

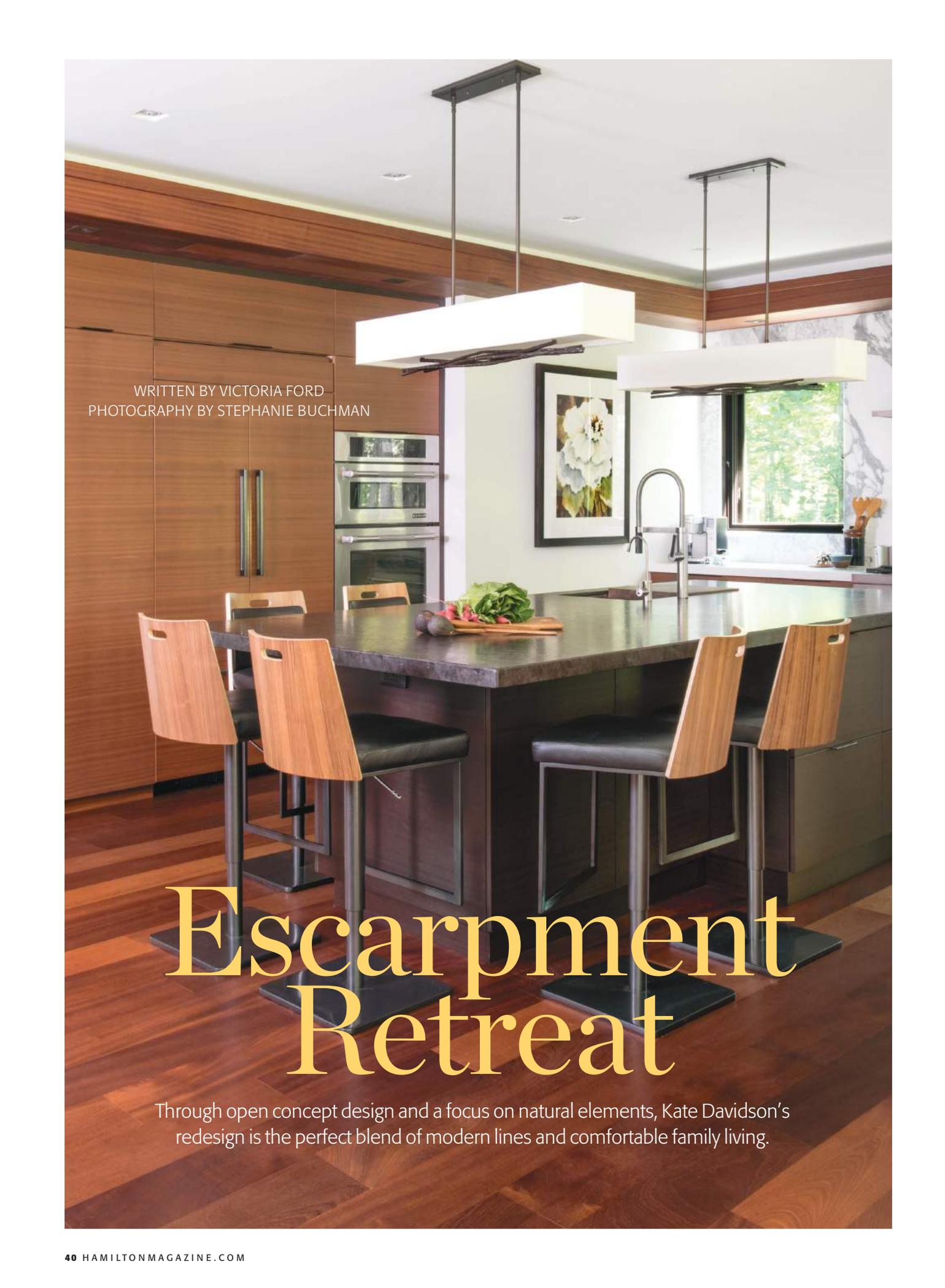
Interiors

**INSPIRED
LIVING!**
BUZZWORTHY
DESIGNERS,
DECOR
& MORE!

A RUSTIC RETREAT

**KATE DAVIDSON'S LATEST PROJECT
STRIKES THE PERFECT BALANCE**

**TIPS FOR GETTING A GREAT GARDEN | GETTING TO KNOW REGINA STURROCK
MEET YOUR NEIGHBOURS: FABULOUS FURNITURE | OPEN YOUR DESIGN MIND!**



WRITTEN BY VICTORIA FORD
PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHANIE BUCHMAN

Escarpment Retreat

Through open concept design and a focus on natural elements, Kate Davidson's redesign is the perfect blend of modern lines and comfortable family living.



LEFT PAGE: The kitchen not only acts as the heart of this home, it also defines the home with rich and streamlined character. Davidson paid attention to every detail, from combining wood tones and showcasing the exotic sapele wood on the faces of the cabinets with a horizontal book match grain. She also layered rich finishes of marble, granite and quartz while offering ample storage, streamlined cabinet hardware and statement light fixtures.

THIS PAGE: Starting at the entry, which sets the tone of a warm and rich palate, the foyer boasts custom-cut richly toned marble slab flooring, the homes' original red brick feature wall and the sculptural modern staircase with glass railing and building-block mahogany step detail.



The location was perfect. A tree-filled, escarpment lot in Burlington. The original home, however, wasn't quite what this family had in mind. Their vision — to transition from a dated, choppy side-split to a breathtaking modern home — was a big one. So they enlisted the clean, family-friendly, creative design expertise of Kate Davidson of Kate Davidson Design Inc., Oakville. The result? A perfect organic, modern, warm family home.

Kate struck a balance between indulgently modern and completely homey. The space features rich exotic finishes throughout, which complement the stunning natural landscape that surrounds the home. Sapele flooring, walnut valances, marble features and granite countertops anchor the inside with the property. "The Sapele's matte rubio finish highlights the wood's warmth and depth," Kate explains. "The use of honed granite on the island, a statuario marble slab on the feature wall above the stove and clean white quartz on the counter overlooking the family room, all combined, add depth to a rich palate."

The large windows are left unburdened by drapes or blinds. Instead, dark staining on the window frames provide a gallery feel to the views, which have been captured for purposeful display. The result is stunning. There is an almost seamlessness to the dense and layered escarpment views and the home's interior. And while imbued with these stunning natural elements, the home is far from rustic. It's crisp lines and clean surfaces are functionally modern.



ABOVE: The mudroom is a must-have for this busy family. Durable slate flooring and lots of storage in the custom floor-to-ceiling cabinetry keeps everything neatly stored and ready to go. In the dining room, a cabinet with a two-tone effect is a clean and functional key feature. A custom walnut live-edge dining table contributes to the home's warm and organic style. The master bath showcases custom cabinetry in walnut and rich textured marble on the walls and floors. Wall-mounted faucets are a clean modern feature.





In the sunken living room, the hearth and fireplace was constructed from a custom coloured cast concrete. The television is concealed behind a large sliding panel which slides up towards the ceiling when the TV is in use, providing a sleek and modern look. The large sectional was custom made and provides plenty of comfortable seating.

“The main floor of this home is all about entertaining,” Kate explains. “This family of four has a busy lifestyle with lots of friends and enjoys having casual get-togethers. The open concept layout was ideal for these homeowners. I used visual cues to differentiate the space and create a visual separation while still maintaining an open concept.”

The homeowners didn’t want formal or stuffy, so cutting out a separate dining room was an easy decision. A high-functioning, quality kitchen was, however, a must. The final design allows the family to flow and interact with one another in multi-functioning, beautifully appointed spaces. To delineate the rooms without chopping up the design, Kate relied on visual cues. “The key elements that delineate this open concept space are the valance details.” Over the island, the valance separates the kitchen from the family room. This detail carries on throughout the main floor, including the steps down to the sunken living room. Furniture and cabinetry also provide the parameters of space without disrupting flow. The custom dining room cabinets serve both as a statement piece while offering storage and partitioning the kitchen.

The family room is accentuated by beautiful details and is all about family comfort. “The large sunken family room has the best view in the home. Overlooking the forest on the escarpment, it is a large room that offers lots of seating and is perfect for entertaining large crowds or cozy family movie nights.” The

Rumford fireplace, clad in machine-etched marble, sits within a custom colour-cast concrete hearth. The large sectional offers plenty of comfortable seating and great views of the flat screen TV, which is concealed behind a sliding panel when not being watched.

The mudroom — imperative for a busy young family — is a warm welcome home after a day of sports and activities. And even the family’s labradoodle was taken into account in the design. The ample floor-to-ceiling cabinetry keeps everything neatly stored away yet easily within reach.

Upstairs you’ll find three spacious bedrooms. The master is a welcoming retreat after a hectic day. The large walk-in closets give the homeowners’ plenty of space for their wardrobe. In the spa-inspired bathroom wall-mounted faucets offer a clean, modern aesthetic of uncluttered counters. The kids’ rooms were also built for function. Joined by a shared bathroom, the design boasts lots of cabinetry for storage that is adaptable to suit the kids’ needs at any stage.



Kate Davidson is the principal of Kate Davidson Design Inc. Based in Oakville, her firm is a multi-disciplinary interior design firm which provides complete design, renovating and decorating services for residential and commercial clients. KDDI’s design goals are to ensure that every home they design reflects and enhances the quality of their clients’ lives. katedavidsondesign.com

Open Your Design Mind

AS **MELISSA DAVIS** EXPLAINS, EMOTIONAL PLANNING MAKES FOR A WELL-DESIGNED LIFE!

As a designer, my job is as much about recognizing how *not* to design a space as it is how to. Most of us embark on a redesign by first pulling inspirational pictures — pretty spaces that have the look. I, myself, usually begin by asking clients to compile boards on Pinterest so that I can start to get a literal picture into what the ideal looks like to them. It's a very telling process, for sure, especially if I ask two people, like a husband and wife, to each create their own look boards independently. Then I get the fun job of finding the common links and feeding into their individual wants. With enough acknowledgements, everyone feels like their vision is intrinsic to the resulting design.

Pretty pictures aside, great design goes deeper than window dressings, offering solutions to wants, needs and inefficiencies. Part of my design programming, and something I encourage everyone embarking on a project at home, is to walk through room by room then big picture, considering what doesn't work currently. This may be more obvious, like the dining table is too small for large groups, but it also may highlight more emotional needs, like reconnecting as a family. This process is a terrific exercise to start the dialogue about the holistic hopes. Not surprisingly, the best designers are great listeners first.

Our relationship with our homes is continually evolving. As our family and parenting dynamics and relationships changed from the be seen but not heard of the '40s and '50s to the now always watchful and at least attempted engagement of the contemporary parent, so, too, did our relationship with our kitchen once again morph. We want connectedness in our lives and the removal of walls and visual barriers in our home is a physical representation of that want. The kitchen is now the hub where the engaged hosts and watchful parent alike can be busy with the business of food prep while not missing out on the conversations of the day. This is a trend, as with most, that is born from an emotional necessity.

This new trend of open concept living is not without its downsides, but it's definitely here to stay for awhile. I, too, also live in an open concept environment and understand the day-to-day challenges. The key to success from a design perspective is to anticipate the potential pitfalls during that initial programming stage and implement solutions from the get-go.

Here are my top four open concept kitchen problems solved.



Toronto-based celebrity designer and contractor Melissa Davis is known for her appearances, creative design and reno work for various HGTV shows. Her work has been profiled nationally in print publications. With almost two decades of reno and design experience, her firm continues to service clientele throughout Ontario and the GTHA, specializing in value-adding ROI and resale consultations. Learn more at melissadavis.com.



1

Visual clutter on the counters

Solution: I make a point of planning a place in advance for all the larger items like small appliances and microwaves. Consider putting the microwave below the counter for ease in access by the littler family members while keeping it out of sight.



2

A utilitarian look kills the cozy feel to adjacent spaces

Solution: Opt for integrated appliances and warm natural materials, like wood and stone, that allows a glance from the family room to be less of a reminder the pan needs to be scrubbed. If you can't see the mess, you're less likely to be tormented by it.



3

Paperwork and homework will start to accumulate

Solution: The open kitchen means more of the daily functions will migrate in and inevitably be left on the counter. Plan ahead and add cabinets on the outside of the kitchen designated as homework supplies, magazines and household bills. Allocating a place will help condition the members of the family to put things away instead of leaving it to be dealt with later.



4

Open kitchens mean unwanted visitors under foot

Solution: Add a drink fridge on the outside edges of the kitchen. This allows both little ones and guests to grab a drink without getting in the way of the chef. Adding pre-dinner nibbles here, like cheese and grapes, along with juice boxes, allows them to fulfill their own hunger needs.