

LivingSpace

ROCKWAY GLEN'S BRUCE AND CATHERINE STRONGMAN AIMED TO CREATE A VIBRANT AND DYNAMIC HOME. CATHERINE EXPLAINS HOW IT ALL CAME TOGETHER

Photography by Roy Timm





From the moment we walked through the door, I envisioned the outcome of this space. I laid out the home's floor plans as soon as we purchased the suite. With concrete floors and the ability to move – and remove – walls, it was like a blank canvas, which is every decorator's dream. From start to finish, the design took about three months.

I have always tried to bring the outdoors in to all of our homes. Moving from an area that had been defined by majestic trees and foliage, we thought we would miss outdoor living. Having a landscaped terrace looking at incredible views is breathtaking. But moving to a condominium from a larger home was not as difficult as we anticipated. We used most of our furniture, and artwork was moved around to suit the space. We found a home for all our favourite pieces and added a few new ones. The most important aspect from moving from a two-storey home to a condominium was to not give up flow. The suite is spacious, and from the moment you walk through the door you get high ceilings (11 to 20 feet), abundance of light from expansive windows and breathtaking views of lake, escarpment, sunrise and sunset.

Our living room perfectly encapsulates what we were hoping to achieve. Its 15-foot-diameter dome that rises to a 20-foot height is breathtaking. Lighting encircles the interior with subtlety. Faux-finish artist Lisa Miller braved a scaffold for many hours to capture the feeling we wanted. The centre is a true-to-life window and several layers of various hues, with golds and coppers completing the balance. At night, it's magical. There is a warmth and excitement when you enter our home. You feel like you are in a New York penthouse. And as with Rockway Glen Golf Course,

OPPOSITE A splendidly realized dome arch lends dimension and drama to a light-filled living room given to scenic perspectives **ABOVE** A lifetime of art was incorporated into a living space that captured some of the passion and history of the couple, whose globe-trotting adventures helped assemble the collection



we have the balance of great views, art and artifacts – and of course a cache of excellent wines.

Bruce and I have been collectors of art and artifacts for over 23 years, and we've travelled extensively to the Orient, Europe and the United States. As an abstract artist, I appreciate the work, love and heart that creates artwork and artifacts. As well, many of the canvases in our home are my own – life through art has allowed me to evolve, releasing and sharing emotions.

We've lived in several homes over the past 20 years and always felt we were searching for something that was missing. With this suite we feel we've reached nirvana. All rooms allow for varied functions as opposed to being useful for only one end. Our living room offers wide-scope views, a fireplace for curling up with a book and a glass of wine, and of course the dome, which is not only awe-inspiring and thought-provoking but dynamic in its own right. Listening to the rain fall in that room is a sensory pleasure and also reminds us to be present and attentive.

Our bedroom is an absolute oasis. Like the living room, it offers incredible

views of the lake and downtown area. It is a calming room, and that in itself serves its purpose. The den is a generous room that doubles as an entertainment haven/office. It's wonderful to be on the same level as Bruce but not have to always partake in the sports channel (although we both love watching golf and have found the den to be incredibly comfortable). It's very nice to not have to negotiate the stairs either – having everything on the same level has made our lives easier and more user-friendly.

My taste in interior design and decorating has evolved over the years. I design a space to be comfortable and inviting. With our family and grandchildren, we understand the importance of livability. I tend to lean towards eclectic, mixing contemporary design with old world pieces and modern "statement" art and artifacts. Our home now is a reflection of who we have grown into as individuals but also as life partners. ■

OPPOSITE Tried-and-true forms and a subdued palette are the perfect foil for hits of colour and pattern. Stools and other key elements were sourced by Pam Chisholm of Burlington's In House **ABOVE** Dynamically conceived rooms allow for multiple uses rather than being defined by static identities

