

BEYOND



A Heaps Estrin Publication

TREASURE HUNTERS

MEET FOUR ART
COLLECTORS WHO
DO IT FOR LOVE

PITCH PERFECT

MARK COHON IS
KICKING WOMEN'S
SOCCER INTO
HIGH GEAR

HACKING THE MARKET

HOW TO GET YOUR
FOOT IN THE DOOR OF
YOUR FIRST HOME

Small Spaces
With Big
Personality



Issue

05

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A TIME FOR FRESH STARTS

ONE OF THE MOST REWARDING ASPECTS OF LIFE AT HEAPS ESTRIN

is the privilege of having a front-row seat to so many of the stories that make this city special. Our relationships with our clients and the neighbourhoods we serve mean that we experience Toronto in a unique and personal way. We witness the evolution of streetscapes, the shifting rhythms of communities, and the personal milestones that unfold within the homes we help buy and sell. By its very nature, our relationship-driven industry makes us great listeners. And beyond that, we are also storytellers — not just through the homes we represent, but through the pages of this magazine.

When we first launched BEYOND, our goal was simple: to create something meaningful, a publication that reflects the vibrancy of the city we love. The response from our readers has been nothing short of extraordinary. Whether it's a deep dive into Toronto's architectural history, a feature on the latest market trends, or a behind-the-scenes look at the neighbourhoods in which we live, work and play, the feedback from

our community has been overwhelmingly positive. It is truly a labour of love — one that allows us to celebrate Toronto's past, present and future.

The past year has been a test of patience for many buyers and sellers. Fluctuating interest rates, shifting policies and evolving consumer confidence have all played a role in shaping today's market. But if history has taught us anything, it's that Toronto's real estate landscape is defined by resilience. Through every cycle, our city continues to grow, adapt and find its footing. And as we step into this new season, there is reason to believe that better days are ahead.

In this issue of BEYOND, we hope you continue to find fresh insights into how our city continues to evolve. We invite you to explore creative hacks to get into the market with "Hacks for Homebuyers" (p. 9). We also take a closer look at the growing movement of opting out of alcohol-infused evenings in "The Case for Sober Curious" (p. 14), inspiring ways to make a big impact in small areas in "Big Little Spaces" (p. 27) and the perfect way to spend a day in the Junction Triangle (p. 12).

And on a personal note, this year marks our 25th anniversary. To commemorate the milestone, we've rounded up 25 fun facts about our company and our team (p. 17) — some you may know, others that may surprise you. It's a chance to reflect on how far we've come, the incredible people we've met along the way and the journey that lies ahead.

Spring is a time for fresh starts, and while uncertainty may still linger, there is promise in change. Toronto has always been a city of reinvention — a place where growth, creativity and opportunity converge. No matter what lies ahead, we remain committed to guiding our clients through every market shift with expertise, integrity and an unwavering belief in the future.

Here's to a season of resilience, renewal and good things to come.

Warm wishes,

Cailey Heaps
President & CEO, Broker of Record
The Heaps Estrin Real Estate Team

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THE MILLION-DOLLAR MINDSET

THE ECONOMIC
FUTURE OF
THIS COUNTRY
MIGHT BE
UNCERTAIN, BUT
ONE THING'S
FOR SURE:
MILLIONAIRES
KNOW HOW
TO MAKE THEIR
MONEY WORK
FOR THEM.
NOW'S THE
TIME TO TAKE
A PAGE OUT OF
THEIR BOOK.

WORDS BY
**PATRICIA
LOVETT-REID**

THESE ARE UNCERTAIN TIMES.

With new leadership in the United States, we are still waiting to fully understand the impact it will have on our economy. And while it's true that we can't control the external factors, we can control how we respond.

I worked with millionaires as a senior vice-president at TD Waterhouse for more than a decade and have often observed what the wealthy do differently. It might surprise you to hear that their success isn't just about having a million (or millions of) dollars. It is about having a millionaire mindset when the future — and your household — feels financially fragile.

You have heard the expression, "Just because you can doesn't mean you should." The financially savvy take this very seriously and are never frivolous with their money. Sure, they can afford to spend, but they choose to spend wisely during periods of uncertainty.

Now is the time to take a good, hard look at your finances. With razor-sharp precision, create a budget and be clear about how much money you have coming in and what you spend. When spending, ask yourself if it is done with intention or emotion. Discretionary spending or unnecessary consumption should be minimized for now. It doesn't mean forever — it just means you are controlling your response to the current economic environment.

Canadians are resilient. Many households have survived financial economic slowdowns, rate increases, high inflation, a red-hot real estate market, a pandemic and more. And once again, it is how you respond to the headwinds your household is facing. Equally important is to make your money work as hard for you as you worked for it.

With that in mind, let's look at what millionaires do — or more importantly, what they don't do — when it comes to investing.

MAKE YOUR MONEY WORK AS HARD FOR YOU AS YOU WORKED FOR IT.

DON'T put all your eggs in one basket. Diversify your portfolio to minimize your investment risk. Never invest in only one company, sector, country or currency.

DON'T play it too safe. Leaving your cash idle in a savings account could result in losing money after taxes and inflation.

DON'T rely on chasing higher performers in the stock market. You might have won once or twice, but that doesn't mean you have predictive powers. It might have been sheer luck.

DON'T underestimate analyzing how much you are willing — and can afford — to lose.

DON'T be blind to compounding your income (by renting out a space you own or investing in dividend stocks, for example).

DON'T count your pre-tax dollars. In other words, never think of your income in terms of gross amount — and don't ignore how inflation will affect your spending power.

DON'T discount the importance of a net worth statement. Sit down and list everything that you own and owe, and set a goal to improve your net worth year over year, whether that's paying down expensive debt or looking at the composition of your portfolio.

This isn't intended to sound negative, nor does it mean the next big thing isn't around the corner. Start the conversation with your children about financial literacy and teach them concepts such as compound interest and leveraging debt to build wealth. Often, through adversity comes opportunity. Having the right mindset and knowing what you can control will free you up to say "yes" to new opportunities, experiences and challenges. 🍀

Patricia Lovett-Reid is the Chief Financial Commentator for HomeEquity Bank and a Special Advisor to Goldhar and Associates, License Insolvency Trustees. Follow her on Instagram @pattie_lovettreid.



THE DOUBLE DUPLEX

COULD A
CENTURY-
OLD ANSWER
TO GROWING
DENSITY BE
THE SOLUTION
TORONTO
NEEDS TODAY?

WORDS BY
ALEX COREY

*Heaps Estrin Real
Estate Agent and
Architectural Historian*

FROM THE REAL ESTATE SECTION OF THE *GLOBE AND MAIL* to the glossy pages of *Architectural Digest*, there's a theme that continues to proliferate: the need for increased urban density. And rightfully so, as Toronto and similar cities seek to accommodate population growth while avoiding both the pitfalls of urban sprawl and the loss of much-needed green space.

Urban planners in search of solutions have pushed gentle density, a strategy that aims to increase housing units within a neighbourhood gradually without significantly altering its aesthetic — although they've often faced an uphill battle, stymied by concerns around built form, congestion and a disruption to "neighbourhood character." As is so often the case, a historic perspective — this one from just shy of a century ago and found in the heart of Midtown — provides valuable lessons for both neighbourhood advocates and density proponents in the form of the double duplex.

You can see this for yourself by strolling along Castle View Avenue and Austin Terrace, just north of Casa Loma. This collection of double duplexes reflects a distinct period of Toronto's

interwar residential development history, a period not unlike today when the city's population was rapidly expanding while physical constraints directed development inwards and upwards.

The design of these early-20th-century double duplexes was a clear attempt to appease residents who fought to maintain their neighbourhood's established character, while warding off apartment buildings. Standing only two storeys tall and with generous front yard setbacks, their designs addressed concerns over height, massing and aesthetic. Architectural details, including the use of traditional materials such as brick, wood and stone, and a single front door, referenced the design of nearby private homes but with a foyer opening to four separate apartments. This type of home was particularly appealing to young couples and families, since most units provided two bedrooms, a bathroom and modern conveniences, like central heating and often a garage at the rear.

Designed by architects such as Hans Oluf Andreas Albrechtsen, Henry J. Chown and William C. Charters — whose work primarily focused on multi-family housing during the interwar period — these homes had their heyday in the mid-to-late 1920s and reflected a shift toward increased urban density while maintaining the character of the surrounding neighbourhood. Examples can still be found along Avenue Road, Bayview Avenue, Glen Manor Drive and Claxton Boulevard.

Development of this unique building type stalled at the turn of the 1930s with the onset of the Great Depression. And by the end of World War II, suburbanization and the accessibility of a private detached home afforded through inexpensive land and widespread car ownership, saw the appeal of multi-family housing like the double duplex fade away.

As we look toward the future and seek creative ways to address the housing challenges of today, perhaps we can take a leaf from the past. The double duplexes of Castle View Avenue and Austin Terrace offer a compelling precedent for gentle density. By successfully balancing the need for additional housing with neighbourhood character and thoughtful design they stand the test of time as a model for sustainable urban growth. ■



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HACKS FOR HOMEBUYERS

FOR SOME, GETTING INTO THE TORONTO REAL ESTATE MARKET FEELS IMPOSSIBLE — BUT THERE ARE A FEW OUTSIDE-THE-BOX STRATEGIES THAT COULD ALLOW YOU TO GET YOUR FOOT IN YOUR FIRST OWNED DOOR. YES, EVEN IN 2025.

WORDS BY **JOSH SHERMAN**

Buying real estate is, for many, one of the biggest investments they'll ever make. And in the city of Toronto, it comes with challenges. The recent U.S. election has roiled economic outlooks and Canadians are heading to the polls later this year, all of which spells uncertainty in the market. Although there has been a dip in Toronto home prices, RBC estimates that the carrying costs on a benchmark home in the city amount to a 75 per cent share of the median household income.

But here's a hot take: despite all the uncertainty, now could still be a good time to wade into the market. In fact, that uncertainty might even present an opportunity for savvy investors who are willing to get creative.

THE SUITE LIFE

Whether you're an end user or purely in it for the investment, Patrick Francey, CEO of Real Estate Investment Network Canada, recommends looking at properties that include more than one unit. It could be a multiplex, a detached home with a finished basement and a separate entrance, or a house with a garden or laneway suite in the back.

"If you really want to accelerate your ability to grow wealth and grow into the next property, that additional dwelling unit is the answer," he says.

Besides being a great way to pull in extra cash, this strategy — sometimes known as a "mortgage helper" — could actually be the key to getting into the market, since the rent collected from a secondary suite can help a buyer qualify for a mortgage that could've been out of reach based on their income alone.

Sean Cooper, a mortgage broker and author of *Burn Your Mortgage: The Simple, Powerful Path to Financial Freedom for Canadians* (BurnYourMortgage.ca), took the idea one step further and made the ultimate sacrifice. When he purchased his first house in 2012, he rented out the main floor and moved into the basement. This allowed him to charge more rent, although he admits it wasn't the most ideal situation.

"Living in the basement makes you feel like you're still renting, but I just saw it as short-term pain for long-term gain," he says. "It was definitely a humbling experience." It worked out, though, as he was able to pay off his mortgage in three years, at the age of 30 no less.

While real estate values have soared since then, Cooper believes his approach is still relevant today — at least to those willing to make the sacrifice. A secondary suite is also a convenient way to begin building your long-term real estate investment portfolio while paying down your first mortgage.

"If you've got an investment mentality, you would then maybe live in that unit five, seven, even 10 years, get your finances under control, manage your costs and then you may move out of that unit but keep it," Francey says. "It becomes an asset that you hold."



IF YOUR DREAM IS A
THREE-BEDROOM,
MOVE-IN READY
HOUSE WITH A
TWO-CAR GARAGE,
YOU MIGHT WANT
TO SET YOUR
SIGHTS LOWER.
REMEMBER THAT
THE PROPERTY YOU
BUY TODAY DOESN'T
HAVE TO BE YOUR
FOREVER HOME.

GET REAL WITH YOUR REAL ESTATE

New investors and first-time homebuyers alike tend to make the same mistake again and again when buying real estate: they end up overleveraged. "They're buying emotionally for today without looking five years down the road," Francey says. "My cautionary note is to live below your means in terms of what you buy for a home."

For example, if your dream is a three-bedroom, move-in ready house with a two-car garage, you might want to set your sights lower. Remember that the property you buy today doesn't have to be your forever home, Cooper says. It's important to keep an open mind in terms of location, housing type and quality of home when searching for that elusive first

piece of real estate.

“Buying a house for the first time and expecting to buy a detached house in the city of Toronto — it’s not really a realistic expectation unless you’re a couple of lawyers or you have help from parents,” he says. In fact, according to analysis from National Bank of Canada, as of Q3 2024, the qualifying annual income to purchase a single-family home in Toronto is \$243,078.

While many homebuyers prefer turnkey properties, purchasing a home that requires some TLC can be a smart move. “If you’ve got the skill set or you’ve got access to it, that is a great strategy,” Francey says. Anything from DIYing hardwood floors to painting can help.

“If you’re going to buy a rental property, we’ve got lots of members of the community who work nights, they work weekends, and they ultimately get a rental unit that they put a bunch of sweat equity into.” And don’t forget to explore government grants that are available to homeowners looking to add a secondary suite to their home.

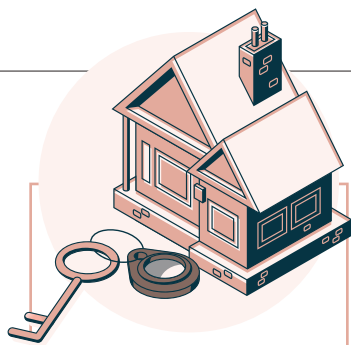
However, Francey also stresses the importance of including a property inspection contingency to ensure the inspection is satisfactory to you, the buyer.

“An inspection helps gauge what renovations fall within [your] skills and competency,” when it comes to DIY fixes. In addition, he advises to “bring in an experienced renovation contractor to assess the scope and cost of renovations.”

THE FRIENDS AND FAMILY DISCOUNT

You might have envisioned your first home as a way to escape living with family or with roommates, but it would behoove you to rethink that. Co-buying a property, which is when you buy real estate with a non-romantic partner (or partners) could be the answer, says Parimal Gosai, realtor and co-founder of Husmates, an app that matches buyers with co-buyers.

By pooling resources, co-buyers are often able to step onto the property ladder — both faster and higher. A combined down payment opens the door for a



HOW DOES RENT-TO-OWN WORK?

You’ve probably heard the phrase rent-to-own before, but what does it mean? It’s when a homebuyer lacks a full down payment, or doesn’t have high enough credit to qualify for a mortgage.

“People think either you rent or you own — this is that bridge in between,” says Alfonso Salemi, a real estate investor who has facilitated these agreements in Canada and the U.S.

In a rent-to-own scenario, a tenant agrees to purchase a home at a later date for a predetermined price, often assuming an agreed upon three to five per cent annual appreciation over a three-year period. As they pay monthly rent, a portion is credited to them for the future down payment. An initial deposit is typically required, but it’s less than a down payment at a bank.

If the tenant can’t qualify for a mortgage at the end of the term, there is a risk of penalties, such as forfeiting the deposit, but agreements are often flexible. “The best rent-to-own companies will work out an additional plan as long as the payments are being made and being made on time,” Salemi says.

first-time buyer to move into a more expensive single-family home or small-scale multiplex, rather than starting with a condo.

“On average, I’m seeing each party come to the table with anywhere from \$50,000 to \$100,000,” says Gosai, who notes he’s seen at least one arrangement where a co-buyer put zero down.

When co-buying, the parties involved obtain a single mortgage and split up the monthly costs depending on the written agreement, which is essential. In the case of the co-buyer with zero down, they had a high income but no savings, so they paid the lion’s share of the mortgage to build up equity.

Similar to a shareholder agreement, co-buyers sign a legally binding contract that outlines their rights and responsibilities, as well as how to deal with a variety of scenarios that may arise, from repairs to cashing out. If one party wants to sell, the others typically have the option to buy them out, or else the seller’s share — or the entire home — is put on the market, per the co-buying agreement.

“Each party should also have independent legal advice that’s outside of the lawyer who’s drafting the agreement,” Gosai says. That way nobody can later try to break the contract by claiming they didn’t know what they were signing.

While Husmates facilitates co-buying among complete strangers, Gosai notes that many co-buyers choose to enter agreements with parents, siblings and friends. The option has become especially popular with buyers on the younger and on the much older side.

“I would say this is super attractive for people under the age of 40 who really can’t get into the housing market. [Similarly], it’s also highly attractive for seniors who do not want to leave their homes...and

would perhaps try to sell half their home to a younger family member.”

As it turns out, despite the daunting projections, getting a foothold in the Toronto real estate market isn’t impossible. In fact, with some creative thinking and strategic planning, it could just be your most achievable goal this year. 🗝️

Welcome to the Junction Triangle

LOOKING FOR A NEIGHBOURHOOD WHOSE WORKING-CLASS PAST HAS GIVEN WAY TO WORLD-CLASS GALLERIES, MUST-DINE RESTAURANTS AND MORE PARKS THAN YOU CAN SHAKE A BRANCH AT? GO WEST.

WORDS BY
MARILISA RACCO



Historically speaking, the “other side of the tracks” hasn’t denoted a desirable neighbourhood, but step inside the three train tracks enclosing Toronto’s Junction Triangle, and you’ll find a dynamic neighbourhood that walks the line of working-class heritage and urbanized style.

Nestled between higher profile High Park and Bloorcourt, Junction Triangle is one of those if-you-know-you-know sort of spots. It was also Toronto’s last dry neighbourhood until 2000.

“It’s still kind of in transition, so not every single place is something,” says Stephanie Newlands, West End Leader for Heaps Estrin. “When people say they want to move to the West End, they often think of Bloor West or Swansea, and Junction Triangle is left out as an option. But there’s more to do and see here than most people realize.”

It maintains something of a gritty vibe, but an abundance of parks and schools, and proximity to the subway, GO and UP Express, make it a pleasing prospect for families and singles alike. And the real estate options reflect that. The neighbourhood offers a diversity of dwellings and price points, from one-bedroom condos for \$585,000 up to \$3 million for a fully detached, renovated home with a laneway house.

“There’s a different heartbeat in the Junction Triangle,” Newlands says. “You get lots of homes as well as a big volume of condos and townhouses, so it brings a very diverse demographic.”

And diversity is the name of the game here. “The Junction Triangle is a thriving community, populated by folks who are invested in the success of their neighbourhood,” says Jena Tarabad, manager of the George Chuvalo Neighbourhood Centre. “It’s teeming with diversity, whether that be the people who live here or the types of spaces available.”

WHERE TO FUEL UP

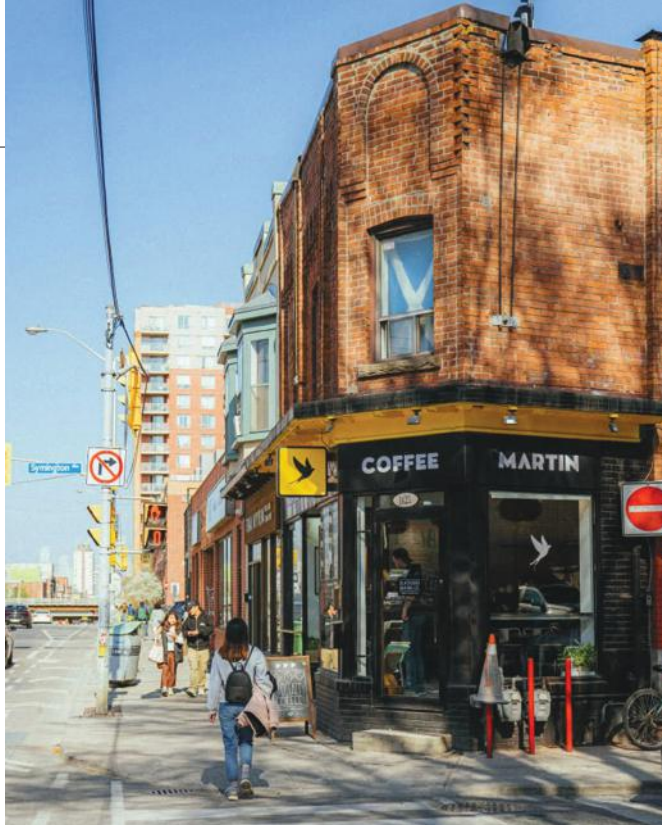
If you’re looking for a quick bite and coffee to fuel your day, pop over to Gaspar Café (10 Sousa Mendes St.) where you can choose from a selection of Portuguese pastries or savoury snacks while perusing the tiny shop’s vast selection of imported gourmet goods and prepared meals.

There’s more caffeine to be had at Martin Espresso Bar (1421 Bloor St. W.) as well as an assortment of locally baked goods, and Ethica Coffee Roasters (213 Sterling Rd.), housed in a historic industrial building that boasts soaring ceilings and in-house roasted coffee.

WHERE TO GO

Art enthusiasts might not be totally surprised to hear that this is an art-forward neighbourhood, given it’s where the Museum of Contemporary Art lives (158 Sterling Rd., #100). But if independent galleries are more your speed, there’s no shortage of options here.

Clint Roenisch (190 St. Helens Ave.) relocated to Junction Triangle from West Queen West, sensing the neighbourhood’s potential and acting like a trailblazer of sorts.



Clockwise from top left: Dotty's; Martin Espresso Bar; Museum of Contemporary Art; a tote from OKAYOK; Ethica Coffee Roasters.

Before long, galleries like Erin Stump Projects (1558 Dupont St.), Arsenal Contemporary Art Toronto (45 Ernest Ave.), Alison Milne Co. (134 Osler St.), and Cultural Goods Gallery (1444 Dupont St., unit 15) — owned by fashion power couple Kim Newport-Mimran and Joe Mimran — proliferated.

WHERE TO SHOP

Local and sustainable is the name of the shopping game here.

Pictus Goods (1609 Dupont St.) is an eco-conscious flower and gift boutique that specializes in unique ceramics and other *objets*, as well as unstructured floral arrangements that read beautifully bohemian. And Urban Gardener (1640 Dupont St.) is a plant boutique rife with gorgeous flora, and artisan-made pots and planters.

Fashion options also abound, from Tokki (1570 Dupont St.), a kids' consignment boutique that sells pre-loved clothes and accessories, to OKAYOK (40 Sousa Mendes St.), a Toronto-designed and -manufactured line of fun and colourful basics. Vintage lovers won't want to miss Boomie Vintage's (1425 Bloor St. W.) highly curated selection of unique pieces from various eras, or the designer finds like '80s era Balenciaga and '70s Courrèges at Nouveau Riche Vintage (15 Adrian Ave.).

WHERE TO DINE

Working up an appetite won't be difficult, but choosing a restaurant might be.

Dupont Street is chock-a-block with eateries, including casual Italian spots like Mattachioni pizzeria and bakery (1617 Dupont St.), and Lucia (1595 Dupont St.), where handmade pasta and wines are the thing. If you're in the mood for small bites and cocktails, head to Dotty's (1588 Dupont St.), or grab a quick taco at Gus Tacos (1546 Dupont St.). But if you're looking for a Junction Triangle OG, go to Boo Radley's (1482 Dupont St.) for their classic pub fare.

After a day at the MOCA, refuel next door at Terroni Sterling or grab a brew and a bite at Henderson Brewery (both at 1284 Sterling Rd.). ☘

THE CASE FOR SOBER CURIOUS

IF YOU'VE STARTED RETHINKING
YOUR DRINKING, YOU'RE NOT
ALONE. THERE'S GROWING
INTEREST IN GOING SOBER AND
ITS BENEFITS INCLUDE A LOT
MORE THAN JUST WAKING UP
HANGOVER-FREE.

WORDS BY
LEAH RUMACK
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
NICOLE AND BAGOL



Illustration: Freepik

Non-alcoholic bourbon, rum and whisky that look (and taste) like the real thing; a non-alc Paloma is delicious and sophisticated.



A few years ago, ordering a glass of non-alcoholic wine with your meal would have elicited side-eye from the sommelier. But in 2025, it's more likely they'll politely ask if you'd like red, white or sparkling, and suggest a non-alcoholic amaro after dinner.

Beyond Dry January and Sober October, these days it seems like everyone — particularly those who are interested in capital-W wellness — is “sober curious” year-round. The term was coined by author Ruby Warrington in her 2018 book of the same name. In it, she talks about a growing movement of people who are choosing to cut back on booze while simultaneously questioning the impulse and societal expectation to drink. While Gen Z and millennial women are leading the sober curious charge (thank you CBD, yoga classes and Goop), it's a trend that's taken hold across the demographic board.

“The word ‘sober’ has taken on a new twist,” says Sarah-Kate Kiriliuk, an expert in non-alcoholic drinks and founder of SomeGoodCleanFun.com, a site dedicated to the alcohol-free lifestyle. “It used to be really shameful to say, ‘I’m sober,’ because it meant you’re in recovery and you’re an addict. Now it just means, ‘I don’t drink, but we’re going to have fun anyway.’”

THE REAL HEALTH RISKS

Some might say it was about time. The International Agency for Research on Cancer classified alcohol as a Group 1 carcinogen in 2010 — in the same category as arsenic, tobacco and asbestos — indisputably linking it to cancer, not to mention its detrimental effects on the liver, heart, sleep and mental health. More recently, in January the U.S. Surgeon General called for warning labels on alcohol just like the ones on cigarettes.

Meanwhile, a 2023 report from the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction revamped its low-risk drinking guidelines from 10 servings a week for women and 15 for men to a whopping zero for all.

(If you must drink, they suggest you limit yourself to two drinks a week, ladies and gents.)

REBRANDING “MOMMY JUICE”

The non-alc market was just begging to be filled, and Jessie Halliburton could see that. Her husband, Shane, had already stopped

MUCH IN THE SAME WAY THAT MILK ALTERNATIVES ARE NOW DE RIGUEUR AT MOST COFFEE SHOPS, HIGH-END COCKTAIL BARS AND RESTAURANTS OFFER ZERO-PROOF OPTIONS MORE OFTEN.



HOW TO MOCKTAIL

While you can definitely shake up your own versions of cocktail classics using non-alcoholic spirits, the growing options of pre-mixed zero-proof drinks in a can are an easy fix. Non-alc beverage company Grūvi's sangria is delicious on its own, but if you're entertaining, this Springtime Sangria Spritz makes for a perfect party punch.

3 CANS GRŪVI

2 CUPS GINGER ALE

2 LARGE HANDFULS OF FRESH RASPBERRIES

1 BLOOD ORANGE, THINLY SLICED

1-2 SPRIGS OF FRESH THYME (OPTIONAL GARNISH)

INSTRUCTIONS

In a large pitcher, combine Grūvi Sangria, ginger ale, fresh raspberries and blood orange slices.

Stir gently and let sit for 5-10 minutes to allow the blood orange and berry flavors to infuse.

Pour into coupe glasses, and garnish with a sprig of thyme and a slice of orange.

Sobr Market has several locations in Toronto, where customers can shop a wide variety of non-alc options, and even sample a flight of drinks before buying.

drinking alcohol and she found herself more intrigued by his evening "cocktail" than her own. Plus, as the mother to small children, she was growing increasingly disinterested in "mommy juice" culture. So the couple founded Sobr Market, a growing chain of non-alcoholic bottle shops that has four locations in Toronto.

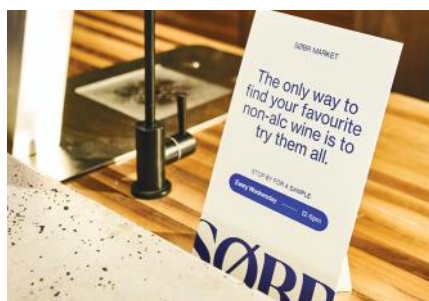
"The mommy culture was, 'I deserve this glass of wine at the end of the day, I earned this, I need this to take the edge off,'" she says. "It would be nothing to reach for another glass and another, but when you remove alcohol, you see how much it calls to you. I realized that if anything happened to the kids and I had to jump in a vehicle, I couldn't do it."

The Halliburtons launched Sobr Market in Winnipeg in 2022 and quickly expanded to Toronto, including a popular location in Summerhill. Suddenly, there's been an explosion in the non-alc revolution. Companies making alcohol-free versions of popular spirits, wine and beer have proliferated, and are doing quick work of replacing booze in cocktails and meal pairings. Much in the same way that milk alternatives are now de rigueur at most coffee shops, high-end cocktail bars and restaurants offer zero-proof options more often. There are even two totally non-alcoholic bars in

Toronto — ZERO Bar and Free Spirit, with more sure to come.

NON-ALC SALES ARE SOARING

And there are some interesting stats to boot. According to market trend research company NIQ, the non-alcoholic sector in Canada



grew by an eye-popping 24 per cent between 2023 and 2024. The LCBO has noticed a similar surge in interest, reporting an almost 200 per cent growth in sales of non-alcoholic beverages since 2022.

To those at the forefront of the non-alc movement, zero-proof alcohol is the perfect way for the sober curious to participate in the fun (and not so fun) events life throws at you without feeling like a buzzkill. It's also a chance for people to notice how their bodies and minds start to feel when they cut back on the hard stuff. (Spoiler alert: they usually feel better.)

"A lot of people show up to events or dinner and they don't want to feel left out if they're not drinking," says Kiriliuk. "But if you can have a non-alcoholic gin and tonic, you feel like you're drinking an elevated, grown-up drink, and that you're not sitting at the kids table."

For Halliburton, it's about still enjoying the flavours of alcohol and the ritual of pouring a drink, with none of the boozy aftereffects. Whether it's a non-alc wine or cocktail, or sparkling water with a couple of drops of bitters, she gets all the benefits she seeks after a long day. 🍷

HEAPS

OF

IN HONOUR OF HEAPS ESTRIN'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY, WE ADD UP THE FACTS – AND THE RESULTS ARE WORTH CELEBRATING.

WORDS BY **ROSEMARY COUNTER**

HISTORY

Thousands of open houses, millions of dollars for charity and oodles of clients. Since 2000, Cailey Heaps and her team at Heaps Estrin have done far more than place happy people in beautiful homes. They've fostered community connections, cemented a professional pipeline of services, and gone above and beyond the call of real estate for clients around the world. Here we've compiled 25 facts and figures to honour 25 years of gold-standard service and industry-leading results. 🏡

1986

The year that Cailey's mother, Heather, started practising real estate – officially. "Long before that, my mum was always armchair-brokering. She'd be at the park saying, 'Anne, meet Jane who's looking with her husband for a bigger house, just as you're downsizing.'" Naturally, Heather Heaps was an award-winning immediate success, always known for her deep care for her clients.



Heather Heaps

WHAT'S IN A NAME

"Heaps" is self-explanatory, but who or what is Estrin? "Estrin's my former husband's name and my children are Heaps Estrins, so when we launched my mum was Heaps and I was Heaps Estrin." Cailey skipped the post-divorce rebrand to honour her kids' last names.

2000

The year Cailey joined her mother and Heaps Estrin was born – despite herself. "I always told Mum she had the worst job in the world because the hours were so demanding and I'd never do it. Turns out, we both had a passion for it."



THE HOUSE THAT CAILEY VACATIONS IN

"I bought in what I believe is one of the most spectacular settings in Newfoundland." She reimagined two historic saltbox houses located on a scenic remote fishing island in Salvage (pop. 100). The renovation was featured in the *New York Times*.

MOST MEMORABLE PARTY...SO FAR

That'd be Heaps Estrin's 20th anniversary. Over five hundred guests flocked to Steam Whistle Brewery for dancing, live music by Governor Douglas (musicians and Heaps Estrin clients, naturally), and flair bartenders tossing drinks high in the air. "It was a great time and fabulous night that we're actually hoping to top with our 25th anniversary party in the spring." Rumour has it the party will involve a private club, fabulous food and drink, Cailey's favourite DJ and some exciting new announcements about what's next at Heaps Estrin. Final details and guest list is still TBD. Watch this space.

12

Number of international languages Heaps Estrin's various agents can speak to assist clients, including French, Italian, Farsi, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, Hebrew, German, Tamil, Bengali, Spanish and Irish.

MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENT

"It was an approved daytime showing, when the parents were away, and I walked through a shut door in the basement to find their teenaged boy in a compromising position with his lady friend." Awk-ward!

MOST CREATIVE OPEN HOUSE

A 1930s-inspired murder mystery night where buyers mingled among hired actors while actively "solving" a murder. No word on whether the butler did it.



MOST OVER-THE-TOP CLIENT REQUEST

A top-secret pet-store mission to replace a runaway hamster with a clandestine lookalike before an unsuspecting child got home from school.

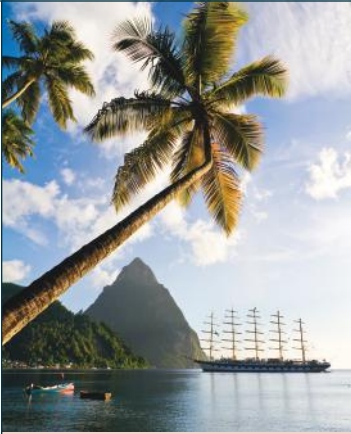
THEIR LIPS ARE SEALED

Heaps Estrin could name-drop some clients — including famous actors, musicians, athletes and more — but they absolutely will not. In fact, these glitterati choose Heaps Estrin specifically for their Fort Knox-esque discretion.



MEET "HERB"

Heaps Estrin Real Estate's buggy, a.k.a. HERB, is a vintage van used to transport materials to open houses or other events. HERB is the company's unofficial mascot, who's a breeze to spot in a crowd thanks to his distinctive blue-and-white HE branding.



3,741 km

Distance between the headquarters in Toronto and the furthest-away deal they've brokered, in Saint Lucia.

\$1.5 MILLION+
Money raised by Heaps Estrin for charities including Ovarian Cancer Canada, SickKids, Interval House, Community Food Centres Canada, Dixon Hall and the Royal LePage Shelter Foundation (which receives a portion of every Heaps Estrin transaction to help women and children fleeing domestic abuse). Fundraising events have included sleep-outs, bake-offs and even a sponsored disco.

\$40 MILLION+
Price of Heaps Estrin's most expensive active listing. (Sorry looky-loos, it's listed off-market for all the obvious reasons.)

\$30,000,000
The highest value represented in a single transaction.

1 : 25
Ratio of Heaps Estrin's smallest home sold — 450 square feet — to the largest most-recent sale — 11,000.

\$5.5 billion+
Total sales volume over the last 25 years.

188 years
Age of the oldest property sold: a country estate on 117 acres in Northumberland County, just minutes away from dreamy Ste. Anne's Spa.

\$28,000

Monthly rent cheque signed by a tenant at Heaps Estrin's most expensive recent rental unit. It's a fully detached four-storey townhouse in the core of the city, with four bedrooms, five bathrooms, a temperature-controlled wine fridge and a backyard pool big enough to do laps in.

2.25% - 7.20%
The range of prime interest rates that Heaps Estrin has been riding in its quarter-century of operation.

4,000
Number of would-be home buyers currently shopping for a Heaps Estrin property based on the company's CRM data, which tracks clients at various stages of their home-buying journey.



THE HOUSE THAT LIVES RENT-FREE IN CAILEY'S MIND

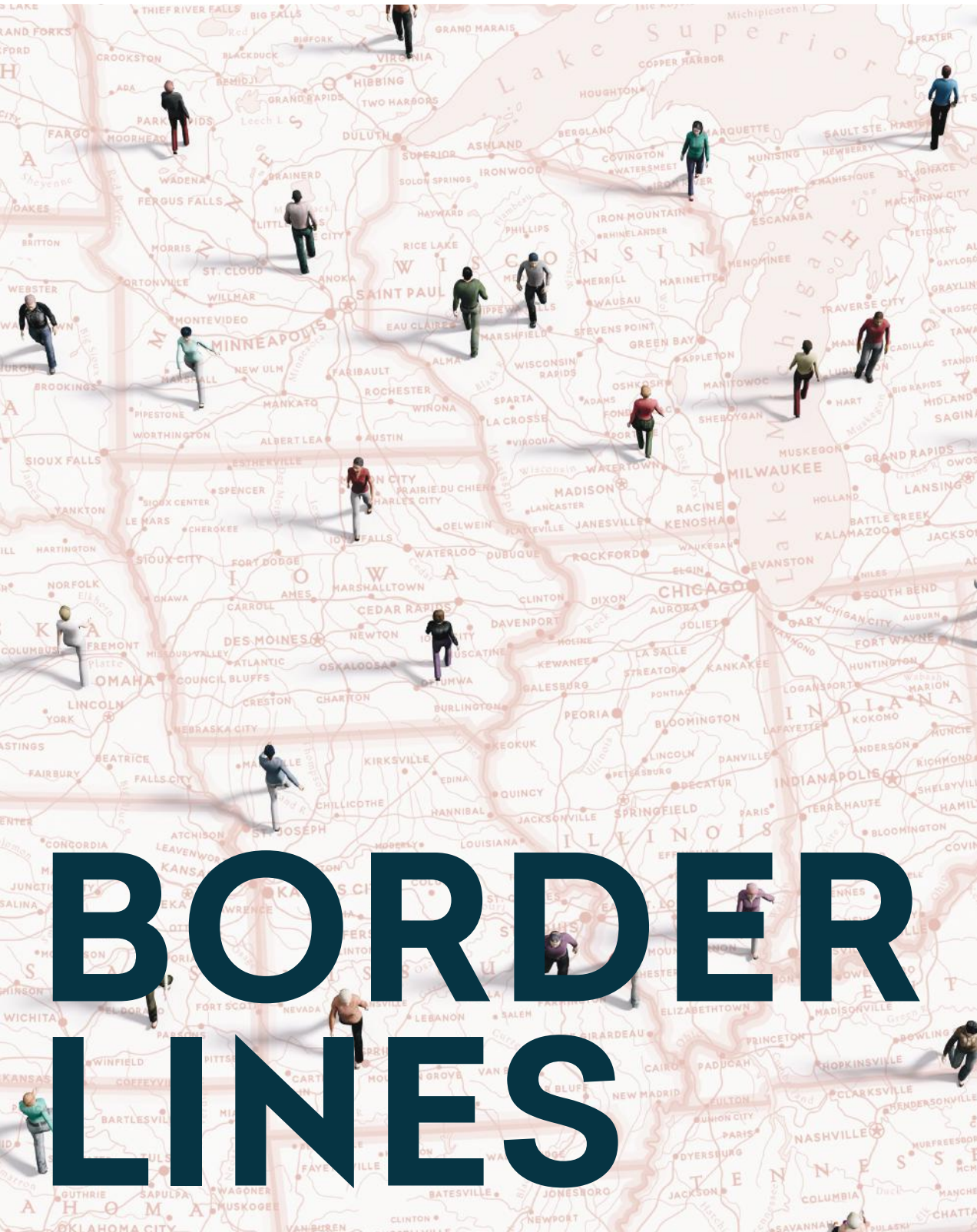
In a sea of remarkable homes, a standout is 11 Thornwood Rd., designed by Order of Canada officer Marianne McKenna, a world-renowned architect and founding partner of KPMB Architects: "The entire house is built with the golden ratio in mind," she says, referring to the Greek letter phi that's said to represent perfect beauty in nature. Relocating phi indoors, therefore, becomes "a beautiful study of how to build a home that embraces setting and flows in a very natural way."

2022

Year Cailey and the team launched The Lobby by Heaps Estrin, a luxury lifestyle boutique and gallery space. So far, The Lobby has hosted 16 local Canadian artists, including one returning Artist in Residence.

69 STOREYS
The highest unit ever sold: a luxury condo at 1 Bloor St. E.

2,000
Estimated number of open houses hosted so far. If you're doing the math, that's two days per weekend x ~40 weekends per year x 25 years. (In fact, it might be even more.)





POLITICAL POWER
SHIFTS, HEALTH-CARE
SECTOR UNREST,
AND ENDURING
POLARIZATION IS
CAUSING SOME
AMERICANS TO
JOURNEY NORTH
OF THE BORDER
IN SEARCH OF
STABILITY...AND
SOME CANADIANS IN
SEARCH OF CHANGE.

WORDS BY
ALEX CYR

In the wake of the recent U.S. election, a familiar trend emerged: Americans taking to Google in droves, typing phrases like “how to legally move to Canada” and “moving to Canada from the U.S.” The spike in interest came primarily from reliably blue states like Oregon, Washington, New Hampshire and Vermont, reflecting a deepening divide in the American political psyche. Yet curiously, this modern-day migration isn’t one-directional. While some are heading north in search of political stability, affordable health care or a fresh start, others are heading south to the United States, drawn by its economic opportunities and cultural allure.

Since 2016, almost 100,000 Americans have made Canada their home, a steady flow that underscores the growing complexity of what it means to seek — and find — a place to belong. But what drives these decisions? And how easy is it really to land on your feet once you’ve crossed the border? We spoke with people who moved in both directions to better understand what led them to venture out in search of a new life.

PUTTING CARE BACK INTO HEALTH CARE

In 2022, Michael Antil, a doctor in rural North Carolina, started to question the true nature of his work. He spent more time fighting with insurance companies than treating patients — negotiating policies so people could afford an X-ray or a CAT scan. “I was more of a financial planner than a physician,” he says. Over time, the work eroded his sense of purpose.

“The more I thought about whether we were really providing equal care to the community, the less happy I was. I wanted to practise medicine again, not argue about who could afford it.”

Michael’s wife, Lynn, a health educator at a not-for-profit health-care network for over a decade, shared his frustration. Living in a small, conservative town added to their discontent. “The politics didn’t make room for us,” Michael says. “We tried to find compassion in people, but it was hard. I was responsible for the health of people who screamed obscenities at me for asking them to get the [COVID-19] vaccine.”

In the fall of 2022, the Antils and their children were ready for a move. They considered Denver, where they could ski, and Atlanta, where he and Lynn had gone to grad school, but Toronto’s diversity, different culture and proximity to relatives in Buffalo tipped the scales. A family visit to Toronto solidified their decision: they liked that it was a cultural mosaic.

“We wanted to expose our kids to more of the world outside of our small-town bubble,” Michael says. “Toronto was perfect, and I also had a sneaking suspicion it would be less complex and more fulfilling to work in Canada.”

So, by the summer of 2023, the Antils obtained work visas and made the move. Lynn began teaching adult ESL classes and finding herself free from the culture wars she had grown weary of in the U.S. “There’s no banning books from schools here, no fighting over what professional teachers can teach,” she says. “It’s been refreshing to live in a place that values openness and diversity.”

For Michael, the transition was transformative. His first few days on the job confirmed what he’d hoped for. One evening, he came home thrilled after treating an Uber driver who, in North Carolina, might never have been able to afford care.

“It was important for us to be in a place where health care is a right, not a privilege. Here, there are no barriers to care based on personal wealth. It’s deeply gratifying.”

“THERE’S NO BANNING BOOKS FROM SCHOOLS HERE, NO FIGHTING OVER WHAT WE CAN TEACH. IT’S BEEN SUCH A RELIEF TO LIVE IN A PLACE THAT VALUES OPENNESS AND DIVERSITY.”

A LIFE-SAVING MOVE

Health care is also what brought Patti Glasz back to Canada, but her journey wasn’t just about geography; it was about survival. A Toronto native, Glasz, her husband and two children moved to Madison, Wisconsin, in 1993 for her husband’s job; then to England in 1998; and back to the U.S. in 2007. But in 2017, after years of wrestling with a health-care system that left her financially and emotionally drained, she made the decision to return to Canada.

Her breaking point came in 2016 when her son was diagnosed with a chronic health condition requiring \$17,000 monthly treatments. Despite having health-care coverage through a corporate job with clothing brand Lands’ End, the bills quickly added up. “The first \$6,000 came out of my pocket every year,” Glasz says. “After that, I’d get a discount.” A year after her son became sick, she was let go from her job and lost her health insurance. Then, the stress mounted.

Without insurance, even a kidney stone became a terrifying financial

prospect — the ultrasound alone was quoted at tens of thousands of dollars. “I thought I might lose my house if I went to the hospital. I decided I wouldn’t go unless I spiked a high fever. Luckily, it passed.”

The physical, financial and emotional cost of staying in the U.S. was too high. Glasz, who is divorced, decided to move back to Canada with her son. “I gave up my green card at the U.S. embassy. It costs

[nearly \$1,000] a year to hold it in Canada and I couldn’t justify paying that.”

Back at home, she found a new sense of purpose. She works as a nanny for families of Toronto Maple Leafs players — a connection that started through a friend. It’s a job she says she could never have done in the States.

“I used to endure a four-hour commute each day to a job that I hated because I

had no other choice,” she says. “In Canada, I don’t need a job with full health benefits. I can afford to do something I genuinely enjoy.”

THE ECONOMY OF MOVING

The move wasn’t without its challenges. “Relocating my life was expensive,” Glasz says. Downsizing helped, but it still cost her \$20,000 to rent a truck and move her furniture and heirlooms across the border.

HOW MUCH DOES IT REALLY COST TO MOVE?

Thinking of making the move north or south? Here are some of the unforeseen costs that you could face if you choose to settle down somewhere new, according to our sources’ personal experiences.

Rebuilding in Canada wasn't seamless either. Glasz (much like the Antils) had no credit history here, which made simple things, like getting a driver's license or a phone plan, feel impossible.

"It was like landing on Mars. My perfect driving record in Wisconsin didn't matter to insurance companies here."

A friend's introduction to a bank manager finally helped her get a foothold in Canada again. Still, the financial repercussions linger. Her American investment account remains a puzzle. "If I withdraw funds now, I'll be taxed heavily. I can't add money or redistribute it, either. The money is stuck and I have to decide when to take the hit."

THE PULL OF OPPORTUNITY

Alia Bedi, a brand marketing consultant from Toronto, moved to the U.S. for work in 2013, first to Cincinnati and then to Dallas. She echoes Glasz's sentiments that moving countries felt like landing on a new planet. Because the U.S. disregards credit histories from Canada, she struggled to do basic things like getting a credit card, a driver's license and even an apartment. Her lack of credit forced her to pay an astronomical amount for cable alone.

Navigating the tax systems of two countries added another layer of complexity. To officially abandon her Canadian residency, Bedi had to stop contributing to her RRSP and ensure her primary residence was in the U.S. "If you maintain ties to both



countries, you risk being hit with taxes in both places," she explains.

But once settled in Dallas, the financial benefits started to make sense. "There's no state income tax in Texas, so I don't get hit with the [same taxes that] Californians — or most Canadians — pay." She says the property taxes in Texas are high, but the housing market is far more affordable: Dallas, Houston and Austin, for example, are all much cheaper places to own a home than Toronto.

Bedi's move was about more than just taxes, though: she migrated to the U.S. on a work visa and only became a citizen last year, but America has catapulted her career. "The opportunities in the U.S. for consumer brand marketing are exponentially higher. With ten times the population, there are far more consumer brands. The pay is better, too."

Since moving, Bedi has worked with high-profile brands, including creating, launching and scaling Steve Harvey's supplement line, L'Egate You. "I collaborated with him on everything: figuring out the product, the marketing, commercials and digital ads," she says. Today, she consults for early-stage founders and startups, leveraging her expertise to help others build successful brands.

Despite her professional success and her newly minted American citizenship, Bedi hasn't ruled out a return to Canada. While she finds it difficult to find comparable career opportunities here, her family and her partner are in Toronto. She is already considering retiring back home.

"Both countries have their long lists of strengths and weaknesses," she says. "You just need to find out which one aligns best with the life you want to lead." ❧

PATTI GLASZ
FROM WISCONSIN TO TORONTO

CAR IMPORT FEE	\$1,000
MOVING COST	\$20,000
<hr/>	
TOTAL	\$21,000

THE ANTIL FAMILY
FROM NORTH CAROLINA TO TORONTO

LAND TRANSFER TAX	\$135,000
CAR IMPORT	\$300
MEDICAL LICENSE TRANSFER	\$2,400
LEGAL FEES TO OBTAIN WORK VISAS (for a family of four)	\$1,020
MOVING COST	\$23,000
<hr/>	
TOTAL	\$161,720

ALIA BEDI
FROM TORONTO TO CINCINNATI

CAR IMPORT FEE	\$2,000
MOVING COST	\$40,000
LEGAL FEES TO OBTAIN WORK VISA	\$10,000
<hr/>	
TOTAL	\$52,000

For the Love of Art

COLLECTING ART IS ABOUT MORE THAN MAKING A WISE INVESTMENT. IT'S ABOUT THE EMOTIONS IT EVOKES IN THE VIEWER AND THE SENTIMENT IT CARRIES. MEET FOUR COLLECTORS WHO DO IT FOR LOVE, NOT MONEY.

WORDS BY
SUZANNE WINTROB



IAIN BAXTERS

Sidewalk Café 12:35 pm, Berkeley, California and Sidewalk Café 12:36 pm, Berkeley, California, 1979, photography

As far as investments go, art can be a lucrative one. With the right research and a long-term mindset, its ROI is often practically iron-clad. But to culture lovers and aesthetes, there's something else that art offers that's even more valuable: emotional connection. Ask an art lover why they gravitated to a particular piece and they'll never talk about honoured expenditure — it's all about the thoughts and feelings. Whether it's getting lost in a sentimental landscape or being drawn in by joyful brushwork, the bottom line is surrounding themselves with pieces that give them pleasure.

"I'm not studied in art; I just know what I like and what I don't like," says Cailey Heaps, president and CEO of Heaps Estrin. "Does it resonate with me? Will it provide me that amount of happiness when I see it? My approach to collecting is not as a portfolio, per se. It's just built on things that I love."

Here, Heaps and several other passionate art collectors open up about their favourite Canadian artists and the pieces that make them swoon.

A SPECIAL TIME AND PLACE

Whether she's relaxing on the sofa or lounging by the outdoor swimming pool, Jennifer Houghton, project manager and gallery director at Langdon Hall Country House Hotel and Spa, often finds her gaze wandering to her family room wall depicting a mysterious scene from California's hippie era.

"The old Porsches give you this idea of luxury," she says of the backlit diptych by Canadian conceptual photographer IAIN BAXTER&. "But at the same time, you've got these two individuals and you can't help but think, 'Did they end up getting together? Were they friends? Were they just passing each other? Do they go on to be lovers?' It's just a moment in time. I like what it conjures in my own head. It makes me think."

The piece had been acquired through a Toronto art gallery by Houghton's husband and Langdon Hall operating manager and part-owner, Braden Bennet, before they met. When the couple started dating, Houghton found herself falling in love with both her future husband and his art. The piece holds such a special place in their relationship that when they built their home in Cambridge, Ont., a few years ago, they had two Duratrans light boxes wired into the wall specifically to showcase it.

"You're almost meant to feel like you're the person sitting at that cafe," Houghton says. "On the left is this moment in time, with the observer just sitting there. Then on the right, there's this disturbance. The colours are quite muted and you can tell it's a bit dated, but it's still so relevant."

THE ARTIST'S ARTIST

Some artists opt to surround themselves with their own work, revelling in and reflecting on their own expression and perspective. But artist Kara McIntosh takes the opposite approach because she says it gets her thinking out of the box.

"I find it very inspiring to have other people's work around me," says the painter and textile artist, who lives near Collingwood, Ont. "I only have two pieces of my own hanging in my home. It's such a treat to be able to have other people's work in my home or studio so I can really examine and enjoy and appreciate it — not only for the end product but for glimpses into their process."

That's why Ann MacIntosh Duff's watercolours made an impression. Known for depicting the landscapes and slices of life from her nearby cottage on Georgian Bay — scenes that McIntosh knew well and

adored — Duff excelled in the wet-on-wet technique (that's what it's called when you apply pigment on soaked paper) that McIntosh was trying to master.

Sadly, Duff died in 2022 at age 97, before the two artists had a chance to meet, but her *Northern Sunset*, a tranquil cottage country landscape that hangs in the hallway near McIntosh's bedroom, continues to inspire and drive the latter to reflect.

"She really portrays a sense of the energy of the place," says McIntosh. "You can feel the movement of the air and the light and the trees. It's very atmospheric. It's super special and I feel very connected to it."

The piece also serves as a reminder of the disparate perspectives and experiences of the artists who have shaped Canada's rich art history.

"So much of Canadian landscape tradition is very masculine," she says, referring to the Group of Seven, who were known for capturing the rugged beauty of the Canadian wilderness. "It's very 'nature and landscape as hero'; a little more conquering [and] being a pioneer. I find Ann's approach to landscape very feminine and tender and gentle. It's quite a contrast, which I appreciate."

THE JOY OF LUCK

Luck was on Sabrina Montemarano's side when a friend spotted a spectacular abstract painting by Polish-born Canadian artist Gershon Iskowitz behind a desk at



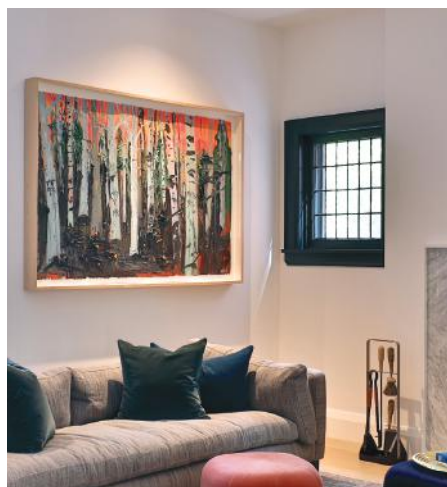
▲ ANN MACINTOSH DUFF

Northern Sunset, 1998, watercolour on paper

GERSHON ISKOWITZ

Summer 1977 #4, 1977, oil on canvas





▲
KIM DORLAND
Top and right: *Nature painting #9*, 2016, oil and acrylic on canvas
Bottom: *Woods*, 2013, oil on paper

Vancouver's Granville Fine Art Gallery. She had always wanted a piece of the painter's work, so she snapped it up and gave it prominence in her Toronto home.

Montemarano, who has studied art history extensively, is drawn to abstract expressionism for the emotion it conveys, explaining that "[it's] a response to whatever is going on at that time in the artist's life."

In Gershon's case, his work speaks volumes. While imprisoned in Auschwitz and Buchenwald during World War II, he scrounged for scraps of paper to chronicle the horrors he was experiencing. But upon immigrating to Canada in 1948, his work took on more joyful themes like landscapes, and eventually evolved into colourful abstracts like *Summer 1977 #4*.

"It's so beautiful," says Montemarano, who is currently helping a downtown Toronto condominium building select new art for its common rooms. "His balance and use of colour is very captivating. He has these fluctuating colourful shapes that appear to float on the surface, yet other shapes draw you into the depths of the canvas. I love the expressive brush work that he used. It just makes me very happy."

FOREST THROUGH THE BIRCH TREES

Heaps finds calmness in birch trees, bold colours and nature, so it's no surprise that her art collection reflects those very things.



She calls herself a "birch-tree girl, through and through," owing to her propensity for the starkly elegant plant, so it was little surprise that Kim Dorland's *Woods* caught her eye immediately. She met the prominent Canadian artist when their children attended the same school, and the first time she visited his studio, the oil-on-paper painting, rife with birch trees, spoke to her and she had to have it.

"It's a beautiful piece with great depth. There's something about it that I just find very peaceful. I like everything about it: the colour, the composition, the subject matter. It was really the beginning of my love of art."

As Heaps's knowledge grew, so did her appreciation for Dorland's work. Before she knew it, she was constructing the dining room of her then new home around a newly acquired large oil-on-canvas triptych called *Nature painting #9* that oozed Canadiana.

"Every time I see it I see something new, like the colourful bunnies in the foreground, the raccoons in that electric orange, a little snake on one of the birch trees, a mom and baby deer. It's as if there are no humans there watching the animals interact."

With Heaps's collection continually expanding, the cherished painting has been moved to her family room and continues to be a conversation starter.

"Most of the time people don't have words," she says. "They walk in and go, 'Wow!' or 'That's exquisite!' There's a lot to digest when you look at it. It's one of those pieces that just takes your breath away." ❧

Big Little Spaces

FOUR INTERIOR DESIGNERS SHARE CREATIVE INSIGHTS FOR MAKING THE MOST OUT OF TIGHT SPOTS.

WORDS BY
IRIS BENAROIA
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
LAUREN MILLER

Foyer design by Ashley Montgomery Design.

Every home, regardless of size, has at least one of those spots that seems too small to do anything with. Maybe you've considered putting in a table habillée with a vase of flowers and calling it a day. But there are big opportunities in small places — just ask anyone who's joined the tiny house movement. And while it's unlikely that downsizing to that point will have broad appeal, there's a lesson to be learned in looking

to those who live in more constrained square footage, which is that small spaces can be the ideal spot for big design ideas.

"Small spaces are often underutilized, particularly in Canada and the U.S.," says Nicci Harrison, co-principal designer at Studio Cajole, who suggests casting your eyes overseas for inspiration. "In contrast, European design tends to make the most of compact spaces by incorporating multiple functions in a smart, efficient way. A mudroom

that is also an office or a hallway that functions as a closet or library."

By treating every room, nook and cranny in your home with purpose, you'll reap not only the rewards of maximizing your space, but also of realizing your biggest creative ambitions. Because if there's one rule to follow, it's that the smaller the space, the bigger the impact.

Before embarking on your next diminutive do-over, follow these designer-approved tips and take your little space to big heights.



Custom millwork and calming grey tones are seamless and stylish in this walk-in closet located outside of the principal bedroom.

CLOSET CAPER

Hallways are often functional zones that link rooms — at their most decorative, they're places to hang photos. But sometimes, with the right design strategy, they can transform into walk-in closets. This shipshape his-and-hers area designed by Studio Cajole is sandwiched on both sides of a short hallway leading to the homeowners' third-floor principal bedroom. Roomy drawers as well as a vertical wardrobe offer storage galore, while bronze T-pulls from CB2 add oomph.

In an oddly shaped space, opt for custom cabinetry, say Harrison and her partner Meagan Prôt, who enlisted One Plus Kitchens to do the millwork for this project. "That's essential to maximize every nook and cranny," says Harrison. Standard-size cabinets from big-box stores don't offer such curation, which is a problem when it comes to older homes with their quirky architectural features (read: slanted ceilings). "Going bespoke gave us the flexibility to utilize the entire space," she says.

As far as the palette goes, in an open-plan closet monochromatic is best. "We painted the MDF cabinetry Classic Grey by Benjamin Moore, our tried-and-true white. We used the same colour on the walls, so the area feels seamless and not imposing or dark," says Prôt. "It helps make it feel larger. Choosing flat cabinetry over Shaker style is another way to ensure the closet is not visually busy."



Coordinating prints on the sconce shades and the walls, along with brass and a ridged sink add up to "a whole lot of pretty," says designer Sam Sacks.

HALF-BATH BEAUTY

Think of it this way: the tighter the space, the greater the leeway. You might have reconsidered an outrageous paint colour or bold wallpaper in your dining room, but as principal designer Samantha Sacks of Sam Sacks Design says, in a small space like a powder room, "there are limited square feet in which to mess things up. Have fun here."

Case in point: this miniscule meets maximalist half-bath located in an impressive century-old house. "The bones of the home are decidedly masculine — meaning the architecture is strong with lots of wood and beefy mouldings. My goal was to inject a dose of pretty," she says. "This was done in soft pastel colours, and a pattern that draws a connection to the natural world outside."

For stellar coordination, Sacks matched the wallpaper and fabric sconces, installed brass fixtures and a scalloped Kast Concrete Basins sink. "It's contrasted by a deeply industrial faucet and exposed pipe underneath the sink that all look very utilitarian. It's flouncy and pared back all in one," she says.



◀ A rousing combination of materials and colours gives personality to this powder room by interior designer Ashley Montgomery.

PUNCHY POWDER ROOM

If there's one place where you should be a drama queen, it's in the powder room. It's small and not on show all the time, so why not? And the reward is huge. When the door is closed, it transforms into a capsule of thrilling gorgeousness, as seen in this scintillating beauty by Ashley Montgomery, principal designer and owner of Ashley Montgomery Design.

Located in a new-build, Montgomery wanted to inject old-world finishes and colour into the home. "We used an antique desk that we turned into a vanity, which adds character to the space," she says, noting the sconces and mirror are vintage. (Pro tip: hit up secondhand shops for scores you won't find anywhere else.) Montgomery also points out the eye-catching shape and colour of the countertop: "The scalloped backsplash is unexpected in a vibrant blue marble."

Montgomery also used wallpaper, which is a decorator's best friend when it comes to elevating a small space — and don't be shy about it. "The scale of the House of Hackney wallpaper in this room is very impactful. Sometimes we get stuck on this idea that small prints should go in a smaller room, but in this space the scale of the birds is powerful."

Another Montgomery-ism: step away from the white paint. "I like to go a little dark and moody — powder rooms are great spaces to use bold colours." Note the brown tones in the paper, the yellow ceiling moulding and the blue door and trim.

Getting creative with every square foot can yield functional and beautiful results, like this cozy kitchen nook (by Ashley Montgomery Design) and this striking spot (by Sam Sacks Design) perfect for slipping on boots or just taking a load off.



Open and closed storage, and vibrant art make this mudroom by Christelle Tomkins of Sabrina Albanese Design visually appealing.




MAGIC MUDROOM

It may be the size of a Parisian elevator, but this mudroom off the garage is big on sass. Colourful ceramic floors, minty green cabinetry, baskets and dynamic artwork energize the small space. “It was inspired by social clubs in London, like the rest of the townhouse,” says designer Christelle Tomkins of Sabrina Albanese Interiors.

Tomkins suggests opting for a mix of storage in a mudroom — baskets, hooks and closed cabinetry — to stow those heaps of outdoor gear. Concealed storage keeps a small space uncluttered, and it’s good to have easy to access baskets that tidily tuck away.

And pay attention to the floors. A teeny mudroom is an ideal spot to make a big statement by experimenting with fun flooring,

like this mosaic arrangement in shades of green, grey and ochre. Since it’s a high-traffic area, Tomkins says to ensure the material you choose can withstand moisture, like ceramic, and it’s even better if it’s textured, “to avoid slippage,” which is why she eschews anything high-gloss, including marble. “Besides, salt would damage the stone or age it prematurely,” she says. ■



The Home as Canvas

HOW AN ARTIST'S
VISION LED TO
THE PERFECT SALE
IN TORONTO'S
WEST END.

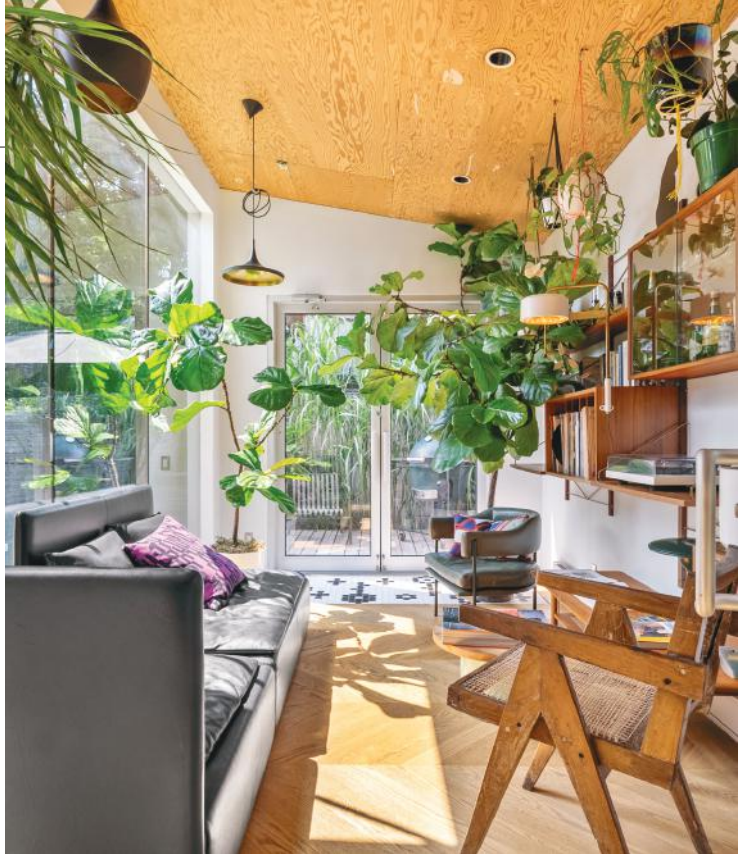
WORDS BY
JANE MCIVER

More than just a house, 384 Indian Grove was a muse, a studio, and both a backdrop and a vessel for breathtaking art and design. For over 16 years, this special West End home belonged to Thrush Holmes, one of Canada's most celebrated contemporary artists. In addition to his talent for vibrant art, Holmes is also a highly skilled carpenter and the house benefitted from his multi-hyphenate talents — from customizing light fixtures to general handiwork — as he poured his creative energy into every detail, making it a livable and life-sized extension of his creative vision.

"I believe a home, like an artist, is always in the state of becoming

something," Holmes says. That philosophy guided his meticulous and perpetual renovation of the house, where every decision was deliberate — from the operable skylight that brought light to a once-dark hallway to the vaulted ceiling in the bedroom that created a sense of freedom and openness.

The home wasn't just a place to live; it was a canvas. Iconic art adorned the walls, while a custom-designed fire pit and handmade sauna elevated the backyard into a private oasis and meditative sanctuary. Every fixture was curated with the utmost care and often customized to make it just right. Even practical features, such as a marble vanity repurposed by Holmes himself, spoke to the house's unique charm.



A PERSONALIZED APPROACH TO SELLING

When it came time for the artist to move on to his next creative endeavour, it was clear that a conventional strategy wouldn't do justice to this one-of-a-kind property. Enter Cailey Heaps and Stephanie Newlands, who brought their expertise, creativity and deep respect for the home — and its owner — to the forefront.

Recognizing the artistic soul of 384 Indian Grove, the duo enlisted the help of the award-winning Heaps Estrin marketing team to craft a campaign that went beyond square footage and finishes. With Holmes's generous participation, the team leaned into the story of the home, including its artistic



legacy and the passion that shaped it. Tailored storytelling and a thoughtful presentation allowed potential buyers to see the property not just as a house, but as a work of art in its own right.

"Every inch of this home reflected the care, precision and creativity of its owner," Cailey says. "We wanted to make sure the marketing celebrated that."

The campaign included a stunning video tour narrated by Holmes

himself, which gave viewers an intimate glimpse into the spaces he'd so lovingly transformed. A gallery-themed open house brought people out in droves — some perhaps just to appreciate the art, though all became smitten with the house in the process. Even the feature sheet copy (notoriously standard fare in the real estate industry) was worded in such a way that the intrinsic connection between the artist and his masterpiece was evident throughout.

"I BELIEVE A HOME, LIKE AN ARTIST, IS ALWAYS IN THE STATE OF BECOMING SOMETHING."

This personal touch resonated deeply with buyers, setting the stage for a competitive sale.

A RESULT THAT EXCEEDED EXPECTATIONS

In just six days, 384 Indian Grove sold for 100 per cent of the asking price — an exceptional feat that outperformed neighbourhood benchmarks and a particularly exceptional achievement in a somewhat challenging market. Ultimately, multiple offers came in,

validating the tailored strategy and the team's commitment to highlighting the property's unique character.

"It was a privilege to work with Thrush and to represent a home that truly embodied his artistry," says Stephanie. "It was important to us that this wasn't just about finding a buyer — it was about finding the right buyer."

A HOUSE THAT LIVES ON THROUGH ITS LEGACY

For Holmes, parting with the home was bittersweet, but he felt confident that the right new owner would carry on its legacy. The success of the sale wasn't just about the price; it was about connecting the house's story with the next chapter in its journey.

Cailey sums it up perfectly: "At Heaps Estrin, we believe every home has a story to tell. This one

was an extraordinary story, and we were honoured to help write its next chapter — or ready it for the next brush stroke, as it were."

The story of 384 Indian Grove is a testament to the power of art, design and storytelling. It's a reminder that a home is more than bricks and mortar — it's a reflection of the lives lived within its walls. And that's something that the team at Heaps Estrin never takes for granted. 卐



Experience the artistry for yourself. Scan the QR code to take a virtual tour and hear directly from Thrush Holmes as he shares the inspiration behind this extraordinary home.



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Mark Cohon at the 102nd Grey Cup Championship Game.

IN CONVERSATION WITH... MARK COHON

INTERVIEW BY
MARILISA RACCO

WHEN MARK COHON helms a sports league, good things happen. Just ask his pals at the CFL, where he served as commissioner for eight years. Now, the newly minted chair of Canada's Northern Super League is ready to kick women's soccer into high gear.

You recently joined Northern Super League as chair of its board of directors. Why did now feel like the right time to move into the world of women's sports?
I think this is an important moment in time for women's sports. I started at Major League Baseball and then moved to the NBA. That was in the 1990s and it's when the WNBA was just starting. When I think

of the Caitlin Clark effect, and the Christine Sinclair effect, and of course Serena Williams, it's clear that people really enjoy watching women's sports and now is the right time to build that platform in Canada.

What do you hope to accomplish for the wider scope of women's sports, outside of soccer?

Soccer is the most-played team sport in this country — people think it's hockey, but it's actually soccer. And in terms of women's sports, two-thirds of Canadians watch, participate or attend women's sporting events. From that perspective, you can see that the interest is very broad. There's an ecosystem that's growing in this city that includes

the Toronto Tempo and Toronto Sceptres, and Northern Super League is a part of that ecosystem. We're excited about that.

I look at sports as building community, and I look at sports like I do entertainment: how does it help our city? That's the lens that I use to look at building Northern Super League. It's to lift up young girls and women, and give them the opportunity to play in front of their families and friends, without having to leave Canada. It's to build our city and country.

You've credited your wife and daughter's influence with your decision to join Northern Super League. What did they say to sway you?

I have a daughter, Parker; she's our only child, and is amazing. She was a diver and a swimmer, and just a great athlete. This is my fourth professional sports league that I'm a part of. After I left the CFL, I was approached by a lot of leagues, but when Northern Super League came to me, I sat down with my wife and daughter and they just said, "Do it." They felt I could have an impact based on my experience, contacts and network. It was like being in a Nike campaign — they said, "Just do it." So I did.

Let's get local. Do you have any special sports memories from your childhood growing up in Toronto?

There are so many.

I moved here when I was two-and-a-half years old, and my memories can stretch from going to my first Jays game with my family, when they played at the Ex, to being at the 100th Grey Cup and when the Raptors won the NBA Finals. So many memories resonate with me. But one highlight was when I first started my career in sports and I was in the MLB. I was working in the Commissioner's Office and it was while the Jays were winning the World Series. Working there meant I wasn't allowed to root for a team, but in my heart I was screaming for the Jays. It was an exciting time for me.

What's your favourite sport to play and where do you do it?

It ebbs and flows. When I was younger, it was definitely football — I was recruited to play in university. But now as I get older, it's tennis. I play at York Racquets Club and they also have a basketball court, so sometimes I like to shoot hoops by myself and announce my play-by-play like a kid. 🏀



For more of this conversation and others like it, tune into Heaps Estrin's podcast **"BEYOND THE BLUEPRINTS WITH CAILEY HEAPS."**



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JEN ARRON WEAVES MAGIC

THE TORONTO-BASED TEXTILE ARTIST IS SHOWING AT **THE LOBBY** BY HEAPS ESTRIN FOR THE SECOND TIME IN TWO YEARS, BRINGING HER FIBRE-BASED WORK TO ADMIRERS OF TACTILE ART.

WORDS BY
ALICIA COX THOMSON

INTEREST IN TEXTILE

ART SURGED during the pandemic for reasons that now seem pretty obvious: the texture and softness evoke warmth, coziness and human touch, something we craved in a time of isolation and social distancing. And possibly no one can attest to this interest more than Toronto textile artist Jen Arron, whose commissions for her work “took off” during the early 2020s.

“Textiles are obviously having a moment, and I think it’s because people want to experience more human-made, handmade artwork in their homes,” she says.

Arron’s work varies in style, size, shape and colour, and she uses a mix of fibres and materials to create art by commission, for sale and to show. Repurposed Turkish cotton, Italian linen, Japanese paper raffia and hand-dyed merino wool all figure into intricate, handwoven pieces perfect for those with a penchant for the eclectic. Her pieces can take a range of forms, from curtain-like tapestries to six-foot-long thick braids of mixed materials that make a striking statement on a bare wall.

“I love being inspired by the materials and using them as a starting point for the direction I go with a piece.”

When designing custom work, Arron creates what she calls a “woven portrait.” Some are raw edged and organic-feeling, and change over time as she works on them, while others are more polished. A piece can



Jen Arron



little bit and what was potentially possible, you could say I had weaver fever,” she laughs. Although she’s taken several classes since that initial workshop, she’s mostly self-taught, learning through practice and curiosity.

This month marks Arron’s return to The

Lobby by Heaps Estrin, where she’s the first artist to be invited back for a second show. Her first, in 2023, was titled “Selected Works & Studies” and opened her up to new patrons and a new base of admirers.

“It was like a debut for me to show my work to a new audience and introduce people to the possibilities of textile work as art.” Her latest exhibit features a curated collection of mostly unseen pieces.

“Putting together a new show with a more focused point of view seems like a beautiful evolution for me,” she says. “I really love The Lobby’s vision and concept for what a space can represent in a neighbourhood.”

take anywhere from weeks to even years to complete, but the one common thread that runs through them all is that they are made to be touched.

“It’s therapeutic to do because I’m using my hands and really connecting with these raw and reused materials, but it’s [also] therapeutic to look at, because you can sort of look through all the stitches and see all of the work in front of you.”

A former full-time photographer, Arron pivoted to weaving during a time of low satisfaction with photography. “I took Intro to Weaving at The Workroom in Parkdale on the suggestion of a friend. Within a couple of hours, once I actually understood the medium a

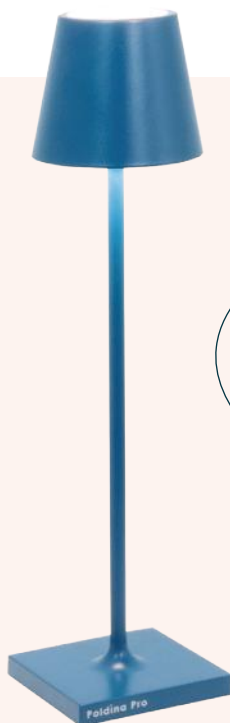
Jen Arron will show at **THE LOBBY BY HEAPS ESTRIN** from March 18 through May 7.

MAKE IT SPRING

AS WINTER LIFTS ITS HEAVY CURTAIN OF DARKNESS AND COLD,

you wouldn't be faulted for rushing to pull the lightness of spring into your home. And while you're probably not going to undergo a complete overhaul of your interior decor, one place where it's easy to embrace the season is your tabletop.

The Lobby by Heaps Estrin, the real estate firm's lifestyle boutique in Rosedale, is a go-to resource for creating a spring tablescape that's equal parts chic and fun. Whether you're looking for quiet luxury linens, maximalist accessories or low-key lighting, this is where your spring table will, er, spring to life. ☘



GUIDING LIGHT
Zafferano Poldina Pro Micro cordless lamp
These modernist lamps come in a variety of shades, from citrus hues to sweet pastels allowing you to shine a light on your spring style. \$165



ROSE-TINTED GLASSES
R+D Luisa glasses
Is there any colour that gives spring more than pink? These rose-hued tumblers are sure to add a sweet touch to your place setting. \$165

KNIVES OUT
Berlingot box of 12 steak knives
Make your next barbecue as delightful as it is delicious with these colourful steak knives. What will they compliment first: the filet or the flatware? \$515



LUXURY LINENS
Scarlette Ateliers cotton tablecloth and napkins
Dress your table in these sweet and airy linens, and transport you and your guests to a stylishly tranquil garden setting — all from the comfort of your home. \$245 (tablecloth) and \$48 (set of four napkins).



THE WILD SIDE
Nicolette Mayer acrylic tray
Pass around your cocktails and prove you're the ultimate dinner-party animal with this wildly striking tray. \$450



SPICE IT UP
Steelwood salt cellar
Elevate the art of salting with these stylish salt cellars. Whether you're packing Himalayan pink or fleur de sel, this is next-level seasoning. \$120

Visit THELOBBYBYHEAPSESTRIN.COM for the full breadth of their seasonal wares.

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I'D LOVE TO FINALLY PARE DOWN AND ORGANIZE MY CLOSET. WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS?

Purging unwanted or unneeded items is freeing, but it can also be overwhelming. Leslie Cowan, an interior design and home organization professional and principal of Curated Transitions, tells clients to follow the three M's: minimize, maximize and maintain.

"If you're DIYing any space, start by getting three empty boxes and labeling them 'donate,' 'garbage,' and 'not sure,'" — and come back to the last one in a few days to re-evaluate. "For a simple closet project, take everything out and start organizing your clothes," either by colour or by type.

But most importantly, she says to invest in good hangers because the uniformity they create immediately organizes your clothing visually and gains you more space.

You can also enlist the help of someone like Cowan, who can help with everything from decluttering and restyling your home to hauling unwanted clothes, and even furniture, to a donation centre. "It's a game-changer for your peace of mind," she says.

For a list of charities and the donations they'll accept, reach out to The Lobby by Heaps Estrin.



I'M PLANNING TO RENOVATE. WHAT SUSTAINABLE UPGRADES MAKE THE MOST IMPACT?

Making changes to your home to make it more green is a great way to make a sustainable impact, but Trevor Wallace, owner and principal architect of Reflect Architecture, says the best thing you can do happens before you do anything at all.

"The biggest asterisk on sustainability is building less and consuming less." For example, don't rip out solid wood floors that look old just to replace them with engineered floors. Sand down what's there and refinish it.

Otherwise, consider switching your furnace and air conditioner to a heat pump system, which allows you to run your home more efficiently and, potentially, on renewable energy. And upgrade your electrical panel to a smart panel, so that you can prioritize what you're powering and when.

"This allows you to, say, plug in your car, but you can set the panel not to service that breaker until after peak hours."

When undergoing a major overhaul of your home, Wallace says to ensure proper insulation of your building envelope — i.e., windows, doors and walls — to help keep your home warm in winter and cool in summer. Of course, solar panels are a good source for alternative energy, but the insulation value and air tightness of your home are very important when addressing energy consumption.



ARE GALLERY WALLS STILL IN STYLE? HOW DO I CREATE ONE THAT LOOKS GREAT?

Always, says Lindsay Mens, partner at TOM Design Collective.

"I put one in every home, if I can. I always say: do what makes you happy and choose art that is meaningful to you."

It's always smart to start your gallery wall by arranging your art on the floor first and moving each frame around until you have a composition that you like. Then, once you're ready to hang, be consistent about spacing: measure two to three inches between each piece.

"If you're doing an eclectic arrangement of vintage prints and paintings, go ahead and mix your frames using different materials and colours, but try to follow the same design rule as when you're decorating a room — have two to three elements that are the same, like two gold frames, two or three black frames, and two white. It creates balance." ■

Want to access our Little Black Book? Visit The Lobby at 1120 Yonge St., or [THELOBBYBYHEAPSESTRIN.COM/PAGES/LITTLE-BLACK-BOOK](https://thelobbybyheapsestrin.com/pages/little-black-book) to ask a question. We're always happy to help.

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