

SUMMER 2009

# SPACES

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Playful  
design

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Green Ideas

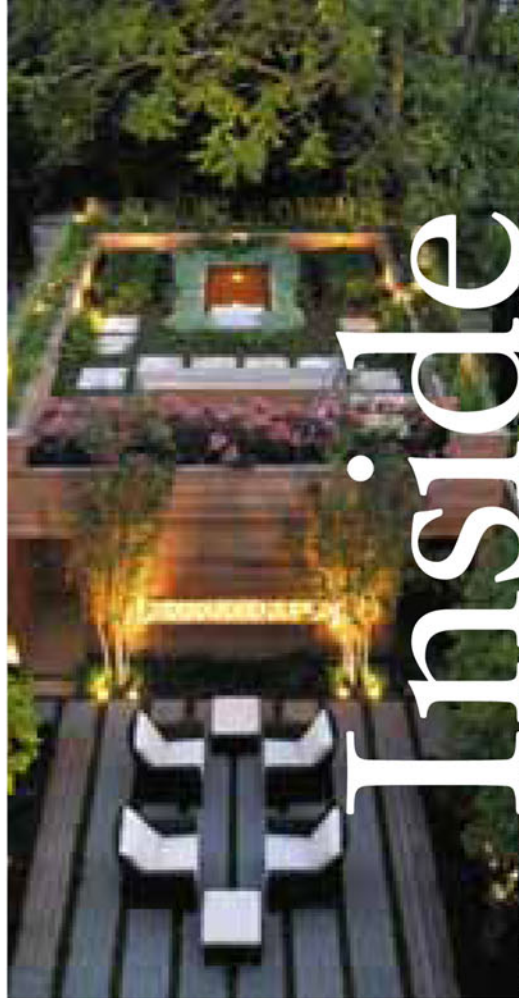
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Inside  
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PM# 40064978



# Inside Outside

By Penny Tomlin

## We Canadians pride ourselves

on being a hardy bunch. We are a country of winter. This is the season that defines us. And, while we love our winter sports and brag about surviving this harsh climate, there is no denying that as often as not we long for warm summer days. If you've ever had a wistful feeling as you watched a late summer sunset, you will understand why some of us will do everything in our power to extend this glorious season as long as possible. Some people dare to do the impossible by donning shorts at the first sign of melting snow and refusing to wear anything but until the first sign of falling snow. Others are leading a more refined trend of simply moving the indoors outdoors from early spring to late fall.

Clinton Hummel of Paisley Park Inc. in North Bay had just such a client, a family with a strong sensitivity to nature and a desire to experience a part of it in their living environment. Hummel's design solution is both unique and inspiring — a “blended unity” of the indoors and outdoors. The family wanted “a private oasis” to enjoy. Hummel worked with this client in 2002 to create a living space, and the client wanted the same ambiance extended to the outside of the home. Hummel obliged and the result is an

outdoor space that blends seamlessly with both the natural landscape and the indoor space.

Although the home is situated in an urban environment, on the edge of a golf course, it is deceptively “country” in its appeal. The site contains a basketball court, children's play structure, heated pool and hot tub — all pretty standard recreational features. Textured gardens, a granite pathway, and multi-level concrete bridges create a beautiful tranquility garden. Again, there is nothing particularly unusual about these features. What really makes one's head turn is the custom-designed, outdoor kitchen, dining and lounge area, (see cover) which mirrors an interior space and is protected from the elements by only a steel and wood canopy. Radiant heaters and a fireplace extend the seasonal use of the space.

Granite, concrete, wood, and glass are repeated throughout the design, enhancing the open concept from interior to exterior. Hummel describes his design as the “evolution of living space represented in the elimination of physical boundaries.

“I was retained to do an outdoor space,” he says, “but it has all the feel of an interior space.” The goal was to create an “effortless transition from the interior space to the exterior space.” His greatest challenge was the site's windy location. In order to reduce the wind's effect, the canopy, which was designed to complement the low sprawling roof line of the home, was constructed higher at one end than the other, where it meets the concrete steps and bridges on the ground.

Is this idea of moving the indoors outdoors catching on? “Absolutely!” says Hummel. “I've done a dozen more, on a smaller scale, since this project. There's a soothing feeling in nature that translates into the design. It speaks to the importance of a family/work life balance.”

While the same tranquil oasis may not be possible for many homes in large cities, rooftop spaces and patios can mimic the feeling and provide a retreat from the everyday hustle and bustle, according to Hummel.

An example of this can be found in a “highly livable backyard” designed by Anna Simone of Ceconi Simone Inc. in Toronto, pictured here. Her client “wanted to put the talk of ‘green’ into action and test the viability of a green roof in a residential setting,” says Simone. The space comprises a private living/dining courtyard area, an environmentally friendly green roof visible from the client's master bedroom, and a unique carport-cum-entertaining space. Simone won an ARIDO Award of Merit in 2008 for its design.

The green roof, with its ornamental grasses, soft green succulents and vines provides habitat for butterflies and insects, while reducing the city's heat island effect and minimizing storm water run-off. A peaceful reflecting pond lined in amber glass mosaic tiles completes this garden in the sky. Accessible only by ladder, it is enjoyed by both the client and his neighbours.