



# Dream it, design it, live it



## LINDA LEATHERDALE LUXURY LIVING

It's been said: Our homes are our castles. How true in Canada — where homeowners are expected to spend a whopping \$45 billion dollars on improvements this year, according to the experts at the Bank of Montreal.

This is proof the dream lives on: Beautiful digs, beautiful designs and a home that makes a statement. And that is why a record number of design-savvy consumers are expected to visit the popular Interior Design Show—Canada's largest contemporary design fair now on at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre in downtown Toronto.

"Markets are hard to predict and money in markets are not guaranteed. So many of my clients are putting money into their homes. And they spare no expense, putting in the best of the best," comments interior designer Jane Lockhart an author, speaker and TV show host, who just launched her own furniture line, called Jane by Jane Lockhart.

Builder/designer Ramsin Khachi, a sought-after expert who appears regularly on CTV's *The Marilyn Denis Show*, agrees: "People want beautiful homes, and the focus is on better design."

Helping to fuel this trend of living the dream are aging baby boomers, who unlike their Depression-era parents don't want to live in the same home for a lifetime, or if they do, they want to renovate it into their sanctuary. A recent *Re/Max* report says these boomers "want it all."

The trickling down of billions in inheritances are helping to make the dream happen, and some don't worry about leaving money for the kids, which is one reason we're seeing more retirees with mortgages.

Fact is a renovated home is money in the bank, with projects like kitchen and bathroom renovations, or even freshening up the décor, increasing the selling price of a home.

Updating insulation, electrical fixtures, heating and cooling systems, and even adding heated floors can also pay back big time.

And unlike the popular belief that do-it-yourself projects are the most cost efficient — a trusted designer is actually who will help save money by keeping their clients on budget and working with builders, architects, etc.

"A good designer will take the helm by staging the planning and taking care of finishing details," says Khachi, owner of Oakville-based Khachi Design Group ([www.khachi.com](http://www.khachi.com)). His advice is to find an expert you can count on and "who understands you and your design needs."

Every designer, he points out, has different attributes. His is a love of technology and finding creative solutions to problems facing the modern-day client. Proof is in his breath-taking makeover of his southeast Oakville home, on a quiet street just steps from Lake Ontario.

"I thought of everything that I'd want, or what bothers me, and I fixed it," says the consummate perfectionist who balanced modern with traditional, resulting in a formally elegant yet family-functioning home, with the latest in technology.

This home has it all — biometric locks, radiant heating in various rooms as well as the outdoor cooking area, a motion-sensor activated hot water recycling system and a safe room. There's also a stunning wine cellar, big-screen movie room, gym and a kitchen/great room featuring food-safe, non-porous quartz countertops.

Striving for perfection, Khachi even worked with the manufacturer, Cambria, to develop a new colour — Torquay — which mimics the look of marble, but has the attributes of quartz — no staining, no sealing, no red wine stains and rock hard.

Jane Lockhart, owner of Jane Lockhart Interior Design, agrees technological advancements play a big part in design today. "A TV is no longer a TV. It's a media station, where you can jump onto the Internet, watch a movie and flip back."

Lockhart says it's important to integrate this new technology into the kitchen, an entertaining area which is sometimes used as a home office, as well. "In today's mobile world, people have no

choice but to work from home," she said. She advises those who work from home full-time to have a separate home office, complete with storage.

Both Lockhart and Khachi preach bigger isn't always better. "It's about creating good spaces, not big spaces. It's about quality, not quantity," says Khachi.

Lockhart adds depending on the size of the home, a growing trend is taking space from living rooms or dining rooms, to become part of the kitchen/great room — a popular hub of entertainment.

Both also preach classic designs never go out of style, while fads come and go. Neutral colours — like soft greys — are timeless, as are traditional furniture pieces and light fixtures.

Accessories like pillows, throws, lamps, window dressings, etc. — can be used to modernize the look. Lockhart's new furniture line, launched this month at the National Furniture Show, offers consumers affordable solutions for their design quests ([www.janelockhart.com](http://www.janelockhart.com)).

Bottom line is our homes are our castles.

"I think when your home is good, your life is good," says Lockhart. "To me, all the things you love should be in your home. It's about what you feel, not what we (designers) think."

Khachi adds: "If you can dream it, we can build it."

For proof, visit the new state-of-the-art Cambria Studio, at 91 Parliament, where Khachi designed and built the concept, and both Khachi and Lockhart have vignettes on display, utilizing Cambria's quartz products in residential and commercial applications.

"This new studio is truly a design experience," says Lockhart.

Also, visit the IDS Show where designers have the latest on display. On Friday, Jan. 27, show is open to trades only. It is open to the public Saturday, Jan. 28 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and on Sunday, Jan. 29 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

For more information, visit [www.interiordesignshow.com](http://www.interiordesignshow.com)

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