



A KITE-SURFER'S DREAM

Homeowner had a long wish list. It all came true

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Cameron's "backyard" deck offers the kite-surfer's peak moment: blue sky, lake waves and bracing crosswinds on Lake Simcoe, with fellow enthusiasts plying the waters.

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BLURRING THE LINE BETWEEN INTERIOR AND OUTDOOR space was central to the concept that avid kite surfer Cameron Sturgess presented to the team designing his lakeside home on Lake Simcoe in Keswick.

Cameron, a technology executive, interior designer Dragana Maznic and architect Ali Malek-Zadeh of Urbanscape Group in Toronto embarked on a collaboration that culminated in a 2,800-square-foot home that pushed their design, engineering and architectural boundaries.

Cameron had purchased the property in an area blessed with the crosswinds that allow him to indulge his passion for kite surfing as well as study the techniques of fellow enthusiasts from his lakeside deck.

Cameron's wish list for creating his own particular Eden was prodigious, and reflected his lifestyle and commitment to sustainable living. “I wanted a location that faced the sunsets, which are simply incredible out here. There's a lot of glass facing west, and when all the doors

are open, there's a crossflow of air throughout the house thanks to the breeze coming off the lake. The idea was that nowhere in the house did you not feel part of the lake.”

The exterior lake-facing façade designed by architect Ali Malek-Zadeh offers a satisfying interplay of horizontals and verticals evocative of a Mondrian painting. (Opposite) The front entrance, articulated in a combination of corrugated metal, stucco and natural finish cedar, signals the homeowner's abiding commitment to sustainability.



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The double-glazed argon windows are purposely bereft of covering, at least until a specific time in the late afternoon, depending on the seasons, when the sunlight is blinding. With one touch of the remote, blinds emerge from a pencil-thin recess in the ceiling joists and just as easily do a disappearing act at sunset. “It’s a bit like living in a fishbowl, which I love,” says Cameron, “but it’s necessary to cover the windows at certain times because the glare can be intense.”

Before calling on Ali’s architectural expertise, Cameron and Dragana conferred on the overall function and flow of the floor plan. “I designed this house to be a ‘barefoot luxury’ home,” says Dragana. “That was because Cameron lives what appears to be a very casual life of bare feet, shorts and T-shirt, but it’s also a very high quality life of enjoying all the highest quality materials, design, architecture and setting.”

The 1,800-square-foot main floor epitomizes open concept and was designed with frequent entertaining in mind. Kitchen, dining room and living room are one fluid space with the ever-present lake view central to the ambience. *ES*

The fluidity of an open concept on the main level, from kitchen to dining room to living space, facilitates a brand of casual entertaining that suits Cameron’s style of “barefoot luxury.”



(Opposite). A “living landscape” view blurs the boundary between inside and outside as espied from the upper-level bridgeway above the dining room.

“I’m invariably the guy cooking behind the island in the kitchen,” says Cameron. And what a kitchen it is! The Italian-inspired Muti cabinets are natural-finish walnut set on the horizontal grain and enhanced by stainless-steel hardware that matches the stainless-steel backsplash tiles. The integrated Thermador refrigerator and freezer contribute to a seamless look while a double tier of suspended glass cabinets forms a bridge between the walnut pillars.

The 11-foot island is “cuisine central.” It’s topped with a runway of Calacatta marble – renowned for its prominent grey/caramel veining in a field of white – and incorporates sink, dishwasher, double garbage and recycling bins and soft-close drawers. The same Calacatta marble makes another appearance in the first-floor master and upstairs bathrooms, preserving design continuity. ☞

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Cameron's 10-year-old daughter ensures that her teddy bears have a prime place basking in the sun while they enjoy the expansive lake view from her bedroom.

Dragana points out that the walnut cabinets are unstained, making this kitchen chemical-free and consistent with Cameron's commitment to sustainability. "This is someone who routinely composts his organic materials and uses it in his garden. There are no plastic bags in his house, and rather than use paper towels, he uses cloths and washes them after use."

Things are under control underfoot as well. Radiant heating and cooling under the porcelain tiles on the main level means a warm floor in the winter and cool one come summer. "While there is air conditioning, it's only needed on windless summer days," says Cameron.

When the interior space was worked out, Cameron called on Ali Malek-Zadeh to work out the exterior aesthetics. Malek-Zadeh comments, "The sustainability of the materials in the house was very important to Cameron as were economic issues, so I gave him the proposal of corrugated metal and stucco along with natural-finish cedar-wood cladding."

A stunning residual benefit of the metal siding, adds Malek-Zadeh, is its highly reflective property that mirrors the changing colours, from pale yellows to purples, as the sun begins its descent in the west.

Cameron's home on Lake Simcoe suits him exceedingly well. "It's a home that's in tune with its surroundings," he says. "It's in harmony with both the sun and the moon. When there's a full moon, the house is fully lit and casts very dramatic shadows throughout the space."

Having lived in his home for two years now, Cameron is in synch with the area's seasonal ebbs and flows, and says he sees swans coming back in the fall just before it snows. "There's a migratory path so there's tons of birds that come by. I'm a fairly big photographer so I take lots of pictures. It's all lived up to my expectations and then some." ☺