

DESIGN GOALS

This young family's custom-built home is a DIYer's dream.

By Lisa van de Geyn

Deciding where to settle was an easy choice for Jacqueline and Ben Chiarot. When the pair decided it was time to build their dream home, they chose Waterloo, Ont., as the place they'd raise their daughter, Emmerson, during the National Hockey League's off-season. (The family has a home in Montreal when Ben, a defenceman for the Montreal Canadiens, is on the ice.) Chiarot was born and raised in the area, and back when the young couple were dating, Ben spent weekends in the ▶

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LEFT: Chiarot opted for a classic white kitchen. It was great choice and allows the custom island to shine.

BELOW: Ben, Jacqueline and Emmerson Chiarot.

Southwestern Ontario city. “We love the farmland and rolling hills — it’s like city living right beside the country,” she says.

The lot they found — in the new development they were keen on — was the exact property they’d hoped for, with protected green space and a pond nearby. Now that they found their ideal location, the fun part was about to start — Chiarot couldn’t wait to choose colours and finishes, and work on the design particulars with the builder. “I have a passion for designing, decorating and choosing furnishings and wanted to decide how our house would look and feel.”

When it was finished, the four-bedroom, 4,200-square-foot abode was exactly what Chiarot had envisioned. “My dad’s a builder and we have very high standards,” she says. “I wanted nice finishes, an airy feel and a more traditional style with modern, contemporary decor. I definitely knew I wanted a timeless look — something bright and classic.” ▶





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RIGHT: The wainscoting in the family room was designed by Chiarot.

BOTTOM: The formal dining room is perfect for entertaining. The space is warm and cozy, thanks to the fireplace on the other side of the room.



Chiarot carried this sentiment into the design of the kitchen and opted for a simple but timeless white kitchen. She also had a beautiful and purposeful 10×4 island installed. “I love cooking, hosting, baking and entertaining. We’re always in the kitchen with friends — having a glass of wine and chatting around the island,” she says, adding she chose an extra-thick slab to make the island a real focal piece in the room. Made of quartzite, the island has a marble-like look and it’s super durable. It also blends perfectly with the marble backsplash she picked. “The white, grey and black in the kitchen and dining room work together well, and the contrast in the colour of the hardwood is what I wanted.” The kitchen built-in that holds the couple’s wine collection was designed after the house was done. “We wanted it to match the servery in the dining room and I love how it turned out,” she says.

The island is the focal point of the kitchen, but the central feature of the first floor is the grand stone-quartz fireplace between the dining and family rooms. “We spend a lot of time in the family room and wanted the fireplace to make a statement. There’s a ▶

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In keeping with her timeless-looking aesthetic, Chiarot selected dark wood cabinets and cupboards for her master ensuite. She opted for more modern-looking hardware to bring in a contemporary feel.



shimmer to the stone and, because it's two storeys high, it goes all the way to the ceiling," Chiarot says. The oversized windows also make a statement, as does the impressive wainscoting, which she designed herself. "I took a while deciding what to do with this wall — it wasn't done until a few months ago. I envisioned wainscoting and designed the pattern, opting for long, skinny boxes instead of the traditional size," she says.

If there's a room that symbolizes Chiarot's dedication to and love of decorating, it's definitely the mudroom, which she just finished last spring. "It was an empty room until I decided to take the one-room challenge, a social-media campaign that challenges you to complete a room in eight weeks and share your progress along the way," she explains. She designed built-ins, a long window to let in light, a custom bench (where she could keep kid stuff and a place to stow their dog Bailey's bowls) and put up an adhesive wallpaper with a pretty cloud pattern. "Doing the challenge and sharing it on my Instagram (@thisprettylifexo) pushed me to get creative and design something that really fits our space and life." 



There are special prints hanging in Chiarot's master bedroom — wedding photos and their dog, Bailey.

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Painting pictured: 60x80" by gallery artist Pietro Adamo