

**TORONTO
LIFE**

THE CITY'S MOST BEAUTIFUL HOMES

GREAT SPACES

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Rooms we love and
the stories behind them

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TRADE SECRETS
from the city's top decor pros

Mark Sakamoto, a 41-year-old author and entrepreneur; his wife, Jade Sakamoto, a 40-year-old dance teacher; and their daughters, five-year-old Tomi and nine-year-old Miya



Going With the Flow in Dufferin Grove

A yoga-loving family's domestic sanctuary mixes Japanese minimalism with maximal flair

When Mark met Jade in 1992, on his first day of ninth grade, he went home and told his parents he'd just met his future wife. Twelve years later, they tied the knot, and in 2005 they bought a semi in Bloorcourt. They loved the neighbourhood (partly because of its proximity to Octopus Garden, their favourite yoga studio), but the house's biggest selling point was the airy third-floor loft, with its 18-foot ceilings. To help cover the mortgage, they rented out the main-floor apartment and lived on the top two storeys. The arrangement worked for 13 years, but with the arrival of Miya and Tomi, they found themselves craving more space—in particular, they wanted a bigger kitchen and separate bedrooms for the girls.

To make that happen, the house would need to be completely transformed. Mark and Jade planned three distinct levels: a spacious main floor for entertaining friends; a second floor for family time, with rooms for each of the girls and a library; and a sanctuary-like master suite on the top floor. They also wanted to finish the basement, which was little more than a dirt floor scattered with old campaign posters and buttons from Mark's time as a political advisor to Michael Ignatieff. "It was a political graveyard," Jade jokes.

On a friend's recommendation, the Sakamotos hired architect Wanda Ely to tackle the redesign. Their vision board consisted of minimalist Japanese design with whimsical modern flourishes. The renovation lasted 10 months and included punching out new windows, moving the kitchen downstairs and turning the second-floor dining room into Miya's bedroom. Ely tore down the walls on the main floor and installed wood-and-steel slats inspired by shoji screens to break up the space.

Now that they occupy the entire house, the Sakamotos have wasted no time making use of the extra square footage. They've hosted parties with up to 50 guests, and at Christmas they threw an at-home variety show in the (now finished) basement, complete with a live band. When they have downtime, Jade and Mark practise yoga in their third-floor bedroom, where they've installed a rope wall similar to the one at Octopus Garden. "It's great for your spine," Jade says.



AN ARTFUL THROUGH LINE

A massive piece of custom wallpaper based on Vincent van Gogh's *Almond Blossom* stretches from the basement to the second floor. Mark and Jade bought the rights to print the art and slightly tweaked the colours.

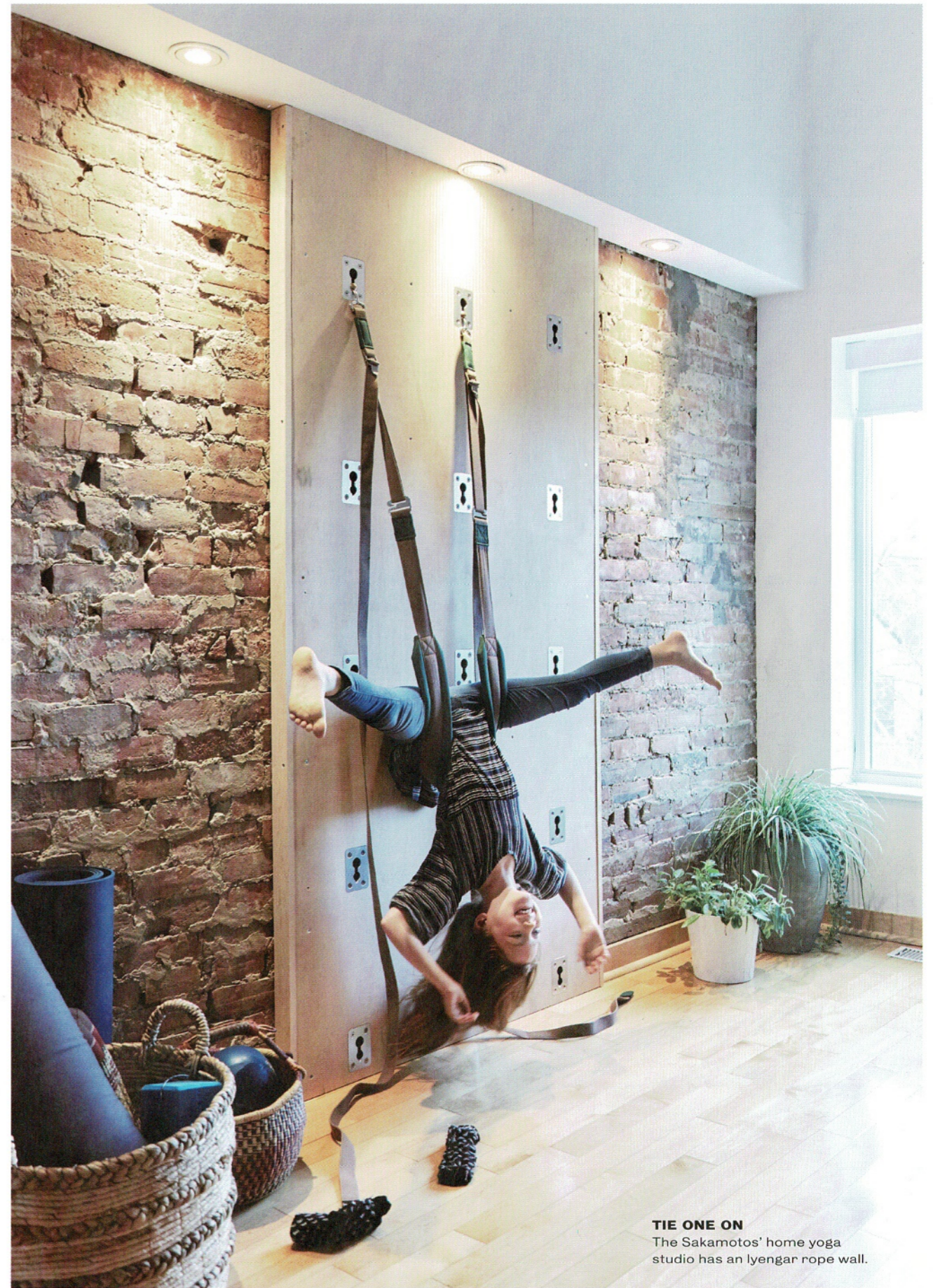
CREATIVE CORNER
Miya's desk is in a sun-soaked corner, perfect for homework. Little colourful touches personalize the small secretary.



BACK SPLASH
Striking green dandelion tile from Saltillo Imports adds a hit of colour to the white kitchen.



The Sakamotos | Dufferin Grove



TIE ONE ON
The Sakamotos' home yoga studio has an lyengar rope wall.



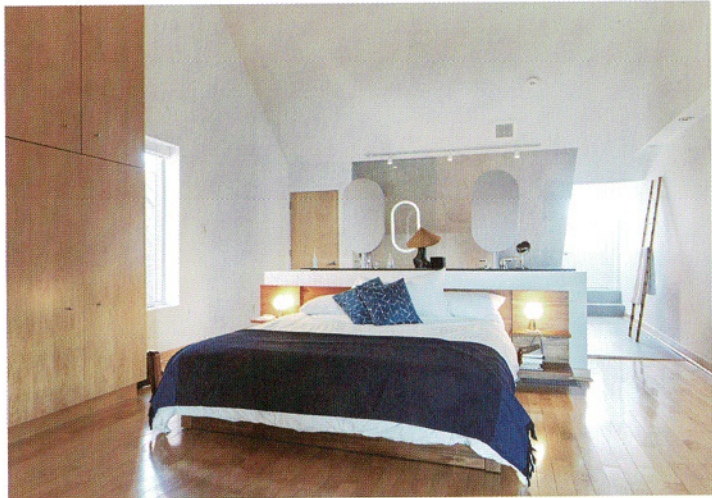
WRAP AROUND

The Sakamotos originally wanted a Roche Bobois Mah Jong sofa, but discovered that the sitting room's unusual dimensions would be better suited to a custom banquette.



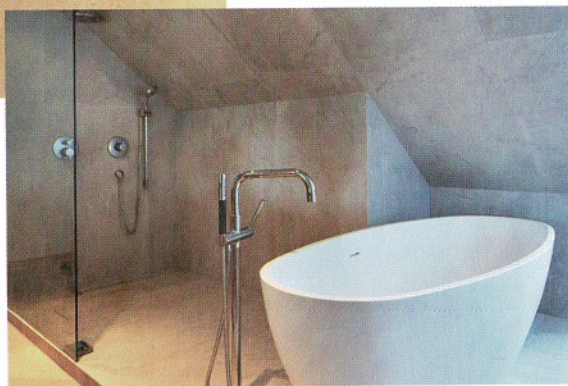
SUPER GRAPHIC

The girls' bathroom is the funkiest room in the house thanks to '60s-inspired avocado-green and pink tiling from Mutina, an Italian ceramics company.



DISAPPEARING ACT

The master has built-in storage to tuck away clothes and reduce clutter, à la Marie Kondo. The king-sized bed is from CB2.



PRIVATE OASIS

The white and grey master bathroom was modelled after a spa. The wall-to-wall tile is from Surfaces & Co.

ROOM TO BLOOM

The floral wallpaper in Tomi's room is by Ellie Cashman.

