

CHESTNUT PARK REAL ESTATE LIMITED, BROKERAGE

# INVEST IN STYLE

VOLUME 3 | ISSUE 8 | WINTER 2020



**Jenny Heijun Wills, Writers' Trust Award-Winning Author**

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

Aruba: A Caribbean Gem | Toronto Biennial of Art | Cheese Bliss In Thornbury: The Cheese Gallery | Skate Through a Winter Forest Arrowhead Provincial Park's Iced Trail

Luxury Listings | Industry Experts | Featured Articles

# Refined Rustic

BY ANNA CIPOLLONE  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GIZELLE GRIARTE

A charming farmhouse-inspired addition gets the royal treatment from Alison Milne Design Studio.

**A**lison Milne was already dreaming up the perfect plans when she fell for the property on Rusholme Road. "It was a house that I had bid on to purchase for myself," laughs the interior designer. After the disappointment of losing the bid, Milne's Toronto-based design studio received a surprising inquiry from the new homeowners. They'd been referred to Alison by a friend, and were eager to have her involved in the renovation—but never expected she'd already be familiar with the space.

"I absolutely loved the house," says Milne, noting that she was thrilled to get a chance to realize her vision for the space—albeit for someone else. With floor plans and a precise aesthetic in mind to augment the property's potential, the designer was up for the challenge that came about quite coincidentally. "It was super organic and a really nice match," she says, "I was able to execute what I would have done—but for them."

The clients were keen on expanding the home with a communal living space, where kids could do homework or play while dinner was prepped in the kitchen. It was a complete gut project intended to add a cozy country feel while preserving the history of the house in Toronto's Dufferin Grove neighbourhood. The space started out very dark, inspiring the 17-foot addition that brought the outdoors in with far more natural light. "Opening up the whole back of the house to the stunning yard and allowing the light to come into the space made all the difference," says Milne, crediting the wall of windows by Pella for the addition's sun-soaked rooms.

The concept hinged on an aesthetic that feels partly historic farmhouse, with contemporary accents and appliances adding a modern angle. The use of pale blue-grey kitchen cabinetry means the entire room's ambience shifts depending on the time of day, while the beadboard and chicken wire in the upper cabinets adds a delicate nod to heritage style. Midcentury modern furniture was thoughtfully matched up with plush contemporary décor to make preserved features like the stained-glass windows really pop. Given the wood's natural and distressed look, wide plank, honey-hued flooring added texture and is juxtaposed against simple and clean interiors with artwork selected by Alison Milne Gallery. >

Art by Patrick Lajoie.









Art by George Whiteside.

But even with a designer's dream project plucked ripe for her, there were inevitable challenges to face. "In order to gain ceiling height in the new portion of the house, we had a large beam installed to hold up the existing back," explains Milne. Instead of trying to hide this structural work, she decided to accentuate this as a feature by cladding the steel beam in reclaimed barn wood. "It really added a unique ceiling treatment to separate the kitchen and living room," she says.

In the master bathroom, the original fireplace became the guiding force for the entire suite. Adding warmth to the otherwise modern bathroom created a soft and inviting spa-like mood while the antique fireplace and its white exposed brick are well complemented by stylish brass fixtures.







// ART & DESIGN //



As both a boutique interior design firm and contemporary art gallery, Alison Milne's approach to every space is different, acknowledging that each client project is unique. What remains a constant is her eye for classic-meets-contemporary interiors while her dedication to craftsmanship is echoed in the finishing touches that truly elevate a space to embrace the functional needs of daily life. ©



**Alison Milne**  
Principal, Alison Milne Design Studio  
alisonmilne.com