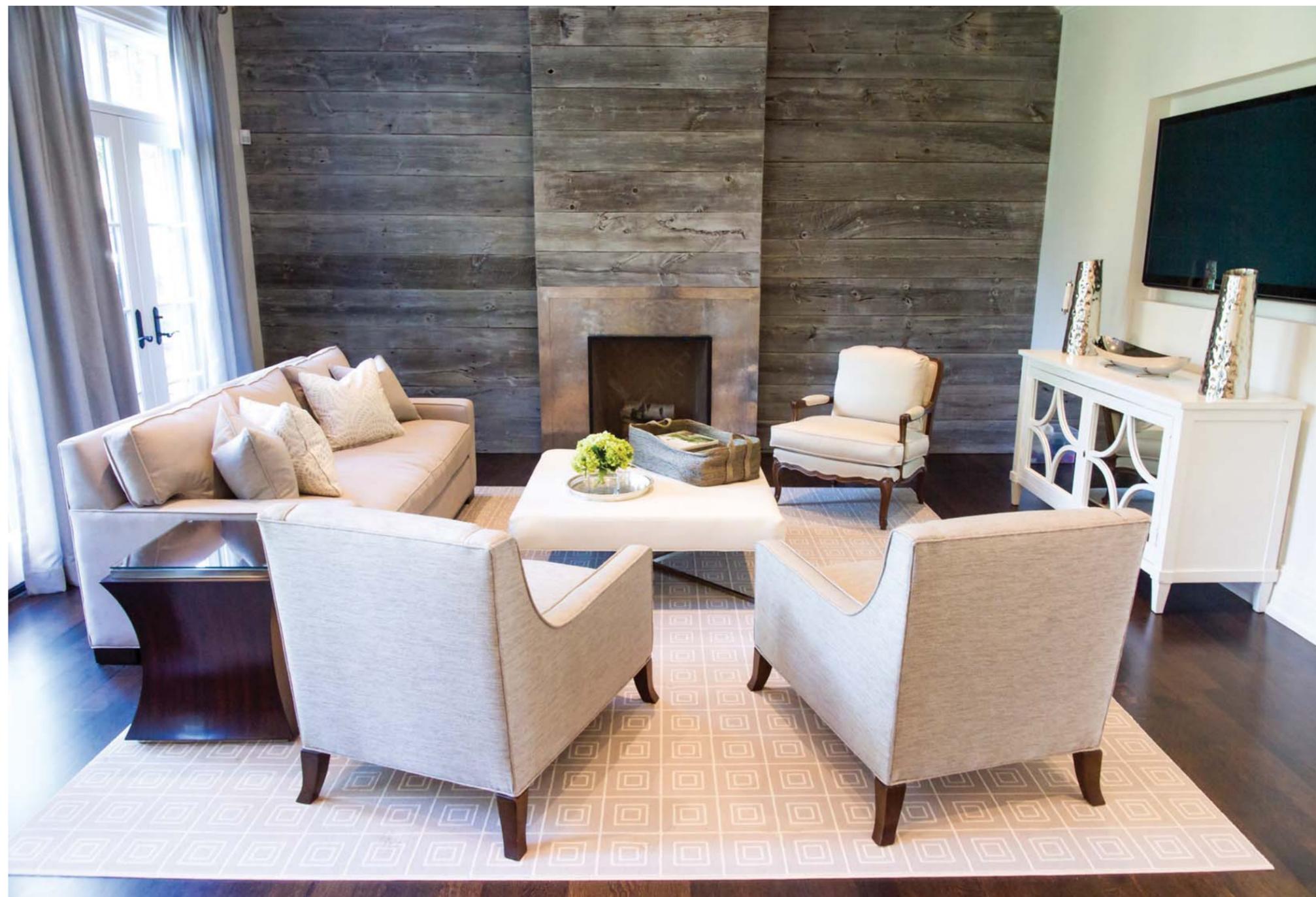


DURABLE DESIGN

Home Décor Built for the Growing Family

By Tara Fingold

We are seeing a clear trend where our clients want to be able to create an environment that is both visually pleasing, and at the same time responds to the needs of children, busy lives and entertaining in the home. Fortunately, when a busy family wants to design a home that is both functional and beautiful, they no longer need to sacrifice either of these elements. Gone are the days where some rooms are “off limits” to the children. Now, with open concept family rooms or, in some cases, open flowing homes, we need to allow for spills, scuffs and dents. Of course, we want to be able to have great timeless style, and we want to use fabulous textiles and finishes but still be able to put up our feet! In meeting these demands, businesses have stepped up and introduced a range of marvelous products available to the homeowner that combine functional and practical choices without compromising on looks.



In designing this welcoming Forest Hill family home, collaborating with the clients from the early stages provided the opportunity to tailor design the home to suit their specific needs. With a growing family and a busy household, we wanted to make sure the home was both timeless and child-friendly. The preliminary agenda was to accommodate young children and lots of entertaining while not compromising on style. We wanted to be sure that our finishing selections would be functional and durable to blend with the dynamic needs of their family.

The primary room for most family homes is the “great room” as this is where the family spends the majority of time. It’s also the room that takes most of the wear and tear. With everyone so busy, this has truly become the hub of the home. Kids will do homework at the

kitchen island and are no longer relegated to the basement to play. Adults do the majority of casual entertaining in this room, with the dining room used less often. With this in mind, we made calculated decisions in terms of finishes. In this home, we used a medley of high tech man-made fabrics and finishes that truly replicate their precious foils. The kitchen chairs and stools are made of vinyl but feel as buttery soft as amazing leather. Food spills, dirt and markers can be easily erased with a quick wipe. This allows us to have a soft, comfortable chair that not only looks great but that can also be easily transitioned to the family room for extra seating or the dining room for extra chairs.

The family room, while open to the kitchen, has an elegant feel but is comfortable and cozy. The focal point of the room is intentionally

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not the typical large television but rather the fireplace. We clad one wall in barnboard that came from an abandoned farmhouse in Muskoka. Not wanting the room to feel too “country,” we whitewashed the boards in the same white paint tones as the kitchen cabinets. The mantel is forged steel, both significant and unique, and was kept linear to mimic the lines of the wall. The fabrics on the sofa and chairs are made of heavy-duty flannel that is cozy but still easy to wipe. The fact that these fabrics are suitable for commercial applications is reassuring for those with little children. Rather than having a conventional coffee table, we elected for an





oversized ottoman upholstered in heavy-duty vinyl. In doing so, the owners have allowed for the occasional spill, bump and even the effects of all the sunlight pouring in through the full wall of glass.

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For the children's rooms, we wanted to create a timeless, practical and functional area while still being whimsical. Even though the finishes look precious, we made sure they would withstand the wear and tear of little hands. The area rug here will wear like iron. Although nylon carpet has been around for a while, there is new technology that has generated amazing colors, patterns and textures. This carpet is actually broadloom that we have cut and bound to fit the room. The headboard and bedskirt are made of ultra suede. These fabrics can be cleaned without damaging the fibres; it's super durable and impermeable to spills, pets, and kids. A great solution for storage is bookshelves on either side of the bed. These can accommodate children's collections and artwork today, and in the future will easily store schoolbooks and trophies.

For bathrooms, we have seen a big development in the design of durable products. Tiles, countertops and cabinetry were all selected to withstand stains, chips and watermarks. Ceramic and porcelain tiles,

coupled with amazing technology, have provided the marketplace with spectacular options. We used a ceramic tile here, which simulates the look of a natural marble. These tiles are both cost-efficient and timeless. The Caesarstone countertops used in the washrooms complement the fresh, casual aesthetic of the washroom; not having to worry about stains on the surface makes this material an easy choice.

Being an open concept home, we did not want to impede on our overall style direction in the mudroom. By placing carefully edited storage solutions, the unavoidable clutter of family life does not have to take over the home. The mudroom, while still being open to the main hallway, can also be viewed from the kitchen. We designed cabinetry that complemented the kitchen while still servicing storage solutions. Hooks are reachable to the children by staggering them at both adult and kid level, while backpacks, rubber boots and everyday items can be tucked away while still being accessible.

By blending the primary objective of a practical, functional house suitable for young children with the timeless elegance consistent with this upscale community, we were able to help our clients create a home that will meet the needs of their evolving lifestyle for years to come.

Tara Fingold is Principal of Tara Fingold Interiors Inc., a full-service design firm specializing in residential interior design. She has been featured on the CBC, HGTV and in numerous publications, and is an International Design Guild winner. For more information, visit www.tarafingold.com