



capitalizing on the light

Glass panes are a practical alternative to railings: views remain unimpeded, enhancing a feeling of lightness.

point of
VIEW

Formerly ensconced in Toronto's central Riverdale neighbourhood, designer Esther Cheong and husband Paul Fantauzzi, an architecture graduate, thought they were resolute urbanites. A few years ago, they started to think about building a new home, researching areas of the city that are near a ravine or the lake. They hadn't initially considered the suburbs, but when a Scarborough Bluffs bungalow with a walkout basement and breathtaking lake vista came on the market, they snapped it up. By adding



LEFT The living room is located on the main floor, which is one storey above grade. It features a south-facing wall of 10-foot-high floor-to-ceiling windows. “There aren’t many areas in Toronto that have a magnificent lakefront view, and are just a 25-minute drive to downtown,” says homeowner and designer Esther Cheong. The sofa is positioned to take advantage of the garden and lake vistas. Overlooking the lower level of the house is an opening, framed with glass panels, which gracefully separates the living area from the family room on the other side while still maintaining expansiveness and flow.

TOP RIGHT A recessed niche, not visible from the living room, provides an easy-to-access spot for storing firewood neatly. Adding an element of visual playfulness is the dress sculpture by Toronto-based artist Sophie DeFrancesca. Entitled *Ruby*, it’s made of beaded galvanized and stainless-steel mesh.

BOTTOM RIGHT The minimalist dining room behind the living area has an informal air. Artwork – including Olena Kassian’s *Sweep 1*, at right, and a piece of architectural salvage – offsets the clean lines of the glass-top aluminum table. To distribute an even glow over the table, Esther opted for three frosted-glass pendant lights instead of a large central one. ▷



a second storey, designing a wall of windows that permits views of the lake from virtually any area of the house, and reconfiguring the interior, they created a light-filled home with lots of room for the family of four. WRITTEN BY CHRISTY WRIGHT | PHOTOGRAPHY BY TED YARWOOD



TOP LEFT Because the kitchen is visually prominent in the open-concept main floor, its design had to tie in seamlessly with the adjacent living and dining areas.

BOTTOM LEFT Paul descends the floating steps, which he and Esther chose for their transparency. Across from them is the entryway, which features the same cultured stone that clads the exterior of the garage. Ivy creeps along the stone, both inside and out.

OPPOSITE "Upper cabinets tend to scream 'kitchen' and can displace valuable window area," says Esther. Instead of traditional above-counter cupboards, she opted to install a 12-foot-long counter-height window. But there's no shortage of storage thanks to floor-to-ceiling cabinets on the adjacent wall. ▷



The kitchen's espresso-stained maple cabinetry has a **furniture-like aesthetic** that helps integrate the kitchen into the design of the main floor

design solution

To maintain a minimalist aesthetic, forgo a suspended exhaust vent above the island by installing a concealed pop-up version right in the island.





OPPOSITE Four-year-old Nathan, seven-year-old Bianca and their cat, Jake, hang out in the family room. Here, the children read, play board games and build Lego creations. (Other toys are relegated to the lower-level play area, where the youngsters are even allowed to ride their bikes and scooters in winter.) The comfortable sectional is covered in easy-to-maintain Ultrasuede. Behind it, *The Sun*, an oil on canvas by Farid Hassani, echoes the blues of the sky and lake.

TOP RIGHT A large concrete terrace extends beyond the main-floor family room, which is one storey above grade. The couple designed an extension beneath the terrace, maximizing interior space in the lower storey.

BOTTOM RIGHT Esther and Paul constructed a firepit close to the property's edge for enjoying the sweeping view and family marshmallow roasts. "We're fortunate to have one of the few Bluff properties that doesn't have a precipitous drop," Esther says. ▶

“When we roast marshmallows in the firepit under a clear, starry sky and look out over the lake, it’s almost like being at a cottage”

ESTHER CHEONG, HOMEOWNER





“Small windows force a home to be introverted. We
by incorporating **large windows with direct access to**



LEFT Esther looks out at the lake from the balcony of the spacious master bedroom on the top floor. “As the window wall faces south, there’s a considerable amount of passive solar heat gain thanks to the expanse of high-performance glass. The heat is absorbed and retained by the dark wood floors,” she says. “On a sunny winter day, the furnace doesn’t turn on until the evening.”

TOP RIGHT The master ensuite bathroom features his-and-her sinks mounted on top of the sleek vanity Esther designed. There are three drawers for toiletries and a hidden shelf below each sink for storing toilet paper.

BOTTOM RIGHT The serenity-inducing soaker tub was constructed from one piece of composite material, then finished with a polyester coating to make it ultrasmooth.

WHERE TO FIND IT, PAGE 158



strive to bring the outdoors in
a terrace or garden” ESTHER
