

SUMMER 2022

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BARRIE ORILLIA MIDLAND INNISFIL

3 DESIGNER HOMES

REVITALIZED FAMILY COTTAGE
NATURE-INSPIRED CUSTOM BUILD
LUXE LOWER-LEVEL APARTMENT

*Vacation-Style
Living*

TROPICAL
AGUA FRESCA

THAI CRUNCH
SALAD

SMALL SPACE *BIG* *STYLE*

STORY **KAREN BRIGGS**
PHOTOGRAPHY **NAT CARON**

Subtle contrast characterizes the kitchen. Brushed champagne cabinet pulls complement a black steel pendant light. White upper cabinets are grounded by subtle pastel bases. Rustic breadboards and artful floral arrangements are finishing touches.

WHEN YOU HEAR THE WORDS, “BASEMENT APARTMENT,” YOU GENERALLY DON’T PICTURE ELEGANT DESIGN, NATURAL LIGHT AND AN ABUNDANCE OF STORAGE.

You’d probably be forgiven, in fact, if the first words that came to mind were “small, dark, and depressing.” But when one of **Vanessa Rogerson**’s clients came to her requesting a welcoming and warm space in his home that could generate income from a tenant and add value to the property, she said, “challenge accepted.”



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1. Some kitchenware is too pretty to be hidden in cabinetry. 2. A brushed champagne faucet from Delta echoes the kitchen cabinet pulls. 3. Vanessa prefers efficient corner drawers to corner cabinets. 4. More storage is found just off the kitchen. 5. Laundry was a must-have for the apartment. 6. Vanessa expertly selected every finish in the apartment. 7. Every space has a function, with a countertop above the laundry for folding. 8. Bright windows bring as much light as possible into the lower level.



Vanessa Rogerson Designs, based in Barrie, specializes in residential renovations, from concept to completion. While custom kitchens and bathrooms are a focus for Vanessa, she also tackles custom homes in their entirety. This project, in the lower level of a two-storey 1990s subdivision home, was like a miniature version of a full custom project.

“We wanted it to feel like a home, not an apartment,” she says. “And we wanted it to comply with all the regulations for a legal dwelling with the City of Barrie.”

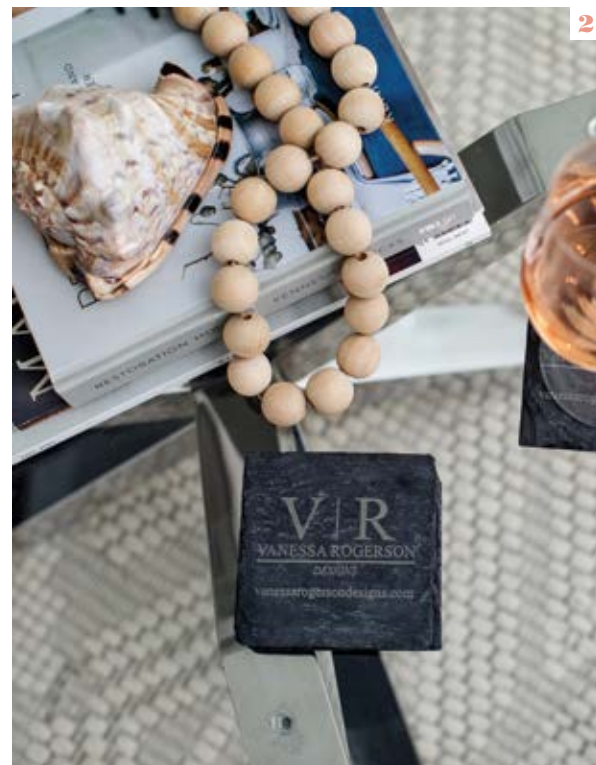
The unfinished basement was a blank canvas, but it did come with challenges. Vanessa and her client decided on a separate entrance, large windows and a patio, which together provide privacy, natural light and a backyard near a ravine.

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Allowing for some storage space and a furnace room for the owner, Vanessa was still able to carve out a new layout for a very comfortable one bedroom, one bathroom apartment. One of the few compromises was to forgo a bathtub in favour of an oversize shower and a little more living space.

“One of our other design goals was to maintain the ceiling height as much as possible to keep the space from feeling confined,” Vanessa explains. Due to the required ductwork, there were areas where bulkheads could not be avoided, but the ceiling height is eight feet in the majority of the layout and seven feet where the bulkheads are located.

Recessed pot lights were installed throughout in lieu of more invasive ceiling light fixtures, with the exception of a black statement glass-and-steel pendant light in the kitchen. “I wanted to keep the space nice and open, but that one pendant light adds a bit of drama,” Vanessa says.

“The design vibe is eclectic, mixing contemporary and traditional finishes. The aim was to “reflect the taste of the owner upstairs, but remain easily adaptable to suit the preferences of any tenant who ends up living in the space.”

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LEFT: A small entry provides a warm welcome. **ABOVE:** An office nook is a bonus space in the one-bedroom apartment. **OPPOSITE:** 1. A gas fireplace is a focal point. 2. Vanessa expertly layers and styles the coffee table. 3. Of the living room, Vanessa says "the space is meant to feel open and airy while accented by the bold emerald green sofa as a statement piece." 4. Scones on either side of the fireplace create cosy, layered lighting. A sideboard can be used as a bar space for entertaining.



Vanessa selected a durable vinyl floor in a light oak finish to keep the space bright and welcoming. She painted the walls **Benjamin Moore** Simply White, which she says adds a bit of warmth while being easy to touch up. Countertops are a clean white quartz with veining, from HanStone. The Shaker-style kitchen cabinets were supplied by Cabico Custom Cabinetry in custom colours.

“Overall, the apartment is monochromatic and clean-looking, but there are soft touches throughout,” Vanessa says. These include the textured Calacatta tile in the shower, the glass-tile backsplash in the kitchen and the brushed champagne finish on the Delta Cassidy line kitchen faucet, which complements the hardware on the cabinetry. *Continued on page 74*



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LEFT: The spacious bedroom has mirrored side tables for a touch of glamour. **1.** Mirrors are used throughout the space to reflect light. **2.** An iron bed is layered with soft bedding, including a throw from Willow Lane Interiors. **3.** Storage is paramount and it's found here in a modern credenza.

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"I pay close attention to hardware on cabinetry and the light fixtures I choose, small touches that give a more luxurious feel," she says. "I also work with a lot of local businesses and prefer local suppliers wherever possible."

Basement apartments are notorious for having little storage, so providing clever solutions was another focus for this project. Incorporated into the full-size kitchen is a bank of corner drawers that Vanessa says "are my absolute favourite – much better than corner cabinets or a lazy Susan." There are also hidden recycling and garbage receptacles. Three closets in the apartment ensure there's plenty of room to store belongings.

The apartment manages to accommodate separate laundry for the tenant, as well as a small office nook. A toasty gas fireplace, framed by black wall sconces, enhances the living room.

The end result is a basement apartment that shatters the stereotypes and provides all the comforts of home. **OH**



A driftwood finish was used on the vanity, with a Carrara quartz top, glass knob hardware and a classic polished chrome faucet. Calacatta gold marble tile is used on the floor, while white wall tiles in a chevron pattern add texture in the shower. "It's the little finishing details that make a space feel luxurious," Vanessa says.



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