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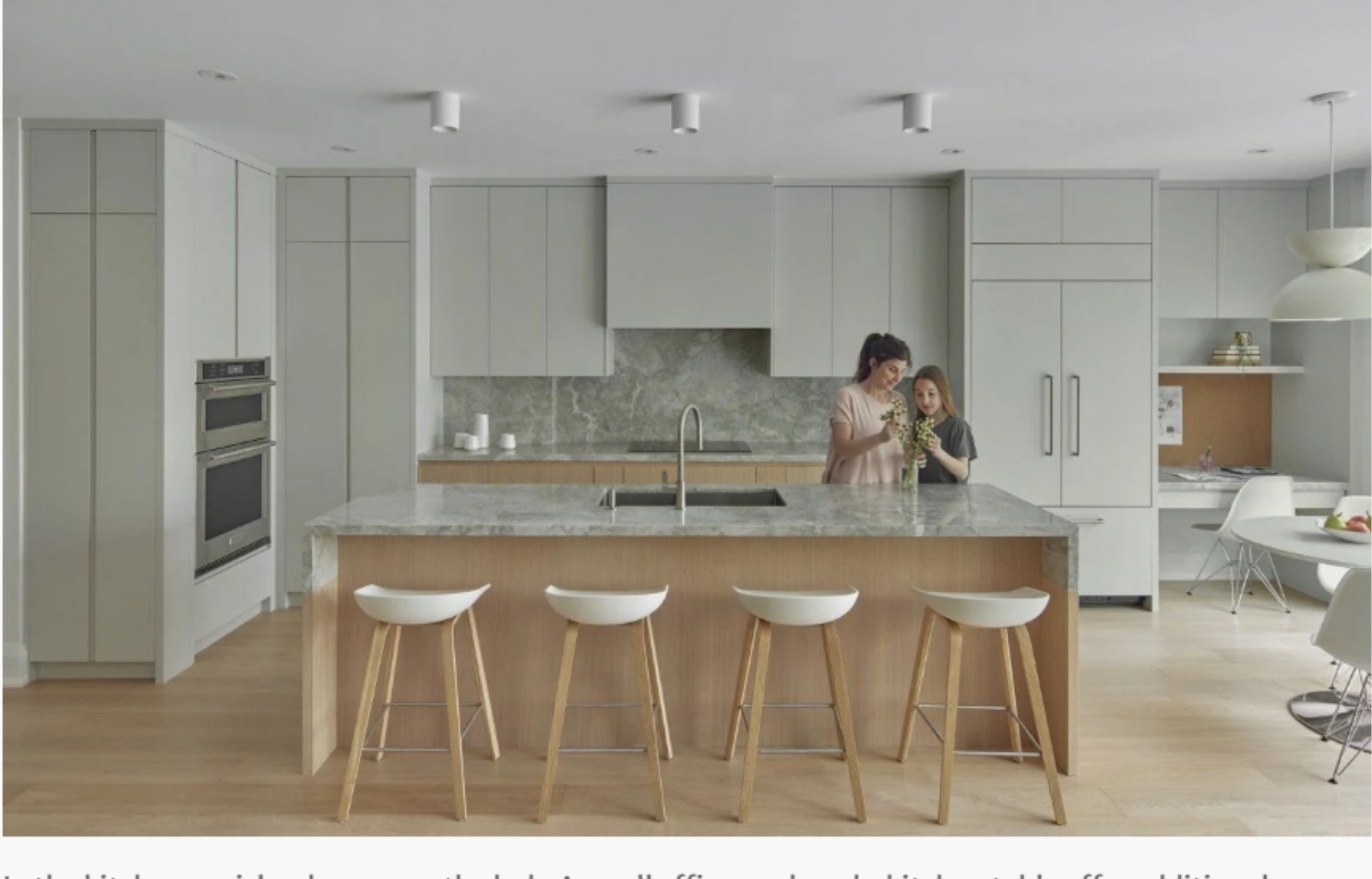
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REAL ESTATE

From pandemic defeat to serene retreat: A husband-and-wife team reimagines their home

Architect wanted to create safe, calm space for her husband and their kids. She kept nothing from their house but two walls and stained-glass windows.

Oct. 18, 2025 | 1 min read |



In the kitchen, an island serves as the hub. A small office nook and a kitchen table offer additional work spaces. The tone is calming and there is storage aplenty.

Nanne Springer

By Jennifer Little Special to the Star

When Jake Bogoch walks through the door of his rebuilt century home, he feels “the anvil lifting off my chest.” It’s this sense of serenity his wife, architect Joanne Myers, designed into every detail of the house. It was a labour of love.

Myers, the Toronto architect and co-founder of Good Standing Architects, set out to renovate the house she shared with Bogoch, co-founder and creative director of the ad agency AndSo. She knew the client-architect relationship would be unique. The client was her husband.

Having enjoyed living in Regal Heights Village with their two children since 2013, the couple found their house was starting to buckle from the pressure of the COVID lockdown. “We lived hard in our house, like everybody else,” Bogoch says.

No substantial changes had been made to it since the 1990s, and the kitchen cabinets were “literally falling off.” The couple considered replacing the cabinets and making their uninviting basement seem “a little less haunted.”

Bogoch had a bold thought: they “might as well tear the roof off, blow out the back, dig the basement and keep pretty much nothing but two walls and some stained-glass windows.”

The project ballooned. One principle guided it: transform the home into a refuge of calm. Keeping tones muted and finishes natural, Myers worked with Toronto firm ATBuild to create a serene, understated space. White oak floors run throughout, evoking the spalike atmosphere Bogoch craved.

Natural light was key. A large skylight above the main staircase floods light from the second storey to the first, while small lights highlight the architectural form by night. A skylight brightens the new bathroom added for the couple’s growing daughters. “What teenage girl wants to share a bathroom with their father?” Bogoch asks.

A 460-square-foot addition at the back opened up the kitchen and family area and extended the master bedroom above. The bedroom features a large picture window framing an ivory silk lilac tree, a haven for birds and small animals. “It’s my own little tree house,” says Myers.

In the once-spooky basement, Myers raised the ceiling by a foot-and-a-half, creating a 1,000-square-foot lower level. It includes a bedroom for visiting family and ample storage for skis, hockey gear, golf clubs and ice-climbing equipment. “Joanne made so much storage ...,” says Bogoch. At six-foot-three, he no longer has to “keep [his] chin to [his] chest to walk through.”

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Bogoch really wanted a wood-burning stove. “When it’s cold out and you throw an actual piece of wood into something and set up a blaze — there’s nothing like it,” he says. “Having a quiet space to run away to is important.”

Says Myers: “There are only so many things you can control in this world. I’m happy the kids can come home and have a safe haven.”

Bogoch says the results feel unbelievable. “I have impostor syndrome.”

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