

HAMILTON MAGAZINE'S Interiors

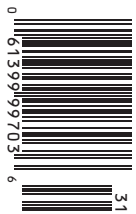
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ing to add a slice of
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from our favourite
designers and shops?



MEET THE DESIGNER



Krista Marie Salter - Interior Design Consultant at *kmsalter design* and blogger behind *The Reno Projects*. Krista draws from her personal renovation experience to help clients tackle the design quandaries in their space and create interiors that reflect their lifestyle.

How would you describe your design aesthetic?

I am a form-follows-function designer. I strip down a design to be practical first, and then focus on making it aesthetically pleasing second. Residential design always has the looming idea of resale behind every design, so I have to make sure a space is timeless, yet still reflects my client's personality and style. I also enjoy renovating, creating new from old. I love trying to mix and match my client's current possessions with more up-to-date pieces.

What is the most rewarding aspect of your job as a designer?

Definitely the "after"! There is something so rewarding about seeing your 2D vision come to life in real space. I am often in awe with how well things turn

out and how many talented people make it happen. All I can ask for is a happy client.

What is your favourite project to date?

My own renovation holds a special place in my heart because of the blood, sweat and tears I put into the place. It was a transformation that was truly the most rewarding because I get to live in it! It is completely "me" and my style: rustic details, original floors and light walls with lots of art.

What does the future look like for kmsalter design?

My hope is to help restore and beautify Hamilton, one house at a time. My partner, Hamilton Holmes, and I are also working on a collaborative furniture line for smaller space living.



CENTRO GARDEN

437 Brant Street, Burlington

Spring gets us thinking about gardens, outdoor living and all things green. But why not bring the outside inside? Centro Garden is one of our favourite Burlington shops with a plant-centric culture. The passion of Jason Pepetone and Jennifer Klassen, this general store is the perfect spot to find fresh ideas for combining art and design with your indoor and outdoor gardens. If you feel like livening up your space with fresh green arrangements, Centro Garden is offering Spring workshops for creating your own terrariums or designing your own fresh bulb planter. centrogarden.com



MIKE MEILER WOODWORKING

We love this wooden growth chart designed and crafted by Mike Meiler Woodworking out of Dundas. You can fix them to a wall for years of recording the growth of your family and personalize the chart by adding the names and the heights of family members. The modern design and colour options will suit the decor of any room and the heirloom quality will ensure each chart develops its own character and colouring as it ages. They are certain to make a memorable keepsake for any family. Available at Branch Design, 850 King St. W., Hamilton.

REKINDLE HOME

Spruce up your home and breathe new life into your furniture this season. Stephanie Hunter's upcycling concept allows you to refurbish home furnishings with custom refinishing and upholstery suited to your taste. We appreciate that she uses environmentally-conscious products and processes. To give you an idea, instead of sanding, she uses a biodegradable stripper. Each piece is refinished by hand so the result is a truly unique, artisan finish. Stephanie takes custom orders or you can visit her shop online at rekindlehome.com





The Reno Project

A thirty-something, young professional's guide to your first renovation

As a child, I loved to accompany my parents on Sunday afternoon drives around old neighbourhoods to admire the houses. I dreamt of what the houses looked like inside, and the character they held within.

When I decided to search for my first home, I chose Hamilton's Locke Street neighbourhood to explore some of those older houses. Durand had the perfect blend I was looking for: a mix of dishevelled exteriors next to newly cleaned up facades, a downtown lifestyle with a small town feel, and close proximity to the highway. I had a list of must-haves that I did not want to compromise on, and as an Interior Design consultant, I wanted to spoil myself with some luxuries I have given to so many of my clients. My house needed to include a driveway, a basement for storage, outdoor space, a room for a home office, and a decent size bedroom for a roommate. As a thirty-something, young professional, renting one of the rooms was a way to afford and maintain the house on my own. I decided to keep my mortgage low and invest time and creativity into an older house, rather than to buy one that was move-in

ready. Still, I had to be realistic about my financial limits during my house hunt. Over a three month period, I visited many homes in the cut throat Durand neighbourhood until I found the one that suited my needs. Although rough around the edges, I knew this home would not last long on the market. It was a 1930s, 1,000 square foot, two bedroom, one bath, brick home with a gambrel roof and front porch; and it fit perfectly into my budget. After a positive home inspection and visit from architect, John Capponi of Capponi Lacroix Design Group Ltd., the renovation planning process began.

To jump-start the project, I wanted to begin space planning as soon as possible, so I made sure to take all imperative measurements on my last visit to the house before I took possession. The layout was a challenge based on my zoning restrictions and budget. However, with the help of my architect, we were able to nail down a functional design. On top of gutting most of the original house, we proposed a plan for a 500 square foot, two-story addition, consisting of a living room and master bedroom. We decided to remove an old kitchen addition, and relocate the kitchen to the existing living room space. Updates were a must. I decided to improve on the dou-



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ble brick exterior insulation, add recessed lighting, remove outdated wall panelling, refinish the existing hardwood floor, install new windows, re-route and update the HVAC system, install an alarm system, and add surround sound speakers on the whole main floor. No small list!

Before renovating, I had to ensure I had my A-team in line to cover all the necessary skills to complete this project. To keep costs lower, I asked friends and family members to help wherever possible. This reno was essentially another full time job for me, and I needed help to pull it off. I quickly realized that a renovation was a combination of favours from generous people and learning new skills. I learned to be flexible, patient, and resourceful throughout the project, and it's still a work in progress. Within a four month timeline, we were able to make the house move-in ready, though areas of the house were still incomplete. Anyone who has lived through a renovation knows that this is no small feat! Work continued after I moved in, and the kitchen renovation alone took an additional 4 months. And, if you notice, the landscaping is still not done. Rome wasn't built in a day! A home develops with time, which is something I always remind my clients. For once, it truly applied to me. I was able to accomplish everything on my must-have list by being practical, committing to the project, and doing much of the hands-on work myself. We literally painted for two weeks straight. Today my house is petite yet cozy, with the character of a century home, but the perks of a modern build. After firsthand experience during an intense renovation process, I encourage anyone thinking about a similar undertaking to consider the following concepts before embarking on your first renovation:

Start small. Additions are not for the faint of heart. I would advise any first time renovator to start small and dream big. Instead of adding square footage, improve surface aesthetics and finishes. Consider updating elements such as tiling, paint, cabinetry, or light and plumbing fixtures. These will give you the best bang for your buck and avoid a tremendous amount of stress that structural changes can cause.

Do your homework. Make sure you research the possibilities your house has to offer. If you dream of an open concept living space, it may not be attainable. Call in the experts, such as an architect, to educate you on what's possible in the house. Century home



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layouts are trickier to alter and you may not want to disturb the structure, as it has settled over decades. Also, many houses have double bricked exteriors, which can cause issues when re-routing heating and electrical. This was true in my pint-sized house. I could not remove any interior walls as they housed all the plumbing and electrical needed for the second floor.

Have a timeline. Often, you hear people complaining that their renovations took a lot longer than anticipated. This happens for many reasons, but a major factor is that there is no firm end date for the project. Things such as permits, drawings, and lead times tend to run longer than expected, so plan accordingly. Once the legal issues are complete, set a timeline for your tradesmen. Renovating has a domino effect, so you don't want one trade to delay the others.

Embrace the old character. Personally, I chose to move into a century home because I enjoyed the character it embodied. The classic details were elements that I wanted to remain: brick walls, coal burning fireplace with a cracked painted mantle, old doors and hardware, and the original hardwood floors were many of the pieces that stayed true to the original house. Not only did they add authenticity, they also helped save money overall. A little elbow grease to make these elements shine can go a long way!

Improve the basics but don't overvalue your house. We all want the modern perks in a house, but don't forget your house cannot supersede the value of your neighbourhood. Improve on areas that will give back to you upon resale. I invested in new plumbing, a sewer backup valve, insulating the home properly, adding lighting and a new kitchen. These upgrades not only help the house function better, but are beneficial to the maintenance and aesthetics that new home buyers are looking for.

Renovations can be scary, but what makes them run smoothly is being prepared and knowing what you are working towards. Reviving an old home provides a sense of accomplishment and offers a livable, cultural space in the heart of many fabulous mature neighbourhoods. Hopefully through my experience, this will help prepare you if you choose to embark on a reno such as this.

For more details on the renovation of Krista's home, read her blog, *therenoprojects.blogspot.ca*.

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