



STORY **JOYCE TURNER-GIONET**
PHOTOGRAPHY **SANDY MACKAY**
FLOWERS **TERRACOTTA HOME & GARDEN**

KING CITY *Glam*

Peter and Ellen McCarthy could be a poster couple for 'How to Design, Build and Decorate Your 12,000 Square-Foot Estate Home.' Most couples have trouble hanging wallpaper without disagreeing. However, Peter and Ellen are not most people. What they have in common, perhaps the secret to their success, is an uncommon level of energy, drive, confidence and creativity.

Soaring ceilings with intricate architectural details are just one of the home's magnificent features.



Ellen loves to cook and entertain so the kitchen is the most important room in the house. Ellen wanted glamour and says, "It delivers in spades."

Peter, president of **Hard at Work Inc.** built the home and worked with a design company on this open-concept French country home in Kingscross Estates that he and Ellen designed. "I wanted to build something that would be here when we're gone, quality that reflects old-world craftsmanship," he says.

No stranger to exterior architecture, Ellen's family business, **DuRock Alfacing International Limited**, is a leading manufacturer of top-quality products in the field of exterior insulation finish systems and acrylic stucco coatings as well as interior paints.

Ellen is the creative muse behind the strikingly glam interior. "If I can't find what I want, I'll make it," she asserts, pointing to a fairy tale, organza lace pintuck counterpane she whipped up in an evening.

You know this home is going to be a showpiece the moment you step inside to see the spectacular wrought-iron California wraparound staircase by Alta Forge Railing.

Each twisting vine and petal was hand-formed involving century presses and a kiln imported from Russia.

"The most important aspect in our home was the kitchen, its size and the way it functions" says Ellen. "I love to cook and we entertain regularly, sometimes we've had 100 people here. It's also the place where family comes together." They left the kitchen design to the experts at **Prestige Kitchens & Bath** (a division of **Unique Store Fixtures Ltd**). Designer **Marco Corrente** is a hobby chef. "Who better to design a kitchen?" asks Peter. As for Ellen: "I wanted glamour," she laughs. Glamour it delivers, in spades.

A magnificent front door and trim from **Balmoral Lumber** opens into the grand hallway. Presenting both traditional and modern elements, it's a transitional space. At 13 feet, the ceiling height is three times counter height. Creamy White Down cabinetry and 12-panel, white-waffle ceiling prevent the space from becoming cavernous.

"We accentuated ceiling height by building

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in tall vitrines,” says Marco. “The island was sized to accommodate everything an inspired chef desires, including four-bin recycling, an organic waste station and knife and custom cutlery drawers with LED lighting. We created a drawer-like pass-through system in the walk-in pantry allowing items to be placed into cupboards from inside the pantry. From the kitchen, you open the cupboard and the item is waiting.”

Despite its name, the Antique Brown, leathered granite island is actually black, and edges were double-nosed for elegance. White Taj Mahal granite flanks the cooking area. The intricately-crafted stone range-hood was designed and installed by **Parsiena Design Inc.** The interplay of light and dark in cabinetry and counters lends modern appeal. Bronze metal ties the space together: oil-rubbed bronze hardware, bronze faucets and pasta pot filler in the French farmhouse style. Bronze birdcage chandeliers hang from knotted ropes, an inspired alternative to traditional chandeliers. As with all the lighting, they’re from **Prima Lighting.**

The lustrous transparency of mother of pearl has been sought in jewelry for thousands of years. On the backsplash it’s pure glam, or as Ellen might say: “room jewelry.” Hundreds of Boutique White mother-of-pearl tiles deliver a shimmering iridescent scrim.

In the great room, with its 20-foot ceilings,

TOP LEFT AND LEFT: Details, from the stone fireplace to the hints of yellow, layer the great room with ambiance. **ABOVE:** Ellen added a hint of shimmer in the dining room with a magnificent gold and silver chandelier.

yellow rules. Inspiration came from the sofa’s florals. “I love to play with fabrics, mixing patterns, colours and textures,” says Ellen. She also loves metals. Satin, linen, velvet, leather and the glamour of metal-beaded cushions beautify the space. A leather ottoman is inset with Swarovski crystals. Crystals are Ellen’s design signature, popping up in delightfully unexpected places. She also mixes eras. A silver antique Victorian side table separates two sensational side chairs – a modern take on the French Bergere chair, their upholstered satin also hints at art deco.

On the great room’s far wall, the **Canamould Extrusions Inc.** limestone mantel was Peter’s design, installed the day before Christmas by Peter and project manager **Jane Lesperance.** The couple refer to her as G.I. Jane – tiny, but tough, it seems there’s nothing she can’t turn her hand to on a job site. What’s inside the walls is as important as what is on the outside. All the HVAC mechanical was designed and installed by **Joe Di Donato of Thermal Concepts Ltd.**

“Gold is back in a big way,” says Ellen. In the formal dining room, gold-tone silk and velvet chairs share the space with captain’s chairs from **Zilli Home Interiors.** On the back of the chair, gold and silver damask print is punctuated with pewter studs. Silk drapery panels are from **Trillium Window Coverings.** The Italian-walnut table with two-tone inlay is from **Frini Furniture** and extends to seat 22.

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Custom glass and iron railings are a stunning focal point throughout the space. **ABOVE:** The elegant dining table extends to seat 22 people for easy entertaining. **LEFT:** A pretty powder room glimmers with textured wallpaper and a mirrored vanity.

feature



FAR LEFT: The master bedroom is Hollywood glam with soft colours and draped linens. **LEFT:** The walk-in closet houses Ellen's treasured doll collection. **BELOW:** Floor-to-ceiling Calacatta marble wraps the master en suite in luxury. Fixtures from Amati Bath Centre complete the space.

In the master retreat, a 200 sq. ft. walk-in closet connects to the master en suite. Peter encouraged Ellen to make it her own. "With five additional full bathrooms, I'm spoiled for choice," he says. It's a quiet, feminine space with bold strokes of glam. Crystal knobs and scalloped Venetian mirrors topped with mini chandeliers dressed up white Caesarstone® countertops. The Italian Carrara Marble Hearts mosaic rug, Ellen's design, supplied by **Moscone Tile & Marble**, softens the expanse of Calacatta porcelain on the floor and walls. Angled in a corner, a freestanding soaker tub fills from the ceiling.

Asked what he loves most about the house he helped build, Peter's site superintendent, **Conrad Kijewski**, thinks for a moment: "Everything," he decides. It's a showpiece – what's not to like, it's spectacular in every aspect. But it's a showpiece that has its priorities right. It remains a place you want to go home to, a place to relax with family and friends.

Despite their extraordinary drive and energy, Peter and Ellen are laid back about everyday living. They don't fuss; they enjoy their home. Lexi, their sweet Maltese terrier illustrates the point: She hops on and off chairs and sofas and cuddles up beside guests no matter where they're seated and no one ever says: "Lexi, get off the furniture!" **OH**



This home is currently for sale with Tara McCarthy of Re/Max Realty Specialists Inc. Brokerage.