

WEEKEND LIVING

An expansive iron chandelier plays up the drama of the double-height ceiling in the living room. **Construction**, Construction FRX; **chandelier**, **sofas**, **coffee table**, **armchairs**, RH; white **vases**, Crate & Barrel; **side table**, 2 Barn Owls; custom **mirrors**, Vitreerie VM.

OPPOSITE: Homeowner Natalie Morrisette in the entrance, where oversized, symmetrical planters and lanterns add to the grandeur. **Planters**, **lanterns**, RH.



• FALL DECORATING •
The New Old World

LA DOLCE VITA

A GRACIOUS LAKESIDE HOME IN HUDSON, QUE.,
CONJURES A TUSCAN ESCAPE.



Text by IRIS BENAROIA | Photography by ANDRÉ RIDER

A sofa reupholstered in green velvet echoes the leaves outside. Landscape artwork and objects look collected over time. **Black-framed artwork** by Robert Gérard; **amber vase, bowl**, Zara Home; **floor lamp**, RH; **drapery and sofa fabric** by Kravet, C&M Textiles.



ABOVE: Homeowners Natalie Morrisette and Marcel Lessard at their secluded beach on Lake of Two Mountains. “We entertain on the beach a lot during the summer,” says Natalie.

BELOW: The den, done up in a moody brown-grey grasscloth, is a favourite spot for family hangouts. “We added wooden beams and linen drapery for a farmhouse touch,” says designer Alexandre Blazys. **Sconces**, RH; **ottoman**, Pottery Barn; **left throw pillow**, Mikko Espresso & Boutique; **patterned throw pillow**, HomeSense.

SOME PLACES ARE SIMPLY UNFORGETTABLE — whether it’s the architecture, landscape or the late-afternoon light, there’s something that stays with you long after you’ve left. For homeowners Natalie Morrisette and Marcel Lessard, that place is Tuscany. After visiting the Italian region five times, the couple was enamoured with the towns of Siena and Montalcino, with their vineyards and abundance of olive, apricot and prune trees. The uncomplicated beauty of ancient Tuscan villas also drew them in, where the walls are limewashed and afternoons are lazed away on sofas the colour of almond biscotti. “We love the natural elements in the architecture there,” says Natalie. “The wood, the stones — even the wallpaper that has a straw-like texture. It’s *rustique*, as we say in French, but in an elegant and timeless sense.”

Natalie and Marcel — who have a 12-year-old daughter, Alice — were inspired to replicate that mood at their house in Hudson, a bucolic area 50 minutes from Montreal. Though the 4,000-square-foot home is blessed with stunning lake and forest views, when they purchased it, the interiors were bland. Longing for a warmer,





ABOVE: The forest scene beyond the kitchen windows offers an inspiring view while cooking. Crema Delicato marble is a beautiful upgrade on the island, which was previously topped with wood.

Stools, pendants, RH; tray, napkins, Crate & Barrel; tea towels, Mikko Espresso & Boutique; bowl (on tray), Zara Home.

LEFT: The dining area's slipcovered chairs are on casters so they're easy to manoeuvre. **Vase, napkins, Crate & Barrel; chairs, table, light fixture, planter, artwork, RH; bowl, À Table Tout le Monde.**



The principal bedroom is lavished with Italian touches. Grasscloth wallpaper and a handwoven rug are comfortable and enveloping. **Bed, nightstands, chandelier, stools, RH; wallpaper, Phillip Jeffries; rug, The Red Carpet & Rug Company; lamps, quilt, Pottery Barn; drapery fabric and green pillow fabric by Kravet, rust pillow fabric by Theo Decor, C&M Textiles.**

WHEN IN HUDSON

Must-see outposts to visit in this pretty Quebec town.

EAT: MIKKO ESPRESSO & BOUTIQUE

No need to sacrifice your morning flat white in this small town. Mikko Espresso & Boutique is staffed by experienced baristas who won't blink an eye at orders for a cortado or a dirty chai. The shop also sells a range of local decorative items inspired by Nordic and Japanese design.



SLEEP: THE AUBERGE WILLOW INN

With a pedigree stretching back to 1820, The Auberge Willow Inn remains a Hudson landmark even after it was razed by fire in 2016. A Montreal couple (who had their first date at the inn), resurrected it in 2017, kitting out the 10 renovated bedrooms with modern conveniences such as Bluetooth speakers, USB ports and flatscreens. From the back porch, enjoy unspoiled views of manicured lawns and Lake of Two Mountains.



SHOP: 2 BARN OWLS

Located in a historical red barn, this gallery and shop is run by artist Nancy Jane Farnum, who crafts functional objects and wall tiles in concrete, and Mavis Elisabeth Martin, whose work often riffs on country motifs such as hens and horses, but with an industrial edge. The rustic fare is augmented by Quebec pine furnishings, jute pillows and vintage finds.



Text by Wendy Jacob (Women in Hudson)/Photography by Maxime Desbiens (Mikko Espresso & Boutique, 2 Barn Owls)/courtesy of Five Pound Media (The Auberge Willow Inn)



"We added the archway to imbue a European vibe," says Alexandre. "The copper tub cost a fortune, but it's an amazing showpiece." **Floor tile**, Ciot; **wall tile**, Italbec; **tub** by Slik Portfolio, Ramacieri Soligo; **bench, sconces**, RH; **drapery fabric** by Kravet, C&M Textiles; **mirror**, Ô Miroir.



Timeworn pieces, such as a Grecian bust, luxe brass tray and apothecary tinctures, reinforce the home's old world flair. **White paper planter**, Mikko Espresso & Boutique.



"We like to punctuate a traditional environment with black elements," says Alexandre. **Armchair, floor lamp, ottoman, bust**, RH.

homey feel, they enlisted the help of Montreal designers Alexandre Blazys and Benoit Gérard of BlazysGérard.

"We had to scale it down to make it cosier," says Alexandre. "We rebuilt certain walls to better define the dining room and the kitchen, and we re-centred the living area, giving it a down-to-earth ethos and adding texture through textiles."

The homage to Tuscany comes through in the designers' use of marble, exposed ceiling beams, copper, limestone, wrought iron and a renaissance palette of burnt orange, bottle green and black. Graceful archways, similar to ones the couple spotted in Italy, are a recurring design feature and bring subtle grandeur and softness. In the living room, arches are repeated in the nooks that flank the fireplace, which received a new stone surround and a relief painted vanilla during the makeover.

Because Natalie loves to prepare Mediterranean dishes for parties, the kitchen was an important focus of the renovation — there's no messing around when cooking for a crowd. Alexandre and Benoit didn't demolish the space; instead, they came up with clever tweaks to make the kitchen more simpatico with the rest of the house. That meant painting the cabinetry a creamy colour, installing wooden beams and refinishing the floors in an amber tone. Now, when fresh tomato sauce simmers on the stove and the breeze ruffles through the trees visible from an arched window, it's not hard to feel transported back to the place that started it all: a sun-dappled farmhouse in the Italian countryside. **H&H**