



LEFT
Layers of moulding add architectural interest.

RIGHT
The kitchen is open to the family room to add visual space.



Getting Great Grades

High ceilings and skylights make this narrow city home seem bright and spacious

BY Connie Adair PHOTOS BY Mark Rosenberg

Living is easy in Mark Rosenberg's new house but his beautiful space didn't happen by chance. He planned every detail, long before construction began, with an eye to creating a timeless residence that would look good, and be practical, functional and a joy to live in.

Rosenberg, a builder who has specialized in infill housing in Toronto since 1980, chose the lot because of its location close to main thoroughfares. "The trend a decade ago was to leave the city and move to the suburbs, but some people are coming back to the city and they want to be able to leave their car at home and go for a stroll."

The 26x85-foot property is within walking

distance of bustling Yonge Street and a variety of amenities. It's easy to "experience summer in the city," he says. That said, Rosenberg also wanted a driveway and a garage, and planned the house accordingly.

The garage is at grade level because Toronto bylaws no longer allow for below-grade garages, so that raised the level of the main floor. Instead of one long run of exterior stairs, he opted to have a half dozen Indiana limestone stairs outside leading to a porch with columns.

The front door has a transom to allow natural light into the foyer, which has 12-foot ceilings and a coat closet. From the foyer, six interior stairs lead to the main floor.

Instead of a completely open-concept main level, a wall separates the living/dining room from the kitchen and family room. A wide opening between the rooms keeps the view open to the French doors and fireplace at the back of the house, but having the kitchen behind the wall keeps meal preparation mess out of sight from guests in the living/dining room.

The living/dining room features mouldings, which Rosenberg says aren't exorbitant in price, but add a customized look. Walls, ceilings, details and trim are painted for a subtle look. The same off-white is used throughout the house. "Carrying finishes, themes and paint colours throughout the



house create a cohesive look," he says.

Prefinished ash flooring is also a highlight. Stairs and handrails are stained to match the floors and are teamed-up with white pickets for a fresh look.

Ten-foot ceilings, large windows and full-height French doors ensure the main floor is bright. Using lots of glass is especially important when there are no windows on the sides of a house, he says. "The home was designed to bring the outdoors in. It also has skylights in the bathrooms and hall."

It's a common mistake not to include rough-ins at the beginning

In the kitchen, function is key. Rosenberg designed the kitchen around the island, which has a Caesarstone waterfall countertop. "Caesarstone is indestructible and comes in a variety of colours and finishes," he says, adding you can put a hot pan on it without damaging the surface and that it also withstands wine and coffee spills.

Caesarstone is a low-maintenance option, and low maintenance is always appreciated, he says. The kids' bathrooms also have Caesarstone vanity tops.

The kitchen island includes a sink, lots of prep space, a dishwasher and a garbage/recycling centre, as well as a breakfast bar. The cooking area is behind the island so the chef can turn from the island to the

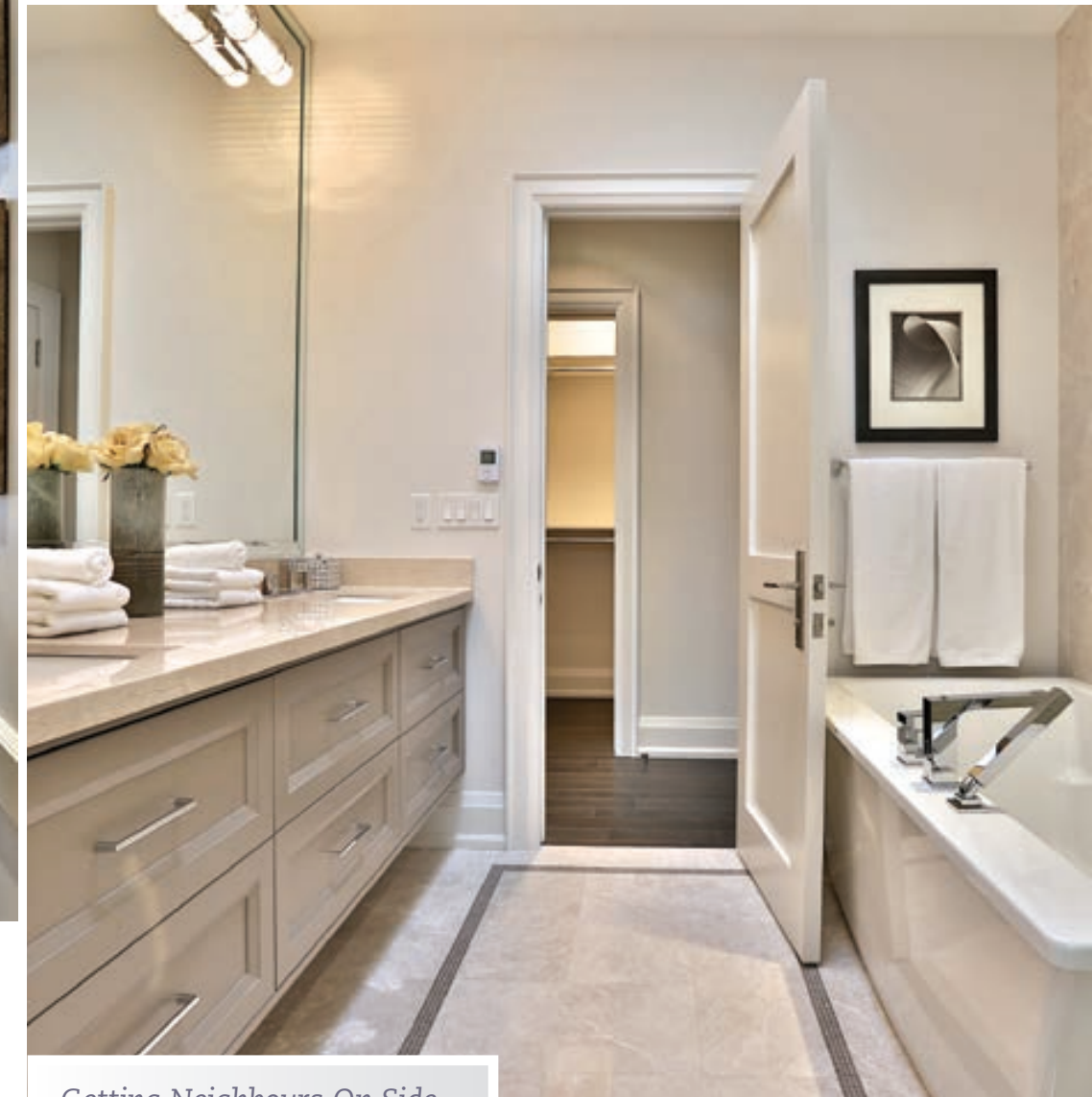


TOP LEFT
Plenty of windows front and back bring as much light in as possible.

ABOVE
A few steps up from the front door leads into the living room where large windows bring in natural light.

LEFT
Using the same hardwood flooring throughout provides a seamless look between living spaces.

RIGHT
Using tile to make an interesting border gives the illusion of an area rug in the bathroom.



Getting Neighbours On Side

The 2,000-square-foot home has a traditional exterior with "lots of attention to detail, hence all the custom moulding work on the outside," he says. It blends with the established neighbourhood.

Rosenberg is a proponent of detailed planning to minimize or eliminate problems before they arise. He drew up a proposal about the house and had a drawing of what it would look like and how it would sit on the lot. Then he knocked on neighbours' doors. "I introduced myself and showed them my plan."

He says he expected some resistance from long-time neighbours, thinking they might be adverse to change, but "everyone was on side."

six-burner gas range. All of the appliances are integrated.

"Off-white cabinets were extended as high as they could be because storage is at a premium in a smaller home," he says. An additional wall of pantry/storage space is in the family room.

In many newer homes, second-floor ceilings are eight or nine feet high but Rosenberg has a trick. He incorporated usually wasted attic space to provide coffered ceilings in the bedrooms and hallways. "There's minimal expense involved and it's a great way to open up rooms," he says.

Regardless of the size of the bathrooms, each has a vanity to provide storage space. Rosenberg used floating vanities for a more contemporary look. Each bathroom also has heated floors and a frameless shower



He incorporated usually wasted attic space to provide coffered ceilings in the bedrooms and hallways

TOP

ABOVE

A vaulted ceiling in the master bedroom adds interest and makes the room appear larger.

enclosure.

The master en suite bathroom has twin sinks, marble countertops and a large shower with a regular shower head, as well as a rain shower. A soaker tub offers a place to relax and unwind.

In the master bedroom, bumping out a wall to create a bay window created space for a sitting area and brings in additional light. Pot lights are used throughout the main floor, and on the cathedral ceiling in the master bedroom.

Rosenberg says he prefers the use of lamps, reserving pot lights to “light up features instead of to light up a room.” Controls are at the entrance and at the bedside for convenience.

The lower level has a nanny’s room and a great recreation room with windows

looking out on to the backyard. The beauty of the design is that the house sits up higher because the garage is at grade. That means the basement is 12 to 14 feet high, and allows for larger windows.

Not to be forgotten are energy-efficient features, including a high-efficiency gas furnace and a heat recovery ventilation system.

The lower level also has a roughed-in home theatre system in the recreation room. He also roughed-in wiring for a home automation system.

Rosenberg says it’s important to rough-in as many features as possible. If you can’t afford to install every feature when the house is being built, it will be easier and less costly to rough-in and finish later than to retrofit. “It’s a common mistake not to include rough-ins at the beginning.” **TC**