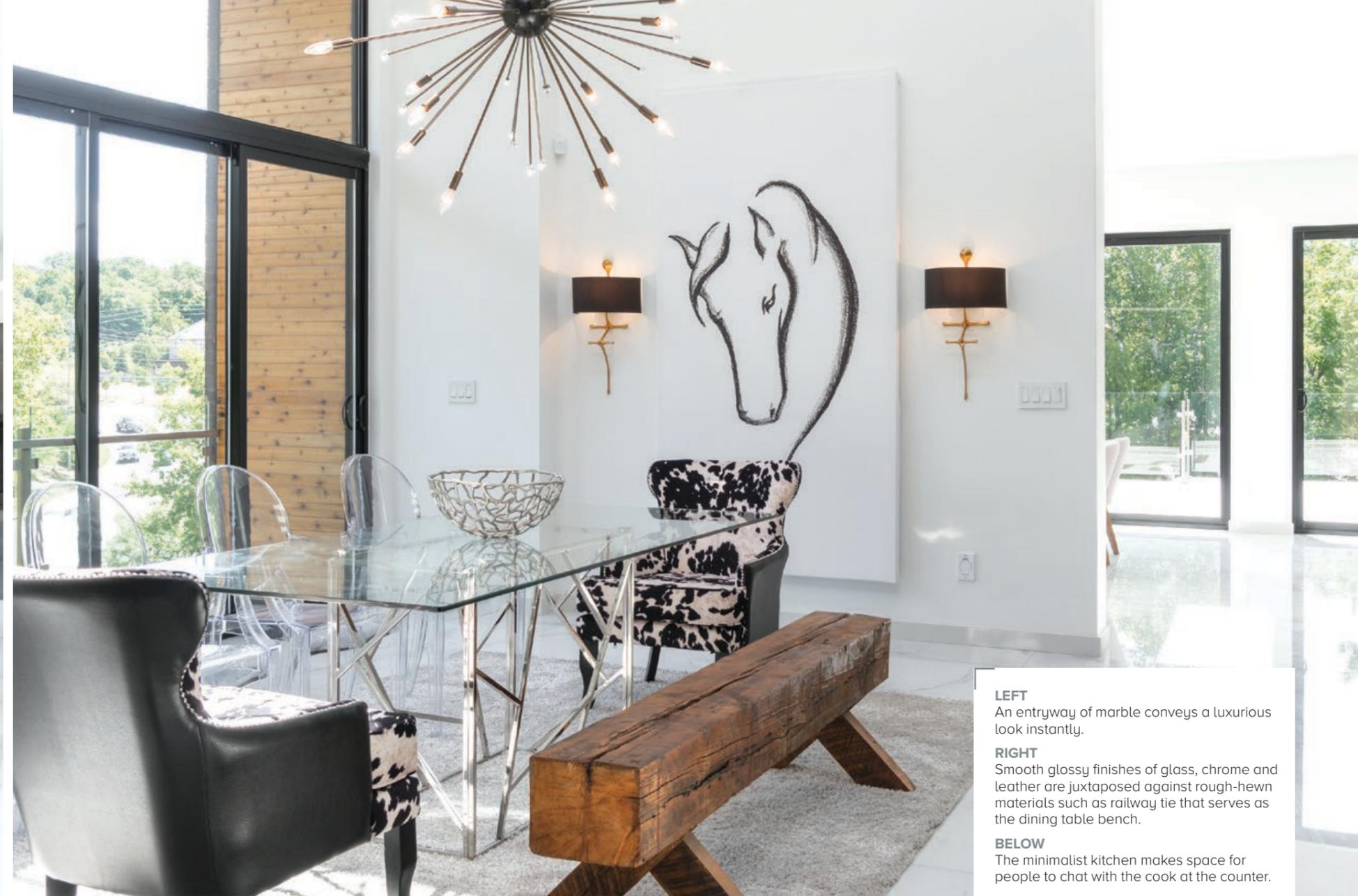


# SETTLING INTO THE SETTING

This TV show agent wanted a home worthy of entertaining

BY *Connie Adair*



**LEFT**  
An entryway of marble conveys a luxurious look instantly.

**RIGHT**  
Smooth glossy finishes of glass, chrome and leather are juxtaposed against rough-hewn materials such as railway tie that serves as the dining table bench.

**BELOW**  
The minimalist kitchen makes space for people to chat with the cook at the counter.

“No house should ever be on a hill or on anything. It should be of the hill. Belonging to it. Hill and house should live together each the happier for the other.”

– Architect Frank Lloyd Wright

And so the words of the great architect were taken to heart by Frank Lloyd Wright fan/homeowner Carlo Rinomato, who built a 5,000-square-foot home designed to be at one with its setting. It allows the “outdoors in and the inside out, providing a complete flow and making every window a canvas,” Rinomato says.

It took one year to design and three years to build House of the Hill, a modern home of black brick, stucco, cedar and glass. “I design everything to be sexy and cool. This house is sexy and very cool,” he says.

Another influence was movie spy James Bond (the Sean Connery version). Rinomato says he thought about what the Bond actor would like then designed an ultra-chic house

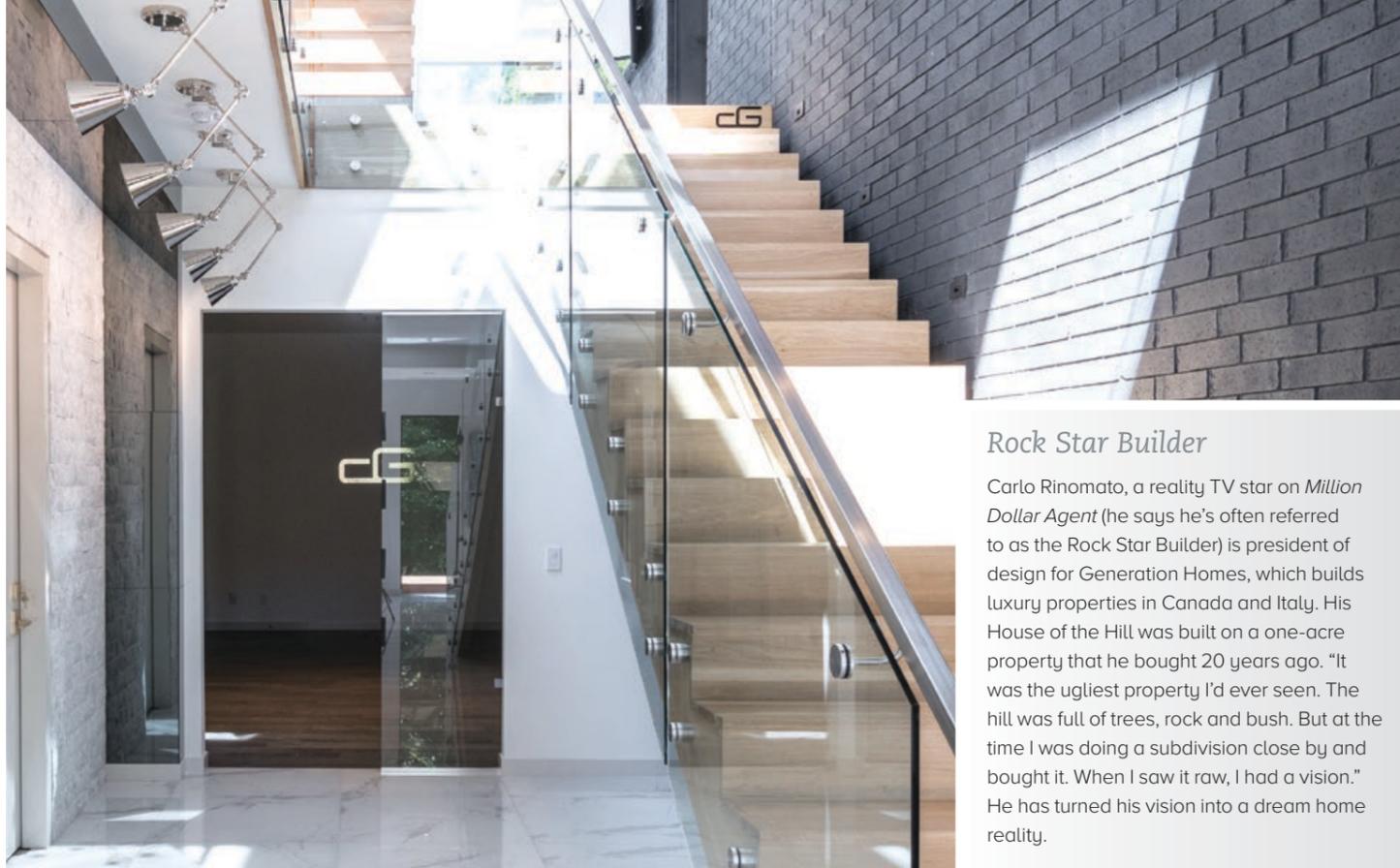
Connery would love. “That’s the easiest way to describe it,” Rinomato says.

The masculine exterior sports a long-lasting metal roof and sleek black brick walls accented with cedar and punctuated by NanaWall folding glass wall systems that open the indoors to the thousands of square feet of cedar decks that surround the house.

The one-acre property in Vaughan, Ontario has tiered stone retaining walls, a helicopter landing pad and beautifully manicured grounds overseen by multiple balconies, including one that’s 25 feet high, he says. “You can see for miles and miles.”

The more feminine interior uses a combination of textures -- rough stone and brick, smooth glossy finishes and





**Rock Star Builder**

Carlo Rinomato, a reality TV star on *Million Dollar Agent* (he says he's often referred to as the Rock Star Builder) is president of design for Generation Homes, which builds luxury properties in Canada and Italy. His House of the Hill was built on a one-acre property that he bought 20 years ago. "It was the ugliest property I'd ever seen. The hill was full of trees, rock and bush. But at the time I was doing a subdivision close by and bought it. When I saw it raw, I had a vision." He has turned his vision into a dream home reality.



**TOP LEFT**

Smooth clear glass meets rough exposed brick for a staircase that's interesting to climb.

**BOTTOM LEFT**

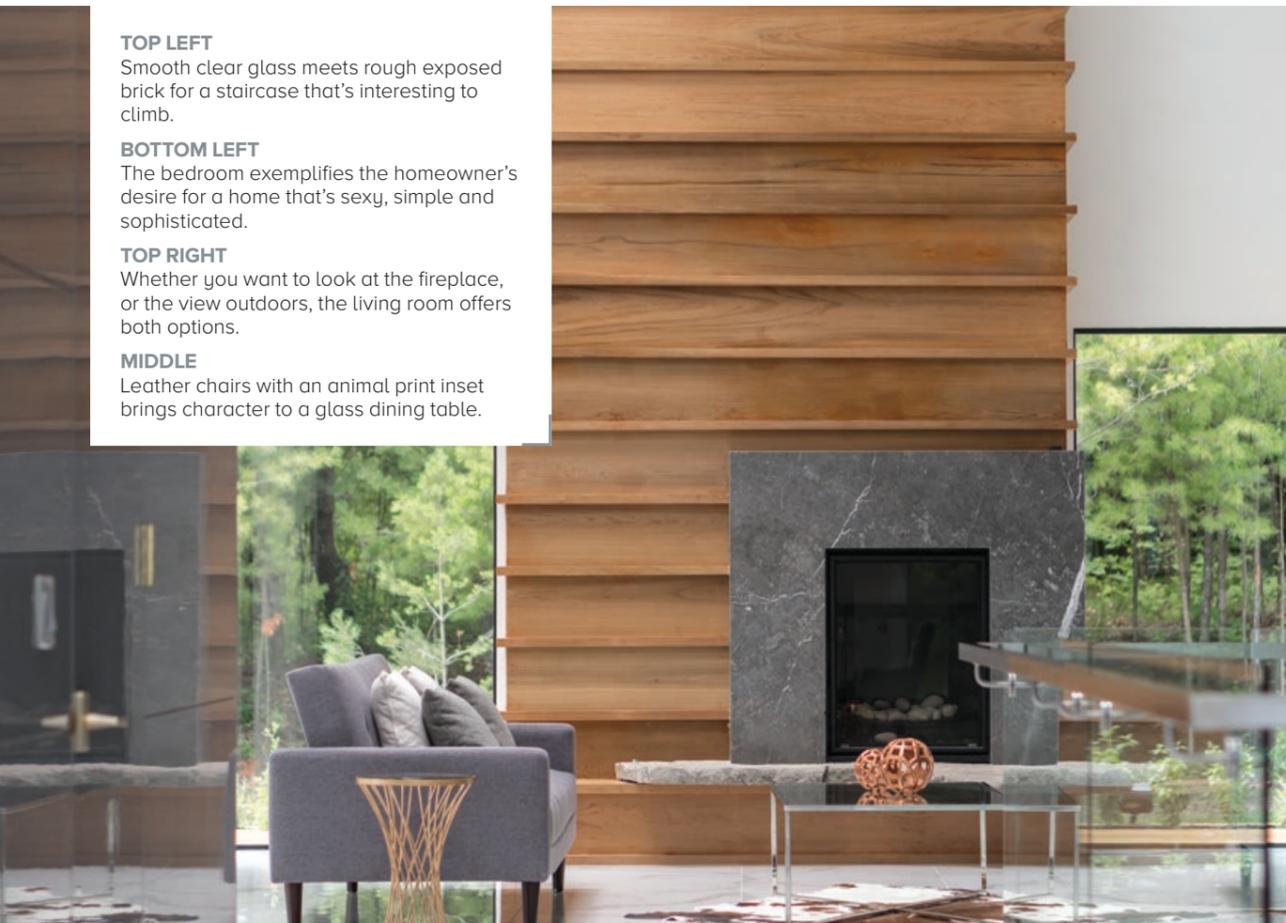
The bedroom exemplifies the homeowner's desire for a home that's sexy, simple and sophisticated.

**TOP RIGHT**

Whether you want to look at the fireplace, or the view outdoors, the living room offers both options.

**MIDDLE**

Leather chairs with an animal print inset brings character to a glass dining table.



*There's a feeling when you come in, a feeling rather than a look. It's spiritual*

even a faux fur-panelled wall in the master bedroom. However, the star of every room is the view. Walls were kept to a minimum because Rinomato says, "Why look at a wall when you can look outside instead?" Structural walls were used to create bedrooms and living areas were left wide open.

Every room has a source of natural light, including large rectangular skylights that ensure there are no dark corners and allow for glimpses of the sky and stars, he says. "I want the the sun to act as the lighting."

Furnishings were also kept to a minimum. "I didn't want to block the view out a window by putting furniture in front of it."

Douglas fir beams stretch across cathedral ceilings. White walls are a clean backdrop to sculptural features such as the floor-to-ceiling wood-and-stone fireplace in the great room. Floors are white oversized polished porcelain tiles (heated at the entry) or solid maple. Upstairs bathrooms feature Calcutta marble.

The front door, under the main peak, opens

on to a cube of glass. Inside, the grand foyer is a sleek space that's pleasing and Zen, with its smooth, shiny floor and a dramatic black brick wall stretching to the cathedral ceiling on the upper level. Exterior materials, such as wood and brick are carried inside to further blur the line between inside and out.

Each of the three bedrooms suites is a 1,000-square-foot space that includes a kitchenette and an en suite bathroom. One bedroom suite also has access to the three-car garage.

Rinomato says that with the price of real estate, children may stay home longer and would appreciate their own self-contained space. "Upstairs has a 2,700-square-foot loft for Mom and Dad" and if the kids aren't living at home, the bedroom suites idea is perfect for guests. "It's a true celebrity home."

A staircase, looking sculptural against black brick, has a glass railing that leaves natural light and sightlines unimpeded. It leads to an impressive dining room that has ample space for a table for 10 and its own balcony.

## Celebrity Home

The kitchen is a beautiful work space that has a large island topped with natural stone, and walls of glass so the cook can enjoy the view. The high-gloss lacquer cabinets back on to an intriguing high-gloss grey lacquer box. It hides a washer/dryer, a powder room and pantry.

The master bedroom and a second bedroom, each with a walk-in closet and an en suite bathroom, are also on this level.

Every room on this level has access to the outside and the Asian-influenced cedar infinity deck.

A 915-square-foot terrace is above the garage. Accessible from the kitchen/dinette/living areas, it is the perfect entertaining space for mingling, cocktails and hors d'oeuvres or après dinner drinks.

Wanting every space to be totally usable, Rinomato built this house without a basement. "Basements are made for creepy crawlers. They have no use other than to put junk down there."

It wasn't a money-saving idea. "There was lots of engineering involved. In this case it was more expensive because of the weight of the house" and the necessary supports. The home has a geothermal heating/cooling system.

Throughout the house, he says, "We went the extra mile to get the true architectural flavour" of the mid-century home built to the standards people now expect. "Everything is customized. Nothing in the house is off the line," he says. "It's meticulously built. No on the spot decisions were made. Everything was carefully planned."

Rinomato joined forces with interior designer Lisa Renzetti-Fronte (who is also inspired by Wright) saying they worked well together, blending their ideas to create the spectacular home.

"There's a feeling when you come in, a feeling rather than a look. It's spiritual," he says. "I've done a lot houses, hundreds and hundreds, but I'm really proud of this one. It's exactly what I envisioned." 



### TOP LEFT

Windows in the kitchen are left unadorned so as to not obstruct the views.

### TOP RIGHT

A glass table allows you to see through it to the views beyond.

### BELOW

The home's exterior shows just how much natural light can enter the home.

