

# *Cozy* in the Country

OLD MEETS NEW IN THIS CUSTOM COUNTRY HOME ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TORONTO.

By Camellia Ghotbzadeh | Photography by Larry Arnal | Styling by Nikki Mobini

French patio doors open into the kitchen and dining room, which features antique cross-back wood chairs surrounding a wood-finish table as the central piece that ties the space together.



New furniture pieces and antique family heirlooms complement one another throughout the main space, creating a warm and welcoming ambience.



WHAT IF YOU HAD TO BUILD YOUR HOME WITHIN CITY GUIDELINES BUT STILL WANTED THE COZY AND COMFORTABLE VIBE OF A COTTAGE IN THE COUNTRY? That’s what builder and designer Nikki Mobini of Upside Development did with her custom-built country home on the outskirts of Toronto.

STARTING FROM SCRATCH

Starting with a one-story, 2,163-square-foot bungalow, Nikki decided to create a new place for her family to call home. The end product would be a two-story, 4,300-square-foot, custom-built home that combines modern utility and country charm.

The project started as a retrospect with the city of Richmond Hills. “Because of the zoning requirements, we were tied to a bit of square footage,” Nikki says. Even though the home’s footprint was constrained, Nikki still saw it as an opportunity to create a great space. Using the city’s guidelines, following the original home’s outline and inspired by the original floor plan, Nikki and her husband worked with what they had.

A DIFFERENT DIRECTION

To get the design concept they wanted, the couple brought in different aesthetics and pieces for the interiors. “My favorites became the roadmaps of the house,” Nikki says. Using her favorite pieces and for that extra country charm, Nikki

The open kitchen features Spanish tiles, perfect for high-traffic areas, along with high-quality, custom-made cabinets. The coffered wood ceiling adds further rustic character and dimension to the space, along with hanging pendants over a marble-topped island.







“What really brought in the country charm is *the tile and floor design.*”

For one of her daughters' rooms, Nikki used wallpaper with butterflies to add a playful yet elegant element to the space. “I really wanted to bring in that country charm, and wallpaper helps you do that,” Nikki says.



## Country Modern

**GIVE YOUR HOME THE MODERN, YET COZY, FEEL NIKKI MOBINI'S HOME FEATURES.**

- **LIGHT IT UP.** Illuminate and accentuate parts of a room by adding delicately designed and inviting lighting fixtures and pendants. Whether you decide to use a chandelier in the living room or a sconce on the porch, a little light can go a long way.
- **FACTOR IN FORM AND FUNCTION.** Utilize your home's space and tailor it to meet your needs. Ask yourself: Do you want a large, open area or an intricately designed, cozy space? Think about the form and function of your home and incorporate it into the final design and construction.
- **ADD WALLPAPER.** Intricately designed, beautiful wallpaper is the perfect backdrop to add that extra dose of country charm to any space. Look for designs that complement other pieces (like furniture and antiques) and will open, not overcrowd, your home.
- **DESIGN IN DIMENSIONS.** Play with different dimensions by experimenting with colors, adding textured elements, layering objects, wainscoting walls and creating coffered ceilings. Not only will it add depth and character to the area, but it can make a house feel like home.



Detailed wainscoting and salmon-colored walls are the perfect, charming country backdrops for Nikki's guest bedroom.

went in a different design and construction direction from her other projects. Normally, her firm does contemporary and modern design, but she decided to stick with a traditional country home—with some modern twists. The design concept plays with light from all angles, but also has structure and functionality as integral parts of the structure.

### NEW TOUCHES

Nikki made this house her own in an inviting way that imparts elegance, comfort and ease. Whether it was with extra illumination, an open kitchen or whimsical designs, the house has unique features that create a cozy, yet functional, ambience.

Lighting was a significant factor in the design. Nikki wanted to add illumination for a purpose. “For me, mood lighting is very important,” she says. Every lighting fixture, pendant and chandelier was put in place for a reason, whether to draw attention to the wood kitchen island, create a lighthearted mood, add accents to the bathroom or make her living room shine.

Along with lighting, other unique aspects of the home are the coffered ceilings in the kitchen. “The ceiling was a last-minute addition,” Nikki says. The coffered ceiling merges the inside of the house with the outside by adding dimension and depth to the space with that extra country element Nikki wanted. The guest areas and hallways also feature wainscoting, adding an elegant and sophisticated element.

### CHANGING IT UP

With changes in construction came changes to traditional design concepts. “We broke some norms,” Nikki says. The open kitchen concept is a prime example. Traditional cottages were made with separate seating areas: a family/dining area and a just-for-guests area. Nikki and her husband wanted to collapse and combine the two areas to create one large,



For one of her daughters' rooms, Nikki used wallpaper with butterflies to add a playful yet elegant element to the space. "I really wanted to bring in that country charm, and wallpaper helps you do that," Nikki says.

“We broke  
some  
norms.”

inviting space for their family and visitors. The open kitchen still maintains its prime location for cooking and entertaining. It's also the furthest point of the central space. "Although it was an open kitchen concept, the kitchen is still tucked away and gives privacy," Nikki says. Changes in construction, architectural style and design ultimately contributed to the new home's appeal and let the interiors take the stage. This allowed for Nikki's country style to shine through the modern construction.

Combining country charm with a functional design, Nikki Mobini created a house that reflects her experience in the field as well as her own individual design style. 🍷

SEE SHOPPING GUIDE, PAGE 128.

**[top]** The sleek white vanity adds a simple yet sophisticated feel to the lighter, polished surroundings of the master bathroom.

**[bottom]** Beautifully printed wallpaper, elaborate hexagonal-shaped Spanish tiling and a marbled vanity greet bathroom visitors. "What really brought in the country charm is the tile and floor design," Nikki says.

