

SUMMER 2018

STYLE ■ COMFORT ■ IDEAS ■ REAL ESTATE

ourhomes

T O R O N T O & Y O R K R E G I O N

MINIMALIST BEACHES BEAUTY

garden
PARTY

ICONIC BRAND
WITH MODERN STYLE

LUXE
yet casual
LIVING

plus
CALIFORNIA-COOL
DESIGN
LIGHT UP
THE NIGHT
HOST A
BLOCK PARTY



Party BY DESIGN

STORY **MELISSA CAMPEAU**
PHOTOGRAPHY **ALEX LUKEY AND MICHELLE QUANCE**
TABLESCAPE STYLING **SUZANNE DUNBAR, EATENTAINMENT**

At first glance, it might seem like landscape design and high-end event planning have little in common.

But when **Sebastien Centner**, director of **Eatertainment Special Events & Catering** and his wife Sheila Centner, hired **Joel Loblaw** to design a new backyard for their Toronto home, it was a meeting of creative and organized minds.

“We’re in totally different businesses in so many ways,” says Centner. “But the fundamentals of how Joel and I approach projects is the same.” He adds, “We work to understand a client’s vision, we plan every last foreseeable detail, and we budget carefully and accurately.”

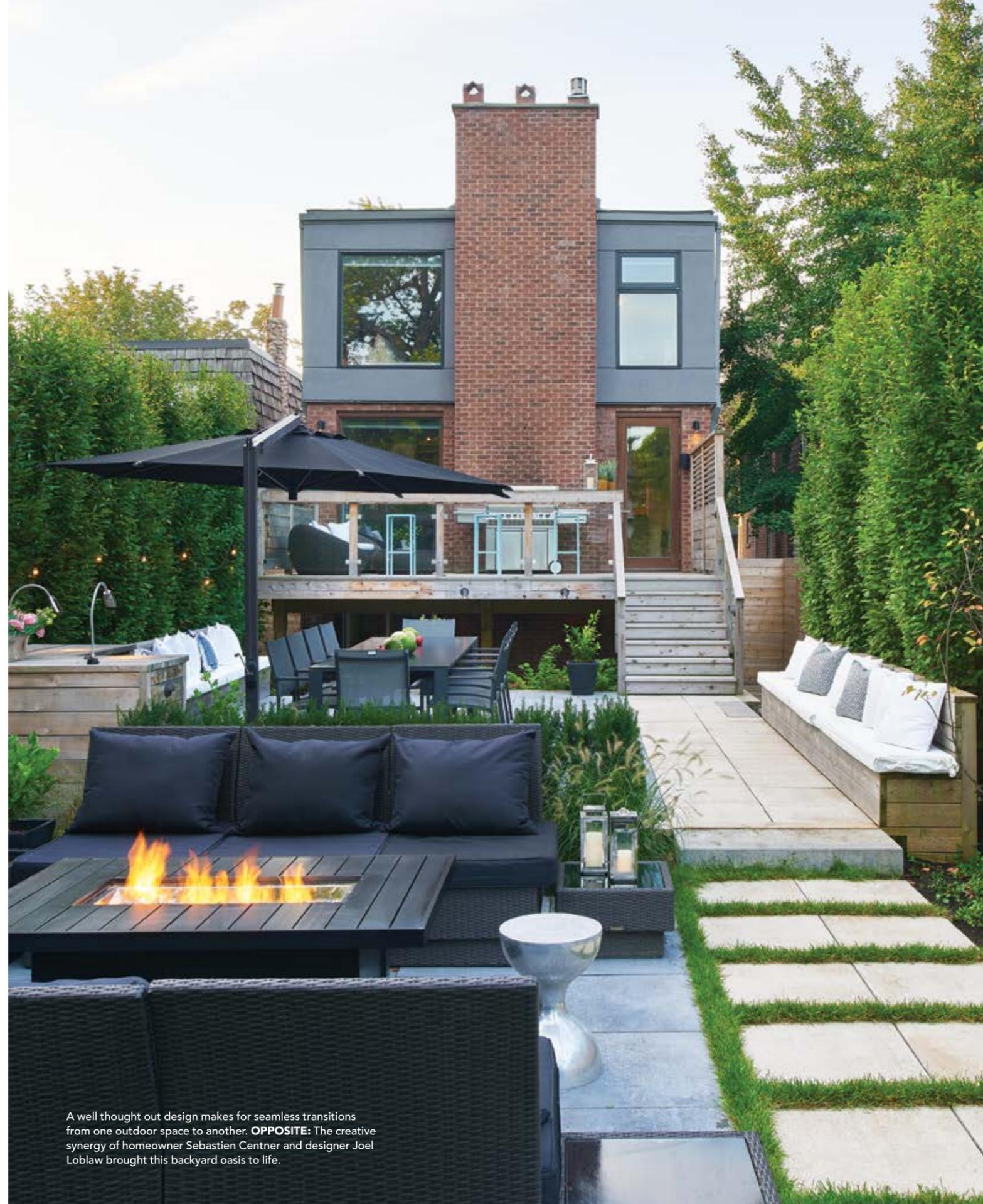
Parties that seem relaxed and effortless – just like beautiful outdoor spaces with easy flow – only happen with a clear vision and meticulous minding of the details.

In the case of the Centners’ backyard, the project’s driving force was the need to create a space where the couple could easily and comfortably host everything from formal parties to casual barbecues.

“We wanted to have lots of functional areas like a bar, a barbecue and a fridge,” says Centner. “And we also wanted to strike some kind of balance, where we have all these areas and people don’t feel crowded, but where they always feel like they’re part of the party, too.”

“That was really the lead in this project – knowing and getting a sense of the kind of environment they wanted to have,” says **Lindsay Gregory**, Joel Loblaw’s business partner and sister.

Continued on page 55



A well thought out design makes for seamless transitions from one outdoor space to another. **OPPOSITE:** The creative synergy of homeowner Sebastien Centner and designer Joel Loblaw brought this backyard oasis to life.

“THE IDEA OF ROOMS MADE SO MUCH SENSE HERE, PLUS IT’S REALLY TIMELESS AND HELPED THEM GET THAT FEEL THEY WANTED.”



The seating area is casual, comfortable and relaxing. **OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT:** A versatile outdoor counter is perfect for parties. **TOP RIGHT:** The deck space was maximized with low profile furnishings and a built-in bar top. **BOTTOM:** Built-in benches provide extra seating and space to spread out.

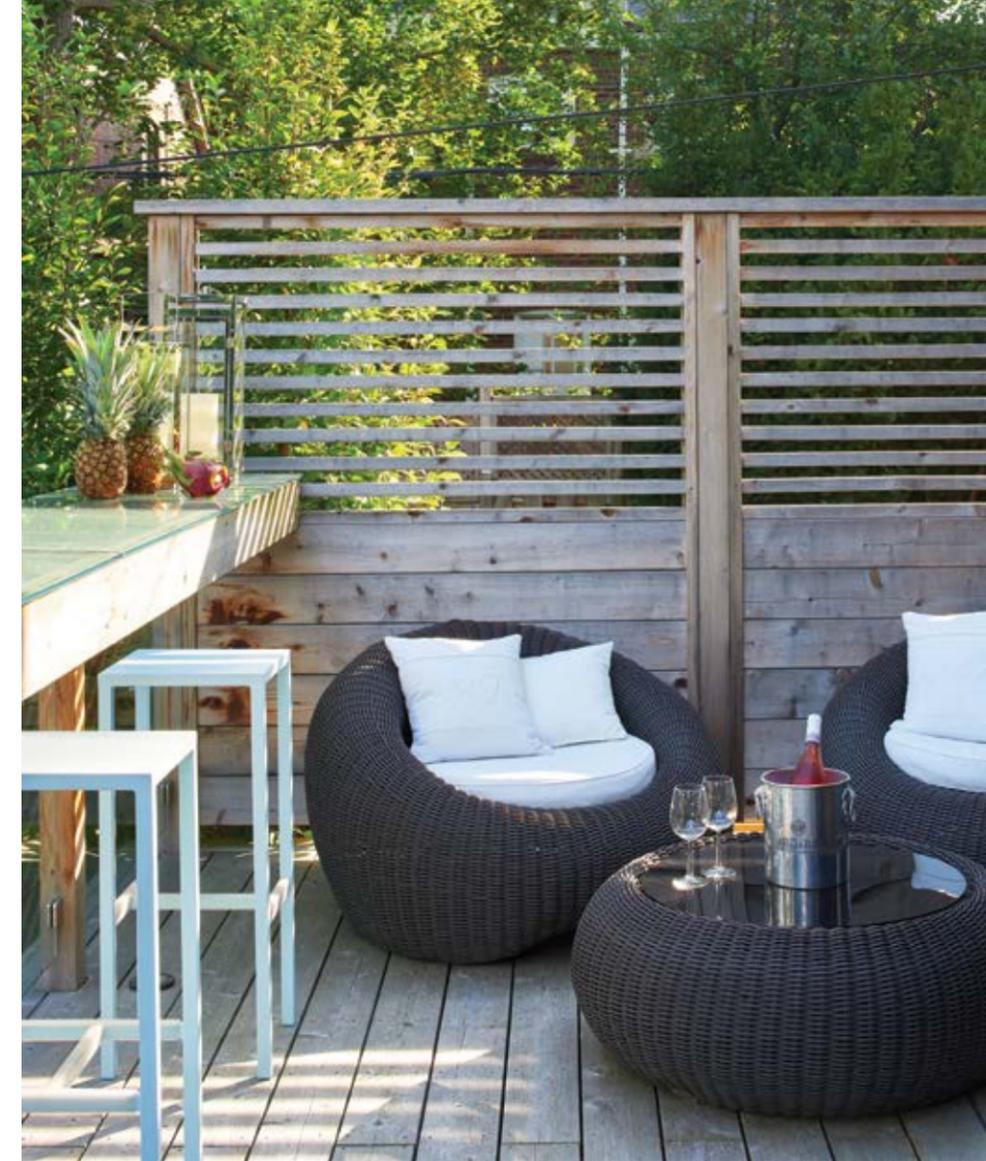


“The idea of rooms made so much sense here, plus it’s really timeless and helped them get that feel they wanted,” says Loblaw.

For practicality and convenience, the Loblaw team built a deck right off the kitchen for year-round barbecuing. There’s also a bar-top table nearby so guests can perch on a stool, sip a cocktail and chat with the chef.

In the dining area, a few steps down from the deck, keeping things versatile was a priority. “We get bored really easily,” admits Centner. “One of the things Joel and Lindsay did that we love is they thought to include these benches in the design,” says Centner. “We hate being confined to doing things a certain way, and especially because we host so much, it can be challenging.” The table can be pulled to one side of the room, and a bench used for seating. “When we do that, suddenly we have this open space that could be a dance floor, or just a little extra room for a larger crowd.” He adds, “That really excited us because it gives us so much flexibility.”

Tucked into a corner of the dining space is an intentionally understated kitchen. “When Sebastien said they wanted some kind of kitchen, I started to get a little nervous because outdoor cabinetry doesn’t always work that well,” says Loblaw. He proposed a custom-made cedar unit that’s practical – it houses an ice machine, a spot for garbage, storage space and lighting controls – but also casual and versatile. *Continued on page 56*





“We’ve used the countertop area as a bar, for a full buffet set up, for clearing, for so many different things,” says Centner. “And then when you’re not using it for one of those things, it just kind of disappears.”

Beyond the dining area is a spot for lounging, decked out with comfortable furniture and a fire pit. Dark grey stone underfoot visually connects the space to the dining area, but there’s also a little defined separation thanks to subtle gradation and a low hedge.

A sports court complete with a basketball net is tucked at the edge of the property. It’s something visitors might not notice right away, and that’s by design. “Toning down the sports court was one of our challenges,” says Loblaw. “That’s where the cedars were really helpful in disguising that area a bit.”

With four distinct areas to the yard, colour helps tie them together. “It’s all connected with one pathway of white stone,” says Loblaw. “As soon as you step out the door, there’s the 100-foot view all the way to the sports court.” He adds, “Almost everything else in this design scheme is grey, and white is one of the strongest colours in a landscape, so it’s a distinct way of carrying a person’s eye down the site.” *Continued on page 58*



SEBASTIEN AND SHEILA CENTNER CELEBRATE THEIR SLEEK NEW CITY BACKYARD RETREAT WITH A SUMMER PARTY.

Served on summer dinnerware from William Ashley, the menu was prepared by Eatertainment Special Events & Catering:

Centerpiece

A crudité centerpiece with raw veggies and herbs for guests to pick and add to their dishes.

Starters

Chilled Cucumber Mint Soup with crème fraîche
Growing Garden Salad

Mains

Truffle Gnocchi (in mini red Staub cocottes)
Arctic Char with saffron fregola, individually plated.

Dessert

Vanilla and raspberry panna cotta with lemon balm





Sebastien and Sheila make the most of the summer and their backyard retreat by hosting a party.

“THEY WERE REALLY GOOD AT HELPING US NAVIGATE THROUGH THIS AND GIVING US OPTIONS.”

If the end result is a design that feels effortless, the collaboration was just as smooth. “This project was so much fun,” says Loblaw.

“Sometimes we can scare people,” admits Centner. “When we go in to this kind of thing, we’re very A-type. But we’ve found when we work with people like Joel and Lindsay, who are super professional and who have this comfortable confidence, it makes the job easier for everyone.”

Centner adds, “They were really good at helping us navigate through this and giving us options, but at the same time bringing the vision to life. They could stop us and say, ‘I know you think this is what you want, and I know this is your goal, but if you want to reach this goal here’s a better way to get to it.’” He adds, “We would end up having really great conversations about these ideas, and a better result in the end.”

“If someone asked me right now if I would change anything about my backyard,” says Centner, “I would honestly say I can’t think of a thing.” **OH**



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