

RESALE HOMES COLLECTIONS

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What do I do for you?



By **Julien Laurion**
The Big Tuna of Real Estate

Saying that I can only speak to what I 'do' since every Realtor's business model is different.

The obvious answer is I help trade real property in Ontario. I help clients and customers buy and sell homes! However, there is a lot more to the job than just touring clients around homes.

When a Realtor has a listing, they have to create and distribute all marketing materials, whether it be in print or digital form. For example, you will see an ad in this paper with all my active listings. This takes careful thought, insight and consideration of your marketplace. In today's world, I make sure that I use social media as a key part of my marketing strategy. In addition to this, I have to help clients prepare their homes for sale. How your home looks to a prospective buyer can make the difference between a quick sale for top dollar or a prolonged sale period for potentially less money. Doing things such as, decluttering the living space and closets, putting a fresh coat of paint in important areas of the home and getting around to those minor upgrades and repairs that have been ignored can have a huge transformational impact your home makes when that prospective buyer first walks through your door. You want the buyer to easily picture themselves living in your home.

When a sale or purchase agreement is signed, that is not the end of a Realtor's job. I continue to serve as the point person helping all parties to communicate and help facilitate a smooth closing, as well as providing advice and guidance for my clients. Avid readers should remember from a past TTR article that conditional clauses are a common part of a purchase and sale agreement so clearing those conditions is an ongoing responsibility that the Realtor assists with.

Additionally, I spend A LOT of time creating content to market your home. This includes writing articles, filming video clips for my social media and YouTube accounts, creating digital ads for Facebook and Google etc., photographs and blog posts. Sometimes I even use my drone to create captivating action shots of the property. This is especially important for the marketing of cottages or rural properties. It is the quality of the content that helps to differentiate between Realtors. You can see for yourself the difference good quality marketing content makes in promoting interest and activity in the sale of a property. I have no doubt that you have seen marketing material of some properties where the pictures are blurry or they are dark and do not do the property justice. So you want to select the right one.

There is so much more to what I do, and I'm not able to fit it all in a half-page article. So please, check out my YouTube channel or website www.bigtuna.ca, where you can find my latest video and where I get more in-depth on this topic!

Julien Laurion AKA Big Tuna is a local Real Estate Sale Representative with Royal LePage Your Community Realty in Aurora. I am a real estate agent who has expertise in both Real Estate and Renovations and has been involved in this community for over 20 years. If you have a question for my monthly article or if you are considering buying, selling or leasing a home please feel free to call or email me directly at (416) 402-5530 or julien@bigtuna.ca or by alternatively visiting my website www.bigtuna.ca or Facebook page @bigtunarealty

How to prepare your family for fire emergencies

(NC) Fire can spread rapidly through your home, and the National Fire Protection Association predicts you may only have as little as one or two minutes to escape safely once smoke alarms sound.

"We encourage everyone to evaluate their level of preparedness against potential dangers," says Ashley Gocken of First Alert, a leading fire safety brand. "It's imperative that people develop and practice a fire escape plan and install, maintain and regularly test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. These are life-saving practices that can make a real difference."

To ensure you and your family are prepared and protected, follow these steps:

CHECK YOUR ALARMS.

Early detection is critical to preventing tragedies. Install smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in every bedroom and on every level of your house, including the basement. Test them regularly and change the batteries every six months. To eliminate battery replacements for a decade, upgrade to 10-year battery alarms.

MAP YOUR HOME.

Involve everyone in your household when developing escape routes. Walk through your home and inspect all possible exits. Identify two ways out of each room, including windows and doors. Make sure everyone in the home understands the plan.

PRACTICE YOUR PLAN.

Conduct fire drills at least twice a year during the day and night, making it as realistic as possible. Allow children to master the fire escape routes beforehand. The objective is to practice, not to frighten, so telling children there will be a drill before they go to bed can be as effective as a surprise drill.

HAVE A MEETING LOCATION OUTSIDE.

Choose a designated outside meeting place a safe distance from your home. Once you're out, stay out. Under no circumstances should you ever go back into a burning building. If someone is missing, inform the fire department dispatcher when you call. Firefighters have the skills and equipment to perform rescues.

Find more home fire safety tips at firstalert.ca.

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Overwhelmed trying to prepare a deceased family member's home for sale, what do you suggest?

Having to enter a family member's, well lived-in home and remove the contents can be overwhelming, while going through the stages of mourning, things can get even more challenging when needing to prepare a loved one's home for sale.

There may likely be a need to deep clean, remove excess debris, decor and collectibles, pack away what's not needed, repair and paint in order to sell. The challenge of doing this preparation in advance of the home being placed for sale on the market would be worth tackling so that the home is in the best condition for Buyers to view.

Call a REALTOR® and ask for a virtual or safe face-to-face meeting as the first step who may be able to assist you with service providers and a core action plan to follow during this preparation process. They may be able to discuss with you multiple options of how the home can be shown in the best way possible to potential Buyers. REALTORS® often can provide area service professionals as needed to help eliminate many of the to-dos on the action plan. Alternatively, as a value add service the REALTOR® selected may be able to manage the preparation and staging of the home or refer other service professionals who can.

The process of preparing the home for sale can take as little as a week to many months depending on the way it has been maintained and cleaned. Once there is legal permission granted for the preparation of the home to sell, a well-designed plan will help you navigate the situation and save time and energy.

Ideally, divide the home's contents into various categories when moving room by room to manage what's remaining in the home, what is being donated to family, friends or a worthy cause and what will

be disposed of. Ask the REALTOR® if they can recommend online auction companies, or downsizing professionals to be contracted for the clear-out of the home contents.

Consider the causes that meant a great deal to the family member who has passed and to their family and friends; there may be clues on how they may have appreciated their goods distributed. Did the family member attend a place of worship, support group, volunteer or donate annually to certain causes? Many places of worship, shelters, nonprofit organizations will gladly accept household goods, clothing, tools and electronics with much appreciation. Drop boxes are often located throughout communities designated for clothing or household goods as well as managed drop-off sites at Salvation Army, Value Village Thrift Stores and Habitat for Humanity RE-Stores to name a few. It's best to check online on how items will be considered and accepted as protocols during COVID-19 times may change.

Keep personal safety as the priority during this transition when meeting any strangers and when attempting the physical work required in preparing a home for sale. Beyond family and friend support there are so many professionals and services available to assist home sellers to reach the goals needed prior to selling loved ones home.

– Written by Connie Power

Connie POWER Manager/Sales Representative CNE® Certified Negotiation Expert, SRS® Seller's Representative Specialist, ABR® Accredited Buyers Representative, SRES® Seniors Real Estate Specialist at RE/MAX Hallmark YORK Group Realty Ltd., Brokerage Call Connie direct to discuss your next real estate move at 905.726.0856.

***not intended to solicit those already under a real estate contract

Real Estate Market Update – Aurora



Buyers Push for Aurora Homes

The year-to-date push to invest in Aurora real estate before September rose by 59 percent for Buyers taking action compared to 2020.

Of the 1053 homes sold so far in 2021, many homes sold in 14 days for about 105 percent of the Sellers asking price. While in the month of August, home sales across Aurora were a little quieter than in July, with only 107 homes sold in this month. Inventory was extremely low once again, with only a one-month supply of choices for home purchasers of all home types to meet the demand.

The highly motivated Buyer purchases caused home values to continue to rise, resulting in the median price increasing by almost 10 percent month over month to \$1,085,000. Year to date, the median price of a home was \$1,160,000 when we take out the highest and lowest sales; that's a 23 percent welcome spike since last year.

Competition is a common result when supply remains so low, coupled with low lending rates. As fall approaches, the housing market is typically strong for those taking

action. For those with children heading as safely as possible back to school, more time may be available for homeowners to prepare their homes for sale and find the right size for their next homeownership opportunity. For anyone else considering selling, call a licensed REALTOR® and have a virtual or safe face-to-face meeting to discuss strategies in these challenging times to decide if now is the ideal time to sell as safely as possible.

– Written by Connie Power

Connie Power is the Manager, Real Estate Sales Representative CNE® SRS® ABR® SRES® for RE/MAX Hallmark York Group Realty Ltd., Brokerage serving York region and beyond in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Empowering you in Real Estate. Call Connie today to make an appointment to discuss your next move at (905) 726-0856.

*The statistics provided herein were obtained from the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board, Summary of Existing Home Transactions for all home types for July, August 2020, 2021 and the Regional Housing Market Tables for York region, Aurora July, August 2020, 2021 as well as from the Statistics and Counts for all of Aurora for July, August 2021 for both Freehold and condominium Sales of all types of homes.

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How to plan your dream backyard makeover



(NC) There are many things to love about the summer, and spending time outdoors is high on that list. So, why not create the outdoor living space of your dreams?

Here are some tips and tricks to help you get started:

DO SOME RESEARCH

Updating your yard or patio is probably a good investment, so don't rush into it. Take your time and think about what works best for your house and your wallet. Look at different options and think about what you and your family would

get the most benefit from. Is it a water feature or an outdoor kitchen? A gazebo or storage shed?

HIRE AN ARBORIST

If you have any trees in your backyard that you want to remove, call a certified utility arborist. They will have all the necessary tools to ensure the work is done in the safest way possible and that no powerlines are affected.

Contacting a utility arborist is a good idea even if you only want to prune trees that are growing close or into powerlines. Never take chances with powerlines because electricity can jump to you and your tools. Touching a tree that's near or in contact with a powerline could result in an electric shock. Remember to keep three metres back from a powerline.

CONSIDER A POOL

If you have the space for it, a pool could make your backyard more enjoyable for the whole family. Start by choosing the type of pool based on your unique space. Above-ground pools may not seem the most attractive, and some digging might be required to level the ground, but the installation is super easy. Plus, they tend to cost much less than in-ground pools.

On the other hand, in-ground pools require a lot of work and can be expensive, but it also gives a facelift to your property. There are thousands of options to choose from, and for a little extra money, you can customize it the way you want.

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Most popular spaces to renovate and their costs

(NC) After spending so much time at home last year, it's no surprise many of us are changing our spaces to fit our current needs.

CANADIAN HOMEOWNERS who renovated this past year spent an average of \$4,525, according to a recent report by insurance company Aviva Canada.

Thinking about improving your home? Check out how much Canadians have spent on average for the most common renos, and with costs coming in lower than you might think, it's time to find some inspiration for your next project:

ADDITION — \$10,800

Creating more livable space with an addition can boost the resale value of your home. There are plenty of options, including a kitchen bump out, new mudroom or small second-storey deck outside the primary bedroom.

BACKYARD — \$6,200

With outdoor hangouts becoming a safer option for gathering with friends and family, many invested in sprucing up their yard or patio. Firepits, hot tubs and comfy outdoor furniture are great ways to make your outdoor living space more useful and enjoyable throughout the year.

ENTERTAINMENT — \$3,800

As leisure activities undergo rotating shutdowns, we've all had to find our fun at home. The basement is a prime spot for creating a recreation hub, whether it's soundproofing and lighting upgrades to create a home movie theatre or splurging on old-school video games and fresh flooring for an 80s arcade.

OFFICE — \$2,800

While most of work-from-home arrangements were intended as short-term measures, today many offices are embracing permanent remote work or hybrid models. This means it's worth fixing up your makeshift home office with a fresh coat of paint, ergonomic furniture and some inspiring artwork.

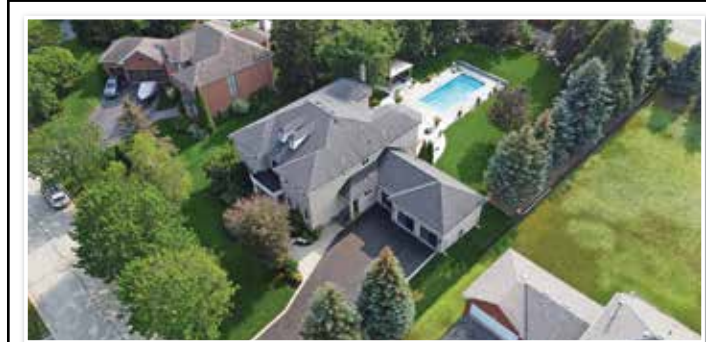
PLAYROOM — \$2,250

Many families chose to help their kids enjoy spending more time at home by creating a playroom with fun activities to do and creative stations. Experiment with fun colours, soft rugs and double-duty pieces to create different zones for tactile play, arts and crafts, board games and more.

If you're planning to make major changes to your home, keep in mind that finishing a basement, removing structural supports or building an addition could impact your insurance coverage.

"These renovations may change the home's rebuild value," explains Phil Gibson, managing director, personal insurance and data science at Aviva Canada. "That's why it's always good practice to check in with your insurance broker or agent when considering renovations so you are adequately covered."

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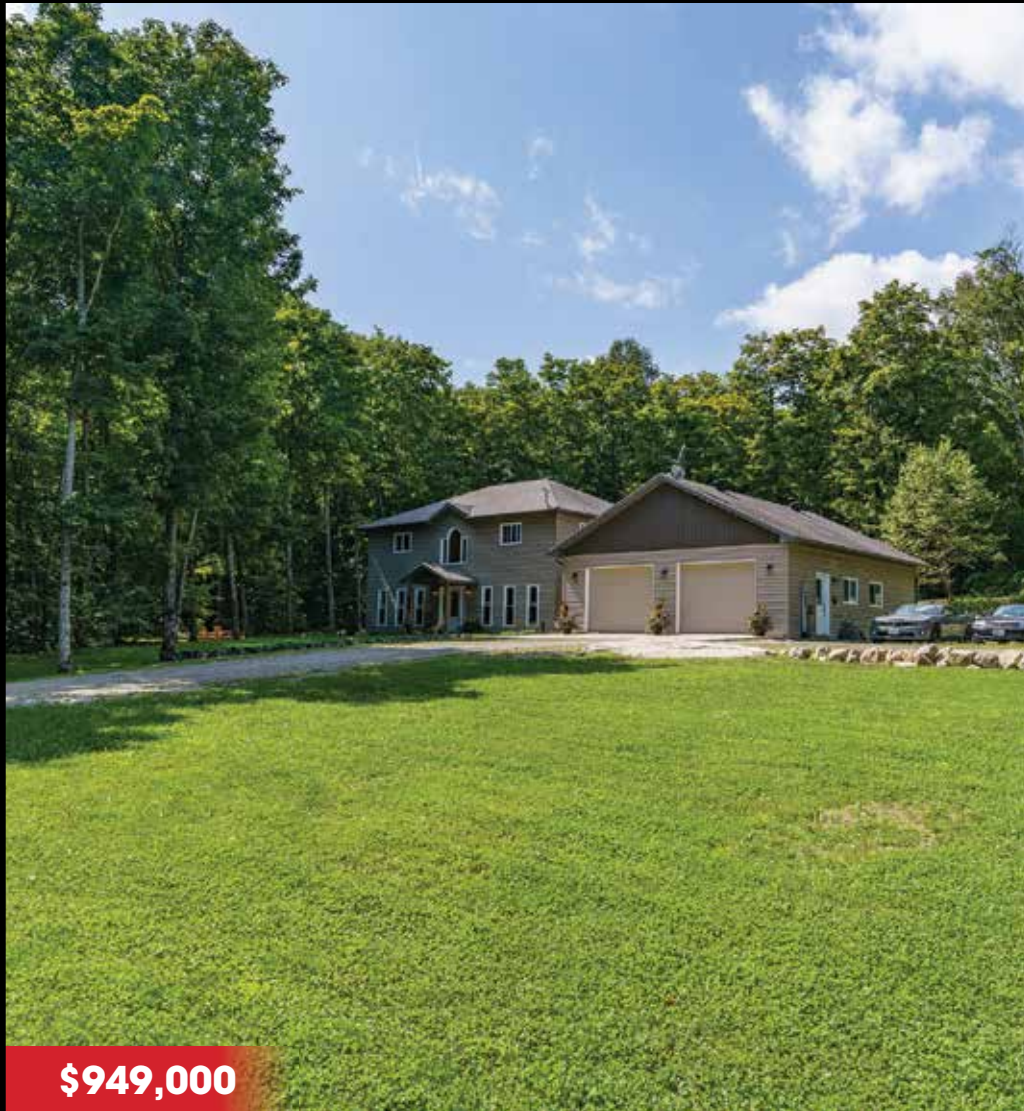
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How to make your kitchen your favourite room

(NC) No matter the size of your home, the kitchen is likely the hub of your everyday life.

It's where you gather for meals, experiment with recipes and maybe even host impromptu dance parties. Since it's the centre of your home, why not make it your favourite room too?

ADD A TV

Consider installing a TV so you can catch up on the news at breakfast or follow along with a cooking show for testing out a new meal.

A smaller TV is ideal as you don't want to overcrowd the space. Before installation, ensure the unit is away from your oven and other electrical equipment. If you find a perfect spot but there isn't an outlet close by, don't worry. You can hire a licensed electrical contracting (LEC) business to install an extra outlet for you, hide wires from view and make sure your space is safe from electrical harm.

But be careful when hiring someone to work in your home. Sometimes, unlicensed contractors offer their services for a lower cost. Always remember that in Ontario, only a LEC business can be hired to do electrical

work in your home. So before getting started, verify their ECRA/ESA licence number to ensure they are authorized to do electrical work.

TURN UP THE VOLUME

Larger kitchens allow for a variety of social gatherings, like having extended family help make a holiday meal together, or entertaining guests for a celebration. Setting up a sound system can add extra ambiance for relaxing music, podcasts or even party tunes. Choose a spot away from the sink to put speakers and any other equipment, so moisture doesn't affect any wires or cause a fire.

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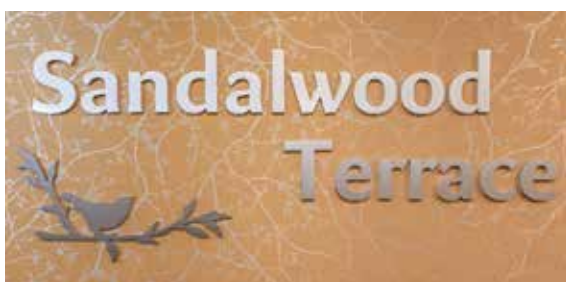
If you're planning to fully renovate, dedicate some time for choosing the best appliances to fit your style and needs. Before putting everything in place, make sure you have the right electrical outlets. Some appliances like microwave ovens, refrigerators and dishwashers require dedicated circuits to protect you from potential accidents caused by overheating or overloading.

Use a ground fault circuit interrupter outlet for anything less than 1.5 metres from the sink. Hire a LEC business to assist with any electrical installation and be sure that they file a notification of work with the Electrical Safety Authority when the work begins.

With the right resources and expert help, small or big changes can transform your kitchen and make it your favourite room. Find more electrical safety tips at esasafe.com/safety.

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GO FOR BOLD WITH THE RETURN **maximalism**

Home office ideas to boost your creativity

(NC) After so much time at home, it's no surprise if you're in need of a creative boost. One of the great things about working from home is that you're much freer to personalize your workspace. This means you can decorate to boost your mood and motivation.

Here are some updates for your virtual home office to help get the juices flowing:

1 FRESH VISUALS Swap joyful artwork on your desk or walls regularly to keep your environment fresh. Better yet, install a gallery shelf above to house easily changeable prints, family photos and knickknacks that inspire.

2 PRETTY PLANTS Bring the outside in with any plant you like. Choose air purifying ones like snake plants for the full benefits, but even a fake plant is better than nothing since green is said to be a colour that promotes productivity.

3 POINT OF VIEW Change your perspective and activate your imagination by adding another seating area to your workspace if you can. A comfy chair is a great alternative for when you feel chained to your desk. You can even try stacking books for a makeshift standing desk to achieve new heights for a new outlook.

4 THE RIGHT GEAR Sometimes it's old tech that's getting in your way. Whether it's adding a second monitor like you had at the office or upgrading your old camera to the latest from Sony for enhanced video calls, livestreams or media projects, new tools can expand your possibilities. Even little things like a mini tripod, a grip for hands-free camera control or studio lighting can also improve your output.

Find tips on choosing the best camera gear and accessories at henrys.com.

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(NC) This season, it's time to embrace a "more is more" design philosophy with the return of maximalism. To help you bring this season's hottest interior trend home, Sharon Grech, Benjamin Moore colour and design expert, shares her top three tips to go all out with maximal style.

BE BOLD.

Saturated colour, vibrant prints and a mixture of furniture from different eras and styles help define a maximalist aesthetic. Looking for colour inspiration?

"Look to the exuberant colours of the 70s and opt for jewel tones and striking hues of mustard yellow or a bright turquoise like Deep Ocean 2058-30," suggests Grech.

SHOW OFF YOUR STYLE.

Maximalism gives you permission to show off and celebrate your prized possessions throughout your space. If you enjoy collecting items, and tend towards a more eclectic, glamorous look, this trend will help bring out the best in your space.

However, don't give into the temptation to clutter every surface. "Allow your favourite pieces to shine by creating

styled vignettes throughout your space following the designer trick of grouping objects in threes," says Grech.

HIGH DRAMA IN SMALL SPACES.

Not ready for a full house of dramatic colour? Choose a small room to make a maximalist splash. "Powder rooms are the ideal space to experiment with bold hues and dramatic accents," says Grech.

Create a mirror-selfie-worthy powder room by selecting a bold hue in a matte finish, using humidity-resistant paint such as Aura bath & spa and pairing it with an extravagant mirror for instant drama in the smallest of spaces.

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3 affordable ways to create a home office that works for you

(NC) This year's home must-have is an office space that offers flexibility to go seamlessly from video calls to virtual classroom to everything in between. To help you create a workspace that works for you, Sharon Grech, Benjamin Moore colour and design expert, shares three affordable tips to create a stylish office no matter your style or budget.

CHOOSE COLOURS THAT PROMOTE PRODUCTIVITY.

Struggling to find focus when working from home? Your wall colour can help promote a sense of calm and concentration to help you through your busiest days. "Tints and shades of green such as Spa AF-435 or Flora AF-470 can help foster a sense of calm and support your productivity," recommends Grech.

Giving your home office a coat of green paint is a project you can do yourself, and the increased focus and reduction in eye strain will help you work smarter all year long.

MAKE ROOM FOR YOUR WORKSPACE.

If you don't have a dedicated home office, you can easily create a place where you can focus by making a work area in your home. A floating shelf or a side table can double as a compact desk in small spaces. Once you select where you want to set up your workspace, clean up any clutter that could be distracting. Grech suggests shopping your home for baskets, mason jars and catch-alls to store office supplies such as notebooks, pens and loose papers.

CREATE A CHIC BACKGROUND.

On video calls all day? You can create an envy-inducing backdrop in just one weekend by painting out a bookcase, including the backs of shelves, in one solid hue like Amazon Soil 2115-30. Grech recommends choosing a durable paint designed to adhere to wooden surfaces such as Advance interior paint for results as professional as your new office. Once dry, position your bookcase, with styled shelves of books and decorative objects, behind you for a put-together background.

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DESIGNER
advice for choosing the right **WHITE PAINT**

(NC) Ready to repaint but not sure how to pick the perfect neutral? Benjamin Moore colour and design expert Sharon Grech shares her top four tips to help you choose the perfect white paint for your space.

KNOW YOUR EXPOSURE.

Overall lighting and the orientation of your room are the most important considerations when choosing paint colours, especially when it comes to selecting the right tint of white. Whether your room faces north, east, south or west, there is a white paint designed to bring out the very best in your space's natural light. "If you have a north or east exposure, opt for warmer

whites. Look for options with cooler tones to counter-balance south and west exposures, such as Decorator's White OC-149."

If you're in a space with limited natural light such as a basement or small den, consider Chantilly Lace OC-65, a bright designer favourite to bring an added sense of space and light to any room.

PAY ATTENTION TO THE UNDERTONE.

When selecting neutral paints, one of the key differences to keep in mind is the undertone. From pink to green and everything in between, you can find a white paint with an undertone to suit your space. When selecting a white paint, consider the colour of the furniture and flooring in your space — if you tend towards warmer hues, opt for a white paint with a warm undertone to create a cohesive feel.

EXPRESS YOUR SENSE OF STYLE.

From modern to traditional, white paint can bring out the best in a range of design styles. Express your

personal taste and give your neutral space a warm and inviting feeling by adding texture with throw blankets, cushions and rugs in natural fibres. To accentuate architectural details and add extra dimension to neutral walls, Grech suggests painting details such as trim, mouldings and even furniture in a high-gloss sheen to add a striking contrast to matte or eggshell walls.

TEST BEFORE YOU PAINT.

Sharon's top piece of advice? "Always test a few variations of white paint on your walls before painting the whole room." A white paint that looks perfect in the store could look totally different once it's in your space. Once you've found your perfect tint, make sure to prime your walls if you're painting over a bold colour. Choose a paint like Regal Select interior paint to achieve professional results and flawless coverage.

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SMART WAYS TO SAVE for a house or condo



(NC) With Canada's housing market hotter than ever, saving up a down payment can feel impossible. But wise spending and saving decisions can add up over time. Here, Vanessa Bowen, money expert and accountant, offers simple yet effective ways to save for the home you've had your eye on.

ENSURE YOU HAVE A GOOD CREDIT SCORE
A better credit score means that you can qualify for lower interest rates and loans that you may require

when investing in a future property. Working to improve your overall credit score, such as by avoiding late bill payments, will help make your savings go further as you look towards purchasing the house or condo of your dreams.

CONTRIBUTE LUMP-SUM PAYMENTS TO YOUR SAVINGS

Large annual payments such as a work bonus or your tax return can be added as lump-sum contributions to your savings. Contributing larger sums helps you reach your end-goal more quickly, so remember to save these payments. It's money you don't count on in your day to day anyway, so it'll be easier to set aside and watch your savings steadily grow.

SWITCH TO A NO-FEE BANK ACCOUNT
A small step that you can take that will add up to big savings in the long run is switching to a no-fee

bank account. The PC Money Account is the bank account reimagined with no monthly fees and opportunities to earn PC Optimum Points on every dollar spent everywhere you shop. Now, instead of having to pay monthly banking fees, you can put your hard-earned money towards saving up for a house or condo.

CUT DOWN ON UNNECESSARY SPENDING

Try cutting back on expenses such as takeout food and shopping for things you may not actually need, like subscription services. Instead, put this money, which could potentially add up to thousands each year, towards a significant investment opportunity, such as a future home.

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RENTING vs. BUYING in the current housing market

(NC) One of the outcomes of the COVID-19 pandemic has been soaring home prices. Many first-time buyers across Canada are wondering whether now is the right time to invest in a home, or if they should wait.

But it's important to carefully think through the choice between renting and owning, and to fully understand the costs of taking on a mortgage.

Renting and owning can both have benefits. The right choice depends on your financial situation, priorities and long-term goals.

Owning your home can give you:

- 1 a feeling of pride that you've made an investment,
- 2 independence from a landlord's choices about the future of the property, and
- 3 the ability to make permanent renovations or decorate to suit your own tastes.

In comparison, renting can give you:

- 1 a feeling of independence,
- 2 the ability to move easily to pursue opportunities, such as a new job, and
- 3 freedom from the responsibilities of maintaining a home.

Remember, while financial calculations are essential in any decision to buy a home, many people will find that the emotions and values they place on owning or renting will influence their choices. Find resources to help you understand what each option will cost and decide what's best for you at canada.ca/money.

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Welcome to Kingsford Point

Located in the heart of Lake Muskoka in one of the most desirable locations only 1.5 hours north of Toronto. This breathtaking island estate is constructed on the northern point of the island with elevated views and multiple sun exposures boasting over 4600 feet of frontage on over 23 acres of land. Hitting all the checkmarks of exceptional design and traditional Muskoka architecture, all day sun, shallow and deep water, private beaches, hiking, privacy and long lake views. The main cottage boasts approximately 7000 sq ft. of finished living space, geothermal energy, 4+1 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, including the connected coach house. The stunning main cottage is complemented by a dry boathouse and a 1.5 storey two boat-slip boathouse. This estate is being offered turnkey with furnishings. The possibilities for expansion into a spectacular family compound are endless at this very private island hideaway. Mainland access is only a few minutes away. Please visit bigtuna.ca for a complete slideshow, virtual tour and survey.
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