



BY JILL GREAVES

# surface selections

When it comes to renovating a space, designer Jill Greaves believes choosing finishes is the fun part

**O**ne of my favourite parts of a renovation project is choosing the finishes. My imagination runs wild with the possibilities – playing with combinations of hard, soft, dull, bright, colourful and neutral elements. Pattern and texture are also big on my list of components for bringing the overall look of a room together.

People often think that there are only a few materials suitable for countertops, cabinets and flooring. Nowadays, the extensive options available

are really limited only by our imaginations.

From recycled glass, concrete, faux-finish laminates and antiqued finish stones to composite stone slabs, traditional granite, marble and butcher-block countertops, the market has so much to offer. And underfoot, wood flooring is now available in many exotic species and finish techniques; some are even manufactured from recycled waste wood. As a designer, my job is to decide which, if any, of these are good for the project at hand, and how they will improve the quality of the finished home.

Some of my favourite combinations can be seen in a recent renovation we did in Toronto's west end. We completely renovated an existing bungalow, adding a great room and larger kitchen, as well as new finishes throughout the rest of the house.

It all started with an engineered, pre-finished, natural-walnut wood floor. Larger plank sizes and more expansive rooms benefit from the stability of an engineered wood floor versus a solid hardwood floor. Additionally, installing a pre-finished floor is less time consuming than finishing on site; you're able to walk on the floor immediately after it's installed; and, you don't have to contend with harmful VOC emissions that are typically attributed to finishing solid wood floors on site.

While I love the cool feeling, natural grain and the many varieties of marble countertops, we decided that a composite stone would be more appropriate for this space. The marble-looking composite we used is relatively new to the market; it has a great natural-stone look and is very durable. It is also resistant to staining and etching and comes as a manufactured slab in large sizes, which enabled us to complete the large island in one piece.

The handmade, glazed-tile backsplash adds soft contrast to the clean white kitchen cabinets and countertop. Tiles can be arranged in different ways to best accentuate the lines of a kitchen – in a stacked pattern for a modern look, or in this case, a running pattern for a more transitional feeling. They reflect light, add sparkle and life to the kitchen and are very low-maintenance.

Furniture and lighting add contrast, pattern and shine to the kitchen with bright chrome accents and patterned chenille fabric on the stools and roman shade. Nail-head details on the stools add a note of distinction, while the stone-blue tableware enlivens the space with a little pop of colour.

The finishing touch to this successful renovation is the thoughtfully pulled-together combination of well-chosen surfaces and accents.



#### SOURCES

**CONTRACTING:** Ralph Senatore, Mill St. Contracting and Project Management, 416.918.2351; **FLOORING:** Brampton Hardwood Floors, bramptonhardwood.com; **COUNTERTOP:** Stone Marketing & Design Services (K Soul Gloss), stonesmds.com; **LIGHTING:** Union Lighting & Furnishings, unionlightingandfurnishings.com; **BACKSPLASH:** Sallitilo Imports, sallitilo-tiles.com

*With a portfolio of projects across the U.S. and Canada, Toronto-based Jill Greaves Design creates award-winning custom interiors for residential, hospitality and corporate clients. [jillgreavesdesign.com](http://jillgreavesdesign.com)*