

POST HOMES

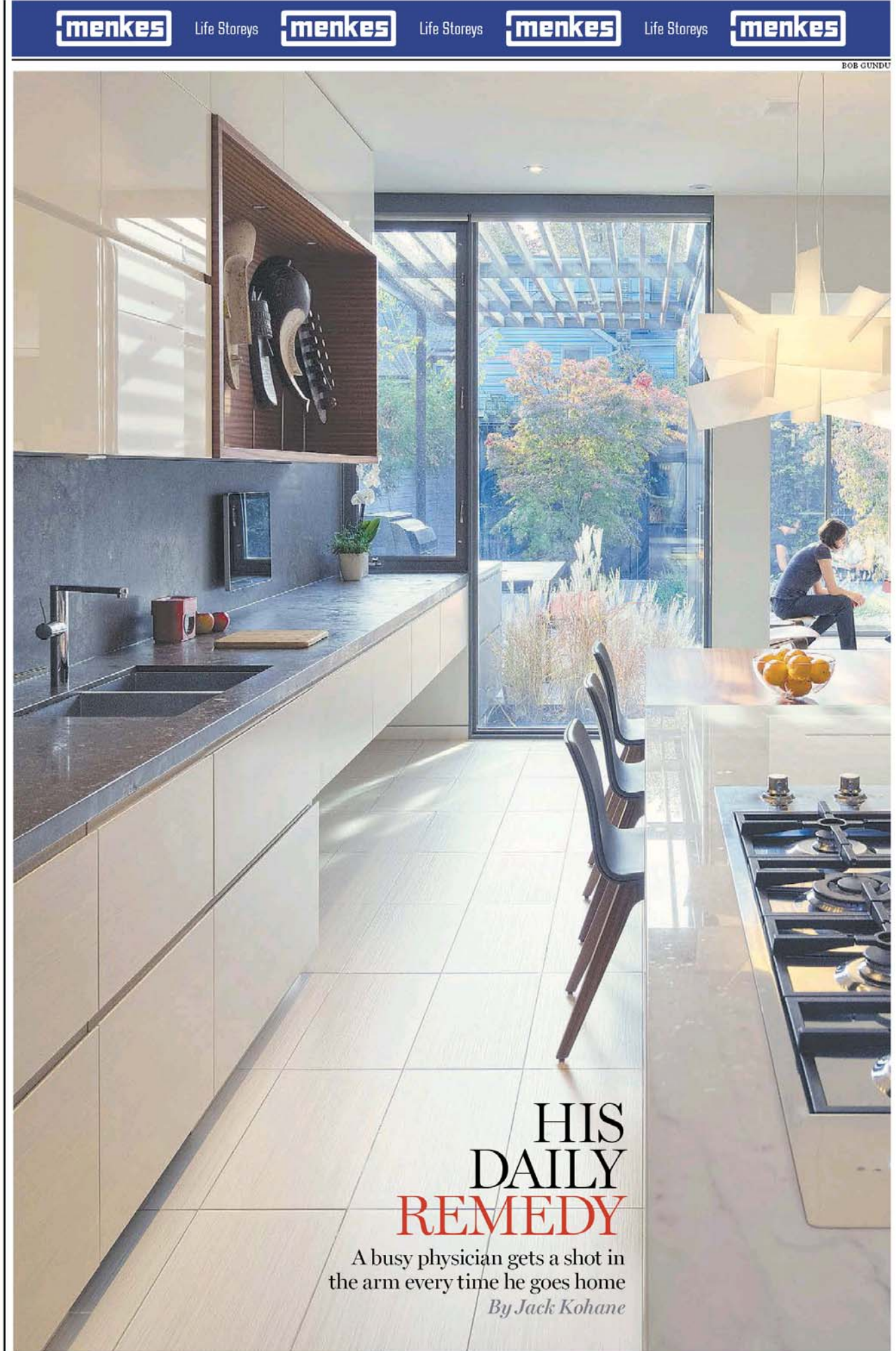
NATIONAL POST
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CONDOS
SHED SHAMBLES
There goes the neighbourhood. PH4

DECOR
SUMMER BUMMER
Bad white patio chairs really just have to go. PH4

FOR SALE
ROSEDALE
An early Moore Park home, with coach house. PH10



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BOB GUNDU

HIS DAILY REMEDY

A busy physician gets a shot in the arm every time he goes home
By Jack Kohane

With its focus directed toward the outdoors, the award-winning Through House provides a healthy escape after the intensity of the workday.

“It’s a sanctuary from the chaos of my day,” says Yash Patel, an internist at a major Toronto hospital. “My home is a place to unwind and to listen to my favourite music, like Coltrane’s jazz, and cook a variety of foods from aromatic Indian foods, to spicy Italian, to BBQ’ing.”

When he purchased this historic 1880s narrow semi in the city core in 2009, just a walk away from his place of work, it was in a sad state as a result of its prior incarnations as a rooming house and as a two-unit apartment. Though it was a designated heritage property, which limits how the front façade can be altered, Mr. Patel saw the potential to both personalize it and improve its environmental performance through extensive renovations on the inside.

“I wanted an alternative to condo living: a small and energy-efficient home with space enough to nicely accommodate visits from my out-of-town family [he hails from Western Canada] and within walking distance of my work and public transit,” he says. “I wanted lots of clean lines and an expression of modern minimalism.”

After approaching several architectural firms to see what they’d do with his vision, he selected the team at Dubbeldam Architecture + Design. There was an instant connection with principal Heather Dubbeldam. “It felt right,” he says. “I believed they could deliver the plan and I let them run with it.” But he had no idea that the plan would ultimately attract heady recognition from the design world.

Through House stands as a particularly special project for the architects. “It was an interesting process working with Yash,” Ms. Dubbeldam says. “He understood and supported our concept for this house. He came to us as a blank slate, open to trying new ideas. We don’t see this very often. He looked to us to turn the dark, cramped interior into a sweeping plan that opens the interior to light, and draws connections to the rear garden.”

To answer the client’s environmentally conscious agenda, several green strategies were put in place to keep energy costs down, including in-floor heating, a high-velocity air delivery system (it works on the principle of pressure rather than air velocity that’s generated by a conventional furnace), low-flow plumbing fixtures, and floor-to-ceiling windows to bring in abundant natural light and warmth on cool days.

See THROUGH on Page PH5

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Shoppers emerge in spring much the same as tulips do. Give them a few hours of sun and warmer temperatures, and happiness results; we start looking for ways to freshen our wardrobes and our homes. There's a number of cheery items coming to CB2 (cb2.com), where shelves are always stocked with upbeat stuff. Take these fishie vases; available in two sizes and two finishes, Bodhi will bring a smile to winter-weary therapy-seekers. Also in the Sur collection, coming in early May, will be additional vintage-vibe items such as macramé plant holders; fun jute rugs that remind us of a doily mashup; mini surfboards, a limited-edition wood print of, appropriately, a Woody stationwagon; and sweet tiki stacking glasses. *National Post*



Clockwise from above: The back of the Through House, where the horizontal lines continue; the heritage façade, with modern door; a long interior view out to the yard.

DOCTOR WITHOUT BORDERS

THROUGH
Continued from Page PH1

Linearity was key in Through House. Horizontal lines and built-ins visually elongate the living space. On the first floor, the connected kitchen island/dining table runs parallel to the wall-mounted, full-length cabinetry clad in rift-cut white oak. The open stacked felt-clad fireplace (the industrial felt resembles natural stone) delineates rooms without closing off one space from another. While the form of the recessed lighting slots in the ceiling also draw the line of sight to the exterior, functionally they spotlight specific points in the space, such as the niche displaying Dr. Patel's collection of East African artifacts and ceremonial masks.

Subtle veining in the floor tiles, marble kitchen countertops and the sapele (a reddish African hardwood prized for its grain and strength) dining table that extends the island, all work in tandem to direct the eye through the house (again the name) toward the garden, with no visual impediments between. "Floor-to-ceiling glass panes dissolve the boundaries between inside and outside," Ms. Dubbeldam says; even a low wall would have broken the effect.

Sightlines are abundant throughout the house, even through the open risers

on the staircase one catches glimpses of the vestibule, the original Victorian windows, the second-floor bedrooms, and the main living space. The floating stair is topped by a large skylight, which funnels light deep into the interior. The glass panels wrap the staircase in various shades of blue from the basement to the second floor, an effect reinforced in the glass-walled bathrooms on the upper landing.

Looking through the house, another living area is visible; the backyard seating space, which is delineated by an overhead wood-and-steel trellis. Fragrant lavender, colourful grasses, climbing vines and Japanese maples enliven the urban courtyard; their seasonal changes add variety to the view from inside.

Dr. Patel praises the end product. "The architects have been brilliant in this design," he says, pointing out that his favourite spot is the kitchen. "I can sit here and read emails, cook wonderful foods, entertain. I can gaze outside to the yard. This is the best vantage point to see all the details of my house, how they interweave, how they change with the time of day or season of the year. It all works well for me."

As it did for Dubbeldam Architecture + Design, which was awarded a 2014 Design Excellence Award from the Ontario Association of Architects, as well as a Canadian Green Building Award.

National Post

Floor-to-ceiling glass panes dissolve the boundaries

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