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## Natural Approach

*Johnson Chou illuminates the  
Toronto skyline*



## Ariel Muller Designs

FROM DESIGN TO COMPLETION...CREATING UNIQUE SPACES FOR ALL CLIENTS

by Jessica Kirby

Ariel Muller was exposed to design before he took his first breath. His mother studied interior design while pregnant, setting the stage for Muller's remarkable career creating custom interiors in upscale residential and commercial spaces in Canada, the United States, Cuba and the Middle East.

"Both my parents are in the design business, so I grew up in an environment where I was exposed to the wonderful world of design," says Muller, who has operated Ariel Muller Designs since 1986.

Muller toyed with his strong inclination toward creative arts, math and sciences studying architecture at the University of Waterloo. He quickly realized his passion lay in interiors and furniture, and he completed his interior design studies at the International Academy of Design.

As soon as he graduated, he accompanied his parents on a worldwide search of interesting furniture, accessories and art to fill their newly constructed design centre. Muller learned to fuse his experience of different cultures and styles into custom interior work using wood, metal and stone in exotic finishes to define his spaces. Exclusive furniture has become as much an identifying trait of Ariel Muller Designs as the company's use of cutting edge technology.

"Integrating technology into our designs is where we really shine," says Muller. "Clients are often looking for luxurious designs that accommodate their lifestyles, and they have automation and AV requirements which we integrate seamlessly into the design."

Technology also plays a part in Fusion, one of the company's feature kitchens. The kitchen can be

seen at Cameo's--makers of kitchen cabinetry--Toronto Showroom. It connects a sleek modern design with the latest in audio-visual technology by Architronics that is clearly beyond the typical wall-mounted flat screen TV.

Straying a bit from flashy appliances and entertainment systems, Country Estate is a large log home in which warm tones and the creative use of textures create a luxurious, yet refined rustic aesthetic.

"The great room's warmth defies its impressive scale," says Muller. "Soaring ceilings and expansive views mesh with the welcoming seating areas and rich wood tones for the ultimate log home experience."

The kitchen is tucked under the mezzanine, featuring double curved islands with integrated



### *Fusion (Kitchen of Tomorrow)*

Fusion is fully equipped with a variety of technological features, including a custom automated Runco backsplash. It incorporates an interactive video wall that comprises three high-resolution TV displays, which can create an almost seamless 10-foot-wide image, or display many images simultaneously. "Imagine a backsplash appearing to be a picture window on the skyline of any city in the world, or as a cook calling up recipes from the web," says Muller. "While entertaining you can use the backsplash to watch TV or a movie, you can Skype your family, or use it as a touch screen to control the music, lighting, window blinds, HVAC, and security cameras in your home." The kitchen is designed with a blend of rift-cut walnut and white high-gloss lacquer, and includes touch-activated motorized doors and drawers that activate LED interior lights. The up-lit bar counter made of striking grey agate semi-precious stone, high-end appliances and exclusive fixtures complement the sophisticated, edgy design.

appliances—the inner island features a butcher block counter while the outer has a 2 ¼ inch thick stone countertop to relate to the scale of the space.

The room's hardwood floors are wide, random plank reclaimed elm, complemented by a two-storey, wood burning fireplace. The cut stone fireplace is accented by an antique French tapestry that conceals a flat screen TV. "Just turn the TV on and the tapestry panel automatically lifts to expose the TV," says Muller.

Brown velvet curtains rise two stories to frame the windows and soften the log walls. Sunlight is filtered by motorized shades which are cleverly concealed when not in use. A custom forged wrought iron chandelier made of hand blown glass helps to fill the vaulted space.

Most of the tables and upholstered pieces, including a handcrafted, 14-foot Bubinga wood dining table, flanked at either end with chocolate brown show wood arm chairs upholstered in

leather with woven leather backs, are custom made to work with the scale of the extremely large but inviting space. A memorabilia and entertainment space in a private residence houses one of the country's largest collection of NHL memorabilia outside the Hockey Hall of Fame, and Muller was tasked with accommodating the extensive collection.

"The challenge was how to integrate this into a personal space in a way that the entire collection could be easily viewed, and at the same time allow the room to serve as a media room and versatile entertainment space," says Muller.

Custom wood and glass showcases display hockey jerseys, sticks, equipment and smaller items like pucks, and signed player contracts.

"The end result is a space where family, friends and guest pro hockey players can socialize comfortably, and enjoy the hockey memorabilia collection, sport broadcasts, movies, or music," says Muller. ■



### *Memorabilia House:*

Muller's first encounter with adding technology into his designs started back in the late 80's, when he created custom cabinetry to help conceal large televisions. Making custom AV solutions work and look amazing is accomplished by blending Muller's skills with the client's needs and requirements. Memorabilia Space idealizes the concept with a 5.1 surround sound system that features a drop down projector which tucks up into the ceiling when not in use. The layered ceiling design conceals beams, ductwork, electrical, mechanical, acoustical treatments and speakers, while sculpting and defining the space. What makes the spaces that Muller designs cohesive and distinct is his knowledge of technology and the challenge of integrating it harmoniously that it appears seamless. "Technology allows people to enjoy a better lifestyle," says Muller. "That is key to what we do and to what inspires me."

#### A MESSAGE FROM JORDYN DEVELOPMENTS

Jordyn Developments is an established luxury home builder specializing in custom homes in Toronto and its surrounding area. Founded in 1988 by Bryan Letofsky, Jordyn Developments has received top ratings by Tarion for almost 25 years. Jordyn Developments specializes in design, building and construction management for custom built homes and renovations. With a passion for detail and traditional building expertise, Jordyn Developments takes pride in their commitment and dedication to their clients.

#### A MESSAGE FROM CULMONE + ASSOCIATES

Culmone + Associates, a Toronto based boutique firm specializing in Architectural Technology, Building Design and Planning in Custom Residential, Commercial and Industrial Projects - producing unique and original building designs, meeting and exceeding client expectations, limitless styles that fit seamlessly into their surroundings or stand out tastefully as preferred. Culmone + Associates' building design is exemplified on the Country Estate project. Ariel Muller's team, produced an exemplary and complimentary interior. Culmone + Associates are proud of their relationship with Ariel Muller Designs.