

TURNING THE CORNER

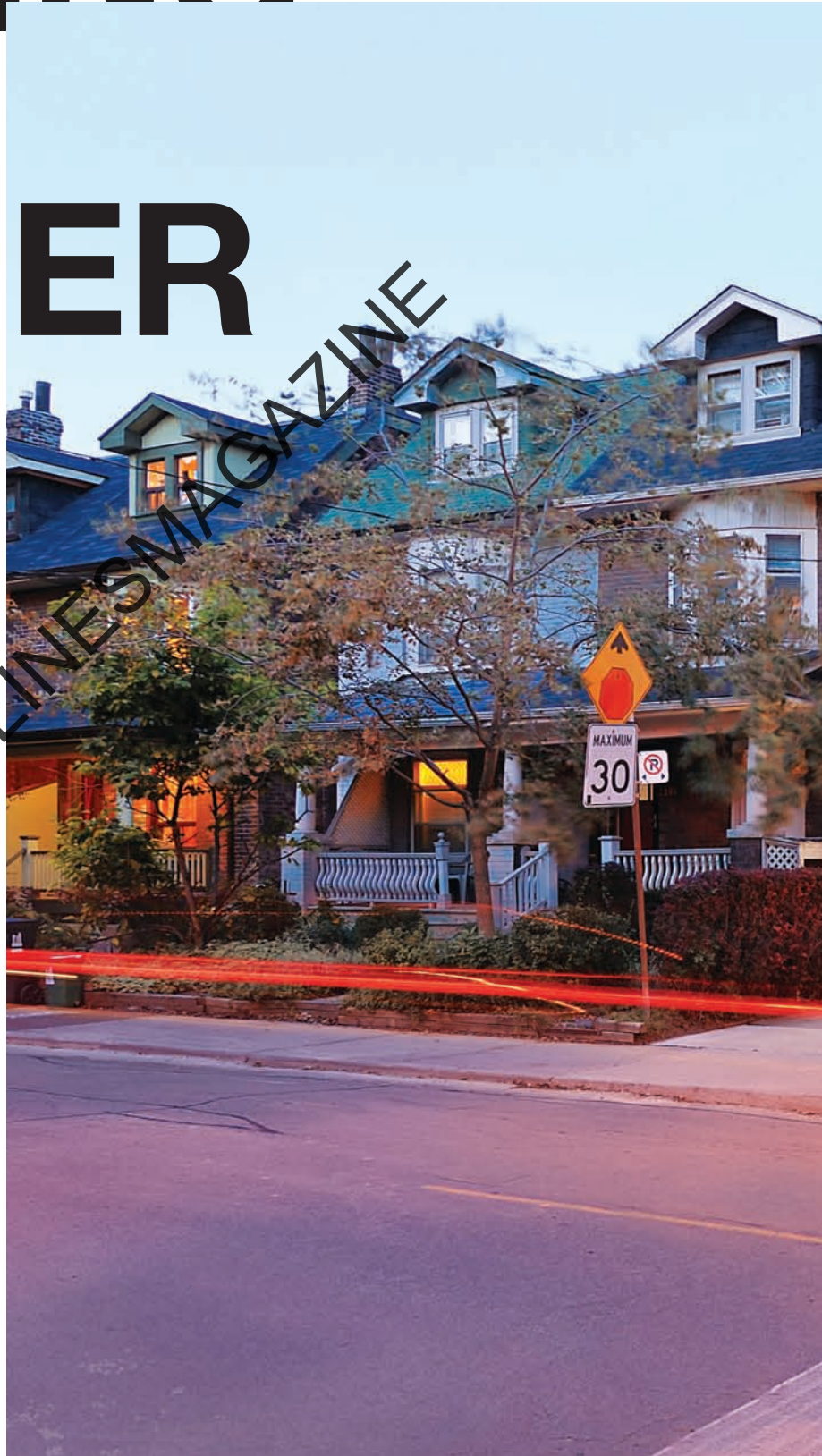
An old storefront gets a whole new lease on life without undergoing a massive reno

By Alex Bozickovic
Photos by Bob Gundu

Before the advent of the supermarket, there was the corner store where neighbours gathered, not only to shop for dinner but to hang out. Streets like Sorcauren Avenue in Roncesvalles were dotted with these stores where the shopkeeper lived upstairs. Since the 1960s, though, many have been torn down or converted into homes. In the case of one former Edwardian bakery at the corner of Sorcauren and Fern, the building had, in recent years, deteriorated as a neglected hair salon overgrown with houseplants.

Architect Antje Bulthaup saw new life and business potential in the property. "It's located at one of the most important junctions in the neighbourhood," she says. When she took on the project she made note of a broad sidewalk shaded by Norway maples, a patch of space that originally would have been a local meeting spot. Bulthaup revitalized the mixed-used property, and now, at ground level, the storefront is a yoga studio. Upstairs, the apartment is a well-lit and minimalist two-bedroom home. >

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What was once a bakery, and then a hair salon, is now an open-concept yoga studio with an apartment above. The custom, rift-cut oak windows and door are by TWP.

The entrance to the apartment is at the back. Visitors walk over a cedar deck, which hints at the all-natural material palette within. The two storeys sport white oak flooring and the walls are painted a warm, unassuming eggshell. New spray foam insulation has been added, along with energy-efficient double-pane windows, wall radiators and sensor-controlled radiant heat flooring in both bathrooms. "This is basic German," says Bulthaup about the changes that are subtle though built to last.

It's an aesthetic she knows well. Raised in Germany and trained as an architect in the U.K., she is a third-generation Bulthaup, a family well known for manufacturing high-end, tightly engineered kitchen systems. She and her husband run the impressively sleek Toronto showroom at 280 King Street East.

Appropriately, the first room visitors to the apartment enter is the kitchen, kitted out with Bulthaup's b3, a customizable ergonomic system that looks like it's floating off the wall and floor. Stacked to the ceiling, the cupboards offer ample storage space, though the slick laminate surfaces and streamlined hardware give the kitchen a sense of minimalist luxury that belies all that roominess. A massive oak table is paired with a long bench, both custom-made of repurposed floorboards from downstairs.

Along with the subtle improvements to the building's structure, the biggest alteration Bulthaup has made is the dormer in the kids' room that provides impressive views of the downtown core. It's a vista many would envy, and proof that luxury can live right above a humble store. □



↑ The yoga studio at ground level features Douglas fir flooring installed by Elite Hardwood.

↓ White laminate cabinets conceal a Miele dishwasher and Leibherr refrigerator. Chairs by Carl Hansen.





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↑ A bench made of repurposed Douglas fir runs the length of the kitchen. This and the table were custom-made; the pendants are by Anta Lighting.
 → Radiant floor heating in the bathroom is sensor-controlled. One-two flush toilet by Duravit; tiles from Olympia Tile.
 →→ The living room is furnished with an Eames lounge and Carl Hansen arm chairs. The wall radiators are by Stelrad.

