

# THE ART OF TRANSFORMATION

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## **Editors, Please note:**

High-resolution interior design images to supplement this story are available for easy downloading over the Internet from the Image Library at <http://media.firstsarniaplace.com>

## **Interior designs for condos with – wow – what a view!**

You've finally found the condo of your dreams – wow, what a view!

Now, comes the part you hadn't considered before.

How do you decorate the interior to complement the fabulous vista that dominates each room?

Take a lesson from Riverdance Holdings Inc. The company is developing luxury condominiums in a waterfront landmark, First Sarnia Place, along the St. Clair River where it separates Sarnia, ON, and Port Huron, MI. at its Lake Huron source.

The view from the suites is a fair description of "wow." Accentuated by the famed, rich blue tones of the major international waterway, the sweeping panorama includes an unimpeded pan of both cities, with their prime sailing and boating waters, recreational marinas, public parkland, the twinned Blue Water Bridge and Lake Huron.

To meet the interior decorating challenge, the developer went to seasoned designer Elizabeth Gilvesy, of Elizabeth Gilvesy Interiors, of Tillsonburg, ON.

Gilvesy brings more than 30 years of experience to the assignment. From her professional start with designer Douglas Gill, formerly of London, ON, now Toronto, she formed her own consulting firm. She serves a select group of clients from Toronto, Oakville and The Muskokas, as well as Florida and Michigan, creating personalized residential, business and recreational surroundings.

"Memorable views offer condominium owners a special opportunity to use their interior design to draw the beauty of the exterior scenery into each room. In the end, you want your space to feel comfortable, to envelope you, with the interior and exterior elements complementing each other."

To showcase the grand view of First Sarnia Place's model suite, Gilvesy chose a soft contemporary style. The design is characterized by quality appointments, soft lighting and a continuity of visual flow formed through the gentle lines and muted colours of furnishings and accessories.

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While there are a number of styles to consider, the contemporary design has a broad appeal, notes Gilvesy. Younger people like its comfortable, modern feel, while the efficient use of furniture appeals to those empty nesters who are transitioning to a simpler life with fewer possessions.

“Most importantly, a contemporary design in a condominium suite offers a continuity of space between the interior and exterior and each room. It helps to visually expand the living area. As well, there is a comfortable melding of colours and shapes that offers a smooth and relaxing flow of eye movement.”

Window treatment is an obvious area where the condo owner’s decisions can have a positive or negative effect on the outside view. Gilvesy recommends applying minimal coverage, suggesting there are a variety of sleek screenings that provide shade from the sun and privacy without impeding the exterior panorama.

Muted earthen colours prevail in a contemporary condo suite. Recessed and area lighting with individual controls is used to harmonize the soft tones of the furniture with the deep hues of kitchen cabinets and the radiant lustre of granite counters.

Textured surfaces help to bring a natural richness to the interior to match the beauty of a surrounding landscape. Features such as marble countertops, hardwood or limestone flooring and primitive collectables and art, will help create an appealing, natural transition.

As well as being comfortable, some furniture in a contemporary condo is selected for its multiple uses. Several arm chairs in the entrance area and living room will be upholstered to complement the dining room set, in case extra guests come for dinner. Similarly, a chair in the den, or bedroom, will look equally in place, if needed in the living room when entertaining a group.

It’s not necessary to match furniture pieces, such as end tables or lamps, although furnishings must complement each other and the surroundings. Gilvesy says such a fundamental approach makes the rooms feel less decorated and appear more natural and comfortable.

Gilvesy points to the model suite’s glass-top dining table and waterfall coffee table for their classic modern designs, as well as their abilities to expand the living area. “They are very functional, but don’t obstruct people’s view of the surrounding room or the outside. Also, a well-placed mirror can help you capitalize on your outdoor scenery and offer a tempting glimpse of your surroundings, even when you are looking to the interior of the suite.”

While continuity of design is important, Gilvesy also likes to see the occasional, contrasting feature added to reflect the unique tastes of the suite’s owners.

“The owner’s edge side might be conveyed through a sophisticated sisal area rug in the living room, an elegant antique sculpture in the dining room, or eye-catching artwork in the den and bedroom.”

For a further look at Gilvesy’s design ideas for condos with “wow” views, visit the online image library at <http://media.firstsarniaplace.com>.

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