



• CUSTOM HOMES /
DESIGN-BUILD •

Gathering SPACES

Modern homes take creativity to new heights

There was a time when gathering at home meant having friends in for dinner or drinks, or perhaps an evening of playing games or watching a movie.

These days, our homes are used for so much more. Activities that used to happen in dedicated public spaces are moving into our homes. Sophisticated homebuilders are finding ways to make that happen.

“Gathering spaces in the homes we build these days aren’t just living rooms and dining areas,” says Matt Pryce, who co-owns Prycon Custom Building & Renovations with his brother, Steve. “We are

drawing inspiration from public spaces like coffee shops and wine bars, fitness clubs and offices.”

The trend goes far beyond home theatres and coffee nooks. “Think indoor pools and pickleball courts – with viewing areas for spectators,” says Steve. “Dedicated scotch-tasting bars, private offices, and professional-level fitness centres; we’re building these and much more.”

Open and flexible
In some ways, this is at odds with another long-standing trend: the demand for open-concept spaces. That’s where creativity in design and construction really comes to

the fore, creating areas that can serve multiple functions. “We are designing and building spaces that flow into each other, that are distinct but also open,” says Matt. “The idea is that you and your guests can move seamlessly from one leisure interest to another.”

While interior walls are still needed – to create private offices, for example – other

spaces are defined using other approaches. “A change in ceiling height or material, or a change of lighting can make all the difference in the world,” Steve explains. It can be dramatic – a nine-foot ceiling in the kitchen area opening to a soaring vault over the dining table clearly defines both areas. Or it can be more subtle, such as a coffered ceiling in the dining

area, or lighting the kitchen with pot lights and the living area with a chandelier, lamps, and wall sconces.

Even furniture placement can fundamentally define the spaces, giving each “room” a distinct feel, while allowing people to see and communicate with each other in different parts of the house, or share the view to the outside.

Truly custom
“Part of our planning process involves extensive conversations with the client about how they intend to use the house,” says Matt. “We want to know how they live, what their lifestyle is, what activities they enjoy. That way we can design and build a house that is truly customized for them.”

The value proposition is always part of that conversation, he adds. “There is always a budget, no matter how big or small. Our entire team is focused on designing and building for value. We believe in complete transparency – if we think something is not good value for your investment, or if there is a more cost-effective way of doing something, we

will have those conversations with our clients.”

Modern innovation
Excellent design and great value are front and centre, but other aspects of fine homebuilding aren’t as visible. “Building open-concept, multi-functional spaces can present some technical challenges,” Steve says.

For example, exterior glass walls are an excellent way to flood a room with light, take in the view, and let the design flow seamlessly from indoors to outdoors. But where do you put the electrical outlets and light switches in a glass wall? How do you maintain energy efficiency while keeping the room comfortable on both sunny days and cold winter nights?

“That’s where it pays to stay on top of new developments in building science,” Steve says. “Manufacturers are introducing so many new products; it’s almost a full-time job just to stay on top of it.”

With a large, dedicated team – and 30 years in business – Prycon benefits from a wealth of experience and knowledge, allowing them to stay up to date on all the latest developments.

“Materials are always changing, always evolving. You can’t just build things the way you always have, because if you do, you’re going to miss out on some tremendous opportunities to add value and functionality to the home.”

Traditional materials are declining in favour of composite materials – which blend “waste” wood with modern compounds – or synthetic alternatives, which are often less expensive, more durable, and need less maintenance.

There are always innovative details worth paying attention to. “We recently installed a kitchen with a pop-up wireless charging station blended into a stone

countertop,” says Matt. “It’s a small thing, but that didn’t exist a few years ago.”

In the end, it all boils down to the same thing that has mattered to the Prycon team for the past 30 years: building fabulous homes designed for their clients’ lifestyle. The result is a home where family and friends can gather, no matter what it is they love to do.

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