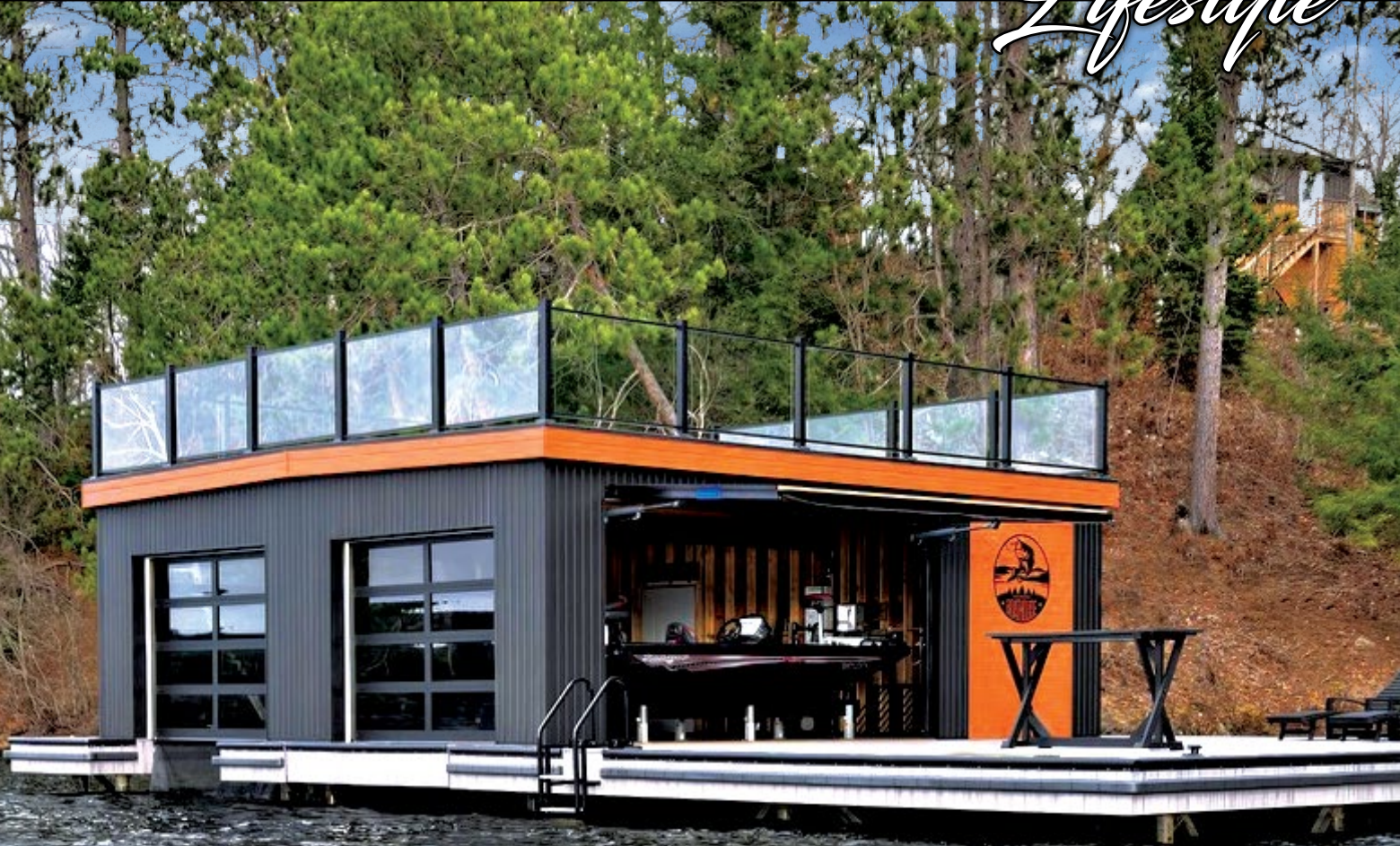


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STATEMENT SURFACES:

WHERE MATERIAL BECOMES THE MOMENT

I've been having more and more conversations lately that start the same way: not with layouts or colour schemes, but with materials. Clients are arriving with a specific slab in mind, or a texture they've fallen in love with, and everything else builds from there. It's a different way of approaching design—less about decorating, more about composing a space from the ground up.

Kitchens and bathrooms are where this really shows up. Instead of layering in lots of finishes and details, my clients are open to pulling things back and letting one or two materials take the lead. This approach creates a calmer, more grounded feeling, where nothing is fighting for attention, and the whole space feels more resolved.

Stone is usually where the conversation begins. My clients want something timeless, and we end up landing on a slab with beautiful, natural movement. What's changed is how we're

using it. Rather than stopping at the countertop, that same slab is carried up the backsplash or even across an entire wall. The space feels more cohesive, and there's a quiet kind of drama that comes with it.

Waterfall edges and fully wrapped islands have also gained in popularity in recent years. They make something as practical as a kitchen island feel intentional, like a piece of furniture or sculpture. I always tell clients that if you're going to invest in a material, you might as well let it shine.

At the same time, not everything needs to be hard and polished. I've been leaning into contrast a lot—bringing in softer, more tactile elements to balance things out. Fluted wood panelling is one I come back to often. It adds texture and a bit of movement without feeling busy, and it warms up spaces that might otherwise feel too sleek.

That mix of materials is what makes a room feel layered, but not overdone. If anything, the approach right now is more about editing than adding. I've had projects where the biggest improvement came from removing things—extra trims, competing finishes and unnecessary details. Once those are gone, the materials you've chosen can actually breathe.

There's also been a lot of progress on the technical side, which helps bring these ideas to life. Engineered surfaces have come a long way. I've been working with products like Laminam, and the flexibility they offer is impressive—especially when you're trying to achieve a really seamless look. Thinner profiles, cleaner edges, and fewer interruptions all add up to something that feels considered without looking overworked.

Even with all of that innovation, I still find myself coming back to natural materials, time and time again. What's changed is how we're using them. Finishes are softer—more honed than polished—and the overall palette tends to stay within a tighter range. It's less about contrast and more about flow.

This is where that idea of warm minimalism really comes into play. When you layer wood, stone and textiles in similar tones, you get a space that feels calm but not flat. It's minimal, but it still has warmth to it.

More thought is going into longevity, with people thinking beyond what looks good right now and asking how things will age. I always encourage choosing materials that will wear in, not wear out. A good stone surface or a natural wood finish tends to get better over time, and that's something you can't replicate.

Of course, none of this works without a bit of balance. A strong surface needs something quieter around it, can feel like too much. I usually pair bolder materials with softer, more neutral elements just to give the eye a place to rest. And lighting makes a bigger difference than people expect—it can completely change how a surface reads throughout the day.

At the end of the day, this shift toward statement surfaces isn't about following a trend. It's about being more thoughtful with the choices we make. When you get the materials right, you don't need much else—and that's kind of the point.

Photo Credit: Stephani Buchman Images



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