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# Neighbours of Olde OAKVILLE

An exclusive voice for Olde Oakville and South East Oakville families and their stories



**Designing Oakville:  
Meet Alison Hodd**

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Photo by Natalia Norton Photography



## Designing Oakville: Meet Alison Hodd



Photos by Natalia Norton Photography

Alison Hodd's design style can be summarized as Olde Oakville, but that is hardly surprising considering she is one of the few people who can actually claim life-long Olde Oakville residence. Growing up on William Street with a view of Lake Ontario, the designer, wife, and mother of two, has had beautiful scenery and aesthetics to inform, shape, and sculpt her design style her entire life.

Her parents purchased their 120-year-old home in 1979 and immediately set to work cultivating the home they desired. Part of the project would involve restoring and renovating an old coach house on their property. Their hard work paid off when they finished that project, because the coach house has turned into, what Alison calls, a party hub. "We always go there after the Santa Claus parade, it's great for entertaining!" That party hub will once again see some celebration this holiday season as it has been home to several Christmas parties in the past. "Dad throws parties

there. One year was Parisian Christmas, we had Cowboy Christmas one year, too," shares Alison.

The family passion for renovation doesn't end there. Alison's family also owns a cottage in the Kawarthas, and they invest just as much time in the town as they do on their rustic residence. "There is such a soul to the town, they have the best antiques and the beautiful Coe Hill County Fair."

Looking to Oakville as a whole, Alison acknowledges that the scene is a little different now than when she was growing up. "It's changed so much, the world has changed so much! I remember we would walk to Robinson to The Grocery. Now there's a lot of condo development, especially down on the water. Downtown is always changing, the stores have changed, and they've all turned over."

Taking a cue from her hometown, Alison embraced that change in her own life recently and made the jump from

working in the pharmaceutical industry to interior design. She opened Catherine Alison Interiors in 2010 after becoming certified through Sheridan College and has been helping people create their dream spaces ever since. "Why not!" She laughs. "Our surroundings are important. We feel good when things look good. We feel joy and productivity; I want to help people enjoy life more, to feel a better connection with the people they love. It's about enhancing quality of life, and lifting people up."

When asked how she would characterize her style, she is clear: "classic, fresh, clean, architectural, and warm." Alison's scientific and analytical background (and engineer father) instilled within her a value of the spatial side of design that ensures the perfect balance of scale, form and function, lines, and proportion. That predisposition dovetails nicely with her "homey and layered" artistic drive that makes every project reflect the architecture of the home and style of the client.

**"...classic, fresh, clean,  
architectural, and warm."**

**BY ALISON HODD**

Some of the greatest joy Alison derives from design comes from watching the discoveries her clients make. "Sometimes I'll work with a couple, and that's two sets of hopes, dreams, aspirations, and style, and sometimes they don't realize they have a lot of commonality. I want to make living spaces that reflect them, and it's fun to find personalities as we work together."


One of Alison's largest challenges is getting her clients to understand the scale of their project. "Everything adds up.

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It can be surprising to see how much goes in and how pieces add up." To make sure every project goes smoothly, Alison encourages her clients to set expectations. "Set aside a chunk of the budget for styling" advises Alison, because you want the room to, as she says, "feel done." "There's nothing worse than buying a couch, but no pillows, or a beautiful hardwood floor without a rug, you want the room to feel done."

**"Sometimes it's hard for them to see how what they already have could be repurposed to work with and create spaces that reflect their dreams and aspirations."**

BY ALISON HODD

The good news is that is exactly where Alison's expertise comes into play, as sometimes home owners are too close to their projects to find solutions. "Sometimes it's hard for them to see how what they already have could be repurposed to work with and create spaces that reflect their dreams and aspirations."

When she isn't at the helm of her business, Alison is with her family. She has been married to her husband Rob for 14 years, and they have two daughters, Elizabeth, 8, and Sarah, 3. Both girls are enrolled at Maple Grove Public School. "They're adorable!" dotes Alison. "Just their zest for life, their energy, their lack of self consciousness. It's fun to see them without insecurities, I'm really lucky." Alison's hopes for her girls are perhaps indicative of the legacy she has already left in Olde Oakville, "I want them to feel a sense of community and connection, to feel safe and supported, and rooted. When we're rooted it can offer us resilience."

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