

Shades of summer

Beating the heat in a sunshade sunroom

BY MARGARET ANNE FEHR PHOTOGRAPHY BY DUALITY PHOTOGRAPHIC



GINA'S SOUTH-FACING BACKYARD

deck had too much of a good thing – unrelenting sunshine. Says this Island Lakes homeowner, “I wasn’t getting any use out of my deck because the sun was simply too intense.” Add to the mix the exposure to wind, rain and, of course, our ubiquitous mosquito population plus the work involved in staining the wood every few years, and these were reasons enough to motivate Gina to look for an alternative.

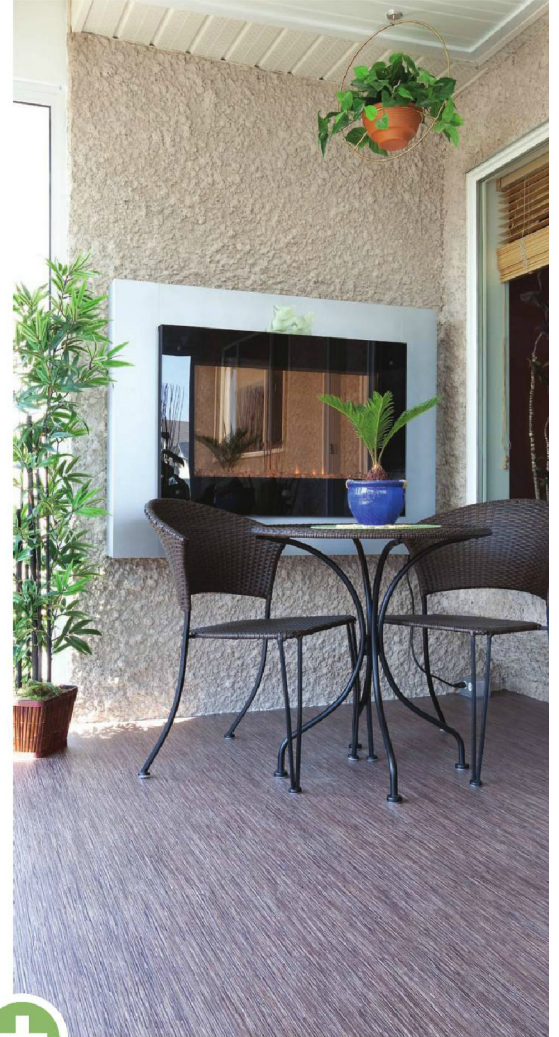
She didn’t have to look too far, as her neighbours a few houses down the street had recently installed a closed-in sunroom that got Gina investigating a possible avenue for solving her decking shortfalls. Gina called upon Steven Sarens of Sunshade Sunrooms to propose a design that would meet her criteria for a carefree summer.

“I let Steve advise me on what would work best in my situation because unlike most other houses, I have a jog that meant there was going to be one wall that was still going to be stuccoed, whereas in most cases, there are 3 sides of glass. But in my case, it was going to be 2 ½ walls.”

Gina was certain of one thing right from the get-go. She wanted to go with the option of 9-foot floor-to-ceiling panes of glass for a total sense of openness. “Most people are opting for the full glass instead of a knee wall to maintain the views of their yard,” says Steve. “In Gina’s case, with her deck being up so high, if she went with a solid bottom section, it would block out the view of her yard.”

The finished sunroom was designed to generous proportions with a length of 19 ¼ feet and a width of 12 feet that fits in seamlessly with the house profile. The jog at the back of Gina’s house presented a few challenges for the Sunshade team. “The challenges came with the existing deck so we had to do some modifications and additions to it,” says Steve.

“The other challenge was the roof because it is partially mounted on the stucco which is on the second storey of the house and the roof itself ties into an overhang on the back. So there was a bit of custom fitting that was needed there. On a house like this where you’re tying in to two sides



BEFORE & AFTER RENOVATION

PICTURED OPPOSITE PAGE

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PICTURED LEFT

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PICTURED TOP

The home's unique jog has been adorned with an electric plasma fireplace that gives off enough heat to warm the space during chilly evenings or can be used solely for its ambient lighting



PICTURED ABOVE
Steven Sarens stands proudly in front of another successful project.

of an existing roof, you're limited to the degree of slope that you can put on, but also from a visual standpoint, it looks nicer to have that slope."

"Fortunately," says Steve, "we are able to custom build everything in our factory, so it's built to fit and we were able to do a nicely angled wall for her doorway leading to the open deck area for her barbecue."

Steve adds that screens are incorporated throughout the entire wall system. "For the front wall of her sunroom, half of it opens up to screens and the shorter east wall has a large 4 foot screen opening as well."

"Because everything blends in so well, whether the windows are fully opened or fully closed, you really can't tell where the

screens are. Our sunrooms tend to look like they belong there, rather than as an afterthought."

Gina has added her own decorative touches to her new sunroom including fiberglass flooring underfoot, and that unique jog has been adorned with an electric plasma fireplace that gives off enough heat to warm the space during chilly evenings or can be used solely for its ambient lighting. "Much better than ugly baseboards," says Gina.

She also gives two thumbs up to the Sunshade Sunroom team and appreciated their easy-going attitude, conscientious clean-up of materials, and the quality of their work. "They were great!" ☐

