

# Rooms that Count

## Varied designs make category tough to judge

By Patrick Langston, Ottawa Citizen November 5, 2011

It's one of the toughest categories to judge, say those responsible for doing so, much like comparing apples and oranges. This year, for example, the finalists in the Any Room in the House category at the annual Housing Design Awards included an Old World-style wine cellar and a contemporary dining room, and the judges were tasked with deciding which components or combination of components in a room make it outstanding.

"There are often interesting and exciting ideas that don't fall into any specific category, so this is a chance for designers to submit their designs. It's a kind of catch-all and has often produced really interesting winners," says John Herbert, executive director of the Greater Ottawa Home Builders' Association, which holds the awards.

(.....)

Lagois Drafting & Construction offered up the transformation of a Hemlock Road dining room.

An existing dropped structural beam and a masonry fireplace were the challenges in creating this elegant room. The solution included adding a layered coffered/beamed ceiling and replacing the gas fireplace with a raised electric version mounted in a porcelain tile-fronted projection. "What impressed me was the fact that this took a couple of undesirable features - that beam and fireplace - and turned them into design features," says architect and Algonquin professor Richard Briginshaw,

The ceiling seems to have grabbed everyone's attention. Dredge calls it spectacular, describing it as a modern take on a Tudor ceiling, while Lawrence says the ceiling bulkhead details are well co-ordinated with the floor plan and furniture location.

"When I look at the room, it's fairly conventional. The ceiling makes it feel more contemporary - the designer's done a nice job with what he had to work with."

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