

Movable Glass Walls

A dream to work with, they offer instant architectural interest



By Jacqueline Glass

I had the privilege of designing the guest quarters of the Dream Home for the National Home Show held in March. The project was challenging on many levels, especially the short timeframe within which it had to be built and fully furnished, onsite. The guest quarters consisted of a recreational room, bar kitchen, two guest bedrooms, and a spa bathroom.

The design direction was modern and clean-lined, using eco-friendly materials. But of all the wonderful elements that came together in this Dream Home, the movable glass walls used throughout the space were a truly outstanding architectural feature.

I was amazed at the interest people had in the vast expanse of glass walls, framed in a dark granite colour, featured

in the recreational area. Everyone was astonished at how the windows, despite their weight, moved effortlessly out of the way to easily allow the outdoors in. Now *this* is a product we Canadians can really get excited about!

I spoke to George Mei, President of Monarch Moveable Glass Walls, about the popularity of his product. While he originally focused on building conservatories, it wasn't until a trip abroad that he saw moving glass walls and realized that Canadians would love them. "It has the same effect as an outdoor room, without the heat-gain experienced with conservatories," he said.

One favourite project Mei completed was a penthouse in Montreal where the owner chose to enclose his rooftop (which happened to overlook Trudeau's

home), with five movable, 12-foot-high walls, thus creating a year-round outdoor living space.

As Mei noted, people spend huge dollars on landscaping but the idea of incorporating outdoor living into home design has not kept up with the pace. With this type of glass wall system, there's no end to how you can fuse your indoor and outdoor living spaces. As well, these custom glass wall systems have screens that protect against pesky insects – perfect for the cottage, too!

If you are like me, I try to extend my outdoor living season for as long as I can, and a product like this makes it easier to do so. As Mei summed up, "I think we are fulfilling the Canadian dream to have a year-round space." I couldn't agree more. ■

Monarch Moveable Glass Walls
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