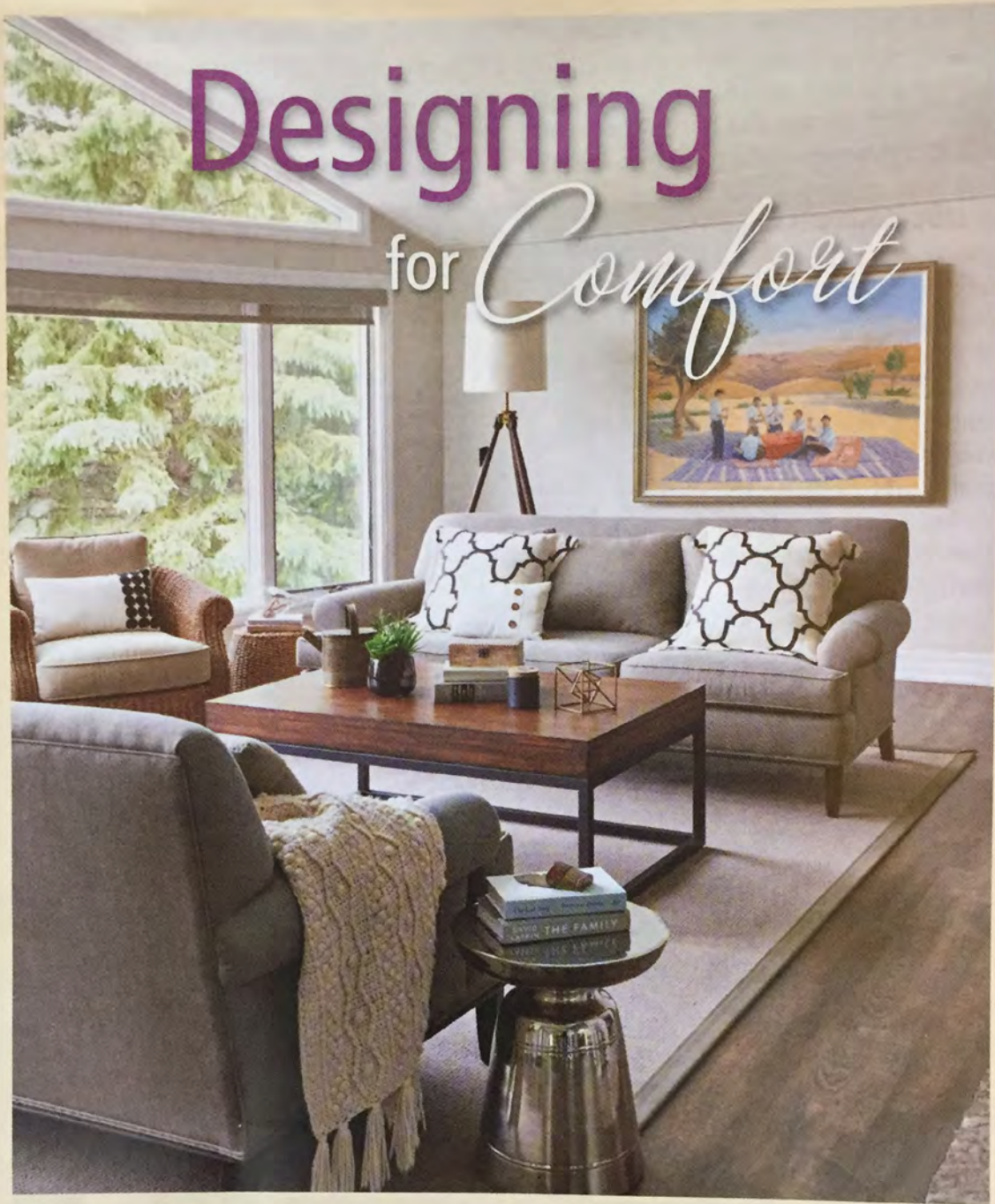


# ONTARIO DESIGN

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# Designing

## for *Comfort*

Cynthia Soda

**E**rgonomics is concerned with the relationship between users and objects. It sets parameters based on scientific study for designing and arranging things people use so that the people and things interact most efficiently and safely. Practical examples of the application of ergonomic study include standard working heights of surfaces and that are comfortable (or uncomfortable) such as the desk chair in your office. We, as professional designers, almost intrinsically know how to apply these principles to our clients' environments. The thing is, if everything around you fits and works with you, you don't think about it. It's when it suddenly doesn't sit right, and your hand starts cramping at your workstation or your counters are too high, do you notice it. Designers have a distinct responsibility to all of our clients to think about the comfort of the end user.

When we set out to create functional and beautiful spaces for our clients, we are starting down a path that will ultimately lead to the optimization of our clients' well-being and overall satisfaction. Having said that, the practical facet of designing for comfort only touches on one aspect of our design process and applies to everyone. It's the emotional aspect of comfort that truly sets our designs apart for our clients. If you've created a space that works perfectly but evokes little to no emotion from the user, what fun is that? Enter — "why I love my job". In a world that is constantly evolving, where there is perpetual change, it forces us to dig deeper. My clients LOVE to scour online resources like Houzz and Pinterest to send me ideas of what they like, dislike and covet for their space. They also have their own collections and interests that need to be incorporated one way or another and it is our duty



to ensure that those cherished "things" are thought about and incorporated. After all, home is where the heart is, right?

I remember joking with my husband after we had moved into our first home together that home is really where your stuff is. It was that first feeling of visiting our parents in what suddenly became "their house" and it was time to go "home" that stuck with me. Suddenly we were without the comforts of home. We didn't have everything that was ours at our fingertips. We suddenly felt more at ease in our own space where we could make our own decisions and mistakes and be surrounded by the colours and things that told our story. As designers, we need to tell our clients' story through our filter. That's why they hire us. If they knew exactly what they wanted and how they wanted it, they wouldn't pick up the phone in the first place.





An important skill that we develop early on in our career is to listen, observe and pay attention to nuances in order to ensure that at the end of the day, our clients feel great walking through their door. They have a sense of pride of place and all the comforts of home are at the ready and incorporated in an efficient but meaningful way. The ultimate result is a well designed space that reflects our client's personality and ensures both physical and emotional comfort for years to come. **00**



**CYNTHIA SODA** is the Owner and Principal Interior Designer of Soda Pop Design Inc., a multi-disciplinary interior design firm providing complete custom renovation and design services for residential and commercial clients throughout the GTA.

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