

# RESTLESSLIVING

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## FOREST RETREAT

Caledon, Ontario, Canada

In rural Ontario, among forest trees and grassland lies Forest Retreat. Beautifully designed, the home has more to it than what meets the eye, it was built with a purpose of reconnection. Essentially, the owners wanted to provide their children with the same experiences they had when they were kids themselves, breathing in the fresh rural air and exploring the bewitching nature.

“The clients for this project live abroad and sought a Canadian homestead — an anchor — for their large, young family. During the summer and winter holidays, the parents wanted their children immersed in an Ontario landscape like the one in which they were raised. To this end, they requested a ‘rustic, modern retreat’ for their 100-acre property of forest, wetland, and meadows.” Principal at Kariouk Architects, Paul Kariouk begins. The residence was developed with family in mind: to accommodate parents and children, dogs and extended family comfortably for long stays while encouraging outdoor activities like hiking and snowshoeing. Simply put, a dwelling that celebrates the simplicity of life. Conversely, the program consists of spacious rooms that are enhanced by glass curtains watching over the landscape. The homely feeling was materialized through wooden materials that contrast with dark elements, conveying a design that fuses the rural with modern but in a modest way, “it was also important to avoid modernist tendencies for box-like forms.”









On the subject of form, the residence is unmistakable. As Paul explains: “the most powerful aspect of the design is the long, tent-like roof, which follows the site’s topography. The roof and its ridge beam became the design’s primary focus, shaping the circulation path through the home’s interior, ultimately extending a view toward the forest.” Nevertheless, the home’s signature element did come with a technical challenge: “a primary technical challenge was the roof’s structure, which despite its 60-metre length needed to seem light. The folds and angles of the steel roof are supported by the meandering ridge beam. The roof cantilevers and tapers at all edges. At the entry side of the house, the roof lifts like a bird’s wing off the garage volume beneath, sheltering an outdoor terrace”, Paul elaborates.

Given the natural richness of the landscape, respect towards nature was paramount and so the home was placed on “existing cleared ridge” to avoid the cutting of trees that in turn creates an even more deeper connection with the site. “Historically, the Canadian identity has been defined by our relationship to the land. Fulfilling the client’s mandate, the home honors that emotional connection through visual and material harmonization with its surroundings”, Paul concludes.

Architecture by **Kariouk Architects**

Photography by **Scott Norsworthy**

