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Nickerson
home appliances

*a fully
integrated*
experience

Charlie Nickerson Jr. and Lex Parker on
Niagara's newly renovated, state-of-the-art
appliance destination. **page 15**

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plus arts & culture listings, a day downtown, and much more!



Nickerson Appliances, one of St. Catharines' most treasured family businesses, has undergone a remarkable transformation in 2012. It all began with a rather everyday encounter during a rather everyday errand three years ago. **By Liz Hendriksen**



Like any homeowner 'in the know' interior designer Lex Parker (ARIDO, IDC, MMR, CRC, SIP) and his wife Susan, owners of Lex Parker Design Consultants Ltd, went to Nickerson Appliances when looking for new appliances. While browsing the impressive merchandise, the pair was greeted by third generation owner Charlie Nickerson Jr. As Lex is one of Niagara's most well regarded contemporary designers, talk naturally led to Nickerson Appliances' outdated storefront and sales floor. The result of the conversation is the store's stunning new façade and modern interior.

In 1945, Charlie's grandparents opened Nickerson Appliances in the front of their home at 50 Russell Avenue. It remains there to this day and three generations of customers are now considered a part of the Nickerson family. Today, the store spans across two homes and showcases everything from entry-level appliances to European brands not out of place in big-city showrooms. As the last renovation took place over 30 years ago, Charlie determined that it was time to make a change. Only one question remained: relocate or renovate? After speaking with Lex the decision to renovate was made.

Satisfied customers would all agree that Lex Parker is gifted in revealing the beauty of a structure through simple and thoughtful design techniques. Having shaped a sizable portion of Niagara's commercial and residential design landscape, Lex was originally tasked with developing a number of concepts for the Nickerson Appliances' storefront. His role

however, evolved as the scope of the project did and an overhaul of the entire building's design was settled on.

Described by Charlie as 'leading-edge' Nickerson Appliances now has a strong and sophisticated design. Customers will notice the enclosed porch and awning have been replaced with "jewel cases" for displaying merchandise. The showroom, a formerly choppy space on three-levels, is now open-concept and includes a spacious foyer and fully functional demonstration kitchen. High-end design appointments are showcased throughout and the building materials and systems all use the latest technologies. Additionally, the building is now fully accessible. Don't be fooled however, this new Nickerson's may be an aspirational space, but Lex and the sales team have ensured that the sales floor is as warm and inviting as always.

Lex has been, according to Charlie, 'absolutely indispensable' and was the renovation's 'go-to guy'. Lex is a hands-on interior designer and was on-site daily to address construction issues and make design decisions on the fly. Conveniently located in downtown St. Catharines at 14 Ontario Street, the close proximity of Lex Parker Design Consultants Ltd. to the Nickerson Appliances construction site has been vital to the success of this project. Indeed this central location and Lex's undeniable talents as an interior designer are the reasons why so many properties in Niagara and beyond have looked to Lex Parker for inspirational and functional design solutions for over 35 years.