

# Profiles

by James Williams



Eden Hinton

Firstly, I must confess that prior to my visit to Eden Pilates, my knowledge of this highly renowned exercise technique was somewhat limited. However, upon leaving an hour later, I felt not only well-schooled in the intricate arts of Pilates, but also came away with an eager determination that it would not be my last encounter with this invigorating enterprise. I attribute this enthusiasm to neighbourhood local, Eden Hinton, the knowledgeable and passionate founder of Eden Pilates.

“Pilates has been my passion for many years,” says Hinton. “I have loved teaching it in both England and Canada as a STOTT certified instructor.” Along with this, Hinton also has a BFA Dance degree from Ryerson University, so it is safe to say she has a sound knowledge of the science of the human body.

“The key to Pilates is in connecting with your core strength,” she explains. “It focuses on using the mind to control your muscles when working out. Even when focusing on one particular area it can be a full body experience; it’s very therapeutic, actually.”

She is not wrong there. Under Hinton’s safe instruction, I had a lesson on The Reformer equipment, and quickly discovered the truth in her statement. “Many Pilates instructors use mats but I really believe in the equipment,” she affirms. In fact, the opening of Eden Pilates in March of this year was motivated by Hinton’s dedication to providing a space for her growing client base to experience the equipment. “I am still committed to private, home-based, one-on-one tutorials,” she says. “But now I can also provide a relaxed, professional environment for exercise.” And, judging from my first session at Eden Pilates, her clients will be very grateful that she did.

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Heikki Walden

Heikki Walden knows how best to help you feel at home, not just in your house but also in your neighbourhood. This experienced Realtor from Royal LePage’s Downtown Branch at King and Strachan leads an incredibly productive life, pursuing his passion for helping people find a “different quality of life in an urban setting.” From speaking at panel discussions with local city councillors and school principals to giving talks on such wide-ranging urban concerns as maximizing your interior space, green living, suburban sprawl and architecture, Walden is clearly very keen on inspiring people to make the most out of where they live.

Given the impressive nature of such a cause, it’s almost a surprise to discover how down-to-earth he is. “I have a love for the neighbourhoods here in Toronto and for helping people to integrate and feel at home within them,” he says. “It is important for people to find meaning in the city they live in by exploring and connecting with their surroundings.”

As a Realtor, Walden has found the ideal way to help people find what is meaningful to them, starting with the space in which they live. “I started as an appraiser, trusted by banks and lenders to determine a property’s market value,” he explains. “But as more people kept asking my advice when buying their homes, I discovered my real vocation.”

Of course Walden’s skills for home appraisal were a natural preparation for his new calling, though he admits, “Most realtors can’t draw on the knowledge of property valuation,” that he can. And as such, this specialized knowledge enables him to accurately price more unique properties. “I like dealing with older, less predictable houses as well as lofts,” he enthuses. “There is potential in even the smallest living spaces. I hope to inspire people to make good, critical choices in their lives.”

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Elizabeth Oliveira

When Elizabeth Oliveira opened her custom clothing store, Style Lab, in West Queen West earlier this year she wasn’t so much taking an unprecedented leap of faith as fulfilling a natural extension of her already significant influence in fashion and design. In fact, the coming together of Toronto’s most fashionable neighbourhood and Oliveira, who for the past 8 years has been the creative mastermind behind custom design clothes, Labl Studio, might even be seen as a perfect fit.

Certainly Oliveira herself considers Style Lab a logical progression. “Labl Studio’s appointment-only, full custom design service is still an important part of Labl,” explains Oliveira. “But the focus of Style Lab is to allow my services to be readily available for walk-in customers, who need unique in-store alterations.”

It all began for Oliveira when studying abroad in Portugal around the mid-1990s. “It was the biggest accident of my life,” she smiles. “I was studying Portuguese but ended up at an intensive fashion and design school, and my passion just grew from there.”

Fuelled with creative desire, she returned home to Toronto and thrived in a range of fashion design roles, including becoming an exclusive designer for Aveda “Congress” in 2003. It seems there is no end to Oliveira’s creativity and, with the founding of Labl, she has found the perfect way to keep her wave of invention flowing. “At Labl and Style Lab I have a variety of clients asking: Can you do this?” Oliveira explains. “It means being visually creative, as well as starting a process of education and discussion with each individual to find what would look best on them. I aim to make it a non-issue in people’s lives.” Fashion-hunters take note of the innovative expertise of Elizabeth Oliveira, a perfect fit in Toronto’s art & design district.

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