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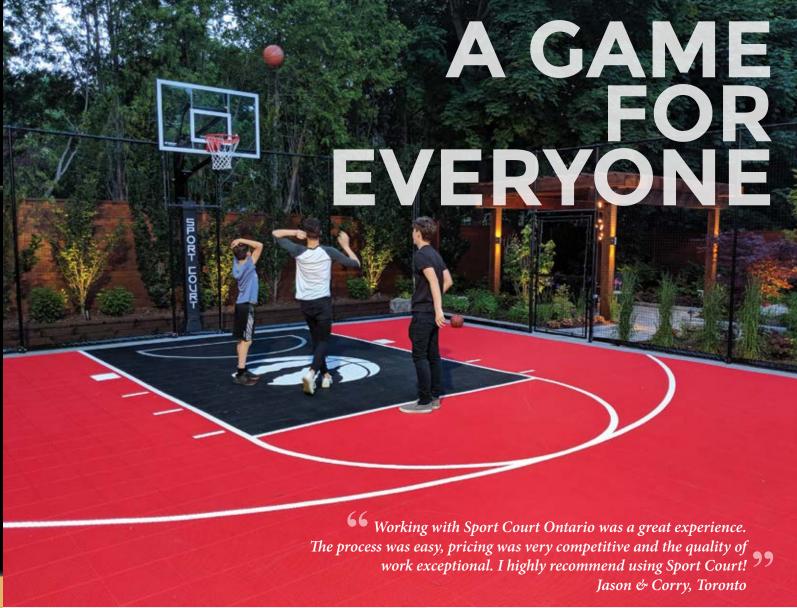
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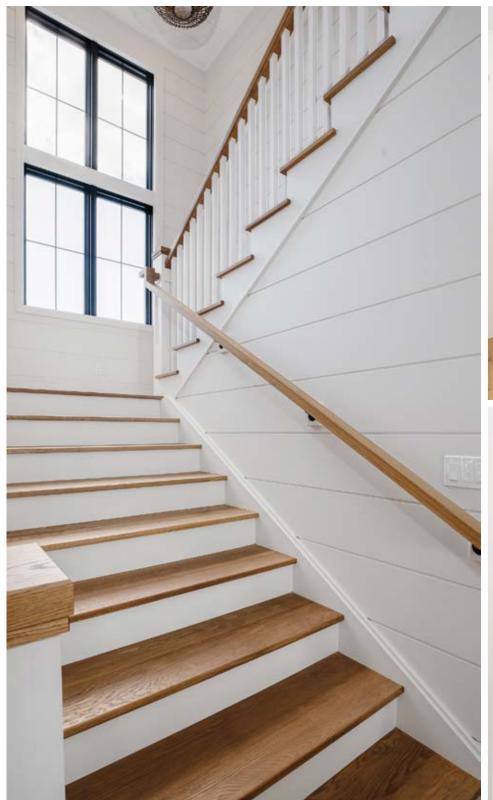


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editor's note



MY MOM WAS MY VERY FIRST DESIGN **INSPIRATION**

teaching me that interior design should be fun. She always let me tag along to home décor stores and had piles of magazines on the coffee table. She would rip out and keep the pages she loved. I find myself doing the same.

To me, design is taking what

resonates from spaces you admire, then making it your own. Because I work in the business, inspiration is everywhere and magazines are a

The three homes we feature in this issue are right up my design alley and I would love to incorporate elements from each. At the top on my list are the handmade concrete tiles in Lived-in Luxury (pg. 36) and the bedside pendant lights in Hilltop Hideaway (pg. 94). I also often find myself wanting to capture the feeling a home evokes, which is the case with Simply White (pg. 62). Homeowner Anne Armstrong has created a sanctuary by filling her home with whitewashed antiques and hydrangeas. I never wanted to leave.

Designer Tamarisk McNalty Stephen's advice on how a millennial can sustainably furnish a first home resonated with me, too (pg. 20). Starting with a blank slate and making it your own is an exciting endeavour, but a challenge nonetheless. A year after moving into my first home, I have found that it's a balancing act between old and new, high and low. We want our homes to feel like a reflection of ourselves and that's how I feel when I walk through my front door.

I am now days away from moving in with my partner, so my next test will be seeing how our design styles mix. First up? Picking out a sectional that is both durable and beautiful, cosy enough to cuddle up for a movie and big enough to gather with friends and family. A tall order! Thankfully, I have a stack of magazines I can flip through for ideas.

Rachael Havens, Managing Editor rachael.havens@ourhomes.ca

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CONTENTS **SPRING 2022**







ON THE COVER

Interior Designer Samantha Thomas blends old-world charm with contemporary finishes. Story, page 36. Photography by Nat Caron.





LOCAL FEATURES

- **22** Style Picks These local goods will infuse your home with a breath of fresh air.
- **36 Home & Designer** A fabulous bungalow makeover with a designer's touch.
- **56** Spotlight Sketch designs family homes with an eye on the future.
- **62** Feature Home A historic home in downtown Barrie gets a shabby chic refresh with gallons of white paint.
- **76** People & Places Let the pros help you complete your to-do list this spring.
- **94** Home & Designer A designer renovates her home on a hilltop in Beeton.

DEPARTMENTS

- 16 Editor's Note
- 20 Advice Furnish Your First Home
- **26** Cooking At Home Fresh Spring Risotto
- **28 Decorating** New Hues
- **32 Gardening** Backyard Paradise
- 48 Design Ideas Cottage State of Mind
- **52 Birding** Welcome Warblers
- **58** Real Estate Buyers Beware
- **60 Good Taste** Gimlet Cocktail
- **72** Organizing Storage Ideas
- **86 Projects DIY Greenery**
- **90** Decorating Classic Palette
- 104 Double Take Sweet Dreams
- **106** Home Resource Directory
- **108 Cooking At Home** Berry Delight
- 110 Finishing Touch Modern Macramé





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FURNISH Your First Home SUSTAINABLY

Designer Tamarisk McNalty Stephens explores the principles of sustainable living.

You're a millennial who has just entered the housing market. Now that you have a place, you need to furnish the space. But how can you make it sustainable and eco-friendly?

Where to begin?

The desire to have a space that feels finished the moment you move in is understandable. However, we must move away from instant gratification and towards playing the long game. The reality is that making environmentally-conscious choices takes time and energy – and that's okay. Plus, curating a space over time will create a finished product that is much more personal and reflective of your unique style.

FURNITURE

One of the easiest and simplest ways to be more sustainable at home is to purchase fewer items.

Before buying, ask yourself: Is this a "need to have" or a "nice to have"?

You can hunt antique markets, local second-hand and vintage shops, estate sales and online e-commerce sites for furnishings. Investing in pre-loved pieces is a great way to contribute to the circular economy.

You can often find high-quality pieces in good shape and for a great price! Antique and vintage pieces provide the opportunity for you to express your style with character, charm and uniqueness that homogeneous,



run-of-the-mill, massproduced furnishings simply cannot.

Use your creativity to reimagine a piece of furniture by giving it new life with a fresh coat of paint, learn how to refinish wood or experiment with basic reupholstery.



And when you do buy new, invest in quality, locally-made pieces that will stand the test of time. The life cycle of fast furniture is often short and it will need to be replaced in five to 10 years. More product equals more resources – and there's nothing sustainable about utilizing more raw materials and consuming more energy.

Purchase goods that you can envision loving long-term and avoid trends. Buy for style and longevity.

APPLIANCES



Reduced energy consumption is only one element to consider when purchasing appliances.

Support companies that prioritize environmental initiatives, such as

manufacturing durable products, utilizing metals that can be easily recycled, restricting hazardous materials during manufacturing and providing a recycling program at the end of the product's useful life.

You can often find second-hand appliances that function perfectly well and are in great shape. Also, peruse the scratch-and-dent section of local stores – you can find quality-made appliances with minimal aesthetic damage. You can always put a grocery list or piece of art over top of a small scratch on a

fridge. If you don't like the colour or finish, research how to paint appliances to suit your desired aesthetic.

Finally, learn how to fix things (or be willing to pay someone who can). The cost of goods has become so affordable that instead of repairing something we replace it. That mentality is simply not sustainable.



ACCESSORIES

Accessorizing your home is where you can let your resourcefulness shine. There are so many second-hand accessories available for you to upcycle, recycle and reimagine. See how creative you can be!

Vintage rugs are worth the investment and no one will have the same one. They have already been around for many years and with proper care they will last for many more. Plus, they are often made of wool and other natural materials and will biodegrade more easily than carpets made from synthetic materials.

Support local artists and artisans by purchasing a unique piece of art for the walls or everyday utilitarian items, such as hand-thrown coffee mugs. Buying local isn't just sustainable, handcrafted items add a different energy to your home.

Another way to instantly accessorize your home is to introduce houseplants – it is one of the simplest and most affordable ways to add texture, interest and colour to a space. **OH**







SPRING

Our local finds are a breath of fresh air for your home, indoors and out.

2





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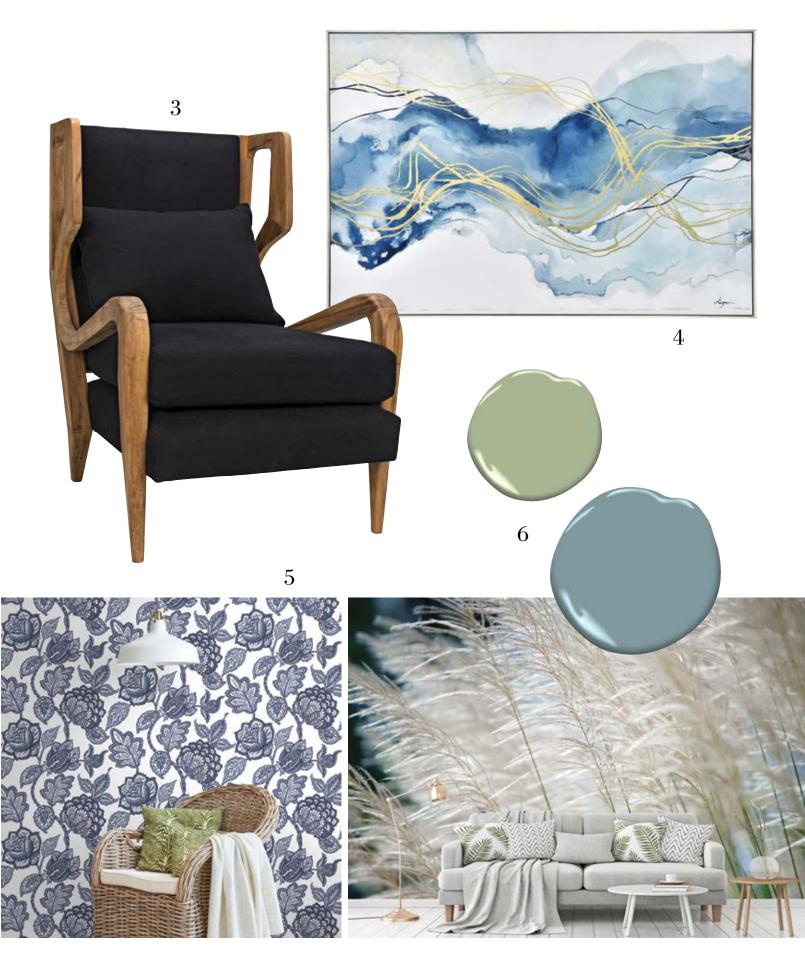
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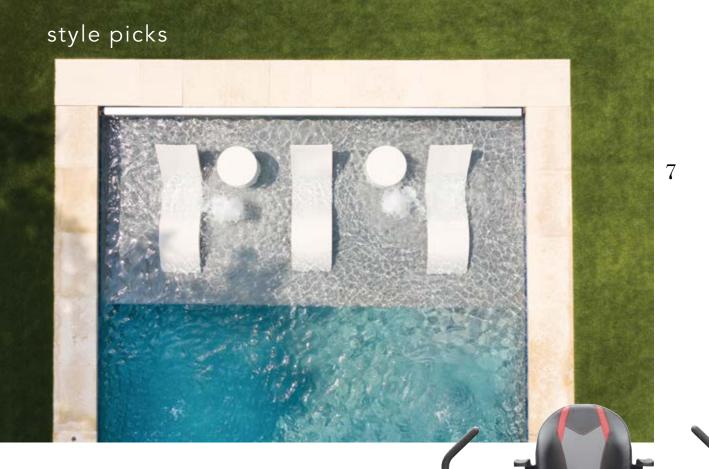
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Continued on page 24



22 | ourhomes SPRING 2022 | 23







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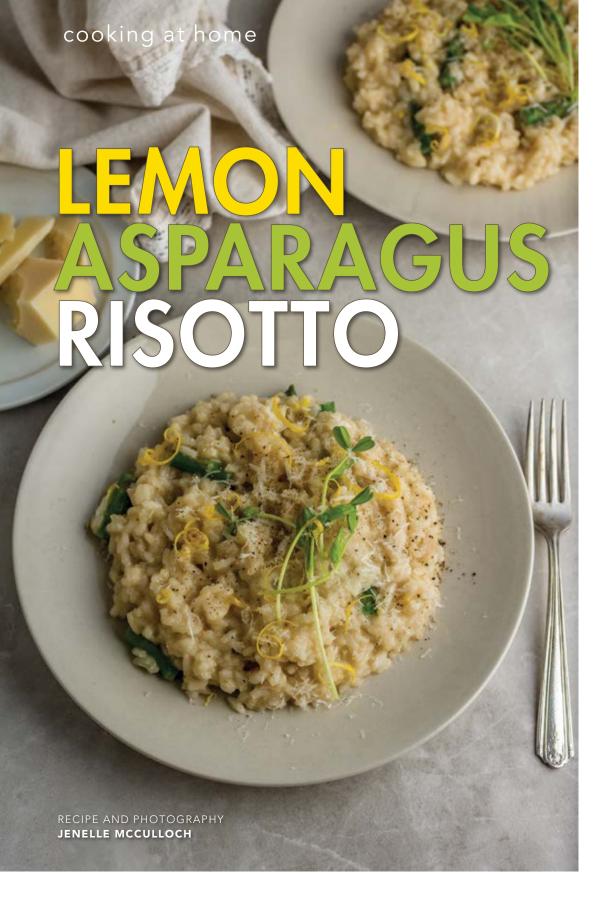
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1 shallot, finely diced

2 cloves garlic, finely diced

1 tsp fresh thyme 1 ½ cups Arborio rice

½ cup dry white wine

1 cup grated parmesan, plus more for serving

Zest of one lemon

INSTRUCTIONS

Clean asparagus and steam or sauté until tender.

In a large pot, bring stock to a simmer. Once heated, remove from heat and keep nearby.

In a large saucepan or pot, add olive oil and cook shallot until translucent. Add garlic and thyme and sauté for 1 minute before adding Arborio rice. Season with salt and pepper and toast the rice for 1-2 minutes.

Add white wine and cook until absorbed, stirring occasionally.

Add 1 cup of stock at a time, stirring continuously until each addition of broth is absorbed. Continue until rice is al dente.

Add parmesan cheese and asparagus to the risotto. Garnish with lemon zest, serve and enjoy! on



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Current MOD

It's time to liven up our living spaces after two rather tumultuous years. The major paint companies have selected their colours of the year for 2022, most picking grey-green as the colour to splash on your walls or inspire your new look. We're rolling out the top picks to help with your next decorating adventure.

Benjamin Moore selected **October Mist**, a pleasing silver-green that evokes the green stem of a flower. They say it creates a canvas for other colours to blossom and encourages creativity. Try it with Hint of Violet or Wildflower, both new from Benjamin Moore's Colour Trends Palette.

BeautiTone is sending a message with **Warm Hugs**. This Canadian brand says the vibrant red-pinkorange is the comfort we've been missing. It offers hope and solace in one exquisite hue.





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STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY MELANIE REKOLA

With staycations becoming more popular, creating a beautiful backyard to escape to is a worthy investment. No backyard paradise is quite complete without the soothing sounds of water to make you feel cool, even when temperatures are blazing.

Adding a dreamy backyard water feature can be simple, extravagant or somewhere in between. There are options for every taste and budget.

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PONDS

Ponds, streams and waterfalls let you take creativity to the extreme in your landscape design. As these are custom made, you can design anything imaginable, from a cool modern vibe to something Mother Nature designed herself – as long as you have the right budget in place as these can be costly.

Shelves of different depths within a pond interior can be created for certain water plants, as each has its own specific requirements. Shallow areas also act as escape routes in the event a pet or wildlife accidentally falls in.

Ponds need to be at least four feet deep (preferably deeper) if you'd like to overwinter frogs and fish successfully. UV filters

and pumps need to be carefully planned and calculated for the amount of water present and if you decide to include fish, you will need an extensive filtering system.

Pond accessories are fun and exciting! There is nothing quite like the feeling of walking on water where a cool, floating step is present. Other fun features include architecturally designed, artisan metal spout scuppers, spillways and mounted spillbowls that replace traditional waterfall weirs. You can even include a floating island filled with plants; you'd be surprised how many traditional garden plants do well in these environments and they look quite natural once the plantings fill in



Melanie's Pond Plant Pichs

The world of water gardening is extensive. Here are a few favourite, hardy, native-to-Ontario perennials to get you started.



Water Lily / Nymphaea odorata - Likely the first water plant that comes to mind, lovely lily is a wonderful, free-flowering plant for any pond. Perfect, glistening white flowers with yellow centres are formed throughout

the summer months. It prefers still waters though, so always plant this beauty far away from waterfalls.

in a contained area.



Pickerelweed / Pontederia cordata - A carefree-growth habit and lovely lavender blooms make this a colourful addition to any pond.



Marsh Marigold / Caltha palustris - Sunny buttercup blooms arrive in early spring, but only for a brief time. However, it's still a worthy water garden addition for its pretty leaves.



Horsetail Rush / Equisetum hyemale -Wonderful stiff upright stems resemble a tiny bamboo forest - perfect for pond margins. It can spread aggressively so it's best planted

POND MAINTENANCE

Ponds do take work and most need to be shut down in fall and opened in spring, just like a swimming pool. Most of the work happens in spring and mucking out a pond is dirty business. Hip waders help! The rest of the year is much easier, as long as you keep up a good maintenance program. An ideal healthy maintenance schedule requires an occasional filter cleaning, replacing 20 per

cent of the water with fresh water weekly and adding beneficial bacteria when needed. This is even more important for smaller features as their balance gets disrupted easily. The larger the pond, the easier it is to maintain and if it's large enough, it will mostly take care of itself. Don't forget to consider the ongoing electricity and pump/filter replacement costs too.

The best part of including a water feature in your oasis is all the birds and wildlife it will attract! What outdoor retreat would be truly complete without them? **oH**

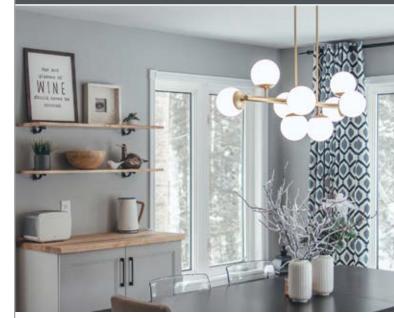
Melanie is a certified horticulturalist and landscape designer.



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Their aim was a home that felt welcoming, lived-in and full of personal touches. The house had good bones, with large windows to let in natural light and a peaceful view to a forested ravine. What they needed was a designer to help them take their interior from dated to chic.

They found that designer in **Samantha** Thomas of Inhabit Interiors and Design in downtown Barrie. Residential projects with a modern or transitional flair are Samantha's specialty.

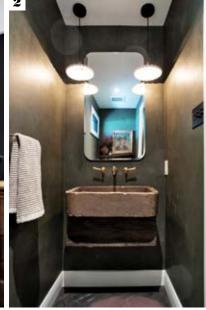
"We have done commercial spaces," says Samantha, who established her business in 2013, "but we focus on the residential projects. There are a lot of designers out there and they each have their own twist on things. For me, it has to be the right fit. A shared aesthetic and a good relationship with the client is key."

Samantha says this project, in particular, "was a joy because the clients had a clear vision and impeccable taste. They were involved from start to finish in choosing what they wanted to surround themselves with in their home. It felt like a great collaboration." Continued on page 41



RIGHT: 1) Entryway cabinetry is painted Farrow & Ball London Stone. 2) A main-floor powder room, painted in Belgian Wilderness by Pure Originals, replaces a second entrance. 3) The fireplace hearth features Arto concrete tiles. 4) The homeowners' music collection is displayed in a custom cabinet by Infinite Design & Interiors. 5) Collected objects find their home in a glass-fronted cabinet. 6) Iron sconces cast candlelight on the plaster surface of the hearth. OPPOSITE: The brick fireplace was plastered and painted with Pure & Original's Marrakesh Collection, also used on the kitchen hood vent. Rustic wood beams from Due North Wood Company add a rustic touch.













home & designer











The whole house was dated. "The biggest alterations we made were in the living and dining rooms, which were separate, closed-in spaces," Samantha says. "We wanted to extend the cathedral ceiling from the living room, so we opened it right up to make a combined living-dining space."

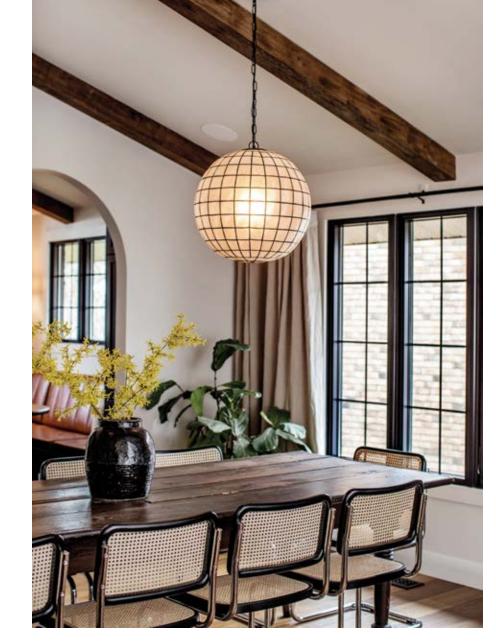
MacNeil Construction did the heavy lifting to transform the space. "Otherwise, we mostly worked with the existing footprint," says Samantha. "The home only had one bathroom, so we built a powder room on the main floor where there used to be a second entrance to a mudroom."

The original bathroom was made into a true en suite for the primary bedroom. "We added a transom window and a double vanity, as well as a beautiful shower with stunning handmade tiles from Creekside Tile Company Ltd.," she says. "They are made of concrete, from a company called Arto in the U.S." The highly textured blue-gray tiles give a Moroccan feel to the shower echoed in the powder room wall finish, which is from Pure Originals' Marrakesh collection.

The home's living room already boasted a fireplace, which had been converted to gas. Samantha converted it back to woodburning with a new insert and covered the red brick surface with a warm plaster finish. The concrete tiles on the hearth are also Arto. Work on the ceiling beams and central support post in the living space was completed by **Due North Wood Company**.

Continued on page 43

TOP RIGHT: An antique dining table contrasts metal and cane chairs from Inhabit Interiors & Design.
RIGHT: Walls are painted White Dove and interior doors are Willow, both by Benjamin Moore. CB
Painting Services completed painting throughout.
OPPOSITE: 1) Wood beams in the primary bedroom echo those in the living space. 2) Bedside sconces create a warm ambience. 3) Bianco Giola marble is an elegant countertop surface, paired with brass wall-mounted taps. 4) A double vanity has plenty of storage. 5) Handmade concrete tiles are one-of-a-kind.





ourhomes SPRING 2022 | 41



LEFT: Kayla pictured with her beloved dog. The house is designed with durable, dog-friendly surfaces. RIGHT: Appliances in black or with custom panels blend into the cabinetry for a seamless look. BELOW: 1) Kitchen cabinetry is painted Benjamin Moore Black Iron. 2) Vintage objects and kitchen tools are artfully displayed. 3) Perimeter counters are Bianco Gioia marble.





Many of the home's furnishings came from antique-hunting trips the clients took to the United States. "There is a huge, twice-a-year antique fair in Texas, in a town called Round Top," Samantha says. "They were armed with measurements and a rough idea of the kind of pieces we were looking for. They would send me pictures of what they'd found

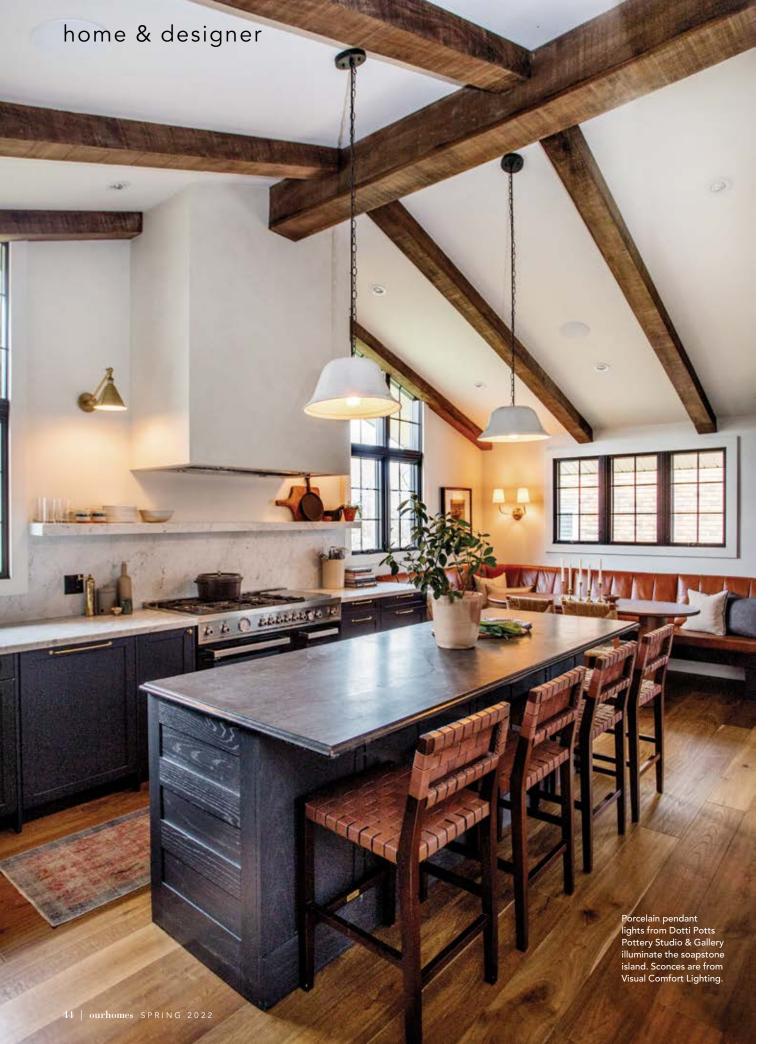
at the fair and we made our selections from there." Among the unique finds is an old store counter, dating from around 1912, which became the home's kitchen island.

"We repurposed it, replacing the top with soapstone which, like a lot of the surfaces chosen for the home, will acquire a lovely patina with time and use," Samantha says.

Suspended over the island are two porcelain pendant lights, which were custom-made by **Dotti Potts Pottery Studio & Gallery** based on light fixtures the couple had fallen in love with in a restaurant during their travels. "They're very elegant in the space, and because they're handmade, each is slightly different," Samantha says.

Continued on page 40

42 | ourhomes SPRING 2022 | 43







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A leather banquette is a casual spot to gather just off the kitchen. European wide-plank flooring is used throughout the home. All rugs are vintage.



Among the other antique pieces in the home are a spacious dining room table, paired with 10 metal and cane chairs sourced through Inhabit Interiors & Design, a bedroom wardrobe and a large glass-fronted cabinet in the living room, which houses some of the couple's favourite collected objects. The sink in the powder room is also a 100-year-old original, fitted with unfinished brass taps. The rugs throughout the home are vintage, as are a pair of substantial leather chairs in the living room.

These one-of-a-kind objects, spanning decades and travelling across borders, have come together in a home with an old-world feel that will only become more welcoming, and more beautiful, with time. OH











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Cottage Style BY DESIGN

A cottage isn't just a property style. For many, it's a lifestyle and a frame of mind. Think about how one feels in a traditional cottage setting: relaxed, rested and at peace in the surroundings. It's not surprising that many people strive to achieve this feeling within their everyday home.



Whether your retreat is an urban dwelling or in a lakeside setting, you can echo the cottage style by design. Here are some tips for decorating enthusiasts and weekend warriors who want to live the laid-back lifestyle, every day.

Let's renovate your cottage... ahem, I mean house.

If you're building new or renovating a space, here's your opportunity to incorporate timeless, cabin-inspired elements into the very bones of the home. Materials are an effective way to convey this distinctive style and the reason why people are drawn to this look. The goal is to achieve a connection to nature. The vehicle? Nature itself.

When designing cottages, use a natureinspired colour palette with organic and natural textiles such as linen, cotton and wool. Use a mixture of wood finishes that celebrate everything nature has to offer.

Floors in cottage-style homes are often informal and even imperfect. Consider oiled hardwood floors over urethane finishes when buying new or use reclaimed hardwood for heavier distressing and character. If renovating, consider painting an existing hardwood floor. As always, hardwood floors look best with area rugs to define spaces. For a relaxed aesthetic, a vintage second-life, fun braided style or flat-weave rug work best. However, even very traditional rugs repurposed in casual settings look new and on trend again.

Continued on base 50

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Painted beadboard or shiplap wood panelling are a common cottage look for walls and ceilings. Whitewashed wood can also be incorporated to create a cosy, cabininspired look and feel.

Focus on natural materials like hardwood and stone and architectural features such as exposed wood beams, fireplaces and expansive windows for natural views and light.

Decorate your way to a lakeside home.

If you're styling your space to achieve a cottage aesthetic, many of the same principles apply in terms of nature-inspired colour palettes and materials, just on a different scale. A coat of paint can go a long way to creating this ambience.

Whites, off-whites and soft creams are typical of the beloved cottage colour palette. The move towards green tones is exciting. One of the hottest hues for 2022 is a fresh, misty green perfect for creating a space that connects you to nature and achieves a relaxed vibe. Soften this colour palette with natural wood furniture and accessories evocative of the earth (think terracotta).

Of course, wood furniture is a must. As with the floors, dents and dings are not just accepted but welcomed, contributing to a

more casual, welcoming, relaxed aesthetic that invites you to kick your feet up and breathe deeply

In the kitchen, open shelving is a favourite addition. Modern cottage style is humble and relaxed, an aesthetic that is well-complemented by open shelving with a few thoughtfully chosen items on display, such as handmade pottery and live plants.

To offset these organic influences, incorporate some fun, light-hearted elements into the space. Unique details, such as a pair of antique skis or a vintage oil painting mounted above the fireplace provide a great touch - and even more so

when they're authentic artefacts. These amusements can also come in the form of a vibrant throw blanket, classic old baskets or an unusual found object. Use these to highlight the focal point of the space, such as a great view, the fireplace or entertaining area.

Whether you're decorating, renovating or building your home from the ground up, a cottage-chic style can be achieved. Engage a designer to help navigate and select the key elements to help you bring this look home. You can enjoy life by the lake, regardless of your physical geography. OH









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Spring is in the air. Literally. Birds, those welcome harbingers of spring, are on the wing in the skies above us on their annual migration mission to Canadian breeding grounds. Hundreds of species are returning and tucked among them are a lesser-known family of birds that are most coveted by birders. They're a range of brightly coloured species often referred to as the "jewels" of the bird world - the fabulous family of warblers.

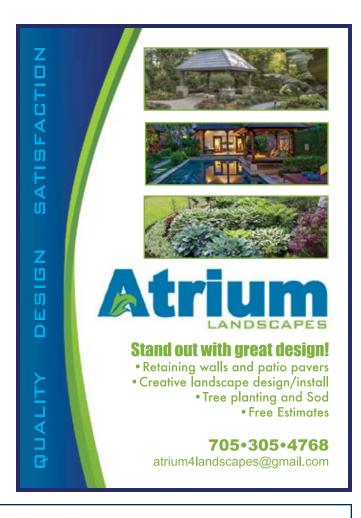
A WARBLER PRIMER

Warblers, or Wood-Warblers according to their official taxonomic classification, are colourful songbirds unique to the Americas. Over 30 species occur or breed in Ontario. Some of them are among the most abundant species of birds in our vast forests. They tend to come in waves as they migrate together in tight mixed flocks. But for all their numbers, they are not commonly seen. There are good reasons why not. Despite their bright colours, warblers are tiny (smaller than a chickadee). They're easily

camouflaged by branches and leaves. They often forage tucked up high in the treetops. They don't stay still long enough for a good, identification-worthy look. They keep moving ever onwards in a quest to reach their nesting territories. And finally, by the end of May, the warbler show is over. The waves of warblers have now dispersed widely across the province, each pair ensconced in their own specific nesting-niche territories. With all this, it can very much be a case of "if you blink you will miss them.'

Continued on page 54





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birding

A BOUQUET OF WARBLERS

Warblers, like most birds, migrate at night under the protection and cover of darkness. Come morning, they seek rest and food wherever they may be in their journey north. While the backyards of our homes are not their preferred habitat, they just may drop by after a long night on the wing, to fuel up for the next leg of their migration. So, as we look out the windows of our homes to enjoy the emerging signs of spring, we may be lucky enough to see our backyard trees and shrubs adorned with a "bouquet of warblers" - the collective noun for a group of these birds. Grab your binoculars and check them out for a morning of discovering these little gems.

WHAT'S IN A NAME

So how do you sort out one wee warbler from another? There are so many species, and they don't stop and pose for you! It can be challenging, but that's where the fun is. Thankfully, each species does have its own distinctive field marks that distinguish it





from its warbler cousins. A number of species even provide clues by virtue of their descriptive names. Notice a black-andwhite striped warbler? Well, it's a Blackand-White Warbler. Completely yellow? It's a Yellow Warbler. Black throat and blue back? Black-throated Blue Warbler. Gold wing patches? Golden-winged Warbler. The names alone evoke visions of brightness and beauty. But wait until you actually spot one!

And their songs! There is such a range that birders often use mnemonics to sort them out. For instance, the mnemonics for the Yellow Warbler are, "sweet, sweet, I'm so sweet." Don't you agree?

On the other hand, there's a group of warblers with decidedly unhelpful names. Tennessee, Cape May and Nashville Warblers, for instance, are denizens of the northern boreal forests, not their namesake

locations. Magnolia and Palm Warblers were simply named after the plants they were first discovered in. So don't rely on those names for identification hints, and don't think you won't see them in your backyard.



WARBLER NECK

With a little patience and practice, discerning one warbler from another eventually gets easier, not to mention very rewarding. It is rightly a bit of a personal achievement to positively identify your first Blackburnian Warbler, your first American Redstart - the list goes on and on. Take up the challenge! But be prepared to wind up with a bout of what seasoned birders refer to as "warbler neck." It's that tight kink in your neck resulting from scanning high into the treetops for lengths of time, hoping to discover a few hidden bejeweled treasures. At the end of the day, the kink is just a reminder of time well spent in a quest for your new favourite warbler. A few gentle stretches and you're good to go again the next day.



It is not uncommon for birders to have what is referred to as a "spark bird" - a sighting of a particular species that sparked or triggered their interest in birds and birding. For many, this spark is often a warbler (mine was the oh-so-handsome Bay-breasted Warbler). A good, crisp look through your binoculars at any one of these bright little beauties is often enough to give you that spark and awaken your senses to the wonderful world of warblers. Enjoy! on















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FRESH PERSPECTIVE

Sketch is launching a new brand this spring with the help of TALIS Creative. Matt's goal is to "attract unique projects that allow us to use our design and highly technical skill set to produce high quality and visually pleasing designs that stand out." Most important to Matt and his team is "making the process fun and exciting for customers by managing the permit submission requirements from start to finish."



VERSATILE STYLE

"We pride ourselves on being versatile on all design styles," Matt notes. "We work hard to achieve this and are careful in the projects we choose to work on to ensure we stay versatile." This means embracing any style rather than falling into any specific niche, which provides more opportunities to work on a broader range of projects and with a broader range of customers.







DESIGNED FOR LIFE

In 2022, Sketch is focused on singlefamily homes. "We are seeing customers trending toward lakefront and cottage properties more and more since we have been limited on travelling and vacationing," he says. "People want their homes to be a sanctuary more than ever, a place where they want to be and spend valuable family time together. A home should be a representation of your lifestyle, a place that is relaxing and highly functional to allow you to spend your moments doing exactly what you want to be doing." At the end of the day, that is what Sketch is all about - creating homes that families will love.

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56 | ourhomes SPRING 2022

Matt Reid's career as an architectural technologist started in his

hometown of Bethany. His work involved fire stations, healthcare and community centre projects, but his heart was in custom homes. When he and his wife Heather moved to Barrie, Matt joined a local, custom home design firm, where he spent the

next seven years working on projects that fed his passion. But adventure awaited and **Sketch** launched in 2016. Matt works

closely with his clients to create lifestyle solutions for every family

MEET MATT

home he designs.

WAIVING CONDITIONS

STORY GEORGETTE MCCULLOCH | ILLUSTRATION SHEILA BRITTON

IT REMAINS A SELLER'S MARKET ACROSS ONTARIO WHERE HOME PRICES CONTINUE TO RISE AND INVENTORY REMAINS LOW.

RE/MAX Canada expects a 9.2 per cent increase in average residential sale prices across Canada this year. In Ontario, relocating from one region to another continues to drive housing activity. City dwellers are cashing in and moving to more scenic areas, where their purchasing power gets them a house that suits their preferred lifestyle. With mortgage rates expected to creep up, demand for homes far outstrips supply, leaving house hunters facing multiple offers for the home they want.

So, what's a buyer to do? They could do what home sellers find irresistible - waive all conditions and warranties.

Laura and Chris Walker weren't fooling around when they finally found their ideal condo in Collingwood.

"We had been looking on and off but when the pandemic hit we got serious," says Laura. "When this three-bedroom at Lighthouse Point came up we jumped on it." The couple had lost out on other properties and vowed not to let this one slip away. They went in with a clear offer with no conditions or warranties and a two-week closing. "They were not taking offers until the following Monday and we didn't want to wait and lose it," she says. "So we put in a bully offer over asking. They came back once and that was it - bought and sold." The condo was fully renovated and they've had no issues.

Waiving conditions and warranties in residential real estate transactions is the new winning strategy for many homebuyers. But

it's not for the faint of heart or those without the means to cover costs if there's an issue with the property or home.

Typical conditions in a purchase and sale agreement include financing, property inspections, state of title, legal review and appraisal. Buyers can add their own conditions and condo owners generally add a request and review of the status certificate, which ensures the condo corporation and its board are stable.

But the current housing market is anything but typical and buyers are increasingly willing to take risks to win the home they covet.

Dr. Parham Davoudpour, an attending emergency physician in Toronto, is suffering from buyer fatigue after waiving conditions and still losing two bids on homes in the Collingwood area.

"Both homes were sold substantially higher than asking price – over 50 per cent higher than asking," he says. "One of my offers was 45 per cent over asking and I still lost. "I call these high-risk transactions because you're pressured to make a decision that involves a lot of money and you don't have enough time for due diligence. It's literally like working in a hospital emergency department where you are always under pressure and you make decisions on the limited amount of information that you have."

Parham is still looking but his experience has left him less motivated.

David Oikle, president of The Ontario

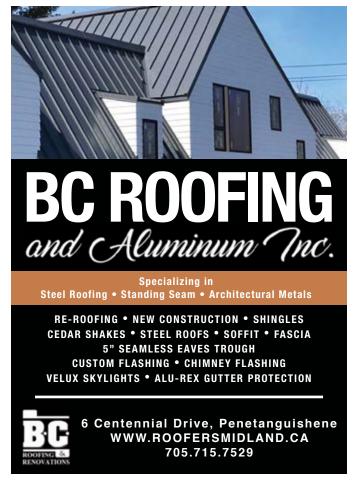
Real Estate Association, blames supply and demand for the current state of housing in the province. "We're in this pickle that buyers are competing in such a way because we don't have enough homes to buy," David explains. "OREA's been spending a ton of time advocating for increasing supply at the municipal, provincial and federal levels. There isn't enough product to buy and we need to address that."

Janine (she didn't want us to use her full name) and her husband looked at eight homes in The Blue Mountains last year. "We lost out on two because our bids just weren't high enough," she says. They waived conditions in both bids, but it didn't help. "It was just a crap shoot," she says. "For one of them, there were about 13 offers. The vendors came back to us, told us they wanted to look at the top three bids 'so give us your very best offer.' We did and we lost out by \$1,000." They finally found and won a home they moved into last May, again waiving conditions and warranties. In hindsight, Janine says she wishes she had more time to investigate the planned developments on wetlands around them. "We love the neighbourhood, we love the house but the main issue now is the development that is supposed to go in beside us. I knew about the potential development, but I honestly thought our government would protect the environment, safety of citizens and our homes. I was wrong."

David says the key to a happy purchase is education, risk management and knowing your limits. He says a local realtor can help buyers mitigate risks. on

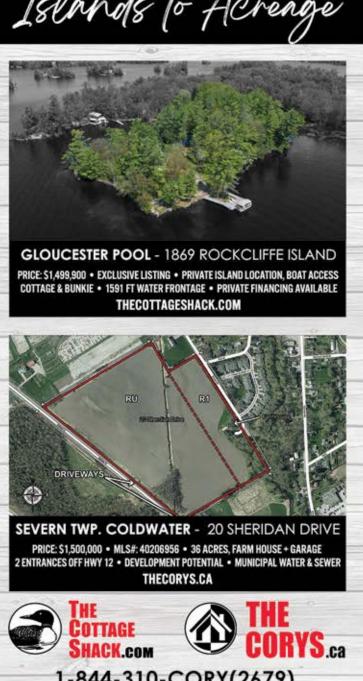








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RECIPE AND PHOTOGRAPHY JENELLE MCCULLOCH

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INGREDIENTS (Makes 1 cocktail)

2 oz gin

3 cucumber slices

1 - 2 basil leaves

½ oz lemon juice

½ oz simple syrup

INSTRUCTIONS

Combine all ingredients in a cocktail shaker. Shake and double strain into a coupe glass or over ice in a rocks glass. OH

To make a simple

syrup: Combine 1 cup sugar and 1 cup water in a saucepan over medium heat. Heat until sugar is dissolved. Cool, then pour into a glass jar and refrigerate until needed.

> Garnish with cucumber slices. a basilleaf and some fresh flowers (optional).



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ourhomes SPRING 2022 | 63

feature



$\ \, 0 \ \, 0$

ABOVE & RIGHT: Anne painted all furniture herself, favouring a distressed white style for a shabby chic take on antique pieces. She also paints furniture for clients and sells her creations at her store, Summer House. **BELOW:** Seventeen-year-old Jackson the cat loves to bask in the kitchen sunlight.





Anne has spent more than a decade making the home, built in 1881, her own. It's located in the historic part of Barrie known as The Grove, a fitting name. Just a short walk to the lake, mature trees tower over beautiful old brick homes. Some, like Anne's, are painted white.

White is a theme that runs throughout the house. "I've always loved antiques," Anne explains. She has been painting antiques for more than a decade. "It just completely changes the look of the piece and makes things bright and fresh," particularly when painted a distressed white, as are many pieces in Anne's home.

"When I bought this house, the minute I walked in the front door, I knew," she says "and I knew immediately I wanted it to be white."

Anne has been painting ever since, both her own pieces and those for clients. Painting furniture to give it a new life is what she loves to do. "It doesn't have to be white," she laughs, though it is certainly her favourite hue. A close second is pale blue and, lately, she has been leaning toward soft pink. She also sells painted furniture at her store **Summer House**, for which she and her business partner Dale Raaphorst are currently seeking a new location. *Continued on page* 66



ourhomes SPRING 2022 | 65



An important design tenet has also been paring back, as inspired by the podcast Millennial Minimalists that Anne started listening to in 2020. From then on, she says "I started editing and asking myself 'why am I keeping this if I don't love it?' It does something to you – you take stuff away and you breathe."

Anne has a love affair with antique furniture and keeping only her most loved pieces has been a welcome challenge. One collection that is staying put is her bunny rabbits. They are tucked away all over the house, inconspicuously hidden everywhere, from the china cabinet to the windowsill. Anne estimates there are 30 or so and they are a delightful surprise to spot.

Many pieces have been collected over time. "I get an idea in my head and I wait patiently," she explains, pointing to the kitchen island. Found on a Sunday morning walk around a local antique mall, it was army green with a sparkly yellow linoleum top. Anne knew it was her island. It just needed a coat or two of white paint. A farmhouse sink completes the kitchen, and a Smeg fridge remains on Anne's list. Continued on page 68



Fresh blooms from the garden are brought including hydrangeas and black-eyed Susans. Paired with Anne's collection of bunnies, the mood is set for spring.











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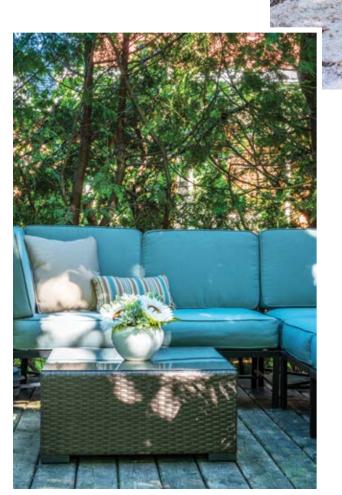
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feature

Anne also pulled out all the upper cupboards in the kitchen to make way for a big window looking out into the garden. "Gardening is a passion, it's been a passion for a long time," Anne says. It started when she was home with her first son. She took a few classes and knew she had found a calling. After years spent working in a nursery, she maintains a handful of clients. "I spend as much time as I can in the garden," she says, whether early in the morning or in the evening.

Anne's garden is a sanctuary, filled with everything from her favourite hydrangeas to black-eyed Susans. The daylily holds a special place in her heart, especially the Stella D'Oro, which bloom continuously. A process of trial and error has taught her tricks of the trade, like deadheading delphiniums allows them to rebloom from late summer into early fall. She has a true green thumb, even keeping a client's roses blooming into November last year.





Anne certainly has a green thumb. Her garden is tended to with love and care. A small shed and bistro set complete the lush backyard, with lots of spaces to relax and take in the verdant surroundings. Though Anne is downtown, nature is all around. If she stands in the middle of the street, there is a direct view to Lake Simcoe





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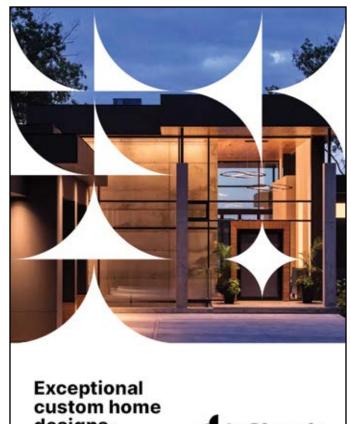
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With Hunter Douglas, the

Featured: Applause Honeycomb Shades with Top Down Bottom Up

Original wood floors add warmth and character

throughout the home. Anne's antique pieces pair perfectly with the historic space. Covering everything in a coat or two of white paint keeps it bright

Anne's two grown boys love to come

home. She recalls her youngest son saying

"Mom, I just love your house. It's so warm

and cosy and quiet and peaceful." She agrees wholeheartedly. "That's the feeling

I get when I walk in – that my home is

Music is always playing in Anne's home. The table is set with heirloom Limoges

Autumn Asters china from France. There are

furniture. It's all in the details, and the details

vases full of flowers and soft slip-covered

giving me a big hug."

are lovely. oh

STORAGE SOLUTIONS That Work

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STORY VANESSA ROGERSON | PHOTOGRAPHY VANESSA ROGERSON DESIGNS

Every homeowner has space for a bench or a creative nook to store items. All homes have additional potential for storage. An organized design by a professional can help uncover areas in your home to organize and store your stuff. Here are five key storage solutions to help homeowners with their design dilemmas.



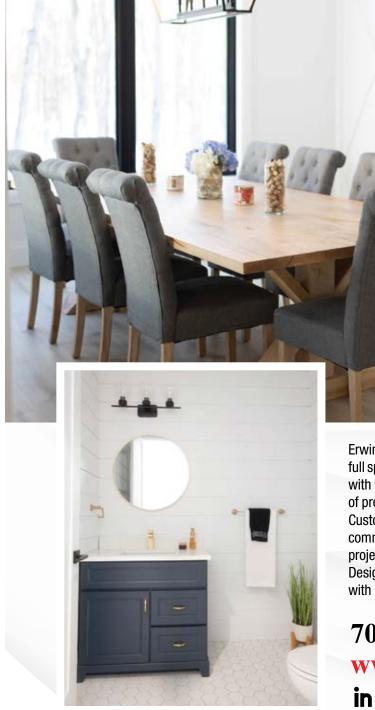
Adding drawers in your kitchen is a functional and eye-pleasing storage solution. Drawers are easy to access and can hold dishes, pots and pans plus small appliances. Don't ignore the corners. A set of base-corner drawers adds a touch of luxury and function. Pullouts installed inside existing base cabinets function as drawers and are also an affordable option when working with existing cabinetry.

Continued on page 74





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organizing



Mudroom Storage

Most homes lack adequate storage for families. Adding

a bench and a few coat hooks in a space off the front foyer or at the back door is a great way to utilize the space. If there's open space above or below, add a shelf and a few wicker baskets to hide footwear and scarves until needed. Toss some pillows and a throw on the bench to create a cosy nook while welcoming guests to your home.

Discreet Office Built-Ins

Now that more people are working and studying from home, additional workspace is a necessity. The kitchen counter is meant for prep and cooking, not laptops and paperwork. Adding a discreet built-in with a foldable desk in the kitchen or living room makes a great workstation. Simply open when needed and pull up a chair.

Living Room Storage Units

Add an oversize storage unit in the living room that can be used as a media centre or sideboard. You can easily stow away electronics, toys and books. Something sleek and low in height creates an open, airy feel and you can mount your television on the wall above.







Coffee Tables

Coffee tables can be used for more than resting your mug in the morning. Source a table with multiple layers and shelving below where you can display books, magazines and decorative items. Leave room on top for a vase of flowers and beverages as needed

Designed storage solutions do not have to be complicated or over-the-top. It's all about working with what you already have, while adding new elements to carefully execute an organized space. OH

Vanessa is a designer based in Simcoe County.

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LAKEFRONT PROJECTS

Many of our large projects take up to two years to complete. We're beginning new projects now that will carry us to 2023. More and more are waterfront properties from Lake Simcoe to Lake Joseph.

Continued on page 78

TIMELESS FINISHES

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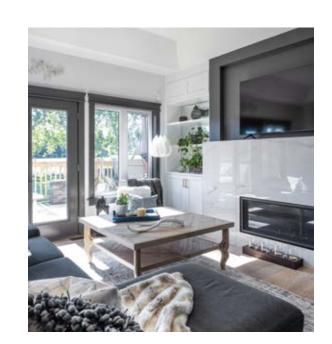
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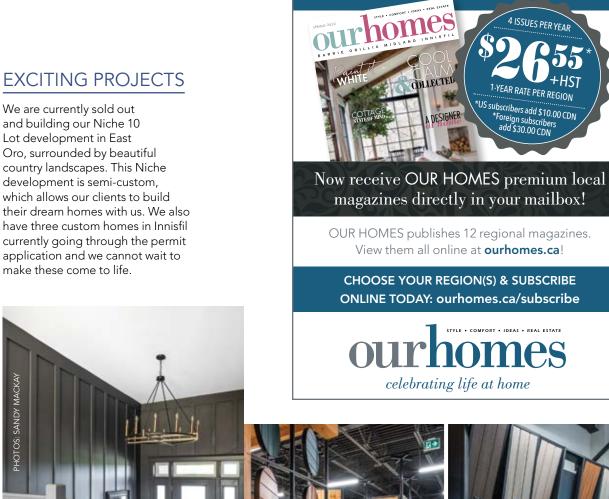
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"At A.N.T. Homes, we understand your custom home is the culmination of years of visioning, planning and hard work. The reward is the right to live and thrive in an environment that matches your lifestyle."



and building our Niche 10 Lot development in East Oro, surrounded by beautiful country landscapes. This Niche development is semi-custom, which allows our clients to build their dream homes with us. We also have three custom homes in Innisfil currently going through the permit application and we cannot wait to make these come to life.







SUBSCRIBE

SPRING IS IN THE AIR

This spring, we are looking forward to breaking ground on some new projects. Although we build yearround, spring is always a special time of year. Watch our social media pages for the release of some upcoming projects.

Continued on page 80





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people & places



2022

We are gearing up for the year with lots of exciting jobs on the horizon. Right now, we are wrapping up framing on a full build in Coldwater. We will be overseeing this project from start to finish. We have two new custom homes and a large list of projects lined up for the spring, which will take us well into the warmer weather.

BRING ON SPRING

This spring, I'm most excited about bringing these upcoming projects full circle and looking forward to the rest of 2022.



"Building your trust with our quality work."

Continued on page 82

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The construction industry is seeing so much growth right now. We currently have projects in Barrie that include townhomes, custom homes and condos. We also have projects in Bracebridge, including detached homes to water-view condos, and in Collingwood – from ski-view condos to beautiful custom homes. We look forward to more future growth coming and are blessed to be a part of it.





GROWTH FORECAST

With the massive growth we are seeing in construction, we don't see things slowing anytime soon. The biggest concern for all businesses in construction is manpower. We hope more men and women will join the industry since work is plentiful. We're now booking projects for summer 2022. Whatever your build may be – a custom home, a subdivision or a commercial building – please contact our office for a free quote.

Continued on page 84





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people & places



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EASON TOPIARY

Bring the outdoors in with greenery and natural elements. This DIY topiary is easy to make and will add an organic feel to your space.

MATERIALS

Sand texture
Plastic container
Plant pot
White and brown
acrylic paint
Paintbrush
Dowel
Glue gun
Moss
Syrofoam ball
Small knife
Foam block
Jute twine

STEP 1

First, pour some sand texture into a container – this will add a rustic feel to the plant pot. Next, pour a small amount of paint into the sand texture and mix to a peanut butter consistency. Paint the whole pot and let it dry for approximately 45 minutes. Once dry, apply another coat of paint.

STEP 2

Use a small paintbrush and paint the dowel brown. Set aside and let dry.



STEP 3

With a glue gun, glue moss to the styrofoam ball. Continue this step until the ball is completely covered in moss.



STEP 4

Make a hole in the bottom of the moss ball. Add glue to the end of the dowel and poke it into the moss ball.



STEP 5

Use a knife to cut the edges of the foam block to fit in the pot. Then take the bottom of the dowel and place it into the foam in the centre of the pot.





STEP 6

Add some moss to cover the foam block and tie some jute twine around the pot.



Find a spot in your home or create a second spring topiary to place near a mirror or artwork on a mantel and bring that spring feeling into your home! **OH**



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Elegant Solutions Slab Gallery 12 Sarjeant Dr, Barrie 705.797.0114 info@elegant-solutions.ca elegant-solutions.ca (Please see ad on pg 31)



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(Please see ad on pg 10)



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(Please see ad on pg 111)

Continued on page 88

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(Please see ad on pg 103)



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(Please see ads on pg 59, 79, 89, 107)



MIDLAND DESIGN CENTRE

Moving to our new location at 159 Fourth St. in Midland (former Home Hardware Building Centre) in September 2021, gave us the opportunity to create new exciting displays for our wide range of products. Our five kitchen vignettes

will spark your imagination with endless possibilities for cabinetry, countertops, hardware, sinks and faucets. Let our designers help you with a complete kitchen redesign from top Canadian manufacturers such as Wood Crest and Deslaurier. Our Home Installs program will guide you step-by-step through the entire process from design to installation. Alternatively, we can help the do-it-yourselfer with our Cutler ready-to-assemble kitchen cabinetry, as well as preassembled options in a variety of styles and colours.

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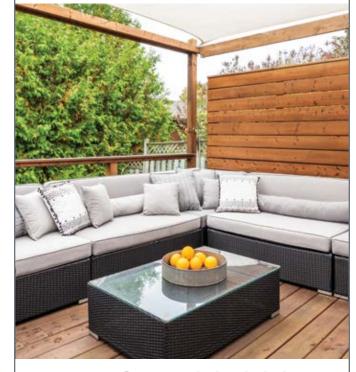
Our flooring selection includes hardwood, engineeredhardwood, luxury vinyl, laminate and tile, while our lighting offerings will illuminate your home from wall sconces to chandeliers.

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decorating



A black-and-white interior is probably the most versatile decorating option. This clean and classic palette is one of my favourites, both as a homeowner and as a trendspotter by trade. A black-and-white motif is a chameleon of sorts, easily adaptable to a variety of periods and styles, from vintage to contemporary and all styles in between. Black plus white is more than just a colour scheme; it's a bold decorating category all its own. Here are some ideas on implementing a black-and-white interior successfully.

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL

Black and white are the ultimate neutrals and they offer a good dose of drama when the look is done correctly. This palette allows you to effortlessly transition from one look to the next, room to room, all while maintaining a cohesive aesthetic throughout. On the other hand, this look can fall flat if poorly executed.

Similar to the principles of layering texture and pattern, add variety to your whites by layering in some off-whites, too. Technically, this trick applies to black, too (picture a charcoal shade set alongside jet black) although a white colour palette is much more common. However, when doing this, be sure to stay within the same colour temperature. By this, I mean if your predominant white leans to the warm side of the spectrum (yellowish) stick with warm tones for your other whites, too. Breaking this rule can make some "cool" whites in your space appear blue.

When it comes to black, you might think you only have one choice. However, black also comes in many different shades, ranging from midnight blue-black and charcoal to warm licorice. Apply the same principles when it comes to temperature.

Dimension is also achieved through texture and finish. Different finishes absorb and reflect light to different degrees. For example, a high-gloss varnish or paint, glass and polished chrome have high reflective qualities, bringing light and shine to a room. On the other hand, matte paints, sheen-less fabrics (think velvet!) and natural materials such as wood and stone tend to pull light in, creating a cocooning effect. Layer these within your bi-colour room to create interest and depth.

Continued on page 92



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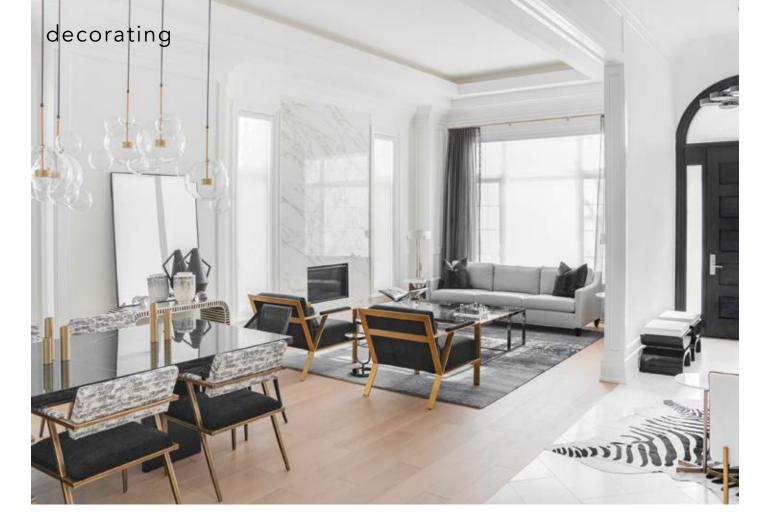
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"I OFTEN USE THE 60-30-10 RULE FOR COLOUR DISTRIBUTION

HOW TO "DO" BLACK & WHITE

As you would with any other colour scheme, choose your principal colour and in this case, you have two options. If white will be your main colour (as it is in most black-and-white interiors), you'll be using black as your secondary colour and vice versa.

As a designer, I often use the 60-30-10 rule for colour distribution. The principal colour occupies the majority for 60 per cent of the visual area of your space. This typically includes your walls and floors (in terms of a black-and-white palette, think light versus dark hardwood). The secondary colour accounts for 30 per cent of the space, such as a feature wall, rug and sofa. The final 10 per cent is reserved for your accent colour - and remember, even a black-and-white room can benefit from some bold pops of trending green, magenta or blue.

When choosing your accent colour, execute it in your accessories. This can include art, accent pillows, throws and



even small furniture items, like an ottoman or painted side table. One of the benefits of the black-and-white aesthetic is the ability to transition between trends on a dime. Since accessories are easy and economical to replace and trends come and go, this is a great way to express yourself and push your style limits.

There's a good reason the black-and-white look keeps resurfacing in our homes, in every room. These polar ends of the colour spectrum deliver drama and excitement, with a timeless appeal. I guess it's true, opposites really do attract! он















Lori and Matthew Willison's timeless bungalow near Beeton is set atop a hill surrounded by towering trees. Matthew and Lori, a senior designer at Masellis Designs, purchased the home, built in 1973, six years ago and transformed it from top to bottom.

The couple found the house in a serendipitous way. "We were actually looking at houses and Matthew saw this one," says Lori. "He needed me out of the house because he was planning a surprise

birthday party for me. He brought me to the open house as a distraction and we ended up loving the property, so we bought the place."

Principal designer Leanne Masellis and designer Daniella Masellis worked collaboratively with Lori to add the finishing design touches, adding layers of personality to the home. Masellis Design is a full-service company from concept to completion. The designers work with you every step of the way to bring your vision to life – or help you discover it – whether a build, renovation or help with final touches. This particular home, Leanne explains, "was such an interesting project to do because it's Lori's house. We were all putting our ideas together. It was a mixture of all three of us." Continued on page 98









ABOVE: An accent pillow from A Changing Nest greets visitors in the mudroom. TOP RIGHT: Marble basketweave tile from Olympia Tile is a classic choice in this bathroom. BOTTOM RIGHT & OPPOSITE: The primary bedroom has wall panelling painted Benjamin Moore Gray 2121-10 to add depth. A rug from Ralph Lauren and grey side tables complete the room.

The front entranceway, with floor-length windows, provides a view of the exquisite colours of the forest scenery, seen from every window of the home. The brick, originally yellow-peach, was transformed with Benjamin Moore's Decorator's White for a more modern facade.

Walls came down to create an open-concept feel. In the living room, large 12-foot sliding glass doors by Masellis Windows and **Doors Ltd.** were installed to optimize the view. Glass railings replaced older wooden pickets to open sightlines.

The fireplace was refinished with shiplap and an electric insert. This room is all about casual elegance. "The solid rectangular coffee table and curved cane back chairs from **Niche Decor** help ground the living room space and guide your eyes to the focal point of the room, the art," says Leanne. "This piece by artist Gabriella **Collier** was sourced from **Butter Gallery** with the help of owners Suzanne Steeves and Andrea Rinaldo."

The large kitchen has lots of seating at the island and adjacent table, along with a bar space, making it perfect for entertaining. Hints of champagne bronze and textured wood create a warm glow throughout. Lower cabinets painted Behr Ultra Pure White stand out against the island and hood in **Benjamin Moore** Flint.

Continued on page 100







home & designer

The primary bedroom is the definition of inviting, embodying the modern farmhouse style of the home. An accent wall, with panelling by Lori and Matthew, sets the scene. "I'm a big texture person and so is Masellis Designs, in general, in terms of how we like to approach design," says Lori. A beautiful canopy bed from Pottery Barn anchors the room. Pillows from Tonic Living, leather stools from Niche Decor and pendant lighting all create an elegant refuge.

The guest bedroom is reminiscent of an old English bed and breakfast. Antique and vintage pieces are found throughout the house and this room is no exception. Twin beds, discovered at a consignment store, were painted. Daniella found a dresser with a marble top on Facebook Marketplace. The crane wallpaper by Brewster adds depth to the room, as well as a little bit of whimsy. Continued on page 102

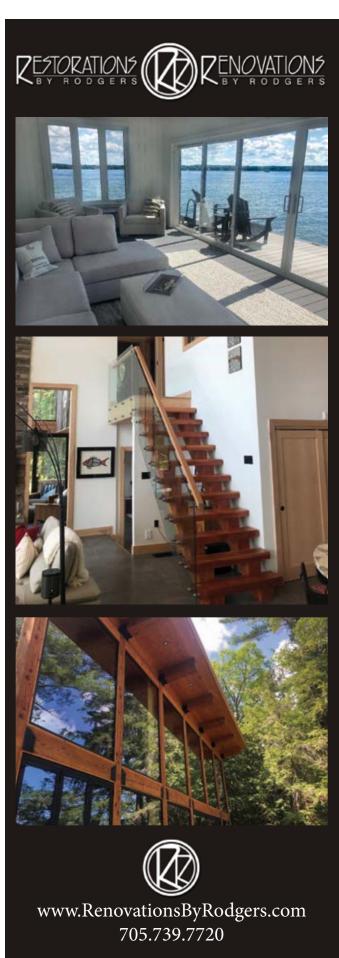




LEFT: A floating vanity and matte black hardware bring a contemporary touch to the lower-level bathroom. ABOVE: Twin beds from Around the Block were originally meant for Leanne's own cottage, but they have found their new home in Lori's guest room after a light sand and refinish. **RIGHT:** Art and objects found throughout the home add a personal touch.







home & designer

There is more living space in the walk-out lower level, including an office and a laundry room complete with Ikea cabinets. Shiplap and panelling create texture on the walls. Bookshelves are a must for Lori, who loves to read.



The bright lower level has a cosy office with a wood-burning fireplace, hidden storage under the stairs for supplies, lots of bookshelves and a vintage brass lamp. The original rabbit artwork from **A Changing Nest** adds a wonderful pop of colour.

A firepit, built by the Willisons, is nestled in the yard to enjoy on weekends.

The home is a hideaway in the forest. Every detail has been carefully considered to create a design as tranquil as the setting. **OH**





















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ARCHITECTS/ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN/ ARCHITECTURAL TECHNOLOGISTS/ DRAFTSMEN & DESIGN

Megan Drew Design, 45, 88 Sketch Design Build, 71

ART/ARTISANS/ART GALLERIES/ STUDIOS/WORKSHOPS

Hannatess ArtHaus, 93

BATH & BEAUTY/AESTHETICS/ HAIR/SPA

Glow Day Spa, 21

BBQS/GRILLS

TA Appliances & Barbecues, 4&5

BUILDERS

A.N.T. Homes, 10, 87
DeCarli Contractors, 53
Design Loft at Simcoe Building Centre, 93
Erwin Construction Custom
Building & Design, 73
Gilkon Construction Ltd., 67
Gregor Homes, 91
JVL Home Improvements Ltd., 8

Milestone Custom Construction, 49
Moonstone Timber Frame Log Homes
& Cottages, 14
North Star Home Vision, 2

Prestige Steel Buildings, 25 Prycon Custom Building & Renovations, 17 Renovations by Rodgers, 101 Tryon Construction, 61

BUILDING/LANDSCAPE SUPPLIES

Midland Home Hardware Design Centre, 85, 89 Trans Canada Wood Products, 79

CABINETS & MILLWORK/CARPENTRY/ FINE WOODWORKING/CUSTOM FURNITURE

Home Options Made Easy, 29

COUNTERTOPS

Desert Tile, 93 Design Loft at Simcoe Building Centre, 93 Elegant Solutions, 31, 87

DRYWALL/PLASTER/STUCCO

Newport Interior Wall Systems Ltd., 79

EAVESTROUGHS/SOFFIT/FASCIA

BC Roofing & Renovations, 59 Jones Aluminum, 103

ELECTRICAL

Triple Tech Heating, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Inc., 101

FINANCIAL/INSURANCE/ MORTGAGE/INVESTING

Raymond James, 53

FLOORING

BreezeWood Floors Bass Lake Sawmill, 69
Desert Tile, 93
End Of The Roll, 81
Home & Cottage Interiors, 12
Irvine Carpet One Floor & Home, 12, 105
Midland Home Hardware
Design Centre, 85, 89

Ecc

Core

FLORAL DESIGN/FLORISTS

Trans Canada Wood Products, 79

Fresh Flowers by Leanne, 16

FOOD & DRINK/RESTAURANTS/CATERING/DELI

Olive Oil Co., 27

FURNITURE & HOME DÉCOR/ ACCENTS/GIFTS/COLLECTIBLES

Aboda Decor, 17, 87
Blair Interiors & Window Fashions, 71
Dwellings Rustic & Refined Living, 31
Our House, 47
Simply Country, 91
Simply Home Furnishings, 91

HEATING & COOLING

Triple Tech Heating, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Inc., 101

HOME IMPROVEMENTS/ RENOVATIONS

Renovations by Rodgers, 101

Ready Pine, 47

ADM Design, 51
Design Loft at Simcoe Building Centre, 93
Gilkon Construction Ltd., 67
Gregor Homes, 91
Jones Aluminum, 103
JVL Home Improvements Ltd., 8
Newport Interior Wall Systems Ltd., 79
Prycon Custom Building & Renovations, 17

Total Living Concepts, 35

Tryon Construction, 61

INSULATION

Newport Interior Wall Systems Ltd., 79

INTERIOR DECORATING/INTERIOR DESIGN/HOME STAGING

ADM Design, 51 Behold Design, 6, 88 Inhabit Interiors & Design, 45 ISO Design, 71, 88

KITCHEN & BATH

Behold Design, 6, 88

Design Loft at Simcoe Building Centre, 93

EcoRefinishers, 45

Home & Cottage Interiors, 12

Home Options Made Easy, 29

Lindsay Schultz Kitchens & Cabinetry, 103

Midland Home Hardware

Design Centre, 85, 89

Ora Kitchens and Bath, 87, 111

LANDSCAPE DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE/LANDSCAPING/ LAWN & GARDEN

Atrium Landscapes, 53 CCS Pool & Landscape, 33 CLEARRAIL, Frameless Glass Systems, 19 Firestone Landscaping, 88, 103 Foster Lawn & Garden, 9 Lakeside Tree Experts, 69 Mercer Equipment, 83, 109 Parklane Landscapes, 69

LIGHTING

Home & Cottage Interiors, 12

MACHINERY/SMALL EQUIPMENT/ FARM SUPPLIES

Mercer Equipment, 83, 109

NEW HOME COMMUNITIES

A.N.T. Homes, 10, 87 Braestone, 112

ORGANIZATION/STORAGE

Closets by Design, 75

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE/RECREATION

Sport Court Ontario, 3

OUTDOOR FURNITURE/STRUCTURES

Barrie LeisureScapes, 55 Total Living Concepts, 35

OUTDOOR KITCHENS

Total Living Concepts, 35

PAINTING & DECORATING

Allandale Decorating Centre, 12, 47
Benjamin Moore, 12
Elmvale Home Building Centre, 12
Home & Cottage Interiors, 12
Housser's Paint & Wallpaper, 12
Irvine Carpet One Floor & Home, 12, 105
Tripp's Paint & Decorating, 12, 47
WOW 1 Day Painting, 31

PAVING/CEMENT/CONCRETE/INTERLOCK

Road Readie Paving, 35

PLUMBING

Plumbtech Plumbing Inc, 59

POOLS/HOT TUBS/SAUNAS/SPAS

Barrie LeisureScapes, 55 CCS Pool & Landscape, 33 CLEARRAIL, Frameless Glass Systems, 19

REAL ESTATE

Chestnut Park, 15
Chestnut Park – Kim Archer, 14
Forest Hill Real Estate – Kelly Lazar,
David Wagman, 51
Royal LePage In Touch Realty Inc. –
Heather & Michael Cory, 59

Sotheby's Realty – Gilchrist Group, 11

RESTORATION SPECIALISTS

Restorations by Rodgers, 101

ROOFING

BC Roofing & Renovations, 59 DC United Roofing Barrie, 85

SPORTING SUPPLY/RECREATIONAL OUTFITTERS

Sport Court Ontario, 3

STAIRS/RAILINGS

Barrie Trim & Mouldings, 7 Creative Design Stairs & Railing, 13

STONE PRODUCTS/VENEER

Elegant Solutions, 31, 87

TILE

Desert Tile, 93

TRIM/MOULDING/CASING

Barrie Trim & Mouldings, 7
BreezeWood Floors Bass Lake Sawmill, 69

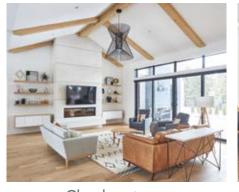
WINDOW TREATMENTS

Blair Interiors & Window Fashions, 71 Salnek's Custom Window Treatments, 9

WINDOWS & DOORS

ANIG Window & Door Manufacturing Ltd., 49 Barrie Trim & Mouldings, 7 Jones Aluminum, 103

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BERRY COBBLER

RECIPE AND PHOTOGRAPHY JENELLE MCCULLOCH

This cobbler is reminiscent of a sweet, soft southern-style drop biscuit. You can use whatever summer fruit you have on hand. We used blueberries and blackberries.

INGREDIENTS

(Serves 6)

FILLING

4 cups blueberries and blackberries*

1 Tbsp flour

1 Tbsp granulated sugar

COBBLER TOPPING

2 cups flour

½ cup granulated sugar

½ cup brown sugar

2 Tbsp baking powder

3 tsp ground cinnamon

1 stick butter, cold

1/4 - 1/2 cup boiling water

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°F.

In a baking dish, combine all filling ingredients and set aside.

For the topping, combine flour, sugars, baking powder and cinnamon in a bowl. With a pastry cutter or two knives, cut butter into dry ingredients until the mixture resembles wet sand. Stir in ¼ cup of boiling water and stir until combined (add in more water – 1 Tbsp at a time, if needed, to achieve a drop biscuit texture).

Spoon the topping over the berries. Don't worry about the topping covering the whole dish, it will spread as it bakes!

Bake for 30-45 minutes* until golden brown.

Notes

*Feel free to substitute any berries or fruit.

*Adjust baking time depending on size of the pan. If using a smaller pan and the topping is thicker add 5-10 minutes to baking time. **OH**







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