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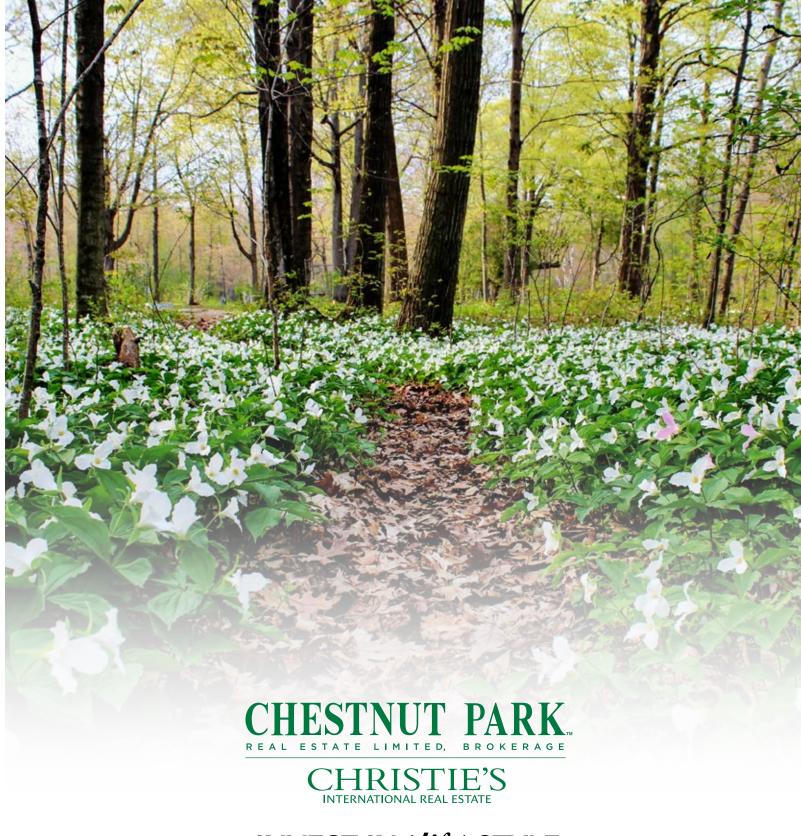
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editor's note



The winter of our discontent is firmly in the rear view mirror and I have my eyes and mind fully focused on being outside and fulfilling all the "wants" I dreamed about as the snow was falling. I have so many; I hope I don't sound greedy!

I want to spend a sunny day on the shoreline of Lake Huron, starting at Kincardine and travelling up to Sauble Beach just in time to put my paddleboard in the water and watch the sunset. I want to walk down main streets all over Grey Bruce and visit all the interesting businesses and restaurants. I want to have friends over for barbecues. I want my children, who live outside this area, to visit anytime they want.

I want to hug and be hugged. I want to go to the OUR HOMES office and see my colleagues face-to-face. I want to see the new James Bond movie in a cinema. I want to see Luke Combs perform live and I want my first grandchild, due just after this issue is out, to see me without a mask.

Maybe some of my wants will stay as that, but I will remain hopeful that many will become reality.

I am sure you have your own list of wants and if it's anything to do with your home, dive into this issue and be inspired by the beautiful features that remind us that spring is here and it is welcome with open arms!

Please wear a mask and be kind to everyone you meet.

Sona Montin

Sara Martin, Managing Editor sara.martin@ourhomes.ca



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CONTENTS **SPRING 2021**







ON THE COVER

A pool with a view surrounded by gardens planted to attract birds and butterflies. Story, page 64. Photography by Jason Hashimoto.





- our picks for the season, perfect for
- bright future.
- **60 Spotlight** Smitty's Fine Furniture offers
- **66** Landscape Tour Three professionally landscaped properties showcase creativity, communication and teamwork.
- **84** People & Places Local experts help with building, moving and upgrading.
- **98** Feature Home This home on wheels is comfortable, practical and full of style to take anywhere the heart desires.





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CONTENTS SPRING 2021





- 16 Editor's Note
- **22** Advice Weather Loving Furnishings
- 28 Good Taste Elderflower Cocktail
- **30** Birding Avian Invitation
- **32 Gardening** Planting Seeds
- **48** Decorating Colour Influence
- **52** Real Estate Augmenting Our Abodes
- **56** Design Ideas Oceans of Textiles
- **62** Double Take Prettiest Powder Room
- **80 Outdoor Living** Free Your Kitty
- **96** Projects Sphere Not
- **112 Focus** Colour of the Year
- **116 Crafty Ideas** Flower Frame
- **120 Cooking At Home** Peaches & Ice Cream
- **122** Home Resource Directory
- **124 Finishing Touch** Luxe Accent Plumbing



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The great outdoors: Whether we experience it on a tiny balcony, a cosy deck or a big backyard, we all want to get out to enjoy warmer temperatures. While it's lovely to lounge, linger and live outdoors, you need to know Mother Nature is cruel towards materials. The scorching sun, with temperatures that go up and down, along with the wind, rain and water are all challenging to materials, natural or man-made.

To navigate the dos and don'ts for your outdoor life experience, first, ask yourself, "How much time do I want to devote to maintenance?" A bit of research will make your lounge time more enjoyable.

CABINETRY AND FURNITURE — MAINTENANCE 101

- Most products are made of plastic, wood, aluminum or wicker, and each material has its own set of positives and negatives.
- Take time to read and follow manufacturers' instructions to clean and maintain any products. It'll make your life easier in the short and long run.
- Corrosion- and weatherresistant means the finish protects materials. It is not waterproof.
- UV-stable and light fastness is a stabilizer added to protect from deterioration or fading in the sun.

- Fire, heat and impactresistant materials are easy to clean and non-corrosive. The most practical is stainless steel.
- The easiest solution is to cover your furniture and place in storage when

WANT SUSTAINABLE PATIO FURNITURE?

Look for recycled plastic, reclaimed wood or FSCcertified wood. Teak is well known for durability, beauty and strength and is popular on ships.



CABANACOAST: Landing Deep Seating in Umber

FABRICS

Cushions and fabrics make outdoor lounging comfy.

Make sure fabrics are breathable and UV, water, mildew and stain-resistant.

Most people are familiar with Sunbrella fabric for its durability and soft feel. Powerwashing is not recommended as it can ruin the seams of the cushions.



SHADES AND CANOPIES

Extend your outdoor stay in a natural way to keep cool, protect yourself from UV rays and reduce the premature ageing of wood and fabric. Add a fan for ultimate breezy coolness.

FLOORING

What's under your feet needs to be practical, beautiful and long-wearing. First, take an inventory of the area you want to cover. Assess conditions such as drainage, holes made by animals, soil type and exposure to sun and rain. This will determine what materials you'll need to use. Flooring options include:

Wood: It's versatile. Redwood and cedar have a natural resistance to rot and the elements. Other woods require sealants.

Stone: Natural and durable. Includes granite, slate and marble and still requires care. Dark stones absorb the heat and will scorch your tender tootsies.

Brick and permeable concrete pavers: Great hardscape options for ecofriendly patios and walkways.

Tile: Porcelain tiles can mimic the look of other materials, including wood and stone, all while being durable and budget-friendly.

Rubber paving stones and recycled plastic: Helps divert waste from landfills. Resilient, durable, slip resistant and shock absorbent – a favourite around pools and kids' playgrounds.

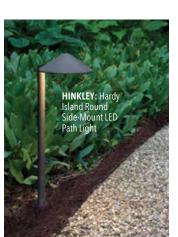
Composite Decking: Wood fibres encased in plastic and binding agents. Low-maintenance, easy to install with a multitude of great traits. Very popular despite higher cost of materials.

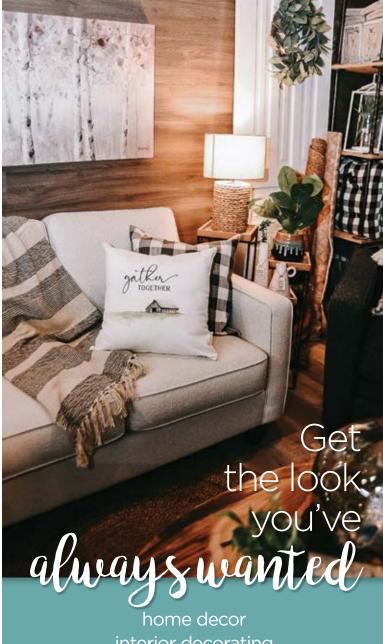
Carpets: Makes the outdoors homelike. The synthetics are easy to clean, and are mould, mildew and stain-resistant. Many are made of recycled materials.

Artificial Grass: It's not the real thing, but it is easy to install and long-lasting. You do need to vacuum it.

NOTE: Make sure your flooring has a matte or non-slip finish. Shiny surfaces are hazardous around water and in the winter.

Finally, your evening outdoor stay is more enjoyable when you light things up! Make sure any fixture you use is wetrated. Safety first. **OH**





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3 CUNEO'S CARPET ONE FLOOR & HOME

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Continued on page 26





5





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style picks



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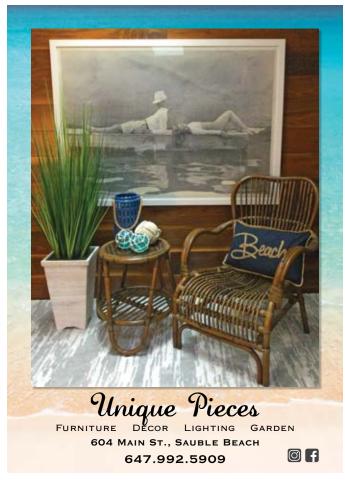
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garden décor.





FIG SYRUP

1 cup figs, diced

½ cup white sugar

½ cup water

COCKTAIL

1.5 ounces gin

1.5 ounces elderflower liqueur

2 ounces lemon juice

1 ounce fig syrup

1 ounce egg white, pasteurized

Garnish: edible flowers (optional)

HOW-TO

FIG SYRUP

Combine all ingredients in a saucepan and simmer for 10-15 minutes.

Remove from heat and cool for 30 minutes.

Strain with a fine mesh strainer and store in fridge.

PREPARE COCKTAIL

Chill glassware of choice.

Combine all ingredients in a cocktail shaker and add ice. Shake until chilled then strain.

Garnish with edible flowers. **o**H







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birding

Spring brings more sun with longer days. Snow melts, ice breaks and waterways flow. But without a doubt, my favourite sign of spring is the return of birds.

STORY MARK WIERCINSKI

The spring migration is a chance to witness one of the greatest natural phenomena right in our backyards. The parade of colour and diversity is amazing and a reminder of nature's wonder. Birdsong is a natural wake-up call, and after their spring arrival I can disable my alarm for the coming months. That dawn chorus is tonic for my spirit. How many of you can't wait for the first robin, redwing or sparrow to sing? Or maybe to simply see more birds at your feeders?

IT BEGINS IN MARCH

If you are keen and observant, you can see the start of migration sometime in March. It is subtle, and slow to start, but it is there. Horned larks and bluebirds are often the first migrants to return. They set off my radar and I start looking for new birds each week.

By the time April swings around, another two or three species return each week. The hardy seed eaters are often the first to get a head start on the trip north. It makes sense, as the seeds and fruits left on plants and shrubs are the first abundance of food. There will be a bigger wave of arrivals as the snow disappears and the weather warms.

More species mean more colour and more song. Ducks and geese of all sorts find open water and make me shiver at their ability to swim in the presence of frost and ice at the water's edge.

In May new birds arrive on a daily basis – sparrows and finches, then orioles and buntings. There are colours everywhere. The feeders become crowded and the seed gets gobbled up. You can put out different foods and add water to the menu and those birds will reward you with all kinds of activity and behaviour.

THE EARLY BIRD

Migration is the uncontrollable urge to travel. It is a way to take advantage of seasonal habitats and food sources while reducing competition. Birds with the ability to fly and cover huge distances gain the biggest advantage, securing food and shelter before the late-comers. This is also where the strong have the best chance to succeed. Those journeys are long, dangerous, full of risks and can be deadly at times. Migration is driven by instinct and accomplished by star navigation, magnetic fields, landscape recognition and good old-fashioned follow-the-leader. We can help. Put out food, offer shelter and give the migrators a place to restore energy and find a safe place to rest.











It is impossible not to appreciate a garden full of life and colour. Songs and activity just bring warmth and appreciation to our souls. (And who doesn't need more of that these days?) There are so many things to learn from birds, including watching them find nests, lay eggs, hatch young and fledge. Parents tend and teach, and a cycle of life is witnessed.

The birds that migrate and stop are so diverse. Warblers pass through with small, colourful blasts. Large, ominous hawks arrive and many stay and set up shop. Little brown birds that skulk around but have big voices include song sparrows and house wrens. Rare or common, those birds make it fun. They bring sound, colour and life right into our backyards – or, if you like to explore, our forests and wetlands – and virtually anywhere we go. Birds are there to greet us. It's all good and refreshing and gives us an attachment to the outdoors again. **OH**

Mark is a biologist with the Department of National Defence.

ourhomes SPRING 2021 | 31

gardening



2020 was a wild year that brought so many challenges – some were utterly heartbreaking and others were just plain annoying. The lack of availability of items we take for granted was frustrating, including plants. Many garden favourites just weren't attainable. Seed-sowing to the rescue!

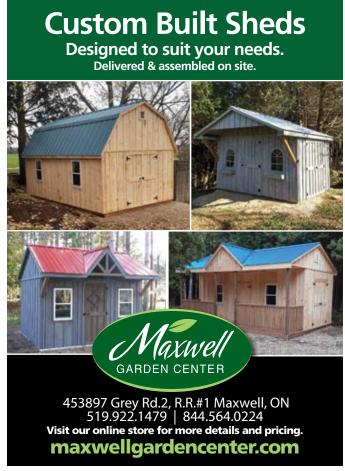


Most garden seeds (both flowers and veggies) are readily available online and at your local nursery, often in varieties you might otherwise never find. Plus, growing plants from seed is an inexpensive, fun and rewarding process. Most seeds can be started indoors earlier in the growing season but for this piece I'm focusing on the direct sowing method because it's terrifically simple. Direct seeding/ sowing means to plant seed directly in the garden. Sounds easy doesn't it? That's because it is!

Unlike their inside-grow counterparts, seeds that have been grown in place don't experience the stress of transplanting and won't need to adjust to their new surroundings. Often you won't lose any time at all direct-sowing and I learned this (again) firsthand during last year's growing season when a friend gifted me a variety of veggie seeds in June. With no time to start indoors I had no choice but to direct-sow them. To my surprise, many of these sown-in-place seedlings grew better and produced more than the ones I started inside the previous months.

Continued on page 34

Melanie is a certified horticulturalist and landscape designer.







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gardening

TIPS FOR SEEDING SUCCESS

Though direct-sowing is easy, it doesn't mean your new plant babies won't need care. Follow these tips for the best direct-seeding success:

- Make sure to clear your seeding area of any weeds and have the soil loose, damp and ready for planting.
- Most of the specific sowing info per plant variety is found on the seed packet. Please read carefully. The rule of thumb is to plant a seed three times as deep as its circumference, but some require light or a cold stratification to germinate. Also keep in mind that when to sow is equally important, as some seedlings are frost-hardy and some are not.
- Mark your spot. It's really easy to forget where you planted seeds once springtime growth is in full swing.
- Water your seeds gently as needed until you see germination, then again whenever you see the soil surface looking a bit dry. Watch the weather and adjust your watering. Schedule accordingly as seedlings can easily die from drought or drowning at this delicate stage.
- If you have a good germination rate, you may need to thin your seedlings to give them airflow and room to grow. I find it's better to pinch the unwanted seedlings off at the base because pulling them disturbs their delicate, young root systems. If the unwanted seedlings are edible plants you can eat them, too.
- Keep watching and caring for your new brood until they're established plants, and always be on the lookout for pests and predators. Some insects love to snack on and decimate defenseless seedlings.

MFIANIF'S PIANT PICKS

Annual flowers, vegetables, and even some perennials are great candidates for direct-sowing. Some plants even seed themselves for subsequent years. Here is my list of favourites, but please don't let it limit you. There are many others that will work.



THE EDIBLES

Beans, salad greens, parsley, basil, dill, borage, cilantro, fennel, beets, carrots, peas and radish.

BLOOMS-FOR-DAYS ANNUALS

Cosmos, zinnia, calendula, sunflowers, nasturtium, nigella, bachelor buttons, california poppies, morning glory and moonflower.



DEPENDABLE PERENNIALS/BIENNIALS

Foxglove, blue flax, black eyed susans, milkweed, butterfly weed, columbine and lupine.

PRO TIP: After your seed garden is well established, don't forget to sow succession crops of both flowers and veggies to keep those beautiful blossoms and edibles coming all season long. You can even save some seeds at the end of the season for next year.

Lessons learned? Direct sowing is a little bit risky and patience-building but also incredibly easy and inexpensive. Which method will you choose this gardening season? **o**



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When Chad and Becky Weltz's daughter was 10 years old, she wrote a speech for school about having lived in many different homes – one for every year of her life. The one constant? Durham, where the family lives and their business is building homes. Continued on page 39











ABOVE: Dinner prep for fresh spring asparagus alfredo is easy with the vast counter space the island provides. RIGHT: A stream of beloved family photos plays on the Samsung french-door refrigerator. Engineered hardwood from The Source Flooring adds a warm undertone to the white shaker-style custom cabinets by Barzotti Woodworking Ltd. BELOW: Sliding doors lead to the large rear deck. Seating at the island is convenient for homework or snacking.

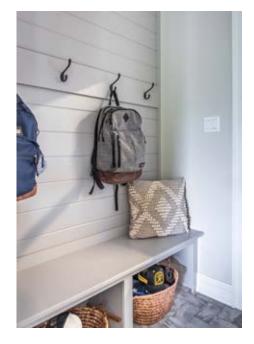


Chad and Becky are partners in **Candue Homes**, launched by Becky's aunt and uncle, Susan and Don Tremble, more than 30 years ago. Candue is a Custom Home Builder that serves Grey-Bruce and Wellington counties.

This Candue home is Chad and Becky's fourth new build. They've always been handson with all of their homes, with Chad doing a lot of the work himself. Their daughter, now 13, and a son who's nine, have grown up on job sites. Becky has photos of her two babies in their snowsuits in the midst of a job site.

When the kids were younger, they would build little houses and forts with the material found on site. Sometimes, with parental supervision, they climbed the scaffolding. Each construction zone became their playground. Continued on page 40

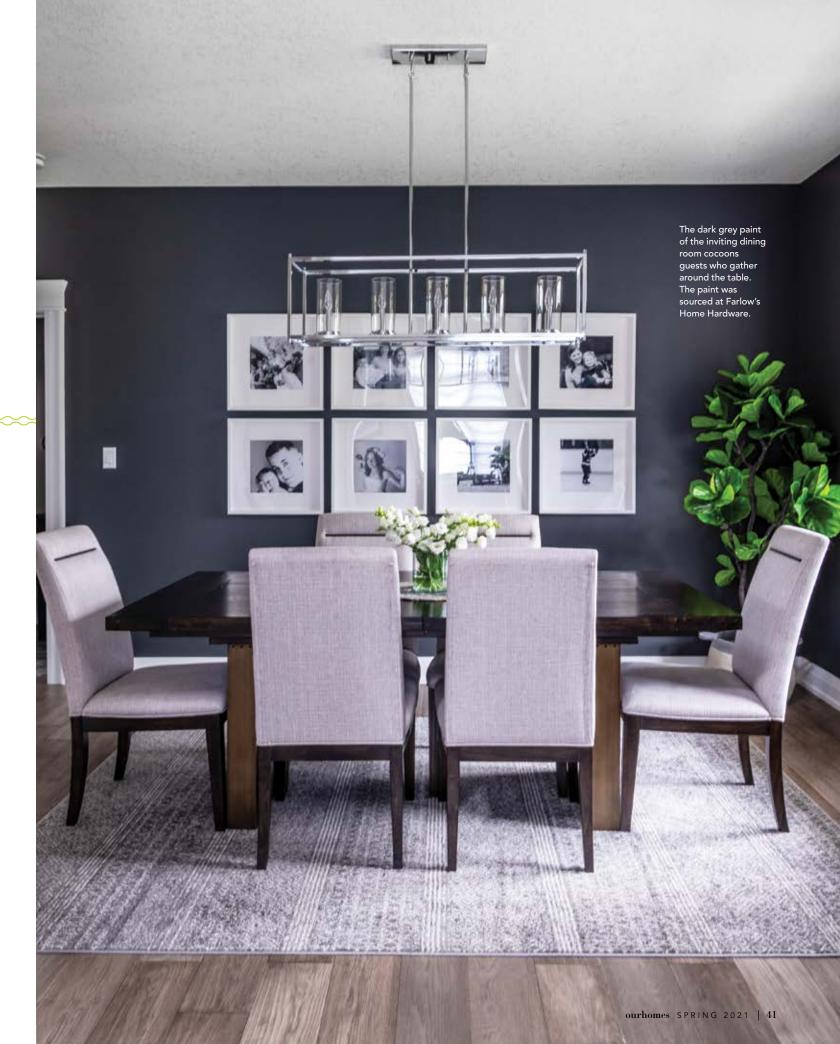




LEFT: Dining on the covered rear deck can be enjoyed even if it is raining. Glass railings highlight the view to the forested area at the rear of the property. ABOVE: The mudroom has a shiplap accent wall with lots of hooks for outdoor gear, bench seating and baskets to keep smaller items contained. BELOW: A large comfortable sectional sits opposite the dining area on the rear deck. The matching firepit table adds ambience in the evening.



Becky's favourite part of any build is seeing it all come together. "I'm always so nervous through the build," she says. "I'm asking, 'Is it going to look like I imagined?' It's a gratifying process to take the small fabric, paint and flooring samples and see them on a grand scale in a finished space." Becky sourced the paint and décor items from Farlow's Home Hardware. Continued on page 43







In subdivisions built by Candue, each home is unique though cohesive to the look of the development. They change at least an element or two, whether the front entry or the pitch of the roof. It's all in the details. The one-of-a-kind nature of each home is important to Becky. She points out, "I love that it's not a standard stock plan." After all, Candue prides itself on building truly custom homes.

The Weltz family also takes pride in their community. Becky was born and raised in Durham, where Candue is based, and Chad is from nearby Ayton. The pair tries to keep their projects within a 30-minute radius to preserve a work-life balance and their time together, though they serve the whole county.

"I just love the small town, everyone knows everyone," she says. "That sense of community, and the opportunity to support it and breathe life into it as other families move to Grey-Bruce to make their own memories, are what it's all about." Their neighbour, **Scott Kuglin**, owner of **Kuglin Contracting**, installed the stone around the fireplace and helped with the insulation. Continued on page 44





ABOVE: The openconcept of the living room and kitchen is the heart of the home for the family. Trim throughout was installed by Eric Hopkins Limited. LEFT: Susan Tremble, Ava, Becky, Chad and Cole Weltz, and Don Tremble. The two families work together and enjoy downtime together when possible.

42 | ourhomes SPRING 2021 | 43





LEFT: A basket-weave tile inset resembling an area rug in the master bathroom is repeated in the shower. Tile was sourced at Cuneo Interiors Carpet One Floor & Home. Dingwall Electric installed the pendant over the vessel tub. **ABOVE:** A must-have for Becky was a second-floor laundry. With a busy family, the location makes laundry a breeze. BELOW: In the master bath, the large glass enclosed shower has multiple shower heads and tile that lines the walls and ceiling.

Chad and Becky spend a lot of time at the arena in the winter months, and hit the local trails all year round. Snowmobiling and fourwheeling are particular favourites.

Baseball is a staple come the summer months, as is time on the $\,$ covered porch with its lounge area and outdoor dining space. The family is grateful to live in the perfect area to enjoy their favourite activities together.

Really, Becky notes, all of Candue is like one big family. Work becomes fun when you love the people you work with. She and Chad have learned a lot in their 13 years with the business but are quick to point out that there is always so much more to learn.

Built on the three pillars of integrity, diligence and results, each element of every Candue home is carefully thought out. Their motto is "The difference is in the details," and it shows in every inch of the Weltz home. Continued on page 46





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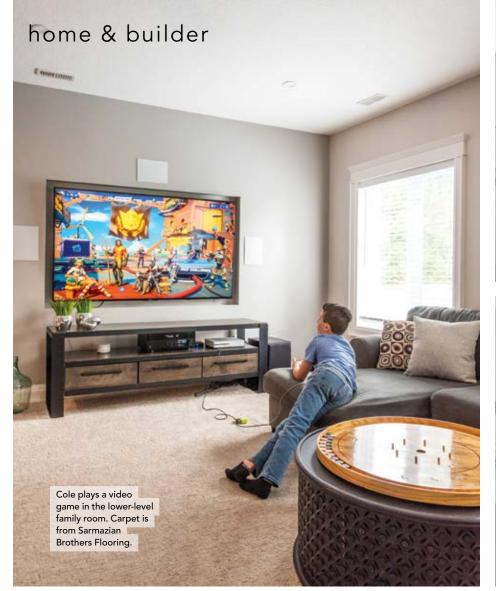
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HOMEOWNERS'
CHOICE AWARDS







It's not just the carefully sourced furniture, tile and light fixtures, it's the black-and-white family photos that hang on the gallery wall behind the dining table and the personal touches (like the Nerf armoury) in the kids' rooms. These are the details that make a house a home.

The kitchen, which has a massive island with seating for the whole family, is the heart of the home. Light pours in, and in the neighbouring dining room, a sophisticated mood is set with dark grey walls. The home is poised to grow with the family, at least until they begin on their next project.

Candue will have a busy 2021 with a sold-out year. They have opened a new shop and office, and look forward to sharing more of Candue with the Grey-Bruce community. In the meantime, the Weltz family will be soaking up all that their home, and their area, have to offer. OH

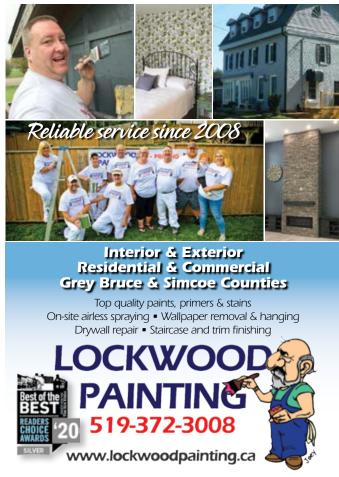


TOP RIGHT: An office area on the upper level overlooks the front foyer. ABOVE: Carpeting in the master bedroom offers sound insulation and comfort. LEFT: A pegboard organizes Cole's Nerf armoury. Shelves display sporting awards.









COLOUR TRENDS

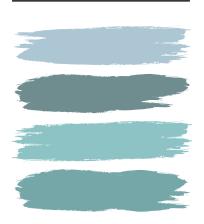
STORY GEORGETTE MCCULLOCH

It's a blue year for interior design. Major paint brands have picked their top paint colours, and blues are trending for your walls and home accessories.



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THE BLUES



Beauti-Tone Paint has selected Dancing in the Rain (C20-5-0644-0), a pastel blue. "It's a blue we can relax in while feeling as though we are in a calm and tranquil environment," says Kristen Gear, Beauti-Tone's lead colour designer.





Aqua Fiesta (PPG1147-4), a vibrant blue-green, is Glidden's first-ever accent colour of the year. It's a bright refreshing aquamarine that will make a splash in small doses, perhaps on millwork or an accent wall. Continued on page 50











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decorating

Benjamin Moore says its colour, **Aegean Teal (2136-40)**, will help create natural harmony in your home. The company calls the colour "intriguing, balanced and deeply soothing." Imagine this colour on your kitchen cabinets.





BACK TO NATURE

While blues dominate, our natural surroundings also inspire colour.



Urbane Bronze (SW 7048), the top pick from Sherwin Williams, is a warm hue the company says will help you create "the ultimate retreat for reflection and renewal," and "a sense of calm from the ground up." It's perfect for window trims or accent walls.









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MOVING AWAY FROM GREY



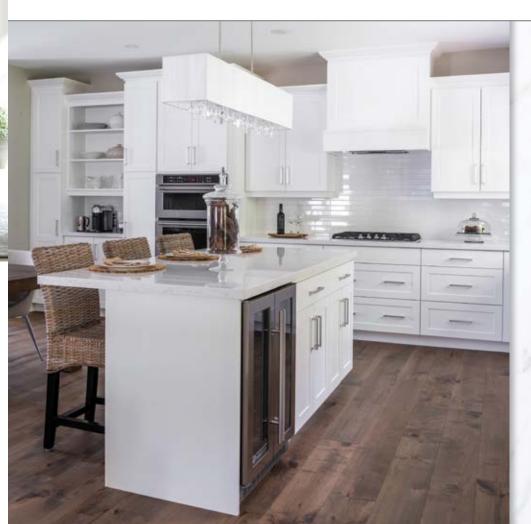




Valspar's colour experts unveiled 12 "fresh and familiar colours" that are on-trend now and are "easy to love forever." One of our top picks from this collection is **Soft Candlelight** (3005-6C).



Farrow & Ball has selected 12 shades for its 2021 colour trends, mostly earthy neutrals and natural colours. The company says its selections reflect "a broader trend toward warm, organic colours and away from cool greys and blues." We like **Green Smoke No.47.** oh

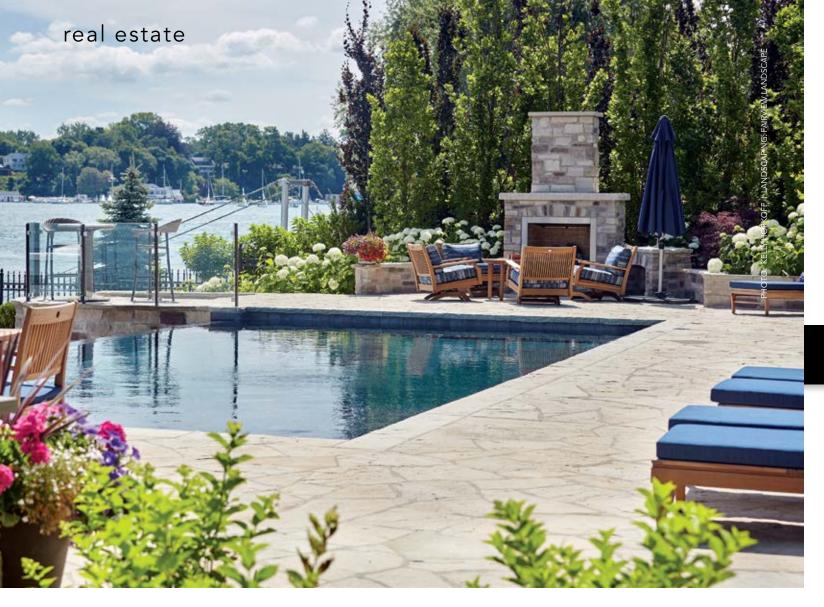






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What homeowners can expect

STORY CONNIE JESKE CRANE

IF YOU TRIED TO COMPLETE SOME HOME IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS (OR EVEN BASIC MAINTENANCE) OVER THE PAST YEAR AND HIT A FEW SNAGS, YOU'RE NOT ALONE.

Homeowner Karen Homer has certainly been there. Homer, who's been completing a string of projects on her Guelph century home over the past year, recalls encountering everything from booked-up contractors to lumber shortages to COVID-related product and shipping delays. With a custom door for example, she says, "This door should usually take nine weeks to come, which is long enough, but it took 16 weeks."

Add to that an extra layer of COVID protocols and PPE. At one point, during some mould remediation work in her basement, Karen found herself dealing not only with "guys in COVID suits but others in mouldhazard suits. So it's been fun!"

For industry players and homeowners alike, 2020 was uniquely and unforgettably challenging. If you plan to begin a new project this year, here's a look at what's in the forecast for the home improvement industry plus advice on navigating challenges.

Continued on page 54





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real estate

MORF OF THE SAME **BUT DIFFERENT, TOO**

What can homeowners expect this year? We talked to Michael Garrity, CEO of Financeit, a Toronto-based company that provides mobile-friendly financing apps for things like home renos.

Michael begins by making sense of what happened last year. "If there was a theme for 2020, it would be 'Dealing with change without a playbook,' right? We had no idea this was going to come, once it hit us we had no idea how big it was going to be, what the implications were going to be, what the government reaction was going to be, what people's perceptions of safety would look like. It was all trial by fire."

Adding to the complexity, says Michael, after an industry lockdown in Q2, the home improvement sector saw a wild 60 per cent year-over-year rise in the third quarter - hand-in-hand with unprecedented delays and shortages.

For 2021, with a second lockdown in January, he says, "We are going to continue to wrestle with effects and implications of the health pandemic for the entirety of the year." Yet Michael also sees more reasons to be encouraged.

"What's different this year from last year is we have information; we know what to expect. We're done with [establishing] policies and procedures and protocols. We know how to operate in a lockdown... in a grey zone, and a yellow zone and red zone. We're ready as an industry."

BETTER TECH TOOLS

In 2021 we're all also armed with geeky new skills, having mastered virtual meeting platforms and other tech tools thanks to COVID. Michael says on the industry side, "We've moved to virtual consults, taken advantage of new tools that are available so we can minimize interruptions with customers." In this wider-scale adoption of tech, he says his own company's online applications, which allow customers to finance home improvement projects online, also saw real growth in 2020. "Electronic payments and online financing tools like ours exploded because of again just health concerns and the inconvenience of cash."





SUPPLY ISSUES

Supply issues are improving. Overall, Michael says, "I think that supply chain issues are going to be less frequent because of knowledge. We know and we can plan for alternative places to source material from."

SPECIFIC TRENDS

Michael says the past year also brought a "reinforcement of the value of the home." In 2021, with people still not travelling, we should see more of the same - spending on backyards, pools, spas, outdoor kitchens, new driveways, basketball courts and anything that maximizes enjoyment of our homes.

ADVICE

For 2021, with home improvement projects, Michael advises planning ahead as much as possible. "Secure the contractor that you want to work with as early in the season as you can because there will be an increased amount of demand."

And for larger spends, particularly if you might sell down the line, Karen says a savvy realtor with good local knowledge can really help you prioritize spending. "I had a realtor walk through the house with me and make lists of bare minimum things that needed to be addressed," she says.

Finally, the right mindset - being patient and flexible – and the need for good safety protocols will stay with us this year. "We're going to experience elements of the health pandemic for all of 2021," says Michael. "It's safe to do projects, as long as you take care." **OH**







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Fashion runways have always been at the cutting edge of design, inspiring everything from simple daily clothing choices to complete lifestyles – and yes, they even have a say in what our home environments look like, too. As designers, we're personally drawn to the latest collections from notable fashion houses, with anticipation of what might walk down that runway and change the trajectory of interior design as we know it.

Perhaps the most literal connection between fashion and home décor is the use of textiles, Look around you - they are everywhere, from window coverings and wall treatments to your furniture upholstery and accessories. Here are some of our favourite fabrics and where to use them.





WOOL

Just like your favourite sweater, wool is great to snuggle while lounging. Wool throws and pillows add decorative texture, but they also serve a warm and cosy purpose on colder nights. This fabric also boasts many natural benefits. It's a renewable resource, biodegradable, durable and despite visions of shrunken sweaters emerging from washing machines and dryers, modern innovations mean many wool products are no longer "hand-wash" or "dry-clean only."

SILK

Silk is a highly durable and beautiful material. making it the perfect choice for fashionable and functional flooring. A rug that is 100 per cent silk or a wool/silk blend has a natural sheen to it, and because it usually has a higher knot count when compared to other rug materials, it allows for intricate patterns in its designs. While our favourite silk rugs have a single, solid colour, this natural material has organic variances in colour, making a solid rug feel beautiful and luxurious.

Continued on page 58







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VELVET

Velvet is classically rich and luxuriously overthe-top, instantly adding glamour to everything it touches. In the right doses, it can elevate the look of any room. This fabric is consistent; its low pile gives it a smooth appearance, which shimmers under different light. This quality makes it a beautiful choice for furniture upholstery and pieces featuring beautiful curves. Despite its dramatic look and feel, velvet is low-maintenance and very forgiving, making it an elegant and practical choice for sofas, chairs and cushions.

LINEN

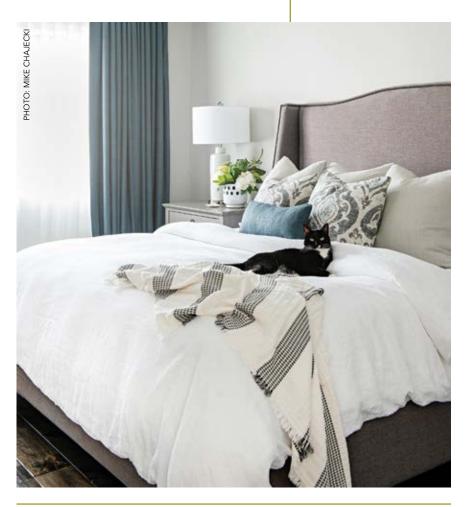
Linen is widely known for its versatility, both on and off the runway. This organic material varies in weight from light and airy to heavier options, and is known for its characteristic woven texture and casual vibe. Linen can be easily dressed up with a bold pattern or colour, thanks to its ability to absorb dye. All of these qualities, combined with the fact that linen always seems to fall nicely, make it a favourite choice for window coverings.





COTTON

There's nothing quite like the look, feel and even the smell of crisp cotton bedding. There's a reason we all use cotton in a variety of applications on a daily basis. This particular material pleases the masses - it's smooth and soft, not scratchy like some linen bedding or hot like silk. The structure of cotton fabric has air channels that make it cool and breathable, and this is one fabric that actually gets better with use. The more you wash it, the softer it gets.



When it comes to finishing touches in your home, textiles are everything. They add softness, texture and depth to your design and create a cosy nest to settle into at the end of the day. Do your research and consider your choices from an aesthetic and practical standpoint. Remember, there's a perfect fabric for every application. OH

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IN THE BEGINNING

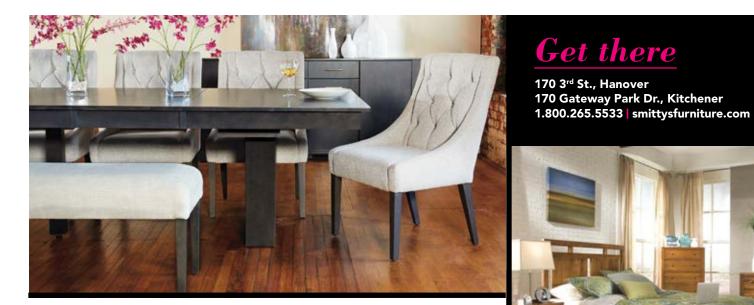
Edward "Smitty" Schmidt started Smitty's Fine Furniture more than 70 years ago in the town of Hanover, which was once the heart of the furniture industry in Ontario. Back then, Smitty's showcased locally manufactured furniture from the likes of Knechtel and Sklar Peppler, alongside pianos, hardware and appliances. The business evolved, and today Smitty's Fine Furniture specializes in quality Canadianmade furnishings. The Schmidt family is still involved in the business and is proud to offer a large selection of quality furniture to fit any decorating style.

MAKING CHOICES EASY

Inspirational vignettes of living rooms, dining rooms and bedrooms are showcased in Smitty's impressive 23,000 sq. ft. Hanover showroom, featuring the quality brands the store represents. With



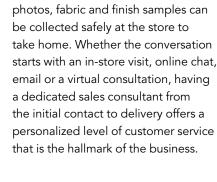




the expert help of sales consultants, many of whom are interior decorators, customers can use the displays as a jumping-off point. Staff can help customize with fabrics, finishes and decorative options that change the design of each piece. Clients get unique products that match their style and needs.

ADAPTING TO CHANGE

Smitty's Fine Furniture has adapted to today's retail environment while maintaining a helpful and comfortable shopping experience. Customers can start with an online room planner - found on Smitty's website - and engage with a sales consultant who can offer suggestions, options and detailed specifications. If needed, product





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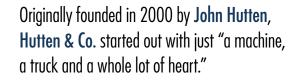
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FOR THE OF LANDSCAPES





ourhomes SPRING 2021 | 67



Twenty years later, this mature and premiere landscaping company is owned and operated by John's sons Mark and Ken Hutten.

"We believe in a consistent process," says Mark. "We call it The Hutten Way." But serving a landscape as rich as the Niagara Escarpment and clients from all walks of life requires "creativity, good communication, and an amazing team."

Casol and Brian moved to the Meaford waterfront from Haliburton to be closer to their adult children. The landscape was a clean slate. Lucky for them, their new pool from Clark Pools and Spas came with an introduction to Mark Hutten.

"They were so professional and thorough. They really listened to us," says Carol.

"The pool was the main driver behind this project, and the hill was the main challenge," says Mark. The backyard had to be levelled, tons of boulders and natural stone steps were brought in to create a level, useable space, which is now home to the couple's pool, interlocking stone patio and meadow.

ourhomes SPRING 2021 | 69



PRECISION
DECK AND FENCE

"Brian is quite the gardener," says Carol. He's won Trillium Awards for his gardens, and we left beautiful gardens behind in Haliburton." Brian's vision for this property was to create a wildlife meadow for birds and butterflies. Together with Mark, Brian chose switchgrass, showy goldenrod, pink milkweed, false indigo, winterberry holly, and BABY SUN lanceleaf coreopsis, among other plantings.

The pair can enjoy the view of the pool, the meadow and sunsets over Georgian Bay from their Ocean Room. Originally an awkward

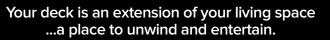
corner beneath their main floor deck, Hutten & Co waterproofed it, and the space now provides shelter from the elements, including the especially high winds. Continued on page 72

ABOVE: The curve of the pool coping is repeated by the patio stone edging of the gardens. BELOW LEFT: A flight of stone stairs leads from the pool deck to the house. Each stone step was cut to follow the curve of the boulders. **BELOW:** The Ocean Room protects the couple from inclement weather and wind.









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landscape tour

Larry and Madeline Middleton wanted to transform their yard into their own corner of zen. Even though they live near, not on, Colpoys Bay, they wanted to hear water

from their home. Their yard now centres around a water feature designed and installed by Hutten & Co.

Their space features a Douglas fir bridge that leads from their home



ABOVE LEFT: The Douglas fir ABOVE LEFT: The Douglas fir bridge becomes a destination to the screened-in pavillion. LEFT: A small pond surrounded by grasses and boulders is a refuge for frogs. RIGHT: Jumbo flagstone creates a patio for sunbathing and enjoying the sounds of grasses rustling in the breeze. FAR RIGHT: Landscape lighting highlights the water as it tumbles over boulders. tumbles over boulders.





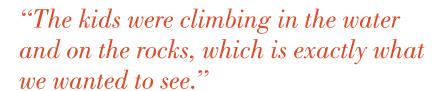
ourhomes SPRING 2021 | 73 72 | ourhomes SPRING 2021



The couple – retired civil servants – moved from Ottawa to retire in Wiarton, where Larry was born. In Ottawa, they were members of the Ottawa Bonsai Society and brought their Japanese influence and love for unique plants with them to their new home. This passion can be seen in the Japanese arch in the back of the yard, the fern-leaf Japanese maple, weeping white spruce and dwarf Korean lilacs.

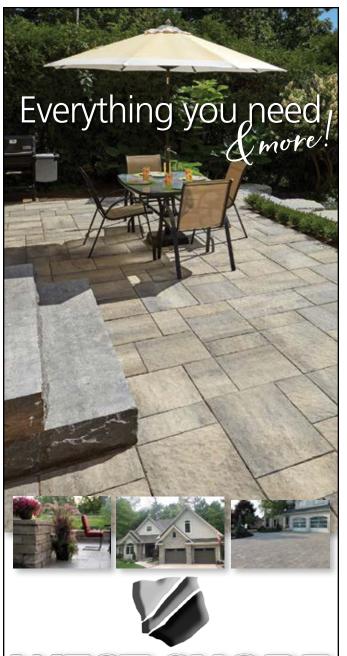
Madeline and Larry loved the experience they had with Hutten & Co. so much that they invited the whole crew and their families for a get-together when the project was complete. "We wanted the kids to see what their parents do," says Larry. "The kids were climbing in the water and on the rocks, which is exactly what we wanted to see." Now they enjoy taking their own grandkids out before breakfast to count the frogs in the pond. Continued on page 76











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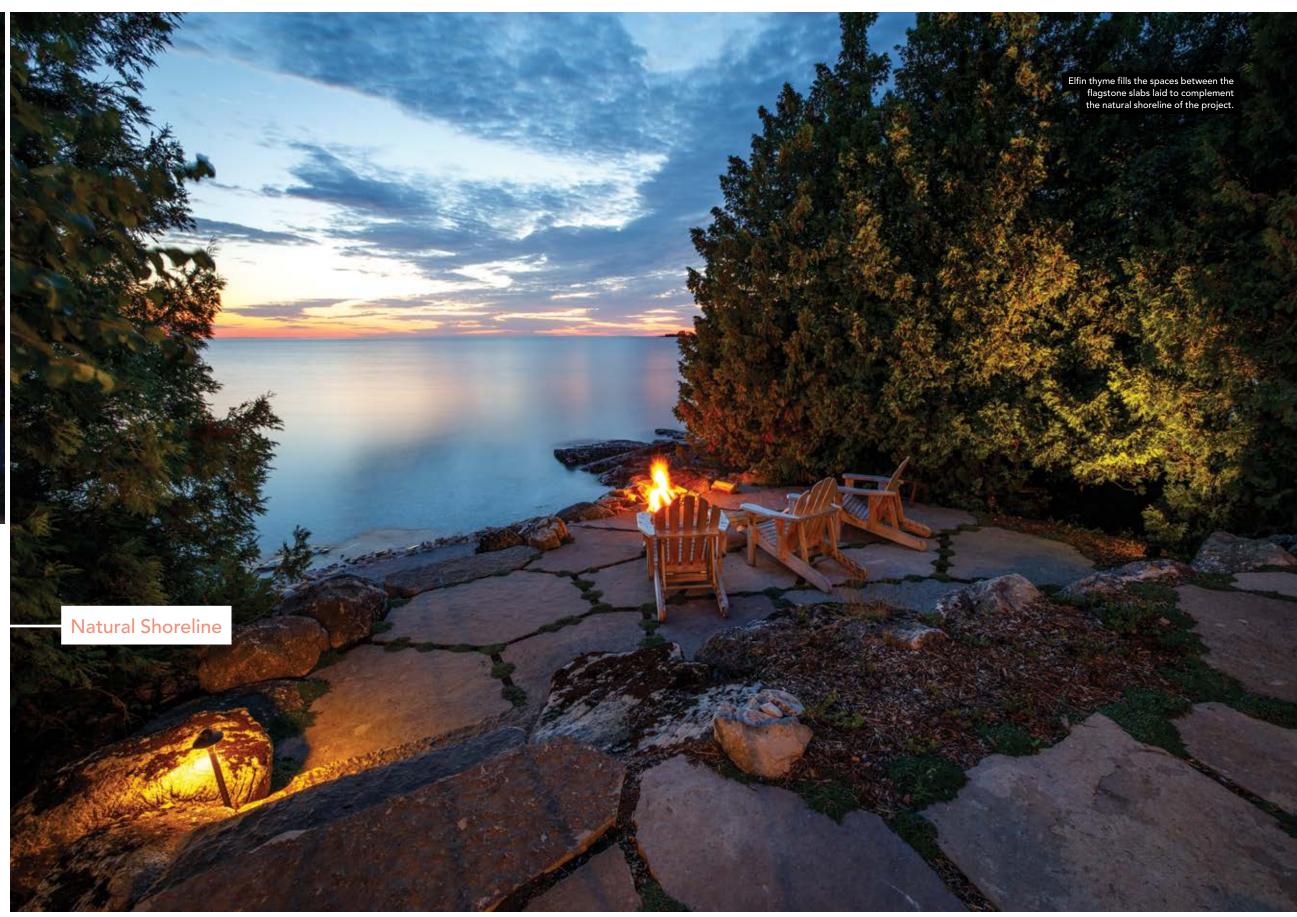


Building de earns on Georgian Bay, Hutten & Co. have the pleasure of working on many projects on and around the water, such as this third-yard overhaul.

The clients were looking for a great outdoor getaway for family and friends with multiple, distinct hubs for swimming, enjoying the fire, dining and relaxing. Hutten & Co. took on the challenge of complementing this natural shoreline.

"We wanted to soften the hardscape in this naturalized space," says Mark. "So we added planting pockets around weathered boulders and creeping thyme in the flagstone joints." The patio overlooking the recessed firepit and nearby shore features large flagstone slabs and is surrounded by simple, native plants and groundcover, including northern bayberry, arctostaphylus, panicum and diervilla.

Continued on page 78



ourhomes SPRING 2021 | 77



ABOVE: A timber frame pavillion is surrounded by cedars that provide protection from the onshore wind. **LEFT:** Cedar Muskoka chairs wait for the homeowners to enjoy the beauty of the setting sun.

The timber pavillion is surrounded by cedars, creating privacy and safety from the wind off the water. It also features a glass railing to bring the cedars into the space and honour the natural landscape.

Hutten & Co. have come to love Owen Sound and the Bruce Peninsula for the beauty it provides, for the projects they undertake there, and most importantly for the clients they get to serve.

After all the work is done, Mark credits the community, his staff and clients for their success. "We want to thank everyone for their support over the last 20 years. We are a small community, a family-run business. And we couldn't do it without the wonderful people beside us and the great clients we serve." OH



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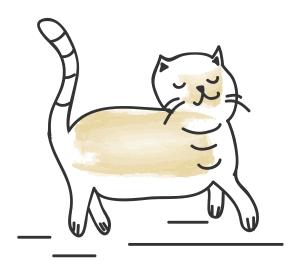








outdoor living



CATIOS

THE COOL-CAT WAY TO GIVE YOUR FELINES THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

STORY CONNIE JESKE CRANE

Meow. Not that long ago, it was the norm to throw open the door and let your cats prowl the 'hood when they wanted out. More and more though, we've come to associate negatives with letting our kitties participate directly in the food chain. Not only are outdoor cats' lives drastically shorter thanks to dangers and predators, they also kill distressing amounts of wildlife, birds in particular. (For more details, see sidebar.)

In Ancaster, Jill Graham and husband Les Csepey reflect Canadians' changing outlook. Graham, an owner of three cats who grew up with outdoor felines and currently rescues cats says, "Absolutely, I would never let my cats outside. I don't believe in it."

According to Humane Canada's Cats in Canada 2017 Report, leagues of cat owners like Graham and her husband have produced a "particularly exciting statistic." Specifically, the 2017 public survey found 72 per cent of cat owners now prevent their cats from roaming free - an astounding 13 per cent leap from 2016 when only 59 per cent reported doing so.

BEHIND THE CATIO TREND

All great of course, but as any cat owner knows, simply herding cats indoors is a compromise. "These are such interesting little creatures," says Don Bacha, of Hellas Custom Catios in Edmonton, noting a cat's innate curiosity and activity level. So here's where catios come in. Don says outdoor pet enclosures can be a great solution, helping cat lovers embrace responsible pet ownership yet also give their felines back some of the outdoor experience - safely.

The concept isn't entirely new. "It's been big in Australia and Great Britain for 20, 25 years," says Don. Yet in North America, he says, we've only been hearing about catios for 10 years or so, with much more interest lately. In fact, Don and his wife and business partner Yvette recently scaled up their business due to demand. No longer only serving Alberta, they now ship their catio kits across Canada and the U.S. Continued on page 82











A RANGE **OF CATIO OPTIONS**

Considering a catio? There are a range of options available today to fit varied budgets. At the low end, Don says, you could simply purchase a wire crate from a local pet store and place it outside so your cat can enjoy some fresh air and stimulation.

For DIYers, there are plenty of catio building plans and resources available online. (Local SPCAs can help guide you.) Increasingly, there are also ready-made catio kits available from various suppliers, with Hellas being one of the notable Canadianmade options. Don says his company's solutions range "anywhere from \$1,500 to the sky's the limit" depending on size and customized options such as catwalks. His standard catio product measures four feet by four feet, and has a galvanized two by two-inch wire mesh, which Don says is both low maintenance and strong. "We're comfortable saying large dogs or even a small bear are not going to get in."

If your budget allows, Don recommends fitting your catio with an independent access (i.e. pet door) to let cats come and go from the house as they please. "If you have to take your cat out to [the catio], it's not as fun."

Finally, there are uber-high-end solutions that are, let's face it, as nice for the humans as for the cats. In 2020, Jill and her husband completed a screened-in catio/addition on the back of their Lake Erie cottage. "We take our cats with us when we go down and wanted a safe spot for them to really enjoy the feel of the outdoors and being at the lake." Their simple catio project ultimately morphed into a \$20,000 project, complete with a screened-in porch, storm-proof slider windows, and two access doors into the cottage giving the cats a scrambling circuit. The space lets everyone enjoy the lake breezes and nature, but as Jill insists good-naturedly, "The initial intent was I wanted something for the cats."





BENEFITS

To be sure, safety and peace of mind are top benefits. Yet many catio owners also get a huge kick out of watching their animals safely playing or lazing in the sun. Don says he's had many clients thrilled to see their indoor cats get a taste of outdoor fun. As a cat owner himself, Don says his cats' year-round adventures in their (admittedly fancy) catio are hugely entertaining. "In the colder days they'll go out and check their little territory and run back in and lick their paws. In the summer they're like little children - they'll come in to eat and then run right back out!" **OH**

FREE-RANGE CATS: NOT-SO-FUN FACTS

- In Canada, cats are the number one killer of birds: They kill anywhere from 100 million to 350 million birds annually.
- Coyote attacks on outdoor cats are not uncommon. In California, one study found that 20 per cent of an urban coyote's diet consists of cat.
- Toxins like antifreeze and rat poison taste good to cats, meaning outdoor cats face more poisoning risks,
- Roaming cats are also frequently hit by cars. In Toronto, more than 1,300 dead cats were collected from city streets in 2017.
- The Ontario SPCA says the average life expectancy for a free-roaming cat is two to five years; for indoor cats, it's more than 12.

Sources: Environment Canada, U.S. National Park Service Nature Canada Ontario SPCA









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PHOTOGRAPHY SARAH TACOMA





REALTOR

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Continued on page 86



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Cottage Country Designs is a unique and creative firm that specializes in residential design. Their mission is to positively influence customers' lives by creating spaces that reflect their personality and lifestyle. They listen to clients and are dedicated to making the design process simple and enjoyable from start to finish.

CURRENT PROJECT

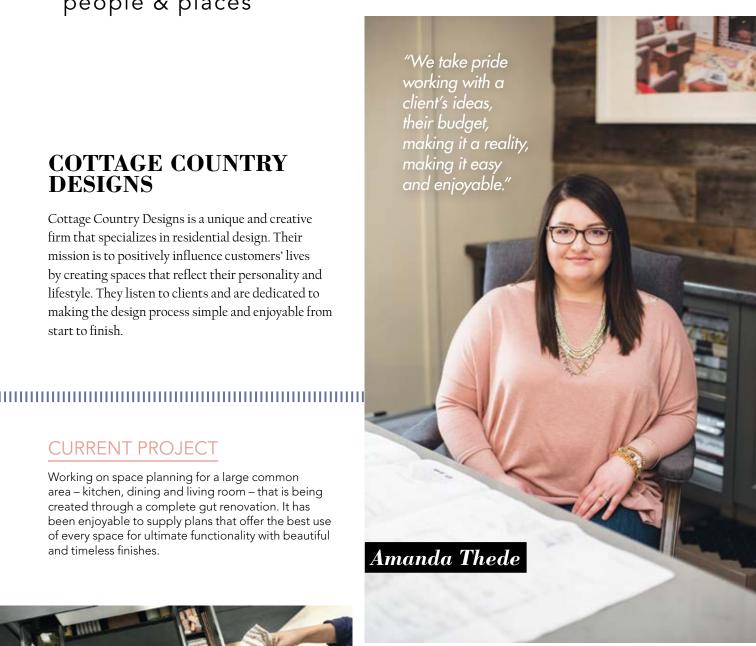
Working on space planning for a large common area - kitchen, dining and living room - that is being created through a complete gut renovation. It has been enjoyable to supply plans that offer the best use of every space for ultimate functionality with beautiful and timeless finishes.



WHAT'S HOT

Natural materials are very popular, specifically wood surfaces, living plants, wicker furniture, stone textures, metal and ceramics

Continued on page 88





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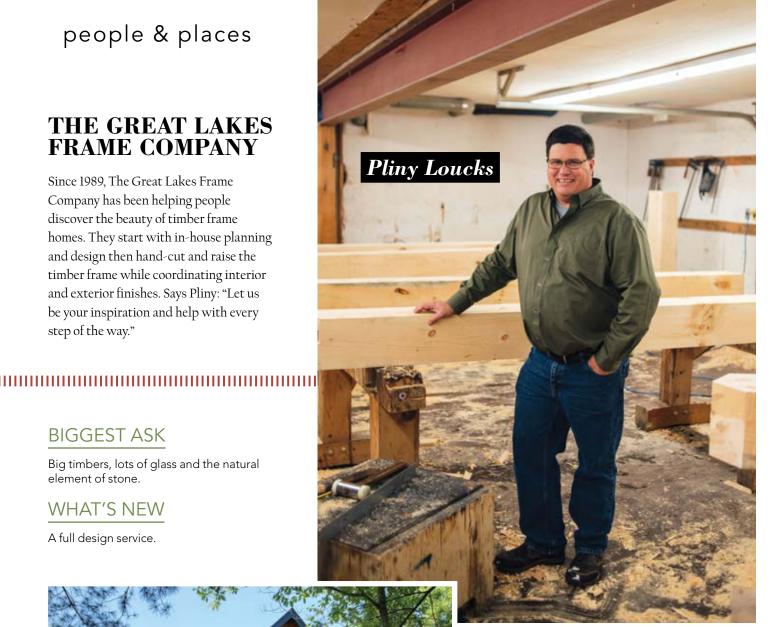
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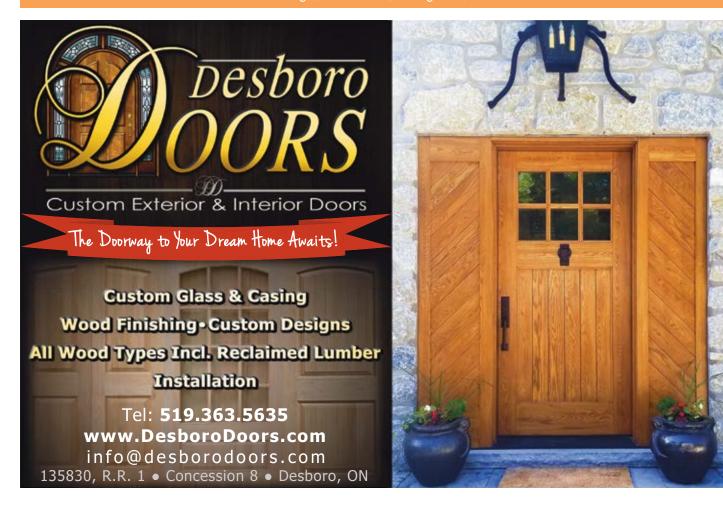




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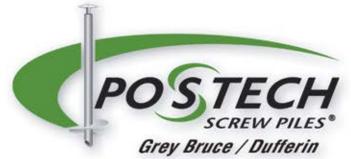
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Continued on page 92



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ARTIST

Using harmonious colours and flowing forms Yükselle Hassan creates a window to an atmospheric world she calls Realism in Fantasy. Her paintings are represented by the Southampton Arts Centre. Visits to Yükselle's studio are by appointment and she accepts commissions.



INSPIRATION

Moving from Toronto to make Southampton my home gave me the chance to stop and watch the vast sky, learn the moods and formation of the clouds and their reflection on Lake Huron. My landscape style flourished when the Great Lakes and Georgian Bay became a major source of inspiration.

"Art nourishes our inner world as well as adorns our surroundings. Like music, fine art has no language barrier."





Continued on page 94







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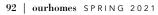


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ON ANY GIVEN WEEKEND IN THE **FAVOURABLE WEATHER** MONTHS OF THE YEAR. RANDI DUCHARME CAN OFTEN BE FOUND SITTING BY THE FIRE, FEET UP, FRIENDS AND FAMILY GATHERED, **ENJOYING HER "HOME** AWAY FROM HOME."

It's not

A SECOND HOUSE, A COTTAGE

or a condo. It's a lovely little trailer that Randi and her partner Matt Kaufman have transformed into a fantastic living space - one they can take anywhere their hearts desire, from the banks of the Saugeen River, a family compound, a regular haunt or a provincial park and beyond.

"I think we have created an atmosphere that genuinely feels like home, or perhaps a boutique hotel," offers Randi. "These small spaces can be really comfortable, practical and a reflection of personal style, but offer a different kind of euphoria than one's permanent home." It also gives Randi and Matt an opportunity to enjoy various locations with other like-minded friends and family members who relish the great outdoors and the escape from the chaos of everyday life. "It's an affordable option to cottaging and it really offers us a simpler life and a much simpler way to step back," says Randi. "We were looking for a creative solution to weekend and extended vacations, to give us a little tranquility, especially these days."





Mission accomplished, with style and taste, through a lens that absolutely delivers on the practical aspects of living small. "I get a lot of enjoyment out of seeing projects through from beginning to end." Randi's studies at the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising in Los Angeles and her time working as a visual merchandiser at H&M have served her well. After leaving her hometown of Hanover, Randi spent a number of years in the design and marketing industry, gaining experience and credential as a designer and tastemaker.

After some serious consideration, she decided that a change was going to come. "I just didn't want the hustle of what that industry was about," she says "I wanted to settle down and start the rest of my life."

Randi has since created **Home Away Designs**, a new venture to pursue her interests and offer her expertise to anyone needing a creative touch for design, whether a small space like their delightful trailer or a more conventional situation.

"I chose a less-esteemed career perhaps, but one that offers me a big yard, a better, more affordable house and an opportunity to bring things back to nature." Randi moved back to Hanover, connected with Matt and their new journey together began. Continued on page 102









00 ourhomes SPRING 2021 | 101



a bohemian vibe, which just seemed appropriate in this instance. We

had to make sure that everything we used was rigid and secure." After

coming loose. Everything is effectively scaled, but no less tasteful than

a full-scale renovation. From the shiplap wall surface they achieved

quarters, to the faux tile backsplash in the kitchen area, it all works

using small, white, stained strips of plywood around the sleeping

seamlessly. "My experience doing display work and just generally

working in tight spaces for H&M really paid off while doing this

refitting," says Randi. Continued on page 106

all, this home moves down the road and they can't have anything

ABOVE: The view to the rear of the trailer shows the cohesive design aesthetic, which visually expands the space. Randi used upper cabinets. Paint was sourced at Cuneo Interiors Carpet One are enjoyed from the living room window.

The trailer transformation was a project they could do together from start to finish. Although space and scale were obviously the most serious considerations, Randi and Matt managed to make the most of every square inch and nothing was sacrificed. "It's so nice to have everything that one really needs at our disposal whenever we head out with the trailer," she says. "It honestly does feel like home." Everything is in the box. Just add water, a nice view and some great company.

As minimal as the space is, the overall feel is airy and light. "I wanted to use a monochromatic palette with just a pop of colour here and there," Randi says. "The black-and-white scheme kind of offers up Chantilly Lace by Benjamin Moore for the shiplap walls, doors and Floor & Home. RIGHT: The sights and sounds of the Saugeen River

102 | ourhomes SPRING 2021 ourhomes SPRING 2021 | 103



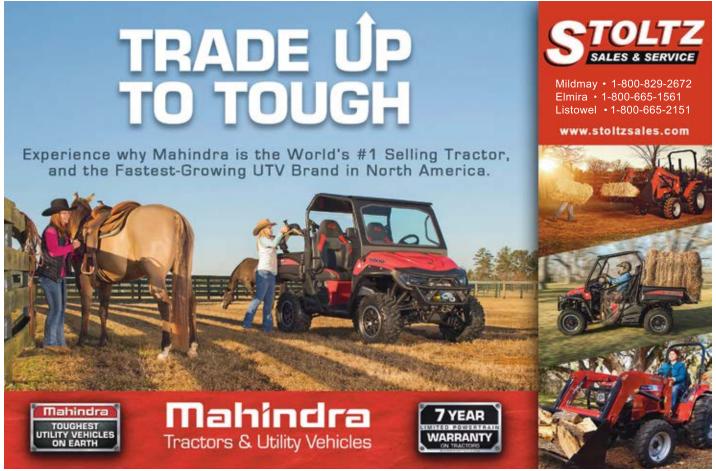




"IT'S AN AFFORDABLE OPTION TO COTTAGING AND IT REALLY OFFERS US A SIMPLER LIFE AND A MUCH SIMPLER WAY TO STEP BACK," CONTINUED ON 1006















Choosing just the right fixtures, surfaces and small furnishings made all the difference. It is warm and cosy, with an element of fun, but purposeful and efficient, which was certainly the requirement. "We have this space we call home, with friends around to share everything from potluck dinners, to a glass of wine and of course, nature at its best. The nicest part is that there is usually no cell service, so we all take a break and are in the present," offers Randi.

Whether they head out for a weekend or a week or two, spending time with the trailer in a picturesque setting really feels like a getaway and immediately puts Randi and Matt in a vacation mindset.

"A vacation is a wonderful thing, but it is not about where we are going as much as it is with whom we spend the time." For Randi and Matt, home really is where they park it. **OH**

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Years later, I have proven myself as a highly skilled drywaller which allows me to also focus on mentoring women to enter into the trades. I volunteer my time presenting in high schools to young women at "Try the Trades" night sessions. If I can encourage one woman to work in a trade, even if she doesn't work with me, I feel I've accomplished my goal.

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Continued on page 11.

108 | ourhomes SPRING 2021 ourhomes SPRING 2021 | 109

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(Please see ad on pg 71)



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crafty ideas

Tools & Materials

Scissors Paintbrush

Hot-glue gun

Egg cartons (1 egg carton makes 3 flowers)

Acrylic craft paint in colour of choice

Acrylic craft paint in metallic gold

Picture frame



How-To

PREPARE EGG CARTON

Tear off the side and top of your egg carton, and using your scissors, cut out 12 individual cups.





Tear off the tall corners and around the top edge of each individual cup until the height is somewhat even all the way around. Don't worry about getting it perfectly straight – the imperfection adds to the rustic beauty of these flowers.

Divide your cups into groups of four. Each flower uses four cups.

ASSEMBLE FLOWER

Take three of the cups and cut slits into each corner, down to the bottom where the cups are bent. Take the fourth cup and cut slits in each corner, a little further past the bend towards the centre.



Tear around the edges and remove sharp corners to create a more rounded shape for each petal. Curl each petal out with your fingers.



To make the outside portion of the flower, glue together the first three pieces, offsetting the petals of each layer.







For the middle of the flower, take the fourth piece, overlap each petal and glue together. Curl out the top edges.





Attach the middle piece to the outside pieces. Now you have a full flower.





Make a stamen for your flower by cutting out a small rectangle from the top of the egg carton. Cut two slits into the rectangle and curl it into itself. Place a dot of glue on the bottom and attach it inside the middle of your flower.



Repeat the above steps until you have enough flowers to cover your frame.





PAINT FLOWERS

Mix your paint with a couple drops of water. This makes it easier to apply.

Coat your flowers with paint, making sure to cover all the petals, front and back.

Once the paint dries, take a very small amount of gold paint and lightly brush the edges of all petals.

EMBELLISH FRAME

Paint your frame the same colour used for your flowers. You can brush a little bit of gold paint over the edges of the frame as well.







Using your glue gun, attach finished flowers around the edge of your frame.

Voila! Now your frame is ready for a picture. **OH**





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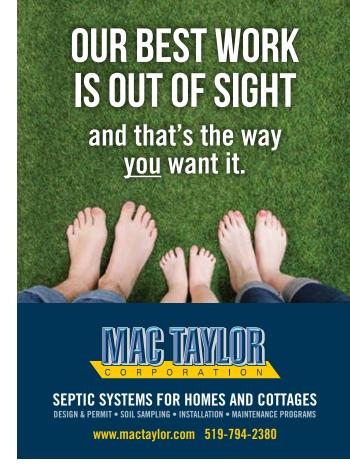
















INGREDIENTS (Serves 4)

SPICED CARAMEL SAUCE

1.5 cups white sugar

¼ cup water

1 cup heavy cream

5 Tbsp butter

1 tsp salt

½ tsp ground cinnamon

1/4 tsp ground nutmeg



CANDIED WALNUTS

½ cup sugar

1 tsp water

1 cup walnuts

½ tsp salt



PEACHES

6 peaches, halved and pitted

1 tsp butter

¼ cup sugar

½ tsp ground cinnamon

Your favourite ice cream

HOW-TO

CARAMEL SAUCE

Place sugar and water in a heavy-bottomed pot. (It is very important while caramelizing sugar that you do not stir it! Stirring will cause the sugar to crystallize and create a mess.)

Heat water and sugar over medium heat until sugar is dissolved and comes to a simmer. Let the water and sugar simmer untouched until an amber colour is achieved, about 10-15 minutes.

Turn off heat and whisk in heavy cream. (A word of caution: Be careful at this step, as the cream will cause a lot of steam and can result in a steam burn.) Whisk in butter until melted.

Return to stovetop and stir on low for 2-3 minutes until caramel bubbles. Add salt and spices. Let cool.

You can store sauce in fridge for up to 1 week.

CANDIED WALNUTS

Cover a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Over medium heat combine sugar and water (again, do not stir!) and bring to boil until mixture is amber in colour.

Remove from heat and stir in walnuts.

Once coated, turn walnuts onto the baking sheet and separate with a fork.

Sprinkle with salt and let cool to harden.

PREPARE PEACHES

Now for the easy part! Melt butter in a large saucepan over medium-high heat.

Dip the cut side of the peaches in sugar and cinnamon and place sugar side down in the pan. Cook until caramelized and soft.

To serve, top peaches with ice cream of choice, caramel sauce and candied walnuts! **OH**





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ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

Blackline Power, 91, 108

APPLIANCES

Square Deal Neil's TV & Appliances, 117

ART/ARTISANS/ART GALLERIES/ STUDIOS/WORKSHOPS

Interior Motives by Kerri, 23

AUDIO VIDEO/HOME AUTOMATION/ ELECTRONICS/SMART HOME TECHNOLOGY

Balaklava, 17, 108

BUILDERS

AND-ROD Construction Ltd., 4&5 Candue Homes, 45 Dennison Homes, 125 Great Lakes Custom Homes, 87 High R Construction, 83, 109 Hill Build, 59 Olivier Construction Ltd, 81 The Great Lakes Frame Company, 128 Valley Home Improvements, 93 Wiarton Design Centre div of Wiarton Home Building Centre, 81

BUILDING/LANDSCAPE SUPPLIES

Centre Grey Building Supplies, 107 Farlow's Home Hardware, 47 Flesherton/Markdale Home Hardware,

Miller's Home Hardware Building Centre, 117 Moggie Valley Timber Inc., 75 Wiarton Design Centre div of

CABINETS & MILLWORK/ CARPENTRY/FINE WOODWORKING/ CUSTOM FURNITURE

Wiarton Home Building Centre, 81

Brubacher Cabinets, 51 Bruce County Custom Cabinets, 125 Great Lakes Woodworking Elmwood, 83 Luxury Woodworking, 64&65 South Gate Cabinets, 13 Topnotch Furniture, 2

COUNTERTOPS

City Stone, 14 The Old Barn, 6&7

DRYWALL/PLASTER/STUCCO

Meg's Drywall, 95, 109

ELECTRICAL

Dingwall Electric, 47

EXCAVATING/SITE PREP/SEPTIC

Mac Taylor Corporation, 119 Mulch-It, 33, 109

FENCING/DECKS/GATES

Built Wright Fencing, 35 Postech Grey Bruce, 91 Precision Deck and Fence, 71, 111

FINANCIAL/INSURANCE/ MORTGAGE/INVESTING

Buckley Mortgage, 89, 108 CMR Insurance, 29 Scotiabank – Global Wealth Management, 29

FIREPLACES & STOVES/ACCESSORIES

Air Tech Mechanical, 17 Chantico Fireplace Gallery, 8 Pratt Plumbing and Heating, 119 South-Port Mechanical Geothermal, 12 The Fyre Place & Patio Shop, 93, 95

FLOORING

Cuneo Interiors Carpet One Floor & Home, 9, 113 Moggie Valley Timber Inc., 75 South Bruce Flooring, 21

FLORAL DESIGN/FLORISTS

Markdale Flowers, 119

FOOD & DRINK/RESTAURANTS/ CATERING/DELI

Lamblicious, 63 Top of the Rock, 107

FOUNDATIONS

Cook Concrete, 105 Postech Grey Bruce, 91

FURNITURE & HOME DECOR/ ACCENTS/GIFTS/COLLECTIBLES

Country Charm Mennonite Furniture, 115 Farlow's Home Hardware, 47 Fulfords Hardware Inc., 57, 108 House Rules Design Shop, 49 Interior Motives by Kerri, 23 Smitty's Fine Furniture, 127 The Fyre Place & Patio Shop, 93, 95 Topnotch Furniture, 2 Unique Pieces, 27 Wiarton Design Centre div of Wiarton Home Building Centre, 81

GARDEN CENTRES/GREENHOUSES/ NURSERIES

Maxwell Garden Center, 33, 105, 109 Riverside Greenhouses, 27

GEOTHERMAL

Sandy Hamilton Plumbing & Heating Inc., 47 South-Port Mechanical Geothermal, 12

GREEN LIVING

Blackline Power, 91, 108

HEATING & COOLING

Air Tech Mechanical, 17 Ken Philp ClimateCare, 87 Pratt Plumbing and Heating, 119 Sandy Hamilton Plumbing & Heating Inc., 47 South-Port Mechanical Geothermal, 12

HOME IMPROVEMENTS/ RENOVATIONS

Great Lakes Custom Homes, 87 Olivier Construction Ltd, 81 Valley Home Improvements, 93

INSULATION

High R Construction, 83, 109

INTERIOR DESIGN/HOME STAGING

Blended Interiors, 14 Cottage Country Designs, 22 Cuneo Interiors Carpet One Floor **& Home**, 9, 113 Fulfords Hardware Inc., 57, 108 Home Town Design, 27 House Rules Design Shop, 49 K-Interiors, 125

KITCHEN & BATH

Brubacher Cabinets, 51 Bruce County Custom Cabinets, 125 Fulfords Hardware Inc., 57, 108 House Rules Design Shop, 49 Luxury Woodworking, 64&65 South Gate Cabinets, 13 Wiarton Design Centre div of Wiarton Home Building Centre, 81

LANDSCAPE DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE/LANDSCAPING/ **LAWN & GARDEN**

AND-ROD Construction Ltd., 4&5 Earth Power Tractors and Equipment, 97 Hutten & Co. Land and Shore, 3 McDonald Crilly Landscaping & Grading, 33

MACHINERY/SMALL EQUIPMENT/ FARM SUPPLIES

Earth Power Tractors and Equipment, 97 Stoltz Sales and Service, 105

ORGANIZATION/STORAGE

Blended Interiors, 14 Wilson Solutions, 19

OUTDOOR FURNITURE/STRUCTURES

Maxwell Garden Center, 33, 105, 109

PAINTING & DECORATING

Benjamin Moore, 9 Cuneo Interiors Carpet One Floor **& Home**, 9, 113 Farlow's Home Hardware, 47 Fulfords Hardware Inc., 57, 108 Grey Bruce Paint, 51 House Rules Design Shop, 49 Lockwood Painting, 47 Martin's Home Hardware, 9

PAINTING, PRIMING, BLASTING **& STAINING**

Premier Industrial Painting, 49

PAVING/CEMENT/CONCRETE/ **INTERLOCK**

Cook Concrete, 105

PLUMBING

Dingwall Electric, 47 Ken Philp ClimateCare, 87 Pratt Plumbing and Heating, 119 Sandy Hamilton Plumbing & Heating Inc., 47 Smith Water Systems, 119

POOLS/HOT TUBS/SAUNAS/SPAS

Rintoul's Pools & Hot Tubs. 79

Royal LePage RCR Realty -

Scott Crowther, 55

Century 21 In-Studio Realty - Laura Lisk, 63 Chestnut Park, 15 Engel & Völkers – James McGregor, 13 Peak Point Real Estate Brokerage -Amber Jenings, 53 Re/Max Grey Bruce Realty -Shannon Deckers, 11 Royal LePage Locations North, Brokerage – Virginia Dawn, 55, 111

RESTORATION SPECIALISTS Hi-Tech DKI, 107

ROOFING

Hy-Grade Steel Roofing System, 10

STONE PRODUCTS/VENEER

Shouldice Designer Stone, 35 West Shore Stone & Brick Inc., 75

TRAIL BUILDING

Mulch-It, 33, 109

WATER TREATMENT/FILTRATION

Smith Water Systems, 119

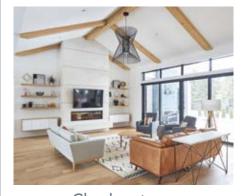
WINDOW TREATMENTS

Budget Blinds of Owen Sound, 27 Cuneo Interiors Carpet One Floor **& Home**, 9, 113

WINDOWS & DOORS

Desboro Doors, 89

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