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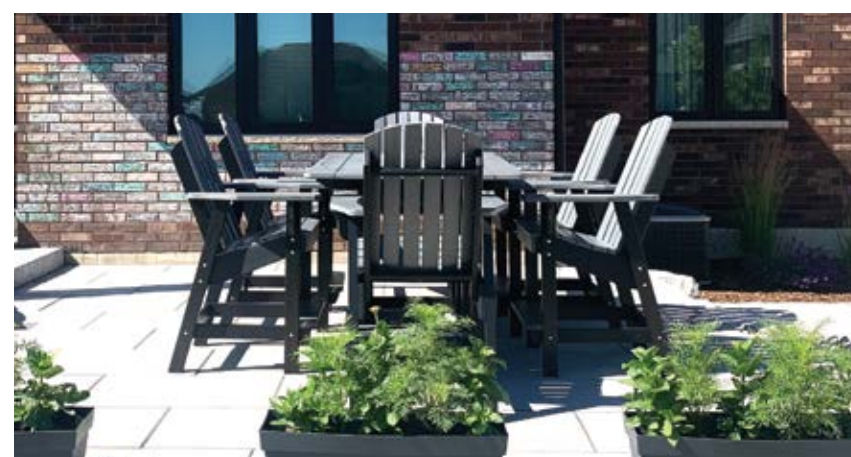
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WHEN I TRAVEL THE ROADS of Grey and Bruce counties to gather the photos and information from local businesses that are featured within these pages, my trusty sidekick is Sarah Tacoma, a wonderful local photographer. We have had many enjoyable journeys and fact-learning moments with the local entrepreneurs we meet. One of my favorite questions is “how did the business start?” There have been interesting and motivating answers, many centring around a pursuit that blossomed into a business.

Sarah has a deep passion for natural cures for her family’s colds, cuts and bug bites; a passion that became a business called Bloem Botanicals. I am a big fan of the Kalmeren Salve that stops the itch from a bug bite faster than anything I have used.

Was Sarah inspired by all the interesting stories we listen to on our travels for the magazine to launch her business? I haven’t had the chance to ask her my favourite question, but her interest in taking care of her family in the most natural way and believing in the products she is producing has propelled her to take that first step in building a business. After listening to many stories over the years, she is well aware of the hard work and ups and downs that are a part of owning your own business. But the rewards of creating products and services that help customers is immeasurable.

In this issue, our Spotlight is about Fulfords Kitchenware Bathware Hardware, a family-owned business that started 90 years ago. It has adapted over the years and their new store highlights the family’s drive and direction. One of our home features tells the entrepreneurial story of two sisters who have turned a century home in Markdale into a beautiful Bed & Breakfast.

I hope Sarah’s business is a huge success and I celebrate her drive and passion as I do all the businesses we feature.

Wishing you happy holidays and a wonderful new year!

Sara Martin

Sara Martin, Managing Editor
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Pops of red and green in this stylish white kitchen signal the beginning of the holiday season. Story, page 32.
Photography by Sandy MacKay.



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Designer **Tamarisk McNalty Stephens**
shares her ideas.

FEW THINGS ARE MORE WELCOMING IN A HOME THAN A FIREPLACE.

What was once a necessity for the daily functioning of a household (heating, cooking, baking, boiling water, etc.) has become somewhat redundant with advances in mechanical systems. However, it is difficult to substitute the sensory experience of the warm glow, flickers and crackles of an authentic wood-burning fireplace. The hearth remains the centre of a home and is a hallmark of emotional comfort to the human psyche.

Whether renovating or building new, installing a fireplace (wood burning, gas or even electric) creates a natural focal point and gathering place. The ideal location is logically within a common area, but it is also nice to view and enjoy the fireplace from adjoining spaces, such as the kitchen. The location of the chimney and venting requirements may dictate placement.

Many argue that the heat from a wood-burning fireplace is unrivalled, but it also comes with a certain level of commitment.

Firstly, you need to cut or purchase a supply of seasoned firewood and have a place to stack and store it that is protected from the elements, such as an outdoor storage shelter or attached garage. You also need a storage rack or containment unit inside that can hold a supply for a day or two. Although there are endless images of beautifully curated stacks of firewood inside homes, the reality is quite different! Firewood is messy – and so is the process of emptying and disposing of the ashes. Chimney cleaning and maintenance are also a must. However, an often-overlooked benefit of a wood-burning unit is the opportunity to slow down and create a daily ritual of getting the fire going in the late afternoon or early evening during the colder months – a good excuse to take a moment of repose while you do it!

There are parameters regarding the appropriate clearances of various units from combustible materials, often making the footprint of a wood-burning stove or fireplace considerably larger than a gas fireplace (and much more than

electric). For wood burning and gas stoves, there are also requirements for the surround to be faced with non-combustible materials, including honed natural stone, slate, porcelain tile and metal. Always plan ahead and work with a professional to ensure you can accommodate the unit of your choice.

One obvious advantage of a wood-burning unit is that it provides a heat source in the event of a power outage, which can offer peace of mind. This isn't always the case with a gas unit. However, for day to day, a gas stove provides heat at the touch of a button and doesn't require cleaning or managing of wood. Just be sure to select a unit with realistic-looking logs. The temperature of a gas or electric unit is set with a thermostat and is much easier to regulate than a wood-burning stove.

Traditionally, an authentic chimney breast will extend from the floor to the ceiling (avoid stopping it above the firebox). Balance the chimney breast in the space, while keeping the centre bay the widest/largest. If installing a gas or electric fireplace that is horizontal in proportions (wider than it is tall), ensure that it is raised off the floor. The design of the fire surround should take into consideration the scale of the unit, the chimney breast and overall space to ensure the proportions



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are harmonious. The design of the mantel and surround will be affected by the unit you select, as manufacturers provide specific dimensions regarding clearances.

Even though the iconic and substantial traditional masonry chimneys are no longer commonplace (a lovely addition to a new build – albeit costly!), it is still important to be sympathetic to traditional architectural design if you're installing a wood or gas fireplace. If you can afford a chimney, be generous and make it look as authentic as possible by cladding the exterior in brick or stone and using traditional proportions.

Always consult a professional when installing any type of fireplace. Also, check with your insurance company about extending coverage. **OH**



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style picks



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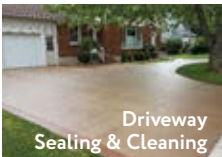
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Ingredients

GRAHAM CRUST

- 1 ½ cups graham cracker crumbs
- 5 Tbsp unsalted butter, melted
- ¼ cup granulated sugar

CHEESECAKE FILLING

- 4 8-ounce blocks full-fat cream cheese, room temperature
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup full-fat sour cream, room temperature
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 3 large eggs, room temperature

BOURBON CARAMEL SAUCE

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ¼ cup water
- ½ cup heavy whipping cream, room temperature
- ¼ cup butter, room temperature
- 2 Tbsp bourbon
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp fine sea salt



Instructions

CHEESECAKE

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Using a food processor, pulse graham crackers into crumbs. Combine with melted butter and sugar. Press mixture into a 9-inch springform pan. Prebake crust for 10 minutes. Once baked, remove from the oven.

To prepare the cheesecake filling, using your mixer, beat together cream cheese and sugar on medium speed until creamy, about 2 minutes. Add sour cream and vanilla until combined. Beat in eggs one at a time, stopping after the last egg is combined to prevent overbeating. Pour the cheesecake batter on top of the crust. Use a rubber spatula or spoon to smooth it into an even layer.

Place in oven and bake for 55-70 minutes, until the centre is set. When it's done, the centre of the cheesecake will wobble slightly if you gently shake the pan. Turn the oven off and open the oven door slightly. Let the cheesecake sit in the oven and cool down for 1 hour. Remove from oven and cool cheesecake completely uncovered at room temperature. Then cover and refrigerate the cheesecake for at least 4 hours or overnight.

BOURBON CARAMEL SAUCE

Combine sugar and water in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Stir once to combine and leave untouched until the sugar has caramelized. The sugar will slowly turn from gold to an amber colour. Cooking the caramel longer will enhance the bitterness and is up to personal preference. Once it reaches an amber colour, remove from heat and slowly whisk in the heavy cream. The mixture will bubble – be careful of the steam. Add in butter and whisk until combined. Add bourbon, vanilla and sea salt and whisk to combine. Set aside and let cool in the fridge until thickened.

TO SERVE

Remove cheesecake from the springform pan. Pour the caramel sauce over top and place back into the fridge to set or until ready to serve. **OH**



PHOTO: BLYNDA DACOSTA

3 REASONS Designers Love SCANDINAVIAN STYLE

If you've seen my work, then it should come as no surprise that I'm a big fan of Scandinavian décor. This distinctive aesthetic is also popular among many of my clients, who are seeking a home that is defined by simplicity, warmth and comfort, with contemporary flair. These happen to be the very qualities that encapsulate what has been affectionately dubbed "Scandi style" and from an end-user perspective, are what home goals are made of. From a more technical designer's perspective, here are three reasons this unique aesthetic has been at the forefront of interior design since the 50s, and it isn't likely to fade anytime soon.



IT WORKS

Function is one of the fundamental values and guiding principles of Scandinavian design. This approach gives precedence to the practical over the ornamental. Looks are important when it comes to design but the utilitarian mindset behind this decorating style focuses on efficiency, maximizing space, the user's energy and the materials used in construction. Aesthetically, Scandinavian-inspired design embraces clean lines, subtle curves and tapered legs, with a "less is more" mindset.

Another important aspect of this look isn't about what's in the space, but rather what isn't there. I'm referring to clutter. Regardless of your home's style, the dreaded "C" word creeps up and captures our home, and with it, our sense of space and sanity. Decluttering is even more critical in Scandinavian spaces to enhance a home's function and simplicity.

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IT HAS STAYING POWER

The neutral palette that defines Scandinavian style gives it a much longer shelf life than perhaps the bolder, more “trendy” styles that come – and go – and quickly show their age. This makes it a winning choice for many clients, who don’t want to endure the inconvenience of yet another redesign in a few years, or suffer the cost.

This minimal colour palette commonly includes variations of white, off-white, ivory, beige, taupe and grey, and visual depth is achieved through the layering of multi-tonal neutrals, some subtle (and specific) patterns, and a variety of different textures. Black details bring balance to this neutral backdrop, add emphasis and draw attention as key focal points in the space, such as black-and-white prints or black-framed artwork, black accessories or accent furniture.

Materials also tend toward the neutral and organic, with a big focus on wood everywhere from flooring and furniture to accessories.



IT FEELS LIKE HOME

The role of a designer is to make a house (or a condo) feel like a home. A home is intrinsically warm, cosy and comfortable, inviting you to come in, sit down and put your feet up. When a client feels all this in their newly designed home, a designer’s work is done. I love Scandinavian décor because it does exactly that.

The Scandinavian concept of “hygge” is about comfort as a state of mind. So, how does a feeling or a thought materialize in a physical and sensory way? Enter texture. Think oversize cushions, cotton chenille and alpaca wool throws, knotted area rugs and fluffy sheepskin. Now, layer these over hardwood, wicker, leather and linen. If you picked up on a theme, very good! Scandi style leans heavily on organic materials and motifs that instantly warm the heart and body.

Scandinavian style has it all – high function, simplicity and beauty, all priorities in today’s hectic world. A home should be a place to escape and feel embraced by the people, things and emotions that bring you comfort. If you’re in search of a new aesthetic for 2023 or are craving some cosy, give Scandinavian a go.

Lisa Kooistra is the creative director and principal designer for Lisa Kooistra Design.

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STORY **RACHAEL HAVENS**
PHOTOGRAPHY **SANDY MACKAY**





Leather sofas in a rich brown with darker brown piping surround the fireplace. The family's stockings are ready for Christmas eve. The coffee table displays Santa and a large evergreen-shaped candle. Festive touches extend to the corner cupboard between the large windows.



Jody Perkins,
Kerri McLean and
Charlie Perkins



ABOVE: Stone covers the wall around the wood-burning fireplace on the rear porch. The arched detail on the firebox is repeated in the alcoves for log storage. The rustic mantel is draped with a lush swag of cedar roping.
BELOW: The artificial tree in the living area is decorated with multi-coloured lights, ribbon that weaves through the branches and gold ornaments that sparkle. The tree sits in a galvanized pail. The design of the home was created by Murawsky Design and Drafting.

Jody and Charlie Perkins and their two children moved into their new home in Port Elgin the week before Christmas in 2019.

In 2021, they opened their doors to the **Chantry Island Cham-bettes Christmas Tour of Homes**. The annual event was back in-person to welcome over 520 guests and raise more than \$13,200 for the Saugeen Memorial Hospital Foundation.

When it was time to pair the Perkins' home with a decorator for the event, **Kerri McLean** of **Interior Motives & Co.** was top of mind. "Jody had a lot of the same style as me to begin with, so it was a really easy partnership," Kerri explains. "She was open to anything." *Continued on page 37*



“KERRI WAS ALWAYS TELLING ME THAT SHE WANTED TO MAKE IT FUN, AND SHE DID. SHE’S SUPER KIND AND VERY TALENTED” –Jody Perkins



Jody describes her style as “French farmhouse,” while Kerri has an affinity for “modern farmhouse.” The overlap turned into a wonderful experience for both homeowner and decorator. “Kerri was always telling me that she wanted to make it fun, and she did,” Jody enthuses. “She’s super kind and very talented.”

“The décor was a lot of the natural – creams, golds and wood beads,” describes Kerri. These neutrals were paired with pops of red and green. When it comes to her advice for Christmas decorating, she notes “I always think less is more, it makes more of an impact. Don’t overdo things and have decorations in every corner, but do a couple of things that you really want to highlight, such as the dining table.”

At the Perkins’ home, greenery brings the outdoors in as a key design element. Wreaths hang in the kitchen windows, garlands loop around the stair rails and simple evergreen sprays find a home in vases from the entryway to the en suite. The kids’ rooms were an opportunity for some creativity. Touches of pink embellish Jody and Charlie’s daughter’s room, while their son’s room was decorated in a rustic cabin style. *Continued on page 39*



ABOVE: The subway-tiled wall behind the professional range from Square Deal Neil’s TV & Appliances is the perfect backdrop to highlight the red touches on the floating shelves. Cabinetry in the kitchen was completed by Brubacher Cabinets. **FAR LEFT:** A cream runner on the dining table holds gold tea light balls and a mixture of real, faux, wood and ceramic evergreen trees. Each place setting has a green linen napkin folded to resemble a Christmas tree. **LEFT:** The Blanco apron-fronted sink is placed to enjoy the view of the rear garden. An unadorned wreath hangs in the window, adding a natural touch. **OPPOSITE:** The table is set for six but if unexpected guests arrive Christmas morning there is extra room for more seats. Red chargers sit under the white dinner plates and crystal and flatware add extra sparkle.

THEIR TRADITIONS
ARE “VERY MUCH
ABOUT FAMILY, FOOD
AND SPENDING TIME
TOGETHER.”



LEFT: Gold pendants over the quartz-topped island fit the holiday decorating theme. A wooden bowl full of sweet treats is a temptation for anyone who sits on the leather stools. **ABOVE:** A cosy corner in the kitchen has holiday cushions and a plaid throw, making it the perfect spot for an afternoon cup of tea. Construction of the home was completed by Beldman Construction Ltd. **OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT:** A shiplap feature wall between the mudroom and stairs to the lower level offers enough space for a wood desk with a resin river through its centre. Fresh boughs bring the scent of the outdoors into the home and their rich green colour is highlighted against the white wood. **BOTTOM LEFT:** A quartz counter in the laundry room has a string of white lights snaking across. Rudolph, with his nose so bright, makes an appearance. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** A natural wood shelf on the landing to the lower level displays a collection of green and red trees, reminding us that it is the most wonderful time of the year.



The upcoming holiday season will be the eighth for Interior Motives. “Christmas is big here in the store,” Kerri emphasizes. Her business was born from an enduring love for home décor. “I love helping people find pieces, and helping them make their house look more like they envision,” she says.

Kerri will often help customers place the furniture they ordered or help select accessories to go with it. “I just find a lot of people know what they want but they’re scared to make a decision, they like to have a professional opinion,” she says.

During the construction of the Perkins’ home, the professionals played a large role, as well. **Dan Murawsky** of **Murawsky Design and Drafting** designed the house, while the main contractor was **Beldman Construction Ltd.** **Troy’s Plumbing and Heating** handled electrical and plumbing. **Brubacher Cabinets** did a beautiful job on the kitchen cabinetry, while appliances were supplied by **Square Deal Neil’s TV & Appliances.** *Continued on page 40*

feature

RIGHT & BELOW: A frosted tree in the primary bedroom is full of white lights. Green cushions are paired with a pillow embroidered with iconic symbols of the season. **BOTTOM LEFT & RIGHT:** The primary en suite is a sanctuary for Jody and Charlie, with a deep vessel tub and large shower. The shower has tile on the floor and a seat that mimics the stone used for the outdoor fireplace. A jar filled with lights is a bright beacon on dark winter nights. Plumbing for the home was completed by Troy's Plumbing and Heating.



It was a pleasure for Kerri to come in and add seasonal finishing touches. Both Jody and Kerri are quick to name the outdoor fireplace, nestled beneath a covered porch, as their favourite spot. Kerri says, "I love that back porch, I could spend all day around the fire when it's cold." The great room is a close second, with rows of windows that let the sunshine in, and allow a view out to the treed property.

As her family grows with the addition of grandchildren, Kerri always looks forward to a relaxing Christmas morning with her husband before her grown children arrive. "We enjoy coffee with Baileys and wait for everybody to arrive before we start opening gifts," she describes. *Continued on page 42*



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Jody, Charlie and their young children are looking forward to their fourth Christmas at home. Their traditions are “very much about family, food and spending time together.” Jody enjoys hosting everyone, with enough space to fit the extended family for a holiday meal and have them stay over. That is where the magic of the season lies, in time spent gathering at home with those we love most. **OH**

LEFT & ABOVE: A tabletop tree in the daughter’s room is adorned with textured ornaments with a pink theme. A white sheepskin acts as the tree skirt and drapes are a similar style to the classic tulle canopy with fairy lights. **BOTTOM:** A faux raccoon-tail hat in the son’s bedroom hangs on the upholstered headboard. The addition of lights, a deer figurine on the side table, as well as a Santa pillow and red throw bring Christmas to life. The tree has a gnome climbing a ladder and red decorations.



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holiday trends

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PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES C LEE



STORY PATTI WILSON

Your home becomes a hosting haven in the fall and winter months, when the chill sets in and people want a warm, cosy place to meet and greet. For some, their homes practically become an open venue for drop-ins and planned gatherings that stretch through the winter and into the new year. Here are some easy tips to keep your home “dressed for guests” on any given day.

MAKE WAY FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

The cardinal sin of decorating, for everyday or any occasion, is creating clutter in the process. I'm a big proponent of the “one in, one out” rule, whereby you remove one item for every new piece you intend to introduce into a room. This is especially relevant when adding seasonal décor to an already furnished and accessorized room. Whenever adding a set of new or themed décor or furnishings, your decorating strategy should include the removal of some of your year-round elements in favour of those festive fares. If you are decorating your fireplace mantel, be sure to remove the existing décor and start with a blank slate. This rule also applies to tabletop accessories, centrepieces, pillows and throws. Similarly, swap out the photos in your picture frames and replace pillows and throws with something appropriately themed in a richer fabric such as fleece and chunky wool knits. And what about the decorated tree? Unless you have lots of open space, you'll likely need to remove an armchair or a side table to accommodate this larger item.

Continued on page 46

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TIP: Choose a theme and stick to it. There are many festive options: woodsy cottage, winter wonderland, silver and gold. Carry your chosen theme into others areas of the home, too, such as fresh or faux greenery wrapped around your banister and incorporated into unconventional areas, like in the kitchen and bathrooms.

SET THE MOOD

Lighting contributes to the vibe in your home, which impacts the people who live in your home and visitors. Layer lighting by combining ambient, task and accent lighting that can be increased and decreased, depending on the mood of your gathering. For example, dim light is better suited to dining and intimate gatherings, while brighter light is great for more casual kitchen parties. Installing a dimmer switch on your lights lets you crank it up or down as needed, so you don't have to commit to one type of light – or party!

TIP: Candles are a must at this time of year, adding a key layer to your lighting strategy, not to mention their aesthetic attributes and aroma! But be safe and never leave a candle unattended.



The holidays should be a time of fun and joy, but for many, they are also a source of stress. Take the overwhelm out of the holidays by planning ahead and being prepared. Your gatherings don't have to be overblown or overdone. Just a little thoughtful planning and preparedness will ensure that you enjoy the season just as much as your guests do! **OH**

Patti Wilson, principal of award-winning Patti Wilson Design, is known for creating stylish, thoughtfully curated, livable interiors.



WOW WITH A CENTREPIECE

What's the first thing people see when they enter your home? Many open-concept homes open to a dining area or kitchen with an island, making these the perfect place for a seasonal centerpiece. This will welcome and wow anyone who walks into the home – yourself included! You can't go wrong with a classic floral centerpiece, but stick to the season with elements like evergreen boughs, pinecones and even consider incorporating seasonal fruit and vegetables. One particularly fun thing about the holidays is the opportunity to really lean on the theme and be a little bit extra with light strings, shimmering baubles, ribbons, feathers or candles.



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RECIPE AND PHOTOGRAPHY
JENELLE MCCULLOCH

The figs give this gin and tonic a sweet honey-like quality and beautiful purple hue. Enjoy at your next holiday party!



FIG AND THYME SYRUP

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup water
- 4-5 fresh figs
- A few sprigs of thyme

In a saucepan, combine sugar, water and figs. Heat gently for 5-10 minutes, stirring until the sugar dissolves and the figs begin to soften and break down. Remove from the heat and add the thyme. Allow to infuse for 30 minutes. Strain into a clean jar. You can keep any of the unused fig syrup for 3-4 weeks in the fridge.

PER COCKTAIL

- 2 oz. gin
- 1 oz. fig syrup
- ½ oz. fresh lemon juice
- Tonic water to top it off

To make your cocktail, fill a glass with ice and add gin, fig syrup and lemon juice. Top with a neutral tonic. Stir well, then garnish with a sprig of fresh thyme and enjoy! **OH**

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How Do You HOLIDAY?

STORY MEGAN
SMITH-HARRIS

MULTICULTURAL HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

Canada opens its arms to people from many different cultures. During the winter months, family celebrations proliferate and many of us raise a glass (or a fork) to mark the arrival of cherished holidays and reconnect with loved ones. Here's a sampler of holiday traditions from local families.

Bermudian Holiday Breakfast

Sacha Welsh, a fertility nutritionist, originally hails from Hamilton Parish, Bermuda. While attending boarding school at Albert College in Belleville, she met her future husband, Owen Welsh, now a vice-president at the Canadian Football League. The couple have three young daughters: Whitney, 6, Victoria, 4 and Cassia, 2. On Christmas morning, Sacha cooks up a delicious piece of her island heritage and serves a traditional Bermudian breakfast to her family: boiled codfish and potatoes with tomato and onion sauces along with sides of boiled eggs, banana and avocado slices.

Stockings Hung With Care

Fred Lafontaine grew up in Québec during the depression. Money was tight, so at Christmastime there weren't a lot of gifts, but he and his siblings always received a stocking with chocolate, a hand-turned wooden top and a tangerine – considered an exotic treat – in the toe. After Fred moved to Toronto in the 50s, he continued the custom with his wife Marie and their six children. Today, his eldest daughter Marie-Josée Lafontaine, who operates a retirement residence, keeps her father's tradition alive. "At midnight my staff and I hang Christmas stockings on every resident's door," she says. "Each one contains chocolate, a tangerine in the toe and a wooden top, hand-turned by my 99-year-old father who still makes these classic wooden toys in his woodshop."



Kwanzaa

Dewitt Lee, founder and president of Emancipation Month, has celebrated Kwanzaa (a pan-African holiday that began in 1966) his entire life. Every year, Dewitt and his partner, Suzette, enjoy sharing the week-long holiday with their six children. Kwanzaa begins on December 26 and ends on January 1, culminating with the Karamu feast when the family "samples foods from around the Caribbean, Africa and soul food from North America," says Dewitt. "One of the great traditions we have is shutting down the TV and social media. We focus on reading and writing about the Nguzo Saba, also known as the Seven Principles or the Black Value System, which include: Umoja (unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (collective work and responsibility), Ujamaa (cooperative economics), Nia (purpose), Kuumba (creativity) and Imani (faith)."



Chinese New Year

Ruowen Leung, a children's book author, immigrated to Canada from Tianjin, China in the 1980s. Now a mother to two adult children, Kevin, 28, and Robin, 25, she carries on holiday customs she grew up with. "Traditionally, Chinese New Year falls at the end of January or the beginning of February and continues for 15 days," says Ruowen. "There are dozens of rituals but here in Canada, we follow only a few of them."

"Parents, uncles and aunts give red envelopes containing money to the younger generation and to anyone who isn't married. We buy red letters and create lucky words with them." Her family also eats jiao zi (pork dumplings) before midnight and enjoys vegetable dumplings after midnight, followed by sweets, which symbolize a sweet future filled with happiness, good luck and prosperity.



Hybrid Hanukkah

"I was born Jewish and though I am not religious, I have grown to love the culture," says Avery Saltzman, co-artistic director of the Harold Green Jewish Theatre. "Hanukkah is a time of giving: the giving of oneself to family young and old. And it's also a delicious time of potato pancakes topped with applesauce." Avery and his husband, Kevin Dunlop, celebrate Christmas with Kevin's extended family, including nephews and nieces who excitedly await the arrival of St. Nick. After celebrating with their respective families, the couple have created their own hybrid holiday. "We plug in our electric Christmas tree adorned with ornaments both Jewish and not, switch on our gas fireplace and celebrate our love for one another by ordering Chinese food." **OH**



Pick A Colour

EXPERT ADVICE ON CHOOSING PAINT COLOURS FOR YOUR KIDS' ROOMS

STORY **CONNIE JESKE CRANE**

From bedtime stories and board games to play dates. From Facetiming friends to homework. Your child's room is a place where a lifetime of memories are made. So when it's time to paint and decorate, let's face it, parents may feel a bit of pressure.

Colour in particular, so central to a child's room, may have you wavering a bit. Do you go bold or neutral with some bright splashes? And, more practically, is it possible to land on a colour that doesn't just work for today, but lasts for a few more ages and stages?

We took our questions to Sharon Grech, a design expert with Benjamin Moore Paints in Canada. Here are some helpful tips from Sharon:

Involve your child

Rather than just a quick chat to suss out your child's favourite colour or pop culture character, Sharon suggests a deeper dive. If kids are old enough, she says, "Let them have some creativity and learn about the process so it can be fun to go through it with them and see what colours they like, rather than just throwing down a paint deck," she says. She also suggests going online or looking through magazines with your kids and "getting out, letting them show you what they like and what they're interested in."

Sharon says today's trends are more about personalization "as opposed to saying, 'Oh, everybody's using pink' or 'Everybody's doing this.' It's more like everyone adding their own personality," Sharon says.

Ultimately, involving your child more, she says, may result in a décor scheme that has longevity. "It might even make them feel more like 'I'm going to keep my room tidy and clean because I was part of it!'" Sharon says. *Continued on page 54*



PHOTO: COURTESY OF BENJAMIN MOORE



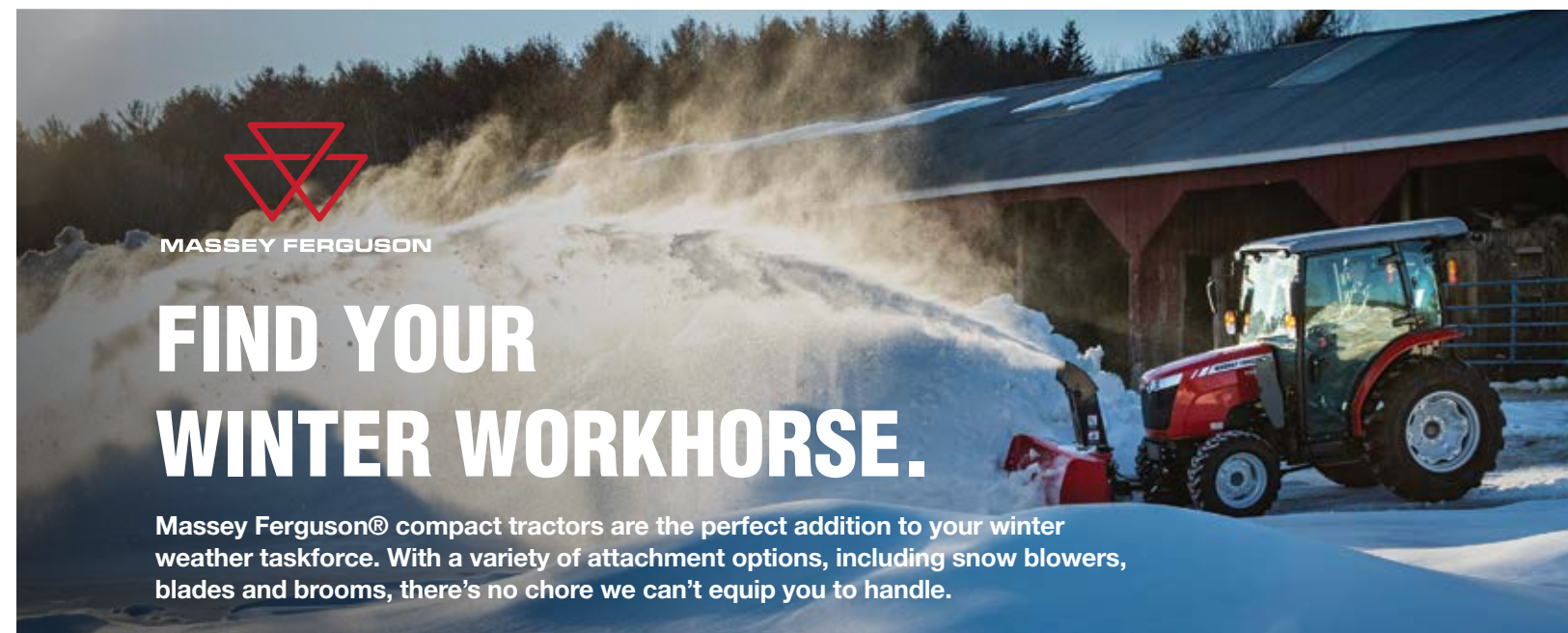
Never a backdrop, **Raspberry Blush** is the definition of charismatic colour. This unapologetic shade of red orange had us thinking: bold, bolder, boldest. Raspberry Blush pairs well with neutral hues and undertones such as Etiquette, White Heron, Gray Owl and Onyx.

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Think outside the box with colour

Once you’ve made colour choices, the options don’t stop there. You may want to do something beyond applying colour to all four walls.

SHARON HAS CREATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

While **accent walls** have been around for a long time, she still likes them, saying colour helps define different areas. “The idea of the rooms being more multifunctional is big – the room has more functions than just for sleeping. And colour is a really great way to help define the difference.” One option, Sharon says, is applying a bold colour to one wall, while keeping others neutral.

Also popular is **colour blocking** or **colour dipping**. Here, Sharon says, you might run a favourite colour part-way up the walls, “maybe three quarters of the way up, or a quarter depending on what you’re defining. I think in a young kid’s room it almost feels like a horizontal stripe or band where things that kids can reach are below a certain area and defined by a colour – which is fun.”

Painted furniture can be a nice joint DIY project too, says Sharon. “Painting a headboard or chair or painting a dresser. It’s a great way to bring colour and fun into the space.”

“**Murals** are absolutely a thing I’ve been seeing,” she adds. Whether you hire an artist or paint one with your kids, murals can make a room personal and memorable. Sharon even sees them in tween and teen bedrooms but notes with this age group designs lean “more geometric, something like a mountainscape or treescape, but really simple and graphic.”



PHOTO: COURTESY OF BENJAMIN MOORE

Don’t be afraid to break some rules

Finally, Sharon says traditional paint and colour rules aren’t absolute. For example, “I don’t think colour really defines gender the way it did 50 years ago or even 20 years ago. I don’t think about rules for colour, especially when it comes to gender.”

Even with those tried-and-true rules, Sharon says there is wiggle room. “Maybe you think, ‘Oh I can’t use a dark colour because it’s such a small room.’” Here, Sharon says it’s more about creating balance. “Colour is very emotional and definitely we’re drawn to certain colours because of that emotional connection. You don’t want to lose that completely.”

So how to make that bold colour that your child loves work in a small space? From a composition standpoint, Sharon says, “Really, any colour can look fantastic in a room. It’s really how you use it.” She suggests adding good lighting and possibly balancing bold or dark shades with some neutral walls. “It can really add a lot of joy if it’s your kid’s favourite colour.” **OH**



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PHOTOGRAPHY SARAH TACOMA

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Dave Fulford



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UPCOMING

Stay tuned as there is much more to come as Fulfords continues to grow its service to residents and businesses alike through The Cook's Cupboard brand. On the table are things like cooking classes, expanded specialty categories, and even possibly more locations in the future.

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HAVEN

STORY **MADDIE JOHNSON**
PHOTOGRAPHY **SANDY MACKAY**

*NESTLED ON THE
NIAGARA ESCARPMENT
AND JUST STEPS FROM
THE BRUCE TRAIL
LIES A NOT-SO-LITTLE
HAVEN THAT IS HOME
TO THE SMITH FAMILY.*

The new propane fireplace repeats the shiplap detail on the ceiling. The insert was installed by Hot Spot Fireplace and BBQ Shop. Luxury Vinyl Flooring, sourced through Georgian Bay Flooring Supply, was installed on both floors of the home.



Jack, Curtis, Jennifer and Kade Smith

The five-acre lot their home sits on and the two adjacent properties collectively cover just shy of 20 acres. Having grown up between Markdale and Flesherton, Jennifer and Curtis Smith love hiking the Bruce Trail, and this particular section – affectionately known by the locals as Standing Rock – has always been one of their favourites.

“That section is something we’ve enjoyed with our family for years, even prior to purchasing property there,” says Jennifer.

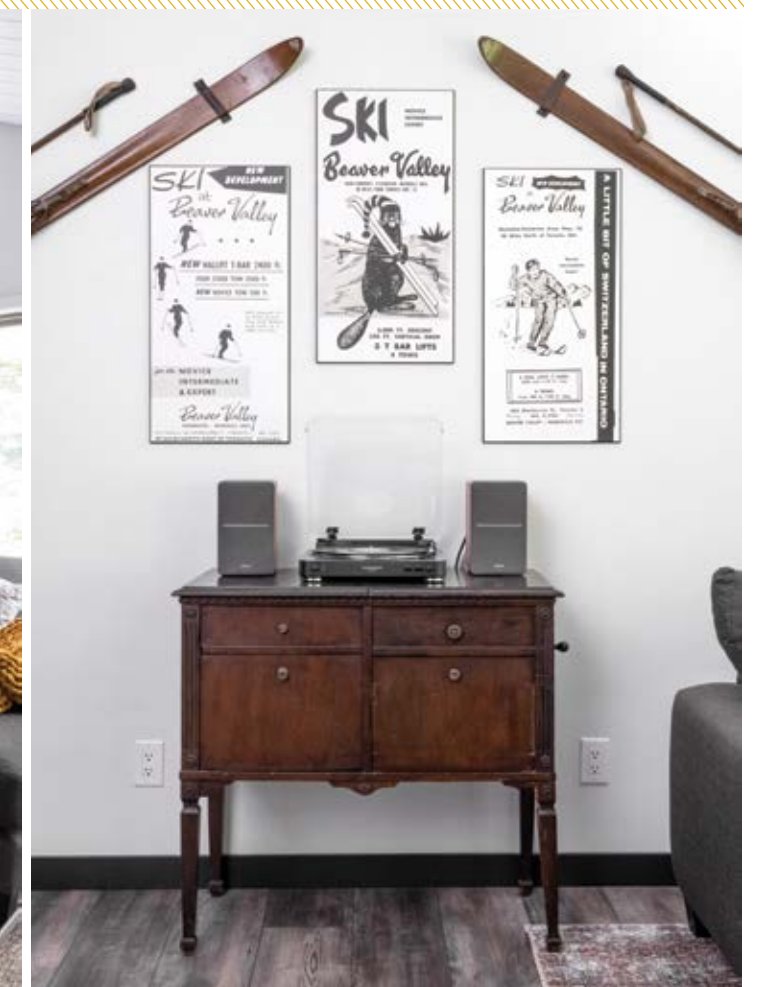
They first viewed the property five years ago and immediately fell in love.

“I joke with my husband that it reminded me of a Disney movie because it was just so magical,” Jennifer says.

The lush property is covered in periwinkles and surrounded by maple bush. It even features their own sugar shack operation called **Bayside Maple Syrup**, where they bottle about 250-300 litres of syrup every year for their family and friends. What started as a fun hobby quickly turned into a passion, and it has become a family tradition. *Continued on page 62*



ABOVE: The original robin’s egg blue exterior paint colour was changed to a charcoal grey with white trim. A new metal roof and contemporary garage doors completed the exterior transformation of this 90s traditional home. **BELOW LEFT:** Windows in the living room overlook the rear of the property and the mature forest that surrounds the home. The sofa and coffee table were sourced through Chatterson’s Home Furniture and Appliances. Shiplap on the ceiling accentuates the height. Electrical for the renovation was completed by The Electricians. **BELOW RIGHT:** Jennifer’s great-great-grandmother owned the record chest that contains its original equipment. A more recent record player and speakers sit on top. The family belongs to the Beaver Valley Ski Club and vintage advertising is on display.





ABOVE: Overlooking the dining table is a map of the world that leads to travel wishes and travel memories for the family. The table and chairs are from Topnotch Furniture. **RIGHT:** Appliances for the kitchen are from Chatterson's Home Furniture and Appliances. Glass doors to the right of the ovens open to a large pantry. To keep the family organized, one end of the cabinetry is a chalkboard for special requests and appointments. **FAR RIGHT:** A breakfast bar for the children has stools made by Jennifer's late father Allan Fawcett.



The house itself was built in the early 1990s and was a very traditional-looking home when they bought it. They knew from day one that they wanted to do some work on it, especially adding consistent flooring throughout. They wanted something that was easy to clean and created flow for their growing family.

When they finally decided to add new flooring, Jennifer says it felt foolish not to carry the new flooring downstairs as well – so their entire house has new luxury vinyl flooring from **Georgian Bay Flooring Supply** with no transitions.

And of course, once they started ripping up floors, it spiralled from there. They knew they eventually wanted to redo the fireplace in the living room and update the bathrooms, so it only made sense to do it all in one go.

“All of a sudden we essentially renovated our entire home from top to bottom,” Jennifer laughs. “It turned into a nightmare full-house renovation last winter, but in hindsight it feels really great to have a fresh and modern look throughout.”

And most importantly, a very practical home for their growing family. *Continued on page 64*



ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT: In the primary bedroom, a reclaimed wood accent sits between the door to the walk-in closet and the door to the en suite. The bed and bedside tables were found at Topnotch Furniture. Plumbing for the project was completed by W&B Plumbing. **RIGHT:** In Curtis's main-floor office, Jennifer painted the graphic accent wall with colours repeated throughout the home. The desk sits on a black shag carpet that adds a level of sound proofing.



A new banister to the lower level greets visitors in the front foyer. The handrail is black pipe mounted on black wooden boards, adding an industrial detail.





Along with all-new flooring, bathrooms, a floor-to-ceiling propane fireplace from **Hot Spot Fireplace and BBQ Shop**, and a new laundry room, they completely finished the basement to give their kids their own space. It now features two bedrooms for their two sons, as well as a bathroom, toy room and recreation room.

“They have their own everything down there and no toys are allowed to come up,” laughs Jennifer.

The theme of the five-bedroom, three-bathroom house is a clean and simple black-and-white effect with versatile and interchangeable accents. They even ordered custom 3M wallpaper from **Park Sign Creative Inc.** for the boys’ rooms to give them the opportunity to have something they are excited about, without damaging the existing paint jobs.

Their older son has a *Harry Potter*-themed bedroom and the younger son has a forest theme, both in black and white.

“It’s a really cool thing for young families, the possibilities are endless,” says Jennifer. *Continued on page 66*



ABOVE LEFT: A winter passion is clearly displayed in Kade’s bedroom on the lower level. **ABOVE RIGHT:** A shelf has been crafted using old skis. A forest of trees was created using wood stained various colours. **BELOW:** A laser-cut sign on Kade’s bedroom door indicates the theme of his bedroom. **RIGHT:** Custom ordered 3M wallpaper from Park Sign Creative Inc. becomes the accent wall. Sleepovers are so much fun with bunk beds.



ABOVE LEFT: In Jack’s bedroom, the custom 3M wallpaper has a wizard theme that highlights his interest in *Harry Potter*. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Reclaimed wood is the base for a shelf that displays Hogwarts potions and house ties. **LEFT:** A crest similar to *Harry Potter*’s Gryffindor emblem hangs on the door to Jack’s bedroom on the lower level. **RIGHT:** In Jack’s bedroom, a seating area pays homage to iconic items associated with the *Harry Potter* books.



feature

They have new appliances and living room furniture from Chatterson's Home Furniture.

On the outside, the robin's egg blue exterior was painted charcoal grey and a metal-shingle roof and new garage doors were installed.

The design and layout were all Jennifer so she served as an unofficial project manager, relying on a number of local trades to bring her plan to life. "It was something I was very passionate about," she says. "I had a vision of what I wanted." Building supplies were purchased at **Smith & Hladil Home Hardware Building Centre**. Plumbing was completed by **W&B Plumbing** and all electrical by **Corey DeBruyn of The Electricians**.

"We've taken a home that we loved from the beginning but helped make it suit our family and style a lot more," she says.

Continued on page 68

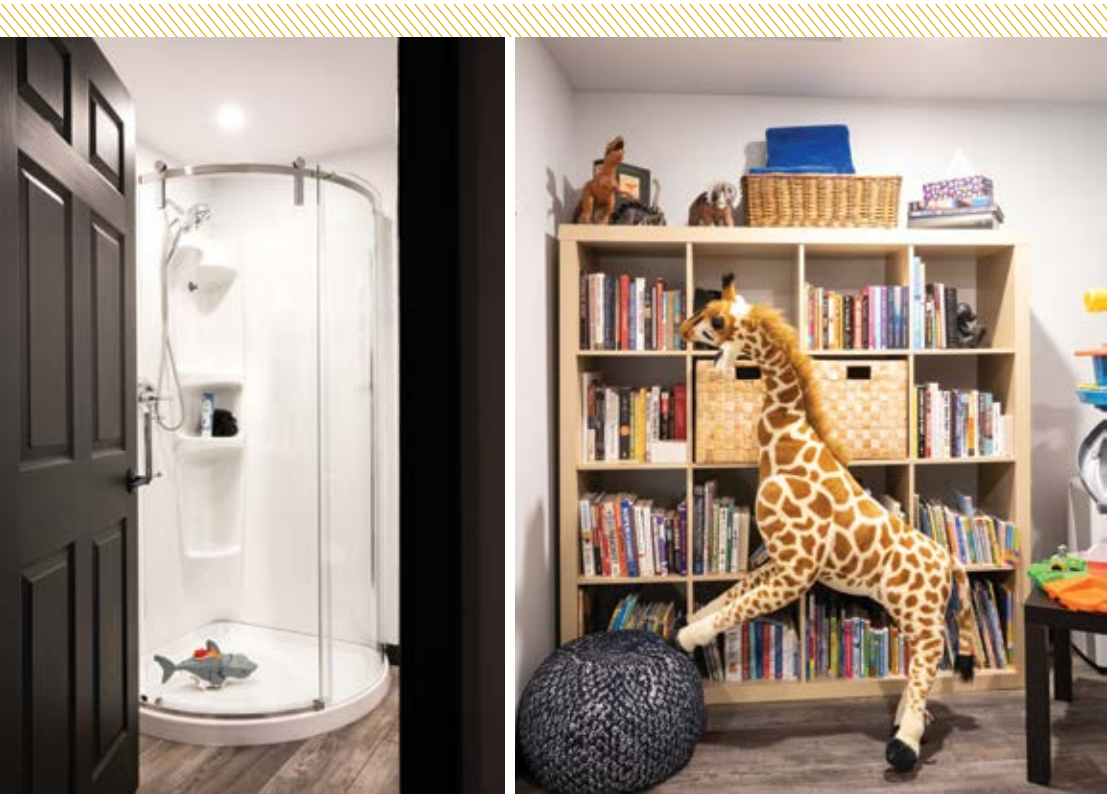


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ABOVE: The lower-level recreation room has built-in cabinetry that displays family photos and décor. Fabric baskets with leather handles offer extra storage for smaller items. **FAR LEFT:** A shark on the shower floor of the lower-level bathroom makes washing up fun. **LEFT:** The toy area is presided over by a giraffe. This area can be closed off from the adjacent recreation room by sliding barn doors.

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ABOVE: Jennifer’s Zen Den is her special place to relax, meditate and do yoga. It was built by her father and Curtis. **RIGHT:** Etched on a piece of live-edge wood are the seven chakras that make up the spiritual powers of the human body.

Lastly, the surrounding property really is something special and it is put to full use by their family.

“My children are covered in mud 24/7,” Jennifer laughs, saying the boys are always exploring the bush and hunting for salamanders. The property also features elaborate landscaping completed by the previous owners. At the back of the property sits what Jennifer calls her “Zen Den.” Curtis and Jennifer’s father built the small two-storey bunkie for her two years ago after a difficult diagnosis, and it has become a very special place for her to focus on her mental health, meditate and do yoga.

“It is a very special piece of our property,” she says. The best part is that while their house is situated on a very private, secluded lot, they are far from isolated. They live in a neighbourhood that has an incredible support system, so even though they have acreage and a secluded home, they still have neighbours that are close by to create a sense of community, and it’s all within 15 minutes of downtown Collingwood. “It really has all the perks of being rural while having access to the amenities that are important when you have a young family,” Jennifer says. **OH**





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Woven Pillow 4. **ELK HOME**:
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To Rent or Buy?

THAT IS THE QUESTION

STORY **MEGAN SMITH-HARRIS** | ILLUSTRATION **SHEILA BRITTON**

In life and in real estate, timing is everything. With interest rates ratcheting up at an unnerving pace, is it better to rent and luxuriate in a turnkey, trouble-free existence? Or should one take advantage of plummeting real estate prices and jump into the housing market before mortgage rates soar even higher?

WHAT TO DO, WHAT TO DO?

As a consumer, it's hard to know the right financial move in the current real estate climate, which is, at best, murky and at worst, highly volatile.

These are not idle musings. My American husband and I are in the thick of it. After 20 years living in the United States, we decided to move back to my Canadian homeland. I identified a charming, walkable community for us to live in, one with great restaurants and enviable cultural attractions, but by the time we relocated, house prices had soared an astonishing 40 per cent in a mere two years. Our dream of buying a storybook cottage imploded as pre-emptive bully bids and dog-eat-dog bidding wars became the norm.

So, we've been renting. Don't feel sorry for us – we're in a penthouse condo with amazing views, a private rooftop deck and heated underground parking. After decades of homeownership, we're enjoying the freedom of not paying property taxes, shovelling the walkway or dealing with maintenance issues. But here's the rub: we miss being the rulers of our own domain. We want a real Christmas tree (only faux allowed here) and crave a big gas barbecue instead of the lame electric one mandated by the condo board. But most of all we want a fenced yard for our dog Duncan, who currently lives with our son because we're in a no-pets building.

I have bought and sold eight homes and done things the right way (made a tidy profit), and the soul-destroying way (sold two houses for less than I paid for them). Why do I keep buying real estate? Growing up, I was indoctrinated to believe that renting was "throwing money away" that could more advantageously be used to pay down a mortgage. That reasoning has merit, but on the other hand, my husband and I don't want to be chumps and overpay for a house that won't hold its value. I consulted some local real estate professionals to get their take on the situation.

The market is correcting and that's a good thing according to Jodi Hannivan

of Keller Williams Lifestyles Realty in London. "Now that prices and expectations are more balanced, buyers can ask for reasonable conditions such as financing and home inspections."

According to a recent study released by in-house economists at Desjardins Group, Ontario has moved from a "pandemic-fuelled seller's market" to more "balanced territory." Housing prices are predicted to drop by up to 25 per cent by December 2023 from their all-time high in February 2022.

Is springtime still the ideal time to buy? According to Jodi, maybe not. "Seasonality doesn't really exist in the way it used to," she says. "We see great properties listed throughout the year." Her advice to homebuyers: "Keep up your search. There aren't as many buyers in the winter so you won't face as much competition."

June Leitch, a realtor at Home & Company Real Estate Brokerage in Stratford concurs. "We're still in a transitional market and prices continue to go down slightly on a weekly basis," June says. "After six years of a seller's market buyers now have an advantage because inventory is high and negotiations come into play with almost every deal."

And renting isn't always the cheaper option. Recent stats from rentals.ca indicate: "The average price for all property types across Canada in September was \$2,043 per month." This is an increase of 21.9 per cent from April 2021.

"In our community we have a shortage of rentals and rents are high so it comes down to supply and demand," explains June. "If someone can qualify for a mortgage, they should consider purchasing because their monthly payments will likely be less than their rent."

Will my husband and I finally be able to buy a Victorian charmer on a mature tree-lined street at an affordable price? That remains to be seen. In the meantime, we're enjoying the perks of being renters but looking forward to the day when we can play with our dog in our own backyard. **OH**

"We're still in a transitional market and prices continue to go down slightly on a weekly basis," June says. "After six years of a seller's market buyers now have an advantage because inventory is high and negotiations come into play with almost every deal."

OYAP IN ACTION!



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Work in the trades can sometimes be hard, physically demanding work, and women are held to the same standards as men, however, a woman can be just as physically fit, determined, confident, and capable of operating the same tools and machinery as their male counterparts. It takes more than a physical requirement in the skilled trades, to get the job done. Balance, dexterity, hand-eye coordination, stamina, and even academic skills like reading, writing and mathematics are assets for working in the skilled trades.

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- To provide students with the opportunity to start training in a skilled trade while completing the requirements for an Ontario Secondary School Diploma.
- To enable students to make the school to work transition by direct entry into apprenticeship training.
- To provide employers with the opportunity to train the skilled workers they require.
- To provide a viable solution to address the problem of skilled tradespeople shortages in general, and specifically the lack of young people joining the trades.

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Continued on page 84



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Could a TINY HOME Be Right for You?

TAKING A SECOND LOOK AT THE SMALLER HOME CONCEPT



Scheduled to run again next year, the inaugural event – which featured a slate of speakers, plus a lineup of well-designed tiny homes for the curious to wander through (some boasting high-end appliances, stone countertops, even soaker tubs) – is just one sign of how much this housing concept is catching on.

Spurred on by an affordability crisis, tiny homes are quickly morphing from an oddity we’ve mostly seen on TV to a compelling alternative more Canadians are exploring.



STORY **CONNIE JESKE CRANE**
PHOTOGRAPHY **ACORN TINY HOMES**

“Tiny homes are really having a moment right now,” says Maria Sturova, co-producer of Canada’s first-ever Tiny Home Show. The four-day show, which took place last August at the Ancaster Fairgrounds, attracted some 2,000 enthusiastic attendees. “There was a lot of interest and positive feedback on just the tiny home lifestyle in general,” she says.

Could a tiny home be right for you or someone you care about? Here’s a closer look:

WHAT IS A TINY HOME?

According to the Ontario government’s guide, *Build or buy a tiny home*, a tiny home is defined as a “small, private and self-contained dwelling unit: with living and dining areas, with kitchen and bathroom facilities, with a sleeping area, intended for year-round use.” The guide also stipulates that tiny homes must comply with Ontario’s building code, as well as municipal zoning and local bylaws.

As for exact size, Ontario’s building code specifies a minimum requirement of 188 square feet, otherwise definitions aren’t firm. According to Maria, “A tiny home is around 200 to 400 square feet.”

There are also two formats – some tiny homes are on wheels (and if so, have to conform to RV size restrictions); others are permanent dwellings on a lot and foundation (sometimes even with a basement). *Continued on page 88*

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WHAT'S THE APPEAL?

Maria says there's a threefold combo of affordability, sustainability and simple living. "Tiny homes are kind of an answer to the housing affordability crisis, but also the climate change crisis and concern about the environmental footprint we're all leaving. Both of those things are a lure to people who have made the move or are planning to, it's about reducing their footprint while at the same time reducing the financial burden and freeing themselves from all the stuff they have – their big mortgage and big electricity bill. It's really about being as efficient as possible in your lifestyle and not having more of anything than you need."

At the same time, Maria notes that the tiny lifestyle includes the standard comforts of home. "Tiny homes are built to Ontario building code, with the same materials as a conventional regular home. So they're just as warm, just as functional. They have kitchens and bathrooms. Most have washers and dryers as well."

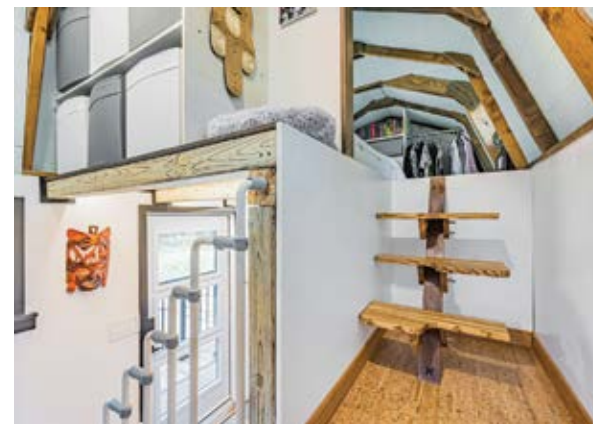
And what about pricing? Maria says costs, not including land, vary according to a home's size and finishes. "But they kind of range between \$100,000 and \$200,000."



WHO'S MOVING IN?

So how do tiny homes fit into Canada's housing market? Here's where things get interesting. Maria sees two demographics interested in tiny homes as primary dwellings. "They're typically most suited for a household of one or two people – although we see lots of young couples who've just had a baby or are about to have their first baby also looking at that option. In so many cases, it's kind of people's first home or their last home. So retired folks, and then students, new grads looking to move out of their parents' house. It's their first step into the housing ownership market."

Additionally, in Canada, tiny home communities are starting to be built to provide shelter for under-housed and homeless populations. And for established homeowners, some Canadian builders market their tiny design-forward spaces as backyard office studios, in-law suites, cottages and bunkies.



THE UNIQUENESS FACTOR

Finally, there's the powerful "it factor." Tiny homes are conversation starters. They connect homeowners to a movement and strong community, and design-wise, the space is a hotbed of innovative design, not to mention personal creativity.

As Maria says, "Most tiny homes are built custom right now. It's really up to the owner to dictate what feels right for them. Something I see that is really cool with tiny homes is that while they're an affordable housing option, they actually allow people to give themselves a bit of luxury. If you're a big fan of handmade Portuguese tile or something like that, those things are expensive to put in a conventional home. But if you only need a few square feet, then you can actually go a little bit wild!" **OH**

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Tiny Home Show | tinyhome.show

Tiny Homes in Canada | tinyhomesincanada.ca

Tiny Town Association | tinytownassociation.com

Tiny House Listings Canada | tinyhouselistingscanada.com

Ontario government guide | ontario.ca/document/build-or-buy-tiny-home

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(Please see ad on pg 29)



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(Please see ad on pg 25)



LOCKWOOD PAINTING

A perfect painting job can make any newly constructed home stand out from the rest of the crowd. A beautiful paint job makes for an unforgettable first impression and can inspire complete confidence in the overall building quality and value of a new home. **Jeff Lockwood Painting Services** has over a decade of experience with new home building projects. Jeff and his staff currently are providing priming, painting and staining services for upwards of forty newly constructed homes and renovation projects each and every year.

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Our pro painters are always ready to help you with all your painting needs. For more information contact Jeff Lockwood Painting Services at 519.372.3008 or visit our website at lockwoodpainting.ca
(Please see ad on pg 29)



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(Please see ad on pg 103)



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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.

I was chosen in 2021 to be a brand ambassador for Columbia tools. It is a fantastic way to promote the tools I love. Being a brand ambassador provides me an opportunity to demonstrate to more women that we can drywall and be awesome at it.

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megsdrywall@gmail.com
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(Please see ad on pg 47)



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(Please see ad on pg 103)



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Cuneo's are part of **Carpet One Floor and Home**, a cooperative with 1,000 stores worldwide, having not only enormous buying power but also partners in all of the major brands, mills and manufacturers. They do the research for you. Just tell them your needs and they'll satisfy them beyond your expectations.

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(Please see ads on pg 10, 55)



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(Please see ad on pg 105)

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(Please see ad on pg 12)



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(Please see ad on pg 3)



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(Please see ad on pg 105)



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(Please see ad on pg 103)



Black is definitely having a moment right now. There are a zillion different ways to insert black into your décor. Personally, I like using black as a stylish accent colour rather than an all-over application and since I almost always use white as my backdrop, it acts as a nice contrast and really anchors your overall design. A long time ago I learned the classic 60-30-10 rule for decorating, which says that 60 per cent of the room should be your dominant colour, 30 per cent should be your secondary colour and the last 10 per cent should be your accent colour. Now I'm not one to follow all the rules, but I do believe if black is your accent colour, it should be kept somewhere under 20 per cent, otherwise it's going to come on too strong and you won't consider it an accent. I've seen some very cool all-black rooms, complete with black ceiling and black trim, but that's for another post.



Here are my favourite ways to use black as an accent:

SWITCH UP YOUR CABINET HARDWARE AND/OR PLUMBING FIXTURES

This is a great way to incorporate a little bit of black into any room without going overboard. Changing out your hardware is an easy and affordable way to make a quick update. Don't be afraid to mix your metals. Just try to limit your metal finishes to no more than two per room.

TIP: Matte black looks great with brushed gold. *Continued on page 94*



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1
PAINT YOUR
INTERIOR DOORS

I absolutely love this idea because literally anybody can do it regardless of budget and it makes such an incredible statement. Black hides a lot of dirty, grimy little fingerprints. So, buy a can of black paint and get to it my friends. There are plenty of great tutorials online to help with your technique and choosing the right tools. A designer favourite is Tricorn Black by Sherwin Williams and I'd go with a satin finish.



2
PAINT AN ACCENT WALL

I get that black is not the first colour that comes to mind for many when they are choosing paint colour for their home, but I would love you to reconsider. Just as white is a designer favourite, and literally goes with anything, I'd like you to consider black as the new neutral and try it out on an accent wall. It's moody, dramatic, cosy and can anchor a room in the best way possible. It works best if the rest of the room is white and you keep your furniture on the lighter side, too. **OH**



Kitchen



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3
GO DARK WITH ART

You want to choose artwork that is heavy on the black. Simple right? There are lots of options out there ranging in price from high to low. Make a serious impact with something high contrast or go moody with an all-dark palette. Either way, tie it back to one or two of the other options on this list and your décor is going to look so pulled together people will think you hired a designer.



4
CHANGE UP LIGHT FIXTURES

I especially like this option in the kitchen, but changing out light fixtures anywhere in the home is a great way to add some black. An all-white kitchen with black pendant lights is a rising trend. Even though there's no sign of black anywhere else in the design, it just seems to work very well. That little hit of contrast gives a much more polished look by staying away from the dreaded "matchy-matchy."

PHOTO: LARRY ARNAL



Amanda Shields is the creative director and principal designer for Amanda Shields Interiors.

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Honouring HISTORY

STORY **LAUREN LONG**
PHOTOGRAPHY **SANDY MACKAY**

Behind the frosty stained-glass window of the snow-covered red brick home, the sisters reminisce about holiday traditions of their childhood in Markdale.

Back then, they decorated an evergreen tree from their family farm and adorned each room with sleigh bells, glass ornaments and classic Christmas décor. This year, Cynthia Smith and Julie Farnsworth look forward to celebrating their first Christmas in their beautifully renovated century home in their hometown.

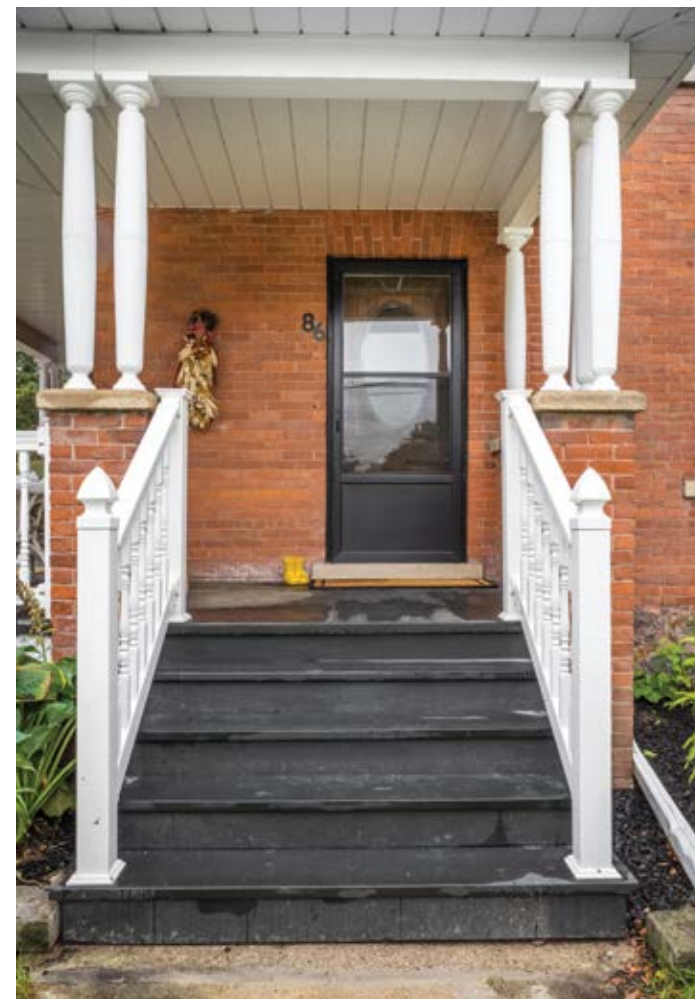
One of their fondest childhood memories was playing “hotel” at their grandfather’s writing desk. This inspired the plan to return to their roots and start a venture where they could share the rural charm of Grey County with others. The vision of the **Two Sisters Inn** came to life.

Originally planning to build a new house on their family farm, the plan was revised to purchase an existing home and renovate it into a boutique hotel. They found a red brick century home with a white wraparound veranda, which had been lovingly taken care of by the same family for three generations.

“We saw the potential for honouring the heritage of the house, and the history of the Thibaudeau family,” says Julie.

With the expertise of **Lee McIntyre** of **Elevated Custom Contracting** and his team, the home was renovated to maintain its historic character, while updating for safety and comfort.

Continued on page 98



LEFT: Designer Tamarisk McNalty Stephens, co-owner Cynthia Smith and contractor Lee McIntyre in the Thibaudeau Room. **TOP:** Guests are greeted upon entering the original front door of the home. On warm days the wraparound porch has many seating options for relaxing and enjoying the comings and goings in Markdale. Plants were sourced at Grange Hollow Gardens & Nursery. Landscape maintenance is taken care of by SDBI Complete Property Maintenance. **ABOVE:** The painting of the home is by Makenna Bugaliski, who is a lifelong friend of Cynthia’s youngest daughter. **OPPOSITE:** A propane fireplace anchors the lounge area at the inn, which is referred to as the Thibaudeau Room. Interior walls are Benjamin Moore Chantilly Lace, which was sourced through Grey Bruce Paint & Décor. Electrical was completed by Daryl Verbeek.



“CYNTHIA AND JULIE WERE GREAT TO WORK WITH. THEY WERE PASSIONATE ABOUT KEEPING THE HOME’S ORIGINAL CHARACTER.”
–Lee McIntyre



“Cynthia and Julie were great to work with,” says Lee. “They were passionate about keeping the home’s original character, so we tried to match everything, from the original trim profiles on the baseboards and windows, to patching as much of the existing hardwood as possible.”

Lee installed highly functional laminate flooring from **House Rules Design Shop** to match the original hardwood. He recreated the craftsmanship of the millwork and sourced doors, which closely matched the originals to fit the new frames.

Cynthia and Julie kept heirloom features such as the knobs on the french doors leading into the Thibaudeau Room, and the stair banister with ornamental globes. The caramel patina from gentle wear on the wood paints a picture of all the hands that have touched them through the generations.

During the renovation, the sisters uncovered many hidden gems, such as the original red brick chimney covered up behind the kitchen wall, which they left exposed as a statement feature.

“This original feature highlighted in the modern kitchen echoes our intention for the home – to honour the past and modernize for comfort,” says Cynthia. *Continued on page 101*



ABOVE: Black hardware on the cabinets and dark grout on the backsplash complement black appliances that came with the home. Cabinets are from Shelburne Home Hardware Building Centre and the custom colour is Tradewinds. **LEFT:** The L-shaped counter comes in handy for breakfast treats. The quartz counters came from Shelburne Home Hardware. **OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT:** An antique jam cupboard holds extra linens and towels and sits in the hall on the second floor. **TOP MIDDLE:** The faux zebra rug is from Ruggable. It was important to the sisters to preserve the original wood details, including the stair banister and the french doors into the Thibaudeau Room. **TOP RIGHT:** This large cupboard was another local find used for glassware and china as well as a station for making toast, coffee and tea. **BOTTOM:** This area of the home was transformed with simple changes, including new mouldings from North Pole Trim & Supplies Ltd.



LEFT: Bathroom vanities for the project were installed by Elevated Custom Contracting. **BELOW:** Tile for the bathrooms came from House Rules Design Shop. Bob's Glass supplied the shower enclosure. Plumbing for the project was completed by Mayne Piping and Plumbing. **OPPOSITE:** A comfortable king bed provides a restful sleep for guests. Floating bedside tables and wall sconces keep the room streamlined and uncluttered.

With the guidance and artistic eye of professional designer **Tamarisk McNalty Stephens**, Cynthia and Julie successfully maintained the character of the home while modernizing the amenities and refreshing the interior. Tamarisk put together the plans and sourced the materials and finishes needed to complete the renovation.

Keeping the kitchen footprint the same, the layout was tweaked for functionality, and the aesthetics transformed from dark and heavy to light and airy by the choice of the cabinetry, materials and finishes.

The Thibaudeau Room provides a common lounging area featuring a balance between modern furnishings and antique décor. Church pews from Berkeley United Church, split to make dining chairs, and a pine buffet from the 1900s offer guests a taste of Markdale's past.

The three bedrooms and one bathroom on the upper level were transformed into two en suite guest rooms, each with its own personality. The makeover included replacing carpeting with laminate flooring and adding contemporary bathroom fixtures, such as glass showers, from **Bob's Glass & Mirror Ltd.** in Hanover.

Continued on page 102



“THE BATHROOM IN THE QUEEN ROOM HAS SO MUCH CHARACTER. I LOVE THE WHIMSICAL OWL WALLPAPER TAMARISK SUGGESTED.” – Julie



“The bathroom in the Queen Room has so much character. I love the whimsical owl wallpaper Tamarisk suggested, and the big soaker tub feels so quaint yet luxurious,” says Julie.

One of the most prominent conversions was the transformation of the attic from a bare storage space into a third guest suite, now called The Loft. With the walls insulated, stairway rebuilt and a bathroom added, it became cosy guest accommodation, complete with private balcony.

Tamarisk explains that many homeowners are surprised by how much of the budget goes on unseen items, such as upgrading the electrical, plumbing and heating. Julie and Cynthia add that they were surprised at the amount of structural work that had to be done, including how Lee had to double the beams in the attic to build The Loft and lift and level the main floor.

The sisters’ design aesthetic reflects the modern trends of Scandi-minimalism and the local personality of country-chic. **Benjamin Moore** Chantilly Lace (**Grey Bruce Paint & Décor**) was chosen as the colour for the walls, allowing the art and décor to shine. A painting of keys in the entranceway, which matches the Two Sisters Inn logo, sourced from **Bare Birch**, is one of many items from local stores and suppliers. *Continued on page 104*

ABOVE: A stained-glass window, original to the home, acts as a piece of artwork on the landing to the first floor. The caramel patina on the banister is a testimonial to all the hands that have touched the wood. **RIGHT:** A whimsical owl wallpaper lines the wall behind the vanity. The vessel tub can also be used as a shower.

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A photograph of a Christmas display. It features a wooden crate filled with red berries and greenery, a small red barn figurine, and a sign that says "DASHING THROUGH the Snow". A black and white checkered stocking hangs from the crate. The Markdale Flowers logo is visible in the top right corner.

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YOUR PERFECT WINTER ESCAPE

A photograph of a hand holding a snow globe. The Two Sisters Inn logo, featuring a key and the numbers 20 and 21, is centered below the image.

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A velvet armchair in the loft bedroom offers a view to the street. Wood beams provide structure for the home's roof line. Engineering was handled by Southwinds Engineering Inc. **TOP LEFT:** New interior doors came from North Pole Trim & Supplies Ltd. and closely match the home's original doors. **MIDDLE LEFT:** A lady fox with glasses in an oiled-rubbed brass finish keeps watch on the stairwell to the loft. **BOTTOM LEFT:** The stair treads to the loft are painted an eye-catching Aegean Blue by Benjamin Moore. **BELOW:** The en suite in the loft is a luxe retreat, with lots of soft-white towels, a deep vessel sink and a large shower. Zeke Air handled all the air conditioning and heating upgrades needed to keep guests comfortable in the winter and summer.



Supporting their community, and especially women-owned businesses, is one of the sisters' core values. Breakfast and treats are prepared with ingredients sourced from local markets and farms. Fresh Jersey milk served in a glass bottle, from Miller's Dairy, honours the sisters' childhood on a dairy farm.

After half-a-year of team effort, with help from their father the handyman and mother working for the business behind the scenes, Cynthia and Julie welcomed their first guests in June, 2022. As a tribute to their grandparents, the writing desk where they played hotel as little girls is the welcome desk in the main foyer.

"This project was a true collaboration. Cynthia and Julie had a vision," says Tamarisk. "I tried to interpret it, put plans to paper and source materials, finishes and fixtures to achieve it. However, it would be nothing without the trades who completed the work. Full credit to Lee and his team for executing the vision. Also, credit to Cynthia and Julie for their keen eye, style and role in decorating the space." **OH**



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PHOTOGRAPHY **NIGEL EVES**

STAY WARM AND KEEP ON BIRDING

Winter birdwatching? Yes, it's a thing. A really big thing. A season to look forward to with much anticipation. As winter descends, some may not feel any great urge to leave the warm sanctuaries of their homes and head out into the cold. But not birders. For them, the birding doesn't stop with the onset of winter weather. It simply brings another aspect to birding with a focus on the birds of winter.



Pine Grosbeak



Snowy Owl



Evening Grosbeak

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Way back in 1900, an honoured Christmas-week tradition was to hunt in competitions and see who could bag the most birds in one day. An American ornithologist at the time sought to break this convention by replacing it with a holiday Christmas Bird Census. This census would cover a day when people would count, rather than shoot, each and every bird found throughout the chosen date. The city of Toronto participated in this original census along with 25 other cities across North America. Impressive communication for an era without email, chatlines, Messenger and all the rest of today's media!

Today, Christmas Bird Counts are held between December 14 and January 5 across hundreds of communities in Ontario and throughout North America. They are organized by a naturalist club or a coordinator and involve teams of birders who head out to record every bird – species and numbers – in all parts of a designated 24 km diameter circle of land. Neither wind nor rain nor sleet nor

snow stops the count. It can be a blizzardy birding adventure!

Count day is generally wrapped up with a tally dinner where each team reveals the birds they have found, all hoping to have discovered the day's best bird – a lingering migrant, the winter specialties, or even a bird blown in from far off its normal range. Being winter, there are usually stories to share about mini-mishaps on snowy sideroads, slippery shorelines, in wild winds and weather and through all the other extremes winter may throw at you. And then there is usually one group that will confess to the always-embarrassing stopping for a Snowy Owl, only to zoom in on a white plastic bag caught up in a tree. The fun, the challenges and the rewards of a Christmas Bird Count can make a brave winter birder out of you! And there is the added bonus of knowing that the data collected from your heroic effort provides vital long-term information used to assess the health of winter bird populations, and helps guide conservation action.

PROJECT FEEDERWATCH

Ok, so I haven't convinced you to get out and freeze your fingers off focusing your binoculars in a blizzard, as fun as that may be? The thought of brrrding on the coldest days of the year still doesn't appeal? Well, never mind then; set aside the coldest days for watching your feeders from inside your cosy home. The worst days of winter can be the best days for feeder-watching. Feeders will be hopping with birds fuelling up before a winter storm or refuelling after one. Blizzards bring in birds looking for an easy, energy-saving snack.

Observing the action at your feeders will while away a cold winter's day. The energy, life and colour against a backdrop of snow that birds bring to your yard can't help but warm your spirit. And once again you can contribute critical information for environmental research by counting the birds you see for science. Simply enter your sightings in the Project FeederWatch database and contribute to the scientific body of knowledge on wintering bird species, distribution, and abundance. Birds are the barometers of the health of our environment so count every bird. Every bird matters.

So, when winter gets you down – get up and go birding! Beat those winter blues and awaken your senses with the cheery call of the Chickadee, the bright blue of a Blue Jay or the blushing red of a Cardinal. Merry winter brrrding! **OH**



Blue Jay



Chickadee



Rough-legged Hawk

WINTER BIRD LIST

Winter is a time to find a range of birds that you won't see in the spring or summer. So, come December, birders start tackling their annual Winter Bird List. Over a period starting December 1 and running throughout the dead of winter to the end of February, we head out to find the winter specialties (Grosbeaks, Redpolls, Siskins, Snowy Owls, Rough-legged Hawks and more) along with our hardier year-round residents (Cardinals, Chickadees, Nuthatches, Woodpeckers and more) to round out our tallies. This fun and occasionally competitive activity motivates birders to grab their binoculars, scopes and scarves and head outdoors for a winter

treasure hunt of sorts. You never know what you may come across. The number and variety of birds are certainly lower in the winter, but the unique-to-winter species make up for that and add to the challenge.

Master lists are kept by ornithological organizations, and it is common to cumulatively rack up sightings of over 200 different species of birds across the province through these three bleak and seemingly barren months! No wonder many take up the challenge of winter bird listing. And as a bonus, winter listing is a good warm-up for one special, big day of birding – the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count.



Snow Buntings



DRIED ORANGE ORNAMENTS

PROJECT AND PHOTOGRAPHY **ERIN ROCHON**

THESE DRIED ORANGE ORNAMENTS ARE A COLOURFUL ADDITION TO YOUR TREE OR TABLE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON. THEY ALSO ADD A FESTIVE SCENT TO YOUR HOME.



MATERIALS

- 3 oranges
- Sharp knife
- Parchment paper
- Cookie sheet
- Hot glue gun
- String & needle
- Star anise
- Cinnamon sticks
- Rosemary sprigs
- Peppercorns
- Wooden beads (optional)
- String & needle

HOW-TO

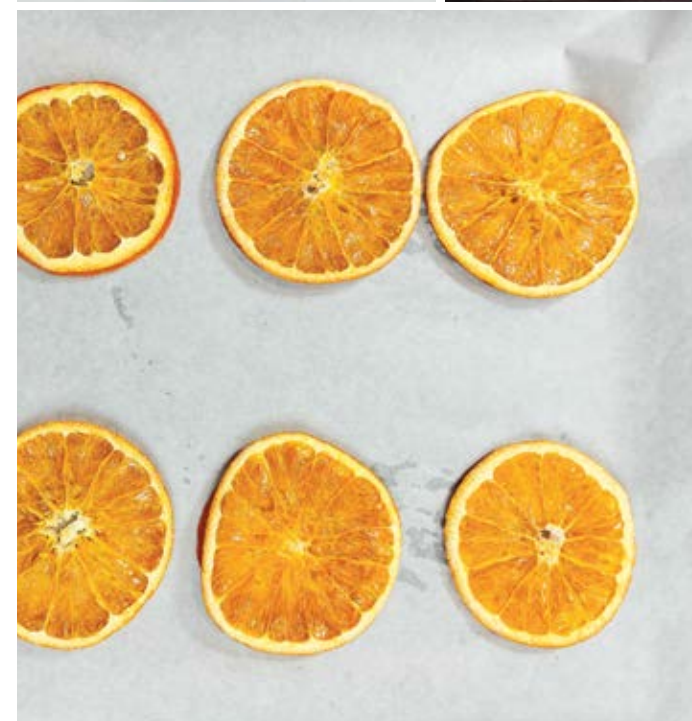
Start by cutting the oranges into ¼-inch thick slices. Preheat oven to 200°F. Place sliced oranges onto a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. Make sure orange slices are equally spaced and not touching each other. Bake oranges for between two-and-a-half and five hours, until slices are translucent.

Next, remove oranges from oven and let cool for two hours.

Then, with a glue gun, start decorating the orange slices. Glue some star anise to the centre, add some pink peppercorns, a cinnamon stick and a sprig of rosemary to complete your ornament. Have fun, get creative and try different combinations!

Lastly, cut some string to hang your ornament. Use a needle to make a hole near the top of the orange and thread the string. Add a wooden bead or a cinnamon stick to the string to complete the look. Knot the ends of the string.

Add these dried orange ornaments to your tree, as a decorative touch to your table or add to a gift for that special someone. **OH**



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INGREDIENTS

- 2 Tbsp butter
- 2 Tbsp flour
- 1 ½ cups milk, heated
- Prepared gnocchi
- ¼ cup pine nuts
- ¼ cup parmesan, grated
- 1 cup fresh basil leaves
- 2 cups fresh spinach
- 1 cup mozzarella
- Salt and pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

- Preheat the oven to 350°F.
- To make the béchamel, melt butter in a heavy-bottomed saucepan.
- Stir in flour and cook, stirring constantly until the paste bubbles a bit, but don't let it brown – about 2 minutes.
- Add hot milk, continuing to stir as the sauce thickens.
- Add salt and pepper to taste, lower the heat and cook, stirring for 2 to 3 minutes more.
- Remove from heat and let cool slightly.
- Put béchamel in a blender with pine nuts, parmesan, basil and spinach. Blend until smooth.
- Season with salt and pepper to taste.
- Place gnocchi in an even layer in a medium-sized oven-safe dish and pour sauce on top.
- Cover with a layer of mozzarella cheese.
- Bake for 25-30 minutes until golden. **OH**

BAKED GNOCCHI

with *Pesto Béchamel*

RECIPE AND PHOTOGRAPHY **JENELLE MCCULLOCH**

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