

at home with



JANINE RANKIN

PHOTOGRAPHY SARAH TACOMA



Two-time Canadian Olympic gymnast Janine Rankin-Abbott digs into a closet for a trio of memory books held together with bungee cords. The books are her mother Jacqueline's labour of love. Each page documents a journey, a competition, a triumph – nothing is missed. Rankin-Abbott travelled the world, earning 149 medals and competing at the 1988 Olympics in Seoul and the 1992 Games in Barcelona. Originally from Palgrave, she is one of Canada's most decorated gymnasts. Today, after coaching and working as a Registered Massage Therapist, Rankin-Abbott, along with husband Robert Abbott, owner of Great Lakes Custom Homes & Renovations, chase after their six-year-old son Owen and the family's pet rabbits in Creemore.



OUR HOMES: How did you get your start in gymnastics?

JANINE RANKIN: My mom enrolled me in the Orangeville Lion's gymnastics club at four years old after seeing Nadia Comaneci compete at the 1976 Montreal Olympics. At age seven, I was at a gymnastics camp and a coach asked if I wanted to try out at his club. He gave my mom the address. We arrived early and I immediately noticed national champion Elfi Schlegel training on the bars. A different coach asked if I was there to be tested. We figured she was one of the coaches we were meant to meet (she wasn't). I was tested for about 20 minutes and the coaches informed my mom that they wanted to coach me. It wasn't long before my mom realized that I had just tried out with the Canadian National Gymnastics Team coaches. The rest, as they say, is history!



OH: Tell us about the two world-recognized balance beam moves named after you.

JRA: One of the skills I developed was to jump from a springboard and land on one hand on the balance beam and hold that position for three seconds before returning to my feet on the beam. I performed the move at the 1987 World Championships and it was accepted and named The Rankin beam mount. The Rankin II is a balance beam skill named after me at the 1991 World Championships. I am honoured that both skills are included in the International Gymnastics Code of Points.



OH: What brought you to Southern Georgian Bay?

JRA: I'll never forget my first visit to Georgian Bay. I was working at a wonderful massage therapy clinic in Toronto, but I was not enjoying the busy city. My friend Marlene invited me up in autumn and all of the leaves had changed. The bay was the most beautiful colour of blue. I sold my city condo, found a house in Collingwood and started building my massage therapy business. I met Rob, now my husband, at a Christmas party. What I love is that whether I'm walking or driving, every time I'm out, there is beautiful scenery and landscapes. Rob and Owen were skiing all winter at the Georgian Peaks Club and this summer we'll swim at Wasaga Beach. What could be better? **OH**

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