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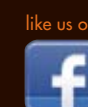
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editor's note



I READ SOMEWHERE that the best trait an old friend can have is the ability to continue where you left off... even if you haven't seen each other in a long time.

That's exactly how I feel about many of my neighbours. We rarely see each other in the winter, other than a wave and a "how's it going" as we dash in and out of our cars and into our warm houses.

But something special happens when the sun comes out and the weather turns hot – we reconnect. We share updates about our families, marvel at how the kids have grown, and share our home improvement plans. Just the other day I was weeding my front lawn, again, when I heard a voice say "it's futile you know." It was Jeff, my new neighbour and the real estate agent who actually sold us our home 12 years ago. He figured I should pull the weeds from his yard too, you know, to stop a re-infestation of my lawn.

As we all know, buying or moving to a new home is all about location, location, location. This summer, we take you to three new homes in fabulous spots.

Tim and Michelle found their slice of paradise in an emerging neighbourhood near Anten Mills (Page 28). This truly inspiring abode, built by DreamWood Homes, blends his and her styles – hers throughout the main living areas and his, in the garage/man cave, where the guys keep their toys.

Our next stop is lovely Apto and the new home of Vic and Jo Anne De Biasio (Page 52). They enlisted friend and designer Laurie Lamb of Inter-Art Interiors to create bright rooms that combine luxury and practicality.

Finally, we take you to the latest model at the fabulous care-free Manhattan condominium development by Pratt Homes in the heart of Barrie (Page 72). This three-bedroom townhome is spacious and beautifully designed, and the location is absolutely perfect.

Whether you live in a new home or an old home, there is always something to fix, build, remodel, decorate or paint. If you're planning a home renovation project this summer (and who isn't) we've got the help you need (Page 62).

Enjoy the long days, the sunshine and our way-too short summer. I'll be in the backyard, relaxing by the pool after my chores are done.

Sincerely,

Georgette

Georgette McCulloch, Editor-In-Chief
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Sandy MacKay.

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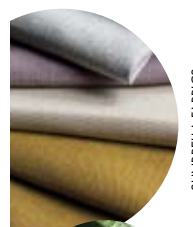


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advice

SUMMER ENTERTAINING *outside* DÉCOR

Every year when summer rolls around I stare out at the deck and start amassing large scale plans for vegetable beds and new furniture, sunshades and fire pits. The season closes and alas, we have usually accomplished one or two of those items. Sun kissed and relaxed, I normally care less about the surroundings and more about the summer experience – family, friends and being outdoors.



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PENDANT LIGHT, DESIGN WITHIN REACH



SHATTERPROOF GLASSES, GOVINO



DARWIN DINING BENCH, CRATE AND BARREL

But let's face it, as a designer, or as anyone who looks at Houzz, reads decorating magazines like *OUR HOMES*, goes shopping or surfs the net, we are inundated with ideas – there's always a desire for change. Here are a few ideas to modernize your outdoor entertaining space and a few others that will make life that much easier:

LIGHTING: You can't depend on candles and a still night when entertaining outdoors. Make sure you have adequate lighting. I love the pendant light by Davey Lighting. It's industrial, classic and modern all at the same time. Hang one off to the side as a subtle design feature or over your side entry.

SHADE: As an alternative to a patio umbrella or a built-in pergola, a shade sail is a fun way to stay protected from the sun. The waterproof polyester material comes in great colours, like rust or royal blue, adding a pop of colour to your space. It also protects you from UV rays. They look modern and they're budget-friendly.



Designer Stephanie Redmond shares her ideas.

FIRE PIT: Not a new concept, but this tells me that it's a good investment! No one gets tired of having a wood burning fire close by and one that's enclosed is a safe choice for a terrace. What a wonderful thing to cuddle up by on a cool summer evening.

EXTRA SEATS: If you entertain for larger groups, then be prepared. Have an extra bench or two around to cram a few little ones onto or to pull up for extra seating around a pool. I love a mix of white weave with teak for these pieces. The simple design will collaborate well with existing pieces.

GREENERY: Create a living wall with beautiful greenery and set up a drip irrigation system to feed it (you can even do this off of a rain barrel for the most eco-friendly approach). There are several do-it-yourself kits available on the market that can be set up on a timer for the ultimate hands-free gardening experience. The living wall becomes a lush backdrop to your outdoor space – modern, lovely and useful too.



LIVING WALL PLANTER, GROVERT

SHATTERPROOF GLASSES: If you're going to entertain outside, then you may want to leave the crystal inside. There are tons of amazing plastic-type glasses on the market that look just like glass. You can find a few

great ideas from Govino on the Wine Enthusiast's website. My favorites are stemless with a cute notch-out for your finger.

PORCH SWING: You can't go wrong with Dedon. If I could break into someone else's bank account, then their new Swingrest may be my first purchase. For a more budget-friendly approach, consider a simple, classic wood swing hanging from chains on your outdoor porch. You know what makes this design decision work best? A hot day and some lemonade!



DANIEL POUZET SWINGREST, DEDON FURNITURE

FABRICS: If your loungers are looking a little tired, then try reupholstering the cushions in one of the new Sunbrella fabrics. They look like interior fabrics, not something that can last through summers of outdoor use. Look at Canvas Granite for a cool linen-looking grey. With pets and kids around, it would be a clever choice for indoor use as well.

FAKE GRASS: The new faux grass is truly impressive. With an under-layer of what appears to be dried grass, you would be hard pressed to tell the difference. It no longer looks like Astroturf. And the best part? No dandelions. If you have an area that doesn't get a lot of light or you're short on time to care for your lawn, then try it! You won't be disappointed. (...and you don't have to tell!) **OH**



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Continued on page 24



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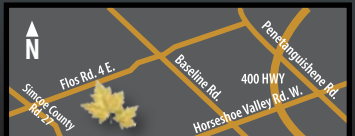
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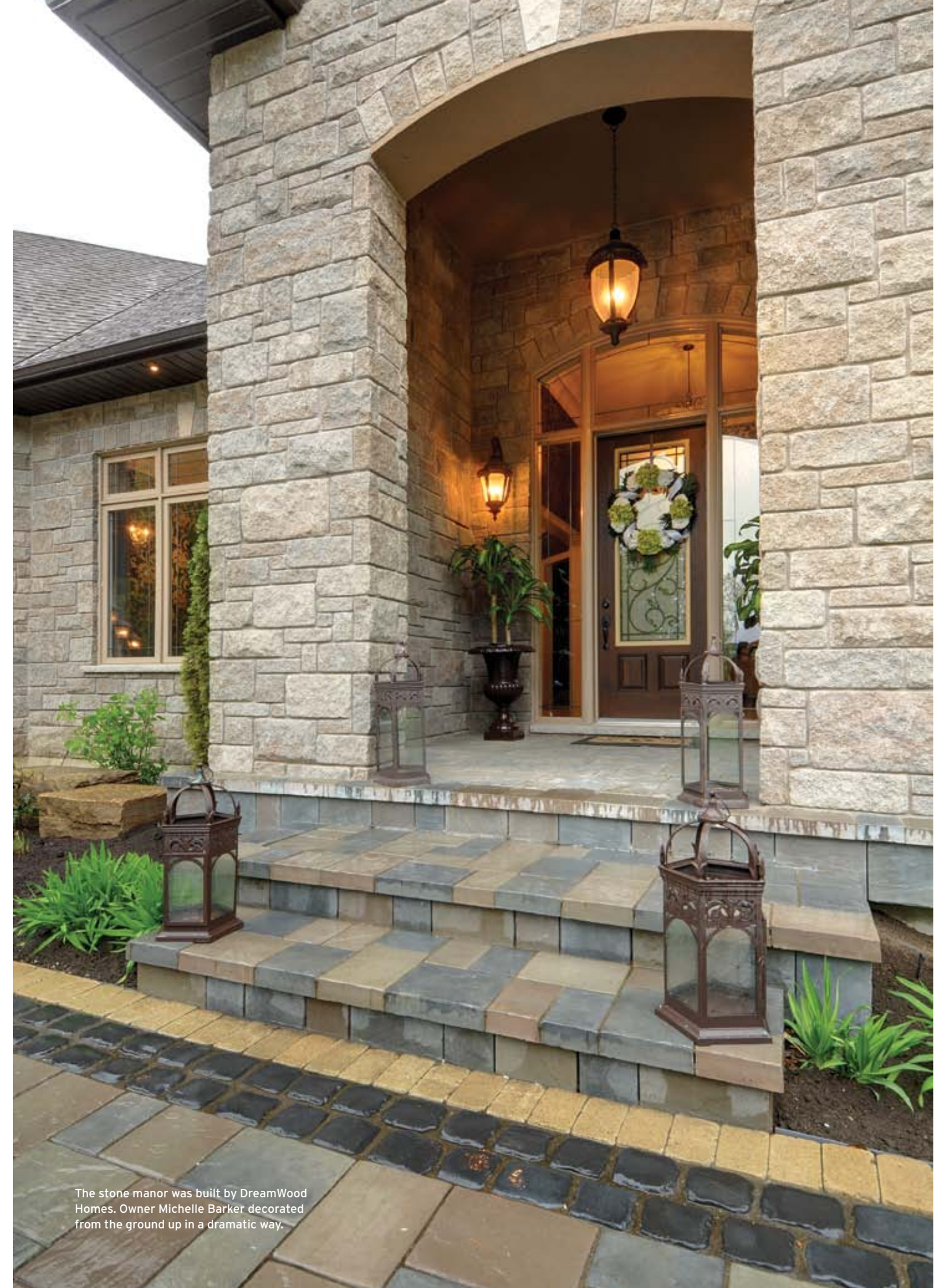
BY KATHLEEN DUNCAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY



The stone manor in the woodlands of Springwater Township stands testament to a man's love for his bride, and her desire to create the perfect family oasis.

"This was Tim's gift for me," says a beaming Michelle Barker, looking around the 5,000 sq. ft. custom-built bungalow by **DreamWood Homes** that showcases her design and decorating preferences. "Our first house in Midhurst was supposed to be our dream home. We created a paradise backyard and renovated the entire main floor, but I wanted to do something from the ground up."

This may not be the first project Michelle has tackled – as evidenced by the sewing machine (and home-made curtains and quilt) in the guest room, knitting needles and crochet hook tucked by her four-post bed, and a series of hand-trimmed wreaths awaiting their season to shine – but it's certainly the largest. *Continued on page 31*



The stone manor was built by DreamWood Homes. Owner Michelle Barker decorated from the ground up in a dramatic way.

Dark cabinetry and tumbled marble meet in the kitchen. Built-in appliances (TA Appliance) make preparing and cooking a meal a snap. The butcher block was made especially for Michelle. **OPPOSITE:** The elegant dining room seats 12-plus and the Barkers host family gatherings often. The crystal chandelier is a fabulous find. **TOP RIGHT:** The laundry room has a handy exit to access a clothes line. **BOTTOM RIGHT** The kitchen table, where the family eats most meals, has a view of the acreage out back.



The indulgent smile on Tim's face speaks to his obvious pleasure in watching her craft the perfect home for their life with son Aidan, now five. Judging by the plush dog beds throughout the house, Rusty, a three-year-old Standard Poodle, isn't far from their considerations either.

Giving back to her supportive spouse, Michelle carved out a man (and big-boy) cave in the three-bay garage where Tim and Aidan bond in the comfort of a large couch – and in the company of exotic cars, tools and an assortment of off-road vehicles. The projection TV is coming soon.

Aidan's south-wing haven boasts a race-car bed and associated décor, making Michelle a shoe-in for coolest mom of the year. So does the playground's built-in fort and circular slide that are clearly visible through a wall of windows.

The same prairie-style mullion grid repeats in the many windows, transoms, sidelights, doors, dormers and architectural portals that splash natural light into each corner (including the walk-out basement, garage and even a couple of closets). *Continued on page 32*



Aidan's blue walls (PPG Pittsburgh Paint's March Wind 25-12 from [The Paint Shoppe Colour Consultations](#)) and darkly stained hardwood flooring (that continue throughout most rooms in the house) give way to tile in a well-appointed bathroom shared with the adjacent guest room. Here, a dual-sink vanity, glass-fronted shower and whirlpool soaker tub with a nature-loving view outside provide the tools for serious relaxation for children and adults alike.

"You might as well install from the beginning what you know you'll want eventually," Michelle reasons, illustrating the attention to detail obvious in each room. Helping take advantage of every nook was [Ferndale Cabinets](#), which provided built-in shelves, drawers, cupboards and multi-bin cubby units. "You can never have enough storage."

The Barkers also have high praise for DreamWood Homes. "We have had and continue to have a very good experience with this builder," says Tim. "We have found their knowledge of the home building

requirements and all associated materials that have gone into our home to be exceptional and the care and quality that they put into our initial home construction and subsequent projects is second to none. We would definitely recommend without hesitation [Tino Zarcone](#) and [Chris Nitsopoulos](#) and their company." The Barkers were also impressed with the care and expertise of on-site construction manager [Aldo Santia](#) of [Aldo Santia Construction](#).

Guy Dumas from [The Design House](#) designed the home and, Michelle says, was committed to quality and easy to work with. Local trades, including [Rainers' Siding & Roofing](#), [High Definition Home Systems](#), [Sunsational Landscapes Inc.](#), [Riverwood Irrigation](#) and mason [Rob Benson](#) took care of the details.

[Decorating Den Interiors' Melanie Potter](#) helped Michelle achieve the timeless appeal she desired, including sourcing the dining room's bold black wallpaper and a table large enough to welcome extended family.

Continued on page 34



OPPOSITE PAGE: Tim, Aidan and Michelle Barker relax with their three-year-old Standard Poodle Rusty. **LEFT:** A nook off the grand foyer has two doors – one leads to the powder room while the other will soon become a large walk-in closet. **BELOW LEFT:** The powder room. **BELOW RIGHT:** The loft above the garage is a wonderful space to work and unwind.





The master bedroom is a peaceful oasis with an incredible walk-in closet, a large en suite with a tub that Aidan loves, plus a balcony for watching the sun rise and set.

"Using some black or dark brown grounds a room," she explains, acknowledging the neutral walls of the great room (Coffee Kiss 418-5 and Dark Granite 520-7 satin finish, from PPG's Speedhide brand) that contrast with Monterey White (HC-27) trim, high baseboards, crown moulding and lofty ceilings (coffered and vaulted in some rooms to increase the lift and interest).

"I like the warm, classic look that lasts for a long time," she adds.

She didn't, however, require a shopping spree to outfit her family's new home, preferring to recycle pieces from previous homes, trade with her mom and sister, and incorporate furniture, accessories and souvenirs that add more than beauty or functionality alone.

While granite countertops, state-of-the-art appliances and custom cabinetry provide luxurious mod-cons to prepare either a dinner party or cosy meal, elegant assistance is also close at hand from Aunt Holly, in the form of her silver tea set. Michelle and Tim's wedding guests are recalled to the gathering by a set of votive candles, and the shared amusement from a day of cross-border shopping returns with an upward glance at the "crazy chickens" from Frankenmuth.

Elsewhere, antique sock stretchers and shoe trees handed down from grandparents add historical depth to the laundry room, while artwork

Continued on page 36



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gathered from the honeymoon in Paris and a Dominican Republic vacation brightens the master suite and the garage-top loft. Dotted throughout the house is an assortment of weigh scales collected and gifted by Michelle's mother. Michelle's father's lineage is honoured by the recurring fleur de lis motif. Not to be forgotten, the Barker coat of arms is displayed with pride as well, as are reminders of Tim's hockey glory days – including his invitation to an NHL training camp.

"It's our piece of paradise," says Michelle standing on the private balcony off her bedroom. She points beyond the deck to the starting point of a trail system cleared by Tim and his Polaris Ranger. After meandering to the ravine at the back of the property, it returns to a campfire set-up in the back yard.

"It's like being at a cottage," she reflects, charmed by the chirp of crickets. "I just want Aidan to enjoy his home and have the best of everything."

With the needs and wishes of her family in mind, she plans the final touches of this multi-year project that has been a labour of love from the start. **OH**

Aidan's love of cars is evident in his ultra-fun bedroom. Tim and Aidan spend a lot of time in the "man cave," where Tim stores and tinkers with his exotic cars and all-terrain vehicles.



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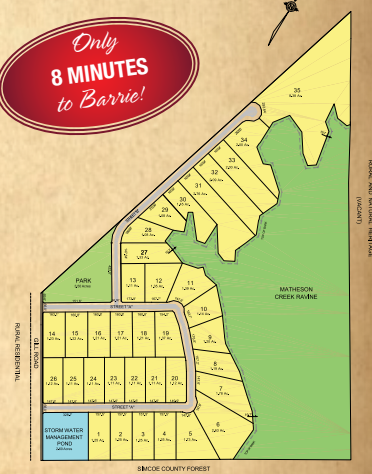


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PHOTOS AND STORY BY MELANIE REKOLA

MINIATURE MARVELS SINGING THE PRAISES OF THE LOWLY *groundcover*

Considering groundcovers are often in the forefront of garden beds everywhere, it seems little praise is given to these tough, tiny plants.

Groundcovers can add a whole new dimension of colour to your garden through their foliage, texture and abundant bloom. Many, with their trailing nature, can soften hard stonework when tucked in crevices, or be encouraged to spill down the front of retained beds giving an “aged” feel. Groundcovers can also help retain slopes and discourage weed growth. Some are so strong that they can act as a lawn or path substitution. Read on to discover more.

MELANIE’S PLANT PICKS:

Stoncrop (*sedum*) – There are so many lovely trailing varieties of the sedum family that I cannot pick just one! The fleshy, succulent leaves of this little plant often look like a flower. It comes in a variety of foliage and bloom colours, plus it’s drought tolerant and happy in lean soil. Bees and hummingbirds love them and the presence of pollinators is an important indicator of a healthy garden. Stoncrop favours sun but will tolerate partial shade. My favourites are:

Angelina (*Sedum rupestre*) – This spiky evergreen variety offers bright golden foliage and turns orange in fall, with yellow flowers in early summer.

Dragon’s Blood (*Sedum spurium*) – This well-loved stoncrop is a semi-evergreen

specimen with rich reddish foliage and bright pink blooms in late summer.

Bronze Carpet (*Sedum spurium*) – This showy stoncrop sports brilliant bronze red semi-evergreen foliage with flattering pink flowers.

Miniature Stoncrop (*Sedum requienii*) – This miniature stoncrop is a tiny leafed evergreen sedum and is the only one that tolerates foot traffic. It forms a dense mat with tiny white flowers and is extremely hardy.

Creeping Phlox (*Phlox subulata*) – Dense and low growing, this soft-looking plant is a prolific bloomer! It’s covered in small purple, pink, white or variegated flowers in spring, with short, stiff evergreen foliage. This low-maintenance perennial prefers sun/part sun and is accepting of lean soils.

Golden Scotch Moss (*Sagina subulata*) – Very dense and low growing, this mounding evergreen perennial, with tiny star-like white flowers in spring, boasts attractive chartreuse foliage. It tolerates foot traffic easily but its shallow root system requires steady watering to thrive. It prefers part shade.

Hens and Chicks (*Sempervivum*) – I like all varieties of this drought tolerant succulent. Their rosettes display dazzling progressive colour changes throughout the season. They favour full sun to bring out their

rich colour. Sempervivums will bloom after the second or third year. An odd looking flower stalk will shoot up from the centre of the main rosette with a cluster of flowers. After the flower dies, gently twist off the stalk. The main rosette has put on new offsets that will fill in.

Cranesbill (*Geranium Bloody*) – Of the many variations of the Cranesbill family, my absolute favorite variety is Bloody, which, to me, is one of the best Cranesbill introductions ever. It bears handsome dark green foliage with happy, upright clusters of bright violet-purple, cup-shaped flowers. Bloom period begins in early summer and continues on throughout the garden season. It likes sun to part shade.

Creeping Jenny/Moneywort (*Lysimachia nummularia* or *Golden Creeping Jenny*) – Creeping Jenny is accused of being an aggressive perennial, however the Goldilocks variety is restrained in habit. It is ideal to combat soil erosion or on rock walls and tolerates lean soil. Preferring full sun to part shade, its yellow-green foliage makes a bright statement when paired with common greens typically found in the garden. The name “wort” suggests medicinal use; it was used by early English herbalists to heal superficial wounds of both man and serpents. It was also used for ulcers, scurvy, hemorrhages and ailments of the lungs.

Dianthus (*Dianthus*) – Dianthus range in colour from pink, to red, to white flowers with notched petals and finely textured leaves. Sweet Williams (*Dianthus barbatus*) are larger and are biennial or short-lived perennials covered with bicolor flowers in late spring. Pinks are low-growing, low-care dianthus suitable for rock gardens with happy open-face flowers and attractive grey-green foliage. Dianthus prefers full sun and won’t stand wet soils.

Creeping Thyme Elfin or **Minus** (*Thymus praecox Elfin* or *Minus*) – This tiny gem has gorgeous miniature flowers and compact leaves. This is another “walk upon” plant and when trod on will let go its thymey scent – plus it’s edible! It favours full sun and tolerates lean soil.

A host of mature, entangled groundcovers can rival the beauty of a tapestry. But be careful to consider the aggressive habit of many and choose the right plant for the right environment. Groundcovers are not only at home in the applications mentioned – consider planting a “mini” garden in a planter or two. Children love this pint-sized forest idea, or dare I say living wall. Perhaps it’s just the thing to take a ho-hum exterior wall to a front-and-centre showpiece! **OH**



Not only at home on the ground, a living wall of mature, entangled groundcovers can rival the beauty of a tapestry.



SEDUM (ANGELINA)



SEDUM (DRAGON’S BLOOD)



CREeping PHLOX



GOLDEN SCOTCH MOSS



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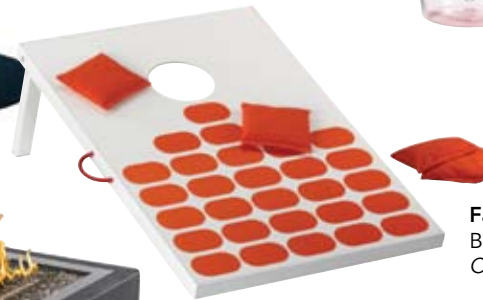


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real estate



DIY REDUX

BY TERRY SMITH // ILLUSTRATION BY SHEILA BRITTON

There was a time in home buying when things were a lot different. In today's market there is a bit of an obsession with finding the home that ticks all the boxes. Ready to go. Turn key. Move in ready. Gosh, if the kitchen is not just right, better move on and look at another home. Some buyers are even distracted by paint colours or a light fixture that doesn't meet their tastes!

In our parents' generation, home shopping was much different. Buyers were more forgiving. They tended to accept things more or less the way they were. Only one bathroom for the whole family? We'll make do! Maybe they would add a bit of paint and wallpaper to improve the décor, but that was about it. The idea of a home that met your needs perfectly was not really on most buyers' radar.

Then came the baby boom generation, with high demands but also a can-do spirit to match. These buyers tended to look at a home not as it was, but as it could be. They were into moving walls, gutting kitchens and bathrooms, reinventing the home to suit their lifestyle. This gave rise to a renovation craze, both do-it-yourself and using hired trades, that made many homes unrecognizable from what they originally were.

Fast forward a little further and in some affluent areas, demanding



buyers with means began demolishing homes they paid a handsome price for and replacing them with brand new homes with all the bells and whistles. In the old days the credo was "don't own the most expensive house on the street," but this idea went out the window and it became common to have homes priced at two or three times the neighbour's home, even on identical sized lots!

With the Internet age, buyers in recent years are constantly plugged in and doing business seven days a week, so most feel they no longer have time to invest in improving a home. The increased supply of renovated and new homes has made this strategy possible. But what has this meant for older homes that, with a little tender loving care, might be serviceable to the modern buyer? Sadly for sellers, the result has been to push down prices beyond what they might hope or expect.

There is an opportunity here for smart buyers. Dust off the old thinking and start looking at homes with the DIY mindset of the past. Look beyond what is right in front of your eyes and view homes for what they could be rather than what they currently are. In many cases, it doesn't take much to re-envision a home to suit your discriminating lifestyle. The hidden value is that if you do this, you won't have much competition, since most buyers aren't thinking this way. So you may get more bang for your home-buying buck, even after you invest in the changes.

Next time you are home-shopping, give this some serious thought. Get help from an agent who thinks this way or get an architect you can consult with. You could end up with less investment, more value and probably a home that fits you better! **OH**

Terry Smith is a custom builder and real estate agent.



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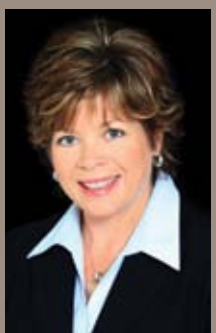
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CURB YOUR DIGITAL CLUTTER

BY ADRIENNE BROWN

Nobody likes to sift through scattered piles of unfiled, disorganized papers to find a phone number, business card, receipt or cheque. Did you leave it on your desk or in the kitchen? Maybe you slipped it into that drawer of items that never really belong anywhere...

Clutter around your home is frustrating because it looks messy, gets in your way and prevents you from finding things efficiently. It may not be as obvious, but digital clutter on your computer, smartphone and other devices is no different.

Tech and social media expert, author and TV personality Amber Macarthur (ambermac.com) says our digital lives can get out of control quickly and easily, so it's important to keep on top of our files and folders, whether they're stored on our hard drives or online.

"Set aside 15-30 minutes every day to get on top of your digital life," says Macarthur. "Grab a cup of coffee and rifle through as many emails as possible, clean up your desktop, and back up your photos and files in the cloud. I travel a lot, so I often reserve my plane time for cleaning up my computer." If you need to play a bit of catch-up to get decluttered, Macarthur says a change of scenery can be helpful. Take your laptop to the couch or your tablet to a coffee shop and sit down specifically to tidy up.



Streamline your digital life by choosing programs and apps that sync all your work across your devices and by targeting specific clutter areas:

INBOX

According to Macarthur, inboxes tend to have the biggest digital disasters.

"With many people receiving hundreds of messages a day, it's easy for them to lose the inbox zero battle," she says. "I use a tool called The Email Game, which works with Gmail and makes answering emails fun – believe it or not!"

Most email programs and services let you create folders, labels and filters. Use these. Take advantage of the features offered to you so you can mark all emails from your boss important, so you can file away newsletters from your favourite organization into a folder for later and so you can go back and search for information easily.

Try: The Email Game (emailga.me) or The Swizzle (theswizzle.com) which helps you unsubscribe from unwanted emails and will create a daily digest of other emails you can read all at once.

CONTACTS

The key with contacts is to be consistent with format. Use full names, business titles and so on so you can search by any detail and find who you're looking for. The more information you save when you first meet somebody, the less you have to search for later. Simplify your address book by keeping one directory (on your smartphone is ideal). Input details from business cards (you can even snap a photo) so you don't have to keep hard copies.

DOCUMENTS AND BOOKMARKS

Digital documents and bookmarks aren't much different from physical files. Folders will help you stay organized here. Create them as soon as you need them and save files or pages to the appropriate directory so you never have to sift through a long list. Group folders by type and by date when you can.

If you want to access documents from anywhere, save them to a DropBox account. You can sync your account to different computers and devices so you're always working on the latest copy – and you can share with other DropBox users too.

For bookmarks, create buttons in your browser for the pages you access most frequently and rename pages if their titles aren't descriptive or specific enough.

Shortcut: Use Shift and Click to select a large block or long list of files all at once. Use Ctrl and Click to select multiple files not adjacent to one another (or to deselect from a longer list). Shift selects multiples, Ctrl selects singles.

Try: DropBox (dropbox.com) or ShoeBoxed (shooboxed.com) for receipts in particular. Evernote (evernote.com) makes all of your notes, web clips, files and images available on every device and computer you use.

PHOTOS

When you download photos from your camera, you're offered the option of labeling them by subject or date. Don't skip this step! If you fill in one of those details, all your photos will be labeled according to that title, so next year when you want to find that photo from the cottage, your search can start with that keyword, eliminating time and effort sifting through images with titles like DC0358135.jpg.

Shortcut: To rename existing folders: press F2 to quickly edit the name of a selected folder; press Tab to move to the next folder.

Try: Flickr (flickr.com) is the top site for sharing, storing and organizing photos online. DropBox is great for photo management too. **OH**

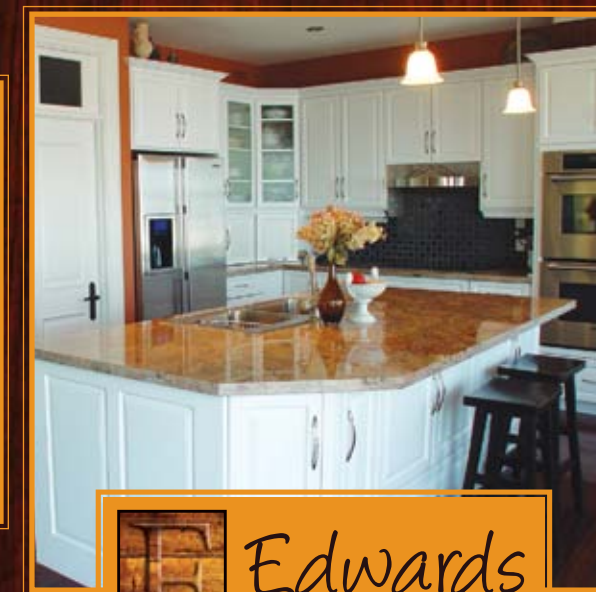
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TIME IS ON YOUR SIDE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BONNIE FOX



THE PLACE: Before mass production, pretty much everything was made to order. Here at **Back in Thyme**, on the main street in Coldwater, shopkeeper Al Townsend takes us back to an era when life was simpler, products were made to last and homeowners sought practical home furnishings that made life easier and more enjoyable. Al's products range from collectibles, antiques and reproduction furniture to pottery, rugs, linens and accessories. This charming store is located in a late-1800s building that once housed a bank. It still has the original tin ceiling and wooden slat floors.

THE STYLE: Back in Thyme offers an eclectic mix of new, rustic, antique and upcycled products and furnishings for your home or cottage. "I cater to a demographic looking for a certain style or a certain item," explains Al. Think country havens or nostalgic cabins in the woods or on the water. Al's wares have a place in every home, especially today when decorating trends include a high/low mix of new, old and vintage. Clients come looking for certain pieces. A jukebox at the back of the store carries a sign that reads: "Sold to a great customer."

WHAT'S HOT: Braided rugs with matching linens, hard-to-find collectibles, candles and accessories. "Candles sell like crazy," Al says pointing to his incredible



selection. While we visit, shoppers come in looking for Coca-Cola collectibles and Al directs them to a display at the back of the store. Reproduction furniture is sought after, along with vintage glass, porcelain figurines, earthenware and new, hand-painted dishes and serving pieces.

FAVOURITES: Al's freezer is a destination in itself. It's packed with Mamma Rosa's frozen Italian entrées. People come from near and far for a taste of the best. Entrées like lasagna and cannelloni are made with fresh tomato sauce and handmade pasta - all from scratch with no additives or preservatives. Another favourite is the vintage lighting made from punched recycled tin.

SEASONAL: Local craftsmen bring in their latest creations. "I like to support the local guy," Al says. He has a very neat bench made from an antique bed frame and a flower bin made from an old set of drawers. Frames made from recycled wood are charming and beachy. Hand-carved birds by Coldwater's Marc Degagné are popular too.

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BY YANIC SIMARD // PHOTOS BY BRANDON BARRE

HOW TO BLEND *his & her style* TOGETHER



It's a classic design dilemma. A couple is ready to move in together and make a house into a home, only to discover that their styles couldn't be more different. Chances are both have brought items from their past that neither wants to part with. So, the question is: How do you make them work together in harmony?

Blending styles is a bit of a process, and you'll probably be hearing or asking a lot of "do we have to keep that?" and "what is that?" type of questions. The key is in evaluating, which will probably include some eliminating because, let's face it, two sofas are one too many for most households. You both need to be on the same page to decide what works and what doesn't, and try to keep the same vision in mind.

Spend a weekend together and analyze what you both have. A key rule is don't throw anything away without permission. Yes, his

or her stuff is now yours – sort of, but respect and trust is crucial in a relationship. Even if you can't stand it – whatever it is – try to find a place for it in your home without displaying "it" front and centre if it means something to your significant other. Opposites attract, so pairing your pieces together can work, it just may take a little extra effort to make it happen. Merge heavier and lighter pieces together, and mix and match materials. When you begin to combine your styles you will be surprised at how balanced it can look.

Materials That Work Well for Mixing & Matching

- Glass and Wood
- Acrylic and Upholstery
- Stone and Metal

Altering the appearance of a furniture piece that either of you already have is a great way to hold onto something that you just can't let go of if your other half can't stand it. You can always re-upholster or paint something to make it more visually appealing to you both.

Once you decide on what you're keeping, then you will most likely have to go shopping to complement your existing items with newer ones that link both styles. For example if you paired his old dining room table with her chairs, then purchase a new chandelier that links the two styles together.

TIP: Mid-century furniture pieces work great in connecting the old with the new



Taking a look into the future when deciding on how you are going to furnish your home is a wise decision. Do you see children down the road? This can help determine where you put your money – do you need that 52-inch flat screen TV right away, or is it better to invest elsewhere?

Make a list of the pieces you need and focus on your similarities when deciding what to purchase – you both love grey, white and clean lines? Perfect! That's an excellent starting



point. Keep an open mind, and remember that sometimes something may not look as great in the store as it will in your home. If your future spouse falls in love with it, it may be worth a try.

Shopping Tips:

- Set a strict budget and stick to it – making an itemized list may help.
- You don't need to buy everything in one day.
- Try shopping at a minimum of three different stores.

Lastly, don't force a style on one another. Most men flee from anything lacy, pink or with polka dots. Most women run the other way from neon signs and sports memorabilia. Don't be cruel to one another and try to decorate in one of these schemes.

A home evolves and grows just like a relationship, and you will learn a lot about each other when merging your styles together. Though it will definitely take some thought and a bit of work, eventually they will both come together to create your final goal in making your house into a home. **OH**

WOODED BLISS

BY M. CAROLYN BLACK
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY



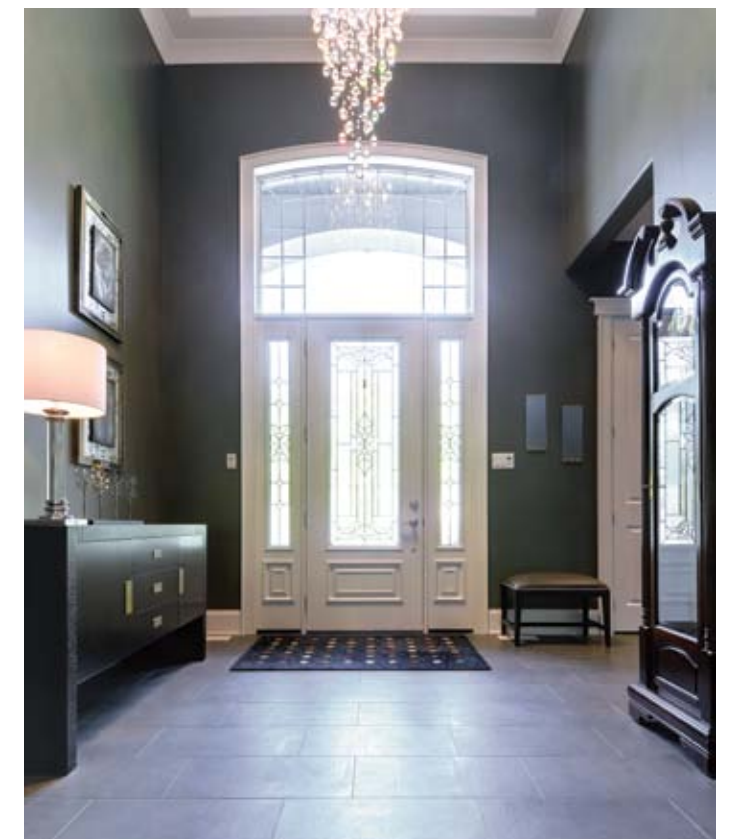
The open-concept, single-floor layout of this home includes a contemporary kitchen with contrasting cabinetry. The dark, vertical line of cabinetry around the wall ovens makes a striking statement. **OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: (1)** The covered deck off the living area will one day be enclosed. **(2)** The cascading crystal ball chandelier is the star of the large foyer. **(3)** In the living room, a cosy bright blue leather chair is a lively choice next to the contemporary fire place.

Vic De Biasio and his wife Jo Anne remember a Barrie far different from today's bustling city.

Vic, founder of **United Lumber Home Hardware**, with stores in Barrie, Bolton, Georgetown and Oshawa plus **United Truss** in Innisfil, says, "When we first moved to Barrie (in 1974) the population was just slightly over 20,000. There were two traffic lights in Barrie at the time." When Vic moved United Lumber, originally just off Highway 11 between Barrie and Orillia, to the present Bayfield Street location in 1984 he remembers there was very little built up in the area. Jo Anne remembers, "The Kozlov Centre was not there; it was a field."

Today, Barrie's population is just over 135,000 and Vic and Jo Anne, who lived in Midhurst for many years, have moved even further afield to a beautiful new bungalow on an acre-and-a-half near the hamlet of Apto. "Midhurst

Continued on page 55





The home backs onto a wooded lot, creating a spectacular view from the kitchen. **OPPOSITE TOP:** A large pantry holds sundries and kitchen supplies for this elegant kitchen. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM:** Colour comes from fun linens, fresh, bright flowers and a delicious summer menu.



was perfect, there was even a gravel road,” Jo Anne says. “I was always driving against the traffic and yet it was five minutes from all the stores.” The two-storey traditional home they lived in was ideal for a large family but once their four sons became adults and moved out, they decided to shift locations and build new. With Vic driving the construction, they asked their friend **Laurie Lamb** of **Inter-Art Interiors Inc.** in Hawkestone to help with the interior design and finishing touches.

While vacationing in Florida a couple of years ago they happened upon several model homes with a perfect all-one-floor, open-concept layout and colour scheme – contemporary yet warm – and decided it was time to design a new place from the ground up. Vic, a mechanical engineer with an MBA before starting the lumber businesses, created every facet of the design and knows how well it’s built, from the inside out. He figures he’s added about \$100,000 more in structural and other improvements than a typical builder would include. Jo Anne says that Vic was on-site pretty much seven days a week for the five months it took to build, and the gorgeous taupe and stone 2,744 sq. ft. home is certainly built to last.

The three-car garage is fully insulated, the home insulation well above code and even the basement floor has radiant heat. But all that warmth might still feel cold without just the right paint, trim and cabinetry colours. The couple turned to Laurie for help. Jo Anne admits

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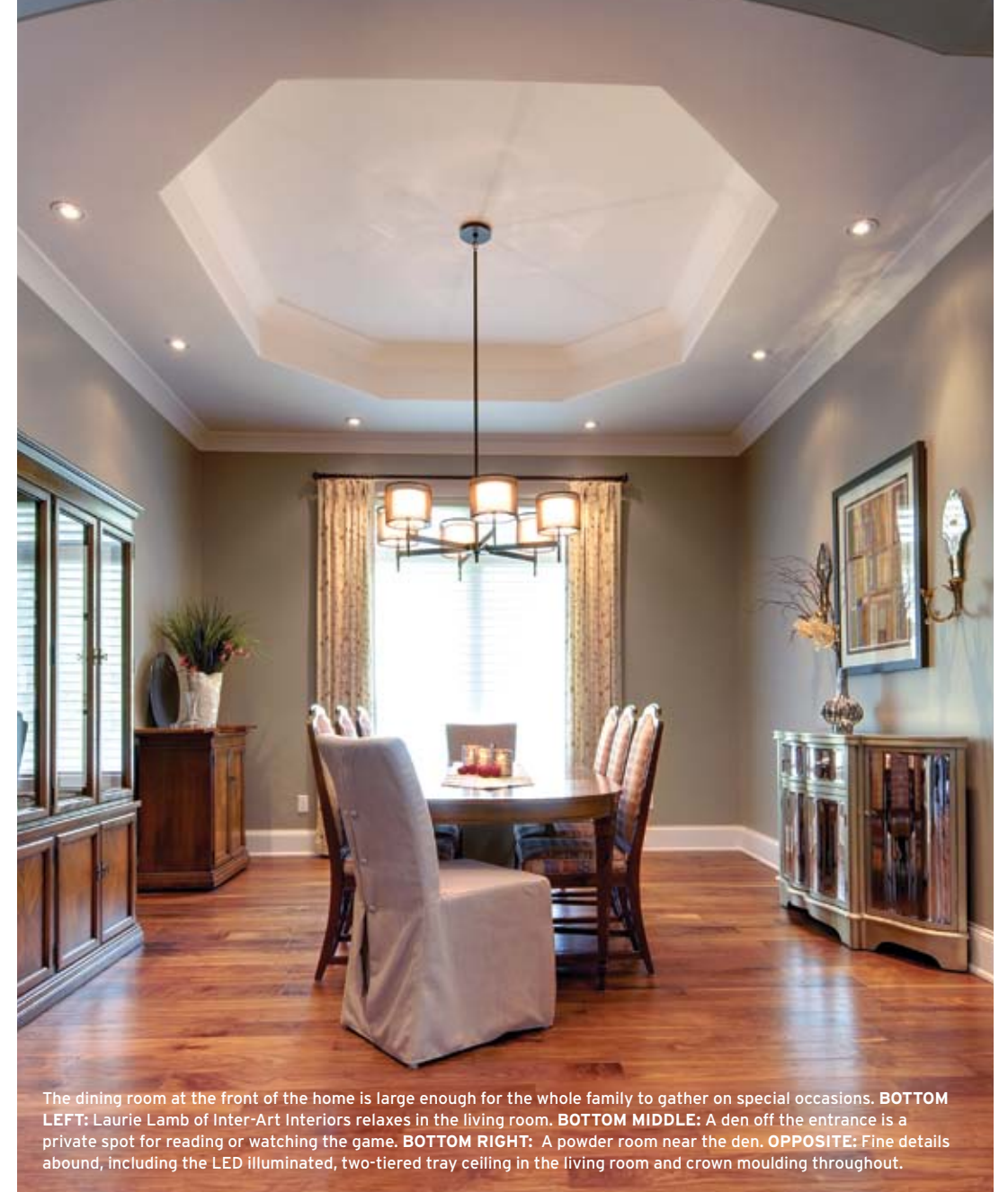
that she finds interior decorating very overwhelming and she's not alone; the myriad decisions involved intimidate many people. Laurie says, "Investing in a new home is full of critical decisions where working with a professional can minimize the stress and offer sources it would be too time-consuming to find on your own."

With Laurie's critical eye for design and details, the couple managed to integrate some of their older furniture instead of starting from scratch, with a few upgrades here and there, like the beautiful glass lamps from Laurie's studio and the stunning chandelier in the entranceway. Jo Anne's favourite place is the living room with a new, blue, peacock leather

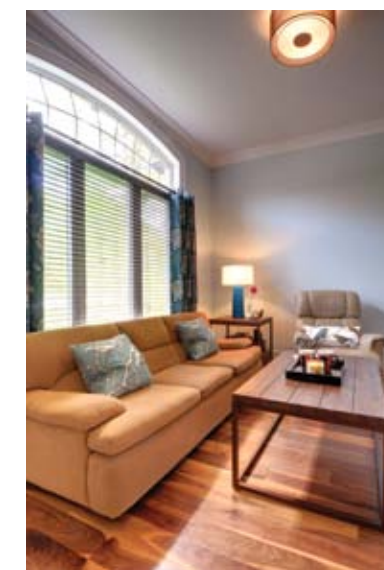
chair from Inter-Art Interiors that's roomy enough for her and several grandchildren – the couple have four. The **Napoleon** fireplace features a lighted crystal insert that warms the room with muted light when heat is not needed in the summertime. Although the fireplace was wired for a television mounted on the stone surround (by **Stones**) the couple instead hung a large photo of the beloved family cottage on Georgian Bay – a Christmas gift from their children,

Jo Anne sits in the leather chair and gestures from the east-facing front door to the large windows and door leading to the back patio and says, "Why would we need a television in this room when we've got all

Continued on page 58



The dining room at the front of the home is large enough for the whole family to gather on special occasions. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Laurie Lamb of Inter-Art Interiors relaxes in the living room. **BOTTOM MIDDLE:** A den off the entrance is a private spot for reading or watching the game. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** A powder room near the den. **OPPOSITE:** Fine details abound, including the LED illuminated, two-tiered tray ceiling in the living room and crown moulding throughout.





feature

this to look at?” The front entrance includes a shapely transom window that mimics the arch leading into the living room and frames the outside forest perfectly. The back patio – inspired by Floridian lanais – was built by Vic himself using maintenance-free Timber Tech from United Lumber and leads out to a back lawn that will remain mostly naturalized and low maintenance, since they spend summers at the cottage. The front landscaping will include select pavers from **Drake Industries**.

Vic says, “Our kitchen was designed by one of our employees (at United Lumber) in Georgetown. He’s an excellent designer.” The Woodcrest kitchen by Kitchen Craft includes cabinetry that conceals appliances and a unique tall, glass pantry door; this and other eight-foot doors throughout the house were supplied by **Pro-Hung Door Products Inc.** in Midland. Laurie Lamb suggested inserting a dark contrasting vertical line of cabinets into the kitchen and the couple loves how it makes a striking statement against the rest of the creamy cupboards; the built-in bookcases in the same cream on either side of the fireplace connect the two rooms and unify the open-concept design.

The unity continues with Cambria Quartz counters from United Lumber, which appear in the kitchen and bathrooms and make a dramatic statement as a folding surface in the laundry room; the oversize utility sink is from **Franke Kindred Canada Ltd.** The kitchen backsplash, a mother of pearl mosaic design, is a favourite kitchen focal point, as are the glass pendant island lights supplied by Inter-Art Interiors. *Continued on page 60*



THIS PAGE: The master bedroom has a comfortable sitting area with a serene view. The master bath is large with two separate vanities, a soaker tub and a glass shower with a creative mix of horizontal and vertical tiles in bright and white hues.

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The floors are engineered wood in a beautiful hand-scraped walnut. Laurie also added her touch in the en suite where a vertical colour contrast appears in the tile work. Large grey tiles serenely line the walls with some dark stripes adding dramatic interest. Vic credits master craftsman **Bruno Porretta** for his meticulous tile installation. Inspiration for the paint colours Laurie helped select came from soothing Floridian spa hues, warmed even more to keep things cosy during our northern winters. The main floor walls are washed in Home Hardware's Beauti-tone White Wave and the warm white trim is Spirit.

Vic and Jo Anne are extremely pleased with the attention to detail trim installer **Jean Guy Gatie** of **JG Carpentry** employed; **Barrie Trim and Mouldings** supplied the wood and wrought iron staircase railings.

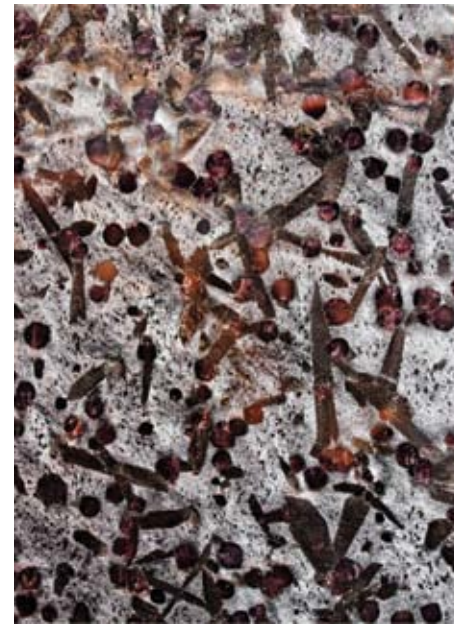
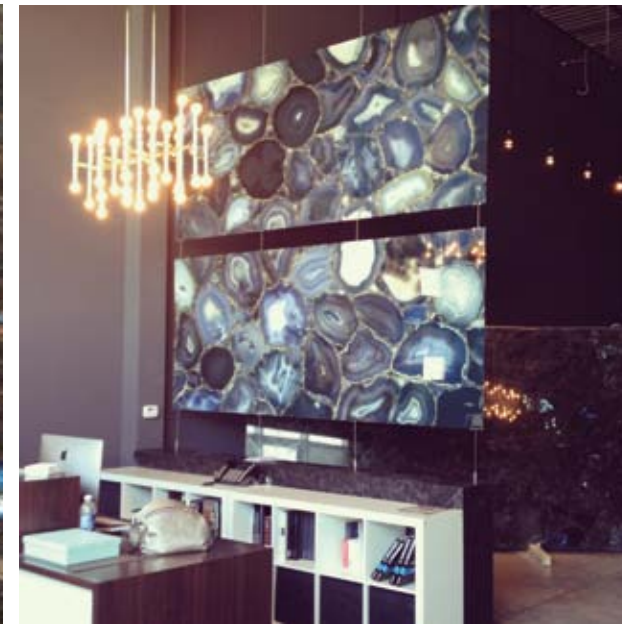
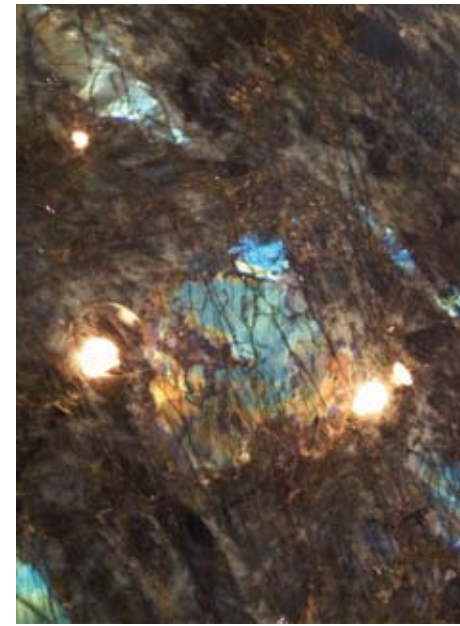
Though the family cottage beckons in summer, returning to a home this beautiful in the fall is surely something Vic and Jo Anne will always look forward to. **OH**

TOP: The covered porch is the place to be this summer. Vic and Jo Anne modelled the space after a lanai in Florida and hope to close it off and enjoy it year-round. **RIGHT:** This custom home's stunning entrance.



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RENO *savvy*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BONNIE FOX

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Caroline Brown

Senior Interior Designer
Midland Home Hardware
Design Showroom

WHAT TRENDS ARE YOU WORKING WITH THIS YEAR? I love chiseled (raw) edges on stone countertops. Finishing touches like this give a space an organic sensibility and work beautifully in both modern and traditional spaces.

CAN A KITCHEN BE UPDATED WITHOUT CHANGING THE CABINETRY? Replacing the countertop, updating the lighting and adding/replacing an existing backsplash can dramatically improve and update the look of your kitchen.

WHAT'S ON YOUR BUCKET LIST FOR THIS SUMMER? Renovating, boating and cocktails, in that order! I have a BIG project on the go with my husband. We recently bought a "diamond in the rough" cottage that is in dire need of a major renovation. We are excited to be working with the Midland Home Hardware Design Showroom team for all our finishing and building supply needs. *Continued on page 64*



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WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS AS A COMPANY? We want to meet and exceed our clients' expectations on every project we take on. We want to be an industry leader, improve daily, challenge ourselves and set the bar higher.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE PROJECT? I enjoy working from the ground up, working with existing conditions and arriving at the desired objective. I'm a problem solver and I find solutions that are not obvious.

Catherine Staples, Patricia Cross, Stephanie Fryer, Samantha Thomas, Candice Manastersky, Genaah Squires Staples Design Group

HOW CAN STAPLES DESIGN GROUP MAKE MY RENOVATION A SUCCESS? With thorough research and planning, professional trades and open communication and trust, we will design and manage your project from concept through construction to all the finishing details, including furnishings and accessories.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR TEAM AND YOUR SERVICES:

We have a creative team of designers with individual expertise that we incorporate into each project to create beautifully unique spaces. Our services range from small-scale decorating to full-scale renovation and construction.

WHAT ARE THE TOP TRENDS? What's old is new again. Our clients are increasingly deciding to renovate their current home rather than move or build new. Old furnishings and family keepsakes are being reinvented through new finishes and people are experimenting more with colour.

Continued on page 66





Madison Taylor

Madison Taylor Design Inc.

YOU PROVIDE A TOTAL DESIGN/BUILD EXPERIENCE FOR CLIENTS. TELL US ABOUT YOUR DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:

Madison Taylor Design provides clients with quality, functionality and aesthetically appealing designs that adapt to ever-changing lifestyles. Through innovative thinking, we develop individual and unique designs for each homeowner. We understand the technical process of construction and planning and are able to design and build effectively within a timeline and on budget.

WHAT EXCITING PROJECTS DO YOU HAVE ON THE GO?

We are working on several different projects to include a new custom kitchen and sunroom addition, main floor renovation with a new fireplace, custom kitchen, dining and family room, and several bathroom renovations. We've also completed a new custom home on Kempenfelt Bay and have planned three more over the next two years. These projects showcase our abilities and unique design from the ground up.

DO YOU HAVE ANY SUMMER PROJECTS FOR YOUR OWN HOME?

We're working on outdoor projects and hope to finish our basement. We'll spend weekends with our one-year-old son and our dogs. My husband and I also enjoy golfing and motorcycling.



Dave Mills

Complete Blinds

HOW CAN WINDOW COVERINGS SAVE ON ENERGY COSTS? Today's honeycomb shades can add to the R-value of your home. The pockets within the blind create a barrier preventing heat loss and heat gain.

TELL US ABOUT NEW DESIGNS AND HOW THEY CAN PROVIDE SAFETY AND ENHANCE THE LOOK OF YOUR HOME: We are always striving to increase safety for children within the home. There's a variety of cordless and motorized treatments to eliminate cording hazards. Technology is also at your fingertips. Operate your blinds with your smart phone or tablet, even when you're out of town.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE SUMMER DESTINATION? I head to my central Ontario cottage country to unwind with some golfing, fishing, bonfires and barbecues. *Continued on page 68*



Greg Edwards

Edwards Custom Cabinets

WHAT HAS EXPERIENCE TAUGHT YOU? Over the past 20 years, experience has taught me that customer service is very important and that you should not be afraid to try something new.

WHAT ARE YOUR CLIENTS ASKING FOR? My clients are asking for the newest in hardware and other space-saving accessories.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS THIS SUMMER? My big plan for this summer and this year is to expand and grow my business.

Stephanie Carter, Adam Perissinotto and Tony Perissinotto

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WHY IS EAGLE PAINTING UNIQUE? We strive to deliver our product in the most satisfying manner possible. We treat every customer's home or place of business with the highest level of respect. We protect the floors right from the front door to the area being painted. We select the right product for the job from several top manufacturers. We accommodate people's schedules.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR CLIENTELE: For all clients, trust is a huge issue. Our residential clients tend to be time challenged, very particular, dual income and know the high level of quality they want. Our institutional and commercial clients tend to be concerned about quality, timely service delivery, insurance and WSIB compliance. We strive to deliver excellence in all the areas of concern.

HOW CAN PROFESSIONAL PAINTERS MAKE A ROOM LOOK GREAT? If the quality of previous work has been poor, we show what excellent looks like. Excellent prep work, great cut lines and the right product all make the end result look fantastic. If the previous work has been good, hopefully we take it to great. *Continued on page 70*





Jeremy Buck

Di Pietra Design

WHAT DO YOU TELL PEOPLE WHO CAN'T DECIDE BETWEEN QUARTZ AND GRANITE? In our opinion, your choice should be made based on the product that you like best from an aesthetic perspective. Quartz and granite each have unique looks, and whatever you choose, you will be looking at your countertop for a long time. Both products are an investment and you won't be changing them often - if at all. Choose what you like best. It's your kitchen after all!

YOUR EXPERTISE DOESN'T STOP AT COUNTERTOPS. WHAT OTHER PRODUCTS DO YOU CREATE AND INSTALL? Di Pietra is a full service, custom stone fabricator. We can fabricate any natural stone application: custom floors and walls, custom fireplaces/surrounds, custom furniture, boardroom tables/reception desks, spas/shower enclosures, door and windowsills - as well as residential/commercial countertops (kitchen and bath) plus accessories for all of these areas.

HOW WILL YOU SPEND YOUR SUMMER VACATION? Spending time with my family is always a priority when I get time away from work.

Lindsay Schultz

Lindsay Schultz Kitchens & Cabinetry Ltd.

WHAT'S YOUR DESIGN PHILOSOPHY? Designing cabinetry to me should be timeless not trendy. My designs are created from a sum of many components that you'll love for a lifetime. After all, cabinetry is pretty permanent. When it comes to designing kitchens, bathrooms, laundry rooms, entryways, etc., I push to make the cabinetry appear furniture-like because furniture is so much more appealing than square boxes on a wall. It really comes down to all the small details to make one timeless incredible space.

HOW DO YOU HELP CLIENTS MAKE DECISIONS ON CABINETRY SELECTION?

Cabinetry can be overwhelming as there are endless choices of colours, finishes and combinations of both. Door styles too; there are so many from which to choose. In order to help clients with selections, I learn about them, see their existing home, or ask them to pull examples from the Internet or magazines to give me a sense of their tastes. I gather information to inspire each client. If anything, it's a building block leading down a less overwhelming path.

ROAD TRIP OR STAYCATION THIS SUMMER?

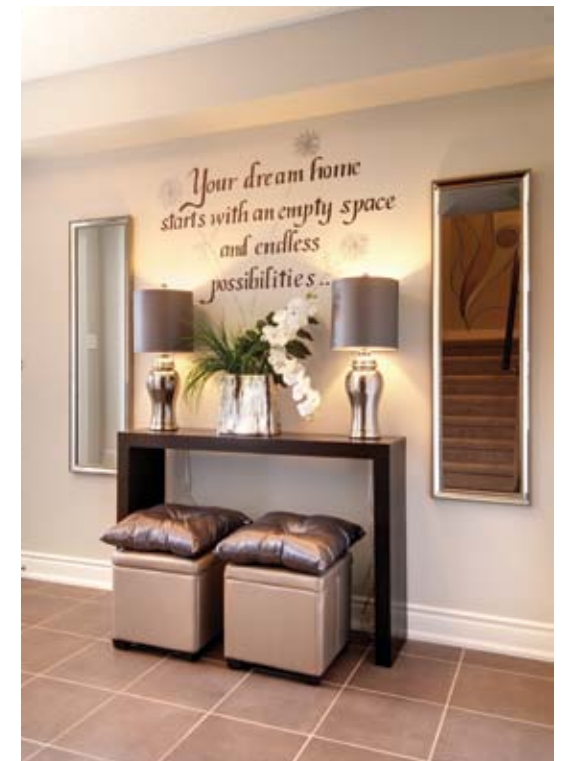
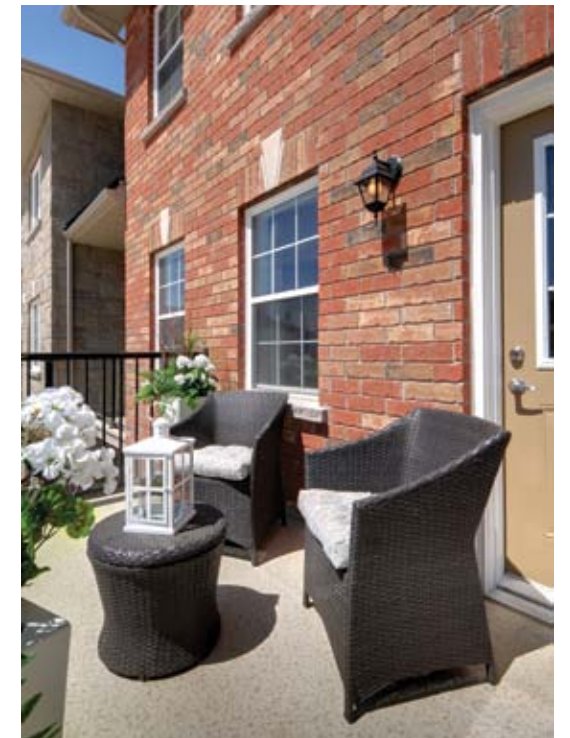
Are you kidding? Staycation! We only get a few short months to boat on Georgian Bay and we use every spare moment to do so!

► See our **directory** for all contact information. **OH**

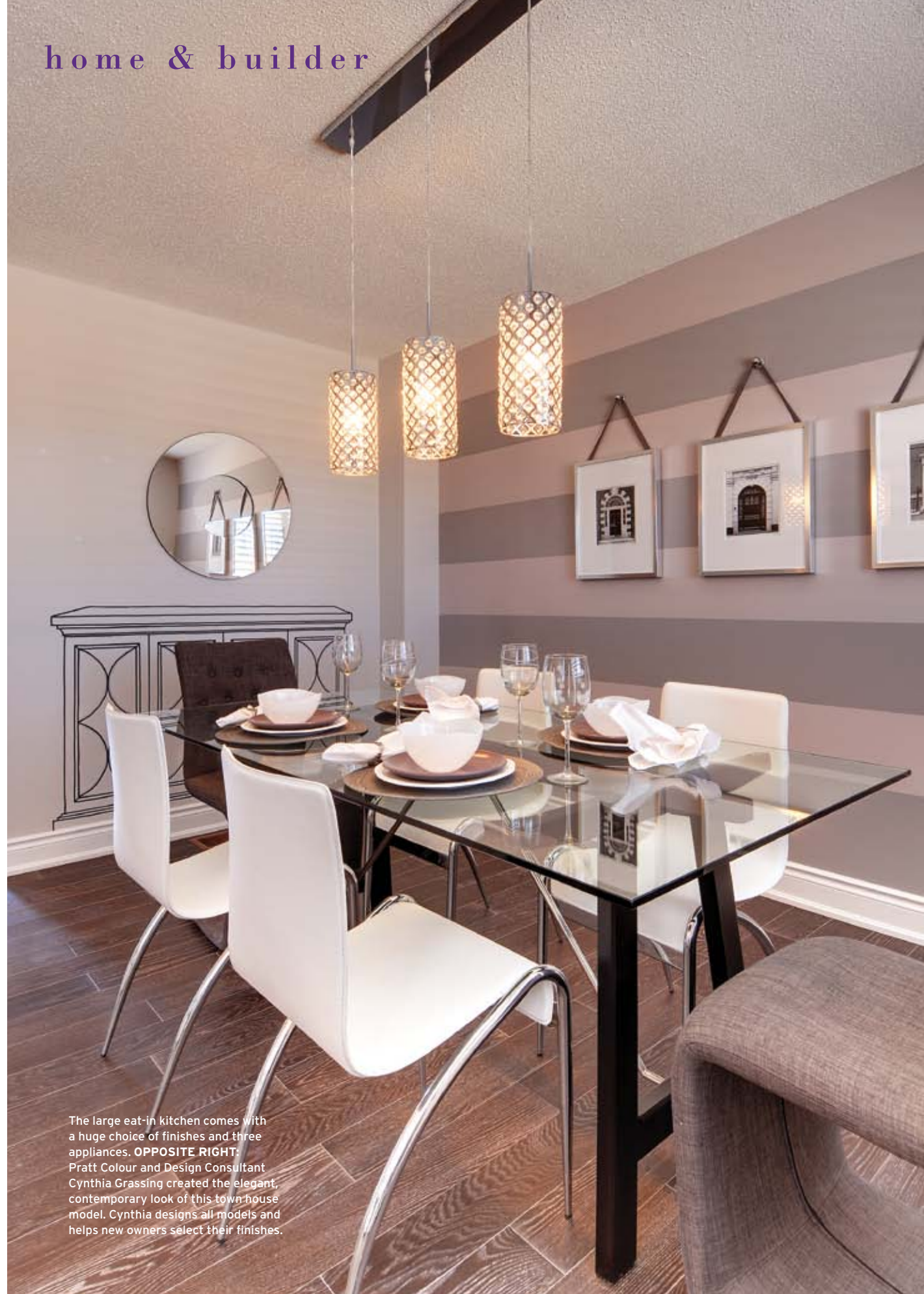


easy living

BY ANDREW PHILIPS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY



The living room in this 1,902 sq. ft. three-bedroom condominium townhouse has a walk-out to a deck large enough for a lovely patio set and container garden.
ABOVE: Every Pratt Model comes with this message: Your dream home starts with an empty space and endless possibilities. This model is a beautiful possibility.



The large eat-in kitchen comes with a huge choice of finishes and three appliances. **OPPOSITE RIGHT:** Pratt Colour and Design Consultant Cynthia Grassing created the elegant, contemporary look of this town house model. Cynthia designs all models and helps new owners select their finishes.



Condominiums are no longer just the chosen abode for the ski crowd and empty nesters.

Condos are a popular choice for the younger set – a group juggling the demands of a busy work schedule while finding time to enjoy social and leisure activities.

Bruno Tidd, sales manager of Barrie-based **Pratt Homes**, says the company's Manhattan development – a mix of traditional and townhome condominium properties located near the Bear Creek EcoPark with floating boardwalk and hiking trails off Ferndale Drive – has proven popular with a wide demographic, especially young professionals ready to embrace the pleasing lifestyle.

"People love the location and lifestyle the community offers," explains Bruno, who doesn't just talk the talk and actually lives in one of Manhattan's condominiums.

"Younger adults might be just out of school and they're working long hours and often driving long distances to get to their jobs," he says. "They just want a place where there are no worries, where everything's taken care of for them."

"Snowbirds and those who travel a lot also like the Manhattan condos because you just lock the door, leave and don't have to worry about anything," Bruno adds.

The latest Pratt neighbourhood, which is largely completed, features three 48-unit buildings, three eight-plex units and three blocks of townhomes comprising a total of 249 units.

Prices for the townhomes, now available for viewing, begin at \$198,900

and offer potential buyers a wide range of layout options, starting from a two-bedroom 809 sq. ft. model on one level to a "stacked" three-bedroom unit spread over three floors.

A tour of the larger, 1,902 sq. ft. three-bedroom model brings Bruno's enthusiasm to life.

The exterior's stone façade, sheltered front porch and second-floor balcony offer an impressive view. Inside, a smartly designed foyer with tile floors provides lots of closet space for coats, boots and sports gear. There's also room for a stylish bench or a console and mirror. Conveniently, a door leads to the single-car garage.

This floor also features a large family/recreation room that's perfect for a games room, home theatre or home office. A walkout leads to the nice-sized backyard.

A lovely staircase leads up to the spacious second floor, featuring a wonderful living area with large windows and a walkout to the balcony where there's room for patio furniture and a patio garden.

The second floor also boasts a powder room and a spacious kitchen/dining room area featuring upgraded granite countertops, a glass-tiled backsplash and plenty of cupboard space. These condos come with a choice of three stainless steel or five white appliances.

This model is beautifully decorated with hardwood flooring on the main floor. Upstairs, on the third floor, are three well-appointed bedrooms and two full baths, including an en suite off the beautifully styled master.

Continued on page 77



All Pratt models have clever wall art by artist Barb Kidd that convey what can be added to the space. This page shows two bedrooms with endless possibilities. **OPPOSITE:** The master bedroom is made to look even larger with antique-look mirrors on one wall. The room also has a smart nook next to the closet area for a desk or vanity.



Pratt Colour and Design Consultant **Cynthia Grassing**, who has 24 years of design experience, including 17 with Pratt Homes, helps buyers choose colour schemes, cabinetry, flooring and building finishes. Cynthia goes above and beyond to ensure the right choices create an environment that reflects the homeowners' own desires and lifestyle.

While upgrades are available for buyers interested in higher-end counters, floors and fixtures, Cynthia says Pratt's standard selections are also impressive.

"There's no pressure to do upgrades," she says. "Some people want to have extra options, but you're going to do very well with our regular line as well."

Pratt Homes has been building new townhomes, condos and detached homes in Simcoe County for over 100 years. The family tradition started with Stephen Pratt in 1890 and has continued for generations.

For this latest venture, Cynthia has prepared 10 different model homes to give potential buyers a real feel for what their dream purchase might look like.

"We want it to be fun and to show people there are lots of possibilities in the space they choose," she says. *Continued on page 78*





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Map showing lots 1-30, environmental protection lands, and surrounding roads like Snow Valley Road and Mennill Drive.



Those visiting the Manhattan site are able to tour model townhomes all decorated with themes ranging from *Urban Rustic* and *Global Discoveries* to *Contemporary Glamour* and even *Rock n' Roll*.

Stencilled on the wall of every model home are the words: "Your dream home starts with an empty space and endless possibilities." That mantra is something Cynthia truly believes as she works tirelessly to create an environment where everybody can see themselves living.

Model homes also feature fun and realistic wall drawings by artist Barb Kidd Ellis that carefully illustrate where an armoire, dresser, stereo or other furniture could be placed.

Pratt also offers a unique program to help potential buyers offset their purchase price. For qualifying clients, the firm allows customers to complete work on their home for credit towards their down payment. This so-called "sweat equity" can be credited by completing tasks such as painting, flooring and trim work.

And since all homes are built to the latest building codes to ensure maximum energy efficiencies, buyers should save even more money on utility costs in the long run.

During the winter months, homeowners also benefit from snowplowing along with ongoing yard maintenance that's in addition to the initial full sodding and landscaping completed around buildings, yards and amenity areas.

In the middle of this ready-made community sits Central Park – Barrie's largest private park – a meeting area that offers some much-appreciated green space. It's the ideal locale to enjoy some casual football tossing, a friendly chat or quiet contemplation.

And while this development's adjacent location to a wonderful nature park is impressive, so too is its proximity to other amenities.

"We're five minutes to everything," Bruno says. "There's such a great balance here. Things are really taking shape." **OH**

ABSOLUTE CABINETS

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BY TONIA WILSON-VUKSANOVIC

SUMMER IS HERE, LET'S LEARN ABOUT BEER

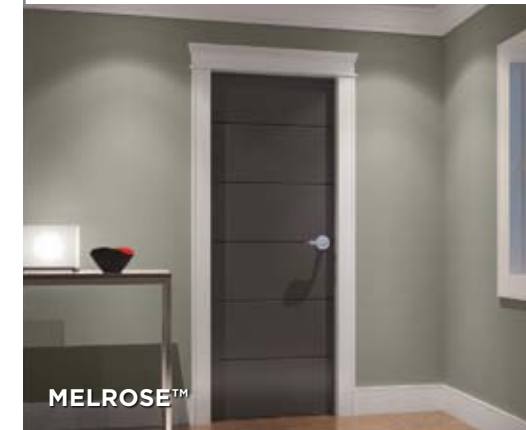


One of the prerequisites to becoming a sommelier is a great love and understanding of wine, and I have been having a full-blown affair with the beloved drink for many years now. So this is why I always feel a tinge of guilt when I openly praise the many delightful virtues of beer drinking. Beer is brilliant on so many levels, and I have to admit, it sometimes brings me more joy than wine.

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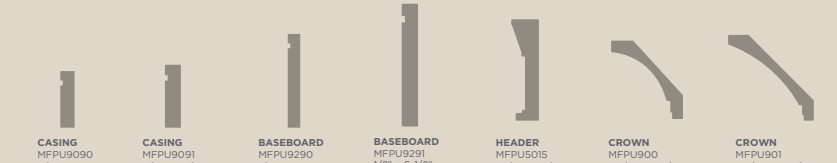
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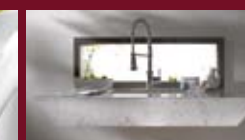
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I have to start by saying that I'm not talking about the mass-market lagers that are pretty much all the same beer housed in different packaging. Instead, I am talking about beers that are made to be distinctive, interesting and typical to the styles that they represent – beers that command a moment to acknowledge what's in the glass. And that's an important point: if you're drinking quality beer, pour it into a glass to maximize your enjoyment. This allows all the wonderful aromas to emerge. The experience is similar to how wine's volatile aromas travel up and out from the open mouth of a wine glass.

Many of the interesting beers on the market (but not all) will be found in individual bottles, or perhaps in a case of six and many are produced by microbreweries or craft brewers.

I find most of my beer at the local wine store. One of the great things about trying new beers is that you can try two or more beer styles in one sitting. For under \$10 you can experience some real taste sensations. Great beer, like great wine, has wonderful aromatics and flavours but is enjoyed for a fraction of the price. You can also indulge more because the alcohol content is almost always lower than that of wine.

Let's have a quick beer-making lesson to understand why beers taste as they do.

BEER IS MADE OF FOUR THINGS:

1. Water, which eventually becomes the beer.

2. Malted Barley or Malt, which is produced by soaking barley grains and then letting them germinate (or sprout). They are

then dried and ready to be toasted. The level of toasting will dictate the eventual colour and flavour of the beer. For example, a lightly toasted malt could be for a pilsner and a dark-roasted malt (which is almost black) will give a stout or porter its desired rich, dark colour and distinguishing mocha aroma.

3. Yeast, which ferments the malt's sugar into alcohol.

4. Hops, which are the flower buds from a climbing vine, and have been used for centuries to impart aroma, flavour and bitterness to beer. The hops are added to the beer to give the desired qualities to the end product. For example, an India Pale Ale (IPA) will traditionally be higher in hop flavours (thus more bitter) than an Abbey Ale, which is rounded and soft. There are many different varieties of hops, and brewers will choose their favourites depending on the style they are trying to create.

Simply put, the water is boiled with the malt so that the malt imparts colour and flavour. The liquid is then strained from the solids. The yeast and hops are then added to the liquid (or wort). The fermentation process begins and alcohol and bubbles are created. This is an oversimplified description but you get the idea.

All beers are one of two styles – either ales or lagers, which is determined by the yeast that make them. Ale yeasts are used in warmer conditions, and tend to create beers with more aromatics. Lager yeasts are allowed to ferment under cooler conditions, which produce a crisper, fresher style of beer.

Now, here's a beer primer to get you started on a summer full of great taste experiences involving a handful of my favourite beer styles and beers

Weissbeir or Wheat Beer:

McAuslan St-Ambroise Apricot Wheat Ale (QC), Bayerische Staatsbrauerei Weißenstephan Hefeweissbier (Germany), Hoegaarden Original (Belgium)

IPAs (India Pale Ales):

Muskoka Brewery Mad Tom IPA (ON), Shipyard Pugsley's Signature Series XXXX IPA (USA), Wells and Young Ltd. Wells IPA (UK)

Porter:

Mill Street Coffee Porter (ON), Shipyard Pugsley's Signature Series Imperial Porter (USA), Harviestoun Ola Dubh 12 Special Reserve (Scotland)

Stouts:

Samuel Smith Oatmeal Stout (UK), McAuslan St. Ambroise Oatmeal Stout (QC), Southern Tier Mokah Stout (NY)

Abbey-style or Trappist:

Brouwerij Westmalle (Belgium), Microbrasserie Charlevoix Dominus Vobiscum Double (QC), Tree Brewing Co. Thirsty Beaver Amber Ale (BC)

Enjoy fully and responsibly! **OH**

Tonia Wilson is a Sommelier and Chef



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SAUCY SMOKY BBQ PORK RIBS

BY MARIA DASILVA // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTT HUNTER



To me, ribs are the ultimate summer food. I mean, we're already eating outdoors – why not make it messy? On rib nights at my house, I cover the picnic table with paper, throw down a heaping platter of these ribs, a pile of napkins, a bowl of coleslaw, some fluffy dinner buns and we dig in! And if this scene doesn't evoke summer, I don't know what does!

Ribs do take a while to become tender, but so many steps along the way can be done in advance. The day before you plan to serve them, rub the ribs with the spices and marinate, and make the sauce. In fact, the sauce can be made up to five days ahead. The sauce is equally delicious on chicken, steaks, burgers, chops – you name it!

While you may want to experiment with other sauce/rub flavours through the summer, perhaps even the meat (beef ribs are a treat too!), this one is a total classic – saucy, smoky, a little sweet and may truly be the only rib recipe you'll need all summer!

CAN'T STAND THE HEAT? GET OUT OF THE KITCHEN...

- Too hot to bake the ribs first? Grill the ribs over indirect heat instead. The timing will be approximately the same, but your kitchen won't overheat. For indirect grilling, place the ribs over a portion of the grill that is not lit or heated. In a gas grill, achieve this by lighting only a few of the burners – in a charcoal grill, by piling the coals to one side of the grill. Be sure to place a drip tray below the ribs to catch the fat and prevent flare-ups.

RIB DONENESS

- The phrase "falling off the bone" often comes to mind when we think of cooked ribs. However, technically, if the meat is

actually falling from the bone the ribs are likely over cooked. A perfectly cooked rack of ribs is very, very tender but should still be clinging to the bone. The best way to test doneness is to insert a toothpick into the thickest part of the meat. If it pokes in and removes with ease, the ribs are done. Be sure to check each rack individually as each one is a little different.

CHIP APPEAL

- If using a gas grill, consider adding wood chips to achieve the natural smoky flavour that's inherent in a charcoal grill. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for using the wood chips, as each gas grill will have different specifications.



SAUCY SMOKY BBQ PORK RIBS

Serves 6 to 8

4 lbs pork back racks (about 2 racks)

1 tbsp packed brown sugar

2 tsp smoked or regular paprika

1 tsp each garlic powder and onion powder

1 tsp salt

½ tsp each dry mustard powder and pepper

SMOKY BBQ SAUCE:

1 tsp vegetable oil

1 onion, finely diced

3 cloves garlic, minced

1 cup passata (strained bottled tomatoes)

¼ cup molasses

¼ cup cider vinegar

2 tbsp packed brown sugar

1 tbsp chili powder

1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce

2 tsp smoked or regular paprika

¼ tsp salt

- **Trim fat from ribs:** Remove membrane from underside of ribs, if attached. Mix together brown sugar, paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, salt, mustard powder and pepper. Rub all over ribs. Cover and refrigerate for one hour or for up to 24 hours.

- **Smoky BBQ sauce:** In saucepan, heat oil over medium heat; cook onion and garlic until softened and lightly golden, about six minutes. Stir in tomato passata, molasses, vinegar, brown sugar, chili powder, Worcestershire sauce, paprika and salt. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until thickened and reduced to about one cup, 20 to 25 minutes.

- **Place ribs in shallow roasting pan.** Bake, covered with foil, in 350°F oven until very tender, 1 ½ to 2 hours.
- **For a charcoal grill, place ribs on grill directly over the coals.** Cover and grill, turning once halfway through grilling and brushing occasionally with sauce, until ribs are browned, about 10 minutes. For gas grill, place ribs on grill over medium-high heat. Cover and grill as directed. Serve with any remaining sauce. **OH**

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Going through the process of merging our Barrie and Elmvale offices has reminded us of all the moving parts associated with a new location. We do not take your support for granted. It has been a nice perk to renew acquaintances with clients who have dropped by for a visit. We are

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Again this year you will have a chance to win one of three art-filled gift baskets by attending a minimum number of locations and filling out a ballot.

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This gated community also boasts a newly opened 9-hole golf course, clubhouse, fitness centre and tennis courts. With its stunning views, scenic walking trails, natural ravines, tree lined properties and an abundance of wildlife, Legacy Pines is truly a leisure paradise. Come and view our model homes!

www.ashtonridge.com (Please see ad on page 93)



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BY JULIE SIMMONDS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TARA CHATTELL

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1. Reuse old mason jars on old barn board for a shabby chic wall-hanging garden. Mark the spots you want your plants to hang from with chalk. Using screws, attach metal pipe clamps to the board. Insert jars and tighten clamps. Fill jars with rock and soil. Plant herbs. Affix chalkboard labels.

Materials: Mason jars, rocks, potting soil, screws, herbs, screwdriver/drill, barn board, metal pipe clamps, chalk, chalk labels.

2. Plant your herbs in individual pockets of a hanging cotton shoe organizer. Fill each pocket with moisture retaining soil. Make cute labels from scrapbooking paper and plastic nametag covers

Materials: Hanging cotton shoe organizer, potting soil, herbs, paper or labels, marker, plastic nametag covers with pins.

3. Create a simple window garden with recycled cans. Use rocks to create a little bed at the bottom of each can. Fill with soil and transplant your herbs. Label with a paper tag, attach with twine.

Materials: Recycled cans, rocks, potting soil, screws, herbs, paper tags, twine and marker.



TIPS:

- Fill your containers one inch below the top with moisture-rich potting soil.
- If potting containers aren't breathable, then make a rock bed at the bottom to help drain excess water. Only a half-inch of rock is needed.
- For the shoe organizer garden, place a small plant underneath to catch water run-off. Water the plants from top to bottom, creating a waterfall effect.
- Use wide-mouth mason jars for large pre-grown herbs. **OH**

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