

feature

# *fine tuned* HOME

BY M. CAROLYN BLACK  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY



**ABOVE:** The Dubes, Victoria, Paul, Nicole and Stephanie gather in the living room of their home. **RIGHT:** The lovely entrance opens to the great room. The music room is located to the left and an office to the right, both with a view of the neighbourhood.



The smart, open layout on the main floor offers a comfortable gathering place for everyone. The two-story stone fireplace in the living room is the focal point, flanked by large windows and a walk-out to the backyard pool and hot tub. The kitchen and dining room are beautifully framed, yet open and accessible.

Having grown up in Barrie, Paul and Nicole Dube knew it was a fine city to raise their own family but as their two daughters, Stephanie and Victoria, approached the teen years they considered a move from their long-time south-end home to an idyllic forested retreat on the north side.

The house hunt began in 2010 but the family quickly discovered their dream home didn't exist yet. Nicole says, "We searched and searched but could not find the perfect layout we were looking for."

They noticed a treed lot for sale on the way out of **Stonegate's** subdivision after yet another tour through a potential home and, in a moment of clarity, realized they had to build a custom design. Paul and Nicole co-own two **Home Hardware** stores, in Angus and Cookstown, and Nicole says, "Owning Home Hardware stores and building your own home just makes sense." They bought the three-quarter acre lot, then cleared all of the trees themselves, hiring professionals to remove the stumps. During that time, the couple spent eight months, "drawing and re-drawing plans for their dream home."

**Mark Taylor** of **Cornerstones Residential Design Inc.** helped the couple transition their pencil sketches into blueprints for a 4,000 sq. ft. home and **Michael Christensen** worked alongside Paul contracting trades and organizing building schedules. Several key components were needed to call the design perfect: An open concept with no wasted space, a room specifically

for music, a spacious kitchen, a backyard pool and spa for entertaining, and rooms that would not only serve a useful purpose but also be used daily.

The process of building required a certain mindset Nicole recommends for other couples thinking about taking the plunge. She says that while it's stressful, building your first home is also exciting and the ability to compromise is huge. She adds, "Building your own home is a long process and demands patience and understanding. Personally, this (experience) taught me to listen, talk things out and compromise – all on a deadline."

The house was finished just before Christmas 2011 and was definitely a dream design come true for the family. Two triple garden doors along the back of the house flank the sweeping two-storey fireplace in the great room and overlook the pool area. The fireplace stone is Wolf Creek Country LedgeStone from Atlas Block and was installed by **Bob Currie Masonry**, who also did all the exterior stonework. The driveway leading to the triple garage was installed by **Advanced Landscapes** with stone by Atlas Block. **Steve Graves** (Atlas Block) supplied and managed all stone work for this build. *Continued on page 80*



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The kitchen is Nicole's favourite room because it's where everyone always ends up. The large island is topped with Bianco Antico granite. The mix of cabinets, chocolate in the island and white along the walls, brightens the space and adds to the home's elegance. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** The dining room, with a view to the backyard, is cosy and inviting and just a few steps from the kitchen, which is convenient for entertaining and family gatherings in all seasons. Cupcakes courtesy of Holly's Sweets and Eats.



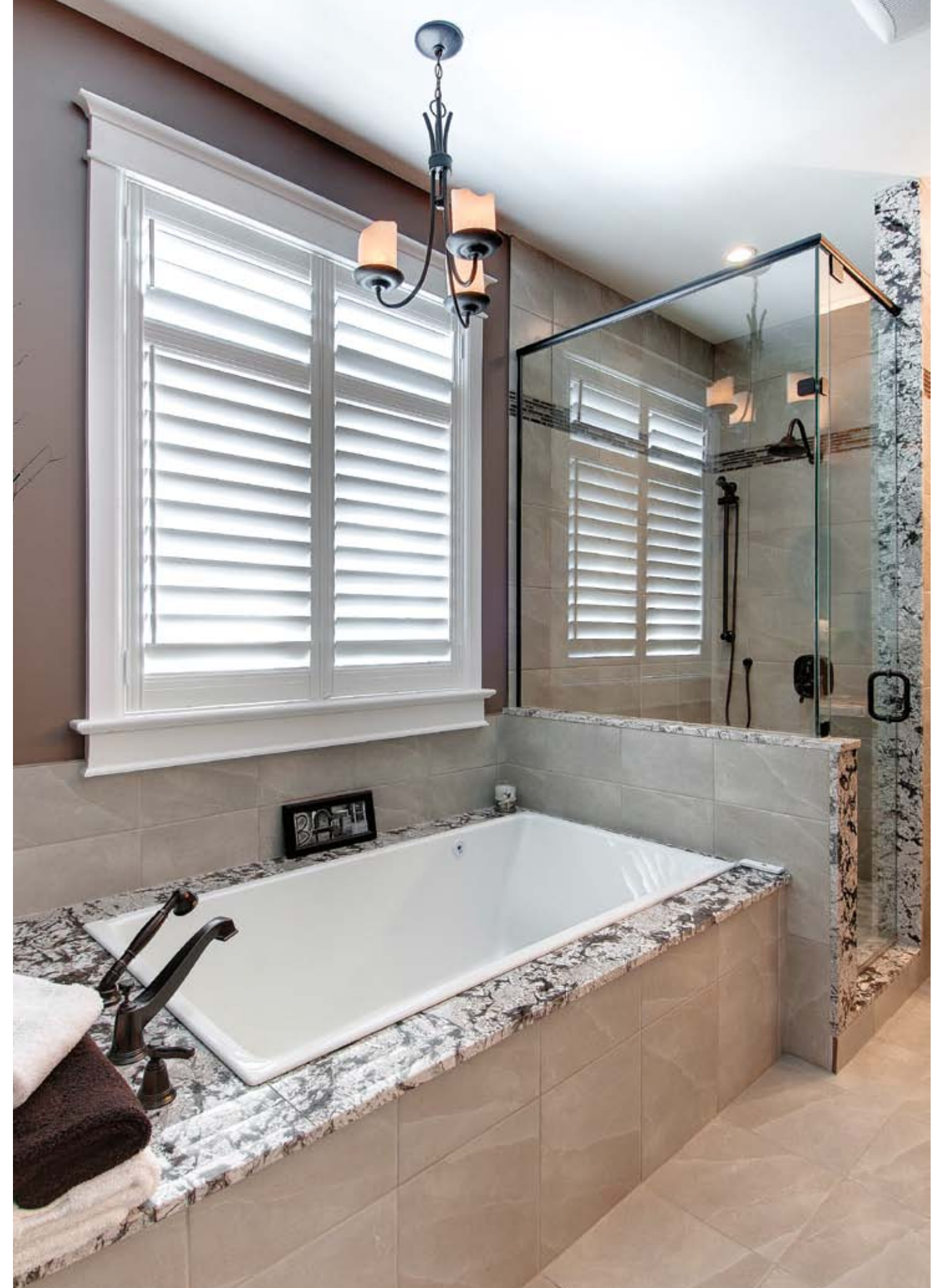




Nicole's favourite room is the kitchen, the place where everyone seems to congregate whether they're entertaining or just spending family time. The custom cabinets in the kitchen and throughout the home were sourced through **HF Smith Lumber** (Home Hardware Cookstown). The cabinets, fireplace box and detailed archways were installed with the help of their good friend **Dave Duiella**. The unique and beautiful granite in the kitchen is called Bianco Antico and was also sourced through HF Smith Lumber.

The main floor en suite off the master bedroom includes more Bianco Antico on surfaces and the custom cabinets manufactured by Bertch, are supplied by HF Smith. Lighting in the bathrooms and throughout much of the home was sourced at Home Hardware, where the couple also purchased many of the furniture pieces. *Continued on page 82*

The master suite is tucked beside the great room. It's a private space with a view of the backyard. Plum accents mix with the white furnishings in the bedroom. The walk-in closet is the perfect size and organized just so. The elegant look continues in the en suite, which is open with luxurious finishes and a separate bath and large shower.







The backyard season begins early with their hot tub spa, but the couple didn't want the spa, which circulates into the swimming pool, open year round. Nicole says "We wanted something to look forward to each spring so in the evenings we'll be outside in the spa as soon as the snow melts." They plan to finish the interior of the pool house with a TV-room plus a change area with a separate room for pool equipment.

The rear garden doors lead to a covered porch with its own separate outdoor space, offering a view of the pool – an idyllic spot to dine with friends and family and play music. Hydro was specifically added to the porch for this reason.

For a musical family that often serves in worship at Mapleview Community Church, having a room devoted only to music was a must. Paul plays bass guitar and Victoria plays guitar. Stephanie plays piano and will be studying music at university in the fall. Nicole also plays piano and sings. The red music room just off the main entrance holds a grand piano and several guitars but Paul and Nicole plan to create an even bigger music spot in the lower level.

The 2,700 sq. ft. basement is unfinished for now, but – with its nine-foot ceilings and extra-large windows – promises to be spectacular. Nicole says, "We will have a shop area and storage, a theatre room and a workout room. Directly below the great room upstairs will be a large area for entertaining with a full band, including drums and an electronic keyboard. We want to create a comfortable lounge area with seating for socializing." A guest bedroom and en suite bath are also planned. *Continued on page 84*

**TOP LEFT:** The music room, where Stephanie plays the grand piano, has red walls and comfy seating. The Dubes plan to add an even bigger music room when they finish the lower level. **ABOVE:** The family gathers outside near the pool before Stephanie leaves for her prom. **LEFT:** The hardest working room in the home has a second fridge and top-of-the-line washer and dryer. Paul used his ingenuity and installed the appliances and cabinets so the counters are perfectly flush.



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**BELOW:** The upstairs loft-area belongs entirely to the girls. Stephanie and Victoria (pictured playing the guitar in her room) each have their own brightly decorated bedrooms with walk-in closets. Their rooms are connected by an en suite with separate sinks and vanities. They share a homework room and a lounge, where they gather with their friends.



Another important factor in the home design was including a private nook for Stephanie and Victoria. Nicole says, “We designed this house in a way that made the girls feel like they had their own space upstairs. Their bedrooms each have a walk-in closet, an adjoining bathroom with a separate area for the toilet and tub.” A fun touch in both girls’ rooms is a sparkly chandelier. Just off the bedrooms, a lounge area with glass pocket doors for TV, friends and Wii games and a loft for homework study with a nearby railing that overlooks the great room, complete the teen sanctuary.

“We are quite content at how our dream home has turned out, and consider it our forever home,” says Paul and Nicole. **OH**



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