



STORY **GEORGETTE MCCULLOCH** | PHOTOGRAPHY **SANDY MACKAY**

At Glencairn Farm

WITH KLAUS AND BEATRIX NIENKÄMPER



THE SUN SHINES BRIGHTLY AS KLAUS AND BEATRIX NIENKÄMPER SERVE CHAMPAGNE AND CHARCUTERIE TO THEIR GUESTS ON THE VERANDA OF THEIR 100-ACRE FARM NEAR CREEMORE.

The couple purchased the property in 1981 as an escape from their busy lives in Toronto where Klaus, Canada's king of modern furniture, has guided his iconic business, Klaus by Nienkämper, for more than half a century. He has set the standard for furniture manufacturing in Canada and is still going strong with his exquisite taste and style.

Glencairn Farm is the family's happy place, where Klaus and Beatrix – married 52 years – gather with their three children and grandchildren for a frolicking good time all year round. It's also where Klaus stables the last of his prized Friesian horses.

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LEFT: Klaus Nienkämper travels around his 100-acre property on a John Deere Gator. **BELOW:** Detailed carvings on the pine front door from Sweden add a touch of formality to the front entrance. **OPPOSITE:** In the main living area, a leather de Sede sofa was produced under licence in the Nienkämper factory almost 30 years ago. Its beautiful curves wrap around the fireplace. A Richard Schultz Petal Table sits in the curve.



The Polo chair was commissioned by Hilary Weston for Galen Weston's polo team and Prince Charles' 40th birthday. Several surround the harvest table.



The sculpture is by Krystyna Sadowska.



RIGHT: Trees surround and protect the treehouse. A swing for the grandchildren hangs from its joists. **FAR RIGHT:** Beatrix stands on the balcony of the treehouse, enjoying the view to the pond. The chair is by Harry Bertoia for Knoll. **BELOW:** Gnomes by designer Philippe Starck add a playful touch inside the treehouse.



“We always drove past this area to our cottage on Georgian Bay and one day, when visiting a friend, discovered the fascinating landscape,” Klaus recounts. “We searched for two years and found the right property.”

When Klaus and Beatrix purchased this estate, it had an old farmhouse and a second small prefab home. “We moved into the prefab with the intent of renovating the farmhouse,” Klaus says. “We discovered that the prefab was at the best location on the property and we decided to use it as the core and expand it to the south, north and east.”

Today, their 2,700 sq. ft. home sits high on the property, surrounded by incredible views of the vast countryside. There is a guest cabin, a large treehouse, gazebos, a horse barn and a carriage house.

TOP LEFT: Daniel Libeskind’s Spirit House chair sits in a meadow at the Nienkämper’s farm. It was created for the Royal Ontario Museum in stainless steel, but Klaus thought a red version looked best with green grass or snow. **ABOVE:** From the Airstream trailer, a favourite of one of the granddaughters, to the cabin with the red bull’s head, guests can take their pick of unique sleeping spots on the farm. **LEFT:** More like a suite in a five-star hotel, the cabin is a large beautiful room filled with treasures, comfort, peace and memories. **BELOW:** Pretty textiles brighten up the Airstream.



Klaus has spent a lifetime steering the Friesian-drawn carriages in competitions throughout North America and at local events. At one time Klaus and Beatrix owned 11 Friesians, many born at Glencairn. They still have two, 18-year-olds Thomas and Nanook. In the carriage house, dozens of horse brasses hang on the walls amidst a large assortment of saddles, other horse tack and there’s also a prominent portrait of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip. The carriage house is also the obvious place to keep the large, whimsical Moooi Horse Floor Lamp (without the lampshade) that came from the famous Klaus by Nienkämper Toronto showroom. The space at 300 King Street East, ground zero for modern furniture in Toronto, is now simply **Klaus** – a bespoke modern furniture store run by his son, Klaus II. *Continued on page 34*



At one end of the galley kitchen, iconic table and chairs, designed by Eero Saarinen and produced by Knoll International, are placed to enjoy views through windows on two sides of the home. The folk-art collection adds dynamic colour to the room.

BELOW: Klaus and Beatrix enjoy a glass of wine in the pergola. The figure behind them is an antique carving of a Gurkha, a Nepalese soldier. The pergola is on a hill overlooking treetops and offers a great vantage point to watch birds. **BOTTOM:** On display in the master bedroom are grey chairs at the table, both by Nienkämper. The red lounge chair is an Eero Saarinen design for Knoll.



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Back in the barn, Klaus sits in a chair from the Beatrix Destinations line. They were asked by future Ontario Lieutenant Governor Hilary Weston to create the leather chair for Prince Charles' 40th birthday. "It was designed as a folding chair to be used during polo games," Klaus explains. "I liked it so much that I made some for myself."

The exterior of the home has weathered beautifully. Inside, it's full of extraordinary folk art, antiques and sophisticated

contemporary furniture Klaus has either imported, commissioned, designed or manufactured over the past 50 years. "Our love of folk art started after visiting a famous designer in Santa Fe, Alexander Girard," Klaus says. "They created a wonderful museum there to house his collection. This defined the look of our house." Klaus and Beatrix found and brought pieces back from travels to the Arctic, Quebec and areas in the U.S. southwest.

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During a walkthrough of the cottage, the couple pay homage to the fine furnishings in each room. Each piece, including designs by Alvar Aalto, Eero Saarinen, Richard Schultz and Charles Eames, has a story and is part of the evolution that is Klaus, the man who arrived in Canada from Germany in 1960 with no money but full of ambition, style, grace and a sense of humour. He met Beatrix when he returned to Germany in 1965 for his sister's wedding. They fell in love right away and Beatrix followed Klaus to Canada to help take the North American furniture design world by storm. Klaus and Beatrix have three children, daughters Ottilie and Rebecca, son Klaus II, and seven grandchildren. The grandkids love the farm and play and stay in an old Airstream that sits across from the guest cabin with the red bull's head over the front door.

The farm has hosted many celebrations and reunions, including both daughters' outdoor weddings. **OH**

RIGHT: A collection of horse brasses that were used for decoration of the harnessed horses fills one wall in the Carriage House. The bench below is from the Woodshop on Fogo Island. **BELOW:** The leather harnesses of all the Glencairn horses hang on the wall of the Carriage House.



Thomas and Nanook, both 18 years old, enjoy a treat from Klaus. The two geldings still drive carriages around the farm but no longer compete.

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