



CARETAKING *History*

STORY **KRISTIN SCHNELTEN**
PHOTOGRAPHY **SANDY MACKAY**
FOOD **GOLDSMITH'S ORCHARD MARKET**
FLOWERS **COLLINGWOOD FLOWERS AND HOME DECOR**



WHEN DOES THE STORY OF A HOME BEGIN? IS IT THAT FIRST STEP YOU TAKE ACROSS THE THRESHOLD, KEYS IN HAND, FULL OF ANTICIPATION FOR A NEW BEGINNING? OR MAYBE IT ALL STARTS WHEN YOU REDECORATE OR RENOVATE, MAKING A CHANGE THAT REFLECTS WHO YOU ARE. *Continued on page 54*

Enjoying the sun in the living room front window, myrtle topiaries surround a wire bird cage from Niche. Wood from sycamore trees was used in this room for all the trim. The floors are oak.

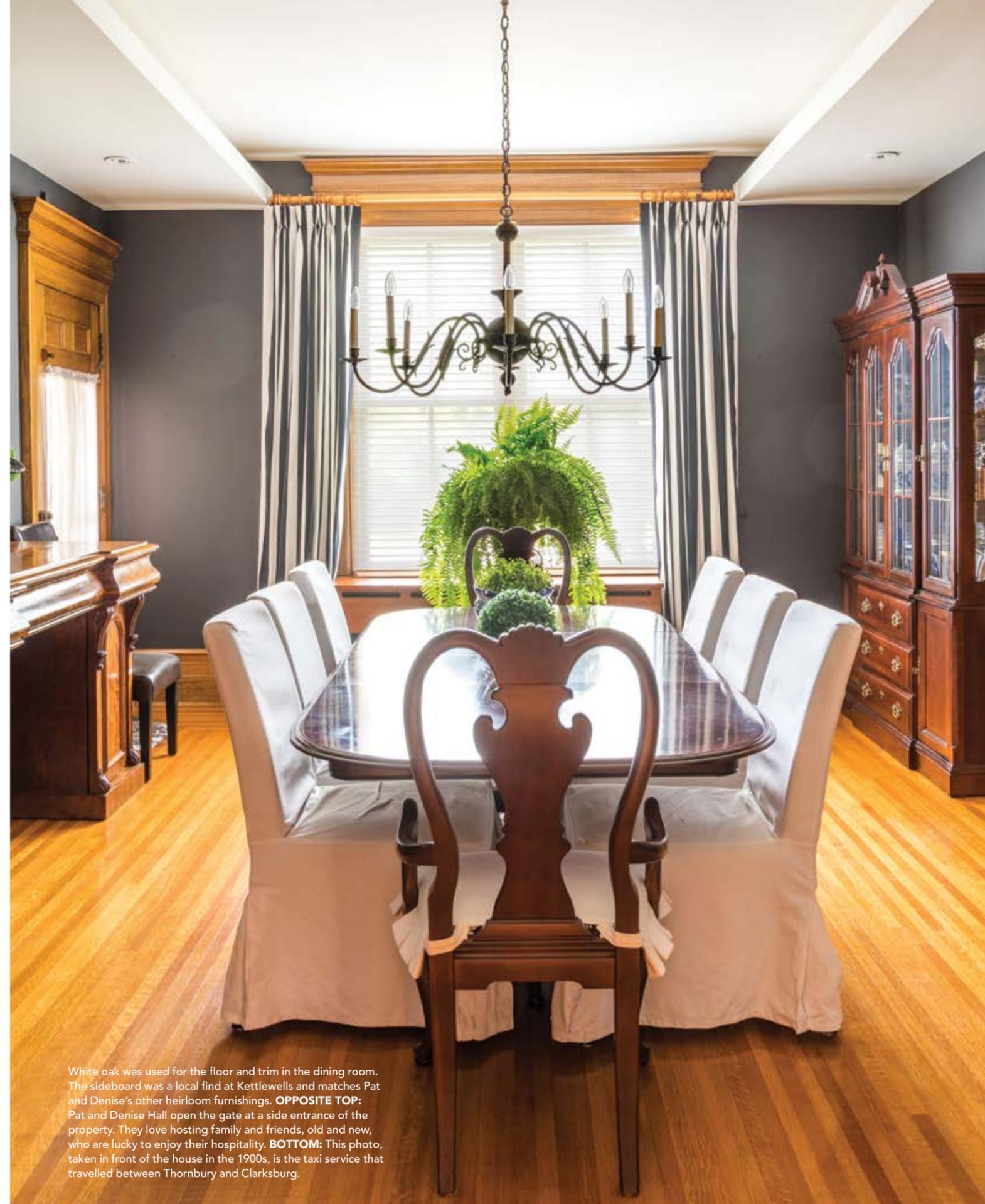


For Pat and Denise Hall, the story of their Thornbury home began long before their closing date. In fact, it began before they, or even their grandparents, were born. This tale commenced in 1904, when a man named Mathias Snetsinger set out to build a new home for his family, making choices in the process that would truly stand the test of time.

Snetsinger, a prominent local businessman, councilor and eventual mayor of Thornbury, opted for the best – the best design, best materials, best craftsmen. And each of his decisions is apparent today in this stately masterpiece.

Beyond the imposing size, strong lines and grand placement from the street, the most striking aspect of this home is its woodwork. Beginning with the four-inch thick front door, framed by wide, deep-set sidelights and transom, leading into the broad staircase and panelled hall, Snetsinger utilized wood to make a bold statement. Every room in the house, from the den, living and dining rooms, to each bedroom, features a different species of wood (some of them quite rare) from around the world. Each door and column, every inch

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White oak was used for the floor and trim in the dining room. The sideboard was a local find at Kettlewells and matches Pat and Denise's other heirloom furnishings. **OPPOSITE TOP:** Pat and Denise Hall open the gate at a side entrance of the property. They love hosting family and friends, old and new, who are lucky to enjoy their hospitality. **BOTTOM:** This photo, taken in front of the house in the 1900s, is the taxi service that travelled between Thornbury and Clarksburg.

“Some houses have other focal points, but in this house, it’s all about the wood.”



feature

of trim, is heavy, solid and clear of knots.

The series of homeowners that followed Snetsinger evidently appreciated and preserved his choices. "It doesn't look as though a single child has lived here," says Pat, "There's only one nick, on just one door, in all the woodwork."

Pat made this observation during their first year in the house, as he renovated the kitchen, three bathrooms and mudroom. Denise recalls her husband making repeated discoveries of precision carpentry along the way, saying, "Pat

would call to me from one room or another, saying, 'You have to come see this! Can you believe they made this cut with a hand saw?'"

The couple is continually overwhelmed with the talent, love and craftsmanship that went into their home's construction. "It's a thrill for us to live here," Denise declares. "Some houses have other focal points, but in this house, it's all about the wood. There's something about natural wood. It's alive, and it brings such an energy into wherever it is."

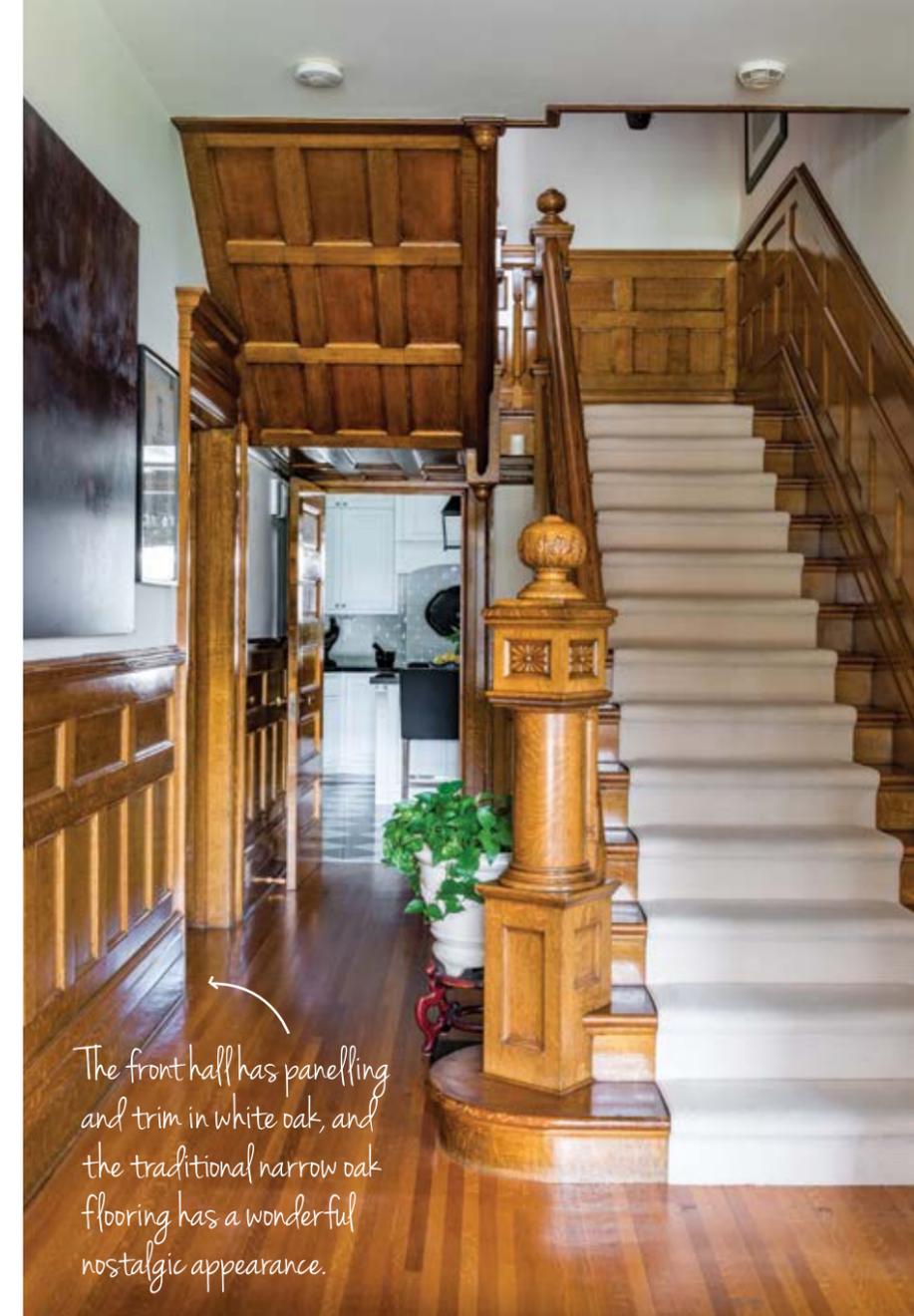
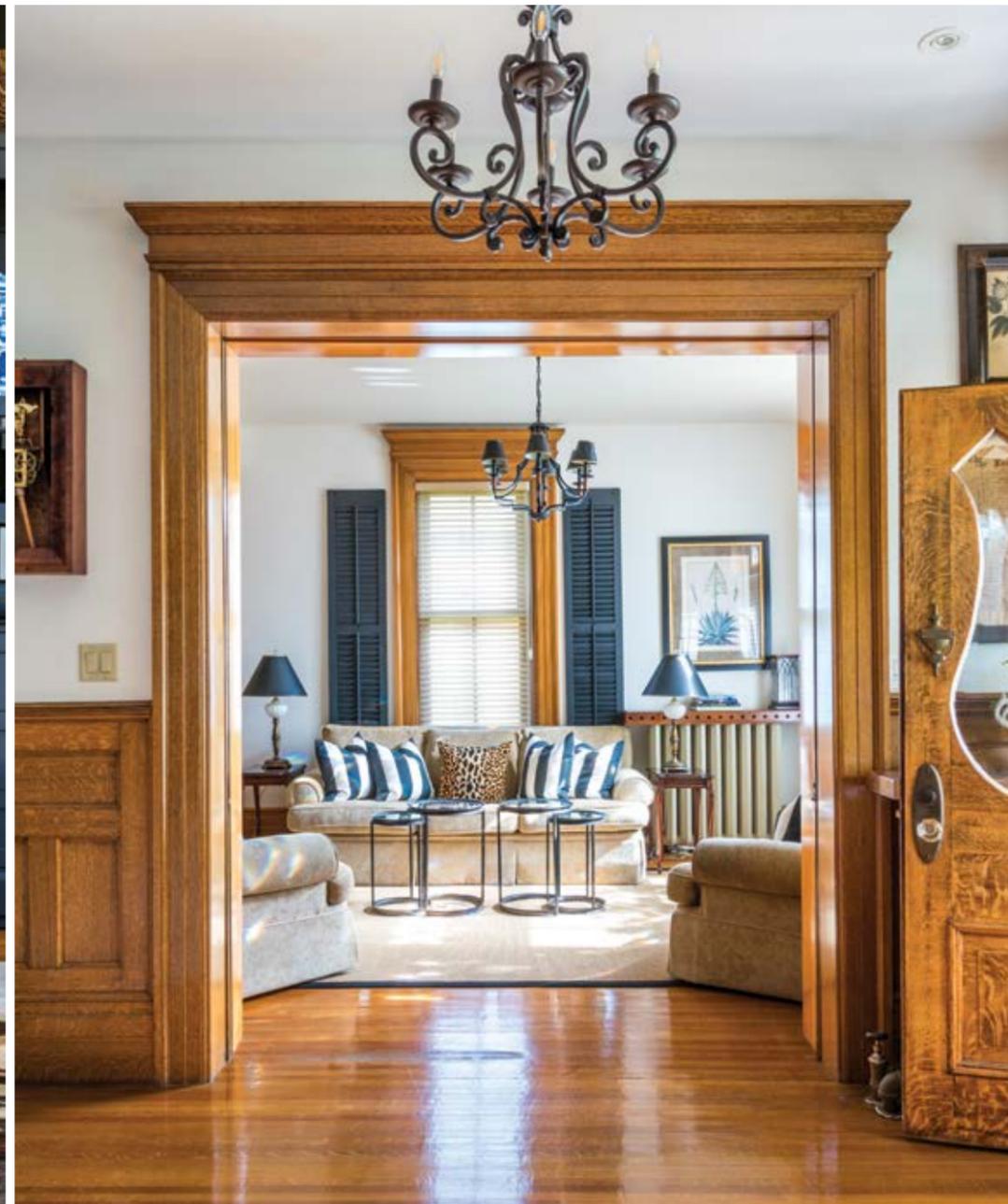
"When you live in a home like this, you're

very aware that you don't own the house. You're just a caretaker, looking after it for the next generation," says Denise.

Part of that job is caring for the artifacts passed on with the keys. In an antique leather bag, tucked away for safekeeping, Denise keeps the photos that came with the house – of the Snetsinger family, the home at various times through its history, and a particularly cherished print of Snetsinger standing in the dining room, surrounded by carpenters and the working tools of their trade.

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BOTTOM LEFT: In the study, firewood is waiting for a cool night to light a fire and enjoy some down time. Black Cherry was used for the trim in this room. A large blue and white ginger jar is part of an impressive collection. **BELOW:** Looking into the living room, painted in Benjamin Moore's Cloud White, from the front door, the oak flooring looks exactly as it did when first laid in 1806. The shutters add a touch of texture and are a nod to Denise's love of France. **BELOW RIGHT:** A cherished photo of former Thornbury Mayor and builder of the home, Mathias Snetsinger, standing in the dining room of the home surrounded by tradesmen and carpenters. It is unbelievable to think that building this home was done without today's modern power tools.



The front hall has panelling and trim in white oak, and the traditional narrow oak flooring has a wonderful nostalgic appearance.



In the renovated kitchen, cabinets by Riverside Custom Cabinets reach to the ceiling and offer lots of storage. The toile-patterned roman shade (Fresh Designs), shutters and the large tin platter above the range add a touch of France to the space. The paint colour is Chantilly Lace by Benjamin Moore. Vegetables and lemons from Goldsmith's Orchard Market.

THIS BEAUTIFULLY APPOINTED KITCHEN IS PERFECT FOR COOKING MEALS FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS.



LEFT: A mid-century modern sideboard in the upstairs hall is home to a vintage typewriter, given to Pat by Denise. The radio came from Pat's family. **BELOW:** The white oak newel posts on the second floor highlight the variances of the grain and its beauty. Benjamin Moore's Oxford White was used throughout the upper and lower hall. **BOTTOM LEFT:** From the front hall, looking through the kitchen to the back entrance and mudroom, the black-and-white tile has been set on the diagonal to the cabinets and the walls. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** A vanity from Riverside Custom Cabinets shines in one of the bathrooms totally renovated by Pat Hall.



Conscious of the home's value to the community, the couple's updates were designed to modernize while maintaining the house's history. Decorating choices were part of this effort. They worked with **Deborah Masters** to select paint colours and **Nancy Driscoll** of **Fresh Designs** for window coverings, all intended to complement and highlight the woodwork.

Although the majority of the renovations were undertaken by Pat, who for decades remodeled washrooms through his company **JP Hall**, the couple chose **Rob Perry** of **Riverside Custom Cabinets** to construct the cabinetry in the kitchen, bathrooms and mudroom.

The couple furnished the home with many antiques including a sideboard in the dining room from **Kettlewells**. This is the first home in the area for Pat and Denise, but they were fortunate to have an established circle of friends. Pat had been visiting Thornbury

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Bird's-eye maple pillars divided the tranquil master bedroom from a seating area. An original glass transom still opens above the door into the hall. Historically, transoms allowed the passage of light and air in a home.

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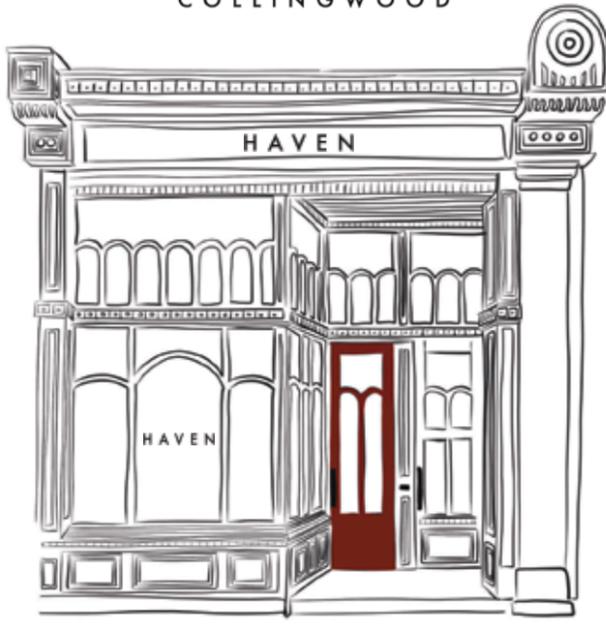
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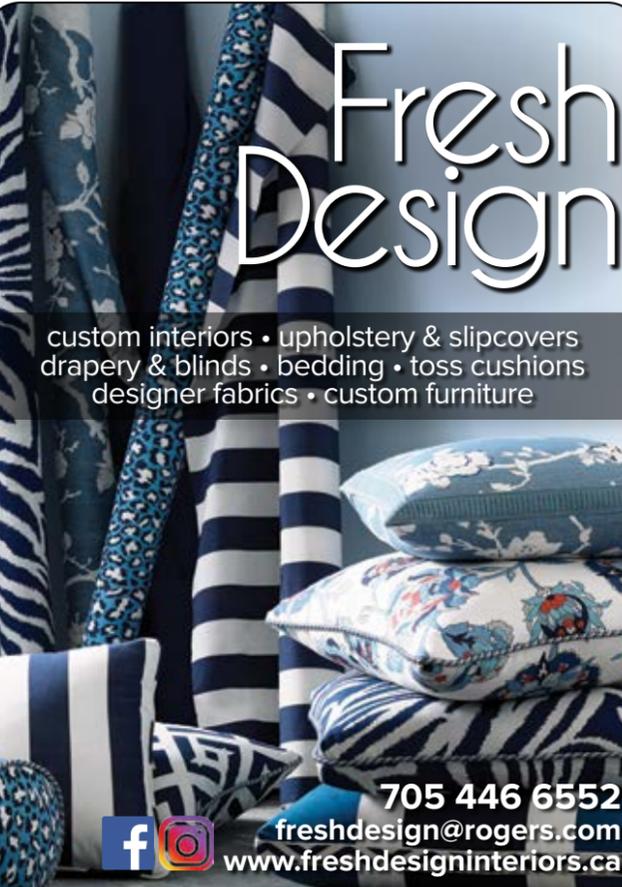
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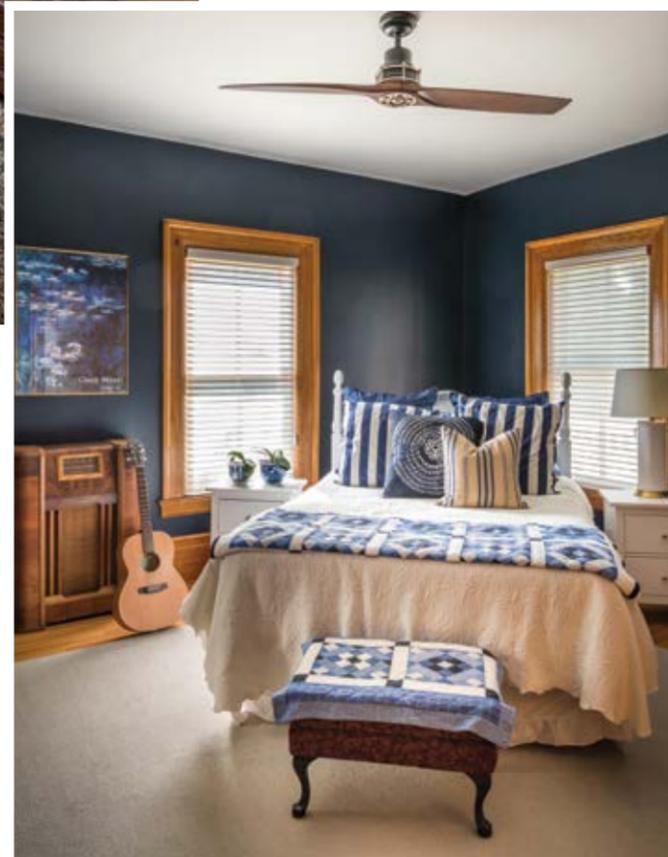
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feature



LEFT: An impressive armoire in a guest bedroom was bought with the house. Its pristine finish reflects light in the room. **BELOW:** Another masterful renovation by Pat, the freestanding sink keeps the space open and airy and basket-weave tile in the shower extends throughout the room. The walk-in shower has a large rainhead. **BOTTOM:** A guest bedroom painted Polo Blue by Benjamin Moore is home to a radio restored by Pat almost 20 years ago.



since his early 20s, when he would come year-round to play in the outdoors, skiing all winter and windsurfing in summer. As Denise joined him on his trips north, she fell in love with the area as well and the past three decades have been filled with regular family vacations to the Blue Mountains. When they made the decision to leave the Toronto area in 2016, the couple's first and only choice for a new home was Thornbury.

"I always admired this house as I drove by," remembers Pat as he stands back to study the quality of the 113-year-old masonry. He notes the hairline thickness and mechanical precision of the mortar, the lack of even the slightest sag or crack. Imagining the stone masons achieving such a feat with nothing but a string for a level, he declares, "It really is a work of art." **OH**



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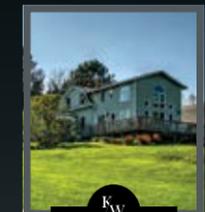
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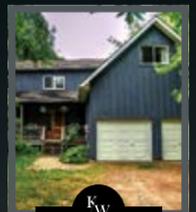
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