



Aimee Lister and Christopher Chapman found something they thought didn't exist when they purchased their Port Perry A-frame: a waterfront home where they could raise a family and run a woodworking business all in one idyllic location. **OPPOSITE: (1)** The living room walls followed the slope of the structure until the homeowners squared them off, in the process creating a nook for firewood. **(2)** Every outdoor space gets used by the nature-loving family, including a small side porch. **(3)** Arrows brought home from Mont Tremblant provide an unexpected touch on the living room wall. **(4)** Aimee's love of natural fibres is evident in the many comfy blankets in and out. **(5)** The pool deck is a big hit with every member of the family.

STORY **ANNETTE MCLEOD**
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 FLOWERS **BRANCHING OUT**

TFor former Whitby residents and downtown commuters Aimee Lister and Christopher Chapman, Sunday visits to Port Perry provided a welcome break from the Monday to Friday grind. How perfect, then, to buy a cottage in the area where friends and family could gather. At least, that was the idea when they started looking for a place about 18 months ago. They also wanted a property on which to build a shop for their successful side business, **One One Eleven Designs**.

Then their realtor showed them an earthy A-frame outside of town, on what locals call simply "The Island" and their plans changed for good.

"We actually bypassed this place about three times before we looked at it because we didn't think it would suit our needs," Aimee says. They weren't really even looking for a home, and this one had issues: because it uses geothermal technology for heating and cooling, with all its accompanying framework housed under the front lawn, there was no room to build a workshop. It had a dark, woodsy, chalet feel that didn't hold much appeal for the couple. But Aimee went ahead and fell in love anyway.

"I love an extra special house that is difficult to do everything in and of course needs work," she says, laughing. "I was drawn to the angles. I knew exactly what I would do with it, but I just didn't think it would work." Once they saw the basement and the garage that would become their workshop, they began to think perhaps it would work after all.

Continued on page 40

LOVE TRIANGLE



feature



The home had ample personality, the landscaping was done (with some additional help from **Hard-Co Sand & Gravel Ltd.** in Whitby) and the structure was sound, but Aimee says there was a lot of cosmetic work to be done, including paint throughout and stain for the central staircases. “People think painting is easy,” she says. “But try a four-storey A-frame with 20-foot ceilings!” They also framed out walls in the open-plan, main-floor living space, which until then reflected the structure’s slanted exterior on the inside too. In squaring off the space, they built in storage, both behind the television (which helps explain the home’s lack of clutter in spite of what at first appears a dearth of closet space) and in a built-in designed to house firewood. The home’s shape also allowed them to make a pantry space, accessed via a discrete door barely noticeable beside the **Ritson Tile & Carpet Inc.** backsplash (which also tiled the laundry room and two of the bathrooms) and more closets on the opposite side of the home.

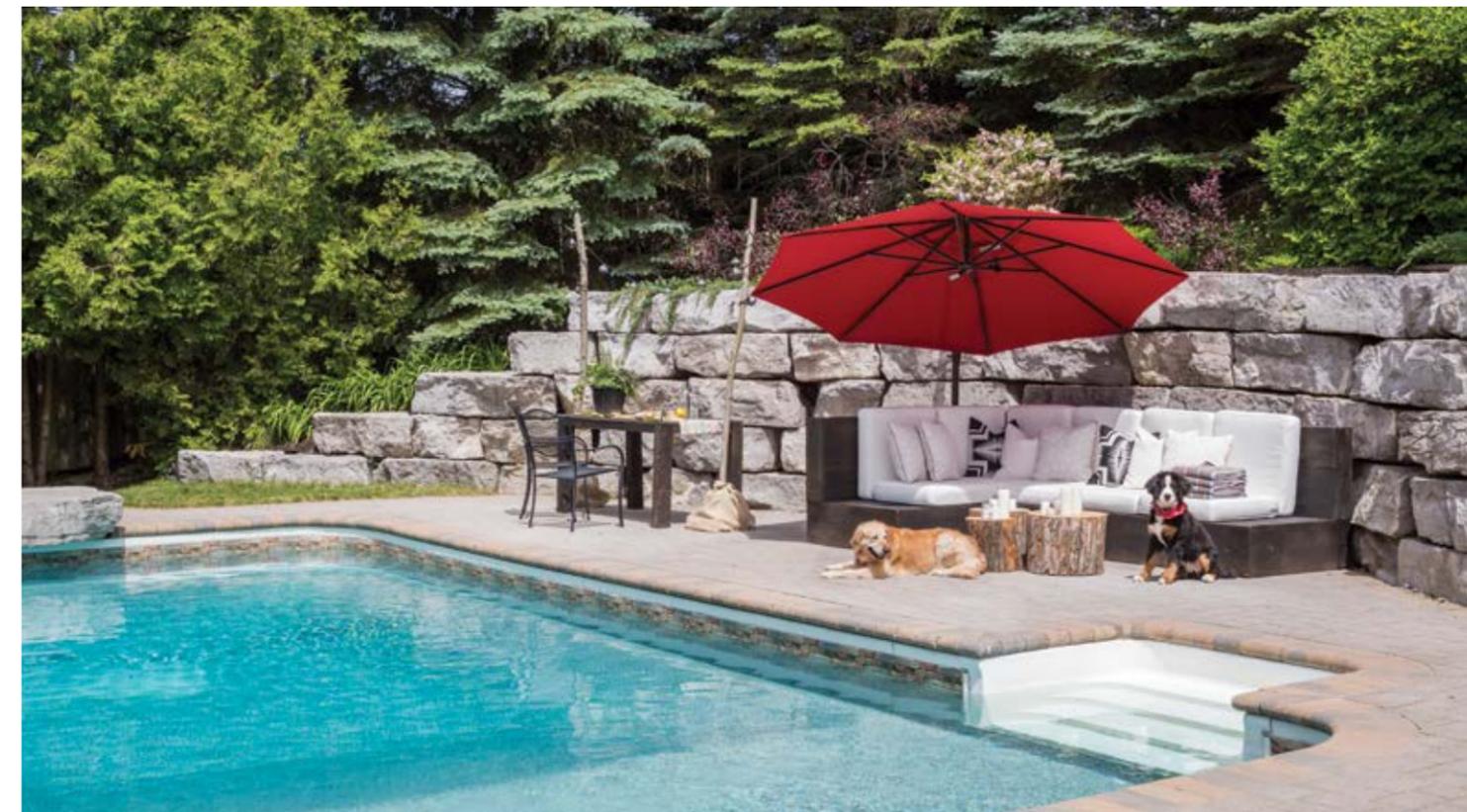
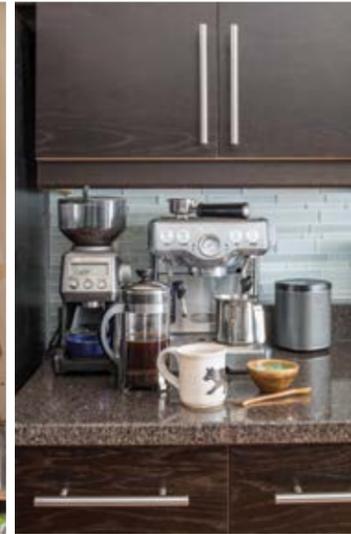
The property shares deeded access to the lake across the street via a lot held in common with several neighbours, and the second and third storeys get some of the best views from their respective balconies. Then there’s the backyard, a haven for entertaining with a stone-wall perimeter, pool and hot tub, and a little help from **Prins Landscaping** in Bowmanville. The shed is earmarked for a guest bunkie, their next big project.

Continued on page 43



OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT: The home’s 20-foot ceilings made painting no easy feat. **TOP RIGHT:** The fireplace, daughter Avery’s favourite spot in the house, comfortably heats the entire structure. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Aimee says she found it difficult to stick to their lighting budget – she spent it all on two fixtures, but says, “I’d have blown it all on this one!” **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Their collection of Mexican blankets is readily available on hallway hooks so guests can wrap up inside, on one of several decks and balconies, or even in the canoe.

BELOW LEFT: The house’s A-frame shape allowed the homeowners to create inconspicuous storage, including this pantry housed in the kitchen wall. **BELOW RIGHT:** Aimee is a big fan of Ontario’s Leishman pottery, from which they got all their dishes, including their Canadian Wildlife Collection mugs. **RIGHT:** The family was happy with the kitchen cabinets, but spruced up the space with a new glass-tile backsplash Chris installed himself. **BOTTOM:** Aimee says it isn’t unusual to find an occasional cow poking her head through the backyard shrubbery.



feature

The entire third floor comprises the master bedroom, where the triangular theme continues with a shelf made by Chris, which houses Aimee's gem stones and healing crystals.



"The beauty of the property is that there are so many hidden gems everywhere," she says. "We barbecue almost every night, have a glass of wine on the balcony, read a book with the dogs." They also like to take breakfast out onto the front porch, where gorgeous sunrise views can be had every morning. "There's a half-hour out there that's exceptionally beautiful," she says. "You can hear the loons, hear the water, and it's otherwise perfectly quiet."

Around the fire in the living room is the favourite spot of their nine-year-old daughter, Avery. "The four of us can just do nothing and be quiet," Aimee says. "The beauty of the A-frame is that the wood stove warms the whole house."

In addition to the geothermal system, the family embraces an eco-friendly lifestyle with their furniture and accessories choices. "It's just who we are," she says. "I think we have an organic, easy-going, bit of a bohemian style, which has translated well from our business to our home." Aimee and Chris turn reclaimed wood into striking furniture.

Because the layout is so open, they stuck to white paint with soft grey accents. "The sightlines are expansive," she says. "You can see into every room from almost every other room! With the high ceilings, we decided to keep it clean and let the angles be the star." *Continued on page 44*

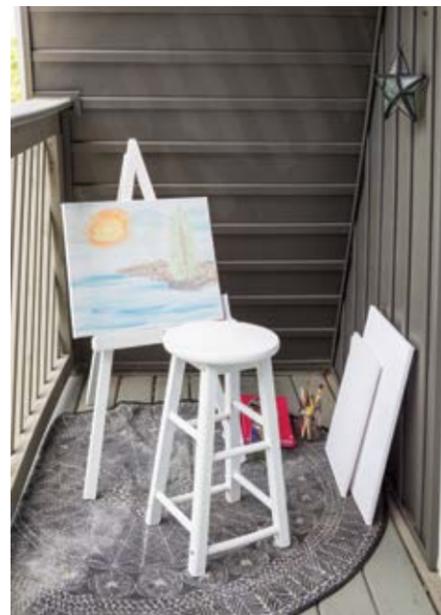
The master's sitting room features wood and leather chairs from Zenporium, another couple-run business, and a walnut table made by the homeowners.



TOP: A cheeky "Get Naked" framed print on a bathroom shelf makes daughter Avery blush.
ABOVE: A side table in Jayden's room is among the salvaged wood items made by the couple. Accessories used are often in sharp contrast, like these metal legs.
LEFT: The house's natural environment is highlighted wherever possible by keeping window coverings light and breezy.

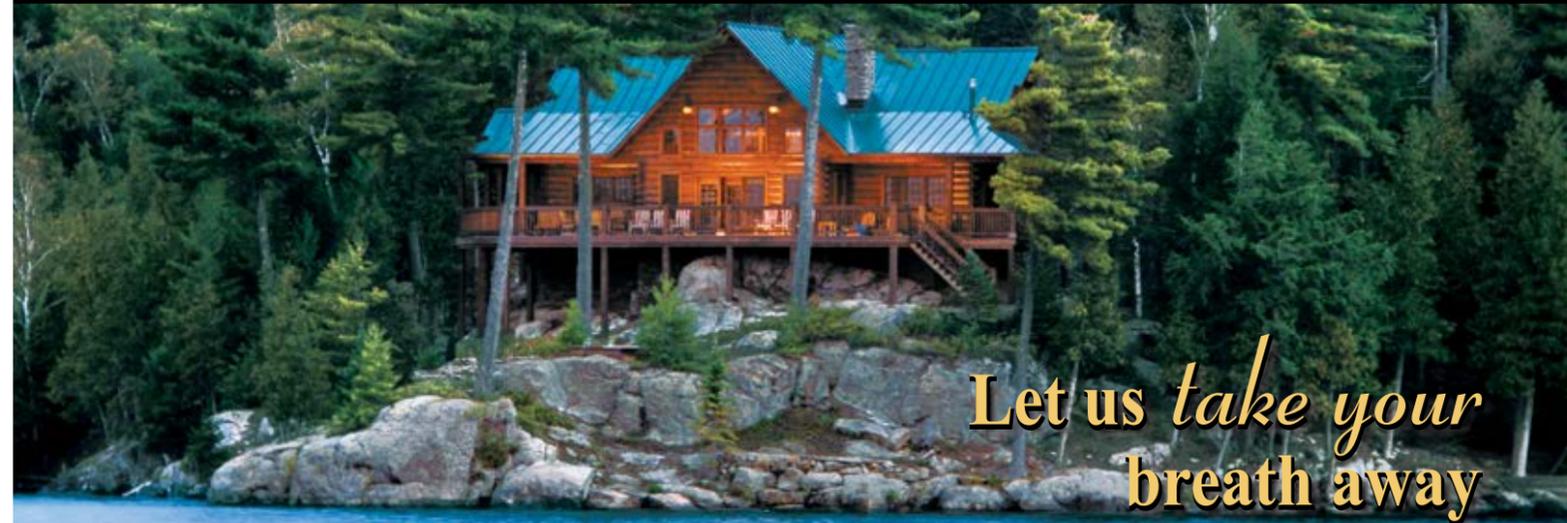
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The other stars are their own furniture pieces – Aimee’s walnut desk in the basement, which was one of the first pieces they made, the dining room table, mantel, side table in 17-year-old Jayden’s room and a bench in the spacious top-floor master among them. “Because we deal in salvage, we can’t be picky about types of wood,” she notes. “We don’t do exotics or anything that’s been cut down. It has to have been removed for a reason. I always love the wood with the most flaws.” The dining room table, for example, had a big swath of rot down the centre, but with a clever mix of epoxy and coffee grounds, you’d never guess it. *Continued on page 46*



ABOVE & FAR LEFT: Nature-loving daughter Avery’s room shares the natural fibres and outdoor-inspired aesthetic of the rest of the home, with a few wild touches. Dreamcatchers and subtle prints complement the space. **LEFT:** The budding artist takes full advantage of her own balcony to brush up on her skills.

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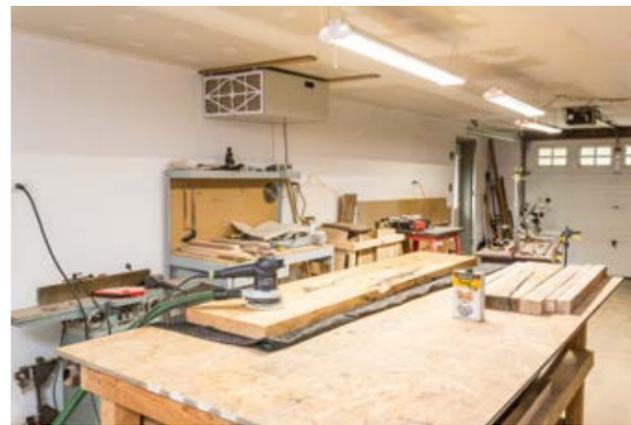
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RIGHT: Aimee's desk is the first piece produced by the woodworking business she runs with her husband, Chris. Cameras are a not-uncommon accessory around the home, owing to her background in photography. **BELOW LEFT:** Aimee's grandmother ran a hair salon out of her farmhouse when Aimee was young, and a pair of her scissors is among the sentimental items adorning this shelving unit. "This is where I get my creative genes from, 100 per cent," Aimee says. **BELOW RIGHT:** The biggest surprise for the homeowners was when they realized the garage would function well as an on-site workshop.

This shelf is filled with items that have special meaning to Aimee, including her Grandfather's hand planer.



Natural fibres are favourites, too. Upholstered pieces are slipcovered, and a collection of serapes hangs along a hallway wall (several of which came from **Tribal Voices** in town). Aimee's desk chair and one of the side tables in their bedroom were discovered at **Redman's Antique Barn**, just down Island Road.

Having found this unexpected but perfect property where the family can work, play, and celebrate lakeside living every day, they have no plans to leave. "From here," Aimee says, "it's straight into the home!" **OH**

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