

Making History

STORY MELISSA CAMPEAU
PHOTOGRAPHY KELLY HORKOFF

Owners Karen and Craig Jackson, pictured in the family room, have incorporated timeless and history-rich elements into their home.



Well-designed homes usually have something to say about where they're built. When Karen and Craig Jackson first spotted this 102-acre property in Freelton, there was a sense of calm and peace to the fields and grassy meadows, and also a feeling of history – of stories tucked away in the rolling hills and tangled woods. The home they built reflects all of that; comfortable and inviting, with hints of an intriguing past in the curated antiques, lovingly crafted replicas and reclaimed local materials.

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“We chose this property because it still had the treeline,” says Karen. “We have 102 acres and we walked all of it. The realtors were amazed, but why would you want to buy a property you haven’t seen most of?”



The home’s story began in 2007, when the couple became engaged and started to search for the right property to call home. They needed plenty of space for their blended family of six grown children, a barn for horses (Craig and his daughter ride show jumpers), plenty of yard for their large-breed dogs, and maybe even space for some chickens.

In December of that year the Freelton property became theirs, complete with a barn, a small cottage and, best of all, plenty of space to build a family home. A few months later they were married in the barn, moved into the cottage (that would become the “help house”) and got down to the business of building their home.

The end result, after years of planning and building, is a brand-new

home that manages to feel like it’s been tucked into the countryside for more than a century.

“Our goal was to build to about 1910, the Edwardian era,” says Karen. “It’s not as fussy or ornate as the Victorian period, but buildings still have those nice large mouldings.” Karen and Craig took their time finding just the right pieces to inspire their home’s design. For example, at an antique show Karen came across a set of exterior windows she absolutely loved, with lozenge-shaped glass inserts. They then had all 99 of the home’s exterior windows made to match the antiques, but updated for safety and insulation, while the original set was installed in the garage. *Continued on page 28*



Craig and Karen are on the same page, design-wise. They both love antiques and have an innate sense for styling. They found this pair of striking chandeliers and other lights in the home at Antique Market. **ABOVE LEFT:** The wrap-around porch is well used. **ABOVE RIGHT:** The sunroom off the dining room is a great spot to appreciate the surrounding countryside. **OPPOSITE:** The Jackson’s home is set amongst trees and fields. **INSET:** Karen and Atticus, the family St. Bernard, enjoy winter fun on the property.





Karen's favourite feature in the kitchen is her AGA range. "It's a neat colour, and I love the styling." **BELOW:** Guests are always welcome – a harvest table in the kitchen provides lots of seating.



The home's front doors have a similar history. "I bought a set of antique doors for our main entryway and then had them retrofitted," says Karen. "We got the replica antique wavy glass shipped from the States to the window company here, and then they turned them into thermal panes, putting low-E glass on the inside and argon gas in between, to make them meet code."

Inside, the couple took the same care in blending the old with the new, with a focus on craftsmanship and authenticity. The fireplace mantel in the library, for example, is reclaimed and has been carefully refinished. "It was the jumping-off point for making the wall panelling in the library, as well," says Karen. "And the interior doors of that room are larger copies of the antique front doors."

Mahogany floors in an oversize parquet pattern add an authentic period touch. **Patterson's Custom Cabinetry Ltd.** worked magic in the kitchen, marrying display cabinets with ample storage. They added a herringbone pattern in the dining room as well. *Continued on page 30*



TOP: Every feature is considered. The chandelier and two sconces in the library are reproductions from the Smithsonian, part of the Kichler Smithsonian Collection. Cosy, the family cat, perches on a leather armchair. **LEFT:** The "WC" under the stairs looks like an armoire when the doors are closed. Inside, it's all about detail. **ABOVE:** Atticus and Geneva have their own beds, and even a shower stall.

feature

In the family room, walls built entirely from stones found on the property make the room feel like it's been around for ages. The reclaimed floorboards bear scratches and saw marks, hints at their previous life as beams in a local factory. "Maybe it's the floor and walls, or the overstuffed furniture or the warm colours, but when we have a fire going in this room in the winter, it's my favourite spot in the house," says Karen.

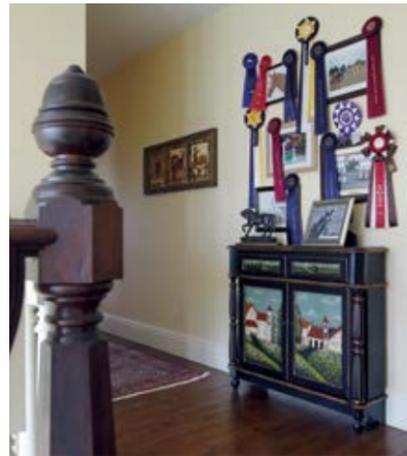
That comfortable feeling is woven throughout the entire house, in thoughtful

accents, touchable fabrics and time-worn furniture. "Although it's a larger home, we didn't want it to feel ostentatious," says Karen, who relied on input from friend and advisor **Cheryl Marie Dorricott**, of **Sotheby's International Realty**. "We wanted people to feel welcome to put their cup down, their feet up, and just make themselves at home." She adds, "A home should be fun. You should be enjoying where you live, and guests should have so much fun they don't want to leave." *Continued on page 32*



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ABOVE AND TOP RIGHT: A guest suite on the lower level is outfitted with every convenience while in keeping with period design. **MIDDLE RIGHT:** Craig, who competes on the mid-level show jumping circuit, has garnered many ribbons and awards. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** These are the back stairs, and a more formal set rise from the front entry way. Both feature turned spindles based on an antique handrail Karen brought home.



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To that end, Karen and Craig added a few quirky details. The main floor powder room, for example, is tucked under the stairs and from the outside looks exactly like an armoire. “We have a lot of fun with that,” says Karen. “When people ask where the bathroom is and I point to what looks like an armoire, they look at me like I have two heads!”

The fun continues downstairs, where Karen and Craig are putting the finishing touches on a proper British pub, designed to seat up to 25 friends and family. It will feature a wood-burning fireplace and a handcrafted bar, made from Victorian sideboards and parts of a four-poster bed. “I hauled all this stuff into the house and told our carpenter, that I wanted him to turn this into a bar,” says Karen, “and he looked at me like I was absolutely mad. Once he got going, though, it turned out even better than we had imagined.”

Continued on page 34



Exposed pipes and faucets can add yet another element of beauty.



LEFT AND ABOVE: An en suite to envy! Nino Giordano's company, Casa Bella Tile, did a spectacular job in the master bathroom. **TOP:** “We’re blending two families and we really needed everyone to feel like they have a spot,” explains Karen, of the seven bedrooms plus a ready nursery.

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feature

Much like the bar, the origin of the home's design is a little offbeat, too. "Craig and I looked through all kinds of home designs online and we couldn't agree on anything," says Karen. "Then I remembered this old magazine I had saved, with photos of a house I really liked." She dug the magazine out of storage and shared it with Craig. "As soon as he saw it, he said, 'That's our house!'" From there, things took off. The couple sketched a few ideas of their own and their architect, **John Willmott**, weaved it all together.

"From that concept, it evolved pretty quickly into our house," says Karen. A few years later, tucked into the landscape with horses grazing and dogs wandering contentedly outside, it looks in many ways like it's always been here – a natural element of this storied countryside. **OH**



SOURCE GUIDE

- Aberfoyle Antique Market • Antique Market • Benjamin Moore
- Casa Bella Tile • Christie Antique & Vintage Show • CLEGG Glass Inc.
- Goemans Appliances • Granite By Design Ltd. • Granite Inc.
- Habitat for Humanity ReStore • John Willmott Architect, Inc.
- Kraus Nurseries • Mar-Span Home Hardware Building Centre
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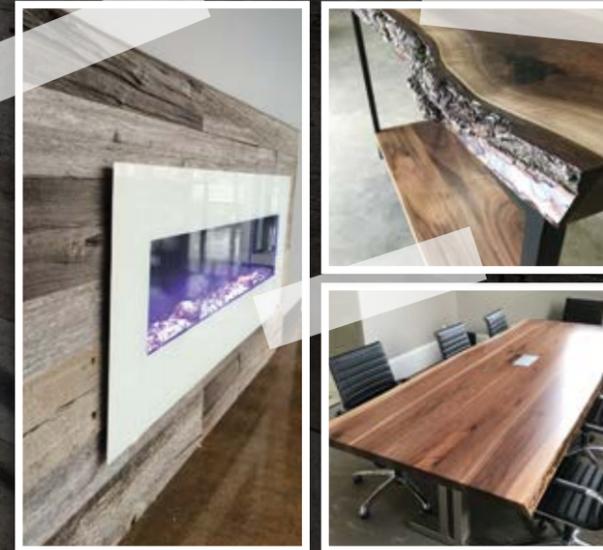
Fun with chickens! The cast includes Audrey Henburn, Eleanor Roostervelt and Chick Norris.



Karen and Craig both enjoy riding, however Karen likes her horses to keep their feet on the ground! **TOP:** A fun English-style pub, with seating for 25 friends and family, opens off a downstairs streetscape.

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