



With the ceiling soaring up 20 feet, the timber-framed great room offers expansive views of Round Lake. Located east of Bonnechere, the Cape Cod-style home built by Tom Schroeter and Carol Paradine is best described as a wing on either side of the exposed beam foyer and great room. **BELOW LEFT:** Homeowner Tom Schroeter had very specific requirements for what went into his 6,000 sq. ft. house; Discovery Dream Homes was able to accommodate him. **BELOW RIGHT:** With the former cottage demolished to make room for new construction, the previously detached garage is now connected to the new house by a mudroom.



# LAKESIDE LEGACY

STORY **DIANE SAWCHUK**  
PHOTOGRAPHY **JUSTIN VAN LEEUWEN**

Tom Schroeter knows houses. Inside and out.

His background as a licensed HVAC technician made him privy to what exactly lay behind the walls of homes. As he saw first hand, a home's beauty was sometimes skin deep, with interesting layouts and bells and whistles covering up a multitude of sins. He stored up this insider information for future use and when he and his wife, Carol Paradine, had the opportunity to build a custom home, his list of must-haves were extremely lengthy, not to mention, specific.

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**TOP:** Beneath the large twin patios are a future wine cellar on one side, and storage for water activity equipment on the other. **ABOVE:** Because of its location on the main floor in one wing off the great room, the games room is fully integrated into all entertaining done in the home. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** Due to its extreme length, a 19-foot island is made up of two sections: a granite meal prep island and a waterfall island in quartz for casual dining or putting out appetizers when entertaining. **BOTTOM:** A basket-weave porcelain tile backsplash travels the full height and width of one wall in the kitchen.

Abbott Design Ltd. translated Tom's list into a 3,700 sq. ft., hybrid timber-frame home in a Cape Cod style, with exposed timber in the centre of the structure soaring 20 feet above. This great room is flanked by a games room on one side and a oversize kitchen made for entertaining large gatherings, both with 10-foot ceilings. Upstairs, a catwalk separates the master wing from the secondary bedrooms. The lower level adds an additional 2,300 square feet with a walkout, future screening room, wine cellar as well as ample space to put up overnight guests. And throughout, wide-plank engineered hardwood and porcelain tiles on the floor and the maximum amount of windows allowed by code for the size of the house was a must.

With **Discovery Dream Homes** charged with project management and supplying the material, construction began with the destruction of their cottage bought about a decade previously. Located on pristine Round Lake, not far from Red Pine Camp where the couple first met as teenagers, the original



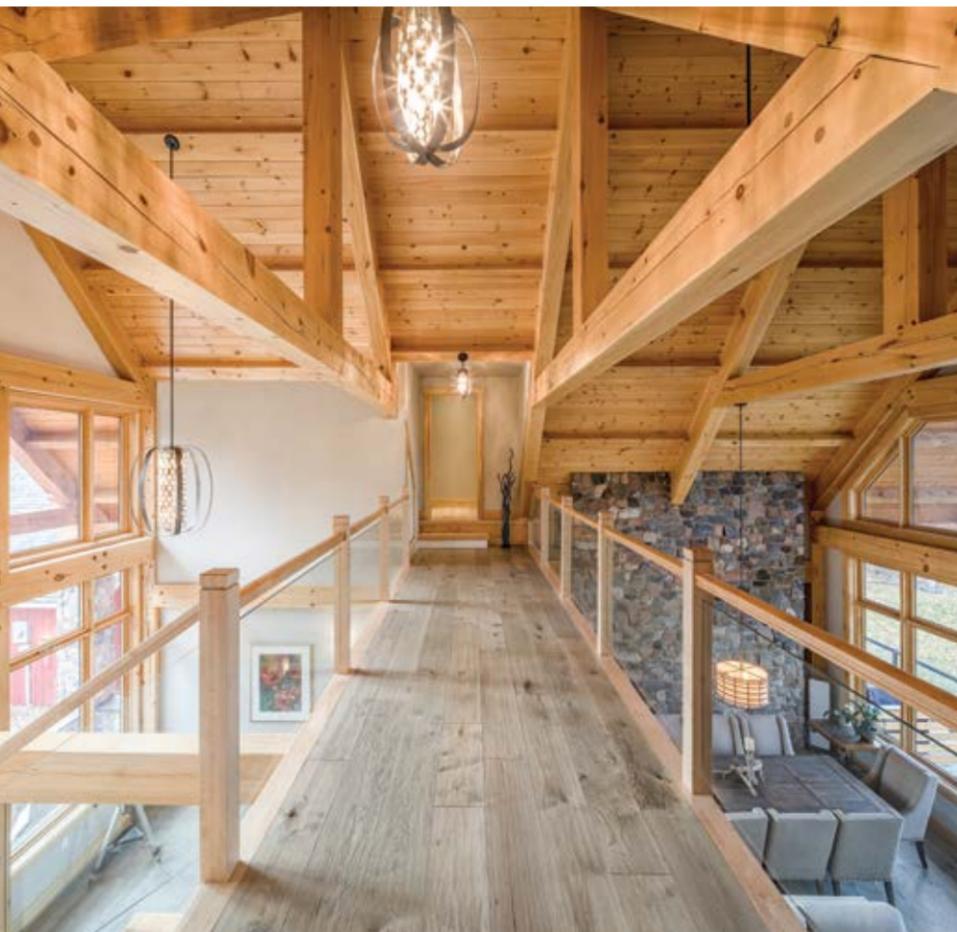
dwelling's sub-standard components made renovating it too costly a proposition. And so down it went, with the only souvenir of those years the detached double-car garage, which was given a facelift and is now connected to the house by a mudroom.

Living on-site throughout the build, Tom oversaw every last detail of every single item that went into his home – a responsibility Carol was relieved to relinquish, working as she does as a chartered accountant in Toronto during the week. The two-year odyssey of construction resulted in a home built to last and where the bones are just as important as the aesthetics.

"The finishes were important but the construction was critical. Everything in this house is built to code – and then beyond," Tom says, chuckling that the contractor pouring the foundation dubbed the house 'Diefenbunker II.' "What's behind the walls is just as important as what's in front of them. Maybe even more so. This is our last house and I think of it as our legacy home." *Continued on page 42*



**RIGHT:** The sitting area off the kitchen contains a half-turret ceiling that's mirrored in the games room on the opposite side of the house. **BELOW:** A catwalk connects the master suite with two secondary bedrooms. The granite-faced wall in the dining area portion of the great room can be seen to the right.



Tom says Discovery Dream Homes' work lived up to his expectations, and beyond. The firm's corporate sales consultant, Chris Nolan, he says, was upfront throughout the build and there were never any surprises or problems. "It's refreshing to see people take pride in their work," he says.

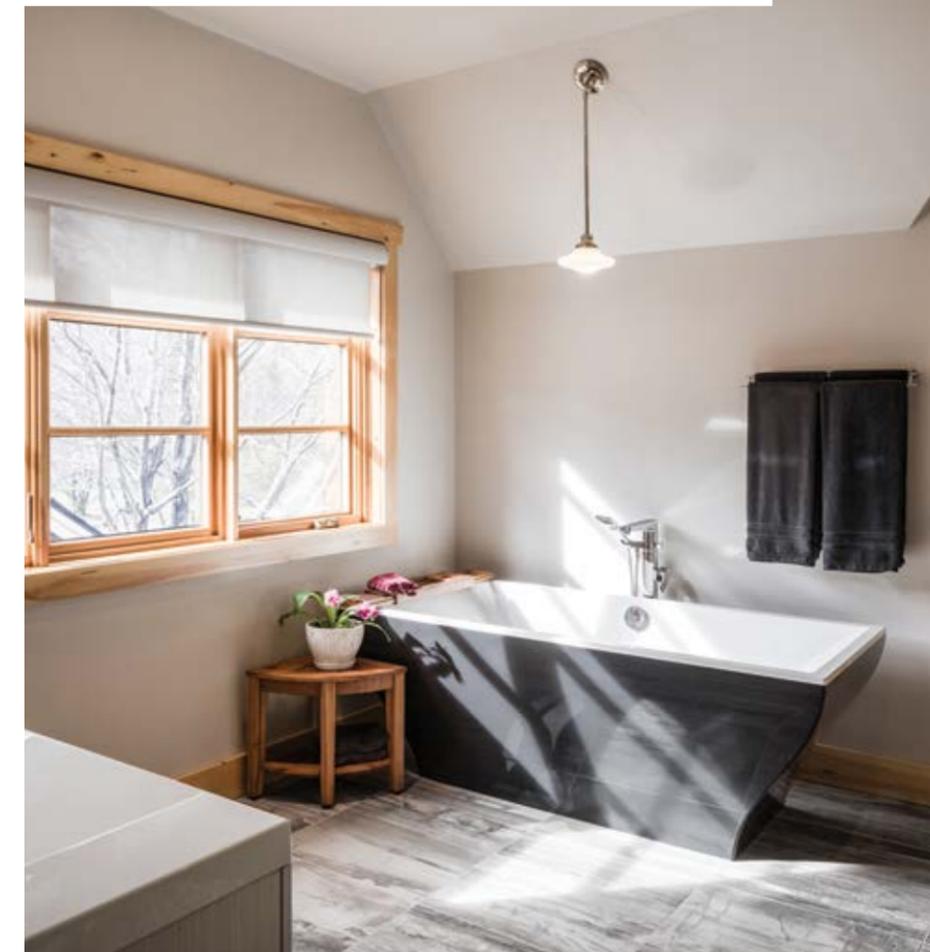
And indeed, this is a house built for the ages: the middle ages, the teenagers, the golden-agers. On a lot that slopes gently to a waterfront spanning 150 feet, the house offers something for everyone, throughout every season of the year. Outside, a dock is the gateway to all the activity in and on the water your energy level is up for, while inside, spacious rooms are designed for entertaining and hosting on a large scale. As proof, Tom and his wife hosted 23 overnight guests, comfortably, he says, for their Canada Day long weekend celebrations.

No detail was overlooked in creating a home that offers comfort for both residents and guests alike. A spacious entry with porcelain tile from Whelan's Flooring Centre opens to the great room offering a vista of the shoreline and lake.

But beside it, a unique staircase by **Accurate Stairs and Railings** makes the grand entrance that much grander: the welded steel stairs, topped with maple treads, are enclosed in massive sheets of tempered glass. Tom explains that after pricing railings for the staircase, glass was found to be less expensive, and, by creating an open feeling, more aesthetically pleasing.

New Brunswick-based stone masons **Cut River Rock** were charged with supplying and installing 3,000 square feet of granite, a visual standout on one complete wall in the great room and mirrored on the opposite side of the room in the fireplace that acts as a room divider between the great room and the games room. It's here that a wood-burning Napoleon fireplace from **The Fireplace Center & Patio Shop** (there are two other gas fireplaces) was lowered by crane through the open joists of the roof and positioned into place, its size and approximate 600 pounds making carrying it in impossible.

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**TOP:** A large step-in shower with pebble-stone floor, seen here, and a Villeroy & Boch freestanding bathtub are found in the en suite. **ABOVE:** A large walk-through closet, with access from the en suite and the bedroom, has cabinet-grade shelves and drawers constructed by the home's kitchen cabinetmakers Lakeshore Designs. **RIGHT:** Most rooms, including the en suite, offer wide views of the lake. The abundance of windows is a result of Tom's insistence the maximum amount of windows allowed by code be installed.



The games room, containing pool table, card table and foosball table, is located on the main floor to fully integrate entertainment in all ways.

“Have you ever noticed that if you put your pool table in the basement, it never gets used? You need to make a conscious decision when you go and play. But because the games room is here on the main floor, you can rack ‘em up, or play a hand of cards and still be a part of the conversation,” Tom says.

On the other side of the great room, the Lakeshore Designs kitchen is fully kitted with granite countertops and Thermador Professional series appliances from **Corbeil Appliances**. But the centrepiece, so to speak, is a two-part island running a full 19 feet down the middle of the kitchen that Tom says is the hub of their entertaining. Because of the length required for it not to get lost in a 29-foot long kitchen, the island is made of two different, but complementary parts. One section, finished in granite, is the designated meal prep area as it contains a 36-inch induction stovetop with downdraft, while the other section, a waterfall island in quartz, is natural for casual dining or laying out a spread for a crowd.

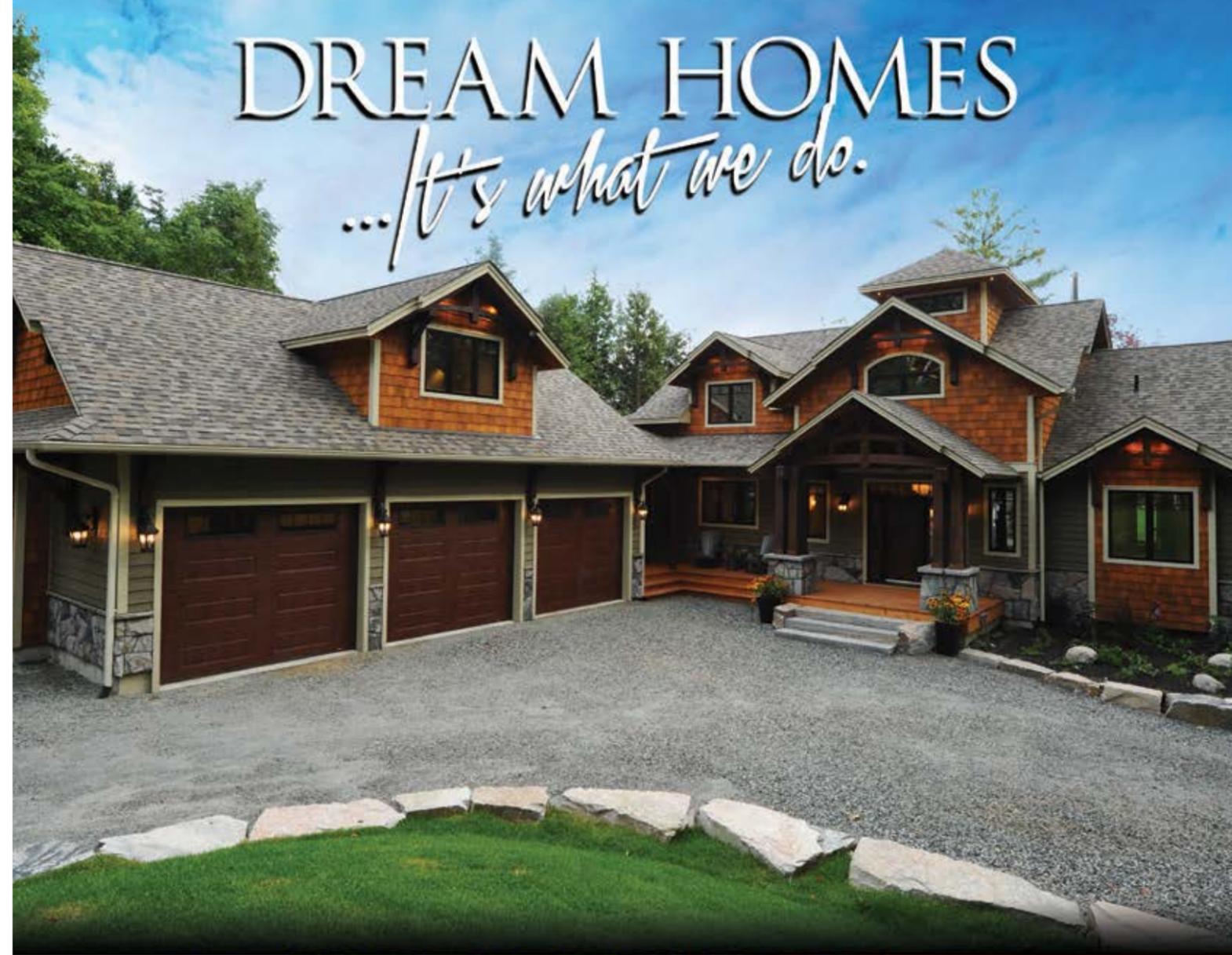
With his previous background in HVACs, Tom elected to install the heating and air conditioning himself. The resulting cost savings was a smart idea, as was making his house a smart home: through his company, **Premiere Home Systems**, the house is outfitted with a Control4 automation system. It oversees music distribution through 16 zones throughout the house, a security system, exterior cameras and door locks.

The system gives Tom a sense of security, as does the knowledge of knowing exactly what went into his home, both now and in the future. It’s a home he and Carol expect to enjoy for many years to come, he says, and in the future, one that his children will share. **OH**

**TOP LEFT:** The design of the window in one secondary bedroom is mirrored in the neighbouring bedroom. Nine-foot ceilings are found throughout the upper level and a steeply pitched roof adds visual interest to the ceiling. **FAR LEFT:** A main bathroom on the second level, shared by the occupants of both secondary bedrooms, is one of 16 zones where music can be piped in. There is another full-size bathroom, on the lower level, to accommodate overnight guests, as well as a powder room on the main level. **LEFT:** The pebble floor in the main bath’s oversize step-in shower picks up on the granite walls on the main level.

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