

MODERN HISTORY



The elegant dining room has lots of room for charity dinners. The richness of the oak wainscoting is enriched by the modern wallpaper above. Centrepiece by Paperwhite Flowers.

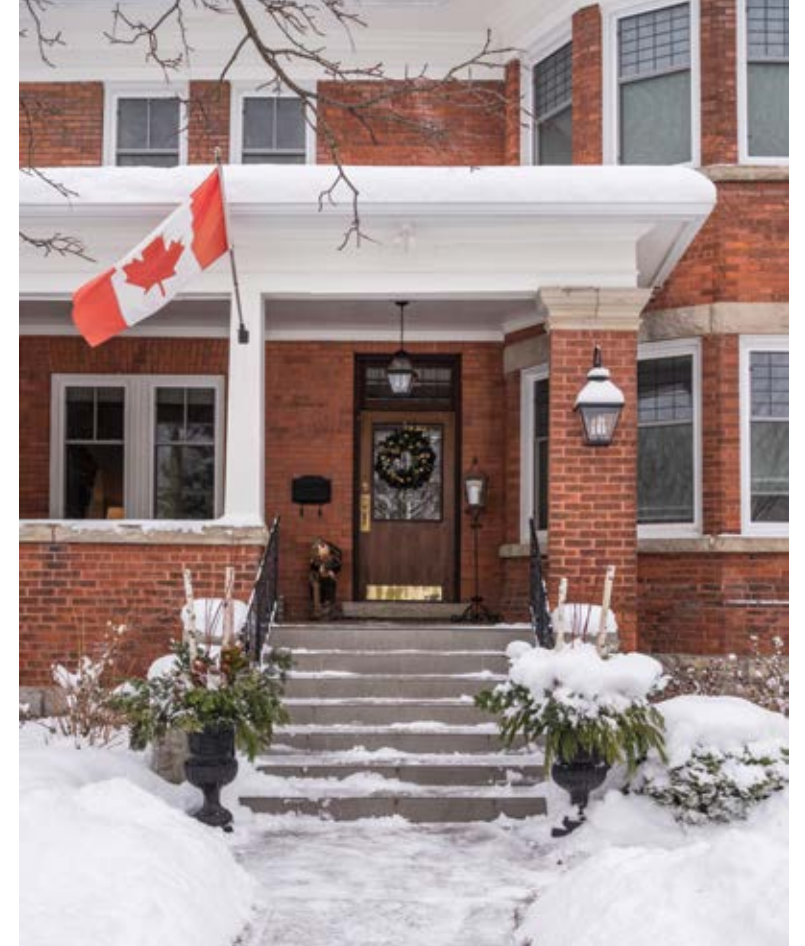
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PHOTOGRAPHY **SANDY MACKAY**

ON HER FIRST WALK THROUGH, THE DARK WOOD PANELLING IN THIS HISTORIC COLLINGWOOD HOME REMINDED SUSIE TAYLOR OF THE CONVENT SCHOOL SHE ATTENDED GROWING UP.

She pictured nuns walking the halls. But her husband **Dean Taylor** immediately fell for the character of this grand Queen Anne revival home, and, after agreeing to relocate the 100-year-old gun rack out of the front parlour, Susie, too, saw the home's potential. A mere block or two from every amenity downtown Collingwood has to offer, they would be close to schools for their two teenage daughters and to Susie and Dean's offices at **Assante Capital Management Ltd.**

A generous formal dining room would let the family host the dinners they so enjoy with friends.

While moving full time from Toronto to Collingwood would be a change for the family, they know the area well. The whole family are skiers. Dean grew up in Collingwood – his parents' legacy was the iconic Beaconsight Motel on Highway 26 that welcomed skiers and vacationers to Georgian Bay, running it from 1969 to 1999. Even after moving to Toronto and marrying, Dean kept property near the ski hills. *Continued on page 108*



With a beautiful stained-glass transom window over the inside vestibule door and a lead window insert, sunlight from the front door floods the front hall. **LEFT:** A built-in side board was refinished and now serves as a practical storage unit for serving platters and linens. **ABOVE:** The deep front porch protects the front door from the elements and in the summer, serves as a spot to relax and watch the comings and goings of the neighbourhood.



restore all of the wood trim throughout the house. This process included sanding the thick, quarter-sawn oak, applying a deep stain, and then adding two coats of high-gloss lacquer. Dean spent hours removing all the brass handles and hinges and restoring them by hand. It was quite the project, but it has truly restored the glamour of the woodwork to what it once was. Fresh paint throughout the home was sourced at **Robinson's Paint and Wallpaper**.

The Taylors then brought in designer **Catherine Staples** of **Catherine Staples Interiors** to update the formal dining room, front entry, powder room and living room. It was Staples who designed the gorgeous ivory fireplace in the living room and brought colours and fabrics together that hint at early 20th century style while being sophisticated and chic. She told Susie, "This house deserves wallpaper!" And so a subtle paisley adorns the upper walls in the dining room and a magnificent floral appears in the main-floor powder room. *Continued on page 110*

ABOVE: Not only is the formal living room a place to entertain, it also works as a relaxing spot for the family to unwind. Design by Catherine Staples Interiors. **RIGHT:** The leather sofa in the living room picks up some of the colour in the area rug. Built-in window seats that were original to the home have had their cushions recovered and have become a favourite perch for Fang the family dog. **OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT:** The kitchen addition provides enough room for a desk station. The door leads up the back stairs to the second floor. When the house was built, the back stairs were for staff to move about the house without being seen. **TOP RIGHT:** The kitchen features a large island and ample windows brighten the space. There is a door to the back deck and a large mudroom. The decorative beams were copied from the dining room. Arrangement by Paperwhite Flowers. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Dean and Susie Taylor with their daughters, Lily and Daisy.



This home's grandiose hallway, two sitting rooms, four large bedrooms, an attic loft and an upper balcony were common for big homes like this in their time, but to add to these luxuries, it uniquely boasts a finished basement with an original coal furnace room that exposes the limestone foundation. Plus, the former owners had completely renovated the kitchen to bring it into modern day. The kitchen had been expanded from little more than a small galley and pantry, to a big, inviting space complete with a granite island. The house needed some serious work, but the design was already breathtaking.

So how do you modernize a century home, while retaining its historic character? The Taylors beautifully walk this fine line. They brought in **Rick Fuhre** of **Fuhre Construction Ltd.** as a general contractor to oversee most of the work. They worked to repair cracks in the plaster, renovate the front-facing living room and second-floor bathrooms and laundry and





RIGHT: The new home for the gun rack, relocated from the upstairs sitting room, holds a collection of Hungarian wine skins. The glass doors lead to the wine cellar, which was once the coal room. **BELOW:** As coal was delivered, the amount and the date were recorded on the doorjamb, creating a historical record. **OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT:** The original laundry chute was kept as it was, used as a conduit to bring new wiring and plumbing to the second floor. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Large scale flora wallpaper for the main floor powder room elevates this space. **RIGHT:** A laundry sink from Taps gives a vintage feel to the second floor laundry room.

Aside from incorporating some modern conveniences and style, the home is filled with references to yesteryear. The front-facing living and sitting rooms each have their original chandeliers, which have been rewired by Dean's father, Bev, an electrician. The sitting room, historically called the "card room", was where the early homeowners displayed their gun rack, made with deer hooves to hold the guns in place. The Taylors still use the rack, but relocated it to the lower level where it now showcases Hungarian wine skins and a herding whip, pieces of Susie's family heritage.

Parts of the basement feature the exposed stone foundation, which, like the face of the home, has a curved wall. The Taylors will be turning this room into a wine cellar. The wooden door to the room is original to the home and features markings from previous owners or attendants who stoked the coal-burning furnace indicating how much coal they had received in shipments or how much they needed. Other markings include references to tonnage of Elk horn stored before shipment on the Great Lakes. Years like "1927" stand out clearly. *Continued on page 113*



LEFT: The Taylors stumbled upon a mystery during renovation when they found this ticket inside a wall for attendance to the Rose Ball dated March 28, 1910. Dr. John H. Irwin, a local dentist, purchased the land for this stately home in April 1907, and subsequent owners of the home dated its construction to 1917. But since a fire in the town of Collingwood destroyed town records from that era, no conclusive record is available. The Taylors wonder if the ticket reveals that the home was constructed closer to 1910.



BELOW: Heated basket-weave marble tile extends into the curb-less shower stall in the master bath. **RIGHT:** The Victorian & Albert clawfoot tub was sourced at Georgian Design Centre. Although new, the tub fits right into the era of the home. The sconces appear to float on the mirror above the sinks. Flowers by Paperwhite Flowers. **OPPOSITE:** The height of the repurposed doors from the Beaconglow Motel show off the details in the woodwork. A curved bank of windows lets sunlight stream into the room.



Dean and Susie incorporated their own family's history by using a pair of ornate oak pocket doors that were removed from the Beaconglow Motel, incorporating them as a unique headboard in the master bedroom. Bedding by **Victorian Values**.

On the second floor, the two bathrooms and laundry room were updated and designed by Shannon Soro of Shannon Soro Interior Design to include elegant colours, tiles and fixtures. Susie and Dean's en suite is a modern getaway with an energetic yet serene shade of aqua, a big bathtub, shower and fabulous vanity, all sourced at **Georgian Design Centre**. *Continued on page 114*

feature



ABOVE: A teenager's dream bedroom, with lots of room to lounge, study and sleep. It also has a small en suite. Pillows and throw supplied by Clerkson's Home Store. **TOP RIGHT:** The grand refinished stairs lead all the way to the third floor. **RIGHT:** Daisy's room is at the front of the house. Its neutral palette makes this room calming and relaxed.

The Taylors are only the seventh owners in the home's community-oriented lineage, and they continue that legacy. Susie and Dean host dinners for family, friends and clients regularly, so much so that bidding on their extensive hosting has become a favourite silent auction item for Home Horizons, the Collingwood General & Marine Hospital Foundation and the National Ski Academy. The family cooks and serves five-course, wine paired meals for their guests, who are welcomed into their formal dining room. It's a classic setting in a modern world, which is also exactly how the Taylors have made this house their home. **OH**



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