



BIG ENOUGH *for 8*

STORY KATHLEEN DUNCAN | PHOTOGRAPHY SANDY MACKAY

Tracey & Mike knew they needed more space to keep their growing family close. So, after 18 years and six children ranging in age from two to 23, they said good bye to their South Barrie subdivision and moved into a custom home on the rural edge of Midhurst.

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A beautiful kitchen with a place for everything is the heart of Tracey and Mike's home.



THIS PAGE: This is a kitchen large enough for a family of eight. Elegant and efficient, it includes cabinets for small appliances, built-in wall ovens and plenty of granite-topped counter and island space. Two sinks make for easy cleanup. **OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT:** The kitchen opens to the living room and fireplace. **TOP RIGHT:** Tracey and Mike's youngest daughter Brooklyn relaxes on the living room sofa. **BOTTOM:** The family gathers for dinner in the dining room, located at the front of the home.

"I didn't want to move this far out at first, but now we love it," recalls mom Tracey, who craved additional property but was hesitant to leave the immediacy of city conveniences. "We're getting used to shopping in the north end rather than the south end."

After growing up in Brampton, Tracey and Mike landed in Angus upon arrival in Simcoe County. There, they constructed the first of three houses they've built together.

"We've never lived in someone else's house," smiles Tracey, who admits that wasn't intentional. "We almost did before this home, but I guess it wasn't meant to be."

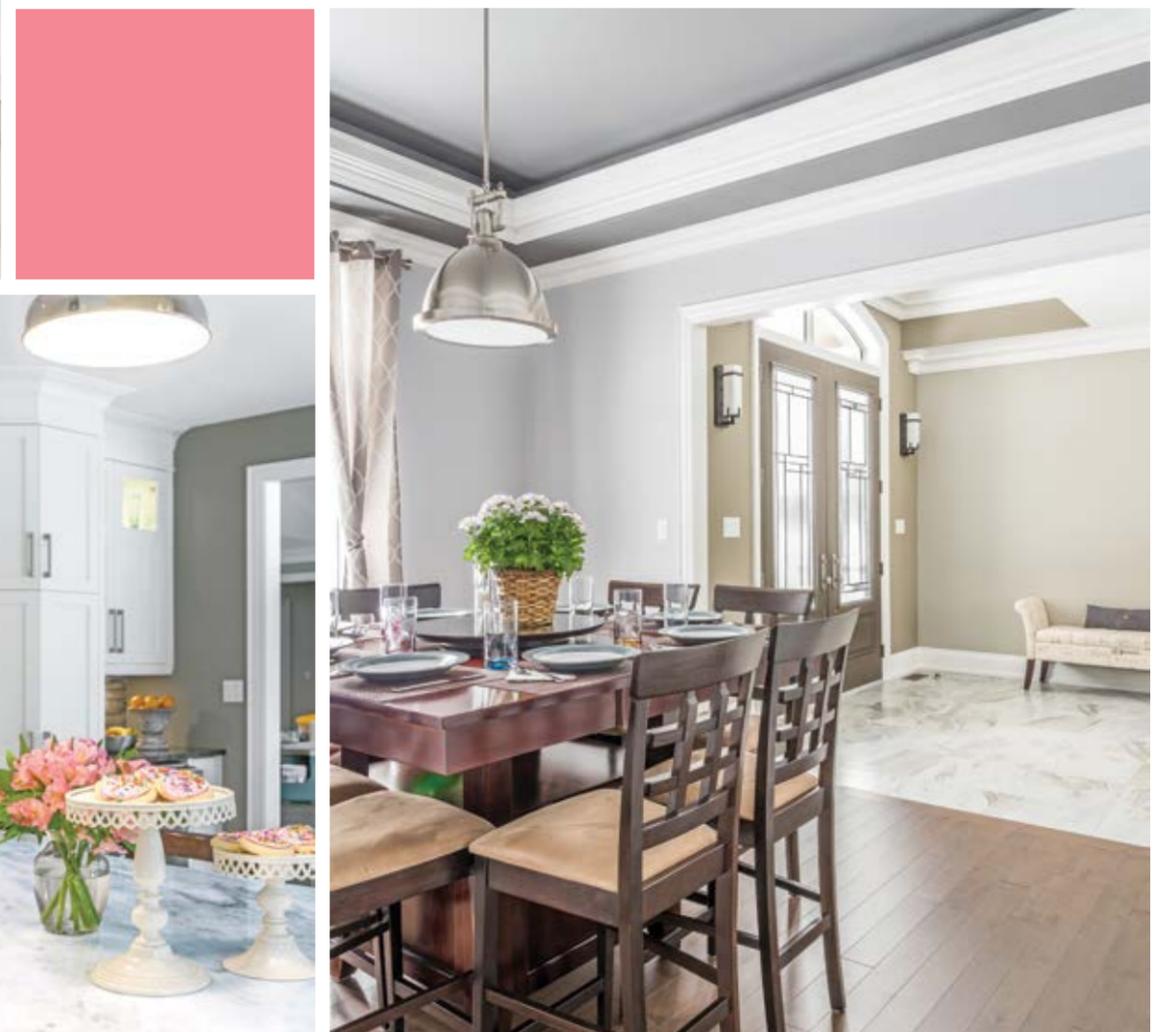
The experience collaborating on this home was very different from the previous builds, she says. Here, there are no model homes, no set floor plans and no sales team. "This is a custom build, so you choose everything – and you deal directly with the builder. You know you are going to get exactly what you asked

for, because you're not going through three different people. It's more personal."

The Ravines of Matheson Creek is the newest estate subdivision developed by **Dreamwood Homes**. Led by **Chris Nitsopoulos** and **Tino Zarcone**, the management team has been making homeowners' dreams come true for more than 60 years. **Santia Contracting** assists with property management.

The many choices and options, although exciting, were also somewhat daunting.

"But Dreamwood Homes was very easy to work with, and very available," adds Tracey, who appreciated the time taken by Zarcone to get to know them before a shovel hit the ground. "He met us at the suppliers to pick out all the granite, the lights and door handles for the house. He provided direction, as well as advice about what works and what doesn't, which was very helpful." *Continued on page 80*





The couple gained further confidence when their neighbours-to-be willingly opened their doors to show off the high-end finishes Dreamwood Homes has become known for – like high ceilings with hand-crafted crown mouldings and extra-tall baseboards.

Nestled on two acres, this new six-bedroom bungalow is surrounded by trees and backs onto green space. A full, finished basement doubles the living space to 6,000 square feet, including a lower-level walk out to an expansive back lawn. Dad Mike points through French doors to the future pool and cabana that are scheduled to appear by summer. Currently, Shilo, an energetic eight-year-old black lab/golden retriever, runs without restraint.

Other downstairs distractions include a two-tiered wet bar with Stontario granite countertops, a gym, office space, gaming centre and a toddler's play nook. Radiant in-floor heating keeps things cosy for toes of all ages as they walk on embossed hand-scraped plank laminate supplied by the **Barrie Flooring Centre**. All of the heating and cooling was installed by **Airlogix Mechanical**.

Flanking the open-concept family room are the individual havens of the three older children. Their shared three-piece bathroom has fixtures from **Bathworks**. Having chosen to remain in the family home a little while longer, each was given the opportunity to choose his or her room's Dulux paint colour – subject to parental veto – that was subsequently applied by **Ontario Paintworks**. They also, whenever the opportunity arises, choose to cross their bedroom thresholds to participate in all-ages ping pong tournaments.

Innovative Wood Worx's David Van Schie, creator of the built-in wine racks and back-lit, glass-fronted cabinetry in the bar, also checked off a couple of items on Tracey's must-have list upstairs. *Continued on page 82*

The master suite gives Tracey and Mike a peaceful space to rest. Their spacious en suite includes a custom his-and-hers vanity with plenty of storage and a walk-in dressing room at the back.



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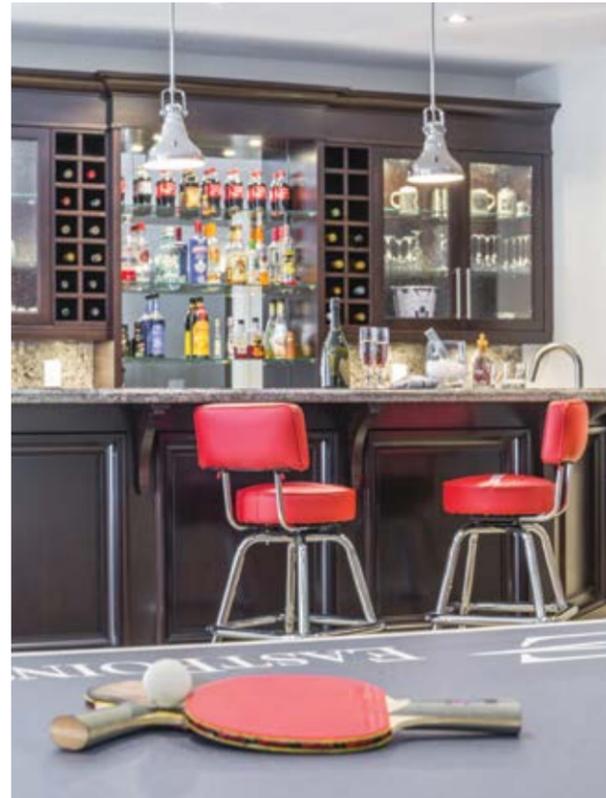


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Off the three-bay heated garage (Mike's favourite spot, since his previous parking area became increasingly overrun by the new cars of his young adults), is a mud/laundry room with three individual coat cubbies for the younger children. In the nearby kitchen (Tracey's favourite room), Van Schie included an appliance garage twinned with a bread box within the oversize design.

After considerable thought, but before **Eisses Brothers Excavating** started digging or **Canadian Custom Roofing** installed architectural shingles, and prior to



Rainer's Siding and **Newport Interior Wall Systems Ltd.** finishing the walls, Tracey and Mike adjusted the blueprints to extend their preferred spaces by an additional four feet each.

"I told David that I love how big the kitchen is because everything is accessible," says a satisfied Tracey. "Nothing is hidden behind anything else, and everything functions properly."

The massive granite-topped island adds to the storage options, while providing casual seating for eating and homework.

Above the polished Italian-marble floor and layered porcelain backsplash is a custom limestone range hood matching the hand-moulded, floor-to-vaulted-ceiling fireplace (both by EFP Design) in the great room opposite. *Continued on page 84*

ABOVE: Everyone has their own special place in this well-organized home. A playroom downstairs covers all the bases – there's a special nook for the younger children, ping pong and lounge for the teens and 20s, and a bar area for Mom and Dad and their friends. **LEFT:** The large mud/laundry room is a bright space with custom cubbies for the three younger children.

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A well-planned two-bedroom space on the main floor includes a vanity and dressing room for the girls, a shared bathroom, and another vanity and dressing room for the couple's youngest son.



Tracey says that in other homes they've seen, the fireplace is usually located at the back wall of the great room. But they decided to put their fireplace in the centre of a side wall, allowing guests walking through the Doorland Group's double front doors (installed by **Victory Contracting**) a vast and unobstructed view across the pre-oiled Preverco maple floor (by **Ryan Webb**) and through an artful wall of Casabella Windows framing the greenery beyond, which negates any need for further treatment.

Elsewhere in the house, Maxxmar Vinyl shutters are the norm. The exceptions include the draped dining room that showcases a unique square table where this family of eight comes together at the end of the day. Tracey also dressed the all-important mud/laundry room with flowing drapes.

Tracey, Mike and their busy family have settled nicely into their beautifully designed and decorated home, and are gracious in thanking Dreamwood Homes for making their dream home come true. **OH**



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