



STORY JENNIFER SCHLEICH
PHOTOGRAPHY SANDY MACKAY

WORKING *together*



It was the fall of 2013 and two brothers had just made the decision to dissolve their well-known local company, Freeburn Fine Homes, and join a business revolution in the home building industry. In the midst of this major upheaval, Dylan Freeburn and his wife Serena were simultaneously embarking on a personal adventure to build a new home for their growing family on the outskirts of Southampton. *Continued on page 24*

LEFT: Homeowners Dylan and Serena Freeburn pose with daughter Cosette and Dylan's brother Ben (right). **BOTTOM LEFT:** This traditional style two-storey family home is situated on the quiet outskirts of Southampton. **BELOW:** A minimalist white contemporary kitchen with oversize white subway tiles and marble countertops allows the black walnut floors to pop. **OPPOSITE:** An eye-catching fabric light shade hangs suspended over the contemporary eat-in kitchen table and contrasting antique family-heirloom chairs.





Dylan (project manager) and his brother Ben (owner) aligned their 13 years of building experience with a Canadian company called Alair Homes, which is now comprised of 62 builders like the Freeburns, while Serena was busy designing their family oasis with a new baby in tow. Design, she did, with meticulous care and attention to detail from the statement light fixtures (**Martin’s Home Hardware**) down to the tiniest pair of baby booties.

“I’ve always liked design and the selection process throughout the build,” explains Serena. Her natural flair for aesthetic and DIY touches, combined with Dylan and Ben’s industry experience, made for an impeccably decorated and sleek contemporary cross-over space, which will be hard for the couple to walk away from when they are ready to move on to their next project.

“Serena and I built our home here together,” says Dylan, while Serena adds, “It will be hard to leave this house, but we’re going to build again someday.”

The rich textures, colours and finishes of the décor are built on a strong base of neutral tones: the off-white and grey walls (**Paul Eagleson Furniture**, painted by **Bob Love**), white kitchen and bathroom cabinetry (**Wood and Wallworks**), natural walnut hardwood floors in a matte finish, and grey and white ceramic tiles from **Greyfair Flooring Inc.** (installed by **Travis Wilder Contracting**).

Warm wood elements and a marble countertop from **The Old Barn Polished Stone Creations** help to soften the stark white palette that is paired with industrial-style pendants and stainless appliances (**Square Deal Neil’s**) in the open-concept kitchen. The black interior and exterior doors (Wood and Wallworks, **VanDolder’s Home Team**) and black Continental linear gas fireplace (**John Bridge Plumbing and Heating**) pop off the neutral backdrop, as do the original acrylics on canvas (Serena Freeburn) and a series of photographs by friend **Rebecca Newcombe**.



“I wasn’t sure about those black doors, but I had read an article, *11 Reasons to Paint Your Interior Doors Black*, and I was, like, ‘Ok, let’s do it,’” says Serena. “I think it’s a simple way to add a nice design feature to each of the rooms.”

Additionally, the walnut flooring was a must-have for Dylan, who has a long history with the characteristic wood.

“Walnut is his favourite,” says Ben. “Grandpa was a woodworker and Dylan did some kind of project with walnut as a kid, and has been talking about black walnut ever since.”

Walnut flooring wasn’t the only portion of the home influenced by past generations. The solid-wood dining chairs and office sideboard table were passed down from Dylan’s grandmother and the master bedroom headboard is an old barn door salvaged from their parent’s farm.

When the Freeburns set to work on their home they were still transitioning their business into the Alair Homes system and didn’t have the opportunity to make complete use of the project management system, but they swear up and down it’s a wonder to behold. *Continued on page 26*

OPPOSITE: The black floor-to-ceiling Continental gas fireplace gives an edgy contemporary feel to the neutral mid-century modern inspired living room. **LEFT:** The open-concept main floor and spacious windows provide ample natural light in the home, even in the narrow entrance hallway. **BELOW LEFT:** The family’s office is painted in a soft, vintage pastel that complements the décor. **BELOW RIGHT:** A barrel mirror and fun industrial pendant light give this main floor powder room punch.





SERVING THE AREA FOR OVER 60 YEARS

SQUARE DEAL NEIL'S

TV AND APPLIANCES

SALES & SERVICE • NEW & USED
Hwy 21, Southampton 519-797-3905
sinclairtv@bmts.com www.squaredealneils.ca
Large enough to serve you, small enough to care!

“We didn’t get the full experience so we are looking forward to fully utilizing it when we build our next home,” says Serena.

The project management system they are referring to is the core of Alair Homes’ philosophy for managing custom built homes and renovations, one that strives to bring greater peace of mind to clients.

“We show every cost, down to the cent,” explains Ben. “We do all the research before giving a quote and the clients select everything beforehand so they know exactly what they are getting into.”

Each and every Alair Homes client gets a personal log-in on the Alair website, and there they will find every quote from each sub-trade and supplier they’ve received for every portion of their project, all the copies of their plans and communications and an up-to-date budget compiled from all that information. Basically, no surprises – exactly what the Freeburns were looking for. *Continued on page 28*



ABOVE: A dark statement wall draws the eye to the master bedroom headboard, which is a repurposed barn door salvaged from the former Freeburn family farm.

LEFT: The master en suite, complete with marble-look tile flooring and industrial-style pendant lights, mirrors the all-white look of the family kitchen situated below it.

A modern bedroom with a dark headboard, red and white bedding, and a view of a house exterior. The room features a large window and a patterned wall.

ALAIR HOMES

LIVING BETTER STARTS HERE

ben.freeburn@alairhomes.com | (519) 385-0845 | www.alairhomes.com



ABOVE: The upstairs guest bath features a floating vanity. **RIGHT:** The nursery is a soft and comfortable space adorned in rich, neutral textures, while gold triangle wall decals add a touch of glam.



The Freeburns have a lot of history in the area. Their parents were the founders of Freeburn Fine Homes, so breaking from that name was a little emotional for the duo, but it was the next best step for the family team.

“We do have a bit of history there,” say Ben and Dylan, “But, we were friends with the founder of Alair Homes, Blair McDaniel, and the client-control process they champion really appealed to us. There is a real need in the industry for transparency and better communication and we saw a way to achieve that with Alair.”

“Really, we are carpenters,” says Ben. “Our training wasn’t in business; focusing on that aspect is hard for a small business. Alair Homes’ network helped us evolve from entrepreneurs and provided us with the tools to be fully transparent and accountable to our clients,” a feat that would have been difficult to manage on their own.

What wasn’t difficult to manage was the construction of Dylan and Serena’s new family home. The couple made a great team and survived the project because of their love for design and building. **OH**

LOCAL SOURCE GUIDE

Allen’s Home Building Centre • Bob Love • Drywall By Phase V • G & M Electric • Gary Cobean Sheet Metal • Great Northern Insulation • Greg Williamson Design • Greyfair Flooring Inc. • Hillis Contracting • John Bridge Plumbing and Heating • Martin’s Home Hardware • The Old Barn Polished Stone Creations • On Track Door Systems • Paul Eagleson Furniture • Port Elgin Home Hardware Building Centre • Rebecca Newcombe • Serena Freeburn • Shane Bradfield Masonry • Shore To Shore Glass • Square Deal Neil’s • John C. Sweeney Concrete Finishing • Travis Wilder Contracting • VanDolder’s Home Team • Welsh Construction • Wood and Wallworks



ABOVE: The laundry room features a touch of country-rustic décor, with laundry essentials displayed in glass jars and wooden crates.

*A little temptation ...
from those who spend their lives
trying to avoid it.*

Country Charm

Mennonite Furniture

Furniture to match your look and needs. Let us design and build for your home.

Bedrooms Buffets & Hutches Chairs & Rockers Tables Home Office

17 George St, Caledon **519-927-1789** | Hwy 6 & 10, Owen Sound **519-376-4434** | www.ccharm.com

OUR HOMES SPECIAL ADVERTISING FEATURE

Mortgage Insurance:

Is there another, perhaps *better* option?

Whether you’ve bought a new house or cottage, most people likely bought that property with a mortgage. Along with that mortgage comes the question “Would you like to insure your mortgage?”. Many people do end up taking mortgage insurance through their lender, most often because it’s “easy”. No blood tests or long questionnaires. You do this without realizing that “easy” is not always the best way to protect your family and your wealth from an unexpected health event.

There are many features and differences between mortgage insurance from a lender and personally owned insurance policies. For example:

| Feature | Insurance with Lender | Personally owned insurance |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Constant Death Benefit | No, benefit declines as the mortgage declines. | Yes, benefit is fixed at the time of purchase. |
| Choice of beneficiary | No, beneficiary must be listed as the lender. | Yes, any beneficiary may be listed and choose how to use the benefit to their best advantage. |
| Underwriting approval | Insurance is not underwritten and approved until after a claim is made. There is a risk that the insurance may not pay out based on findings. | Complete underwriting and approval before policy issued. |
| Effect of refinancing | Any type of refinancing may cause cancellation of insurance. If borrower has health issues, new coverage may not be available. | Moving between lenders, changing residence or refinancing has no effect on policy. |

If the above information has made you at all uncomfortable, it likely means you need to take another look at your insurance coverage. Dealing with an unexpected health event is made exponentially worse when it is followed by an unexpected insurance event.

Contact **Michele Mannerow**, Insurance Representative with **RBC Dominion Securities** (www.mannerow.ca), at **519-376-2018** to help you determine if your insurance makes sense for you.