

A 19-foot island services this large home with ease. The black marble top is bookended by a butcher block and a round bar top where six contemporary leather seats have views to Olser Ski Club. Magnolia leaf and snapdragon arrangement courtesy of Paperwhite Flowers.

# LEVELS OF LUXURY

STORY **SARA MARTIN & GEORGETTE MCCULLOCH**  
PHOTOGRAPHY **SANDY MACKAY**





At dusk, James Schneider takes a seat at the grand piano in his Collingwood home while flurries swirl around Blue Mountain in the distance.

Music fills his show-stopping contemporary home as he plays Journey's *Don't Stop Believing*. The grand piano holds a special place on a platform overlooking the main living area, one of 11 distinct levels in the home.

Schneider was born with not just music, but building in his blood. The creative Wasaga Beach native and principal of **Jasper Group Inc.** grew up inspired by his parents John and Marilyn, watching and learning as they built 23 homes during their 50 years of marriage so far.

His personal foray into building began in public school. "I'd be sent to kind Mrs. Wilson's room to build birdhouses," he explains. "Those birdhouses became more and more elaborate and I'd start changing the shape of them."



Even today his creative design process is distinctive. "I use wooden building blocks," Schneider describes. "I go to the lot, sit on a bucket, number my sightlines, then take my blocks and create a shape for the home." He's been documenting his designs and ideas in a scrapbook for as long as he can remember.

One of those ideas was a house with a waterfall by Blue Mountain. Today, his stunning contemporary, black and grey, stone-faced home sits on a huge estate lot in Collingwood's Windrose Estates with a view of the mountain. It seamlessly blends fine natural elements with cutting edge technology.

Schneider performs classic rock and original material with the band Hunter, and he's both an avid skier and outdoor enthusiast. He's driven to translate these passions into his designs. He has gathered around him an equally talented, committed and creative team – designers in Jasper Design and construction crew Jasper Construx – who create homes

that exemplify lifestyle living, from the inside out. The homes feature the best sightlines for maximum panoramic views, functionality and timeless and trending design features.

Schneider designed, built and decorated the 8,000 sq. ft. six-bedroom, seven-bathroom home, which he describes as a Bali-style ski chalet. It's his second home in this exclusive development.

"Contemporary homes are increasingly popular in this area, which is very exciting," Schneider says. "Right now I'm building modern and lifestyle-oriented homes that create a surrounding and feeling of living art."

Jasper Group Inc.'s **Bayside Meadows** development on Beachwood Road between Wasaga Beach and Collingwood consists of 17 luxury starter homes. He's also building high-end custom homes for clients and has ambitious plans to expand into the Muskoka market with a multi-home development near Huntsville. *Continued on page 111*



**TOP:** A solid stone apron wraps the exterior of the home. Its multiple rooflines give almost every room in its 8,000 square feet a window with a view. **ABOVE:** LED strips under-light the staircase. Ascending to the piano level, original artwork lines the hallway and a glimpse of angel wings can be seen through the master bedroom door. **RIGHT:** James Schneider of Jasper Design Inc. plays his grand piano. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** One of many vignettes that sets the tone of this modern home. **BOTTOM:** Even with its soaring ceiling and 22-foot-tall windows the living room area is intimate, grounded by the granite-clad fireplace. It is a favourite spot for the cat the family adopted at the Georgian Bay Humane Society.





His company has broadened over the years, from architectural design and custom building to multi-home projects and retail. He owns **Jasper Life**, a Collingwood store specializing in exquisite décor, lighting and furniture for inside and out.

The home is wired for sound, security and convenience thanks to **Cam Posch of Huronia Alarm & Fire Security Inc.** Schneider controls the lights, the window coverings, the music and the security through an app on his smart phone. James, Skye Woolston and their blended family of four teenage children enjoy the open-concept floor plan, which easily accommodates the demands of an active family.

Like the outside, the style inside is contemporary zen. “There are 49 shades of grey in this house,” laughs Schneider. The interior design always starts and revolves around the selection of his marble or granite. For his kitchen, Schneider picked a massive slab of black marble (Milestone Marble & Granite) to top the 19-foot long island, designed with a circular eat-at bar at one end and a four-foot-square cutting board at the other. The kitchen is fully equipped with a professional stainless-steel refrigerator, two dishwashers and a wall of ovens, all from **Leon’s** Collingwood.

Just off the kitchen is an office, a bathroom with a live-edge, stone-topped vanity and a large walk-in pantry.

A two-storey natural-cut black granite surround installed by mason **Terry Martin** houses the gas fireplace (**Newhouse Home Comfort**) in the great room with a spectacular view through a 22-foot high wall of windows. The adjacent dining room with oversize sliding doors provides one of several walkouts to the 80-foot long multi-level deck, accented by vintage, reclaimed nautical timbers. *Continued on page 112*

**TOP RIGHT:** A Buddha statue observes the dining table, overseen by a Buddha painting behind the grand piano. The chandelier over the live-edge table matches the pendant lights over the kitchen island. **RIGHT:** A raw-edge stone vanity with a glass basin in the guest bathroom has a custom cabinet that is lit from underneath and spotlights the striped heated marble floor. **FAR RIGHT:** Marble continues into the glass-enclosed shower. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** When using the four-foot butcher board, the open-concept main floor is revealed. A cut-out in the wall next to the ovens allows unobstructed sight lines to the dining-room. **BOTTOM LEFT:** This eat-at bar showcases the spectacular view of Osler Ski Club. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Ample storage and another worktop line the kitchen’s interior wall.







Distressed and muted maple floors (Rivalda Ceramic Tiles Inc.) anchor the floors throughout most of the home.

Artistic angel wings and iron chandeliers accent the master retreat with vaulted ceilings and views overlooking the coveted mountain panorama. Deep pile carpet from **Kirby's Flooring** adds warmth and comfort to the large room with a sitting area. The walk-in closet features its own washer and dryer. The soaring en suite is wrapped in Verde St. Denis, jade green marble. The lights on the ski hills can be enjoyed from both the raised jet tub and massive glass shower.

The open-riser, tubular steel staircase (**Fusion Custom Welding & Fabrication**) is showcased by a striking Starlite chandelier. The children have bedrooms on the top level and a guest suite has a covered balcony overlooking the grounds. *Continued on page 114*

**TOP LEFT:** On a raised platform, the en suite jet tub is spectacular. It is surrounded by jade-green, heated marble flooring. The same rich jade marble extends up the walls in the open shower. **TOP RIGHT:** In the master bedroom, the mood is one of calmness and serenity. With deep pile carpet the space offers a king-size bed, sofa and a bank of windows. **RIGHT:** The loft overlooks the living room through glass railings and is topped with a large Starlite chandelier. **FAR RIGHT:** Double vessel sinks in the master en suite sit atop a floating vanity. Orchids courtesy of Paperwhite Flowers.



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As a monument to the surrounding landscape, the centrepiece of the home is a handcrafted waterfall, built by James's cousin, Kevin Hockley of Hockley Studios, who fabricates natural history exhibits. Visible from multiple levels, the water streams down into a lit pond on the lower level and fills the home with its calming sound.

Schneider builds a hockey rink in many of his homes. This one has a live-edge maple bar along the boards for spectators to sit at and enjoy the action. The kids, Ella, Lucas, Max and Tianna are always up for a shootout. *Continued on page 116*

**RIGHT:** With its one-storey height, the realistic waterfall is a one-of-a-kind feature connecting the main level to the lower level. **BELOW:** Skye and Ella watch from the live-edge bar, as James, Max, Lucas and Tianna play shinny on the indoor hockey rink. Adjacent to the rink is an exercise room and wine cellar.



*The whole family enjoys the indoor hockey rink.*

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While Schneider's house reflects an appreciation of art, technology, music, landscape and design, he knows the style and quality of the home will be in demand. "I get comfortable but never too attached to the homes I live in – there's always another design, another build around the corner." **OH**

**RIGHT:** A guest bedroom with en suite on the lower level is tucked away from the action. The barn board ceiling creates depth and texture.



This topographic relief of Georgian Bay doubles as a custom sink, created by Georgian Bay Custom Concrete.

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