

STORY **WALTER FRANCYK**  
PHOTOGRAPHY **HAROLD CLARK**

# Going TO THE Country

Moving to the country was a well-planned pleasure for Cathy and Colin Basinger.

They had lived in a rural area north of Cobourg for about 25 years, but moved to the city for work. “We knew we wanted to come back and get out of the rat race and be out in the countryside again,” says Colin. They had just started looking for property when they were asked to look at a new house built in Grafton by **Stalwood Homes**. Stalwood president **Al Rose** is a long-time friend. The new home had been designed for retirees or people looking to downsize, but it wasn't quite what the Basingers wanted. The vacant lot next door, however, was an ideal spot for the home they had in mind. “We liked the idea it was going to be close to town, close to Highway 401, on town water and natural gas. It had everything, so we stopped looking and said, “Yes, we could live here,”” says Cathy. “It’s so quiet.” *Continued on page 40*



**ABOVE:** Colin and Cathy Basinger are delighted to be living in the country again. Lilly is one of their two miniature dachshunds.

**LEFT:** The Craftsman-style front porch is a pleasant spot to sit and watch rainstorms and sunsets.

**OPPOSITE:** An antique table, painted grey and white, with matching web-backed chairs, lends classic French ambience to the dining space.



They asked Stalwood to build their new three-bedroom home. In preparing for their move to the country, Cathy had, for some years, been looking at design books and magazines, saving pictures of her favourite ideas, designs and styles. “We found the basic floor plan that we liked and then we worked with the Stalwood design team in terms of pushing a couple of walls here and there and changing a bit of the layout,” says Colin. They enlarged the kitchen and master bedroom. “Cathy looked at me and said, ‘You’ll like this Colin. By doing that I get to make your garage three feet bigger.’ ‘I’m sold. I’m in,’ I said. That was a no-brainer,” Colin laughs.

Cathy collaborated with Stalwood kitchen designer **Jocelyn Mason**. “She was wonderful to work with and she helped me create a beautiful, very functional kitchen.” Glass-fronted cabinets display Cathy’s collection of pitchers atop the white kitchen cabinetry by Decor Cabinet Company. A checkerboard tile pattern in multiple shades of grey, from **Tilemaster**, forms the backsplash. **Delray Granite** supplied a Carrara-like quartz for the kitchen perimeter counters and Cambria Britannica quartz for the kitchen island. Painted Admiral Blue, the island is designed, at Cathy’s insistence, to allow people to sit comfortably, as they would around a table, instead of in a straight line.

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**ABOVE:** Designed for engaging conversation, the kitchen island is an inviting spot for breakfast and informal meals. Tilemaster supplied tiles for the backsplash while Delray Granite furnished quartz countertops. **LEFT:** Just outside the kitchen, a flowering dipladenia basks in the afternoon warmth on the sundeck.

“Because we have a lot of windows on the south side, we do get a lot of beautiful natural light that comes into the home,” says Colin.



Custom-built shelving and tiny windows flank the living room fireplace. Ruby, the couple's year-old, miniature harlequin dachshund stands guard. **BELOW:** Chinese wedding jars and porcelain plates augment the blue motif of the living room.



A curved, French-style range hood hovers over the stove. An adjoining butler's pantry provides extra space and convenience. On the south side of the kitchen, an oversize sliding glass door opens to the sun deck.

Cathy and Colin applied their taste for Craftsman styling to the front of the home. A large welcoming porch, supported by tapered white pillars on low stone columns, is where Colin enjoys sitting and watching rainstorms roll in across the nearby fields. "It's lovely. We use it a lot," says Cathy. "We see some gorgeous sunsets," Colin says.

In the living room, a blue sofa and complementary green-and-blue armchairs gather around a central, gas fireplace, flanked by white, built-in bookshelves, square windows and porcelain Chinese wedding jars. Their grey-and-white antique dining table and matching cushioned chairs reflect a French inspiration. Trey ceilings, designed by Stalwood, lend depth and a stately ambience

to the living and dining rooms. Carefully chosen, blue-and-white curtains complete the look. "Because we have a lot of windows on the south side, we do get a lot of beautiful natural light that comes into the home," says Colin.

A large, master bedroom on the ground floor was a "must-have" for the couple. "A main-floor master bedroom was pretty important for us so we wouldn't have to be climbing stairs when we get older," says Colin. On one wall, the bedroom has matching, sliding barn doors. One door opens to a walk-in closet. The other reveals the en suite with a large walk-in shower, white custom cabinetry with sinks embedded in quartz counters. Ceramic tiles for the bathrooms came from **Floortrends** where **Judy Ball** helped with the selections. "She was awesome," says Cathy. Bedroom windows overlook the backyard and eastern sky. "We see the sunrise every morning. The first thing we do every morning is check what the sun's doing," says Cathy.

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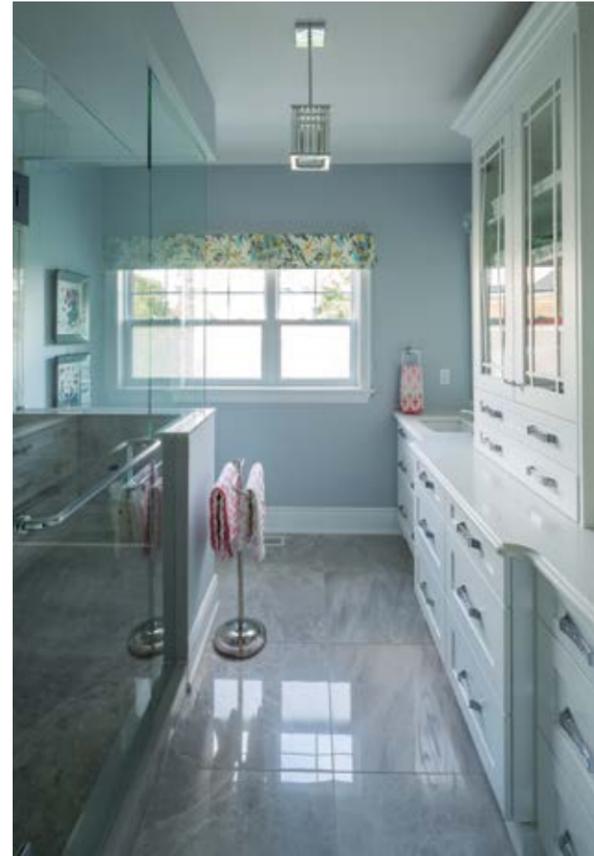
A small ground-floor bedroom has been transformed into Colin's office. "I make the long commute from the kitchen to my office at the front, when I'm not travelling," he laughs. "It's great, it's right at the front of the house, I can see the comings and goings. It works perfectly that way."

Upstairs are two more bedrooms and a cosy sitting room where the couple watch television. The walls are covered with pictures and paintings of birds, a reflection of the Basingers' appreciation of their natural surroundings. "We like to watch the birds," says Cathy. A great grey owl was their most exotic avian visitor. Fox, deer and rabbits are part of the neighbourhood and the couple has heard the howling of coyotes. "It's nature's paradise out there," says Cathy. Before she lets their two miniature dachshunds, Lily and Ruby outside, she always checks to ensure there's no wild animal about. "If there's anything out there, they'll go after it," says Colin. **Beauti-Tone** paints from Cobourg Home Hardware Building Centre were used throughout. Colours include Elephant on the main floor, Grey Goose in the master suite and Favourite Sweater in the two upstairs bedrooms.

Although the ground floor is their main living area, last summer they filled the house when their two daughters, one of whom lives in Vancouver, the other in Australia, came to visit with their families. "It

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**RIGHT:** Ceramic tile flooring, a large glass-walled shower and custom-made cabinets furnish the master bedroom en suite. **BELOW:** The large master bedroom catches the early morning sunlight.



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**RIGHT:** Roman shades in a bright floral pattern match the pillows in this upstairs guest room. **BELOW:** The laundry room was built just inside the door to the large backyard. **BOTTOM:** A pine sleigh bed makes a tempting place for peaceful slumber in this second-floor bedroom.



“We like to watch the birds,” says Cathy. “It’s nature’s paradise.”

was great,” says Cathy. “The upstairs was well used. Having all the space on the main floor was wonderful.”

The Basingers describe Stalwood’s quality of work as amazing. “His whole team were very good, very professional,” says Colin. Once construction was well under way, Colin and Cathy would visit the site every Friday to check the progress and review any changes. “They kept us in the loop, right from start to finish,” he says. “Their people working on the site were always great to deal with and very respectful when we came through. Stalwood seems to have a very good group of trades working for them,” says Colin. **OH**

### SOURCE GUIDE

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