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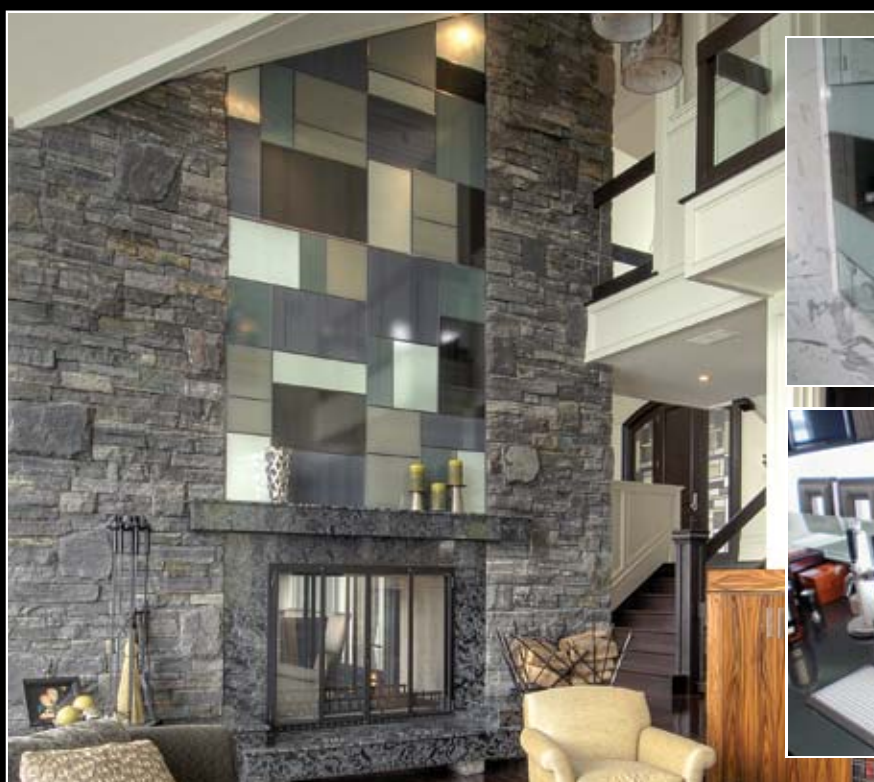


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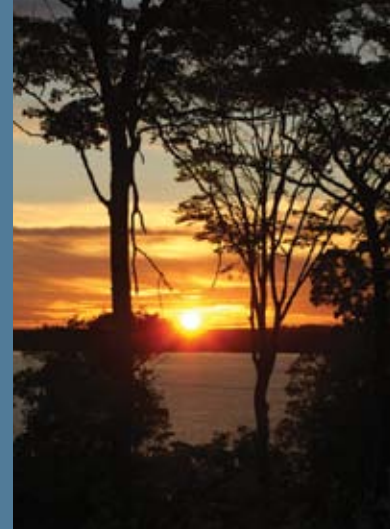
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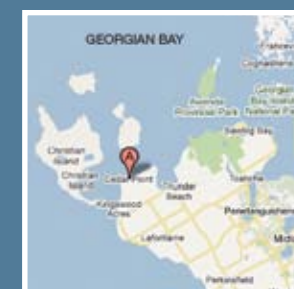
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SELECTING OUR COVER THIS ISSUE WAS NO EASY TASK.

Our cover options come from the homes we feature inside the magazine. This issue, which marks our third anniversary, we showcase three gorgeous homes, all completely different in style and design.

Our first stop was Penetanguishine and the home of Stacey and Gord Cox – a bright, yellow Cape Code-style home with an impeccable interior filled with family photos and style galore.

Next, we had the pleasure of photographing Tara Brown's sleek home in Barrie. Tara is a designer and the rooms in her home are daring and fashion forward.

Our third home is a country log classic on 17 acres that John and Melanie Simioni spent considerable time renovating and updating.

All three homes ooze personality and are a tribute to the creative talents of their owners. They also photographed beautifully.

Which brings us back to choosing the cover. We had many beautiful options – the oh-so-fall feel of Stacey and Gord's front porch and the incredibly warm, rich look of Melanie and John's family room.

In the end, after consulting many people, we decided Tara's contemporary living room/dining room was the one, simply because it's unique and much different than any other cover we've featured so far.

It's also our hope that this issue of OUR HOMES inspires your next renovation. We asked six talented professionals to share fresh, new renovation projects that we know you'll love.

This issue is also packed with design and décor ideas from local retailers you can visit to make your home the best that it can be this season.

Finally, as OUR HOMES celebrates three successful years in Simcoe County, I want to thank our dedicated readers, our advertising partners and the many homeowners who have welcomed us into their beautiful homes. Cheers to you all!

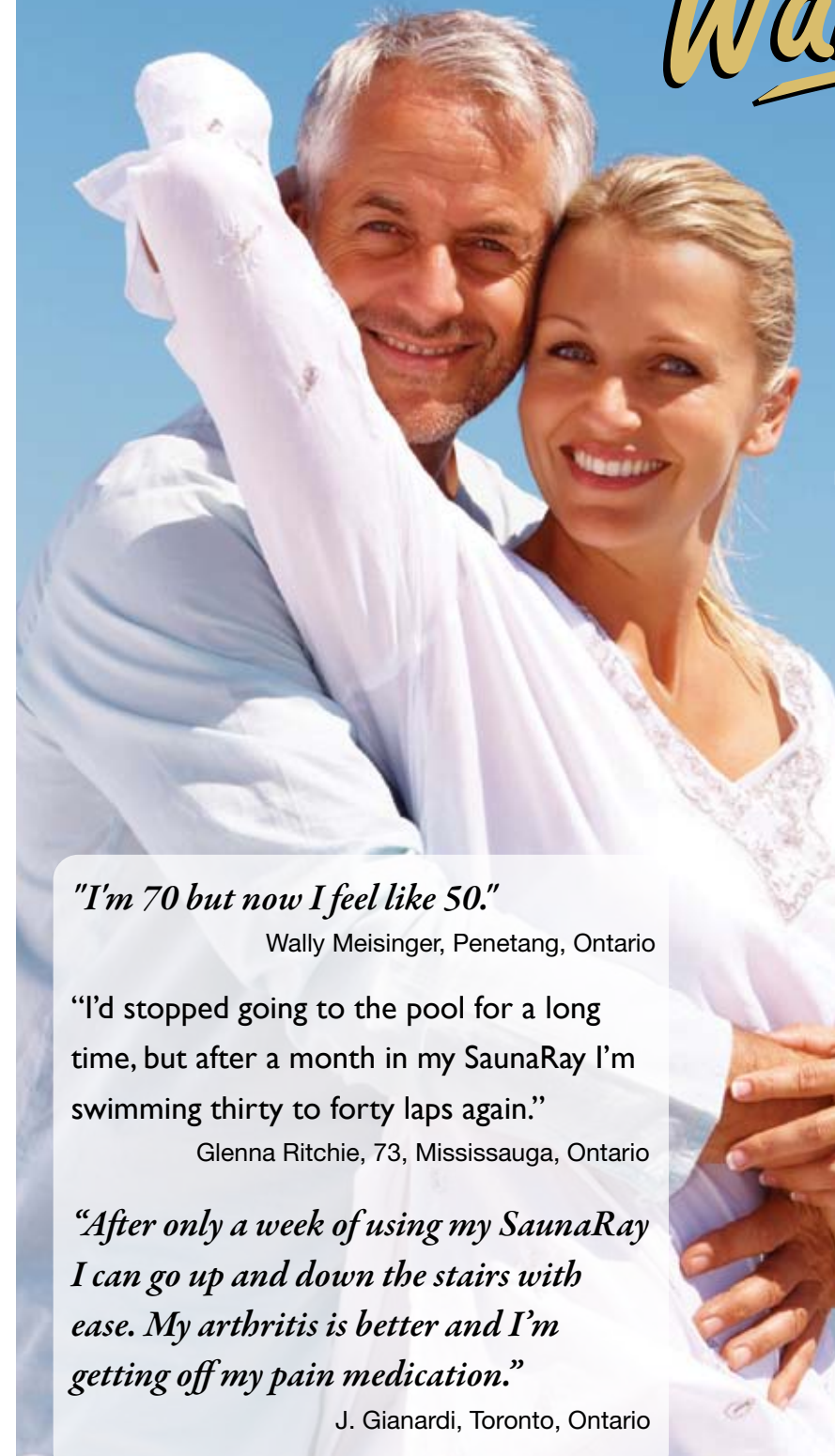
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Georgette

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and via direct mail to select builders, architects, trades and professionals. OUR HOMES
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ON THE COVER

Tara Brown designs her home. Story, page 28. Photography by Sandy MacKay.



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publisher's note




IT'S OUR ANNIVERSARY! OUR HOMES Barrie, Orillia, Midland and Innisfil has been coming into your home for three years. What a pleasure it's been showcasing spectacular homes and providing homeowners throughout Simcoe County with great design and décor ideas. The talented OUR HOMES staff is as committed as ever to creating a magazine that you not only read and enjoy, but keep as a reference to find local businesses you can trust to help out around your house. Our readers support our advertisers and for that, we are grateful. Your patronage helps drive our local economy and has made OUR HOMES a success. OUR HOMES is the number one, premium home décor and design magazine in Simcoe County. We intend to keep it that way. Please enjoy this, our fall issue, and we look forward to publishing many, many more in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Jamie Jefferson, Publisher
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Ron Baird, Spirit Catcher, 1986, Collection of the MacLaren Art Centre.



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advice

Designer **Stephanie Redmond** answers your questions.

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Dear Stephanie

We will be moving into a new home with a recessed fireplace, small mantel and nine-foot ceilings. We want to hang a picture over the mantel. How do you determine what picture fits best? Is there a formula for this task? The room is open concept with a full fireplace wall, one additional wall and two half walls. Should the wall with the fireplace be a different colour to accent this space?

Any help would be most appreciated.

– Sharon McMann

Stephanie Redmond replies:

Given that your ceilings are not high, you want to accent ceiling height but not overpower your mantel. The most fail-proof way to test a piece is to hold existing pieces above the mantel to see how they feel to you. Some frames will be too heavy, some will not accent the mantel, some may appear too small. This becomes your guide.

One rule of thumb (and something that many mantels suffer from) is to hang your art about six to eight inches above your mantel. Start low. The art should come from the mantel, not float in the space above it.

Always keep in mind the style of your mantel. You can't fight with something that is ornate, but you can complement it with a simpler piece. They need to cohabitate without fighting with one another.

Regarding wall colour, it's difficult to pick a point at which to change tones in an open-concept area and an accent wall is a simple way to do this. If you're craving change, then go for it!

Dear Stephanie

I have huge south-facing windows in my living room. I love the view but I am concerned about privacy. What can I cover my windows with that will give me a view from the inside but privacy from the outside?

– Tara C.

Stephanie Redmond replies:

There are many options when it comes to window coverings. Here are a few ideas that will create privacy and not entirely ruin the view:

1. Unlined voile curtains – A curtain on a pole with minimal “fullness” (not too much fabric) will soften the window area and give you a more traditional solution. You can see through finer weaves with minimal obstruction but you can only see shadows and shapes from the outside.

2. Mesh roller blinds – These are used a lot in condos and seem like they may feel too commercial, but they don't. When rolled up into a pocket above the window they literally disappear. (If you are building a new

house, you can build out the crown moulding to create a pocket for the blinds to recess into.) They come in a variety of weaves for light reduction, but you can see through the more open ones. The benefit of these? If you have a lot of windows, you can have them automated.

3. California shades with sheer covering – I have to admit this is not my favorite look, but they are popular and would solve your problem (which I suspect is a common one and attests to their success). These can be fully closed, semi-open with the sheer still giving you privacy or fully retracted which will clear your window except for the stack at the top.

I would suggest visiting a store that specializes in window coverings to see some of your options before making your decision. You say the windows are “huge,” which makes me think these window coverings will play a major role in your living room décor.

Dear Stephanie

Upcycling seems to be the latest trend in home décor. How do I determine if a piece of furniture is worth either refinishing or reupholstering? I have an old sofa and some dining room chairs that I'd love to upcycle, but I don't want to invest in pieces that won't last.

– Jean Marie

Stephanie Redmond replies:

You have to assess upcycling two ways: cost and emotion.

If you like something enough to want to reinvent it (like your dining set), then yes, it can be worth it. However, be aware that the cost of repainting, staining, reupholstering and purchasing new fabric may be the same as new chairs. Upcycling is not necessarily the most cost-effective approach.

An old wood chair of quality can generally be re-glued if it has a wobble and re-painted to give it some spark. If done correctly, it should last beautifully. So yes, this is worth it.

Generally older sofas have sturdy frames with webbing and coil springs that can be fixed and re-strung if necessary. The seat cushions often need to be replaced and new fabric purchased, which can add up to more than a new sofa. But if you like the style of your existing sofa, then maybe it's worth it. That assessment can be done by an upholsterer who will tell you if the frame is worth saving.

Upcycling was a trend long before the magazines gave it a catchy name. Not only does it have a positive impact on the environment, it can be easier on the pocketbook. Sometimes we just can't part with that old dilapidated piece of furniture for whatever sentimental reason we may have. And sometimes that's good enough. **OH**

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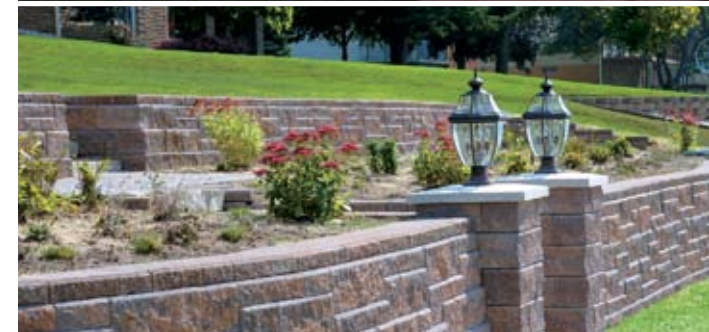
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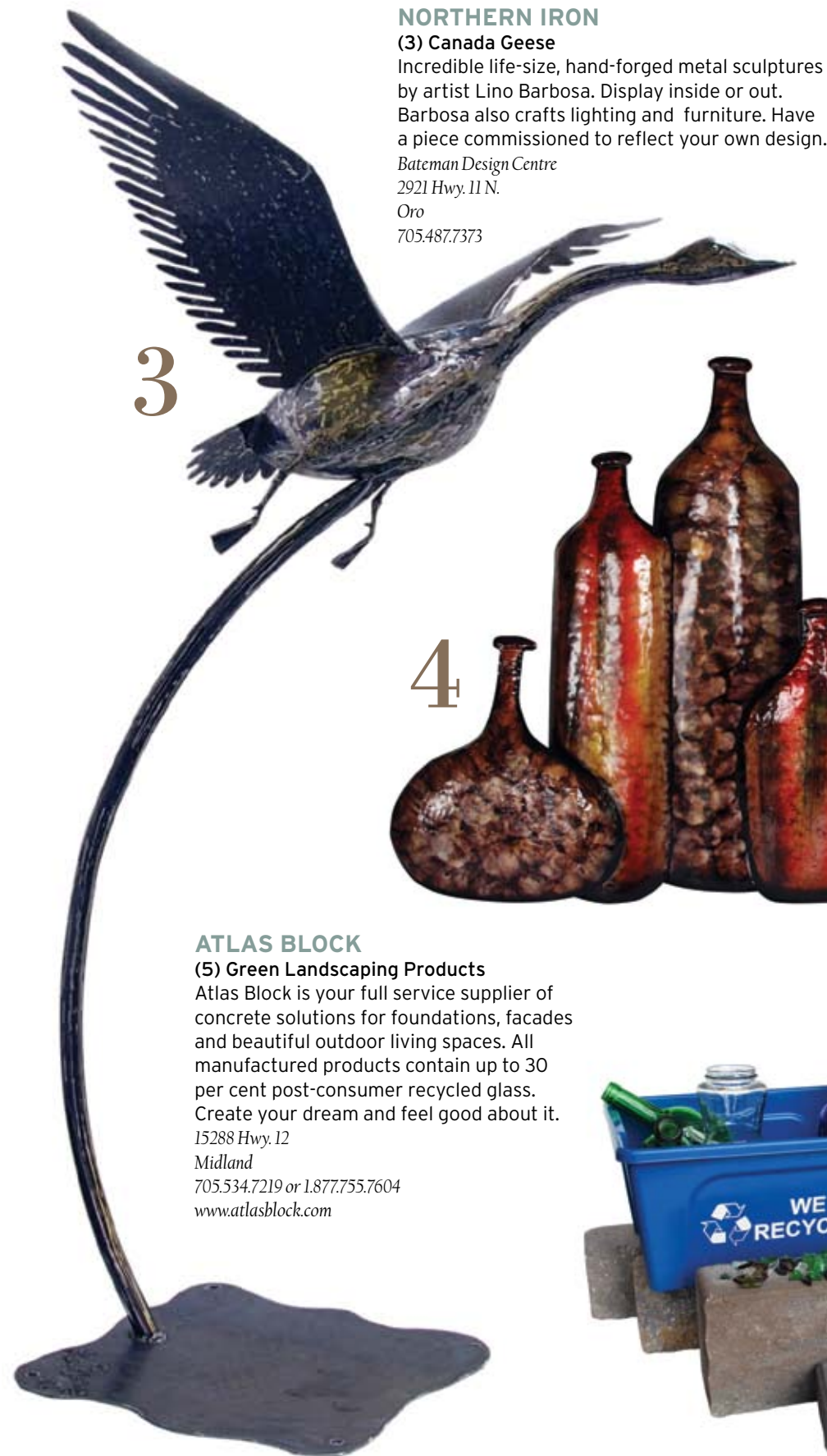
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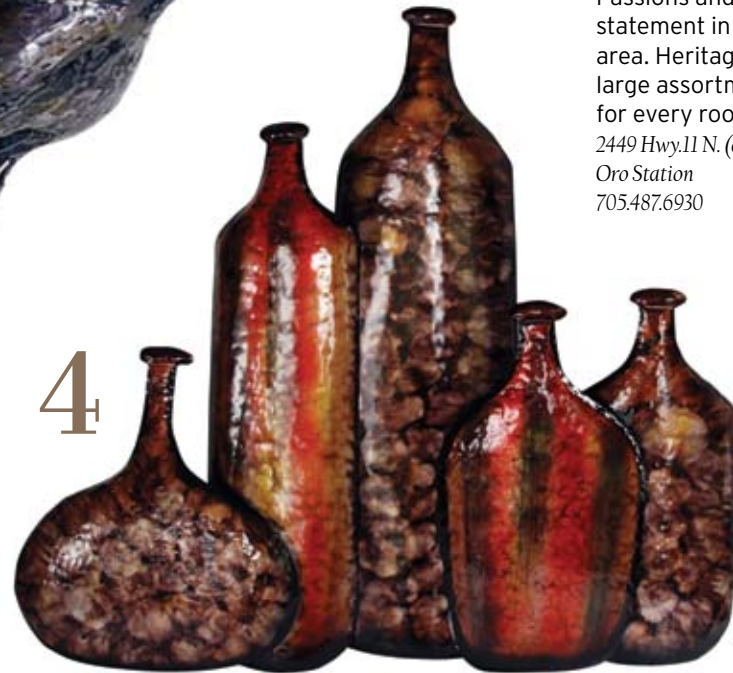
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Tara Brown's living room exudes a chic, comfortable, contemporary look.

BY JUDE WAYLAND // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY

DESIGNER'S TOUCH

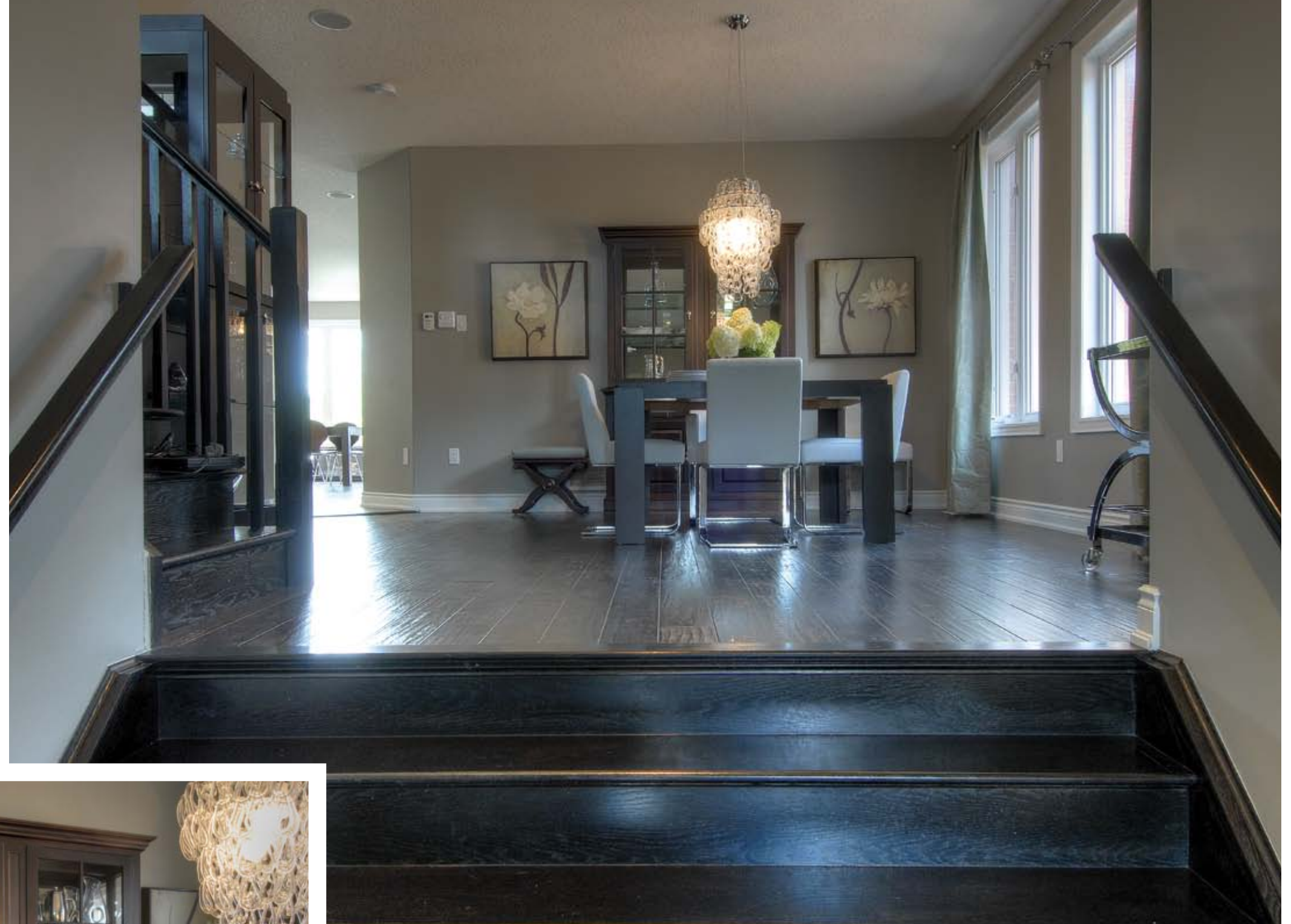
Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "Love of beauty is Taste. The creation of beauty is Art." *Continued on page 31*



ABOVE LEFT: Tara welcomes guests to her home.

ABOVE RIGHT: Less is more in Tara Brown's dining room, viewed from the foyer of her home. The dining room is glamorous and, when necessary, can accommodate a happy group.

RIGHT: Tara selected a chocolate dining table and sideboard with hutch, which blends nicely with the hardwood. She added white, modern, chrome Parsons chairs and a sparkling chandelier. Seasonal flowers add a finishing touch.



Tara Brown knows exactly what Emerson meant. When this stunning 29-year-old woman decorates a home, her appreciation of beauty and artistic good taste come shining through.

Tara just built her dream home five minutes from downtown Barrie, and is still finessing the finishing touches. She's the decorator at **Grandview Homes** in Barrie. And she's an artist who studied at the Emily Carr University of Art and Design in Vancouver. This artistic dynamo is also an awesome drummer who can rock your socks off!

"I love my job," Tara gushes. "I do all the interior design for Grandview. Everyone who purchases a Grandview home gets an appointment with me to pick out all their selections. I've learned so much from being in this industry and from working closely with all of Grandview's trades."

Tara's 2,900 sq. ft., four-bedroom home is roomy and bright, a modified version of Grandview's two-storey Windermere model. "I did sit down and make a lot of changes to the floor plans," she explains. "I switched the layout a little, added a few feet to the width, and went deeper in the back as well."

The home exudes a "less is more" minimalist feel. Contemporary black, white and grey furnishings create a picture of utmost simplicity. "It's my thing," says Tara. "It's classic, but at the same time, contemporary. It's always in style, even though trends come and go."

Clean lines and a lack of clutter characterize the open-concept main floor, which includes a living room, dining room, spacious kitchen and laundry room. Large windows welcome in plenty of natural light. *Continued on page 32*



home & builder

The front foyer features a 12-by-24-inch smooth porcelain flooring, which contrasts beautifully with the textured plastered ceiling (standard in all Grandview homes). Recessed pot lighting, soaring 15-foot ceilings and a tidy little powder room complete the entryway design.

It's three steps up to the dining room that showcases a square dark wood table and four contemporary white leather chairs with simple, yet elegant chrome bases. The dining room walls are painted warm taupe-grey (Silver Fox by **Benjamin Moore**). Tara sourced her lighting fixtures from **La Moquette** (including an eclectic piece over the large kitchen island).

It's evident that Tara loves what she does. Her face lights up when she describes her design philosophy. "I'm not a modernist," she states, "but I am a minimalist." Tara's home is the perfect blend of minimalist flair and contemporary style. "That's me perfectly," she says. "And I like to mix 'n match expensive and inexpensive pieces."

To customize her home, Tara worked with several Grandview suppliers and trades, including **Ray Levitt Drywall**, bricklayer **Larry**

Farr, **Mike Smith** from **United Lumber** (windows and lumber), **Barrie Trim** (doorknobs and trim), finishing framer **Kevin Hunter** of **The Finishing Touch** (oak stairs and fireplace mantel installations), and **Kim Hazelwood** (landscape design and installation).

Gleaming distressed engineered walnut floors (from **Irvine's Carpet One Floor & Home**) run through the dining area into the kitchen. "I love walnut," says Tara. "It's really dark, glossy and smooth. Plus, it's distressed, so it's easy to live with."

"If you were to ask me what my style is, I would say it's my kitchen," says Tara. "It's modern, still a bit classic with the crown moulding, but very simple." Classic, off-white cabinets (**Kitchen Craft**) complement matte, flecked-grey **Corian** countertops.

Restoration Hardware supplied the chrome kitchen pulls. She selected KitchenAid and Jenn-Air appliances. "I love my fridge, and I really love my double-wall oven. It's probably my favourite thing in the house," she says. "I'm a huge baker." *Continued on page 34*



Tara adheres to a high-low standard when she's designing any interior. In her own home, she's splurged on beautiful lighting and top-of-the-line appliances. Grey is the dominant colour on the main floor, with a big splash of white in the kitchen.

ABOVE: The dining room walls are painted Silver Fox by Benjamin Moore.

RIGHT: The kitchen shines with white cabinetry, stainless steel appliances and a brilliant silver, drum chandelier.



Says Tara, “This house is fantastic for entertaining. It’s open, bright, and comfortable. When I have friends over, everyone always ends up around the kitchen island.”

Up another few steps is a spacious media room (above the double garage). A projector transforms an entire wall into a giant screen, and this is where Tara and her girlfriends gather for movie and “rock band” nights. Tara decorated the room with a large Martha Stewart media console, a **Natuzzi** sofa and a drum set that matches her “New White” Farrow & Ball walls.

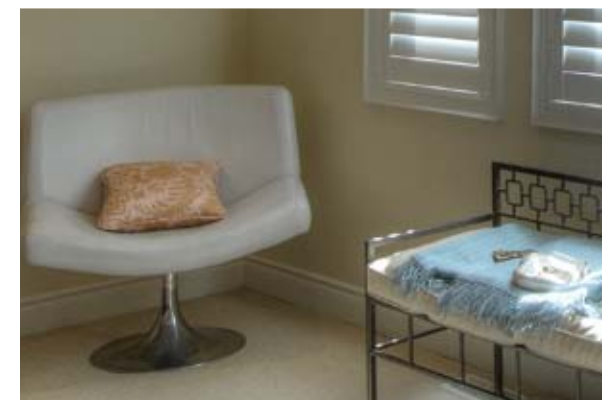
The master bedroom is an oasis of serenity, modeled after Tara’s favourite beach house in Hilton Head, S.C. “It’s right on the ocean and there’s this one bedroom that’s pale yellow and everything in it is white, and you look out at the beautiful blue ocean.” She tastefully recreates that feeling of calm and juxtaposes an expensive king-sized bed (Restoration Hardware) with an inexpensive mirror and a funky fixture.

The open and fresh en suite features white beadboard painted maple cabinets, brushed nickel hardware, double sinks, lovely fixtures, porcelain tiles, a floor-to-ceiling, glassed-in shower and the pièce de résistance: a svelte, freestanding tub from **Bath Works**. “It’s a little nod to the past with the curve,” says Tara, “but then it’s very modern.”

Is this Tara’s dream home? Without blinking, she responds: “Yes.”

“Being in the industry, it’s a work in progress,” she explains. “I change it up all the time, but I hope to be here for a really long time.” Tara Brown is a savvy, smart and incredibly talented young woman. She’s already living a dream in her dream home in Barrie. Considering her artistic sense and aesthetic flair, it’s no doubt that this young entrepreneur has a very promising future. **OH**

Grandview Homes has been in business since 1999. Owned by Linda and Randy Brown, the company builds homes that offer exceptional value and quality workmanship. Grandview Homes currently have two developments in Barrie, another in Innisfil, and an ongoing four-year project in Collingwood. Even though business is booming, the homebuilder will continue to build only 50 to 75 homes per year, in an effort to grow better, not bigger.



OPPOSITE PAGE:

BOTTOM LEFT: Family and friends gather in Tara’s upstairs media room, where Tara plays her drums and hosts movie nights.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Tara’s drum set has a special place in this room. The drums are yellow and match the décor.

TOP RIGHT: The family room’s colour scheme is vibrant and earthy.

THIS PAGE:

TOP: Tara’s master bedroom is fresh and oh so feminine. Peachy-pink accents and soft, airy fabrics make this room a special place for rest and relaxation.

RIGHT: The vessel tub in the master en suite is the splurge. A hip chandelier and sheer drapery add to the serene, luxurious space.



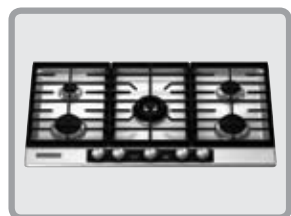


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BY PAUL WILSON

NIGHTMARE ON MAIN: THE RISE OF PSYCHIC HOME INSPECTION



Paul Wilson is a writer, editor, and translator who lives full time in rural Ontario. He can be reached at paul@ourhomemagazine.com.

If any house is haunted, ours should be. The building is well over 150 years old and has served as a livery stable, a hotel, a photographer's studio, an auto repair shop, a furniture stripping company and an antique store. It's not far from a pioneer cemetery where the original settlers are laid to rest – or so we hope – and our village has enough spooky tales of violence and anguish to fill a house twice the size with tormented spirits.

Before we put in an offer, I asked Patricia – my more sensitive half – if she thought there were “ghosts” in the building. I was partly joking, but I also knew that if she said, “yes,” we'd walk away from it. She said, “Definitely not!”

Fourteen years later, we've had our fair share of problems: loud banging noises at night, scurrings in the attic, slamming doors, objects that mysteriously vanish and just as mysteriously turn up somewhere else. But they can all be explained, pretty much: the house is a drafty, wooden structure that creaks and cracks with extremes of temperature; we have bats and who knows what else under the eaves; and as for the missing objects – well, let's just say I'm a lot more forgetful than I used to be.

But Patricia was essentially right: in all that time, we've never seen or sensed anything scarier than our own shadows, or anything more alarming than our aging faces and sagging waistlines in the mirror.

Not so for Barry Lebow and Catherine Fogarty. They have never met, but they share an interest in haunted houses. Each started out as a skeptic, yet each has had a personal experience of “haunting” that inspired them to modify their skepticism in positive, but very different directions.

Lebow, a real estate professional with 42 years' experience (www.lebow.ca), teaches agents how to handle what he calls “stigmatized” property, property that's been “tainted” or devalued in buyers' minds by, say, its proximity to a toxic waste site or a cemetery, or by violent deaths associated with it. He's been described in the *Toronto Star* as “something of a maven on Toronto's haunted houses” and he acts as an expert witness when issues of non-disclosure become the subject of litigation.

Lebow's interest in properties with weird problems began in his 20s, when he bought a house in a Toronto neighbourhood for a song, only to discover later that it had been the scene of a dramatic suicide several years earlier. Lebow renovated the house, then sold it to someone who wasn't bothered by the building's tragic past. A decade later, a grisly triple murder occurred in a house on his street. He thought the house would remain empty forever, but it was snapped up almost immediately.

These experiences bolstered his fascination with what makes or breaks a real estate deal, and he eventually developed a course, which he still teaches under the auspices of different real estate boards, called “Selling the Haunted House: The Impact of Stigma on Market Values.”

The “Haunted House” designation draws students in, but the real substance of Lebow's course isn't ghosts – which, in his experience, are very rare – but properties haunted by more tangible curses that can make values plummet, such as the presence of urea-formaldehyde insulation or a former marijuana grow-op. By law, the vendor and the agent must disclose any such information to the buyer. But that still leaves a large grey area: should knowledge that a house is “haunted” by unexplained phenomena also require disclosure?

Catherine Fogarty runs a Toronto-based film company, Big Coat Productions (www.bigcoatproductions.com) which is currently shooting a new cable TV reality show that could help clarify that grey area.

She happened on the subject more or less by accident – or was it cosmic design? In any case, four years ago, shortly after she and her young twin boys moved into an old home she'd bought in Toronto, scary things began happening. Doors would open or lock spontaneously; she heard strange sounds at night in her bedroom; she woke up to find both taps on her bathtub running full blast. One day, an aquarium in her kitchen shattered, scattering glass and water across the countertop.

Coincidentally, Fogarty was talking with the HGTV cable channel about developing a new series that might tap into the growing popularity of paranormal subject matter. The mysterious occurrences at her home were her eureka moment. With the cameras running, she brought in two psychics, who both confirmed that there were powerful “presences” in the house. Still somewhat skeptical, she engaged a conventional home inspector. He found natural causes for some, but not all, of the events.

That experience became the pilot episode of a 13-part series called *Paranormal Home Inspection*. What makes it different from other spooky home shows, like VIVA's *Rescue Mediums*, is its down-to-earth, “multi-platform” approach. Each home – most in Ontario – will be examined by a regular building inspector before bringing in the psychic investigators. If the pilot episode is any indication, *PHI* will be something like *Holmes Inspection* meets *The Blair Witch Project* meets *Ghostbusters*. There'll be something in it for skeptics and believers alike. (The series begins airing early next year on the HGTV and Mystery TV networks.)

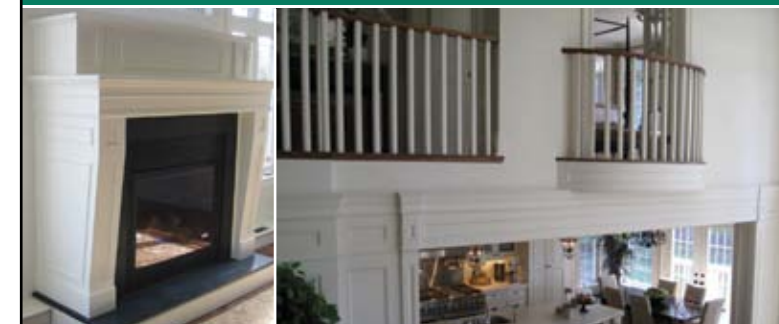
Both Lebow and Fogarty have been changed by their experiences. Lebow, though still a skeptic, doesn't dismiss psychic phenomenon out of hand. “Perception is reality,” he says. “If the public believes it, it's a problem, be it ghosts, or urea formaldehyde poisoning.” There may be no absolute proof for either, but they will still affect property values, and that's real enough for him. And he has a digital-age caveat for his clients: never buy a house you haven't Googled.

Fogarty hasn't banished the spirits from her home, but she's come to believe they're harmless, and has resigned herself to their existence, just as I have resigned myself to the haunting presence in our home of mice in the basement, bats in the eaves and the ghostly “to do” lists that hover reproachfully in the air, disturbing our sleep. **OH**

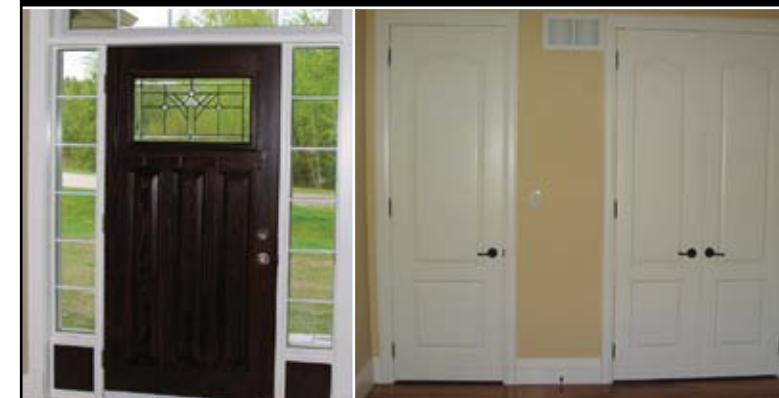
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glorious grasses

PHOTOS AND STORY BY MELANIE REKOLA

As autumn comes to be, ornamental grasses take centre stage of many beautiful landscapes. I adore watching the fall breeze rustle through their mature foliage; often with silver, pink or bronze seed heads nodding high above. Certain grasses even turn colour in fall, adding a whole different dimension to their aesthetic worth. I find many people tend to forget about the autumn garden when designing their landscapes. Take a critical eye to your garden; with fall in mind. Sometimes a landscape just looks past its prime at this time of year, with no gorgeous flowers at the forefront. Or maybe you need a focal point with a textural change of pace. Trendy ornamental grasses may be the piece you need to update and add movement to an otherwise static garden.

MELANIE'S PLANT PICKS:

Zebra Grass (*Miscanthus sinensis Zebrinus*): I love Zebra grass for its wonderful horizontal yellow striping, and its elegant arching habit. It is often confused with “Porcupine” grass for its similar markings, but Porcupine has a much stiffer and rougher appearance than Zebra. Zebra grows five feet plus and its thick leaves and unusual markings make it a wonderful statement plant or perfect for planting en masse.

Giant Miscanthus (*Miscanthus x Giganteus*): This grass is truly a giant, growing eight feet plus. Great for a space where height is needed, but there's not much room available for planting. It has a thick, mid-green leaf with an arching habit and is great as a privacy screen or to add a somewhat “tropical” effect to any yard. I especially like it around pools for exactly this reason. Though it rarely blooms within most parts of Canada, it's still worth planting solely for its foliage size and texture.

Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardi*): An eyecatching grass that also grows about five feet in height. The lush green leaves of mid-summer give way to distinctive three-part seedheads with a purplish colour. The grand finale of the growing season occurs when the leaves turn a reddish-copper colour.

Karl Foerster Reed Grass (*Calamagrostis x acutiflora* Karl Foerster): Though this grass is commonly used, I still find it irresistible. Its seed heads are very unique and look somewhat like wheat. It is extremely hardy and drought/salt tolerant. Mass planting is best and it has an early spring show of growth that not many other grasses possess. Look for new varieties of this grass with white or green margins.

MaidenHair (*Miscanthus sinensis*): I use five-foot maidenhair grass for its beautiful ultra fine texture and its great contrast with larger leafed plants and large stone pieces. It has gorgeous seed plums as well! Look for varieties such as “MorningLight,” “Huron Sunrise” or “Graziella” for a variety of foliage and seed head colours.



Sometimes space just doesn't allow for such large and bold plantings as mentioned above. Dwarf grasses are the answer to a much daintier statement.

Blue Fescue and other dwarf grasses: Adding blue foliage such as “Elijah Blue Fescue” can really brighten up the autumn landscape. The colour is very complementary to much of the oranges and golds that naturally occur in fall. Though these grasses are small, a mass planting of five or more makes a beautiful statement to any garden. Other dwarf grasses to look for are dwarf maidenhair, little Blue stem (for fall colour) and dwarf fountain grass; all great for rock gardens as well.

Ornamental grasses offer a unique opportunity for a vertical element, much different than what small trees and shrubs offer. Their herbaceous nature makes them ideal for difficult areas prone to snow piling where an upright plant component is needed. Bear in mind, fall is not the best time to plant grasses. Spring is the ideal planting time and will give you a great rate of survival.

I have seen whole gardens planted with only grasses that look so distinct in their uniformity, so don't be afraid of adding different varieties to one area. Try planting a grass (or three) in an area toward the middle to front of a garden bed. This can add an unexpected surprise and really give a fresh sense of randomness that is often lost in gardens that are seemingly “too planned.” Best of luck! **OH**



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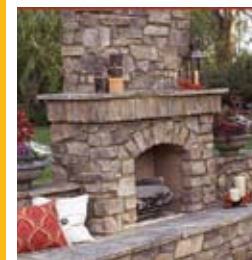
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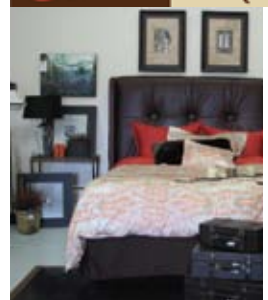
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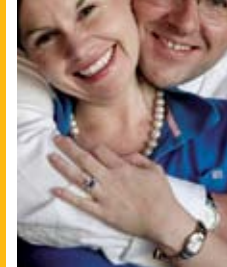
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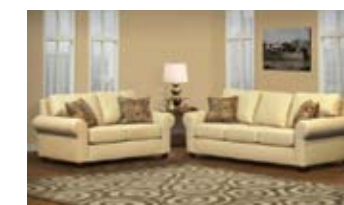
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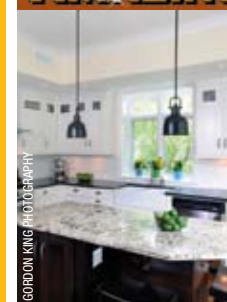
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WHERE EVERY DAY IS SATURDAY

THE PLACE: Saturday Afternoons Home Store is a great place to spend any afternoon. Celebrating 10 years in downtown Midland, this elegant home décor destination will inspire you to re-style your home with fantastic finds. Proprietor Paula Lynn-Meridis is the founder of the Saturday Afternoons Home Store Franchise, with additional locations in Orillia, Barrie, Aurora, Bala and Port Dover.

THE STYLE: Modern cottage and transitional. "We buy for our customers," Lynn-Meridis says, adding "people love our prices." Every season brings a new collection of affordable, functional and stylish furniture and accessories for every room of your home. Clients also receive exceptional service.

WHAT'S HOT: The products at Saturday Afternoons reflect consumer demands and current trends. Sofas, chairs, loveseats and ottomans from Brentwood Classics are very popular. Unique, Canadian-made lamps, like the stacked river rock design, fly out the door. Customized family signs mark special occasions with names, dates and favourite sayings and can be made in both official languages.

SEASONAL: Fall is a great time to add a new wreath to your front door and Saturday Afternoons stocks a beautiful selection. Throws, serving trays and table linens are abundant, along with grapevine pumpkins, scented candles, original hostess gifts and vases in all



sizes and shapes. White dishes and serving platters work in every season. And don't forget to order gorgeous flower arrangements for that special occasion or just because.

FAVOURITES: Staff has a tough time keeping wallflowers, dragonflies and butterflies in stock. They also order the ever-popular wall vases, which are cheerful and chic, almost every week. Customers love the small bud vases that hold a single bloom. Jewelry is a show-stopper and this store carries plush baby items, including an adorable baby lamb jacket that they've been selling for six years.

WHERE: 225 King St., Midland, 705.526.5226
www.saturdayafternoons.ca OH



Smooth Move

...TIPS FOR A STRESS-FREE SHIFT

BY SAMANTHA MARTIN

“We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we’re curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.”
— Walt Disney

Moving is one of the three most stressful events a person can go through in a lifetime. To help ease the anxiety, make sure you prepare and plan for a smooth move so you can get started on the right foot.

BEFORE

Lists: Make to-do lists of action items and the date you want them completed. Check them off as you go. A check mark is very satisfying.

Mode: Decide how you are going to move. Are you going to hire a packing and moving service or pack yourself and rent a truck?

Declutter: Get rid of items you never use. Hauling more useless junk to your new place will only clutter up your new beginning. Hold a garage sale or visit your local reuse centre. The general rule of thumb is if you didn’t use it in the past year, it’s got to go.

Over-prepare: Get twice as many boxes as you think you’ll need. It’s better to have extras close by. Those you don’t need can be broken down and recycled.

Pre-pack: Pack items you won’t need until after the move: seasonal, decorative, recreational items.

Specify: Make a very specific list of the contents of each box. Give each box a number and record its contents in a notebook.

Insurance: Make sure your insurance covers your move in case of loss or damage. You don’t need the added stress of worrying about the safety of your belongings.

Notify: Submit a change of address form to your post office and notify any service providers (lawn maintenance, housekeeping, newspaper delivery) of your move.

Utilities: Get a reading on your last day and have the bills and services sent on to your new address.

Eat: Use up the food in your fridge and freezer. Start fresh when you get to your new home.

Plants: Water plants a couple of days before moving to avoid leakage.

DURING

Pick A Day: Try to move on a weekday so that if you need something, businesses and services will be open to help you rather than putting any issues on hold until after the weekend.

Colour Code: Make sure to colour code your boxes with a sticker and coordinate with each room in your new house (ex. red for kitchen, blue for living room) for your own sanity, as well as any movers or friends helping you.

Essentials: Keep necessary items such as toiletries and utensils separate for immediate use.

Bundle: Keep items together. Keep remotes with electronics, extension cords with appliances, bookends with books.

Identify Clearly: Mark fragile boxes and boxes that need to be accessible. This will ease a lot of headaches.

Personal Items: Transport valuables, such as photo albums, laptops, cameras and other sentimental items, yourself. You might just want to take a picture of the process anyway. Also hold on to important documents.

Last Check: Make sure no items have been forgotten and ensure doors and windows are locked and utilities are turned off.

Tools: Keep the toolbox handy. You’ll want to put furniture together as you go.

AFTER

Clean: Dust and wipe items as you unpack them for your fresh start.

Unpack As Necessary: No need to rush it. You will find yourself moving furniture many times before you find the right spot. It’s easier to move furniture without clutter.

Expenses: Keep receipts and records of your moving expenses if you are moving farther than 40 kilometres as you can claim these on your income tax.

Update: Change over the address on personal identification as well as vehicle(s).

Explore: Walk around your new neighbourhood to get a feel of the place and where parks, grocery and convenience stores are located as well as their hours of operation.

Introduce Yourself: Make friends with your new neighbours.

Sit Back: Relax and enjoy your new home!

There may be no such thing as moving bliss, but if you follow these easy organizational steps during your next move, you’ll be able to appreciate the process for what it is – a fresh start. **OH**

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*OAC, See store for details.



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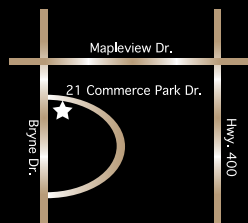


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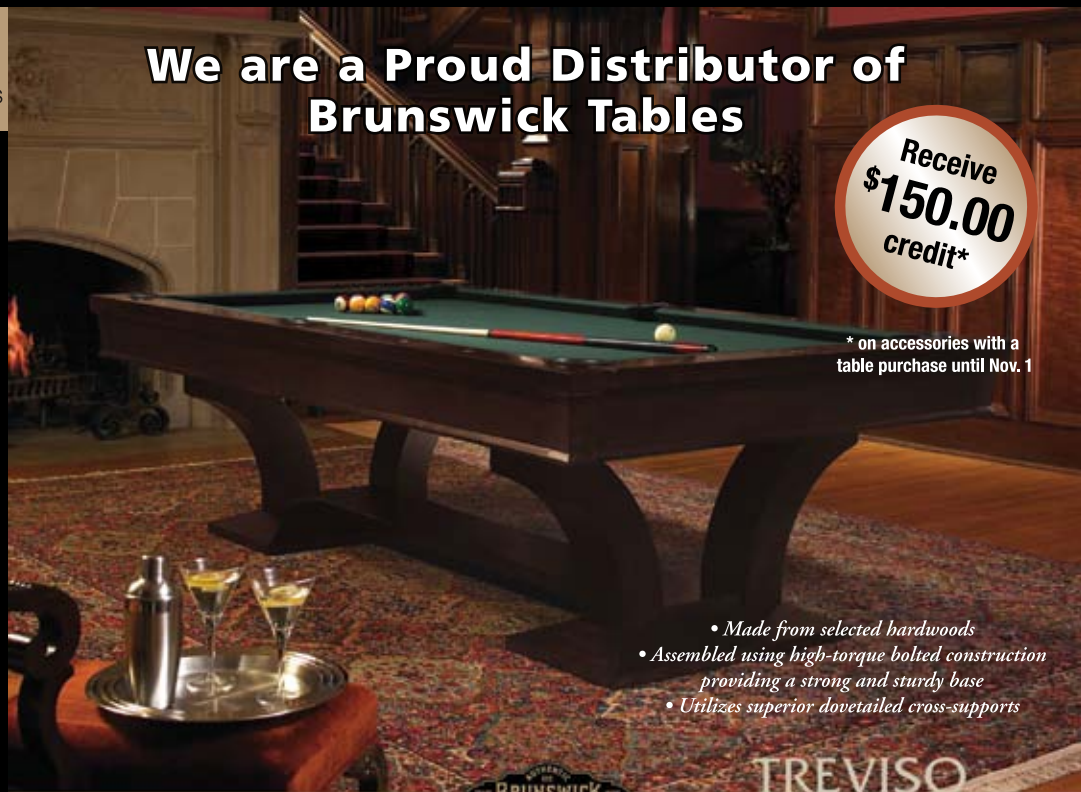
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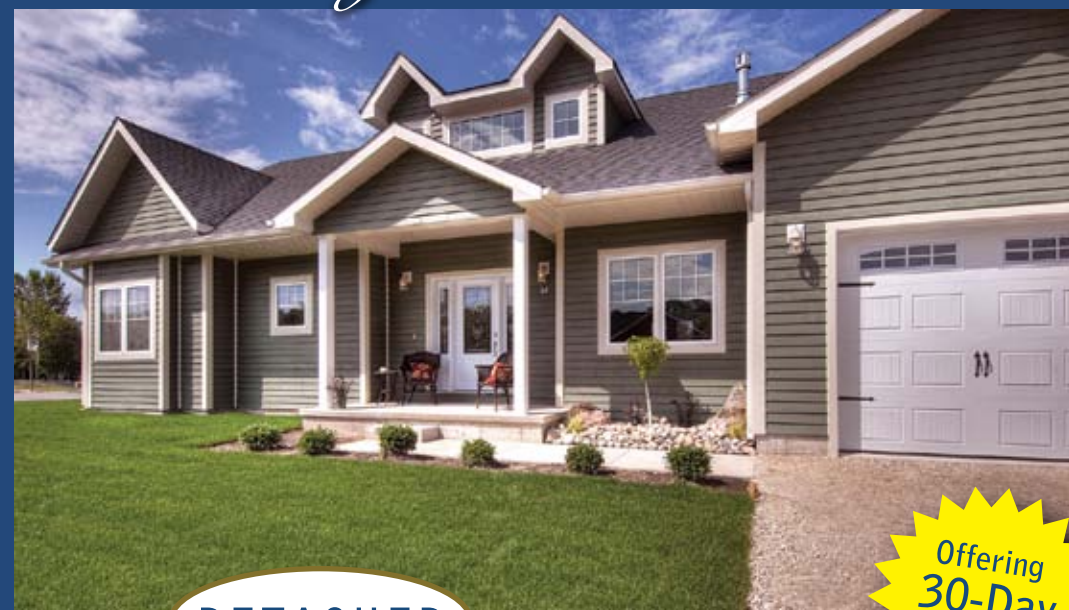
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feature

The Cox home has wonderful curb appeal. A covered porch with crisp white benches and festive fall decorations offers just a hint of what's inside.

RIGHT: The family room is located just off the foyer in the front of the home. There's lots of room on the big comfy sofa. Black and white family photos displayed in all-white frames add a lovely personal touch to the room.



IT'S A.
family affair
BY M. CAROLYN BLACK
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY



When a smiling Stacey Babcock-Cox welcomes me into her immaculate home, it is immediately apparent that family is the most important aspect of her life. Turn left in the large foyer to see a collection of white-framed family pictures in the living room; turn right and family adventures are documented along the wall of the mudroom, each in a unique frame.

Stacey grew up in Penetanguishene, daughter of Teresa and Dave Babcock, who, along with Dave's brother Paul, owned local movie theatres and the Midland Drive-In. The theatres were eventually sold, but not before Stacey met her husband, Gord Cox, when he worked there for her father as a teen. Paul Babcock died in 2005 and the following year Dave passed away, so the next generation – Stacey, brother Mark and their spouses – stepped in to keep the Midland Drive-In tradition alive. Stacey says, “It was always known that if something happened (to my dad) we would continue on (with the business). Even though we all went on to different jobs, we always helped my dad and my uncle out... so when my dad passed away, it wasn't really a decision. We just knew that's what we had to do.”

Stacey and Gord, a lead hand equipment operator at Penetanguishene Public Works, bought a lot on Jury Drive from her parents, and they acted as their own general contractors, hiring **Brian Vandervoort** of **Quality Contracting** to do the framing and **Balm Beach House of Glass** to install windows. They moved into the two-storey, 2,950 sq. ft. house on the July long weekend in 2003. *Continued on page 57*



Located along the back of the home, the charming living room combines big comfortable seating with antique and natural elements. Stacey's decorating style is classic.

TOP LEFT: More family photos, this time in black frames, grace the walls in the hallway leading to the kitchen. Every nook in the Cox home has a delightful, seasonal vignette.

The dining area off the kitchen is white and bright. The storage armoire is a creative solution that adds height and character to the room. All flowers courtesy of Saturday Afternoons, Midland.

OPPOSITE PAGE:

TOP LEFT: Every inch of this home is furnished, including the deck, located off the kitchen. A pergola and a gazebo add architectural interest to the space, which includes maintenance-free decking. The family spends a lot of time outside and entertains often.

TOP RIGHT: Tanner feeds his fish in the backyard pond.

BOTTOM: The kitchen is a bright, open space with lots of work surfaces, a desk and lots of natural light. Stacey uses baskets to eliminate clutter. Stacey and Gord bought all their appliances at Barber & Haskill.



The Babcock family also owns drive-ins and theatres in other parts of Ontario – notably Can View near St. Catharines and Oxford in Woodstock. Stacey says, “It’s sometimes hard to find time to do things as a family because we work the drive-in, but on our weekends off we cram everything in. We go anywhere and everywhere. We just pack up.” Their favourite place to camp so far is Craigleith Provincial Park in Collingwood: “It’s right on the shale rocks and when you’re camping it sounds like you’re on the ocean – the water splashing up onto the rocks – and it’s gorgeous.”

The Cox family loves to entertain and does so frequently. “My whole family lives on this street. My mom lives right next door and my brother and his wife Sheila live in the last house on the right and they just had a little boy, Nathan, a year ago. They come up once a week for dinner, it’s awesome.”

The large lot – 71-by-324-feet – is partly forested and an all-family oasis. **Nicole Pattenden Landscape Design** did a fabulous job on the landscape. Indicating the fire pit, Stacey says, “That is our favourite thing

in the world. We have so many fires, we love it. What we do is we have everyone over, then we swim at my mom’s and we come over here and have a s’mores party.”

The backyard pond contains six goldfish that belong to their son, five-year-old Tanner, and the challenge now is keeping them safe from a determined raccoon. “We’ve got lily pads and elephants ear and lots of little places for the fish to hide,” Stacey says. Backyard play dates are fun because Tanner and his friends can climb on the wooden play set or dig in the sandbox.

The back deck, pergola and gazebo were built by Gord and his father Don with products purchased at **Elmvale Tim-br Mart** and **Huronia Steel**. “I saw a picture, gave it to them and they did it,” she says. The outdoor table, chairs and gazebo furniture were purchased at **Canadian Tire** and it is apparent the Cox family has many talents – Gord’s mother Kathy made all the comfy cushions. *Continued on page 58*

feature

The kitchen and bathrooms in the house are all by Canac and the candles, sconces and tabletop décor are from **Saturday Afternoons** in Midland. Teresa and Stacey owned **Wyebridge Country** until 2004 and much of the furnishings – kitchen table and chairs, living room furniture and some bedding – come from there. The family photos adorning many of the walls are by **Robert Barnstaple Photography** and **M.E. Photography** in Barrie. The wall paint came from **Tripp’s Paint and Decorating Shop** in Midland. All appliances were purchased at **Barber & Haskill**.

Up the curved staircase there are three bedrooms plus a home office and a still-decorated nursery waiting “for the next baby, whenever that comes.” A sign on Tanner’s bedroom wall – Vroom Vroom Tanner’s Room – declares the transportation theme apparent on his cosy bedding. His bed was purchased from Saturday Afternoons. Tanner has his own little fort in the large closet of his bedroom with a comfy chair, games, puzzles, books, an easel for his paintings and a clothes trunk for dressing up like Darth Vader or Batman. “It’s just his little place to hang out,” says Stacey.

The master bedroom ceiling is white-painted, V-joint poplar panelling from the **Perkinsfield sawmill**. The brown, cream and sea grass-coloured bedding was ordered from DKNY. All flooring in the house is high-quality laminate from **Irvine Carpet One Floor & Home** in Barrie. Stacey says, “We didn’t want to put the money into hardwood while our kids are young.”

As I’m leaving the Cox home, a crowd of family and friends are playing bocce in a court behind the next door pool and I receive several friendly waves. If Jury Drive doesn’t have a nickname yet, a very fitting one might be “Babcock Lane.” Stacey laughs, “I’ve lived on this street my whole life but moved four times. I really like this street!” **OH**



ABOVE: This pretty storage cabinet sits in the guest bedroom on the second floor.

LEFT: Tanner’s room is big and bright with red and blue accents. As you can see, he loves trucks and cars

OPPOSITE PAGE:

LEFT: The master bedroom is a sanctuary for Gord and Stacey. The décor is timeless, with a subdued, natural colour palette and light furniture.

BOTTOM: The large en suite is designed for the needs of both Gord and Stacey.





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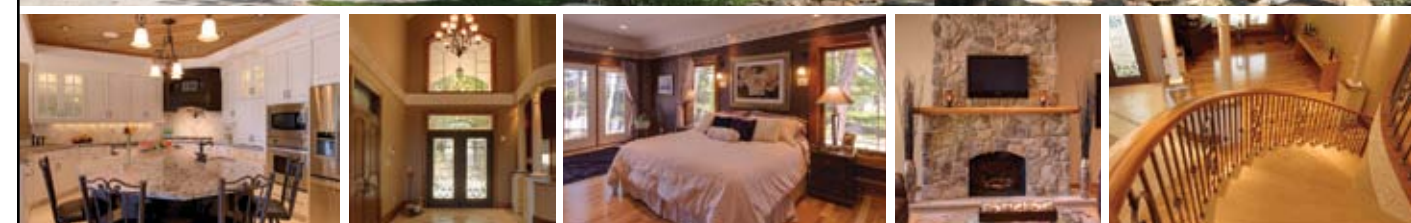
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Mike Desroches

COMPANY: Perkinsfield Kitchen & Bath

RENOVATION PROJECT: New Kitchen

WHAT YOU DID: I met with homeowner Carolyn on numerous occasions to discuss and design her new kitchen layout. I personally took Carolyn to Toronto three times to choose her granite surface. We manufactured and installed new cabinets - shaker door flat panel - and attached crown moulding around the entire kitchen. We referred Carolyn to local trades for plumbing, electrical and lighting.

CAROLYN LOVES THE RESULTS BECAUSE... she got exactly what she wanted.

"Carolyn first saw our ad in OUR HOMES magazine and contacted me after shopping around," says Mike. "After our meeting, she felt Perkinsfield Kitchen & Bath was the company she felt most comfortable with to redo her dream kitchen. Carolyn is extremely happy with the excellent workmanship and personal service she received at PKB. She received the quality kitchen she desired and stayed within her budget."



Homeowner Linda Johnson and Designer Irene Turnbull

COMPANY: Turnbull Interiors of Distinction Inc.

RENOVATION PROJECT: Total renovation of a bungalow under 1,500 sq.ft.

WHAT YOU DID: We redesigned the interior living space starting at the front door, which we relocated from an awkward side entry to a grand centre entrance, by incorporating the existing porch into the interior. The new layout permitted a wonderful bathroom with full glassed-in shower and built-in wardrobes in a private master suite arrangement. The new kitchen with its centre island, repositioned in the former family room, is efficient as well as beautiful and boasts a large walk-in pantry. Detailed millwork, including crown moulding, baseboards, window and door trim and custom cabinetry, creates a classic casually elegant ambience - a perfect setting that includes a formal dining area and comfortable living room.

LINDA JOHNSON LOVES THE RESULTS BECAUSE... "Our hope was to have a house that would be comfortable, cosy, elegant and reflect the style that we wanted with no addition. I feel that was accomplished very well. Now it's easy to get around and easy to care for and a good use of every inch of space."

Continued on page 64



people

Elke Bradford, Design Consultant and Renovation Specialist

COMPANY: Designers Plus
Kitchen & Bath Studio
RENOVATION PROJECT:
This was an update of a
charming summer residence
on Lake Simcoe.

WHAT WE DID: In the
kitchen, we added new quartz
countertops, an undermount
sink with "bridge faucet" and
installed hand-glazed Italian
tile for the backsplash. We
painted and hand-distressed
the chairs and table base and
distressed and hand-rubbed
black paint onto existing
hutches. We added new
old-world hardware.

We redesigned the laundry
room and added new cabinetry,
quartz counters and black
glass-and-stone, brick mini
subway tiles on the backsplash.

In the family room, we
designed and installed new
custom built-ins to house
media equipment, custom
bookcases and covered the
knotty pine walls with the
same paint finish. The room is
now bright and airy.

In the master en suite, we
updated the paint scheme
on the walls, trim and face of
the tub. We raised the vanity,
added moulding details and
gave it a fresh new paint
palette. New Perrin and Rowe
faucets and Carrera marble
counters with full backsplash
enhance the square under-
mount sinks.

The shower was retiled in
Carrera marble with a mosaic
marble accent wall. We added
a fabulous rain head and a
separate Grohe hand-held
shower, all while working with
the existing custom
shower glass.

**OUR CLIENT LOVES THE
RESULTS BECAUSE...**
it created a look that
complemented their needs
and lifestyle.

Continued on page 66



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Tammy Kadlec

COMPANY:

A Gallery of Interiors

RENOVATION PROJECT:

En Suite Bath

WHAT WE DID: We are a complete renovations company and can design an entire project, as well as supply and install all materials required to complete any project. Our team is there from start to finish. This particular project started with a small five-by-eight-foot standard bathroom that blossomed into a beautiful 10-by-14-foot European-inspired dream spa.

Our large showroom gives our clients the opportunity to pull together everything their new room requires – from tile to toilets, cabinets and paint colours – all under one roof.

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Wayne Ezekiel, Owner and President of ANT Construction

COMPANY:

RENOVATION PROJECT:

Complete makeover of a Penthouse Condominium in downtown Barrie owned by Virginia Dekoning

WHAT WE DID: We transformed this dated condo by removing interior walls to give the space a modern, open feel. We gutted the bathroom and kitchen and gave Ginny two beautiful new rooms that reflect her style and personality. We converted closets and doors from glass sliders and flat metal casings to a warmer look with wood doors and casings. We installed new laminate flooring throughout with wood baseboards with a shoe mould. We installed new contemporary lighting, including 20 pot lights, and new communication wiring.

"The renovation was a journey from start to finish," says Wayne. "Ginny made my job exciting as she likes things that are different and likes to think outside the box like me."

VIRGINIA LOVES HER NEW HOME BECAUSE...

of the professional people she worked with, including Yvonne Nielsen of Innovative Design. Yvonne worked with Ginny to design her gorgeous new kitchen and bathroom. The artwork in her Polynesian-inspired paradise comes to life, showcasing who she is as a person. Special thanks to Monarch Electric and CRM Mechanical.

Continued on page 68





Allan McLellan

COMPANY: Renovations By Rodgers

PROJECT: Complete renovation of a heritage building and rear addition
WHAT WE DID: This project involved a complete renovation. The renovation included a rear addition that expanded the living space and incorporated a new garage, storage and a roof-top outdoor space for the owners. This project was a complete design-build that involved the integration of the new addition with the Heritage building. Our client was looking for a loft-feel living space that would provide modern day features in an existing Heritage building. All the criteria that were set out by the owners were met and far exceeded with the end result. The renovation, in fact, provided many features not contained in the client's previous dwelling, including superior materials and finishings, as well as major features such as a residential elevator. The outdoor space includes a full-featured roof-top terrace serviced by an elevator. The entire renovation was made completely accessible for the disabled. The attention to detail and the installation of unique and upgraded features resulted in a unique renovation with considerable resale appeal. Our clients achieved the lifestyle they were seeking along with a number of added, unexpected benefits. **OH**



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Their country gem, a 100+ year old log home in Essa in its wooded setting, was perfect for the couple, but the kitchen was waiting to be brought into the 21st Century. That is when Cynthia called **Elke Bradford of Designers Plus Kitchen & Bath Studio** in Barrie. The plan was to design and install the cooking, storage and clean-up areas and then turn the attention to the kitchen's centre island.

Currently being installed in this magnificent home, the 6.5' x 5' maple island with its Bianco Romano granite top, fabricated to match the rest of the kitchen, features an appliance lift-up station, pot and pan drawers, pull-out spice rack and seating for three people.

If only the original pioneer builders of this log home could see it now !!



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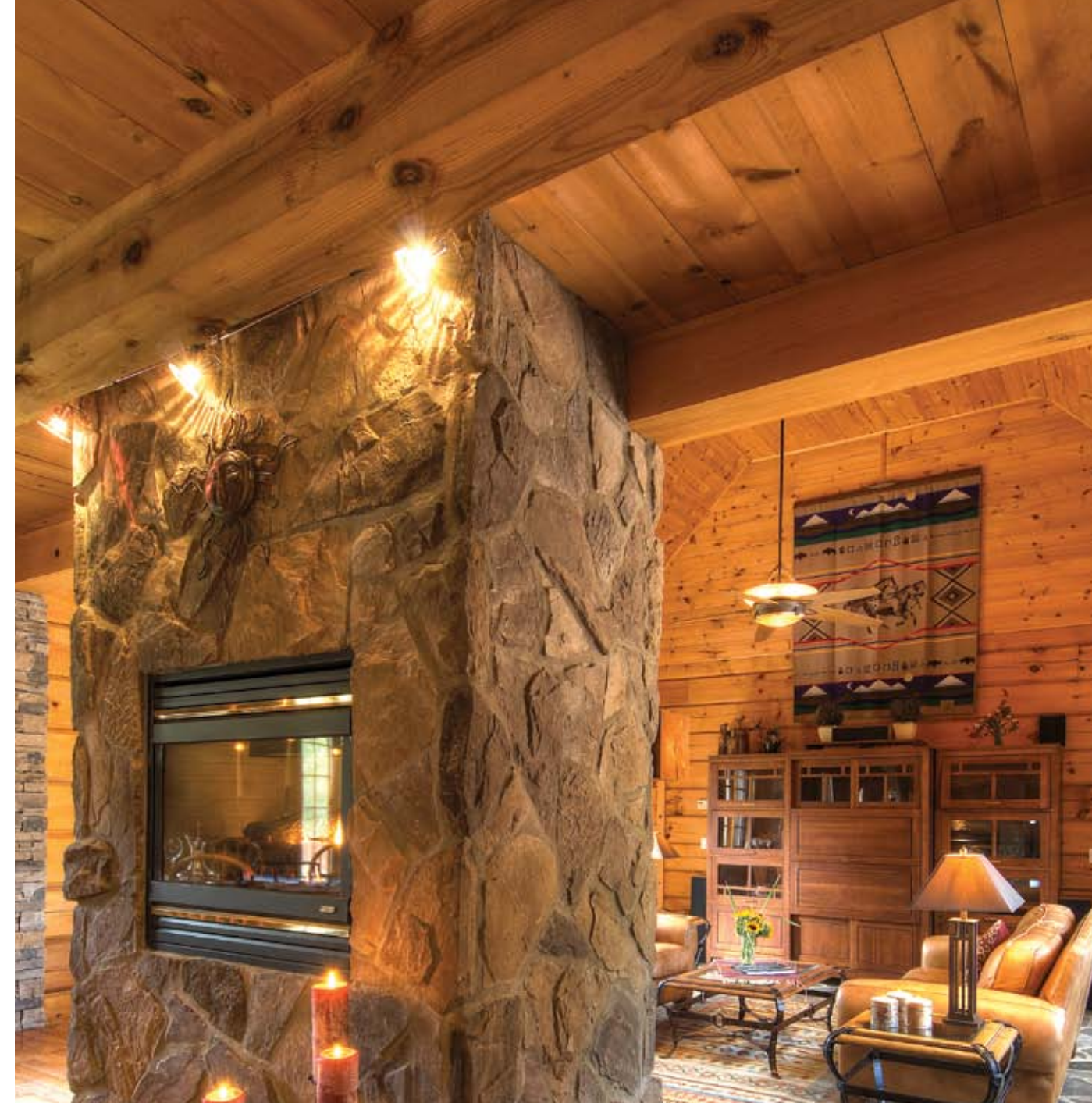
BY SHELBY HILSON // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY

Nature and luxury come together in perfect harmony to form this extraordinary equestrian estate in Stayner.

Continued on page 74



John and Melanie Simioni and their three daughters enjoy a beautiful fall day on the pond of their vacation home. The stunning 7,000 sq. ft. log home sits on 17 acres.



With more than 17 acres of natural beauty and nearly 7,000 sq. ft. of pure craftsmanship to admire and enjoy, John and Melanie Simioni have turned their vacation home into their own personal resort.

Passersby slow down and often times come to a complete stop in adoration of the True North log home, finished with barn-red steel roofs and surrounded by towering mature trees.

Listed at \$1.8 million, it's not hard to see that this home, along with its expansive property is worth every penny.

Having grown up on a farm, Melanie yearned for a country getaway where she could escape the business of everyday city life; a place where she could one day have horses and where her three daughters, Natasha, Sonja and Sophia, could experience the great outdoors.

"I would get horses just to spoil them," says Melanie.

With a spectacular steel barn complete with seven hardwood stalls, a tack room, wash room, rubber flooring and hayloft, it's the perfect place to raise and spoil horses. The professionally designed corrals outside the

barn and trails that explore beyond the property also make it an ideal location to breed, train and ride for the true equestrian.

An enormous stocked pond with built-in pump system and fountain offers a great place to swim, take in the scenery and catch frogs, a favourite pastime of the Simioni children.

"We love fishing in the pond and then cooking the fish on the barbeque," says Melanie while John smiles in agreement.

When the weather's less than perfect, the family will often enjoy a swim in the pool or soak in the hot tub after a busy day of gardening and playing outside. They also love nothing more than snuggling up and watching a movie in their luxurious great room – a part of the home's generous addition.

It was this particular room that really stood out to Lance Chilton, the property's real estate agent along with his partner and wife, Anne Chilton. The former six o'clock news anchor for /A/ Channel News has joined his wife to pursue a long-time passion for real estate. *Continued on page 79*



The double-sided fireplace separates the kitchen and dining room from the cosy family room.

TOP LEFT: The original Confederation log home included the kitchen, dining room, basement and the bedrooms upstairs. A previous owner added this family room, office and gym.



TOP LEFT: The Simionis love to cook in their kitchen and shop locally at nearby farmer's markets for fresh produce. Their three daughters love to eat at the counter before heading outside to enjoy all the property has to offer.

BOTTOM LEFT: A view from the kitchen into the large new great room with loft.

RIGHT: The dining room is located close to the kitchen for easy entertaining. Melanie decorates with treasures discovered on her travels.





The backyard pool is located in the courtyard just off the patio. A gazebo pool-house offers shelter and a cozy place to read a book and relax.

TOP LEFT: The great room addition includes a roaring gas fireplace from Yanch. This family loves to gather in this room to watch a movie at night after a fun day outside.

BOTTOM RIGHT: The sliding doors open up to the patio, hot tub and pool.

BOTTOM LEFT: The steel barn comes complete with seven hardwood stalls, a tack room, washroom, rubber flooring and hayloft. It's the perfect place to breed, train and ride for the true equestrian.



Lance wants this gorgeous Stayner home to mark the launch of his new career because, "It's a spectacular house," he says. "And when you're starting something new, you want to make a strong entrance."

The home's addition connects the existing structure with the four-car garage and creates an incredible space for sharing with guests and friends alike.

"We love to entertain," says Melanie. "So we had to turn it into an entertainer's home."

With a soaring 20-foot ceiling lined with solid log rafters, the great room resembles a beautiful lodge. A gas fireplace (**Yanch**) serves as the focal point with an incredible flagstone hearth and slate stone surround that extends the height of the room and features a built-in entertainment system.

The eight-inch, red alder plank flooring, paired with deep leather furnishings, keep the large room warm and cosy while custom-made, sliding Loewen doors span the width of the west wall and offer a panoramic view of the recreational space outdoors, including a beautifully

landscaped riverbed by Dan Fraser of **Fraser Contracting** in Eugenia.

"We host a ton of people here," says John. "Having our friends come and share this with us is a big, big part."

Custom-crafted log railings and stairs by Dale Chauvin of **DC WoodProducts** on Horseshoe Valley Road take you into the great room from the kitchen and also lead up to a loft that currently serves as a playroom for the girls.

At the far end of the north wing, you'll find a sprawling, self-contained master bedroom with views both north and west. It features a huge walk-in closet fitted with built-in cabinetry.

An elegant en suite leaves little to be desired as the sun fills the room through a beautiful bay window finished with a HanStone bench and storage below. It also features a classic claw-foot tub, bathed in the light atop a hand-tiled floor. There is also a large glass shower and his-and-her sinks.

Along with the addition, the couple installed a reverse osmosis filtration system and a geothermal heating and cooling system. *Continued on page 80*

feature

The home's three other bedrooms and full washroom can be found on the second floor of the original structure, which was a Confederation log home. When first built, the home only included what is now the kitchen and dining area, the small basement room and the second level bedrooms. It was the owners who sold to the Simionis that added the True North west wing addition to include the family room, office and gym. Like the great room, the family room also boasts high ceilings with timber beams and a stone-encased, double-sided fireplace that keeps the dining area toasty too.

Melanie shares that John just loves to stretch out on his recliner chair in front of the fireplace and fall asleep at the end of the day.

"This house, for whatever reason, just seems to put you in a relaxed state of mind," he says.

Although Melanie cites fall as her favourite season, she and John both enjoy snowmobiling in the winter. They'll often take to the trails on their property and set out on an adventure with the girls.

"When we lived up here full-time, we'd take the kids to school on the snowmobiles," explains Melanie. "That was awesome!" adds Natasha, the eldest of the three girls.

Lance may have described this home best when he said it has a "rugged elegance." He is flattered that he and Anne have been asked to represent it and has even dreamed of living there himself.

This amazing Carriage Trade home, along with others for sale, can be found on the Chiltons' website at www.thechilonteam.com **OH**



The loft above the great room is a play room for the girls. It was also designed to accommodate a games room.

ABOVE: The gorgeous claw-foot tub is the focal point in the generous master en suite.



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8 Highland Dr, Horseshoe Valley
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7 Hillside Court, Horseshoe Valley
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3945 Lakeview Rd, Innisfil
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Also known as "that store on Horseshoe Valley Road" by many local residents and visitors. Since opening in 2005, Seasons 'n Style has become a favourite place to find unique and distinctive home decor, gifts and accessories. At Seasons you will find great cottage accents and décor from Canadian-made log furniture to bear and moose-themed lamps, dishes, accessories and gifts. Other regular features include unique handcrafted light fixtures, with blown glass or marble shades, canvas and metal wall décor including mirrors and clocks. Home décor items change frequently. If you do not see what you are looking for we can source it for you. Seasons is well known for our huge selection and great prices on jewellery, scarves and handbags. If a unique gift is what you are looking for, you will not have trouble finding it here, with a large selection of items from wine and cocktail-themed gifts, recycled glass platters and bowls, bath and body products and so much more. Drop in, you will not be disappointed.

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Our best selling items can be found on
www.inspiredhomeinteriors.ca (Please see ad on page 69)



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Offering top quality and service at affordable prices, visit Yanch Heating's showroom at 89 Rawson Avenue, SE Barrie. Call 705.728.5406 or surf www.yanchheating.com today. Your Hometown Comfort Team since 1965!

(Please see ad on page 20)



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Cyndie Jerome Design specializes in decorating and design encompassing all aspects of interior transformation from initial design planning to project completion. With a previous career in the fashion industry transfusing her design and decorating aesthetic, CJD will work with you to create a home that is comfortable, beautiful and elegant.

Services include project management, floor plans, kitchen and bathroom design, furniture selection, window treatments and all finishing details.

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Visit our web site for more information:

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E: Cyndie@cyndiejeromedesign.com

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NAPOLEON HOME COMFORT

Napoleon Home Comfort relocated from the original factory store location after 20 years to a new state-of-the-art 8,500 sq ft showroom across the street in the spring of 2000. The idea was to have a retail store that became a destination for consumers, dealers and curious onlookers. Napoleon Home Comfort has now expanded the showroom again after 10 more years to just under 12,000 sq feet. After 30 years of retailing in Simcoe County, we have created a destination... how quickly the time goes by. The store lives up to its name "Home Comfort" with a wide variety of gas, wood and electric fireplaces from "Old World Charm" to "Modern Elegance". The store also has a year round display of barbeques, patio furniture and accessories for your perusal. Decorating your home? We have unique home furnishings and accessories for every décor. That is just some of what we offer...Napoleon Home Comfort also offers a full line of Heating and Air Conditioning equipment for your home. We also offer installation and service on everything we sell. So if you are in the market for a little "Home Comfort" come and "Experience the Difference Experience Makes".

The store is located at the North end of Barrie where Hwy 11 meets Hwy 93, 705.721.1214 (Please see ad on page 48&49)



Continued on page 84

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We believe everyone likes the personal service they get while shopping here and we manage to keep the prices down by doing much of the work ourselves. The past few years Metal Art has really grown and the selection is phenomenal! We are bringing in some very unique pieces which are priced to SELL! Keep in mind Metal Art can go inside or out and can also be spray painted if the colour isn't what you are looking for!

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Combining elements both old and new, DVC owner Don Cain strives to create works of art that truly convey the emotions his customers wish to share.

We take a hands-on approach to customize all sorts of unique creations from glass, wood and stone to LED landscape lighting with handmade custom fixtures. Accents can include copper and stainless steel to exotic or common wood reclaimed from old timbers.

Cain does all of his own artwork, sometimes using photographs to capture the "essence and feelings" customers want in a rock or glass carving to remember a beloved family pet or celebrate a cherished family home.

The company has received numerous accolades over the years and regularly creates hand-carved awards and trophies for organizations such as the Southern Georgian Bay Chamber of Commerce.

DVC recently completed a cherry wood and two-stage glass carving commissioned by the Huronia Foundation for the Arts. The agency plans to display the striking four-by-two-foot piece at its functions and will eventually feature it in Midland's new cultural centre.

705.245.0086 (Please see ad on page 93)



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Established in London, Ontario, Sanders Pro has been servicing the billiard industry since 1959. Being one of the oldest Brunswick dealers in Canada, we are excited to be celebrating 10 years in Barrie.

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MASON PLACE

A leader in home comfort supplies and service, Mason Place Fireplace and BBQ Centre once again is the Readers' Choice for best fireplace store (Thank You All).

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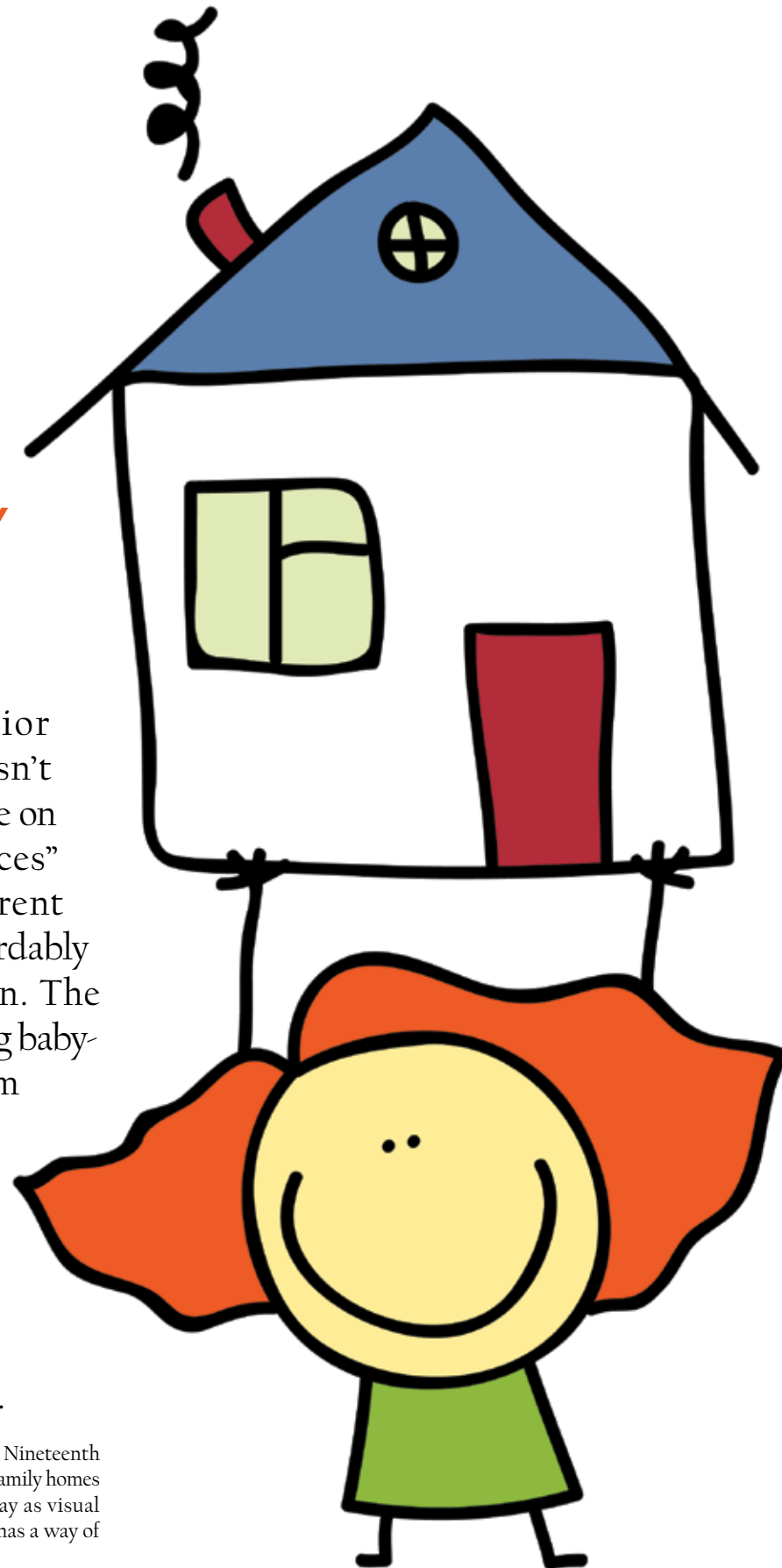
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SMALL BUT MIGHTY

BY IRENE TURNBULL

There's hardly a major interior design magazine today that hasn't featured some sort of recent article on the art of decorating "small spaces" – a logical reflection of our current socio-economic demands for "affordably efficient" living accommodation. The impact of record numbers of retiring baby-boomers looking for a break from burdensome home maintenance and soaring upkeep costs, combined with expensive land and development costs has certainly spearheaded the trend to multi-unit dwellings and efficient use of available amenities.

However, the concept of scaled-down housing is not new. Nineteenth and early 20th century row housing and pockets of 900 sq.ft. family homes that sprang up in the late 1940s and early 50s remain today as visual reminders that, while disguised in modern clothes, history has a way of repeating itself.



The good news is that whatever stage of life you are at, whether you are "resizing" or simply starting from scratch, there are numerous ways to capitalize on time-tested strategies for living comfortably when space is at a premium. Naturally, personal style and budget will impact choice, but here are some concepts beyond the obvious need to make do with less, that have remained solid over the years.

Lighting – essential to comfort and well-being, good overhead and ambient lighting is a priority; brightness influences the feeling of spaciousness. Bedside wall mounts conserve side table space. Avoiding chandeliers in open concept areas allows easier multi-functional use and table expansion. Get a qualified expert to help you get this right!

Reclaim storage space from: (a) attics – by adding flooring support to hold seasonal items with access either by portable or drop down ladder. (b) under staircases with closets or cabinetry. (c) false bulkheads with ceiling height cabinets.



Rework inefficient clothes closets by eliminating doors and adding ceiling height built-ins to meet wardrobe requirements. Eliminate inefficient overhead shelves and double rack clothes.

Consider pocket doors to avoid losing space for the door turning radius on interior doors.

Use architectural detail with millwork – crown and wall mouldings etc., to define space and add interest without bulk.

Use built-ins to capitalize on drywall build-outs that create odd corners. By keeping tops narrower than the bottom portion, you provide depth perception and countertop "landing" space can double as a server. Avoid room-blocking squared sides by adding finished corner sections on cabinetry.



Passthroughs and open spaces between dining tables and kitchens create depth perception; while allowing counterspace for serving.

"Steal" space for inset cabinetry – desks or display niches from the back of closets in adjoining rooms.



Consider hiding a space-saving "Murphy bed" in a wall unit for guest accommodation in a dual functioning room. It will take up less depth than any other solution and can be "made up" in its stored position.

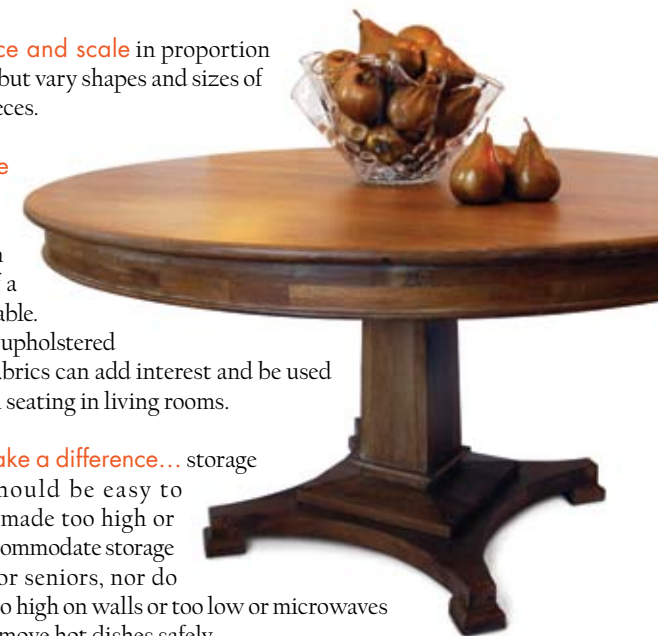
Multi-functional furniture such as "gate legged" tables, which fold down to side tables; coffee tables with built-in storage (blanket boxes) and secretary-style desks with drop-down writing tables, used in days gone by, are commonly replicated in modern styles for those who prefer new to old.

Keep balance and scale in proportion to room size, but vary shapes and sizes of individual pieces.

A round table will seat more people and soften the impact of a dining room table. Dining chairs upholstered in different fabrics can add interest and be used for additional seating in living rooms.

Age does make a difference... storage solutions should be easy to access; beds made too high or too low to accommodate storage don't work for seniors, nor do TVs placed too high on walls or too low or microwaves too high to remove hot dishes safely.

Remember the art of illusion – mirrors reflect light and expand space but be aware of what you are reflecting. Glass front doors and tabletops also reflect light and add to depth perception. **OH**



directory

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GRILLED CORN AND BLACK BEAN STUFFED PEPPERS

BY MARIA DASILVA // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTT HUNTER

SERVES 8

- 8 red peppers. If possible, choose peppers that are more stout than long with flattish bottoms.
- 4 ears fresh corn, shucked
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 onion, finely diced
- 1 rib celery, finely diced
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and finely diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp chili powder
- ¾ tsp salt
- ½ tsp dried oregano
- ¾ cup basmati rice
- 1 can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 ½ cups crumbled feta cheese
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 tbsp red wine vinegar

I always find fall to be the most inspiring season for cooking. The country is literally bursting at the seams with fresh produce of all shapes, sizes and varieties. The weather is still kind enough to get outside and use the grill. And the harsh reality of winter continues to be a far-off prospect. With all this in mind, I've given a nod to our (kind of) neighbours of the American southwest. The tangy vibrant flavours of that region coupled with our amazing local produce results in this colourful, ultra-satisfying dish. It's rich enough for a vegetarian main course when paired with a salad, or equally at home as a side to your favourite grilled meat. Best enjoyed with friends or family, of course!

The separate components can be prepared a day in advance, then assembled and baked the following day. A great option for entertaining without any fuss.

TO PREPARE:

- Heat grill to medium-high heat. Grill pepper, turning occasionally, until skins are blackened but pepper still holds shape, about 10 minutes. Transfer to bowl, cover with plastic wrap and let stand for 10 minutes. Peel skin from pepper, being careful to leave pepper intact. Set aside.
- Grill corn over medium heat, turning often, until tender, about 10 minutes. Let cool. Cut kernels from cob and set aside.
- Heat oil in saucepan over medium heat. Saute onions, celery and jalapeno until golden, about 8 minutes. Stir in garlic, cumin seeds, coriander, chili powder, salt and oregano; cook for 2 minutes. Stir in rice; cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Stir in 1 ½ cups water and bring to boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer until rice is tender and all water is absorbed, about 8 minutes. Turn off heat, let pot stand on burner, covered, for 5 minutes. Stir in black beans, 1 cup of the feta cheese, the cilantro, vinegar and reserved corn kernels.
- Cut tops from peppers and remove core and seeds. Stuff each pepper generously with rice filling. Place in baking dish. Sprinkle with remaining feta cheese. Bake in 400°F oven until mixture is warmed through and cheese is golden, about 20 minutes. **OH**

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BY TARA CHATTELL // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SAMANTHA MARTIN

Bath bombs and fizzies are easy to make and fun to use. With the giving season fast approaching, they make the perfect girly gift. Or, gather your friends and have a make-and-take party. OUR HOMES used fall-inspired scents. But you can use your imagination. *Continued on page 94*



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BATH FIZZIES

TOOLS:

Small spray bottle, plastic droppers (pipettes), silicone ice-cube trays, sifter, metal spoon and mixing bowl.

INGREDIENTS:

(makes about 24 cubes)

Eucalyptus Lemon

7 drops of eucalyptus essential oil
7 drops of lemon essential oil
About 10 drops of green food colouring (more if desired)
1 tsp matcha tea powder (optional)
½ cup citric acid
1 cup baking soda
¾ cup cornstarch
¼ cup organic cane sugar

Vanilla Orange

10 drops vanilla essential oil
5 drops orange fragrance oil
About 10 drops of red and yellow food colouring (more if desired)
½ cup citric acid
1 cup baking soda
¾ cup cornstarch
¼ cup organic cane sugar

DIRECTIONS:

- Sift together citric acid, baking soda, cornstarch and matcha tea powder (optional for eucalyptus fizzies) into a mixing bowl. Stir in cane sugar.
- Using pipette, add oil, one drop at a time, until desired scent strength is reached.
- Fill spray bottle with water and add food colouring. Spray mixture lightly, stirring constantly, until mixture becomes damp enough to pack with your hand and colour is even throughout. Do not over spray or mixture will start to fizz.
- Spoon mixture into ice-cube trays and press down firmly.
- Allow to dry in trays, at room temperature, for 24 hours.
- Carefully pop individual cubes out of tray by pushing up from bottom.
- Allow cubes to dry exposed for another 24 hours before transferring to containers.

TIP: Use matcha tea with scents that are strong enough to mask the scent of the tea and when the green colour of the tea is beneficial to the final colour you would like to achieve.



BATH BOMBS

TOOLS:

Plastic pipettes, large or small round moulds (we've used plastic ornament balls), metal spoon and mixing bowl.

INGREDIENTS:

(makes 2 large or 4 small)

Candy Apple

6 drops apple fragrance oil
1 drop orange fragrance oil
3 drops vanilla essential oil
About 5 drops red and 3 drops yellow food colouring
2 ½ cups epsom salts
2 tbsp water

Orange Marmalade

5 drops orange fragrance oil
2 drops lemon essential oil
3 drops vanilla essential oil
About 5 drops yellow and 2 drops red food colouring
2 ½ cups epsom salts
2 tbsp water

DIRECTIONS:

- Stir together epsom salts and water in mixing bowl.
- Using pipette, add oil, 1 drop at a time, until desired scent strength is reached.
- Spoon mixture into both halves of moulds and pack firmly. Press both halves together until they connect. Carefully remove top half of mould.
- Let ball stand, mould side down, for 24 hours.
- Once exposed side is completely dry hold the ball in your hand, exposed side down, and very carefully remove mould. Set ball on dry side and allow to completely dry out, approximately 3-4 days before transferring to containers.

TIPS: Set balls on upside-down bottle caps while drying to stop them from rolling. Allow larger balls to dry a little longer before transferring to containers, to avoid crumbling.

Remember: You can find the ingredients at your local bulk-food store, craft outlet or health-food provider. **OH**

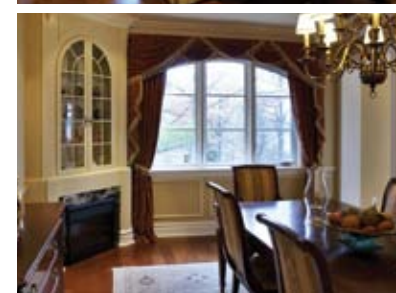


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