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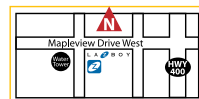
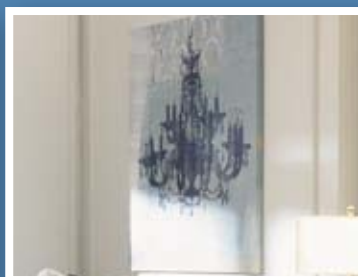
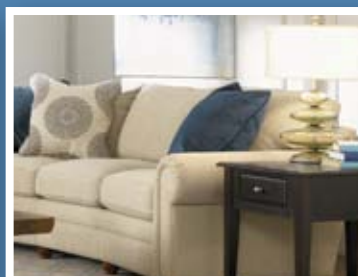
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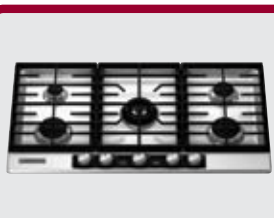
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editor's note



Me and Max, our new rescue dog.

IF YOU COULD BUILD A CUSTOM HOME on your very own handpicked piece of land, what would it look like? How big would it be? What would be at the top of your must-have list? And most importantly, who would you trust to build your home?

This fall issue of OUR HOMES features three incredibly beautiful, but entirely different, custom-built homes for three diverse families.

We are so pleased to bring you another home by A.N.T. Construction (page 52). If you've ever met A.N.T. principal Wayne Ezekiel you know why his clients love him and his work. Homeowners Sheila and Len are completely satisfied and living happily-ever-after in a gorgeous A.N.T.-built home they adore in a sought-after Innisfil neighbourhood.

When you live on the water, the view is everything – and that's especially true at our Feature Home (page 72), where impeccable gardens and the inviting waters of Georgian Bay beckon through massive windows by DeCola. You can't argue with the view fall brings and you can see it here in all its glory.

Our cover story is a brilliant source for building and decorating ideas (page 28). Cole Leibel of BigEast Construction had big plans for a home on a deep, densely forested lot near the water. Those plans turned into a luxury home with many jaw-dropping surprises. This home is a showstopper, professionally decorated by Kristylynn Banman of KL Interior Design.

The two most important rooms in every home are the kitchen and bathroom. But where do you start when you need a makeover? This issue, OUR HOMES features a range of experts who can deliver results for every taste and budget (page 60).

OUR HOMES also brings you tips on how to prepare your gardens for the cold weather ahead and some fun decorating ideas for the quickly approaching holidays. Fall means fresh air, fresh food and giving thanks.

OUR HOMES is celebrating our fourth anniversary. THANK YOU to everyone for embracing our magazine.

We are committed to bringing you a top-notch magazine to enjoy and use as a resource for all things home.

Sincerely,

Georgette McCulloch, Editor-In-Chief
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contents

fall

22



ON THE COVER

Natural Luxury
Story, page 28.
Photography by
Sandy MacKay.

46



departments

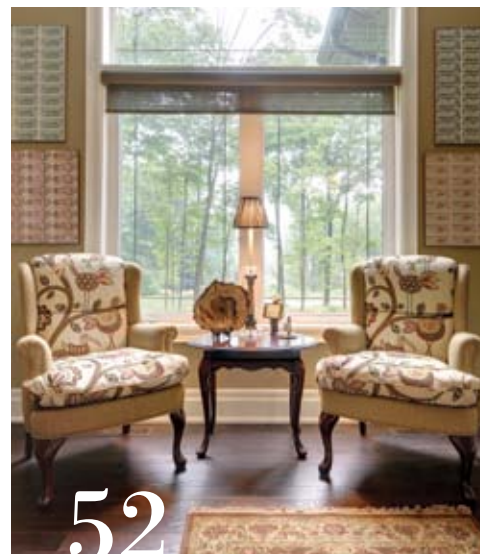
EDITOR'S NOTE	10
ADVICE Mudroom Makeover	18
STYLE PICKS Fall Pleasures	22
COMFORT ZONE Shop La-Z-Boy	46
PEOPLE Kitchen And Bath Pros	60
HOME RESOURCE DIRECTORY	90
FINISHING TOUCH DIY Napkin Rings	94

features

HOME & BUILDER	
Solid, Serene Design/Build	28
House That A.N.T. Built	52
GARDENING Prepare For Winter	38
REAL ESTATE Home Insurance	42
DECORATING With Glass	50
FEATURE Life On The Water's Edge	72
COOKING AT HOME The Holidays Are Coming	82



28



52



72



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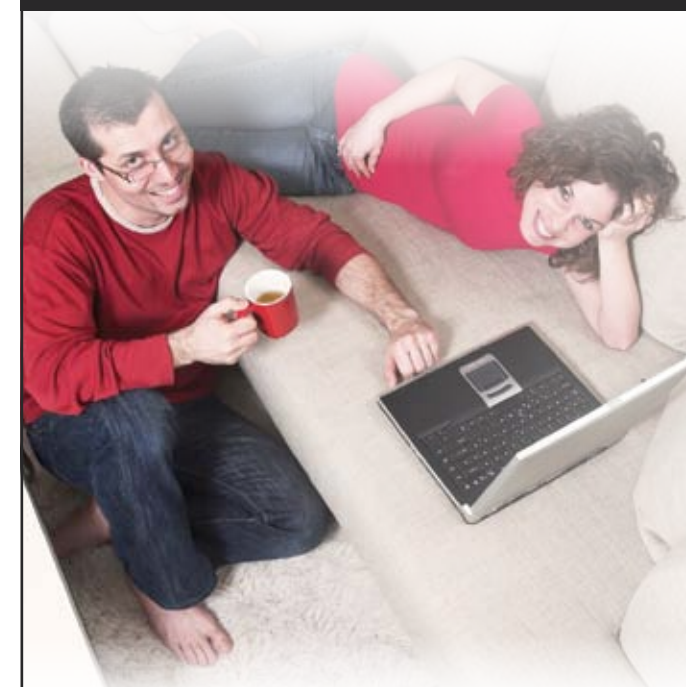


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advice

MUDROOM *makeover*

We have decided to build an addition onto our home in order to accommodate a mudroom and more storage space. Do you have any tips or hints to help us make our new room work for our family? We have no idea where to even begin. – Carol



QUICK TIP: An easy way to add softness to your mudroom (and necessary storage) is by using baskets. When selecting your baskets, make sure they are just deep enough to fold a scarf or store a bulky pair of gloves. Things get lost at the bottom of deeper baskets and become disorganized too quickly.



Designer Stephanie Redmond
answers your questions.

As much as I would appreciate my home always looking as though it's in the middle of a photo shoot, it is simply impossible. We have boots, mittens, scarves, strollers, keys, mail, grocery bags, backpacks, spare change and all things made to produce clutter. Unless we dedicate a space for each item, it seems to all end up at the bottom of a basket, on the floor and just plain lost. The mudroom, however, is my saving grace.

Some would argue that a mudroom is the busiest room in the house. They endure the ebb and flow of a household on a daily basis. Let's face it, it's constant abuse! If you're going to invest in an addition for your home, make sure you spend time planning. It will make that extra space go from functional to fabulous.

DESIGNING YOUR MUDROOM

A well-designed mudroom is a well-planned mudroom. Look in closets and the garage and itemize what you will keep in your mudroom. Take into account the height of boots and number of shoes, the length of jackets, the size of purses and helmets. Instead of promising to take that trip to Goodwill, plan for what you've got.

Consider the following:

- **Seating** – to put on and take off shoes
- **Hooks** – a lower level is handy for children
- **Counter** – for mail and car keys
- **Broom closet** – for regular sweeping
- **Coat closet** – for longer items
- **Baskets, cubbies or drawers** – for mittens, scarves, etc.
- **Pet station** – for leashes, food and bags
- **Grocery bin storage** – for easy access on the way out

BUILDING YOUR MUDROOM

Material selection is critical. Ensure that surfaces are hard-wearing to prevent scratches or water damage. Leave enough room in your budget for quality materials that will withstand the test of time and keep your room looking unsullied.

Consider the following:

- **Radiant heat** – this will dry the floor and your wet shoes
- **Drawers with soft closers** – to prevent slamming
- **Central vac** – install in the baseboard so you can sweep directly into it
- **Good lighting** – brighter is better
- **Slatted shelves** – for airflow so wet items can dry easily
- **Stone or slate floors** – thinner tiles could crack
- **Wood cabinetry** – a painted finish will eventually scratch or chip (but can be repainted)
- **Electrical outlets** – for charging phones

As utilitarian as this space may be, don't forget to make it chic. Just because it's where you keep your shoes doesn't mean it needs to look like a boring old closet. Have fun with it! **OH**

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Continued on page 24

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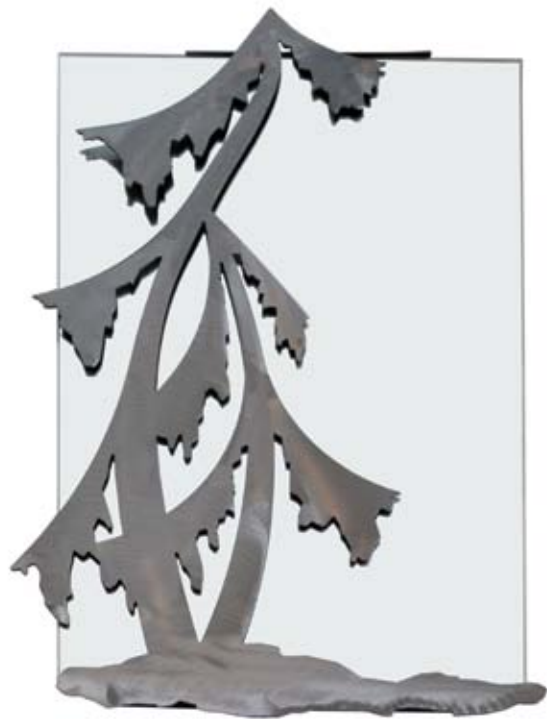
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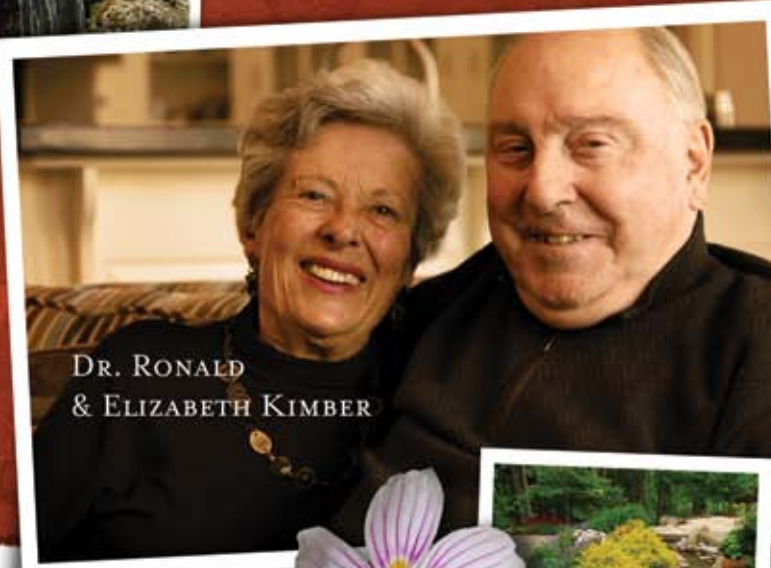
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Inside, the feel is calm and serene. A neutral palette and fine furnishings bring the stone interior wall and barnboard ceilings to life. **OPPOSITE:** Gracious gardens and perfectly placed hardscapes surround this BigEast-built home.



MASTER PLAN

BY GEORGETTE MCCULLOCH // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY



When it comes to building luxury homes on time and on budget, **Cole Leibel** of **BigEast Construction** has developed a winning formula. He says the design, the material, the trades – everything – has to be ready and scheduled before the building begins. “Planning, communication and trust are everything,” Cole says while standing in front of a stunningly beautiful modern-rustic home in north Innisfil that he completed inside and out in just eight months.

“When I build a home I work on the whole home until it’s complete,” he says. “There’s no stopping and starting because we’re waiting for materials and trades. I’ve planned out every aspect of the build so the project runs smoothly and is completed as promised.”

Cole has had wonderful teachers. A third-generation builder with an honours degree in business management, he’s been swinging a hammer since he was a very young boy. His passion for building is evident in every finished detail. *Continued on page 33*



OPPOSITE TOP: Two sitting areas flank the open gas fireplace in the great room. One area is for watching TV, the other is for conversation. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM:** No detail was overlooked in the kitchen. A large maple, granite-topped island is surrounded by the best in custom cabinetry. An old iron pot rack found a new home, adding practical interest above the island. **LEFT:** Professional-grade appliances, lots of prep space and solid-wood cabinets, inside and out, make this kitchen a cook’s dream. **TOP:** A natural gas, open log-set fireplace is the obvious focal point in this intriguing room. **ABOVE:** The laundry/mudroom is off the kitchen. There is a separate entrance from the front of the home. Large baskets by the door are used to hold shoes.



OPPOSITE COUNTER CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: (1) The theatre room downstairs is one of the most popular rooms in the home. **(2)** Natural elements add charm, texture and outside-in atmosphere to the inviting dining room. **(3)** Vintage posters add colour throughout the home. **(4)** Exit the dining room onto the terrace where a wood-burning fireplace warms the space. **ABOVE:** The home sits on five-and-a-half acres. Huge trees frame the property. A courtyard is beautifully furnished for outdoor living. **LEFT:** The courtyard is private, with a dining area, lounge, wood-burning fireplace and a flatscreen TV.

This house was inspired by its surroundings – five-and-a-half acres of mature forest. “I wanted to build a house that would capture the beauty of the undisturbed land,” says Cole. “The footprint offers 360-degree views with each window and door framing the treed landscape.” The 4,500 sq. ft. home stands at the end of a winding driveway. You can’t see the home from the street, a must to ensure peace and privacy. Relaxed gardens in green and white grace the front of the home. A large-cut flagstone walkway and stone stairs lead to the black, hand-distressed solid-wood front doors.

“The front and side doors arrived in solid oak,” Cole explains. “However, new doors didn’t fit the profile here.” A talented artist hand-distressed and painted the doors to create the look of an old find. The exterior of the home is finished in stone and wood siding, with matching window trim.

Look up... way up to the chimney where handmade terra cotta gargoyles form the chimney flu.

Inside, **Kristylynn Banman** of **KL Interior Design** worked with a talented team to achieve a polished, relaxed look with a neutral palette, lots

of texture, natural elements, comfortable furnishings and fabulous lighting.

“It’s so important during the building process to have a clear design direction,” Kristylynn says. “My design team ensured all the finishings were carefully planned for during the process.”

The same stone was used inside, to emulate the look of a solid stone structure, while connecting the spaces with a continuous wall that starts in the dining room, and follows through the bedroom hallway.

The stone wall forms a U-shape that frames the inviting courtyard outside. The U shape of the house, along with the openness achieved by the series of French doors, creates inter-connectedness throughout.

That wall, along with barn-board ceilings in the dining room, living room and the hallway, formed the inspiration for the interior design.

Cole sourced an old barn, took it down and cleaned the wood. His skilled trim-carpenters hand-cut the boards and arranged them on the ceilings. “It was really great to incorporate the character and history of the 150-year-old barn,” says Cole. The weathered grey patina sets the tone for the rest of the interior.

Continued on page 34



ABOVE: This elegant bathroom is a shared space, located between the two guest rooms. There is a separate shower and toilet room for ultimate privacy. **TOP RIGHT:** The beautiful beadboard ceiling was the inspiration for this room. Texture and shape add to the seaside feel. **RIGHT:** The checkered rug and polished-nickel four-poster bed give this room a sophisticated charm. **OPPOSITE TOP:** The glamour is in the master bedroom, where mirrored furnishings sparkle. **OPPOSITE RIGHT:** The hallway leads to the master suite.



“We used a palette of grey, soft beige and cream,” Kristylynn says. “The walls throughout the entire house are painted White Down (by Benjamin Moore).” Even the kitchen cabinets, beautifully handcrafted and installed by **Bateman Custom Furniture & Cabinetry**, are White Down.

Tumbled-marble floors in the dining room and kitchen make way for hand-planed maple in the great room and bedrooms. The main living area is open and flows easily from one area to another.

In the dining room, two large antique iron lanterns hang above a long reclaimed wooden table surrounded by linen-wrapped Parsons chairs. Wing-backed chairs in a fun zebra fabric sit at both ends. A blonde, teak wall unit holds books and a collection of white china.

A large maple island (Bateman) anchors the kitchen. A stainless steel apron-sink and professional-grade appliances shine. A large iron pot rack hangs over the granite-topped island. The cabinet style is a sunken-panel

shaker with a hand-cut quarter-inch bead. Solid wood, soft-close doors and drawers have European hinges. It’s a true chef’s kitchen that doesn’t feel out of place in the comfortable home.

A natural gas, open log-set fireplace is the stunning focal point of the living room. Kristylynn’s team cleverly designed two sitting areas on either side of the mantel. The first, off the kitchen, is ideal for conversing with friends. The other area is set around a large flat screen. Up above are two large, custom hand-forged iron fixtures (**Northern Iron**). The chairs and sofas are covered in neutral linens and durable cottons. Lots of patterned pillows add texture and interest. A raw-wood and iron table shares the space with a black antique chest. Colour comes from the art. Large, framed, vintage posters are hung strategically on the walls throughout the home, offering bright, saturated hues. Fresh flowers in green and white (**Joshua’s Greenery**) add life. *Continued on page 36*



home & builder

The bedrooms are calm and beautiful. The front guest room has a fabulous tray ceiling finished with beadboard. "The ceiling depicted the whole look of this room, giving it a relaxed feel," Kristylynn says. Texture comes from the shutters, the sisal rug and the bed pillows.

A stunning shared bath connects two guest rooms. A basketweave, white marble floor with grey grout defines the pattern. The mirrors above the long Caesarstone counter with vessel sinks inspired the design. There is a separate marble-encased shower room and a separate room for the toilet. "It's very functional and private," Cole says of the layout.

The second guest room sparkles with a nickel-plated bed and a fun grey and white checkered cotton rug.

The master is an oasis all its own. The en suite is luxurious with creamy wainscoting and Crema Marfil floors and counters. A tile rug in the centre of the room is beautifully designed. A vessel tub with striking black fixtures grabs attention. A large dressing room is right around the corner.

The master bedroom is glamorous with continued wainscoting, textures in cream, and floor-to-ceiling custom drapes. A mirrored dresser and bedside tables shine.

Leibel is completely satisfied with the finished home. He has taken great care to ensure talented trades used the best materials available to build and finish this home. He worked closely with Kristylynn and her team to create an interior that is polished, relaxed and comfortable.

A perfect plan, indeed. **OH**



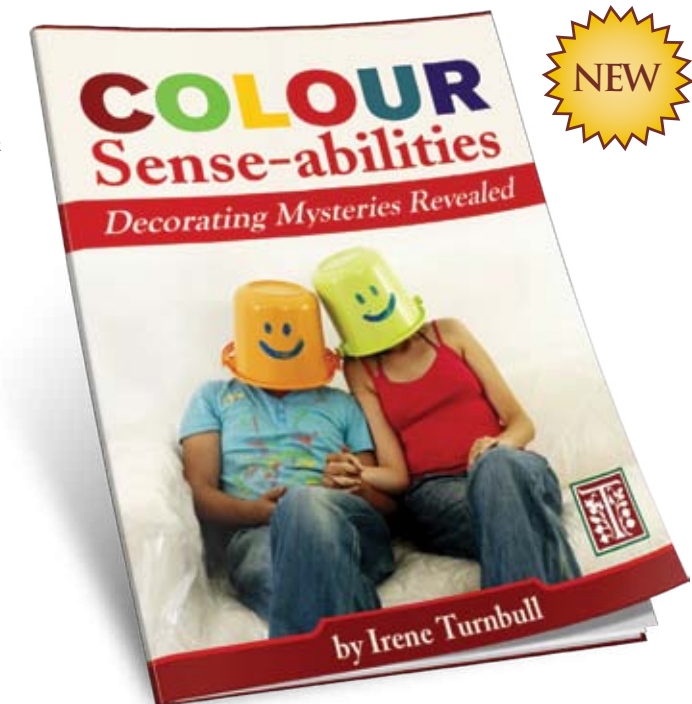
The master bath is exquisite with fine details, including matching tile inlays on the floor and in the shower. The entire room is bathed in Crema Marfil with black accents. **ABOVE:** There are two separate areas for him and her - she gets the larger space.

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PREPARING YOUR GARDEN *for winter*

BY MELANIE REKOLA

I really enjoy gardening this time of year; cooler weather, fewer biting insects – what's not to love? Readyng your landscape for winter is a relatively easy task; the spring maintenance task list is much more daunting. Here are some basic tips to ensure your garden looks its best this winter and wakes up gorgeous the following spring!

Remove Tender Bulbs And Plant Material: Dig up bulbs such as dahlias, Canna Lilies and geraniums. Store in a cool and dry place to stave off bulb rot. It is so disappointing in springtime to find these prized bulbs rotting and mouldy.

Fall Pruning: Prune off any dead areas of all trees and shrubs, but be careful to not prune for shape on your spring-flowering woody plants – you will be cutting off their spring blooms.

Wrap Tender Trees And Shrubs: Wrap marginal plant material and evergreens prone to ice/salt and snow damage, but be careful not to wrap too tightly. I have seen many plants smothered and choked by being bound too tightly and not getting the wrap off early enough in spring. Myself, I try to choose plant life that is well suited to the area it lives, therefore I rarely have to wrap.

Remove Annuals: Remove spent annuals; you will not miss them as they look overgrown and messy at this time of year anyhow. The seeds from some annuals such as poppies and Scarlet Runner Beans can be saved to plant directly next spring.

Cut Back Herbaceous Plant Material: The cutting back and removal of herbaceous plant material makes for an easier spring clean and protects plants from the spread of disease. It is also important to remove any diseased leaves of deciduous shrubs and trees from your garden beds for the same reason. I think leaving some seed heads of perennials such as Purple Coneflower and many ornamental grasses makes the winter garden look great and provides food for wildlife as well.

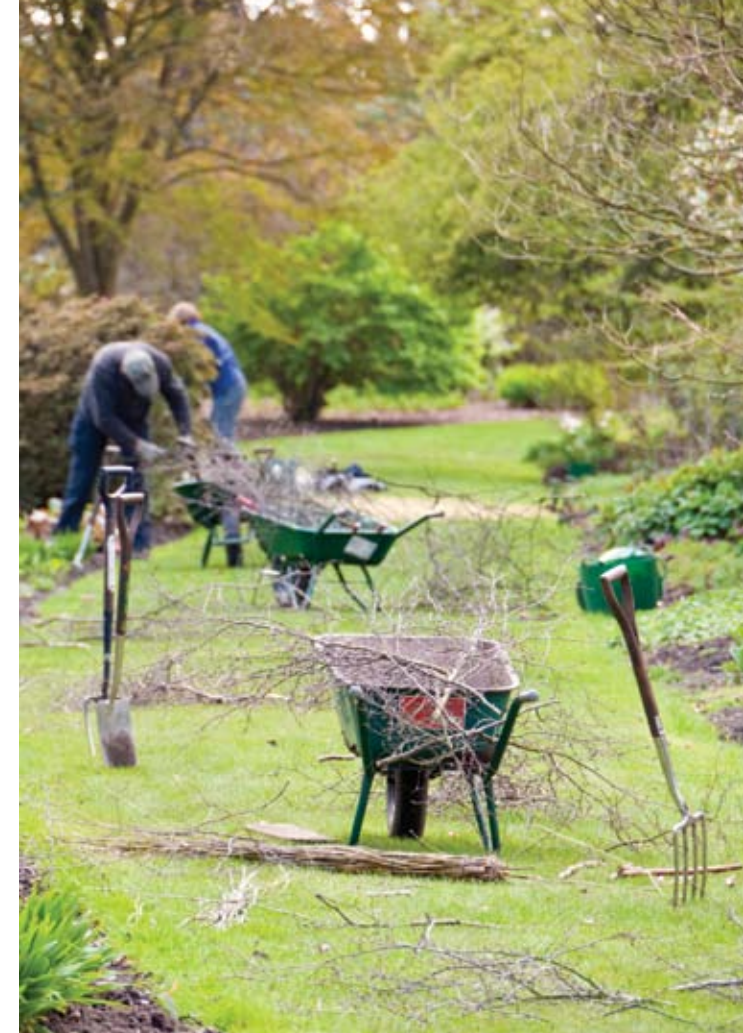
Plant Or Transplant Hardy Perennials: Fall is the perfect time to move hardy perennials as they don't go through that “newly transplanted” look for long and next year they will emerge like they have always been there.

Rake Leaves: We all know to rake our leaves off the lawn in fall, but it is crucial to do it promptly as to not smother the grass beneath. Remove fruit tree fallings as well for they will attract wasps. Leaving some leaves in garden beds helps protect plants by insulating against the freeze and thaw that is so detrimental to vegetation. And if you have the room, why not start composting those leaves!

Plant Spring Bulbs: It may be hard to think of spring when the garden is looking so tired, but now is the time to plan for and plant spring bulbs. Spring bulbs need to be planted in large groups, and placed near perennials that will mask their associated die back foliage. Small bulbs are best positioned near paths so their delicate beauty will be noticed. I prefer bulbs that are perennial, such as daffodils, Species Tulips and crocuses for they are lower maintenance and multiply. And don't forget about fall crocus if your garden needs a splash of colour at this time of the year!

Winter gives the opportunity to assess what your landscape looks like without deciduous leaves or flowers. Evergreens and trees with interesting bark or form take centre stage. The winter garden is often forgotten, but is ultra important in a climate like ours! Plant Emerald Cedars near your front door to make a great spot for Christmas lights, or add soft spreading yews where you need a horizontal habit. Paperbark Maple, London Planetree and River Birch all have very interesting bark when stripped of their leaves. Corkscrew Hazel looks even better in winter than in the summer with its unique curly branching. The berries of Highbush Cranberry, Mountain Ash and Serviceberry provide food for wildlife and add colourful interest.

The landscape takes on a stark but restful state as winter weather closes in. Enjoy this time, sleep long and restful and plan for the upcoming year. It will be here before you know it. **OH**





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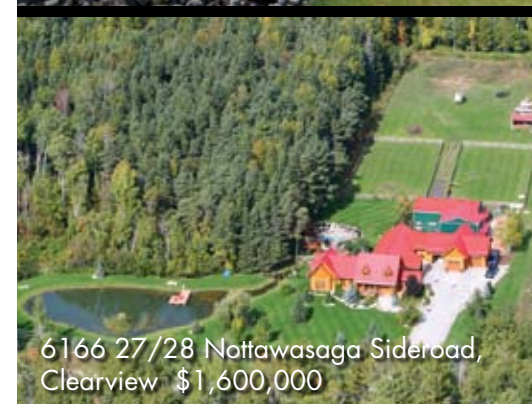
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David & Peggy's hard work certainly paid off; it increased the value of their home and allowed them to sell in a very timely manner.

Wishing the McGaws all the best in their future endeavours!



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real estate

ENSURING YOUR INSURANCE

BY JILL ELLIS

Catastrophes across the world have put the insurance industry under a spotlight over the past few years, with typhoons in Thailand, hurricanes along the U.S. Gulf Coast and earthquakes in Chile, just to name a few.

Homeowners may feel a sense of panic when empathizing with families in these unfortunate locales, but what level of insurance is reasonable when dealing with the kinds of weather-related emergencies that we experience in Ontario? Typhoons and hurricanes don't affect us, but landslides, floods, blizzards or tornadoes can and do happen regularly.

How much home insurance is enough?

"You need enough insurance to rebuild from the ground up, including debris removal," says Kevin Hodgins, secretary-treasurer, Southwestern Ontario Chapter, Insurance Institute of Ontario. This could be more than the price of your home because of the economies of scale: contractors get good deals on labour and material when building many homes at the same time, but rebuilding one home can cost much more.

Or it could cost less, according to Brian Maltman, executive director at General Insurance OmbudService. "You get overheated markets like Toronto, where homes in some parts of the city are selling for many times (more than) what it would take to rebuild them."

How much is too much?

No one wants to be "insurance poor," but being seriously over-insured is almost guaranteed not to happen, according to Maltman, because of the way insurance companies calculate the replacement value of your house.

What kinds of insurance do I need?

A package or comprehensive policy ensures that the building itself is insured, as well as the contents and the mortgage are all covered. Other types of coverage are also part of a comprehensive policy, like riders on special items or items of greater value. This type of policy also usually includes liability insurance.

Contents insurance is limited, according to Maltman, so it's a good idea to have expensive jewelry appraised (or other items that fall outside the normal range of value for your type of house) and covered with a rider.

"Be aware that there are limitations on things like jewelry, furs, computer software, collector items – and sometimes even bicycles and silverware. Go over the limitations with your agent or broker," urges Hodgins.

Mortgage insurance ensures that the lender is covered in the case of injury or death of one or more of the owners. It can also ensure that the house is paid off through insurance, so as not to be a burden to the surviving spouse.

One million dollars is the usual amount for liability within most comprehensive policies. This protects the homeowner in case someone is injured on their property. Some policies include \$2 million liability coverage.

What's not covered?

"Floods," says Maltman. "Because they are predictable (in some areas) and because they usually involve many houses."

He says, however, a flood due to a sewer back-up is usually covered by comprehensive policies.

What about deductibles?

A higher deductible means a lower premium and vice versa. This is because most claims are on the lower end, says Maltman. "Ask yourself, 'Could I afford to pay that first \$1,000 (if that's your deductible amount)?' That's the first question," he adds. If the answer is no, a \$1,000 payout would be tough, go with a lower deductible and higher premium.

What questions should I ask?

When buying a new home: "Question the seller about any water-related losses. If they have occurred, ask what steps were taken to ensure it wouldn't happen again," says Hodgins.

When renewing insurance annually: "Ask yourself if there's anything you should talk over with your broker or agent," cautions Maltman. Have you done extensive renovations that would affect the replacement cost of your home; have you purchased expensive art or jewelry; has anything changed in your home in the past year?

What should I be aware of?

There are discounts allowed if you have fire or burglary protection systems, being mortgage free and often for insuring your house and car with the same insurer, according to Hodgins.

The bottom line:

"There are discounts for being and remaining claims free, so consider your insurance as protecting against disasters rather than a home maintenance policy," says Hodgins. **OH**

For more information: www.giocanada.org, www.insuranceinstitute.ca



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QUALITY AND COMFORT

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BONNIE FOX

THE PLACE: Shawn Reid, President of **LA-Z-BOY Furniture Galleries**, Barrie, greets customers with a smile. Reid and his wife Sharon, Service Manager for the local franchise, have created a family feeling for customers. Reid is the youngest franchisor with the international firm. He arrived in Barrie from Thunder Bay with a strong background in furniture sales. Reid and his experienced team have catered to the furniture needs of local customers for the past eight years at their Bryne Drive location. He relishes the look of surprise on the faces of newcomers when they realize his expanded store offers much more than easy chairs. Along with a wide range of quality products from Kincaid Furniture Company and Howard Miller, the massive showroom includes well-designed vignettes for living rooms, bedrooms and dining rooms. A hands-on fabric sample selection of more than one thousand styles gives customers plenty of choice. "We appeal to discerning customers, who want to put value into their homes," says Reid.

THE STYLE: Reid restates the company's slogan: "Comfort. It's what we do," then goes on. "While the accent is on comfort, we strive to appeal to as many people as possible," he says. "We're not extreme in our product selections, but we provide a variety of pieces to give people lots of choice. We also provide customers with an in-home design service. Our designer goes into the home to help coordinate colour selection, style and floor plans that complement the functionality of specific rooms."

WHAT'S HOT: When asked about the current trend in home furnishings, Reid has an immediate response. "Colours are hot! Browns and tans are safe and will always sell, but each of our consultative staff has a background in design," he says. "They encourage people to be brave in how they decorate. Our staff focuses on the specific customer's room. Some people know what they're looking for while some are looking for answers. Once we

know the requirements, together, we can easily make decisions."

SEASONAL: Reid suggests that business for him is year-round, but, in fall, due to the cooler weather, customers start noticing changes they want to make to the inside of their homes. When that happens, Reid and his staff are ready to assist.

FAVOURITES: After acknowledging that the trusted La-Z-Boy recliner is a customer favourite, Reid continues: "People are surprised by the breadth of the selection we have in our large showroom. We have curios, wall units, window coverings, lamps, bar sets, armchairs, sofas, as well as dining room and bedroom sets. The space makes for an easier shopping experience. We have a great product mix to appeal to different tastes and our items are warranty-protected."

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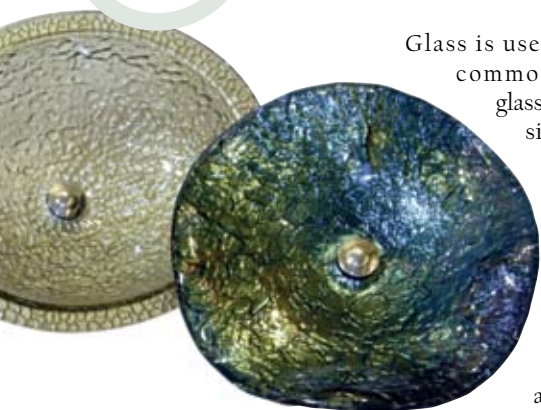
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decorating

TOUCH OF *glass*

BY IRENE TURNBULL

Since man first witnessed the vitrification of quartz when lightning struck sand some 5,500 years ago, we have embraced the use of glass in our homes and buildings.



Glass is used for everything from common household items – glasses, bowls and bottles – to significant architectural components, allowing the manipulation of light and the enjoyment of its historical contribution as an art form. Not surprisingly, this very environmentally friendly and adaptable substance is an even more popular building material choice today

as a result of huge technological advances that offer seemingly endless design options.

In recent years glass has taken on a new architectural role, moving from its usual use in windows and doors to becoming an integral part of the structural design itself. Glass walls, floors, stairs and roofs are reshaping the nature of our living spaces. More and more designers are taking advantage of innovations in strength and durability to incorporate the light and sound-controlling properties of glass with creative flexibility.

Bend it... shape it... melt it... paint it... laminate it... or etch it. Only your imagination will limit how you can incorporate glass into your home decorating projects. However, each application requires professional know how. Glass production is a complicated business. It can evolve from the original production of sheet goods through additional manipulation with either heat, colour or surface etching.

Among the most exciting developments is the inclusion of additional materials within the interlayer of laminated glass, including

fabrics, coloured films, wood veneers, LED lights, stone veneers and papers and dichroic films. The results are definitely delivering the WOW factor at affordable prices with the added benefit of relatively seamless installations.

Sheet glass is particularly well suited for backsplashes, countertops and shower walls, offering clean, grout-free and maintenance-free, non-porous hygienic and stain-resistant surfaces, which can be custom finished to offer unique textures and colours. The reflective characteristic of the glass surface set over either a laminated or applied substrate can give a unique three-dimensional quality to the surface, particularly if textured. The surface can be reflective or matte depending on the finish chosen, and by further strengthening the glass through the tempering process, it is safe to use behind the cooktop.

So, if you think glass might be the answer for your next interior project, remember product knowledge and expert handling, from templating and fabrication to installation, requires specific skills. So be sure to choose your designer and supplier carefully to ensure many years of timeless, carefree “feel good” living with your touch of glass! **OH**



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BY KATHLEEN DUNCAN // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY

BUILT FOR *Life*



Len's office is located off the entrance at the front of the home. These chairs received a makeover for their new home. **LEFT:** First impressions count and homeowners Len and Sheilagh were immediately attracted to the fine exterior details of their new home.

RIGHT: Visitors receive a warm welcome in Len and Sheilagh's home. The home's traditional elegance is evident immediately along with fine finishes, including crown moulding throughout. **OPPOSITE:** Transom windows, found above each doorway on the main floor, frame the entrance to the dining room.



As their new northern retreat nears completion, the only decision Sheilagh Dreyer and Len Miller need make is which vista to enjoy – the forest out back where a family of deer search for fallen apples on a regular basis, or the ever-changing waterscape visible from their front porch where white sails feature against a background of Kempenfelt Bay blue.

“It feels like we’re at the cottage,” reflects Sheilagh, who appreciates the abundance of wild flowers lining their neighbourhood walking routes. “It has that relaxed feeling.”

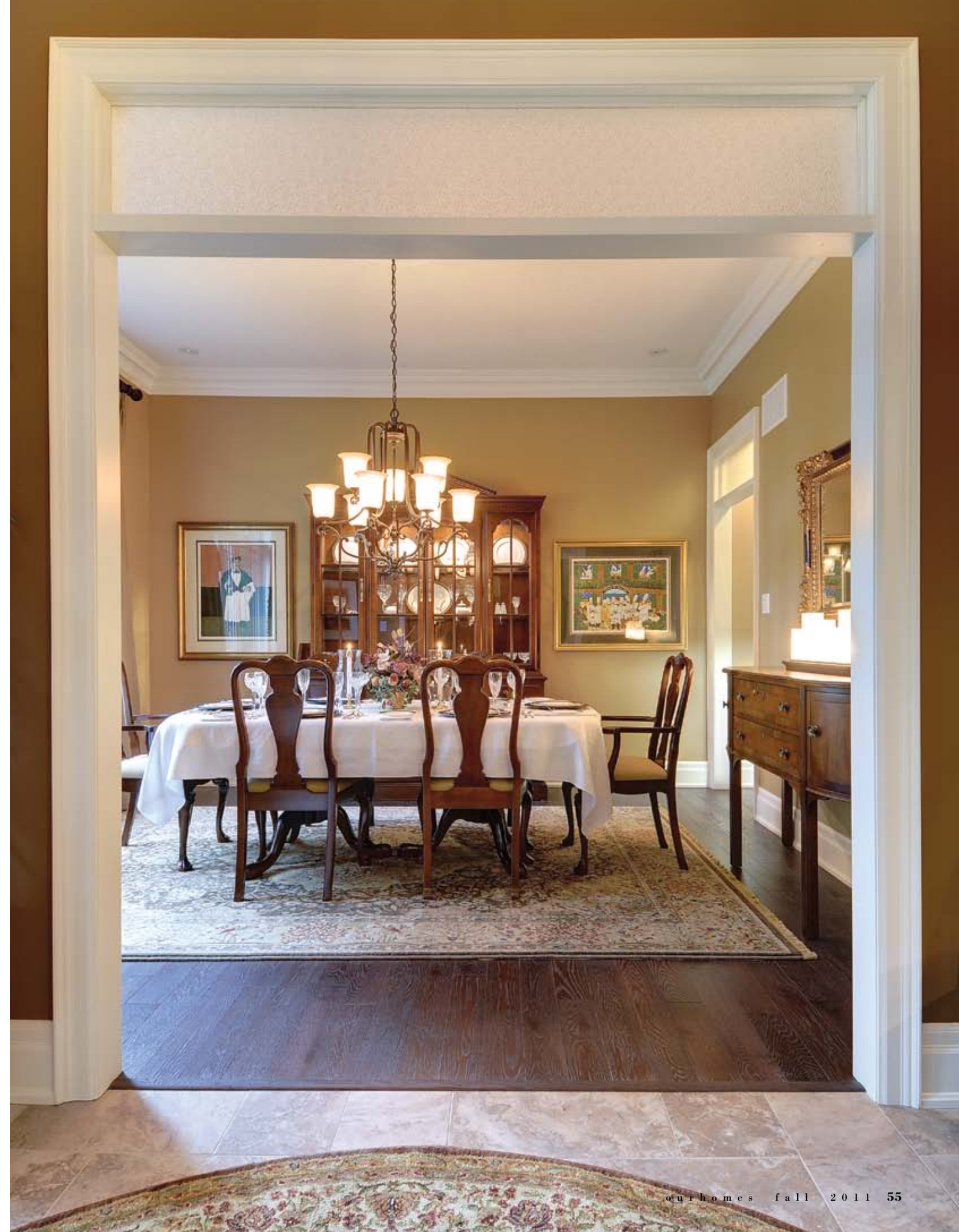
With a winter residence in Arizona, the retired couple was looking for a new base to share the warmer months. After meeting on a blind date 10 years ago, it was time to sell their individual houses and create a new home together.

It was far from warm, however, when they decided to follow up on a family suggestion to check out real estate options in Innisfil.

“We stopped a snowplow to ask if the driver knew of any places

for sale in the area,” recalls Len, who’d lived in Stouffville for years. “He directed us to the south shore.” **Lauren Kelly** of Homelife/Kempenfelt-Kelly Realty Ltd. was the listing agent.

The stone-and-stucco home they discovered, beautifully built by **A.N.T. Construction**, had the professional stamps of approval of **Epplert and Worobec Surveying** and **Gemmell Engineering**. It featured local **Tarpin Lumber & Truss**, **Atlas Block** stone and **Arts Aluminum**. The site was prepared by **Rumball Excavation & Haulage** and was climate controlled by **G.H.D. Mechanical**. *Continued on page 56*





"The style and layout was a perfect fit for the neighbourhood," says licenced custom-home builder **Wayne Ezekiel**, founder and president of A.N.T. Construction. Based in Innisfil's South Shore Woods, the company has been crafting quality dream-homes-come-true throughout the region for more than 20 years. "And the house was situated perfectly on the property to take advantage of the gorgeous view."

Wading through several feet of snow to peek into the windows of the under-construction building, Sheilagh and Len were happily surprised when **Sigmund Tronowicz**, A.N.T. Construction's site supervisor and general manager, happened by and answered their questions.

"He quarterbacked the quality of the Energy Star-rated build," says Ezekiel.

"We'd been looking for a bungalow with a three-car garage, and they were very hard to find," recalled Len, who can also picture his large family being welcomed and entertained in the house's great room. Anchoring the homey space is a **Napoleon Home Comfort** fireplace with a cast limestone surround by **E.F.P. Designs**.

As guests enter the 12-foot front foyer, featuring a medallion (also by E.F.P. Designs) at its apex, they're immediately treated to a backdrop of that extensive greenery in the backyard courtesy of large casement Casa Bella Windows. The vaulted ceiling of the great room soars another two feet allowing a large segmented window in the peak to maximize the natural light spilling down onto the wire-scraped Preverco oak, tinted with Black Bear stain, from **Grand Floors**.

In every wall and corner, drywall details pop with the exquisite workmanship of **Newport Interior Wall Systems**.

To the lobby's left, a formal dining room promises a meal to be enjoyed, while a pair of pillars to the right provide light and grandeur to a short hallway leading to a den, guest room and bath – all with transoms at their doors allowing that natural light to flow freely. Decorator Donna Garipey of Irvine Robinson Interiors selected fabric, crafted drapery and reupholstered chairs in the den and cushions in the great room.

Keeping the cook in the conversation is the open-concept cookery created by **Astro Kitchens**, which also handled the home's laundry room, en suite closet, butler's pantry and vanities.

The white-painted maple cabinetry, which incorporates shaker-style door panels, matches the white brick tumbled travertine backsplash, which adds a textured brightness above the granite slabs provided by Countertops Unlimited. *Continued on page 58*

TOP LEFT: A butler's pantry with wine fridge, storage and prep area is located between the kitchen and dining room. **LEFT:** Architectural features, including columns leading into the living room, add to the traditional feel. **OPPOSITE TOP:** Windows with a view of the forest frame the fireplace in this inviting living space. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM:** The large eat-in kitchen with breakfast bar is well equipped and adds a bright contrast to this main living area.



RIGHT: The spacious master bedroom has a walk-out to a backyard. Three square windows above the bed let daylight and moonlight fill the room. **BELOW:** The master en suite has it all – jet tub, separate shower and his-and-her sinks.



Like **Tilemaster's** Athena Sparta ceramic tiles in Flair Nutmeg that adorns much of the main floor, the great room's Hunter Douglas blinds, by Betty Vetere Designs, coordinate with the warm neutrality of the Sherwin Williams Burnished Brandy paint **Luis Bravo** applied to the walls. A colourful trail of whimsy, which adds both a decorative flair and a personal touch to the room, is the extensive collection of kitschy roosters that pay tribute to road trips gone by.

While the couple admits a passion for barbecuing and outdoor living (Tronowicz is also overseeing the addition of a covered patio with a skylight and patterned concrete floor that can be converted to a four-season room at a later date if desired), Sheilagh says her favourite appliance supplied by **T.A. Appliance** is the warming oven inside.

The new patio area will extend to the garden doors of the master suite, which is awash in Benjamin Moore's tranquil Norwester Tan and natural light from the many windows. The en suite features natural river rock in the shower and rectified porcelain tile on the heated floor (both by **Mosaic Only**.)

The new owners also requested the basement be fully finished with a workshop, bar (**A Gallery of Interiors**), and games room for additional entertaining. A seating area with a dry-stacked stone fireplace and furniture re-covered by **Shanty Bay Upholstery** complete the look and functionality.

A couple of additional bedrooms, with high ceilings and large windows, have also been included on the lower level to welcome Sheilagh's two visiting granddaughters.

As **Dearborn Designs** finishes up the landscaping and irrigation system making the outdoor vistas complete, Len and Sheilagh enjoy a glass of wine and look around in satisfaction.

"It's fun getting used to living in Barrie and Innisfil, and meeting our neighbours," says Sheilagh, who enjoys talking to the fellow Newfoundlander who serves at a neighbourhood restaurant.

Len, who nods heartily in agreement, also continues to appreciate the garage space offering a roomy home for his motorcycle. **OH**

A.N.T. finished the basement on time for our photo shoot. It includes a games area, bar, family room, two bedrooms and a bath. There's also a workroom at the back. **BELOW LEFT:** Sheilagh, A.N.T. General Manager Sigmund Tronowicz and Len check out the new bar. **BELOW RIGHT:** Len and Sheilagh relax with their iPads in the downstairs family room.



people

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▼ Elke Bradford and Her Design Team Designers Plus Kitchen & Bath

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MUST HAVE BATHROOM LUXURY ITEM: Want to make a splash? Consider a water closet with “bidet functionality” or a bubble massage tub.

Continued on page 62

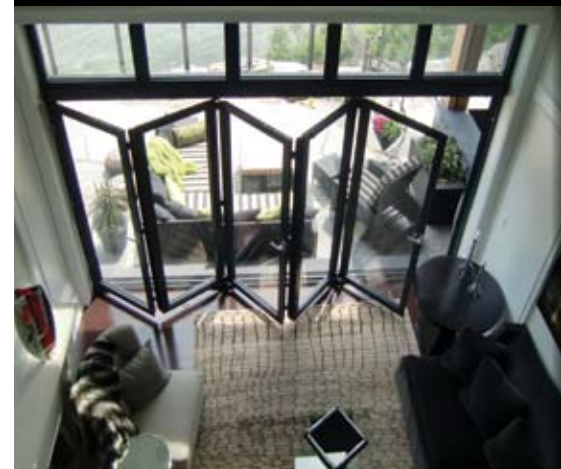


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WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE FALL ACTIVITY? A boat ride along the shores of Georgian Bay.



▼ **Maria Dus**
Artistic Stone Design (ASD)
WHY ARE GRANITE AND SOLID SURFACES SO POPULAR THESE DAYS? Both are very durable and easy to maintain. With an array of colours available in solid surfaces, and the natural, unique, artistic beauty that granite provides, it makes a perfect choice for any décor and budget that will last for generations.
WHAT'S IN YOUR KITCHEN THAT YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT? My granite island with built-in cooktop. Easy cleanup and no worries with spills or hot pots.

Continued on page 64



▲ Sheree Toffan

**Amazing Kitchens
(Part of Bateman Design Centre)**

WHAT MAKES YOUR KITCHENS SO AMAZING? The great variety of materials, sizes, colours, and styles. My kitchens are custom-made in Canada and are environmentally friendly inside and out. What makes them so much more AMAZING is that each kitchen is tailored specifically to the clients who buy them.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE MEAL TO COOK IN YOUR KITCHEN? Christmas Eve dinner "Toffan Style." We try to include some Ukrainian dishes like perogies and cabbage rolls, plus our three sons' favourites. We set it up around the large island and let the whole family dig in! Of course all of our relatives bring their specialties too!



► Jeremy Buck and Rocky

Di Pietra Design

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WHAT'S IN YOUR KITCHEN AT HOME THAT YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT? Our 12-year-old granite countertop and our undermount stainless steel sink - where everything eventually ends up at one point or another!

Continued on page 66



◀ Brian Laidlaw

Perkinsfield Kitchen + Bath

HOW DO YOU DEFINE A CUSTOM KITCHEN?

A custom kitchen encompasses whatever your mind can dream up. You are not limited to specific cabinet standards or parameters that some companies insist you work within. A custom kitchen is not only functional but also relaxing and enjoyable to work in.

DESCRIBE YOUR DREAM KITCHEN: My dream kitchen is an open concept kitchen with a large island offering seating for eating as well as entertaining, while cooking in a relaxed setting.

FAVOURITE MEAL: Prime rib and Yorkshire pudding.



▲ Tony and Justin with Dad Denis Robitaille

Marcelville

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FAVOURITE DINNER I MAKE MYSELF:

TONY: Cabbage Burger Bake

JUSTIN: Steak or salmon with a side of baked potatoes

DENIS: Meat and potatoes and lots of veggies

Continued on page 68

▼ Bill Skinner

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WHY ARE YOUR KITCHENS SO AFFORDABLE? We want your business so we design your quality Canadian-made kitchen to meet your functional needs, in the style and colour you want and all within your budget.

DESCRIBE SOME UNIQUE KITCHEN FEATURES: You can include dazzling hardware, stone countertops, glass features, pots and pans drawers, soft close doors and drawers and more to add value and “pop” to your kitchen.



► Bernadine Bolech and Bruce Berry

Kitchen & Bath Design House

WHAT'S POPULAR IN CABINETRY FOR THE KITCHEN AND BATH? The shaker door is what's popular in cabinetry today. People are looking for a clean, simple style. People are also asking for quartz countertops because of the easy maintenance.

WHAT IS THE MOST COMMON MUST-HAVE FOR KITCHENS AND BATHROOMS? In the bath, again, simple lines. Rain-head showers and multi body-spray systems are becoming the thing. The spa atmosphere is the “in” thing. **OH**



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feature

A *view* FROM EVERY ROOM

BY M. CAROLYN BLACK // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY

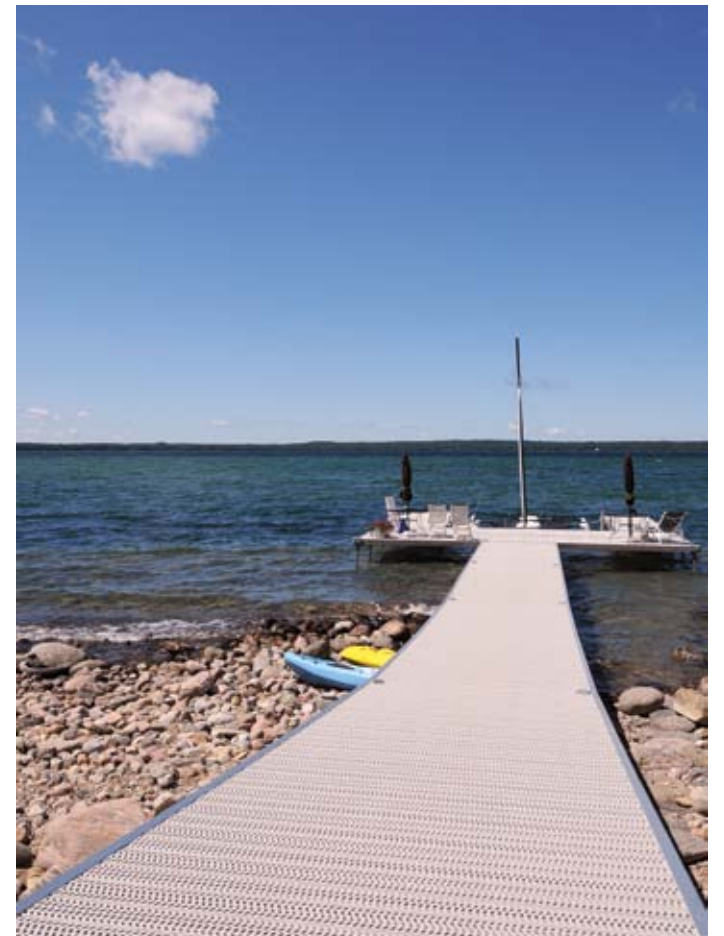
After 13 work-related moves, living temporarily in places like Edmonton, Sault Ste. Marie and Ottawa, these homeowners decided 10 years ago it was time to settle for good in the Cedar Ridge area. When they first purchased the two-and-a-half acre lot with 317 feet of water frontage, “it was all wooded and you can’t believe you’re ever going to make anything of it when all you see is bush and fallen trees.” They had their work cut out for them – and a lot of decisions to make – but fortunately they had hired a dream team to build their dream home. *Continued on page 76*



A massive wall of windows in the sunny great room offers a perfect view of meticulous gardens and the clear blue waters of Georgian Bay. **OPPOSITE LEFT:** The homeowners are passionate about their gardens and have created a relaxing front porch to enjoy the seasons in colour. **OPPOSITE RIGHT:** A custom armoire is carefully placed in the open foyer.

feature

A wonderland awaits outside. There is a terrace at every level, offering full sun upstairs and shade on the lower level. A meandering flagstone walkway leads through lush gardens to rugged beach. **OPPOSITE TOP LEFT:** A deck off the great room. **OPPOSITE TOP RIGHT:** The new dock, installed this summer. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM LEFT:** A covered pathway on the lower level. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM RIGHT:** One of many magnificent gardens.





LEFT: The dining room in the front of the home features a custom table set for company coming. The homeowners love to collect art, with nature as its theme. **RIGHT:** A view from the sitting sunroom into the kitchen. **BELOW:** The sunroom off the kitchen is comfortable and bright with oversized furniture and blinds that add texture and interest. **TOP RIGHT:** The well-appointed kitchen is strategically placed, with easy access to the spacious living and dining rooms. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** The mudroom off a side entrance is brightly decorated.



Doug Plumb (**Plumb Designs**), designed a perfect layout; builder Gerard Forget (**Forget Construction Ltd.**) made the layout a beautiful reality and Angelo DeCola (**DeCola Windows + Doors**) sourced and delivered all the windows and doors exactly as the homeowners wished – no small feat for any of them since all they had to go on was magazine pictures and a verbal wish list from the homeowners.

She says, “I knew what I wanted in the house; I knew what I didn’t like and what I did like and there were things in all my previous houses that I incorporated into this house.” She showed Plumb a magazine picture of the perfect house exterior and he used that but designed a completely different house inside, including the open spaces and large windows

the homeowners liked. He also used several different ceiling styles in the home: a barrel ceiling in the sunroom, tray ceiling in the kitchen and soaring cathedral ceilings in the main living areas.

She continues with praise for the builder: “Gerard (Forget) is the best builder, I swear to God! It was a little less than a year from the time he started until we moved in and we just loved him the whole time. I can’t tell you how happy we were with him. If I couldn’t visualize something like the dining room, or I just couldn’t see how the ceiling was going to work, he would do mock ups.”

Angelo DeCola adds, “I’ve never met a more organized contractor than Gerard Forget. He was on-site and he scheduled the trades so that none of them overlapped. Doug Plumb is really good at drawing something functional

and structural that you can actually build. Sometimes what you draw and what works are different but we understand each other and we all worked very well together as a team.” This kind of seamless collaboration makes the homebuilding process look easy and the homeowners count themselves very lucky indeed to have procured the services of Forget, Plumb and DeCola.

Midland **TIM-BR Mart** supplied the lumber, the roof and siding. The couple also relied heavily on local trades – **Georgian Kitchen Centre** did the kitchen, granite countertops and bathroom, and also finished many other areas of the house with built-ins and shelving. A clever use of space is the hidden cabinets under the roofline in the guest room and guest bath above the garage. *Continued on page 78*

feature

RIGHT: This bathroom is located upstairs in the private guest suite above the garage. **BELOW:** The master bedroom is situated at the far end of the home and is incredibly spacious and beautifully furnished with a great view and walk-out to a raised terrace.



The pedestal table and chairs next to the kitchen were built by **Marcelville** based on a picture the homeowners had seen in a magazine. The dining room table, both sideboards and the armoire in the entrance were also done by Marcelville according to a design by the homeowners themselves. Beautiful silk flower arrangements throughout the home are from **Fresh By Leanne** in Midland.

All window coverings and bedding come from **Blair Interiors & Window Fashions** in Midland. Niches tucked into the side of an archway dividing the master bedroom from the bath recall a beloved section of a former home incorporated into the new design, and the homeowners love the beautiful privacy Repla windows by DeCola provide in the master bath.

The views all around the property are magnificent, from the multi-coloured gardens along the driveway and backyard paths to the beautiful sunsets over the waterfront. "I wanted an open concept and every room had to have a view of the water and the island. The Christian Island ferries go by every half hour."

The couple sees lots of wildlife on and around the property, as evidenced by the many hummingbird and oriole feeders, but other surprises abound. "One day I was weeding and I said to my husband, you've got to see this – and he thought I saw a snake," the homeowner chuckles. "I moved a large leaf aside and underneath it was a brand new fawn." *Continued on page 80*



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The master en suite is luxurious with an old-fashioned vessel tub and a his-and-her vanity.



The gorgeous landscaping was designed by **Scott McCuaig** of **Eden Tree Design** and installed by **Georgian Landscape** in Perkinsfield and was finished very soon after the couple moved in. They both spend a lot of time gardening and are ruthless when it comes to plants that don't perform: while sternly eyeing a hydrangea that is much sparser than last year she says, "If they don't produce right I yank them out."

Avid water lovers, they have a trimaran, which is similar to a catamaran but with three hulls in place of two. "Instead of sitting in it sideways you sit in the centre and you can better see where you're going." They also have four kayaks and thanks to sizzling temperatures last summer, everybody was swimming at a July family reunion.

The spacious dock is from **Dock in the Box** in Innisfil and the material is a unique composite in a grey zigzag pattern that doesn't get hot under a blazing sun. "It's great because when the water comes up it just falls straight back through and doesn't pool on top, and you can add on sections."

After a day in the garden, a walk with Holly and Daisy (their two friendly Affenpinschers) and a swim to cool off, the outdoor patio – complete with fireplace – beckons. Ahhhh. Fourteenth time is definitely the charm. **OH**



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STOCKING THE HOLIDAY PANTRY

BY MARIA DASILVA



The holiday season is just around the corner. It's a time to celebrate with family and friends. It's also the season for unexpected guests, impromptu dinner parties and festive entertaining. For some this is an exciting and enjoyable time, planning the menu, setting the table and organizing the bar and cellar. For others, the thought of entertaining brings nothing but sweaty palms and an increased heart rate.

Whether last minute or long-planned, entertaining doesn't have to be a panic-inducing nightmare. With a few trips to the grocery store and a well-stocked pantry, fridge and freezer you'll want guests to drop by throughout the holidays. And you'll be ready to set a table full of delicious treats at the drop of a hat.

A well-stocked pantry also means quick, easy meal times for you and your family when time is already at a minimum.

Here are some helpful ingredients to have on hand, and simple ideas on how to use them to make your holidays stress-free and fun.

FROM THE PANTRY

For last minute entertaining

- **Nuts** - For last minute entertaining, simply put a few types of nuts in a bowl for snacking while sipping. When you have a bit more time, try different types of roasted and spiced or sweetened nuts, very impressive and very addictive!
- **Fig Jelly and Red Pepper Jelly** - These two jellies take a cheese tray from everyday to holiday - ready in no time.
- **Pickles** - An assortment of pickles (dills, beans, asparagus, beets, onions) make great snacking, even better when you've pickled them yourself or purchased them locally.
- **Crackers/Crispbreads** - These are essential for pairing with cheese, meat, marinated vegetables and dips. Select a few different types, and have at least one gluten-free option (there are many great ones) just in case.
- **Good Balsamic Vinegar** - A splash of aged balsamic vinegar drizzled over pieces of Parmesan cheese takes less than five minutes to prepare but feels oh so chic.
- **Bars of Good Chocolate** - Nothing makes dessert easier than a few pieces of good chocolate.
- **Dried Fruit** - Dried apricots, pears, prunes and figs not only look great on a cheese tray, they also complement the rich saltiness of aged cheeses.

For stress-free meals

- **Pasta** - Pasta is the perfect option for dinner when time is at a premium. While the pasta is cooking, sauté any vegetables you have on hand in olive oil for an easy sauce.
- **Rice** - Fried rice, risotto, one-pot chicken and rice, the options are endless, and speedy, for an easy weeknight meal.
- **Canned Beans** - Keep a variety of canned beans in your pantry for a quick chili, burrito filling, or to serve on toast or with rice.

- **Canned Tuna or Other Fish** - Tuna (or other canned fish) melts make satisfying and simple weeknight dinners. Or try it tossed in pasta.
- **Canned Tomatoes** - A tomato sauce is only 15 minutes away when you have a can of tomatoes on hand. Keep a few in the pantry for easy sauces, soups and stews all through the week.

FROM THE FRIDGE

- **Olives** - A bowl of olives on the table is the perfect snack to nibble on while sipping cocktails. Set out a small bowl on the side for the pits so you don't find them in your planters at clean up time.
- **Cheese** - Everyone loves to nibble on cheese, making it the most appealing item to have on hand for unexpected gatherings. Keep an assortment of cheese in your fridge. The best cheese platters have three to five different kinds, ranging from soft to blue. And a large piece of cheddar will come in handy at meal times for anything from stovetop mac and cheese, to simple but satisfying grilled cheese.
- **Sliced Meats** - For easy entertaining an assortment of sliced cold meats, such as ham, salami and sausage make a great appetizer, especially with some cheese and crackers. Use the same meats for quick dinner sandwiches, or cooked in a simple frittata.
- **Marinated Vegetables** - Whether you spend some time to make your own, or purchase ready-made from the antipasto bar in the grocery store, marinated vegetables make great last-minute flatbread or pizza toppers, or sandwich fillers. They're also great on a platter with cheese, crackers and sliced meat.
- **Hummus/Bean Dip** - Arrange store-bought hummus in your favourite bowl with some crispbreads and say you just whipped it up yourself. Perfectly simple!
- **Smoked Fish** - Smoked salmon or trout adds a touch of elegance to an appetizer platter. Serve it on little toasts with a dollop of whipped cream, or for a simple dip whiz it in the food processor with cream cheese. For an easy supper, toss smoked fish pieces in cooked pasta with oil, capers and a squeeze of lemon juice.

FROM THE FREEZER

- **Frozen Bread Dough** - Nothing welcomes dinner guests like the scent of freshly baked bread. Also keep a package, or two, of frozen pizza dough for quick weeknight dinners.
- **Cooked Shrimp** - Thawed cooked shrimp set in a bowl with cocktail sauce is a stress-free crowd-pleaser. Or toss thawed cooked shrimp in cooked pasta for a quick dinner.
- **Puff Pastry** - Sprinkle frozen puff pastry with herbs and cheese, fold in half, cut into strips and bake for instant and addictive cheese sticks. Your guests will think you're a genius.
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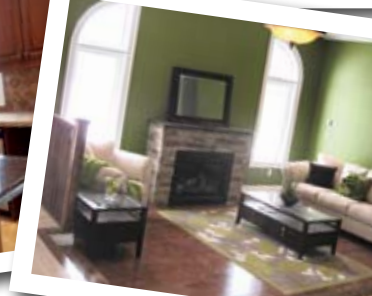
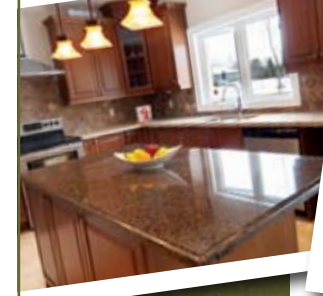
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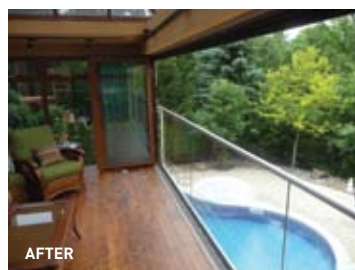
Monarch's Glass Wall systems offer state-of-the-art bearings, thermal closing hardware and thermally broken extruded aluminum.

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(Please see ad on page 61)



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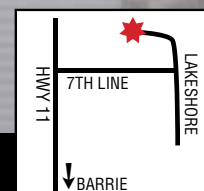
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APPLIANCES

BARBER & HASKILL *Page 6*

TA APPLIANCE *Page 3*

BBQ'S/FIREPLACES

NAPOLEON HOME COMFORT *Page 48&49*

BUILDERS

A.N.T. CONSTRUCTION *Page 27*

BIG EAST CONSTRUCTION *Page 17*

DAVID ROBSON AND ASSOCIATES *Page 81, 88*

EVERGREEN HOME & COTTAGE *Page 70*

GRANITE GROUP HOMES *Page 86, 89*

HOMES BY DAYCORE *Page 91*

MG HOMES *Page 79*

PRATT HOMES *Page 21, 86*

RENOVATIONS BY RODGERS *Page 27*

BUILDING/LANDSCAPING SUPPLIES

GP MASONRY & LANDSCAPING SUPPLIES *Page 15*

TRANSCANADA WOOD PRODUCTS *Page 87*

CABINETS & WOODWORKING

MARCELVILLE *Page 44*

PERKINSFIELD KITCHEN & BATH *Page 5*

CONSUMER RESOURCE

CITYDIRECT.INFO *Page 17*

COUNTERTOPS/GRANITE & STONE

ARTISTIC STONE DESIGN *Page 93*

DI PIETRA DESIGN *Page 9*

DOOR/CABINET HARDWARE

DISTINCTIVE DECORATIVE HARDWARE *Page 44*

FINANCIAL

DOMINION LENDING CENTRES *Page 71*

FLOORING/STAIRS/TRIM/ MOULDINGS

A GALLERY OF INTERIORS - THE DESIGN CENTRE *Page 83*

BARRIE TRIM *Page 79*

DESERT TILE *Page 84*

TRANSCANADA WOOD PRODUCTS *Page 87*

FLORISTS/FLORAL DESIGN

FRESH FLOWERS BY LEANNE *Page 85*

STREET'S FLOWERS *Page 23*

FURNITURE & HOME DÉCOR

ABODA DECOR *Page 12*

BACK IN THYME *Page 23*

BLAIR INTERIORS & WINDOW FASHIONS *Page 71*

HERITAGE HOMESTEAD *Page 8*

HOUSE OF WONDERS *Page 51*

INTER-ART INTERIORS *Page 45*

LA-Z-BOY *Page 2*

RAFTERS/LIVING LIGHTING *Page 91*

SATURDAY AFTERNOONS HOME STORE *Page 23*

SEASONS *Page 87*

SHAW'S INTERIORS *Page 11*

SIENNA HOME DECOR & GIFT GALLERY *Page 51*

STAPLES DESIGN GROUP *Page 84*

GEOTHERMAL

NOTTAWASAGA MECHANICAL *Page 70*

RELIANCE-YANCH GEOTHERMAL *Page 92*

GLASS/MIRROR & DESIGN

BARRIE METRO GLASS *Page 95*

SGO DESIGNER GLASS *Page 86, 92*

GLASS WALLS

MONARCH MOVEABLE GLASS WALLS *Page 61, 88*

HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING

NAPOLEON HOME COMFORT *Page 48&49*

NOTTAWASAGA MECHANICAL *Page 70*

RELIANCE-YANCH HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING *Page 92*

HOME IMPROVEMENTS

A GALLERY OF INTERIORS - THE DESIGN CENTRE *Page 83*

BIG EAST CONSTRUCTION *Page 17*

RENOVATIONS BY RODGERS *Page 27*

INTERIOR DECORATING/ INTERIOR DESIGN

CYNDIE JEROME DESIGN *Page 40*

INNOVATIVE DESIGN & DECORATING SERVICES *Page 51*

INTER-ART INTERIORS *Page 45*

KL INTERIOR DESIGN *Page 23*

LVZ DESIGN *Page 51*

STAPLES DESIGN GROUP *Page 84*

TERRI CLARK INTERIORS *Page 18*

TURNBULL INTERIORS *Page 37*

KITCHEN AND BATH

A GALLERY OF INTERIORS - THE DESIGN CENTRE *Page 83*

ALLANDALE AFFORDABLE KITCHENS *Page 19*

AMAZING KITCHENS *Page 8*

DESIGNERS PLUS KITCHEN & BATH *Page 10*

KITCHEN & BATH DESIGN HOUSE *Page 16*

KITCHENART NORTH *Page 40, 88*

MARCELVILLE *Page 44*

PERKINSFIELD KITCHEN & BATH *Page 5*

LANDSCAPING/LAWN & GARDEN

GROOM & ASSOCIATES *Page 89*

NEAR NORTH LANDSCAPING *Page 81*

THE LANDMARK GROUP *Page 26*

LIGHTING

GLASS LIGHTING GALLERY *Page 70*

RAFTERS/LIVING LIGHTING *Page 91*

NEW HOME COMMUNITIES

PINE MEADOWS ESTATE - BROADMOOR HOMES *Page 85*

PAINTING & DECORATING

BENJAMIN MOORE *Page 20*

LABAR SALES *Page 4*

REAL ESTATE

CENTURY 21 - MAUREEN LIGHT *Page 42*

ROYAL LEPAGE - THE CHILTON TEAM *Page 41*

ROYAL LEPAGE - DOROTHY SLOCUM *Page 43*

ROOFING

ONTARIO SHAKE N' TILE *Page 96*

SHELVING SOLUTIONS

GLIDING SHELF SOLUTIONS *Page 71*

WINDOW TREATMENTS

BLAIR INTERIORS & WINDOW FASHIONS *Page 71*

COMPLETE BLINDS *Page 45, 88*

SALNEK *Page 13, 86*

WINDOWS & DOORS

BARRIE TRIM *Page 79*

DECOLA WINDOWS & DOORS *Page 13*

KEMPENFELT WINDOWS & DOORS *Page 7*

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