

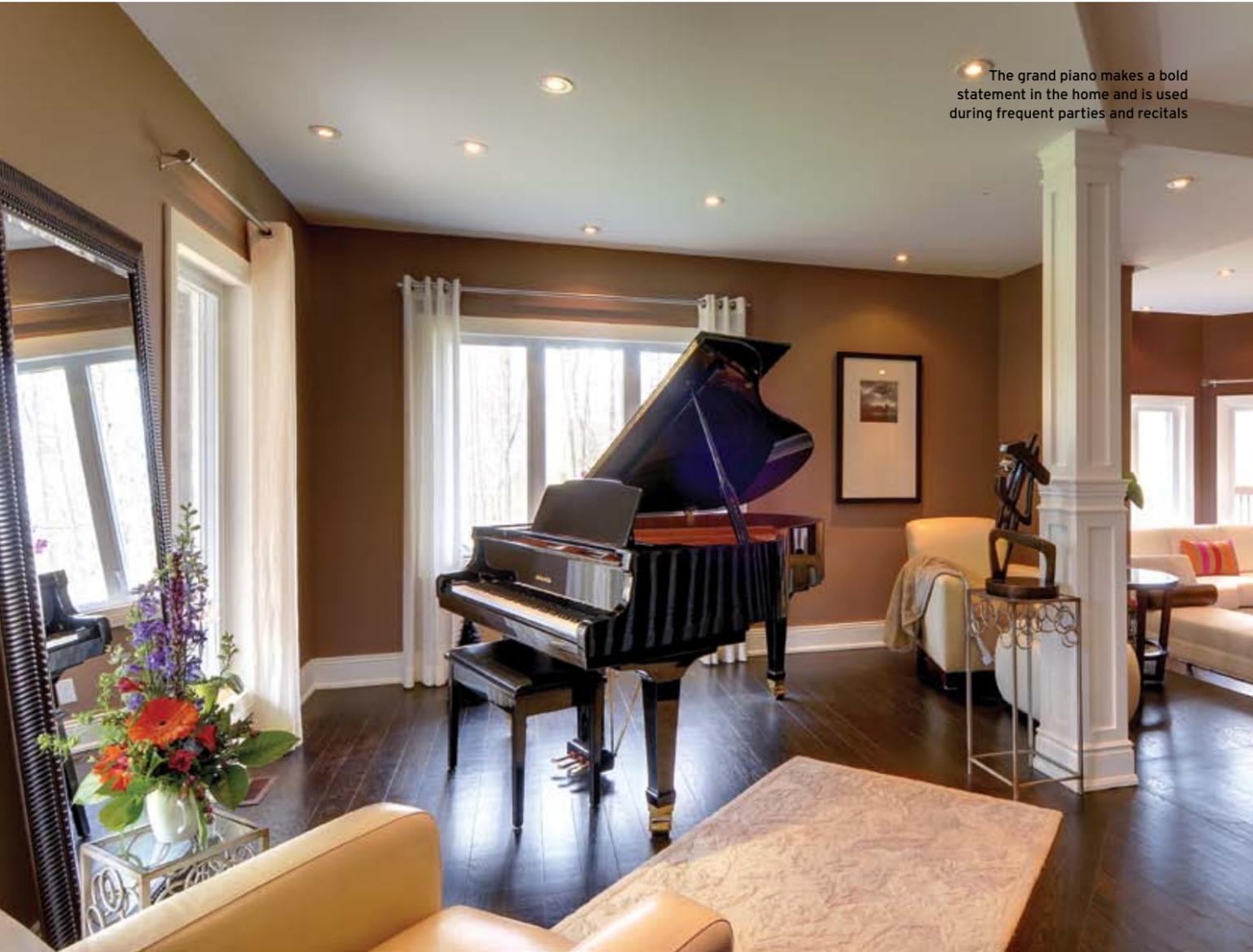


The glamorous living room was designed and decorated by Laurie Lamb of Inter-Art Interiors. Lamb worked with the Struthmanns to design the interior after major renovations.

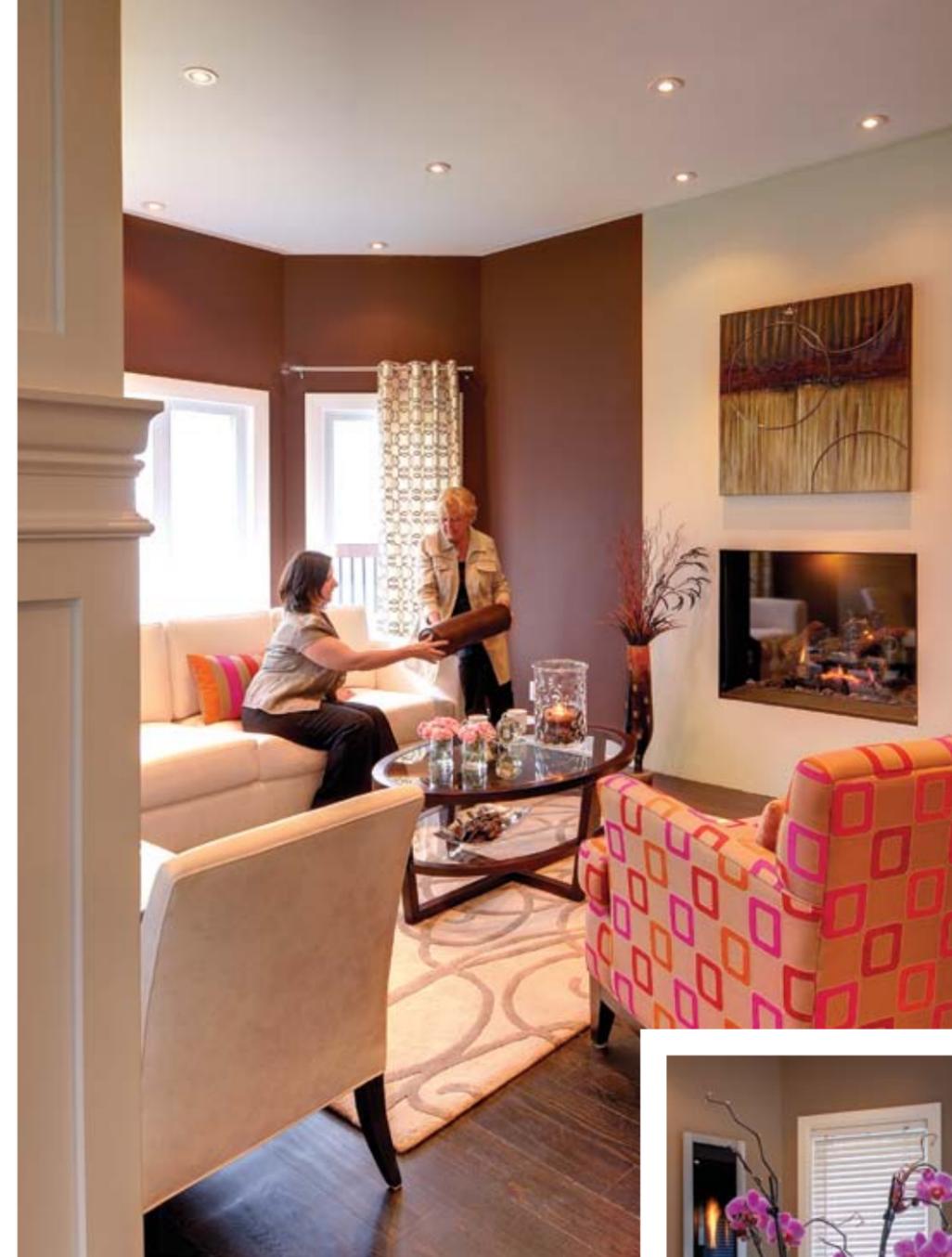
# COMING HOME *a destiny fulfilled*

BY KATHLEEN DUNCAN // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY

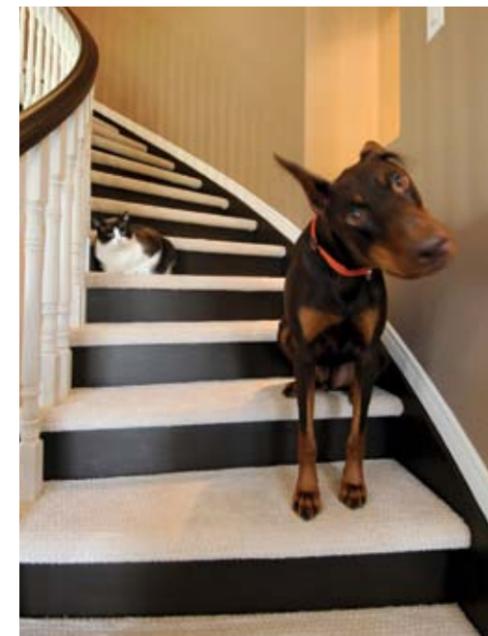
The importance of a certain country corner near Craighurst reverberates in the lives of Hermann and Vilma Struthmann. In fact, the couple has come full circle as they settle into their new family home – chosen to accommodate his mother and her living quarters, their grown daughter, her apartment and music studio, a grand piano, a watchful Doberman and a sometimes naughty cat named Georgie. *Continued on page 30*



The grand piano makes a bold statement in the home and is used during frequent parties and recitals



LEFT: Laurie Lamb of Inter-Art Interiors and Vilma Struthmann chat in the contemporary living room. BELOW: The grand staircase used to be oak but Hermann Struthmann painted every spindle, riser and railing to match the new modern features in the home. BOTTOM RIGHT: The master bathroom has a beautiful square vessel tub and a raised built-in Napoleon fireplace. BOTTOM LEFT: The family pets, Georgie and Winston, pose for the camera.



It was at that curve in the road 33 years ago that Vilma questioned Hermann about their destination. It was their first date and this transplanted Toronto girl's excitement had faded with the lights of Barrie several miles back. No stranger to starry nights, the farm-raised Hermann assured her his brother and sister-in-law's new home was nearby.

Indeed it was, and the couple went on to marry, have son Christian and daughter Tiana, and establish what would become the successful **Struthmann Enterprises Ltd.**, a distributor of commercial janitorial and maintenance supplies, as well as a full line of automotive reconditioning products.

It wasn't until they'd moved into their new open-plan two-storey home last year that they realized the significance of its location.

"It was like it was meant to be," smiles Vilma.

It may not be coincidence then to see that circular theme echo inside the house. Taking inspiration from what could be intertwined eternity rings in the artwork above the **Napoleon** fireplace (one of three in the

house) in the living room, the round décor detail also shows up in the area rug, the draperies framing large windows showcasing the forest beyond and in the corners of three nesting tables that act as pedestals for sculpture when not put into use as tables during social gatherings.

"That acrylic canvas was the anchor piece that started things," says veteran designer Laurie Lamb, who owns the south-Barrie store **Inter-Art Interiors**. She first worked with the Struthmanns on their previous home and was tasked with incorporating existing furniture and accessories with appropriate new pieces to finish the look of this one. Brought in after the completion of renovations, Lamb also envisioned the updated style of the prominent main staircase.

Steve Kruger of **Your Way Home Improvements** took the lead, adding ceiling details, a peekaboo wall cutout and slate flooring to add interest and practicality to the foyer. He also saw to the installation of a back stairway, allowing Oma easier access to her suite, while **Durk's Railing** handled the banister. *Continued on page 32*



**Gym-Con Ltd.** refinished the existing oak floors using an ebony stain chosen by Tiana and her friend Cheryl Udell. The duo also picked out the wall colours from **Irvine Carpet One Floor & Home**, which supplied and installed new carpets as well. The new stainless steel backsplash in Tiana's self-contained apartment and studio downstairs was also sourced from Irvine, and installed by **Burton & Brown Contracting**. Erica Fortin at **The Loft** at **Simcoe Building Centre** designed Tiana's kitchen.

Throughout the house, **Barrie Tiles Sales & Installation** completed other tile work, while **Bathworks** supplied plumbing fixtures and **Accurate Glass** completed the shower enclosures. In the kitchen, **TA Appliance** added the stainless steel necessities. Matt Cousins of **Interlink Electric** supplied and installed most of the lighting throughout the house.

"I would say her style is classic-contemporary," Lamb says, using the clean lines and square arms of the sofa as an example. The colour specialist was impressed the homeowners agreed to include the hot pink and orange fabric on the living-room chairs. "Wilma was pretty brave to go with those colours, but they wanted something dramatic."

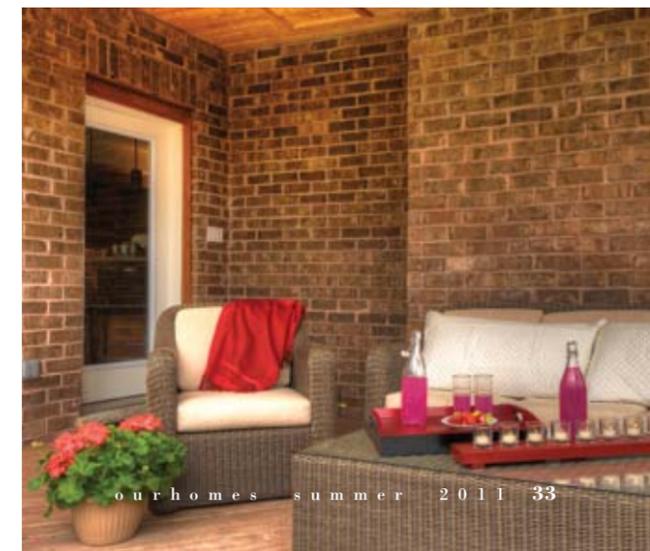
The grand piano also makes a bold statement in a corner between the open-concept foyer and the living room. Employed during frequent parties, and the quarterly recitals of Tiana's students, the instrument's dominance also says this is a family passionate about music. In addition to her daughter's professional dedication, Wilma once dreamed of being a pianist and felt thwarted when her Italian parents sent her off to accordion lessons.

"Accordion? I hated that," she laughs. "I didn't know at the time if I stuck with it, I could switch. So later, I got my kids involved." *Continued on page 36*

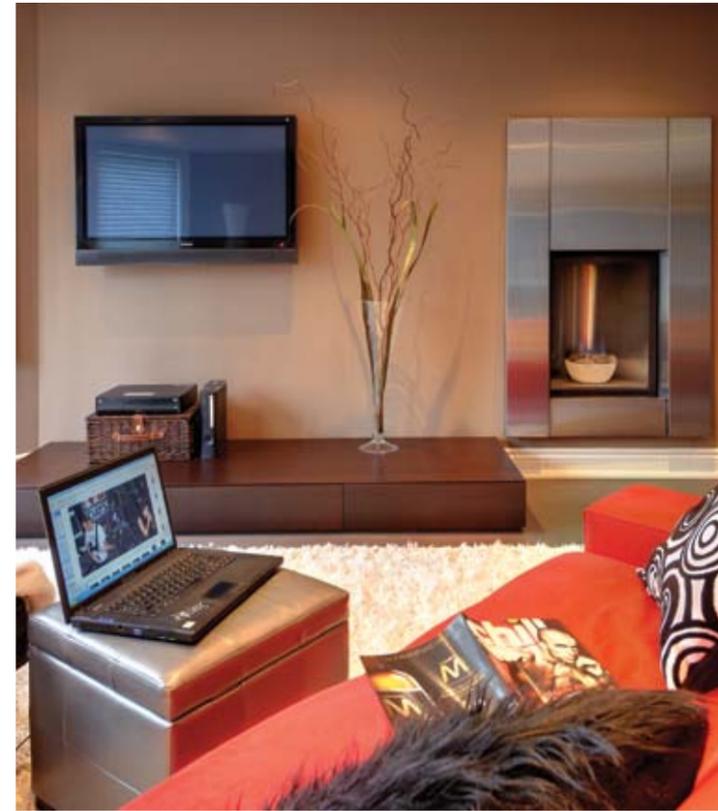
**ABOVE:** The elegant, formal dining room is set for a lovely evening.

**TOP RIGHT:** Nephew Patrick chats in the kitchen with Vilma and daughter Tiana. **MIDDLE:** The kitchen was in fine shape and was left as is during the renovation.

**RIGHT:** Oma loves to knit at the kitchen table. **FAR RIGHT:** The deck off the kitchen is a favourite spot for Hermann and Vilma to unwind and enjoy a glass of wine after a busy day.



Tiana lives downstairs in a fabulously fun space. **OPPOSITE TOP LEFT:** A raised platform adds much-needed storage without overwhelming the space. The cool Napoleon fireplace is sleek and heats the room. **OPPOSITE TOP RIGHT:** This powder room is located upstairs off the kitchen. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM:** Tiana's kitchen has everything she needs. The appliances and the backsplash sparkle in stainless steel.



feature



Tiana has her own recording studio and a space to teach her piano students and jam with her band.

And when the entrepreneurial Hermann isn't spending his free time tinkering with his cars or using his tractors to tweak the landscape of home and cottage, he sings in the Barrie show choir Bravado!

With as many as 40 people descending at recital time, the open circular staircase, foyer and living room are all converted to accommodate the audience.

"It's understanding how they're going to use the room," explains Lamb of her approach. She added an upholstered bench (with kid-proof ultra-suede fabric) that allows seating on both sides, and placed a large decorative mirror behind the piano so parents can better see their youngsters perform.

"It's not too precious a room," explains Lamb. "It's functional."

"She's always right," Vilma smiles, while her daughter nods. "Every time I thought 'no,' she's always bang on." The organza and crystal chandelier in the dining room, for example, looked like a cardboard box to Vilma when she saw a photo. She couldn't picture it as the focal point of a room already housing a huge German schrank, an airtight cabinet once lined with Hermann's grandfather's medical books (and now keeps Vilma's silverware from tarnishing.)

The doubts about the chandelier evaporated once it was installed. "I love it," she said simply.

And, at the end of the day, when the unusually still Struthmanns sit on their patio with a glass of wine and seek deer among the trees, love is the shared music filling their corner of the world. **OH**



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