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THANK GOODNESS IT'S SUMMER. Of all the seasons, I find spring the most exhausting, simply because there is so much to do around the house in such a short time, especially in this climate.

The push is always on to clean up, fix what's broken, paint whatever needs painting and prune, plant and pamper the gardens. The goal is to get the tough chores done in the spring so we can all sit back, relax and enjoy the all-too-short summer season with family and friends.

After all, many people I've spoken to plan to stay closer to home this summer and entertain more, so sprucing up the place makes sense.

We are all so lucky to live near water. In this issue, we have two gorgeous waterfront homes, one old and recently renovated and one that's brand new.

Our feature home (page 38) takes us to a glorious location on Lake Couchiching in Orillia where owners Don Loader and Betty Mosher completed a beautiful renovation. When we arrived for the photo shoot, the landscape and gardening professionals were adding last-minute touch-ups and the driveway was getting a coat of sealant. Inside, the place was totally ready for a close-up, thanks to Don and Betty and designer Terri Clark.

The following week, on a warm, sunny day, we headed to Innisfil and a home on Kempenfelt Bay (page 22). Our hosts, Wayne and Tracy Ezekiel, were a delight. They own A.N.T. construction and their home is a testament to the wonderful work they do for their clients. We couldn't have picked a better day for the shoot as we were able to meet Gary Friend, the Surrey, BC-based President of the Canadian Home Builders' Association, who dropped in to see Wayne.

If you're looking for a unique way to celebrate a milestone or a special event, you'll love what Mark Adams has to offer (page 56). Mark creates incredible, intimate keepsakes called Tributes.

And do drop by Simply Country (page 32) during your next trip to downtown Midland. What a fun place to shop for all your decorating needs.

Have a fabulous summer!

Georgette

Georgette McCulloch, Editor-In-Chief
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38

DEPARTMENTS

- 8** EDITOR'S NOTE
- 12** PUBLISHER'S NOTE
- 14** ADVICE
Area Rugs and Mirrors
- 16** STYLE PICKS
Charming and New
- 32** COMFORT ZONE
Simply Country
- 56** PEOPLE
Tributes
- 67** HOME RESOURCE DIRECTORY
- 68** FINISHING TOUCH
Make A Mosaic Table

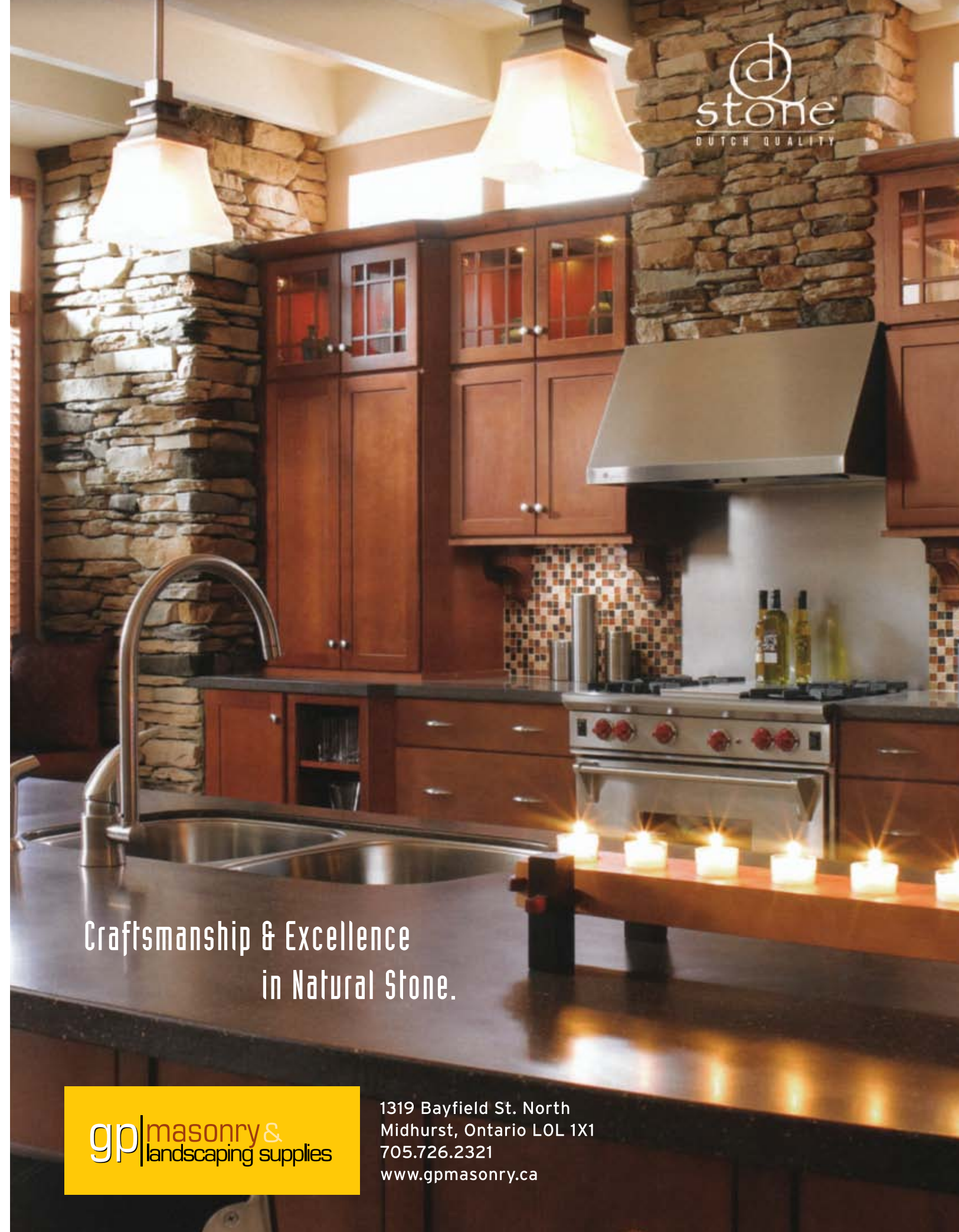
FEATURES

22 ON THE COVER HOME AND BUILDER A.N.T. CONSTRUCTION

- 38** FEATURE HOME
New Home, New Look
- 50** GREEN LIVING
Grey Water Systems
- 62** DECORATING
Cool Summer Ideas
- 64** REAL ESTATE
Time To Invest
- 66** COOKING AT HOME
Grilled Flank Steak

22

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publisher's note



AFTER TWO YEARS OF PUBLISHING OUR HOMES in Simcoe County I can't help but feel that somehow we are quietly escaping this global economic meltdown. Working closely with local builders, renovators, and home decorators, I hear again and again that things are not so bad, and the constant news of global doom is misleading.

It reminds me of a sign I saw in the lobby of an American hotel that said: "This hotel is no longer participating in the recession."

As OUR HOMES continues to grow thicker and find its way into the hands of more people across the county, our goal remains the same: To showcase the enormous talent that stands ready at our doorstep, or just down the street.

I have always believed that the best and the brightest are among us, and we don't have to look far and wide to find an excellent product, or a talented artist, carpenter, or designer.

By shopping close to home we get to know the people who are doing our building. We can talk to them directly if there is a problem, and thank them personally when we love what they've done.

I think that's how Simcoe County has remained strong. When we shop at home the money stays at home. It re-circulates at home and comes back to us. This notion of the 100-mile philosophy is not just good for the environment, it's good for our own economic health.

Where these ideas converge is with the many government incentives offered to conserve energy in your home or start a renovation. When you shop locally, the staff and owners are eager to steer you toward those incentives and get you the rebates while they last.

So when the national news fills your living room with endless warnings of economic doom, just think of it as a reminder of what happens when we search far and wide to find what we already have at our doorstep, or just down the street.

Have a great summer.

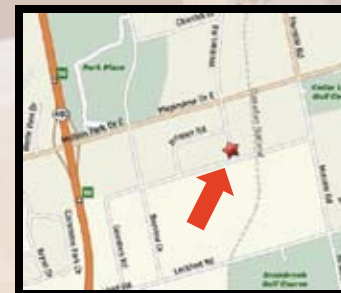
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Designer **Stephanie Redmond** answers your questions. If you need help, send your questions to stephanie@ourhomesmagazine.com

Dear Stephanie,

I really liked your spring column on paint trends. My problem is picking colour combinations, specifically picking a wall colour that matches furniture and accessories. Could you give me some great combinations that will help in my décor decision making?

Susan R.

Stephanie Redmond replies:

Don't just look at the colour of the furniture when choosing wall colours; consider the weight of the fabric as well. A sofa with a heavy fabric such as leather or chenille can take a deeper tone on the walls. A sofa upholstered in cotton or linen will look nice on a much softer wall. For that red wine leather sofa (heavy!), choose something with a little more depth. Same thing applies for your furniture. If you have traditional dark wood pieces, they may appear heavy against a white wall. Your furniture needs a stage that suits its style and feel.

Here are a few combination ideas:

1. **EARTHY:** Chocolate brown sofa + sage green pillows and throw + toffee colour leather chair + crisp white pillar candles
• Paint solution: Pick up on the toffee colour and use a mid-tone burnt butter colour on the walls
2. **SOPHISTICATED:** Light earth-toned sofa + navy blue pillows + chunky woven baskets + cream cashmere throw
• Paint solution: Mirror the sofa and pick a light neutral with a brown base
3. **CALM:** Cream linen curtains + light grey upholstery + metal side tables
• Paint solution: Introduce a bit of color and choose a butter yellow or a light French blue on the walls

HINT: Take any element with colour into a space to see how it looks – a piece of clothing, a dish towel, a picture frame. This is an ideal way to test drive a colour without the long term commitment!

Dear Stephanie,

We just installed new hardwood flooring throughout the main floor of our home. I would like to purchase some area rugs for the living room/dining room but I have no idea how to determine what size I need. Is there a set standard? Should I buy two rugs for the same room or one big one? I also don't want to spend a fortune.

Janice C.

Stephanie Redmond replies:

The biggest mistake that people make with area rugs is going too small. A guideline to follow is that your furniture should sit comfortably on your area rug. You can inset the rug under the back of the sofa, but leave at least eight inches so that it doesn't look like an error. If you have ample space, allow chairs to sit comfortably on the area rug. Don't skimp. As far as one or two rugs go – if your space is very large or walls indent to decipher one room from another, then use

two carpets in the same style. This gives the illusion of a larger space. If your space is quite small, use one large one to lengthen the room. Area rugs are not inexpensive and they are long term purchases. Make sure you inform your carpet dealer of what your needs are, whether you have children or pets, and your budget. Ask about stain resistance and edging details.



HINT: Use green painter's tape to tape out the size of the rug you think is right and then measure it!

Dear Stephanie,

How can I use framed mirrors to make a room look larger?
Charlene W.

Stephanie Redmond replies:

The options are endless, but I have one guideline: Place your mirror on a side wall, not on a wall facing an entry. You shouldn't feel as though you are walking towards yourself every time you enter a room.

A mirror will act as a window reflecting light into a space. Try a starburst above a fireplace or a slim framed mirror on a side wall. Line up two or three of the same mirror (horizontally or vertically) for an even more compelling reflection. Cluster small mirrors to add a fun sparkle, just as you would group a selection of your favourite family photos. Be bold! Don't be afraid to use a large piece in a small space. This will add some much needed scale. Can't find the right mirror? Visit a frame store and have one made that suits your décor.



HINT: Have a friend hold up your pieces to see what the mirror will reflect once it's hung. You don't want to make holes in a wall only to discover that you can see your toilet from your living room sofa! **OH**

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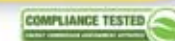
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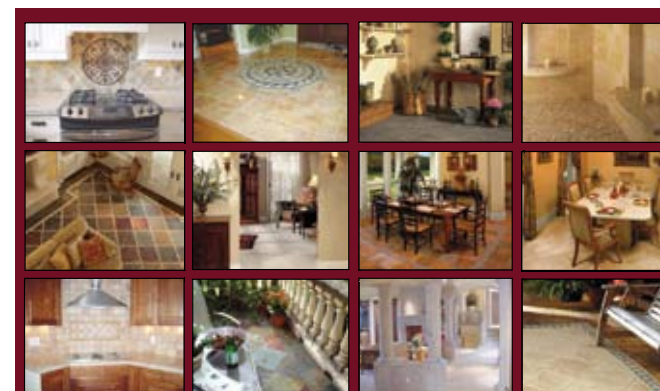
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Continued on page 18



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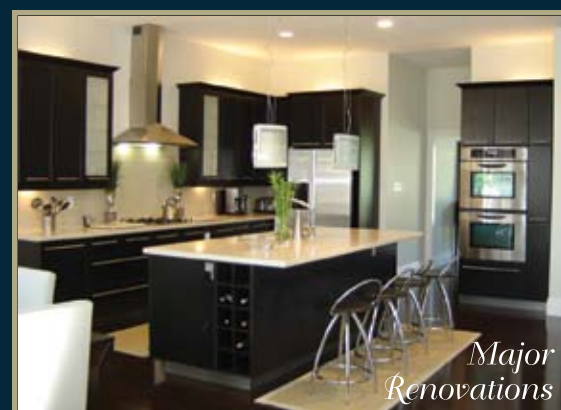




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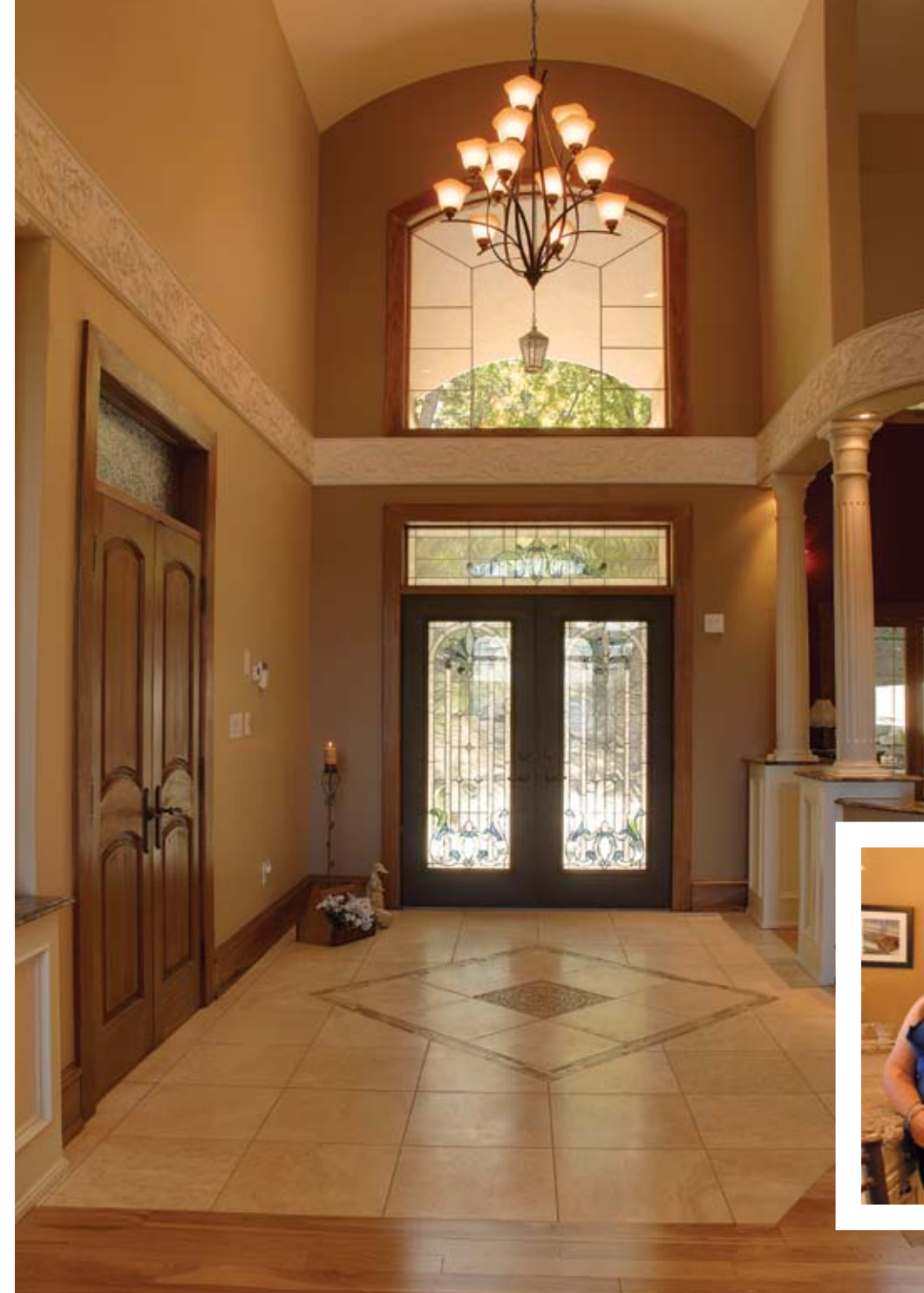
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BY KATHLEEN DUNCAN // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY

Sunshine and Happiness



OPPOSITE PAGE: The grand entrance to the Ezekiel home is surrounded by beautifully landscaped grounds and a soothing waterfall that empties into a pond.

LEFT: The foyer inside is just as grand and welcoming.

BELOW: The Ezekiel family: Aaryn, Wayne, Norm and Tracy.



For many couples whose children have reached the age of majority, it's time to embrace the concept of downsizing.

But Wayne and Tracy Ezekiel have no intention of succumbing to empty-nest syndrome quite yet.

Instead, they worked with daughter Aaryn, 19, and son Norm, 18, to create a beautiful, functional and inviting setting that would encourage both university students to return to the roost as often as possible.

"We wanted to provide them with some space of their own, while staying together as a family," Wayne recalls. "They're not ready to move out permanently yet, so we created an environment that works well for

the family at this time in its evolution."

Last year the family vacated a Barrie house less than half the size of their new 6,000-sq. ft. custom home. The stone and stucco residence is nestled amid four acres of mature maple and hemlock forest. The Innisfil property lays claim to 285 feet of waterfront along Kempenfelt Bay's rugged south shore.

Moving in before the construction was complete didn't faze the Ezekiels, who are no strangers to drywall dust. Wayne has spent the past decade building **A.N.T. Construction** (named after his family), a Tarion-registered and Energy Star-approved custom-home builder in the region.

This project would not only shelter his family, but also house and showcase his business.

"I was definitely going for the wow-factor," he says, "but this is a house to be lived in first and foremost." *Continued on page 26*



Tracy teamed up with **Guy Dumas** of **The Design House** to develop the drawings. She wanted to combine elegance with the casual comfort of a cottage to provide a warm welcome for friends and family.

"We're very social people," Wayne smiles.

The contemporary style of the home is flavoured with European touches in the front foyer. It incorporates columns, stained glass and ribbons of stylized plaster mouldings by **EFP Designs**. Separated from this entranceway by an iron-trimmed catwalk and a circular stairway is a colonial country living room featuring massive windows cradled under a 30-foot arched dormer. With no need for drapes, the window frames the ever-moving artwork that is the view of the bay.

In fact, thanks to 40 large windows throughout the house (supplied by **Casa Bella Windows**), glorious natural vistas abound in every direction.

The soaring space is balanced by the cultured stone fireplace by **Minty Carter Masonry**, offset by a hand-crafted maple mantel by **E.R. Woodworking's Hermes Ricetto**. Far above, two chimneys add palatial interest to a complicated roofline. The combination cross-hipped roof is further embellished by a collection of gables and dormers.

"It's a very intricate design that took a lot of on-site measuring," says Wayne. "It wasn't a simple truss package that was shipped in. **Tarpin Lumber** was a great help with this."

It would have been simpler to raise the roof to incorporate a full second storey, but the beauty and intrigue would have been lost. Instead, Norm's bedroom and Aaryn's en suite bathroom are built into the corners of the roof and benefit from the character of sloped ceilings, and the charm of surprise nooks and crannies. *Continued on page 28*



TOP RIGHT: The living room, located off the foyer, flows into the kitchen. The stone fireplace is the focal point in this comfortable room.

MIDDLE: Wayne Ezekiel, principal of A.N.T. Construction, talks business with Gary Friend, President of the Canadian Home Builders' Association.

FAR RIGHT: The staircase spirals up to the kids' bedrooms and down to the lower level. The curves, iron spindles and hardwood make this a stunning feature in this traditional home.

RIGHT: The lovely main floor powder room has a curved, rectangular vessel sink and a wall-mounted faucet.





The view from the lake.

OPPOSITE PAGE:

TOP LEFT: The cosy entrance to the A.N.T. Construction offices.

TOP MIDDLE: The waterfall and pond is a fabulous addition to this spectacular home.

TOP RIGHT: The theatre room, by Audiotronic, is located upstairs, just down the hall from Aaryn and Norm's rooms.

The delightful icing on this architectural cake is the passage near the home-theatre room the young adults share. State-of-the-art **Audiotronic** equipment distracts from a discreet entrance to a low-slung tunnel that eventually opens to a full-sized retreat worthy of its medieval predecessors.

Another nod to the splendour of castles can be found in the curved partitions and rounded corners incorporated by interior designer **Yvonne Nielan** of **Innovative Designs**. The flowing curvature in the mahogany-tinted walls in the guest powder room is complemented by stone accents to generate the old-world romance of a turret garret.

Mod-cons abound, however, in the **Astro Kitchens** showpiece next door that boasts a tumbled-marble backsplash, textured-glass cabinet inserts, and an oversized granite-topped island, by **Yanish Gruszka** of **Stontario**. Here, and throughout the house, **C.R.M. Mechanical** sourced plumbing fixtures to heighten aesthetics while adding luxurious comfort and fingertip convenience.

Adjoining the kitchen space are the dining room and a sitting area that are lit by 34 pot lights embedded in a unique coffered ceiling accented with recessed panels of tongue-in-groove hardwood. **Monarch Electric** added to the mood with an integrated computer system that includes pre-set lighting levels for any occasion.

This open-concept great room opens to patio gardens that transition

from carefully cultured plantings close to the house, to the ordered chaos that is the natural surrounding.

"Tracy and I love to walk around here," Wayne says. "We've seen deer, foxes and lots of wild turkeys."

The front gardens are highlighted by a unique four-waterfall pond system. The massive stone sculpture was designed and built by **Harry Jansma Landscaping** (with materials from **Atlas Block** and **Brayford Sod Farms**) to incorporate several of the lofty maple trees that started life as seedlings in the 1800s. Planting by **Landmark Environmental Group Ltd.**

Another opportunity to turn a challenge into a positive was managing the steep downgrade from the road. The teams from **Eplett & Worobec Land Surveyors** and **Rumball Excavating** helped to create the long, winding and visually appealing driveway.

But it's the non-artistic additions that make this home a success. In Aaryn's quiet room, her beloved snowboard awaits the attention another winter will bring. In an unfinished corner of the basement, Norm's hockey net sits with a collection of pucks in its depths ready for the next practice session.

Meanwhile, Wayne continues to build custom homes, and registered nurse Tracy attends patients in the emergency room of Barrie's Royal Victoria Hospital.

But soon they will all return, as planned, to their cosy cottage castle to rekindle the family home fires together. **OH**



Wayne and Tracy's master bedroom is special. Its location in a large area to the right of the entrance provides lots of windows and a walk-out to the lake.

BOTTOM LEFT: Aaryn, home from university, relaxes in her funky but feminine room.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Norm studies in his room. An exceptional hockey player, Norm is off to university next year.





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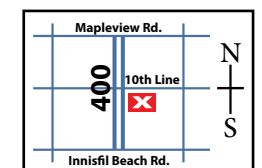
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THE PLACE: Simply Country is a fabulous destination in downtown Midland for all your home décor needs. Brent and Yvonne Howell have created a retail space that offers loyal customers a huge selection of fine, affordable furniture and accessories for every room of your home, including your garden and patio. Look for fun and thoughtful gift ideas throughout the store.

THE STYLE: An eclectic mix of quality country and traditional furniture, accessories and gifts for all occasions.

IN A NUTSHELL: Don't let the name Simply Country fool you. You'll find every style of furniture in this huge, recently expanded retail space. Top-brand Canadian furniture suppliers include Decor-Rest, Superstyle, Elran, Dutalier and Pel, as well as other top-brand suppliers including Ashley Furniture, Van Dam, Reemka and more! Simply Country also offers solid hand-crafted furniture made by Mennonites of St. Jacobs. There is truly something for everyone. "So don't judge a book by its cover," says Ashley Howell. "We have updated and changed with the times and the industry."

Continued on page 34



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THE ANGLE: Simply Country has been around for 16 years, including 12 at this location. The Howells expanded the space in October to make room for a wide selection of Mennonite-made beds, harvest tables, buffets and hutches. The new room also includes a kitchen area offering serving pieces, gourmet food items and staples for the hub of your home. It's an added bonus to this ever-changing store.

UNIQUE: The selection is what makes Simply Country simply irresistible. Happy customers pop in on a regular basis to browse the accessories and giftware aisles. Here you'll find candles, picture frames, fun signs, baby, birthday and anniversary gifts plus all kinds of seasonal items. You'll find just the right accent for your kitchen, living room, bathroom or bedroom. Simply Country also has a Bridal Registry for a bride-to-be's must haves.

FAVOURITES: Lampe Berger fragrance lamps. These lamps, from Paris, destroy odours and bacteria in the air and increase the oxygen levels while adding a wonderful aroma throughout your home. Fun cottage accessories are also very popular at this time of year. Don't forget the wide selection of sofas, chairs, ottomans and dining room furniture.

MISSION: Clients value Simply Country's variety and personal service. It's a one-stop shop for all your home décor needs. "And we still write personal thank-you cards," adds Ashley.

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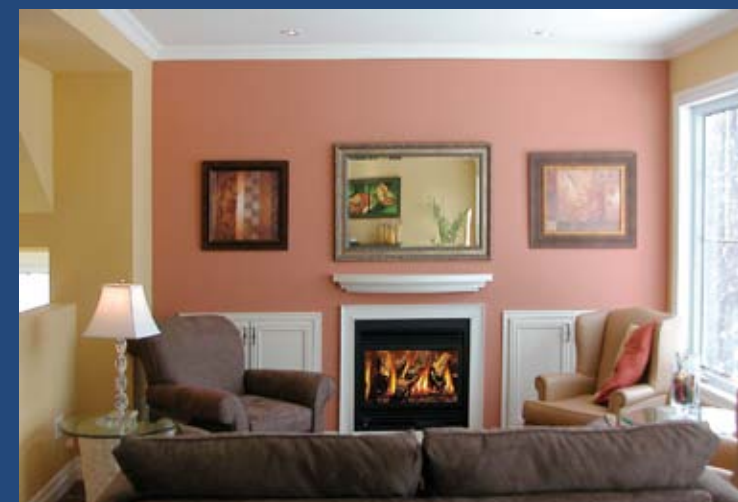


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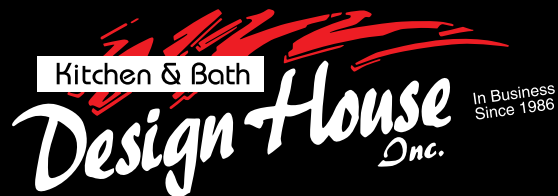


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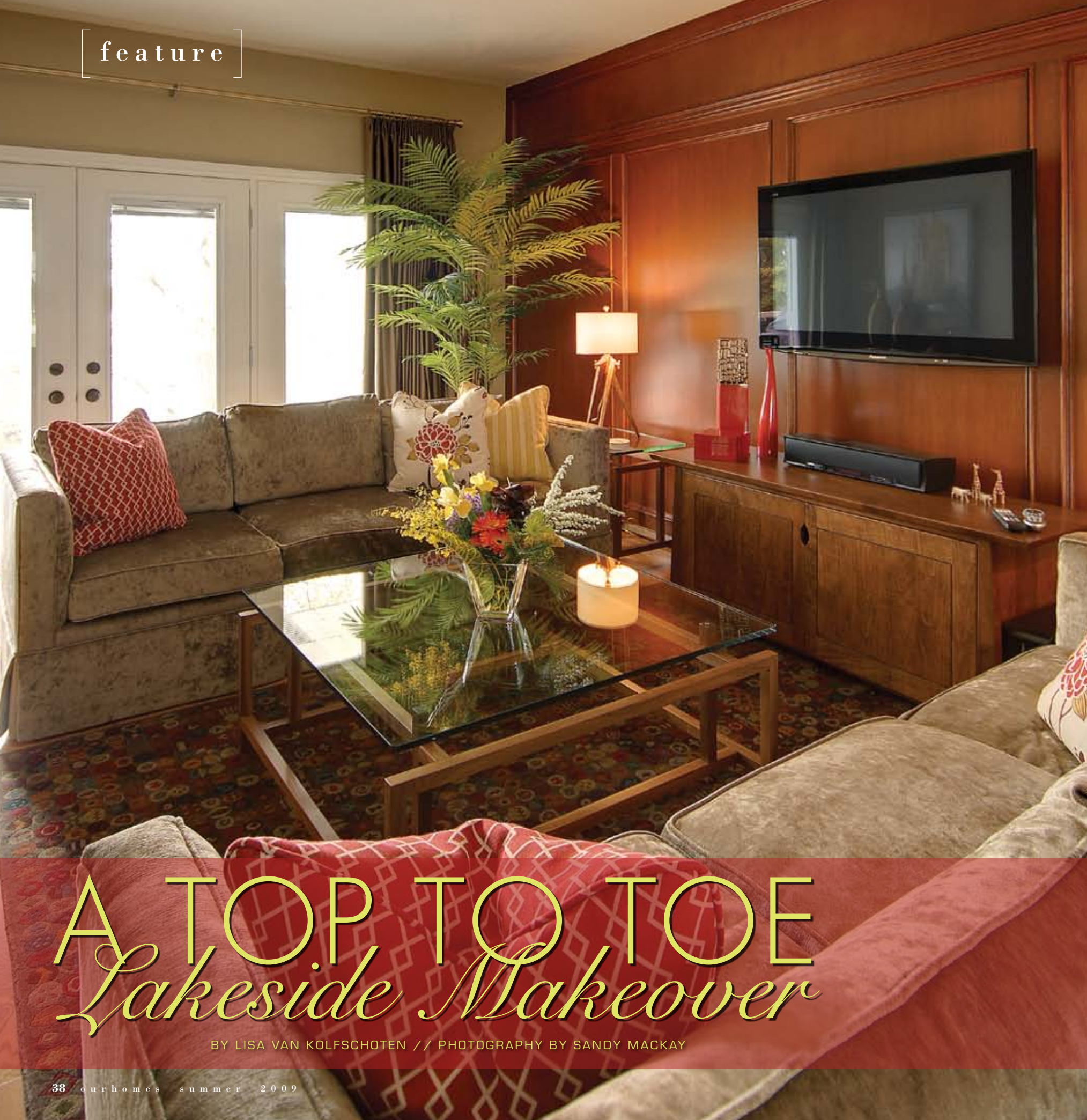
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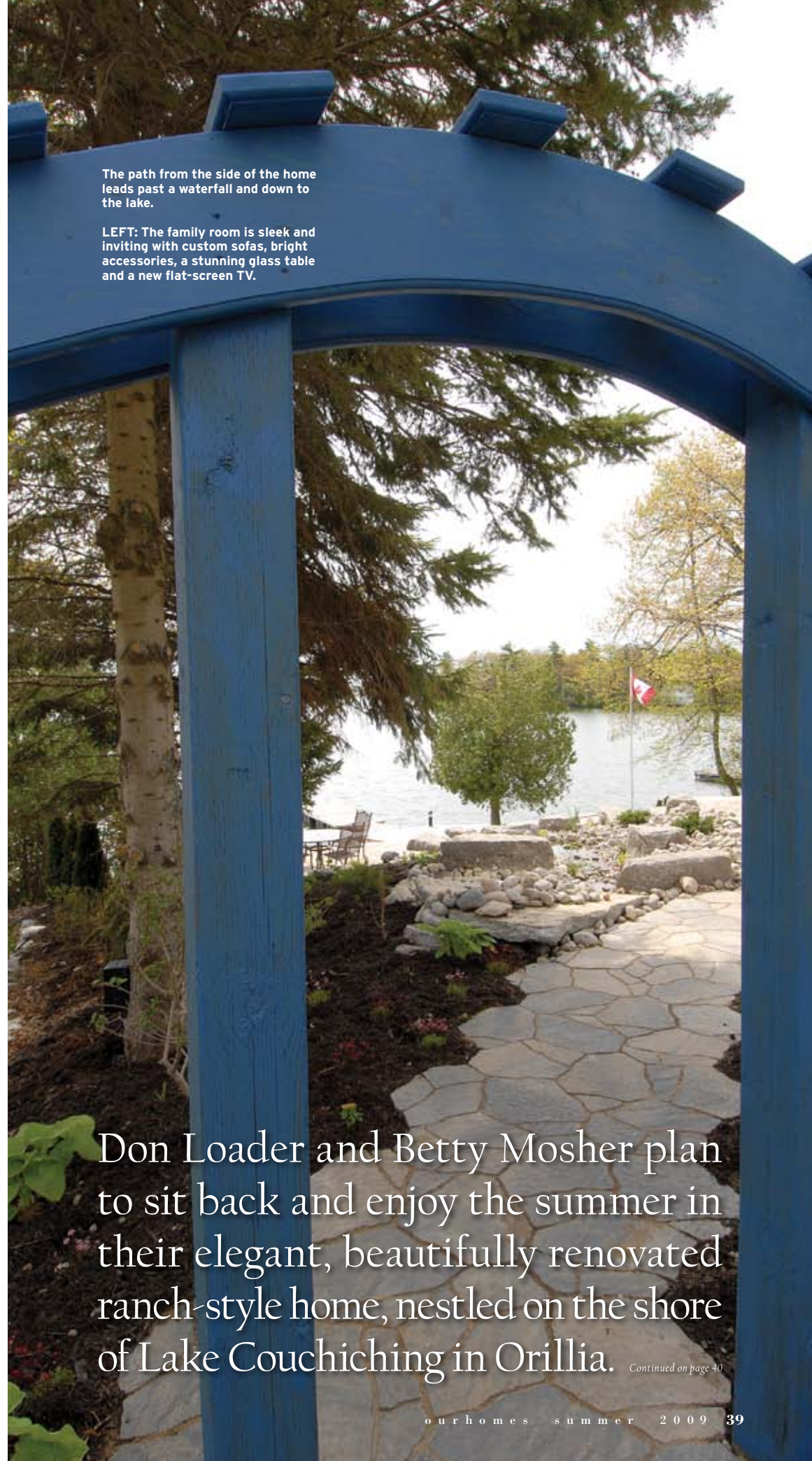
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A TOP TO TOE *Lakeside Makeover*

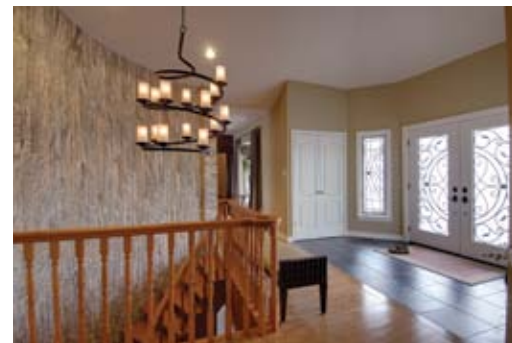
BY LISA VAN KOLFSCHOTEN // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY



The path from the side of the home leads past a waterfall and down to the lake.

LEFT: The family room is sleek and inviting with custom sofas, bright accessories, a stunning glass table and a new flat-screen TV.

Don Loader and Betty Mosher plan to sit back and enjoy the summer in their elegant, beautifully renovated ranch-style home, nestled on the shore of Lake Couchiching in Orillia. *Continued on page 40*



A top-to-bottom, inside-and-out renovation began 10 months ago on the home they purchased together following their wedding in the fall of 2007.

"We thought it would be nice to choose a new home together and make it our own," Mosher explains, adding a major makeover wasn't part of their original plan.

"Initially, when we looked at the house, we anticipated only minor changes," Mosher remembers. "However, after we moved in, we decided to add a modern touch to the traditional design."

The couple contacted design expert **Terri Clark** of **Terri Clark Interiors** to help transform the 4,800 sq. ft. home's interior and help finish what the previous owners started. The large kitchen was new and the couple loved the chocolate brown cabinetry, complementary granite counters and tumbled marble, subway-tiled backsplash. However, the modern kitchen was a contrast to the rest of the layout.

General Contractor **Dan Morris** of **D.P. Morris Construction**, integral to the team, was brought in to work on much-needed structural changes.

With Clark's eye for detail and Morris's know-how, the team set out to update every facet of the sprawling home. Bathrooms were gutted, new windows and doors were installed, old blinds were replaced with new (**Thomas Ranton, Labar Sales and Distribution**) while every wall received a new coat of paint (**Win Chase, Colour Concepts**) and the landscape outside changed too.

Clark helped the couple by selecting new furniture that included custom sofas and chairs in the living room, family room and master bedroom. Fabrics, wallpaper and accessories were carefully chosen for balance, texture and warmth. She designed floor plans and ensured just the right flow from one room to the next. **Ellen Soloy** of **Ridgewest** helped select key accessories. *Continued on page 42*



The dining room is sophisticated and colourful with its Arts-and-Crafts style furniture and a gorgeous Persian rug.

OPPOSITE PAGE:

LEFT: A lot of care and attention was paid to the landscaping and outdoor décor. The porch has a natural stone finish by Darlinghurst Construction.

TOP RIGHT: Two large iron geese in flight greet visitors to this waterfront home.

MIDDLE RIGHT: Enter through double doors to the foyer. The open staircase leads to the beautifully re-finished basement.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Designer Terri Clark and General Contractor Dan Morris loved working on this home and are thrilled with the results.



While distinctly contemporary, the kitchen is what started the whole renovation. It was new when Don and Betty moved in and they decided to add a new look to the rest of the home.

RIGHT: The living room is decidedly elegant and inspiring. Most of the furniture is neutral while the accessories, including an electric blue ottoman and the Persian rug, add a burst of colour.

BELOW: This window, to the right of the entrance, is dressed up. The flowers throughout the home are the finishing touch.



“Terri is cutting edge,” Loader says. “She’s very professional and she consulted with us every step of the way and she had some great ideas.”

Hot & Cool Air Services provided two new furnaces, air conditioning and a hot water tank. **SGO Designer Glass** added a new design to the Pella windows in the living room, dining room, den, at the front door and the garage.

“We pulled the home out of 1989 and brought it into 2010,” says Morris as he marvels at the total transformation.

Electronic Lifestyles reconnected an automated audio system throughout the home and installed new 46-inch and 50-inch flat screen TVs and two smaller screens for the kitchen and office.

Situated on a cul-de-sac, the white brick ranch stands out on this desirable lane with its newly stained, stamped-concrete circular driveway and a natural stone porch in Stoneworx by **Darlinghurst Construction**. New gardens, designed and planted by **Lexi Dearborn** of **Dearborn Designs**, frame the home’s gracious exterior. To the left of the entrance, two large metal Canadian geese in flight (**Northern Iron**) greet visitors.

A princess staircase takes you to the double-entry doors and into the foyer, where a marble facade is the immediate focal point. Original to the house, the expansive wall runs from the ceiling to the floor in the basement. A winding oak staircase takes you to the lower level.

Both stunning and functional, the facade is double-sided and flows into the calm, relaxing main floor den. Two plush custom mocha sofas, separated by a glass-top cherry coffee table, face each other in the centre of the room. Red is the accent colour here, found in floral-print throw pillows, and glass accessories, which sit atop an HDTV stand set up against a warm, wood-paneled wall that anchors a flat screen TV. A new gas fireplace from **Napoleon Home Comfort** is the focus on the other side of the marble wall.

The den leads into the previously renovated kitchen. Mosher says the kitchen received a fresh coat of paint and a custom valance for the window over the sink, which faces the lake.

The kitchen leads into the dining room. A warm glow fills the space.

Here, **Sandy Ward** of **Drift Design** helped select the blue and rose fabric on the chairs around the Arts-and-Crafts-style dining set and buffet. She also helped pick the bright blue and red floral antique Persian area rugs that cover the floors in the dining room and adjacent living room.

A modern chandelier, a shade wrapped in gold and wall sconces on dimmers set the mood in the room. The adjoining living room is irresistible with its sleek custom sofa and arm chairs. A large electric blue ottoman sits comfortably in the front bay window. The earth-toned walls are the perfect backdrop for vibrant, eclectic paintings by José Valverde, of Chester, N.S. Valverde is featured throughout the home.

Fresh, contemporary seasonal and silk flower arrangements (**Street’s Flower Shop**) are breathtakingly beautiful and are strategically placed throughout the main living areas.

The previously replaced oak hardwood floors, which cover most of the main level, lead down a long hallway, through the foyer to the master suite, a guest room and a full bathroom. *Continued on page 45*



BELOW: The master bedroom is serene and inviting. It's a luxurious place to rest.

LEFT: Double sinks in this bathroom add personal space.

Right: The view up the staircase from the lower level.

The master is relaxed and elegant. The king-sized bed and two side tables rest in front of a wall covered in paper with a forest motif. The soft turquoise and sand tones complement each other, with luxurious bedding to match. A functional, walk-in closet by **Kwik Klose** keeps the couple's clothes organized and out of sight.

This tranquil theme continues through a frosted glass door into the master en suite transformed by Morris and his crew with fixtures from **Bathworks**. With a separate shower, a jet tub and his-and-her sinks, it's a little slice of heaven. The view of the lake outside the master window is spectacular.

The basement is made for entertaining. It houses two additional bedrooms (one which currently serves as an office), two full bathrooms, a massive family room and a second kitchen. Two sets of doors open onto the covered verandah, with an outdoor kitchen, and steps take you down to the lake.

Fresh paint, new almond coloured berber carpet and large, vanilla, rectangular porcelain tiles update the space. The kitchen received an eco-friendly facelift with newly-sprayed countertops, door and drawer handles from **Eco Countertops**. *Continued on page 46*



feature

TOP RIGHT: The basement kitchen received a splendid but inexpensive re-do by Eco Countertops. The huge basement is a prime spot for entertaining with a walkout to a covered verandah with a built-in barbecue and easy access to the beach and dock.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Don and Betty enjoy their morning coffee down by the water on a warm, sunny day.

BELOW: The view of the home from the dock.



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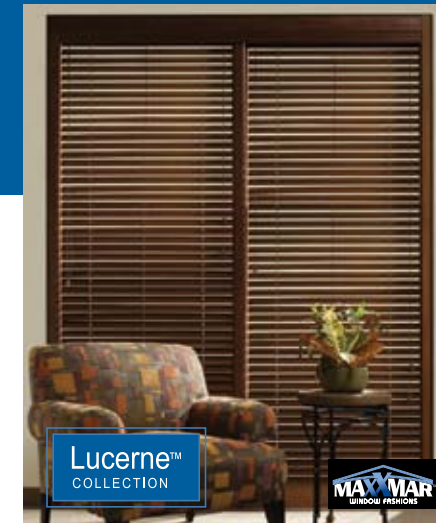


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BY PAUL WILSON

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When we bought the building – a mid-19th century commercial structure – the previous owner had already begun the saga of turning it into a modern dwelling. Then he'd run out of money. Or maybe the sheer magnitude of the work had ground him down and he'd given up in despair. There were even rumours that marital strife had led him to sell – a not unknown consequence of renovations that go on for too long. Whatever it was, we showed up, and his last straw became our call to arms. *Continued on page 52*



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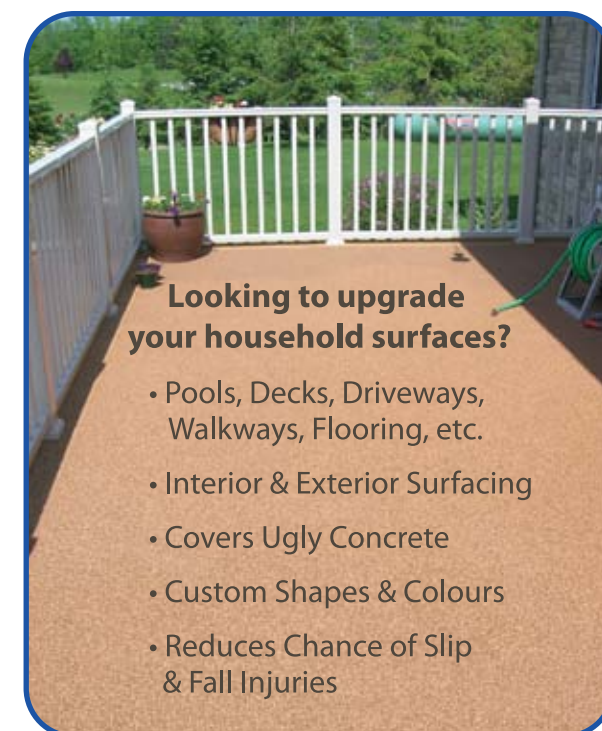
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Natural and Beautiful
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Stoneworx is on pages 40 & 42 of the Feature Home Section in this issue ...check it out!



We discovered, among other things, that he'd roughed in two separate waste water collection systems, one for the toilets and one for all the rest – from the sinks, the showers, the washing machines, the dishwasher, the bathtubs. Though I didn't know it at the time, he'd actually created the infrastructure for what we would now call a "grey water system." The "black water" from the toilets would go into the holding tank, and all the rest – contaminated by little more than hair, grease, and soapy residue – would go its separate way, in this case, through a pipe and straight into the river at the bottom of the garden. It would clearly have been both illegal and harmful and, feeling very righteous, we ripped out the secondary system and rerouted all the plumbing to the holding tank.

Twelve years and thousands of dollars later, it pains me to admit that the former owner was, perhaps without knowing it, a visionary. Today, a growing number of householders and cottagers in water-rich Ontario are discovering what hundreds of thousands in arid regions like the American southwest or Australia or in places like Japan, already know: that separating grey water from black water is one of the best things you can do to conserve water, take pressure off overloaded sewage treatment systems and save yourself money while helping the environment.

There are several ways, all of them legal, to benefit from grey water. The most straightforward is to redirect your domestic grey water to an indoor tank that will filter out impurities, chlorinate it and then pump it back to the toilets for flushing. This way you get double mileage out of your grey water, which in most households accounts for about 70 per cent of the total water usage. There's a Canadian-designed system

"From now on, my mantra is: Grey is the new Green"

called the Brac that will do just this. Chris Thompson, who sells it through his company, The Install Team (www.theinstallteam.com), has retrofitted his Barrie home with a Brac, and he reports that in the past 12 months, his five-member household saved about 100,000 litres of water. If the pattern holds, it will net him \$300 in savings next year, and if the cost of water continues to rise at the current rate, his Brac system will have paid for itself in five years.

Denis Orendt, executive director of the Ontario Onsite Wastewater Association, confirms that interest in grey water systems is surging in Ontario. Orendt's company, eco-work (www.eco-work.ca), is involved in both residential and larger projects. The CNE, the Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton, Trent University and some summer camps, like Camp Kawartha, are installing grey water reuse systems, some of them in conjunction with new rainwater collecting systems that lessen the demand for municipal water even further. And some homebuilders in Oshawa, Newmarket and Owen Sound are preinstalling the Brac, or similar systems, in their new housing.

David Brezer, director of Building and Development with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, told me that the Ontario Building Code, revised in 2006, is the first in Canada to provide specific guidelines for grey water recovery systems. Brezer says the changes have been driven, in part, by a heightened interest in such systems, but also by hopes that the new Code will drive innovation in the field.

Section 8, for instance, lays down the minimum legal requirements for another type of dispersal system, officially called a Class 2 Sewage System, but more commonly known as a "leaching pit." For those like myself, with an older home on an appropriately sized piece of property, this system may be the best choice. If the flow of grey water from your home does not exceed 1,000 litres a day, you can run it outside into a specially constructed pit. From there, the water will leach into the topsoil and be purified by the action of microbes and plants in the soil. The system is both legal and safe, as long as setback and construction guidelines are followed. (Further information at www.ontario.ca/buildingcode or 416-585-6666.)

Although it's hard to find anything seriously flawed about modern grey water systems, the battle to gain them acceptance is just beginning. Many inspectors are nervous about requests for permits and some municipal officials are even hostile to the idea, apparently believing that a boom in grey water systems would mean reduced water revenue for them. It's a short-sighted view, especially given the increasing pressure on our water and sewage treatment plants. Some cities, like Guelph, have been quicker to recognize the benefits and are offering rebates to residents who install approved systems, something Denis Orendt believes the province and the federal government should take up as well.

Grey water systems aren't the sexiest fare on the eco-menu but they may well be the next big thing. From now on, my mantra is: Grey is the new Green. I will be repeating it often as I continue to shell out to rectify the stupid mistake I made so many years ago. **OH**

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

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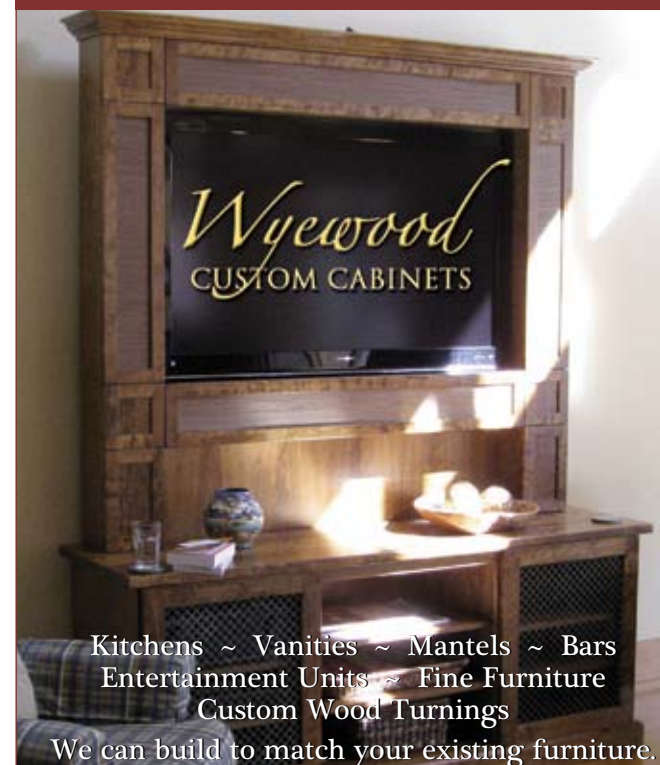
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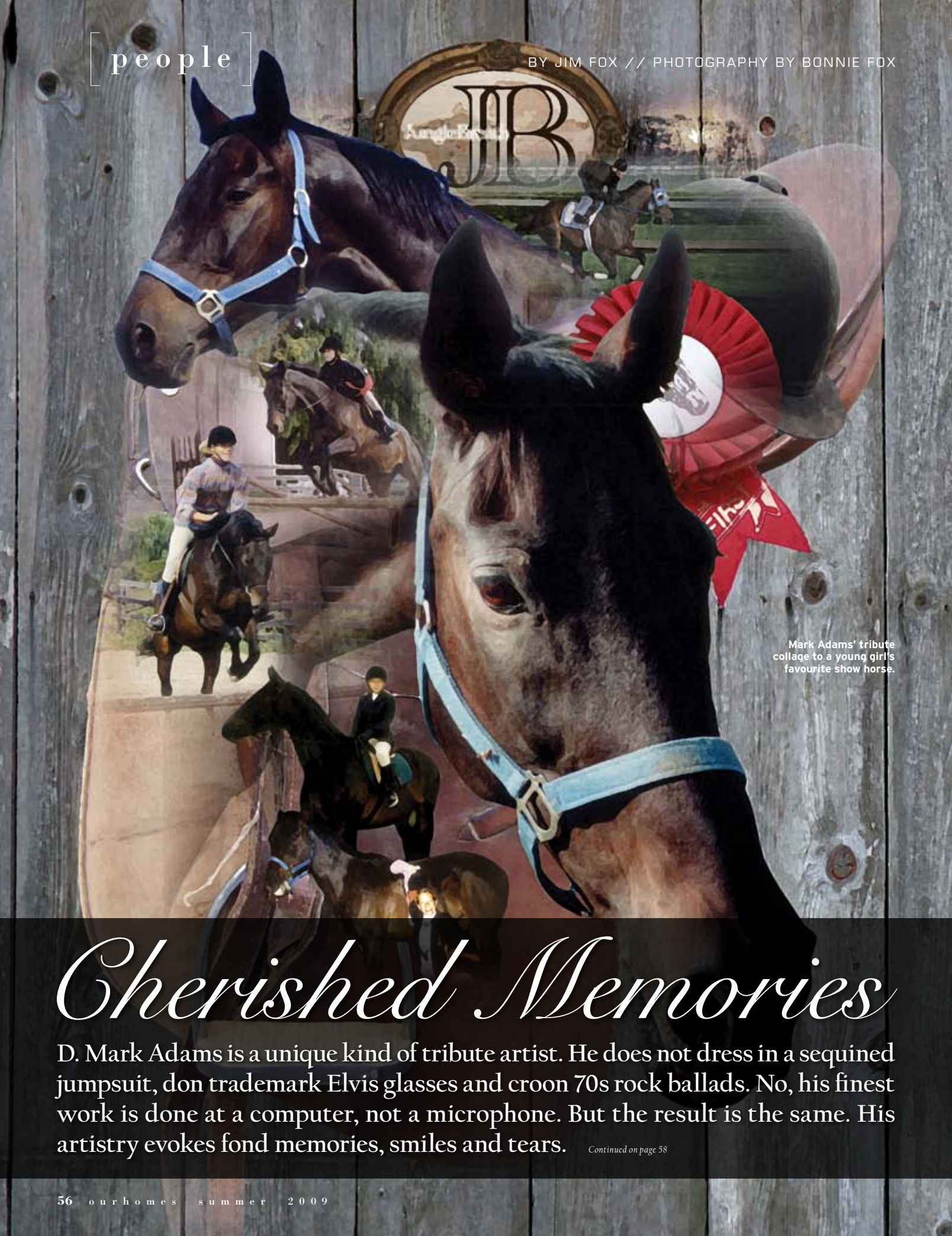
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Mark Adams' tribute collage to a young girl's favourite show horse.

Cherished Memories

D. Mark Adams is a unique kind of tribute artist. He does not dress in a sequined jumpsuit, don trademark Elvis glasses and croon 70s rock ballads. No, his finest work is done at a computer, not a microphone. But the result is the same. His artistry evokes fond memories, smiles and tears.

Continued on page 58



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You see, Adams creates graphic collages that pay homage to the real events of people's lives. He calls his artistic creations Tributes – pieces that give shape to the high points of people's lives; occasions that might be lost forever or forgotten as a collection of photos in a neglected cardboard box gathering dust in someone's attic.

Adams' magic is to revive these memories and give personal stories artistic expression. Using his natural gifts as a practicing graphic artist, Adams employs techniques he discovered decades ago as a student at The Alberta College of Art.

Adams approaches his new passion to tell people's visual stories with a wealth of experience as a commercial graphic artist. In his 30 years of involvement in all types of creative media in Calgary, Edmonton and Toronto, during which he garnered several awards for his work, he has produced everything from corporate logos to speaker support visuals for the likes of Toyota, Ford, Live Nation, Eaton's, Bell and Sprint Canada. In addition, Adams has taught website design and graphic software techniques to students at Seneca College.

Adams' varied background is reflected in his affable ease with people. Meeting him you feel immediately at ease. His warm, gregarious personality makes it easy for him to work with clients to create a fitting artistic celebration of their life stories.

Moving to Barrie from Toronto in 2001, Adams' enthusiasm for the city is infectious. "I love this city...I recently joined the Rotary Club so that I can feel involved in the community on a larger scale." Since his arrival, Adam, owner of Artcetera Creative Resource Inc., works out of his home when not on site with one of his corporate clients.

Continued on page 60



Adams' family anniversary tribute to his father's life and loves out west.

ABOVE: One of Adams' early ink drawings, where he clusters a number of images to tell a visual story.

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RIGHT: Adams at home on the computer, working on his graphic creations.

BELOW: Adams' artistic tribute to his own recent wedding.



Who are the potential customers for Adams' creations? Adams has a ready answer. "Anyone who has events or happenings that they want to cherish or businesses who want to celebrate someone's retirement or achievement. Applications are almost endless. Tributes could mark any milestone in a person's life – birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, whatever." Adams makes the intent of his creative passion clear. "I want to get people's memories out of their basements and on to their walls," he says.

"When your house is on fire, what do you grab first? It's family photos. That tells you how important these memories are to people." He elaborates with excitement about his craft. "I'm an artist, not a technician. I started in the industry as an illustrator then moved into graphic design. I enjoy the emotional feedback I get from the Tributes I've created."

"I use whatever helps tell the story," says Adams. In celebrating

his father's birthday and his own wedding, Adams has used faxes, vintage photos, 8mm film and scanned three-dimensional objects to create digital Tributes for himself and his family. Adams wants to do the same for others. "Lifetimes are punctuated and defined by special occasions – weddings, births, graduations, achievements, pets, hobbies and adventures that shape our lives...Tributes presents them in whatever format clients wish – framed print, print plaque, canvas or on cards. This way, people can enjoy them daily. It's fun for me to get to know people's stories in order to portray them well. In addition, my work gives customers a digital file that they can share with family and friends."

"People put generic art from a box store on their walls at home – why not have a work of art that applies to their life?" Adams asks.

Good question. He has found the answer.

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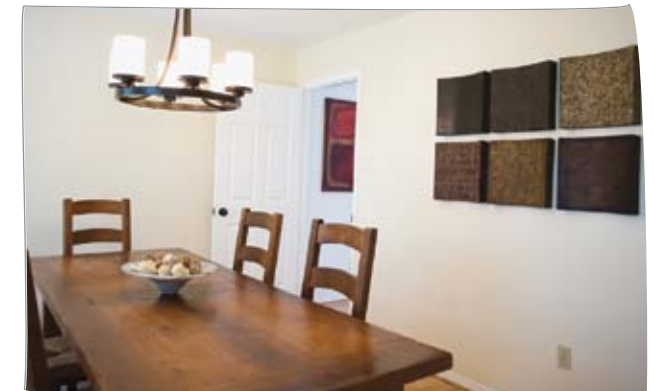


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5 cool SUMMER IDEAS for your home

BY IRENE TURNBULL

When summer comes to Ontario, most of us can't get the extra layers of clothes we've been wearing for months put away fast enough as we head outside to enjoy the bounties of life in lake country.



Easy living becomes a priority and the optimum word is "cool" as we strive to soak up the glory of the sunshine season. Cool comes in many forms of course, from iced tea to the latest shade of summer umbrellas, but the coolest of all are the great feelings of comfort we get when we live summer well. That means lighter, uncomplicated and relatively carefree.

Simply following the patterns of our seasonal wardrobes is the easiest and most obvious way to bring the interiors of our homes into summer. We can put heavy draperies, cosy blankets, throws and bedding away with our winter coats. We can infuse our interiors with garden freshness, reminding us of the bounties of the season. Fresh flowers and bowls of fruit on display reinforce thoughts of healthy abundance. White linens and happy floral prints and stripes and checks in garden colours keep us connected with nature when used as decorating accents along with colourful glass and tableware. Just like we do with our clothes, we can lighten up our homes with slight adjustments to its accessories.



HERE ARE SOME IDEAS THAT MIGHT HELP YOU WITH YOUR "COOL SUMMER COMFORT."

1. THINK MAIN ENTRANCE DOORWAYS. They are your cover story! They connect your interior and exterior worlds. Colour does matter and clearly sends a message about the homeowners to the neighbourhood and your guests. Not only should the colour be compatible with the exterior finish, roof, soffit, fascia, window trim etc., it should clearly reflect your invitation of welcome. Make sure they are spruced up for summer. Remember, garage doors are not a main entry for your visitors and in most cases should be blended rather than accented in the exterior colour scheme.

Homeowners should look beyond the front door as outdoor living often takes place in the back of the home where patios and gardens flourish and waterside lots bring double exposure. The key here is to take a cue from nature – build upon great environmental assets such as forests or water and don't be afraid to include the main door colour as part of your outdoor room setting.

2. EASY INS AND OUTS can be facilitated with the addition of retractable screens, which will let your home breathe, and disappear when you want them to. They can

be excellent options for maintaining the outdoor connection without obstructing the view. Not all brands are equal, so do your homework.

3. HANDY STORAGE AND SERVING COUNTERS in just the right spot can make a huge difference for hosting outdoor entertaining with ease. Think about how you pass in and out with food and beverages. The

addition of a serving counter and storage cabinet in close proximity to the passageway might just be one of the best investments you can make. So consider a place to store outdoor table settings, a counter to serve buffet style and a landing counter for handling the transition between in and out.

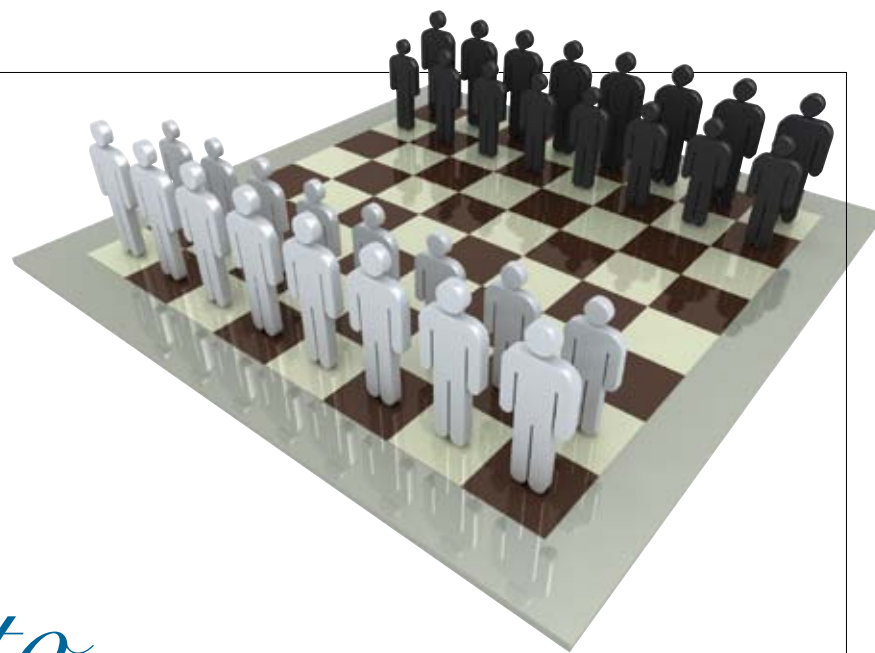
4. INDOOR/OUTDOOR FURNITURE. Take advantage of the fabulous fade- and weather-resistant fabrics such as Sunbrella that allow you to piggyback furniture for use both inside and out. Easy-care washable options allow family friendly pieces to be used all season indoors and out without compromising style – from plush velvets to bright prints and everything in between. A family room ottoman can double as an outdoor bench and storage box.

5. LIGHTEN UP for evening sparkle with white solar lights in the garden and LEDs under the patio umbrella. Inside, change warm bulbs in lamps to white for summertime.

In all your summertime decorating, remember that while nature comes in an assortment of colours there is a definite relationship relative to the intensity of sunlight. Flowers that flourish in the shade are softer and more delicate in colour than those found in full sunlight. It's important to remember that bright sunshine reduces the impact of colour, and that bright colours will look lighter on large surfaces. White creates contrast and can make colours look stronger.

Have a cool summer. **OH**





Is it time to INVEST IN REAL ESTATE?

BY CINDY FREIMAN

You may have already considered real estate investment as an option to help secure your financial future or provide extra cash flow for your desired lifestyle. But in times of global economic uncertainty, many Ontarians tend to want to tuck their excess cash under their mattresses until all of the doom and gloom headlines in the mainstream media come to pass.

But did you know that the current credit-crunched lending environment and slower real estate market actually provide several reasons why now is an ideal time to invest in the purchase of real estate for investment purposes?

While interest rates are currently sitting at 40-year historic lows and the real estate market slowdown has seen purchase prices drop, rental income has not wavered – making now an optimal time to start building a real estate investment property portfolio or continue adding to an existing list of properties.

“Real estate investment works, but success is measured in years, not months, weeks or days,” says Eric Gonneau, a Barrie-based real estate investor who currently owns 35 properties in Barrie and Orillia. In other words, real estate investment cannot be viewed with a get-rich-quick mentality.

When it comes to purchasing multiple properties, real estate investors essentially face two major obstacles, says Beverley Brandl, a mortgage broker and owner of the Dominion Lending Centres Integrity Plus Inc. franchise headquartered in Wasaga Beach. “The first obstacle is qualifying for multiple mortgages at the bank and the second is being able to come up with enough money for multiple down payments,” says Brandl, who helps real estate investors obtain mortgages. “These two obstacles have a cause and effect impact on each other.”

In order to overcome these obstacles and ensure you can continue purchasing real estate, a ‘portfolio’ approach to financing must be taken, she says.

“The difference between a ‘transactional’ approach to lending and a ‘portfolio’ approach is the difference between playing a game of chess at eye level versus looking at the board from above,” explains Brandl. “When you’re looking at the board at eye level, you can make a move, but you have no idea how your move may impact the other players on the board. If, however, you take a bird’s-eye point of view, you will be able to anticipate the cause and effect of your move before you make it,” she adds.

Brandl advises real estate investors to work with mortgage professionals or bankers who understand the portfolio approach, which considers investors’ goals and long-term plans, to ensure they do not inadvertently handcuff themselves from obtaining future mortgages.

But even when real estate investments are made based on goals and long-term plans, Gonneau suggests investors continue to conduct their own research in order to make educated investment decisions.

“Talk to other real estate investors and join organizations that will offer further insight into your real estate investment needs,” Gonneau says, adding that he is a member of the Real Estate Investment Network (REIN).

While REIN can provide market insight and investing tips through years of experience, a local Rental Owners and Managers Society can help with credit checks for potential tenants, and keep investors abreast of changes to the Residential Tenancy Act and other topics/concerns faced by landlords.

Gonneau has chosen to invest in Barrie and Orillia because he knows the areas and is comfortable investing in what he knows.

While Carol Garrett, a Toronto-based real estate investor, owns multiple properties in Ontario – including Hamilton, Orillia, Oshawa and Windsor – she also owns several properties in Edmonton. As a REIN member, she decided to venture into the Edmonton market because it was identified as a REIN ‘hot spot.’

Over the past five years, Garrett has become a full-time real estate investor. She currently owns more than 40 properties and prefers to purchase townhome condos because the maintenance – including snow removal, lawn care and window and roof replacement – is taken care of by monthly maintenance fees.

Garrett has created a formula for her real estate investment business that has systems worked out for each aspect within the process – everything from making an offer to securing financing to selecting and managing tenants. She advises that real estate investment must be run like a well-managed business in order to succeed. **OH**

Cindy Freiman is the director of public relations and communications for national mortgage brokerage firm Dominion Lending Centres. She can be reached at cindy@dominionlending.ca

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THE MIGHTY FLANK STEAK

Summer Entertaining on the Grill

Thanks to an increasing popularity on restaurant menus, in magazines and on television cooking shows, the humble flank steak has made a comeback at meat counters across the country. How lucky for us, and just in time for summer entertaining.

GRILLED FLANK STEAK WITH ROASTED PEPPER AND ASPARAGUS SALAD
A two-pound flank steak will feed four to six people. Increase the amount of steak and marinade as needed to fit your crowd.

FLANK STEAK:
1 tbsp peppercorns
1 tbsp coriander seeds
2 bay leaves
1/2 cup red wine
2 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp red wine vinegar
1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
3 cloves garlic, halved
3 green onions, chopped
3 sprigs each fresh thyme and parsley
2 lb flank steak
1 tsp salt
SALAD
3 sweet peppers (red, orange, yellow or mixed)
12 spears asparagus
8 cups mixed baby salad greens
Extra-virgin olive oil
White balsamic or white wine vinegar
Sea salt
Fresh ground pepper

Flank steak is a long lean muscle from the belly side of the cow and has some really good things going for it. As far as steaks go, they are relatively inexpensive, so you can impress guests with a fancy steak dinner without breaking the bank. Because it's a somewhat tougher cut of meat than tenderloin or rib cuts, it stands up well to marinades. This makes it great for entertaining because you can marinate the steak earlier in the day or the night before, freeing up time to cut flowers, mow the lawn or catch up on summer reading in the hammock before guests arrive.

Flank steak is also fast cooking, taking only about six minutes to grill to medium-rare. With flank steak, rarer is better. A well-done flank steak tends to be on the chewy side.

And finally, the flank steak is an incredibly versatile cut. Sliced flank steak makes a mean sandwich filler or salad topper. And the raw meat, thinly sliced across the grain, makes great beginnings for a beef stir-fry. Like any cut of beef, flank steak takes well to many flavours, so feel free to experiment. A French-inspired marinade with red wine and lots of herbs is great for entertaining (see recipe below), but an Asian-inspired marinade with soy sauce, chiles and rice vinegar or a Mexican-inspired marinade with the fresh flavours of lime, chiles and coriander will be great too!

Any way you slice it, flank steak is the ultimate summer entertaining steak. So, call your friends and fire up the grill. Summer's here and it's time to celebrate.

- FLANK STEAK:**
- In small skillet, toast peppercorns, coriander seeds and bay leaves over high heat, shaking pan often, until toasted and fragrant, about 2 minutes. Transfer toasted ingredients to cutting board; lightly crush with bottom of heavy saucepan. Transfer to 13 by 9-inch glass baking dish. Whisk in wine, oil, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, garlic, green onions, thyme and parsley.
 - Poke steak all over with fork and place in marinade. Turn steak to coat both sides; cover and refrigerate for at least four hours or up to 24 hours. Remove steak and marinade from fridge one hour before grilling to come to room temperature.
 - Transfer marinade to small saucepan. Bring to boil, boil for one minute; set aside.
 - Preheat grill to medium-high. Sprinkle steak all over with salt. Grill steak, turning once and basting with reserved marinade, for six to eight minutes for medium-rare.
 - Slice steak thinly across the grain to serve.

- SALAD:**
- Grill peppers until skins are blistered and blackened. Transfer to bowl; cover and let stand for 10 minutes. Peel off skins; remove seeds and slice.
 - Grill asparagus on piece of foil paper or using grill basket until tender-crisp, about three mintues. Cut into thirds.
 - In salad bowl, toss together peppers, asparagus and salad greens. Toss with oil, vinegar, salt and pepper to taste. Serve with steak.

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<i>Page 54</i>	BATEMAN CUSTOM FURNITURE & CABINETS <i>Page 21</i>	KITCHEN AND BATH
ARBORIST	BILLY HILL PINE <i>Page 59</i>	A GALLERY OF RENOVATIONS <i>Page 4</i>
LANDMARK ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP LTD. <i>Page 15</i>	HERITAGE HOMESTEAD <i>Page 59</i>	ASTRO KITCHENS <i>Page 12</i>
	HOMECOMING <i>Page 59</i>	DESIGNERS PLUS KITCHEN & BATHS <i>Page 35</i>
BUILDERS	LA MOQUETTE <i>Page 17</i>	DIVINE DESIGNS <i>Page 48</i>
A.N.T. CONSTRUCTION <i>Page 35</i>	RAFTERS/LIVING LIGHTING <i>Page 33</i>	KITCHEN & BATH DESIGN HOUSE <i>Page 36</i>
DARLINGHURST CONSTRUCTION <i>Page 51</i>	SATURDAY AFTERNOONS HOME STORE <i>Page 20</i>	PERKINSFIELD KITCHEN & BATH <i>Page 5</i>
HOMES BY DAYCORE <i>Page 20</i>	SEASONS <i>Page 17</i>	
JASPER ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN	SIMPLY COUNTRY <i>Page 49</i>	LANDSCAPE DESIGN
<i>Page 57</i>	WYEBRIDGE COUNTRY GARDEN <i>Page 17</i>	HARRY JANSMA LANDSCAPING <i>Page 33</i>
LEGENDARY LOGCRAFTERS <i>Page 53</i>		LANDMARK ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP LTD. <i>Page 15</i>
LINDAL CEDAR HOMES <i>Page 57</i>	GLASS DESIGN	
THE VILLAGE AT BAY MOORINGS <i>Page 37</i>	SGO DESIGNER GLASS <i>Page 55</i>	LANDSCAPING
		CORNERSTONE LANDSCAPING <i>Page 31</i>
BUILDING SUPPLIES	HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING	LENDING
ATLAS BLOCK <i>Page 30</i>	YANCH HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING	DOMINION LENDING CENTRES <i>Page 48</i>
GP MASONRY & LANDSCAPING SUPPLIES <i>Page 11</i>	<i>Page 55</i>	
CABINETS & WOODWORKING	HOME IMPROVEMENTS	LIGHTING
BILLY HILL PINE <i>Page 59</i>	DARLINGHURST CONSTRUCTION/STONEWORX <i>Page 51</i>	RAFTERS/LIVING LIGHTING <i>Page 33</i>
WYEWOOD CUSTOM CABINETS <i>Page 53</i>	ECO COUNTERTOPS <i>Page 53</i>	PAINTING & DECORATING
	GREAT NORTHERN INSULATION <i>Page 33</i>	BENJAMIN MOORE <i>Page 61</i>
CLOSETS	THE INSTALL TEAM <i>Page 53</i>	LABAR SALES <i>Page 49</i>
CLOSETS BY DESIGN <i>Page 47</i>		PLUMBING
COUNTERTOPS/GRANITE & STONE	HOT TUBS	PLUMBTECH PLUMBING INC. <i>Page 33</i>
DI PIETRA DESIGN <i>Page 13</i>	BEACHCOMBER HOT TUBS <i>Page 15</i>	
ECO COUNTERTOPS <i>Page 53</i>		ROOFING
ELECTRONICS	HOUSEHOLD CLEANING PRODUCTS	ONTARIO SHAKE N' TILE <i>Page 72</i>
AUDIOTRONIC <i>Page 31</i>	WINNING BRANDS <i>Page 2</i>	
FLOORING	INSULATION	SAUNAS
A GALLERY OF RENOVATIONS <i>Page 4</i>	GREAT NORTHERN INSULATION <i>Page 33</i>	SAUNA RAY <i>Page 9</i>
DESERT TILE <i>Page 17</i>	INTERIOR DECORATING	WINDOW FASHIONS
MAJESTIC NORTH <i>Page 47</i>	LA MOQUETTE <i>Page 17</i>	SALNEK <i>Page 69</i>
		WINDOWS & DOORS
		DECOLA WINDOWS & DOORS <i>Page 21</i>
		KEMPENFELT WINDOWS <i>Page 7</i>

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finishing touch

A crafty MOSAIC TABLE to make this summer

BY ANDREA RAMACIERI // PHOTOGRAPHY BY BONNIE FOX

OUR HOMES took a tired, weather-beaten, wooden patio table and gave it new life with old plates, bowls and tiles.

Continued on page 70



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WHAT YOU'LL NEED

(We found almost everything at the local re-use store.)

- Old plates, ceramic bowls and tiles
- Safety glasses and gloves
- Hammer
- Ceramic tile glue
- Grout
- Floater
- Sponges
- Sealant (a must for an outdoor table)

HINT: Select a colour scheme and a basic design. Make sure you have enough of one mosaic colour to fill in the desired area.

GETTING STARTED

Wrap plates and tiles in an old tea-towel or cloth bag. Place them in a shallow plastic vessel or cardboard box. Put on your safety glasses and smash the plates and tiles with a hammer.

Separate the mosaic pieces by colour. Make sure you have enough pieces to complete your design.

HINT: We used the lips of the plates along the edges of the entire table.

TIME TO GLUE

Cover your starting point with an ample amount of ceramic tile glue and start placing your mosaic pieces. You may have to apply glue directly to each piece. The thickness of each piece may vary, which adds interest to your table. Place pieces relatively close together. You can fill in the gaps with smaller pieces later. Continue to work in segments until the surface is filled and your design is complete.

Allow 24 hours for the glue to dry.

TIME TO GROUT

This is a two-person job. One person applies the grout with a grout floater while the other cleans each tile as you go along. Clean the tiles as best you can, otherwise the grout will dry and you will spend hours scrubbing and digging them out.

Allow 24 hours for the grout to dry.

CLEAN AND SEAL

Once the grout is dry and the tiles are clean, it's time to apply a sealant. We used Circa 1850 Nu-Lustre 55 – a thick, high gloss clear epoxy finish. One coat of this product equals up to 55 coats of varnish. Follow the directions carefully. You can find this product and others at the hardware store.

HINT: We used a brush to apply the epoxy sealant. Once dry, it looks incredible. **OH**



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