



STORY **KATHLEEN DUNCAN**
PHOTOGRAPHY **SANDY MACKAY**

PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WOODS

Yesterday AND today

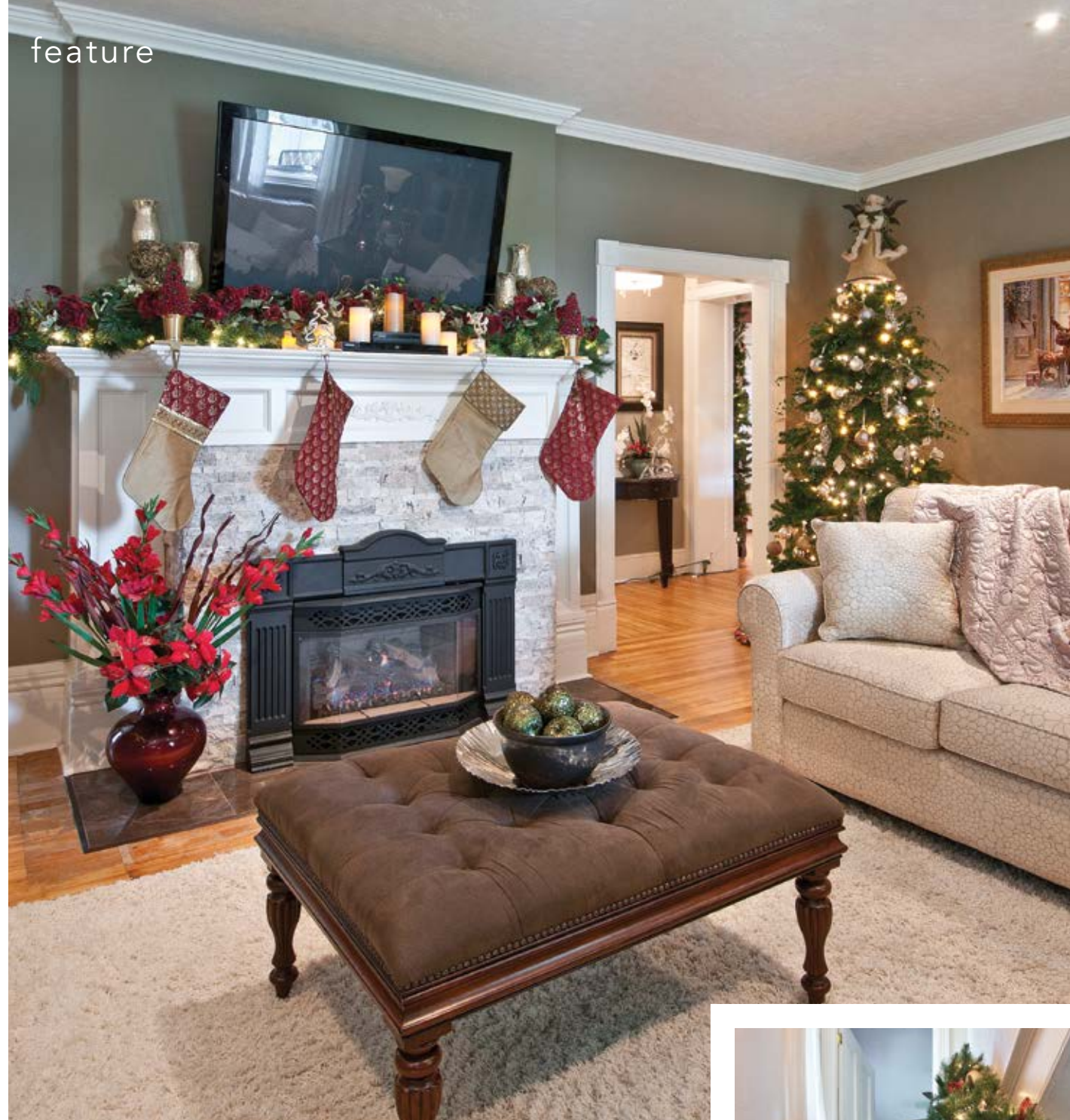
THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

It wasn't the pitter-patter of little feet that convinced Christine Woods to accept the challenge of turning this derelict farmhouse into a family home. Instead, the joyful stomps of her children racing up the front staircase and down the back proved the 156-year-old building's worthiness.

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Christine Woods and her partner Jim Garraway love Christmas and have decorated every room of their fully renovated 156-year-old farmhouse. **OPPOSITE:** A four-season sunroom was added to the front of the home last year, creating a light-filled addition off the kitchen.



“I knew I could fix it, but I thought the house needed too much work,” recalls Woods, then a busy mom who conducted art classes in her basement studio. “I had just finished my house in Oakville and I loved it. And, seriously, this place was boarded up and broken down. It should have been condemned.”

But with her Barrie-based parents only two blocks away and a priceless view of Kempenfelt Bay, she let herself be caught up in her kids’ glass-half-full spirit and agreed to the move – and a massive DIY project.

“I see the value of things that aren’t perfect,” says the lover of antiques, heritage homes and garage-sale treasures. “I should have been born 100 years ago.”

It was Oct. 10, 2003, however, when she bought the two-storey, 3,200 sq. ft. fixer-upper that once housed cattle farmers whose herd quenched its thirst at Johnson’s Beach (as it’s known now). Woods says the “labour of love” is almost complete.

With building supplies from Home Depot and **Sue Kay & Co.** at **Allendale**

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OPPOSITE: The stockings are hung by the chimney in the spacious living room with care, where family members gather to read, relax and watch television. The family dog loves to sit on the ornate stairway leading to the bedrooms upstairs. **ABOVE:** The photo on the piano in the dining room came with the home. Christine believes the woman was a member of the family that lived in the home from 1889 to 1965. **TOP AND BOTTOM RIGHT:** Christine’s Christmas collection is traditional, filling the heritage home and creating a warm welcome for family and friends during the holiday season.





The kitchen was completely rebuilt. Christine used an old bed post to support the island. **LEFT:** Festive vignettes cover every surface of the home and above, on the walls, hang Christine's beloved Trish Romance prints.

Decorating Centre, supplemented by **Habitat For Humanity ReStore** finds and left-overs reclaimed from the attic and basement, she got to work with the help of **Matt Rainey**, then 19.

"We installed the drywall. We installed the crown moulding. We rebuilt the kitchen," Woods says looking around. Her handiwork is also evident in a stained-glass window, hanging folk art Christmas ornaments, and knitted dish cloths. "I can make anything. I know I can because I try. My father taught me there isn't anything you can't do – you just have to try."

With tools in hand, Woods deployed an old bed post to support the kitchen island and transformed bed rails into door trim to match the original wide moulding. She also painted a rug on the dining room's refurbished hardwood floor to cover a persistent black

stain, but happily accepted the time-worn edges of a large portrait in the same room.

"She was likely a member of the Coles family," considers Woods, referring to the home's owners from 1889 to 1965. "I've always kept her here because I think she deserves a place."

On the ceiling, a chandelier medallion found at an Oakville garage sale is given new life (the chandelier itself was a ReStore find) above one of the home's two Victorian-style Valor Windsor Arch fireplaces.

Adding heat and atmosphere to the four-season porch off the kitchen is another fireplace – this one a black arched panel from **Napoleon Home Comfort**. This porch itself supports a spacious bay-view balcony for the master bedroom above.

From time to time, Woods enlisted the help of handy relatives,

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including cousins Jay Oram and Grant Boyington, and father Cliff Boyington, who showed up on a daily basis.

Inspired by her beloved Trish Romance prints, each room – including five bedrooms and the hallway that connects them – has been meticulously re-created. Those climbing the front staircase are treated to a moulding detail adorning each riser and a textured plaster-look wall that is actually painted wallpaper from WalMart.

“I’m just tickled that a house with this kind of history, and that has been restored with such love and attention is going to be included in the **May Court Club’s Homes for the Holidays 2014**,” says this

year’s home tour convenor and self-proclaimed old-house junkie Nancy Graham. “I chose this house because it was charming and unique. Many Barrie residents have driven by and itched to get an inside peek. It’s just a feast for the eyes.”

The Barrie chapter of Canada’s oldest service club will host its annual fundraiser on Nov. 22 and 23. Tickets are available from the group’s consignment store downtown at 54B Maple Ave. and other area businesses. In addition to the five homes that will be on display, this year’s tour also includes a tea room at the Lion’s Gate Banquet Hall (the scones have a secret ingredient that makes them extra delicious,

says Graham), and a boutique featuring wares made by club members.

“Some vendors have a following and there’s always a line-up to get in early,” Graham adds. “Many people do their Christmas shopping at the boutique.”

After a lifetime of moving and renovating, Woods made a natural transition to the field of real estate since returning to Barrie and has little time for volunteering.

“I am always happy to support local charities that dedicate such great time and effort towards helping our local people,” says the non-stop businesswoman. “This is a way I can help.”

With this self-led project winding down, she has stepped into a supporting role in another. Her partner Jim Garraway, a renowned local chef, is bringing back his signature tastes in a just-opened ’50’s-style general store in Barrie’s former Parkside’s Corner Market. In addition to penny candy and other familiar treats, the retro retailer will feature homemade smoked meats, soups and daily specials to go, as well as a little produce section.

“I’m bringing a fine-dining sensibility to comfort food,” he promises. “I want people to have my food without the restaurant. This way everyone can afford to eat this way.”

Together, they’re creating an historic feast for the eyes and the taste buds. *Continued on page 34*



The sun-filled four-season room is the latest addition to this old farmhouse. A fireplace keeps the room warm in early spring, during fall and all winter long. Christine opted to show the original brick facade and window, creating a café on the porch and lots of comfortable seating in the spacious sunroom.





Meet the talented design volunteers for the 23rd Annual May Court Club of Barrie's Homes for the Holidays, proudly sponsored by OUR HOMES.

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| SANDRA WILSON
Home Outfitters | KELLY BOSCO
HomeSense | KAREN MIRON
Karen Miron Design | HEATHER LEE
Joshua's Greenery | CATHERINE STAPLES
Staples Design Group | MARILYN RUYTER
Nineteen Melrose Flower Studio | KRISTIN MCPHAIL
Ego's Garden Centre |
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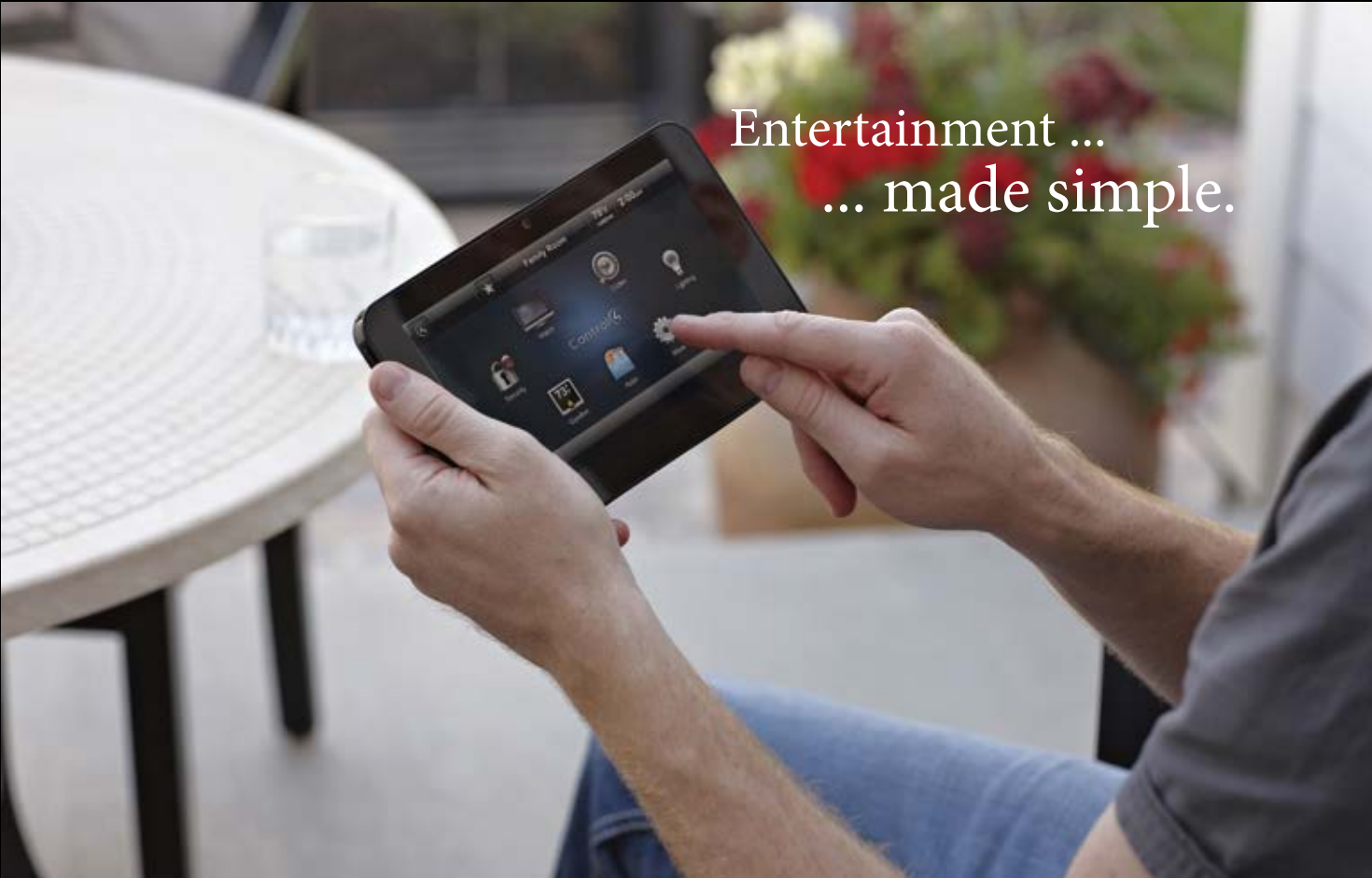
ABSENT: Rob And Sharon Street, Street's Flowers; Sharon DiBernardo, The Flower Boutique; Etti Mountain, Barrie's Garden Centre; Eileen Graham, Bradford Greenhouses Garden Gallery **OH**

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