



The unique white vaulted ceiling in the living room sets a refreshing tone for the entire home. **TOP RIGHT:** Outside, landscaped tiers lead down to a sandy beach. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Chris Bondar of Gilkon Construction says this home was a pleasure to build.

The suggestion of a salty tang flavours every tread, turret and transom of this Cape Cod-style vacation home on the southern shore of Georgian Bay. From the painted cedar-shake exterior to a souvenir starfish tucked into a built-in bookshelf, the New England coast is near in heart if not in actual miles. *Continued on page 79*



# WELL WORTH THE WAIT

BY KATHLEEN DUNCAN // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY



“There’s something about a nautical theme that gives the hope of travelling,” says homeowner and avid global explorer Cathy Tait, who chose a myriad of blues and whites to complement nature’s palette. “It imbues faraway places.”

As if made to order, a lighthouse lends a haunting serenity to the island vista across the water, visible from nearly every room in this house, expertly built by **Gilkon Construction Ltd.** – including the four-season sunroom, which boasts drop-down panes by ROSS Windows & Doors that sink into the foundation. The resulting screened-in haven invites cooling breezes while overlooking the expansive deck.

Landscaped tiers created by **Kelly’s Northern Landscaping and Classic Stone**, step down to the sandy waves.

The white tower and scarlet peak of the iconic beacon across the sound echo in the seascapes gracing the second-floor hallway. The architects of both structures clearly share the form-should-follow-function philosophy of design.

Despite the overwhelming evidence that an art connoisseur is in residence, this house – named “Glencairn,” according to the curbside plaque transplanted from an ancestral home in Scotland – invites guests to plunge in and enjoy their stay wholeheartedly, rather than tip-toe timidly at the periphery. *Continued on page 80*



**ABOVE AND RIGHT:** The kitchen was inspired by the movie *Something’s Got To Give*. Creamy cabinets surround a well-appointed island with a raised wood-topped bar. The granite counters are striking with tones of orange and green. **FAR RIGHT:** There is no need for a formal dining room in this casual cottage. There is plenty of room at the kitchen table to entertain a crowd. **TOP RIGHT:** The four-season sunroom has unique drop-down windows that sink into the foundation.





**LEFT:** Seating in the artfully decorated library-theatre room is ultra comfortable. **BELOW:** This walk-in mudroom/closet is furnished top-to-bottom with custom cabinetry and hidden storage. **OPPOSITE LEFT:** A cosy sitting area in the large master suite. **OPPOSITE RIGHT:** The labradorite quartz-topped vanity in the master en suite is said to have healing powers. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM:** The master bedroom is bright and fresh with an inviting view out large windows.



“This is not a precious house,” assures the hostess, who shares Glencairn with husband Ian (both management consultants with a ravine-backing home in Toronto), daughter Meghan (a museum curator), son Cameron (a university senior), and a rotating cast of friends and family. “You know the saying ‘build it and they will come?’ Well, they come – and come again.”

Completed in the summer of 2008 by Gilkon, veteran custom home builders, the house is the result of patience rewarded.

“It took us eight years to find it,” Cathy recalls. “We wanted it to face west for the sunset, to be on a beach, and to have pristine waters with a sandy bottom. We knew what was on the property could be changed, but those things can’t – or not easily.”

Once the ideal location and environment had been discovered, **The Ideal Environment/Brian Lee Architect** was enlisted to replace the

existing cottage (while retaining its cedar tongue-in-groove boards to clad the sunroom’s floor and vaulted ceiling.)

Gilkon worked closely with Lee.

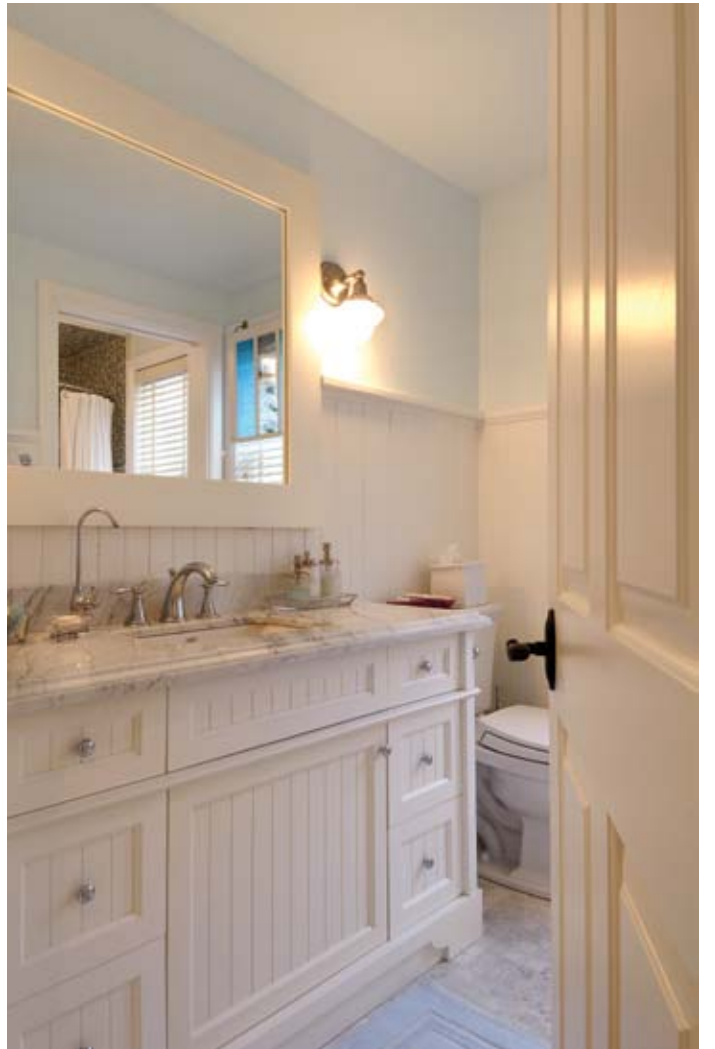
Earthwork was completed by **S. Charlebois Haulage & Excavating Ltd.**, while plumbing and heating contractors **Tom Downer Ltd.** and electricians from **Simcoe County Contracting** were brought in for the modern conveniences.

“I enjoyed the finishings on this house – the roof was a challenge,” says Gilkon co-owner **Chris Bondar**, who clearly enjoys being tested. “And the eyebrow in the vaulted ceiling of the living room – it too was a unique challenge that turned out beautifully.”

The unique ceiling design (painted by **Richard Secord**) is highlighted by a four-panel casement series and arching transom by Kolbe Windows & Doors.

*Continued on page 82*

**RIGHT:** The bathroom on the lower level also has built-ins. **FAR RIGHT:** The guest room has faux-wood ceiling beams created by muralist Lindsay Davis. A lot of the bedding and accessories in the home were purchased at Cabin Boy. **BELOW:** Built-ins line the top of the stairs.



**TOP LEFT AND LEFT:** Daughter Megan's room has fresh-white décor and a nautical theme. **ABOVE:** The shared bath upstairs has a separate shower room.

Bondar's Gilkon team is also very experienced with custom cabinetry, columns, stairs, handrails and other woodworking details employed throughout the home. Their mission included a living room mantel designed specifically to accommodate a model sailboat that made its way home from Hawaii. ("It took two years to find someone to assemble it," grins Cathy.)

The flooring – reclaimed rock-elm barn board, which had to be cleaned, planed and filled by hand – was also processed and installed by Gilkon.

The local history of the floorboards, which are briefly interrupted by granite (the entranceway is a smooth transition from the outdoors), slate (in the multi-purpose pantry) or tumbled Carrara marble (bathrooms), is now another page in the Glencairn storybook – an ongoing rich tale Cathy crafts to spark memories and conversation.

Another example: the vanity in the master bath is topped with green

labradorite quartz said to have healing powers. It isn't necessary to believe, but for those in the know who care to contemplate, life can be escalated to a level that is just a little more fascinating.

The artistic journey moves from the lighthouse seascapes (done by Portuguese artist Miguel Freitas, who Cathy met in his youth) to the over-sized Bob Marley oil portrait by Paul Ygartua that took its rightful place in Cameron's room after a three-year search, to a mixed-media Betty Boop by Steven Csorba that gains depth from a base layer of bubble wrap.

"There's always a story – that's how I choose art," confirms Cathy, who designed an entire wall to showcase a huge Chantal P. Durocher canvas that incorporates textural components, such as birch bark, that begs to be touched. "It was just the perfect painting."

An artistic appreciation for texture and depth can also be found in the Brazilian Barricato granite-slab countertop in the Something's Gotta

Give-inspired kitchen (the multi-colour design of the stone reminds Cathy of a Jackson Pollock painting), the tiny Egyptian tiles framing a nearby chalkboard, and the faux-wood ceiling beams created by muralist and trompe l'oeil artist **Lindsay Davies** in the guest room – the only room in the house without a water view.

Jhavi Desai designed the kitchen cabinetry and many of the built-ins. The kitchen cabinets were made by Prestige Wood Designs.

With a sound system set up by musicologist and sound engineer Andrew Weleshcuk of Solutions AV to stimulate another sense, guests can listen to the house selection or plug in their iPods wherever they happen to land – a perfect way to relax after a busy day of skiing or kayaking.

"This house has a lot of soul. Not to be absurd, it just grounds you as soon as you walk in. We worked hard at trying to get that feel and weren't in a rush. I think that made all the difference." **OH**