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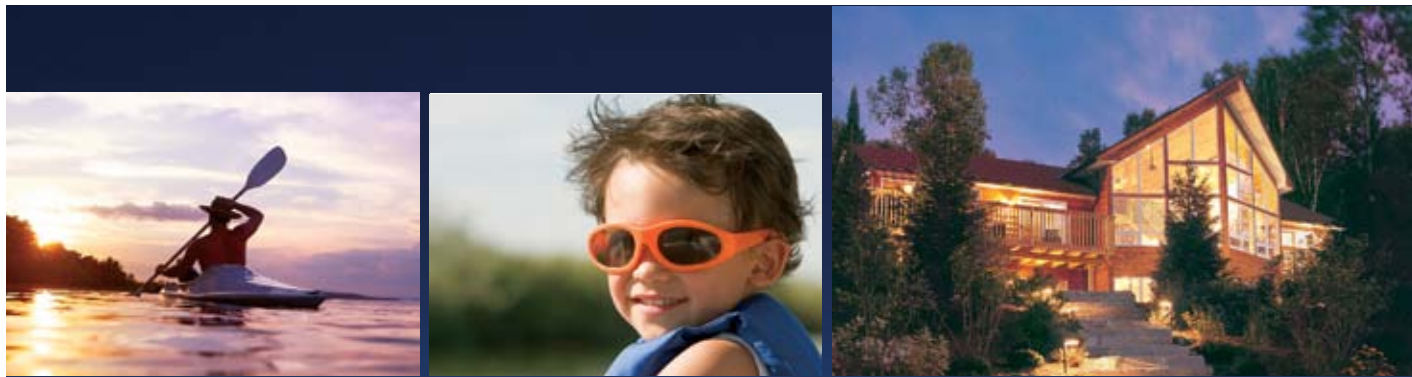
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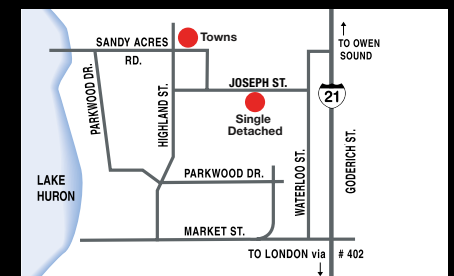
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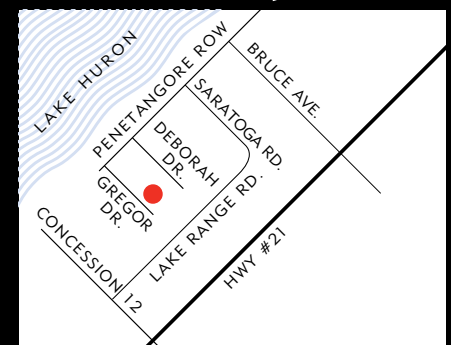
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editor's note



RELAXING WITH A GOOD BOOK is one of those treasured moments, one of those rare opportunities to completely escape into another world for a while and leave the concerns and responsibilities of everyday life behind.

Of course it's important to choose the right book, one that will take you on a journey you never want to end; a book that will leave you feeling enlightened, even in the tiniest of ways, a little more aware or a tad more imaginative. But it's also important to find the perfect spot to sit and read that book.

It's fall, so no need to retreat indoors immediately. Sit and watch the colours change as you read and enjoy the warm sun on a cool day. But, on those other days, it's nice to have a room or cosy corner for reading.

In this issue, we visit two homes with gorgeous libraries. One is aged and worn, just like the books that live within; the other is new and fresh. They are warm and classical and create just the right atmosphere for some quality escapism.

Also in this issue, we introduce you to some local interior designers and decorators who bring out the beauty in everything they touch. And if you're thinking of selling your home, check out our feature on home staging. Learn how to show it off. And, it's time to harvest your herb garden. We show you how to preserve those glorious smells and flavours for the cold months ahead.

So, please, if you have a favourite spot to read, take us there and enjoy this fall issue of OUR HOMES Grey and Bruce counties.

Have a colourful season!

Sincerely,

Samantha Martin, Managing Editor
smartin@ourhomesmagazine.com

Clarification: Northern Heating & Ventilation installed the heating system in Paul and Nancy Grigg's home, which appeared in the Summer issue of OUR HOMES Grey/Bruce.

publisher's note

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE FALL. The smell in the air, the colours, and of course, the home improvement projects! At our house the focus is the basement. Typically an area for empty boxes and storage, a basement is often neglected. But there's a lot of floor space down there, and trust me, with two kids now in the house, the more floor space we have at our disposal the better. So, we're putting in some engineered hardwood, complete with in-floor heating, and a fireplace to make it cosy. We hope it becomes a destination room for our family.

OUR HOMES has become a destination magazine in Grey and Bruce. It's amazing to see the copies flying off the racks, and it's very rewarding to hear how many of our local and out-of-town readers use the products and services of our advertisers and purchase the real estate that our Realtors showcase in our pages.

Further to that, this past year, we launched GREAT LIVING as an insert in OUR HOMES. It has been extremely successful. As you know, GREAT LIVING has been designed to both celebrate the good life here in Grey/Bruce and to help more businesses in Grey and Bruce counties speak on an in-depth level to our dedicated, loyal, and high-net-worth readership. We have received an overwhelmingly positive response to our first two issues. As a result of this response, we have decided on a couple of key and beneficial improvements.

First, GREAT LIVING will now stand on its own, not as an insert in OUR HOMES, but instead distributed right beside OUR HOMES, as its own free-standing publication.

Second, we're adding more top-notch editorial to GREAT LIVING. To make the magazine thicker each issue, we are extending the period of distribution from three months to six months. GREAT LIVING will now be published twice a year, and will continue to showcase the good life alongside OUR HOMES. So look for the next issue in March! It will be, as always, spectacular.

Enjoy this fall issue of OUR HOMES, and enjoy your home!

All the best,

David Loopstra, Publisher
publisher@ourhomesmagazine.com

P.S. This is a photo of the newest addition to our family, Maverick Loopstra, and proud older sister, Brooklyn.



TOP LEFT PHOTO BY SANDY MACKAY, BOTTOM RIGHT PHOTO BY DAVID LOOPSTRA

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Sandy MacKay



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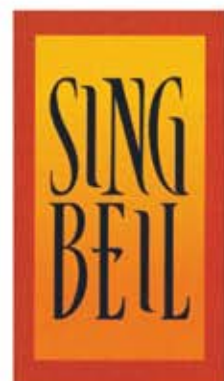
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advice

Designer **Stephanie Redmond** answers your questions.

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Dear Stephanie,

A lot of my friends never pay full price for anything. I've never had a knack for negotiating and I always spend more than I've budgeted for. How can I find a good deal on big (and not so big) ticket items? When is the best time to buy furniture, appliances and seasonal items and is there room to haggle on the ticket price? – *Faith R.*

Stephanie Redmond replies:

Patience! People who tend to find deals scout out shops and wait until the end of a season (when sales begin) to make their purchases. There are certain items worth waiting for (the expensive ones!), but you run the risk of an item selling out. A lot of new lines launch in spring or fall, but don't be shy about asking when a sale might start. Explain your budget and ask if it's realistic. You're not asking for a discount, you're doing your research.

On another note, be realistic about your budget and allow a bit of leeway. Remember that long-term purchases are worth saving for and make sure to avoid impulse shopping!

Dear Stephanie,

The holiday season is fast approaching. We go to a lot of parties and I always bring a hostess gift, usually a nice bottle of wine. I want to change it up. Can you give me some ideas on what I can bring that will be useful in the home? – *Janine L.*



Stephanie Redmond replies:

A general rule to follow for a hostess gift is giving something that can be consumed. Avoid knick-knacks and dust collectors that your hostess will feel obliged to politely keep on display. Keep in mind what your friends are interested in and go from there. Perhaps a cooking magazine (*Donna Hay* or *Anna* are really nice), white tapered candles, chocolate truffles or a book, movie or CD you've enjoyed. Having said that, if you ever come over to my place, I like an oak chardonnay.

Dear Stephanie,

What's hot in decorating for 2010? My house is ready for a change and I want to know "what's hot" and "what's not" so I can start planning my projects. I don't want to make any mistakes. Can you help? – *Carolyn S.*

Stephanie Redmond replies:

My bet is more sustainable style to come for 2010 – think eco-chic in all shapes and forms – Low VOC paints, furniture in recycled materials, organic cottons and linens.

As far as colour trends go, use earth tones or, in direct contrast, shockingly bright colours and metallics. Primary tones are everywhere from kitchen utensils to appliances in red, yellow and blue. Going "green" could take on a whole new meaning next year. And the good news about paint is, if you make a mistake, you can always get out the paintbrush and apply another coat.

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(6121-64)

SICO Polar Bear White
(6191-11)

This mix of neutrals and shocking colours can be really interesting and easy to accomplish. Look at the décor mags and pay attention to the rooms you like. A lot of the colour comes in the form of "changeables" – painted walls and throw cushions. These items jump out from a neutral base, which is where you can use your organic linens. If you don't want to make any mistakes, take a chance on low cost items and stick to the basics for the forever pieces. **OH**



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RIVERFRONT *Refuge*



This peaceful backyard gradually slopes down to the edge of the Sydenham River in Owen Sound.

RIGHT: Ashley throws the swans and ducks some corn.



The 1919 photo of Alex and Linda Coles' home, found in a newspaper of the time, shows it to be the only house on the south side of the Sydenham River in Owen Sound. More than a century later, this classic, Tudor-style home, on what locals call "Millionaire's Drive," a short walk from downtown Owen Sound, is surrounded by picturesque homes with broad green lawns and well-cared-for flowerbeds.

This solid red brick house stands out among its younger neighbours – its white porch columns and matching trim framing an imposing three-story monolith of historic proportions. The red Japanese maples that frame the entrance hint at the Asian artwork inside and the rejuvenated perennial gardens, complete with English roses, reflect the work that Alex and Linda have put into revamping this unique home.

Past the massive oak door, guarded by black iron carriage lamps and a matching stone lion sculpture, visitors enter a foyer of rich wood and a vestibule with a historic horsehair plaster ceiling, providing the cream-coloured canvas for the decorative artwork of the locally renowned **Miller Brothers**.

The historical marvels continue when you take in the large dining room lined in mahogany panels. Alex compares the large bowed windows of the room "like being on a ship." A similar sense of quality and tradition is carried into the spacious adjoining room, with its vintage quarter-sawn red oak floors, allowing for more of the wood's grain to be viewed. Here, below a century-old, plaster ceiling with wooden cross-timbers and within reach of the original functioning fireplace, recessed wooden shelves function as the Coles' library. *Continued on page 22*



The living room features an expansive wall of glass looking out onto the grand deck and natural beauty beyond.

The dining and library areas open on to a fully equipped bistro kitchen. The eating area's leather club chairs and stainless steel appliances, set against the old servants' staircase and collection of dishware, provide what Linda calls "a mixture of modern and cosy antique." Wooden cabinetry complements the rich timber textures of the surrounding rooms. The kitchen, in turn, flows into a relaxed family room of comfortable sofas surrounding a modern gas fireplace. The north wall of the gathering area is constructed of floor-to-ceiling windows that allow natural light to flood the space and offer a panoramic view of the natural beauty beyond.

The view is priceless. The first time people witness it, they blink their eyes in disbelief. It's as if they've been magically transported to cottage country. What lies beyond is a tree-lined river view as far as the eye can see. Beyond the canopy of fluttering leaves is the reflective shimmer of the river's ripples and steady flow.

An expansive rear deck, which Linda laughingly compares to the size of a "railway platform," sports patio chairs, two sun umbrellas, a barbecue and potted flowers, and extends across the entire length of the home. The refurbished deck looks out onto a sloping back lawn that descends to the treed riverfront and an oval, in-ground pool, bordered by a concrete deck and surrounded by a black wrought iron ornate fence by

Tony Bell of Blue Water Machine & Tool in Meaford. The cottage has come to the city.

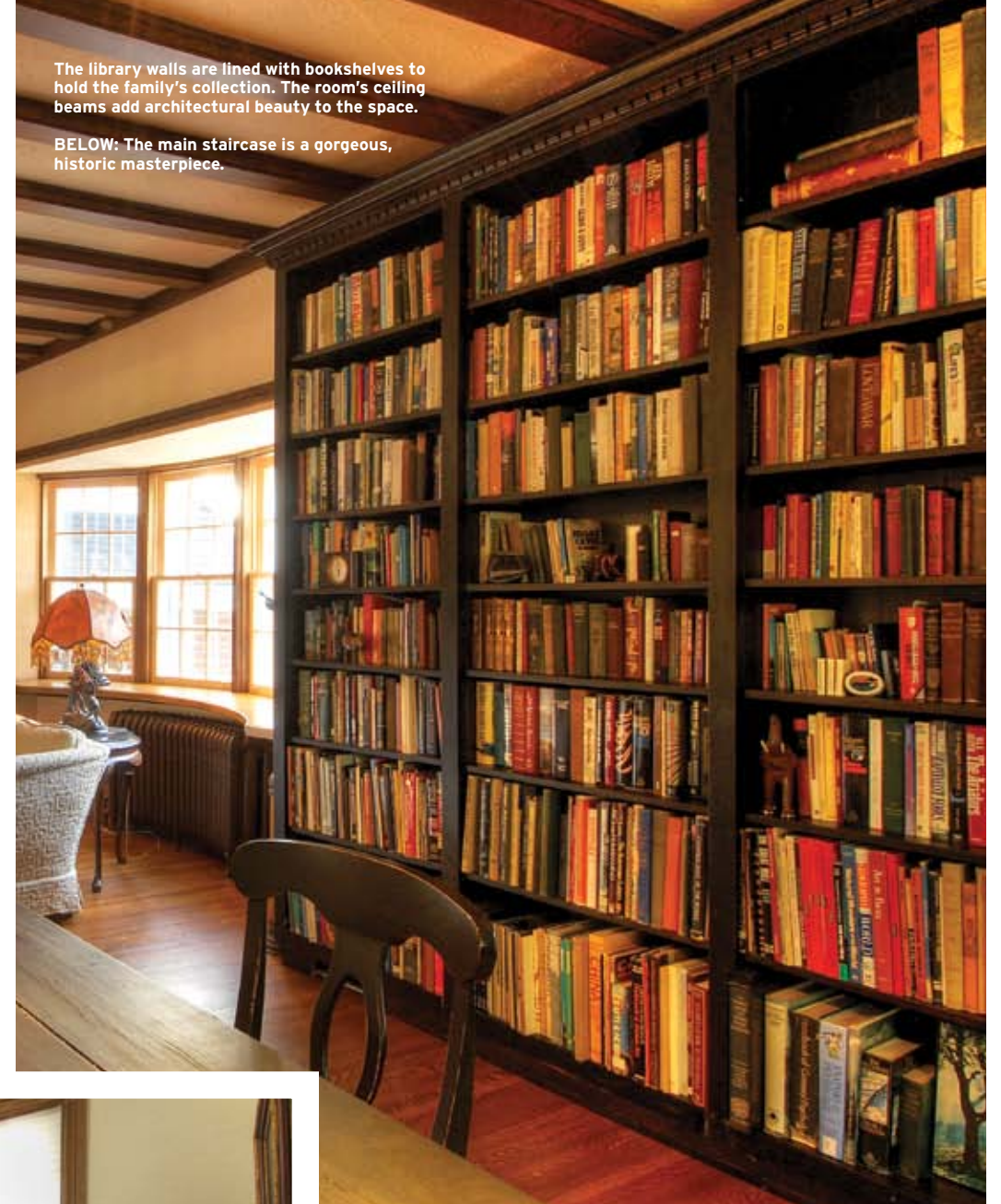
The home's original covered porch, linked to the rear deck, is also a great place to sit out and enjoy the idyllic scenery, even on a rainy day.

Linda is enthusiastic about the stunning natural setting where her home is found. "People in the area have not groomed their riverfronts, so the view is perfectly natural," she says, gazing out at the swans cruising the river in the morning sunlight. "The milldam nearby regulates the river's depth so there's no erosion and only kayaks and canoes are allowed on this stretch of water, making it very peaceful. The only sound you might hear in summer is the sound of lawn mowers...Alex and I often walk down the few steps to our dock, have a coffee, and bring along a bucket of corn to feed the swans and the mallards that float by."

It's hard to believe you can have it all: downtown living and a peaceful retreat. "It's amazing," says Linda, elaborating on the opportunities the home's location allows. "You can take a canoe or kayak downriver to Harrison Park, a family conservation area, which has a zoo and lots of walking trails. It's a two-minute walk to downtown, where I go to the Farmer's Market on Saturday mornings. Once a year, the Sydenham Regatta is held where people on the river dress up and provide boaters with treats."

The library walls are lined with bookshelves to hold the family's collection. The room's ceiling beams add architectural beauty to the space.

BELOW: The main staircase is a gorgeous, historic masterpiece.



A water person at heart, Linda says the setting gives her a sense of joy and peace. "Owen Sound is rated as one of the top 10 retirement communities in Canada," she notes. "It's got everything you could want, from box stores to boutiques – all within a two-and-a-half-hour drive from Toronto. It's one of the last undiscovered treasures...Here, I know who my neighbours are. I feel comfortable and secure. I love the fact that the neighbourhood is a wonderful mix of all sorts of people – from young mothers with babies to seniors and everyone in between."

Aside from the bathrooms, the floors and other retrofits, which they've done themselves with the assistance of Carl De Jong's **Home By Design** in Wiarton, Alex and Linda employed **Riddell Contracting** of Owen Sound to ensure that this exquisite historic home, with its old world ambience, meets all modern mechanical requirements.

And so this stately home truly is as Linda puts it, "a marvelous mixture of all times."

The home is now too large for this couple to fill, with their daughter Ashley moving to Scotland for her Master's degree, and the Coles are ready to pass this stately gem onto a new family where new history will be created. However, it will be a difficult place to leave. "There isn't anything I don't love about this house," says Linda, beaming with pride. **OH**

The home is listed with Lisa Tannahill and Ruth Lovell of Royal LePage RCR Realty.

Meet the Designers

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BONNIE FOX

It takes style and grace to create a space. Let us introduce you to some very talented designers/decorators who live and work in Grey and Bruce counties.



Cindy Gardiner

COMPANY: Décor Design
LIVES: Owen Sound
SPECIALTY: Draperies and blinds
FAVOURITE ROOM TO DESIGN/DECORATE: They're all interesting. I find window design for living rooms is a really rewarding experience because you can do so many treatments. There are larger windows and you're not limited.
FAVOURITE COLOUR SCHEME: I'm into more earth tones, the neutrals, and punching them up with splashes of bright colours.
BEST ADVICE: You have to like the fabrics. Work around something that's really special to you like a piece of furniture or swatch of fabric.

COMPANY: Hanover Kitchen and Bath Gallery
LIVES: Mount Forest
SPECIALTY: Detailed drawings for homeowners, contractors and trades.
FAVOURITE ROOM TO DESIGN/DECORATE: The kitchen because it's one of the rooms where everyone gathers. It's where the day starts and where you fuel up.
FAVOURITE COLOUR SCHEME: It changes all the time. I would favour a combination of white and wood, a more classic modern look.
BEST ADVICE: Some people get hooked up on resale value, but it's the homeowner that will be living in the space. Design for what you like, buy the best you can afford and trust your instincts.

Karen Thomson



Continued on page 26

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Gail Slocombe

COMPANY: Inside Ideas

LIVES: Owen Sound

SPECIALTY: Window coverings, draperies and upholstery

FAVOURITE ROOM TO DESIGN/

DECORATE: The great rooms that we're working on now with the extra tall windows.

FAVOURITE COLOUR SCHEME: Lately I've kind of taken to the aqua or spa blue that's in now. It's very restful and clean.

BEST ADVICE: Ask for advice from a decorator before you get involved in a project and bounce ideas around so you have a plan before you start ripping and tearing.



Patti Smith

COMPANY: Show Offs Home Staging and Organizing

LIVES: Owen Sound

SPECIALTY: Home staging: simplifying with style, beautifying on a budget

FAVOURITE ROOM TO DESIGN/DECORATE: The master bedroom for sure! This is a place that should be calm, relaxing, serene and tasteful.

FAVOURITE COLOUR SCHEME: I'm loving grey tones as a neutral background. It has a rich look with crisp, white trim and shows well with all kinds of wood. Add accents in yellows, oranges, golds and reds for the punch of colour.

BEST ADVICE: Take a photo of your space and see how potential buyers would see it as their home-to-be. Use what you have and remember to pre-pack. You will be glad you did when moving day comes.

COMPANY: Heather Smillie Designs Inc.

LIVES: Mildmay



SPECIALTY: Residential and commercial interior design and decorating

FAVOURITE ROOM TO DESIGN/DECORATE: The great room: mixing the multiple personalities of a family in one room. Creating a balance between styles.

FAVOURITE COLOUR SCHEME: Watercolours – blues and greens.

BEST ADVICE: Don't pick your paint colour first. Come up with your entire project and look and make sure you know exactly what you want before you start. **OH**

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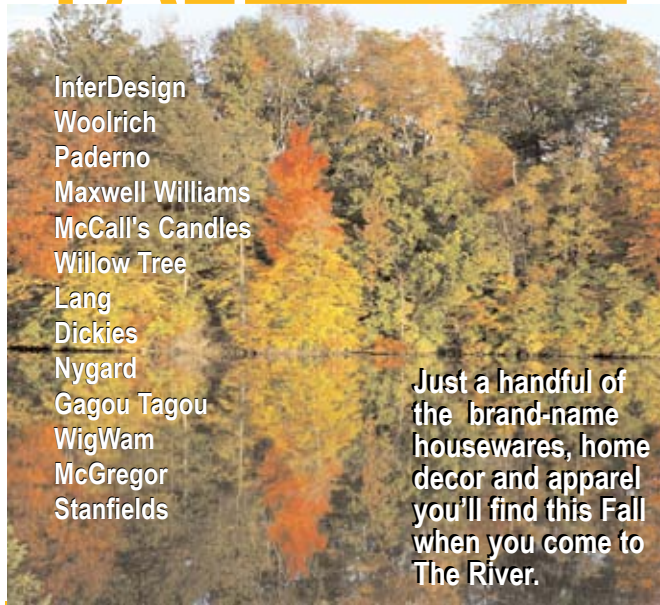






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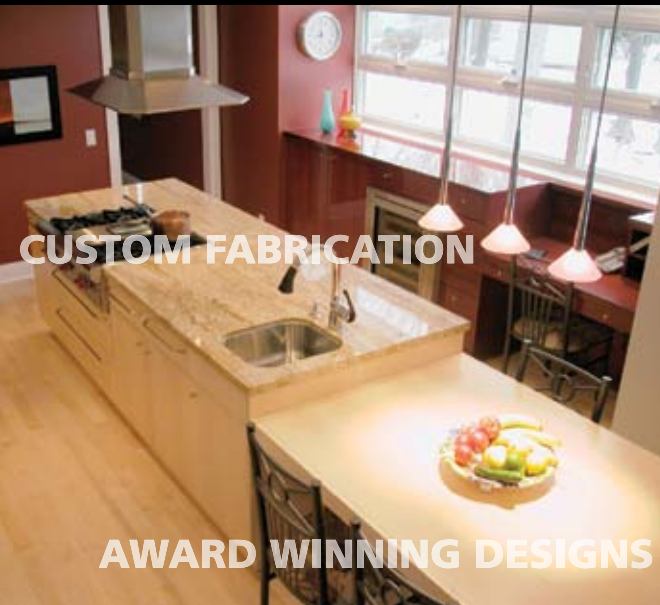
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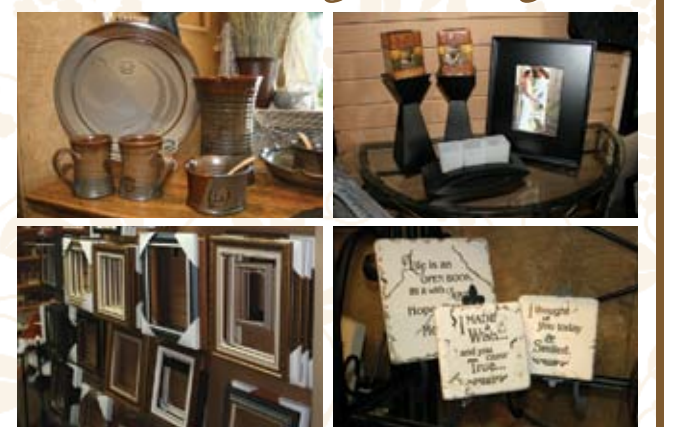


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BY JIM FOX // PHOTOGRAPHY BY BONNIE FOX



INTERIORS ETC.

THE PLACE: A comment in the leather-bound guestbook at the store's entrance states, "This building is very special...very unique." The visitor's words are accurate. Interiors Etc. is located in the former McKay's dry goods store, circa 1905, in downtown Owen Sound. The hardwood floors, the original pressed tin ceiling with its antique money rail and school house lights testify to the historic building's heritage. Here, traditional, quality furniture is displayed in a vast 5,000 sq. ft. showroom where customers are free to wander through tasteful displays that are sure to capture their fancy.

Continued on page 32

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THE STYLE: For those looking for wood reproductions in traditional styles and quality soft furnishings like sofas and chairs - upholstered and in leather - this is the store for you. Likewise, Interiors Etc. offers tasteful contemporary coffee tables, lamps, sculptures, wall ornaments and prints that would add to any family's home décor. "I always like to source something new to offer our clientele," says owner Marigayle Ramage.

WHAT'S HOT: Reclaimed wood pieces are a must this year. "A driving force behind the shop are people who come into the store, like the look and need help with interior design," says Ramage. "I go into the home and do space planning, taking measurements to ensure people's lifestyle and traffic flow are accommodated...We come back to the store where we customize the look to suit the individual customer's tastes."

SEASONAL: A fabulous selection of throws and pillows to change a look for autumn. Christmas items are introduced in October to allow lots of preparation time for customers. In November, during The Festival of The Northern Lights, the entire store takes on a festive air, including windows decorated for both children and the holiday season.

FAVOURITES: Ramage is most fond of her exclusive offering of the Smith Brothers' fine furniture line and their accompanying fabric selection. "They have a thousand high fashion, good quality fabrics to choose from. Once you decide on a certain shade, you still have a hundred choices ahead of you."

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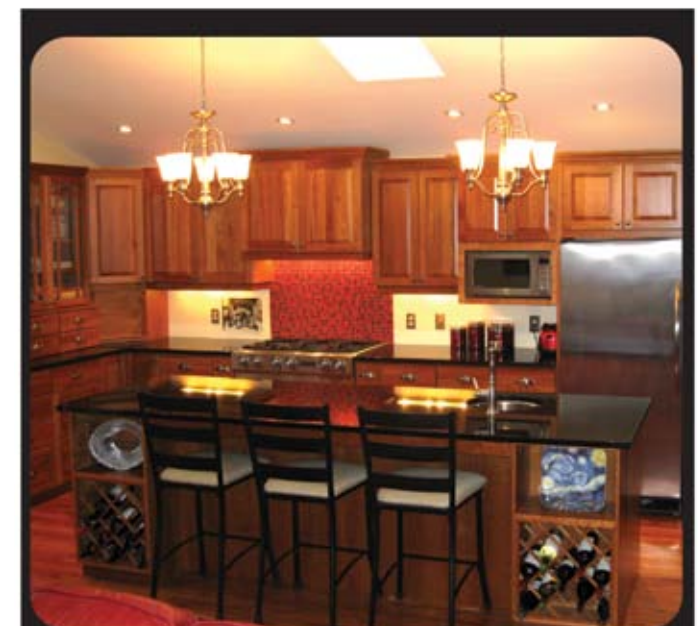
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IS THERE A SIMPLE SOLUTION TO SOARING WATER COSTS?

BY PAUL WILSON

It's been humbling to discover that one of the most expensive items in the never-ending project of improving our old home has been human error – not the architect's, not the contractor's, not the electrician's or the plumber's, but my own. I could probably place a dollar value on how much I've cost myself, but it would be too depressing. Just thinking about it makes me cringe.

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.

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 called the Brac that will do just this. Chris Thompson, who sells it though 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 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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Dreams COME TRUE

BY SAMANTHA MARTIN // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY



This Post and Beam custom house has become a home over the years for the Reaume family.



As the timber frame of this country home in Southgate Township was being hammered together in 1997, neighbours thought it was going to be a church. The rising structure, in fact, was a dream for Nancy and John Reaume – a place to start a family and pursue their hobbies.

Twelve years later, Luke, 10, rides his bike past the dry-stone fence at the end of the driveway (by **Highland Masonry** in Holstein) and down the dirt road to visit his friend. In the backyard, his archery target and golf net wait on his next whim. Inside, his violin sits on the piano, ready for another practice session.

John's medical books, along with photography equipment and light reading, are proudly displayed in a room of their own. Two years ago, what had been stored in boxes in a forgotten space upstairs was brought out into the light when the couple decided they needed to continue refining their dream home. John and Nancy approached **Hanover Kitchen & Bath Gallery** and designer **Karen Thomson** to create a library. The room is a traditional, cosy space filled with books and art. Cherry cabinetry and bookshelves in autumn shadows, with an ebony patina, have been finished with a toe kick and crown moulding, complemented by the maple hardwood floors in Nevada cashmere.

Nancy, an avid and enthusiastic pastry baker who also makes pasta from scratch, still loves the custom kitchen Hanover Kitchen & Bath Gallery crafted for her nearly a decade ago. "I needed a good work space," says Nancy, adding with a laugh that she has more than enough baking and kitchen supplies. The custom kitchen features cherry raised panels, five-piece cabinets with crown moulding and green Corian countertops. Two pantries store supplies for all her baking and cooking needs.

Continued on page 39



The custom kitchen was designed by Nancy to accommodate her love of baking and making pasta from scratch.



The library is the newest room in the home and was custom built to create space for John's photography equipment and the family's books.

This four-bedroom home is a beautiful complement to its natural surroundings. Its exterior façade is composed of granite on the bottom and board-and-batten on the top half. The roof is covered in cedar shingles and a dark shade of green frames the windows and garage doors, highlighting the forest surrounding the home. The generous front porch offers a covered haven for reading and enjoying a cup of coffee.

The foyer of flagstone (**Ledgerrock** in Owen Sound) faces a wall of windows in the great room. The eye passes the soaring ceilings of the second floor loft and the indoor ceramic-tile garden planter, built into the home between the beams to bring a little more of the natural environment inside, to the view beyond. The dropped great room leaves an unobstructed view from the eat-in kitchen and foyer.

The solid Douglas fir beams were reclaimed from a distillery in Belleville by carpenter **Keiran Glass** of **Century Timber Frame** in Durham. The window frames and trim were crafted from the excess material from the beams. The great room boasts a gorgeous view of the family's 100-acre property, comprised of mature forest, a river and a network of trails kept groomed and cleared for relaxing walks and exploring. This property has served John's love of nature photography and Nancy's hobbies as a Girl Guide and Junior Naturalist leader well.

The peaked roofline resembles a grand chalet from the trails behind the home. "The whole family skis, so I like the ski chalet look to it," says Nancy. The piano sits at one end of the dropped great room while the fieldstone fireplace sits at the other. The stones were gathered from John's childhood home in Chatham and crafted into this gas fireplace by stone mason **Steve Hodges** of Southgate Township. It features crossfire chambers and, when lit for only an hour, will radiate heat for another eight hours. The fireplace supports the furnace heat, which is sourced from the well (**Northern Heating & Ventilation**).

The eat-in kitchen features a breakfast bar and dining space surrounded in windows for spectacular views during mealtime. (The home's temperature is balanced with triple-pane, argon-filled Loewen windows and doors.) A spotting scope sits near the table, ready to give John a good look at some warblers snacking at his feeders. French doors open onto the wrap-around back deck with cosy seating to enjoy the cool night air.

Continued on page 40



The family gathers in the great room, sunk a couple of steps to separate the space.



The sitting room upstairs is located in the peak of this chalet-style home and is the perfect hangout spot for son, Luke.

Right: Luke takes time out from biking and golf for some lunch.





LEFT: The library features one of four fireplaces. The cherry custom work has an ebony patina finish, adding a traditional elegance to the room.

ABOVE: Cosy chairs have been placed by the fire to invite afternoon reading.

Nancy and John designed the home to be as convenient for family living as possible. To this end, the main floor also houses the laundry room, formal dining room, bathroom, master suite and en suite.

Up the maple tread and cherry banister staircase, expertly crafted by **Barry Vaine Woodworking**, is an impressive sitting room located in the peak of the structure. To the right is the elegant library and the newest room in the home.

Three grand chairs sit by the gas fireplace: two wingback in a subtle gold (**Country Carpets**), reupholstered by **Dreany's Upholstery**, and one leather. The opposite side of this generous space acts as office with two computers and desktops. Worldly art from **Smitty's Fine Furniture**

give the space an intellectual atmosphere. Draperies in an espresso tone and **Sheerweave** roller blinds filter the light and keep the room cosy along with a large rug in complementary colours from **Plume's Color Your World**. The wiring in the room had to be completely redone (**Dingwall Electric**) to suit the library's needs.

To the left of the peaked sitting room is Luke's space, though the nice weather finds him enjoying the property more than his room the majority of the time.

It may not be a church, as curious neighbours imagined 12 years ago, but it is a gathering place full of love for a family and their growing dreams. **OH**



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PHOTOGRAPHY BY BONNIE FOX
STAGED BY HEATHER SMILLIE
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A home has to be cleaned, de-cluttered and styled before it's put on the market. Presentation is everything. If you want to sell your home quickly, follow these tips and watch the offers roll in.

KNOW YOUR BUYER

Who would buy your home? Would it suit a family, a retired couple or newlyweds? Is it a cottage or a full-time residence? Can a bedroom be converted to a den or office? Play up your home to attract the right buyer.

FAÇADE

A potential buyer will know within the first 15 seconds if your home is a match, so make sure it welcomes buyers with open arms. Your front and back yards should be manicured and your front door should be freshly painted. Nothing should be left lying around the yard.

POINTS OF INTEREST

The entrance of the home makes a strong statement. Highlight an interesting feature like a recycled barn beam. Also make sure to show the versatility of the space by using it effectively. An old church pew makes a long, empty wall in this home the perfect spot for extra seating near the kitchen and back patio. *Continued on page 44*

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DE-CLUTTER

More open space makes it easier for potential buyers to picture their possessions in the home. Keep the walls neutral so buyers can imagine their own colour scheme. The homeowner chose to bathe his home in Para P2707-4, a warm beige colour that complements the natural, eco feel of the home.

TINY DETAILS

Don't assume buyers won't notice the smallest details. Make sure your paint isn't chipped and your floor isn't scuffed. Add fresh flowers to as many rooms as possible. Clean closets and organize your "stuff." Turn on all of the lights so buyers can see easily and don't have to look for switches.



SMELL

Smell is often the first thing a buyer will notice when they enter a home. Make sure to keep their noses happy with a fresh lemon scent (often associated with cleanliness). Some homeowners will bake before an open house or showing to make the home feel cosy. Designer **Heather Smillie** suggests keeping the smell simple and clean.

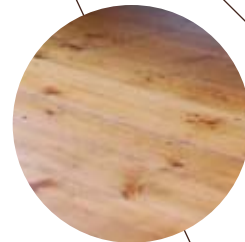


SPACE/SIGHTLINES

Mirrors are your best friend. Besides allowing the buyers to literally see themselves inside the home, they amplify your space and throw additional light into the home. Also, remember that buyers will be checking out the home from all angles, so make sure when you are standing in the doorway of one room, the view of the room down the hall is also pleasing and inviting.

COLOUR

Although you want to keep the home neutral, you also want to add subtle splashes of colour for interest. Use some bright pillows and a throw and carry that same colour throughout the home with simple hints in the décor.



THEME

Your home should flow. If you change your theme in each room, the home and individual spaces feel much smaller. Here, Smillie brought nature inside the home with twigs, shells and artwork to continue the natural, eco feel of the home that **Freeburn Fine Homes** created with reclaimed lumber.

STRENGTHS

Make sure your décor features aren't taking away from the unique features of the home. Highlight the strengths of the home. These include the space (use an appropriate furniture style) and the upgrades (like the floor here). Smillie chose a beach theme in this home to highlight Port Elgin's waterfront and beaches.

Remember less is more. Too much furniture in a room makes the room appear small. Edit and ask your trusted friends what they think. **OH**

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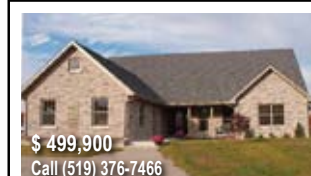


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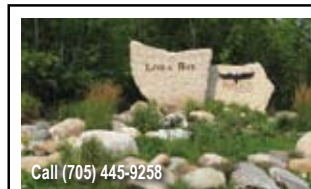
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PRESERVING HERBS

Whether you are a beginner or advanced gardener with a rambling English-style garden, a tiny deck or a sunny windowsill, growing culinary herbs can be one of the most satisfying adventures. BY MARIA DASILVA // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTT HUNTER



These hearty plants are relatively easy to grow organically and are immediately rewarding with their scents, colours and pungent, flavourful foliage. A generous harvest can be preserved to keep that summer-fresh flavour lasting throughout winter. Here's a list of the best ways to preserve some of the most common culinary herbs.

BASIL – Although its rich licorice-like taste might lead you to believe otherwise, drying basil causes it to lose much of its flavour. The best way to preserve basil is to freeze it. Blend a combination of fresh basil leaves with just enough oil or water to make a thick paste. Freeze the paste in ice cube trays then transfer to resealable freezer bags to keep until needed. These cubes are great to boost the flavour of soups, stews and sauces.

CHIVES – Freezing is one of the best methods for preserving chives. Chop the leaves into the lengths you will require and freeze them on a baking sheet to prevent them from clumping together. Transfer the frozen chives to resealable freezer bags to use as needed.

CILANTRO – Like basil, cilantro loses much of its peppery appeal when dried, so freezing is best. Harvest and freeze the carrot-like white roots of cilantro to use in your favourite Thai recipes.

DILL – Dill weed can be preserved by drying or freezing. To dry, spread whole stems on a screen or cooling rack and keep at room temperature until dried through – this can take about a week. Crumble the leaves and keep them in a sealed glass jar.

MINT – Like dill, mint can be preserved by drying or freezing.

OREGANO – The best way to preserve oregano is to dry whole stems. Loosely tie three or four stems together and hang them in a cool dark place until the leaves and stems are dried through – this can take up to two weeks. When the leaves are dry, strip them from the stems and store in a sealed glass container.

PARSLEY – To preserve the bright, fresh flavour and vibrant colour of parsley, it is best to freeze it rather than dry it. Freeze whole sprigs in resealable freezer bags and snip off pieces as needed. The fresh leaves can also be blended with olive oil, garlic and pine nuts or walnuts to make a fresh version of pesto.

ROSEMARY – It's best to dry rosemary in the same way as oregano.

SAGE – Freezing preserves the fresh flavour of sage. Spread fresh leaves on a baking sheet and freeze. Transfer frozen leaves to resealable freezer bags for use as needed. Sage can also be dried. Because the leaves curl as they dry, and their thick foliage holds a lot of moisture, they need a lot of air circulation around them to inhibit the growth of fungus during drying.

THYME – Thyme is best preserved by drying in the same manner as oregano. Or freeze whole sprigs of thyme in resealable freezer bags. This method is best for flavouring stocks, stews, soups or sauces to which the whole sprig is added during cooking and removed just before serving. **OH**



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