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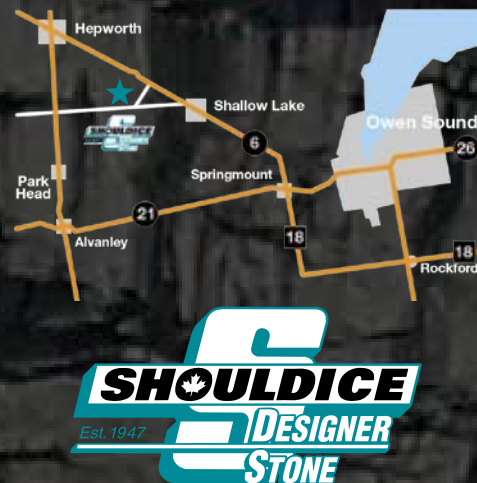
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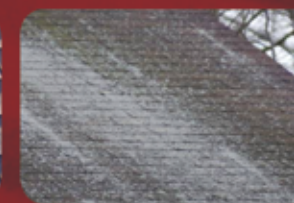
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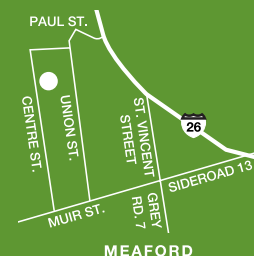
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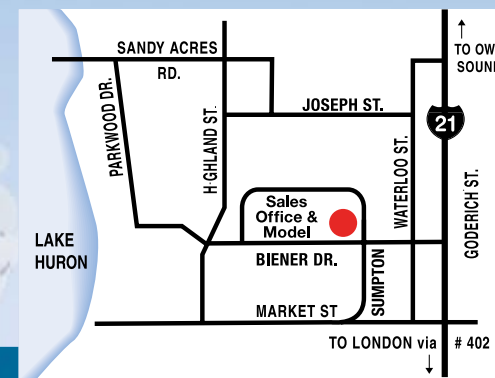
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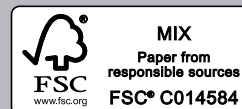
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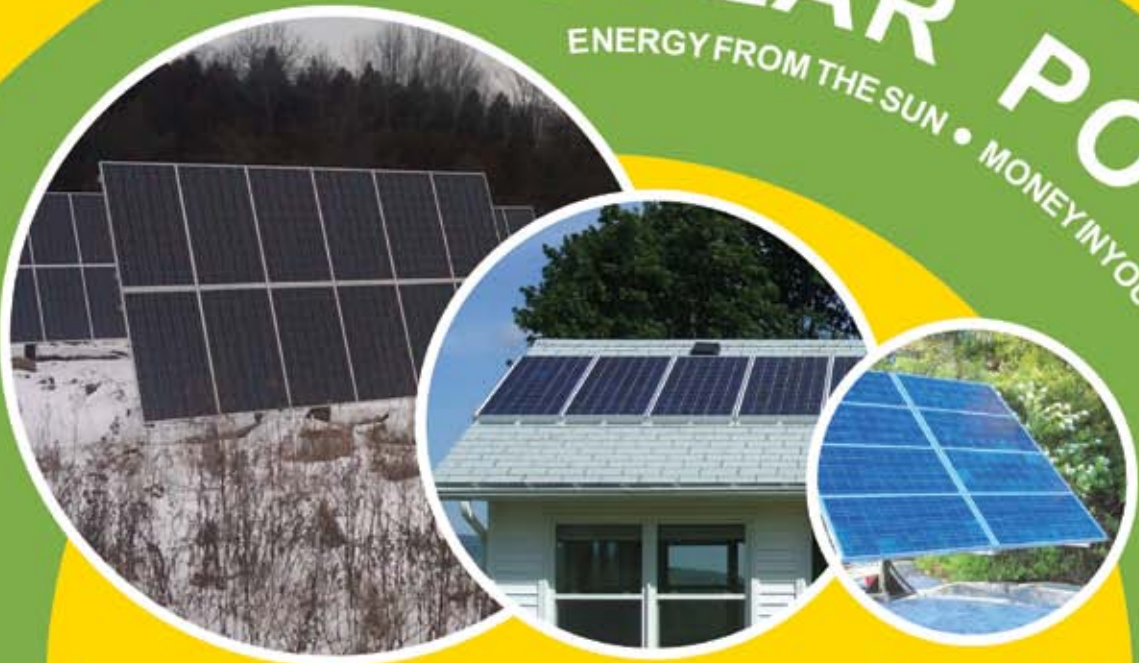
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OUR HOMES welcomes new Managing Editor Shelby Hilson. She replaces Samantha Martin, who has moved to Newfoundland.

I LOVED WINTER GROWING UP. My dad used to make ice rinks in the backyard for me and my sisters and we always had great snowball fights with our neighbours. Picking out a tree and watching Christmas specials in big flannel pyjamas with cookies and hot chocolate were a few of my favourite things, and once I learned how to ski, winter was that much better.

But something changed. I moved away to the city for school and found myself dreading the cold weather. There was no space to play and everywhere I looked, white was turning brown. I thought I was just getting older and my days of bundling up to embrace the snowfall were coming to an end. But thankfully, I was wrong. When I moved back home nearly two years ago, the magic of winter returned. I got out my skates, snowboard, Sorels, board games and everything else that makes this season so much fun.

I love seeing families pile into the local arena with big hockey bags and kids turning a small hill of snow into a mountain of fun. There's nothing more liberating than being the first to bound into a field of fresh, untouched snow, and my dog couldn't agree more.

Instead of hibernating away, the people in Grey and Bruce Counties come alive, and the homeowners of our two feature homes this issue are no exception.

First we take you to Beaver Valley where John and Laura Artibello enjoy a view like no other (page 20). With 50 acres of private trails to explore on skis and snowshoes, and a fabulous space to entertain guests through the holidays, winter is the season this couple looks forward to most.

Further west, just outside of Walkerton, is another couple's cosy retreat (page 36). Maggi Olson and James Cooke completely transformed an old, yellow brick farmhouse into a stylish, shabby chic home with the help of Lang's General Contracting. An ideal place to host both intimate dinner parties and large gatherings, these two couldn't be happier with their reno results.

In these pages you'll also meet some of your neighbourhood heating experts, who share with us the new and best ways to heat our homes (page 24). Or, if you're looking for ways to heat your body, check out the hot tubs and saunas featured in our Comfort Zone (page 30).

I am so happy to be back home and exploring more of Grey and Bruce with OUR HOMES. Bringing you the best of these beautiful counties is something I look forward to for many seasons to come.

Cheers to a wonderful winter, filled with family, friends and fun!

Shelby

Shelby Hilson, Managing Editor
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ON THE COVER

A wonderful winter retreat. Story, page 20. Photography by Sandy MacKay.



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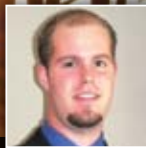
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\$369,900 Walkerton

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Designer Stephanie Redmond answers your questions.

If you need help, send your questions to stephanie@ourhomesmagazine.com

Dear Stephanie

I have a new sideboard in my dining room and I want to hang a painting or a mirror above it. How long should the piece be and how high do I hang it from the top of the sideboard?

- Donna

Stephanie Redmond Replies:

Here are a few simple guidelines to take into account:

- Always inset your artwork to the furniture below. The sideboard should not feel overshadowed by the piece that hangs above.
- Are you using wall sconces on either side of the art? Allow enough breathing room and include that space in your overall measure for width.
- Maintain a relationship with the sideboard by keeping the artwork close. The piece should not feel like it's floating in the space above.
- If using a mirror, you have to consider the distance to the sideboard, but also the reflection.

It's the relationship between the two pieces that is important. The buddy system is a great way to judge this. Have a friend hold it up for you, stand back and see if you like the way it looks. Sometimes it just feels right.

Dear Stephanie

Recently, I've been hearing and seeing a lot about "transitional" style. Can you tell me what it is and how I can introduce this style into my more traditional home?

- Suzanne

Stephanie Redmond Replies:

Key words enter into our lexicon like trends and the word transitional has become a catch-all term for a "cleaned up" traditional look. It has derived from exactly what you are attempting – to streamline your existing traditional décor. You won't ditch everything and switch to ultra-modern, but you're willing to scale back the chintz.

The removal of pattern and introduction of texture plays a key role. To achieve the look, you need to use pattern sparingly. Throw cushions, wallpaper, sofas; these are all acceptable applications, just not together!

Switching to a transitional style is more an exercise in subtraction than addition. Do you have fringe trim on your sofas? Remove it. Do you have a pleated lampshade? Remove it. Do you have a hodge-podge of throw cushions on your sofa? Remove them. All can be replaced with a pared down version.

We don't have to eliminate all things traditional. Transitional is about keeping the good stuff but keeping it simple.

Dear Stephanie

We just bought a very old home with lath and plaster walls. I want to start hanging art, shelves and mirrors but I don't want to make a mess of the already fragile walls. What can I do to make this an easy process?

- Faith

Stephanie Redmond Replies:

The answer is preparation. Have a tape measure, a pencil and a level on hand. Some scotch tape and a note pad are handy. And of course, the appropriate tools and hardware.

ASSEMBLE the items you wish to hang and then place them around your house in the appropriate locations. Remember, you're doing this once, so take your time.

MEASURE twice (or more)! Measure the pieces and mark the holes. Have someone there to help you hold the items up. Don't guess. It's difficult to judge if you're holding something straight when you're right in front of it.

HARDWARE is critical. Plaster walls are sensitive and can easily chip. Ask for the appropriate wall hangers, anchors and drill bits at a hardware store. You will likely need anchors as the lath and plaster is weight sensitive. Use them! You will avoid falling artwork and a chunk of missing wall in the long run.

MESS is containable. For a simple hanger put a small piece of clear tape on the wall, mark the tape with pencil, and then tap the nail in. Sometimes a small piece will chip off and the tape will at least contain that mess. When drilling, hold a piece of paper or dustpan underneath to catch the dust. This stops the fragments from falling to the floor and scattering.

Go for it! **OH**



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style picks

"In the depth of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer." – Albert Camus

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Continued on page 18

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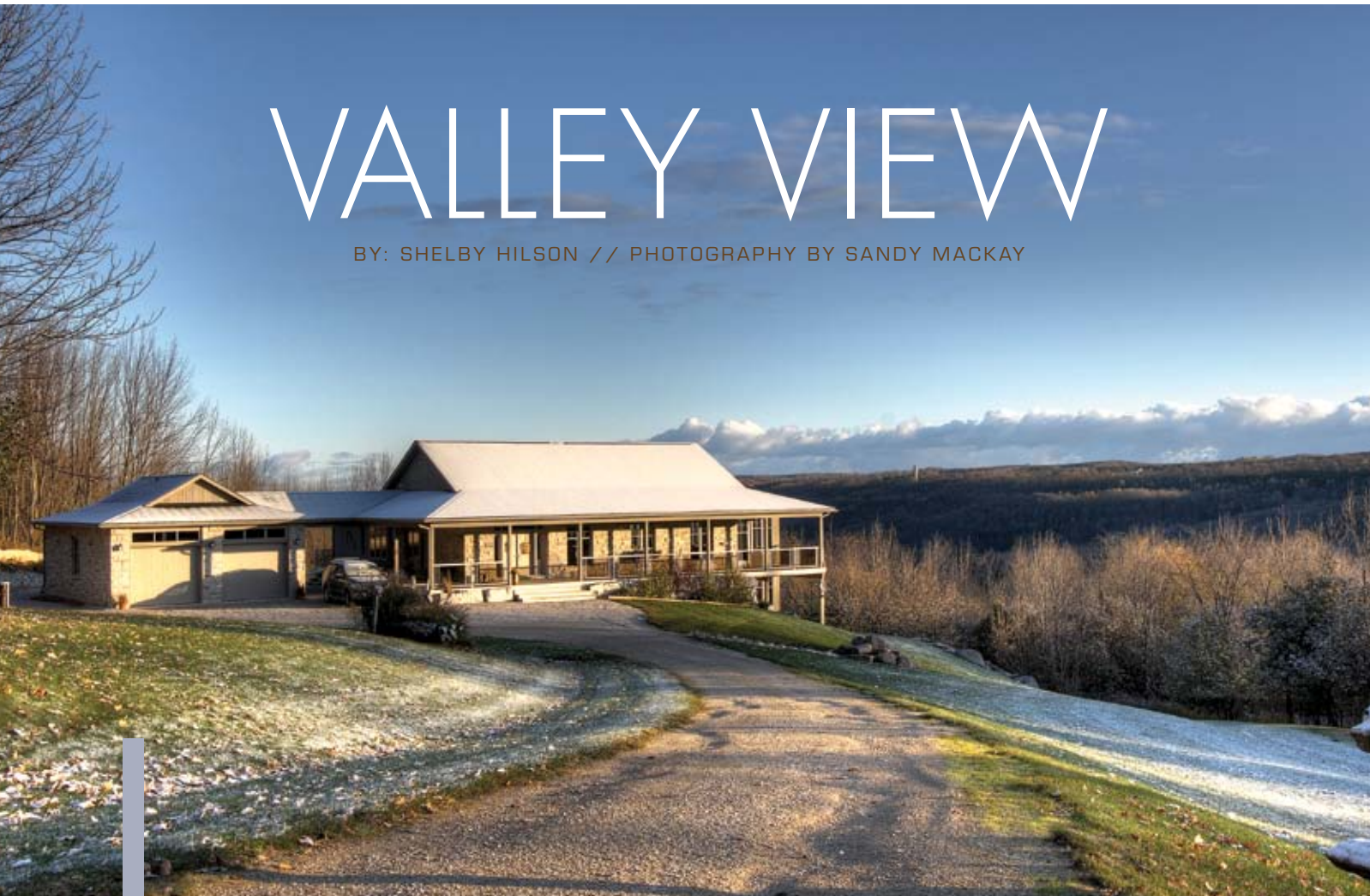
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VALLEY VIEW

BY: SHELBY HILSON // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY



It's something that locals and visitors alike hike for miles to see. Something that many of us don't even know exists so close to home and something that is astonishing no matter the season; no matter how many times you see it.

"We bought a view," says Laura Artibello. She and her husband John have always admired the beauty of the Beaver Valley as long-time members of the Beaver Valley Ski Club. They knew they would someday own a second home here; one they would eventually retire to.

What they didn't know is that every morning they would wake to the view of countless treetops, meandering trails and an endless horizon.

Nearly 15 years ago John stumbled upon the property in awe of the view from the road. He had no idea the land mass stretched to encompass 50 acres and he wasn't in a position to buy, but it was a place that made itself at home in the back of his mind. Then one day, just as they were looking to buy in the Valley, a close friend noticed a "for sale" sign go up and the Artibellos owned the vast property just four days later.

"It was fate!" exclaims Laura.

They didn't build right away. When the couple came to visit they would set up chairs at the top of the property and envision their new home together.

To bring those plans and visions to life, they worked with Architectural

Technologist **Pamela Farrow** of Holstein. With her stamp of approval they brought the plans to Gerald and Paul Lawler of **Gerry Lawler Construction** in Markdale.

Laura can't say enough about the Lawlers. She uses words like impeccable workmanship, trustworthy, knowledgeable, organized, kind, dependable and even, awesome, to describe her experience working with them. She also says they were fairly priced and stayed on budget. She and John chose the Lawlers because they had an "exceptional reputation" and after touring homes they had built, they knew they were the right people for the job.

Gerald Lawler had similar feelings about the Artibellos. "They were the perfect people to build for. They knew exactly what they wanted," he says. "It's a nice feeling when you're working for people like that."

The home was designed with an open-concept living, dining, kitchen and sunroom area, all with a spectacular view to the great outdoors. Having the sunroom as part of the central living space was important to Laura.

Continued on page 22



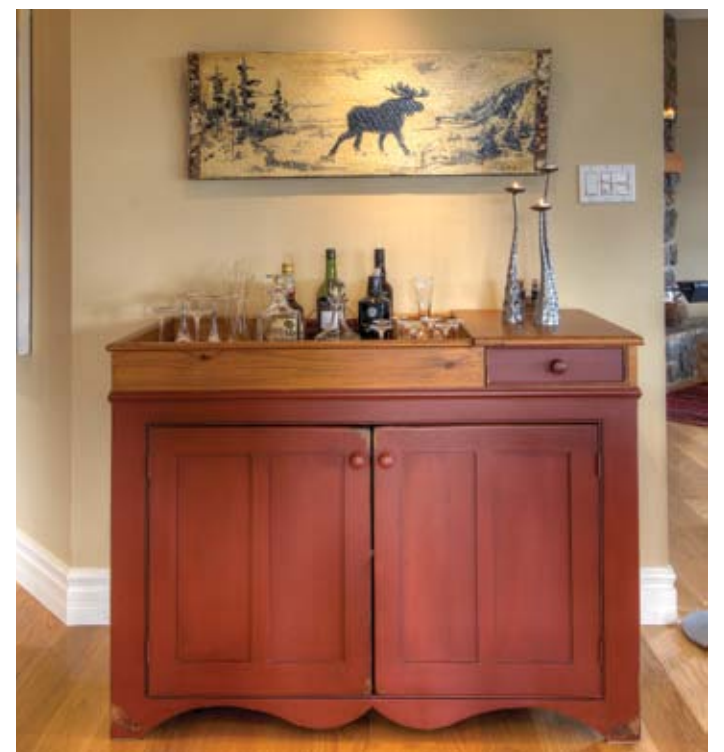
LEFT: This cosy, warm living room is a great place to curl up and watch the snow fall.

A beautiful custom-made harvest table is dressed for guests.



This gorgeous kitchen features a large island where the Artibellos gather with guests and serve buffet-style dinners.

RIGHT: A small rustic bar perfect for après ski.





The master bedroom boasts one of the best views in the house.

RIGHT: Laura Artibello celebrates the fabulous view from her deck.

FAR RIGHT: A back door leads out to the hot tub.



“I wanted a relaxing space that would be included in the life of the house,” she says. “Where you can still be a part of any room activity, inside or out – or just sit quietly and enjoy the view.”

Equipped with walls of windows and a door to each of the two decks, the sunroom is Laura’s favourite place to spend time, along with the kitchen.

Beautiful finished oak flooring runs throughout the main level of the home and meets limestone in the kitchen. A large granite-topped island, complete with painted maple cabinetry, serves as the anchor of the entire living space, creating an ideal spot for gathering with family and friends, and to serve a delicious meal, buffet style as the Artibellos always do.

Just outside the kitchen, the story of their gorgeous harvest table is framed and hung for visitors to read. It was built with first growth Yellow Birch cut during Ontario’s logging days between 1880 and 1910. It remained waterlogged for several decades before it air-dried for three years and was custom built for John and Laura, who love nothing more than a full table sharing great food and wine.



Entertaining guests is something that’s done frequently in this home, which is really no wonder considering the functional layout, the breathtaking view, numerous outdoor activities and Laura’s innate ability to make visitors feel right at home. Just recently, the couple hosted a post-wedding celebration for their only daughter and their new son-in-law.

With professionally maintained, private trails to explore on foot, snowshoes or cross country skis, a new addition to the Bruce Trail just steps away, a hot tub and a great fireplace to cosy up to, John and Laura can’t get enough of winter and neither can their loved ones who come to stay.

Everything about the Artibellos’ home is welcoming, warm and cosy. “It was meant to be lived in,” she says. “There’s only one rule when you come here. You have to dance!”

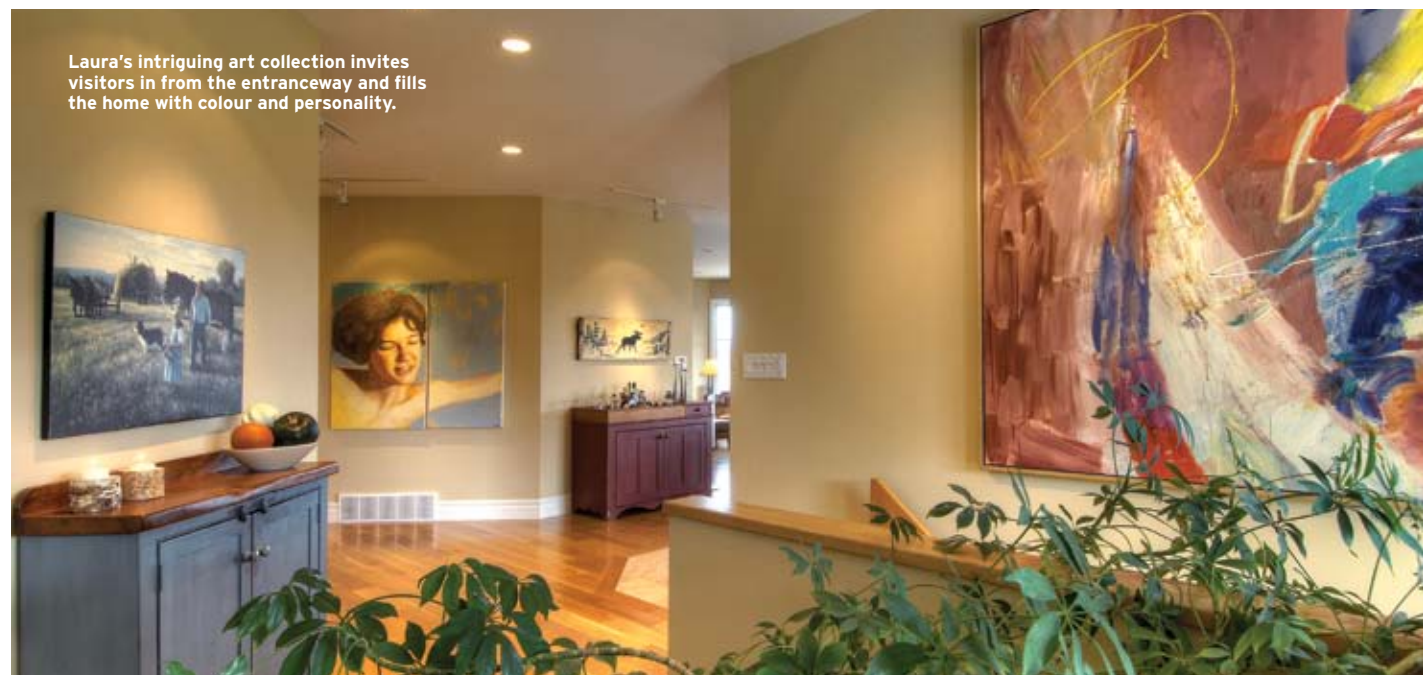
Another feature that makes this home such an intimate space is the phenomenal artwork displayed in nearly every room. Original works by

local artists **Peter Beckett, Pie Atkinson, Jorgen Fleischer, Nick Furguele** and **Louise Moore** fill the home with colour and personality. Laura chooses art that reaches out to her and pulls her in. She doesn’t choose it by the space it will show in or by any particular style, just by what speaks to her and she’ll tell you about each wonderful piece like it was painted just for her.

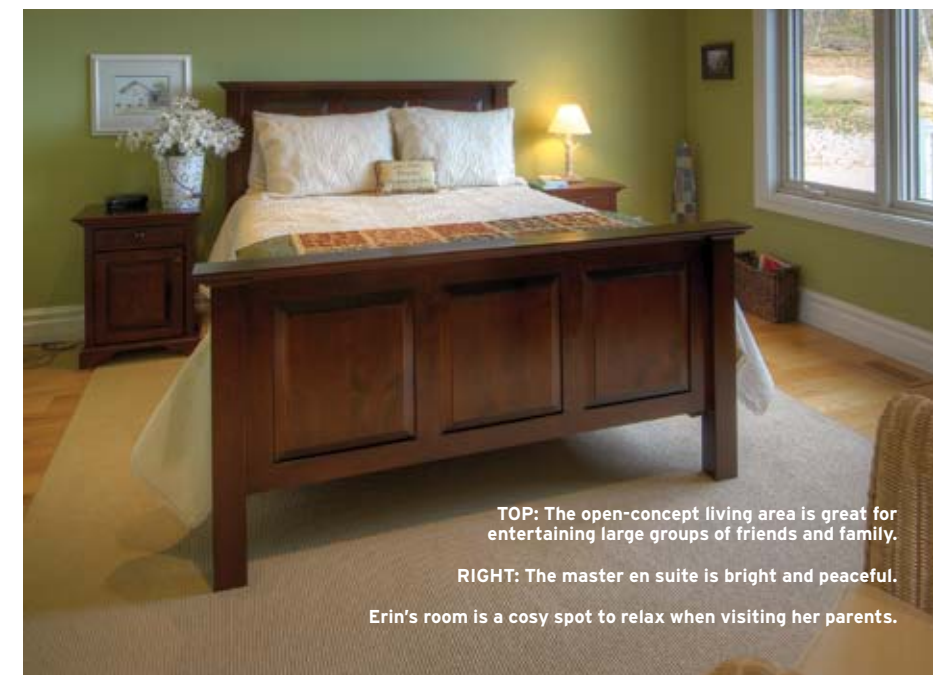
There are three bedrooms on the main level, including a guest room suited for two singles in chalet-style décor, their daughter Erin’s room and the master, which has the most incredible view from both the bed and the luxurious soaker tub in the en suite.

The lower level is yet to be finished, but with a grandchild on the way, John and Laura plan to have the Lawlers finish it for them in the near future.

Until then, the couple will continue to enjoy their weekly retreat and their unmatched view of the Valley; a place that Laura says is still a secret. One that’s “captivating once found; a beautiful part of Ontario.” **OH**



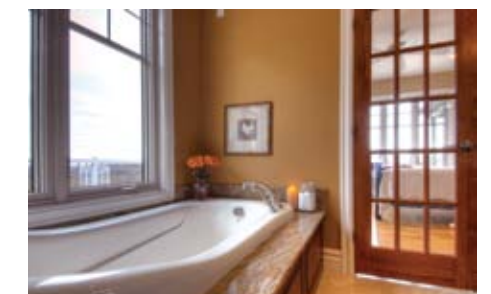
Laura’s intriguing art collection invites visitors in from the entranceway and fills the home with colour and personality.



TOP: The open-concept living area is great for entertaining large groups of friends and family.

RIGHT: The master en suite is bright and peaceful.

Erin’s room is a cosy spot to relax when visiting her parents.



SOURCE GUIDE

Gerry Lawler Construction, Boynton Team RE/MAX, Pamela Farrow, Peek Thru My Window, Edward McNabb Roofing, Peninsula Overhead Doors, Pratt Plumbing & Heating

HOT STUFF

An essential element of any Canadian home is a good heating system. Luckily, Grey and Bruce Counties are home to a number of heating experts who can help you choose and install the heating system that's right for you and your home – from wood burning fireplaces and pellet stoves to high efficiency geothermal products and in-floor heating. PHOTOGRAPHY BY BONNIE FOX

ROB & ERIN WEPPLER ▶

LIVES: Keady

COMPANY: Air-Tech Mechanical

SPECIALTY: Home comfort systems and restaurant exhaust systems

THE BEST WAY TO WARM UP IN THE WINTER IS... relaxing by the fireplace.

UNIQUE SERVICES: We offer custom designed systems for each project and have been a qualified YORK dealer for over 30 years.

TRENDS: In-floor heating and indoor air quality products

FAVOURITE PRODUCT: YORK's high efficiency modulating furnace



◀ TOM RAMAGE

LIVES: Owen Sound

COMPANY: Northern Heating & Ventilation and Classical Gas Inc.

SPECIALTY: Design and installation of geothermal heating and cooling products

THE BEST WAY TO WARM UP IN THE WINTER IS...

to have your heating systems inspected for reliability, efficiency and safety, then grab your clubs and head south.

UNIQUE SERVICES: Green technology solutions for residential and commercial HVAC applications

TRENDS: Higher efficiency green products, reducing fossil fuel consumption and dependency

Continued on page 26



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people

CRAIG THOMPSON ▼

LIVES: Shelburne

COMPANY: Hearth & Leisure

SPECIALTY: Wood and gas stoves and fireplaces, as well as pellet stoves

THE BEST WAY TO WARM UP IN THE WINTER... is in front of our Pacific Energy stove with my wife and kids and lots of hot chocolate!

UNIQUE SERVICES & PRODUCTS:

We specialize in sales, service and installation of wood and pellet stoves. Our stoves are installed to WETT standards. During the summer we also sell local handcrafted furniture, hammocks and Canadian-made pedal boats.

YEARS IN BUSINESS: 34

TRENDS: Buying local and Canadian made products. We always try to provide high-quality Canadian products.

FAVOURITE STYLE OF STOVE:

Pacific Energy Alderlea T5 in matte black. **OH**



▲ PAUL WILSON

LIVES: Owen Sound

COMPANY:

The Fyre Place & Patio Shop

SPECIALTY:

Wood and gas fireplaces

THE BEST WAY TO WARM UP

IN THE WINTER IS...

around the fire with friends.

UNIQUE PRODUCTS:

Modern and contemporary fireplaces

YEARS IN BUSINESS: 38

FAVOURITE STYLE OF FIREPLACE:

Clean looking. I like a large, unobstructed viewing window.

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7. REALTORS® will prepare you for the entire transaction process - REALTORS® will go through the entire sales transaction with you and ensure every detail is handled properly - so there are no surprises and you know exactly what to expect.
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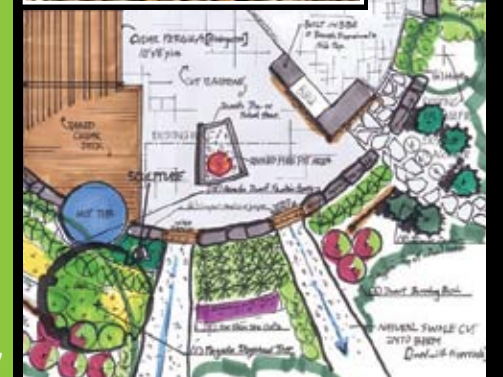
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ALMOND CRESCENT COOKIES

BY MARIA DASILVA // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTT HUNTER

I don't consider myself a sweet tooth. I'm more of a salty snack kind of girl. But at this time of year, everything changes! I scour through magazines, search my favourite food websites and flip through cookbooks to come up with my baking list. The list gets written and re-written. Shopping lists are created and re-created. Finally, cuts are made and decisions are final and the baking begins.

I have been looking at old traditions and thinking about creating new ones. That's why almond crescent cookies are at the top of my baking list. These simple, yet elegant, melt-in-your mouth cookies have roots in Eastern European history and were a staple on my Hungarian grandmother's table. So as you start to consider your own baking list for this year, consider family traditions, especially the ones dearest to your heart. And add some new ones, like almond crescents!

ALMOND CRESCENT COOKIES

Makes about 36

1 cup unsalted butter, softened
¼ cup icing sugar
¼ tsp almond extract
Pinch salt
1 cup ground almonds
1 ¾ cups all-purpose flour
Extra icing sugar for dusting

- Beat butter with icing sugar, almond extract and salt. Stir in ground almonds until well combined. Stir in flour until well combined. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour.
- Shape, by scant 1 tablespoonful, into about 2½-inch logs, tapering ends. Shape logs into crescents and place on parchment paper-lined baking sheet.
- Bake in 325°F oven until bottoms and edges are golden, 18 to 20 minutes. Let cool on pan for 10 minutes. Sprinkle with icing sugar.
- Transfer to rack and let cool. Sprinkle with additional icing sugar before serving. **OH**

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For more info please call 519.506.1000
www.ourprojectcentre.com (Please see ad on page 31)



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us how the newly painted rooms in their home help them to feel rejuvenated. It may be that the colours are dramatically different than they were before, or some walls that were in bad repair are now looking like new or that by painting the 70's style wood trim white, the rooms now look more contemporary. As well, a customer may express his feelings of gratitude and pride when seeing his wood home newly stained in a beautiful neutral colour that looks great in its natural setting.

The before photo in this feature shows a back porch and laundry room that was too dark because of the wood that had been in this room

for years. The customer was unsure as to how this room could be "revived" so she called Re-Shine! We used an airless sprayer to spray on a flat exterior stain in a light colour and painted the trim and doors white! Here are the exact words of the customer "...our back porch has been transformed from dreary and claustrophobic to bright and airy!"

Occasionally we are asked how the name Re-Shine came into being. Just think of all these great words: redecorate, renew, restore, refinish, repair, revitalize and RESULTS! Re-Shine says it all in one word!

For more photos and for our contact information, please check out our website at www.re-shine.ca (Please see ad on page 45)

FREE E-WASTE

Grey Bruce is now home to the ReStore E-Waste service. It's free and everyone can participate. Just bring your used working or broken E-Waste to your local ReStore, or call for a site closest to you. E-Waste accepts all computer and related equipment, TV's, radios, stereos, cameras and many more items. We can help you host an E-Waste Day at your place of employment or with your community organization.

All funds generated through the ReStore E-Waste program are dedicated to helping Habitat for Humanity Grey Bruce house projects.

This holiday season as you upgrade your electronic equipment, please remember the Restore E-Waste Program, and donate your unwanted equipment so we can continue to build homes and hope. Thank you for your ongoing support.

For a complete E-Waste list go to: www.Restoresgreybruce.com and look under the E-Waste tab or call the ReStore Owen Sound at 519.371.6714 or Hanover ReStore 519.364.5100

(Please see ad on page 43)



HOT AND BUBBLY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BONNIE FOX



THE PLACE: If you're looking for a reminder of summer this chilly season, look no further than Water & Wellness in Walkerton. As you enter the 3,500 sq. ft. showroom of hot tubs, saunas, pools and patio furniture, memories of the warmer months return. What opened as the Water Centre 10 years ago, was sold in 2009 to co-owners Kelly Devries and Jeff Scheper who changed the name to its current, more encompassing name. With a large selection of quality hot tubs and saunas, this is the place to go to bring warmth and relaxation into your home this winter.

THE STYLE: The store carries several of Hydropool's Canadian-made, Self-Cleaning and Serenity hot tub models so you can climb on in one to see if it's the right fit for you. Water & Wellness also sells a number of indoor and outdoor saunas, as well as patio heaters so you can extend your outdoor entertaining season long past the first frost.

Continued on page 32



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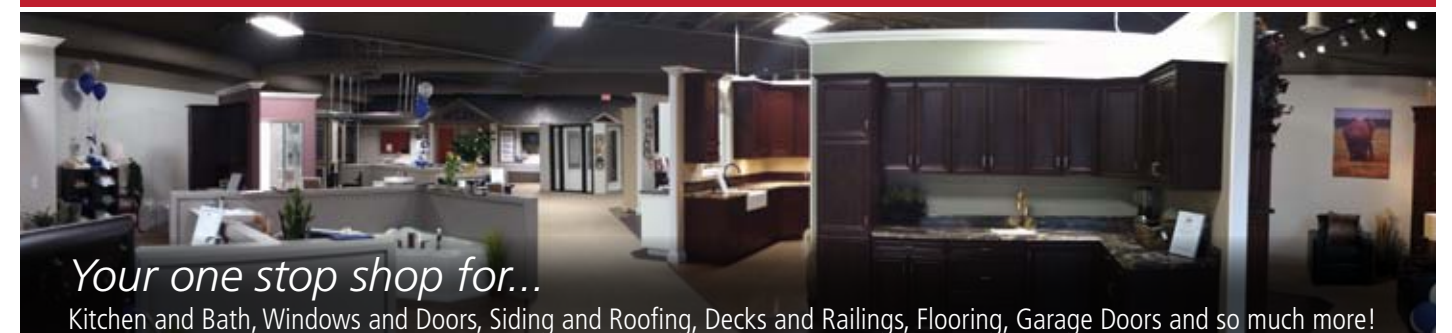
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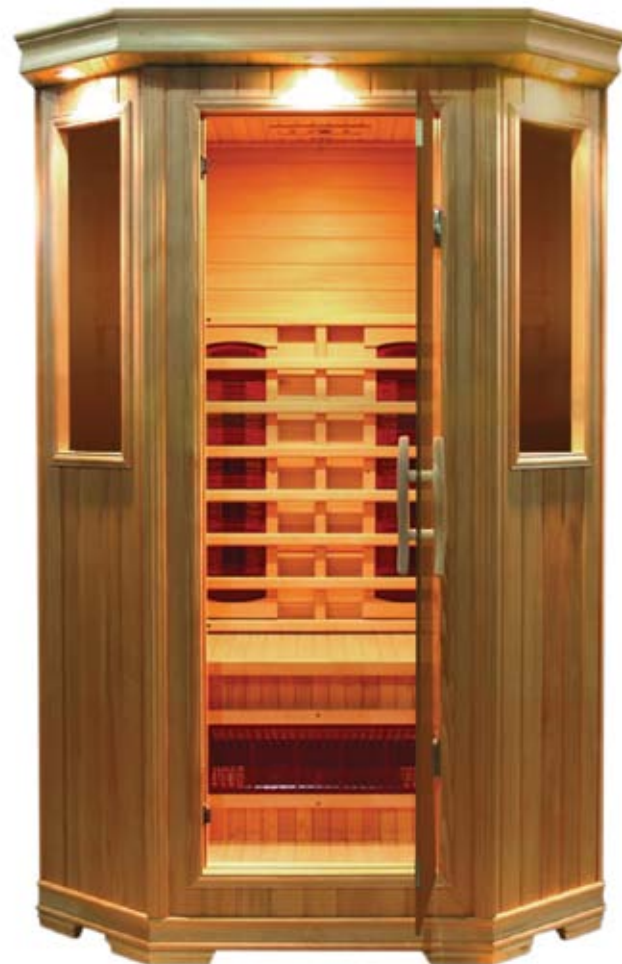
WHAT'S HOT: Salt water tubs are growing in popularity and Devries lists three reasons why. He says that the water in salt water tubs lasts longer between refills and produces bromine

so you don't have to add chlorine or bromine tablets. He also says "they feel really nice." The salt concentration matches what is naturally produced by our bodies so it doesn't dry out our skin.

SEASONAL: Although the store offers a variety of products and services that include purified water dispensing, tanning, infrared sauna sessions and hydrotherapy massages, the snowy months are all about staying cosy and entertaining at home, and there's no better way to do that than to soak in a bubbly hot tub or relax in a sweltering sauna.

FAVOURITES: Devries has two favourites that he shares with many of his customers - Hydropool's self-cleaning, salt water hot tub and the bar table with fire burner in the centre. The store's line of high-end, cast aluminum patio furniture is designed for use and enjoyment year round with built-in fire features.

WHERE: 102 Kincardine Rd., Walkerton, 519.881.0746 www.waterandwellness.ca **OH**



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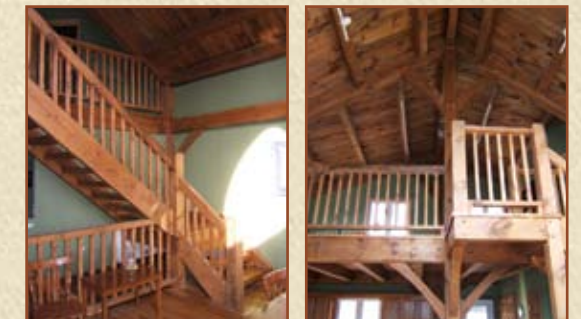
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BY PAUL WILSON



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

The other day, I got a phone call from an electricity retailer, one of those companies that offer you stable electricity prices for a period of three or five years. Such offers seem to make sense, because every April and November, the Ontario Energy Board “adjusts” the price we pay for hydro, usually upward.

It wasn't the first time they'd called, yet in the past, I've always turned them down, and for two reasons. First, the price the retailers offered per kilowatt hour was always more than we were paying at the time. And second, because the cost

of the electricity itself is only a fraction of the total monthly power bill, the savings have never seemed that significant. The rest of the bill – up to 60 per cent most months – is made up of annoying extras like cost of delivery, debt retirement, something called “regulatory charges,” the new HST, plus an additional 1.1 per cent to make up for “losses in transmission.” Nobody is offering us savings on that part of it.

In the meantime, however, a lot has changed, or is about to, in how we are billed for electricity. Most of us will soon have activated “smart meters” that can record not only how much we use, but what time of the day we use it. It's called Time of Use (TOU) metering and as the system is rolled out across the province, the utilities will charge us higher rates during peak periods – midday in the summer, mornings and evenings in the winter – when the cost of producing electricity goes up. Parts of Ontario, notably Toronto, already have TOU billing, and since May 1st of this year, they've been paying 9.9 cents per kWh at peak, 8.0 at mid-peak, and 5.3 from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m. on weekdays, and all weekend. These prices will probably go up again.

The new system makes a lot of sense. During the daily peaks, the nuclear power plants that are the main providers can't keep up with demand, so the coal and gas-powered plants are brought on line to make up the difference. Peak power is both more expensive and dirtier than nuclear (at least in the short run). Reducing demand at peak, the argument goes, will lower costs and benefit the environment. This is where the smart meters, and TOU billing, come into their own.

To take full advantage of smart metering, it helps to understand a little more about how the system as a whole works. Dave Watts, a communications officer for Hydro One, which services 1,200,000 customers in Ontario, explained it to me this way: every smart meter has a small, 2.4 gigahertz radio inside that can link to other meters in what he

calls a “self-healing mesh network.” This means that your smart meter is in radio communication with other nearby meters. Our meter, say, talks to our neighbour's meter across the road, and theirs, in turn, connects with their neighbours until they're all joined up in a daisy-chain of smart meters busily passing their tiny digital bundles of information up to a regional collector, where it is sorted and passed on to a central data warehouse. (The network is self-healing because if one smart meter breaks down, for whatever reason, the meter immediately before it in the chain will automatically look for the next available meter and link to it.)

The information from the data warehouse will be posted each day at 5 a.m. on your utility's website. When your meter is activated for TOU billing, you will be able to register and then access your individual account. This will give you a snapshot of your daily electricity usage, the times you use it, how much it's costing you, and how your current usage compares with yesterday, last week or last month. It will also post outside temperatures at time of use, and show you what you'd be paying to a retailer for the same usage.

If we did nothing to change our daily patterns, our electricity bills would obviously go up. But the power to monitor our usage is a great incentive to shift certain activities, like dishwashing, hot water heating, laundry, air conditioning and so on, into off-peak hours.

How much will we be able to save? Dave Watts told me that in a survey of users already connected to TOU metering, 76 per cent saved an average of around \$5.00 a month, while the rest spent an average of \$1.75 more. It doesn't sound like much, but if you remember that most of those savings come from shifting electricity use to off-peak hours, the social benefits – less dirty power generation at peak hours – are enormous.

The energy retailers are still in business, but with the imminent arrival of TOU billing, their pitch has changed. Now, instead of offering to protect me from rising prices, they are offering, in essence, to protect me from my own laziness. Without ever saying it in so many words, the agent suggested that TOU would be a colossal and expensive pain in the butt. What were we going to do? Have candle-lit dinners every night? Wash our dirty shirts at midnight? Get up dark and early for breakfast? Instead of this hassle, he was offering me a fixed rate of about seven cents per kWh for three years, bypassing the TOU system altogether.

It sounds attractive, but you know what? I like the idea of being able to take more control of our consumption of electricity. I like the idea of saving a few bucks a month while helping to reduce our carbon footprint. So I told the retailer I'd take a pass, for now. Once my smart meter is operating, I'll be able to compare my options. But it's not just about savings. Who knows, maybe the occasional candle-lit dinner might turn out to have some wonderful side effects, the kind that can't be measured in mere dollars and cents. **OH**

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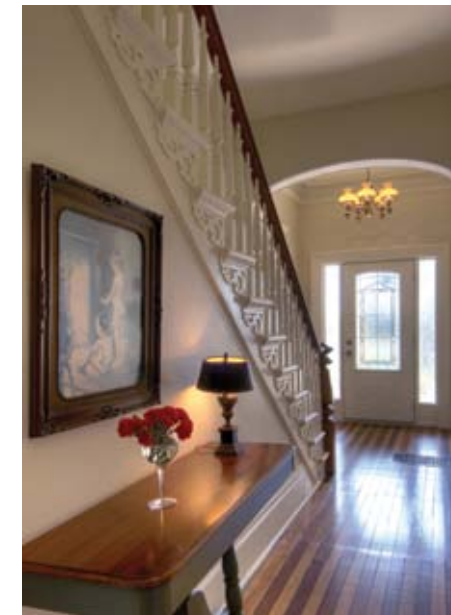
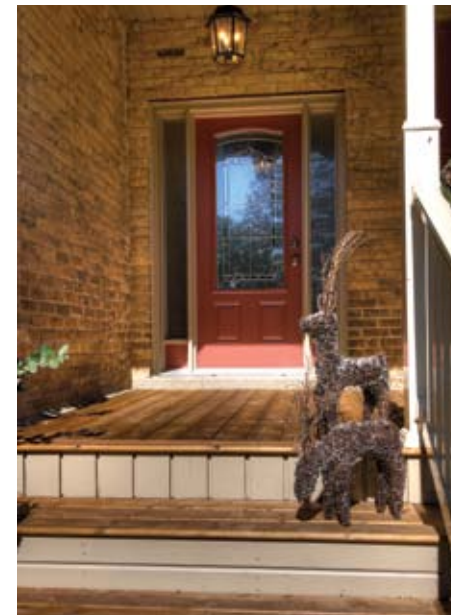
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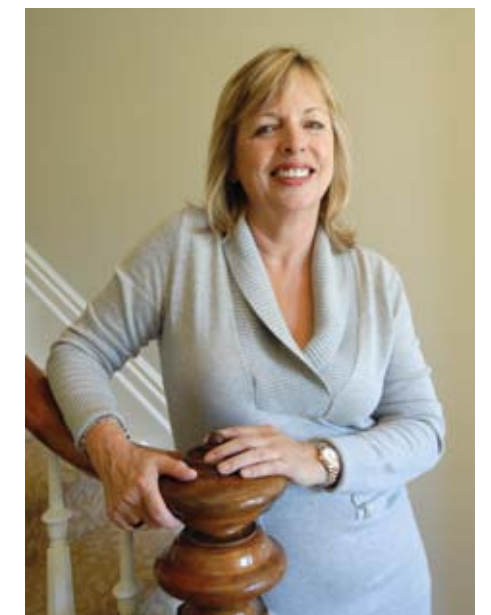
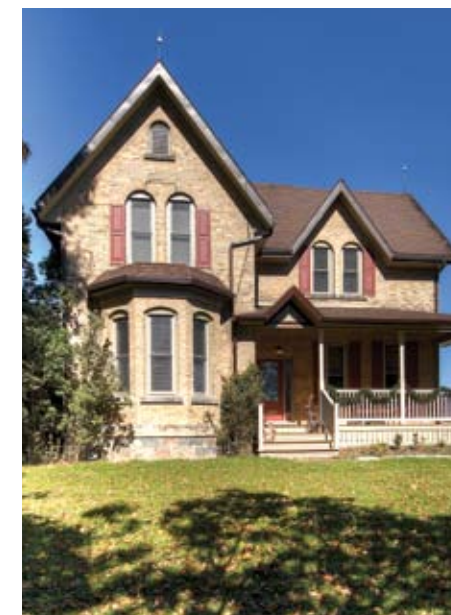
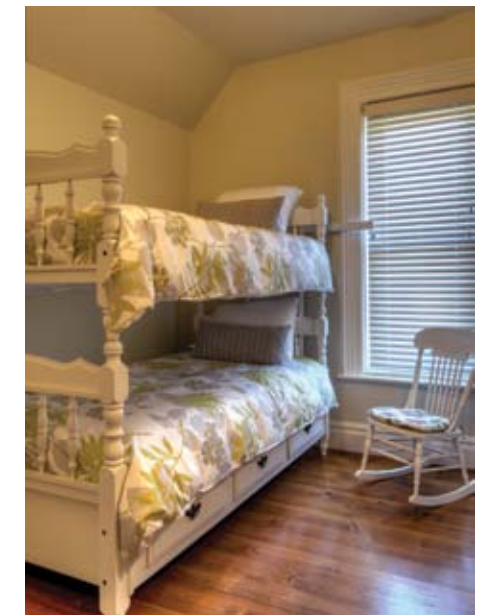


FARMHOUSE *facelift*



BY JIM FOX
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
SANDY MACKAY

Outside of Walkerton
a plain yellow brick
farmhouse, circa 1868,
has been transformed into an
architectural poster girl
for contemporary shabby
chic design. *Continued on page 38*



This beautiful dining room is set for a festive gathering with friends and family.

BELOW: A lounge area off the kitchen features a fabulous retro bar and was designed with entertaining in mind.

BOTTOM: The large kitchen island is multifunctional and serves as an informal dining area.



TOP: James and Maggi's kitchen underwent a complete renovation to include all new cabinetry, appliances, an island and a view to the vast farmland outdoors.

LEFT: One of four lovely spare bedrooms. Each features a random room number on the door in the style of an old bed and breakfast.

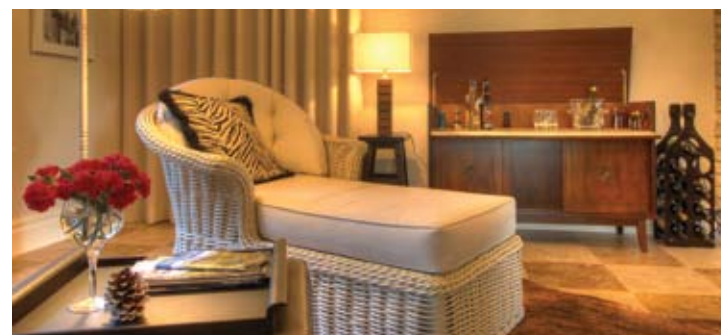
The term shabby chic was coined in the 1980s, becoming popular in North America in the 1990s with a surge of eclectic decorating styles on the west coast with heavy influences from Provence, Tuscany and Greece.

It is a soft, relaxed decorating approach that is comfortable and inviting. In general, shabby chic highlights décor that is stylish rather than fashionable, where style reflects quality as opposed to newness. The definition suits this revitalized farmhouse to a T.

The instigators of this change are homeowners Maggi Olson and James Cooke. The Cooke family purchased the farm in 1974. The only renovations until now took place in 1981 when they renovated the kitchen and added a garage and mudroom area, along with a 20 by 40-foot indoor swimming pool.

To complete the latest renovations the homeowners enlisted the help of Gord Lang of **Lang's General Contracting** in Walkerton. Lang, in business for 25 years, specializes in renovations, new home construction and additions. His practical knowledge allowed Cooke and Olson to transform the farmhouse from a worn, tired Victorian lady into a classy, modern maiden that is eminently functional while maintaining its historic charm.

"Maggi and Jim were wonderful to work with," Lang says. "What started out with the renovation of upstairs bedrooms snowballed into something much bigger... I admire Jim, who lived in the house for years, for dealing with all the surprises and accepting the changes. It was an education for all of us. Jim absorbed it all and made the right decisions as the renovation progressed."



Like many home renewal projects, this one began with minor adjustments that soon revealed the need for a major overhaul. The renovation began modestly with the refurbishing of the five bedrooms. This change demanded more than a mere coat of paint.

Work included the replacement of the interior plaster walls in the bedrooms, the removal of a lowered panel ceiling and its replacement with drywall, tearing out carpets, followed by the sanding and staining of the original wood floors, re-trimming of doors and windows, a complete gutting and retrofitting of the bathroom and the replacement of exterior soffits and fascia.

The home's rebirth benefitted greatly from Olson's past experience in home design and construction. She works in real estate in Collingwood, and in the past acted as her own general contractor in the building of two new homes.

Olson admits she was the one who spurred on the project. "I kept pushing to revamp the farmhouse," she admits. "We pushed on from room to room and Jim became more comfortable with the changes as time went on. Along with interior changes we added a front and side porch as well as air conditioning and heated floors in some areas. We basically re-built the house. Gord Lang joked that our home was the job that never ended."

As renovations proceeded from upstairs to the rooms on the main floor, Olson's plan for this historic home was clear from the outset. "My original vision for the house was to strip back to reveal the grand old lady underneath," she says. "I could almost feel her stretch and smile as we reclaimed her. With the work done, the Victorian lady now functions as a 21st century home."

Continued on page 40

home & builder

Lang acknowledges that the changes were made easier by the reliable circle of tradesmen who work with him, including Dave Marshall of **Dave's Drywall Service**, painter **Mike Turnbull**, as well as **Cuneo Interiors** and **Emke Schaab ClimateCare** in Walkerton.

On the main floor, a window and glass door was added to the spacious country kitchen to allow natural light to flood the room. A cumbersome 80s industrial kitchen was removed and replaced with the clean lines of ample white cabinetry by Daryl Johnson of **Johnson Woodworks** and a more modest stainless steel gas range and refrigerator/freezer from **Modern Appliances and Electronics** in Hanover. Sand laminate was used on all countertops and the island surface. The colour complements the ceramic floor tiles, adding warmth to the space.

The focal point of the kitchen is the oversized island incorporating a double sink that is a natural gathering place for family and friends. The island has unique turret legs of natural wood to mimic huge harvest tables of old.

The kitchen area opens into a light-filled dining room, where, as in the other rooms, revitalized furniture and lighting accentuate the sense of comfort and quality. To breathe new life into traditional furniture and light fixtures the homeowners employed the spray-painting skills of **Rob Miller** and the electrical expertise of **Weber Electrical Service**.

Likewise, the kitchen provides easy access to an office, living room and study, which utilize revamped and repainted furnishings to create a clean, relaxed feeling and save treasured items from the landfill.

The homeowners were pleased with the final results of the nine-month renovation. Olson says, "All the trades were excellent to work with. And Gord was so patient. He hung in there through it all." As a small thank you, the owners invited all those who worked on the reconstruction and their families to dinner to review their completed home.

This home's renovation is an excellent model for other homeowners who wish to revamp a tired turn-of-the-century farmhouse. "There are so many homes in the area that could use this change," Lang says.

Olson continues to be thrilled with her home's resurrection. "I love the transformation! I can feel the change in the energy of the house," she says. "Now that the work is done the fun part begins. We will take time to enjoy it with friends and family. We have the best of both worlds. The home looks lived in because of the historic style and familiar furniture. This sense of time exists in the house along with the new functionality and modern finishes."

Asked about her renovation experience, Olson says, "I loved doing it. I always wanted to makeover a traditional farmhouse. I've always wanted to live in a laid-back farm and with our children grown this will be the perfect weekend home – a wonderful gathering place." **OH**



LEFT: The front living room brings old and new together with a selection of painted pieces. Olson had the backing from the shelves torn out to add brightness to the room.

BOTTOM LEFT: The upstairs washroom reflects the style of the home, creating a relaxing atmosphere with flair.

BOTTOM RIGHT: The master bedroom is simple, stylish and calm – everything Maggi wanted in her weekend retreat.



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DESIGNED BY ANDREA RAMACIERI
WRITTEN BY SHELBY HILSON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BONNIE FOX

Bring your old, worn furniture back to life with little more than a splash of paint. Designer Andrea Ramacieri has taken two less than gorgeous garage sale finds and turned them into practical pieces to be proud of.



BAR CART:

Who would have guessed this old, rusty brass teacart could be transformed into a stylish bar cart so easily? Its timeless appeal makes it a lovely addition to any entertaining space and it's easy to move from room to room. For this piece, Andrea used a spray paint primer and a Tremclad Hammered finish spray in Charcoal Grey. Be sure to remove the glass before painting and don't replace it until dry.



SIDE TABLE:

An everyday side table, which you can often find for a couple of dollars at a garage sale, is given a polished look to suit a contemporary style. The curvy shape of this find will add character to any living space. With a light sand, some primer and a couple of coats of a finish paint, your side table will look as good as new – or even better! The colour seen here is Grand Piano by Benjamin Moore kitchen and bath paints. **OH**



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finishing touch

fun in the tub

...WITH HANDMADE BATH PRODUCTS

BY TARA CHATTELL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SAMANTHA MARTIN

Bath bombs and fizzies are easy to make and fun to use. With the giving season upon us, they make the perfect girly gift. Or, gather your friends and have a make-and-take party. OUR HOMES encourages you to use your favourite scents.

BATH FIZZIES

TOOLS: Small spray bottle, plastic droppers (pipettes), silicone ice-cube trays, sifter, metal spoon and mixing bowl.

INGREDIENTS: (makes about 24 cubes)

Eucalyptus Lemon

7 drops of eucalyptus essential oil

7 drops of lemon essential oil

About 10 drops of green food colouring (more if desired)

1 tsp matcha tea powder (optional)

½ cup citric acid

1 cup baking soda

¾ cup cornstarch

¼ cup organic cane sugar

Vanilla Orange

10 drops vanilla essential oil

5 drops orange fragrance oil

About 10 drops of red and yellow food colouring (more if desired)

½ cup citric acid

1 cup baking soda

¾ cup cornstarch

¼ cup organic cane sugar

DIRECTIONS:

- Sift together citric acid, baking soda, cornstarch and matcha tea powder (optional for eucalyptus fizzies) into a mixing bowl. Stir in cane sugar.
- Using pipette, add oils, one drop at a time, until desired scent strength is reached.
- Fill spray bottle with water and add food colouring. Spray mixture lightly, stirring constantly, until mixture becomes damp enough to pack with your hand and colour is even throughout. Do not over spray or mixture will start to fizz.
- Spoon mixture into ice-cube trays and press down firmly.
- Allow to dry in trays, at room temperature, for 24 hours.
- Carefully pop individual cubes out of tray by pushing up from bottom.
- Allow cubes to dry exposed for another 24 hours before transferring to containers.

TIP: Use matcha tea with scents that are strong enough to mask the scent of the tea and when the green colour of the tea is beneficial to the final colour you would like to achieve.



BATH BOMBS

TOOLS: Plastic pipettes, large or small round moulds (we've used plastic ornament balls), metal spoon and mixing bowl.

INGREDIENTS: (makes 2 large or 4 small)

Candy Apple

6 drops apple fragrance oil

1 drop orange fragrance oil

3 drops vanilla essential oil

About 5 drops red and 3 drops yellow food colouring

2 ½ cups epsom salts

2 tbsp water

Orange Marmalade

5 drops orange fragrance oil

2 drops lemon essential oil

3 drops vanilla essential oil

About 5 drops yellow and 2 drops red food colouring

2 ½ cups epsom salts

2 tbsp water

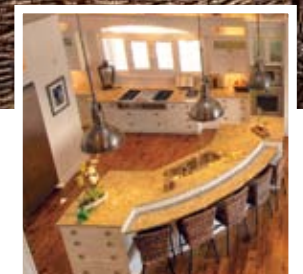
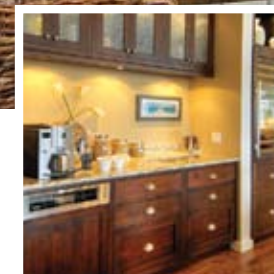
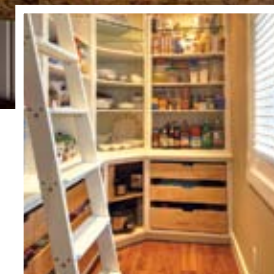
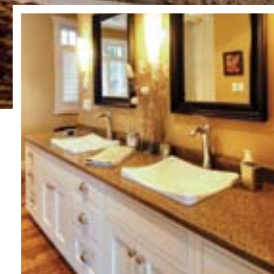
DIRECTIONS:

- Stir together epsom salts and water in mixing bowl.
- Using pipette, add oils, 1 drop at a time, until desired scent strength is reached. Add food colouring.
- Spoon mixture into both halves of moulds and pack firmly. Press both halves together until they connect. Carefully remove top half of mould.
- Let ball stand, mould side down, for 24 hours.
- Once exposed side is completely dry hold the ball in your hand, exposed side down, and very carefully remove mould. Set ball on dry side and allow to completely dry out, approximately 3-4 days before transferring to containers.

TIPS: Set balls on upside-down bottle caps while drying to stop them from rolling. Allow larger balls to dry a little longer before transferring to containers, to avoid crumbling.

Remember: You can find the ingredients at your local bulk-food store, craft outlet or health-food provider. **OH**

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