

FALL 2010

STYLE ■ COMFORT ■ IDEAS ■ REAL ESTATE

ourhomes

G R E Y & B R U C E C O U N T I E S

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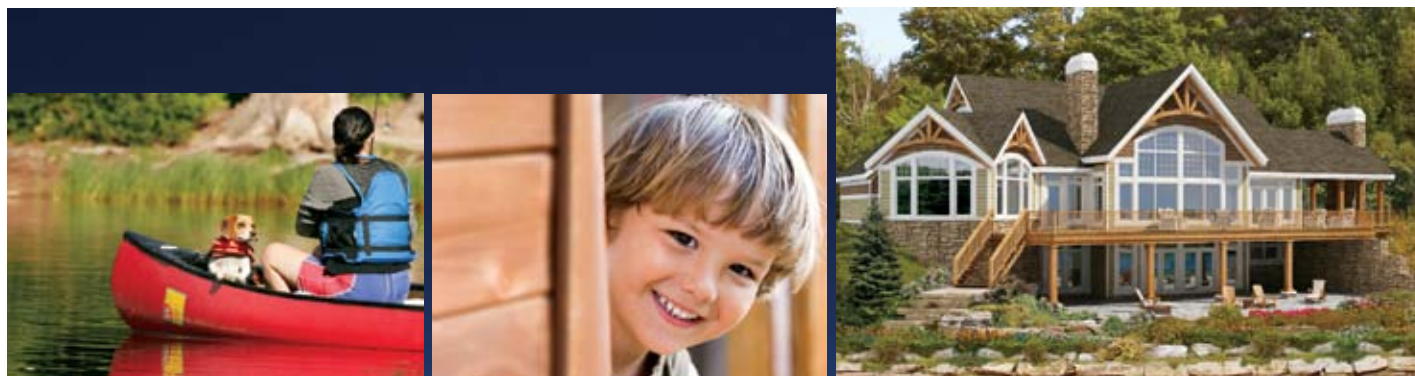
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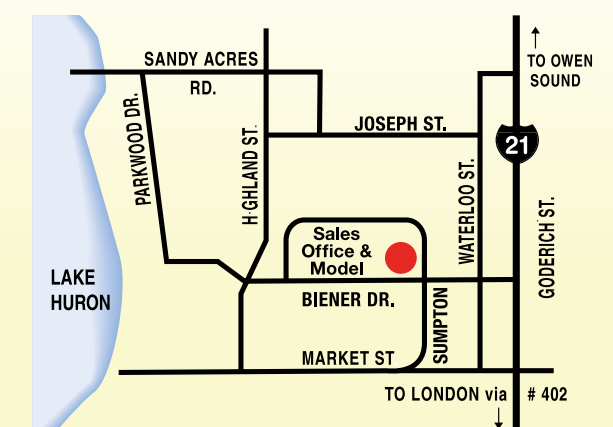
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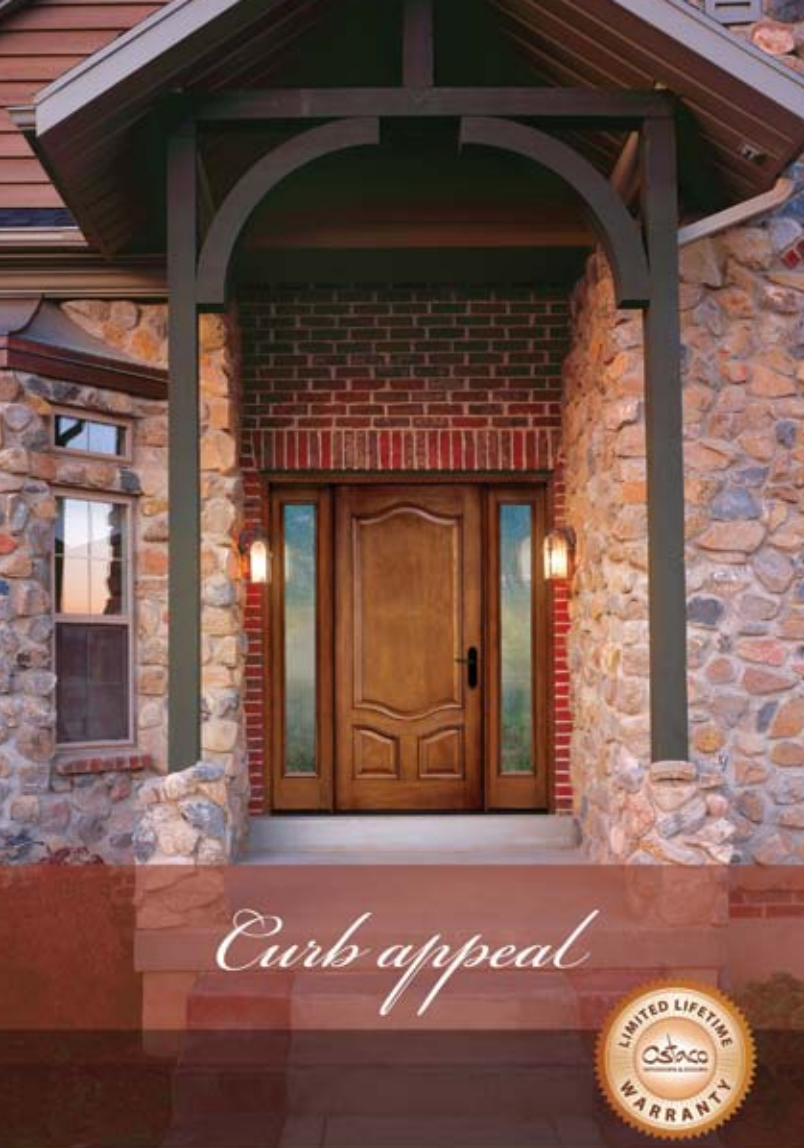


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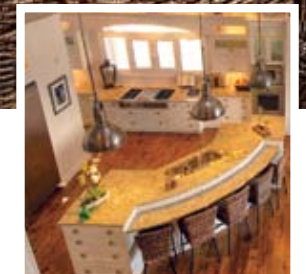
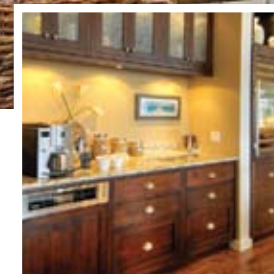
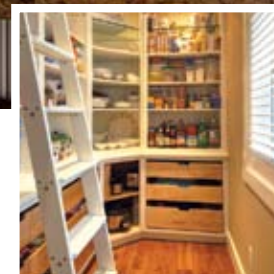
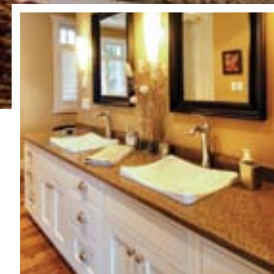
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editor's note

Getting ready to manage the parade for the annual Scarecrow Invasion and Family Festival in October.

I'VE LIVED IN MEAFORD FOR MOST OF MY LIFE and the signal for fall has always been the annual Scarecrow Invasion and Family Festival. It begins after labour day, when the population increases dramatically with straw people wrapped around downtown light posts and others pushing wheelbarrows through parks. The invasion shines with a family festival and parade on the first weekend of October and ends after Thanksgiving. It's an event I have looked forward to for 14 years.

In the early years, I was "voluntold" to be a dunkee in the dunk tank during fundraising efforts, but later became a volunteer member of the executive that runs this well-planned event. When the event ends, planning for the next year begins. These dedicated volunteers get just one month off each year, but you'll never meet a happier, more friendly bunch of fall-lovers who take pride in their community.

And how fitting: an event to celebrate the harvest in the apple capital of Ontario. OUR HOMES took on the challenge of building a couple of scarecrows. Scarecrows are traditionally used to keep pesky pests away from the garden but they can also bring a smile to your neighbours' faces as they pass your character sitting happily in the yard somewhere. Or, you can add one to your yard to simply celebrate this wonderfully vibrant and plentiful season. We show you how to build your own scarecrow on page 54. And don't forget to visit Meaford between Labour Day and Thanksgiving to see hundreds of scarecrows decorating the town. The Family Festival and Parade is held on the evening of Friday, Oct. 1st this year: www.meaford.com/town/scarecrow. And then, take a trip around our refreshing bay while touring the homes of Mary Ellen and Bill Black and Dave and Kathy Wilson. Each couple has found their own slice of paradise on one of the most gorgeous, pristine bodies of water in this country.

As for me, I'll be heading to another coast this fall. I am east-bound. And not just east, but as far east as one can go and still call themselves Canadian. I am moving to the rock. Newfoundland has always been on my bucket list and it's time I got to crossing a few items off. Thank you, dedicated readers, for taking this wonderful journey with me across Grey and Bruce counties over the last few years. It's truly been my pleasure. You'll meet my replacement in the winter issue.

Sincerely,

Samantha Martin

Samantha Martin, Managing Editor
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Shoreline sanctuary.
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Photography by
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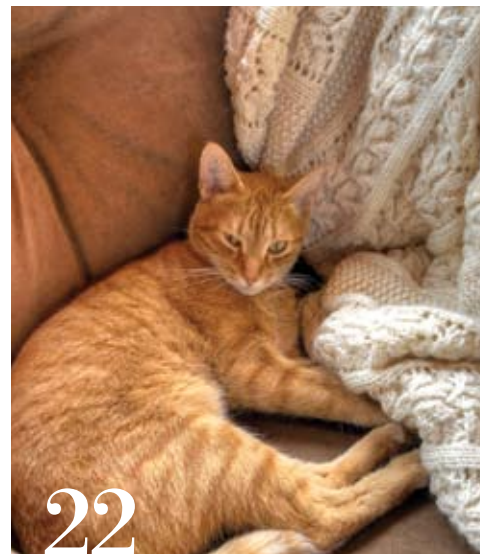
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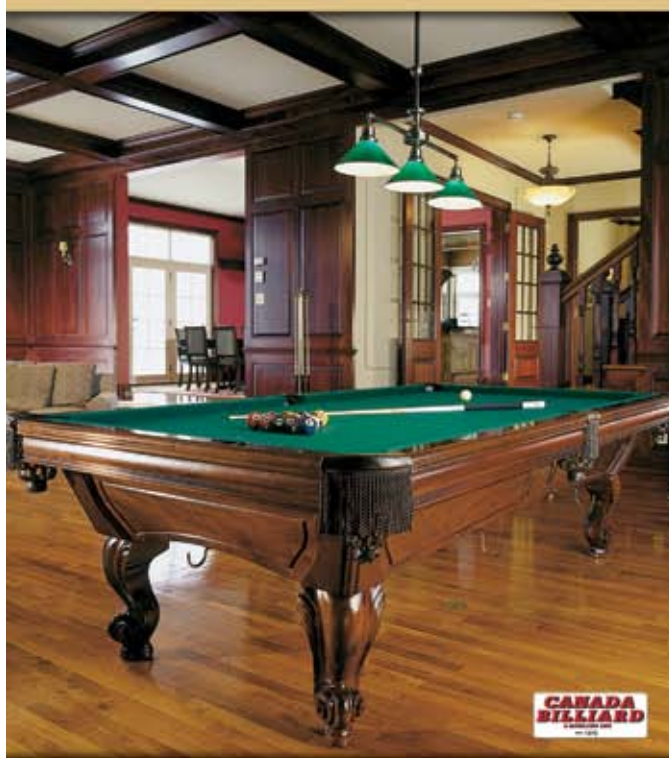
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Designer **Stephanie Redmond**
answers your questions.

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

Dear Stephanie

We will be moving into a new home with a recessed fireplace, small mantel and nine-foot ceilings. We want to hang a picture over the mantel. How do you determine what picture fits best? Is there a formula for this task? The room is open concept with a full fireplace wall, one additional wall and two half walls. Should the wall with the fireplace be a different colour to accent this space?

Any help would be most appreciated.

– Sharon McMann

Stephanie Redmond replies:

Given that your ceilings are not high, you want to accent ceiling height but not overpower your mantel. The most fail-proof way to test a piece is to hold existing pieces above the mantel to see how they feel to you. Some frames will be too heavy, some will not accent the mantel, some may appear too small. This becomes your guide.

One rule of thumb (and something that many mantels suffer from) is to hang your art about six to eight inches above your mantel. Start low. The art should come from the mantel, not float in the space above it.

Always keep in mind the style of your mantel. You can't fight with something that is ornate, but you can compliment it with a simpler piece. They need to cohabitate without fighting with one another.

Regarding wall colour, it's difficult to pick a point at which to change tones in an open-concept area and an accent wall is a simple way to do this. If you're craving change, then go for it!

Dear Stephanie

I have huge south-facing windows in my living room. I love the view but I am concerned about privacy. What can I cover my windows with that will give me a view from the inside but privacy from the outside?

– Tara C.

Stephanie Redmond replies:

There are many options when it comes to window coverings. Here are a few ideas that will create privacy and not entirely ruin the view:

1. Unlined voile curtains – A curtain on a pole with minimal "fullness" (not too much fabric) will soften the window area and give you a more traditional solution. You can see through finer weaves with minimal obstruction but you can only see shadows and shapes from the outside.

2. Mesh roller blinds – These are used a lot in condos and seem like they may feel too commercial, but they don't. When rolled up into a pocket above the window they literally disappear. (If you are building a new

house, you can build out the crown moulding to create a pocket for the blinds to recess into.) They come in a variety of weaves for light reduction, but you can see through the more open ones. The benefit of these? If you have a lot of windows, you can have them automated.

3. California shades with sheer covering – I have to admit this is not my favourite look, but they are popular and would solve your problem (which I suspect is a common one and attests to their success). These can be fully closed, semi-open with the sheer still giving you privacy or fully retracted which will clear your window except for the stack at the top.

I would suggest visiting a store that specializes in window coverings to see some of your options before making your decision. You say the windows are "huge," which makes me think these window coverings will play a major role in your living room décor.

Dear Stephanie

Upcycling seems to be the latest trend in home décor. How do I determine if a piece of furniture is worth either refinishing or reupholstering? I have an old sofa and some dining room chairs that I'd love to upcycle, but I don't want to invest in pieces that won't last.

– Jean Marie

Stephanie Redmond replies:

You have to assess upcycling two ways: cost and emotion.

If you like something enough to want to reinvent it (like your dining set), then yes, it can be worth it. However be aware that the cost of repainting, staining, reupholstering and purchasing new fabric may be the same as new chairs. Upcycling is not necessarily the most cost-effective approach.

An old wood chair of quality can generally be re-glued if it has a wobble and re-painted to give it some spark. If done correctly, it should last beautifully. So yes, this is worth it.

Generally older sofas have sturdy frames with webbing and coil springs that can be fixed and re-strung if necessary. The seat cushions often need to be replaced and new fabric purchased, which can add up to more than a new sofa. But if you like the style of your existing sofa, then maybe it's worth it. That assessment can be done by an upholsterer who will tell you if the frame is worth saving.

Upcycling was a trend long before the magazines gave it a catchy name. Not only does it have a positive impact on the environment, it can be easier on the pocketbook. Sometimes we just can't part with that old dilapidated piece of furniture for whatever sentimental reason we may have. And sometimes that's good enough. **OH**

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(2) Aged Dining

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3



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TEMPTATIONS

(6) Party Setting

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Continued on page 18

6



style picks

LEGATES

(7) Expandable Table

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(8) Glamour Gathering

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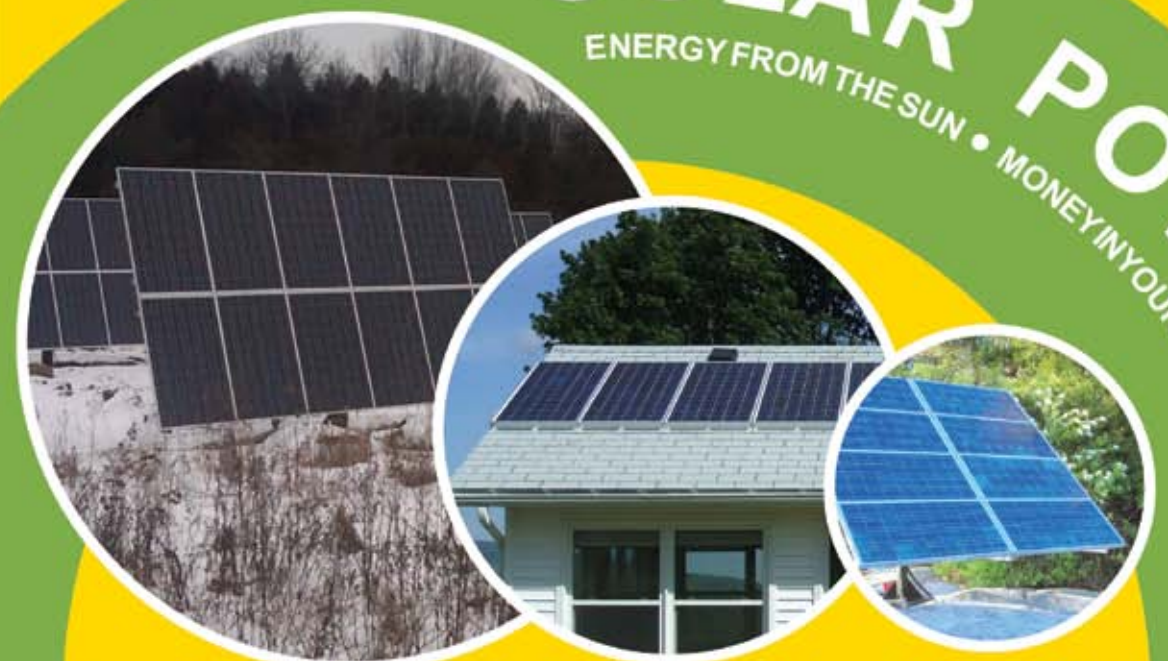
(10) Rustic Table

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BLACKS' *Beauty*

Just past the quaint village of Leith, at the end of a gravel lane, a wooden sign swings in the wind. Carved water birds fly over whittled blue waves below the word, “BLACKBURN.” The sign welcomes visitors to an oasis on the east shore of Owen Sound that is the new home of Mary Ellen and Bill Black.

The most miraculous part is that, once this cottage lot of three acres was cleared, it took **Clancy Builders** only four months to construct this spacious post and beam home on the water.

“Working with the Blacks on their beautiful home was a fun process,” says Tim Clancy, who works with his father Tom. “Like all our projects, this custom house is unique.”

“It was like a barn-raising,” says Mary Ellen. “Tom and Tim were here every day overseeing things to make sure it all went smoothly.”

“We originally looked at the house next door, but when we found this lot was available, we jumped at the chance to purchase it and build our own home,” Bill says of the couple’s gorgeous Georgian Bay creation. “With our two children grown, we wanted a bungalow with plenty of room on the main floor and a full lower floor. One of my favourite hobbies is woodworking. I love the look of wood. It creates such a warm, comfortable atmosphere. So

we went with an open concept, post-and-beam approach.”

The positive collaborative design process the Blacks undertook with the father-son team of builders was a momentous one. “This would be the first and last new home we planned to build so we looked at basic designs in magazines, then went from there,” says Bill. “A lot of ideas began as sketches on napkins. On the main floor we wanted spaces that flowed into one another. We achieved that. We wanted great views of the water. We achieved that, too. Through it all, Tim and Tom were good to work with.”

“It was easier than I thought it would be,” adds Mary Ellen. “We didn’t come close to killing each other in the process. Tom Clancy listened to all our design requests. It helped that Tom was on-hand at the site from morning ‘till night. Tom’s philosophy is: ‘We can do anything and everything you want. You are only limited by your budget.’ So it was up to us to decide what to include and what to compromise on.” *Continued on page 25*

Blackburn sits on a private beach on the crystal clear shores of Georgian Bay.

BELOW: The quiet setting is peaceful.

BOTTOM LEFT: The waters’ edge is a favourite spot to sit and watch the waves.





Entering into this warm home, guests are immediately met with a gorgeous peaked timber ceiling.

RIGHT: The kitchen, living room and dining room unify the main floor, optimizing the view of the bay.

INSET: The kitchen was designed to complement the post and beam with Amish-crafted cabinetry.



The result is a roomy, waterfront country home to be proud of. The Blacks' vision is seen everywhere. To the left of the grey stone drive is Bill's large, fully equipped woodworking shop, complete with heated floors for carpentry during the winter months. The cedar coach house doors of the workshop, with their traditional metal fittings to match those of the home's main entrance, give the out-building a sophisticated feel. This design feature links the two buildings to provide a uniform look that speaks of traditional quality and durable comfort.

A spacious, tiled entranceway with plenty of closet room welcomes visitors to the main floor great room with its soaring wood ceiling and wood trusses, installed by Brad Moran from **Rockwood Timberframe Homes**. The vast windows look out on an expansive view of the Sound, including the **Cobble Beach Golf Course** in the distance. Natural light bathes the space, especially into the evening, giving the cherry wood flooring by **McNabb's Flooring Solutions** an inviting sheen. The great room, the home's central gathering space, is anchored by a stone fireplace installed by **Rob Hicks Masonry**, utilizing cultured stone from **Shouldice Designer Stone**.

The relaxing great room flows into the kitchen/dining area, which

opens onto a large balcony made of no-maintenance composite decking with a luxurious hot tub from **Clark Pools & Spas** of Owen Sound. The food preparation area was wisely planned with easy access to a small office, a pantry and the double garage. The kitchen's dark patterned granite countertops by **The Old Barn** of Durham, along with ample brown ash cabinetry fashioned by the Amish craftsmen of Chesley, complement the home's natural look.

It's precisely the atmosphere the owners were striving for. "If we were going to build a home for us, we wanted spaces that flowed because we like to entertain," explains Bill. "We also choose earthy paint colours in shades of green, gold and brown to enhance the cottage feel and blend into the environment. For the same reason, we went for a lot of indirect lighting because it's much more natural."

The main floor's large master bedroom has its own water view and a walk-in closet with a handy, stacked washer/dryer combination for easy laundering. The en suite bathroom is luxurious with a large corner tub and a glass shower enclosure. Heated ceramic tiles by **Tile Time** of Owen Sound and contemporary fittings complete this modern, functional space.

Continued on page 26



The cherry hardwood floors carry into the master bedroom.

INSET: The en suite features a separate toilet closet with pocket door.

The lower floor boasts a walkout to a flagstone patio overlooking the sculpted landscaping of the waterfront by **Westside Nurseries** of Owen Sound. In Bill's "man cave," comfortable leather home theatre recliners, grouped around a flat screen TV, provide the ideal venue for watching live sports. Within easy reach are a pool table and state-of-the-art stereo system for listening to his collection of 3,000 vinyl records and 1,000 CDs, saved from a fire.

Off a hallway with access to the garage, sits the home's surprisingly compact mechanical nerve centre, housing electrics, plumbing and the geothermal heating/cooling transfer system, along with central vac.

The ground floor also boasts two guest bedrooms, an exercise room, a future workshop for Mary Ellen's stained glass fabrication and a potential temperature-controlled wine cellar. Bill admits that the lower floor is "a work-in-progress," because he chose to use his carpentry skills to complete the flooring and trim himself.

The Blacks' thoughtful, practical approach to design, coupled with the expert help of Clancy Builders, allowed them to create a comfortable, functional first and last custom home in a waterfront setting second-to-none. **OH**



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BY PAUL WILSON

NIGHTMARE ON MAIN: THE RISE OF PSYCHIC HOME INSPECTION



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

If any house is haunted, ours should be. The building is well over 150 years old and has served as a livery stable, a hotel, a photographer's studio, an auto repair shop, a furniture stripping company and an antique store. It's not far from a pioneer cemetery where the original settlers are laid to rest – or so we hope – and our village has enough spooky tales of violence and anguish to fill a house twice the size with tormented spirits.

Before we put in an offer, I asked Patricia – my more sensitive half – if she thought there were “ghosts” in the building. I was partly joking, but I also knew that if she said, “yes,” we'd walk away from it. She said, “Definitely not!”

Fourteen years later, we've had our fair share of problems: loud banging noises at night, scurrings in the attic, slamming doors, objects that mysteriously vanish and just as mysteriously turn up somewhere else. But they can all be explained, pretty much: the house is a drafty, wooden structure that creaks and cracks with extremes of temperature; we have bats and who knows what else under the eaves; and as for the missing objects – well, let's just say I'm a lot more forgetful than I used to be.

But Patricia was essentially right: in all that time, we've never seen or sensed anything scarier than our own shadows, or anything more alarming than our aging faces and sagging waistlines in the mirror.

Not so for Barry Lebow and Catherine Fogarty. They have never met, but they share an interest in haunted houses. Each started out as a skeptic, yet each has had a personal experience of “haunting” that inspired them to modify their skepticism in positive, but very different directions.

Lebow, a real estate professional with 42 years' experience (www.lebow.ca), teaches agents how to handle what he calls “stigmatized” property, property that's been “tainted” or devalued in buyers' minds by, say, its proximity to a toxic waste site or a cemetery, or by violent deaths associated with it. He's been described in the *Toronto Star* as “something of a maven on Toronto's haunted houses” and he acts as an expert witness when issues of non-disclosure become the subject of litigation.

Lebow's interest in properties with weird problems began in his 20s, when he bought a house in a Toronto neighbourhood for a song, only to discover later that it had been the scene of a dramatic suicide several years earlier. Lebow renovated the house, then sold it to someone who wasn't bothered by the building's tragic past. A decade later, a grisly triple murder occurred in a house on his street. He thought the house would remain empty forever, but it was snapped up almost immediately.

These experiences bolstered his fascination with what makes or breaks a real estate deal, and he eventually developed a course, which

he still teaches under the auspices of different real estate boards, called “Selling the Haunted House: The Impact of Stigma on Market Values.”

The “Haunted House” designation draws students in, but the real substance of Lebow's course isn't ghosts – which, in his experience, are very rare – but properties haunted by more tangible curses that can make values plummet, such as the presence of urea-formaldehyde insulation or a former marijuana grow-op. By law, the vendor and the agent must disclose any such information to the buyer. But that still leaves a large grey area: should knowledge that a house is “haunted” by unexplained phenomena also require disclosure?

Catherine Fogarty runs a Toronto-based film company, Big Coat Productions (www.bigcoatproductions.com) which is currently shooting a new cable TV reality show that could help clarify that grey area.

She happened on the subject more or less by accident – or was it cosmic design? In any case, four years ago, shortly after she and her young twin boys moved into an old home she'd bought in Toronto, scary things began happening. Doors would open or lock spontaneously; she heard strange sounds at night in her bedroom; she woke up to find both taps on her bathtub running full blast. One day, an aquarium in her kitchen shattered, scattering glass and water across the countertop.

Coincidentally, Fogarty was talking with the HGTV cable channel about developing a new series that might tap into the growing popularity of paranormal subject matter. The mysterious occurrences at her home were her eureka moment. With the cameras running, she brought in two psychics, who both confirmed that there were powerful “presences” in the house. Still somewhat skeptical, she engaged a conventional home inspector. He found natural causes for some, but not all, of the events.

That experience became the pilot episode of a 13-part series called *Paranormal Home Inspection*. What makes it different from other spooky home shows, like VIVA's *Rescue Mediums*, is its down-to-earth, “multi-platform” approach. Each home – most in Ontario – will be examined by a regular building inspector before bringing in the psychic investigators. If the pilot episode is any indication, *PHI* will be something like *Holmes Inspection* meets *The Blair Witch Project* meets *Ghostbusters*. There'll be something in it for skeptics and believers alike. (The series begins airing early next year on the HGTV and Mystery TV networks.)

Both Lebow and Fogarty have been changed by their experiences. Lebow, though still a skeptic, doesn't dismiss psychic phenomenon out of hand. “Perception is reality,” he says. “If the public believes it, it's a problem, be it ghosts, or urea formaldehyde poisoning.” There may be no absolute proof for either, but they will still affect property values, and that's real enough for him. And he has a digital-age caveat for his clients: never buy a house you haven't Googled.

Fogarty hasn't banished the spirits from her home, but she's come to believe they're harmless, and has resigned herself to their existence, just as I have resigned myself to the haunting presence in our home of mice in the basement, bats in the eaves and the ghostly “to do” lists that hover reproachfully in the air, disturbing our sleep. **OH**



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WHAT'S HOT: Pook toques and sock monkeys are whimsical and warm; perfect for fall. The Pook toques are made right here in Ontario and the line includes hats, scarves, socks and mittens. An

Continued on page 32

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◀ ANDREW SAARI

COMPANY: Saari Cabinetry

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YOUR KITCHEN: We're currently gutting it. We have a farmhouse and wanted a country kitchen with a large island and upper cabinets that extend to the 10-foot ceilings.

POPULAR STYLE OF CABINETS: Classic paint grade. Two-tone styles with an island in a stained finish and cabinets painted in whites and creams.



◀ JOHN CARSCADDEN & BRYAN DUNCAN

COMPANY: Exquisite Wood Design

JOHN'S KITCHEN: Somewhat contemporary with straight lines and earth tones.

BRYAN'S KITCHEN: Traditional oak wrap-around cabinetry with peninsula. Going to renovate to cherry cabinets next year.

MOST POPULAR KITCHEN DESIGN: Traditional to transitional. Cherry is the most popular with a lacquer finish.

JOHN'S FAVOURITE SURFACE: Granite. I like natural.

BRYAN'S FAVOURITE SURFACE: Quartz. I like more consistency.

▲ PETER MORRISON

COMPANY: Hanover Kitchen & Bath Gallery

FAVOURITE STYLE OF KITCHEN: Gallery – a

straight run of cabinetry and appliances with a parallel island with sink and dishwasher.

MOST POPULAR KITCHEN DESIGN: Quartz countertops. They're after it because of its durability and longevity as well as the style.

NO KITCHEN IS COMPLETE WITHOUT... the cook.

Continued on page 36



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◀ ARNOLD TURK

COMPANY: Brubacher Kitchens

FAVOURITE MATERIAL: Quartz countertop. It's nice in colour and texture, very, very serviceable, it looks like granite and the seams are almost invisible.

MOST POPULAR KITCHEN DESIGN: Painted and wood combinations

USING YOUR KITCHEN: I cook and bake anything you can think of: pumpkin pies, shortbread, Christmas dinner.



▲ PAT DURNIN

COMPANY: Durnin's Custom Cabinets

FAVOURITE STYLE OF KITCHEN: It has to be functional within the design. Form and function have to go together. I like kitchens that work for people.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR KITCHEN: I cook in it every day. Everybody in our family cooks. We use the *Food & Drink* magazine all the time. It's a great way to cook and it's fun.

MOST SATISFYING TASK WHEN BUILDING A KITCHEN IS ... designing them. I like seeing the design and complete work come together.



JACLYN ► FOTHERINGHAM

COMPANY: Royal Oak Kitchen & Bath

FAVOURITE STYLE OF BATHROOM: A bright, white, fresh and clean colour scheme

MOST POPULAR BATHROOM DESIGN: People want clean lines (not so many grooves in their cabinet doors) and vessel sinks or solid surface tops with a sink integrated into the countertop material.

NO BATHROOM IS COMPLETE WITHOUT... great lighting to enhance the cabinets and also to enhance yourself.

► TOM BEENEY

COMPANY: Van Dolder's Kitchen & Bath

FAVOURITE STYLE OF BATHROOM: Functional. It has to look good but you still have to be able to use all the space.

BEST SURFACE: Cultured marble. It has the best durability, not as many seams and lasts a long time. I've seen stuff in for 20 years that still looks as good as the day it went in.

NO BATHROOM IS COMPLETE WITHOUT... a neat and tidy look with everything tied together. **OH**



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New NEIGHBOURS

BY SHELBY HILSON // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY



This bright, cheery kitchen features custom glasswork to mimic the lake.

RIGHT: The home was designed carefully with a unique layout to comply with property guidelines.

Many of Dave and Kathy Wilson's favourite memories are rooted in weekends spent at the family cottage on Little Lake. So, once the children moved out and retirement approached, it seemed like the only natural place to call home.



Back in 1973, Dave's father purchased a piece of land and built the cottage that his family has grown to cherish over the decades as a relaxing summer retreat. It holds a special place for the Wilsons, their two sons and now their grandchildren too.

Next to the cottage sat a small vacant lot that the Wilsons decided to buy 25 years ago to give their growing family a little extra space that they would perhaps someday build on. That someday arrived just last year.

After Dave's father passed away and their sons moved out and got married, Dave and Kathy found themselves in a place that didn't quite feel like home anymore. The cottage itself wasn't suited to year-round living but they knew Little Lake, an inlet off Georgian Bay in Lion's Head, was where they wanted to spend their retired years. So they weighed the options of building an addition on the cottage, tearing it down and building new or building a home on the vacant lot next door.

In the end, they decided on option three to get the best of both worlds. The old cottage remains in the family and they get to have the retirement home they've been looking forward to.

"Dad always liked the idea of his cottage ending up in his grandsons' hands," says Dave. "And we liked the idea of them having their own space and us having ours."

After soliciting several recommendations from friends and acquaintances and meeting with builders, Dave and Kathy hired Laurens Wit of **Laurens Wit Construction** in Owen Sound for the job.

"We wanted a timber frame look, so Laurens took us to his home to show us what he had done there to achieve that look and we were very impressed," says Dave. "We had a really good feeling about him and really good recommendations," adds Kathy.

Knowing the size of the lot was limited and that their house had to sit a number of feet back from the lake and the access road, the couple looked around their big home in Guelph and took note of the space they actually used along with the rooms they no longer needed.

Continued on page 40

feature

The results were creatively compiled into a beautiful design by architect **Greg Williamson** of Lion's Head, who worked closely with Dave, Kathy and Laurens to make sure all the must-haves were covered.

On that list was a main floor master bedroom to save the couple from trekking up and down the stairs as they get older, as well as a dining room for their 1940s antique dining suite and a sewing room for Kathy to craft her quilts.

"Laurens by far had the best vision of what he was going to do," says Dave.

The hardwood oak flooring from **South Bruce Flooring** in Mildmay, combined with the perfectly crafted rafters above the open-concept living area, give the home an earthy elegance that feels natural to its surroundings.

A wood-burning fireplace serves as a focal point with a lovely surround created from **Shouldice Designer Stone** in Shallow Lake; the same place from which all the stone for both the interior and exterior of the house was purchased. The mantel was formed from a solid ash log that Dave had the excavators pull from the lake after he spent years tripping on it whenever he tried to put the docks out.

"Laurens saw the log sitting on the lawn one day and said 'That's going to be your mantel!'" smiles Dave.

Another exceptional feature that brings the outdoors in can be found in the kitchen (**Brubacher Kitchens**). The custom-made, glass breakfast nook is one of the first things you notice when you enter the home, but what you might not catch is how it was designed with ripples to resemble the lake just steps away. *Continued on page 44*



The octagonal great room optimizes the view of Lion's Head and this hidden lake community.

LEFT: The Wilsons' new waterfront home is a four-season comfort.

TOP RIGHT: When family is staying at the neighbouring cottage, dinners together are cherished moments.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Sunlight takes centre stage throughout the home.

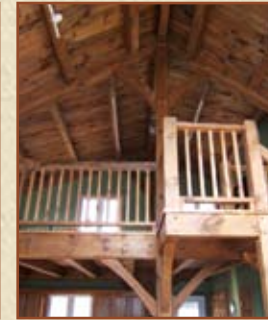


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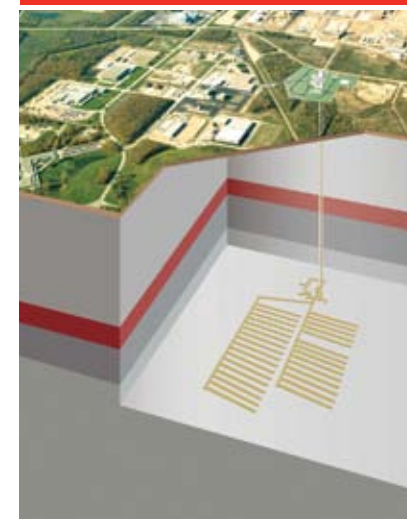
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LEFT: Builder Laurens Wit was able to give the Wilsons a timber frame look on a budget.

BELOW: Kathy works on her latest quilt.



Robert A. Brown, an artist from St. Jacobs, also created display cabinets for the couple that incorporate the reeds seen standing tall above the water from the kitchen window.

The best view in the house though, is almost certainly enjoyed from the sewing room on the upper level, which looks over the water and across to the cottages and homes of those they have befriended over the past 30 years.

"It's quite pretty when all the leaves turn across the lake and you feel the nice crisp air," says Kathy lovingly of the season.

A large guest room and full bathroom can also be found upstairs along with a tiny but spectacular loft lookout over the living space. It's from this spot that the true craftsmanship of the home can be most appreciated, standing face to face with the rafters.

With summer behind them, Dave and Kathy get to relax a bit more, enjoy their new home and create even more memories in the place that has seen their family grow. Dad would be so proud. **OH**

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GRILLED CORN AND BLACK BEAN STUFFED PEPPERS

BY MARIA DASILVA // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTT HUNTER

SERVES 8

8 red peppers. If possible, choose peppers that are more stout than long with flattish bottoms.

4 ears fresh corn, shucked

2 tbsp vegetable oil

1 onion, finely diced

1 rib celery, finely diced

1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and finely diced

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 tsp cumin seeds

1 tsp ground coriander

1 tsp chili powder

¾ tsp salt

½ tsp dried oregano

¾ cup basmati rice

1 can black beans, drained and rinsed

1 ½ cups crumbled feta cheese

¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro

1 tbsp red wine vinegar

I always find fall to be the most inspiring season for cooking. The country is literally bursting at the seams with fresh produce of all shapes, sizes and varieties. The weather is still kind enough to get outside and use the grill. And the harsh reality of winter continues to be a far-off prospect. With all this in mind, I've given a nod to our (kind of) neighbours of the American southwest. The tangy vibrant flavours of that region coupled with our amazing local produce results in this colourful, ultra-satisfying dish. It's rich enough for a vegetarian main course when paired with a salad, or equally at home as a side to your favourite grilled meat. Best enjoyed with friends or family, of course!

The separate components can be prepared a day in advance, then assembled and baked the following day. A great option for entertaining without any fuss.

TO PREPARE:

- Heat grill to medium-high heat. Grill pepper, turning occasionally, until skins are blackened but pepper still holds shape, about 10 minutes. Transfer to bowl, cover with plastic wrap and let stand for 10 minutes. Peel skin from pepper, being careful to leave pepper intact. Set aside.
- Grill corn over medium heat, turning often, until tender, about 10 minutes. Let cool. Cut kernels from cob and set aside.
- Heat oil in saucepan over medium heat. Saute onions, celery and jalapeno until golden, about 8 minutes. Stir in garlic, cumin seeds, coriander, chili powder, salt and oregano; cook for 2 minutes. Stir in rice; cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Stir in 1 ½ cups water and bring to boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer until rice is tender and all water is absorbed, about 8 minutes. Turn off heat, let pot stand on burner, covered, for 5 minutes. Stir in black beans, 1 cup of the feta cheese, the cilantro, vinegar and reserved corn kernels.
- Cut tops from peppers and remove core and seeds. Stuff each pepper generously with rice filling. Place in baking dish. Sprinkle with remaining feta cheese. Bake in 400°F oven until mixture is warmed through and cheese is golden, about 20 minutes. **OH**

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STORY AND PHOTOS BY SAMANTHA MARTIN

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Make it a family activity and get creative. Whether your fall fun character is dressed in formal attire to welcome guests to an event or sporting the traditional overalls and straw hat, you're only limited by your imagination.

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- scissors
- coloured plastic or pantyhose
- patches of material
- raffia

Steps:

1. Attach garden hose to wooden stake about a quarter length from the top
2. Cover one grocery bag with coloured plastic or pantyhose and staple to top of stake
3. Pierce remaining grocery bags with stake and staple into place
4. Staple four flyer bags (two on each side) to hose for arms
5. Tape or staple flyer bags (three on each side) to bottom of stake as legs
6. Dress your scarecrow and draw on a face
7. Make it your own with accessories, props and raffia **OH**

Earthly Elements

A whole new idea in hardwood is taking shape.



From Mannington comes Earthly Elements—a new hardwood floor in two revolutionary shapes: Squares and Rectangles. Offering unparalleled artistic freedom, simply choose your colors and pattern to design a floor that perfectly expresses your personal style. To learn more, visit your Mannington dealer, McNabb Flooring Solutions.



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