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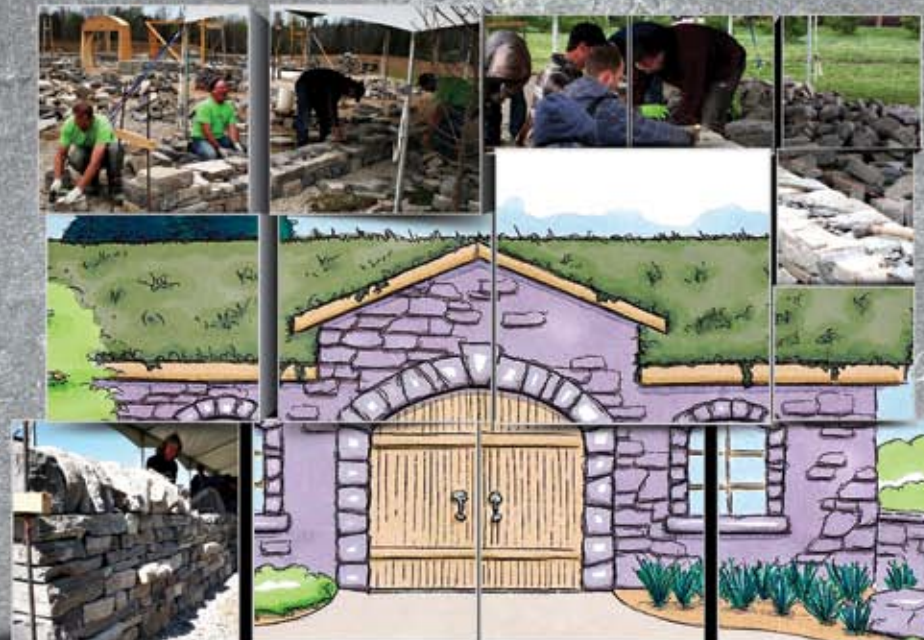
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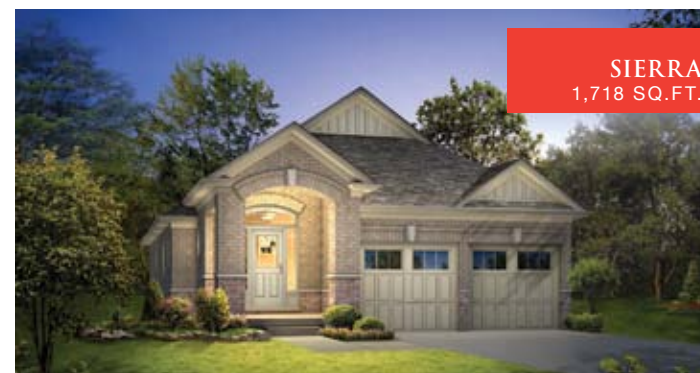
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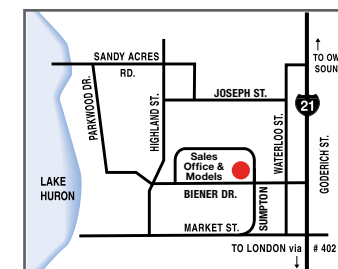


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editor's note



GET OUTSIDE AND HAVE SOME FUN! That's my goal this summer – my big challenge to myself. Fun. Doesn't exactly sound like I'm shooting for the stars, I know, but I have a tendency to rank fun low on the priority list, amongst things like getting my windshield fixed and RRSPs. (Okay, maybe not THAT low!)

I belong to the "chores first, fun last" belief system, but I've recently discovered a major flaw in this system: chores are never-ending! There will always be something to clean or fix, plant or pull, cook or plan, and while I do enjoy a few of these things, none compare to biking to the beach, swimming all day, eating s'mores around a campfire or swinging on a tree swing. Quite honestly, none of them even compare to cuddling up on the couch to watch Law & Order.

I've been thinking about fun a lot this year and even started scheduling it in. I know, I know, how fun is that? Who has to schedule in fun? Well, I do! Or did anyway... until I met an incredible woman while producing this issue of OUR HOMES.

Lynne Knowlton, a popular design blogger who lives here in Grey Bruce, has created a spectacular outdoor space tailored to fun, for kids AND grownups! When she's not entertaining friends and family in her stunning outdoor kitchen by the pool, you might find her enjoying a coffee in her tree house or dancing in her barn (page 22). Lynne has designed the life she wants and fun is at the top of each day's to-do list – a philosophy I've been inspired to follow.

So far, my fun plans include biking to work every day and I just bought a new bike for this very purpose. I've also vowed to spend more time at the beach that's just a five-minute walk from my home, and as I write this, I'm thinking of the steak and feta salad I'm planning to take as a picnic there tonight.

Fun should be a part of every day and while I know many of you don't need to be reminded of that, I have a feeling I'm not totally alone in this. How can you start your summer of fun? Why not begin by reading this issue of OUR HOMES with a cold drink in your backyard lounge chair? I'm confident you'll discover all kinds of inspiring stories and ideas that get your fun wheels turnin'.

Cheers to a fun summer!

Shelby

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Photo by
Andrew Grinton



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HERE COMES *colour*

THE SPUMONI TREND

Say the word “pastel” and I envision spumoni ice cream (yes, I love it) and Easter eggs. Delicious yes, but attractive? Pastels seem so faint compared to their primary counterparts, a weaker version of the true thing. But when you describe them, they’re wonderful and yummy (cotton candy, mint chip, lemon chiffon) or romantic and flowery (rose, lavender, wisteria). Maybe they’re understated, but these introverts of the colour wheel are whimsical, refreshing, and dreamy. What tones could better characterize summer? So how do we use them? It’s always fun to see these trends in print but how do you incorporate a trend into your otherwise permanent décor?

THE ANSWER? DO IT YOURSELF.

Get out your dirty t-shirt and ripped jeans! Whether you’re having a romance with the pastel trend or into a more vibrant palette, here are a few ideas for a do-it-yourself approach.

PAINT DIPPED ACCESSORIES

A note-worthy trend that cropped up is paint-dipped furniture and accessories. Start with a wooden spoon. It couldn’t be easier and there is virtually no investment. Paint the legs of a chair. Dip the base of a basket or a set of wine glasses. You don’t have to actually dip an object in a bucket of paint if it’s too large. Just give the illusion by painting the lower or upper portion of a piece and voilà, you’re showing your trendy side. A small item is a great way to practice, but to make an impression, do something sizeable. I recently cut and hemmed a table skirt in burlap and dipped the lower portion in Benjamin Moore’s HC-59 Odessa Pink. It looks wonderful as a centerpiece stacked with books and white pillar candles.

LINENS

If you have an old set of white sheets to spare you can incorporate two trends in one: Tie-dyed linens (that boho-chic thing) in soft pastel tones – a tablecloth, curtains, duvet cover, toss cushions. Those are just a few ideas. Tie-dyeing is actually really easy. Sew together two 24-inch square fabric pieces and when you’re done you have a throw pillow that screams “hello 70’s!” If you don’t have anything on hand, purchase a textural linen or heavy cotton duct by the yard at your local fabric store. It’s not as easy as ordering online, but you’ll be proud of your design. Check out the Rit Dye website for colour ideas.

FLOOR STENCILING

An old wood floor in rough shape is always a dilemma – to refinish or to paint? I’ve always wanted to try stenciling: Maybe on a third floor? A dark space that needs some livening up? A country kitchen? This is a great way to incorporate colour into a space. Buy a roll of paper at a craft store and create your fabulous shape. Stain or paint the entire floor an inspiring colour, then use your cut-out to stencil in white or another colour of choice. Choose wisely! Let’s not forget that this is a LOT of work. Forget the sweat, tears and hours of labour! How incredible is that end result? Stain colour suggestion: For a beautiful blue tone try MinWax Pearl Gray.

The ideas may be endless, but the do-it-yourself method does take planning and time. Most importantly, send us some photos! Everyone has a different approach to decorating and it’s always fun to see what our readers have been up to. **OH**

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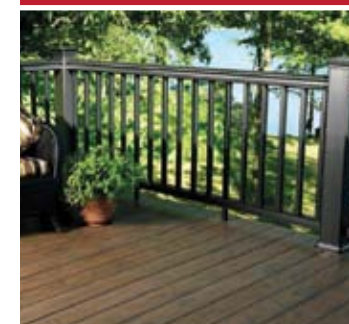
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BY SHELBY HILSON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BONNIE FOX AND ANDREW GRINTON
STYLED BY LYNNE KNOWLTON

Just imagine

A barn designed for dancing. A fully-equipped outdoor kitchen and pool area to entertain at. An enchanting tree house suited to host guests and newlyweds. One hundred acres to explore freely. And a beautiful home with a wraparound porch to relax on.



This is the stuff dreams are made of, and they've all come true for an imaginative, fun-loving family here in Grey Bruce.

Design the life you want to live – that's the motto Lynne Knowlton lives by. It's also the name of her popular design blog (lynneknowlton.com) where she shares her inspiring do-it-yourself ideas and home projects, along with candid, yet encouraging stories about cancer and how it has touched her and her family's lives. Lynne's coveted sense of style paired with her witty, fearless writing has earned her thousands of blog subscribers and social media followers from around the world.

Her home, which she shares with her husband Michael and four children, is a countryside utopia that reawakens childhood fantasies of play forts and secret hiding places. With every turn of the head some little detail unveils itself, igniting the imagination. It might be a door handle made from a horseshoe, chimes crafted from kitchen utensils or a chandelier hanging in an outhouse. Beauty is abound, even where you least expect it. *Continued on page 24*



outdoor feature



FOR ENTERTAINING

Follow the flagstone path from the back of the house and you'll find yourself looking over the incredible outdoor entertaining area. It's at the top of these steps that Lynne and Michael said "I Do" – not long after moving in. No one would have thought this a pretty wedding venue 10 years ago though! When the Knowlton family bought the home, the stone walls that surround the pool and lounge area were completely buried beneath rubble, garbage and overgrown trees.

With the help of **Sierra Excavating Haulage & Landscaping** they unearthed it all and repaired the damaged stone walls, placing found bits of farm equipment and hardware back in the wall for creative fun.

It just so happens that a barn original to the property burned down many decades ago, but after much digging, it was discovered that the stone foundation was still intact, and what better place for a pool? That's how the unique shape and size of the pool (installed by **Chris Wilkes** and **Ron Hartman**) was achieved.

Lynne's love of Balinese furnishings and décor is ever evident at the poolside kitchen area, with stunning umbrellas to shade the dining table, hand-carved bar stools in the shape of cupped hands, colourful toss cushions and unique wooden benches to share by the fire.

Richard Pratt – a man Lynne admiringly refers to as a genius contractor, built the timber frame shelter that covers the area. "All beams were hand hewn and assembled perfectly," she says. *Continued on page 26*



Richard Pratt is responsible for the custom-designed cement countertop that helps the kitchen blend into its natural surroundings and survive harsh winter weather.



outdoor feature



"The outdoor fireplace was a last minute addition to our original building plans," says Lynne. "It was the best decision we made though; it's my favourite part of our outdoor entertaining area."



FOR PARTIES

"I think barns are too pretty for hay," laughs Lynne. "We use our barn for dances, parties and weddings. We even have a chandelier hanging in it!"

Built in the '60s after the original barn burned down, the Knowltons worked with local Amish workers to restore the barn to a people-friendly place. Now you'll walk past beautifully crafted horse stables on the ground floor as you head up to the dance floor, a huge open space that twinkles with white lights and glows in the warmth of colourful Balinese lanterns.



Guests love staying the night in the tree house, which sleeps four. With an indoor/outdoor bar, a fridge, running water, coffeemaker and woodstove, it's Mother Nature's version of a hotel room and has even been used as a bridal suite!



FOR PLAYING

A grown-up tree house? Yes! This enchanting hideaway, built by Chris Wilkes and Ron Hartman, was constructed entirely from a local barn that was destroyed in a tornado. Lynne says the project started rather innocently with plans for a small fort with a wraparound porch, but once the base was built they opted for just a small deck and more indoor space, and the tree house grew from there. "A friend donated the slide from a torn out playground. Another gave us a sink," says Lynne. "The doors and windows are all recycled and reused from old projects and old homes." *Continued on page 30*

outdoor feature



Duke Iron did all the wrought iron work around the property, including the antique bed swing that sways beneath the tree house.

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outdoor feature



You'll never think of outhouses the same. This one is nice enough to hang out in, and, in fact, Lynne has done so with friends on cool summer nights. When Chris Wilkes built it, he installed a "no-stink" system and Lynne has prettied it up with a lovely chandelier, stained glass windows and rows of candles.



Lynne and Michael saved old scoreboards from the dump and put them to work as wind-blockers in an outdoor living area by the tree house.



The outdoor paradise that is the Knowltons' backyard is not only inspiring, but also visual evidence of the beauty in nature. "I am inspired by the space around me. I like to work with what I've got," says Lynne. Her creative, organic style is much more than a look though – it provokes

feelings of happiness, relaxation and playfulness, and to her this means a job well done. "I believe a well designed space is one that FEELS good," she says. "A space that anyone can come and enjoy and feel right at home." **OH**

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY BONNIE FOX

THE PLACE: In a brand new location, right across the street from the old one, **J'Adorn** now has more space to showcase its beautiful collection of all things pretty. Storeowner Corinne Robertson-Brown opened J'Adorn after being inspired by Renée Desrocher's Thornbury shop Pamper & Soothe. Renée and her mother Elke, who owns Adorn in Port Perry, agreed to work with Corinne to

bring her Kincardine boutique to life. "We've only been open two years, but already have so many loyal customers who have become friends now as well," says Corinne.

THE STYLE: Corinne describes the unique blend of styles at J'Adorn best. "It's a mix of European-inspired 'olde world' fashion – a bit of French flair, Italian style, some Victorian sensibilities, a

touch of shabby chic and a big dollop of whimsy," she says. "Oh and sparkly things, LOTS of sparkly things!" Everything in stock is carefully handpicked during trips to Europe and throughout North America, with a focus on products you won't find elsewhere. "We even shop the Paris flea markets for great antique finds," says Corinne.

WHAT'S HOT: International influence is everywhere you look. Last year's royal wedding "really reignited a craze for wonderful hats and fascinators," which people are scooping up for summer engagements. The shop's paperie, filled with thoughtful greeting cards, journals, vintage books and posters, also features lovely serviettes and paper plates for outdoor parties.

FAVOURITES: Keeping J'Adorn's special line of carpets in stock has proven to be a challenge. They're affordable, washable, practical and enhance the look of any room instantly. Gurgle Pots, French soaps and perfumes are among several other favourites, though Corinne admits a personal weakness for the stunning assortment of chandeliers that keep you looking up while shopping. "I see people putting chandeliers in more and more unusual places, such as outdoors, over soaker tubs, in kids' rooms and even in laundry rooms," Corinne says. "They add so much character to a space, why not?"

WHERE: 770 Queen St., Kincardine
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IS A REVERSE MORTGAGE RIGHT FOR *you?*

BY JILL ELLIS
ILLUSTRATION BY SHEILA BRITTON

You're living the Canadian dream of owning a beautiful home. You bought your house right after you got married 20 or 30 years ago and have been steadily paying down the mortgage, and now there's considerable equity built up.

This is the perfect scenario for taking a reverse mortgage, according to Carmen Alpaerts, an experienced mortgage broker in Ontario. "A reverse mortgage is using the equity in your house as collateral for a loan. It is tax-free money and you don't have to make monthly payments to pay it back," she explains. Alpaerts is a long-time mortgage broker who has won several national and provincial awards.

While this sounds too good to be true, there are catches and it's not for everyone – ergo the profile above of a couple for whom a reverse mortgage works. In fact, in her nearly 30 years as a mortgage broker, Alpaerts estimates that she's only done about 20 of them, in comparison to thousands of regular mortgages. But she expects this type of financing to become more popular because of the ageing demographic. According to Statistics Canada, the number of Canadians over the age of 65 will rise from 4.7 million in 2010 to 9.3 million in 2030.

What is a reverse mortgage? According to the Canadian Home Income Plan (CHIP, a chartered bank) website, "A reverse mortgage is secured by the equity in your home. Unlike a traditional mortgage in which you make regular payments to someone else, a reverse mortgage pays you."

There are conditions and limitations. The borrower and his/her spouse must be 55 or older, but you can get a larger loan if you're older. You can only get up to 50 per cent of the value of the equity in your home. The loan is tax-free and no payments are due until the property is sold. Interest is usually a little higher than that charged on traditional mortgages and is compounded on the principle from the time of borrowing.

Taking a reverse mortgage on their rural property was the answer for George and Maxine Scott. At 78 and 73 respectively, they were facing mounting credit card and other debt and had \$180,000 still owing on a first mortgage, but their house was appraised at \$390,000.

Alpaerts helped them navigate a rather complicated situation by securing a private second mortgage because the \$140,000 available through reverse mortgage wasn't sufficient to pay off the first and take care of the debts.

"People have misgivings (about reverse mortgages) because the interest multiplies on the principle, but it's a good way to get money and not have to make payments," explains George. "Property (value) is going up around here, so it's good for us," adds Maxine.



Alpaerts agrees that a reverse mortgage can be a good thing for the right people in the right circumstances but cautions her clients to consult with the appropriate professionals before going ahead. "Besides a mortgage broker, they should have an accountant, a financial advisor and a lawyer on their team," she says.

"It can be a good solution if you outlive the equity in your house, but if you outlive the money, it can be detrimental." **OH**

online

Is a reverse mortgage right for you? Find out at www.ourhomesmagazine.com/reversemortgage

PROS:

- Allows owner(s) to stay in home
- No payments until house sells, borrower/spouse dies or moves out of house
- Loan is tax free
- No credit, income or health qualifications necessary
- Provides money for travel or to pay bills
- Makes money available for investment, increasing monthly cash flow
- Can use money to pay for child's college or help with their finances (early inheritance)
- Can make funds available for catastrophic illness

CONS:

- Compounded interest causes equity to diminish quickly
- Interest is higher than on traditional mortgages
- Heirs won't receive benefit of equity in home
- There are legal and appraisal fees

KICKER:

According to CHIP: Men (44%) are much more likely than women (28%) to consider this option. Regionally, Quebecers (47%) are the most inclined to say they'll consider leveraging their home equity.



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603 Cayuga – \$289,500

Whether you enjoy a quiet moment on the deck off the kitchen or the views from the deck across the back of the home, you will enjoy the mature trees and lovely perennial gardens. Top to bottom, kitchen to bath there have been many great upgrades including a metal tile roof, heating system +a/c. This 1460 sq ft, three bedroom bungalow sits on a poured concrete foundation with a three foot crawl space. Call Linda Bowers* for details.



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earth friendly LAUNDRY

BY ADRIENNE BROWN



Nothing compares to the scent of fresh, clean laundry. Unfortunately, sometimes Mother Nature takes a big hit when we use lots of energy, water and chemicals to achieve that comforting smell.

Luckily, a few small changes can take your laundry routine from harmful to healthy. These eco-friendly laundry habits are both better for the environment and, in some cases, for your health, too.

START WITH EFFICIENT MACHINES

If you're in the market for a new washer and dryer, this is the perfect opportunity to choose energy-efficient appliances, which use less energy and water than conventional machines. Look for the blue- and white Energy Star logo, which marks appliances that use 10 to 50 per cent less energy and water than standard models. Front-loading washing machines are also a great choice because they use less water and less energy than top-loaders.

If your current machines are still healthy and you're not ready to invest in new ones, there are still a few simple steps to make running them easier on the environment.

About 90 per cent of the energy expended to wash clothes comes from heating water. Set your machine to use cold water to save all that energy. Cold water is also easier on your clothes, so they should last longer.

It's important to always wash full loads – but don't overstuff. Running your washing machine for just a few items wastes water. However, overstuffing it means the machine is working overtime, which could mean a shorter lifespan for your appliance.

CHOOSE OR MAKE NATURAL PRODUCTS

If you want to wash with soaps that are gentle on the earth and your clothes, shop for cleaning products that are plant-based, rather than petroleum-based, then choose the most concentrated product. Anything larger is likely the same product just watered down.

Just like food, the fewer ingredients and chemicals on a label, the better. But if you'd rather make your own cleaning solutions, it's as easy as mixing up products you likely already have in your cupboards. Everything from vinegar and lemon juice to baking soda and borax can be used to clean your clothes.

For example, a simple solution of about 1/2 cup of white vinegar, 1/4 cup of baking soda and 3 cups of water can be mixed together in a spray bottle and used as a natural stain remover for tough spots before clothes go in the washer.

Similarly, a cup of vinegar during your rinse cycle will soften your clothes just as well as any fabric softener – and you'll avoid all the toxic, flammable chemicals associated with those.

DRYING

Efficient drying starts right in the washer: if you're planning on tossing damp clothes into the dryer next, choose the highest spin cycle in the washer first, which will remove plenty of moisture and reduce your drying time.

Dryer sheets may make your clothes and towels feel like a dream, but they're actually chockfull of chemicals that are both bad for the environment and your health. You can get the same static-busting effect from dryer balls, which you can use over and over.

Better yet, ditch the dryer altogether and hang your clothes to dry. In summer, put them out on a clothesline to blow in the wind. You don't have to damage Mother Nature to dry your clothes – she'll dry them for you! In winter, hang a clothesline in your laundry room, use a drying rack or hang clothes on hangers around the house. This is a bonus when dry winter air is at its worst because damp laundry helps add moisture to the air without having to plug in a humidifier.

DRY CLEANING

Traditional dry cleaning methods use a cocktail of chemicals just to get clothes "clean." These can cause everything from eye, nose and throat irritation to liver and kidney damage – and they don't stay at the cleaners, they come home on your clothes.

Instead of taking clothes labeled as "dry clean only" to a conventional dry cleaner, shop around for more eco-friendly options. Find a cleaner that uses carbon dioxide or try a professional wet cleaning company instead. They'll treat your delicates as gently as any dry cleaner and their methods are far more eco-friendly. **OH**

online

Find a recipe for eco-friendly laundry detergent at www.ourhomemagazine.com/laundrydetergent

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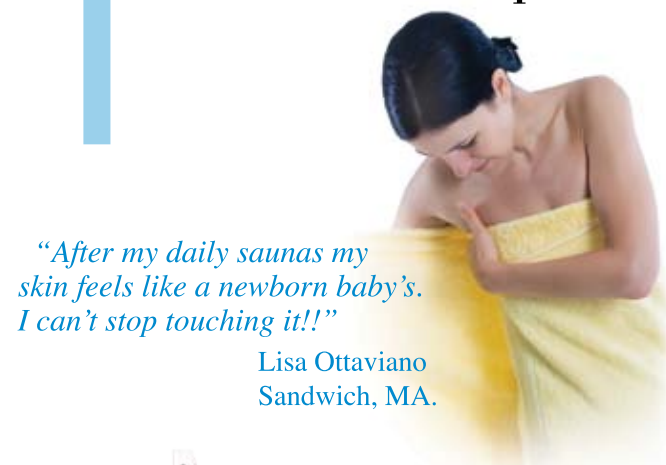
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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: (1) Jack and Patricia Aldersley enjoy the vast country view over fields and valley from their sheltered sun deck. **(2)** Ground Effects Landscapes won a Unilock Award of Excellence for their stunning work on the Aldersley home. **(3)** The open-concept kitchen/family room design makes it comfortable for the couple to host large family gatherings. **(4)** The front entranceway sits at the centre of the H-shaped home layout, which resembles the couple's previous farmhouse of many years. **(5)** The kitchen is bright and spacious with white cabinetry by Hanover Kitchen & Bath Gallery. **(6)** A beautiful sailboat painting by Jack suits the marine-themed family room perfectly.



BY LAUREL FORTIN // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY

THE ART OF living

As a charm of gold finches flits past the Aldersley home, the delicate yellow birds alight to take seeds from Patricia Aldersley's generous bird feeders.

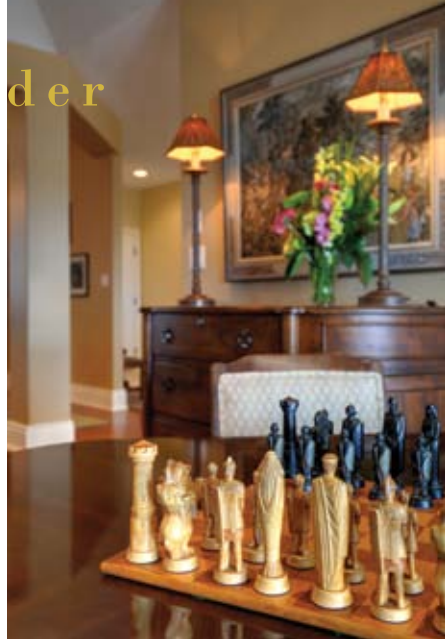
On the sunny side of her new house in the south end of Hanover, Patricia has hung some of her favourite feeders, relocating them from the 80-acre homestead outside town, which she and her husband Jack sold in December 2010. "We love to sit out on the deck and watch the birds," says Patricia. "One of the reasons we chose this location was because it looks out on the same area of bush as the old farm." Exterior landscaping of the home was done by [Ground Effects Landscapes](#) in Hanover, which won the Best Residential Front Entrance Using Unilock Products Award from Unilock Awards of Excellence for their work on the project.

The view from Jack and Patricia's sun deck meanders 13 kilometres over fields and valley, past the Sulphur Springs Conservation Area as far as the Neustadt water tower in the distance. Their custom-built home sits on one of the cherished lots in Hanover's Country Meadows Estates and backs onto a farmer's field. Everyone calls it the Whaling subdivision after Louis and Bryan Whaling, who developed the lots and built each of the custom homes on it. "[Whaling Home Construction Ltd.](#) did an incredible job on this house, we couldn't be more pleased," says Jack.

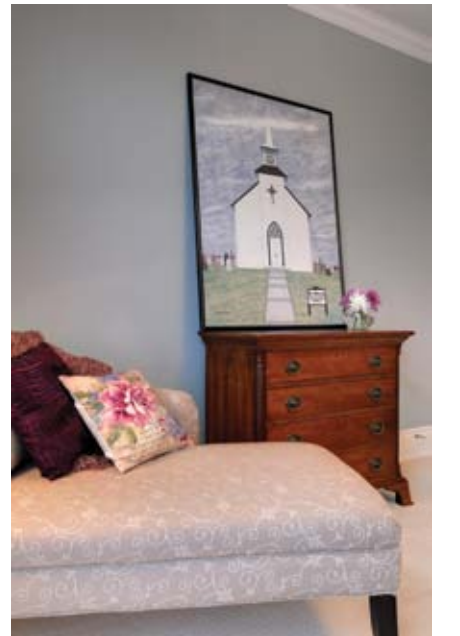
Jack and Patricia had decided the upkeep on their country property was more than they wanted to manage. After making a few enquiries, their real estate agent had a buyer for their acreage before it was even listed on the market. It was just prior to the Christmas holidays in 2010 and the vivacious couple was planning to leave for a four-month around-the-world cruise. They had mere weeks to decide where to move.

Making some quick resolutions, the couple fell in love with the convenience of town living and set Whaling Home Construction to the task of building them a 3,000 sq. ft. custom home where they could spend the rest of their lives. Jack and Patricia knew they wanted a home layout similar to their existing residence, so they worked with [Dar-Cad Designs](#) of Walkerton on the corresponding H-shaped floor plan for their new home. The result has a west wing with master bedroom, office and guest room, the middle of the H contains the entrance, great room and dining room, and the east wing houses the kitchen, family room, laundry and garage. "At our age, there is enough change in moving houses that it was really comforting to have a similar layout and all of the things that we were used to having around us," Patricia says. Both of them are in their 80s. *Continued on page 42*

RIGHT: A games table in the living room provides a cosy spot to play chess by the fire. **CENTRE:** The formal dining room was designed to showcase the Aldersleys' stunning travel artifacts on a built-in, three-tier shelf with lighting. **BELOW:** To make the transition to a new home easier, many design elements were based on furniture pieces being brought from the old house.



BELOW: Another of Jack's skillful paintings, this time of the Anglican Church in Maxwell, adorns the dresser in the guest room. **BOTTOM:** The Aldersleys' guests are offered a tranquil space to stay with a lovely wallpaper backdrop in pale blue and silver leaf motifs.



A chance meeting a few years prior led Patricia to **Heather Smillie Designs Inc.** Based in Mildmay, Smillie accepted the shotgun challenge given to her by the Aldersleys. "We had two weeks to get concepts together before they left on a tour of the world," marvels Smillie. All of the Aldersleys' furniture was to be brought to the new home, so Smillie selected finishings to complement the existing colour schemes. Patricia and Jack were very decisive about what they wanted, but when the two of them disagreed, they deferred to Smillie's opinion.

For example, says Smillie, "Patricia wanted window coverings and Jack did not. He was used to the views and privacy of their country home. He wanted to be able to see out for miles. But there were privacy concerns with living in town, plus they have hardwood flooring (**Saugeen Valley Carpet and Tile**) that the sun could bleach over time, so Pat won that debate." Smillie mitigated a softer approach to the window coverings, supplied by **Cuneo Interiors Carpet One Floor & Home**. "We went with top-down-bottom-up blinds, which allow you to see out while keeping your privacy," she says. In the home's family room and dining room, the blinds can be lowered all the way, and then the tops can drop

down for up to two-thirds of the window area so that light shines through while the lower portion remains obscured. With the home's nine-foot ceilings throughout, that's a lot of view. Even more so in the great room where a tray ceiling extends the height. Custom upholstered valances by Smillie finish the look.

Decorating with the couple was a pleasure, says Smillie. "Both Jack and Pat have so much life and have had so many great experiences. The house really reflects the fullness of their lives." The great room and dining room host stunning artifacts from their travels. The Aldersleys requested a custom three-tier shelf to showcase their most stunning pieces – a 200-pound opal sculpture of two cranes, a wooden carving of African elephants, an Inuit falcon carving and two Delft plates from the Netherlands. Patricia's safari photos of the big five South African animals – lion, leopard, elephant, buffalo and rhinoceros – provide conversation fodder in the dining room. Dining furniture was produced locally by fine craftspeople at **Durham Furniture**.

The family room and kitchen have a marine theme with large, captivating paintings Jack produced of his sailing days. Scenes of his

sailboat and distant port destinations such as the Aleutian Islands between Russia and Alaska; Bali, Indonesia; and Hokkaido, Japan, are set off by the blue tones of the denim couch and warm Sisal wall colour (paint from Cuneo Interiors) and cabinets. Kitchen and bath cabinets were custom produced by **Hanover Kitchen & Bath Gallery**.

All areas of the home were built with wheelchair access in mind, should the couple ever need it, with all amenities on the main floor. Jack requested a wine fridge be installed at above-counter height so that he could more easily select a vintage. The wide berth around the kitchen island allows for a great many hands to help with cooking – Patricia and Jack's extended family of 34 has gathered to celebrate on occasion.

The highlight of the kitchen, however, is the dramatic granite countertop and backsplash. "I wanted granite with a large vein throughout," says Patricia. "It's unusual to have such a pronounced layer." The tawny, near bronze-coloured vein cleaves the slab flecked with black, grey and warm neutral stone. "It's like a Jackson Pollock painting," says Jack. The backsplash was cut from the same type of granite, finishing the look in the kitchen with elegance. *Continued on page 44*



PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE BY CRAIG SHOULDICE



TOP: The spacious master bedroom is cool and calm with a coffered ceiling and direct access to the back sun deck. **ABOVE:** Double glass vessel sinks with hints of gold, set against a black marble countertop, give the luxurious master bath a unique personality.

The master bathroom showcases Patricia's exquisite design aesthetic. A pair of glass vessel sinks flecked with gold sit atop a black marble counter. Waterfall faucets complete the look (all fixtures sourced at **Van Dolder's Kitchen & Bath** in Owen Sound). The warm grey walls draw out the marbling of the tile in the glassed-in shower.

The couple's master bedroom features a coffered ceiling, solid wood furniture from Durham Furniture, broadloom and an aboriginal painting above the bed of orange, yellow and red interconnected spirals the Aldersleys bought while travelling in Australia.

The guest room is serene with walls in a shade called Tranquility by Benjamin Moore. "Pat wanted something dressy for their guests, so we sourced a wallpaper in silver and pale-blue leaf motifs," says Smillie. "We added a chandelier (**Living Lighting**) and lighter draperies." Another large artwork by Jack – of the modest, white Anglican church in nearby Maxwell – suits the room perfectly.

The home is rounded out with Jack's simple home office space; however, as he now lives in town, Jack often walks the few kilometres to his Hanover office. A bit of work and a lot of socializing keep Patricia and Jack as busy as ever. Their comfortable, elegant, low-maintenance home will allow them to focus on the things they love to do into their golden years, with even a bit of bird watching on the side. **OH**

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This distinct garden style originally used structured edges (usually rectangular) to contain a chaotic blend of shrubs, perennials, annuals, herbs and edibles. *Continued on page 48*



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They included slim, straight paths with whimsical furnishings and structures such as waddle fencing and rose arbours. The use of scrambling vines was and still is essential to this classic method. Busy pollinators love these types of gardens for their emphasis on the “flower” rather than a beautiful leaf or habit. What I am drawn to personally about this garden approach is that each year is different. The self seeding quality of much of the plant materials makes the landscape change year to year, depending on which plant took hold the previous year. Therefore I am never bored.

Originating in the middle ages, the emphasis of the cottage garden was absolutely on vegetables, herbs and even fruit trees, with ornamentals to fill in between. Typical plant materials used were primrose, thyme, calendula, violets, daisies, roses, ivy, etc., but any locally found vegetation would do. Over time the perennial, shrubs and annuals became more dominant. As this style of gardening evolved, quirky arbours and rustic furniture were added. More stylized versions grew in the 1870s in reaction to more structured and high maintenance English estate gardens that used formal design and mass plantings of dazzling greenhouse annuals.

Modern-day cottage gardens house a wide variety of modern plant materials and personal variations of the more traditional English cottage garden. Ornamental grasses, hosta and daylily, plus new varieties of tidy flowering shrubs do much to modernize. Curvature has also been added, with wide borders and sweeping curves. Traditional roses, with their full fragrance and lush foliage, continue to be a cottage garden foundation — along with current disease-resistant varieties that keep the original attributes. Informal vines, both traditional and modern hybrids, are still a cottage garden mainstay. Self-sowing annuals and freely spreading perennials continue to find a place in the new cottage garden, just as they did in the traditional cottager’s garden. What they share with the tradition is the lush, relaxed look, covering every square inch, with a rich variety of flowers, herbs, and vegetables.

Many people are attracted to this garden style due to the “natural” feeling they evoke. They look as if no planning was necessary to create their beauty, but buyers beware. These gardens are still high maintenance.

Weekly weeding and deadheading are necessary to keep plants looking even somewhat controlled. If this doesn’t scare you and you still decide that this is the garden-type for you, it is essential to mass plant with a smaller list of vegetation and repeat, rather than using a massive inventory. Create balance and harmony within the bed with the size of the plant, shape of the blooms, leaf size and habit. But remember, an English cottage garden is all about surprise! Consider hedging such as privet to contain and give a neater appearance, and use mulch to make weeding less of a chore. If using potted plants, keep pots the same colour. They can be different sizes and shapes, but by keeping the colour consistent, you are creating a foundation for the plantings. They don’t have to be a neutral colour like clay or brown. Consider a bold colour such as royal blue or yellow. Such pop of colour, although not traditional, can be seen in many current day English cottage gardens and will keep your landscape up to date.

Gardens are forever growing and changing and this is what keeps us enamored with them. Let them have a little more freedom and you may be surprised. Sometimes Mother Nature makes a better combination than what we can ever imagine ourselves. **OH**





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Continued on page 56

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Strawberry ICE CREAM

BY MARIA DASILVA // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTT HUNTER

They say some things are best left to the pros. Often, I suppose that is the case. You certainly won't find me racing in a Formula-One series, base-jumping or performing open-heart surgery. However, professional or not, the art of making ice cream is for all to enjoy.

Regardless of your culinary skill level, ice cream is a cinch to master. Minimal cooking, a handful of ingredients and a bit of patience through the cooling and freezing stages are all you need. In fact, you don't even need fancy or expensive equipment to make it happen. A freezer and a food processor will do just fine.

And you have complete control over the ingredients. No funny-named thickeners or preservatives in this batch, just all-natural and delicious ingredients. Sure, it's a bit decadent. But, it's summertime! And nothing beats the cool, satisfying creaminess of homemade ice cream on a hot summer day.



HOMEMADE STRAWBERRY ICE CREAM

4 cups hulled strawberries

1 ¼ cups sugar

1 tbsp lemon juice

1 ½ cups milk

1 ½ cups 35% cream

6 egg yolks

1 tsp vanilla extract

Pinch of salt

- Using a pastry blender, mash strawberries into small chunks. Transfer to saucepan, stir in ¾ cup of the sugar and the lemon juice. Bring to boil over medium-high heat, stirring until the sugar is dissolved. Boil for 5 minutes. Transfer to airtight container and refrigerate.
- Meanwhile, in a clean saucepan, whisk together milk, cream, egg yolks, vanilla, salt and remaining sugar. Heat over medium, stirring constantly, until thickened enough that a line drawn across the sauce on the back of a spoon holds its shape, 10 to 12 minutes. Strain into 8- or 9-inch metal cake pan. Cover surface directly with plastic wrap and refrigerate until chilled, about 2 hours.
- Freeze until firm, but not solid, 3 to 4 hours. Scrape into food processor, adding all but ¾ cup of the strawberry mixture. Puree until smooth. Transfer to airtight container. Swirl in reserved strawberry mixture. Freeze until solid, about 4 hours. **OH**

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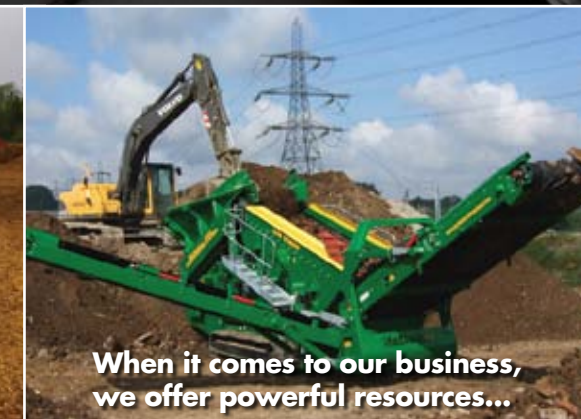
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