



# OLD WORLD CHARM AT THE FALLS



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PHOTOGRAPHY **SANDY MACKAY**  
CUPCAKES **THE BACK FORTY BAKER**

On a quiet road in Durham, the rushing of water over McGowan Falls is like a natural lullaby infusing the home of Henry and Sandie Maldonado with serenity.

Sprawling gardens and a wooded lot add magic to the charming rustic dwelling, which is steeped in history – history of the home and history of each antique that resides behind its front door.

The Maldonado house is a home quite unlike any other. Almost every piece of furniture, big and small, is an antique, right down to the light fixtures and dishware. Collected with meticulous care, born from a deep love of antique hunting and one spouse's patience for another's fondness for auctions, the 1870s house boasts that it's well-loved. The utmost care was put into its restoration, which began with the home's previous owners.

"The house gives us a sense of peace," says Sandie. "It has a heart and it needed to come back to life. We had about 80 people stop in when we moved in, who said they can't believe the beautiful work we've done on the house and who were so happy someone was taking care of it."

When the Maldonados, their two dogs, Peyton and Dallas, and two cats, Lucy and Ella, took over the house in 2014 it was much improved, thanks to the extensive work done by the previous owners. After repairing the interior, including gutting, drywalling, rewiring and installing a furnace, the previous owners parted ways with the house. Nevertheless, Henry and Sandie still had their

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**ABOVE:** The Maldonados' porch showcases some of their unique antiques and harkens to the couple's Southern past. **LEFT:** The home's wrap-around porch has a colourful collection of antiques and flowering shrubs. **OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT:** A vintage garden bench sits among the sprawling flower beds and woods surrounding the Maldonados' house. **TOP RIGHT:** A rustic bench adorned with a collection of vintage watering cans sits alongside the original barn. **BOTTOM:** The 1800s Durham homestead was rejuvenated with fresh paint and a new roof, which accentuates the gingerbread trim and Victorian columns.

feature

**RIGHT:** The new kitchen, which features slate flooring and granite counters, is home to a vast collection of ornate ironstone and pewter cookware. **BELOW:** Trade signs, like “Country Store,” proliferate throughout the house, which Henry calls a “sign house.” **BOTTOM:** An authentic vintage kitchen scale doubles as a dessert stand for fitting cupcakes from The Back Forty Baker.



work cut out for them. They got straight to it, installing new flooring (**Hopkins Trim and Carpentry**), painting inside and out, replacing the roof, adding two porches and a deck (**Shelburne Roofing & Contracting**), laying paving stones from **Maxwell Stone** (installed by **Hopkins Tree Spade Service**) and building a garage. Henry, who was a stone mason by trade, repaired some deteriorating brickwork and also galvanized and sprayed the intricate iron railings surrounding the home, which the couple commissioned from longtime friend Ciprian Potinteu of Wrought Iron Gate Design & Welding.

It only took one look for Henry and Sandie to fall in love with the century home. Despite the enormous amount of work they invested in their previous home in Shelburne, and the surprised protests from their neighbours

and friends who were sad to see them leave, the duo set out on a new adventure and never looked back.

“This was a chance encounter, when, during one of the worst winters in years, we took a drive to Durham just to be nosy and see the house,” explains Sandie. “We sat in the driveway and looked at each other and said, ‘This is it.’ You know people where you live, so it’s hard to leave, but moving was never a mistake.”

After 25 comfortable years in their Shelburne residence, a home they believed they would never leave, the move to Durham required more than just a leap of faith. Though their decorative style has always harkened to their love of primitives – a type of handmade antique (also called early American country) often built by farmers or unschooled artists



between the mid-1700s and early 1800s – their Shelburne home was very different in character from their new 1800s homestead.

“A number of our antiques we ended up selling because this house is very different from our old one,” explains Sandie.

Aside from switching out some of their décor, which involved staking claim to new antiques and waiting at auctions for hours (more than 10 on one occasion), Henry and Sandie had to select a colour palette for their new home. **Dana Aponte**, colour and design consultant from **Cuneo Interiors Carpet One Floor & Home**, guided the couple in the process, helping them pick Benjamin Moore colours, including Bittergreen (dining room), Caramel Apple (porch ceiling), Antiqued Aqua (upstairs bathroom), Massicot (living room), Crownsville Gray (master bedroom) and Windham Cream (hallway). The couple also had to make a few compromises when it came to their new abode. *Continued on page 26*

**TOP LEFT:** The couple waited 10 hours at an auction to acquire the blue step-back hutch that is a centerpiece in their living room. **LEFT:** A small sitting room off the kitchen houses an antique spice rack, a little wooden man nicknamed Walter, a washing stand and another collector sign. **ABOVE:** A variety of antique lamps and light fixtures, which Henry has been collecting for years, are found throughout the home.



“Henry didn’t want a kitchen table, he wanted to keep the kitchen’s island – that was world war three – and we couldn’t find a table that was five feet long to fit in the space,” reminisces Sandie. “We were invited to a friend’s for dinner and I sat at her table and said, ‘This is it, I need your table.’ So I made her an offer she couldn’t refuse.”

On the other hand, Henry was dead set on sleek and warm hardwood flooring with a more contemporary feel, to which Sandie whole-heartedly objected. In the end, Sandie got her table, Henry got his flooring and the whole house was knitted beautifully together with a brand new kitchen featuring slate flooring and granite countertops (**The Old Barn Polished Stone Creations**), and new appliances (**Macdonald’s BrandSource Home Furnishings**).

“My favourite part of the house is the kitchen, I just have a sense of calm in there,” she adds. *Continued on page 28*



**ABOVE AND RIGHT:** The living room features an antique coffee table from Michigan, a red, cigarette-lady sign that is one of only three ever made, and the R.E. McCabe sign salvaged in Shelburne and refurbished. **TOP RIGHT:** The laundry room features vintage shutters and corbels, an adorable ladies bathroom sign and sleek white appliances.

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**ABOVE:** The spare bedroom, claimed by Lucy the cat, is full of sweet country charm. **TOP RIGHT:** The upstairs powder room painted in Antiqued Aqua has neutral tiled flooring to accentuate the porcelain wash basin, claw foot tub and rustic wood accents. **BELOW:** The master bedroom, in calming hues of blue and yellow, is a spacious retreat predominated by a vintage wrought-iron bedframe.



When they moved in, the home was finished in basic MDF trim, which didn't suit its historic character. New trim was expertly crafted by **J.E. Trim Johnson Enterprises**, which specializes in manufacturing solid wood trim and mouldings for turn-of-the-century homes, and installed by Eric Hopkins of Hopkins Trim and Carpentry. The new trim and moulding contributed to the authenticity of the home's décor and pairs beautifully with the stunning white wooden shutters from **Budget Blinds** in Owen Sound that adorn the interior windows and complete the charming country look.

Though the Maldonados never expected to find themselves in a historical home in Durham, surrounded by sprawling nature, anyone who has visited them in their new home will be hard pressed to suggest it wasn't meant to be. They speak about the house as if it has a personality – a soul – and they are suited to it just as much as it's suited to them. **OH**

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