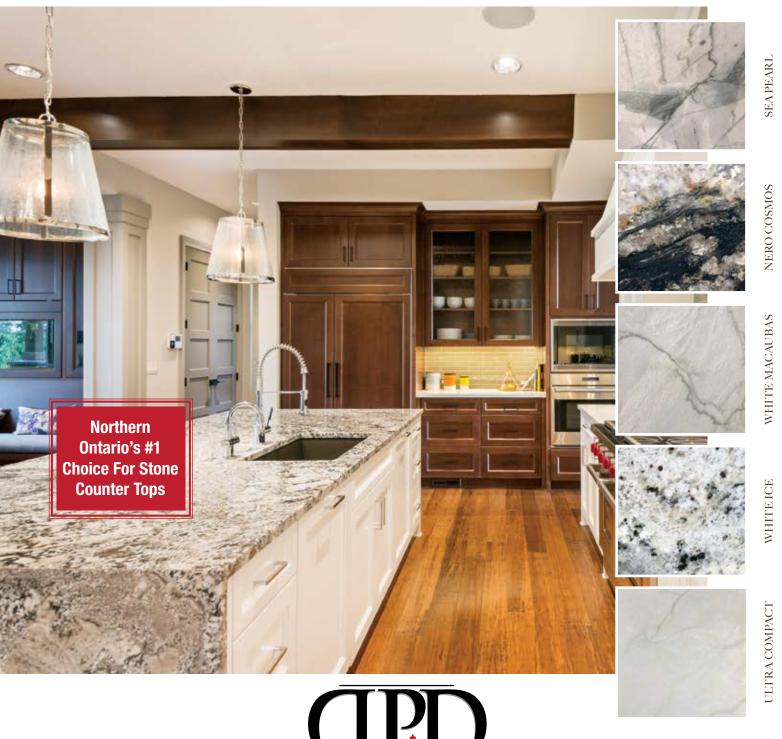
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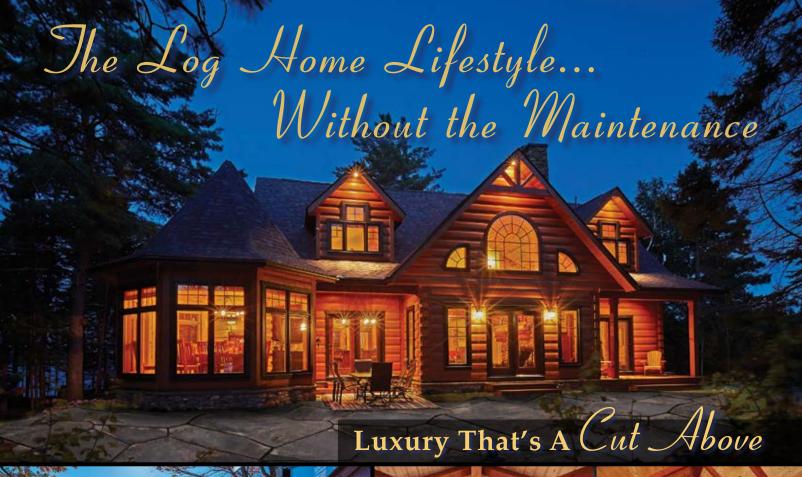
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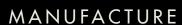
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OUR HOMES is a registered trademark of OUR HOMES MEDIA GROUP INC. OUR HOMES Muskoka is published four times a year.

OUR HOMES is distributed via free pick up to residents of Muskoka region and to cottagers via direct mail. Copies of OUR HOMES are available for free pick up at high traffic locations throughout the region. OUR HOMES is distributed $\,$ throughout select B&Bs and hotels, and to select business leaders via direct mail.

Please send all letters and/or feedback to OUR HOMES Magazine, 25 Elgin St., Collingwood, ON L9Y 3L6. Or email us at editor@ourhomes.ca. All letters received are subject to editing for grammar and length.

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My suspicions were confirmed when a trail camera at the edge of the woods in the backyard photographed a doe with a small spotted fawn. I took some consolation in the fact that the baby was eating its vegetables.

IT'S BEEN A CRITTERFUL GARDENING SEASON.

Toads were the early arrivals. The first one, the size of a fist, squatted on the front door mat, a stoic harbinger of more to come.

When I trained a sprinkler on the garden vegetables, tiny toads would hop out from among the beets and squash. Some were so small they'd fit on a dime, others on a nickel. One was about as big as a toonie. These homely amphibians are said to be a gardener's dream because they keep pests at bay, eating thousands of bugs, snails and slugs. I'd like to keep these little squatters around. So I made some toad houses - red clay flowerpots with an opening cut into the side, placed upside down in cool leafy spots in the garden.

Summer was an unending assault by chipmunks. We no longer have a cat that escapes outdoors, so these cute little rodents have free reign. They delight in plucking tiny ripe tomatoes off the vine and devouring them. I saw one chew the buds and flowers off a miniature orange rose. When these bold bandits began gnawing on tiny, emerging squash, I placed large glass jars around the squash. One squash grew so quickly, I couldn't get it out through the mouth of the jar and had to break the glass to free it. When the squash grew too big for the jars I fenced them with old metal window screen.

The beans took a beating as well. For a few seasons I had encircled the garden with seven-foot high plastic netting to keep out the deer. When deer grew scarce, I left the garden unfenced. Big mistake. One morning I noticed that most of the pole beans had been stripped of leaves to a height of about four feet. It was puzzling until I saw tiny tracks in the soft soil. My suspicions were confirmed when a trail camera at the edge of the woods in the backyard photographed a doe with a small spotted fawn. I took some consolation in the fact that the baby was eating its vegetables.

Last years's very wet summer was an unceasing war on slugs. The sweltering summer of 2018 came with mixed blessings. Can't imagine what next summer might be like, but I'm certain to be mending garden fences.

Walter Franczyk

Walter Franczyk, Managing Editor walter.franczyk@ourhomes.ca



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The Downsview cabinetry collection is custom crafted in North America and available through select kitchen design showrooms



nterior Designer **Dolores Pian** shares her ideas.

Keeping clean has never been more luxurious and spectacular. The master bathroom, in particular, is the second-most-popular renovation after the kitchen. Visual appeal, functionality and unique design elements are what we are now looking for in our bathrooms. Tubs and showers are a great way to make your unique statement. Here are some tips that interior designers think you should know.



The new attention grabber is the freestanding tub. A sculpture that bathes you in comfort, it appears to float, taking less space than a built-in and easier to clean.

- Test your tub for body size when sitting. A taller person requires a longer tub. A small tub will result in knees to the chin and not comfortable at all.
- Statement lighting over the tub can add that wow factor. Make sure your fixtures are rated for damp or wet locations. Place on a separate switch.
- A soft white lighting colour temperature of 2,700 to 3,000 degrees Kelvin provides a warm, cosy atmosphere so you'll always look your best.
- Dimmers set the mood and can be preset to the timing of your choice. Place on a separate switch.
- Leave three inches or more around the tub for cleaning. The handle of a mop still needs to reach around the back.

SHOWERS

The shower is where you stimulate your senses. Glass shower enclosures have eliminated thick tiled walls, allowing for more space. Glass doors can now roll or hinge effortlessly.

- Curbs virtually disappear with curbless shower systems made possible by Schluter Kerdi-Line Systems. They have shower kits that provide the necessary waterproofing membrane and floor sloping for drains. Linear drains, which are long troughs two-inches deep, lie beneath the floor and need to run in the direction of joists or can be carved out of a concrete floor.
- Water can rain on your head or jet you from three sides. Be careful when

selecting body sprays. Make sure they accommodate all members of the family and their various heights and weights. While they can be adjusted to suit your needs, jet sprays can be very powerful and you could end up with a mouthful of water or even injure sensitive body parts. You may

need a grip rail.

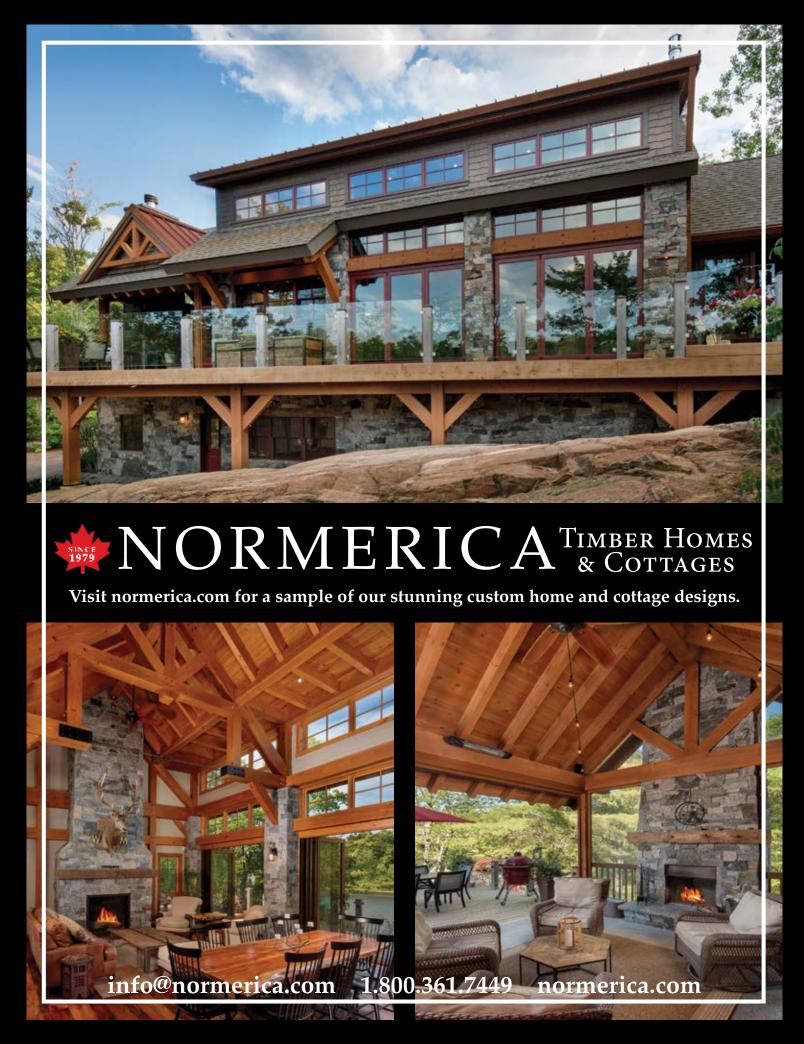
- Large format tiles, quartz stone or Corian are now used for seamless shower walls, eliminating the need for those pesky, hard-to-clean grout lines. Ask your contractor if you have enough room to get them up the stairs or in an elevator prior to installation.
- Shower floors need small tiles for foot grip and safety so that you can avoid slipping. Make grout colour the darkest colour that coordinates with the tile.
- Install a waterproof light fixture overhead for safety. (Yes – you can still install an overhead shower.) Place the fixture on a separate switch with no dimmer.
- Shower benches are useful for a quick sit down during a long shower and also to perch your foot while shaving your legs.

SPECIAL TOUCHES

- Heated floors. Made more affordable and doable with Ditra-Heat-E-Kit by Schluter. It has a quarter-inch profile that minimizes the thickness of the finished tile floor.
- Wall niches. Scavenge space from wall cavities with niches. Wall niches can come in stainless steel or tiled. A slight slope is needed to drain water. Not only are they a décor element, they make all items more accessible.

EDUCATE YOURSELF

Check out bathroom manufacturers' sites for your specific needs. Tubs and showers are just two of the elements to explore so that you can create your own unique fabulous bathroom. он



2. CASALGRANDE PADANA

4. SCHLUTER: Kerdi-Line Floor

Drains 5. PRODUITS NEPTUNE:

Cruz Acrylic Freestanding Tub

7. SCHLUTER: Ditra-Heat-E-Kit

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PHOTOGRAPHY WALTER FRANCZYK





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Accent Chair

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23 York St., Haliburton 705.457.2330 | railsendgallery.com

FLYING STAR ANTIQUES

Clay Crock

Favourite beverages will stay cool and refreshing in this two-gallon Marshall Pottery crock with spigot. It sits atop a vintage metal baby seat among the many old and unusual treasures at this antique shop.

1981 Manitoba St., Bracebridge 705.644.3131 facebook.com/flyingstarmuskoka

5 TWIG

Pie Fix

Savour your favourite dessert on a Mud Pie plate with matching server from this cottage décor and gift store. Twig carries a range of home accents and accessories for entertaining. Linens, drinkware and specialty cards are also available.

3137 Muskoka District Rd. 169, Bala 705.762.4812 | twigmuskoka.com

6 HUCKLEBERRY'S

Paddling Feast

Around the dinner table, these paddle placemats will evoke cherished memories of warm weather canoe trips. The 100 per cent cotton mats can be paired with a matching table runner, paper or fabric napkins and tea towels.

14 Bay St., Parry Sound 705.746.2799 huckleberrys.ca

Continued on page 26

7







THE CORNER CABINET

Landscape Prints

Scenes of Georgian Bay and Muskoka, rendered in six-by-eight-inch giclée prints by Midland painter Carol Currie, are like tiny windows to the Canadian Shield. Reproductions of paintings, they're printed on watercolour paper and applied to a wooden frame.

3 Manitoba St., Bracebridge 705.645.2810 | cornercabinet.ca

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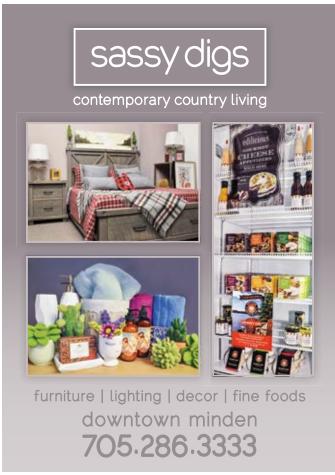
Muskoka Lakes Township 416.557.0896 | deepwaterwood.com

RAFTERS OF MUSKOKA

Dinnerware

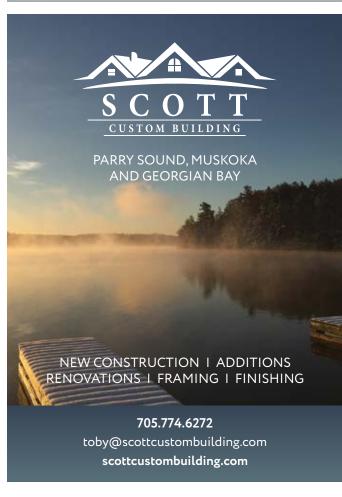
Butterflies and ferns lend whimsy to meals with this collection of sparkling melamine tableware. An oval platter and salad bowl with servers can be complemented with condiment cups, plates or matching paper napkins.

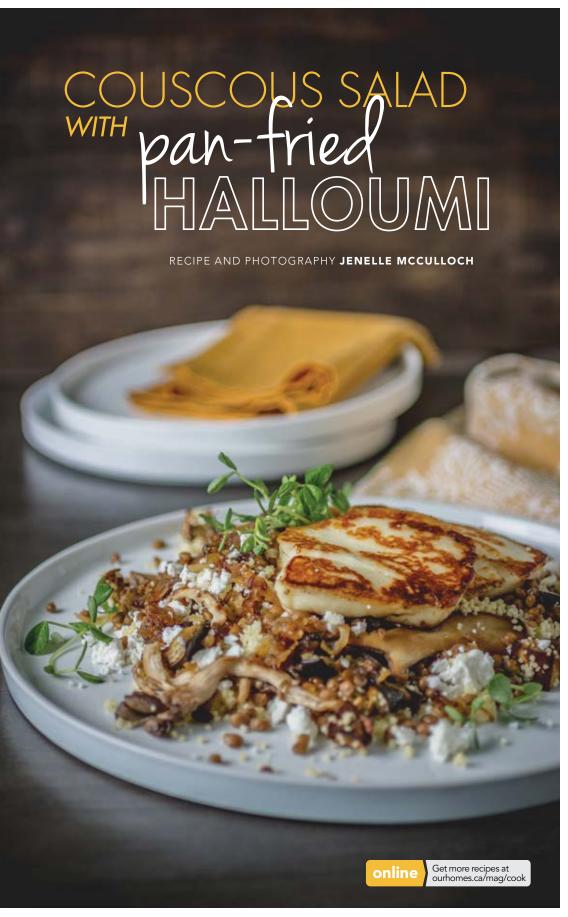
3 Dickie St., Baysville 705.767.3093 | raftersofmuskoka.com **0H**











This salad has deep, earthy flavours topped with smoky, salty and sweet halloumi cheese, which is made from goat's or sheep's milk.

SERVES 2

HALLOUMI

INGREDIENTS

1 pkg (250 g) halloumi cheese

1 Tbsp honey

Cumin and chili powder, to

Cut halloumi into ½-inch slices, lay on paper towel and pat dry. Season with cumin and chili powder, then drizzle with honey. Halloumi is a salty cheese, so there is no need to add more salt. The honey will balance the saltiness of the cheese and provide a caramelized crust. Set aside.

DRESSING

INGREDIENTS

3 Tbsp olive oil

1 Tbsp apple cider vinegar

1 tsp dijon mustard

Salt and pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

Combine all ingredients together in a small bowl and whisk until combined.



SALAD

INGREDIENTS

1 cup dry lentils

3 Tbsp olive oil

1 cup couscous

1 cup boiling water

1 large onion

1 Tbsp butter

2 Tbsp olive oil, divided

1 tsp sugar

1 tsp balsamic vinegar

1 eggplant, cubed

1 cup mushrooms of choice, sliced

Cumin to taste

Salt and pepper, to taste ½ cup feta cheese

DIRECTIONS

Pre-soak lentils in hot water for at least 15 minutes, or up to 24 hours. Drain and rinse before use. Set aside.

Place couscous in a bowl. Pour a cup of boiling water over couscous and cover with a lid. Let stand for 5 minutes then fluff with a fork. Set aside.

Cut onion into 1/4-inch slices. Add to saucepan with 1 Tbsp each of olive oil and butter. Cook slowly on medium-low heat and stir occasionally until onion reaches a golden brown colour. Add sugar and balsamic vinegar, stir and remove from heat.

Combine eggplant and mushrooms in a bowl and season with 1 Tbsp olive oil, cumin, salt and pepper. Mix thoroughly. Add mixture to frying pan over medium heat. Sauté until almost browned and add drained lentils. Cook until browned edges appear.

TO ASSEMBLE

In a large bowl combine couscous, sauteed eggplant, mushrooms, lentils, caramelized onion and feta in a large bowl. Add dressing and season with salt and pepper to taste.

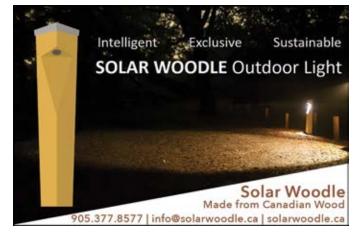
Just before plating, fry slices of halloumi in a dry pan over medium heat.

Fry and flip until both sides have a golden crust.

Plate salad and top with halloumi. он







Aplace for THANKS

PROJECT AND PHOTOGRAPHY TARA CHATTELL



Set your Thanksgiving table with paper placemats to help your family and friends express gratitude. Here are three ways to use simple paper doilies and printable templates.

TOOLS & MATERIALS

Large paper doilies (we used 14-inch doilies)

Paper (we used white or kraft paper)

Placemat template

Printer

X-Acto knife or scissors

Paint (optional; we used gold craft paint)

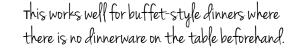
Foam paintbrush (optional)

Glue (optional)

Pens or pencils

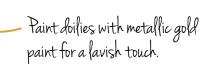


















Visit ourhomes.ca/mag/placemats to download printable templates in PDF format for the placemats shown here. on

ourhomes FALL 2018 | 31

SENIORITY GOES HIGH-TECH

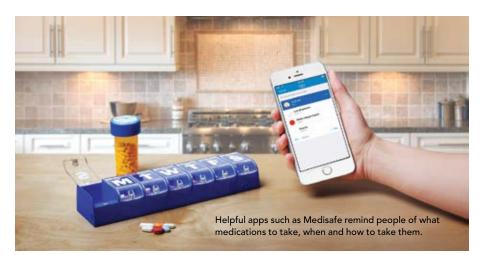
STORY WALTER FRANCZYK | ILLUSTRATION SHEILA BRITTON

Aging at home in the digital age can be a challenge as well as an interesting adventure that enhances and prolongs independent living. When it comes to adopting modern conveniences that help people live at home as long as possible, age-appropriate technology is essential.

Most seniors, already enjoying their retirement years, prefer low-tech, easy-to-use solutions, says Heather Mahon, who owns Heather's Home Healthcare, a medical equipment and supplies store that promotes independent living.

Low-tech solutions could include something as simple as soft rubber covers that slip over kitchen and bathroom taps, making them easier to turn. A portable phone or a cell phone, taken into the bathroom during showers or baths, is a simple safety measure. "If you fall, you can call 911," says Heather.

An ever-expanding universe of digital technology promises benefits unheard of when today's seniors bought their first homes. Retirement is an excellent opportunity to explore emerging technology and to learn about computers, the internet, digital devices and all they have to offer. Technology is used in every facet of life to make tasks easier and faster, according to Aging in Place, a resource hub for seniors and families. "It's important not to underestimate how technology can help you in your golden years," the organization advises.



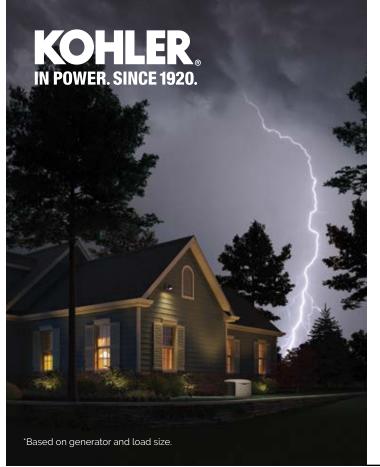


When travelling to see family and friends gets too difficult due to inclement weather, distance or mobility issues, people can keep in touch through email, text messages or live video links such as FaceTime and Skype. Simple training in using computers, smartphones and tablets is available through local libraries, recreation departments or seniors organizations.

Medical alert services, often the first aging at home improvement, are also easy to use. They typically provide clients with a small help button that can be worn as a pendant around the neck or on the wrist. Someone in need of help can simply push the button to reach a monitoring service. Some systems have the ability to detect falls. With the home phone turned into a speaker phone, the monitoring centre can call the customer. "If they don't respond, they're going to call an ambulance," says Heather. Monitoring is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. "They don't care how often you press that button. They're there," she says.

With voice commands, mobile digital assistants such as Apple's Siri or Amazon Echo's Alexa can be used to find out the weather or traffic conditions, to send an email, make a phone call and more.

Continued on page 34



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Window shades can be automated to open and close and temperature can be adjusted remotely from a smartphone.



People with complex medical conditions that require multiple medications can take advantage of new technologies that help ensure they take their pills as prescribed. For example, a heart transplant recipient who takes more than two dozen pills every day uses an app called Medisafe to remind him what pill he should take, at what time and whether he should take it with food or water. The application for tablets or smartphones can be programmed to alert a designated relative or caregiver if someone has forgotten to take medication.

Spencer Heath Solutions has taken a step further and developed a medication dispenser. About the size of a toaster, it can be placed on a kitchen counter. It doles out pre-packaged doses of the right medication at the right time, as prescribed. It alerts users when its time to take medicine and can remind them when they've forgotten. The device can also alert caregivers and pharmacists when someone has missed taking medication.

THE SMART HOME

Sarah Love and her husband Stewart operate a Burlington company called PMWYRE that automates homes and cottages. Many of their customers are age 60 or older. "A lot of them are people who are building their retirement home and they're looking to stay at home forever," Sarah says. "So we work with the builder to provide a variety of solutions to make their home safer as they age."

A critical care nurse for 15 years, she worked closely with home care services in getting

people home after they were discharged from hospital. "I think I bring a unique perspective," she says. The couple work with clients to design smart homes to be exactly what homeowners want. PMWYRE can install sound and television systems, security systems, panic alarms and sensors that detect whether their sump pump is working or if water is leaking into the basement. They can install a camera if homeowners want family to visually check on them via smartphone or computer. Doorbells can be equipped with a camera to show, on the home television, who's at the door. "The client will hit it and see if they want to get up and answer the door," Sarah says.

"We work with clients to develop light pathways. So, for example, if they frequently get up and use the bathroom, we can do a pathway of light that's set at 10 per cent or 20 per cent that's on at night from their bedroom to the bathroom. And when they get to the bathroom, we can put in an occupancy sensor in the bathroom so the light goes on. When they leave, it automatically goes off."

Medical alert devices and mobile digital assistants can allow seniors to live independently tor as long as possible.

In bedrooms or other rooms, window shades can be automated to rise in the morning and descend in the evening, so homeowners aren't struggling to get behind furniture to open and close shades, she explains. Lighting can also be automated to turn on and off when homeowners want. The house can be programmed so when homeowners leave, they can press one button and the security system engages, shades descend and lights adjust to leave on only those that are necessary. When owners come home and punch in their key code on the door or their smartphone, the security system automatically disarms and lights come on at appropriate settings and locations. The door code can even turn on their favourite music or radio station.

The systems are user-friendly and not difficult to learn, Sarah says. "Our objective for our clients is to make it as simple as possible for them." OH





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LEFT: River rock lines the swales that direct water in the expertly landscaped front yard. **BELOW:** Space over top of the two-car garage was transformed into a large guest room. **BOTTOM:** Chairs on the dock are an ideal place to watch the world and the geese go by on the river. Norstar covered the home's many intricate roof surfaces.





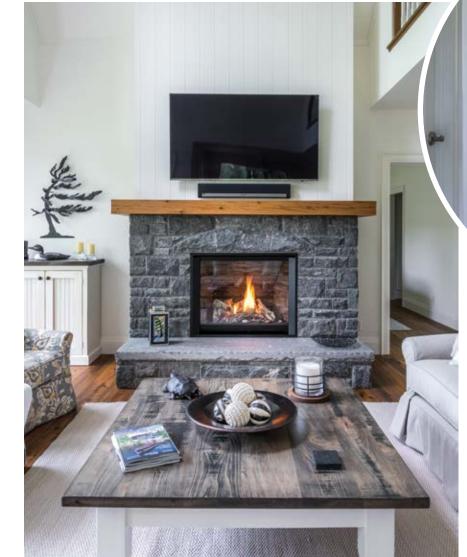
JUST A STONE-SKIP AWAY from the family cottage, the search for a legacy property was over. The site, featuring 105 fe<mark>et of</mark> frontage on the Indian River in Port Carling, was introduced to Carol Conlin twoand-a-half years ago by sales representative Thelma Jarvis from Johnston & Daniel Rushbrooke Realty, Brokerage.

"It needed quite a lot of work, but she knew I would love it," recalls Carol. "I felt a calmness, a peacefulness here, the first time I set foot on the property and I could already visualize a nice home to be built."

Its appeal was more than a wise investment. "Our beautiful family cottage is on Lake Muskoka," Carol explains. "We are a blended family and I decided to search out a property as a legacy to my two daughters in advance of it becoming unaffordable here. And it proved to be a good time to do it."

Daughters Alexis and Erika had been coming to the area since 1995, forging life-long friendships, teaching swimming at the Beaumaris Yacht Club, and becoming well ensconced in the Muskoka lifestyle. Carol envisioned a legacy home for them that would blend iconic and traditional Muskoka cottage construction with some of her more contemporary ideas. After sourcing suppliers, builders, artists and tradespeople, she chose a primarily local team, well experienced in translating that "Muskoka feel." Continued on page 39





ABOVE: Randy Nickason Sr. of Fireplace King built the living room fireplace. TOP RIGHT: The cottage's front foyer offers a window-framed view of the river. RIGHT: Conveniently located off the foyer, a doorway provides easy access to the kitchen.



First on board was Joshua Wassenaar, owner of From the Ground Up Construction, who had built the family cottage on Lake Muskoka. He recommended architectural technologist Tim vanKruistum of Muskoka Lumber Building Supplies Centre Ltd. in Port Carling, who invited Carol to view a place he'd designed for his family on Lake Rosseau. She added her own input, significantly modifying and reducing the floor plan to 3,200 square feet.

"Carol worked with us to make sure the drawings were exactly what she was looking for," explains Joshua, a licensed carpenter. "From there it was really easy because she picked all of the finishes herself. Really, I didn't help her much with that at all. Carol knew exactly what she wanted and that was it – there was no guesswork."

She incorporated more and larger windows to offer a near-panoramic view of the river and Mirror Lake, added a Muskoka room and ensured that four of the five bedrooms had their own full en suite.

Thelma suggested the batten details on the bedroom ceilings as an affordable way to add interest and impact. "I wanted this cottage home to look 'of its time,' so some of the items I've chosen are timeless," Carol explains. "The less expensive, contemporary items are easily changed by the girls, down the road. The more significant items, because they're timeless, will last forever and won't need to be changed."

Quality pieces include the dining and great room chandelier fixtures and the wrought-iron exterior black coach lights, all custommade by **Matt Church** of **The Artisan's Gallery Inc.** in Gravenhurst. Continued on page 40

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feature

Durable Neue wide plank engineered oak from Nadurra Wood Corp. graces most of the floor surfaces throughout the home. Exceptions are the bathrooms, foyer and laundry room, where artistic porcelain tile from Mettro Source is used in hexagonal, rectangular and square patterns. Flooring and tile sources were recommended by Alex Arnott Design. Carol took the tile samples to **Knowles Plumbing** to co-ordinate the bathroom fixtures, vanities and countertops.

The Valor H6 Series fireplace from **Fireplace King** is propane for ease of use. To add Muskoka warmth to it, Carol specifically chose the grey-black Muskoka stone around the fireplace and large hearth, done by **Randy Nickason Sr.**, just before he retired. "It's beautiful," she says.

"I wanted the house to flow with the same calmness I felt when I first set foot on the property," says Carol. "That's why I chose **Benjamin Moore**'s Simply White throughout, with the kitchen island in soft Farrow and Ball grey."

The beautiful Calacatta Nuovo Caesarstone kitchen countertops crafted by **Woodsmiths of Muskoka** add a contemporary feel, but with the wood floors and metre-by-metre fresco-like tiles, there is still a Muskoka vibe. From just a few blocks away in downtown Port Carling, **Brown's Appliances** furnished the stainless steel kitchen equipment.

Carol chose simple shaker-style kitchen cupboards with contemporary hardware. In addition to the kitchen, Woodsmiths of Muskoka also designed and built the closet organizers, laundry cabinets and window boxes in the girls' bedrooms. "The window boxes are a wonderful timeless upgrade overlooking the water," says Carol.

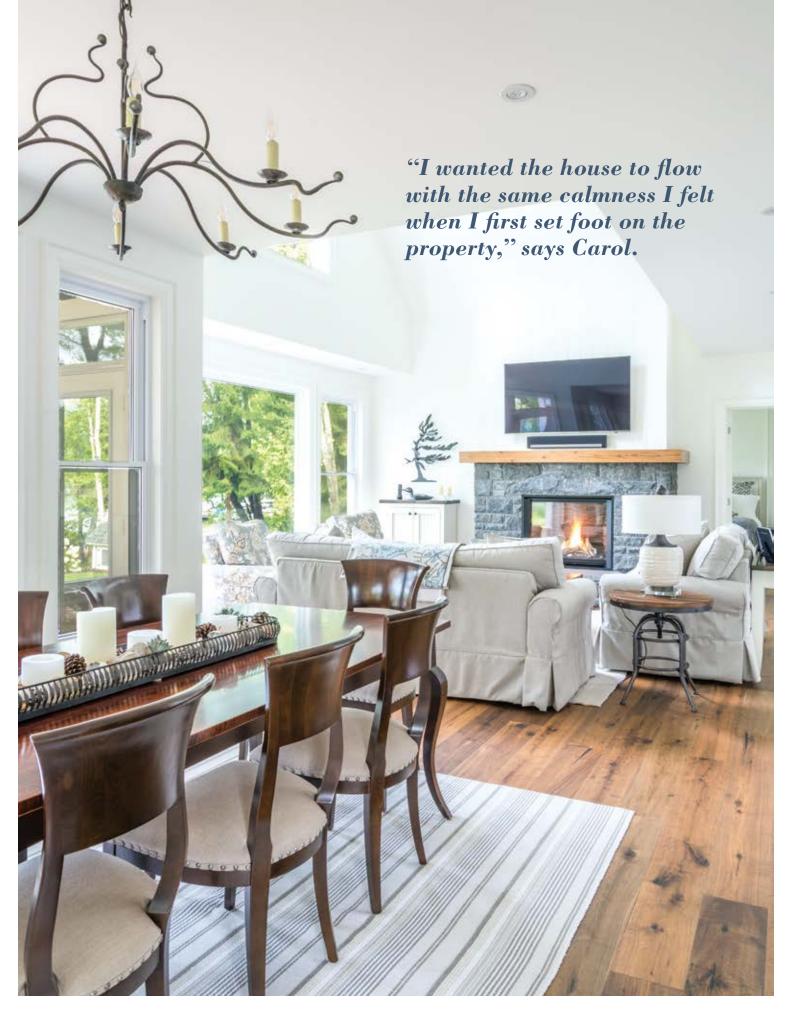
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TOP: A propane-fuelled fire table takes the chill off autumn air in the screened Muskoka room.

RIGHT: Large porcelain tiles form the colourful backsplash in the kitchen by Woodsmiths of Muskoka. OPPOSITE: Brass and pewter chandeliers made by The Artisan's Gallery Inc. illuminate the living room and dining room, where chairs around the dinner table were reupholstered by Steve Wegner Upholstery.







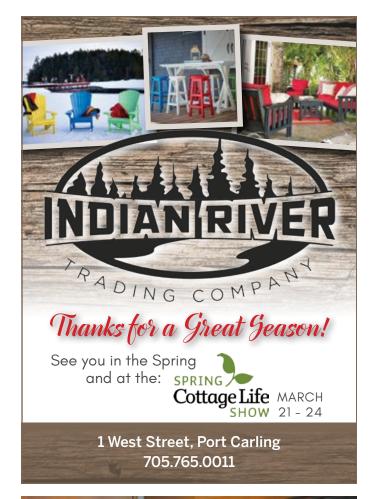
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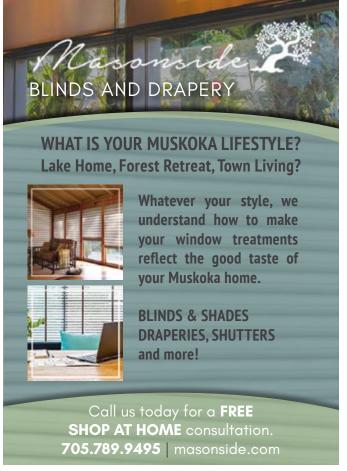
















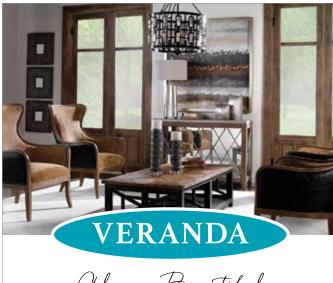
Karin Rogers and Laura Smith from **Simply Cottage** were extremely helpful with interior design choices, and measured spaces to ensure sofas, chairs, rugs, bedroom furniture and accessories fit nicely. "I spent hours with them choosing styles, fabrics and colours and they really made furnishing this place stress-less for me," Carol explains. Other accessories, rugs and linens were discovered at **Veranda** in Bracebridge, **Urban Rustic Living** in Huntsville, **Port** Carling Woodworks and Muskoka Living in Port Carling. Masonside Consultants **Inc.** supplied blinds and shutters throughout the home.

In keeping with the tranquil flow to the exterior, Carol chose Benjamin Moore's Overcoat, a medium grey, with white trim to accent the Cape Cod siding. Painting was by Jeanne Marshall of Decorative Finishes. Two red doors in Benjamin Moore's Rapture, a cool tone red, suggested by Alex Arnott, mix nicely with the warm grey. Continued on page 46



ABOVE: Three of the four second-floor bedrooms each have an en suite bath, furnished and installed by Knowles Plumbing. LEFT: Custom-built window seats in bedroom dormers provide handy storage and a comfy perch for watching the river.





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Jason Sinasac of TrueNorth
Landscape Design & Development
created a landscaping plan that proved to
be both simple and beautiful. "Everyone
comments on the stone paths he made and the
flow and continuity of trees, plants and river
rock he incorporated," Carol says.

The modern outdoor black aluminum and glass railing supplied by **Wayne Parsons** of **Muskoka Aluminum & Vinyl** is very clean and simple, and seems to disappear from view, while serving its purpose. **Indian River Trading Company** provided outdoor furnishings.

Last fall, two smaller properties adjacent to Carol's came up for sale. Again, Thelma Jarvis facilitated the purchase of these, one of which featured a small cottage. **David Dixon** of **David Dixon Carpentry** did a great job completely renovating this cottage, which Carol currently rents for the season to offset costs of renovating and furnishing. Her legacy project is complete. **OH**

ABOVE: A sliding door in the master bedroom opens to a private deck overlooking the yard and the river beyond. **RIGHT:** In the master bedroom en suite by Knowles Plumbing, matching sinks bookend a dressing table.

LOCAL SOURCE GUIDE

- Brown's Appliances David Dixon Carpentry Fireplace King
- From The Ground Up Construction Indian River Trading Company Jeanne Marshall Decorative Finishes Johnston
- & Daniel Rushbrooke Realty, Brokerage ullet Knowles Plumbing
- Masonside Consultants Muskoka Aluminum & Vinyl Muskoka Living • Muskoka Lumber Building Supplies Centre Ltd. • Muskoka
- River Tree & Property Care Norstar Aluminum Products Ltd.
- \bullet Simply Cottage \bullet Steve Wegner Upholstery \bullet The Artisan's Gallery

- Inc. The Stair Guy TrueNorth Landscape Design & Development
- Urban Rustic Living Veranda Woodsmiths of Muskoka

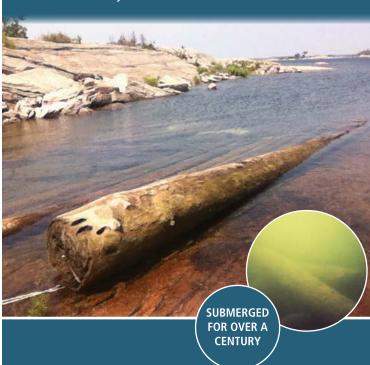




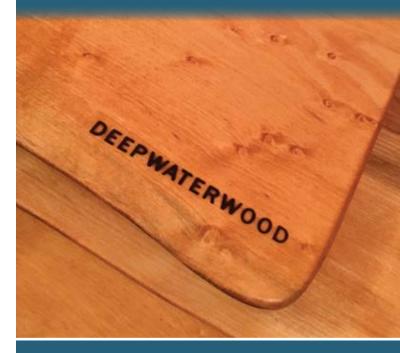




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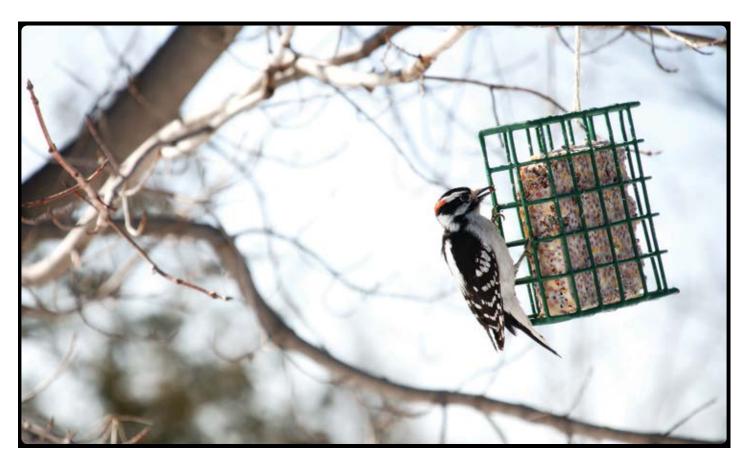
For the Birds - Suet

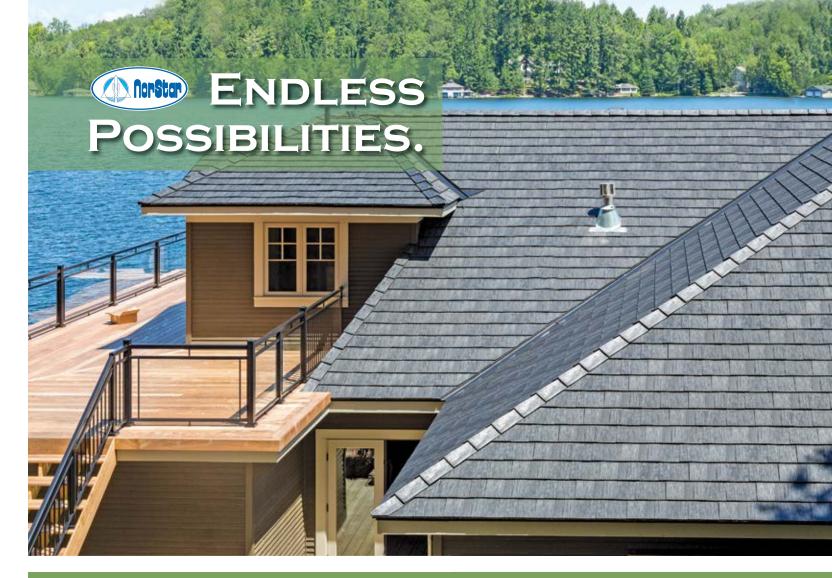


Suet can be moulded into all sorts of shapes, allowing for personal creativity.

Whether your feathered friends are fall migrants or year-round residents, augmenting their diets with high-quality calories found in suet will help them survive and thrive.

Making homemade suet is about as easy as making hummingbird nectar. It's also more rewarding, affordable and often healthier than purchasing commercially made cakes, bells or blocks. Plus, making suet at home allows you to customize the ingredients to appeal to the specific birds in your yard as well as those you wish to attract.





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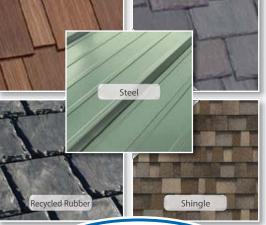


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SIMPLE SUET **RECIPE**

1 cup rendered suet

1 cup chunky organic nut or seed butter of choice

> 1/2 cup wheat or quinoa flour

When it comes to making suet, the more natural, organic and local the food ingredients are, the healthier the results are for the birds. A homemade suet blend is also free from nasty preservatives and fillers.

Start by purchasing rendered plain suet cakes or chunks from a wild bird supply store, garden centre, butcher shop or pet store. These cakes can be used as-is or can be melted down for tallow and used in more specialized suet recipes. You can also save beef fat left over from cooking to make homemade tallow. Once you have saved enough to make the batch size of your choice, just add a bit of water and let it simmer on the stove for a few hours until it turns a golden brown. Then strain the liquid fat with cheesecloth to remove any contaminants and the resulting liquid will be beef tallow. Use it right away or store in the fridge or freezer.

Suet recipes need not be complicated in order to attract a range of hungry fowl.

- Melt the suet and nut butter together until they are smooth and liquid.
- Add the flour, mixing well. Allow the mixture to cool slightly to thicken, then pour it into moulds, containers, muffin liners, plastic wrap or foil as needed for desired shape.
- Refrigerate or freeze suet until it is firm and ready to use. Extra suet may be kept frozen until needed.





Make It More Tempting

While a simple bird suet recipe is a great starting point, adding other ingredients to the mixture before it cools will make it more tempting to birds. Through experimentation you'll discover what your local birds find the most appetizing. These customizable ingredients include:

- Organic and unsalted/unseasoned/raw chopped nuts of choice
- Sunflower seed chips or other shelled seeds (many birds cannot extract the seeds encased with shells once fat is introduced).
- Organic dried fruit and berries
- Mealworms or crickets (my home bird populace goes crazy for these!)

Suet can be moulded into all sorts of interesting shapes leaving lots of room for personal creativity in your own bird buffet offerings. Given my personal affinity toward natural Christmas décor, my favourite way to display suet is by using a large pine cone that I run a stick through the middle of and attach with twine (the stick acts as a perch). I then smush the suet mixture on and into the pine cone and freeze it to set. I add a pretty double twine and ribbon combo to the top of the pine cone for hanging and voila, it's a gorgeous, natural and edible outdoor Christmas ornament. Bring on the birds! OH



TIP: To avoid attracting unwanted rodents, only put out enough suct that the birds will consume within one day. This will also help the suet stay fresh



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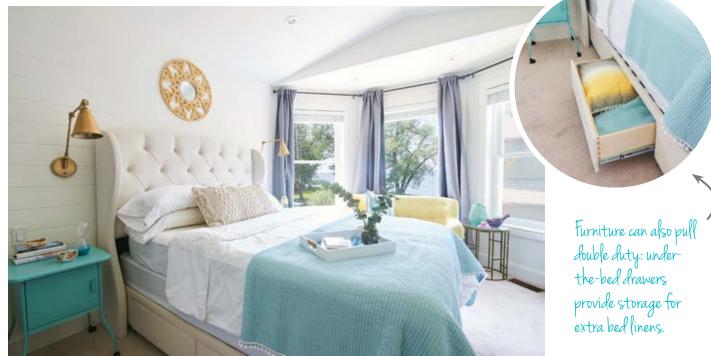


STORY LISA CANNING
PHOTOGRAPHY DANN TARDIFF

Designate a spot for the office

Once you've found the spot, plan your design. I opted for custom millwork to utilize every square inch of storage I could. Going custom allowed us to paint the desk this gorgeous turquoise colour, Benjamin Moore Waterfall. Take note of the brass, hand-cast cabinet pulls from Shayne Fox – they're like jewelry on this desk. The chair is from CoreChair.





2 Find the perfect bed

Everyone deserves a beautiful bed. After a hard day a beautiful bed is worth the investment. This bed with its tufted, wingback headboard is from Wayfair and it offers great value with storage. A beautiful bed needs a quality mattress. Here we used the award-winning Casper Mattress. I also chose Casper's sheet and duvet set in a crisp white.

3 Add your personality

This is important, regardless of the kind of space you are creating. It has to reflect you and your unique personality. Here I just had to add elements like the Metrie door painted Benjamin Moore Yellow Highlighter. To ensure this was the focal point, we kept the adjacent sliding closet doors in white to ensure some balance. Again, to ensure the space didn't feel too overwhelming with all the vibrant pops, I wrapped the room in Metrie's tongue and groove shiplap panelling and painted it Benjamin Moore Decorator's White. I love interior mouldings. They provide such a beautiful textural element to any space.

4 Get cosy

Every bedroom needs to feel cosy and comfortable, which is why I added ample blankets and pillows in a variety of textures, all within our colour palette to stay harmonious, and displayed them on the ladder. Lighting also makes a big impact in the room. I added a stunning modern chandelier that adds an architectural element. Lastly, add some fun accessories. The ladder, chandelier, tray and pen are all from Bouclair. **OH**



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spotlight





STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY WALTER FRANCZYK

BRIGHT IDEAS

THE PLACE: Opened three years ago, Muskoka Lighting Company is a gleaming boutique that shines with bright ideas. "We sell decorative lighting, under-cabinet lighting, landscape lighting, lamps, home décor and giftware, says sales manager Debbie Tilstra. Her son, master electrician Jeremiah Tilstra, owns the store. At 2,400 square feet, the shop

can't display its entire inventory, so it has a working space where clients can use a computer and lots of catalogues to view products. "We carry a lot of inventory," says Debbie. "People can come in and find something and potentially take it home with them the same day."









THE STYLE: "We sell a lot of contemporary and modern lighting," says Debbie. It's a style that suits modern cottages and the many people who are moving to Muskoka to make their homes here.

FAVOURITES: "I love everything," says Debbie, who's inspired every time she sees a new place where lighting can go. A good working knowledge of the store's product line is essential to informing clients and asking the right questions to help them make the right choice, she explains.

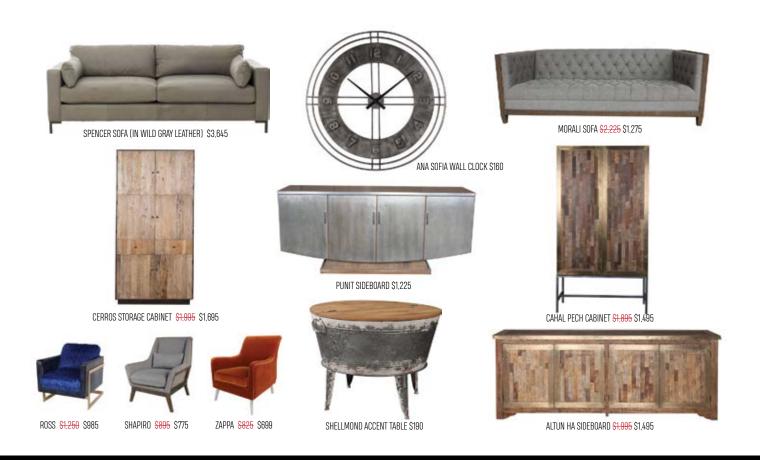
WHAT'S HOT: Modern farmhouse lighting is a popular choice. Two-tone metals, including white and brass, chrome and nickel, and black and gold are also very popular.

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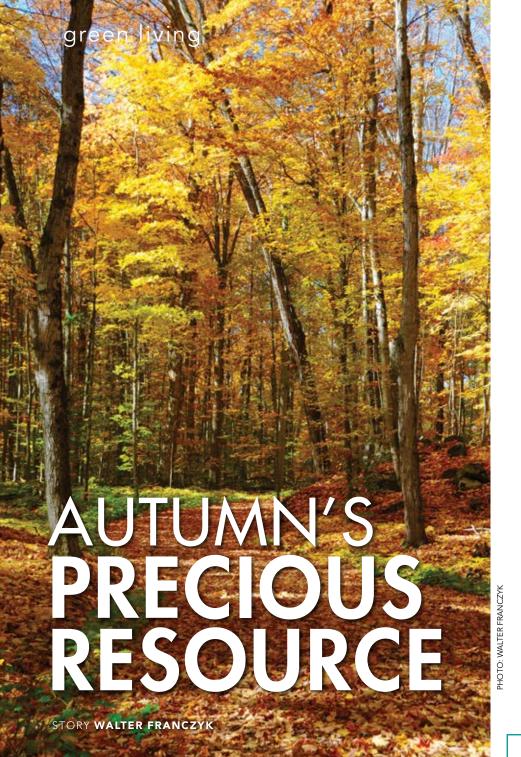




Love being home.







RAKING LEAVES AND BAGGING THEM FOR PICKUP AT THE CURB IS A SIMPLE WAY OF RIDDING THE YARD OF AUTUMN'S ANNUAL BOUNTY, BUT IT'S ENVIRONMENTALLY UNFRIENDLY.

Especially for those who drive somewhere to collect or buy compost for the garden. Hauling away leaves and carting home compost needlessly burns fossil fuels.

Better solutions can be found right at home. A mature deciduous tree sheds hundreds of thousands, perhaps as many as a half million, leaves every fall. Year after year, this colourful descent adds tonnes of organic matter to the environment. It's a plentiful and renewable natural resource. Here are five ideas for dealing with leaves.

GIVE THEM AWAY

If you don't want the leaves that fall in your yard, you can offer them to a neighbour. This overture might be unwelcome or redundant if most of your leaves have already blown onto your neighbour's property. But it's worth a try. An avid gardener next door just might accept the offer. Some gardeners admit to supplementing their own leaf harvest by cruising residential subdivisions and taking the large paper bags full of leaves left at the curb for yard waste collection.

LEAVING THEM

Leaves are beneficial in yards and gardens. They serve as habitat for salamanders and insects. Completely removing them deprives soil of nutrients that percolate into the ground if leaves are left to rot naturally. But if you want to leave the leaves, it's best to leave them in wooded areas and beneath shrubs. If you want leaves to remain on the lawn, it's best to shred them with a lawnmower or place them in a big garbage bin and chop them up with a weed-whacker, before spreading them on the grass. If left un-shredded on the lawn, leaves will trap moisture, block sunshine and create bare patches in spring that will require more yard work to repair.





TIP: It's easier to till organic matter that is broken down. Leaves can be shredded into small pieces with a lawnmower, or place them in a big garbage bin and chop them up with a weed-whacker.



MULCHING

Adding leaf mulch around the base of trees and shrubs and atop perennial beds provides many benefits. Leaf mulch improves soil fertility. It inhibits the growth of weeds and prevents evaporation of moisture. It helps to protect plant roots, keeps soil warmer in winter and cooler in summer, and reduces soil erosion. It's welcoming to earthworms that aerate the soil and help release nutrients. Dried leaves can be chopped into mulch with a lawnmower. If trees and plants have been previously mulched, remove the old material. A new layer of three to four inches of shredded leaves can be added around trees and shrubs. Two to three inches will suffice for perennial beds. Mulch will reduce the need for watering, weeding and

- TILLING

With a lawnmower, leaves can be shredded into pieces and tilled into the garden. where they improve soil quality. Leaves will increase organic matter, allow soil to hold more moisture and make it easier to till. Leaves add carbon, calcium, nitrogen, magnesium, potassium, phosphorous, iron and manganese to the soil. Decomposition is required to release these nutrients over time, but in the long run, they will enhance soil fertility. Scientists at Rutgers University in New Jersey found that due to the high carbon content of leaves, little of their organic nitrogen will be immediately available to flowers and vegetables, so some additional nitrogen fertilizer will be needed.

COMPOSTING

Composting leaves will turn them into an organic, nutrient-rich soil conditioner. Composting bins can be bought at garden supply centres or hardware stores, but it's easy to make one. Wooden shipping skids, turned on their sides and attached at the corners, will serve nicely. It's best to leave one side open or hinged to allow easy access. Chicken wire, rolled and fastened into a three-foot diameter bin, will also work. Composting works best when three parts brown material, such as leaves, are layered and mixed with one part green material grass clippings, vegetable peels, tea bags, coffee grounds, cut flowers or manure. Keep the pile moist. Turning it weekly will speed decomposition and prevent odours. After a few months, the pile will break down into a dark, valuable soil supplement that helps aerate and feed garden soil. Spread about a half-inch layer of compost over the entire garden. When transplanting, add compost to the soil surrounding plants. OH



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Coffee TONIC

Don't wait for this coffee trend to hit your local spot. The Coffee Tonic is refreshing and light, while still delivering your daily dose of caffeine. The idea originates in Sweden, yet has made noise throughout many large cities, and now in your own kitchen.



INGREDIENTS

ce

Tonic water

Espresso or cold brew coffee

Garnish: Citrus fruits and rosemary sprig or maraschino cherries and pomegranate syrup

DIRECTIONS

Fill a glass with ice and top with tonic water until about an inch from the rim.

Slowly pour in espresso or cold brew coffee so that it floats on top.

Serve with a squeeze of fresh citrus and a sprig of rosemary to brighten it up. Or, for a deeper complexity, garnish with maraschino cherries and pomegranate syrup. **OH**





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KUSHOG Delight

STORY WALTER FRANCZYK
PHOTOGRAPHY SANDY MACKAY





Brian and Donna Conroy thought they were done cottaging. "When the kids started to go to university, we thought it was over," says Brian. "We sold the cottage and retreated back to the city."

But a couple of years later, the allure of the Algonquin Highlands proved irresistible. "We had made a lot of friends on this lake," he says. "We had always wanted to come back."

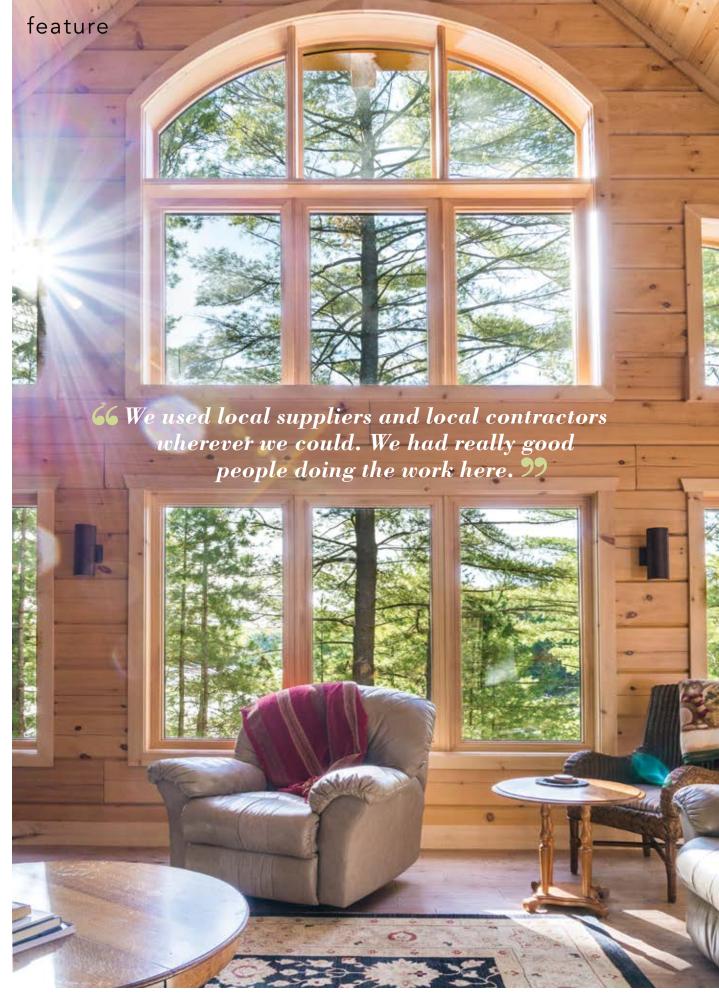
Seated at the dinner table in the couple's new five-bedroom log home on Kushog Lake, he recalled how they first got to know the area. Mississauga residents, they were introduced to the lake when the parents of youngsters who played hockey with the Conroy sons invited them up to their cottage. The Conroys later rented a cottage and then bought their first summer home on Kushog. "We really enjoyed

ourselves and the kids were enjoying it," says Brian. "That's what attracted us to buy the very first cottage."

"I like this lake," says Donna. "Kushog is a long, narrow lake. You can go for a nice long boat ride and you can just see things on both sides of the lake," she says. "There are enough bays for the guys to go waterskiing, wakeboarding or whatever else they want to do."

On their return to cottage country, they initially bought a place on Twelve Mile Lake, but they longed to return to Kushog and looked at several properties before they found their ideal spot. Continued on page 65

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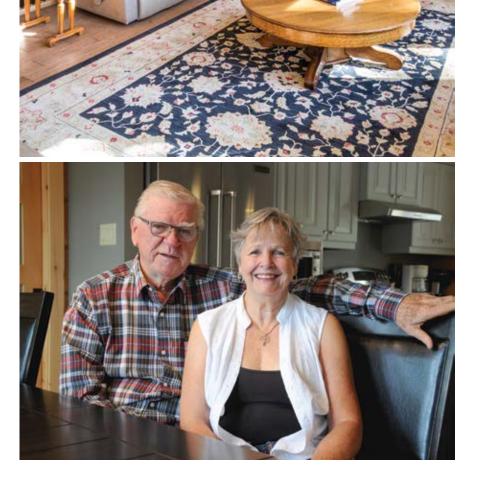


"We wanted to be at this end of the lake," says Brian. "We wanted to stay down here where all our friends are."

They bought just over an acre of waterfront land, with 750 feet of shoreline in a sheltered cove, near the south end of Kushog Lake. It overlooks Kushog Island. The property's southern end is a tiny wooded peninsula, nearly surrounded by water, where the original cottage, built about 75 years ago, still stands, bright yellow and red.

The Conroys wanted a new cottage, of Donna's design. They examined several options, including a custom-built summer home. When they viewed a cottage built of logs from the Haliburton Forest, they were impressed. "I had always thought that any home with a lot of pine wood didn't appeal to me," says Donna. "Once we were in this other place, I really liked it. We both liked it," says Donna. "Everything about it was just right," says Brian.

They took their plans and ideas to 1867 Confederation Log & Timber Frame where the staff won their confidence.
Confederation's reputation, its 3D walk-through of designs and pre-assembly of logs and timbers on the factory floor helped earn the Conroys' trust, explained Rich Kinsman, vice-president of sales. The company works with clients' ideas, needs, lifestyles and desires in designing each home, he explains. "They knew what they wanted to have and we tweaked it to make it great," Rich said. Confederation supplied logs and timbers for the two-storey home. "They were really good people to deal with," says Brian.



TOP LEFT: Modern Home Carpet One supplied tile flooring for the cottage foyer. **TOP RIGHT:** A vaulted pine ceiling, intersected with beams, soars above the great room fireplace built by Dwayne Simms. **ABOVE:** Brian and Donna Conroy say their many friends on Kushog Lake drew them back to the back-country neighbourhood. **OPPOSITE:** High arched windows in the great room catch the afternoon sun. They overlook Kushog Lake and Kushog Island.

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The Conroys wanted a main-floor master bedroom as well as an office for Brian, an accountant who still crunches numbers part-time. Ground floor plans included a large open-concept great room with an adjoining dining room and kitchen, as well as a utility room. Upstairs, they created two wings, each with two bedrooms and a bathroom, separated by a central games room. A single-stringer, pine staircase with timber treads, an original Confederation design, connects the main floor with the upstairs.

Greg Bishop Surveying & Consulting Ltd. plotted the property lines. Francis Thomas Contracting Co. Ltd. prepared the building site, excavated the basement and built the insulated concrete form foundation. The company also installed the septic system and driveway.

Builder **Scott Doan** of **S&S Construction** impressed the Conroys with his attention to detail as he laid engineered hardwood flooring and tiles from **Modern Home Carpet One**. He also installed trim, doors and ceilings. "He was very good," says Brian. "He was a lifesaver." Scott built a fixed dock as well as a path with handrails leading down to the lake where **Houston Marine Systems** supplied a floating dock and ramp, designed to accommodate the wide-ranging lake levels.

Emmerson Lumber Limited furnished the kitchen cabinetry with

Continued on page 68

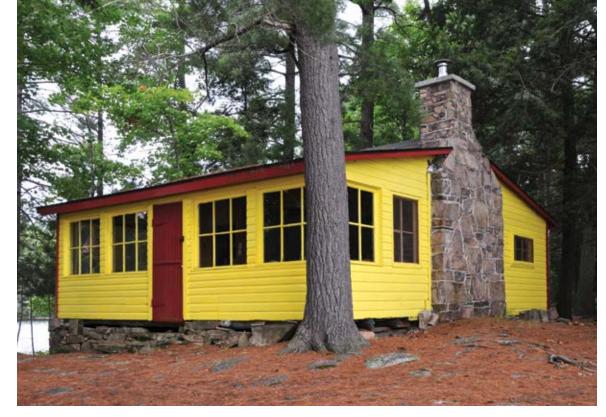




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feature

RIGHT: Painted bright yellow with red trim, the original cottage on their property has been left standing on a southfacing point of land. **BELOW:** A tiny wooded islet sits just off the point. **BÉLOW RIGHT:** installed a fixed dock on the waterfront where Houston Marine Systems supplied a floating dock and ramp that adjusts to fluctuating lake levels.



granite countertops from **Delray Granite** while **Haliburton Timber Mart** supplied finishing materials and shaker-style doors throughout the home.

Haliburton Artesian Well Drillers and Ontario Water Well Fracturing ensured an ample supply of fresh water. Don Barker **Heating & Cooling** provided year-round climate control while **Sharp Electric** wired the home and supplied ceiling pot lights. **Highlands Plumbing & Heating** looked after the waterworks.

"We used local suppliers and local contractors wherever we could," says Brian. "We were really pleased. We had really good people doing the work here."

The couple didn't leave all of the work to professionals, however.

Donna led a team of friends who stained the exterior log walls as well as all the soffit, fascia and pine cladding. "It was three coats," says Donna. "Except for the logs, everything was stained before it was put on. They were stained in the garage by myself and our friends. We had a bunch of ladies here from all over." They used the carport and garage as their paint shop. To aesthetically tie the site together, Confederation provided pine cladding that replaced the vinyl siding on the garage.

The carport, a feature suggested by one of their sons, was a great addition. "That was absolutely one of the best things we put on the house," says Brian. "We use this place year-round. It's so easy to unload and load cars right through the side door in any kind of weather."

Donna chose most of the home's lighting from a variety of suppliers.











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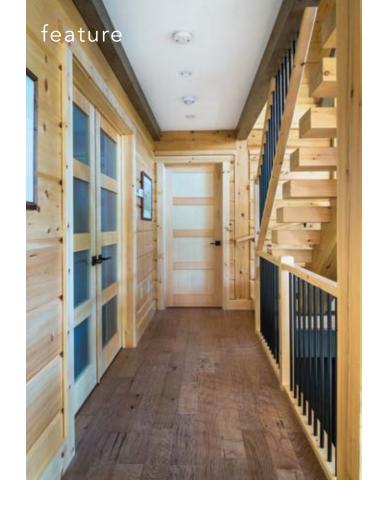
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As in most of her design, convenience and utility were paramount. "I just basically like practical, functional things," says Donna. "It doesn't have to be super splashy. I just want to be able to work with things and put things away that need to be put away."

The couple have enjoyed summer among friends on their favourite lake. They admit they probably spend more time at the cottage than at their Mississauga home. This cherished spot is something they intend to pass on to their children. "We didn't build it to flip it and sell it," says Brian. "It's going to stay with the kids and stay with the grandchildren." он



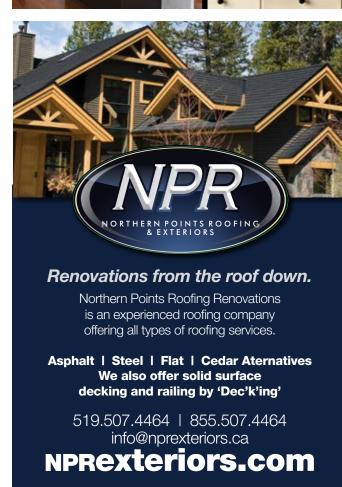
LEFT: Shaker-style doors, inset with frosted glass, open to Brian's main floor office. BELOW: Donna chose the cottage light fixtures from a variety of sources. **BOTTOM:** A main-floor master bedroom with an en suite was an essential part of their cottage design.

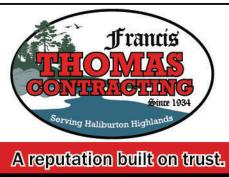


LOCAL SOURCE GUIDE

• 1867 Confederation Log & Timber Frame • Delray Granite • Don Barker Heating & Cooling • Dwayne Simms • Emmerson Lumber Limited • Francis Thomas Contracting • Greg Bishop Surveying & Consulting Ltd. • Haliburton Artesian Well Drillers • Haliburton Timber Mart • Highlands Plumbing & Heating • Houston Marine Systems • Modern Home Carpet One • Ontario Water Well Fracturing • S&S Construction • Sharp Electric







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TOOLS

Mixing bowl

Large spoon

Measuring cups and spoons

Large bags for tea (either reusable muslin or disposable paper tea bags will work, we've chosen 4-by-6-inch muslin bags)

Tags (for gifts)

INGREDIENTS

Makes five bags each.

rose coconut milk tub tea

2 cups Epsom salt

1 cup Himalayan pink salt

1 cup coconut milk powder

1 cup dried rose petals and buds

lavender oatmeal tub tea

2 cups Epsom salt

1 cup coarse Dead Sea salt

1 cup powdered milk

1 cup oats (ground in a food processor or blender)

½ cup dried lavender





eucalyptus thyme peppermint tub tea

2 cups Epsom salt

1 cup coarse Dead Sea salt

½ cup baking soda

2 Tbsp dried eucalyptus leaf

2 Tbsp dried peppermint

1 Tbsp dried thyme



Add a colourful tag to make lovely gifts for friends (or just for yourself!)

Directions

For each recipe, mix the ingredients in a large bowl and divide evenly to fill 5 tea bags.

Once filled, close each bag tightly, knot the strings and tie on a pretty tag. Store in a cool, dry place.

When it's time for a bath, toss in a tea bag while you fill the tub with water. Let tea steep for 10-15 minutes (or desired strength) before removing the bag. Happy soaking... он

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STORY WALTER FRANCZYK

LAURA MUNZ Paint By Munzy

Tell us about your business: Celebrating our gallery's fifth anniversary, Paint By Munzy exclusively features a collection of original oil paintings and affordable, ready-to-hang canvas prints by my brother, artist Jonathan Munz. Art described by collectors as Group of Seven meets Tiffany stained glass, we proudly offer an extensive collection of truly northern canvas art that's available both online and at our Waterloo-based art gallery.

What's the difference between a canvas print and oil painting? Jonathan Munz's original paintings are hand painted using oil paints on canvas. When a painting is finished, he photographs that piece using a professional camera. Our canvas or "giclée" prints are then made-to-order by printing those high-resolution painting photographs onto canvas. Each canvas print is then hand stretched over wooden bars creating a piece of affordable art that has the look of an original Munzy.

Any tips for selecting a canvas size? Once our clients have narrowed down a shape and size (landscape, portrait, square, etc.) they're interested in, we recommend using green painters' tape (that can be purchased at any hardware store) to tape that size option directly onto their wall. We also offer a free in-room mockup service where clients can send us a photo of their space for us to photoshop some art examples into their room.

LARRY SPEERS, STEVE DURRAND, DAVE URRY, JIM SMITH & LAURA SPENCLEY

Linwood Custom Homes

What does Linwood provide clients?

Linwood Homes has a design library of more than 500 home plans in many different styles and sizes to suit any budget or location. "We can also create your own unique custom design," says Larry Speers. "Whatever you want to build, we have a design and material package or home kit to meet your needs."

Why do people choose Linwood homes?

In its 50th year, Linwood has won the most national awards for "outstanding custom home" by using design and material home packages and a local builder or Linwood Construction services. These awards have been achieved even when competing against homes that cost much more. Linwood homes have the wow factor or that something extra that immediately creates a lasting impression of value and quality, Speers says. Linwood homes showcase soaring ceilings, harmonious living spaces and an abundance of light. Linwood's use of natural wood features, including western red cedar and exposed Douglas fir beams, is admired throughout the world.

What advantages does custom design offer? Linwood's proven track record means clients benefit from award-winning expertise to get an outstanding custom home at a great price. The Linwood home package includes the creation of a top-quality design. Working with Linwood's design experts means clients can create a site-specific concept that can actually be built and meets their budget requirements.

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TIM LEFLER, ASHLEY COSTELLO, CARTER VEITCH, BEN GARDINER, JENNIFER VEITCH, DAVE GRIGG, JAYMI MOORE, CORY VEITCH & SEAN GUNN

Brown's Appliances

What's new at Brown's? "We just built a new warehouse, 2,000 square feet, to house more product. We've always been tight for space because we have a lot of product that we hold for people because sites are not always ready on time," says Jennifer Veitch. "We've also added a new truck and two new delivery guys to try to keep up with the volume that we're doing right now. We've had a fantastic summer season because of the weather."

What does Brown's do for customers? "It's a turnkey type of service. Not only do we help them choose the appliances, we do spec packages for their cabinetmakers or their builders," Jennifer says. Brown's teams deliver appliances, uncrate and place them. They take away packaging and old units. The store has two full-time installation teams.

How does a family approach shape your business? "Being third generation in the business, we have a reputation to uphold," she says. "For us, it's really important that if a customer comes in with an issue we have a resolution," Jennifer says. "That's part of our service. If you have an issue, we're going to work our way through it with you, rather than just send you off to the manufacturer and hope somebody's going to care at the other end.'

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MARY BOYKO, DESIGN ASSISTANT, ERICA FORTIN & CHRIS SINKIC, DESIGN & SALES SPECIALISTS Royal Homes

Tell us about your company: Royal Homes is a prefabricated builder, specializing in custom designs for homes and cottages throughout Muskoka and Ontario. "We feature a prefabricated building, including turnkey services such as excavation and foundations for our homes. That sets us apart from other builders," says Royal design and sales specialist Erica Fortin.

What makes Royal Homes unique? "We are very flexible in what we design for our clients and the range that we can provide in custom design," says Erica. "If they have a waterfront property that has a grading change that allows for a walkout basement then we can build to suit on that. We can also provide a bungalow with lofts as well as two-storey homes. We can build to suit, based on the lot requirements and what the town and client want."

What are the advantages of prefabricated homes? "You have a solid timeline, once a building permit is approved," Erica explains. "You also have firm pricing, because we are very upfront with our pricing, based on excavation, foundations and all interior-exterior items. Royal Homes is turnkey so we're actually providing on-site services such as septic, wells and tear-downs in addition to just building their home on their land."

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Are fireplaces a good source of home heating? Absolutely. Thanks to technology, today's hearth industry offers great fuel efficiency and clean burning units. Many stoves and fireplaces available today can heat your home year-round. As a renewable resource, wood is a great option.

What's new in the world of fireplaces? A few common trends are contemporary styles, European units and clean-faced wood and gas fireplaces. While companies are coming out with contemporary styles that are more energy efficient, others prefer European-style units that are sleek with low emissions and clean lines. Clean-faced fireplaces with large viewing areas are perfect for customers looking for the open masonry look, feel and ambience, but without the back-drafting and heat loss of an open masonry fireplace. OH



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STORY TAMARISK MCNALTY STEPHENS

BUILDING A NEW HOME

Part 1: Lessons learned

OUR HOMES Managing Editor and Interior Designer (I) Tamarisk McNalty Stephens and her husband are in the midst of building a new home in Grey County. She shares the dos, the don'ts and the best practices she's learned along the way. The number one lesson? Be prepared to make dozens more decisions than expected.



PI ANNING

DO: Evaluate your needs. We lived in a small cabin on our property for five years. This experience taught us what was actually important to us – insulation and enough space to entertain friends and family – and the things we could live without, like a basement and an en suite bathroom.

Hire professionals when it comes to the architectural and interior design of your home. Experience is invaluable especially if it's your first time building. Professionals can help bring your vision to life.

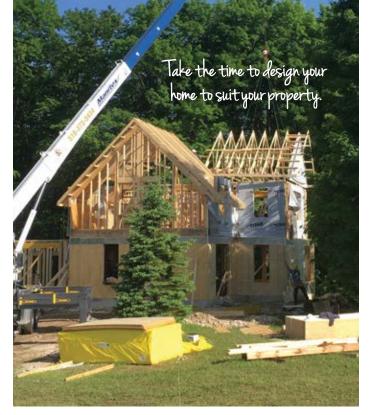
Decide on a budget figure that you are comfortable with and speak to your bank early to arrange financing.

PERMITS

DO: Talk to all authorities having jurisdiction early.
Your local municipality's planning department will
have by-laws that apply to the planned structures
and all associated parameters, setbacks, etc.
Our project is located within the catchment area
of the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority,
and it took several months to receive the final approvals.

Submit a complete application when applying for your building permit to avoid delays.

DON'T: Forget to contact your insurance company to get builder's insurance for the duration of construction.



DESIGN

DO: Design a home to suit your unique property. Each site will have natural restrictions, but take the time to consider the views and natural light, the location of outbuildings, where you'd like future gardens and outdoor living areas or a pool. Map out the footprint of the home in the proposed location. Morning sun is very important to me, and in our initial site I realized that I didn't have morning sun hitting the house until about 10 a.m. – that just wasn't going to work!

Pay special attention to the layout of doors and windows. It can be desirable for interior doors to align with windows.

Purchase the best quality windows that your budget will allow. Windows are a detail that are often overlooked, and aside from their thermal rating, they can truly make or break the overall exterior appeal and aesthetic of a home.

Think about kitchen and bathroom design, electrical layout, the switching plan and a furniture layout early on so you have all of the answers when your trades are ready to go. Select your appliances early, so, for example, you can plumb water to your fridge if you have an integrated water dispenser/ice maker.

Think about heating and cooling options early. Walk through with a mechanical contractor to understand how they need to run their duct work so you will know where you'll have bulkheads and registers.

Try to anticipate and integrate structural elements such as dropped beams and/or bulkheads needed to house mechanical equipment into the design – they could become an unexpected feature.

Consider various levels of lighting – general, accent and task – to create an inviting space and wire for it even if you don't intend to use it right away. It's easier and cheaper to do this before the drywall is installed.

DON'T: Rush the design phase. It takes a lot of thought and consideration to get a home that has a layout that meets your needs and is also aesthetically appealing from both the exterior and interior.

COSTS

DO: Request quotes from two suppliers, which is generally sufficient. It is time consuming for suppliers to quote a job/project, so be mindful of that.

Decide where you want to splurge and where you can save. For me, the exterior presence of the home is really important. I didn't want to compromise on the exterior finishes (windows, doors and siding).

Create a spreadsheet to track expenditures and stick to the budget as best you can.

DON'T: Forget to include development fees when calculating the approximate cost of your building permit – they might be an unwelcome surprise.

CHANGES

DO: Make sure you are able to devote the time required if you are taking on the project management. It involves being on site and scheduling trades and deliveries, pricing and ordering plus managing the budget.

DON'T: Make changes on site without considering the implications. Changes will invariably happen as the build progresses and it is important to be mindful of how these changes will impact other elements of the build. OH



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THE PINES ON LAKE
VERNON, RON AND
KAREN HEYDEN'S NEW
COTTAGE IS AN
ALL-SEASON RETREAT
THEY'LL EVENTUALLY
CALL HOME.

"We will move here in a few years and become permanent residents," says Ron, whose parents first bought a cottage on Lake Vernon more than 50 years ago. He has spent summers and winters at the lake since age three. Ron and Karen met in high school. She was 15 when she first visited the cottage, a place where the family spent summers waterskiing, riding dirt bikes, knee-boarding and fishing. In winter they went snowmobiling. When the vacant lot next to the original cottage came up for sale, Ron and Karen bought the land and began planning a new family lake house.

As the project organizer, Karen pored over building plans. The couple looked at the work of several builders. When Karen saw plans for **Linwood Custom Homes'** Antler Trail design, she found exactly what they wanted – an open-concept design, main-floor master bedroom and plenty of bedrooms and space for family and friends. "It was perfect," says Karen.

Continued on page 8





LEFT: Old barn beams make a bench at the front entrance to the Heyden cottage. **ABOVE:** A stone footpath and stairs meander downhill to the Heydens' front door. **BELOW LEFT:** Lake Vernon provides easy access all the way to downtown Huntsville. **BELOW RIGHT:** Muskoka chairs make an inviting resting place on the stone path to the lake. **OPPOSITE:** Post-and-beam construction is one of many attractive features in this cottage by Linwood Custom Homes.





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LEFT: Seen from the second floor, a soft leather sectional makes an inviting spot to sit in front of the fire. **BELOW:** Cottage owners Ron and Karen Heyden with Linwood Custom Homes vice-president Craig McFarlane (centre). **OPPOSITE:** The wood-burning living room fireplace, where the family often gathers, is one of Karen's favourite features. The top left of the photo shows a railing made of reclaimed wood and rebar.



The property, like much of the Vernon Shores area, is steep granite that had to be blasted for the building foundation, says Linwood's vice-president of retail sales **Craig McFarlane**. "This was one of the most challenging lots, but it turned out incredible," he says. As with most clients, specific building elements were modified to meet the family's needs. "Not only are we designing to make it work on the site, we're implementing modifications and changes to a stock design to suit what our clients want."

Linwood clients typically bring their own teams and sometimes sweat equity to the project, McFarlane explains. "It was a real collaboration of teams."

Bayroc Construction blasted and excavated the site, hauling out 65 truckloads of granite. While **Cripps Contracting Ltd.** built the foundation, framed the building, installed siding and shingles, Ron and

Karen, their daughters Kirstie and Amanda, friends and family finished the cottage. Amanda, who has a bachelor's degree in interior design, had plenty of ideas for furnishings and finishes. "We sort of gave her free reign and she did a fantastic job," says Karen.

Karen credits her daughters for a lot of help on the lake house, everything from helping carry flooring and tiles, in minus-30-degree temperatures, down a long, steep slope to the cottage to sourcing tables of reclaimed wood, and choosing interior finishes and colours. "They were working their tails off," says Karen. "Anytime we need help, family and friends are always close by to lend a hand," she says. "We've been lucky."

Ron used his electrical expertise to design and build a barn-beam chandelier. He installed a row of Edison bulbs in the bottom of a reclaimed barn beam, sourced in Elmira, built metal brackets and

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LEFT: Oak flooring complements the wormy ash kitchen cabinetry and bar stools by Ryan Bambach of Rustic Home Interiors & Premier Custom Woodworks. **BELOW:**The grey tile backsplash reaches from the leathered granite kitchen counter to the ceiling. **BOTTOM LEFT:** The Cutter's Edge built custom corner cabinets for the dining room.





suspended the fixture from the ceiling, reinforced for this purpose, above the dining room table. "It's one of the projects we really loved," Ron says. On a top floor walkway, overlooking the great room, he built and installed a barn-beam railing with rebar spindles. He also helped an old friend **Scott Maclachlan** of **Ready Systems** install the electrical services.

The spacious cottage kitchen is furnished with Ontario-grown, wormy ash cabinetry by Ryan Bambach of Rustic Home Interiors & Premier Custom Woodworks. Ryan also built the bar stools that align with the leathered granite kitchen counter, supplied by Granite Kings. Brandon McCully of MC Squared Renovations installed the soft grey backsplash tiles that reach from the countertops to the ceiling. He installed

a custom bathroom, floor tiles, pine trim surrounding the great room windows and painted the entire interior.

In the great room, with its high windows looking over the deck and a surrounding natural screen of tall pines, Randy Nickason of **Fireplace King** installed a Napoleon wood-burning fireplace with a blower system that helps heat all three levels of the home. Masonry King's Peter Zantingh finished the fireplace and cottage with more than 600 square feet of stonework. **Velha &** Co. Furniture supplied coffee tables and television stands made of reclaimed wood while **The Cutter's Edge** built custom corner cabinets for the dining room and the bedroom furniture. In the master bedroom, the couple installed a sliding barn door, built by Ryan, to access the en suite.

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home & builder

When choosing an exterior colour, the Heydens toured the lake, noting the hues other cottagers had chosen, mostly blues and greys.

They chose Gooseberry, something different, which contrasts nicely with the natural finish of the home's wooden shutters. "I'm really happy with the way it turned out," says Karen. "It's not something that everyone else has and it complements all the stone."

Ron's favourite spot is the great room, its soft leather sectional and expansive windows. "That's where everybody hangs out and gathers," he says. "With the fire, it's nice." He also enjoys sitting out on the deck. "I really like having the big pines there. It's like you're sitting up right in the tree tops." Afternoon is his favourite time of day when the sun warms the dock where he's building a storage shed that will eventually have a TV, refrigerator and maybe a beer keg.

With two Sea-Doos and a boat that the family shares with his mother and two brothers next door, the Heydens enjoy spending time on the water. They can boat from their calm, sheltered bay all the way to downtown Huntsville for shopping or entertainment. In winter, Ron enjoys easy access to a lot of great snowmobile trails, routes more plentiful and quieter than those on Muskoka's larger lakes.

Continued on page 9

TOP RIGHT: The main floor master bedroom, with custom furniture from The Cutter's Edge, has a sliding door that opens to the front deck. **BOTTOM LEFT:** A custom-built wooden door rolls open to the en suite. **BOTTOM CENTRE:** A glass-walled shower door and a linear drain create clean lines in the bathroom. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** The bathroom vanities and cupboards are built with wormy ash.





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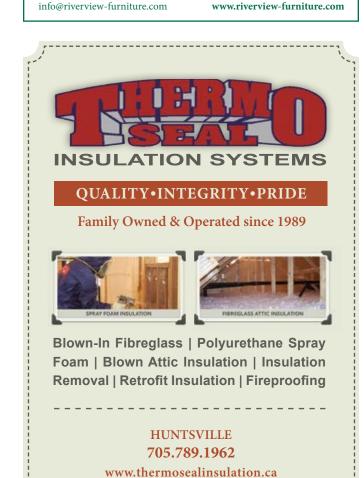
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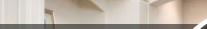
home & builder

Dinnertime, when everyone gathers for a nice meal, is Karen's favourite time of day. "This is a nice place where everyone comes together," she says. "We have our meals. Everybody pitches in. There can be four of us preparing a meal in the kitchen and we're not falling over each other." She delights in the fact that daughters Kirstie and Amanda like to spend time with them. "They could spend weekends with their friends or with their boyfriends, but they like to come up here and hang out with us, which is cool," Karen says.

One of her favourite features is the great room fireplace. "In the winter time, when it's cold, we get the fire roaring and it's a nice warm cosy place," she says. "It's a beautiful spot. It feels like home." он

RIGHT: The comfortably furnished ground floor family room has a fireplace, lots of windows and sliding doors that open to the front of the cottage. **BELOW:** Leathered granite covers the top of this





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ATTAINABLE SOLUTIONS INC. Attainable Solutions Inc. is a

family-based company located in Huntsville serving most of cottage country including Muskoka, Georgian Bay, Parry Sound, Haliburton and all points in between.

The company started out in the early 90s as a small landscaping business and has evolved into a sizable contracting company of approximately 30 employees, but still remains focused on quality workmanship and customer satisfaction, just as it did 24 years ago.

We specialize in custom homes and cottages, but also have a landscaping division, a dock and boathouse division, two barges and our own heavy equipment, as well as offering in-house design services. Attainable can handle as much or as little of your project as you require, and all estimates are free.

Our portfolio is wide and varied, ranging from traditional style post and beam cottages to more contemporary offerings, many of which can be viewed on our website.

Our barges are ideal for island work or hard to access waterfronts, and we also use them extensively for steel-pile dock construction.

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The stores' selections are in constant change throughout the seasons, offering a multitude of choice from quality custom furniture, lighting, home décor, great giftware, casual clothing, plus everything in between.

Lockside Trading Company also offers a successful Interior Design Service. With their dedicated staff and quality products, Lockside offers complimentary interior design when purchasing furniture, having all your design needs under one roof. This service includes in-store and on-site consultations, room layouts, colour, fabric selections and much more. It is a service that works with the customer, giving them direction and confidence to create a living space that they dream of. Offering Hunter Douglas window treatments, floor coverings, and many lines of furniture specializing in Canadian made! Quality by Canadians, for Canadians, keep it local!

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This past spring both locations welcomed new owners Lindsay and Dave. Having a combined background in retail, design, and a love of colour, it was the perfect fit for the next chapter of their lives. They are very excited to continue to grow this amazing company and look forward to many years of serving both these wonderful communities. With a new logo and look, plans are already in place to bring in more products and a wider range of services to better serve you. Come in and see how we can inspire your space

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Schlager offers a variety of construction services to the Parry Sound/Muskoka area. We have been in business since 1986 and are here to help you through every stage of your project. As proud members of Landscape Ontario, we can help you with all of your landscaping needs from designing, hardscaping, planting and maintenance. A beautifully landscaped property can increase the value of your property!

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Continued on page 100



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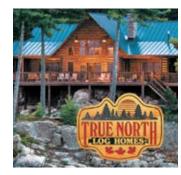
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NEW HOME INSPECTIONS

So you're ready to move in to your newly built home, but is your home ready for you?

A PRE-DELIVERY INSPECTION (PDI) IS A SIMPLE BUT CRUCIAL STEP THAT CAN HELP DETERMINE IF YOUR HOME OR CONDO IS READY BEFORE YOU TAKE POSSESSION.

Ontario builders are required – under the New Home Warranties Plan Act – to conduct a PDI to help homeowners note the condition of the home, and document missing or broken items on a PDI list. To prepare, the list is available on the Tarion website, says Bryan Stott, manager in warranty service at Tarion, the independent non-profit corporation tasked with administering the Act.

In general, builders of new homes and condos are required by the legislation to register each home and warranty their work with Tarion, which acts as mediator and watchdog. However, according to the Tarion website, residential buildings converted into condos, renovated homes, previously occupied homes, owner-built homes, seasonal homes, and homes built on previous foundations are not covered in the legislation. If you are considering buying a custom-built home check to see if it qualifies for Tarion warranties.

This is how a PDI works. "The homeowner and builder will walk through the home and use that opportunity to document the condition of the home, look for damages and missing items," Bryan says. Homeowners can see their house for the first time and ask about how systems function.

Houses are becoming more and more advanced and people may not be familiar with systems, such as heat recovery ventilators (HRVs).

"The walk through will start at the exterior of the home," says Bryan. "Look for damaged brick, missing caulking, anything like that. Inside the home, look for missing or damaged items."

The inspection should be done slowly and thoroughly, he adds. "Generally speaking, it should take an hour per 1,000 square feet."

And there's always something to put on a PDI.

"It's not like a car, which is built in a factory by machines," Bryan notes. "A home is built by people of different skills and calibre of workmanship. And there's always going to be something that isn't done to someone's preference."

Also, he says, at the time of PDI, homeowners and builders shouldn't get into an argument about what is and is not under warranty. Yet homeowners shouldn't hesitate to have something included on the list.

Usually homeowners conduct the PDIs themselves, accompanied by the builder, but if they are not confident in their ability to spot problems, they can designate another person to handle the PDI, like an independent home inspector. The builder must be informed of the designate, using a form that is also available on the Tarion website.

Once a list is created, it gives the builder a chance to make remedies. If unresolved by the time of possession, homeowners can put those items on their 30-day form for conciliation, Bryan says.



This triggers the 120-day period builders have to make changes. A year-end form may also be submitted to Tarion during the last 30 days of the first year of possession. It should list any items that are still unresolved and any new items that have come up.

Bryan also shares some pointers that could equip homeowners to confidently conduct a PDI. Builders should have the home in a clean state for the inspection, he says.

"Sometimes you'll notice dust or construction material in the home, that should be noted on the PDI," he says. "This can then be used to assist Tarion in determining if later scratches may or may not have been visible."

Additionally, he says, there's nothing stopping homeowners from taking photos as they go through the home and documenting the state of the home.

"It doesn't mean we can 100 per cent rely on photos, but it increases the homeowner's credibility with us," he notes.

Open and close cabinet doors, check hardware, window screens, doors, toilets, faucets and do a close inspection of all surfaces to look for scratches.

Builders also must provide a homeowner information package. "(It) will outline all the warranty timeframes, guidelines and homeowner and builder responsibilities," Bryan says.

Moreover, homeowners should document the humidity/moisture levels in the home at the time of inspection.

"Noting the temperature of the home is important," he says. "Let's just say it's a hot day and there's no air conditioning in the home and it's sweltering, it could potentially cause issues with the hardwood floor."

The PDI is just the start of the relationship between the builder and homeowner in the warranty process.

"If the relationship between the homeowner and builder goes well at that stage, generally speaking, the warranty process goes very smoothly," Bryan adds. **OH**













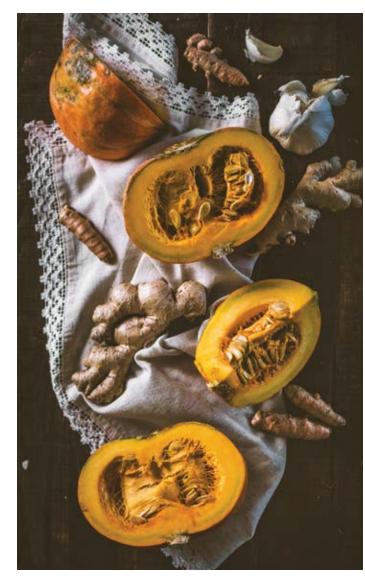




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INGREDIENTS

1 Tbsp coconut oil

1 medium pumpkin, peeled, seeded and cubed

1 medium onion, diced

5 carrots, diced

2-inch piece fresh turmeric, peeled and diced

3-inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and diced

3 cloves garlic, roughly chopped

Chili flakes, to taste

4 cups vegetable stock

Pumpkin seeds to garnish

DIRECTIONS

In a soup pot, melt coconut oil over medium-high heat.

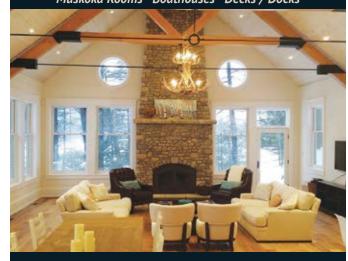
Add pumpkin, onion, carrots, turmeric, ginger, garlic and chili flakes. Sauté until pumpkin and carrots begin to caramelize.

Cover with vegetable stock and simmer for about 30 minutes.

Using a hand blender (or transfer to a food processor or blender), blend until smooth. Garnish with pumpkin seeds to

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