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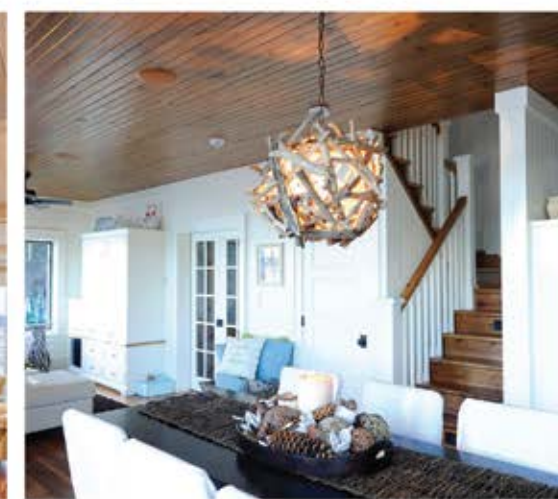


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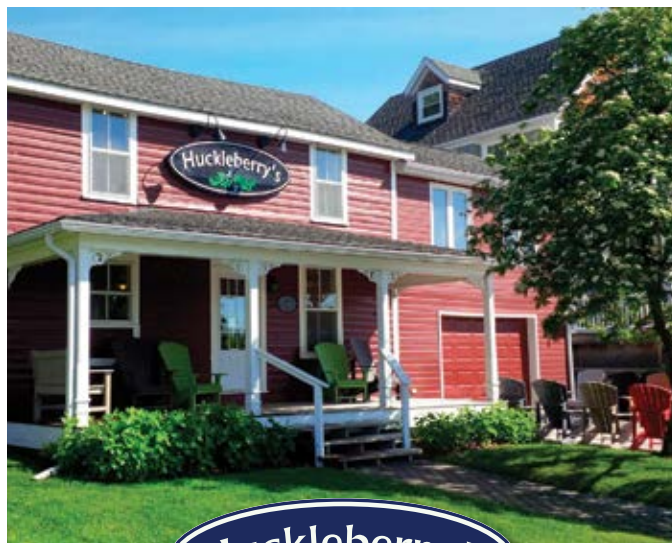


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OUR HOMES™ Muskoka Region is published four times a year by Three Punch Publishing
under the license of OUR HOMES MEDIA GROUP INC.

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.

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Sound, P2A 2X4. Or email us at editor@ourhomesmagazine.com. All letters received are
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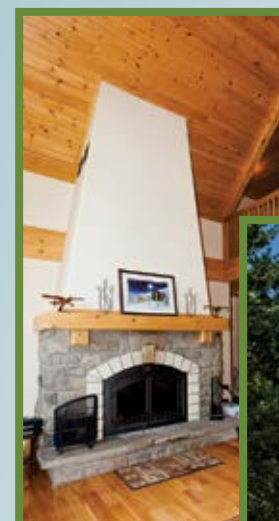


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I MOVED HOUSES
before ever writing about them. As a teenager, I spent a summer helping Russell Harrison, a house mover from Mount Albert, who was as old as my grandfather but could work harder and smarter than any young helpers he employed.

In my first week on the job, we rolled out of Mount Albert in a convoy to Bracebridge. Russ drove one of his two Diamond T transport trucks. Built during the Second World War, Diamond Ts hauled battle-damaged army tanks in North Africa. Both trucks had roof turrets above the passenger seats. We helpers imagined that's where machine gunners would have been positioned. A dump truck followed with a load of heavy wooden cribbing and a service truck carrying tools and jacks led the way.

The house we were moving, a two-storey brick home, had to be relocated to make way for widening Highway 11 at Bracebridge. The bricks had been removed from the house before it was raised, a few inches at a time, with 75-ton, hand-pumped jacks. Once high enough for two thick fir beams to slip underneath, the house was gingerly lowered to sit on the squared timbers. One of the first things we learned when working for Russ was never to make a move unless instructed. He knew what he was doing. The rest of us were just learning. The practice kept everyone safe.

Once we rigged our house-moving chassis, we hooked it to the fifth wheel on the blue Diamond T. Winched by the green Diamond T, the old army truck slowly pulled the house off the land where it had stood for generations. Led by police cruisers with red lights blazing, we rolled south across the Muskoka River to Muskoka Falls. As we neared the home's final destination, the road softened under the weight of our load. My job was to scramble beneath the house and place heavy planks ahead of the wheels so the load wouldn't sink in the soft terrain.

We moved the house to its new home without breaking anything and without snapping any overhead wires. With great satisfaction, we lowered it onto a new foundation, collected our cribbing, tools and big beams and went home. The house is still there today. It's been bricked again and looks like it's always been there.

Walter Franczyk

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THE FASCINATION AND popularity of Scandinavian interior design is remarkable to me. It's not that it isn't well deserved, quite the contrary. These countries – Denmark, Norway and Sweden – are characterized as dark and cold. Yet the interiors are white and simple. Somehow, the starkness of the interior reflects the chill of the landscape, but still evokes incredible warmth. How is this possible? And what's the obsession? A main characteristic of Scandinavian furniture design is minimalism, but also incredible craftsmanship. Simple lines using natural elements – wood, metal, stone, paper and felt. When something is really simple, you tend to see every working part unless it is carefully hidden. Take this Alvaar Aalto stool as an example. Instead of hiding the screws that hold the backrest to the stool and the footrest to the legs, they become the simplest design element. Other than the shape of the piece, it remains the single outside element that decorates this stool. (He was Finnish, but Finland is oft considered a



1. STANLEY SOFA : De La Espada **2. STOOL:** Alvaar Aalto
3. LITTALA MENO HOME BAG: Iittala Finland **4. EPOCA WOOD FIREPLACE:** Rais **5. ARM TABLE LAMP:** Claesson Koivisto Rune



Designer
Stephanie Redmond
shares her ideas.

Scandinavian country). Simple and beautifully crafted; this is typical of a Scandinavian piece.

It's not to say that Scandinavian design is clinical, not by a long shot. The backdrop may be white, the lines might be clean, but there is often a sense of humour. What pops out of the strictness of this white palette are primary colours and fun patterns in some cases. Take this table lamp by Claesson Koivisto Rune. It follows the rules of simplicity, but comes in



a fabulous bright green for added pop. We also see these primary colours in textiles with patterns that reflect a rich history in weaving and embroidery.

In a modern arrangement, we typically see a more organic approach: wool, felt and linens in off-white and soft grey. What stands out in this type of setting are the items placed against the backdrop. It's a gallery style setting – fabulous if you have an art and/or photography collection. The key to this approach though, is to keep it simple. If you have a vast array of tchotchkes and knickknacks, Scandinavian living may not be for you. One of my favourite things is a collection of curiosities. Odd found items put out on display. It's the kind of thing my husband might throw in the woodstove. But this creates warmth. A great piece of bark hung on a wall can look like a masterpiece in the right setting.

The best modern designs in woodstoves are also Scandinavian. No question. Take the Rais Epoca as an example. A woodstove is a quintessential item in this setting and the lines on this piece follow the typical aesthetic – simple yet beautiful. Paired with a fur rug we have immediately created a warm environment, both aesthetically and physically!

So what is the obsession? I believe a clean surrounding that is relatively clutter free gives us a sense of calm in an otherwise hectic life. This style is like a detox for your home. And let's be honest, who wouldn't want to kick back in front of a wood stove at the end of a long day? **OH**

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STORY COLIN McALLISTER & JUSTIN RYAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BRANDON BARRE

ABOVE: The luxe lodge vibe mixes wood finishes, leather detail and grey linen to elicit a soft and relaxing ambience in Colin McAllister and Justin Ryan's Muskoka cottage. Black drapery and accessories anchor the scheme. Ross Window and Doors supplied glass doors for a better lake view. **OPPOSITE TOP:** Colin and Justin are international designers and property developers whose show *Colin and Justin's Cabin Pressure* airs on Cottage Life television. **RIGHT:** A faux antler chandelier shines adjustable illumination above the oversized wooden dining table.

90 days TO NIRVANA

Ah, the cottage. That wonderful sanctuary unto which we escape for rest and recuperation. That place where clocks run slow and wine runs, well, faster. And that's just how we like it. Cab Sauv, if you don't mind, preferably new world Argentinian.

In our world, with a schedule that propels us between Canada, Britain and, most recently Australia, as design experts on lifestyle show *The Living Room*, we're always searching for somewhere to catch our breath. That said, we love our job, so you'll hear no grumbling from us. We're happy with our professional mission to make ordinary homes extraordinary for style-challenged homeowners across three continents.



Two years past, however, we met the trickiest clients we've ever worked with – ourselves. Having purchased a run-down cottage in Muskoka, the race was on to transform it into a chic bolt-hole before our nerves – and our budget – got the better of us. To compound matters, we'd been invited to film the transformation for the Cottage Life television network. And they'd suggested a three-month deadline. Yes, three months, to rebuild a collapsing sunroom, refurbish a basement bedroom, tackle a large family room, install a new kitchen, create two new bathrooms and knock together two small bedrooms to create one killer master suite. Aye, it's fair to say we had our work cut out.

The kitchen, updated by **Bateman Custom Furniture & Cabinetry**, is a hand-built triumph finished in rich grey with Caesarstone detailing and nickel lighting. Slick Euro-styling is important to us, so we discreetly concealed fridge and freezer separates behind doors. The former in the left tall tower and the latter in the right, effectively sandwiching the built-in stove and cooker. Reworking the entire ground floor, to be honest, was simple, being that the biggest job (short of inserting triple french doors to afford better lake sightlines) was removing threadbare carpet and installing a slick wooden floor. Dressed with an outsized sofa and a leather ottoman, the scene is anchored



Continued on page 22



Grey painted cabinetry sets a dramatic tone in the kitchen where appliances are concealed behind cabinet doors so as not to disturb clean lines. **ABOVE RIGHT:** The original kitchen before renovations. **BELOW:** Taylor Carpet One Floor & Home installed Kentwood floors throughout the cottage.



by a large grey rug that seems to float, like an island, in front of the stone fireplace.

To the other side of the room, modern black Windsor and grey leather chairs gather around an outsized wooden table while a faux antler chandelier floats proudly above, providing atmosphere and adjustable illumination at the twist of a button.

Upstairs, in the house bathroom, we replaced dated tile with acres of slick Caesarstone wrapped across main wall areas and around a deep soaker tub. Above this, a rain head shower cascades high-pressure jets while fixed glazing protects the room from water splash.

In the master bedroom (the result of combining two smaller rooms) we created a relaxed atmosphere with a creamy painted scheme to minimize the overpowering v-groove pine. Benjamin Moore Revere Pewter was our weapon of choice and, paired as it is against the joists, which we left unpainted, the resultant aesthetics are dramatic yet soothing.

For the most part, pattern was limited, though we conceded a spot of Robert Allen Ikat fabric for drapery (and toss pillows) and geometric weave rugs from the C+J Home collection. Find our line in stores like Homesense, Winners and Marshalls.

A large custom headboard stretches along one elevation, its soft nickel pins visually balanced by pale lumber night stands and dressers. Opposite the bed sit two comfy chaise lounges, which we found in Ikea. Our schemes are peppered with affordable detailing that helps moderate spending.

In the basement, after opening the space to



make it more livable, we created a large double bedroom and a comfy family room, each clad in pine and connected via a large barn door that slides along a slick black rail.

The focal point in the family room is the oil-burning stove that sits in front of a granite-clad feature zone, while the focal point in the bedroom is the large padded headboard, custom made for the project. Both rooms feature double french doors, dressed with grey plaid drapery, which lead to a large sunroom rebuilt in the

footprint of its near derelict predecessor. The reborn sunroom boasts Sunspace Weather Master Plus windows with plastic memory glass that's virtually impervious to scratches or breakage and bug screens to protect against entomological invasion. Dressed with weather-proof wicker and embellished with Robert Allen toss pillows, the sunroom is a climatic joy, even in cooler climes, thanks to the memory glass that helps insulate. An inviting sun porch

Continued on page 26



TOP: The master bedroom has a relaxed atmosphere courtesy of creamy linens and wooden case goods. **ABOVE:** A "junktique" table, inherited with the cottage, is re-purposed as an exquisite vanity area. **LEFT:** Red accents and lots of mirrors add zest to what is essentially a tiny guest bedroom. Hilltop Interiors supplied night stands while Harris Furniture & Antiques provided the headboard.

feature

Boral brick composite stone creates an eye-catching focal point in the living area of the bunkie, manufactured by canadabuilds.ca. A striped rug from Ikea is a great island for a pale grey sofa and chartreuse chairs. Gnarled wood stools gather in the centre.



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A less-is-more approach elicits a comfortable vibe in the bunkie bedrooms. Coat hooks and wire storage on the rear of sliding barn doors provide overnight guests with ample stash points.



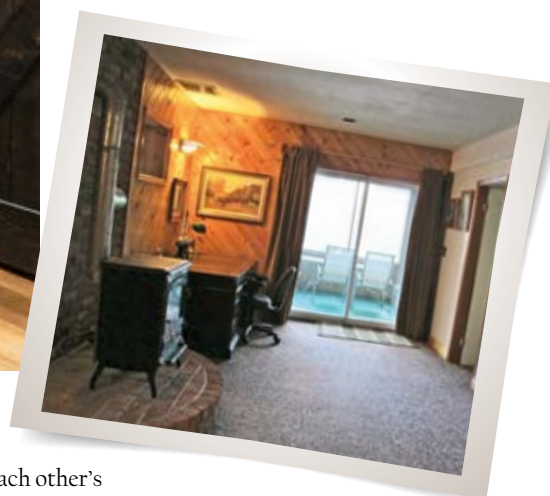
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stretches the seasonality of the Muskoka room, courtesy of a Sunspace Weathermaster Plus Window System fitted by **Porch To Pier**. Wall sconces came from **Living Lighting** while **Muskoka Rock Company Ltd.** supplied granite flooring. Outside, **Hall Construction Inc.** built the stairs leading to the dock and fire pit.

And finally, the downstairs bathroom. Accessed by another rolling barn door, its primary aesthetic is grey scale via cement-toned tile and graphite grout that enlivens basic-buy subway tile. To add flair, we custom manufactured the outsized trough sink in conjunction with **Dare To Be Different**, a vibrant young company whose products can be sized to suit each application. The results speak for themselves.

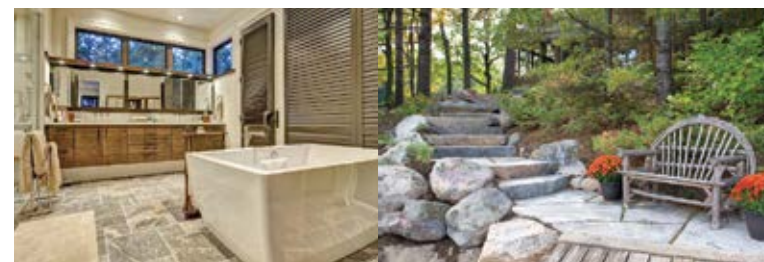
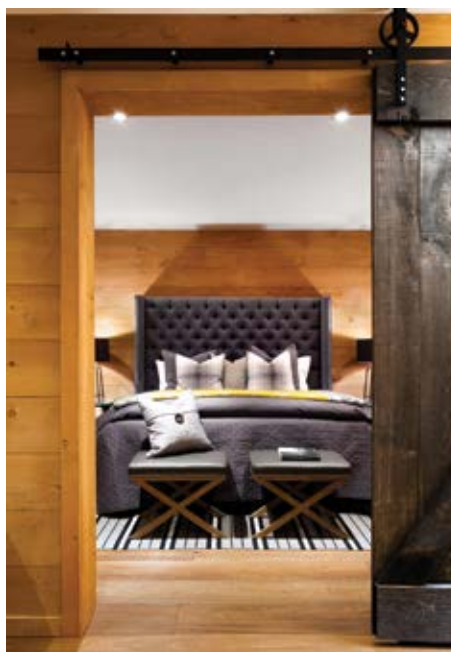
Looking back, it's hard to believe we made the changes described in just three short months. Sure, we have a brilliant team, but it was a monolithic transformation, nonetheless, given the window of

opportunity. As each other's fussiest clients, we drove one another crazy. On a daily basis, we'd hone ambition... and then start from scratch. To say we were pedantic with each other and our team is an understatement. At all times, however, we had the best interests of the cottage close to our hearts.

So would we do it again? In another cottage? Could we actually deal with our "most demanding" clients ever... in a second location? Well, as a matter of fact, yes. We could. During Season Two of *Colin and Justin's Cabin Pressure*, which starts this spring. And this time the drama is even bigger and the makeover even more astonishing.

Get ready for our "slanty shanty" in Haliburton, the worst property we have ever corrected. You've been warned – prepare for decorative lift off as the *Cabin Pressure* lid finally pops! **OH**

TOP LEFT: A whisper of plaid and shots of yellow in the family room bring this former lacklustre space alive. Muskoka Timber Mills Ltd. supplied the wall cladding. **TOP RIGHT:** The family room before its transformation. **RIGHT:** Yellow accents, played across a predominantly grey scale, maximize drama in the basement bedroom, sectioned discreetly from the TV zone by a massive barn door. **FAR RIGHT:** The compact en suite shower room boasts a custom concrete sink. Grey slab tile and black grouted subway tiles create a fresh wash-and-go environment.



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STORY & PHOTOGRAPHY **WALTER FRANCZYK**

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décor **SUMMER HOUSE INTERIORS**

Muskoka’s newest home furnishings store invites shoppers to come by car, boat or float plane to see the styles, linens, rugs and décor that can help make their summer house a home. Products are sourced throughout the United States and Europe. Great gifts are also available.



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MUSKOKA STEAMSHIPS

Remember your Lake Muskoka sightseeing cruise with unique souvenirs. Glass trays by John Christopher, a self-taught artist of Cree heritage, and Rick Beaver, a designer with Anishnabe ancestry, will bring colourful fond memories to your home.



gifts **ZENSATIONS GIFTS**

Among the many unique gifts at this top-floor shop is this lotus lamp, a do-it-yourself project that comes in a small box full of folded components that snap together to create soft and unusual illumination. Zensations offers gifts from around the world for every occasion.

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Sidney and Natalie Sommer with children Sébastien, 5 and Isabelle, 7, relax in the kitchen of their new Georgian Bay cottage. **OPPOSITE:** Afternoon sunlight bathes the triangular-cubic form of this unique lake house designed by architect Michael Pettes.



STORY CHARLENE PECK | PHOTOGRAPHY SANDY MACKAY | STYLING CINDY BLEEKS

PHOTO: DAVID MACDUGALL

COASTAL PLEASURES

Carling cottagers Natalie and Sidney Sommer often have to remind themselves they're not on an island. But expansive Georgian Bay views from all main living areas and bedrooms in their 3,200 sq. ft., two-storey cottage tend to sweep them into that mindset.

They credit architect Michael Pettes for optimizing the water views of this scenic five-acre point with 2,000 feet of shoreline. Natalie remembers standing on the property with Pettes, indicating the primary view she wanted to highlight in the design. Meanwhile, Sidney was pointing in another direction, favouring exposure to sunset vistas. The challenge for the architect was satisfying both clients.

"Being out on a point you have amazing views all around, so Pettes came up with this triangular-cubic design that maximizes all

the great water views," explains Natalie. "We loved it from the beginning." From daybreak to sunset, the beauty of Georgian Bay offers a natural backdrop for creating family memories. And that's important to the pair, who both cottaged in the region as children: Natalie on the French River and Sidney in McKellar.

"Natalie's family is in Sudbury, so this is a nice central meeting point for the kids to see their grandparents," explains Sidney. "We love spending summers up here, having a

place that everybody can call home, not just us, but our extended family, siblings and their children," he says.

Their search for a cottage site culminated when **John Sallinen of Re/Max Parry Sound-Muskoka Realty Ltd., Brokerage** introduced the couple to the property in 2012. They knew they'd found a gem, a uniquely situated spot where Dillon Cove's rocky landscape meets the beachfront shoreline of Sand Bay. "We just fell in love with this gorgeous property," Sidney says.

Continued on page 38



TOP LEFT: Polished concrete tops the wooden wash stand in the powder room. **RIGHT:** Custom-made bookshelves and cabinets by Attainable Solutions line an entire wall of the sunroom, just off the kitchen. **ABOVE:** A wood-grained concrete wall lends a solid, rustic look to the main entrance hall.

Family friend and designer, Cindy Bleeks of Feasby & Bleeks Design, began consulting right from the planning stage. A recessed buffet by Bloomsbury Fine Cabinetry built into the large dining area was her idea. So was the choice of bathroom tile installed by **Ability Tile**. Bleeks suggested design tips for warming up areas and for locating lighting and furniture.

“Michael Pettes came up with the optimal design for the property and layout,” says Sidney. “And then builder **Blayne Hutchins** from **Attainable Solutions Inc.** took it from the plans and made it a reality.”

“We’ve had a wonderful experience with Attainable,” Natalie says. “They and their crew have been real gentlemen and got everything done on schedule and on budget. They’re very reliable.”

Blayne likes the unique design and beautiful setting with the stone and panoramic views. “Natalie was super organized,” he recalls. If builders needed decisions, **Dwayne Hutchins**, Attainable’s project co-ordinator, would speak with her. “She’d get them to us right away.”

Dwayne is impressed by how well the

design blends two contrasting styles. “It comes across as very contemporary, but when you get inside it actually feels more rustic and cottagey,” he says. “I found it to be a good balance of those two elements.”

Most building materials came from **Dorset Timber Mart** and **Rolston Home Building Centre**. “**Bill Maki** of **Redneck Concrete Pumping**, Huntsville, did an excellent job on several different occasions pumping concrete, which all came from **Parry Sound Ready Mix Ltd.**,” says Dwayne. **Wm. Konoval & Sons Construction Co. Ltd.** did the septic work and used rock left from blasting a full basement to build the driveway. While re-using this rock simply made sense to the couple, other choices intentionally respected and protected the Georgian Bay environment.

The brick and concrete exterior was chosen to merge nicely with the natural stone. “We didn’t want to build a big cottage that just stands out. So this blends in nicely with a flat roof,” Sidney explains. “And we used refurbished wood.” As well, high energy-rated windows from Kolbe Gallery Windows & Doors were installed.

Continued on page 40



TOP: A high, wide window above the grey sectional sofa radiates northern light in the living room where a corner-hugging concrete fireplace warms the space. **LEFT:** The long dining table made from reclaimed wood comfortably serves 10 or more diners. **ABOVE:** Bloomsbury Fine Cabinetry crafted the recessed sideboard with wine cooler in the dining room.



While Sidney wanted a modern exterior, with grey brick, concrete accent walls and wooden balconies, he felt a modern interior tended to be plain and cold. The solution – a style Natalie describes as modern rustic – mixes a warm cottagey feel with an airy freshness. They opted for pine board wall covering and had their builder source reclaimed hemlock floors, wall barn boards and timbers from Nostalgic Wood Inc.

A hand-cut fireplace mantel from Reborn.ca is among Sidney's favourite features, along with the sliding barn door in the basement. "I never thought I'd own a barn door," he notes. "We have a lot of these old things with very new things and I think they complement each other really well."

The home's airy freshness is derived from lighting, furnishings and décor as well as the colour scheme. "I wanted soothing colours and on a bright sunny day the blue of the water really looks magnificent," Natalie explains. "It's just so peaceful here."

While blasting the bedrock for a utility room, the couple figured it was not that much more expensive to blast out the entire space to create a full basement.

The basement games room – complete with foosball, ping-pong and bubble hockey games – was Sidney's project. To compensate for a lack of windows, he was generous with his use of barn board on the walls, including those in the wine cellar. The gym/indoor hockey area has a mirror and a wallpaper forest mural while a wall in the children's playroom sports a world map. *Continued on page 42*

LEFT: Penny Carrara marble complements the polished marble shower stall and tub enclosure in the master en suite. **BELOW LEFT:** Green lamps and an antiqued dresser enliven the guest room. **BELOW:** Bunk beds from The Bunkhouse and a shiny two-drawer trunk cube from Restoration Hardware furnish Sébastien's bedroom.



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The cottage was well prepared for year-round comfort and recreation by **Sound Seals Insulation. Tech-Air Systems** installed the furnace.

Quality time at the cottage begins in the sunroom, sipping morning coffee, playing with their children Isabelle and Sébastien, and maybe tackling some puzzles together. By midday, sunlight streaming into the kitchen coaxes family and friends to gather around a spacious island, topped with a bistro-feel, matte-finish, antique Carrara marble from Marble Trend Ltd., and a solid butcher block from Evertsen Brothers.

Later, a setting sun's finale can be seen from the dining or living room beside the double fireplace. In summer, guests and family watch, sheltered from the wind, on the outdoor patio or in the hot tub.

A favourite hub of serenity is the large deck off the upstairs hallway. Ipe wood was a low-maintenance choice. InvisiRail glass railings preserve a seamless panorama.

“It’s gorgeous up there in the summer, you get a view over the island in front and often we’ll go up there with a glass of wine and just watch the sunset,” says Sidney. Their children also enjoy evenings overlooking the cottage waterfront. “We go out on that balcony and read our books before bed,” Natalie says. “The kids think it’s great!” **OH**



TOP RIGHT: Benjamin Moore’s Gray Mist on the pine wallboards paints a simple monochromatic fluency throughout the two main floors. Oxford White trim contrasts nicely with reclaimed hemlock floors. **ABOVE:** A glass door opens to the wine cellar lined with rough-sawn barn boards. **RIGHT:** The basement gym is wallpapered with a forest scene reflected in a sweeping wall mirror.

LOCAL SOURCE GUIDE

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PHOTOGRAPHY **BRANDON BARRE**

Whether our interiors are big or small, we all hope to make the most of the square footage we have. With that in mind, I pulled together my best advice for expanding your horizons in every room – in any home – for the feeling of additional space, without the addition!

In the Living Room

Balancing Act: To maximize seating flexibility, start with a large, plush sofa or sectional for everyday lounging, and then add compact seats or stools to seat everyone at a large gathering. If your dining chairs also suit your living room décor, they can serve double duty in a pinch.

Don't Shrink Away: Avoid the temptation to make everything in your space “condo sized” just to fit more in it. Anchoring a space with some large objects (especially large art) creates a less cluttered, large-scale look.

Even Out: I can't stress the importance of layered lighting enough! A more even wash of light created by multiple light sources will open a space, so aim for ceiling lamps, sconces (or lamps near the periphery) and specific task lighting to round it out.

In the Kitchen

Keep a Low Profile: Achieve a more seamless look by going knobless, or with minimalist knobs that mount to the underside of the door, giving you less to bump into and smooth surfaces. You can then reintroduce character with earthy tile and wood flooring.

All Wood Everywhere: Speaking of wood flooring, yes, you can apply it in the kitchen. I usually avoid breaking the floor material



Tip: Tiling from top to bottom will make walls appear neater and taller.

between rooms where possible to create longer visual planes and continuity throughout the home.

White on White: White cabinets and white walls create a clean and fresh look, while again, avoiding colour breaks that can disrupt the visual flow of your space and shrink the walls. Also consider a pale grey, greige, or blue for a similarly airy appeal.

In the Bathroom

Double Dip: A large vanity mirror is a perfect way to visually double a bathroom space. Feel free to extend the mirror beyond the edge of the vanity (or to the ceiling, or both). This will also reduce the amount of wall area to be tiled, which can save you in the long run.

Go Big: In a primary bathroom or en suite, an oversize tile (grouted to blend out) creates the feeling of a single expanse of material, which helps the walls appear larger in all directions. If you don't want to invest in tiling every wall, tile just a few walls top to bottom rather than breaking them midway up – it'll look neater and taller.

Or Go Wild: In a powder room, forget about expanding the space and indulge your wildest décor desires, applying the bold colours and loud looks you wouldn't risk in the main spaces. You can get your daily dose of design drama here while leaving the rest of your home breezy and open.

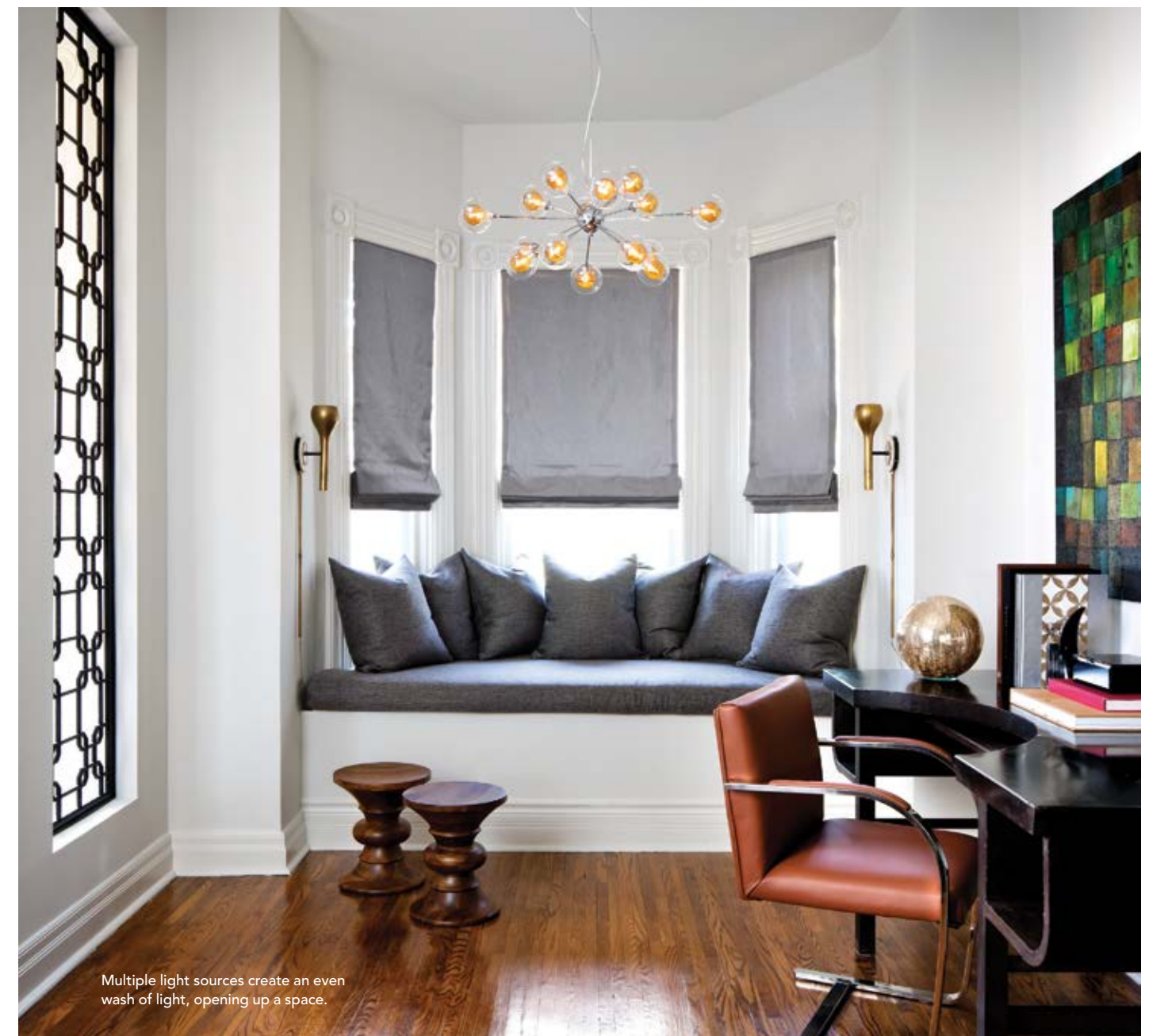
In Everywhere Else and Beyond

Get Elliptical: An oval table is one of the best options for fitting in many seats without wasting space or creating circulation issues, and you can use chairs on the ends or remove them as needed.

Divide and Conquer: Creating functional zones within an awkward space (often by breaking it down into smaller squares) avoids waste. Try bridging two areas, such as a TV zone and reading nook, with an open-backed bench or lightweight chairs that can be used in either zone.

Blank Slate: I often use one paint colour throughout a room or even an entire home, dressing both the walls and ceiling to blend out the divisions and any flaws. Benjamin Moore's OC23 Classic Gray gives some depth and warmth without weighing the space down.

Don't Miss the Point: Although consistency is key to creating large-looking spaces, don't forget the power of the focal point. Creating some standout moments (like a wallpapered accent wall or punchy palette of sofa pillows) is essential to directing the eye and giving it the structure it craves. Make sure to include one-to-two focal areas in small rooms, with two-to-three in bigger spaces to keep the eye moving. **OH**



Multiple light sources create an even wash of light, opening up a space.



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Scarlet Runner

As happens so often in fashion, what is old is new again. Adding edibles to the landscape is presently very stylish, however being the world's oldest form of horticultural cultivation it is, in fact, the origin of the modern-day garden.

MELANIE'S TREE PICKS

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Fruit Trees: | Nut Trees: |
| • Apple | • Chestnut |
| • Pear | • Shagbark Hickory |
| • Peach | • Walnut |
| • Plum | |



Nasturtium

Evidence suggests plant-based gardening began in prehistoric times where our ancestors planted favoured food species along jungle-clad river banks. By 10,000 BC, we were enclosing our food gardens, very likely to protect our crops. The word “garden” descends from the Old English term “geard,” meaning fence or enclosure.

Adding food plants to your landscape is easier than you may think. Many are quite lovely, performing double duty. Other common garden plants are both edible and delicious proving there is no need to sacrifice beauty for a food-fare garden.

Add A Fruit Tree Or Two

I never hide the fact that I am in love with woody plants of all types. Most properties lack trees for privacy, to mask ugly sight lines, to ground the house and to give outdoor spaces that content and cosy feeling. Many fruiting trees are quite good looking, and though you may have heard fruiting trees are high maintenance, by choosing disease-resistant varieties, you can cut your work in half. Yes, you will have to prune thin to increase the size of the remaining fruit and spray a safe, chemical-free pesticide to be successful, but the reward far outweighs the work in my opinion.

They all bloom, and some are even fragrant. Many are self-pollinating (meaning you only have to plant one), yet others must be planted in pairs, of male and female, to produce fruit. Select tree placements wisely. If you are not judicious about harvesting, the fallen fruit will attract wasps. Therefore, they are best planted away from patios and walkways. If fruit trees are not your thing, then don't forget about the low-care nut producing trees and sugar maples for syrup.

Berry-Bearing Shrubs

Fruiting shrubs are lower maintenance than fruiting trees due to the smaller size and faster maturation of fruit that makes insect infestation less likely. As they take up less space than trees, they are also easier to fit in.

Serviceberry (can also be a tree) produces tasty berries, and it looks gorgeous with lovely grey bark, great form, fluffy white flowers and red scarlet fall pigment.

Elderberry is another great choice. It comes in standard leaf and lacy cut-leaf variation that mimics a Japanese maple (but is much hardier). Leaf colours also vary wildly from yellow to deep wine, making them highly ornamental. Its prolific berries taste great on their own and also are perfect for pies.

Low-growing velvet leaf blueberry is appropriate for the front of the border. Though it is not highly ornamental, it makes a good filler plant and is worth considering due to its supremely luscious berries.



Oregano

MELANIE'S PLANT PICKS

- | | | |
|---------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Herbs: | Perennials: | Annuals: |
| • Chives | • Daylily | • Nasturtium |
| • Thyme | • Echinacea | • Pansies |
| • Oregano | • Lavender | • Calendula |
| • Sage | • Yucca | |
| | • Violets | |

Underused and vigorous, vivacious vines are a wonderful way to screen unsightly walls or fences and maximize vertical space. They also give a garden a much-needed sense of age.

For grapes, by deciding on native or cold hardy, disease-resistant varieties and by using careful pruning techniques, you'll have a great chance of success!

Hardy kiwi is a lower-maintenance but aggressive vine to ponder with lovely reddish stems, thick mid-green leaves and succulent fruit.

Scarlet runner beans are yet another delightful option. They grow fast and have gorgeous red blooms that hummingbirds love and develop into edible beans. Scarlet runner beans are an annual and, for this reason, require planting every year, but it's easy to let a few beans develop and save the seed for sowing the following year.

Edible Perennials (and a few annuals)

Interestingly, the flowers of many common garden perennials are edible or partially edible. Flower cookery can be traced back to Roman times but was especially popular during the Victorian era. Most herb blooms are just as tasty as their foliage, and many are quite handsome, available in colourful leaved and variegated variations. You may recognize some



Chives



Arctic Kiwi Vine



Daylily

of these edible and vibrant annuals, perennials and herbs (listed above) already growing in your very own garden. And if cooking with flowers doesn't delight you, they can be used as a lovely plate garnish or frozen into ice cubes for a fancy dinner party.

Gorgeous Kitchen Garden

You could also choose to be all-out obvious with your edibles and plant a kitchen garden. Kitchen gardens can be a thing of beauty when formal geometry is bordered with low-herb hedging, and are best situated in a spot with easy kitchen access. Select but one good-looking food plant per quadrant. Finish the look by decorating the space with lovely potted edibles such as vibrant hot peppers. Save those ugly tomatoes and potatoes for the designated veggie plot.

In a world where many children grow up eating from the grocery store (and many ingesting mostly packaged food), it is especially important to demonstrate just where all this food is coming from. Growing edibles creates an important teaching opportunity by showing first-hand the life cycle of food, including the importance of (and the necessity of protecting) our pollinators. To sum it all up, food gardening can be both attractive and appetizing, is fun, convenient and healthy, offers educational opportunity and will save you money. What's not to love? **OH**

Melanie is a certified horticulturist and landscape designer.

online Get more in outdoors at ourhomes.ca/mag/outdoor

cooking at home

MAPLE MAGIC

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY
PAT CROCKER

Just as spring slips into our consciousness, something almost mystical is taking place deep in the woods. It happens only when daytime temperatures inch above freezing and then drop back into crisp, frigid nights.

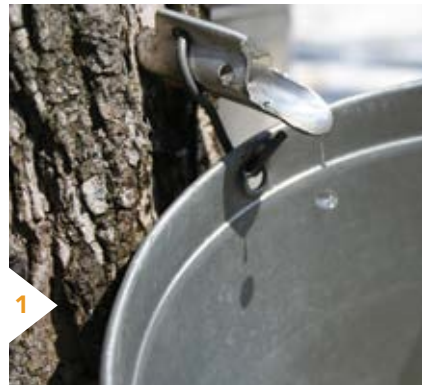
When conditions are just right, carbohydrates, stored as starch in the roots and trunks of maple trees, begin to morph into sugar.

The sugar merges with water while being pulled from the ground up through the roots, trunk and limbs. Warm days cause pressure to build up in the tree, forcing the thin, clear, slightly sweet and sticky sap to drip out of drilled holes (1).

Sugar maple (*Acer saccharinum*) is the most widely used tree for collecting sap for syrup-making, but other maple species, birch, walnut and beech trees are also tapped for sap. Modern methods of sap collection rely on an intricate network of plastic lines that funnel the sap directly to the boiler (2).

The sap is boiled until the water content is reduced and the sugars are concentrated into a syrup-thick liquid.

Syrup from the first sap run of the season is light amber and mild in taste, labeled No. 1 Extra Light. By the end of the season, the syrup is a rich, full-bodied and dark amber colour. This is the grade of syrup I prefer for both cooking and drizzling on pancakes because of its distinct maple flavour (3).



MAPLE-BRAISED APPLES AND PORK

Makes 4 servings

1 lb boneless pork loin or tenderloin, cut in ½-inch (1cm) thick slices

2 tsp chopped fresh sage

1 tsp chopped fresh rosemary

salt and pepper

2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

1 onion, thinly sliced

4 apples, cored and thinly sliced

2 Tbsp (30 mL) maple syrup

½ cup (125 mL) apple juice

- Rub pork slices with sage and rosemary and season lightly with salt and pepper.
- In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add seasoned pork slices and cook until lightly browned, about one minute per side. Remove from pan and set aside. Reduce heat and add onion to pan. Cook, frequently stirring, for five minutes or until softened. Stir in apples and cook, occasionally stirring, for five minutes. Stir in maple syrup.
- Return pork and accumulated juices to skillet. Add stock, cover and simmer, until juices run clear when pork is pierced with the tip of a sharp knife, about five minutes. Transfer pork to platter and keep warm. Increase heat to high; cook apple mixture, frequently stirring, for three minutes or until liquid becomes syrupy. Spoon over pork and serve immediately. **OH**

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ENTERPRISING WOMEN



As the owners of nearly half of all small businesses in Canada, women are creating tens of thousands of great jobs and new business ventures every year. OUR HOMES asked a few enterprising women in our communities what got them started.

DR. NATALIE EVES DVM, BSc. PT
Owner, Cottage Country Animal Clinic

While growing up, Natalie Eves was always bringing home cats from the barn, taking horseback riding lessons and embracing whatever dogs her dad rescued from the OSPCA.

Ultimately, that love for animals led her to become a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine. She graduated in 2003 and gained experience in small animal medicine, emergency care and clinical practice. By 2006, she was ready to return to her hometown of Parry Sound to open her own business, Cottage Country Animal Clinic. Associate Dr. Jennifer Garner joined the clinic's all-female staff three years ago.

Most gratifying for Dr. Eves is a challenging case with a positive outcome. "When there's a reunion of family and pet, that's really moving," she says. And she still finds puppies and kittens irresistibly fun.

Last spring, the clinic began offering mobile veterinary service. "We've even done a couple of boat-access-only trips this past summer, so that's been helpful for people who are down the bay," she says. "There is no additional cost to seniors in the town of Parry Sound. We are able to offer the majority of veterinary services available at the clinic in the comfort of your home or cottage."

SHELLEY WALLACE
Owner, Fireplace & Leisure Centre

Shelley Wallace is in her element overseeing the showroom, office and day-to-day business operation of the Fireplace & Leisure Centre. Working with people in the hearth industry is one of her greatest pleasures. "Excuse the pun, but it really is a warm group of people," she says. "Most care about each other. They are very open with business practices and helping each other."

Assisting homeowners, cottagers and contractors with their fireplace design is another aspect Shelley enjoys. "It's fun, a creative outlet, and helps our customers," she says. "It's a lot easier for them to come to one place and be able to get everything they want." Husband and business co-owner, Jay excels in the operation's fieldwork. As the hands-on side of this business team, he ensures fireplace designs become a reality.

"It's a lot easier to be a woman in business now than 14 years ago," Shelley says. "Attitudes have changed with the times, but we've got a long way to go." *Continued on page 54*



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SHEILA MCCRANK

Assistant Manager, Kawartha Credit Union

What inspired you to get into this business? Twenty-four years ago, a part-time job at a financial institution was the last place I thought I'd be. As my life was shaped by the paths I chose, I found myself offering financial services full time. I quickly learned that I was great at customer service and loved helping people achieve their dreams by building financial relationships.

What do you enjoy most about your work? I love meeting people and sharing the Kawartha Credit Union experience. It's rewarding to be able to fulfill a need for customers buying a home, vacation property, vacant land and even new construction mortgages.

How do you help homeowners and home buyers? By taking the time to understand every person's financial situation, offering honest, clear financial advice and walking them through the process.



KIMBERLEY DEWAR

The Soulful Organizer

What inspired you to become a professional organizer? When my parents became unwell, it was my responsibility to declutter and organize their home, along with downsizing them from a large home to a smaller dwelling. I did this three times during their senior years. I found this to be a very satisfying exercise. I found I enjoyed organizing and thought that I could turn my love of organizing into a business.

What do you enjoy about your work? Often when I see a client they are very stressed about the clutter they have accumulated in their homes. They have become unbalanced in their life. When I work with the client and the job is completed the client is happy and there is a sense of relief.

How do you help homeowners? I support and assist clients to declutter and organize their homes. I initially will go into their homes and do an assessment of their needs. Once that is completed a plan is put into place. The client and I work toward completing the plan of organizing.



CARA VALIQUETTE

Lawyer, Falls Law Group

What inspired you to pursue a legal career? I was inspired by a Springer Spaniel named Maddy. My first contact with a lawyer was when I purchased a home in Toronto 12 years ago. I met him and his dog who went to work with him every day and also attended at banks to complete transactions and collect biscuits from the tellers. I thought, "This guy seems to be happy, and he gets to bring his dog to work, I should look into this."

What do you enjoy most about your work? I enjoy running a small business first and foremost, and meeting people and getting to hear about what is going on in their lives that has led them to me.

How do you help homeowners and home buyers? My job is to protect the purchaser's interests during the transaction and post-purchase. My firm is a general practice and real estate clients are often going through changes in their lives that intersect numerous areas of law. I can help them tie together a strategy for dealing with a lot of complexity. **OH**



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(Please see ad on page 47)

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opened 33 years ago and has been changing and adapting to consumer needs and demands from day one. Our offering of this beautiful Ontario made rough sawn wormy maple bedroom suite featured here is a testament to that. Gone for now

is the demand for more sophisticated looking pieces from oak and walnut. The beauty of the mineral colorization and other perceived blemishes of the wormy maple grade were once considered defects and the lumber used primarily for industrial applications. This is just one of many options for home, cottage and condo furnishings that we offer. Other styles of bedroom suites, tables, chairs in a host of sizes and colours, as well as sofas and mattresses from Canadian manufacturers are always on display. We also restore/repurpose and create unique items.

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(Please see ad on page 11)

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benefits from attending corporate training courses at Hunter Douglas, Benjamin Moore Paints, and Schluter Tile Systems and is ready to serve you.

Cordell Carpet offers in-home flooring and window consultations at no cost. Attention to detail, competitive pricing and top-notch installations

are all part of the package. Seasonal residents will be pleasantly surprised to discover friendly, knowledgeable, and convenient service available locally.

Established in 1976 and still operated by the Sales family, Cordell's is located in the Beer Store Plaza or find them at cordellcarpet.ca. Check for extended store hours in the summer months on the website, Facebook or Houzz.

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(Please see ads on pages 14 & 53)

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Porch to Pier offers an array of interior and exterior products to enhance your home or cottage. Some of our recent projects included a sunroom addition for Colin and Justin, as seen on the Cottage Life Network, *Cabin Pressure*. Colin and Justin were familiar with Sunspace WeatherMaster windows, and realized it was the perfect system for their three-season room. They also chose our faux stone product from GenStone. We installed this along the knee wall. GenStone has a vast selection of styles and colours with Colin and Justin selecting Kenai. Sunspace WeatherMaster windows are a unique system equipped with a full fiberglass screen on the exterior, with ViewFlex memory vinyl vents on the interior, all held together in a maintenance-free extruded aluminum frame. There are 7 different colours to choose from - Colin and Justin selected black.



Porch to Pier continues to expand our lineup of products, to include all of the industry's best. Drop by our store and see our wide selection of building products. Perhaps new windows, doors, screen room, docks, decks, railings or a new roof, are on your project list. There are also many displays to choose from. We can help!

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(Please see ad on page 27)

ROCKSCAPE DESIGN

Rockscape Design is a design-build landscape business and has been serving Muskoka, Parry Sound, Haliburton and beyond for over 20 years. We specialize in creating unique and functional outdoor living spaces for your cottage or home. From concept through to creation, our professional designers and knowledgeable installation crews are confident in providing expert workmanship with unmatched attention to detail. Rockscape Design is about quality in product and service.

The team behind our landscapes take pride in every project we work on - passion for the industry and specialized leaders set Rockscape Design apart. **Design:** Initially meet and consult with our team to create a landscape concept that fits your needs while ensuring it also blends seamlessly with surrounding natural elements. Our two-tiered installation approach begins with **Hardscape:** winding staircases, fire pits, flagstone patios and walkways built by our crews from granite, which is locally sourced. This is followed by the addition of **Softscape:** the installation of native plants and trees, natural mulch and all the small touches provided that soften and give the new landscape instant maturity.



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We look forward to many more projects throughout Muskoka, Haliburton and on Georgian Bay - we are excited about and open to any challenge presented to us!

Visit us at: www.rockscapedesign.ca or call: 705.645.3162

(Please see ad on page 25)

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(Please see ad on page 15)

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The Water's Edge Team includes horticulture graduates, Certified Landscape Professionals, Horticultural Technician Apprentices, and several who are pursuing certifications in design and technical specialties. Their website, watersedgelandscaping.com is a great testimony to their exceptional quality and innovative culture. It features an online portfolio and a 'cottage profile' portal which allows an exchange of ideas, photos, proposals, invoices, 'chats' and payments.

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(Please see ad on page 61)

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Funding came from both the public and private sectors, much of it from local cottagers and residents. Portico designed the building to provide sheltered outdoor space for concerts, craft shows and picnics.

The 40' x 40' roof structure, supported by stout posts resting precisely on 16 tapered concrete bases, provides a fabulous overhead display of heavy pine timbers connected artistically using centuries-old joinery techniques. You can see traditional mortice and tenon joinery, wedged through tenons, and most notably, scarf joints in the massive 10' x 16' timbers that support the rafters.

A 2014 loonie was embedded into a scarf joint to date the structure for future generations. See the raising of this magnificent structure on our website by going to the News menu and selecting Pavilion.

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(Please see ad on page 41)

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The CHBA held its SAM (Sales and Marketing) Awards in Halifax, NS to celebrate national excellence. Craig McFarlane, Linwood VP of Retail Sales, accepted the Winner Award from Bard Golightly, Outgoing President of the CHBA. "Being awarded a Winner, then Top Five Finalist in two other categories, is an incredible thrill," said Craig. This brings the company's total to 20 CHBA National SAM Honours since 2008.



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(Please see ad on page 43)



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STORY **WALTER FRANCZYK**

INSPECTIONS MAKE GOOD DEALS AND *better homes*

Buying, selling or maintaining a home are all a lot easier with professional help.

It's one reason many people turn to home inspectors to help them decide whether to purchase a home, when to repair it or spruce it up for sale.

"Inspections help home buyers make an informed decision," says Blaine Swan, a registered home inspector and owner of Home Probe Canada.

"Buyers are usually inundated with details about colour choices, how their furniture fits and the home location," he says. "A home inspection is the nitty-gritty details. An inspector looks at the multitude of systems that all come together to make the home – the roof, structure, heating system, plumbing system, electrical, etc.," says Swan.

"It is a large financial investment they're about to make and it provides them with a number of answers, but primarily, is the home safe, is the home habitable, are there significant costs needed to make it safe and habitable," says Swan, who's been inspecting homes since 2002 and is president of the Canadian Association of Home and Property Inspectors.

Home inspectors don't prescribe repairs or estimate the cost of renovations, but their findings can help prospective buyers choose whether to renegotiate the sale or accept the home as is and deal with repairs later, Swan explains. "Sometimes, the information provided is walk-away information. There's just too much, and it's a deal breaker. It happens all the time."

While most older homes often need some work and are carefully scrutinized, newly-built homes are also worth a professional look. The quality of building materials and contractors can vary widely in new construction. "You've got the low end and you've got the high end," Swan says. "Not everybody is at the high end. That's why we

inspect. The problem with new homes is that sometimes it's not readily evident what the problems are."

Pre-sale home inspections performed for homeowners can help prepare them for selling their home and give them time to ensure the house is ready for sale. "This allows the seller to be proactive," Swan says. "In other words, if it needs a new furnace, or it needs a new roof or something like that, the homeowner can go out and gather the pricing and information, or even get the jobs done, prior to putting the home on the market," he says.

Inspections can also assist home maintenance, especially for those people with limited mobility, knowledge or skills in home improvement.

"Not everybody can crawl on the roof," Swan says. "A lot of people are older and can't get up there and look at the roof. Even if they could look they may not be able to interpret what they see. A home inspector would." Inspectors are knowledgeable about the life expectancy of different materials, products and systems and can advise homeowners accordingly. "It's better than laying awake at night, worrying about what's over your head, or what's happening in the basement," he



says. "It's just good information so you can do financial planning."

Before choosing a home inspector, homeowners and buyers should check the websites of the Canadian Association of Home and Property Inspectors (cahpi.ca) or the Ontario Association of Home Inspectors (oahi.com). Their published standards of practice define what you can expect from a home inspector. Just as importantly, these standards state what inspectors don't do. For example, inspectors are not required to determine the advisability of purchasing any property. Nor are they required to determine the remaining life of any system or component. They're not required to move suspended ceiling tiles, furniture or debris or to determine the strength, adequacy, effectiveness, or efficiency of any system or component or the causes of any condition or deficiency. Both sites list nearly 80 exclusions.

The Canadian and Ontario home inspectors' associations can help homeowners and buyers find trained and qualified inspectors. **OH**

online Five questions to ask a home inspector: ourhomes.ca/mag/inspector

The Ontario government urges homeowners and buyers to do some research to find a reliable and knowledgeable home inspector. Here are some of its tips:

- | | |
|--|---|
| Look for a home inspector who: | When hiring a home inspector make sure to: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• provides written inspection reports• will give you references• has experience with the type of home you're considering (e.g. condos, heritage-era homes, cottages)• has an accreditation that shows training and experience• will provide a written contract | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• get quotes from more than one inspector• check references• ask about their training and experience• ask to see a copy of the inspection report they use• ask if they choose to have insurance |



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STORY **MELODY WREN** | ILLUSTRATION **SHEILA BRITTON**

THE LUXURY OF LESS

Living a decluttered life in a streamlined, simplified house sounds easy. Why is it so difficult?

It is generally true that “outer order contributes to inner calm,” as Gretchen Rubin writes in her bestselling book *The Happiness Project*. Massive decluttering is likely to leave you feeling lighter. Your first step should be getting rid of things, and then there will be less to organize. Choose experiences over material goods. Get familiar with your stuff and your spending habits. Experientialists are not against spending, not even against stuff, but they are against having too much of the wrong stuff. Making sure your possessions play a healthy role in your life and knowing exactly what you own leads to the following question: Do my things give me experiences and make me happy, or are they creating debt, stress and unhappiness?

“Have nothing in your home that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful.”

– William Morris

One way of finding out what you need is to put everything you are unsure about in a box or garbage bag. Over the next month, take out items as you need them. By the end of the month, you will know what you don't use because it will still be in the box. Your next step is doing it for six months. Start anywhere – do any small thing to train the brain that change is coming. Once you are in the mindset to declutter, the following steps will help you get started:

One of the easiest methods to subscribe to is the four-box method:

- Decide which room you are starting on and line up boxes in the following categories: keep, sell, charity, trash. Place each item from every room into one of the four categories. Some rooms will take hours, and others will take days. But the technique and principles remain the same.
- Consider each item individually. Be ruthless and if you can't be, make sure someone is helping you that can question everything

- you decide to keep. Whatever is in the keep pile, look at it a second time.
- Pick up one item at a time and make an instant decision – when was the last time you used this? If you haven't used it in a few months (six months at the longest), get rid of it, excluding seasonal clothes, of course.

Deal With Each Box

- Keep Pile:** if you decide to keep it, organize it before you put it away, keeping similar items together. You might have scattered notebooks and stationary – keep it all together in a nice-looking container in the office area of your home.
- Sell pile:** List it immediately on Kijiji or Craigslist and keep it separate from the remaining items to sort so you aren't tempted to keep it. List it for a reasonable price with a photo, description and measurements so it sells quickly.
- Charity Pile:** Donate as much as possible. Most charities are willing to pick up large pieces, otherwise load up the car and deliver as soon as you can to keep things moving. If you hold onto an item too long, there might be a temptation to keep it.
- Trash Pile:** Papers often fall into this category. For anything you can use for tax purposes, the general rule of thumb in Canada is to save pertinent financial records for seven years.

Henry David Thoreau, everyone's favourite 19th-century hut-dwelling minimalist expressed the sense that owning things constitutes a spiritual burden. He advocated simplicity; not throwing out so much as not acquiring them in the first place. **OH**



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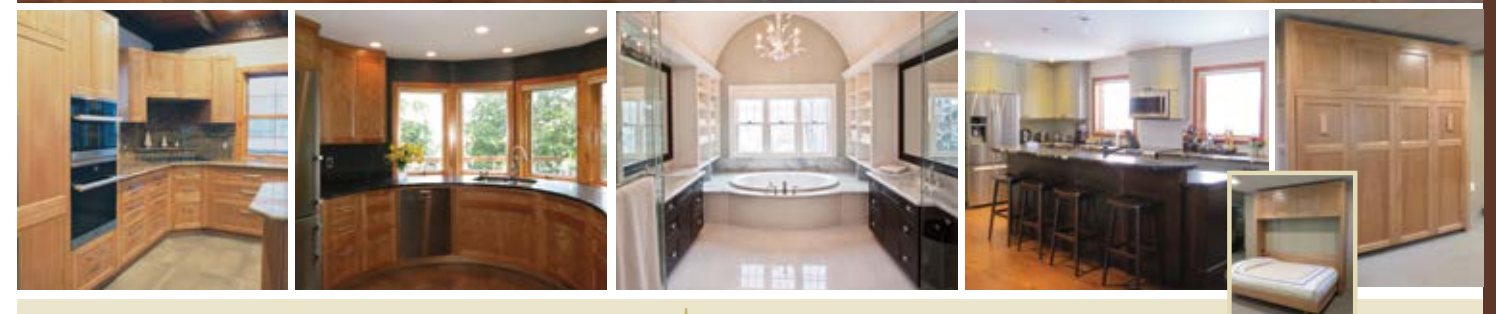


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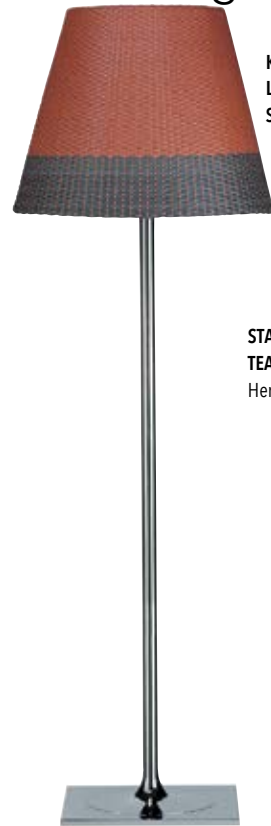
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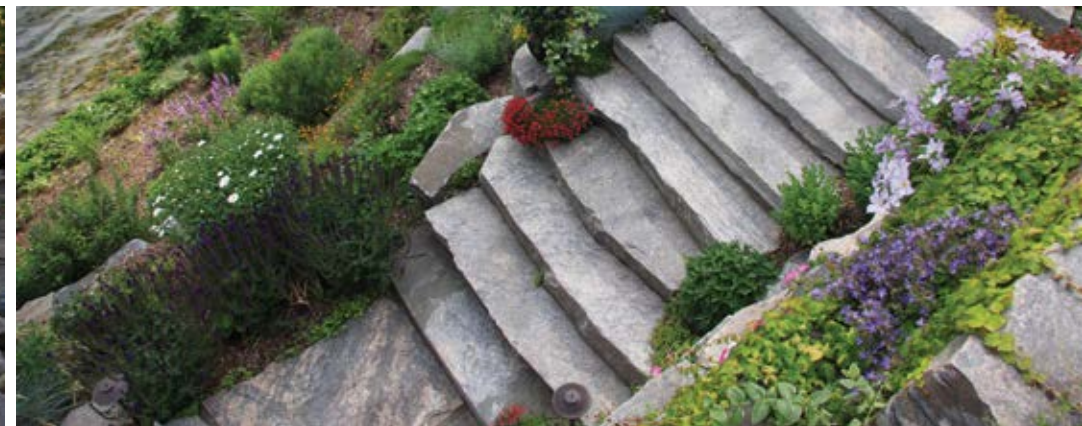
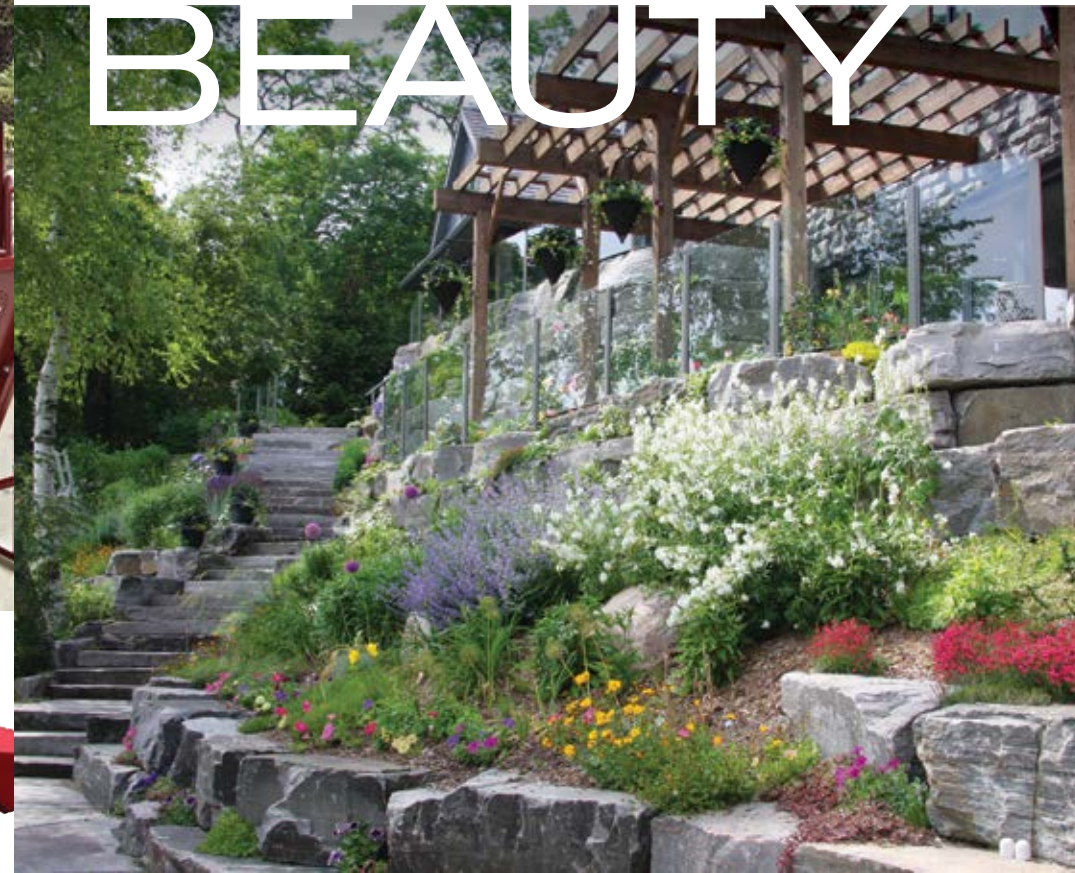
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