

# Victorian Retreat

STORY **EILEEN ARGYRIS** | PHOTOGRAPHY **JAY ROBINSON**

**P**ort Hope has some of the finest collections of original, historic architecture in Eastern Ontario. A tour of the town reveals numerous pockets of well-preserved neighbourhoods complete with architectural gems spanning the town's march through history on the north shore of Lake Ontario.



Tim Badgley and Dean Howlett live in an elegant vintage home at the very end of a quiet, 19th-century street in a charming Port Hope neighbourhood. The owners of **Acanthus Interiors Inc.**, these two men are living their dream.

Their professional and personal lives are superbly blended so that they live their passion in both. Acanthus Interiors on Port Hope's historic John Street offers something for everyone – tasteful home furnishings, art pieces and accessories to accommodate every budget. Their home reflects their eclectic tastes, from antique to exotic to modern.

The pair have made their home in Port Hope for the past 23 years; for the last 10 in this circa-1854 house with almost an acre of land on a ravine lot so large it actually has two civic addresses. The house is also home to Issey and Ruby, two Petite Basset Griffin Vendeen dogs, much loved by their daddies.

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**TOP LEFT AND RIGHT:** Serenity can be found in many quiet vignettes and comfortable outdoor spaces throughout the lavish gardens. **LEFT:** Designed with entertaining in mind, the large L-shaped porch is the perfect retreat throughout the spring, summer and fall.





**TOP:** The large open kitchen is the entertaining hub of the main floor for both healthy conversation and cooking. **ABOVE:** Large windows and high ceilings are the hallmark of the vintage 1850s home, impressive from top to bottom.

Although they have lived in historic buildings before, including the Acanthus shop, which was formerly home to Canadian literary icon Farley Mowat, Tim and Dean have never sought official heritage designation for their properties. But, says Tim, “We always try to be sympathetic to the house,” in any work that is done.

Under the 11-foot, four-inch coffered ceilings in their kitchen/family room, guests look out on the rear-facing wrap-around porch on the south side of the house, facing Lake Ontario. The house, says Tim, started life as a single-storey Ontario Cottage (also known as a Regency Cottage) but was expanded with the hopes, dreams and finances of its builder.

Tim and Dean love to entertain and the 3,200 sq. ft. house, including four bedrooms, three bathrooms, as well as the expansive gardens with two fountains (from Acanthus) and a waterfall, forms a perfect venue. Last year, after the traditional Canada Day Calithumpian parade in Port Hope, they hosted over 70 for lunch, not an uncommon event. Outdoors there is a greenhouse for tropical plants, which are brought into the main house for the winter. There is even a bathroom with an outdoor entrance for the convenience of garden-party guests. **Naturescape** of Baltimore (north of Cobourg) was the landscaper. The backyard pond came from **Burns Water Gardens**, also just north of nearby Cobourg.

Shortly after moving in, Tim and Dean took down a front wrap-around porch, which they had discovered was not original. The house now has an elegant portico at the front opening into an elegant foyer with polished limestone floors that gleam like marble.

Omega Mantels of Stone recreated all the crown mouldings around the ceiling and the real plaster medallions at the base of light fixtures.

Altogether, the house has three working fireplaces, two fired by gas, and one wood-burning.



David White, of Port Hope’s **Hilltop Construction**, handled most of the major work but the custom-coloured birch floors on the main level were done by **Goody Hardwood Flooring Installation And Refinishing**. Floors upstairs on the bedroom level are original wide-board pine.

The eight sets of solid-wood french doors on the main level were all special-ordered through **Gilmer’s Home Hardware and Building Centre**, as were the custom-made replacement windows.

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**LEFT:** A clever mix of modern style and classic details complements the home’s architectural details. **ABOVE:** Contemporary furniture and original historic artifacts enhance the home’s creative design. **BELOW LEFT:** The generous second-floor footprint provides three bedrooms, a master suite, two baths, a huge linen closet/storeroom and handy laundry facilities. **BELOW:** The main entertaining room is a long, richly-appointed space, designed to showcase the home’s Victorian roots.







The asphalt roof was installed by local company **Bambrough Roofing** and copper accents, including a “chimney crown” that prevents wildlife (but not Santa) from getting in, was supplied by a company in Pickering.

All stair railings are solid wood, supplied and installed by Hilltop.

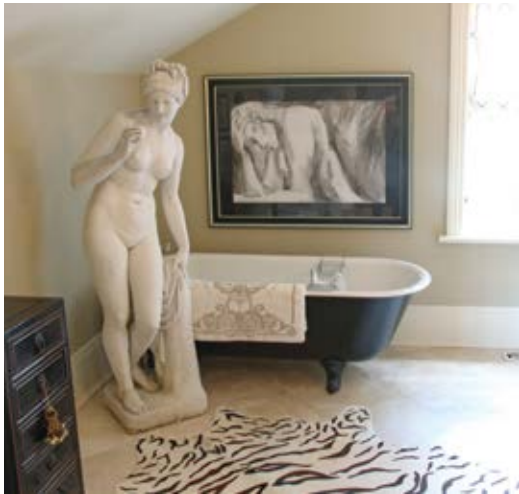
The two upstairs bathrooms boast surfaces of honed and Travertine marble and one has an antique claw-foot bathtub that was manufactured at Port Hope Sanitary, a former local company.

Kitchen cabinets were done by Acorn Kitchens and plumbing was


completed by **Mackenzie Plumbing Heating & Air Conditioning**.

Shutters on the exterior of the house can actually be closed, and they do fit the windows, lest the weather become ferocious. The shutters were custom milled by **Pierre Moreault** of **Atelier Moulin-Noir** of Cobourg. Paints for interior and exterior decoration are from Benjamin Moore and Farrow & Ball.

Tim and Dean researched period-appropriate wallpapers and drapery fabrics and sourced them through their business, Acanthus, and they can do the same for you. **OH**



**TOP:** There’s plenty of room for visitors with three guest rooms and a private bath on the second floor. **LEFT:** An elegant master bedroom offers rich décor designed to flatter the 11-foot ceilings and highlight the impressive crown molding. **ABOVE:** The master en suite features a stout, original claw-foot tub and modern enclosed shower as well as generous built-in cabinets.



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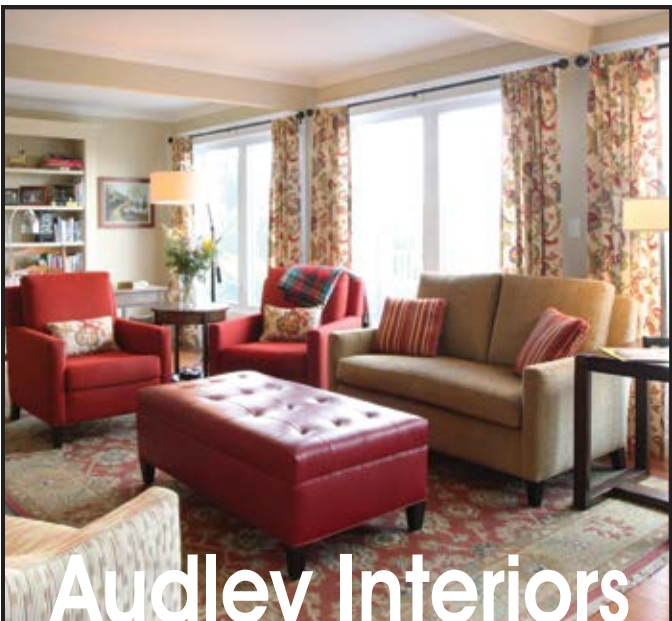
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