

# Sense AND serendipity

STORY **MANDY MARTIN**  
PHOTOGRAPHY **JAY ROBINSON**



wood trim throughout the home is sound. Natural light streams through six-foot-tall, multi-paned glass windows on the ground and second floors, lessons in architectural symmetry. Fortunately, the home has always been lived in and cared for.

The six-acre Wheatland Farm property has panoramic views on all sides. The drumlins, a gift from the Ice Age, provide an ever-changing, four-season landscape unimpeded by other residences. Teddy, the Australian Shepherd-Poodle, delights in his country space, happily inviting a game of chase while escorting visitors throughout the home.

“Our previous city home was a 2,200 sq. ft. condominium, very modern,” Dimitri says. “Here, there’s over 4,000 square feet and all this outdoor space. We just love it. We have made many new friends and are involved in the community. There are so many interesting people doing so many things here.”

The one-storey “summer kitchen” extension to the rear of the house was the first project for the current owners. Removing an interior wall, side windows were exposed to light the interior. Dimitri, working with **Debbie Skinkle** of **Aya Kitchen Designs**, Peterborough, with the help of contractor **Steve Peacock**, designed a sleek, state-of-the-art cuisine centre for Jamie, who loves to cook. The custom millwork of the cabinets, which also contain a refrigerator, and the simple, elegant lines of the hardware, complement the exposed stone of the room’s walls.

A six-burner gas range is set in an island topped with leather-finish Brazilian granite from Crystal Granite & Marble. “The 36-inch-wide

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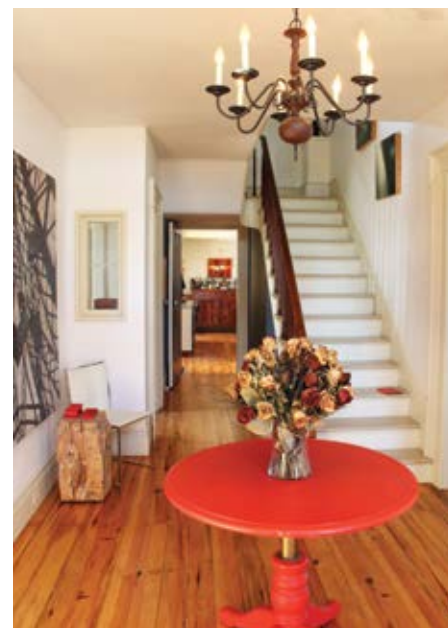
**RIGHT:** Removing two interior walls opened up the new kitchen to natural light. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** A six-burner range is set in a marble-topped island. **BELOW:** The bright kitchen area to the rear of the two-storey home features seating for four on one side of the cooking island. Up to 12 people are accommodated when the table of reclaimed wood opens to full length.



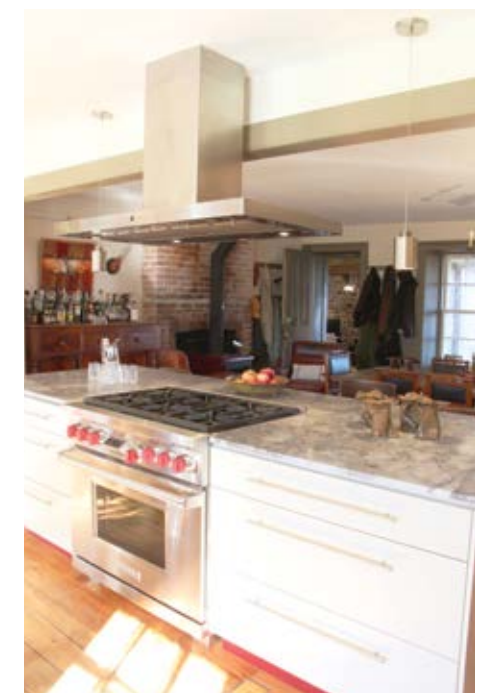
With patient dignity, an 1861 Ontario Gothic, two-storey fieldstone house on the heights of Northumberland County awaited its present owners.

When partners, Architect Dimitri Papatheodorou and Dr. Jamie Read both turned 50, they sought to extend their downtown Toronto lives to include rural experiences. Their search took them to over 20 properties throughout Prince Edward County and Northumberland County. “We like to say this house owns us, we don’t own it,” Dimitri says. “We’re its stewards for the next couple of decades. We first found it on-line. We visited three times over two to three months, made an offer in March 2013 and got it in May, with help from **Royal LePage ProAlliance Realty** brokers **Brian** and **Iris Andrews** of Picton.”

The two-foot-thick stone walls are solid. The original, wide classical



**ABOVE:** Built in 1861, this Ontario Gothic farmhouse boasts two-foot-thick stone walls. **LEFT:** Buffed, natural pine flooring extends from the front hall throughout the ground floor and beyond to the renovated summer kitchen and studio areas.







country kitchen sink was a really good decision,” Dimitri says. “And we splurged with Sub-Zero and Wolf appliances from TASCO Appliances.”

At one end of the new open kitchen is a wood-burning stove from **Friendly Fires**, Cobourg. A table made of reclaimed pine opens to seat up to 12 people, a dining alternative to the café seating along one side of the island. The home’s everyday entrance is into the kitchen area from a porch nook nestled between exterior stone walls.

The former dining room area is now a living room featuring an audiovisual console of repurposed materials, artwork and custom design chairs by MADE Design.

A bright, sunny office and reading room is nestled in the front east ground floor corner of the home. Here, Jamie reads, writes, completes office work and regenerates. In the front west corner is the former parlour, evolving as an art-filled oasis.

The classical front door, with glass sidelight panels and transom, opens into the front hall and staircase.

Behind the “parlour” and before entering the kitchen area is the main-floor bathroom built by **Ron Masil** of **Woodfield Crafts**, Cold Springs. Utilizing reclaimed wood, a laundry room/pantry is separated from the large, bright, ceramic-walled bathroom by a rolling wall – an actual barn door hung on rollers. The vanity and cabinets are also made from reclaimed wood.

Throughout the ground floor, original pine floor planking has been buffed. Upstairs, it is painted a calming neutral colour. Throughout the home is evidence of support and appreciation for Warkworth area artisans and merchants: cast iron ducks from **Camp Ho-Ba-Chee**, candles from **Cheeky Bee**, pottery by **Monica Johnston** and **Paul Portelli**, glass-work by **Paulus Tsiang**, even coffee ground at **Our Lucky Stars**.

The second project tackled was the upstairs master bedroom off the well-lit centre hall and stairway. Two large paintings by Dimitri divide the master bedroom. On one side is the sleeping area; behind the paintings, a spacious, open dressing room. The room runs the length of the east wall of the second storey. Extending the existing

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**OPPOSITE ABOVE:** The former dining room is now the media centre/living room with custom chairs and artwork. A reading and office room is accessed through the glass-paned door. **FAR LEFT:** The main floor bathroom is designed with a distinctly rustic appeal using generous amounts of reclaimed barn wood. **ABOVE:** The studio has been created from the reclaimed barn area beyond the summer kitchen. A dirt floor has been replaced with in-floor heating. Risers double as seating areas and an upper deck is ideal for art projects. **BELOW:** Teddy welcomes guests to the upper deck of the studio.







paint colour throughout, a modern, custom-made Douglas fir and metal bedstead from MADE Design was relocated from the city to one end of the room. The blend works, Dimitri says, because the building materials and design of 1861 are authentic, with “lovely proportions” and “light, clean lines.”

The “blue” and “red” guest rooms are also located on the second storey, blending modern design elements with traditional, classic features and design touches.

Everywhere in this home, the artistry of Dimitri is apparent: watercolours, oil paintings, glazing, sculpture and pottery. Dimitri’s studio, the third home project undertaken, is his delight. **Wayne McCrory Construction Co.** of Colborne took the design for this unused two-storey-high, dirt-floor space to create a 45-person theatre area. Dimitri and Jamie have already hosted three concert events. On heated concrete flooring by **Comfort Zone**, Cobourg, are step risers, which can serve as cushioned seating areas, and an upper deck area for chairs. Dimitri’s grand piano awaits upcoming jam sessions with his trio, Talespinn. The studio has its own custom glass, door-entry from the driveway. Visitors come into a room of exposed fieldstone walls, custom interior lighting by electrician Ted Papatheodorou, and terrific acoustics.

Comfort Zone Heating and Air Conditioning installed the ground-source heat pump and air conditioning for the forced-air heating throughout the home and the in-floor studio heating.

Northward from the studio, a wide, oblong hallway serves as a gym (beer cooler handy) and impromptu gallery for more of Dimitri’s artworks. The gym opens outside to a 65-foot-long lap pool installed by **Foster Pools**, Hastings. The pool runs east-west to maximize sunlight exposure.

A labyrinth trail winds through natural garden and field space beyond the pool. Wildflowers have been seeded in anticipation of next spring. Several varieties of shrubs have been planted, all from **The Branch Ranch**, just outside Warkworth. Plans are afoot for a vegetable garden and additional landscaping projects. “We have met so many wonderful people,” Dimitri says of the new rural home. “Everyone who’s worked on this house is now a friend.” **OH**



**ABOVE LEFT:** A custom Douglas fir and steel bed is readily accommodated in the large second-storey master bedroom.  
**ABOVE:** Light streams into the second-floor bathroom from one of the six-foot tall, eight-paned windows throughout the home.  
**BELOW:** Modern blends with traditional in the “red guest room” on the second floor.



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