

UPLAND INNOVATION

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PHOTOGRAPHY **SANDY MACKAY**
STYLING **SARA MARTIN**

Nothing but windows for this south-facing home. Open rafters and built-in storage keep the sight lines of the Kolapore Uplands' Metcalfe Rock visible in the distance. Tin planters courtesy of Paperwhite Flowers.



Sequestered down a maze of dirt roads ringing the Kolapore Uplands sits a new home, the product of Scandinavian inspiration, smart engineering, a thirst for sustainable design and the cooperation of university alumni. The home of Martin Mansikka and Sara Woodward is perched high in the Uplands, a nature preserve surrounded by undeveloped land with Metcalfe Rock as its focal point.



ABOVE: Homeowner Martin Mansikka and builder Milan Smeh of Legendary Group connect on the covered deck. **LEFT:** Pine tongue-and-groove ceilings on the deck blend seamlessly with the interior. Cords of wood heat the home in the colder months on the few days that passive solar heat isn't enough. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** A Scandinavian aesthetic gives the Uplands home a minimalist look while offering an efficient and functional house. **BOTTOM:** Not a single residence or light at night is visible from the home's secluded vantage point.

Not far from the four-bedroom home is the **Legendary Group** shop in Collingwood. A hive of year-round activity, Legendary Group is a leading-edge manufacturer of prefabricated custom homes. Inside that shop is founder **Milan Smeh**, a civil engineering alumnus of Martin's at Western University. Together the duo developed a pared-down white-on-wood modern design for Martin and Sara to call home. The popularity of this style of home among Milan's clients would come to inspire Legendary Group's new Mod³ collection, which features innovative design concepts and optional heavy steel construction for even larger room spans and increased design flexibility. *Continued on page 98*



A bottle-cap opener gets a prime location with a stainless steel bin to catch caps.

THIS PAGE: An open galley kitchen gives the chef full view of the home and beyond. White cabinets, wormy maple counters and stainless steel appliances and stools keep the look clean.

OPPOSITE, TOP: A graphic from Finnish textile maker Marimekko in red, black and white hangs in the stairwell. **BOTTOM:** A cowhide rug, wood stove and low sofa and coffee table add to the home's Scandinavian touches.



With Martin manning the helm as designer and general contractor, Milan led the charge in the development of the 2,700 sq. ft. home with his company's prefabricated hybrid wall systems. Together they produced a home beautiful for its authentic minimalism, simple materials and breathtaking view. From the seamless concrete of the basement, to the wall-to-wall glazing, the home is endearing in its bare-it-all attitude.

"The modern design of Martin's home is reflective of our system," says Milan. "Martin was very interested in green building and energy efficiencies, and our system follows those mandates of sustainable design. Our roof system is super insulated and he spent a lot of time working on passive solar heating to develop a very economically heated home. We also work with Ontario wood products and use Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified lumber."

The passive solar heating is so effective that, in conjunction with radiant in-floor heating on the lower level and a wood stove from Hearth & Leisure upstairs, the home's back-up, forced-air furnace ran for only five days this past winter. Well-designed roof overhangs that anticipate the sun's seasonal shift eliminate heat gain in the hot summer months.

Legendary Group fabricated the 10-foot high wall-panel systems (pre-finished with exterior siding and windows), roof panels (pre-finished with pine tongue-and-groove on the ceiling) and heavy timber trusses and gables in the factory, and then assembled the home on site with a crane (Vanwyck Crane Service Ltd.) in an unbelievable two days. Following site work in the first week of November, Martin and Sara were living in the home by February – a shocking feat during a Grey County winter.



"It's a lighter impact footprint on the site," says Martin. "They were only here for two days, comparing that to 40 guys with their trucks hanging around for a few months. Materials don't get damaged by the weather and there isn't the material wastage you get on a conventional job site." Martin adds, "It's pretty sensitive land here. We had to do a deer study and a walk-through with a botanist to look for endangered species on the whole 25 acres."

In contrast to a conventional build, the Mansikka home was constructed in a controlled environment that facilitates quality and predictability. All the components are built more precisely, without exposure to the elements, which ensures the air barrier remains intact and delivers an air-tight building envelope. Everything is inspected before it leaves the Legendary shop floor.

"Prefabricated homes are a smarter way to build," extols Milan. "The greatest benefits are that prefab homes guarantee quality and are 100 per cent predictable with respect to both time and cost. Our home package costs are fixed, so there is no risk of cost over-runs and no time delays. The delivery time and cost is always fixed, and people are always comfortable with that." *Continued on page 100*



The homeowner collected these four tribal masks while travelling.



home & builder

With solid planning, Martin and Milan were able to plan to hide away plumbing and electrical inside the home's few interior walls, while leaving the ductwork and structural floor exposed from above and below in order to establish a clean design.

Natural materials predominate, including striking wormy maple that Martin sourced at **Bill Brown Woodworking & Building Supplies Ltd.** to produce a half wall in the front foyer, butcher block waterfall kitchen countertop and the modern harvest dining table. Paint throughout the interior is Behr's Premium Plus Interior Flat line, a zero-VOC paint in Ultra Pure White (1850). Outside, the couple went with the low-VOC Behr Marquee Exterior Flat paint in Carbon (N520-7).

"The exposed heavy timber structural floor was a great way to minimize material usage," adds Martin. "I have LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) credentials, so I tried to incorporate a lot of those principles into the house design."

The open-concept floor plan is facilitated by the heavy timber trusses, wide passageways and few doors. Only the bedrooms and bathrooms are closed off, while sight lines to the laundry and mudroom, front foyer and even the principal bedroom walk-in-closet are broken only by right-angle walls. Many of the walls themselves are absent of trim, lending to the seamless minimalist sensibility. *Continued on page 102*



ABOVE: Both homeowners wake up in the treetops of the Kolapore Uplands. A ceiling fan disperses heat.
LEFT: The master en suite and kitchen have the only half-walls of windows on the south side of the home.



An off-cut of the same wormy maple Martin worked with throughout the home becomes a bedside table. A green lamp adds a bit of primary colour.

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FAR LEFT: More Marimekko graphics brighten the guest room on the lower level. **LEFT:** The homeowners are avid cyclists. Laundry machines are tucked into the space under the stairs. **BOTTOM LEFT:** The exposed heavy timber structural floor above becomes a beautiful lower-level ceiling. **BELOW:** Because the home is built into a slope, the lower level walks out onto a concrete patio. A fire pit was set into the cement, flush with the ground.



“The absence of trim is done with a J-moulding, so wherever the wall system meets the floors or the doors, you get the really clean look of no trim and it produces that nice shadow effect,” notes Martin. “I really like seeing the physical elements of the house.”

Legendary Group was a natural ally in the construction of Martin and Sara’s home. Not only is Milan an excellent problem solver, according to the homeowners, but the product Legendary Group produces is top-of-the-line quality, adhering closely with industry trends. Trend-awareness was particularly important for Martin and Sara,

as they strove to construct a contemporary modern-inspired home.

“We are aware and open to current design trends, and respond by engineering products, homes and system components that satisfy that product need,” explains Milan. “We see a demand for modern homes and have come up with ways to accommodate those ultra-modern designs. Our Mod² line of prefabricated modern homes is what Ontario wants right now.”

It’s definitely what Martin and Sara wanted. Their welcoming Scandi home is a true haven from a busy life. **OH**

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