

Vanilla SKIES

BY JUDE WAYLAND
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY

feature

RIGHT: Jens and Natalia Jorgensen welcome guests to their weekend home with friendly smiles. **BELOW:** The front of the custom post-and-beam home mixes wood and stone for a warm, northern appeal. **BOTTOM:** The large, open entranceway features a walk-in coat closet that comes in handy when entertaining friends and family.



Ever since he was 23, Jens Jorgensen dreamed of owning a 100-acre property in the country. On New Year's Day 2007, while driving the babysitter home, he ventured into unknown territory and was awestruck to discover the stunning views of the Beaver Valley.

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ABOVE: The open-concept, main-floor living space offers breathtaking views of the snow-dusted Beaver Valley, which presents itself as a backyard of dreams. **FAR LEFT:** The endless view from the seat next to the fireplace, encourages guests and family alike, to relax and take it all in. **LEFT:** Jens and Natalia reminisce with builder David Eaton while looking at their home plans.

feature

“It was a beautiful sunny day, crisp and cold, when I turned up Grey Road 2 and saw the whole Beaver Valley,” he recalls. Jorgensen knew he had found his land.

Jens, wife Natalia and their three daughters were renting a ski chalet in Craighleith when Jens heard about a prime piece of land with a panoramic view of the Beaver Valley. It sounded like the ideal location to build his active family a winter retreat. Jens immediately scouted it out, and put an offer on the land before the property had even been shown.

What the Jorgensens purchased is simply out of this world – 300 acres of gently rolling hills that stretch as far as the eye can see, and a ridge overlooking a wide open sky and an unobstructed view of the sparkling blue waters of Georgian Bay.

“We see every sunset along that ridge 365 days a year,” says Jens. “There aren’t many places you can do that.” Even his father commented that he

had never been to a place where you can see so much sky. In fact, there’s an astronomical observatory a stone’s throw from the Jorgensen property.

At first, the Jorgensens wanted to build a log home. But Natalia felt the structure might restrict her use of colour and limit the number of windows, so the couple chose a post and beam design. **Normerica** recommended an experienced builder, who happened to be a good friend, neighbour and fellow member at Georgian Peaks Ski Club. Enter **David Eaton of Baylyn Construction Ltd.**

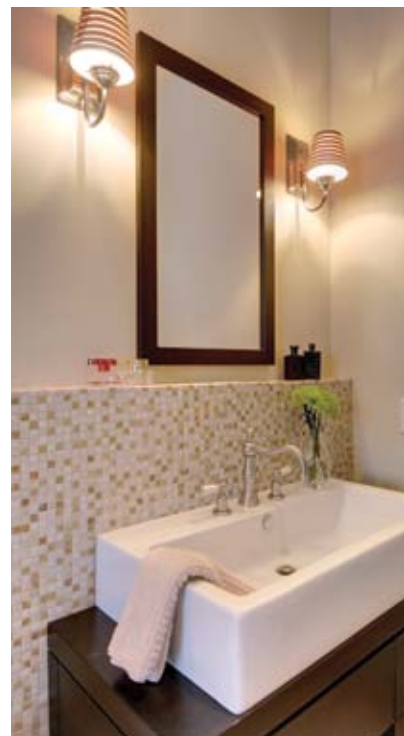
In 2007 and 2008, Eaton and the Jorgensens built an impressive 5,800 sq. ft., two-level, white pine and Douglas fir, post and beam winter getaway. “This is a very unique, 100 per cent custom designed Normerica home,” explains Eaton. “With Normerica, every joint, and every tenon has to be fitted, drilled and pegged. They’re roughly cut, and then we fine-tune them all to make them fit properly.” *Continued on page 56*



FAR LEFT: With the dinner table set for 10, complete with flower arrangements from Paperwhite Flowers in Thornbury, and a gourmet kitchen designed for entertaining, the Jorgensens are ready to share their evening with close friends. **LEFT:** After pouring a drink at the rustic bar in the dining room, visitors are encouraged to sign the guest book. **TOP:** An afternoon snack is served on a beautiful cheeseboard given to the Jorgensens as a gift from Eaton. **ABOVE:** The custom-crafted kitchen offers loads of workspace and style with a built-in refrigerator.



LEFT: Splashes of red are seen throughout the home, including in the cosy, up country master bedroom. **BOTTOM LEFT:** The master en suite mixes warm colours with clean lines and tasteful tile work to achieve a contemporary look that complements the rustic home. **RIGHT:** A wooden sign on the landing of the main staircase, pays tribute to the family's ski club, Georgian Peaks. **FAR RIGHT & BELOW:** The lower walkout level was designed specifically for the couple's three daughters with a large living room for playing games and watching movies, a small kitchen, a bedroom each, a separate laundry room, spa, gear room and a spare room for friends.





It was Natalia who situated the home high atop the ridge, and Natalia who tastefully oversaw every single detail of the interior design – from detailed tile designs and custom designed cabinetry (with the expertise of **J.D. Medland Cabinet Makers**), to sourcing fixtures, paint colours and furnishings (**Jonna's Rustic Refinement** and **FAD Inc.**)

“The way Natalia decorated their home is the reason why this is one of my favourites,” says Eaton. “It’s the first time ever I’ve had a homeowner put together tile drawings for patterns. It was amazing. They were done by hand and so helpful.”

Eaton’s team did most of the finishing, including the nine-to-11-inch reclaimed elm floorboards supplied by **Danny Farrow** at **Nostalgic Wood Inc.**

The Jorgensen home was designed to be functional. The master bedroom and en suite are on the main level. Four more bedrooms and bathrooms (all countertops from **City Stone**), a spacious living area and stone fireplace, wine cellar, kids’ laundry room, equipment/mudroom, steam/shower room and kitchenette are located in the fully finished lower level. *Continued on page 58*

ABOVE: The girls’ kitchen is fully equipped with everything they need to host friends in their lower-level apartment. **RIGHT:** The newest addition downstairs is the wine cellar. Jens points out that several bottles have tags hanging around the bottlenecks with handwritten notes from the guests who gave them, including what foods to enjoy each vintage with.



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LEFT & BELOW: The guest room on the lower level is a private getaway for anyone staying with the Jorgensens. The bedroom is warm and comfortable in chalet colours while the spa-like en suite features double sinks, a spacious glassed-in shower and a large soaker tub.

The main floor features a remarkable open-concept space, which includes expansive kitchen, dining and living areas. The Jorgensens took full advantage of the post and beam construction to welcome in the light. Everywhere you turn, windows of all sizes offer breathtaking views of the surrounding valley.

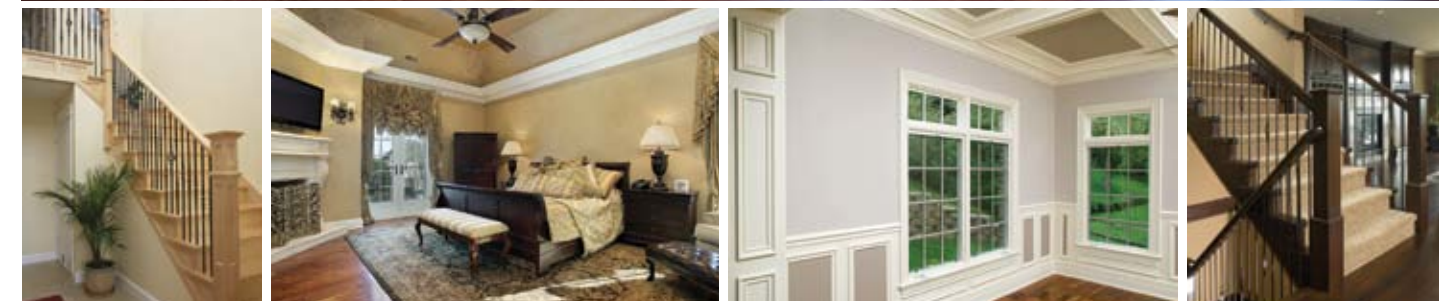
A stately great room fireplace anchors the home. “**Campbell Construction Inc.** did a fantastic job with the fireplace stonework,” says Eaton. “You can’t even tell where there’s a seam in this inch-and-a-half-thick real stone veneer.” The block chimney exterior is clad with cultured stone, the interior with **ErthCoverings**, once again, Natalia’s recommendation.

In Eaton’s opinion, the great room really makes the home. “It’s the one place where I can totally relax and be myself,” says Jens. “When everyone’s there, we all become immediately relaxed, and that’s what I think is so beautiful.”

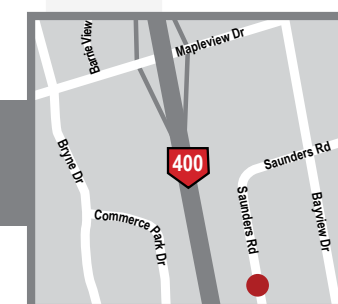
There’s a full radiant heating system throughout the home, and no ducts, thanks to a very efficient propane boiler (**RT Mechanical**). “It’s all the best of the best as far as heating systems go,” says Eaton. “The only forced air in the home comes from two 200-amp HRV systems, one at each end of the house, which provide fresh air.” There’s no need for air conditioning on the ridge. *Continued on page 60*

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The home sits solidly on an ICF foundation. Eaton and his crew installed an engineered suspended slab in the attached single car garage to tuck away noisy mechanical equipment in the basement. It's a phenomenal use of space that includes a huge ski locker area for the kids.

Across the driveway, Eaton built a 1,248 sq. ft., three-car garage with a full bunky, which features two bedrooms and a large teenage play area.

With 10 years of commercial construction experience in Toronto, and 30 homes under his belt in the Blue Mountains, Eaton holds a special place in his heart for the Jorgensen project. Why? "The building. The view. The people," he responds. "They're just great. This couple is so passionate about what they do."

Now the Jorgensens escape the city almost every weekend to savour their country retreat. "It's great," says Jens. "I just sit there and look at the view, or in the evening we have a little fire. It's the perfect place to sit, talk and relax with each other." **OH**

SOURCE GUIDE

Baylyn Construction Ltd., Campbell Construction Inc., City Stone, Clearlite Electric, Doug Goodwin Plumbing, FAD Inc., Georgian Stair Company Inc., Huronia Alarms, J.D. Medland Cabinet Makers, John H. McNabb Construction Ltd., Jonna's Rustic Refinement, Nostalgic Wood Inc., Rudy Berrang Roofing, RT Mechanical, Thornbury Home Hardware Building Centre



ABOVE: There's no arguing over bathroom space for the Jorgensen girls. Each daughter has her own sink and a wall-length mirror makes it easy for all three to get ready each morning. **LEFT:** Perhaps one of the most unique features of the home, the lower-level mudroom resembles that of a full team's locker room, with enough space to store all sports equipment year-round.

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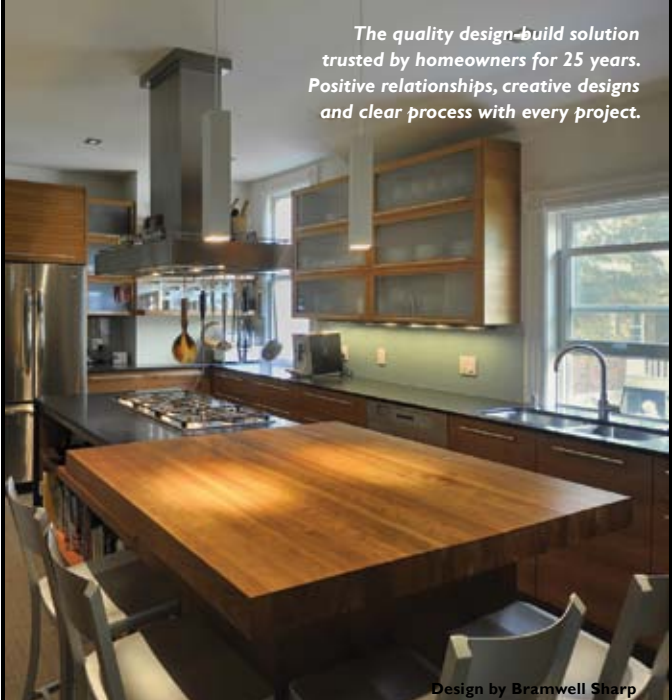
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