

THE DEVIL'S IN THE *details*

BY LAUREL FORTIN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY

With five skiers in the family, Carol Port, James Malone and their three sons have a lot of gear. Toques, goggles, scarves, socks and mittens. Not to mention coats, boots and snow pants. But they've got a way to keep track of it all – at least while they're at home.

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It was this north-facing, immense view of the escarpment that initially drew the Port-Malone family to their hilltop acreage, where Porter Skelton & Associates designed and built their four-season highland retreat.



ABOVE: Homeowner Carol is one very organized woman. Her favourite space in the home is the mudroom, where custom built-in cubbies keep track of all of the family's outdoor gear. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Whether to sip on a cup of tea, or to strum on a guitar, this active family often gathers around the wood-burning fireplace to catch up on the day's activities. **RIGHT:** Originally, the property featured a modest farmhouse. After living in the space for four ski seasons, the homeowners approached Porter Skelton to help design and build a new and more suitable home that their family could grow into.



Members at Devil's Glen Ski Club, they have a four-season retreat in the Duntroon highlands, just minutes from the club. The home's generous, organized mudroom was one of the top priorities for the family when they were designing and planning their new post and beam space with custom homebuilder, **Porter Skelton & Associates Ltd.**

"It's still my favourite part of the house," smiles Carol. "We absolutely needed a spot big enough for all of us to get out of our snow gear, get it dry and be able to find it again the next morning." With custom, locker-style storage created by **Kim and Kathy Hall** at **Pinetiques** in Clarksburg, each family member has a station with ample hooks, and a seat with a drawer underneath to keep track of all their accessories.

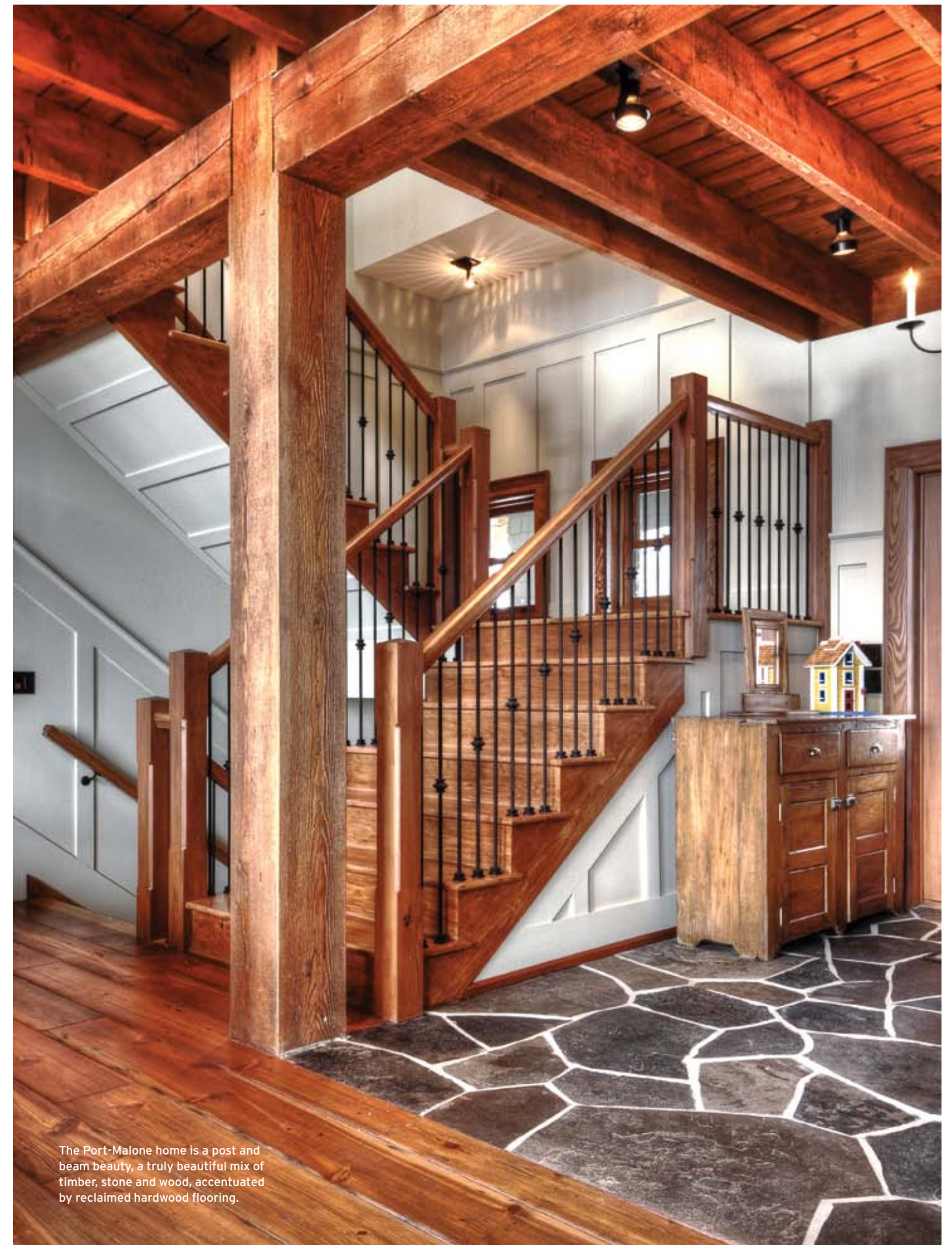
While it may have been the mudroom that clinched the house design

for Carol, it was the view that drew the family to the highlands in the first place. Their north-facing vista from the two-storey high windows in the great room extends miles down the escarpment across Georgian Bay (windows by Loewen).

The family has enjoyed this view for eight years, since they joined the ski club and bought the hilltop acreage as a chalet base. The original home was a modest farmhouse, and they knew they would need to add on to the home to accommodate their growing family. So they approached Porter Skelton in 2007.

Carol and James were surprised by designer Chris Skelton's advice. Rather than remodel, Skelton suggested they live in the house and on the property for a while, to see how they used the space, and then decide what, how and whether to renovate.

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The Port-Malone home is a post and beam beauty, a truly beautiful mix of timber, stone and wood, accentuated by reclaimed hardwood flooring.



So Carol and James and sons did just that. For four ski seasons, Christmases, weekends, and summer vacations. The family soon realized that their house wasn't in the greatest condition, and that an extensive renovation would be difficult and costly. But they loved the area, so they searched for a new chalet. Every property they toured was further from the ski hill, or from Toronto, and just not what they wanted. They kept returning to their highland view.

Then Carol and James approached Porter Skelton again, this time with a plan to keep their property, but to construct a new home that they could grow into for decades. Chris Skelton had the family made a wish list. Says Porter, "We ask our clients to think big – to not worry about costs while they're dreaming, and find out what they're really looking for. We draw

up a few options, and clients generally like a few features from plan A, plan B, and plan C. We amalgamate these features," he explains, "and then refine from there. We do budgeting exercises as we progress through the design until we land at something that fits the clients' vision and budget."

James and Carol knew they wanted timber, stone and wood throughout their home (B.C. Douglas Fir beams from [Haven's Home Building Centre](#) in Collingwood and reclaimed hardwood flooring from [Northland Custom Hardwood Flooring Inc.](#)), but the two elements most critical to them had little to do with the size of the bedrooms or the flow of the great room. It was all about the two spaces in their home they use when coming and going. For Carol, it was the mudroom. For James, it was an attached garage. *Continued on page 100*



TOP RIGHT: An immense black iron chandelier, custom designed by Pete Muller of Pete's Metal Works in Nottawa, hangs above the dining room table.
RIGHT: The kitchen window offers a glorious view of the valley.



“On weekends, we often get in late on a Friday and have to unload our boys, the dog and our groceries,” says James. “We wanted an attached garage, where it didn’t matter what the conditions were like, we could get in out of the snow or cold, right into the house.”

Porter Skelton answered the wish with a three-bay garage. The family uses two bays for their cars, and the third as a foyer to access the garage. The garage and mudroom lead to an open-concept kitchen where custom cabinetry (Pinetiques) has a refined, rustic shaker look. The subtle black granite island and countertops, in a leather finish from **Di Pietra Design Counter Tops**, have a textured matte appearance that disguises fingerprints and streaks.

The dining area and great room feature a pair of massive black iron chandeliers (handmade by **Pete Muller** of **Pete’s Metal Works** in Nottawa), inspired by the fixtures in the Devil’s Glen clubhouse (electrical work by **Rigney Electric**). **Rosco Stone Design** contributed a massive wood-burning fireplace in the great room.

The main floor master bedroom shares the chimneystack with a propane fireplace. Carol and James enjoy a tiled en suite (**The Flooring Place Inc.**), with a soaker tub and walk-in shower (by **Baymount Plumbing Ltd.**).

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TOP: The upstairs hallway showcases B.C. Douglas Fir beams and reclaimed hardwood flooring, which consists of an engineered hardwood base and a reclaimed wood upper. Carol chose Sharkskin by Benjamin Moore for the walls. **ABOVE LEFT & RIGHT:** A funky sliding barn door leads to the master en suite, an oasis of sheer comfort, featuring a lovely soaker tub and spacious walk-in shower. **RIGHT:** The main floor master bedroom shares the same chimneystack as a propane fireplace, creating a super cosy and comfortable space.

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Carol's impeccable style selected Sharkskin by Benjamin Moore for the walls throughout the home, with a shock of red here and there. All hardware and fixtures are black, in contrast to the stone and timbers, from switch plates and door hinges to stair railings (sourced at [Georgian Stair Company Inc.](#)).

Says Porter, "Chris Skelton and I started out small 30 years ago building decks and sheds. We focused on creating great relationships with our clients and we grew slowly; we only take on projects that we can completely commit to. Some of the relationships we've made with clients and trades people have lasted for 25 years, and we hope they continue for another 25."

With their second ski season in the new house underway, Carol and James have nothing but accolades for Andrew Porter and the team he brought in to build their weekend ski retreat. **OH**



SOURCE GUIDE

Baymount Plumbing, Di Pietra Design Counter Tops, The Flooring Place Inc., Hackstone Landscapes, Huronia Alarms, Ferraro Painting & Restorations Inc., Georgian Stair Company Inc., Havens Home Building Centre, Northland Custom Hardwood Flooring Inc., Paperwhite Flowers, Pete Muller of Pete's Metal Works, Kim and Kathy Hall of Pinetiques, Porter Skelton & Associates, Fred Reithmeier, Rigney Electric, Rossco Stone Design.



TOP: When the old farmhouse came down, Porter Skelton recycled as much of the house as they could, donating cupboards, fixtures, hardware and the like to the Habitat for Humanity Restore. **ABOVE:** After drawing up a wish list for Chris Skelton, and discussing the family's vision and budget, the Port-Malones put their trust in the Porter Skelton team. They are over the moon with the final product. **LEFT:** The three Port-Malone boys relax in their downstairs family games room after a day on the slopes at Devil's Glen.

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