

True COLOURS

BY SHELBY HILSON // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY



Abbey Westlake loves her Collingwood bungalow. She enjoys a good book in the sunny reading nook at the front of the house. **OPPOSITE TOP:** A painted walnut branch gives the front lawn an artful touch. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM:** A charming archway flanked by a white picket fence frames the front of the home.



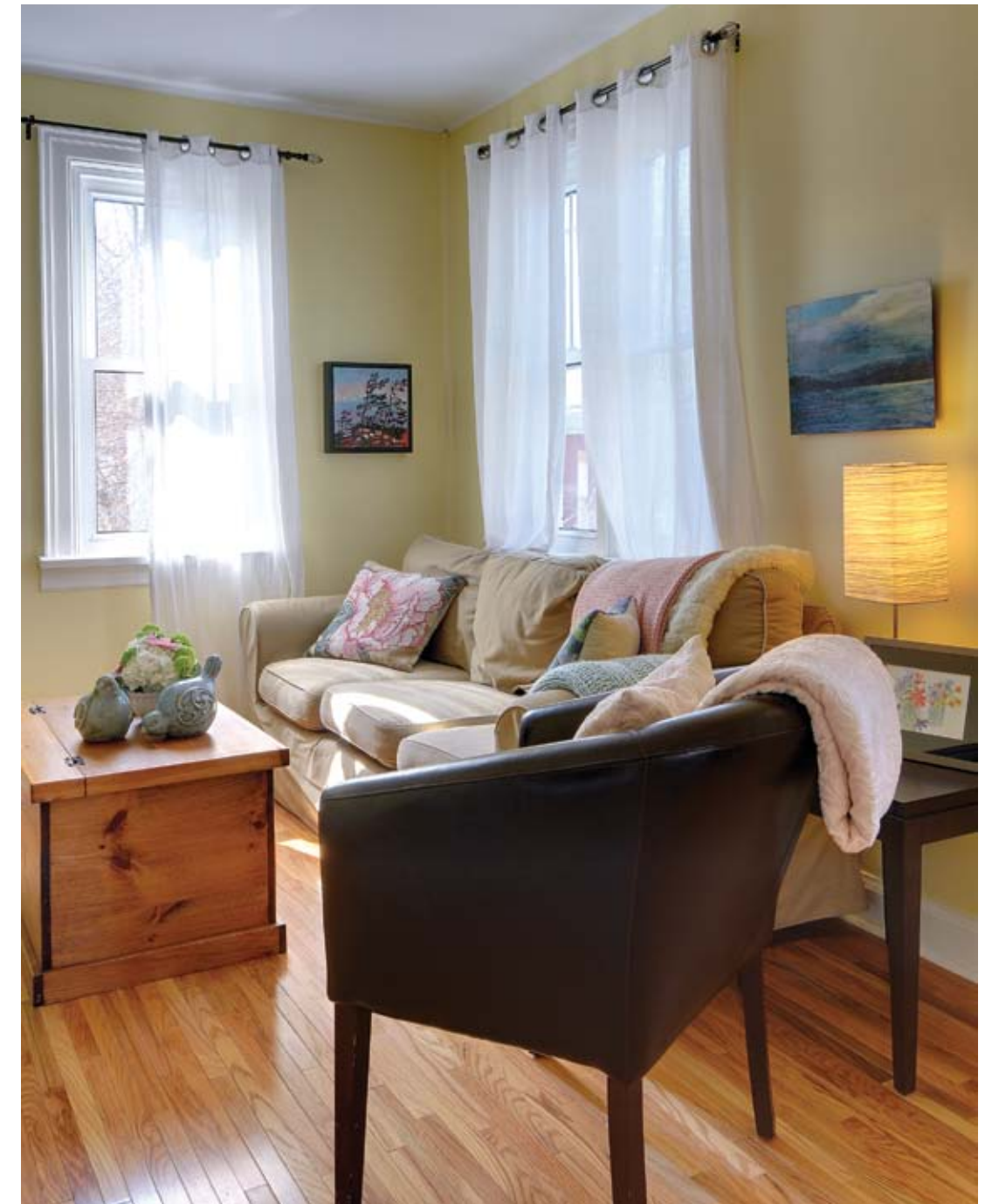
A walnut branch has been painted red and placed on the front lawn; the same lawn that's bordered by a white picket fence with a charming archway welcoming visitors up the front walkway.

A passerby would certainly be curious about the inhabitants of this small bungalow, nestled so thoughtfully among towering red brick Victorians on a Collingwood street.

After spending a short time with Abbey Westlake and her husband Andrew Peycha, it's impossible to imagine them living anywhere but in a house with a painted branch out front.

Andrew is a well-known artist whose colourful, nature-inspired paintings can be found in homes and businesses throughout the region and beyond. Abbey's work is also rooted in nature's beauty. She owns the **Garden's Nest**, a successful downtown Collingwood shop filled with unique and stylish home décor and garden accessories.

At home, their artistic, down-to-earth styles have been combined to create a beautiful space filled with life, love, history and personality. *Continued on page 105*



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
(1) Tableware and accessories from the Garden's Nest and a flower arrangement from Paperwhite Flowers adorn the retro kitchen table. **(2)** Andrew and Abbey painted the old brick fireplace white. **(3)** Small and cosy, the living room embodies what Abbey refers to as her "granny chic" style. **(4)** Abbey has given this antique buffet new life with white paint and spray-painted hardware. **(5)** To make the reading nook as comfy as possible, Abbey used foam cushioning and ordered a custom reversible cover online.

"It's fun when you're married to someone like Andrew," says Abbey. "Not a lot of guys would like a yellow house with pink accents but Andrew is very creative and likes colour."

When they purchased the house in 2006, this young couple went straight to work on making it their own. One of the first tasks was to replace the carpets that blanketed every room – even the kitchen. For a look common to old Collingwood bungalows, they chose thin-strip oak flooring from **Knights of Meaford** and had it installed by **Richard Sabas** of **Alpine Contracting**.

Andrew laid tile in front of the existing brick fireplace, which they painted white – a simple and effective way to freshen up the outdated living room.

The yellow on the walls came as a surprise because it's never been Abbey's favourite. "This house just had to be yellow though," she says. Antiquity by Benjamin Moore (all paint purchased at **Robinson's Paint &**

Wallpaper) was the winning shade that now provides a sunny backdrop in the common rooms.

The dining area, open to both the living room and kitchen, is full of character. A large, bright reading nook is flanked by built-in bookshelves and made comfy with padded seating and colourful toss cushions. Rory, the couple's three-year-old son, keeps some of his stuffed friends here to enjoy story time with him.

Across from the nook sits an antique buffet, originally given to Abbey's mother as a wedding gift. It spent most of its years stored in a basement because her mother wasn't fond of the "horrible brown finish," but like the fireplace, this treasured piece has been given new life with a fresh coat of white paint and spray-painted hardware. Paired with a funky, retro kitchen table from **Century Olde Salvage**, genres have been mixed to accomplish an attractive personal style. *Continued on page 106*

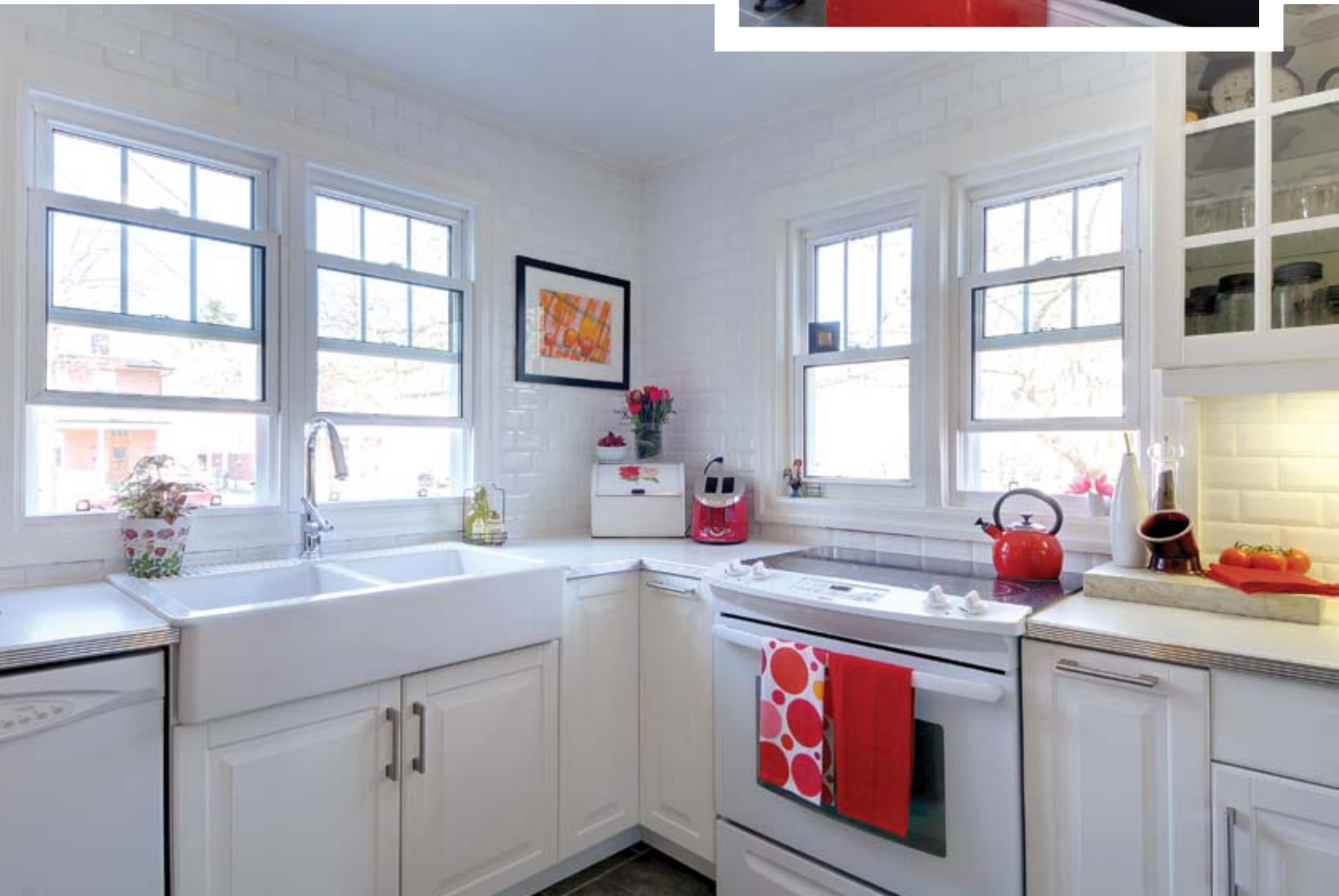
feature

“I like it, so that’s why it’s here,” says Abbey of everything in her house. Nothing was purchased just to fill a space or to match another piece, but simply, “because we truly love every item, which makes everything seem to fit together,” she says.

The kitchen is no exception. It saw a full renovation that removed a third entranceway to expand counter space (**Just Counter Tops**). “We figured two doorways were enough for such a small house,” explains Abbey. Fresh white cabinetry and subway tiles (**The Flooring Place**) make red accents pop and the space seem larger. To pull in the character of the rest of the home, the couple flattened the edge of the countertops and trimmed them with aluminum for the same retro look the table has. “I really wanted a kitchen with a light retro feel,” says Abbey.

Bright white tiles (**Quanbury Flooring Centre**) are found in the bathroom where a beautiful rustic mirror, discovered in a garbage bag in Abbey’s grandmother’s basement, completes the look. **John Winkels** crafted the bathroom cabinetry. *Continued on page 109*

BELOW: A bright white kitchen features appliances from Foley’s Furniture and Sears and pops with red accents. The aluminum trim added to the countertops gives it a light retro feel. **RIGHT:** A chalkboard wall in the kitchen is a nice contrast to the white cabinetry and subway tile. **OPPOSITE TOP:** Painted Pale Avocado, Rory’s room is bright and fun. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM:** A spare room/ playroom off the kitchen features built-in bunks and a nice view to the backyard.





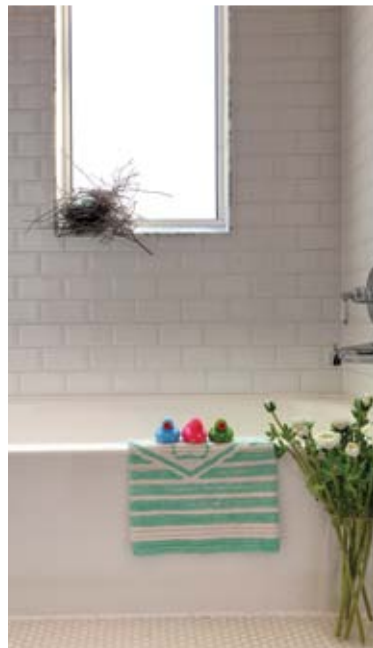
Windows throughout the home were replaced by **Performance Plus Windows & Doors Ltd.** “They did an amazing job recreating the look of the older windows at an affordable price,” says Abbey.

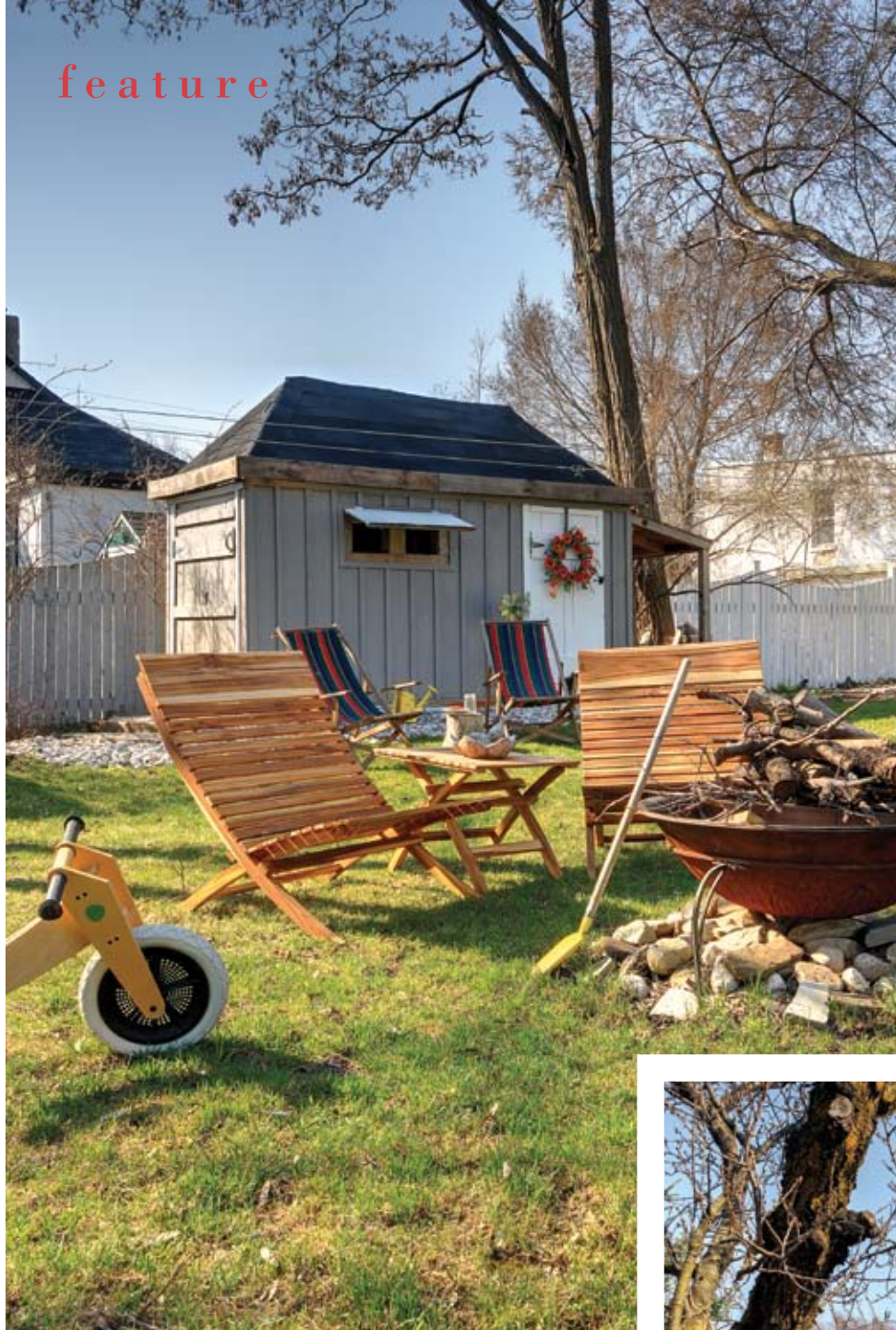
A big backyard and deck can be accessed through a sliding door in the couple’s bedroom. This is where this fun-loving family spends much of their time in the warmer months and it’s easy to see why – with ample space to play and a fire pit to gather around – all surrounded by trees and gardens.

“We like having a small house because it provides us the ability to do other things and we’re more inclined to be outside,” says Andrew, whose painting studio is also in the backyard.

“We built the studio as a garage for resale value,” he explains. “But we built it with 10-foot ceilings.” When it came time to paint, they picked a colour that would blend in naturally with the background. *Continued on page 112*

OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: (1) A glimpse into the couple’s charming bedroom from down the hall. **(2)** A rustic mirror discovered in a garbage bag in Abbey’s grandmother’s basement warms the bright white bathroom along with a pretty flower arrangement from Paperwhite Flowers. **(3)** A real bird’s nest has been filled with robins’ egg soaps and placed in the bathroom window. **(4)** The bed, bedding and nightstand in Abbey and Andrew’s bedroom are all from Clarkson’s in Collingwood. **ABOVE & RIGHT:** The front porch is decorated for spring with colourful accessories from the Garden’s Nest.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: (1) Sitting around the backyard fire is a favourite way for this family to spend time together. (2) Andrew constructed the back shed from skids and an old play fort. (3) An outdoor dining area has been set up under the cherry tree. (4) Rory loves roaming in his big backyard.



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LEFT: Andrew Peycha spends most days painting in his backyard studio. Oscar, the family dog, likes to keep him company. **BELOW:** The couple's property boasts many beautiful perennial gardens.



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Because the couple never intended to use the building as a garage, they left the large cherry tree that sits between the driveway and the studio, in peace. Though they're lucky to get a bowl full of cherries once the birds are finished with the tree, it lends character and shade to the backyard.

In the front, Andrew and Abbey planted a magnolia tree to celebrate Rory's birth. It blends in beautifully with the perennial gardens. "We try to use plants that don't have to be watered a lot," says Abbey, listing lily of the valley, periwinkle, hostas, elephant ear, ferns, poppies and crocuses as a few examples.

Although it's small, this charming bungalow has big style. Inside and out, from the pretty gardens to the fresh and thoughtful interior, it's a reflection of a loving family's true colours. **OH**

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