



# TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

PHOTOGRAPHY  
WALTER FRANCZYK

Experts ensure  
your home has all it  
needs and more.

**ALVIN ALLEN**  
*Owner*  
*Cottage Lifts Enterprises*

**How did you start this business?** A millwright, Alvin was repairing a cottage lift when a neighbour suggested he start a business building and installing them. “I just thought it would be a good product to put on the market. It’s done very well for me. I retired from my millwright job and these are all I do right now.” He now employs four people who build lifts all winter long and install them in spring.

**What advantages do lifts offer?** “It just saves walking down all those steps to get to the water,” he says. Level waterfront land is scarce and expensive, out of reach for most people. Lifts make it feasible to build and enjoy cottages on steep ground. They can add to the value of a property. “People get these lifts to make it easier for older people, especially parents and so forth, to get up and down to a boathouse.” While the carrying capacity of lifts is unlimited, the standard capacity is 1,000 pounds, he says. “Wooden stairs have a lifespan of maybe 15 years. A metal lift has a lifespan of 50 years.”

**What do you enjoy about your work?** “I should have been retired years ago, but I like the challenge,” he says. “The challenge is mainly finding the right places to put them.”

**DEBBIE  
SKINKLE**  
*President*  
*AyA Kitchen  
Designs*



**How did you get started?** “My education and background is in residential and commercial architecture,” says Debbie. “I love working with clients and have a passion for the entire process from concept to structure. Kitchen design is a very rewarding career for me in this respect.”

**What is the secret to your success?** “It’s comparable to a good family recipe passed through generations. It takes quality ingredients, attention to detail, the right equipment and pride in what you have created,” she says.

“What we accomplish here is very similar. AyA is a quality, Canadian cabinet manufacturer. Our in-house design team listens to our clients and tailors each kitchen specifically to their needs and aesthetics. The quality workmanship that goes into every installation fuses the product and design. The result is a space that family and friends will want to enjoy together.”

**What is your favourite part of the work?** “Being invited to dinner by clients to share in that family recipe and enjoy it in their new space,” she says. *Continued on page 54*





ADAM CORRIVEAU,  
JOSH AMENT  
& PETER SELLORS,  
President  
Greensville Soapstone Company

**Tell us about your company:** Peter: Our family owned and operated business started out with a passion for soapstone. We have a strong focus on quality and craftsmanship and work exclusively with soapstone, which sets us apart from other stone fabricators. Located in Burlington and opening soon in Port Hope, we custom fabricate and install across all of Ontario and Quebec, and ship across Canada. Greensville Soapstone Company offers the largest inventory and soapstone slab selection.

**Why are soapstone counters a great choice for any style of home?** Natural and non-porous, soapstone is resistant to stains and bacteria. Its soft, honed finish gives this stone a timeless elegance and beauty unlike any other, with a unique texture that feels like a bar of soap.

**Where else can soapstone be used?** Soapstone countertops and sinks are an excellent choice for your kitchen, bathroom or laundry. Because soapstone does not react to temperature, it is also an excellent choice for fireplaces and outdoor kitchens.



JACQUIE HALLIGAN  
& CHARLENE JACOB  
Owners  
Cobourg Paint & Wallpaper

**What got you started in this business?** “We both worked here as employees for a long time,” says Jacquie. “I’ve always done staging and decorating and it was the perfect timing in my life to come into owning this business,” she says. “Working here as a part-time employee, I loved working with the customers and anything to do with colours and the whole decorating industry,” says Charlene.

**What sets your store apart from others?** “What sets it apart is our friendliness and customer service,” says Jacquie. “Customer service is very important.” Many people come to the store because they know they’ll get the attention and time they need to help with their projects, says Charlene. “Even contractors,” says Jacquie. “We get a lot of contractors that come in and they enjoy dealing with us.”

**What is your favourite part of your work?** For Jacquie, it’s helping clients find the colours that work with their decorating projects. She offers home colour consultations for \$75 and provides clients with a gift certificate for paint in the same amount. “I spend an hour-and-a-half in their home and we find the right colours that will work with their furniture and their pieces.” Charlene loves mixing paint. Customers are her favourite part of the business. “We have long-time customers that have been coming here since the store opened in 2002 and we’ve gotten to know them all.” *Continued on page 56*





**MITCHELL HYNES &  
ROBERT HYNES, Owner**  
*Your Own Design*

**How did you get started?** “As a kid, I wanted to be an architect,” says Robert. He worked many years as a renovator until a retired engineer suggested he do some drafting. “I started researching computer-aided design and started Your Own Design as a hobby business, with the idea I’d give it three or four years and see if it grows into something.” It worked out well. Design became his full-time occupation.

**What services do you offer?** “We offer complete residential custom home design, which encompasses new homes, renovations and fire damage repairs,” says Robert, a licensed heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) designer. He also designs farm buildings, workshops, sheds and small non-commercial buildings. “I do complete mechanical designs for residential homes, in conjunction with my son Mitchell doing the residential drafting. Between the two of us that’s what we provide.”

**What’s your favourite part of the business?** “Working with people,” Robert says. “We have a down-to-earth office,” he says, explaining that clients are an integral part of his designs. “That’s where the name Your Own Design came from because the concept is to take your dream and make it your project.” With extensive construction knowledge and experience, he understands how to build things and strives for reasonable, affordable budgets.



**ADRIANNE  
TOWNS, Owner**  
*Village Paint & Paper*

**What drew you to this business?** Adrianne studied business and later interior decorating at Sheridan College before she and her husband Darcy moved home to Campbellford. “One day I was looking through the classifieds and saw our local Benjamin Moore store was for sale,” says Adrianne, who was working at Siemens in Peterborough at the time. “I thought, ‘wouldn’t that be fun?’ So, we just took a leap of faith and went for it,” she recalls. The couple bought the store. “I just had to jump at it. I just had to try.”

**What does your store offer?** Village Paint & Paper offers a full range of Benjamin Moore products and a broad selection of wallpapers,

in-stock and available on order. It also carries Fusion mineral paint, a great finish for furniture applications. “We have a whole set of additional products that go along with that line,” says Adrianne. “We sell peel-and-stick decals, a full range of sundries for wallpaper and paint applications, bedding on special order, and cabinet hardware.”

**What’s your favourite part of the work?** “I love the customer service aspect of it. I love helping people pick their colours and helping them redecorate their interiors,” she says. “We love our home town.” *Continued on page 58*





STANDING: **TREVOR MCGEE** *Senior Draftsman*, **KIM LEHVONEN** *Sales & Design Consultant*, **CRAIG MCFARLANE** *Vice-President Retail Sales* SITTING: **ANGELA COX** *Sales & Design Consultant*, **HOLLY MCFARLANE** *Sales & Administration*, **TREVOR LEBLANC** *Sales Support*  
*Linwood Custom Homes*

**How did you get started?** A civil engineering technologist, Craig McFarlane was a home builder when he started erecting Linwood homes. “We built one and the sales manager offered us another and we just went on from there.” The quality of Linwood’s components impressed him. “It’s a great product to work with,” he says. “Plans are expertly done. It’s a package from British Columbia and B.C. framing material is second to none. There’s lots of material, good quality material and plans are easy to read. We enjoyed building it. That’s why we stuck with them.” He built homes for three years and has been selling Linwood homes for 27 years. “In 30 years, I’ve designed and delivered almost 500 homes.”

**What makes Linwood one of Canada’s best builders?** “One of the things we’re known for is our true custom design,” he says. “The

majority of the time, we’re modifying and customizing site-specific designs for our clients because the majority of our clients are building on waterfront lots and there’s a lot of environmental challenges – steep slopes, waterfront setbacks, septic setbacks. We have to really look at something that’s going to work within their lot.” Hundreds of designs, excellent building materials and expert designers all contribute to that reputation. “We’ve got a great core of design people who all work at Linwood Custom Homes.”

**Your favourite part of the business?** “It’s a rewarding challenge to work with people and design something that’s unique for them, that they will love to live in for the rest of their life. For the majority of the people building with us this is their dream home.” **OH**



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