



PASTORAL *paradise*

It's an idyllic day to be in this idyllic spot. The sun is high and hot, but a cool and sheltering forest holds its expansive, gently sloped lawn in its peaceful embrace.

The sunlight sparkles on the man-made pond as its fountains gently murmur messages of tranquility. In the strategically placed garden beds, dozens of varieties of flowers and shrubs generously exude their colour and fragrance. Overlooking all, the spacious, modern wood-and-stone house solidly presides.

Seven years ago, Brad and Linda Pitre and their young son and daughter discovered this ultra-private 47-acre property with a trout stream in the heart of Northumberland County's famed rolling hills. They had been looking for the perfect site for their dream home. They knew they had found it.

"We spent a whole winter just clearing the site for the house," says Brad, who with his wife and business partner, Linda, operates **Braelin General Contracting**, specializing in high-end homes. The massive task of clearing was accomplished, he says, by "just the family and some of the guys that work for me."

There were plenty of challenging thorn bushes to be cleared but, of course, the surrounding hardwood and a number of mature trees in the clearing were left standing. Now, the surrounding forest provides privacy and scenery as well as fragrant logs for the home's two wood-burning fireplaces, free for the chopping.

The public road that leads to the Pitres' winding driveway from the south is not maintained by the municipality so there is no access from that direction once winter snows drift in. There is an alternate access route to the north and the family has four-wheel drive vehicles so they never have any problems getting in and out Brad says. Nor do they have a private plow.

"I just use a snow-blower" to clear the 700-foot driveway, Brad says cheerfully. *Continued on page 44*

BY EILEEN ARGYRIS // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY // STYLING BY URBAN LOFT



The three-storey Pitre home overlooks a pastoral man-made pond. Water fountains gush skyward at the flip of a switch. **FAR LEFT:** Linda and Brad Pitre delight in their home's natural surroundings. **LEFT:** A waterfall cascades in front of the secluded pump house at pond's edge.

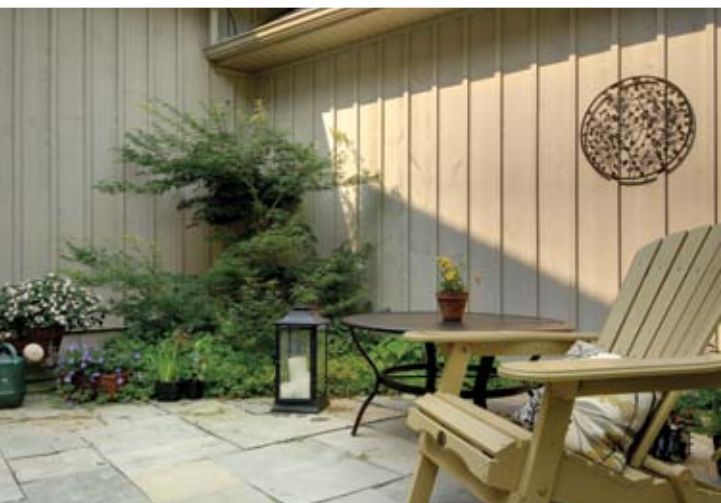


On the approach to the property, leaving the drive and entering the clearing, the house is an impressive sight. With 4,300 sq. ft. of living space, it is a sizable dwelling, but it's imposing also because of its brilliant situation. Along with the soaring, three-storey wall of windows facing southwest to overlook the drive, pond and gardens, the subtle earth tones in the Shouldice stone walls and Maibec prefinished wood siding make it a majestic fit for the setting.

Visitors are greeted by the family German Shepherd who stands guard but, having been assured by Linda that the newcomers are welcome, quickly shows her friendly side. In addition, the Pitres have two large, beautifully groomed cats and two horses for riding.

With horses, domestic pets, indigenous wildlife, dirt bikes and a trampoline down by the pond ("the kids can bounce right into the water," Linda says) in addition to a 16-by-32-foot in-ground pool, it's heaven on Earth for the kids – and their parents.

Naturally, their company, Braelin General Contracting, was their home builder of choice. Brad and Linda designed the house themselves, based on their years of experience and on Linda's extensive file of clippings from magazines, illustrating the features she wanted, including: granite kitchen countertops sourced from **Canadian Shield Stonecraft**, floors from **Gaylord Hardwood Flooring**, geothermal heating and cooling by **G&G Comfort Cooling Inc.**, fabricated open steel-framed staircases by **Ex-LL** (with solid maple treads crafted by Braelin), and architectural roofing by **A-1 Roofing**. *Continued on page 48*



TOP LEFT: Custom designed floor-to-ceiling storage for outdoor wear and riding gear means everyone's quickly ready to go. The family dog enjoys the functional foyer too. **ABOVE:** A patio area beyond the foyer is a protected garden area. **RIGHT:** Fresh herbs and flowers from the extensive gardens accent a table setting. **FAR RIGHT:** An antique dining suite complements the modern architecture of the home.



feature

Cosy transitional furniture and expansive windows capture the natural light, colours and comfort of the main floor great room.



feature

RIGHT: The sunroom, located off the kitchen and dining areas, is Linda's favourite space. **BOTTOM LEFT:** The open concept kitchen is a busy family centre. Every cupboard is designed for specific storage use. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** An open steel staircase with solid maple treads rises to the third-floor master bedroom.



The Pitres also wanted a finished basement with radiant heat floors there and in the mudroom, four bedrooms, three bathrooms, a central great room with wood-panelled cathedral ceiling and an elegant master bedroom loft with en suite. The exterior second-floor decks have gorgeous views. Throughout are energy-efficient Ostaco 4000-series windows and doors.

"I use these windows and doors in the homes I build (for clients) because they have more profile and style and this is a high-end window that meets everybody's budget," Brad says.

Windows and kitchen cabinets were sourced from **Cobourg Home Hardware Building Centre**. G&G Comfort Cooling installed the two wood-burning fireplaces – one in the great room and the other directly below, in the basement family room. Adjoining the central great room is another unique feature of this home – a sunroom, which also adjoins the kitchen and dining room – offering a blissful space for morning coffee or a cosy cuddle-up area for reading on winter evenings when dinner is over, dishes are done and the kids, aged 16 and 20 years, are busy with homework. It's a place apart, and yet not.

Continued on page 52



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RIGHT: Antiques and a handmade quilt by Linda appoint a main floor guest room. **BELOW LEFT:** A spa oasis has been created in the main floor bathroom. **BOTTOM:** A Juliet balcony in the master bedroom overlooks extensive lawns and gardens.



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feature

“It’s my favourite space,” Linda says. Along with gardening, interior decorating is Linda’s department and her style is eclectic. Inherited antiques and found treasures are seamlessly blended with traditional and modern pieces to form a harmonious whole. One of her favourite sources for home décor is Cobourg’s **Urban Loft**.

The Pitres’ landscaping – contoured by **Country Homes Garden Landscape** of Castleton and designed and maintained by Linda – is so remarkable it was featured on the Northumberland Big Sisters Big Brothers Garden Tour this year. During the dry summer of 2011, the grass and flower beds were nourished by in-ground irrigation, a system of

hundreds of feet and 46 taps, installed by **Pro-Turf Irrigation** of Bewdley.

The pool, supplied and installed by **Clear Choice Water Centre**, is an outdoor oasis set into the rise of a hill overlooking the rolling lawns and woods beyond. Brad has built a fragrance-filled cedar-lined cabana to hang towels and bathing suits and store poolside furniture.


The essential comforts of this rural retreat were laid by **Blake Construction Services, Ferguson Electric, Campbellford Well Drilling** and **Taylor’s Overhead Doors**.

The ambience of this house and its grounds spells happily ever after for this hard-working family. **OH**

The outdoor swimming pool is nestled in the hillside behind the home.

ABOVE RIGHT: A cedar-lined cabana constructed by Brad Pitre serves as a fragrant change room. **BELOW RIGHT:** An outdoor dining area has been created on the deck off the dining room. It’s the perfect spot for birdwatching.





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