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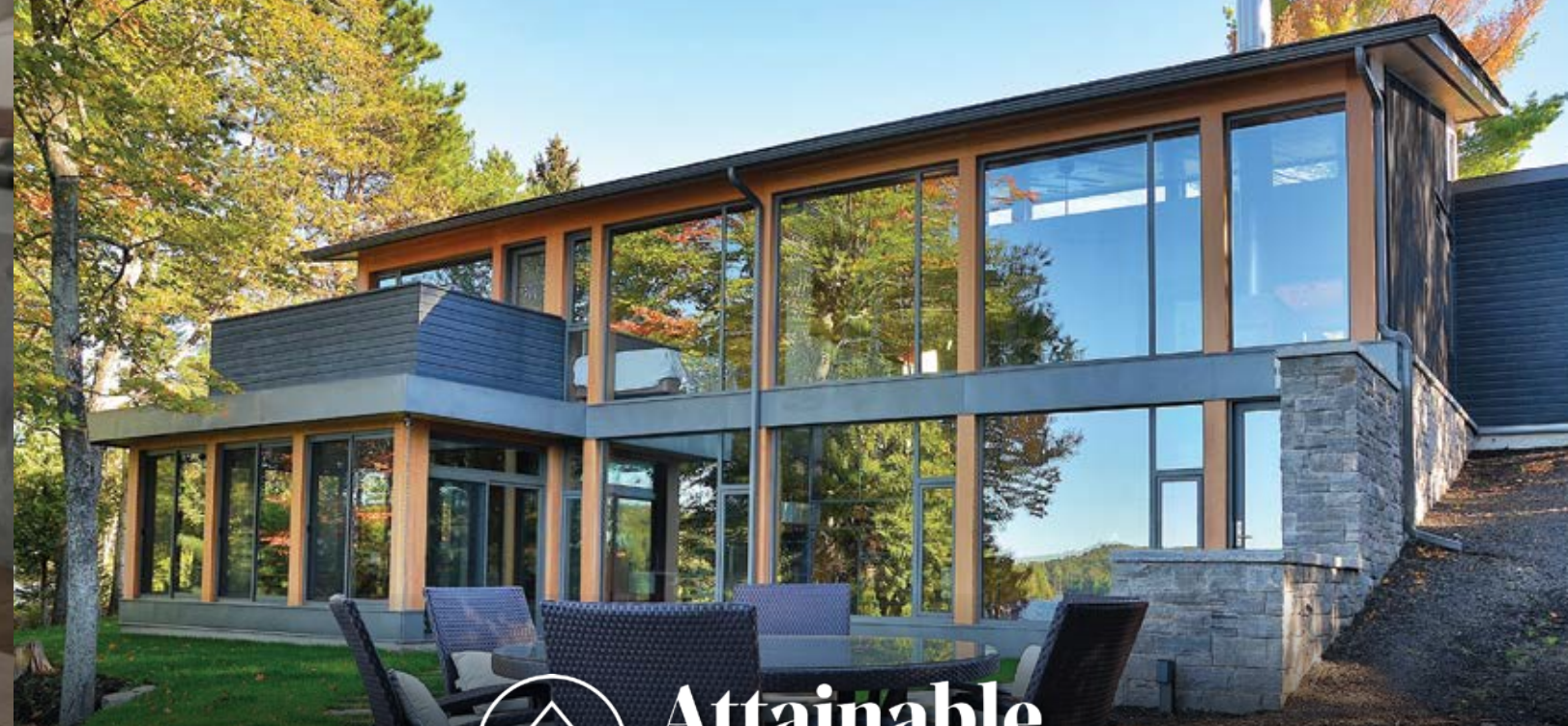
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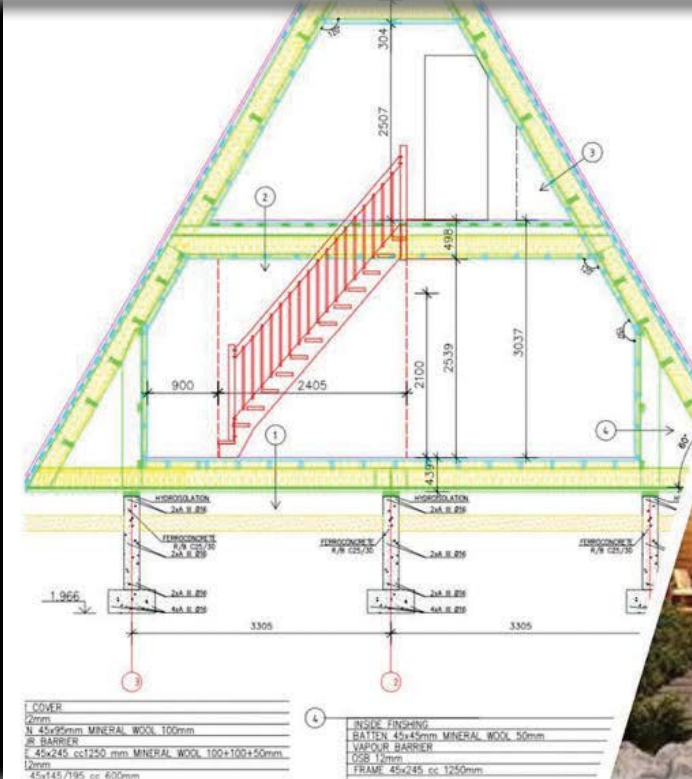


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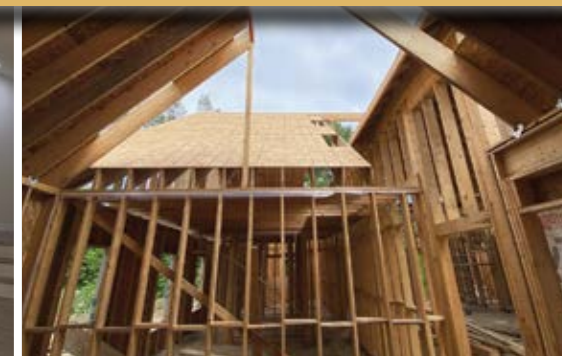


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REGIONAL PUBLISHERS Jamie Jefferson
 Georgette McCulloch
REGIONAL MANAGING EDITOR Walter Franczyk
REGIONAL PRODUCTION MANAGER Julia Dempsey
MARKETING & ADVERTISING Kelly Bidan, 705.349.1485
 kelly.bidan@ourhomes.ca

REACH US EASILY: firstname.lastname@ourhomes.ca

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ASSOCIATE EDITOR Heather Wright	PRODUCTION MANAGERS Julia Dempsey, Kelly Donaldson, Tracy Shuttleworth
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	MANAGING DIRECTOR, SALES & MARKETING Jamie Jefferson jamie.jefferson@ourhomes.ca
ART	MANAGING DIRECTOR, OPERATIONS Georgette McCulloch
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CONTRIBUTORS
 Sheila Britton, Lori Davis, Nigel Eves, Walter Franczyk, Carol Hamilton, Emily Hoogsteen, Robin Jowett, Sandy MacKay, Georgette McCulloch, Jenelle McCulloch, Tamarisk McNalty Stephens, Charlene Peck, Lynne Richardson, Erin Rochon, Vanessa Rogerson, Brittany Williams

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Wylie finally came in from the cold.

A stray, orange tabby cat, he first showed up stalking squirrels in our yard last April. I started feeding him in the mornings when he arrived, loudly meowing at the glass door to the deck. He'd step warily into the living room, devour his breakfast and leave. A couple of times, he explored the living room and even ventured into the basement. But he was skittish and wouldn't let us get close.

My wife Lori sent his photo to the SPCA and circulated his picture on social media, but no one claimed him. As fall approached, we worried about how he might survive the winter. While living in Northern Ontario, where winter temperatures dip to -30°C for weeks at a time, I had seen outdoor cats who lost the tips of their ears to frostbite. We decided to try and make a pet of him.

Photographer Sandy MacKay loaned me a live trap to help Wylie transition to life indoors. We made an appointment with a veterinarian, baited the trap with tuna one November morning and caught him. At the vet clinic, Wylie was modified and vaccinated. His war wounds were clipped and treated with an antibiotic. The vet found and removed a tick, gave him a flea-and-tick treatment and deworming medicine.

When Wylie came home, he stayed in our rec room while recovering from surgery. When his leg wound swelled with infection, we fed him antibiotic pills in his morning meals. The injury healed. He let us pet him. He purred. Soon, he was shadowing Hillary Rodham, our 14-year-old resident Siamese cat. He fawns over her, follows her around and mimics her sleeping habits.

Hillary has accepted his presence but not his affection. If Wylie tries grooming her, he usually gets smacked with a manicured paw. Sometimes Hillary lunges at his throat. That hasn't stopped him from curling up with her whenever she allows. He hasn't tried to escape outdoors. We hope he'll be content to stay.

Walter Franczyk

Walter Franczyk, *Managing Editor*
 walter.franczyk@ourhomes.ca

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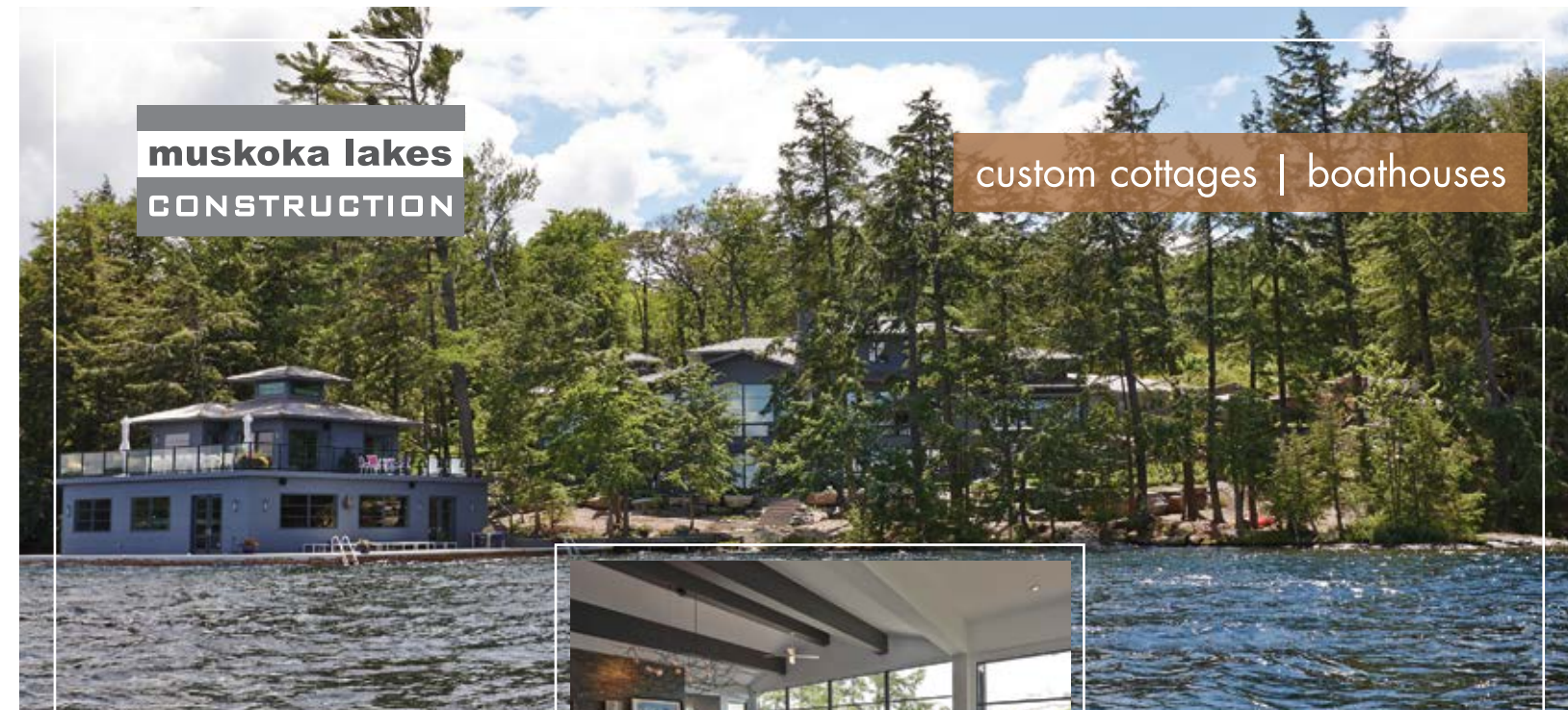
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FURNISH Your First Home SUSTAINABLY

Designer **Tamarisk McNalty Stephens** explores the principles of sustainable living.

You're a millennial who has just entered the housing market. Now that you have a place, you need to furnish the space. But how can you make it sustainable and eco-friendly?

Where to begin?

The desire to have a space that feels finished the moment you move in is understandable. However, we must move away from instant gratification and towards playing the long game. The reality is that making environmentally-conscious choices takes time and energy – and that's okay. Plus, curating a space over time will create a finished product that is much more personal and reflective of your unique style.

FURNITURE

One of the easiest and simplest ways to be more sustainable at home is to purchase fewer items.

Before buying, ask yourself: Is this a "need to have" or a "nice to have"?

You can hunt antique markets, local second-hand and vintage shops, estate sales and online e-commerce sites for furnishings. Investing in pre-loved pieces is a great way to contribute to the circular economy.

You can often find high-quality pieces in good shape and for a great price! Antique and vintage pieces provide the opportunity for you to express your style with character, charm and uniqueness that homogeneous,

run-of-the-mill, mass-produced furnishings simply cannot.

Use your creativity to reimagine a piece of furniture by giving it new life with a fresh coat of paint, learn how to refinish wood or experiment with basic reupholstery.



MY BACK SHED: Refurbished Furniture



STYLUS: Ramos Sofa

And when you do buy new, invest in quality, locally-made pieces that will stand the test of time. The life cycle of fast furniture is often short and it will need to be replaced in five to 10 years. More product equals more resources – and there's nothing sustainable about utilizing more raw materials and consuming more energy.

Purchase goods that you can envision loving long-term and avoid trends. Buy for style and longevity.

APPLIANCES



Reduced energy consumption is only one element to consider when purchasing appliances. Support companies that prioritize environmental initiatives, such as manufacturing durable products, utilizing metals that can be easily recycled, restricting hazardous materials during manufacturing and providing a recycling program at the end of the product's useful life.

You can often find second-hand appliances that function perfectly well and are in great shape. Also, peruse the scratch-and-dent section of local stores – you can find quality-made appliances with minimal aesthetic damage. You can always put a grocery list or piece of art over top of a small scratch on a

fridge. If you don't like the colour or finish, research how to paint appliances to suit your desired aesthetic.

Finally, learn how to fix things (or be willing to pay someone who can). The cost of goods has become so affordable that instead of repairing something we replace it. That mentality is simply not sustainable.



GRAHAM AND BROOKS SALVAGE: Salvaged Lighting

ACCESSORIES

Accessorizing your home is where you can let your resourcefulness shine. There are so many second-hand accessories available for you to upcycle, recycle and reimagine. See how creative you can be!

Vintage rugs are worth the investment and no one will have the same one. They have already been around for many years and with proper care they will last for many more. Plus, they are often made of wool and other natural materials and will biodegrade more easily than carpets made from synthetic materials.

Support local artists and artisans by purchasing a unique piece of art for the walls or everyday utilitarian items, such as hand-thrown coffee mugs. Buying local isn't just sustainable, handcrafted items add a different energy to your home.

Another way to instantly accessorize your home is to introduce houseplants – it is one of the simplest and most affordable ways to add texture, interest and colour to a space. **OH**

RUG & WEAVE: Antique Persian Hamadan Wool Rug



GRAHAM AND BROOKS SALVAGE: Dough Bowls

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Continued on page 26



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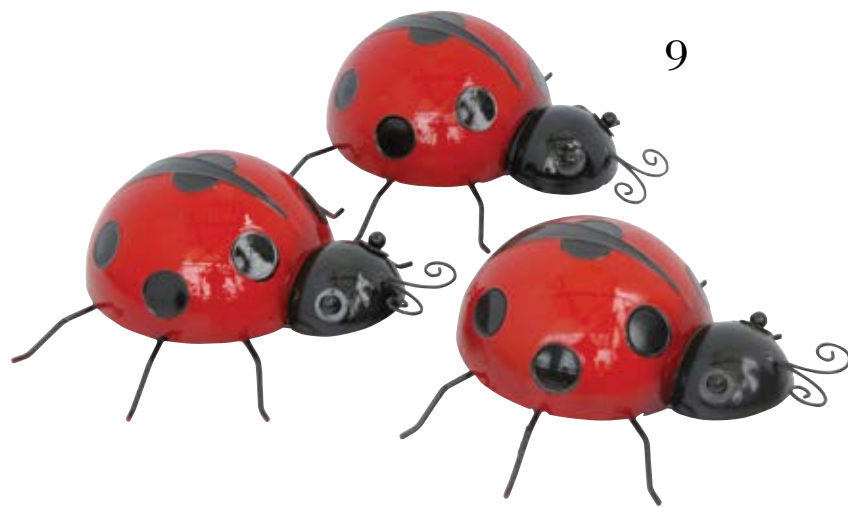
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8 THE CUTTER'S EDGE

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INGREDIENTS (Serves 4)

- 1 bunch asparagus
- 6 cups vegetable or chicken stock
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 shallot, finely diced
- 2 cloves garlic, finely diced
- 1 tsp fresh thyme
- 1 ½ cups Arborio rice
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 1 cup grated parmesan, plus more for serving
- Zest of one lemon

INSTRUCTIONS

Clean asparagus and steam or sauté until tender. Set aside.

In a large pot, bring stock to a simmer. Once heated, remove from heat and keep nearby.

In a large saucepan or pot, add olive oil and cook shallot until translucent. Add garlic and thyme and sauté for 1 minute before adding Arborio rice. Season with salt and pepper and toast the rice for 1-2 minutes.

Add white wine and cook until absorbed, stirring occasionally.

Add 1 cup of stock at a time, stirring continuously until each addition of broth is absorbed. Continue until rice is al dente.

Add parmesan cheese and asparagus to the risotto. Garnish with lemon zest, serve and enjoy! **OH**

RECIPE AND PHOTOGRAPHY
JENELLE MCCULLOCH

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decorating

current MOOD

It's time to liven up our living spaces after two rather tumultuous years. The major paint companies have selected their colours of the year for 2022, most picking grey-green as the colour to splash on your walls or inspire your new look. We're rolling out the top picks to help with your next decorating adventure.



BeautiTone is sending a message with **Warm Hugs**. This Canadian brand says the vibrant red-pink-orange is the comfort we've been missing. It offers hope and solace in one exquisite hue.



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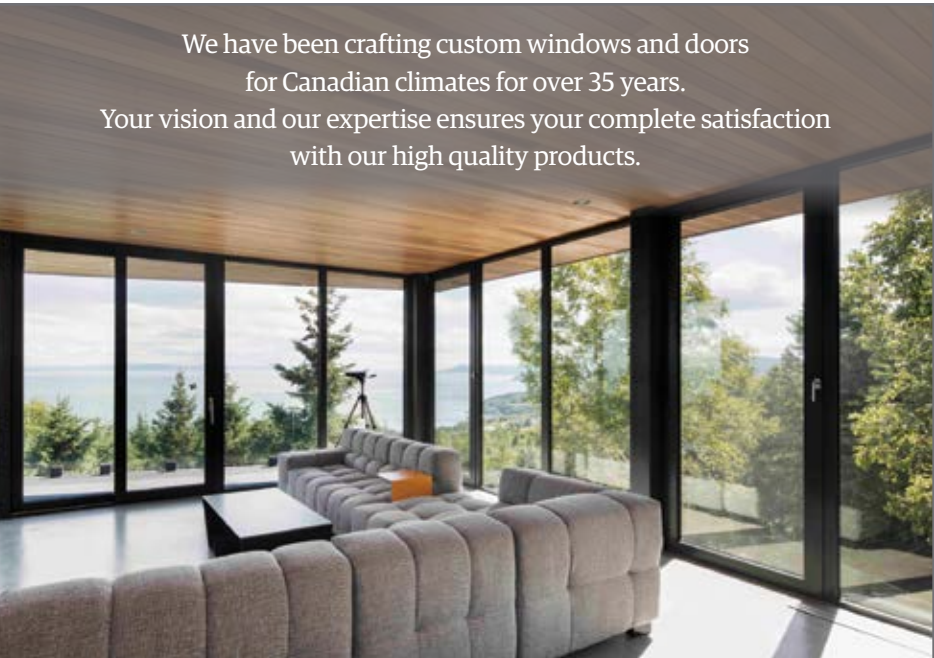
 

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Benjamin Moore selected **October Mist**, a pleasing silver-green that evokes the green stem of a flower. They say it creates a canvas for other colours to blossom and encourages creativity. Try it with Hint of Violet or Wildflower, both new from Benjamin Moore's Colour Trends Palette.



PPG selected **Olive Sprig**, a soft organic shade of green reminiscent of a soothing aloe vera plant or velvety sage leaves. It's a green-grey chosen to represent regrowth and the resiliency of nature as we adapt to new ways of living post-pandemic.

Continued on page 32



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Breezeway is Behr's pick. It's "where the sea meets the sky" – a relaxed and uplifting sea-glass green. Behr says Breezeway naturally harmonizes with shades of white, grey and natural wood tones for effortless style in any room.

Valspar couldn't pick just one colour. Their Colours of The Year include 12 trend-worthy and forward-thinking natural shades that evoke warmth, calm and comfort. We like **Blanched Thyme**, **Sunset Curtains** and **Subtle Peach**.

Sherwin Williams has unveiled **Evergreen Fog**, calling it a versatile and calming hue – a chameleon colour of gorgeous green-meets-grey, with just a bit of blue. They recommend it for spaces that crave a subtle yet stunning statement shade.

Who can say no to **Guacamole**, Glidden's Colour of The Year? Glidden says everyone's favourite dip will look great on any wall or accent piece. It's a spirited yet soothing hue.



STORY **LORI DAVIS** | PHOTOGRAPHY **SANDY MACKAY**

MODERN LOG RENOVATION

Family is the cornerstone of life in retirement for
Carla Clarkson-Ladd and Brent Clarkson.



With a view across Lake
Rosseau, Brent Clarkson
and Carla Clarkson-Ladd
enjoy the rooftop deck on
their new boathouse.

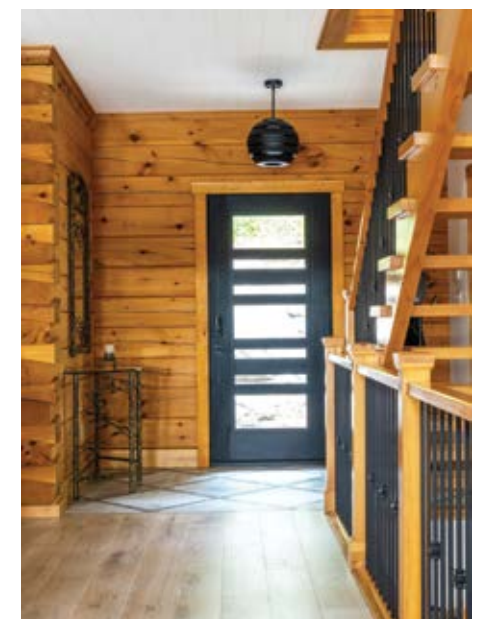


WITH THEIR SIX-BEDROOM home on Lake Rousseau, they created a comfortable, spacious and functional retreat to welcome their three children, Alex, Geoff, Alyssa, and their families. “Family is important and we have more flexibility here to accommodate them,” says Brent.

Originally from the Kitchener-Waterloo

area, Carla, a former chief administrative officer with the City of Barrie, spent summers as a youth camping around Georgian Bay. Husband Brent is a retired planning consultant. Muskoka affords them the opportunity to pursue their love of the outdoors. Carla is an ardent hiker, camper and fitness enthusiast while Brent enjoys playing golf. *Continued on page 36*

ABOVE: The couple renovated their Colonial Concepts Log & Timberframe home with a modern twist. **BELOW LEFT:** Flowers thrive in the window boxes Brent and Carla built as a pandemic project. **BELOW:** Dovetail joints and innovative technology keep this log home secure.





LEFT: Granite stairs descend from the lake house to the waterfront. **ABOVE:** The lake view from the loft. **BELOW:** The couple keep their offices in the upper floor loft.



The couple previously owned a cottage, a fixer-upper, just a little north of their new home. Rather than engage in further, extensive renovations to accommodate a growing family, they entrusted **Bob Clarke**, a broker with **Royal LePage Lakes of Muskoka Realty**, to help them find the perfect home.

Located at the end of a single lane cottage road, the eight-year-old log home, originally built by **Colonial Concepts Log & Timberframe**, sits on 2.3 acres with 235 feet of lakefront. “I fell in love with the property,” says Carla. “It’s located on a point, has a beautiful view and faces south so we can enjoy the sun all day.”

The home’s square-hewn logs appealed to the Clarksons. “Our vision was to add modern elements but maintain the rustic flavour of the home,” Carla explains. “It’s a nice combination that is warm but also contemporary. We call it modern log.”

Building a new Muskoka room, renovating the kitchen, pantry/laundry and main-floor bath as well as building a new boathouse completed the Clarksons’ vision of the ideal family haven. Renovations and construction took approximately 11 months, spearheaded by **Clarke Muskoka Construction & Project Management Inc.** with site manager **Joe Thompson** of **Silver Lake Contracting**.

Continued on page 38



The inviting granite fireplace is the heart of the great room.

RIGHT: Family photos fill the wall below the open-tread pine staircase to the loft. **FAR RIGHT:** Brown's Appliances equipped the home's new kitchen, designed by Northern Living Kitchen & Bath Ltd. **BELOW:** Seeded glass pendant lamps from Living Lighting hover over the kitchen island and Mennonite-made stools.



The Clarksons credit this team with the success of the project. Bob focused on the big picture and managed to procure all the materials, despite COVID supply issues, while Joe had great construction design ideas and oversaw the project from start to finish. **Muskoka Paint and Carpentry** completed interior painting and exterior staining of the home and additions. "They were able to perfectly match the stain on the Muskoka room so you wouldn't know it was an addition," says Carla. "It was a dead match. They did an amazing job."

The couple called on designer **Nancy Fournier** of **Northern Living Kitchen & Bath Ltd.** to realize their vision of blending contemporary with rustic. "Nancy worked with us on our previous home, so we were familiar with her work," Carla says. "She really brought our vision to reality and is always a pleasure to work with." Nancy describes the project as an exciting challenge. "The Clarksons wanted to do something contemporary but with natural-looking materials in a modern way." *Continued on page 40*

OPPOSITE: A wooden beam, festooned with staggered, hanging Edison bulbs, helps illuminate the dining room.



"Our vision was to add modern elements but maintain the rustic flavour of the home. It's a nice combination that is warm but also contemporary. We call it modern log."



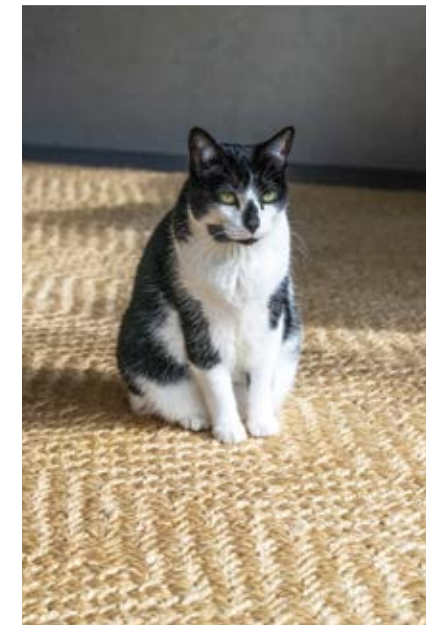
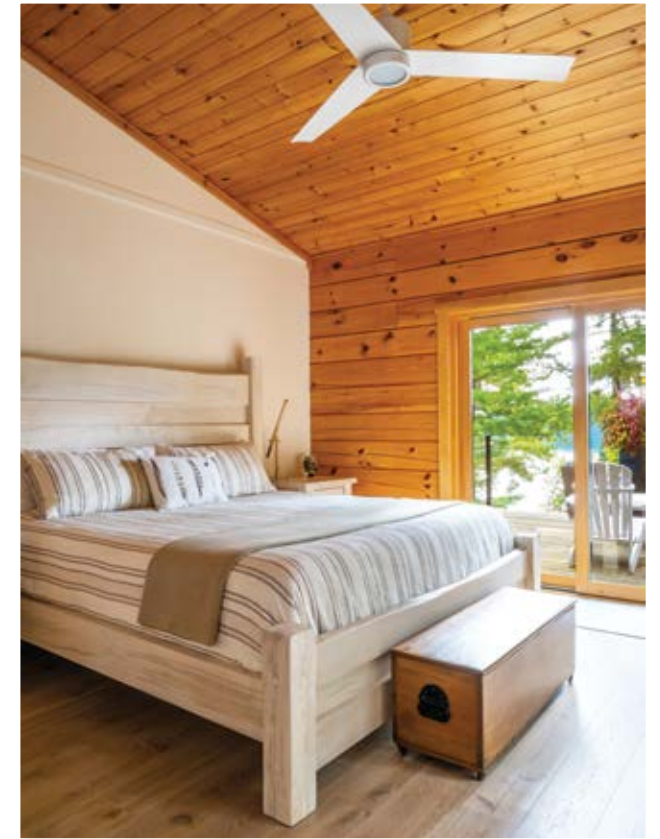
The fusion of modern and contemporary is evident throughout. The main floor features an open-concept design that allows natural light to filter through the kitchen, dining area and great room. A pine staircase connects the main floor to a loft where Carla and Brent can work from their offices and enjoy the amazing view of the lake. The kitchen pulls together several modern elements, including quartz counters, seeded-glass pendant lighting, a wine fridge and Silgranit sinks.

The great room features one of three fireplaces and a panoramic view of the lake.

ABOVE: Glass doors open from the dining room to the new four-season Muskoka room. **LEFT:** Large windows on three walls and a linear fireplace by The Fireplace King make the Muskoka room one of the couple's favourite spots, especially on a stormy day. Son Alex made the coffee table.

The rustic, square log design is prominent in the great room and dining area while modern touches like engineered, white oak hardwood floors and skylights add an aura of light and space. Floor-to-ceiling windows on three walls flood the Muskoka room with natural light and provide a magnificent view of the lake. A propane fireplace, by **The Fireplace King**, is clad in Dekton, a porcelain surround that provides a smooth, contemporary look. The fireplace emanates a warm, cosy ambience where one can curl up with a book or enjoy the view, especially in winter. "I like to sit in the Muskoka Room or the "Koka" room as my granddaughter calls it with a fire going and watch storms," says Carla.

Continued on page 42



TOP RIGHT: Appointed with Mennonite furniture, the primary bedroom has a walkout to the front deck. **LEFT:** The roomy en suite includes a glass-walled shower and Northern Living plumbing fixtures. **ABOVE:** Squirtly is the friendly family cat.

feature

The lower level is ideal for entertaining and accommodating family. A family room and kitchenette separate two family pods that each include two bedrooms and bathrooms, allowing everyone to have their own space and privacy. Personal touches such as a Muskoka chair, built by their son Alex when he was in Grade 10 and brightly painted by his wife Stephanie, and a piano, originally owned by Carla's grandfather, add warmth and whimsy to the family room. During lockdown, Carla and Brent explored their creative side and worked on a couple of projects, building window boxes and a slatted, whitewashed headboard for a guest bedroom. *Continued on page 44*



TOP RIGHT: Bunk beds provide plenty of space for grandchildren in the home's ground level, four-bedroom family suite.
LEFT: A wood-burning fireplace helps warm the large downstairs family room.
ABOVE: Son Alex was in Grade 10 when he made this Muskoka chair. His wife Stephanie decorated it.

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LEFT: When it's not plying the waves of Lake Rosseau, the couple's boat is berthed in their roomy boathouse. **BELOW:** Rail-mounted sliding doors open to generous storage space for boating gear and water toys. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Excel Railings installed the frameless, tempered-glass railings that guard the rooftop deck on the boathouse. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Muskoka chairs ring the firepit at the front of the home.



SOURCE GUIDE

- Bob Clarke, Royal LePage Lakes of Muskoka Realty • Brown's Appliances • Clarke Muskoka Construction and Project Management Inc. • Excel Railings • Hall Construction • Living Lighting • Muskoka Lumber • Muskoka Paint and Carpentry • Northern Living Kitchen and Bath Ltd. • Siftt Electric • The Fireplace King • The Gardens Edge



The new boathouse is a focal point for family gatherings. Glass railings, installed by **Excel Railings**, surround the roof-top deck, providing an unfettered view of the lake. A large dock with three boat slips completes the perfect recreational area. The boathouse provided some technical challenges that **Siftt Electric** handled expertly, Brent recalls. "They did some complicated work in terms of tying the boathouse and the main house together, buried wires and installed all the equipment in the utility room so everything is neat and easy to use."

Ultimately, Carla and Brent, assisted by their design team and expert professionals, fulfilled their dream, creating a home where family can gather and create new memories. **OH**

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STORY VANESSA ROGERSON | PHOTOGRAPHY VANESSA ROGERSON DESIGNS

Every homeowner has space for a bench or a creative nook to store items. All homes have additional potential for storage. An organized design by a professional can help uncover areas in your home to organize and store your stuff. Here are five key storage solutions to help homeowners with their design dilemmas.



1 Kitchens

Adding drawers in your kitchen is a functional and eye-pleasing storage solution. Drawers are easy to access and can hold dishes, pots and pans plus small appliances. Don't ignore the corners. A set of base-corner drawers adds a touch of luxury and function. Pullouts installed inside existing base cabinets function as drawers and are also an affordable option when working with existing cabinetry.

Continued on page 48




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2 Mudroom Storage

Most homes lack adequate storage for families. Adding a bench and a few coat hooks in a space off the front foyer or at the back door is a great way to utilize the space. If there's open space above or below, add a shelf and a few wicker baskets to hide footwear and scarves until needed. Toss some pillows and a throw on the bench to create a cosy nook while welcoming guests to your home.

3 Discreet Office Built-Ins

Now that more people are working and studying from home, additional workspace is a necessity. The kitchen counter is meant for prep and cooking, not laptops and paperwork. Adding a discreet built-in with a foldable desk in the kitchen or living room makes a great workstation. Simply open when needed and pull up a chair.

4 Living Room Storage Units

Add an oversize storage unit in the living room that can be used as a media centre or sideboard. You can easily stow away electronics, toys and books. Something sleek and low in height creates an open, airy feel and you can mount your television on the wall above.



5 Coffee Tables

Coffee tables can be used for more than resting your mug in the morning. Source a table with multiple layers and shelving below where you can display books, magazines and decorative items. Leave room on top for a vase of flowers and beverages as needed.

Designed storage solutions do not have to be complicated or over-the-top. It's all about working with what you already have, while adding new elements to carefully execute an organized space. **OH**

Vanessa is a designer based in Simcoe County.



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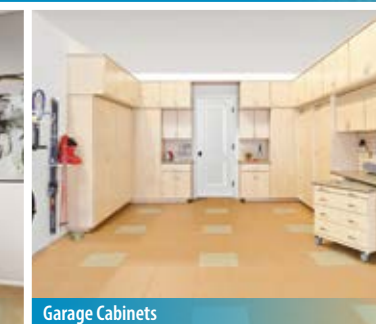
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AT THE END OF THE LINE

PHOTOGRAPHY WALTER FRANCZYK

THE PLACE

Housed in Haliburton's landmark rail station, **Rails End Gallery & Arts Centre** is a public art gallery, brimming with paintings and pottery, jewelry and woodwork by dozens of local and regional artists. "Our job here is to bring the creative arts to life," says executive director and curator Laurie Jones. The Gallery Shop is located in the 1878 station's former waiting room and ticket office.

PRODUCTS

"We try to have something for everyone's price point," says Laurie. "An original creation by a local artist is a powerful means of conjuring good memories of time spent in the Haliburton Highlands." The broad range of offerings includes ceramics, fibre arts, stained glass, drawings and books. Rails End Gallery, next to the new welcome centre and Head Lake Park, is often people's first brush with Haliburton's vibrant arts community.

EXHIBITS

The station's former baggage room is an 800 sq. ft. exhibition space where work by professional artists and themed group shows are presented. "Established artists in all media are welcome to send a proposal at any time," says Laurie. Exhibits run six to eight weeks and community programming often ties in with the art. As for her curatorial focus, Laurie says, "I'm just trying to bring beauty and love to the world and reflect on life. That's really important to me right now."



ON SHOW

Point Of View is the theme of the gallery's current exhibit, involving about 50 artists. "Our annual "salon" is a varied show of recent work by local artists, and patrons get to vote for their favourite," Laurie says. "I like to present exhibitions that are thoughtful and have some relevance to gallery visitors, so that when they leave, somehow their perception is a bit altered. We don't want to be ho-hum."



TRENDS

"People seem to be more interested in abstract pieces," she says. "Now that they're spending more time at home, they are looking at making major art purchases so we asked some of our artists to bring in large paintings and that's been very successful."

NEXT UP

Love & Death: Ramune Luminaire and Jocelyn Brown. **OH**

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WAIVING CONDITIONS

STORY **GEORGETTE MCCULLOCH** | ILLUSTRATION **SHEILA BRITTON**

IT REMAINS A SELLER'S MARKET ACROSS ONTARIO WHERE HOME PRICES CONTINUE TO RISE AND INVENTORY REMAINS LOW.

RE/MAX Canada expects a 9.2 per cent increase in average residential sale prices across Canada this year. In Ontario, relocating from one region to another continues to drive housing activity. City dwellers are cashing in and moving to more scenic areas, where their purchasing power gets them a house that suits their preferred lifestyle. With mortgage rates expected to creep up, demand for homes far outstrips supply, leaving house hunters facing multiple offers for the home they want.

So, what's a buyer to do? They could do what home sellers find irresistible – waive all conditions and warranties.

Laura and Chris Walker weren't fooling around when they finally found their ideal condo in Collingwood.

"We had been looking on and off but when the pandemic hit we got serious," says Laura. "When this three-bedroom at Lighthouse Point came up we jumped on it." The couple had lost out on other properties and vowed not to let this one slip away. They went in with a clear offer with no conditions or warranties and a two-week closing. "They were not taking offers until the following Monday and we didn't want to wait and lose it," she says. "So we put in a bully offer over asking. They came back once and that was it – bought and sold." The condo was fully renovated and they've had no issues.

Waiving conditions and warranties in residential real estate transactions is the new winning strategy for many homebuyers. But

it's not for the faint of heart or those without the means to cover costs if there's an issue with the property or home.

Typical conditions in a purchase and sale agreement include financing, property inspections, state of title, legal review and appraisal. Buyers can add their own conditions and condo owners generally add a request and review of the status certificate, which ensures the condo corporation and its board are stable.

But the current housing market is anything but typical and buyers are increasingly willing to take risks to win the home they covet.

Dr. Parham Davoudpour, an attending emergency physician in Toronto, is suffering from buyer fatigue after waiving conditions and still losing two bids on homes in the Collingwood area.

"Both homes were sold substantially higher than asking price – over 50 per cent higher than asking," he says. "One of my offers was 45 per cent over asking and I still lost. "I call these high-risk transactions because you're pressured to make a decision that involves a lot of money and you don't have enough time for due diligence. It's literally like working in a hospital emergency department where you are always under pressure and you make decisions on the limited amount of information that you have."

Parham is still looking but his experience has left him less motivated.

David Oikle, president of The Ontario

Real Estate Association, blames supply and demand for the current state of housing in the province. "We're in this pickle that buyers are competing in such a way because we don't have enough homes to buy," David explains. "OREA's been spending a ton of time advocating for increasing supply at the municipal, provincial and federal levels. There isn't enough product to buy and we need to address that."

Janine (she didn't want us to use her full name) and her husband looked at eight homes in The Blue Mountains last year. "We lost out on two because our bids just weren't high enough," she says. They waived conditions in both bids, but it didn't help. "It was just a crap shoot," she says. "For one of them, there were about 13 offers. The vendors came back to us, told us they wanted to look at the top three bids 'so give us your very best offer.' We did and we lost out by \$1,000." They finally found and won a home they moved into last May, again waiving conditions and warranties. In hindsight, Janine says she wishes she had more time to investigate the planned developments on wetlands around them. "We love the neighbourhood, we love the house but the main issue now is the development that is supposed to go in beside us. I knew about the potential development, but I honestly thought our government would protect the environment, safety of citizens and our homes. I was wrong."

David says the key to a happy purchase is education, risk management and knowing your limits. He says a local realtor can help buyers mitigate risks. **OH**



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WIDE OPEN

Snowmobile trails, four wheeling and boating drew Ed Veldjesgraaf's family to their new four-season getaway on Peninsula Lake. "We just felt everything was there for us," says Ed. "I have five children and we're a fairly close family."

Continued on page 58



Stone surrounding the main entrance of the Veldjesgraaf family cottage lends solidity to the newly renovated lake house. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** Granite stairs cascade down the forested front yard slope to the lake. **FAR LEFT:** At the foot of the property, Peninsula Lake is a gateway to more than 20 kilometres of lakes and rivers.



A twig chandelier, wooden dining table and chairs were all furnished by Veranda, a Bracebridge furniture store. **OPPOSITE TOP:** The front deck connects the great room to the front yard, an evening gathering spot at the firepit. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM:** Mike Bateman of Benchmade Furniture + Kitchens created the cottage's new kitchen island. Muskoka Lighting Company supplied pendant lamps.



Their newly-renovated, six-bedroom lake house, with 4,000 square feet of living space, nestles amid five acres of mixed forest on a high slope overlooking the lake. Sledding trails and four-wheeling trails are nearby. With navigable routes to Fairy Lake, Huntsville and Vernon Lake, Peninsula Lake accesses more than 20 kilometres of scenic sailing.

It's his family's first cottage in Muskoka. When Ed's wife Dorothy was alive, they travelled by motorhome to many places. "When we were young we always included the kids," Ed says. "We went to the Bobcaygeon area for the last 20 years or so because we really liked the boating in that area." But winter sledding and four-wheeling in that part of Kawartha doesn't compare to Muskoka, he explains.

Ed says he and the children like the home's open-concept design and large downstairs games room. "It's a wide-open house and that's what we were looking for." The fact the cottage was finished and fully furnished was especially appealing. Ed owns and operates a well-established business in Stratford. All his children are married with children and all have their own businesses. "We don't have a lot of time to come up there and start repairing and fixing things," he says. "It's very hard to find something in new condition."

Continued on page 61



feature

Seating in the Muskoka room consists of woven resin on aluminum frame sofas.



The cottage's previous owners, Amanda and Amar Hira, assisted by **Sotheby's International Realty Canada** broker **Megan McLeod**, began renovating in the fall of 2020 with carpenter **Benjamin Zakaib**, of **Zakaib Contracting**. As project manager, Ben did most of the work himself, including framing and finish carpentry. He sourced sub-trades and worked alongside them to completely renovate the house. "He's a very bright young man," says Amanda. "He did everything with a lot of love and care."

Keeping only the original exterior walls, crews replaced plumbing and electrical services, installed new light fixtures, doors and hinges. Exterior siding and the front door were refreshed. "Everything's been redone," says Amanda. Megan was responsible for interior finishes. She recommended removing a few walls to open up the great room area and primary bedroom. Feature walls and ceilings in MDF and light paint colours achieved an open, airy space with great flow.

Amanda sourced most of the home's furnishings from **Veranda**, a Bracebridge furniture store. "We worked together," says Veranda owner **Elise Boyer**. "Amanda is very discriminating. She chose everything with me but she knows what she likes." The décor is beautiful, Ed says. "It was very professionally done." *Continued on page 62*



TOP LEFT: Open-concept living was especially appealing to the Veldjesgraaf family. **TOP RIGHT:** A linear fireplace from The Fireplace King enhances the great room's clean, contemporary look. **RIGHT:** Comfortable seating gathers viewers around a flat screen television to one side of the great room.



feature

CLOCKWISE: Recessed niches are handy in the glassed-walled shower. A beaded chandelier from the Muskoka Lighting Company helps to brighten this bedroom. Benchmade Furniture + Kitchens crafted this blue bathroom vanity. The primary bedroom's bed, love seat and other furnishings were sourced at Veranda.



In addition to the great room, open-concept kitchen and dining space, the main floor holds a large primary bedroom with en suite. There's a second main-floor bedroom and a third used as a Muskoka room. A large family room downstairs has two distinct gathering spots. One sitting area is furnished with sofas. The other has swivel armchairs gathered by an old-fashioned black iron stove. A bar installed to one side of the pool table is built atop a vintage bicycle, manufactured by Hero Cycles Limited, an Indian company and the world's largest bicycle maker. Four more bedrooms complete the ground floor.

Mike Bateman of **Benchmade Furniture + Kitchens** created the cottage's new kitchen island and bathroom vanities. **The Fireplace King** supplied and installed the living room fireplace while **Muskoka Lighting & Electric** rewired the building and installed light fixtures from **Muskoka Lighting Company**. **All Ways Plumbing** re-plumbed the entire cottage to bring the waterworks up to code. *Continued on page 64*

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feature

Ed says his family is very happy with the lake house. "It's pretty new for all of us," he says. "We love it. We're outdoors people." Down at the lake, they cleared an area of frozen ice where they skate and play hockey. "We took a fire bowl down there and had a fire on the lake. We had the fire bowl on plywood and we had a nice fire there to keep us warm. It's awesome."

Once warmer weather arrives, he intends to landscape the property. "I'm hoping I can build a trail down to the water, rather than using the steps all the time. Some of the neighbours have a trail going through the woods. We'll need to do some work to get that done."

He plans to bring up his boat and a Sea-Doo and do some work on the dock to park and store the vessels more easily. He also hopes to finish a small bunkie on one side of the property. "Some of the grandkids would love to sleep in there at night in the summertime I'm sure," he says. Ed's 20th grandchild was born early in the new year. **OH**



ABOVE: Canadian-made swivel chairs and a reclaimed, distressed cabinet furnish an intimate gathering spot on the home's ground level. **BELOW:** A bar grafted atop an old bicycle, built by Hero Cycles Limited of India, serves the billiards room. **BELOW LEFT:** The ground level family room offers plenty of space and entertaining diversions for this large, active family.

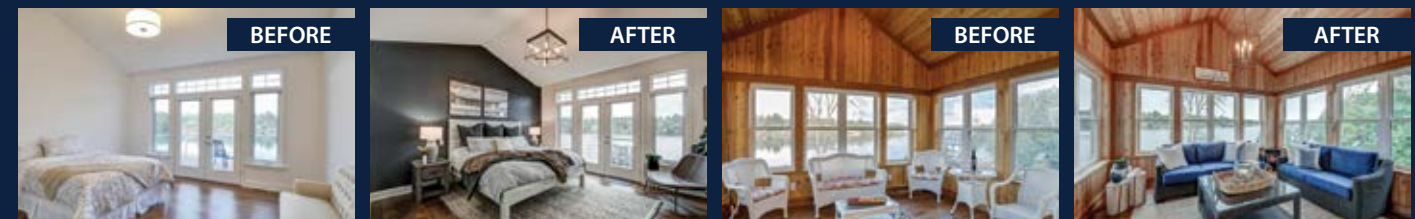


SOURCE GUIDE

- All Ways Plumbing • Benchmade Furniture + Kitchens • Groh Construction Inc. • Kelly's Home Furniture • Megan McLeod of Sotheby's International Realty Canada • Muskoka Lighting Company
- Muskoka Shading • Refresh Painting Co. • RJ Hatton Renovations
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WORKING WITH PROS



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Linda Boothby
Jessica Brabant



LAKE OF BAYS GARDEN CENTRE

For more than 20 years, the Lake of Bays Garden Centre has been serving the needs of the local community and cottagers. The centre has a vast assortment of bagged and bulk materials such as the ever-popular mushroom compost, triple mix, top soil, mulches, wood chips, sand and aggregates. In season, there is a stunning array of annuals, perennials, large caliper trees and shrubs. "The active online shop is available as well for everything we carry in bulk and bags," say owner Linda Boothby.

THE SHOP

Open year-round, the picturesque store is home to vegetable seeds, gardening tools, pots, planters, fertilizer, insect repellants and hardware. For bird watching enthusiasts, it offers black oil seed, niger seed, Algonquin Mix and more, along with a great selection of bird feeders and birdhouses. Home and garden décor, featuring area rugs, furniture, lighting, baskets, books, giftware, greeting cards and so much more, is attractively displayed.



FLOWERS

Full-time florist Jessica Brabant ensures a plentiful supply of artistically arranged grab-and-go bouquets, potted houseplants and fresh cut flowers. Orders can be taken for birthdays, anniversaries, funerals and "just because." A recently installed walk-in floral cooler will assist with many wedding events coming up in 2022.

Continued on page 68



PETER SMITH CONSTRUCTION

Peter Smith Construction is a custom home building company, specializing in the design and turn-key completion of high-quality residential and recreational projects. Excellent client relations, attention to every detail and customer service for years to come are the cornerstones the business has been built on for 20 years.



DECORATIVE TIMBERS

Shiplap or V-groove ceilings painted Benjamin Moore Cloud White along with decorative timber bents and beams are very popular these days. We typically design and build the timber details in our own shop and in a variety of woods and finishes to suit any space and client's style.

Continued on page 70



Peter Smith

MUSKOKA ROOM

A new cottage or home in Muskoka would not be complete without a Muskoka room. This example has a wood-burning fireplace with local granite on the fireplace and floor. The screen panels made in the company shop were installed on site, letting the views of Muskoka in without the bugs.



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equipped with air-conditioning that's great during blackfly season and a heater for cool autumn days. It's popular with cottagers and retired folks, says Dave. A four-seater model is available. Equipped with hydraulic dump boxes, they're used for hunting, fishing and just enjoying Muskoka.

Dave Jackson



GINO COSTANTINO

Kubota zero-turn riding lawn mowers are ideal for large properties where they can reduce cutting time by eliminating the need for trimming. "You can get right into the edges and under trees that you can't with other tractors," says Gino. With just a push-pull on the handle and a left-right for turns, they're easy to operate. "They're fun to drive."



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Continued on page 72



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MATTRESSES OF MUSKOKA

Mattresses of Muskoka provides the largest selection of in-stock mattresses in Muskoka, says owner Stan Stadnyk. Quality products, good value and excellent service draw customers to this store, in business for more than 20 years. Tempur-Pedic, Marshall, Dreamstar Bedding and Mlily mattresses are available, as well as mattresses in a box and cabinet beds. The shop also carries bedding accessories – pillows, blankets, sheets and mattress protectors.



**Stan Stadnyk
& Kokomo**

MASSAGE CHAIRS

The Cozzia robotic massage chair relaxes muscles and joints to reduce tension and stiffness. Its heat therapy can ease pain and improve blood circulation. "It is much more efficient to have a massage chair than to go out and get massages," says Stan. "A lot of people have it so that every member of the family can use it," he says. "They're the best massage chairs. They can massage your hands and the bottom of your feet."



CABINET BEDS

While Murphy beds that fold into a wall offer extra space in a bedroom, cabinet beds are more versatile. "We sell Murphy beds, but you have to attach them to a wall and if you sell the place the bed goes with it," Stan says. "With cabinet beds, you can change the location, in the house or other places, quite easily. You can use the room for another purpose." A cabinet bed can easily turn a gym or sewing room into a guest bedroom. "They're much more comfortable than a sofa bed. A high-quality mattress comes with it."



Continued on page 74



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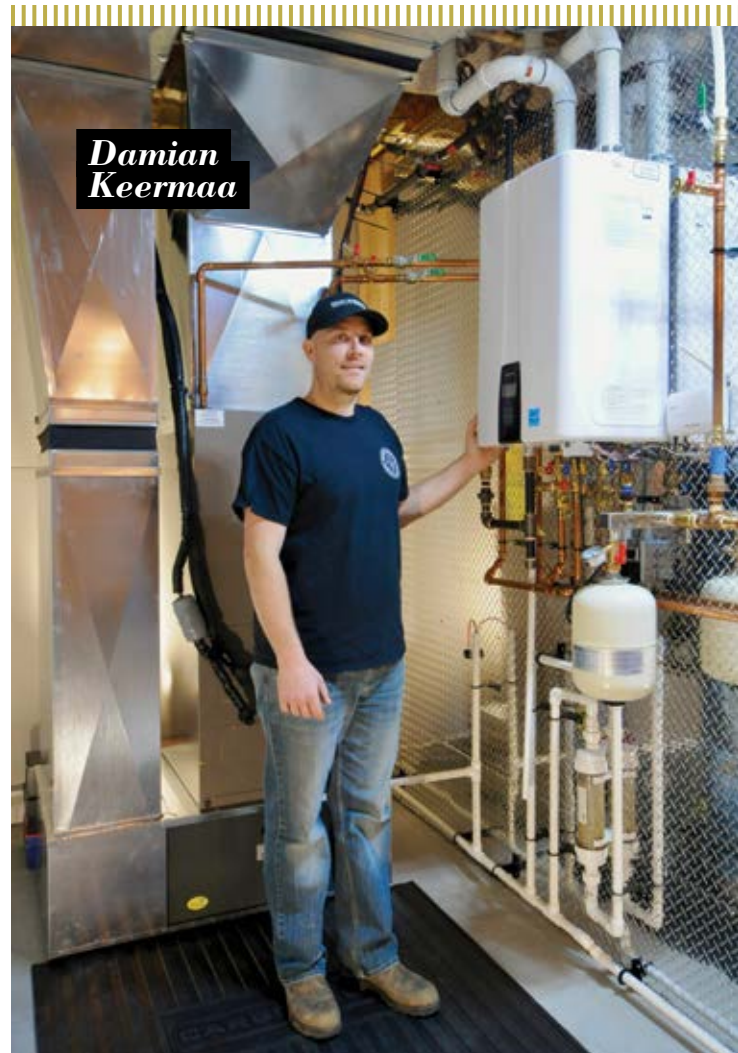
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SCOPE

"We have focused primarily on new construction, whether it's new builds, spec builds or custom homes and some renovations," Damian says. "We work with a few companies that do design-builds, so we'll have HVAC duct designs done, radiant heat layouts done, full duct work, hydronics, in-flooring heating, boilers, combo boilers, air handlers, air conditioners, heat pumps, duct-less units, ERVs (energy recovery ventilators), HRVs (heat recovery ventilators), you name it." **OH**

TRENDS

Efficiencies, heat pumps and hydronics – the movement of water – are the major trends Damian sees. "Furnaces are kind of a thing of the past. There are better ways to heat and cool your home now," he says. "Water has a better heat transfer than air, so you get that warm comfy feeling, whereas when you're heating air, it tends to dry out."



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cooking at home



BERRY COBBLER

RECIPE AND PHOTOGRAPHY **JENELLE MCCULLOCH**

This cobbler is reminiscent of a sweet, soft southern-style drop biscuit. You can use whatever summer fruit you have on hand. We used blueberries and blackberries.

INGREDIENTS

(Serves 6)

FILLING

4 cups blueberries and blackberries*

1 Tbsp flour

1 Tbsp granulated sugar

COBBLER TOPPING

2 cups flour

½ cup granulated sugar

½ cup brown sugar

2 Tbsp baking powder

3 tsp ground cinnamon

1 stick butter, cold

¼ - ½ cup boiling water

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°F.

In a baking dish, combine all filling ingredients and set aside.

For the topping, combine flour, sugars, baking powder and cinnamon in a bowl. With a pastry cutter or two knives, cut butter into dry ingredients until the mixture resembles wet sand. Stir in ¼ cup of boiling water and stir until combined (add in more water – 1 Tbsp at a time, if needed, to achieve a drop biscuit texture).

Spoon the topping over the berries. Don't worry about the topping covering the whole dish, it will spread as it bakes! Bake for 30-45 minutes* until golden brown.

Notes:

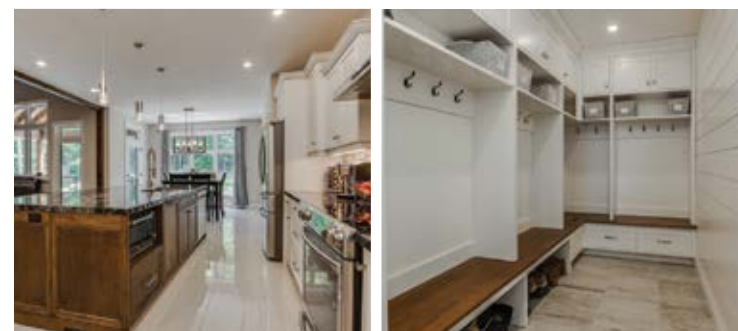
*Feel free to substitute any berries or fruit.

*Adjust baking time depending on size of the pan. If using a smaller pan and the topping is thicker add 5-10 minutes to baking time. **OH**



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STORY CHARLENE PECK | PHOTOGRAPHY SANDY MACKAY

sweat EQUITY

After vacationing 12 years on the family's Muskoka property, Ted and Tammy Schendera were finally ready to build their own home.

Inspired by a shared vision, they rolled up their sleeves to complete nearly 80 per cent of the project themselves. "It was teamwork, perseverance and a labour of love," says Ted, reflecting on two years of construction, finishing and decorating.

The property near Bracebridge was purchased as part of a long-range retirement plan. "We wanted something that gave us some liveability and looking to the future: this is our forever home," Ted explains. "Wider hallways and no steps will make it as simple as possible as we get older." *Continued on page 80*



PHOTO: EMILY HOOGSTEEN

TOP: Homeowners modified two Beaver Homes & Cottages designs to create their unique Bracebridge home. **ABOVE:** Ted & Tammy Schendera built much of their three-bedroom home themselves. **OPPOSITE:** A granite footpath and steps lead to the Schenderas' front porch.



The kitchen island has a base of clear and knotty alder, and is topped with amethyst-embedded granite. Colour 'N Light supplied the kitchen lighting. **RIGHT:** The couple enlarged the size of their home foyer to make the home more accessible. **BELOW RIGHT:** At the centre of the family room, the 70-year-old dining table with matching chairs can be expanded by nearly eight feet.



In the early years, a 30-ft. trailer sufficed for the family's summer getaways. Later, trails onsite beckoned them to hiking and snowshoeing. Before long, they'd discovered how to capture the best views, where to find shade, and exactly where they'd build their garage.

Accustomed to being outdoors, gardening and enjoying wildlife, they weren't willing to sacrifice their lifestyle for the demands of maintaining a grand home. "I wanted a simplified, minimalist home," Tammy says. "I didn't want to be inside dusting."

The couple turned to the **Beaver Homes & Cottages** design

book, choosing two models to customize with their ideas for a family room with cathedral ceilings and an all-season Muskoka room. Window shapes and sills were modified to capture favourite vantage points.

"You start with the preliminary drawings and then have the flexibility to modify from there," explains **Emily Hoogsteen**, design consultant with the **Lindsay Design Centre**.

"It's completely customizable. All of the finishes are your choice as well. Lots of options. The Beaver Homes program is a great option

for people who know they want to build a home, but don't exactly know where to start. So, this is your inspiration point to see where you're headed."

Beaver Homes and Cottages design consultant **John Ireland** helped the couple alter their plan to achieve a larger entry. "Based off the larger entry was the combined laundry room/guest bathroom," explains Ted. "This extended the whole bedroom side of the house by another 11 feet or so."

Continued on page 82

home & builder

Blueprints were drawn for the three-bedroom, two-bathroom, 2,146 sq. ft. home with detached garage. Fine-tuning adjusted for a bedrock basement with a crawl space to house utilities, water softener, water heater and furnace.

Ground was broken in June 2019, just as the last of the four Schendera children left the family home in Lindsay for independent pursuits. Local contractor **Paul Donaldson** and son, **Ryan**, of **Donaldson Construction**, got them started with an Insulated Concrete Forms (ICF) foundation. **KAN Build Construction** framed the house, while Ted worked alongside the Donaldson crew to build the garage. Donaldson installed the septic system and driveway and supplied gravel and soil backfill.

The Schenderas cleared the building site themselves, hiring **Tom** and **Brian Sword** of **T & B Sawmilling** to haul the trees to their



nearby mill. “All the hemlock, all the beams, the porch and the carport, were all milled here – so we didn’t have to buy wood,” says Ted. “Even the bunk beds, we built from a hemlock we saw go down in a storm and had it milled.” The fireplace mantel was crafted from a resident maple felled by the gales of Muskoka. “I did a lot of staining, painting and Varathaning in the past two years,” Tammy recalls. “That was part of my job. So glad it’s done and over, but it was worth it.” She

learned how to operate the miter and table saws and helped with the stonework. Ted was the artist behind the stone masonry in the fireplace and front porch. As a young construction labourer working under the tutelage of his father, Ted was a quick study. “We learned to do rather than relying on someone else,” Ted reflects. “And being a labourer, I was subjected to a lot of different types of building, whether it be framing or masonry.” *Continued on page 84*

ABOVE LEFT & RIGHT: Muskoka Furniture furnished the bright and spacious Muskoka room. **ABOVE:** Just off the main entrance, the laundry is combined with a guest bathroom. **OPPOSITE, TOP RIGHT:** Large beams spanning the family room ceiling were milled from hemlock trees felled on the property. **BOTTOM:** Ted, who worked as a construction labourer in his youth, built the cultured stone fireplace in the family room.



Ted and Tammy teamed up to install the Twelve Oaks waterproof luxury vinyl plank flooring, selecting a French Press shade throughout the home. Ceramic and porcelain tile was chosen for the bathrooms. These, like most of the building materials, were purchased at the Lindsay Design Centre.

Whether stonework, tile, windows, doors, kitchen cabinets or hardware, building materials were delivered from the Lindsay Design Centre & Home Building Centre according to a schedule based on communicated need. "We never had to wait, John just knew when we were at that next stage or we'd call him," Tammy explains.

Bathroom vanities were purchased at Muskoka Furniture; one off the showroom floor and the other custom-made. While there, the couple also purchased their bed, a wardrobe, and furniture for the Muskoka room to mix with family heirlooms.

A lighting consultation with the owner of Colour 'N Light Muskoka in Bracebridge proved invaluable for TAB Electric's subcontractor owner Justin Blackmore to readily discern the number, location and type of lighting fixtures required before wiring the house. *Continued on page 86*



ABOVE: Furnishings for the primary bedroom were supplied by Muskoka Furniture.
ABOVE RIGHT: The Water Closet provided fixtures for the bathrooms and kitchen.
RIGHT: The soaker tub in the en suite has a view of the surrounding forest.

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home & builder

“Lindsay Rouse from Colour ‘N Light Muskoka was wonderful to deal with,” says Ted. “She brought a designer with her and they went through the entire home, marking the plans for interior and exterior lighting.”

With no shortage of ideas gleaned from magazines and virtual real estate tours, Tammy and Ted did their own decorating. The interior painting prompted a memorable Schendera party weekend, when family members who wished to contribute were invited to bring their own painting attire. Pizza included. “We had enough rollers for everyone and we had a blast,” recalls Tammy.

Original pieces, *The Wanderer* moose on barn board and *Quiet Time*, a smaller bear cub, both by wilderness artist **Meagan Smith**, are meaningful finishing touches in the new home.

“We were warned beforehand that building a home together can be rough on a marriage,” Ted adds. “But we never had a problem right up until we started the gardening and that was at the very end.” The gardening, perhaps, is a story in itself. **OH**



RIGHT: The wooden deck on the west side of the home was built near the edge of a forested ridge at the rear of the property. Winter snows make the trees a spectacular backdrop. **BELOW:** When wind toppled a large hemlock tree in their property, the couple had it milled into lumber that frames these bunk beds.



SOURCE GUIDE

- Beaver Homes & Cottages • Colour ‘N Light Muskoka • Donaldson Construction
- KAN Build Construction • Kennedy Home Heating & Cooling • Lakelands Marble & Granite Inc. • Lindsay Design Centre & Home Building Centre • Muskoka Furniture
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Palm Warbler

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STORY LYNNE RICHARDSON
PHOTOGRAPHY NIGEL EVES

HIDDEN GEMS

Spring is in the air. Literally. Birds, those welcome harbingers of spring, are on the wing in the skies above us on their annual migration mission to Canadian breeding grounds. Hundreds of species are returning and tucked among them are a lesser-known family of birds that are most coveted by birders. They're a range of brightly coloured species often referred to as the "jewels" of the bird world – the fabulous family of warblers.

A WARBLER PRIMER

Warblers, or Wood-Warblers according to their official taxonomic classification, are colourful songbirds unique to the Americas. Over 30 species occur or breed in Ontario. Some of them are among the most abundant species of birds in our vast forests. They tend to come in waves as they migrate together in tight mixed flocks. But for all their numbers, they are not commonly seen. There are good reasons why not. Despite their bright colours, warblers are tiny (smaller than a chickadee). They're easily

camouflaged by branches and leaves. They often forage tucked up high in the treetops. They don't stay still long enough for a good, identification-worthy look. They keep moving ever onwards in a quest to reach their nesting territories. And finally, by the end of May, the warbler show is over. The waves of warblers have now dispersed widely across the province, each pair ensconced in their own specific nesting-niche territories. With all this, it can very much be a case of "if you blink you will miss them."

Continued on page 92

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birding

A BOUQUET OF WARBLERS

Warblers, like most birds, migrate at night under the protection and cover of darkness. Come morning, they seek rest and food wherever they may be in their journey north. While the backyards of our homes are not their preferred habitat, they just may drop by after a long night on the wing, to fuel up for the next leg of their migration. So, as we look out the windows of our homes to enjoy the emerging signs of spring, we may be lucky enough to see our backyard trees and shrubs adorned with a “bouquet of warblers” – the collective noun for a group of these birds. Grab your binoculars and check them out for a morning of discovering these little gems.

WHAT'S IN A NAME

So how do you sort out one wee warbler from another? There are so many species, and they don't stop and pose for you! It can be challenging, but that's where the fun is. Thankfully, each species does have its own distinctive field marks that distinguish it



PHOTO: ROBIN JOWETT

Black-throated Blue Warbler



Magnolia Warbler

from its warbler cousins. A number of species even provide clues by virtue of their descriptive names. Notice a black-and-white striped warbler? Well, it's a Black-and-White Warbler. Completely yellow? It's a Yellow Warbler. Black throat and blue back? Black-throated Blue Warbler. Gold wing patches? Golden-winged Warbler. The names alone evoke visions of brightness and beauty. But wait until you actually spot one!

And their songs! There is such a range that birders often use mnemonics to sort them out. For instance, the mnemonics for the Yellow Warbler are, “sweet, sweet, I'm so sweet.” Don't you agree?

On the other hand, there's a group of warblers with decidedly unhelpful names. Tennessee, Cape May and Nashville Warblers, for instance, are denizens of the northern boreal forests, not their namesake

locations. Magnolia and Palm Warblers were simply named after the plants they were first discovered in. So don't rely on those names for identification hints, and don't think you won't see them in your backyard.

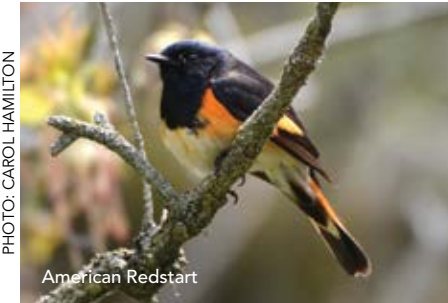


PHOTO: CAROL HAMILTON

American Redstart

WARBLER NECK

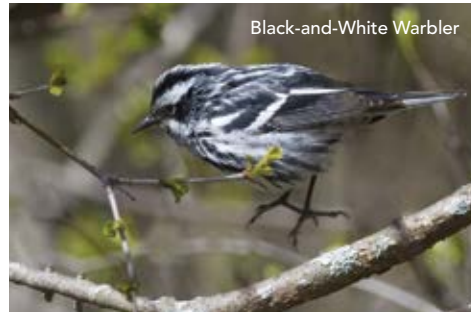
With a little patience and practice, discerning one warbler from another eventually gets easier, not to mention very rewarding. It is rightly a bit of a personal achievement to positively identify your first Blackburnian Warbler, your first American Redstart – the list goes on and on. Take up the challenge! But be prepared to wind up with a bout of what seasoned birders refer to as “warbler neck.” It's that tight kink in your neck resulting from scanning high into the treetops for lengths of time, hoping to discover a few hidden bejeweled treasures. At the end of the day, the kink is just a reminder of time well spent in a quest for your new favourite warbler. A few gentle stretches and you're good to go again the next day.

SPARK BIRD

It is not uncommon for birders to have what is referred to as a “spark bird” – a sighting of a particular species that sparked or triggered their interest in birds and birding. For many, this spark is often a warbler (mine was the oh-so-handsome Bay-breasted Warbler). A good, crisp look through your binoculars at any one of these bright little beauties is often enough to give you that spark and awaken your senses to the wonderful world of warblers. Enjoy! **OH**



Golden-winged Warbler



Black-and-White Warbler



Yellow Warbler



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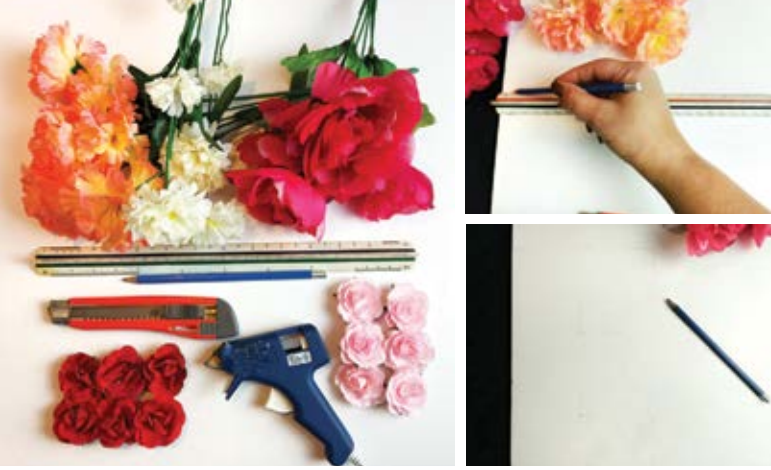
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ALPHABET FLOWERS

PROJECT AND PHOTOGRAPHY ERIN ROCHON

ADD SOME FLOWER POWER AND A POP OF COLOUR WITH THIS FLORAL LETTER DIY AND LET SPRING BLOOM INSIDE YOUR HOME.



MATERIALS

- White foam board
- Artificial flowers of various sizes, in pink, white, red and blush
- Glue gun
- X-Acto knife
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Wooden board

HOW-TO

Place the foam board onto a wooden board to avoid damage to your work surface. Using a pencil and ruler, outline your chosen letter onto a piece of white foam board. Carefully score then cut the outline of the letter with an X-Acto knife.

Start placing the larger flowers onto each letter until you like your design. Glue flowers in place.

Once the larger flowers are attached, fill in gaps with smaller flowers. Continue to add more flowers until the letter is full.

Create a stand for your letter by cutting a right angle triangle out of a piece of foam board. Glue the longest side of the right angle to the back of the letter. This will keep your letter upright and on display!

Find a spot in your home to add a touch of spring. **OH**



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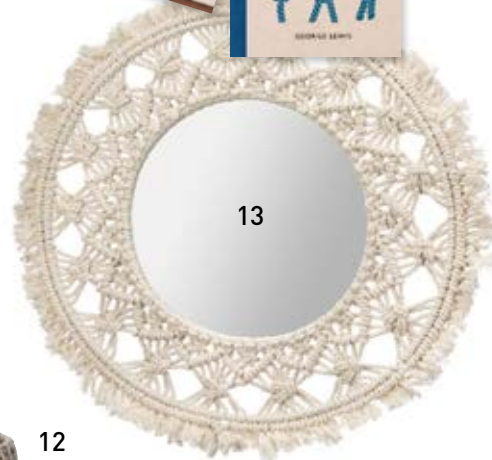
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13. BOUCLAIR: Macramé Mirror
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15. SURYA: Hachi Throw Pillow
16. RENWIL: Annick Throw Pillow
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