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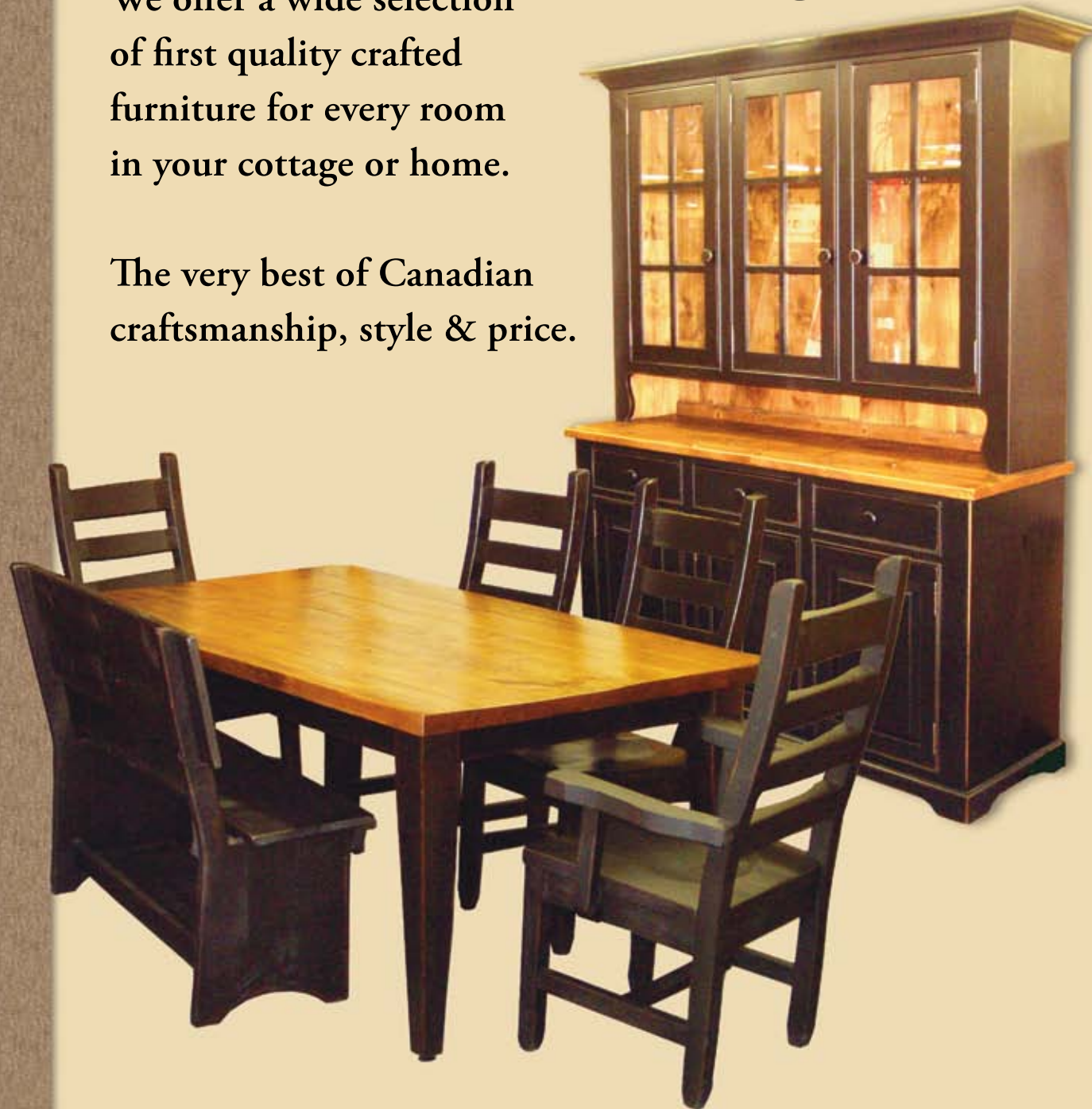
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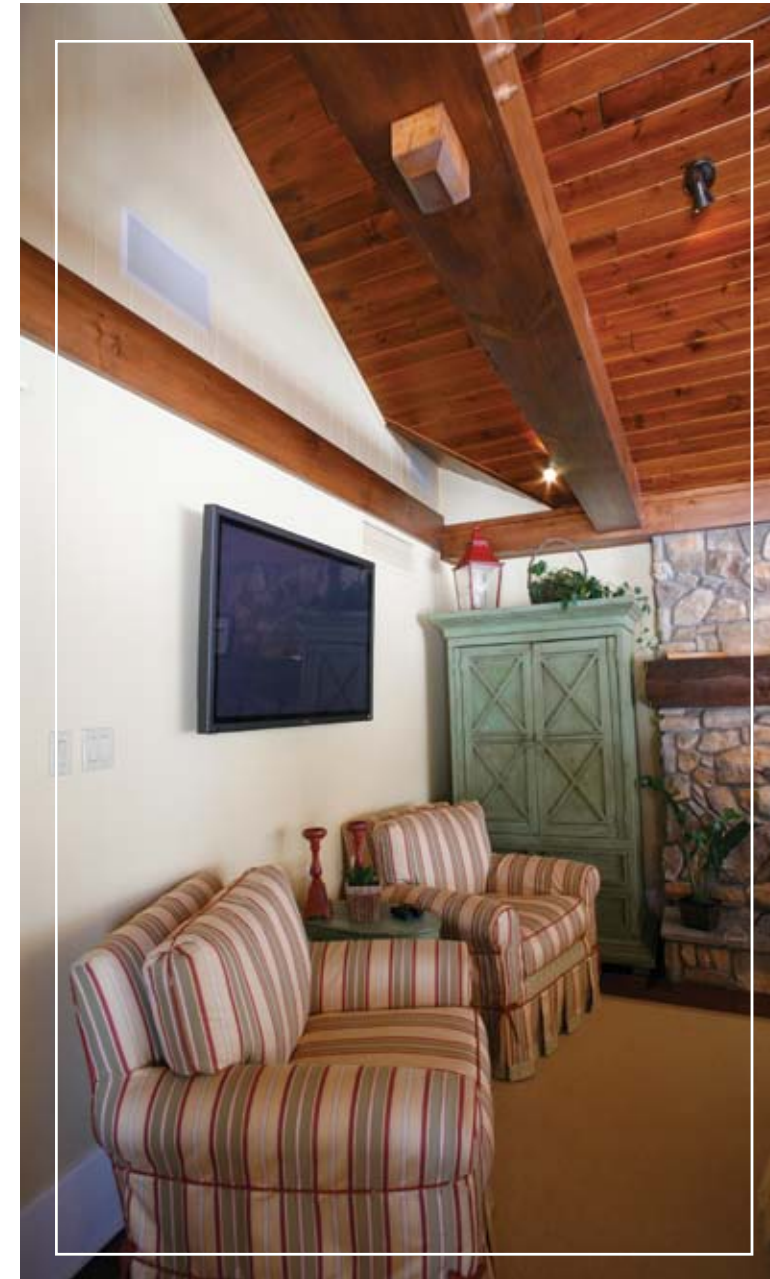
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editor's note



*Getting the bugs
out of your swing*

NO BUGS ON BIGWIN?

It was hard to believe while swatting at a sustained assault by bloodthirsty mosquitoes at Norway Point, east of Baysville. Blackflies and mosquitoes are intrinsic to spring in Northern Ontario. They give rise to that well-known Muskoka wave. A common post-winter greeting in these parts, it's a quick flick of the wrist at the bugs in front of your face, brush the fingers past the left ear, a backhand stroke across the right. Smack at the bite on the back of your neck. "Hello there." Repeat.

At Norway Point, a short ferry ride south of Bigwin Island on Lake of Bays, David Smith assured me that Muskoka's traditional warm weather salute isn't necessary on the island. Smith is president of Eagle Landing, the company that recently took over ownership and control of the Bigwin residential development. There are few bugs on the island for several reasons, he explained. Bigwin is blessed by geography. Shaped like the back of a turtle, the 600-acre island is swept by winds that ward off flying insects and keep them grounded. The island retreat has little of the standing water essential to the reproduction of mosquitoes. With few creeks, it also lacks the running streams that blackflies need to breed. The scarcity of these voracious biters helps make Bigwin a paradise for cottagers and golfers who play at the Bigwin Island Golf Club. It's a natural "No Swatting" zone.

When OUR HOMES magazine toured Fred and Catherine Purvis's beautiful cottage property on the southeast coast of the island, photographer Sandy MacKay and I were there about two hours before we noticed the first, solitary blackfly of the day. It was a welcome relief from one of the few discomforts of life in Ontario's backwoods. It made our visit to this charming island all the more pleasant. The Purvis cottage, pictured on pages 42-52 in this issue, is built with a clean, quiet lake on the front doorstep and an award-winning golf course at the back. It is one of two golf properties featured in this summer's magazine.

At Manitouwabing Lake, northeast of Parry Sound, Udo Petersen, a successful businessman, athlete and raconteur par excellence, and his wife, Ingrid, are living the Canadian dream. Originally from Germany, they have made Canada their home and the lake near McKellar their summer getaway and a favourite gathering spot for relatives and guests. Nearby, Petersen built The Ridge at Manitou golf club, a 300-acre Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary that protects the water, birds, wildlife and woodlands. Golf Digest rated The Ridge as Canada's best new golf course in 2006, an extraordinary achievement by a remarkable man and his staff of 60 local employees. The Petersen summer home is featured on pages 24-32.

We hope readers enjoy OUR HOMES' visits to these beguiling properties. For golfers, The Ridge and Bigwin promise irresistible new challenges.

Sincerely,

Walter Franczyk

Walter Franczyk, Managing Editor
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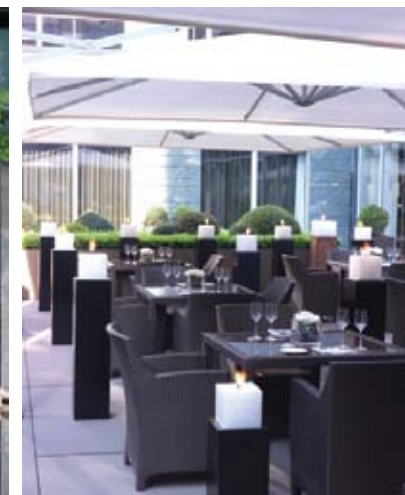
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everything that's wonderful," – Lesley Gore*

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Designer **Stephanie Redmond** answers your questions. If you need help, send your questions to stephanie@ourhomesmagazine.com

Dear Stephanie,

I really liked your spring column on paint trends. My problem is picking colour combinations, specifically picking a wall colour that matches furniture and accessories. Could you give me some great combinations that will help in my décor decision making?

Susan R.

Stephanie Redmond replies:

Don't just look at the colour of the furniture when choosing wall colours; consider the weight of the fabric as well. A sofa with a heavy fabric such as leather or chenille can take a deeper tone on the walls. A sofa upholstered in cotton or linen will look nice on a much softer wall. For that red wine leather sofa (heavy!), choose something with a little more depth. Same thing applies for your furniture. If you have traditional dark wood pieces, they may appear heavy against a white wall. Your furniture needs a stage that suits its style and feel.

Here are a few combination ideas:

- 1. EARTHY:** Chocolate brown sofa + sage green pillows and throw + toffee-coloured leather chair + crisp white pillar candles
 • Paint solution: Pick up on the toffee colour and use a mid-tone burnt butter colour on the walls
- 2. SOPHISTICATED:** Light earth-toned sofa + navy blue pillows + chunky woven baskets + cream cashmere throw
 • Paint solution: Mirror the sofa and pick a light neutral with a brown base
- 3. CALM:** Cream linen curtains + light grey upholstery + metal side tables
 • Paint solution: Introduce a bit of colour and choose a butter yellow or a light French blue on the walls

HINT: Take any element with colour into a space to see how it looks – a piece of clothing, a dish towel, a picture frame. This is an ideal way to test drive a colour without the long-term commitment!

Dear Stephanie,

We just installed new hardwood flooring throughout the main floor of our home. I would like to purchase some area rugs for the living room/dining room but I have no idea how to determine what size I need. Is there a set standard? Should I buy two rugs for the same room or one big one? I also don't want to spend a fortune.

Janice C.

Stephanie Redmond replies:

The biggest mistake that people make with area rugs is going too small. A guideline to follow is that your furniture should sit comfortably on your area rug. You can inset the rug under the back of the sofa, but leave at least eight inches so that it doesn't look like an error. If you have ample space, allow chairs to sit comfortably on the area rug. Don't skimp. As far as one or two rugs go – if your space is very large or walls indent to decipher one room from another, then use

two carpets in the same style. This gives the illusion of a larger space. If your space is quite small, use one large one to lengthen the room. Area rugs are not inexpensive and they are long-term purchases. Make sure you inform your carpet dealer of what your needs are, whether you have children or pets, and your budget. Ask about stain resistance and edging details.



HINT: Use green painter's tape to tape out the size of the rug you think is right and then measure it!

Dear Stephanie,

How can I use framed mirrors to make a room look larger?
 Charlene W.

Stephanie Redmond replies:

The options are endless, but I have one guideline: Place your mirror on a side wall, not on a wall facing an entry. You shouldn't feel as though you are walking toward yourself every time you enter a room.

A mirror will act as a window reflecting light into a space. Try a starburst above a fireplace or a slim, framed mirror on a side wall. Line up two or three of the same mirrors (horizontally or vertically) for an even more compelling reflection. Cluster small mirrors to add a fun sparkle, just as you would group a selection of your favourite family photos. Be bold! Don't be afraid to use a large piece in a small space. This will add some much needed scale. Can't find the right mirror? Visit a frame store and have one made that suits your décor.



HINT: Have a friend hold up your pieces to see what the mirror will reflect once it's hung. You don't want to make holes in a wall only to discover that you can see your toilet from your living room sofa! **OH**

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Continued on page 20

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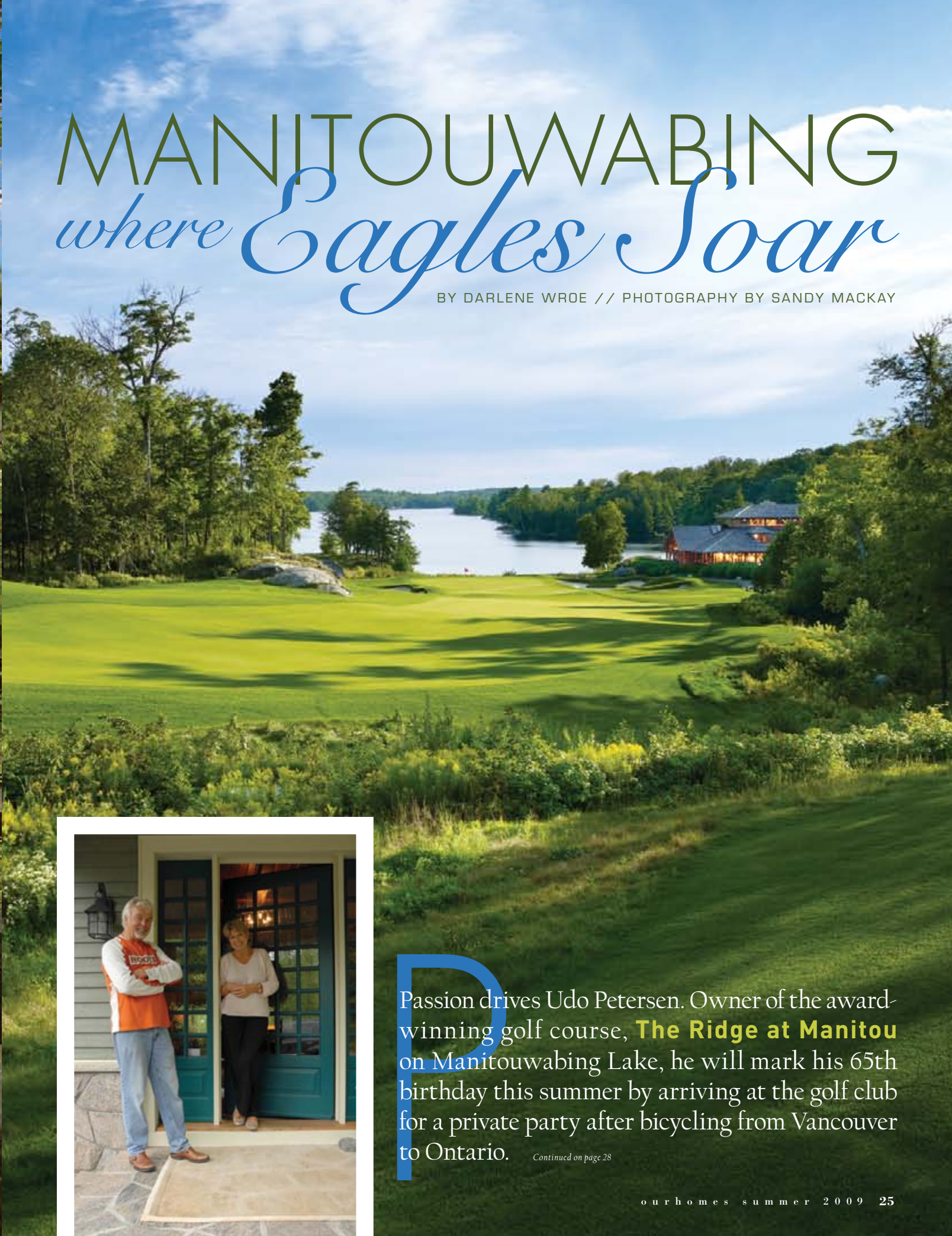
BY DARLENE WROE // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY



Landscaping by Little Gardens surrounds Ingrid and Udo Petersen's cottage on Manitowabing Lake near Parry Sound. Hannon Homes Construction built the summer home.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Rated by *Golf Digest* as Canada's best new golf course in 2006, The Ridge at Manitou is certified as an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary in recognition of its environmental stewardship.

BOTTOM: Gracious hosts Udo and Ingrid Petersen often entertain relatives and friends at their woody retreat.



Passion drives Udo Petersen. Owner of the award-winning golf course, **The Ridge at Manitou** on Manitowabing Lake, he will mark his 65th birthday this summer by arriving at the golf club for a private party after bicycling from Vancouver to Ontario. *Continued on page 28*



Bright colours and many happy memories fill the great room at the Petersen cottage. The vaulted ceiling provides a second-floor view of Manitowabing Lake.

ABOVE: A curvy railing with painted balusters adds soft elegance to the balcony overlooking the great room.



With a fireplace at one end and the great room at the other, the dining area seats a dozen diners in antique-finished chairs that complement the adjoining kitchen.



TOP: Marana Kitchens crafted the culinary centre at the heart of the home.

MIDDLE LEFT: Painted balusters enhance the custom-blended stain on rails, beams and ceilings.

MIDDLE CENTRE: A wine cellar also keeps beer at ideal sipping temperature.

MIDDLE RIGHT: Whimsical, sculpted creatures inhabit the woods encircling the home.

BOTTOM: The sun room, with its circular view, is a favourite comfort zone.

That is Petersen's way. He believes that if you are going to do something, do it well. This philosophy is reflected in his business career, his golf course and his Manitowabing Lake cottage near Parry Sound.

Born in Germany, Petersen and his wife Ingrid honeymooned in Canada with the understanding that "if we like it we stay, and so we never went back," he recounts with a cheerful laugh. They settled in Kitchener where Petersen started a tooling company, Bend All Tools and Machines. The business evolved to become Bend All Manufacturing, a highly successful auto parts maker.

The Petersens have two daughters, Nicole and Michaela, and two grandchildren, Hannah, 6, and Jared, 4. "My kids thought we should get

a cottage, otherwise we're not Canadians," he laughs.

They chose to build on Manitowabing Lake. Petersen had already constructed their house in Kitchener. For inspiration, he went out on Lake Joseph and took pictures of cottages he admired there. "I came up with the sketches and I took that to the builder, **Hannon Homes Construction**," he recounts. "His passion to build cottages is amazing," he says of Paul Hannon.

Hannon's brother-in-law, **Kelly Dixon**, designed the cottage, with input from the Petersens and Hannon. Dixon says it was interesting to use the architectural concepts of Muskoka lakes cottages on a small lake. "It is more of a country home, as opposed to a cottage," he says. *Continued on page 30*

feature

RIGHT: Matching upstairs bedrooms offer comfy window benches that double as efficient storage spots.

BOTTOM: The master bedroom features a fireplace and walkout to an exterior deck overlooking the lake.



In addition to Hannon Homes Construction, the building project involved a number of trades – **Bay Area Plumbing, Heating and Electrical, JT Masonry** of Rosseau for the stonework in the fireplace, **Muskoka Concrete Forming** on the foundation work, **Little Gardens** on landscaping, **Marana Kitchens**, which did the kitchen construction, and **Jinx Dunbar** who helped Ingrid Petersen with the interior design and decorating. “She was great to work with. We had a lot of fun,” says Ingrid. “I could never have done this myself.”

Along with the 5,700-sq. ft. cottage, there is an 1,100-sq. ft. suite above the garage and another 800-sq. ft. suite above the barn. A two-bay boathouse has a small lounge upstairs. The boathouse is equipped with a hand-made lift crafted by Petersen for his Sea-Doos.

“Everything is built in the same style as the main house,” says Petersen. “The beam construction, everything is the same style, the same colour scheme. My favourite part of the house is the sunroom, especially in the

winter. We are always home for December and January.” New Year’s Day and the first two weeks of January are traditionally spent at the cottage. With heated floors throughout, the cottage is cosy in winter. The sun room provides a beautiful view of the scenery. Within the house, Petersen’s favourite view is from the great room where the convergence of the ceiling beams, constructed by the **Great Lakes Frame Company**, can be admired.

Whimsical, bronze, life-size forest creatures dot the cottage landscape. Bronze deer flanking the walkway still startle the Petersens on occasion. An eagle, a monkey lifting a child into the trees, a mother bear with her three cubs and a totem pole complete the scene Petersen has created. The landscaping is designed to blend into the natural woods and features a variety of plants, including many flowering bushes and hydrangeas. Also set amidst this landscape is a tennis court, a sandpit for the children and a trampoline. “It’s a fun place,” says Petersen. *Continued on page 32*

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The 26-acre property has 1,000 metres of tranquil shoreline. "It's so peaceful, the lake. It's actually a huge lake, but it is so quiet," he says. Shortly after completing the cottage eight years ago, Petersen got involved in discussions with other people in the area about the local benefits that a golf course would offer. The resulting 300-acre, 18-hole golf course, The Ridge at Manitou, with private memberships, is now also open to the public through reservations.

It took three years to complete. Designed by Tom McBroom, and now managed by Drew Rachar, the \$20-million golf course is designated as an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary. "To me, everything has to be perfect. I do it right, or I don't do it," says Petersen.

Dixon was project manager for the clubhouse construction. Much of the design for that project was by architect **Brian Brisbin**, also a cottager on the lake. Dixon comments that it was "most interesting to see a traditional timber frame incorporated into a commercial building." Petersen wanted the clubhouse to feel like a lodge. Dixon used the input of the Petersens and Brisbin and his wife, Kathleen, for the interior design of the clubhouse.

Some of the trades involved in the clubhouse project include Bay Area Plumbing, Heating and Electrical, Hannon Homes Construction, Great Lakes Frame Company, **Sheridan Foundations**, which did the stone work, and **Persimmon Golf** for the bridge and other construction on the golf course itself.

"It's a nice spot," Mr. Petersen says of his cottage property. With the addition of the nearby Ridge at Manitou, it is now an amazing place. **OH**

ABOVE: The dock and beautiful timber frame clubhouse await members and guests arriving by boat or plane.

TOP: The foosball table offers guests an entertaining challenge in the second-floor lounge of the boathouse.

MIDDLE RIGHT: A bronze lion prowls the foliage.

BOTTOM: A curtained boathouse bunk provides a quiet spot where a weary angler can catch a nap after a long day on the lake.

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STYLE: Urban elegance meets rustic retreat.

IN A NUTSHELL: Over the past six years, Tary and Ed Roossien have grown their home décor business from a tiny shop in Port Sydney to a 7,000-sq. ft. studio in Huntsville. Their downtown store is housed in a more-than-century-old, two-storey house, while their studio next door fills the former Baptist church on Main Street. The new home-like environment is an ideal setting for a stunning array of products. "People can visualize the whole concept," says Tary, whose background includes design, colour consultation and home staging. Ed, who did much of the renovating to create their new venue, designs custom leather furniture. Together, they own and manage the business. People come to their studio not only to shop but to enjoy a unique experience.

THE ANGLE: Urban Rustic Living is about creating ideas, inspiring people and giving them a space where they can design home interiors, Tary explains. "Design is a personal thing," she says. "You can inspire almost everybody to define what their style is. This is definitely a place to come and ask questions and get help with design." The Roossiens and their creative designers furnish country cottages as well as city homes.

UNIQUE: The studio invests in the full-time décor specialists it employs. "We offer excellent, well-informed advice on the latest trends, colours, lighting, accessories and full décor," says Tary. "Our people can advise from all stages of building and renovation projects, assisting our clients with their individual needs. Whether shopping for accent pillows or a complete room, each client is handled with professional advice that enhances any project." Urban Rustic Living has a quiet but substantial commitment to the community, supporting local charities with more than \$5,000 in donated merchandise and cash. The company auctioned off the pews from the former church to raise money last year for local community groups. It plans to do the same with stained-glass windows from the church this year. *Continued on page 38*

Urban Rustic Living Defining Your Style

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY WALTER FRANCYK



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THE PRODUCTS: Urban Rustic Living offers full home décor, from linens to furniture. It carries clean-lined wooden furniture, well-made leather couches and upholstered pieces, including accent chairs. Homeowners have an endless choice of fabrics and colours. "Warmer palettes are a really strong pull for us," says Tary. The Roossiens weave antiques into their designs because antiques add warmth to a room, she explains.

FAVOURITES: Monk's tables are popular for their versatility and solid, natural look. "Whether in a modern environment or a cottage, they look fantastic," says Tary. Many customers favour twig lamps for their relaxed and organic ambiance. Birch bark furnishings, such as mirrors, are also in demand, as are nostalgic reproductions of old Muskoka signs. **MISSION:** "The customer coming through our doors is looking for an experience and we provide just that, a friendly atmosphere that inspires the inner designer in all of us," says Tary. Many husbands happily accompany their wives on shopping trips to Urban Rustic Living just to see the renovation work on the church and wood frame home. "There's a very comfortable feel."

GET THERE: Urban Rustic Living's two stores are located side-by-side at Main and Lorne streets in downtown Huntsville. At 4 Lorne Street, the couple has recaptured the beauty of a vintage home and turned it into a great shopping experience. The 15 Main Street location, one of Huntsville's original brick and stone churches, is the home décor studio and showroom. Open seven days a week in the summer. Phone 705.788.2612. **OH**



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“Big something or other.” That’s how a friend remembered the name of the island golf club where Fred and Catherine Purvis eventually built their summer home. He described it as the nicest golf course he had ever played. Intrigued, Fred tracked it down on the Internet – the Bigwin Island Golf Course. Stretching over a forested island on Lake of Bays, the par 72 club, ringed with prime waterfront lots, offers all the blessings of cottage country with none of the snags. Continued on page 45

BY WALTER FRANCYK // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY

The tee for the 18th hole at the Bigwin Island Golf Club offers a spectacular view of Lake of Bays and the waterfront clubhouse.

BELOW LEFT: The cottage of Fred and Catherine Purvis maintains a low profile amid the pines and beech trees on the eastern end of Bigwin Island.

BELOW MIDDLE: In keeping with local building restrictions, the Purvis boathouse is a modest, one-storey facility.

BELOW RIGHT: Bigwin residents and guests ride golf carts beneath a canopy of towering beech trees on the island’s scenic trails.



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A skylight along the cottage roof peak provides ample light for the main hall and adjacent living and dining room. Hall floors are hemlock. Living, dining and kitchen areas have sandstone floors.

TOP RIGHT: Before builders could frame the study entrance with antique doors salvaged from a Paris gatehouse, a Bigwin porcupine made its own design modifications by chewing this one while it was stored outdoors.

BOTTOM RIGHT: A stone fireplace anchors the east end of the open concept living room and connecting dining room and kitchen.



"I couldn't imagine finding a nicer piece of property," says Fred. An investment banker, he and Catherine, an interior designer, had been living in Barbados for about 10 years when they discovered Bigwin, where homes have a private golf course at the back door and a pristine lake at the front.

Originally a prairie boy, Fred wanted a level lot. The couple called the sales agent, put a deposit on two adjacent lots, and headed north to see for themselves. "We came up and fell in love with it," Catherine says.

Catherine and her daughter, Laurie Felesky, also an interior designer, collaborated to plan the symmetrical, one-storey cottage with two master bedrooms, guest bedroom, a study, three fireplaces and an open-concept kitchen, dining and living room lit partly by a long skylight running along the peak of the ceiling. Ringed with stone, the home nestles low to the ground, part of the landscape. Wide soffits extend the roof, shading the house from the summer sun. No air conditioning required. "I've always loved a big roof with plenty of overhangs," Catherine says.

A Muskoka room runs across the front of the central living area. Exterior master bedroom doors open onto low decks, just a step above ground. Soft morning sunlight, rippling across Lake of Bays, illuminates the large eastern bedroom. "It's hard to get out of bed in the morning," Catherine admits. In the evenings, the pastel hues of the sunset reflect off the clouds and the lake.

Windows in all the showers provide a view of the surrounding forest and occasionally grazing deer that sometimes peek in. A nearby guest house offers overnight visitors complete privacy. *Continued on page 47*





LEFT: Concrete countertops abound in the kitchens and bathrooms of the Purvis cottage and guest cabin. "They're fun and they're rustic," says Catherine.

BELOW: The modern, spacious kitchen provides plenty of room for preparing culinary delights.

RIGHT: The wood and stone range hood helps create a sense of dueling fireplaces in the open concept living area.

An office in the boathouse, equipped with high-speed Internet service, gives Fred a place to trade currencies in waterfront comfort while watching loons paddle the lake.

Dave Watkins of **Lakeridge Developments** was the general contractor who built the cottage. **Muskoka Lumber** custom-made the trusses to frame the central skylight. "It was the best building experience we ever had," says Catherine, who has designed buildings in Canada and Barbados. "It was right on time and right on budget," adds Fred.

Phil Sifft, an electrician and bush pilot, who specializes in remote locations, flew his plane to the cottage dock to check electrical work. Landscaper **Anthony Janssen** was unbelievable in the way he handled the job and all its granite work, says Fred. "It was exactly what we wanted."

Rick Holder of Gravenhurst was the expert plumber. Designer **Laurie Felesky** prepared all the home's specifications and ran the building project.

One of the most memorable compliments heard by Fred and Catherine came from an old-timer who paddled up to the property with his granddaughter in a canoe. "I want to congratulate you," he said. "You made it look like there's nothing here." *Continued on page 50*





Morning sunlight reflects off Lake of Bays and softly filters into the master bedroom on the east side of the summer home.

BELOW: All showers in the Purvis cottage have windows overlooking the surrounding woods. Privacy is afforded with stained bamboo blinds.



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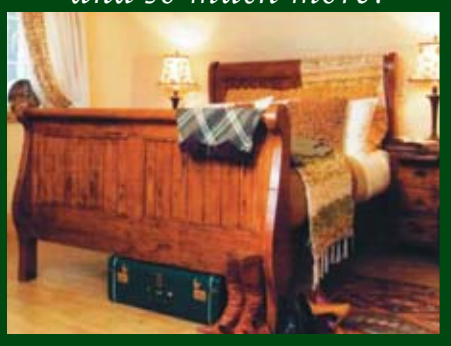
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LEFT: An outdoor deck at the boathouse provides a picturesque view of the quiet lake surrounding Bigwin Island.

BELOW: A Muskoka room running the length of the central living area offers a bright and inviting place to relax and enjoy the stunning scenery.



The Purvis home reflects an attitude common to island residents who appreciate the area's natural beauty and do their best to preserve it. There are no cars on Bigwin. Residents come to the island by ferry, boat or float plane. They walk or travel its scenic trails in electric golf carts.

The island development is part of a master plan that defines what the community will look like with respect to common lands, trails, mainland parking and other support facilities, says David Smith, president of **Eagle Landing**, the company that recently took over ownership and control of the Bigwin development. "There is no guess work," he says.

One of Bigwin's biggest draws, he says, is the golf course, and its setting, which boasts incredible views and vistas, all in harmony with the island's vast array of wildlife and natural features. Opened for its first full season in 2002, it was recognized by *Golf Digest* as the best new course in Canada. It ranks among the top in North America. For island residents,

the golf club underpins important services, such as transportation and maintenance of common facilities.

Eagle Landing has sold 13 waterfront lots on the island and has another 60 available. Over the past five years, eight cottages have been built, at costs ranging from \$1 million to \$4 million.

In tune with the changing economy, Eagle Landing recently teamed up with **Normerica Authentic Timber Frame Homes**, to develop a series of new-home designs that are efficient to build and operate. They minimize disturbance to Bigwin's environment and landscape. "You can stage your construction," Smith explains. Designs take advantage of natural topography, allowing additional rooms to be added later, as pods connecting to a central cottage. Along with new design and building initiatives, there are plans to work cooperatively with area real estate brokers and agents on the sales and marketing of the product, Smith says. *Continued on page 52*

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RIGHT: Fred Purvis trades currencies from the comfort of his home office in the boathouse.

BELOW: Visitors can belly up to the kitchen counter atop banana leaf chairs in the guest cabin at the Purvis family cottage.



He describes the economic recession as a wake-up call, a time to get back to cottaging basics in Muskoka. "The era of excessive over-building and uncontrolled spending is over," he predicts. "If we look back through the history and heritage of Muskoka, why we came here and why we continue to come back, it is because this is a special place where family and friends can escape for adventure or to relax, but most importantly, it is where we create fond memories," he says.

Avid golfers, Agnes Di Leonardi and her husband, Jim Green, are creating their own memories while preserving others. Island cottagers who love the history of Bigwin, they named their new cottage 'Chevodin,' the Ojibwee name of Chief Joseph Big Wind, who sold the 600-acre island to local tannery magnate Charles Shaw in 1910. Their cottage, built by **Portico Timberframe Homes**, on the northeast coast of the island is very private, but close enough to the golf course to allow them to enjoy the social amenities of the Bigwin Club. "It is a magical place," Di Leonardi says.

On the south coast, Sue and Eric Rumi are finishing their new four-bedroom cottage. Using Normerica's architectural and design services,

they created a hybrid of styles featuring large overhead timbers, a bathroom in each bedroom, massive granite fireplaces and African walnut floors. The couple looked at about 30 cottages before buying on Bigwin, where they love the beautiful view as well as the quiet, privacy and security that island living affords. "You can hear a pin drop," says Eric. Separating the island from the mainland, the lake is like a large built-in moat, he says.

By creating strategic partnerships with industry leaders, Smith hopes to give buyers even more choices. "It has given us a reputable, well-known product that purchasers can identify with and use as a benchmark to understand what it costs to build on the island," he says. "We are still allowing purchasers to buy a lot and build on their own, as most have done in the past, but we want to provide as many options and as much guidance as possible." The association with a reputable builder allows Eagle Landing to offer a complete turnkey product.

When all lots are sold and the golf club is turned over to equity members, the entire island will be governed by the property owners and golf club through a waterfront association. **OH**



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BY PAUL WILSON

It's been humbling to discover that one of the most expensive items in the never-ending project of improving our old home has been human error – not the architect's, not the contractor's, not the electrician's or the plumber's, but my own. I could probably place a dollar value on how much I've cost myself, but it would be too depressing. Just thinking about it makes me cringe.

When we bought the building – a mid-19th century commercial structure – the previous owner had already begun the saga of turning it into a modern dwelling. Then he'd run out of money. Or maybe the sheer magnitude of the work had ground him down and he'd given up in despair. There were even rumours that marital strife had led him to sell – a not unknown consequence of renovations that go on for too long. Whatever it was, we showed up, and his last straw became our call to arms. *Continued on page 58*



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“From now on, my mantra is: Grey is the new Green”

called the Brac that will do just this. Chris Thompson, who sells it through his company, The Install Team (www.theinstallteam.com), has retrofitted his Barrie home with a Brac, and he reports that in the past 12 months, his five-member household saved about 100,000 litres of water. If the pattern holds, it will net him \$300 in savings next year, and if the cost of water continues to rise at the current rate, his Brac system will have paid for itself in five years.

Denis Orendt, executive director of the Ontario Onsite Wastewater Association, confirms that interest in grey water systems is surging in Ontario. Orendt's company, eco-work (www.eco-work.ca), is involved in both residential and larger projects. The CNE, the Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton, Trent University and some summer camps, like Camp Kawartha, are installing grey water reuse systems, some of them in conjunction with new rainwater collecting systems that lessen the demand for municipal water even further. And some homebuilders in Oshawa, Newmarket and Owen Sound are preinstalling the Brac, or similar systems, in their new housing.

David Brezer, director of Building and Development with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, told me that the Ontario Building Code, revised in 2006, is the first in Canada to provide specific guidelines for grey water recovery systems. Brezer says the changes have been driven, in part, by a heightened interest in such systems, but also by hopes that the new Code will drive innovation in the field.

Section 8, for instance, lays down the minimum legal requirements for another type of dispersal system, officially called a Class 2 Sewage System, but more commonly known as a “leaching pit.” For those like myself, with an older home on an appropriately sized piece of property, this system may be the best choice. If the flow of grey water from your home does not exceed 1,000 litres a day, you can run it outside into a specially constructed pit. From there, the water will leach into the topsoil and be purified by the action of microbes and plants in the soil. The system is both legal and safe, as long as setback and construction guidelines are followed. (Further information at www.ontario.ca/buildingcode or 416-585-6666.)

Although it's hard to find anything seriously flawed about modern grey water systems, the battle to gain them acceptance is just beginning. Many inspectors are nervous about requests for permits and some municipal officials are even hostile to the idea, apparently believing that a boom in grey water systems would mean reduced water revenue for them. It's a short-sighted view, especially given the increasing pressure on our water and sewage treatment plants. Some cities, like Guelph, have been quicker to recognize the benefits and are offering rebates to residents who install approved systems, something Denis Orendt believes the province and the federal government should take up as well.

Grey water systems aren't the sexiest fare on the eco-menu but they may well be the next big thing. From now on, my mantra is: Grey is the new Green. I will be repeating it often as I continue to shell out to rectify the stupid mistake I made so many years ago. **OH**

Paul Wilson is a writer, editor and translator who lives full time in rural Ontario. He can be reached at paul.heathcote@sympatico.ca.

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We discovered, among other things, that he'd roughed in two separate waste water collection systems, one for the toilets and one for all the rest – from the sinks, the showers, the washing machines, the dishwasher, the bathtubs. Though I didn't know it at the time, he'd actually created the infrastructure for what we would now call a “grey water system.” The “black water” from the toilets would go into the holding tank, and all the rest – contaminated by little more than hair, grease and soapy residue – would go its separate way, in this case, through a pipe and straight into the river at the bottom of the garden. It would clearly have been both illegal and harmful and, feeling very righteous, we ripped out the secondary system and rerouted all the plumbing to the holding tank.

Twelve years and thousands of dollars later, it pains me to admit that the former owner was, perhaps without knowing it, a visionary. Today, a growing number of householders and cottagers in water-rich Ontario are discovering what hundreds of thousands in arid regions like the American southwest or Australia or in places like Japan, already know: that separating grey water from black water is one of the best things you can do to conserve water, take pressure off overloaded sewage treatment systems and save yourself money while helping the environment.

There are several ways, all of them legal, to benefit from grey water. The most straightforward is to redirect your domestic grey water to an indoor tank that will filter out impurities, chlorinate it and then pump it back to the toilets for flushing. This way you get double mileage out of your grey water, which in most households accounts for about 70 per cent of the total water usage. There's a Canadian-designed system

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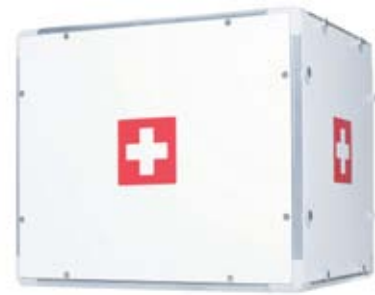
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[people]



Ron Leach can look at a rock and see the wolf inside.

Sometimes he spies a loon, an owl or a seal. When he can't readily discern an animal, his imagination evokes the stony creatures that take shape in his strong but gentle hands.

A soapstone carver for 30 years, Leach has transformed a hobby into a passion for sculpting he pursues in a tiny studio on the shore of the Kakshe River near Gravenhurst.

Ranging from small birds that fit in your hand to large prowling bears or preying eagles, his carvings have been bought by people from around the world and hundreds of Muskokans.

"I'm not doing this to get rich," says Leach, 67, a Gravenhurst resident for most of his life. "I've always prided myself on trying to make my carvings affordable."

As a young man, he served as a radar technician in the Canadian Navy and was in England when the Cuban missile crisis put Canada's warships on yellow alert.

"We didn't know if we were going to go to war or not," he recalls. "Fortunately, we didn't." He married his first wife, Claire, while he was in the navy. When he left the military, he and Claire moved back to Gravenhurst where they raised three children. Leach was a bartender for 10 years, then worked as a lithographic film stripper for 25 years at Baxter Publishing and for five years at McLaren Press. "Then my eyes went on me and I had to leave that profession," he says. Always artistically inclined, he had been a wood carver for about five years when he first saw a documentary about the stone art of Meso-American civilizations that pre-dates the Aztecs and Incas. *Continued on page 64*

STONE Carver

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY WALTER FRANCYK

Metropolitan meets Muskoka

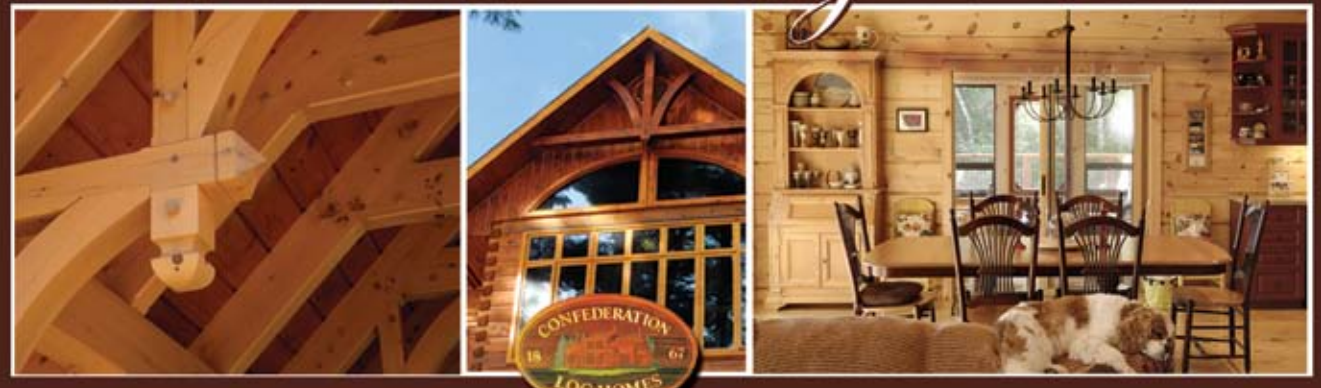
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people

RIGHT: Loons carved from green soapstone are among the more popular creatures crafted by Gravenhurst sculptor Ron Leach.

BELOW: Although wet macular degeneration has diminished his sight, Ron Leach continues to make regular trips to his Kahshe River carving studio where he hews wildlife and abstract sculptures from raw stone.



"It was beautiful carving," he says. The permanence of stone enthralled him. "It won't rot. It won't burn. It won't turn to dust. It's going to stand the test of time. I just love that," he explains.

A self-taught sculptor, he studied Inuit sculpture that reflects the lifestyle and religious beliefs of these hardy, northern Canadians. When he decided to carve soapstone, he vowed to be disciplined in style. "It had to be uniquely mine," he says.

Wildlife became his specialty and bears are one of his favourite creatures. "I like doing bears because they're so interesting in what they do and what they stand for," Leach says. Bears, he explains, are solitary predators, strong and fierce, like the Inuit hunters who stalk them. Leach hunts his prey with carving tools.

Using a bow saw, hammer and chisel and a grinder, he patiently coaxes his creatures out of rough blocks of green soapstone mined in Quebec.

Over the past three decades, he estimates he has produced about 2,000 carvings. Some are small enough to fit in one hand, while others, weighing as much as 200 pounds, take strong arms to handle. He is limited only by the capacity of the canoe he paddles to and from his riverside studio. "I can pick up 150 pounds fairly easily, but getting it across the river in a canoe can be tricky," he laughs.

Built on a cottage property he owns with Jeanette, his second wife of 14 years, his studio in the woods provides him with the isolation he needs for his art. It is made of recycled building materials hauled across the river in hundreds of boat trips. It's an ideal spot to watch beavers, rabbits, deer and the occasional black bear that ambles down to the river for a drink.

"There's always something going on out there," Leach says. "I get a lot of my ideas from being there." *Continued on page 66*



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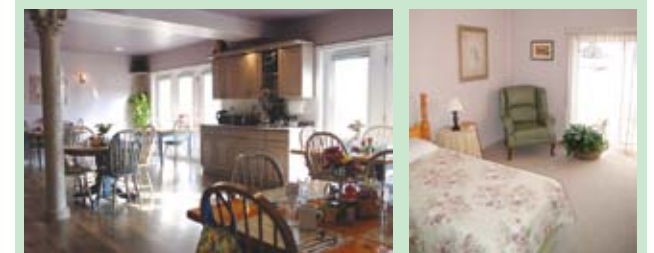
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RIGHT: This California sea lion and pup are carved from brown Brazilian soapstone.

FAR RIGHT: A stony penguin incubates an egg beneath its belly folds.

BELOW: Bears are one of the sculptor's favourite creatures.



Carving soapstone is messy. It creates a lot of dust that can be irritating to anyone not wearing a mask. At his studio, Leach can keep the dust to himself. He packages it and sells it at farmers' markets as Slugaway, a natural pesticide gardeners use to control slugs and snails.

Slimy garden pests are immobilized when they crawl onto soapstone dust. "They can't move. They stay there and become bird feed," he says. Larger bits of leftover stone become necklace kits that children can use to make their own jewelry.

While soapstone is found in every country in the world and comes in every colour of the rainbow, good soapstone is found in only a few places, Leach says. "Canada has been blessed with good soapstone." He also carves brown soapstone from Brazil and pink soapstone from China. Always striving for excellence, he doesn't hesitate to discard a carving that doesn't meet his high standards. It becomes Slugaway, necklace kits, or scraps for aspiring carvers.

"If I'm going to make an impression on someone, I want it to be a lasting impression and I want it to be a good impression," Leach says. "When I make something out of stone, it's going to be around for a long time."

Jeanette puts a finishing touch on his carvings. "With his eyes going, he can't see the small scratches in carvings anymore, so I do much of the final polishing and checking to make sure they are up to his high standards," she says. She takes care of marketing and helps him with set-up and sales at craft shows.

Ron's work can be seen each week throughout the summer at the Gravenhurst Farmers' Market. This summer he will also show and sell at the Muskoka Arts and Crafts 47th Annual Summer Show in Bracebridge, The Haliburton Art and Craft Festival, The Woodland Art Experience in Kilworthy, Dockside Festival of the Arts in Gravenhurst and the Torrance Honouring Our Children Powwow. This fall he'll be at the Meaford Apple Harvest Craft Show and Bala Cranberry Festival. **OH**



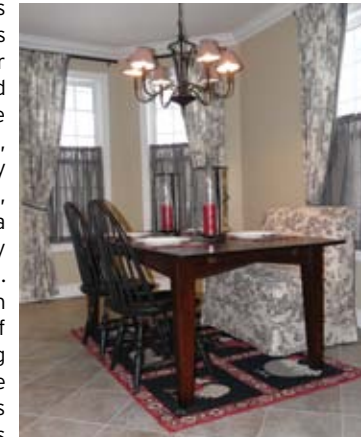
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FLANK STEAK:

1 tbsp peppercorns

1 tbsp coriander seeds

2 bay leaves

1/2 cup red wine

2 tbsp olive oil

2 tbsp red wine vinegar

1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce

3 cloves garlic, halved

3 green onions, chopped

3 sprigs each fresh thyme and parsley

2 lb flank steak

1 tsp salt

SALAD

3 sweet peppers (red, orange, yellow or mixed)

12 spears asparagus

8 cups mixed baby salad greens

Extra-virgin olive oil

White balsamic or white wine vinegar

Sea salt

Fresh ground pepper

Flank steak is a long lean muscle from the belly side of the cow and has some really good things going for it. As far as steaks go, they are relatively inexpensive, so you can impress guests with a fancy steak dinner without breaking the bank. Because it's a somewhat tougher cut of meat than tenderloin or rib cuts, it stands up well to marinades. This makes it great for entertaining because you can marinate the steak earlier in the day or the night before, freeing up time to cut flowers, mow the lawn or catch up on summer reading in the hammock before guests arrive.

Flank steak is also fast cooking, taking only about six minutes to grill to medium-rare. With flank steak, rarer is better. A well-done flank steak tends to be on the chewy side.

And finally, the flank steak is an incredibly versatile cut. Sliced flank steak makes a mean sandwich filler or salad topper. And the raw meat, thinly sliced across the grain, makes great beginnings for a beef stir-fry. Like any cut of beef, flank steak takes well to many flavours, so feel free to experiment. A French-inspired marinade with red wine and lots of herbs is great for entertaining (see recipe below), but an Asian-inspired marinade with soy sauce, chiles and rice vinegar or a Mexican-inspired marinade with the fresh flavours of lime, chiles and coriander will be great too!

Any way you slice it, flank steak is the ultimate summer entertaining steak. So, call your friends and fire up the grill. Summer's here and it's time to celebrate.

FLANK STEAK:

- In a small skillet, toast peppercorns, coriander seeds and bay leaves over high heat, shaking pan often, until toasted and fragrant, about 2 minutes. Transfer toasted ingredients to cutting board; lightly crush with bottom of heavy saucepan. Transfer to 13 by 9-inch glass baking dish. Whisk in wine, oil, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, garlic, green onions, thyme and parsley.

- Poke steak all over with fork and place in marinade. Turn steak to coat both sides; cover and refrigerate for at least four hours or up to 24 hours. Remove steak and marinade from fridge one hour before grilling to come to room temperature.

- Transfer marinade to small saucepan. Bring to boil. Boil for one minute; set aside.

- Preheat grill to medium-high. Sprinkle steak all over with salt. Grill steak, turning once and basting with reserved marinade, for six to eight minutes for medium-rare.

- Slice steak thinly across the grain to serve.


SALAD:

- Grill peppers until skins are blistered and blackened. Transfer to bowl; cover and let stand for 10 minutes. Peel off skins; remove seeds and slice.

- Grill asparagus on piece of foil paper or using grill basket until tender-crisp, about three minutes. Cut into thirds.

- In salad bowl, toss together peppers, asparagus and salad greens. Toss with oil, vinegar, salt and pepper to taste. Serve with steak.

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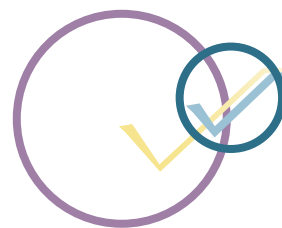
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5 cool SUMMER IDEAS for your home

BY IRENE TURNBULL

When summer comes to Ontario, most of us can't get the extra layers of clothes we've been wearing for months put away fast enough as we head outside to enjoy the bounties of life in lake country.



Easy living becomes a priority and the optimum word is "cool" as we strive to soak up the glory of the sunshine season. Cool comes in many forms of course, from iced tea to the latest shade of summer umbrellas, but the coolest of all are the great feelings of comfort we get when we live summer well. That means lighter, uncomplicated and relatively carefree.

Simply following the patterns of our seasonal wardrobes is the easiest and most obvious way to bring the interiors of our homes into summer. We can put heavy draperies, cosy blankets, throws and bedding away with our winter coats. We can infuse our interiors with garden freshness, reminding us of the bounties of the season. Fresh flowers and bowls of fruit on display reinforce thoughts of healthy abundance. White linens and happy floral prints, stripes and checks in garden colours keep us connected with nature when used as decorating accents along with colourful glass and tableware. Just like we do with our clothes, we can lighten up our homes with slight adjustments to its accessories.



HERE ARE SOME IDEAS THAT MIGHT HELP YOU WITH YOUR "COOL SUMMER COMFORT."

1. THINK MAIN ENTRANCE DOORWAYS. They are your cover story! They connect your interior and exterior worlds. Colour does matter and clearly sends a message about the homeowners to the neighbourhood and your guests. Not only should the colour be compatible with the exterior finish, roof, soffit, fascia, window trim, etc., it should clearly reflect your invitation of welcome. Make sure they are spruced up for summer. Remember, garage doors are not a main entry for your visitors and in most cases should be blended rather than accented in the exterior colour scheme.

Homeowners should look beyond the front door as outdoor living often takes place in the back of the home where patios and gardens flourish and waterside lots bring double exposure. The key here is to take a cue from nature – build upon great environmental assets such as forests or water and don't be afraid to include the main door colour as part of your outdoor room setting.

2. EASY INS AND OUTS can be facilitated with the addition of retractable screens, which will let your home breathe, and disappear when you want them to. They can

be excellent options for maintaining the outdoor connection without obstructing the view. Not all brands are equal, so do your homework.

3. HANDY STORAGE AND SERVING COUNTERS in just the right spot can make a huge difference for hosting outdoor entertaining with ease. Think about how you pass in and out with food and beverages. The

addition of a serving counter and storage cabinet in close proximity to the passageway might just be one of the best investments you can make. So consider a place to store outdoor table settings, a counter to serve buffet style and a landing counter for handling the transition between in and out.

4. INDOOR/OUTDOOR FURNITURE. Take advantage of the fabulous fade and weather resistant fabrics such as Sunbrella that allow you to piggy back furniture for use both inside and out. Easy-care washable options allow family friendly pieces to be used all season indoors and out without compromising style – from plush velvets to bright prints and everything in between. A family room ottoman can double as an outdoor bench and storage box.

5. LIGHTEN UP for evening sparkle with white solar lights in the garden and LEDs under the patio umbrella. Inside, change warm bulbs in lamps to white for summertime.

In all your summertime decorating, remember that while nature comes in an assortment of colours there is a definite relationship relative to the intensity of sunlight. Flowers that flourish in the shade are softer and more delicate in colour than those found in full sunlight. It's important to remember that bright sunshine reduces the impact of colour, and that bright colours will look lighter on large surfaces. White creates contrast and can make colours look stronger.

Have a cool summer. **OH**



BY NICK KEUKENMEESTER

Creating a Functional WINE CELLAR

When finding the right place to keep your wines, there are three factors to keep in mind.

Temperature: The ideal temperature is somewhere between 52 and 55 degrees Fahrenheit (11-13 degrees Celsius). If it is a little higher than this, the wines mature faster, and the opposite occurs if it is on the cool side. You want to try to avoid large fluctuations as this can shrink and expand the corks, leading to leakage and spoilage.

Light: There is a reason most wines come in coloured glass. Ultraviolet light can be as damaging as heat to wine.

Vibration: Wines need a settled environment if they are to age gracefully.

There is no point in buying wine to keep unless you have somewhere to put it. Wine cabinets (specially designed fridges) or even just cold storage areas in a basement will all do this job for you. There is no sense in building an expensive 10,000-bottle cellar when you have three cases to put in it. Start with the coolest, darkest place in the house and upgrade from there when you need to.

Forward Thinking

When stocking a cellar, it is important to remember that you want wines to be ready at different times. It's not much help if you have nothing to drink for 10 years and then 500 bottles are ready all at once! Stagger your buying and go for things with varying aging capacity.

Be Eclectic

Different situations call for different wines. Maybe you are not a white wine drinker, but when you have guests over to eat fish you still want a couple of options. Don't forget that occasions come up for sweet wines and ports. Ones with a little age can be a show-stopper.

Palates Change

Most collectors start out loving the big reds from California, Australia and Bordeaux. It takes time to develop a palate for Pinot Noir and the wines of Burgundy. As drinking wine with dinner becomes the norm, you start to look for those perfect matches. Old Pinot often fills that role, but unless you cellar a little at the beginning, it will take you a long time to find this out.

Mind Your Own Palate

Not everyone likes mature wine. As a wine develops, its obvious fruit or primary characteristics mellow and subside, and secondary notes (like herbs and spices) come through. If you like fruity wine, don't leave it too long.

We All Mature At Our Own Pace

European wines (and French wines in particular) go through a dumb phase. Like teenage children, they go into their bedrooms and don't come out for three years. In this time, their company is not something to seek out. Basically, the fruit is less available to the palate and the wine doesn't offer all it has to give. Once this phase is complete, the wine emerges like a butterfly from its cocoon, mellowed and with new layers of complexity. Most new-world wines do not suffer through this phase, but many would argue they don't gain the same levels of complexity either. Great Bordeaux and Burgundy can often improve over 10 or more years.

Is it a Keeper?

So what keeps well and what doesn't? Let's look at the grapes most likely to repay a little cellar time.

WHITES

Yes

Riesling (the greatest ager of all, with mineral notes abounding), Chardonnay, Pinot Gris, Gewurztraminer, Semillon (not just Sauternes, but the dry stuff from Australia too)

No

Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier, White Zinfandel, Pinot Grigio, Arneis, Cortese (Gavi), Albarino, most sparkling wines (Champagne excepted)

REDS

Yes

Pinot Noir, Barbera, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Shiraz/Syrah, Cabernet Franc, Tempranillo, Sangiovese, Carmenere, Nebbiolo

Maybe

Grenache (no more than 3-5 years), Gamay (only the top Beaujolais; NOT Beaujolais Nouveau)

No

Zinfandel (enjoy the fruit in its youth), Dolcetto, Corvina (unless it's Amarone), Rosé. Also, remember that 90 per cent of wines are consumed within hours of purchase and most wines are now made for this purpose, so most will not cellar well. OH

If you have any questions about any of the topics Nick has covered here, feel free to send him an email: nick@liffordwineagency.com. Nick Keukenmeester is a writer who is currently Head of Private Client Sales for Lifford Wine Agency.

OUR HOMES attracts the area's finest businesses to advertise in our pages. Since our first issue, more than 400 companies have utilized our unparalleled distribution and coffee-table appeal to market their products and services. Now we're making it easier than ever for you, our readers, to become educated as you plan your home-and real estate-related purchasing decisions. The listings below are organized alphabetically by industry.

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finishing touch

A crafty MOSAIC TABLE to make this summer

BY ANDREA RAMACIERI // PHOTOGRAPHY BY BONNIE FOX

OUR HOMES took a tired, weather-beaten, wooden patio table and gave it new life with old plates, bowls and tiles.

Continued on page 78



concept  design  construction



check out our website for pictures and information about our company

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finishing touch



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

(We found almost everything at the local re-use store.)

- Old plates, ceramic bowls and tiles
- Safety glasses and gloves
- Hammer
- Ceramic tile glue
- Grout
- Floater
- Sponges
- Sealant (a must for an outdoor table)

HINT: Select a colour scheme and a basic design. Make sure you have enough of one mosaic colour to fill in the desired area.

GETTING STARTED

Wrap plates and tiles in an old tea-towel or cloth bag. Place them in a shallow plastic vessel or cardboard box. Put on your safety glasses and smash the plates and tiles with a hammer.

Separate the mosaic pieces by colour. Make sure you have enough pieces to complete your design.

HINT: We used the lips of the plates along the edges of the entire table.

TIME TO GLUE

Cover your starting point with an ample amount of ceramic tile glue and start placing your mosaic pieces. You may have to apply glue directly to each piece. The thickness of each piece may vary, which adds interest to your table. Place pieces relatively close together. You can fill in the gaps with smaller pieces later. Continue to work in segments until the surface is filled and your design is complete.

Allow 24 hours for the glue to dry.

TIME TO GROUT

This is a two-person job. One person applies the grout with a grout floater while the other cleans each tile as you go along. Clean the tiles as best you can, otherwise the grout will dry and you will spend hours scrubbing and digging them out.

Allow 24 hours for the grout to dry.

CLEAN AND SEAL

Once the grout is dry and the tiles are clean, it's time to apply a sealant. We used Circa 1850 NuLustre 55 – a thick, high-gloss clear epoxy finish. One coat of this product equals up to 55 coats of varnish. Follow the directions carefully. You can find this product and others at the hardware store.

HINT: We used a brush to apply the epoxy sealant. Once dry, it looks incredible. **OH**



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