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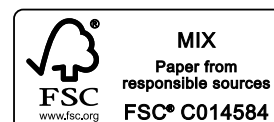
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I IT HAPPENED AGAIN THIS MORNING. I CAUGHT THE scent of wood smoke in the air and I thought about how rare that is now. After that, one thing led to another as things often do, and I got to thinking about other winter sights, smells and sounds that I love.

Earlier, while I was still cosy in bed, the snow plough rumbled by. I heard it from under the covers while waiting for the furnace to click on, telling me it is time to get up and take the dog for her walk.

The streets were quiet. Empty wading pools were propped against houses. There was the outline of a child's snow angel fading in the drifting snow. I passed the lake – which is frozen now – and I heard the scratching sound of skates on ice.

There is a tree I pass on my walks that is alive with birdsong and in winter, especially, this particular tree trembles with noisy conversation. I wonder what the birds are talking about – the eagle that has a nest in the cemetery, the cat that skulks beneath the cedar trees, or the location of the latest bird feeder in the neighbourhood?

And perfuming it all was the scent of wood smoke.

Memories, imagination, old sentiments, and associations are more readily reached through the sense of smell than through any other channel, says Oliver Wendell Holmes, and I, for one, certainly find this to be true. I also find that our homes are the repositories of these memories – the places where we store the treasure-trove. Which reminds me that a huge thank-you is in order to our readers and especially to all the wonderful homeowners who have shared their homes and memories with OUR HOMES this past year. For me, winter is the season that gives me time to savour my home and its memories. I look and listen to the world differently and to paraphrase another saying, it's a great time to slow down and smell the wood smoke.

Until spring!

Nancy

Nancy Belgue, *Managing Editor*
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By Timberland Homes,
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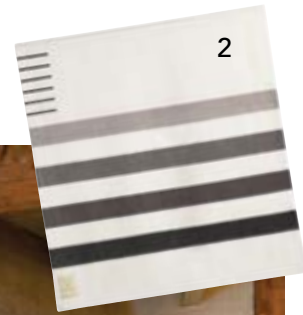
STORY **STEPHANIE REDMOND**



Designer Stephanie Redmond shares her ideas.



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C

Cabin chic seems a fitting décor choice for winter months. The aesthetic evokes images of cosiness and warmth, reminding us of what it is to be Canadian. Rustic interiors with wood, wool and hot chocolate come to mind. However, let's not forget that, in August, we sweat, fight blackflies, and if we're lucky, swim in our wonderful fresh water. Winter or summer, the cabin makes me feel truly Canadian. Here's how to achieve that rustic setting, with a few modern conveniences.

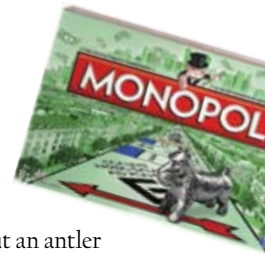
First of all, I have to stress comfort. No modernist furniture in my cabin, please! How about this extra long sofa from Lee Industries? It will accommodate a mass of people (perfect for the weekends) and is ultra comfy for lounging, reading and napping. Of course, I'd prefer it in a natural linen colour, so it doesn't clash with my collection of antique Bay blankets. If you don't have one, they are always available (and always in style) at The Bay. Now, if you're a bit allergic to colour, you can always go with the Millennium Stripe, which is a more neutral approach, but just as lovely.

Of course, all of this must sit on a rustic base of something, so let's talk about wood flooring. In the cabin, I see pine, but if you have dogs or kids, or simply a busy household, pine will be too soft. You can apply an oil or wax finish (this will not protect it from grooves) but the wear will be slightly less noticeable than a deeper stain finish. If you'd like to



3

modernize, try a grey wash quarter sawn oak with an oil finish. More Belgian than Canadian, but the results will be stunning.



As tempted as I am to put an antler chandelier in here, I like my lighting a bit more modern. You can try the Mori light by Rich Brilliant Willing for a beautiful, soft glow. With more rustic companions like wood and textural fabrics, a modern light will fit right in without making the scene appear too contemporary. (For a cheap fix, you can always use a big white paper lantern – always a winner as far as I'm concerned!)

A cabin shouldn't feel like it was pieced together yesterday, or it becomes too decorated and too stiff. Throw a fur rug on the floor and a few oddball pieces to make it seem like a collection from bygone times. I like rattan because its low-key style never looks right off the shelf. I found these chairs on 1stdibs.com for a bit of rustic charm. They're quirky and will look great with pine floors.

There is one more piece that every cabin needs: Monopoly! I would add a deck of cards and Scrabble, too; the list is never-ending. Whatever your game, don't forget to include an antique pine chest of drawers filled to the brim with games that the whole family can enjoy in front of a roaring fire. Now that is wonderful living. **OH**



4

- 1. MORI 2420 PENDANT: Rich Brilliant Willing
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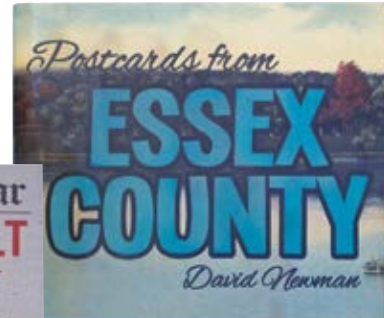
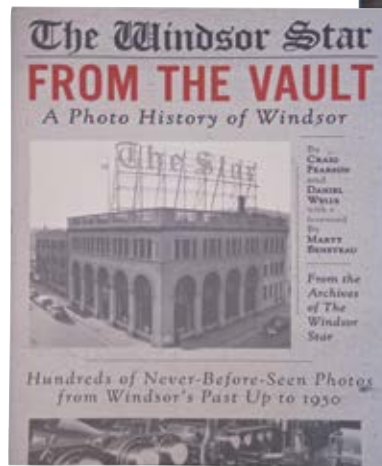
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STORY **NANCY BELGUE**
PHOTOGRAPHY **HEIKE DELMORE**
STYLING **RICHARD PURSEL**

The rustic kitchen table is built from reclaimed acacia wood. The bench features woven wool Kilim rug upholstery, all from the Lionheart Collection. The furnishings are a perfect complement to the beautifully simple yet organically rich finishes in the Frank Cremasco-built kitchen.



Located at the end of a leafy crescent in LaSalle, the Timberland-built, two-storey home makes a quietly dramatic impression. Inspired by the Prairie-style made famous by renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright, the striking home is a modern day classic.

“We took a long time choosing our builder,” say the homeowners. “We talked to friends, went to open houses, drew up a short list and then had meetings with the builders that had impressed us the most. In the end, we went with **Gino Piccioni of Timberland Homes**. We immediately trusted him and knew he would give us the home we wanted.”

A busy couple with a young family, the homeowners became parents for the second time shortly after moving into their new home. “With a toddler and a new baby on the way, it was essential that we hire a builder we could depend on totally,” say the homeowners. “As the project progressed, we came to rely on Gino more and more. A lot of the time we left the choices of finishes up to him because we knew his taste was a lot like ours. The home is absolutely perfect and we are thrilled with it.”

Designed by **Allan Djordjevic of ADG + Associates**, the four-bedroom home encompasses 3,750 sq. ft. on two levels. The exterior salutes the Prairie-style aesthetic with its long, low lines, use of organic building materials like stone, brick and wood, and architectural details like oversize soffits, pillars and a covered front porch. Another of the Prairie-style maxims – that the structure blends with its surroundings – is also magnificently fulfilled. The home fits perfectly into its curved lot: mature trees have been preserved and the landscaping, which makes liberal use of decorative grasses and large basalt boulders, is both elegant and rustic (**Signature Gardens**). *Continued on page 26*

ABOVE: The multi-paned sidelights that frame the front door flood the foyer with natural light. **RIGHT:** The Timberland-built home exemplifies many Prairie-style architectural features like deep soffits, use of natural materials and a covered porch.



The living room is furnished with two tufted sofas upholstered in linen and accented with stainless nail heads and leather trim. The rustic modern coffee table is reclaimed barn wood.

The front door (**Martindale Windows + Doors Inc.**), with its multi-paned sidelights, opens into a grand foyer where an organic, earth-toned colour scheme sets the tone for the home. Oversize, rectangular porcelain tiles (**Rose City Tile Inc.**) in espresso and cream connect the foyer with the kitchen. There is a powder room and a mudroom to the immediate left of the foyer. The mudroom cabinetry is built from hand-scraped, rift-cut oak (**Frank Cremasco Fine Cabinetry**). "I love the attention to detail," comments the homeowner as he points out the sleek brushed stainless door pulls and the raised edges on the trim.

The great room features a tray ceiling and floor-to-ceiling windows (Pella) and looks out onto a protected green space (where the homeowners recently counted 17 deer at one time). The long, linear fireplace (**Marquis Fireplaces Ltd.**) repeats and accentuates the horizontal lines the prairie-style design is known for. Another of the hallmarks of the Prairie-style is hand-crafted details that celebrate natural materials. The great room fireplace's limestone surround and mantel (**Apex Stone Products Inc.**) are perfect examples of this aesthetic.

Spacious and free flowing, the home's floor plan is ideal for the young family that lives here. The kitchen (Frank Cremasco Fine Cabinetry) opens to a large eat-in area that, in turn, accesses the large back yard. The quartz island (Apex Stone Products Inc.), flecked with grey and cream, the hand-scraped, rift-cut, walnut cabinetry, top-of-the-line stainless steel Thermador appliances (**Lighting Boutique and Appliance Shoppe**) and the earth tones of the glass mosaic backsplash enhance the home's Arts and Craft feel. "Gino essentially picked that backsplash," laughs

Continued on page 28



ABOVE: The master bedroom en suite has his-and-her sinks and a wood-enclosed tub. **BELOW:** Accessories and furnishings throughout the home are from the Lionheart Collection.



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ABOVE: The master-bedroom fireplace features a stainless steel surround, which blends perfectly with the grey linen upholstered bedframe and luxurious custom bed coverings. **BELOW:** An elegant, custom-built home office.



the homeowners. “We were in the showroom and couldn’t decide what to choose, so we called Gino for advice. He dropped everything and came right to the showroom to meet us. He liked this backsplash and suggested we consider it. At first, we weren’t so sure but we brought it home along with a few others. In the end, it was the one we chose. Well, like I said, it’s the one Gino chose! And he was absolutely right. We love it.” This anecdote is a good example of how the homeowners came to “defer more and more” to Piccioni throughout the building of the home. “Our trust in him was absolute,” they say.

The main floor also comprises a music room, a study (which the homeowner is currently using as a craft room) and the master bedroom.

The master bedroom shares the same calming and nature-oriented view of the back property that the kitchen and great room do. It boasts many high-end signature Timberland touches – an inverted, backlit tray ceiling, a gas fireplace (with a striking stainless-steel surround) and a stunning en suite bathroom.

Indeed, attention to detail might be the theme throughout the home. It is evident everywhere you look – from the more obvious grace notes like the tray ceilings and the floor-to-ceiling windows to the surprising hidden touches like the cosy, heated floors and the sound-proofed pantry (Piccioni sound proofed the pantry so that any noise generated by appliances would be concealed).

For these homeowners, their new home is just perfect – perfect for now, while their children are small and perfect for later when they are teenagers.

“We are putting down roots,” they say. “We have a home we love and a place to build our family memories and a place we can all grow into.”

It’s another happy “beginning” – brought to you by Timberland Homes! **OH**

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STORY
NANCY BELGUE



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WHAT'S HOT: In addition to the DoorBot, products using the latest and greatest technology include: Kwikset's Kevo Bluetooth-enabled deadbolt lock (lets you unlock your door wirelessly with your iPhone, iPad or iPod touch and the Kevo



app); The MyQ Garage, which allows you to control and monitor your garage door from anywhere, at any time; the Nest Learning Thermostat that learns your heating and cooling preferences over time, so you don't have to program it; and The Wi-Fi enabled WeMo Light Switch that allows you to turn lights on and off from anywhere – from across the house, from the backyard, or from the other side of the world. It works with your existing Wi-Fi network and anywhere your smartphone or tablet has an Internet connection. And best of all? The awesome team from Get Wired can install it all for you!

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STORY **YANIC SIMARD**
PHOTOGRAPHY **BRANDON BARRE**

CRAFTING THE ORGANIZED KITCHEN

ALTHOUGH the clutter of kitchen ideas may seem overwhelming sometimes, there are really two main ways to get that perfectly organized space – finding last-minute storage tricks to hide your growing collection of tools and trinkets, and designing for organized living from the start. There’s always room for innovations and improvements, but I think the effortlessly elegant look of this recent condo renovation proves that the best results come from a little planning.

Here’s how you can get a perfectly planned kitchen:

- **Pull It Back** – Rather than choosing a more traditional look with handles and/or knobs, I used mitred-edge cabinets (so they can be easily gripped from the bottom) and eliminated the visible hardware. This look is more modern, but also helps a small kitchen feel less cluttered with fewer projecting pieces. Traditional warmth was reintroduced through the sandy porcelain tile and timeless wood floor.
- **Outlet It Go** – Speaking of the porcelain tile, you may have noticed its rich, subtle tones, or the elegantly organic texture. What you probably did not notice were electrical outlets marring this beautiful surface. The outlets



are tucked away on the underside of the cabinets and shelves, where they are still conveniently reachable without being in your sight line – a worthwhile adjustment during construction.

- **Shed Some Light** – Along with moving the outlets to organize the electrical, I added sleek under-cabinet lighting. You can add under-cabinet battery-powered lights at any time, but building them into the cabinets results in a clean finish. Plus, it adds a convenient on and off switch for a better light scheme (you can flick on with one elbow while wrist deep in dough).
- **More Bright Ideas** – Under-cabinet lighting wasn’t going to be enough; every space should have multiple layers of light, especially a functional one. Here, I dropped the ceiling a few inches to allow for a network of pot lights, eliminating the harsh shadows created by the original central fixture.
- **Open Up** – Although open shelving may not be your first thought for de-cluttering, it can be a very practical addition, so be open-minded! A long shelf for often-used dishes keeps these everyday items immediately at hand, shows off their simple beauty and forces you to keep them tidy (but not too perfect). Don’t worry: glass and white basics look great jumbled together effortlessly.
- **Hidden Depths** – I am a huge fan of the deep, square sink, with a perfectly fitted draining rack. I have one in my kitchen and use it often for client projects. Springing for the extra depth hardly adds to the cost, and a slight loss in storage below is more than made up for by the clean lines. It also allows extra hiding space for the messes you haven’t gotten to.
- **Easy Trade-Offs** – The original floor plan here included space for a breakfast



nook, but there was also room for a four-seat table just outside the kitchen, and this condo certainly didn’t need both. The new plan moved the fridge to this area and added extra cabinetry around it, with one open display niche in the centre to keep the space from feeling too boxed in.

- **Built To Serve** – If you do have space for an eat-in kitchen area, consider a built-in banquet on one side of the table. This allows you to still incorporate some storage in the base of the seat, hide heating vents underneath in the toe kick, and keep guests in conversation distance while out of the workspace.

- **Widen Your Options** – Whether creating custom cabinetry or working with standard units, remember to consider what items you typically store and make sure to select cabinets that will hold them effectively rather than repeating one standard size. This plan includes a slim, full-length pantry, half-height doors, standard cupboards, and wide drawers, allowing any item short or tall to find the perfect home. Running the nonstandard units floor to ceiling (with the top filler matching the toe kick in height) keeps the look clean, simple and always organized. **OH**



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LEFT: The fireplace is hand-built from old fieldstones. The coffee table is from Coulter's Furniture. **BELOW:** The foyer, with its grand coved ceiling, welcomes visitors to the home. **BOTTOM:** Builder Andrew Brotto of Suburban Quality Custom Homes.

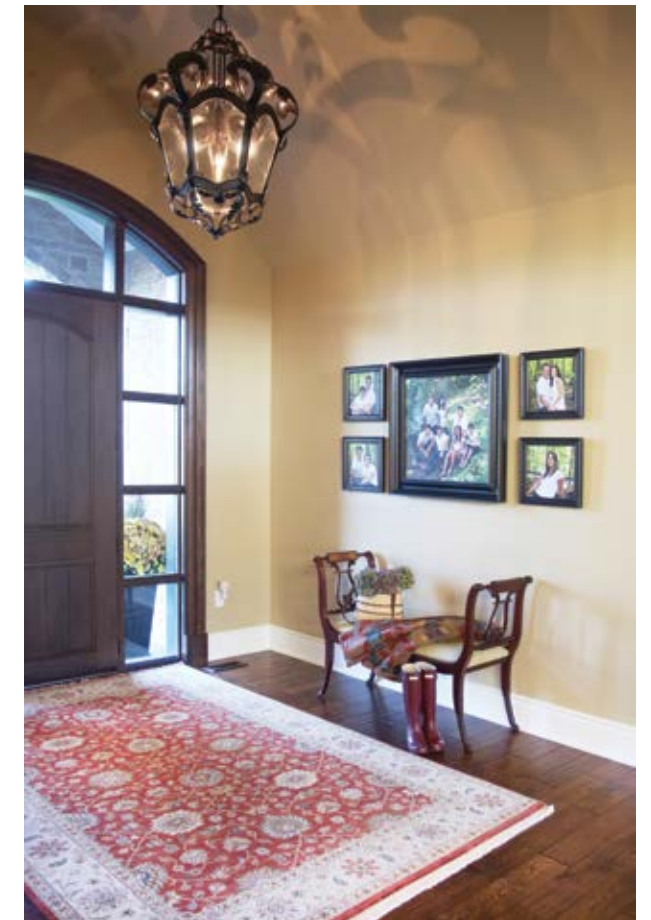


PHOTO BY RICH MANCINI

wide open SPACES

STORY
NANCY BELGUE
PHOTOGRAPHY
MAX WEDGE

A rafter of wild turkeys hustles across the driveway. Deer nibble on the sweet grasses in the backyard. Foxes dart in and out of the tree line. Overhead, clouds swirl by. This is big-sky country, Essex County style. "We owned this property 12 years before breaking ground," comments the homeowner. "We took our time because we really wanted

to get it right. We intend to be here forever." It is certainly easy to see the attraction.

Built by **Suburban Quality Custom Homes** in 2012, the 3,200 sq. ft., ranch-style stone bungalow was, indeed, carefully designed to make the most of its extraordinary 25-acre property. Set well back from the road, at the end of a sweeping driveway that gently curves

toward the three-car garage, the home is surrounded by trees, grass and sky. Oversize windows showcase the dramatic views and two outdoor patios offer serene escapes during the warmer months. The expansive lawns that surround all four sides of the home create an openness and feeling of relaxation that is the architectural equivalent of a deep tissue massage.

Continued on page 41



The home exudes warmth and comfort from the moment you step through the front door. Custom finishes accentuate the homeowner's personality and add drama everywhere you look. The oversized door (**Martindale Windows and Doors**) with its multi-paneled sidelights floods the foyer with light. A large, wrought iron chandelier anchors the space and holds its own against the high ceilings. It also sets the stage for the home's rustic, mountain-lodge-like vibe.

Dominating the family room is a floor-to-ceiling, natural stone fireplace. "We hand-picked every stone from an old stone fence on a logging road on our cottage north of Peterborough," says the homeowner. The result is spectacular, organic and unique. When the fireplace (**Forest Glade Fireplaces**) is lit, the subtle patina of the old stone glows with history. A wagon-wheel chandelier adds to the historic, lodge-like feel.

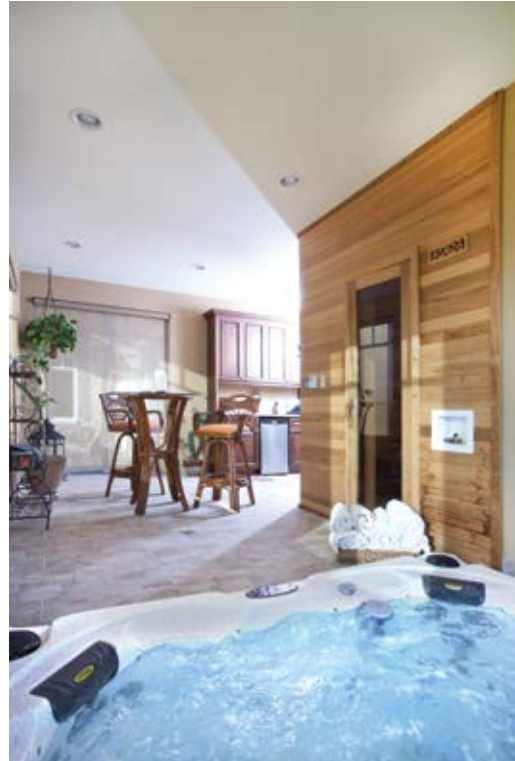
The kitchen is the centre of the home. Cooking is a pleasure with its relaxing views and top-of-the-line appliances (**Lighting Boutique and Appliance Shoppe**). Crafted by Frank Cremasco (**Cremasco Fine Cabinetry**) the kitchen is the scene of many family gatherings. The expansive granite island (**Dimanti Stone Works**) has a seating area that overlooks the back 40. "We sit here at the end of the day, enjoy a glass of wine and just luxuriate in the peace and quiet," says the homeowner. The couple has a large, active family and enjoys entertaining. Everyday meals take place at the rectangular wood table in the kitchen's eating area. On special occasions, the family moves into their dining room where the clan gathers at the large oval table. "Even our formal dinners are very casual," laughs the homeowner. "We don't

Continued on page 44

LEFT: The dining room table is set for a family gathering. **ABOVE:** Frank Cremasco designed and built the country-style kitchen. **RIGHT:** The fieldstone backsplash is crafted from the same stone surrounding the great room fireplace.



feature



The master bedroom offers relaxing and expansive views of the homeowner's acreage. **ABOVE LEFT:** The master bathroom en suite is elegant with its white columns, stand-alone tub and granite counters. **RIGHT:** The home spa, which adjoins the en suite is like having a luxurious getaway in your bedroom – especially on a cold winter day.



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BELOW: The powder room with floral wallpaper makes an elegant statement. **RIGHT:** The charming white guest bedroom.



stand on ceremony in this house. In fact, when our sons, who are away at school, come back for the weekend they often bring their friends and the house just jumps with their energy.”

Fortunately, when that happens the homeowners have created a master bedroom retreat that rivals a spa. Their rustic sleigh bed is dressed in southwestern style fabrics and cushions that are rich in reds, browns and greens. The master bedroom opens to a personal patio that is the perfect getaway on a warm summer day.

The pièce de résistance is the indoor hot tub that adjoins the en suite (**Erie Accent Pools and Spas**). The homeowner’s athletic past has come back to haunt him at this stage of his life, and the spa is a delightful remedy for a wide variety of aches and pains. “We love to come in here, turn on the spa, dim the lights, pour some wine and enjoy the views,” says

the homeowner. In the summer months, the doors slide open so that we enjoy the outside. “Although we use this room every season of the year, it’s especially inviting on a cold winter day when the snow piles up outside,” the couple admit with smiles.

The master bedroom en suite sets a quite different tone from the rustic vibe set by the rest of the house. Sleek, white and elegant, it features his-and-hers sinks set into granite counters, a make-up area and a sculptural white soaker tub. Classic columns welcome you into the space. It feels like walking into a Roman bath. The oversize tiles are from **Rose City Tile Inc.**, as is all the flooring throughout the home. A large walk-in shower (**LaSalle Glass and Mirror**) is available when a long, leisurely soak isn’t in the cards. There is also an amazing dressing room (another trademark of a Suburban Homes new-build)

that features Cremasco cabinetry and a centre island/dresser.

“Working with Suburban Quality Custom Homes and **Andrew Brotto** was amazing,” say the homeowners. “He is the most meticulous, exacting and uncompromising builder imaginable. If something wasn’t right, he made it right. If he wasn’t completely satisfied, he did it over. He held himself and his trades to the highest of standards and we are thrilled with the result.”

For all its space and elbow-room, the home is an easy 15-minute drive to Windsor. Every day the homeowners escape their busy lives, draw up a chair on one of their patios, settle into their spa or hike the trails in their acreage. It’s a sanctuary, a space to come home to and a place for the ages.

“We love it here,” they say. “We are here to stay.” **OH**

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THE STORY **WALTER FRANCYK**
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IMAGE COURTESY OF REID'S HERITAGE HOMES

While many Canadians strive to keep their heating and hydro bills as low as possible, a small group of home builders is working to do away with these expenses altogether.

Five builders, two in Ontario and three in other provinces, have embarked on an experiment to build 25 homes that produce at least as much energy as they consume. Called Net Zero homes, they are extremely energy efficient. They've been around for years. Any home built off the grid could be considered a Net Zero home. But they've typically been custom-built, often at considerable expense, beyond the financial reach of all but the most dedicated energy misers.

Partnered with Owens Corning Canada LP, and with \$1.9 million from Natural Resources Canada, five selected builders will construct Net Zero homes using off-the-shelf equipment and materials. Their goal is to make these homes available to the mass market and to more homeowners than ever before. "It hasn't been tried in a production setting," says Candice Luck, director of strategy and programs for buildABILITY Corporation, the project manager. "We wanted to see whether Net Zero could be done in an affordable manner in a production setting and across Canada."

Builders Reid's Heritage Homes, of Guelph; Minto Communities, Ottawa; Mattamy Homes Limited, Calgary; Construction Voyer, Laval, Quebec and Provident Development Inc., Halifax, were chosen for their track records in building energy-efficient homes, and their expertise, drive and motivation to build leading-edge homes. "We wanted to make sure these houses are built for any homebuyer,

something that's aligned with their regular production design, something that they can possibly repeat in the future," says Luck.

Reid's Heritage Homes, which has built thousands of houses in southwestern Ontario, recently broke ground for the first of its five single-family Net Zero homes in Guelph. Blake Seeberger, the company's senior vice-president, estimates the first home will be finished by spring 2015. "We've had an overwhelming response from the general public," he says. "We have people lined up saying, 'How can I get one of these?'"

Seeberger expects Reid's will take the lessons learned in building these homes and apply them to future developments. "You have to have some kind of a test to work out the bugs, before you go out and build a community of 300 homes," he says. "You've got to be able to understand how best to build the home and make it affordable to the end user."

Ranging from 1,500 to 2,600 sq. ft., the Guelph homes will be built with high-efficiency, triple-pane windows, an air barrier system and thicker walls with added insulation. Extra insulation will be installed in the attic and below the basement floor. Homes will be equipped with solar panels to generate electricity, a cold climate air source heat pump instead of a furnace and a hybrid heat pump water heater. Owens Corning will provide the CodeBord™ air barrier system while Jeld-Wen® Windows and Doors, Canadian Solar Inc., Mitsubishi Electric Sales Canada

Inc. and Rheem® will supply other off-the-shelf technologies.

The technologies have to be readily available and affordable, something any other builder could buy, says Luck. "The builders are really trying to show the industry that this is feasible and hopefully drive the prices down on some of these technologies."

Seeberger estimates a two-storey, 2,000 sq. ft. Net Zero home will cost about \$60,000 more than a typical home of the same size. Solar panels, he says, would account for most of the added expense. Mortgaging that extra \$60,000 at today's interest rates would cost about \$300 a month, an outlay that could be offset with savings of \$3,000 to \$5,000 on annual energy bills. As energy-saving technologies become more popular and more widely used, Seeberger expects their costs will decline, just as prices for CD and DVD players dropped after those technologies became widespread and mass-produced.

He and Luck agree it's hard to predict how well these Net Zero homes will serve the individual families who live there. The lifestyles and energy-consumption habits of occupants will vary and determine whether these homes produce all the power they require. Reid's is working with the University of Guelph to monitor this aspect of the experiment. "We're trying to figure out what truly is the lifestyle and the load that we need to prepare for and how should we build those houses to offset those uses," Seeberger says.

Mattamy Homes is building five single family Net Zero homes in Calgary, Provident Development is building five in Halifax. In Ottawa, Minto will build one single family Net Zero home and a row of four townhouses, while Construction Voyer is building a two-storey, six-unit building in Quebec. All construction is expected to finish by 2016. **OH**

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- ¾ cup milk
- 1-inch fresh ginger, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon raw honey
- ¼ tsp pure vanilla extract
- ¼ tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 ounces freshly brewed espresso

- Combine the milk, ginger, vanilla and cinnamon, and steep for 10 minutes. Pour into a saucepan over medium heat. Add the honey and bring to a simmer. Cook, stirring constantly, for two minutes. Do not boil. Discard the ginger slices.
- Add the brewed espresso to a serving cup. Pour the warm milk over the espresso. Serve immediately.
- If desired, pour some steamed, frothy milk on top.

Ginger Green Smoothie

Start your day with a burst of energy with this fresh, superfood smoothie. The hemp seeds bring protein and a great creamy texture. If you're battling a bug, a few glasses are sure to name you victorious.

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- 1 cup cold water
- 1 cup kale, fresh or frozen
- ½ cup spinach, fresh or frozen
- 1 inch fresh ginger
- ½ apple, cored
- 1 tbsp raw honey
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 tbsp hemp seed
- ½ – 1 cup ice cubes

- Add water to high-speed blender, followed by fresh ingredients then frozen ingredients.
- Blend until smooth.
- **Note:** Add more honey or a pitted date if sweeter flavour is desired.
- Adjust amount of ice depending on whether your fruits and vegetables are frozen or not. **OH**



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STORY **NANCY BELGUE**
PHOTOGRAPHY **MAX WEDGE**

It's fascinating to watch Nancy Johns paint. She moves quickly and with decision. Her blank canvas fills with her signature colours – purple, teal and reds – while her rescue dog, Sydney, keeps a careful eye on her progress. It's clear Johns is a woman in full. Her three passions – her painting, her gallery and her framing – have converged in a career path that feeds and nourishes her. It's an enviable place to be.

Johns's evolution from art student to successful artist/entrepreneur is inspiring. In 1989, she was a fine arts student at the

University of Windsor and working part-time at Posterotics, a local framing store. It was here, Johns says, that she was "fortunate to work with a couple with great business sense." They were very knowledgeable about framing, Johns adds and "taught me everything there is to know about it." Armed with a fine arts degree and what amounted to an apprenticeship in both small business management and hands-on training in the art of framing, Johns had a vision: she would open a gallery that would allow her to utilize all her skills in one place. In 2007, after

supplementing her on-the-job experience with a small business management course, Johns opened Nancy Johns Gallery & Framing. The gallery was a success from the get-go. "Windsor has really supported the gallery," Johns says. "We really feel part of the community and that's very special."

In the spirit of community involvement, twice a year the gallery holds major events. In the spring, Johns and her staff stage what they call their "size event." Johns chooses a canvas size and sends out an open call for artists to submit work in that size. In November,

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Johns donates 10 per cent of the gallery's art sales for the month to a specific charity. This past November, Tranquility for Hospice of Windsor and Essex County was Johns' charity of choice. "Giving back is a big part of why I love what I do," Johns says. She is also very involved in the Humane Society, and sat on their board for three years, wrapping up her term in September of 2013. "I was so glad to be able to help during a time that saw the construction of the spay and neuter clinic," Johns comments. Ironically, it was as she was leaving the Humane Society a few weeks before the end of her final term that she laid eyes on a fetching Red Heeler Australian Cattle Dog, Sydney, named for Australia's capital city, was available for adoption and Johns says it was "love at first sight."

Johns' own canvases are big, bold, abstract pieces. They fill up a room with vibrant colour and motion. Her painting is the purest expression of her creativity. She produces several works a year and her work is in such demand that it was difficult finding pieces to photograph. "Many of my works are out on rentals," Johns comments. "And many more have sold. I am humbled and thrilled at the response."

"Although I love painting, I also love the framing side of the business," Johns says. "Every one of my employees is also an artist, so we are able to bring that artistic sensibility to the framing side. We get a thrill out of finding the best way to enhance our customers' art, photographs or memorabilia."

The gallery also enables Johns to fill a mentorship role. She currently represents 38 artists. "I like to make sure we have a variety of styles, mediums and prices," says Johns. "We want the art to have a broad appeal and want the browsing experience to be eclectic." In addition to paintings and photography, the gallery also represents jewelry and ceramic artists and offers a complete art rental program to encourage people to experience the thrill of living with art.

Making a life in the arts may be challenging but it is also immensely fulfilling, says Johns. "Producing or buying art is an emotional experience that is different for everyone," she adds. "For me, to be creative is to keep pushing myself to new depths. But the art gives back. It gives back beauty and joy."

"As a career, one can't ask for more." **OH**



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SUN-FILLED LEMON CHUTNEY

STORY AND PHOTOS **PAT CROCKER**



This chutney gets better and better over time. In fact, it is best when “aged” from four to six months. Whether you make it for the holidays for gifts or wait until the new year, this tangy grill-buddy is perfect for summer barbecue season. Its spicy, rich marmalade flavour lends zest to grilled vegetables, fish and chicken. Don't be put off by the overnight macerating of the rind, flesh and salt because it's easy: all you do is peel and chop the lemons, combine with salt, cover and let sit overnight.

Because I like this chutney to have extra heat for grilled foods, I add either dried chipotle or hot red pepper flakes, but you can omit these if you wish. Use a small, heavy spice mortar and pestle – mine is cast iron – or a rolling pin to crush the seeds and a micro-grater to grate the fresh ginger.

LEMON CHUTNEY

Makes 4 cups (1 L)

8 thick-skin lemons, scrubbed	1 ½ cup (125 mL) cider vinegar
2 tbsp (25 mL) pickling or Kosher salt	1 tbsp (15 mL) freshly grated gingerroot
4 large cloves garlic, minced	1 dried cayenne pepper, crushed
½ cup (125 mL) dried currants	1 tsp (5 mL) ground cardamom
½ cup (125 mL) chopped dried apricots	1 tsp (5 mL) crushed coriander
½ cup (125 mL) freshly squeezed lemon juice	½ tsp (2 mL) dried hot red pepper flakes, optional
	2 cups (500 mL) +2 tbsp (25 mL) packed brown sugar

- **Peel:** Using a vegetable peeler, remove the zest from the lemons, being careful not to include the white pith. Finely chop the zest. Using a paring knife, cut away and discard the white pith from around the lemons. Coarsely chop the lemons, discarding the seeds.
- **Combine:** In a non-reactive bowl, combine the zest, lemons and salt. Cover with a clean cloth and set aside in a cool place overnight.
- **Cook:** In a Maslin pan or large saucepan, combine macerated lemon mixture, garlic, currants, apricots, lemon juice, vinegar,

ginger, cayenne, cardamom, coriander and hot pepper flakes. Bring to a light simmer over high heat. Reduce heat to medium and stir in the brown sugar. Stir constantly until the sugar is dissolved.

- **Simmer:** Adjust the heat to keep the mixture at a regular simmer and cook, frequently stirring for 30 to 45 minutes, or until the mixture becomes thick and mounds on a wooden spoon.
- **Jar:** Meanwhile, place four, 1 cup (250 mL) Mason-type jars in a canning kettle. Cover with water and bring to a boil. Place 4 flat lids in a saucepan and pour boiling water over, set aside.
- **Fill:** Skim and discard any foam on chutney. Fill hot jars one at a time, leaving a ¼ inch (0.5 cm) headspace. Wipe rims with a clean cloth, top jars with flat lids and screw on metal rings. Return jars to the hot water bath, topping up with hot water if necessary to bring the water one inch (2.5 cm) over the tops of the jars. Cover the canner, bring water to a full rolling boil and keep boiling for 10 minutes.
- **Cool:** Turn the heat off, remove canner lid and wait 5 minutes before removing jars to a towel or rack to cool completely. Check seals, label and store in a cool place for up to one year.
- **Use:** Once it has “aged” for a month or more, serve Lemon Chutney right from the jar with baked whitefish (as shown), trout or salmon. You can also mix 1 cup (250 mL) with 3 tbsp (45 mL) chopped capers for a flavourful and different tartar sauce. Mix with orange juice or an equal amount of yogurt and coat chicken before baking. Mix ¼ cup (50 mL) chutney with the same amount of soy sauce and use as a sauce for stir-fried foods. Serve as a condiment for cooked chicken, cold cuts of meat and with a cheese platter or over brie, cream cheese or goat cheese. **OH**

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STORY AND PHOTOS
TARA CHATTELL

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How-To:

- Cut your wood into five-inch squares, or whatever size that's right for you. Sand wood squares until smooth and round off the sharp edges and corners.
- If you'd like to give your wood a paint wash, like we've done with ours, do so now and allow to dry overnight before transferring your image.
- Using your X-Acto knife, ruler and self-healing mat, measure and cut your wax paper to 8.5-inches-by-11-inches. The more precisely you cut your wax paper, the better the chance it will feed through your printer.
- Adjust your computer image to the appropriate size for your piece of

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wood. You'll also need to reverse the image before printing, so that it's facing the right way once transferred to the wood.

- Print your image onto the wax paper. If your wax paper has only one waxy side, be sure to load the paper correctly so that the image prints on that side. It may take a few attempts to get it to print properly, so it doesn't hurt to have a few extra pieces of cut wax paper.
- Acting quickly and carefully, place the wax paper, wet side down, onto your piece of wood. Be very careful not to let it move once it's touched the wood or it will smear. Take your card and run it over the wax paper. Carefully pull the wax paper off of the wood.
- Attach four felt pads in the corners, on the bottom side. Voilà! Your wood trivet is complete and ready to protect your table with style. **OH**

Note: We've chosen not to put a finish on our trivets. If you decide you'd like to add a finish, choose something that is not wax-based or it will transfer to the bottom of your hot pots and dishes. A natural oil finish may work best. Ask your local hardware store for advice on the best finish.



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