



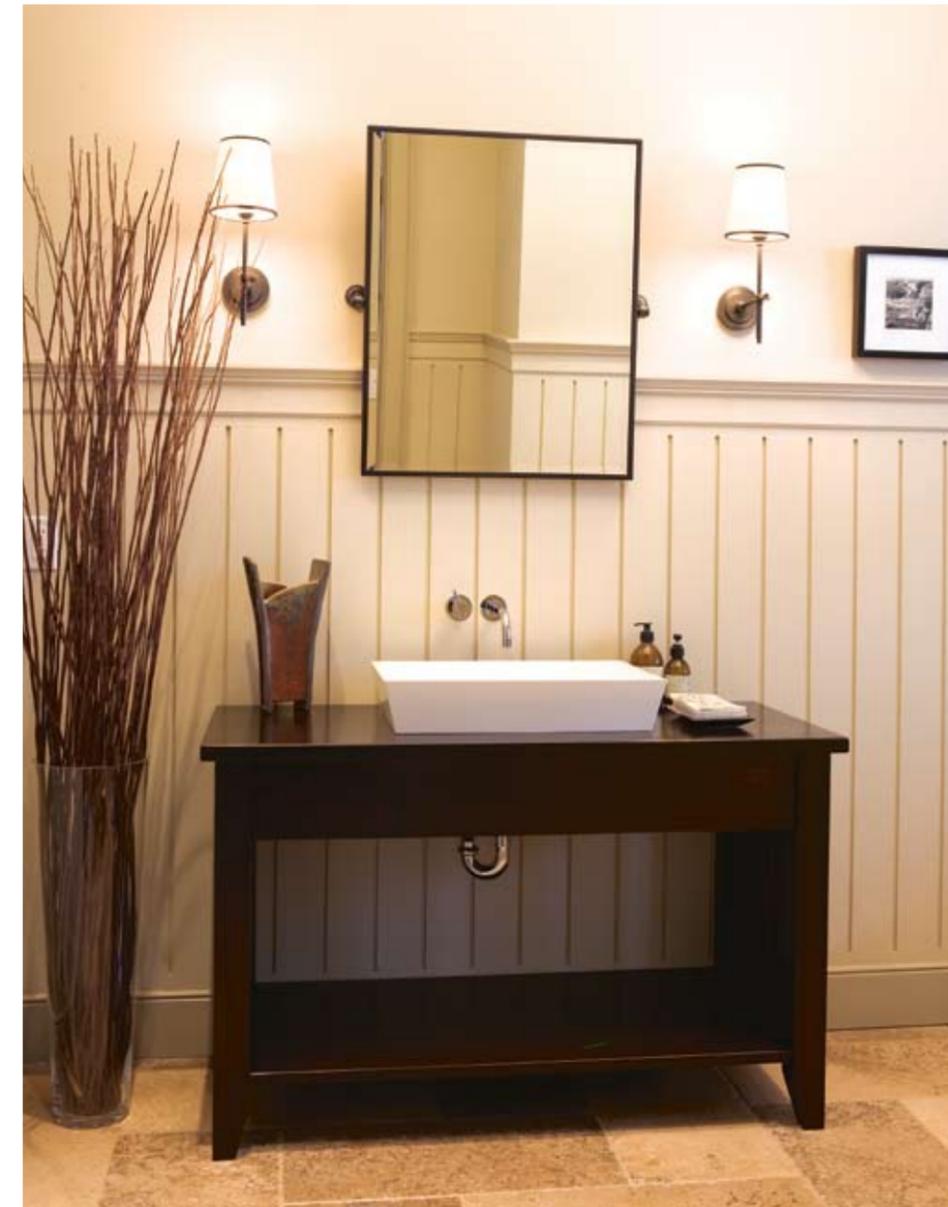
# INTO FRUITION

A COLLINGWOOD, ON, COUPLE MAKES IT HAPPEN

This welcoming foyer features the much-coveted totem pole acquired by the art-loving owner. The paneling adds depth and dimension to the large entry while the four lounge chairs offer a comfy cozy gathering area. OPPOSITE: In keeping with the homes updated country look, the custom vanity adds an air of warmth and simplicity to the spacious powder room.



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**“I’M THE LUCKIEST MAN IN THE WORLD,”** says builder Richard Wilson. Wilson, owner of Wilson Project Management in Toronto, ON, builds some of the most exclusive custom homes in Ontario. His clients include the prestigious architecture firm Hariri Pontarini, for whom he built the internationally-recognized Art Collector’s Residence in Toronto. The house went on to win several awards, including *Art Info Magazine’s* Best House in the World in 2005.

It had always been his dream, however, to build his own home. When the time came, he selected the ideal piece of land in Collingwood, ON.

“I sat on the lot with a chair every weekend for six months to site the house properly,” Wilson laughs. Those weekends paid off: his family and their guests are now treated to spectacular views of skiers flying down Blue Mountain, a nearby ski resort, while the view from rear terrace encompasses not just their property, but the serene woodland of Craighleith Provincial Park. “It’s kind of like having acres of our own private forest out back,” Wilson says.

After two years of construction, the 11,000 square foot, Craftsman-style home is warm and beckoning from the outside, with contemporary meeting tradition on the inside. With eight bedrooms (including three housed in the guest quarters above the four-bay, heated garage) six bathrooms, a gym and a marble-walled steam room, the house boasts plenty of room for entertaining.

Custom wood paneling and a charming foyer furnished with locally-made furniture greet guests at the door. So does a 12-foot tree.

“It’s a sculpture that looks like a Tom Thompson, Georgian Bay pine,” Wilson says. It also was the starting point of the whole project. First spied in a local gallery in 2002, he and his wife fell in love with it but it was a “luxury we couldn’t justify,” he says. A year later at the same gallery, Wilson was dismayed to see the tell-tale red dot on the tree’s information card, a sign that it had been sold. When Wilson asked the gallery owner who had bought it, “he looked at me and said, ‘You did!’ My wife had bought it and had kept it a secret until then.”



The large kitchen sees plenty of entertaining. The warmth of the finishes draws people in and makes this the natural gathering place for the house. The custom stained island and large scale industrial pendants balance the heavy beam above.



The chandelier from Australia, a gift from an appreciative client, shines over the dining table visible from most areas on the main level. The contemporary high back wing chairs from fAd@Peaks & Rafters in Collingwood, ON, are an unexpected twist in the rustic setting. OPPOSITE: The basement contains a fully functional home theatre, stocked kitchen with popcorn maker and beer/wine fridge. This entertainment area houses a poker table, table tennis table and an original Evil Knievel pin ball game.



The gathering point inside the house is the great room, where living room and kitchen flow together seamlessly. An imposing fireplace anchors the living room and is surrounded by Algonquin rubble stone quarried nearby in Owen Sound. The custom-made chandelier that hangs from the 28-foot ceiling was chosen by their designer, Marina Farrow, of fAd@Peaks & Rafters in Collingwood. It spans more than four feet and is made entirely of delicate twigs.

A second, equally impressive fixture hangs in the dining room, again made of organic materials. The antique, built entirely of antlers, traveled to Canada in the 1920s from Austria. Wilson lucked into it when one of his clients, a descendent of the original owner, presented it to Wilson as a gift.

The impressive beams that travel the length of the great room's ceiling are 150 years old, and were recovered from a brewery in Toronto's waterfront district. With a thickness of 18 by 26 feet, they support one entire end of the house.

The expansive kitchen boasts Bianca Carrara marble countertops, custom millwork and top-of-the-line appliances. The large centre island is topped with hand-brushed black granite, a treatment which gives the surface an extra soft texture.

In the generous games room found in the walk-out basement, guests and family can play snooker or relax in front of the ten-foot projection television. Blackout blinds cover the two sets of French doors leading to the outside, darkening the room when it's showtime.

Take a stroll through those doors into the back yard to discover one of Wilson's favourite features of the home:

the poolside pavilion, which boasts a fireplace, a full kitchen and a seated dining area, perfect for a formal meal or a casual get together. Wilson has even hosted an outdoor concert in the space. The kitchen backsplash features another locally-sourced stone, this time grain-cut Eramosa, a veined limestone found in nearby Wiarton, Ontario. The lovely warm brown of the stone also caught the eye of a well-known Italian fashion designer, who chose to use it extensively in his brand-new, Dubai boutique.

Ask Wilson, though, and he'll tell you the best place to be is in the pool, which they keep heated to a toasty 98 degrees year round. "We can relax in the water and watch everybody (at Blue Mountain) ski," he says. A 10-person hot tub and a waterfall round out the exterior touches. Balancing his own project with his clients' meant he couldn't be on the job site as much as he would have liked while the house was under construction.

"Even though it was my house and my dream, I had to rely on the people who work for me to do it," he recalls. His team of 30-plus staff applied the same rigorous standards when building their employer's home as they continue to do on all client projects. But that kind of devotion and commitment are inspired from the top.

"I love what I do," Wilson says. And it shows. ♣

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The oversized sofa frames the large stone fireplace in this grand family room. The custom designed TV unit and console and the carefully selected accent pieces enhance the innate warmth of the high wood beamed ceilings and reclaimed wood floors. All the furniture was custom designed and manufactured.



The master bedroom remains intentionally sparse to focus the view to the private forest outside. OPPOSITE: The steam room shower features current marble mosaic tile patterns specifically designed to emphasize the curved ceiling, softening the linear flow of the multi-level seating and vanity.