

feature

In the kitchen, contemporary meets traditional rustic. Nothing obstructs the view. The impressive island is topped with a solid slab of wheat-coloured, antique marble.

RIGHT: The homeowners selected a rusty red to highlight the exterior of their Brad Abbott-designed custom home, built within walking distance of the Craigleith Ski Club.



MOUNTAIN *Retreat*

BY JIM FOX // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY

This spacious all-season country home is a five-minute walk from the slopes – the ideal setting for an active family that enjoys skiing, casual gatherings and holiday parties with family and friends who can't resist an invite.

Surrounded by fir trees with views of Blue Mountain and Georgian Bay, this custom retreat was designed and built within a year, which is quite a feat for a project of this size. It is a true testament to the homeowner's exquisite taste and organizational know-how.

According to designer **Brad Abbott** of **Abbott Design Ltd.**, it was good that he and builder, **Dave Harrington** of **Absolute Craftsmen**, were brought on board at the same time. "Having us both begin at the same time was terrific when you're on a tight timeline," Abbott says. "Dave is an excellent builder and we were fortunate that the homeowners were highly organized and firm about their decision-making."

Abbott adds, "As well as the home's orientation on the property with a view to the ski hills, there was a desire that the residence have three separate living spaces. One was a family area in a great room that was both intimate and allowed for entertaining guests. The other was a family node or quiet area, separate from the communal gathering spaces. Lastly, there's a kids' zone on the basement floor with overnight accommodation and a games room. A U-shaped plan with a central outdoor room that could be used in all seasons allowed for the separation we wanted."

It helps that Abbott, a skier himself, who has designed over 15 homes in the Creemore, Collingwood, Thornbury triangle, is intimately familiar with the lifestyle requirements of busy ski families. *Continued on page 43*



LEFT: The great room is designed for easy living. The custom dining table is set for an evening of fine food and friends.

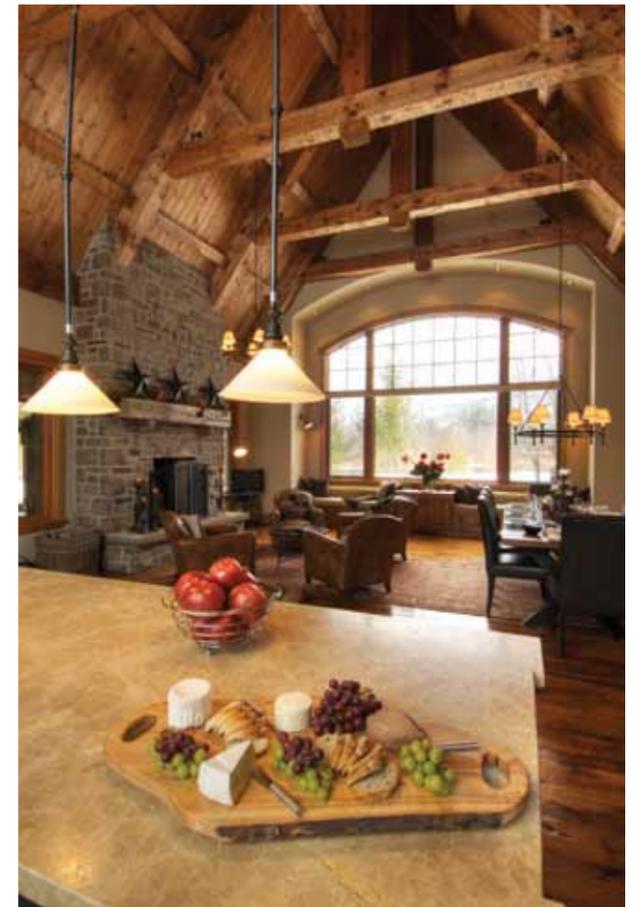
BELOW: Family and friends gather in front of the wood-burning fireplace. The homeowners have filled their home with art from Black Dog Gallery, Level Gallery, Loft Gallery, Sue Tupy, Sheila Fox and Jenn Wilkins.

RIGHT: Large identical windows were installed at the front and back of the home. The views from inside are incredible, especially during ski season.

The homeowner agrees with Abbott's assessment. "We interviewed quite a few designer/builders to arrive at people we knew we could work with and who could complete the project on time. We also had a concrete vision of what we wanted. We knew we wanted an outdoor room and sleeping accommodation away from the communal areas."

The result is an excellent mix of the traditional and the modern-traditional textures and materials in a clean, uncluttered setting. In the words of the homeowner, "I'm all about symmetry and balance." This stylistic poise is apparent as you enter the home under a sloped metal canopy braced by twin, hand-adzed beams that jut forward, welcoming visitors home.

The roomy entranceway with its natural flagstone flooring and intriguing bench from **Terase Art and Home** opens on to all the large areas of the ground floor. The heated flooring flows nicely into the reclaimed hemlock plank floors of varied widths in the rest of the home. To the right is the vast open kitchen, dining and gathering spaces of the great room with a cathedral ceiling of rustic pine beams that soar over 40 feet high. Mammoth, twin windows (**Loewen**) on each end of the great room allow for plenty of natural light. One window affords a panoramic view of the ski hills in the distance. The massive, Rumford-style fireplace finished in grey stone and a barn-beam mantel anchors this large space. **Rob Hobson of Hobson Masonry** did all the stonework. *Continued on page 46*





LEFT: The four-season room was built between the great room and the living room. It too has a wood-burning fireplace and comfortable furnishings.

Art is an integral part of the décor. In the four-season room, the homeowners selected this birch-branch piece by Ian McLeod, purchased at Parrots 'N Parsnips.



The living room has a gas fireplace and a neutral décor with hints of red, the accent colour carried throughout the home. Innovative architectural details are evident in this room, from top to bottom.

BELOW: A bench from Terase Art and Home graces the front entrance. A photograph of the Collingwood harbour, taken by the homeowner, greets everyone at the door.



In the homeowner's words, "This room is perfect! We wanted lots of space because we like to entertain when we're in the area."

The fabulous kitchen is positioned in the front of the home. There are no upper cabinets obstructing the view, all storage is located on either side of the room or below. The well-crafted, face-frame cabinetry, by **Bernard Rioux**, in a pleasing neutral hue, is complemented by modern oil-rubbed bronze hardware. The built-in Sub-Zero fridge, with its bottom rollout freezer and the wine cooler, are seamlessly integrated into the cabinetry.

Likewise, the stainless steel Wolf gas range, topped by a rustic wood and metal hood, fits nicely with the space's comfortable contemporary décor. All the kitchen appliances were purchased at **Foley's Furniture**. The long, rectangular island, topped with a solid slab of wheat-coloured, antique marble, works as both a serving table for large gatherings and a breakfast bar for family and guests.

The great room includes a large wooden dining table for eight, built by **John Poole**, with smart chocolate brown leather Parsons chairs and iron candelabra with crisp parchment shades above. Next to the dining area a cluster of leather club chairs surround the central hearth. A Turkish carpet in tones of red, black and beige grounds the area. Red is the accent colour used throughout the entire home. *Continued on page 48*

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A guest bedroom on the lower level. All the sleeping quarters, upstairs and downstairs, are located in a separate wing of the home.

TOP RIGHT: The whole family skis. The youngest son races to win.

MIDDLE RIGHT: The two boys have identical rooms upstairs, each with custom furniture and a separate bathroom.

BOTTOM RIGHT: The landing upstairs separates the master ensuite and the boys' rooms.



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Rooms upstairs and down celebrate the colour, which unifies the home as a whole – the rich dark wood of the furniture and the deep reds found in carpets, wall art and accent pieces. These hues are set against a background of neutral walls and the organic hues of the flooring, trim and ceiling beams.

The central space on the ground floor accentuates the home's focus on enjoying the outdoors. This "outdoor room" with a superb view of the Craighleith Ski Club is situated between the great room and the living room. It is furnished with casual outdoor furniture and is heated by a Rumford-style fireplace. Four huge iron lanterns from **Three Herons** light the room. This space opens on to an outdoor entertaining area complete with grill, hot tub and fire pit. What better way to enjoy the great outdoors any season of the year! The homeowners love their outdoor living space by **Clarke's Landscaping**.

The adjacent living room, furnished in comfortable, upholstered furniture lends itself to more intimate gatherings. It, too, has a generous gas fireplace with a limestone mantel to keep skiers warm after an exhilarating day on the slopes. *Continued on page 50*



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feature

The master ensuite has a large free-standing vessel tub and built-in seating with storage by the window. The custom-cabinetry adds warmth to the enticing room.

BELOW: The homeowners wake up to a view of the snow-covered slope.



Across the hall, the roomy mudroom accommodates winter gear and apparel. It opens to the outside onto the development's trail system, within walking distance to the Craighleith Ski Club, as well as to a heated double garage.

A natural wood staircase with its custom wrought-iron railing opens on to the two large, upper-floor bedrooms with their dark wood furniture. "Each bedroom is the same size and has its own bathroom to avoid any disputes," smiles the homeowner.

The master bedroom, at the other end of the hall, provides a spectacular, unobstructed view of the ski slopes. Here, unique window treatments of top-down/bottom-up blinds, by **Salnek**, provide privacy while the ensuite bath, in sand-coloured marble, has his-and-her sinks in a roomy vanity that makes it easy to prepare for a day of skiing.

Guests haven't been left out of the picture in this active household of avid skiers and golfers. The large guest bedroom and overnight "bunkie" for younger guests on the lower floor with its airy 10-foot high ceilings are only steps away from the generous four-piece bathroom. On the same floor is a large laundry room and a spacious recreation room offering a widescreen TV with surround sound, a comfortable chocolate-coloured sectional and a ping pong table. **Georgian Audio** provided the home's security system and the audio/visual Control 4 network.

Outside and in, this active family's country home with its sleek modern lines and traditional accents is a tribute to the owner's original vision. "We wanted a comfortable home that was warm and inviting."

This home achieves that and much more: It captures functionality and fun in perfect, artful balance. **OH**

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