

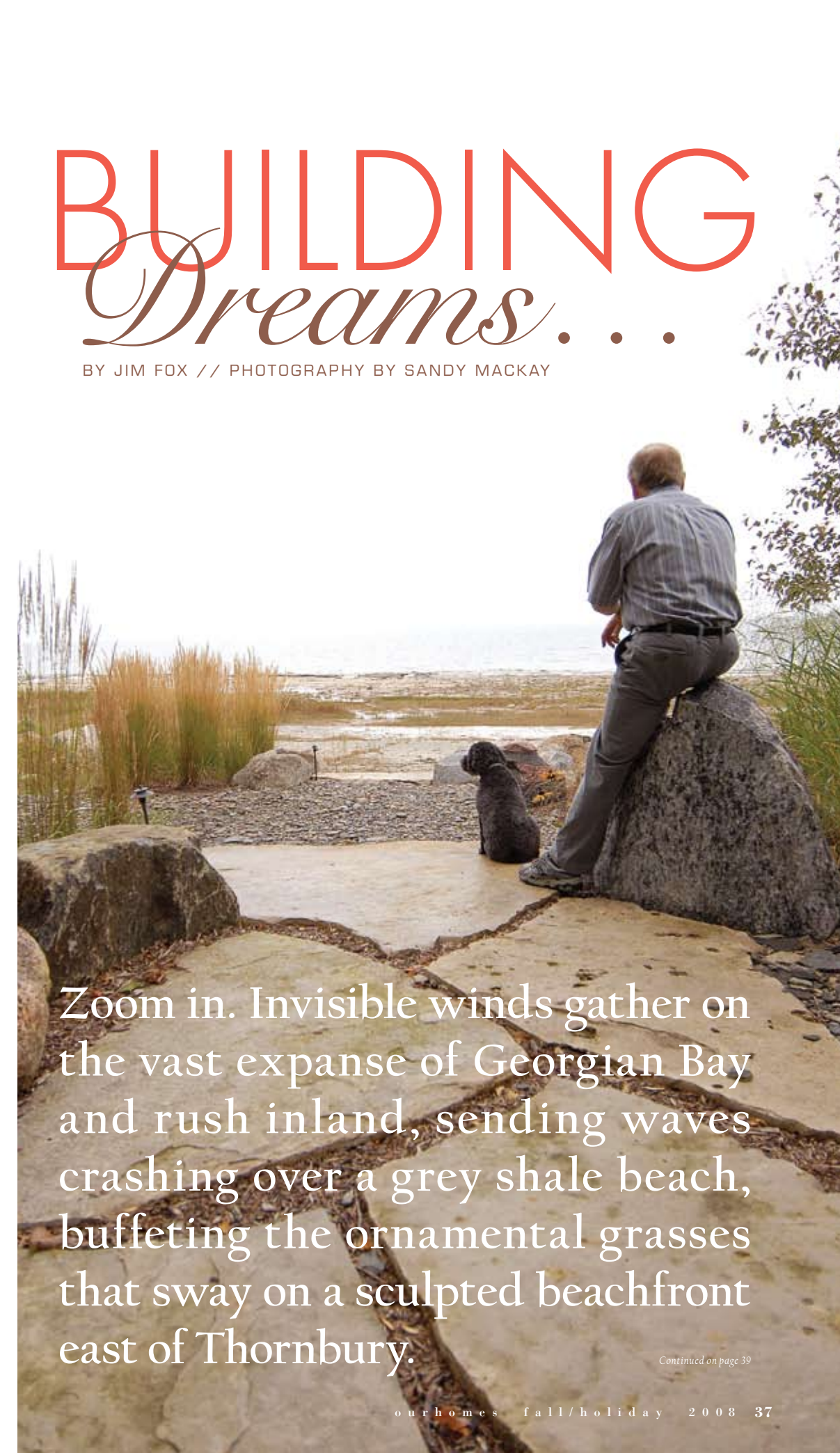


A flagstone walkway leads to the entrance of this beautifully designed and decorated home on the water.

RIGHT: Landmark Group did a fabulous job on the hardscapes. The look out back is natural and secluded.

BUILDING *Dreams...*

BY JIM FOX // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY



Zoom in. Invisible winds gather on the vast expanse of Georgian Bay and rush inland, sending waves crashing over a grey shale beach, buffeting the ornamental grasses that sway on a sculpted beachfront east of Thornbury.

Continued on page 39



OPPOSITE: The living room, with its floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace and vaulted ceiling, also offers a stunning view of the shoreline.

TOP LEFT: Slate floors in the entrance turn to hardwood on the main floor of this Arts and Crafts-style home.

BOTTOM LEFT: Antiques from local dealers set the tone. These owners have impeccable taste.



The waterfront is a jewel on this stretch of the bay – shaped by the imagination of the homeowners and landscape designers. The rugged beauty of the bay is enhanced by the artful use of multi-coloured granite boulders, a variety of grasses, groundcover and poplar, cedar and white birch trees. A series of stepped flagstone walkways descend to the water from a multi-level deck, complete with barbecue area, a patio gathering place and hot tub.

The wonderful waterside landscaping is the result of combined efforts on the part of the **Landmark Group** – design and hardscapes; **Kool Country Gardens** – planting and native grasses; and **Dave Holmlund** – deck design/construction. Add outdoor furniture and accessories from **Squire John's** and **Greentree**, lighting by **Lawn-Tech**, and a hot tub from **Clear Choice**, and you have an outdoor living space that is truly an escape in an exhilarating, natural setting.

Continued on page 42



Cornflower blue cabinetry in the kitchen is fun and unexpected. Hints of the same blue can be found in the granite counter on the island.

RIGHT: Collectibles and antiques throughout the home are thoughtfully placed.





The master bedroom leads to a spa-like en suite. The room is cosy, with lots of extra space.

TOP RIGHT: An antique child's toy sits comfortably on a fluffy duvet in a guest room.

BOTTOM RIGHT: The seamless glass shower is tucked into a corner in the master en suite.



Living and working in Toronto, the owners hired architect, **Paul Roth**, of **Roth-Knibb Architects** in the city to design a northern getaway for their family. They owned the property for a year while they thought about the design. “At first, we didn’t know what we wanted,” they say. “Our priorities were a two-storey home with an open-concept plan, with easy access to the bay and good views of the water. Our challenge was to design for a lifestyle we never had, for people who may or may not come. We were advised to: ‘Build it primarily for yourselves, not for extended family and friends.’ We took this advice. So the upstairs master bedroom and en suite are roomy and the other upstairs bedrooms are sufficient, but not overly large. We can easily

accommodate guests, and when we are here by ourselves, it feels just right.”

Looking back, the homeowners are happy with their decision. They’re also happy that they chose **Doug Abbot’s** bid. Abbot, of **Village Builders Inc.** in Creemore, developed such a strong rapport with Roth that they went on to build another home together. Abbot also had a great relationship with the homeowners. “We could not have planned to work with a better builder. We were glad to work with a local contractor and trades, and living on the bay, with all the water run-off from the Escarpment, we especially wanted our home to be ‘dry as a bone.’ Between Paul and Doug, it was built like Noah’s Ark.”

Abbot agrees. “Paul Roth is a great architect. His drawings are excellent. Paul was easy to work with in solving problems that inevitably come up. We’ve worked together on several other projects. Likewise, we have a great relationship with the homeowners. We work very closely with clients and pride ourselves in people having a good building experience because most of our work comes from referrals. This is one of our showcase homes. People still call us asking for the plans.”

The result is a waterfront home in a modern Arts and Crafts style, completed in 1999, which has admirably withstood the test of time, incorporating from the start structural innovations that were ahead of

Continued on page 44

“We couldn’t have planned to work with a better builder.”



LEFT: An office on the landing upstairs features this old Canadiana bookcase.

BELOW: This heirloom quilt hangs on the railing overlooking the great room below.



its time. The overall ambience of the home is restful relaxation – a true getaway from the hustle and bustle of an urban setting.

The tone of comfort is set by natural light streaming through large windows in the great room and in the dining area. Here, ample windows offer a generous view of the landscaped garden and bay. The home's relaxed atmosphere is accentuated by the cooking area's cornflower blue cabinetry and the blue-brown shades of the kitchen's granite-topped island. The open eating and gathering spaces are warmed by antique furnishings from **Joe's Emporium, J.R. Antiques, Blue House Antiques** and **Stayner Antiques**, and comfortable leather seating in earthy brown tones from

Terase Art & Home and **Jonna's Rustic Refinement and Antiques**.

The overall look is tied together by cheerful, cherry flooring and blue-green slate tiles in the entranceway and bathrooms. Continuity is also provided by custom-planed pine doors. The rustic look extends to the great room's natural stone fireplace, with its rough-hewn wood mantel, to the exterior grey-hued wood siding with white trim. In the homeowner's words, "we wanted to keep things as natural as possible. We used to vacation in Maine and Cape Cod and like the east coast look, and at times, when the mist hovers over Blue Mountain and the waves crash in off the bay, it feels like we're on the ocean."

Continued on page 45

The homeowners were glad to have the leeway to add several details of their own and make changes as the project progressed. The ceiling of the kitchen/dining area, originally to be tongue-in-groove pine like the cathedral ceiling of the great room, became wallboard with an attractive geometric pine lattice. Behind the kitchen is a functional laundry/pantry room, complete with a laundry chute descending from the master bedroom above. Upstairs, the scheduled flat ceiling of the master bedroom was opened up to create an airy space and the original beams were painted.

On the shores of Georgian Bay, the Village Builders' motto: We Build Dreams, has come true. Since 1980, the firm has constructed dreams from Meaford to Mulmur. "For us, it's the quality we're selling, not the price," Abbot says. "We're there for our clients, even months later, and we treasure those referrals."

Zoom out. As you leave this cosy home, built with care down a secluded lane, through a shadowy cedar forest, you're struck by the home's appropriate sense of scale. You feel this timeless home is already an integral part of its natural surroundings – a warm refuge for its owners that easily withstands the wild winds off Georgian Bay. **OH**



The laundry room is long, with abundant storage. White beadboard cupboards give the room a light, airy feel.

BELOW: The waterside of this home is absolutely stunning, with its tiered decks and breathtaking landscapes. There are several nooks with varying views set up for relaxation and entertaining.

