



Japanese magnolia trees flank the front porch. The timber frame detail is repeated above the garage doors and was constructed by Curtis. Stone skirting continues to the wall behind the front door. Windows and doors were sourced at Van Dolder's Custom Exteriors.

ALL THE RIGHT MOVES

STORY **RACHAEL HAVENS** | PHOTOGRAPHY **SANDY MACKAY**

Debra Anderson set out to find a new home that could host their family Christmas. After 23 years in Wellington County, Debra and her husband Curtis Rutt were making the move to Grey County.

The couple knew exactly what they wanted, but couldn't find it on the market. It became clear that a custom build was right for them.

Debra knew **Jennifer McInnes** through work, leading to an introduction to Jennifer's husband **Mike McInnes** of **Universal Builders**. A partnership was quickly formed, as Debra and Curtis had found their builders. It also led to the lot their new home is built on, which Mike owned in Eugenia. Driving by immediately after hearing about the lot, Debra remembers "I loved it because it had all the hardwood trees."

Continued on page 67

In the front foyer, a sisal area rug defines the space. The round mirror hanging over a whitewashed console table is surrounded by leaf botanicals. Flooring for the home was purchased at Georgian Design Centre.



“Mike has been a carpenter his whole life,” says Jennifer. “His father was a carpenter, and he started from an early age, following his dad around. He started Universal Builders in 2003 and now focuses on custom homes, renovations and additions, as well as insulated concrete forms (ICF).” Jennifer joined the business full-time two years ago.

Debra and Curtis had a handful of priorities when it came to the design of their new home, including that it be single-storey, embrace open-concept and incorporate vaulted ceilings. Reclaimed barn beams were also key to the design. Curtis also wanted a three-car garage, while Debra sought a wood-burning fireplace.

To accomplish this vision, Mike and Jennifer referred Debra and Curtis to Architectural Technologist **Catherine Lockhart** of **Residential Graphics & Design**. **Across the Grain** completed kitchen cabinets, with counters from **The Granite Company**. Windows and doors are from **Van Dolder’s Custom Exteriors**, building supplies from **Shelburne Home Hardware Building Centre** and flooring from **Georgian Design Centre**. **Rick Dodd Custom Painting Inc.** completed painting throughout the home, while **The Master’s Workbench** handled stairs and railings. “They all did a really great job,” Curtis explains. “We’re very appreciative of Mike’s connections to the trades.” *Continued on page 69*



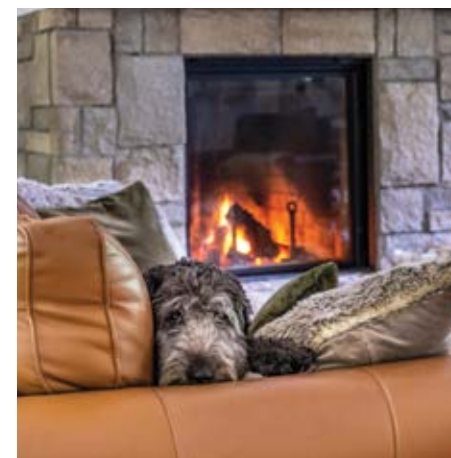
A well-used firepit off the rear deck is surrounded by Muskoka chairs. The trees that drew Debra to the site shelter the rear yard. The building site excavation was completed by Ben Hopkins Excavating Inc. **BELOW:** Jennifer McInnes, Curtis Rutt, Debra Anderson and Mike McInnes couldn’t be happier with the finished home.



Some of the rear deck is covered giving this settee lots of use when it is raining. The double doors are an entrance to the great room



The Rumford 1000 wood-burning unit is surrounded by stone installed by Dominic Arcaro. Jennifer Woodburn's *Along The Water's Edge* hangs over the fireplace mantel. Another painting by Jennifer called *Snow Day On The Bruce Trail* hangs by the door to the primary bedroom. Jennifer shows her artwork at Loft Gallery.



Debra adds, "Mike's knowledge of local trades helped us get into our house on time." The build was complete in six months, with Debra and Curtis moving in just in time for Christmas. They fondly recall that first festive season in their great room "with our Christmas tree up, lights dimmed and the fireplace going."

The big, open-concept great room is at the heart of the home with the primary suite at one end and two bedrooms with a bathroom in between on the other end. They had a wonderful experience working with Universal Builders to create this space from the ground up.

Curtis helped out on weekends, too, building the deck and front porch himself. He also built the beautiful rangehood in the kitchen from an inspiration photo Debra found on Pinterest. "It helped make our house feel like it was complete when we moved in," Debra says. "And it kept me busy!" laughs Curtis. *Continued on page 71*

LEFT: An arrangement of beautiful roses sits on the dining table dressed for Thanksgiving dinner with crystal, candles, linens and gold flatware. **BELOW LEFT:** The family dog Rory, short for Aurora, enjoys a rest by the fire on the leather sofa. **BELOW:** Open-cage lighting over the dining table was purchased at Home Depot. The timber frame detail in the vaulted ceiling is made from reclaimed barn beams, which were also used for the fireplace mantel.





The kitchen cabinetry was supplied by Across the Grain. Stone counters were sourced at The Granite Company. The custom exhaust hood was crafted by Curtis from a photo Debra found on Pinterest. A display of Wedgewood's *Hunting Scene* in the glass-fronted upper cabinets belonged to Debra's mother Colleen.



Jennifer's favourite part of a build is when the drywall goes up. "Your rooms become rooms, everything starts to take form," she says. Jennifer also appreciated the opportunity to visit the completed house, as she loves to see that "the house you built is now being lived in and it will create memories for another family for years to come."

One of the best parts of the home is the location, which sets the scene for so many of these memories. Debra and Curtis can snowshoe right out their back door, and are also savouring being able to hike the trails in the Old Baldy Conservation Area. Curtis and their daughter, Olivia, refurbished a canoe, and the couple also loves to kayak. *Continued on page 72*

TOP LEFT: A series of photos taken in Austria by Curtis and Debra's daughter Olivia hang in the hallway to the garage. **ABOVE:** The subway tile backsplash was installed by Trendy Designs. The profile on the cabinet doors and drawers is slim Shaker. Gold hardware is a sophisticated choice against the white cabinets. **LEFT:** Encaustic tile in the laundry room carries onto the backsplash. Cabinets were supplied by Across the Grain.



In the primary bedroom, white linen bedding is enhanced with texture and black details. Bedside sconces have adjustable arms so the light can be moved closer to the bed. Painting for the home was completed by Rick Dodd Custom Painting Inc. **BELOW:** This is the view of the en suite from the primary bedroom. The sliding Z-style barn door opens to the walk-in closet.



“THE HOUSE YOU BUILT IS NOW BEING LIVED IN AND IT WILL CREATE MEMORIES FOR ANOTHER FAMILY FOR YEARS TO COME.”

Continued on page 74

Have us install a fireplace in your home.

REGENCY
FIREPLACE & PATIO SHOP

Since 1973
Located at Highway 6 & 21, Springmount (Near Owen Sound)
519.371.2963 | www.thefyreplace.com

Meg's
DRYWALL

2021 Columbia Tools Brand Ambassador
Owned and operated by
Meghan Robertson
megsdrywall@gmail.com
519-270-6378

new residential construction | renovation | textured ceiling removal | fully insured



In the shared bathroom between the guest bedrooms, the double vanity provides storage space with gold accents in the faucet, mirror, lighting and cabinet hardware. Plumbing for the home was completed by Mueller Plumbing Contractors.



ABOVE: Hexagon tile on the floor of the shared bathroom continues up two sides of the shower. The teak bench can be used to hold soap and shampoo or be used as a seat when relaxing under the rain showerhead. **BELOW:** Olivia's bedroom is painted blush pink. The floating shelf above the bed displays mementos and the open shelving by the closet stores extra towels and linens.



“One morning,” Debra recalls, “we were having coffee in the great room and our dog started to bark. We looked up and there were deer going through the backyard.” Curtis is fond of sitting by the fire with a good glass of wine. Debra and Curtis are certainly loving life in Grey County. “Fall is beautiful here, I love the changing of the seasons,” Debra says, “with lots of privacy and quiet – we’re really enjoying it.” **OH**



custom homes renovations additions



We specialize in ICF!
(insulated concrete forms)
519.375.0771
mike@universalbuilders.ca
jennifer@universalbuilders.ca
universalbuilders.ca

Building peace of mind through dedication to quality...since 2003!



Affordable wood products...delivered!

Custom built sheds. Designed to suit your needs.
Delivered & assembled on site.



Red Cedar Outdoor Saunas...so many health benefits!

Available in a variety of sizes, options and shapes.
Delivered and assembled on site.

453897 Grey Rd.2, R.R.#1 Maxwell, ON | 519.922.1479 | 844.564.0224

Visit our online store for more details and pricing. www.maxwelligardencenter.com