

feature



Charmed on CHEMONG LAKE

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LEFT: Mature pines shelter this modern new home, built on Chemong Lake by Royal Homes.

Peter and Sara thought building a new house was not in the cards for them. They were hesitant to take on the intricacies of constructing a new home and, besides, they never saw a property on the market they liked. "I have lived beside water all of my life, and because I know this area and Chemong Lake very well, I am pretty picky," says Peter who operated a retail business in Bridgenorth for 23 years and retired 15 years ago.

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Well known for its fishery, Chemong Lake stretches from Fowlers Corners to Buckhorn.



It was a twist of fate for them when a property Peter had admired while fishing on Chemong Lake more than 25 years ago came on the market in 2016. “My wife Sara and I had just returned from Florida,” Peter recounts with a too-good-to-be-true tone in his voice. “I opened up the real estate section of the paper and saw this property listed and I said, ‘Oh shoot,’ and when Sara asked me what was wrong, I replied, ‘I think we are moving.’” Sara laughs, raises her voice and continues the story adding her immediate reply was: “What?

Moving? Where? When?”

Only 10 minutes south of their home at Gannon Narrows in Ennismore, the new property prospect was perfect. “It checked off all the boxes,” says Peter. The two-acre island property, connected to Ennismore by a private road, had 800 feet of water frontage on Chemong Lake. It had southern exposure, offered protection from the elements and was in a peaceful setting with all the conveniences nearby. But it was empty land.

As fate would have it, Peter recalled

touring the **Royal Homes** factory when it was in Peterborough 20 or so years ago. “I knew the manager there then and I was very impressed with the process and how the homes were built. So I thought if we go forward with building a home, the Royal Homes way was very appealing,” he says.

Before signing on the dotted line, Peter and **Mike Jones**, design and sales specialist with Royal Homes in Peterborough, visited the property. “We sat in the car, because we did not own it yet,” Peter recalls. “I said to

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LEFT: A wall-wide mirror seemingly doubles the size of this bathroom. **BELOW:** Carved waterfowl float atop the kitchen cupboards and range hood. **OPPOSITE:** Canadiana Cabinets furnished the cabinetry for the large, open-concept kitchen.



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Cushioned dining chairs with elaborate wooden slats and the polished dinner table are cherished family heirlooms. **BOTTOM:** Peter and Sara's living room is furnished for comfort and conversation around the fire.



Mike, "Sara and I have a vision, and you are going to make it come true and we need you to understand and interpret what we have going on in our brains as much as possible," he says snapping his fingers. "Mike was on it like that, and away we went. He was a total partner in this project and paramount to its success." In May 2016, Peter and Sara submitted an offer on the property and on Valentine's Day 2017 a Royal Homes crew was on site delivering and assembling their home. By the day's end, voila, Sara and Peter had a new home.

"It is quite an amazing process," says Sara, who is also retired. "Once we finalized our design with Royal Homes, we went to the Royal Homes design centre showroom in Peterborough to pick out the flooring, shingles, siding, windows, fixtures and paint colours, everything for the home. It was just 10 minutes away, so we could pop in for an hour or two, make some selections, go away, and come back. If you tried to do that in a couple of days you would go crazy."

Peter explains that the five prefab units that make up the house are built in a factory in Wingham and are delivered to the building site with electrical and plumbing fixtures installed and ready to be hooked up to services. Walls come painted and bathtubs, tiles, heated floors, carpet, windows, cabinets and siding already installed. Because all construction is done ahead of time, inside,



An antique sideboard in the dining room is another treasured family keepsake.



Just outside the kitchen, a screened porch at the side of the home offers a bug-free environment with a view of the lake and the large side yard. **BELOW:** Living room armchairs look out on the home's upland front yard.



in a controlled environment, the lumber is bone dry and quality control is excellent. Once units are delivered to the site, a crane lifts them into place. "It is just like full-size Lego," he marvels.

Inside the two-storey, 2,200 sq. ft. home, tall, bump-out windows in the main floor master bedroom, living and dining rooms invite nature's light to pour in. They open out to exceptional lake views. "Windows were the most important thing to me. I wanted the light and the view," says Sara.

Canadiana Cabinets furnished the kitchen, where a large island houses a dishwasher, microwave oven and double kitchen sink. A wave-like pattern in the Cambria quartz countertops restates the couple's desire to bring the outside in. The pièce de résistance is a nearby, seven-foot

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In the master bedroom, the couple awake every morning to a breathtaking view of the lake. **BELOW:** A pocket door opens to rectangular his-and-hers sinks in the en suite.

pantry connecting to a laundry room. A screened-in porch, just off the kitchen, is one of their favourite areas, says Sara, adding when the weather is good, they are hardly ever indoors.

A roomy master bedroom provides lake views. “While I have lived on water all my life, I have never been able to see the lake from my bed. The first morning we moved down here I woke up and thought ‘oh my God!’” says Peter. In the en suite, Sara insisted on heated floors. “For some people that is an option, not for me. I come from England where floors are always cold and bathrooms always damp. Heaven for me is a heated bathroom.”

By opting for a five-foot crawl space rather than a full basement, the couple was able to build as close to the ground as possible, attain the water’s-edge view they desired and be able to have a second storey for when family or friends come to visit. Upstairs

are two bedrooms, an office and a four-piece bathroom.

A stone patio, by **Ash Walker with AW Landscaping**, is a perfect perch to watch the sunrise and take in the lake view. “Rather than a deck, we went with a stone patio to bring the inside outside,” says Peter. Roadside, large grey rocks flank the driveway and the covered porch is the ideal spot for catching sunsets. From a weather point of view, Peter says this part of the lake is a whole different world than where they lived at Gannon Narrows. “The cold northwest wind, which is the prevailing wind, is behind us now,” says Peter. “This is a kinder, gentler place. There are no extremes here.”

“We designed this house for what we wanted and we are so happy here, it is unbelievable,” says Sara. “Every morning we get up and look out and say ‘how fortunate are we!’ It truly has changed our lives.” **OH**

