

Custom features include an oversized window to take full advantage of the forested views.



John and Sharon Vandervoet, Homeowners

• PREFAB CONSTRUCTION •

ABOVE & BEYOND

Solutions found for every challenge during home build

There were two things John and Sharon Vandervoet knew when they decided to semi-retire: they wanted to escape the rat race of city life and they wanted to have a custom home built.

The first part took a little longer than expected, but the couple eventually found a beautiful four-acre property in the Algonquin Highlands, with family living nearby and a boat

launch just down the road. But the second part was actually easier than expected.

As they reviewed options and got quotes, John and Sharon were impressed by Royal Homes. They liked many of the benefits that come from prefab construction, such as knowing their home would be protected from the elements while being built, and the fact they would be moving in within a year.

They were also pleased with the range of customizable options.

While the company has an extensive library of home and cottage designs, those are just the jumping-off point. Sitting down with their representative, John and Sharon started with a Bala

model and began tinkering with the plans here and there to make it their own.

Moving a few walls, changing the positioning of the kitchen, taking the linen closet from the bedroom to the bathroom, adding an ensuite, and even switching around the laundry room and a staircase; nothing was out of the question.

“It’s only 1,450 square feet, but by taking out a couple of walls and taking full advantage of the open concept, it feels a lot bigger,” says Sharon. “When people come over, they always comment to us about how spacious it feels.”

The home features two bedrooms and two bathrooms

on the main floor. A walkout basement is set up perfectly so John and Sharon can eventually add a third bedroom and an office for John, who is still working from home.

One of their favourite design decisions was repositioning the deck to better suit the angle of the sun, allowing them to enjoy sun all day long.

“As well, we replaced the patio door with a floor-to-ceiling window for the living room,” says John. “I didn’t want to always be looking out at a railing. I wanted to enjoy the amazing views of the tall pines, maples, and other trees on the property.”

Sharon adds, “people come through the front door and

their jaws drop immediately looking out that window.”

Above and beyond

Though the design and build of the home itself – from the foundation to the roof – was a smooth process, there were a couple of challenges along the way.

Plenty of hidden bedrock meant they ended up moving the initial location of the build closer to the road by about 20 feet (though they’re still far enough away to be hidden from any passersby).

“They kept trying to dig and hitting bedrock,” remembers Sharon. “Eventually, they found a spot to dig for the foundation that we were all happy with.”

Once the house was up, there were a couple of issues with hydro. A cable that was buried four feet deep snapped almost halfway up the driveway in the middle of winter. John says the Royal Homes team used torches and a jackhammer to dig down to the line and repair it.

“That’s just one of the ways they went over and above,” says Sharon.

And on the day power was supposed to be hooked up, the utility company staff announced that the trench near the pole was too shallow, and they would come back when it was ready. Not wanting to wait any longer, John and Sharon immediately got on the phone with their Royal Homes representative.

“He said ‘tell them not to go anywhere, I’ll be right over,’” says John. “Sure enough, he showed up with an excavator and deepened the ditch himself so we could have hydro that day.”

Adds Sharon: “They went out of their way to fix the situation. They even loaned us a generator for the time we were without power.”

Dedication to quality and service

That commitment extended after the build was completed, too.

As a new home settles, tiny imperfections can arise. But the follow-up team has been there to check on John and Sharon several times, performing any necessary

touch-ups – sometimes even catching things the owners hadn’t noticed.

“They were fantastic to work with and made everything we spoke about happen,” says John.

“They have followed up with us a few times to make sure we’re happy and everything is working out well.”

TEXT CHRIS OCCHIUZZI
PHOTOS ANDREW FEARMAN



Innisfil Design Centre • 888-739-5122
Gravenhurst Design Centre • 866-782-0033
Minden Design Centre • 888-717-4923
Peterborough Design Centre • 800-659-0980
Sarnia Design Centre • 833-337-8686
Wingham Design Centre • 800-265-3040
www.RoyalHomes.com