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TO THE WATER

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SUMMER
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**BACKYARD
GLAM TOUR
BEHIND THE SCENES**

**+
YUMMY
BURGERS &
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LEMONADE**



GEORGIAN BAY *meets* WEST-COAST MODERN

STORY LAUREL FORTIN
PHOTOGRAPHY SANDY MACKAY

Fabulous flat rooflines, and windows, windows, windows showcase this modern year-round lakefront home built by Dave Harrington of Absolute Craftsmen Ltd. Whether you're inside or out, the views are spectacular at every turn.

Passing sailors and paddle boarders are treated to the most exciting vantage of a modern glass home built by **Absolute Craftsmen Ltd.**

On the west side of Thornbury, from out on the bay, the face of the glass house reflects water, sky and trees; the roof lines and cement chimney draw the eye in many satisfying directions. On land, the best vantage of the house is from inside the second-floor lounge, which overlooks the courtyard by the front door, but because the front and rear walls of

the house are glass, the view encompasses the stunning great room, past its stone walls and orbs of light, and outside to the shores beyond. This home is the year-round getaway for a busy Toronto family of five. Originally from British Columbia, when they decided to buy a vacant lot on the water, the owners drew inspiration from the large windows and flat

roofs of the modern homes on B.C.'s West Coast. With a modern design, the family could have their wall of windows, and an airy, open space with simple lines that draw the eye to the home's setting, instead of its interior features. But Georgian Bay winters are more severe than those of coastal Vancouver, so the homeowners needed an architect and builder to design a wall of windows strong enough to withstand bay-side storm fronts.

Enter **Dave Harrington** of Absolute Craftsmen, who is a sought-after builder with 26 years of experience, and a former neighbour

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Off the dining and living areas, a wall of windows opens to a screened-in porch, where the family watches movies in front of the wood-burning fireplace. Vases and floral arrangements were supplied by Paperwhite Flowers in Thornbury.



RIGHT: This fun, kid-friendly home features a ping-pong table in the dining room. The functional kitchen also has two built-in fridges, and two separate work zones – one for cooking, another for beverages. **ABOVE LEFT:** The homeowners' son thought the whimsical stag head over the bar should have a tail coming out of the wall on the living room side! **LEFT:** In the second-floor kids' wing, a lightbulb fixture ("to spark bright ideas", says the homeowner) hangs over the children's homework and games area.



LEFT: Sophisticated elegance best describes this wide-open contemporary kitchen. Inspired by the clean and modern Italian Polyform look, Rob Perry of Riverside Custom Cabinetry Ltd. built all the cabinetry based on the homeowner's designs.





in Craighleith. “We thought of Dave because his house is one of the few in this area with a flat roof and modern design,” says the homeowner.

For Harrington, the 2011-2012 build was exciting. “We rose to the challenge, as did all the trades people we brought on for the project,” says **Christine Harrington**, Dave’s daughter and project manager on the build. “That house inspired me to find my calling,” says Christine. “As a kid, I was around my dad’s job sites a lot. After two years of university, I took a summer job at Absolute Craftsmen and everything changed; there was no turning back to veterinary school after we built this beautiful modern house.”

The homeowners are on a first-name basis with most of the people who built their home. “When our trades feel they have all the resources they need to get their job done, they really perform, and it shows,” says Christine.

Brad Abbott, of **Abbott Design Ltd.**, drafted the architectural plans, working closely with Collingwood engineer **Dan Barill**, of **Barill Engineering Ltd.**, who ensured the home’s two 24-foot high, 20-foot wide glass walls had steel reinforcements across the top, bottom and middle (windows and doors sourced at Tiltco). Aircraft cables were strung crosswise in the ceiling to hold the walls at a tension, bracing against the shore winds. The home is completely secure and wired for sound, using the expertise of **Red Brick Group**.

Indoor and outdoor spaces merge together. The sauna-grade cedar ceiling, and stone wall cladding start on the front exterior, pass inside across the great room, and end on the rear patio. Floor coverings are dark throughout: custom-stained walnut and flamed-and-polished basalt stone on the inside. Outside, walkouts are man-made Owen Sound pebbled patio-stone sourced by **Parklawn Landscaping**. A

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ABOVE: Dave Harrington created the unique fireplace from photos supplied by the homeowner, with help from an experienced forms man from Grey Bruce Construction. Since it was all done in cement, it had to be perfect the first time around. **RIGHT:** Who needs an outdoor dining space when an entire wall of windows opens to the outdoors, providing indoor-outdoor dining and absolutely breathtaking views of Georgian Bay?



It’s always playtime in this great room! The homeowner designed the area around the orb light fixtures the family call “starry night lights.” One seating area is for TV viewing and another is for enjoying bay views.

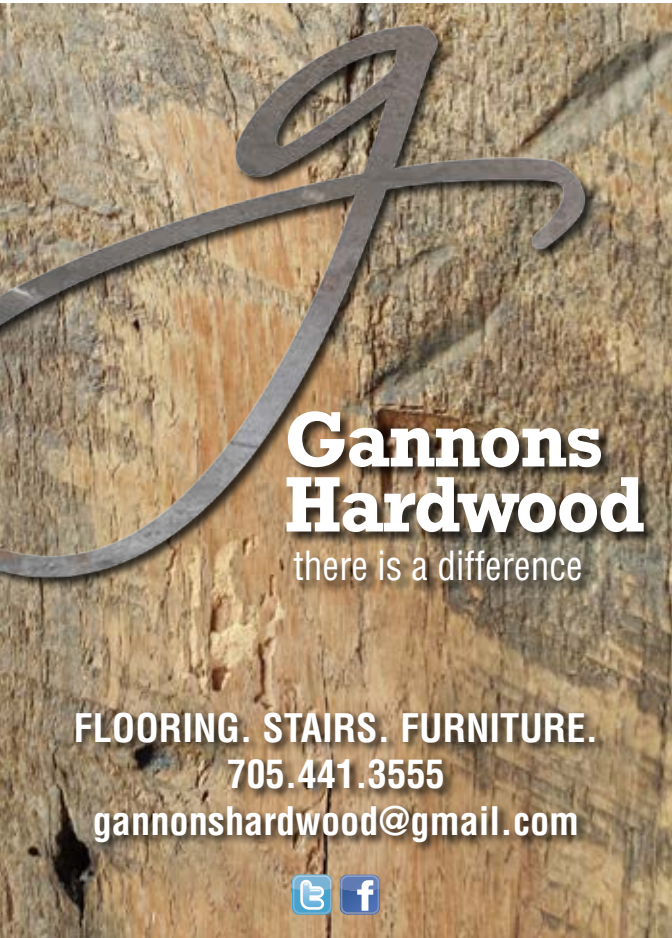
RIGHT: A glass breezeway leads to the master bedroom, the couple's Zen-like oasis.
BELOW: A funky "meringue" fixture hangs over the freestanding egg-shaped tub.
BOTTOM LEFT TO RIGHT: Custom-stained walnut floors and floating stairs lead to the second floor. The children share an adjoining bathroom. Upstairs are three children's bedrooms and a communal games area.



16-foot side wall with 10-foot-high bi-fold doors separates the great room from the Muskoka room. A massive cement fireplace, built by **Grey-Bruce Construction Ltd.** and Dave Harrington, is the centre point of the space, with comfortable sofas to relax on by the fire. Motorized screens (installed by Ontario Screen Systems Inc.) can be drawn up or down to keep the bugs out.
The home is heated via both forced air and radiant, in-floor heating, installed by **Nottawasaga Mechanical**. Air ducts



blow a blanket of air up the sides of the great room to combat any drafts from the glass. **Chantico Fireplace Gallery** installed a gorgeous 80-inch, two-sided gas fireplace in the front entry, inset in an eight-foot wall to act as a privacy guard at the entrance. "We challenged Chantico to vent the fireplace from below; we didn't want any pipes or bulkheads obstructing the open space inside," says the homeowner. All interior painting was done by **Complete Value Painting**.
The focal point in the great room is a

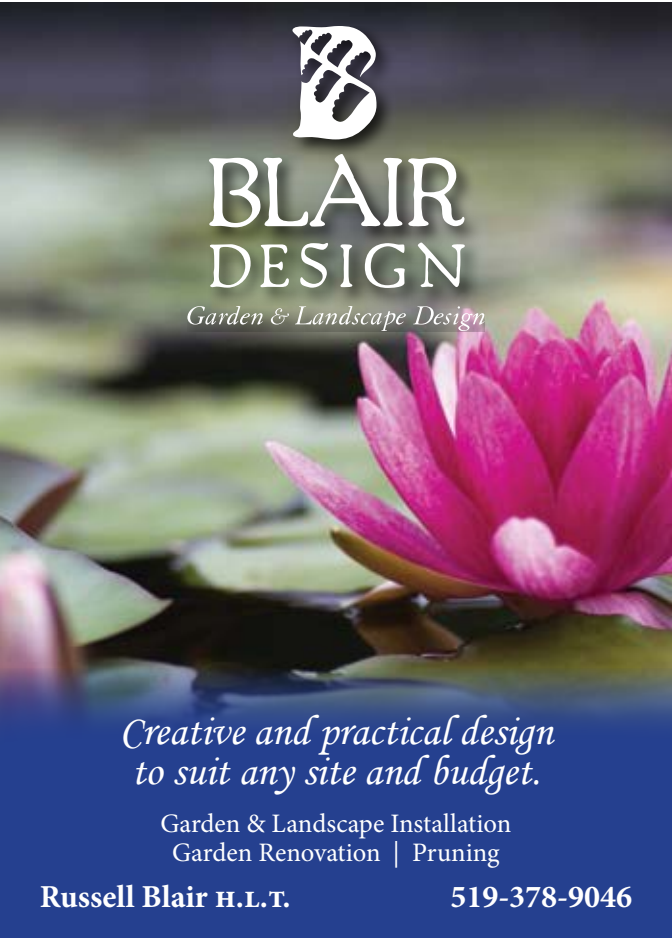
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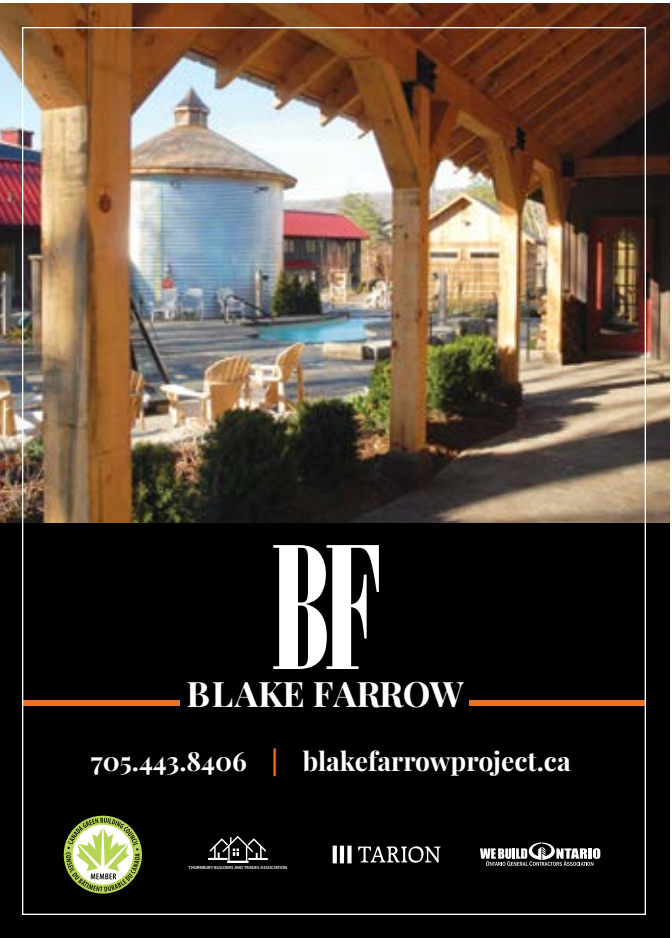


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24-foot rock-climbing wall, professionally installed by Rockwerx of Calgary. The toe holds and wall materials were custom stained to coordinate with the home's stonework. The kitchen opens to a ping-pong table, rather than a formal dining room. "We wanted this to be our fun, relaxing weekend home – simple and easy to care for," says the homeowner.

Rob Perry (Riverside Custom Cabinetry Ltd.) built all cabinetry from the homeowner's design specs, including the kitchen, living room, walk-in closets and bathroom vanities. The cabinets are floating, reinforced to hang from the wall studs. Perry custom manufactured the kitchen in white, moulded acrylic. An 18-foot island is topped in white quartz, with fridges installed underneath in drawers facing the sink and stove.

Off the kitchen, passing through a glass hallway, the couple transition to their private, main floor master suite. Crisp, white floor-to-ceiling drapery, activated on a motorized track, was custom made and installed by **Ashton's Blinds Draperies Shutters**.

Up a set of floating stairs, the three children each have rooms with a view of the water. A media room and lounge is tucked above the garage where the kids do homework on ski weekends.

With open sight lines from the lounge to the glassed-in great room, the family has an easy closeness, staying connected without being in the same room. "Our modern getaway is a place our family and our imaginations can all grow into," says the homeowner. **OH**



ABOVE: The homeowners designed their lakeside abode to be a fun and relaxing weekend place for their three children. "It's all about family," says the homeowner. **BELOW:** This active Toronto family transitioned from a rustic home to a very modern lakeside dwelling, inspired by B.C.'s coastal flat-roof glass houses. The vibe is definitely relaxed.

Architectural design

Interior design

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