

feature

# ESCAPE TO NATURE

*a hockley valley retreat*

BY SHEILA O'HEARN // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY

The open concept living space of this stunning home offers a unique view of the impressive features, including a stone fireplace and wooden beams.



The kitchen area features hardwood floors and lots of cupboard space. A custom designed chandelier hangs above the kitchen table. RIGHT: The home is a blend of minimalism and modernism in both architecture and layout.

## The beautiful landscape of Hockley Valley is captured in this nature inspired home.

Architect **Charles G. Bunker** and custom home builder **Andrew Hunt** distinguish themselves by setting precedents. Bunker's latest home-design in Hockley Valley is a masterpiece of technology, function and eye appeal, matched by Hunt's stellar craftsmanship and inside knowledge of where to source just the right materials including the windows.

Bunker struck out on his own in 1985, after having worked with a large commercial architectural firm in Toronto for many years. Dividing his time between Hockley Valley and Toronto, his custom-home ventures in the rural area, including his passion for interior design, have allowed him to stretch his creativity.

Hailing from Collingwood, Hunt brings 25 years of experience to the trade of custom-home construction, and looks for no less than the same skill, drive and ingenuity in his sub-contractors.

Built over two years, this stunning 10,000-sq. ft. weekend retreat perfectly complements the Mono area, famed for its natural geography. The winding, kilometre-long private road leads to a contemporary version of a Frank Lloyd Wright and Chinese feng-shui-inspired abode, the hallmarks of a Charles G. Bunker creation.

Its clean lines and sense of efficiency engage the imagination and sense of surprise – as though you stumbled upon an enormous oyster soon to reveal its inner pearl. The home sits unassumingly on top of a hillock, where you lose yourself in the home's 100 acres of tall spruce and pine trees, winding streams, old logging trails, rolling hills and a natural pond.

"You don't see a home that is so ultra contemporary sitting in the hills of Hockley Valley," says **Marvin Windows and Doors** Territory Manager **Erich Shabot**, who worked with the builder and architect on the home.

He said the project was very much a collaborative effort as the team worked together to find the best products and designs to match the style of the home.

"During the initial meetings it was made clear that the homeowners wanted the very best in terms of quality and a lot of research went into coming up with the design," says Shabot.

The goal was to accentuate the overall concept of the home and take advantage of the natural light and beautiful surroundings.

"We are able to put a lot into the engineering of our product so we can make things bigger and better," says Shabot, adding both the homeowner and the builder wanted materials that were going to last for many years to come. "When you come up the driveway and see the home, it takes your breath away." *Continued on page 24*



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The roof's cedar shakes, Douglas-fir brackets and the craftsmanship of **Stone Pros** stonework mirror the natural habitat. The pre-finished steel siding recedes into the background, emphasizing the exterior's abundance of unbreakable, aluminum three-paned windows and three-inch-thick cherry wood exterior entrances, all supplied by Marvin Windows and Doors.

Hunt carefully sourced the materials from The Royal Wood Shop Ltd. for his striking custom-made tri-garage doors.

The home's special features are virtually endless, beginning with a heated concrete driveway. Downstairs, bench-seating is surrounded by Douglas-fir panelling. Hang up your skates or snowy coat on elegant Sun Valley Hardware, supplied by Summerhill Hardware. Custom cabinets from **South Gate Cabinets** abound, and aid in keeping this home clutter-free.

Marvel at the "brains" of a home in a technological chamber downstairs, where the entire propane-fuelled home is wired for sound via the Internet. Hit the switch to generate in-floor heating delivered through tubes spread throughout the home.

Light switches operate by radio-frequency, which can also be controlled through the techno chamber.

Seclude yourself in the downstairs spa room, or luxuriate in the bathroom's deep jet tub and whirlpool, large glassed-in shower, and custom-made quartz vanity from International Stone. A large, cedar storage room, exercise room – complete with a Samsung TV console – a tool-and-work room, servant or guest room, out-of-view furnace room, and massive recreational room with an impressive fireplace of dry-laid, natural-stone comprise the downstairs.

Instead of lugging your groceries upstairs, take the cherry wood elevator with slate floor, from Concord Elevator. Toss your laundry down the chute from the upstairs dressing room. Host a lively party in the living areas, or revel in silence by closing the door to a sound-proof world of your own. *Continued on page 26*



**RIGHT:** A sunken sitting area provides a cosy place to relax with friends. **BELOW LEFT:** At night, the home sparkles under the wide open skies of Hockley Valley. **BELOW RIGHT:** Wood is the main focus of the home and covers most floors and walls.



**TOP:** A large double-sided fireplace keeps resting spaces warm all year long. **LEFT:** A sunken tub and walk-in shower offer the perfect home spa retreat. **ABOVE:** The laundry room has lots of work space and state-of-the-art appliances.



**LEFT:** Built-in appliances add an extra touch of sophistication to the kitchen area. **BELOW:** Stainless steel sinks make for quick and easy clean up. A bright green backsplash adds a shot of colour to the room. **BOTTOM:** Vaulted ceilings can be found throughout the main floor. The 35-foot ceilings are constructed from 12-by-12 inch Douglas-fir beams.



Follow the Douglas-fir stairs up to the equally impressive second or main level, with its warm walnut flooring and luscious custom sofas from Louis Interiors.

The living room area and built-in seating pit share a huge central fireplace, also composed of dry-laid, natural-stone. The ambience is set off by tracks of flexible lighting and ceiling inset-lighting from Luminart. The open-concept kitchen, dining and living room areas have a 35-foot ceiling, topped with 12-by-12-inch Douglas-fir beams from British Columbia, supplied and installed by **Thistlewood Timber Frame Homes**. Perhaps most extraordinary is there are no visible connections from outside, where the wood-beams join, or any nail holes – the woodwork having been constructed entirely with biscuits and dowels. “You get to appreciate the wood that way,” Bunker says.

The open-concept area’s span of windows, sets off the natural light and the surrounding environment. The clerestory windows provide additional outside light into the inner space. “The windows were designed so that the

outside comes in and the inside goes out,” Bunker comments. Discover the same access to light and nature in the screened-in porch with stone tiling from both Stone Tile International Inc. and Ciot. “The windows open with remote control,” Bunker says, “and the barbecue console contains a custom hood for ventilation.”

A gourmet chef’s dream, the contemporary kitchen sports shaker-style cherrywood cabinetry with recessed panels from **Downsview Kitchen And Fine Custom Cabinetry** and a 12-foot quartz island with sink, quartz countertops, two ovens, a warming oven, and gas cooktop with a 25-foot-high stainless steel vent.

Valance lighting is set into the cabinets for task or ambient lighting. This kitchen also boasts a built-in sideboard, bar nook and cherry wood computer station. The stylized red stools warm the open space of wood, stone and windows in true Japanese style. Combined with Oriental carpeting and other touches of red, an overall zen-like feel has been achieved. *Continued on page 28*

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Each wing of the house is endowed with its own rite of passage. Spot-lighting in hallways highlight the traditional oil paintings that contrast delightfully with the otherwise contemporary home.

Bunker designed beautifully appointed contemporary bedroom furnishings, lavished with bedspreads from **Genesis Decorating & Design Gallery**. Hunt sourced and built the closets' Japanese shōji screens pressed with real leaves, from Octopus Products Ltd.

"Everything has been designed to fit with the decor," Bunker notes. The master en suite's windows overlook different aspects of the acreage, including the pond, while the gas fireplace blazes serenely. Automatic roller blinds in all the bedrooms give five per cent resolution. "You can still see out, but you can't see in," Bunker says. *Continued on page 30*



A large walk-in closet offers lots of storage space and is entered through solid wood sliding doors. **ABOVE:** His-and-hers sinks sit atop marble counters. The bathroom also features elegant tiles. **LEFT:** Natural light cascades into the bedroom allowing a breathtaking view of the surrounding forest.

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Hunt takes special pride in his import from Pennsylvania: one 20-inch wide, 70-foot high cherry tree from which he built the library walls, built-in book shelves, the closet shelving and dressing room. "The library's handsome file drawers were fashioned from one veneer also," Hunt explains.

The main floor's three bathrooms contain brushed nickel taps, rain-head showers and personal hand-held showers. All plumbing fixtures were selected from Taps Bath Centre. The porcelain tiles, double sinks and granite counters sparkle opulently.

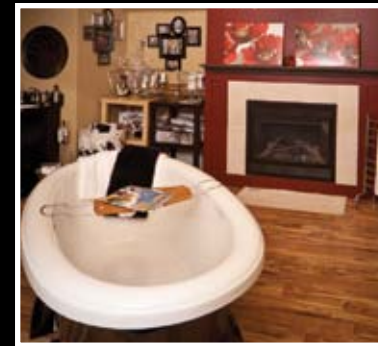
Gently sloped floors in the glass showers direct the water, making it unnecessary for the traditional step-over rise.

"It's gratifying to meet the needs of your clients," Bunker says. "It was an ideal project that was a great opportunity to work elements of the environment into the home." **OH**

**RIGHT:** Every attention to detail has been paid in this beautiful home including a built-in magnification mirror and a place to sit while getting ready in the morning. **BELOW:** Hardwood floors lead visitors into the office/library space where a wide selection of classics line the shelves.



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