



# Splendour IN THE TREES

BY ELLY TAKAKI // PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAX WEDGE

In the spirit of a secluded lodge getaway, this **Noah Homes** masterpiece is likely to remain hidden to passersby. Nestled into a pristine forest at the end of a winding driveway, the rustic, three bedroom, three bath home is screened from the road by densely wooded bush.

“It started with this: a rustic theme,” says Mike, the homeowner, who spent hundreds of hours on the Internet researching and planning the home. “My wife Lisa and I knew we wanted a house in the bush,” he states. In 2008, when the couple chanced upon the 10-acre lot of bush and farmland on a country road north of Harrow, they knew immediately that they had found the right property for their nature-inspired home.

The stone and cement cedar shingle board exterior (**Santerra Stonecraft, Hi Neighbor Floor Covering Co.**) blends harmoniously with the hundred-year-old oaks, hickory and maple trees that provide the homes’s dramatic backdrop.

Thick beams made of Douglas Fir (**Goodreau Sawmill & Woodworking**) frame the front porch. A massive front door, which looks like wood but is actually made from highly durable fiberglass (**Martindale Windows & Doors**), opens to reveal a spacious entryway. Vaulted ceilings are graced with chandeliers, the lights cleverly mimicking thick candles (**Re-Lighting**).

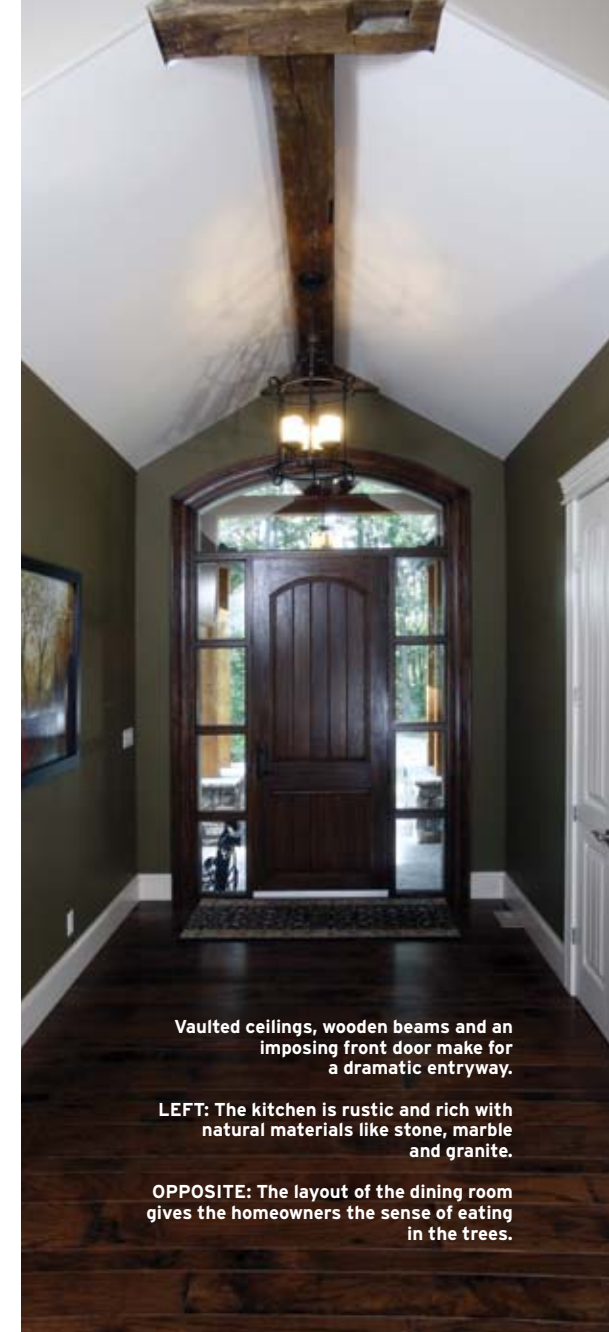
The exterior beams are echoed inside, with heavy beams crossing the entryway and living room ceilings. The 130-year-old barn beams add a steadying sense of character and history to the new house. They were given to the homeowners by a friend who told them, “when people see your home, you’ll have a story to tell.” A high efficiency, natural wood-burning fireplace (Lifestyles by **The Firebox**) with an imposing stone chimney provides a focal point and saves on heating bills in winter. *Continued on page 21*

TOP: The stunning one floor home blends beautifully with its surroundings.

TOP RIGHT: The homeowners along with their dog, Terra, stroll through their property.

The soaring ceilings and antique beams give the great room true character.





Vaulted ceilings, wooden beams and an imposing front door make for a dramatic entryway.

LEFT: The kitchen is rustic and rich with natural materials like stone, marble and granite.

OPPOSITE: The layout of the dining room gives the homeowners the sense of eating in the trees.

While the home's open concept creates a sense of airy space, repetition of materials and colours provides a feeling of cosiness and continuity. Three paint colours are repeated strategically through the house (**Merlo's Paint and Wallpaper**, applied by painter **Rob Valoppi**). The same travertine tiles (Hi Neighbor Floor Covering Co.) and granite countertops (Fireworks by **Granite Concepts**) are used in all of the bathrooms. Accessories and dramatic displays of richly toned art (**Art Expressions**) are kept to a minimum for maximum impact.

Engineered hardwood flooring (Hi Neighbor Floor Covering Co.), warmed by rugs (**Palazzi Rugs & Carpets**), covers the main floor. The homeowners planned to have tile floors in the kitchen, until Steve Shanbon, owner of Hi Neighbor Floor Covering Co., suggested extending the hardwood into the kitchen. "It's such an open concept," says Mike. "Having a different type of flooring in the kitchen would have broken up the space."

The kitchen is a cook's dream. Maple kitchen cabinets (**Wayne's Custom Woodcraft**) give a sleek glow to the natural theme. "I knew I wanted dark cabinets and the lines to be simple," says Lisa. KitchenAid appliances (**Midway Home Appliance Centre**), like the gas stove with six burners, and the beverage centre with separate thermostats for white

and red wine, are welcome luxuries. "It's a great kitchen to cook in and I love to cook," says Lisa. But the pièce de résistance is a spacious walk-in pantry, complete with an upright freezer and lots of shelves.

A tumbled marble tile backsplash accents granite countertops ("Minsk," Granite Concepts) that extend to form a division from the living area, as well as creating a bar area where Lisa serves appetizers. "You know, everyone gathers in the kitchen," she says.

The kitchen flows into a rustic yet elegant dining nook that juts out into the back yard, its angled windows giving the impression of being in the woods. Architect **Lino Montemurri**, who developed the plans, created the same nook-like window space in the couple's master bedroom.

Lisa's favourite room is the south-facing screened-in porch off the dining room. "It was a must-have for me," she says. Your first impression entering the porch is that of sound: the twittering and clicking of birds and crickets, the rustling of leaves. Elegant rattan furniture ("Boca", **Coulter's Furniture**) creates a cosy seating area where Lisa goes to read and relax. "In the morning, I love to come out here to have coffee and sit and listen to the birds," Lisa says. "Friends and family like to come over, light some candles and have a good chat. We call them our 'porch sessions.'" *Continued on page 22*



Lisa notes that the porch is also a great spot to view wildlife. "Wild turkeys come marching through whenever they feel like it," she laughs. Two deer were peering in the window one morning until their dog, a Hungarian Vizsla, barked and the deer ran off.

The couple enjoys walking their dog through the bush. There are no paths and the couple doesn't plan to make any. "We want to leave it natural," says Mike.

Mike and Lisa agree that their builder, Walter Branco of Noah Homes, made the building process surprisingly stress-free. "He makes you feel like you're part of his own family," says Lisa. "As soon as we met Walter, we didn't even entertain other builders."

"They're definitely good to work with," says Branco. "They had a starting vision. As we progressed with the project, we made changes and they were adaptable. As a result I think they got everything they wanted."

Indeed they did. Lisa says the house feels like a resort. "Every morning I wake up and think 'I can't believe I live here.'" OH

**NOTE:** Noah Homes is Launching a NEW OFFICE that will be over 6,000 sq. ft., which will include a DESIGN / SALES CENTRE on County Rd. 20 by Fall of 2010.

LEFT: Just inside the entryway, an art wall glows with glassware and richly toned paintings.

ABOVE: Granite, dark wood cabinetry, and glowing wall sconces make the master en suite an ideal place to relax.

BELOW: The master bedroom offers a relaxing view of the forest from strategically placed windows.

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