

A good laugh is sunshine in a home.

AN *Invitation* TO ERIN

BY LIZABETH PIRSTLE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY

"We put as much emphasis on design as we do on construction" The gentle arch and Roman columns frame the picturesque family room. Note the vaulted ceiling with flush pot lights. The artsy clock on the back wall really works.

TOP RIGHT: The dining room seats the whole family and then some. The crimson poppies in the painting above the antique sideboard, add just the right touch of colour to this serene room.

BOTTOM RIGHT: "The kitchen is definitely the hub of the house" Here the ample, warm cherry cupboards enhance the approachability of this kitchen, with its modern stainless-steel appliances. The wine fridge is wonderfully decadent.



For John and Maria Parish, the wait was worth it. Two summers ago they moved from Georgetown to their beautiful, inviting home in **Erinbrook Country Estates**, a short drive from Main Street in the picturesque village of Erin.

Country living appealed to them and they were drawn to Erin and the homes built by **Charleston Homes**.

“We liked the town and the shops and it had a nice character and good schools and the subdivision was pretty close to town,” says John. “We had looked at some Charleston Homes in Rockwood and Glen Williams and I was familiar with them through my line of work. I knew they had a strong reputation for high-end homes and good craftsmanship.”

The Parishes were early buyers in the small estate community that boasts one-acre lots surrounded by open farmland and waited almost three years to move in.

Today, they have turned a brand new house into “home” for themselves, their two young children and the friends they entertain.

“I’ve always been partial to the Georgian style with a central and symmetrical floor plan,” John says. Maria and I looked at all the floor plans individually. This model was our favourite – the flow of the home and the layout was what we had envisioned.

There is some openness in the design and the Parishes, together with Shelley Foord, owner of **Décor Solutions** in Erin, worked to create a natural, inviting flow throughout the main floor, while incorporating some more traditional, formal designs and pieces to complement the overall style of the home.

The flooring throughout the entire main floor is Muskoka Maple Russet hardwood, supplied by **Rushton Contract Flooring** in Waterloo. The walls throughout are a creamy yellow, (Benjamin Moore Pittsfield Buff), while the walls in the study are done in Benjamin Moore Wethersfield Moss.

“We like earth tones: warmer golds on the walls. Greens and browns fit with our tastes and feel comforting and welcoming,” says John.

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"I love the tile work and stone detail in the front foyer. The antique side table is an heirloom that has been in my family for about 80 years," explains Maria.

She enjoys seeing her favourite design elements and pieces of furniture as she arrives home every day.

Guests are immediately drawn towards the inviting fireplace that is the centerpiece of the living room and the rich rug.

"Casual elegance best describes the style we've created," explains Foord. "There is a refinement in the living room, but it is inviting and you feel very comfortable walking in and sitting down. It is relaxing."

The Parishes began working with Foord after John gave Maria a gift certificate to **Décor Solutions**.

"John wanted to support the local businesses," Marie says. "We first went to Shelley for window coverings for the living room and dining room. I met Shelley and we really hit it off. She had lots of ideas and has done a great job in our home. We're really pleased."

The drapery Foord designed for the living and dining room is beautiful. The valance is from **Greff**, the pattern is Portsmouth, and the colour is Spice. The panels are from **Joanne Fabrics**, the pattern is Rugby, and the colour is Nectar.

Foord also helped choose the rugs in the room, part of the Kathy Ireland European Collection and purchased from **Shaw Carpet & Floor Centres**.

While French doors separate the two rooms, the colour, rug and drapery are replicated in the formal eating area to create an open, connected feel. The dining room features a double-tray ceiling. The crown molding is stacked, creating an interesting, polished feature.

In the kitchen, warm cherry wood cabinets by **Barzotti Woodworks** in Guelph contrast beautifully with the black granite marble countertops to create a sense of both warmth and sophistication.

"The kitchen is definitely the hub of the house," explains Maria. "I like the layout in that the kids can watch television while I cook dinner and I can see them. It's also good when we entertain."

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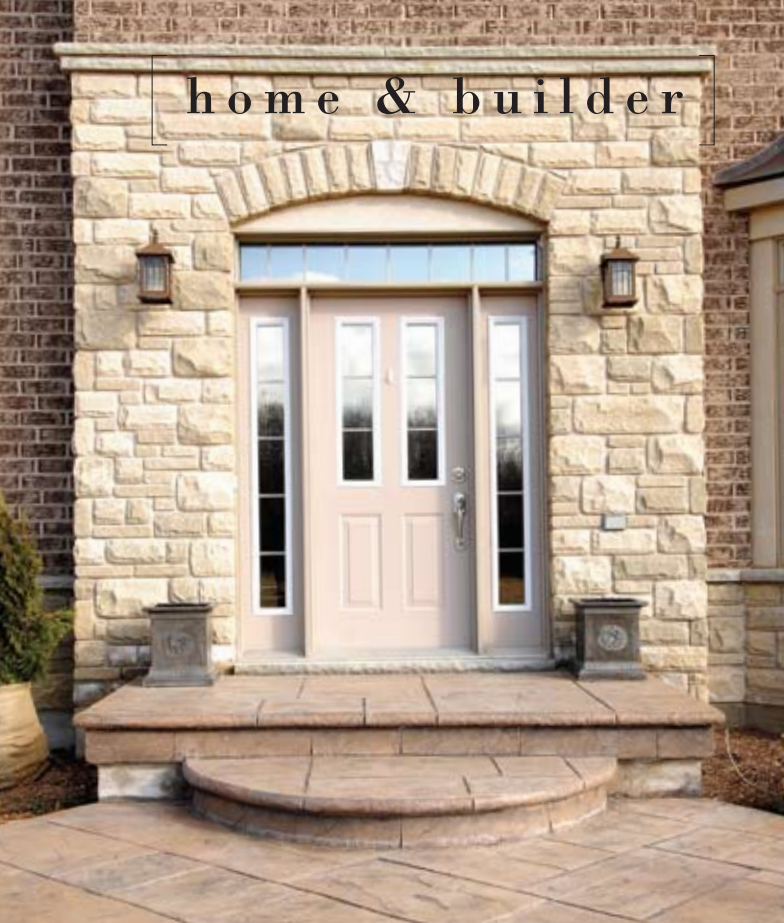
LEFT: Simplicity reigns in the powder room. The circular mirror edged in copper and walnut hues lend a sophisticated air.

BOTTOM LEFT: The den invites lingering as well as working. Foord recovered the chair, which is one of an antique pair, passed down and cherished by the Parishes.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Another family heirloom is beautifully showcased here.



"The interesting thing about this home is that I had to decorate it completely from the plans - sight unseen. Why have it okay when it can be beautiful?" Shelley Foord has done an amazing job.



The deep family room has a vaulted ceiling and soothing country view, but it is the corner fireplace that quickly captures your attention.

With its two-tiered mantel showing off a photo of the children, it brings warmth to the room in so many ways. The archway and column leading from the kitchen to the family room are two of John's favourite features. They are yet another example of formal, traditional elements used to encourage flow and comfort in the home.

Dick Marvin, Sales and Marketing Director of Charleston Homes says it is some of these features that make the builder different.

"Charlie Kuiken, the president, is not just a builder, but an individual with good taste, a good eye and a sense of whether things are working," says Marvin.

"We put as much emphasis on design as we do on construction. Everything we do is carefully planned, not just the overall appearance, but features such as arches, columns and half walls."

Since 1991, Charleston Homes has been striving to create homes of the highest quality, whether they are one-of-a-kind custom homes, estate properties or a first home for a young family in a subdivision.

"Early on," says Marvin, "the company took the following approach: it looked at how long it typically took for people to pay for a home (20-year mortgages were common at the time.) They reasoned the people shouldn't have to start fixing things, like windows, when they were still paying for the home."

"We try to choose materials that will last at least 20 years. As a result, some of our base materials are often higher quality," says Marvin.

There are the special touches that come with time and care. Above the archway leading to the family room Maria has painted "a good laugh is sunshine at home." There is plenty of "sunshine" throughout the home.

Greenery appears in every room – on sills, mantles and in the main floor bathroom.

Framed paintings and photographs throughout the home feature birds, wild animals and natural scenes. Family photos and framed children's art have prominent spaces as well. Bold splashes of colour dot the kitchen in a kid's photo, a decorative platter or a fanciful teapot.

As well as the antique side table, John and Maria have several other unique pieces.

"When we were first married we went to the **Aberfoyle Antique Market** a lot and purchased a few pieces," says Maria. "We found the antique dining room hutch there. We also found a settee from the 20s or 30s that we had recovered and put in our bedroom."

"The two chairs in my study are family heirlooms," says John. "They were passed from my great grandfather and we had them reupholstered to fit the style of the study."

This summer, the Parishes are focusing on landscaping and expanding their patio area for outdoor entertaining – and then they'll continue to apply their family-friendly sense of traditional style to the family's bedrooms; carefully and patiently. **OH**



The Parishes have just built this stunning back patio. One can enjoy the pastoral view while lounging under this rustic hewn wood roof.

TOP LEFT: An inviting, superbly built entranceway is one of the features that make Charleston Homes so desired. Note the arch above the door and the contrasting brickwork. Beautiful.

TOP RIGHT: With the diffused light and the pastel tones this room beckons. Come in and stay awhile and sleep well." This airy room is perfect for the Parishes' young daughter.