

WITH COLIN AND JUSTIN 

here

**Exploring
the New
Rural
Lifestyle**

volume two | issue 2 | spring 2022 | **FREE**

Discovering
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Kawartha Lakes
and Muskoka

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**Happiness
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Keli Schmidt
hasn't looked
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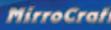
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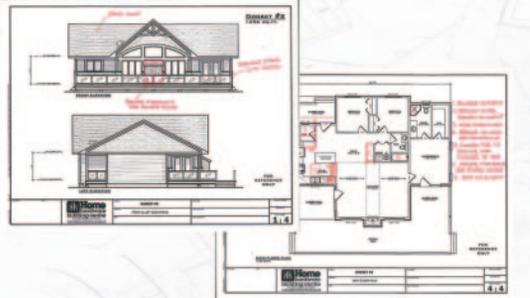
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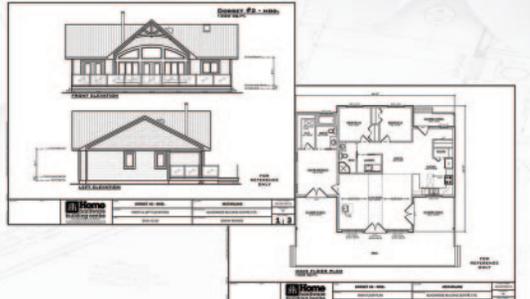
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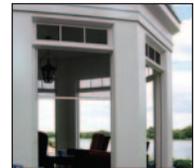
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On the cover

Photography by Stéphane Brügger | V2com

On this page

Colin & Justin photo by Danielle Meredith

Land Acknowledgement

In the Iroquois language, kanata translates to "village," and the land on which we are guests is now known as Canada. We acknowledge that the areas covered by *Here With Colin and Justin* are on the traditional territories of this land's Indigenous peoples. These territories include the Algonquin, Anishinabewaki, Haudenosaunee, Mississauga and Wendake First Nations.



Brighter days, brighter thinking

It's close. Can you feel it? Yes indeed, clocks have finally gone forward, days are getting longer and temperatures are fluttering in the ascendant, all of which signifies that Canada's most elusive period is truly upon us. You know, that one day that falls loosely between winter and summer. Yes, spring – it has finally sprung and we couldn't be more excited.

And with brighter days comes brighter thinking, wrapped up neatly in the pages of *Here with Colin and Justin*. With one eye on the future, we catch up with celebrated Canadian creatives Architecture49 (fresh from their House of Commons design project) to appraise their take on the classic Canadian cottage. Great fodder for dreamers, sure, but what's in store for doers? Read on and we'll show you how to take inspo from modern cabins such as theirs.

Mark and Ben Cullen discuss the effects of climate change in Ontario – conditions that make it more likely to experience summer droughts and extreme cold in winter – that can kill plant species that haven't adapted. Putting a positive spin on change, it's interesting to observe the way in which a warming climate can actually provide an opportunity for Cottage Country gardeners to take a few planting risks. Peaches, anyone?

Ever have a moment when you look at the bigger picture and wonder what it is you're actually doing with your life? That's exactly what happened to Aimee Alabaster – farmer, sharer and reformed city slicker – who left the city to create Alabaster Acres, a farm and hospitality business where guests can learn about farming, try glamping or book the event barn for seminars or photo shoots.

If you still don't feel sufficiently brave to dive aboard the New Rural Lifestyle train, perhaps you should try before you buy, bolstered by our guide to rental opportunities that offer a different way of life. Cue tiny houses, Airstreams and shipping containers: they're all out there, in beautiful Ontario, just waiting to be discovered.

Feeling sticker shock at the grocery store? Little wonder. Canada's Food Price Report predicts soaring inflation could add \$1,000 to annual food costs for a family of four. While global factors such as rising transportation and fuel costs are out of our control, there exist simple steps to moderate spend, many of which go hand-in-hand with reducing food waste. This in mind, Vicky Sanderson offers delicious tips to save cash on meal prep to help offset the high cost of cooking.

Turning attention to our feathered friends, Kaileigh Nichols explores ways in which to prevent bird strikes by making the glass in our homes and cottages visible to our avians. Harmony with our – and their – surroundings being crucial.

Without further ado, get ready to spring into the latest issue of *Here*. As the season changes and the skies (hopefully) become bluer, we've got it all covered so you can get uncovered before stripping off and diving in the lake.

Enjoy!

Colin and Justin

Here: Exploring the New Rural Lifestyle

Here. It's where you are: a landscape stretching from the shores of Georgian Bay, eastward through the Haliburton Highlands and south to the Kawartha Lakes.

It's Ontario's Cottage Country – reimagined and revitalized.

Central Ontario is experiencing the fastest growth since Confederation. A population of former city dwellers – educated, travelled, skilled and savvy – is heading north, in search of something new and better, beyond the concrete highways and glass towers (and the physical and mental confines) that typify an urban existence.

Here is dotted with resort villages and former industrial towns. It's infused with natural assets – lakes, hills, rivers and forests – and peopled by industrious, storied locals, and those who have joined them, seeking to explore and invest in small-town life. It's a region that positively brims with opportunities to embrace the New Rural Lifestyle. It presents nothing less than a more fulfilling, happier way of life.

The New Rural Lifestyle is entrepreneurial. It involves shifting focus from oneself to one's surroundings, all the time fully engaged with the community, in one of the world's most beautiful places.

Here With Colin and Justin is the standard bearer for the New Rural Lifestyle. It's the way forward: a magazine imagined to make the very best of rural life. And, indeed, the best of life itself.

Here is about:

- Building homes that reflect values of quality, durability, sustainability and responsibility;
- The way in which towns are revitalizing and reinventing themselves;
- Setting up successful professional practices, businesses, stores and workshops;
- Engaging in volunteer opportunities;
- Solving problems and building communities;
- Enjoying the outdoors and nature;
- Buying local first;
- Living an authentic life.

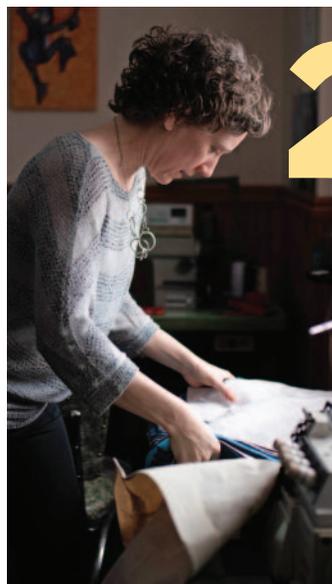
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Colin and Justin have corralled a host of ideas to welcome the new season.



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Out and about

Keeping up with a fitness routine in the time of COVID has led trainers, their clients and the rest of us to be more creative in the ways we get moving.



Canadian house classics

The team at Architecture49 create spaces that are functional, and eye wateringly beautiful. From their work at the House of Commons, to eminently simpler Canadian cottages, their client roster is hugely varied. Inspired by the creative studio, here's how to imbue your nest with a little mod design.

by Colin and Justin

photography by Stéphane Brügger | V2com



The kitchen was designed so that there would be a connection with the natural landscape.





The commanding interior design is the essence of form and function.

Whether enhancing the Canadian Parliament – their iconic West Block glass roof addition blends architectural daring with cherished Gothic Revival – or asserting influence over smaller structures like Le Littoral (a rural residence that reworks the traditional farmhouse silhouette into a modernist escape), Architecture49 has built a stellar reputation across the design fraternity.

But would a modernist confetti, such as Le Littoral, work for you? If you find it exciting, yet a little out there, evaluate the parts you do appreciate and tailor them to suit. For the record, there's little about this slickly detailed abode we don't love. But as we were saying: just as catwalk fashion trickles down into high street iterations – or concept cars distil into daily drivers – so, too, can a polarising home such as this

allude to what's ahead for the greater populace.

While we mightn't all drive Aston Martins, we can all observe a little of Aston's influence in motorcars by Ford, who, for a time, owned the revered British marque. Inspiration in mind, it's time to soak up some ideas to shape your future.

Make your homestyle match your lifestyle

Designed for a couple who're passionate about gastronomy and the great outdoors, the project was envisioned as a backdrop for gatherings, so that guests might experience a connection with the natural landscape by which the modern edifice is surrounded.

Positioned to embrace river views, with unpretentious but commanding exterior and interior design, it's the essence of



The swimming pool and the inviting sauna and spa amplify the comfort quotient.



form and function. So be inspired: follow Le Littoral's lead and give your cottage or cabin (however simple) a slice of magic with open-concept living, comfortable dining proportions and a well-equipped cooking space. And, if you can, replace smaller windows with expansive fenestration to enhance connection to the great outdoors.

Add amenities

To make the cottage a truly magical experience – memory making for owners and guests alike – Architecture49 created a sleek and functional environment full of discreetly integrated facilities. A beautiful swimming pool, for example, as well as an inviting sauna and spa, amplify the comfort quotient, conspiring, as they do, a sense of convivial luxury at every turn. Follow Le Littoral's lead and consider adding a forest hot tub, or make more of your dock with chairs and loungers to bolster the connection with the lake and tempt a resort vibe every day.

Embrace simplicity

Utilising a neutral colour palette (limited to black, white and wood) simplifies the modern rustic aesthetic, but it also strengthens architecture to ensure the space speaks for itself, free from the muddled messages of pattern, clutter and overpowering colour.

With principle finishes in noble materials (and function, at all times, determining form), the environmental pursuits of Architecture49 were pursued, and indeed carefully met, at every turn. The structure, which is for the most part minimalist and appears easy to inhabit, leaves plenty of room for users to



An open staircase leads from the guest bunks to upstairs.



All the interior designs are pared back, forcing the inhabitants to live a minimalist lifestyle.



self-express. Crucially, the building's clean lines encourage an existence that uses only those elements that are truly required. As such, the less is more discipline is prevalent throughout.

Unnecessary belongings are pared back, and accordingly, Le Littoral's inhabitants are encouraged, within the walls by which they're surrounded, to lead a cleaner, decluttered life. Surveying the regimented environment, we're reminded of easier, less obsessive times and pledge, in that same moment, to employ strict storage and home management systems to ensure everything around us flows beautifully.

Achieve harmony with your surroundings

Adding a contemporary home to the impressive, natural environment was challenging, but the architect/client ambition was certainly achieved. The cottage was built upon a high

elevation (with breathtaking views towards the St. Lawrence River and La Malbaie Bay), a smart decision that avoided extensive excavation. Courtesy of colour, and a repertoire of finishes chosen to minimize visual impact, the building appears to regress into the landscape.

Use natural materials and local know-how

The project, wherever possible, called upon the services of local resources, businesses and artisans and used locally produced FSC certified lumber, specifically eastern cedar and pine. This sensibility really appeals to us: it's so good for the wider Cottage County economy. While working recently on a Haliburton beachfront chalet, we specified granite carved from a nearby quarry and found it rewarding to incorporate such a strong local component as part of our design.



The cottage was built on a high elevation to allow for uncluttered views of the river valley.







Be inspired!

So, as you bask in the afterglow of *Here* property porn, do you feel suitably inspired? And ready to embrace life in a patiently manicured home (or home from home) that, while future forward, is still a cottage? Cottage being the operative word: from minimalist glass boxes to rickety slanty shanties, and from naïve forest abodes to multi-million-dollar Muskoka estates, the same rules apply: a cottage should serve as a comfortable place in which to experience Ontario's beautiful landscape. And it should provide a sublime connection with nature and a golden opportunity to share good times with people that matter.

For us, it's about all that and more. It's about boating, swimming, dining al fresco ... and maybe imbibing the odd glass of wine. Or 12. And that's something we can all do, wherever we are, huh? Although perhaps not in the House of Commons. *

Technical datasheet

Official project name: Le Littoral
Designer and project manager: Viviane Zhang
Location: La Malbaie, Quebec, Canada
Client: Charlevoixchalets.com
Completion: June 2020
Project area: 2,400 sq. ft. (220 sq. metres)
Architecture: Architecture49
Structural engineering: SBSA
Building Mechanics: Habitat Refrigeration
General Contractor: Habitat Ecoconstruction



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Stitch by stitch

Keli Schmidt traded the fast-paced world of the fashion industry for a slower pace of life in the country. After a deep breath, she started an ethical clothing company and is now happier – and more relaxed – than she has ever been.

*by Gale Beeby
photography by Caitlin Dunlop*





“I’m so happy,” exclaims Keli Schmidt – with an exclamation point!

Schmidt is still in awe that after moving to Cottage Country almost two years ago, she has adapted to rural life so quickly, and so joyfully.

“It had always been our long-term plan to move to Haliburton, but Dave (Keli’s husband) and I decided to take the plunge when COVID changed how we work.”

Dave, who grew up in Brampton, spent many happy summers and winters in Haliburton with his family – he’s a good curler, Keli says – and wanted to move here permanently sooner, rather than later. When COVID struck, Keli relented and they bought their Haliburton hideaway.

Schmidt, 40, says that moving to the house, located on a country road near Lake Kashagawigamog – and just seven minutes from the village of Haliburton – has been surprisingly less isolating than life in Toronto.

“Here, it’s a real community and we know all of our neighbours. That just wasn’t the case in Toronto, where everyone

kept to themselves. Also, I’ve been able to meet other local artists and it’s a very strong supportive community.

“I love it here!” Keli says. “I don’t even notice how spotty the internet is anymore.”

A stitch in time

Keli started sewing when she was only 3 years old, when her mother taught her how to use a needle and thread. By 8, she was sewing up a storm on the family’s Singer, and when she was 11, she started drafting her own patterns. At 22, she left her hometown of Winnipeg to study fashion at George Brown College in Toronto. Along the way, she designed and sewed for friends and coworkers, holding her own fashion shows.

Once in college, she became the assistant to a local designer for three years, where she learned a lot a lot about the industry and a lot of skills from the other sewers on the production line.

Schmidt also became a designer for a Toronto-based fashion collective, making everything from women’s tailored suits – perhaps her signature look – to ball gowns. But what she really



loved was pattern and sample making for other designers. She found it challenged her creatively and she made that her career. Keli boasts that she hasn't bought clothes for 17 years, making all her own garments. She is particularly fond of making fancy dresses and made three for her own wedding, including a purple strapless gown with a rouched skirt and ostrich feather hem that she was marred in.

"I went a bit nuts," she says with a laugh.

When COVID struck, Keli learned how to do fittings over Zoom, with the buyer using chalk and pins as instructed by Keli, sending the garment back and forth by courier.

"No one was more surprised to me that it worked," Schmidt says, "but we had no choice during COVID."

Made by neighbours for neighbours

Dave and Keli settled into their rustic cabin in 2020, enjoying the peace and beauty of the country and growing their family by one – a dog named Whitaker.

"Oh, I'm such a nerd. I love sci-fi," Keli says, laughing. "The

dog is named after Jodie Whitaker, an English actor who is the 13th Dr. Who and the only woman to play the historic character."

Keli hadn't planned on starting her own clothing company but her sister-in-law challenged her to make a pair of ethically-sourced plain, practical and comfortable panties.

"I started working on that and came up with something that worked for her. Then I started thinking about my own clothing line and that morphed into the Haliburton Clothing Co."

Keli prides herself not only on using ethically sourced fabrics, but also paying her sewers fairly.

"Most often, about 15 to 20 per cent of the price of a garment is for marketing and the people who make that clothing don't earn fair wages. I don't do any marketing and I pay ethical wages."

As well as ready-made clothing, including comfy pants, sweaters, dresses and sweatshirts, Keli also offers bespoke apparel for women and men.

"I do everything myself. I work from my home making high-quality clothing from ethically-sourced fabrics.

"Handmade by neighbours for neighbours."*

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Testing, testing

Tempted by the prospect of a new rural lifestyle but concerned about the associated risks? Then bring the adventure one step closer to reality by hedging your bets with a little 'try before you buy' safeguard.

by Colin and Justin



The Luna cabin by Cabinscape is a micro abode that is small but perfectly formed. (Vanhalla Wild Photography)



Ah, *heaven*: the prospect of escaping the city and waking up with the sun on your face and the melancholic sound of loons on some beautiful, lonely lake. Or perhaps your perfect world exists high on a mountain, with eagles overhead and the forest in every breath? Or in a windswept seaside cabin with waves lapping gently in the distance?

Each of the foregoing scenarios is an undoubtedly attractive lifestyle choice, perhaps more so than ever before, for many Canadians who, having grown tired of the rat race, feel drawn to a purer and eminently simpler existence.

But what of the associated risks? Might that dream path, after hand-break turning regular life, prove less than initially expected?

Hmm. *Careful*. Before ditching the metropolitan norm to permanently commune with nature, a little try before you buy logic to appraise the highs (and attendant lows?) of your

proposed shift makes sense. Hey, what if you could walk a mile in someone else's shoes, before going to the metaphorical cobbler, to figure out the comfort quotient?

Call it what you will (curiosity salver, information harvest or temporary diversion), now's the perfect time to rev up your truck and get a feel for your rural dream. Seriously: rent an escapist home and let an adrenaline rush grip your very soul. Your temporary sense of abandon starts here.

The tiny home phenomenon

Many of you will be familiar with the tiny home phenomenon, a pared back, minimal existence in deliberately tight accommodations. While on paper it might sound tempting, would a diminutive den work for you? Before selling up to downsize, appraise whether the concept is all it's cracked up



Hike to the Algonquin Wolf cabin at Golden Lake and enjoy the solitude.



The Farlain Container Cottage by Northern Shield in Tiny straddles container-built with conventional construction.

to be by checking into a Cabinscape micro abode. Small, yes, but perfectly formed.

The Luna cabin, near Huntsville, is tucked into the Limberlost Forest and Wildlife Reserve – a publicly accessible year-round wilderness haven with 20 private lakes and 10,000 acres of unspoiled forest. As far as tiny homes go, this one's a poster child, courtesy of an open staircase that stretches over the kitchen, leading to a bed nook above. Perhaps it's time to think inside the box in a beautiful wee space where you can channel your inner rustic style warrior? Find out more at Cabinscape.com.

Leave the road behind

If you long to abandon your car and venture deep into the forest, the perfect spot could be Deacon Escarpment at Golden Lake. The destination invites visitors to detach from the urban rush whilst hiking in to (and undoubtedly falling in love with) the remarkable, pared back oasis.

Enjoy a beautiful private cabin while watching the sunset and the moonrise over gently twinkling waters. Wake up refreshed and ready to explore the trails that weave through the beautiful landscape, hypnotised by the call – and chorus – of nature. Did someone say bliss out? And breathe! Check out the Algonquin Wolf Cabin at DeaconEscarpment.ca.

In the can

Living in a shipping container has become a hugely popular dream home scenario. Northern Shield Development has brought to the rental market a cottage in Tiny (ironic, or what?) that straddles container-built with conventional construction.

Marrying the modern-industrial aesthetic (all exposed steel and beams) with a cozy cottage feel (all shiplap and soft texture), it's a beautiful short-term prospect. Join the steel age by searching Farlain Container Cottage by Northern Shield at Airbnb.ca.



This vintage Airstream is located to make the most of the lake views. (Sara Lecapellain, Black Saddle Photography)



Rent a van to hit the highway for a Canadian lifestyle experience like no other.



There's nothing like boating to an island to help you feel disconnected from the world outside. (Jake Bennett, Northwoods Realty photo)

Who says you have to live in a house?

Without further ado, unleash your inner adventurer by spending time in the forest near Parry Sound in a vintage Airstream trailer. Positioned to make the most of lake views with deck and barbecue, this smart setup boasts all manner of mod cons, not least a state-of-the-art Nespresso machine to ensure the perfect cup of coffee whenever it's required. Brew your plans at NorthRidgeInn.com.

Island life

You don't have to be a multi-millionaire tycoon, like Sir Richard Branson, to own your own private island. Ontario has loads of 'em, and now you can rent before you buy. Imagine owning all the land by which you're surrounded and the feeling of peace and privacy that comes with that, secure in the knowledge that your only neighbours are invited guests and wildlife.

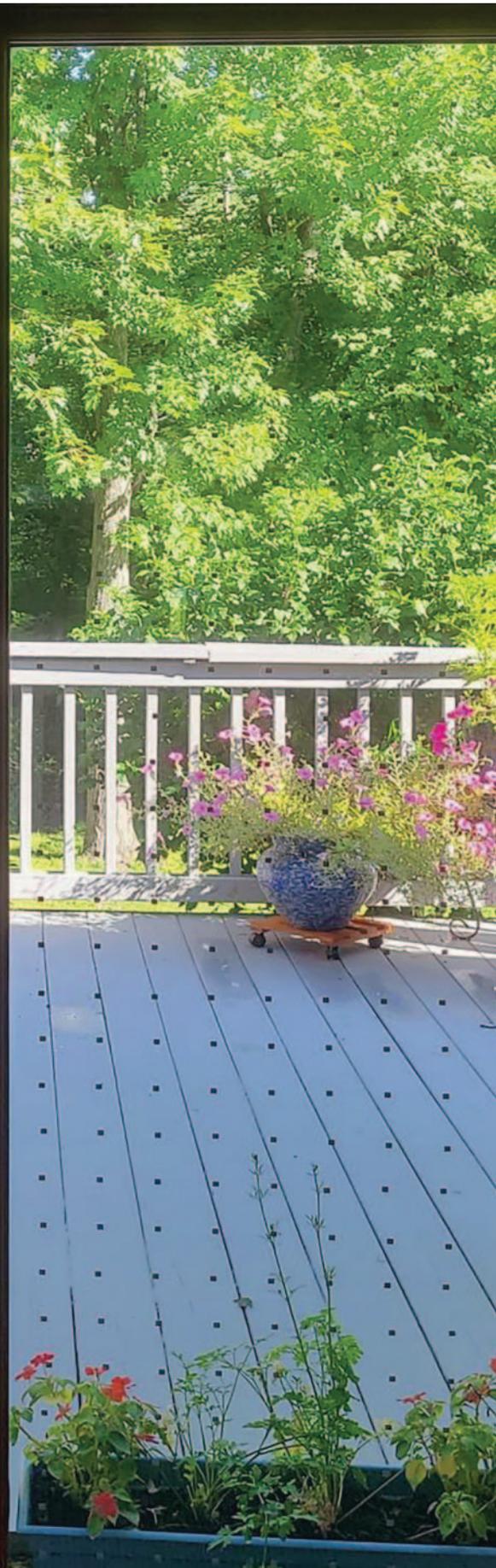
Before you know it, when visiting Red Pine Island in Sioux Narrows-Nester Falls (near Kenora), you'll be reaching for the

drone to capture that perfect house on a rock Instagram shot. Seriously, there's nothing like boating to an island to help you feel disconnected from the world outside. For more, visit Airbnb.ca.

Explore a road less travelled

If you enjoyed the movie *Nomad*, you probably found yourself thinking: "Who needs a house, anyway?" Yes indeed, if Frances McDormand's odyssey piqued your interest, then go on, scratch that wanderlust itch by bagging a van to live out that fantasy, albeit on a trial run. Consider the rental options at RVEzy and hit the highway for a Canadian lifestyle experience like no other. The vehicle featured here is available at NomadUntamed.com. Simply looking at the atmospheric image, set as it is against a beautiful mountain scape, makes us want to hit the road for a cross Canada adventure. *

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Feather Friendly tape leaves rows of dots on your window so birds will understand a barrier is present.



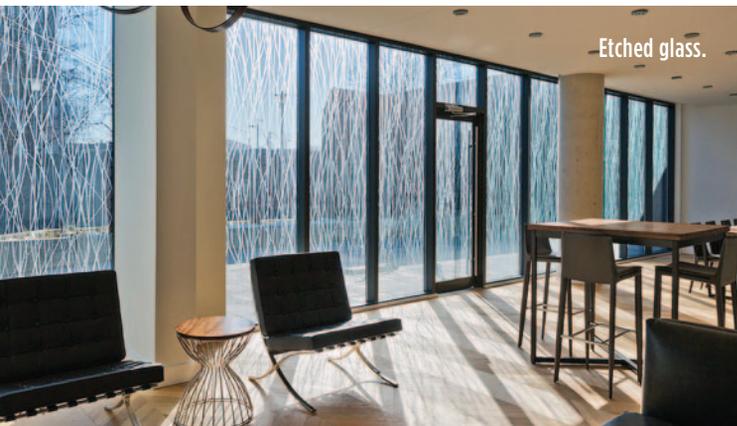
For the birds

Millions of our feathered friends die each year after hitting the windows of our homes, cottages, condos and office towers. But there exist many simple, cheap and effective ways in which to prevent the unnecessary deaths.

by Kaileigh Nichols

Bird strikes – when a bird collides with a window – are sadly the main way human habitation causes avian deaths. These incidents, in fact, kill between 16 and 42 million birds each year, according to Environment Canada, and in the United States that number increases to between 365 and 988 million. The birds don't usually see the collision coming and are killed on impact, or left with life-threatening injuries such as internal bleeding, shock, broken bones, concussions and brain damage.

So why should you care? Maybe you're not a birder, or someone who knows much about our fine feathered friends. Either way, you'd notice if they disappeared. We need birds. They assist in pollination, the dispersal of seeds and they're mighty good at controlling pests.



Preventable tragedies

To prevent bird strikes, we simply need to do one thing: ensure the glass in our homes, cottages, condos and office towers is visible to our avian friends. Even humans can be fooled by the transparent nature of glass windows and doors: if you've ever walked into either, you'll know what I mean.

Sadly, birds are unable to pick up on many of the subtle physical and situational cues that humans can, making their run-ins more common and much deadlier. Most strikes occur because birds perceive the glass's reflection as vegetation, habitat or sky, or because they see through the glass and are trying to reach the other side. The majority of strikes occur during the day - when birds are most active - and occurrences seem to increase during migratory periods.

If you've ever seen a bird strike glass - or found birds dead under your windows - you may feel compelled to take action. There exists specific glass designed to prevent such fatalities, but unless you're in the middle of a construction project or renovation, this mightn't be a realistic option.

But fear not! There are many simple, cheap and effective ways to prevent bird strikes.

One of the easiest is to make your windows more visible by making or purchasing stickers to place on them. These symbols can be anything from a piece of art to a photo or simple dots placed about 5cm apart.

Whatever you choose, the markers should contrast with the glass's reflective surface and they must be applied to the outside of the window. They should be no less than 6mm in diameter and should cover the entire window. Many online retailers sell markers, or, if you feel like being creative, you can make them yourself.

So, what action should be taken if you find an injured bird? If the creature has survived the initial impact and you'd like to help, call your local wildlife rehab centre. Note: unless you have experience handling and caring for wild birds, it's not recommended you keep it with you. Find a list of rehab centres in Ontario at Ontario.ca/page/Wildlife-Rehabilitator. The best way, of course, to avoid these tragedies is to prevent them from happening in the first place.

FLAP's window marker guidelines

According to FLAP Canada (Fatal Light Awareness Program), there are many products on the market that claim, but ultimately fail, to prevent bird strikes. By following these simple guidelines, you can effectively avoid hearing that dreaded "thud."

- Apply markings leaving no gaps more than 5cm by 5cm. If the gaps are larger, birds may try to fly through them and hit the window.
- Apply only to the outside surface. Reflections of trees or sky on the outside of the window may render any internal markings invisible.
- Markings must be high contrast so that they stand out. Markings with poor contrast - black markings on a dark window, for instance - might not be seen by birds.
- Each marking should be no less than 6mm in diameter.
- Markings must cover the entire surface of the glass.
- FLAP Canada does not recommend using netting as it can pose an ensnarement danger.
- UV window treatments are theoretically visible to birds, but there is mixed evidence of their efficacy. If using UV treatments, make sure the patterns reflect 20 to 40 per cent



To prevent bird strikes, we simply need to do one thing: ensure the glass in our homes, cottages, condos and office towers is visible to our avian friends.



- over the 300-400 nanometer wavelength and that the coating is applied to the first surface of the glass.
- The drawing of interior curtains or blinds is not an effective option because it does not address reflections on the outside surface of the glass.

What to try

Decorative window films: Frosted or decorative window films can be an attractive addition to your windows, while also helping birds to avoid a deadly collision with glass. WallpaperForWindows.com offers an assortment of decorative films that meet FLAP Canada's Guidelines.

Perforated window films: These create an opaque surface on the outside of the glass that, to birds, looks like a solid barrier. However, thousands of small perforations in the film allows ample light to shine through and permits a view of the outdoors from inside your home. CollidEscape.org offers products made specifically to reduce bird collisions.

Dotted tape: Feather Friendly tape leaves rows of white dots on your window so birds will understand a barrier is present. When installed according to the instructions, this product can be very effective at preventing collisions. Order Feather Friendly DIY Tape from LeeValley.com or the UrbanNatureStore.ca.

Ribbons or string: Hung on the outside of the window, these can be an effective collision deterrent if they are spaced no more than 10cm apart and run the entire length of the window. Consider spacing the strands even closer at 5cm to meet FLAP's guidelines. You can order this type of product custom made, or you can easily make your own.

Coloured tape: You can make your window look like a barrier to birds by applying lines of tape across the outside surface of the window. To be most effective, do not leave any gaps of more than 5cm.

Decals: Falcon silhouettes have long been a popular approach thought to stop birds from hitting windows, but they are ineffective unless properly installed. If choosing decals, use any shape you like, but they must form a dense pattern on the outside of the window and not leave any gaps more than 5cm.

Windows grills: Decorative or security grills on the outside of the window can appear as a barrier for birds to avoid. For best results, ensure bars or patterns do not leave gaps greater than 5cm.

Exterior shades or solar screens: Motorized or permanently fixed to cover the outside surface of the window, these are another way to avoid bird strike while also offering privacy and climate/lighting control. However, they may affect your view and they will only prevent birds from hitting windows when drawn. HunterDouglas.ca has a good selection of exterior shades.

Exterior screens: These products can be mounted to the outside of windows and form a flexible barrier between birds and the glass to soften impact and reduce the chance of injury. Window screens may provide some level of protection, but there's still a chance of injury if the screen is mounted too close to the glass or is too taut. BirdScreen.com has a wide assortment to choose from.*

Kaileigh Nichols has a degree in environmental resource sciences with a specialization in restoration and rehabilitation, and a degree in digital geography and GIS (geographic information system).

Picking the right floor for your home and cottage

With all the options out there, it can be a little overwhelming.

Buying flooring isn't something most of us do everyday. We've compiled a list of the most popular products and why so you can choose the best product for your lifestyle.

Luxury Vinyl – WPC

- Waterproof
- Cork back – the bonus is that it's a renewable resource AND water repellent
- Quiet, soft, and warm feeling underfoot
- Can get very realistic visuals
- Better quality joint than other thinner types of luxury vinyl floors
- Higher price point with some of the best costing the same or more than hardwood

Tips: Check out the bevel! A cut and painted bevel or integrated bevel will provide plank definition, a micro bevel will look more similar to a sheet floor once it's installed.

Luxury Vinyl – Loose Lay

- Waterproof
- Heavy yet soft feel underfoot
- Easy to replace damaged boards
- More tolerant of imperfections in your subfloor
- Less prone to expansion in direct sunlight

Tips: Don't be fooled by the name, the majority of loose lay products are actually glued down. Look for products with a nice texture and image variation to get a realistic visual so you don't see the same board repeated over and over again.

Laminate

- Superior surface durability compared to vinyl and hardwood
- Ideal for pets
- Good quality laminates now offer a waterproof warranty
- Excellent visuals for a very realistic wood look floor
- Better value compared to luxury vinyl and hardwood

Tips: A good quality underlay is required, make sure you get one with a vapour barrier if you're installing on concrete.

Anyone can sell you a floor, but it takes an expert to help you choose the right floor for you. Visit one of five **Floortrends** locations today for help finding the floor that fits your lifestyle and fits your budget.

Don't forget to check out the **Clearance Center** located at 35 Wilson Avenue, Belleville to take advantage of great values on ends of lines and remnants!



Luxury Vinyl WPC



"Blended Tawny" by CoreTec



Smart Drop is a loose lay vinyl by Fuzion – "SmartDrop Tile – Grey Granite"



"Anthology – Parchment" is a popular laminate by Mannington



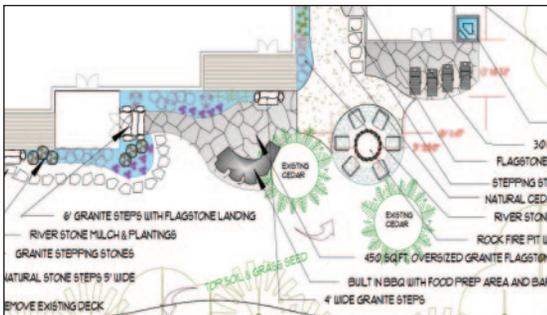
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Beat the high cost of cooking

Inflation and supply chain issues have raised the price of just about everything, meaning a trip to the grocery store could cost up to \$1,000 more this year. However, there are many delicious ways to save money on food and many involve reducing food waste.

by Vicky Sanderson

Feeling sticker shock at the grocery store? No wonder. Canada's Food Price Report predicts inflation could add close to \$1,000 a year to food costs for a family of four over the next 12 months. While global factors such as rising transportation and fuel prices may be out of our control, some relatively simple steps will help you spend less. Many go hand-in-hand with reducing food waste.

Start with small changes, like getting into the habit of a weekly fridge clean. Soups are a great way to do that. Chop onion, carrot, celery leaf, parsnip, or other veg that's on its way out. Sauté briefly, with garlic if you like, add stock and you've got a great base to which you can add leftover meats, cooked pasta, rice, or potato.

Stock can be made with leftover chicken, ham, beef bones and/or vegetable scraps and peelings, all of which can be frozen until you've got time. If that's a bridge too far, invest in a supply

of a decent quality packaged brands. While conventional wisdom suggests that convenience items take too big a bite from food budgets, a few dependable favourites provide shortcuts on busy days, and offer an alternative to pricey take-out.

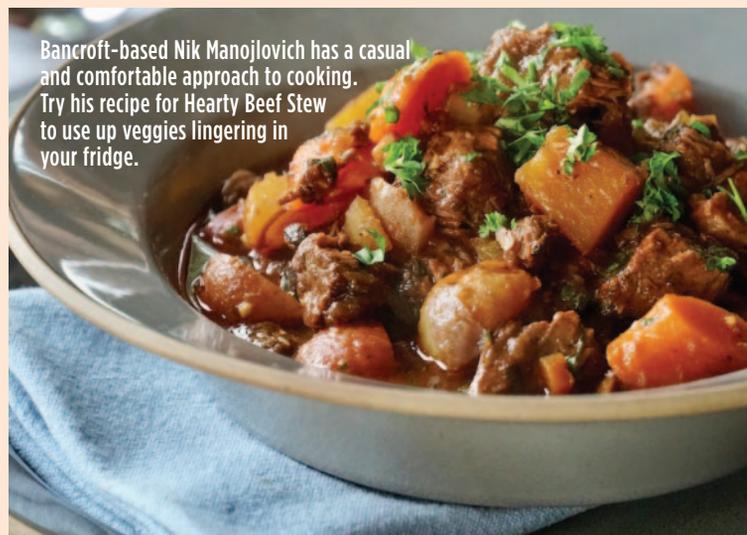
In warmer months, use the same ingredients for a meal-sized salad. And don't scorn less-than-perfect, reduced-price vegetables. A slightly wilted head of broccoli, stir-fried with black beans and mushrooms makes a hearty topping for rice or noodles.

Keep prices in perspective. Even if you pay \$4 for a head of cauliflower, leftovers can be sautéed with onion, a can of chickpeas and some spice to make a fragrant curry. To make it more substantial, substitute some stock for coconut milk. Along with a grain, that's a healthy meal for two (with leftovers) for under \$10.

Smaller amounts of mixed veg can be blended together as a puree to serve under meat or fish. Or stir a tablespoon or two into stock to make an instant cup of soup. It can also be frozen



Flavourful dressings from Chosen Foods are a handy salad shortcut.



Bancroft-based Nik Manojlovich has a casual and comfortable approach to cooking. Try his recipe for Hearty Beef Stew to use up veggies lingering in your fridge.



Fulgor Milano's fridge/freezer uses separate systems to maintain optimal temperatures in each compartment.

into portions in ice-cube trays.

A slow-cooking Dutch oven turns cheaper cuts of meat into tender, tasty stews. For even more convenience, consider a slow cooker. HamiltonBeach.ca has a Set & Forget model with a useful feature – it can defrost meat before cooking it.

Put it on ice

Make friends with your freezer. Prepare double batches of family favourites and freeze half in individual portions for hot lunches, or a fast dinner on hectic days. Grab a couple of extra pounds of butter when it's on sale. Buy a few bags of fresh cranberries when they drop in price (after Thanksgiving and Christmas, for example) to use in sauces, muffins or breakfast grains. You get the idea.

When shopping for a new fridge, ask about food preservation features. Fulgor Milano's (Fulgor-Milano.com) 36-inch French-

door model has, for example, separate systems to maintain optimal temperatures for fresh food and freezer compartments. Take note of fridge and freezer lighting because you won't cook what you can't see.

Save money and satisfy a sweet tooth by baking a double-batch of cookies – one to enjoy now and one to freeze. This is also a good way to control consumption. Check out *Cookies I Have Loved*, a new cookbook by Calgary-based Julie Van Rosendaal (DinnerWithJulie.com). Her salty-sweet Trashy Cookies recipe incorporates leftover nuts, chocolate bar bits, dried fruit, cereal, crumbs, pretzels and chips.

Use online experts as a cost-free way to expand your culinary repertoire. Local talent includes Bancroft-based Nik Manojlovich, whose WeekendAtTheCottage.com includes excellent how-to videos, recipes and kitchen tips. Nik has a casual, comfortable approach to cooking.



Certain investments in the kitchen — like these knives from Kilne — pay culinary dividends.



The Vitamix blender makes quick frozen desserts with leftover fruit.



A food dehydrator is an energy-efficient way to preserve seasonal fruits and herbs from local farmers' markets.



This non-stick ceramic pan from Our Place can be used to braise, sear, steam, strain, sauté, fry, boil and serve.



Dishwasher/freezer/oven-safe silicone bags from Cuisipro.com, have a space-saving flat design makes them easier to stack and store.

Kitchen help

The correct cooking equipment can save money, reduce waste and make prep faster and more convenient. Here are a few helpers to consider:

- Air is the enemy of food freshness. That's why your mom used to get mad at you for not tightening the pickle/jam/mayo/jam/peanut butter jar before putting it away. It's also why vacuum sealing preserves flavors and nutrients, whilst eliminating freezer burn. Zwilling.com has a vacuum system that works with microwave, freezer and dishwasher-safe heat-resistant glass containers. BPA-free vacuum bags are re-usable.
- Flexible cooking tools are good value. Our Place (FromOurPlace.ca) offers a non-stick ceramic pan that comes with a metal steaming basket/colander and a

wooden spoon (with a built-in rest and a domed lid) so it can be used to braise, sear, steam, strain, sauté, fry, boil and serve.

- A food dehydrator is an energy-efficient way to preserve seasonal fruits and herbs from local farmers' markets. This one is from HamiltonBeach.ca.
- Dishwasher/freezer/oven-safe silicone bags, like the ones pictured here from Cuisipro.com, do everything from storing food to cooking it sous vide. A space-saving flat design makes them easier to stack and store. *

Vicky Sanderson has been writing about home and decor for over 20 years and has an exceptional grasp on everything from paint to pillows, tools to textiles, and gadgets to garden tools.



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Aimee Alabaster with her children, from left, Charlie, Antonia and Oli.



Farm girls

Planning on leaving the city in search of an eminently more pastoral existence, but need a little inspiration? Meet 'have-a-go hero' Aimee of Alabaster Acres, who created a successful business - and her own slice of heaven - by mixing farming with hospitality.

by Colin and Justin
photography by Julie Broadbent Photography



Mini goats offer endless entertainment, and they're cute, too.

Camping was seldom as glamorous as it is at Alabaster Acres, where each of its three tents is outfitted with a private bathroom, featuring a full size tub in which to soak after a long day of farm activity.



Whenever you look at the bigger picture, do you find yourself wondering what it is you're actually doing with your life? That's precisely what happened to Aimee Alabaster (farmer, sharer and reformed city slicker) one summer night several years past when enjoying a bottle of wine with friends.

We caught up with Aimee to get the lowdown on her epiphany and she paints a vivid picture.

It had been a typically exhausting week, by all accounts, in corporate life with a thousand things on the busy mom's to do list: business deadlines, house improvements, back-to-school shopping for her kids – Antonia, Oli and Charlotte – entertaining friends and much, much more.

"At 38 years of age, I decided, almost out of nowhere, to become a farmer. As you do. I was managing a software development consultancy and, during a gruelling contract that found me dealing with a particularly unscrupulous client, I found myself pondering the bigger picture and challenging my own perceptions of happiness and success," Aimee explains.

Aimee's is a fascinating story and as we listen, gripped, she reminisces about transforming a wine-fuelled dream into a successful life plan. "My long-time partner at the time was talking

about life, and forks in the road, and wondered aloud about what I might be doing were money and bravery no obstacles."

Pausing, for a moment, she adds: "There's a certain freedom in deciding to effect change in life, and while I didn't have all the answers that night, I gave myself permission to dream big. I knew I wanted to raise my daughters to become self-sufficient, independent and capable women, amidst a life rich with adventure, learning, creativity and accomplishment."

To do that, Aimee needed to spend more time learning real-world skills as opposed to the largely digital and disconnected existence she'd been living. But she had a – somewhat left of field – plan.

The family's first big leap of faith came when they moved from a condo to a homestead. It was there they designed and built a series of raised garden beds to grow over 100 varieties of food.

Next, they started breeding rabbits and added a chicken coop with laying hens. By the end of that first summer, they were selling eggs and produce and, by their own admission, were amazed by just how much inexperienced city folk could accomplish with a little online research, a spot of ingenuity and a tonne of enthusiasm.



Three fully furnished tents feature their own wood stoves, heated mattress pads, luxury linens and fire pits. The hammocks also look very inviting.

Needless to say, it wasn't long before they decided that if they had more space, they could accomplish much, much more.

"Let's be honest," muses Aimee, "it doesn't require a huge change of mind set to go from fresh eggs ... to your first dairy cow."

Spool forward to the present day and Alabaster Acres has grown to become a gorgeous 100-acre farm in Caledon, the green farming belt where the city gives way to Cottage Country and beyond. It's an area the new farmer loves. "It's so special. We can see the stars every night. The crickets are louder than the traffic. We have fireflies in the fields and the kids are free to be kids. Just as we were, all those years ago."

More than simply a farm, Alabaster Acres is a sharing experience, an educational place where visitors can get close to calves, goats and chickens. And they can experience a wide range of seminars geared towards kids and adults alike, covering subjects such as herb growing, the manufacture of skin care products using essential oils, canning organic sauces, raising chickens, survival skills and a host of associated learning.

We love this incredible "can do" attitude, especially when it comes to new businesses in rural areas. This particular success story is testament to Aimee's entrepreneurial spirit, which took a

traditional farm and turned it into an exciting visitor experience.

"I'm a life-long entrepreneur," she admits, "and while this takes numerous forms, it all boils down to the fact I see potential in just about everything, everywhere."

Her enthusiasm, it's fair to report, is little short of captivating.

Lessons learned?

"When I first started our city-to-country transition, I had to experience many things the hard way. I found the world of farming difficult to access, being that much of the knowledge is passed generationally, the typical sentiment being that outsiders 'have no business getting into the business.'"

Rather than be defeated, however, by lack of knowledge, Aimee found a positive way to appraise the road ahead. "I soon realized my naiveté was actually advantageous, being that I was coming at this with a willing and creative spirit."

We ask Aimee if she feels her previous life ever got in the way of such new ambition, and she responds without hesitation.

"I was unencumbered by old attitudes, which are often resistant to change and modernization. It's pretty amazing what a sound sense of logic, a mighty work ethic and MacGuyver-like



The Event Barn, outfitted with statement light fixtures, comfy furniture and a roaring fireplace, is available for private parties and photo shoots.

ingenuity can produce. I created a highly automated, permaculture-style farm that is good for the Earth, its animals and for fellow ‘outsiders’ to come and learn about life on a farm.”

Words of advice

Glamping (glamorous camping) is another arena into which Aimee has ventured, with three fully furnished tents, each with its own woodstove, heated mattress pad, luxury linen, fridge, coffee maker, private washroom, BBQ, fire pit and hammock.

The utterly stunning Event Barn – complete with statement light fittings and a roaring fire – is available for fancy fêtes and animal experiences with a happy herd of mini goats that offer endless cuteness and entertainment.

To amplify her project’s profitability, the farm can be hired for film or photo shoots, an enterprise that attracts clients such as the LCBO, that chose the location to shoot its festive catalogue.

So does Aimee have a few words of advice for any would-be rural entrepreneurs?

“As I see it, rural life is far more soulful and rewarding than city life, but it’s definitely not for the faint hearted. This adventure keeps us humble, in that it’s virtually impossible to

have it all figured out. It’s a carousel of life, loss, love, learning and logistical challenges that never ceases to surprise.”

We listen intently as our new friend continues. “A few things are required for success: a diversified plan in order to adapt to ever-changing dynamics, resourcefulness, curiosity, optimism and tenacity. And, of course, a few handy skills are of benefit because you won’t be able to afford to hire professionals to do your bidding around a farm.”

It’s fair to observe that rural Ontario is a place that offers real opportunity for circumstance-changing manoeuvres, especially if you long to get back to nature and enjoy a life less ordinary.

“Whether or not rural life is right for you, the most important thing is to be brave enough to create an existence you love. Learn to do only the things that bring real joy, and you’ll create a wonderful sense of a life well-lived.”

And to that we say, amen! *

For more information, visit AlabasterAcres.com

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How does your garden grow?

The warming climate provides an opportunity for Cottage Country gardeners to take some planting risks. Peaches, anyone?

by Mark and Ben Cullen

Climate change is here, whether we like it or not. But, of course, this isn't new information.

The long-term warming trend is indeed reshaping how we garden, and while we don't really like the overall trend (and, in fact, support measures to curb it) we also accept there's a certain level of warming which is, at this point, locked in.

With the effects of climate change, we're more likely to experience hot summer droughts and extreme cold conditions in winter, shifts that can kill many plant species that haven't yet adapted. But what does this mean for gardeners, especially in Ontario's Cottage Country?

Kevin Kavanagh is someone who has spent a lot of time thinking about this very issue. After a career as a conservational biologist with World Wildlife Fund Canada and the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Kavanagh established South Coast Gardens in 2005 near the shore of Lake Erie in St Williams, ON.

South Coast is a small nursery that specializes in native and rare species, some of which, historically, have been only marginally hardy in our climate. In a phone conversation with us, Kavanagh addressed the issue of climate change head-on. "I think we can all accept that global climate change is happening. There's no doubt about it, the world is getting warming, and, generally speaking, more extreme weather is occurring. We don't escape the wild swings that provide some of the coldest weather, but there are new opportunities for plant species."

New growing zones for Cottage Country

The opportunities to which he is referring are for those plants which we haven't, historically, considered hardy, based on the old USDA growing zone maps.

"There are published reports that look at how zones are shifting," Kavanagh explains. "In the past 30 years, these zones have shifted northwards about 150 to 200 kms. The new Canadian system is trying to match up with the USDA system, but for now you could try going a half-zone higher than you've tried in the past." That means Kawartha, for example, historically a USDA zone 5a, is now a 5b.

Until recently, we would not have recommended most yew (*taxus*) varieties for planting here, but now they thrive, especially when they are planted out of prevailing north or west winds. The same can be said



Sweetgum tree



Shasta daisies



Peaches

for apricots, certain peach varieties and many herbaceous perennials like coreopsis, Shasta daisies, meadow rue and lavender.

Help marginal species adapt

Growing a tree or shrub outside of its traditional growing zone is never as easy as dropping it in a hole and forgetting about it. But here are some tips that should help:

Start by selecting a local seed source: “Shipping plants from the deep south probably isn’t going to work for us,” says Kavanagh. “Native sweetgum trees (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) from seed sources as far north as Indiana have been shown to do well in our part of Ontario as the genotypes are more locally adapted to severe weather than the populations growing further south.

Protect from wind and sun: In late autumn, place a screen of white fabric around plants without wrapping too tightly. A cheap set of white sheets will suffice. The white fabric is preferred as it deflects the winter sun, which can actually burn plants, while protecting against wind.

Create a microsite: By planting simple barriers such as evergreens (or a fence) to the west and north of your home, you’ll create a microsite, a protected area on the east side for planting tender varieties. When you have a choice, plant in east- and south-facing locations and near the wall of a permanent structure. The protection provided can be a full zone warmer than the one in which you live.

Mulch adequately and water evergreens deeply in the fall: The freeze/thaw cycle can be particularly damaging with warm

spells followed by cold snaps, an occurrence that’s increasingly common. White plastic tree guards can prevent bark split or sunscald during early spring warm spells.

Take risks: Experimentation is half the fun of gardening. Nobody knows exactly what the new climate holds, and, as Kavanagh explains, “plants can often surprise us.”

And finally: Long ago, we accepted certain failures as a part of the overall gardening experience. Of course, it helps to have some knowledge, but pushing the envelope on the issue of plant zones can be fun if considered from this point of view. And with success comes the opportunity for bragging rights in the community, perhaps as the only grower of trees that actually produce peaches. ✱



Mark Cullen is a Member of the Order of Canada. He reaches over two million Canadians with his gardening/ environment messages every week. **Ben Cullen** is a professional gardener with a keen interest in food gardening and the environment and is the owner of Cullen’s Foods.



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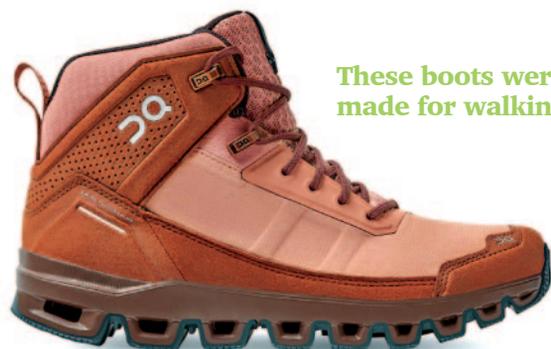
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Spring forward

With the tantalizing promise of spring in the air (and, we hope, summer just around the corner), we've corralled a host of ideas to welcome the new season as the mercury's vertiginous ascent continues (hopefully) apace. From footwear to room scenting, from puzzles to placemats, we've got you covered.

by Colin and Justin

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These boots were made for walking



Give me shelter

These boots were made for walking

As the weather improves, we love hiking around our beloved Drag Lake, but when it comes to the relevant footwear, we're super fussy. Aye, we've been known to spend literally hours in shoe shops driving sales staff mad as we appraise every option with diligent care.

It's important: when it comes to long treks, being suitably shod is crucial. That's why we love On, whose toffee-toned Cloudridge Mocca offering not only looks rugged and appealing, but boasts stellar utility chops into the sure-footed bargain.

Swiss engineered to conquer ever changing terrain, the boots' hiking specific lower reaches are engineered to support the rolling motion of feet. The manufacturer maintains that every step feels lighter, a sensation which lets you continue running just a lil' while longer.

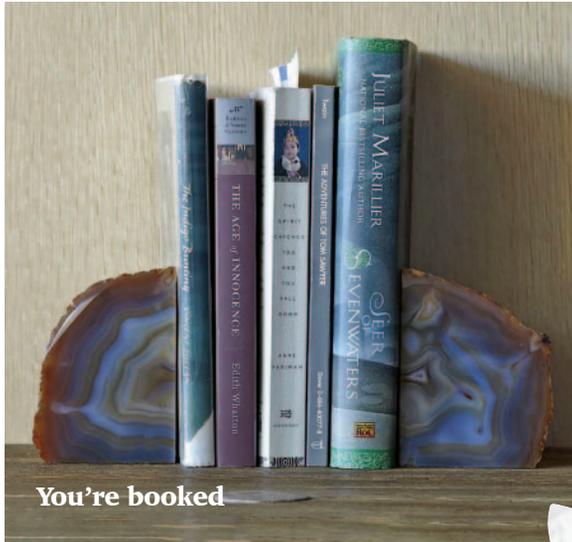
\$269.99 | [On-Running.com](https://www.on-running.com)

Give me shelter

Why wait for summer, when you can enjoy an outdoor experience right now with a pop-up tent with a difference? Domes, over the last two years, have become more popular than ever – as dining rooms and outdoor seating areas – being that they allow you to be outside with protection from the weather.

Offering comfy accommodation for up to seven adults, this 12-foot dome by Adoren could serve as a stylish conservatory, a fun play area, a simple greenhouse, or as sheltered dining gazebo. Smart, huh?

\$1,460 | [Amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca)



You're booked



Fact or fiction?

Wax works



Road map to comfort



Gurgle jug



Wax works

The Fresh Air scented candle from Crate and Barrel is an artisanal beauty that will suffuse the air with the fresh, clean scent of spring breezes. Presented in a ceramic vessel, the nine-ounce, hand-poured soy blend wax is fragranced with floral notes and sweet clover. Once your candle has burned away (in around 52 hours) the two-toned vessel within which it's contained can be used as a vase, planter or catch-all.

\$29.95 | CrateAndBarrel.ca

Road map to comfort

Cartology seldom looked this good, nor felt as comfy. This cozy pillow features a map of Haliburton County, circa 1944, perfect for your cottage couch or to take back to the city as a reminder of your dreamy, northern existence. Measuring 20 by 20 inches, the cotton cover is filled with 100 per cent duck down and printed locally, in Minden.

\$49.99 | UpRiverTrading.com

Gurgle jug

Didn't everyone's mum have one of these retro gems, proudly displayed for all to see? A traditional springtime gift, this noisy fella produces a slooshing, gurgling sound when filled with water and rocked backwards and forwards. Crafted from durable stoneware, the ample vessel holds up to one litre and measures just shy of 10 inches. Use for drinks or flower display.

\$49.99 | Bigleyshoes.com

Fact or fiction?

The Jackalope: an intriguing combo of a jackrabbit and antelope, the Frankenstein, we suppose, of the bunny kingdom. Rumored to hang about cowboy campfires, it's a fascinating creature, often shy, but most commonly seen during the springtime calendar. But be careful, they're known to be vicious.

You can now buy a breed specific hunting licence, but the paperwork is only viable between midnight and 2 a.m. on June 31. The Jackalope has appeared in literature, poems, TV shows, video games and even a fascinating mockumentary. Measuring 31 by 41 inches, bag your crossbreed trophy at The Cutter's Edge in Huntsville.

\$469.99 | TheCuttersEdge.com

You're booked

If we've pursued one pastime more than any other during COVID, it's reading books. Hundreds (literally) of 'em. From crime thrillers to biopics, and from classic literature to travel tomes, we've gone (by our own admission) a little crazy. Now, as spring dawns and we attempt to pursue a greater sense of order at the cottage, organising our wordy pile has become an obsession. Consequently, bookends such as these – crafted as they are from solid agate, dyed and polished to reveal naturally occurring patterned rings – have been super useful. Each piece is subtly one of a kind and would bring jewel-toned beauty to bookshelves, desks and consoles everywhere.

\$51 each | WestElm.ca



Butter me up

The final straw



Butter me up

In colder rooms, butter seems to stay solid forever. But as the sun warms up, plus ça change. This observed, we'll grab any chance we can to keep our favourite spread (lightly salted, thank you very much) fresh and clean, and this Le Creuset butter dish more than hits the mark. Straddling modern and retro, it's glazed artichoke green and sufficiently sized to accommodate a hefty 454gr block of butter. Decorative yet functional, the covered dish easily transfers from refrigerator to countertop for cooking, or directly to the table for serving. Stain and chip resistant, the dish will also help protect against odor absorption for a fresher tasting spread. \$65 | [CrateAndBarrel.ca](https://www.crateandbarrel.com)

Sign of the times

A road trip wouldn't be complete without the lowly road sign. Occasionally comedic, these cautionary sentinels help plan your route. And as travel starts to open up, they couldn't be more pertinent. Whether a charging moose, snowmobiles on the sidewalk, or humans walking with canoes (over their heads), danger takes many different forms in Haliburton County.

We're avid puzzlers, so this jigsaw appeals no end. Stunningly photographed and designed by Michael Bainbridge, the tabletop passtime is reproduced in vivid colour and mounted on genuine Eska board.

\$26 and \$30 | [The Occurrence.ca](https://www.theoccurrence.ca)



Giant lily of the valley

Sign of the times



The final straw

We love entertaining, and love dressing tables to impress. For us, the ultimate tablescapes are those beset with texture, so anything with raffia, linen or wicker is a sure-fire winner. This touchy feely placemat is fashioned from naturally woven straw and makes a lovely statement. As spring dawns, and home entertaining rejoins the social agenda, this lovely product is sure to please.

From \$15.69 | [The Home Holiday at Etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com)

Giant lily of the valley

In the city, our ability to raise flowers is somewhat limited by issues of scale, being that we have only a small windswept terrace upon which to tempt bloom. But at the cottage, things are entirely different. With lots of outside space, we try to be as adventurous as possible, and anything we can rear with an aromatic quotient is an added benefit.

One of our favourite flowers is lily of the valley: we love its gentle, sweet smell. So imagine our excitement when we discovered this giant version, which can be mail ordered and sent directly to your door.

According to the growers, spring is the proper planting time for a hardy botanical such as this. Find out more about *Convallaria majalis Bordeaux* by visiting Breck's Bulbs online. \$49.99 for five | [BrecksBulbs.ca](https://www.brecksbulbs.ca)

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Water wise

Every summer, the serene waterways of Cottage Country beckon residents and visitors to come out and play. But an idyllic image of life by the water masks the danger it poses for the unprepared. It's high time we face facts about life by the water.

by Lisa Harrison

Water safety campaigns and education services are made available regularly by organizations such as the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), municipal emergency services, the Canadian Red Cross and local marinas. Even so, preventable water-related accidents and fatalities occur every year.

In 2020, 465 Canadians suffered water-related fatalities, with 63 per cent of those occurring in a lake, pond or river, according to the Lifesaving Society's Drowning Report. In 2021, the OPP reported that 86 per cent of fatalities in the past 11 years included a failure to wear a lifejacket (FOCA.on.ca/safe-boating). OPP Central Region, which includes Ontario's Cottage Country, recorded 27 fatalities in 2021.

"Capsized vessels and falling overboard, are the top contributing factors in boating deaths every year," says OPP acting sergeant Terri-Ann Pencarinha, media relations coordinator for the Central Region. "OPP data continues to confirm that the vast majority of victims who die in boating incidents are not wearing a lifejacket or personal flotation device (PFD)."

If you don't carry the proper safety equipment for your vessel, you may face fines.



Know and maintain your craft.



A Canadian-approved lifejacket or PFD can prove to be your best friend, a true lifesaver.

Statistics consistently show that alcohol is a factor in approximately 40 per cent of boating fatalities, according to the Canada Safe Boating Council. Last year, the City of Kawartha Lakes alone received 15 calls for water rescues, which were attended by Kawartha Lakes Fire Rescue Service (KLFRS).

“Water isn’t forgiving,” says Cameron Smith, deputy fire chief, KLFRS. “Even the strongest swimmer can meet with tragedy if they are not prepared.”

Here’s how experts recommend we get wise about water:

Get wet

Become a strong, prepared swimmer by taking courses that include water safety awareness.

“Many drowning incidents involve other factors that swimming skills alone cannot prepare an individual for,” notes the Red Cross in its online swimming and water safety tips and resources. “It’s swimming skills, combined with safety knowledge and skills, that saves lives.”

Know and maintain your craft

From outboard to paddleboard, make sure you familiarize yourself with your craft, keep it in good condition and accident-proof it as required.

“Mechanical breakdowns account for a significant number of calls for assistance to the OPP,” says Pencarinha. “Most of these embarrassing incidents are preventable by ensuring your vessel is serviceable and you have sufficient gas.”

“It’s easy to trip and fall in a boat, especially when getting in, so stow bumpers, ropes, paddles and other equipment in

hatches, side storage areas and under seats,” advises Alan Gordon, owner of four RPM Marina locations in the Haliburton Highlands.

Learn the ropes

Take an operating course for your craft, accredited by Transport Canada if available, and learn from locals.

Learn and follow all Transport Canada rules and regulations for your craft, including human-powered craft such as paddleboards, and the rules and regulations for recreational towing activities such as waterskiing and wake boarding.

“If you’re not prepared for the water, you are at risk of becoming lost, stranded, or drowning,” cautions Smith. “If you do not carry the proper safety equipment for your vessel, you may face fines.”

Ontario boat renters are required only to complete a safety checklist but boat owners must have proof of competency, such as a Pleasure Craft Operator Card. To obtain the licence, an owner must take a training course, but even that doesn’t cover everything a boater needs to know about this area, according to Gordon.

“It is a good starting point, but it does not replace the common sense required when boating in Cottage Country. It is strongly recommended you go for a ride with an experienced boater prior to actually driving a boat by yourself.”

Lifejacket = BFF

Wear a Canadian-approved lifejacket or PFD – it can prove to be your best friend, a true lifesaver.



Alcohol and/or drug-impaired operation of a motorized marine vessel is dangerous and carries the same penalties as impaired operation of a motor vehicle. This includes suspension of the operator's vehicle licence.

“The goal of a lifejacket is the same as that of a seatbelt – to keep you in the safest state in the event of an accident,” explains Gordon. “People forget that if you fall in the water, several things that don’t exist when driving a vehicle on the road can injure or kill people and pets.”

“First, if you can’t swim, you’ll drown without a lifejacket. Secondly, if you are injured when you fall out of, or are ejected from a boat, there is a distinct possibility you will drown, or at least struggle to sustain yourself in the water.

“Finally, if boating in spring or fall, the water can potentially put you into a hypothermic state which can seriously injure or cause you to drown. If wearing a lifejacket, it will significantly improve your odds of survival.”

Under federal law, a lifejacket or PFD must be provided for each person on a watercraft, including human-powered vessels. According to Transport Canada, compared to PFDs, lifejackets offer more flotation, enhanced thermal protection and greater capability of turning the wearer to face upward, enabling them to breathe. PFDs – like flotation wings or near-shore vests – are often designed for specific activities and come in a wider variety of types, sizes and colours.

When buying equipment, talk with knowledgeable sales staff to match your flotation device to your activity and have it properly sized and fitted. Choose a bright colour for high visibility and ensure you – and all passengers – wear one.

“Attach a whistle to your lifejacket so you can signal for help,” advises Smith. “Children and non-swimmers should always wear a properly fitted lifejacket and be supervised by an adult when on or near the water.”

Plan for success

With the following steps completed, it’ll help ensure your outing is smooth sailing:

- Keep in mind your craft’s capabilities, and your own if using human-powered craft.
- Check the weather forecast: conditions in many areas can change quickly and death from sudden cold-water immersion can happen very fast.
- Ensure your craft is in good working order, that it’s stocked with the necessary safety equipment – all in good condition – and that it has sufficient fuel.
- If paddling, choose a route that’s close to shore.
- Carry a cellphone.
- Tell others where you are going.
- Use a tracking app such as What3Words.com

Don’t drink and drive

Make it your mantra.

Avoid using alcohol or drugs when near the water as consumption can lead to injury or death due to impaired judgement. To compound the danger, wind, waves, sun and boat movement can act as stressors that increase the level of intoxication per volume of alcohol consumed, according to the Canadian Safe Boating Council.

“We continue to see impaired operation of a boat in our fatality statistics every year,” notes Pencarinha. “Alcohol and/or drug-impaired operation of a motorized marine vessel is dangerous and carries the same penalties as impaired



Never swim alone. Adults make up the biggest group of drowning victims in Canada, and one-third of victims were swimming alone when they drowned.



You should always have a spotter for waterskiing, tubing and other towing activities, as mandated by Transport Canada.



Always check weather conditions before using any water toys or non-motorized crafts and actively supervise children.

operation of a motor vehicle.” This includes suspension of the operator’s vehicle licence.

“The public is one of our most valued safety partners and it helps when people discourage family and friends from boating while impaired,” says Pencarinha. “If someone is about to head out in a boat and you know they are impaired, call 9-1-1. In doing so, you could be saving lives.”

Keep watch

Always stay alert and have an adult swimming buddy or a spotter.

Adults make up the biggest group of drowning victims in Canada, and one-third of victims were swimming alone when they drowned, according to the Lifesaving Society. And the absence of adult supervision is a factor in most child drownings, according to the Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety Public Resource Guide.

When boating or paddling, your buddy can assist if the operator becomes incapacitated. The buddy also serves as a necessary spotter for waterskiing and other towing activities, as mandated by Transport Canada.

Swimmers and paddlers should always remain aware of their surroundings, assume that the operators of larger craft cannot see them, and be prepared to give up the right-of-way.

Slow your roll

Learn and observe all speed limits and avoid excessive speeds.

High rolling waves from a large wake can continue to fan out and capsize smaller craft without warning long after the cause is out of sight and hearing. Docking requires slow speed and practice

to avoid impacts that could damage the boat and cause injury.

Motorized craft approaching tow riders or swimmers should do so at dead slow speed, says Gordon. If staying alongside a person in the water, the craft should not be moving and should be in neutral or have the motor shut off.

Tubing may very well be more thrilling at higher speeds, but it’s also more dangerous for the rider.

“Remember that you are in a boat to enjoy yourself,” advises Gordon. “You don’t have to be going fast to have a good time. Not only that, but going fast costs a lot in terms of gas. Enjoy your ride at an appropriate speed.”

Take toys seriously

The Red Cross advises that recreational water toys should always be used with a buddy. Check weather conditions before using them and actively supervise children. Non-swimmers should wear a lifejacket at all times.

Note that wind, currents and wakes can shift inflatables into deeper water, making it dangerous for non-swimmers. Anchor inflatables in shallow water and follow the above advice.

Ask for help

Whatever you need to know, feel free to ask the experts.

“We talk to people all the time about these types of issues,” says Gordon. “There are so many areas in which we can help: we advise people to ask questions, and, where possible, we’ll actually show them the best way to evaluate a situation.

“Remember, common sense is probably the biggest contributor to safety on the water. And pushing the envelope is the biggest cause of injury or death.” *

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In the warm weather, there are plenty of ways to stay fit outside, including a hike in the woods.

Out and about

Keeping up with a fitness routine in the time of COVID has led trainers, their clients and the rest of us to be more creative in the ways we get moving.

by Andrew Cruickshank

When the pandemic first broke out in this country in March 2020, gyms shuttered, leaving many people feeling stranded, cut off from the fitness routines upon which they relied to stay both physically and mentally healthy. Meghan Cox experienced a similar feeling, only worse, because it also jeopardized her livelihood.

Like other small business owners, Cox was hit hard by the pandemic, but as a personal trainer who owns and operates Just Movement Fitness out of Minden, she didn't have a product to sell. There were no curbside pick-ups or home deliveries. In short, the success of her business depended upon people showing up to her studio.

Within the first month, she was forced to permanently close her Haliburton studio, run out of the Haliburton Dance Academy, followed by her Minden studio above the town's Pharmasave, where she had been located for 18 years. "(The government) closed us around March Break. I had actually booked that period off because people are usually busy, but I worked every single day, almost 24/7, to figure out how I was going to get people online," Cox recalls.

The reason for the immediacy was, in part, because the fitness studio was Cox's main source of income, but also because she couldn't imagine her clients living without exercise. "If you have adopted fitness as a lifestyle, that's just what it is, a lifestyle. And the saying's true: If you don't use it, you lose it. So, I wanted to

make sure I was still available for my people if they wanted to continue online."

Exercise feeds mental health

Statistics Canada reported that in the spring of 2021, one in four Canadians aged 18 and older showed symptoms of depression, anxiety or posttraumatic stress disorder, up 4 per cent from the fall of 2020. Studies have shown that exercise benefits mental health, but it's been hard to stay motivated, especially over the last few months.

Emerging from a long, cold winter filled with Omicron variants, it's easy to tell ourselves we'll get back to being active when it's warmer out, or when we feel safe enough to return to the gym. But are we really committed? Exercise is, after all, a lifestyle habit, and once we've fallen out of the habit, will we re-engage?

Cox grappled with this mindset in her clients, which was precisely why she started thinking of ways to get people outside – and active – while at the same time staying safe. She always taught outdoor classes at her Haliburton studio, but, generally speaking, during the summer. And, of course, winter is a different animal altogether. In early 2021, she began piecing together her Snow Fit program.

"I was still teaching online, but being that I own 100 acres and I have snowshoeing trails, I decided I should incorporate those and include fitness training," she says.



Ice climbing classes were very popular at Yours Outdoors this past winter.



Outdoor fitness classes on snowshoes. Who knew?

Cox's Snow Fit program includes guided tours along the snowshoe trails on her property with exercise sessions thrown in at predetermined locations. Clients will snowshoe to a clearing or a hill where they'll perform exercises, such as squats, tricep dips and lunges, before continuing along the trail.

"It was all trial and error. I was going out and playing and I decided, okay, this would be a really great spot to do tricep dips on this log or this rock," Cox says. "I mean, we only have six movement patterns in life: squat, lunge, push, pull, rotation and gait. That's how my entire fitness programming is developed. And then it's just modifications or tweaks on those patterns, putting them together, tempo changes, that kind of thing."

"Outdoor classes also felt less regimented," Cox explains. "They were a chance for much needed socializing with some solid exercise, making the classes less intimidating for beginners."

Fitness classes, however, aren't for everyone. If you're looking to get active on your own, Cox advises focusing on something in which you're truly interested.

"Do something you enjoy," she suggests. This could be as simple as going for a walk. Cox suggests picking somewhere calming and picturesque, rather than walking along a busy highway. And try listening to music. "Music will definitely drive your movement. It'll either make you walk faster, or slow you down, depending on the tempo."

Take it outside

If you're looking to tackle more complex activities, say tai chi, cross-country skiing, cycling, or even ice climbing, there are classes available to teach you the skills you need to continue the

activities on your own. Yours Outdoors, a Haliburton-based company, offers outdoor experiences for any skill set or expertise.

"This past winter, what we had on a regular basis were ice climbing, skiing, snowshoeing and ice fishing," says Emily Stonehouse, co-manager of Yours Outdoors. "What we try to do is give people the opportunity and the tools to be able to learn how to do something for the first time."

In the warmer months, the company offers guided hiking tours that focus on a range of different topics, from bird calls to edible mushrooms. Or you can take part in a guided bike tour that stops in at local art studios, hop on a paddleboard for some yoga, or take a canoe out on the lake for a guided trip. Yours Outdoors even offers a class where you spend the morning in a woodshop designing your own paddle and the afternoon on the water trying it out.

"Something we see a lot in people is newfound confidence," Stonehouse says. "Many of our experiences are catered to those who've never done them before, people who've always wanted to paddle somewhere, or try this hike on their own. We notice that when they get out there and experience support along the way, they find a new level of confidence, and they're kind of awakened to whatever that experience is."

Regardless of whether you're looking for structure, or simply to get active on your own, why not hike the trail that you've always talked about? Or run to the end of your road? Or cycle into town? Or climb a hill? Honestly, there are so many amazing ways to stay active, surrounded, at all times, by fresh air. So why not take advantage, and awaken – or reawaken – that ambition to get fit, all the time enjoying the great outdoors? *



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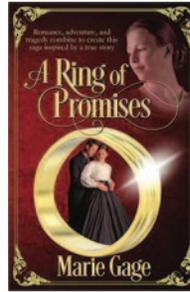
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Good reads

Canada has an amazing stable of literary giants and some of them come from Cottage Country. Herewith a small selection of what some local authors have to offer.

by Gale Beeby



A Ring of Promises: Historical Fiction Romantic Saga Inspired by a True Story

by Marie Gage

Century-old letters found in an attic reveal the 1912 story of Will, a lowly footman to an Earl in England, and Janet, a nanny to a Lord and Lady in the Highlands of Scotland. Desperate to find a way to be together, Will gives up

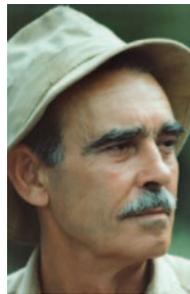
everything he knows and sets sail to find a new home with only \$25 in his pocket and a dream.

The book was inspired by genealogical research into Haliburton author Marie Gage's paternal grandparents immigration story.

When you hear things like “he was a footman at Buckingham Palace,” “he missed the Titanic,” and “he stole a canoe and paddled 600km against the flow of the Hayes River system to escape worker mistreatment,” you know there is a story that needs to be investigated, Gage says. When the investigation uncovers a heart-wrenching tale of romance, adventure and tragedy, it simply has to be told.

This gripping and heartfelt story traces their journeys, in back-and-forth chapters between Canada and the Highlands of Scotland, as they struggle to overcome the obstacles threatening their dreams.

[Amazon.ca](#)



The R.D. Lawrence Library: Where the Water Lilies Grow | The North Runner | The Place in the Forest

by R.D. Lawrence
and Max Finkelstein

R.D. Lawrence was a Haliburton-based naturalist and author who was an expert on the wildlife of Canada, on which he wrote more than 30 books, in 14 languages. This special three-book bundle collects three of his works.

In *The North Runner*, he tells the true and moving story of the building of trust between a man and an exceptional dog that was half wolf, half Alaskan malamute, and the resulting mutual affection and respect between them.

In *The Place in the Forest*, he tells of a patch of Ontario wilderness, soon known as The Place. Here Lawrence and his wife built a cabin and became immersed in studying the ways of the wild. The Place was home to a variety of wildlife, and Lawrence's desire to learn, fuelled by his keen observation, led to his writing about and photographing life within his small corner of the forest — the result being a warm, witty account of change and survival in the natural world. The sequel, *Where the Water Lilies Grow*, continues the story of animals who inhabit the lakeside near his backwoods home. From the smallest water creature to wolves, deer and many birds, all are known to him with sensitivity, enthusiasm and empathy.

[Amazon.ca](#)



Oliver and the Bee

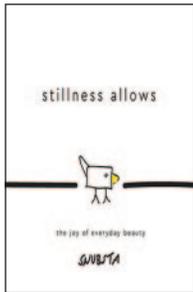
by Marie Gage
illustrated by Audrey Ramsay

The Haliburton-based author shares Oliver's fantastical journey through his grandparents' apple orchard. The story leaves a lasting impression and will change the way children view the importance of bees to the environment of Earth. As Oliver takes the hand of the

son of a scientist from another planet, a planet that once faced the same environmental issues as Earth, he not only learns what it's like to be the size of a bee, but gains perspective on the importance of this tiny creature to our world.

There is a beekeeper approved learning addendum in the back of the book that explains the work and importance of bees.

[Amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca)



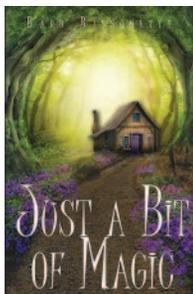
Stillness Allows

by Snubsta

Each page of this beautifully illustrated book offers a meditation on the beauty and wonder that surround us every day. Most of all, it's about love. These extraordinary poems and illustrations by Simon Payn of Haliburton are a potent mixture of simplicity and depth, revealing fundamental truths in simple, accessible

ways. Reading this book will remind you of the beauty of life and the challenge to make each day a little bit better.

[Snubsta.com](https://www.snubsta.com)



Just a Bit of Magic

by Barb Bissonette

Every morning, Jenny Smith stares into her magic mirror, searching for glimpses of two girls. But on this day, she is joyful, knowing that this is the day they will materialize in her village. Molly has come to the village for a fresh start. Her parents are dead, her boyfriend has cheated on her with her

best friend, and she is feeling very alone. Miranda has arrived at the boarding house and workplace, but she has her own secrets.

Nothing is as it seems in the village. Not the yoga studio. Not the bits of magic that seem to hover everywhere. Not even the assortment of women who gather there. The two girls discover that all of this is leading to the biggest story, the biggest mystery, the reason why they ended up in this strange, unconventional place to meet a hedgewytch named Jenny Smith.

To research the world of witches and magic, the Muskoka author made two trips to Salem, Mass., where the infamous witch trials took place in 1692.

[Amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca)



Square Wheels

by David Bruce Patterson

Family life in Toronto in 1925. Simple, euphoric, winsome? Not exactly. Siofra is a young adolescent prone to mischief. Her sister, Nessa, is a burgeoning – and pretentious – career woman. Abigail Conor, the mother and suffragette, is described as austere, and Eamon Conor, the father, who is

mechanically dexterous. And psychotic.

Patterson, who lives in Bracebridge, has written over 3,000 poems and hopes to have an anthology out soon.

[Amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca)



Stripped Bare: My Mental Health Story

by Kristina Vanderlugt

This is the true story of Kristina Vanderlugt's struggle with mental illness. She lived through two psychotic episodes and was in and out of the hospital. During this time, the Bracebridge resident was stripped bare of her emotions, her faith and her life.

"My world had been turned upside down. I didn't know what to do or who to trust."

Despite her fear of opening up about her journey, she felt the need to share. Vanderlugt feels there is not enough information out and there and hopes her story will be of help to others suffering from schizoaffective disorder. "Turn that brokenness into a strength."

[YairusOnline.com/StrippedBare](https://www.YairusOnline.com/StrippedBare)



Out of Darkness: The Jeff Healey Story

by Cindy Watson

Cindy Watson, a Bracebridge-based lawyer, takes us backstage for a powerful and insightful look at one of Canada's great musicians. From the moment 3-year-old Jeff Healey first laid a guitar across his lap in what was to become his signature style, it was

clear he was no ordinary kid. Losing both eyes to retinoblastoma, a rare form of cancer, opened a door to another world for Jeff. Out of darkness he created music, becoming one of the most influential blues-rock and jazz performers of our time. In this up-close and personal account, loaded with never-before-seen photographs, memorabilia and intimate recollections of family, friends and fellow musicians, we discover this unique music icon's dynamic career, which saw him collaborate with everyone from George Harrison and Eric Clapton to B.B. King and Stevie Ray Vaughan.

[Amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca)



Here's what our readers are saying...

"Wow! That is more than a magazine, it's a coffee table book!"

Terry, Haliburton

"Just wanted to let you know that I came across your magazine and I was so impressed. It looks great, of course, but I thought the content was really solid. Keep up the great work."

Dennis, Peterborough

"I loved your premier issue of Here magazine! It's contemporary, has great articles on many different and interesting topics, tasteful advertising, great layouts and photography. Simply put, very, very classy!"

Shelley, Haliburton

"This magazine is too good to be true! The articles, the cover and the photography are just great. I took a handful (sorry!) off the shelf and will pass them to all my girlfriends."

Mary, Haliburton

"My wife and I love reading your magazine, the stuff in it is leagues ahead of other stuff we pick up. A breath of fresh air. My only grumble is that it's not every week."

Dean, Bancroft

"My first order of business when I get to the cottage is picking up the latest issue of Here. Any chance I can get a subscription?"

Janet, Oakville

... and we're listening!

A great big *Thank You* to all of our readers who have sent positive reviews of our first year! Dean from Bancroft – sorry, we don't think a weekly magazine is possible in the near future. But, Janet from Oakville, you're not the only one who has asked us to make *Here* available by subscription!

You can now go to **HereCanada.ca** and get the next three issues of *Here* **delivered directly to your mailbox** for just \$29.99 (our cost for postage and handling).



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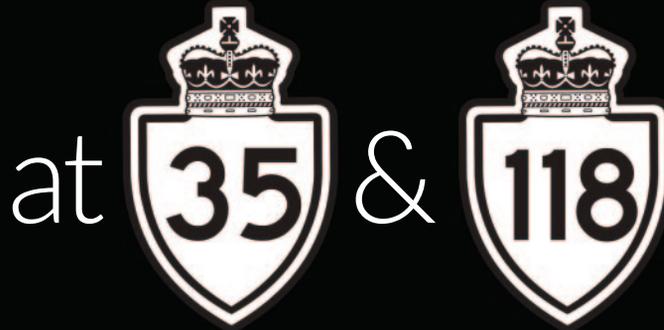
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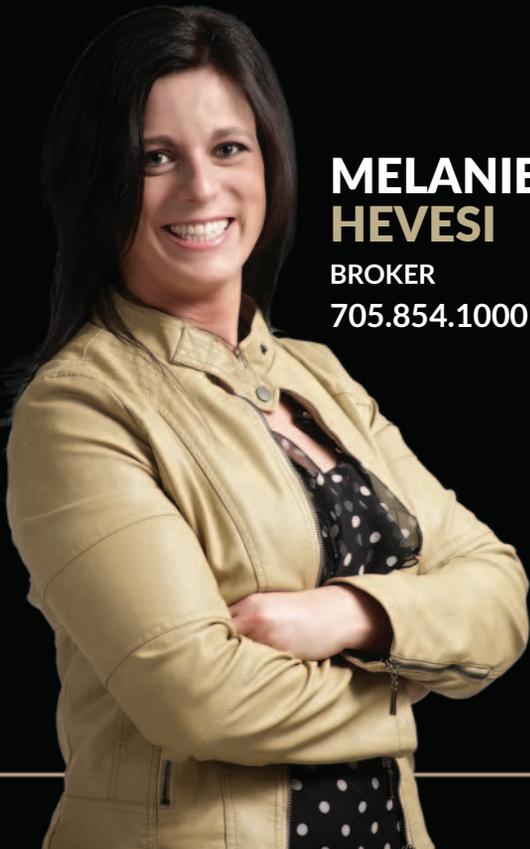
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