

Design • Build • Renovate Your Home  Win A Dryer Vent Kit!

canadian homes^{10th} & cottages

10th
ANNIVERSARY

Urban Country

A three-stage renovation

plus
wood refinishing
canadian earthquakes?
lighting and storage solutions

Volume 10 Issue 7 \$4.95



Agreement # 138770
Publications Mail Registration No. 29856

www.homesandcottages.com

urban

country

Story by Connie Hinatsu Photos by Christopher Lawson



Renovated in three stages, this urban home has undergone a transformation that builder Yuill McGregor calls 'urban country'.

WASTE NOT. They're two words design builder Yuill McGregor lives by, and has demonstrated to the fullest in the renovation of his downtown Toronto home. Nothing - materials, light, energy or an inch of space - is wasted within the walls of the bungalow turned three-storey home he shares with his wife, Sylvie Turbide, and their four-year-old daughter, Cedrine.

McGregor and Turbide bought the 1899 bungalow nine years ago and ren-

ovated in three stages, first "removing everything that was ugly and saving the good bits," says McGregor. The original heart pine flooring, hemlock roof boards, foundation and front façade were retained, and just about everything else was replaced.

The second phase involved underpinning an additional crawl space, waterproofing the perimeter foundation walls and creating a steam bath and home entertainment room on the lower level.

Outside, the front and back yards were landscaped and a plunge pool was built.

The third phase, a collaborative effort with architect Tony Belcher, involved the creation and construction of a three-storey hybrid timber frame addition built up and over the original house. Floor space was doubled to 2,000 square feet and included the addition of two bathrooms, three bedrooms, two stone fireplaces, two decks and state-of-the-art mechanical systems.

The centre hall plan was retained, with the original bungalow space opened up to contain a play area, office and kitchen. There are no drywall walls, just made-to-measure cabinetry that makes the most of every inch.

There's but one solid interior wall - a rock climbing wall the family uses to keep in shape. It's also great for birthday parties, as Cedrine and her friends found out earlier this year. McGregor harnessed up kids in turn and they climbed the wall in search of the candy canes he had placed at various levels.

This original bungalow space is open to the roof line, with the original hemlock roof boards exposed. In order to keep the wood exposed, McGregor "outsulated", adding layers of roof felt, insulation and plywood topped with an ice and water shield product, then a cedar breather under cedar shingles.

In the play area, a wall of mirror adds depth and reflects light back into the space. Light spills from a tall window near the stairs, through the open risers and transparent wall panels. Openings, some blocked by iron bars and others completely open, allow movement of "sound, light and air".

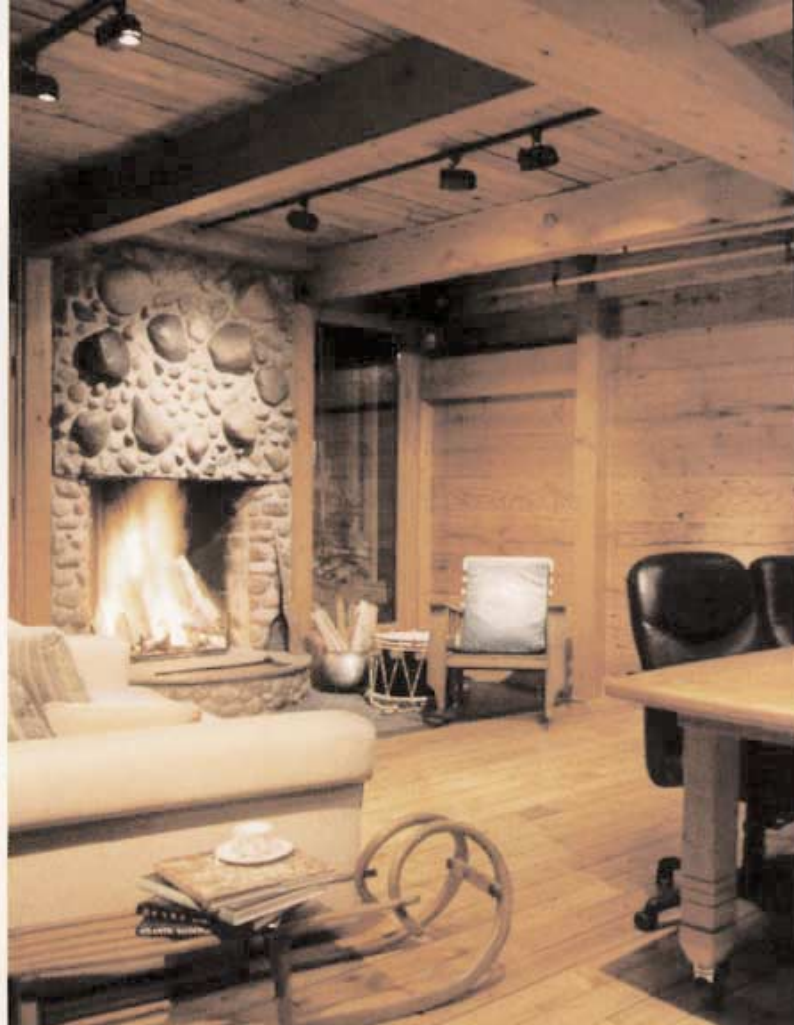
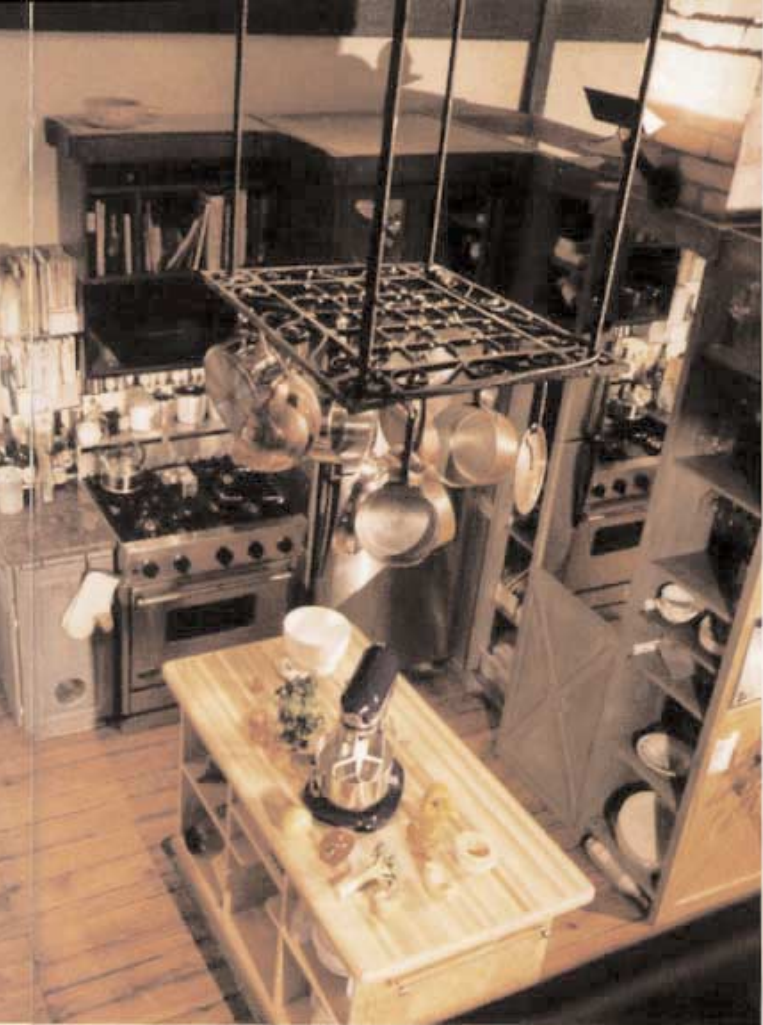
A half wall of wood cabinets stands beside an opening in the floor, with stairs leading to the basement. On the room side, the cabinets offer drawers for storage. The stair side was left stud-wall exposed, with shelving added between.

The kitchen shares double sided cabinets with the office. Plywood cabinets are outfitted with such space savers as slide-out drawers and stemware holders to maximize space. A maple cutting board on wheels serves as a work island.

"In the kitchen, it's all about tasking. Everything is at the ready," McGregor says. Knives that rest in slits in the marble coun-

The third phase of the renovation was the creation of a three-storey hybrid timber frame addition built up and over the original house. See the 'before' photo on page 81.







tertop are handy, recessed stainless steel tubs are ready to accept compost materials and scrub brushes are within easy reach of the sink.

The faucet is wall mounted to conserve space, and a built-in soap pump (a gadget McGregor loves and has installed throughout the house) is built into the countertop close at hand.

Task lighting is provided and under the counter lighting is provided and there's a heat recovery ventilator that conditions incoming air.

The eating area/family room boasts beautiful old-growth Douglas Fir, rescued from a warehouse downtown and a tannery in Acton, Ontario, McGregor says.

"Douglas Fir is the choice of fine homes in the U.S. It's valuable, rare and lasts forever," he says. Being a builder, he says he realizes the importance of wood and takes an active interest in forest management.

One-quarter inch steel brackets hold massive beams in place and plumbing pipes are left exposed. "It's mean and lean," he says.

The back wall, which has windows overlooking the backyard, features a massive stone fireplace. The fireplace front was built horizontally, with steel rebar every 10 inches across and four inches of concrete. Rocks were placed, then grouted with a slurry coat of river pebbles. The approximately 2,800-pound slab was lifted by a chain system, buttered with an adhesive and bolted into place on the wall.

Doors lead to the backyard, where a wood deck with bent steel seating and a gas barbecue overlook the plunge pool, waterfall and sandbox. One side of the property features a tiered garden, with seedless grapes growing on the uppermost tier, and strawberries on the tiers below. An ornamental pear tree grows through the roof of the pool building.

The home's lower level houses an office, a laundry room and space designed to offer maximum storage. There's a dehumidifier hooked directly to a drain, and all cold water faucets that



provide drinking water are centrally filtered.

The home entertainment room has a floor that is heated 24 inches from the wall - away from built-ins that offer wine storage for 330 bottles. The room, with a built-in sofa bed and cedar lined drawers for linen storage, doubles as a guest room.

Wood stairs leading to the upstairs bedrooms offer drawers and shelves at every turn and a play area is tucked under the staircase at the first landing.

Cedrine's bedroom has large wooden bunk beds with drawers underneath and a built-in desk. At 27 inches high, it serves her well now, but can be raised to 30-inch adult height as she grows. The closet is outfitted the same way, with clothes bars that can be raised and shelving that can be moved or removed as required.

The master bedroom has a wall of windows, a huge stone fireplace and an oversized air massage tub beside the bed. "I can't imagine why you'd build a wall around" the tub, McGregor says.

There's wood and more wood - a massive bed with large pull out drawers and specially designed openings to accommodate sports bags.

Large mirror clad medicine cabinets stand over the sink and its "stealth bomber" shaped countertop made of aircraft aluminum, anodized black. The commode is enclosed.

In the dressing area, wood cabinets provide closet space, and mirrored doors provide access to more storage space, and hide the air handler and filter system.

A beautiful and unusual in-laws' suite, the third-floor space features a sleeping area, a bathroom and a wall of glass with doors leading to a rooftop deck. Again, space is used to the max, with double-sided cabinets serving the bathroom and bedroom areas.

On close inspection, eight eye bolts can be seen sprouting from the top of a rock wall outside the in-laws' suite. You guessed it. It's another rock climbing wall.

Filled with surprises, this home is a treehouse of sorts; beautiful, yet efficient and practical, and it stands apart from rest. ■

For more information, see page 119.