

A whimsical harpsichord stars as the focal point in the music room.

Sister Act 1

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THIS IS THE TALE OF TWO SISTERS – MARY AND JANE. THEY LIVE TWO BLOCKS AWAY FROM EACH OTHER. THEY BOTH MARRIED MUSICIANS. THEY WORK TOGETHER, AND THEY HAVE BOTH ARTFULLY RENOVATED THEIR FAMILY HOMES. *Continued on page 38*

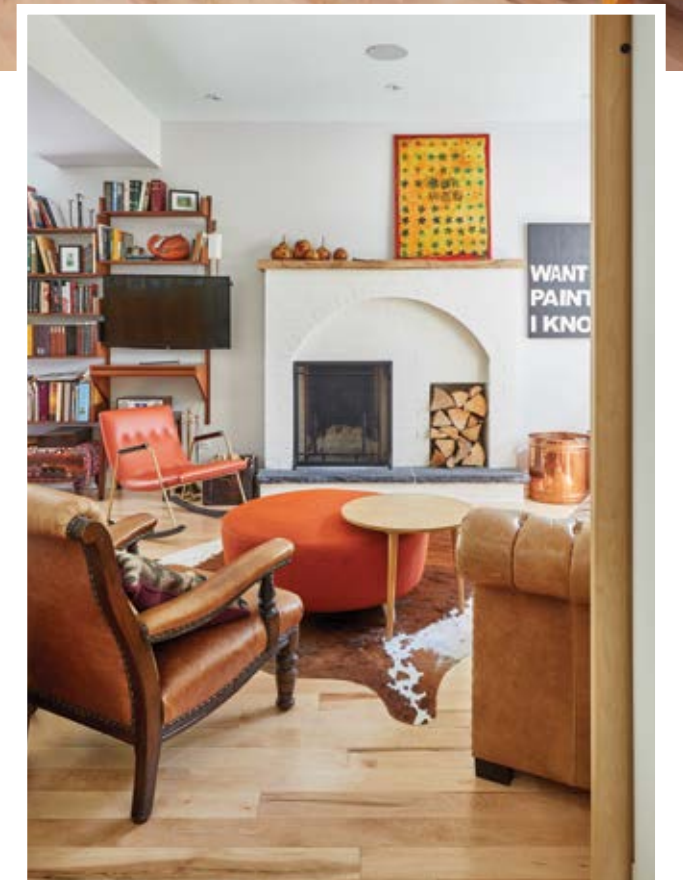
feature

Mary Peirson and her husband Daniel were newlyweds and had been living in Mary's long-time home in downtown Guelph. However, they dreamed of finding a home that better suited their family's new life together.

Luckily, an intriguing home just two blocks away that had originally been a farmhouse circa 1874 went up for sale. They purchased the property in 2015 and the planning for the renovations began.

Mary had a strong working relationship with a contractor from her previous home, so she called **Jeff Muysson** of **Standard Renovations** to take a look. He assured the couple that the house had good bones, but that it needed to be ripped back right to the studs. He was the general contractor for the entire renovation. "Jeff and his team are not only superlative craftsmen but they were also supportive collaborators who brought something special to our home and our life," says Daniel. **Bill Spira** of **Spira Architectural Illustration & Design** was hired to draft the plans.

TOP RIGHT: With sleight of hand, this sunny sitting room transforms to a project space or a guest bedroom. Clever cork sliding doors disguise a built-in home office and Mary's sewing nook. **BELOW:** Daniel's office and music room are off the main entryway. **RIGHT:** Daniel surprised Mary with William Morris's fruit-patterned wallpaper (on the underside of the staircase) on their fourth wedding anniversary.



The couple also called upon Daniel's Dad, who is a composer and a musician, and also a dowser. He checked for underground water and to their delight, he found no evidence of any disharmony in the house. In fact, it turned out that the previous owners were musical folks and many house concerts had been performed there over nine decades.

The original house was a single-family dwelling with a centre hall and single staircase. Early on, the house was duplexed by dividing it down the middle and installing two staircases and many small rooms both up and down. Mary and Daniel understood it would need a daunting amount of work to return it to its original centre hall design with a more open concept.

The must-have list included open space that could potentially be used for hosting music concerts, a main floor bedroom to accommodate aging in place, a music room, and a kitchen designed for a family that loves to cook. A main-floor laundry/mudroom was important, complete with laundry chute from the upstairs bathroom. *Continued on page 41*

ABOVE: The couple's artful blend of vintage and modern pieces of furniture and Mary's favourite turquoise accents create harmony in the cosy living room. **RIGHT:** The focal point of the living room is a welcoming fireplace. The unique design was inspired by a picture Mary saw in a British design magazine.



The open concept kitchen, dining and living space was designed to host large groups and intimate music concerts.



LEFT: Mary and Daniel spend most of their time in the kitchen. They have a passion for all things vintage – charmingly evident in their clothing. **BOTTOM:** Mary and Daniel wanted a streamlined look in the kitchen, uncluttered by upper cabinets, so the design includes deep drawers for storage and the fridge is in the adjacent laundry room. **BELOW:** The “Dorset” by Woods & Sons china set was transported in Daniel’s luggage on numerous trips from Europe while Mary and Daniel were dating.



Although their children, Theodora and Henry, are away at school, their beautiful bedrooms and shared bathroom, which occupy one half of the second floor, will be kept warm for them by the cat, Sergeant Pepper.

A highlight of the home design is a spectacular modern central glass staircase with a wooden frame engineered by **Stair Rite**. **Michael Dunsmore** of **Guelph Glass Limited** supplied and installed the tempered glass, which is stronger than that used in the SkyDome.

The vision for the kitchen involved hunter green cabinetry with white countertops – an idea Mary culled from a British design magazine. The couple wanted the cabinetry to look streamlined, without interruption by bulky appliances or upper cabinets so they installed drawers and a large walk-in pantry for storage. Cabinets were built and installed by **VDCM Architectural Millwork Inc.** A second sink in the large island works well when Daniel hosts as bartender when entertaining family and friends.

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BELOW: The funky bathroom cabinets are custom-made by a U.S. cabinetmaker that Mary sourced online. Turquoise – her accent colour of choice – is evident in the floating cabinets, artwork and glass tiles on the floor. **RIGHT:** Cheerful and efficient, this main floor mudroom/laundry space keeps the family organized and clutter to a minimum. **BOTTOM:** It's good to have a doctor in the house! Mary found the bright red first aid kit at Ikea – "full of bandaids and medicines that come in handy," she says.



Mary says now that the renovations are finished, they have taken on the responsibility of hosting large family events like Grey Cup parties and Christmas dinners. She has a large family and there are sometimes as many as 25 people to host. The living/dining area is infinitely flexible to accommodate large groups.

The fireplace in the living room is another nod to British design (installation by **Burpee Stone Masonry**.) When the masons removed the original chimney, they discovered it had only three walls and that the house's exterior stucco and frame wall comprised the fourth. It was a miracle the house had not previously burned down.

Both Mary and Daniel have a passion for all things vintage. They enjoy scouring the region for vintage finds like the toaster and telephone in the kitchen, and their dressing room is full of vintage clothing and accessories. Although they both have the vintage bug, Mary's taste in decorating leans more towards modern than vintage. The difference is noticeable in their bedroom retreat upstairs. Daniel's bathroom is more Victorian with a tub, since he likes a bath. Mary laughs, "after all, he's a Victorian kind of guy!"

Mary's bathroom has a modern flair with a glass shower and funky melamine cabinetry. The cabinetry design is carried through all of the bathrooms in the house.

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BELOW: Henry's bedroom features a burgeoning art display. Mary explains that each child receives a piece of art at Christmas to encourage their interest and appreciation. **RIGHT:** A shared bathroom between Theodora and Henry's rooms has cabinets that echo the design on the main floor. They each have a sink and there's a door closing off the toilet so both can use the facilities at the same time. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Theodora was instrumental in her bedroom décor. She chose the bright blue colour for the wall at the head of the bed. The room also has a skylight that opens up the angular space.



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His-and-hers separate bathrooms are on opposite sides of the master suite. Daniel's has a Victorian air about it with a claw-foot tub.

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Another theme that runs through the house is the colour turquoise. It's Mary's favourite and it pops up somewhere in every room – sometimes as a decorative accent, or as a focal point like the sparkling glass floor tiles in the main-floor bathroom. Tiles by **Tilemaster**.

For Daniel, the most memorable part of the transformation from old to new was, "the process of smooshing together our families and discovering a shared vision of home," he says. Mary agrees saying "it was the adventure of taking on a big project, learning to work together and discovering more about each other in the process." **OH**

TOP RIGHT: Along the hallway from Mary's more modern en suite is a large walk-in closet with a vintage dressing table for Mary and (almost) enough room to hold the couple's treasured collection of vintage clothing. **RIGHT:** When the music has ended and guests are gone, Mary and Daniel retreat to their bedroom and share quiet time by the fire.



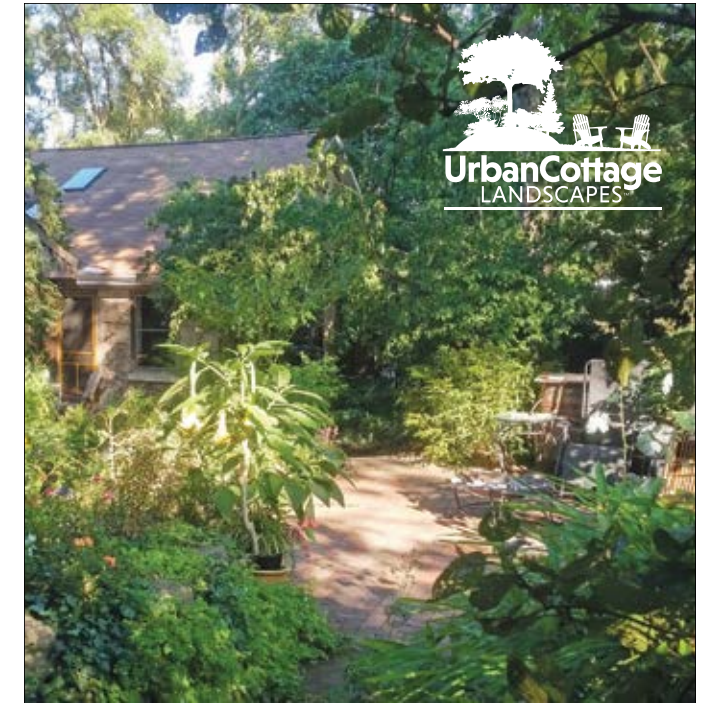
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