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The boathouse at The Landscapes offers serene space for quiet relaxation or a friendly get together by the fire. It stows a variety of boats and canoes while providing ample space for lounging in the sun.

# LAKE OF BAYS *getaway*

BY WALTER FRANCZYK  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY





**CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT:** (1) The kitchen in the McWilliams' villa is fully equipped for family meals or entertaining. (2) In a nearby Landscapes cottage, a two-sided, stone fireplace spans the dining room and great room. (3) Stairs ascend to three upstairs bedrooms in the McWilliams' villa. (4) Their cosy Muskoka room overlooks the lake and manicured grounds.

After their first week at **The Landscapes**, Bill and Stephanie McWilliams didn't want to go home.

If you think serving coffee at Tim Hortons can be hectic, imagine operating two of Canada's most popular coffee shops. Bill and Stephanie know what it's like because that's exactly what they do. The Fonthill couple took over two Tim Hortons in the Niagara region when Stephanie's parents, Doug and Susan Burr, chose to retire from the business.

"We decided to take the plunge and join the company," says Stephanie. That plunge has meant plenty of hard work to keep the shops running smoothly.

For a leisurely break from their arduous work schedule, Bill and Stephanie take their children Lauren, 5, Ryan, 3, and Ashley, almost 2, to The Landscapes, a fractional ownership resort of cottages and villas along a quarter-mile of scenic Lake of Bays shoreline. The McWilliams bought a one-tenth share of a three-bedroom villa overlooking the southern tip of the lake. That share gives them five weeks of exclusive use of the vacation home every year.

"We just found this was the best place to retreat to," says Stephanie, whose parents were among the first people to buy a share of a Landscapes cottage. "It was a home away from home," Stephanie says. "It was easy



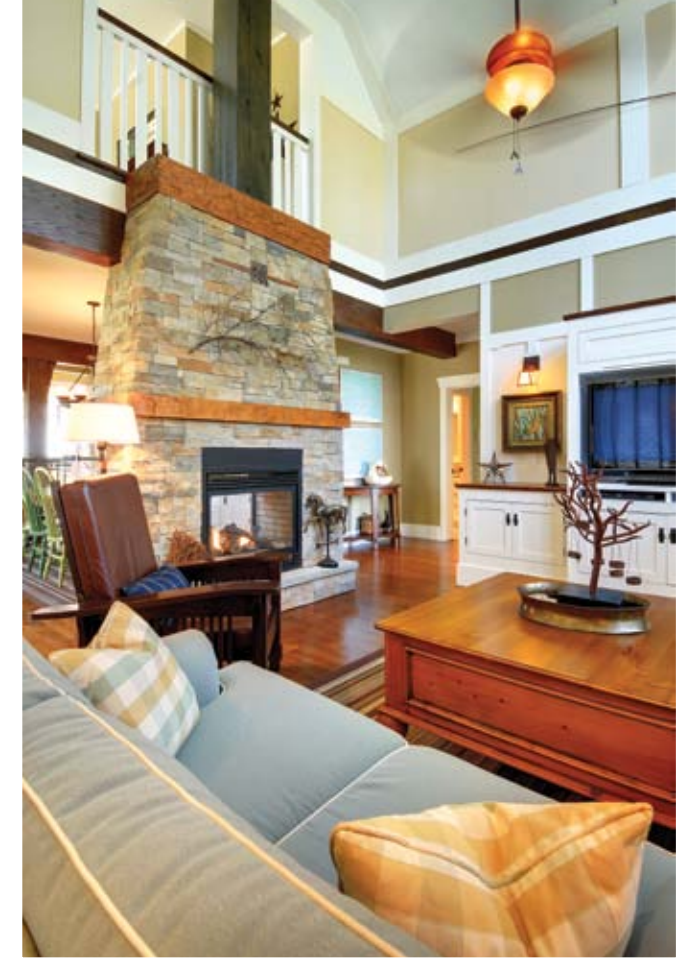
**ABOVE:** Built-in bookcases flank the stone fireplace in the sunken living room of the villa. Some décor, rugs and cushions came from Rafter's of Muskoka while Pinestead Crafts supplied selected wood furnishings.

bringing the family up here. We have two businesses, so it's a way to get away from it all because we don't get a lot of time as a family when we're home," she says.

Their Landscapes villa is more than just a cottage, says Bill. It comes with a beautiful two-storey boathouse and cabana on a natural beach, a luxurious clubhouse, a spa and fitness centre with a hot tub and pool. They own a share of it all. "How could you not want to invest in this place," Stephanie says in an interview in their all-season Muskoka room.

*Continued on page 60*



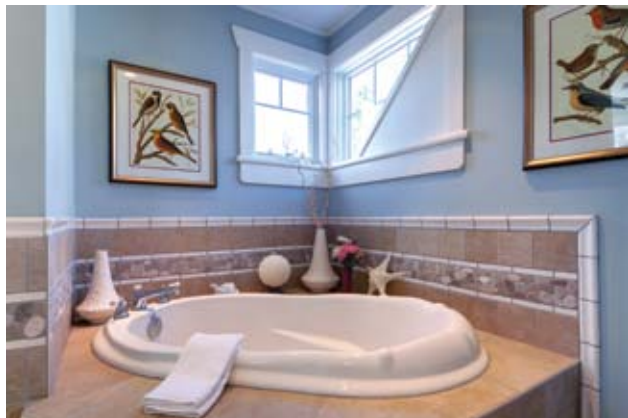


The ceiling in The Landscapes cottage great room soars more than two storeys. A small balcony above the stone fireplace reveals a panoramic view inside and out.





A sloped ceiling and restful hues of blue add intimacy to the cottage master bedroom. It occupies the top floor. Master bedrooms in the villas and cottages have their own fireplace and luxurious en suite bath.



Designed by Architect **Venerino V.P. Panici** and built by **Greystone Project Management**, the 2,200 sq. ft. villa has a ground floor den, conveniently located next to the entrance. WiFi connectivity allows telecommuting and Internet surfing anywhere on the property. The fully equipped, efficient kitchen, with Royal Doulton china and fine flatware, is floored with porcelain tile that looks like natural slate, laid in a modified-hopscotch pattern.

The kitchen overlooks the dining room and sunken great room. Hardwood floors, by Quickstyle Industries, are pre-finished in golden oak. Built-in cabinets, by **Chestnut Lane Kitchen & Bath**, flank a stone fireplace that lends sturdy elegance to the living room. Connecting with the living room, an intimate all-season Muskoka room provides a bright, airy space for relaxing, reading or sipping morning coffee while admiring the outdoors.

Upstairs, three bedrooms provide ample space for the growing family. "The master bedroom is just beautiful," says Bill. "It looks out onto the water." The master has an en suite bathroom, a fireplace and a small exterior deck with a panoramic view of the lake.

It all seems private and personal. "You've got your own place here," says Stephanie. "Your own little oasis." It's a vacation home without all the tasks that come with a cottage. Not having to worry about the maintenance of their villa is one great feature the McWilliams love about the property. Whether it's snow plowing and shoveling in the winter, yard and garden care in spring and summer, or raking leaves in the fall, it's all covered. "You have no issues. You come up here and you enjoy your week, you make sure the place is tidy when you leave, you have no maintenance,

*Continued on page 62*



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The clubhouse is the hub of The Landscapes. Luxuriously appointed with comfortable chairs, billiards table, big-screen TV and games area, it's a beautiful place to make new friends and chat with neighbours. Stairs lead to the Library Loft for quiet reading. The spa and fitness centre feature exercise equipment, heated outdoor pool and outdoor hot tub.



no cutting of the grass, no yard work. We're faced with that at home constantly, maintenance of the stores, our house and our lives," Stephanie says. "You come up here and it's worth it."

"It's very care free," Bill says. "The grounds are always well kept," adds Stephanie. "Everything is taken care of."

One of their favourite things to do at The Landscapes is to pack a picnic, hop aboard their boat and cruise to a secluded beach on one of the islands on Lake of Bays. With little shoreline development, the lake retains that wilderness look that's drawn generations of vacationers to its shore. During winter, the McWilliams children enjoy playing in the snow, tobogganing and skating on the outdoor rink. When the weather is nice, the family will go to the boathouse for lunch. Occasionally they enjoy dinner at the clubhouse. "The people around here are very nice, very friendly and respectful," Bill says.

Construction of The Landscapes began in 2005, with first occupancy

in June 2006. There are currently 16 villas and three cottages, used by 170 owners. "Because we have so much property it's never crowded," says Keith Singleton, senior sales executive for the company. "Sales have exceeded our expectations. Since future development is driven by sales, more construction is scheduled to start this fall with occupancy slated for next summer."

As owners at The Landscapes, the McWilliams are members of The Registry Collection. This permits them to exchange any of their five weeks at their villa for accommodations at affiliated resorts around the world, every bit as beautiful as Lake of Bays. "The places are just gorgeous," says Stephanie. "We may be able to go to places that we never would have been able to afford." They're considering using their Registry Collection membership for a trip to Animal Kingdom at Walt Disney World.

For now, however, they're happy to just relax and enjoy their lakeside home, content to get away from living life on the double... double. **OH**

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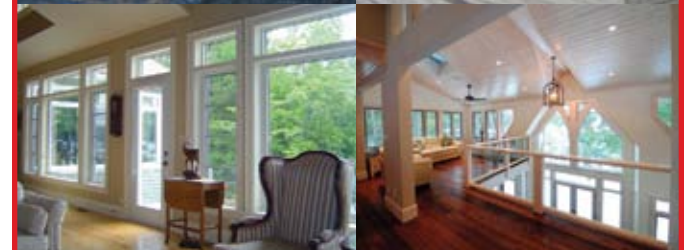
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