

Black table and chairs in the dining area establish a distinctive look within the open space. The pale rug further defines the area. Homeowner Susan McFarlane strived to work with the open overhead space by choosing pieces with some verticality, such as the chairs, and hanging light fixtures.

activity CENTRAL

A cheery Ontario getaway dramatizes its openness and the outdoors.

BY ROLAND SWEET | PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY

"THE BIRCHES PLAN WAS DESIGNED EXCLUSIVELY FOR LORA BAY AND HAS PROVEN TO BE A VERY POPULAR MODEL. THE HOME'S SPACIOUS LAYOUT IS HIGHLIGHTED BY **IMMENSE FLOOR-TO-CEILING WINDOWS OFFERING MAGNIFICENT VIEWS** OF GEORGIAN BAY FROM THE OUTSTANDING TIMBER-FRAME GREAT ROOM, DINING ROOM AND KITCHEN. IT'S MORE THAN JUST A HOME, IT TRULY IS A LIVING EXPERIENCE."

—CHRIS WAGG, SALES MANAGER, NORMERICA TIMBER FRAME



The rear of the home showcases its abundant great room windows, all fixed on a woods-and-water view. The Pella windows reach from ground level to the top of the wall, adding dividers to diffuse the light and create interest. The simply furnished sunny patio provides a comfy spot to dine al fresco. The timber framing supporting the porch echoes that inside the home.



ABOVE: For the living room, Susan chose contemporary, comfortable furnishings to achieve a look that says casual without venturing toward quaintness. A consequence of the window wall is that the leather sofa backs up against glass instead of hard wall, as does the one opposite. The symmetry is essential to create the cozy grouping, made possible by the room's 17-foot width. The arrangement has the added effect of turning the eye toward the fireplace as the focal point instead of the view outside.



LEFT: The 15-by-14-foot master bedroom is located at the front of the house, adjacent to the vaulted entry. Upper-divided windows let in plenty of light, while a hanging light fixture accentuates the cathedral ceiling. The bedroom furniture illustrates Susan's decorating strategy, which was to fill space sparsely and use contemporary rather than traditional furniture. A cherry-frame, king-size bed enjoys plenty of surrounding room, allowing for an heirloom desk and chair and matching cherry bed stands.

The view from the kitchen reveals the dramatic interplay of wood and light throughout the 46-foot-long great room, as well as the clear view from end to end that makes the home a delight for entertaining big groups. The opening between the kitchen and dining areas is a wide hall leading to the vaulted entry.

"I TRIED TO DECORATE IT LIKE A SECOND HOME, BUT EVEN THOUGH IT'S COZY, I DIDN'T WANT IT TO LOOK LIKE A COTTAGE. EVEN THE KIDS SAID, 'MOM, DON'T QUAIN'T US TO DEATH.'"

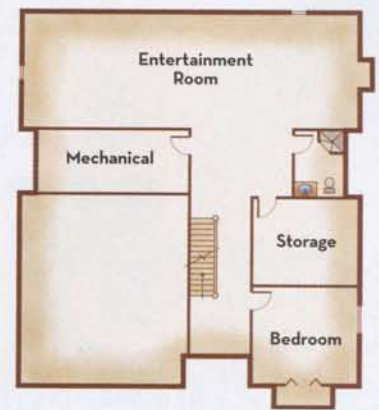
—SUSAN MCFARLANE, HOMEOWNER



UPPER LEVEL



MAIN LEVEL



LOWER LEVEL

FOR HOME DETAILS, SEE "FIND IT HERE" ON PAGE 59.

WHEN David and Susan McFarlane decided they were ready to build a second home, what they really hoped for was a great location, not any specific type of home. They found the perfect setting at Lora Bay, a resort community two hours north of Toronto overlooking Georgian Bay. The development has detailed architectural requirements for new homes and works primarily with three home companies. One is Normerica, an Ontario-based timber framer. "As it happens, I'd always wanted a timber-frame home," Susan says. "I just love the openness and the wood."

Dave and Susan chose Normerica's Birches plan, which has an open great room with not just one but two eye-catching cathedral ceilings. The first spans the sprawling great room

and features towering timbers and trusses and a dramatic railing bordering one entire side. An unimposing but uplifting cathedral ceiling tops the couple's first-floor master suite.

Susan oversaw the project herself, working with Normerica and her contractor. When it came to furnishing the home, she played to the home's openness, noting that in post-and-beam construction, "half the decorating is already done by the wood." What fills the openness most, though, is natural light, which streams through the windows, brightening the whole interior. It isn't a large home, but it feels roomy inside while connecting with the surrounding outdoors. Best of all, it provides the family with easy access to skiing in winter and bicycling in summer, making it their own all-season getaway. ■