



The home's bright and spacious rooms offer Marc, an award-winning studio and en plein air painter, art instructor, author, and owner of **Marc L. Gagnon Fine Art**, not only room for his studio, but also gallery space in what was once a model home.

"This was the builder's showroom," Barbara says. "The builder's floor plan designated this space for a garage, but Marc saw it as the perfect gallery space. We asked if this particular house was for sale. We bought it, and rented it back to the builder for a year."

A step down from the foyer, several dozen of Marc's watercolours and acrylic paintings are displayed along the white, panelled walls. Track lighting spotlights the spectacular landscapes, still life, cityscapes and digital art pieces in a dramatic way.

Finished to showcase the many upgrades offered by the builder, the Gagnons' home boasts nine-foot ceilings, hardwood floors, crown moulding and wainscoting.

Barbara, owner and chief design consultant of **Clewley Gagnon Interior Design Inc.**, has added sophisticated touches in both her furniture and wall paint choices. Immediately to the right of the front door is a formal living room. Barbara has painted the room with Benjamin Moore's Willow. The stark contrast between her bold choice, and the white trim of the crown moulding, baseboards and window casings work beautifully to make this an inviting and elegant room.

An impressive collection of not only Marc's work, but also paintings and pieces created by their talented daughter, artist **Abbey Gagnon**, and paintings by Neville Clark and other noted artists grace every room. Even the family's main bathroom has received a wave from their creative wand. Extending from the floor onto the ceiling, Abbey painted a tree, strategically adding glitter beads to increase its interest factor. "She did it all freehand, in what seemed like no time," Barbara says.

Not feeling the need for a dining room, the couple re-imagined the space to the left of the front doors and created a lounge area, complete with a wall-cabinet bar, where they can settle in with a glass of wine and entertain guests.

When asked to name her favourite thing about her home, Barbara says, "For me it is the abundance of natural light coming from so many large windows. The lake can be seen from almost every room in the house. The sunsets are amazing."

The open-concept kitchen, dining area and family room offer the perfect space for the family to congregate. French doors along with a bay window in the breakfast nook and three windows in the family room bring the outdoors into the home.

Barbara points to her functional and attractive kitchen as another of her favourite features. The only change they made to the kitchen was when they switched out the

*Continued on page 30*



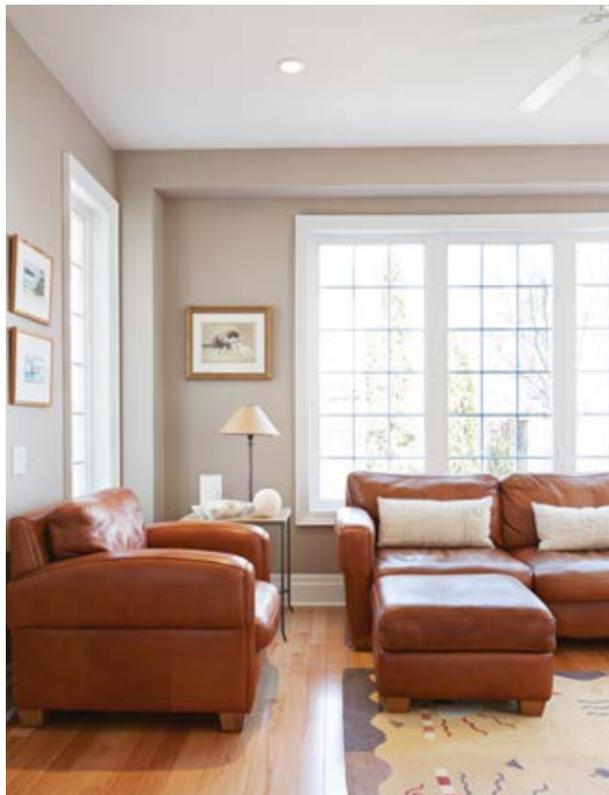
# ART OF THE MATTER

STORY **SHARON OVEREND**  
PHOTOGRAPHY **TRACY SHUMATE**  
FLOWERS **VAN BELLE FLOWERS**

Marc and Barbara Gagnon moved from Brampton to Newcastle eight years ago. When they happened upon a beautiful, 2,700 sq. ft. home, steps from Lake Ontario and only a two-hour drive to their cottage, the couple knew they had found the perfect spot to live and work.



**LEFT:** Barbara's designer touches fill the home, like the hand-picked seashells that fill this chandelier. **TOP FAR LEFT:** The well-stocked bar, view of the lake and more of Marc's artwork make this nook one of the couple's favourite hangouts. **BOTTOM FAR LEFT:** The gleaming floors and a telescope give the front parlour a masculine, scholarly feel. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** A space once earmarked for the garage provided the perfect gallery space in this former model home. **MIDDLE:** Homeowners Marc and Barbara Gagnon live, work and play in their Newcastle dream home. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Pieces by their daughter Abbey, like this wooden sculpture, prove that the artist's gene runs in the family. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** A quick sketch contrasts with Marc's colourful paintings.



countertops. They called in **Brandom Kitchens and Bath**, who installed a beautiful granite countertop on the island workstation.

Marc and Barbara's artist personalities are obvious not only in the artwork displayed throughout the home, but also in their decorating choices. Shells gathered from various beaches the couple have visited fill a chandelier lantern above their bar/lounge, and kitchen drawer handles made from pieces of driftwood have been attached to add a quirky touch sure to inspire conversation.

Off the kitchen and spanning the length of the house stretches an inviting backyard oasis. Bowmanville's **Green Wood Interlock** constructed the deck and attractive garden where the couple kick back and relax at the end of their workday. Marc points to a pear tree he is particularly fond of that the couple purchased from Newcastle's **Bloomfield Gardens**.

"We love the garden because it gives the house a setting that makes it look like it was here for a long time, and makes it sit down, so to speak, on the land," Barbara says. "It integrates the house with the land and keeps us in touch with the outdoors."

When it came time to furnish their new home, Marc and Barbara visited **Sturrock Period Furniture** in Newcastle for some of their furniture. Sunderland's Lianne Megarry, owner of **The Dark Horse**, helped style and provided other pieces, including the cow hide rug in the couple's favourite sitting nook.

Upstairs, two of the home's four bedrooms house the offices of the couple's three businesses: Barbara's two companies, **Heads Up Chair Wear** specializing in outdoor head cushions for chaise lounges and Muskoka chairs, and Clewley Gagnon Interior Design along with a studio where Marc can paint and see to the daily operation of his business. Overlooking the lake, one can only assume the spectacular view must provide the necessary inspiration for Marc's limitless creativity.

Although they have no immediate plans to tackle any new renovation projects, Barbara does admit, "I think it is difficult to work out of the home and keep it tidy. I have a cushion company and an interior design practice and Marc has his painting – maybe we could use some more storage cabinets."

The Gagnon home is a perfect example of personality meeting functionality. In using their collective talents, Marc and Barbara have created not only a gorgeous home, but also an inspiring place where they can each work. **OH**



**TOP LEFT:** The rear of the home is an open living space featuring a modern kitchen with island. **TOP RIGHT:** Lake views are some of the home's most spectacular works of art. **ABOVE:** Driftwood drawer handles and daughter Abbey's sculptural spine never fail to spark conversation. **RIGHT:** A filled chandelier carries the beachy driftwood motif into the adjacent dining room. **OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT:** One of Abbey's first works of art was this glossy wooden bowl. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Overstuffed leather is the perfect fit for the open-plan living area. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** The tools of Marc's trade rest on a cabinet made from an old piano in the gallery.