

ALL THE RIGHT STUFF

STORY **KIM MASIN** | PHOTOGRAPHY **SANDY MACKAY**



John and Lynne Raimondi enjoy the sunshine at home with their dog Crosby. **BELOW:** Timbers from a barn frame the foyer. Inside the entryway, this modern rustic vignette, paired with a traditional chandelier show off Lynne's decorating style.

Vintage meets modern style at this impeccably designed and constructed family home nestled on the shores of Lake Simcoe.

Lynne and John Raimondi, principals of **Meridian Design Build Inc.**, have created a warm and welcoming waterfront home.

The couple, along with daughters, Olivia, 10, and Sofia, 7, spend a great deal of time entertaining family and friends. "We love sharing this home with other people," says Lynne. "Most of our summer weekends are booked and half of the time our guests sleep here. Sharing our home is the best."

John, a structural engineer, has an exceptional vision for space and design, offering clients of Meridian Design Build Inc. a unique building experience from start-to-finish. John is known for his constructive and efficient solutions while providing the same desired outcome on a new build – a huge benefit of using a structural engineer as a builder with a focus on architectural design.

"We've been fortunate enough to build many great homes for other people in many different styles," John humbly explains. "It's a process I enjoy."

The Raimondi home showcases Meridian's expertise. *Continued on page 78*





The vintage timbers continue in the great room where other unique designs are showcased, including the brick walls. The ceilings are 32-feet high and the floors are hand-scraped hickory. The sunroom is located on the other side of a wall of windows. **LEFT:** The wood-burning fireplace is surrounded by dry-stacked stone installed by This Stone Home. The stairs are by Stairhaus Inc. and all the trim is from Barrie Trim and Mouldings Inc. The mirror above the mantel is from Dwellings Rustic and Refined Living. **BELOW LEFT:** The lower level powder room has a very unique iron vanity. **BELOW RIGHT:** The front barn beam runs the length of the room. The centre of the 38-foot beam was hogged out to cover the steel support.

Lynne, guided by designer **Lidia van Zyl** of **LVZ Design**, played a vital part in the interior design of the house, researching and discovering the appropriate, affordable finishes, furniture and accessories. Together Lynne and Lidia created the exquisite combination of informal elegance throughout the house with vintage rustic style. Lidia helped with colours, custom linens and the purchase and placement of furniture for optimum flow and style.

“People should design their home around things that make them feel comfortable,” John says. “It makes the home feel like your home the minute you move in because you’ve

been so involved in the selection of so many things. You’re choosing the tiles, the vanities, the kitchen knobs and there are so many stories behind those choices by the time it’s done – it’s like your favourite blanket the minute you move in.”

Nestled on a tree-lined lot, this home is reminiscent of a historic home built centuries ago. “We wanted the house to look like it had been here forever with the flush grout, that old-world look,” says John. “They used to create this look with limestone but with the sandstone I selected it looks even older.” John searched and found the unique sandstone at Ducharme Quarries in Quebec and it was

installed with precision by **JP Contracting Masonry Ltd.** The stucco, coloured in Benjamin Moore’s Revere Pewter, was completed by **Openview Contracting**. The stucco complements the rustic barn-board shutters crafted by **Jake Wice** of **J. Wice Custom Woodworking**. Custom wood doors from Maxwell Wood Turnings Ltd., frame the entranceway.

Stepping over the threshold into a beautiful, open great room, old meets new with refurbished and antique furniture, barn beams and exposed brick.

The kitchen to the left boasts a large island, custom made by Wice Custom Woodworking

with a leathered granite top from **Northern Granite Works**. A three-eighths-of-an-inch brick faces the wall behind the upper cabinets. It is a unique touch that adds to the interior’s rustic charm. White custom kitchen cabinets, again by Wice Custom Woodworking, brighten the entire space along with the stainless-steel modern appliances. Pilot pendants suspended over the island are from Lëuk Bij Hermas Interiors.

The 12-foot solid-wood dining room table made by **Bateman Design Centre** has a base made from trusses that John designed. “We designed the wall overlooking the bay to match the table,” he says. *Continued on page 80*





The sun porch is a favourite destination for the whole family. The fireplace warms the space in all seasons. The dining furniture, including the cabinet that houses a television above the fireplace, came from a heritage home sale.

Personal elements like the dance hallway are essential for entertaining and family fun. “The kids do gymnastics here,” Lynne says “and we taught Crosby, our dog, how to fetch down this hallway.”

A massive oak beam culled from a barn in Coldwater runs the length of the ceiling over the great room. “We hogged out the entire length of a 38-foot barn beam to cover the steel beam,” says John.

Engineered hand-scraped hickory floors by Antique Impression and purchased through **Irvine Carpet One Floor & Home** are installed throughout the home.

The ceilings are 32-feet high. Floor-to-ceiling windows from **United Lumber Home Hardware Building Centre** provide natural lighting, transporting nature indoors. “We wanted it to feel like one big window but they’re four individual ones,” explains John. “I wanted to maximize the limitations of the windows because we could only go 48-inches wide without going to custom sizes and more expense. We based the design of this window on that fact.”

Details like this exemplify John’s philosophy at Meridian – building, designing and working with his clients to ensure he produces the most desired effect while keeping costs in mind. “These are tricks working with someone who can design and build,” he explains. “In the design stage, I can steer people away from making costly mistakes by offering compromising solutions that give 99.9 per cent the same effect.”

The indoor dry stacked, natural stone, wood-burning fireplace creates a stunning visual for the great room, installed by **This Stone Home**. “This was non-negotiable for us,” says John. “We burn a lot of wood here and in the fireplace in the sunroom.”

The sunroom is Lynne’s favourite spot in the house, located right off the kitchen. A striking stone wood-burning fireplace and a 12-foot sofa from Restoration Hardware create a comfortable lounge outside. “A lot of naps happen out here,” jokes Lynne. There are screens that can be drawn for protection from pesky bugs or up for lovely breezes off the water. *Continued on page 82*



ABOVE: The view of the home from the lakeside of the property. All windows are from United Lumber Home Hardware Building Centre. John is particularly proud of his design that allowed him to use stock windows on a

grand scale. The home has a Napoleon furnace. **TOP LEFT:** Meridian tamed the rugged piece of land with exquisite landscaping and a deck mid-way between the house and the dock. **TOP RIGHT:** The views are exquisite from the sunroom.

home & builder

Edgecomb Gray by Benjamin Moore was the paint colour selected for the main floor and upstairs, where the bedrooms are located. Olivia and Sofia's rooms are beautifully decorated. Lynette Van Greunen of Shabby Chic Houzz repainted some of the furniture. Lynne furnished their bathroom with furnishings from Restoration Hardware and Lëuk Bij Hermas.



The majority of the furniture in the sunroom and in other rooms came from a dear friend who was selling her heritage home and downsizing. John and Lynne jumped at the chance to purchase the vintage-style furniture.

Coloured, stamped concrete and all of the patio installations were completed by **Lavalee Concrete**, however Meridian completed all of the other landscaping.

Open, wide-planked oak stairs from **Stairhaus Inc.** lead to the second floor. The stunning girls' rooms are complete with walk-in closets. "That was the only thing they asked for from John," laughs Lynne. The vintage beds and furniture were part of the heritage home sale and **Lynette Van Greunen** from **Shabby Chic Houzz** painted them.

The master bedroom's windows provide a calming view of the water. An opulent, oversize pendant light in the master is another find from their friend's home. "It was sitting in the garage, dirty and dusty," says Lynne. "But once John cleaned it up, it was the perfect piece."

A spa-like en suite has a large shower and, more importantly to Lynne, a vessel tub (from **Bathworks**). All plumbing was installed by **Custom Plumbing**. Tile is from **Desert Tile**. Granite-topped vanities and matching storage towers are from Restoration Hardware.

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The master suite has an envious view through a large window. The headboard was a wonderful find for Lynne. Desert Tile provided the tile for the en suite.





Guests have their own, beautifully decorated space. The cottage space above the garage includes a living room, bedroom with a desk nook and a full bath. This soft carpet in this bedroom, from Irvine Carpet One Floor & Home, resembles straw.



The loft “cottage” space over the garage sits behind an eight-foot pine door, made by Maxwell Wood Turnings Ltd. The space houses two cosy bedrooms, an en suite bathroom and a comfy lounge area for their guests to relax. “We want our guests to be comfortable and have their own space,” says Lynne. The plush straw-coloured carpet from Irvine Carpet One Floor & Home warms the rooms. Guests sleep between luxurious Brunelli linens ordered by Lidia.

The original lot was the site of a burned down old cottage where only the fireplace and foundation remained standing, and it was overgrown to the tenth degree. “One thing we’re proudest of is that we turned this lot into something spectacular from an old burned down house,” John says. “It’s the angle of the house on the lot versus the water and the road. It’s not just the drywall and brick, it’s the entire development of the property. That’s the real art of what Meridian does.”

“We feel 100 per cent blessed to live here and to be able to build a home like this,” adds Lynne. **OH**




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