

[ feature ]

# MOUNTAIN HIGH

JUDE WAYLAND // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY



The Collingwood area is an outdoor enthusiast's dream-come-true, and an ideal four-season playground to raise a family. Just ask Chris and Brigitte Szybbo. The couple, along with their two young daughters, Alex, 10, and Michaela, 8, are avid skiers and nature lovers. Their outdoor lifestyle is what drew the family to purchase a home in **The Orchard** development at Craigleith. *Continued on page 103*

**LEFT:** Looking down to the foyer from above. Slate flooring at the front door makes clean-up a snap.

**RIGHT:** Alex, 10, and Michaela, 8, are avid skiers and regulars on the slopes at the nearby Craigleith Ski Club.

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** The authentic timberframe Great Room makes a statement and adds to the charm of this four-season getaway.





LEFT: A gas fireplace ensures the TV room is always warm and cosy.

RIGHT: The Szybbo's enjoy casual dinners at the large custom-made harvest table in the dining room. A reproduction of a map of the Craigleith Ski Club comes from fAd at Peaks and Rafters in Collingwood.



Skiing isn't all this active family does. They also love hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding and snowshoeing while Brigitte is an enthusiastic cross-country runner.

"We're huge outdoors people and we decided to buy here because we can walk to everything," says Brigitte. "We can walk to the Village, even to the lake. We walk to the Club, and then in the summer, I take the children up the switchback at Craigleith, across to the Bruce Trail, down through the Village, and then we walk home. It's great!"

Quite the lifestyle for this Oakville family, who use their convenient new home every weekend in the winter and as often as they can in the summer months.

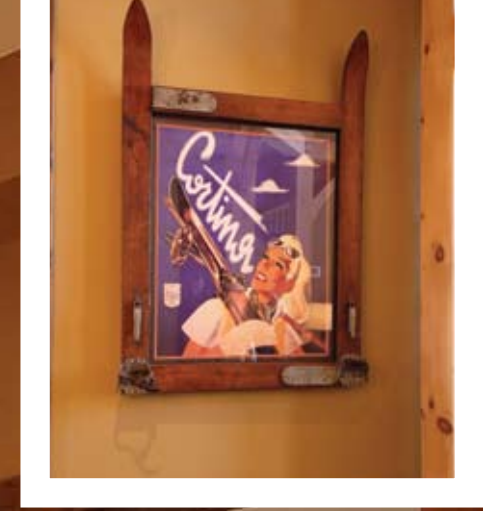
"It's beautiful country and such a beautiful environment, and like Brigitte said, we're really into the outdoors and want to bring the girls up with a real appreciation for nature, irrespective of what season it is," says Chris. "There's always something to do here."

The Szybbo's took possession of their Orchard home in November 2007, despite a long list of unfinished items. This year, the family celebrated their first real Christmas in their 3,000 sq. ft., four-bedroom, ski country home. And what a warm and welcoming abode they created! Wood accents and rustic detailing lend a casual, cosy atmosphere to the home. *Continued on page 106*

Chris is the chef in this well-appointed, free-flowing kitchen. The design allows guests to mingle or gather around the wood-burning fireplace in the living room while meals are being prepared.

LEFT: Chris Szybbo, Katherine Arcaro and Brigitte Szybbo enjoy a glass of red wine at the kitchen island.

RIGHT: The art in the home reflects the family's love of skiing.





LEFT: The master bedroom is spacious and warm and has a view of the Craigleith Ski Club.

RIGHT: The master en suite is large and luxurious.



Chris and Brigitte upgraded practically everything in their abode, from the post and beam wood features and cathedral ceiling in the living room, to distressed, walnut-stained oak floors, to oversized windows and interior doors, with wood surround. “We upgraded floors, we upgraded windows, and we put in a wood burning fireplace in the living room instead of gas, because we retained the gas fireplace in the TV room,” says Chris.

The open-concept main floor features a spacious foyer, comfortable living room with wood-burning fireplace, dining room, TV room (with fieldstone gas fireplace) and a roomy, functional kitchen (by **Paris Kitchens**), with honed granite countertop and cherry-glazed oak cabinet upgrades, where Chris, the resident chef, works his magic.

“We didn’t agonize over things,” says Chris. “We knew there were a couple of things that were important to us – like the fireplace and the floor – so we spent time choosing those, but our purpose in building was to come up here, enjoy the environment and be casual and cosy.”

Brigitte’s favourite thing about the home is the open-concept design and the free-flowing kitchen space. “When we have people over, Chris cooks, so he does his thing, and everybody mingles around.” She also loves her mudroom, featuring built-in shelving, bins and cupboards to house all the skiing, biking and horseback riding equipment this active family needs. “It’s so easy to be organized when you have a space like this,” she says. *Continued on page 109*

*“Chris and Brigitte are fabulous people to work with,” says interior designer Katherine Arcaro, of Ad Peaks and Rafters.*



LEFT: The mudroom is a must in this busy home. There's plenty of storage for gear and it's a perfect drop-off zone.

BELOW: Club cards and gloves are easy to find in the well-organized mudroom.



*“We’re huge outdoors people and we decided to buy here because we can walk to everything,” says Brigitte.*



The girls have identical rooms, separated by a full bath. Of course, they’ve added their own personal touches.

The Szybbs worked with **fAd** designer **Katherine Arcaro**, who offered advice about upgrades and helped select furnishings, fixtures, artwork and bedding from her Collingwood store, **fAd at Peaks and Rafters**. Arcaro designed the dining room table, powder room vanity and master en suite mirrors, and each piece was custom built by local craftsmen. She also designed the mudroom built-ins and then Collingwood artist/carpenter **Paul Crighton** worked his magic.

“The floor plan in this home was well thought out and spacious,” says Arcaro. “I love the view when you come in the front entry to the open-concept space, and I love the way the kitchen turned out, and the view into the family room off the kitchen.”

Both Chris and Brigitte agree that working with Arcaro was truly awesome. She read their needs perfectly. “We spent time with her choosing things, and during the week, she would bring stuff in, and then we would come in and say, ‘yes, it’s everything we talked about – love it, love it, I don’t know about that piece,’ and she would say ‘ok, we’ll take care of that,’” explains Chris.

“It was an unbelievable working relationship,” says Arcaro. “They’re

both skiers and I’m a skier, and the first time I met them, I was in my ski garb. I understood their lifestyle and what they were looking for. Chris and Brigitte are fabulous people to work with.”

An impressive, antique entryway mirror was sourced from an old monastery in Quebec and a **Diana Wish** ‘branchelier’ hangs tastefully in the living area – stylish Arcaro décor touches. A reproduction of an original Craigeith Ski Club trail map hangs above the dining room console – exclusively developed and sold through fAd at Peaks and Rafters.

A stately, four-poster bed in the master bedroom and hickory and pine log bunk beds in the girls’ rooms also came from fAd at Peaks and Rafters. Arcaro added fun, bright orange Fat Boy bean bags to each child’s room, where the girls take flying leaps from the top bunk onto the bean bags below.

The Szybbs are planning to landscape this summer and finish the basement so the girls have their own play space. “Moving here is the best thing we’ve done since coming to this part of the country,” says Chris. “Here, you really feel like you’re part of a community, and it’s safe.” Brigitte agrees. “The convenience of living here is a huge bonus.” **OH**