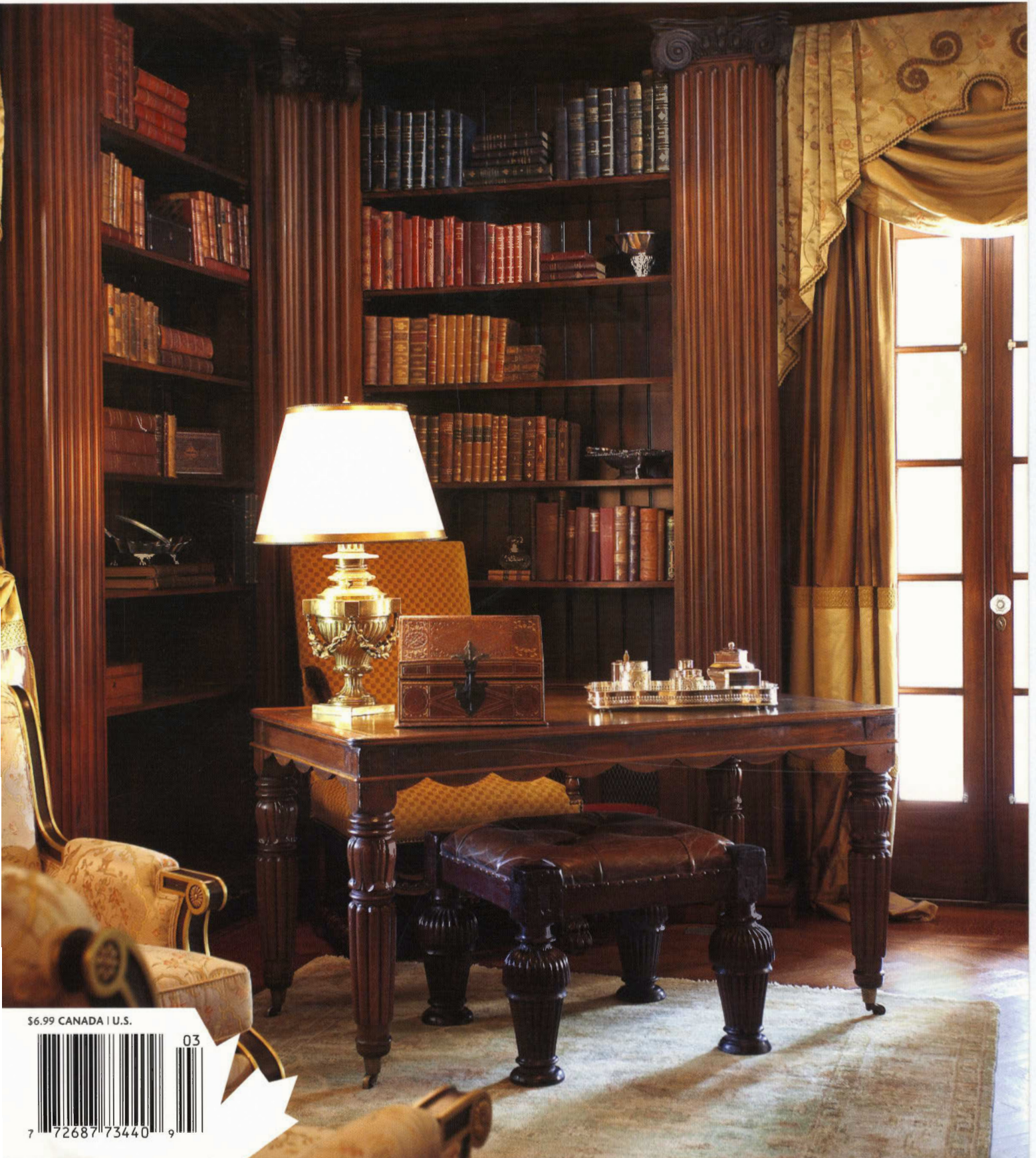


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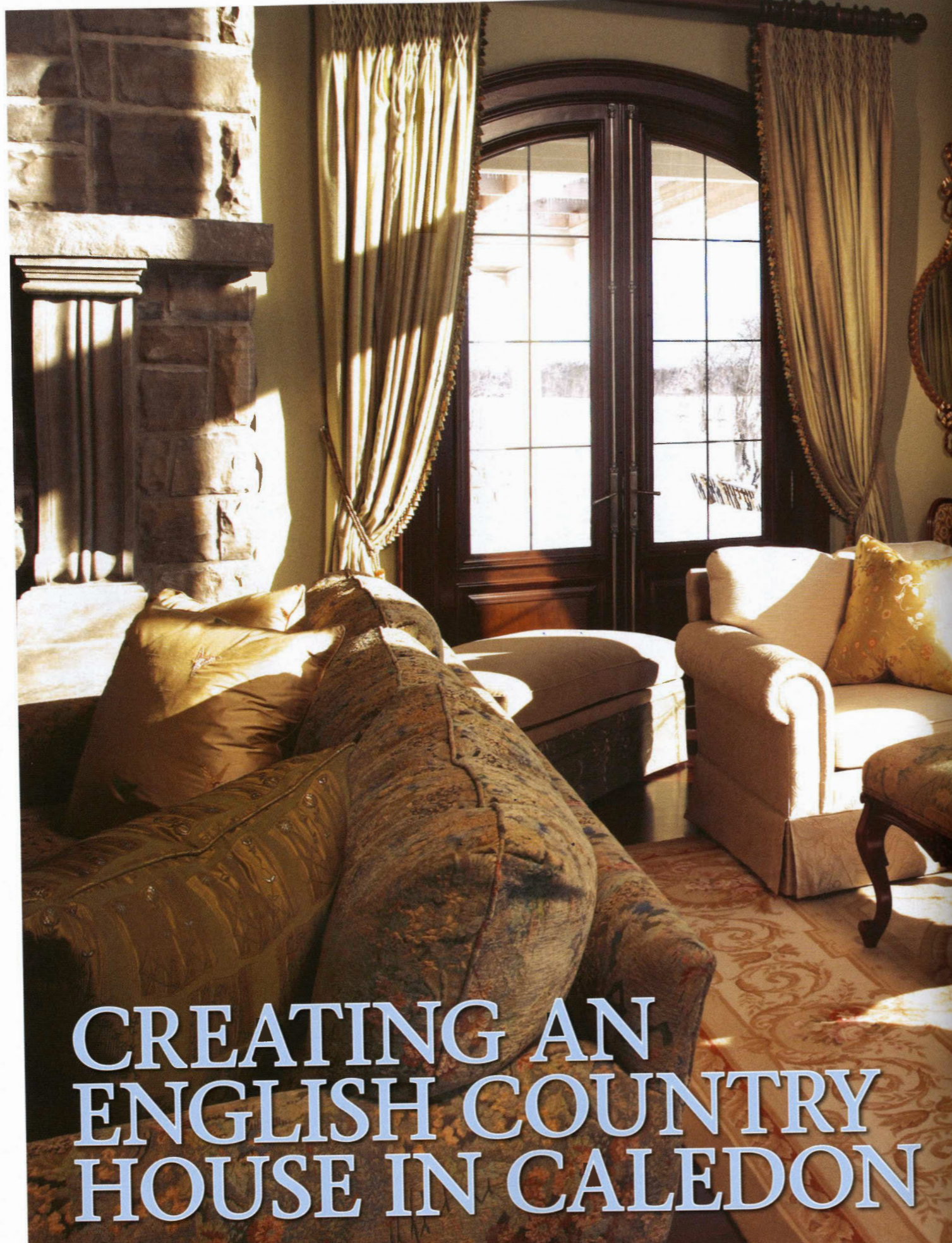


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CREATING AN
ENGLISH COUNTRY
HOUSE IN CALEDON



A ROMANTIC APPROACH
IN A RITZY RURAL ENCLAVE

The great room houses a two-storey stone fireplace with stone corbels. The room's fabrics are Aubusson tapestry-style chenille that almost have a Monet-inspired garden feel.



Text by
Terry Poulton
Photography by
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Architecture by
Lorne Rose
Interior Design
by Lori Morris



Toronto architect Lorne Rose says he's designed a lot of exciting rural properties during his career, but an English-style country house he helped create in Caledon was a particular professional treat. "You don't get a ton of opportunities like that one."

The picturesque, much-sought-after Caledon district northwest of Toronto boasts many luxurious country estates, including those of some of Canada's wealthiest citizens as well as pop star Elton John and filmmaker Norman Jewison.

"My approach to the project was definitely what you could call romantic," Rose recalls. "I fell in love with the property the first time I saw the vast piece of land surrounded by rolling hills, ponds and an old apple orchard. And as I drove toward where the original house had been torn down, I found an old tumbledown barn that was just so dramatic and evocative I knew we had to keep it, even though it meant asking the clients to actually reroute the road."

Fortunately, the clients quickly saw things through Rose's eyes and offered him virtual carte blanche. "Whatever I proposed, they seemed to love, so I got to choose both the siting and the orientation for the home. To be a bit poetic, I decided to place the house on a majestic hill to be reminiscent of the Acropolis [in Greece]. That makes the site very dramatic because you emerge out of the woods, pass the old ruin of a barn, and then climb the hill to see the house from different viewpoints before arriving at the front door."

Rose's enthusiasm is echoed by Toronto-based interior designer Lori Morris, who says she also found the project special and unusual because of its sumptuous rural setting, plus "the gorgeous exterior site lines from every angle throughout the house," and the clients' challenging vision. What they were dreaming of was a formal English country house with all the trappings that rich image conjures up.



The kitchen features hand-painted, antique cream, framed cabinetry with exposed hinges, glass transfers and carved-frieze detailed moldings; a built in pizza oven, carved range hood with stainless-steel paneled tin backsplash and a mosaic carpet inset into a walnut floor. Much of the architectural wood carvings were supplied by Art For Everyday of Toronto, ON.



The library offers a walnut coffered ceiling and walnut paneled walls; bookcases are enhanced with leather-bound books and fretwork doors; custom-designed camel-backed sofas with leather surrounds and damask-chenille-patterned seat backs; a persian carpet and stylized wingback chairs with a velvet floral design.

That, says Rose, "called for a very sculptural approach, which I find very exciting. In its exterior architecture, an English manor or country home is a language of stone, many gables and varying roof lines."

Inside, the effect and ambience the clients desired begins immediately at the front entrance in a large, walnut-paneled rotunda, which Rose capped with a glassed dome to allow light to flood in. The area, says Morris, "faces the staircase, to the left and right of which is an impressive dual hallway. I decided to flank it with beautiful walnut pilaster columns, and then we added a latticed

archway. This leads in one direction toward the fireplace, the family area and the kitchen, and in the other to a view of a charming outdoor room surrounded by stone columns."

"We called that area 'the little jewel on the end,'" says Rose, who adds that the gazebo-like structure at the apex of the hill on which the house sits is his favourite element of the project. "It's like a round Italian tempio, or little temple. It's a colonnade of rustic stone columns with smooth capitals and bases that's a play on the classical concept. You can sit out there and enjoy a commanding view of the whole site,

including the ruin of the old barn. To me, this area is the exclamation point for the whole property."

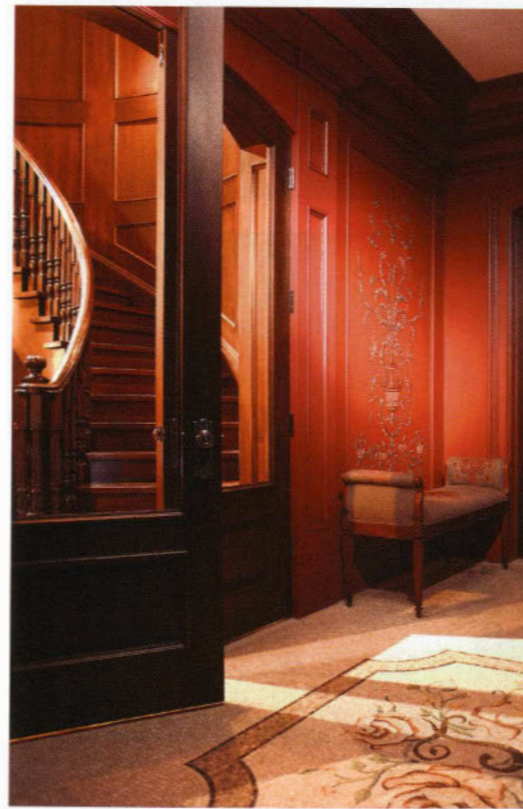
Back inside the elegant home, says Morris, there's a great room with 12-foot-high doors facing out to the pond, orchard and rolling hills. "The focal point of the room is a two-storey stone fireplace with ornate stone corbels and a beautiful carved 18th century antique bookcase on the side. The fabrics here, and throughout the house, all have rich textures, colours and patterns, including Aubusson tapestry-style chenille with a Monet-inspired garden effect."



The front hall is flanked with beautiful walnut pilaster columns, a latticed archway, and recessed panels on the walls and ceiling.



The master bedroom's sitting room features a beautifully painted 9-foot armoire that is the site line and focal point for the room. Sandblasted glass doors incorporate the room's floral motif.



There are two libraries. One has a walnut coffered ceiling and walnut panels and bookcases festooned with leather-bound books and fretwork doors behind which are trophies and beautiful pieces of art. Adjacent to the fireplace are custom-designed camel-back sofas with leather surrounds and damask chenille-patterned seat-backs. Nearby, sitting on a graceful Persian carpet, are stylized wingback chairs upholstered in a velvet floral-design fabric.

The other library, says Morris, "is done in warm tomato-reds, rusts and creams with site lines toward a beautiful armoire and a stunning crystal chandelier, and there's a wonderful carpet to enhance the richness of the reds and golds."

The kitchen Rose created and Morris made outstanding is dominated by hand-painted antique cream

cabinetry with exposed hinges and carved-frieze moldings that extend to the stove hood. On the backsplash is the unexpected touch of stainless-steel tin paneling. Completing the kitchen are a built-in pizza oven and an archway around the window that houses decorative china. A mosaic carpet was inset in front of the stove for both functionality and design on the walnut floor.

All in all, the Caledon country home ended up equaling, or arguably even bettering, the surrounding properties of the clients' illustrious neighbours. ♦

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