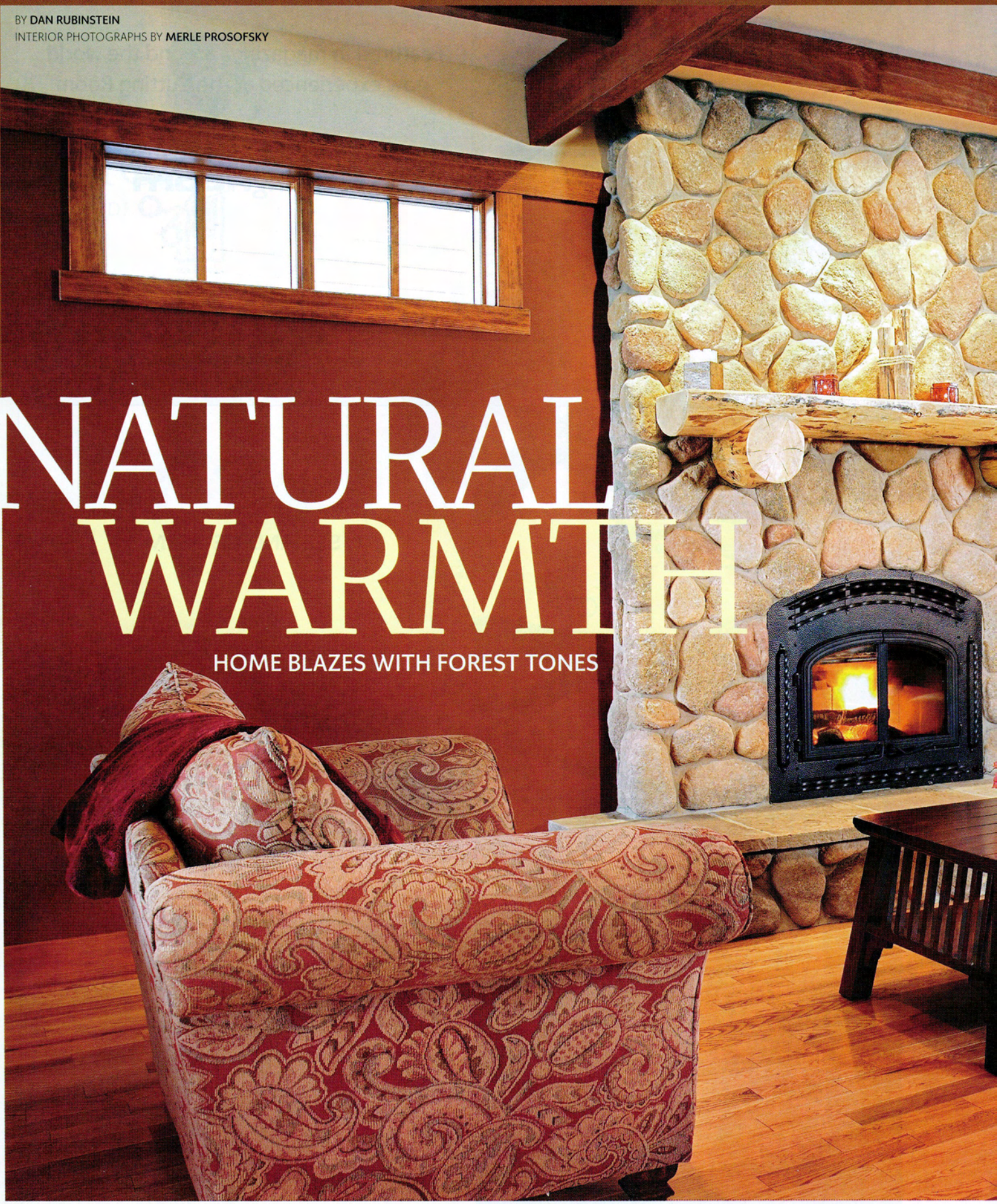
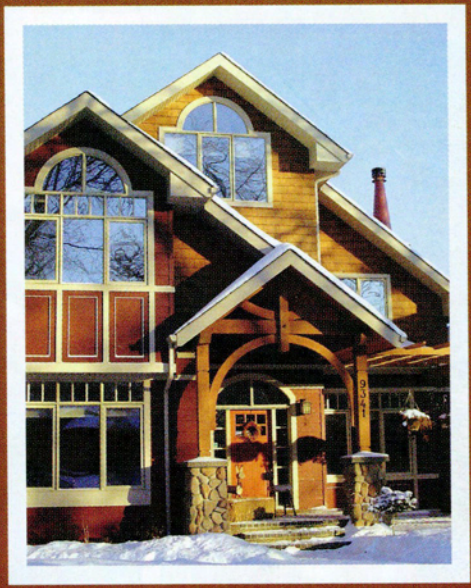
BY DAN RUBINSTEIN
INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS BY MERLE PROSOFSKY

NATURAL WARMTH

HOME BLAZES WITH FOREST TONES



The Foisy/Harris home is wrapped in rusty-red (Earthly Russet), golden wheat (Ginger Root) and light brown (Greenfield Pumpkin).



WHEN IT'S TWENTY below and the snow is blowing sideways, even hardy Edmontonians crave cozy. Pharmacist Michelle Foisy and her husband, Dr. Kevin Harris, have the perfect prescription for warding off frigid weather: they stay home.

Warmth was a key consideration in their custom-built house on a dead end overlooking the Mill Creek Ravine. They had other desires — a functional space for their family, an aesthetic inspired by years of apartment living in three-storey Victorians in Toronto — but the home was essentially designed around a trio of autumn colours. Its genesis was their predisposition to hues that are welcoming and warm.

"We like the fall palette," says Foisy, sitting beside Harris in front of the wood-burning fireplace on an icy afternoon. "And we were really tired of white walls." Their living room is wrapped in a rusty red called Earthly Russet. They also chose golden wheat (Ginger Root) and light brown (Greenfield Pumpkin) from Benjamin Moore. With these tones in mind, the couple selected wood finishings that create rich character: exposed fir beams in the living room and master bedroom; fir baseboards and trim; a maple staircase (supported by hidden steel); cherrywood kitchen cabinets with a nutmeg stain; red oak traditional flooring that's rustic with knots and streaking; and three-panel, Shaker-style fir doors rather than more modern single-panel maple.

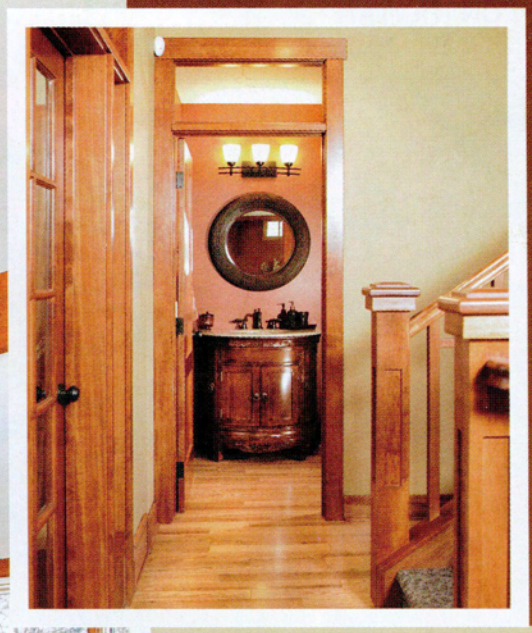
Living in a rental townhouse in Bonnie Doon with their two young daughters, Foisy and Harris were contemplating a move back >>

THEY DECIDED TO STAY IN BONNIE DOON, THE HEART OF EDMONTON'S FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITY

to Toronto. It's where they met, where they fell in love with the angles and timelessness of the city's older Victorian houses. They decided to stay in Bonnie Doon, the heart of Edmonton's francophone community. It's Foisy's heritage, and most of her siblings (and babysitting nieces and nephews) live in the neighbourhood. Keen to build from scratch, they heard about an uninhabited bungalow that was going on the market and snapped up the teardown.

Both rave about the construction-management approach of their builder, Habitat Studio & Workshop Ltd., which gives homeowners complete control. "From the moment they dig the first hole to when they give you the key, you're *expected* to be there," says Harris. Foisy came up with ideas while spending time on-site during construction: the fir beams in the living room were added after the drywalling stage, and the flooring was only finalized a month before it was put down. "It's a fluid process," says Harris. "Things happen when they need to happen."

"We don't have a set of specs for clients," affirms Habitat's Trevor Hoover, who designed the home with Bruce Watt and is still struck by its bold colours. "Whatever the client



wants," says Hoover, "we'll deliver."

Foisy and Harris moved into their 3,400-sq. foot "mountain meets Craftsman" home in February 2006, and it truly fits their lives. There's a mudroom off the back entrance, separated by sliding pocket doors which are tucked away when open; it features four lockers for stowing jackets and knapsacks. There's a computer/television in the kitchen with hardware hidden in an adjoining oversized closet. Touches like this reduce clutter. When 30 of Foisy's relatives descend for holiday gatherings, the place doesn't feel crowded.

Upstairs, there's a walk-in closet between the peak-roofed master bedroom and ensuite, and one can enter the closet from either the landing or the bedroom. The large landing wasn't in the original blueprints, but Foisy and Harris felt they didn't need a huge bedroom, so they created space for a window seat where they can read bedtime stories. Moreover, both kids' rooms are larger than the master bedroom. They need the space more, the parents say. There's also a third-floor loft, with an office and sitting area. And off the basement rec room is a sound-proof recording studio where Harris, a guitarist, produces music and multimedia DVDs.

Should the family one day decide to sell, the studio could easily be converted into a home theatre. But on a winter day in Edmonton, with the fireplace well-stoked, one can't imagine them ever wanting to leave.

THE SOURCE

Appliances: Trail Appliances (9880 47th Avenue, 434-9414; 12404 149th Street, 452-8888)

Cabinets: Kitchen Craft Cabinetry (2866 Calgary Trail South, 465-6531; 10627 170th Street, 930-1520)

Doors and trim: Timbertown Building Centre (4840 99th Street, 435-4747)

Fireplace stone: Manstar Distributors (12835 170th Street, 447-1774)

Fireplace: Northern Fireplace (4926 99th Street, 437-5114)

Flooring: Action Flooring (9249 50th Street, 468-4118)

Granite: Ideal Tile & Terrazzo (10821 214th Street, 447-4777)

Lighting: Park Lighting (10353 170th Street, 434-9600)

Log mantle: M&H Wood Specialties (St. Albert, 459-5700)

Plumbing fixtures: Best Plumbing & Heating Supplies (11703 154th Street, 451-2432)

Railing: Spindle Factory (14305 121st A Avenue, 453-5973)

Sound system: Connect Home Innovations (17313 107th Avenue, 484-8300)

Windows: All Weather Windows (18550 118th A Avenue, 451-0670)