

# moved

## Breathing easier in Braestone

VARIETY OF HOMES HAVE BEEN DESIGNED TO EVOKE AREA'S BARN AND FARMHOUSES

ADAM BISBY

**W**e'll move there if you move there."

Ten months after relocating from the Newmarket area to the Braestone community 15 km west of Orillia, Karen Calverley, 57, recalls her sister's 2016 challenge: "It all started with an email from Ingrid. I saw the photos she sent and I just thought, 'I've got to see this place for myself.' I brought Dave along two days later, and he was like, 'This could work.' Ingrid and her husband bought their place, then we followed through on our end of the bargain."

Backed by forested hills south of Horseshoe Valley Road, Georgian International's 566-acre master-planned community recently launched the fourth, final and most extensive phase of its 228-home roll-out. Featuring dormers, cupolas, coach houses and roomy verandas with gas-fired lanterns, Braestone's pleasingly eclectic bungalows and two-storey dwellings have been designed to evoke the barns and farmhouses of the surrounding Oro-Medonte region.

Karen and Dave, her husband of 32 years, have taken pains to make their bungalow their own. "We put in a wood-burning fireplace and opened up the living space," says Dave, 60, who is on medical leave from an energy consulting company. "We love it when everyone gets together in this warm open space with the fire crackling."

Another feature — a dog shower — helps keep the surrounding countryside off furniture and carpets. "We love our dogs," Karen says of the couple's two golden retrievers. "We're going to fence the property next summer so they can just be out all the time."

Spending time outdoors is popular with humans and canines alike, with Braestone being home to a 108-acre farm with pumpkin

and berry patches, as well as a Christmas tree farm, sugar shack, apiary, vineyard, walking trails and skating pond.

Post Homes spoke to Karen and Dave about their search for a new home, and what they love about the place they found.

**Q** Why did you start looking for a new home?

**Dave** We've always loved living in the country, but Newmarket was getting congested. Here we walk out the front door with our dogs, we go up the hill, and we can walk for miles and miles.

**Karen** We wanted to get back to that country lifestyle. We're also getting older, and it's comforting to know that if something happens to one of us there's not a lot of maintenance involved here.

**Q** How was your search progressing before Ingrid's email?

**Dave** We were kicking things around. We were looking over on the Mount Albert side a little bit.

**Karen** My sister knew we were looking to get out of Kettleby, but I wouldn't say we were actively looking.

**Q** What drew you to Braestone?

**Karen:** The homes. I've never had a brand-new home, and here we had different models to pick from that we could tweak a little bit. We knew we wanted a lot that backs onto the woods. We were very specific. We just love the outdoors, and there's lots to do here in every season. And of course, I love living on the same street as my sister and brother-in-law.

**Q** What do you like best about your new home?

**Karen** You just breathe easier. As soon as I get on Horseshoe Valley Road after a stressful nursing shift, it's just so breathtakingly beautiful that any stress I'm carrying melts away.

**Q** How have you found transitioning to a more rural setting?

**Dave** Everything's been



Karen and Dave Calverley relocated from Newmarket to live the country life in Georgian International's 566-acre master-planned Braestone community.



Braestone is backed by forested hills in Oro-Medonte, near Orillia.

great. I haven't regretted moving for one second. Now we're clear of all the traffic south of Orillia when we drive to our cottage in Algonquin Park. I haven't had a snowmobile in years and I just bought one. I was able to renovate the garage and all the toys are in there.

**Karen** I haven't once looked back. There are friends I miss, of course, but I haven't once missed our old house or lifestyle.

**Q** Has relocating presented any challenges?

**Dave** Karen commutes to Toronto General, and she got hit by a couple of snowstorms right off the bat.

**Karen** When I tell people the distance I'm travelling, they say, 'Couldn't you work at the Royal in Barrie?' I explain that I've got a permanent part-time day position at the General and do two 12-hour shifts a week. I work one shift, stay over at a friend's condo, work another shift, and come home.

**Dave** A guy down the street is a firefighter, and he does the same kind of thing.

**Karen** For me, it's an absolutely perfect mix right now. People ask when I'm going to retire, and I say if I still love what I'm doing and I'm physically and mentally able to do it, I'll just keep doing it.

**Q** Are there any other changes you've had to make?

**Karen** Well, we do have three boys in their 20s, and when we first bought the place we told them, "Boys, you have 18 months to figure out where to go." As a parent you don't want to kick them out, and if they need to be

with you for financial reasons of course that's fine. **Dave** They weren't with us the whole time — one of them was in university. They just kept coming back!

**Karen** Even when we moved here in January, two of them moved up here with us, but they have filtered out since then. So as of June we've been empty-nesters. **Dave** But they do love coming up to visit.

For National Post

This interview has been edited and condensed.

## Less is more

Minimalism can be liberating

CHRIS ARNOLD

Not everyone's dream home is the cosy country cottage full of bits and bobs. Some prefer a more modern approach with crisp lines and clean edges. Lifestyle website The Manual offers up a few tips on how to get the minimalist look for your home.

Choose simple and boxy, with white being the preferred colour scheme on the exterior. Where weather and geography permit, flat roofs and

large sliding glass doors are ideal design features that favour minimalism, though flat roofs can be problematic in places with lots of snow. Not everyone has a giant backyard that connects seamlessly with their living room and maybe you don't want a boxy house. That's what the inside is for.

Choosing a white-on-white theme for furniture helps declutter both house and head. The more daring, might want to opt for splashes of faded blue or shades of taupe to help inject personality.

Look for high-end stuff that lasts rather than adopting a trend piece with a limited life span. Traditional mid-century items can be the perfect accent pieces.

Keep in mind, less is more.

Hanging a single piece of art can be visually compelling and a dramatic centrepiece. Don't be afraid to go big and be creative. Instead of patterns, consider textures. Harmony is easier to achieve, while still ensuring differences that mix and mingle without clashing.

Minimalism is easily implemented in the most important room in the house, the kitchen. Counters are straight and angular by design and offer lots of space to play with. Keep it clear, clean and tidy.

Create vibrant splashes of colour by filling bowls with fresh fruits or veggies. Since this is the room that probably sees the most interaction, every choice is important. Appliances should be both functional and fashionable so look for stainless steel finishes that fit in with any style.

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Keep it simple, clean and clutter free — especially in the kitchen.