

# AN AUTHENTIC ITALIAN BEAUTY

*Written by Karen Marley  
Photography by Acorn Studios*

From glassy blue waters to powerful winter storms; the view from this Italian-styled, farmhouse villa is always appealing. After all, a view is enhanced when you're surrounded by a home with natural beauty and gracious comfort. When looking to build their empty-nest, retirement home, the homeowners dreamed of an Italian farmhouse. Instead of moving to Italy they brought their dream to life in a piece of wooded property on the shore of Lake Ontario.

It took a team of expert service providers working closely with the homeowners for three years to fulfill the vision. Layout, footprint, structure, design, and details across the interior and exterior work together creating gorgeous spaces







“I wanted a place that would feel cozy for my husband and me, yet open enough to absorb visitors.”  
 —Homeowner

made for living. “The house is not overwhelming in size. The actual footprint is quite modest but feels spacious,” says Jake Oukes of Grayson-Oukes Interior Design.

Spaciousness without bulk is exactly what the homeowners wanted, emphasizing, “We did not want a big, over-the-top show-piece.” The wife adds, “I wanted a place that would feel cozy for my husband and me, yet open enough to absorb visitors.”

The home begins in the front courtyard anchored with a central fountain. Fig trees and grapes are lovingly maintained by the husband who is an avid cook. Visitors enter through one of two substantial wrought iron gates. As you enter the house you realize that the materials making the exterior feel so textural and handsome are also the primary materials for the interior: Venetian plaster, brick, and stone walls complement creamy limestone floor tiles. The brick, stonework and mortar were treated to look aged.

Even in the presence of the stonework the interior feels warm and bright. Venetian plaster is used throughout the home. These bold, heavily textured materials are warmed by the presence of dark wood furniture and wooden floors. Oukes used these materials strategically to define spaces and break up the voluminous ceiling

space. Even the temperature, which is controlled with a heated flooring system, feels perfectly balanced.

The main part of the house is the hearth room. The 16.5-foot ceiling is separated from the kitchen space by a series of brick archways which echo the arched windows throughout the home. The screened porch is a seamless continuation of the hearth room in warmer weather.

Oukes used soft luxurious fabrics and dark, warm woods to counterbalance the strong presence of stone. Dan Catone of Danrich Homes along with James Fahy of James Fahy Design incorporated design details to create an authentic Old World style.

A butler pantry attaches the kitchen to the dining room. The true pantry has a substantial wrought iron gate similar to those in the garden. There is an identical gate to the wine cellar. The cellar has a brick barreled ceiling and reclaimed wooden floors from old wine casks.

Everything has a place and a purpose. Kim Martin of Custom Kitchens by Martin and Company addressed every functional and aesthetic detail. Appliances and televisions are hidden. Even the island has a special section to accommodate the husband’s hand-cranked pasta machine.

The house is an authentic experience, embracing its occupants and visitors in a sense of warm hospitality and confident elegance that only comes with superior craftsmanship. It’s the kind of place where you never feel alone because the house keeps you company.

DESIGNNY

