

# NEW LEASE ON LIFE

PHOTOGRAPHY **MAX WEDGE**  
STORY **NANCY BELGUE**



**I**t's been a long three years for John and Karen King.

Three years of treatments and hospital stays, setbacks and progress, bad news and good. After a hard-fought battle with multiple myeloma that included a successful stem cell transplant, the well-respected builder got the news that things were looking up and he knew he was going to make some major life changes.

First on the agenda was downsizing. Midway through his cancer fight, John and Karen knew they wanted to simplify. They sold their 25-acre country property and purchased two lots backing onto the Belle River. And, because for the Kings, family is everything, John assisted both of his children in building homes nearby – one for their daughter Jillian next door to their own brand new house and another for their son Joshua in the town of Tecumseh. *Continued on page 40*



The oversize armchair with ottoman is designed to seat more than one. A sliding door adds an industrial touch. The art at the top of the stairs perpetuates the sparkle element that is a theme throughout the home. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** John King and his granddaughter Charlotte enjoy story time together. **BOTTOM:** The home's exterior is modern contemporary with a nod to prairie-style elements.



Their ducks in a row, so to speak, the family then concentrated on getting John well enough to walk Jillian down the aisle in October 2015. With the determination and strength of character he's well known for, he did just that, albeit in a back brace. "It was great motivation," John says. "There was no way I was going to miss one of the biggest moments in my daughter's life."

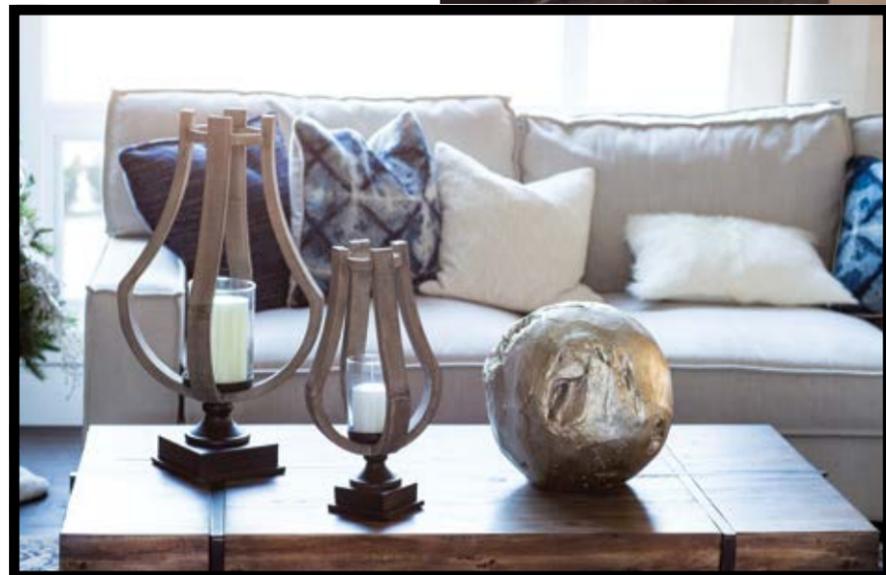
"Cancer has a way of putting everything in perspective," agrees Karen. "And when in Christmas 2015, Jillian and Ryan gave us an empty picture frame and told us our present wouldn't be arriving until June, we knew we had another milestone to look forward to."

That present arrived right on schedule when the couple's first grandchild, Charlotte, made her debut in June 2016. It's clear she has a special bond with her Papa. The minute she toddles into the house she heads straight for her grandfather and demands to be picked up. They cuddle into the sofa with a book, oblivious to the activity around them. "There's nothing better than this," John says, smiling over Charlotte's head. "Nothing at all."

Their new home has allowed the couple the freedom to relax and enjoy being with their children and grandchild. Working with **Jodi Mason of Urban Home Furniture & Design Studio** made the transition from their former home as seamless as possible. "With everything that was going on with John I knew I wouldn't have time to get our new place furnished," Karen says. "I wanted all new furniture because our old home was a completely different style. I absolutely love everything Jodi did. I couldn't have done it without her and I can't praise her



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enough. Everyone who comes here says 'Oh my goodness!' They can't believe how lovely it is."

The easy-maintenance furnishings and finishes allow the couple more time to relax and enjoy each other's company. "I chose a trans-contemporary style for the home," Mason says of her design ideas. "They wanted it to be elegant yet warm and casual."

The porcelain high-gloss tiles and hand-scraped floors (**Hi! Neighbor Floor Covering Company**) in a matte finish make cleaning easy-peasy says Mason. "I kept the furnishings neutral, yet big and comfy."

"We wanted to see the light," Karen adds.

"Our old home was a lot darker and coming here to the water was a fantastic change. Light and airy was what I wanted. At first I was skeptical about the blue accents," she continues. "But being on the water it turned out to be the perfect choice."

The barn board accent wall adds an earthy natural feel that grounds the room and gives it an appealing rustic element. "The wall with the fireplace (**Fireplaces by Mario Inc.**) has a big presence in the room," Mason concludes, "and so it was important how we dressed it. We thought tile would be too cold and wood was just so warm." *Continued on page 42*

**ABOVE:** The barn board fireplace accent wall gives the home an earthy natural feel. The fireplace surround is by Dekko Concrete. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** Backing onto the Belle River, the exterior back of the home has an infinity pool and a lanai. It's where the Kings spend the bulk of their time in the summer months. **MIDDLE:** Jodi Mason of Urban Home Furniture & Design Studio was invaluable in helping the Kings transition from their large country property to their new, light and airy space. **BOTTOM:** Distressed wood lanterns and a globe-shaped wooden ball coated in metallic finish are both elegant and rustic.

feature



The sleek, white kitchen (**Windmill Cabinet Shop Ltd.**) with its expansive granite island (**Universal Marble & Granite**) is the perfect place for the family to gather, as is the outdoor recreation area complete with lanai (**Seaton Sunrooms**) and the pool (**The Great Outdoors**) that John used as a key part of his rehabilitation right up until mid-November. "With the back operations and spinal fusion surgeries, I was unable to walk," John says. "I went from a wheelchair to a walker to a cane in two-and-a-half years. With the help of my doctors, physiotherapists, and swimming every morning and every night I was able to get my strength back." *Continued on page 44*

**TOP LEFT:** The harvest table and upholstered chairs are all from Urban Home Furniture & Design Studio. Window coverings throughout the home are by Made to Shade Window Coverings Ltd. **TOP RIGHT:** John, Karen and Charlotte enjoy some quality time together. **RIGHT:** The kitchen is a great place for family gatherings.



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**ABOVE:** The bedroom has a water view. It is neutral and serene yet understatedly glamorous. The wallpaper has a shimmer element that is consistent with Jodi Mason's design plan. **TOP RIGHT:** The en suite is pared down – with the exception of a faux fur bench.

The couple knows how lucky they are. With their new home, their children and grandchild settled and nearby, John is making a concerted effort to step back and enjoy their good fortune. A self-confessed workaholic, John, whose company **King Homes & Developments**, has “built a great many of the new homes on the water from Lakeshore to Tecumseh,” realizes that “the future is now.”

“I try to slow him down,” Karen says. “Our experience of these last three years has brought us all closer. With everything he went through – good friends and family were our absolute saviours. And we cherish every moment together. Even during the long days of treatments and uncertainty, we would go to the cancer clinic then pick up lunch and go to the water and sit in the car because it was winter and have a picnic. And now here we are living on the water.”

John thinks for a moment then adds, “The most important part of it all was Karen,” he says looking at his wife of 29 years. “Thank God for her.” **OH**

The cabinet in the master bedroom is a “German Silver” buffet. It is functional yet beautiful. Metallic touches are everywhere and give the home a special elegance.

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