

LEFT The owners of this home, situated on a secluded property amid rolling hillocks, wanted its exterior to suit the landscape.

OPPOSITE The interior's wide open, contemporary feeling is balanced by familiar, warm touches, like antique chandeliers, a rustic fireplace and the pine furnishings in the loft library. The walls are left clean, except for an Inuit wall hanging in the dining area.

A roaring fire and just the right seasonal touches fill this soaring interior with holiday warmth.

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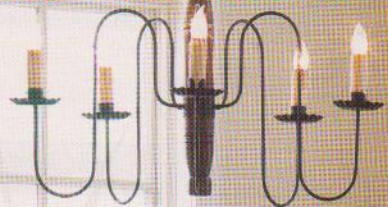
country *style*

At first blush, you might think modern design would be incompatible with the tinsel and tradition of holiday decorating. But designer William MacDonald took the natural elements that are a central feature of this country house near Mansfield, Ont., and used them to create a holiday setting that's festive and completely in keeping with the striking architecture. The owners, a retired couple, regularly invite family and friends to drive out from Toronto – there's room for up to 12 to sleep in the five bedrooms. At Christmas, there's a gathering of the clan to spend a few precious days together, walking by the pond and in the woods, and relaxing by the vast stone fireplace.

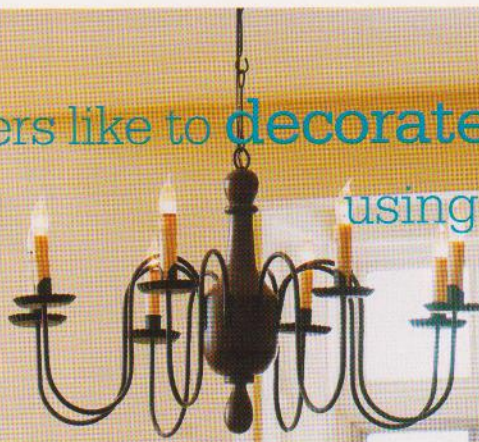
Originally, there was an old farmhouse on the land – the setting for their daughter's wedding a few years ago – but the homeowners decided the new house should be located farther from the road for privacy and better views. The design is sympathetic to the surrounding 90 acres of rolling hills. As William says, "It was important to the owners that it seem as if the house had always been there, so it's traditional-looking on the outside but with a clean, contemporary interior – their goal was to declutter their lives." >



but there are subtle
it **comfortable**"



“The owners like to **decorate simply** when using items gathered



you can do this

Cut red amaryllis right below the blossom and place them in highball glasses for a strong graphic statement on a table set with white linen and china. Add hits of greenery and fill in with sprays of pepper berries in sherry glasses.



entertaining – in a **more natural way,**
from around the property”

OPPOSITE William included a bit of black in each room to “provide definition – a punctuation mark against the maple flooring and cabinetry,” he says. Case in point: the dining chairs and Labrador granite countertop of the breakfast bar. **RIGHT** The owners didn’t know what to do with their vintage Murano lamps, so William had black shades made and set them at each end of the counter. “They have a contemporary look and are beautiful when dimmed while dining,” he says. This breakfast bar is also the perfect place to perch and read the morning paper.



Nowhere is this uncluttered look more striking than in the 20- by 30-foot great room, which encompasses the kitchen and living and dining areas in one vast sweep. The sheer volume of the space is enhanced by the elements within it: the fireplace rises 24 feet from the floor, and the coffee table, which William custom designed, is the size of some condo balconies. A simple arrangement on the coffee table features natural elements like greenery and hemlock cones – an example of how William’s pared-down seasonal decorating respects the balance between the clean, uncluttered decor and homey touches.

Massive hand-hewn fir beams line the peak of the ceiling, and tall windows rise well past the second level all around the room, ensuring the landscape itself is a major component of the design. “One of the important features of the home is that there are no draperies except in private areas,” says William. “That was a conscious part of the design, to bring the outdoors in and let in as much light as possible.”

In such a dramatic setting, it’s essential to add human-scale features to keep it from becoming overwhelming. Natural textures and a few carefully

"The owners wanted the architecture to be a part

and



of the house; they love natural wood clean, uncluttered design”

OPPOSITE In the bedroom, strong, clean lines create a restful mood. The graphic rugs are actually a runner that William cut in half. A bouquet of pepper berries inside the built-in bedside table is an unexpected seasonal touch.

RIGHT At 18 feet high, the ceiling of the ensuite is almost as lofty as that of the great room. Sybaritic touches, like a deep tub-with-a-view and glassed-in rain shower, make it supremely comfortable. The wooden birds are guinea fowl, but William laughs that they could conceivably, given the time of year, stand in for turkeys.



chosen antiques – a wood-and-wrought-iron chandelier above the coffee table, reproduction Windsor chairs in the dining room – impart warmth and a homey feeling. Above the kitchen and dining area, William lowered the ceiling to 10 feet, creating a wonderful loft library above to maximize use of the space. Incorporating a touch of black into each area – the loft railing, the dining chairs, African stools in the living area, the kitchen countertop – was important to ground the light wood and tie everything together.

In the master suite, the spare design becomes soft and calming. In contrast to the creamy tone of most of the walls, the wall behind the bed is painted pale blue. Pillows on the window seat make it an ideal spot for taking in the view. The window in the adjoining bath, which matches the dimensions of the ones in the bedroom and dining room, features yet another view – from the luxurious vantage point of the tub.

“I love the scale of the home,” says William, who has become a frequent guest himself. “And I especially love the great room at night, when it’s dark outside, the chandeliers are glowing and there’s a big roaring fire in the hearth.” WHERE TO FIND IT, PAGE 165