



LIFE AT HOME

DECOR • DOMESTIC ARTS • RENOVATIONS • RENTALS • RESALE

EDITOR: LISA MONFORTON 235-7428 FAX: 235-7379

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AROUND THE HOUSE

Gadgets to keep little ones safe

SAFETY • Here's a list of products that makes sense when curious and roaming toddlers become more mobile.

■ **Outlet covers:** Some are designed to store excess electrical cord — a bonus.

■ **Furniture braces:** Anchor TV armoires, bookshelves and china cabinets to the wall.

■ **Cabinet and drawer latches:** These also protect kitchen goods from being thrown on the floor.

■ **Gates:** Block rooms and stairwells.

■ **Door knob covers:** Good for doors leading outside, to stairs and to bathrooms.

— McClatchy Newspapers

Seven steps for newbie gardeners

BOOK • Just in time for spring is a new how-to gardening book for would-be green thumbs ready to landscape.

How to Make a Garden: The 7 Essential Steps for the Canadian Gardener, by Marjorie Harris (Random House Canada, \$29.95), takes readers over what Harris considers the key stepping stones along the path to yard nirvana.

Step 1: Become a pre-gardener. That is, know how much time you want to spend toiling in the soil, how much money you want to spend, and which elements need to be put in first (patios, fences, paths and trees, for example). The next six steps — know your soil, set a garden style, make a garden map, selecting plants, how to plant and garden care — walk you through the rest.

Her best tips: Use good soil for garden longevity; learn which plants will do well in your climate (and pick ones that add interest in winter); and make time to weed, deadhead, edge and prune.

The book is a culmination of Harris's quarter-century of hands-in-the-dirt experience. She is also a national gardening columnist and editor-in-chief for Gardening Magazine.

— Calgary Herald

Inspiring Edens around the world

BOOK • On their deathbed, many people say they wish they'd travelled more and worked less. But how many express regret they never wandered through the Eastgrove Cottage Garden in Worcestershire, England?

Maybe more than you think because now there's a book on the subject. 1001 Gardens You Must See Before You Die (Barron's, \$43.75), is a beautifully illustrated tome, edited by Rae Spencer-Jones. It takes garden-obsessed readers on an armchair tour of the most interesting gardens in the world. Among them: Butchart Gardens in Victoria; Queen Victoria Park in Niagara Falls; Villa Borghese in Rome and Byodo-in (The Court Temple) in Kyoto, Japan. Some of the gardens seem kind of a stretch: While you should strive to see the Taj Mahal before you die, let's be honest — no one there is looking at the little trees out front. Overall, it's a lovely compilation of some of the planet's most inspiring outdoor spaces.

— Calgary Herald

This posh home is a harbinger of what's next — brainiac wiring and low-profile technology for living the good life

UNDERCOVER TECHNOLOGY

SHEILA BRADY
CANWEST NEWS SERVICE

I have an oversized watch that is smarter than me. This clunky but very bright Garmin tells me how far I have run, beeps when I should walk, and then spits out the number of calories still available for an afternoon non-fat latte. It can even track my route because a global positioning system

is part of its big electronic brain.

The only problem is I need my 22-year-old son to program the monster and he's not always around. It's the same story with my cellphone, the balky television controller and a second pad that controls a quirky audio system hiding behind the ceilings of our townhome.

Quite possibly, I am a technological loser intimidated by buttons or sometimes cowed by a partner who likes electronic toys.

I bought the watch, but in the big scheme, simple seems best.

It appears a number of bright folks, including Florida architect Bobby Morales, who designed the InSync showhome featured during last month's International Home Builder Show in Orlando, Fla., also prefer the simple factor when it comes to technology.

The InSync home is a lavish salute to Spanish eclectic architecture, money and smart tech-

nologies. Morales fought long and hard to design and build a home for living, with technology playing a low-profile role.

"I didn't want technology to be overwhelming," Morales said during an evening reception to launch the \$4-million US home. I didn't say it was a low-budget house.

SEE TECHNOLOGY, PAGE G2



James T. Wilson, for CanWest News Service
A computer ensures the InSync, a lavish and eclectic Spanish-style home, is awash in lights under the night sky.

ENVIRONMENT

Band green at home and on the road



Herald Archive, Canadian Press

Steven Page, front man of the Barenaked Ladies, was one of the first people to sign up with Bullfrog Power, a renewable energy retailer in Toronto.

Barenaked Ladies request reusable cutlery and biodiesel fuel

SHERRY NOIK-BENT
FOR CANWEST NEWS SERVICE

A musician on a concert tour will always have a rider in his contract, and it's often one that can read like a lesson in celebrity capriciousness: One of the best-known examples is Eddie Van Halen's demand for bowls of M&Ms with the brown ones removed. A rider for the Barenaked Ladies contains nothing so friv-

olous: They want recycling bins, reusable dishes and cutlery and biodiesel fuel.

These guys are no strangers to breaking new ground. As a fledgling band, they famously revived the Canadian indie music scene by selling their demo tape out the back of a van and taking it to gold-record status, partly on the strength of a song about money. Now that they have that million dollars (or more), they're doing everything they can to green the way they live and work — and using the currency of fame to influence others.

"People are learning more and more," says front man and principal lyricist Steven Page, "and because of that, they engage with the planet and the commu-

nity and their own behaviours in a way they wouldn't otherwise."

A Toronto native, the easygoing Page nonetheless brings a Bono-like fervour to his cause: He sits on the board of World Wildlife Fund Canada, owns shares in local wind-energy cooperative Wind Share, and signed his home up to be among the first users of Toronto's Bullfrog Power, a renewable energy retailer.

Social responsibility, he says, is innately Canadian. "It's part of what makes us who we are. On top of that, it's just part of travelling and meeting people who have an understanding of our impact on the globe."

SEE GREEN, PAGE G2

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Richmond Hill \$525,000



166 Sierra Nevada Green, SW

Quiet, family oriented crescent, close to the park/tot lot, 1654 sq. ft., 3 bedroom home, white island kitchen, corner windows, living room with hardwood floors, lower level family room with 2nd gas f/p, 2458 sq. ft. of living space.

Strathcona \$650,000



138 Strathridge Place, SW

4 + 1 bedroom home with developed basement in key-hole cul-de-sac, formal living & dining + family room, island kitchen, oak cabinets, stainless steel appliances, den, basement w/ 5th bdrm, bath & games room.

Aspen Woods \$699,900



2 Aspen Stone Crescent, SW

Looking for a large home? 2500 sq. ft. estate home w/ stucco & stone exterior, on a large corner lot in desirable Aspen, near park/pond, formal dining room, big kitchen w/ true walk-in pantry, 3 spacious bdrms + bonus room.

Patterson \$889,000



10 Patterson Green, SW

Great location, backing greenbelt, 2403 sq. ft. home, newer high-end, solid oak kitchen w/ huge island & restaurant style appliances. 3 + 1 bdrms, walkout bsmt, nanny suite, heated triple garage, 3500+ sq. ft. of living space.

Discovery Ridge \$1,190,000



8 Discovery Valley Cove, SW

Facing Griffiths Woods Park! Large bungalow, walkout bsmt, over 3500 sq. ft. developed, big lot, siding treed greenbelt, 3 bdrms, den, exercise room, wood burning outdoor fireplace, huge wrap-around deck, stunning!