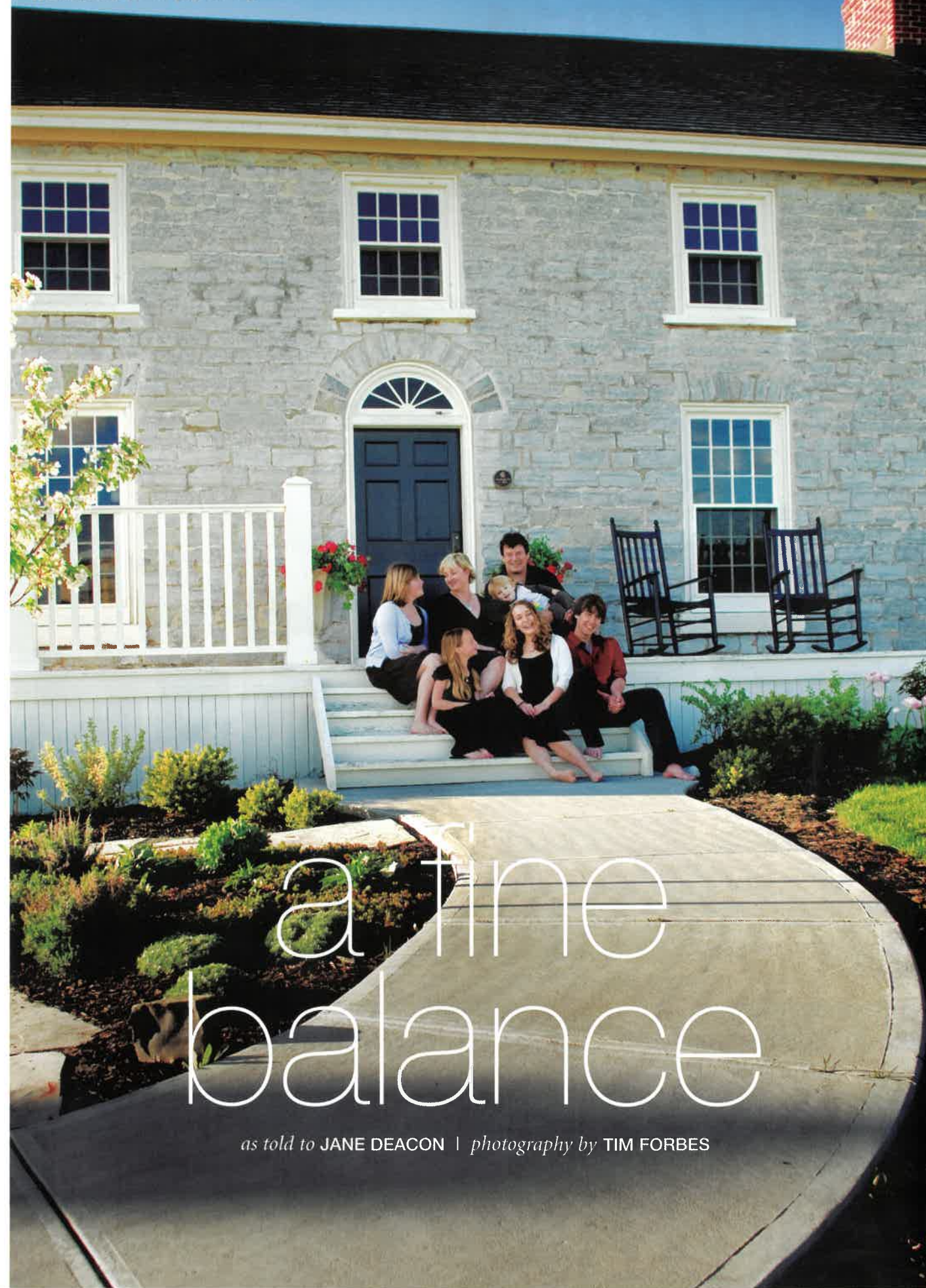




a fine balance

as told to JANE DEACON | photography by TIM FORBES



(left) Heidi and Ted Bergeron with their five children: Nap, Noelle, Zoe, Ella and Gabe.

The evolution of Heidi and Ted Bergeron's home in Barriefield Village is proof that "good bones" are timeless. "Our home began as a tavern, The Pittsburgh Inn, and over the years evolved into a care facility, a store and eventually multi-unit apartments," says Heidi. When the property went up for sale, it lingered on the market for some time until Alicia Gordon, of Gordon's Estate Services, showed the limestone building to the couple in 2005. "I still laugh at the thought of her expression when we told her we loved it," Heidi recalls. "The house was a rabbit warren of tiny rooms. There wasn't a stone or a beam or even a fireplace that hadn't been hidden under layers and layers of panelling, drop-tile ceilings, faux finishes and shag carpet." With a bottle of champagne and a crowbar, the couple unearthed a stone fireplace the first night they spent in the home. After stripping the house to its bare bones, the home now stands as a nod to its past while creating a new history for the couple and their five children.

Homeowners: Heidi and Ted Bergeron

Location: Barriefield Village

Size: Enough for two adults, five children and a cat

Years lived in: 5

Describe your style. I love solid, distressed, rustic-feeling pieces with very simple, clean lines. Pieces with history — scuffed floorboards, crackled paint, the pine tabletop with the kids' homework engraved into it, countertop scratches — add a lot of character to a home. I love to pair rough things with crisp white linen or cotton. The result is something that feels to me both warm and safe because it's withstood the test of time, but is also fresh and inviting.

What do friends say? We're really proud of what we've accomplished with this home; we feel like we saved it. Our friends who saw the "before" and the "after" versions of our home are particularly appreciative of what we've done.



What is your design inspiration?

Our 1939 limestone home has the most beautiful bones. We like to sit by the fire over a glass of wine and think about the work that went into the original hand-hewn beams and the incredible masonry. Someone loved this place before we did.

When we bought it, there wasn't a stone or a beam or even a fireplace that hadn't been hidden under layers and layers of panelling, drop-tile ceilings, faux finishes and shag carpet. Two of the fireplaces had been entirely walled-in so you couldn't tell they were there. We spent our first night at the house digging for buried treasure. Ted unearthed the first fireplace that night. We eventually ended up gutting the house to its bare walls, ceiling and floors. It was so beautiful in that raw state, and we built into





took it apart and carefully laid out the stones so he could put them back together as closely as possible to the original design.

What is your favourite room? I love our bedroom. It's magical to lie there at night and listen to the wind, to look out at the lights of the city, to hear the rain on the roof above our head. The pole-rafters with their peeling bark, the rough pine ceiling overhead and the towering limestone chimney provide an incredible backdrop.

What is your favourite bargain piece? I love the washbasin in the girls' bathroom. It's an old pine cupboard with cream and blue flaking paint that I found at a flea market and had the countertop and sink built into it.

What is your best advice? My best advice is to forge ahead fearlessly. If a house has good bones, you don't need much else. ✿

that as gently as we could. We've added as little as possible. Our paint was chosen to blend with the mortar of the limestone walls.

What are the "must-have" pieces in your home that you wouldn't want to live without? I love the pieces in our home that are both functional and unobtrusive. We have Murphy beds that can be tucked away and built-in pieces that blend with the surroundings. In this house, less is more.

What was the greatest challenge of decorating your home? The most heart-breaking decision we had to make involved dismantling the first fireplace we dug out from the rubble, in order to bring it up to code. It was my favourite piece of the house and the first treasure Ted and I discovered together. I loved every stone in it and couldn't bear the thought of disturbing that beautiful 170-year-old piece of craftsmanship. In the end, we had the best mason, Rob Webb, who



Do you have renovation or design plans for the future?

No, I think we'll take some time and enjoy what we've created.

