

HOMES RESALE & RENTAL



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THE OTTAWA CITIZEN, SECTION E

Out front

Big, small, ornate or simple, porches are delightful resting spots to slow down time and connect with the neighbourhood, writes **PHIL JENKINS**.



These New Edinburgh homes are proof that the Ottawa is a diverse porch city.

What's not to like about porches? They are miniature cottages, an oasis in which to sit and read the paper, to gossip or do absolutely nothing at all. Porches are delightful devices for slowing down time. Observation posts for the street's business, they serve as al fresco dinner booths. They are places where soft memories are made.

Ottawa is porch city. These resting spots proliferate in neighbourhoods that are classically North American, offering a wide street, a curbside tree, a bit of grass and appealing homes built in a variety of boxy styles that are adapted reflections of the homesteads of the American south.

It may well be in the American south, where the sun beats good and long, that the porch first landed on the continent. By the mid-eighteenth century, homes in Dixie — both the master's mansion and the slave's shack — had already evolved the porch to the status of compulsory.

During the next 100 years, porches slowly worked their way north and making regular appearances on Ottawa homes in Sandy Hill, New Edinburgh, the Glebe, Ottawa East and Old Ottawa South.

How the south first got on to porches is not clear, but a credible theory has them brought over by southern Africans uprooted from their homes.

Or, equally plausible, since the word porch comes from portico, which means a columned entrance, the American south decided, as a way of putting the old in Old Glory, to adorn their dwellings with columned verandas, putting a miniature Parthenon façade on their Georgian, republican mansions.

Then there are some who believe they made their way from Japan, where the transition from inside to outside is done in several stages.

When porches crossed the border into Canada, they took on a

colonial aspect, yet adopting the Victorian and Italianate fetish for embellishment. Here the plain, functional porch sprouted all sorts of spindles and spandrels, cornice brackets and balustrades, newel posts and sunburst fans, rails and running trims, posts and appliques in profusion, each one striving for a unique edge.

If you want to see some of these terms illustrated, as well as plan your new retro porch or sparkle up an old one, visit the www.vintagewoodworks.com. The illustrations alone will release the inner porch lover in you.

The frequent use of the word "porch" may have already sent some of you off on an etymological tangent, so it's best to clear things up.

Porch, veranda, balcony, what's the difference?

We can dispose of balcony first, which is an airborne platform onto which you can venture from the first floor and up. Although, when the floor of the balcony is the ceiling of the porch, the whole structure is sometimes considered a porch.

A veranda, which is an Indian word, is a form of country porch that tends to extend and wrap around a building like a scarf. Verandas have migrated into the city, and can be seen on homes that wish to radiate a rural look.

Railings are optional, more likely than not on a porch (which can be front, side or back), more not than likely on a veranda.

Then there is the lanai, which is a Hawaiian porch, rather like a sun room, usually furnished and screened in and popular in Florida, but we won't go there.

Our inclination to customize our homes, has led to Ottawa having a gallery of veteran porches that are a pleasure to amble past.

Some are a century or more old, others are lovingly retro, and the opportunities to criticize or applaud the efforts of others are a welcome part of any twilight tour.

This year's early summer and continued heat spurts fired the porch parade up prematurely, and younger porchers, particularly the students housed around Ottawa U, were spotted in the first week of April roasting rump steaks and crushing beer cans lengthways to the rhythm of urban beats.

Now that summer is official, porch life is in full swing, from singles catching their breath on a garage-sale Adirondack chair after a bike ride, to retired couples in matching wicker chairs discussing civic affairs over a jug of iced tea.

See PORCHES on PAGE E2



GORDON KING

Paul Denys has restored about 25 heritage porches across the city.



CHRIS MIKULA, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

Lynn Griffiths and Paul Denys relax on her Rochester Street porch.

Legendary hacienda

Marilyn Monroe's safe haven is for sale for a hot \$3.6 million

BY MARTHA GROVES

A nomad from birth who bounced from coast to coast and from foster home to apartment to hotel, Marilyn Monroe finally found, in Brentwood, a place where she could nest after three failed marriages.

The stucco hacienda stood behind tall gates at the end of a shady cul-de-sac on half an acre of wooded grounds. The Latin inscription on tiles embedded in the front stoop served notice that Monroe felt she had succeeded in her quest for a safe haven: "Cursum Perficio," or "I have completed my journey."



Marilyn Monroe died in the Brentwood home in 1962.

After the talented and troubled actress died in the house on Helena Drive of a sleeping pill overdose in August 1962 at 35, the words seemed a cruel foreshadowing.

Earlier this month, news spread quickly through the Marilyn community of fans and admirers that the rambling, four-bedroom, three-bathroom house was on the market for \$3.6 million.

After Prudential California Realty's David Offer posted the listing on his website, an early showing drew real estate agents and TV news trucks. Offer's website describes it as "the crown jewel and largest property of all the Helenas (one of Brentwood's most romantic and coveted locations) affording lovely vistas and great privacy."

Monroe, baptized Norma Jean Baker, would scarcely recognize the house, which has been altered and updated by subsequent owners. It has changed hands several times since she died.

See MARILYN on PAGE E2



WHAT THEY GOT ORCHARD ESTATES

LOCATION: 39 Spring Cress
FEATURES: Resort-style house with extensive landscaping, a large pool and an outdoor living room. There are quality finishes inside the four-bedroom home, a games room, three-car garage.

ASKING PRICE: \$1,899,000
SELLING PRICE: \$1,851,525
DAYS ON MARKET: 8
WORD FROM THE SALES

REP/BROKER: "This is a resort house. It's where everyone wants to be," says Marilyn Wilson, sales representative for Royal LePage Performance Realty, Brokerage. "Magnificent master suite, gorgeous landscaping and spectacular architectural features."
WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT THE 'HOOD: This is a destination

home that's located on a quiet street just north of Barrhaven. It's located close to the Cedarhill Golf & Country Club and all the amenities of Barrhaven.

Sold a home recently? Contact **Jennifer Campbell** at jcps@sympatico.ca

HOMES • RESALE & RENTAL

A farm for good

Bill Dow is something of a latter-day pioneer. He grew organic crops in his home state even when it didn't make him popular. 'Cussedness' got him through, he says

BY JIM WISE

In the rolling-hill country between North Carolina's Pittsboro and Siler City, Bill Dow's farm has fresh crops of cucumbers, peppers, basil, parsley and blueberries just coming in.

Just up the rocky road leading into his place, there's another farm where a fresh crop is coming in: houses. Yes, the development pressure is on.

Not at Bill Dow's place, though. His was North Carolina's first farm to be certified organic. He was Chatham County's first farmer to make a business of selling directly to restaurants. Now he's the area's first small organic farmer to put land under a conservation easement in perpetuity.

"That's going to have a real big impact," in keeping agriculture alive in the county, says extension agent Debbie Roos.

"I don't know, it just seemed like the right thing to do," says Dow.

Dow, a retired physician, owns 30 acres, with woods enclosing the three acres he cultivates spring, summer and fall.

"It's all I can do, with good

help," he says. The amount of help varies depending on what needs doing. One recent afternoon Dow had five pairs of helping hands at work — one hoeing weeds, two tying squash vines and two setting posts for cucumber trellises. The numbers vary depending on what's to be done, he said.

Twenty-two of his acres are under the conservation easement. Besides preserving the property undivided and undeveloped, the easement creates a permanent buffer along a creek.

"I didn't want somebody coming in here and cutting it up," Dow says. "You get attached to a place and you just don't do that. I don't do it."

Dow grew up on a cattle and soybean farm in Mississippi. "Dad was a believer in the chemicals," he says, but young Bill — unlike his farmer brothers — developed a distaste for the herbicides and fertilizers that go on conventional fields. At Vanderbilt medical school, he organized a students' health organization that spun off agricultural marketing projects in five southern states.

He ended up in North Carolina via "a long, circuitous" route — "It would make a

good novel," he says — and bought a country place where he could garden. Organically. This was in 1981 and he didn't get a lot of local encouragement for going green, but he stuck with it because of his "cussedness" and conviction.

"Part of it was the challenge and part I thought it was important. From a medical standpoint, you are what you eat as they say," he says. "Part of it was, just the boys at home: 'I'll show you.' There's a certain amount of competition."

It was about 10 years ago that Dow metamorphosed from gardener to farmer. "It's not something you plan or anything else," he said. "You just wake up one day and realize, 'It's got me... We're not just playing games here.'"

Broccoli was his first cash crop, but although it grew well in his soil, one crop wasn't going to earn a living for a small farmer. That takes an appreciation for economics.

"What you've got to look at on this size farm is, not how many acres have I got but how much am I making per acre? I can grow broccoli like this and sell it for a good price, but in that same amount of space there's other



Bill Dow is a retired doctor who loves getting his hands dirty.

crops I can grow and make a lot more."

Now, he raises a variety of vegetables, fruit, herbs and flowers and sells most of his produce to restaurants that appreciate the appeal local food has for customers. The rest he sells at a farmers' market — which he helped establish, along with the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association and a sustainable agriculture program at Central Carolina Community College's Pittsboro, N.C., campus.

"He's very special," says Roos, the extension agent. "He has totally been a real pioneer in this area."

HOW IT WORKS

A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement

by which a landowner permanently restricts how property may be used while retaining ownership.

Agriculture and conservation boosters throughout the Triangle are promoting easements as a tool to reimburse landowners, with cash and tax breaks, for signing away their development rights. The easements protect rural land for its benefits to air and water quality, and keep it available for farming.

According to the Triangle Land Conservancy, Bill Dow got \$96,000 for putting his land under a conservation easement.

The money came from the N.C. Agricultural Development & Farmland Preservation Trust Fund.

Chatham, Durham, Franklin and Orange counties have adopted Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection plans, and Wake has one under way.

With the plans, counties become eligible for grants to pay for easements and acknowledge their interest in maintaining or enhancing agriculture as a local industry.

For information, see tinyurl.com/298zb7l or tinyurl.com/28qdlu8

Read more: <http://www.newsobserver.com/2010/07/04/564672/a-farm-for-good.html> xz0tDaTIRAA

MCCLATCHY-TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE



Homes in New Edinburgh sport many different styles of porches, adding a flourish to these modest homes.

Porches: Quiet resting spots to regroup

Financial help available for homes set down in historical districts

Continued from PAGE E1

Since this is Ottawa, the city that enjoys the second greatest diurnal temperature range of all the capitals, our climate is not kind to heritage porches. The better ones were made of several fine heritage woods, uniquely turned and moulded, but our freeze and bake climate plays hell with wood.

Eventually all vintage porches need a fluff up or a wholesale restoration, either at our own hands or by a handful of fine woodworkers.

One of Ottawa's premier porch restorers, Paul Denys, likes to recount an anecdote about his great-grandfather building a porch on his Toronto home in 1908, carrying the requisite lumber piece by piece from his employment on the streetcar.

Denys reckons he has restored about 25 heritage porches, the latest on Bolton Street in Sandy Hill.

His pièce de résistance to date is Rochon House, located on St. Patrick Street across from the cathedral.

It is a combination porch and balcony built by a master carpenter many decades ago and recreated by Denys from photographs. The original porch had been euthanized, sorry, removed and replaced with a blander version. He created hundreds of unique pieces of turned, sculpted and moulded pieces, adding membranes and aluminum caps where wood meets wood to grant the structure a long life under the Ottawa sky.

Restoration or recreation of a porch your grandparents could have enjoyed is not, as Denys points out, cheap. But the aesthetic reward is considerable.

In the course of his projects, Denys has noted a host of influences manifesting themselves in porch pulchritude. The Victorian style is drippy, heavy and detail upon



Paul Denys created a replica of the original 1890s porch and balcony.

detail, says the carpenter, while middle eastern and simple, dignified detailing from Japanese embellishments from a century ago are gaining popularity on designer's infill homes.

In this age of off-the-peg porches at do-it-yourself stores, it is possible to knock

up a facsimile that you and your spread sheet can live with; what is being sacrificed is that uniqueness, and most certainly a step down the ladder in quality of woods and longevity.

Knot-free spindles, back-priming the paints to double the life of their protectiveness, and the practical use of PVC flooring all ensure that the inheritors of Rochon house and their ilk will have a fine porch to enjoy.

There are financial aids to restore porches in homes set down in historical districts, Denys let it be known in a recent lecture on the subject. The city is keen to see the preservation of architectural heritage, and has earmarked \$5,000 in matching dollars to restore, replicate porch columns or trim. The very porchy Lower Lorne Avenue heritage district is a prime example.

Unless of course you are reading this on an already lovingly restored porch, in which case, apologies for the interruption.

Phil Jenkins is an Ottawa writer.

Marilyn: House a dream come true

Star put her own mark on first home she owned without a man

Continued from PAGE E1

It was the first home she owned independent of a husband, and at the time of her death she was putting her rustic mark on it with items she had selected in Mexico, including hand-hewn tables and hand-painted tiles.

"This home was to be a dream come true where she could furnish it as she wanted and make it into a sanctuary," says Greg Schreiner, president of the Marilyn Remembered fan club and a collector of Monroe memorabilia. "It is ironic she would die in the only home she ever owned."

Schreiner's website, themarilynmonrosite.com, features photos of the interior.

As Monroe lore has it, she chose the house, north of San Vicente Boulevard, because it reminded her of the nearby Spanish colonial residence of her psychiatrist and friend, Ralph Greenson.

Monroe biographer Fred Lawrence Guiles said the purchase might have been motivated by the end of her five-year marriage to playwright Arthur Miller.

Built in 1929, the property, for which Monroe paid \$75,000, featured lush gardens, a kidney-shaped pool, a small, detached guest house and a garage. Arched doorways, cathedral beamed ceilings and deep-sill Spanish windows with iron gratings completed the effect.

Monroe was taken with the house from her first visit, according to an account in *Cursum Perficio: Marilyn Monroe's Brentwood Hacienda*, by Gary Vitacco-Robles.

Eunice Murray, who became the housekeeper, recalled that Monroe studied and memorized every detail, brick by brick. She liked the house's simplicity, privacy and sturdy construction, and its lived-in aura.

Monroe renovated the outdated kitchen, installing a Hotpoint refrigerator (which Schreiner now owns) and yellow-and-blue tiles that framed the stove's sides and continued along the wall to create a large splash board.

Monroe began making \$320-a-month mortgage payments in March 1962. Five months later, the *Los Angeles Times* blared the headline: "Marilyn Monroe Found Dead. Sleeping Pill Overdose Blamed."

"It was learned that medical authorities believed Miss Monroe had been in a depressed mood recently," the *Times* reported. Wrapped in a pale blue blanket, her body was strapped to a stretcher and carried to a station wagon that took her to the Westwood Village Mortuary. She was buried that Aug. 8.

The death certificate listed her death as a probable suicide, but many admirers maintain that the overdose was accidental — the result perhaps of the calamitous interaction of drugs prescribed by different doctors. Conspiracy theorists continue to assert that she was murdered.

To this day, her delight in the house and garden — for which she had purchased lemon trees and flowering plants just days before she died — leaves many fans saddened that her tumultuous life would end when she had at last landed in a place where she could feel at peace.

MCCLATCHY-TRIBUNE NEWS.



Monroe installed the yellow and blue tiles that frame the side of the kitchen stove.



Fan club president Greg Schreiner says Monroe intended to turn her home into a sanctuary.