

BY PAULINE CLARK // PHOTOGRAPHY BY GENE SANTORO

A Superior HOME



When George and Julie Di Berardino realized their cottage at Pointe Des Chenes was sinking into the ground, they knew they had to act. Determining their options was at the top of their list, so they immediately called **FICMAR BUILDERS Inc.** because they knew the company was one of the most respected builders around.

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George and Julie Di Berardino had their old cottage replaced with this beautiful lakefront home built by FICMAR.

LEFT: Julie and George enjoy the spectacular view at their beachfront property over morning coffee.

home & builder



FICMAR BUILDERS, Steve Ficociello (left) and Mario Febbraro worked with the Di Berardinis right up to the moment they moved into their new home.

When they learned their home couldn't be repaired, they decided to work with FICMAR and start from scratch.

"One of the best things about working with FICMAR is that nothing was 'we can't do it,'" says George. "They accommodated us and gave us lots of choices."

"And we love our house," adds Julie.

FICMAR BUILDERS Inc. has earned its reputation as a local construction company known for quality craftsmanship in the construction of contemporary homes.

Partners Steve Ficociello (**FIC**) and Mario Febbraro (**MAR**) started the enterprise four years ago.

FICMAR's beautiful showroom is located at 683 Great Northern Rd. in Sault Ste. Marie.

This first-class facility is fully equipped with materials and technology to help clients navigate through every step of the building process. FICMAR also features on-staff designer Kim Briel, who helps clients design the interior and exterior of their homes.

FICMAR is synonymous with quality craftsmanship, attention to detail and family values. The company works with clients to build architectural masterpieces. The FICMAR team works with homeowners every step of the way - from groundbreaking to moving day. Ficociello and Febbraro have also developed a great relationship with their sub-trades, which makes for one great company. It's a family business too. Ficociello's father, Frank, is on site daily during the building process.

Ficociello, an architectural designer, worked his magic to create the perfect layout for the Di Berardinis. The result - a beautiful 2,169 sq. ft. home, with a 420 sq. ft. media room above the garage.

The home sits on a spectacular lot facing Lake Superior. Entering the driveway, you can't help but notice the two beautiful, hand-crafted columns flanking each side of the stamped concrete porch (**Ontario Concrete Finishing**).

Just inside the doorway, a beautiful ceramic-tile inlay, with a slate border, eliminates the need for a carpet. This inlay is also found at the patio door entrance.

Febbraro says the engineered hardwood flooring (**Soo Glass and Ceramics**) in the main area and bedrooms is ideal for homes close to the water, since it can withstand moisture and sand.

Two handcrafted, shaker-style columns separate the entry area from the open-concept living room. The columns match the top of the beaded mantel in this stately room.

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Pre-planning during the construction phase means there's no visible wiring showing on the flat panel television that hangs above the gas fireplace in the living room.

BELOW LEFT: The entire main floor has a spacious feel due to the open-concept design and the expanse of natural light that floods the rooms.

BELOW MIDDLE: Four stools, neatly tucked under the island's overhang, are easily accessible and perfect for family mealtimes.

BELOW RIGHT: An inlaid tile carpet at the entrance protects the hardwood flooring. Nearby, a closet is readily accessible for outerwear storage, while a coat tree in the corner accommodates guests.







This attractive, cultured stone walkway was salvaged from the couple's original home.

LEFT: This lakeside view of the home features a large deck, perfect for warm weather gatherings.



The beautiful architectural design of the dining room window keeps the room simple, yet elegant. Julie loves the look of flowers from A Thymely Affair around her home.

LEFT: The walls and ceiling of the media room have been painted one colour, creating the illusion of a larger room.

Ficociello designed the beautiful cultured-stone fireplace from a photo Julie gave him. Febbraro and FICMAR employee Dante Venneri took the design and created the fireplace Julie wanted. **LM Febbraro Masonry** completed the brickwork.

The perimeter bulkhead, with dropped crown moulding, houses rope lighting, which adds ambience. Pot lights inside and out add just the right amount of glamour to the home.

A full audio/visual system throughout the home was wired during the construction phase. Receivers, decoders and other equipment are tucked into a small control room, out of site, but easily accessible.

“Planning during the design phase of building helps eliminate the clutter of audio and video wires,” says George, who, through his business, **Soo Video TV**, works with FICMAR to plan and install wiring for similar systems in other homes.

Transom windows (**Lyon's TIM-BR Mart**) run across the front of the home. The large windows showcase the picture-perfect view of the lake. Julie says, because of the incredible landscape, there is little need for artwork on the walls.

The Di Berardinos decided not to cover the windows, tinting the glass

instead, which protects the interior of the home from direct sunlight and cools the home in the summer months.

Patio doors lead from the dining area out onto a wooden deck. Both George and Julie have large extended families, so they love to host family gatherings.

The lovely kitchen island is house-central, where the couple and their two children gather for most of their meals. Julie says it fits well with their busy lifestyle.

George and Julie work together at the business George's father started, and their two boys both play soccer and hockey, so there's often a need for meals in a hurry.

Stools line the bar-side of the granite-topped maple island, which complements the antique-style, seashell cupboards in the rest of the kitchen. Etched-glass inlays adorn some of the upper cabinet doors.

Pot lights and a modern fixture over the island illuminate the area, while under-cabinet lighting highlights the tiled ceramic backsplash.

The couple encourage others not to “chintz” on the added expense of materials they might want for their home. They're glad they chose to go with both the ceramic backsplash and the granite countertops (**Granite and Stone Décor**).

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Sand-coloured walls in the master bedroom add to the natural ambience of the room. The sheer blinds – open or closed – make this a perfect room to retreat to.

TOP RIGHT: Michael, 15, finds the desk in his room perfect for using his laptop computer.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Matthew, 12, is a big Bobby Orr fan and has much of his collection displayed in his room.



“It was worth the extra money,” says Julie.

Julie loves her kitchen and its amenities. A small stainless steel beverage fridge installed next to the larger refrigerator helps with food storage overflow. Built-in trash and recycle bins are a must for this busy family.

The master bedroom, with its large picture window, is a favourite escape for the couple. Though sheer blinds have been installed to reduce the light, Julie says they often leave the blinds open so they can take in the beautiful view.

Their en suite has a large four-foot shower, a wall-to-wall vanity with double sinks and a heated ceramic tile floor, which is on a timer. Adjacent walk-in and linen closets complete the room.

Julie called on **Silver Design Group** to help her choose her colours when the home was built. More recently, Julie’s friend, decorator and home stager, **Raea Caruso** helped Julie add some finishing touches to the home.

George loves the media room. Located above the double garage, the room is perfect for movie nights, game playing, televised sports events and family gatherings.

The remote controlled, 100-inch screen drops down from under the window valance and a projector falls from the ceiling. George installed flush-mount speakers in the other rooms during the construction process, however, he preferred the look of external speakers for this room.

Four Italian leather reclining chairs in the olive-green room make it an extra comfortable place to watch a movie. A round table (**Storey Furniture**) converts into a gaming table in seconds. Berber carpet makes the room cosy.

George and Julie laugh when they remember how FICMAR wasn’t happy with the original paint-job in the media room, which they thought was just fine. FICMAR insisted on re-painting until the look was perfect.

“That shows how these guys are,” says Julie. “They are so conscientious and considerate.” **OH**