



When the warm weather hits, it's time to dig out your barbecue and do some outdoor cooking.

Bringing out the barbecue

By Maggie Calloway

In North America outdoor living includes eating outdoors, which in turn means barbecuing. When one is thinking about cooking outdoors, Nash Shivji of The BBQ Shop in Port Coquitlam is the person to call. Twenty-five years in the business means there is nothing this gentleman doesn't know about the subject.

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Ben and his family enjoyed working with contractor Harald Koehn, right, while planning their Langley renovation. Koehn is the recipient of numerous local, provincial and national awards, including two Georgie Awards this year.

Martin Knowles photo

Elevating your life

By Maggie Calloway

We are hearing a lot lately about aging in place. This single subject will become more and more important over the next few years as our population ages.

Research shows the very best thing for our aging population is to stay in the neighbourhood they know, if at all possible. We all need a sense of community and that basic need doesn't change as we age; in fact it's just the opposite. Knowing your neighbours, your doctor, dentist and shoe repair store is a major part of belonging. As the theme song of *Cheers* said, "Everyone knows your name."

Staying in place is sometimes easier said than done. If the home is on multiple levels and mobility is an issue, moving or finding another solution is paramount.

With 35 years in the business, partners Alan Bodnaruk and Cam Pomeroy of Western Elevators are certainly in that category.

"There are a variety of ways the home can be modified to assist movement in the home from level to level," Bodnaruk says. "Stairlifts, a sturdy chair assembly unit that travels up and down on a steel rail mounted to the staircase, are the easiest to install. They may be straight, curved, or custom

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Making a house a perfect home for Ben

With the help of Harald Koehn, a local family now has a home that fits everyone.

By Maggie Calloway

Imagine if you will a family of five kids, one with spina bifida, and two adults all living in a 2,400-square-foot rancher which has seen, shall we say, better days. The imagination runs rampant thinking of long, dark, rainy winter weekends with high-energy kids trapped inside. Well not any more! After a total home renovation, this stunning home sitting on acreage in

Langley works for every member of this amazing family. Ten-year-old Ben, a dynamo on wheels, is now able to zoom around the whole house.

Contractor Harald Koehn Construction Ltd., winner of numerous local, provincial and national awards for excellence, was a perfect fit with this family. The project was a collaboration between the family and the professionals to make sure every member had their needs addressed and while Ben's needs, both now and into the future, were integral to the design, this needed to be a home in the real sense of the word.

"The bones of the house were basically good so it was a smooth transition," Koehn says. "We were able to create what they were looking for

within the new 4,400 square feet. The old house was not energy-efficient and none of the family had privacy. The difference for the family is life-changing."

The project took a year to complete.

There were many different things at play in the renovation. One was Ben's mobility, but the house was inefficient in many ways, and there was also a need for the new house to meet the needs of the family while the children were still at home and, if the parents wish, to age in place.

Built in a style similar to houses seen in Whistler, the home now includes a great room, dining

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Harald Koehn Construction turns a Langley residence into a dream home

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room and kitchen combination.

“You get a great feeling of space, and the connection to the outside, through the three sets of French doors, flows naturally. There is a large patio with a pool and hot tub off the great room and no lip or step so Ben can come and go at will,” Koehn says.

The house was stripped completely inside and out. The centre of the home was opened up to create the great room and dining room using a timber frame structure, creating soaring fourteen-foot ceilings. The garage stayed as it was but a new bedroom wing was added which gave the family two large bedrooms, a bathroom and a laundry room.

“Our climate is so rainy and grey for a lot of the year we maximized the opportunity to bring in as much light as possible,” Koehn says. “We used distressed oak throughout the great room and dining room ... The kitchen works perfectly for everyone including Ben. There are a couple of areas especially for Ben; a lowered sink area and a bar fridge for cold snacks and at the end of the kitchen island there is a separate lower counter. We also placed the microwave lower so Ben can help himself.”

There is a contained suite of around 400 square feet for Ben including a bedroom and bathroom. The bathroom vanity is lower, there is a jetted tub, and the separate shower is large with no sill. The whole floor of the bathroom has a special membrane under the tile which channels water into the drainage system. In addition the floor is electrically heated so any water will dry up quickly.

“On the ceiling there is a track system with a lift so Ben can go right from the bathroom through to his bed which again will add to independence,” Koehn says. “The bedroom is multipurpose with the bed, storage and

then another little area where, when Ben gets older, they can put in a sofa and chairs; it's set up with TV, so he can entertain his friends. The door to the outside from his bedroom is automated by pushing a button, again to lend independence. Everything has been thought through to give as much accessibility and independence as possible.”

The brilliance of this home is, even with the necessity of building in accessibility, nothing looks or feels contrived or institutional. Steve Riley of S.P. Riley Residential Design and Koehn worked hard to make sure that didn't happen.

“Steve Riley did a fabulous job both on the original design and making the necessary adjustments as the job progressed ... He was very critical in making this project work,” says Koehn.

The exterior of the home is dramatic but also subtle. The sidewalks change elevation seamlessly and complement the home; this was done by building up the terrain so that the ramps become pathways.

Darlene is the mother of this large brood.

“It was so important to build a home that worked for the whole family. A lot of thought and planning went into every bit of the house,” she says. “We wanted to get it right because we plan on being here for a long time. Ben is a full member of the family and now he is able to completely participate in family life. I would like to acknowledge the Vancouver Foundation for giving us a grant under their ‘accessible housing program’ to help with the part of the renovation that affected Ben. We really appreciate the help they gave us.”



The new house is perfect for Ben and his family, with upgrades meant just for him such as exterior ramps, above, a lowered counter and sink in the kitchen, left, and his own dedicated bedroom and bathroom, below.

Martin Knowles photos

“I want anyone who is building a new home or renovating to realize it's not that hard to include little things that make it accessible. If they end up in a wheelchair after surgery or need a walker ... they need at least one entrance they can use to get into the house. Simple things such as making doors wide enough or planning for an elevator are easy to do when building but difficult to accommodate after the fact.”



The heat of the summer

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“Some very interesting things are happening in the business. One of the big things is reasonably priced barbecues are now available with many of the features previously only available on high-priced models, features like rotisserie and rear burners,” Shivji says. “Barbecues priced around \$1,000, made in Canada or the U.S. ... are very well built with lots of bells and whistles. We scour suppliers to source out North American-built product. ... They are very well built and they come with a good warranty. There are some exceptions but readers in the market for a new barbecue, or other outdoor cooking product, should make sure the product is well made by a known brand, ... has a warranty and that replacement parts are available.”

Shivji has a word of caution for people in the market for a new natural gas barbecue: check that the fittings are compatible with your home connection. It is frustrating for the person who has to go from store to store trying to match up the couplings.

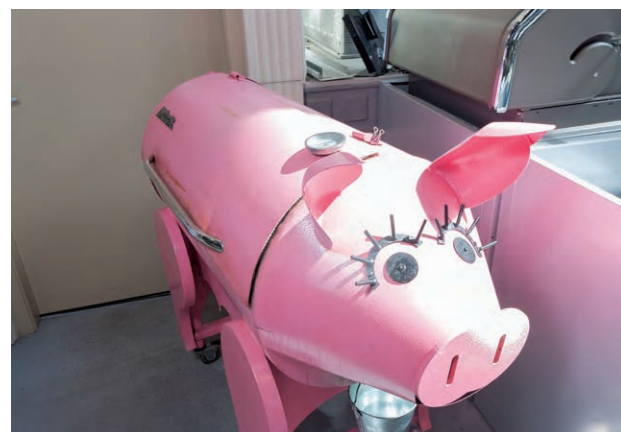
Shivji has plenty of advice for people looking to purchase a new barbecue.

“First, make sure there is the good ten-year war-

ranty which means the manufacturer will stand behind their product. Secondly, the way the burners and valves are placed in the barbecue is very important. You need precision so that they heat evenly across the whole area. ... When you want high heat for searing meat or low heat for a roast you want to be able to count on your barbecue to deliver. Look for a manufacturer whose primary business is building barbecues; they are up on the new technology and the materials they use are very solid and stable. Thirdly, if you like to use the rotisserie for roasts or chicken, look for a rear burner which will give you the even heat you need in exactly the right place.”

You should decide exactly how you are going to use your new barbecue. If the extent of your interest is hamburgers and hot dogs, simple is better. But if all your warm-weather cooking is done on the barbie, something more sophisticated is in order.

After twenty-five years in the business, Shivji is still passionate. He feels he is not just selling barbecues but helping families have a great experience which will encourage more get-togethers with family, friends and neighbours.



Nash Shivji of The BBQ Shop in Coquitlam, far left, is passionate about barbecues, outdoor fire pits, above, and getting people together outside. There are a range of barbecues available, from the standard to the whimsical, left.

Martin Knowles photos

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Sales Director: Lisa Farquharson • 604-575-5364 • lisa@blackpress.ca

Editor: Kerry Vital 604-575-5346 • editor@newlocalhome.com

Writer: Maggie Calloway maggiec@blackpress.ca

Online Advertising • Black Press National Sales • 604-575-5826

Contributing photographers • Martin Knowles, www.mkphotomedia.com; Rob Newell, www.robnewellphotography.ca

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