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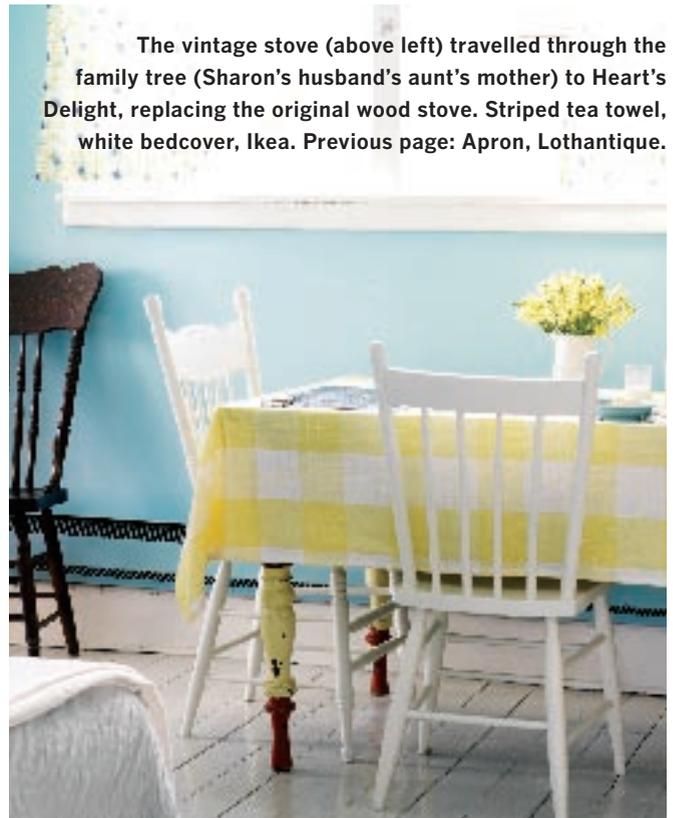
A Newfoundland family's
treasured home opens its
doors to a new generation

BY REBECCA ZAMON PHOTOGRAPHY BY DONNA GRIFFITH PRODUCED BY ANN MARIE FAVOT





The Sooleys settled in **HEART'S DELIGHT IN THE 1860s**, and since then new generations have kept the family's traditions and heritage alive



The vintage stove (above left) travelled through the family tree (Sharon's husband's aunt's mother) to Heart's Delight, replacing the original wood stove. Striped tea towel, white bedcover, Ikea. Previous page: Apron, Lothantique.

NEWFOUNDLAND has legendary status in Canada: that far-flung outpost at the eastern end of our country harbours a rich history, stark landscapes, and arguably, the strongest sense of regional pride. It's no wonder, then, that the Sooley family, whose roots go deep in this province, can't help but return year after year to a little Newfoundland town aptly named Heart's Delight.

An hour and 15 minutes from St. John's, this tiny 'outport' has been home to Sooleys since the 1860s, when John Bishop Sooley, great-great-grandfather to siblings—and the current owners—Ken and Sharon, bought five acres overlooking Trinity Bay on the north Atlantic. When the land passed down to his grandson, Edward John Sooley, the family built a house on the property culled from the remnants of two nearby buildings. "My father took them apart himself," recalls Fred Sooley, Ken and Sharon's father. "One was on the other side of

the harbour, and the other was pulled 500 yards by horse to be the foundation for our house."

Like many other young and able Newfoundlanders, Fred moved to Ontario in the 1950s to seek employment, but continued to summer in Heart's Delight with his family until his mother passed away in 1984. A decade later, the house was in disrepair, and Fred was ready to sell—until Ken and Sharon stepped in. Not willing to see their memories and heritage be passed along, the two embarked



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to live like locals
and experience
the province's
diverse culture,
beautiful natural
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and outdoor
adventure.

on a new chapter in Sooley history, one that gives others the Newfoundland experience brother and sister cherished.

Thus CapeRace Cultural Adventures was born, an inventive 10-day touring program of Newfoundland that lets visitors explore the unique characteristics of the province by staying in homes owned by the Sooley family. "Usually when you travel Newfoundland," says Ken, a prolific adventurer, "you see a lot of nature, but the cultural experience doesn't have the level of depth many people would like." To date, the Sooleys have purchased and restored the three homes on the tour (look for their St. John's property in our September 2008 issue). "The incredible thing about Newfoundland is its sense of community," adds Sharon.

For this house, dubbed E.J.



In Newfoundland, where kitchen parties originated, the pantry is where food is prepared, while the kitchen proper is almost exclusively confined to family and friendly gatherings. Underneath that cheery tablecloth (opposite) lies a workbench that still bears the marks of Edward John's chopping—as a young man, Fred added arborite and chrome to its top to replace the wood.





While the turquoise and watery shades of new paint refresh this space, the **ORIGINAL DETAILS OF THE E.J. SOOLEY HOUSE** give visitors a taste of living in the past

Though the linens were all replaced, the beds and dresser in the bedroom are all original Sooley furniture. Ken and Sharon, in a nod to modern conveniences, brought hot water heaters into the home and Ken found a faucet that matches the one in the pantry. The handles on all the cabinets are original.



Sooley House (named both for their grandfather, Edward John, and grandmother, Elizabeth Jane), the siblings went to great lengths to honour its heritage, furnishing it with pieces that are either original to the home or, as in the case of a working vintage stove, staunchly uphold its primitive spirit. “The house is a part of a fishing village that has barely changed in a hundred years,” says Sharon, “so we made a conscious decision not to modernize it.” In the kitchen, a traditional daybed sits beside the stove, awaiting the time when the weary cook needs a break, while the home’s three bedrooms boast traditional iron beds and handmade dressers, along with supplemental hooks in lieu of closet space.

Despite the emphasis on authenticity, some concessions to visitors’ tastes were made, both in the form of updated appliances and a “bridge” at the back of the home looking out at the panorama over the water. “In Newfoundland, houses

weren’t built for views of the ocean,” explains Sharon. “The wind coming off the water made it way too cold.”

Inside, the overarching feel of E.J. Sooley House is a warm, cheery port in a storm, a treasure awash in turquoise hues to combat the harsh grey scenery out the windows. “The backdrop is undisciplined and undiscovered—it really is the last frontier of Canada,” says Ken with conviction. “When you’re here you’re literally walking on top of history.” ❖

