



SHERRY MILFORD

As well as living in her **Dream Home** with her husband, Yan Roberts (pictured here with Sherry), from where the pair operate their Piebird Bed and Breakfast in Nipissing, Ont., Sherry also runs a second business called Heal Thy Health. A certified nutrition consultant, peer counsellor and whole-food enthusiast, Sherry offers nutritional guidance and healthy-cooking classes. She's been a vegetarian for 20 years and believes passionately in the power of food as medicine and the healing energies of sharing nutritious food with friends and family.

OUR DREAM HOME



Pie in the Sky

Embracing a house, a community and a new way of life

In the spring of 2005, my husband, Yan Roberts, and I were vacationing at his family's cottage in Ontario when we discovered that a house up the road, which we'd often admired, was for sale. Something told us we had to buy it. So, we packed up our home in Vancouver and moved across the country to Nipissing Village, Ont., into a 106-year-old Victorian summer cottage.

Oh, the house needed a little love—a new foundation, roof, insulation, windows, furnace, woodstove and chimney liner, just to name a few. And every single support under the summer kitchen and veranda had to be dug up and replaced—I'm sure the house was still standing through sheer habit alone! But the beauty was there in the original embossed-tin walls and ceilings in every room, and in the wide planks of pine and maple wood flooring throughout the house.

The various states of ill repair didn't sway us at all, though even our realtor tried to convince us not to buy it! Over the past four years, Yan and I have enthusiastically devoted ourselves to its restoration. We can only hope that the care we've put into it will allow it to continue to be a landmark for another 106 years.

We believe a house like this is a rare historical gem and deserves to have all the attention it can get, so in

order to share its charm with others, Yan and I opened the Piebird Bed & Breakfast. Besides offering the usual B & B amenities, we also host vegetarian dinners and concerts featuring touring musicians.

We're able to feed our guests largely with what we grow and preserve from our ever expanding garden; homemade pies are always on the menu. We even built a suite for ourselves, making use of part of what used to be the original summer kitchen, and now have a great teaching kitchen in which to give nutrition and canning workshops.

At first, I'm sure many of the locals thought we were crazy for taking on this project, but now, by saving this house, Yan and I feel as though we've earned our place in the community—we really feel like we belong.

If you are attuned to them, old buildings can be like messages imparted across time—reinforcing the values of a simpler era. History is beginning to unfold here at Piebird as the old stories find their way to us. Our house is a tangible reminder of that history.

Running the Piebird Bed & Breakfast connects us to the community, while working in the garden connects us to the land. This place, and the life it offers us, is beyond anything I ever dreamed of.

Sherry Milford, Nipissing Village, Ont.