



Anya Sheinman, 10 sits in her mother's sauna in their harbourfront condo. It's made of Canadian basswood

## Compact sauna can go anywhere

### Low-heat unit can fit in closet

### Vents and drains are not required

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SPECIAL TO THE STAR

**COLLINGWOOD** – Thanks to a Collingwood company, retrofitting a downtown condominium with a sauna is even easier than assembling an Ikea cabinet.

“We live on the 19<sup>th</sup> floor but it was no problem at all,” says Lucy Scheinman, who has used her low-heat sauna everyday of her downtown Toronto condo in January.

Built by SaunaRay, a Collingwood company started by former broadcast journalists Patricia Naylor and Rodney Palmer, Scheinman's sauna arrived in flat boxes wheeled in on a dolly by Palmer, who then assembled it in the master bedroom in less than 30 minutes.

“It was so easy, the pieces just clicked together,” says Scheinman.

SaunaRays are low-temperature saunas that use ceramic infrared heaters, which plug into standard 110-volt household power sockets. Vents and drains are not required and the single person version is small enough to be placed inside an ordinary closet.

### The infrared ceramic heaters cause people to sweat at much lower temperatures than traditional saunas.

Some condo owners are replacing their powder rooms with two-seater or even family-sized SaunaRays, while others are squeezing them inside their utility rooms, says Palmer.

“They'll fit in any room of a house or condo,” she says.

Scheinman, who loves city living but doesn't like the pollution and exhaust fumes, says she noticed an immediate improvement in her health and state of well being as soon as she started using her sauna.

“I was experiencing breathlessness and headaches from the pollution. Now that I'm sweating out the toxins, I'm feeling great,” she says.

The infrared ceramic heaters cause people to sweat at much lower temperatures (40 to 50C) than traditional saunas (80 to 90C) so can be tolerated even by people with heart conditions or high blood pressure, explains Dr. Zoltan Rona, a Toronto general practitioner.

Rona, who is also the medical editor of *The Encyclopedia of Natural Healing* and a SaunaRay user himself, says they have helped some of his patients get over long-term chronic pain.

Other ailments that improve with the use of a low-temperature sauna include arthritis, skin disorders and high blood pressure, says Palmer.

SaunaRays sell for about \$3,300 for a compact model, which is about one-metre square and two metres tall, while the family models sells for \$5,495 for a 2-metre by 1.5 metre unit that is two metres tall.

Scheinman's condo building has a traditional sauna, but she couldn't tolerate the heat, so was unable to use it. The low temperature of her new sauna means even her 10-year-old daughter, Anya can use it.

“She loves it,” says Scheinman.

While other companies make small-sized saunas, Palmer says his company is the only one in Canada

that makes a medical-grade sauna using no toxic glues or finishes. Built from solid Canadian basswood, which Palmer says is the least-allergenic wood in North America, they are finished in beeswax and put together with wood screws.

Four years ago, when Palmer, 39, was a foreign correspondent with CTV and his wife Naylor, 40, was making documentaries for the CBC, they were based in Beijing and Patricia became very sick.

“The pollution in Beijing caused a total immune-system collapse: I was deathly ill,” says Naylor.

When a clinic in Texas treated her with new type of low-temperature sauna and she quickly recovered. Palmer and Naylor decided to give up their successful careers and bring the technology to Canada.

“We were users first and saw first-hand the results,” says Naylor

They traded in their jobs, sold their townhouse in Toronto, moved to Collingwood and with a \$50,000 government-backed business loan, launched their company in 2003.

Although their business is based in cottage country, many of their customers are Toronto condo owners who are concerned about pollution and hope to sweat out the toxins, says Naylor.

The couple has been delighted with response and have no regrets about giving up their careers. They love to tell stories about people like Scheinman who have enjoyed positive health benefits.

“To us, this is the biggest story we've ever told,” says Palmer.

For more information on SaunaRay, call 1-877-992-1100 or visit the website at [www.saunaray.com](http://www.saunaray.com).