

# OUTSIDE IN

*JASON MCINTOSH, JIM SHAFFER AND THEIR FOUR-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER NORAH CAN'T WAIT FOR WINTER WEEKENDS AT THE COTTAGE.*



STORY **MARY HATT**  
PHOTOGRAPHY **JASON HARTOG**

**LEFT:** Norah loves hanging out at the cottage with Dads Jim (standing) and Jason. **ABOVE:** The idea of being inside yet feeling outside inspired the open-concept living space. Most walls throughout the cottage were painted Simply White by Benjamin Moore, and the ceilings stained Early American.

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“We imagine feeling a little like being inside a snow globe, being able to watch the snow fall all around us,” Jason says, anticipating fireside family time after outdoor fun in Grand Bend’s Southcott Pines neighbourhood.

Previously, Jim and Jason had owned another cottage nearby. But they yearned for a place directly on the lake. After purchasing a suitable property two years ago, they enlisted designer **Steve Sims** of **The Barnswallow Company** to help them achieve their vision: a quietly contemporary vacation home with as little visual separation from the outdoors as possible.

The original idea was to renovate the property’s existing structure. Complications, however, led to designing and building a brand new cottage, one that’s simple yet also dramatic.

“We are always drawn to simple design,” Jason says, adding he and Jim are inspired by mid-century and industrial influences as well as wood, stone and steel building materials. The pair opted for Maibec prefinished wood siding stained Muskoka Brown (**Home Hardware Building Centre Grand Bend**) and contemporary black window frames. The exterior doors are finished with nickel-plated hardware for an industrial embellishment. *Continued on page 22*



**TOP:** The indoor-outdoor vibe continues in the kitchen where an eye-catching backsplash offers a punch of colour and pattern framed by the quiet and calm of simple design lines. The glass stairway to the lower level is tucked between the kitchen and the exterior wall. **ABOVE:** The Barnswallow Company's Steve Sims.

"Their vision was a great starting point," says Steve, whose architectural plans revolved around his clients' wish for commanding lake views from most of the cottage and generous entertaining spaces inside and out.

**Jeff Fisher** of **Fisher Design & Drafting Services** was also involved in the project. **Rod Nicholson** of **Nicholson Builders Inc.** was the general contractor. His team did much of the interior finishing and trim.

Steve explains the rectangular shape of the 3,450 sq. ft. cottage is pretty basic, mainly due to building restrictions. But creative architecture has stamped it with one-of-a-kind detailing such as the mono-pitch, standing seam metal roof (**White**

**Stone 1998 Inc.**) with waterfall detail on one side of the cottage. There are also wood panelled ceilings with exposed interior rafters that continue to the exterior as rafter tails (Nicholson Builders Inc.). Most of all, there are soaring windows along the lake side of the home.

These commercial-grade windows by **Eco Architectural Glass Inc.**, rising a dramatic 14 feet, were a must to capture the year-round beauty of the lake and the landscape. The windows create a virtual glass wall, easily blending the interior and the expansive exterior deck into one vast indoor-outdoor living area for the family that enjoys entertaining friends and relatives regularly.

Arrivals to the cottage are from the road,

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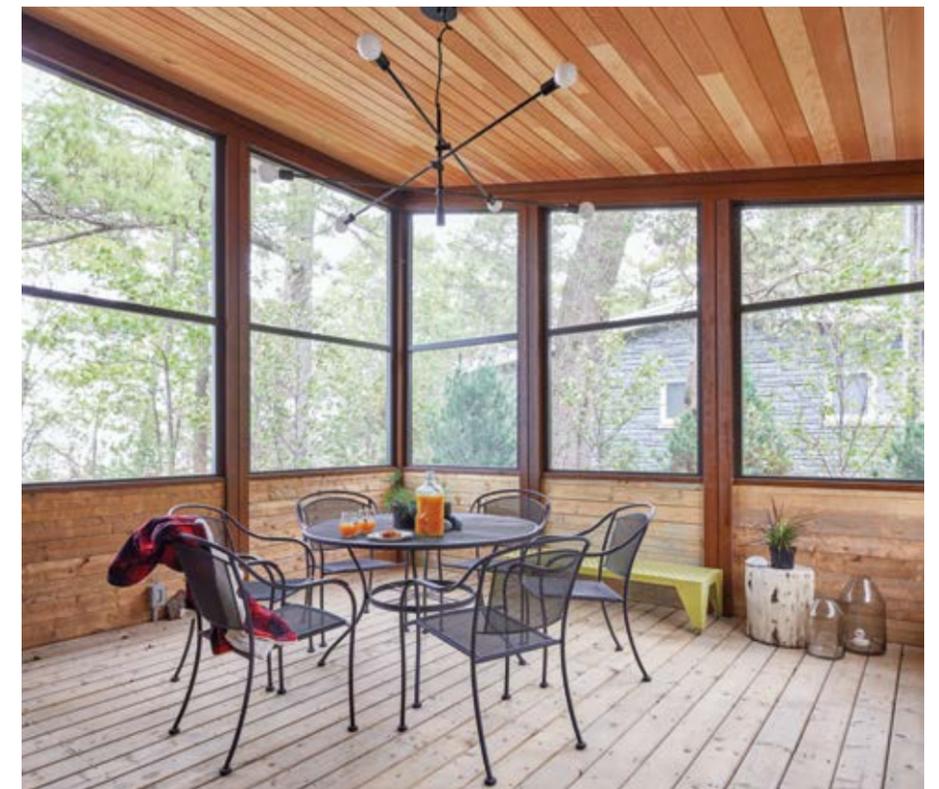
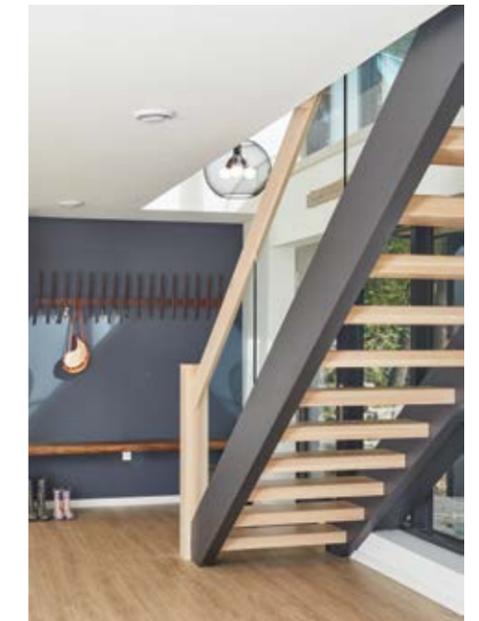
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**LEFT:** The cottage's standing seam metal roof rolls over into a waterfall style exterior feature beside the upper entryway to the cottage. **BELOW:** A series of tiled images by wildlife and landscape artist Charley Harper coordinate with colourful dining chairs and warm wood table. **BOTTOM LEFT:** A spacious bar area also includes glass-fronted cabinetry for storing decorative pieces.





Textural components in the great room include the wood beamed ceiling and the floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace surround, which doubles as a wall separating the living space from the bedroom wing. **OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT:** By situating the master bathroom on the inside of an exterior cottage wall, designer Steve Sims was able to pop in a handy outdoor shower just off the master bedroom. **TOP RIGHT:** Plenty of glass plus the open wood and glass stairway ensure the lower level entryway is bright and airy. **RIGHT:** Owners Jim and Jason made sure to include a classic cottage feature, the screened-in porch.



where a generous parking area gives way to the east side of the property and a protected stone patio enjoys morning sun. This side of the exterior is two storeys and has been carefully landscaped by **Oasis Landscapes** to allow for easy entry on either level. A handy entrance at ground level welcomes guests staying in one of the lower bedrooms. There is also a television room here.

Steve wanted to connect inside and outside

spaces on this side of the cottage just as he had done on the lake side. Hence a windowed wood and glass interior stairway between the first and second floors (**The Master's Touch Wood Products Ltd.**) There is also an exterior stairway from the driveway that leads to the main level front door and an immediate lake vista through the great room.

Simple design lines continue on the main level where an open floor plan invites easy

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**ARTISTIC IMAGES THROUGHOUT THE COTTAGE REFLECT LOCAL WILDLIFE LIKE FOXES, OWLS AND BIRDS.**



living. “The great room is our favourite for the obvious reason of the views from both sides of the house,” Jason says. “But it is also a place where everyone can be together. It’s the centre of everything, where we spend most of our time when not down at the lake.”

A full wall of square-cut, random pattern Wiarton stone (**Joe Vanneste Masonry**) with fireplace (**Safe Home Fireplace**) stands out for its rustic detailing. The rest of the room, with a simple furniture grouping around the fireplace and a harvest table in the spacious dining area, creates minimal distraction from the lake and the woods.

The contemporary kitchen reflects the cottage’s sleek, quiet vibe. White oak cabinets in a simple natural finish (**J&J Jones Custom Cabinets**) match the floor (**Great Floors**) and the cabinets are topped with soft grey quartz countertops from **Progressive Countertop**. The honeycomb-style black tile backsplash (installed by Nicholson) creates visual interest here as well as in the adjacent bar area where live-edge shelves add a pinch of rustic to the mix. *Continued on page 28*

**LEFT:** Blues and greens accent the master bedroom and reflect Lake Huron’s ever-changing hues. **BELOW:** Pale wood finishes and soft grey wall tile pair with black accents and a bold floor in the master bathroom.



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**RIGHT:** Like the master bathroom, a blend of rustic and contemporary elements define the guest bath. Custom interior doors throughout the cottage (Riverside Millwork Group) are seven-feet tall. **FAR RIGHT:** Bird prints by Charley Harper add a colourful pop in the guest room. **BELOW:** The kids' room, sensibly kitted with sturdy wood bunk beds, welcomes many of Norah's friends and cousins to the cottage.



The bar and the stone wall of the great room divide the living spaces from three upper-level bedrooms, including the lakeside master suite, which opens to the deck and an outdoor shower. In the master bathroom, Steve's design took advantage of ceiling height to place three clerestory windows that allow natural light without compromising privacy. **Shoreline Plumbing & Heating** supplied fixtures to the master bath as well as the main-level guest bathroom. Both baths sport a crisp hexagonal tile floor, grey shower tile, simple cabinetry, clean quartz counters and glass shower doors (**Ferguson Haan Custom Glass**).

Jim and Jason are masters of the clutter-free interior where artwork is minimal and the walls are white. As a result, there is a quiet but strong connection with the natural landscape and no distraction from their view. "We wanted more than anything for the inside to feel like the outside," Jason says. He adds that any time of the year, "there is nothing like a sunset over Lake Huron." **OH**

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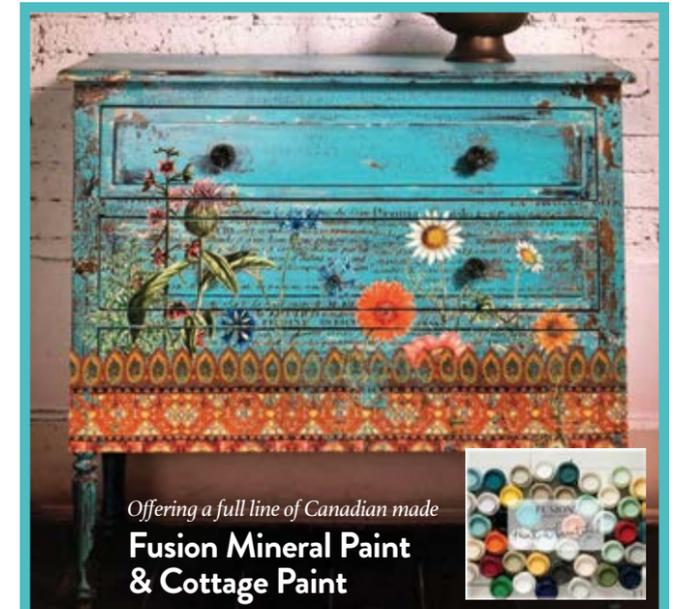
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