



Todd Wood and Jen Mahoney have found a piece of paradise – a secret getaway from the hustle and bustle of Toronto. Todd describes their lives as a “Tale of Two Cities,” with their North Bruce Peninsula cottage as an all-season weekend escape.

The couple’s cottage is nestled on the rocky shore overlooking Georgian Bay, between White Bluffs and Lion’s Head. The setting is a tranquil retreat for the pair in an area Todd has been visiting for more than 30 years. Off the winding road you are greeted by the original coach house (currently being transformed into a studio) and vintage iron gates. A sloping driveway leads to the cottage – aptly christened *White Rocks*.

“We had walked past this cottage a million times and a couple of different families had owned it,” explains Todd. “It sold a couple of years ago, and that’s when the builder (**Stewart Jones of Stone Boat Homes**) bought it and saw the potential in renovating it.”

The cottage, originally built in the 1940s, had an overgrown garden as well as structural and water problems, which needed to be addressed.

“They basically tore it down to the bare bones and started rebuilding from there,” says Todd, adding Stoneboat Homes’ approach was to keep a lot of the original character, using new and local materials such as limestone and timber (sourced from the **Adair Marble Quarries Division** near Wiarton and **Liverance Lumber Inc.**).

The cottage exterior (a custom Sansin Stain available at **Miller Lake Timber Mart**) complements a natural setting. The entrance to the cottage is bordered by a gabled gate and cupola, which tie in nicely with the cedar shingles.

“Jen and I were up visiting our friends and noticed [the cottage] was coming along nicely,” recalls Todd. “They had just put the cedar roof on. They were about to put the For Sale sign on the road.” The couple jumped at the opportunity to own a cottage in their favourite stomping ground.

“We had been looking for land for a long time with the hope of building something up here one day,” he continues, “But then we saw this and we were like ‘wow, let’s take a

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BEAUTY ON THE BAY

STORY **SARAH SLOAN**
PHOTOGRAPHY **SANDY MACKAY**



ABOVE LEFT: The White Rocks sign hanging above the cottage’s front door welcomes visitors into a foyer topped with a cupola from a large stone patio and terraced garden. **FAR LEFT:** An expansive wood deck runs the length of the cottage, offering stunning views of Georgian Bay from every spot. **LEFT:** Stewart Jones and Burnie Root of Stoneboat Homes pose at the front door of the cottage they renovated from top to bottom.



serious look at this' and we ended up buying. It just made sense."

There's a soft breeze in the foyer and a piercing blue view of Georgian Bay through an opposite exit onto the deck, while the entrance to the house lies to the right.

"The breeze is primarily westerly so it stays nice," says Todd. "The foyer has really good air circulation, so it's a nice intermediate room to enter if you've been out exercising or gardening."

The foyer offers the first glimpse of the waterfront, which can also be seen from the expansive windows and sliding doors found in the cottage's open-concept living space. A deck spanning the width of the cottage can be accessed from the foyer.

"Georgian Bay is like a small ocean, so it's perfect here," says Todd, while leaning over his deck railing. White Bluffs and Lion's Head are excellent markers for navigation, making the Bay in front of their cottage a sailor's paradise. The pebble beach is unique and simulates colours commonly found in the Mediterranean. "This is a playground for us," he adds. "We love to hike and swim and at night we love to play Scrabble and cards."

TOP LEFT: The exposed white-washed ceiling timbers are visible above a beautiful stone fireplace, which features a built-in wood cubby. **ABOVE:** The original coach house sits at the top of the property and is being transformed into a studio. **LEFT:** The couple's stylish Italian-designed furniture, recovered in Danish wool, gives the cottage a unique character. **OPPOSITE, TOP and FAR RIGHT:** Evening card games at a small table nestled in the kitchen are a favourite pastime for Todd and Jen. **RIGHT:** The dining room table is covered with Todd's design work on a new Bruce Peninsula-inspired chair.



On rainy or cool evenings, the couple take the games inside, enjoying a game of Cribbage or curling up next to their fireplace, which was remodelled by Jerry Caudle of **Caudle Masonry** in Lion's Head. The new fireplace is bordered by a stunning rock face, which can be enjoyed from every angle of the common space. The original fireplace is now found in the first of two guest rooms and the recent expansion allowed the old chimney to remain with a new energy-efficient Morso insert wood stove.

"We took the rock face limestone and changed the scale a bit from what was used outside... bringing a little bit of the outside in," says Todd.

The same can be said for the colours and materials used throughout the interior of the cottage. Rustic lighting fixtures (**Tackaberry Electric**) and furniture (**International Woodworking Ltd.**) accent the interior design. The flooring throughout the cottage is a soft complementary maple from Liverance Lumber Inc. Todd and Jen's kitchen features a limestone peninsula (Adair Marble Quarries Division), set at an angle to maximize the breathtaking views of Lion's Head Point.

"It's our hub of activity," says Todd of the kitchen. *Continued on page 38*

feature

RIGHT: The bathroom shares the same stained timber walls found throughout the cottage, which gives the rustic wood a softer, modern feel. **FAR RIGHT:** Todd enjoys the breathtaking view of Isthmus Bay. **BELOW RIGHT:** Glass patio doors provide a lovely view of Lake Huron from the master bedroom.

Greys and greens (Glidden Paint) inspired by the outdoors, and muted tones make up the colour scheme of the cottage's interior. The wall colours and white-washed wooden beams (Sansin Enviro Stains) complement the ever-changing sky on the Peninsula. "The large windows make a fantastic lookout for storm watching," says Todd. "Some of them are really scary, actually."

Off the living space is the couple's master bedroom, which overlooks the same view as the rest of the house, with a sliding door allowing access to the deck.

Outside, the couple have been busy carefully trimming and naturalizing the property. Jen, a landscape architect, wanted it to be like a woodland garden; very natural and full of indigenous species. A small kitchen garden with herbs and tomatoes can also be found at the front of the house. "We've been slowly cultivating it and trying to get it manageable, as we are not here every day," notes Todd.

"The cottage isn't too big or too small," he says. "I think it's just right for us. This is our little slice of Canada." **OH**

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