



The expansive, light-filled kitchen was completely transformed to fit the Bells' beach-house vibe. The century home on the water has a rich past and a bright future.

# Vintage COTTAGE reborn

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Not many of us would buy a house half way across the country and then renovate from afar. But that's exactly what homeowners Gaye and Brian did – to great success.

The couple travelled to Orillia last summer from their place in British Columbia to find a new home. They checked out a number of listings during an intensive and almost unsuccessful house search.

As they prepared to head back to the west coast empty-handed, the couple received one last call from their realtor to look at a home that had just been listed. That call turned out to be fortuitous and led to the eventual and successful long-distance relationship with **Madison Taylor Inc.** Gaye knew immediately that “this was the one” after seeing

the charm of the rustic living room and enjoying the light-filled kitchen and cottage porch.

The 4,000 sq. ft. home is located on a quiet peninsula that retains an out-of-town cottage feel, but remains within comfortable walking distance to the Mariposa city's pretty downtown.

“The outside already had a nice look,” Gaye says, noting she and her husband were quickly taken by the wonderful views of its grounds on Lake Couchiching. *Continued on page 74*



While originally from Toronto and having visited her grandparents over the years on Cumberland Beach, Gaye has always had a soft spot for Orillia's Lake Country.

"We had 15 wonderful years in B.C., but we were ready to move back," Brian says, noting that living in a place that features ample restaurants and culture, including live theatre, also made Orillia a good choice.

The retired executive couple also wanted to move closer to their daughter and are reconnecting with numerous friends who cottage in the region.

The home has the warmth and brightness normally associated with a cottage, thanks in part to the more than 30 windows that provide plenty of natural light.

Off the welcoming foyer, there's a powder room to one side and a mudroom and laundry space to the other with the appliances hidden from view by wonderful cabinets from **Absolute Cabinets**, which also created impressive units in the home's bathrooms and kitchen.

Overnight guests stay a few steps down the hallway in a private bedroom that features a full en suite equipped with a steam shower and in-floor heating with, of course, a gorgeous lake view.

*Continued on page 76*



**TOP:** Madison Taylor Inc. renovated and transformed the entire home in four months, including this comfortable, inviting library space. **ABOVE:** The beach-house style continues in the laundry room and in this built-in drop-zone area. **LEFT:** A stunning powder room boasts a vanity with lots of storage. **RIGHT:** The living room is the historic home's oldest room at 110 years. Marble surrounds the wood-burning fireplace.







**LEFT:** The sunroom off the kitchen was once an uncovered porch. It now serves as the perfect space to unwind with an incredible view all year round. **BELOW:** The blonde wood flooring found throughout the home continues up the stairway. **RIGHT:** Soft hues continue in the bedroom, where comfort is a must. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM LEFT:** The TV room can accommodate a crowd. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** The en suite bath has a vessel tub and a sophisticated shower with fixtures from Bathworks.



and structural changes that included eliminating a staircase and adding an eye-catching marble hearth with a working wood fireplace.

Madison says that besides operating within a tight timeline, her team also encountered unforeseen events that are par for the course when conducting older home makeovers.

“We had to add 11 new beams,” Madison says. “An existing masonry fireplace also had to be taken down because it couldn’t be fixed.”

To help bring the entire project to fruition and ensure everything was done to the highest standard, Madison employed a wide range of companies including: **Shockwave Electrical Services Ltd.**, **McCowan Carpentry**, **Barrie’s Custom Plumbing**, **Urban Barn, Flooring by Design** and her own **The Gallery** shop.

New bathroom fixtures from **Bathworks** and paint from the **Sherwin-Williams** outlet give the home a warm feel. Painting was completed by **Snape Paint**.

Madison’s firm called upon **Napoleon Home Comfort** to install the home’s gas fireplaces with **Puetz & Sons Inc.** adding the wood-burning fireplace in the living room.

The second floor features two full baths, complete with cosy in-floor heating, and huge shower stalls were created with marble and quartz selected from The Gallery.

There’s also a nice-sized master bedroom with another splendid water view, two other large bedrooms and a spacious family room that Madison transformed from two rooms that once housed an office

*Continued on page 78*



Gaye and Brian really enjoyed working with Madison. Her company offers full-service design, architectural drawings and construction services for the residential, commercial and hospitality industries.

“Madison always knew exactly what was going on with the project,” Gaye says over a cup of tea from the large chef’s dream kitchen that includes a big, warm harvest table that’s sure to be a busy spot as the couple entertains family and friends.

And since they wanted most of the renovations to be completed before their Valentine’s Day moving date, they had to find someone they were comfortable working with over the phone and Internet.

“In four months, Madison transformed the whole house,” Gaye adds. “We knew it was going to be beautiful, we just didn’t know how beautiful. She managed the perfect balance of keeping the cottage charm and yet creating a new beach house that is elegant and rustic with a relaxed feel.”

Madison lowered sconces throughout the hallways to provide better lighting while adding elegant chandeliers.

“There was a lot of wood throughout,” Madison says. “We kept most of it but lightened things up.”

Gaye and Brian love recounting the home’s rich history from its early 20th century beginnings, including its place as the birthplace of famous Canadian sculptress Elizabeth Wynn Wood, who later married prominent Canadian artist Emanuel Hahn.

According to Gaye, the cottage was still mostly “unwinterized” until 1994 when the previous owner began extensive renovations, which included enclosing a porch that now serves as a marvelous sunroom/library space. Brian says it’s the perfect place to unwind with a glass of wine and watch the last light of day fade, or fireworks burst over the city’s skyline on special occasions.

The sunroom area also features a small breakfast nook along with a striking buffet purchased from **Saturday Afternoons**.

The living room remains the house’s oldest portion, having been built about 110 years ago. It features the same original hardwood floors and wall paneling. Madison helped the couple complete some aesthetic







The guest room has a fabulous view of the water and easy-access to a soft-blue and white bathroom.



and a smaller bedroom. Throughout the floor, one finds comfortable carpeting from [Sunshine Carpet](#). Along the water's edge, there's a boathouse with a vertical lift. The structure was designed and built by Orillia's [Wes Brennan Construction](#) two years ago. The shoreline, protected from erosion by deep-seated pilings, makes the perfect place to enjoy a full range of water activities. Gaye and Brian are looking forward to settling into their new beach house this summer with a fresh new interior that will make life in Orillia just that much sweeter, thanks to the fabulous transformation from Madison Taylor Inc. **OH**



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