

STORY **LEE-ANN CHOQUETTE**  
PHOTOGRAPHY **HAROLD CLARK**

# stoney comfort

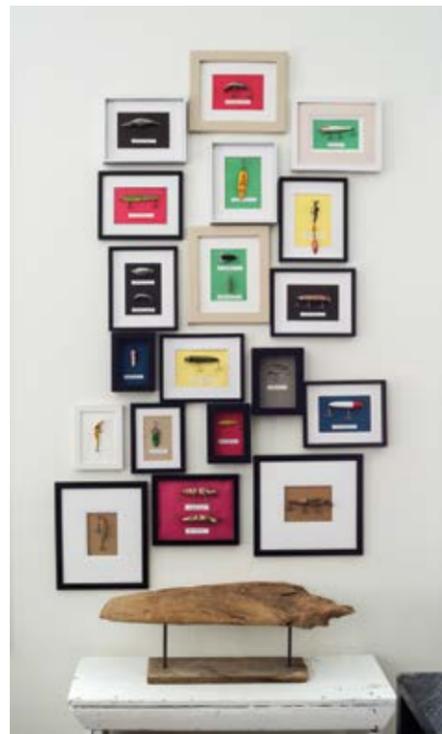


Sitting fireside, Rich and Joanne Clark admire the expansive panorama of evergreen treetops contrasting against a land carpeted in fresh white snow. “It feels like you are sitting in a treehouse, right?” asks an upbeat Joanne. “We just love it here.” Giddy with delight, the Clarks finally have their own four-season lake house on Stoney Lake. *Continued on page 24*



Old fence boards from the family’s ranch were used to build a living room console. They topped it off with handmade lamps and a canvas painted in a Hudson’s Bay motif. **ABOVE:** Homeowners Rich and Joanne Clark intend to make their Stoney Lake home their permanent residence when they retire. **OPPOSITE:** Stonemason Barry McClennan built the living room fireplace and hearth. Boards from a builder’s scaffold were repurposed to make the coffee table.





← A colourful collection of framed fishing lures makes a visual hook on a kitchen wall.

The award-winning kitchen design by Hickory Lane Kitchens includes black cabinets with brushed gold hardware and leathered granite countertops from Delray Granite. The surfboard at the left is plastered with stickers from the many places the couple has visited. **TOP LEFT:** Just inside the front door, a debarked wooden pole is a place to hang your hat.

“We both grew up cottaging, it is ingrained, it is in our DNA,” says Joanne. With a legacy of cottage life on Cameron Lake, Joanne grew up in Fenelon Falls while Rich, who spent his youth in Unionville and then Toronto, enjoyed his uncle’s cottage on Stoney Lake’s Casement Island. “We would pull up at the lights at Crowe’s Landing, point the car at the island and flick the headlights,” Rich remembers. “I could hear the boat; it was my uncle coming to pick us up.” His family has had a cottage on the lake since 1950, making Rich a third generation “Stoney Laker.”

Living in an apartment in Toronto, Joanne works as a marketing executive. Rich is a network engineer. As young adults, the Clarks

devised a longstanding plan to retire early and to get back onto water. Now in their late 40s, they intend to retire in less than two years. “We always saw this plan very clearly,” says Joanne. “Everything we did was moving another piece of the plan into place for the long term.”

Deciding they would need a home, not a cottage, they began searching for property on Stoney and Cameron. “Vacant lots on Stoney Lake are rare,” says Rich. “We found two and fell in love with and bought this one. We could envision our house perched on the granite shelf, sitting high above the bay.” They purchased the property in 2007 and started building their customized home by Beaver Homes

and Cottages from **Chemong Home Hardware Building Centre** in 2012. They got an occupancy permit the next year. In 2017, they completed their chic, black and gold kitchen by **Hickory Lane Kitchens**. It features a leathered granite countertop from **Delray Granite**. The design received the Peterborough & The Kawarthas Home Builders’ Association Best Kitchen Under 150 square feet award for 2017.

Joanne says she loves to see people’s reactions when they first enter the home. “The house is very unassuming from the outside,” says Joanne. “Once inside, everyone’s face goes WOW.” Rising from nine to

21 feet, the sloped ceilings, combined with white walls and a curtain of windows that spans the water view, make the home airy and bright. An open floor plan provides unobstructed glimpses to the treetop vista outside and makes it easy for guests to mingle no matter where they sit. In addition to the great room, which includes the kitchen, living and dining areas, the one-floor, 1,300 sq. ft. home has three bedrooms, a laundry room, a three-piece main bathroom and a two-piece bathroom off the master bedroom.

“We wanted something modern, fresh and different,” says Joanne. “We brought in elements like barn boards, stone and pieces to make it

*Continued on page 26*



A high wall of windows overlooks the forested lakeshore.

One of two guest bedrooms provides a comfortable space for overnight guests. **ABOVE:** Joanne enjoys juxtaposing styles, textures and vintage in her home furnishings. Northern Iron furnished the overhead light in the great room.



interesting.” Fellow Stoney Lakers and best friends Ian Beck and Duncan Fanning were a big help and inspiration. “They are good decorators and we always have fun talking about interior design,” says Joanne. Ian and Duncan own Fresh Home & Garden, a luxury outdoor furniture store in Toronto. They supplied the Clarks with market umbrellas and a patio set.

Long before they started to build, Joanne imagined every room. “I like putting things you wouldn’t expect to see and pairing them up,” she says. “It’s all about the juxtaposition of things.” Edgy, upholstered armchairs with wooden legs sit nearby mid-century, black leather-seated shell chairs. A Ray Eames chair adds swooping lines, interest and texture in a guest bedroom. In the main bathroom, snowshoes, a Davy Crockett hat, a reclaimed French renaissance mirror and a rustic bathroom vanity made from barn beams share the space with modern fixtures like a wall-mounted toilet and a large, custom glass shower clad in indigenous granite.

Aiming for a mix of new and old, precious, purposeful and personal, the couple have achieved the space they imagined. Heirlooms

like a Singer sewing machine that belonged to Joanne’s grandmother and wartime keepsakes from Rich’s grandfather are lovingly sprinkled into the décor. Antlers, acorns and birch branches bring the outdoor element in. Handcrafted furniture like the console Rich and Joanne’s dad constructed from old fence boards from her family’s home not only warms the space, but also the heart. Her father died two weeks after they took occupancy of the home. Decorative pillows, faux fur and woollen throws and rugs, including a silk rug Joanne brought back from India, and a contemporary hide rug she managed to fit into her carry-on luggage while travelling in Argentina, add elegance, colour, texture and cosiness to the space. A nod to Canadiana comes in the form of the iconic Hudson’s Bay Company stripes on canvas wall art, towels and blankets. Joanne mounted fishing lures on coloured paper and framed them. Some are vintage, given to Rich by a long-time Stoney Laker. Other lures are retired old favourites. Another is a special lure from their nieces. The fishing wall not only adds a pop of colour, but also acknowledges the importance of fishing to Rich. “There’s a bit of everybody here,” says Joanne. *Continued on page 28*

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High windows in the master bedroom bathe the sleigh bed in natural light. Doors open to an exterior deck.  
**BOTTOM:** A French renaissance mirror hangs above a vanity crafted from thick barn beams in the bathroom.



SOURCE GUIDE

- Barry McClennan Masonry • Beaver Homes & Cottages • Chemong Home Hardware Building Centre
- Delray Granite • East of Eden Antiques • Foote's Heating Systems
- Greg Armstrong Trucking & Excavation • Hickory Lane Kitchens
- Horlings Garden Centre • John Johnson Plumbing • Lockside Trading Company • Napoleon Fireplaces
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Getting back to their early retirement plan, ease of maintenance was top of mind. Outside, the house is clad in vinyl, and they opted for a natural landscape with native perennials and no grass. **Greg Armstrong Trucking & Excavation** landscaped the property with its natural look and supplied hardscape materials. The couple planted junipers, hydrangeas and various perennials from **Horlings Garden Centre**.

Rich also made the house flip-of-a-switch-easy to winterize. The Clarks like to travel and they own a beachfront condominium in Panama. When they retire, Stoney Lake will be their permanent residence in Canada and Panama their winter retreat – that's when they are not out skating, skiing, snowmobiling, ice fishing or jogging in the great Canadian outdoors at Stoney.

The husband and wife team are sharing a heritage of lake living together and are writing a new chapter in the rich history of Stoney Lake. "When you are doing the right thing, it just all falls into place," says Joanne. "All through the seasons, there are all kinds of good things awaiting us on the lake and we look forward to enjoying it with family and friends." **OH**

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