



STORY KATHLEEN DUNCAN | PHOTOGRAPHY SANDY MACKAY



LIKE MANY of its New England cousins, this Cape Cod-style getaway waits serenely on the shore, its cedar-roof shakes welcoming the breeze off the water and the warmth of dappled sunlight filtering through the leaves of nearby trees.

Unlike those beach houses, this upscale 3,200 sq. ft. cottage is surrounded by mature Maples and overlooks Kempenfelt Bay from atop a rugged bluff sculpted into tiered gardens and a stone staircase leading to the water's edge.

"It was a straight cliff," recalls **BigEast Construction's Cole Leibel**, who razed a decrepit cottage to make way for this custom creation. With few exceptions, his 12-person team managed all aspects of the build – including the extensive landscaping. "The homeowners really enjoy the lake and wanted a safe access to the water, especially for the children."

At the bottom is a two-storey boathouse with deck that mirrors the design of the main house, from the copper-topped cupola that matches an awning detail on the larger roof above, to the prefinished cedar siding (sourced from **Tru North Exteriors**) that was chosen to match a sample taken from a Nantucket Island original.

"I'm known for my boathouses and shorelines," acknowledges Leibel, a fourth generation builder who works on several renos and new-build projects at a time – primarily on Simcoe County's waterfront. "Boating is a passion for me so this focus makes sense, but my company prides itself on providing an overall turnkey experience."

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The boathouse on this pristine Kempenfelt Bay property mirrors the design of the main house. The finishes are purely Nantucket in style. The dock below provides a boating gateway to the bay.



The multi-level estate awaits the energy explosion that arrives with the two-adult, three-child Pantalone family (and their many friends and extended family members). They show up ready for play. It's a familiar destination. Jason and Julia Pantalone moved their family into this Innisfil retreat just last summer, but he grew up cottaging down the street at his parents' place.

Now that construction is complete, the BigEast crew ensures vacationers can dive directly into relaxation upon their arrival by maintaining the property year-round.

A glance around the front lawn mid-season shows the youngest generation hasn't wasted time putting its own stamp on the area.



Just beyond the edge of the manicured grass, a soccer ball peeks from the periwinkle waiting to be kicked back into action, and a pair of slacklines offer a silent dare. Beside the detached garage/guest house with dormers and finishes to match the prevalent design theme is an asphalt sports court that invites activity. Between the basketball hoop and hockey net, an abandoned hockey stick stakes its claim against two small scooters.

Outdoor living continues out back on an expansive deck that accommodates both dining and lounging under its protective portico. Just three steps down, the lawn follows the curve of a wrought-iron fence built to protect youngsters from the steep drop to the water. The grass extends from a group of Muskoka chairs around a fire pit, to a solitary hammock swaying in the shade. *Continued on page 76*

RIGHT AND BELOW: The covered porch provides a sheltered area for eating, entertaining, play and watching the action on the water. **OPPOSITE LEFT:** The all-white interior of the Cape Cod-style main house is fresh and relaxed, perfect for a busy family that arrives ready to have fun. The poplar square-grooved panelling covers every wall and ceiling and is painted Dune White throughout. **BOTTOM LEFT:** The front exterior shows the beautiful Cape Cod design. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** The boathouse sits below what used to be a straight cliff. Cole Leibel and his BigEast crew carved out a beautiful landscape that provides easy access to the boathouse and water below.





“They have a large family and do lots of entertaining,” confirms Leibel, who leads the way into a great room designed for that exact purpose. A wall of windows and french doors showcase an ideal bay vista while flooding the room in natural light. A simple Dune White paint colour from Benjamin Moore, chosen as the anchor for the entire house, becomes a

varied palette of shadows and shades amid the texture-rich ceilings and walls. Furniture in similar colours is strategically placed to allow an appreciation for both the window view and the floor-to-ceiling fireplace (with a hemlock barn-beam mantel) creating an airy, welcoming environment regardless of the weather outside. “Normally my crew takes the lead on the

design, but this time Julia knew exactly what she wanted,” Leibel explains. Either way, he is able to finish even the biggest projects within a year. “I’m very quick. I try to stay really organized and ensure the homeowners have made their decisions a month ahead of me needing their answers.” Topping the living area is a 10-foot coffered ceiling boasting a deep grid fully lined

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ABOVE: The bright kitchen has an extra-long, quartz-topped island and an abundance of storage. **TOP RIGHT:** The dining area is furnished with a reclaimed wood table and a mix of relaxed seating with a stunning view. The flooring throughout is comprised of reclaimed and prefinished hemlock planks in four widths. **RIGHT:** The mudroom and laundry is located off the kitchen with a powder room just down the hall.





with square-grooved panelling assembled of individual four-inch poplar boards. The same tongue-in-groove technique was applied between the beams of the vaulted ceilings over the dining table and in the foyer. A wider plank was used in a similar fashion on each wall.

The flooring pattern below combines reclaimed and prefinished hemlock planks in four different widths. Custom floor registers in the same material disappear into the blend, while thicker boards were used for the in-house construction of a matching staircase.

The dark floor is offset by unfinished pine pillars (from [Trans Canada Wood Products Ltd.](#)) that Leibel weathered outside for a year and treated with vinegar to achieve the rustic effect. *Continued on page 82*

OPPOSITE: The upstairs lounge gives the kids their space. **THIS PAGE:** The children's rooms upstairs have beautifully-designed roof lines and are furnished with light, fun and airy essentials.





The main upstairs bathroom has a vessel tub and a double vanity with coastal lighting and accessories.

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Hemlock accents also trim the unique range hood, fridge and the huge island base to contrast with the singular paint colour that is also used on the Shaker-style cabinetry of the kitchen and matched in the Caesarstone island slab and quartz countertops.

Upstairs, amid cleverly placed dormers that allow for three additional bedrooms (the master suite is on the main floor), is a cosy sitting area and full bath with a marble-topped double vanity outfitted by **Johnstone Plumbing**.

“That ceiling was the biggest challenge,” admits Leibel, glancing up. “To allow for exposed rafters and insulation, it’s actually a double roof – it took six months to trim out.”

It’s an attention to detail that inspired a nation as this house was recognized by Houzz for its favoured design. **OH**



The master en suite is located on the main floor with a waterside view and access to an outside deck. It’s easy breezy living at its best.

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