

# THE SIMPLE LIFE IN *Southampton*

BY SAMANTHA MARTIN  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY

Brenda and Tom Stockie always envisioned creating a special place in Southampton they could call their own.

When Brenda's parents sold the cottage that had been in the family since 1947, the couple decided to save their weekends of fun in the sun and wandering barefoot on the beach. They designed their own cottage and had it built in the same town as the old one.

"Southampton became our summer stomping grounds," says Brenda. "It was such a safe and beautiful community that, as a child, we could do just about anything: play on the beach, walk and ride bikes to town, never fearing anything. It is full of memories and good times."

Brenda's grandfather built his cottage and ran it as the lifesaving station at the town dock. The building was moved to Beach Road, where it still stands today, and became the family cottage for Brenda's mother, her six siblings and their children.

Tom and Brenda live full-time on a golf course in Port Carling, but weren't ready to give up their blissful getaways to Southampton.

They hired Ben Freeburn of **Freeburn Fine Homes** to build their custom cottage. Brenda's parents hired Freeburn to build their new cottage after selling the old memory maker and couldn't compliment the builder enough. Brenda and Tom knew something good when they saw it and weren't going to let anyone else build their retreat.

"We never looked at anyone else to build," says Brenda. "We saw how Ben worked with my mom and dad. He listens. In our home there were several special features he had never done before, but was willing to try and did an excellent job."

"We talked twice a week during the build," says Tom, walking through the French doors from the back deck into the screened-in porch. "The kind of detail he put into it is pretty spectacular. He created details and features to a higher quality."

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This custom cottage on a quiet road leading to the lake attracts attention from passersby who appreciate its simple luxury.

BELOW: A plethora of outdoor living spaces allows the homeowners every opportunity to enjoy every hour of the day throughout every season.







The custom crafted country kitchen borrows the raspberry hues from the great room and dining area to blend the spaces.

OPPOSITE PAGE: The Eldorado river rock fireplace perfumes the fresh, evening summer air with the inviting scent of a wood fire. The Stockies have designed their cottage to be as simple and relaxed as their time spent here.

Freeburn felt the positive feedback from the homeowners made for a very pleasant and successful build. “Being thanked for doing a good job just makes everyone happier to be working there and encourages everyone to do their best.”

Brenda says it isn’t unusual to notice people parking on the side of the road to get a prolonged look at the home as they pass by, heading to the shores of Lake Huron. Whether admiring the craftsmanship, the gorgeous wrap-around porch or the blend of cedar beams and sage-brushed Fraser cedar siding that makes up the exterior of the bungalow, locals and visitors take an immediate liking to the home.

The couple originally purchased 16 acres of treed land before selling off three lots. They chose this specific parcel for themselves because the majority of the surrounding property is build-free. Designated as environmentally sensitive, four creeks flow through the surrounding bush, creating a privacy that cottage life requires.

As a bunny hops through the backyard, Brenda and Tom make breakfast and coffee in their open kitchen. An eye-catching cutting board, made by the couple as a hobby-turned-business called **Wood B Nice**, sits atop the oversized island featuring a medley of storage and seating. The

island compliments the rest of the kitchen cabinetry, brushed **Benjamin Moore** raspberry truffle. The same colour spills onto the walls of the great room and dining area, creating a synchronicity and intimate, yet unbarred space for gathering or hunkering down for the weekend.

The Eldorado river rock fireplace (**Stone Parlour & Art Gallery** in Tiverton), with its barn board mantel (**Timeless Materials North**), in the great room adds to the authentic cottage feel. “It’s a main design feature on the inside and the stone chimney looks good on the outside,” says Freeburn. “It gives a bit of variety to the wood siding exterior and accents the cedar.”

Pine ceilings are accented with Muskoka beams, adding depth and an aged cottage look to the open space. Scraps from these beams are used to create the cutting board masterpieces, linking the cottage with their Muskoka home and their side business. Wide plank pine floors anchor the space and are complemented by pine furniture, custom-made pine trim and the warm glow of candlelight. A wall of sliding doors (**Strassburger Windows and Doors**), four in total, allow for abundant natural light and lead to the heated porch, where an outdoor dining table and barbecue await company.

Down a hallway, designed for maximum storage with a wall of cupboards holding everything from linens to shelves upon shelves of

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# feature

LEFT: Family wedding photos from last summer hold prominent placement at the cottage, where the couple's growing family visits to unwind.

RIGHT: The master suite exudes classic simplicity. French doors open onto the screened-in porch, extending the space for lazy summer mornings.



candles (Brenda loves candles), is the master bedroom, clad in a subtle corn silk yellow with black, white and cream accents. French doors open onto the screened-in porch where two cushioned loungers and a love seat await steaming morning coffee or a good book on a rainy afternoon. Music flows into this space from the home and onwards onto the deck.

The master en suite resembles a true cottage cabin with pine, board and batten walls and a claw-foot tub in black and white (**John Bridge Plumbing and Heating** in Tara). A grand mirror (**Star Glass Service** in Allenford) spans the length of the his-and-her vanity and a slate mosaic tile shower (**Warton Home Décor Centre**) in marbled black washes the sand away after a day down by the lighthouse. The infrared lamp above warms and dries refreshed skin once out of the shower.

Checkered red and white bed linens in the spare room down the hall suggest a country picnic. A laundry room and three-piece bathroom also find convenient homes on the main floor of this cottage. Downstairs is a welcome escape from the mid-summer heat. The cool, finished basement (three-quarter-inch maple hardwood flooring by **South Bruce Flooring**) features a living room, bathroom, workshop (a second workshop is located in the two-car garage; **Ontrack Door Systems Inc.** in Owen Sound) and two guest bedrooms for the blended family.

“We wanted this place to be a livable place,” says Brenda. “We didn’t do anything extravagant. Everything’s pretty basic: we wanted people to feel welcome.”

“It’s very simple,” adds Tom. “For us, it’s how you live. Our goal is to simplify our lives.”

And Southampton is where they will be keeping it simple for years to come. **OH**



A country cottage guest bedroom on the main floor is one of three guest rooms where friends and family can enjoy the fresh Lake Huron breeze.

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