

# LOOKABOUT *Bay*

A view from Lookabout Bay on Lake Huron. This waterfront property includes abundant deck and patio space as well as a sandy beach for swimming and lounging.

Peter and Karen MacDonald love their year-round cottage, where their triplets catch frogs and swim, and they indulge in gourmet coffees, entertain friends and family and relax by the bay. *Continued on page 38*

BY SHELBY HILSON // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY





The home was designed and decorated in a fresh, beach theme that incorporates portholes as windows and accents.

NEXT PAGE: The high ceilings of the open-concept living room, kitchen and dining room soar to accommodate an entertainment loft above.

INSET: Peter's cappuccino machine has its very own station between the kitchen and dining room.



One summer, after renting a cottage in Wasaga Beach for their family, Peter and Karen began to wonder what it would be like to have their own cottage where their kids could play outside and swim all summer long. It wasn't long after that Peter came across an odd ad in the Kitchener-Waterloo Record for a small cottage on Lookabout Bay in Lion's Head. Peter went to check it out one morning and bought it on the spot.

That was six years ago, when the 1950s ice-hut-turned-cottage became theirs. It was the land that the MacDonalds were after and less than two years ago, they moved into the retreat they had envisioned from the beginning.

Deciding who the builder of their dream cottage would be wasn't nearly as difficult a decision as they thought it would be. They started asking around and everyone gave them the same response. "If you want the very best, go to Sheldon Weatherhead."

"We knew exactly what we wanted," says Peter. He and Karen spent more than a year talking about the design and working with local draftsman **Greg Williamson** before handing it over to Weatherhead.

**Sheldon Weatherhead Building Ltd.** worked closely with the MacDonalds to bring their vision to life. They laid the foundation one

spring and built the next; completing the project in just a year and a half. "Sheldon coordinated everything," says Peter. "He takes the role of general contractor very seriously."

The company specializes in custom homes of all shapes and sizes, from modest to high-end, with the MacDonalds' cottage being one of Weatherhead's high-end products. "As a builder, when there's a bigger budget you can get more creative and let your creative character loose," says Weatherhead.

He enjoys working with high-quality materials, such as the hand-scraped, chestnut-stained Canadian oak floors throughout the cottage. One aspect that was new to Weatherhead was the airflow concept that Peter brought with him from his home country of Australia.

"Everything about the cottage is designed for airflow," says Peter. "The cupola in the main room has automatic windows that open when the temperature or humidity hits a certain level." Similar features include airways at the top of each bedroom with fans between them and European-style doors that open regularly, but also tilt forward to allow a fresh breeze while staying locked and secure. *Continued on page 40*







The MacDonalds designed the home to be open concept so they could entertain and their children could have space. Karen's favourite room in the cottage is the large pantry, tucked behind the kitchen and equipped with a sliding ladder to reach the incredible amount of food packed away up high.

"Almost every week we have new people coming up," she says, looking at shelf after shelf of food, ready and waiting for guests. "There's always a crowd of 14 to 18 people here."

There's no doubt that Peter's favourite spot is shared with most of their guests: the barista bar. He loves his cappuccino machine dearly and states, "It goes on when guests arrive and doesn't go off until they leave."

The suitably large dining room table was crafted by **Alain Bélanger**, a French artisan cabinetmaker in Southampton. The MacDonalds found timbers that date back more than 1,000 years, originally part of whiskey vats in the old Seagram Distillery in Waterloo. They commissioned him to make a table and sideboard from the timbers.

The dark wood adds a beautiful contrast to the light colours throughout the cottage. "We love the coastal look with the bead board and portholes," says Karen. The vinyl-coated wood that Weatherhead suggested for the window frames, railings and some ceilings ties in with this style and also meets their goal of using low-maintenance materials.

Karen and Peter aren't the only ones who like to have friends over. Their children, Kate, Carter and Matthew, each have reading lofts in their bedroom, reachable only by ladder, where they can hang out with neighbouring cottagers on a rainy day. In addition, huge beanbag chairs in the games room are actually disguised queen- and king-sized mattresses waiting to be transformed into beds for sleepovers.

When not entertaining, the MacDonalds take the time to enjoy their expansive master suite, which encompasses a small gym and a luxurious aromatherapy tub that fills from the ceiling. *Continued on page 42*



The main floor bathroom keeps the air flowing with a tilt door that allows a breeze but keeps the home locked and safe.

ABOVE: Daughter, Kate, helped design her sophisticated bedroom and en suite. She spends rainy days reading in her loft.

*august skies*  
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An outdoor swim spa lights up at night and is a great place for relaxation as well as fitness. The expansive flagstone patio boasts loungers, a love seat and chairs and a dining table for those al fresco lakeside meals.

The entire cottage is set up on a smart system that does everything from control the lighting and audio in each room to measuring energy consumption and operating cameras on the property for security purposes.

Right next door to their custom cottage are four more. The MacDonalds own and operate a high-end cottage rental business located beyond the tree line on the neighbouring property.

**Mac's Shacks**, which just opened last summer, consists of four luxurious cottages ranging in size. Each one was completely gutted and renovated by Weatherhead and his team last spring with many of the same materials used throughout Karen and Peter's cottage. They are also all equipped with high-end amenities including beautiful linens, comfortable lounging furniture, wireless Internet, iPod docking stations, flat screen televisions and, of course, cappuccino machines.

"At the beginning of the summer we had a grand opening party for Mac's Shacks as well as Peter's 50th birthday," says Karen. "We had a live band and 150 people here and we had people partying and dancing all over."

Along with the cottages is a large custom-designed pergola right on the water with two large seating areas and Napoleon barbeques for families to cook, eat and spend time together before heading over to the huge fire pit on the beach for smores. For more information on Mac's Shacks visit [www.macsshacks.ca](http://www.macsshacks.ca).

"We wanted our guests to be as comfortable at Mac's Shacks as we are up here on the Bruce," says Karen. The couple have certainly created an atmosphere that will be more than comfortable for many generations of MacDonalds, and guests to come. **OH**

**Bryan's Mechanical:** Gas, **Georgian Bay Window and Door:** Front door, **Miracle of Silence:** Dining table, sideboard, **ACN Electric:** Lighting, **Andrew Saari:** Kitchen, stairs, **Caudle Masonry:** Fireplace, **H&H Plumbing:** Plumbing, **Peninsula Out of Doors:** Plants, **Bridge Excavating:** Hardscapes, **Larry's Roofing:** Roofing, **Scott's Home Hardware:** Benjamin Moore paint, **Greg Williamson:** Drafting, **Tyndall's Haulage:** Septic and rock breaking, **Porter's Concrete Contracting:** foundation, **Forest Soul Custom Carpentry and Millwork:** Woodwork

One of Mac's Shacks cottages with a screened-in porch and lazy hammock.

ABOVE: The MacDonald's fantastic, expansive patio includes a swim spa and covered pergola.



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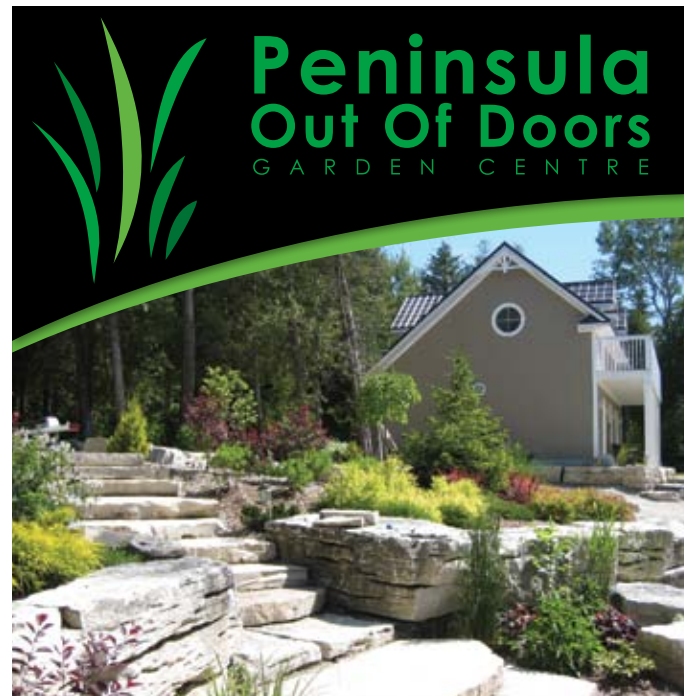
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