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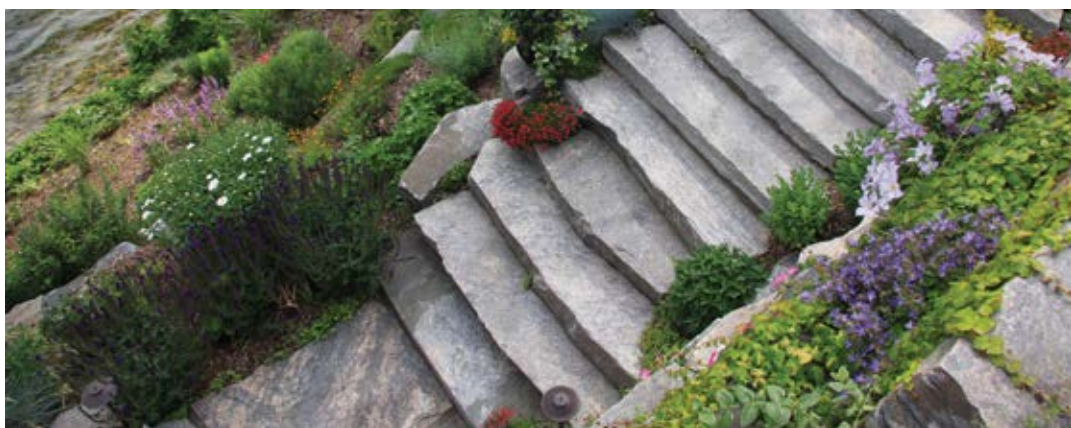
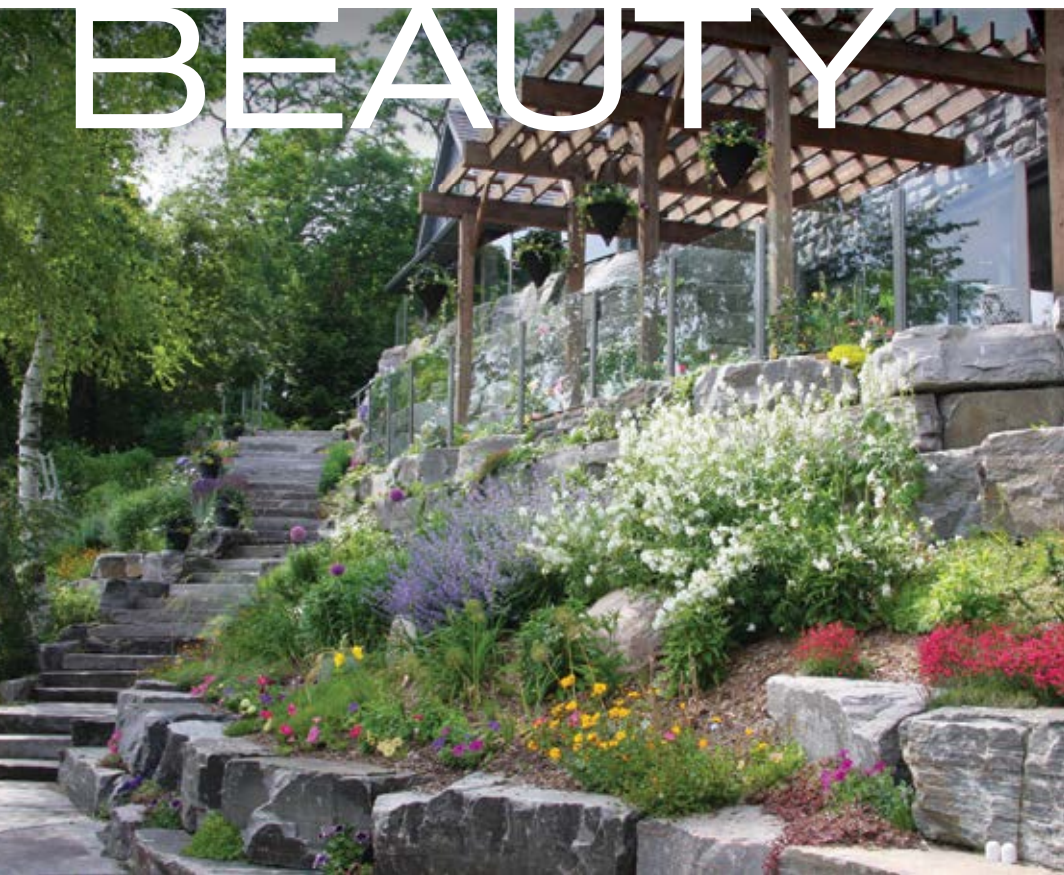
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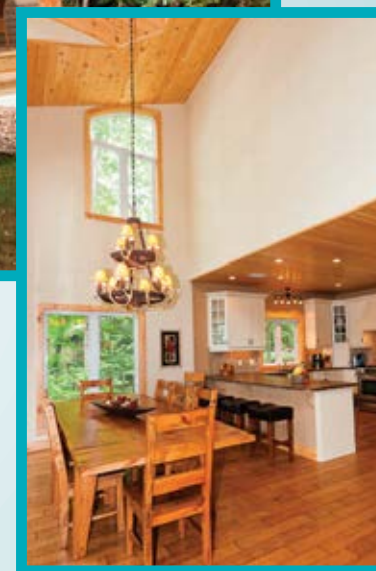
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editor's note



OUR SUMMER VISITORS ARE HERE. The Downys have settled into a new bunkie in our backyard.

A pair of downy woodpeckers, they built their tiny treehouse in one of the maples that shade one side of our yard.

I first noticed the male – small, black and white, a red patch on his head – perched and picking away at the dead limb of a tree high above our deck in April. He seemed to be hunting for insects in the bark. When I saw him the next day, jabbing near the same spot, he impressed me as an industrious and thorough forager.

Watching him for the third time, some days later, I saw him plunge his entire head into a hole he'd bored into the tree. That seemed a little strange. Below the tree, a growing array of wood shavings littered our garden shed roof. Later, when I saw one of the birds completely disappear into the growing tree cavity, it finally dawned on me. They were nesting.

They made a beautiful little home in the woods. The oval entrance, about the size of a toonie, is slightly camouflaged by nearby fungus. It faces the sun and has a garden view. A curvy branch, perfect for perching, extends just above the portal. The nest is about 10 metres off the ground, so I haven't seen inside. But I imagine it's finished with beak-carved and polished maple flooring, ceiling and walls. Lots of wood.

According to bird books, downy woodpeckers usually lay a clutch of four-or-five eggs, occasionally as many as six. Given the frenzied activity of our avian guests, this pair has successfully hatched a hungry brood. Every few minutes, either the male or female alights on the dead limb and plunges into the nest, a bill full of insects for the insatiable nestlings. Moments later, the parent bird emerges and flies off. Its mate arrives and in turn dives into the nest with another take-home order of fresh bugs. Repeat. All day.

It's the start of another fine summer in Muskoka.

Walter Franczyk

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summer



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Photography by
Sandy MacKay.



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SUMMER TRENDS

AND QUIRKY COLOUR COMBOS

Much like taste and smell, colour is subjective. What is aesthetically pleasing in one's surroundings may seem dull and joyless to another. The good news is, this year it seems that anything goes, *with anything!* Green is definitely at the forefront. The weirder the green the better, and you can pair it with just about any colour. For 2015, it's back to nature with greens, metals and a handcrafted feel.



3



PINK + MINT PASTELS

Introverted & Soft

I'm a pink lover, and Farrow & Ball has it covered. Pink Ground is an amazing pastel tone that is soothing yet somehow modern. The mood it sets will please the introverted decorators with its gentle feel. They have it paired this season with two greens – Pale Powder and Teresa's Green. You get that Easter egg, spumoni ice cream vibe. This is classic and not trendy. To modernize, hang a mirror with faceted edges. This subtle detail is all the rage but won't overpower the softness of the backdrop.

COPPER, EMERALD & NAVY

Romantic & Daring

I adore copper, but I prefer mine aged with a patina, darkened but not green. Copper was a traditional background piece, like old, too heavy pots hanging above the stove. And for the



Designer Stephanie Redmond shares her ideas.

country, what could be better? The copper trend, however, is shiny and bright. It's modern and urban. Paired with emerald green it is a definite win. Add navy blue to accentuate this pairing. If you want to add a little copper to your existing palette, try this West Elm side table. It's simple, stylish and looks right at home just about anywhere.

AUBERGINE, BRASS & GRANNY SMITH

Modern & Refined

I'm not quite ready to say goodbye to black forever, but it's time to add a little edge to our moody tones. Deep aubergine is certainly a step in the right direction and cooked is even better! Try Caponata from Benjamin Moore for a regal backdrop. It's lovely paired with brown or deep pink for a serious and refined look. For a contemporary edge, throw in a quirky green accessory like Martha Sturdy's resin flower bowl in granny smith apple. And for a little glamour, try these beautiful aged-brass wall hooks that I found on Etsy. Their clean lines highlight the brass and would be stunning on an aubergine backdrop.

AZURE, DEEP MAHOGANY & LEAF GREEN

Sophisticated & Fresh

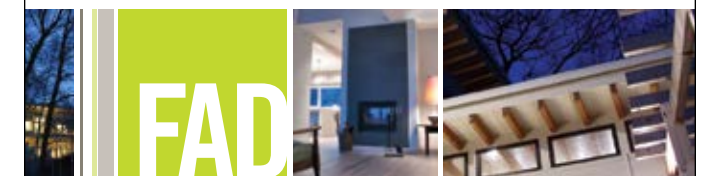
Deep mahogany is another tone that will allow us to shift away from black. This rich brown creates a stunning backdrop on a wall or shelving unit. Simple pottery on a shelf disappears on a light background, but a deeper tone allows you to see the lines of each piece. Jewelry is a big inspiration in interior design this season. Take these Lindsay Adelman wall sconces for instance. On a much smaller scale, they would make a lovely pair of earrings! Add a hint of nature with a leafy green through furniture, an area rug or a beautiful ivy plant. Sometimes there is no substitute for the real thing.

I'm going out on a limb, but I think we've become more daring in our decorating, which is a good thing. It's fun. Colour is in, so don't be shy. Even the grey lovers are adding a pop! **OH**

1. Mahogany Stool: BluDot 2. Brass Hook: Golden Biscotti 3. Resin Bowl: Martha Sturdy 4. Wall Sconce: Lindsay Adelman 5. Copper Side Table: West Elm



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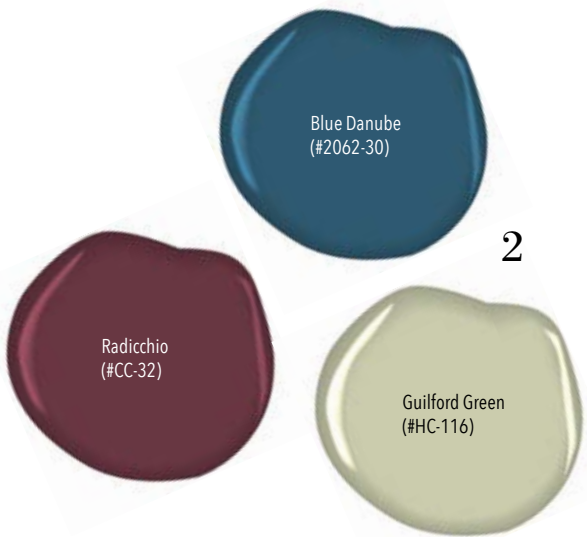
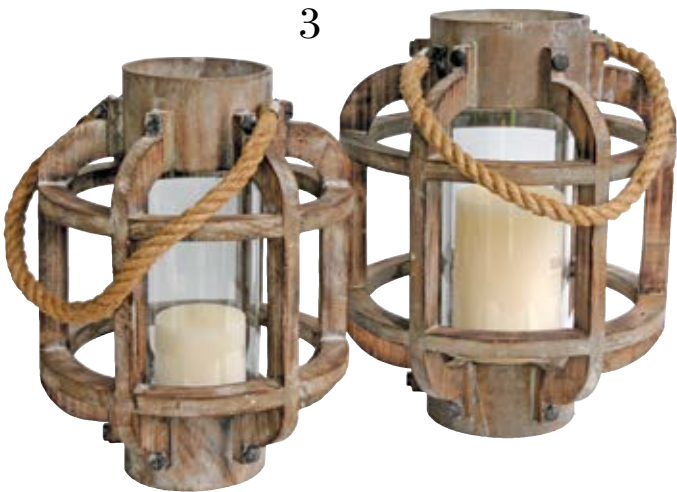


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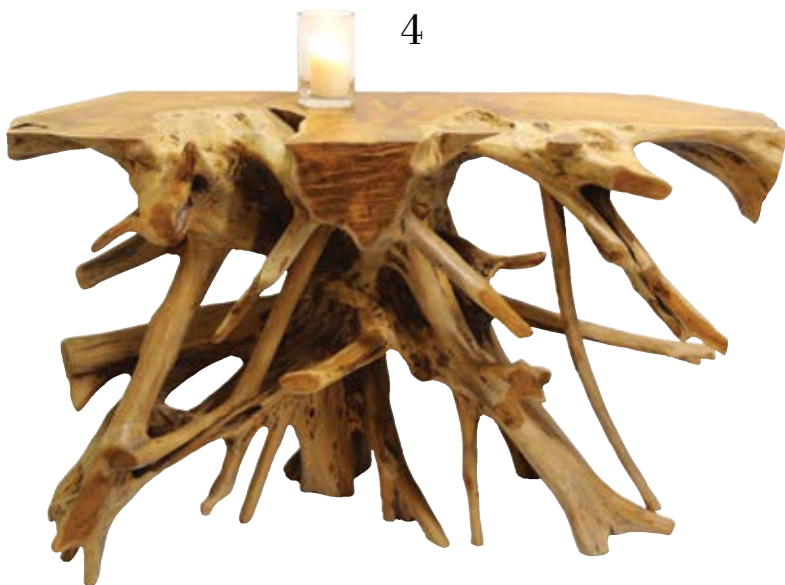
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STORY WALTER FRANCZYK
PHOTOGRAPHY SANDY MACKAY



Visible from miles away, winter storms sweep sheets of fluttering snow in translucent curtains across Georgian Bay.



Summer waves swash the rocky shore – a comforting resonance. Oaks, poplars and maples paint the forest with fiery autumn hues. “I love the bay, I love it in all seasons of the year in all kinds of weather,” says the owner of a unique Georgian Bay cottage. “The islands and the rockiness of the bay really appeal to me. I love the changes in the topography. I love getting out in the kayak and exploring.”

Shortly after they married, he and his wife first experienced this niche of Lake Huron more than 30 years ago. “We fell in love with Georgian Bay and we’ve been coming back ever since.” After many summer visits, they decided to buy a place of their own. A natural setting and a great view were essential. When they found a log cabin with a sweeping vista of the bay, Palestine, Rose and Parry Islands on the horizon, they knew immediately it was the spot for them. “It has a great view,” he says. “It also has a very large, flat rock outcropping into the bay which we liked because our kids were young at that point and we thought it would be a good place for them to get into the water when they were swimming.”

Eventually, they and their three boys outgrew the two-bedroom, seasonal cabin. But renovating wouldn’t provide the space they wanted. Faced with a significant financial investment just to keep the original cottage liveable, they decided to build a new summer home. *Continued on page 23*

OPPOSITE: Designed by FAD Architects of Parry Sound, this five-bedroom cottage was built with wood and stone to blend with the rugged Georgian Bay landscape. **TOP LEFT:** Fore and aft shed roofs give the building a unique and utilitarian appearance. **LEFT:** Lots of windows flood natural light into the family room where exposed beams and whitewashed pine ceilings combine with painted drywall for a contemporary cottage look.



They chose **FAD Architects Matt** and **Brenda Ryan** to design a spare and modern lake house. At their third meeting, the architects showed the couple preliminary renderings, many depicting a cottage with a pitched roof. The last couple of drawings showed a shed roof, slanting away from the bay. “A light went on for us. We liked this roof style,” says the owner. There was an audible sigh of relief from Matt and Brenda, who had been hoping their clients would prefer a shed roof because that’s what they favoured.

“We discovered at that stage that our tastes were pretty similar,” the owner says. “We began to all realize that we could work together and we could share ideas very readily without worrying about bumping up against peoples’ taste barriers.”

Given the site topography, a gently sloping hill spilling into the bay, the architects worked to create a series of steps from the home’s interior to the outside. “We wanted the interior to blend with the exterior,” says Matt. At the front, they designed a sheltered outdoor space, a private stone courtyard, adjoining a glass-bordered wooden deck with the aura of a floating dock. “When you’re sitting on that deck, you really might have that feeling of being right on top of the water,” says Matt.

He describes the cottage as modern rustic. “There are some modern elements to it but we really wanted to bring some updated cottage language to it,” he says. They spoke that language by combining drywall and exposed slanting beams, supporting shiplapped whitewashed pine, to create a two-tiered ceiling in the family room. Shiplapped pine clads all the upper-floor ceilings and whitewashed birch trims the doors. Outside, rafter tails protrude beneath the eaves and sturdy grey-weathered beams brace the deck and pergola. *Continued on page 24*

TOP LEFT: A wood-burning fireplace lends heat and ambience to the family room. **TOP RIGHT:** Large windows with cushioned benches give the family room a wide view of Georgian Bay islands and waves. **LEFT:** Martha Stewart Weston Persian Grey cabinetry provides plenty of storage space throughout the home. **OPPOSITE:** A kitchen island and dining bar with a built-in sink and dishwasher centres the cookery. Living Lighting supplied the dining room chandelier.



LEFT: The powder room, like three other bathrooms, is finished with bamboo plywood cabinetry and millwork by Scott Holm. **BELOW:** A unique clock keeps time near the foyer. **BOTTOM:** More windows and soft northern light illuminate an upholstered window bench in the upstairs hall.



Gibson Homes And Cottages Inc. built the 2,400 sq. ft. home with large sweeping windows and sliding glass doors from Integrity from Marvin Windows and Doors, giving the main floor living room, open concept kitchen and dining room panoramic views of the bay and upland forest. Long window benches, cushioned by **Get Stuffed Upholstery Etc.**, provide bright airy seating. “The place is light-filled,” says the owner. “We have windows all over the place, as much light and as big a view as possible.” Martha Stewart Weston Persian Grey cupboards and drawers from Home Depot provide ample storage beneath the window benches. The same cabinetry furnishes the kitchen and dining space. **Parry Sound Furniture** supplied kitchen appliances while dining room illumination came from **Living Lighting**. On the top floor, the master bedroom with its en suite bath and built-in wardrobes has a spectacular view at all times of the year. “In the summer time, it feels a bit like you’re in a treehouse, but in the fall and winter, when the leaves are gone, you can see forever out our bedroom windows.” A sliding glass door opens to a small glass-walled balcony where the couple often enjoys a cup of coffee. *Continued on page 26*



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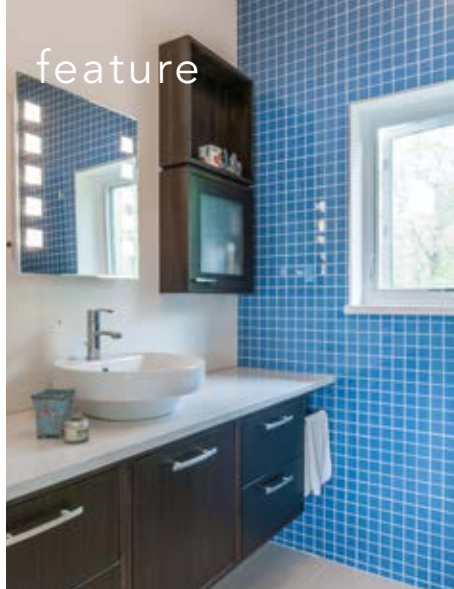
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Two other bedrooms on the top floor also look over the water. On the ground level are two guest rooms and a large family room with a walkout to boulder-bordered gardens at the front of the house. Three bathrooms and a powder room are all furnished with vanities, detailed bamboo millwork by **Holm Woodworking**. Grey-stained white oak from **Northern Wide Plank** overlays the radiant-heated floors while a sturdy oak staircase links the home's three levels.

Engineered wood siding by KWP NatureTech clads the exterior of the upper floors while Berkshire Blend Tumbled Ashlar, a stone veneer by Brock White Construction Materials, protects the ground-floor exterior walls. The home was assembled using built square wall panels by Kent Trusses Ltd.

The family can now use their vacation home year-round. It's big enough that they can entertain. They can stay in comfort and enjoy the north country in all seasons. But their ardor for summer remains unabated. "We're passionate swimmers," says the owner. "We swim as many days of the summer as we can. We have a tradition, the first one up puts the coffee on, we all go for a swim and then we sit and dry off and have our coffee." Life, he says, is good on the bay. **OH**



TOP LEFT: Bright blue tiles in the en suite bathroom mirror the water view. **TOP RIGHT:** A glass-panelled balcony off the master bedroom looks over the stone courtyard, main-floor deck and the bay. It's the perfect spot for a morning cup of coffee. **LEFT & ABOVE:** A whitewashed pine ceiling and built-in wardrobes give the master bedroom a contemporary look with a touch of traditional.

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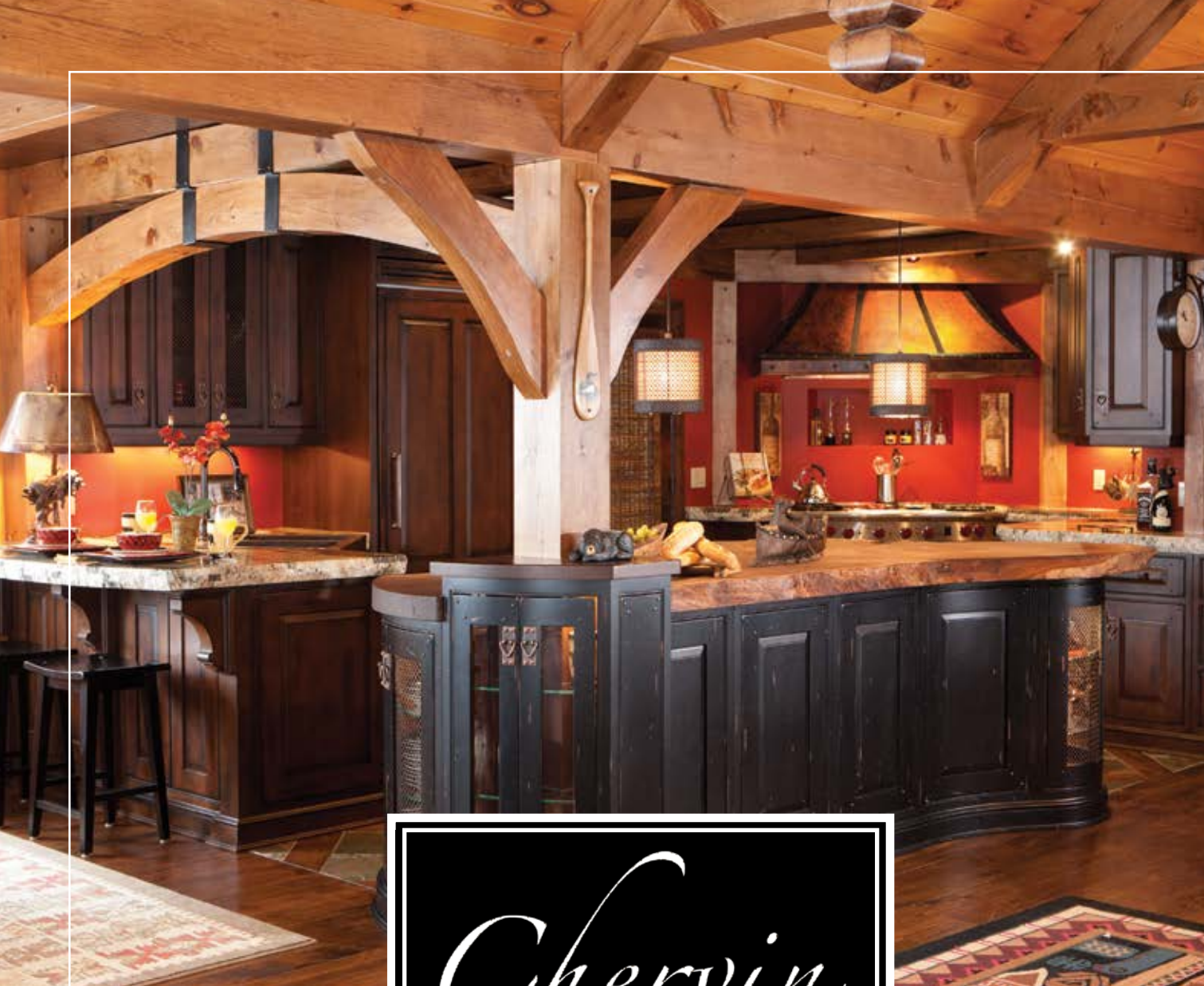
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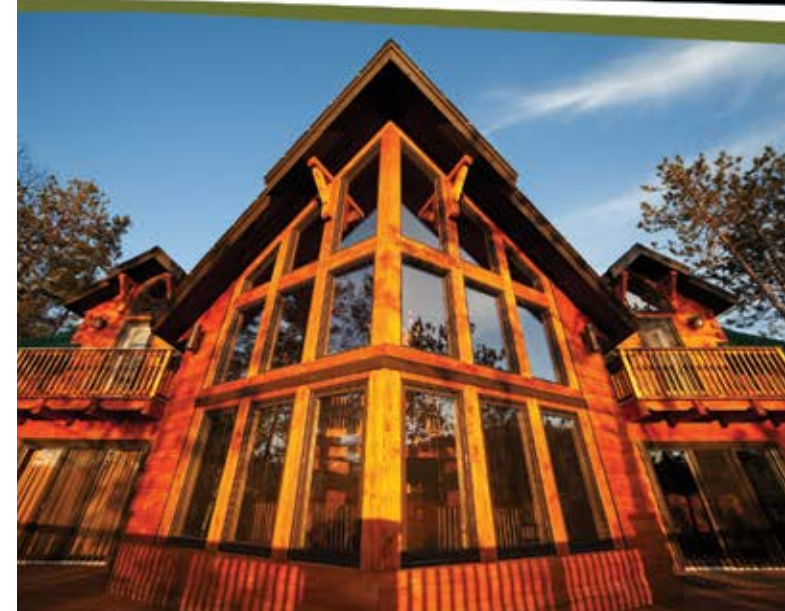
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MIGHTY MINDEN

STORY & PHOTOGRAPHY
WALTER FRANCZYK

A hardy little town in the Haliburton woods, Minden thrives where the Bobcaygeon Road crosses the Gull River. Originally built as a settlement road for pioneers of the 1800s, the Bobcaygeon Road is the town's main street and a hub of summer pleasure and commerce. We visited a few of the many busy shops along this historic thoroughfare.



décor **UP RIVER TRADING CO.**

Whales' tails in white resin and a polished aluminum sailboat are but a few of the unusual treasures found at this main street shop where you can sip on an espresso or iced tea while browsing an eclectic collection of gifts and home décor.



food **MOLLY'S BISTRO BAKERY**

Tickle your taste buds with toothsome treats such as peanut butter blast, crunchy granola, chewy date or maple walnut squares. Molly's also bakes sugar cookies and sugar pies as well as lasagna, moussaka and chicken, steak and fresh fruit pies.

home accents **SASSY DIGS**

A Barcelona chair, finished in tufted cowhide and chrome, makes a comfortable perch in any home of contemporary country living. The solid-cork end table supports a Steven and Chris lamp trimmed in stitched leather and chrome.



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garden **MINDEN HOME HARDWARE**

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furniture **RIVERVIEW FURNITURE**

This pine dining table with matching hutch and bench, handcrafted in Fenelon Falls, is just one example of the fine custom furniture available at this Minden store. Riverview also builds bedroom suites and living room furniture in a variety of styles.

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The fieldstone fireplace in the great room of the Anderson cottage helps countrify the modern new lake house. **RIGHT:** Rob and Jennifer Anderson and there children Megan, James and Shannon with Koda, their very enthusiastic Burnese mountain dog.



When they found a waterfront property, a wooded peninsula with 520 feet of sunny shoreline on a sheltered Lake of Bays cove, they knew the old cottage it held was too small for their family. But, beguiled by the charm of the place, they bought it. “It’s such a great spot,” says Rob. “It’s tough to find a building lot that is so beautiful.”

“We couldn’t let it go,” says Jennifer. “I could tell from the look on my husband’s face that he loved this piece of land.”

Donna Freberg, a broker with **Royal LePage Lakes of Muskoka**, found the property for the Andersons.

Jennifer and Rob had long dreamed of owning a cottage. For years, they vacationed at their friends’ cottage. That annual week-long visit kept their urge to purchase at bay. But when their friends’ cottage was sold, they missed the summer experience. “One summer without any visit to a cottage felt like a big gap in our lives,” says Jennifer.

Lake of Bays is a nostalgic place for Rob, who summered there as a teenager. His aunt and uncle retired to a home on Lake of Bays where Rob and Jennifer bring their children Megan, Shannon and James every summer to an annual family reunion. The reunion is called the Hockin-Anderson Olympics, a three-day regatta with their six visiting cousins. “It’s a lot of fun, a lot of excitement,” says Jennifer, who grew to love the area while staying at a girlfriend’s chalet in Huntsville. “It’s such a beautiful lake.”

Buying the one-and-a-half-acre Lake of Bays property shrank the family’s cottage budget, so they needed an economical way of building a new vacation home with enough square footage for their active family. “We wanted a great space to entertain family and friends,” says Jennifer. They started looking at pre-fabricated homes. “It was really important that we could get into a situation where we could control the total price tag with no surprises.”

Continued on page 38

summer joys ON LAKE OF BAYS

STORY **WALTER FRANCZYK**
PHOTOGRAPHY **SANDY MACKAY**

Rob and Jennifer Anderson hadn’t planned on building a cottage. They wanted to buy one.



Hand woven resin wicker by Cabana Coast provides comfy seating in the Muskoka room where large screened widows keep the bugs out while allowing cooling summer breezes to waft through. Stained pine ceilings and half walls encircle the space. **OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT:** Large panoramic windows on the lake side of the cottage bring the outdoors inside in all seasons. Whitewashed tongue-in-groove pine covers the ceiling. **TOP RIGHT:** Iron chandeliers, custom made by The Light House Design Centre, illuminate the dining space where chairs, upholstered with muslin and vintage leather, surround a hemlock barn-board table. **BOTTOM:** Stools with swivelling barn-board tops seat the entire family for informal meals around the butcher block island in the kitchen. A wine cooler is built into the other side of the island.

When they walked into the **Royal Homes** model home in Gravenhurst, the layout, the look and the quality impressed them. They researched the company’s reputation. Once Royal explained the sales and design phase, they were sold.

The cottage design was collaborative, taking into account Rob and Jennifer’s specific needs and using some of the features of Royal’s Lakeview model, says Royal Homes president **Pieter Venema**. “The Andersons’ lot was perfect for a basement walkout, which provides sunlight and greater access to the basement, making the basement space fantastic for additional living space,” he says. The couple asked Royal to change the two-storey design of its Lakeview model to a full bungalow version to accommodate family and guests on the same level, he explains.

Royal constructed the 3,000 sq. ft. five-bedroom cottage indoors at its factory in Wingham. Once the building modules were

finished, they were loaded on flatbed trailers and hauled to the building site, excavated by **Barnhart Sand & Gravel Inc.** Starting at 8 a.m. on delivery day, Rob and Jennifer watched a big crane carefully place each module on the foundation. By late afternoon, they could walk through their cottage.

They applaud Royal’s site supervisor **Peter Jennings**, who kept them abreast of progress as building crews finished the building. “He was a rock star. He was truly amazing,” says Jennifer. “He really knew his stuff.” Royal built and finished the entire project within eight months. **Sunrise Tree Service** helped clear the building site while **Pipefusion Services Inc.** supplied floating Nydock docks.

The cottage’s main floor holds the kitchen and adjacent dining room alongside a spacious great room with a stone fireplace and sliding glass doors that open to a wide deck overlooking the lake. The master bedroom with its en suite

Continued on page 40





TOP: Queen-over-queen pine bunk beds, trimmed with a moose crossing theme, furnish James's bedroom with enough sleeping space for an entire family. **MIDDLE:** White double bunkbeds, custom made to sleep six, complement the coastal look of the girls' bedroom. **ABOVE:** Guest rooms, upstairs and downstairs, offer quiet privacy.



The only television at the cottage resides above the gas fireplace in the children's den on the ground floor.

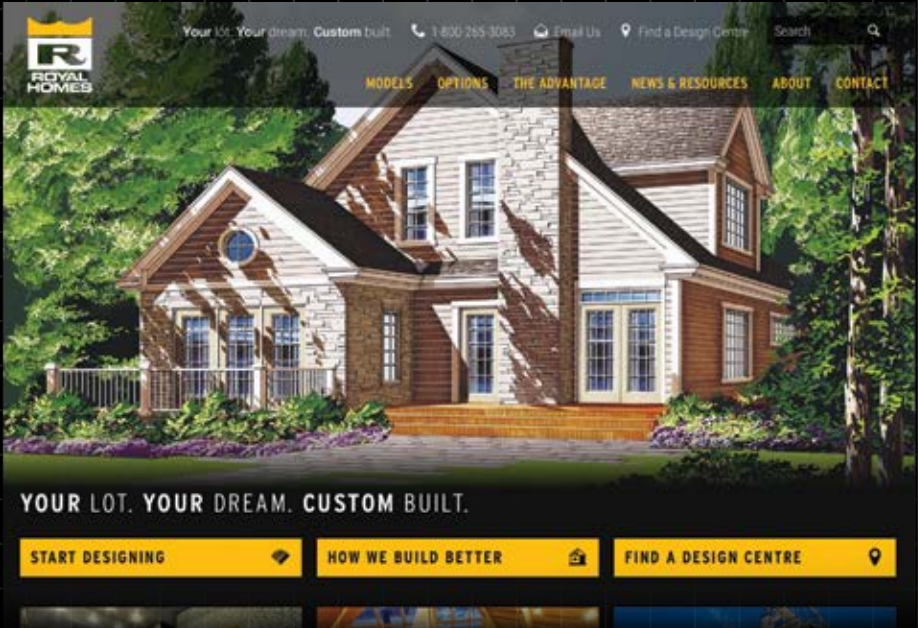
bath and a nearby guest room occupy one end of the main floor while a screened Muskoka room sits at the opposite end. Downstairs are the children's bedrooms, another guest room and a large den for the youngsters. "We wanted to have two separate living areas. One, we call it the upstairs, the adult zone, and then there's the kids' zone downstairs," says Jennifer. The home is designed for today, for later when the children are teens, and eventually for grandchildren. "It was important for us to have the two different spaces when the mosquitoes come out, and everybody's inside, so that you're not sitting on top of each other."

Jennifer asked **Tary Roossien** at **Urban Rustic Living** to help her choose and collect

the new furnishings, linens and fixtures for her summer home. They collaborated through a series of meetings and emails. "It was just such an easy process," Jennifer says. "Literally, the day we got possession of the cottage, Tary and her husband Ed went in with their big truck of stuff and set up the entire cottage," Jennifer says. "I walked into my brand new cottage. I had pictures hung on the wall. I had throws on the couch. All the beds were made. It was as if I was walking into a model home. I couldn't believe it. I started to cry," she recalls. "The only things I brought of my own were my dishes and towels, my kids and husband. Everything else, she did. It just made it super easy." *Continued on page 42*

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Since February, when the building was finished and furnished, the Anderson family has made weekend escapes from their Newmarket home to their woodland sanctuary. “There are times when we literally sneak up for one night,” says Jennifer. “It’s no big deal, because door-to-door it’s one hour and 45 minutes for us.”

During their first summer at this cottage, they plan to boat, tube and waterski. They will also host beach volleyball as one of the events in the Hockin-Anderson Olympics.

It’s vital to Rob that his children experience the joys of life on the lake. “That was huge for me,” he says. Waking up, sipping coffee while reading, and looking out at the lake is one of his favourite times of day at the cottage.

Jennifer’s favourite space is the great room, its soaring cathedral ceiling and panoramic view. “It’s just trees and lake and it’s all around you.”

The Andersons bought their spot on Lake of Bays from Joy Wilson, whose maiden name is also Anderson. They’ve named their summer retreat Anderson Again. **OH**



ABOVE: The main-floor master bedroom features a lake view and a sliding glass door to the exterior deck at the front of the cottage. **LEFT:** In the glass-fronted shower, shelves are recessed into the grey-tiled walls. Vinyl widow shutters are from Home Depot.

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PHOTO BY BRANDON BARRE

MIXED METAL MADNESS

ADDING GOLD TONES TO YOUR KITCHEN

STORY **YANIC SIMARD**

With summer in the air, you're probably going to want to soak up all the sunshine you can. But don't totally leave your interior in the dark! This is the year to go for gold in your kitchen, and bring a sense of timeless radiance to the room that you can bask in all year round – UV free. Take some inspiration from my own kitchen redesign, and mix a new metal into your space for first-place results. Here's how:

1 Bold and Brassy

While warm metals, in general, are seeing a huge resurgence, one humble material in particular is worthy of its newfound time in the spotlight: brass. To add a sunny metallic tone that doesn't feel too opulent, brass is the perfect understated option.

In my own home kitchen, I first opted to add brilliant brass handles to my cabinetry. Switching out cabinet hardware is an easy way to update a look, and moving from silvery steel to a warm metal creates a noticeable change instantly. Plus, research has found that copper (a fundamental element of brass) has antimicrobial qualities, for a healthier kitchen along with a beautiful design.



PHOTO BY BRANDON BARRE



2 Mix and Don't Match

One reason people may be scared to go golden in the kitchen is the cost of a total overhaul. Fear not: even warm metallics (especially balanced brass) are still very neutral, so there's no pressure to go all-in, even with stainless-steel appliances on display. The hot and cool essences will complement and energize each other, so feel free to mix in a lot or just a little.

A few simple accessories can bring a strong feeling of gold to a space even without a hardware change. Look for textural golden accents like the Talis Hammered platter in my Yanic Simard Selected collection, and repeat the material in another zone (in a picture frame, candleholder or cocktail shaker) to make it feel integrated throughout the room.



PHOTO BY BRANDON BARRE

3 A Big Splash

The future looks bright. A golden faucet makes a big statement, but with long-term potential. Brass has spent a few decades with a bad reputation, but this warm metal has enjoyed centuries of appreciation, so you don't have to worry about an investment in gold growing old any time soon.

Here in my kitchen, I upgraded to an Aquabrass Quinoa faucet with a sleek joystick control. While clean-lined faucets are still not widely available in golden finishes, many companies like Aquabrass do offer special finish options as a custom order. Alternately, try mixing the ornate details of a traditional faucet with contemporary cabinets and a sleek stone counter to create an elegant transitional style.

4 Golden Glow

Lights are a natural place to go gold, as it suits and enhances the radiance they provide, plus it always helps to add a new layer of lighting in any space, especially in a kitchen where balanced lighting is key to ease of work. *Look for brass-accented sconces* to bring a touch of gold to the walls, and pendant lights to bring some further golden sparkle to your eyeline. Keep it current and understated by choosing styles with metallic bases and glass shades (like the Lander Sconce from Crate and Barrel), for a light and airy jewelry-like effect.

(PHOTO COURTESY OF CRATE AND BARREL)

5 Tying the Knot

Wrapping up a shiny new golden look takes just a few finishing touches. Yellow accents will pick up the natural sunny undertones, so add a handful of blossoms, or display a lemon-hued cookbook (or some actual lemons).

Accents of blue will make gold pop, so toss in a few pieces of blue-hued dishware, or choose a navy cabinet treatment (like my Benjamin Moore's 2062-20 Gentleman's Grey finish). I contrasted my cabinet handles with cut crystal knobs (which you can also match from my Yanic Simard Selected collection at YSSelected.com), for the perfect mix! **OH**

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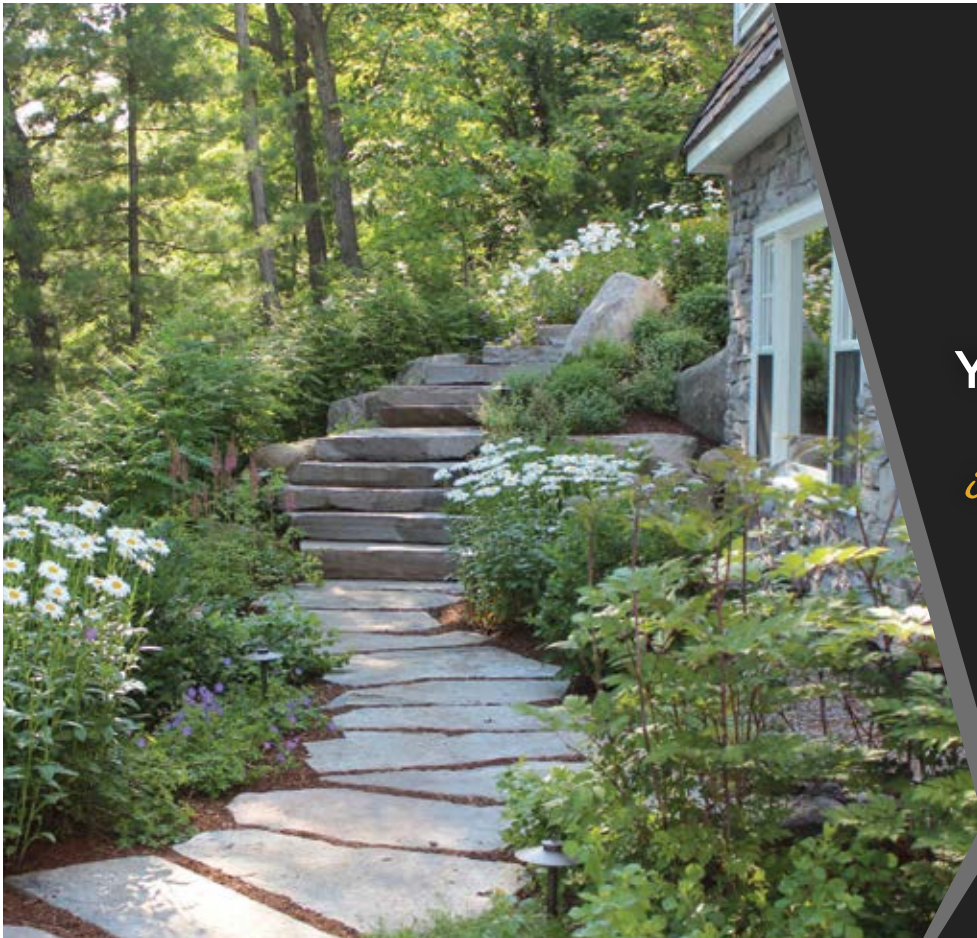
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HOME FOR THE *summer*

STORY **WALTER FRANCZYK**



A sunny southern exposure, breathtaking views and a sandy beach – alluring delights of a summer home are easy to picture. “We all want the dream,” says realtor Caitlin Hill of Royal LePage. But the joys of summer aren’t always available at a price buyers can afford. “The reality is, that dream is \$500,000 and you may only have \$300,000, so you have to give up something in your dream,” says Fred Aitken, a Royal LePage broker. “We can go out and find the next best thing,” says Hill.

The Lakes of Muskoka realtors expect another strong season of recreational property sales in Ontario’s cottage country. A healthy economy, rising employment and low interest rates have buoyed the residential housing market. Like a rising tide, it has lifted recreational property sales to their highest levels since the financial meltdown of 2008. With house values rising, some people are leveraging equity gains in their urban homes to buy cottages and summer homes all over Ontario.

Typical cottage hunters want a woodland retreat within a two-hour drive of home. Ideally, they want a country house on the water, with cathedral ceilings and windows overlooking the lake – a property where children can play safely, where they can swim, launch a canoe, dock a boat or fish. With many of the six million denizens of southern Ontario cities eager for respite from summer heat and suburban hubbub, demand for summer homes is high, and so are the prices.

Royal LePage’s 2014 Recreational Property Report estimates that cottages on Lake Erie and Lake Huron, within an hour or two-hour drive of London, ranged from \$195,000 to \$2.4 million. In Muskoka, two hours north of Toronto, typical waterfront cottages with road access were selling from \$525,000 to \$650,000. On larger Muskoka lakes, more than 100 waterfront cottages fetched between \$1 million and \$8 million.

There are comparative bargains. In eastern Ontario, in the land of 1,000 islands, a

waterfront cottages with road access in the Kingston area ranged from \$185,000 to \$325,000. Waterfront properties accessible only by boat cost \$175,000 to \$210,000 while inland sites were \$80,000 to \$110,000.

In the Meaford and Collingwood areas, the average price of a waterfront cottage with land access was estimated at \$345,000. A similar property on the Bruce Peninsula ranged from \$250,000 to \$400,000. In Haliburton, the price averaged \$350,000.

If you’re lucky enough to live in northern Ontario or are willing to drive several hours, you can buy an affordable recreational property and still have money for all the toys to equip it. Up north, they’re usually called camps, not cottages. On St. Joseph Island, a 45-minute drive southeast of Sault Ste. Marie, cottage owners can watch gigantic lake freighters ply the St. Marys River from waterfront properties that can be bought for an average of \$150,000. Inland camps run about \$100,000.

Near Sudbury, home of Science North, Dynamic Earth and the Big Nickel, waterfront camps and cottages average \$190,000, while a water access only site will run about \$140,000 and an inland property \$100,000 – a bargain if you’re willing to drive four hours from Toronto. Similar prices can be found around Lake Nipissing in the North Bay area.

The three things that most affect the price of the cottage are the size of the lake, size of the cottage and its condition. The proximity of amenities, such as shopping, dining, a

movie theatre or golf, is also a factor. The closer the amenities, the more a cottage might cost. Cottages accessible only by boat are less expensive as are those inland without any waterfront.

Rob Serediuk, a salesman with Chestnut Park Real Estate Ltd. Brokerage, estimates that more than half the people he deals with have considered renting their cottage when they’re not using it to help cover expenses. Cottage rental agencies can screen tenants and handle all the administration for a fee. Keeping a cottage, maintenance and repairs, utilities and taxes will cost just as much as a home in the city.

Many people are making more use of their country homes than their parents did a generation ago. The demand for year-round road access and four-season liveability is hot. With the proliferation of reliable Internet service, four-day weekends at the cottage are getting more popular. “People who are working from their house are now working from their cottage,” says Aitken.

More and more buyers view the cottage as more than a summer home. Rob and Jennifer Anderson of Newmarket designed their cottage on Lake of Bays with their three young children in mind. But they also planned years ahead. “It will eventually be where Rob and I will retire,” says Jennifer. “We would be there half the time and hopefully somewhere warm through the hard winter months, when we get to that stage of our life.” **OH**

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how to GRILL the PERFECT STEAK

STORY ADRIENNE BROWN

Almost anyone can toss a burger on the barbecue and be happy with how it's cooked. A steak? Not so simple. But with a little prep and some know-how, it can be just as easy to cook a succulent, juicy steak on the grill as anything else.

Jamie Hussey, Executive Chef at Glen Abbey Golf Club in Oakville, Ontario, recommends strip loin or sirloin steaks for the grill. "They have a better flavour, and they are robust," he says.

Ted Reader, the author of *Gastro Grilling*, agrees but adds that he loves rib steak too. "I like my steaks to be cut about one-and-a-half to two-inches thick and weigh about 12 to 16 ounces each, depending on the cut. A thicker steak will cook more evenly and give you a little wiggle room in case you get distracted," he says.

Prepare your steaks

According to Reader, good quality steaks do not need to be marinated or tenderized – only if you want to add a certain flavour.

On the other hand, if you're using a tougher cut, marinate it for at least a day before grilling. Hussey recommends a base of red wine, garlic and herbs – and always a ratio of two-to-one for oil and vinegar.

Salt your steaks just before grilling. This will give them a nice crust. This is the time to season with herbs and garlic if you like, too. Chef Hussey says chimichurri is his favourite steak finisher of all time.

Bring your steaks to room temperature before placing them on your barbecue.

Hit the grill

Cook your steaks for a short time at a high temperature. "Six hundred degrees Fahrenheit or higher if you can," says

Reader. Leave your barbecue lid open and resist the temptation to poke your steaks.

Never overfill your grill. Leave at least an inch-and-a-half clearance around each piece of meat.

Cook your steaks to your preferred doneness (see our chart), and then let them rest for 10 minutes before serving, says Chef Hussey. This prevents bleeding onto your plate.

Never cut your meat to check whether it's cooked to your liking. "Cutting the steak lets all the natural juices escape, leaving you with a dry and tasteless piece of meat," says Reader.

Don't flip out

Only turn and flip your steaks as necessary. Reader suggests this flip-and-rotate approach:

- Place steaks on a hot grill on a 45-degree angle at 11 o'clock.
- Grill for two-to-five minutes to sear, depending on the thickness and doneness you want.
- Turn 45 degrees to 2 o'clock, cook for another two-to-five minutes.
- Flip steaks and baste the grilled surface with your favourite baste. Continue to grill for two-to-five minutes on a 45-degree angle.
- Turn 45 degrees and cook for another two-to-five minutes.
- Flip and baste again.

"Now you have that fancy steakhouse diamond pattern!"

Two final pieces of advice from Chef Hussey: "It's always better to undercook a steak than to overcook a steak. And have fun! Buy the best local products you can, have a couple of beers and enjoy it!"

Pick the perfect steak

Ted Reader's four rules for picking the best beef:

1. **Buy the best quality steak you can afford:** "Not all good top cuts (rib eye or strip loin) are always tender. There are many grades of meat." Grade A is the worst quality and AAA is the best.

2. **Dry aging:** "The older a steak is, the more tender it will be." Many butchers dry age beef themselves.
3. **Fat:** "To put it simply, fat equals flavour. Internal fat or marbling is what gives a steak its succulence and juiciness." External fat will also add flavour, but can be cut off after cooking.
4. **Find a good butcher:** Nobody else will be able to answer your questions better, nor cater to all your steak needs. Learn what you like and want and ask for it.



How do you like your steak cooked?

A meat thermometer is the best way to test doneness. Here's Ted Reader's guide to the steak rainbow:

Blue Rare: A blue rare steak is quickly charred on the outside and barely cooked on the inside. For best results, bring the steak to room temperature before cooking. (130°F)

Rare: A rare steak has a cool red centre. (130-140°F)

Medium-Rare: A medium-rare steak has a warm red centre. (140-145°F)

Medium: A medium steak has a pink centre, and the juices are clear. (145-150°F)

Medium-Well: A medium-well steak has a hot pink centre, and the juices are clear. (150-160°F)

Well-Done: A well-done steak is grey throughout without any trace of pink and the juices are clear. (160-170°F)

Super Well Done: This steak is weighted with a brick until heavily charred on the outside and without any trace of pink and no juices inside. (170°F plus) or






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WAYNE NEWBIGGING

Owner, Muskoka Rain Irrigation
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Why irrigate a lawn? Matched precipitation and regular watering promotes a healthier lawn. A lot of people, when they water their lawn with a hose, they'll get two hours of water over here and 15 minutes over there. When we do a system, we try to put equal amounts of water all over the lawn. Deeper watering promotes healthier root growth. In the case of cottagers, who aren't here all the time, plants and flowers, especially annuals, would die without regular watering.

What are the advantages of an automated system? You're regularly watering. We have new smart controllers that take weather into consideration. They're looking at weather stations all the time – monitoring the amount of rain. They'll shut the system off if we've had a certain amount of rain so we're not wasting water.

How long does it take to install irrigation? A typical system would be a couple of days, depending on the size. Sprinkler systems will last many years. *Continued on page 54*

PHOTOGRAPHY **WALTER FRANCYK**

Grown since the Middle Ages, lawns are one of summer's most tactile pleasures. Grass cultivation has become art and science. A few local experts share their advice about the green stuff.

BOB NAYLOR & JENNIFER DAVIES

Owners/Operators, Pratt's Lawn Care & Landscapes

Why have a lawn? Three great reasons – aesthetics, environment and fun. A lawn in any landscape looks luscious, is welcoming and provides the longest-lasting green space from spring to fall. Grass cools the environment, absorbs and deflects sound, reduces carbons and controls erosion. Grass is soft and cool.

What's the best thing to do for your lawn? Top-dressing and seeding. Even established lawns need good, organic soil replenished and new germination. A thick, healthy lawn will choke out weeds and be easier to maintain.

How do you prepare a lawn for winter? You can do more in the fall to impact how your lawn will look than at any other time of the year. Remove leaves and debris, de-thatch and over-seed. Get after the weeds now and apply a good organic pre-emergent such as corn gluten meal and fertilize.



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KAREN GODDARD
Owner, Water's Edge Landscaping

How important is a lawn? It's nice to step out on a lawn. Kids can play on it, it's open and parents can see them. You can have a small patch of grass, maybe 10-by-10 feet, with flowers all around it and it's a little oasis.

What's best to keep a lawn alive and healthy? Seed. The more grass seed you have germinating the more it chokes out weeds and you'll have a nice, lush lawn. Fertilizing and watering are essential.

At what times of year do you seed grass? You can seed anytime, but the best times are spring and fall when natural rainfall germinates the seeds. You can seed as late as September or October. We use an organic sun-and-shade seed mix. It will grow almost everywhere in Muskoka.



BILL KILPATRICK
Owner, Earth Elements Turf and Irrigation Specialists

Why have a lawn? Healthy lawns capture greenhouse gasses, dust and air-pollutants. Lawns purify water entering aquifers and surrounding lakes. Root mass and soil microbes filter, capture and break down pollutants.

How do you grow good grass? The best way to improve lawn soils is to add a minimum four-to-six inches of high-quality compost to the native soil. Till the soil and rake out well prior to seeding or sodding. Once the grass has established, keep the lawn cut between three-and-four inches, aerate yearly, over-seed and apply nutrients. Fescues and rye grasses out-compete weeds and have better drought and shade tolerance.

Why irrigate? When it comes to watering your yard, you may be able to save yourself some "green" without your lawn turning brown by using an automatic irrigation system. If systems are correctly designed, installed and maintained, they can keep your landscape looking lush with the least amount of water. **OH**

STEACIE LACHANCE & ROB BLAIR
Owner/Operators, Weed Man Muskoka

How do you keep a lawn healthy? Watering, mowing and seeding are cornerstones of a healthy lawn. Lawns need an hour of water every four-to-seven days. Early morning watering is best. Mow with a razor-sharp blade and maintain a grass height of two-and-a-half to three inches. In spring and fall, over-seed thin and bare areas to repair and thicken your lawn.

Why eliminate weeds? Weeds are unsightly and if left unchecked can destroy a new lawn in three to four years. With regular weed treatments and proper cultural practices weeds can be controlled. Fertilizing throughout the growing season to keep your lawn strong is an added defence.

What are the benefits of a healthy lawn? A healthy lawn adds value to your home and boosts curb appeal. It provides a safe, relaxing place for your family to gather and play. Environmental benefits include reducing noise and pollutants, filtering water and air, controlling runoff and erosion, and providing homes for beneficial insects and animals.



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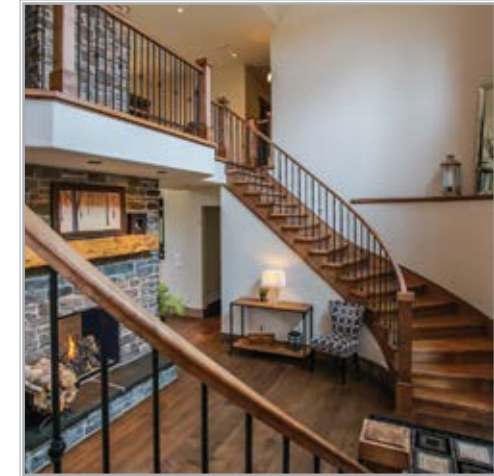
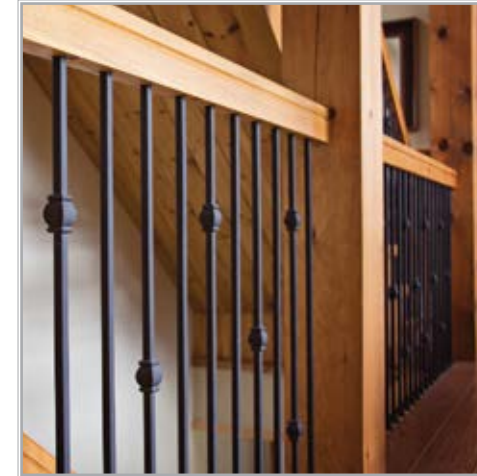


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This year, Blackbird Pottery celebrates a new and permanent studio location at the historic Donald Schoolhouse, just 5 minutes from the village of Haliburton.

Working mainly in porcelain, pieces are carefully hand crafted using wheel, hand building and casting methods. With an interest in personal mark making, inspiration is pulled from rural life, landscape and history. Reflection, nostalgia and place are reoccurring themes throughout her work. Each piece is decorated using various surface techniques applied by hand, including print, mishima, resist and water-etching.

This new location marks exciting growth for Blackbird Pottery, providing the space for expanded studio practice and offerings, including ceramic workshops slated to begin this fall.

This summer, the studio will maintain limited business hours, please check in advance or book a studio appointment.

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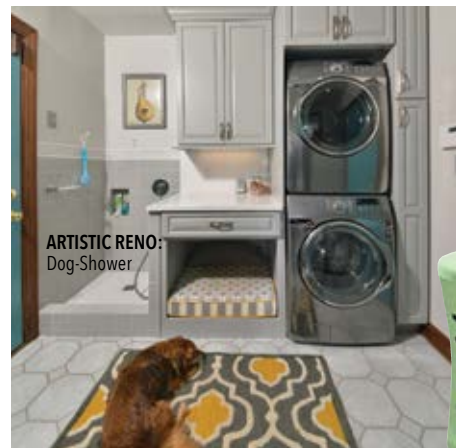
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Food dishes crammed in kitchen corners, leashes hanging haphazardly over benches, raggedy dog beds welcoming guests in the foyer, toys strewn across the floor and kibble scattered under the kitchen table; these are facts of life pet owners learn to live with.

It doesn't have to be this way. Pets don't have to equal clutter, and they certainly don't have to be incompatible with your décor. Seamlessly integrating your pets' needs and accessories into your home is simple, and it can be done stylishly – we promise.

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Accessories You Can't Live Without:

The luxury market has become saturated with pet accessories, so there's no excuse for unsightly dog beds and dollar-store leashes. Whether your home's style is modernly minimalist, industrial, coastal, country chic or more traditional, you can find an accessory that matches.

- Food dishes now come in patterned ceramic.
- Climbing structures for the active kitty can be works of art.
- Raised feeding stations are great organization solutions.
- A vintage suitcase cat bed is a fun living room addition.
- Leather storage bins are stylish hideaways for toys.
- Dog leash racks make great DIY projects (check the OUR HOMES Pinterest board)

Hide The Clutter In Plain Sight:

Even if you replace every pet accessory with a stylish one, you will still have too much stuff. Choosing items with multiple functions can cut down on clutter.

Have you considered solid wood end tables that double as dog crates, or how about a Murphy bed for your pet that folds up into a shelf? Try a cat tree, which on first glance appears to be a corner shelf, or replace your living room console table with a sleek alternative that cleverly conceals a litter box. The options are as endless as your imagination.

Design Your Home With Furry Friends In Mind:

From the moment you start a build or renovation you should consider every customization that will streamline your life, pets included. From feeding and bathing to storage, a good contractor will be able to offer a well-designed solution.

- Craft a built-in pet feeding station in the kitchen or mudroom.
- Construct a dog shower in the laundry room.
- Hide the pet bed in the space below the kitchen island.
- Convert unused under-stair storage into a mini dog bedroom.
- Install pocket door dog gates.
- Plan for a second slide-out garbage drawer in the kitchen: they make great pet food storage.

Fabric And Flooring:

Despite common opinion to the contrary, leather is a great option for furniture in a pet-friendly house. It's allergen resistant, easy-to-clean and should resist normal wear from most paws.

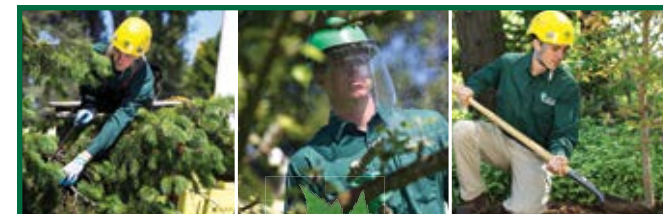
If you prefer to go the fabric route, never pick an open weave or textured fabric, which will catch claws and allow hairs to migrate into the fibres. The best options are tight-weave polyester fabrics. Fabric furniture should be vacuumed twice a week to prevent the oils from your pet's fur from penetrating the fabric.

When considering carpet, keep the same tips in mind: tight weaves and short nap will go a long way to eliminating headaches. The Mohawk Group's Lees brand of carpet tiles come with a special pet warranty to protect homeowners from stains.

Though hard-surfaced floors are more popular, even the most durable hardwoods won't withstand the wear and tear from your pets. If you are set on hard-surfaced flooring, consider tile, laminate and the newer vinyl luxury products. **OH**

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It's a wonderful time of year, even if you aren't able to get away for a holiday. Weekends are filled with barbecues, friends and family, and evenings are spent sitting under the stars on the deck.

Many of us will be entertaining outdoors. Here are some tips to help make your summer entertaining both environmentally responsible and stylish:

THE TABLE

Avoid using plastic disposable cutlery and plates. Try using your indoor cutlery, or glam it up with your inherited sterling silver and best dishes. If you don't have enough of one set, mix and match for an eclectic look. If you need to buy more dishes, grab some at your favourite charity shop – the ultimate in recycling.

Another alternative is bamboo. The eco-friendly dishes are inexpensive, reusable and outdoor friendly, and they are from renewable resources, or you can rent cutlery and plates.

If hiring a caterer, using your own dishes and serving platters cuts out another level of disposables and reduces cost.

Use tablecloths. If you don't own any, buy vintage at a consignment shop, thrift store or flea market. Vintage linens, such as Irish linen, will lend elegance to an outdoor meal, and they are perfect for outdoor use. If you can't find vintage napkins, use hankies or cut a tablecloth into napkin-size squares and hem, or use with rough edges for a more rustic look.

Be creative when decorating the table. Use



summertime ENTERTAINING

flowers out of your garden, from a market stall, or branches in a tall vase for a striking display, or try placing small terracotta pots filled with herbs at each place setting.

Burn beeswax or soy candles, or better yet, use LED candles, which are battery operated and reusable.

THE MENU

As you begin to plan your menu, look for ingredients that are currently in season. This means you won't need to purchase imported goods that travel thousands of miles to get to your table.

THE CLEAN UP

You've just enjoyed grilled chicken and steak. As delicious as they were, now you're left with loads of dishes and a sticky barbecue. Residue can affect the cooking process of your next grilled meal by sticking to your food and changing the flavour. It can affect cooking time too, but cleaning the grill thoroughly is the way to deal with it. If you clean it right away, then it's easier. Believe it or not, there is a way to get it clean without noxious sprays. Taking care of your grill means it will last for many barbecues, and it will be a healthier grill to cook on.

HOW TO:

- **Cover it all up!** Close the lid of your barbecue, which will allow the temperature to rise to the maximum, and avoid a loss of heat, a crucial part of the cleaning process.
- **Make it hot, hot, hot!** Turn both propane burners to high. Wait until the maximum temperature has reached the top of the thermometer. If you don't have one, simply wait five minutes for the barbecue to heat up. The high heat will turn the residue into ash. Shut everything off and proceed to clean the grill.
- **Brush it all off!** Use a good wire brush to clear off the ashes of what was the remains of your dinner. A quality wire brush can handle the heat and will not melt or catch fire.
- Alternatively, clean your grill with a barbecue brush and a thick paste of baking soda and water. Or, cut an onion in half and rub it over the rack once it has heated up; then brush a bit of olive oil on over the grill, so the food doesn't stick next time.

With a little planning, your summer get together can be both eco-friendly and stylish. **OH**

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LOUNGE AND RELAX

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Continued on page 66

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