

# Muskoka Lifestyles



**Feature and Photographs  
By Heather Douglas**





# Escaping to Muskoka

A place to escape from the hectic life of a Toronto executive is what Craig Reith, vice-president of finance with Four Seasons Hotels, was looking for in Muskoka as he searched for three years for a perfect location. He finally found it in a cozy, three bedroom cottage on the shore of Lake Joseph.

However, the cottage he envisioned was not what he had when he first purchased the property in February of 2000.

"I bought it for the view," he said. "I always thought you can work with a building, but not with a view."

And work he did, calling on interior decorator Lena Patten of Hilltop Interiors in Rosseau





to transform the dark, unfinished interior.

"I wanted a cozy cottage that was bright and cheerful and comfortable so that people would feel at home," Reith said.

Since he intended on using the cottage as a location where family and friends could visit and get away from the city, he didn't want anything formal or stuffy. "I got exactly what I intended – my friends enjoy the break and say it is very relaxing which is just what I wanted to hear," he said

Patten said when Reith came to her, he had very specific ideas of what he wanted and together they turned the ideas into reality.

A soft yellow paint was used throughout the main floor with a fabulous blue for the kitchen, which opens into the dining room and living room. Brown leather twig furniture compliments the colors as well as being very inviting to curl up in with a good book.

A wall of windows, overlooking the lake, provides a view from all the main areas of the cottage and brings the outside indoors.

In the last five years, the trend has been a move towards cottage casual decorating, Patten said, adding people come north to get away from the city and not to bring that look with them.

"Lena was a great help with the decorating," Reith said. "I liked her immediately when I met her, she has similar (decorating) ideas and was a great help with suggesting furniture and accessories. I could really relate to her."

With the idea of accommodating company, Reith finished a bedroom in a nautical style, in bright blue and white and an upstairs bedroom with three single beds. The master bedroom overlooks the lake and is painted in a soft moss green tone which shows off the twig bed and furniture and the wood floors.

A quilt bedspread adds the final touch to the rustic setting.

One of the most unique touches are twig and birch bark closet doors which greet guests and subtly inform them they are about to enter a unique and special place.

Reith who comes to the cottage year round, stating winter in Muskoka is "just spectacular," has a favorite location at his Muskoka retreat. It is "sitting on the dock, enjoying the view."

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