

# SCORING IN MUSKOKA

*Former Maple Leafs captain  
Wendel Clark builds summer  
retreat tailor-made for  
family and business*

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*Iconic Muskoka chairs provide plenty of spots for  
family and guests to gather at the Clarks' summer  
home on Lake Rosseau.*



*The three-season Muskoka room (left) is the heart of the home and also functions as a makeshift office for Wendel. “The Muskoka room is where I spend my time,” he says. “Every morning I make my phone calls, return emails, etcetera. It’s a great place to get organized while having an amazing view of the water.” Throw, flowers: Urban Barn.*

*“You walk in the front door and the first thing you see is the lake.”*

**“IT’S AN AMAZING FEELING.** You walk in the front door and the first thing you see is the lake. You just breathe a sigh, and it’s lovely.”

There’s a smile in her voice as Denise Clark talks about the summer home she shares with her husband, Wendel, and their three children. They have what many would consider a busy life on Lake Rosseau in the Muskokas, but the setting helps them keep it all in perspective.

You might remember Wendel as the burly captain of the Toronto Maple Leafs during the 1990s. Known as Captain Crunch in his playing days, he has not been idle since he retired from the National Hockey League. With his numerous business enterprises, he’s always on the go. And now he’s developing a business tailor-made for his summer home. 🐿️

*(Opposite) Denise loved visiting local businesses such as HillTop Interiors to choose soft furnishings and accessories for the living room (top, bottom right), kitchen (bottom left), and throughout the home. Flowers, pillows (living room); bronze bowls (kitchen): Urban Barn.*



*“We invite executives to stay at the guest cabins for one- or two-day retreats.”*



The Clark cottage is a substantial building (5,500 square feet) on a relatively open lake-front property that includes four bunkies. Built at a time when a bed and breakfast operated on the site, the refurbished bunkies are becoming a destination for executives in need of down time. “We invite executives to stay at the guest cabins for one- or two-day retreats,” says Wendel’s business associate Andrew Jackson, of Jackson Events. “We give them a Muskoka experience with high-end golf, food, and beverage.” Although events are catered, Wendel is the host, and “we’ve found that guests really love that Wendel is the guy over there barbecuing their steaks.”

In the meantime, Denise is operating her own high-end retreat for family and friends. Their busy summer social life is quite deliberate. “In our home in King City, we’re so busy September to June with Wendel’s work and the kids,” she explains. “When summer comes, this is where we do the majority of our entertaining.”

She’s made their lakeside home a comfy and welcoming space not only by virtue of her personality but also her love of decorating. “All the finishing details which I love... that’s where I kick into gear,” she says. “I just love, love, love putting all the knickknacks and doing all the finishing, the lighting, the tables, the lamps, the mirrors.”

*The beverage bar is an important feature of this hospitable home, which also has a walk-in cooler (not shown) housing beer kegs that can be tapped from the Muskoka room. Flowers: Urban Barn.*





Attention to detail is a hallmark of Denise's and Wendel's endeavour. The cottage was designed to their specifications by Windemere Custom Homes and built by Cutting Brothers in 2008. Wendel acted as general contractor. "He would come up every day and drive home every night," says Denise. "Once the interior was started, then I would come up too. We'd drop the children early at school and pick them up late."

The result is a home made for an active family that loves to entertain. The main floor features the living room and dining rooms, the kitchen with a walk-in cooler, a bar, a mudroom, and the heart of the home: the screened Muskoka room with its imposing granite fireplace.

"That's where we do all our entertaining," Denise says. The family sometimes calls it the three-season room, because they can use it in spring and autumn with a fire lit and heavy plastic panels, hidden in the window sills, pulled up to cover the screens.

The master suite and laundry are also on the main floor. On the lower floor is a capacious wine cellar, but the rest of that level is mostly a kidzone. A large recreation room accommodates the three children and friends. There are three bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms for the kids, and another suite for the many guests who come to visit. 📍

*"Once the interior was started, then I would come up too."* \_\_\_\_\_



*Nearly all of the wood in the building – floors, baseboards, walls, window casings, beams – is reclaimed. Hurricane vase, candles, flowers: Urban Barn.*

See [www.wendelclark.ca](http://www.wendelclark.ca) for more information on corporate retreats at Wendel Clark's Muskoka property.

The lower floor also boasts a large walkout to the waterfront and surrounding unforested area, which appealed to Wendel and Denise when they were considering the property. "We wanted level land with areas for the kids," Denise recounts. "We didn't want a really high elevation where you just go from your cottage to your boathouse. We wanted to be able to do something on the grounds as well."

The location was also a major consideration. Wendel is talking about both business and domestic activities when he says that he loves the cottage's location: "It's minutes from everything we do both by boat and by car. The Lake Joe Club is within walking distance, and we golf there as well as enjoy many dinners at water's edge."

Denise adds, "We go home the odd time for whatever—appointments or something—but the kids, as well as us, we just can't wait to get back into the car and back to the cottage."



As befits a home on the Canadian Shield, granite slabs form the floors at the main entrance, both inside and out. Massive reclaimed wood front doors (opposite page, top left) lead to a cozy foyer (this page) with its view through the living room to the front deck (opposite page, bottom left). Ceramics (foyer), pillows and red bowl (deck): Urban Barn.

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