



Newly-built by Tamarack North Ltd., this five-bedroom home of wood, stone and glass perches on the rocky shore of Georgian Bay. **BELOW LEFT:** Stone footpaths and stairs lead to the beach and dock at the front of the house. **BELOW RIGHT:** Illuminated at dusk, the home glows invitingly. (Photo courtesy of Daniel Weylie Photography) **RIGHT:** Carefully selected granite makes a seamless transition from the outside in through custom-made front doors by Cutting Brothers Inc.

# RUGGED WITH BENEFITS

BY RICK SHURMAN  
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At age 12, when Chris Madden and his family moved to the village of Parry Sound on the shores of Georgian Bay, he knew then, as he certainly does now, that this windswept and weathered landscape was the place he would always love, where he would ultimately raise his family and forever call home.



To that end, Chris left the north country, only briefly, to receive an education in mechanical engineering at Ryerson University and the University of Toronto, to return a few short years later and begin his career, raise his family and to realize his dream of owning and operating his own construction company, in this very place. Mission accomplished.

It has been 25 years now and the success that Chris has achieved has allowed him to live the life he has always aspired to and, most recently, to build his family a masterpiece on the granite shores they hold so dear. Built by his company, **Tamarack North Ltd.**, the Madden home is truly a study in contrasts from beginning to end. It is strikingly modern, beautifully elegant and airy, but at the same time, it speaks to the heritage of Georgian Bay cottage life. "It is all about wood, stone and glass," says Chris. "These have always been the three mainstays of material choices in this part of the world and although we embraced a modern architectural style and the latest in technology, the end result is exactly as it was meant to be." This marvel of engineering and design is borderless to its natural surroundings – a part of the bedrock beneath it and open to the endless blue Georgian Bay sky above. *Continued on page 31*



**OPPOSITE:** Windows frame the panoramic view of Georgian Bay on three sides of the great room. Above the fireplace is one of several paintings by Ed Bartram who uses crushed granite to create abstract images of nature. **LEFT:** A dry-stacked stone fireplace, by Fred Fraser of Reflections of Nature Stone, anchors the great room's northern wall. **BELOW:** Stairs guarded by stainless steel cable balusters descend from the home's main floor to a bar that joins the great room with a nearby family room. **BOTTOM:** Homeowner and builder Chris Madden with daughters Katie (left) and Victoria as well as the newest member of the family, Charlie, a golden retriever.



Katie, Chris' 22-year-old daughter has always had the bay as her backyard. "I love the hot rocks, the clear blue waters and the endless places to explore. Kayaking along the waterways or cross-country skiing in the winter along the many local trails." Though she and her sister, Victoria, have enjoyed a number of other family cottages along the way, Katie is quick to point out that they get to enjoy the best of all possible worlds in this setting. The rugged and remote nature of the Georgian Bay shoreline, in perfect balance with the sophistication of the endless amenities that this wonderful home has to offer. "Kind of rugged with benefits," says Katie - an appropriate turn of phrase.

You approach the home across carefully chosen, locally quarried granite. Supplied by [Muskoka Rock Company Ltd.](#), the stone continues as you enter the foyer, creating the impression that there is no division between the exterior and interior. "Instead of going up when we approached the construction design, we tried to go down," Chris explains. As opposed to having to walk up a flight of stairs to the front door or down a flight of stairs to the back of the house and on to the water's edge, Chris kept the floor level with the landscape on which it sits. "It was important to keep it low to the bedrock. Not only does that meet our esthetic demand, but it gives us total accessibility and eliminates steps and awkward height changes." Glazing rises 17 feet from the floor on the lower level, just inches above the bedrock outside, to a fabulous rough-sawn tongue and groove cedar ceiling above. *Continued on page 33*





**OPPOSITE:** Family members and dinner guests can enjoy a stunning view with a delicious meal. Hilltop Interiors furnished the dining room table and chairs. **LEFT:** Engineered oak flooring helps give the kitchen an air of efficiency. **BELOW:** Hilltop also supplied the dinnerware and dining room chandelier. **BOTTOM:** Located just off the kitchen, the well-equipped laundry room includes a built-in ironing board.

Chris and his design team made sure that doors were wider, hallways were generous and windows were expansive, providing an ease of movement, unrestricted views and guaranteeing that the concept of “drawing the outside in,” was in play everywhere in the home. “I guess I think of myself as a leader and a guiding force, but I know my limitations.” Chris makes sure he is surrounded by the very best in each and every trade and service to get the job done effectively.

From the very onset of the project, [Lena Patten of Hilltop Interiors Inc.](#) was brought on board to take the Madden family vision from basic design through to the hanging of the last piece of art. Their 14-year relationship is based on trust, Lena states. She is given a free hand to determine everything from stain and paint, to the many finishings, furniture and fixtures.

“I have a long history of life in Muskoka, and as a result I have a deep affection for the comfort and cosiness of classic cottage furnishing, but I also have a strong feeling and appreciation for new materials and current design considerations,” she says. Putting these two elements together is what contemporary interior design in the north country is all about.

*Continued on page 34*



**LEFT:** Douglas fir beams, below a rough-sawn cedar ceiling, arch over the sleeping area of the master bedroom. **BELOW:** In the en suite, a sun-lit soaker tub sits atop ceramic tiles that resemble marble. **OPPOSITE TOP:** A rustic spot offers a spectacular view on the deck of an old bunky near the shore. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM:** Large bifold doors open to give the master bedroom an unobstructed view of the bay and its beautiful sunsets. GemThane Pre-Coated Wood Systems supplied the exterior siding.

Chris says that when it came time to sit down to begin the process of interior finishing, his starting point and really his only demand was the engineered oak floor of the main areas of the house. It was essentially to be the reference point for determining the rest of the colours and textures to be chosen. A 10-inch-wide, weathered plank look, with an earthy coloured slate stain, allows the grey granite of the house exterior to transition seamlessly to the interior, once again evoking a borderless feeling. The muted tones established by this relationship continue throughout the interior and are reflected in the paint and stain choices for the walls, windows, ceiling, as well as most of the furnishings.

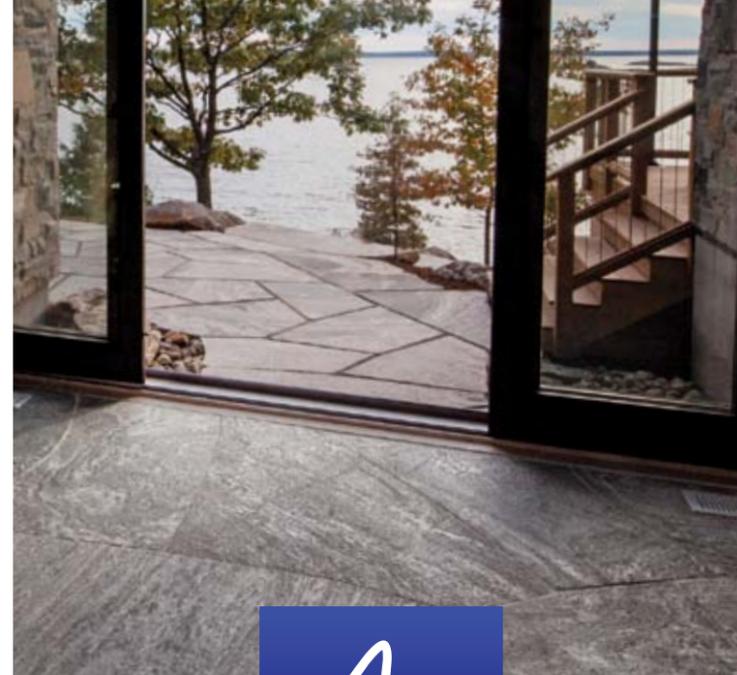
Each supplier had a keen understanding of the overall vision and aesthetic demand of the build. That would include every piece of Georgian Bay granite that borders the cottage, front to back, expertly installed by [Rockscape Design](#). Every window and door was custom-designed and built by [Ross Windows & Doors](#) of Parry Sound. From the triple glazed low E argon-filled window panels to reduce solar heat gain, to the framing material chosen to withstand the demands of Georgian Bay weather, each window and door was critical and carefully measured. This home is masterfully designed and skillfully executed. *Continued on page 36*





Cabinetry is from **Chervin Kitchen & Bath Inc.**, a local manufacturer. "It is important to support as many of the local trades as possible," Chris and Lena both emphatically stated. "It obviously helps the local economy, is cost effective and most importantly, it is efficient." The house is filled with cabinetry, cupboards, wall units and functional surfaces from Chervin. Each piece is meticulously crafted and finished to keep the flow of design, texture and colour transitioning throughout the interior. The surfaces are beyond beautiful, accented with wonderfully modern hardware that works harmoniously with the classic finishes. *Continued on page 38*

**TOP:** Ralph Lauren fabrics help lend a Katherine Hepburn black and white theme to Victoria's bedroom. **FAR LEFT:** A dressing table by Chervin Kitchen & Bath suits the young dancer. **LEFT:** The clean white style of cabinetry continues in the adjacent bathroom.



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**RIGHT:** Near the door to the sauna, a driftwood mirror reflects above a custom teak vanity. **BELOW:** A fireplace in the home's original rock wall warms the large downstairs family room. RONA supplied building materials for this new home.



Again, in keeping the house integrated with the landscape around it, "geothermal heating was a must," says Chris. The ground source heating allows the home to pull heat from the rock below to warm the structure.

The house is controlled by a fully integrated automation system, installed by **Sift Electric**. Control 4 offers the ultimate flexibility in light, heat, entertainment and even window screen controls. Yes, huge panels of screening are raised and lowered at the push of a button. A far cry from the thwack of an old screen door on rustic family cabins of days gone by, but who would complain about that?

Certainly no stone left unturned, but every stone left in place. Old and new, timeless and timely, this home reflects the heritage of Georgian Bay with everything that modern construction has to offer. **OH**



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