

FALL 2025

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# ourhomes

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STORY **LORI DAVIS** | PHOTOGRAPHY **LAUREN MILLER**

# COTTAGE *Lifestyle*





As the sun dips below the horizon, nature's nightly performance of vibrant colours shimmers across the lake. "The cottage faces west, so we have fantastic sunsets all year round," says the homeowner. The retired couple spends much of the summer at their five-bedroom timber-frame home on Woodwinds Island.

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**ABOVE:** This timber-frame cottage on Woodwinds Island is a structural beauty. The exterior is painted Benjamin Moore Regent Green and contrasts beautifully with its natural surroundings. **RIGHT:** The wood door and white window frames painted in Benjamin Moore Easter Lily amplify the modern-rustic aesthetic. **OPPOSITE:** Inside, exposed wood beams bring warmth and charm to the cottage, which was inspired by a lodge in British Columbia. The Douglas fir frame was built by Cutting Bros. Inc. and Cottage Country Builders handled the overall construction.









**BELOW:** A cosy seating nook offers a space for the homeowners to enjoy a morning cup of coffee. Lena Patten from HillTop Interiors brought in tactile materials like cotton, wool and linen to soften the cottage and add sensory richness.

**RIGHT:** The oversize reclaimed-wood dining table is Canadian-made and the black chandelier is from Northern Iron. **OPPOSITE:** The living room is drenched in architectural character. The stone fireplace with a wood mantel softens the area while earth-tone textiles invite a grounding aura. The wagon-wheel chandelier, also purchased from Northern Iron, adds contrast.



**THEY BOUGHT** the single-storey 1950s-style cottage on Lake Muskoka in 2007. The cottage was small, but the couple planned to rebuild at some point. In 2020, they decided to upgrade to a larger, more functional retreat. “It was run down and mice-infested, so we knew it was time to tear down and start over,” they recall.

The homeowner’s family has a long history of cottaging on Lake Muskoka. “My grandparents had a cottage here in the 1930s, so my mother grew up at the lake,” he says. “I’ve been coming here my whole life.” His wife spent her youth in Northern Ontario and also enjoyed the cottage lifestyle.

The couple wanted their new summer home to reflect their love of the outdoors. “We like the cottage look and were inspired by a lodge in British Columbia we often visited,” they explain. They opted for a timber-frame build to highlight the natural beauty of its exposed beams and structural grandeur. “It was spectacular to watch it go up, and we were thrilled with the result,” they recall. *Continued on page 57*









**ABOVE:** A rustic barn door keeps the laundry room enclosed and raw stone tiling is a perfect choice for this Muskoka cottage.

**TOP RIGHT:** A corner in the laundry room stores a wicker handbag and a sun hat. **RIGHT:** The kitchen features a dark herringbone backsplash and a Bertazzoni range. The Shaker-style cabinetry is painted Benjamin Moore Thunder.

**OPPOSITE:** White stone countertops from Quartz Co. keep the kitchen surfaces durable and timeless. The black hardware is from Rubinet Faucet Company and the barstools were sourced by HillTop Interiors.



**Cutting Bros. Inc.**, built the Douglas fir frame, the stairs and railings while family friend **Jason Mortimer**, owner of **Cottage Country Builders**, handled the construction. “His family owns the marina where I grew up. He does great work,” says the homeowner. The 3,500 sq. ft. floor plan makes the most of every nook and cranny. “We were very limited by the floor space, so we had to make sure the design was efficient,” they say. “We don’t have any big unused areas.”

Once the homeowners finalized the cottage design, **Lena Patten**, owner of **HillTop Interiors**, and her team began crafting the interior aesthetic. HillTop was on board from day one and provided furniture layouts, electrical plans, kitchen and bathroom design, and even advised on plumbing fixtures. “I was drawn to this project because of the cottage’s unique architectural character and its harmonious connection to the natural surroundings,” she recalls. “The exposed wood beams, rustic ceilings and wood floors offered a perfect canvas to craft a space that feels cottage-like, yet light and airy.”

The couple didn’t have a specific theme or look in mind, but they wanted durable surfaces, a light palette and a calm, grounding ambience. Lena curated a palette of earthy tones – soft creams, warm greys and subtle blues – to reflect the lakeside setting and complement the wood and stone elements. “I selected natural, tactile materials like cotton, wool and linen for furnishings and textiles to enhance the rustic elegance while ensuring durability and comfort,” explains Lena.

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**BELOW:** Décor in this bathroom is elegant and simple. The countertops are from Quartz Co. **RIGHT:** A basket-weave mirror is the focal point on this dresser. Two wall scones shape the atmosphere and draw the eye upwards. **BOTTOM LEFT:** The black bath fixtures are from Rubinet. Stevenson Plumbing & Electric handled the plumbing. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Cosy sleeps await in this bedroom, which is decorated with a soft, neutral colour palette.




She honoured the cottage's inherent beauty while infusing it with modern comfort and style. "They wanted a home that felt like a forever retreat, blending the cottage's natural beauty with a modern, welcoming vibe," says Lena.

The kitchen includes Shaker-style cabinetry. **Brown's Appliances** provided the JennAir refrigerator and Bertazzoni range. A dark herringbone backsplash dramatically offsets the light cabinets and white stone countertops (**Quartz Co.**). The Rubinet Faucet Company supplied the fixtures. "The kitchen is pretty basic, but it functions very well," the homeowners tell us. They love large family dinners, so Lena designed the dining area around an oversize reclaimed-wood table. "It's Canadian handcrafted and echoes the cottage's beams, while its generous size ensures there's room for every guest," Lena says.

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Flooring Solutions in Huntsville provided the stunning tile in this walk-in shower. A window invites natural light into the area, and a small bench was a smart choice for added comfort.

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The landscaping on this lot is natural and minimally disruptive to the landscape. Conner Daily handled the hardscaping, and Ted Smith provided the hardscape materials. Laura Thomas from Hidden Habitat added native plants and flowers to the property to enhance the natural aesthetic.



*“I WAS DRAWN TO THIS PROJECT BECAUSE OF THE COTTAGE’S UNIQUE ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER AND ITS HARMONIOUS CONNECTION TO THE NATURAL SURROUNDINGS.”* –LENA PATTEN





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She chose furniture with clean lines and subtle accents to keep the space fresh and sophisticated while maintaining the cottage's rustic feel. Just off the kitchen, two simple armchairs offer a cozy place to pause. It's a popular spot where people naturally gather. "I sit here, drink coffee, look at the lake and think how lucky I am," the homeowner reflects. Lena tailored a layout that maximizes the open-concept space and takes full advantage of the lake views. "I strategically placed furniture to create intimate gathering areas without obstructing the flow of natural light," says Lena.

A warm oak staircase paired with contemporary metal spindles connects

the main living area to three second-floor bedrooms. A loft overlooks the great room, while a clever interior window in the upstairs bathroom draws soft, natural light from the loft. "It's from my grandfather's cottage, which was built in the 1900s," says the homeowner.

Between time on the water, evenings by the fire and weekends surrounded by nature, this lakeside cottage has become a treasured family retreat. "It's a place where our family comes together. We love the closeness to nature and enjoying activities on the lake," says the homeowner. "I married into a family that loves cottaging, and now my family loves it too." **OH**

**ABOVE:** The homeowners and their family enjoy lake views from the lower-level living room, which is decorated with soft neutrals. **BELOW:** The warm oak staircase with metal spindles was installed by Cutting Bros. Inc.



## LOCAL SOURCE GUIDE

• Benjamin Moore • Chervin Kitchen & Bath • Cottage Country Builders • Cutting Bros. Inc. • Flooring & Tile Solutions • HillTop Interiors • Northern Iron • Ridley Windows & Doors Inc. • Stephenson's Rental Services • The Rubinet Faucet Company • West-Eden Design Studio



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