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MUSKOKA

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2017

Life

ON FROZEN POND

North American Pond Hockey Championships return

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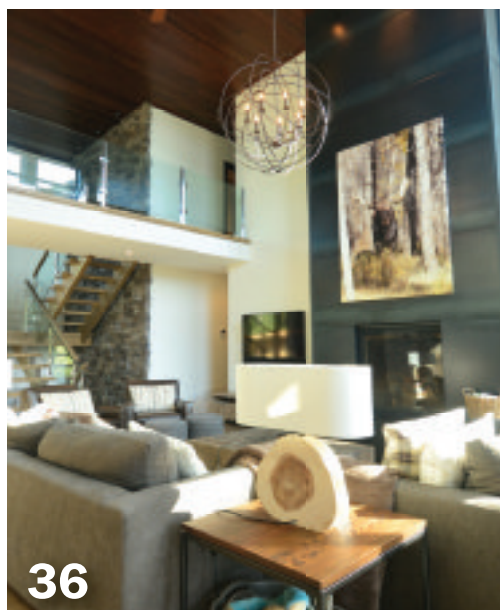
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WHAT'S ON THE COVER

This happy couple celebrated their new chapter by hopping in a canoe at Sherwood Inn, Muskoka.
(Krista Fox Photography)



115



*TRADITIONAL
MUSKOKA
EXPERIENCES
IN AN*

ULTRA-MODERN COTTAGE

Roasting marshmallows around a crackling fire, being in the water from sun up until sun down, and endless adventures exploring untamed shorelines – these are the memories kids have when they spend summers in Muskoka and when they grow up, it's what they want for their children.

STORY BY KIM GOGGINS | PHOTOS BY BEV MCMULLEN



Despite the contemporary look of the cottage, it blends in well with its natural surroundings.

The 3,300-square-foot, three-level structure stares down miles of cool water from its position about 20 feet above the lake.

When searching for the perfect Muskoka cottage, Greg and his wife Jenn wanted a place that would reignite his memories of spending childhood summers at his parents' cottage on Lake Joseph and offer similar experiences for their son and daughter.

But the Lake Muskoka cottages they looked at didn't have the outdoor space they wanted, were a bit too far from their city home, and lacked the contemporary style they desired.

When they decided to expand their search about five years ago, to include vacant land further south, a rugged Kahshe Lake property they discovered online caught their attention. Situated at the southern tip of Muskoka and 90 minutes from their home, the location was perfect but for more than that one reason.

With thick walls of granite plunging into the depths of the Lake along 400 feet of shoreline, southwest exposure, and approximately six acres of lush coniferous forest to offer a private playground for their family, they couldn't resist.

The couple enlisted the services of Glen McAulay's construction company to help them realize their ultra-modern cottage dream. Years of Jenn collecting clippings of favoured design trends and decorating elements helped the process immensely, says Brian McAulay, Glen's son and building manager with McAulay Construction.

"When you have clients like that it definitely makes the selection process a lot smoother, I can say that," he notes. "I would say that out of all the people that I have built for, Jenn would be the closest to working with a designer without actually using a designer. She had a vision of what she wanted to do and she executed it well."



“You see the lake on the far left, then you see the channel in front of you and then you see the channel up to the right of you. It’s like 180 degrees of trees and water.”

The dock has plenty of room for all the boats and toys and is also a nice place to enjoy all-day sun. Nearby, a high bluff offers a great jumping spot for the kids to plunge into the deep water.



A stunning wood-burning fireplace, its chase wrapped in black cold-rolled steel right to the ceiling, is the focal point of the Great Room



The fireplace, wrapped in black cold-rolled steel right to the ceiling, is the focal point of the Great Room. Angle iron on the corners gives an industrial feel and the guillotine glass front on the tall firebox continues this theme. The hearth is made of poured black concrete.

Through effective project management and skilled craftsmanship, McAulay Construction successfully brought the ideas and dreams of Greg and Jenn to life.

The couple also relied on the expertise of architect D'Arcy Dunal, who is currently designing a three-bay garage with loft to accommodate guests, to complement the existing cottage.

Embracing the Frank Lloyd Wright style of architecture with low-pitched roofs, extensive overhangs and walls of windows, the 3,300-square-foot, three-level structure stares down miles of cool water from its position about 20 feet above the lake.

"We've always liked modern but we never thought of building modern in Muskoka," says Greg. "It definitely has its appeal to us. We have a traditional home in the city and we wanted something completely different to go to. It certainly hits all of those check marks for us, for sure."

To ensure a maintenance-free facade, the cottage is clad in Cape Cod pre-finished black siding. Brian also suggested Ipe wood for a rich contrast. The durable Brazilian hardwood is stained with Ipe oil on three feature walls to show off the warmth of the grain. Stacked stone stretching from ground to roof is also a feature on the exterior of the cottage.

"We tried to use a lot of materials that were low maintenance," explains Greg. "We wanted to enjoy it. There will always be something to do at the cottage, but we wanted to put the leg work in at the beginning so we could enjoy it down the road."

Tall, quadrangular windows encased in black trim on all sides of the cottage are a hallmark of this design, inside and out. The windows even allow expansive views of the lake through the house as you drive up the driveway.

Once inside, a glass door and floor-to-ceiling windows, above and beside it, draw light into the foyer that also features a chic wood box and shelving unit nestled within the white wall and framed in black. Alongside this space, an open staircase with wide-planked ash stairs and tempered glass rail is positioned in front of the windows but also against a feature wall of dry-stacked stone to give a rugged contrast to the smooth and simple lines of the Great Room it opens to. At the foot of the stairs, an LED fixture hangs above

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Durable vinyl plank flooring in a greyish ash tree tone flows throughout the cottage and protects against scratches

The island features a polished, marble-look Dekton counter, a man-made material impervious to stains. The island, itself, is fronted in a shiny white veneer with frameless drawer fronts for extra storage.

featuring crystal globes suspended at different lengths provides another contrast to the straight lines of the space.

A stunning wood-burning fireplace, its chase wrapped in black cold-rolled steel right to the ceiling, is the focal point of the Great Room and complements the sleek black trim around every window while counterbalancing the white walls. Angle iron on the corners gives an industrial feel and the guillotine glass front on the tall firebox continues this theme. Made of poured black concrete, the solid hearth stretches forward about 18 inches.

Wide strips of cedar on the slightly pitched vaulted ceiling offers a warmth to the modern-industrial look of the room, and in the centre, a substantial, low-hanging sphere light in brushed brass gives a fun

balance to the room.

Each of the tall windows in this space are inset with a six-inch ledge and are framed in a smooth, black border. A translucent black blind comes down to shield against heat in the summer on all windows in the cottage.

"We wanted it to look like a picture frame," says Greg. "We're framing everything and when you look out it looks like you're looking at a picture standing there. That's why we wanted to over size windows. It makes doing the dishes (when you're staring out) actually pleasant."

Durable vinyl plank flooring in a greyish ash tree tone flows throughout the cottage and protects against scratches by their over-exuberant yellow lab pup. These floors flow into the extensive dining and kitchen area



Between the Great Room and open-concept kitchen rests a magnificent live-edge suar wood dining table that is about 11 feet in length. This table has extensive views of the lake through large sliding glass doors.

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3 BARRON DRIVE, BRACEBRIDGE

where modern style meets rustic elements.

Between the Great Room and open-concept kitchen rests a magnificent live-edge suar wood dining table. Stretching about 11 feet in length, it is much narrower at one end and boasts butterfly joints where natural splits have occurred. This bucolic piece is juxtaposed by four simple bucket chairs with metal legs on each side and has expansive views of the lake through large glass doors to the outside stone terrace.

A lower white ceiling carves out this kitchen and dining space, which is also highlighted by two corners of dry-stacked stone embracing a long beverage bar with stainless steel sink, under-counter fridge and glass-fronted cupboards for glassware, above. Several steps from the kitchen island, this area allows guests to access snacks and beverages without moving into the cook's space.

"The traditional working triangle idea in kitchen design has given way to a more expansive area. Taking additional steps to navigate the kitchen still works very well," Greg smiles. "Things are not rushed up here."

The expansive island features a polished, marble-look Dekton counter, a man-made material impervious to stains. A single stainless steel sink offers extra food prep space, here. The island, itself, is fronted in a shiny white veneer with frameless drawer fronts for extra storage. Overhead, three large pendant lights with charcoal-coloured tin shades and mechanical-looking fixtures offer workspace lighting and give more of the industrial feel in the contemporary space.

The perimeter of the kitchen features rich brown custom cabinetry in frameless hard rock maple melamine construction with MDF slab doors and drawer fronts. These counters are made of the same durable Dekton material but look more like a grey concrete to once again bring in an industrial element. Large subway tile with light veining on the walls offset the dark cabinetry nicely.

Tucked-in near the fridge are double French glass doors that lead to the most popular room of the cottage, the screened-in porch. Even here, with the smells, sounds and sights of the rustic property, this room with oversized comfortable furniture, maintains the modern design of the cottage with thick black metal posts and beams, black framing around the doors



The most used room of the cottage, the screened-in room is accessed from the kitchen through large garden doors. The family enjoys 180-degree views from here.

This ultra-modern cottage truly does offer a traditional cottage experience.



All of the bedrooms are spacious with large windows and a feature wall.



Although the cottage is ultra-modern in its design, this classic fire pit fits right into the traditional fun the family has at the cottage.

and windows, and smooth grey porcelain tiles on the floor. Screened walls to the top and extensive overhangs make the pitched cedar ceiling look as though it's floating over the room. Clear stained Ipe on the wall attached to the cottage adds a softness to the space.

"We spend a lot of time out here," says Greg. "Morning, day or night, it's just spectacular. When you're in this room, peripherally, you see the lake on the far left, then you see the channel in front of you and then you see the channel up to the right of you. It's like 180 degrees of trees and water."

At the other end of the cottage, behind the extensive black fireplace is the master retreat that features a king-size bed against a smooth wood floating wall that provides



a buffer between the main room and the two deep closets and the master bath behind it. As in each of the four bedrooms, large windows take advantage of property and lake views.

The master ensuite showcases a rustic dry-stacked stone feature wall with hooks for towels across from a double vanity with

The stacked wood in this nook gives a rustic feel to the modern design of the main foyer.



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The ash stairs to the loft landing/hallway on the upper level are kept open to create flow.

vessel sinks. The custom vanity maintains the same counter as the kitchen.

The shower features a glass door with chrome rain head, large format black tile on the walls and a pebble effect on the floor.

"It gives the feel of standing in a creek, feeling the roundness of each pebble," says Greg. "It's uneven, but when you're standing on it, it's hyper comfortable on your feet."

Although the master ensuite is slightly larger, the washroom shared by their children on the second level, as well as two powder rooms feature similar layouts and counters.

The second level features a walkway with tempered glass front that overlooks the Great Room and lake. The teens' two bedrooms and washroom sit at one end, while a guest room is at the other. Each of these spacious rooms boast a feature wall, with their son's wooden wall painted black, daughter's in rough barn board and the guest room in smooth natural cedar. Transom windows can be found over the beds in the daughter's and guests' room.

Not that anyone spends much time in their bedrooms when they're at the cottage.

With an extensive dock that juts out from a rocky crevice of the shoreline to hold multiple motorized and non-motorized boats, and a nearby tall bluff overlooking deep water to provide endless jumping opportunities, who wouldn't want to spend all of their time outdoors?

This ultra-modern cottage truly does offer a traditional cottage experience. 🍁