

MAY/JUNE 2016

Good LIFE

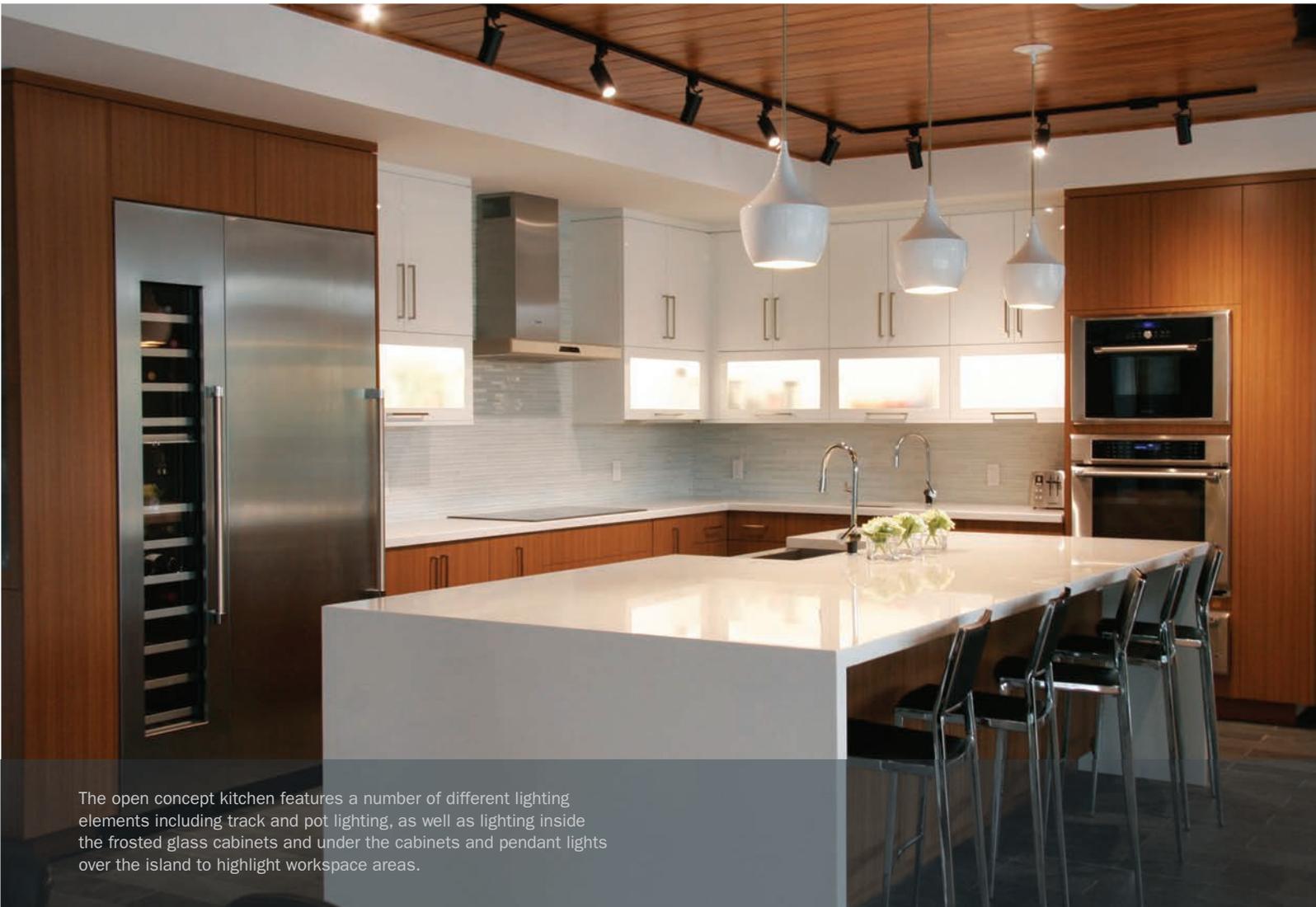
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LOCAL FARMS BRING
Selection Smorgasbord
TO THE TABLE

Muskoka Retreat

CONTEMPORARY COTTAGE

GARDENING
TRENDS
2016



The open concept kitchen features a number of different lighting elements including track and pot lighting, as well as lighting inside the frosted glass cabinets and under the cabinets and pendant lights over the island to highlight workspace areas.

Contemporary Cottage

BLENDS IN TO RUSTIC MUSKOKA

STORY BY KIM GOGGINS | PHOTOGRAPHY BY CANDICE MANASTERSKY

It's early morning and the sun is inching its way above the mist suspended over the lake. A damp, earthy bouquet fills the air and the subtle lapping of water against the shoreline is the only movement perceived at this time of day.

The owners of this property have held on to and loved it for many years, anticipating the time when they could build their dream cottage on the rugged terrain, amongst the towering trees.

This is traditional Muskoka in every sense and it's why they chose this location for their retreat. But although they love the rustic na- »



The flagstone terrace with fire pit area and outdoor kitchen are perfect outdoor gathering places for friends and family.

ture of the property, they wanted a more contemporary design to their build.

With the help of Catherine Staples, interior designer and owner of Catherine Staples Interiors, and contracting company Attainable Solutions, they were able to create a unique getaway that brings together the urban look they desired with more classic elements of cottage design.

Tucked into the granite rock face that defines the property, the 2,000-square-foot, two-level cottage asserts a contemporary look in its exterior design, with multi-level, low-pitch roof lines and walls of windows framed in black on the lakeside, while at the same time, the grey cultured stone and cedar exterior offers a natural warmth that fits into its surroundings.

“It’s one thing to have it modern but it also needed to be incorporated into the landscape. That’s why we brought in the wood and the stone,” explains Staples. “I think the colour combination just fell into

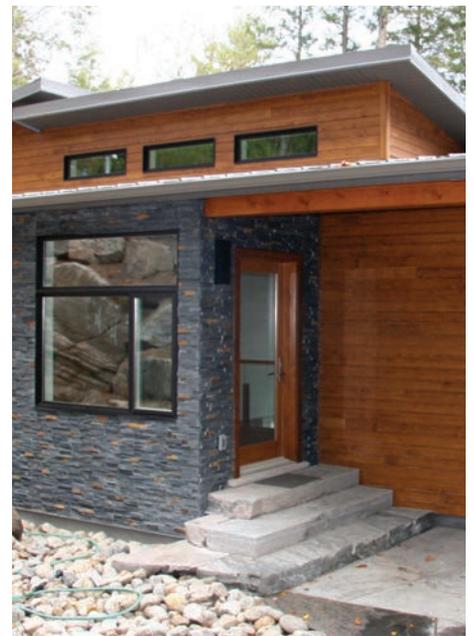
the landscape so beautifully.”

Taking advantage of sightlines and the natural surroundings was key in the design of the cottage that boasts floor-to-ceiling windows in every room that faces the water. Upon walking into the foyer on the top level that overlooks the main floor, guests are treated to sweeping views of the lake through large windows in the Great Room that capture the morning sun.

Grey slate floors and crisp white walls, combined with a tempered glass railing for the wooden staircase provide an urban look to the entryway, while a cedar accent wall and bucolic barn door leading to laundry facilities offer a warmth to the area.

“The (tempered glass) was chosen for its modern style and adding the wood hand-rail on top gives it a warmer feeling,” notes Staples. “The glass also opens up the Great Room (below) so it’s not as busy.”

Contrasting the look and texture of materials is an integral part of the design of



The cultured stone and cedar siding gives a Muskoka warmth to this modern cottage design.

“Taking advantage of sightlines and the natural surroundings was key in the design of the cottage that boasts floor-to-ceiling windows in every room that faces the water.”

the cottage, where smooth white walls and grey slate floors are offset by rustic elements such as tongue-and-groove ceilings, wooden accent walls and custom-made wooden doors throughout.

The Great Room encapsulates this strategy well with large frameless windows that cover a bright white wall on the lakeside.

“We didn’t put window frames around any of the windows,” explains Staples. “It’s just a drywall return to give (them) a more contemporary look.”

An imposing floor-to-ceiling grey slate gas fireplace, flanked by warm-toned wooden walls on each side, boasts a thick slab of live-edge pine atop the stone hearth to soften the look and give a warmth to the room, which also has grey slate tile on the floor.

“The tile we used for the fireplace façade is very close to the tile on the floor but it has a slightly different tone and different style,” recalls Dwayne Hutchins, a project manager for Attainable Solutions. “It’s got variations in size and texture and we bumped it out to give it more texture rather than a smooth face.”

The six-by-35-inch slate floor tiles that are featured throughout most of the lower level are an effective conduit for the hydronic heating system, but are also cool on the feet in the summer and low maintenance. They were chosen for practicality, notes Staples, but also offer a nice contrast to the white walls and wooden accents.

This distinction is especially apparent in the kitchen where smooth white upper cabinets and white quartz countertops create a clean, modern look and complement the large, five-by-almost-10-foot island that is made almost entirely of quartz. In an area where functionality is key, the island also incorporates plenty of storage, dishwasher and large, apron front stainless sink. To aid in food prep, a smaller sink is located on the



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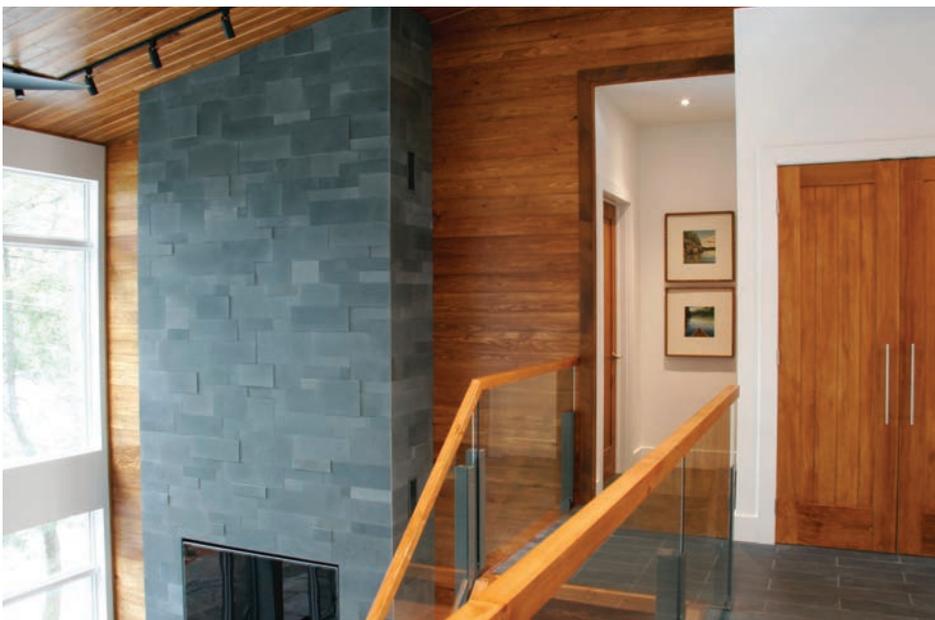
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Cathedral ceilings and floor-to-ceiling windows in the Great Room don't take away from the intimacy of the space. All of the furniture in this room was designed by Catherine Staples Interiors and built by Lee Industries. The paddles seen on the wall (foreground) have been in the family for years.



Thick live-edge pine was used on the hearth to give warmth to the massive grey slate fireplace. Beneath it, the doors are vented and there is space to store electronic equipment.

Vaulted ceilings and massive windows allow impressive views of the lake and property from the foyer when you walk in.



main counter. The Thermador stainless steel appliances include refrigerator with glass-front wine fridge attached, convection speed oven, warming drawer and dishwasher.

"This is a great cooking and entertaining kitchen," says Staples, noting it was not only important for the family to have a functional large kitchen inside, but outside, as well.

"We created a window that they could use to pass through food from the indoor kitchen to the outdoor. (The outdoor kitchen) also incorporates a bar area so they can linger while someone is cooking."

Like the indoor kitchen, the food prep space outside is made of white quartz, but also has an impressive live-edge pine bar top. The covered space includes a sub-zero beverage refrigerator, stainless steel sink and built-in Wolf gas barbecue.

Across the flagstone terrace is a large fire pit area surrounded by Muskoka chairs, just a stone's throw from the water's edge. »

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While the cottage is open concept, distinctive areas such as kitchen and dining are created with a lower ceiling height than the Great Room. The dining area boasts a custom-made birch table and low maintenance black chairs that match the chairs at the kitchen island. Again, the key is practicality and these chairs are perfect for wet bathing suits.



TOP: The cosy den is a great place for the kids to gather to watch a movie or find some solitude. It also acts as a guest room, when needed. Large windows and the deck makes it the perfect place to take in the scenery.

MIDDLE: The screened Muskoka Room is a great way to enjoy the outdoors no matter what the weather. The teak furniture featured in this room was designed by Catherine Staples Interiors and built by Lee Industries. The game table and chairs was refurbished.

It's the perfect area for outdoor entertaining but for those who want to get out of the bugs and inclement weather, the screened Muskoka Room, off the kitchen, is where Staples expects family and friends will gather often.

This is the only room in the cottage where traditional Muskoka elements are prominent, with wooden window frames and a pitched wooden ceiling painted in white that evokes a coastal feel. Teak furniture, designed by Staples' team and built by Lee Industries, along with a refurbished card table and chairs, further enhance this atmosphere.

While the four-bedroom, two-and-a-half bath cottage was built to accommodate large gatherings in its principal areas, the upstairs den, at the opposite end from the Muskoka Room, offers an area for individual pursuits or smaller groups with a cosy deck overlooking the water. This space is down the hall from the three children's rooms and also acts as a guest room.

Below, a haven within the Muskoka retreat has been created for the owners. The couple's master suite is tucked behind the Great Room on the main level to provide privacy. The white ceiling and walls, as well as the clean lines of the windows in this intimate space, are contrasted by hardwood floors and an accent wall made of rough sawn wood painted 'iron mountain grey' with fireplace insert. French doors blend with the large windows and lead to a flagstone patio overlooking the lake.

Like much of the furniture in the cottage, the pine headboard was designed by Staples. "We wanted to bring a little bit more of that wood element in again to give it character and warmth," she notes. "The grey painted side tables are suspended on the wood headboard and I brought in the sparkle of sconces."

A transom window high up on the wall opposite to the wall of windows in the bedroom draws natural light into the master ensuite on the other side. This washroom is bathed in pale greyish-beige tile and white walls to provide a simple pallet. The seamless glass shower and stand-alone tub on one side are offset by a dark vanity with white quartz counter with sunken sink on the other side.

Minimalism is also a key component to the main washroom upstairs, where a stand-alone tub against white walls creates

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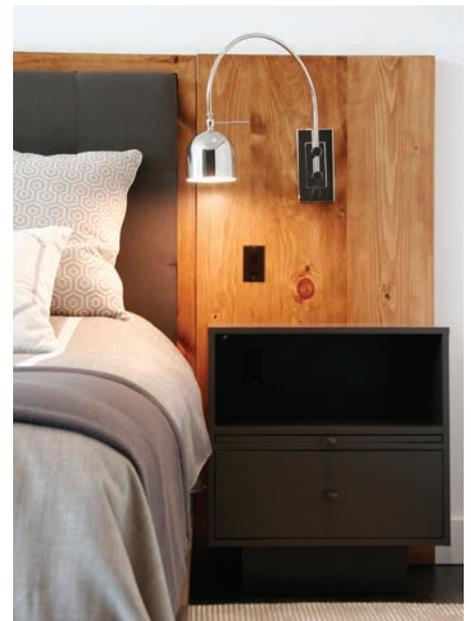
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Large French doors blend with the windows and lead to a flagstone terrace overlooking the lake. The wall on the other side of the window features a high transom window into the master bath.

“In creating this family’s dream cottage – when creating any cottage – Staples says functionality is always a cornerstone of her design but it’s also important to think about how the needs of the family will change in the future.”

Texture is key to the children’s rooms where the walls – both smooth and rough sawn wood – are painted white and feature a wall of windows overlooking the water. Large custom closets feature built-in drawers so dressers are not necessary.



The two-piece washroom, situated on the main floor near the staircase showcases a real stone vessel sink and two unique accent walls: one in stained pine and the other in a funky porcelain tile that acts as artwork.



The covered outdoor kitchen creates the perfect place for food preparation and socializing. The sliding window to the indoor kitchen is a convenient way to pass food.



a modest look. Instead of different colours, Staples looks to the different textures of the white subway tile and smooth walls for simplicity. Contrasting dark slate floors and dark cabinetry enhance the space and make it welcoming to family and guests.

In creating this family’s dream cottage – when creating any cottage – Staples says functionality is always a cornerstone of her design but it’s also important to think about how the needs of the family will change in the future.

“We were thinking long term for this family. Right now, there are no grandchildren but their family is going to grow over time. The couple is planning to retire there and it could possibly become their permanent home,” says Staples, who is a cottager, herself. “It’s important to design cottages with the future in mind. It helps to think long term because needs will change.” ❄️



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