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*Transforming a cottage into
a cozy retreat*

CHC 3028689 Exp.2015006
Linda Jennings
Jennings & Co
436 Woodland Dr
Sarasota FL 34234
USA

Hello Linda

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FORECAST: Warm, Sunny Days Ahead

MUSKOKA GEM PART II

DESIGNING WOMEN

How an empty shell of a cottage was transformed into a cozy nest

BY Dennis McCloskey. PHOTOS BY Daniel Dutka

New Cottage Construction

BELOW

A deep soaker tub tucked next to the window allows the bather to enjoy views of the sky.

RIGHT

A cove ceiling above twin beds adds to the coziness of the bedroom.

MIDDLE AND FAR RIGHT

Family can lounge outside under the upper deck in any weather.

LOWER RIGHT

Grasscloth wallpaper adds texture and warmth to the walls.

LOWER FAR RIGHT

Sunbathers on the upper deck have a clear view of the water through the glass partitions.



was done over time with a well thought-out theme. Hence, a pendant over the kitchen island is from France, and a very old framed map of the 'Big Three' Muskoka Lakes (a gift from Teresa to Len) hangs prominently on a wall on the main floor.

The dining room and kitchen are equally breathtaking areas in the 2,400-square-foot, three bedroom, three bathroom and one powder room cottage. (An additional two bedrooms and a bathroom are in the boat house.)

In continuing with the natural and rustic look throughout the cottage, Elmwood Fine Cabinetry created a stunning kitchen island that allows style and taste to meet form and function. Elmwood also made all the cabinets and countertops in their production facility in St. Catharines, Ontario.

The kitchen island is topped in Caesarstone which mimics natural stone. With 40 innovative colours and textures to choose from, Caesarstone is a premium quartz surface with remarkable style and endurance that is nonporous, and resistant to stains, scratches and heat.

The remarkable Knotty Alder custom dining room table is long and narrow to fit the space, and seats 10 comfortably. A custom range hood rests above the kitchen's gas range with two windows and shelving inserted to "break things up." The blue cabinet colours are Evening Dove by Benjamin Moore.

Adding a splash of colour throughout the cottage in the kitchen, hallways and Great Room are antique Persian rugs, runners and carpets. Walking along the

long, narrow hallway past the main floor bedrooms and bathrooms, one is awed by the majestic wood doors of reclaimed elm. All interior doors and the front door are made from solid elm, and the quality door hardware is from Upper Canada Specialty Hardware in Toronto.

You won't see a lot of wallpaper in the cottage because the owners are not fans of such wall coverings. But they agreed to have the walls in a guest room and bathroom covered in a textured and patterned grasscloth which the designers say creates a sense of coziness. And you won't see plain, run-of-the-mill furniture, but rather items like a unique dresser in the guest room, for example, that the designers say has "a bit of pizzazz."

Even the bathrooms are distinctive with



Decking that Delivers

The Lumberock synthetic decking delivers a product that will not rot, warp, twist, cup or mould and will not split, splinter, crack, stain or fade. The mono extruded solid material will not absorb water and is not slippery because of an embossed wood grain finish. It can be cut and shaped like wood with standard lengths of 12 and 16 feet. Available profiles range from 5/4x6 to 2x8 with custom length options. Lumberock can easily span up to 24-inch centres and is offered in 12 standard colours. No special tools needed, and no predrilling required for installation.

features such as a gorgeous shower by Adanac Glass and Mirror and, for example, there is a bronze, hammered vessel sink and similar faucet hardware, next to one of six Memoire toilets by Kohler that are in the two buildings. A Victoria + Albert soaker bathtub made of finely ground volcanic limestone can be found in the master bedroom's bathroom en suite. That bedroom was a particular accomplishment for the designers who created a feminine space for Teresa with pretty-patterned fabrics and cream drapes, but kept the ceiling beams, wood furniture, a massive and rustic wood-framed mirror, and an over-sized chair in front of the TV for a masculine effect.

The only other room with a distinctive masculine element is the loft which is the bedroom domain of the two Conlon boys.

Designer Kathryn M. Ireland once wrote, "Serious is a word that must be entirely avoided when it comes to decoration," and the pair of interior designers from Sarah Richardson Design took this to heart in most areas of the cottage and boathouse. "Nothing is considered too precious," says Mens Craig. "After all, it is a cottage!" That's why you'll see things like two vintage oars hanging on a wall next to the stairs leading to the loft. "Obviously, it's a cottage reference without being too kitschy," Fremont says.

The sense of fun continues as one steps outside to the deck with its Wood Mill Muskoka chairs and Alphanplantes patio furniture which are also placed on the decks below, at the water's edge, where the 640-square-foot boathouse was built. This

attractive structure, that was designed to blend in with the cottage design, serves a dual purpose. It's a parking spot for three powerful jet boats, and above that is the guest cottage, painted blue to reflect its watery surroundings. No attention to detail was missed in this cozy structure, from the specialty heating and cooling equipment by Comfort Connections, to the floors by Satin Finish Hardwood Flooring of Toronto that uses only North American lumber.

When the Arizona Coyotes play their last regular season home game on April 2, 2016 against the Washington Capitals, and if they're not headed for the playoffs, you can be sure that Len and Teresa Conlon will turn to each other, raise their Tim Hortons coffee and whisper, "Who's ready for Muskoka?" **HC**