



CAPE COD  
**Charm**  
ON LAKE MUSKOKA

STORY LORI DAVIS | PHOTOGRAPHY ZACK TOSSWILL



While they have lived all over the world, these homeowners call this six-bedroom lakeside cottage home. “This is where we can relax, recharge and enjoy our family and friends,” they say.

The family has had to relocate frequently to accommodate the owner’s career. In 2017, they decided it was time to look for a home base that would eventually become their permanent residence. A home on Lake Muskoka caught their attention. “I loved it the minute we walked in the door,” says the owner. “It had a nice flow with a big open space to hang out, lots of bedrooms and a beautiful view of the lake.”

After a few summers of cottaging, they decided to transform the property into a year-round home where they could eventually retire. They enlisted architectural firm **Spencer Douglas Planning & Design** to develop the design, custom home builder **PattyMac** to oversee construction and Shayla Knight, founder and principal designer of **Warm Welcome Design Inc.**, to lead the interior design. *Continued on page 52*

Every detail has been thoughtfully considered in this serene cottage retreat, perfectly positioned steps from Lake Muskoka and deeply connected to the surrounding environment. **RIGHT:** Inside, the home embodies coastal charm. The white and blue striped chair is custom made by Gresham House Furniture and the sculptural wood side table is from Phillips Collection.





The original plan focused on adding a large Muskoka room, but the project soon evolved into a renovation of the entire main level. This included the addition of a butler's pantry, a new kitchen, laundry room and the rebuilding of the staircase connecting the upper and lower levels, all completed by PattyMac.

The couple wanted traditional, comfortable décor with nothing too rustic. "When we bought the cottage, everything was knotty pine, even the countertops," says the owner. "It was beautiful in its time, but it was a lot." They turned to Shayla to begin the redesign. "Our architect recommended Shayla. She was easy to work with and the whole process felt so comfortable," the owner says.

Shayla's passion is creating quality, timeless interiors. "We focus on designing customized solutions for our clients and interiors that are meant to be shared," she says. While Shayla's signature style is contemporary, she pivots to suit her clients' needs. "We accommodate any aesthetic preferences," she says.

Shayla describes the owner's style as Nantucket Cape Cod, with its laid-back, beachy charm. "She loves blue and likes a classic coastal look, but we also incorporated a more neutral approach in some areas," says Shayla.

Because the family frequently hosts guests, they wanted a welcoming, modern design with the conveniences of a permanent home. "This is their family home. It had to feel like Muskoka but also function efficiently," Shayla explains. *Continued on page 54*



The homeowners wanted traditional, comfortable décor inside their cottage. A warm palette of seaside blues, ashy greys and creamy neutrals creates a lived-in, cosy interior. The living room coffee table is from Classic Home and both sofas were custom made by Gresham House Furniture.

**OPPOSITE, TOP:** The beautiful staircase with wrought iron spindles is a timeless design choice.

**BOTTOM:** Books, trinkets and a vintage typewriter are displayed on the living room bookshelves.





A butler's pantry provides extra storage and space, while a redesigned kitchen and laundry room improve functionality and ease of entertaining. "The extra storage and space are a huge bonus as the owners love to cook and entertain," says Shayla.

What started as a three-season Muskoka room evolved into a striking, year-round heart of the home where family and friends can play games, enjoy a cocktail, read a book or gather around the fireplace. "It's the hub of the home and where we make memories," says the owner. Warm timber trusses define the vaulted ceiling, giving the room classic cottage character.

Layered lighting from **Visual Comfort & Co.** adds depth and dimension to the space, while LED lights weave through the trusses, casting a soft glow across the ceiling. One wall is outfitted with custom cabinetry, a wet bar, hutch and wine fridge.

The long dining table shifts easily from weeknight dinners to afternoon board games, while a sitting area in front of large windows from **Muskoka Window and Door Centre**, overlooks the lake. "Shayla did a great job helping us define the different areas in the room," says the homeowner.

The custom kitchen is functional and inviting. "We've never lived long enough in one place to customize anything, so it's a dream come true," the owner reflects.

Dual islands support food preparation and provide generous space for gathering. "It's big enough so we can all cook together, play games or just hang out. It's where everyone wants to be," she adds. The islands are oriented to face the windows – a must-have for the owner.

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The butler's pantry is bright and airy, providing extra storage and prep space. Open shelving offers room to display pottery and kitchenware. **BELOW LEFT:** All the kitchen cabinetry was expertly crafted by Top Notch Cabinets, and the countertops were sourced from Ciot. Tongue-and-groove ceilings add a coastal cottage charm. **BELOW RIGHT:** Gold hardware adds a sense of luxury to the kitchen cabinets. The high-end appliances are from Wolf Gourmet and Thermador.





Dual islands in the kitchen were a thoughtful design choice as the homeowners host friends and family often. The cabinetry was painted Benjamin Moore Newburyport Blue and the barstools were custom made by Gresham House Furniture.



The warm timber trusses in this room add drama and depth, while the surrounding windows from Muskoka Window and Door Centre keep the room feeling light and airy. Creamy neutrals, warm wood tones and rich leathers work together with natural ease.



**“WE STREAMLINED THE WOODS INTO A MORE INTENTIONAL SCHEME. IT’S MODERNIZED IN TERMS OF THE WOOD COLOUR AND CONTINUITY, WHICH GIVES A MORE FINISHED AND HARMONIOUS FEELING.”**

– SHAYLA KNIGHT

“I want to be able to look out the window while I’m cooking,” she says. To accomplish this, Shayla pushed one wall into the garage to gain the depth needed to integrate a butler’s pantry behind the kitchen. This allowed her to flip the islands’ orientation and better organize the space.

The custom cabinetry, crafted by **Top Notch Cabinets**, is finished in **Benjamin Moore Newburyport Blue**, reinforcing the Cape Cod-inspired palette while providing a striking contrast with the light walls. High-end appliances from **Wolf Gourmet** and **Thermador** ensure the kitchen functions as beautifully as it looks.

Originally, the interior combined an array of different woods, creating a disjointed patchwork effect. “We streamlined the woods into a more intentional scheme,” says Shayla. Instead of keeping the knotty pine on the walls, she opted for classic white tongue-and-groove panelling and a clear pine ceiling. **Vintage Hardwood Flooring** supplied the materials throughout. *Continued on page 60*



**ABOVE:** The stonework around the fireplace is a strong architectural detail that feels like true Muskoka. The round rattan light fixture is from Palecek. **RIGHT:** Benjamin Moore Iron Mountain colours the custom bar in the Muskoka room. The oversize dining table was custom made by Abacus Furniture Design.



A true private paradise, where sweeping views of the lake unfold from nearly every window in the cottage.



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“It’s modernized in terms of the wood colour and continuity, which overall gives a more connected, finished and harmonious feeling,” explains Shayla.

With the renovations complete, this lake house now has everything in place to serve as the family’s permanent home. “It’s special in so many ways,” say the owners. “When we walk in the door and see the lake and trees out the windows, we feel at peace. It’s more than just a getaway now, it’s a home base for our family that is functional and comfortable.” **OH**

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**ABOVE LEFT:** A bright and airy laundry room painted in Benjamin Moore White Dove. **ABOVE:** The pool table is well-loved by friends and family. The tongue-and-groove walls are painted Benjamin Moore Winter Lake and the luxurious window coverings are from Window Wear Drapes. **LEFT:** Shayla wasn’t afraid to play with different patterns and textures on the sofa pillows.