

WITH COLIN AND JUSTIN 

here

Exploring the New Rural Lifestyle

Volume two | Issue 3 | Summer 2022 | FREE

Is the farm the new cottage?

A sprawling
homestead could
be exactly what
you need

Summer adventure awaits

Driving Mrs. Rowan

How a simple ride
started a 50 year
connection to
Cottage Country

Discovering

Haliburton Highlands
Kawartha Lakes
and Muskoka

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FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHY



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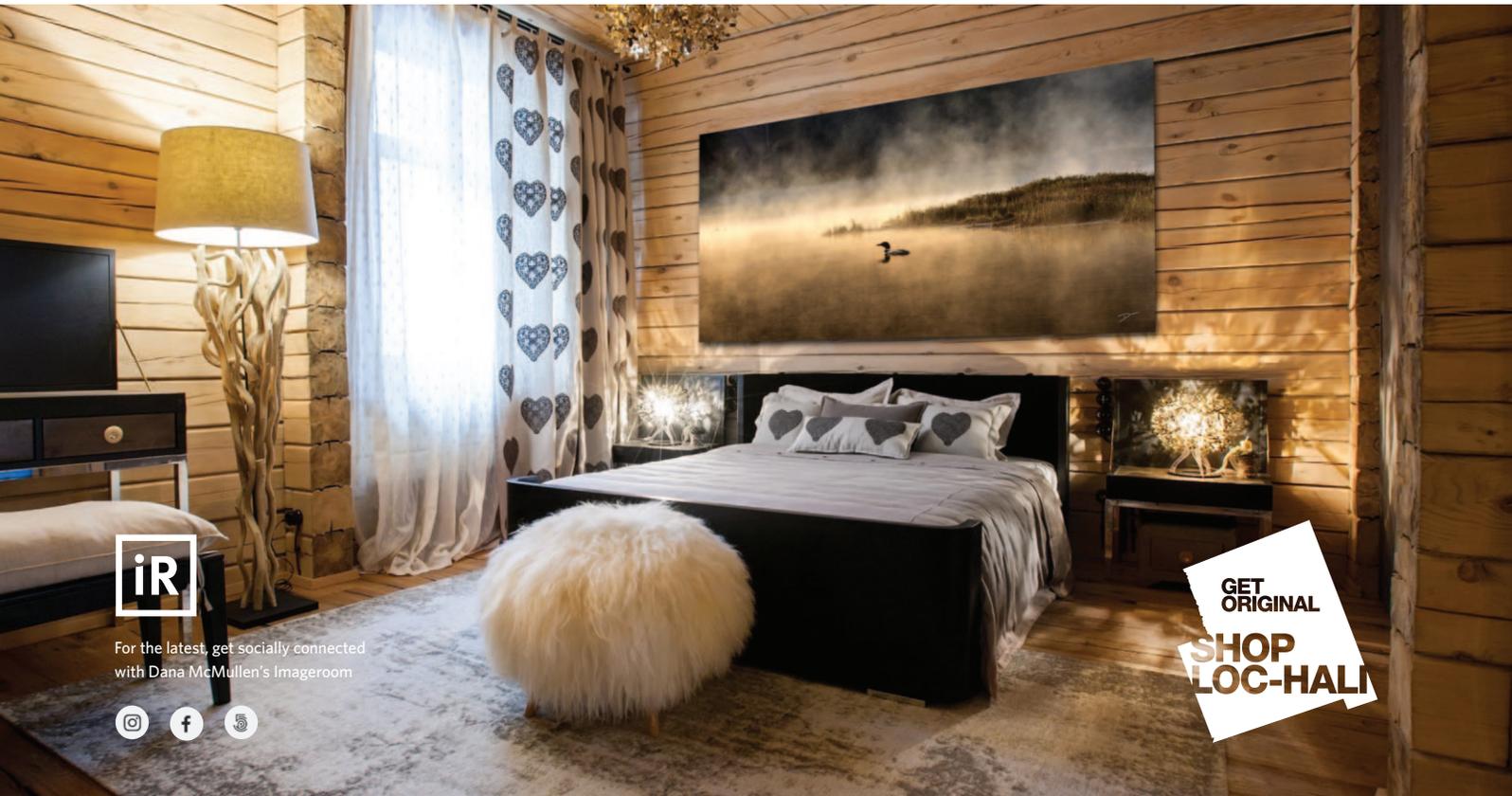


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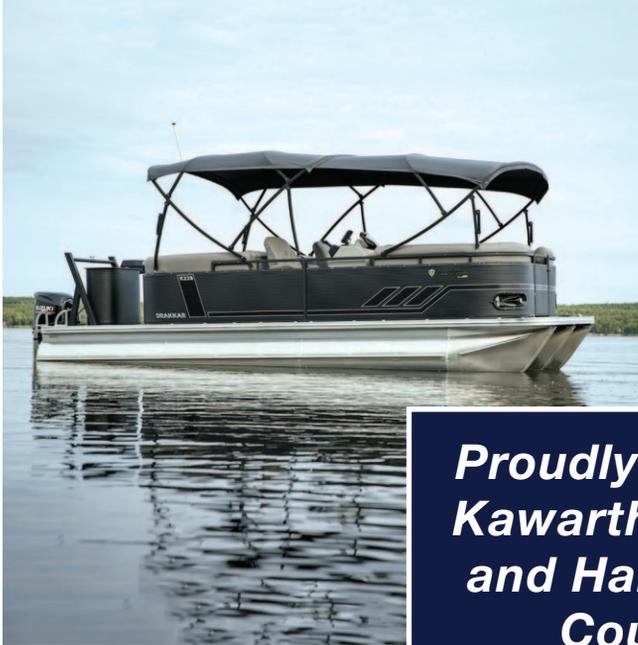
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On the cover

Photography by DoubleSpacePhoto.com

On this page

Colin & Justin photo by Danielle Meredith

Land Acknowledgement

In the Iroquois language, kanata translates to "village," and the land on which we are guests is now known as Canada. We acknowledge that the areas covered by *Here With Colin and Justin* are on the traditional territories of this land's Indigenous peoples. These territories include the Algonquin, Anishinabewaki, Haudenosaunee, Mississauga and Wendake First Nations.



It's *Here*, it's there, it's everywhere!

Yes indeed – summer is finally upon us, and with its arrival come glorious days without masks, distance nor (hopefully) a care in the world. If you, like we, are desperate to move on and get back to normal, Ontario's Cottage Country could very well serve as the perfect place to escape as the worries of the world pass you by.

We recently bought a seasonal hotel in Cape Breton, so our personal cottage season in Haliburton will now run from October to June (with monthly Ontario summer weekends between) so we'll see you in snow boots, or on the ice. Amongst our first guests at North Star* this month were Alan and Ann Gordon, owners of RPM Marinas and the celebrated Kozy Korner diner in Haliburton. T'was great seeing Hali friends and catching up on what's happening in our favourite village!

In this issue, read one man's touching story that explains how chauffeuring a 72-year-old woman to her Algonquin Highlands cottage started a 50-year connection to Cottage Country, one that ultimately saw him buy his former employer's cabin to continue his life memories.

With Canada Day looming, we explore cool ways to get your Canuck on (throughout the year) with Indigenous art, hand-painted paddles and retro beaver t-shirts topping our shopping list.

Is the Canadian farm the new cottage? We showcase a wonderful new home inspired by Ontario's rich agricultural heritage, one realized as an incredible rural bolthole that seamlessly connects with its surrounding natural landscape to provide a truly luxurious home experience.

Whether you're a full-time resident or a seasonal visitor, take advantage of everything Cottage Country has to offer – from simple hikes to backcountry paddling adventures – with editor and thrill seeker Gale Beeby's guide to summer fun. Just don't forget the sunscreen!

Fancy indulging, this summer, in a lil' *shinrin-yoku*? Japanese for "forest bathing," read all about the practice of immersing in nature while moving slowly through the trees, your body and mind relaxed, creating a deeper connection with nature. Hey, who knew that a walk in the woods could be quite so therapeutic?

So there you have it: set your watch to summer – pour a glass of chilled rosé, take up residence on the dock and enjoy this issue of *Here*, while weighing up the excitement of everything that lies ahead over the next few months!

Enjoy!
Colin and Justin

Here: Exploring the New Rural Lifestyle

Here. It's where you are: a landscape stretching from the shores of Georgian Bay, eastward through the Haliburton Highlands and south to the Kawartha Lakes.

It's Ontario's Cottage Country – reimagined and revitalized.

Central Ontario is experiencing the fastest growth since Confederation. A population of former city dwellers – educated, travelled, skilled and savvy – is heading north, in search of something new and better, beyond the concrete highways and glass towers (and the physical and mental confines) that typify an urban existence.

Here is dotted with resort villages and former industrial towns. It's infused with natural assets – lakes, hills, rivers and forests – and peopled by industrious, storied locals, and those who have joined them, seeking to explore and invest in small-town life. It's a region that positively brims with opportunities to embrace the New Rural Lifestyle. It presents nothing less than a more fulfilling, happier way of life.

The New Rural Lifestyle is entrepreneurial. It involves shifting focus from oneself to one's surroundings, all the time fully engaged with the community, in one of the world's most beautiful places.

Here With Colin and Justin is the standard bearer for the New Rural Lifestyle. It's the way forward: a magazine imagined to make the very best of rural life. And, indeed, the best of life itself.

Here is about:

- Building homes that reflect values of quality, durability, sustainability and responsibility;
- The way in which towns are revitalizing and reinventing themselves;
- Setting up successful professional practices, businesses, stores and workshops;
- Engaging in volunteer opportunities;
- Solving problems and building communities;
- Enjoying the outdoors and nature;
- Buying local first;
- Living an authentic life.

Here is where you are.



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If you've grown tired of an urban existence, a sprawling homestead could be exactly what you need.



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How buying a marina on Kawagama Lake changed one family's lives – for the better.



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Cool Canadiana

Make every day Canada Day and celebrate in style with Colin and Justin’s guide to cool Canada.



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Tree therapy

Forest bathing is the practice of immersing yourself in nature.



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Summer gardening 101

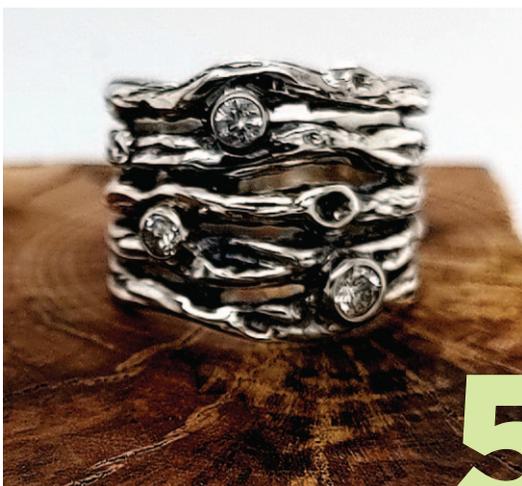
This is the perfect time of year to think about how you can make the cottage experience more enjoyable.



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Driving Mrs. Rowan

Driving a 72-year-old woman to her cottage in the Algonquin Highlands started a 50-year connection to a cottage community.



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A wealth of talent

Cottage Country’s artisans, crafters, artists and makers create things of beauty.





Is the farm the new cottage?

If you've grown tired of an urban existence, a sprawling homestead could be exactly what you need to put yourself out to pasture.

by Colin and Justin
photography by [DoubleSpacePhoto.com](https://www.DoubleSpacePhoto.com)





With a larger number of people than before leaving (or at least planning to leave) the city in search of an eminently more pastoral existence, the rural aspirant real estate wish list has broadened to include churches, barns, farms and many other former commercially zoned prospects.

The dictionary definition of farm describes a plot of land used to grow crops and raise livestock. In the modern oeuvre, however, the Canadian farm has broadened its appeal to become a lifestyle choice with ‘arm to table cooking and farmers’ market sensibilities becoming elevated lifestyle choices for which people long. It’s fair to observe that living, nay, existing, on a farm, these days, is as much about raising spirits as it once was raising cattle or crops.

When it comes to real estate, the farm has also become a source of inspiration: the appeal of immersion in the rolling

countryside and owning acreage now key areas for which would-be buyers dream. If you’ve grown tired of an urban existence, and crave splendid isolation, a sprawling homestead could be exactly what you need to put yourself out to pasture – in the nicest possible way.

The Farm, imagined by architect Scott Posno and interior designed by & Daughters, is both an industrial inspired building and a luxurious rural retreat. Located an hour east of Toronto, it occupies a 65-acre site, set as it is amongst the peaceful green fields of this Southwestern Ontario agricultural region, adjacent to the lush Ganaraska Forest. It’s a truly commanding and atmospheric affair.

Offering total farmland immersion, the property is surrounded by rolling meadows, a large pond, a stream, a woodlot and a walking trail. The exterior architecture perfectly





aligns with the surrounding six farmhouses, while the interior design is minimalist, modern and sophisticated. The structure, it's fair to report, sits harmoniously with the ancillary working buildings, while offering a catalogue of indulgent surprises.

Positioning of any new building is crucial: here the main house pivots atop a shallow ridge that follows a north-south orientation, with the primary longitudinal elevation facing east to capture morning light and compelling views of the property's rolling hills, dense thickets and the forest beyond. As farms go, this one more than successfully harvests the natural beauty of its surroundings.

Set back some 200 feet from a dead-end gravel road and accessed from an L-shaped driveway, the property has an agricultural, long barn feel, exaggerated in length to provide modernity and extra living space.

Extending some 153 feet from garage to master suite, the

edifice is clad in cedar (stained soft charcoal) with a standing-seam metal roof featuring deep overhangs, either end, perfectly colour matched in a gentle palette that perfectly complements the varied tones of the foliage, bark and rocky landscape. The look is gently underplayed, with statement planting and monumental walls providing the only clues to the modernity that lies within.

For us, the key ingredient to a successful rural home is connectivity to the landscape, and the ability to be present or hidden as required. The domicile achieves this courtesy of multiple entry points that allow occupants to access the great outdoors from many different rooms.

The careful balance of windows and doors provide unbroken sightlines which allow occupants to experience the horizon beyond, and a sense of endless space, even from within. The



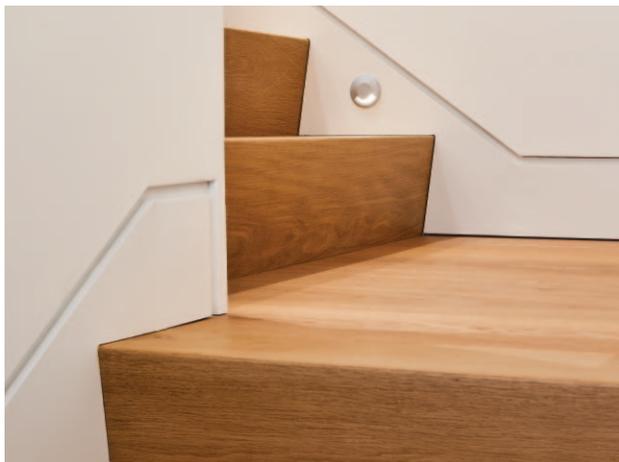


door at the front entrance on the west elevation is balanced to the east by an operable window wall that connects interior living space with the generously scaled outdoor patio. Considerations such as these capitalise on the verdant, seemingly limitless view while ushering in a natural air flow that doesn't rely on mechanical intervention.

One of our favourite features, the dining room, is located at the building's north end. The cavernous space occupies the home's full 22-foot width, and offers functional flexibility: when sliding glass pocket doors are closed, it's a warm and intimate gathering space, but when the portals roll open, it becomes a fresh breezeway, one that isn't simply a congregational outdoor room, but a conduit that links front and back, interior and exterior, east and west.

Living amidst the rural idyll, as we see it certainly, is as much





about seeking quiet, personal time as it is sharing good times with others, and this home sequences balance by keeping group and individual spaces apart, as required. To deliver privacy and sanctuary, the longhouse separates sleeping quarters: a luxurious double-height master suite enjoys a privileged position with southern orientation and a secluded patio, while the other two bedrooms are located on the second floor. Further, a loft space above the garage functions as an artist's studio or a self-contained guest suite.

Overall, the interior suffuses restrained materials that support the simplicity of form, and the subtleties of light and shadow. Polished concrete floors in public areas are enhanced by an abundance of white oak used for millwork and across the stairs and flooring on the second level. The Douglas fir structural ceiling whispers rustic, while the brightly patterned





corner seating takes bohemia on a modern journey. It's all, we suppose, in the mix.

Fifty feet south of the main house, relaxation and repair are the order of the day with a secondary zone that includes an outdoor pool, hot tub and a sunken fire pit. The carefully considered architecture reads like a restful resort, providing, as it does, much needed reward and respite from the world beyond, with a sauna and a compact cabana acting as pool house and perfectly proportioned additional one-bedroom guest suite should ancillary accommodation be required.

Like a carefully grown crop, this beautiful farm has risen from the seeds of careful planning. It's been tended and nurtured to harvest the ultimate backdrop for family life. And it's proof perfect, were it ever required, that the right conditions are what optimal growth is all about. *

Architect: Scott Posno Design, ScottPosno.com

Designer and firm principal: Scott Posno

Project design lead: Darcy Hanna

Interior design: & Daughters, And-Daughters.com

Builder: Den Bosch & Finchley, DenBosch.ca

Structural engineer: Blackwell Structural Engineers, Blackwell.ca

Millworker: LakelandInteriors.ca

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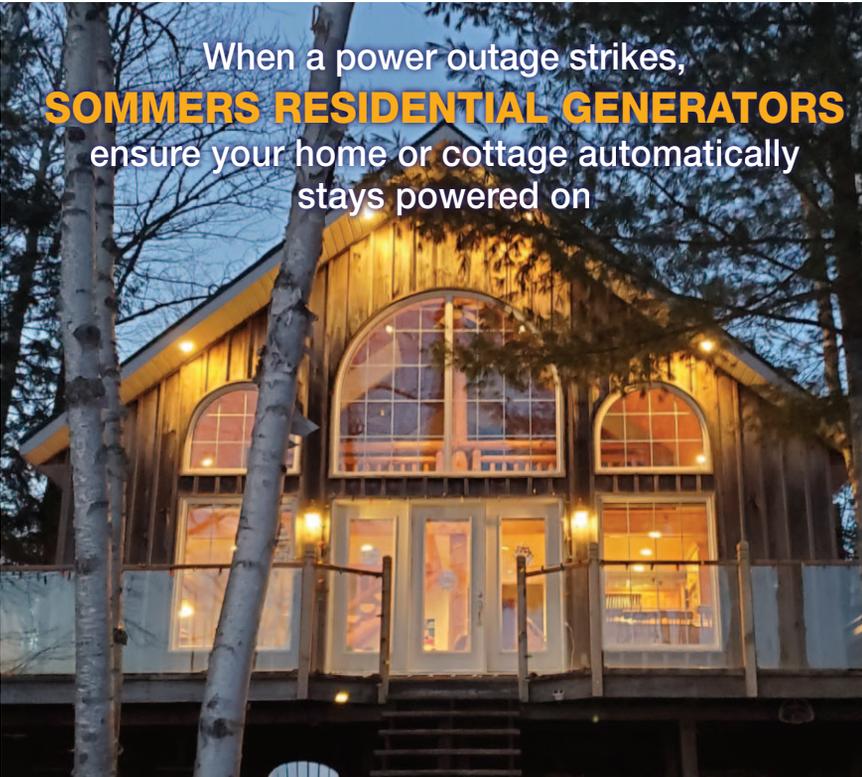
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by Gale Beeby



GEORGIAN BAY

Scenic Caves Nature Adventures Blue Mountains

Set within one of Canada's 16 UNESCO biosphere reserves, Scenic Caves Nature Adventures is situated on 370 acres of the Niagara Escarpment. The location provides the perfect views of the surrounding area as well as Southern Ontario's longest suspension footbridge. Explore the network of trails and admire the life-size wooden sculptures, and kids can test their strength at the Children's Adventure Playground. Explore the series of natural caves and caverns along self-guided trails that weave throughout 17 unique geological features, naturally carved millions of years ago by glacial ice. The site also includes picnic grounds, a fishpond, mini golf, panning for minerals, artifacts and two adventures playgrounds.

ScenicCaves.com

Sainte-Marie among the Hurons Midland

Ontario's first European settlement, Sainte-Marie among the Hurons was the headquarters for the French Jesuit Mission to the Wendat (Huron) people in the early 17th century. After extensive archaeological and historical research, Sainte-Marie among the Hurons is now a world-renowned recreation of that community. Visitors get a unique opportunity to see how the the earliest Canadian pioneers and the Indigenous people lived through guided or self-guided visits, interactive education programs, special events and the Interpretive Museum. Connected to the site is The Martyrs' Shrine, which sits on 300 acres of forests, gardens, pathways and devotional spaces. It is a tribute to St. Jean de



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Discovery Harbour



Sheffield Park Black History
& Cultural Museum

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SaintMarieAmongTheHurons.on.ca | Martyrs-Shrine.com

Discovery Harbour Penetanguishene

Discovery Harbour traces its roots back to the original British naval and military base in Penetanguishene, built to safeguard access to Upper Canada after the War of 1812. The base kept ships prepared to supply British posts to the northwest. By 1820, it was home to over 70 people, including sailors, officers, shipwrights and soldiers. Five large ships, 15 smaller vessels and numerous workshops and dwellings were built. The site boasts five replica boats that are open to visitors, including the 79-foot gaff topsail schooner HMS Bee, a full-scale replica of her namesake, and the HMS Tecumseth, a topsail schooner that measures 124 feet, a warship that was sunk in 1828.

DiscoveryHarbour.on.ca

Wasaga Beach South Georgian Bay

Here you will find the world's longest freshwater beach – more than 14km – and one of Ontario's most unique coastal dune ecosystems. Visitors can enjoy the pristine natural landscape and panoramic views of South Georgian Bay. Here you will also find extended recreation trails for hiking, cycling, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling that wind through the diverse landscape. While there, try casting your rod in the Nottawasaga River for some magnificent game fishing, or jump out of a plane! There are also boat rentals available and great canoe routes to explore.

WasagaBeachTourism.com

Wines, spirits, brews and ciders South Georgian Bay

Plan your driving tour of South Georgian Bay's various wineries and brewhouses but don't forget the designated driver. However, if you and your companions want to partake in the sampling, consider an all-inclusive tour with Blue Mountain Adventures. Some of the establishments to visit include the Thornbury Village Cider and Brew House, Coffin Ridge, Side Launch Brewing Company, Georgian Hill Vineyard, Creemore Spring Brewery, The Collingwood Brewery, Black Bellows, The Roost Winery, Georgian Bay Spirit Co., Heretic Spirits, Freshwater Distillery, Northwinds Brewhouse and Kitchen and the Wasaga Beach Brewing Co.

VisitorGuide.SouthGeorgianBay.ca

Sheffield Park Black History & Cultural Museum Thornbury

It was the dream of Howard Sheffield to gather and preserve the history of his family and it blossomed into a wider history of the black pioneers and settlers of South Georgian Bay. His collection of family photos and artifacts attracted donations of more items from families who grew up with the original homesteaders. Interest increased and various cultural artifacts were donated to the project. The museum includes pioneer life and times, the social networking of a community and the preservation of past generations.

SheffieldParkBlackHistory.com



Haliburton Sculpture Forest



Silent Lake Provincial Park



Paudash Lake



Hawks Log Chute

HALIBURTON HIGHLANDS

Haliburton Sculpture Forest

Haliburton

Located in Glebe Park, this is a unique outdoor collection of sculptures by Canadian and international artists. Follow the trails – walk or bike in summer, snowshoe or ski in winter – and enjoy the forest and artwork ... and bring your dog! The Sculpture Forest shares the park with the Haliburton Highlands Museum and the Haliburton campus of Fleming College.

HaliburtonSculptureForest.ca

Skyline Park

Haliburton

The trail up to Skyline Park is great for all skill levels and the payoff is breathtaking views of Haliburton and the surrounding area. The trail is open year-round and is pet friendly as long as dogs are leashed. There are places to sit and rest along the way and the trails are clearly marked. This area is perfect for families looking to connect with nature and take in the natural beauty of the area.

DysartEtAl.ca

Paudash Lake

Bancroft

Every angler's dream, Paudash Lake is famous for its largemouth bass but also has plenty of smallmouth bass and lake trout. Paudash Lake is home to several popular fish species and is surrounded by vast conservation areas. The lake's picturesque expanse of clear water is cradled between steep, tree-blanketed hills and dotted with rugged islands. Natural shorelines of impressive pink granite and towering pines alongside quiet bays and inlets provide plenty of opportunity for fishing, boating or simply watching the sunrise or set.

PaudashLake.org

Silent Lake Provincial Park

Bancroft

Established in 1975, Silent Lake Provincial Park was created to provide recreational activities close Haliburton and is considered one of the best in the province. The park – with Silent Lake as its centerpiece – spans over 3,975 acres and includes day activities as well as all-season cabins and yurts, as well as traditional camping sites. There are over 19km of hiking trails, 17km of mountain biking trails, two sandy beaches and 34km of cross-country ski trails with heated camp cabins. Over 80 per cent of the park remains in its natural state.

OntarioParks.com

Hawks Log Chute

Algonquin Highlands

In the late 1800s there were thousands of wooden chutes around the province, which were used to carry logs over rough river landscapes to a sawmill. The historic Hawk Log Chute is the only remaining log chute in Ontario and, at 151 years old, it has been painstakingly restored and reconstructed. This historic site is a testament to the tenacity and perseverance of the tens of thousands of men who made their living in the logging industry, and whose courage helped forge the communities of rural Ontario. The Hawk Log Chute is part of the Stanhope Museum, which boasts one of the largest archives of Ontario pioneer history.

StanhopeMuseum.on.ca

Wolf Centre at Haliburton Forest and Wildlife Reserve

Haliburton

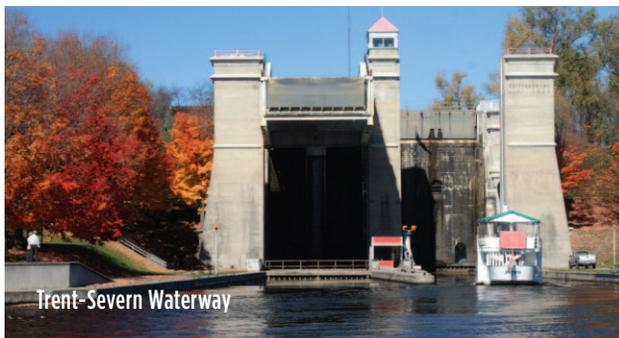
The Wolf Sanctuary – 15 acres of protected reserve – is situated within 100,000 acres of hardwood forest at the Haliburton Forest and Wildlife Reserve. Here you'll be able to witness a pack of



Wolf Centre



Victoria Rail Trail



Trent-Severn Waterway



Kawartha Settlers' Village

grey wolves in their natural habitat as they roam freely through their territory. Visitors can watch as the wolves bask in the sun or play in their pack. The centre includes exhibits, a cinema, classroom, a retail space and a large indoor observatory. Catch a glimpse of the permanent wolf pack of the area and learn more about the animals from the friendly and knowledgeable staff. While visiting the wolves, you should also explore the Haliburton Forest, which boasts 100 lakes to explore, as well as tree canopy tours, camping, hiking and paddling.

HaliburtonForest.com

KAWARTHA LAKES

Trent-Severn Waterway

Salute human ingenuity navigating the heritage canals, locks and boat lifts along the 386km Trent-Severn Waterway, connecting the playgrounds of Lake Ontario and Lake Huron. Cruise Canada's renowned inland passageway through historic lock stations. Travel into Cottage Country by water or by car and watch the Big Chute Marine Railway in action. Stare up at the towering Peterborough Lift Lock and learn about its history at the Visitor Centre. Explore lumber towns, farm villages and the spectacular pre-Cambrian landscape of the Canadian Shield. Drive, boat or paddle ... you will enjoy every minute.

PC.GC.ca/en/lhn-nhs/on/TrentSevern

Drive-in Movies

If you're old enough, a drive-in double feature was a part of your childhood experience. Now you can share the joy with your loved ones – including the family pet – at one of two drive-ins located in Cottage Country, a rare yet classic experience. It's an opportunity to enjoy snacks and a great flick from the comfort of your own car, kids in their pjs in the

backseat, forcing themselves to stay awake! The Lindsay Drive-in was built in the mid 1950s during the growth of drive-ins and is now celebrating 85 years of hosting box office hits on its two oversized screens. The Muskoka Drive-in features a barbecue that offers up sausages, burgers and hot dogs.

MuskokaDrivein.com | LindsayDrivein.ca

Victoria Rail Trail

The 55km-long Victoria Recreation Corridor is a rail trail that stretches from Lindsay to Kinmount and is used year-round for hiking, horseback riding, cycling, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling. The trail follows the former CN rail line, which was constructed beginning in 1874. The trail takes you from Lindsay along Sturgeon Lake to Felon Falls and then travels along Cameron Lake. At the north end of Cameron Lake, the trail follows the Burnt River north, eventually leading to Kinmount. The trip from Felon Falls north to Kinmount is 32 km but it takes you through some of the County's most scenic land. From Cameron the trail travel towards Ken Reid Conservation Area.

OntarioTrails.on.ca

Kawartha Settlers' Village Bobcaygeon

What was once a thriving family farm, Kawartha Settlers' Village is now home to a fascinating collection of over 20 historic homes and buildings. Experience what life was like for pioneers as you stroll through the village and discover artifacts dating from the 1830s. While there, visit the Discovery Trail, which meanders around the perimeter of the site, and the Environmental Park with its vast assortment of plant life, wild flowers, trees and shrubs. It's also a great spot for bird watching.

SettlersVillage.org



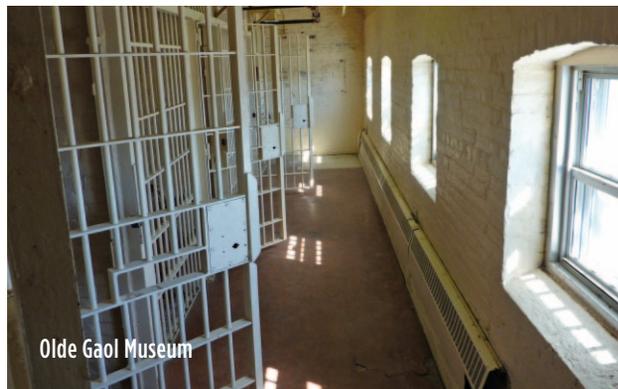
Horseless Carriage Museum



Dive Kawartha



Houseboating



Olde Gaol Museum

Horseless Carriage Museum Fenelon Falls

The Horseless Carriage Museum features early transportation and mechanical artifacts and has something to interest everyone. The museum features some of Canada's oldest running cars, gas station memorabilia, curiosities and an 1890s general store, which features handmade crafts from leather goods, to quilts, carvings, knitting and jewellery. A collection of antique scales may tempt you to sample the old-fashioned candies, as well as the maple syrup, honey and homemade preserves.

HorselessCarriage.ca

Kinmount Model Railroad & Museum Kinmount

The museum is located in the former Kinmount Railroad Station on the banks of the Burnt River, appearing just as it was in the 1800s. The station's passenger waiting area, ticket office and baggage room have been restored to display historic artifacts, memorabilia, photos and posters. Taking up the entire baggage room, the model railway gives a unique picture of Kinmount and the neighbouring towns and villages situated along the railway line as they were many years ago.

Kinmount.ca

Olde Gaol Museum Lindsay

Tour the Olde Gaol and view the exhibits that highlight the history of the Victoria County Gaol from its construction in 1863 to its closure in 2003, when the inmates were moved to the Central East Correction Centre in Lindsay. Discover what the daily lives of the inmates and their jailers was like throughout the late 19th century and visit the cells that housed the prisoners. While visiting the gaol, take a stroll

through the Kawartha Lakes Museum and Archives, which shares and preserves fascinating stories and artifacts from the history of the area.

OldeGaolMuseum.ca

Houseboating

Kawartha Lakes is known as the houseboating capital of the Ontario. Houseboating is a great way to explore the lakes, canals and locks of the Trent-Severn Waterway and discover the many quaint villages, attractions and experiences throughout the region, all while taking your "cottage" along with you. At night, you will be able to anchor in a bay or on an abandoned shoreline. You may also dock at the many marinas located along the route. Whether you're looking for peaceful solitude, a family adventure, or time on the water with friends, a houseboat may be the perfect solution.

ExploreKawarthaLakes.com

Dive Kawartha Lindsay

Want to learn how to SCUBA dive? Dive Kawartha is the only 5-star PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors) dive centre in Kawartha Lakes, and it offers instruction for people of all ages. Diving is a doorway to amazing fun and adventure, not only at home but around world. Once certified, you can join one of Dive Kawartha's adventures, either in the Great Lakes, the St. Lawrence River, or one of their international destinations.

DiveKawartha.ca



Torrance Barrens Dark Sky Reserve



Dorset Lookout Tower



Flyboarding

MUSKOKA

Dorset Lookout Tower

With a breathtaking 360-degree view, the observation deck of the historic tower stands 142m above Lake of Bays. The original tower was built in 1922, was 25m high and was used as a fire lookout tower until 1961. The current tower was built in 1967 and is 30m high and was erected for visitors to enjoy the view. The trails surrounding the tower vary in skill levels, but the incline can be steep in places so wear sturdy shoes and prepare for a hike if you plan to explore the area. Dorset Lookout Tower is sure to stun and amaze even the most avid outdoor adventurer.

AlgonquinHighlands.ca

Torrance Barrens Dark Sky Reserve Gravenhurst

Listen to the wolves howl as you take in the night sky at the Torrance Barrens Conservation Area and Dark Sky Reserve. The Torrance Barrens, the world's first permanently designated Dark Sky Reserve, is surrounded by protected or undeveloped land, which acts as a buffer from urban light. Vast expanses of Canadian Shield bedrock provide an unobstructed surface from which to observe the sky. The granite surface is impervious to vibrations, making it ideal for telescopes and photography. It's also a great place to see the Northern Lights. Torrance Barrens also offers daytime activities, so take a hike, mountain bike, snowmobile, cross-country ski, go birding and enjoy the wildlife.

TorranceBarrens.com

Muskoka Steamship and Discovery Centre Gravenhurst

Muskoka's steamship heritage is older than Canada and the first ship steamed Lake Muskoka in 1866. The Muskoka

Steamship and Discovery Centre offers trips aboard the Royal Mail Ship Segwun – at over 130 years old, she is North America's oldest operating mail steamship – as well as the Wenonrah II, a modern interpretation of a traditional steamship. A variety of cruises are offered, from a one-hour sightseeing trip, to an evening sail with dinner. Before or after your trip, visit the Discovery Centre, which includes a one-of-a-kind museum, galleries, a boatbuilder workshop and a kids' zone.

RealMuskoka.com

Flyboarding Port Carling

Ever wanted to fly like a superhero? Well, get your Superman on with the latest extreme watersport, flyboarding – it's like a jetpack for the feet. A flyboard is a hydroflight device that allows riders to soar up to 15m in the air, dive into the water and perform incredible aerial flips and spins. This exciting new sport will have you leaping tall buildings in a single bound, and, if you can mount a camera to your helmet, you can make a pretty awesome video to share with friends.

SWSMuskoka.com

The Tree Museum Gravenhurst

The Tree Museum isn't a museum about trees, its art installations set among a 200-acre woodlot. The sculptures are in the woods and on the rocks of the Canadian Shield and requires participants to hike into the forest to see the exhibits. Some of the works are permanent and some are transitory. The tour is self-guided with information signs to help you enjoy the experience. Hiking boots are highly recommended and along the way you may want to climb a few of the rocks.

TheTreeMuseum.ca



Muskoka
Zip Lines &
Aerial Park



Santa's Village



Chasing Waterfalls



Lake of Bays Marine Museum



Four Corners Algonquin

Lake of Bays Marine Museum

Dorset

Located next to the SS Bigwin dock, the Marine Museum offers a collection of artifacts and photographs about the marine history of Lake of Bay and the SS Bigwin. The ship herself has a storied history. In 1925, having been purchased from a private owner, she set sail on the Lake of Bays, joining other wooden steamships that were part of the transport service on Muskoka's waterways. She later became the property of the Bigwin Inn and ferried guests – many famous – to the island resort. She fell into disrepair, but was restored and officially relaunched in 2013 and guests can now take in the scenic islands, captivating forests and rugged cliffs on Lake of Bays.

SSBigWin.com

Muskoka Zip Lines & Aerial Park | Santa's Village

Bracebridge

Nestled around Santa's Village, the Muskoka Zip Lines and Aerial Park offers all the excitement of a modern aerial adventure park with the added bonus of being next to a bustling amusement park. The facility offers adventure experiences for all ages – take a leap from the Jump Tower for a quick shot of adrenaline. Now in its 65th year, Santa's Village has lots to do for kids of all ages, including an enchanted forest to explore, a suspension bridge, elf school, go-karts, bumper cars, mini golf, a petting zoo (yes, there are reindeer), various rides and, of course, Santa!

SantasVillage.ca

Four Corners Algonquin

Whitney

Four Corners Algonquin offers glamping, camping and tiny house accommodations on 90 acres of an off-grid, dark-sky-friendly campground at the edge of Algonquin Park's east gate. Enjoy a weather-tight safari tent, pole tent, ball tent or tiny home, perfect for those seeking an authentic but comfortable experience or just a dry place to stay before or after a backcountry expedition. Four Corners newest accommodations are their bubble tents – transparent igloo-like structures that are bug and pollen free but allow guests to enjoy the dance of the campfire flames and the breathtaking views of the Milky Way.

FourCornersAlgonquin.ca

Chasing Waterfalls

Bracebridge

Muskoka is known for its beautiful lakes and connected waterways and is home to some of the best waterfalls in the province. So, pack up the car and set out on a trip full of adventure to Bracebridge, home of four incredible waterfalls. The first stop is High Falls, which can be found just off Highway 11 a few minutes from downtown. You can view the falls from the top, looking down over the falls, and from the bottom, looking up at the cascading water. Just off the beaten path from High Falls is Pott's Falls. Wilson's Falls is just a short walk from downtown, offering a breathtaking view of the Muskoka River. The last stop is Bracebridge Falls, the most famous of them all. There is a lot of history here and it is recommended you take your time and read the many historic plaques that can be found along the walking trails.

VisitTheBridge.ca

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Ride the waves!

Bruce Macpherson and Vanessa Slack, along with their three sons, took the plunge and bought a marina on Kawagama Lake. It's a life choice that changed - even bettered - the way in which they relate to each other. You might call it water therapy.

*by Gale Beeby
photography by Caitlin Dunlop*



“Teenagers are amazing!” exclaims Vanessa Slack, a former high school teacher and mother of three boys. It’s a sentiment that most people might not share, but for Slack and her husband, Bruce Macpherson, their three sons – Rory, Alex and Angus – are pretty amazing.

Actually, Vanessa and Bruce are pretty amazing, too, as I quickly discovered during our wide-ranging conversation.

The Slack and Mac family, as they call themselves, recently moved permanently to Dorset when they purchased the Mountain Trout House Marina (MTHM), located on Kawagama Lake where they have owned a cottage for over 20 years.

“We bought the cottage before we even bought a house,” Bruce recalls. “We both grew up with cottage access and we knew we wanted to continue that tradition with our children.

“We also lived for three years in North Bay, where I was the construction manager during the building of the new hospital there. It gave us a taste of life outside the GTA – rocks, pines,

lakes and snowmobiling from our driveway – so we’ve had experience living in the north,” says Bruce, 54, who worked for PCL Construction for 35 years. “Vanessa took Angus to nursery school on a snowmobile!”

Vanessa taught high school religion for the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, where she remembers having “big” conversations with her students, not only about spirituality, but also about growing up in these extraordinary times and dealing with the pressures of being a teenager, family life, sexuality and any other subject that came up.

“I’d close the classroom door, and we’d just talk,” she says. “I loved those conversations.”

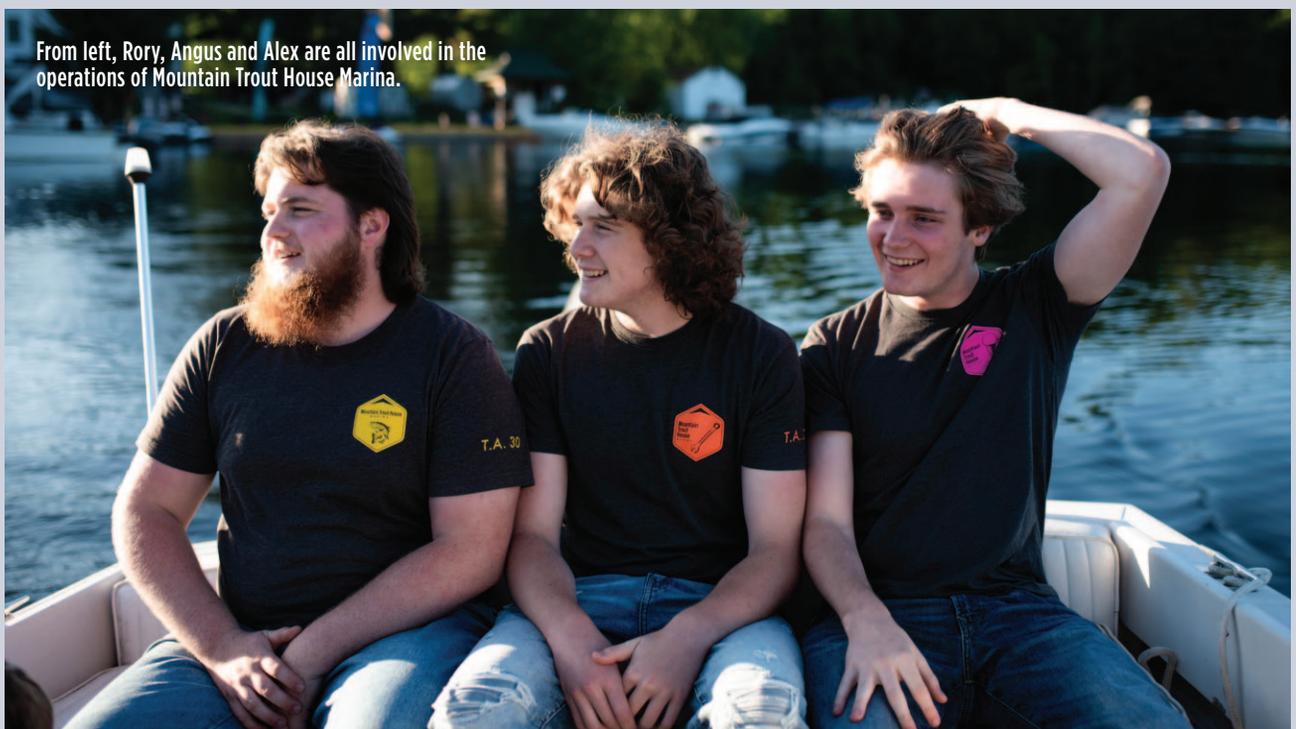
Vanessa has a master’s degree in theology from Trinity College, was certified in grief care and broadened those skills when she completed a clinical pastoral unit at Wilfred Laurier University and Hamilton Health, helping patients, family and staff with loss and grief.



Donzi the Labrador retriever is the marina's resident dog.



Vanessa and Bruce take a ride on the lake with Rory, Angus and Alex.



From left, Rory, Angus and Alex are all involved in the operations of Mountain Trout House Marina.

She has found her pastoral skills are in demand as she tends to her new “flock” at the marina. Interacting with her customers is kind of like being a bartender – “if you are open and ready to listen, people will talk to you just about anything.”

“It’s been very nice to be able to help people with whatever crisis or issue they might want to share with me.”

“She has an incredible ability to be calm and be present with people,” Bruce says. “She is someone who truly cares about how people are doing emotionally and spiritually”

All in the family

All of Bruce and Vanessa’s sons are involved in the operations of MTHM.

Rory, 20, who just finished his first year at Queen’s University studying political science, wants to be a diesel mechanic. “He loves getting his hands dirty,” Vanessa says, adding that son Alex, 18 – a student at Carleton University – does not. Angus, 16, is

still in high school but is a “cool kid,” according to his mother. “He’s been blacksmithing since he was 12. He has his own forge, and we’re encouraging him to set it up at the marina.”

Rory was in his gap year between high school and university when Vanessa and Bruce bought the marina and moved north. He has since become Bruce’s right-hand man, Vanessa says proudly.

“He’s become my best friend,” Bruce adds.

“It’s really wonderful to see them become aware of just how much Bruce knows about boats and motors,” says Vanessa, adding that Bruce has a huge collection of books and magazines about boats and boatbuilding, and also collects antique motors.

“It’s been a hard slog since he took over the business, but working with my sons is wonderful,” says Bruce.

They did discuss the purchase and move with their sons before diving into a new way of life. “They were great,” Vanessa



Vanessa and Bruce, along with their three sons Rory, Angus and Alex, have become the stewards of Mountain Trout House Marina, which dates back to 1938.

recalls, “so gentle. They said if it was going to make dad happy, then they were okay. Rory, on the other hand, was all in right from the beginning.”

When Vanessa is asked what it’s like to be the only female in a house full of men and boys, she laughs and says she’s no longer the only girl as they recently adopted Donzi, a silver Labrador who is the marina’s resident dog and mascot. “It’s nice to have some female companionship,” says Vanessa, who has brought yoga and fitness classes to the dock of MTHM and plans to expand that into mindfulness meditation sessions, as well as canoe and wilderness retreats for women through the Sister Soulace community.

Life on the lake

Mountain Trout House Marina is a full-service facility that sells and services boats (motorized and otherwise), as well as having rental stock, motors, water skis, wakeboards, inflatables and water toys.

The name of the marina – and its tagline *Loyal to the Lake* – date back to 1938, when it first opened. There is a house on the site, which the Macs and Slack are living in, that also has a long history. “It was once a restaurant, a post office and a logging cabin,” Vanessa says. “It’s got a real *Schitt’s Creek* feel to it,” she says with a laugh.

The marina store carries all the cottage essentials including food, fuel, gifts, ice cream and – just arrived – *Loyal to the Lake* and *Kawagama Lake* branded merchandise.

They have plans to expand the business and are bringing in a food truck, which they’re going to name *Loyal to the Latte*. Bruce and Vanessa still own their original cottage and it is used mostly now for visiting friends and family.

“We moved here because we wanted more life balance and the ability to live, work and play, together” Vanessa says. “Unfortunately, we haven’t had a chance to play that much yet. We’re still trying to figure that out, but the boys are sure enjoying themselves.” *

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Cool Canadiana

Make every day Canada Day and celebrate this glorious country in style with our guide to cool Canada.

by Colin and Justin

Buffalo check, bunting and bursts of *O Canada* – common denominators as we celebrate Canada Day. But don't think you can only share your love of this great country once a year. Herewith a roster of ideas to get your Canadian on, all year round.

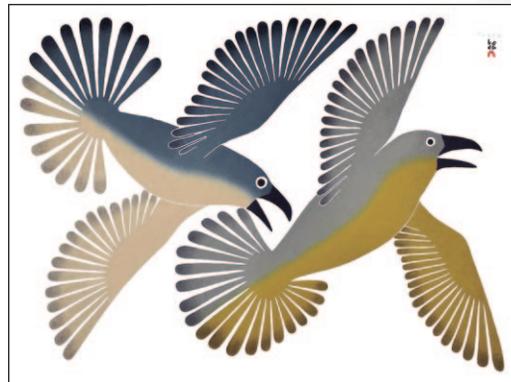


Retro t-shirt from Parks Canada

Vintage map pillows



"Dancing Ravens" by Ashevak



Bring home some indigenous art from the AGO with "Dancing Ravens" by Ashevak

Dip into Canada's heritage and celebrate beautiful Indigenous art with this reproduction of "Dancing Ravens" (2003) by Kenojuak Ashevak – a colourful and joyous piece featuring two brightly coloured ravens. Size: 11x14 inches, which includes a matted border. Material: 100lb cover paper. Made in Canada. **\$16.95 | Shop.AGO.ca**

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Get your geography on with vintage maps printed onto linen pillowcases complete with a 100 per cent down-filled insert (synthetic insert available on request). Make it totally personal with map prints available showing Muskoka, Haliburton, Georgian Bay, Lake Huron and more! **\$69.99 each | VintageMapCo.com**

Get your beaver on with a retro t-shirt from Parks Canada

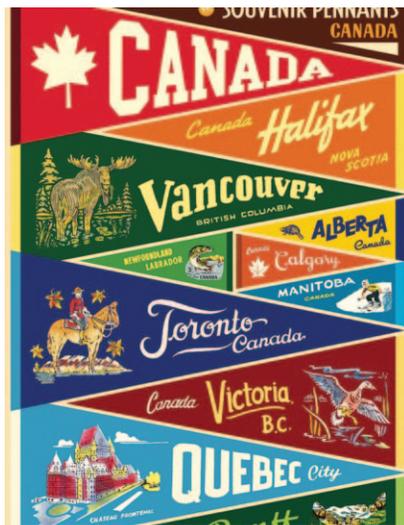
Celebrate our national animal and reminisce about your Parks Canada memories with this crew neck t-shirt adorned with the retro beaver logo. Made in Canada from 100 per cent combed cotton jersey, it feels every bit as good, damn it, as it looks. **\$34.95 | ParksCanadaShop.ca**



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RCMP classic blanket

Multi-stripe HBC Frame outdoor rug



Frame this to create your own artwork - Cavallini Papers Canada Pennants Wrap

This product is lovely enough to be framed and hung as a piece of artwork, or used to line guest room drawers to provide an unexpected hit of fun. Or use it for the purpose for which it was created and give the gift of Canada to the ones you love.
\$5.95 | TheCollectiveGood.ca

Cradle your baby in Canadiana with the Canada Creature Baby Blanket by Shared

Designed and manufactured in Canada, this super soft cotton blanket is designed to be gentle on a child's skin. Quilted on one side for comfort, with the opposite side decorated by Ani Castillo, the beautiful illustration features an adorable map of Canada showcasing creatures and critters that inhabit our home and native land. Perfect for your cuddle bug!
\$78 | DrakeGeneralStore.ca

Make your home stand out with accessories to get people talking

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) originated in the 1870s as Canada's first police force – 275 men on horseback, despatched to monitor whisky traders in Alberta. Here's their classic blanket – an ideal way to make your cottage even more arresting. Size: 54x52 inches, wool rich blend.
\$149.99 | RedCanoeBrands.com

Explore deep water design and hang a canoe paddle as wall decor

Perfect for gracing your lake house or city loft walls, these heritage inspired pieces are the original work of artist and designer Natasha Wittke, who, having reached international acclaim for her artistic sensibility, colour mixology and geometric patterns, carves every paddle by hand using FSC certified wood responsibly sourced from a sustainably managed forest in Canada.
\$465 | NorquayCo.com

Add a classic Canadian strip to your deck or patio with multi-stripe HBC Frame outdoor rug

The iconic multi-stripes of green, red, yellow and indigo were first introduced on the Hudson's Bay Point Blanket at the end of the 18th century. Today, they're available on a variety of great home accessories, including this commanding outdoor rug – the perfect way to add a burst of colour and texture to your patio, garden or deck.
\$198 | TheBay.com

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Making the most of your cottage time

Cottage season is here, and you've earned a getaway with the family!

Whether you're new to Ontario's Cottage Country, or have been coming for generations, being in nature — and particularly at the waterfront — is one of the greatest things about our beautiful province.

Waterfront living can be a wonderful time for friends and family. But there are lots of things to consider, from living in harmony with nature, safe boating, making affordable choices and doing all you can to keep the cottage experience just as wonderful for your family and the generations to come.

The Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA) is a not-for-profit organization that has been the voice of the waterfront since the 1960s. It will help you get the most out of your cottage investment and provide you with the information you will need about the ins-and-outs of rural living.

Tips to make the most of your cottage time

Get connected: Connect with your local lake association to find people who know the area. They'll tell you where the best butter tarts are, when the blackflies might leave, and the go-to contractors in your area. Not sure if there's a lake association near you? FOCA has over 525 volunteer member groups across Ontario. Find yours at FOCA.on.ca/list-of-associations/

Embrace your inner sloth: Ditch the lawn mower and hit the hammock. The butterflies, frogs, turtles and loons

you've come to love rely on naturalized areas for shelter and habitat. That means leaving logs and rocks at the water's edge and maintaining native species of shrubs with deep root systems that stabilize the shoreline to prevent erosion. Upside: less work for you.

Become septic savvy: Most cottages in Ontario are not on municipal water systems, so you'll need to know important septic system dos and don'ts, maintenance requirements and signs of trouble. Harsh chemicals could end up hurting your lake's water quality. For a crash course, check out FOCA's resources, including a 10-minute video that hits the highlights at FOCA.on.ca/septic-systems.

Right boat fun, right place: Whether you canoe, stand-up paddle, waterski or wakeboard, you'll need to take your watersport fun to the right part of the lake. Did you know that wakeboarding near shore causes erosion damage, can be dangerous to swimmers and swamps out loon nests? Big wake activities need to move far away from shorelines and narrows. Ensure you know how to be wake aware before you hit the water by visiting BeWakeAware.com

Get in the know and then tell two friends: Learn more by doing some light reading. Check out FOCA's Shoreline Owner's Guide (FOCA.on.ca/shoreline-owners-guide-to-healthy-waterfronts/) and then impress your friends and family with your Cottage Country know-how. And be sure to sign up for our monthly e-lets at FOCA.on.ca.

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Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations

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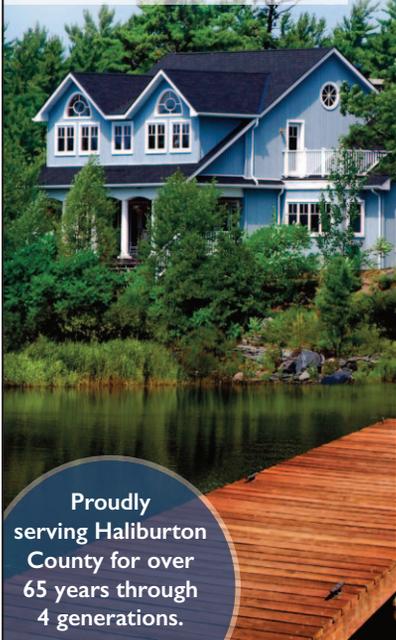


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Summer gardening 101

This is the perfect time of year to think about how you can make the cottage experience more enjoyable.

by Mark and Ben Cullen

As the temperatures rise, so does the traffic density leaving the Big City for Ontario's Cottage Country. As you sit in your car on your way up to the cottage, or on your way back home, this is the perfect time to think about how you can make the experience of being there more enjoyable.

Let us be the first to suggest that some attention to the cottage landscape can pay big dividends. With some careful planning and a professional execution, it is possible to enhance your time relaxing by the lake or entertaining on the deck.

When you get to the cottage, take a good look around and ask yourself how you can improve the following:

Outdoor cooking/entertainment

No doubt you have heard about the popular trend of the outdoor room. For some, this is no less than an outdoor entertainment centre, complete with a stainless steel half-ton barbecue, wood-fired pizza oven, fire pit, flatscreen TV, surround sound system and theatre seating. To get you started on a practical footing, consider:

- Your outdoor food prep area can be enhanced with the addition of an awning, gazebo or garden umbrella, quality patio/deck furniture and some large planters that will add colour and help to define the area. Fill the planters with hardy perennials that are appropriate for the sun/shade exposure in the area and make sure that you use plants that do not require a lot of watering. In the sun, we use a lot of stonecrops, sempervivums and sedums. In the shade, we use hostas (attractive to deer) and hardy ivies.

- Consider either replacing your old deck with a new one made of synthetic wood (composed of recycled plastic) or, at the very least, cleaning the existing deck using a wood cleaner and power washer. When replacing your current deck, consider increasing the size of it as we seldom make a deck large enough for daily use.

Lake view

We are not big on cutting down trees, but if there are large limbs impeding the view of the lake from the cottage, this is a good time of year for tree trimming. While you are at it, move some of the struggling young saplings that grow naturally in the woods into the open areas on your property, choosing the youngest specimens. Be patient. They will grow fast once they put down roots. If you transplant a large (2m or greater) tree, it will sit forever while it puts down new roots or it will die. Given time, the younger tree will always surpass the older one in growth. Soil prep, as always, is essential.



Butterflies look for a flat-faced flower to perch on – like the purple coneflower.



Hummingbirds move through Southern Ontario beginning in early April.



Use native plants and respect the natural topography.

Hummingbirds and butterflies

These beauties frequent Cottage Country and you can attract them to your property by planting perennials that produce flowers that these pollinators favour. Butterflies look for a flat-faced flower on which to perch – the more pollen the better. Look for the native *Echinacea purpurea* (purple coneflower), *rudebeckia* (black-eyed Susan) and, of course, the butterfly bush (*buddleia*).

Hummingbirds, on the other hand, like the tubular shaped flowers of the trumpet vine, lupine, perennial salvia, monarda and lilacs. The more nectar per flower the stronger the hummingbird attraction. One note of interest is that hummingbirds move through Southern Ontario beginning in early April on their way to the boreal forests of Northern Ontario. If you feed them, you may get them to stick around for an extended stay.

Lawns

A lawn is a great way to set off your cottage when viewed from the lake. However, this is only practical if you have topsoil – not pure sand or rock – as a foundation to plant it on. Once established, consider cutting it with a walk-behind, reel-type lawn mower. They are quiet and their quality and ease of use has come a long way in recent years – they are lighter, the blades hold an edge and they are almost maintenance free. Do not fertilize your cottage lawn: it will only grow faster and need more cutting. Remember, this is your cottage. Sit! Relax!

Gardens

Plants have a role in most any cottage garden. Take your cues for garden design and plant selections from your natural surroundings. The local rock formations, flora and topography

should not be offended by a design that is more suited to a city home. We see this often in Cottage Country – city folk import their city taste where it does not fit. Look for native plant material and mulch it generously with finely ground-up bark about 8cm thick. This will minimize the need for watering and weeding.

Noise and smells

Call us old fashioned, but we thought that the notion of cottaging had something to do with re-connecting with Mother Nature. No? In the yard and garden, we recommend that you use a broom instead of a leaf blower on the deck and a leaf/lawn rake on the lawn and garden. If you must cut some limbs or small trees down, invest in a buck saw and surprise yourself at how much fun it is to do the job manually rather than reach for the chainsaw.

Going to the cottage may not be a thrill in Friday night traffic but being there can more than make up for it. *



Mark Cullen is a Member of the Order of Canada. He reaches over two million Canadians with his gardening/environment messages every week. **Ben Cullen** is a professional gardener with a keen interest in food gardening and the environment and is the owner of Cullen's Foods.



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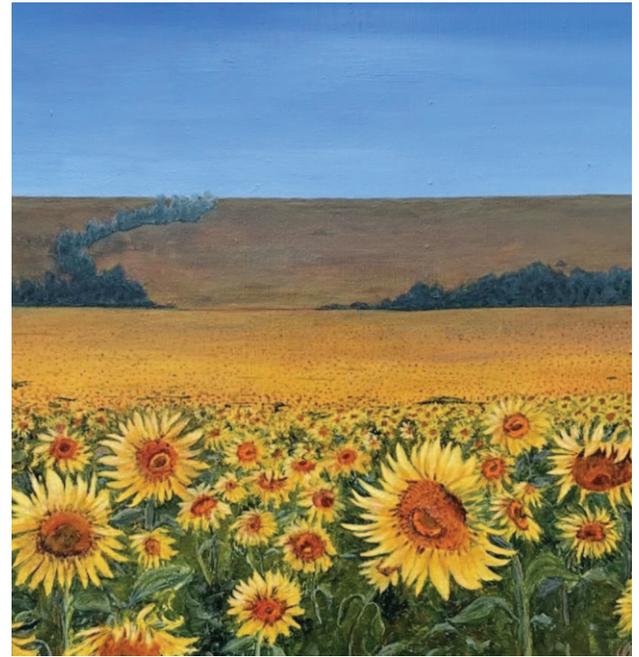
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Daniel Marlatt, Miskwaa Studio and Outdoor Gallery, Bobcaygeon



Kim McBrien,
Indigo Dragonfly,
Haliburton



Wendie Donabie, Heron's Nest Studio Gallery, Bracebridge

Burmeister paints of appropriate objects. The lettering is all hand done, a testament to her background as an architect. "I feel honoured to be connected to lives this way," she says.

MuskokaTwig.ca

Kim McBrien Indigo Dragonfly, Haliburton

If trying to talk to Kim McBrien while in her shop, you might be distracted by the dazzling array of hand-dyed and vibrantly coloured yarns. Any creative knitting juices you may have will definitely flow.

McBrien teaches sweater knitting and yarn dyeing, doing so in her studio/shop and online. Her store sells everything connected to knitting, including a variety of yarns, as well as the hanks which she hand dyes.

Many customers drop by to buy a kit containing everything they'll need for a project, such as a sweater or shawl. "If they run into problems, they can visit for a consultation or, if they live far away, they can book a Zoom lesson," McBrien explains.

IndigoDragonfly.ca

Daniel Marlatt Miskwaa Studio and Outdoor Gallery, Bobcaygeon

Enjoy art in an outdoor setting on the Miskwaa Ziibi River at the Miskwaa Studio and Outdoor Gallery. Set up on grids throughout the riverside property, it is open every day in July and August and hosts some 200 artists from the Kawartha Lakes area.

"We have chairs set up so people can relax, decompress and

enjoy nature," Daniel Marlatt, the owner, explains. "We take the pieces down every night and when it rains. We store them in our art port and get them out in the morning."

In the winter months, Marlatt sells his own works, elemental landscapes incorporating rocks and natural stains. "I help emerging artists – we don't take a commission – while pursuing my own career."

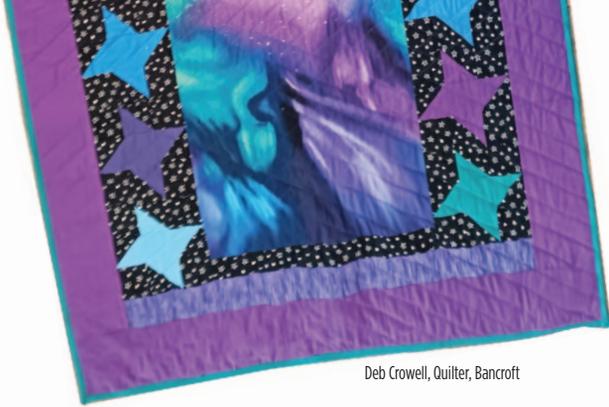
DanielMarlatt.com

Wendie Donabie Heron's Nest Studio Gallery, Bracebridge

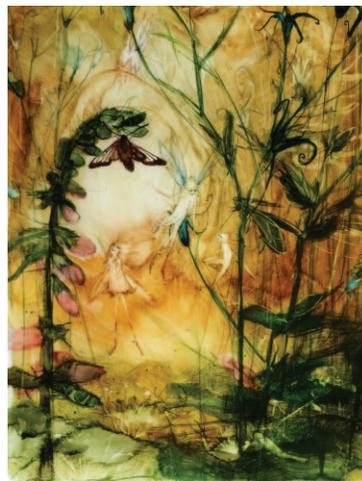
Wendie Donabie uses many brushes when it comes to creating her art. "These days," she explains, "I'm painting with mostly acrylics. I love oils as well, but I have to say watercolours and Chinese brushworks are always media I enjoy working in."

The pull of nature is irresistible to Donabie. "A twisted weave of tree roots along a forest trail, a white-tailed deer peering in our patio window, or a rainbow-coloured sunset can awaken my creative spirit. I experience a pleasant fluttering in my gut, light headedness, and, sometimes, even goose pimples as my muse entices me to the easel to share the experience with the world," she says.

Herons-Nest-Studio-Gallery.square.site



Deb Crowell, Quilter, Bancroft



Bonnie Bews,
Hinterglas,
Bracebridge



Wendy Wood,
Weaver and Painter,
Minden

James Lukow,
Your Dreams in Wood, Lindsay



Deb Crowell Quilter, Bancroft

Quilts are a wonderful art form: beautiful and so very functional. And for those who make these beautiful pieces, the craft is addictive.

Deb Crowell began quilting when her first son, Michael, was born and now works at her home in a spacious sewing room where she has plenty of room and excellent light by which to work.

“There are so many pieces to cut and lay out,” she explains. “Rows and rows of little pieces that have to be carefully sandwiched between batting and backing.” The addictive nature of quilting means any outing can result in the purchase of fabric and other supplies, often necessitating more purchases to complete the concept.

“I sell my quilts so that I can afford to make more,” Crowell says with a smile.

[Pinterest.ca/DebCrowell02](https://www.pinterest.ca/DebCrowell02)

Wendy Wood Weaver and Painter, Minden

“I am inspired by nature, by the surroundings where I live,” says Wendy Wood. “The colours here inspire me, especially the different combinations. I’ve been painting for 40 years in an abstract realist style.”

Wood has looms in various sizes, and the fabrics they produce are all very different. Working as a weaver and a painter is ideal the artisan explains. “If I don’t feel like painting, I can weave and, of course, the reverse is also true. And I don’t

just create visual works, I’m also involved with music and playwriting.”

[WendyWood.ca](https://www.WendyWood.ca)

James Lukow Your Dreams in Wood, Lindsay

Producing small cabinets, bowls, candlesticks and other decor items, all handmade in wood – a live element with its own hues, smooth feel, grains and unique patterns – is what James Lukow does best.

“I use any domestic wood in my work,” Lukow says. “If there is a request for something special, like a picture or mirror frame, or perhaps some hurricane lamps, I can make those, too. Jewelry boxes are also popular.”

The method is exacting. “The best thing about woodworking is seeing how each item gradually evolves as I’m turning it. Then, using a handful of sawdust, I’ll burnish it and finally give it a beeswax-based polish. It’s an artistic and creative process.”

“My workshop is beside our house and the dining room is my showroom.” That, I imagine, must make dinner parties very interesting.

[YourDreamsInWood.ca](https://www.YourDreamsInWood.ca)

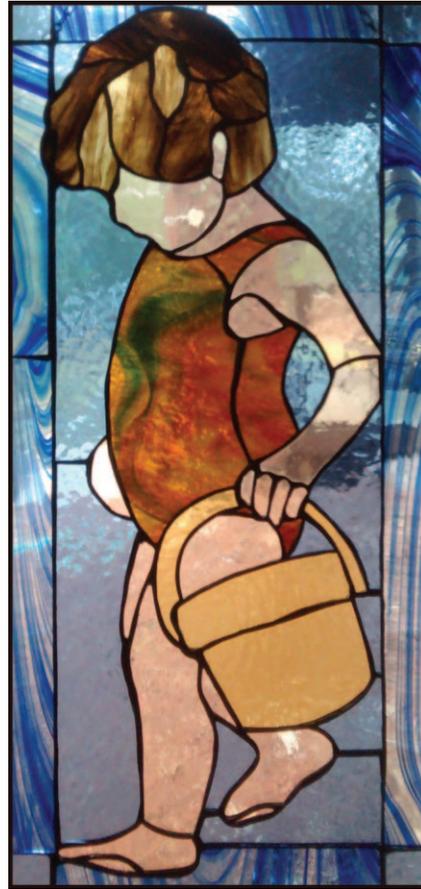
Bonnie Bews Hinterglas, Bracebridge

Backpacking through Europe in the 1990s, Bonnie Bews, fresh off a fine arts course at Georgian College, knew she wanted a career in the arts. There she met an artist who taught her the

Tiffany Howe,
How(e) Creative,
Haliburton



April Gates,
Blackbird Pottery, Haliburton



Maureen Haines,
Log Cabin Glass Studio,
Washago

craft of reverse painting, known as hinterglas.

“This art is not well known here, it’s unique in North America,” Bews explains. “The glass is sandblasted first and then the paint material is applied. I use watercolours or charcoal. It’s difficult because I, as the artist, am painting backwards to what the viewer will see.”

Bews often features her own garden in her work, as well as the Muskoka wildlife. “One connecting factor you’ll find in my work are fairies. Most times they are hidden so you must look closely.”

BonnieBews.com

Tiffany Howe **How(e) Creative, Haliburton**

“I’ve liked making things ever since I was a little kid,” Tiffany Howe says. “I used to save my money to buy things to use for crafts. Now I believe in using whatever is available, and working with what I have.”

A striking feature of Howe’s work is upcycling, from an old pair of jeans, which might turn into a doll, to buttons that might be the eyes.

“I live in what was previously a grocery store in the Village of Haliburton,” Howe says. “I have an apartment and a studio there – it’s a really cool space.”

Howe also creates jewellery. Her earrings are both glamorous and whimsical and, above all, appealing.

“Right now, I’m excited about recycled denim and making weird little animals. The beauty of my work is I do what I enjoy, and those who buy it enjoy it, too.”

HoweCreative.ca

April Gates **Blackbird Pottery, Haliburton**

The earliest piece of pottery April Gates made featured a small bird’s nest with three eggs, crafted when she was a young child.

“My first successful project was a tall and narrow tumbler. It took weeks to get it right using a potter’s wheel,” Gates says. “Now I’m enjoying slipcasting, making pieces using a plaster mould.”

The natural setting by which she’s surrounded provides inspiration and an atmosphere of peace. Her charming items feature an array of shapes and sizes, each beautifully decorated. “I love making serving wares,” she says.

“Their simple shapes allow me to do the painting decorations, but really, I don’t have one path. I love every type of creating and the whole tactile experience.”

BlackbirdPotter.ca

Maureen Haines **Log Cabin Glass Studio, Washago**

The texture of a stained-glass piece may be bumpy, flat, swirled or circled, which is part of the attraction that brought Maureen Haines to her art.

“I work in whatever colours appeal to me at any time,” she says. “I make a lot of dragonflies and fairies and I can’t keep them on the shelves.”

Haines’ home and studio is on the waterfront, and she finds inspiration in the pine trees and, in the autumn, the reds of the maples. “I have my family around me and I’m never lonely. I love it here!”

[Facebook.com/LogCabinGlassStudio](https://www.facebook.com/LogCabinGlassStudio)



Charlene McConnell,
Purple Door Pottery,
Haliburton

Sharon Lynch,
Stone Garden Studio, Haliburton



Charlene McConnell
Purple Door Pottery, Haliburton

If looking for art inspired by dragon eggs, you might find the perfect piece at Purple Door Pottery. “I think of my works as fun and functional,” says Charlene McConnell. “I like producing whimsical garden items, like large flowers. They don’t wilt or die and often people buy them to take as gifts when they visit someone in hospital.”

The work is physical and it’s time sensitive. “If I don’t get a piece into the kiln in time, it could crack and break. I also have to be careful not to over-fire a piece,” she explains.

But the creative freedom trumps the challenges. “I make my own glazes and I get to choose the colours and whether they’ll be matte, shiny or metallic.”

In other words, complete artistic freedom.

PurpleDoorPottery.ca

Sharon Lynch
Stone Garden Studio, Haliburton

“As soon as I started handling the clay, I knew I loved it,” Sharon Lynch recalls. “Recently, I made a large platter with a tree design and that is currently my favourite piece.”

“I work in a lovely setting, in the Village of Haliburton. Being here, up north, things move at a slower pace. I use nature to give me ideas – the flowers, the fish and the birds – and I create stylized pieces. I’ve been doing this for 17 years and I am happy here.”

[Instagram.com/StoneGardenStudio](https://www.instagram.com/StoneGardenStudio)



Michael Reijnen, Muskoka Jewellery Design, Huntsville

Joyce Pruyers-Emmink and Peter Emmink,
Ivy Cottage Fusion Arts,
Algonquin Highlands



Joyce Pruyers-Emmink and Peter Emmink
Ivy Cottage Fusion Arts, Algonquin Highlands

Joyce and Peter create innovative fusion glass, a process that combines compatible glass pieces in a kiln and fires them to a temperature where they become one. This technique can be used to make plates, platters, bowls, art objects and jewellery.

Peter, who works full-time as a production designer in the movie industry, also paints on glass with glass grit, a technique called frit painting. Joyce is also a sewer, quilter, twig furniture builder and beader.

IvyCottageFusionArts.com

Michael Reijnen
Muskoka Jewellery Design, Huntsville

Michael Reijnen, the owner and head goldsmith of Muskoka Jewellery Design, apprenticed with his father, Joseph, a classically trained European master goldsmith.

The family business was not in Reijnen’s plans growing up, but when he started working in the shop in 2004, it wasn’t long before he was toiling behind the bench.

He quickly discovered he had a passion for this kind of work and now owns the shop his father founded. He has a keen eye for fine detail, and it shows in the pieces he designs, which are often inspired by the natural world around him.

Reijnen likes to create functional jewelry in gold and silver, often with semi-precious and precious stones.

MuskokaJewelleryDesign.com

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Tree therapy

Forest bathing is the practice of immersing yourself in nature, moving slowly through the trees, your body and mind relaxed, fostering a deeper connection with nature.

by Andrew Cruickshank | *photography by Andrew Cruickshank*

On a cool April morning, I found myself standing among a circle of women, deep in the woods, spilling my guts. Not to play into stereotypes, but – as a man – I tend to keep my emotions stashed well below the surface, especially in the presence of women I’ve only just met. But I’d signed up for a forest bath – or forest therapy as it’s alternatively known – in the Ken Reid Conservation Area near Lindsay, and sharing is part of the program.

When my editor first proposed a story about forest bathing, I jumped at the idea, despite not knowing what it actually was. In my mind, forest bathing conjured images of a Nordic spa tucked among towering pines with hot and cold tubs accented by plush bathrobes and a quick massage. Heck, I’d even be willing to try that old Scandinavian practice of lashing yourself with a branch to induce blood flow. A little hardship, after all, might just spice up the story.

A quick Google search, however, caused my visions of a remote Nordic spa to dissipate, a puff of steam spiraling skyward. As it turns out, forest bathing doesn’t involve lowering yourself into a warm wooden tub. Rather, it’s the practice of immersing yourself in nature by mindfully using your five senses. By moving slowly through a forest, your body and mind relax, lowering stress levels and fostering a deeper connection with nature.

The practice originated in the 1980s in Tokyo, where it’s known as *shinrin-yoku*, which translates to “breathing the air of the forest.” At the time, Tokyo’s population was nearing 30 million, and officials noticed that residents were suffering from stress-related diseases. Japan’s rural population, on the other hand, seemed much healthier. The Japanese government launched an investigation into the benefits of a rural lifestyle and found that people who spent more time in the forest spent less time in the hospital.

This may not come as a surprise to readers, especially when you consider the great outdoors’ role in easing stress during the pandemic. Multiple provincial, state and national parks across the continent broke attendance records over the last two years as people looked for calming respites away



Forest bathing offers genuine physiological and psychological benefits that are backed by a long list of scientific studies.

from the city. Nature has a long history as a soothing source. In fact, Cyrus the Great, who ruled the Persian empire from 539 to 530 BCE, built lavish gardens in his capital city to promote a sense of calm among citizens.

Forest bathing operates along the same principal, offering a calming escape from our screen-sized workspaces. In Japan, forest bathing is often practiced at an individual level, with certain medical experts designating locations as certified forest therapy areas where individuals can go to enjoy nature's relaxing effects.

In North America, where the practice is still gaining traction, people are generally led through the forest by a certified guide. "The guide that leads the walk is really the conduit to nature, a connection that a lot of us have lost over our lifetimes," says Ben Porchuk, one of the founders of the Global Institute of Forest Therapy (GIFT), an organization founded in 2016 to train guides. "We've largely lost that connection because we live in an indoor world 90 per cent of the time."

Invitation to connect

The forest bath experience can last as long as three hours, during which you may only walk as far as one kilometre. Porchuk stresses that it's not a naturalist walk and the guides won't be identifying species of plants and animals. Instead, each walk follows a standard flow. The guide leads you along a set route through the forest, stopping at certain intervals to take part in what Porchuk calls "invitations."

"Instead of prescribing what someone should do, you're invited into various activities, and they're all optional. So, for example, I might invite you to stand in a circle and find your feet firmly planted on the Earth, and just sway back and forth. You'd notice the connection of your feet to the Earth. I might

then invite you, if you're comfortable, to close your eyes," Porchuk explains. "It's very subtle and suggestive and it really makes a person feel comfortable."

After each invitation, participants gather in a circle and the guide passes around a talking piece – a stick, a leaf, a pebble, anything found on the forest floor. When you're in possession of the talking piece, you have the option to share how you felt during the invitation and what you were thinking – hence me unloading my emotions on a group of strangers. The act of sharing is meant to be cathartic, to snap you out of the judgment-fuelled mindset we occupy on a day-to-day basis.

This is one of several techniques that forest bathing uses to help you unwind. Porchuk, for instance, often starts his guided walks by having the group stand in a circle with their eyes closed to reinvigorate their other senses.

"In this modern era," he explains, "our eyes tend to lead the way and we see things and are stimulated by them. It creates thought and takes us into a faster brainwave, into the beta brainwave. By starting a walk off with our eyes closed in the alpha state, it really enables our systems to recalibrate," he says. The practice is similar to meditation's focus on breathing, where you try to calm your mind, avoiding overstimulation.

Now, the idea of closing your eyes and swaying in the forest may have some readers questioning the effectiveness of forest bathing. For those of you rolling your eyes and thinking the practice is one crystal short of New Age mumbo jumbo, you should know that forest bathing offers genuine physiological and psychological benefits backed by a long list of scientific studies. The *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, for instance, found that forest bathing can strengthen your immune system and increase your natural



Being in the forest has made Kristie Virgoe - a forest therapy guide - so happy she often laughs out loud.

killer cell count, which helps prevent cancer. That's a major health benefit! But keep in mind every forest therapy guide to whom I spoke stressed that the practice is not a substitute for traditional medicine, such as chemotherapy, only a supplementary practice.

The journal also found that forest bathing lowered blood pressure and improved the cardiovascular systems, helped reduce allergies and respiratory diseases, and helped smooth depression and anxiety. Researchers even noted that spending time in the forest improved focus for individuals suffering from Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

"If you're on a three-hour forest therapy walk, your immunity is boosted for three days," Porchuk says. "If you go out in a high-quality habitat on a forest therapy retreat for three days, your immunity is boosted for 30 days."

Most fascinating is that many health benefits come directly from the trees. Coniferous trees release a chemical compound called phytoncides, Porchuk explains. "They're essential wood oils. It's the smell of pine that you get when you go up north."

Trees use the phytoncides to ward off infections from insects, bacteria and fungi. When humans inhale the chemical, it stops cortisol production, our body's stress hormone. Cortisol blocks the production of serotonin, the hormone that makes us feel happy. On top of the phytoncides, moving slowly through the forest in silence helps you tap into your parasympathetic nervous system. Our sympathetic nervous system drives our fight or flight response in stressful situations, while the parasympathetic nervous system is the state our minds occupy when we relax.

"When we rest and relax, we're more likely to slow down our brains, feel less stressed, and have a healthier state of mind and body," Porchuk says.

Having only taken part in one forest bathing experience, I can't speak to the effectiveness of the health benefits, but as I stood in the Ken Reid Conservation Area's pine grove, sun dappling through swaying tree branches, robins chirping in the nearby brush, I certainly felt more relaxed and in tune with nature.

Invitation accepted

Kristie Virgoe – director of stewardship and conservation lands at Kawartha Conservation – was our forest therapy guide that morning. Under her guidance, we walked slowly through the forest, at times closing our eyes and inhaling the deep piney smell of our surroundings or listening to the creak of branches and soft rustling of leaves. In other moments, we gathered around trees, imagining their roots beneath our feet and how they connected us to distant loved ones.

Each invitation ended with a regrouping. As we got further into the walk, our group shook off its timid disposition and we were suddenly unloading the effects of the pandemic. One woman hadn't taken part in a recreational outing in two years. Another talked about her family and their struggles with anxiety.

We stood silently as each person spoke. There was no applauding, no slapping one another on the back. We were just there to listen. And while one of the first things Virgoe told us on the walk was that she wasn't a registered therapist, and the walk was not intended as a substitute for professional counselling, there was something therapeutic about having a group of strangers listen to your problems.

"The insights that come out of forest therapy are so impactful for the individuals. You're going to see things in a different way and through a different lens than the person standing directly next to you. You might be looking at the same thing, but your



Despite his initial reluctance, our reporter Andrew Cruickshank discovered that a forest therapy walk was cathartic.

interpretation, and the meaning you get out of that, is going to be personal to you,” Virgoe told us.

It was a car accident that first led Virgoe to forest bathing. The accident happened over a decade ago and it was her husband who was involved. In the aftermath, he suffered from chronic pain, which spiraled into mental illness. To improve his health, he and Virgoe tried forest bathing. After participating a handful of times, Virgoe was hooked. Being in the forest made her happy, and she wanted to share that feeling with others.

In 2017, she became a certified guide through the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy. The certification involved a six-month remote course where she learned the principles and science behind forest bathing. As part of the course, the instructors assigned Virgoe exercises she was expected to complete on her own. One of those was to return to the same spot every day over a six-month period and sit quietly for 20 minutes.

“After six months, I had bunny rabbits coming out of their hole and hopping across my legs,” recalls Virgoe. “I had a blue heron land on my foot. It sounds supernatural but the reason it happened is because I was always there.”

Developing a deeper connection to nature is only half of what keeps Virgoe coming back to forest bathing. The other half is creating opportunities for people to come to nature and experience it in a meaningful way. She recalls leading one walk, during which a quadriplegic woman participated. “It was incredible to watch her move through the forest in her wheelchair and experience the forest in that way.”

It’s a conversation

Changing people’s perspective of nature is a common theme on these walks. Donna Raetsen-Kemp, a forest guide who

leads walks for Yours Outdoors in Haliburton, remembers leading a family with two 20-year-old children through the forest. It was winter and the two seemed cold and uninterested. But by the last two invitations, they started to open up. The daughter grew teary-eyed talking about a snowflake she’d been gazing at, never realizing how beautiful and intricately shaped they are.

It’s this type of connection that forest therapy guides aim to establish. “It’s not seeing the forest as a resource to just be drawn on, like, ‘Let’s take from this forest and exploit nature by taking wellness and pleasure from it.’ It’s a conversation about it being a relationship,” she says.

Raetsen-Kemp often quietly thanks nearby trees and rocks on her guided walks. Without prompting, the occasional participant will follow suit, patting a rock or tapping a tree to say thank you. “We’ve put ourselves in a place where we see nature at our beck and call. It’s important to put a bit of a different lens on that and see it as a partnership.”

The final section of our walk in the Ken Reid Conservation Area was across a boardwalk bridge spanning a marshy section of the forest. Many of the boards had become misshapen and misaligned over time – pushed out of place, requiring extra care to be taken while crossing. When the last of our group made it to the other side, Virgoe picked up some pine needles and asked what we were thinking about as we crossed the bridge. It may sound like a trite metaphor to wrap up the forest bathing experience, but I couldn’t help but see the bridge as our connection to nature. Worn and strained from years of neglect, sure, but nothing that a little time among the trees couldn’t heal. *

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by Vicky Sanderson

Vicky Sanderson has been writing about home and decor for over 20 years and has an exceptional grasp on everything from paint to pillows, tools to textiles, and gadgets to garden tools.

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Easy access to the water with which we wash, cool and nourish ourselves is seldom more appreciated than it is in summer, when a short shower on a sweltering day is pure bliss. A new generation of home products aims to make our experience with water even more refreshing, and healthier and convenient into the bargain.

American Standard's Spectra shower system, (American-Standard.ca) for example, has a replaceable filter that removes up to 50 per cent of chlorine, making treated water less drying and damaging to skin and hair. Existing plumbing can be used, so it's a relatively easy and affordable DIY bath update.

Sun, sand, air-conditioned spaces and pool water can also dry out skin and hair. That's why self-care in summer should include moisturising with a product such as Double Rich Body Butter from Dundas, ON.-based Ellénoire (Ellenoire.com). Handmade and loaded with organic shea butter and a host of soothing ingredients, this lovely product is both luxurious and pampering. The best time to apply lotion? Right after bathing on still damp skin. Try massaging in naturally scented or scent-free oils immediately after turning off the taps. Not only will the steam stimulate natural oil production, but wet skin absorbs the product more easily and helps it "lock in" moisture.

Also, cutting an eight-minute shower to five can reduce water consumption by almost half, with less energy needed to heat the water. It's also better for your skin, as lengthy showers deplete natural oils.

As well as protecting your face in the summer from UVA and UVB rays with SPF30, Nudescreen Daily Mineral Veil works as a moisturizer and make-up primer. The light, non-

RainStick has a traditional mode for cleaning the stall or shampooing pets.

Double Rich Body Butter is loaded with organic shea butter and a host of soothing ingredients.



The Monrovia faucet has a magnetic base that locks the spray wand in place.

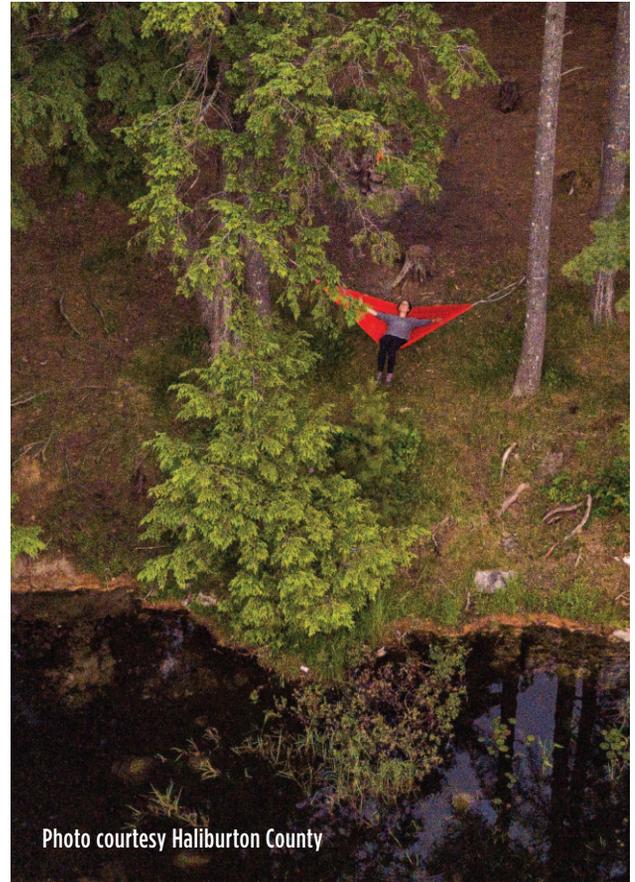


Photo courtesy Haliburton County

oily, nude-finish lotion is part of a plant-powered, multi-tasking skincare and makeup line from rapidly emerging Canadian company Nudestix.ca. I also like the Nudies Blush stick – eye, cheek and lip colour on one end, a brush on the other. Add a hat and sunglasses when you go to the lake for even more protection.

Reminders of the role water plays in good hand hygiene have fuelled the popularity of faucets that reduce contact between the user and the fixture with tap, touchless and voice-activated features. The elegant Monrovia faucet, new from Delta (DeltaFaucet.ca), needs only a tap with the hand, wrist or elbow anywhere on the spout or handle to work.

Using correct water temperature makes cooking safer and tastier. To help, Moen.ca has a smart faucet that lets users choose hot, warm or cold water with a swipe of the hand over a sensor. With an app, defaults can be set for frequently used temperatures, including those needed for, let's say, yeasted doughs. A hand-washing program delivers sanitary temperatures and pauses for 20-seconds while the user scrubs.

Greywater systems that reuse water in the home are becoming ever more sophisticated. The Wi-Fi-enabled shower technology used by RainStickShower.com conserves up to 80 per cent of the water and energy of a traditional low-flow fixture by capturing, cleaning and recirculating water in real time. In short, you're washing in water in which you've just washed, albeit after it's cycled through processes to remove hair and debris and kill bacteria and viruses with UV-LED technology. Put simply, you're washing in fresh, clean water that benefits the overall water system you're lucky enough to enjoy. And that's certainly a water win-win.

If you love your lake, you'll respect her shoreline

Growing awareness of the link between healthy waterways and safe water delivery systems is prompting municipalities to legislate lake and shoreline protection. In Ontario, foundations are already in place. A 2021 article in The Highlander newspaper points out the province currently recommends a minimum 30-metre non-development zone from water bodies located on the Precambrian Shield, where Muskoka and Haliburton are located.

Learn more about shoreline preservation from organizations like the Coalition of Haliburton Property Owners' Associations (COHPOA.org). In the meantime, here are a few of their natural methods for strengthening and sustaining shorelines this summer:

- Plant low-maintenance native trees and shrubs – especially those with deep roots – to reduce erosion and absorb runoff.
- Prune rather than remove trees.
- Choose porous materials wherever possible, and redirect runoff away from the water's edge.
- Research changes or upgrades that may be coming to septic system rules in your area, and plan/budget accordingly.
- Opt for home cleaning and body-care products that are gentle on water. You'll find both at The Wolf Moon in Minden. Alongside a thoughtfully chosen assortment of sustainable decor, self-care products, textiles and clothing, the company also carries The Bare Home's line of made-in-Canada septic-safe home-cleaning products. Visit if you can – this spot is as refreshing as cool water on a sizzling afternoon. *



Ron Craig and Inez Rowan, December 1972

Driving Mrs. Rowan

Driving a 72-year-old woman to her cottage in the Algonquin Highlands started a 50-year connection to a cottage community and led to a rural lifestyle.

by Ron Craig | *photography by Ron Craig*

She sat silently in the passenger seat, staring through the windshield. Mrs. Rowan only spoke to provide directions. Like a scene from the movie, *Driving Miss Daisy*, I was Mrs. Rowan's chauffeur. We were driving north in her early 1960s Ford Galaxy, to a destination somewhere in the Algonquin Highlands. I had no idea this three-hour drive would lead to a life-changing 50-year adventure and ownership of a piece of cottage history.

Our trip started because of a simple question. "Say," she asked me one day, "do you think you could drive me to my cottage?"

Inez L. Rowan was my landlady, and I was her boarder, living in a room in her Toronto home. I had just finished my first year of college and was about to start a summer job at a local food store.

On an early May morning in 1971, we started travelling north up Highway 27. "I don't like driving on bigger highways," Mrs. Rowan told me. So we avoided the 400 series of highways by driving on less-travelled roads. After arriving in Huntsville, we turned onto Highway 60, toward Algonquin Park. When we reached Oxtongue Lake, she directed me to a gravel road. After a short drive, we pulled up to her cottage.

The cottage was a living monument to a past era, a charming log structure built in 1906. A peaked roof swept down onto a wood frame addition built onto the rear. At the front, facing the lake, a screened-in porch offered protection from the bugs. We entered through the addition, which was a small kitchen. Just off the kitchen was a three-piece bathroom.

The cottage interior included a floor to ceiling fieldstone

open-hearth fireplace in the main "Muskoka Room." Over the years, the smoke had licked up the fieldstones below the hand-hewn wooden mantle, creating a permanent black stain. A hand-wound antique clock sat on the fireplace mantle. Old cooking implements decorated the fireplace's open-hearth – a reminder of the days when cooking took place in the fireplace.

A gently sloping treed lot led down to the lake. When the sun set in front of her cabin, the sunlight created thousands of sparkling highlights on the water's surface – like light shining on diamonds. Behind the cottage, a forest of hard maple and yellow birch trees stretched out for miles, all the way to Algonquin Park, 10km away.

Beside her cottage was a bunkie to accommodate guests. On a separate lot, next to her property, was a newer log cottage. This cottage, built during the winter of 1959-60, belonged to her son, James Rowan, an Air Canada pilot.

To say I was impressed by Mrs. Rowan's cottage was an understatement. The log structure with the massive stone fireplace was like something from an Ernest Hemingway short story. Rustic yet comfortable, her cottage recalled the charm of a past era, complete with modern conveniences.

As I contemplated this impressive landscape, I wondered aloud if I could find a summer job near her cottage. Suddenly, my summer job in the produce department of a Toronto food store seemed even less appealing. She offered to take me to the largest lodge in the area, the Blue Spruce Inn (now the Blue Spruce Resort), and introduce me to the owner, Jack Hayden. Mrs. Rowan began by telling him I lived with her. She ended her sales pitch by saying, "He is a hard worker." Mr. Hayden (I

The cottage interior included a floor to ceiling fieldstone open-hearth fireplace in the main “Muskoka Room”.



always called him Mr. Hayden) thought about it for a few minutes and hired me. But I added one condition: was there any work for my girlfriend, Susan, at the lodge?

“Does she have waitress experience?” he asked. I told him she had worked part-time as a waitress the previous summer. After considering for a moment, he hired her – sight unseen. This chance meeting was more than a job opportunity. It was our entrance into the amazing Oxtongue Lake community.

Two weeks later, I drove Mrs. Rowan back to her cottage for the summer and moved into the bunkie. I became the general utility worker at the Blue Spruce Inn: lawn cutter, beach groomer, pot washer – any task required at the busy lodge.

Susan moved into the Blue Spruce Inn, where she stayed with the other female staff for the summer. After we finished work, we went for hikes or took a canoe out onto the lake. It was an idyllic, carefree time enhanced by the beautiful northern environment.

When Mrs. Rowan’s son James, his wife Priscilla and their children, Jim, Tom, and Mary, arrived for the summer, Susan and I spent many pleasant evenings visiting with them at their cottage.

“In the early 1940s, my father and mother drove up from Toronto to Algonquin Park, and they were on the lookout for a summer place,” James recalled. A property owner on Oxtongue Lake told them, “I have two places for sale, and you can decide if you want one.”

The second property was a cabin built in 1906 by a group of American outdoor enthusiasts to serve as a fishing camp. There were only six cottages on the lake at the time, including

one owned by Toronto Globe and Mail columnist Bruce West. Mrs. Rowan bought the log cabin from owner Johnny Robertson in 1944 – for \$500. It was one of the oldest log structures on the lake.

There was no bathroom or running water when the cabin became hers. An outhouse was the only facility for Mrs. Rowan and her guests. Water was hand-pumped from a well and, for the first 10 years, there was no electricity. She was a tough, resilient woman with the spirit of a true pioneer.

During one of her early summer residencies, a bear came up to a screen window and looked into the cabin. Mrs. Rowan picked up two cooking pans, marched over to the window, yelled and banged the pans together until the bear ran off into the woods. Mrs. Rowan walked away from the window, completely calm and collected.

All too soon, the summer ended. We left behind the great times we had enjoyed on the lake, but our connection with Oxtongue Lake did not end. On the contrary, Susan and I had just started a 50-year relationship with this unique cottage community.

After graduating, I moved out of Mrs. Rowan's home and into a one-room bachelor apartment in Toronto. However, I continued to visit her from time to time. When I told her I was getting married to Susan, Mrs. Rowan generously offered us a wonderful wedding present: her cottage and car for a week.

Susan and I returned to Oxtongue Lake for a one-week repeat of our summer experience. Every night, we went for a walk along the lake. The moon shone through a canopy of stars creating a celestial light show that penetrated the



darkness. The only other light came from cottages around the lake. After a walk in the crisp night air, we returned to Mrs. Rowan's cabin, where we started a fire in the open-hearth fireplace.

As the faint smell of smoke wafted into the cottage, we wondered if we would ever own a property on the lake. Our honeymoon in Mrs. Rowan's cabin was an experience we would remember for the rest of our lives.

I drove Mrs. Rowan to and from her cottage for the next few years. She always sat silently in the passenger seat, and I followed the same route every time. I vividly remember the last time I drove Mrs. Rowan home at the end of the season. "I wonder if I will ever get back here again," she said as she walked out of her cottage and glanced back, tears welling up in her eyes. Fortunately, she did. Mrs. Rowan continued to spend summers at her beloved cottage until 1981.

A true original

Inez Rowan passed away on December 3, 1981. With her passing, the Oxtongue community lost a true original – a woman who loved the north and her cottage. After she died, the Rowan family sold the cottage and their property on the lake.

Susan and I often returned to Oxtongue Lake, staying at the Blue Spruce Inn or one of the cottage resorts. Of course, we always drove by Mrs. Rowan's cottage during these trips, but

each time we drove past, our thoughts returned to the summer we spent with her and our visits with the Rowan family. The cottage was now truly a special place for us.

Then, one day, our connection with Mrs. Rowan's cottage changed.

Susan was on the computer when she turned to me. "You are not going to believe this, but Mrs. Rowan's cottage is for sale." We arranged to meet the real estate agent at the cottage on a cold day in March.

We were amazed at how much was unchanged during our first visit inside the cottage in nearly 50 years. The fireplace was still the centerpiece. The kitchen and bathroom had been expanded and updated with new add-ons: a soaker tub, shower, new kitchen cabinets, modern appliances and flooring.

The previous owners had winterized the structure. A modern fireplace insert and a propane wall furnace replaced the oil-burning space heater. Yet, it was the same cottage we remembered from the past. We made an offer to buy.

Intense negotiations followed. We didn't tell the real estate agent or the seller our history with the cottage throughout this long negotiation process.

"Perhaps we should tell the seller why we want the cottage and why it is so special to us," Susan said. "Why not?" I replied.

When the realtor heard about our unique connection with

Inez Rowan passed away on December 3, 1981. With her passing, the Oxtongue community lost a true original – a woman who loved the north and her cottage.



the cottage and our history with Mrs. Rowan and Oxtongue Lake, she promised to tell the owner. When the seller heard the story, he agreed to sell us the cottage. In October 2015, we took possession. But the story, as they say, goes on.

Mrs. Rowan's grandson, Jim, also owns a cottage on Oxtongue Lake. Soon after we moved into the cottage, we received a message informing us that James and Priscilla were driving from Montreal for their annual two-week stay at the Blue Spruce Resort. On an early afternoon, Susan and I visited them there.

The next day, Jim and Priscilla visited us at Mrs. Rowan's cottage, where we exchanged memories about James' 70-year experience at Oxtongue Lake. We sat in our screened-in porch and gazed out at Mrs. Rowan's beloved lake. We agreed that it was amazing that we bought the cottage that had meant so much to the Rowan family and us.

A year later, we had a special gathering at the cottage, a family reunion of the Rowan family: James and Priscilla, their sons Jim and Tom, daughter Mary and their families. We talked about our lives, careers and memories of cottage life on Oxtongue Lake. And how Susan and I became part of the fantastic story of Mrs. Rowan's cottaging legacy and the Rowan family history.

The connection with the Rowan family and Scott Hayden, Jack Hayden's son and current owner of the Blue Spruce

Resort, continues. We often visit Mrs. Rowan's grandson Jim and his wife Janet at their cottage on Oxtongue Lake and we see Scott regularly.

Mrs. Rowan witnessed the Oxtongue Lake community grow from a few scattered cottages to a vibrant tourist destination. During her remarkable life, she lived through two world wars and the Great Depression. She saw the gravel roads leading up to Muskoka change into multi-lane highways. And through it all, her cabin on the lake remained her favorite place.

Often, when Susan and I sit in the screened-in porch watching the setting sun, we sense Mrs. Rowan's calm, silent presence. Like the movie, my relationship changed from being a boarder in her home to becoming friends. In my mind, I imagine exactly how she looked as she gazed out on the sun-dappled lake she loved so much.

My daughter, husband and their twins are now part of this story. They are frequent visitors and will eventually be custodians of Mrs. Rowan's cottage.

What began like a scene from *Driving Miss Daisy* ended 50 years later with ownership of our dream cottage and the start of our rural lifestyle. On late summer evenings, while sitting in the screened-in porch, I often reflect on the events that led to Oxtongue Lake and Mrs. Rowan's cottage so long ago. And during these moments, I know this is how Inez Rowan wanted the connection with her beloved cottage to continue. *

The Floor Forecast

What's popular and what's next

Everything old is new again, or so the saying goes.

WOOD VISUALS

What's popular:

Light Scandinavian inspired rooms with natural – or nearly natural – wood are extremely popular, putting grey wood flooring firmly in the rear-view mirror.

What's next:

Expect a resurgence in richer more saturated wood as people crave more warmth and seek authenticity in the imperfections and variations of real wood. Look for visuals with more character than white oak.



Cali – Seaboard Oak (luxury vinyl plank)



Mohawk – Morena Bluffs Cattail Pecan (laminate)

TILE VISUALS

What's popular:

White and grey, particularly the Carrera marble look. Kitchens, countertops, backsplashes, bathrooms, tabletops, entryways ... it's everywhere!

What's next:

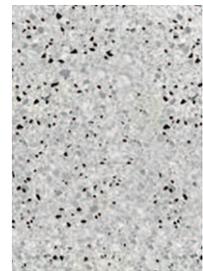
A shift to darker dramatic natural stone looks like Nero Marquina, slate, or Midgley West's soapstone black porcelain tile. Terrazzo! Funky, retro-modern and extremely practical for disguising dirt. Terrazzo visuals are on everything from coffee mugs, to mouse pads, to floors.



Melmart – Encore Carrera (luxury vinyl tile)



Midgley West – Soapstone Black (tile)



Midgley West – Marmette Mix (tile)



Tuftex, Only Natural – Luminary (carpet)



Mannington – Deco Wrought Iron (sheet vinyl)

COLOUR:

What's popular:

White, grey, greige and natural with interesting patterns or textures are still solid choices for any room.

What's next:

Colour! Blue, green and pink are popping up everywhere in the home – kitchen cabinets, paint, wallpaper, rugs, runners, backsplashes and floors.

Anyone can sell you a floor, it takes an expert to help you choose the right floor for you. Visit one of five Floortrends locations today and find the floor that fits your lifestyle and budget.

Don't forget to check out the clearance centre located at 35 Wilson Ave., Belleville, to take advantage of great values on ends of lines and remnants.



Daltile – Memoir Cosmo Blue (tile)



Ceratec – Habitat Cara Glacier (wall tile)



Stevens Omni – Bellini (area rug)



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This award-winning kitchen was designed and built by ACM Designs, where every team member - including the construction manager - is certified in aging-in-place design.



Life by design

The best home designs help deliver quality of life inside and out, ensuring physical safety, while allowing residents to age in place.

by Lisa Harrison

Let's face it, we're not getting any younger. But whether 25 or 85 – or somewhere in between – safety in the home is paramount, being that most personal injuries occur in or around our residences. In Cottage Country, there are unique safety risks, including uneven paths and stairs to and from the lake, snow accumulation in winter, and slick decks and docks in summer.

But the risks are even greater for older people, who may require additional support to keep them safe and comfortable as daily activities become more difficult. They require homes that allow them to continue functioning and thriving in their own residences. This philosophy incorporates the principles of universal design, developed for people of all ages and abilities.

More than 85 per cent of older adults in Canada would prefer to age in place (at home in their own communities) if given the choice, according to the National Research Council's report "Aging in Place: Technology and Innovation Proposed Program Plan." Almost 70 per cent aged 65 and older say the pandemic has changed their opinion on arranging for themselves – or an older loved one – to live in a nursing or retirement home. This percentile also favours aging in place, according to the National Institute on Ageing/Telus Health National Survey.



An accessible bathroom design features a zero-entry shower/wet area and a wheelchair-height counter.

Who, me?

When interior designer Andria Cowan Molyneaux and her ACM Designs team bring up the importance of aging-in-place design, the first reaction they encounter from clients is denial. “Owners often believe that it doesn’t apply to them,” says Cowan Molyneaux. “They are fit, leading active lifestyles – aging isn’t an issue for them.

“But life can change in an instant. Skiing or wakeboarding can result in an unexpected injury, and an illness can impair anyone at any age. Having an environment that can support you during rehabilitation can make all the difference in the recovery.”

Accidents will happen

It is very important to safety proof your home or cottage, especially if any of the residents are experiencing falls or need to constantly hold onto something to avoid a tumble, says Bonnie Smith, founder and owner of the Home Comfort Care Services (HCCS) locations in Muskoka. She has been helping clients accident proof their homes and improve their quality of life for over 25 years.

Smith highlights information from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), which sights falls as the leading cause of injuries among Canadians aged 65 and older. Research suggests that falls are the direct cause of 95 per cent of all hip fractures, leading to death in 20 per cent of cases.

Falls also account for 85 per cent of seniors’ injury-related hospitalizations, and are associated with over a third of admissions to long-term care facilities after release from hospital.

To complete the picture, living in Cottage Country can delay emergency response times as many homes and cottages are isolated with poor cell service.

Safe by design

Every team member with ACM Designs, including the construction manager, is certified in aging-in-place design. Because the Haliburton company specializes in cottage renovations, their designs accommodate everyone from great-grandparents to great-grandkids, all of whom clearly benefit from safer spaces.

Team members speak positively with clients about the subject of aging and emphasize the importance of adaptable and flexible design, says Cowan Molyneaux. “Many people don’t fully understand what it entails, so informing and providing examples on how to make changes is crucial. For example, lighting is so important. Being unable to see clearly as you move around your house or cottage can result in serious safety risks, and not just for the elderly.”

Universal design suffers from the stigma that it’s ugly, industrial and sterile, but that’s not true, insists Cowan Molyneaux. For instance, choosing drawer pulls instead of



Even stairs with attached hand railings helps make the trip to and from the lake safer for people of all ages.

knobs, or levered door handles instead of doorknobs can make a significant difference, without sacrificing good design, for someone with arthritis.

Cottage Country presents particular challenges when it comes to exterior design. Terrain, for example, is often uneven and structures may be perched on hills with steep descents to the water. Experienced landscape designers can help choose the designs and materials you need, such as walkway components and treatments that won't heave and shift with the frost to become trip hazards, or slick when it rains. Similarly smart are stairs with railings to make the journey to and from the lake safer.

Renting out your cottage? ACM designers Elizabeth Jones and Sophie Creelman note that designing your spaces with aging in mind expands your market and allow you to sleep peacefully knowing guests are as safe as possible.

The doctor will see you now

Accidents experienced while entering and leaving the home or cottage account for most of the preventable home injuries seen in the emergency room at Ross Memorial Hospital in Lindsay, according to Dr. Koushik Krishnan, chief of emergency medicine. He recommends preventive measures such as sizing ramps and stairs properly and ensuring ice and snow are cleared in the winter.

"The other part of fall prevention is the person themselves,

so I always look at the patient as well. Things like doing good physio, being physically active and whether or not there are any medication changes. Medications, especially for blood pressure, can cause patients to feel lightheaded when they stand up too quickly."

Krishnan recommends a lifeline. It can be the electronic kind that senses a fall and immediately notifies a monitoring service, or ensuring a neighbour knows when you arrive at the cottage and arranging for them to check on you regularly.

"Sometimes we see patients who have fallen and have been lying on the ground for days because nobody is able to get to them," he says. "A simple fall from a standing height in an elderly person can break a long bone. You can break your neck, or have bleeding in your head, especially if you're on blood thinners.

"These are life-changing events that can undermine quality of life for months, years or even permanently. So, taking that extra step to protect against trips to the hospital emergency room could ultimately improve quality of life."

The heart, mind and soul of the matter

Community support organizations have their work cut out as baby boomers continue pushing into their senior years. Most importantly, this work extends beyond environmental home safety supports. Clients wishing to remain at home for as long as possible find themselves at the intersection of



Outdoor lighting will help prevent people from tripping over unseen obstacles, preventing falls, which can be life-changing events.

independence, pride and dignity, requiring assistance with daily living activities, says Angela Everson, community hospice coordinator for Community Support Services (CSS) in Haliburton County. CSS is part of Haliburton Highlands Health Services, which provides clients a 24/7 emergency response system, but that's only part of the picture for this organization.

"We also have to factor in safety, not only in the physical sense, but, just as importantly, in the social, emotional, spiritual and intellectual sense," notes Everson. "These are intrinsic domains essential for the overall well-being of our community population. The warmth and comfort of human connection can be equally essential to a lonely widower living on his own, as a hot nutritious meal to a senior who's no longer able to prepare their own meals."

Strongly supported by volunteers as well as staff, CSS services include a home help and maintenance program, supportive housing and assisted living, meals on wheels, grief support, and hospice support.

Clients can also benefit from security checks, friendly visits, medication reminders, foot care, transportation for medical appointments and therapeutic social and recreational programs. "Helping clients to live independently requires extensive support and reassurance, and we do this with all of their safety needs addressed," says Everson.

Pricing quality of life

Budgeting for certain aging-in-place designs can be daunting. For those who aren't ready to hire a design firm, or who feel their budget won't stretch that far, a medical supply and services store can be a good solution. Especially when services begin with a complimentary in-home assessment, such as those offered by HCCS.

"We're then able to recommend the right equipment and technology solutions to meet specific needs or challenges," says Smith. "If you're completely satisfied with our professional recommendations, we can discuss the next steps."

Funding to assist with product and renovation expenses may be available from different levels of government. Smith uses the Ontario Seniors' Home Safety Tax Credit 2022 as an example, and eligibility extends to people who live with a senior relative. For support, check with your health services provider and your local health network. Prices may vary being that organizations such as CSS provide certain services through volunteers.

Focus on the finish

Hardware store grab bars, medical supply store ramps, full bathroom renos – whichever path you take in designing your home or cottage for the future, be mindful that good planning is a short-term investment for a long-term return, advises Cowan Molyneux. "Good design that accommodates any user, regardless of age or ability, is the best design and goes so far."*

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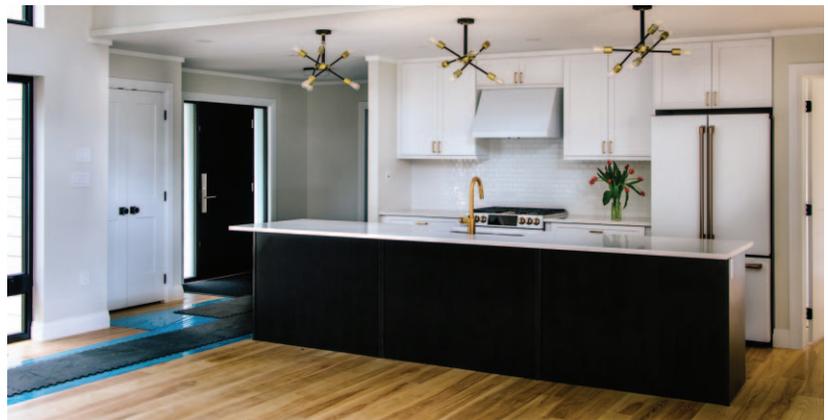
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Tours de Force

Cycle vacations hit high gear with post-pandemic travellers.

by Marc Atchison

Over the last two years, bikes were dusted off in garages around the world and new bike sales surged, thanks to new attitudes, especially among younger travellers, to see the post-pandemic world in the great outdoors and at a safe social distance.

According to inflation-adjusted figures recently published by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, North Americans spent nearly \$8 billion (US) on bicycles and accessories in 2021, up from \$6 billion in 2019. And while spending appears to be decreasing in 2022, bike sales remain well above pre-pandemic levels.

So, if you're one of the lucky ones who was able to find a new bike or if you simply dusted off an old bike in the garage, take a look at this list of bicycle travel ideas from around the world to keep this bike spike rolling:



Maui multi-sport
(courtesy EscapeAdventures.com)



Dolomites cycling tour
(courtesy Tourissimo.Travel)



Utah hut trail
(courtesy EscapeAdventures.com)

Ride a volcano in Ecuador

See waterfalls, lakes and Inca ruins during the day and stay in classic haciendas each night on a mountain biking tour of the foothills around Ecuador's Cotopaxi National Park with Adventure Life. At the end of the trip, take on the thrilling descent of Cotopaxi Volcano into the valley below.

Adventure-Life.com

Dolomites cycling tour

Experience dramatic mountain beauty and the fairytale towns of Italy's Dolomite Mountains with Tourissimo. Each day, guests will be surrounded by stunning Alpine scenery as they cycle through some of the most beautiful towns and villages of this breathtaking region. Ride over exhilarating passes, climb by soaring spires, and coast downhill to charming hamlets on routes made famous by the world's greatest cyclists.

www.Tourissimo.Travel

Maui multi-sport

Escape Adventures Maui multi-sport tour loops around the valley between Pu'u Kukui on the west and Mount Haleakalā on the east. In addition to world-class road biking, surfing lessons and sea kayaking allow guests to add water sports to their experience, while several unforgettable hikes offer a chance to see the beautiful island on foot.

EscapeAdventures.com

Hut system in southern Utah

The new Aquarius Trail Hut System offers a backcountry mountain biking experience like no other in the region. A system of five huts furnished with beds, a bathroom, a fully stocked kitchen and solar power has been strategically placed along a 320km route through some of Utah's most scenic backcountry and best mountain biking trails.

AquariusTrail.com



Bike across Europe
(courtesy RideAndSeek.com)



Ride with local cyclists
(courtesy AGZapp.com)



Ride the rocky mountains
(Bigstock.com)

Bike across Europe

Follow in the footsteps of Napoleon's Grande Armée on Ride & Seek Adventures 36-day, 3,700km Bike Across Europe tour. The epic adventure crosses eight countries between Paris and Tallinn, Estonia, taking in Champagne region of France, the green hills of southern Germany and the great lakes of Poland and the Baltics.

RideAndSeek.com

Cycle across America

Plan an epic bike tour or bike packing trip of your own with assistance from the Adventure Cycling Association. To help riders find their way, the organization offers maps for 80,000km of bike routes in North America, the Bicycle Route Navigator app and other resources. Cross the U.S. on the TransAmerica Trail, ride the Rockies on the Great Divide Mountain Bike Route or try a shorter adventure in between.

AdventureCycling.org

Ride with local cyclists

For the travelling cyclist, the new JAGZ app connects riders with locals who can guide them on the best rides. JAGZ users can search destinations across the world and choose from thousands of hosts, guides, and tours. When at home, users can connect with other cyclists in their hometown and create or join group rides and events. The interactive ride calendar allows users to browse upcoming races, demo days, and trail building events.

JAGZapp.com

Marc Atchison is the Editor-in-Chief of TravelLife magazine.

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Here's what our readers are saying...

"Wow! That is more than a magazine, it's a coffee table book!"

Terry, Haliburton

"Just wanted to let you know that I came across your magazine and I was so impressed. It looks great, of course, but I thought the content was really solid. Keep up the great work."

Dennis, Peterborough

"I loved your premier issue of Here magazine! It's contemporary, has great articles on many different and interesting topics, tasteful advertising, great layouts and photography. Simply put, very, very classy!"

Shelley, Haliburton

"This magazine is too good to be true! The articles, the cover and the photography are just great. I took a handful (sorry!) off the shelf and will pass them to all my girlfriends."

Mary, Haliburton

"My wife and I love reading your magazine, the stuff in it is leagues ahead of other stuff we pick up. A breath of fresh air. My only grumble is that it's not every week."

Dean, Bancroft

"My first order of business when I get to the cottage is picking up the latest issue of Here. Any chance I can get a subscription?"

Janet, Oakville

... and we're listening!

A great big *Thank You* to all of our readers who have sent positive reviews of our first year! **Dean from Bancroft** – sorry, we don't think a weekly magazine is possible in the near future. But, **Janet from Oakville**, you're not the only one who has asked us to make *Here with Colin and Justin* available by subscription!

You can now go to HereCanada.ca and get a year's subscription to *Here delivered right to your door* for just \$39.99. Subscription starts with current issue.



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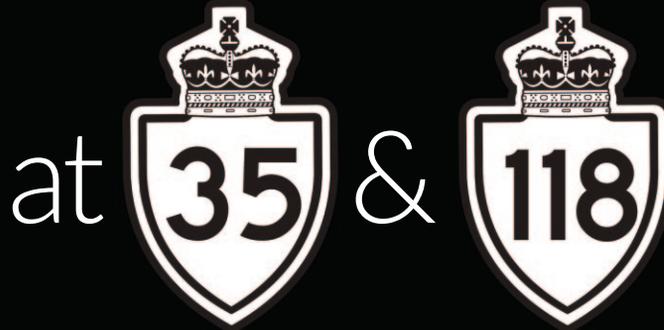
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