



imagine a life with NO TRAFFIC,
SMOG or even a Starbucks.
WELCOME TO
the lakehouse
where STRESS-FREE living is PARAMOUNT

BY TED JOHNSTON PHOTOGRAPHY BY DONNA GRIFFITH STYLING BY ANN MARIE FAVOT

"Tiverton, the street where we owned our first house and later the name of our first cottage, is now a dreamy gabled room that gets the early morning light," says owner Ted Johnston. "We got the bentwood chair for \$14 at a local auction, and the watercolour sketch of the cottage Tiverton was done by my aunt, Sharon Pinkney."





The Lakehouse was named after a British murder mystery book from 1949, found on the floor the day we took possession. Opposite, top right: The Arts and Crafts hall bench in the Tiverton room was a birthday gift from my mother. Opposite, bottom right: Eating outdoors is just one of the daily pleasures at the cottage. The Canadian flag is from Dog Bite Steel.



THE MOMENT THE FRENCH doors I'd saved from my great-grandfather's house (and carried around for 30 years) were installed in a guest room in my new house, I knew this was home.

In 2001, my partner, Tim Young, and I had just completed a tedious renovation of a cottage near Bobcaygeon, Ontario, when a friend called from the site of a recently listed 1901 Arts and Crafts summer house. Knowing my penchant for all things vintage, she told us: "Come look at their stuff, it's like a 1940s movie set." Twenty minutes later, Tim and I were viewing it, and two months after that, we owned it, minus the 'stuff.'

When we bought it, the rambling two-storey structure was a tear-down. It came with a bat-infested attic, leaking roof, sloping floors and a desperate need for modernization. But the location was idyllic—three acres of bush at the end of a road, stretching along 500 feet of shoreline on Pigeon Lake. In addition, the bones of the house were a perfect match for our brand of vintage style, with lots of space to display the collections we've gathered over the years. And the spectacular round dining room—glass with an uninterrupted view over the lake—that helped me envision how I could resurrect this grand dame is one of the cottage's crowning glories.

I drew endless remodelling plans and began





working with framer John Vanderheide and carpenter Bob Jones on the transformation. All 22 rooms were taken apart, restructured, wired and insulated, carefully preserving the natural wood and character. Aside from the tedious bits of any renovation, we indulged in lots of whimsy, designing rooms around favourite pieces of furniture. The Linden room, for example, took shape around three 1930s iron hospital beds brought from a previous cottage. In fact, we gave all the bedrooms monikers like Linden, Dewhurst and Tiverton, named after streets our friends live on. Archways were made to measure for doors I'd scavenged over the years, and the original doors were refurbished and re-hung. It's a source of pride that visitors can't tell the difference between old and new.

We spend a lot of time in the kitchen—Tim cooks, I bake and friends pitch in—so we designed the room around our collections, furniture and work space for several chefs. Reproduction schoolhouse fixtures light up the open shelves we've lined with antique bowls and old kitchen tins, while my favourite vintage signs adorn the walls. The baking counter was influenced by the number of glass canisters we wanted to line up. Windows face the

An antique linen cupboard we salvaged from a Kingston, Ontario, cottage now holds enamelware from the 1920s and enough hotel dinnerware for 36.

The colour palette is a variety of greens, creams and yellows, enhancing the richness of the wood floors and drawing attention to the antique furnishings



The Mt. Pleasant Road sign hung in the kitchen was bought for \$125 from an antiques dealer who refused to say how he got it. The 12-plate pie rack was bought from a local bakery garage sale for \$10. Douglas Fir salvaged from a London, Ontario, distillery and remilled by Timeless Materials in Waterloo to make the tongue and groove flooring still smells like whiskey.



The Greenhouse

TED JOHNSTON AND TIM YOUNG
COTTAGE WITH A CONSCIENCE

- * **Reduce** "Our paint colours are custom mixed. The limited colour scheme adds flow to the space, and reduces the number of paint cans in the basement."
- * **Reuse** "We finally found a place big enough to fit all the old doors we'd salvaged. Archways were made to measure during the renovation, and the original doors were refurbished and re-hung."
- * **Recycle** "Nothing comes in unless something goes out. Each spring I de-clutter and fill the garage with unwanted or unused items for local dealers. Proceeds are used to fill the garden with trees, shrubs and perennials."



Three iron hospital beds from the 1930s line up in the Linden room for overnight guests. Cotton quilts layered over chenille bedspreads lend the room a nostalgic, vintage summer feel.





The cast-iron bull dog standing guard by the master bed is a family heirloom once used to hold open the door of my grandparents' cottage on Lake Simcoe. "The Rocks," hanging above the Mission Oak bed, is part of an Arts and Crafts wallpaper frieze found in the Boyd mansion in Bobcaygeon, Ontario, before it burned down.



Cottages, comfy reading chairs, vintage board games and whimsical accents go hand in hand

garden and lake, allowing views of birds, deer, otters, heron, beaver, even the odd bear.

Inspired by old fabrics, rugs and cedar shingles, we chose a palette of greens, creams and yellows. I mix and match the same colours in every room, but the wall texture, room location and accessories produce different effects. The limited colour scheme creates continuity, while enhancing the nutty brown wood floors and drawing attention to the antiques. It all adds to the vintage feel.

When we purchased the cottage, we thought of ourselves as city folk with cottaging in our hearts—the plan was to pursue a different lifestyle, not necessarily escape the city. But now, each morning Tim heads to his office upstairs and I plan my day as a life coach and real estate representative for Kawartha Waterfront Realty. We don't get mail delivered, but the post office is a hot bed for socializing. There aren't any Starbucks, but Kathleen at Kawartha Coffee Co. makes a mean latte. We don't get to the movies, but we see more stars from our dock than we ever imagined. There's a balance. Life at the Lakehouse is healthy and rich. ❖

