



The fieldstone fireplace in the great room of the Anderson cottage helps countrify the modern new lake house. **RIGHT:** Rob and Jennifer Anderson and there children Megan, James and Shannon with Koda, their very enthusiastic Burnese mountain dog.



When they found a waterfront property, a wooded peninsula with 520 feet of sunny shoreline on a sheltered Lake of Bays cove, they knew the old cottage it held was too small for their family. But, beguiled by the charm of the place, they bought it. “It’s such a great spot,” says Rob. “It’s tough to find a building lot that is so beautiful.”

“We couldn’t let it go,” says Jennifer. “I could tell from the look on my husband’s face that he loved this piece of land.”

Donna Freberg, a broker with **Royal LePage Lakes of Muskoka**, found the property for the Andersons.

Jennifer and Rob had long dreamed of owning a cottage. For years, they vacationed at their friends’ cottage. That annual week-long visit kept their urge to purchase at bay. But when their friends’ cottage was sold, they missed the summer experience. “One summer without any visit to a cottage felt like a big gap in our lives,” says Jennifer.

Lake of Bays is a nostalgic place for Rob, who summered there as a teenager. His aunt and uncle retired to a home on Lake of Bays where Rob and Jennifer bring their children Megan, Shannon and James every summer to an annual family reunion. The reunion is called the Hockin-Anderson Olympics, a three-day regatta with their six visiting cousins. “It’s a lot of fun, a lot of excitement,” says Jennifer, who grew to love the area while staying at a girlfriend’s chalet in Huntsville. “It’s such a big beautiful lake.”

Buying the one-and-a-half-acre Lake of Bays property shrank the family’s cottage budget, so they needed an economical way of building a new vacation home with enough square footage for their active family. “We wanted a great space to entertain family and friends,” says Jennifer. They started looking at pre-fabricated homes. “It was really important that we could get into a situation where we could control the total price tag with no surprises.”

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summer joys ON LAKE OF BAYS

STORY **WALTER FRANCZYK**
PHOTOGRAPHY **SANDY MACKAY**

Rob and Jennifer Anderson hadn’t planned on building a cottage. They wanted to buy one.



Hand woven resin wicker by Cabana Coast provides comfy seating in the Muskoka room where large screened widows keep the bugs out while allowing cooling summer breezes to waft through. Stained pine ceilings and half walls encircle the space. **OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT:** Large panoramic windows on the lake side of the cottage bring the outdoors inside in all seasons. Whitewashed tongue-in-groove pine covers the ceiling. **TOP RIGHT:** Iron chandeliers, custom made by The Light House Design Centre, illuminate the dining space where chairs, upholstered with muslin and vintage leather, surround a hemlock barn-board table. **BOTTOM:** Stools with swivelling barn-board tops seat the entire family for informal meals around the butcher block island in the kitchen. A wine cooler is built into the other side of the island.

When they walked into the **Royal Homes** model home in Gravenhurst, the layout, the look and the quality impressed them. They researched the company’s reputation. Once Royal explained the sales and design phase, they were sold.

The cottage design was collaborative, taking into account Rob and Jennifer’s specific needs and using some of the features of Royal’s Lakeview model, says Royal Homes president **Pieter Venema**. “The Andersons’ lot was perfect for a basement walkout, which provides sunlight and greater access to the basement, making the basement space fantastic for additional living space,” he says. The couple asked Royal to change the two-storey design of its Lakeview model to a full bungalow version to accommodate family and guests on the same level, he explains.

Royal constructed the 3,000 sq. ft. five-bedroom cottage indoors at its factory in Wingham. Once the building modules were

finished, they were loaded on flatbed trailers and hauled to the building site, excavated by **Barnhart Sand & Gravel Inc.** Starting at 8 a.m. on delivery day, Rob and Jennifer watched a big crane carefully place each module on the foundation. By late afternoon, they could walk through their cottage.

They applaud Royal’s site supervisor **Peter Jennings**, who kept them abreast of progress as building crews finished the building. “He was a rock star. He was truly amazing,” says Jennifer. “He really knew his stuff.” Royal built and finished the entire project within eight months. **Sunrise Tree Service** helped clear the building site while **Pipefusion Services Inc.** supplied floating Nydock docks.

The cottage’s main floor holds the kitchen and adjacent dining room alongside a spacious great room with a stone fireplace and sliding glass doors that open to a wide deck overlooking the lake. The master bedroom with its en suite

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TOP: Queen-over-queen pine bunk beds, trimmed with a moose crossing theme, furnish James's bedroom with enough sleeping space for an entire family. **MIDDLE:** White double bunkbeds, custom made to sleep six, complement the coastal look of the girls' bedroom. **ABOVE:** Guest rooms, upstairs and downstairs, offer quiet privacy.



The only television at the cottage resides above the gas fireplace in the children's den on the ground floor.

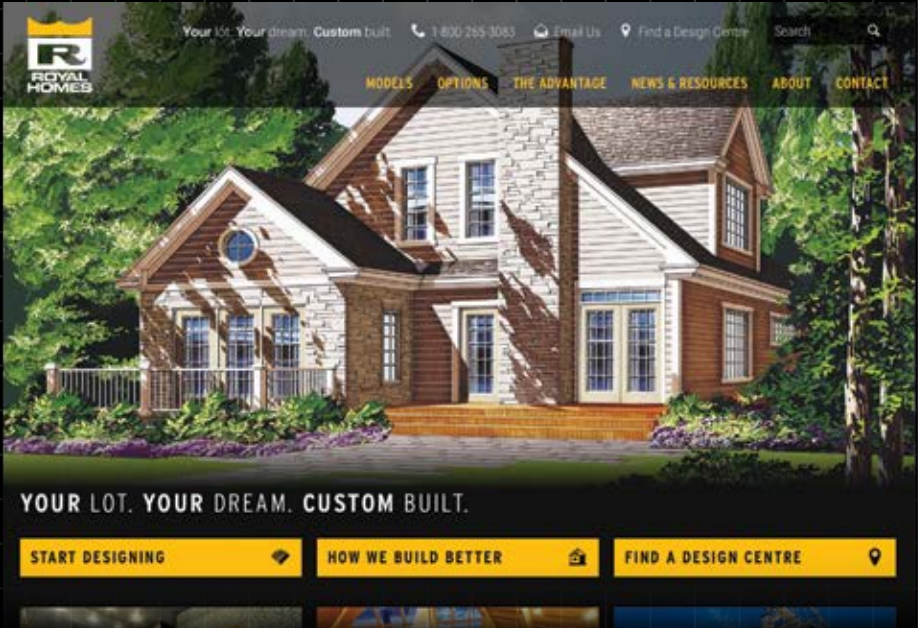
bath and a nearby guest room occupy one end of the main floor while a screened Muskoka room sits at the opposite end. Downstairs are the children's bedrooms, another guest room and a large den for the youngsters. "We wanted to have two separate living areas. One, we call it the upstairs, the adult zone, and then there's the kids' zone downstairs," says Jennifer. The home is designed for today, for later when the children are teens, and eventually for grandchildren. "It was important for us to have the two different spaces when the mosquitoes come out, and everybody's inside, so that you're not sitting on top of each other."

Jennifer asked **Tary Roossien** at **Urban Rustic Living** to help her choose and collect

the new furnishings, linens and fixtures for her summer home. They collaborated through a series of meetings and emails. "It was just such an easy process," Jennifer says. "Literally, the day we got possession of the cottage, Tary and her husband Ed went in with their big truck of stuff and set up the entire cottage," Jennifer says. "I walked into my brand new cottage. I had pictures hung on the wall. I had throws on the couch. All the beds were made. It was as if I was walking into a model home. I couldn't believe it. I started to cry," she recalls. "The only things I brought of my own were my dishes and towels, my kids and husband. Everything else, she did. It just made it super easy." *Continued on page 42*

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Since February, when the building was finished and furnished, the Anderson family has made weekend escapes from their Newmarket home to their woodland sanctuary. “There are times when we literally sneak up for one night,” says Jennifer. “It’s no big deal, because door-to-door it’s one hour and 45 minutes for us.”

During their first summer at this cottage, they plan to boat, tube and waterski. They will also host beach volleyball as one of the events in the Hockin-Anderson Olympics.

It’s vital to Rob that his children experience the joys of life on the lake. “That was huge for me,” he says. Waking up, sipping coffee while reading, and looking out at the lake is one of his favourite times of day at the cottage.

Jennifer’s favourite space is the great room, its soaring cathedral ceiling and panoramic view. “It’s just trees and lake and it’s all around you.”

The Andersons bought their spot on Lake of Bays from Joy Wilson, whose maiden name is also Anderson. They’ve named their summer retreat Anderson Again. **OH**



ABOVE: The main-floor master bedroom features a lake view and a sliding glass door to the exterior deck at the front of the cottage. **LEFT:** In the glass-fronted shower, shelves are recessed into the grey-tiled walls. Vinyl widow shutters are from Home Depot.