

A MATTER OF TIME

Designer Keely Gow brings character and comfort to a new-build cottage that looks and feels like it's been there forever.

TEXT BETHANY LYTTLE | PHOTOGRAPHY THE NORTH STUDIO



THESE PAGES “Wood ceilings run throughout the main floor of the cottage, and the dark-stained decorative beams set the tone for the living room,” says designer Keely Gow. The furnishings are all about comfort: you can curl up on the velvety ochre sectional or choose the classic wingback by the hearth for a little before-bedtime reading. And when the family gathers, the credenza is the go-to. It holds a bevy of games, puzzles and cozy throws. “The idea behind the timber coffee table was to reinforce the cottage vibe,” says Keely.

DESIGN, custom **WALL ART**, custom **LUMBAR PILLOW**, ARKE Design Build. **RUG DESIGN**, ARKE Design Build; **FABRICATION**, Loloi Rugs. **SECTIONAL**, **ARMCHAIRS**, **WINGBACK CHAIR**, Long Way Home. **COFFEE TABLE**, Modern Komfort. **CREDENZA**, Accents for Living. **FIREPLACE**, Fireplace King. **CHANDELIER**, Robinson Lighting & Bath. **PILLOWS**, Tonic Living. **LAMP**, HomeSense.

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hen a couple approached Keely Gow to design their family's new-build lakefront getaway in Ontario's Haliburton Highlands, their main ask was that it *feel* like a cottage and *look* like a cottage. “Well, to me, ‘cottage’ is a very descriptive word,” says Keely. “To me, ‘cottage’ means that when you walk in the door, it feels like walking into a hug!” That concept is at the heart of the architectural design of the new-build. Hallmarks of traditional Ontario cottages – like vintage-style pine ceilings, a massive stone fireplace and amazing lake views – are all present and accounted for. And to get that welcoming-hug feeling the family desired, Keely's inspired-by-nature colour palette – lots of blues, greens, browns and greys – and layers of texture provide the finishing touches. “We've got these wood ceilings that run throughout, then all the wonderful wood furniture pieces, a rustic stone fireplace, and comfy plush velvet and wool seating,” says Keely. She also employed what's best described as a distinctly Keely-centric approach to design. “I have a passion for including previously loved objects,” she says. “The right pieces nestled here and there among newer furnishings brings instant character, even to a brand-new space.”



“This room has it all: a towering rustic fireplace, wood cathedral ceilings, cozy seating and a view of the lake.”



THESE PAGES For a subtle take on traditional, Keely customized the dining chairs in a soft outdoorsy sage hue. At breakfast time, they look playful. At dinnertime, bathed in the evening sparkle of the grand chandelier, they assume a lakeside elegance. Another one of Keely's special touches appears in the hall that leads from the kitchen. "We found this antique bench that was perfect for the space, except it was too long," says Keely. "So, we just cut it down to fit. That's my thing: Bring in found treasures and give them new life!"

TABLE, CHAIRS, Steckley's Furniture. **CHANDELIER,** Robinson Lighting & Bath. **CANDLESTICKS,** IKEA.



"We chose a table made of pine because it ages well and will soon look like it's been here for years."



THESE PAGES The cottagey kitchen has clean lines, but it's wonderfully textured and warm. For example, the range hood is wrapped in oak stained a rich chestnut colour. And rather than go with smooth countertops, Keely went more rustic with a leather-finished granite. The look is a perfect setting for the stools, which combine metal, faux leather and wood. "When it came to the cabinets, we went with simple lines in a soft off-white," says Keely.

CABINETS, ISLAND, RANGE HOOD, Norcab Kitchen & Millwork Co. **CABINETS PAINT,** Accessible Beige SW 7036, Sherwin-Williams. **STOOLS,** Urban Barn. **LIGHTING,** Robinson Lighting & Bath. **RUNNER,** HomeSense.



"The open kitchen has doors out to a barbecue deck, so the kitchen is laid out in a way that makes it easy to go from one cooking area to the next."

“Combining new items, like the bed, with cost-effective ones, like the previously loved dresser, makes a room more approachable, and that’s my jam!”



THIS PAGE “This is my favourite room,” says Keely of the primary bedroom. “It’s entirely wrapped in this deep, saturated green. It’s so dramatic, but also so warm and natural.” The light-coloured storage bed is daydreamy soft, and the dresser, with its vintage scrollwork, and night-stands are great examples of the kinds of treasures Keely finds secondhand.

WALL PAINT, Army Green 2141-30, Benjamin Moore. **BED, BLANKET,** Silk & Snow. **WALL ART,** ARKE Design Build. **SCONCE,** Wayfair. **BEDDING,** IKEA.



THIS PAGE In the primary bedroom’s ensuite, the wood ceiling continues and imparts a dark warmth. The paint on the vanity links to the bedroom walls, while the colours in the rug and wall art are inspired by the woods and lake outdoors.

Custom **VANITY,** Norcab Kitchen & Millwork Co. **VANITY PAINT,** Army Green 2141-30, Benjamin Moore. Maxx’s Ariosa **TUB,** Emco. **WALL ART,** Urban Barn. **RUNNER,** HomeSense.





ABOVE The recreation space has its own fireplace and a cozy wingback chair. The leather pouf is lightweight and super easy to move around. "We sought out that antique double-door hutch to stow games and puzzles," says Keely.

PLAID CHAIR, Long Way Home. **CABINET**, Land & Ross Antiques & Design. **OTTOMAN**, Urban Barn. **RUG DESIGN**, ARKE Design Build; **FABRICATION**, Surya. **FIREPLACE**, Fireplace King.

BELOW "This was a massive expanse of drywall, so it really needed some help! We collected a bunch of great landscape pieces - some thrift and some new - then grounded the display with this antique bench," says Keely.

BENCH, Land & Ross Antiques & Design. **FLORAL PILLOW**, Tonic Living. **WHITE PILLOW**, HomeSense.



THIS PAGE Keely discovered these old oars and created little leather belts to hang them on the wall. Pairing them with the vintage table and chairs gives the space a been-here-forever look.

OARS, Facebook Marketplace.



"The recreation space is on the lower level, so it's a little dimmer down there. The look is still cottagey, but the tones are lighter here than upstairs."



ABOVE Guests who settle into this bedroom can completely unwind. “The bedding is super durable, so just plop your luggage down on top, or toss your damp bathing suit across the poufs after a swim,” says Keely. “This is one of the darkest rooms in the home, so we went light with the wall art and colour palette.”

WALL ART, ARKE Design Build. **BEDDING, LAMP, PILLOWS**, Tonic Living.

RIGHT, TOP & BOTTOM In another guest room, a white metal bed is dressed in fresh yellow gingham bedding for a sunny dose of country charm. “The bench is new but is made to look older,” explains Keely. The nightstands and bed are repurposed from the homeowners’ former cottage.

BEDDING, IKEA. **ART PRINTS**, Etsy.



“When you walk in from the lake, this is the closest bathroom, so it had to be designed to suit everyone.”



THIS PAGE Blue tile suits the natural surroundings of the cottage, a subtle reminder when you come in from the lake. The arched mirror enhances the vanity that Keely designed. She says, “I love the way the hand-painted ceramic knobs have blues and oranges, like the wall art and rug.” On the super-practical side, the spacious shower niche is big enough for everyone’s favourite bath products.

VANITY DESIGN, ARKE Design Build; **FABRICATION**, Norcab Kitchen & Millwork Co. Custom **MIRROR**, ARKE Design Build. **RUG**, HomeSense. **SHOWER WALL TILE**, Olympia Tile. **FLOOR TILE**, Tilemaster. **SCONCES**, Robinson Lighting & Bath.