

Designer Alison Knapp relied on textural treatments and natural tones to curate casual comfort at an Ontario cottage.

TEXT CHRISTY WRIGHT | PHOTOGRAPHY ALEX LUKEY



Simply Serene

Making an Entrance

For the entryway, designer Alison Knapp created an eye-catching wall treatment of oak slats. "It provides a simple architectural backdrop for the mirror and console," she says. The slate-look floor tiles are highly textured porcelain that is durable and easy to clean.

DESIGN, Alison Knapp Interior Design. **ARCHITECT**, David Gillett Design. **FLOOR TILES**, Olympia Tile. **MIRROR**, Renwil. **Talbot CONSOLE**, Vanguard Furniture. **Bernhard STOOLS**, Cocoon Furnishings. **Visual Comfort LAMP**, Robinson Lighting & Bath. **VASES**, Elte.

In the Woods

"I love the architect's roofline. It reminds me of a paper plane," says Alison. "I had it clad in oak to create warmth on the ceiling." The great room's white oak floors continue that feel and foster an enveloping effect. The down-filled custom sectional seats six easily and Alison says it's like "laying on a cloud." Subtle shades of green, birch and caramel in the hand-knotted rug delight, and black roller blinds are skillfully hidden in the windows' drywall returns.

RUG, Elte. **Custom SECTIONAL**, Kravet. **END TABLES**, **COFFEE TABLE**, Cocoon Furnishings. **WINDOWS**, Muskoka Window and Door Centre.





Great Escape

"The great room [opposite] was laid out to create two seating areas that could be connected for entertaining a large group, but for a more intimate seating area, the small sofa with cocktail ottoman is the perfect place for two to put their feet up, read the paper and enjoy the view," says Alison. The fireplace stones are local, and the flanking built-ins feature irregular-shaped openings designed to hold all sizes and shapes of family mementoes. Colourful artwork enriches the space and sits beneath an interior window that lets natural light into the entry hall.

SOFA, Cocoon Furnishings. **Leather TABLE**, Gresham House Furniture. **BOOKSHELVES**, Chervin Kitchen & Bath. Hudson Valley **SPOTLIGHTS**, Robinson Lighting & Bath. **ARMCHAIR, STOOL**, Kravet. **ARTWORK**, Holly Ann Friesen.

Island Life

"The kitchen island is sort of pie shaped," says Alison. "We designed it to fit the perimeter of the room and maximize taking in the view of the lake, rather than facing the sink." The rift-cut white oak cabinetry features simple hardware, and glass-fronted cabinets define a little bar area.

MILLWORK, Chervin Kitchen & Bath. Blizzard Caesarstone **COUNTERTOPS**, Granite By Design. Hinckley **PENDANT LIGHT**, Robinson Lighting & Bath. Damble **KITCHEN STOOLS**, Suite 22 Interiors.



Change of Tone

The owners' desire for a more contemporary aesthetic than their primary home is evident in the sleek stools. "The shape is modern and the leather was chosen for its easy texture, as well as its putty colour," says Alison. The pendant light speaks to the modern vibe and the irregular shape of the kitchen. "It's a neat nod to the angles of the island and the ceiling."

VASE (on island), **BOWL**, Crate and Barrel.



o flash, no glam, just serene," is how designer Alison Knapp describes this 3,200-square-foot cottage that's set on a rocky perch above Ontario's very Instagrammable Lake Joseph. "When we were planning this new-build, the word *simple* kept coming up: it couldn't look overdone." Alison had worked with her clients, empty nesters who live in Oakville, Ont., for more than 20 years. They wanted an inviting getaway where they could welcome their kids and grandkids and – fun for Alison – they were keen to change things up design-wise. "Their homes have always been traditional – think dark cherry floors, mullioned windows – so they wanted to go more modern and a bit fresher at the cottage."

Alison started from the ground up, selecting flooring and rugs that layered in natural textures and hues taken from the landscape. "These informed the rest of the colour scheme and the choice of fabrics, which are mostly solid – there's not a lot of pattern happening," she says. The simple furnishings make a casual mark, while details like oak-clad ceilings and high-impact millwork ensure that the space is charged with interest yet doesn't compete with the magical view. "This is a retreat that blends into the landscape," says Alison. "The natural fabrics and no-fuss textures mean you don't have to worry about spills or scratches. Blood pressure immediately drops when you walk into this cottage. That's pretty serene."



Porch Time

The owners (shown) enjoy their screened-in porch, which offers a spectacular view of the lake. The cottage exterior's charred colour was a jumping-off point for Alison's choice of grey-accented furnishings. "Again, the furniture is more modern," she says. "It features a mix of teak and rope-wrapped frames that feel sculptural, and the end tables are concrete." The rug is soft underfoot and made from recycled plastic bottles. It can be hosed down for easy cleaning.

Palecek **OUTDOOR FURNITURE**, Cocoon Furnishings. **RUG**, Crate and Barrel.



Blurring Boundaries

"All the open space around the dining table creates a very relaxed atmosphere," says Alison. "So much light comes in, you almost feel like you're outside, and the comfortable chairs invite lingering around the table." The oak table is finished with a warm grey stain reminiscent of birch bark. Alison had the pendant lights on hold for the perfect space. She says, "They are airy and light and just right here."

PENDANT LIGHTS, Skandium. Vanguard **DINING TABLE**, Jessica Charles **DINING CHAIRS**, Anderson's Interiors.



Vanity Fair

The lower-level guest bathroom feels like it could be a European spa. "The design began with the wall tiles and their shades of earthy green, blue, watery grey and soft white," says Alison. "They're meant to act as a complement to the water and marry the interior space with the view to the lake. It's one of my most favourite bathrooms that I've ever designed." It serves two guest rooms, so it offers double sinks and ample closed storage in the vanity. The black accents feel fresh and modern.

VANITY, Chervin Kitchen & Bath. **FLOOR TILES**, Céragrès. **SHOWER TILES**, Stone Tile. **RIOBEL FAUCETS**, Watermarks Kitchen & Bath Boutique. **MIRRORS**, CB2. **SONNEMAN SCONCES**, Robinson Lighting & Bath.



Primary Panache

The primary bedroom and ensuite weave a textural story with details like a fabulous white oak panelled ceiling, nubby rug and fabrics, and woven wicker. The tub includes a sleek black tray; both are framed by a floating wood platform that dials up relaxation. Says Alison, "This is the perfect spot for a candle or a glass of wine and, again, is very simple."

DRAPES, Custom Home Decor. **BED, SIDE TABLES, BENCH**, Cocoon Furnishings. **LAMPS**, Robinson Lighting & Bath. Custom blue **CUSHIONS**, Alison Knapp Interior Design. **BEDDING, RUG**, Elte. **WETSTYLE TUB**, Watermarks Kitchen & Bath Boutique. **PENDANT LIGHT**, Crate and Barrel. **ARTWORK**, Celadon.



Mirror, Mirror

A metal mirror with leather-wrapped detailing on the upper bracket feels bespoke, and that's something that Alison desired. "I wanted each of the guest bathrooms to have its own personality," she says. "Here, I chose a rectangular vessel sink to sit atop an inset stone slab." Herringbone stone floor tiles feel both upscale and relaxed.

Theodore Alexander **MIRROR**, Cocoon Furnishings. Sonneman **SCONCES**, Robinson Lighting & Bath. Ardoise du Bresil **FLOOR TILES**, Céragrès. Kohler **SINK**; Riobel **FAUCET, TOWEL RING**; Watermarks Kitchen & Bath Boutique. **ARTWORK**, Celadon.



Guests of Honour

The owners use their cottage year-round but mainly in the warmer months, when it's a place for making memories with their children and grandchildren. They wanted to ensure the amenities were just as welcoming as the surroundings, and the main-floor guest bathroom (left) fits the bill with smart design that includes a custom vanity. "I was influenced by Mission style and designed the vanity to look like an old piece of furniture," says Alison.

Colour Coordinated

The main-floor guest bedroom expands the palette with colourful walls. "Although there's a natural flow throughout the cottage, not every area has to embody the same colour scheme," says Alison. "We changed it up slightly here. Since the sliding doors exit to a balcony that looks out over the water, blue grey seemed a natural choice." Linen drapes soften the room, and the bed is a fun showstopper that injects the guest space with personality. "I love how different it feels to the other bedrooms, and isn't it cool to sleep in a canopy bed?"

WALL PAINT, Westchester Grey 2849, Sherwin-Williams. Visual Comfort **LAMPS**, Kichler **CEILING FAN**, Robinson Lighting & Bath. Kravet **DRAPES**, Custom Home Decor. Ombre front **CUSHIONS**, Cocoon Furnishings. Custom **PILLOWS**, Alison Knapp Interior Design. **BED, NIGHTSTANDS, BEDDING**, Elite.

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