

STORY
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PHOTOGRAPHY
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WIDE OPEN

Snowmobile trails, four wheeling and boating drew Ed Veldjesgraaf's family to their new four-season getaway on Peninsula Lake. "We just felt everything was there for us," says Ed. "I have five children and we're a fairly close family."

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Stone surrounding the main entrance of the Veldjesgraaf family cottage lends solidity to the newly renovated lake house. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** Granite stairs cascade down the forested front yard slope to the lake. **FAR LEFT:** At the foot of the property, Peninsula Lake is a gateway to more than 20 kilometres of lakes and rivers.



A twig chandelier, wooden dining table and chairs were all furnished by Veranda, a Bracebridge furniture store. **OPPOSITE TOP:** The front deck connects the great room to the front yard, an evening gathering spot at the firepit. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM:** Mike Bateman of Benchmade Furniture + Kitchens created the cottage's new kitchen island. Muskoka Lighting Company supplied pendant lamps.



Their newly-renovated, six-bedroom lake house, with 4,000 square feet of living space, nestles amid five acres of mixed forest on a high slope overlooking the lake. Sledding trails and four-wheeling trails are nearby. With navigable routes to Fairy Lake, Huntsville and Vernon Lake, Peninsula Lake accesses more than 20 kilometres of scenic sailing.

It's his family's first cottage in Muskoka. When Ed's wife Dorothy was alive, they travelled by motorhome to many places. "When we were young we always included the kids," Ed says. "We went to the Bobcaygeon area for the last 20 years or so because we really liked the boating in that area." But winter sledding and four-wheeling in that part of Kawartha doesn't compare to Muskoka, he explains.

Ed says he and the children like the home's open-concept design and large downstairs games room. "It's a wide-open house and that's what we were looking for." The fact the cottage was finished and fully furnished was especially appealing. Ed owns and operates a well-established business in Stratford. All his children are married with children and all have their own businesses. "We don't have a lot of time to come up there and start repairing and fixing things," he says. "It's very hard to find something in new condition."

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Seating in the Muskoka room consists of woven resin on aluminum frame sofas.



The cottage's previous owners, Amanda and Amar Hira, assisted by **Sotheby's International Realty Canada** broker **Megan McLeod**, began renovating in the fall of 2020 with carpenter **Benjamin Zakaib**, of **Zakaib Contracting**. As project manager, Ben did most of the work himself, including framing and finish carpentry. He sourced sub-trades and worked alongside them to completely renovate the house. "He's a very bright young man," says Amanda. "He did everything with a lot of love and care."

Keeping only the original exterior walls, crews replaced plumbing and electrical services, installed new light fixtures, doors and hinges. Exterior siding and the front door were refreshed. "Everything's been redone," says Amanda. Megan was responsible for interior finishes. She recommended removing a few walls to open up the great room area and primary bedroom. Feature walls and ceilings in MDF and light paint colours achieved an open, airy space with great flow.

Amanda sourced most of the home's furnishings from **Veranda**, a Bracebridge furniture store. "We worked together," says Veranda owner **Elise Boyer**. "Amanda is very discriminating. She chose everything with me but she knows what she likes." The décor is beautiful, Ed says. "It was very professionally done." *Continued on page 62*



TOP LEFT: Open-concept living was especially appealing to the Veldjesgraaf family. **TOP RIGHT:** A linear fireplace from The Fireplace King enhances the great room's clean, contemporary look. **RIGHT:** Comfortable seating gathers viewers around a flat screen television to one side of the great room.



feature

CLOCKWISE: Recessed niches are handy in the glassed-walled shower. A beaded chandelier from the Muskoka Lighting Company helps to brighten this bedroom. Benchmade Furniture + Kitchens crafted this blue bathroom vanity. The primary bedroom's bed, love seat and other furnishings were sourced at Veranda.



In addition to the great room, open-concept kitchen and dining space, the main floor holds a large primary bedroom with en suite. There's a second main-floor bedroom and a third used as a Muskoka room. A large family room downstairs has two distinct gathering spots. One sitting area is furnished with sofas. The other has swivel armchairs gathered by an old-fashioned black iron stove. A bar installed to one side of the pool table is built atop a vintage bicycle, manufactured by Hero Cycles Limited, an Indian company and the world's largest bicycle maker. Four more bedrooms complete the ground floor.

Mike Bateman of **Benchmade Furniture + Kitchens** created the cottage's new kitchen island and bathroom vanities. **The Fireplace King** supplied and installed the living room fireplace while **Muskoka Lighting & Electric** rewired the building and installed light fixtures from **Muskoka Lighting Company**. **All Ways Plumbing** re-plumbed the entire cottage to bring the waterworks up to code. *Continued on page 64*



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feature

Ed says his family is very happy with the lake house. "It's pretty new for all of us," he says. "We love it. We're outdoors people." Down at the lake, they cleared an area of frozen ice where they skate and play hockey. "We took a fire bowl down there and had a fire on the lake. We had the fire bowl on plywood and we had a nice fire there to keep us warm. It's awesome."

Once warmer weather arrives, he intends to landscape the property. "I'm hoping I can build a trail down to the water, rather than using the steps all the time. Some of the neighbours have a trail going through the woods. We'll need to do some work to get that done."

He plans to bring up his boat and a Sea-Doo and do some work on the dock to park and store the vessels more easily. He also hopes to finish a small bunkie on one side of the property. "Some of the grandkids would love to sleep in there at night in the summertime I'm sure," he says. Ed's 20th grandchild was born early in the new year. **OH**



ABOVE: Canadian-made swivel chairs and a reclaimed, distressed cabinet furnish an intimate gathering spot on the home's ground level. **BELOW:** A bar grafted atop an old bicycle, built by Hero Cycles Limited of India, serves the billiards room. **BELOW LEFT:** The ground level family room offers plenty of space and entertaining diversions for this large, active family.



SOURCE GUIDE

- All Ways Plumbing • Benchmade Furniture + Kitchens • Groh Construction Inc. • Kelly's Home Furniture • Megan McLeod of Sotheby's International Realty Canada • Muskoka Lighting Company
- Muskoka Shading • Refresh Painting Co. • RJ Hatton Renovations
- The Fireplace King • Veranda • Zakaib Contracting • ZZ Contracting

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