

LABOUR OF *Love*

A FRESH TAKE ON A RUSTIC, MODERN HOME

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AFTER A WEEKEND BOATING ON GEORGIAN BAY, ROB SNYDER AND SUZANNE STRONGMAN WERE HOOKED. THE WINDSWEPT WHITE PINES AND CLOSE-KNIT COMMUNITY ON MIDLAND BAY CAPTIVATED THEIR HEARTS. ORIGINALLY FROM BURLINGTON, THE COUPLE LOVED THE IDEA OF ENJOYING THEIR RETIREMENT SOMEWHERE QUIETER AND CLOSER TO NATURE.



Suzanne Strongman and Rob Snyder with Beau, their Labradoodle.

Once Rob sold his business, he casually searched for waterfront property in the Midland area. He stumbled across a five-acre lot nestled on a protected cove. At the time, the waterside land was primarily vacant, filled with dense vegetation and a small stream near the shoreline. Despite all the work involved in a custom build, Rob and Suzanne knew that getting the chance to build their forever home would be worth the effort. In October 2021, the project commenced.

The couple worked with architectural technologist **Richard Kossak**, founder of **New Age Design**, to create all architectural drawings. Their non-negotiables? Creating a comfortable home they could grow into, having space for their six children and friends to roam, and crafting something that worked in harmony with the landscape. The property is granted southeast exposure and immaculate sunrises, so views of the lake from all principal rooms were also a key element. *Continued on page 50*

ABOVE LEFT: The couple love relaxing on their screened-in back deck or lounging in their signature yellow Muskoka chairs. The Muskoka flagstone is sourced from Maxwell Stone and installed by Country Roots Masonry & Landscaping. **ABOVE MIDDLE:** Multiple viewpoints on the property offer picturesque lake views. Georgian Bay Metals crafted the exterior staircase. **OPPOSITE:** Views of the house from the waterfront are impressive. Muskoka rock and symmetrical garden beds designed by Nicole Pattenden Landscape Design Build create visual balance and rhythm. The home's placement on a protected cove creates a calm shoreline and a beautiful sandy beach. A&G Roofing installed the roof.



Space abounds on this five-acre property overlooking Georgian Bay. Lush greenery encases the home, along with beautiful hydrangeas, tall grasses and native plants. It was important to Rob and Suzanne that their property works in harmony with the landscape.



After a comprehensive design period, their contractor, **Brad Hauser** and the team at **IHD Design Build** began building this four-bedroom, 5,000 sq. ft. masterpiece. Brad's professional team and a troop of local trades surrounded Rob and Suzanne. From the get-go, they knew they were in good hands. "Everyone wanted to work together," says Rob. "They all had one common goal: to make a modern, beautiful, and functional space."

The property's curb appeal is a fresh take on the contemporary waterfront cottage. It evokes a sense of tranquility and elegance. Perfectly landscaped gardens, created by **Nicole Pattenden Landscape Design Build**, are filled with peonies, hydrangeas, various

grasses, lilies, and native plants. "I love flowers and seeing them bloom at different times," Suzanne adds.

Strategically placed garden beds stretch around the entire property and establish a balanced look without sacrificing the land's beauty. "We could put bee hives around here," says Rob. Their five acres buzz with life in the spring and summer.

The couple spend most of their time outside by the water or tucked in the "bay" room, a screened-in back deck, a perfect relaxation zone. The dock, constructed by **A&A Services and Marine Construction Limited**, and the sandy shoreline are ideal backdrops for endless family fun. *Continued on page 53*



The home's exterior materials were used in the interior to invite the outdoors inside. Japanese Yakisugi charred wood siding lies behind a colourful piece of art sourced from Rob and Suzanne's hometown, Burlington. The custom finished oak dining table often hosts friends and family and works perfectly in the space.

OPPOSITE, TOP: The home's curb appeal is a work of art. A thoughtfully designed carport offers protection for vehicles without sacrificing style. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Stunning Muskoka flagstone from Maxwell Stone graces the front porch, along with two rattan chairs to view the surrounding forest space. The eastern hemlock soffits add a warm touch. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** A leather bench backed by a perforated brass guard brings texture and style to the main entry.





Window treatments that reach the ceiling were part of the initial design. The motorized shades from Posch Lifestyles were necessary to keep the home cool and shaded year-round. The wood-burning Napoleon fireplace, a focal point in the living room, is surrounded by stunning stone installed by Country Roots Masonry & Landscaping. Neutral furniture fabrics and warm colour tones chosen by Suzanne and Rob evoke a sense of comfort.



Suzanne enjoyed decorating the open shelving with colourful items to add character to the living room. The home's millwork was completed by Craftsmen Custom Millwork, and the dynamic light fixtures came from Corsi Lighting. The oak kitchen island features quartz countertops from Blue Bay Granite & Marble Inc., and vertical grain hemlock tray ceilings provide a unique touch.



Japanese Yakisugi wood covers the exterior and seamlessly flows to the interior walls. It effortlessly invites the outdoors in – a design tip offered by IHD designer manager **Jacob LaLonde**. The Yakisugi material is an elevated choice for siding. The wood has been slightly charred through a heat treatment process to increase durability, improve weather resistance and enhance overall performance.

Organic choices were made throughout the entire build to complement the theme of inviting the outdoors inside. Eastern hemlock soffits and Muskoka flagstone grace all entrances, while **Northern Wide Plank** hardwood, installed by **Oak Valley Hardwood Flooring**, runs on both levels.

The cosy living room is the heart of the home. Floor-to-ceiling windows from Loewen Windows offer unobstructed views of the waterfront, making the house feel like it's floating. The wood fireplace, encased in stone from **Maxwell Stone** and installed by **Country Roots Masonry & Landscaping**, is a beautiful focal point. *Continued on page 56*



LEFT: A small office area strategically placed off the kitchen invites convenience and functionality for the family. Two-toned kitchen cabinetry with black hardware creates visual contrast. **ABOVE RIGHT:** The lower level is finished with the same materials that grace the upper level to create unity throughout the home. A galley-style kitchenette and luxury sleeping quarters make the lower level an optimal second living space.

This is the heart of the home. The open-concept design creates a harmonious blend between central living spaces. Warm, earthy colour tones with a mix of rattan, leather, wood and metal make the space feel organic and rustic. The 13-foot ceiling and oversized windows, purchased from Loewen Windows and installed by Gator Custom Windows Ltd., establish a sense of luxury. The perfect off-white walls are painted in Benjamin Moore Classic Gray.





Suzanne’s design background helped her pick out finishes, tiles and furniture. She enjoyed having input in the design process, especially regarding the kitchen. “One of the things I wanted was a big pantry,” says Suzanne, “and lots of storage.” All cabinetry was created in collaboration with **Craftsmen Custom Millwork**, and the quartz countertop was sourced from **Blue Bay Granite & Marble Inc.** The space is completed with a unique tray ceiling with vertical grain hemlock, and an oversize island bookended with an oak wood waterfall. Unique light fixtures were sourced at **Corsi Lighting**.

Craftsmen Custom Millwork completed all of the cottage’s custom cabinetry and millwork, right down to the custom bunk beds in the lower-level guest bedrooms.

The primary bedroom with a private deck is both inviting and indulgent. Decorated with warm textiles and creamy neutrals, the space feels like a personal haven. Eastern hemlock is artfully placed on the ceiling, while harmonious floor-to-ceiling windows grant gleaming water views. *Continued on page 58*



ABOVE: The primary bedroom is the embodiment of luxury. Also painted Benjamin Moore Classic Gray, the space has a private balcony and cozy furniture sourced from Pavilion Modern, West Elm and Crate & Barrel. The 11-foot ceilings feature eastern hemlock. **FAR LEFT:** The spa-like primary en suite boasts a double vanity created by Craftsmen Custom Millwork and gorgeous tile sourced from Ciot and installed by St. Peter’s Roma Tile Inc. **LEFT:** The walk-in shower is tile-drenched, creating a bold, immersive look.

Elegant Living, Made Simple





“When designing, we were really thinking about our future,” says Rob, “and our future grandchildren.” An elevator, a thoughtful design element, descends to the fully finished lower level, complete with additional living quarters.

The 32-month project is finally complete, and the couple lives comfortably in their new space. They couldn't be happier with IHD Design Build and are grateful for Brad and his team. “All the intricate details of a build take a lot of time and effort,” says Brad. “But Rob and Suzanne were ready to make it happen.”

The abundant Georgian Bay landscape compelled the pair to start their next chapter on Midland Bay, but the local community made their home feel like home. “We absolutely love this part of the world,” says Rob with a big grin. **OH**

ABOVE: The modern staircase with a metal and glass railing creates visual impact. The textured feature wall, designed by Jacob LaLonde at IHD Design Build, adds dimension. **RIGHT:** The basement walk-out provides easy access to the waterfront for seasonal enjoyment. The Muskoka flagstone in the foyer invites the outdoors inside. **FAR RIGHT:** The basement wine room is a luxury addition. The space features gorgeous walnut panels, moody lighting and temperature-controlled wine fridges. **BELOW LEFT:** One of the home's calming guest bedrooms. Located on the main level, this space embodies comfort and features an en suite. Suzanne wanted each bedroom in the house to have its own bathroom so guests could have optimal privacy. **BELOW RIGHT:** Another guest bedroom with simple design elements and gleaming waterfront views.



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