



No. 69
Design Future

ARCHITECTURE. INTERIORS. LANDSCAPE. PRODUCT. FASHION.

Gray



Furniture is showcased like artwork throughout this striking summer cottage. In the expansive living room, a Beam sofa by Patricia Urquiola for Cassina and Yale table by Jean-Marie Massaud for MDF Italia invite family gatherings.

LAKESIDE CONTEMPORARY

An infusion of color by Reigo & Bauer breathes new life into a historic Canadian cottage.

By Carla Sorrell Photographed by Doublespace Photography







ABOVE AND LEFT: To update the cottage's foyer, a built-in closet was replaced with new board-and-batten paneling. The addition of a built-in bench, cabinet, and dichroic-glass cabinet brings new life to the space.

Vibrant color may not be the first thing that comes to a designer's mind when developing a minimalist interior for a 200-year-old home. But when the creative brief prioritizes a collection of iconic 1960s pop art, a bold and unconventional result is almost inevitable.

The aforementioned structure, a former innkeeper's lodge, is the last remnant of a once-sprawling resort on Muskoka Lake in Ontario, Canada. Although the property had been owned by the same family for two decades, its husband-and-wife stewards had refrained from making changes to the old building, fearing that any new upgrades would be at odds with the historical cedar board-and-batten-clad interiors that are characteristic of the region.

But eventually, thanks to a relationship with husband-and-wife designers Merike and Stephen Bauer, which has spanned more than 10 years and two successful renovations—a Toronto home and a Collingwood ski chalet—the couple decided to make the leap and update the treasured cottage. For the art-collecting duo, the previous renovations had proven that design—much like the contemporary art they collect—can significantly enhance their experience of a living space.

Initially, the Bauers' task was to restore the 6,700-square-foot building and replace its antique and vintage furniture, which was stylistically typical of a lake cottage, but out of sync with the bold pop art that adorned the walls. The Bauers and their clients were committed to forgoing an easy-to-adopt »



The dining room's focal point is a cherished antique table that easily sits 10 for family meals. Its scale inspired the choice of oversized hanging Avico suspension lamps by FontanaArte.







ABOVE: A board-and-batten backsplash was introduced to reinforce the idea that the home's new elements are engaging with the original structure. **OPPOSITE:** Designers Merike and Stephen Bauer worked with Toronto-based millwork and cabinetry company Renca + Heilimo to create a striking new kitchen.

palette of neutral finishes for a more colorful approach, but at that point, neither party knew just how daring the end result would be.

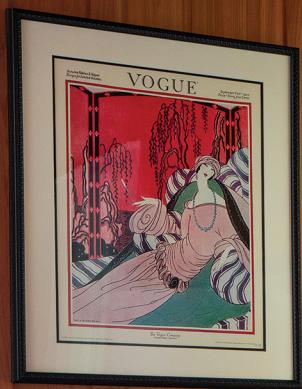
"This client loves color a lot," says Merike, who cofounded Reigo & Bauer with Stephen in 2005. "That's so fun for us because not everyone is brave enough to embrace bold colors. It allowed the opportunity to think about which colors complement cedar—because a lot do, but you don't see [them used in that context] too often." Standout color combinations include the intense neon hues of a Warhol sunset, a surprising match with the dark wood paneling, and a zesty teal-and-apple-green combination that unites a contemporary settee with an iconic *Love* print by Robert Indiana.

The interior's traditional board-and-batten cedar walls are the antithesis of a contemporary gallery's crisp white walls, but the

designers realized that by treating the former as the latter—literally placing, hanging, or framing the furniture against these rustic feature walls—they could create a simple yet striking gallery-like effect that the clients loved. This, Merike says, brought them to the project's thesis: Here, architecture and design are treated as art.

"The place was in immaculate condition when we got there," Merike recalls. "So it wasn't so much restoration as it was continuing the language. We wanted to reinforce this idea that all the new elements were engaging with this old perimeter."

The realization that a contemporary design language could live in harmony with the property's historical features broadened the project's scope. Everything in the 1990s-era kitchen and bathrooms was replaced. »





OPPOSITE: In a space known as the “pink room,” furniture pieces by Muuto, Patricia Urquiola, Bensen, and MDF Italia mingle with artwork by Thrush Holmes and vintage *Vogue* magazine cover art. **TOP:** A bedside table lamp by FontanaArte illustrates how Reigo & Bauer viewed furniture and décor items as additions to the homeowners’ existing art collection. **ABOVE:** The black-steel-framed shower appears to hang from the board-and-batten walls like artwork. »

The homeowner's two daughters were a part of the design process, which included 'kids' room' days. »









OPPOSITE: The primary bedroom features Ligne Roset ottomans and custom nightstands. **ABOVE:** In the spare bedroom, nicknamed the ‘green room,’ a contemporary settee creates a striking color combination with an iconic *Love* print by Robert Indiana.

New cabinetry, stainless-steel surfaces and appliances appear to hang from the walls like artworks, creating a stark contrast with the existing wood paneling, and a quiet palette of black and white was introduced to complement the art and furniture.

The furniture pieces, in turn, were selected to create a distinct palette that gives “the art a place to be at home without feeling like it was a color-coordinated room,” Merike says. Simple yet striking pieces by Kettal and Paola Lenti were go-to favorites for the designer, who also incorporated custom items—like the primary bedroom’s colorful nightstands—and old treasures into the rooms. “Even though we’re building a largely new collection of pieces for a project, often there will be an antique or family heirloom that becomes an interesting starting point for an unexpected grouping,” she notes.

A round, wooden dining table—cherished by the family for its ability to include as many as 10 people, face-to-face, in the same

conversation—became the focal point of the dining room. To emphasize its impressive diameter, Merike illuminated it with oversized, dome-shaped light fixtures that hang overhead. In the family room, she gave lighting an equally important role, balancing an oversized Anglepoise lamp alongside a stack of board games.

The lengthy design process afforded every family member—including the couple’s two children—the opportunity to share input on the design. “The kids’ realms have always been part of our design brief,” Merike says. “In every project with these clients, the [children have] been part of our meetings. We have ‘kids’ room’ days [when we put out all the samples] and the kids get to come and see everything.” A pair of enticing Paola Lenti bean bag chairs and a Kettal swingseat demarcate their zone on the covered veranda, offering playful testaments to this cottage’s livability for many more generations to come. ✱