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How to Design a *Heated Rivalry* Cottage of Your Own

Canadian designer Parris McKenna—who has a retreat of her own on Lake Muskoka—reveals how to create a breathtaking escape of your own

BY MADDI BURLY
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Heated Rivalry - (L to R) Connor Storrie as Ilya Rozanov and Hudson Williams as Shane Hollander in an episode of Heated Rivalry
PHOTO: SABRINA LANTOS/CRAVE/HBO

It's hard to say who is the bigger breakout star of HBO's *Heated Rivalry*. Actors Hudson Williams and Connor Storrie, who play hockey greats Shane and Ilya in the steamy streaming series, or Muskoka, the real life Canadian location of a secret rendezvous in the Season 1 finale.

The island-riddled region, about two hours north of Toronto, is known for its "Big 3" lakes—Muskoka, Rosseau, and Joseph—and the cottages that line them. Shaun's 2,500-square-foot show-stopper, by architect Trevor McIvor, is a prime example of the area's more modern builds with floor-to-ceiling glazing and Douglas Fir Kindl siding. In fact, the tourism site Discover Muskoka changed its Instagram bio to "Home of THE Cottage."

To find out what makes a quintessential Muskoka cottage, *Galerie* enlisted Canadian designer Parris McKenna, who renovated her family's own 4,000-square-foot cottage on the same rocky shores of Lake Muskoka. "What I love is the goal here is to design around the environment, to make a space feel very cohesive with its surroundings," says McKenna. "The first thing you see when you walk in is that incredible view. Yes, you're noticing the finishings, the color of the wood, the countertop materials, what the floor is made out of, but really, it's that view."

Whether you're looking to create a secluded escape for two or a lively family retreat, here's what the founder of Parris McKenna Design says to keep in mind.

Christina Chang and Dylan Walsh star as Yuna and David Hollander, the parents of main character Shane Hollander
PHOTO: SABRINA LANTOS/CRAVE/HBO

Plan for *multiple* outdoor zones.

Cottages in Muskoka tend to have an outdoor dining table, a comfortable seating area for conversation, sun loungers on the dock or another patio, and Muskoka chairs (the Canadian version of Adirondack chairs) somewhere on the property. "These zones play into the types of activities you are doing: one or two are definitely meant for daytime, and one or two are definitely meant for evening and chill time," says McKenna. The newest must-have zone is a custom outdoor sauna. "We have one. It's amazing," she says. "Shawn's cottage needs one, 100 percent."

Connor Storrie as Ilya Rozanov and Hudson Williams as Shane Hollander
PHOTO: SABRINA LANTOS/CRAVE/HBO

Make the living room truly livable.

Many people use their Muskoka cottages year-round, so a large stone fireplace is essential. Surround it with "excessive sofa seating," says McKenna, whether that's a supersized sectional or two couches facing each other plus accent chairs. (Shell have steered Shane toward the Canadian brand Montauk Sofa. "They're deep and plush, and at the same time, they don't look sloppy.")

When there's a storm, you'll appreciate having a big cocktail table that can handle puzzles, board games, or cards, as well as "little side tables here, little end tables there" on which to rest drinks. Speaking of cocktails, McKenna's found a small hammered-brass bar top with an antique mirror backsplash and two tucked-in stools makes a nice vignette for private tête-à-têtes. And don't forget that in the summer, there'll be wet feet and dripping swimsuits; you'll want a low-pile, high-performance rug and practical seating options. "Our bar stools and dining chairs are an outdoor line from Restoration Hardware," says McKenna. "We have little kids, and I want to be able to wipe these things down and not worry about them. So we're very much about durability, low maintenance, but making sure that it still looks beautiful, which is totally achievable."

Hudson Williams as Shane Hollander and Connor Storrie as Ilya Rozanov.
PHOTO: SABRINA LANTOS/CRAVE/HBO

Accept that good lighting is worth the effort.

McKenna has a personal disdain for LED recessed lighting, which she finds cold and sterile no matter how warm it's advertised. She encourages directional lighting, standout fixtures, and ambient lighting as much as possible. "It's annoying because I'm changing light bulbs all the time, but it gives me the feel and the warmth that I really want," she says. "For me, lighting is a very easy way to add a lot of impact and a lot of character." Bonus: Unique, identifiable fixtures in each bedroom help overnight guests communicate their preference.

Hudson Williams as Shane Hollander, Connor Storrie as Ilya Rozanov, Dylan Walsh as David Hollander and Christina Chang as Yuna Hollander
PHOTO: SABRINA LANTOS/CRAVE/HBO

Prepare your kitchen for crowds.

As Shane learned, it's rare to stay a party of two in Muskoka. Docks are often full of family and friends, which is why outdoor kitchens with a barbecue, smoker, and pizza oven are popular. Inside, McKenna recommends having two of everything, from dishwashers to integrated paper towel holders. "You cannot summer in Muskoka with just one fridge," she says. "There's one fridge for your staples, and then there's always another fridge that is all beverages, whether that's under a counter or in your garage or laundry room."

Remember, bigger isn't always better in the bedroom.

McKenna had reservations about hanging a small antique oil painting on the large wall behind her bed. "Then I thought, who cares? I love it, and it's not competing for attention," she says. Across from the work, sliding doors look out at the lake. "It was important to have pieces in the room that felt nostalgic, had an old-world feel to them, and complemented the main piece of art, which is the exterior," says McKenna. "Muskoka is meant for magic. It's why Shane took Ilya there. It's a very, very special place."

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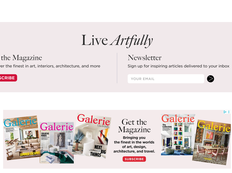
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