

COMMON

THIS YEAR-ROUND
GATHERING
PLACE CREATES
SPACE—16,000 SQUARE
FEET OF IT—FOR
MULTIGENERATIONAL
MEMORY-MAKING.



GROUND

STORY BY MEGAN McCARTY
INTERIOR DESIGN BY DART STUDIO
CONSTRUCTION BY FORGET CONSTRUCTION
CONCEPTUAL ARCHITECTURE BY ANTHONY PANNOLINO
LANDSCAPING BY AKA GROW
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STYLING BY ME & MO





THIS HOME IS perhaps the most elegant space ever imagined with the spirit of a camp dining hall in mind. The nearly 16,000-square-foot lakeside retreat was conceived as a place of convergence—a central hub where generations of family and friends could overlap with ease. “This house isn’t about stuff,” says Olivia Botrie, one half of design firm Dart Studio, which she co-owns with her sister Jenna. “It’s about people.”

Located on a wooded property north of Toronto in Penetanguishene, the home replaced what Olivia describes, only half-jokingly, as “the derelict”—a dilapidated structure that begged to be torn down. While the homeowners owned three nearby cottages, none were large enough to bring everyone together. The mission? Build a lodge-like gathering place where dozens of loved ones could barbecue in the summer, decorate gingerbread houses during the holidays, and relax—together or solo—year-round.

Four years in the making, the doors are finally open. Dart Studio joined the project before construction began, working closely with architect Anthony Pannolino to conceptualize a practical layout. “A good designer can make anything beautiful, but if it’s not functioning, it’s useless,” Olivia says. Together, they ensured the house could host 25 people just as comfortably as the homeowners themselves.

Despite its size—five bedrooms, seven bathrooms, and several communal spaces—the home never

Custom millwork by Forget Construction anchors the kitchen, accessorized with Urban Electric island pendants, Abacus Furniture stools, and a Loloi runner. The hood by Bazay Blacksmith provides a sculptural focal point.

feels cavernous. Instead, it unfolds as a series of interconnected buildings linked by glass hallways, with cozy lounges and smart seating clusters scattered throughout. The design team

considered various personality types too, including an introverted friend who likes to linger after dinner and listen to conversation without being at the center of it. The solution: a comfortable chair near the fire, close enough to feel included, but removed from the table. “How do we make sure everybody’s quirky needs can be met in the same space?” Olivia asked herself. “We wanted lots of different interactions to be happening simultaneously, while still feeling intimate.”

The aesthetic nods to an English cottage, layered with what Olivia calls “color noncolor”—a palette of muted, earthy tones. Mustards, ochres, burgundies, and soft greens are grounded by an abundance of white oak millwork and floors that run continuously throughout the house. “Everything flows room to room,” she says. “You can take a pillow from one space and put it in another, and it still works.”

That cohesion is especially important in a home with a dedicated “motel wing” of guest suites, so nicknamed after a tradesperson mistook it for an actual motel. Each suite shares the same layout but is distinguished by its own dominant tone, drawn from the veining of the stone used throughout the bathrooms.



Muted furnishings in the living room (top)—including Avenue Upholstery sofas and chairs, a Y&Co rug, and Visual Comfort chandeliers—allow the lakeside scenery to shine. The eat-in breakfast nook (left) features an Urban Electric chandelier, Abacus Furniture table and chairs, a banquette by Textile Craft, vintage portraits, and a Visual Comfort lamp. In the kitchen (above), Mullan Lighting sconces highlight a curated collection of pewter teapots, collected at auctions by the homeowner.



The powder room (top) embraces moody elegance with Lewis & Wood wallpaper, Urban Electric sconces, a Cava Surfaces countertop, and PHYLRICH fixtures. For a quiet retreat, the sitting room (above) features an Avenue Upholstery sofa and chairs upholstered in Kravet fabric.

The hard-working laundry room (top) is outfitted with double washer and dryer sets, rolling industrial baskets, and millwork painted Sherwin-Williams Amazing Gray. In a guest suite (above), Lulu and Georgia nightstands, a Loloi rug, and Mullan Lighting sconces offer a welcoming stay for family and friends.

The primary bedroom (top) is anchored with an Abacus Furniture bed, nightstands, bench, and cabinet, a Loloi rug, and Visual Comfort lamps and chandelier. A circle of Avenue Upholstery armchairs (above), atop a Y&Co rug and finished with Maxwell-upholstered pillows, offers secondary seating adjacent to the kitchen.

The primary bathroom (top) features Centura floor tiles, Rejuvenation accessories, and Visual Comfort chandelier and sconces. Floor-to-ceiling Ciot tiles steal the show in the pantry (above), which is complemented by Forget Construction millwork painted Sherwin-Williams Rocky River, MYOH hardware, and Mullan Lighting flush mounts.



Window-seat beds, generous wardrobes, and thoughtful workspaces make the rooms flexible enough to accommodate entire families.

Naturally, the heart of the home is the kitchen, designed specifically for communal cooking. “We wanted guests to feel comfortable opening drawers and finding what they need,” Olivia says. A hidden pantry, tucked behind millwork for perfect symmetry, houses additional refrigerators and open shelving, while a pull-out tray near the sink allows snacks to be ferried straight to the dock.

Materials throughout, including stone walls and mohair upholstery, were chosen for durability and patina rather than perfection. “We wanted everything to feel unfussy,” Olivia says. “Spaces you can really relax in, that will build character over time.”

Gathering spaces are abundant and varied: a great room oriented toward the lake; a secondary living area with a circle of chairs for casual conversation; a spacious dining room with a custom table that

expands to seat more than 20; and a conversation-starting eat-in nook with a gallery wall of vintage portraits that guests invent backstories for—“weirdos,” Olivia affectionately calls them.

Even the most intimate details reinforce the home’s purpose. An outdoor hanging daybed is positioned for lake gazing. In the primary suite, a discreet dog door connects directly to the outdoors, allowing early mornings to unfold quietly.

Outside, the architecture and landscape were designed to seamlessly blend into the wooded surroundings. Cedar shakes were pre-stained to weather evenly, while meadow-influenced plantings blur the line between cultivated and wild. “The idea was to make it feel like it’s been here forever,” Olivia says.

Ultimately, the success of the home lies not in any single space or material choice, but in how gracefully it supports connection. As Olivia says, “This space was about creating somewhere everyone can be together—in their own way.”

Built-in retractable screens in the pavilion allow everyone, including dogs and young grandchildren, to enjoy the indoor-outdoor experience. The generously sized patio is furnished with Restoration Hardware lighting and seating, which is layered with Textile Craft pillows.



The home’s only second-story room, the lounge (left), is furnished with an Avenue Upholstery sectional, Whittington & Co ottomans, and a Restoration Hardware side table. Every space, both indoors and out, is designed to make an extended circle of loved ones, including dog Cooper, feel at home.

