



PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE GUILBAULT

TIMBER RETREAT

Lakefront cottage design offers four season relaxation



Owners Joy and Gord Allan



Lake Joe has always been a place of refuge for Gord and Joy Allan. Gord's parent purchased their cottage here in 1960 and made the lake their place of rest every summer since. It was where Gord fell in love with fishing and boating, and even brought Joy while they were still dating. Once he and Joy married, they too found themselves cottaging along the lake in properties close to Gord's parents. But when his parents passed, Gord and Joy decided to purchase the property and transform the

memory-filled lot into their own dream home. "It made sense," says Gord. "We have roots here. The property feels like home." Deciding what type of cottage to build on the property was a simple one for Gord and Joy, who couldn't imagine putting anything other than a timber frame home on their newfound lot. "We knew we wanted a timber frame cottage," says Joy. "One with large lake-facing windows that make the most of the

sunlight from our western exposure, without feeling too modern and out of place." For the Allans, Normerica Timber Homes and Cottages was the perfect choice. Although they loved the rustic warmth of timber frame, they knew Normerica would approach their design in a contemporary way that didn't make the cottage feel too dark. "I didn't want it all wood. I wanted painted wall space – drywall, not wood, to break up the warm wood details."

Normerica delivered. **Starting with a model** Gord and Joy decided to start their cottage design with the Fremont -- one of Normerica's many home and cottage plans. The Fremont featured vaulted timber ceilings, exterior timber truss detailing and a wrap-around timber frame entry porch that the Allans loved. Although the plans addressed many of their needs, Normerica's team invited the pair to look at other completed Normerica

cottages within the Port Carling area for perspective. "They were very accommodating in allowing us to customize our cottage to suit our needs and tastes," says Gord. "And so helpful when it came to making decisions." Although some couples approach their future cottage with budget top-of-mind, the Allans made a point of focusing on what would look the best and work backwards from there.

Although the cottage's floorplan isn't overly large, Gord notes that the design makes it feel both large and comfortable at the same time. Their cottage features a 1,700 square-foot open concept main floor, a cathedral ceiling and timber frame details, along with post-and-beam ceilings that extend to the kitchen and dining area on the north end of the home. The main gathering room is lined with eight-foot sliding glass doors, which frame the lakeside view and give access to the rear deck and Muskoka room.

Finding favourites The Allans can't pinpoint a single area of their home that they dislike, however they do have a few favourite spaces, thanks to Normerica's artful timber frame design. "That Muskoka room is my favourite," says Joy. In the summer, Gord and Joy often leave their eight-foot glass doors open to make the Muskoka room feel like an extension of their main floor. And although it isn't heated, the pair also find themselves using the room year-round. "They used a product which blends glass-like plastic and window screens to moderate the room's temperature," says Gord. "You can open it up completely in the summer and make the room feel like it's outside, if you want to."

the Allans couldn't choose a single one. "We love every area of our home," says Gord. "It's a pleasure to walk through. No matter where we go, we love coming home." Now that the Allans have retired, they are so glad their timber frame retreat is built to withstand Muskoka's sometimes unpredictable four seasons. "We've had five major storms since we moved in and we didn't hear a thing. Our cottage has been built so tight that no air escapes. We have to actually open a window or door to hear the wind outside," says Gord. "It feels like a city home, and yet a vacation home," says Joy. "We just couldn't be happier." **DS**

But when it comes to picking out any other favourites,

BY SHELANNE AUGUSTINE

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