



WEEKEND LIVING

Into the Woods

Design **MATTHEW and RICK BETTENCOURT**

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In the great room, an antique bed frame was turned into a daybed, becoming the ideal spot to nap or curl up with a book. Two vintage Alky chairs were reupholstered in cosy bouclé.

OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT: Matthew (*left*) and Rick, and their Jack Russell-Chihuahua cross, Pierre, on the porch.

OPPOSITE, TOP RIGHT: Hand-carved Christmas trees in wood and marble are festive on the vintage coffee table. *Tabletop trees*, HomeSense.

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM LEFT: A bench reupholstered in a vintage fur coat and a grapevine deer stand sentry at the back door. *Rug*, HomeSense.

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Produced by Stacy Begg





DESIGN DUO MATTHEW AND RICK BETTENCOURT TRANSFORM THEIR RUSTIC LOG CABIN INTO A COSY HOLIDAY RETREAT.

AT FIRST IT WASN'T THE KAWARTHAS, it was the cabin that charmed Matthew and Rick Bettencourt, prompting them to drop everything and drive one and a half hours to put in an offer. Now, it's both.

The two-man team behind design agency and retailer Bettencourt Manor didn't have a specific location or type of property in mind when they began their search for an all-season escape from the city. Their main goal was to find a spot big enough to host large gatherings of friends and family, especially over the holidays. Although they'd never really considered the Kawarthas before, they were immediately smitten with the 1,400-square-foot log cabin on one and a half wooded hectares in Omemee, Ont.

"We fell in love with the rounded shapes of the logs and the arches, which are rare to find in a log cabin, as they're usually quite boxy and cookie-cutter," says Matthew.

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TOP LEFT: A pair of sculptures draws the eye to the 11-foot-high vaulted ceiling. "The room is so large that we were able to float the furniture to create an intimate moment, rather than having everything pushed back against the walls," says Matthew. **Chandelier, sculptures, Bettencourt Manor; rug, Floortrends.**

TOP RIGHT: In the front entry, a locally sourced antique table displays an ever-changing vignette of treasures. **Vintage table, Nostalgic Journey; checkered tabletop trees, Bettencourt Manor.**

LEFT: The log cabin looks cosy under snow in Omeme, Ont.
OPPOSITE: The couple sourced their vintage Christmas tree at a secondhand shop in Ottawa. Every year, they decorate it with natural elements including grasses, pinecones and wooden ornaments.







BELOW: The kitchen is open to the dining area, and the island is long enough to accommodate seven stools. **Stools, Wayfair Canada.**



Matthew and Rick took possession of the property in July 2021 and spent the next year exploring — and shopping — the picturesque towns and farming communities the Kawartha Lakes region is famous for. Their comfortably rustic country getaway is now furnished with an array of locally sourced antiques, from a piece of vintage farm equipment to a deck chair that once reclined on an old ocean liner. “We love antique shops, vintage bookstores and old barns, and the more you become a local, the more you get to know the best spots,” says Matthew. “All the antiques we found in the area are like an extension of our neighbourhood, and they feel at home in the space.”

The cabin, which was built in the late 1970s, had recently been renovated, so the couple put off any major design projects and devoted themselves to decorating the space with their signature mix of old and new. “We spend time here all winter,” says Rick. “It’s close enough to the city that we can escape every weekend.” Four bedrooms, two

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bathrooms and a spacious great room also make the cabin a perfect place for hosting holiday gatherings.

The couple keeps their holiday decorating natural, favouring neutral earth tones over greenery — after all, says Rick, you only need to glance out the cabin’s expansive windows to get a glimpse of towering pines and lush green spruce. So, instead of garlands, they cover their walls, art and windows with wreaths of hay, twigs, vines and pinecones. “Because they’re so neutral, we can put them up earlier in the season and keep them up for longer,” says Matthew.

Last Christmas was the couple’s first opportunity to host 20 of Rick’s extended family in their new space and celebrate the season (each guest was greeted at the door with their own Santa hat). The couple prepared a maple syrup-infused feast and Matthew whipped up a chocolate cake for dessert. “It was wonderful to have enough space for people to spend the night, gather in the great room to open gifts and celebrate together,” says Rick. **H&H**

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“We fell in love with the rounded shapes of the logs and the arches” — Matthew Bettencourt



The principal bedroom's white linen drapes conceal a closet and serve as a neutral backdrop for the custom checkerboard bed frame. *Drapes*, HomeSense; *accent pillow* by Annie Axtell, Simons; *blanket* (right, hanging), Hermès.





TOP LEFT: The main guest bedroom is inviting with a soft grey palette, grasscloth walls and vintage bench upholstered in wool. **Wallpaper**, Crown Surface Solutions; **nightstand**, **bed linens**, HomeSense; **rug**, H&M Home.

TOP RIGHT: Natural textures reign supreme when it comes to Matthew and Rick's holiday decorating. This dresser is topped with metal Christmas trees, and a pinecone wreath is hung from the art above. **Antique dresser**, Southworks Antiques; **tabletop trees**, Waterford Antique Market; **stocking**, art, Bettencourt Manor.

BOTTOM LEFT: A mirror with an antique tramp art frame is a note of contrast in the all-white guest bathroom. **Towels**, HomeSense.

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