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GENTLE ORDER

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FULL



HOUSE

Sheree Stuart Design brings playful interiors to a net-zero family retreat on Eugenia Lake in Ontario *By Jennifer Choo. Photography by Gillian Jackson*



Less than two hours north of Toronto, a young family of five commissioned a holiday home on Eugenia Lake that would function as more than a seasonal retreat. The 6,578 sq ft residence, designed by Dewson Architects with interiors by Sheree Stuart Design, achieves net-zero energy consumption while accommodating the practical demands of a household that include extended family visits, multiple cooks in the kitchen, and regular pizza-making gatherings.

GROUND ZERO

Angular rooflines, large overhangs and a material palette of wood, stone and metal characterise the exterior, which the architects scaled to sit comfortably within the lakeside landscape. Clean horizontal lines and expansive windows combine contemporary design with mid-century modern influences. But the true technical achievement lies beneath these aesthetic choices. Working with specialists in geothermal systems, solar panel installation and passive design, the team oriented the building to account for facade shading, cross-ventilation and stack-effect principles. This approach maximises natural ventilation and minimises energy use without compromising on the panoramic lake views.

The construction of the main house took approximately 15 to 16 months. Locally sourced limestone, coordinated by stone masons, forms part of a material strategy that included specialists in high-efficiency building materials. Passive house standards require airtight construction, high-performance insulation, and heat-recovery ventilation. This residence meets these benchmarks while maintaining the spatial generosity and the visual connection to the lake that the family had requested.

CUSTOM MADE

Sheree Stuart of Sheree Stuart Design, who was brought into the project by the architects, shaped her interior design around the family's particular requirements. One result is a curved cedar ceiling that moves through the ground floor in a continuous plane, creating the home's most distinctive interior feature. "The two primary challenges were maintaining the monolithic appearance of the curved cedar ceiling that sweeps through the ground floor





This spread, clockwise from top left: The open-plan living area features custom sofas and views towards the porcelain-clad pizza oven; the custom pendant lighting above the dining table integrates with the curved cedar ceiling; the patio extends the living space outdoors with dining and seating areas overlooking the lake; the lower-level recreation room features a custom sectional, Blu Dot ottomans and playful colours for the children

Previous spread: Clean horizontal lines and expansive windows connect the 6,578 sq ft residence to its lakeside setting beautifully







and integrating the large pizza oven,” says Stuart. Custom trimless plates hide the lighting and ventilation systems while preserving the ceiling’s uninterrupted surface. The lighting needed to be subtle yet effective, which led Stuart to specify minimalist fixtures including Archier pendants in the kitchen.

Stuart positioned the pizza oven, a non-negotiable element of the client brief, adjacent to the dining area, where it serves as both functional equipment and architectural anchor. Its substantial dimensions made placement critical. “Serving as a focal point, the pizza oven replaces the absence of a fireplace, aligning with passive house priorities and featuring a thermally sealed door,” Stuart explains. Clad in porcelain that matches the kitchen worktops, the oven’s rear facade extends into the entry hall, where it aligns with the floor-to-ceiling walnut millwork.

DESIGNED FOR LIVING

Counter space designed to accommodate multiple cooks working simultaneously occupies the centre of the main floor’s open plan. Hidden pull-out pantries and an appliance garage address the storage requirements for both everyday use and entertaining, including dedicated space for pizza-making equipment. Custom pendant lighting above the island coordinates with the curved ceiling overhead. Sub-Zero and Wolf appliances, and a Brizo faucet meet the homeowners’ specifications. Counter stools from Article provide seating, while an artwork by Erin Rothstein hangs on the wall.

Walnut flooring by Northern Wide Plank runs throughout the main level, which contains the primary bedroom suite, an office, two additional bedrooms with ensuites, a powder room and laundry facilities. One bedroom

This page: The primary bedroom features a custom bed, chaise longue, and cedar ceiling that extends through the main level

Opposite page, clockwise from top left: This corner bedroom window frames scenic views of Eugenia Lake; the entry hall incorporates floor-to-ceiling walnut millwork that aligns with the back facade of the pizza oven; the pizza oven itself, clad in countertop porcelain, features a thermally sealed door and replaces the traditional fireplace; the primary ensuite is furnished with a walnut vanity, white porcelain-slab walls, black fixtures and a freestanding bathtub with views towards the lake

This page: The roomy patio is an inviting, functional space ideal for cosy family gatherings and entertaining

Opposite page, from top: The gym's large doors ensure unhindered views and plenty of natural light, supporting both physical and mental wellness; large overhangs and angular rooflines denote the house's exterior, which combines metal, stone and wood

features a bed from Crate & Barrel, nightstands from Mobilia, and a chair from Elte Market. Custom pieces, linens from Au Lit, and a navy faux fur throw furnish the primary bedroom.

Below, the lower level opens to the back garden and houses a recreation room with a custom sectional, Blu Dot ottomans, and pillows from Elte Market. Guest accommodation includes a bedroom and a bunk room with a shared bathroom. A mudroom and additional laundry area connect to the garage entry on this level.

BUILT TO LAST

Blues and greens, the clients' preferred palette, appear throughout the interior in ways appropriate for a lakeside property. "We kept the architecture of the interior modern, warm and minimalist," Stuart says. "We added textures and colours through area rugs and furnishings." White walls balance the abundance of wood surfaces. In the bedrooms and recreation room, where the clients wanted spaces their children would enjoy, Stuart incorporated the requested blues and greens.

Durability factored into every furnishing decision. "There would be lots of kids running

around, so everything we put into the house had to withstand the high traffic," Stuart notes. Sofas and ottomans in the family room are custom pieces designed for heavy use, with pillows from RH and area rugs from Y&Co.

A 2,550 sq ft gym building stands apart from the main residence. Space for basketball and other sports accommodates the family's preference for physical activity as a shared experience. Large double sliding doors bring in natural light and frame views of the surrounding landscape, connecting physical wellness with mental health through an unhindered exposure to nature.

"The sources of inspiration for designing and decorating the house were primarily driven by the natural surroundings and the homeowner's preferences," Stuart says. "The serene lake views and surrounding nature played a significant role in shaping the design." Her clients, who use the house for both summer hiking and winter skiing, asked for a generational abode suitable for extended stays. They wanted, in Stuart's words, "a comfortable and understated atmosphere that blends with nature and the surroundings, but has a playful and fun demeanour."



