



Three stunning boathouse designs – and how you can get the look

MATTHEW HAGUE

Special to The Globe and Mail

Published Friday, May. 30 2014, 6:00 PM EDT

Rooms with two views

At first glance, there's something backward about the boathouse designed by architect Christopher Simmonds in Ontario's Muskoka region. It's because of the porch: It faces the wrong way. Rather than looking out to the expansive open water, it points toward the small bay in front of the main house.

The reason is strategic. Simmonds wanted to create the illusion that his clients' summer home sits on its own private pond. So he massed the boathouse – a large, two-storey structure with 600 square feet of living space, including a kitchen, sitting area and guest quarters, all lined in Douglas-fir plywood – to block the view of the neighbouring cottage. He then placed the terrace so the owners – a couple from Toronto – can sit out and gaze back across the shore at their own house. The two structures are like siblings, both clean-lined, crisp and modern.

But while the view is well edited, the architecture isn't entirely self-referential. Inside, a large picture window in the living room looks out over the main lake (a pretty spectacular scene). And the whole thing sits lightly in its surroundings.



Peter Fritz

"I like building in the landscape," says Simmonds, who is based in Ottawa and works all over Ontario. To that end, he limited to the footprint of the boathouse to that of the rotting structure that was there before – he didn't want to go beyond it so as not to disrupt the local ecology – and rebuilt the foundations with locally grown, sustainably sourced hemlock timbers (any other material, such as stone or concrete, would have been harder on the lake bed). Inside, the sustainable features continue. The lights are all low-energy LEDs and the heat source is a woodburning stove. So even though it might point backward, the whole thing is forward-looking.



Get the look

The Vision line of seating by Toronto's Andrew Richard Designs (from \$1,295 for an ottoman through www.andrewricharddesigns.com) is upholstered in marine leather (the fabric you'd find in a powerboat). The pieces look indoor-appropriate, but are tough enough for wet swimsuits.



Designed by Belgian-based Stuv, the sleek 30 stove (from \$5,500 through www.marshfireplaces.com) features a central drum with a rotating cylinder that either contains the flames behind glass or opens up entirely for indoor marshmallow roasts.



Modern but made of cottage-friendly plywood, Offi's Mag Table (\$199 through www.offi.com) offers maximum flexibility for a small space, tripling as a magazine rack, a seat and a side table. (It also flips on its side to become a laptop stand.)