

this picture

An Australian fibre-cement cladding system called HardiePlank (jameshardie.com) covers the entire property. It is very durable and will never need painting



Lakeside LIVING

When Peter Schneider and Richard Almonte decided they wanted a country bolthole, they were drawn to a beautiful plot by the side of Lake Ontario in Canada

Words Sophie Warren-Smith **Photography** Shai Gil Fotografia



Peter Schneider and Richard Almonte had always yearned for a weekend and holiday retreat, where they could escape the busy routine associated with city life. ‘We often discussed having a country house, but we knew it had to be waterfront and ideally on a lake – and we also didn’t want it to be more than 25km from the city,’ explains Peter. In 2008 they finally began their search, and in late August of the same year they drove out to visit some land for sale, which Peter had found online. ‘We fell in love with the plot’s proximity to Lake Ontario,’ says Richard. ‘It was vacant land that had never been built on, but it was beautifully landscaped, as it had been the garden for the neighbouring house. After we had walked around the area and taken a swim in the water, we knew

that we wanted to buy it. We called the estate agent while we were on the ferry back to the mainland, and purchased the land on the spot.’ In December 2008, the pair, who were living in rented accommodation while work took place on their existing townhouse, hired architecture firm Superkül. ‘We were renting a property near the company’s office – it’s a renovated shop where the architects live upstairs,’ explains Peter. ‘We loved the renovation; it was cool and intriguing. So we visited the website and saw some of the other projects the firm had worked on, which we liked.’ The couple knew that Superkül would understand their vision for a contemporary property that was also sensitive to the local vernacular. ‘As much as we appreciate a modern glass house, we didn’t want to impose that on the lovely rural →

above Grasses flank the long walkway and soften the white of the building’s exterior

right The large open-plan living, dining and kitchen area features 2.5-metre-high aluminium windows from Fortglass (fortglass.com), which allow Peter and Richard to enjoy amazing views of the lake in all weathers



AT A GLANCE

Names Peter Schneider and Richard Almonte
Ages 48 and 43
Location Wolfe Island, Ontario, Canada

Property Modernist lakeside cottage

Bedrooms 2 **Bathrooms** 2

Project started 2009

Project finished 2012

Size of house 120sqm

Plot cost C\$100,000 (approx £54,772)

Build cost C\$300,000 (approx £164,318)

Cost per sqm C\$3,333 (approx £1,825)



this picture Warm wood tones are prominent in the interior. The vintage coffee table is from Machine Age Modern (machineagemodern.com) while the chairs are recovered flea-market finds

landscape,’ says Richard. ‘Our brief was for a contemporary interior, with an exterior that would fit its surroundings.’ By spring 2009, they had settled on a design inspired by the local horse barns, agricultural sheds, old schoolhouses and farmhouses of Wolfe Island (where the property was to be built). Peter and Richard built up a working relationship with the chief inspector and the people in the local planning office, so the planning process was straightforward, which allowed construction to begin soon after permission was granted in June 2009. During the first five months of the build, the pair lived in the city but drove out regularly to carry out site inspections. ‘It was a smooth process and we had an excellent contractor; it’s not enough to have good architecture,’ says Peter. ‘We were very clear about what we wanted and we didn’t change our minds or second-guess ourselves once we had made a decision.’ After five months, the property was up

and watertight, so Peter and Richard were able to stay on site during visits while work continued, until the project was completed in 2012. The finished house sits on a half-acre plot, which is beautifully landscaped with a mix of grasses, perennial local plants and numerous tree varieties including red maple, tamarack, blue fir and a new addition – Richard and Peter’s very own Granny Smith apple tree. A pea-gravel path leads to a 17-metre catwalk of decking, and it’s at this point that you appreciate you’ve escaped to a lakeside setting. ‘To us and our visitors, the outdoor space is as much a part of the house as the interior,’ says Peter. ‘Superkül designed a wonderful covered/uncovered deck combination that stretches the length of the house and is made of fragrant white Canadian cedar. This includes storage space for outdoor furniture, the barbecue and bicycles, →



‘Our brief was for a contemporary interior, with an exterior that would fit its surroundings’

this picture Designed by Superkül, the staircase was built by the construction team at Truehaven. At the top of the stairs is a seating area; to the right is the guest bedroom

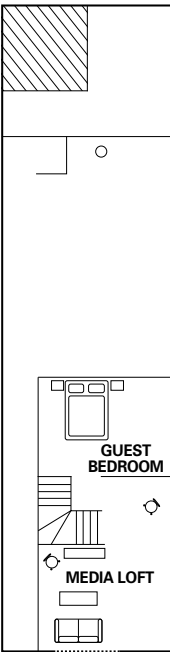
this picture Peter and Richard chose to use Italian porcelain-tile flooring throughout the ground floor to create a continuous flow of space. It contrasts beautifully with the white of the timber clad walls



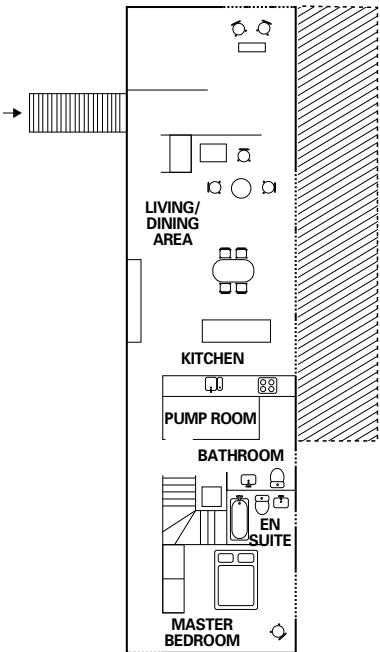
this picture The Velux skylight in the peaked ceiling of the guest bedroom keeps the space light and airy. An iron bed from Ikea (ikea.co.uk) and flea-market vintage trunk add interest

The layout: 120sqm ↗ N

FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR



and a covered area for dining, as well as a long, 2.5-metre-wide deck for lounging on and staring out at the water. It really is the most heavenly place to be, especially after a busy week in the city.’

The deck leads to the front door, which in turn opens up into the main internal space. This room is an open-plan living, kitchen and dining area with soaring five-metre-high ceilings. The rooms are all clad in poplar siding, with a custom-milled reveal that has been painted to a hard-baked, almost enamel-like white finish. The reveal creates one of the most important features in the home: the horizontal lines that stretch the whole length of the home, which induce a tranquil feeling of infinity.

The main room includes a modern wood-burning stove, which Peter and Richard use during late spring and early autumn. The furniture in the living and dining areas has a mid-century modern feel – it’s either vintage or inspired by that era of design – and includes Thonet bentwood chairs in the dining zone. A Modernist oil painting inherited from a friend also hangs in this space. The kitchen is minimalist and contemporary, featuring Scavolini cabinetry and a custom-designed marble island for food preparation. ‘The room looks out on to Lake Ontario through 2.5-metre-high aluminium, commercial-grade windows,’ says Peter. It’s a beautiful place to sit and read a book or a magazine and gaze out at the sometimes white-capped wavy waters and the migrating geese and ducks.’

From this main space, a wide corridor runs the length of the rest of the property. The first stop on the left is a secondary corridor leading to the pump room, in which mechanicals, filtration and storage are located. Across from this is a small laundry room with a stacked washer-dryer. Next to the laundry is the main bathroom, which features a large walk-in shower, tiled all in white. Further along the main corridor is the master bedroom and en suite. This →

Suppliers

PROJECT TEAM

Architect Superkül (+1 416 596 0700; superkul.ca)

Builder Truehaven Design Build (+1 613 561 8958; truehaven.com)

STRUCTURE

Foundations Concrete piers by Truehaven Design Build (as before)

Windows and doors Commercial-grade aluminium curtain wall from Fort Glass (+1 613 384 2535; fortglass.com)

Cladding HardiePlank by James Hardie (+1 888 542 7343; jameshardie.com)

Steel roof Vicwest (+1 905 825 2252; vicwest.com)

Staircase Designed by Superkül (as before) and built by Truehaven (as before)

FIXTURE & FITTINGS

Kitchen Scavolini (+39 0721 4431; scavolini.us)

Kitchen appliances AEG (0844 561 1611; aeg.com)

Kitchen taps Rubinet (+1 905 851 6781; rubinet.com)

Kitchen island Emerald Tile + Marble (+1 613 738 7841; emeraldtile.ca)

Bathroom toilet Toto (+1 770 282 8686; totousa.com)

Bathroom taps Toto (as above)

Bathroom cabinetry Designed by Peter Schneider, built by Green Tea Design (+1 888 222 0195; greenteadesign.com)

Flooring New Zealand wool carpet from Stradwick Carpet

One Floor & Home (+1 877 560 0612; stradwickcarpet.onekingston.com); Italian

porcelain tiles from Emerald Tile + Marble (as before)

Lighting RAB Design (+1 416 252 9454; rabdesign.ca);

Ikea (020 3645 0000; ikea.co.uk); Gubi (+45 3332

6368; gubi.dk)

Wood-burning stove Regency Fireplace Products (regency-fire.com)

FURNITURE & SOFT FURNISHINGS

Living room Modern wingback chairs from Gus (gusmodern.com)

Living-room side chairs Re-upholstered vintage flea-market finds

Living-room coffee tables Cube by Blue Dot (+1 612 782 1844; bludot.com); vintage from

Machine Age Modern (+1 416 461 3588; machineage

modern.com)

Dining table and chairs Crate and Barrel (+1 630 369 4464; crateand

barrel.com)

Media-loft sofa Crate and Barrel (as before)

Media-loft ottoman BoConcept (boconcept.com)

Media-loft coffee table Nood (+64 09 357 3519; nood.co.nz)

Master- and guest-bedroom beds Ikea (as before)

Guest-bedroom trunk Kingston Antique Market (kingstonantiquemarket.com)

‘It was challenging staying true to our minimalist vision and not succumbing to country style’



this picture
Created by sinking the end of an iron boiler into the ground, a fire pit sits between the lake and the house



above Made of white Canadian cedar, the deck that wraps itself round the exterior of the house features a large covered area for dining

Interactive
image
gallery
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room has an iron bed and en suite with a shower/bath. Both these rooms have windows that look out to the lake.

Walk back along the corridor and a set of stairs covered in New Zealand wool carpet lead up to the media loft, office and guest bedroom. 'Here we have a vintage Swedish roll-top desk, a sofa and a TV set,' says Richard. 'It's where we watch old movies at the weekend. Next to the media loft is a cosy guest room with a peaked ceiling, iron bed and gorgeous views towards the lake through Velux skylight windows.'

'The best thing about this experience has been creating a cosy and comfortable, yet sharply designed home for friends, family and ourselves to enjoy,' says Peter. 'It was challenging staying true to our minimalist vision and not succumbing to the charms of country style. We have thought long and hard, but there is nothing we'd change. We learnt that trusting your architect and designer is vital, and choosing the right combination is the most important decision. We love the outcome and they exceeded our expectations.'

'In fact, we enjoyed the process so much that we've bought a large flat in central Toronto, which we plan to renovate and live in,' Peter continues. 'While we're happy to sell our current townhouse, we'd have a real problem selling our country house. We just hope that we'll love the new flat as much as we love our lakeside retreat.' GD

STYLE FINDER

Natural-wood finishes are key to Richard and Peter's look

Compiled by Emily Seymour



▲ **Wrap around** Cladding in uPVC in white wood effect (H240xW25cm), £38.98 for four planks, B&Q (0333 014 3098; diy.com)



▲ **Bold birds** Lovebirds cushion in organic cotton in black/white (H40xW60cm), £49, Ferm Living at Naken (01502 715 064; naken.co.uk)



▲ **Graphic line** Gräshoppa floor lamp in powder-coated steel and aluminium in jet black (H125.5xDiameter43.5cm), £565, Gubi at Nest (0114 243 3000; nest.co.uk)



▲ **Simple classic** Gritsch chair in beech with cane back (H83xW50xD51cm), £550, Hussli at Wharfside (020 7253 3206; wharfside.co.uk)



▲ **Back to nature** Tree trunk side table in wood in natural and white (H45xDiameter 24cm), £125, French Connection (0844 557 3285; frenchconnection.com)