

MOUNTAIN LIFE

ONTARIO



GREAT LAKES
SURFERS

THE STEALTH CABIN

This small-footprint family cottage salutes its natural landscape on a lake near Bracebridge

As its name suggests, superkül's Stealth Cabin fits cunningly into its surroundings.

Its owners were torn between wanting a trad log cabin and a modern structure. To bridge this gap, Toronto-based architectural firm superkül chose a sculptural wood form which adds aesthetic warmth in a cost-effective manner that capitalized on the skill of the local carpentry trades.

We spoke to Meg Graham, principal at superkül, about this low-impact family cottage situated on a lake near Bracebridge, Ontario.

Mountain Life – Obviously, wood is the hallmark of this build. Any details you can give us about it?

Meg Graham – The cabin is built out of untreated cedar boards, shakes, and shingles, with the intention that as it ages, it will grey-out and blend into the trees. Nodding to the idea of a log cabin, the interior walls are lined with FSC-certified cedar planks. The reclaimed wood dining table offered some contrast while maintaining the nature theme.

ML – Can you name any architectural influences, other than the basic cabin form?

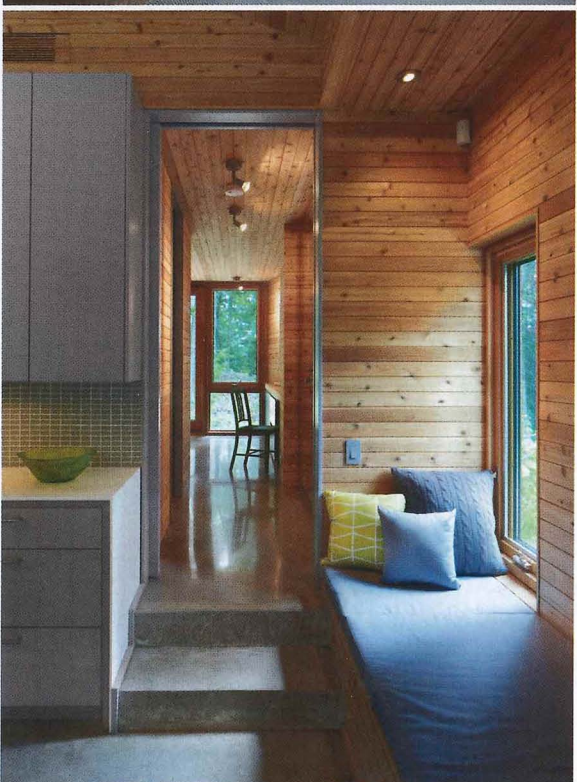
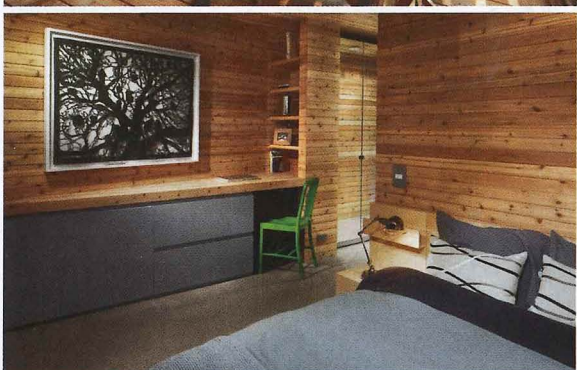
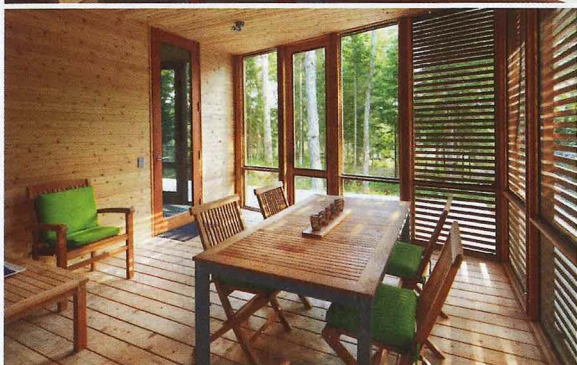
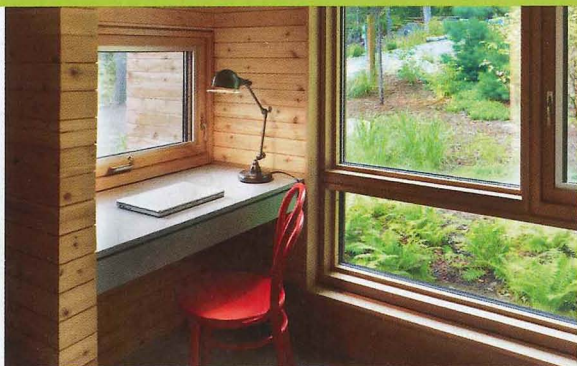
MG – Stealth Cabin is the result of the meeting of two minds. It's a marriage of the owners' wish for the warmth of a log cabin, with contemporary lines and modern comforts. The architectural impetus came from our clients – lovers of the outdoors and stewards of the environment. They wanted to be sure that they were building sensitively. For three years prior to this project the couple camped on the site to experience the amount of sunlight and the wind patterns, and to appreciate their preferred views and how to be protected from storm activity. We spent some time with them on site too, discussing the right orientation to take advantage of natural features – prevailing winds, views, sun, and existing topography.

The cottage's low profile, material and colours were chosen so that it would blend into its surroundings, nestling into the land and not dominating anyone's view. We faceted the plan, to make the cabin appear smaller, so it's not one long expanse of wall. The form was inspired by the shell of an overturned boat we found near the site. It was the perfect impetus – a simple structure with a kind of formal efficiency.

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As the untreated cedar fades, the structure will continue to blend into its surroundings. SHAI GIL PHOTO/superkül.



SHAI GIL PHOTOS/superkul.

ML – How is the cabin heated/cooled?

MG – We used a high-efficiency wood burning fireplace and radiant heated floors for a comfortable and pervasive warmth. We designed the plan with energy conservation in mind – the north half of the cabin can be closed off when not in use, reducing heating loads. Skylights and big windows on all sides allow the owners to invite natural light and breezes into the house.

ML – Any challenges or other notables you can comment on?

MG – Local by-laws stipulate that no trees of significant size can be taken down within 100 feet of the shore. However the owners always intended to do better than this. They wanted to remove as few trees as possible throughout the entire property. So we shifted the cabin back and forth on paper to test its impact on the trees and the landscape in general. ■■

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