

JULY 2014

# HOUSE & HOME

THE MAGAZINE OF HOME & STYLE

Easy Lobster Boil  
& Summery Sides

## *the BEST of* **SUMMER** **LIVING**

**FRESH IDEAS**  
*for Relaxed*  
**Decorating**

**A FAMILY  
BEACH HOUSE  
BY SARAH  
RICHARDSON**

*plus*  
**16 OF THE  
BEST  
HURRICANE  
LANTERNS**

**DESIGN  
DESTINATION:  
NEWPORT,  
RHODE ISLAND**

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Text by CATHERINE SWEENEY | Photography by JANIS NICOLAY

# ON THE ROCKS

*Set high on the edge of a deep valley, designer Carrie McCarthy's tiny mountain retreat capitalizes on natural beauty.*

**Soft ocean breezes,** lush greenery and mountains dotting the horizon — designer Carrie McCarthy's cottage has all the perks of a tropical isle, but is located on B.C.'s Pender Island, known as the Hawaii of Canada for its mild sub-Mediterranean climate. Carrie, husband Cameron Thorn, their five-year-old son, Leighton, and dog, Billie, make the three-hour trip here at least twice a month from their home in Vancouver. While on the island, they take long daily hikes or kayak trips, visit the local farmers' market and enjoy the welcome respite from the harried pace of city life.

Designed with entertaining in mind, the 830-square-foot cottage has just one multitasking great room on the main level and a loft bedroom-office upstairs. In the age-old question of quality over quantity, Carrie and her family subscribe to the quality ethos at every turn, using local materials and tradespeople to craft their petite island getaway. Encircled by towering evergreens, the cottage is grounded by the rugged rock patio out front and its classic shingled exterior, but reveals a surprisingly minimalist interior, almost Scandinavian in its restrained white palette and simple but luxurious materials. We spoke with Carrie about her approach to designing a serene family cottage.

**HOUSE & HOME:** *The incredible sight lines must have been paramount to your design.*

**CARRIE MCCARTHY:** My husband is a developer and he was very aware of the architectural details and of how all the views would be framed.

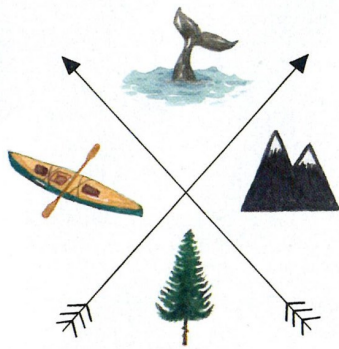


Homeowner and designer Carrie McCarthy took the beautiful sight lines into account when designing the extra-large french doors that lead from her cabin's great room out to the patio. She and her husband, Cameron Thorn, left the ceiling beams exposed for a rustic look. The strong lines add architectural interest to the pale, neutral room. A hand-forged iron chandelier lends a Gothic edge and draws attention to the room's height, while simple furnishings and a quiet palette feel calm and unfussy. Carrie updated an old hairpin-leg table from her grandparents' farm by swapping out the glass top for a slab of marble. **Interior design,** McCarthy Hinder Interior Design; **sofa,** Stylus Sofas; **sisal rug, planter,** Ikea; **chandelier,** Maco Studio; **wall, trim and ceiling colour,** Simply White (OC-117), Benjamin Moore.

**OPPOSITE:** Simple tree stumps act as unstudied side tables on the rock patio, and modern white chairs are a pleasing foil to the rugged surroundings.







*Location:*  
PENDER ISLAND,  
BRITISH COLUMBIA  
48.7563° N, 123.2073° W

## HOW DID THE SETTING INFLUENCE THE DESIGN?

“We wanted to make sure the *materials* and *colour palette* were cohesive inside and out. We started with the *dry-stacked rock patio*, chose dark grey shingles to go with that, then concrete floors and so on. When the doors and windows are open, it all flows together”

*Carrie McCarthy*







A built-in bench between the modern fireplace (*not shown*) and french doors creates a sunny reading nook. Storage inside the bench (and an identical bench on the other side of the fireplace) houses pantry items and bed linens. A sliver of a window frames a pretty view to the forest.

**Bench fabrication,** Paul Hamson; **vase,** Janaki Larsen.

OPPOSITE, TOP: Carrie worked with The Airey Group of Vancouver to design the tiny cottage, set on the edge of a 45-acre valley. The cedar shakes and dark metal roof blend easily into the wooded surroundings. Pretty mullioned windows add an aura of history to the new-build cottage. **Contractor,** Paul Hamson.

BOTTOM: The kitchen has all the mod trappings of a larger city home. A tall, slender fridge allowed for more counterspace, while neutral Silestone counters continue up the wall to create a seamless backsplash that doesn't scream "kitchen" in the open-concept space. An oversized length of burlap softens the utilitarian kitchen table. **Countertops,** Pebo Stones; **hardware,** Cantu; **fridge, stove,** Trail Appliances.







He was mindful of where things were located, and where they'd work best. He poured the foundation himself and did anything he could during construction. When he didn't know how to do something, he found out about it.

**H&H:** *How did your approach differ here from your city home?*

**CM:** It's more natural here than in the city, especially on the outside. The patio stone is from the island quarry, and the cedar is from the island, too. It was all locally oriented. The natural colours were brought inside with the poured-concrete floors, the pottery and the chandelier. There's no plastic, nothing that's not natural.

**H&H:** *Was this your original vision for the cottage?*

**CM:** Our initial drawing was a 2,300-square-foot house. But instead of going into debt, we started with this much smaller cottage, which will eventually become our guesthouse. We love to entertain, and we like the idea of friends and family having privacy when they visit us. In the long run, we also plan to build an art CONTINUED ON PAGE 108

OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A sculptor by training, local craftsman Ronny Henshaw approached the dry-stacked patio and retaining wall (*centre*) like a work of art, integrating it with the house and the landscape. **Chairs, Ikea.** In the great room, the TV is offset to balance the window on the other side of the fireplace. Natural textiles are a cosy addition to the modern space. **Bench fabrication, Paul Hamson.** A bench under the coat hooks provides storage in the entryway. Mottled poured-concrete floors add depth and dimension, and also conceal dirt in the high-traffic areas. **Hooks, Cantu; bench, Mth Woodworks.** Cameron took great care in crafting the stairs from hemlock, then whitewashing and varnishing them several times. Practical stair lights with the romantic look of tealights create ambience. Mounting the handrail on the top of the balustrade is a unique touch. **Lantern, Bacci's; banister, Cantu.** A simple wooden cube serves as a bedside table in the upstairs loft. The sleek white task lamp lends an industrial note. **Side table, Allan Thorn.**

Serene and elegant, the cabin's one bathroom employs the same palette and materials. **Towels, Country Furniture.** A low bed is edgy in its minimalism and gives the sleeping loft a youthful energy. The wardrobe rack keeps clothing housed at the cottage to a minimum — all part of the family's desire to live simply while here. An Ivano Redaelli chair has sink-in comfort. **Bedding, Country Furniture; Ivano Redaelli chair, LivingSpace.** A large, nubby sisal rug grounds the all-white great room and injects natural texture over the silky poured-concrete floor. **Floor lamp, Lightform; trellis-print throw pillow, McCarthy Hinder Interior Design.** Carrie's collection of modern pottery — a mix of pieces from local artisans and thrift stores — finds a home on the kitchen's open shelving, reiterating the handmade ethos. Sleek lower cabinets are simple and practical. **Dishwasher, Trail Appliances; speckled white bowl, white vase (top right), Janaki Larsen.**



Tucked into the peak of the bedroom ceiling, an unfussy table made from leftover MDF is a simple workspace with a sweeping view. A modern-classic chair continues the room's austere aesthetic. Navy 111 chair by Emeco and Coca-Cola, Inform Interiors.



Whitewashed plank floors give the loft a Scandi vibe, which befits the wooded setting. A wall hanging made from collected pieces of driftwood is an appropriately rustic note. Leighton sleeps in a little nook under the eaves, until his captain's bed is complete. Vinyl stool covering, Pull and Staple; shoes, Vans.