

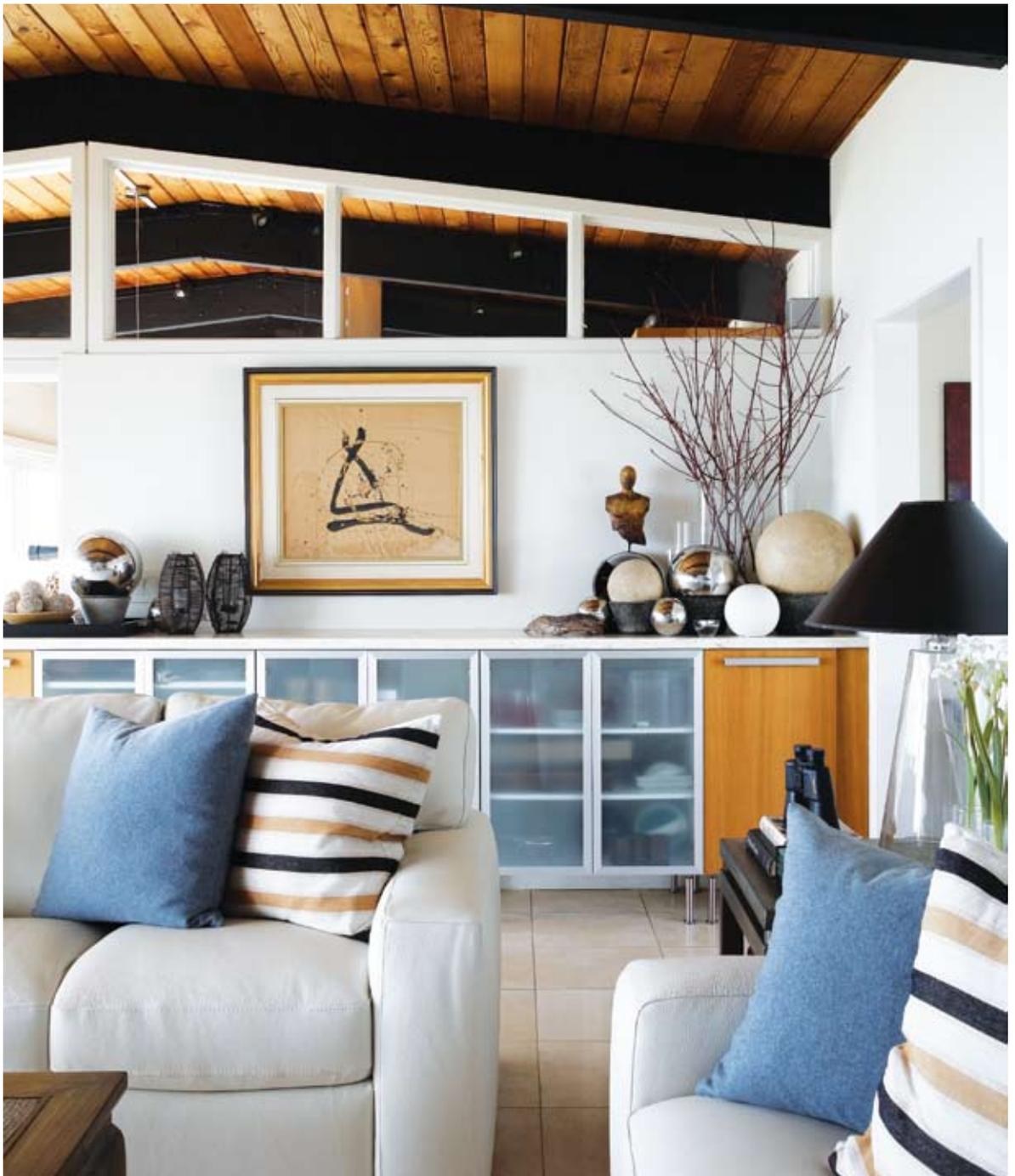


LAKESIDE LIVING

A gloomy 60s-style bungalow is turned into a sophisticated California-style beach house, making maximum use of its spectacular location

It has been a decade now since local designer John Kazmir heeded the call of his inner beachcomber, enamoured with the tranquil idea of lake living. It was not without effort, but he got what he wanted: a Lake Erie beach house with casual, earthy sophistication. »

By Christine Darragh | *Photography by* Robin Stubbert



South-Cali Calling

Kazmir felt the 1960s structure called out strongly for a southern California beach house treatment, instead of a Canadian Muskoka-lake cottage feel. Keeping with this relaxed atmosphere, he reflects. "The house called the shots and I ran with it. With any good piece of architecture you need to listen to it. If you superimpose a lot of 'stuff' onto it, you fight it constantly and you'll never be successful with it. So if you give into it, try to understand and listen to it, you will have half the problems, spend half the money, and you'll end up with something you can take credit for."





Effortless Eat-in Elegance

Kazmir removed an existing wall behind the island cooktop area to give the new space an open-flow kitchen/dining arrangement. The same buff-coloured, delustered travertine limestone matching the floor was carried over to the kitchen counters. Its mellowed, suede-like surface proved to be a suitable complement for the overall comfortable, easy style of the beach house.

Secondary Simplicity

An integral sink and countertop combination from Taps & Tubs in the guest bathroom offers effortless care. The acrylic basin with vanity is a single molded piece that doesn't need to be pampered. Sand-coloured panelling was installed on the bathroom's walls to continue the "tasteful aspects" of the 1960s, and also gives an earthy contrast to the dark slate floor.

Kazmir was seeking a rare jewel on the waterfront. Something not too labour intensive to renovate, but also a place he could put his own signature design mark on. After a seemingly endless search along the Fort Erie-Port Colborne shoreline for a suitable property, he found himself scouting the fringes of the Dunnville area looking for appropriate digs.

Finally, a 1,700-square-foot, one-level, three-bedroom bungalow he happened upon became that sought-after Lake Erie sparkler.

The foremost selling feature was the spectacular frontage, an almost unheard of two acres of rocky beach and land without a conspicuous breakwall minimizing the glistening



A Lake with a View

With nearly two acres of waterside living, sliding glass doors reveal multiple cascading terraces down to the waiting lake. Large sheets of prehistoric rock lodged along the water's edge eliminate the need for a concrete breakwall and protect from any additional shoreline erosion. To further access the natural location, Todd Barber of Forestgreen Creations carved away the embankment to expose the entire shoreline and placed slab-terraces of beach rock stepping gently down the sloping hill. An adjoining wooden patio trellis comfortably supports loose, breezy awnings to take full advantage of any pleasing weather.

southern-facing views. Sadly, the structure itself was a gloomy, cloistered 1960s style house, trapped in a bygone era with far too many orangey-red walls of brick and cedar everywhere.

Characteristically, the designer in Kazmir listened keenly to what the house was telling him before deciding on any particular intentions. Fairly quickly, though, he understood the direction he needed to take it. "My goal was to have a Dunnville version of an L.A. beach house—long, low, light, airy, sandy tones, exposed raw woods as opposed to polished woods, but always a very clean look. This house wanted to be in the 60s, so I listened to what it wanted and put the



Picking the Right White

The master bedroom combines shining brightness and no-fuss living with access to the outside patio. On the floor is wall-to-wall vinyl from The Binding Shop. With a deceptively stylish woven sisal-carpeting look, this white choice was a snap to keep dirt free. Imagine Custom Woodworks created the built-in, integrated headboard and bedside tables.

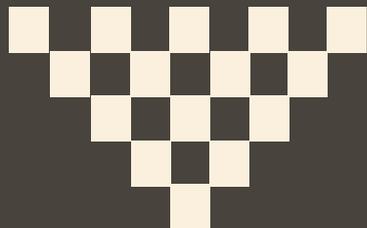
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best spin I could on it," he now shares.

Kazmir's "spin" resulted in paying homage to the house's existing architecture with open, flat, linear lines that hold close to the horizontal landscape and suitably incorporating the organic, tactile elements from nature which reflect the location's surrounding beauty. After removing a wall separating the kitchen and dining room, the corresponding dividing transom windows were saved and painted white for an interesting, retro looking sound barrier that matched the new California feel. Likewise, the existing linoleum floor was replaced throughout with an 18- by 18-inch buff-coloured, delustered travertine limestone tile to preserve a casual, weathered impression.

Covering the interior's red brick and dark cedar with a coat of fresh, white paint, he kept the 11-foot vaulted cedar ceiling natural and painted out the cross-bracing a contrasting black, to highlight the feature and "give it some punch." Suspended ceiling fans in brushed aluminum and wood were also added to provide circulation of refreshing, abundant breezes off the lake.

Staying true to his favoured "masculine contemporary" design ethos, he accentuated the space naturally with the "objets d'art" he loves: curled, statuesque twigs beside chunks of gnarled, rescued driftwood, and personal collections of water-smoothed stones mixing with edgy, fossilized rocks—found pieces that offer a unique, one-of-a-kind authenticity to a home.

Contentment with the charming location and adornments aside, Kazmir ultimately started desiring the freedom to travel on occasion instead of feeling the pull of his beach house every weekend and sold the property. But he offers this advice, which he often shares with his clients. "With renovating (and cottages in particular), really check your property values from left to right to make sure the surrounding real estate can support what you're doing. It's so easy to over-develop these things. When you start your renovation it's important you know where it's going to end up and that you haven't blown it completely out of the market." NMI

For full list of suppliers on this job,
see source guide page 72