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RECREATIONAL PROPERTIES



Dee Dee stakes her claim: Follow along as architect Dee Dee Taylor Hannah builds her Stoney Lake dream cottage. First of a six-part series Page 7

The Globe and Mail, Friday, February 12, 2010

Real Estate G7

RECREATIONAL PROPERTIES

Dee Dee stakes her claim

Follow along as architect **Dee Dee Taylor Hannah** builds her Stoney Lake dream cottage. First of a six-part series.

This is the first part of a six-part series following architect Dee Dee Taylor Hannah as she builds an island cottage for her family on Stoney Lake north of Toronto.

I know we're still dealing with deep freezes and salt-stained Jimmy Choo's, but while you have been patiently grappling with our Canadian winter's glories, I have been thinking ahead to the summer. While the snow falls, I have been hard at work creating my ideal summer destination: an island cottage on historic Stoney Lake.

As an architect, interior designer and partner in a construction and millwork company, building my own a cottage is a thrill and a half. After working on other people's projects every day, it's refreshing to work on something of my own for a change. I have always wanted to leave my permanent style stamp on Stoney Lake, and this is also a chance to experiment with new looks and materials. But even more than that, this island cottage is an opportunity to create a family home for my husband and kids that we can share for the rest of our lives.

For the first part of my 20s, I like many others would spend weekends over the summer in glamorous Muskoka. After a couple of seasons at the larger-than-life pace, I turned eastward and settled down in Stoney Lake, a more rustic spot of Canadian wilderness where my family had established roots.

Stoney Lake is nestled in the Kawartha's about an hour and a half northeast of Toronto. Stoney's calming open wetlands and rugged limestone bedrock house cottages that are built to blend in and complement their surroundings, rather than steal the spotlight.

When my great-grandfather Daniel O'Connell moved to Canada from Ireland, he settled in Peterborough. It was customary in those days to summer in nearby Stoney Lake. Once he received a judgeship,



A rendering shows the proposed front elevation of Dee Dee Taylor Hannah's Stoney Lake cottage. TAYLOR HANNAH ARCHITECT



The existing boathouse on Wilcox Island. TAYLOR HANNAH ARCHITECT

he moved his family to Toronto. Even though he set up shop in a more urban area, he kept the tradition of summering at Stoney alive. He bought a summer residence on the mainland that was affectionately dubbed "Breezy Point."

Three generations and many marriages later, my family is still at Breezy. I have known it as my second home all my life, having made my inaugural visit as a one-week-old newborn.

Forty-odd years have passed, and every summer my hus-

band Rob, my two children Jake, 15, and Rachael, 10, and I move into the cottage for some serious summer fun, with the weekly Toronto fix thrown in of course (a girl can only number business for so many days from the dock!).

Also visiting the property are my parents, three siblings and a total of eight grandchildren. This means our vacations tend to lean more toward extended family therapy than kicking back with my nuclear family. I can only say that as an ar-

chitect and interior designer, and mother, daughter, sister, wife and aunt, I needed new horizons to explore.

Anyone who knows me knows I am a city girl, and my boating skills can be summed up by an incident last summer that left me stranded on the lake in my motorboat without any gas.

Nevertheless, I came down with a serious case of island envy last summer after an endless stream of dinner parties at friends' island properties.

While on the boat drive back from a friend's, I passed a beautiful island not too far off the mainland that coincidentally was in the shape of a bowtie. Formally titled Wilcox Island, the property had always belonged to an American family, the Lewises, and it was known for its unmarked views and prime location. When I spotted a "For Sale" sign, I dialled up local real estate agent Craig Hamilton who filled me in on the property.

"The date on the original boathouse is 1898. Written on the walls of the other building are stories of summer fun ranging from jumping off the boathouse roof to maintaining various parts of the buildings,"

said Mr. Hamilton, an agent with Re/Max Eastern Realty Inc.

He also swayed us by sharing the benefits of living on an island property.

"The islands provide unique 360 views, deep clean shoreline and the ultimate cottage experience in terms of privacy. From an island you start your day watching the sun rise in the east with coffee, and then finish with a glass of red wine watching the sunset in the west after enjoying sun and water all day," he said.

Rob and I knew we had to put in an offer. We brought in a surveyor to take a closer look at the island, and right off the bat we were given some news that made us very happy, considering we planned on tackling construction in the winter.

"Wilcox Island is located relatively close to the mainland and, on average, the ice around the area of the island is thicker than most parts on the lake. This ensures logistical problems [such as transportation of people and equipment] are minimized," said Chris Musclove of Elliott & Parr surveyors.

It turns out Mr. Musclove was not the only one with concerns. As in any buying pro-

cess, there was a conditional clause pending approval of our building plans. I scheduled a necessary hearing with the committee of adjustment in the local township of Dourou-Dummer to discuss my plans for the island.

I wanted to grandfather the new cottage into the footprint of the old cottage, build a new 550-square-foot sleeping cabin in the "neck" of the bowtie and renovate the existing boat house.

As in any democracy, there are neighbours to be found, and those neighbours will undoubtedly have questions. The six to eight council members and single interested bystander at the hearing wanted to ensure that I respected the island's landscape and was mindful of sightlines from other cottages.

I deferred the hearing in order to get more feedback from the neighbouring islands, and was also told I had to review the existing septic system. I turned to local hero Darrell Drain, of Drain Brothers Excavating Ltd., who had put in the older system years ago and who owns all things stone-related at Stoney Lake.

Mr. Drain was quick to tell me how fond he was of the island's stunning westward views right down the lake and how he could trace back the previous owner's family lineage over three generations. He was also very fond of the existing boathouse.

"The boathouse has a lot of potential and is something real special. Once it's jacked up and level, it will be great because there are not many of them big double-story," he said.

After the final go-ahead, which meant dealing with a cross-border transaction and weathering the 20-day appeal process, I am officially water bound!

Dee Dee Hannah is the president of Taylor Hannah Architect Inc. She has appeared as a guest on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* three times.

COTTAGES

How to find the perfect placement

In part three of her series on building her family cottage, designer and architect **Dee Dee Hannah** explores the site plan

WILSON ISLAND, ONT.

In previous stories, you've watched me set sail on Stony Lake and met my contractor Bob the Builder. Now we'll focus on the island's site plan and the various structures that I'm building.

We have had one of the mildest winters on record, which was great for stretching my fall wardrobe, but not so great for counting on the frozen lake to use as a surface for transporting materials. We lost a good month of construction time, but I've been happy designing away and meeting with my trades and suppliers making sure this cottage is everything I had dreamed it would be.

My island property is shaped like a bow-tie on a crisp Yves St Laurent tuxedo suit, with its natural angles it requires knowing where true north is located. The breathtaking view west across the lake was one of the selling features of the property so when it came to determining where to locate the main cottage, I focused on the 34' maximizing my view, minimizing the wind, and morning light. This meant I had to place the cottage on the west part of the island on an axis so the vista faced straight out across the open water. It also ensured morning light would soak the kitchen from the rear of the cottage so you can cozy in for comforting cup of soychal in the warm summer rays.

Of course I also had to consider the fact that the structure needs to blend into its surroundings, so keeping in mind it sits on an island in a body of water, I designed the exterior siding with blue-grey shingles so it would blend into the surroundings and reinforce the nautical theme of the cottage and its water-bound lifestyle.

I approached the architecture of the cottage with the goal of producing a seamless blend of exterior and interior spaces. With a view akin to Anna Wintour's front row perch at New York Fashion Week, it would be silly to separate the outside and inside any more than needed be. Three pods of approximately 30 by 20 feet form the body of the cottage: a great room, a kitchen and an expansive screened-in Douglas Fir porch supported by stone pier columns and fir beams. A partially exposed staircase takes you upstairs in two bedrooms, a family room and a library/office space. The laundry room is accessed by walking outdoors through the side or you could pass that and head straight for the hot tub!

Helping blend the interior and exterior is our special custom windows, which I designed collaboratively with Doug Hannan, president of Ridley Windows and Doors. Doug and I have a lot of history together so turning to

him for this project was a natural choice.

I had a lot of ideas about how the windows should look in my cottage. Doug helped me with the custom sizing and profiling, and helped take into consideration my desire for screens that are invisible to the outside eye while still keeping out bugs and other debris. What we ended up with are striking tall and narrow windows with a custom brick mould and pre-painted blue frames both inside and out that blend into the siding.

"This cottage is like no other project I have done," said Doug. "We must have spent at least 100 hours from the conceptual stage to delivery and I cannot wait to be on-site and watch it all go in."

The type of materials used in the actual structures is also a result of staying true to the natural environment of Stony Lake and working with trusted trades and suppliers. After considering the pros and cons of types of lumber, I turned to Jerry Overboom of ROXA Cashway to work out the lumber packages.

Jerry supplied samples, profile options for exterior and interior trims, colour samples for roofing, brochures on door styles and decking options.

Moving beyond the main cottage to the east end of the island is the sleeping cabin. In order to access the 300 square-foot cabin, you walk through a path anchored by pine trees and clumps of fragrant juniper and blueberry bushes. With enough space to fit a bedroom and small sitting room, the sleeping cabin provides privacy for visiting guests - but that's only if I can convince my teenage son to give up the peaceful seclusion so many teenagers crave first! An outdoor steamer made of cedar connects to the cabin's ensuite bath and completes the escapist experience.

The boat house is the last sizable structure on the island that I tackled (well, not counting the demolition of the outhouse and smaller shed - but no one ever shed tears over losing an outhouse). The two-storey 100-year-old boat house is grandfathered in the northern cove of the island, where it is protected from the westerly winds. The rickety building needed new steel piles for structural support, new cladding, new roofing and new windows and doors - think of it as a makeover anchored by a pair of Christian Dior platform slingbacks. The second floor connects to a catwalk that leads directly to the rear entrance of the main cottage - now we have come full circle in time for cocktail hour on the expansive deck. I'll have a California Chardonnay please...

Dee Dee Hannah is the president of Taylor Hannah Architect Inc.



The view from what will soon be the master bedroom. TAYLOR HANNAH ARCHITECT INC.

OPEN HOUSE
~ THIS WEEKEND FROM 1PM - 4PM ~



Art by Steve Thompson Inc.



ABOVE The site plan for the cottage on Wilson Island.

BELOW The basic frame of the main house takes shape. TAYLOR HANNAH ARCHITECT INC.



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REAL ESTATE EDITOR: D'ARCY McGOVERN

INTERIORS



FURNITURE RE-DRESSED

City home chairs and sofas get a makeover for country home duty

As her summer home nears completion, architect and interior designer Dee Dee Taylor Eustace turned her eye to furnishings. With her city home up for sale, she decided to reuse some of the furnishings by reupholstering them to suit a more leisurely style. The chairs now make use of such materials as faux-ostrich embossed vinyl, ivory cotton and chrome.

PHOTOS BY DEBORAH BAIG/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

DEE DEE TAYLOR EUSTACE

As life changes so does your furniture. We have sold our house in Toronto and will be on to a new project in the New Year. Now, I have the pick of what will stay in Toronto and what will set sail for our cottage nearing completion on Stoney Lake. I truly believe in investment furniture, even if it is 20 years old. For better or for worse, I'll reupholster a good piece rather than throw it out, so with that resourceful and eco-friendly philosophy in mind, I am looking to my existing pieces to see what I can make over so it's more suitable for cottage life.

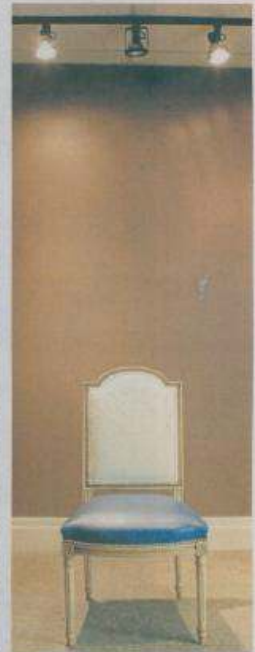
A perfect example is a set of 14 dining room chairs that I adore, but am currently not using in the city. They were upholstered in sumptuous rosy velvet - fabulous for luxurious dining in the city - but can you imagine peeling yourself off of the plush fibres in the middle of a steaming July?

What to do? Re-cover!

"In our throwaway society, it's a pleasure to see clients reuse and refurbish good quality furnishings," says Denys Jones, President of Creative Custom Furnishings. I took my dining room chairs to Denys to reupholster in functional stunning fabrics for the cottage. The seats are now a marine blue, faux-ostrich embossed vinyl that makes the set feel more trendy than tired, and the inside and outside back are a soft and nubby ivory cotton. The play on different textures and the bright shot of colour adds an unexpected dimension, and the vinyl is practical and easy to clean to boot! Chrome nail heads finish it off for an extra nod to life by the water.

I also took some older lounge chairs I had languishing in storage and had them recovered in some blue and white fabric remnants I had leftover from old jobs.

Dee Dee, Page 4



Clockwise from top: Dani Warshager and Jonaton Saul carry the sofa Dee Dee modified for her cottage at Cooper Bros. Upholstery in Toronto; Upholsterer Nenad Lucic carries one of the occasional chairs at Creative Custom Furnishings; Another of the chairs in the showroom; A view of the cottage last week; Dee Dee on the shore. PHOTOS BY DEBORAH BAIC/THE GLOBE AND MAIL AND RACHAEL HANNAH

FROM PAGE 1

Dee Dee: A new suit for the lake. Part five of a six-part series

» A fresh upholstery job took this dated moss green channel-back chair from land to sea with a soothing cream and sky-blue fabric.

As great as it is to repurpose existing pieces, a girl needs some variety and spice in life; some days I prefer a slim Christian Dior spike heel and other days I am happy with a Christian Louboutin wedge, so I also designed new custom pieces to complement the old. Five years ago Taylor Hannah Architect created our Lounge Line of furniture. I think it's ideal for family rooms: sleek yet over-seated, it is super stylish while being super comfortable. Over the years, we've modified the arm heights, angle of repose and detailing, but for my cottage, I decided to design two new versions with an open end and with only one arm, which makes for ideal viewing of the television over the fireplace. The legs have a chrome detail, which adds a nautical feel to the entire piece and the fabric I chose is a soft herringbone weave in a serene blue and cream from Teko et Cie that conjures thoughts of lake-filled days.

We'll also be using a lounge so-

fa that Taylor Hannah Architect created for the model suite at The Avenue, a Camrost-Felcorp condo project in midtown Toronto. The fabric valance is studied like a bag that the late Alexander McQueen would have created. It's amazing how many different looks you can achieve when you play with the fabric and details. On to the lighting. I am not a big fan of pot lights (especially in bedrooms), but having said that, they do have their place. Pot lights are ideal in the kitchen as they truly allow you to perform open heart surgery on your food; for this gruesome task (a.k.a. cooking), the pot lights in my kitchen will have a chrome trim. In the great room I have also lit the corners with chrome pot lights and made sure to layer them with plenty of accent lighting. (Tip: when working on renovating or building your own place, remember to include handy floor plugs so you have the option of layering your task and ambient lighting without having a cord running across the middle of your room.) For accent lighting I have employed a variety of wall lights that reference seaside motifs, including a pair of double-

sconces that reflect light off their circular mirror plates, which are etched with a detail meant to resemble a compass. They are a little bit of wall jewellery! We picked out picture lights that will be mounted at the top of the bookcases in the great room that resemble map lights - this will give the hall/library a feeling of walking down the corridor of a yacht without the keeling (unless you've had too much chardonnay with your guests after a late summer dinner!) Exterior lighting has to welcome visitors and set the tone for your space, while also being bug proof. The fixtures we are using for the featured exterior spaces are the circular Pelham sconces from ELTE in chrome.

"The Pelham ... helps set a welcoming mood," says Renee Metrick, principal buyer for ELTE. "The fixture has a unique rivet detailing for an added industrial feel, keeping in theme with the rest of the nautical décor."

For the rest of the exterior spaces, I looked to a marine supplier in Florida for true caged boat lights with screw down face for weather proofing. If it can survive life on the Atlantic

Ocean, it will be just fine on an island in Stoney Lake.

It is important that all the lighting highlights the colours in the cottage. The overall palette is classic nautical, with the ashy brown wood floors, white walls and trim, and navy blue interior doors and windows. The hardware for the windows and doors are polished chrome with ball hinges, and the piece de resistance are the master bathroom vanities made of French polish mahogany with reeded chrome knobs with a white onyx inlay. The white onyx is translucent and reminds you of lying on the clock on a cloudy day.

And one last issue I've had to keep in mind - air flow. We've decided to do without air conditioning at the cottage; instead, retro-looking chrome ceiling fans will help distribute fresh air from the open windows and give the added bonus of the wind-blown look. I love a good fan when I get my photo taken - pulls back the skin and makes for a good hair shot!

Architect and interior designer Dee Dee Taylor Eustace is president of Taylor Hannah Architect Inc. in Toronto.

“It's amazing how many different looks you can achieve when you play with the fabric and details.”

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COTTAGES

A seafaring theme takes shape on the island



For Dee Dee Hannah's cottage, the beadboard is painted a blue-white to complement high-gloss blue interior doors and window fittings. TAYLOR HANNAH ARCHITECT

BY DEE DEE HANNAH

We're pretty much half-way through summer, and between the heat waves, Gao and endless festivals and parades shutting down city streets, having a cottage to escape to has been a godsend. While my island cottage nears completion, I have been bunking with my family at Breezy Point in Stony Lake and keeping a close watch on its progress.

With the location perfected and structural frame complete, the work on the interior is moving along nicely. In this instalment, I will delve into the architectural details that I've incorporated into the cottage design and discuss how I interpreted classic nautical style.

I looked to Carlos Menonte of JMD Hardwood Flooring, a reliable trade that my companies regularly use, for the supply and installation of hardwood. Thinking of a trusty heather-grey cashmere wrap you reach for on cold mornings, I chose antique ash wood finished in tung oil for a classic seaside harbour feel that could stand up to the elements.

» SEE 'COTTAGE' PAGE 7

THE PERFECT HOUSE



LOFT LIVING IN MUSKOKA – WITHOUT THE COTTAGE PRICE TAG **PAGE 4**

THE ARCHITOURIST



From Est... with love... Two sma... Beaches... gems shi... with Balt... moderni... **PAGE 2**

It may be summer, but chilly evenings call for a fireplace – or three

» The weathered look of the ash also flows nicely into the Douglas fir beams and decking of the porches, so it feels like you're seamlessly moving from a soft cashmere scarf to a crisp flannel shirt.

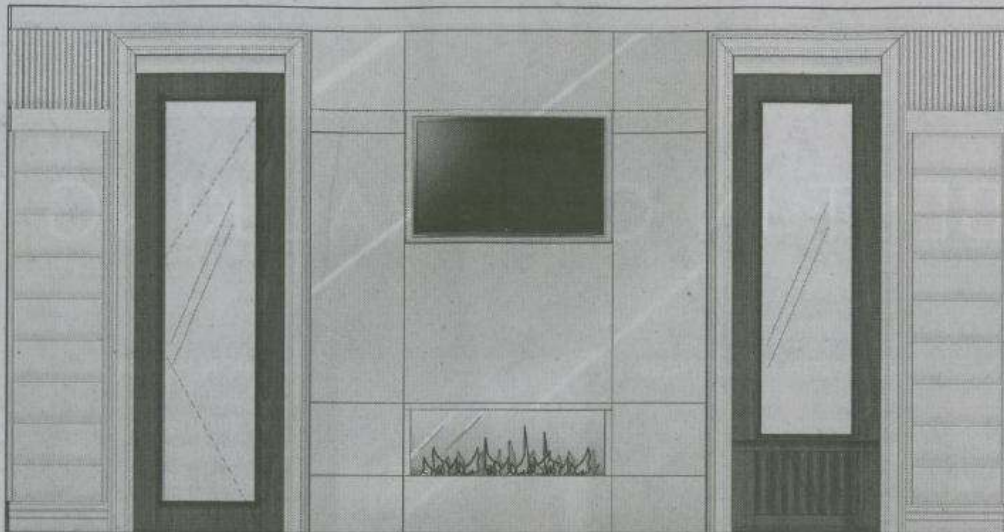
Carlos recommended the ash for its ability to withstand wear and tear and the tung oil for the durable finish and natural look.

"The ash itself works because it resists shifting in high humidity and it has visible knots and worm holes reminiscent of barn board. When laid plank style in random-width increments between five to nine inches, it gives that rustic weathered feel," he said.

The walls are treated in classic cottage fashion with country elements, including beadboard and stacked horizontal planks. The 11-inch-tall planks are a way to play with scale, as they exaggerate the several smaller lines seen within each sheet of beadboard. This interplay continues up the wall, with a datum line that butts into the window casing, and a wood cornice that carries the eye up to the ceiling.

The white paint colour I chose to coat the entire surface of the interior walls is Benjamin Moore white heron: a blue-white that complements the high-gloss blue interior doors and deep blue seen in the fittings of the interior windows. I hope I never grow out of my blue phase!

The ceiling tends to be ignored in many design concepts, but being an architect, I find the ceiling too large a canvas to ignore. A classic cottage ceiling often incorporates exposed beams, so for this property, I created faux beams that drop from the ceiling and treated the space between them in beadboard that, depending on the room, either runs orthogonally or



diagonally. In the kitchen, the ceiling has multiple long rectangular coffers with clean flat panels in between for a more classical look.

An extensive millwork package created by Ellis Fine Cabinetry, one of the companies I run with business partner David Strathy, helps add character and function to the island cottage.

David and I met on site to measure and discuss how to create a series of built-in shelving and storage units, bathroom vanities, laundry room cabinets, and of course the kitchen, as modern interpretations of that relaxed cottage feel.

"The millwork design ... is cottagey, but it also has a new and different feel," David says. "[It] uses traditional design and materials while stretching the limits and capabilities of the wood."

I chose a wood moulding for all of the cabinetry made of a custom-milled poplar

with a clean rectilinear motif. In the kitchen cabinets, this moulding contrast with more rustic beadboard doors and inserts for an engaging look.

Another motif that is seen in the millwork is an "X" design that I interpreted from the traditional crosses you see in harbours and on old flags waving from a Nantucket house.

The kitchen and bathroom vanities are all painted out in a soft blue-grey hue by Benjamin Moore, called whirlpool, and the hardware is all polished chrome that is reminiscent of a boat cabin.

Even though it's been hard to imagine being cold in this heat wave, a typical summer on an island cottage means at least a few chilly mornings and evenings when you'd want some extra warmth. So when it came to selecting fireplaces, I knew I wanted a model with an innovative and impressive design that could also give off a lot of heat.

I worked with David Kim, director of the Fireplace Shop in Toronto to select the open-hearth Stuv 21, a modern wood-burning model that does not require intensive maintenance, and that I could incorporate into my architectural features.

"The open hearth Stuv 21 fireplace ... comes with several features that give it advantages over a standard masonry or factory built fireplace," he says. "These items include such things as a hideaway guillotine door, which gives you the ability to have a huge open flame similar to any open-hearth fireplace with the control and heating efficiency of a wood stove."

I installed three of them throughout the main cottage and treated each of them in a different fashion.

For the family room, which will be the most used model, I created a sleek floating feature wall of stainless steel with a niche at the bottom for

the flames and a niche at the top to house a flat screen television. Firewood can be piled up behind the wall out of sight, and the resulting look is a modern foil to the otherwise rustic design.

In the second-floor sitting room I also treated the fireplace design in a more modern fashion, creating a tall surround of white Caesar-Stone slab, and for the outdoor fireplace I incorporated stainless steel blue exterior shingles with built-in niches to house the firewood.

With the floor laid, the wall dressed and the ceiling capped, now I am ready for some architectural bling and furniture to complete the picture.

The next instalment will look at my shiny chrome lighting and fixtures, the reinterpreted nautical furniture and more.

» Special to *The Globe and Mail*
» Dee Dee Hannah is the president of Taylor Hannah Architect Inc.

Firewood can be piled up behind the wall out of sight, and the resulting look is a modern foil to the otherwise rustic design.

The hardware is all polished chrome that is reminiscent of a boat cabin.

A rendering of the family-room fireplace set in a sleek floating feature wall of stainless steel.
TAYLOR HANNAH ARCHITECT

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CONSTRUCTION



Building on thin ice

Dee Dee Hannah gets her ducks in a row as construction gets started on her new Stoney Lake cottage

Since last month's article about my island cottage, there's been a lot of progress on my summer getaway, but before we get down to the nitty gritty I want to thank the readers who contacted me with suggestions about island living. Lou Meehan, of Wallace Island in Ivy Lea Ontario provided me with 32 tips, covering everything from safety (knowing your island's fire code) to fun (buy a billiards table) — thanks Lou!

Dee Dee Hannah stands with her lead contractor Robert McClellan on site at her soon-to-be summer cottage. JESSICA WAKES

This week I'm going to focus on the challenges of building out of town, choosing a contractor and dealing with winter construction; all of which can be difficult tasks.

I often work outside of Toronto, especially on cottages and vacation properties on Georgian Bay, Muskoka and Simcoe. I have some international residences under my belt as well, so the notion of working on a non-local site doesn't make me flinch. Besides, once it's more than an hour out of the city limits, it may as well be in Timbuktu. If you can't pop over for a quick on-site approval in between client meetings, than it's far enough away already!

The key to making an out-of-town project successful is communication. Quick calls and e-mails to check-in never hurt, and drawings and other notes and materials have to be extra careful and complete to avoid unnecessary confusion and delays.

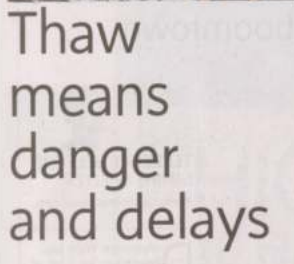
For my island cottage, I try to keep site visits down to once a month. That works because I can count on my contractor for this project, Robert McClellan, aka "Bob the Builder." Choosing a contractor is one of the most vital elements to a project's success, and Bob was the answer to my prayers.

SEE 'HANNAH' PAGE 2

G2 Real Estate

The Globe and Mail, Friday, March 19, 2010

FROM PAGE 1 || HANNAH



Thaw means danger and delays

Generally when you pick out a contractor, you need someone you can trust and who will work hard to do the job right. Personal recommendations are a must, and it's important for the designer or architect to have a good working relationship with the construction company.

I'm already partners in a contracting company, Montclair Construction, but my company collaborates on many projects, so it's not unusual for me to work with other contractors and builders. But I turn to David Strathy, president of Montclair, for advice and guidance on every job.

As much as I like keeping things in-house, for this project it was important to hire a contractor who lives on the lake and knows the region inside out. This ensures easy access to stay on top of upkeep and maintenance over the years, as well as thorough knowledge of the terrain and how to adapt construction methods to the more rustic landscape.

Bob McClellan came highly recommended from other owners in the region. He not only lives on the lake year-round, but he has over 30 years experience in the field, personally works on the site with his trusted crew, and ships his own materials. I met him both in Toronto and at the lake, and immediately felt comfortable with his skills and

the sense of ownership he carried over each project he works on.

After getting the thumbs up from David, I hired Bob to work on my island getaway.

Now, working on an island property in the winter is no easy feat, especially during a fairly mild winter that makes driving across the lake in a 2-ton truck an adventure, to say the least.

"The number one risk when it comes to winter construction here is dealing with the ice and the terrain," says Bob. "You have to be very cautious and play it safe."

In order to get materials from the landing to the island, they are piled on to a large red wagon and hauled across the

icy lake with a truck. The crew is working out of a small existing shed with an outhouse.

Regular chats and e-mails between Bob and I keep things moving, and it certainly helps that I approach the project with knowledge from the trade.

"It is not hard to work with a client who is out of town, as long as you have a good plan and keep the communication line open," says Bob. "It has been a pleasure working with Dee Dee thus far, because she knows the language and how everything works."

As spring nears and the lake thaws, Bob is preparing for the two to three weeks when he will lose access to the island because travel by truck be-

comes impossible and travel by boat in the ice-clogged water is too treacherous.

"Mother Nature really dictates how much work we can get done during these next few weeks, but at least one advantage to working on construction [once the ice melts] is I don't have to deal with boat traffic," says Bob. "Post-Thanksgiving, you can shoot a cannon clear through the lake without hitting anyone."

Next month we will begin to tackle the actual structure, talk trades and delve into the design... stay tuned!

Dee Dee Hannah is the president of Taylor Hannah Architect Inc. She has appeared as a guest on The Oprah Winfrey Show three times.

CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM RIGHT A deed shows the original purchase price: \$40; Bob's truck on the ice; Dee Dee and daughter Rachael; the old boathouse; Bob McClellan; a view from shore. JESSICA WAKES