

CANADA'S

the MAKEOVER ISSUE

style at home

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MAKEOVER
EVER!

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colleen mcgill

Canadian designer Colleen McGill's style is synonymous with fresh, classic elegance, apparent in her architectural designs, interiors and furniture line. Here, we get the scoop on the secret to her success.



When and how did you know you wanted to work in design? I've always been very aware of spaces that make me feel good. The mother of one of my best friends had white carpeting in her hallways, and I tried to convince my mother to do the same. She wouldn't. I also constantly drew her plans for my bedroom, such as a loft with a jungle gym in it - that never materialized either.

How did you translate that interest into your career? I actually completed a degree in economics at Western University in London, Ont., but I noticed my peers were a lot more passionate about what they were doing, so I told my dad I didn't think economics was for me. I was interested in architecture and interior design and so, with my dad's encouragement, I did a four-year interior design degree at Toronto's Ryerson University.

It's great that your dad was so encouraging. He really was! He believed a lot in following your passion. Now I'm running my own business and have a furniture line [Plum], so economics does come into play. And design has a lot to do with math, anyway. You have to be able to see patterns and understand geometry.



SIGNATURE DESIGN ELEMENT
WHIMSICAL ACCENTS
THAT ADD SUBTLE
MAGIC

SIGNATURE DESIGN ELEMENT
SOMETHING REFLECTIVE
TO LEND LIFE TO
THE ROOM

Colleen McGill The Sandra Double **CHAISE**, from \$5,150, and The Ikat's Meow **TOSS CUSHIONS**, \$300 each, Plum, myplumdesign.com.

What are you coveting for your kitchen right now?

Scanomat's TopBrewer coffee maker. It's a brewed-coffee tap built right into your countertop - it's so small and subtle. And you can program it from your smartphone, so you can make yourself a coffee from bed!

Who influenced you most in terms of decor? My mother was a bit of a Martha Stewart - a stylish do-it-yourselfer who sewed her own clothes and had a catering company. And my father was so passionate about the design and function of living well. He created things to make his household chores easier, like garbage chutes so he wouldn't have to take out the trash. He also loved making drinks for people, so our house had a hidden bar in it.

Do you ever incorporate bars in your designs? Always! Every single project I've done has a bar of some sort. Whether hidden or on a bar cart, it's a great place to gather and relax.

As are kitchens these days. What's the most important design consideration for kitchens? Function, of course. After all is said and done, if you haven't considered your work triangle or made sure that there's enough storage space, it's not well-designed.

SIGNATURE DESIGN ELEMENT
A NEUTRAL PALETTE WITH BURSTS OF COLOUR



Colleen McGill
The Kelly **COUNTER STOOLS**, from \$1,200 each, Plum, myplumdesign.com.



KITCHEN PANTRY DESIGN, Colleen McGill
Architectural Services,
mcgilldesign.ca.

How did your Plum furniture line come about? It started with my design solution packages, because I wanted to offer help to people who couldn't necessarily afford to hire a designer. The furniture line evolved from that - it's really an answer to the pieces we couldn't find on the market. We also wanted to offer Canadian-made products to the world, which we are doing successfully now through Designers House (designershouse.com), among other vendors.

Do you have a favourite piece from your line? The Coco desk, the Sandra chaise and the Reese bench are a few of my absolute favourites. I named the latter after my eldest daughter, Reese. And every time we make a sale, she comes down and rings this nautical bell we have. It's so cute.

Does your daughter Reese want to get into design? I think so! She draws plans all the time for things like tree houses and slides coming out of her bedroom window. She's showing the same sort of creative tendencies I had when I was young.

TURN THE PAGE TO SEE A STUNNING MUSKOKA ROOM DESIGNED BY COLLEEN MCGILL

SIGNATURE DESIGN ELEMENT
CLASSIC ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS



Colleen McGill The Classic **SOFA**, from \$5,488, The Keira **ARMCHAIR**, from \$2,864, and The Tacked **OTTOMAN**, from \$998, Plum, myplumdesign.com.



iPad Exclusive: **Read our extended interview!**

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1. LIGHT IT UP Designer Colleen McGill was conscious of lighting in this 500-square-foot Muskoka room. The early setting sun is replaced by task lighting from chandeliers and sconces, while the fireplace and lit candles lend ambience.

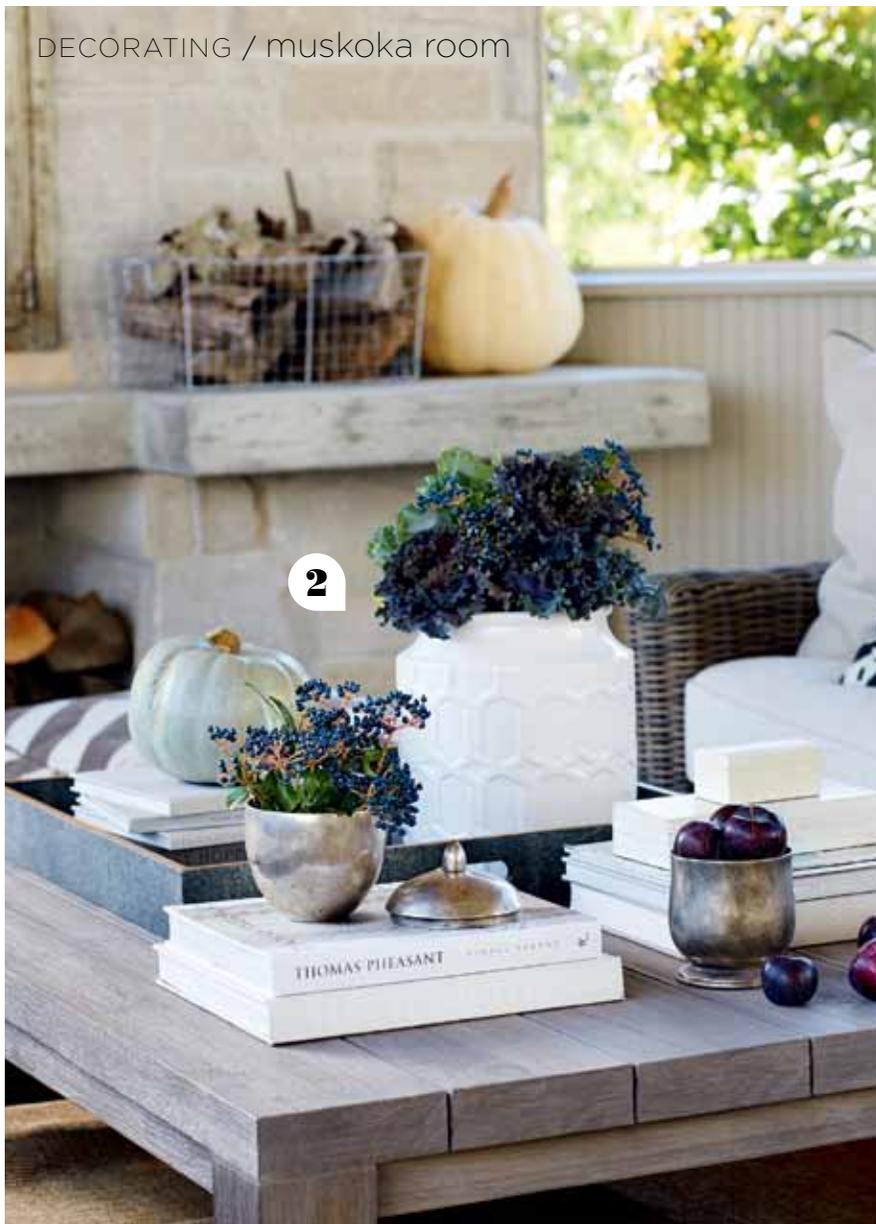
Longing for lazy summer days spent in your Muskoka room? We've got six tips for extending the use of the space into the cooler months.

endless SUMMIER

TEXT MARY LEVITSKI

PHOTOGRAPHY VIRGINIA MACDONALD

STYLING CHRISTINE HANLON



A shaft of sunlight, a wisp of fresh air: There is something so ethereal about Muskoka rooms, but that doesn't have to be fleeting. Designer Colleen McGill of McGill Design Group creates a classically elegant space that's as divine on a chilly fall evening as it is on a hot summer's day.

2. USE FALL'S HARVEST

As the temperature changes, so do Mother Nature's offerings. Follow her lead by swapping bright blooms for sprigs of berries and leafy branches with edible greens. White and blue pumpkins subtly usher in the season, while plums are a sweet reminder of bygone sunny days.

3. COLOUR OUTSIDE THE LINES

You don't have to use browns and reds for an autumnal look, says Colleen. Here, an indigo and cream palette - a summertime go-to - is augmented with shades of plum for an unexpected fall scheme. Weathered woods used throughout stay relevant year-round.



4. GET COZY A screened-in room can get quite cool on an October evening, so the seating - from all-weather wicker sofas to ceramic stools - is focused around the wood-burning fireplace. A sisal rug overtop the flagstone floor keeps feet warm, while tons of throws (including fleecy and furry options) and toss cushions allow the homeowners to get snug as they read a book or hang out - it's the ideal setting for the season's first hot chocolate.



5. DINE IN COMFORT

A dedicated eating area makes it easy to take advantage of the enclosed room for both casual breakfasts and formal dinners. Plush seat cushions and throws offer the comforts of the indoors, ensuring the space functions for most of the cooler months, while verdant evergreens visible through the windows hint at the snowy scenes to come.

6. SET THE SCENE As the menu switches from light eats to hearty fare, the tablescape should follow suit. After all, as Colleen says, "it's the decorative things that bring warmth and personality to a room." Layers of materials like linen and rattan create a rustic display befitting a beef stew or warm apple cobbler. Birch branches and patinated silverware lend a relaxed air.



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DESIGN, McGill Design Group, mcgilldesign.ca; **SOFAS, ARMCHAIRS, COFFEE TABLE, CONSOLES, DINING SET**, Restoration Hardware; sisal **RUG**, Y & Co.; metallic cowhide **RUG, SCONCES**, antique pewter **VESSELS, NAPKINS**, Elte; rattan **PLACEMATS**, Crate and Barrel; **CHARGERS**, Jacaranda Tree; ikat lidded **JARS**, ceramic **VASE** (on coffee table), **LUMBAR CUSHIONS**, CobiStyle; ikat **TOSS CUSHIONS**, striped **TOSS CUSHIONS**, Pottery Barn.

FOR SOURCES, SEE OUR WORKBOOK