



## Great Canadian Cottages

Colin and Justin reveal 24 vacation retreats — including a unique Scottish longhouse on Georgian Bay — on their newest TV show

SANDY MACKAY PHOTOS

**Twenty-four** vacation retreats. Twenty-four sets of homeowners. And twenty-four entirely different stories. Aye, welcome to *Great Canadian Cottages*, our all new, eight part docu-series that charts the way in which those seeking escape from fast spinning worlds have created thoroughly inspiring bolt holes.

Clay, so our typical TV oeuvre sees us navigate the make-over game in style-negative domiciles where, with wild ambition, tight budgets and an undistinctly loyal team, we conjure brand new interiors, tailor matched to the expectations of each TV client. And hey: we love that game. We've simply side stepped it, for a moment, to appraise the transformative abilities of others.

Indeed, during our exciting adventure, not one moment of valuable, episodic air time is consumed by jeopardy, messy builds or lock off shots depicting rooms being born or disasters unraveling. Every scene, in fact, literally froths with designer after glow, and a veritable oase of top tips and design counsel enticed from each proud homeowner.

So what can you expect? Well, for starters, three glossy nests per episode, with enough property porn to send Instagrams into meltdown. One such dream abode is the live/work space of Canadian photographer Larry Wilton's. Perched dramatically over Stony Lake in Peterborough, and built almost entirely from glass, it's a spectacle of modernity that's attached, stealth like, to a stunning outcropping of heavily veined granite.

Then there's a fairytale cottage in Madoc, fashioned from straw bales, mud and sweet equity. Designed and built by visionary Chris Magwood for his dating room Sandy (with the hands-on assistance of friends, family and neighbours) its construction was pre-empted by only a few simple pre requisites: the new house should be super cozy, manageably sized and, erms, devoid of right angles.



The resultant fantasy is inextricable to Chris's construction process and his ability to observe a brief. The softly undulating mud-clad terracotta and cream-painted walls (which undulate across the aforementioned straw-bale framework) are suitably curved — and precisely devoid of corners. In the absence of perpendicular constraints, they create a somewhat cave-like aesthetic, the soothing nature of which delivers a sense of calm decompression.

Later in the series, we visit an architect who shipped building materials by helicopter (as you did to his water access Georgian Bay from the ground up cottage). And we call by a stunning modern rustic retreat, a monolithic abode built within the walls of an old whisky coopersage. Oh, and the 8-by-10-foot lily log cabin home of Mass. Escorted, happily, in her doll-sized residence, life changed suddenly when Mass won the 649 Lottery. Keen for a little more space, but determined not to build a faceless McMansion, she hired an architect to build a lavish home around her original Lilliputian cabin. Yup, her tiny wood shack now sits inside the new structure. Literally. Think Havel and Gretel on steroids. It's magical. Follow our trail of televised breadcrumbs when the episode airs.

Another escape that grabbed our attention was that of Scottish builder Scott Young and his lovely wife Lynn. Fashioned to echo the Scottish longhouse style (where, during ancient times, animals lived at one side with humans at the other), the rectilinear fantasy is clad in dramatic jet-toned siding and set under a slick steel roof. Internally, the longhouse boasts crisp white-painted drywall, stunning wood floors, a contemporary chef's kitchen and a host of vibrant colour pops sequenced via accent walls and jaunty upholstery.

Scott's vision, sitting as it does, roadside, in beautiful Clarksburg, is literally a traffic stopper. The polar opposite of the area's vernacular (red brick century homes and quaint tiled-roof farmhouses), it has quickly become the stuff of folklore: an average day sees curious onlookers hovering, snapping selfies and asking questions, none of which are a problem for Scott.

"In such stark contrast to neighbouring homes, our place was always destined to be of interest to passersby, so we're always happy to inform."

"Building this house has delivered a tremendous sense of satisfaction and achievement," explains Scott. "My son, Ben, a carpenter, is planning a similar place and it's going to be fun recreating elements of this property with him. We're really looking forward to getting started."

It's fair to report that filming our new show afforded an amazing opportunity to navigate some of North America's most beautiful landscape. Each stop on our incredible journey revealed the lengths to which builders, architects and visionaries will go to create singular, fascinating homes. But as much as they're all different, there's a common denominator that threads them together: whether humble or overt, contemporary or traditional, each fascinating prospect is a great Canadian cottage. **CB**



**COLIN AND JUSTIN** are hosts of *Great Canadian Cottages*, which airs weekly starting on October 18 on Cottage Life TV. They are also the authors of several books, including *Home Style Guide*. Follow them on: Twitter @ColinJustin, Facebook at ColinAndJustin and contact them at [ColinAndJustin.tv](http://ColinAndJustin.tv)