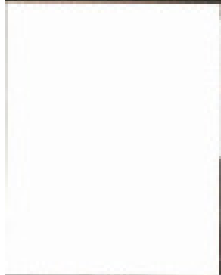


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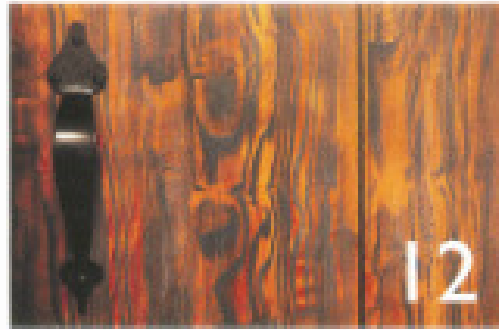
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**Living Large**  
at the Mountain's Edge



# Contents





Bob Marshall Photos

rooms in any Benjamin Moore colour on your home computer.

The creative gurus at Para Paints invite you to seek inspiration from the works of famed painter Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven. Picture your living room in Canadian Shield or your dining room in *Passing of the Maple*.

Actually, using a favourite work of art as a starting point for choosing a wall colour is a pretty good idea.

A print, painting, or colourful piece of folk art can set the mood and inspire a complete colour palette for a home, says Sharon Allan, a design consultant with Seasons Retreat by Muskoka Living, a new home décor store in Collingwood.

"Find a great fabric or piece of art and work with that," she advises.

"That could be a whole house," says Allan, pointing to a pair of vintage-style prints of sailboats. The breezy, nautical theme suggests a "Nantucket beach house" look, she says, with "crisp, clean colours" and lots of blue and white.

## Love is the cue

From a practical point of view, it makes sense to take your colour cues from a rug, fabric pattern, or sofa that you already own – and love – or plan to buy.

"People get pushed into decisions about paint colours before they get their furnishings," says Allan. "But there are thousands of paint colours. You need to get the big pieces first. Find something you really love."

And what if you're not sure what you love?

"Go through design magazines and put yellow stickies on everything you like," says Allan. A pattern will emerge. "Maybe it's neutrals that you like, or pine and antiques."

Get your partner to do the same thing with different coloured sticky notes and see where your preferences coincide.

Allan says clients often ask for advice on choosing interior colours. But, she says, it's important that they literally do their homework to define the look they want for their home.

"Subconsciously, you know what you like," says Allan. "I have 500 suppliers, so I can get you what you're looking for. But if you don't tell me, you will end up with a house I want to live in, not the house you deserve."

## Closet personality

For other clues to your colour personality, take a good look at your wardrobe.

"Look in your closet and you'll probably find the colours you're happy with," says Allan. "You're either warm or cool – it's there in your closet."

Given the store's location in the heart of resort country, it's not surprising that the majority of Seasons Retreat clients are seeking design guidance for a second, or often a third, home.

When it comes to selecting colours, furniture and accessories for their seasonal retreat, they're often more adventurous in their choices.

"It's not the city – they want the country look," says Allan. "It's a place where they can take off the tie and put on jeans. It's a look that's rich in texture, interesting, maybe eclectic in style."

Wooden gameboards, for example, are popular accessories at both the Collingwood store and its sister store, Muskoka Living Interiors, in Port Carling.

A collection of gameboards is not only practical – families love to play the old-fashioned board games they grew up with at cottages and chalets – but makes an attractive wall display that can inspire a colour palette for a room, or an entire house, says Allan. ■

## Hot tips for cool colours:

- Be inspired. Start with a piece of artwork, fabric, or patterned area rug you love.
- Look in your closet for the colours you like to wear. These are likely the colours you can happily live with.
- Go through design magazines and mark the pages of rooms, colour schemes and furnishings that appeal to you. Get your partner to do the same thing, using different coloured sticky notes. Note patterns and common ground (if any).
- Look to nature to find colour combinations that work.
- Choose colours because you like them, not because they are trendy.
- Buy your big pieces first. It's a lot easier to find paint colours to complement fabrics than to shop for a sofa that goes with your walls.