

With its breathtaking views and nearly untouched natural surroundings, Northern Ontario might seem a sensitive area in which to build. But the owner of this home, jewellery designer Anne Sportun, wanted to avoid interfering with the natural surroundings as much as possible. 'Anne wanted the feeling of untouched wilderness,' says Dan Molenaar, the designer at MafcoHouse responsible for the project. 'She opted not to have a basement because the bedrock would require blasting and she also decided to remain off the electricity grid and use a well to supply water.'

MafcoHouse worked with pre-engineered 4.88mx4.88m modules that could be built in different configurations, allowing the house to work with the land rather than against it. 'Northern Ontario is full of bedrock, lakes and forests,' says Molenaar, 'so the

modules allowed us to take advantage of the land.' Other factors were taken into consideration to make the house blend in with its surroundings as much as possible. The outside is painted in a bronze colour that mimics the surrounding forest, effectively camouflaging the house. Also, deliberately positioned screen doors create cross breezes, which eliminate the need for air conditioning, while highly efficient Regency stoves provide heat.

The 186m² house was built on 10 acres of land that Sportun and her family had owned for a decade and used as a weekend and summer retreat from their permanent home in Toronto. Sportun, her husband and two teenage children lived in bunkhouses while construction was taking place.

'Both Anne and her husband were really hands on throughout the entire process,' says Molenaar. For example,



FOREST FLOOR
 Left: all the walls have been made from cedar while wide-plank Douglas fir has been used for the flooring throughout the house

OUT OF THE WOODS
 Main pic: the living room, with its calm woodland views, features Gus seating from Style Garage and a rustic coffee table made by the owner

ENCHANTED FOREST

Words CARRIE MILFORD Photography GEORGE WHITESIDE

This retreat in Northern Ontario takes design inspiration from the rugged beauty of its woodland setting. An extensive use of fir and cedar, combined with a muted palette and some home-made rustic pieces, creates a warm and relaxing ambience that is in perfect harmony with nature



Sportun's husband cut the coffee table in the living room from a maple tree that fell during construction and then treated it with Danish tung oil.

The flooring throughout the entire house is wide-plank Douglas fir while the walls and ceilings are made from cedar. 'The bunkhouses all had cedar interiors,' Molenaar explains. 'Anne and her family liked the smell, so we used it for the walls and ceilings but used Douglas fir for the floors because it is a slightly harder wood.' Unlike drywall and paint, the wood interiors require little or no maintenance and get more beautiful with age.

The living room takes advantage of sunlight as much as possible, with numerous 4.88m tall windows on three sides of the room. The Gus sofa and chairs from Style Garage are surrounded by these windows, which provide a breathtaking natural backdrop for moments of quiet relaxation. The maple log coffee table is joined by a felt storage cube from Fluf, which sits beside the sofa. Lighting is provided by Artemide floor lamps plus oil lamps and candles, which create warm ambiance while being energy efficient. The dining area is

an extension of the living room and is warmed by one of the Regency wood-burning stoves.

The kitchen, which shares the same cedar walls and Douglas fir floors as the rest of the house, contains a Whirlpool refrigerator while solar friendly, low-voltage halogen spotlights provide energy-efficient lighting.

The master bathroom contains a large Neptune tub that takes advantage of the view from the floor-to-ceiling windows. Sportun and her husband made the the basin unit from Douglas fir. A vintage Charles Eames rocking chair with original Eiffel Tower base sits in the master bedroom beside one of the Regency stoves. On the bedside table is an antique glass oil lamp, which used to reside in the Sportun family's cottage.

'Anne wanted an outside space but Northern Ontario has a lot of bugs,' says Molenaar, who got around the problem by creating a screened-in porch.

Here the flooring is made from western red cedar planks and an L-shaped sofa and chairs from Ikea provide plenty of seating to enable the family of four to relax outdoors. *idfx*



FRESH START

Below left: the master bathroom has a Neptune bathtub; the basin unit was made by the owners from Douglas fir

HOT STUFF

Below right: the house is heated sustainably using Regency stoves, seen here in master bedroom and living area



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 » **Regency** www.regency-fire.com » **Style Garage** www.stylegarage.com » **Whirlpool** www.whirlpool.co.uk