



# *All Decked Out*

achieve that cottage vibe in your urban backyard

story Laurie Wallace-Lynch with notes from Andrew Hind

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Creating that relaxing cottage getaway vibe can be as easy as adding a few pillows and accessories or embracing the look by adding some beautiful outdoor furniture and even a fire pit.

"Add some solid colour pillows with a colourful bolster in a cabana print in red and blue stripes, or pillows with whimsical orange fish, or turquoise pillows with a white pattern for a chic look," says Lucie Zima, owner of *Zest for Living* in Port Credit. "Turquoise is huge for summer because it goes with almost any colour, like pink, orange or yellow. Turquoise reminds us of sea and blue sky and just makes us feel happy."

A nod to nautical brings back great memories of sailing on Lake Ontario or at the cottage. "Since we are in Port

Credit and are known for our lighthouse, we carry a good assortment of lighthouses year round as well as nautical-inspired decor items like artwork framed in rope, ships for home decor, and door stops shaped like whales or sailor's knots.

Deborah Betton, showroom manager of *Casualife Outdoor Furniture* in Mississauga says you don't need to own a cottage or live on the lake to get that cottage look at home. Muskoka comes to Mississauga by way of top quality outdoor furniture that can quickly turn your home, porch or backyard into a cottage oasis. The name of the Casualife collections says it all: Dorset, Lake, Cabin and other cottage-inspired collections.

"Our line called 'Lake' features a bit more traditional









styling that has a cottage feel,” states Deborah. “Drift or Santa Fe teak sectionals offer that rustic outdoor look and teak works with anything. You can mix materials like aluminum, wood, resin and wood furniture. It shouldn’t look like it came straight out a showroom.”

Furniture is the core element in any outdoor space. After all, what’s a patio or deck without a place to sit, relax, and maybe enjoy a meal?

“What we’re seeing now is a better use of outdoor space to lengthen our time spent outdoors and furniture is a big part of that,” explains Steve Brooks of *Leons*. “The patio sets of today are far removed from those of the past. There’s far more selection, both in terms of style and material, and a greater range in terms of price. Instead of just the patio table and chairs we’re now seeing loungers, sofa sectionals with aluminum frames built to last a lifetime, outdoor fabrics that are fade resistant, storage Ottomans, and all kinds of smart ways to bring the indoors outside and make the most of the available space.”

*Casualife* provides these four great tips when designing

your outdoor space: Know your home’s style (your style should be reflected indoors and out), consider your exterior finishes, measure your space, and think about how you want to use the space.

If you need help making decisions on outdoor furniture choices, Deborah and the *Casualife* team even make house calls.

“We go to a customer’s home and talk about their lifestyle and style preferences and then take measurements and offer complimentary space planning with 3D sketch ups,” explains Deborah. “Most of our furniture is transitional, which means it can be used indoors in a sunroom or outdoors. All of our furniture is designed to withstand our Canadian winters, but we do suggest using furniture covers.”

Another aspect to consider is material. “When assisting a customer, I always start with the location because it dictates the material. There is a wide-range to choose from, each with their own benefits,” explains Kim Arnett of Indian River Trading Company.

If the furniture will be exposed to moisture or sunlight,



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"Add a fire pit to immediately establish that cottage feel," Deborah Betton, Showroom supervisor, Casualife

you're best to go the route of furniture that requires the least maintenance. You want to enjoy as much of your cottage time as possible relaxing or frolicking in the water, not repainting chairs or sanding down a table. Most metal, teak, and all-weather wicker pieces are unfazed by whatever nature throws their way. Wicker and softer woods, on the other hand, will not fare nearly as well.

"The recycled plastic furniture industry is growing rapidly. The line has expanded from the traditional Muskoka chair to dining sets, deep

seating, lounge chairs, and pub sets. It's sturdy, practical, comfortable, very striking in design, low maintenance," explains Arnett. "The environment impact is very encouraging as well – each Muskoka chair uses 579 milk jugs to produce."

Deborah offers another suggestion to instantly transform a blah backyard into a cottage getaway.

"Add a fire pit to immediately establish that cottage feel," she says. "Fire pits are very popular right now and we have partnered with a Canadian company called *Dekko* which makes

beautiful composite concrete fire pits for a sleek, contemporary look in gas or propane options. We also sell beautiful steel wood burning fire pits by Corten, which have a gorgeous rust patina for that rustic contemporary look. We don't do traditional Adirondack chairs so we suggest adding comfortable chairs in your style preference or adding our teak stumps. Then curate your look by adding layers of accessories like planters, lanterns, big teak base candle holders. We even carry Pendleton blankets which really complete the cosy Muskoka cottage feel."

Kyla Kryski, social media specialist for *Unilock*, a Canadian company which makes gas or wood burning fire pit kits, agrees.

"Fire pits, fire tables and outdoor fireplaces are one of the top search topics right now, according to Kyla. "A few of the drivers of this trend are that people want to create a cosy outdoor living space that can extend the season," says Kyla. "Outdoor fireplaces and fire pits create a great sense of community and togetherness."

The *Unilock Idea and Display Centre* in Georgetown even offers free 3D drawings to show customers what their dream backyard can look like with a fire pit.

"The Rivercrest Wall Feature is one of our most popular fire products with natural stone coping which can be built square or rectangular shaped," says Kyla. "The Brussels Dimensional Stone fire pit with LedgeStone coping is another popular look, while the Lineo Dimensional Stone is a great option for a contemporary look."

Check with your local municipality in terms of by-laws regarding recreational fire pits/fireplace rules and regulations. If you are good to go, stock up on the S'mores ingredients (and wine and beer) and get set to enjoy a cottage-like getaway right in your own backyard. 🍷

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- Mulches
- Interlocking Stone
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- Flagstone
- Sand/Gravel
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