

For immediate release. September 2024

## **Ashley Botten brings muted tones and tailored comfort to a Muskoka cottage**

High fashion is a constant source of inspiration for abd, so it is always a pleasure for the studio to work with clients who share a similar reverence for fine tailoring. When invited to renovate a family lake house in Muskoka, Ontario, the desire was for a thoughtful blending of elegance with the casual ease of spending summers near the water.

While the exterior bones of the six-bedroom cottage have remained intact, interior structural walls were removed to enhance spatial flow and carve out quieter areas. Core features, such as the sash windows and majestic flagstone hearth—a hallmark of the Muskoka region—remained untouched. Abd focussed on infusing the communal areas and private spaces with a personalized expression, which required custom-designed furniture from room to room.

Whether in fashion or interior design, tailoring is all about precious detailing and working with quality materials and makers. It also involves understanding how a room is used and navigated. Upon entering the front door, one of the first things your eye connects with is the curved sofa placed to take in the stunning lake view. Splendidly comfortable for seating up to six, the sofa is also rich in micro-detailing, particularly how the fabric is railroaded to wrap the back seamlessly. The effect is subtle but visually powerful. The eye is naturally drawn to follow its 16-foot contour without seam lines disrupting the flow.

A curved bench in white oak was also crafted to hug the sofa, transforming unusable space into a functional area – a spot for a small sculpture or a seat to take off your shoes. On the floor is a sculpted carpet with three-dimensional patterns thoughtfully placed within the furniture layout. Blush shadows highlight specific areas, like where the leg of a chair meets the floor, creating moments of quiet luxury.

A dynamic mix of two types of timber gives the ground level a sense of boldness, with wide-plank Douglas fir on the floor and straight-grained larch encasing the half-turn stairs leading to a catwalk hallway. The golden-brown larch is repeated on the kitchen cabinetry where it is paired with slabs of honed charcoal bedrock on the countertops, backsplash and range hood. This rich palette is further enhanced with an open aluminum shelf for stacking dishware. An island kitchen, also in aluminum, is surrounded by nubuck leather counter stools.

The primary bedroom and ensuite embrace a more subdued mood, with walls painted in a textured sea salt hue and woven linen window coverings diffusing dappled light. The bed frame is tightly upholstered in wool suiting with a millwork piece set away from the wall to allow for an alternate passageway to the ensuite bathroom.

At every turn, abd has paid close attention to sensory experiences that enhance the sweet comforts of living easy. In the ensuite, the studio devised an extended metal towel rack with a resting tray for burning incense. Privacy is also considered, with glass pocket doors in the bar lounge to buffer television noise and an upholstered pod area near the living room that is ideal for children to hang out

With its ageless style and meticulous attention to refinement, this family retreat is destined to grow more layered through use and memories, evolving into a beloved home for generations to come.

### **Press contact:**

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ASHLEY  
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DESIGN



Photography: Patrick Biller

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## summer lake house

**abd design team** // Ashley Botten, Sarah Valentic, Haleigh Carter, Morgan Leeder

**location** // Muskoka, Ontario, Canada

**size** // 9000 square feet

**builder** // Tamarack North

**completion** // 2024

**photographer** // Patrick Biller

### **ashley botten design**

Founded in Toronto by Ashley Botten, abd is recognized for its experiential interiors, outdoor environments and artful accessories and furniture. The studio brings a deeply refined appreciation of quality, artistry and a unique curated approach. Its modern sophistication comes from a calming sense of balance and proportions, where every detail is intentional and fits naturally within the dimensions of a room. Ashley and her team are highly attuned to finding singular moments, where objects that might seem purely functional, such as a curtain rod or wooden bench, become a defining feature. The studio seeks out what is exceptional in the everyday and is continually engaged in collaborations with bespoke creative studios including bronze caster Nancy Pearce. Select abd products are available through Avenue Road and The Rug Company.

### **ashley botten. creative director**

Born and raised in Toronto, Ashley credits her unique aesthetic to a wealth of lived experiences and a love for art, architecture and fashion. Her mother's natural ability to style the family's homes was an early influence, as was growing up immersed in the hospitality world with a father who managed luxury hotels in Toronto and Boston, including the Four Seasons Hotel. She recalls spending weekend sleepovers in hotel suites and exploring every corner, including the indoor pools and discotheques that were popular in the 1980s.

After a career in retail at a Montreal home accessories and clothing shop, Ashley moved into the hospitality design space, and after 3 years launched her own studio in Toronto in 2008. Her process is deeply collaborative, working closely with local artisans, fabricators and clients on private family homes, multi-generational retreats, workspaces and retail shops.

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