

## Cottage cleaning concerns

This article is provided by local Realtors and the Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA) for the benefit of consumers in the real estate market.

If you're a cottage owner, your summer get-away has probably suffered from the forces of nature during the past seven or eight months. While thoughts of mending the roof, unboarding the windows and hauling out the dock may seem a little overwhelming, don't despair.

Most seasoned cottagers agree that planning thoroughly in advance will make for an easier time when opening up your cottage. In fact, it should only take about two or three weekends to prepare your second home for summer use.

To make the process easier and more enjoyable, it's advisable to take things slowly and make sure you have assistance with all the heavy jobs.

To make sure you get the most out of the upcoming cottage season, plan to open up your cottage as early in the season as possible. By doing this, you'll have your summer abode all ready for the first onslaught of balmy weather - and you'll be able to relax and enjoy yourself while your cottage-country neighbors are still getting their vacation properties into shape.

**Initial Inspection**  
For your first weekend visit, you should plan to spend only the day. The cottage will probably be too damp, musty and uncomfortable to stay in overnight.

As soon as you arrive, inspect the property carefully for any signs of damage or theft. If a break-in has occurred, don't touch anything and call the local police immediately.

During this initial visit, the dock should be set in place and the water should be turned on - depending on how early in the season your first visit is. If it's warm enough to open the windows, this is the ideal time to give your cottage a thorough airing.

If you left your outboard motor with a local mechanic for service over the winter months, check to see if it's ready for use. Depending on weather conditions, you might also want to launch your boat, but you'll likely need two or three volunteers to help you get it into the water.

### Repairs

If any repairs to your cottage are required, contact the appropriate local repair people as early as possible. Repairs can be done during the week, while you're back at home. If you don't know who to call, talk to neighboring cottagers - they may be able to provide you with names of reputable local service people.

By the following weekend, your cottage should be much more comfortable. This is the weekend you'll want to bring the TV and stereo up. (These items should never be left behind over the winter months, due to the threat of vandalism and theft).

This second visit is an opportune time to start stocking your cottage with food, beverages, bedding, towels and other items frequently used during the summer months. Having the necessary staples on hand will mean less packing for you on weekends.

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## HOME OF THE WEEK



### SKYLIT DECK ENCOURAGES OUTDOOR LIVING

Sprawling, four bedroom family home offers two exciting exterior finishes. This design may be finished in wood siding with brick trim or low maintenance stucco. The skylit foyer which is graced by an elegant curved staircase, flows to the sunken livingroom and adjoining diningroom. A plant ledge provides visual separation of the open planned living and dining room and emphasizes the high vaulted ceiling. The cross-hall den, with private three-piece bath, can easily double as a guest room or office.

The focal point of this design are the two spacious covered decks which stretch along the entire width of the home and expand the living space outdoors. Double French doors off the expansive, sunken family room open to a partially covered patio with built-in barbecue. A second deck with twin skylights further extends the outdoor entertaining area. The gourmet kitchen features a centre preparation island, angled sink under corner windows and connecting breakfast room.

Upstairs the skylit master bedroom boasts a cozy fireplace, private sundeck, walk-in closet, and luxurious ensuite with whirlpool spa, shower and twin vanities. The three additional bedrooms share a main bathroom with double vanity.

The finished floor area of this design is 3,424 square feet. Plan offers a choice of foundations, including a full basement or crawl space.

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