

Living on a Lake in the Country: Decorating Your Cabin or Lake Home

By Gayle Rich-Boxman

Decorating on a dime used to be my credo when I was a struggling artist. I've decorated everything from my little SE Portland home built in the 40's to our 6200 square foot lodge-like home here on Fishhawk Lake. Since it's such a passion for me and I feel there is a closet designer and interior decorator desperately trying to get out, I thought I would share some ideas for decorating a lake home, cabin, lodge or something akin to that that might fit in your area. Whether it's rustic using what nature provides or high-end stonework for your kitchen or bath, I will try to give you some of my favorite tidbits on how to pull it off without having to (necessarily) spend gobs of money.

There are ways that you can create a feeling in all areas of your home from lighting to hardware to something as simple as branches cut from outside and put in a vase with marbles to incorporate nature into your inner landscape.

Where to Buy

You can get all kinds of great STUFF from simply going to your local Goodwill or garage sales or antique shops. I am very eclectic in my taste and mix it up all of the time, from antiques to kitschy and funky, silly things to deliver some whimsy and not make the home too staid. *Made in Vernonia* will have local items that would fit right in. *Flowers 'n Fluff* located in Clatskanie is another great shop. There are shops online, like *Black Forest Décor* and I have found that Pier 1 Imports, Fred Meyer and Target will offer cabin/lake items for a reasonable sum of money.

Start with a Theme

Having a theme can make it easier to narrow down your buying. I've seen it all from bear themes, to nautical and in between. Being the consummate cabin-on-the-lake girl, I love items with elk, deer, leaves, fish and a lake theme intertwined along with wood-hued tones and muted shades of leather or fabric as the backdrop. Accent pieces can be area rugs, granite, appliances, mantel décor, pillows and/or throws casually tossed over a couch, bed or the favorite reading chair.

Some people stick with pine cones as a running theme throughout the interior from switch plates to baskets or bowls filled with ones the family has gathered. I've seen homes decorated with really cool old fishing tackle, and rustic antique cooking utensils. Mixing these things with the background of wood, leather or fur makes it really easy to go a variety of directions. If you're going with a more rustic or traditional cabin look, you don't want too much color as it makes it feel very contemporary or very artsy and it seems that the cabin/lodge feel leans more towards earth tones with either whites, creams, greens, reds or yellows being accent colors.

Pillows are one GREAT WAY to easily give a

different feel to a room with each change of season and will give a pop of color. I have gone to Ross and gotten pillows that are basic or fun & funky and Pier 1 Imports has a good selection that's always changing, but they are somewhat spendy in comparison to Ross.

Nature Themes

You can't go wrong with a nature theme. I've picked up all kinds of baskets at Goodwill and then filled them with leaves, branches, and pine cones. Keep an eye out when you're hiking in the woods or on a trail or along a river. You can find interesting rocks, feathers or even cool skeletons, that if tastefully placed, can seem more like art.



I've picked up things in the woods that make their way home and become part of my homage to Mother Nature. Vertebrae from a large animal. A deer horn. Petrified wood. I have a friend who collects round stones and she places them on her windowsills, smallest to largest. Simple and really lovely!

In fall you can break out the warm earth tones, shades of orange, yellow and green in candles, and dried flower arrangements. Baskets can give texture as well as being a great place to put potpourri in different rooms. I have purchased TONS of cheap baskets at Goodwill that came in all sizes and shapes. If you pick a Goodwill that's in a more urban area or close to an upscale neighborhood, you can make a KILLING for next-to-nothing. You can buy potpourri or make your own and place that in baskets. Linens with animals embroidered on them are a nice touch in the kitchen or the bath and can also be displayed on or near a basket. You can cut certain kinds of plants that will dry beautifully and can be displayed anywhere. Even spraying with hairspray can keep them intact for quite some time!

Using Light for Ambiance

Area lamps are terrific for creating that warm cozy candlelight feel that makes everyone want to hunker down around the fire, and read a good book or enjoy that glass of cabernet along with quiet conversation. Overhead lights usually give you a much more stark feeling, so lamps with amber shades work really well. Lampshades can give a bit of drama or continue a theme.

In our home we have lamp stands with metal pine cones, metal trees or made of logs. We also have shades with animal silhouettes and stands like the shape of a small tree trunk. Then, on the high-end, we have

wall sconces with heavy dark wrought iron and simple leaf patterns interwoven in the metal, surrounding the brushed glass of the sconces. Elegant and rustic at the



same time.

Statement Pieces

Some of your bigger expenses like granite or marble can make a HUGE statement. My personal favorite is an Egyptian marble called RainForest Green and I used it in the home we owned at Fishhawk Lake before our current home and ALWAYS got compliments on it. I used *Absolute Marble and Granite* in Vernonia to have it installed and they are true artists. I will never use anyone else and recommend them to everyone.

But, if you don't have that kind of money, just use combinations of wood, metal, glass, leather and nature's gifts right outside your door to start with, maybe add a few switch plates with elk or deer or bear on them, amber-colored shades, some well-placed pillows or a throw and then you'll be on your way to that cozy cabin look. (Don't forget the hot cider or great glass of wine to congratulate yourself at the end of a day of decorating!)



If you're in the market for buying a cabin at Fishhawk Lake, I'm your gal! Call me at: (503)755-2905.

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