

# THE COTTAGE EXPERIENCE:

## Notes on Design and the Importance of Dreams

The concept of cottage promises a reprieve from everyday patterns, an escape from urbanity, and for many, a renewed connectedness with nature. The idea of a retreat brings with it a break from the habitual, a sense of freedom and a redefining of ourselves.

It is here we feel free to dream and to extend our imaginations. If the rooms, porches and pathways of our cottage define and embody these experiences should not these spaces be equally exceptional?

Just imagine your present home as your ideal retreat. Is there a place that makes watching the evening sunset spectacular? Or area which welcome walking-about freely with sand between your toes?

If all you really like to do at the cottage is sit and stare at the lake, then this activity should be celebrated in the design of your cottage; perhaps by making this a place which forms the heart of it - and by extending a roof-eave in such a way that you can sit undercover and watch a summer storm. If every fibre of your being just wants to sit and stare at the fire, then perhaps you want your fireplace designed like a different kind of window with a view - with a chimney which extends up through a glass opening to allow a view of the rising of the new moon.

Perhaps there is a stair in behind the chimney which ascends to an open loft to let you watch the sun rise over the valley as if you were perched in the trees. Even the simplest space can be the generator of dreams. Even a one room cottage can be as rich in experience as the most sprawling country estate.

When you dream of cottage life what does it look like? What does it smell and taste like? What sounds do you let in? What does it feel like? Is it timeless like the lazy rhythms of the bobbing of a dock? Is it grand like a symphony of autumn colours? Is it comforting like a thick blanket of snow? If your dreams were spaces would they be:

- tall, dark and cool like a cathedral of trees?
- expansive and brilliant like a sun-drenched beach?
- sleek and glassy, like the water at midnight unbroken by the slow passage of a loon?
- sheltered and cozy, like a dappled thicket?
- afloat, like a ship?
- lofty, perched, like the nest on the highest tree on the mountain?
- airborne, like the dive of a heron from a cliffside?

Spaces are stages for more than mere activity, they are platforms for our dreams. In designing your cottage, your retreat, - your great escape - we encourage you to remember, and explore them, fully.



