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DECOR

Karen Sealy makes over summer homes



By [Jennifer Wilson](#) Social Media Editor

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In the summertime the living is easy, especially if you're one of the fortunate few to have a cottage retreat.

Designer Karen Sealy is making over those family havens in her new series *Summer Home*, premiering Sunday, June 5, at 9 p.m. on HGTV.

It's a "feel good show, with a summertime vibe and no contrived drama," says Sealy, adding it has a "feel good, *Dirty Dancing* vibe."

While cottages aren't known for their sleek style (Sealy notes that in episode two, she pulls up pink shag carpeting that had seen more wet dogs and messy children than anyone wanted to think about), their peaceful vibe is one many would like to emulate as the mercury rises.

People are "more emotionally attached to cottages than their city homes," says Sealy, adding that just walking into a summer haven evokes all those memories of great times spent with families and friends for generations.

Many cottages become dumping grounds for furniture we no longer want in our city homes, so a big part of the series is about sorting through the sentimental items and the junk.

By sifting through collections, you can unearth and display the items that really matter and lighten up your space for a breezier vibe.

That doesn't mean embracing a minimalist vibe. "I don't want to go into

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That doesn't mean embracing a minimalist vibe. "I don't want to go into people's cottages and make it feel impersonal," says Sealy. "It has to feel like them. That's why people who own these cottages are an important part of the design direction."

"Design is design," says Sealy. "People could easily use these lessons in condos or city homes."

She notes that two episodes of the series are about outdoor spaces, which are easily translatable to any home. "Summers are too short, so taking advantage of outdoor spaces is so important," says Sealy.

One cottage is treated to a full outdoor living space and kitchen to accommodate the family's teenagers, extend the space and provide privacy for everyone.

Musts for such spaces include comfortable furniture, so you can spend as much time as possible in your yard or on your balcony, and a retractable shade or umbrella to help protect you from the sun.

"Whether you scale it up or scale it down, you're asking the same questions," as we do on the show, she says.

Also consider a heater to extend the time you can use your space, she says, as well as screens or drapes you can open and close to protect yourself from bugs, like the yellow jackets that plague Toronto in August.

Finally, don't underestimate the importance of lighting. Sealy has dimmers wired outside in her gazebo because, she notes, it's good for setting a mood — you want different levels for a romantic dinner than a family meal — and also kinder for your energy bill.

Aim for pools of lights rather than strong uplights, she suggests, adding that even lighting on paths and walkways for safety can also be subtle.

She notes it's also important to consider what's appropriate.

"We have neighbours. We don't want what we're doing in our own space to affect our neighbours," she says, for example, bright uplighting in one yard wrecking the neighbour's love of telescope gazing.

We're "trying to be a little more subtle and neighbour friendly."

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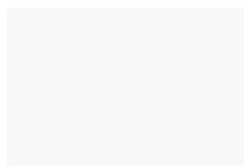
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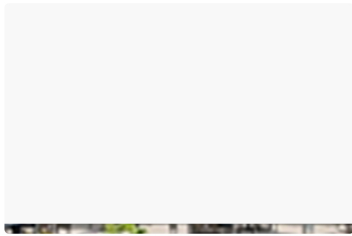


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