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Cabin Style Study: The Adirondack Look

Nostalgic for the historic Great Camps? These tips and finds will add instant Adirondack style to your cabin!

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Photo: Roger Wade, courtesy Carole Sisson Design

Moneyed East Coast families snapped up thousands of acres of land in the Adirondack area of New York in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Filled with streams, alpine lakes and high peaks, the region offered beauty and outdoor activities for these turn-of-the-last-century barons and their friends. The families built **Great Camps**: compounds of luxury lodges, guest houses, staff quarters and entertainment amenities from boat houses to stables to bowling alleys. The architecture and decoration they used came to define Adirondack style. If you would like to echo Great Camp style in your cabin, look for inspiration here – and all around you in the great outdoors.

Elements of Adirondack Style:

Rustic Artistry



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*Photo: Courtesy **The Bark House***

This absolutely Adirondack powder room combines bark, burnished metal, stone and the amber glow of a shaded pendant light. Finds from the forest fit right into the style, which also echoed the ornate Victorian and stout Arts & Crafts décor that was popular during the Great Camps' heyday.

Lodge Luxe



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Photo: by Rick Hammer, courtesy Lands End Development

Large spaces with an intimate feel convey Adirondack style. In the Great Camps, massive stone fireplaces handcrafted by local masons anchored seating areas and provided much-desired warmth. Here, windows with dividing grilles provide a vintage feel and rich wood tones add a layer of **coziness**.

Hang a Shingle



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Photo: Courtesy The Bark House

The exterior of classic Adirondack camps featured a mix of organic materials. From logs to wood shakes to stone, Mother Nature supplied the style. Poplar bark shingles follow the tradition – especially when accented with the red window trim so beloved by yesteryear’s Adirondack elite.

Pack It Up



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Beautiful and functional, the iconic Adirondack pack basket makes a wonderful addition to Adirondack décor and lifestyle. The reed baskets, with their leather or cotton straps, were designed for toting camping or fishing gear. Wood runners on the bottom of the baskets allow them to stand upright and protect them against wear and tear.

A Long Summer's Nap



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Photo: by Rick Hammer, courtesy Lands End Development

Great Camp screened porches were plentiful and offered connection to the outdoors without the bother of bugs and rain. This sleeping porch adds charm to a cabin, creating a dreamy space to listen to the birds or the splash of a nearby lake. The tongue-and-groove-lined ceiling and painted window trim are staples of Adirondack style. *Designer/Builder: **Lands End Development***

Twigs Are Big



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One of the mainstays of traditional Adirondack style is twigwork. Owners of the original Great Camps hired local artisans to build furniture for their vast estates that combined Victorian forms with rustic flair. Twigs were often used as inlaid decoration on doors, frames, cabinetry and all types of furniture.

Branch Out



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Photo: Courtesy Dartbrook Lodge

Naturally bent branches or curving willow were often used as railings or trim for porches in the Adirondacks. Swiss chalet style surfaces on larger Great Camps, with the addition of overhanging balconies and gingerbread trim. Log posts and beams with bark intact fit perfectly with the style. Lodge: **Dartbrook Lodge**

Elevated Sports Gear



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In homage to the outdoor recreation that's so abundant in the Adirondacks, well-loved canoes, fishing gear, boat oars, snowshoes, etc. show up as décor. So before you donate your old gear, consider how you might reuse it as art. These vintage snowshoes would be right at home on the walls of a cozy cabin.

Geometric Textiles

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Speaking of color palettes and fabric, try mixing in upholstery, rugs, wall hangings, quilts, etc. in deep, earthy colors and bold geometric patterns.

Adirondack Chairs



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Finally, we'd be remiss to leave out what is perhaps the most iconic element of Adirondack style—the quintessential Adirondack chair which you'll find in backyards all across the U.S. today.

See also: [An Affordable "Loj" in the Heart of the Adirondacks](#)

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