



## CHARMING COTTAGE VAL-DES-MONTS, QUEBEC

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ArcelorMittal Dofasco Steel Design, 2009)

### DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION TEAM

**OWNER:**  
Honorata Pien'kowska

**DESIGNER:**  
Honorata P. Roseman Architect

**SURVEYORS:**  
Bussieres & Berube

**GENERAL CONTRACTOR:**  
Alia Construction Ltd.

**CLADDING SUPPLIER:**  
Ideal Roofing Company Ltd.

## Colourful Steel Adds Charm to Unique Quebec Cottage



"A modern variation on the gingerbread house from the Hansel and Gretel fairytale", is how Honorata Pien'kowska describes her charming cottage that sits on a rocky point of a crystal clean lake. The use of colourful prepainted steel for the roof and exterior wall cladding sets this unique cottage apart from others in the area. The cottage was constructed with a post and beam skeleton, then completed with structural insulated panels, made by Thermapan, forming walls, floors and roof.

A composite building material, structural insulated panels (SIPs) consist of an insulating layer of rigid polymer foam sandwiched between two layers of structural board, which in this case is steel. SIPs combine several components of conventional building, such as studs and joists, insulation, vapour and air barriers. The 1.2m x 4.88m (4' x 16') panels of .38mm (.015") prepainted galvanized steel was cut to size on site, as necessary. Floor and roof insulation were 209mm (8.25") (R=38) and wall 157.7mm (6.25") (R=29).

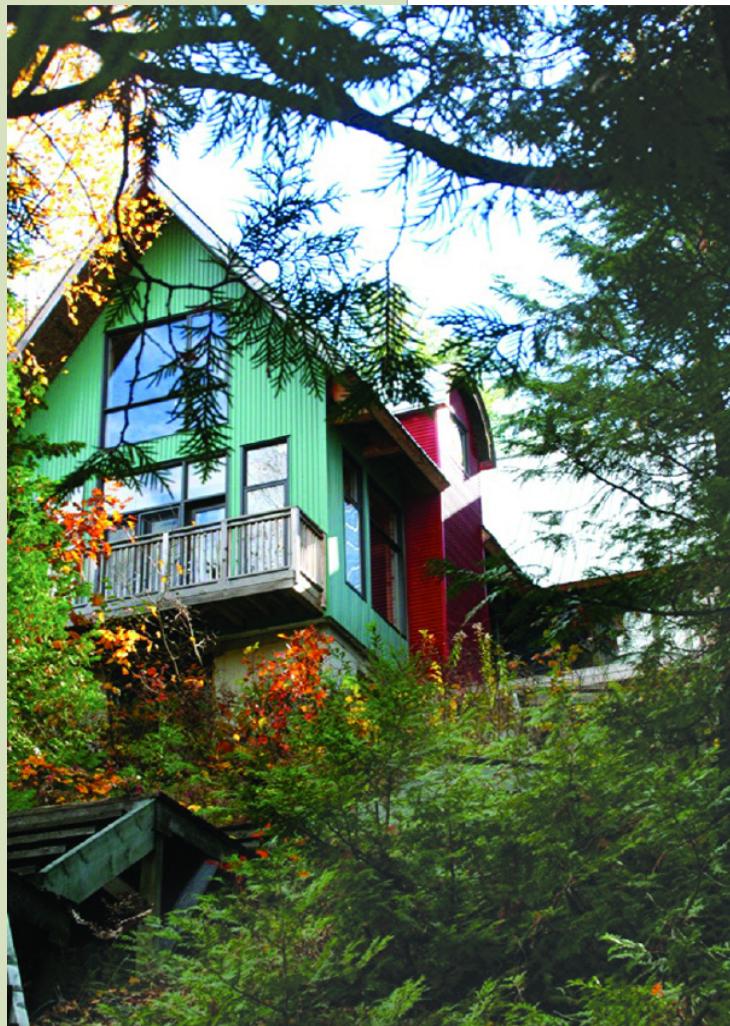
Honorata, an architect, designed the cottage to represent two interlocked, simple "boxes". The blue box contains private spaces, such as bedrooms and studio, while the green box relates to the common areas - entrance, kitchen, dining and sitting rooms. An occasional "pop-out" of red cladding draws attention to special locations of a fireplace, kitchen stove and bathroom wash counter. "The colour composition emphasizes my design concept," says Honorata, citing steel's "great selection of profiles and colours" among the multiple reasons for choosing steel for the cottage. "It allowed me to express playfulness of the design and it's my personal preference to use unassuming, non-standard materials." Honorata also emphasized steel's other advantages of no maintenance, durability and ease and speed of installation.

At first, there was concern as to the neighbours' reactions to this whimsical and colourfully designed cottage. "We kept the neighbours sitting

on the edge of their seats throughout the whole construction process," says Honorata. "I believe the concern was that the cottage would stand out too much - look very aggressive against the natural setting, rather than complement it. I told them the roof is silver on purpose - to best reflect the sun and minimize the heat gains - and that they could expect many colours in the walls. Even the contractor joked about needing sunglasses during installation of the cladding." General Contractor Raymond Cheslock of ALia Construction was responsible for purchasing and installing both the prepainted galvanized steel cladding and prepainted Galvalume steel roofing.

The finished results have elicited numerous compliments. "How lovely it looks from the water, on the rocky point, in the woods against the trees. The roof takes on the colour of the sky. It blends with the brilliant fall colours, as well as when wrapped in sparkling white snow. It is a cottage for every season!"

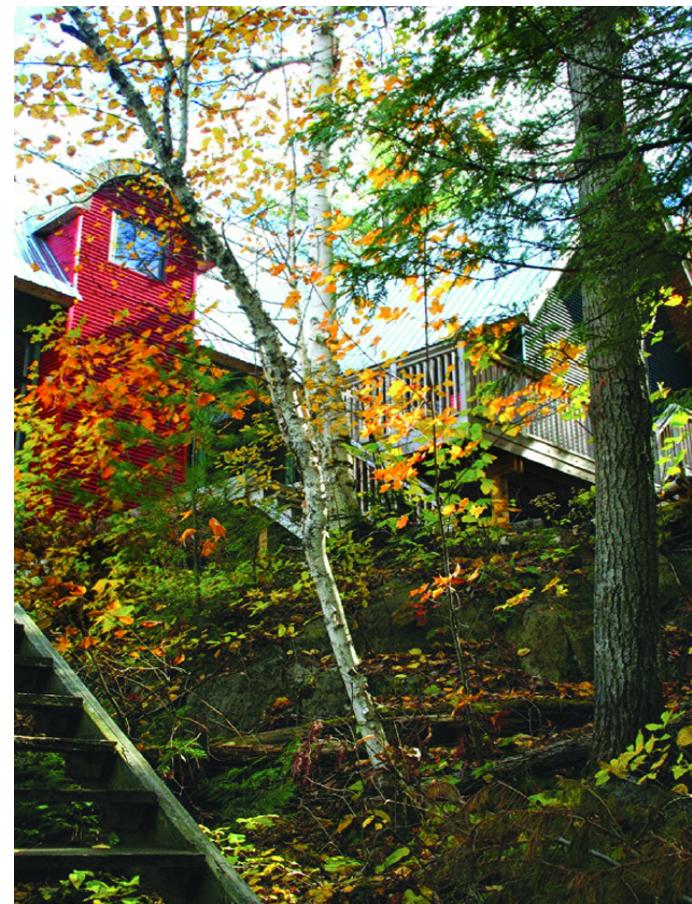
Obviously, Honorata's design objectives were met. "When I look at the forest, sky, water, I see a plethora of brilliant colours. My colourful whimsy draws on what is around and absorbs it. The colours help to break the volume of the cottage, almost camouflage it. In winter, the effect is the opposite. The cottage becomes a cheerful "barcode strip" of colours caught in between the silver white of the ground and the silver white of the roof. It welcomes you from the distance."



Prior to construction the anticipation of such a multi-coloured steel envelope gave some concern to the cautious and traditionalist neighbours, but once finished, the design was reviewed and accepted with a thunderous applause.

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- Honorata Pien'kowska



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