

Unique water unique solutions

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS THWAITES

Getting the best water requires a custom approach

A one-size-fits-all approach rarely works for anything in Muskoka. That's particularly true when it comes to water treatment, says Jon Armstrong from Muskoka Clean Water.

"There may be places where you can just install a water softener from the big box store," he says. "But Muskoka isn't one of them."

That's partly a function of Muskoka's mineral-rich geology. "I've seen wells drilled on opposite sides of a fence that have different water," says Jon. Each lake and river has its own unique water: on larger lakes, water can even vary from one end to the other.

Start with testing

There are solutions to suit just about every water issue.

But the first step is to do the right testing.

Jon says it's amazing how often he sees cottages with "solutions" that aren't really treating the underlying problem. Mistaking tannin for iron is a common error. "Iron and tannin will both discolour your water and stain your laundry," Jon says. "And we have both

here, but they need to be treated differently."

Water pH also makes a big difference. If the pH is low, which it often is in Muskoka, it may need to be raised to maximize the effectiveness of other treatment systems.

Custom solutions

With the problems identified, Jon can then build a custom system, modify an existing system, or use off-the-shelf components.

Even a water softener can be customized. "Two tanks may look identical, but the resin inside can vary quite a bit. And it's the resin that does the job," says Jon. "We may install a softener even if the water isn't hard, because it's the best way to treat a low-level iron problem."

Jon works with peroxide, air injection, ozone, reverse osmosis, ultraviolet and ion

exchange systems to handle the various problems.

Maintenance is key. "If you have a tannin issue and an ultraviolet system without a treatment filter, the tannin will settle on the sleeve, and it will soon become useless," says Jon. "Regular cleaning is vital to keeping the water potable."

Jon maintains a large inventory of UV lamps, quartz sleeves and cartridge filters in his store. He also supplies pumps, pressure tanks, heat lines and much more, creating a single stop for all things to do with great drinking water.

"We work with our clients to design, build and service a system that will give them the water they need," says Jon. "It's chemistry and mechanics – if water flows through it, we can do it." **DS**

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