

Making Memories

A rustic-style new-build cottage on Torch Lake is a getaway that will welcome family for decades to come

By Khristi S. Zimmeth

Photography by Beth Singer

“Fishing, hiking, sailing, skiing, and large family gatherings with lots of food” are among the memories the owners of this rustic retreat cherish from their childhoods — his in northern Michigan, hers in New England.

It’s not surprising that, years later, they wanted to re-create those happy years with their own family. After many scouting trips to northern Michigan, the couple opted for a place on Torch Lake in Bellaire, in part because it offered “pristine water quality,” not to mention an excellent youth sailing program, nearby ski areas, and easy access to Traverse City, Charlevoix, Petoskey, and Harbor Springs.

The active family, who live downstate but also have a home in Jackson Hole, Wyo., purchased an existing Mid-century home on the lake’s east side that boasted stunning sunset views in 2000. Less impressive, however, were the home’s ongoing water issues, caused in part by the lot’s 12- to 14-foot grade change, says architect Steve Werner, of Shoreline Architecture & Design in Petoskey, who also worked with his business partner, architect Michael Pattullo, on the project.

Fifteen years later, the homeowners consulted with builders and architects about renovating the home — a plan they eventually abandoned. “Most said it would be more efficient and cost-effective, and we would end up with a more cohesive complex if we started from scratch,” the homeowner recalls.

Covered and uncovered porches take full advantage of the views of Torch Lake.



A fresh start meant they were able to prioritize what they'd always wanted in a lake home. At the top of the list was "a place our family will enjoy for generations," the homeowner explains. "We wanted to have a home that was comfortable, with room for our extended family (and grandchildren in the future). But while we wanted plenty of room and comfort, we didn't want our place to be overstated. It was very important to us that it fit within the environment. It's somewhat hidden from the roadside and the water by native trees and other landscape. We both like the look and feel of the barns and ranches we've experienced in Jackson, Wyo., and wanted to bring some of that feel to Torch Lake."

The couple eventually selected their builder — Roger Widing, of Widing Custom Homes in Traverse City. They had also kept a thick inspiration file, which they passed along to the architects and interior designer Lucy Earl, of Jones-Keena & Co. in Birmingham, during the planning process.

"Natural products, especially the blend of barn wood and stone, appeal to us," the homeowner explains. Werner and Pattullo researched Western building styles — reclaimed mining structures in particular — and eventually landed on a style Werner calls "Mountain Rustic." Popular out west, there's nothing similar in northern Michigan. "I like how it embraces the site and the views," he says. "It's designed to capture as much natural light as possible." Designer Earl says the architects "did a great job laying out the house; everything works fantastically."

THIS PAGE: Wood and steel elements were inspired by old mining architecture in the West.

OPPOSITE PAGE: A first-floor hallway shows the homeowners' art collection. Hand-picked stone in the fireplace and overhead beams in the living room reinforce a "Mountain Rustic" look.

"It's designed to capture as much natural light as possible."

— Steve Werner

THIS PAGE: Splashes of crimson — including a red ladder, oven knobs, and a mixer — complement the kitchen's otherwise black-and-white palette.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Green chairs add a fresh feel in the dining room; the powder room features hand-stenciled Venetian plaster walls; and a pine hutch is filled with vintage and contemporary pottery.



Texture plays a large part indoors and out, according to both the designer and the architect. Barn beams and stone complement the judicious use of steel and other industrial elements. A stone fireplace in the living room is among the designer's favorite features, as is the open-plan kitchen, with its expansive soapstone island and bright red ladder.

Earl integrated color "in small ways" throughout the home's predominantly black-and-white palette. Also prominently featured is the family's enviable art collection. "Textiles, rugs, and art — she loves the same things I do," Earl says of the homeowner. For their part, the homeowners praised Earl's ability to personalize their décor. "She quickly learned our sense of style and helped us refine it," they explain, adding that the designer also introduced them to Environmental Artists' Jeff Hennig, who integrated the structures and the landscape and added one of the female homeowner's favorite features: a large raised garden full of organic vegetables and a spot she calls her "happy zone."

Guests might prefer the renovated on-site guest house or the new three-story barn, the only structure visible from the road. Built using reclaimed lumber, the barn features the same large beams and rustic style found in the main house. In addition to extra sleeping quarters, it houses an entertainment area with vaulted ceilings and a lower area that provides storage space for sailboats and other toys.

Finished in 2017, "the house came together beautifully," says Werner, who adds that "it's one of the houses we're most proud of." The designer agrees, adding: "I wouldn't do anything differently." Earl says the two-year project "was just a blast."

The lucky owners spend approximately six months a year enjoying the lake and the home's many pleasures. They treasure their quiet weekends, but point out that they're seldom there alone — which is exactly what they had in mind when planning began. "Our niece recently had a wedding in northern Michigan and we actually had room to sleep 38 people," the couple marvels, adding that they and their young adult children also host family and college reunions at the house each summer that are filled with fishing, hiking, sailing, skiing, and, of course, lots of food. 🌊



“(The architects) did a great job laying out the house; everything works fantastically.”

— Lucy Earl

THIS PAGE: An upstairs guest room is the preferred sleeping space among younger visitors. Two vanities in the master bath give the homeowners plenty of room to spread out.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Who wouldn't want to wake up to views of verdant trees and Torch Lake's aquamarine expanse? Dark trim on the master bedroom's bed echoes that on the nearby windows.

BUYER'S GUIDE

INTERIOR DESIGNER

Lucy Earl, Jones-Keena & Co., Birmingham, [jones-keena.com](#)

BATHROOM, MASTER

Cabinets – Liz Firebaugh, Signature Kitchens, Petoskey

Ceiling Treatment – Travertine, Venetian Plaster, Venetian Plaster Co., Lake Orion

Countertops – Cristallo Honed Finish, PMP Marble & Granite, Troy

Faucets – Rocky Mountain, Russell Hardware, Bloomfield Hills

Flooring – German Limestone, Ann Sacks, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Mirrors – Frame, Signature Kitchens, Petoskey

Sconces – Covington Sconce, Visual Comfort, City Lights Detroit, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Wall Treatment – Venetian Plaster, Venetian Plaster Co., Lake Orion

BEDROOM, GUEST

Beams – Reclaimed Wood, Widing Custom Homes, Traverse City

Bed Frames – Custom, Widing Custom Homes, Traverse City

Bedding – Pine Cone Hill, Annie Selke

Lighting – Visual Comfort, City Lights Detroit, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Mattress Covers – Pindler, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Wall Paint – Swiss Coffee, Benjamin Moore

Wall Trim – Black Beauty, Benjamin Moore

BEDROOM, MASTER

Bed Frame – Metz Bed, Alfonso Marina

Bedding – Halley Duvet, Alvsa Home

Ceiling Treatment – Nickel Gap, Widing Custom Homes, Traverse City

Chairs – Louis XVI Chairs, Cowtan & Tout Fabric, Alfonso Marina

Drapery – Coraggio Fabric; Fabrication, Designs Designs Ltd., Wixom

Fan – Quorum, Michigan Chandelier Co., Troy

Flooring – Walnut Floor with Tung Oil Finish, Premium Hardwoods Inc., Auburn Hills

Lamps, Bedside – Clubcu

Pillows, Accent – Daiquiri Pattern, Nobilis Paris, Lori Reed

Rug – Nashville Rug Gallery

Table, Occasional – Antique, Sleepy Hollow Antiques

Tables, Bedside – Alfonso Marina

Wall Paint – Swiss Coffee, Benjamin Moore

Wall Trim – Black Beauty, Benjamin Moore

DINING ROOM

Cabinets, Wooden – Liz Firebaugh, Signature Kitchens, Petoskey

Chairs, Dining – Verellen, Chatham House Interior Design, Troy; Upholstery, Nobilis Paris, Faux Leather

Chandelier – Darlana, Visual Comfort, City Lights Detroit, Troy

Flooring – Walnut Floor with Tung Oil Finish, Premium Hardwoods Inc., Auburn Hills

Rug – Patrick Charles Ltd.

Table, Dining – Elias Dining Table, Four Hands Home

Wall Paint – Swiss Coffee, Benjamin Moore

Wall Trim – Black Beauty, Benjamin Moore

FOYER

Bench – Asia Minor Carpets

Ceiling Treatment – Walnut, Salvaged Wood Beams, Steel, Widing Custom Homes, Traverse City

Chandelier – Dos Cubos Pendant, Solaria

Flooring – German Limestone, Ann Sacks, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Rug – Vintage Cicim Kilm, Asia Minor Carpets

Staircase – Northern Staircase Co., Pontiac

Wall Paint – Swiss Coffee, Benjamin Moore

Wall Trim – Black Beauty, Benjamin Moore

HALLWAY 1

Artwork – Bodies Panel, Roberta Schilling, Designer Group Collection, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Ceiling Treatment – Nickel Gap, Widing Custom Homes, Traverse City

Flooring – German Limestone, Ann Sacks, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Lighting, Ceiling – Dos Cubos Pendant, Solaria

Rug – Vintage Cicim Kilm, Asia Minor Carpets

Table, Display – Currey & Co., RJ Thomas Ltd., Michigan Design Center, Troy

Wall Paint – Swiss Coffee, Benjamin Moore

Wall Trim – Black Beauty, Benjamin Moore

HALLWAY 2

Door, Barn – Custom, Widing Custom Homes, Traverse City; Paint, Positive Red, Sherwin-Williams

Flooring – German Limestone, Ann Sacks, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Wall Paint – Black Beauty, Lacquered Finish, Benjamin Moore

HALLWAY 3

Chandelier – Ralph Lauren Roark, Visual Comfort, City Lights Detroit, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Flooring – German Limestone, Ann Sacks, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Lamp – Visual Comfort, City Lights Detroit, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Staircase – Northern Staircase Co., Pontiac

Wall Paint – Black Beauty, Lacquered Finish, Benjamin Moore

HALLWAY, UPSTAIRS

Lighting – Dos Cubos Lanterns, Solaria

Railing – Northern Staircase Co., Pontiac

Rug – Vintage Cicim Kilm, Asia Minor Carpets

Wall Paint – Swiss Coffee, Benjamin Moore

Wall Trim – Black Beauty, Benjamin Moore

KITCHEN

Appliances – Miele, Sub-Zero & Viking, Signature Kitchens, Petoskey

Backsplash – PMP Marble & Granite, PMP, Troy

Bar Stools – Villiers Counter Stool, Alfonso Marina

Cabinets – Liz Firebaugh, Signature Kitchens, Petoskey

Ceiling Treatment – Nickel Board, Widing Custom Homes, Traverse City

Countertops – Soapstone, PMP Marble & Granite, Troy

Faucets and Sink – Julien, Advance Plumbing, Detroit

Flooring – Walnut Floor with Tung Oil Finish, Premium Hardwoods Inc., Auburn Hills

Hood – Custom, Widing Custom Homes, Traverse City

Ladder – Custom, Widing Custom Homes, Traverse City

Lighting, Ceiling – Darlana Pendant, Visual Comfort, City Lights Detroit, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Lighting, Sink – Tech Lighting, Lighting Resource Studio, Michigan Design Center, Troy

LAUNDRY ROOM

Cabinets – Liz Firebaugh, Signature Kitchens, Petoskey

Countertops – Soapstone, PMP Marble & Granite, Troy

Flooring – German Limestone, Ann Sacks, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Lighting – Kennedy Hanging Lamp, Light and Living

Rug – Asia Minor Carpets

Wall Tile – EPRO in Pewter, Beaver Tile & Stone, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Wall Treatment – Gunmetal Lacquered Raffia, Phillip Jeffries, Tennant & Associates, Michigan Design Center, Troy

LIVING ROOM

Andirons – Delray Antiques, Atlanta, Ga.

Art, Abstract – Graham Harmon

Chair, Armchair – Noella Wingback in Wolf, Verellen, Chatham House Interior Design, Troy

Fireplace – Brad Hagelstein Stoneworks, Traverse City

Flooring – Walnut Floor with Tung Oil Finish, Premium Hardwoods Inc., Auburn Hills

Lamp – Currey & Co., RJ Thomas Ltd., Michigan Design Center, Troy

Pillows, Accent – Sambra Charcoal, Jane Churchill Fabric, Tennant & Associates, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Rug – Kuzu Oushak, Asia Minor Carpets

Sofas – Milano Sofa, Alfonso Marina

Table, Coffee – Four Hands

Tables, Display – Casal Console, Alfonso Marina

Wall Paint – Swiss Coffee, Benjamin Moore

Wall Trim – Black Beauty, Benjamin Moore

POWDER ROOM

Ceiling Treatment – Nickel Board, Widing Custom Homes, Traverse City

Flooring – German Limestone, Ann Sacks, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Mirror – Custom, Widing Custom Homes,

Traverse City

Sconces – Watt Sconce, Waterworks

Sink – Custom, Hard Topix, Jenison

Wall Paint – Angel's Trumpet, Benjamin Moore

Wall Treatment – Venetian Plaster with Hand-Embossed Stencil Dots, Venetian Plaster Co., Lake Orion

ADDITIONAL PROJECT CONTRIBUTORS

Architect – Michael Pattullo and Steve Werner, Shoreline Architecture & Design, Petoskey

Builder – Roger Widing, Widing Custom Homes, Traverse City

Cabinetry – Liz Firebaugh, Signature Kitchens, Petoskey

Home Technology Designer – Navot Shores, Spire Integrated Systems, Troy

Landscaping – Jeff Hennig, Environmental Artists, Leland

Masonry – Brad Hagelstein Stoneworks Inc., Traverse City

Painting – AMS Custom Painting, LLC, Fife Lake

Roof – Mills Construction Service, Traverse City

Stone Supplier – The Concrete Service Inc., Traverse City

Trim Labor – North Park Construction Co. Inc., Empire

Trim Material – Phillip Elenbaas Millwork, Traverse City

Windows – Marvin Windows distributed by Thomas & Milliken Millwork Inc., Traverse City

Wood Floors –Bob Trudel Floor Covering Installation, Buckley

THIS PAGE: Even the halls have personality. Here, a red barn door and eye-catching art lead to the laundry room, which also doubles as canine quarters. The home is equally comfortable for humans and their animal friends. A three-story barn on the premises provides additional sleeping quarters, as well as off-season storage.

