

WELCOME HOME

Magazine

GREATER KALAMAZOO HOME IDEA GUIDE & LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE **COMPLIMENTARY**

WINTER 2018



THE COZY HEARTHSIDE LAKESHORE LIFE
PLANNING AN EVENT TO REMEMBER
MUDROOMS MAKE A COMEBACK
MARTHE'S BUCHE DE NOEL



THE COZY HEARTHSIDE LAKESHORE LIFE

By Zolton Cohen
Feature Photography by Gary Yonkers Photography

Pardon the pun, but a flood was the precipitating event that spurred Margaret and David to demolish their existing Gull Lake house and replace it with a cozy, intriguingly designed, energy efficient home.

Four years ago, while attending a family funeral in Florida, the couple received word that a pipe in an exterior wall had burst and filled the interior of their house with water, ruining floor coverings and much of their furniture. Margaret says, "It was like a tropical rainforest when we walked in. We had a company drill holes in every wall and they dried it out with big fans for weeks."

But the flood wasn't the only issue with the house. David says, "Every summer when the air would get humid the tile on the slab floor would sweat like a Coke bottle; we would mop up the water with towels. We also knew there was a mold issue in the walls, and acoustical tile was sagging from the ceiling while mice ran around overhead. We were done. The house needed to be gone."

LAND WITH A HISTORY

David's family bought the property in the early 1950's. They replaced the original cottage with a simple ranch, which they then used during the summers. "We had a lot of good years in that house," David says. "When Margaret and I moved in it was just a summer residence, so we winterized and insulated it."

But they had been thinking for years about replacing it, and the flood motivated them to finally put their plans into motion. While they were still in Florida, Margaret urged David, "Call Hawks Hollow Builders."

Sera Gesmundo, now President of Hawks Hollow Builders, was then in the process of taking over leadership of the firm from her father, Jack, who founded it in 1973. Margaret says, "We knew we wanted to work with Hawks Hollow because of their reputation for building finely crafted homes, and we had been thinking long and hard about how we wanted to live here



ABOVE: Craftsman-style board and batten siding and cedar framing around the front entrance are part of the low-maintenance exterior of the home.

LEFT: A soaring ceiling, solid cedar framing and an Ipe deck make the second story screened-in porch a pleasant place to while away the hours enjoying the breeze and the lake view.



ABOVE: Salvaged from the kitchen of the previous house, a cherry butcherblock island countertop blends well with the extra-tall custom maple cabinets built by Hawks Hollow Builders.

RIGHT: Margaret's dream of having a pantry devoted entirely to dishes rather than food storage is fully realized in this well-designed room off the kitchen.





Valentina Velkova
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because of David's history with the place. He knows where the sun rises and sets, and how snow falls and accumulates on the land. But we wanted something that wasn't as big as the lot could support; we wanted a house at a scale that would fit in with the neighborhood and look as though it had been here for 100 years."

Gesmundo says, "Many of the houses alongside Margaret and David's are older and have been there a long time, though some have been developed to become bigger. David and Margaret wanted their house to be a part of the neighborhood, congruent and in context with the existing homes both from the road and from the lake. I think we pulled that off." It was also important to the couple to have an open floor plan and easy access to the outdoors because, as Margaret says, "We're outdoor people."

CRAFTSMAN STYLE APPEALS

Valentina Velkova, President of ADIDA Inc., Architectural Design, Interior Design and Art, was brought on board to help turn Margaret and David's ideas into reality. She started by visiting the couple in the existing house, walking through it and around the property with them in order to internalize how they lived. She asked questions about what they liked and didn't like about the house, and how they wanted the new one to be different. Velkova says, "It's good to see the plusses and the minuses. But a very fortunate aspect of this project is the location. It is a beautiful property and a beautiful lake, with beautiful views in every direction. So, one of the main goals was to open up the house toward the lake."

The open-plan Craftsman style design allows a lake view from every room except the service areas like the pantry and mudroom, and the bathrooms. The kitchen has views of the lake as well as the main entrance and driveway. Cedar posts and beams frame the main entrance and wrap-around porch, as well as the private second-story screened-in porch off the upstairs master bedroom. Board and batten siding, and Craftsman window and door trim, completes the look. The structural aspect of the home was engineered by Tom Palarz, Principle of Nehil • Sivak, P.C.

Velkova says, "David and Margaret entertain during the summer. So, with coming from the lake it seemed like a good idea to put in a bathroom with a shower that has direct access to the outdoors. It's also handy for when they work outdoors in the garden."

Along with the open floor plan, David and Margaret wanted two master bedroom suites. Velkova says, "That's a bit unusual. But it's so they can continue to live in the house as they age. Right now, they're using the upstairs master suite with its beautiful view from the screened in porch. As they get older, the bedroom upstairs will become a guest bedroom and they will move into the master bedroom suite downstairs."

Margaret says, "Sera and Valentina came up with so many great ideas, and they also came up with really good people to work with - for lighting, cabinet knobs and other things. John and Rich, the carpenters from Hawks Hollow, did such an amazing job on the porch off the master bedroom. And everybody was so helpful and cooperative with everyone else on the project."




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ABOVE: A custom redwood burl front door from California graces the entry foyer while ceiling beams in the living area help delineate spaces in the open-plan design.

RIGHT: Seen from the lake, cedar framing on the screened-in second story porch off the upstairs master bedroom and the wraparound porch on the first floor catch the eye.





ABOVE: Practical cabinets and a practical floor highlight the mudroom and laundry area off the garage. The faucet on the unique slop sink has a hook that is used to hold the handle of a bucket while it fills with water.

LEFT: A low bench built into the mudroom offers a place to sit and take off shoes and boots, and drawers to hide away backdoor clutter.



ABOVE: One of two master bedrooms in the house, the one upstairs has French doors that lead to a second-story screened-in porch that overlooks the property and the lake beyond.

RIGHT: A soaking tub and doorless walk-in shower in the master bathroom can accommodate two bathers at once.



A WARM FIREPLACE BECKONS

David adds, "The fact that Hawks Hollow is known as an energy efficient builder was very important to us. We like to burn wood, so we wanted something that was compatible with that - a Tulikivi brand soapstone fireplace from Finland. The house is basically built around it, and it is located near the stairway so some of the heat it produces can travel upstairs. It was a challenge at first to find a place for it, but now that it's there it makes sense." The stone chimney from the fireplace is exposed in the master bedroom so it can radiate heat when a fire is burning downstairs.

Margaret and David mention that Ashleigh Kosin, Owner and Designer at Bell Tower Lake House Living Company in Richland, was another important member of the team that put the home together. Margaret says, "Ashleigh was so valuable to the process. She was the one who designed all the furniture placement; she came in while we were still building and could see things spatially in a comprehensive way. All the furniture is new because we weren't bringing anything in from the flood."

Kosin says, "Margaret had been shopping at our store for a couple of years, so I had a good idea of her taste in furnishings. It is important to her and David that their furniture is handmade, built in the United States, and

eco-friendly. They have a lot of nice art, so I was able to work with that, pulling out colors and textures to compliment what they already had, and to make it look as though it had been in place for 20 years. It was a timeless approach, and fun to bring their design style to life."

One furniture item in the house didn't come from a store though. Jack Gesmundo built a walnut slab table for the couple similar in design to one he had built earlier for Sera. Margaret says, "Ashleigh came to Hawks Hollow where the table was stored while we were building. She brought wood samples and figured out the kind of chairs that would look good with it. It was such a valuable service because I wouldn't have known what to do."

CUSTOM TOUCHES ABOUND

When walking through the house, David and Margaret each point out many of their favorite rooms and features. David says the heart of the home is the kitchen area, where he does much of the cooking. The countertops are a couple of inches higher than standard because both he and Margaret are tall, and the maple cabinets, custom built by Hawks Hollow, are also tall to provide plenty of storage space. David enthuses about the steam oven, explaining how it infuses various foods with heat

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and moisture, and says it is the ideal appliance to reheat leftovers.

One of Margaret's dreams was a pantry devoted not to food, but to dishes. And that has come to fruition in this house. "I don't like to kneel down to get things out of lower cabinets," she says. "It has worked out perfectly. We have dishes we treasure so it would be a shame to hide them away, and we can see everything and know where everything is." The highly refined concrete countertops in the kitchen and the bathrooms were built by the Hard Topix Company in Jenison, Michigan.

Margaret and David are quick to express thanks and gratitude for the team of experts who worked on the house, Margaret says, "Sera was always kind in her direction when she was talking to us. If I decided to forge a new path that wasn't very bright, she was so generous of spirit to gently bring me back and not tell me how inappropriate my thinking was. And that's what David and I got from everyone who was involved - Val and Ashleigh and everyone else. That's what made it fun, with everyone contributing ideas to the project. Building a home is not the kind of thing we do every day, so you have to learn to trust; to trust the process and the people involved. We were working with three wonderful professionals. It was an amazing experience because they listened. They heard us, and they understood what we wanted."

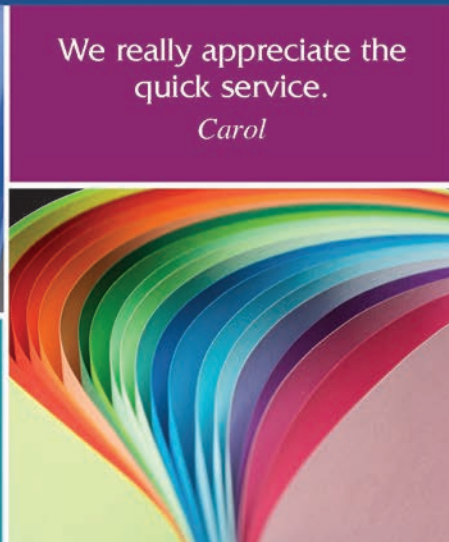
Gesmundo says that Hawks Hollow Builders brings together best construction practices, innovative and creative designs, and a team of the area's best craftsman and trade partners. In terms of energy efficiency, she says, "We build to our standards whether or not the client asks for it. We feel it is; not just to reduce the amount of energy used by the house, but with proper assembly of the walls so they stay dry and don't mold or rot and can be sustainable for 150 years. And that leads automatically to ongoing comfort for the occupants."

She adds, "We're proponents of the concepts laid out in Sarah Susanka's 'Not So Big House' book that create multi-use spaces and make use of superior materials and design elements to craft high-quality spaces that you enjoy being in. It's not enjoyable to sit in a high-ceiling living room where you feel small and cold. With Margaret and David's house, I think we accomplished that."



You guys have really helped us out. We really appreciate the work and effort your crew puts in.

Mark



We really appreciate the quick service.

Carol



The mailing was perfect and we could have not have asked for a better election cycle.

Shelby

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