

# New England HOME

Celebrating Fine Design, Architecture, and Building



A New Season of  
*ELEGANCE*



# Little Wonder

Rustic meets chic in this lakefront getaway in central Massachusetts. BY LISA H. SPEIDEL



Designer Jill Najnigier contrasted rustic elements, such as the original ceiling (which was lightly sandblasted to bring it back to life) and the stone fireplace, with simple interior architecture. A ladder made of metal piping and salvaged hemlock leads to a loft with a queen-size bed.

**C**halk it up to serendipity. The owners of this little lakefront cottage discovered it for sale just a mere mile from their home in central Massachusetts. It had lots of potential—and a couple of cool perks: it would be a perfect excuse to buy a powerboat and an idyllic spot to house visiting guests.

But before they could get to the perks part, they had to address the potential. “It was a disaster,” says Jill Najnigier, who headed up the interior architecture. “There were animals living there.”

They would retain the basic structure and size (a mere 674 square feet) of the 1950s cabin, but pretty well everything else—save for the fireplace and the original wood ceiling—would go.

Neither the designer nor her clients, a family of four, wanted it to be “too cabin-y or cottage-y,” remembers Najnigier, but everyone hoped to preserve its history and character. And their teenage daughter, who took an active role in the design phase, wanted “a cool place to hang out.”

While architect Paul Lieneck focused on structural design and modernizing the exterior, Najnigier set to work on the hulking fireplace in the center of the space, updating the mantel with reclaimed wood and the hearth with cast concrete. She wrapped an L-shaped bar around two sides of the fireplace, eliminating the need for a dining table (bigger

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**ARCHITECTURE:**  
Paul Lieneck, Haynes  
Lieneck & Smith

**INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE  
AND INTERIOR DESIGN:**  
Jill Najnigier,  
JN Interior Spaces

**BUILDER:** Mike Lanney,  
Apex Property Services

**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:** Najnigier kept the cottage from being too rustic with clean lines (note the lack of baseboards and moldings), modern furnishings, and strategic use of saturated color. The bar, the ladder, and the loft railings were fabricated by Adam Brandt of ArcArt in Sterling, Massachusetts. Rich velvet and brass accents add a dose of luxury.

gatherings retreat to the deck). A full kitchen handles any size party, and Najnigier made the space a focal point with custom cabinetry painted Farrow & Ball’s sultry Hague blue.

The designer has worked on five projects with the family, so she knew their propensity for fun. Hence the bathroom’s Ann Sacks glass tile in glossy red, and the sitting area’s statement chandelier. “The husband wanted something big and perhaps gaudy,” remembers Najnigier. “I told him I can’t do gaudy, but I can give you the bling you’re after.”

While the designer maximized sleeping quarters to accommodate six (the upstairs loft sleeps two, and there’s a murphy bed and two daybeds on the main floor), that may not have been necessary. It turns out, the cabin has morphed a bit from guest house to family retreat. The four often hang out in the TV-free space playing board games and music (dad on guitar, son on drums) and swimming and boating off the dock. Just as the design-minded daughter had hoped.

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** For details about this home, see Resources.



Floor-to-ceiling red glass tiles from Ann Sacks are a vivid, reflective counterpoint to the concrete floors. A zero-clearance shower with a full-width linear drain eliminates the need for an enclosure.

