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A family getaway settles comfortably in the rise and fall of the landscape on Martha's Vineyard's north shore.

Text by Megan Fulweiler | Photography by Eric Roth

ON THE COVER: Kris Horiuchi's landscaping helps a Hutker Architects–designed house nestle into its spot on the north shore of Martha's Vineyard. Photograph by Eric Roth. To see more of this home, turn to page 134.



To help the house blend into its natural surroundings, the design team kept the existing woodlands wherever possible, supplemented with native trees and plants. Red cedar shingles and stone enhance the home's connection to the land.

lake effect



Skillfully designed and cleverly nestled into its wooded lakefront site, a New Hampshire house makes an enchanting getaway for a Boston couple.

Text by *Robert Kiener* | Photography by *Jim Westphalen* | Produced by *Karin Lidbeck Brent*





LEFT: The entry hallway sets the tone for the home with natural touches such as the twig-like door handle. **BELOW:** Entry sideboards sport pulls that resemble mushrooms. **FACING PAGE:** The colorful, custom-designed runner was inspired by the lake setting.



PROJECT TEAM

Architecture: Michael McClung and John Gassett,
Shope Reno Wharton

Interior design: Jan Chenault, Chenault & Associates

Builder: Kenneth Vona Construction

Landscape design: Keith Wagner and Jeffrey Hodgson,
Wagner Hodgson Landscape Architecture

Mike McClung and John Gassett both smile as they recall an early visit to the lot on New Hampshire's Lake Sunapee where they would soon build a second home for their Boston-based clients. "It was snowing

and chilly, and we must have looked like a couple of Boy Scouts as we marched around, clambering over boulders and around trees with a compass in one hand and a topographic map and pen in the other," says McClung.

The men, architects with the Connecticut firm Shope Reno Wharton, were looking for views—distant and near—to help them orient the home on its site. They also had to consider the sloping topography and how the solar angles change through the seasons. And, like many lakeside properties, the lot was subject to a slew of regulations about storm water runoff, setbacks, and the number of trees that could be altered to open up views. "At this early stage, there is always a Rubik's Cube of issues that have to be balanced and sorted as you develop a concept and orientation for a new house," Gassett says. "It's both fun and challenging."

The owners had wisely also enlisted landscape architects H. Keith Wagner and Jeffrey Hodgson and general contractor Brian Vona from the very beginning of the project to work together on the home's design. "Getting a team together from day one is an excellent way to foster collaboration," says Vona. "When everyone is on the same page, things can go smoothly and problems can quickly be solved."

BELOW: The great room's sitting area is anchored by the massive fireplace built with locally sourced stone. Furniture keeps a low profile, the better to focus on the views. **RIGHT:** Elegance meets rusticity in the dining room, where a dramatic chandelier hangs above a live-edge walnut table.

"I love the way this chandelier evokes the unexpected and, at the same time, blends in with traditional design," says Jan Chenault.



Wagner realized speedily that, given the lot's nearly forty-foot grade change, he and Hodgson would have to address water runoff issues. "I knew we'd need several rain gardens to keep the water from reaching the lake," he says. "There were also wetlands that needed to be protected."

Vona noted that an existing road to the property would have to be replaced. "We'd never get the trucks and machinery we needed for site preparation over that road in mud season," he remembers. The entire project was a huge undertaking; Vona would work with more than eighty subcontractors from some sixteen states.

Beyond all the logistics, the clients

had their own list of requirements. Chief among them: a house with timeless style that would blend into its surroundings.

"They wanted the home and the outdoor areas to look as if they grew organically from the land," says Hodgson. They also hoped their lakeside home would be a year-round destination for frequent gatherings of their large extended family. "They didn't want just a ski house or a summer house, but something that was all-season," McClung says.

Other requests included using locally sourced natural materials, creating a nostalgic camp feel, and embracing indoor/outdoor living.





RIGHT: Cream-colored ceilings and island add a light touch to the kitchen. **BELOW:** Sunset-colored furnishings give the library its warm ambience. **FACING PAGE:** The windows in the light-washed breakfast area, like those in most of the house, are left bare to forge an indoor-outdoor connection.



“We went with a fairly sophisticated, earthy, organic color palette inside, punctuated by splashes of color,” says Chenault.



McClung and Gassett came up with a novel, three-story, three-building, classic shingle design that is tucked neatly into the hillside. The structures—a guest wing, the main house, and the garage and entry area—are linked to one another but oriented differently to take full advantage of the views and to help break up the mass of the home. “Instead of one big building that may look inappropriate on the lot, we went for smaller elements that we joined together,” explains McClung.

“By orienting them differently, we were able to preserve many of the views we had identified when we first walked the property,” Gassett adds. The home boasts drop-dead distant views of sunsets and Mt. Sunapee as well as nearer lake views neatly framed by existing trees.

Western red cedar shingles for siding and roofing, and expressive brackets and rafter tails on the overhangs, give the home the camp-like feel the owners wanted. Dark green trim paint and foundation walls of regional granite in tans, browns, and grays enhance the sense of connection to the land.

The sloping site meant that it would have to be excavated for retaining walls and terracing so the home could be nestled into it. This was a challenge (“We needed a lot of concrete,” says Vona) but





The homeowners “wanted the home and the outdoor areas to look as if they grew organically from the land,” says Hodgson.

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: The house nestles into the dramatic slope of the lot. The boathouse deck makes a pleasant gathering spot. The home’s lower level opens to a broad bluestone terrace overlooking the lake.

one that offered dividends. “Because of the hillside slope, all three floors of the home, including the basement level, have great views,” McClung says.

The lower level opens onto an outside entertaining space that features a fire pit, a broad bluestone terrace, overlooks, and a lawn area. “We like to extend the form and function of the home’s design out into the landscape,” Hodgson says. A series of gardens filled with native sedges and perennials look pretty and catch rainwater runoff.

For the stylish but relaxed look and feel they wanted inside, the owners turned to Colorado-based interior designer Jan Chenault. “We went with a fairly sophisticated, earthy, organic color palette inside, punctuated by splashes of color here

and there,” says Chenault. Ceilings and walls sport pale creams and whites to, as the designer explains, “help lighten the woodwork and raise the ceilings.” Touches of color—blues and greens to echo the lake, sky, and woods, and hints of reds and yellows that call to mind a late-day sun—show up in sofa and chair fabrics and in the water-inspired patterns of the wool and silk rugs Chenault designed.

To keep the hybrid post-and-beam home light-filled and not obstruct its numerous views, she used window treatments sparingly and outfitted the space with low-backed furniture.

Nods to nature abound, from the mushroom-shaped drawer pulls on the sideboards in the entry hall to the branchlike handles of the front door, to



LEFT: The master bath features an oversize tub of marble and limestone tucked into a windowed niche. **BELOW:** The master bedroom opens to a private balcony. **RIGHT:** The owners enjoy their second-story porch all year long.

the raw-edged slab of walnut that tops the dining table. But there is elegance, too, as in the show-stopping chandelier of acrylic and brass wire mesh that floats above the rustic dining table. “I love the way this chandelier evokes the unexpected and, at the same time, blends in with traditional design,” says Chenault.

How do the owners feel about their new house? Mike McClung relates that the couple called him after their first big family get-together in their lakeside retreat. “It is magical,” they told him. Could a design team ask for a nicer compliment? **■**

RESOURCES : For more information about this home, see page 196.



