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Lake Effect

Thanks to water vistas and relaxed decor,
a stately residence exudes welcoming vibes.

WRITTEN BY LAURA HINE | PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL ROBINSON



Architecture: Fred Wilson and Elissa Morgante, Morgante Wilson Architects **Interior Design:** Andrea Goldman, Andrea Goldman Design
Home Builder: Neil Regan, Chicago Custom Home Builders **Landscape Architecture:** Scott Byron, Scott Byron & Co.

I love a good reveal,” says designer Andrea Goldman, speaking to that glorious moment when homeowners see their newly finished home for the first time. But, for one particular Wilmette residence designed by Goldman and architects Fred Wilson and Elissa Morgante, pulling off that reveal meant the owners had to stay away for an entire month. It took that long to get the furnishings moved in, finishes completed and the house staged for its debut.

Goldman ordered food, hired a bartender and the family made sure their five children—only one of whom still lives at home—could come for the weekend. “The kids were running to their bedrooms, which they’d never seen,” Goldman says. “It took us a good couple of hours to walk them through all the spaces.” Goldman encouraged the delighted family to call up friends and continue the party. “The bartender was booked for the evening, so why not?” she says.

The celebration was a testament to the design team’s success in creating a home that, while immense, felt welcoming; a house where spontaneous party invitations could be expected well beyond the first night. “Getting this house approved and built was pretty amazing,” Wilson says, who worked with builder Neil Regan and landscape designer Scott Byron. “It was an engineering and architectural endurance test.” But persevering through the hurdles was worth it, he says, for a legacy house that fulfills the family’s request for a year-round vacation home. Resort-like amenities abound: an indoor pool (that opens to the outside on warm days), a golf simulator, a bowling alley, a full-sized basketball court, an exercise room, a wine cellar, a theater and a guest wing. “It’s like Disney World,” Goldman says. “It truly was created, designed and built for a house full of family.”

It’s also oriented to its unique spot overlooking Lake Michigan. “The living room and kitchen are the heart of the home, and everything orbits around those spaces,” Wilson notes, adding that they planned those rooms to have stunning vistas.

“In the living room and kitchen, the windows have no mullions, so visually nothing gets between you and the lake.” Cleverly, the architects connected the two rooms, not just through doorways but with a secret bar that opens up for entertaining.

Like the architects, Goldman took her cues for the furnishings, accessories and lighting from the homeowners’ desire for a respite. “The family wanted the house to feel like a place where they could hang out,” Goldman says. “It’s partly what Morgante Wilson did with the window placement and the architecture. We did the same with the interiors to make it feel grounded and approachable.”

In the main living area, which has both a TV and a fireplace (plus that breathtaking view of the lake), Goldman created back-to-back seating areas on a large custom rug, carving out spaces within the space. She notes that, for as big as it is, the living room feels properly scaled when you’re in it. It’s a tactic the designer repeated in several of the rooms, taking spaces that could feel overly expansive and making them cozy by providing different groupings. “Good design is really about good scale,” she says. “You don’t want a home to feel like a museum.”

She also used the flow of color from room to room to tie the house together. “We look at every space as a collective and think about how one room flows into the next,” she says. “You don’t want every space to feel the same, but it’s got to flow.” Such as in the husband’s two-story paneled library. “We wanted it to feel dark and masculine, but not too heavy,” Goldman says. She intentionally went with a gray for the library walls that she used touches of in other rooms, so it contrasts—but doesn’t clash—with the lighter rooms surrounding it. The library anchors the darker side of the home’s palette of soothing blues, grays and creams that frame the property’s ultimate asset: its lake views. “There’s nothing more gratifying than to have clients say that their house is beyond what they thought it could be,” Goldman says. “You’ll be impressed when you come in this house—you can’t not be—but after you get over that initial moment of ‘Oh my God,’ I think it’s warm, inviting and very personal.” ■



Architects Fred Wilson and Elissa Morgante used arches throughout the house to connect spaces and create a rhythm to passageways. The abstract painting by Lisa Ridgers was acquired at Anne Loucks Gallery.



Above: Livability reigns supreme in the sun room. The custom sofa is upholstered in a Pindler hard-wearing Sunbrella fabric. A mix of materials, thanks in part to the McGuire lounge chair and woven-rope Palecek coffee table, lends warmth and texture.

Opposite: In the dining area of the sun room, astonishing views accompany any meal eaten at the RH table surrounded with Janus et Cie armchairs. A Rook pendant light by Arteriors hangs from above.



A Gregorius Pineo table, McGuire side chairs and a pendant light by Paul Ferrante create an elegant breakfast nook where the homeowners can enjoy a stunning vista of Lake Michigan.

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—ANDREA GOLDMAN



Left: To give a place for pause, Goldman installed a photograph of California's redwood forest by photographer Lincoln Schatz above a custom console. She added another layer of organic interest with stone vessels from RH.

Opposite: "The husband wanted a man's library," Goldman says. She used Kendall Charcoal by Benjamin Moore in the two-story room to create that desired vibe. Another Lincoln Schatz photograph hangs above the fireplace.





Above: Guests have their own separate space to relax if they desire. In this sitting area off the guest bedrooms, Bensen club chairs from Hive and hollow pouf ottomans by Goldman provide the perfect spot to rest.

Opposite: Appropriate for a lake house, the artwork in the guest room is a framed sailing knot by Historical Americana Nautical Art. Goldman dressed the RH bed in classic white linens, also from RH.

BEDROOM PHOTO: AMÉE MAZZENGA.

