



ASPEN INFLUENCE

Contemplation and Patience Yield the Perfect Waterfront Home



WRITER KAREN VANDER WERP • PHOTOGRAPHER DAVE SPECKMAN

the search for the perfect location took plenty of time and energy, but the ideal location for this home was finally selected. “We decided the location was more important than the dwelling,” shares the Grand Rapids couple. “We could always change the house, but we could never change the location.”

They had been vacationing at Torch Lake for about nine years but weren’t totally convinced it was the place to build. There were so many incredible Michigan lakes to choose from. First, there was the dilemma of the “The Big Lake” verses an inland lake. Ultimately, they decided on an inland lake for the pleasure of “all sport” boating for their teenagers. Exciting water sports are a natural over quiet walks on the beach.

The next issue was the distance from Grand Rapids. What distance would be comfortable for a day trip to and from their full-time residence? They toyed with closer locations but their familiarity with the beauty and pristine waters of Torch Lake were already indelibly stamped in their psyche. The constant water level, controlled by the Elk Rapids dam, added finality to their Torch Lake decision.

After Torch Lake became the lake of choice, they began renting summer homes at various locations around the lake. “We wanted to familiarize ourselves with the different communities and amenities of each area,” shares the homeowner.

The “sandbar” is Torch Lake’s fun spot, a hang-out for summer

festivities and day boaters but the Grand Rapids couple preferred its quiet coves. The less traveled west side of the lake offered a more idyllic setting for quiet, sunsets, dog walking and bike riding. The west side of the lake brought resolution to that part of the decision making.

They found an unpaved road leading to a little red cabin on an exceptional piece of land. It was everything they wanted but it wasn’t for sale-- but would be in a year and a half. After a fruitless search, they opted to wait for the land with the little red cabin on the ideal building site.

The little red cottage was built in the 1920s. It had wonderful vintage quality but moving it would present some major obstacles with the private road and surrounding mature trees. A Craigslist ad reading, “Cottage, \$2000 or best offer, you must remove.....” roused three interested parties.

It was made clear to all parties that this was a removal not demolition project. The little red cottage was a usable structure with its own history and antiquated charm. After evaluating everyone’s plan for removal, the one most viable for the project was selected. What remained was a chimney and a cement slab, perfect for new construction to commence.

The Craftsman-style home selected for the site was inspired by an Aspen cottage. Builder Bill Makuski, explained how they could obtain the look of a timber frame without the expense. “Bill contrib-



uted so much," share the homeowners. " He's a man of integrity, cost conscious and we knew we could trust him."

Bill used his Grand Rapids subs, renting a home for them to live in. They worked Monday through Thursday. The efficiency and progression of the project was more than anyone could have hoped for. They broke ground in October 2009 and the house was completed in May of 2010.

The Aspen-inspired home was designed with teenagers in mind, as well as a place to enjoy as empty nesters. It was a priority to build a home their children would enjoy today and return to one day with their own families. With all the heartfelt contemplation and sincere evaluation, the finished product is a home that will be filled with pleasures of lakefront living for now and generations to come. □

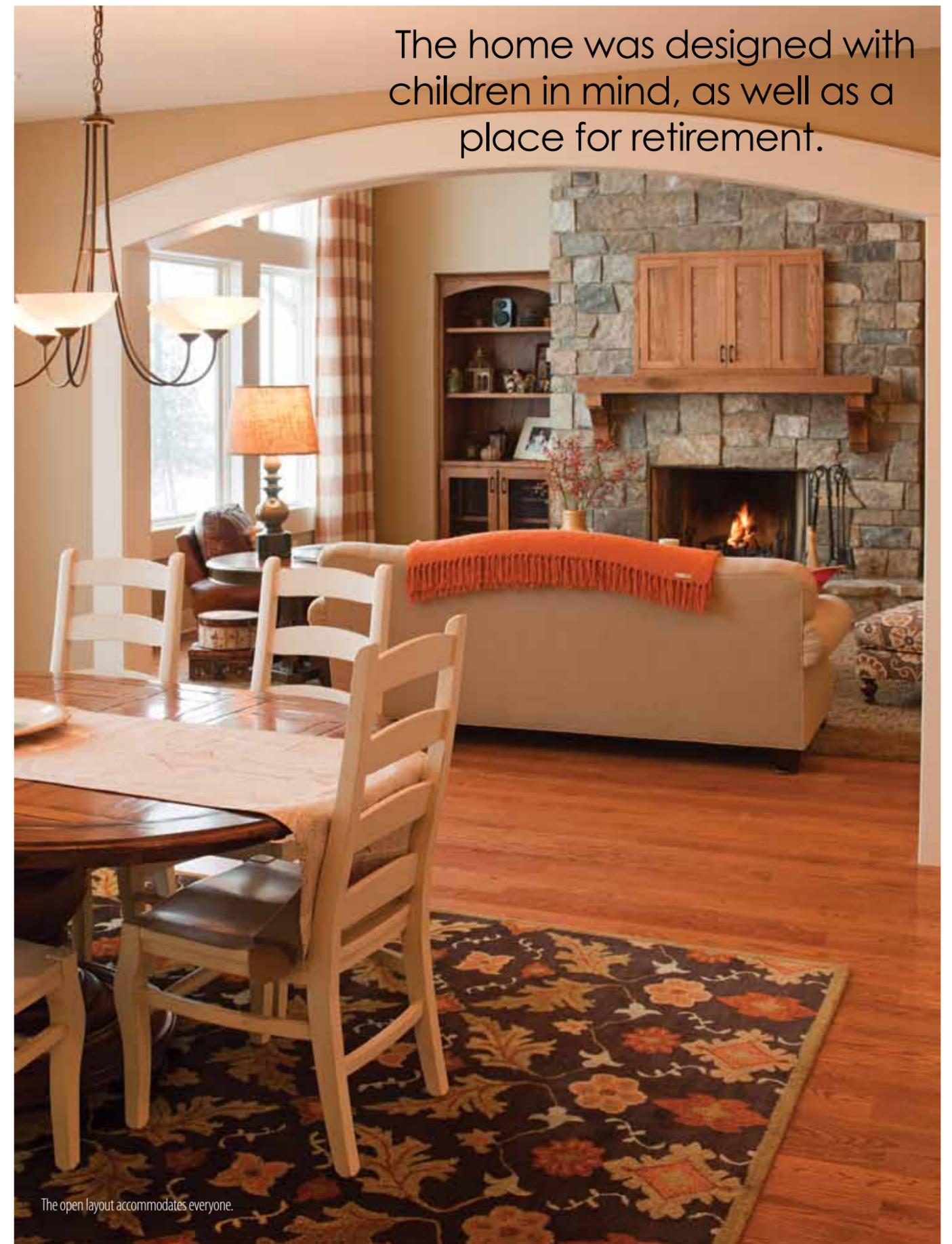
PREVIOUS PAGE:

ABOVE: For erosion control, boulders were brought in from the Upper Peninsula for construction of the patio, stairway and wall.

BELOW: An Aspen mountain cottage, with its sloping roof lines, was the inspiration for the exterior design.

ABOVE: The Adam Page Cabinetry combines clean lines with rustic styling.

BELOW: The dining area is the link between views, casual living and food preparation.



The home was designed with children in mind, as well as a place for retirement.

The open layout accommodates everyone.



The careful attention to detail is found throughout the home.

OPPOSITE PAGE:

ABOVE: Artistry of the stone fireplace, timber ceiling and comfortable furnishings is the perfect combination.

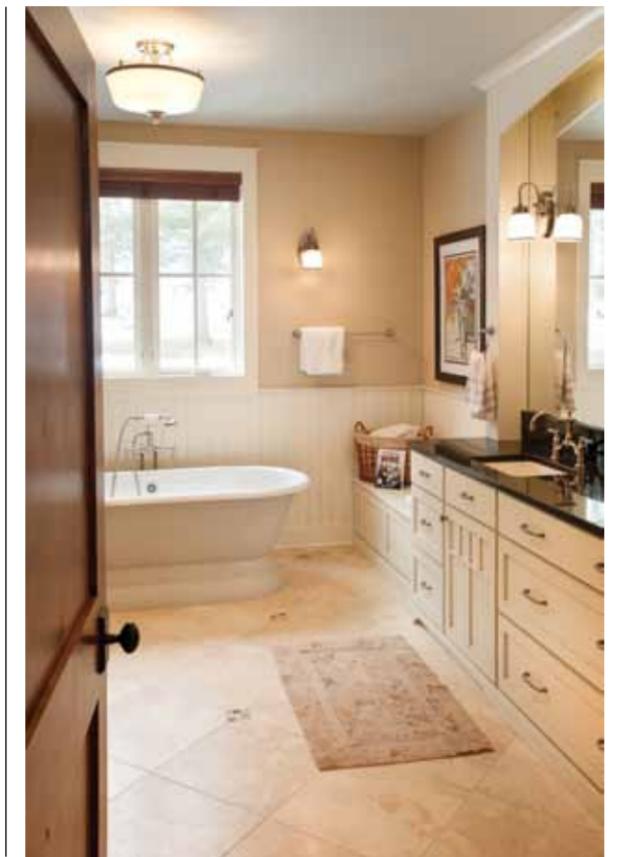
BELOW LEFT: A built-in coat rack and bench provide not only architectural detailing but a functional solution as well.

BELOW RIGHT, TOP: Builder Bill Makuski explained how to save money on a non-structural timber frame ceiling.

BELOW RIGHT, BOTTOM: The lower level is complete with a guest apartment.

ABOVE: Timber ceiling adds warmth and rustic detailing to the master bedroom.

BELOW: Simple clean lines, fashioned after the kitchen, create exceptional appeal in the master bath.





ABOVE: The professionally landscaped grotto creates a perfect entry point to the waters edge.

MIDDLE: Boaters slow to admire the grotto and unique architecture.

BOTTOM: Torch Lake's west side was chosen because of its calmer coves and sunrises.



MBI Homes

Makuski Builders Inc.

OWNER:
Bill Makuski

YEAR BUSINESS STARTED:
1990

YEARS IN BUSINESS:
22 years

EDUCATION:
Bachelor of Science degree in Construction Management from the University of Wisconsin Stout.

BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY:
To provide exceptional customer care and expertise in the building process to our clients for a fair and reasonable profit. We strive to build relationships that last a lifetime.

WHAT SETS YOUR BUSINESS APART?
Owner Bill Makuski works on-site to oversee construction to ensure the best possible product. He also uses his building expertise to assist customers with their selections.

HOBBIES, VOLUNTEERISM, ETC.:
Makuski is married with three children. He loves the outdoors, hunting, fishing and skiing. Makuski has served locally on his township building review committee, planning commission and board of review.

CONTACT PHONE NUMBER & WEB ADDRESS:
For more information, call (616) 299-1725 or visit Makuskibuilders.com.