

SPECIAL OUTDOOR LIVING ISSUE

TIMBER HOME LIVING



LAKESIDE GETAWAYS

- Rustic
- Formal
- Mountaintop

DECKS

Low-cost
bonus
space

INSIDE A TIMBER FRAME

How timber homes
are built to last

WINDOW SHOPPING GUIDE

Buy for looks &
energy-efficiency



Camp Comfort

A Vermont couple builds a lakeside retreat with fun and family in mind.

STORY BY BARBARA JACKSIEB | PHOTOS BY SUSAN TEARE

FINDING the ideal location for a second home can be difficult. But when Cheryl and Peter Morse decided they were ready to build a camp (the word native New Englanders use for their cherished vacation havens) of their own, Lake Seymour in northwestern Vermont was an obvious choice.

“Spending summers at Lake Seymour has been a tradition in my family for almost a century,” says Cheryl. “My great-grandfather

used to go there on his annual fishing expedition — and he always brought his wife and three sons along.”

In the early 1940s, her grandfather purchased 11.5 acres of waterfront property on the northern side of the lake. The property came with a primitive main lodge and two small sleeping camps. Over the next few decades, the growing family added several more rustic bedrooms.

When she was a child, Cheryl and her

OPPOSITE: From the lake, the prow faced with rugged cultured stone is visually stunning, but what can't be seen is equally impressive: Behind the facing, stress skin panels create a super energy-efficient shell.

ABOVE: An angled wall of ceiling-to-floor windows allows the lake's natural beauty to become part of the great room's decor. After dark, the golden glow of a crackling fire is enhanced by the room's lighting scheme.



extended family gathered at the lake from whenever school let out until Labor Day weekend. “My cousins and I spent leisurely days swimming, boating, fishing, hiking and picking wild berries there,” she explains. “After I married Peter, we kept going there with our own children.”

In 1999, a lakefront lot adjacent to the other family properties became available. It had a small camp and two-bedroom bunkhouse, in addition to a sandy stretch of beach. “We jumped at the chance to purchase it,” says Peter.

Team Building

Peter and builder Dan Delabruere met while sitting on the sidelines of a hockey rink when their sons were on the same travel team. One

day Dan mentioned that he was a builder and the owner of Delabruere Custom Homes in Newport, Vermont. Peter told Dan that if he ever decided to build a new place on his lot, he’d give him a call. In 2006, he did.

Peter and Cheryl visited a timber-frame home Dan had designed and built. When they walked in and saw the gorgeous post-and-beam construction, they knew immediately this was the kind of house they wanted. Dan’s well-crafted plan and attention to details also convinced the couple they had found the right builder.

“Our first design meeting took place around the kitchen table at their old camp,” recalls the builder. Cheryl and Peter explained that they wanted their new retreat to have the

OPPOSITE: An open floor plan encourages guests to join Cheryl in the kitchen and help out at dual sinks, a separate cook top and wall oven, and a convenient multi-level island. An enthusiastic chef in his own right, Peter built a masonry wood-burning grill in the front yard. “It turns out perfect steaks,” he says.

ABOVE: From its soaring Douglas fir frame and wall of windows to its two-story stone fireplace, the expansive great room is designed to maximize family togetherness and encourage socializing. It offers a cozy place for gathering around the hearth, intimate sitting areas for admiring the lake, a bar for drinking and chatting, and a generously sized dining table.



Exposed rafters, square-cut trusses and even the way the rafters are set into the wall posts contribute to the strength and visual aesthetics of the master bedroom.

Home Details

SQUARE FOOTAGE: 3,000
ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Delabruere Custom Homes
TIMBER PROVIDER: North Woods Joinery



The lawn's gentle slope provides plenty of room for family fun and flexible outdoor entertaining and preserves the sightlines.

same warm feeling as the old structure, but with a two-story great room, huge windows facing the lake, more bedrooms and outdoor areas suited for large family get-togethers.

They traded ideas for several hours and agreed to meet a few weeks later. When they did, Cheryl handed Dan a preliminary floor plan that she had sketched on a piece of graph paper. After that, everything fell into place, and the design phase was wrapped up about three months later.

The next step was selecting a framing company. The builder suggested North Woods Joinery because of prior collaboration and its traditional framing techniques. After viewing examples of its handcrafted mortise-and-tenon joinery and high-quality woods, Peter and Cheryl invited the Cambridge, Vermont-based firm to join their team.

"We discussed building with Douglas fir," says Larry Kruse, co-owner of North Woods

Joinery. "The wood has a nice, tight grain and clean look that was important to Peter and Cheryl. Our extended length timbers were ideal for their plan that called for beams ranging from 8-inch to 16-inch square and up to 30 feet long in the great room."

Entertaining Ideas

Working with the builder was easy, according to Cheryl. "He understood that, in most design decisions, whatever made the most sense for hosting and entertaining was the right solution."

For example, a bar area adds extra seating to the great room and the kitchen has a walk-in pantry just off the kitchen to house plenty of food for visiting friends and relatives.

The main level features a dramatic great room with a floor-to-ceiling fireplace, a large kitchen with an eat-in bar and an open dining area — all designed to provide gathering

spaces when the weather moves the fun indoors. There's also a bedroom suite for Cheryl's mom, so she doesn't have to climb stairs to get to her room.

The lawn areas offer plenty of space to pull up a chair and relax with a good book. There are also horseshoe pits to encourage socializing.

When construction finished 10 short months after it began, Cheryl and Peter had a beautiful home, featuring a combination of split logs, cultured stone, and a dramatic west-facing glass prow. The family and their guests make full use of their beautiful camp all year long.

"We love the outdoors," Cheryl concludes, "and we do lots of summer and winter sports. The weather is never a factor in our ability to enjoy the area."

A perfect camp in the perfect location filled with family, friends and tradition — what could be better than that? ■