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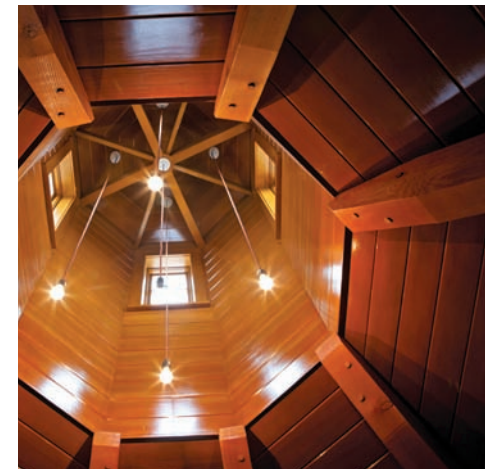


Building

HISTORY

A gathering place emerges with unstudied, casual ease on Torch Lake's azure shores.

Text by Diane Kolak • Photographs by Todd Zawistowski



Patinated metals, mixed wood species, and local stone come together in a casual but careful blend to give the house a look that often takes decades to develop. OPPOSITE: An inviting, stone-circled resting place lies between the house and the lakeshore.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The master bath's refined marble walls look less formal when topped by clapboard siding and paired with an antique screen door on the shower. The entry side and interior feature heavy use of local stone, all of which the homeowner, a geologist, can name. The kitchen is divided into two zones, making it adaptable for large gatherings or just for two.



Boating on Caribbean-blue Torch Lake for the first time can be a life-changing experience. It certainly was for a couple with downstate roots looking for the ideal place Up North to gather extended family. They knew as they motored into the thrilling, clear water that Torch was the place where they wanted to let the seasons unfold for years to come.

They bought a small cottage on Torch's sunset side with plans to move it to the back of the lot and live in it while realizing their concept: an old-timey Northern lodge blended with the intimate spaces found in classic cabins. As they envisioned it, their new vacation home would be a carefree place where sandy feet and wet dogs were welcome, where 25 friends and relatives would be as comfortable as their family of four.

Impressed by Ken Richmond's diverse portfolio, the couple chose the Traverse City architect to make their vision real. "It was clear that he was customizing each project to the client's personality. When he gets this twinkle in his eye, you know magic is about to happen," says one of the homeowners of Richmond's individualized approach.

Indeed, Richmond demonstrates his signature enthusiasm when he talks about how this project began. "I really believe in local patterns," he says. "There's a lot of great historic work right here [in Northern Michigan]—the old summer lodges at Glen Lake, Crystal Lake, Long Lake, Walloon Lake and Lake Charlevoix. They became my inspiration."

Inspiration flows freely from historic architecture, of course, but imbuing a new structure with a sense of authentic history is tricky. To convey the idea that this gathering

place had developed and changed over decades, Richmond avoided close adherence to a single style. "We didn't want it to be 'too nice' ... too thought-about."

Accordingly, the architecture and finish details borrow from 1920s lodge style, Arts & Crafts, classic lake cottages, barns and even a hint of midcentury modern. The various styles come together in a natural, pleasing way due to deft handling of proportions and subtle, repeated themes such as a fiddlehead motif, interior stained glass and diagonal woodwork.

Richmond and Ken Van Houten, general contractor, gave each craftsman a lot of creative freedom. They encouraged the quirks that come from each craftsman expressing his own style. Doors and windows were trimmed with a technique borrowed from barn builders, and handmade nails were left exposed. Extensive, towering stonework required a melding of engineering and artistry. The craftsmen's imprint were so important, in fact, that the homeowners asked each one to sign a beam in the great room.

The meandering layout has an added-on feel, as if built over time. Richmond explains how he used smaller-scaled spaces to counteract the vastness of the building. There is a small reading alcove with a full lake view, an inviting game



Through balmy summers and snowed-in holidays, the lodge fills up with friends and family all seeking the refreshing Torch Lake air and its calming waters.

ABOVE: It's hard for any home to compete with Torch Lake's renowned blue glimmer.
BELOW: The outdoor kitchen, where guests come and go as they please, is in constant use all summer long.



nook, a kids' getaway tower, beds tucked into passageways and small bedrooms throughout. Even the master bedroom is modest, with the character of a cottage sleeping porch.

A mix of humble, local materials keeps the look casual. There's a lot of wood—pine walls, white-oak paneling, fir doors and windows, reclaimed pine flooring. And of course, indigenous stone is a significant part of the rustic aesthetic both inside and out.

The homeowners love antiquing and have filled the rooms with notable furniture and accessories. They love cabin kitsch, but their collection is restrained. A pair of card-playing squirrels lay bets in the game nook, and a racy saloon-girl props open a door between her cast-iron legs. The amusing touches keep a small collection of Arts & Crafts pottery from looking too formal on the stairside shelving.

Through balmy summers and snowed-in holidays, the lodge fills up with friends and family all seeking the refreshing Torch Lake air and its calming waters. Babies turn in to teenagers, boyfriends come and go, and the lodge changes, too, acquiring a natural patina that can only come from time and a constant flow of happy memories. 🏡

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FIND RESOURCES FOR THIS HOME ON PAGE 35 & 37.

FROM TOP: The most dramatic use of stone on the interior is in the imposing great room fireplace. A slat treatment on walls and railings hints at midcentury chalet style. Custom shelving lines an open hall on the second floor; it conceals a secret door leading to a kids' play space.