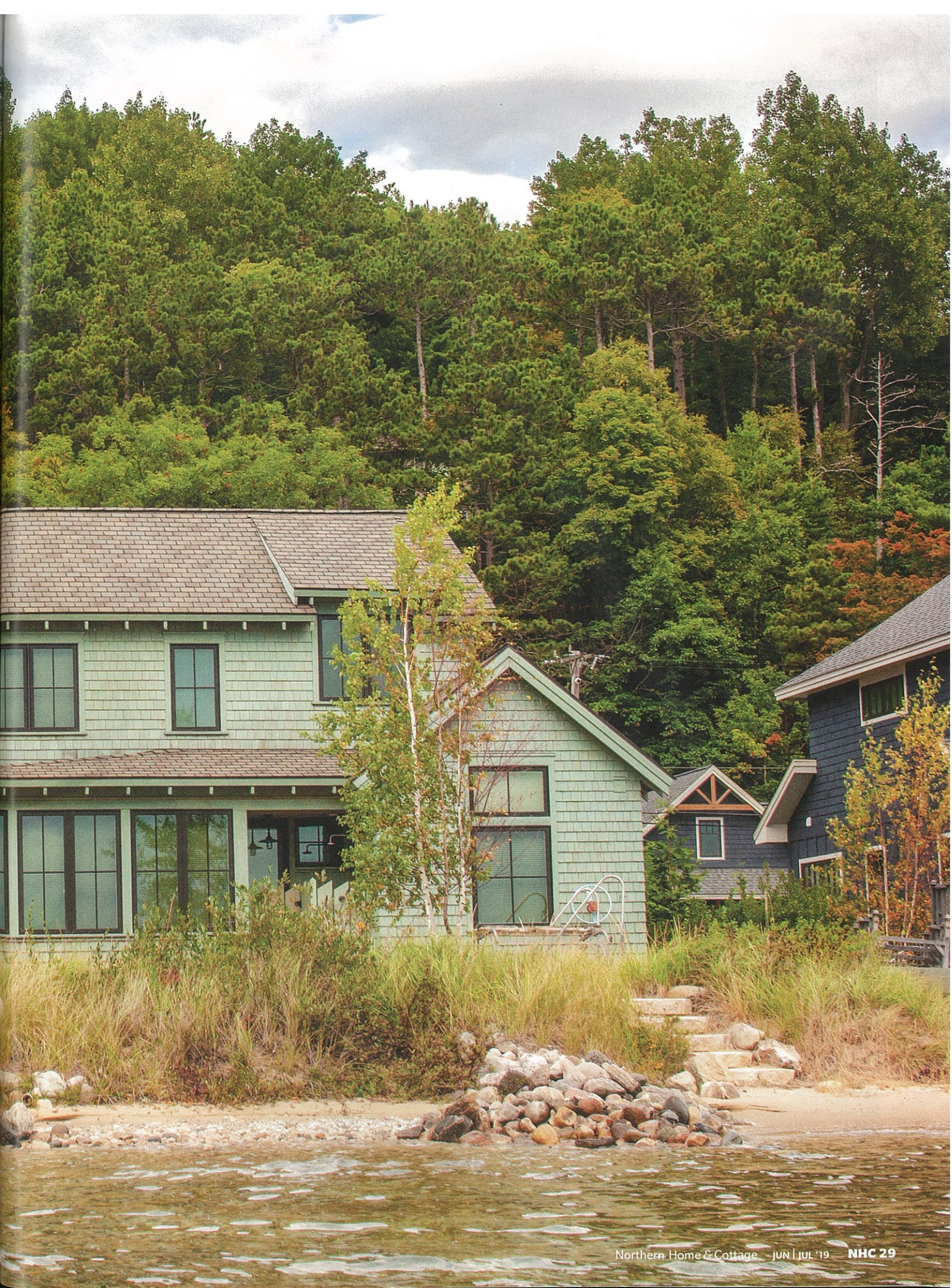


Home Sweet Crystal Lake

WHEN THE FAMILY GETS TOO BIG FOR A TREASURED COTTAGE,
THEY DECIDE TO FIND A DIFFERENT SPOT ON THE LAKE.
BUT COULD A NEW BUILD EVER BE AS BELOVED?

TEXT BY ELIZABETH EDWARDS // PHOTOS BY DAVID SPECKMAN





As a very young child, Mark's parents loaded him and his three older siblings into a station wagon to travel from their home in Saginaw to "try out" Northern Michigan lakes. The idea was to find one that the family would go back to summer after summer. It only took one visit to Crystal Lake for the family to form a lifelong commitment to this aquamarine gem of Benzie County.

His parents purchased their pretty ranch on the beach in the mid '60s. They never missed a summer with their kids, a tradition that those kids continued with their kids. To say they are a close-knit family is an understatement. The entire extended clan eats all of their meals together when they are at the lake.

But with his parents now great-grandparents, well, the family cottage was getting a bit crowded ... >







That's about when Mark discovered a lot on Crystal Lake about a half mile from his parents. Empty lots on Crystal Lake's north shore are few and far between. Even so, breaking up the tight clan was a big decision. But in the end, Mark and his wife, Anne, knew it was time. And that if they were going to build their own Crystal Lake legacy, it had to be just the right house. But what should it look like? They really couldn't imagine.

One look at the thoughtful, Shingle-style home that now graces that lot is to know that this is the right house, down to the shake siding that is stained a pale, almost indescribable shade of sage-aqua-gray—helping the home to blend into the Crystal Lake shoreline. The homeowners credit Midlake Builders with a flawless construction process and long conversations with their architect, Ken Richmond, for capturing the essence of their fondest summer memories in the design. "We sat down and just had an interesting conversation," recalls Anne, who was raised in the East. "... what makes me comfortable, my history. He wanted to hear everything." Anne told of summers in Rhode Island and of cabin vacations in the Adirondack Mountains. For a local reflection of that vernacular Richmond only needed to look a couple miles up the road to Chimney Corners Resort, where the main lodge is a historic shake-sided building famous for its four stone chimneys. ➤



In response to Anne's request that the bedroom wing be designed to keep sounds from the adjacent living area muted, Richmond placed a wonderful, hand-hewn chimney between the two wings. The chimney, fabricated from rocks culled from Michigan farm fields, is an outgrowth of the great room's wall-sized fireplace facade—one so grand that it actually wraps around the wall, into the foyer, and clads one side of the open stairwell.

Yes, people sleep peacefully in the quiet bedroom wing.

And they live happily in the great room whose soft palette reflects the shades of sand and water on the Crystal Lake shoreline just outside the door. Like the stone fireplace and chimney, a generous use of flagstone in the foyer, white oak floor in the great room, wooden ceiling beams, and a rough-sawn bar counter between the kitchen and the dining room, reflect Richmond's affection for natural materials.

In scale, this home slips into its narrow, shoreside site perfectly. In its relaxed flow and intimate understanding of what type of home builds generations of bonds between people and place, it is genius. 🏡

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