

Free Spirit

INSPIRED BY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES, TWO SISTERS
WORK TOGETHER TO PUT A FRESH SPIN ON
A TRADITIONAL ADIRONDACK LAKE COTTAGE.

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OPPOSITE Cool blues and nautical themes imbue Jane and Bill Wasserbach's living area with Adirondack authenticity. The coffee table legs are made from anchors. Old beams frame the doorway, and ebony window trim frames the outdoor views. **THIS PHOTO** A birch-bark vase and wooden tray with a tree motif bring outdoor beauty inside.





JANE WASSERBACH AND HER SISTER, JOANNE HANS, SPENT THEIR CHILDHOOD SUMMERS IN THE ADIRONDACKS.

Summering with their family in old camp cottages, they swam, explored, and wandered down to the marina for penny candy and sodas. At night, they curled up in wrought-iron beds in rooms with shiplap walls and crooked floors, lulled to sleep by the sound of water lapping against the shore. “That was the vibe we wanted for this home,” says Joanne, an interior designer who worked with her sister and brother-in-law, Bill, to build an Adirondack Craftsman house filled with the same carefree spirit of their youth.

The architect drew up plans that angled the house away from the bustle of boaters in the nearby village and fully toward Lake George, with its view of sunsets and Thursday-night fireworks. The New York getaway is also designed for entertaining; the house sleeps 13, making use of every nook and cranny to include a sleeping-porch daybed and trundle. True to the old cottages along the lake, the walls are shiplap painted white, with reclaimed barn beams and Columbia pelican oak hardwood floors stained the color of driftwood.

The only exception is on the lower level, where a pub serves as the closest entrance from the lake. There, brown walls set a cozy mood for the bar, TVs, and shuffleboard. Underfoot, an equally warm and textural cork floor is tolerant of wet towels and bathing suits.

“Jane and Bill don’t want anyone to feel like they can’t be comfortable in the house,” Joanne says. “It was all about choosing materials that would withstand a lot of use.”

Comfort and easy care were key in other choices as well. Sofas are covered with slipcovers that can be removed and thrown in the laundry. And the height of the windows in the living room was adjusted to leave more room above the window seat, where a row of pillows and a long cushion made from indoor-outdoor fabric form a perfect perch to recline. A peaceful, easy feeling extends to the home’s blue-and-white palette and fun, nautical-style hardware and lighting—all befitting a home where everything is oriented toward the water.

But one theme is woven into the cottage’s spirit: a connection to the past. As Jane says: “It was all about how to make it look like it’s always been here.”

OPPOSITE A table from an office was cut down to size and refinished to the color of the home’s natural beams. Built-in storage with a marble surface holds dinnerware and doubles as serving space. **ABOVE LEFT** Cedar trim and gray-blue siding that reflects the lake’s color knits the cottage to its surroundings. **ABOVE CENTER** Joanne Hans and Buster Brown enjoy the lake view from the sleeping porch. **ABOVE RIGHT** A square beam acts as a rustic mantel over the native-stone fireplace, displaying a rice paddy stool and harpoon.

BELOW Gleaming subway tiles and a soapstone kitchen countertop provide dramatic contrast and add to the home's established character. Designer and sister Joanne chose open shelving rather than cabinets next to the windows for airiness. **OPPOSITE** Two small islands maximize space in the narrow kitchen. One provides plenty of storage, and the other can be rolled out for seating all the way around. Globe lights make a nautical statement without blocking the view across the room. The range hood is edged in an old beam.







STYLE SECRET

“Details like milk-glass doorknobs and nautical hardware make a house look like it’s been around for a long time.”

—JANE WASSERBACH, HOMEOWNER

OPPOSITE A closet-size niche stashes additional beds. Similar to a ship's bunk, the alcove includes a trundle bed with pulls, known as folding eye pads, typically used on boats and yachts. **RIGHT** In the pub, a bench and butcher block create a cozy corner for watching shuffleboard or TV. The lamp was made from an old railroad light. **BELOW LEFT** Classic basket-weave tile, a vintage-style sink, and an old mirror look as if they came from another era. Pendant lights add a splash of color. **BELOW RIGHT** In the master bedroom, linens echo the home's blue-and-white palette. A chandelier sparkles over a concrete garden table.

