



A Perfect Partnership

Two brothers and a team of local designers and builders create an idyllic family retreat on Lake Michigan.

BY NICOLE BELL | PHOTOS BY RYAN HAINEY PHOTOGRAPHY

For two brothers, sharing a lake home was a long-term goal they could finally realize after finding the perfect property north of Milwaukee. The home needed a little TLC to become the relaxing retreat they dreamed of, so they tapped the teams at Deep River Partners and Timber Innovations for the transformation.

The architects and builders renovated the space for more room and an interior makeover without losing the footprint. Now, each brother has his own family's wing, complete with an en suite.

Timber Innovations president and owner Paul Driessen notes that to create equal-sized wings, the team added dormers for extra space. The wings meet in the kitchen, which was revitalized with custom cabinetry and whitewashing the dark wood paneling.

"It was a really good connection from the old to the new," notes Deep River Partners

architect Nicholas Mather, AIA. "A lot of the finishes were the same but freshened up, like the kitchen ceiling beams and tongue-and-groove knotty pine ceiling."

"What's really neat about this house," adds Driessen, "is you have a master suite on each end, but you come to the middle court and it's literally the core of the house. The kitchen just became so inviting. We opened up the east wall to the lake — you can open up those bi-folding doors and just hear the sound of the waves throughout the house."

A lush, green woodland area to one side of the home and picturesque views of Lake Michigan on the other inspired a design that called to both vistas.

One homeowner adds that though there was double the input from both the brothers and their wives, they leaned on the Deep River interior design team to help with details. He even recalls an instance in a planning meeting when a member of the team presented a fistful of sand from the beach as a color match for the proposed flooring.

Above: A multi-level deck offers unobstructed views of beautiful Lake Michigan. Opposite: The design and construction team replicated the home's original timber trusses throughout the home for one cozy, cohesive design.





“From the wood slats, the doors, the curved handles, the cutouts for the plumbing — [they’re] utilizing every existing space.”

“Every detail — paint, trim, cabinet colors, stain, all of it — blended together so well with the materials,” the homeowner explains. “They provided suggestions . . . and most of the time whatever they suggested we went with, because it was the right choice.”

The co-owner adds, “From the wood slats, the doors, the curved handles, the cutouts for the plumbing — [they’re] utilizing every existing space. The little lockers that everybody has in their room. Luggage storage areas. They thought of everything, and then utilized all

this space and made it beautiful. It’s seamless compared to what we’re used to, and we’re very happy with the end result.”

One original feature that was left in its original spot is a near-century-old mantle. “Keeping that old part of the house really makes it feel like you take a step back in time,” the homeowner says.

All parties agree that the intensely collaborative process and a smooth meshing of ideas and execution propelled the project was one for the books. Driessen highlights the relationships he’s formed.

“In recent years we changed our tagline to ‘Vision, Craftsmanship, Award-Winning Partners,’” Driessen explains. “It’s such a passion for me, and I love being a carpenter. It’s not only the work we do, but the connections we make and how we’re able to bring everyone together for a collaborative effort. With this [project], it’s about how we built that partnership with Deep River and the client. We all have true respect [for] our crafts and build on our strengths to make a team.”

“The combination of Deep River and Timber Innovations made [the home] come to life,” one homeowner adds. “All the little facets and fine details of the house, the quality to the millwork, even the edging around the uneven rocks of the fireplace . . . great care was taken to make sure it was right. They made it feel like they were designing and building their own home. We appreciated that sort of family effort.” MKE



Opposite page: Both wings of the home (one for each family) lead to the hub of the home — the remodeled kitchen, which has been updated with crisp white paint and a custom island for a bright, welcoming area.

This page top: The shingle siding on this home creates a rustic and inviting entrance. Left: Despite its galley-style layout, this master bathroom offers plenty of serene space. Above: Removing crown molding and adding a white trim offered a clean, uninterrupted look to the picture windows in this master bedroom.