

CRAFTED LODGING

GREAT LAKES **BY** DESIGN



East Bay coastal

Crafted by Eastmark Construction of Boyne City and Edgewater Design Group LLC of Petoskey, Michigan, this Shingle Style, Nantucket-inspired residence is set on the shores of East Arm Grand Traverse Bay.

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Text: R.J. Weick



The custom home is often a reflection and a curation of personal expression. It can speak a design language distinctive of its owners and the collaborative design and build team that helped bring that vision to reality. There is a vernacular expressed in the architectural form, a dialect in inspired details, and an unspoken statement in the ambiance of interior space and emotive materiality. And in this Shingle Style, Nantucket-inspired residence set on a deep, narrow lot on the shores of East Arm Grand Traverse Bay, the narrative is one defined by a close collaboration between its owners and design-build team to create a meaningful home that exudes a classic, yet casual sophistication and a permanence within its landscape.

“They had a vision centered around their forever home. They knew they wanted to be close to Traverse City, they knew they wanted to build a high-end, quality home that was going to fit their needs going forward,” said Eric Darooge, founder, president, and senior project manager at Eastmark Construction in Boyne City, Michigan.

“This project was different than a lot of our builds in that these [clients] plan to live there year-round. This was going to be their permanent residence. A lot of the homes we build are vacation homes or second homes meant for seasonal use, so it made the process a little more intense for the owners. There was some emotion attached to all the decisions and I think the

success of the interior was born out of that intense collaboration between builder and owner. They visited the jobsite frequently and provided a lot of input,” Darooge added.

Founded in 2007, Eastmark Construction is a collaboration of skilled craftspeople and building professionals with a belief that the homes they build are not only a reflection of their clients’ hard work, personality, and creativity, but also a timeless tribute that is intended to last for generations. Established by Darooge 15 years ago, the company envisioned a build process in which customer service, communication, and collaborative hands-on presence was fundamental to providing a successful and meaningful experience for their clients.



“One of the things we pride ourselves on is having 100 percent success at creating a pleasing process and fabulous outcome for our clients and I think this [project] fit that mold,” Darooge said. “The owners were very hands-on with the project. We got to know them well. Within Eastmark, we talk about the Eastmark family and when we settle into a project and we put our machine to work for people, it is often an emotional process for the owners, but it is also emotional for us. It was fun to be able to have so much interaction with the owners throughout the course of the build.”

When the clients of this waterfront residence were in the process of purchasing the property set on the shores of East Arm Grand Traverse Bay, they turned to Eastmark Construction to help realize their vision early on in the process. Darooge noted the owners initially contacted them upon a number of referrals from subcontractors the company had worked with in the past and touring a number of past projects, and they collectively thought it was a good fit.

“It was gratifying that my subcontractor teammates would hold us in that high regard. I think for them it boiled down to, more than anything, they liked what they saw in terms of the craftsmanship in the homes we have built in



the past,” Darooge said. “For a project that people are building as a forever, family-gathering home, they want the experience to be a good one as well as the outcome and I think that is the result that they were looking for.”



The site, set in somewhat of a sensitive area as Darooge noted, required a deft navigation of constraints inherent to the lakefront—flood plain restrictions, zoning regulations, and soil conservation, among others—as well as those associated within the city limits since the property was still considered within Traverse City. Though working with the regulatory agencies to address any site concerns was challenging and a lengthy process in this particular case from drainage and groundwater to ensuring a dry environment for its crawl space, Darooge said it was worth it in the end to have all the necessary approvals to build the house as it now is positioned on the landscape.

“They wanted to be on Lake Michigan and they wanted to be reasonably close to Traverse City. They had been long-time residents and wanted to maintain that connection and be close to the amenities of town. It has what I think is one of the finest beaches of any property I have seen—it is almost better than some of





the municipal beaches—I think that was a big selling point,” Darooge said. “It was a narrow lot like a lot of lake lots, but it was deep so it would give some buffer off the road and give them some more room for landscaping.”

During the initial planning phase, the team also looked to tap the creative experience of Edgewater Design Group LLC of Petoskey, Michigan to bring the custom home build to life. Edgewater Design Group is a woman-owned firm that partners with its clients providing step-by-step design development to deliver quality custom homes informed by a customer-centric process and commitment to tailoring a one-of-a-kind home backed by a passion for design. Founded in 2011 by Stephanie Baldwin,

president, owner, and designer, Edgewater Design Group has since grown into a five-person team with a portfolio of new custom residential, commercial, and renovation work.

“We were referred to the project by Eastmark Construction and [the clients] had toured several of [Darooge’s] homes and really loved the flow and his quality of craftsmanship and so they were looking for a new, full-time residence and it was really important to them that it was going to be generational. They wanted it to be able to fit family and grandkids, in the future at that time,” Baldwin said.

“They had a beautiful lot on East Bay, they wanted to take advantage of the views, take advantage of outdoor living, bringing as much

natural light into the home as possible, and more stylistically, they were interested in a very timeless, classic cottage,” Baldwin added.

Designed for entertaining with its inviting, spacious interior and exterior spaces, the home is positioned on its landscape in a L-shape layout to address a desire for yardage and privacy, while also as a solution for tight lot lines and flood plain restrictions. Natural materials such as stone veneer and cedar shake impart a sense of permanence and classic timelessness in its landscape—characteristic of the Shingle Style—and ornamental molding, rafter tails, corbels, brackets, and the arched line of the entry gesture to the artistry of craftsmanship. Baldwin said it was important to the clients to have some of those features that really give a classic ambiance, from the natural cedar roof, cedar shake siding stained linen white, and white-clad windows, to the natural stone veneer at its base, on the patios, and at the fireplaces.

“I love a lot of things about this house. I think it is gorgeous. I think it is because they were very true to the materials being used. So many today, for maintenance purposes, don’t want to use wood products, but there is something about it that really makes it a classic,” Baldwin said. “The coloring on the exterior too—it is not two tones—we’ve got a very light, natural color palette, which just gives it that timeless quality. It really is quite breathtaking.”

Darooge also noted it is in the details, its textural exterior elements—such as its painted white cedar shingles and medium, hand split shake shingle roof—and intentional landscaping that make the home distinctive from first glance, and if one was to take away things like the wood elements, cornice details, rafter tails, and some of the corbels, it would be a fairly straightforward house.

“But all those elements give it that ‘pop’ that when people drive by they slow down to check it out. The other thing that is nice about it particularly from the lakeside elevation is it has great symmetry. There is a sitting room off the master bedroom and on the other side there is a sitting area that is off the kitchen that has the grill and it just adds a lot of balance,” Darooge said.

“The way the landscaping has been arranged around the house, the strategic use of some retaining walls and planting areas and pathways—the grand blue stone patio on the lakeside—these are some of the things just on the exterior of the home that made this house special. Our carpenters enjoyed working on this house because it had a lot of that detail. It was more fine-finished, attention-to-detail, some of the things you think more of from a carpentry perspective you do on the inside of the house, we were doing outside of the house,” Darooge added.

That attention to detail carried throughout the interior of the home as well from how the kitchen laid out, and doors and transition







spaces, to the crafted handrails, custom window trims, lighting fixtures, and interior selections of heirloom wood and tile—driven in large part by the clients’ focused vision for organization, flexibility, and functional living on the waterfront. Baldwin said the clients really led the charge as far as layout went and had put a lot of time in organizing their thoughts about how one space flowed into the other, needs for their guests and for potential future expansion, and were very attuned with what they needed for cabinetry since a family member owns a cabinetry company.

“Open living plans are really what everyone wants when their focus is on the lake and the palette on the interior of this one is kept very light and natural so that furniture and accessories do the talking. It is very clean and not about clutter. They kept it very neutral and let artwork speak as opposed to walls, while still having texture on the ceilings and the beams in the living room. They knew exactly what they wanted,” Baldwin said. “[The clients] had phenomenal taste and that does make our job a little easier when they are accepting of this idea and I will say my teammate, Kevin Burns, did much of the

design. He did a phenomenal job.”

There is a presence and intentionality to the home as it courts onlookers from drive to shore, where natural materiality and neutral, textural palette evoke that classic ambiance where time erodes. Its geometric massing and dynamic roof forms engage, leading the eye to the more intricate details of the exterior and movement down pathways to the lakeside of the home where it opens outward to the waterfront.

“Design is creating that shelter for your soul. It is different to everybody as far as what that means and where you find your happy





place. To some people, it is modern and a combination of steel, concrete, and wood; to others, it is a traditional cottage with texture and different color palettes,” Baldwin said. “For me, a good design is if we can provide peace for your soul when you walk in the front door, then we have done our job and it really does come in all shapes and sizes.”

Baldwin also noted the firm has the pleasure of working with some pretty exceptional clients, which not only allows their creativity to really flow, but also demands a responsibility of ensuring the residential or commercial structure is designed to last, and at the end of the day, it is a team effort.

“I will say the craftsmanship of the rough carpenter who puts the structure together and the finish carpenter who then puts all the trim details together really showcase our work. We are only as good as the craftsmen following the plan,” Baldwin said. “It is a team effort, because it’s ours to draw and envision on the computer, theirs to build, interior to finish, and landscape to provide the creativity on entry as well as what is enjoyed view side or lakeside.”

The collaborative team behind the East Arm Grand Traverse Bay residence not only comprised Eastmark Construction and Edge-



water Design Group, but also Robinson’s Landscaping & Nursery Inc. of Boyne City, Phillip Elenbaas Millwork Inc. of Grand Rapids, Old Mission Windows of Traverse City, Das Holz Haus in Tuscola, Illinois, and the clients, who not only provided the inspiration, but also the interior design.

“It was a fun collaboration all the way

around. I know it is hard for people to go through the building process, since it is not always self-evident what our team of craftsmen put into their work each day,” Darooge said. “To have this kind of close connection with our clients, to have them see our team in action during the process of the build, was very gratifying and resulted in a spectacular home.”