

# The northern lakefront context in contemporary

Photography: Jacqueline Southby Photography



**C**rooked Lake, named for its long, convoluted shape and like many of the inland and Great Lakes in the region, is defined by its glacial-cut topography, moraines, and striking timbers. Carved into the land east of Little Traverse Bay near Harbor Springs and Petoskey, Crooked Lake is made distinctive by its lateral and recessionary moraines as rock and soil were deposited from the once-retreating glaciers long ago; evident in its many shallow bay areas and pitched elevations along its shoreline.

It is in this setting this single-story home with a full walk-out lower-level is set into the landscape, overlooking dramatic elevation changes and Crooked Lake's fresh wa-

ters. Inspired by its lakefront context, this Crooked Lake Retreat evokes a simple albeit timeless style where its environment takes center stage and a warm, cottage interior, complete with contemporary undertones, reflect its homeowners' vision for an inviting, lakefront destination.

"They wanted a northern Michigan cottage and they wanted a little bit more of a contemporary flavor to it—keep it clean, keep it simple—as well as a little nautical flavor with it being on the lake. They wanted the ability when you walk through the front door, the first thing you see is the view," said Stephanie Baldwin, president, owner, and designer at Edgewater Design Group LLC

in Petoskey, Michigan. "Capturing that elevated lake view was very important to them and we pretty much could achieve that from every room in the house."

## The designer

Edgewater Design Group is a design firm based in Petoskey, Michigan with a team of architect, designers, and structural engineers who partner with clients to build their vision through a comprehensive process. Its philosophy, which is rooted in a passion for great design, envisions the finest quality at the best value as well as striving to deliver an exceptional experience for clients. From

















conceptual design and space planning, and structural engineering and construction administration, to documentation and drafting; Edgewater Design Group provides a range of services for any-sized project, anywhere, and at any budget.

Launched in 2011, Edgewater Design Group is the creative brainchild of Stephanie Baldwin and made possible through a strong working relationship among teammates who had been working together at Town & Country Cedar Homes. Baldwin,

who had also served as vice president and president for the company throughout her 17-year-tenure at Town & Country Cedar Homes, said it was time to start something new and return to doing something she loved: design.

"All the stars aligned that it was time for a change and I had decided what was going to make me happy was starting my own firm. They were making some changes in their business, looking to downsize, and concentrate more on a mill-manufactur-

ing company, which allowed me to take the team that had been assembled over 17 years with me," Baldwin said.

"It was all very amicable and through the last nine-and-a-half years we've been at Edgewater Design Group, some have come and gone, but I have a really great group of people right now providing an incredible amount of creativity for our clients," Baldwin added.

The move also provided the opportunity to work with different clients and explore



a variety of architectural styles as well as exterior and interior finishes, according to Baldwin. Throughout the years, the firm has developed a diverse portfolio of projects in residential remodel and new construction, commercial remodel and new construction, and interiors in styles ranging from cottage and craftsman to contemporary and light industrial.

“What I love about our company is it is not one-size-fits all. I value the fact that we provide a pretty amazing service for a great value for our clients. I believe good architec-

ture should be available to as many people as possible,” Baldwin said. “We are blessed with some pretty amazing clients that allows us some creative license to expand their horizons, as well as our own, and when they have exceptional taste that allows us to flourish.”

#### **The process**

When it comes to the process, Baldwin noted each site, client, budget, programmatic need, and like or dislike is different and the team’s first and foremost focus is learn-

ing and listening to the client, and becoming familiar with the property before moving into creative design.

“What is the site? What are our parameters? What are our constraints? What are the views? This project on Crooked Lake, the lot is very steep and we were limited on our building envelope,” Baldwin said. “Some lots are huge and we have lots of flexibility, but most of our lake lots have a finite building envelope that we are working with and lot coverage and height restrictions.”

With its tight lot lines and steep eleva-



tion, the Crooked Lake Retreat site offered a unique set of design opportunities and challenges. While the narrow lot meant a two-stall garage would have to be “front-loading” and limited how wide of a footprint the house could be, it also provided an advantage since the property drops dramatically toward the narrow road and waterfront below. Baldwin noted the site elevation meant the team could create a full walk-out and lower-level infused with natural light that had a strong relationship with the rest of the home—as well as capture a stunning panoramic view on the main level.

“The most exciting thing about the site to [the clients] was the fact that they had this huge panorama. A lot of lake lots are not elevated, so you are seeing through your lot and your boat dock to the lake. It is a very narrow view,” Baldwin said. “This one offers a 180-degree-view of not only the lake, but also the sunrise, sunset, and the changing seasons. You have this beautiful color palette you are going to be able to take advantage of: it really is a stunning piece of property.”

Upon approach, the garage and finished bonus room above greets onlookers at the drive before drawing them around the side with a path to the front door. The relationship to and with its surroundings becomes apparent even before entering the home as a view toward Crooked Lake draws guests through vaulted space in the home onto the covered balcony beyond. Its program also reflects an open concept on the main floor as kitchen, dining, and living space flow together in casual, seamless fashion. The grand fireplace with stone surround is mirrored on the lower-level; and sophisticated nods to its northern lakefront context can be found in the constellation wall-covering on a bedroom ceiling, the maritime wallpaper in the laundry room, nautical-inspired artwork, antler-print pillows, and mix of metals and fabrics. The retreat also features two master suites, two additional bedrooms, bathrooms, and a covered porch at the lower elevation, where a lakeside stairwell appears as if carved into the land itself.

“I love the fact that the house has an extraordinary amount of space, but it doesn’t look ostentatious. We’ve packed a lot into this footprint; it is very efficient in its use of space and I really love the look and feel. It is completely maintenance-free on the exterior, because we used vinyl shakes, composite trims, stone veneer, composite decking, and cable railing,” Baldwin said.

“This project certainly is a great showcase to the collaboration among client, design team, builder, interior design team, and landscape. It really takes a village to create a pretty fabulous home and when everybody is working together in a very collaborative





















way, this is what you get to create: fantastic architecture,” Baldwin added.

### The collaboration

For the Crooked Lake Retreat, Edgewater Design Group collaborated with Petoskey-based company Harbor View Custom Builders, a high-end custom home builder; for the construction of the project. Founded by Ben Fettig, Harbor View Custom Builders is the cultivation of a life-long passion for architecture and the well-built custom home. From a young age, Fettig discovered a love of building and spent time working alongside his grandfather, honing the art of fine craftsmanship.

Fettig went on to earn a degree in architectural design from Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Michigan and after establishing Benny’s Construction in 2011—and spending some time in the field focused on framing, roofing, and siding—felt compelled to launch Harbor View Custom Builders, where the custom build process can curate relationships that last a lifetime and delivers homes for multiple generations. From large, lakefront homes and carriage houses to historic renovations and remodels, the team at Harbor View Custom Builders strives to create projects that reflect their clients, an attention to detail, and a collaborative process throughout construction.

The team behind the Crooked Lake Retreat also comprised The Quiet Moose, a full-service interior design firm and furniture store; Kitchens By Design, a custom kitchen and bath studio; and Little Traverse Electric Inc., among others, to bring their clients’ vision to life.

For Jennifer Keiser, general manager and interior designer at The Quiet Moose, the process behind the Crooked Lake Retreat was a collaborative one with great teamwork from all parties involved, from designer and builder to electrician.

“We really worked hard as a team to provide a great experience for our client and it shows,” Keiser said. “Besides that, the clients were amazing. They were very kind, generous, communicative and had a good design eye.”

### Interior designer

As a full-service interior design firm, The Quiet Moose works closely with clients throughout the design process to help develop ideas, translate individual requirements, and aspirations into interior spaces tailored to their clients’ lifestyles. The Quiet Moose comprises a small team of interior designers who share a passion for good design and hold an appreciation for their customers at



heart. Led by Keiser, the team at The Quiet Moose works with clients from initial concept to completion, providing services like architectural space planning, material selection, custom cabinetry, kitchen and bath design, lighting and furnishings, and art and accessories.

“[We] create classic, fresh, and smart interiors, with livable and luxe details. I lead a team of creative minds who effortlessly mix subtle color and rich architectural features, weaving in the meaningful details of your life, all with stunning results,” Keiser said.

“We consider it a privilege to be entrusted with the design of our clients’ personal spaces and value the relationships made in the process. While our design philosophy is consistent throughout our work, no two projects will ever look the same. Each is a reflection of the unique architecture, setting, and individuality of our clients,” Keiser added.

When it came to the Crooked Lake Retreat, creating a vacation home that reflected a warm, inviting, and comfortable atmosphere drove the interior design of the home. Keiser noted the result is a charming lake house filled with exquisite features that blends cottage and contemporary style—and most importantly, is centered around family.

“Our clients love to cook and spend the majority of their time in the kitchen. We envisioned a space that was family-focused, but also luxurious enough to entertain and host friends,” Keiser said. “Led by the beautiful surrounding countryside, we chose a muted palette of gray and blue that feels both timeless and elegant. Every inch of this property feels warm, lived-in, and intimate—and will no doubt be a cherished vacation home for many years to come.”

Baldwin also noted the clients were amazing to work with and were understanding when it came to some of the constraints of the site and allowed the team to get creative in developing the layout and look and feel of the home.

“We are allowed to provide creative form to our clients’ functions. We get the ability to stretch our creative process to meet their needs in a very collaborative way that also fits a budget,” Baldwin said. “Design also provides the ability to provide great happiness to our clients. They are so extremely happy, huge advocates of our team, and that is really what it is all about.”













