

Bigger, Better



FEATURE
HOME



Space and Light Breathe New Light into Jewett Lake Home

written by Dawn Duncan | photos by Kip Johnson



"We looked for a while at other places," Steve said. "We just kept coming back to this lot, which we love, and realizing there are so many wonderful people around us. We have our house situated on the lake and on a dead end road, and we have privacy. We just weren't finding that where we looked elsewhere."

Once the decision to remain on Jewett Lake was made, it was Steve who selected Keith Sellner as their builder. Sellner is the owner and operator of Ten Mile Construction in Dalton, Minn., and has been in the business since 1983. His youngest son, Al, works with him, along with two employees. "I already knew Keith," Steve said, "plus I trusted him. He's easygoing and I knew he'd be the right guy for the job and he definitely was." Ann agreed, commenting, "We were so lucky to have Keith, Al, and their crew work on our home. We couldn't be happier with the work they did for us."

Like many homes of its time, the 1982 rambler owned by Steve and Ann, was designed with compartmentalized spaces that were small and blocked in access to other areas. The couple, retired since 2017, spends six months of the year at their home on Jewett Lake, while the colder Minnesota months are spent in Florida at a home they purchased five years ago. They began to think about relocating to another home or possibly renovating the one they have and, after an extensive search of other properties, made the choice to overhaul the existing house in order to update it and make it one to enjoy long-term.

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Steve and Ann chose Kelli Wegscheid, architect of Harmonious Architecture, to design what would be a large undertaking, given that they wanted to achieve multiple major goals in their design/build project. "I couldn't deal with the small galley kitchen anymore!" Ann joked. "I love to cook and it was very important to me that we create a kitchen that is easy to cook in, with a lot of space and convenience."

Wegscheid, whose business is located in Perham, Minn., specializes in lake home architecture and has worked on numerous

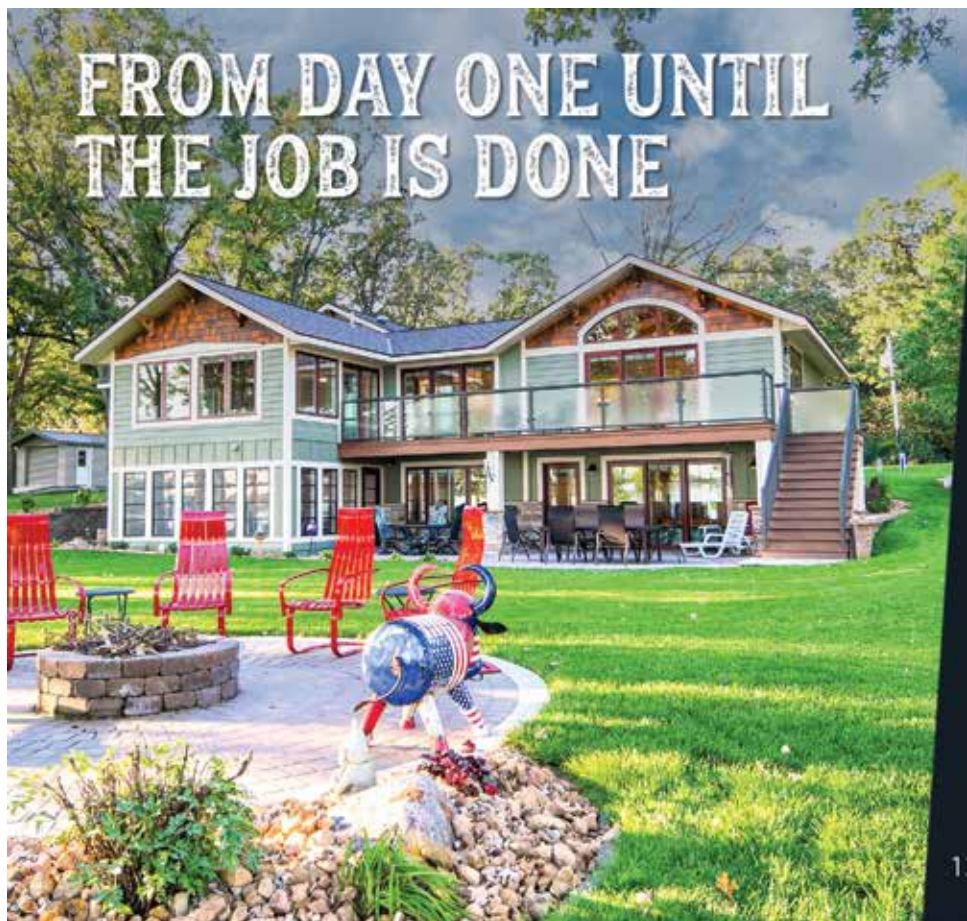
properties, lake and otherwise, throughout the region. "Steve and Ann had a big project in mind," she said. "They wanted more space, including an addition. Taller ceilings and a bigger, better kitchen were also on their list." Wegscheid went to work creating a design that included a 20-by-28-foot main addition to the home and a sunroom addition.

The main addition allows for a new design, including a great room with vaulted ceiling, a guest en suite, and a lower level exercise room with a swimming pool. "The new



design is sun-filled and really beautiful," Wegscheid commented. "What was a typical 1980s home is now contemporary, but with warmth and including all of the things important to the homeowners for this stage of their lives as well as for future years."

This was Wegscheid's first time working with Steve and Ann and she remarked, "They were so fun to work with and very knowledgeable. They made the process much easier in that they had a clear idea of what they wanted."



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Although the couple had not listed all of the ideas that were implemented in the home's redesign, they are pleased with the outcome. The master bedroom did not get any larger, but the guest room that was originally next to it was redone to be the five-piece master bath, complete with curbless shower. Walls were removed, redone in new spots, and another area of the main floor was designed as the new guest suite. "Steve and Ann wanted the guest area accessible on the main level, so we made that happen. By dismantling and redesigning the existing construction of the guest room, we allowed for a great bathroom to be installed and still accommodate the need for guest quarters."

Also included in the plan was a large, walk-in master closet. This was another result of taking the original guest room space. By freeing up substantial square footage, the homeowners now have more closet space and a bathroom that is the perfect complement to their bedroom area.

Ann is exceptionally impressed with the new kitchen, which is complete with a full wet bar and hutch area, an extended, usable work space, and a color palette she enjoys. Wegscheid added, "Ann chose a very calming interior. It's warm, with soft greens, earth tones, and soothing colors set against a neutral white/ivory backdrop. The colors are just the right amount of accent."

Jed from Builders FirstSource in Fergus Falls created an island for the kitchen that includes seating and that provides additional work area. Rod Saurer, Steve and Ann's neighbor, also works for Builders FirstSource and he worked to provide all building materials and cabinetry for their project.

Wegscheid particularly appreciates the warm, creamy tan palette of the backsplash in the kitchen, in addition to the installation of uniform Coretec wood flooring that was done by another of Steve and Ann's neighbors, Tyler Severtson of Pro Flooring & Tile of Fergus Falls, throughout the main level.



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"This is a gorgeous way to pull the whole house together," she commented. "Previously, the house had little, choppy rooms; it didn't look cohesive. Now it does."

To get the high ceilings the homeowners desired, adding on to the house proved to be the perfect solution. "We wanted to get height in there, away from the standard 8-foot ceilings that the house had," Wegscheid noted. "Adding on was the way to go."

Besides the addition, a sunroom was added and this is a year-round space, whereas the home previously just had an outdoor deck. A large fireplace was added with the surround by Cambria and the insert from Hebron Brick of Fergus Falls. This was constructed as a focal point and serves as an extra heat source in addition to providing texture and beauty for the space.

The existing house also lacked a defined entryway. Now, there is a main entry the homeowners commented serves their needs better and that offers the convenience of space to move. The exterior of the home features an appealing covered main entry and the transition to the interior foyer has a 9-foot tray ceiling.





Other ideas that Wegscheid incorporated to improve the home's functionality included moving the existing interior stairway in order to install a pocket door. "We can close the door and lock it so our dog isn't going up and down the stairs," Steve said. "For 20 years, we've had a gate there. This is so much better and looks good, too." What used to be the laundry room has been redesigned into a pantry that Steve and Ann love. The new laundry area and pantry have countertops that are the same as the kitchen's in order to showcase consistency. The laundry has access to the backyard, and a custom dog-washing bath, making it convenient as a mudroom area.

Large windows by Pella are another impressive change to the home. Ann remarked, "I didn't like the small windows our previous design had. I wanted to see the lake and the new windows allow for this. I just love them!" The goal of having big windows that all face the lake was achieved. LED lighting, Steve added, has also brightened up the living space considerably and Ann commented that Lois Atchison, their painter, chose the perfect colors for the home's interior.

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The cabinets, coated in epoxy, are heavy and positioned snugly on the garage walls. They are by Ulti-MATE and purchased from Imperial Flooring out of Fargo.

Ann has always been an avid perennial gardener and the redesigned home's landscaping was important to her in that she wanted to have less maintenance moving forward. "I am done spending so much time out in the yard working," she said. "I wanted to reallocate space and not have so much to take care of." Landscaper and neighbor, Mark Jacobs of North Country Lawns of Fergus Falls, achieved this, including camouflaging the home's septic tank through the placement of boulders, plants, and shrubbery.

In the end, the home on Jewett Lake has a new lease on life. It is modernized, designed for years to come, and one that Steve and Ann are proud of. "This is our place that we intend to stay," Steve said. "Everything is just how we want it and that is a good feeling." **L&H**



As they are committed to staying healthy and fit, Steve and Ann wanted to include an exercise room with a swim spa in the lower level of the home. Wegscheid designed a room that includes a spa pool (purchased from Master Pool & Spa), the concrete slab is dropped 4 feet to accommodate the deep swim pool, but the top of the pool has a 2-foot area exposed above the decking to make entering and exiting the pool much easier and safer. The pool is deep enough that Ann can do water aerobics. In addition, the option for resistance training is offered with the swim spa including adjustable current to swim against for training purposes. The swimming pool area has large patio doors to view the lake at all times.

Another unique aspect of the home is the new garage. The existing garage was removed and the new design includes a powder room, a dog wash, the laundry area, a large walk-in closet and sink, bright lighting, and industrial cabinetry.





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