



Life on

LITTLE
PINE

Lake



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FEATURE
HOME





Building a home takes a lot of time, effort, and thought, not to mention having the right people on the project. It is even more true when you are completing such a large project from out of state. Steven and Julie Becker knew this would be the case when they decided it was time to build on Little Pine Lake, north of Perham, Minn.

The Becker family lives in Des Moines, Iowa, but have roots in the area and have spent a lot of time at the lake with their families.

"The property came into Julie's family about 30 years," Steve said. "Her parents maintained it and finished off a 600 square-foot building that served as our cabin for many years."

"We used that for several years before deciding that we wanted something larger and more permanent."





When it was time to begin the process of building their home on Little Pine Lake, they became attentive to what houses were being built around Otter Tail County.

"One day we stopped by one that was being built on the east side of Otter Tail Lake, and it turned out to be a house designed by Kelli Wegscheid of Harmonious Architecture, and built by Eric Haataja of Haataja Contracting."

They loved what they saw and decided to go ahead and contact the architect.

"Kelli did a nice job of weaving together the home from the different ideas that we had collected over the course of many years."

Giving the architect access to their vision boards on Houzz allowed them to share the ideas with her from a distance easily.

Julie said, "It worked out well! We did all of this living in Iowa."

"We had to find people up there that we could trust and rely on, to be excellent communicators with us, and that we felt comfortable carrying out our ideas while we weren't there."

It was clear to Steve and Julie after visiting the home on Otter Tail Lake that they needed to reach out to Eric Haataja of Haataja Contracting in the hopes of having him work on the project as well.

"You could just see the quality of the craftsmanship that went into the work they were doing, so when it came time to take Kelli's designs to the next level and visit with contractors, we wanted to make sure Eric was on that list."

The 2,300-square foot modern country farmhouse sits on a very rare flat lot on the east side of the lake.

White board and batten SP Smart Side covers the outside of the home and is paired with black frame windows from Andersen Windows & Doors. The roofing is a combination of asphalt shingles and steel, and the dark wood accents add warmth to the sleek look.



The floors are heated, and covered throughout most of the home in a beautiful dark COREtec luxury plank. The homeowners are pleased with the look and how easy it is to maintain. White-painted custom kitchen cupboards from Jerry Eischens Cabinetry in Park Rapids, Minn., hang on the walls.

The beautiful granite countertops on both the island and perimeter are from B&D Granite Tops in Detroit Lakes, Minn. The sink is made of black granite.

The mixture of colors between the taupe colored subway tile backsplash and the kitchen island in its Cyber Space Gray is subtle but striking. The homeowners worked with Carol Ebling from Karvonen's to purchase their stainless steel appliances.

Off the kitchen is a pantry, complete with a sliding barn door in an accent color to match the kitchen island, granite countertops, extra storage, and under-cabinet lighting. It is a great place to prep food, and the homeowners like having the microwave in this room rather than taking up extra wall space in the kitchen.



The Beckers wanted a contemporary profile for their windows - more glass and less frame. Lumber Depot assisted them in finding their perfect match from Andersen Windows: the 400 Series with black exterior and prefinished white wood interior. They opted to install SmartSun™ Glass, which provides thermal control similar to tinted glass while letting in more natural light. The specialized glass also cuts down on harmful UV rays that cause fading to flooring and furniture.

Opposite the kitchen is the great room, and it has a built-in gas fireplace. The high ceilings overhead include clerestory windows on two sides, allowing in extra natural light. The windows on the lakeside of the home are tinted, providing some UV protection, and the windows overhead also open electronically, allowing for some extra airflow if needed.

Even the screens are doing more work than a traditional screen. The TruScene® Insect Screens provide more clarity and fresh air, while keeping pesky insects out.

This space is warm and welcoming, perfect for hosting a small intimate party or a large family gathering, which is precisely what the homeowners envisioned during the design process.

"We wanted a big space," Steve said. "I come from a big family, and Julie's got a number of relatives that live in the area as well, and we're excited about those times when we will be able to host a summer event."



Wegsheid of Harmonious Architecture explained particular design details, such as creating separate-room feelings within the open-concept design.

“One of the unique features of the home is that even though it’s an open concept floor plan, each of the rooms have different ceilings defining each space. The kitchen ceiling is flat, the dining room ceiling is vaulted, and the great room ceiling is vaulted with clerestory windows.”

Kelli Wegsheid - Harmonious Architecture

A door off the great room leads to the master suite. As you walk through the door, to the right is the master closet, and to the left is the bedroom. All of the doorways in the home are handicapped width.

The master closet doubles as a storm shelter. Built with 4x4 posts anchored in the concrete, and 3/4 inch plywood on either side, the shelter space is a separate structure, and it is not connected to the rafters or the roof. The storm shelter is cleverly designed within the master suite closet and hidden from normal view.



One important design decision was placing the suite on the opposite side of the home from the other bedrooms, allowing for more privacy for both the homeowners and their guests.

And naturally, the Beckers made certain to have a fantastic view of sunsets on the lake from their master suite, something that never goes unappreciated.

A sliding barn door in the bedroom leads into the luxury master bath. A glass shower stands to your left with blue-tinted glass tile. Next to it is a bathtub surrounded by gray painted shiplap to match the sliding barn door.

The opposite side of the room features beautifully stained knotty alder custom cabinetry, a side-by-side sink, and white subway tile.

"We worked with a local tile shop here in Des Moines, Iowa, to find all the materials," Steve said.

Julie added, "We had to haul a lot of stuff in from the outside and ordered quite a few things to be delivered up there."

Steven continued,

"The contractor and subcontractors were all great about working with us on that."

Walking back out of the master suite and through the great room to the dining area, you find a hallway that leads to the garage on your left.

The garage is an oversized 700 square foot space allowing for extra storage and workspace. A utility door on the backside of the garage allows for easy access to the ATV and leisure equipment for use on the lake.

A drop-down stairway allows access to the storage space above the garage. The Becker's considered using the space for bedrooms or a recreational area but decided to keep all of the living space on one level, a decision they are happy they made.

Heading back into the home from the garage, you find a laundry room to your left behind a pocket door.

The laundry room is complete with custom built-in cabinetry, stainless steel appliances, and a utility sink. Continuing down the hallway from the garage, you'll pass a nook for shoes and jackets on the left and a half bathroom on the right.

Heading back into the main part of the home and through the kitchen, you will find a three-season porch to your right.

EZ-Screen porch windows and screens allow the homeowners to enjoy each spring, summer, and fall to the fullest. Stained pine wood covers the ceiling and two of the walls. The other two walls are covered in house siding, making it feel like it truly is an outside room.

There is a door on the lakeside of the porch that leads out to the lakeside patio. Julie said, "We thought a lot about how we wanted to live in the house. Kelli was good at helping us with that."

"She understands the flow of traffic. We debated for a while if we wanted to put in sliding glass doors [in the great room], but it was Kelli's recommendation to direct traffic with patio access to the dining room instead of the great room."

Steven - Homeowner





There is also a door right off the kitchen to the lakeside patio. The screen porch is off the guest wing, where you will find the two guest rooms and a full bathroom. Each of the bedrooms are oversized, allowing extra space for visitors to spread out.

When you enter the guest bathroom, you will find one sink on your left and the other on your right. There is also a separate space that includes the toilet and shower behind another door allowing for privacy.

The Beckers made use of the flat lot and built the house further back from the beach to have space for lawn games and social gatherings.

At the Window from Perham worked with the homeowners on the window treatments for the lake home.

The Beckers also worked with Chris Fudge of Signature Home Technologies on installing security and thermostats they could control remotely. Chris also installed the Wi-Fi controlled in-home audio system, which they thoroughly enjoy.

Both Steve and Julie are grateful for the businesses and individuals that helped them with this project. Designing and building from out of state was challenging, but finding the right experts made all the difference.

They spent their first summer at the lake last year, as well as Christmas with their daughters. The Becker family is sure to make many more memories in the coming years at their modern country farmhouse on the lake. ~L&H

