

HOMES

& GARDENING

STAR TRIBUNE/AIA HOME OF THE MONTH



A newly built cottage could easily be mistaken for one of the century-old summer homes on Lake Minnetonka's historic Crane Island.

TIMELESS TREASURE

By LYNN UNDERWOOD • lynn.underwood@startribune.com

In 1906, Charles Woodward gazed at Lake Minnetonka from his summer home on Crane Island. Woodward, along with a group of Presbyterian families, founded an island community to escape the heat and congestion of the city. Each spring, they ferried across the lake, bringing the supplies to last for their summer sojourn.

More than a century later, Leni and David Moore relish that same view from their summer home, which sits on the island's highest point.

Before building their 21st-century getaway, the Moores often vacationed on Crane Island at the summer homes of their Minneapolis neighbors. They even rented a cottage for a month to immerse themselves in the island's timeless qualities.

The densely wooded, 13-acre island is dotted with 15 cottages, many of which are pre-World War II dwellings passed down from generation to generation. There are no cars or grocery stores and limited TV reception, but the island boasts a close-knit community. Just as they did in the 1900s, residents take in docks and close the cottages on Nov. 1.

The Moores hoped to continue a family tradition of lake living, which started well before they were married in 2007. Leni, who lived in New York, vacationed at a family retreat in the Hamptons. David grew up spending summers at a lakeside house in Connecticut.

"I love how Crane Island is so quiet and idyllic," said Leni, "the opposite of the Hamptons."
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Photos by TIMOTHY NWACHUKWU • Star Tribune (top) and SUSAN GILMORE

Top Leni and David Moore with their dogs on the Lake Minnetonka side of their Crane Island cottage, which was designed to blend with the neighboring homes.

Above The living room's solid stone wood-burning fireplace is reminiscent of a fishing lodge. Reclaimed trees add rustic character to the staircase.

See more photos of the Moores' lakeside Crane Island retreat and other Homes of the Month at startribune.com/aiahomes.

STAR TRIBUNE/AIA HOME OF THE MONTH

Home of the Month appears in the Homes section the first Sunday of every month. The program, a partnership between the Star Tribune and the Minnesota chapter of the American Institute of Architects, features architect-designed houses selected by a jury of experts. The houses represent a range of prices, styles and locations.

TIMELESS TREASURE

◀ AIA from HI

David, a multimedia artist and retired theater manager, compared it to “a miniature Madeline Island. But it’s only a 30-minute drive back to Minneapolis,” he said.

The Charles Woodward cottage had burned down many years ago, so the original lot was empty. Luckily for the Moores, a longtime island resident decided to sell that lot and some adjacent land, which was overgrown with buckthorn and basswood trees.

Although the Moores were building new, they wanted to ensure that their home would have the age-old craftsmanship and qualities of the original early cottages. Yet it had to be equipped with modern must-haves, such as air conditioning and plenty of bathrooms. Building on the island posed its own challenges. The contractor had to haul supplies across the ice in the winter or in barges and boats in the summer.

The Moores chose David Heide and Mark Nelson of David Heide Design Studio for the project. The two had designed several remodeled spaces inside the Moore’s older bungalow in Minneapolis.

“Their firm is sensitive to a home’s historic character while adapting spaces for contemporary use,” said David.

At first, David envisioned a simple fishing cabin. “It was his little fantasy,” said Leni. “That lasted two days.”

The project eventually expanded to accommodate the couple’s visiting adult children and more amenities. The 2,200-square-foot structure was designed as a 1½-story home punctuated with shed dormers to minimize the scale and blend better with the other island cottages, said Nelson.

His versatile design juxtaposes the aesthetic of a North Woods cabin, Vermont farmhouse and fishing lodge.

“The materials and style were also inspired by the early 1900s caretaker’s cabin in the island’s commons area,” said Nelson.

A homey screen porch wraps around two sides, with golden-hued fir covering the floor and ceiling. The generous porch is large enough for a dining table that seats 14 people. “It’s cozy for two people,” said Leni, “but can comfortably handle 40 people for a lobster boil.”

The mechanized shutters also allow for shelter from the storms.

“The beauty of the porch design is that you can see out to the lake — but people from the lake can’t see in,” said Nelson.

For the rest of the home, Nelson maintained a traditional floor plan with separate defined rooms. But he used wider doorways to draw in natural light and make spaces feel more open and airy.

In the farmhouse-style kitchen, the Moores chose a reclaimed timber work table instead of a contemporary center island. Other handcrafted touches include an iron pot rack by a local artist, built-in glass-fronted cabinets and painted shiplap boards. Inside the adjacent dining room, an iron oil lamp chandelier by local artist Connee Mayeron emits a



David Heide Mark Nelson

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

What: A new summer retreat on Lake Minnetonka’s Crane Island evokes the 100-year-old cottages still on the island.

Size: 2,200 square feet, including three bedrooms and three bathrooms. There’s also a screened porch.

Design team: Architect Mark Nelson, residential designer David Heide and Kyle Veldhouse, David Heide Design Studio, Mpls., dhdstudio.com, 612-337-5060.

Builder: McKendry Construction, Mpls.

Landscape design: Landscape Renovations, Afton.

Photos by SUSAN GILMORE (1,3) and TIMOTHY NWACHUKWU • timothy.nwachukwu@startribune.com (2,4,5)

1. The compact kitchen combines shiplap boards, granite surfaces and a reclaimed wood work table. 2. The spacious screen porch offers summer lounging and dining areas. 3. A built-in pass-through from the kitchen to the dining room. 4. The Moores recycled cabinets from their city bungalow in the master bedroom. 5. The couple ferry to and from the mainland on a pontoon boat.

warm amber light on summer evenings.

David re-created a hunting lodge vibe by adding a massive, dry-stacked stone wood-burning fireplace in the living room.

“It’s a 21st-century chimney with a 19th-century stone surround,” he said.

Another modern addition

(a flat-screen TV for movie nights) is concealed behind a sliding panel that flanks the fireplace.

Upstairs, the calming blue master suite was designed with a bank of windows to provide a panoramic view of Lake Minnetonka. “We’re so high up,” said Leni, “it feels like

we’re sitting in a treehouse.”

The couple’s earlier remodeling projects on their bungalow in the city proved to be a cost-saving resource. They recycled many components — from kitchen cabinets to bathroom sinks — in the Crane Island retreat.

Leni loves that their crisp

white gabled cottage looks as if it were always part of the island’s historic landscape. For David, the best part is when he steps off the pontoon boat and enters “island time.”

“It’s a lot slower,” he said, “and I don’t have to shave.”

Lynn Underwood • 612-673-7619