

A beautiful watercolor painting showcases this new Wisconsin lake home, designed in a tribute to the classic American boathouse aesthetic.



# LAKESIDE

*Legends*

BY ANNA BJORLIN + PHOTOS BY DAVID BADER  
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# AN ELEGANT ABODE ON THE SHORES OF BIG CEDAR LAKE BECOMES THE PERFECT HOME FOR TWO FORMER OLYMPIC ROWERS



**LEFT TO RIGHT** High windows flood the kitchen with warm sunlight, while reclaimed timber beams lead up to a vaulted ceiling, visible from the second floor laundry room. A mix of lighting adds interest to the space, from the kitchen's contemporary chandelier to the dining room's chandelier with hand-blown glass shades and vintage pendant lights.

*F*OR A COUPLE WHO MET ON THE OLYMPIC ROWING TEAM (and who have children following in their wake with rowing scholarships of their own), a lakeside home that reflected their love of the water was a must. When a lovely property opened up on Wisconsin's Big Cedar Lake, the couple jumped at the opportunity to live on the same lake the wife had grown up visiting every summer with her own family.

Although there was already a house located on the premises, the couple decided they wanted to build their dream home from the ground up. They reached out to Wade Weissmann of his eponymous architecture firm and asked him to draw up an idea for the new house. Weissmann attended grad school at the University of Pennsylvania and

was familiar with Philadelphia's historic Boathouse Row, where all the rowing institutions maintained traditional boathouses since the turn of the century. "I knew the kind of iconic architecture the couple had been exposed to on the East Coast, and I thought to myself, 'I bet they'd want something on this lake that feels the same way,'" says Weissmann, who completed his sketch and sent it off to the couple. "Two hours later, I got a call from them saying I got the job."

He collaborated closely with Beth Wangman of Chicago-based interior design firm i4design (who had worked with the clients on several other home projects) and fashioned a stately 10,000-square-foot home designed as a tribute to

**CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT**

A wraparound porch overlooks the shores of Big Cedar Lake. The white oak cabinetry in the mudroom features a unique gray-blue color achieved through a painstaking process using vinegar and water dipped in steel wool. In the study, a cozy seating area with an ottoman and swivel chairs offers an exquisite view of the lake.



the classic American boathouse aesthetic. The house's heavy stone base serves as a throwback to the area's historic utility buildings—many of which have exposed foundations made of local sand, cement, and split fieldstone—while the light clapboard exterior with wood trim and cedar shingle accents provides a modern-day look.

Inside, the home has a spacious, open floorplan, large windows (with no window coverings except in the bedrooms), and plenty of nooks and crannies to explore. While the initial vision for the interiors was akin to an East Coast lake home with Colonial vibes and dark wood tones, Wangman and the clients ended up settling on an industrial farmhouse look, with shiplap ceilings, a soft color palette of grays and blues, and lots of natural elements. “We wanted this home to be perfectly imperfect,” explains Wangman. “We didn’t want things to look polished and pristine and brand-new—we wanted the house to look, in the end, as if it had always been there.”

Materials and products were carefully chosen to achieve this goal, from the soapstone countertops in the kitchen to the rough-hewn lumber beams that were locally sourced from Darrah Barns, Inc., a company that specializes in tearing down old barns and salvaging their wood. White oak floors were hand-scraped to look rough, and vintage light fixtures were installed to complement the home's rustic-chic feel.

A large communal kitchen was essential for the entertaining-loving couple, so an expansive, open-concept area was created with entry points leading to the pantry, dining room, living room, and stairs. A 10-foot-by-10-foot island

and custom stainless-steel stove hood add to the drama of the room, while fun details like a sliding library ladder and a small window overlooking the space from the upper-level laundry room were incorporated throughout. “The kitchen’s two-story volume shoots the eye right up to a dome of reclaimed beams,” says Wangman. “The entire space feels grand without being over-the-top...it’s massive, but really comfortable.”

The husband’s study was a favorite for both Weissmann and Wangman to work on. “It has an easy flow, and keeps your eye very active,” says Weissmann. A beautiful bay window provides a sweeping view of the lake, and a subtle herringbone pattern on the floor leads guests to the room’s fireplace, made of reclaimed wood and a purposely-rusted corten metal surround. “When the metal arrived, it was beautiful, but too perfect,” Wangman explains. “It didn’t match the rest of the interiors, so we ended up leaving it out in the winter snow for several months. We’d visit each month to turn it, and in the end, it rusted and left cool streaks all over.”

The team recently finished putting the final touches on the basement, which was designed around a glassed-in boathouse area where the family can store and display their racing shells. “The windows look into the boathouse and illuminate at night so you can see the beautiful crafts from outside as well,” says Weissmann. “It’s really the perfect finishing touch to the home.”

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