



A Room with a View

Simple, clean, symmetrical lines face the lakeside of this Cape Cod-inspired home on Otter Tail Lake. The design entices family and friends in from the water, where they can enjoy the extraordinary lake views while dining and visiting in a warm, relaxed atmosphere.



“It’s a personal connection, designing a home,” Stoll says. “Getting to know people, gathering the pieces to the puzzle — it’s about listening to how they live day to day, and the fun work of pulling together a design.”

Tony Stoll, AIA principal architect, bhh Partners, Planners/Architects



The vast open floor plan breaks with traditional Cape Cod design but is perfectly compatible with this home's lake cottage design sensibility. A view of the gorgeous lake from all main living areas was a top priority.

The homeowners wanted unobstructed views of the lake from the kitchen, dining and living areas.



Light from the bank of lakeside windows is reflected throughout the room by this all-white Craftsman-style custom cabinetry. Hidden appliances and white countertops give a fresh edge to the more traditional design style.

STORY BY JILL OCKHARDT BLAUFUSS | PHOTOGRAPHY BY TRAVIS BEAUCHENE, STUDIO THREE BEAU

Designing a custom home isn't something everybody gets to do. But if you're one of the lucky ones, architect Tony Stoll of bhb Partners in Perham, Minnesota, urges you to shoot for the moon. "It should be a happy moment in your life," Stoll says. Even if you don't get all the way to the moon due to budget or square footage restraints, Stoll urges clients to enjoy the process.

When designing this Otter Tail Lake home, Stoll enjoyed getting to know what was on the homeowners' wish list. Stoll says his first step in the design process is always working out the flow, function and square footage within the footprint. The schematic footprint is then used to develop exterior concepts.

"They wanted a simple, symmetrical Cape Cod cottage design," Stoll says. "A more casual, comfortable lake home feel. Nothing too ornate." Typical Cape Cod features that Stoll included in his design are the eye-catching traditional grid windows and shingle siding.

While Cape Cod design originated in the northeastern United States, Stoll says many of the traditional design elements are applicable to the lakes area's wooded landscape, climate and living style. Steep Cape Cod rooflines ensure snow doesn't collect during the winter. And while typically the design includes smaller, more compartmentalized rooms within the interior, this Otter Tail Lake home's open living, cooking and dining space is a

more modern concept the overwhelming majority of Stoll's clients look for today.

Planning for summer use with their adult children and grandchildren, the homeowners wanted an inviting summer retreat focusing on a connection with the lake, including visibility and access. But they also wanted a home that would serve the couple well into retirement, with design considerations for aging in place. Stoll took into account future mobility challenges that come with aging, especially when designing the main level of the home.

Stoll says designing a home for aging in place doesn't have to be a consideration for only older clients. "Aging in place comes

into conversations with a lot of clients," he says. When considering resale value, Stoll challenges even younger clients to think about how a home can serve people with a range of physical abilities.

"Designing a main level to be accessible for people with physical challenges doesn't have to be obvious or even apparent in the design," Stoll says. Wider door sizes and reducing tight corners and tight spaces, he says, are all things that can be considered in any home, making it more practical for people with varying degrees of physical ability.

The homeowner's wanted unobstructed views of the beautiful lake from the kitchen, dining and living areas. Two of the three



The ceiling beam pattern was designed to emanate from the front entry, directing your eye to the lake view. The open staircase is an attractive feature that brings balance to the room.



The connection of seating areas makes getting together comfortable for even large gatherings. The lake view extends out the side door to the inviting three-season porch.



A Charles Beck print in rich blue complements the upholstery of these cottage-inspired gingham upholstered chair backs. The view from this large dining area means you won't miss anything happening on the lake even when coming in for meals.



This guest bedroom is perfect for letting the grandkids all bunk up together or for parents to sleep close to their children. With these perfectly crafted built-in bunk beds and space for a crib, this room accommodates all ages comfortably.



This bathroom is anything but basic because of the bold blue-and-white leaf pattern of this attention-grabbing wallpaper.

bedrooms have amazing lake views as well. Keeping with interior details similar to a historic Cape Cod, a beamed ceiling artfully brings a traditional cottage feel to the vast ceiling in the living area. “The beams help define the interior space and direct your eye,” Stoll says. His beam design emanates from the front entry, the lines leading your eye through the home to the impressive lake view immediately upon entering the front door.

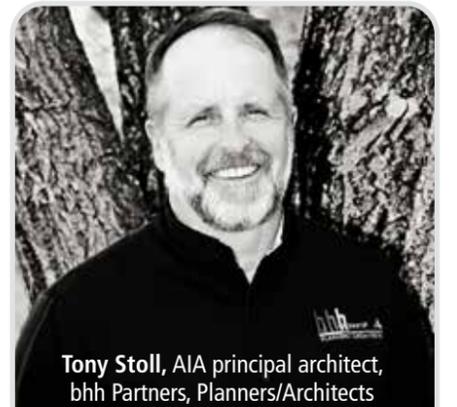
Stoll placed the three-season porch with a lake view off the side of the living room and fitted it with a Phantom screen system. With the screens raised (and hidden in the soffit), the porch offers relaxation by day. With screens down, it's a bug-free outdoor-air retreat for evening gatherings. Stoll also designed covered porches on the lake and the road sides of the home, noting that inclement weather isn't something people naturally plan for when designing a lake home. “You should

be able to enjoy your morning coffee outdoors regardless of which way the wind is blowing,” Stoll says. “It's important to design for those rainy days, too.”

Along with three bedrooms in the main portion of the house, a loft area built over the garage with a separate entrance offers another space for family and other guests to enjoy more privacy when visiting the lake home.

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Stoll designed a true summer escape, with room for everyone and a focus on time spent in and near the lake. The home's airy main living area is a masterpiece itself, but it's Stoll's layout and impressive window design that enlists the interiors as an artfully crafted picture frame for the captivating lake view beyond.*



Tony Stoll, AIA principal architect, bhh Partners, Planners/Architects

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