

Living in the Landscape

STORY BY STACEY FREED | PHOTOS BY SCOTT HEMENWAY

The great debate when it comes to lake homes is whether to call the street side or the lake side the “front.” For Laurie and Dan Hoffend, whose timber-frame home is built into a cliff overlooking Canandaigua Lake, it’s a difficult choice.

Both sides are warm and welcoming and embrace the landscape. But, says Laurie, the lake side probably wins out because of its beautiful views.

Laurie and Dan grew up in Pittsford, but they took the long way home. They met while working for Dan’s family business, Xposition, which did service contracting for trade shows. When it was purchased by Freeman, a national company, the couple relocated to Dallas, where they’ve been living for 17 years.

But they remembered summers spent on Seneca and Conesus lakes and Sodus Bay, and they always wanted to return to this area. They scoured Zillow for four years looking for property for a summer home, and they drove around the Finger Lakes during visits home. They found their land in 2015 and already had their design ideas before contacting New Energy Works timber framers.

“We knew we wanted a great room with large windows, two masters on the main level, and an open floor plan,” Laurie says. New Energy Works (NEW) started excavation in May 2016, and the house was completed in October 2016.

Built into a cliff, the house is also nestled in the trees. It was important to the Hoffends that the home fit *into* the landscape. “We really wanted something that would look like it was coming out of the land itself,” Laurie explains.

NEW’s Pete Heintzelman, AIA/LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) green associate, served as lead architect/designer. He worked closely with the couple to turn their ideas into reality.

Heintzelman agreed about the importance of “setting the house into the site rather than rest it on top of the site,” he says. “This minimizes some of the challenges of living on a hill and keeps the overall height within restrictions. Setting deeper into the land also helps the structure become more a part of the land.”

When the Hoffends first saw the property, it held two small structures: a hunting cabin and a bunkhouse, both built in the 1940s and never updated. They took down the cabin and used its arched wood door for their wine cellar.

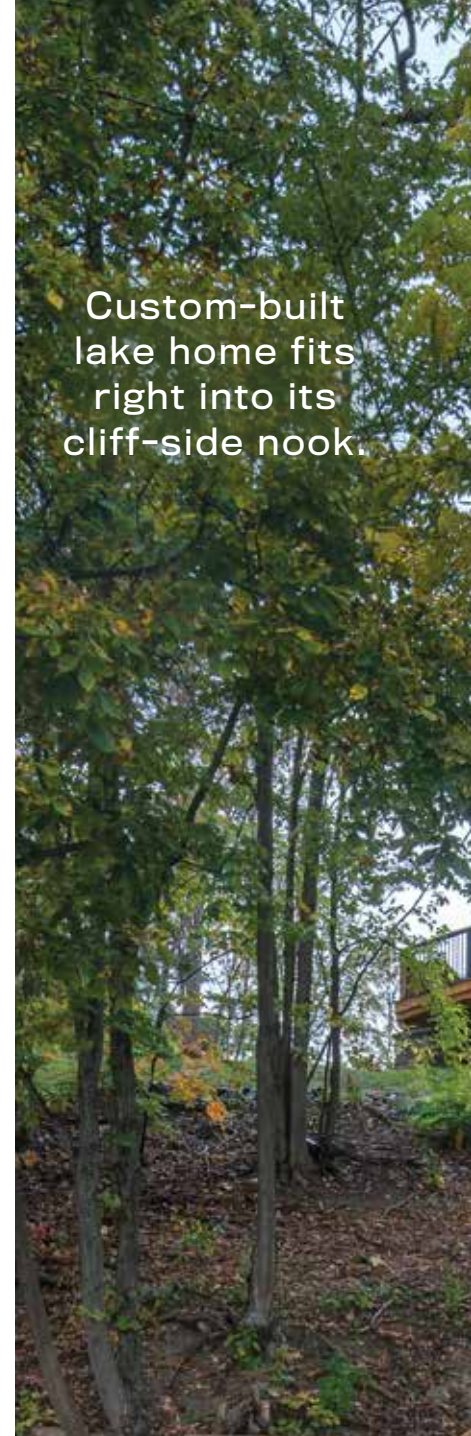
They removed only one tree, a large hickory, whose wood Pioneer Millworks (NEW’s sister company) was able to reclaim for use as the kitchen island. In summer, Laurie says, it feels like they live in a tree house, and in the leafless months, they have double the views of the lake.

The style is a hybrid, mixing timber-frame and traditional construction. Big Douglas fir timbers “are used to bring visual and physical weight and delineate the great room, kitchen and dining areas,” Heintzelman says. “The great room is also vaulted, while the dining and kitchen spaces have flat ceilings.” To lighten the look of the space, Laurie had the tongue-and-groove ceilings painted white.

True to the couple’s vision, the main level includes two master suites, and the lower level has a bedroom suite built for a family with children so they can have their own space, Laurie says. On that level there’s also another bedroom, a bunk room, a game room, a workout room, two full bathrooms and a wine room. The kitchen, though, is the heart of the home, with its large island. “It’s the center of our world,” says Laurie, who worked closely with Andrew Atloft from NEW’s design department on the interiors.

Outside, the Hoffends hired Ted Collins to create a boulder garden using stones from a local quarry, with tiered landscaping and hardscaping for retention and walkways. They

Custom-built lake home fits right into its cliff-side nook.



The stone area at the first landing is the fire pit. This is where the bunkhouse was for the original hunting cabin. The wood steps from the fire pit are the original steps, cleaned and secured.





Pendant lights hang by a wall of reclaimed wood in the stairwell, with nothing on the wall so the homeowners can simply enjoy the beauty of the wood. (Above) The light fixture in the great room is from Restoration Hardware.





were able to refurbish and keep a set of existing stairs that now land at a large fire pit. More stairs lead down to the lake itself.

The Hoffends recently downsized in Dallas and plan to spend “at least from Memorial Day to Labor Day” at Canandaigua Lake. Last year they had all the family in for Christmas. The house, Laurie says, is now “the meeting place. It’s like a destination lodge for their parents, their three grown children who live in Las Vegas and Boston, and extended family and friends.

“The lake is beautiful year-round,” Laurie says. They love both the “front” and the “back,” the view out to the lake and the view from the lake looking up to the house.

“In the early evening, with the great room light fixture on, you can pick out our house when you’re on the lake,” Laurie says. “In winter it’s all about being indoors and in summer it’s all about outside. We’re in love with how it transforms.” **R**

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 Stacey Freed is a writer living in Pittsford.

After removing the hickory tree to situate the house, Pioneer Millworks reclaimed the wood and used it to create the raw-edged kitchen island. (Opposite page) The powder room has a copper vessel sink and wood made of old shipping pallets. The stone wall in the master bedroom is the back side of the fireplace in the great room.

