



LAKESIDE *Living*

A CUSTOM VACATION HOME IN WISCONSIN PAIRS CASUAL LIVING WITH RUSTIC ELEGANCE.

By VICTORIA VAN VLEAR | Photography by TROY THIES

Reclaimed Living

Working with reclaimed wood isn't always easy. "You have to go to a place that specializes in reclaimed wood," Kristy says. Once the company has acquired wood from an old barn or another building, it's important to inspect each batch. "Not everything looks the way you want it to," Kristy says. "You have to find just the right wood. It's really hard to create that aged look. If you want to sand it down, you lose all of that."

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he best vacation homes assist with the delicate balance between luxury and informality, activity and rest, permanence and transience, nostalgia and novelty. When designer Kristy Conlin of Martha O'Hara Interiors came in to help build a vacation home on the banks of Bone Lake, Wisconsin, this was the paradox she wanted to turn into a reality.

"I wanted a traditional cabin feel while staying clean and cool," she says. "Not 'camping rustic,' but sophisticated rustic."

Large and Small

Kristy always begins with function. "I start with the floor plan to make sure the spaces are working the way the family will use them," she says. For this house, the family knew they would have a wide range of visitors—sometimes just their own nuclear family and at other times, a larger group of extended family. Kristy needed to make the lake house feel homey and cozy, yet remain large enough to accommodate all the visitors. "The challenge was to have enough space for the family but also extended family, and still make it feel intimate and casual," she says. And at 5,000 square feet,

the house would naturally tend toward cavernous and imposing, rather than intimate and casual.

Old and New

What helped with this challenge was texture and material. "By layering all the different materials and fabrics and woods, everything has a texture to it in this space," Kristy says. Material choice was a large part of the building process. "That was a really long process," she says. "The wood was all reclaimed, so you have to look at what's available. We picked every single material." From the floors to the column posts, ceilings and even stone fireplaces, Kristy chose the materials with meticulous care, so the house would feel warm and inviting. "There's a lot of texture, so that created the

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Same but Different

Part of keeping the home from looking monotonous was to use various woods throughout the house. "The wood on the walls is slightly different than on the ceiling," Kristy says. In the main living area, the large posts were from a different old structure than the other woods. "Those were true posts and beams from old barns," Kristy says. "The materials change but it also flows really well."

Kitchen Center

The placement of the open kitchen is strategic: it has easy access to the living area, as well as a direct path to the lake. "We didn't want to fill the space up with cabinetry," Kristy says. "Guests don't have to open every cabinet to find things." This makes the kitchen easy to use for the first-time visitor.





Summer and Winter

The lake house serves just as well as a getaway in the winter as it does in the summer. Warm plaids and industrial farmhouse lighting work well alongside the rustic reclaimed wood walls. Here in the loft, texture combines with architecture for the A-framed gable window cut out, creating a cozy room to read or watch TV.

intimate, casual, warm feeling,” she says. The design also couldn’t look too pretentious or expensive. “We didn’t want people to feel like they couldn’t touch anything, especially when they’ll be coming in from the lake,” she says.

In the main living spaces, Kristy kept the wood raw to accentuate the aged feeling, but in some of the smaller rooms, such as the bedrooms and bathrooms, she treated the wood to remain cohesive yet make the spaces interesting. In the



Charming Chinking

Just inside the front door is a small alcove that functions both as a coat closet and mudroom. “We didn’t need the closet there, so it became space for hanging shoes and boots,” Kristy says. “We didn’t want a big built-in there.” It became one of the few areas where Kristy used chinking paneling that features large gaps between each wood board. “We wanted that to be in a few special areas,” she says.

Warm Wood

The all-wood look doesn't have to be stark or dark. "It goes back to texture and layering of materials," Kristy says. "A big part of this was the light. There's a lot of light even though the materials are darker. Make sure you have enough light to brighten the space naturally, so the windows and architecture feel light and bright."

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Navy Niche

In the master bathroom, reclaimed wood graces the walls with a twist from the traditional raw wood in the living areas. "We stained it a dark navy blue," Kristy says. "It has a nice, cozy feel." The vanilla penny round mosaic tile on the floor ties in with the white marble countertops to balance out the darker colors.

In Knots.

In the master bedroom, the reclaimed wood and stone theme continues, but here Kristy decided to incorporate a new twist. "The boards [on the wall] are reclaimed, and we painted them," she says. "We wanted to be able to see the knots, so we carried on that feeling but wanted that space to feel fresher." The white walls and light-colored stone fireplace create an airy feel.



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master bedroom, the reclaimed wood has a coat of white paint, and in several of the bathrooms, a coat of stain. "Not every wall and surface is the same, so we were changing it while making it all go well together," Kristy says. "I've never looked at so much wood in my entire life."

See Sources, page 128.