Homespaces

Lady of the Lake

Polhemus Savery DaSilva Architects Builders combines bungalow and Shingle Style elements to create a stunning lakeside home.

BY JACI CONRY • PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN VANDEN BRINK

Above: A deck off of the screened porch leads to a bluestone patio; a serene view of the lake is visible through the trees. Right: An engraved motif of the house's exterior serves as a focus along the fireplace mantel.

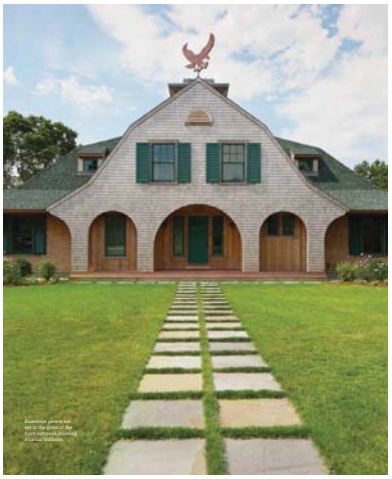
While distinctive Cape Cod residences tend to be associated with ocean settings, the region has a smattering of secluded lakefront locales. They are well-guarded secrets, like the site of this rambling abode. Nestled down a long, wooded drive on the Mid-Cape, the house, designed and built by Chatham-based Polhemus Savery DaSilva Architects Builders, is perched on a parcel that is flat in front. The backyard slopes steeply down to a glistening kettle hole lake. "It's a special site, with beautiful trees," says principal architect John DaSilva.

Design & build Polhemus Savery DaSilva Architects Builders

The home was intended to be a rendition of a classic New England lake house, says DaSilva. "The design is whimsical and eclectic, combining influences from classic New England lakefront bungalows at the back and gambrel-roofed Shingle Style houses at the front."

A striking green roof caps the house. The front façade is monumental enough to have a formal appeal, yet it also has a domestic, cheerful and welcoming presence. Soaring angles, geometric forms, large overhangs and oversize windows and shutters contribute to the feel of a lake house.

"The exaggerated elements and compact form emphatically state 'lake house.' They create a scenario where the house is both an actual lake house and a representation of a lake house—a double meaning that makes the house more complex and interesting than it otherwise might be," says DaSilva. "The design feels familiar, yet you've never quite seen it anywhere before. Like the best vernacular architecture, it is both timeless and of its own time—at once of the past, present and future."



Bluestone pavers set to the point of the Cape-influenced dwelling's entrance walkway.

Above: In the kitchen, white cabinetry is inset with beadboard panels for a cottage feel.

Rich, stimulating details, including the oversize cedar-shingle clad chimney that springs from the center of the roof, give the house a contemporary feeling. The weathervane is based on the coat of arms from the Great Seal of the United States, a depiction of an eagle holding an olive branch in one claw and arrows in another. "The eagle's head turns toward the olive branch symbolizing a preference for peace but a readiness for war," says DaSilva. The homeowners requested that the weathervane be a representation of the coat of arms, which is used in many ways throughout the government, including on the cover of passports. "As a more dynamic and casual

Rustic by design, the walls and ceiling of the screened porch are sheathed with red cedar. The interior windows are trimmed with forest green, a nod to the view of the trees.

Perched on a hill, the back of the house looks the part of a Shingle Style Lake Country Retreat.

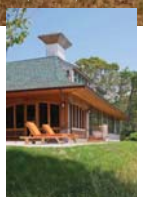


image that might be better for a private home, we suggested transforming it into an eagle in flight that still carried the olive branch and arrows," says DaSilva. "We based the flat representation on an actual photograph of a bald eagle about to land. We made the eagle's head turn toward the arrows, however, because of some hawkish tendencies we noticed in the owner's comments."

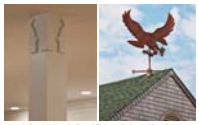
The house is occupied by a multi-generational family and the layout includes ample areas for privacy. There is a first-floor master suite, two guest suites and a nursery on the second floor, and a suite on the lower walkout basement level. "Since the basement is at ground level, we were able to create huge windows that offer a wonderful view of the lake looking through the trunks of the trees," says DaSilva. Each of the three floors has a different view of the lake, due to the distinct vantage points. From the second story, one looks through the very tops of the trees toward the lake. From the main level, the lake is observed through the clearing in the trees.

A guest room on the lower level has a view of tree trees and a great vibe.

The main living spaces on the first floor are open to each other. The kitchen, living, and dining room are integrated so the entire family can relax and socialize together. DaSilva used soffits, ceiling shapes and columns to give the separate spaces subtle definition.

The homeowners wanted large expanses of glass to frame the lake views. "To make the windows feel more domestic and comfortable, we put gently curved muntins on the tops, rather than just having a straight line," says DaSilva, who worked to design other ornamental elements throughout the house that offer a playful, whimsical feeling. Structural columns in the kitchen were wrapped in wood, and the top corners are adorned with flat cutout representations of the home's exterior. "We took the shape defined by the front gable of the house and turned it into an ornamental pattern," says DaSilva. The same engraved motif serves as a focus along the fireplace mantel. A testament to the home's dual traditional and contemporary inspired nature, "The mantel is exaggerated, but still elegant in shape," says DaSilva.

Accessible through the main living area, the best spot in the house is the screened porch. "Open to the elements, it is both an exterior and interior space," says DaSilva. Smooth red cedar vertical boards sheath the walls and ceiling. Furnished sparsely with two teak Kingsley-Bate outdoor chairs from the St. Tropez collection, it feels rustic and serene, and the view of the lake through the swaying trees is positively sublime.



Among the home's intricate details are, left, structural columns with carving that bears a motif of the exterior and, right, a weathervane modeled after the coat of arms from the Great Seal of the United States.