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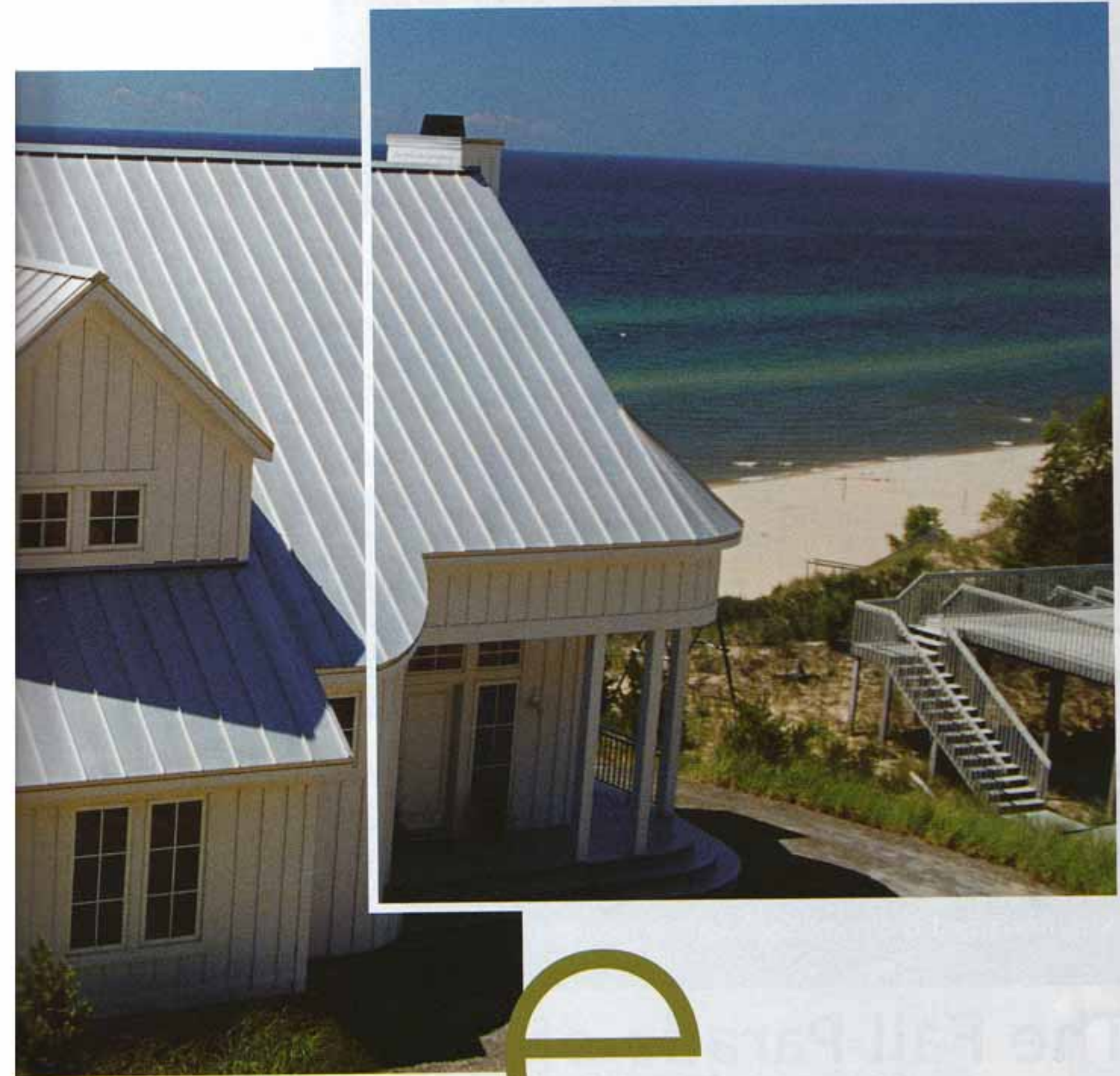
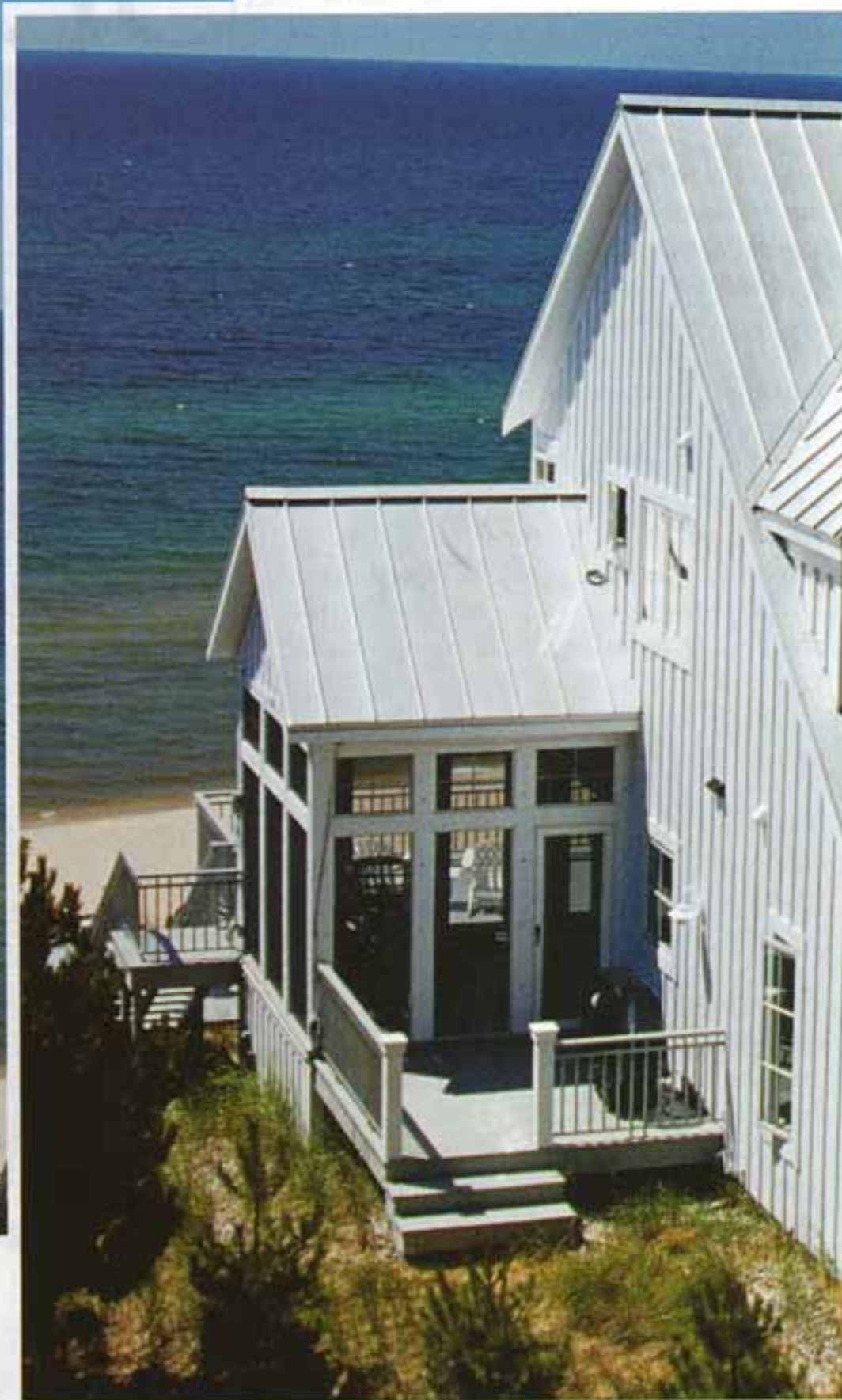
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Shoreline Charm

TEXT BY JANA TIGCHELAAR PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVE LEALE

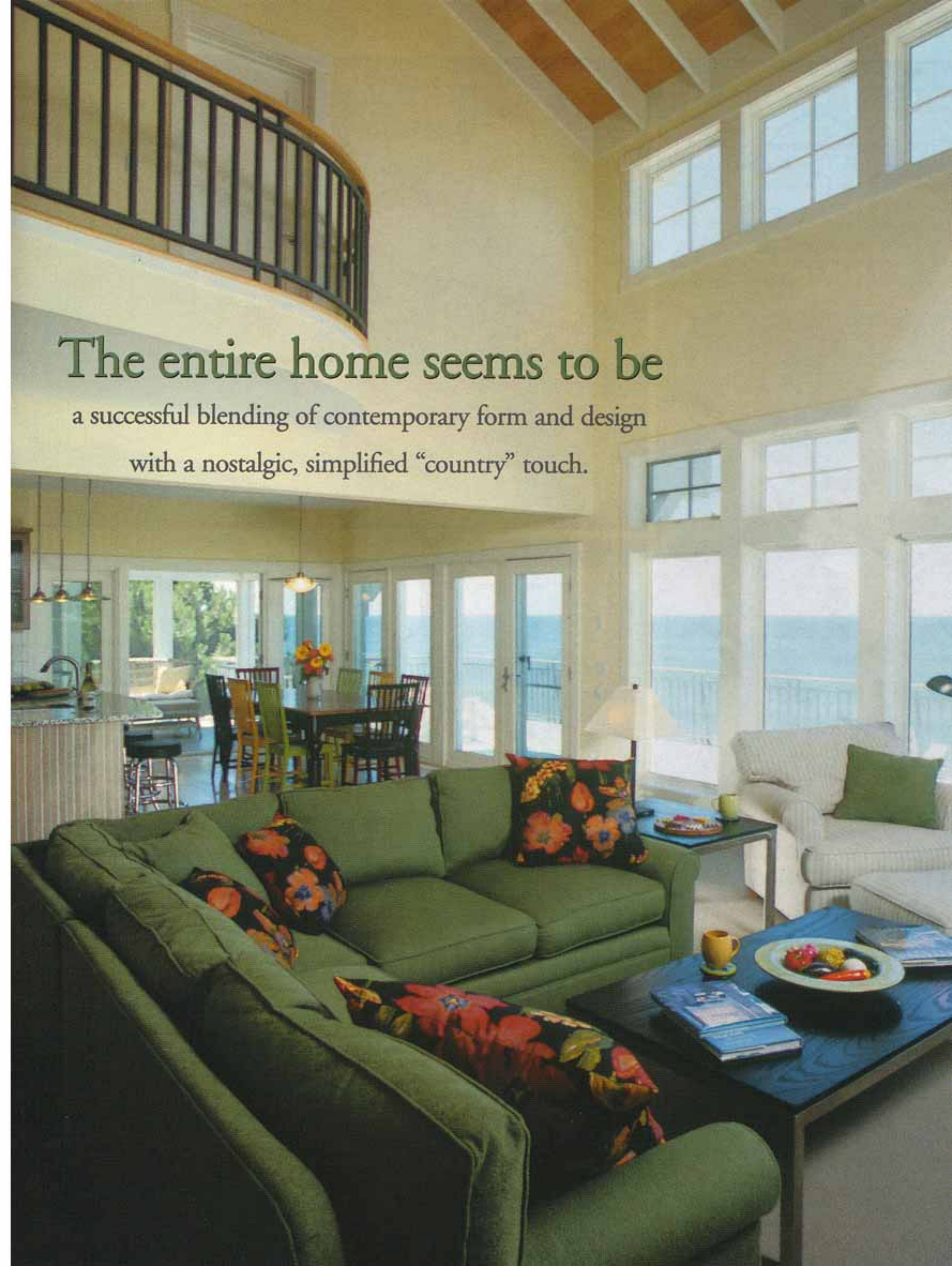
very great builder and designer knows that a home can be fantastically designed, exquisitely decorated, and solidly built and still have something missing. That certain extra something may be right outside the window. A home that offers the complete package is one that takes into account its setting, working with the environment, learning from and adding to the surroundings. Such is the case with this summer home that graces the shoreline of Lake Michigan near Montague. With a subtle vertical emphasis, unique roof line, and playful use of windows, this vacation retreat enhances the smooth shapes and natural tones of the surrounding dunes and waterfront.

The fantastic project was the brainchild of architectural designer Jeff Visser, and the unique construction was made possible through the work of Mike Schaap of Mike Schaap Builder, Inc., both of whom found the setting integral to the undertaking.

"When [the homeowners] originally came to me, they wanted something relatively small with modern, clean lines," said Visser. "Primarily, they wanted to capitalize on the views they had there."

If capturing views was the goal, this cottage is more than a success. Scenic vistas stretch from nearly every vantage point in the home, and views of the lake reveal an ever-changing horizon. But the cottage is much more than simply the view it frames. A successful marriage of functional home and relaxing retreat, this modern-day weekend haven is a study in design.

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a successful blending of contemporary form and design
with a nostalgic, simplified “country” touch.



The master suite holds farmhouse charm with its "exposed framing" ceiling and small, square windows framing the bed.

The dining area brings an eclectic feel with a farmhouse table from Rock Kauffman's Urban House accompanied by "mismatched" chairs.

The kitchen by Dimensions Kitchen & Bath features a granite-topped island complete with second sink and an eating area along with perfectly chosen stainless-steel appliances.



"Typically, in lake homes, people let their imaginations go a little," said Visser. "They wanted a lot of light, a lot of views in as small a package as possible."

Visser recognized that goal by using soaring ceilings and adding volume with clear story windows. But rather than overwhelm the cottage with huge windows (often tempting when working with a lake home), the contemporary effect was softened by using smaller, more farmhouse-style windows strategically placed to let in just enough light.

Indeed, the entire home seems to be a successful blending of contemporary form and design with a nostalgic, simplified "country" touch.

"It's really a fun environment," said Schaap. "Unlike many new homes, it's not overwhelming. It's very manageable and it's not pretentious."

Adding to that fun environment is the interior design choices by Christine DiMaria. Soft, muted, natural colors and tones fill the home's palette. Interestingly, the color choices also originated from the surroundings.

"We wanted to see this house done in a very sophisticated cottage style," said DiMaria. "I wanted to give it a beachy feel without taking off the clean and contemporary edge."

That beach-like atmosphere originated in the kitchen, where DiMaria chose a custom-designed finish for the cabinetry in a color best described as "driftwood." The warm, gray, weathered color of the cabinets "was the centering point for the home," said DiMaria. Accented by the cabinets' vertical lines which connect the home's interior and exterior, the kitchen features a granite-topped island complete with second sink and an eating area along with perfectly chosen stainless-steel appliances. The kitchen also boasts uninterrupted views over the deck, a feature the homeowners particularly relish.

"I especially like to use the island when entertaining," said the homeowner. "It's wonderful to be able to look outside at the lake while cooking."

The driftwood-colored kitchen cabinetry led DiMaria to choose other natural yet fun colors in the home. The muted bottle green, terra cotta and soft, buttery yellow tones flow from room to room, bringing both an



element of fun and the impression of a timeless, classical design.

"If you look to nature," said DiMaria, "your colors will never be dated. You'll have a grounded, earthy feel."

Some of these colors are visible in the dining area, which brings an eclectic feel to the contemporary structure. A weathered-look farmhouse table from Rock Kauffman's Urban House is accompanied by a hodge-podge of "mismatched" chairs in warm, natural tones. Located right next to a bank of windows and French doors, one almost feels as though one is dining al fresco. Continuing that fresh air feeling, a screened porch with adjacent patio branches off the dining room, offering the perfect place to relax with an after-dinner (or early morning) cup of coffee.

The decks, nestled into the side of the dune, extend the cottage's capabilities and make a wonderful spot for relaxing on cooler days.

The kitchen and dining areas flow into the great room, a soaring centerpiece to the home. Accented by furniture DiMaria chose both for durability and comfort as well as clean, contemporary lines, the great room is a study in the home's unique balance between vast space and intimate comfort. Visser detailed the ceiling in the great room with the appearance of exposed framing, adding interest to the room's height. Built-ins in the same warm gray of the kitchen cabinetry and a cool-toned fireplace add unity to the space, and draw the eye downward. Another feature of the room is notable only when one turns from the view of the lake to notice a curving balcony undulating over the great room.

"The balcony was a great way to use some of the upper volume of space," said Visser.

"One of the concerns when you put that much volume in a room is that it tends to look stark and boxy. This brings the interest back down."

The balcony serves as a wonderful, open office area that capitalizes on the views, and makes a fantastic entryway into the master bedroom, a second-floor showpiece. The master suite holds great farmhouse charm, from the same "exposed framing" ceiling of the great room to the small, square windows framing the bed. Soft, muted colors and subtle whites lend the space a cool, calm atmosphere. One wall features French doors opening to a private deck, where the homeowners can enjoy their own private view of the lake, as well as nights of star-gazing and, on clear nights, views of the lights of Milwaukee across the lake.

The master bath is another quaint retreat. Cool colors create a soft backdrop for relaxation in the jacuzzi tub, recessed into a quiet alcove. The master bath has several functional



aspects, including separate commode and shower stalls and a deep, walk-in closet with ample storage, making this cottage a utilitarian dream.

With such a winning interior, it wouldn't seem necessary to ever leave the cottage. But with a fantastic private beach and several decks, it would be a shame to shun this home's exterior, which is as striking as its interior. A beacon of white and silver, the home's unique vertical emphasis is primarily achieved through the use of reversed board-and-batten siding and more upright construction, with three complete stories. The choice of siding in a

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cool white lends the home a certain "fishing village" air with a California edge. The roofing, an aluminum and galvanized mix, completes the charm and continues the vertical lines while the striking front entrance throws an element of fun into the design.

"The exterior really looks like it belongs," said the homeowner. "The white-washed siding seems really beachy, and the metal roof reflects the sunlight."

The home's rear exterior makes good use of what Schaap described as "an extremely nice, gentle slope" with tiered decks and landings connected by stairs. The series of decks was created for a number of reasons, said Schaap, including safety issues and as a resting spot for those less acclimated to 40 feet of stairs. Additionally, the decks, nestled into the side of the dune, extend the cottage's capabilities and make a wonderful spot for relaxing on cooler days. With such extensive deck work, this cozy cottage suddenly seems much more expansive.

The surroundings extend the home's capabilities, giving the cottage an open, exterior feel while maintaining a snug simplicity. "The homeowners especially wanted all access to outdoor living space," said Visser. "Having that access makes the house feel bigger, and visually it connects to the outdoors." A strong connection to the outdoors is a notable goal this lakeside charmer easily achieves.

BUILDER Mike Schaap Builders, Inc.
 ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN Jeff Visser
 INTERIOR DESIGN Christine DiMaria Design

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