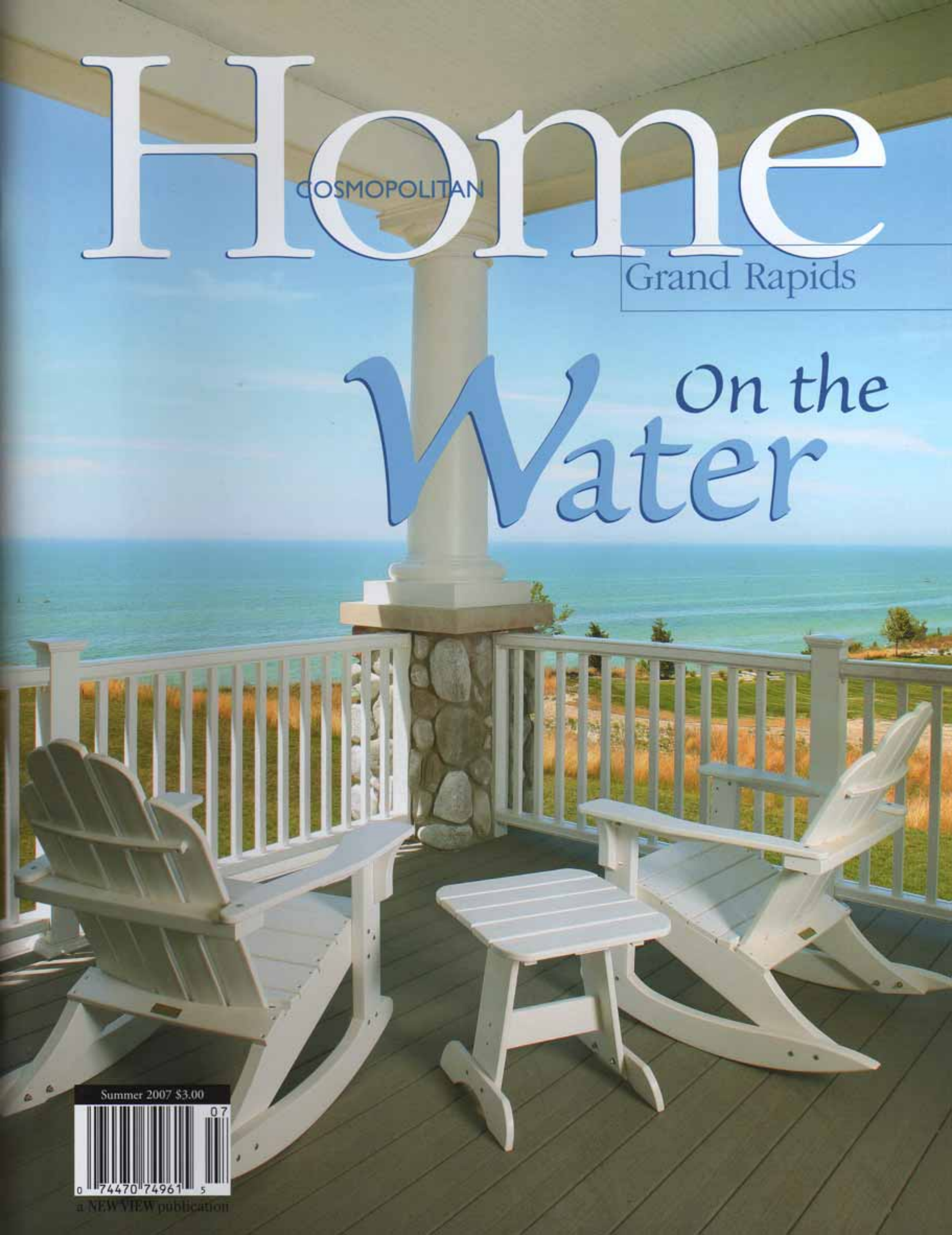


Home

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W On the Water



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Silver Lake Sanctuary

In the past, summer visits from family evoked mixed feelings for Lee and Sue Murphy. Mingled with the prospect of making wonderful memories and enjoying relaxed conversations was the reality of long lines at the bathroom, no elbow room in the tiny kitchen and knick-knacks imperiled by the grandkids' rambunctious games.

WRITTEN BY TONYA SCHAFER | PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVE LEALE



White furnishings and sunny orange and yellow all-weather fabric bring a jaunty punch of color to this patio on the lake.

OPPOSITE PAGE: The new 2,500-square-foot cottage features plenty of room for family and friends to gather—and stay the night.

Murphys went with Grand Rapids-based Dennis Rotman Builders. Christine DiMaria Design, also of Grand Rapids, handled the interior design.

"Lee and Sue pretty much knew what they wanted from the start—a place with a quaint, 'cottage' look," Rotman says. The Murphys achieved this by incorporating clapboard siding and a gabled roof into their home's design, says Rotman, noting that the clapboard vinyl surface is easier to care for than a traditional wooden covering.

Inside, several features make the cottage more livable, both for the Murphys' visiting family and for the couple in the long-term. "Lee and Sue didn't want something overcrowded, especially with the potential for kids to be running through and breaking things," DiMaria says. "They wanted a place that was approachable to guests and that offered practicality for their retirement years—but that still retained a 'lake house' feel." That atmosphere starts as soon as visitors walk down a stone pathway from the detached garage to the home's front door. Nestled on a lush green lawn, surrounded by abundant trees and foliage, the home has a tranquil feel that speaks of casual fun on the lake.

Beyond the front door, guests step into an entry hall that leads to the living room on the left and the kitchen on the right. This dining/living area has no walls separating it, creating an open atmosphere that Sue says had to be a feature of her new home. "In the old place, the kitchen felt like a dungeon," she says. The new version is anything but, with cheery yellow cabinets from Dimensions Kitchen & Bath, gray granite countertops from Top of the World Granite and a floor of honey-colored Australian cypress from Rivershores. Together, these give the room what Sue describes as "a homey, warm feeling." The ambiance is just what Sue wanted. "Now, when you're cooking, you can be a part of it all," she says, noting that one may enjoy views of the sparkling lake while chopping on the island's butcher block surface.

Next to the kitchen, the living room embodies Country French style, characterized by vibrant colors and natural materials. "Sue loves yellow, and we had lots of red in our old cottage," Lee remarks. Accordingly, the living room showcases those colors, with yellow walls and a red-and-white seersucker couch from Urbanhouse that invites lively conversation over views of the lake. Caramel-colored waffle-weave carpet is ready to take heavy traffic, while the room's focal point, a fieldstone-encased gas fireplace from Belden Brick, pays tribute to the hearth the Murphys enjoyed in their former cottage. "We wanted to save that one, but we found it would have been a design



A mixture of character and convenience fills this charming cottage, making it the perfect retreat from city living

TOP: Large windows and a sliding glass door offer peaceful views of sparkling Silver Lake from the cheery, rose-hued master bedroom. A skylight over the bed lets in cooling breezes and allows the homeowners to drift off to sleep while gazing at the stars.

RIGHT: An outdoor shower and footbath help the cottage's bathrooms stay clean by keeping sand and mud outside.





ne of the first homes on Silver Lake, located 20 miles north of Grand Rapids, the Murphys' 800-square-foot cottage had charm, but not enough space to accommodate visits from their four sons and 10 grandchildren. So after "making do" for 20 years, the Murphys decided to knock down the structure and start fresh with a home that would better meet their needs.

Last year, Lee and Sue spent their first full summer in the result: a 2,500-square-foot cottage that features plenty of room for family, yet offers a manageable layout should the Murphys decide to live there year-round. The new residence adds a second floor to the old cottage's design but retains the former structure's white siding—giving Lee and Sue a reminder of the vintage home in which they'd spent so many summers enjoying breezes off the lake.

"Sometimes from the water, we look up and the new cottage looks just like our old one," Sue says. "It's as though we're seeing a 'grown up' version of our previous cottage" When choosing a contractor to make their vision of lakeside living a reality, the

TOP: The living room embodies Country French style, characterized by vibrant colors and natural materials. The room's focal point, a fieldstone-encased gas fireplace, pays tribute to the hearth the homeowners enjoyed in their former cottage.

RIGHT: The kitchen features cheery yellow cabinets from Dimensions Kitchen & Bath and Australian cypress flooring from Rivershores Companies. Granite countertops from Top of the World Granite complement the island's butcher block surface.





nightmare," Lee remembers. The new fireplace is like having the original hearth back, he notes: "It looks just like the old one."

A number of other features enhance the home's seaside-meets-sensible character. For example, a spare room at the front of the cottage contains dressing rooms for changing into bathing suits, but also includes the necessary hookups for becoming a garage should the Murphys decide to build one in the future. "We learned that it would be difficult to add an attached garage later on, but we also weren't sure we wanted to tear down the existing garage," Sue explains. The spare room is a compromise, with a carpet-covered cement floor and a set of steps that takes guests to what could eventually become the back door. "All we'd have to do is cut out the front wall [for the garage door] and put a driveway through," Sue says.

Adding to the home's convenience and livability is a laundry room with a General Electric washer and dryer from Bell's Furniture & Appliance. This helps Sue avoid the trips she had to make to Rockford when wet towels and suits piled up in her formerly washer-free cottage after a day on the lake.

A basement with five-and-a-half foot ceilings is a concession to the fact that the water table prevented Lee and Sue from building a full-sized basement in their home.

TOP: In the guest bedroom, fresh, vibrant hues of blue and green recall the shades of sky, lake and leaves waiting just outside. Crisp white furnishings and a woven headboard maintain the classic look of a waterside cottage.

LEFT: A quaint patio is the perfect spot for a leisurely brunch or enjoying a glass of wine in the evening.

Rotman had the home's mechanical components placed in this "crawl space," and also installed a Bilco door—what Sue calls a "Wizard of Oz" cellar—that opens onto the backyard, allowing the Murphys to put beach toys directly into the basement without having to drag them through the home. An outdoor shower and footbath also help the cottage stay clean by keeping sand and mud outside.

Thanks to a remote-control retractable screen covering two walls, the open porch in the backyard becomes a closed porch with ease, allowing the Murphys to enjoy the lake view when the sun dips below the horizon while keeping out bugs. "The porch is a great place to sit with a glass of wine," Sue says.

"The cottage turned out to be everything we had in mind and more"

It's this mixture of character and convenience that fills the Murphys' home and makes it a perfect retreat from city living. Upon spending their first Labor Day in the cottage, Lee and Sue quickly found it an improvement over the previous structure, which allowed only day trips to Silver Lake. The couple are considering a permanent move to the cottage once they retire, and say it has all the features they'll need to achieve a comfortable lifestyle, both for themselves and for the family members who will be frequent guests.

"The only reason we thought to save the old place was its charm," Lee concludes. Yet the new version offers that same charm in a more family-friendly package. "It exceeded our expectations. The cottage turned out to be everything we had in mind and more." ☺

- DESIGNER Hal Hoekzema
- BUILDER Dennis Rotman Builders
- INTERIOR DESIGN . . . Christine DiMaria Design
- Brickwork Lincoln Brick
- Cabinetry and
Countertops . . . Dimensions Kitchen & Bath
- Flooring Rivershores Companies
- Heating and Cooling Tacoma Heating
& Cooling
- Landscaping Clark's Landscaping
- Windows Plainfield Lumber