



ABOVE: The cabin was built right on beach level. A big deck and tons of windows take advantage of gorgeous lake views. The inspiration for the great room windows came from a mountain house in Keystone, Colo. BELOW: The great room vaulted ceiling features decorative king and queen trusses. Weathered barnwood accents with traces of red paint add a pop of color. RIGHT: The cabin has a traditional 6x12-inch log profile, with hand-hewn Douglas Fir logs. A 4-inch insulated chink joint meets local energy code



Courtesy Michael & Cynthia Drewek
BEFORE

ALL IN THE FAMILY

A waterfront cabin celebrates a grandfather's legacy

STORY BY FRAN SIGURDSSON | PHOTOS BY GLENN SANDERSON

At Camp Mudjeekee in Wisconsin, states a 1927 brochure, the emphasis is on “happy, safe adventure.” The “log cabin camp for girls” on Lilly Bay featured a dining hall and three “pioneer” cabins. Each of the sleeping cabins, according to the brochure, boasted an “open fireplace” and “quaint, comfortable interior.” The camp ceased operation in the 1930s, a victim of the Great Depression. But the log cabins still stand, anchored by a beautiful new one belonging to Michael and Cynthia Drewek.

Michael is the third generation of Dreweks to vacation at Mudjeekee. For him, it's like attending an extended family reunion. “I still look forward to seeing my friends that I grew up with at Camp Mudjee-

kee when they come with their families – the great-grandchildren of the original owners.”

It all started with ...

Michael's grandparents, Tony and Loretta Drewek of Racine, Wis., rented “White Birch” in the mid-1950s. The following spring, Tony opted to buy the cabin – much to the delight of Michael's dad, David Drewek.

David and his two brothers never lacked for playmates. The Kwas, who bought “White Pine” in the mid-1940s, had nine children. The Stuelkes, who also bought one of the cabins after the War, had seven. David became a teacher, so Michael and his two siblings got to spend spring break and entire glorious summers at “camp.” The youngsters hung out on the beach, playing

kick the can and capture the flag.

“My dad taught me how to sail on Lake Michigan,” he reminisces. “And we both would go fishing with one of the Kwas kids on their boat before sunrise on many cold summer mornings.”

Good news, bad news

In time, Michael married Cynthia and they had two children of their own. But as the extended Drewek family grew, White Birch's interior went from “comfortable” to cramped.

The good news: Mudjeekee's former dining hall came on the market in 2005. The bad: It was offered as a teardown. Converted into a residence for the original camp owner, Mary Higgins, upkeep was neglected after her death. A leaky roof had

HOW TO GET THIS LOOK

*"Make new friends, but keep the old.
One is silver and the other gold."*

The popular girls' camp song applies to cabins, too. But when it's time to bid farewell to an heirloom cabin, do as the Dreweks and keep as much "gold" as possible.

"Cynthia was sad to tear down the old house," says Michael. "So she came up with using parts that were salvageable." The Dreweks hung old varnished panel doors on a closet and a bathroom, and repurposed knobs as cabinet pulls. Spindles from the original screened porch were used on the patio.

Integrating original doors, windows, fixtures, hardware, and more is a great way to preserve the memory of a cherished family cabin. Reusing vintage elements can also give a new retreat a period look.

For example, Cynthia took one of the six-pane windows to Casco cabinetmaker Terry Tassoul and asked if he could build cabinets around the frame. Tassoul's Shaker style cabinets and barnwood kitchen island evoke the simple farmhouse kitchen Cynthia desired. The white porcelain light over the apron sink is from a bathroom in the old house.

A carpenter friend made the Dreweks' metal and wood bed. Another neighbor, who is a potter, made vessel sinks for the three and a half baths.

The Dreweks have 10 acres of woods on the property, and used some of the trees that were felled when the new cabin was built. The half bath on the main level has a stump base for the sink. Two stumps become newel posts on a rustic staircase. (See "Stairwell Tower," directional.) Arborvitae poles that kept the roof and screen porch up in the old house were reused as balusters.

The old house came furnished, but most of the pieces sustained water damage. The Dreweks had several refinished by a former shipbuilder in Sturgeon Bay, including two benches from the original dining hall. One of them now provides seating at the family dining table; the other is outside.

Family photos are always welcome at a cabin. Besides the two windows that were turned into cabinet fronts, Cynthia, an avid photographer, used eight to frame photos. Often, the subjects are happy campers. "We have lots of pictures over the years from being up there," she says. Arts and crafts also deserve a place in every cabin. The Dreweks kept some of the crafts made by the girl campers, including candlesticks and burlap hangings.

TIPS

- Plan ahead, and keep a journal. "There's no way we would have remembered otherwise," says Cynthia.
- Mix old with new. (Don't have any vintage items? Try the nearest flea market!)
- Frame a collage of family snapshots taken at the cabin.
- Repurpose items creatively.
- Introduce texture and color.
- Employ local artisans.



"As part of the design process for the floor plan, I used graph paper to draw out the floor plan to scale and then created "furniture" to scale with the graph paper to make sure the furniture we wanted in each room would work/fit," says Cynthia Drewek. "That way you don't end up with a big oops after the room is built!"



caused extensive water damage. "There were mushrooms growing in the ceiling," recalls Michael. But the couple snatched it up faster than a developer could say condominium. "My grandfather left us a legacy," he says. "Our goal was to keep it within the family."

Calling on local builder Charles Schmitt of CJS Design & General Contracting (Casco, Wis.) to patch the roof, Michael and Cynthia eked out 9 years there.

Cabin dreaming

For the last 5 years in the old dining hall structure, the couple dreamed of replacing the drafty, stick-built cabin with a retreat in keeping with Mudjееkee's pioneer spirit. They clipped pages from magazines, listed resources, and photographed cabins they liked both nearby and back home in the Denver area. Everything went into a journal. "That helped us a huge amount

in designing the place, and also [with] the interior design," notes Cynthia.

A friend in Colorado, who also owns a Wisconsin retreat, suggested StoneMill Log & Timber Homes. The Knoxville company builds log and timber frame homes across the continental United States. StoneMill's Appalachian-style cabins resonated with Cynthia, who hails from Nashville. (That's where she met Michael, who was completing a surgical residency at the time.)

"One of the things that attracted the Dreweks to our company was a product we have specialized in for 42 years," says Sales Director Mathew Sterchi. "The traditional, hand-hewn flat log with dovetail corners and chinked joints."

The Dreweks liked the Elk River 2 and the Rose Hill standard plans. But neither offered the four bedrooms they needed to accommodate guests, as well as a teenage son and daughter. In April of 2013, Stone-

Mill designer Remington Brown was tasked with incorporating elements from both plans, along with the couple's wish list, into a custom design.

Though client and designer never met face to face, numerous phone calls, screen shots, and photographs were exchanged over the course of a year. "Cynthia was exceptionally detail oriented," recalls Brown. "She's a great example of planning ahead."

Time to build

Construction started Memorial Day weekend of 2014, with Schmitt as general contractor. After his crew removed the old house and built a new foundation, StoneMill's crew, Creekside Construction, got to work. Creekside assembled the log and timber components and installed rigid insulation between log courses and under the standing-seam metal roof. The two-story shell was completed by the end of June.

Schmucker Log Home Restoration, an

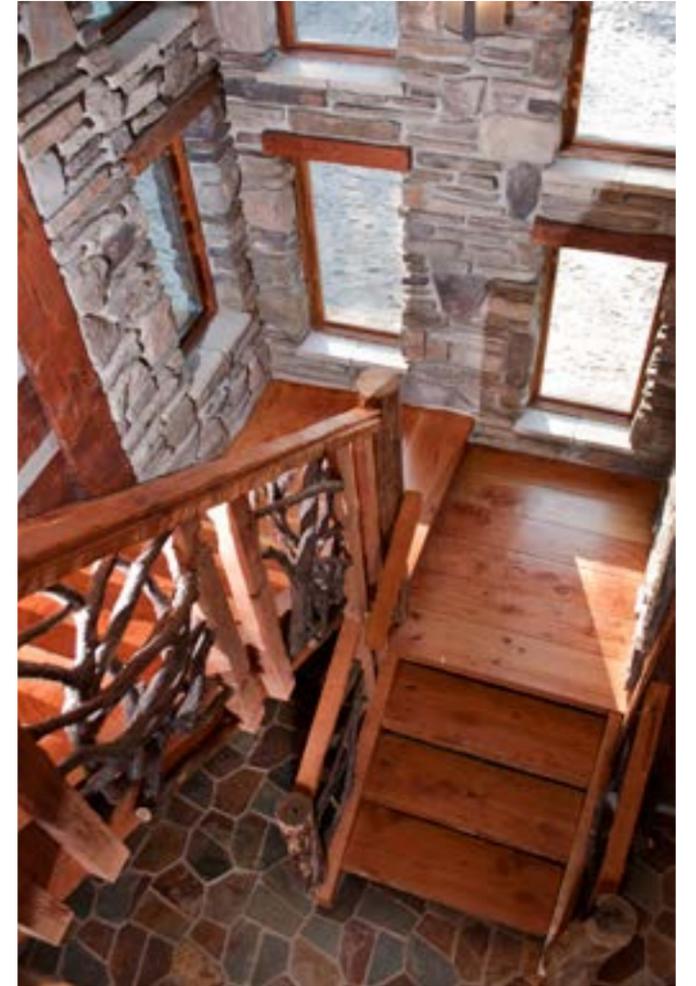
*“My grandfather left us a legacy.
Our goal was to keep it within the family.”*



LEFT: The screen porch is a perfect, mosquito-free retreat for visiting with family or relaxing with a good book. ABOVE: This handmade-pottery bowl sits center stage, and is complimented by a rustic faucet and natural-stone backsplash.



Stone is a beautiful complement to wood. The stairwell tower was faced with a mix of stone. For the exterior, real 6-inch veneer stone was used. On the interior, manufactured stone was used due to space and weight-bearing constraints. The tower also features a back-to-nature rustic staircase that incorporates tree trunks and twigs.



happy campers



THE EMPHASIS at Michael and Cynthia’s new Camp Mudjееkeе retreat is still on happy, safe adventure. The couple keeps family and friends entertained with a “well-balanced program” similar to that listed in the 1927 brochure. Archery and basket weaving may have gone by the wayside, but a lot of pastimes are, at heart, the same.

A typical day starts with a walk on the beach – certainly the favorite pastime of the family pet, a yellow field Labrador Retriever. “Jesse loves being up there,” laughs Cynthia. “He retrieves in the water.” Then there’s swimming and boating. Son Austin, 18, and daughter Paige, 15, join in on the fun. Depending on weather conditions, taking to the water involves surf kayaks, paddleboards, windsurfers, sailboards, PWCs. “Lake Michigan varies tremendously based on direction and speed of wind, from glassy smooth to waves like an ocean,”

explains Cynthia.

As for the off-water game plan, the family plays a lot of badminton in the cabin’s front yard. This summer, everyone is practicing for the Olympics – the Mudjееkeе version, that is, not Rio.

Like the original campers, the Dreweks enjoy outings and excursions. Lilly Bay is 5 miles from the city of Sturgeon Bay in Wisconsin’s Door County. Located on the Door Peninsula stretching into Lake Michigan, the county boasts 300 miles of shoreline. Today, Door County is a premier tourist destination with a thriving cultural scene. “It’s a unique place, with cute Victorian villages,” says Cynthia. “There’s a huge number of artisans, lots of galleries and art work.”

The Dreweks also support Door County’s performing arts. Northern Sky, a family-oriented outdoor theater that stages original works, is a favorite. The family also

loves Peninsula Players, a popular lakeside theater with strolling gardens overlooking Green Bay.

As well as antiquing and art, Door County is known for cherry orchards. Every year, the clan goes cherry picking and makes pies and crumbles with the tart fruit. Then there’s the spectacle of traditional Door County fish boils. “It’s a big production,” says Cynthia, describing how huge kettles of whitefish and potatoes are heated over an open fire. “The kerosene makes huge flames, and the water boils over and spills out. When we have people from out of town, we share that.”

When you add bonfires on the beach, stargazing, and s’mores to the program, well, cabin living just doesn’t get any better than this.

For information, visit the Door County Visitor Bureau web site doorcounty.com

the stairwell tower

“Design is one of those hurdles that people are apprehensive about. The earlier you can get started and let your ideas marinate, and the more back and forth with professionals, the better.” – Remington Brown

Brown’s words certainly ring true for the cabin’s stairwell. Like the one in the Rose Hill model, the stairwell stands out from the cabin. Only this one is encased in stone, not logs. The tower, with its long windows, is based on one at a friend’s house in Colorado, says Cynthia. She took photos and sent them to Brown.

For the designer, moving a stone tower out was a concern. “With a log home, you have to think of settlement,” stresses Brown.

“Remington was very patient and went through many iterations,” recalls Cynthia.

“Finally, I got it the way I wanted it.”

The exterior of the tower is real 6-inch veneer stone, says mason Ron McClure of RMMasonry in nearby Algoma, who also built the chimney. Schmitt and his son Ross built the interior tower walls with manufactured stone. “We used manufactured stone on the inside because we didn’t have room for full stone, says Schmitt. Weight was also an issue.

Schmitt and his son also built the rustic staircase. It incorporates tree trunks and limbs that were removed during construction, as well as posts from the old house. “We came across a picture of a staircase that was natural and twiggy, and shared that with Chuck [Schmitt],” says Cynthia. “He’s an artist. It came out fantastic.”



CABINSTATS

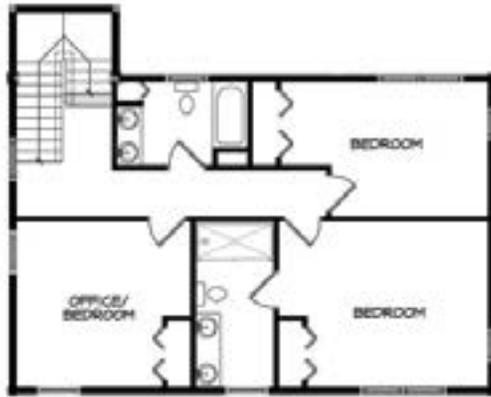
Built: 2014

Location: Sturgeon Bay, Wis.

Square footage: 2,500

Bedrooms: 4

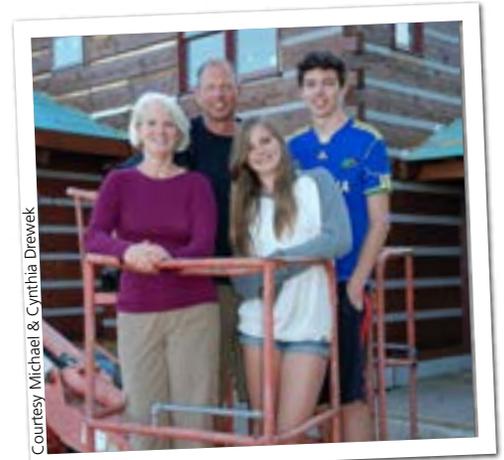
Baths: 3 ½



UPPER LEVEL



MAIN LEVEL



Courtesy Michael & Cynthia Drewek

“I want this place to be a 300-year-old house that will survive the elements.”

— Cynthia Drewek

Amish family business outside Green Bay, did the chinking and staining. Choosing colors from Perma-Chink’s array of products was “one of the hardest, most stressful decisions,” Cynthia says, only half in jest. “It makes a huge impact.” Ultimately, they went with medium gray for chinking, and a chestnut stain.

Schmitt had the interior of the 2,500-square-foot cabin finished by the middle of November. Like the Elk River 2 model, the great room projects forward, overlooking the water. The main level is an open plan, with a master suite on the south end balanced by a screened porch on the opposite end. Three bedrooms occupy the second floor.

Design & décor choices

Because the cabin is on the beach, Cynthia

wanted a floor that could: 1. Stand up to sand, and 2. Not show the grains inevitably tracked inside. “We have slate in Colorado, and it’s very durable,” she says. Rather than square tiles, Cynthia opted for an irregular pattern to create a natural look.

Interior eaves in the great room and bedrooms are trimmed with boards salvaged from a barn in Green Bay. The same barnwood wraps the kitchen island and the area below the great-room fireplace.

There’s a barnwood look in the master bath shower, too, only there it’s ceramic tile. A vertical mosaic strip made by Cynthia, her mom and sister accents the tile. “We spent the weekend gluing and enhancing stones from the beach,” she says.

To bring the outside in, Cynthia chose slate flooring for the main level in earthtones of brown, blue, tan and green.

“When I was [at the site] over the summer, I would bring in all the pieces and make sure the colors went together.” The yellow-green color coordinates well with the cabinets, painted Sherwin-Williams Bamboo Shoot.

Silestone quartz kitchen countertops with grey veining resemble granite. “We have it in Colorado and I love it,” says Cynthia. “It’s very durable. You don’t have to seal it.”

“We were going for lasting,” she continues. “I want this place to be a 300-year-old house that will survive the elements. Considering we built the house from 1,200 miles away, we’re pleased as punch”. **CL**

Fran Sigurdsson enjoys lakeside living with her family at “Camp Sacandaga” in New York’s Adirondacks.