

Story by Marisa Crumb
Photos by Carolyn Bates



VERMONT HOMES AND GARDENS

The Gift of a Beautiful Spot

Lakeside Home in Charlotte Is Well Suited for Stellar Sunsets

THE 6,500-SQUARE-FOOT HOUSE THAT SHARES the same view as The Inn at Shelburne Farms has a somewhat mosaic past and an equally enchanting present. Three separate entities that are actually attached comprise a preserved barn built in the early 1800s (with its

own intriguing history); the older farmhouse guest wing, which is the connector between the barn and the newer main house; and the main residence, constructed in 1988, that accentuates distinct moldings and classic design details. Husband and wife Peter Holmberg and Denise Durling are



The pristine lakeside property with its large barn, main house, and guest wing, has a unique, historical connection to marine traffic of the 19th century.



The flagstone terrace outside the living room can also be handily accessed from the kitchen and is “the best place on earth to watch the sun set over the Adirondacks,” says Denise appreciatively.



Inside the living room, the bay of five, 7-foot-tall windows, similar to those at Monticello designed by Thomas Jefferson, let in plenty of light and afford a great view of Lake Champlain.



Husband and wife Peter Holmberg and Denise Durling are the homeowners. "Our changes to this magnificent home were minimal," Denise says. The foyer (below) has a slate floor and is enhanced with a wall made from locally quarried Pantone stone.



the grateful homeowners who didn't change much at all when they moved in, in June 2013.

Denise describes the large kitchen as "a real workhorse of a kitchen." Typically, the very first thing new homeowners do is completely tear out the kitchen. In this case, the 1980s archetypal kitchen was extremely functional and so well thought out that the couple decided to keep it as is. Why mess with success? they figured, and the space provided everything they needed and wanted whether they were entertaining friends or cooking for themselves or hosting visiting family members (the couple's children are grown and now grandchildren are part of the scene as well). Denise explains that it is fitted with a Traulsen side-by-side commercial refrigerator-freezer. "They are both super deep, providing maximum capacity for our many summertime gatherings here lakeside," she says. The range is also commercial grade, with six burners, two large ovens, a flat top for "pancake mornings and fajita nights," and a salamander. At first it conjured images of the little orange critter, so I had to ask; a salamander, Denise clarified, is a broiler that uses intense infrared ceramic broilers. There is also a conventional oven and a Jen Air range. With these professional-grade appliances, it's easy to envision myriad parties and gatherings that are pulled off seamlessly.

The custom cabinets were crafted from beautiful tiger maple. No upper cabinets were installed; instead, a half-circle of unadorned windows fully takes in the breathtaking, reach-out-




With the purchase of this home, Peter and Denise had the opportunity to create an entirely updated interior design. Denise describes the large kitchen (below) that's nicely equipped with new, commercial-grade appliances and custom cabinets made of tiger maple, as "a real workhorse."



and-touch-it lake views. A marble slab perfect for pastry preparation and making is tucked away next to the range, and a solid, butcher-block island—more space for ample storage—anchors the room. A floor-to-ceiling pantry, a combination of closed cabinetry and glass-front cupboards, is adjacent to the kitchen and provides even more storage. And a shining feature of the kitchen is the ability to walk directly outside to the terrace overlooking Lake Champlain. So with a steaming cup of morning coffee or an evening glass of wine in hand, Denise and Peter can be out in nature just steps from the kitchen. Another favorite spot, in Adirondack chairs down by the lake or on their dock on the lake, finds them listening to the lapping water of Lake Champlain. “It’s so restful as we watch the charming ferry coast back-and-forth from the Vermont shore to the New York shore,” says Denise.

A beautiful foyer in the front hall is enhanced with local Panton stone on the wall that extends to the height of the open two stories. Besides the main

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The living room (above) in the guest wing, which is actually the original home on the property. The library in the main house (below) features a custom-designed curved ceiling and the use of Vermont butternut wood throughout.



entrance, Panton stone (from the northwestern town in Vermont) also embellishes the living room and the master bedroom. The texture, natural element, and beautiful architectural statement is one of Denise's favorite components in their three-bedroom, three-bathroom home. Incorporating another local material is the use of native Vermont butternut in the custom-designed library, which features a curved ceiling—adding more character and further interest to the warm and inviting space. An apropos vernacular touch, the floors throughout the house are oak, with Vermont slate in the entry halls.

The couple previously lived in a converted barn in Warren on 80 acres. Unfortunately, a fire destroyed their home; they left with “pretty much the clothes on our backs,” relates Denise. “With children grown and off, a move became a thought. I went on the hunt, and this home was the third property I saw. Immediately I knew I had found our new home. When I drove in the first time to see this house, I realized everything is going to be just fine. Peter and I love our lake life.” She continues, “With the loss of everything in the fire, we had the opportunity to create an entirely updated interior design. I had specific ideas on design and fabric.” Cecilia Redmond of Redmond Interior Design assisted Denise in getting the project done. “It feels just right,” she adds.



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The remodeling of the bathrooms was the largest project, with the removal of wallpaper and repainting surfaces constituting the final touch. The stonework by the downstairs fireplace and in the foyer is matched by that in the master bedroom.




“Our changes to this magnificent home were minimal. Remodeling all the bathrooms was the largest project, with removing wallpaper and freshly painting surfaces the final touch,” Denise says. And really, why change something as spectacular as the bay of five windows that illuminates and highlights the living room so splendidly? These stunning 7-foot-tall windows, akin to the ones designed by Thomas Jefferson at Monticello, slide all the way up and enable one to step right through, connecting the living room to the lake-facing terrace. “The flagstone terrace graces the lake side of the home. It provides several seating areas and a dining table on one end, a huge casual table and benches on the other. Fresh landscaping provides large graceful beds of perennials, ferns, and flowering bushes. The best place on earth to watch the sun set over the Adirondacks,” says Denise appreciatively.


The guest wing is the original home on this property, she explains. It is attached to a massive and stunning barn; they used it for a wedding last year! In the early 1880s the barn housed the mules that powered the Lake Champlain ferry from Charlotte, Vermont to Essex, New York (the aforementioned intriguing history), Denise recounts. The original farmhouse accommodates the two guest bedrooms and expanded guest bath with large walk-in marble shower. There is a long annex-hallway between the bedrooms and the bank barn (a style characterized by the convenience of entry at ground level, as it’s typically built into the side of a hill) with cedar paneling where the couple plans to build bunk beds for their grandchildren in the future. There is even a small galley kitchen in the guest wing for overnight guests to access—and it also allows Denise and Peter to “happily sleep until we want to!”

In the main house, the couple’s bedroom offers expansive views of the Adirondacks in the distance and of the lake, thanks to an entire wall of windows. “From our bed, through large sliding doors, we can look right out at the lake and the Adirondacks.” Their three-acre property is also home to a resident eagle that lands in a tree outside their bedroom and fishes from the branches. Not an everyday scene elsewhere for certain... In addition to the simple yet distinctly elegant master bedroom, the suite con-




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sists of Peter's master bath and walk-in closet and Denise's master bath and walk-in closet. From her deep soaker tub Denise can look out directly at the lake just beyond the large windows. A cozy sitting area with two overstuffed, comfortable chairs in the master bedroom affords quiet space for reading and unwinding.

Denise notes that "for a big house, it's very livable." With several sitting areas and places to gather to relax or have a conversation, it might be easy to feel cut off; it's not the case in this house though. There are distinct rooms with specific purposes yet the design is very conducive to an open feel; during parties, no one is segregated or out of the festivities loop. "It's an incredible flow," remarks Denise, "every space is open to each adjoining space." An unintentional theme, so to speak, throughout the home décor wise is furnishing the rooms with paintings by Vermont women artists. When they lost everything in the fire at their previous home, the couple took the opportunity to decorate here in a different fashion, with new and fresh artwork, furniture, and fabrics. The paintings were a "phenomenon that just happened to happen!" says Denise.

"What a gift to be able to live in such a beautiful spot," reflects Denise. "Unless we are heading out on our sailboat, we stay happily planted here all summer. We have landed safely and couldn't be more blessed to call McNeil Cove home." ¶

Marisa Crumb enjoys hiking, kayaking, and all forms of chocolate. Carolyn Bates is a professional photographer who lives and works in Burlington, VT. To see more of her work, visit carolynbates.com.

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