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# Maine Magic

*A Florida couple is irresistibly drawn North to a lakeside cabin they now call home six months of the year.*

**“We needed a home that would blend right into the area,” says homeowner Clora Hamilton. “We wanted it to look like we were always here, and the design, the size, the materials, really do give it that timeless feel.” As does the welcoming, 8-foot deep front porch, which shows off many of husband Wayne’s roadside finds. “He is a trash picker extraordinaire,” laughs Clora. “Once we started to outfit the house, we were all about reuse, recycle, repurpose and reimagine.”**

**I**f you’ve ever heard the phrase “there’s something in the water,” then you’re on the road to uncovering the mysterious allure of a pair of tiny towns tucked into the foothills of southern Maine’s White Mountains. Gathered around the remarkably beautiful but relatively undiscovered Kezar Lake, the pastoral hamlets barely register above a population of 1,000. Even during the summertime swell, when out-of-state visitors seek to beat the heat and ease into breezy, carefree days, these piney shores retain their quiet beauty and the charm of the land remains strong.

In fact, once upon a time, droves of young girls from up and down the East Coast visited a particularly pretty spot along the lake’s shoreline for summer sleepaway camp. Here, they were willing to endure weeks under canvas for the offer of natural serenity and outdoor adventure. More than half a century later, Florida residents Clora and Wayne Hamilton





above The home's shared gathering areas fill the main 20-by-24-foot living space. "This plan has it all in a small package," shares Richard Titorenko, Coventry Log Homes' sales rep. "You can be cooking and entertaining on the main floor, and the kids can be upstairs in the loft area watching television or in the lower-level playroom."

opposite Spacious and cozy at once, the open kitchen boasts a pantry, movable island (handmade by homeowner Wayne from reclaimed wood and steel brackets), knotty pine tongue-and-groove cabinetry, locally sourced pine floors, a soapstone sink and stainless-steel appliances.

experienced that same draw, though they were seeking shelter a little more substantial than a tent.

The couple had been searching for property up north, where they could spend half the year away from the Sunshine State's sweltering humidity. They fell in love with Maine and had an instant connection to a particular piece of property. Turns out, it was the very same spot where the girls' camp once thrived.

They couldn't escape the *je ne sais quoi*; nor did they try to. "The summer camp had been closed for 50 years, so there were decades of over-

growth," explains Clora. "But as soon as we pulled off the dirt road and I put my feet on the land, I started to cry. I knew this is exactly where we needed to be."

From the get-go, the couple wanted to honor the area's sense of time and place — a determining factor in their decision to build a compact timber frame. "We all live in the world of the McMansions where we tend to have more space than we need," says Clora. "But we wanted something that would fit in with our land and with the community. It is a place with a lot of older camps, and people have lovingly



preserved the area's architecture."

They began searching for plans under 1,500 square feet and quickly stumbled upon the "Cape Cod" from Coventry Log Homes. It had everything they needed in a tidy package — plenty of room for gathering, thanks to the open-concept layout and loft, a primary suite and laundry room on the main floor and two upper-level bedrooms with a shared bathroom.

What it didn't have was a cramped atmosphere. "Our agenda was to make sure it didn't live like a small space," says Clora. She is quick to add that designing a functional home

within a limited footprint is more than achievable. "You have to be intentional and creative with your spaces."

For example, the couple's floor plan eschews the customary primary en suite, allowing the main level's bathroom to service the entire house instead. It also pulls double duty as the laundry room, with the inclusion of a side-by-side washer and dryer. "With a smaller house, you really have to think about the form-follows-function concept. Ask yourself, 'What are we building, and what is it going to serve?' When you do that, it really simplifies your life."

With design ideas in mind, they reached out to Richard Titorenko, Coventry's local sales rep, who reaffirmed their Cape Cod choice. "There's a 32-foot shed dormer on the backside of the house, so the bathroom, bedroom and loft all have complete headroom, which is key in a smaller home," he says. "You could walk into a 1,500-square-foot house, but this 1,296-square-foot house is going to feel bigger all day long because of that design."

After a few adjustments to the stock plan, including a walk-out lower level which houses a single-car



garage, an art studio for Clora and a playroom for visiting grandchildren, they were ready to move forward with their home away from home. Then, the pandemic struck. “We had planned on flying up every couple of months to check on the progress, but as it turned out, we never saw the house in person until we moved in,” Clora says. “We loved it the second we walked through the door. When we are in the house, everything feels lighter and easier because we are not encumbered by all the extras.”

Despite its diminutive footprint, the cabin lives large exactly as planned. Lofted ceilings lend a sense of spaciousness, while the eastern white pine that forms the frame and wraps around every wall of the interiors creates continuity that helps the space to feel bigger than it is. Of course, the windows on every wall that allow natural light to pour in do their part, too. “No matter what room you’re in, you feel like you’re in a tree house,” Clora says.

Part of that effect is due to the unique way the house is situated on the land — the front porch rises one

**Special treasures fill the home’s entertaining spaces, like the dining table fashioned by Wayne from a repurposed wood slab and barstool legs.**







**left** In the 12-by-12 loft, the homeowners and their guests can get up-close and personal with the home's eastern white pine timber frame. Metal railings along the loft and staircase visually lighten the space, enhancing the open aesthetic and allowing natural light to move freely. "Every single day we walk around the house, we say we can't believe how beautiful it is," Clora says.

**below** The combined bathroom and laundry room also provides storage space for cleaning essentials – a must in a small home. "There's a little space that became the perfect place to fit my broom and dustpan," she says.

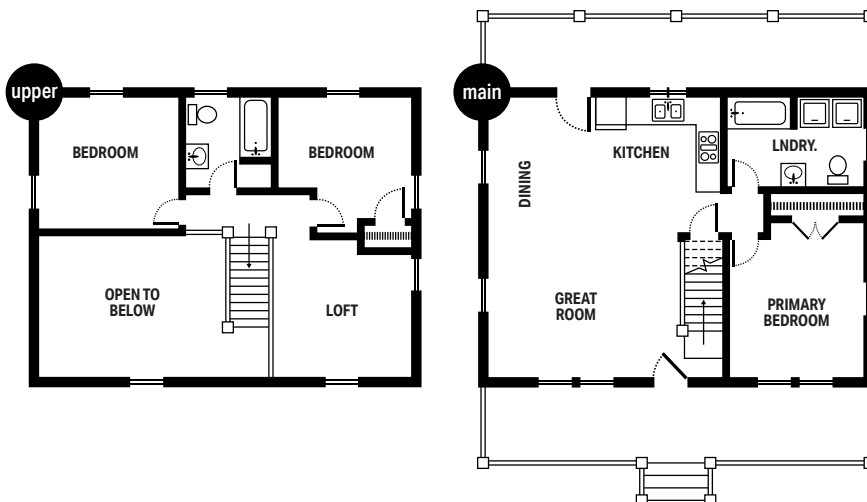


## HOME DETAILS

**SQUARE FOOTAGE**  
1,296

**BEDROOMS** 3  
**BATHS** 2 full

**DESIGNER/TIMBER PROVIDER**  
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story off the ground, which allows the rear of the home to walk out to a ground-level deck, further expanding the living space. It's a favorite spot for catching glimpses of the wildlife, possibly lured by the promise of the fruit trees, blueberries and raspberries planted by Wayne. Or, maybe, like everyone else, they're drawn to the land. "I wouldn't be surprised if even fairies and gnomes live in these woods," says Clora with a laugh. "It really is that magical here."