

little lake cabin in the wisconsin woods

A timber-framed family retreat gets a new life.

History was made here. Ancient history, when the last glacier retreated, making way for placid lakes, shimmering rivers and dense forests. American history, when early settlers tamed the north-central Wisconsin wilderness. There's family history, too, made by loving parents who built a tiny cabin by a lake in those woods.

"This was the vision of my parents, Sharon and Leo," explains Doug Beilfuss. "My father oversaw construction and guided my brother, Pat, and me through everything from electrical and plumbing to drywall. My mom

More than 20 years after its original construction, Doug and Patty Beilfuss have renovated a small cabin situated within 21 acres of Wisconsin woods filled with maple, red oak, hemlock, cedar, white pine and ash. Porch timbers were crafted from Douglas fir, and new western red cedar lap siding stained with Sherwin-Williams WoodScapes covers the exterior.

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“Since our longest stay at the cabin is a week at a time, there is no need for full-sized appliances,” Doug shares. “The GE refrigerator is a 24-inch-wide model, and the range is a 24-inch Bertazzoni.” Doug and Patty love to cook, so to ensure ample lighting, they installed Scandinavian-inspired pendant lights by Maxim and track lighting by WAC.



HOME DETAILS

SQUARE FOOTAGE

980

BEDROOMS 1 **BATHS** 1 full

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textured the walls, primed and painted. Along the way, many friends and family contributed to the construction with ‘work weekends.’ It was a great experience.”

By the time the little timber frame was completed in 1997, Doug’s parents had created more than a family retreat. They had helped launch a career for Doug, who soon after founded Custom Timber Frames in Madison, Wisconsin.

“This was my first timber frame,” shares Doug. “The project gave me the confidence to continue in the profes-

sion. We now work nationwide, and our business and techniques have evolved. I studied under a great log home builder and learned how to work with large pieces of wood and the importance of precision cutting. The timber frame connected with me and was a natural progression.”

Recalling more than 20 years of holidays, special occasions and “countless parties and time spent around the fire ring,” Doug says the house was built as a family cabin and lives up to it.

“As my parents aged and ultimately passed away — the last members of our family who moved to the area in the 1890s — it became clear that this cabin was going to take on a new importance,” Doug says.

He and his brother shared ownership of the cabin for a time after his parents passed. Then, in 2019, Doug and his wife, Patty, bought the cabin outright.

“Our nieces and nephews all have personal memories of the cabin. Sledding in the winter, building forts in the woods in summer. Also, a long line of cousins, their kids, hunting camps with multiple generations,” Doug recalls.

Doug and Patty decided to renovate the original cabin. “Patty led the renovation with a strong vision of what this should be. It was driven by the need to expand the loft and make the main floor living area more efficient,” explains Doug. “We added six large windows to bring in more of the view.”

Taking advantage of more than 400 feet of lake frontage and 21 acres of forests, they’re currently developing a hiking trail system, and a modern, two-bedroom cabin is in the works on an adjacent lake lot.

“Our goal is to have a property that can comfortably host our families now and down the line,” Doug says.

It would seem that there is more history to be made in these Wisconsin woods.

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