

CHICAGO HOME + GARDEN

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SUMMER 2016



DIVE IN!

These summer-inspired interiors may spark a simple refresh—or a major renovation



Hydrangeas and boxwood shrubs frame the front porch of the farmhouse-style home. On lazy summer days, the homeowners' young daughters often hang out on the swing, eating Popsicles.



WEEKENDS AWAY

A Chicago family builds a farmhouse in Michigan from the ground up.

BY ELAINE MARKOUTSAS | PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDY BARNES | STYLING BY BARRI LEINER GRANT



Sweet memories from childhood summers can leave a lasting imprint, like one boy's recollection of a sojourn at a friend's home in Grand Beach, Michigan. When the boy grew up and married his soulmate, they put down roots in Chicago but continued to rent in the area each summer, eventually with two daughters (now 7 and 10) in tow.

One day, a real estate agent told the couple that a 100-by-200-foot grassy lot nearby had become

available. They snapped it up and started to dream. "We knew we wanted a farmhouse," the wife says, even though there weren't others around. She and her husband turned to a friend, artist and designer Linc Thelen, who had rehabbed their Chicago home. He nailed it on his first sketch, and construction began soon after.

The white frame home with black window frames, a shingled gable roof, a 40-foot-long front porch with the traditional swing,

and an almost old-fashioned expanse of landscape looks like it might have been there for 100 years. "We wanted to give it a barn-like look," says Thelen, who chose board-and-batten siding, a metal roof over the porch and included the requisite chimney—topped with a bunny-shaped weathervane (an homage to the husband's childhood friend who loved the animal). He beefed up the porch's paneled posts and detailed its railings, as well as the ga-



tailed its railings, as well as the garage doors, with X shapes.

The 2,500-square-foot home lives large because of an open-plan concept, 16-foot ceilings, and plentiful light. There is an inviting mix of cottage and industrial materials—rough-hewn wood, raw metal, and honed stone—as well as an eclectic assortment of furnishings that are sophisticated in palette (grounded by gray and navy), with linen fabrics and playful elements thrown in (a casual picnic-style table with metal chairs and bench; a reclaimed “Lake” sign). Says Thelen: “The house has a Shaker-like simplicity: clean and modern, less decorative, a bit edgy, but very comfortable.”

Rough-sawn white oak beams are a striking focal point of the living room’s vaulted ceiling. They lend warmth, as does the cocktail table that Thelen designed out of salvaged pine. “Besides the wood beams, we knew we wanted a



Left: A grand iron chandelier from Currey and Company encircles the main living space. Below: Floating shelves crafted from rough-sawn white oak and mounted with custom-made brackets flank the range in the kitchen. Opposite: Architect and interior designer Linc Thelen had the long picnic-style table custom-made out of rough-sawn white oak. The mixed-media oil painting by Thelen suggests wave-like movement—a nod to Lake Michigan.

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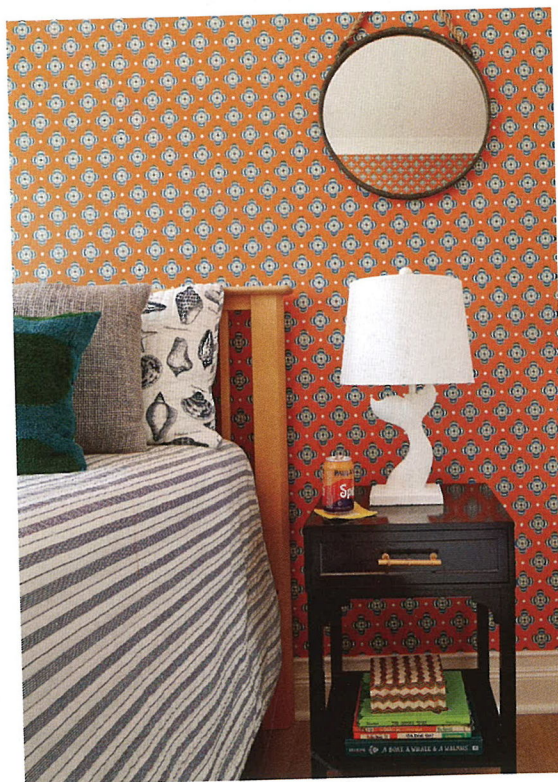
PHOTOGRAPH: JIMTSCHETTER



bunkroom for the girls,” says the wife. “We entertain here—every weekend friends are up,” she says. “We didn’t want toys and stuff around, especially when we retreat in the evenings. Downstairs is adult space.”

As for the main eating area, “one of the great aspects of the casual, comfortable home is that there’s no formal dining room,” says Thelen. “The [dining] table anchors the center, between the kitchen and living room. It’s great because they have huge dinner parties, and the bench opens up the space and allows interaction with those sitting on the stools in the kitchen.”

There are no recessed ceiling lights; instead, lighting is layered: a 63-inch round hand-forged iron chandelier in the main living area, an industrial mottled metal lamp over the dining table, and, in the kitchen, 20th-century-factory-inspired pendants above the soapstone counter and gooseneck barn



Above: In the girls’ bunkroom, Thelen designed the sleek, built-in bunks with drawer storage and detailed the beds with nautical rope, which creates the illusion of floating. Left: Perky print wallpaper in the guest room is a campy backdrop for the bed, a remnant from the husband’s bachelor days. Opposite: Just outside the first-floor bath is an enclosed outdoor shower, paved with thermal-protected bluestone tile that leads to the pool. Hooks bear family members’ initials. For resources, see Buy Guide on page 19.



Above: In the girls' bunkroom, Thelen designed the sleek, built-in bunks with drawer storage and detailed the beds with nautical rope, which creates the illusion of floating. Left: Perky print wallpaper in the guest room is a campy backdrop for the bed, a remnant from the husband's bachelor days. Opposite: Just outside the first-floor bath is an enclosed outdoor shower, paved with thermal-protected bluestone tile that leads to the pool. Hooks bear family members' initials. For resources, see *Buy Guide* on page 19.



lights above rough-hewn floating shelves on the shiplap-paneled back wall. "Each space has its own originality but is also connected to the space next to it," says Thelen.

That cohesiveness extends to the color scheme, with navy drawn from the kitchen into the guest room on the first floor and the girls' bunkroom upstairs, and grays from the main level seeping into the master bedroom's uphol-

stered bed frame on the second level. "Linc said, 'I want you to feel like you're in a hotel, with a sink-in comfy bed,'" says the wife, noting that the king size is a luxury they don't have back in Chicago. "It's regal looking."

As the family settles in, a few more plans remain on the drawing board. "We want to build out the backyard with plantings and put in a formal fire pit," the wife says.

"The best thing about [our home] is how happy we all are when we're here. The girls and my husband love to get in the golf cart with the lily pad [swim raft] tied to the roof and head to Lake Michigan.

"Everyone is in a good mood, smiling. Every time, it feels like a vacation. In just one season, we created so many memories. We can't wait to get back." ●