

ADIRONDACK LIFE

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Great Pairing

At the Metropolitan Opera she was a ballerina, he was a singer. At their Indian Lake getaway, she wanted *On Golden Pond*, he wanted a Japanese teahouse. What they created is a harmonious happily ever after

—
BY ANNIE STOLTIE
PHOTOGRAPHS BY
JULIE WALMSLEY





“We’ve seen triple rainbows and, if you paddle directly across the lake, there might be otters playing. There are lake trout beyond our dock. We fall asleep to the loons. It’s magical.”



Yes,

it’s an extraordinary house—smartly designed, beautifully appointed, looking out onto one of the loveliest lakes in the Adirondack Park. But there’s way more happening here than four (very tall) walls and a roof. There’s the reason Deborah Allton-Maher and Rob Maher are in Indian Lake in the first place and why they’ll stay here for the rest of their lives.

Rob’s visits to the Adirondacks started 25 years ago, when he’d bring his kids to camp on Indian Lake’s islands. They’d paddle and hike, embracing what Rob calls “the wilderness experience.” He says, “I fell in love with it and dreamed of having a place here. I even sketched my future home before it existed.” He needed his Adirondack get-

Facing page: Neighbor Jeff Degeyter’s pen-and-ink drawings hang in the bedroom. The dumbwaiter helps transport meals or cocktails from the kitchen to the deck. Labs Posy and Ludlow have taken to lake life.

Below: Japanese-charred wood, on the home’s exterior, weathers well and is pest resistant.



aways. “During rough times in my life, nature would say, *Don’t freak out, you’re going to be OK.*”

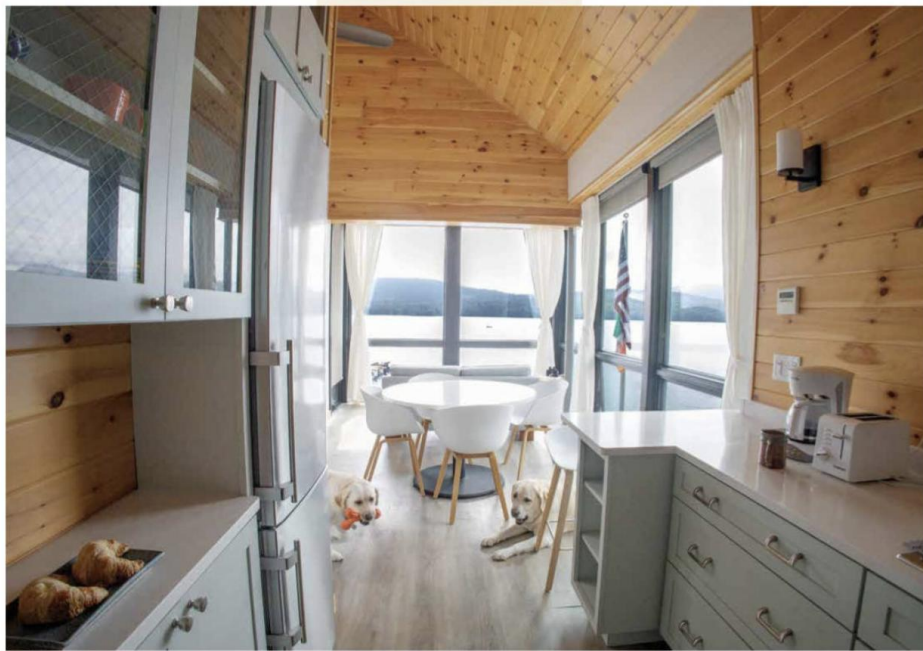
That’s why bringing Deborah here for the first time, back in 2005, was such a big deal. He’d only shared this paradise with his family. He and Deborah had been together for a while and it was time. And site 10 on Green Island in Indian Lake was just the introduction.

“Oh, it’s *Brigadoon!*” Deborah had said. “I was speechless... it was incredible. I had never been up here.”

Deborah had lived in Manhattan for 46 years. She’d attended Julliard, followed by a two-decade career as a ballet dancer with the Metropolitan Opera. Just before retiring she went to Fordham Law, later becoming an attorney for the American Guild of Musical Artists AFL-CIO. “Most of my life revolved around Lincoln Center,” she says.

That’s how she met Rob.

A baritone, he’d been a full-time chorister at the Met for almost 30 years. He



Right: Deborah, who grew up in Colorado, says the mountains here feel more welcoming than the Rockies, “like they have some kind of ancient wisdom.”

and Deborah had crossed paths, but it was while reviewing the draft of a Met Opera contract over lunch that he asked her out. They fell in love, married in 2006 and put their collective bargaining skills to use years later when it came time to build their dream home.

First, they bought a 1940s cottage on Indian Lake. “It was really cute,” says Deborah, “but it was sliding into the lake.” After it was razed, they set about designing a new year-round home that would occupy the cottage’s footprint.

Rob wanted a Japanese teahouse—Met tours had brought them to Japan numerous times—and Deborah wanted *On Golden Pond*. Their architect, Philip Consalvo, of PJCArchitecture, also had ideas. Ultimately, they landed on a three-story modern structure with pitched roofs, wood siding, stone walls, multi-tiered decks and a wall of windows facing the lake.

“Designing the home was a creative process,” says Consalvo. “They both understood the importance of material and form, and as with the creation of a dance or an aria, they understood the importance of process, practice and collaboration.”

“We look out at Forever Wild land,” says Rob. “We’ve seen triple rainbows and, if you paddle directly across the lake, there might be otters playing. There are lake trout beyond our dock. We fall asleep to the loons. It’s magical.”

“I love the mountains,” says Deborah. “I grew up in Colorado. The Rockies feel so different, almost aggressive, as though they’re saying, ‘I dare you.’ But here they’re more welcoming, like they have some kind of ancient wisdom.”

And the house? They both say it’s a “vertically challenging space,” so a dumbwaiter delivers meals and cocktails from the kitchen to the bottom floor for drinks on the deck. Space-saving pocket doors and covertly placed storage streamline the home’s interior.

“We occupy every square inch of our property,” says Rob, “and we’re still learning how to live in this space. But it exceeds our expectations.” ▲



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