



Extending a long dune view

Above: A mirrored wall in the dining room multiplies natural light and waterfront enjoyment. "The quarter-angle lakeshore view here is tremendous," noted architect John Allegretti. "It seems to go on forever." Sof-fits and lighting articulate the ceiling, while a built-in buffet lends friendly elegance.

Right: A shared driveway and fragile dune inspired Allegretti Architects Inc. to design a four-story home that makes the most of waterfront views. Built by Hazelhoff Construction in Mattawan, the beachside retreat's simple, indigenous landscaping is primarily Marram grass.

Top left: Housing inviting warmth from Heatilator, a massive limestone surround in the living room rises into the master suite above, subtly repeating the home's bold exterior grid pattern. Unhindered lakeshore views are enhanced by energy-efficient Pella windows, trimmed in red birch and thermally protected by automatic energy shades.

Photo styling: Kelly Nugent, Melissa Brooks

Through the Looking glass

On the shores of Lake Michigan, a contemporary cottage with sunny character makes the most of panoramic views and nature's commodities.

BY LISA M. JENSEN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL BUCK

WHAT BEGAN AS PLANS FOR A COUPLE'S VACATION HOME took a scenic detour into permanent residency along Lake Michigan's southern shoreline. The transition seems rooted in something meant to be: They had both grown up along this Great Lake's coast. Sun, sand, sky and seasons of shoreline memories remained ingrained in their minds, even though career obligations brought them inland to Kalamazoo.

When professional roles began to incorporate international travel, job proximity lost its relevance — and inspired an inventive, modern, year-round home that reflects the moods and soul-reviving nuances the couple (who favors privacy) has long loved about lake living.

"There isn't a room you can be in," one of the homeowners noted, "and not see the lake."





Above: Originally designed as a vacation home, the main floor's open plan includes a living room, dining area, kitchen and sitting area. Curved, corrugated aluminum-clad cabinetry adds visual interest and directs a visitor's gaze to an expansive view of Lake Michigan.

Left: Centrally located, the kitchen anchors this home's three-dimensional grid design. Glass, aluminum and stainless steel elements including Fisher & Paykel dishwashing drawers, Thermidor oven and a Sub Zero refrigerator echo its industrial, yet welcoming, exterior.

A long view of uninhabited dune unfolds to the north. Nearness to a scenic township park access enhances the site's natural appeal. Still, the blissful lay of this land also posed challenges, and St. Joseph-based architect John Allegretti's approach to high-risk erosion setback and state critical dune requirements was multi-faceted.

"The homeowners wanted low-maintenance siding and roofing materials which would have a contemporary, festive appearance," he said. "The home also needed to withstand the strength of on-shore westerly winds and capture the site's panoramic views."

Allegretti's four-level design minimizes the footprint within this fragile dune environment. An open floor plan's extensive glass allows light to filter throughout the home and creates a connectedness between simply, smartly placed spaces. "Views become more expansive and revealing as you progress up to the (fourth-story) loft," Allegretti noted.

Beyond this, the home's own Piet Mondrian-like composition lends artful intrigue. Corrugated .032 aluminum panels, set in a rigid geometric grid of white trim, reflect bright sunlight from one angle but are saturated with environmental hues from another. Bright yellow panels — inspired by wild dune goldenrod — enhance the retreat's festive beachfront façade. Painted with weather-resistant paint, the home's dynamic exterior is substantially low-maintenance.

"Corrugated aluminum has a fluid, shimmering surface quality that's almost water-like," Allegretti observed. "It's chameleon-like, intensifying and then muting down colors, playing with light and shadows."

Transparency is a key ingredient in this home's distinctiveness. Allegretti called for four-foot, translucent white fiberglass panels to be nested within the roof's panels. Indus-





An outdoor fireplace by Heatilator, left, provides warmth and extends evening entertaining on the deck, outfitted with Brown Jordan furniture.

The home's outdoor rooms best showcase the site's long shoreline views, Page 42, bottom.



Bottom: Casual and friendly, this beachfront home's entry greets guests with a contemporary staircase that rises to a variety of airy, open-water views.

Top: Contemporary furnishings and angled windows enliven an inviting casual eating area. Bright colors lend celebratory summer ambience throughout the year.

trial strength and ultraviolet resistant, the fiberglass roof sections do three important things: "They allow light to wash the window walls below," explained the architect. "They protect the wood rafters and wood window trim, and they provide a historical cottage, yet contemporary, aesthetically pleasing exterior."

In addition, porches and decks ensure this home is well-equipped to inspire plenty of memorable days and nights at the beach.

"Friends love to visit," shared the homeowner. "And it's been a great house to come home to." ≈

Interior design and furnishings are credited to Tracee Dore Interior Design Inc., (502) 562-0002. Lisa M. Jensen is editor of Michigan BLUE.



Top: From their third-floor master bedroom suite, the homeowners enjoy panoramic sunset views. The suite features a decorative glass window by Michigan artisan John Goldbaum.

Below: A central, steel square core framed with beams and columns acts as an armature around which the home's four wings hang. Reinforcing, steel wind girt beams are woven through floor landings: "The roof and wall systems (manufactured by Alcoa Cladding Systems and installed by A.G.M. in Byron Center) were insulated to exceed the Michigan Energy Code," Allegretti noted.

