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What is this, and what's it worth?
Our appraisers weigh in on readers' finds. **PAGE 88**

Maine homes

HOUSE TOUR

Modern Cabin, Deep Roots

As kids, Matti and Chris summured on opposite shores of Belgrade's Great Pond, in camps that had been in their families for generations. Today, Matti's brother owns their family's place. Meanwhile, so many cousins share Chris's that it's difficult to get a week there. "We needed to establish a legacy of our own, a multi-generational house that our kids could come to," Chris says. So the couple, who asked that their surname be withheld, made a list of the cabin qualities they cherish, and with the help of Falmouth architect Kevin Browne, they've created a modern retreat that embodies their fondest memories. ▶

BY VIRGINIA M. WRIGHT



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The Barracks

Inspired by a whimsical cottage that they saw on the website Houzz, Matti and Chris presented their contractor, Todd Harrison, of Durham, with a rough sketch for renovating an old garage into this guest cabin, which they call “the barracks.” Harrison incorporated 20 mismatched windows, all purchased from a Habitat for Humanity ReStore, into the facade facing the lake. The barracks sleeps six.

Previous page: Rhododendron-branch balusters provide visual contrast to the bead-board paneling and evoke Matti’s mother’s collection of twig furniture. Matti and Chris fondly call the railing “Sammy’s Evolution” after Harrison’s employee, Sam Curtis. The balustrades grow more creatively tangled as they descend the staircase, a reflection of Curtis’s increasing confidence with his task as he made his way from loft to first floor.



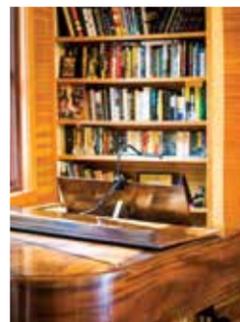
Great Pond

Matti and Chris didn’t want to build their house on any Maine lake. It had to be Great Pond, where they have roots, and they were fortunate to purchase a lot next to the cabin that’s been in Matti’s family since the 1930s. “In my opinion, the Belgrade Lakes are the most beautiful lakes in the world,” Matti says. They took down as few trees as possible, so the house

would be barely visible from the water. The mailbox on the dock is the real deal: Great Pond’s seasonal mail service is one of just a handful of U.S. Postal Service water routes in the country. It inspired author Ernest Thompson, who had a cottage here, to include a boat-driving mailman named Charlie in his 1979 play (and 1981 film), *On Golden Pond*.

The Piano

The loft was designed to accommodate Matti’s grandmother’s 1826 Mason & Hamlin grand piano. “To my husband’s horror, it moves wherever we go,” Matti says. The banister was installed after the piano was hoisted to the loft, a testament to the couple’s commitment to the place. Matti, who tunes and repairs pianos, insists she inherited her grandmother’s instrument, but not her talent. “I can play,” she says, “but not for anyone.”



The Kitchen

The open floor plan suits a family that congregates in the kitchen while Chris cooks. The cabinets, built by Downeast Woodworks, of Freeport, are Douglas fir, as is the bead-board paneling on the walls and ceiling. “There’s not a piece of drywall in this place,” Chris says. The floors are white pine, milled from trees cleared from the lot. Just off the kitchen is a covered outdoor cook space for messier meals, like steamed lobster. Another prized feature is the fieldstone fireplace, built by Sabattus mason Tim Ames. It’s a near-replica of the one in Chris’s family’s camp. The moose head mount is a trophy from a 968-pound moose that Chris bagged on a hunting trip with his son several years ago.

The Porch

When the sliding glass doors are open, which they usually are in summer, the 8-foot-deep porch extends the living room. Furnished with wicker chairs and a glider sofa, the porch faces the lake and wraps around the south side of the house, where there’s a pool table. Rough-hewn

cedar logs stripped of bark serve as corner posts. Together with the unstained cedar siding, they lend the house a rustic, weathered appearance. “You have to look real close to see it from the water,” Browne says, “and then it looks like a house that has some history.”



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