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Inspired by the towering pines and romantic horse trails that dot their Massachusetts property, Jill Neubauer and Steve Stimson built a home that embraces the great outdoors.



written by CELIA MCGEE | photographs by LUCAS ALLEN | styling by KARIN LIDBECK-BRENT



THIS PAGE The library's 12-foot-long table and built-in bookshelves were made using bark-on birch trunks. Jill Neubauer found the Eames chairs at a vintage shop and the horse mannequin at an art-supply store.

OPPOSITE PAGE Neubauer's daughters, Lizzie (left) and Annie, take a dip in the lake beside the family's property.



Jill Neubauer has a theory of home: If it isn't fun, forget it. So back in 1994, when the Massachusetts architect started designing a house for her own family, she called upon her most joyful childhood memories—of summers spent swimming, canoeing, kayaking, and hiking at her grandmother's lakefront cabin in Wisconsin. "Architecture that references vacations and special family outings has greater sentimental value," Neubauer explains.

But the residence she built is far from a nostalgic, literal interpretation of rustic country traditions. Instead, Neubauer, her husband, Steve Stimson, a landscape architect; and their daughters (Annie, 17, and Lizzie, 15) live in a modern, 3,000-square-foot home that puts a contemporary spin on the past while still embracing its woody surroundings.

WHEN NEUBAUER AND HER HUSBAND found the land in Falmouth, Massachusetts, some 16 years ago, the foliage was so overgrown, the duo needed a machete to hack their way through it. But Neubauer was inspired by the setting—a Cape Cod pine forest abutting a 25-acre lake—to "look at agrarian aesthetics and play with archetypes," she says. "I knew I could take the notions of a sweet cottage or a great tack room—familiar, wonderful stuff—and push them in a different direction."

While designing her home, Neubauer incorporated pine trees from the property as structural columns that run from the basement playroom up through the second-story



TOP RIGHT Trumpet vines surround the property's outdoor dining area, located between the house (left) and barn.

MIDDLE RIGHT Jill Neubauer (middle) shares a laugh with daughters Lizzie (left) and Annie (right) in the backyard.

BOTTOM RIGHT Neubauer scored the farm table and sideboard at a flea market outside Chicago and the folding chairs at the Brimfield Antique Show. A commercial-use garage door serves as a convertible window wall.

OPPOSITE PAGE In the living room, a rug by Dash & Albert, along with Crate & Barrel's geometric-print pillows, offers a splash of color and contrast against the otherwise neutral palette. The family built the rocker from a Shaker Workshops kit, and the Ultrasuede sofa is by Bailey.





bedrooms. "I have deep memories embedded in knotty pine, so I reinterpreted it. A friend calls the trees in our house the unlucky pines," Neubauer says with a laugh, "but I think they enjoy being here."

To balance the warm wood—which also shows up in floors, ceilings, shelving, and even some walls—she added exposed steel piping and factory-style lighting fixtures. One of the house's best views of the lake is visible through a glass-paned garage door that takes up a whole wall in the dining area; in the summer, the family raises the divider to enjoy open-air meals.

EMPLOYING INDUSTRIAL MATERIALS in unexpected ways is a key component of Neubauer's style. In her mudroom, for instance, the floors are protected by practical black-rubber mats designed for barns, and the walls are covered with repurposed chalkboards once used in a school. (She even outfitted the space with pale wood pieces, such as a desk-like table and an Alvar Aalto chair, that look as if they, too, came from a classroom—or at least a modernist's fantasy version of a classroom.)

And while all those brown, black, and gray elements might seem a bit quiet—particularly since Neubauer used no paint on the walls, just roughly applied plaster—the family shakes things up with stunning but judicious pops of color. Green and red throw pillows give a vibrant charge to the otherwise neutral living room. Dining chairs range in hues from orange to yellow to green. And kitchen cabinets were eliminated both to lighten the room and also to show off an array of rainbow-hued

TOP LEFT The mudroom's chalkboard wall—repurposed from a school—offers the family a spot for impromptu doodling and jotting notes to each other. Alvar Aalto designed the chair, and the table is from Boom Design.


MIDDLE LEFT Neubauer brushes Toffee, a 17-year-old Morgan and one of two horses belonging to her daughter Annie.

BOTTOM LEFT Lizzie and Annie lead their horses from the pine-and-cedar barn, located next to the house.

OPPOSITE PAGE In the open kitchen, white pine shelving—constructed from trees on the property—holds vintage Fiesta ware, along with glassware from Crate and Barrel. Modernica stools offer seating at the plywood-topped bar.

When Neubauer and Steve Stimson were engaged to be married, rather than registering for Limoges or Lenox, they sent friends and relatives to flea markets for Fiestaware in every color.



A photograph of a rustic wooden porch. The porch has a dark wooden roof and a wall made of horizontal wooden planks. A red Adirondack chair sits on the left. A white life preserver with "USS LUCKY" and "P.L.N." written on it hangs on the wall. Several wooden oars are leaning against the wall. A sign above the door reads "EAGLE RIVER". The door is red with a glass panel. To the right of the door, there are several plants in blue enamel buckets, including white and purple flowers. A small white wooden chest is also visible. The porch floor is made of wooden planks. The background shows a forest of tall trees.

“This home works from my memories
and my history. After living here so
long, I can say this house wears well.”

bright idea!

Simple enamel buckets
make for cachepots with
laid-back charm.

Fiestaware, which takes up a whole wall of shelving and doubles as artwork.

THOUGH NEUBAUER NAMED the property Lucky Pines, a weathered sign on the front porch reads EAGLE RIVER, in honor of the Wisconsin town where her extended family still gathers at the same cabin the architect visited as a child. “We go there as often as we can,” Neubauer says. At Christmas, she and Stimson return the favor, with several of her Wisconsin kin descending for the holiday. One lucky couple gets to stay in the treehouse-like guest room that sits above the woodshop. Younger visitors bunk together by climbing a ladder to a loft over Annie’s and Lizzie’s rooms on the second floor. “We just throw a bunch of air mattresses and sleeping bags up there,” Neubauer says.

Of course, by now her relatives are used to this relaxed way of living. When Neubauer and Stimson were engaged to be married, rather than registering for Limoges or Lenox, they sent friends and relatives to scour antiques stores and flea markets for Fiestaware in every color. Today, the couple and their daughters still happily eat off these bright and cheery gifts, at a farm table Neubauer bought back when she was in college. It’s just another example of how the past and present comfortably coexist in her home—and how the place itself is as tied to its surroundings as any she knew as a girl.

“So many houses going up don’t seem to know where they are. But I really try to let you see that, to connect my home to the landscape,” Neubauer says. “This place works from my memories and my history. And after living here so long, I can say it wears well.” ♦

TOP RIGHT Red-cedar boards (and, on the first story, shingles) adorn the exterior of the family’s 3,000-square-foot home.

MIDDLE RIGHT Annie and Lizzie regularly go canoeing and kayaking on the 25-acre lake.

BOTTOM RIGHT Neubauer designed the built-in bed for the master bedroom; her husband, Steve Stimson, crafted the bench from pine.

OPPOSITE PAGE The front porch makes a handy spot for canoeing paddles and wood for the fire pit.



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