lake house effect

Eclectic accents and modern architectural lines come together effortlessly in a playful waterfront dwelling designed for an active family who loves the water.

By Sue Cevianos // Photography by Tony Soluri

Michael Hamann, an ER doc, and Becky Warren, a medical oncologist, make the most of the precious hours they have together with their kids, and in the summer, you can often find the energetic family splashing around in their swimming pool or launching kayaks from the dock behind their home along the Fox River in DePere, Wis. Although the waterfront lot posed several challenges, the chance to make happy memories like this—without reservation—made the grandfathers house—waterfront—ticks had about building on the site. "It was the smallest lot with a deparate 10-year-old house that nobody wanted to buy," Warren explains. "But we had a vision.

Recalling the existing house as even smaller than the..."
and her husband covered when they attended art school in Chicago, the couple targeted designers in the city and were hired by architect Kevin Toshobayashi and Tom Hagerty of RE/ACE Studios, and Aimee Wrenperg and Lauren Wrenof of PROJECT Interiors, to team up on the design of their new abode. "We wanted to enhance the beautiful art and architecture in any way we could," Wrenperg says, "and maybe learn a few new tricks from working with Kevin and Tom."

Built into the top of a hill that slopes down toward the river, the 6,500-square-foot modernist home is comprised of a series of terraces, each with an entire rear-facing wall of floor-to-ceiling doors that open to long balconies overlooking the river. Italian porcelain tile, charcoal metal panels, and strategically placed cedar clothing bins warm up and innocence the linear steel-and-glass structure. "The wood is used in places where you can reach and see it," Toshobayashi explains. "Every detail has been considered."

Lighting is one such detail, and a crucial one at that, with LEDs integrated into cabinetry, radiating into an angled chandelier along a 40-foot wall. A floor-toceling glass wall of sliding doors that allow it to be closed off when the kids are practicing their instruments. A wood-inspired rug adds another layer to the monochromatic palette and gets a fun narrative with the charred-stained white oak built-ins and white marble counters of the kitchen. The PROJECT team dreamed up. "Aimee's work is playful, global and full of texture," says Wrenperg. "It's cozy but not traditional, and it has a really nice edge."

The look continues in the open living room, where the cool surface of the blackened steel fireplace meets the warmth of a textured burl wood. A living room with floor-to-ceiling windows, a blackened steel fireplace, and a large, white sofa. The room is filled with natural light, and the furniture is arranged to create a comfortable and inviting space.

down light hitting you in the space," Hagerty explains. "It's more subtle and versatile." Adding to the ambiance is a two-sided fireplace that can be enjoyed from the living room or the adjacent music room, which Wrenperg outfitted with custom glass-and-stained sliding doors that allow it to be closed off when the kids are practicing their instruments. A wood-inspired rug adds another layer to the monochromatic palette and gets a fun narrative with the charred-stained white oak built-ins and white marble countertops. The PROJECT team dreamed up. "Aimee's work is playful, global and full of texture," says Wrenperg. "It's cozy but not traditional, and it has a really nice edge."

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Westrepp explains, "Something rough-hewn, something glossy or polished, and not a whole lot of color."

There are exceptions to this rule, including a banquette and marble-pedestal floor-to-ceiling walkway consisting of hundreds of photos from the family's Instagram feed. The tribute display has been installed alongside a fireplace that connects the top floor with a lower-level tradition, allowing the family to travel from bedroom to garage in seconds. "When we first visited, we saw the kids riding a skateboard through the house," Westrepp explains, "so we know that this house needed some adventure and excitement."

The active family relies on spending time outdoors, swimming in the pool, bowling or just sharing a few laughs around the sculptural concrete fire pit after a long day not on the river. Although summer is all too short, the hot tub was still open in December when Westrepp and crew—swimmers in hand—savored their haul for the stately annual office holiday party shortly after the project concluded. "We've all become friends," Warren says, "There was so much love and energy put into this home, and it showed."