

New England Home

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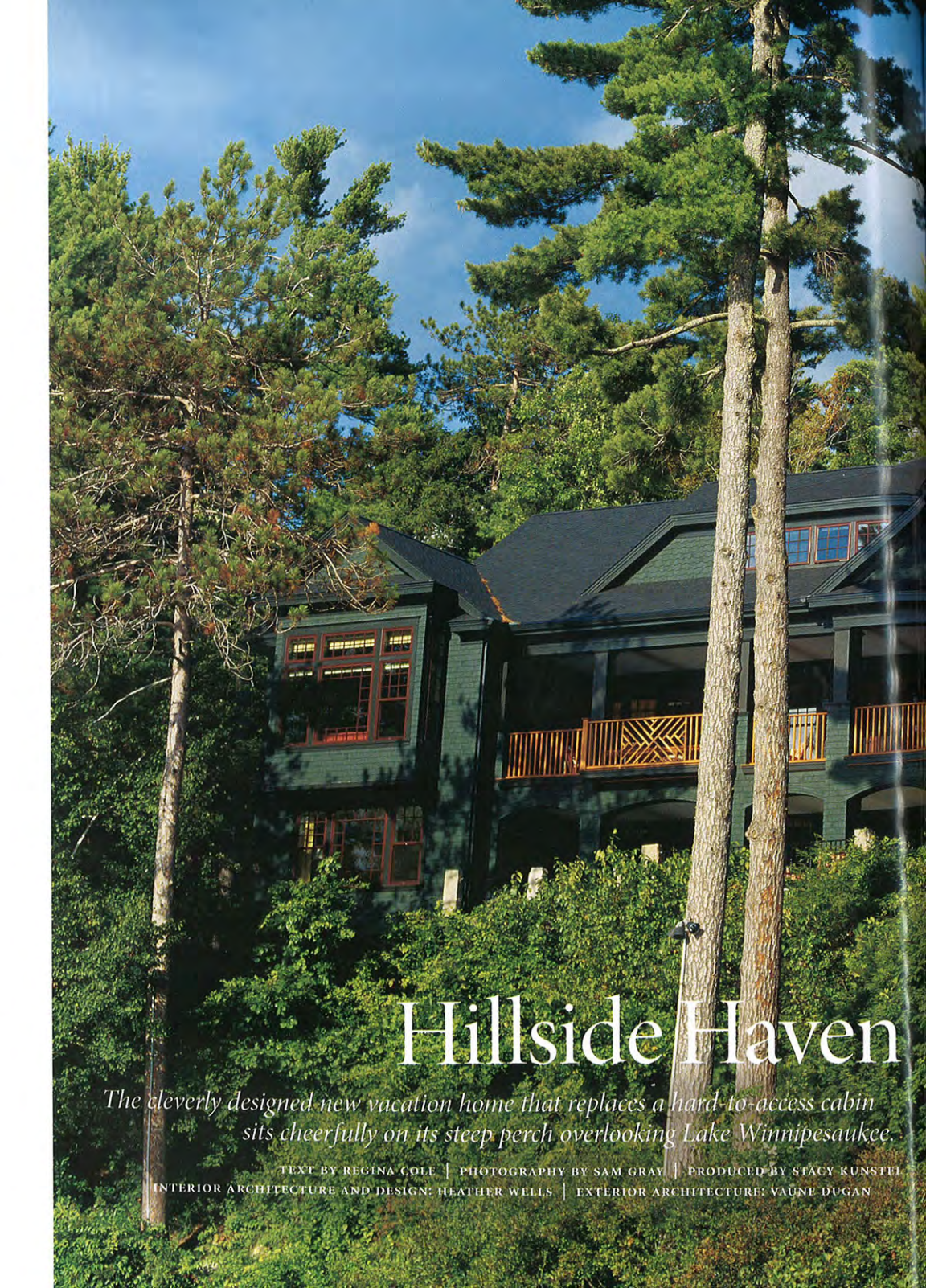
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Hillside Haven

The cleverly designed new vacation home that replaces a hard-to-access cabin sits cheerfully on its steep perch overlooking Lake Winnepesaukee.

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INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN: HEATHER WELLS | EXTERIOR ARCHITECTURE: VAUNE DUGAN





fter twenty years of clambering down a steep flight of steps to reach the front door of their summer vacation home, the owners decided it was time to move. But as they looked at real estate offerings on Lake Winnepesaukee, they realized how much they loved their im-

perfect house's perfect location. Overlooking New Hampshire's big lake from a steep hillside, it couldn't be improved on for views, privacy and access to the water. They made a new plan: demolish the troublesome cabin they'd been trying to love, and build a new house.

That decision freed the homeowners to design for their needs, which included a lot of amenities for a tribe of grandchildren as well as personal living space that wasn't so hard to get to.

"What a difference," says Vaune Dugan, the Wolfeboro, New Hampshire, architect who designed the 10,000-square-foot Shingle-style house that replaced the old cabin. "Before, the house was in a hollow, sunken down," she says. "Now, when you arrive, you're at the main level.

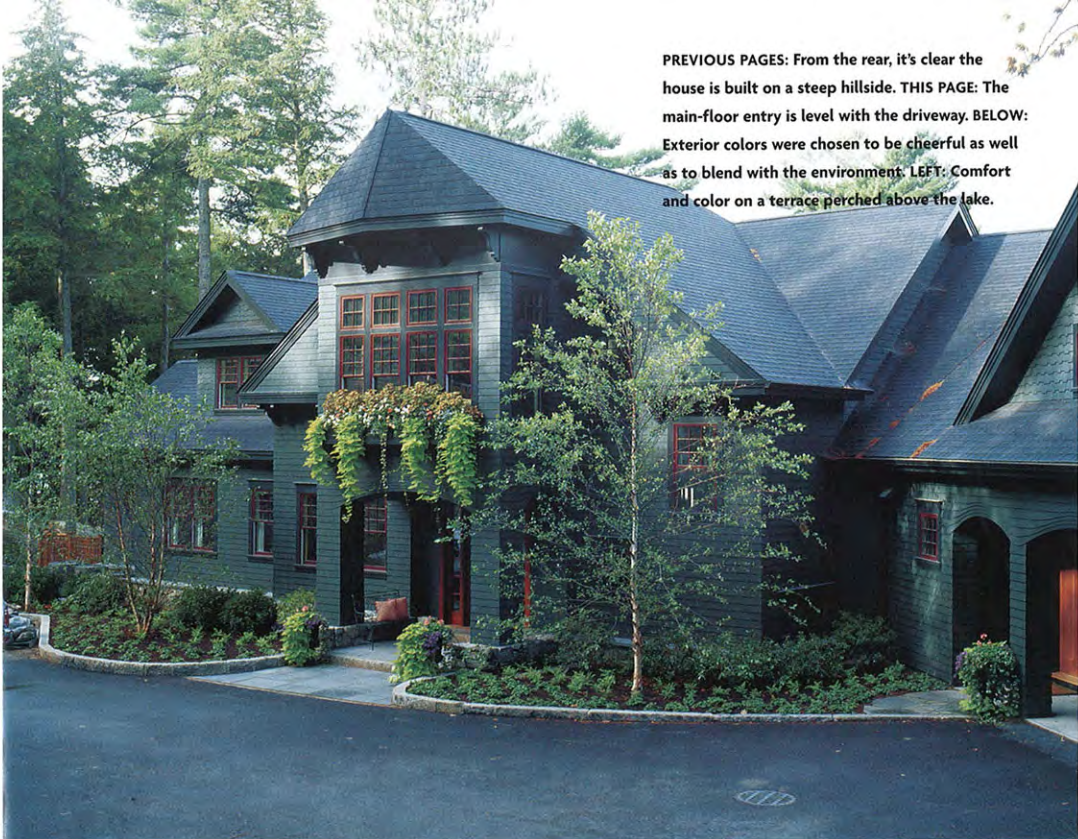
You just walk right in."

Her clients stipulated ease of main-level access as the single most important element in their new house, a challenge when the land falls down to the water's edge like the side of a mountain. For a house that would neither loom over the approach nor disappear down the hillside, Dugan used the vocabulary of an architectural style common to the historic waterfront vacation homes of New England. With its irregular massing, a Shingle-style house can ramble down a hillside in multiple levels, yet display a sweetly unassuming one-and-a-half-story gabled facade to the street.

Once the design coalesced, the structural challenge of building so large a house on so steep a slope loomed. A series of concrete terraces, faced with an aesthetically pleasing granite boulder veneer, support descending levels on the lake-facing side of the house; charming patios and broad-roofed porches provide scenic overlooks at various levels. Near the bottom, wide stone steps lead to the lake-side beach, where shaded chaises and a small dining table create an al fresco room. There's a small guesthouse, a boathouse—everything an extended family could want.

This easy and gentle access to the water's edge, aided

PREVIOUS PAGES: From the rear, it's clear the house is built on a steep hillside. THIS PAGE: The main-floor entry is level with the driveway. BELOW: Exterior colors were chosen to be cheerful as well as to blend with the environment. LEFT: Comfort and color on a terrace perched above the lake.





The porch wraps around the water side and shades the living room, which has walls treated to raspberry grasscloth. The firebox's pink tile edge reflects the house's color sensibility and adds a touch of preppie whimsy.



by an elevator inside the house, was created with the construction of the terraces that provide the house's structural support. "We poured 750 yards of concrete," Alan Vittum, the Wolfeboro-based general contractor for the project, recalls. "There are eighteen-and-a-half-inch-thick walls, twenty-two-foot-high walls. We had to build buttresses to hold them in against the pressure of the earth. Footings are eight feet wide, and all that concrete is full of steel."

When Vittum relates these and other staggering numbers, it's easy to believe him when he says that the most difficult aspect of the whole project was excavation. "And then we poured concrete for six months," he says.

Heather Wells, an architect and designer with offices in Boston and Chicago, worked with Dugan from the start to design a comfortable, functional interior. The main level, now so easily accessed from the street, is self-sufficient. A kitchen, family room and bedroom suite open to a deep veranda that overlooks the lake from on high. In the levels below are guest suites, game rooms and grandchildren's rooms.

Wells, who met her clients when she designed their daughter's Chicago apartment, admits that this project had its own interior design challenges. "The homeowners are very into color and wanted each room done in a different one. I'd never done an interior with that many colors. The first time we met, the mister wore a bright pink shirt. He pointed to it and said, 'I want the living room to be this color,'" she says with a laugh. "And it was a two-hour drive. But I love doing interior architecture, and each time I made a site visit, I loved the whole project more. It was wonderful! The homeowners are wonderful!"

In Wells's design scheme, clear shades of medium green, lemon yellow, blue and raspberry interact through wide pocket doors with the charming insouciance of a Lilly Pulitzer print. "The trick is to get it to all flow and look right from near and far," Wells explains.

She relied on the unifying crisp white wood-

Nearly every room is a different color, but cohesive design means the hues play together well. RIGHT: The green family room provides space for lots of TV watchers, readers, conversationalists and lake viewers.





The love of color that informs the house is especially effective in the kitchen, where red, blue, green and yellow come together in happy harmony. TOP RIGHT: A green linen paint effect keeps the bedroom informal. BOTTOM RIGHT: Bathroom wainscot and woodwork are painted a pale minty green.



work in adjoining rooms, as well as traditionally painted beadboard and wainscots. Wells had rugs made in wools and cottons in colorful plaids to go with the comfortable, traditional furniture upholstered in small prints or solids in greens, reds and yellow. Roman shades and generous linen drapery panels in printed florals hang at the windows. "All the window treatments are lined with contrasting colors because you see them from the porch outside, and because the homeowner loves those kinds of dress-maker details," Wells says. "It's a lot of color but it still feels cohesive. The architectural tone makes the rooms flow."

The color theme carries through to succeeding layers and materials. Instead of the stone expected in a Northern summer house fireplace, for example, Wells faced the living room fireplace surround with green ceramic tiles glazed in a glossy, variegated, mossy green. As a border, she edged the firebox with a line of slender burgundy; clear pink bullnose tiles make a preppie statement at the corner.

Wells admits to channeling Sister Parish in this project. "I've always been intrigued by her, especially in the way she used colors and combined patterns. And her layering was amazing."

The exterior, too, is colorful, though not in the way first planned. "Initially, they wanted to paint it yellow," Dugan recalls. "But after we talked and looked at houses in the area, we chose a darker, more traditional color."

The cedar shakes are painted deep green, with a darker green trim and traditional deep-red window muntins. A delightful benefit of choosing shingles as an exterior cladding material is a series of eyebrow curves over the garage and front door entry arches.

As Wells says of the new abode, both inside and out, "It's a cheerful house." **NEH**

RESOURCES For more information about this home see page 233.

