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Spring Forward

ECO STYLE

**Two Artists,
One With the Land,
17 Miles Off the
Coast**

**A Midcentury
MODERN
MAKEOVER
on Sebago Lake**

**PLUS:
Six Sustainable
Shops We Love**

**A Danish Builder's
PASSIVE
HOUSE IN THE
MOUNTAINS**



A lakeside camp in
Sebago gets a splashy
upcycle

written by Heather Chapman *photography by* Peter Morneau

WELL-ROOTED REHAB

Sebago Lake's glittering horizon stretches out in oceanesque tranquility. Ross, Bill, and Bob transformed the site's existing and tired structure into a dwelling fit for the setting.

Architect
HOLDEN ARCHITECTURE
AND INTERIORS

General Contractors
LAKE DREAMS RENOVATIONS

Tile
CAPOZZA FLOOR COVERING CENTER

Landscape
EVERGREEN TREE & LANDSCAPING

Styling
LC DESIGN CO.



△ Although the home captures sunshine all day long, darker nooks and crannies are lit with fixtures from Lowe's and Lighting by the Sea.

◀ The striking staircase—clad in hardwood from Fat Andy's Hardwoods—was designed by Ross and proudly commands center stage at the heart of the home.

A swanky midcentury modern abode peers over crystalline Sebago Lake.

Tucked among the neighboring seasonal A-frames and heritage fishing cottages, the 4,900-square-foot dwelling appears plucked from beach-front Malibu and dropped into a similar—albeit *hardier*—waterfront scene. Although the glistening view, contemporary interior, and shaded double-decker balconies might fool you, this is not new construction. Rather, it is the outcome of nine grueling months' work of Bill Kavanagh and Bob and Ross Holden: house-flipping trifecta—and part father-son duo—with an eye for design and an appetite for boots-on-the-ground construction rehabilitation.

"This work isn't for the faint of heart," Bill and Bob quip. "We're on the lookout for the *worst* home in a

given neighborhood with an eye towards reviving, rather than demolishing," says Bill, emphasizing the team's commitment to adaptive-reuse principles. "Rehab rather than demolition reduces the carbon footprint involved in construction," Ross says. "The creation of each individual *new* material has a large environmental impact. Restoration and rehab work are crucial to building a greener world, and to saving little pieces of history and character along the way."

In their three years in business, the trio (Bill and Bob operating as Lake Dreams Renovations and Ross as principal of Holden Architecture and Interiors) have sourced, transformed, and flipped eight tired lakefront

WELL-ROOTED REHAB



Once accessible only by a trapdoor, the refinished daylight basement retained one original element: an enormous boulder, which has now been decidedly rooted in the home's foundation.

shacks into sparkling luxury homes, complete with energy-efficient systems for healthy home function. "It takes a lot of planning and vision to execute these rehabilitation projects," Bill says, emphasizing that the creaking floorboards, leaky ceilings, and lackluster interiors can be a serious deterrent for other interested buyers. Nevertheless, when the team happened upon the Sebago Lake

house in the late summer of 2019—complete with plenty of structural and cosmetic challenges of its own—they were transfixed. "I think Bill was the most excited," Bob remembers with a chuckle, adding, "He got the rest of us really eager to dive in."

Ross concurs, noting the rarity of finding a midcentury modern structure in a state dotted with tired colonials and Victorians fit for the

setting of a Stephen King novel. "It was in rough shape, but I knew—when considering the bones of the building and the lot it was situated upon—that it had dramatic potential." However, seeing that potential through a floor plan riddled with choppy, haphazard additions, poor circulation, and a general lack of cohesiveness proved an up-front challenge.



▲ In the living room, the home's original stone fireplace and dropped-level sofa—modernly reupholstered by Claude's Upholstering—create a comfortable space to talk and unwind.

▼ In the kitchen, granite countertops from Stone Surface pair with Cabinetry Concepts cabinets. The home's clean lines and calming palette direct the eye to the lake through oversized Pella windows.



From the balconies, the idyllic scene comprises swaying conifers, crystalline waters, and a light-sport airplane in the distance.



WELL-ROOTED REHAB

The purposeful use of clean lines and natural materials enhances the feeling of sophistication throughout. *opposite* In the basement—once dark and windowless—elements of light and space were introduced to create a multipurpose lake room.

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The 1970s-era dwelling had most recently served as a rental property, with drab carpeting, dark wall paneling, and a massive stone fireplace smack in the center of it all that proved a tricky obstacle. Not to mention the basement, a dormant and windowless utility space, featuring a massive and unmovable boulder that proved aesthetically problematic. But for as much as the home desired, there were bits and pieces that, with a lot of elbow grease and an enthusiastic team of contractors, could be not only salvaged but *shined*.

“The dropped level in front of the original stone fireplace, the huge space for a daylight recreational room in the basement, and the bedroom suite—separated from everything else by an entire story—were all major bonus points for the home,” Bill says. The lot, too, was something to celebrate. Situated on a hill overlooking the lake, the location was free of the encroaching conifers

and aged maples creeping close to the other lakeside camps. Instead, this lot was grassy, with abundant sunshine and just enough space for one crucial addition: a two-car garage. “The garage *barely* fit onto the property, but it was a necessity. You can’t have a comfortable home in New England without a place to protect your car in the winter,” Bill says.

After conceptualizing a “flow through”—the maximization of lake vistas from all possible vantage points—on paper, the team got down to work. The front door, once “cave-like” in the center of the home, was moved to the right-hand corner to further enhance the lake views from the driveway. Dark wall panels were traded for fresh drywall painted in breezy neutral shades. The dingy carpet was torn up and replaced with glossy hardwood. A few walls were lost to enhance natural light, and space for a unifying staircase was run from the top story clear



through to the basement, previously accessible only by a trapdoor. However, don't let this seemingly finger-snap-and-done checklist hoodwink you. "There's a reason not everyone does this," Bob says, reflecting on the nearly yearlong project. The work, though shiny upon completion, is a messy rehab full of mishaps, potential failings, and long, *long* hours. "The people you choose to work with mean the world to the outcome of any given project," Bill says. "When everyone can collectively see the same vision and work together graciously, it's a lot like magic."

And if the teamwork involved is magic, this Sebago Lake home is the elusive genie in a bottle. Standing in the center of the kitchen and living spaces, one can catch the afternoon sunshine glinting off the seemingly endless expanse of water through rows of well-appointed

Pella windows, installed to maximize daylight for solar gain. A grand nautical staircase commands center stage—designed and executed by Ross—clad in naturally finished hardwood and sleek horizontal wire slats that call to mind an ocean liner. But perhaps what makes this home truly shine is the most salvaged element of all: the enormous boulder—once considered an eyesore—that now appears as if it were painstakingly preserved from an archaeological dig. Strikingly on display in the basement-turned-daylight-rec-room, the boulder is visible from the tippy-top of the staircase, grounding and unifying this restored and redefined lakeside habitation in the home's humble roots. ■

above Evergreen Tree & Landscaping in Harrison crafted this oasis-like scene. The exterior is clad in Hardie board.