

# New England HOME

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# Out of the BLUE

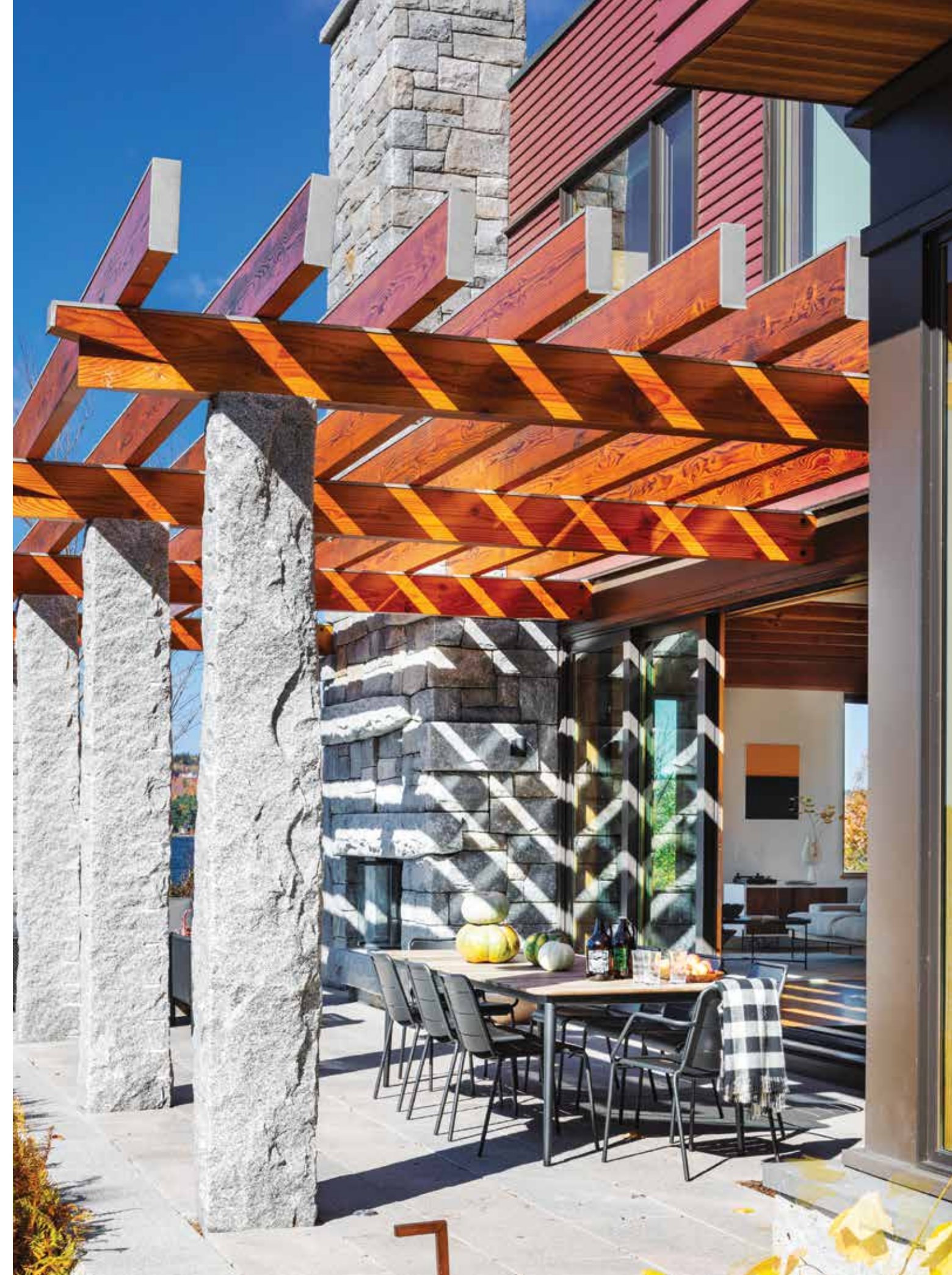
A MODERN LAKE HOUSE  
DEFIES CONVENTION BY EMBRACING  
ITS ENVIRONMENT.

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Designed by Marcus Gleysteen Architects, this contemporary Lake Sunapee, New Hampshire, retreat throws off traditional notions of what a lake house should look like. **FACING PAGE:** Sunlight plays through gaps in a pergola under which a wall of sliding glass doors connects the kitchen and living area to the outdoors.







Handmade tiles from Heath Ceramics and Douglas fir ceilings bring the colors of nature into the living room. **FACING PAGE:** Stocky fir beams with steel detailing frame the custom door at the main entrance. At a glance, the home's simplicity belies the high craftsmanship behind it. "There was a lot of behind-the-scenes work to make everything line up," says builder Tony Bourque.



Spend time on a lake, and you'll notice the water has two colors. One is a resplendent blue that floats under the slanted light of the rising or setting sun. The other is a blinding white that ignites the surface at the height of the day.



Rather than dictate style, interior designer Atsu Gunther directed her clients to sources that offered the unique, handcrafted look they desired. Croft House, in Los Angeles, became a favorite, supplying the living room's sofa, marble-topped table, and cabinet. Gunther unified the pieces with a rug from Landry & Arcari Rugs and Carpeting, a painting by Boston artist John Vinton, and a striking photograph by Roger Palframan.

“The sensory connection to the landscape—being able to listen to the lake, feel the breeze, and have the view—is very important.”

—PROJECT ARCHITECT  
ROBYN GENTILE

The brother and sister who approached architect Marcus Gleysteen for ideas about designing their shared retreat on New Hampshire's Lake Sunapee hadn't thought much about this blue-water, white-water thing before.

But, says the sister, “As soon as he started talking about it, I knew the kind of light he was talking about.” They also knew that Gleysteen's focus on the lake—rather than the conventional rules of what a lake house ought to look like—meant he was the architect they needed to hire.

“He understood that we didn't want some fantasy, that we wanted him to guide us in designing a house to fit the site,” her brother adds. “He understands how architecture is part of nature.”

Nature already had a decisive hand in the project. In 2014, a lightning strike destroyed the forty-something-year-old house on the lot, which was owned by the siblings' father. His two children bought the property from him and planned to build a peaceful, low-maintenance retreat for both their families.







A walnut-and-metal dining table designed by Gleysteen catches sunlight from across the room. The globular lighting is by Bocci. **FACING PAGE:** The contemporary kitchen picks up the same color of tile used around the living room fireplace to brighten a recessed wall with open shelving. A blend of heartwood and sapwood in the Douglas fir island and ceilings creates a range of honeyed tones that complement the reclaimed heart-pine floors and vintage counter stools.



Gleysteen and project architect Robyn Gentile began by reorienting the existing footprint to the south to maximize those luscious blue-water views. From there, the 4,836-square-foot house took shape as an assemblage of rectangles, with wide windows facing the lake. The interior was organized accordingly: rooms where their clients would spend the most time—the two primary bedroom suites, living room,

dining area, and kitchen—face the lake, with windows that open to admit air from multiple directions. “The sensory connection to the landscape—being able to listen to the lake, feel the breeze, and have the view, the daylight—is very important,” says Gentile.

Yet Gleysteen and Gentile didn’t plan to invite all of the lake’s sights and sounds inside. The removal of trees damaged by the



“The house is a piece of sculpture that you live in.”

—ARCHITECT MARCUS GLEYSTEN



**CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT:** The two primary bedrooms are situated for maximum lake exposure, but the windows are positioned to guard the occupants' privacy. The adjoining bath features a glass-tile shower and deep soaking tub from Victoria + Albert. A shiplap wall and handcrafted bed from Croft House introduce texture without disturbing the room's simple lines.



**ARCHITECTURE:** Marcus Gleysteen, Robyn Gentile, Marcus Gleysteen Architects

**INTERIOR DESIGN:** Atsu Gunther, Atsu Gunther Design

**BUILDER:** Tony Bourque, Burpee Hill Construction

**LANDSCAPE DESIGN:** Greg Grigsby, Pellettieri Associates

lightning strike left the property exposed to a continuous parade of kayakers, water-skiers, and pontoon boats. So the architects lifted the windows in the upper bedrooms and added a lake-facing pergola for shelter and a visual barrier. Strategic plantings by landscape architects Pellettieri Associates also reestablished boundaries.

Other factors shaped the house as well. A twenty-five-foot height restriction, coupled with the clients' desire to offset

energy consumption, translated to a flat roof that maximizes ceiling heights while hiding a forty-six-panel solar array. Combining photovoltaics with a high-velocity hydro-air-conditioning system and meticulously sealed exterior walls qualified the house as net-zero, meaning it can generate as much energy as it uses, says builder Tony Bourque.

The interior, where Douglas-fir ceilings, heart-pine floors, and handmade





Passing boaters see no sign of the rooftop solar panels that supply the house with electricity. The lake-facing pergola, meanwhile, lets homeowners engage with passersby—or not. “You can hang out and wave to the boats, or turn your back, keep your shades on, and focus on your book,” says Gleysteen. **FACING PAGE:** A concrete coffee table from CB2 anchors a seating area facing the outdoor fireplace. Stones that project slightly from the fireplace face are used to hold candles at night.



tiles provide all the ornamentation necessary, expresses a similar economy. Interior designer Atsu Gunther let the color and craftsmanship of those elements stand out, with a limited palette of black and white. Furnishings, chosen by the homeowners with recommendations from Gunther, mix vintage and easy-care pieces with a casual

mien that fits the home’s purpose as well as its design. “The house is a piece of sculpture that you live in,” says Gleysteen. “It has to function as a house, and it has to be livable. You can’t let beauty compromise function, and you can’t let function compromise beauty.”

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** For details, see *Resources*.