

A Rustic Welcome *at the Lake*

Smart space planning, white oak details and a relaxed Scandinavian-camp spirit shape a lake home designed for gathering.

Produced by **Marni Katz**
Written by **Kelly McMaster**
Photographed by **Tamara Flanagan**

A long wood dining table, mixed seating and a textural bench create an easygoing gathering spot with a view. White oak ceiling details and black-framed doors bring warmth and contrast to the open lake-home layout.

For Carly Shafiroff of

Carly Jane Designs in Great Barrington, MA, the best interiors begin with real life. In this lakeside project, that meant creating a home that could welcome grown children, extended family and friends, without feeling crowded. "This project was such a fun challenge because the constraints were really what drove every decision," Carly says. "Our clients have three adult children, a wide circle of friends and a genuine love of entertaining, so the demand on the space was significant."

The home sits on a tight lake lot and includes three bedrooms and two and a half baths, so every inch needed to work hard. Rather than seeing those limits as obstacles, Carly and her team used them as the foundation for the design. "The entire focus became creating zones that were truly built for how this family lives," she says.

That thoughtful approach shows up throughout the home, from the game and breakfast nook to oversized sectionals, a hardworking kitchen and indoor-outdoor living areas that help extend the home's footprint. The goal was simple but layered: make the space beautiful, functional and comfortable for many people at once. "Every square foot had to earn its space," adds Carly.

Even the bedrooms were designed with flexibility in mind. Carly approached them "almost like well-designed hotel rooms," keeping them compact but comfortable, with smart sleeping arrangements and privacy-minded details. Some spaces include two queen beds, while others pair a queen bed with a sleeper sofa, allowing the home to adapt easily for different guests and gatherings. "The goal was always to maximize how many people could feel comfortable and at home at once," Carly says.

Aesthetically, the clients were drawn to a Scandinavian camp-meets-a rustic farmhouse palette, which proved to be a natural fit for the project. The look is warm, cozy and unfussy, perfect for a lake home where durability and beauty need to coexist. "That sensibility is inherently unpretentious and grounded, so beauty and function didn't feel like they were in tension," Carly says. "They just fit together naturally."

THE WARMTH OF WHITE OAK

One of the home's most defining design elements is its use of white oak. With 10-foot ceilings and open living areas, the team wanted to add warmth and intimacy without weighing the rooms down. The ceiling became the perfect place to do that. "We used white oak paneling throughout the ceiling and wall millwork applications," Carly says. "Wood overhead brings the room down in the best possible way. It makes that height feel intentional and intimate rather than vast and unanchored."



left | Set on a tight lake lot, the home maximizes its connection to the outdoors with expansive windows, dark siding and a deck that extends the living space toward the water.

above | Built-in banquettes make the most of the compact footprint, turning this nook into a hardworking spot for casual meals, games and conversation. A woven pendant adds texture without overwhelming the streamlined space.



White oak beams layer over the paneling, adding dimension and feel original. "With a Scandinavian, camp, rustic aesthetic, the goal was always to add character and warmth without tipping into something that felt too on the nose or overdone," Carly says. "The ceiling became our primary canvas for that."

MILLWORK AND A NOTE OF BLACK

Because the home includes so much open space, Carly avoided adding strong wall colors that might interrupt or fragment the flow. Instead, she used ceiling treatments and millwork details to define zones and shift the mood from area to area while keeping the overall look cohesive.

above | In the kitchen, clean-lined cabinetry, black-framed windows and warm wood ceiling beams strike the balance Carly wanted throughout the home: practical, unfussy and quietly beautiful.

right | A farmhouse-style sink, black faucet and generous windows keep the kitchen feeling bright and efficient. Simple cabinetry and natural accents allow the surrounding views to take center stage.

Designer Takeaway

How to Make a Smaller Home Live Larger

- **Create purposeful zones.** Instead of relying on square footage, define areas for dining, games, lounging and gathering.
- **Choose flexible furniture.** Sleeper sofas, multiple queen beds and oversized sectionals help a home welcome more guests comfortably.
- **Use ceilings as a design moment.** Wood paneling, beams and millwork can add warmth and help define open spaces without breaking up the room.
- **Add a grounding note of black.** Black-framed windows, lighting or hardware can bring contrast and connect indoor spaces to the view outside.
- **Keep the palette relaxed.** A Scandinavian-camp mix of natural wood, rustic texture and simple forms feels warm without becoming too themed.





Black-framed windows add another grounding element. For Carly, they are more than a trend—they are a design staple. “Every space needs that grounding note of black,” she says. “Having it come from the windows feels completely effortless. It’s already there, it’s already working, and it ties the whole interior to the exterior in a way that just makes sense.”

The finished home is warm, welcoming and highly livable—a lake retreat that feels both tailored and relaxed. And for Carly, that balance reflects the heart of her growing studio.



Get to Know Carly

Carly (seated on the desk) opened Carly Jane Designs five years ago, during COVID, after launching her career at a design-build firm. While she was specifying interiors for new homes, clients began asking if she would come back to help furnish the spaces too. “One referral led to another, and eventually the calls were coming in fast enough that launching my own studio felt less like a leap and more like the obvious next step,” she says. “I was right out of college, but it felt like a natural move,” says Carly.

Today, Carly Jane Designs has grown into a team of five and recently opened a brick-and-mortar location. While Carly still loves the creative side of the work, she has found equal joy in building the business with intention. “What I didn’t expect was how much I would love the business side of it just as much as the creative work. Growing intentionally rather than reactively meant I could build something with real structure and vision behind it,” explains Carly.

“What fills me up most isn’t a project or a room,” she says. “It’s the women on my team. There is something so fulfilling about building a space where incredibly talented people get to do what they do best and then watching them exceed even that. Every single day I walk into our studio and feel genuinely proud of the creativity and energy that lives there. That, more than anything, is what I’m most excited to keep building.”

You can learn more about Carly Jane Design at carlyjanedesign.com and [@carlyjanedesign](https://www.instagram.com/carlyjanedesign) on Instagram.

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