

Summer, Simplicity, & Sunsets

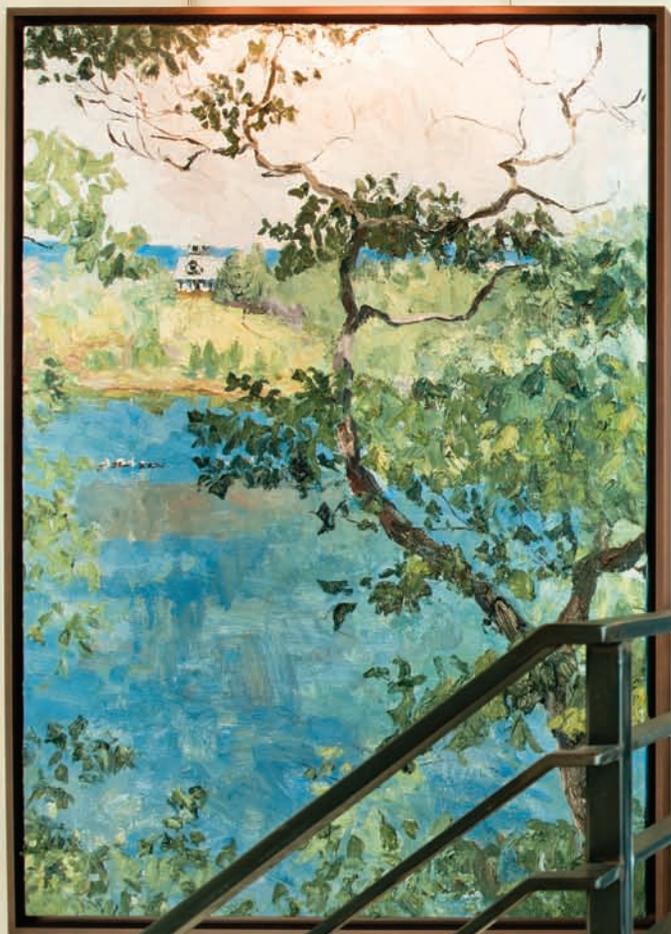
A METRO DETROIT COUPLE
RESCUED A NEGLECTED
LAKE MICHIGAN RETREAT,
WHERE THEY NOW SPEND
WEEKENDS 'BLUFFING IT'

BY REBECCA POWERS PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROY RITCHIE

VIEW FINDERS

Sal Impastato (left) and Mark Bess renovated a 1970s, Japanese-inspired contemporary cottage on Lake Michigan. Plastic Adirondack-style chairs are positioned for prime viewing from the Glenn, Mich., property. Contrasting ceiling beams emphasize the original 4-foot grid design by architect Norman Carver. The painting is by Saugatuck artist James Brandess. Oakland County-based Tom Myers designed the metal railing.









Opposite: In the great room, ink and watercolor pieces are from Artspace II, Birmingham. The sofa is from Design Within Reach; the chairs are from Room & Board. A former screen room became a dining porch (exterior above, interior below) with new windows and a heated floor. Furnishings include a George Wilson fixture, Saarinen table, and Aristeu Pires chairs.

KEEP IT LIGHT

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SOME PEOPLE ARE FREQUENT MOVERS.

Others have a knack for renovation.

A lucky few understand the nuances of real estate.

Sal Impastato is all of the above, which explains why he's comfortably ensconced in his third Lake Michigan-shore cottage. (He sold the last one, furnishings and all — right down to the bath towels.)

His current lakefront getaway was discovered during what so many of us do: a wouldn't-it-be nice drive through cottage country. He and his longtime partner, Mark Bess, came upon a "complete wreck" on 1.4 acres overlooking the lake. "There were trees growing against the house," Impastato says. That was in 2007. The following year, they embarked on a nine-month fix-up project that included trimming trees, replacing the roof and windows, and installing a new kitchen and bath.





EASY LIVING

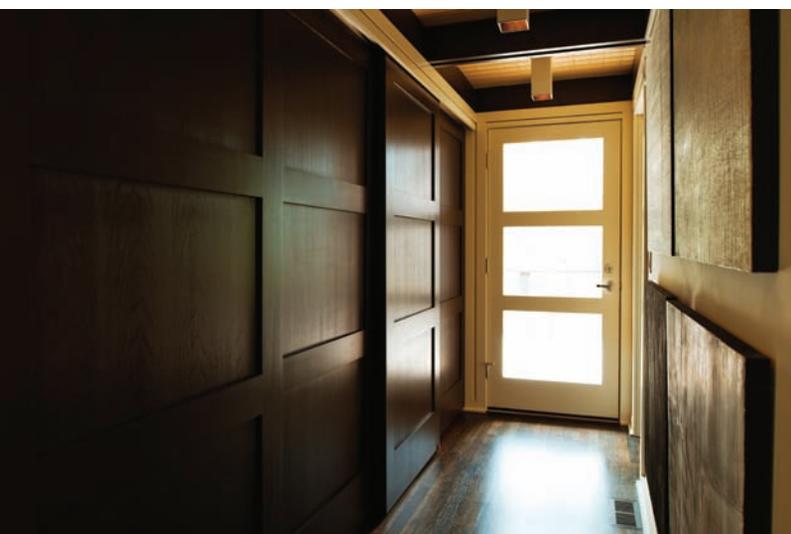
Above: Easy-clean furnishings, which include a Herman Miller plastic armchair (beneath a Ray Becoskie painting), keep weekends carefree. Opposite: Furnishings in the master bedroom include an Eames lounge chair beneath a Michelle Gorden painting. The brown palette has shots of orange as a nod to the home's '70s heritage. Custom paneled doors (lower left) conceal a large pantry.

They kept the home's original envelope, which is just shy of 2,500 square feet, but converted a screen porch that was cantilevered on the north side of the house. "We insulated and heated the floors and installed windows, Impastato says. "Now, it's a 12-by-16 dining room that's warm in the winter. We put a nice Saarinen dining table in there."

With the benefit of a little expert guidance from a friend, Royal Oak-based interior designer Richard Ross, Impastato and

Bess set about creating a suitable interior. Their décor echoes the '70s-era vintage of the home, which was designed by Kalamazoo-based architect Norman Carver, and also reflects the home's Japanese-inspired contemporary style.

Part of the pleasure was in creating a setting different from their usual habitat. "Our home in town is a traditional in Bloomfield Hills," Impastato says. "We also have a traditional British Colonial cottage in Palm Beach, Fla." — a sunny escape that



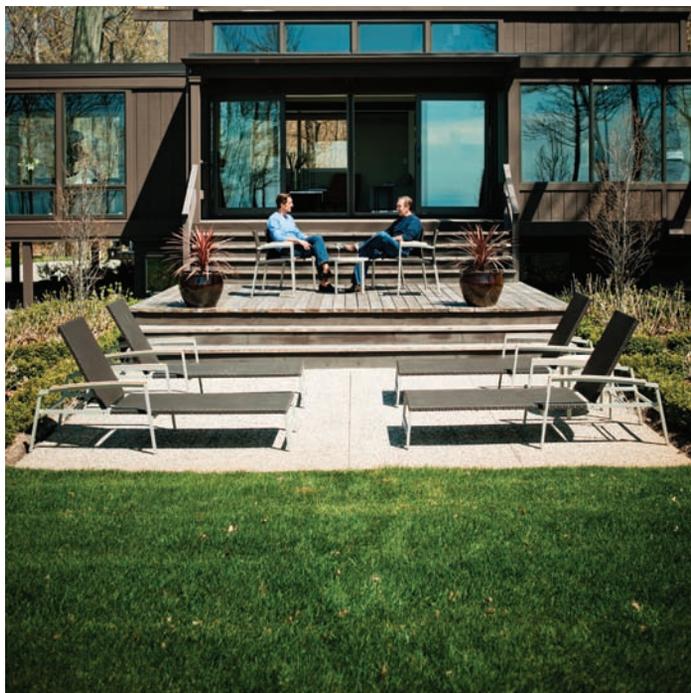
completes a winning residential trifecta fitting for a man who sells real estate for Hall & Hunter in Birmingham.

Throughout their third home, they were careful to use low-maintenance materials on the floors and countertops and in the landscape because, Impastato says, you don't want to arrive and do work.

Leisurely weekends at the cottage in Glenn, Mich., near Saugatuck, take full advantage of the wide, blue horizon. The

couple built an 80-step staircase that leads down to the lake, a structure that includes two sunset decks, one at house level and another just 10 feet above the beach. Both serve as platforms for "martini sunset parties."

It's a lifestyle he recommends for those of us who work hard at our jobs. "On Friday, we drive there and fight the traffic," he says of their two-and-a-half-hour commute. "On Friday night, you just exhale." ■





LAKE EFFECT

Streamlined design puts the focus on the lake. The master bath (opposite) and kitchen (above) have quartz countertops. "Baba" bar-height chairs are from DWR. The woven-glass backsplash tile is from Ann Sacks at Michigan Design Center, Troy. Patio furniture came from Smith & Hawken. Royal Oak interior designer Richard Ross assisted with décor selections.

TIPS FOR BUYING A SECOND HOME:

- 1 Research the area to make sure you're comfortable, whether you want privacy and seclusion or access. ("From where we are, we can still go to movies and nice dining places," Impastato says.)
- 2 Remember that bargains are available. The market for second homes is the best it has been for probably 10 years, Impastato says.
- 3 Try to keep it low maintenance. For example, choose ground cover instead of sod. You don't want to go there and do work.
- 4 Before buying, give serious consideration to the driving time from your main home to the cottage.