

ARCHITECTURE MN

MAKING A GETAWAY

Contemporary getaways in Minnesota and Wisconsin remind us of the many virtues of the simple life.

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SAVING THE UPPER POST

Fort Snelling stakeholders endeavor to set the stage for the revitalization of the long-neglected Upper Post.

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45 DEGREES NORTH

Captivating eco-friendly structures on a coastal Nova Scotia farm stir the imagination.

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Summer Destinations

***A new slant on
cabin living***

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modest MØDERN

by Camille LeFevre



THE "HEART OF THE HOME," SAYS ARCHITECT AND OWNER ANDREA PESCHEL SWAN, IS THE MAIN LEVEL, WHERE THE KITCHEN, DINING, AND LIVING SPACES OPEN FREELY INTO EACH OTHER. SHE STRATEGICALLY PLACED THE FURNISHINGS TO ENCOURAGE CONTINUAL INTERACTION AND CONVERSATION BETWEEN FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

SWAN FISH CAMP

Location:
Lake Mille Lacs, Isle, Minnesota

Clients:
Andrea Peschel Swan, AIA,
and Bret Swan

Architect:
Swan+Simmons Architecture, Ltd.
swanandsimmons.com

Principal-in-charge:
Andrea Peschel Swan, AIA

Project lead designer:
Andrea Peschel Swan, AIA

General contractor:
Nor-Son, Inc.

Size:
1,860 square feet of conditioned
space; 965-square-foot garage

Cost:
\$150/square foot
for finished spaces

Completion date:
March 2009

Photographer:
Scott Amundson Photography



Design meets affordability in a Lake Mille Lacs retreat for a young architect and her family

FISH CAMP. The expression conjures images of army-issue tents—large ones, the kind you stand up in—nestled in the woods next to a pristine lake, where friends and family gather to clean and cook the day’s catch. Smoky, messy, buggy, and a lot of fun. So when Andrea Peschel Swan, AIA, and her husband Bret came across one of the last remaining unbuilt lots on the eastern edge of Lake Mille Lacs, Minnesota’s premier walleye lake, the avid anglers decided to step it up a notch and construct a fish camp they could also call (a second) home.

After purchasing the lot “for less than the assessed value,” Swan says, she and Charlie Simmons, her partner at Swan+Simmons Architecture, designed a three-level, Scandinavian A-frame structure with a 20-by-60 footprint. They contracted with Nor-Son, Inc., to build the home for less than \$180 per square foot. “We were determined to custom-design a home in the current economy by taking advantage of lowered construction costs,” says Swan.

But she also credits the extended project team with completing the cottage in a record-setting four months. Because she was opening her

architecture firm, giving birth to her first child, and designing and building the house all at the same time, the team took a collaborative approach to creating the retreat.

The exterior features low-maintenance materials in a nautical color palette—dark-navy metal roof and white Hardie Board siding—with windows positioned for maximum lake views. The team selected spray-foam insulation to add in R-value and reduce energy bills “from the get-go,” says Swan. They also chose a high-efficiency heating-and-cooling system, augmented by passive solar heating, operable windows, and ceiling fans that draw warm air up and out through the loft windows in the summer.

The lower level, embedded in a hillside, “is meant for dirt,” says Swan. The long two-boat, one-truck garage has a heated mudroom with easy-to-clean, commercial rubber flooring. Stairs lead to “the heart of the home,” says Swan: an open-plan main level with a kitchen, dining area, and living room.

“Audrey Hepburn said, ‘The best thing to hold on to in life is each other,’ and that’s true for us,” says Swan. She designed the floor plan and placed the

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Modest Modern

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furnishings so family and friends are always facing or interacting with each other. "Our focus is on family, but we also want to celebrate catching the walleye, and preparing and eating the walleye, so it's easy to communicate with someone in the kitchen or dining room from wherever you are."

Sliding glass doors open onto a deck with views of the lake. The master bedroom and bath are tucked into the back of the main level, where an open, cable-rail stair leads to the loft, which offers a pullout couch for guests, a second bath, and an area for movie watching. Swan designed the round picture window so that, when viewed from the loft, "where lake meets sky is perfectly centered between the horizontal mullions on the window."

The cottage's clean, contemporary aesthetic allows the "architecture to serve as a stage for views of the lake," says Swan. "We also find solace in simplicity and natural light. We enjoy an exceptional quality of light throughout the day, and at night the vibrancy of the stars is reflected off the lake. So the play of light is never-ending at the cabin. It's magical." **AMN**