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salute to summer

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AN INDIANA FAMILY REVELS IN A SUN-FILLED SEASON OF **LAKESIDE LIVING**

Just say the name—Lake Maxinkuckee—and you can almost hear morning bugle call. Campfires, cannonball dives from a boat dock, and boat races leap to mind. The spring-fed, natural lake (pronounced Maxin-CUCK-ee) in the northern Indiana town of Culver is as all-American as it sounds, and for the family of Gina and Jim Bremner, it is summer at its best.

Every June for 22 years, the Bremners have made the two-hour drive north to the lake from their home in Indianapolis. The Bremners' sons, Matthew, 28, and Josh, 21, grew up skiing and sailing there, and went to summer camps at Culver Academies, a prep school with a postcard-perfect lakeside campus. Matthew and his wife, Carley, who live in Alexandria, Virginia, and college-student Josh still return for family vacations, and the Bremners welcome friends and extended family as well. Jim's and Gina's parents, siblings, and their families often swell the guest list to 16 or more.

"Now our family is spread throughout the Midwest—in Chicago; Grand Rapids, Michigan; and Indianapolis," says Gina. Lake Maxinkuckee is equidistant from all three cities—perfect for reconnecting over euchre card games, boat rides, biking, and good food.

Gina and Jim bought a cottage at Lake Maxinkuckee in the late 1980s, and, while it served them well, they were ready for an upgrade. In 2006, they broke ground on a new home on the site, working with Gary Nance, an Indianapolis-based

Above: Jim and Gina Bremner with Remy, their golden retriever, enjoy breezes on the back porch. **Top left:** Gina's love of Americana shows in blue-and-white fireplace tiles from Country Floors and Lee Jofa plaid fabrics on a slipper chair by Victoria Hagan Home and on club chairs by Edward Ferrell, repeating colors from the Elizabeth Eakins Tree of Life rug. **Left:** An antique Pennsylvania quilt hangs near carved balusters and newels on the double staircase. **Right:** Porches, an upper balcony, and large Marvin windows face the lake. **Preceding pages:** A vintage rooster weather vane perches on the mantel painted in Benjamin Moore White Dove. ■ A Dessin Fournir chandelier hangs in the foyer.

Left: An island sink from Waterworks with a vintage-style Rohl faucet faces the living areas. Wm Ohs cabinets and marble countertops and backsplashes contrast with walnut Olde Savannah Flooring. **Right:** Blue-and-white china inspired the choice of Lee Jofa fabric for Hickory Chair armchairs and a Stark rug in a sitting area by the kitchen. **Below:** An Indiana artist painted a mural of Lake Maxinkuckee for the mudroom.

residential designer. "Instead of a brand-spanking-new house, they wanted the look of an old cottage that had been refurbished," Nance says. "We did make the house more formal than most lake cottages, but still it is casual enough that you can walk in with shorts and bare feet and feel comfortable."

That comfort level comes in large part from Gina's extensive collections of antique quilts, weather vanes, and blue-and-white china. "Gina really loves Americana and has an unbelievable collection of quilts and weather vanes that she wanted to display in this lake home," says interior designer and longtime family friend Suzanne Kasler. The Atlanta-based designer often returns for projects in her native Indianapolis and previously designed the Bremners' primary residence there.

"The design of the lake house really evolved around a classic American look, based on the colors and collections Gina had," Kasler explains. The challenge, she and Gina agree, was showcasing the collections as the art objects they are without overwhelming the rooms with pattern or clutter.

Kasler and Nance created a simple backdrop with walls of vertical and horizontal wood planks painted white and dark-stained, hand-scraped walnut floors. Nance detailed the house with charming beadboard ceilings (painted gray-blue in the kitchen and dining area), built-in shelves, and cozy nooks with sloping walls, replicating the look of old lake cottages. "I mix half a dozen trim profiles in one cottage so it has the look of being added to over a period of generations," Nance explains.

Old quilts are stacked on built-in shelves on the second-level landing. Gina was shopping for a quilt to hang on the landing wall when she spotted a 36-star flag. The 8x5-foot flag now hangs above an antique pine bench.
Opposite: Blue-and-white toile fabric by Hinson & Company was used for wall coverings, bedding, and furniture, creating a peaceful mood in the master suite. The upholstered headboard is illuminated by sconces from Circa Lighting and accented by a painted wood arch. A blue-and-white needlepoint rug by Stark Carpet introduces a simple grid design underfoot.

Sunny yellow fabrics from Lee Jofa and Schumacher brighten an upstairs guest room. In addition to the four-poster by Hickory Chair, a daybed under the eaves offers a cozy sleeping space. A rail (stored in a closet) converts the daybed into a baby crib. **Opposite, top:** French doors lead to a balcony with lake views. The wicker chairs were from actress Bette Davis's Connecticut estate. **Opposite, bottom:** The Bremners have two docks: One is reserved for boats, the other for people to relax without boat traffic.

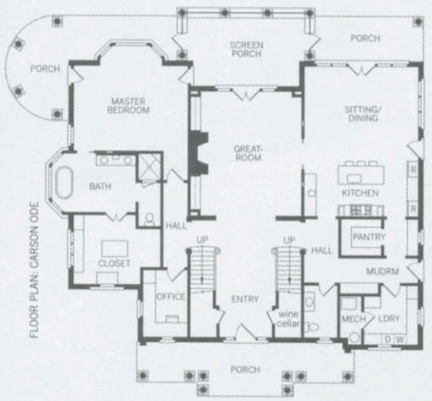
The light-filled front foyer features direct sight lines through the house to the lake. "Gina requested a double stairway to display her quilts, but we still wanted to be able to walk in the front door and see the lake in the back," Nance says. Ornate spiral-turned balusters and newels—also Gina requests—were crafted by an Indiana carpenter.

A blue-and-white needlepoint rug in the foyer introduces a predominant color combo. It reappears in a sitting area next to the kitchen, where Kasler covered swivel armchairs in a blue-and-white crewel pattern that looks as if it were taken from the antique china in the cupboard nearby.

The adjacent kitchen is a study in simplicity, with 2½-inch-thick marble countertops, marble backsplashes, and classic white cabinets, drawing attention to the room's main ornamentation: a horse weather vane galloping above the range.

Many of Gina's Depression-era quilts are stacked on shelves on the stair landing, and others are in active duty in the home's four guest bedrooms. "I chose a favorite quilt for each bedroom and Suzanne designed the room around it," Gina says.

The exception is the master suite, decked out in blue-and-white toile. "This is my favorite room," Gina sighs. "Our old bedroom was so small I had to step over a golden retriever to get anywhere. My kids joke that I've definitely made up for that now. I have to agree."

Residential designer: Gary Nance **Interior designer:** Suzanne Kasler

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