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For the love of boats
Adirondack Style Boathouse on Niswaga Lake
Prairie Style Home on Cross Lake
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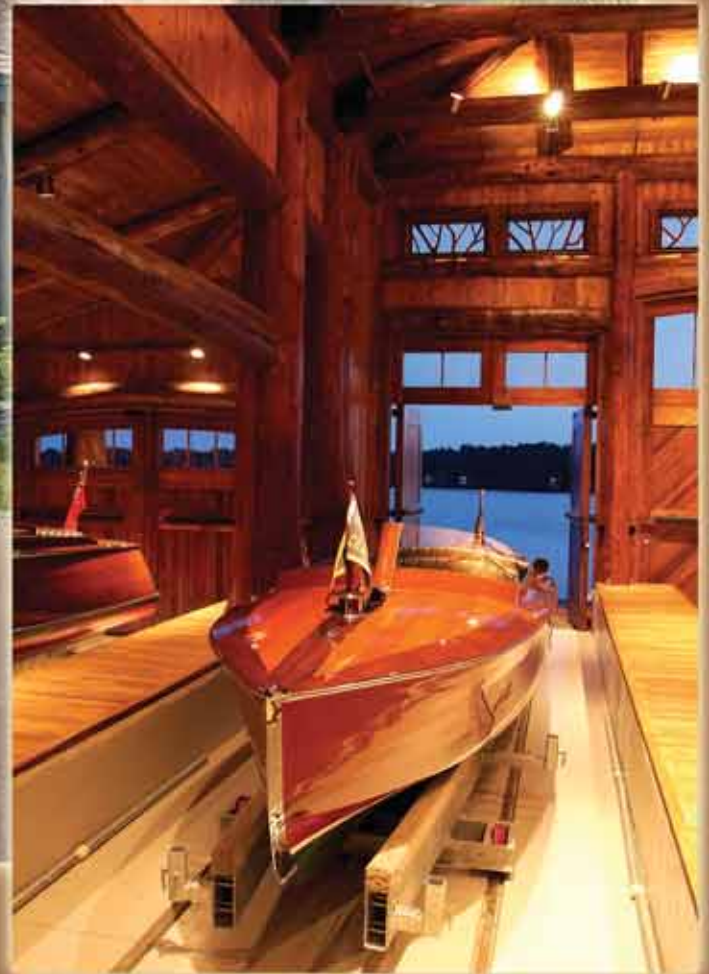


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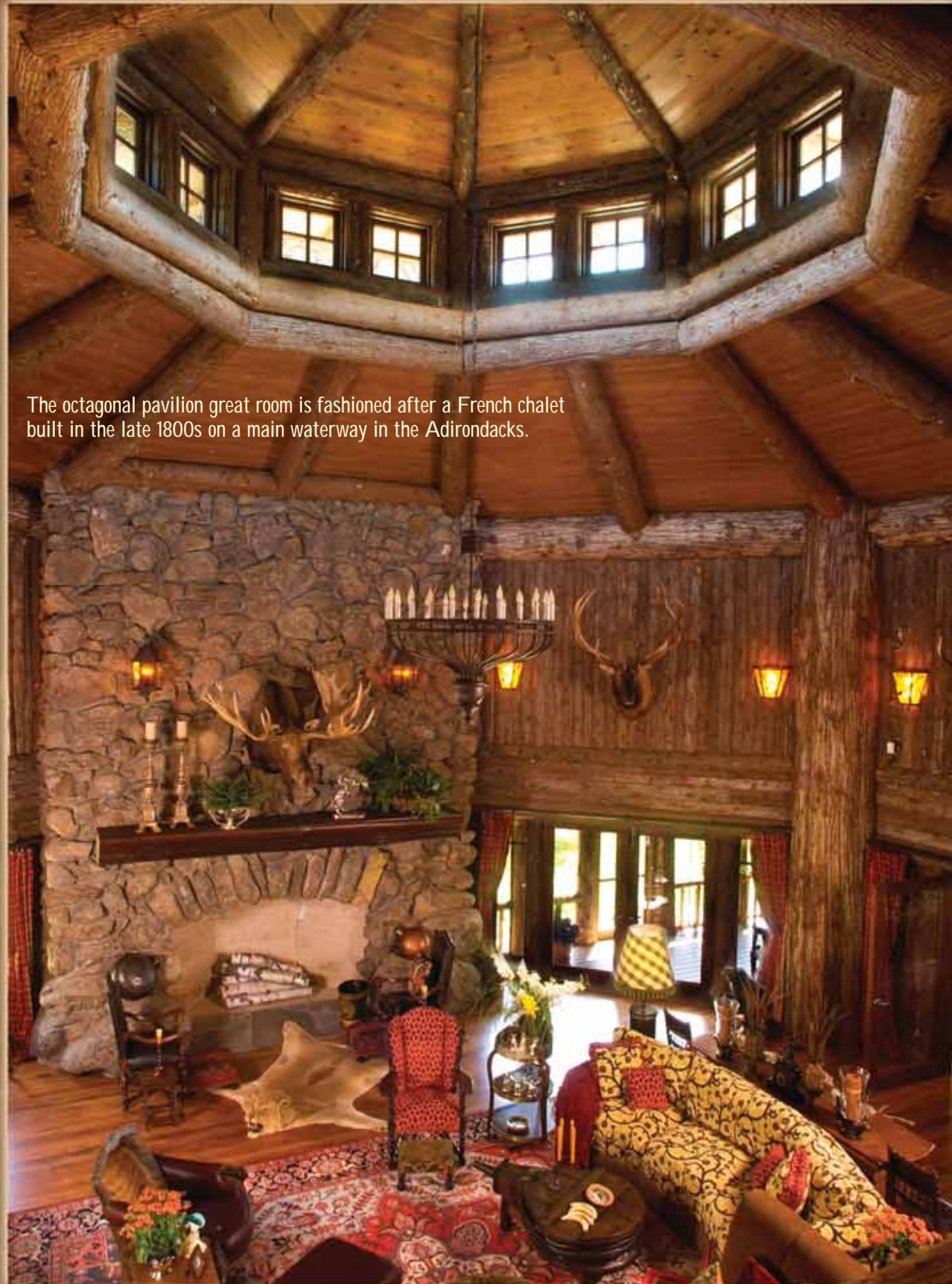


For the Love of Boats

Adirondack style boathouse
deeply rooted on Niswaga Lake



by Sheri Davich • Photography by Scott Amundson



The octagonal pavilion great room is fashioned after a French chalet built in the late 1800s on a main waterway in the Adirondacks.

It's fair to assume that business owner Lee Anderson of Nisswa is a worldly man. He runs a billion dollar conglomeration of companies known as the API Group. He travels the globe for his work and in pursuit of exotic animals; big game hunting is an avocation. He and wife Penny have homes in Naples, Fla., and Duluth. They own a winery in Croatia.

First impressions can be deceptive, can't they? A closer look reveals a man whose roots run deep into the shores of Nisswa Lake, just north of Brainerd. Anderson was raised there, whiling away the hours at the next-door marina, as kids would be wont to do. He developed an affinity for the wooden boats of the time. His family owned two — a Falls Flyer and a Century Chris Craft.

They eventually made the switch to fiberglass. Fiberglass made for a boat that was faster, lighter, supposedly better, but Anderson never forgot the wooden boats. His love for classic boats is as enduring as his connection to the place where he grew up.

When given the opportunity to purchase that marina back in 1985, he hesitated.

"I really didn't want to run a marina," he explains, looking back, "but I was concerned that if I didn't buy the property a condominium development or something similar would be built there."

He bought the marina and his first classic boat that same year.

He ran the marina for 10 years before selling. The business is now operated as Nisswa Marine in a different location. The sale and the move provided a perfect space for a building to house what had become a collection of classic boats — a boathouse, but not just any boathouse.

Visiting the Anderson Boathouse

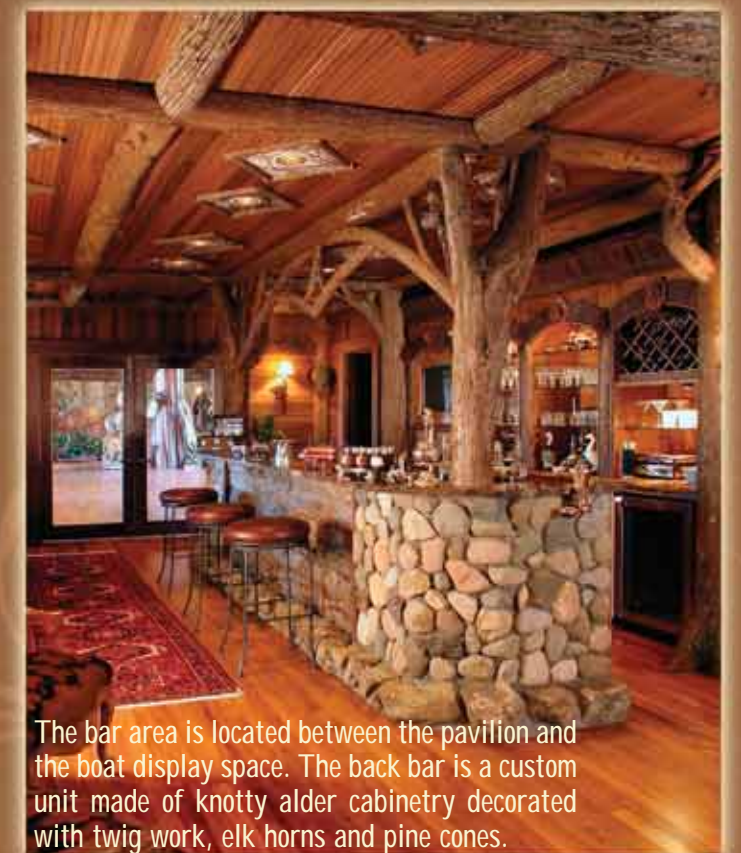
At first sight, the Anderson Boathouse appears to have sprouted up rather than been built, with its tree trunk frame and bark-on wood but, again, first impressions can be deceptive.

Much planning and care went into its construction. New York blue flagstone paths lead to four separate entrances. The main entrance foyer captures the overall character of the building's Adirondack style of architecture. Overhead, Minnesota cedar twig work is artistically attached, giving the sense you are in a massive tree house. It's whimsical and rustic. An adjacent powder room is wallpapered with peeled birch bark, yet make no mistake, the luxury of a marble sink and antique vanity speak of the comforts found here.

Beyond the foyer is the octagonal pavilion great room, fashioned after a French chalet built in the late 1800s on a main waterway in the Adirondacks. The pavilion is home to a massive fireplace made of Montana glacier stones, complete with live lichen. The fireplace must be watered twice



The pavilion is home to a massive fireplace made of Montana glacier stones, complete with live lichen.



The bar area is located between the pavilion and the boat display space. The back bar is a custom unit made of knotty alder cabinetry decorated with twig work, elk horns and pine cones.



A grand cedar staircase is made of bark, burls, limbs and sticks, and it appears to grow out of the floor of the pavilion. It curves gracefully upward to the second floor, where an office and sleeping quarters are found.

each year to maintain the lichen. The maintenance is provided by the builder, Nor-Son Inc. of Baxter.

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A bar area is located between the pavilion and the boat display space. The back bar is a custom unit made of knotty alder cabinetry decorated with twig work, elk horns and pine cones. A stone footrest and combination of stone and cedar slabs are topped with a colorful river rock countertop and a copper fish sink. The lights are accented with diamond-shaped birch bark and decorated with red willow twigs. The diamond theme is a constant through the building.

In the kitchen, knotty alder cabinets were antiqued and hand-distressed after installation. A copper farm-style sink and antique pewter hardware complement a soapstone countertop. The center island was hand-crafted on site using cedar log feet. A tile backsplash replete with forest creatures surrounds a Viking stove. Hand-distressed clear vertical-grain cedar and fir cover the walls and ceiling. Off the kitchen is a cozy breakfast nook. Open to the kitchen is the dining hall, large enough for two long tables. Completely enclosing the dining hall is a wrap-around screen porch. Floor-to-ceiling screens, bark-on cedar posts, an Adirondack shed roof and wide plank cedar flooring grace this area.

The furnishings here, many of them antiques, were painstakingly chosen and placed by Penny Anderson. The effect is opulent, substantial, yet at the same time cozy and warm. It's a welcoming place.

Adjoining the living space is the 8,400-square-foot classical boat display area. Here 30-foot old growth red cedar tower, seemingly holding up the roof. They were hollowed out to conceal the true support structures of the building, steel structural columns. White oak wood floors and pine walls rise to a 26-foot-high vault. The five boat slips were designed to make the boats appear as if they are sitting in the water with an in-ground cable track system operated via remote control. The five double doors in the Boathouse also are operated remotely.

Housed here are trophy mounts of exotic animals and just a few of the classic boats, his "babies," as Anderson refers to them at times. Others are kept in a building across the drive, in covered slips outside and off-site being serviced or re-furbished. He currently owns 18 classic boats with original engines. All see time in the water, although he does transition them from the water to dry dock periodically for practical purposes.





The inspiration

The Andersons were introduced to the Adirondack building style of the Boathouse while on a trip to upstate New York. They visited a resort called The Point, on Upper Saranac Lake. The Point was originally Camp Wonundra, home to William Avery Rockefeller during the Adirondack Great Camp Era.

The Adirondack Great Camps were built in upstate New York along rugged shorelines, between forests and mountain lakes, in the late 1800s and the early part of this century as retreats for the very wealthy. A trademark of the Adirondack building style is the use of unfinished materials such as tree trunks and bark-on wood. Exterior walls, porch railings, staircases and rooflines incorporate tree trunks, limbs, branches, bark and roots. While rare in Minnesota, Adirondack methods are a perfect fit for our lakes and forests and well-suited to Anderson's lifestyle of classic boats and big game hunting.

"Three days!" Anderson laughs when asked how long it took to get him hooked on the Adirondack style. "We spent three days there and haven't been back since. It's very difficult to get a reservation."

Those three days spent at The Point spurred him to purchase every book he could find on Adirondack materials and techniques. He researched extensively and consulted with the builder who could make his dream a reality. It was an easy choice. He has a long-term relationship with Nor-Son, and he knew they were up to the challenge of the Boathouse. They shared a willingness to do the necessary research, the commitment to getting each detail just so and the patience required to stay true to those details.

The construction

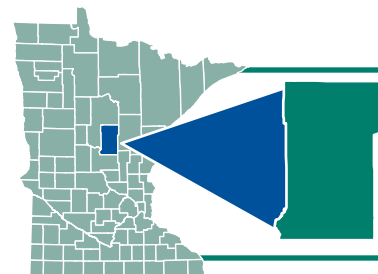
Their quest for the right materials took them to both coasts in search of the trees required to complete the project. They found towering old growth red cedar in British Columbia. It was a complicated acquisition. To maintain the necessary three-foot diameter at the base of the tree, the



Nor-son won the Associated Builders & Contractors (ABC) **2002 Eagle Award** for its construction of the Anderson Boathouse.



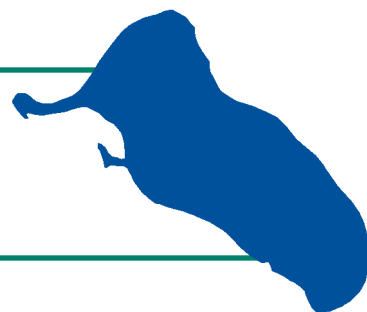
The 8,400-square-foot classical boat display area. Here 30-foot old growth red cedar tower, seemingly holding up the roof. They were hollowed out to conceal the true support structures of the building, steel structural columns.



Nisswa Lake

Crow Wing County

Size	207 Acres
Max Depth	23 ft.
Water Clarity	13 ft.





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trees had to be cut two feet below grade. The process was made more challenging by the fact they were growing high on the side of a mountain. Only three logs per truck bed could be hauled at a time due to their massive size.

The bark-on white cedar was found in the heart of the Adirondacks in Lake Placid, NY. The cutting season for this type of tree is limited to November through January. This is the time when the tree's sap is deep in the ground. When harvested at this time, the bark stays on the tree. This one detail delayed construction by nearly a year and demonstrates the patience required by both client and the builder. Any bark that was lost during the process was painstakingly re-attached by glue and pins, pieced together like an intricate puzzle.

Life at the lake

The Boathouse is currently used as a guest house for friends and clients as well as home to many of the boats. The Andersons stay there occasionally, and they spent significant time there during the construction of their main house.

"Do you see that swing there at the water's edge?" Anderson points to a swing just outside the Boathouse. "Penny and I love to spend time there."

You will find them there, or out cruising. Rare is the day that they aren't on the water when they are home.

Sheri Davich is a writer from Breezy Point.

FEATURE HOME CONTRIBUTORS

Anderson Boathouse



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