

A WONDER by the WATER

The sprawling great room beckons with Cassina's Mex Cube sofa by Piero Lissoni, an ideal spot for taking in the home's endless Lake Michigan views.

Among a developed stretch of homes along the lake in New Buffalo, Mich., dSPACE Studio creates a secluded contemporary oasis for a globe-trotting couple.

By J.P. Anderson
Photographed by Tony Soluri

From top: Scavolini cabinetry, Viccarbe's Trestle table by John Pawson from Luca Lanzetta, and Hay's About A Chair dining chairs give the kitchen/dining area minimalist appeal; ENVI Surfaces porcelain Forte island waterfall countertops with matching backsplash make a style statement in the kitchen.

THE CLIENT

Dreaming of a vacation home, the Chicago-based clients hadn't found the perfect property yet—but they knew they wanted dSPACE Studio to bring it to life when they did. A few years later, a place in New Buffalo, Mich. called their name, and dSPACE took action.

THE PRIORITY

"St. Barts on the shore of Lake Michigan" was the brief that studio principals Kevin Toukoumidis and Robert McFadden were given by the clients, who craved a weekend sanctuary evocative of a sensuous French Caribbean lifestyle on the lake an hour from their primary residence in Chicago. Also high on the list for this cosmopolitan couple? A sculptural contemporary design with open-plan living for entertaining, integrated interior and exterior spaces, expansive panes of glass, a home gym, family lounge and bedrooms for their two children and weekend guests.

THE CHALLENGE

The house's location alongside a stretch of properties with narrow side yard setbacks on the lakeshore presented the primary challenge. "The clients wanted a light-filled home that would be welcoming in the family-friendly neighborhood," explains Toukoumidis, who led the project with McFadden with additional assistance from Ethan Werkmeister, "but they also wanted to maximize a feeling of seclusion and preserve privacy." The strategy? Notes McFadden, "Balancing conflicting objectives of openness and privacy, we lowered the grade of the building site, nestling the structure into the dune. This approach enabled us to partially obscure the main living area, a space defined by parallel window walls that



From top: A framed Massimo Vitali photograph draws the eye in the primary bedroom; stand-out features of the great room include a two-story fireplace wall clad in custom bamboo panels and a customized pendant light made in collaboration with Giopato & Coombes to mirror cumulus clouds that form over the lake; the sleek, soothing primary bath boasts Scavolini cabinetry and Luminil's Luceo suspended linear pendant.



track the shoreline. The effect is that the first level remains private even while appearing transparent from the street—passersby enjoy views of the lake through the structure. Lowering the grade also enabled us to locate a sunken courtyard at the front, hidden by a low retaining wall constructed of fluted concrete. This design mitigated an additional challenge of lakefront living: prevailing lake breezes. The courtyard offers protected space for outdoor living on windy days. For this space we selected ginkgo trees for their open canopy and sculptural form, adding a measure of privacy for the first floor while preserving a welcoming character in the community. This design enabled

us to lower energy usage while promoting wellness. Oversize sliding glass doors offer abundant ventilation for passive cooling and improved indoor air quality, and encourage active living through a strong visual connection to the outdoors.”

THE DETAIL

“One defining element is the first level linear volume clad in a black aluminum rain screen interrupted by a rectangular glass void,” explains Toukoumidis. “This design, coupled with a concealed garage, makes the first level recede. The effect is that the second level appears to hover over the dune and offers views of the horizon through the structure. The second story volume is clad in Accoya, selected for sustainability and color. Over time, the home will blend into the environment as the taupe wood weathers to a gray patina. And in the great room, frosted glass spheres suspended in the double-height space draw one’s gaze upward. This custom pendant light from Giopato & Coombes, which mirrors cumulus clouds that form over the lake, is visible from both levels and playfully contrasts with the charcoal fireplace wall. On the floor, large-format porcelain extends out to the pool terrace, uniting interior and exterior spaces and amplifying the connection to the outdoors.”

THE OUTCOME

The clients couldn’t be happier,” notes McFadden. “They spend warm days surrounded by friends and family who revel in a home that lives like a boutique hotel, including drinks by the pool, reading on the sun deck, stargazing from the beachfront fire pit and rinsing off in the luxurious outdoor shower. The clients note that guests do not want to leave during their stay, even to go out to dinner. The solution: a rotating series of private chefs regularly provide summer dinners from the gourmet outdoor kitchen so no one has to miss a sunset or change out of their bathing suit for dinner.”



DESIGN DETAILS

TYPE
Single Family Home

LOCATION
New Buffalo, Mich.

ARCHITECTURE/INTERIOR
DESIGN
dSPACE Studio
dspacestudio.com

BUILDERS
Zahn Builders
zahnbuilders.com

Resources

ALLIED MAKER
Light fixture in kids bath
alliedmaker.com

ARIOSTEA
Floor tile on 1st floor
ariostea-high-tech.com

THE BAHR COMPANY
Engineered wood flooring on 2nd floor
thebahrico.com

GIOPATO & COOMBES
Custom pendant light in great room
giopatocoombes.com

HAY
Dining chairs
hay.nl

LUCA LANZETTA
Salvatori coffee table, John Pawson dining table
lucalanzetta.com

LUMINII
Various lighting
luminii.com

MASSIMO VITALI
Photography in primary bedroom
massimovitali.com

SCAVOLINI
Cabinetry in kitchen and bath
scavolini.com

STONE SOURCE
Tile in guest bath/kids bath
stonesource.com



Clockwise from left: Clad in a black aluminum rainscreen, the home’s first level recedes, making the Accoya-clad second level seem to float above the dune; a smartly designed hidden courtyard at the front of the house offers an inviting protected space for outdoor living on windy days; large-format tile extends from the house out to the pool terrace, stylishly blurring the line between indoor and outdoor space.

