

# HOMIE

*Away From*

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A converted barn creates a private haven for visiting friends and extended family

BY EVA HAGBERG | PHOTOGRAPHY BY DURSTON SAYLOR



**Barn Raising** (OPPOSITE PAGE) A screen of what the architects call Chinese Chippendale nestles up against the converted barn, while a weathervane offers a striking reminder of what the building used to be. **Serene Scene** (THIS PAGE) A checkerboard pattern from Mosaic House breathes new life into a fireplace, while a Knoll chair and custom-upholstered Room & Board chaise and round table provide a framework for friends-and-family hangouts. A massive curtain from Clarence House drapes across the window that frames a view of Bantam Lake. See *Resources*.



**Modern Moments** (CLOCKWISE ACROSS SPREAD FROM ABOVE) An Artemide pendant light hangs over a Knoll dining table surrounded by Herman Miller chairs, while striped drapes from Clarence House bring a pop sensibility into the space. Viewed from the lake, the house is a study in old and new, with the shape of the greenhouse picking up the original angular frame of the barn. A thick red tread on the stairwell draws in the eye and opens up the entry space, which is illuminated by Sonneman Lighting pendants. See *Resources*.



**W**HEN BOB AND Mary Ann Downes approached New York City-based architect Andrew Bartle with the idea to create a guesthouse on their Bantam Lake property, they didn't come to the architects with a suggestion for what they wanted the new space to look like (unusual in this age of Pinterest and Google image searchability), rather only for what they wanted the new space to do: connect. The couple wanted to bring together family with extended family with friends back to family, to celebrate their vision of a richly inclusive network that needed more space than the couple's main house could provide—and more privacy than such close quarters could offer.

Enter, stage left, a barn; now a two-bedroom, one-sleeping-loft guesthouse with sweeping views overlooking the lake and a striking amount of open space. "They wanted a place where guests would feel comfortable, and not like they had to perform," Bartle says. "And they wanted to do it economically and in such a way that they could take advantage of the view of the lake." Because the couple didn't have a specific look in mind, Bartle and his design partner Ken Lake started from the social and moved toward the aesthetic, keeping in mind both the spoken and unspoken requirements. Bartle had noticed Mary Ann's modern stylishness, and saw how that contrasted (though complemented) Bob's comfort with traditional settings. "Bob could see a traditional house, and Mary Ann could see a modern," Bartle says. "I think all of our projects have tried to walk that line—and this one does it in a very interesting way."

The first sign of that line is in what the architects call the Chinese Chippendale, a repeating screen pattern that appears both outside and



**What A View**  
The master bedroom and terrace, furnished with a Design Within Reach webbed armchair and Room & Board ottoman, look out over the sweeping vista of Bantam Lake's opposite shore. See *Resources*.



inside, hanging low from the roof and perching tall on a stair. Next is the sleeping loft, tucked under the roof and illuminated by an almost-impossibly-thin clerestory, furnished with benches that become sleeping areas once you bring out the bedding stored underneath. Then there's the central stair, its treads thick and red, a dash of bright modernism in the carefully laid-out main space—but it also works conceptually. "The stair was a critical moment," Bartle says, explaining how amping it up so much helped to give the overall interior space a much larger, punchier feeling. "The building is unbelievably tiny." And the stair, rather than filling up the space, manages to expand it.

That kind of visual sensitivity and acuity appears throughout the structure. A sitting room frames a view of the lake, while, in that same room, a column, wrapped in rope, both holds the ceiling up structurally and holds the building together conceptually. Textural remnants of the original barn appear here and there in the form of the original ceiling, exposed in all its beam-filled glory; and in the adoption of original floor planks onto a textured wall surface. On the outside, gates and windows offer shapely shadows of their former lives—a cross between adaptive reuse and post-modern interpretation. "What was fun about the project is that they had more building than they needed, so we were able to subtract parts of the building," Bartle says. "We were able to make these interstitial spaces work with the whole transitional zone between the inside and the outside."

A significant amount of architectural education is devoted to training designers to be able to work with that fluid and ever-changing boundary, and this house works not only with one—inside and outside—but many others: sleep and wake; rest and relax; building and ground; decoration and structure; house and barn; friends and family. ✨

**Outside Influences** The sloping roofs of the original barn (ABOVE), combined with Bartle Architects' additions (and subtractions), make this a geometrically intricate house. A porch entry door (BELOW) is surrounded by Chinese Chippendale scrim, custom-created by the architects to speak to the clients' widespread interest in multiple eras and aesthetics, while Illuminating Experiences' Galaxy globe lights offer a soft counterpoint. See *Resources*.

