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SENSE OF STRUCTURE



It's rare for a remodel to change the essential feel of a home, but that's the story behind the Round Lake vacation home belonging to Ben and Andrea (Andy) Smith. Once a 70's split entry with three bedrooms, it's now an engaging five-bedroom home with a distinct Arts and Crafts, or Craftsman, character.





"We added and subtracted and did a little bit of everything," notes architect Dale Mulfinger of SALA Architects, who created the plans for the structure. "It was more than a remodel—it was really a transformation."

In addition to expanding and improving the space, owner Ben Smith wanted to change the look of it to create a north woods character. "Initially, we discussed making it more lodge-like," Mulfinger says, "but lodges feature steep roofs, whereas this one had a low-slung roof. We needed an architectural style that had character as well as a legacy of low roofs. It's important to work within the existing context, not just the floor plan, but the ceiling and roof system. We decided on a style that would fall under the rubric of the Arts and Crafts style. Ben read a few books

on the subject and did some research and really warmed up to the idea."

The Arts and Crafts school gained steam in the 1880's. It was a movement of sturdy, simple architectural firmaments, flowing lines and simplicity in furniture, where exposed beams, plain wood and visible joints are evidence of the work of craftsmen—a departure from the Victorian aesthetic of machine-made, highly polished veneers. The key point of the Arts and Crafts movement is that the more clearly expressed the construction, the more honest the piece. "We weren't slaves to the style, but we used it as a theme," Mulfinger comments. "I'd worked previously with a very talented builder, Nick Allen of Handmade Homes, so we brought him on board. Nick

fleshed out the vision with wonderful woodwork. It's one thing to draw up plans, but it's another to find someone who can read them. You don't always find that in remote northern locations."

Talla Scogmo of Gunkelman's, who worked with the Smiths previously on their home in Edina, did the interior design of the place. She also collaborated on finishings. "A lot of design firms forget that part of it, but good interior design starts with the backdrop." She and her assistant, Jen Zirkelbach, were also very involved in the lighting and electrical plans.

The team opened up the ceiling in the kitchen to connect it to the living room, which had a high ceiling that came to a



mono point, and added structural elements like beams to lend character to the space. Skogmo chose pieces manufactured by Stickley—a coffee table with tile insets as well as a sofa and chair. The torchier, from Brass Light Gallery, features a Mica shade.

The porch, which is an entirely new feature, has become a favorite living area for the Smiths. They like it so much, in fact, they added a porch onto their Edina home.

"So many people in the Midwest overlook the porch," Skogmo observes, "but having a screened in space gives you an outdoor living area that's very practical. The architecture of the porch finishes the roof line and looks appropriate." For the porch d*cor, Skogmo and Zirkelbach chose sim-

ple, clean colors—reds, yellows, russets, and clear blue—bright, whimsical colors that tie into the Arts and Crafts theme. The chairs pictured are Walters Wicker: "Very nice, comfortable and substantial," Skogmo comments. "The accessories were done in a collected, eclectic way with things that feel found. I grew up with a 75-year-old cottage in the family, full of furnishings and accessories that belonged to my grandparents. That's the success of many cottages, and it can be hard to achieve that feel without 75 years of artifacts. We didn't want to create something that was cabiny and cutesy, with little signs and bears. We brought together objects that reflected the design of the house and used things the owners would want to live around."

"Many people approach cabins with kids in mind," Skogmo says, "but the Smiths did this as a way to enjoy retirement. They have grown children with their own families, and they love to entertain. This is a great space that can accommodate friends and family with the comforts of a nice, well-designed home."

In addition to the new porch, two bedrooms were added on the lower level and the couple's bedroom was expanded. "The couple's bedroom is painted in the most glorious color of faded robin's egg blue," Skogmo says. "It's beautiful and restful. In fact the Smiths recently used that color on their Edina home. Even a cool color can warm a room." She chose a "big, campy seersucker duvet" for the bed. "It feels very much like lake living."

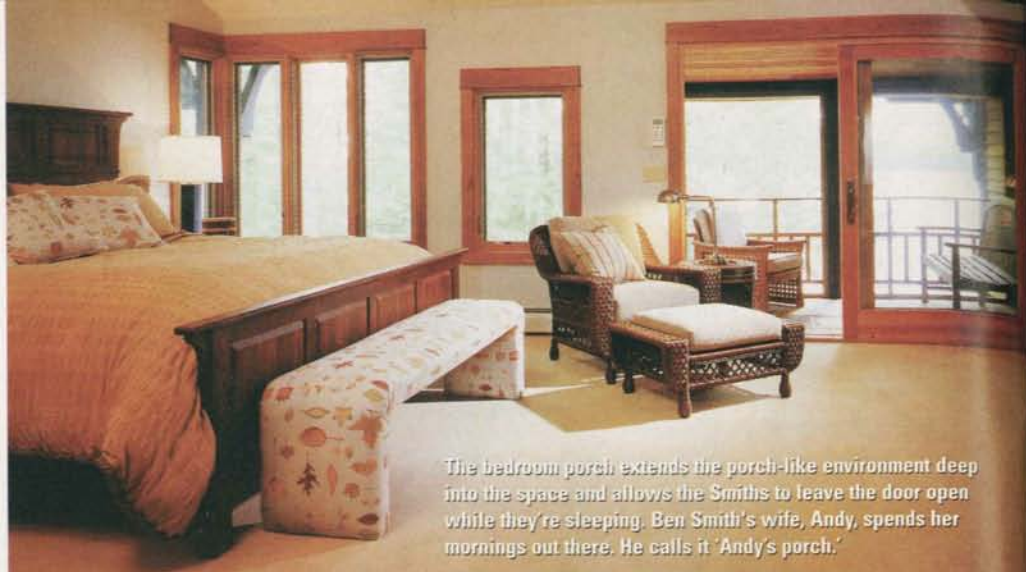
The bed is a reproduction Arts and Crafts piece. The bedside lights, from Brass Light Gallery, are swing arm lamps in an oil rub bronze finish. The dresser was custom built by Nick Allen. Mulfinger had a small screened-in porch constructed off the bedroom. "The addition of two porches as well as a small deck off the kitchen makes the whole house 'porchy'. The bedroom porch extends the porch-like environment deep into the space."

"It was more than a remodel—it was really a transformation."

Ben Smith remarks that his wife, Andy, loves that bedroom porch. "We call it Andy's porch. She enjoys little places and coziness. She loves to spend time out there in the morning. We really love everything about this remodel."

The fireplace by Jotul in the master bedroom adds a warmth and romantic glow on cool evenings. Available through Woodland Stoves and fireplaces.

The entrance features fanciful stonework and woodwork. "We were trying to show the way the wood came together," Architect Mulfinger explains. "We wanted to make the entrance an experience. It's a long, broad house—we constructed the entrance to project out and diminish that. You have a long roof dropping down at you, we wanted to open it up to receive a visitor, to give a sense of the structure sheltering you."



The bedroom porch extends the porch-like environment deep into the space and allows the Smiths to leave the door open while they're sleeping. Ben Smith's wife, Andy, spends her mornings out there. He calls it 'Andy's porch.'



The exterior was redone to reflect the new mood of the house, including an entrance which projects out, diminishing the broad line of the structure. The Smiths use the home in the summertime as well as the winter.

