

THE UNPLUGGED ISSUE

AUGUST 2022

# Country Living

Old-School  
Summer!

bring on  
WATERMELON  
SEASON!

Recipes, pg. 33

Rediscover the  
Simple Joys  
of Sunny Days  
and Starry Nights

LIFE'S BETTER  
*at the* LAKE

Cousin-Approved  
Bunk Rooms

Barefoot-Friendly  
Kitchens

Party-Ready Porches



# Lure of the Lake

A Minnesota couple settles into a dream cottage built along a sentimental shoreline.

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Black  
Cabot Stain

The black-stained siding of Jill and Jeff Murphy's low-slung cottage is crisply contrasted with white trim and topped with a cedar shake roof, echoing buildings in Norway and Denmark.





"I've always liked vintage trucks," Jeff says of their restored 1967 Land Rover. Alongside him are Jill (holding Daisy) and daughters Megan, Grace, and Sarah. Their golden retriever, Piper, is the official guest greeter.

**G**rowing up, Jeff and Jill Murphy lived on opposite sides of Lake Pulaski in the small Minnesota town of Buffalo, west of the Twin Cities, but it wasn't until they were both in their youth and more than 2,000 miles away in San Diego that the pair were introduced by mutual friends.

"As kids, we were both out water-skiing all the time, and I don't know how we didn't manage to cross paths," Jill recalls. That fateful first date in California and a deep-rooted love of the lake eventually brought the couple right back to where they started. "After college, we knew we wanted to come back to Lake Pulaski to raise our kids, and we wanted to be the house that everybody comes to."

Today, some 35 years later, the empty nesters are settling into their next stage of life in a newly built cottage about a mile down the shore from their previous family home. Inside and out, "Camp Murph" is as much about accommodating the couple's new life stage as it is about remaining the sort of place where everybody gathers, including their three grown

daughters, Megan (22), Sarah (20), and Grace (18), who regularly return for weekends of wakesurfing, waterskiing, hiking, and cookouts over a bonfire.

An architectural designer, Jeff ([murphycodesign.com](http://murphycodesign.com)) situated the house on a 50-foot bluff above the water's edge, with primary living areas on the main level and guest rooms downstairs. Carved timbers, rough-cut stone, and walls of windows reflect a combination of Jill's Scandinavian heritage and Jeff's Irish roots. "We really gravitate to the more vernacular historic homes in Scandinavia—ones that embrace unique detailing and craftsmanship, especially in the woodwork," he says. But they also wanted to incorporate elements of relaxed Minnesota lake homes, such as reclaimed wood floors salvaged from barns and the small screened-in porch high above the shoreline, which is hands down the heart of the home. Says daughter Sarah: "The first thing I do when I come back home is walk right out to the porch balcony and look out over the lake. I love it here."

HOW CLEVER IS THAT?  
**Disguised Speaker**

The Murphy family shares a love of music and the throwback stereo is always set to "play." Jeff cleverly obscured a speaker above the flat-screen television with an architecturally appropriate iron grate.



LAKE LURE  
**Lodgelike Living Room**

The living room's wall of windows (above left) frames a bird's-eye panoramic lake view, sheltered by a timbered ceiling in a combination of white oak and elm. "It makes the room feel like it's been here a long time," Jeff says. A wall of moss rock surrounds the fireplace, with chiseled stone corbels supporting the mantel. On cool summer nights, the Murphys light a fire, spin a few records from Jeff's vintage vinyl collection, and wrap up in a blanket (Minnesota's Faribault Woolen Mill throws are always at the ready) to settle in for a snugly hang-out.





LAKE LURE

### Family-Friendly Island

In the kitchen, double windows slide open at the sink for a seamless connection to the adjoining screened-in porch (see pg. 68). "We just keep them open, and when you're sitting at the island, it's so great to be able to look out to the lake," says Jill. The generous 7-foot 2-inch by 5-foot 2-inch island easily holds the family of five when they gather to cook, eat, and hang out. Reclaimed wood floors and the exposed timbered ceiling with carved corbels make the room seem like a lodge, while large woven pendant lights ([arhaus.com](#)) and the backs of the counter stools ([restorationhardware.com](#)) bring more casual texture.

#### HOW CLEVER IS THAT? Heated Countertop

The Calacatta Laza quartz countertop is heated along the seating areas thanks to an electric mat underneath ([feelswarm.com](#)). "Stone can be cold, so it feels really nice on your arms and hands," says Jeff.



*meet the dogs!*

Golden retriever Piper and Shih Tzu poodle Daisy are always ready for a jump in the lake.

LAKE LURE

### Cozy "Dibrary"

Inspired by Irish pubs they visited during their travels, Jeff created what the family calls its "Dibrary," a dining alcove lined with bookcases (below). "It just kind of hugs you, like when you're sitting in those pub booths with all the books around you," he says. Framed by aged timbers, the recessed hideaway is wrapped in black-painted shelves (Deep Caviar by Benjamin Moore). An upholstered built-in bench allows for hours of lingering conversation—and laughter-filled rounds of UNO and Trivial Pursuit.

*"We wanted to be the house that everybody comes to—cozy, comfortable, and casual."*

HOMEOWNER JILL MURPHY







After a long day on the water, the girls hit the dock's rope-strung rocking chairs (*decorist.com*) around the Solo Stove to watch the sun set. Come winter, the boathouse turns into a warming hut after ice-skating on the frozen lake.



LAKE LURE  
**Perfect-Size Porch**

Early on, the Murphys considered a four-season porch, but they quickly nixed the idea in favor of the breezes and sounds of the waves that come courtesy of a screened-in porch. Its modest 13- by 13-foot size keeps the scale in check—big enough for everyone to gather, but small enough to keep conversations intimate. Jeff found the antique pub table with four swing-out stools around 15 years ago. A new woodburning fireplace (*jotul.com*) adds to the comfy factor, especially on chilly Minnesota evenings.

LAKE LURE  
**Postcard-Worthy Boathouses**

One of the family's two boathouses (left) serves up drinks and snacks from a soapstone bar that opens up with candy apple red bifolding windows. Wet suits and wakesurf boards (along with several trophies picked up during the lake's annual decorative boat and ski parades) are stored inside. Its black-stained board-and-batten siding and the chunky cedar brackets are indicative of classic Scandinavian vernacular, right down to the wooden pegs. The Murphys restored the second circa-1915 boathouse (this page) and cedar platform as a landing area for canoes. Jeff stacked fieldstones he gathered from the shoreline under and around the boathouse foundation, while found sticks prop open the awning windows.



Unmellow Yellow  
*Behr*

Jeff found the small yellow cooler on eBay—he sought it out because it's just like the red one his Dad had when he was growing up.