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This page: An arched front door previews the great room's dramatic vaulted ceiling. **Opposite:** A simple roofline helps create the restrained street-side profile desired by the owners.

.lakeside view



A cramped ranch house expands into a spacious home with stunning water views.

The 1950s ranch house on Chicago's North Shore had a multitude of minuses, including cramped rooms and a leaky roof, but it had one major plus: a bluff-side site with splendid views of Lake Michigan. Larry and Judy Tauber resided just a few blocks away but yearned to live on the lake, so they bought the ugly duckling and set out to turn it into a swan. A big swan: 6,000 square feet of living space, five bedrooms, five full bathrooms, and two half-baths.

WRITTEN BY CASEY ELLIS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK SAMU
STYLING BY KAREN JOHNSON



Above: A large central island works equally well for food preparation or casual dining. Northern exposure brings ample breakfast-time sunlight.

At the same time, they wanted the home to present a simple street-side profile rather than loom like one more McMansion squeezed onto a suburban lot.

After hiring the design/build firm Benvenuti and Stein, Inc., of Evanston Illinois, they decided to work with the existing footprint, extending out only 7 feet in the front, but going up a full

A mix of materials and finishes adds visual interest to the kitchen and breakfast area.

second story to gain more space. (Extending into the back of the property would have flirted with the possibility of the addition sliding into Lake

Michigan during a winter storm.)

Building up allowed the designers, including project architect Jeff Herberholz, to create a dra-



Left: A small sink in the island provides the perfect spot for prepping flowers or produce. **Right:** A fireplace saved from the original structure adds a focal point to the breakfast area. **Below:** Tilework echoes the blue accents in the granite countertop.



matic two-story-high great room entered through an archway and culminating in a massive 18-foot window looking out on the lake. From the front, however, the simple lines of the roof mask the extensiveness of the added space.

A warm rusticated brick on the exterior helps the house blend with its neighbors rather than shout its newness. Cast stone accents the window and door openings. Copper-clad dormers punctuate the front roof slope, with the large central dormer providing an avenue for natural light to pour into the great room.

After a six-month design process, actual construction took nine months—a relatively rapid schedule for such a complex project. “Faster finishing time is a major advantage of using a design/build firm that includes its own cabinet shop,” Geno

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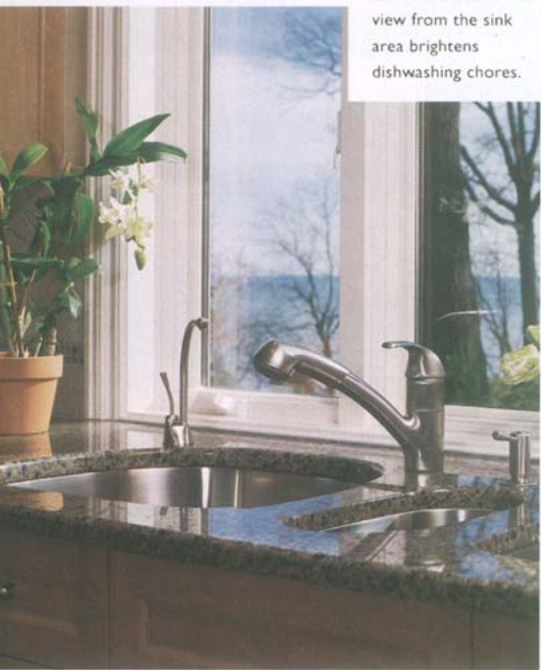
Benvenuti says. "It makes it easier for us all to work together and tweak things along the way."

The Taubers wanted a home that provided first-floor living for themselves yet had spacious accommodations on the second floor for visiting children, grandchildren, and house guests.

On both floors, laundry and storage areas are located at the front of the house, so the main living spaces, as well as the bedrooms, can face the lake in back. One of the upstairs bedrooms is a virtual second master suite—perfect for providing grown children or other guests a measure of privacy.

The sunroom, now one of Judy's favorite areas, was an afterthought, hatched when the couple was standing in a screened porch in the

Right: Honed black granite on the island contrasts with the multi-colored granite topping the perimeter cabinets. **Below:** The view from the sink area brightens dishwashing chores.



Careful siting of the sunroom added onto the kitchen preserved the lake view for anyone eating or working at the central island.

Dominican Republic. Looking out at the ocean, Judy thought, "I want one of these."

To allay the couple's fears that adding the extra room would make the kitchen seem dark, Benvenuti suggested they site the addition a bit lower than the kitchen's breakfast area. "We actually wanted to set the sunroom three steps lower than the first floor," he says, "but because of the general grade, we could set it only two steps lower, or approximately 15 inches below the first floor."

Those hard-won 15 inches, however, allow anyone in the kitchen to see over the sun-

room furniture. Plenty of windows allow sight lines to continue all the way to the lake.

"The goal was to make the sunroom as transparent as possible. Not having the concern of a basement below or second floor above gave us an expansive vertical view to complement the horizontal view for whomever might be working or sitting at the island," Benvenuti explains. At night, the room's cove-lighted bamboo tray ceiling makes the room almost as inviting as it is by day.

"I love to sit out there and read or just look at the changing light on the lake," Judy says.



Tall columns and soft green walls define the dining area of the spacious great room.

For help with the interior decor, Judy turned to Leslie Stern of Leslie M. Stern Design, Ltd. in Chicago. "Her main request was for more color than in her former house, which was very neutral," Stern says. "In this house she wanted the interior to reflect the blues and greens of the lake."

In the great room, seating is upholstered in chenilles and other rich but

durable fabrics. "They add a degree of elegance, yet still wear well," says Stern. Green granite tops the buffet in the formal dining area, complementing the soft green hue of the walls.

The lake and sky colors are particularly prominent in the master bedroom, where the first fabric they found, an abstract print in blues and soft yellows, sets the palette. A

custom-made rug in blue and yellow with green edging adds to the warm and inviting feel of the room—a space Stern describes as "very serene."

A mix of materials infuses the kitchen with visual interest. Counters feature two different granites: honed black atop the island (which has birch cabinets stained a silvery blue), and along the

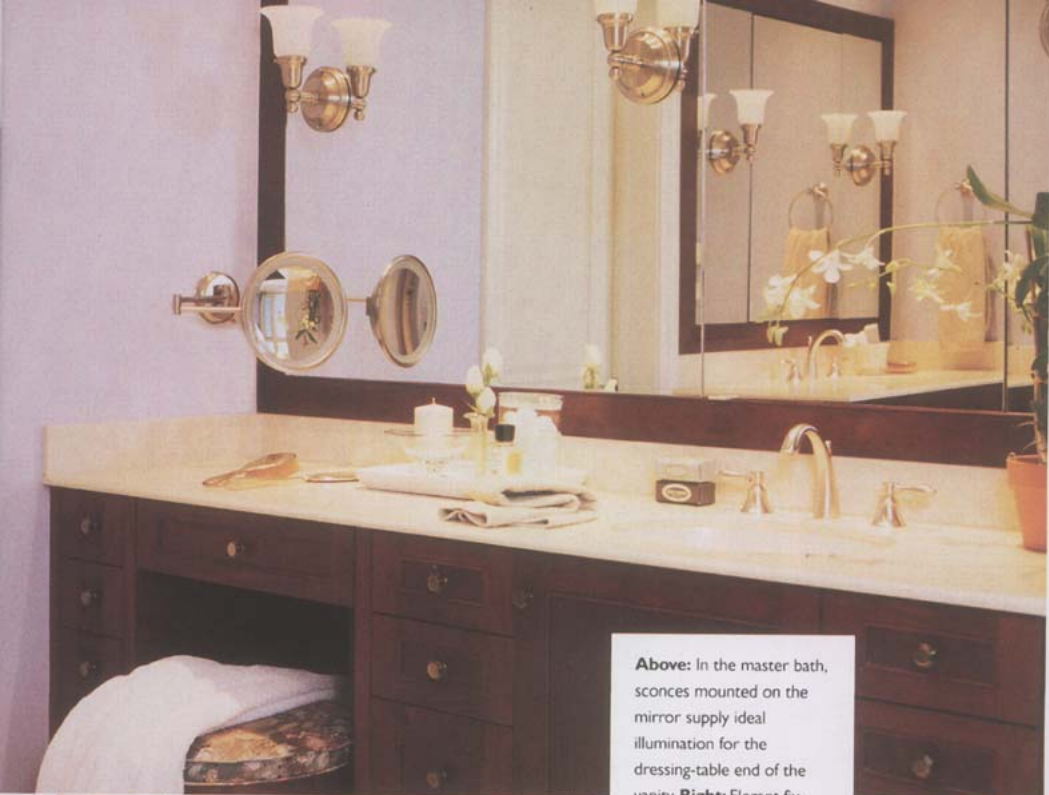


perimeter, topping maple cabinets stained a very light, warm beige, a cream-and-black granite flecked with blue. "It's a wonderful kitchen; the only thing I wanted that I didn't get was a separate pantry," Judy says.

But the lack of a pantry pales in comparison to the house's many pleasures. "Our last place was great to raise children," Judy says. "This is a great adult house. We put so much thought into it, and it all paid off." ■

Above: Zoey the cockapoo enjoys the sunny window bay in the master bedroom. **Below:** Windows etched to look like blinds create privacy in the master bathroom.





Above: In the master bath, sconces mounted on the mirror supply ideal illumination for the dressing-table end of the vanity. **Right:** Elegant fixtures add spa-like touches to the glass-enclosed shower. **Left:** Periwinkle walls complement exterior views of lake and sky.

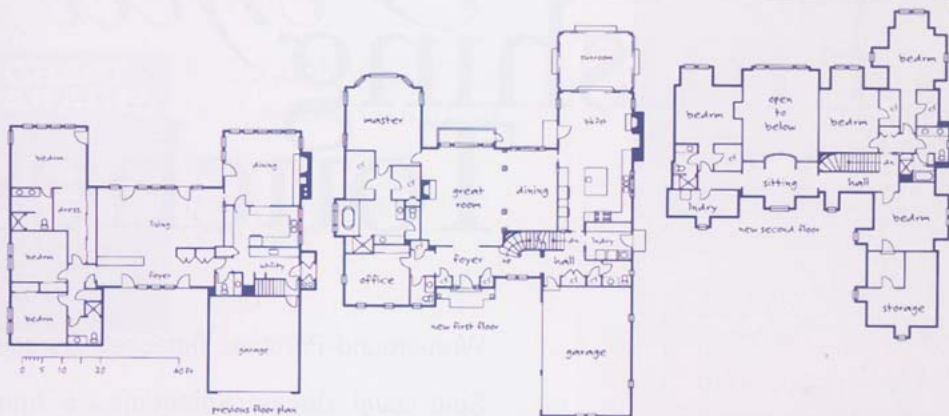




**“It’s so peaceful to sit
here and watch the boats
on Lake Michigan.”**

—homeowner Judy Tauber

The sunroom’s sweeping lake views make it the owners’ favorite room.



» MORE PRODUCT INFO ON PAGE 95 «



An outdoor dining terrace nestles partway down the lakeside bluff.