

## Bedside manor

*The old Martha Jefferson  
readies for tenants*

## A fresh start

*In Fry's Spring, an updated  
cottage honors its roots*

## Counter color

*Bold hues...and other kitchen  
trends we're avoiding*

Inside.  
Outside.  
**Home.**

# Aboode

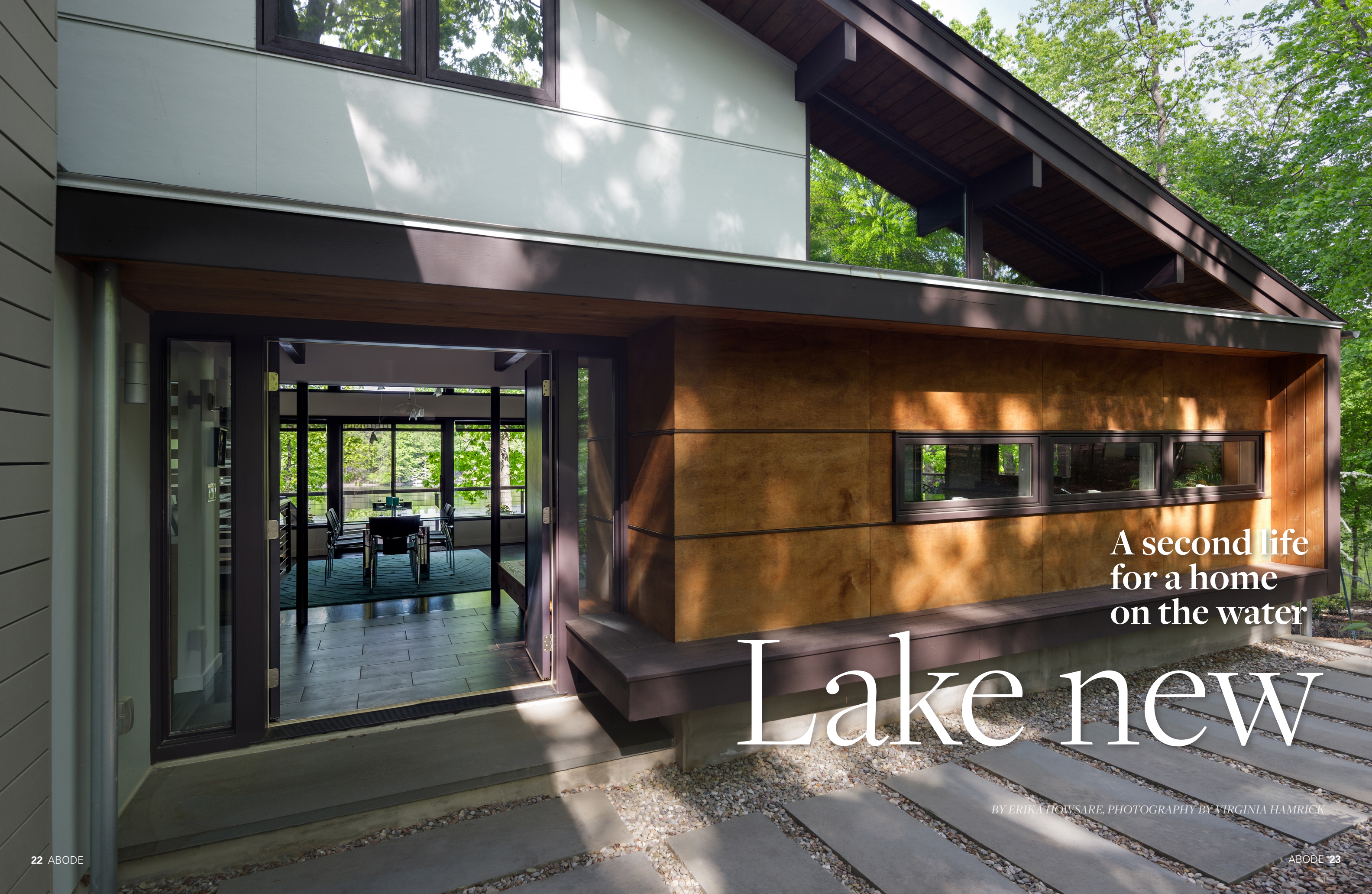
cville

JUNE 2015

Perfectly sited,  
a once outdated lake  
house prizes flow—  
and its view

# Modern revival





A second life  
for a home  
on the water

# Lake new

BY ERIKA HOWSARE, PHOTOGRAPHY BY VIRGINIA HAMRICK



You'd never know that Ken Schmalzbach and Karol Forsberg's house isn't brand new. It looks as up-to-the-minute as anything Wolf Ackerman has recently designed to be built from the ground up. In fact, this home on Lake Monticello is 31 years old, and the architects are responsible for transforming it from a near-eyesore to a star of the lake community.

When the couple first viewed the property in 2008, "Ken turned to me and says, 'Do you think we can renovate this one?'" remembers Forsberg. She believed they could, but it took a leap of faith. The house was dated and uninteresting, and the front door cozed up to a heat pump and dumpster. "It looked like the back end of a brown bear," says Forsberg.

The site, though, was dynamite. Coming from D.C., where they'd both worked as federal employees, the couple wanted a lakeside home with easy walking access to the water and space for gardening. This fit the bill. "There was a sense of community here," Forsberg says. And the view of the lake, framed by tall trees, is mesmerizing.



The original home (left) sported a generic chalet style, which the homeowners wanted to change into something more contemporary. Inside, the open flow and modern furnishings—including a dramatic chandelier that, at night, creates a starry effect—reflect the renovated home's new look. The overhaul also narrowed the back deck to keep views of the lake unobstructed.



Fred Wolf had his work cut out for him. His clients—particularly Forsberg, who'd been clipping images from *Dwell* magazine—were interested in a contemporary look for their new house, which sported a generic chalet style. The floor plan needed rethinking, too: There was an awkwardly placed stairwell, a vertical pole in the middle of the kitchen and a small living room that created a bottleneck.

The house did have its good qualities. "We wanted to preserve all this glass," says Forsberg, pointing to the wall of windows that face the lake. And original cedar ceilings lent warmth and texture.

## Radical reform

From four alternate designs that Wolf and his team created, the couple chose one that involved fairly radical changes. It made the symmetrical roof into a more dynamic form by moving the peak one bay to the right. This move created more space for a second-story loft, and added drama to both the stairwell (in its new, more maneuverable location) and the back deck.

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Though they were interested in renovating much of the home's exterior, Schmalzbach and Forsberg wanted to preserve the wall of windows that face the lake.

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"The aspect I loved was aesthetic," says Schmalzbach. "I loved the way it looked." He especially was drawn to the way spaces seemed to open up with the reimagined design: the loft and the kitchen sharing a sightline, for example, and the front entryway being set up as a prelude to the expansive living/dining space at the back.

Every room in the house saw changes. An addition made more space for the guest suite on the main floor. The basement, which had a bowling-alley shape, became wider and was divided into separate rooms. Even the outdoor spaces changed: Wolf Ackerman made the back deck shallower, so that it wouldn't interfere with the view from indoors, and added a new side deck and pergola for outdoor living.

And, of course, the main rooms now exude style and offer easy flow for both the occupants and their guests. "We lived here for a year before we started the renovation, so we knew what kind of entertaining went on," says Schmalzbach, referring to the lively social scene at Lake Monticello. Though neither he nor Forsberg are cooks, they still wanted a big kitchen to accommodate partygoers, plus a nearby (but separate) bar.

"People need to be able to move around comfortably," says Schmalzbach, adding that 30 to 35 people can mingle in the common rooms without difficulty.

## One of a kind

As for the looks of the place, the couple had some notions in mind but largely trusted their architects to conjure the vision of a beautiful and contemporary lakeside home. Forsberg had lived in a community in Falls Church filled with mid-century modern homes. "I loved it," she says. She also had a fondness for the horizontal lines of many Frank Lloyd Wright residences, which found their way into the metal-cable railings on the deck and indoor stairs as well as the rain screen that clads much of the exterior.

Wolf Ackerman proposed a materials palette that would allow the house to sit lightly on its leafy site. Pumpkin-hued cedar is an arresting accent that takes off from existing trim, while Hardipanel and Miratec siding are more muted. The lakeside wall of windows allows a dramatic modern chandelier to take center stage after dark: "When we came in off the lake at night," says Schmalzbach, "I wanted something that looked like there were stars in here."

Bold forms enliven the combined living/dining space: a dark painted panel on the stairwell wall, a white wedge that follows the upward slope of the roof and steel beams rhythmically contrasting with the cedar on the ceiling. In the kitchen, a large granite-topped island comes forward visually while dark gray Corian recedes around the edges of the room.

At every turn, the house connects inside and outside. Materials and forms (like the cedar ceiling and an entryway bench) continue seamlessly through walls of glass. Even the staircase allows a lake view through its open treads. "Looking out any window here is like a changing oil painting," says Forsberg.

The new deck provides a protected feel within open pergola walls, and a garden full of shade-loving plants draws one down a curving path toward the water and the dock.

While Schmalzbach and Forsberg are plenty pleased with their reimagined digs, they also relish hearing comments that reveal others, too, appreciate the presence here of such an unusual and modern house. Says Forsberg, "People on boats yell up, 'This is our favorite house on the lake!'"

## THE BREAKDOWN

**Structural system:** Existing; post and beam ('70s Lindel Cedar Home Kit House system)

**Exterior material:** Fiber cement board, clear cedar, Miratec board siding

**Interior finishes:** Various

**Roof materials:** Asphalt shingle and rubber membrane roof

**Window system:** Largely existing with Marvin Integrity added

**Mechanical systems:** Modified existing (R.E. Boggs mechanical sub-contractor)