

# Aged By Design

There's magic in building a new home with old reclaimed wood.



## behind the scenes

**COLORWAYS** Palette of clean, crisp white to showcase antique hand-hewn beams

**KEY ACCENTS** Nautical touches including cleats, rope and shiny metal lighting fixtures

**FURNISHINGS** Well-loved finds from junk shops and garage sales

**TRADEMARK** Old reclaimed timbers that form the home's structure

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New construction doesn't spring instantly to mind when looking at Sue and Rick Williams's cottage on Keuka Lake in New York's Finger Lakes region. Varied roof lines and a mix of materials, from local fieldstone to rustic cedar porch railings, lend the look of an older home altered over the ages rather than one built this century. This is by design.

Step inside and 73 antique posts and beams with hand-hewn surfaces take you back in time to

around 1780–1800, when barns in upstate New York were built from local oak, beech and hickory trees. Also by design, this is the magic of building a new home with old reclaimed wood and the ancient art of timber framing.

### TIMBER FRAMED

Sue and Rick were inspired by a ski house built by friends. "It was rustic and interesting looking from the outside, like a barn, but beautiful inside, with timber framing," recalls Sue. So they hired the same firm, New Energy Works, a custom timber-frame design/build company. The

The sailboat-and-twig piece hanging on the wall was a wedding gift from the couple whose ski house inspired Sue and Rick Williams to build a timber-frame home.





The cottage is set very close to the lake, making the view from the living room couch magnificent. "You feel like you're in a little treehouse on the water," says Sue.






A close look at the old beams reveals hand-hewn markings, signs of a time when logs became timbers by hand, not by machine. Rick built the stair railing using the sides of old ladders. A beam makes a creative and practical bookshelf.



Closed-door cubbies in the loft under the eaves transform otherwise-wasted space into a tidy, clean-lined storage area.

Williamses served as their own general contractors, laying flooring, roughing in electrical and sourcing some of the materials. When huge cedar logs started arriving from North Carolina for the porch railing, "The UPS man was so flabbergasted," says Sue.

No nuts or bolts are used in timber framing. Instead, mortise-and-tenon joints and pegs hold huge beams and posts together. "You're actually living with the structure of the home exposed," explains Jennifer Young, marketing manager at New Energy Works. "Expressing the structure is an artform." As a result, the Williamses decorated the cottage with a clean white color palette, to better admire the old timbers visible in each room. Crisp nautical accents, including metal lighting fixtures and a unique stair banister made of rope and cleats, are a nod to the lakefront locale.



A simple white palette keeps the focus on antique timbers that soar to the ceiling. Found at a junk yard, the headboard was once gingerbread trim on a porch.



In the kitchen, a piece of planed barnwood became a decorative wall shelf that distinguishes the eating nook from the rest of the space.

## Ship-Shape Staircase



Rope twines its way between a peg-studded wood railing and cleats on the stairs. To adapt the look for an open staircase, install cleats on exposed stairs and then install a simple wood railing and line it with eye hooks through which the rope can be threaded. Starting at the bottom, tie rope to eye hook and pull it down to underside of right side of cleat. Weave over top in a figure-eight pattern and then pull rope around bottom to left side of cleat and then straight up to next cup hook (refer to inset photo). Continue until railing is completed, keeping rope taut but not forcing railing to bend. Tie off and trim rope end.



Metal cleats hold the rope in place to help create a unique banister with a distinctly nautical feel.

In a timber-frame home, the walls don't hold up the second floor, allowing for a flexible floor plan. The bedroom upstairs is a loft open to the spaces below: open areas for cooking, eating and living that flow into one another and then spill out onto a screened porch and deck at either end. The cottage is a modest 850 square feet; close to the water's edge, it offers spectacular lake views.

### BRIMS WITH CHARACTER

Timber framing specifically appealed to Sue and Rick for the opportunity to use and showcase salvaged wood that brims with character. "We like everything antique," says Sue. These beams were originally hand-hewn, in the days before machines made quick work of the task. "Someone in the old days literally took a chisel" to the wood, marvels Sue. The result is a rich patina that new wood cannot rival. Additionally, cracks have passed the test of time; they are stable. Says Young: "If you build a timber frame, generations far beyond you will see it."