

Your inspiration for life at the lake

Lake & Home

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A PLACE TO

Gather

A MODERN
RENOVATION
IN BRAINERD LAKES

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RENOVATION
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in the Details

FLUSH WOOD FLOOR VENT

European White Oak flooring and vents create a smooth look on all levels.

"They had many ideas and also were open to enhancing ours, so it felt like a fit right away."

Kelli Monical on
Bercher Design & Construction

Never say never....

For Kent and Kelli Monical, a second residence was never in their plans, but things have a way of changing as time progresses. The couple, originally hailing from Nebraska (Kent) and Iowa (Kelli), are the parents of three grown children and have eight grandchildren. With their immediate and extended family living in various parts of the country, the idea arose that perhaps having a residence somewhere central would offer a chance for everyone to easily gather and

enjoy the warmer months together. Kent and Kelli have lived in Iowa, Maryland (twice), Virginia, and Arizona. This couple, having experienced life in several states, discovered their newest project by speaking to friends in Arizona who are familiar with lakes country in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Based on what they heard in these conversations, they were intrigued by the idea of exploring Minnesota's Brainerd lakes region.

From there, they found a real estate agent who helped them choose the home that they recently moved into after embarking on a two-year renovation project with Bercher Design & Construction, owned by Brent and Jenny Gunsbury. They chose the design/build company from a list of three referrals given by their agent and, after doing interviews with each, chose Bercher. Homeowner Kelli Monical commented, "We fell in love with the idea of working with Brent and Jenny! They had many ideas and also were open to enhancing ours, so it felt like a fit right away." As they were living out of state when the process of renovation kicked off, the Monicals received weekly field reports and had several Facetime meetings with Brent, Jenny, and team members. "The process actually went very well," said Brent. "Scott Salvevold, our superintendent, was continually on site. He did a fantastic job."

Kent and Kelli communicated their ideas well and explained to Brent and Jenny what they wanted. Brent noted, "Our process involves our clients telling us adjectives, i.e. descriptors of what they want something to look like or the feeling they want to have in the home. We ask them for inspiration pictures and we make notes of what they like or dislike. From there, we get a clear picture of where to go next in terms of architecture and design." For this project, Bercher Design & Construction worked with Dan J. Heid Planning & Design for the overall remodeling concepts. Interior design was led by Jenny.

The four bedroom, four bathroom, 3,200 square foot home with an attached 495 square foot garage was originally built in 1994 and the Monicals purchased it in 2021. "When they came to us," Brent explained, "they liked the location of the house, but we made pages of notes about how to overhaul the home, make it to Kent and Kelli's preferences, and also do a bit of an addition. The result is a reconfigured, enlarged, and contemporary interior home that suits the family's needs." The Monicals have owned several homes, however, their core style has typically been what they describe as more modern. "They decorate to their specific style, not necessarily to that of the region or area of the country where they reside," Brent relayed.

This was no ordinary project and it was one that required thoughtful planning and expertise to execute. For one, the lake home was missing a sense of arrival, meaning that the entryway was not only lackluster, it actually blocked the view of the lake. The entry included house walls, hallways, and a 12-foot walk before the lake was visible. "We removed the walls that obstructed the lake view and brought in as much natural light as possible," Brent said, "giving a lake view just two steps into the house." He added that with lake homes, it's all about the water and the beautiful appearance, mood, and ambiance it offers. Most lake home owners he has worked with stress that the view is essential and a key factor in their design/build or remodeling process.

in the Details

POP-OUT OUTLETS

While still meeting electrical code, these outlets are accessible when needed but otherwise hidden from view.

"The result is a reconfigured, enlarged, and contemporary interior home that suits the family's needs."

Brent Gunsbury
Bercher Design & Construction





in the Details

SEAMLESS UNDER-CABINET LIGHTING & OUTLETS

These utilities of the kitchen don't clutter the tiled backsplash for a clean look.

Also blocked was the kitchen, which was an interior room with a limited view of the lake. To change this, the kitchen area was redesigned entirely, with the room being moved to the lakeside for a bird's eye view of the deck, yard, and water. Being the heart of the home, the kitchen is usually a main area of focus when it comes to designing the perfect dwelling and the Monicals' property was no exception. The kitchen cabinets now have lift up doors versus opening the side and the tile goes all the way to the vaulted ceiling, providing a striking look.



"What we did in this home," said Brent, "was beyond anything we had ever done previously when it comes to the flowing visual appeal. We used LeGrand Adorne pop-out outlets in the kitchen to meet electrical code, but these disappear when not in use. There are no outlets in any of the white subway tile on the kitchen walls, which is by design. Instead, these are hidden as light strips underneath the upper cabinets. Floor and ceiling vents have been made virtually invisible, blending into their surroundings. We worked very hard to minimize and blend everything so you see the beauty of the home, the finer details of wood, and other design elements." Throughout the home, Lutron custom color devices were used to match the color of the materials behind them.



in the Details

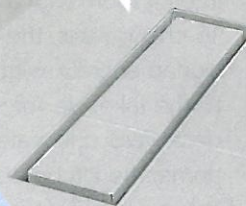
TILE FLOOR VENT

Aria vents were installed and custom-painted in tiled floor areas to continue the modern look in every space



In addition, venting system components are designed or placed in a way that they disappear. All of the metal floor vents are custom color matched to their surround, while wall returns and ceiling bath fans are merely thin lines. Ceiling vents are as flush as possible, and even the smoke detectors and temperature sensors are low-profile; they are sleek and fade into the surfaces where they are mounted. Subwoofers and speakers

in the home are installed to look as if they're part of the walls themselves. All of this culminates in a gorgeous, smooth and flowing look, letting emphasis fall on stunning features such as Rift White Oak cabinets, European Oak wood floors, White Oak doors, and black metal/White Oak railings.





Another showstopper in the home is the primary suite. It was completely remodeled with a large en suite bath and closet area. Now, this is a sanctuary, free of awkward walls or wasted space. Kelli noted that she and Kent want to use all of a home's space. "We don't like any space to be just sitting there with no purpose." Now, the home has comfortable living space, gathering areas, and a place for the family to be together in the summer and enjoy lake life. There is a lower level, expanded laundry, bath, and mechanical room that have been fully remodeled, along with updates to all interior finishings; this includes flooring, lighting, and plumbing.

And the renovation project didn't end inside the house; the exterior and the surrounding property were also carefully analyzed and revamped. Now, an updated storage shed (which Kelli calls her "She Shed"),

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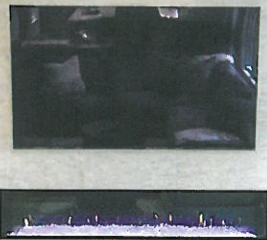
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in the Details

TV AND AUDIO SPEAKERS

While providing an excellent audio experience, they don't distract from the main focus of the dancing flames and tile surround.



"We worked very hard to minimize and blend everything so you see the beauty of the home, the finer details of wood, and other design elements."

Brent Gunsbury
Bercher Design & Construction





new gas firepit, and irrigation system are in place, and all new landscaping offer improved visual impressions. New paved paths and a deck have been added, with the deck's railing created by local fabricator Chariot Customs. The metal post and railing system has been powder coated to exactly match the house color so that it blends away, offering a better view to the lake and from lake to house. Now, the railing is barely visible against the home's Benjamin Moore Normandy main body color. The yard was redone to create play space between the water and the home by adding a beach, an outdoor shower, grass for yard games, and the firepit and accent lighting that make it appealing for night gatherings.



in the Details

CAMBRIA SHOWER BENCH TO MATCH ADJACENT VANITY TOP AND TRENCH FLOOR DRAIN

Aesthetically pleasing and functional, the clean modern lines continue into the bath areas.

Trex Island Mist decking ties the lakeside and entry decks together and all mechanical systems protruding from the house were placed, painted, or concealed to achieve a seamless exterior look. The amount of analysis and intentional design/build that were applied to the interior carried over to the exterior as well. Yet, with a full remodel in place, Kelli noted that a few things were left alone, such as the original placement of some of the home's windows. New windows were installed, but in the existing shape and location in some of the house.

Kelli added that their vision was to achieve "modern, but with a twist" including what she refers to as "lake softness." Features such as barn doors, wood, and a built-in wall unit that was custom were a few items that align with the aesthetic goals. In the main area, part of the room's peak was flattened to allow drop lighting. The lighting is modern, yet highly functional, which is something the Monicals wanted. Another must-have involved Miele appliances. The German company specializes in high-end kitchen appliances and is an industry favorite of homeowners as well as chefs. Also on the list of preferences was a kitchen that allowed for gathering, which was achieved by redoing counters and adding seating for eating and working. The seating is situated for lake views. Tiles that have a wave-like appearance echo the serenity of the lake and the kitchen cabinets are a standout in a gray-blue hue.



in the Details
CUSTOM COLOR POWDER-COATED VENTS AND LOW-PROFILE SMOKE DETECTORS

The stylized design of the ceiling vents and smoke detectors were intentionally chosen to be pleasing but unobtrusive to the eye.

Now, the Monicals are enjoying all that lake life offers and are comfortable in their rejuvenated place by the water. Kelli's favorite space is the main/great room. "When you look from inside, the wood, the railings... all of it is just an art piece. The furniture and décor in a home should not define it. The architecture and design details are what should be the focus." This is a home that is warm, inviting, and created for multiple generations to enjoy. Even with kids, multiple pets, and guests, the house has a functional flow to it and is comfortable.

This is a home full of details that have not only been considered, they have been brought to life with freshness and attention to beauty as well as function. "Brent and Jenny are simply fantastic people to work with," said Kelli. "I am a very detailed person, but WOW! Their attention to even tiny details still astounds us. They are trustworthy individuals and were simply amazing throughout this process."

Kelli remarked that although she and her husband love their home, they also appreciate Minnesota's friendly people. "This is a special place," she said. "We are very happy here and have been warmly welcomed."

L&H



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