

Lady *of the* Lake



Topping the Maine Multiple Listings this summer—an \$11.85M lodge on Sebago Lake.





Discovery vignettes, with spectacular views of the lake, take you by surprise at every turn.

From Route 302, passing the boyhood home of Nathaniel Hawthorne as we approach the lake, we see Sebago burst into view like an inland ocean behind the 2006 structure that is Sand Hill Hideaway, with 1,300 feet of shore frontage.

Clad in mahogany-stained shingles, "It's the perfect marriage of Craftsman and Adirondack styles," says listing agent Karen Tufts, owner of Coldwell Banker Team

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: CYNTHIA FARR-WEINFELD; COURTESY OF MAINE HERITAGE TIMBER; COLDWELL BANKER TEAM REAL ESTATE

SAWMILL SALVATION

There's a fascinating story behind rescued pine, a defining element in this lodge. Generations ago, during the logging days, some gorgeous timbers would sink to the bottom of lakes and rivers during logging drives. As the years race by, minerals in the water incorporate themselves into the wood, creating rich, deep colors and patterns that characterize this most desirable variety of reclaimed lumber, which has never seen a lick of lead paint.

The wood-salvaging business itself attracts all types, from two-wetsuit outfits



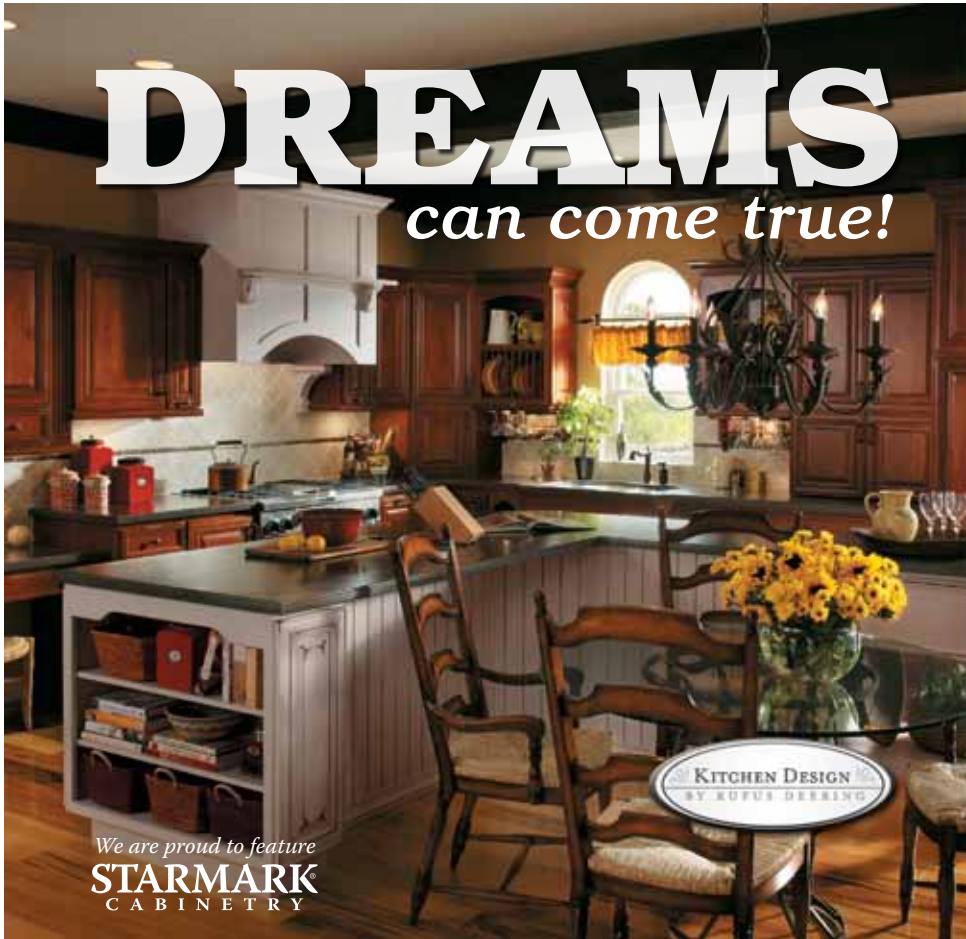
that operate on a level familiar to a second-hand copper forager all the way up to sophisticated operations employing seasoned professionals that use huge grabber claws on CATs in a version of that dropping-claw game that will never, ever give you a stuffed animal.

Divers and equipment operators, then, are now on the hunt for these wooden pearls. The soaring popularity of this limited resource has spiked prices and is bringing reclamation operations to a river near you.

—Colin S. Sargent

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Real Estate. This Woodward Thomsen masterpiece, perhaps the last triumph for the bygone firm, "took four years to complete."

As for inspirations, the smaller building on the lip of the lake, exactly restored to match the modern structure today, is the classic original cottage here, once the summer retreat of a continental Italian family who removed to Switzerland.



WHERE THE HEART IS

The sellers' love for the area has a great deal to do with nearby Camp Wawenock, a Sebago legend since 1910 where Kay McDonald and her two daughters spent summers, and Migis Lodge—dear to both Tim and Kay and their family.

Migis Lodge is the portal through which New Yorkers and Philadelphians have been introduced to Sebago Lake since 1916. "So many people from Manhattan," Tufts says. "There's Katie Couric and her family..."

Designed by the late Richard M. Monahan Architects of Peterborough, New Hampshire, Sand Hill Hideaway's great room is anchored by two majestic Rumford fireplaces, resplendent with stones rescued directly from the lake. Every consideration has been made to match the design inside to what's outside; in fact, as we go through the warm rooms, many of them in exquis-

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Sellers Tim and Kay from a Long Line of



In his Notes on the State of Virginia, Thomas Jefferson lists **David Rittenhouse**, a forebear of the sellers of Sebago Lake's most impressive luxury lodge, "beside Benjamin Franklin and George Washington as examples of New World genius when disputing French naturalist Georges-Louis Leclerc Comte de Buffon's claim that the environment and climate of North America had stunted the intellect of peoples living there both native and European," according to Wikipedia.

Rittenhouse (1732-1796), the astronomer/inventor/philosopher, was first to measure the transit of Venus and the first to discover that Venus boasts an atmosphere. His orreries—18th-century brass models of the so-

sitely milled reclaimed heart pine paneling from the South, the effect is "as if the lake itself is designed around the house."

"The large lot was cobbled together over a three-year period," Karen Tufts says as we look out across one of the many slate terraces toward the water. "At 48 acres, it's one of the largest parcels on the lake and is gated,

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FROM LEFT: UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA; NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

McDonald Come Stargazers.

lar system captured in lustrous mahogany boxes—still astonish viewers at the University of Pennsylvania and Princeton. (<http://www.library.upenn.edu/exhibits/pennhistory/orrery/orrery.html>)

Among the galaxy of his accomplishments, he was the first director of the U.S. Mint. His heirs in Philadelphia (Rittenhouse Square is Philadelphia's answer to DuPont Circle in Washington, D.C.) and Wilmington, Delaware, built up a fabulous fortune in partnership with DuPont.

How he'd have loved to set up the astral telescope he designed for himself (in 1769, America's first) on Sebago Lake at night, where the stars burst through the darkness and crowd the eye. And what more appropriate place could there be than on the widow's walk of Sand Hill Hideaway?

Because this luxury lodge, built on the shores of Sebago, is for sale for \$11.85M by Kay Rittenhouse McDonald, the stargazer's descendant, and her husband, high-tech NASDAQ investor Timothy J. McDonald, who in January of this year set Canada abuzz by purchasing 14.3 percent of DragonWave, Inc., in a single swoop. (Telecom network star DragonWave's stock was attractively priced due to its slow recovery after buying Nokia Siemens microwave technology in June of 2012.)

with security systems." Even though it's a landmark beacon for yachting, "it offers absolute privacy, which is priceless."

The Sub-Zero and Wolf kitchen sports counters and an island in dark honed granite—perfect balance, perfect view.

Hand-adzed beams in Douglas fir add drama to each room as they open up, some

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to cathedral ceilings. The staircase is maple, designed to trick the eye with a vanishing point that rushes toward you to make it seem larger, just the way theater set designers connect with an audience.

"There's no Sheetrock" in this lady. "The walls are hand-troweled plaster," Tufts says. "The windows alone in this house cost \$850,000."

The carpentry and workmanship are peerless. You feel the quality everywhere. Finishing "was done by a troupe of European furniture makers," Tufts says. "Everything is perfect and bull-nosed around."

One of the motifs is curves, as if the house itself is an orrery, its many constellations set to vantage, a precise alignment of stars. These curves are echoed in the many private decks that add drama to the 12 bedrooms, each smart-wired with its own ultra music system. "All but two of the bedrooms have views of the lake."

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gently conducting guests to bedrooms in a circular pattern, comfortable amid soothing heart pine beadboard. On the way to one of the bedrooms, there's an original painting of Ted Williams fly-fishing, looking up from preparing his lure as if he's just been surprised by a friendly visitor.

The master bedroom has floor-to-ceiling built-in storage that matches the heart pine; a private curved balcony; two commodes modestly flanking the double sink in the ensuite; and adorable raccoon, squirrel, salmon, and campfire tiles on a shower wall.

A sure-fire visitor favorite is "the Cousins' Room. It's four identical beds lined up with matching bedspreads," and like the other bedrooms has its own lakestone shower stall.

Needless to say, there's a boathouse with lift, lakeside dressing rooms, a dock large enough to tie up a destroyer-escort, gorgeous mission-style garage, economical gas heat. One adjunct garage enclosure has a sport-fishing boat that fits perfectly inside. "It used to be owned by Curt Gowdy's



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Former Washington DC area residents who own a summer farmhouse in Waldoboro, Carolyn Bryant and Don Sarles bought a cottage at Thornton Oaks in early 2010 as their winter home.

Carolyn says "Bowdoin College provides a fine library that I can use for musicological research (though officially retired, I've continued editing and writing for Oxford University Press). The local public library has also been extremely helpful in finding abstruse journals and scholarly books for me." Don, a long-time choral singer, has joined an excellent choir.

"We especially appreciate the strong sense of community at Thornton Oaks. We have formed close friendships and feel very much at home."

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HOUSE OF THE MONTH

once], they'll all work perfectly and never be in need of water."

The Rittenhouse precision again. Talk about harmony of the spheres!

As for why the couple is leaving, two daughters have already finished their degrees at Bates and Colby and are on to post-graduate studies. Every adventure, however beautiful, comes full circle, and it's time for something new (in this case, possibly in Florida), so the McDonalds are ready to turn stewardship of this magnificent estate into the hands of an appreciative buyer who, cooled by central air, won't blink at the taxes of \$75,792. All it takes is one couple to think it's worth \$11.85 million for it to be true. As for comparables, at press time the most expensive house listing in the United States is a 50-acre waterfront estate in Greenwich, Connecticut—with ugly window air-conditioners and a price tag of \$190M. Sand Hill Hideaway is an opportunity. ■

For more, visit portlandmonthly.com/port-mag/2013/06/raymond-house-extras.



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