

# CHICAGO HOME

LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE

# + GARDEN

SUMMER 2014

## WARM IT UP!

INVITING  
MODERNISM  
IN MICHIGAN

GORGEOUS  
GARDENS  
IN GLENCOE

OUTDOOR LIVING  
IN BLACK  
AND WHITE



# STATE OF BLISS

In Michigan, a designer re-creates her own idyllic childhood

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A bluestone fireplace commands attention in the living room.





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## ROWING UP, GLENCOE NATIVE

Katherine Eckert Grunder spent summers in western Michigan. For two weeks each year, her family would rent a cabin and fish, swim, and barbecue under the stars.

Memories of those carefree days have tugged at Eckert Grunder ever since—throughout her studies at Parsons the New School for Design and afterward, as a project manager at Daniel Frisch Architecture in New York (she now heads her own firm). Though happy in Manhattan, she never stopped thinking about the possibility of a lakeside home in Michigan. She wanted a place her whole extended family could enjoy, as in years past.

A decade ago, the idea started taking shape when she and her husband, art dealer Robert Grunder, snagged a parcel of land tucked between piney woods and a lake in the southwest corner of the state. In partnership with Frisch, Eckert Grunder designed a two-story house that blends her taste for modernism with her love of the outdoors.



**Above:** Black-eyed Susans, catmint, Russian sage, Autumn Joy sedum, and native grasses fill the garden. **Left:** Katherine Eckert Grunder and her husband, Robert, gone fishin'.



Glass panels on the steel staircase ensure uninterrupted views in all directions.

“It plays on the idea of a glass box, bringing the outside in,” she says.

The first level of the four-bedroom house has a master suite and free-flowing kitchen, dining, and living-room spaces. Floor-to-ceiling windows with sliding glass doors offer views of the woods in one direction and a patio overlooking the lake on the other.

Natural materials abound inside. Floors laid with wide planks of espresso-stained white pine echo the tall trees on the north side of the property; two fireplaces are made with the same bluestone used on the patio.

An ethereal floating staircase, welded onsite, keeps vistas unobstructed. “As you’re walking down, the beautiful views are a nice start to the day,” Eckert Grunder says.



Furnishings in a mix of eras and styles create a cozy modern vibe.



When it came time to decorate, she enlisted the help of her mother, who grew up in Grand Rapids and first introduced the family to Michigan's natural splendor. "She's always had a passion for design," says Eckert Grunder. "I knew it would be that much more special to work on the decor with her. We worked as a family to design a dream family home."

They outfitted the space with a mix of old (Mom's influence) and new (daughter's). A diseased English elm became a dining-table top with the help of Brooklyn-based Uhuru Design; a chandelier of clustered pendant lamps by Studio Frederik Roijé hangs overhead.

In the breakfast nook sits a 1960s walnut credenza plucked from an antique store in Chicago. Organic flourishes include a repurposed wasp's nest hung from the ceiling and backyard birds' nests displayed with old vases and artwork purchased at Ox-Bow, the nearby artists' community.

Upstairs, three airy bedrooms and two bathrooms nicely accommodate children



**Above:** A vessel sink mounted on an antique cabinet lends a countryish touch to the powder room downstairs. Top right: A Lampscape chandelier by Studio Frederik Roijé hangs over the reclaimed-elm dining table. Right: Firewood stays close at hand in a niche in one of the bluestone fireplaces.



Comfortable pink chairs from Room & Board provide a pop of color in the master bedroom.



A vintage headboard upholstered in yellow-and-gray velvet sets a sunny tone in the guest bedroom.

and guests. (Both Eckert Grunder and her husband, and her brother and his wife, had babies this spring.) At the top of the stairs, a 16-foot window seat with a built-in bookcase and toy drawer looks out on the forest.

The Grunders' Michigan trips have expanded from one visit per year to at least three in summer, plus major holidays. "We fish on the lake, we have a boat and do a little tubing and swimming, we kayak and paddle boat," the designer says.

She clearly thinks the decade of work she poured into the house was worth it—for herself and for her growing family. "The next generation will enjoy it, too," she says. ●