

HOME SHOWCASE

Custom-milled poplar ceilings, maple floors and birch walls with oak accents are seen throughout Jeanette Martinek's nearly completed home situated on Lake Michigan in rural Oostburg.





new beginning

BY ALLISON THOMPSON
PHOTOS BY SAMUEL CASTRO

A NEW BEGINNING, a connection to the past and a lifeboat from a painful loss, Jeanette Martinek's home is all that and more.

Her Oostburg home is reminiscent of Frank Lloyd Wright's prairie-style homes. Encompassing less than 1,600 square feet with two bedrooms and two bathrooms, it's not the size but the artistic nature of the home that is impressive. The custom-built wooden floors, walls and ceilings accentuated with strategically appointed windows makes the Martinek home a classic.

The home represents a rebirth for Martinek, who went through a personal dark time in 2005 after her father, mother and husband all passed away the same year. She realized that the house she lived in with her husband of 34 years in Cascade, the home in which they'd raised three chil-

Oostburg lakeshore home offers a connection to the past for owner Jeanette Martinek

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At top: Jeanette Martinek, at her nearly completed Frank Lloyd Wright's prairie-style home situated on the shores of Lake Michigan in rural Oostburg.

Top right: The 1,600-square-foot home features built-in planters along the windows inside and out.

At right: The exterior of the home boasts majestic views of the lake.





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dren, was a bit too big and overwhelming for the 59-year-old.

So Martinek decided instead to live in the summer home she and her husband had on the shores of Lake Michigan in Oostburg. The 650-square foot cottage incorporated design features of Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian homes.

But once Trademark Builders examined the cottage, they quickly realized that it wasn't structurally sound for year-round living and that rebuilding

was the best solution.

"There were tree stumps underneath," said Justin Fink, who co-owns the business with his father, Don. "As a person who loves architecture, you hate to destroy history."

But it was something they had to do.

"The news was difficult to accept as it meant destroying a piece of the community's architectural heritage and emotionally as well as financially, it would be a challenge," said Martinek, who serves as the Plymouth School



The home is a showcase of woodworking craftsmanship, as seen in the kitchen. At left: A simple yet elegant custom wooden mantle above the see-through fireplace.

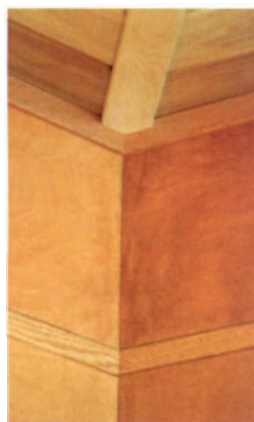


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A bank of windows offers a serene view of Lake Michigan. Below: Custom-milled poplar ceilings and birch walls with oak accents join together at a corner, highlighting the craftsmanship and exquisite joinery skills of Trademark Builders.



District coordinator of E-school and the district's gifted and talented program.

With the help of Brian Breit of CountrySide Designs, work began to create a home that was suitable for Martinek's new life but reminiscent of her old summer cottage.

"I couldn't have just any builder. You need the patience and the skills to work with me," she said. "And they needed to create materials that didn't

even exist. They really matched details of architecture of the era."

The Finks researched and studied Wright's work, trying to find the solution to create a home of Wright's design pattern of including wood throughout the home.

"It's all about the horizontal lines," said Fink of the walls and ceilings. The wood used for the home includes birch plywood with oak to get the appropriate look of the wood walls.

"There is no molding to cover it up. It's molded to fit," Fink said of the corners. "It truly is a one of a kind."

Martinek had developed a true affection for Wright's

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HOME SHOWCASE



Jeanette Martinek discusses her great grandfather's photograph that rests on a custom wooden mantel above the see-through fireplace inside her lakeside Oostburg home.

homes and had traveled throughout the country visiting his homes.

The wood used includes clear custom-made poplar for the ceilings; walls with birch plywood with oak accents; doors, window frames and cabinets of clear maple; and natural maple on floor.

"There is no drywall in the house, it's all wood, it's all custom," said Fink. He and his father spent much of their time in the last year constructing the house, looking at it like one giant sculpture.

Some of the only areas that stray from wooden designs are stone tiles in the bathroom and near doorways and a cultured stone fireplace and counters.

In keeping with Wright's vision of blurring the lines of indoors and out, there are two large brick planters, one on

“I’m living in a painting.” – Jeanette Martinek

the outside and one on the inside.

The foyer is also Wright-inspired.

“The entrance is really an important piece to me. It’s enclosed and feels like a cave, and then you walk into the living room and the pop ceiling opens up,” explained Martinek, describing the 8-foot monochromatic foyer. “In here (the foyer) you inhale and when you step in there (the living room) you exhale. It’s really a visceral feeling. The feeling you get of almost being born again. Its organic architecture at it’s best.”

Martinek’s appreciation of art is part of her genetic make-up as well. To accommodate that, the upstairs bedroom doubles as an art studio. She enjoys making Polaroid transfers and pairing them with original poetry. Her poems are hanging on the refrigerator back at Trademark’s office space.

“Every time they sent me a bill, I’d send them the payment with a poem,” she said.

The beauty and tranquility of her new home soothes Martinek’s spirit.

“You can’t beat the view ... With a full moon over the lake, you just lay awake and enjoy the serenity,” she said. “I feel like a little girl in a painting. I’m living in a painting.”



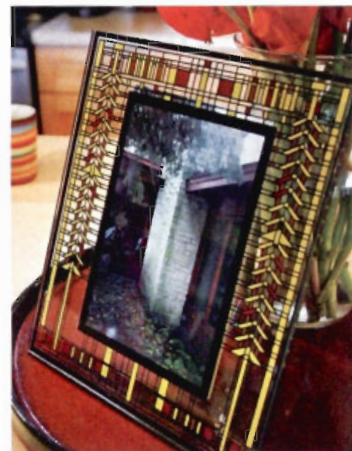
One of Martinek’s poems:

HOME

*The need never was
To live high rent,
Building monuments to self
The need was
To Answer the call
Return to the source
For water runs through
My family’s veins, not blood.*

*Whether sea, lake or straits,
The screech of the gull,
The rhythm of the waves
The wail of the lonely foghorn,
Two on the right,
One on the left,
Calls to fishermen, salmon and sailors
Riding the currents home.*

– Jeanette Martinek, 2008



At top: Jeanette Martinek, center, poses with the team from Trademark Builders who built her home. From left: Joe Klahn, Justin Fink and his father, Don Fink.

At left: A bathroom features tiles from top to bottom.

Above: A framed photograph of the original 600-square-foot cottage.