



THE WHITEHEAD'S UNIQUE HOME HAS MADE FAMILY TIME TOGETHER BY THE LAKE, PRICELESS.



# family compound on keuka lake.

A sprawling 8,000-square-foot family compound on Keuka Lake designed by local architect, Patrick Morabito, takes its cues from famed coastal homes of the rich and famous.

BY DONNA DE PALMA | FREELANCE WRITER  
PHOTOS BY JACK HALEY | MESSENGER POST MEDIA



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Merle and Jan Whitehead purchased an existing low-slung 70s contemporary house on Keuka Lake in 2005 but knew they wanted a pretty big expansion. The couple has four adult children and four grandkids they enjoy hosting throughout the year.

Merle Whitehead, who has worked in the real estate industry for decades, subsequently purchased an adjacent house next door. He and his wife wanted to add on to the existing house and use the adjacent house as a guest house for their extended family.

The couple's builder, who did a few initial changes to the home, Lin Hough, of Hough Builders introduced the Whiteheads to architect, Patrick Morabito. "From the very start, Patrick was willing to listen and incorporate our ideas into his plans. He presented two very progressive plans. We choose a plan that has exceeded my expectations for this upgrade," Whitehead said.



“Our original ranch-style plan turned into a multiple-story home that was taller than expected. We needed to apply for a variance to build. Ultimately, we chose to have the house next door torn down and to build guest accommodations into the home we live in now,” he said. “This project held some unique challenges. My clients’ kitchen was overlooking a property to the south. I suggested we relocate the kitchen so it had a view of the lake. Their backyard was lowered by 10-feet to accommodate a new floor plan that included a walkout under the existing house,” notes Morabito. The original grade of the house is now the second floor.







The homeowners wanted to retain a freestanding garage on the site and add a second floor loft for more living space and storage. However, when the builder dug a hole, he saw the garage had no foundation. "We tore it down, put proper footings in place, and built a new, two-story garage," said Morabito.

The homeowners expressed a desire to match the look and feel of an older home. The architect specified exterior finishes and detailing to match a much older home.

The lower portion of the exterior is neutral-colored stone with brown Timberbark cement board shingle. The shingle was installed with laced corners to create a vintage look. Panel and batten lattice on the gables adds yet another layer of interest. Sand-colored trim finishes off the exterior in style. A bay window on the roadside view of the house is topped with a ribbed copper canopy.

Lakeside, the home features a screened-in octagonal deck off the family room, a side pergola, renovated boathouse, and three docks on 300-feet of lakefront.





A stick frame interior calls out ascending ceiling heights in the living room featuring a natural stone fireplace. An existing chimney was extended to accommodate the new design and allow access to an attic. “You can still see the old roof shingles from the attic. We just built over the existing roof,” said Morabito.

An open floor plan on the main floor of this five-plus bedroom, seven bath home makes kitchen, dining and living room able to fit this extended family with ease. Two separate islands in the kitchen, plus a table, allow for 16 people to sit comfortably together for breakfast or lunch. A step ceiling in the kitchen creates a more defined space for food preparation. “We wanted to introduce more timber frame while bringing light into the kitchen,” Morabito said.





In addition to a spacious master bedroom in one wing of the home and two adult guest bedrooms that walk out to a pergola, an oversized bunk room was designed for grandkids equipped with lockers instead of closets. “The children created a playhouse and a castle in one corner of the room under the eaves of roof lines,” said Morabito.

The house also has a 45-foot billiards room on its ground level equipped with game room and a restaurant-style booth for the grandkids. The billiards room has a full kitchen, wet bar and seating area for adults.





A brand new, freestanding four-car garage with loft provides ample parking and storage.

The renovated boathouse features an 11-foot overhead door and rail system for easy boat access and storage.

This unique family compound has made one family's time together, by the lake, priceless.

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