

 MINNESOTA COOL: SOIRÉE IN THE SNOW P. 34

MIDWEST

December 2008

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DESIGNERS' HOLIDAY HOMES
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Maritime Magic

For Wayne and Karen Soojian, the holidays are rife with tradition—which isn't to say they always celebrate in traditional ways. The Soojians, who have three children, live in a modern Nantucket-style cottage on Lake Minnetonka and spend much of their time on the water. So when Christmas arrives, it's only natural that they deck their halls with model sailboats in lieu of snowmen, and display miniature lighthouses rather than gingerbread versions. Instead of a classic red and green color scheme, the home's everyday palette of sand-dollar whites and seaworthy blues takes precedence, setting a comfortable, festive tone.

BY MICHELLE BALTUS ★ PHOTOS BY SUSAN GILMORE ★ STYLED BY DAVID ANGER



“This is a lake house first and foremost,” Wayne says. “When it comes to Christmas, we like it to feel cheery and warm, but not overdone.” Which is precisely how it feels the rest of the year as well. The

home’s modest yet airy rooms and Americana-influenced interiors are a fitting expression of the couple’s low-key lifestyle.

“We’re a blue jeans family at heart,” says Karen, a senior interior designer at Gabberts Design Studio & Fine Furnishings at the Galleria in Edina. “We didn’t want or need a real sense of formality anywhere in the house.”

They did infuse their gracious, window-lined home with a sense of history, however. Both Wayne and Karen are East Coast natives who enjoyed summers on the New Jersey shore. In 2002, they were living in Eden Prairie and longing to be near water. Their kids were active in sports, so instead of buying a cabin up north, they chose to build a house on Lake Minnetonka. They asked Eden Prairie-based architectural firm Keith Waters and Associates to design something reminiscent of the lake’s original resort hotels and the coastal cottages they remembered from their own childhoods. The shingled residence features rustic stonework, round windows, and a corner turret that rises like a lighthouse from the home’s peninsula location.

“Architecturally, it’s appropriate for the setting,” says Wayne, who built the house and now owns Colfax Companies, a Wayzata-based builder. “It’s also positioned on the property to take full advantage of the views.”

The foyer’s double doors open to sweeping views of the lake, framed by sky-high windows in the casual living room. The thor-



PREVIOUS PAGE All is ship-shape in the Soojians' dining room, from the crisp blue and white of the wool rug to the linen window treatments. Evergreen branches, metallic ornaments in shades of true blue, starfish, and seashell-motif lights add holiday sparkle to the scene. THIS PAGE LEFT In the kitchen, a touch of whimsy: A tree branch sparkling with crushed glass is decked out with tiny glass

sailboats and lighthouses. BELOW Karen and Wayne Soojian, both East Coast natives, recreated the feel of a Nantucket-style cottage on a peninsula in Lake Minnetonka. This cozy hearth room, adjacent to the kitchen and informal eating area, shares a fireplace and a panoramic view of the water with the living room. Glass ornaments and poinsettias add pops of color to the year-round seaside motif.





THIS PAGE In the living room, an antique rug handed down from Wayne's Armenian ancestors complements the nautical palette. The red drum beside the tree is a year-round piece Karen chose because it's a unique and unexpected element. OPPOSITE PAGE Evergreen branches, eucalyptus leaves, and peacock feathers add a natural feel to this informal space.

