



In a weekend house in Wisconsin, designer Summer Thornton used graphic pattern and bold color to add zing to the covered porch. The bistro chairs are from Serena & Lily. The green-and-pale blue floor stripes are painted in Benjamin Moore's Buckingham Gardens and Forget Me Not. Table, Restoration Hardware. **OPPOSITE:** Green Lake as seen from the house.

All Together Now

On a bucolic Wisconsin lake, Summer Thornton layers vibrant hues and piles of prints in an all-seasons getaway built for the young—and young at heart.



Interior Design SUMMER THORNTON *Architecture* McCORMACK + ETTEN ARCHITECTS
Interview KATHLEEN HACKETT *Photography* THOMAS LOOF *Producer* DORETTA SPERDUTO



Is it safe to say that your clients love to live large?

SUMMER THORNTON: Ha! They are a couple in their 60s with three grown children and one grandchild. They built this home as a weekend retreat with the hope that there will soon be additional little feet padding around. They also love to entertain and sometimes host as many as 20 guests.

KATHLEEN HACKETT: So the thinking was, if they build it, the babies—and family, and friends—will come?

Pretty much! It's an 8,000-square-foot house on a peninsula in a lovely lake in Wisconsin—ideal for summer entertaining. Not only is there the great outdoors, but now there's also the great indoors. There are fewer rooms than one might expect in a big house, but the spaces are ample.

I'll say. How big is that great room?

The coffee table alone measures six feet by four feet, if that gives you an idea. Yet they didn't want the house to look sparse. I paid very close attention to the scale of the furnishings and accessories—everything was sized up just enough, but not so much as to appear ungainly. The sofas are taller than standard height, and the daybed is the size of a twin bed. The clients worried that the high ceiling would make the place seem cavernous, so I clad it in bleached-walnut planks for a warmer ambience. I also installed a massive chandelier and hung it several feet below the ceiling, which feels friendlier.

It's almost like three rooms in one.

Exactly. There's nothing worse than pushing all of the furniture up against the walls and forcing guests to either shout across the room or spend the evening talking just to the people beside them. We arranged the main seating area near the fireplace, then added a second around the games table and a third anchored by that daybed.

How does color help the space feel less cavernous?

Well, the truth is that it would have been easier to use a neutral palette, which lowers the risk of visual chaos in a sprawling space. But my client insisted on color. And it just goes to show that the more colors you use, the better they go together. I started with her two favorite shades, red and aqua, then added hints of other hues. Because those two colors dominate, you don't notice that there are eight different patterns in the room—from ikats to chinoiserie to stripes to animal prints.

The space is a showstopper! How did you decorate around it?

We were determined that every room in the house be equally special. This was particularly important in a house of this size. Too often, everyone gravitates to one space—usually the one that has been designed for comfort—while the rest are “decorated” but less loved, or overlooked because they are simply passageways to another room. That was the case with the dining area, which comes between the great room and the kitchen, the two obvious gathering places. To make it unique, I added that painted lattice and enormous table. Now you just can't ignore the space—plus, that warm walnut slab is really inviting and seats more than a dozen people!

The room with the bunk beds reminds me of my childhood summers at the lake.

You and most adults who visit! Though designed for visiting grandchildren, this guest room appeals to everyone. Painting the whole room one color—including the ceiling—makes it feel like a womb.

And it's such a great color. It takes a lot of guts to spin the color wheel for someone else. Were you ever tempted to push back and advocate for soft neutrals?

I love when a client wants me to go for it, color-wise. There are those who say they want color but don't really mean it. These clients meant it! In fact, the wife liked the results so much, she threatened to move to the lake permanently. Instead, we went on to redecorate her main residence in town too. Now she has the best of both worlds.

LEFT: To make the expansive great room feel more intimate, Thornton scaled up the furnishings so that they're proportional to the architecture. A pair of Hickory Chair sofas is covered in a blue-and-white ikat, and two custom armchairs are upholstered in a red cotton-linen blend, both by Brunschwig & Fils. Cocktail table, Restoration Hardware. Overhead, Currey & Company's Lodestar chandelier has a silver- and gold-leaf finish that gleams in the light-filled room.

A latticed wall in the dining room is painted in the same Benjamin Moore green as the porch's floor stripes. Ceredo-oak Poppy chairs from Jayson Home surround a custom walnut table that can seat up to 14 guests. Roman shades in Peter Dunham Textiles' Isfahan Stripe. Compiegne chandeliers by Vaughan.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: The colorful kitchen has an island painted in Benjamin Moore's Slate Teal and Urban Electric Co. brass pendants with custom red interiors; the ceiling is clad in oak planks; stools, Thomas Hayes; vent hood, RangeCraft; backsplash tile, Urban Archaeology. In the grandkids' room, painted in Benjamin Moore's Gumdrop, custom bunk beds have liners from the Company Store; pouf, Serena & Lily. The house was designed by Wisconsin firm McCormack + Etten Architects.



Outside the master suite, a hallway is enlivened with horizontal blue stripes that mimic the pattern of the wood planking on the adjacent wall. A Hickory Chair slipper chair is covered in Lee Jofa's Turkistan. The oak-and-carved hardwood chest is by Bunny Williams Home.



"The client specifically requested a white headboard in her bedroom," says Thornton, who covered the custom Eli-Wyn Upholstery bed in a Ralph Lauren Home fabric. Suzani throw, Jayson Home. Nightstand, Hickory Chair. A Balinese artwork hangs over the bed on a wall covered in a Phillip Jeffries grass cloth. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES