



#### Stats

- 3,546 SF, 4 bedrooms, 3 baths, 54 ft lakefront deck, 54 ft lakefront patio
- 3 car garage with guest apartment above
- 26x46 garage with rec room above
- Boathouse with double rail system
- 3 docks

# EXQUISITE LAKE VERMILION ESTATE SAVES BIG ON UTILITIES WITH SUSTAINABLE SYSTEMS

By Lisa Janisch

**S**ecluded on the Moccasin Point peninsula of iconic Lake Vermilion in northern Minnesota, you'll find an exquisite half log sided home on south facing sandy shoreline, hosting every amenity one hopes to find in a premier lakefront home. What is not apparent is how inexpensive this property is to maintain due to the reliable energy efficient systems running quietly in the background.

Step inside the log trussed covered entry and you will find a vaulted great room with a two story tall stone fireplace and floor to ceiling glass showcasing an island studded view across Daisy Bay and the tip of Birch Point, out into Big Bay. There's a magnificent kitchen with custom hickory cabinets, granite counters and stainless appliances. The main floor is home to the luxurious lakeside master suite with its spacious

granite master bath, walk in closet and glass door to the lakeside deck. Up the log stairs is a loft overlooking the lake. Downstairs, the family room features a full bar and is open to the lakeside stone patio. There are two more spacious bedrooms and another large bathroom. Among its numerous first class amenities, the home offers in-floor heat on all three floors, central air conditioning, central vac, and whole house sound including outside speakers.

Also on this property are two heated garages with guest quarters above and a boathouse with an electric double rail system and 3 docks. The 3 car garage has in-floor heat both in the garage and in the apartment above, which has its own full bathroom and granite kitchen. The 26 x 46 garage has propane heat in the garage and electric heat in the rec room above.



The total electricity and propane gas bills for one year for all this? \$2,300 for electricity and \$1,400 for propane gas!

The owners, Jim and Judy, did not specifically set out to build an energy efficient home. They fell in love with a piece of property they were told they couldn't build on. "We loved the location. South facing road accessible property on Lake Vermilion is rare and wind is never an issue here. The location in this sandy cove protects you from big waves. It's a great place to entertain the family. The swimming and boating is great because you are out of the main traffic on the lake. The kids love it because they can swim without having to worry about boats going by."

"The turning point was when we were told we couldn't build on this land. We were determined that there had to be a way."

What followed was much research, discussions with various contractors and careful thinking through how to do things more efficiently and effectively with regard to long term reliability. "Everything had to be done top notch. We didn't cut corners on anything. This was going to be our retirement home."

They took into account that in northern Minnesota it is not unusual for traditional drilled well water lines and septic systems to freeze during hard winters and they wanted systems that could not freeze.

## Water

They decided upon a whole-house rainwater system for the main home drinking and domestic water. Although not yet common on Lake Vermilion, rainwater systems are used in other areas such as the Caribbean, where rain water is the water supply source



for the island of Bermuda. "I wanted the best water I could get up here, especially having kids, and after talking to experts, rainwater seemed to be the best."

The whole-house rainwater system provides the water needed for the entire house and can be drunk from any tap. In addition, the system provides the water needed for the in-floor heat system installed on all three floors.

Have they ever run out of rainwater? No. In over a decade of heavy use, including hosting friends and family groups as large as 38 people, they have never run out of water. Should the area ever experience an extended dry period, the house could simply be tapped into the year round lakewater system that supports the guest quarters above the garage or a groundwater well could be drilled; however, they have never had to consider this as they have always had plenty of water.

Maintenance on the rainwater system is simply cleaning one of the three filters every five years,

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changing one of the filters every year and changing the third filter every month or two.

## Sewer

They decided upon a two holding tank system for the waste water from the home, one in the utility room and one buried in the yard, and another holding tank buried in the yard for waste water from the apartment above the garage. With this system, they never have to worry about the septic freezing.

Maintenance is simply having the tanks pumped once or twice a year, depending upon amount of use.

## Heating & Cooling

An inconspicuous bank of solar panels tucked into the landscape to the west of the home provides most of the electricity needed to heat the in-floor system. The solar panels bring the in-floor system up to 66 degrees. The propane boiler then only has to heat the system a few degrees to get the in-floor heat from 66 degrees up to 70 degrees. When the owners are not going to be home in the winter, they set this system at 45 degrees.

There is also a high efficiency propane forced air furnace neatly tucked into the utility room. When the owners have been away in the winter, as soon as they arrive they use the thermostats to turn up both the in-floor heat and the propane forced air furnace. The propane forced air furnace quickly heats the whole house to 68 degrees and keeps it toasty warm until the in-floor heat catches up.

Every room in the house has its own in-floor heat zone so it is easy to adjust the temperature in every room with the thermostat on the wall of each room.

Maintenance on the propane boiler, forced air furnace and central air is just the usual routine servicing recommended for these units. Maintenance on the solar panels has been minimal.


They built their dream retreat and have enjoyed years of making family memories as their children and now



growing number of grandchildren learned to trap shoot, snowmobile, fish and even zip line from the upper garage down to the house. “All the stuff you can do with the kids is just phenomenal up here and you don’t have to deal with crowds. The kids are all up on Memorial Day, the 4th and Labor Day. “

“Some of our best memories are boating to restaurants on the lake. You do have the big water if you want to go out on Big Bay but it is also easy to get to scenic places where the water is not so big.”

“Other favorites are being so close to one of the best golf courses in the state, shopping in Ely, and good fishing right off the dock in Daisy Bay. “The fishing and the energy savings have been phenomenal.”

Jim and Judy desire to pass this cherished retreat on to someone who will love this place as much as they have and begin making their own memories on Lake Vermilion. 

### For more information contact

Lisa Janisch

Janisch Realty

Lisa@JanischRealty.com 218-780-6644