the winds swept in from the southeast over the graceful yet modest sand beach. The tendrils of a willow tree by the shoreline danced and swayed in the breeze. Looking out over the water, I could see sailboats bobbing in the distance and could barely make out the opposite shoreline. This is a big lake—a really big lake, I thought, as I watched the waves crashing in on the beach.
IT ALL EVOKED AN **illusion...**

that I was somewhere far away—a peaceful point on the east coast perhaps. Then the call of a loon brought me back to Minnesota. I was standing on the shore of Pelican Lake, right here in Lake Country.

Obtaining the feeling of being somewhere far removed from the everyday duties and scenery has been pursued for hundreds of years. One Pelican Lake family has heard the call of the north since the early 1900s. “In the old days,” family members boarded trains in Nebraska and traveled the distance to Minnesota, arriving at Lake Hubert. They then climbed into horse-drawn wagons to complete the journey to Pelican Lake. The women and children stayed the entire summer and the fathers would come up at the beginning and the end.

This particular property has been in the same family for generations. The owner’s parents were of the era when beaches were large and groomed and stretched all the way from the water’s edge to the house. Today, the homeowners provide shoreline restoration to the majority of the waterfront. Keeping a small portion of the original beach for grandchildren to build castles of sand, they are returning native Minnesota plants to the remainder.

A carpet of impeccably manicured lawn lies between the beach and the gardens surrounding the house. This is the thickest emerald-green grass I have ever seen—every blade seems to beckon bare feet.

The owner’s son was the builder for the remodeling and
expansion of the original 3,800-square-foot lakehome. He enlisted the help of an architect friend from the Twin Cities to provide the design work. Many changes were made inside and out. A team of carpenters, plumbers, and electricians worked magic. The home now boasts 4,500 finished square feet for year-round living.

With the design changes to the outside—including altering the roofline, removing a wrap-around deck replaced with strategically placed patios and a smaller deck—the one-story rambler/ranch home evolved into something completely different, with the appeal of a country cottage. It is graceful and elegant without being ostentatious.

Perennial flower gardens surrounding the house welcome visitors to the colors of the seasons. Columns flank the front entryway and draw visitors inside where the foyer opens gracefully to the dining room on the left, the living room on the right, and straight ahead to the kitchen.

"It seems odd that the first thing you see is the kitchen," says the lady of the house. "But that is the way it was, so we went with it."

Not odd in the least, this grand kitchen blends traditional and modern elements with an English country feel. Spacious granite countertops glisten and a cleverly designed center island hides a microwave, which creates added space for entertaining and experimenting with recipes. The end of the island was designed to include a large, antique, wooden chopping block from the late 1800s. The distinctive markings and a pronounced dip hint that it must have been owned by a left-handed butcher.
are found throughout the kitchen. Beadboard cupboards and matching wainscoted walls welcome guests to the grand, family sized table for casual dining. The patio beyond the wall of windows and French door is a relaxing area for an evening barbecue or afternoon tea.

The home is an eclectic mix of elegant, formal antiques, as well as contemporary and country furnishings, which provide a comfortable welcome with an informal appeal. The homeowners did all the decorating themselves with items collected over many years of traveling the United States and Europe. "My husband loves to shop," says the lady of the house, "and so do I. We really do live in every room in this house." She collects ideas from several home-interior design magazines and books. Coupled with a natural eye, she says her motto has been "more is better"—there is always a perfect place for displaying a new favorite piece.

The architect took full advantage of natural light, using windows that are higher and longer than usual and which come close to the edges of the walls. The exterior walls are mostly windows, which doesn't leave much room for displaying a favored painting. However, "I think there is one spot left for one more painting," she says.

The couple loves to entertain. Whether it is a weekend for family and friends or a sophisticated dinner, the home can handle them all. The grand living room is arranged with conversational areas throughout; the centerpiece, however, is the original massive, center-wall fireplace that assumes a commanding presence. The warm hues of the natural stone have been incorporated throughout the room, giving it a relaxing atmosphere.

One of the original three bedrooms has been transformed into a lovely library with hardwood floors and a wall of shelves filled with books to satisfy the eye of every booklover. The cat, Miss Oxford, curls up on one of the leather wingback chairs, enjoying the view as she looks out the sun-filled windows, seemingly dreaming of birds and butterflies.

The master bedroom is also an eclectic mix of sophisticated Georgian romance and stately charm. A gas fireplace and sitting area are enhanced by the wall of windows facing the lake and a glass-paneled door that opens to a sunny patio. Next door, the master bath is also bathed in the sunlight that filters in from windows high above the large oval whirlpool tub with ceramic surround. The room exudes an undeniable freshness. The tiled shower includes a bench and room to enjoy the intricate details, such as the European-style showerhead. "It feels like you are standing under a watering can on a warm spring day," she says.

The third original bedroom has evolved into a gigantic, walk-in closet and dressing room. Because they have a lovely guesthouse with 1,950 square feet, the couple did not feel guilty about eliminating a bedroom or two from the main house. Guests and family members are quite

**ABOVE and LEFT**

Seated at the grand dining room table, one can imagine witty conversation enjoyed over dinner.

The enormous original stone fireplace holds a commanding presence in the living room.
comfortable and enjoy the privacy of being quartered a short distance away down a tree-lined path.

The large formal dining room is architecturally detailed with a molded ceiling crafted without nails, except for the very edges and corners. The room is home to many family heirlooms and other pieces collected over the years. Just off the dining room is a comfortable office/den. Once half of the original attached garage, it is now a cozy space for working at the large desk, while basking in the glow of the gas fireplace.

The other half of the old garage is now the garden room. Decorated in wonderful, light hues, it is a place for "girls to hang out," surrounded by plants and frills of leftover, antique sewing equipment. At one time, the lady of the house owned a needlepoint store. She retained some of the antique merchandising pieces, such as the glass ribbon case and the refurbished cabinet that now houses floss and threads of every color. This room is the perfect place for her collection of British movies and books, as well as heirloom quilts and antique dolls. "It is really a grown-up's playhouse," she says.

Through the doors of the mudroom, or boot room, named after the old lamps with boots for the stands, is the new attached garage. The floor of the garage is painted, textured, non-slip cement, the kind used to surround swimming pools.

The family collects everything from cookbooks and novels, to priceless furnishings and old matchbooks. Every piece has a story and every room overflows with details, making this a comfortable home for entertaining and lakeside living.

With so many lovely rooms inside and the wonderful patios outside, the only problem the homeowners experience is deciding where to enjoy their morning coffee. When their grandchildren come to visit, they can all usually be found sitting on the dock enjoying doughnuts, orange juice, and coffee.

It's nice to be home on a peaceful, Pelican Lake point.