



# LIVING IN THE *Light*

“Home and cottage—  
two words most suggestive of  
comfort in the English language...”

*-William H. Ranlett*

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WRITER ELIZABETH BOOTH O'TOOLE • PHOTOGRAPHER DAVE SPECKMAN

**W**hether you realize it or not, the homes you remember most are those built in harmony with their surroundings. Few builder/architect duos can pull it off but with this vibrant waterside cottage built by Easling Construction Company, it positively sings. Having an accomplished artist as the homeowner certainly helps too. Her canvases cover most walls and are so rich, so brilliant, and so vibrant, they almost have a pulse of their own. These same colors leap off the paintings and repeat throughout; in rugs, tiles, accent walls and throws, all synchronizing to perfectly mirror the intensity of the summer hues just outside the door.

Built in an established, sociable summer community, Marty Easling's crew operated seamlessly to meet the very tight schedule. “We were allowed to start the day after Labor Day and had to be completely finished by June 15th,” notes Easling Construction Company founder and president, Marty Easling. As the third largest employer in Leelanau County, Easling has a talented crew with excellent rapport and therefore the ability to meet tight deadlines. “We have been in business for 36 years, so the professionals who work with me have been with us for a long time and they understand the process,” he explains.

The cottage-style house was completed well before the first car-loads of families arrived in June, a result of Easling's specialized in-house crews including stone masons and cabinet makers.

The 5,100 square foot home, designed by architect Larry Graves, feels not at all like a home of this size. The owners wanted warm, happy, welcoming and in synch with its surroundings, but—above all—cottage-like. Right down to the screen doors which were designed to slam, because, of course, classic cottage screen doors slam.

Other details like the massive farm table, a game room complete with half-finished puzzle, the star-embedded stairs (their "starway to heaven"), a giant bowl filled with billiard balls and the ladder-access-only bedroom loft add an undeniable fun factor. The owners even hosted a "borrow a baby day" where friend's babies were let loose everywhere to make sure the cottage does indeed appeal to toddlers too. Smaller finishing details include a hand crafted fireplace mantle made from an ash tree in the original yard and a garden trellis created from the previous garage's wood.

Located on a quarter acre lot and perched on a bluff 20 feet above the beach, the home meticulously brings the outside in. Every exterior wall has windows, windows, and more windows, mostly with transoms, filling all rooms with ever-shifting natural light throughout the day. Wall colors were selected based on the time the sun would strike them, transforming each accent wall into a blaze of shifting color each and every summer day. The home was positioned parallel to the shoreline so that the westward sunset would be maximized. Multiple porches and patios create natural streams for friends to flow inside and out, all day and night.

The big picture plan for this cheerful cottage is to accommodate a true houseful and to be passed on for generations. For example, the studio on the second floor will someday double as a master bedroom for future families but for now it is an artist's sanctuary bathed in light and overlooking the sparkling blue coastline.

This light is the family's fuel, filling everyone each morning with a joy that can only come from living in a little piece of paradise. And for the lady of the house? The light is a muse for further masterpieces, guaranteed to embody the sizzle and energy that only comes from an afternoon summer sun illuminating the underbellies of birch tree leaves. As the owner herself states, I feel happy wherever I go in this house." And then she adds, "I mean really, who needs the south of France when you have Northern Michigan?" □

**COVER PAGE:**

An arbor crafted from recycled wood not only frames the brilliant blues of the bay but was also the site of a recent wedding proposal.

**RIGHT:**

Crisp and colorful, every room captures the vibrant life of the family and the surroundings. The refined decorative trim details complement the color and decor, and are in perfect harmony with the cottage style.





Rare is a home truly symbiotic with its land

**ABOVE:** Splashes of color and interest in unlikely places abound throughout, such as the blue painted wainscot and playful child-height tiles in-laid underneath the counter. An Easiling Construction specialty, a modified Lazy Susan, ensures that this colorful space is also highly functional.

**BELOW:** Open and spacious (but not big or cavernous) creates a cottage with excellent traffic flow and the ability to chat with guests three "rooms" over.

**OPPOSITE:** No corner of this cottage better epitomizes its aura than this game area complete with half-finished puzzle and adjacent to the screen door, intentionally installed without springs because, of course, cottage doors were meant to slam!





**OPPOSITE PAGE:** Windows, windows, white and bright. An artist studio is void of distraction and ready for the next masterpiece moment.

**THIS PAGE**

**ABOVE:** This ladder-access-only loft underscores the whimsy of this fun family.

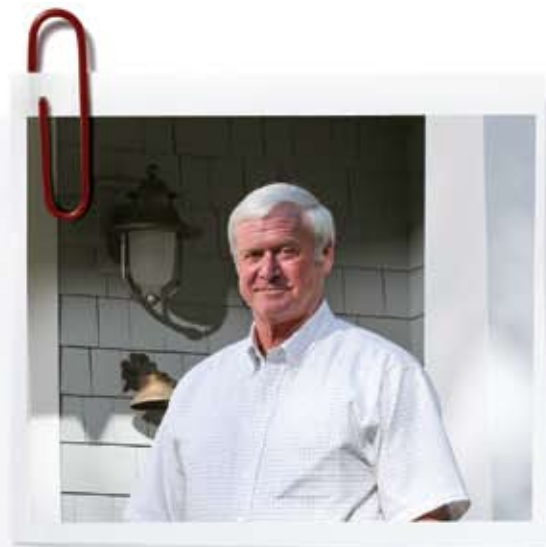
**MIDDLE:** Guests can't help but wake up happy in this sunny upstairs bedroom.

**BELOW:** Several hues of blue are used throughout and all mimic the water at different points throughout the day. On this popular porch, family and guests seem to float as they chat on an indigo lake.



**ABOVE:** There really is a place where the grass screams green and the blue blinds. It's here, in all the tips and bays of a magical place called Northern Michigan.

Building Supplies: **NORTHERN LUMBER CO.**  
Electrical Work: **ADVANTAGE ELECTRIC**  
Fireplace: **SOURCE JULIEN INC.**  
Flooring: **FLOOR COVERING BROKERS**  
Granite & Tile: **STRATUS MARBLE & GRANITE**  
HVAC: **TEAM BOB'S**  
Kitchen Appliances: **MAX'S SERVICE**  
Well Drilling: **B & Z WELL DRILLING**



## Easling Construction Company

### PRINCIPAL OWNER (S):

Martin M. Easling

### NUMBER OF YEARS IN BUSINESS:

36

### YEAR BUSINESS STARTED:

March 1976

### EDUCATION:

Martin M. Easling has a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Michigan Technological University.

### BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY:

We strive to do our absolute best to surpass our clients' expectations by offering honesty, integrity and the highest standards in workmanship and service. Our goal is to be the company all others aspire to emulate.

### WHAT SETS YOUR BUSINESS APART?

The Easling Construction Company includes the Easling Wood Shop and Easling Home Maintenance. We offer an unparalleled depth of in-house expertise, giving us firm control of the highest quality, custom product and efficient scheduling. Working as a team, the company delivers personal, professional service both during and after the construction phase. Additionally, Easling makes every effort to support local businesses. Our strong relationships with our suppliers adds to our success in providing the best products available, in a timely manner. The mark of excellence unique to Easling Construction Company is due to Marty's personal commitment to each and every client. He visits each project daily to guarantee the best possible standards are achieved.

### HOBBIES:

Establishing Easling Home Maintenance sets the tone for Marty's interest in preserving the quality of this area's unique architecture. A hometown man, Marty is community oriented, supporting a large variety of projects throughout the area. The Easling Company devotes the largest portion of their marketing dollars to philanthropic support. Marty spends his leisure hours sailing, hunting, fishing and hiking, and is an avid reader.

### CONTACT PHONE NUMBER/WEB ADDRESS:

For additional information, call (231) 256-9891 or visit [www.easlingconstruction.com](http://www.easlingconstruction.com).