



# FAMILY TIES

*A well-built house starts with a solid foundation*



# Wilbraham

MASSACHUSETTS

STORY  
**RICH J. WIRTH**  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
**COREY FITZGERALD**

**M**arried for almost 40 years, Loring and Pam Reed's back-story begins on a mountain. Pam's grandparents emigrated to the U.S from Italy in 1918 and purchased a 200-acre working dairy farm on the crest of Wilbraham Mountain two years later. Located at the junction of Old Ridge and Monson roads, down which many a stagecoach rumbled in the early 1840s, the rugged, mountainous terrain undoubtedly reminded them of the Italian Alps. "They had an appreciation of the beauty of the land and the view, and recognized this is where they wanted to raise their family," Pam said.

The property has a storied history. In 1930, Pam's grandfather, John Porteri, commissioned Springfield architect Atwood C. Hall to design an 80-foot observation tower to maximize the ocular pleasure of the 90-mile panoramic view, which stretches from Hartford, Conn., to beyond the Mount Holyoke Range. Reminiscent of an early 16th-century English watchtower and set

Chimney pots and roof spires lend visual interest to the roofline of this English Country cottage. The pine lintels and board & batten shutters are charming.



atop a terraced green, the tower, crafted entirely from Douglas fir, featured an enclosed stairway leading to a roofed observation platform with an overhanging battlement. Porter's six daughters, including Pam's mother, operated a tea room-style restaurant at the base of the tower until it burnt to the ground in 1955. Almost 60 years later, the foundation piers are still visible, as are some charred remains of the structure itself. Loring flies an American flag here daily. "Pam's mother maintained it [for many years] and we're continuing that tradition," he said. "That's sacred ground."

An only child, Pam grew up on the Ridge Road property, and Loring's family would eventually settle just 500 feet away. He was among the first four-year class to graduate from Minnechaug Regional High School in 1965, and she helped coin the school's moniker, which means "Berryland" in Nipmuc. The Reeds built their second home—a 3,500-square-foot English Tudor—across the street from Pam's parents' home, residing there for almost 25 years. The couple had no intention of building a third house; in fact, they had considered retiring to their beach house on Mason's Island, near the mouth of the Mystic River

in Stonington, Conn., but 90 years of history was hard to leave behind. "The mountains or the ocean—it's a nice problem to have I guess—but when you have roots like this, you just don't pick up and walk away," Loring said.

After acquiring the facing property three years ago, the couple called upon third-generation builders R.J. and David Chapdelaine, of East Longmeadow-based Jos. Chapdelaine & Sons, to build a retirement home that would honor Porter's legacy and celebrate Pam's European heritage. The Reeds were smitten after seeing a photo of Roger Chapdelaine's home on the Internet. "Something spoke to us," Pam said. "He really is an artist."

A decision was made early on to deconstruct the existing home, which would have required extensive renovations, and salvage the foundation. "Using the existing foundation allowed a preservation of the past while bridging the future," Pam said. Chapdelaine proposed a "green" alternative by suggesting they donate the discarded building materials to the ReStore Home Improvement Center in Springfield for recycling.

At 2,300 square feet, the three bedroom, two-and-a-half bath home is smaller than the Reeds' English Tudor by design. "This





The deck was fashioned from cedar, which is naturally resistant to decay. The wrought iron railings and signature handrails were custom made by R.J. Chapdelaine to provide detail with minimal obstruction of the view.



house reflects a downsize approach,” Loring said. “We wanted a smaller house with a finer fit and finish.” Having always fancied European architecture, the couple commissioned Chapdelaine to build them a Cotswold-style English Country cottage, a subtype of the Tudor Revival style. Based on cottages built since medieval times in the Cotswold region of southwestern England, this style became especially popular in the U.S. during the 1920s and 1930s. The home features painted stucco siding with prominent stone soldiering, and a steep roof line with complex gables. “I didn’t want a box with one roof,” Loring said. “I wanted peaks.” Adorning those peaks are fanciful spires and decorative roof

vents that will, along with the home’s copper flashing, patina over time. “We want this house to age,” Loring said. Authentic English chimney pots, half-round gutters, decorative strap hinges on the garage doors and board & batten shutters complete the storybook look. Here, the devil truly is in the details. Fashioning knee braces or “ship’s knees” for the front entryway, so called because they were often used to preserve precious space in ships, Loring and his son scrapped a number of templates before finding the perfect fit. “It took us 17 different tries until we got it right,” he said.

The home’s cottage charm extends inward from the front

The homeowners have an affinity for natural materials. Granite from Skyline Quarry in Stafford Springs, Conn., was used for the great room fireplace. The hearth is bluestone. The windows frame the view of Tower Square in downtown Springfield.



stoop—a slab of live edge granite from New York state. Fashioned from knotty alder and purchased online from Alabama, the front door influenced many of the interior design elements, including the repeating arches and richly stained millwork. Quaint and imposing at the same time, the piece features a novel speakeasy door.

In designing the interior, the couple sought the guidance of East Longmeadow home stager and interior designer Sandi Lanigan, who decorated their Connecticut beach house via the Internet. “We didn’t want formal,” Loring said. “We’ve done formal.” Lanigan offered elements of design, color choices and room arrangements based on her knowledge of the couple and their style. “Both Sandi and Roger said if something ‘spoke’

to us, they could make it work,” Pam said. Case in point—the couple was drawn to a set of c. 1920 arched French doors at the Brimfield Antiques Fair. Regretting having not bought them, they tracked down the dealer and traveled to upstate New York weeks later. Ironically, the dealer acquired the doors in South Hadley originally. The glass-paneled doors, which still have their original hardware, lead into the mahogany-infused library, which Loring modeled after rooms in his grandfather’s Victorian home in Palmer. “It always felt very warm and safe [there],” he said. “I wanted a room that would replicate that.” Loring had envisioned a library with mahogany panels laid floor to ceiling, but Chapdelaine felt it would overpower the space. Instead, he installed recessed panel wainscoting, a built-in bookcase and



Wanting an informal dining room, the homeowners chose a distressed Nichols & Stone table with a thick, hand-planed birch top. The Napa parsons chairs and coordinating slipcovers are from Pottery Barn, allowing for easy style updates.



Fashioned from tumbled Jerusalem limestone, the backsplash gives the kitchen a sense of rustic simplicity. The coordinating granite countertops came from Santo C. DeSpirt in Agawam.



raised credenza with turned feet accents, and heavy lintels and crown molding. Loring's grandfather would approve. "The finish carpenter spent a month in this room," he said. Elegant without being ostentatious, the library reflects Chapdelaine's attention to detail. "He built this house like it was his own," Loring said.

The couple wanted a more natural look in the great room, opting for 3-inch red oak hardwood flooring and exposed beams stained to match the surrounding millwork. Granite from Skyline Quarry in Stafford Springs, Conn., was used for the fireplace, with the hearth fashioned from bluestone, a bluish-grey sandstone used for building and paving. Natural materials were also employed in the kitchen, where tumbled Jerusalem limestone was chosen for the backsplash. Known for its durability, it adds a sense of tactile texture and historical whimsy to the space as its warm tones provide a stunning backdrop of seashells and fossils from biblical times. The coordinating granite countertops came from Santo C. DeSpirt Marble and Granite Fabrications in

Agawam. An expanse of windows on the home's western façade, including decorative transom windows in the great room, allows the cedar deck to become an extension of the main living area. "The flow across the deck from the dining room to the great room lends itself well to entertaining," Pam said.

The home was designed so that every room—save for a first-floor powder room—would have a spectacular view, and the dining room is no exception, offering westerly and southerly vistas. "Such a large amount of glass creates a sunroom effect, which is perfect to decorate the [space] with plants during the winter season," Pam said. The windows are equipped with Pella Slimshade® between-the-glass blinds, which offer flexible light and privacy control, and require no maintenance. In the great room, the homeowners chose cellular (or honeycomb) shades, which keep rooms warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer, and won't fade even in full-sun locations.

But, the story doesn't end there. Porteri's observation tower



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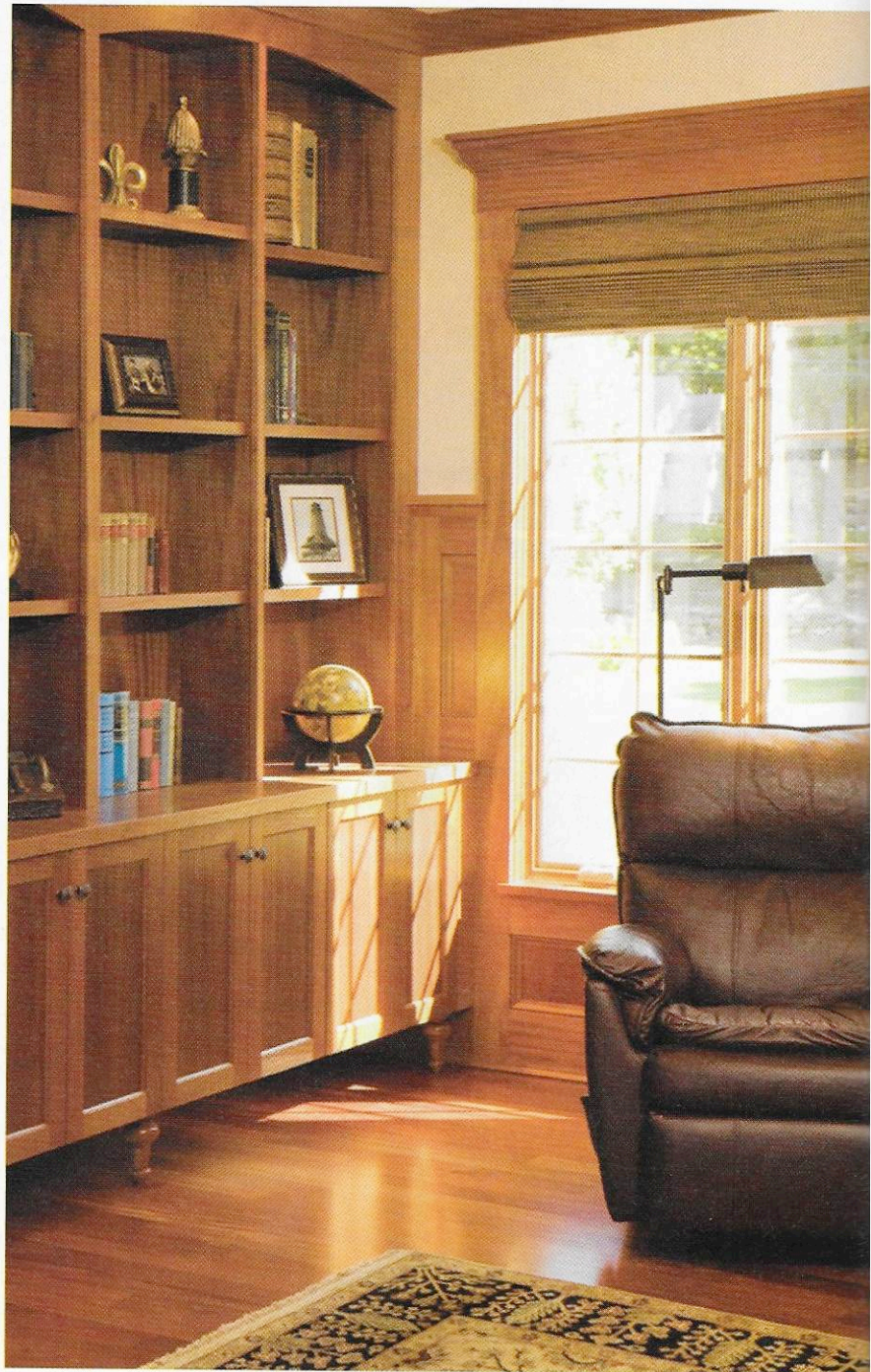
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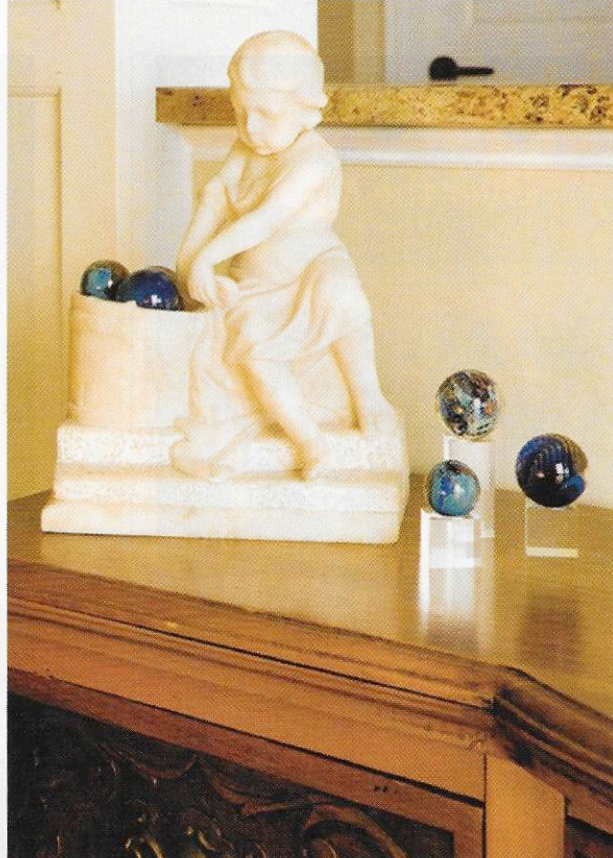
Loring wanted the library to emulate rooms in his grandfather's old Victorian in Palmer. The built-in bookcase and raised credenza are mahogany.



was the impetus for Pam's participation in Shelburne-based contemporary glass artist Josh Simpson's Infinity Project. "My grandfather was a man of vision and beauty, and respected nature," she said. The artist gives two spherical "planets" (one to keep, one to hide) to individuals that write to him and propose where and why they'd like to place a planet for perpetuity. "Some are meant to be discovered quickly, perhaps by someone who will wonder what it is or what it was meant for. Others are likely to lie hidden for centuries," Simpson's website reads. Since 2000, over 1,700 people have hidden planets in locations around the globe. The kaleidoscopic patterns inside the striking pieces are created using several Venetian glass techniques, including millefiori and vetro a filigrana.

Ninety years after the Porteri family first came to Wilbraham,

Pam's grandparents brought this marble statue with them when they emigrated to the U.S. from Italy in the early 1920s. The Venetian glass "planets" are part of Shelburne-based contemporary glass artist Josh Simpson's Infinity Project.



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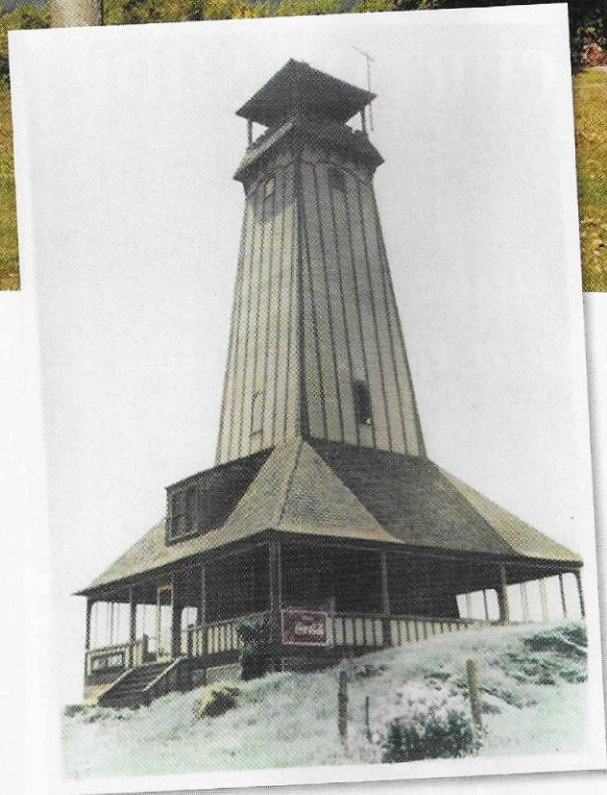
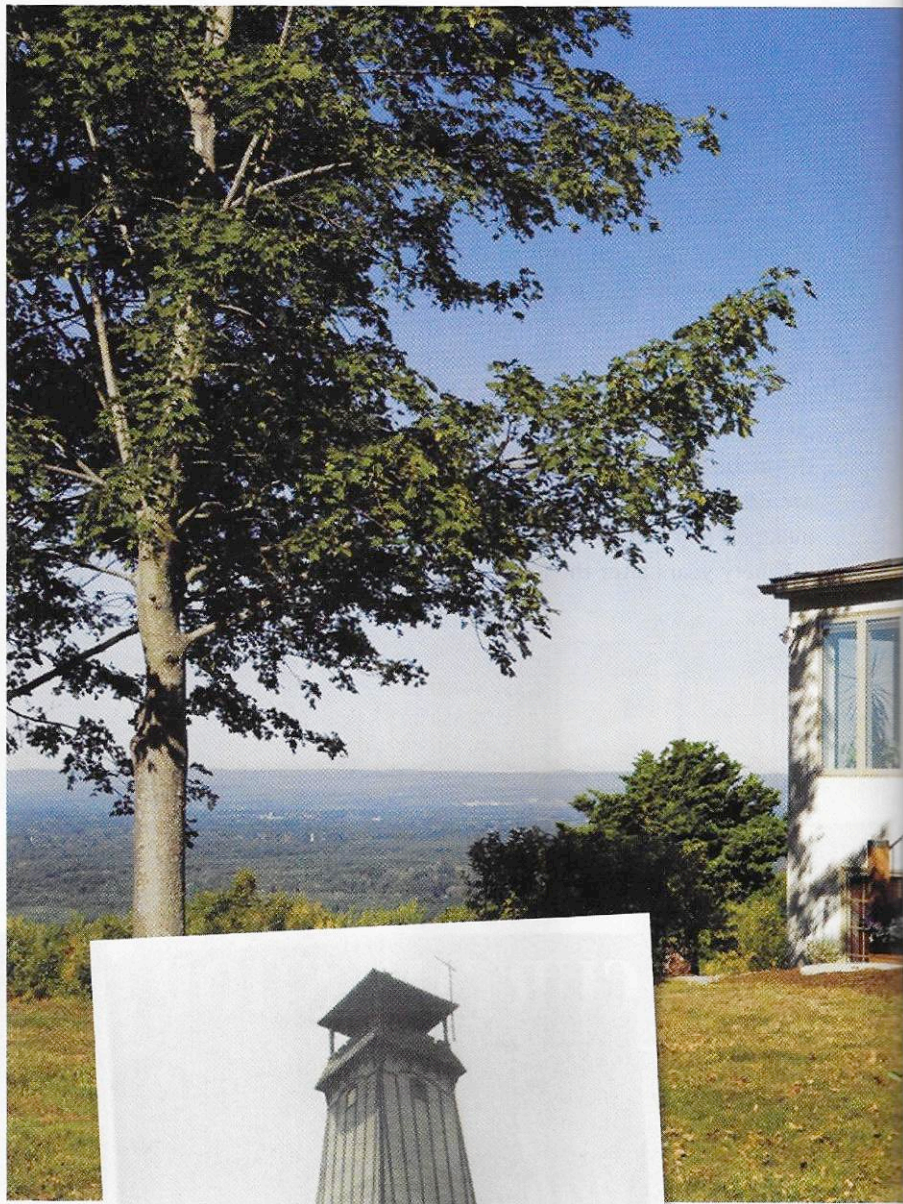
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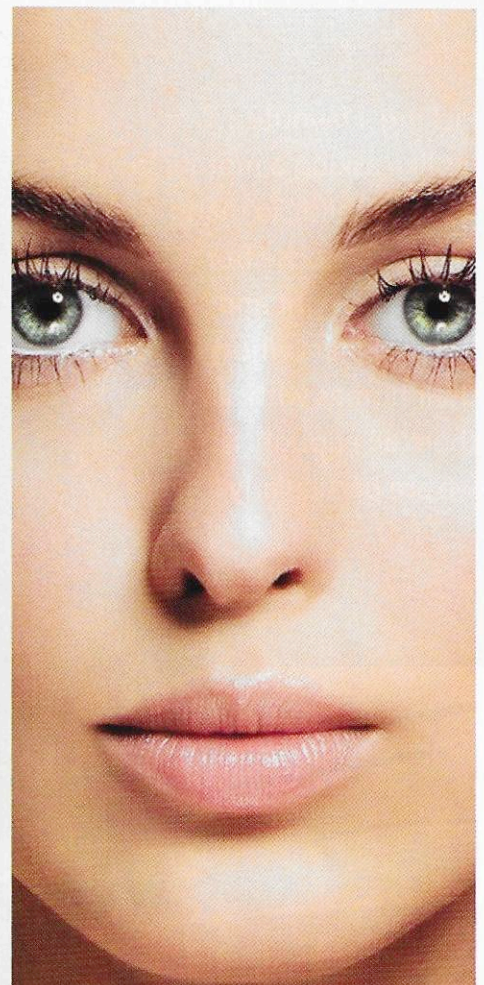
Pam's grandfather, John Porter, commissioned Springfield architect Atwood C. Hall to design this 80-foot observation tower in 1930. It was destroyed by fire in 1955.





The steep roofline is readily associated with English Country cottages. A new foundation was poured to accommodate a walk-in closet in the master bedroom.

it's remarkable to think there is still family occupying a portion of the land. "We are very fortunate to have connected with R.J. Chapdelaine, who understood what we were looking for and was able to provide a great home and a positive building experience," Loring said. "We are surrounded by building materials that we love, with the natural feel of stone and wood. It has created for us a warm, inviting and comfortable home styled with the elegance, creativity and detail that we have always wanted." **LS**



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