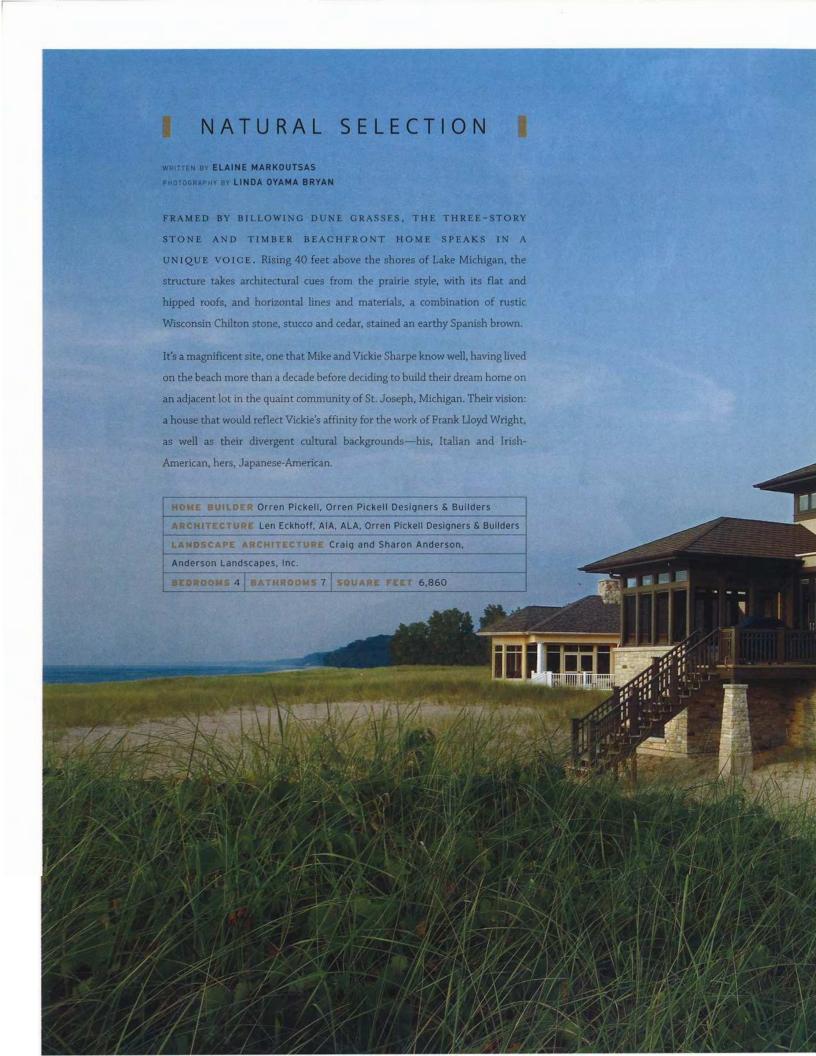
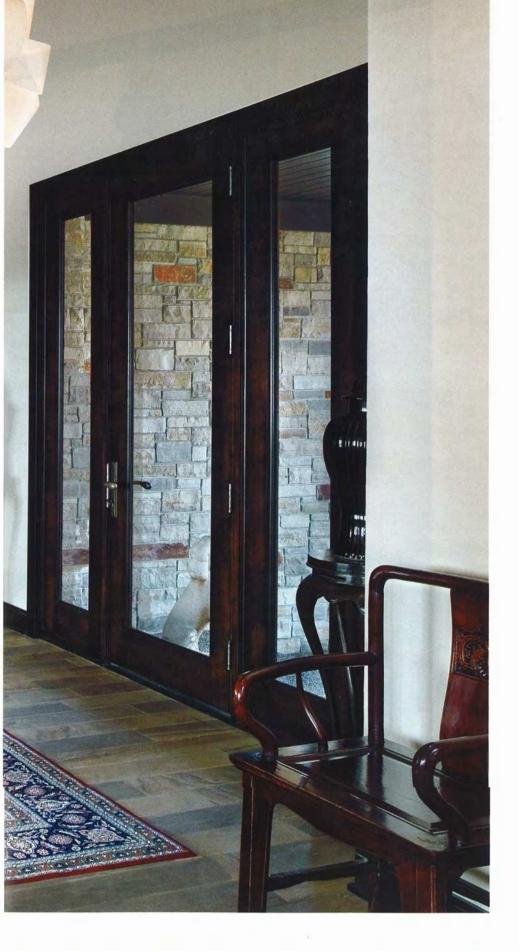
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STYLE SELECTION

The pendant light in the foyer, which features plastic-coated paper strips ribboned around a steel frame, channels modern origami. White Leonardo Pendant Light, price available upon request; santacole.com

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They found their dream weaver in Orren Pickell, principal and owner of Lake Bluff-based Orren Pickell Designers & Builders, whose team created an architectural hybrid that spoke to the Sharpes' design aesthetic, while deftly confronting dune movement, erosion and wind issues.

"The most challenging aspect was creating a substantial window wall to stand up to hurricane-force winds," says architect Len Eckhoff, AIA, ALA. "And the house had to be set back 120 feet from the water." That setback is mirrored on the approach to the house, a 170-foot-long winding driveway lined with 30 ornamental pear trees, underplanted with ivy. A pair of squat stone pillars, espresso-stained rustic wooden gate and a sea of wildflowers, including black-eyed susans, rattlesnake master, liatris, purple cone flowers and feather reed grass, announce the front elevation, which has gabled roofs for a more formal presentation.

"Repeating the tapering column detail gives the building mass, making the house feel pinned down," says Eckhoff. "It's about scale and balance." In addition, says Pickell, "where the wood columns line up with the stone piers beneath, four inches of wood column 'float." It's a device Eckhoff says "brings the building up off the structure and gives it an airy feeling."

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Incorporating such unusual details is something Pickell relishes. "We weren't afraid to leave the security of one clean, proven architectural style to tastefully blend in other influences," says the builder. "I love the mix of prairie materials and lines with the Asian influence, along with a curve or two thrown in that rarely occurs in either style; it's simply outstanding."

The walkout lower level, appointed with a nine-foot ceiling adorned with reclaimed chestnut beams, is designed for entertainment with its 55-inch flat-screen TV and pizza oven, which backs up to an outdoor fireplace in a protected terrace outside. The Sharpes recently added a 35-foot-wide pergola covered with porcelain vine, a bocce ball court and a series of decks in ipe wood.

"The hardscape and garden were part of a multiyear master plan designed to evolve over time," says landscape architect Craig Anderson, of Anderson Landscapes in Mundelein, who introduced Mike, a college buddy, to Pickell. "We studied the dunes to get a good understanding of the site before we began," says Anderson. Six-foot grade changes were just one of the challenges he met during the project.

Taking advantage of the 100-foot beach frontage was a common goal in the overall design. To that end, nine-foot-high windows span 18 feet in the living area, and a generous 15-by-17-foot breakfast area enjoys a six-foot window-clad radius. Flooring throughout much of the home is quartzite in a burl wood plank pattern, a practical choice for inevitable sand exposure. Furnishings blend clean lines with counterpoints of textured finishes and Oriental antiques.











EASTERN ACCENT

A trio of shoji-paneled pocket doors screens the dining area from the kitchen/family room. A custom-crafted table sits in a sunken space so that meals can be taken Japanese tea-style.

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Upstairs, the Sharpes luxuriate in a private master suite that features a fireplace, spa bath with overflow tub and rain shower overhead, his and hers walk-in closets, and a small home office. This quiet area is the couple's favorite spot, and, while they enjoy their shared solitude, they also love company, especially during holidays.

"We're both from big families," says Mike, "so the layout is designed for social get-togethers. It's easy to sit down and relax in just about any place in the house." L



