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| **Legendary Homes of Lake Minnetonka**

Bette Jones Hammel with photography by Karen Melvin

Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2009

208 pages, 240 color photos

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As a first introduction to Minnesota's big lake—Lake Minnetonka—with its coveted shoreline of cottages, cabins, mansions and pastoral homes, I read through Bette Jones Hammel's evocative narrative and studied Karen Melvin's beautiful color photographs from *Legendary Homes of Lake Minnetonka* with much delight.

Hammel's introduction lays the groundwork to the area's important historical points, followed by in-depth accounts of ancestry, pedigree and painstaking renovations made to thirty magnificent properties covering the concealed shore. These anecdotes are further enhanced by Melvin's stunning photographs of interiors, exquisitely adorned with designer furnishings and amazing artworks, as well as scenic shots of lush grounds with expansive lake views.

Each home has its own charming story and unique design, and the book's pages are ripe with splendid highlights, including tales of architects Philip Johnson and Frank Gehry, who both created sensations on the lake. In particular, Johnson's *Davis*, *Winton*,

Nelson House (1949) caused quite an impression with its simple geometric lines and forward-looking style. The sculptural forms of Gehry's ingenious *Winton Guesthouse*, completed in 1986, will leave every reader wanting a glimpse at this whimsical work of contemporary art. And then there are tales of massive renovations, such as the Herculean project undertaken by Clyde Jorgenson, current owner of the *Northrup, Jorgenson House*. Known as the "White House of Minnesota," Jorgenson, spent four years on the extensive task of restoring all four major structures on the property—manor house, carriage house, pool house and boathouse.

All told, *Legendary Homes of Lake Minnetonka* offers an absorbing visit to magnificent yet secluded residences built by families like the Pillsbury's, Washburn's and Dayton's, which are now accessible to the general public in each turn of the page. With every riveting account and thoughtful image, the authors provide an enchanting and thorough tour of these enduring structures.

- **Elizabeth Barragan**