

A NEW WAVE

Nature and city living converge in a floating home designed by its architect owners

Text by ANH-MINH LE Photographs by HENNY VAN BELKOM

WHILE SOME neighborhoods have block parties, Angela Holterman and Derko-Jan Dollen's has jetty parties.

For the past five years, the couple, both architects, have resided in east Amsterdam's burgeoning IJburg district, which is comprised of artificial islands in IJ Lake. The three-level 1,600-square-foot abode that Angela and Derko-Jan designed themselves is part of a community of floating homes. "In the summer, we have one big swimming pool around our house," she says, "and in the winter we have a skating rink."

The Dutch are no strangers to the life aquatic; houseboats have long occupied Amsterdam's canals. The buoyant neighborhoods that have popped up in recent years are a response to a land shortage and increase in the urban population.

Angela and Derko-Jan, who previously lived in an apartment in the center of the capital, wanted "the feeling of freedom and the contact with natural elements" while still being in the city, Angela explains. In addition to their place, they have designed "water homes" in Groningen, in the northern part of the Netherlands. Derko-Jan is the founder of SOOH (sooh.nl), a studio for design development



PAST MEETS PRESENT

In Angela Holterman and Derko-Jan Dollen's floating home, family pieces abound—including an orange chair that belonged to her aunt and uncle, a patterned rug from his grandmother, and a hanging light fixture his mother purchased in the 1970s (shown on page 71). The brown chair and side table are also vintage, though plucked from a secondhand store.

Outside, the dwelling appears decidedly modern. The terrace is outfitted with a table, bench seating, and lounge chairs. "When the weather is good, we are often here," says Angela.





The *VIEWS* were also a priority in Angela and Derko-Jan's planning.

and reuse, while Angela is the founder/owner of the architecture firm *Hollands Zicht* (hollandszicht.nl). They also jointly operate an online vintage furniture shop called *De Gele Etalage* (degeleetalage.nl).

The store's mid-century aesthetic bears out in their home's interior, where some of the furniture was handed down from family. In the living room, for instance, a plush orange chair and a sculptural hanging lamp belonged to relatives. The colorful, patterned rug in the space was once Derko-Jan's grandmother's—as was the one in the kitchen. Also in the kitchen, the tulip-style chairs that encircle a secondhand table are family heirlooms.

When it came to materials, in both their decor and construction, Angela and Derko-Jan took an austere approach, emphasizing wood, concrete, and metal. For example, his home office is furnished with storage made of wood or steel, and the kitchen is appointed with metal units from Ikea. Their initial plan entailed an untreated wood exterior, but they ultimately decided that such a finish was more appropriate in a forest or beach setting. For their urban, lakeside environs, a blue shell seemed fitting.

Since the structure has no trees or vegetation around it, Angela and Derko-Jan devised their own gardens—like the glass-enclosed



MATERIAL WORLD

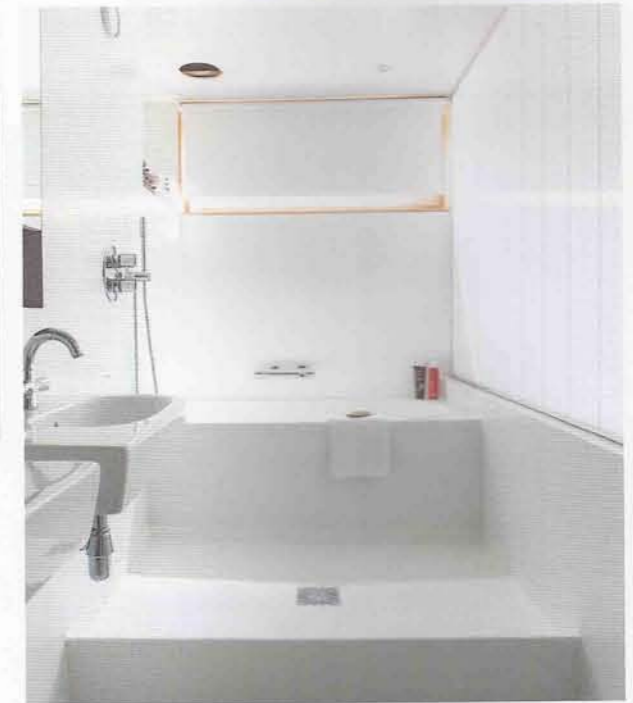
Angela and Derko-Jan incorporated sustainable materials whenever possible. Wood is prominent, with furniture in the living room and his home office fabricated from the same wood as the walls. Case in point: the unit that divides the two spaces, which also serves as a bar and TV storage.

Living on the water impacted the finishes and materials that the couple chose. For example, in the kitchen, they decided against a concrete countertop in order to keep the weight of this level light.





Since the structure has no trees or vegetation around it, they devised their own *GARDENS*.



WHITE OUT

The lowest level of the house, where the bedrooms are situated, is under water. Unlike the top two floors, which are made of wood, the basement features concrete construction. So, for the latter, Angela and Derko-Jan chose to "make everything white," she says, adding that the look is "a little bit Scandinavian."

To maximize the bathroom's square footage, they designed it with the tub at the far end and an adjacent open shower. A large mirror creates the illusion of more space, while also hiding ample storage behind it.

one outside of their three-year-old son Birk's bedroom. (They welcomed a second son, Huug, in May last year.) The sleeping quarters are located on the lowest level, which is the submerged portion of the house. Yet the greenery and abundance of natural light can easily make you forget that you're in the basement.

The views were also a priority in Angela and Derko-Jan's planning. "We see a big lake, the north part of Amsterdam ... swans and ducks from our windows," she observes. The placement of the living room's low window was carefully considered: It's the perfect height for looking out when you're sitting in the space, yet it still offers some privacy. "We have a big view outside, while the neighbors have a small view inside."

Along with a strong connection to nature, their floating residence offers another perk for Angela and Derko-Jan: "We both like surfing," she says, "and we can start surfing right from our terrace." ●