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**Green Living in Gap Cove**

***Coastal home approaches zero-energy with Kolbe's VistaLuxe® Collection windows & doors.***

Wausau, Wisconsin (Sept. 2017) – Steps from the Atlantic Ocean, Gap Cove House withstands coastal conditions, winter storms and summer heat with uncompromising strength and beauty. The Massachusetts home’s contemporary design showcases large energy-efficient windows to capture the shoreline views, while supporting the goals for net-zero energy, durability and low maintenance.

Architect and homeowner, William Ruhl, selected windows from Kolbe’s VistaLuxe® Collection to achieve the desired balance of performance, aesthetics and sustainability in his 1,600-square-foot home.

**Contemporary Beauty**

“We design Modern houses,” says Ruhl. Not surprisingly, Ruhl Walker Architects of Boston designed Gap Cove House with an overtly Modern character and large windows to match.

He elaborates, “I chose VistaLuxe for the sightlines, maximum light and views, and minimal frame size. No one else offers the 2-1/4-inch frame size for a metal-clad wood window system at this price point. There are a few window companies that claim to have a narrow frame, but even a fraction of an inch larger makes a substantial difference. We considered steel and aluminum window systems as well as some European options, but in the end, those were all cost-prohibitive.”

Built on the foundation and partial framing of a previous structure, Gap Cove House’s interior features an elevated main living space along the entire oceanfront side that is open to the original house’s roof framing. Two levels of compact bedrooms and bathrooms exist on the west side and adjacent to the master bath is a small courtyard with bi-folding doors to expand the shower to the outdoors. This space also acts as a thermal chimney to enhance natural ventilation. At grade is an open-air living space defined by raw concrete piers, a cedar-clad ceiling, and a built-in 16-foot-long steel and wood dining table anchored to the concrete at the north end.

Befitting this contemporary palette, the windows’ aluminum exteriors were finished by Linetec in a Coal Black 70 percent PVDF fluoropolymer coating to meet the most stringent industry standards. “Kolbe offers a lot of finish color choices, and Coal Black was perfect for the look we wanted,” observes Ruhl.

**Net-Zero Energy**

“The house is literally on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, of course you want to see as much of that view as possible,” says Kolbe’s distributor, Bill Osgood of Cleary Millwork Co. “Will found everything he wanted in VistaLuxe – the Modern look, the expansive daylight openings and the ability to handle the elements.”

Ruhl agrees and adds, “In keeping with the great views, we wanted large windows. We factored this into our metrics of sustainability. We knew we needed an excellent U-value since we’re in such an exposed location.”

Osgood continues, “We provided all the window units with triple-glazed, LoE glass to meet the specified U-value.”

Energy efficiency is a key attribute of the VistaLuxe Collection with products verified by the Passive House Institute U.S. (PHIUS).

“We’re aiming for net zero energy,” explains Ruhl. “It’s an all-electric house with solar panels, and was designed to produce as much electricity as it uses over the course of a year. In the summer, we are a positive energy producer, which means we have negative electric bills month after month. We stayed warm in winter even when the heat wasn’t on. It was very comfortable sitting right next to the largest windows in the middle of winter.”

**Strength & Resilience**

“The winter storms are the worst and the brunt of them come from the northeast,” Ruhl notes. “We really take a beating as we’re only 25 feet from the high water level.”

With respect to the coastal climate and fragile ecosystems, the modestly sized Gap Cove House was designed in close collaboration with the local Conservation Commission to exceed recently updated FEMA regulations. Ruhl describes, “We lifted the entire existing house above the flood plain level as determined by FEMA. In doing so, we’re also more exposed to the wind coming off the ocean. On this (northeastern) side of the house, we specified laminated glazing for added protection. It’s exciting to watch the windows work! Thankfully, there’s no water or air coming through, and you are reassured that they’re doing their jobs.”

On Gap Cove House’s ocean side, Osgood counts at least eight very large and very heavy units. “It’s great to see Will has the best of both worlds, with the large view and winning the battle against the vicious nor’easter storms.”

Ensuring the specified performance, Osgood also praises the high-quality installation by Skinner & Watkins, Inc. “This was their first project with VistaLuxe and they did a very good job. They made it look great and work right.”

Skinner & Watkins’ Kevin Watkins, follows with another compliment: “Bill Osgood was very helpful in guiding us through the installation process. After the windows were fully installed, you could not even tell that the weather was bad outside, while we were finishing construction of the home.”

Ruhl echoes his appreciation for the proper installation. He says, “I hadn’t realized the extent of the windows’ adjustability. They were fine-tuned to make sure everything was right.”

“It was all worth it to see the low profiles of the trim and the amount of clear, open glass to view the spectacular view of the cove,” continues Watkins. “The quality of the windows is great.”

Ruhl adds, “The whole Kolbe team was very helpful. Their entire support team was great.”

**Durable & Neat**

In addition to resisting the outside elements and supporting the home’s aesthetic and energy goals, Kolbe’s VistaLuxe windows with Neat® glass also minimize maintenance for Ruhl and his family.

“The Neat glass is fantastic,” reiterates Ruhl. “The windows start to get a little cloudy from the salt spray; it rains and the windows are clear. It does a beautiful job and wasn’t even an expensive add-on.” For optimal performance, routine cleaning and maintenance is necessary, even with Neat glass and especially in coastal zones.

Surrounding the windows, the home’s dark copper and red cedar exterior materials also were selected for their ruggedness and minimal maintenance. These will patina over time to mottled greens and greys that will match the lichen-covered rocks to which the house is anchored.

On the interior, the material palette is light and bright with bleached white oak flooring, white painted poplar walls, engineered wood cabinetry, white custom-perforated steel stair and railings, and translucent polycarbonate panels that bring borrowed afternoon light into the main living space.

Completed in 2016, Ruhl and his family not only have appreciated the comfort of their home, but also been happy to demonstrate their favorite features to their guests. He says, “It’s become a fun sales tool. It’s been especially helpful to show off the windows in our home to clients.”

Visiting Gap Cove Home, Ruhl’s clients have experienced the exceptional performance and styling of the VistaLuxe Collection. After seeing the products firsthand, many have selected VistaLuxe windows for their new homes, too.

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**Gap Cove House; Rockport, Massachusetts;** [**http://ruhlwalker.com/project/gap-cove/**](http://ruhlwalker.com/project/gap-cove/)

* Owner: William Ruhl and family
* Architect: Ruhl Walker Architects; Boston; [www.ruhlwalker.com](http://www.ruhlwalker.com)
* Builder and window installer: Skinner & Watkins, Inc.; Danvers, Massachusetts
* Window manufacturer: Kolbe Windows & Doors; Wausau, Wisconsin; [www.kolbewindows.com](http://www.kolbewindows.com)
* Distributor: Cleary Millwork Co.; Somerset, Massachusetts; [www.clearymillwork.com](http://www.clearymillwork.com)
* Photographer: Chris Becker Photo

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*What began in 1946 as a two-brother team has grown into an internationally respected manufacturing company. Kolbe Windows & Doors is one of the nation’s leading manufacturers of windows and doors for residential and commercial markets. After 70 years, Kolbe products are best known for superior quality, custom craftsmanship, attention to detail, as well as innovative and unique designs.*