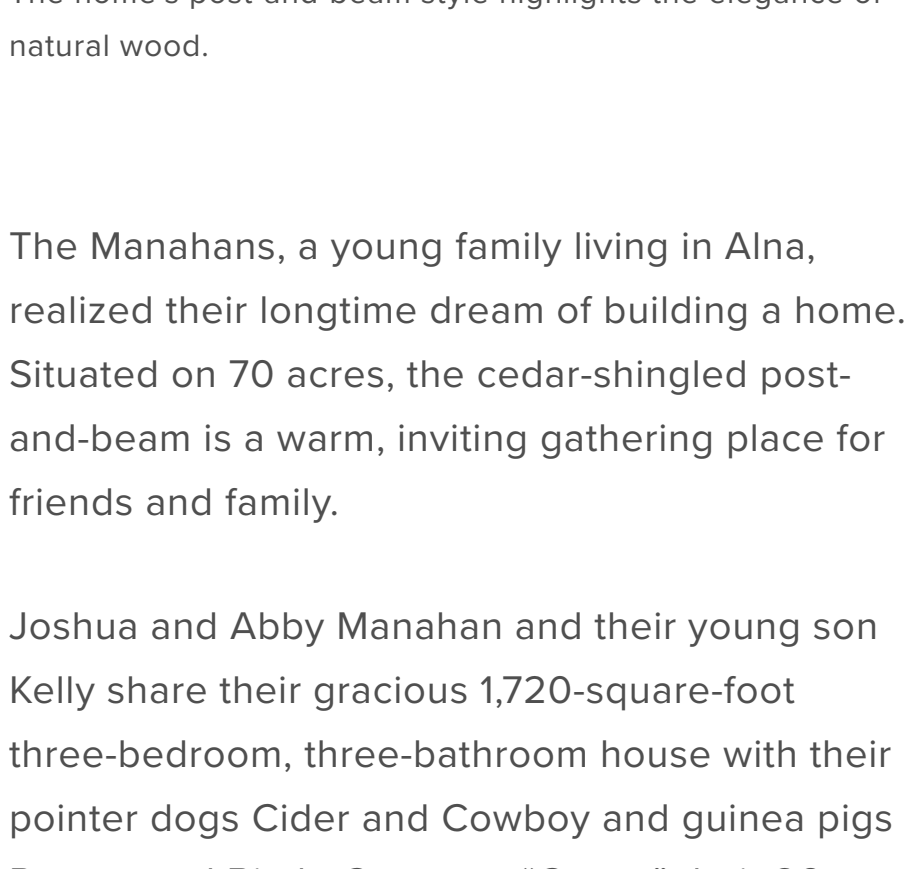


HUNT AND GATHER

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Words by Allison Paige | Photos by Myriam Babin

The Manahans, a young family living in Alna, realized their longtime dream of building a home. Situated on 70 acres, the cedar-shingled post-and-beam is a warm, inviting gathering place for friends and family.



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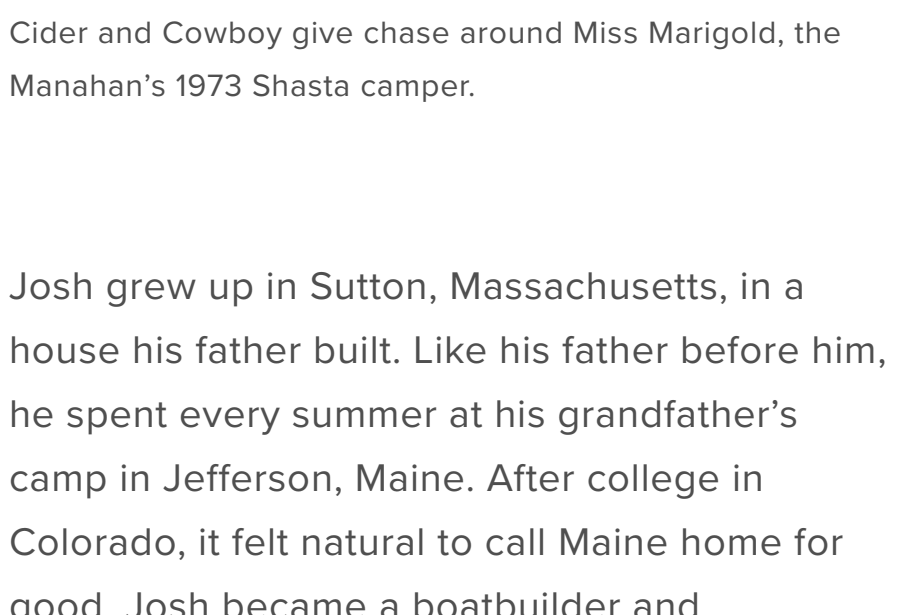
Situated on 70 acres, the cedar-shingled post-and-beam is a warm, inviting gathering place for friends and family.

Joshua and Abby Manahan and their young son Kelly share their gracious 1,720-square-foot

three-bedroom, three-bathroom house with their pointer dogs Cider and Cowboy and guinea pigs Peanut and Birch.

Grace, or “Gussy,” their 26-year-old retired harness racehorse (whom Josh calls their beloved “pet and lawn ornament”), grazes placidly in the pasture nearby.

It’s a full and happy home.



Three generations of Manahan men try their hand at Cornhole on boards hand made by Josh.



Cider and Cowboy give chase around Miss Marigold, the Manahan’s 1973 Shasta camper.

Josh grew up in Sutton, Massachusetts, in a house his father built. Like his father before him, he spent every summer at his grandfather’s camp in Jefferson, Maine.

After college in Colorado, it felt natural to call Maine home for good. Josh became a boatbuilder and cabinetmaker, honing the skills he would later use to build his home and businesses.

Abby was raised off the grid in Atkinson, Maine an upbringing that more than prepared her for rural living. She is a technology education specialist and is planning a “side hustle” of turning her 1973 Shasta camper “Miss Marigold” into a pop-up vintage clothing shop.

She and Josh met at a yoga class (the instructor acted as matchmaker), which reveals a lot about the couple, who radiate contented calm and seem just the sort to possess the confidence and gumption to take on such a daunting project.

In 2004, after buying the abundant property of forest, pastureland, and marsh, they broke ground for their home and the whole family pitched in. Josh’s father helped with the design.

Local tradesmen were hired to pour the foundation, erect the timber frame, and install the roof, drywall and electricity. Everything else was done by family: Abby’s father installed the plumbing and appliances; Abby and Josh ran the tubing for the radiant heat; Josh’s brother helped with flooring and siding; his sister helped roof the barn; Josh’s and Abby’s moms provided painting, landscaping, and lunch.



On the glassed-in porch, vintage chairs provide a cozy spot to enjoy the view.

The house grew with the family. In 2010, when Abby was expecting, an addition was built with room to welcome Kelly. “My home is a pretty honest reflection of me and my family,” Josh says. “Built with integrity and love, needing care and attention, it’s a source of comfort, protection, and warmth.”

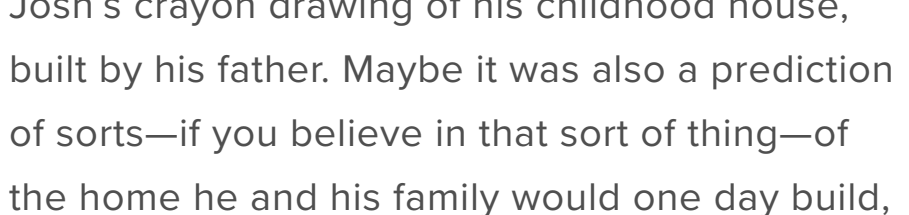
The home’s post-and-beam style highlights the elegance of natural wood, from the beams and braces to the exposed rafters of the vaulted ceiling. The kitchen is a cheery chartreuse. The living room features a wood stove and opens into a bright playroom where Kelly has his art table. Sliding glass doors overlook gardens where sunflowers, bachelor’s buttons, kale, and Brussels sprouts grow tall. Beside the home is the garage and barn where Gussy sleeps and a small coop where their three hens stay when not roaming the property.

The family lives in easy harmony with the seasons off the bounty of their land, foraging for berries and mushrooms, growing vegetables in summer, picking apples for cider in the fall. Josh takes the dogs to hunt for grouse and woodcock in the nearby woods, and he and Kelly fly-fish for bass or brown trout in Damariscotta Lake. Come winter, when the sugar maples are tapped, friends and family grab buckets and join in the syrup making. At mealtimes, they collect around a table, handmade by Josh with salvaged barnwood from Sutton.

Off the dining room, a glassed-in porch provides a view of a pastoral vista that stretches as far as the eye can see. Josh explains, “What started out as a sturdy house with a beautiful view has become an integral part of the fabric and rhythm of our lives.”

Hung lovingly on the playroom wall is young Josh’s crayon drawing of his childhood house, built by his father. Maybe it was also a prediction of sorts—if you believe in that sort of thing—of the home he and his family would one day build, this haven in which the picture now hangs. Like a child’s rendering, it is a place of comfort, simplicity, and warmth. A life and home made by hand, along the grain, with room for all to gather.

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