Bosque-a-Lago: Architect's Vision Brief

Patrick Meniboon · November 2026

The Vision In One Sentence

The Peninsula is a private family sanctuary, quiet to the world and wide open to the people inside it.

The estate's name is Bosque-a-Lago: forest to lake. The Peninsula is the vision behind it. Bosque-a-Lago is the place that vision becomes, a home you reach through the trees and that ends at the water.

One road leads in. The house reveals itself slowly, then opens into a courtyard where family reunions, quiet mornings, and long summer nights all happen in the same place. Every person who stays here gets their own space and still feels part of the whole. It is designed for living, hosting, wellness, and legacy, in that order.

Design principle: revelation over display. Home first, event second.



Figure 1: From above: the arrival, the shape of the house, and the Ring Lane.

The Site: One Way In, One Way Out

To me, a peninsula means a single approach. Nature guards the other sides. That can be a lake point with water on three sides, a wooded ridge, or a hilltop where the land falls away and the trees close in around it.

What I Want	Why It Matters
One private drive in and out	Privacy and a true sense of arrival
Elevation, ideally a hilltop	Views, light, and a walkout lower level
Mature trees on three sides	Seclusion without walls
Water if possible, woods if not	Water is a bonus; the single approach is the requirement

What I Want	Why It Matters
Views captured from the courtyard and tower	The best view belongs to the people gathered, not the street

The Shape: A Curved Horseshoe Open To The Lake

The front of the house is one long, gentle curve, and it wraps around a circular stone motor court with a large oak at its center. The driveway loops fully around the oak and passes directly under a timber porte cochère at the front door, so guests step out of the car right at the entrance and the car continues around the circle and back out. The house wraps around you like open arms before anyone opens a door.

From above, the house is a curved horseshoe that opens toward the lake. The great room sits at the center of the curve, directly behind the porte cochère, so the front door opens straight into it. The two wings curve back on either side of the courtyard toward the water: one is my private wing, the other is the family wing. The far end of the courtyard stays open, so the view runs from the front door all the way to the lake.

The garage and service areas stay hidden. What a guest sees on arrival is architecture, light, and a hint of what is beyond. The full reveal comes when the front door opens and the courtyard appears.

Architectural character: modern timber courtyard estate. Natural stone, timber, steel, and glass. Deep roof overhangs. Warm, timeless, quietly luxurious.

The Ring Lane

A quiet stone paver lane, lit by low lanterns, circles the whole property. It leaves the motor court on both sides, curves through the trees past each guest house, and continues around the grounds. It reads as a garden path, not a road.

At each guest house the lane widens into a small private parking court, so guests drive straight to their own door without passing through the main house or blocking the front entry. A branch of the lane slopes down the hillside to an underground garage beneath one wing, with an elevator and stair up into the house. The garage entrance should sit around the side, out of view from the arrival court, so no garage door is ever visible.

Beyond the car sections, the lane becomes a walking loop with footpaths to the tennis court, the barn, the Water Terrace, and the observation tower. Where cars and walkers share it, the lane is designed for slow speeds: gentle curves, a change in paver pattern, and lantern bollards.

The Owner’s Wing: A Home Within A Home

One full wing is mine. It should feel like a personal home inside the larger home, so I can host a full house and still have a quiet place to return to. It connects to the great room but closes off completely when I want it to.

Space	Intent
Primary suite	Bedroom with direct views and its own door to a private terrace
Primary bath	A spa experience every day
Dressing room and closet	Generous and organized
Private sitting room	Morning coffee, reading, thinking
Private garden or terrace	Outdoor space no guest wanders into



Figure 2: From the lake: one straight line from the dock to the great room. Behind the waterfall is the ballroom.

The Family Wing And The Guest Houses

The second wing is for the people I love. It holds guest rooms for family and friends, each with its own bathroom, connected to the great room and the courtyard.

Just beyond the end of each wing sits a small guest house, one for each of my two kids, so there is always a place for each of them to come home to. My mother can live in one when she visits, so that one should be fully accessible and single level. Each guest house has its own parking court on the Ring Lane and its own lit path into the courtyard. Guests can join everything or come and go on their own without walking through the main house.

Guest House Space	Intent
Bedroom suite	A full private retreat with its own bathroom
Small living area with a fireplace	A place to read, rest, or gather as a small family
Kitchenette	Coffee, breakfast, and late-night snacks without going to the main house
Porch	Facing the courtyard or the lake
Parking court	One or two cars at the door, off the Ring Lane

The Great Room And Courtyard

This is the soul of the house. The great room sits at the center of the curve, with the front door on one side and the courtyard on the other. It rises to a vaulted ceiling of curved timber trusses, at least 10 feet at its edges, and has a wood-burning stone fireplace. The courtyard side is floor-to-ceiling glass that folds or slides fully open, so the wall disappears and you practically live in the courtyard. Retractable screens let the room stay open on summer evenings without bugs.

It holds living, dining, and the kitchen as one open space, with a scullery hidden behind it so the mess never shows. It is built for entertaining and outdoor living, at a scale that can hold a full family reunion.

The Heart Of The Courtyard Is An Open Patio

The center of the courtyard is a large, open, multipurpose patio, not a pool. A pool mostly does one thing. An open patio does everything: a dance floor for a reunion, long tables for a family dinner, a stage for a talk, chairs for a movie night, or open space for kids to run. The great room's glass wall folds open onto it, so the floor inside and the patio outside read as one continuous room.

The surface should be level, durable, and beautiful enough to dance on, with power, lighting, and sound built in so any event can set up without extension cords.

Courtyard Element	Intent
Multipurpose patio	The center of the courtyard: dance floor, dining, gatherings, events
Infinity pool and spa	At the far, open end of the courtyard facing the lake, its edge spilling as a waterfall down to the Water Terrace
Outdoor pavilion	Covered living with an outdoor kitchen and a wood-burning fireplace
Lounge and fire areas	Places to sit in small groups around the edges
Lighting, power, and audio	Built in, so evenings feel like an event without planning one

The Water Terrace

The whole social life of the house runs in one straight line from the front door to the lake: porte cochère, great room, courtyard patio, pool, fire terrace, dock. Nobody has to leave the gathering to reach the fire or the boat.

Beyond the patio, the infinity pool and spa sit at the back of the courtyard. The pool's edge spills as a wide waterfall down a stone wall to a lower terrace at the water. Wide stone steps on both sides of the pool lead down to it.

The lower terrace holds a fire pit ringed with Adirondack chairs and curved stone benches. Behind the waterfall is the ballroom's glass wall, so people inside can watch the fire through a curtain of falling water. A lit wooden dock reaches straight out from the terrace into the lake, with a boathouse nearby, so boat guests step off and walk up into the party.

Notes for the architect: the dock needs enough water depth beside the terrace, so check it on any site. Add a discreet gate at the dock that can be locked for privacy.

Lower Level: The Ballroom At The Heart

Upstairs, the great room is the hub of the house. Downstairs, the ballroom is. Every space on the lower level opens off it, so the lower level never feels like a basement. Every door leads back to the room full of light and life.

The Ballroom

A wide, tall, column-free ballroom sits directly beneath the courtyard. It is built for anything: a family reunion dinner, a dance, a talk, a wedding, a movie night, a launch party. A grand wood-burning fireplace in natural stone anchors one end, so the room feels warm and personal even with only a few people in it.

The back wall is floor-to-ceiling glass set directly behind the pool's waterfall. On quiet nights, people sit inside and watch the fire terrace through a curtain of falling water. When the glass folds open, the ballroom spills onto the Water Terrace, and the two staircases beside the pool climb back up to the courtyard. That creates one continuous loop: great room, courtyard, steps, fire terrace, ballroom, and back up inside.

Built in: power, lighting scenes, and sound for live music or a speaker, plus a catering kitchen hidden nearby so events can be served without crossing the room.

The Service Bar And Catering Kitchen

The only bar attached to the ballroom is a service bar, built into one side and connected to a catering kitchen behind it. When there is an event, drinks and food flow out from here without anyone crossing the room. The ballroom stays the elegant room for dinners, dancing, and talks. The loud, late nights happen in the barn, away from anyone sleeping.

Everything Else Opens Off The Ballroom

Space	Intent
Guest rooms or a bunk room	Overflow for big family weekends
Wellness retreat	Gym, sauna, cold plunge, massage and recovery
Wine room	Small, warm, and quiet
The Studio	Library, office, recording studio, and presentation space, placed wherever sound control and a view work best
Hall to the underground garage	Direct access from the cars to the house
Storage and mechanical	Fully hidden

The Elevator

A generous elevator connects the underground garage, the lower level, and the main level. It is sized to move people and things: groceries, luggage, event furniture, catering, and anyone who should not take the stairs. It also makes the whole house work for my mother and for aging in place over the years.

Fires Throughout The House

Wood-burning fireplaces are part of the soul of Bosque-a-Lago. There is one in the great room, one in the courtyard pavilion, one in the ballroom, and the fire pit on the Water Terrace. Wherever people gather, there is a fire.

Note for the architect: the ballroom needs real height and a wide-open floor with no columns, and it sits under the courtyard and possibly the pool. Carrying that weight over an open span takes steel or heavy timber beams. It is one of the most expensive structural choices in the house, so plan it from day one.

Outdoor Grounds

Feature	Intent
The Ring Lane	A lantern-lit loop around the whole property, linking everything below
Water Terrace fire pit	Stories, music, and tradition at the water’s edge
Dock and boathouse	Straight out from the Water Terrace, with storage for the boat and water toys
Tennis court and active lawn	Play and movement
Observation tower	On the tip of the point: coffee in the morning, stars at night, clarity always
Walking paths	Footpaths off the Ring Lane to every corner of the land

The Barn: A Hidden Honky-Tonk

At the back of the property, a short lantern-lit walk down the Ring Lane, sits what looks like an ordinary timber barn. Then you open the door. Inside is a self-contained honky-tonk: a long rough-wood bar with a stone counter, a stage for a live band, a dance floor, a pool table, and deep leather seating. It is the place where the night runs late, the music plays loud, and you lose track of time.

The barn sits far enough from the main house and the guest houses that nobody trying to sleep can hear it. It needs its own restrooms, a small kitchen or bar prep space, heating and cooling, and real sound control. It is planned for a later phase, so the Ring Lane and the utilities should be ready for it from the start.

How Bosque-a-Lago Feels

The feeling comes first. Every room, material, and light switch in this brief exists to create it. If a design choice looks impressive but works against these feelings, the feeling wins.

Level	Bosque-a-Lago Feels	How The Design Creates It
Must feel	Welcomed home, the moment you arrive	The drive through the trees, the oak in the motor court, the porte cochère, and warm light glowing through the front glass
Must feel	Safe and at peace	One way in, trees on every side, and no neighbors in view
Must feel	Together, and free to be alone	Big shared spaces at the center, private wings and guest houses at the edges, and a quiet spot always a few steps away
Must feel	Open and able to breathe	Glass that folds away, long views to the water, and the courtyard open to the sky
Should feel	Warm, even in winter	Timber, stone, wood-burning fires, soft fabrics, and low golden light at night
Should feel	Alive	Music in the courtyard, laughter from the barn, water moving in the pool and waterfall
Should feel	Timeless	Natural materials that age well and look better in thirty years than on the first day
Should feel	Meaningful	The family legacy wall, the fires, and traditions like the Barefoot Blue Jeans Weekend
Could feel	Like a celebration	Lighting scenes and sound that turn any evening into an event at the touch of a button
Could feel	Like a private resort	The pool, the spa, the Water Terrace, and the wellness retreat
Could feel	Like a journey of discovery	Reveals around every corner, from the front door to the ballroom behind the waterfall to the tower on the point

Level	Bosque-a-Lago Feels	How The Design Creates It
Could feel	Playful	Places for kids to roam, the treehouse, the dock, the lawn, and the pool table
Must not feel	Like a museum or a showroom	Durable, livable finishes. Nobody should be afraid to sit down, put a glass on the table, or let the kids run
Must not feel	Like a hotel or an event venue	Family touches everywhere, and the business side of any event kept out of sight
Must not feel	Cold, intimidating, or showy	Human scale at every door, soft edges, and warmth over grandeur
Must not feel	Empty or lonely with just a few people home	Rooms that work for two people as well as for two hundred: fireplaces, smaller nooks inside the big rooms, and dimmable light
Must not feel	Like work to keep up	A caretaker, good systems, and materials that are easy to maintain

The Senses

Sense	What Bosque-a-Lago Is Like
Sound	Crackling fires, falling water, wind in the pines, music when it is a party, and true quiet when it is not
Smell	Woodsmoke, pine, fresh air off the lake, and something good on the grill
Touch	Warm wood underfoot, cool stone, soft wool and linen, and smooth timber rails worn by many hands
Light	Golden and low at night, bright and natural by day, and the whole house glowing from the water at dusk
Temperature	Cozy by the fire in winter, open and breezy in summer, with every room comfortable all year

The test for every decision: when someone walks in the front door for the first time, do they slow down, breathe out, and feel like they have come home?

Be, Do, Have: What Bosque-a-Lago Is, Does, And Holds

Have tells the architect what to build. Be and Do tell them why. Every design decision should serve who this place is and what it does.

What Bosque-a-Lago Will Be

Level	Bosque-a-Lago Is
Must be	A sanctuary first: private, safe, and restful. A family home first and an event place second. Welcoming to every generation and every ability. Able to run without me.
Should be	The gathering place for both sides of the family, across generations. A place of creation, where ideas are written, recorded, and shared. A living legacy that tells the family's story. Rooted in nature, from the forest to the lake.
Could be	A retreat for small groups of leaders, masterminds, and workshops. A recording location for the podcast. A venue for family weddings and milestone celebrations. A home base for the Value Reimagineering movement.
Will not be	A trophy or a monument to wealth. A hotel that crowds out family life. A fortress. A burden that drains time, money, or peace.

What Bosque-a-Lago Will Do

Level	Bosque-a-Lago Does
Must do	Protect privacy through a single approach. Bring people together while giving each person a space of their own. Reveal itself, from the forest arrival to the lake. Restore people through rest, fire, water, and wellness. Run through capable people and good systems.
Should do	Host reunions, holidays, and celebrations. Let me create and speak to the world without leaving the people I love. Feed people from the kitchen, the garden, and the grill. Connect everyone to the land and water every day through the Ring Lane, the dock, and the tower.
Could do	Host an annual signature gathering, a Barefoot Blue Jeans Weekend. Host leadership retreats and podcast guests. Host fundraisers for education, healthcare, and opportunity.
Will not do	Demand my constant presence. Isolate people from each other. Put business ahead of family. Hide the view. Cost more to run than planned.

What Bosque-a-Lago Will Have

Must Have

Feature	Why It Matters
A gated entry at the single road in	The Peninsula's privacy depends on that one approach: a beautiful gate, cameras, and a call box
Backup generator and a solid water and septic plan	A house built for gatherings cannot go dark in the middle of a reunion

Feature	Why It Matters
Fire safety built in	Four wood-burning fires in a forest call for defensible space, sprinklers, and fire-resistant roofing
Real accessibility	Wide doors, step-free paths, the elevator, and one accessible guest house, so everyone can enjoy it for decades
A mudroom and service entry	Groceries, deliveries, and muddy boots come in the back, so the front door stays beautiful
Fast, reliable internet with backup	The studio broadcasts to the world from here
Retractable screens	Open glass walls only work if the bugs stay out

Should Have

Feature	Why It Matters
A caretaker’s cottage or apartment	Someone lives on site to run the estate, so I can be a guest in my own home
A chef’s kitchen with a working scullery	Big gatherings get cooked and cleaned up out of sight
A boathouse	Storage for the boat, kayaks, paddleboards, and life jackets at the dock
A kitchen garden and small orchard	Food from our own land and a reason to walk the Ring Lane every morning
A firewood barn	A dry, hidden home for the wood that feeds four fireplaces and a fire pit
A family legacy wall	Family photos, the journey from Liberia, and the generations ahead
Overflow event parking	Hidden among the trees for reunions and big celebrations

Could Have

Feature	Why It Matters
An outdoor amphitheater or lawn stage	Talks, workshops, and live music under the stars
A treehouse for the grandkids	The spot children remember for the rest of their lives
An open-fire grill and smokehouse	Long Saturday cookouts in the pavilion
A greenhouse	Gardening through winter and flowers for the tables
A quiet reflection garden	A place to be alone, read, and think
A putting green or pickleball court	More play near the tennis court
Solar panels and EV charging	Lower operating costs and a cleaner estate

Will Not Have

Will Not Have	Why
Visible garage doors	Operations stay invisible
Rooms nobody uses	Every space earns its place by being lived in
A fortress look	Private, not cold. The walls are made of trees
Show over substance	It is a place where life feels magnificent, not a trophy

Program And Approximate Sizes

These sizes are a starting point for the architect to test, not fixed requirements.

Area	Spaces	Approximate Size
Main level	Great room with living and dining, chef’s kitchen and scullery, owner’s wing, family wing guest rooms, mudroom, laundry, entry gallery	About 6,000 sq ft
Lower level	Ballroom with service bar, catering kitchen, wellness retreat, guest or bunk rooms, wine room, studio, storage and mechanical	About 4,500 sq ft
Two guest houses	One bedroom suite, living area, kitchenette, and porch each	About 750 sq ft each
Underground garage	Four to six cars, with the elevator and a stair into the house	About 2,000 to 2,500 sq ft
Caretaker’s cottage	Small home for the estate’s steward	About 800 sq ft
Outdoor structures	Courtyard pavilion, boathouse, observation tower, firewood barn	Sized by the architect
Total finished living space	Main level, lower level, and guest houses	About 12,000 sq ft

Budget And Phasing

The planning range for the full estate, including land, is about $10 million to $20 million, with $13 million to $15 million as the working target. These are early planning numbers based on 2026 luxury custom building costs, not a quote. The biggest variables are the land, the ballroom structure under the courtyard and pool, and the amount of folding glass.

Phase	What Gets Built
Phase one	Main house, lower level and ballroom, underground garage, courtyard, pool, Water Terrace, dock, motor court, and the core of the Ring Lane
Phase two	The two guest houses, the caretaker’s cottage, and the boathouse
Phase three	The barn, the observation tower, the tennis court, and the could-have features such as the amphitheater, treehouse, and greenhouse

Phase one should include the utilities, paths, and foundations that later phases need, so nothing has to be torn up to add them.

Nonnegotiables

1. One way in and one way out, with a gated entry.
2. A motor court around the oak, a porte cochère at the front door, and no visible garage doors.

3. One straight line from the front door to the lake: great room, courtyard patio, pool, Water Terrace, dock.
4. A great room whose glass wall folds fully open to the courtyard.
5. An open patio at the center of the courtyard, not a pool.
6. A private owner’s wing that works as a home within a home.
7. Two guest houses, each with its own parking and its own path into the courtyard.
8. A lower level built around a ballroom, with its glass wall behind the waterfall.
9. Wood-burning fires wherever people gather.
10. An elevator and real accessibility on every level.
11. A studio built for recording and creating.
12. A Ring Lane that circles the whole property.

Questions For The Architect

1. How much land does this plan need, and what should I look for when I tour sites: slope, water depth at the shore, and a true single approach?
2. How do we carry the courtyard and the pool over a column-free ballroom, and how do we keep it watertight for decades?
3. Which folding glass systems and retractable screens hold up to our climate?
4. How should the house sit on the slope to get the walkout lower level, the waterfall, and the best view?
5. Where should the underground garage entrance go so it stays out of sight from the arrival?
6. What will the estate cost to run each year, and how large a caretaker role does it need?
7. How should we phase the build so later phases never require tearing anything up?
8. Does the budget range in this brief match your experience, and where would you spend or save?