



# Designing the great indoors for L.L. Bean

## Arrowstreet

IT'S A SERIOUS TASK FOR A DESIGNER TO EMBELLISH a legend. Yet that was exactly what Arrowstreet was called upon to do when L.L. Bean asked it to build a new, larger hunting and fishing store next to its flagship in Freeport, Maine.

The result is a store that both celebrates the company's outdoor lifestyle focus and helps to preserve the environment; as to the latter goal, L.L. Bean is pursuing Silver Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification.

"L.L. Bean is making a very large commitment to taking lifestyle retail to a new level," said John W. Cole, a principal of Somerville, Mass.-based Arrowstreet. "That means the store embodies Bean's image of life in the outdoors, and that it creates the opportunity to experience that lifestyle."

The 33,000-square-foot, two-level store, which opened in November, is located adjacent to the L.L. Bean flagship, with a passageway connecting the two.

"We wanted a flagship hunting-fishing store that would fit our brand, be built with a strict budget, in a very compressed timeline," said Sean Salter, director of visual presentation of L.L. Bean, describing the challenges that Arrowstreet and L.L. Bean faced. "And it had to connect to our existing flagship store."

The new hunting and fishing store has been designed in zones focused on different activities, where shoppers can, for instance, consult experts in fly-fishing in one area, and test bows and arrows in another.

Outside, the designer and retailer are designing a park for L.L. Bean's Outdoor Discovery School, which will give demonstrations in kayaking, canoeing, mountain biking and fishing.

"People are able to directly experience the lifestyle that L.L. Bean's clothing and merchandise support," Cole said. "Authenticity was a key word from L.L. Bean from day one."

The store is modeled after a traditional Maine hunting lodge, with wood dominating throughout. A large stairway and elevator lead to the mezzanine level, which boasts a fireplace and lounge to draw people up to the store's library and bookselling area. Interior details pay homage to the classic Northwoods outdoor lifestyle. For instance, door pulls are shaped like fishing rods, light fixtures take the form of deer antlers and wildlife mounts are scattered around the store.

Sustainability and sensitivity to the environment were major factors in the design process, with recycling a key component.

"The front porch and the high vaulted ceiling over

the mezzanine are made of wood salvaged from another L.L. Bean building," said Sean Selby, an Arrowstreet associate.

Local stone used on the porch and in the store so perfectly captured the L.L. Bean look that the supplier renamed it "L.L. Bean Blend." The large windows open for natural ventilation, unusual for retail stores.

Other sustainable techniques include the use of low-flush toilets, and the selection of plants that are native to Maine. The storm drain system uses a bioretention system to filter roof and parking lot runoff.

The store has been instantly popular.

"It is a very impressive new structure, with many unique details, including its 'green' features," Salter said. "But it also fits in with the rest of our campus like it has always been there." ■

L.L. BEAN IS SEEKING LEED CERTIFICATION FOR ITS NEW HUNTING AND FISHING STORE IN FREEPORT, MAINE.

