



They Traded an Ocean for a Lake and They Love It

by Matt Beardmore
photos by Maija Martin Photography

Whether they are traveling with their young daughters, enjoying time with their neighbors on the “best and friendliest block on earth,” or hosting friends in their warm and welcoming Lake View home, Carine and Habib Moudachirou are passionate about learning from other’s experiences, sharing their own, and being part of a multi-cultural community.

Carine, originally from Haiti, and Habib, who grew up in Benin and France, met in 2013 in New York City where Carine was transitioning from an early modeling career to a marketing and communication professional path and Habib was working on Wall St. Three years after that first encounter at a charity gala organized by a mutual friend, Carine and Habib were married. While living in Manhattan, they welcomed daughters Zoë (now 7) in 2016 and Lara (now 4) in late 2019.

The family’s time on the East Coast ended in 2020 when Habib co-founded a Chicago-based investment firm and “it became clear that it was far more practical to be there as a family instead of him commuting every week to New York City,” Carine said.

Living under heavy COVID restrictions, the family packed up and essentially traded the inside of its New York City apartment for the

inside of a Lincoln Park apartment, Habib said. At the end of 2021, the family moved into its current home in Lake View, just steps from the lively Southport Corridor and Roscoe Village.

“Lakeview is even beyond all the great things we were told about it and the glimpse we had by just visiting the neighborhood,” Habib said. “We have the best block on earth, and we know most of our neighbors; most kids are in the same age range. We also enjoy wandering and taking walks to some of our favorite neighborhood restaurants.”

What they find even more relaxing than enjoying all the wonderful restaurants in the area is entertaining in the comfort of their home, Habib said.

“Despite being transplants from New York and having our families scattered between Haiti, Europe, and Africa, we met wonderful people in the short time we have lived in Chicago,” he added. “We love meeting people, getting to know them, and sharing our mutual experiences.”

Said Carine: “We enjoy entertaining and spending time with our friends, and we believe the best quality time is spent when we

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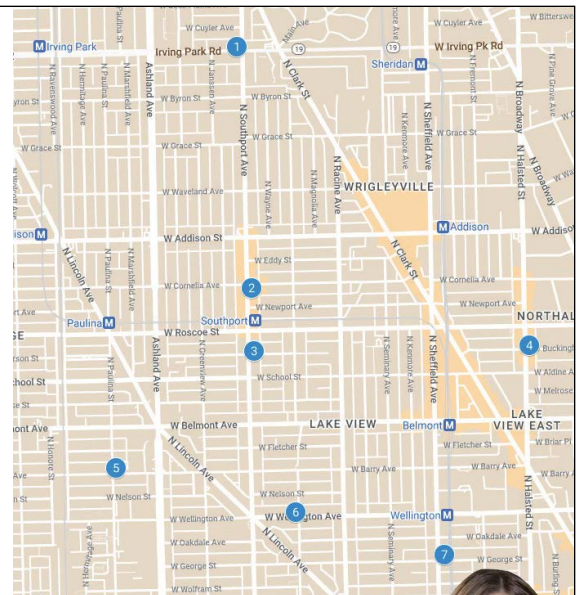


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Heather's Lakeview Faves

7 PATIOS TO ENJOY WITH YOUR POOCH

- 1. Port & Park**
American fare, classic cocktails & brunch in a vintage tavern setting with lounge & patio. 4000 N Southport
- 2. Crosby's Kitchen**
American comfort food, rotisserie meats & a popular, family-friendly brunch. 3455 N Southport
- 3. Coda Di Volpe**
Southern Italian fare including pizza, pasta, steak & seafood with a bar. 3335 N Southport
- 4. Wood**
Stylish spot with small & large New American plates, hand-crafted drinks and a walk-up frites window. 3335 N Halsted
- 5. Cody's Public House**
Dog-friendly bar with darts, pool & a jukebox, plus a backyard social scene. 1658 N Barry
- 6. Farm Bar Lakeview**
Farm-to-table American eats plus housemade ciders, craft beer, cocktails & tap wines in tavern digs. 1300 W Wellington
- 7. Barcocina Lakeview**
Modern takes on classic Mexican fare plus tequila, margaritas & sangria in rustic-industrial digs. 2901 N Sheffield



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[COVER STORY]



have them over for dinner. We love cooking, and we find that meals are a very warm and convivial way to travel the world and introduce our guests to world cultures."

Seeing the world up close and sharing time with friends and family members who live abroad is something the Moudachirou family is no stranger to. While they unfortunately do not get to visit Carine's home in Haiti due to the political instabilities there, they generally spend the summers in France and often visit family and friends there and in Benin where they recently spent the holidays.

"We enjoy traveling, especially discovering new places with the kids," Carine said. "Habib has always been an avid traveler and infected the family with that passion. The kids enjoy traveling – at their age we suspect it's more about getting on a plane than anything – and have been already in many countries across on the Americas, Europe, and Africa. The most memorable trip with the family was Colombia a few years ago."

The family plans on visiting South Korea soon – "this would be a dream come true for Carine who enjoys almost everything K-pop: food, movies, and the culture," Habib said – and Habib would also like for the family to visit Peru and Argentina, especially Patagonia, and see the Southern Lights.

Another way Carine and Habib have been able to introduce the world to their daughters is through language, speaking only French at home. Carine also speaks Haitian Creole, and Habib is fluent in Spanish, the West African languages, Yoruba, Fon, Gun, and Mina, and is taking Portuguese classes to improve his written and speaking level. Zoë and Lara both speak perfect French and

English, and starting this fall, Zoë will begin her fourth year at Lycée Francais de Chicago as a third grader, while Lara will be joining her grande soeur (big sister) at the Ravenswood school to begin Kindergarten.

"As we live in an anglophone environment, speaking French to the girls since they were born was best way to ensure they master both languages," Habib said. "We wanted to give the gift of a second language without them having to work for it. We hope this makes it even easier to learn more languages down the road and connect with people all over the planet. We also wanted them to have no language barrier with their French-speaking grandparents and family members who are abroad."

Along with keeping up with two very active little girls, Carine and Habib still find time to practice self-care and volunteer throughout the community. Carine enjoys Pilates and creative baking with Zoë and Lara, while Habib plays tennis and golf, and has been passionately practicing Capoeira, an Afro-Brazilian martial art, for more than a decade. Carine volunteers for the PTA at the Lycée Francais de Chicago, and Habib serves as a Board member for two Chicago organizations: the French-American Chamber of Commerce (FACC Chicago) and Urban Initiatives (UI), a 20-year-old nonprofit that creates and offers free sport and play-based after-school programs to the Chicago Public Schools.

Another passion they have is collecting art from all their travels. Art is a universal connector. Each piece displayed in their home not only helps the Moudachirou family share where they have been, but reveals who they are, what they value, and helps them forge deeper connections with all of those who visit.