

Worth **the** Wait

At long last, an architect builds his family's dream home

BY DARCY LEWIS | PHOTOS BY JON HUELSKAMP, LANDMARK PHOTOGRAPHY



THIS PAGE The welcoming front entry opens to a foyer that adjoins this elegant space. OPPOSITE PAGE Arch-topped windows in the great room make the most of the home's southern exposure. These dramatic windows will soon feature stained glass made by homeowner Kerry Styczynski.



It's never too late to disprove an old adage. That one about the shoemaker's children having no shoes? Bill Styczynski, president of Lifestyle Custom Homes by SWA, and his wife Kerry have demolished it. "After so many years in the field, I've always wanted to build a house for myself," he says. "We lived in our old house for 26 years, but the kids never wanted to move, so we kept putting it off."

Now, with the Styczynskis' three children nearly out of the nest, it seemed time to make their own dreams come true. "We put ourselves through the same process we put our clients through in terms of figuring out which features were most important to us," Bill says.

The couple knew they wanted to remain in Downers Grove. "That's where we raised our family and the established neighborhood feel is very important to us," Bill says. "More specifically, we needed a lot where our rear yard would face south for the sunlight."

Kerry had quite specific needs in mind for the kitchen design as well. "We wanted the kitchen to be related

to the great room, but not open to it, so we created a wall with two arched entrances to separate the rooms," she says. "And, compared to the overall size of the house, the kitchen is not oversized because I really wanted it to be highly functional, which was the motivation behind the huge walk-in pantry."

Both the kitchen and the great room bask in that much-desired southern exposure. The great room has an arch-topped band of windows—Kerry plans to create stained glass to fill in the top portion—and the breakfast area has a band of five bowed windows that make the space exceptionally bright.

Upstairs, the owners' suite feels wonderfully private, thanks to its location in a separate wing. A highlight of the suite's bath is the generous-sized window above the bathtub, which includes a piece of stained glass Kerry made years ago. A row of bow windows, matching the breakfast-room windows below, yields an abundance of light.

Both Bill and Kerry are avid hobbyists, and their 5,700-

THIS PAGE, RIGHT The stone and copper detailing on the home's exterior dovetail nicely with the Styczynskis' hobbyist sensibilities. BELOW Built-ins and an art nook add distinctive touches to the staircase landings. OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP The roomy kitchen connects to the great room via two arched entrances. BOTTOM The cozy, first-floor office and full bath can also function as a bedroom.



square-foot home reflects that. In Bill's case, he races Formula Vee cars, so the six-car garage with custom work areas (not to mention three flat-screen televisions) is a long-time dream. And Kerry is a quilter, so she now has a second-floor sewing room with very specific lighting and storage, plus a quilting room in the lower level to accommodate her long-arm quilting machine.

After waiting so long to build their dream home, the Styczynskis aren't in any hurry to leave it. "We want to be able to live here for the rest of our lives, and we planned accordingly," says Bill. If they become less mobile, the first-floor contains a full bath and an office that could easily be converted to a bedroom. Plus, they've already roughed in the framing for a future elevator.

Despite its luxuries, the home is a model of restraint in many ways. For example, the garage houses six cars, but, with only double doors, it doesn't overwhelm the rest of the façade. And the extensive landscaping includes many retained elements. "We specifically worked with the landscaper to save what we could," Bill says. Salvaged plantings include several full-grown spruces, some mature shrubs, and even some perennials. All in all, the couple has created a home that works beautifully for them. "We were careful to make decisions based on our needs and desires, not just what everyone else does," Bill says. **MH**

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