

# A house for the ages

*From an 8-car garage to a media room with padded walls, the Millennium Home targets affluent, aging baby boomers*



*The dining room of the Millennium Home features a curved conservatory of windows with an automatic watering system for the plants. Visitors will find many automated controls in this Lincolnshire home, designed for affluent baby boomers. Living is easier at home, and they can take care of lights, security, heat and water by phone when they're in their second home or traveling.*

You might not be able to afford a house of more than \$1 million plus land. But a brand new up-to-date Millennium Home can give you ideas that could be incorporated in your smaller, er, cozier home.

Radio operated electrical controls, an elevator, curved walls – especially a wall of windows that provides a conservatory in the dining room, a first-floor media room with padded walls and a kitchen with granite counters are among the memorable features.

The second-floor exercise room has a two-person sauna with sound system and a special shower that provides a body and foot massage. The tub in the master bathroom gives back rubs.

Don't miss the secret room in the library, and the eight-car garage is designed to hold the owner's collectible cars – featuring Thunderbirds.

The Millennium Home in Lincolnshire is going to have a few open houses as fund-raisers. It also will be featured in a national magazine called Custom Builder Home from New York City and was featured as part of a recent Chicago trade show.

“The home is not intended to be futuristic, but an accurate representation of the desires of the affluent aging baby boomer population as they approach the new millennium,” said Willowbrook architect Bill Styczynski.

The home started when the anonymous owner purchased the lot and began working with Styczynski and builder Scott Sevon of Palatine. Then the design-build team was approached by the magazine, and things got interesting.

For one thing, the home was completed 11 months, after the first design meetings. And it was built in six months. Many of the products were donated or sold inexpensively by manufacturers because of the publicity associated with the home.

“We are very happy with the level of construction,” said Matthew Power, editor in chief of Custom Builder. “That’s my main concern to make sure no corners were cut. Everything was done right, and I think that home will be around for 100 years or more. You can’t always say that because it’s easy to fake cosmetics.”

One of the first highlights visitors will notice is the two-story great room with its massive rough-hewn oak beams. These were hoisted in by crane after much of the house was built. And the surrounding conservancy area had to be avoided, too, of course.



*The two-story great room features a stone fireplace, two walls of windows and antique decorative stucco treatment on the walls.*

“I didn’t want them stained dark – that’s too foreboding,” said Jayne Dranias of River Forest the interior designer who stepped in after the project was started. “I like the natural look.”

If you touch the walls, they’re much smoother and cooler than the multitone stucco would lead you to suspect. It’s like marble, said artist Remigio S. Gudin of William H. Ward Inc. in Chicago.

The process is called Venetian plaster and Gudin needed the help of two assistants to complete it.

The curve-topped windows on either side of the fireplace are draped in a taupe-colored rayon and cotton. Dranias compares the effect to a woman with an off the shoulder dress.

The designer set the furniture at an angle to draw attention to the pre-cast concrete mantel in front of the stone fireplace and the art deco window wall.

And those lighting cans way up in the room's ceiling are brand new and can be changed for fluorescent, incandescent or halogen, Styczynski said.

Another noteworthy area is the entertainment room with padded walls.

Within this room is a closet with 11 shelves for the "guts" of the systems. These include the player for 200 compact discs, the digital video disc player for the television, a Web TV for the Internet and satellite receiver, and the video cassette recorder.

Because of a specialized sound system, different music can be listed to at the same time in various rooms.

"You want a dedicated room for volume control, but many people find a media room more convenient on the main level of the house rather than upstairs or on the lower level," Styczynski said.

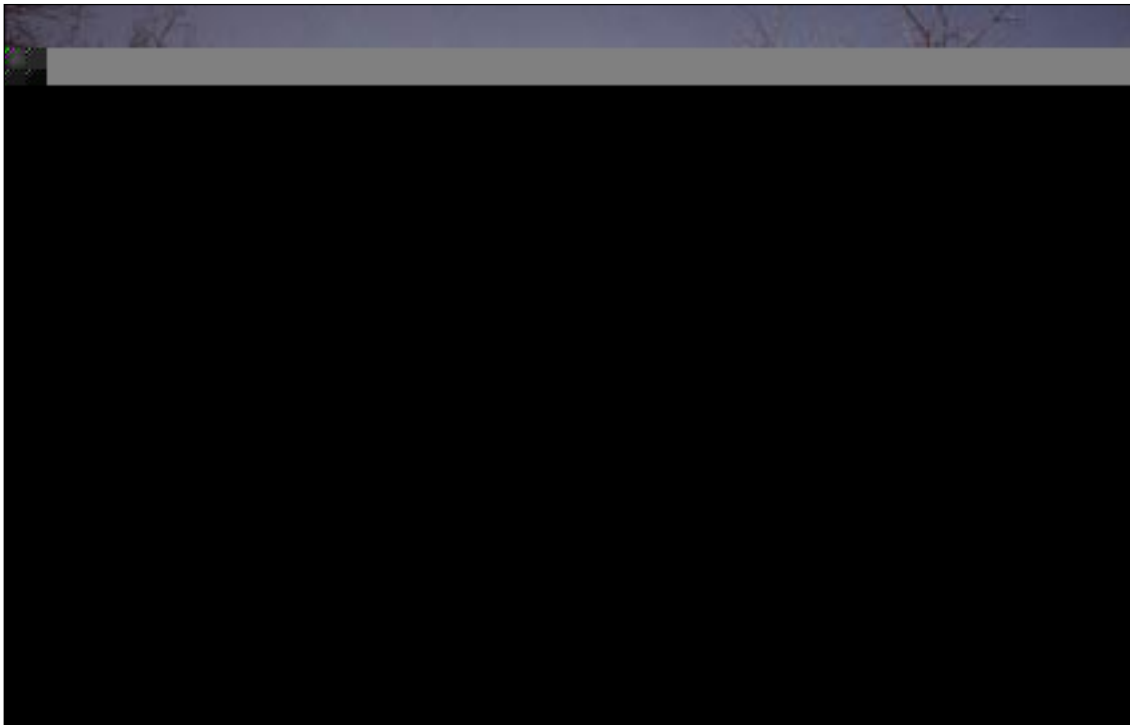
"Especially when you're entertaining," added Sevon.

And the intercom system will automatically mute music when a page is performed from any phone or when the phone rings. The phones also can be used to unlock the door to allow guests to enter and any touch-tone phone can be used to set the lights or arm the security system.

These systems were designed and installed by Audio Video Environments Inc. of Bartlett.

In the kitchen, the cabinets are distressed painted maple with trim and the stove hood stained cherry. The countertops are granite.

The new Thermador range has gas burners with gas and electric convection ovens.



*The front of the Millennium Home is designed to disguise the eight-car garage.*

The 16-inch ceramic tiles on the floor resemble stone and are used both in the foyer and kitchen, which Styczynski said creates a nice flow.

The flagstone patio is one of the exterior areas where snow melting is handled by a boiler in the lower level.

The corners in the house are all rounded, which Sevon says leads some people to think they are plastered rather than drywalled. A special plastic corner from Trim Tex Corp. prevents cracks in the drywall, he said.

Don't miss the Gothic arched window by the curved front stairway in the foyer. And the 3\_-foot wide front door is mahogany and leaded glass.

The home has 5,700 square feet on the first and second floors plus the lower level and an eight-car garage with a kitchenette. Styczynski took special pains to set the garage at an angle and tuck it partially under the house to make it look less obvious from the front.

This is all so energy efficient that a three-year heating and cooling warranty will be given to the owner after tests are done, Sevon said.

Styczynski and Sevon are especially enthusiastic about the RadioRa system from Lutron in Coopersburg, Pa., which has been on the market about a year.

This method for controlling lights would be a special boon for retrofitting older houses because it works with radio waves rather than wiring, the architect said. The lights throughout the house can be programmed. A touch of a button shifts the lighting to different levels for say entertaining, getting up in the morning and going to bed at night.

One advantage is reducing the number of light switches in a large, open-plan house like this, said Kim Haig, an architect in Styczynski's office. And, of course, the house has an alarm system with features that include calling for help if the power to it is cut.

As part of the energy efficiency, the heating system has computer-controlled dampers. Thus more or less heat will go into zoned ducts depending on what is requested for that area of the house. This is less expensive than additional furnaces, Sevon said.

Another innovation is the sensor under every sink and toilet that turns off the water supply to the house if a pipe breaks when no one is home. And they can be monitored from a phone.

Here's something you could put in your modest home – the only requirement is that you can talk a cat into living with you. The mud room in the Millennium Home is called the "cat room," equipped with a special built-in nook for the pampered feline's bed.

*This article was written by Deborah Donovan of the Daily Herald, and appeared in the paper on Saturday, April 25, 1998*