

GREYSOLON GEM

The Purple House on the Corner

STORY AND PHOTOS
Marti Buscaglia

Everyone's asking about the Boben house. The eggplant colored structure on a quiet Eastside corner is magnificent enough to draw attention. And yet, for Mark and Linda Boben it's a peaceful haven – a retirement home they have built with old age in mind. The guest bath is ADA compliant, the doors are all wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair, and the elevator is ready for when they can no longer manage stairs. Their bedroom is carefully planned on the main floor.. "This is our

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retirement home, " Linda tells us. "I always knew I wanted to retire to Duluth and Mark was kind enough to agree." They are from Duluth originally. They both grew up on the west side and graduated from Morgan Park High School. At the age of 50, they picked their retirement location. Duluth won out because of its low crime rate, lack of traffic, the fact that it's a regional medical center, the clean air (no pollution), outdoors lifestyle and, of course, because they have family here.

This house was built with meticulous attention to detail and a great deal of love. Each ceiling throughout the house is uniquely designed to complement the room. In fact, the wine bar ceiling was completely redesigned to accommodate the mahogany door – one of their fabulous finds while shopping in the Twin Cities. "We shopped around a lot," Mark confided. "We even shopped for contractors. It was important for us to find a contractor that would respect Linda's ideas as a student of interior design and art history and appreciate the fact that the house is truly her vision." Bruckelmyer Brothers fit the bill. They interviewed 4 contractors prior to selecting them. Working with Bruckelmyer Bros. draftsman, Mark Cichosz, they laid out the plans for the home, starting with the Foyer, an idea Linda brought from her many travels. As she put it, "the rest of the house took on a life of its own." "The contractors



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were wonderful to work with” both Bobens chimed. “We couldn’t have asked for a better partnership.”

The Boben home will be on this year’s Duluth Woman’s Club Tour of Homes on Wednesday, July 20 from 10 a.m. until 4 pm. Tickets are \$27 and include lunch at the Club. There will be a total of 5 homes and 3 gardens on the tour this year. Make your reservations early because they sometimes sell out and this year looks like it may be one of those years. For more details, go to www.duluthwomansclub.com/registration.

When touring the home, here are some details you won’t want to miss:

- The eclectic decorating is a compilation of the many places the Bobens have lived, including China twice, Norway, Oklahoma, Texas – they have moved 12 times in the last 35 years. Don’t miss the stone soldier in the guest bath, the ornately carved chair in the living room custom made for Linda in China, the cowhide chair in the great room, just to name a few.
- Mark’s basement office has internal windows that were salvaged from the gardener’s cottage originally on the property. Although officially “retired,” Mark still has his own consulting company in the oil industry.
- The detail work inside the wine cabinet is impressive. Enter and look above the door to see how carefully it was all constructed even in the interior where no one will ever really see it.
- Note the ceiling in the hall from the dining area to the master bedroom. It is beautifully beveled and literally folds into the walls.
- Take a look at the roofline with its various cupolas and unique metal trim.
- The elevator is beautifully finished on the inside, invisible from the outside and is wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair.





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- The gardens, designed by Miller Creek Landscaping, include a waterfall in the back gardens and a fountain in the front yard.
- Note the hood over the stove in the kitchen. It was hand crafted in Bruckelmyer's cabinet shop.
- The wood floors are Australian Cypress (from Lumber Liquidators). The doors throughout are knotty alder and are solid wood.

The unique color scheme on the outside was put to a secret ballot by extended family members and everyone, with the exception of Linda, voted for the "purple with cream."

Both Bobens simultaneously said to me, "Life is all about story value." That's why they don't mind being (literally) at the end of the road, where Interstate 35 ends. As Mark put it, "It's a great place to live."



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