



Coming Home to the Land

Kit and Dick Bahr

by Sheryl Jensen

Finally building on the eleven-acre piece of land in Hermantown that they have owned for over twenty-five years, Kit and Dick Bahr feel they have truly come home. They used to live a stone's throw down the road, and have, over the years, been upgrading and tending the property on which they have recently built their new home.

Coming home for the Bahrs has also meant enjoying their retirement together and building a home on their property that can last them for the rest of their lives. Kit is a retired Hermantown High School English teacher, and Dick is retired from the State Employment Service.

It was their goal, when they turned sixty, to build a new, smaller home that would accommodate one level living in a space that was sized and planned for them to use all of the rooms. "We use the whole house," says Kit. They also wanted it to be still spacious enough, however, for guests to enjoy and for visits from their daughter and her family.

Ed Bruckelmyer, of Bruckelmyer Brothers Construction LLC, the Bahrs'



Kit and Dick Bahr love inviting guests over to their new Hermantown home built by Bruckelmyer Brothers Construction, LLC. The home is nestled in the woods on an eleven-acre piece of property that the Bahrs have owned for twenty-five years.



Above: The dramatic contrasts of dark and light in the black Cambria countertops and cream custom cabinetry are lit by unique pull-down fixtures from the Home Lighting Gallery. The scenic wooded outdoors become part of the interior through the many large windows throughout the home. Left: A favorite spot in the house for both Dick and Kit is the sun-lit window seat in the dining room. The couple enjoyed picking out the fabric in shades of black, tan, and cream for the cushions and pillows that Kit made herself.



general contractor, notes that this style of home is becoming increasingly more popular. "We've seen lots of interest in one level homes that are smaller and easier to maintain," he says.

Making a conscious effort to downsize from their old home, the Bahrs only brought with them what would fit comfortably in their new home. With all of its storage and open floor plan, a decidedly neat and uncluttered feeling is achieved with "a place for everything and everything in its place."

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The Fireplace Corner was the provider of the two-sided fireplace, open to the home's entry way on one side and the living room on the other. Accent recessed lighting accentuates the richness of the cherry wood above the fireplace. Cream-colored leather furniture is contrasted by the lavender colors and pattern in the side chairs and pillows on the couch.

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Breaking Ground

Kit and Dick had heard so much about the great reputation of contractors Ed and Dennis Brucklemeyer that they were the only company they talked to when they went looking for bids for the construction. Having done their homework, the Bahrs knew exactly what they wanted in their new home.

They were also looking for the Brucklemeyers to give them a top quality home and to bring in quality subcontractors to do the work. Dick notes, "They were incredible! Everyone they brought in and referred us to were top notch."

Ed Brucklemeyer also really enjoyed working with the Bahrs. "They had a lot of good ideas, and we tried to stay flexible to change and add as they wanted. They were very good at visualizing how the final product would turn out."

In from the start, beginning with the ground breaking in December of 2005, Kit and Dick were able to be at the site everyday. "We didn't want to miss a



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The contrast of black and cream used elsewhere in the home is echoed in the powder room/guest bathroom. Kit's love for baskets is repeated here as well with the towel storage in the open space under the vanity. Two entry ways into the room allow for a private entrance from the guest bedroom and access from the hallway.

minute of it," says Dick. They have wonderful photographic records of the house going up from start to finish. The home was ready for the Parade of Homes this past May, and the Bahrs moved in the day after the Parade of Homes closed.

Solidly Built

The Bahrs' home is one of the few in Hermantown to be built with concrete walls from floor to ceiling. This makes the home highly energy efficient and also serves as a sound buffer. "It is so quiet here," says Dick. Considering that the property is also set well back from the main road, down a long gravel driveway, the ambiance is like being out in the middle of the woods.

The Insulated Concrete Form (ICF) technology is high on Bruckelmyer's list of energy saving house-building processes. He explains, "ICF is not a new thing. It has been on the market for ten to twelve years, but it has come into regular use in the last five years." According to Bruckelmyer, using ICF in place of traditional framed walls makes for a particularly well-insulated and quiet home.

The home is wired for and has all of the ducts for air conditioning. Bruckelmyer suggested that the Bahrs

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A custom-built decorator shelf above the windows in the den houses twinkling lights, baskets, and other decorator pieces. A place for relaxation and quiet conversation, the den also doubles as a playroom and bedroom during visits from the Bahrs' two-year-old grandson.

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try it a year without installing the air conditioning, and then they could always add it later. With the concrete as an insulator, not only for warmth in the winter, but also helping to keep things cool in this particularly warm summer, the Bahrs feel that they won't need the air conditioning.

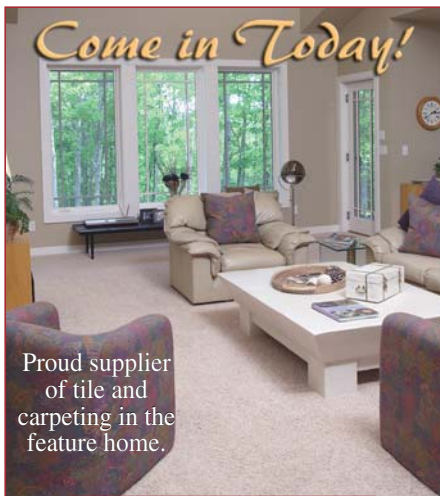
"We never really felt that it got that warm inside the house this summer," says Dick. The home is also equipped with a humidistat and adjusting that to control the humidity seemed to provide all of the cooling they needed. Bruckelmyer adds, "Kit called me one day this summer when it was 103 degrees outside and said that their home was at a comfortable 77 degrees."



The slab heat, in floor heating throughout, interruptible service, and the dual fuel LP gas fireplace promise to make the home very cozy and energy efficient when winter strikes as well.

Hub of the Home

A "bullseye" door is what Ed Bruckelmyer called the position of the arched Marvin front doorway of the Bahr home. The home was positioned so that



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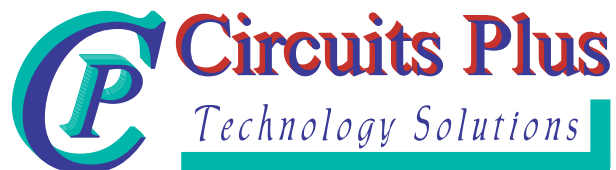
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Doing double duty, the laundry room has a counter unit that serves as a computer station and as a crafting station for Kit's quilting. The view outside this window is also one of Dick's favorites.

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when people come up the driveway, the front door is the target or bullseye focus of the destination. The front door opens up into a spacious, cherry wood entryway. Guests first see the dual-sided fireplace that is a welcoming hearth for visitors in the entryway side and a cozy part of the living room on the other.

Not "just for show," the Bahrs living room is truly the central hub of the home and furnished with comfort and relaxation in mind. Overstuffed taupe leather furniture accented by throw pillows in muted, soft colors, and lavender print side chairs give the room an understated elegance. A plush taupe carpeting underfoot and a large concrete ivory table are also part of the "quiet" decorator touches.

A flat screen television on the wall opposite the couch is equipped with surround sound speakers. The controls for all of the video and audio equipment are in the bedroom walk-in closet on the other side of the television wall, with all of the clutter of equipment and wiring unseen.

Open Floor Plan

The living room is completely open to the dining area and kitchen making this part of the house very inviting for guests and easy for entertaining. The dining area is framed by a comfortable and cozy window seat, with a black and tan buffalo plaid cushion and accent pillows that Kit made herself. A favorite place for Dick to stretch out for a nap, it also provides extra seating for parties.

A maple dining room set helps to give the dining area a bright and light ambiance.

Drama in the kitchen comes from the contrast of light off-white custom cabinetry, black Cambria countertops, and the black wood in the island storage cabinetry. The kitchen's clean

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Simplicity and elegance are the key words to describe the Bahrs' master suite. A custom bed, made by Bruckelmyer, houses storage baskets in the footboard. The bedroom is completely open to the bath, also elegant with its curved bath "pier" and the glass block curved wall of the shower. A feeling of spaciousness is enhanced by the wall of mirrors from St. Germain's Glass Company.



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and crisp look is maintained with polished silver cabinetry hardware, a Titanium "no fingerprint" LG refrigerator, and a black Jennair cooktop.

Light fixtures over the island are pull-down models that can be brought lower for food prep work, or "So we can see better as we age," jokes Dick. The Bahrs enjoy the quiet and efficient use of the kitchen cabinetry. Pistons and shock absorbers make for one touch quiet and easy closure of drawers and cabinet doors.

Off the kitchen is a large and spacious laundry room with a counter/built-in desk with ample room for a crafting and sewing space for Kit and computer space for Dick. "Sometimes I like to sit here to work and look out the window at the woods, and sometimes I just 'like' to sit," he says.

Guest Suite and Grandson Haven

To the left of the entryway is the guest bedroom. Done in quiet shades of taupe and cream, it has the ambiance of a guest room at an expensive spa or bed and breakfast. Out the sliding doors in the guest room is a little concrete aggregate stone patio for guests to enjoy an outdoor

private respite. It is one of three patios that help to extend the Bahrs' living space to the outdoors.

With one door leading to the guest room and the other door leading out to the entryway, the bathroom in the guest suite can be private or used just generally as a powder room when the couple isn't entertaining guests. Using black for the vanity in the powder room gives it an understated elegance.

The couple's den is also multi-purpose. A toy closet with shelves is accessible when their grandson comes to visit, and this room then doubles as his playroom. Another closeted space provides room for a crib for him, making this also an extra bedroom space when the family visits.

Kit loves shelves and decorator ambient lighting as a place to put her baskets and other knickknacks. The den has a custom decorator shelf, built and



designed by Bruckelmyer, above the windows adding more coziness and homey touches to the room.

Unique Master Suite Design

Kit had seen a picture of a bed she liked that had a built-in base with open shelves at the footboard that she could use for baskets and extra storage. The Bruckelmyers built the bed especially to meet her specifications and to fit the style of the room and house. A custom built-in cupboard on the wall opposite the bed houses a television, books, knickknacks, and a built in computer station.

The Bahrs also wanted an open floor plan in their master suite. One aspect of that openness is seen in the wall oppo-

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site the bed that does not go all the way to the ceiling, leaving a visual line open to the interesting “chopstick” beams in the living room.

Most dramatically, the floor plan in the master suite is striking since the bath is completely open to the bedroom. Not putting in a wall or door to separate the two spaces gives an expansive feeling to this area of the home.

Elegant throughout from fixtures to a custom built “pier” for the bathtub, the master bath also has the ambiance of a fancy spa. Even the shower seems open to the room with an interesting glass block curved partition to allow light and designer interest. Completing the master suite is a large walk-in closet with ample storage space and a closet system that allows for complete organization.

At Home At Last

Kit and Dick Bahr appear to have gotten exactly the home they envisioned when they first decided to start the project. “I had spent so much time with the ideas for the house in my head, it is so much fun to see it come to life,” says Kit.

With many comfortable years of retirement ahead of them, the Bahrs have the perfect home, nestled in the woods in Hermantown, to sit back, relax, and enjoy the fruits of their labors. ♦

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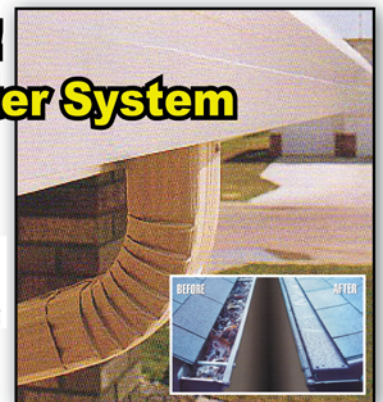
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