



Family-Friendly First A House to Live In

by Sheryl Jensen

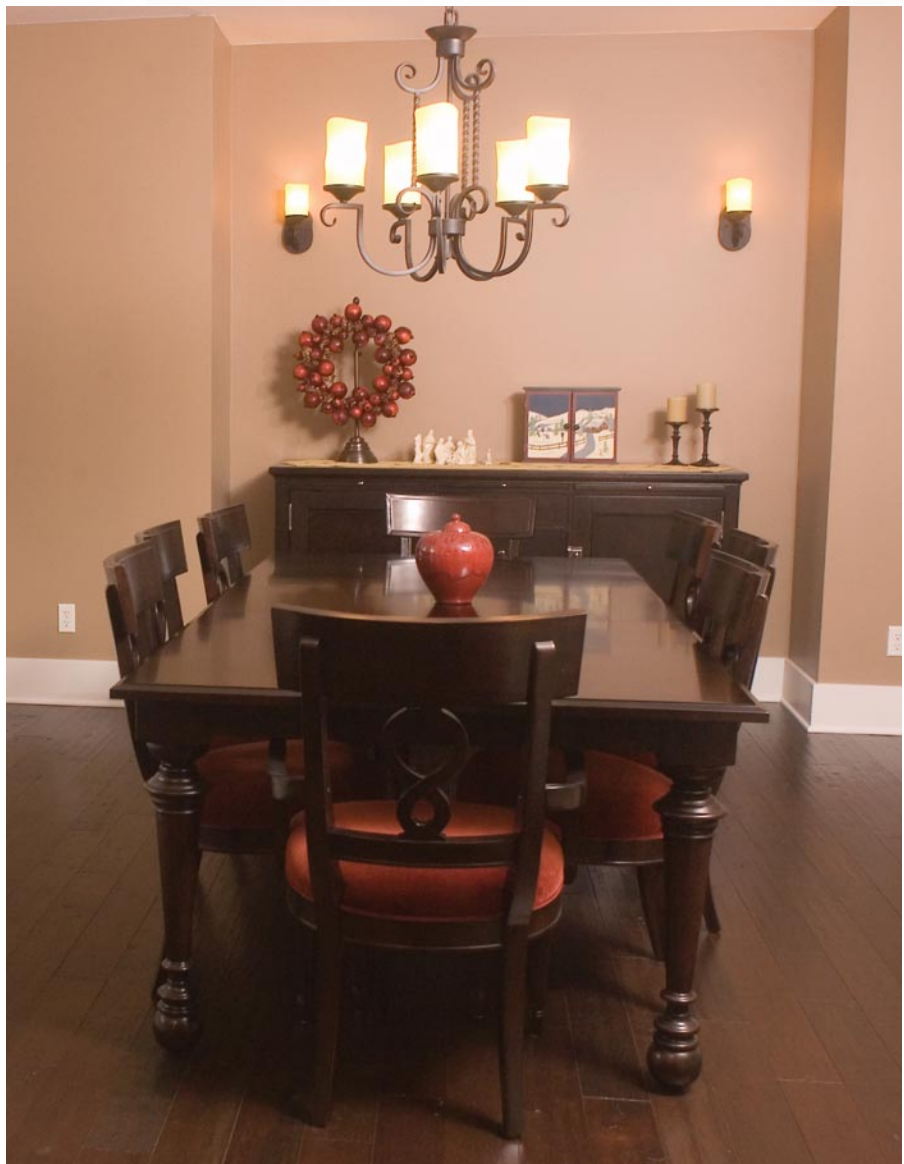
A classic Craftsman style home with a Pacific Northwest ambiance perfectly suits a physician and a former English teacher, a couple who recently moved from Seattle to Duluth with their young son and daughter. “We came for my job, but also for the community, the educational opportunities for our children in Minnesota, and the chance to live in a more intimate, family-friendly neighborhood,” says the husband.

Building Long Distance

The family lived in a 100-year-old house in Seattle and had planned someday to build, saving pictures, searching the Internet, and creating files of what their dream home would be. The wife says, “We both have the same vision. So the process of home building was fun and surprisingly easy.”

After the husband took a job here, the couple originally planned to buy an existing home. When they couldn’t find anything on the market that was exactly what they wanted, they looked at building instead. They found a lot in a neighborhood they liked, checked out different contractors and some of their home projects, and decided to go with Ed and Dennis Bruckelmyer.

“We love our builders,” says the couple of the Bruckelmyer brothers. “They are honest, hard-working, and straightforward. We appreciate their high stan-





Opposite top: The home’s exterior has a clean Craftsman style with varied roof lines, crisp white trim, and a traditional front porch. Opposite: Echoing the rest of the home’s minimalist style, the formal dining room is understated with dark wood and a few accents in red. Above: White, the dominant color in the kitchen, is accented by the stainless steel appliances and the dark wood used in the flooring, island seating, and eating nook furniture. Without the use of any window treatments, the white trim around the windows in the eating area also adds to the clean look of this half of the Great Room.

dards and have had absolute trust in them throughout the process.”

This was especially important because the couple had to do considerable “long distance” communication since the home was being built before they moved to Duluth. Ed Brucklemeyer wasn’t daunted by the distance either. “We have worked on several projects

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A family-friendly place to hang out, this half of the Great Room, open to the kitchen and kitchen eating area, is also simple and uncluttered. A wall of custom cabinetry is the main accent in the room, featuring a pullout unit for the television that can be rolled back in and “hidden” behind doors in the unit when not in use. Comfortable, low-maintenance furni-

ture pieces also make this area kid-friendly. A deck accessed from the Great Room leads to an expansive, fenced in backyard, a perfect place for the kids to play and the family’s dog to get some exercise.

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here, with folks living in other parts of the country. With this family, it was very easy; they were able to make decisions by communicating via e-mail and phone,” he says.

Bruckelmyer adds, “The overall value the couple enjoys with this home is probably the most impressive thing to me. The cost per square foot was very economical for this style of home, with its concrete exterior walls, super high efficiency, eco-friendliness, and custom quality throughout. Our goal is to have

the same consistent quality in each project we do. This home is a reflection of this consistency. It comes with experience, hard work, and a strong desire to please our customers.”

Breaking ground in May of 2006, the family was able to move into their new home last Christmas. As they have settled into their Woodland neighborhood in the last year, they have found their new home as oriented toward their lifestyle as they hoped it would be.

Space to Hang Out

The Great Room’s combined family room, kitchen, and kitchen eating area are open and airy with windows looking out to the expansive backyard. The ability to talk to family and guests while also involved in food preparation and clean-up makes this a great space to

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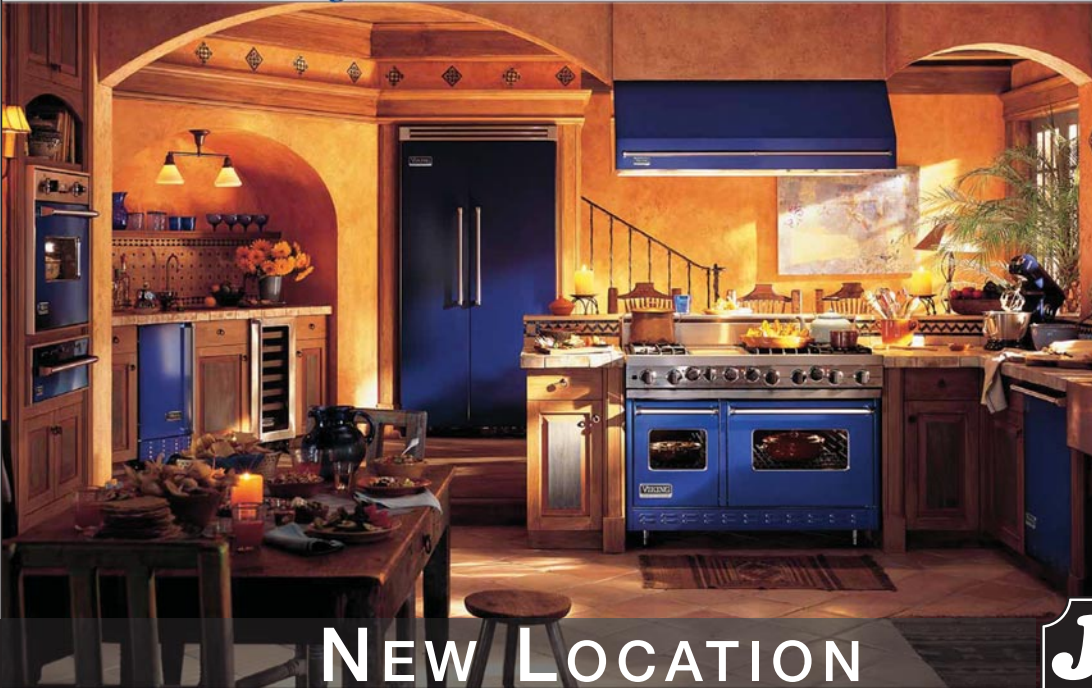
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Having their own private home movie theater is one of the family's favorite aspects of the downstairs level of the house. Comfortable furniture, movie posters on the walls, and easy to use video/audio equipment provide the couple with a place for them to have "date night" without having to get a babysitter and going out to the movies.

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"hang out," says the couple.

They were looking for a classic and simple kitchen; the white cabinetry and its clean lines are contrasted elegantly with the stainless steel appliances and rich dark Merban wide-planked, hand-scraped floor. "We were looking for both ends of the spectrum," they say. "We wanted practical for kids, dogs, and play, and elegant for us and for our guests at the same time."

The beautiful custom cabinets were built by Bruckelmyer Brothers and provide significant storage including an appliance "garage" and more shelf space under the island. The centrally located kitchen island is topped with grey granite, flecked with burgundy and bronze accents. A swirled "river" pattern gives the granite visual interest. The main sink is in the center of the island with a smaller vegetable prep sink on the other wall next to the professional grade cooktop.

Since the husband is 6'5," the counters are raised to allow him to use them more comfortably. The two kids like to sit on the high stools at the end of the island to use the computer, have a snack, or to draw and color.

The kitchen eating area is large enough to seat eight people and is surrounded on three sides by windows making it a sunny and inviting place to spend time. Access to the outside is available from this area out to the deck and to the large fenced-in yard. Lots of play equipment for the kids and a place for the family's black Lab to run around in an enclosed space make the backyard a family-friendly environment.

The dominant architectural feature of the Great Room space is a beautiful built-in bookshelf and storage unit in maple filling one entire wall. The television can be pulled out and swiveled from inside the cabinet and stored away when not in use. A gas

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fireplace with a Celtic knot tile border, reflecting the wife's Irish heritage, is centered on this bookcase unit wall.

The overstuffed couches and ottoman, covered in taupe microfiber fabric, provide lots of room to kick back and relax. "We wanted something spill-proof, functional, and practical for our furniture here since this is our major place to be together as a family," says the husband.

Working with an interior designer in Seattle, the couple found a paint line they especially liked called Devine, a company in Portland, Oregon. With "colorful" names like Berries and Beans, Espresso Blends, and Valley Vineyard, the paints used in the house range from soft and subtle sages to vibrant and intense brick reds. The palette for this line of paint is made to link colors that accent and complement each other.

Sound of Music

On the hallway wall leading out of the Great Room is the control panel for the home's multi-room audio system. Working with David Thornton at Circuits Plus to select this system with the features they wanted, the couple enjoys listening to a variety of music sources, including their entire CD collection, standard radio, and satellite radio, among others. Speakers are located on the deck and in the Great Room, the children's playroom, and the master bedroom.

Thornton says, "The user can go to any computer or in-wall touchscreen to choose their desired music. All of the user's music is stored on a central hard drive server, or with additional equipment, they can stream music from the Internet. A simple way to think of it is that this kind of system is like having an Ipod for your whole house. Each room can listen to their own music without affecting the other rooms."

Main Floor Circle

From the Great Room, down the hallway to the left is a powder room that the couple calls their "Seattle" bathroom. Decorated with such icons as a picture of

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Right: Continuing the home's minimalist style, the master bedroom is a tranquil oasis with a dual sided fireplace to keep things cozy and a reading nook for the couple to enjoy as a private getaway in their suite. Below: The ceramic-tiled master bath features a large walk-in shower, a soaking tub, and a dual marble-topped vanity.



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the first Starbucks and a model of the Space Needle, it reminds the family of where they used to live.

To the left of the large entryway foyer, through French doors, is a home office that is a “work in progress.” It will eventually provide the husband with a private place for work and study.

On the right side of the foyer is a formal dining room decorated with dramatic black furniture, giving it an elegant ambiance. A door to the right of the dining room leads to a butler’s pantry with a place for food prep and dishes storage; a door from the butler’s pantry leads to a separate walk-in pantry for easy access to food supplies.

Down the hall to the left of the butler’s pantry is a multi-purpose room used as a family mud room, a laundry room, and a “dining” area for the dog. Cubicles on one wall outside the mud room provide easy storage for the family as they come in the door from the garage with winter gear, boots, and coats.



Downstairs Space Multi-Functional

The lower level’s main room is finished off, but as of yet, unfurnished. It allows the kids to have a great open space to run around and play. Eventually, the couple would like this to be a game room with a pool table.

An exercise room on this level with a

recumbent bike, a Stairmaster, and a body gym weight system, has a television mounted on the wall to provide “entertainment” during workouts. Also on this level is a guest room with its own bathroom.

A favorite family space on the lower level is the home theater. Decorated with

posters of some of the couple's favorite movies, including *The Godfather*, *Miracle*, *Hoosiers*, and *Braveheart*, the room is a relaxing place for entertaining guests or for the family to use themselves.

With its comfortable furniture and movie theater ambiance, it's like going out for the evening without ever leaving home. "We have 'date night' here," says the wife. "We can 'go out' without having to get a babysitter by watching movies at home, getting snacks, and relaxing together."

About the home theater, David Thornton explains, "The whole system is operated by a single remote control that can easily load up a DVD or a satellite television station at the touch of a button. We also provided a lighting control system for the room so that at a touch of a button, all the lights in the room can be set to a desired scene. All of the equipment is stored in an adjacent room in an equipment rack to provide proper ventilation of the components and can easily be serviced if need be."

Private Spaces For All

A classic bannister in white and a traditional carpet runner on the dark wood stairs lead to the home's upper level where the family bedrooms and baths, a playroom for the kids, and another guest bedroom are located. Since none of their family members are from the Midwest, they like having extra space for family and friends to stay when they visit.

Down the hall to the left is the little boy's room, decorated in deep hues of blue and orange, with elements of a pirate theme from his fascination with Captain Hook in *Peter Pan*. At the end of the hall is the little girl's room, "pretty in pink," with a traditional Disney princess theme. A huge dollhouse, built by the wife's father, was originally hers and her sister's; it has some of the original carpeting and wallpaper from the house where they grew up outside of Seattle.

Between the two children's rooms is a sparkling white and blue tiled bathroom evoking the style of a Victorian era nursery bathroom. Blue penny round

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Top: A "pretty in pink" little girl's room has a princess theme and plenty of space to play. The doll-house in the room was originally built by the little girl's grandfather for her aunt and mother when they were children.



Left: Bright blue paint, accented with orange and white, give the little boy's room a strong color boost. Bunk beds provide room to play and space for a guest or family member to sleep over.

Right Top: A downstairs exercise room has plenty of equipment to keep in shape and a television on the opposite wall for diversion while working out.



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tiles on the floor are also used as wall trim and on the backsplash.

At the opposite end of the hall is a large children's playroom filled with plenty of toys and books. The room's sunny yellow color scheme and a wall of windows make this a bright and fun space for the children to spend time.

Tranquil best describes the master suite, accessed from the main upstairs hallway up a few stairs through French doors. "Nothing feminine," was the husband's request. The room is subdued and understated in shades of blue, taupe, and tan.

A two-sided gas fireplace is visible from the bed on one side and a small sitting area on the other. The couple loves to read and has two comfortable chairs and ottomans in this nook for a quiet escape.

A huge, custom walk-in closet off of the master bedroom allows for easy and visible storage helping to keep clothing, shoes, and accessories organized. Opposite is a large linen closet for additional storage of towels and toiletries.

The master bath has ceramic tile and a marble dual vanity top. As with the kitchen counters and island, this unit was built three inches higher than standard to accommodate the husband's height. A walk-in shower and a soaking tub complete the master bath.

Family-Friendly Space

"We are pretty minimalist in our style," the couple agrees. Yet, the home has just the comfortable family-friendly ambiance they wanted when they began the project. "The entire house is pretty relaxing, a pretty friendly space to do what we want. The kids and dog can run around, and we can all hang out together." ♦

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