

Coming Home



Large windows and interesting materials, such as a stainless steel mantel, define the living room.

Pat and Jim Hoyt of Johnston don't agree with Thomas Wolfe's notion that you can't go home again.

By Carol McGarvey
Photography by Tim Abramowitz

In many families it's the kids who move away for a time and then perhaps move back to be nearer to relatives. In Pat and Jim Hoyt's situation, however, they were the ones who moved away and have now returned to central Iowa to be closer to their children, grandchildren, and other relatives in the area.

The Hoyts, completely in love with their new Prairie-style home in Johnston, which they moved into in February of this year, have built 2½ other homes, the half a total lower-level remodel. Because of Jim's position as an executive of Growmark, an international agricultural company, they lived in Toronto, Canada, and Bloomington, Illinois, for the past 15 years.

Pat, a Des Moines native, and Jim, from the Waterloo area, have seen huge changes in central Iowa from when they lived here before and had homes in the Waterbury area and in West Des Moines. "Where we built this home in Johnston was a field, and places such as Jordan Creek Town Center weren't even imagined yet," Pat says. "The area now is so full of vitality and energy."

The home the Hoyts built with TS Construction of Grimes is natural in its appeal with a stucco and stacked-stone exterior. "We wanted a unique, clean look with lots and lots of windows and light," Pat explains. It's a walk-out ranch with the open concept plan on both floors and has 4,500 square feet—2,456 on the main level and 1,900 finished on the lower level.



The Prairie-style ranch's exterior is stucco and stone.

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Jim's welcoming office is off the entryway.



The entryway welcomes visitors to the open-concept plan and contains the stairway to the lower level.

Appealing view

An important part of the Hoyts' selection of this cul-de-sac lot is its proximity and great view of a farm pond. Why, there are even two neighborhood pets, a blue heron and a white egret that love the water, too.

"We wanted this home to have a total view of the pond," says builder Tom Stevens of TS Construction. "Pat and Jim wanted the biggest windows we could use, and it worked out beautifully. Because they are north-facing, the windows can be left without coverings to take advantage of the view on the main and lower levels. Simple touches and 12-foot ceilings utilize the light."

"Because of the way the house sits on the lot and the placement of windows, the home feels very private," Pat says.

Jim enjoyed working with Stevens. "He brings so many ideas to the table, and he is such a good listener about what the client wants. He's an exceptional builder, and now he's our good friend. Once the house was framed and enclosed, Tom's creative style kicked in. We might be standing in the living room or lower level, and he would say, 'We're going to do something cool and unique with this space,' and we loved his ideas."

When guests enter the front door, they can see through the home out to the pond. Jim's office is to the right of the main entry.

A column of stacked stone separates the kitchen from the entry without disturbing the open feel. The double island allows Pat to be in the kitchen but still be able to converse with guests. Six can be seated at green leather stools at the two-level bar, and another six or eight can sit at the glass-topped dining table with subtle animal-print upholstered side chairs. The light fixture over the table shimmers with small chains and doubles as a piece of art. Off the dining room is an inviting screened porch. There's also a deck off the porch.



The porch off the dining room catches breezes and keeps out the bugs.



Two colors of granite define the bar area and the kitchen islands. Two tones of cabinetry—dark walnut and rich beige-gray glazing—add a rich palette to the kitchen. Pat gives credit to her friend Sheila Waller for some design help throughout the home.

The big kitchen surprise comes when Pat opens what appears to be a cabinet door to reveal a full walk-in pantry, big enough to hold a freezer.

Interesting details

Flooring is a beautifully grained teak, and carpet defines the living room area. Stevens used interesting materials for details, such as the main-level fireplace, which features a stainless-steel mantel and Durock cement board facing. He also offset the fireplace so that it wasn't plunked in the middle of the wall and added a floating hearth. The Hoyts also appreciate the detail of the finish carpenters, who used dead space in the corner to create a hidden compartment and office storage space in the area between the living room and Jim's office.

Down the hallway is a powder room, plus an efficient space that serves as Pat's office, mudroom from the garage, and expanded closet storage space for off-season coats and jackets. "On this area we put a sliding 'barn door' to make the hallway pop," Stevens says.

On this level is the serene master bedroom. It has a cozy feel and a great view of the wooded back lot and pond. A tray ceiling has a fan and subtle rope lighting. The master bath features a two-vanity sink, a walk-in shower, and a huge closet. The laundry room is nearby.

Clockwise from top left: The open kitchen features two tones of cabinetry and two colors of granite. • Guests can sit at the kitchen bar or the nearby dining area. • Master bedroom and master bath have great views of the farm pond beyond. • A sliding barn-style door adds a surprising touch. • The Hoyts requested the biggest windows possible in the dining room area. • A full walk-in pantry expands the kitchen space.





Lower level

The home's lower level is geared to fun for family and friends. The Hoyts enjoy watching movies there and relaxing on a leather sectional. The offset stacked-stone fireplace in the family room adds a cozy touch. An adjoining conversation area features large windows (perfect for an eye-level view of the farm pond) and teal walls, four white leather chairs, and a teal patterned area rug and pillows. "It's the best space ever for morning coffee," Jim says. There are two patios outside; one open and one covered.

The small kitchen area—aka Jim's bar—sports custom concrete countertops. Nearby is his wine cellar that holds 400 to 450 bottles and keeps them at 55°F. "I have enjoyed collecting wine for about 20 years," he says.

The floor in the wine cellar is concrete. For a touch of color, Jim and Pat undertook a do-it-yourself project of subtle circle designs on the floor with—what else!—wine bottles. For a bit of history, a Tiffany-style hanging lamp that has survived each move with the couple originally hung in Younker's Tearoom in downtown Des Moines.

Also on the lower level are two bathrooms and three guest rooms. One is used as an exercise room. There's also a small game room with a pinball machine and dart board.

The home's versatility has led the Hoyts to institute casual Sunday night suppers for their three kids and spouses and six grandchildren, all of whom live in the metro area. Whoever can make it just shows up.

"I love it," Pat says. "There's no doubt about it. We have come home." ■



Clockwise from top left: The lower level bar area is great for entertaining. • The family room downstairs is perfect for family get-togethers and movies. • This relaxing seating area has a nice view for watching wild life on the pond. • On the back of the home are a porch, deck, and two patios. • The ample wine cellar can hold more than 400 bottles.