



This page: A seating area in the home office creates the feeling of a cozy den. **Opposite:** The front of the Parkers' home southwest of Adel is welcoming with sunny yellow and stone touches.



A Sunny Delight

By Carol McGarvey, Photography by John Johnson

Becky and John Parker commuted 2 hours and 20 minutes round-trip each day from their home at Sun Valley Lake in southern Iowa to their jobs at Iowa Student Loan in West Des Moines. High gas prices this past year helped them to make the decision to move.

"Another decision," Becky says, "involves our five children and 11 grandchildren. It used to be fun for everyone to gather at the lake on weekends, but as the grandchildren get older, they have sports and activities and they weren't able to come down as often." The five families are around central Iowa and from Denison to Dubuque.

"It just made more sense for us to move north so that we could spend more time with them," John explains. The couple still wanted to be "out," and they chose a wooded lot southwest of Adel in the Mill Creek development.

When it came to selecting a builder, they relied on the good experiences of one of their children and picked Colin King and Dean Vogel of K & V Homes. "We had built a home once before, so this wasn't our first experience. It was so much easier the second time because we knew better what to expect in the process," Becky says. This time they chose geothermal heating and cooling.

"We were thrilled with the workmanship from all of the K & V subcontractors, and their attention to detail. Plus, the continuous dialog between us and Dean was fantastic. We were involved throughout the entire process. We don't have even one bad experience to share," she states.

Dean Vogel, of course, is delighted to hear that. "Our only problem in building this home was the weather last winter, which kept not cooperating and extended the process a bit." K & V, in business since 1997, builds 10 to 15 custom homes each year all around the metro area. The firm constructed a home in HomeShowExpo for this year's show at Prairie Trail in Ankeny.



Above: The focal wall of the living room houses a fireplace, big-screen TV, and niches for displaying art.

Opposite page: The formal dining room has built-in storage for holiday dishes and stemware.

Big windows

Now, aside from cutting their commute time to a 40-minute round-trip, the Parkers' move in May gave them a delightful new home with big windows on the east side that soak in the sun as well as the wooded view behind. Even the front of the house is a pleasing, welcoming yellow with stone accents. They admit to missing the lake but enjoy being closer to family members.

The couple chose an open floor plan, giving more space for gatherings. The ranch home has almost 4,000 square feet on the main and lower levels. Acting as her own primary interior designer, Becky converted most of the furniture from her previous home to this one. "I tend to be more traditional, but this time I added a touch of contemporary. It's really pretty eclectic." She chose warm beiges, creamy golds, and greens, with touches of deep burgundy and rust tones for accent.

For a focal point in the main living area, Scott Dean and Julie Youngblade of Creative Homes in Clive designed a multistep wall unit that houses a fireplace and big-screen TV along with spots for artful pieces, such as a display of metal leaves, colorful graphic designs, and pottery. There's a raised plank hearth. Twelve-foot ceilings in the great-room area add to the spacious feeling.

With 11 grandchildren, Becky keeps her decorating simple. "There's no clutter allowed. It just gets too confusing." John says the back entry with its mudroom purpose and lockers off the garage catches the kids as they come in from outdoor play.

Open kitchen

In the open kitchen with mellow maple cabinetry, low-maintenance quartz countertops, and black appliances, Becky is in heaven. "I love to cook for big crowds, and this works well. I'm happiest when I'm in the kitchen. I enjoy cooking traditional fare, such as turkey and ham dinners, and lots of soups." With two wall ovens, she's gearing up for more than 40 people at Thanksgiving dinner. There's





This photo: The kitchen, in mellow maple, casts a warm glow to the dining area.
Right: The sunroom, an extension of the open kitchen, overlooks the woods.



a glass-top dining table in the kitchen area, but for big groups, a long plank table replaces it. A focal point in the kitchen is a faux-painted range hood in a pleasing mottled design that complements the countertop.

One end of the kitchen is a sunroom that also looks out to the leafy woods. "It's a favorite area," Becky says. "I love to sit there and read."

John's treasured spot is just out the door from the sunroom on the covered deck. There, with binoculars in hand, he has an up-close-and-personal look at the woods for his bird-watching hobby. "We can be out there for hours," he says. Other wildlife includes deer in the front yard and a flock of wild turkeys that comes to snack on acorns most mornings at 9. Raccoons bring their own element of entertainment to the menagerie.

The formal dining room to the right of the main entry has a built-in buffet for dishes, one of Becky's passions. Also, in an efficient move, the deep drawers are for holding sets of stemware, which are easy to handle and don't have to be balanced as they might in a top cupboard or cabinet.

To the left of the front door is an office with French doors. Two comfy chairs and ottoman, bookshelves, and a computer desk give the space a cozy, but efficient, look.

Rain shower

The master bedroom is a restful spot in soft green and rich beige. A poster bed and tray ceiling, accented with rope lighting, set a restful scene. The master bath offers separate his-and-hers vanities, a whirlpool tub, and a rain shower with an oversize sunflowerlike showerhead. "We saw that on a trip to Costa Rica," John explains, "and we really wanted to add one to our home."



Clockwise from top: The covered deck is an outdoor living room for the Parkers, who love to watch birds. • The restful master bedroom is a peaceful oasis. • The master bath features separate vanities, a whirlpool tub, and a rain shower.

A guest room welcomes visitors, and there's a bath between that room and the nearby office. Downstairs is party central when the family visits. A huge family room allows for play, and a bunk room—yes, with three bunk beds (one with a trundle)—makes for great cousin sleepovers. Another room with a hide-a-bed will become the center for playing Nintendo Wii games. At Iowa Student Loan, John is director of community services and educational research, and Becky is senior vice president of business

development and customer relations. She will retire at the end of the year and is looking forward to spending more time in the couple's new home. One wall in the living room area is devoted to numerous family photographs. With 23 members in the immediate family, that's a lot of photo groupings. The saying in the middle of the display explains why this home was filled with instant love: "We may not have it all together, but together, we have it all." **WH**



Resources

Builder

K & V Homes, Inc

Materials

Gilcrest Jewett, Lumbermans Wholesale, Plum Building Supply

Windows

Pella Window Store

Appliances

Factory Direct

Hardwood floors

Barnum Floors

Carpet, laminate

Flooring Gallery

Fireplace

Kitchens & Fireplaces

Railings

Artistic Iron Works

Plumbing fixtures

Ferguson Enterprises

Sound system

Technology By Design

Interior design

Homeowner, Creative Homes, Vernie's Custom Draperies of Creston