



Rough-hewn stone, beefy trim, a substantial chimney, and hand-chiseled plinths supporting the porch posts reinforce the home's Old World demeanor.

Authentically HOME

Reclaimed materials and Old World craftsmanship infuse this new home with lived-in charm

by CHRIS LEE » PHOTOS by SUSAN GILMORE



IN OLD HOUSES, EVERYTHING HAS A STORY—

rooms still echo with the laughter that once filled them, walls whisper of long-ago family dinners, and floors show the daily routines of owners who have moved on. The sense of lived-in ease is palpable.

That's the feeling this couple wanted to capture as they set out to build a new house in Wayzata. They began with an empty 2-acre lot in 2008—the house that once stood in this spot had been torn down by the former owner—and a yearning for a home that would be spacious and functional for themselves and their two sons, yet warm and welcoming. Partly in reaction to their transitional-style house in Medina, they wanted this home to feel aged from the get-go. “We were excited about the opportunity to put ourselves into the house,” says the wife.

“We like old, we like wood, we like stone, we like European influences, we like mountain (but not *mountain*),” she says. The style of the home, which she now calls European Country, comes courtesy of Jeff Murphy, principal of Murphy & Co. Design in Buffalo. “He was the one who really caught our vibe and put down on paper what we envisioned,” she says. The other key collaborators on the project were Sarah Randolph of the eponymous Wayzata interior design firm and builder Bob Carlson of Jyland Construction Management, also of Wayzata. “We had discussions from the beginning about what they wanted the house to feel like,” says Randolph. “With his Scandinavian background, they wanted those classic, warm elements you find in European homes.”

As the design phase of the project got underway, the team focused on the core spaces—the kitchen, dining area, great room, and porch—where the family would spend the most time. Much thought went into considering flow between those spaces, as well as the sight lines among them, says Murphy. But every room in the 6,535-square-foot house was to be useful and useable. “We wanted the kitchen to be the center of the home, but we wanted every



FAR LEFT Both husband and wife cook, and the island and prep sink give them plenty of elbow room when they make meals together. The granite-topped bar in the foreground divides the kitchen from the dining area and great room. The adjacent four-season porch, visible through the old-fashioned wood windows (at left), is designed to have an added-on-later feel.

LEFT Rather than stashed in the lower level, the wine cellar is just around the corner from the kitchen.

BELOW The stained and waxed French oak that tops the island is made for chopping and cutting. Minneapolis faux painter Carter Averbeck distressed and painted the stepped-down end to give it the look of a vintage Norwegian table.



space to have everyday use," says the wife. She also wanted a family office—in place of the little desk and chair in the kitchen of the old house—within sight of her "command center" at the island. She wanted to be able to see the boys (one teenaged and one nearly so) at their computers in the office, the better to keep tabs on them.

The couple both cook—and both love to be in the kitchen—so the design had to accommodate her needs (she's a petite 5-footer) and his (he's 6-feet 4-inches tall). They entertain frequently, often large groups, and needed expansive spaces for serving and dining. They also wanted the dining area and table to be part of the action, where the kids could do their homework, not a separate, formal room reserved for special occasions.

As the core of the house took shape, the kitchen's features came into focus. Lower-level cabinets and drawers store everything from dishes to everyday glassware. Lack of uppers means loads of light streaming in and, for the wife, no more asking her tall husband (or growing sons) to reach items on upper shelves. The nearby pantry features a rolling, library-style ladder—"perfect for the short homeowner," she says.

The kitchen's centerpiece is the enormous island of reclaimed white oak, topped with waxed and stained French oak. It seats seven, but steps down to a table designed for more intimate family dining. The wife wanted the table to have the look of a Scandinavian antique, something her husband's grandmother might have brought over from Norway. After Minneapolis faux painter Carter Averbek aged and distressed the oak, and added a design reminiscent of rosemaling at the corners,

the table looked remarkably authentic.

A soapstone prep sink, custom fit into the furniture-style oak island, gives whoever is cooking handy access to the blue BlueStar stove. The clean-up area, anchored by a hammered copper farmhouse sink, overlooks a wall of windows that open to the backyard and the porch. Styled after old-fashioned wooden windows, they are designed to reinforce the connections between the kitchen and porch, says Murphy, allowing the cook to chat with whomever is relaxing in front of the fireplace and vice versa.

The kitchen's Old World charm comes in equal measure from the vintage terra cotta tile on its floors and the reclaimed timber beams that connect it with the great room. Interior designer Randolph located tiles imported from the south of France and then made certain distinctive pieces would be placed in view—look closely, and you'll see the imprint a dog's paw made long ago in one tile, a chicken's foot in another, and a math problem scratched into the surface of another (it's figured correctly).

A granite-topped bar divides the kitchen from the dining area and holds the beverage center, icemaker, and other entertaining supplies. Two glass-enclosed cabinets—the only uppers in the room—add a necessary element of texture and sparkle, says Randolph. "The rest of the space is so functional and Old World, I wanted this to be a prettier element. The leaded glass and the glow of the cabinets play differently than the other parts of the kitchen."

Overhead, reclaimed Douglas fir beams and trusses lower the feel of the vaulted ceiling, giving the great room an enveloping warmth and comfort. The timber beams themselves are masterful demonstrations of 19th-century



THIS PAGE, ABOVE No gas fireplaces in this house—these homeowners like the real thing. The massive stones are set asymmetrically to give the fireplace old-fashioned personality. RIGHT The pantry features a library ladder to simplify life for the petite wife. OPPOSITE PAGE The dramatic front staircase wraps around the grand piano in the great room. Custom ironwork and vintage terra cotta risers add to the distinctive look.





The Ultimate Man Cave

As the homeowners and their collaborators pondered the innumerable decisions about their new house during the design phase, one requirement on the table was a spot for the husband to work and relax in solitude. An avid sportsman, he also wanted ample walls for his trophy mounts (his wife preferred to keep them out of the main house) and space for cleaning game and storing gear.

Taking inspiration from the husband's Norwegian heritage and active outdoor lifestyle, Jeff Murphy designed a rustic out-

building, tucked between two ash trees 80 feet from the house, to look like an old hunting cabin that predates the house. The 521-square-foot building holds an office/hearth room on one side and a hunting shop on the other.

Reclaimed barn siding clads the exterior walls, battered stone adds character, and bare corrugated steel (now well-rusted) covers the roof. An unpaved wheel-path driveway to the shop's garage doors reinforces the quaint feel. Inside, substantial timbers add heft, as do the enormous pieces of flagstone on the



TOP The hunting cabin, more rustic and rugged than the house, is a combination office, getaway, and hunting shop. ABOVE The octagonal office nook allows the husband a scenic vista, while his numerous game trophies keep him company. BELOW The shop side includes everything a hunter needs, including a pulley system to hoist up game.

floor. An octagonal office,

with a vintage antler chandelier overhead, occupies one end of the space, while the hearth area features trophy mounts that belong to the homeowner and his two boys.

Murphy's painstaking attention to detail is evident in the awning barn-style windows on the rear of the building, the windows built into the substantial chimney, and the stone threshold. It was also his idea to pound nails into the threshold that spell out, "Eat. Sleep. Hunt," in Norwegian. Words the owner clearly takes to heart.—C.L.



The owners' bath features his-and-her vanities, built to order for the tall husband and short wife. But the star here is the 1,500 pound travertine tub. It required extra bracing in the floor and customized plumbing for the faucets.

carpentry techniques with the wood-pegged trusses joined together with a scarf joint—a Z-shaped cut made in each timber and then splined together. The only things missing are nails or screws. Reclaimed timbers throughout get their rustic good looks from a transparent oil stain.

Another noteworthy space is the family office, fitted into the turret embraced by the wide porch on the front of the house. Built-in desks line the curved walls, a compass of inlaid wood is in the center of the floor, and upholstery covers the walls to help absorb sound. But the most striking feature of this lovely and functional room is the enormous sliding barn door that is curved to hug the outside of the office wall.

The private areas of the house include the main-floor owners' suite and second-floor spaces (both boys' rooms, a large family room/rec room, and a fairytale guest room tucked into the peaked ceiling that follows the top of the turret). Each one has interesting curves and corners, also by design. "I wanted funky ceilings and interesting architectural elements in the rooms," says the wife. The owners' bedroom, another spot designed with cozy in mind, isn't overly large, but it gets an extra custom touch from a wood-burning fireplace lined with hand-painted tiles. Likewise, the bath is wonderfully personalized with his-and-her vanities that are higher- and lower-than-standard heights to match the couple's needs.

The spectacular tub—a 1,500-pound piece of travertine—was Randolph's find. She discovered it when the design was just getting underway, but knew it was exactly right for the house. The wife loved it, too, though she hesitated when her tub had to be ordered from a quarry in China, sight unseen. She decided to go for it, and her willingness to take the gamble paid off. The tub is a spectacular centerpiece for the bathroom—even though piano movers had to move it into place when it arrived. It also required additional floor supports and customized plumbing for the faucets. "It's actually considered a water feature because it has no overflow," says Randolph.

All worth it in the end. The homeowners love it, and the whole family uses it, says the wife. Likewise, she loves the washer and dryer in the owners' closet, the light-filled porch, and the mudroom with individual cubbies and storage designed to ease the family's regular travels to their lake home. But asked to name her favorite feature, she stops. "Gosh, it sounds cheesy, but it's more the feeling than any one feature. It feels cozy and homey. The first time my dad came here, he looked at us, and said, 'You know what? It feels like you.' It does. It feels like we're home, and we've been here for a long time." **MH**

CHRIS LEE IS EDITOR OF *MIDWEST HOME* MAGAZINE. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON FEATURED PRODUCTS AND SUPPLIERS, SEE PAGE 86.