



The 2007 Parade of Homes Madison-area builders strut their stuff

By Sue Sveum

Imagine sorting the laundry while your kids gather round, eagerly folding their own clothes fresh from the dryer. OK, so maybe they aren't actually folding clothes. They may even be avoiding the laundry. But the family could at least be spending quality time together — if your laundry room doubled as a trendy new “project room.”

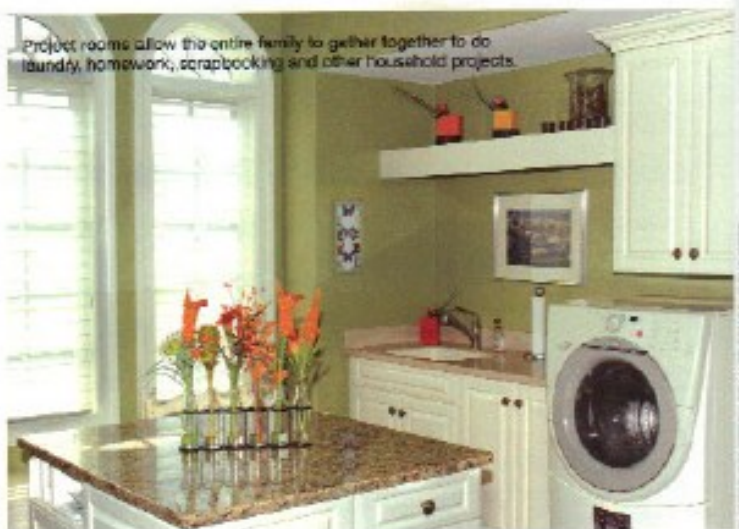
This multi-purpose area is just one of the many new features you'll see at the Madison Area Builder's Association's 2007 Parade of Homes from June 9-24. The Parade, which showcases 21 homes at three Madison area sites, has something for everyone. Whether you're planning to build a new home, looking for decorating ideas or just plain nosy, the Parade is definitely worth a look.

If that project room sounds intriguing, you'll find one in the Hart DeNoble home at the Blackhawk site on Madison's west side. “People spend a lot of time in the laundry area,” explains Hart DeNoble, president of Hart DeNoble Builders. “This is a unique way to bring families together.” He says the concept combines laundry space with whatever else fits into the family's lifestyle.

In the Blackhawk house, the room is roughly 12'x18' and is just off the kitchen. Sharing space with the washer and dryer is a workstation with an island. Chairs can be pulled up for doing homework or craft projects. Other people might choose to use the space as a home office. Lighter and brighter than a traditional study, the project room moves ▶

PHOTO COURTESY OF HART DENOBLE BUILDERS

Brava June 2007 107



Project rooms allow the entire family to gather together to do laundry, homework, scrapbooking and other household projects.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HART DENOBLE BUILDERS

the office right into the midst of daily hustle and bustle.

If a project room leaves you feeling a little confined on a warm summer day, you might enjoy spending time outdoors instead. "You don't need to sacrifice comfort to be outside anymore," says DeNoble, whose Parade home also features an outdoor living area, or loggia. "This is a new trend that's becoming more and more popular."

This particular loggia combines the best of both worlds. One sitting area is under a roof, to fend off any raindrops, and offers a wood-burning fireplace, comfortable patio furniture and a built-in outdoor grill with granite top. For stargazing, just pop over to the other side of the fireplace, where you'll find another patio with no roof to block the view.

And if you prefer to leave the outdoors, well, outdoors, you can still bring the sunshine in. You'll see plenty of skylights in the Parade, but there's a new option in town, according to DeNoble. It's called a solar tube and you'll find it replacing traditional skylights in some homes. Natural light is redirected down a reflective shaft and diffused throughout the room (or rooms). "We used it in our Parade house

and it's a great way to gather light into small areas," says DeNoble. Priced at \$700-\$800, it's pretty reasonable.

Luxury within reach

In fact, not all Parade amenities are on such a grand scale that only the wealthy can afford

them. Sometimes it depends on whether the house has been pre-sold. In the case of the Hart DeNoble home, the builder started working with a buyer right from the start. That means all of the features are designed to work for the particular buyers and their lifestyle. Builders who hope to sell their homes during the building process or after the Parade need to be a bit more conservative in their choices.

"We try to produce a very saleable product," says Chad Wuebben, president of Encore Construction. "We need to make it unique and exciting, but can't spend so much that we price ourselves out of the market." As this article goes to print, the Encore home is still available in the Wolf Hollow development in Windsor. "Keeping

Outdoor fireplaces are replacing traditional fireplaces in some backyards.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BRUISE COMPANY

things neutral isn't necessarily the answer," he says. "You just have to do it well. It has to be a good value."

"We go for a memory point," says Mike Beiersdorff, who's the president of NorthPointe Construction. "You want something about your house to stick in people's minds." This year, it's two things in the North Pointe home. One is a beautiful master suite on the second floor with its own deck. That might not sound all that memorable, but consider the easy-care aspect of a deck made out of recycled plastic. And then there's the view. It's breathtaking.

The second focal point is Brazilian walnut flooring in the dinette, hearth room and main entry. "Most exotic woods are soft, but this is extremely durable," Beiersdorff explains. Practicality is nice, but what will stick in your mind will most likely be the look of the flooring. Full of color, the dense wood boasts a dark red and yellow palette, like walking through autumn woods.

Timberlane Builders president Mike Vilstrup says his Parade home in Wolf Hollow was designed to appeal to the general public, but will strike a special chord with the environmentalists among us. He says the outward appearance is just like any other home but special things hidden behind walls and ceilings protect the occupants from carcinogens, formaldehyde and other by-products of building.

"I believe strongly in green building," says Vilstrup, a charter member of the MABA Green Built Committee. "It's gaining strength and growing in the state."

To become certified as a Healthy Home Reports Residence, all processes from selection of a product, composition of that product, construction methods and installation must meet certain criteria based on the impact to the health of its occupants. The results aren't always visible or obvious, according to Vilstrup, but the process is in place and the outcome is the same — a beautiful home.

Jenny Acker, vice president of Acker Builders, says Acker typically does a lot of arched pass-throughs and took the idea one step further for this year's Parade house. "We used a rounded ceiling in the formal dining room," she explains, adding, "We've seen it done in hotels and other commercial buildings, but not in a home before."

She says the trend in homes is "everything rounded or arched." Acker Builders is doing rounded drywall corners in most homes, along with arched doors and even round rooms. The rounded ceiling in Southbridge was custom-made in Arizona, according to Jenny Acker. "To ensure it was symmetrical we ordered it out of metal." The arch is light brown with striking blue walls underneath. Crown molding and rope lighting add to the overall effect. And at \$1,500, the cost is just double the price of an average tray ceiling. "It's very unique and dramatic," says Acker.

Wayne Acker, president of Acker Builders, adds that houses are more colorful in general than they used to be. Gone are the days of nothing-but-white walls. White does seems to be the new trend for trim, though, according to Acker. "Five years ago, 90 percent of trim was stained," he says. Now the reverse may be true.

The basics, with a twist

In addition to colors and shapes, buyers have not forgotten about the basics. Bathrooms are garnering quite a bit of attention, as well, says Acker. "Two-person showers are gaining in popularity even in medium-end homes," he says. "With body spray." Hmmm.

Wuebben of Encore agrees. "Whirlpool tubs are less important now; we're seeing a shift to nicer showers." He says family rooms are also getting quite a lot of attention. "We're living in a home-based environment and people want comfort at home," he says. With big ►



screen TVs, computers and TiVo, there's no need to leave the house for entertainment anymore.

So is it time to get a home theater? Maybe not. A popular and less expensive trend, according to builders, is to make the lower-level family room into a media room. "It eliminates having to build a separate room with all the additional expense," says Acker. Wuebben agrees, adding, "A separate theater room with graduated seating could add as much as \$60,000 to the cost of the home." And for that price what do you get? A dark room where everyone sits in his or her own leather chair and faces a giant TV. You can't even share the same bucket of popcorn.

Instead, you can install surround sound speakers and mount a large screen TV right there in the family room. You'll get the movie-watching atmosphere (complete with vibrations!) in a room that's more versatile. When you aren't watching TV, you can use the space for something more interactive — like playing cards or having a conversation.

Three sites, three lifestyles

These are the types of amenities that you might find in any of this year's Parade sites, where home prices range from \$449,500 to \$815,000 for most unsold properties. The three sites may differ in location and price range, but each offers the latest in building and decorating styles. "The Parade is an invaluable way