



HELFENSTEINS
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Matt and Shelly are experienced home builders. This is the fourth house that Matt has built and the third house that they have built together. "So we've been through a lot of Parade of Homes," said Shelly.

"We've been through a lot of houses," agreed Matt. "Every house we've been in, we've got ideas."

They had a few core ideas for the design of their new home: maximizing the views of the wetlands behind their new backyard; having bedrooms for their three girls - ages 13, 7, 4 - on one level; and using a similar flow to their previous house. The final design was amalgamation of previous houses, houses they've seen, and ideas from their lumber yard.

Wanting great views of the wetlands - and of the Horseshoe Chain in the distance - when they purchased the lot, before building, they stood on it and tested the views. "Where do we want our main view," recalled Matt, "that's where we want our living room."

They used a similar flow to their last house - i.e. the three-car garage opens into a mud room with a three-stall cubby and adjoining bathroom, walk-in closet, and laundry room, which in turn opens into the kitchen; then you can walk through the dining area to the living room, with the adjoining front door and entryway.

"We liked that flow in our last house," said Matt. "I think that was the starting point of our design."

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In coming up with the design for a two-story house, the location of the stairs (two sets, one up and one down) was critical. The layout of their new house finalized when they designed these stairs leading to a second-story balcony overlooking the living room.

Photo by Michael Jacobson

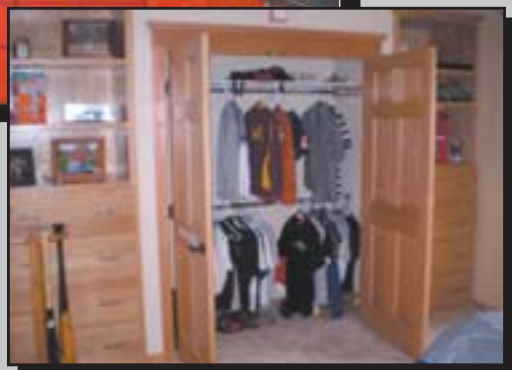


From the second-story balcony, there are views back down to the living room and out the two-story windows to the wetlands behind their house. In the distance, you can see the Horseshoe Chain of Lakes.

Photo by Michael Jacobson

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