



Built for Comfort

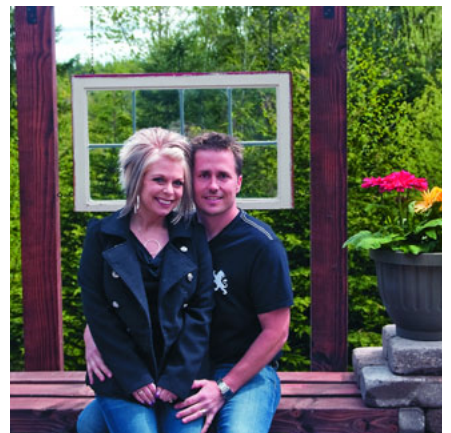
A builder's home fits family's lifestyle, serves as showcase

TEXT BY RODIKA TOLLEFSON PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOM WOLTJER

Any parent who's raised young children (or teenagers, for that matter) is familiar with the challenge of keeping the youngsters in "indoor mode"—no running in the house, no bouncing balls, no using outdoor voices. In the Craig family's Port Orchard home, trying to contain that youthful energy, however, is not an issue. The house has an entire gym with stained concrete floors and basketball court where kids (and adults) can do just about anything they want,

even rollerskate or play soccer if they please.

If playing ping-pong and shooting hoops gets boring, there's always the billiard room or the home theater with the comfy seating, complete with a popcorn machine. And it's not just the kids who can entertain themselves to their hearts' content. Poker night for the guys? There's a room for that. A little tanning for the ladies? There's a room for that too.





The owners of this three-story, 7,500-square-foot home (not counting garages), Kurt and Amy Craig, own Eagle Crest Construction, a 16-year-old business that specializes in custom and spec homes and remodels. The old adage that the cobbler's children have no shoes does not apply to the Craigs — not only did Kurt build the home as a showcase for his clients, the couple have designed their living spaces to fit their family lifestyle.

"We want people walking into the house to feel comfortable. A home can be classy and elegant yet still comfortable," Amy says. "We wanted it designed around our lifestyle."

The process of building their own home is not a lot different ("The customer is always right still," Kurt says) but it gives the flexibility of incorporating features that customers may not consider. Round ►





or square pillars are a signature throughout the home, as are windows that are sheetrocked versus white-painted, wood-wrapped (or trimmed). Architectural details such as an arched window in the family room and master bedroom, a circular staircase, a coffered ceiling and built-in features create the elegance they sought while elements such as stained concrete floors and a spacious deck with an outdoor kitchen provide a bit of a contrasting, casual look.



The top floor of the home includes a guest suite with a bedroom. On clear days, this is one of the many spots with a beautiful view of Mount Rainier. The three children's bedrooms also share this floor, and each reflects the personality of the kids: Their son, who has since left for college, and two daughters (now teenagers) selected their own colors, countertops and other details. The girls share a Jack-and-Jill style bathroom but have separate sinks.

On the main floor, the kitchen provides the focal point, and the space opens up to several other areas including a family room.

"Everything is based around the kitchen. We wanted an open view but separate rooms so during parties, people can have separate areas (for mingling)," Kurt says.

The generously sized master bedroom, at 800 square feet on its main level, is every couple's dream home retreat. A fireplace, "his and her" sinks and separate walk-in closets are among the features, and everything is meticulously organized.

"I like things a certain way, and Kurt is awesome and organized too," Amy says.

Amy's 200-square-foot closet, in a downstairs nook, is a show-and-tell of her personality. Purses displayed on built-in shelves, a mix of spa and pendant lighting, a couch and other creative details give the closet a boutique look but the space is comfortable enough for visitors like mothers with babies who need a quiet, private space.

The closet was the only architectural change the couple have made to the home, unlike the décor, which changes frequently. It was originally a shop space, accessible from a separate door, but the Craigs found that their shared master bedroom closet was too small. Besides, "I like projects," Kurt says. So he remodeled two years ago.

One of the best-used areas of the home, besides the gym, is the home theater that can seat as many as 20. The theater is located in the basement, which is all about fun — it also houses a sitting area with a bistro table, a wine cellar, ►







plus tanning, poker and game/arcade rooms.

In the summer time, the outdoor kitchen is likely to win the popularity contest with adults. Complete with a barbecue, sink, storage and large seating area, the tranquil deck overlooks the terraced backyard and pond, which has four waterfalls.

One feature was a must when the Craigs designed their home: a home office. As the owner of Eagle Crest Construction, Kurt has been operating a growing business while Amy helps out with the administrative side. Having a "30-second commute" has allowed the couple to be flexible and active in their children's lives.

"I've been fortunate to go to basketball games and field trips, and not many dads can do that," Kurt says. "It gives me a lot of freedom to do office work without leaving." ➤



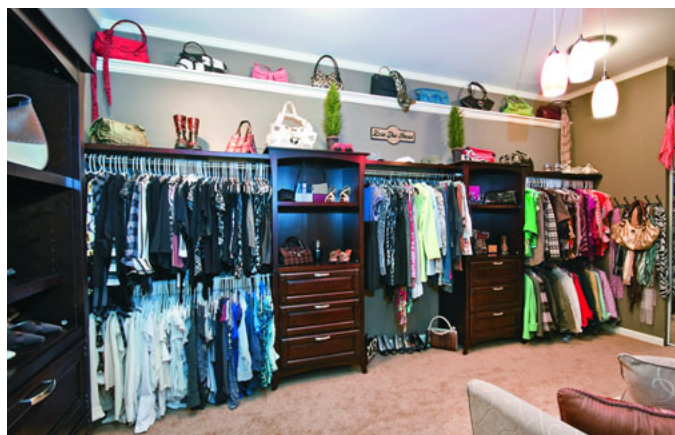
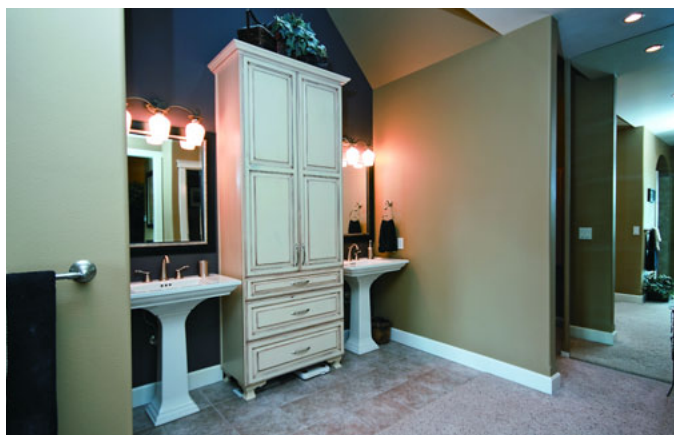
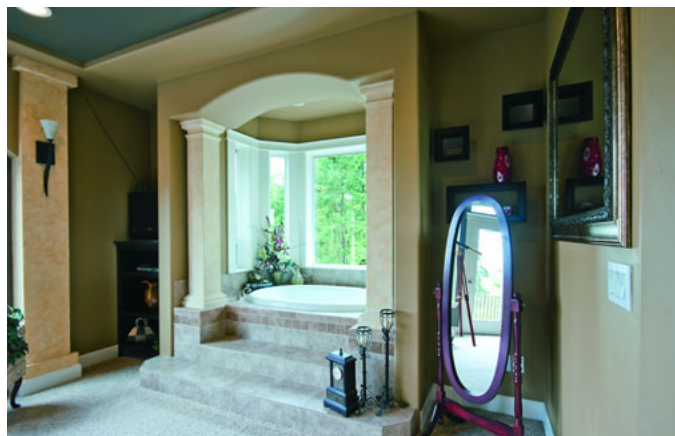


The couple, South Kitsap High School grads and high school sweethearts, have built several family homes together. With this newest home, built six years ago, they've learned from their own mistakes.

"Our last house just wasn't as comfortable. It was very formal and traditional," Amy says.

A testimony to the fact they accomplished their vision of a comfortable space is the popularity of their home. Not only do they host various functions (including fundraisers with as many as 150 people), the home is popular with family members.

"Our house gets used for other people's baby showers, weddings and parties often," Kurt says. "So many people feel



comfortable with our house to use it, they don't find it stuffy."

Amy and Kurt both say building a home is 90 percent about creativity but being veteran homebuilders means they don't have to get hung up on details when building their own home. "I just know what goes together," says Kurt, who's been in the industry for 21 years. "It doesn't have to be the most expensive product to be the best choice."

Because of that low-key approach, and their deep trust in each other, the Craigs say they didn't have any disagreements as they designed and built the project. Well... maybe one small incident, having to do with the main color, a unique golden tone that is used throughout the home, although every room also has its own color.

Amy saw some photos in a magazine and really liked the color. "He was skeptical but I liked it," she says. When she showed Kurt photos and assured him it would look great, he went along despite the risky move.

"I generally wouldn't be that bold in a color throughout the home," he says.

It was a wining decision. "We get nothing but compliments on this color," Kurt says.

The compliments certainly don't stop there. More than a few customers have asked for certain features in their homes after seeing them in the Craig house. Which, of course, was the idea.

While the 5-acre property — with outdoor features just as beautiful as the inside — has served the family well, the Craigs know they'll likely have to sell once their youngest daughter graduates from high school. Nearly 5,000 square feet of space is just too much for two people. When the time comes, rest assured their next home will be just as creative — and reflective of whatever their new lifestyle will bring. And just like with the rest of the homes they built for themselves or their customers, it will be something they will be proud to show off.

