



# Couple Builds Their Forever Home

LENEXA'S FALCON VALLEY PROVIDED THE PERFECT LOCATION FOR AREA COUPLE

ARTICLE LISA ALLEN | PHOTOGRAPHY BRANDON SCHULTZ



Today is someday for Joan and Phil Cansler.

Nestled in their new home in Lenexa, Joan says that even though they'd gone through the custom building process once before, there were certain features that they both agreed they'd include in a new home, someday, when and if they built again.

"We are fireplace nuts," says Joan, who explains the couple always wanted to have a see-through fireplace between the master bedroom and master bath vanity. In addition to the master bedroom fireplace, their new home has three others. It also features a neutral grey base of wall color and kitchen tiling, which Joan says accomplishes two of her main goals.





"I wanted serenity. We've been so busy and on the go, that I just wanted a feeling of peace. If I was doing this at another time in our lives, I might have opted for more color, but this is so perfect for us right now. I also feel like this grey is open to any other color, so it gives me freedom to decorate. It looks great with my oranges in the fall, and with my holiday decorations at Christmas."

It's not just the color palette that makes the home a chameleon. Joan and Phil both put extensive thought into not just what they wanted in their home today, but in what they might need in the future.

"We want to stay here forever," says Joan. "We don't want to have to worry about stairs if we're unable to navigate steps and we want to be able to access everything even if we're in a wheelchair." Their planning resulted in doorways that are handicapped accessible and a separate living area and kitchen in the lower level should they ever need someone to live with them to provide care.

"The downstairs can be an apartment on its own, if necessary," says Phil. "We looked at this place in terms of 20 years down the road more so than any other place we've ever lived."

The couple credits their builder, Don Julian Builders, with helping them create a home that not only gives them peace of mind when thinking of the future, but also perfectly suits their lifestyle needs today.

"We were looking at places and considering different options, and Phil took a look at Julian's Cambridge model. He came home and told me that I was going to love it," says Joan. "I looked and it was very nice, but I'm just not a cookie cutter type of person. We took that plan and moved things around. I love that the staircase is now in front, because it gives us a little drama, and we omitted the dining room. Instead, we enlarged the eating space so that it's worthy of guests."

"It could be a six bedroom home," says Joan. "We're only using it as a three bedroom home." One of those bedrooms is what Joan jokingly calls a 'man cave', but Phil insists is a multi-media room. Regardless of the moniker, it's a perfect place to watch games and settle into a recliner to relax. The couple opted to remove the shower in the guest bedroom and instead made it accessible from two sides, which added additional room to the multi-media room.

Pinpointing a favorite element of their new home is like asking them to name a favorite child.

"There were so many great people, I felt that I was working with friends," says Joan, speaking of the Don Julian Builder's team and extended team of subcontractors. "Don, Jeff Horn and John Dailey ran the project. I promised John though I had a million reasons to call with questions, I would never call more than once a day so we would have a 'daily' call."





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Joan credits Dan for his touch up magic as well as staff members at Wilson Lighting, Complete Home Concepts, LandMasters Inc., Stonebridge, Teague Electric, Harrington Brothers Heating and Cooling and Lawrence Glass & Mirror with each giving their own personal touch to make their house a home.

Joan lauds the team for always listening to her ideas but for also explaining why something could or could not be done. The kitchen pantry is an example of how well they worked together; Joan wanted a larger pantry and for the lighting to come on without having to flick a switch.

"It's a little thing, but so helpful when my hands are full," says Joan. We added a foot, which went into the garage, and I compromised by having to open both doors before the light kicks on. I didn't even realize that what I was asking was such a project, until the cabinet maker came and said 'Oh, you're the one!'"

"When you start looking at details, one thing leads to another," says Phil. "Even though we took this off a plan it was more of a custom build. There are so many more options now than the first time we built. Whether it is lighting or plumbing, there's much more detail now to plow through and make decisions about than there was the first time. The first time we went pretty much by the model. For this house, Joan really looked at every element and made it ours."

A perfect example of the customization process, says Phil, is the lighting throughout the home.



"I think it was the most fun part for Joan," he says. Joan points out that right upon entering the home, you see four major lighting fixtures. Her goal was to make them 'go together' but not match.

"Looking for lighting is like looking for candy or jewelry for the room," says Joan. "I wanted something with a little drama,

something a little different than what you might see on other homes. Like the home, I don't think this lighting will date itself. I think we'll still be very happy with it 10 years down the road."

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