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A TOWERING ACHIEVEMENT

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TAKING CUES FROM A HISTORIC WATER TOWER
ON SITE, HENDEL HOMES ANCHORS A GRAND NEW
HOME AROUND TWO STONE TOWERS.

► BY CAMILLE LEFEVRE | PHOTOS BY GREG PAGE ◀

AS PHILANTHROPISTS AND EXPECTANT grandparents, the long-married couple loved their location on Christmas Lake in Shorewood. The hilly topography provided spectacular views of the pristine lake during charity events, while access to the lake provided an ideal setting for long weekends of swimming, boating, and conversing around the patio. One problem: Their house was no longer big enough to accommodate entertaining or family get-togethers.

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RIGHT: Parabolic-arched windows enhance the space's light and drama, while the balcony houses cozy reading areas with built-in shelves and daybeds.



ABOVE: The lower-level entertainment area includes a movie theater, bar, pool table, and areas for showering and changing after a swim in the lake.

So the couple contracted with Hendel Homes in Wayzata to tear down their old house and build a new one with an old-world, European aesthetic. “They wanted a new, larger home that didn’t feel like a new house,” explains Rick Hendel, owner of Hendel Homes. “They wanted their home to feel as though it had been at this location for a long time.”

Taking a cue from a historic water tower at the upper edge of the site, Hendel and his team began by designing a stone tower — banded with clerestory windows at the top under a peaked cap — around which the rest of the house unfolds. “The notion was to build the rest of the house around a tower that looks ‘old’ and ‘historic,’ that looks like it was built out of solid stone,” Hendel says.

The tower anchors the house’s formal façade, with arched windows and doors, decorative roof peaks, synthetic slate roof, stone pillars, and a livery-stable-style garage. Meanwhile, the back of the house features

expansive windows that provide panoramic lake views and allow sunlight to flood the interior of the home. The tower also houses the staircase that connects the house’s main living spaces, with four second-story bedrooms, baths, a study, a library/office and the lower-level entertainment areas.

With its open interior, stone walls and massive beams of reclaimed wood, Hendel explains, “the tower looks as if we carved it out just leaving the structure and the staircase.” Reclaimed timber, in fact, continues throughout the interior of the 8,000-square-foot home, in which Tudor, English and French design elements are combined.

The house’s dramatic cathedral ceilings, complete with flying buttresses, were constructed from reclaimed barn siding that was hand-hewn, planed, and refinished. Reclaimed chestnut was used for the kitchen ceiling and the mantle in the adjacent hearth room. Mortise-and-tenon



ABOVE: The kitchen features an armoire, designed by Hendel Homes, to house the refrigerator and the freezer. Furniture-like components also hide the sinks and cabinets. A 14-foot-long butcher-block table with walnut, checkerboard inlay provides a large workspace with a rustic feel.

joinery, with wooden pegs, was used to convey authentic old-world detailing.

“The level of detail throughout the house is just astounding,” Hendel says. “They really pushed us to detail every little thing. Everything is custom designed.” In the kitchen, for instance, Hendel designed an armoire for the refrigerator and the freezer, furniture-like components for sinks and cabinets, and a 14-foot-long butcher-block table with walnut, checkerboard inlay.

Hendel Homes designed a custom iron door for the wine cellar off the kitchen; a floor medallion of holly wood; and a door for the elevator carved with the family’s crest. Gold accents on cabinets and fixtures enhance the formal master bath. Hendel Homes also developed a unique finish for the hand-scraped walnut floors and the ironwork. They also crafted a cat door in the laundry room, and constructed a custom-designed dog kennel in the mudroom.

“While the house is extensively detailed,” Hendel says, “the homeowners also insisted the house be very useful and practical.” The lower level, which has walk-out access to the lake, has tile and stone floors for easy cleanup. The sauna, toilets, showers, and dressing areas all have separate doors for privacy. The laundry room is on the lower level. And the spacious bar, media room, and pool area all accommodate large groups of people. “We incorporated everything you need for lake-style living,” Hendel says.

The biggest challenge: the site, which changes more than 100 feet in elevation. “So we designed the house to nestle into the hill,” Hendel says, “and you can walk out on three different levels, which adds intrigue.” Indeed, old-world intrigue permeates this new home, with its stone arches, dark woods, iron sconces, five fireplaces, and grandly arched ceilings. “In many ways, it’s like a castle,” Hendel says, “but designed for a contemporary lifestyle.” LD



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LEFT: In the great room, the homeowners asked for a parabolic-arch window to enhance the space’s light and drama.