

FUNCTION *Marries* STYLE In This English-Inspired Home

WRITER LISA MULKA • PHOTOGRAPHER BETH SINGER



a quiet bellow from neighboring cattle and the subtle flutter of wings from fowl overhead is the idyllic backdrop for one couple's dream home. Though just minutes away from downtown Ann Arbor, the aptly named Cutcombe House is full of pastoral views reminiscent of the rural English countryside inspiring its creation.

Descending from Cutcombe, a parish in Somerset just beyond the Bristol Channel, homeowners Richard and Mary Jo Marsh longed to blend Richard's ancestry and admiration for British history with modern appeal when building their dream home.

To help them achieve old English style with a modern feel, the homeowners called upon Chizek Custom Builders and Classic Lines Interior Design to craft the home of their dreams. From the Cotswald Cottage-inspired limestone exterior to the interior's quarter-sawn white oak floors, a collaborative process between the builder, interior designer and homeowners reveals a contemporary home rich with traditional English character.

"We wanted it to feel like an old English house with large, comfortable furniture," says Mary Jo. Armed with a scrapbook of design ideas, Mary Jo worked closely with David Pulice of Classic Lines Interior Design to devise a style that was truly comfortable and customized. "Comfort is key. It's not a museum," says David. "Everything is usable and durable, while still being authentic and current." With four dogs sharing the home, Mary Jo knew she wanted a space that was both stylish and

livable. From ultra suede upholstered furniture to solid oak flooring, the home is a perfect blend of practical and aesthetic value.

David describes the process of design as identifying a common denominator in a homeowner's vision and marrying it with function and style, which is exactly how he approached the design of the Cutcombe House. Using hand-made tiles to frame the window above the sink instead of traditional moldings makes kitchen clean up a breeze and adds architectural detail, while the deep farmers sink anchors the kitchen and provides plenty of space for dishwashing. The large granite countertop welcomes a host of family and friends to gather, dine and converse—the very atmosphere the homeowners wanted. The laundry room also bolsters a deep basin sink, made unique by an icy green hue and antique fixtures, epitomizing the powerful combination of convenience and style.

No detail was left untouched during the building process as each contractor collaborated to create a cohesive space. An alcove was added to the hallway leading to the master suite specifically to house a particular bookcase, and a custom chair rail in the dining room mimics lines of the homeowner's hutch, giving the home customized features with architectural interest.

Whether observed in the coffered ceiling paired with light and dark hues of neutral paints or the latticework cleverly enhancing walls, the collaboration between Classic Lines Interior Design and

Chizek Custom Builders presents a space with astounding function and aesthetic flair.

Establishing old English allure was imperative in the design and build, but so too was staying true to the local and regional community. Chizek Custom Builders worked with the homeowners to select Michigan products and local craftsman. "The stone is from a quarry in the thumb area," notes Richard. "It was great to know that it was local to Michigan." The white oak floors also hail from Michigan and all major suppliers used in the build were Michigan-based.

While local products played a role in the building process, it was the collaboration, communication and attention to detail that made Chizek Custom Builders the ideal fit for the homeowners. "The detail and patience to achieve that look is just incredible," says Mary Jo of the custom-cut molding surrounding the fireplace. The home also boasts an impressive library with alder woodwork taking months of craftsmanship to complete. Mindful of creativity and budget, alder remnants from the library were transformed into ceiling medallions and coffered ceilings, fully uniting the home's design. "They worked with us on everything," notes Mary Jo.

From historical inspirations to an atmosphere of comfort, the Marsh's home is exactly the way they envisioned it. Mary Jo shares her delight in the words of a recent visitor who told her, "Your house feels so comfortable." "That is a superb compliment!" says Mary Jo. □



OPPOSITE PAGE: The exterior of the Cutcombe House draws inspiration from England's Cotswold Cottages with characteristic rooflines and limestone.

ABOVE: Built-in cabinetry framing an arched walkway unites the kitchen and sitting room, making it the perfect place for family and friends to gather.

BELOW: Warm wood complements white cabinetry and green-hued granite, giving the kitchen old English charm.



Classically inspired design for thoughtful living.



TOP LEFT: A wall of windows paired with a vaulted beamed ceiling gives an airy accent to the sunroom, making it one of the homeowners' most frequented rooms for relaxation.

MIDDLE LEFT: Coffered ceilings and Michigan limestone enhance the living room's comfortable atmosphere.

BOTTOM LEFT: Alder ceiling accents and unique wall treatments add classical flair to the dining room.

TOP RIGHT: White oak floors and artfully arranged English-inspired furniture give the living room complete comfort while reinforcing the flow of the home's open-concept design.

INSET: The laundry room is the epitome of style and function with cubbies integrated into the cabinetry and a washbasin specifically designed for the homeowners dogs.



ABOVE: When the homeowners ran out of space to house all of their books, the decision to build a new home was ignited. The true muse behind the homes creation is a stunning Winston Churchill library, featuring handcrafted alder woodwork, custom lighting, and historical-inspired furniture.

BOTTOM LEFT: A tray ceiling with subtle lighting casts the master bedroom in a brilliant glow.

BOTTOM RIGHT: The master bath boasts double pedestal sinks and a freestanding tub, while the neutral color palate creates flawless elegance.



ABOVE: An alder paneled staircase and grand chandelier creates a warm welcoming to the front entry.
 BELOW: Classical elements combine to create a welcoming retreat.

Cabinetry: STUDIO 2000
Flooring: ANN ARBOR CARPETS FLOORING AMERICA
Home Automation: ARCHITECTURAL MEDIA SYSTEMS



Bob Chizek Builders

PRINCIPAL OWNER (S):
 Robert Chizek and Daniel Chizek

NUMBER OF YEARS IN BUSINESS:
 1975

YEAR BUSINESS STARTED:
 36

EDUCATION:

Chizek Custom Builders is a third generation builder and Robert holds more than 35 years of on-site experience, continuing trade education and certifications. Robert is also a licensed realtor and studied art at the Brooks Institute. Daniel earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Building Construction Management from Michigan State University.

BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY:

We believe custom homebuilding extends far beyond brick and mortar; it is the relationships, loyalty and trust developed collaboratively that create an exceptional home. With three generations of experience, Chizek Custom Builders offers inclusive customer service, sophisticated workmanship and integrity to ensure your homebuilding experience is as customized as the final product.

WHAT SETS YOUR BUSINESS APART?

Chizek Custom Builders focuses on the subtleties in the custom building process and the interpersonal interactions with homeowners. We believe that housing is one of the foundational blocks to the American experience and we invest our heart and soul in each project with sincerity and honest effort. Our style is one of guided leadership built on a solid foundation of expert craftsmanship, attention to detail, creative design and collaboration—creating both a superior homebuilding experience and final product.

HOBBIES, VOLUNTEERISM, ETC. :

Robert is active in national, state and local home builders associations and is part of the board of directors for the Builders and Remodelers Association of Greater Ann Arbor. He serves on multiple housing committees at the state level and regularly contributes both his time and expertise to the Ann Arbor Student Building Industry Program and the Ann Arbor Board of Realtors.

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