

GREAT LAKE STORY

FINAL CHAPTER: HOME AT LAST

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Though it will be another couple years before Jim retires and we move the rest of our furnishings from Peoria to live full-time in South Haven, nothing feels more like truth than this: We're home.

Over the Fourth of July, we began moving things into our new house at The Boardwalk. I'm putting together an album now of photos taken during our first couple months here to share one day with Tyler, already almost a year old!

Born just this past February, he won't remember his first summer here — the first time he touched sand, or heard Lake Michigan's big waves, or watched the sun set with his parents.

But when he's older, I'll tell this amazing first grandchild of ours stories of how Jim and I (who



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHNNY QUIRIN
ILLUSTRATIONS BY GARY W. ODMARK



Originally the bluff from which this open development was created steeped almost straight up off Lake Michigan's shore. Developer and builder David C. Bos Homes pushed the bluff back and sculpted it into three "tiers."

Because of this site design, every home enjoys a sweeping, unhindered view of Lake Michigan.

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have known each other since kindergarten!) vacationed to West Michigan with our own parents as kids growing up in South Bend.

I'll tell him how his Grandpa and I have felt connected for that long to Lake Michigan. And I'll explain how — even though we had over time built four other houses — we had forever dreamed of building one last, special home right along this shoreline, so that our own daughters, Jenna and Jamie, could come enjoy the same traditions we did on this Great Lake with their families, too.

Maybe that's why — like Tyler — this "new" house at The Boardwalk feels as though it has always been a part of our lives.

The other truth is that a very talented team custom-crafted it to reflect us, which allows us to begin living our dream.

GETTING HERE

First of all, I'm not sure if we will ever get used to this view!

The gentleman who delivered our barstools yesterday just looked out at it from our kitchen windows, and asked, did we know we had bought the best lot at The Boardwalk?

The way our builder, David C. Bos, has staggered this street of homes, ours actually sits forward a bit more toward the lake.

Top left: Seedy Baroque glass in the Budas' custom-stained wood front door reflects light.

A screened "outdoor" living room in the home's north wing master suite offers the warmth and glow of sunset and a fireplace.

Top right: Visible through the dining room, a screened dining porch caters to Jim and Susan's love of cooking, entertaining and being outdoors.

Opposite page: Facing Lake Michigan on the main floor, twin cathedral screened porches create lake-breeze retreats off interior rooms — Jim's office (which adjoins the master suite), and the kitchen. They also each open to an unscreened porch off the living room.

"These spaces combined are great for entertaining a lot of people," said architect Wayne Visbeen, "or can be closed off to become more intimate." Porches are made from Fiberon composite decking and railing with composite white beadboard panels from HB&G.

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LANDSCAPE
DESIGNER
JEREMY BAKKER
CREATED A
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EDGE.



Above: Situated on the home's south side with convenient access to the butler's pantry and a sweeping view of Lake Michigan, Jim's custom grilling area is equipped with a 48-inch grill, warming drawer and side burner from Viking, purchased at Bekins Appliance Inc.

Opposite page: Designed by architect Wayne Visbeen, AIA, IIDA, the Budas' East Coast-inspired home features high-wind resistant windows from Andersen, cement clapboard, cement shakes, stone and Certainteed-brand shingles built to sustain up to 110-mile-per-hour gusts. Core building products for the Buda residence came from Pro-Build.

Landscape designer Jeremy Bakker created a large, flowing bed stocked with masses of perennials, beach grasses, shrubs and a paving stone fire pit closer to the bluff's edge, facing page.

Below: A special thank you to Zeigler BMW of Kalamazoo for sponsoring our sharing of this Great Lake Story.

Nothing obstructs our view of it in either direction – we just feel surrounded by water and sky.

I love looking out at neighboring houses, too. With their varying rooflines and stone porches, balconies and white trim, there's a sense they haven't been just newly built, but risen up instead over generations. Our own home feels this way, too – except for spaces not yet filled by what's still in Peoria.

Like my Italian hutch.

Melissa, probably even more than Jim, knows the empty nook created for it in our foyer is driving me completely crazy! Every time I see this bare wall by our front door, I imagine what I could be displaying on my beautiful hutch's shelves – which souvenirs from our travels, or seasonal keepsakes.

So much I'd like everything in its place, right now! But I guess time is going by fast enough.

It doesn't seem so long ago that Jim and I were meeting Melissa de Alvare for the first time. As one of Bos Homes' preferred interior designers, she'd detailed a particular model we love at The Boardwalk, and we'd requested her when we learned building in this David C. Bos community included design guidance.

From start to finish, it has truly been a team effort.





Designed with guests in mind, the lower level family room opens to a paving stone patio and stainless steel grill with custom exhaust surrounded by the home's exterior stone, Aspen Country Ledge stone. It's an easy and scenic spot to grill up lunch while sandy feet find their way back from the beach. Nearby, a compass rose created by landscape artisan Jeremy Bakker offers fragrant appeal and flavorful herbs.

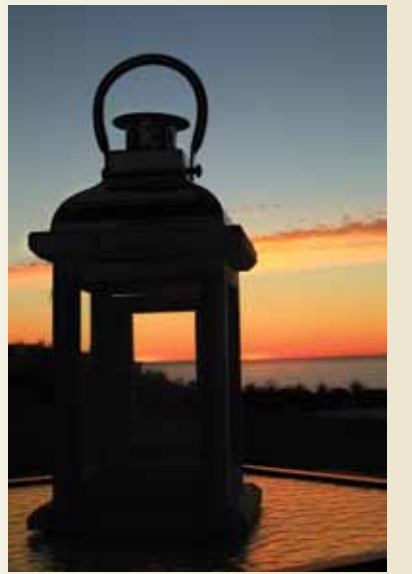
In the beginning, both David and our visionary architect, Wayne Visbeen, worked closely with us to create our custom home's design. Then Melissa held our hands after the plan was laid, fine-tuning details along the way and simplifying countless choices we had to make.

Getting to know us as well as she did – especially during long summer weekends we spent at her design studio in Holland – she became invaluable to us.

There were so many considerations! Just the number of new products that have emerged on the market alone since we built our home in Peoria eight years ago was amazing; we wished we could have included then the kinds of maintenance-free materials our Boardwalk home has now!



"NOTHING OBSTRUCTS OUR VIEW OF (THE LAKE) IN EITHER DIRECTION — WE JUST FEEL SURROUNDED BY WATER AND SKY."





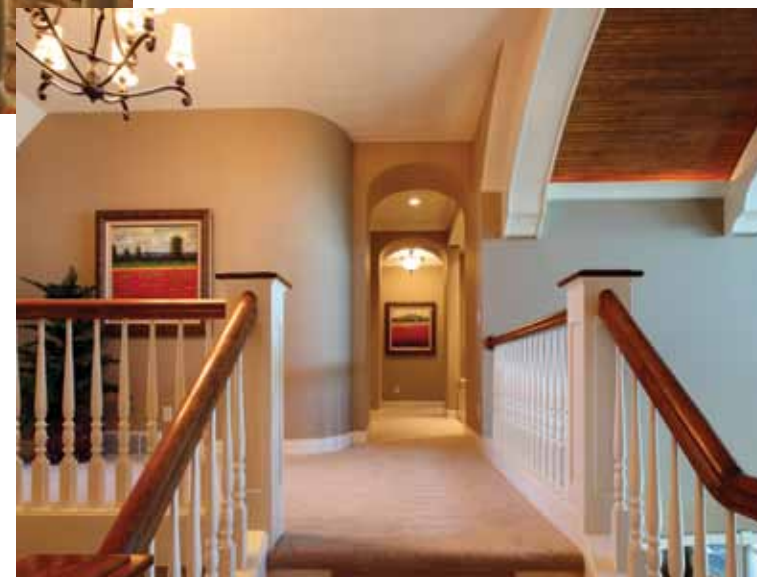
Opposite page: Fashioned by masonry John Potts, an elegant stone fireplace with hand-crafted hickory mantel tapers up to the two-story space's custom barrel-vaulted ceiling. Bos Homes' carpentry team built the arched beams and finished the vault with various lengths of pine panel bead. "The beams are decorative," noted job superintendent Ken Vander Zee. "But they also hide end joints of the bead paneling." A raised radius hearth echoes the home's arch theme.

Interior designer Melissa de Alvare chose indirect cove lighting and wall-washing recessed lights to highlight architectural features and create inviting ambience at night.

Below: Bos Homes' carpenters echoed the grand barrel vault with a rounded wall on the upstairs landing. En route down the hall to a spacious guest suite and the theater room, a nook with built-in shelves displaying family photos and an inviting, cushioned seat lend warmth, left bottom.



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Right: Open to both the living room and kitchen beneath a pair of elliptical archways, with a windowed view through the screened porch to Lake Michigan, the dining room balances formality with friendliness. De Alvare selected a richer wall shade and a combination of lights – cove and recessed on separate dimmers, with candlestick lamps on the sideboard – to create warmth and intimacy between the kitchen’s openness and living room’s volume.



Right and opposite page: Jim and Susan’s kitchen includes a variety of custom features and top-grade appliances from Bekins, from a six-burner Wolf range and armoire-styled Sub-Zero refrigerator to a Miele steam oven – a favorite convenience for preparing healthy meals. The highlight for Susan is a majestic hood, custom-crafted by Bos carpenters: “I did a lot of research beforehand,” she said. “I knew I wanted a mantel-style hood for displaying and switching out large platters I collect.”

Working with Randy Reuter from Rycenga’s, de Alvare flanked the hood with pull-out spice racks and corbels from DuraSupreme, then had it painted antique white with an espresso glaze to match the Budas’ cabinetry. Bos Homes’ carpenters crafted the furniture-style crown molding, stained to match the kitchen’s hickory floor, from ID9 in Holland.

Both avid cooks, Jim and Susan enjoy when family and friends assist or stay near to converse. To accommodate everyone and make the most of a panoramic lake view, Visbeen designed a spacious, half-rounded island with raised bar and angled it 45 degrees, which allows the cooks views into the dining and living rooms, too: “They’re always part of the action,” he says. The island also offers an expanse of prep space; all countertops are non-porous quartz.

Meanwhile, a custom-upholstered, built-in booth with hand-hewn, black cherry table (opposite page, bottom) is an inviting spot to drink coffee and read the paper or watch TV on an ultra-thin flat screen; built-in shutters from Great Lake Window Coverings add character and the right amount of light.



We talked a lot, too, of the future.

Though we enjoy working out in the yard, we realize the day will come when we can’t. So beyond ensuring we were building a house that could stand against the harsh winds, weather and winters of Lake Michigan, we wanted a landscape that would emerge more beautifully one year after the next alongside it, too.

Here, Jeremy Bakker from Landscape Design Services gave us a hand – his team has done all of The Boardwalk’s properties so far, including shared space



and development of the dune. His knowledge of what grows and thrives in these elements is indispensable.

Combined with this sweeping lake view, homes and land flow together so naturally, it's gorgeous! But what we love most is that Jeremy personalized our own green spaces – from a compass rose and herb garden to masses of colorful perennials, dune grasses and flowering shrubs.



We have roots here already.

WHAT WE SEE

Jim and I were sitting in the family room, by the fireplace, just us two the night before friends were arriving for the weekend. He looked out the big window toward the water and said, “You know, this place is just really neat, isn't it?”

A hallway outside of the kitchen leads to three efficient spaces: A walk-in storage pantry with programmable Miele coffee station (not pictured); Susan's personal office (above) and a butler's pantry (left). Equipped with an ice-maker, wine cooler, dishwasher and integrated Corian prep sink, this area services Jim's outdoor grilling kitchen, just outside the door. It also functions as a bar, and offers abundant storage space.

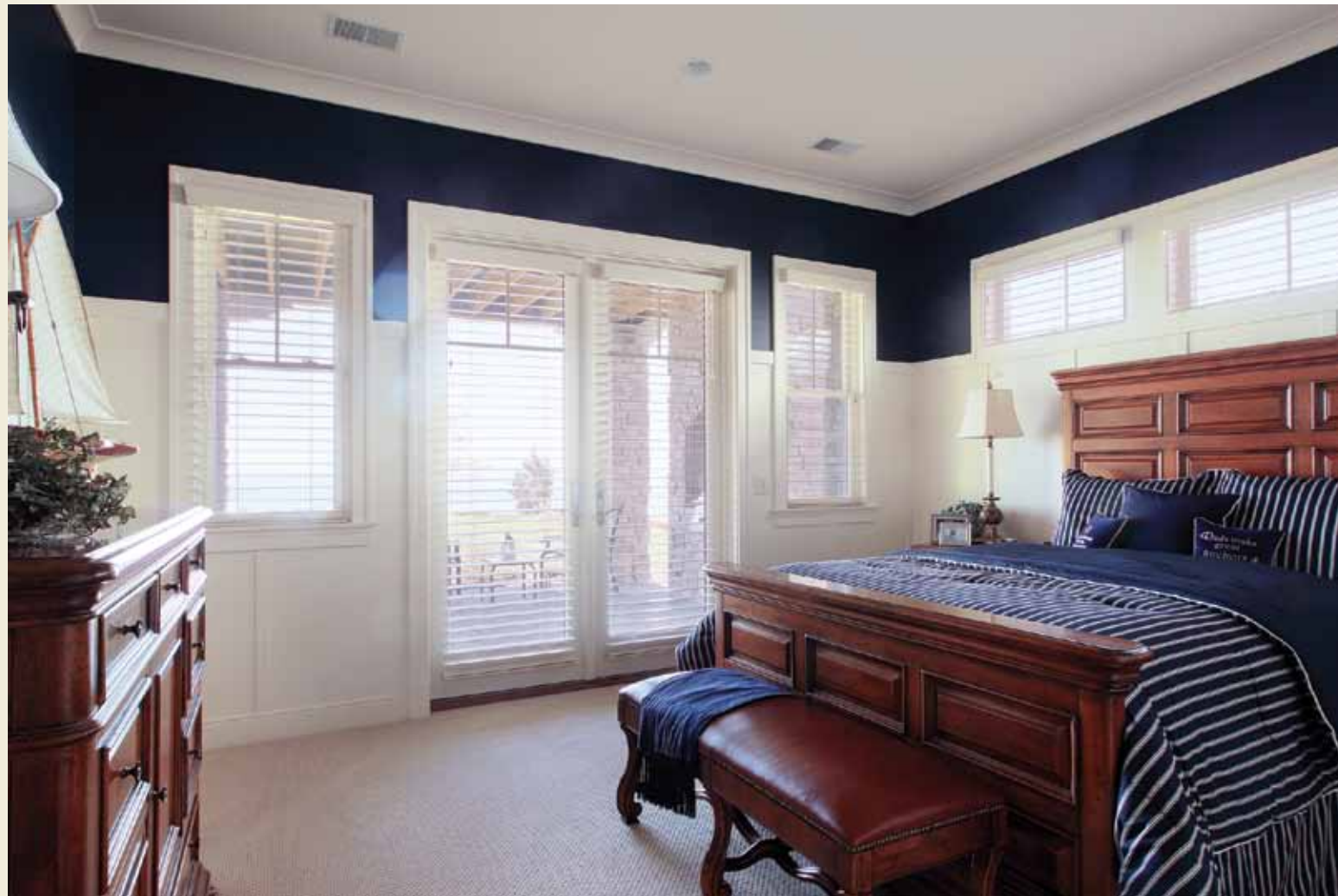
Being this close to Lake Michigan does make this home very special to us. But so does everything inside of it.

While we had expected a high standard of quality – and we are picky – we have to admit Bos Homes exceeded our expectations. We notice the craftsmanship, attention to detail and artistry in every room, every time we enter it.

This we credit to Ken Vander Zee. He's been Bos Homes' job superintendent for 37 years, and oversees every bit of the construction process. We had our punch list, then he had his. He was even fussier than we were – we loved him! We always felt he viewed our home as if it were his own.

The same could be said for Bos Homes' entire team of craftspeople. Watching any of them at work – masonry John Potts puzzling each stone into place, or “Ernie” (Dave Ernst) creating our three-story staircase from piles of wood, or head carpenter

The Budas' lower level includes two guest suites with full baths on either side of a shared family room; an exercise room; a wet bar with two refrigerator drawers, a dishwasher drawer and icemaker; and, tucked beneath the staircase, a coffee station with microwave.



Jeff Roberson and his crew crafting our barrel-vaulted ceiling more than 20 feet off the ground – gives us a whole new level of appreciation for this home’s quality and beauty.

I remember these people when I look around my house, and I think of this:

Once when Jim and I were traveling in Venice, we bought a little print from an artist. The artist gave us a map, and said, “Here, let me mark for you where I did this painting.” Wouldn’t it be fun, we thought, to see the location that inspired our new art? So we began following the trail, crossing one canal after another... and then another...and then another, until Jim observed that this journey was a lot more quest than it was fun.

Above: One of two guest bedrooms on the lower level, this space offers easy access to the outdoor patio through French doors. Board and baton on the walls here is a nostalgic nod to cottage construction a couple generations ago, de Alvare said: “The boards were put up as extra protection against sand and other elements.”

“MELISSA HELD OUR HANDS AFTER THE PLAN WAS LAID, FINE-TUNING DETAILS ALONG THE WAY AND SIMPLIFYING COUNTLESS CHOICES WE HAD TO MAKE.”



I had to agree, but urged him to cross just one more canal with me. On the other side, we found ourselves standing within the picture we had up till that point only carried with us.

You see? I’ll tell Tyler one day. Every part of our home was carried to fruition by inspired artisans on a shared quest!

And then, we’ll go play on the beach. Because the real art, of course, is in living...beautifully.

This is the final chapter of Jim and Susan Budas home-building journey at The Boardwalk in South Haven, Mich., a David C. Bos shoreline community. Each chapter is posted on the www.miblue.com Web site, where you’ll also learn of all the team members that helped the Buda’s achieve their dream.



Left: Accessed from the garage and a “friends’ entry” on the home’s south side, a ceramic tiled mudroom features a built-in, furniture-style bench with built-in storage cubbies crafted by Bos Homes carpenters.

Above: Though theater rooms are typically situated on lower levels, the Budas opted to transform their second-story bonus room into a hi-tech retreat for games and movies. Equipped by Bekins Appliances Inc., this room also features day-block blinds and stage curtains by Great Lakes Window Coverings, who worked with Bekins to integrate them into theater programming so that when the movie starts, lights dim and the blinds come down. Eight luxe recliners from Hegg’s, tiered in two rows to allow everyone a clear view of the big screen.