



On Budget and On Time



Fine Line Home in Winfield created a dream home in the country for owners Barbara and Jim Scheifley, seen in the photo at lower right. They say Fine Line delivered their feature-filled home on budget and on time and couldn't say enough about the whole experience.

Area couple say Fine Line delivered on house in country

By LORENA BENIQUEZ
Sun-Gazette Correspondent

When Barbara and Jim Scheifley wanted a new home in the country, they started shopping around for a contractor. They met with a few but, in the end, Fine Line Homes in Winfield won them over. "They are very honest with you and there were no hidden prices," said Jim.

Winning the Scheifleys favor was no easy feat because Jim was a former building contractor who is now retired. "Their standard (construction) options are what other builders offer as extras," he said. Barb added, "They have excellent quality and they are easy to work with and amenable to any changes. Anything you have in mind they try to incorporate it."

The couple moved into their Pine

Creek Township home in March 2016. The build started in fall 2015 and took six months to complete. "It was done on budget and on time," Jim said.

The new homeowners chose Fine Line Home's Clarkesville model with three bedrooms and two full baths. "This floor plan is perfect for us. It's all one level and we have a screened in porch so we can relax," said Jim.

There were some modifications made from the Clarkesville's original plans. For instance, the kitchen sink was eliminated from the kitchen island. "I just wanted all that space to work on," said Barbara.

The sink was moved to a nearby wall, which yielded additional cupboard space and a half wall. It also allowed for more space underneath the island since plumbing was eliminated. As a result, there was room for an oversized pull-out drawer to hold pots and pans.

Additional changes were made to the kitchen. "We wanted a gas stove instead of an electric and they gave us a deduction," said Jim.

The modern kitchen is not only functional but also beautiful. Maple cabinets with a ginger snap stain are complemented by granite countertops and stainless steel appliances.

Surprisingly for Barb, her treasured part of the kitchen is not even visible. "My favorite feature is the pantry. There is so much room for equipment," she said with a big smile.

For Jim, his favorite part of the home isn't hard to miss. "I like the living room and kitchen's open concept," he said. He added that guests can easily converse from across the space.

One of the standout elements of the living room is a gas fireplace surrounded

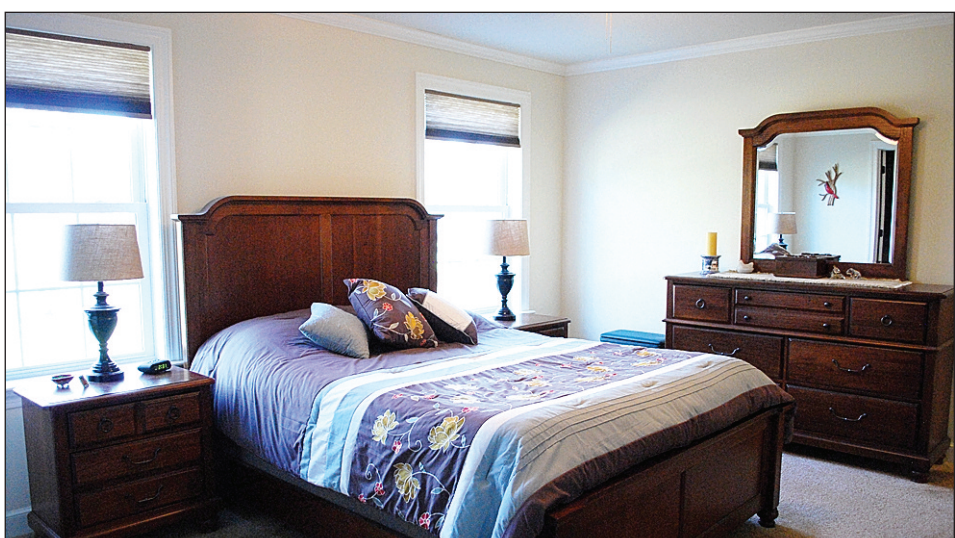
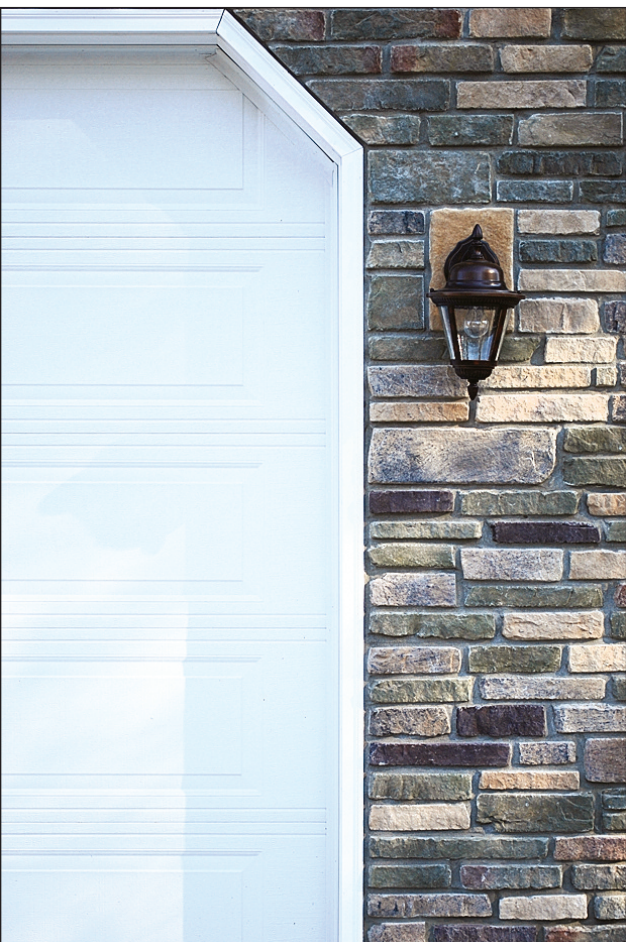
by white marble. It warms the large space that is minimalist in decor but has ample furniture for guests and relaxation.

Barbara said she loves the ease of the gas fireplace in comparison to a wood fireplace, where the mess of ashes and wood requires cleanup.

A door off the kitchen leads to a flex room that is now being used as an office. Flex spaces are a construction trend that gives homeowners extra space to adapt to their needs. The space can be used as a playroom, crafting room or homework area.

Also off the kitchen are sliding doors that lead to the screened patio. With a view of a wooded patch, the Scheifleys have deer and squirrels visit while they relax. Jim said one of the bonuses of the outdoor space is that it requires no maintenance.

(See FINE LINE, Page D-2)



LORENA BENIQUEZ/Sun-Gazette Correspondent

It's the attention to detail found all throughout the home that Fine Line Homes created for the Scheifleys that help to make it even more special for the couple.

Fine Line does job on budget and on time for area couple's dream home

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The Scheifleys' home became a realization as a result of their collaboration with Fine Line Homes, whose tools made it painless to design their space. Jim said he was impressed with how housing consultant Dan Johnson provided computer layouts of changes the company

made during pre-construction.

Fine Line Homes now has an added tool to help home buyers. The color visualizer was added in 2016 to aid in making changes to the over 60 home plans that Fine Line Homes offers.

The software allows users to alter paint colors, brick, stone and siding on home exteriors. Fine Line Homes

director of sales and marketing Mark Bittner said, "The big thing is that it allows you to see it before you build it. It can be difficult to choose colors from the small material samples (provided)."

The color visualizer is available on the company's website at <http://www.finelinehomes.com/visualizer-start-2017>. When an account is cre-

ated, multiple changes can be saved for reference later. It is user friendly and quite fun to play with.

For the Scheifleys, easy choices, quality construction and collaboration is what sold them on building with Fine Line Homes. It also is why they refer the contractor to their family and friends.

How to make home more friendly to wheelchair or walker users

By JUDITH GRAHAM
Kaiser Health News

When Dan Bawden teaches contractors and builders about aging-in-place, he has them get into a wheelchair. See what it's like to try to do things from this perspective, he tells them.

That's when previously unappreciated obstacles snap into focus.

Bathroom doorways are too narrow to get through. Hallways don't allow enough room to turn around. Light switches are too high and electrical outlets too low to reach easily. Cabinets beneath a kitchen sink prevent someone from rolling up close and doing the dishes.

It's an "ah-ha moment" for most of his students, who've never actually experienced these kinds of limitations or realized so keenly how home design can interfere with — or

promote — an individual's functioning.

About 2 million older adults in the U.S. use wheelchairs, according to the U.S. Census Bureau; another 7 million use canes, crutches or walkers.

That number is set to swell with the aging population: Twenty years from now, 17 million U.S. households will include at least one mobility-challenged older adult, according to a December report from Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies.

How well has the housing industry accommodated this population?

"Very poorly," said Bawden, chairman of the remodelers division at the National Association of Home Builders and president of Legal Eagle Contractors in Bellaire, Texas. "I give them a D."

Researchers at the Harvard center found that

fewer than 10 percent of seniors live in homes or apartments outfitted with basic features that enhance accessibility — notably, entrances without steps, extra-wide hallways or doors needed for people with wheelchairs or walkers.

Even less common are features that promote "usability" — carrying out the activities of daily life with a measure of ease and independence.

Laws that guarantee accessibility for people with disabilities go only so far.

The Americans with Disability Act applies only to public buildings. And while the Fair Housing Act covers apartments and condominiums built after March 1991, its requirements aren't comprehensive and enforcement is spotty.

We asked several experts to describe some

common issues mobility-challenged seniors encounter at home, and how they can be addressed. The list below is what they suggested may need attention and has suggested alterations, but is not comprehensive.

A ramp will be needed for homes with steps leading up to the front or back door when someone uses a wheelchair, either permanently or temporarily.

The estimated price for a 5- to 6-foot portable non-slip version: \$500 to \$600.

You'll want to take out the weather strip at the bottom of the front door and replace it with an automatic door bottom.

"You want the threshold to be as flat as the floor is," Bawden said. Consider installing an electronic lock that prevents the need to lean in and insert a key.

Getting through doorways easily is a problem

for people who use walkers or wheelchairs. They should be 34 to 36 inches wide to allow easy access, but almost never are.

Widening a doorway structurally is expensive, with an estimated cost of about \$2,500.

A reasonable alternative: Swing-free hinges, which wrap around the door trim and add about 2 inches of clearance to a door.

Ideally, people using wheelchairs need a 5-foot-wide path in which to move and turn around, Bawden said.

Often that requires getting rid of furniture in the living room, dining room and bedroom.

Another rule of thumb: People in wheelchairs have a reach of 24 to 48 inches.

That means they won't be able to reach items in cabinets above kitchen counters or bathroom

sinks.

Also, light switches on walls will need to be placed no more than 48 inches from the floor and electrical outlets raised to 18 inches from their usual 14 inch height.

Older eyes need more light and distinct contrasts to see well.

A single light fixture hanging from the center of the dining room or kitchen probably won't offer enough illumination.

You'll want to distribute lighting throughout each room and consider repainting walls so their colors contrast sharply with your floor materials.

"If someone can afford it, I put in recessed LED lights in all four corners of the bedroom and the living room and install closet rods with LED lights on them," Bawden said. LED lights don't need to be changed as often as regular bulbs.

Redfin predicts hottest neighborhoods of '17

SEATTLE (BUSINESS WIRE) — Redfin (www.redfin.com), which refers to itself as the next-generation real estate brokerage, announced its annual list of neighborhoods across the country it predicts will be the hottest this year, topped by Bushrod in Oakland, California.

To rank the neighborhoods that are heating up the most, the brokerage said it analyzed hundreds of millions of pageviews to Redfin.com and homes that users favorited to monitor for price and status changes.

The analysis also takes into account insights from Redfin real estate agents who specialize in neighborhoods across these 39 major U.S. metros.

This Smart News Release features multimedia. View the full release here: <http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20170119005326/en/>, aco

High-growth job centers are driving this year's list of hottest neighborhoods; the top three hottest neighborhoods all sit close to San Francisco and Seattle, according to Redfin. But while home prices continue to rise in the centers of these booming tech cities, homebuyers are increasingly focusing their searches in neighboring cities like Oakland, Bellevue and Sunnyvale.

Redfin real estate agents said these

communities offer homebuyers the best balance of everything: Quick access to public transit, trendy shopping and dining options, plus larger move-in ready homes with charm and price tags that are a little easier to bear.

"Bushrod is a quaint enclave of homes with unique character nestled between the more established (and expensive) area of Rockridge and the increasingly trendy hot spot of Temescal. From Bushrod you can walk to some of the Bay Area's best restaurants on College Avenue. It's also walking distance to either the Ashby or Rockridge BART stations," said Redfin real estate agent Tom Hendershot. "Homebuyers often come to the area hoping to find something in Rockridge and ultimately realize they can have an even better lifestyle at a lower cost in Bushrod."

This may not last for long though — a two-bedroom starter home in this neighborhood recently sold for \$200,000 over the list price and was off the market in 10 days."

Other neighborhoods that made the top 10 list, such as Eliot in Portland, Hollywood Park in Sacramento and Tremé in New Orleans, are located in second-tier cities, which Redfin predicted would be particularly popular in 2017.



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