

On a beautiful property between Van Meter and Adel, the Burkett family members built their dream home, just a short hop from their previous home.

# ROCKY *Mountain* IOWA

New home between Van Meter and Adel gives off a cool Colorado vibe.

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*Photography by Tim Abramowitz*



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**W**ith its magnificent windows and soaring ceiling, a new home could easily be framing views of the Rockies. Well, OK, how about the rolling hills of west central Iowa?

For Chris and Vicki Burkett, the new home is a culmination of lots of planning. The move itself was short; they lived only a quarter mile away before. “We saw the lot about 10 or 12 years ago,” Chris says, “but it wasn’t developed. On closer inspection, and the removal of more than 100 trees, the 3-acre property seemed just right for a timber-frame home, befitting a Western location.”

It’s certainly not surprising that Chris loves that look. As owner of Colorado Classics, a Western-style furniture and accessories store in Valley Junction, he has a passion for that look. He has owned the store for about seven years. “I knew of a similar business that had been very successful in Indianapolis, and I thought if it could work there, then why not here?”

#### Natural beauty

The Burketts have three grown sons, and all five have enjoyed this style of home and its furnishings. “This style places a strong emphasis on natural beauty, which results in a comfortable and relaxing feel,” Chris explains. They moved in last April.

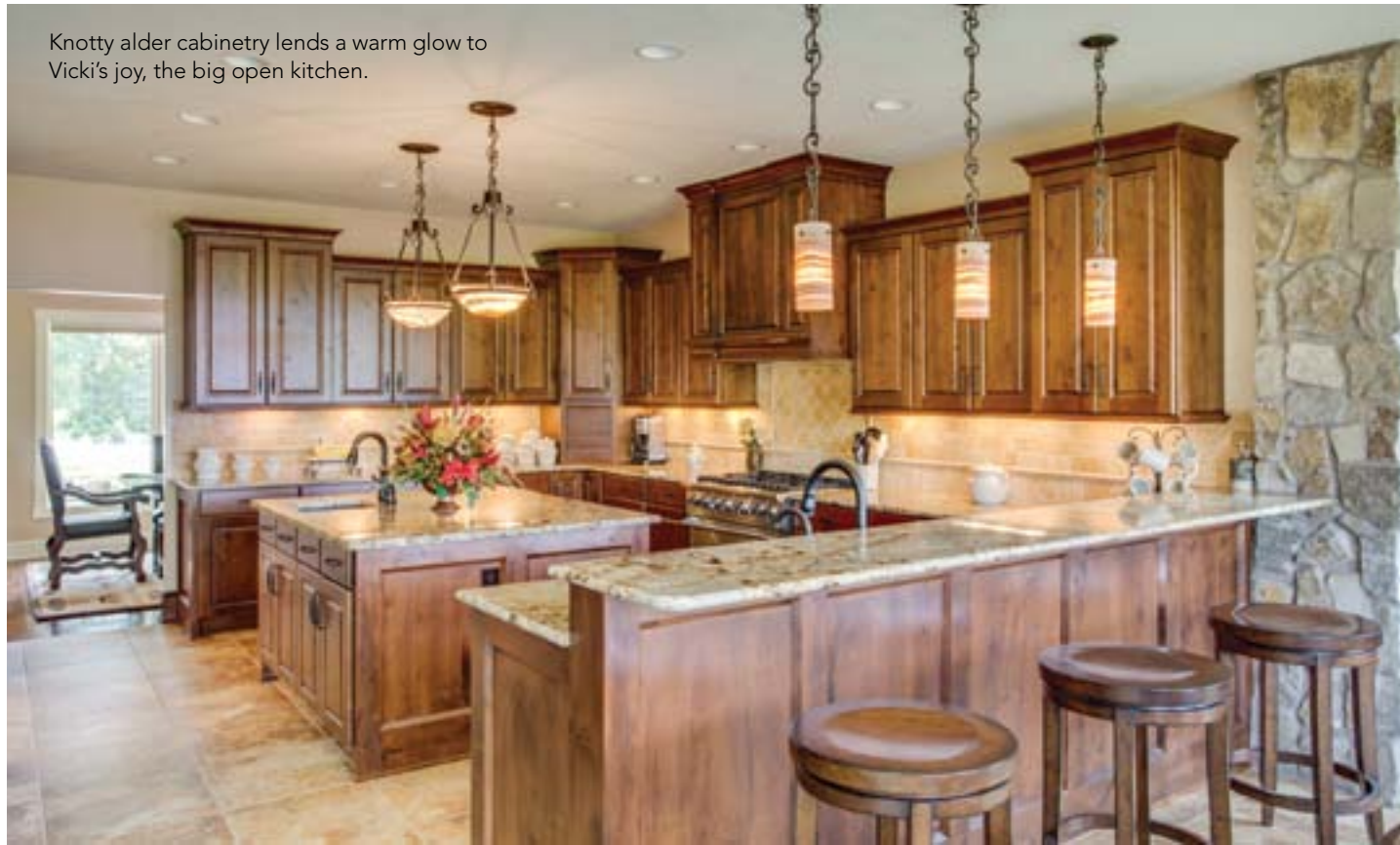
**This page, from top:** The open floor plan, with its soaring ceiling, allows for several conversation areas. Chris Burkett deals in Western-style furnishings at his Colorado Classics store in Valley Junction, and the home showcases many of the pieces. • Artful pieces flank the floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace.



Western art and a spectacular chandelier draw attention to the height of the room, 26 feet to the peak.



Knotty alder cabinetry lends a warm glow to Vicki's joy, the big open kitchen.



The kitchen eating area soaks in views of the valley below.



The mule deer antler chandelier in the dining room is a conversation starter for sure.



The beautiful wall of windows in the living area frames the breathtaking view beyond.

Huge windows everywhere soak in spectacular views. “The views are wonderful,” Vicki says. “Truly, it reminds me of my native Pennsylvania. I love it. Plus, there are lots of wildlife to observe, such as coyotes, foxes, and deer.” She is a nurse by training and is a medical sales consultant. She attends surgeries at various hospitals in central Iowa when her company’s products, such as pacemakers, are being used.

Jim Harmeyer of Tyler Homes built the home. “This is the first timber-frame home like this to be built in this area, but it’s catching on. We have done three or four since this house. They are growing in popularity on the East and West Coasts, too.”

#### Real wood beams

The Burketts insisted on real Douglas fir beams, not the pseudo ones that might be more commonly used. “That made the process more difficult and complex with heavier engineering,” Harmeyer says. “We had to go to Decorah in northeast Iowa to get large timbers. There are only a couple places in this area you can even get them.”

It’s easy to see why the timber-frame style is popular, he says. “I call it casual elegance. The tall ceiling—26 feet to the peak—creates so much more volume. It’s very appealing.”

The 4,700-square-foot home was designed by Karl Chambers of Imprint Architecture in Ankeny. It is modeled after a home on Flathead Lake in Montana. For authenticity, the stone is from Telluride, Colorado.

Besides its tall ceiling height, the living room has as its focal point a floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace. Knotty alder panels on either side give display space to artful pieces. Stucco-style walls give the look of sturdy plaster. As you enter the home, straight ahead is the A-frame window wall, which emphasizes the glorious timber view.

A 10-foot leather and fabric combination sofa, complete with nailheads, is angled near the windows. In front of the fireplace is a conversation area with a leather sofa and two other tufted leather chairs. An amber onyx and iron chandelier takes center stage. The distressed-wood flooring is hand-scraped hickory from Barnum Floors in Clive.

The centerpiece of the dining room to the right of the front entry is a mule deer antler chandelier over a table with six leather chairs with nailhead trim. Nearby, the large kitchen is Vicki’s joy with its huge island with a prep sink, a commercial gas range, stainless-steel appliances, and a counter with large bar stools. Staggered-top cabinetry is of knotty alder for a warm, rustic look. A kitchen table and chairs are in front of another large window overlooking the valley beyond. White onyx lights and three pendant lights illuminate the work areas.

#### Covered deck

Off the kitchen is a covered deck. “It’s where we start the day with coffee or breakfast,” says Chris. An office, handy for Vicki, is off the kitchen. What she loves most is that trim



Chris Burkett's office displays his collections of early Bibles and of forged iron crosses.



carpenters made special pocket doors in a deep doorway that can close off the kitchen. From the kitchen side, the closed doors look like a bank of shelves. From a garage entry to the kitchen, there's a Tyler Homes trademark—a small pass-through doorway where groceries can be unloaded.

To the left of the front entry is Chris's office, where he displays his collection of Bibles, some from the early 1600s, and forged iron crosses, many from Arizona.

Also on the main floor is the master bedroom suite. A focal point is a hand-hammered copper headboard. A pop-up TV rises from a console dresser. The master bath and dressing area features an interesting corner piece that Vicki enjoys because it has plug-ins inside it for a hair dryer and other accessories. Western-style onyx lighting came from Santangelo Lighting in Austin, Texas, and locally from Colorado Classics.

Downstairs is the family room for entertaining and for watching sports. A kitchenette works well for serving snacks and appetizers. A stone fireplace, leather seating, and a table and chairs set the cozy look. Sons' bedrooms and a guest room are on this walk-out level.

#### Welcoming entry

Outside, the wood A-frame entry and stone columns welcome visitors to the front door from a circular driveway. There are a three-car garage and another driveway that goes down around the side of the home to the lower garage, which houses mowers and other equipment. Boulders surround an oak tree in the front yard, along with ornamental grasses and Knock Out roses.

Chris says that the home has become somewhat of a second showroom for his store. "We've had clients come here to see how a piece of furniture looks in a home setting and have purchased it right from our home. Let's just say I have an understanding wife," he says with a wry chuckle. ■

**This page, from top:** The covered deck off the kitchen is the perfect spot for morning coffee. • The lower level family room is perfect for family activities and entertaining. • The master bedroom suite is a restful oasis.

