



Kid-Friendly Elegance

Can those two concepts coexist? Absolutely, say the Baumlers of Grimes.

By Carol McGarvey, Photography by Tim Abramowitz

Brad and Mary Lynn Baumler

planned for nearly four years for the new home they have built in the Bridge Creek development north of Grimes. After living in Urbandale for 13 years, the couple—high school sweethearts from northeast Iowa—looked to build their first home for their active family of three sons.

Even though they had never built for themselves, Brad is heavily involved in the construction industry. He is the owner of Concrete Technologies in Urbandale. “By being in the business, I certainly have collected ideas over time. Mary Lynn and I knew we wanted a 1½-story home with vaulted ceilings, an open kitchen concept, and beautiful curb appeal. We collected pictures and studied architectural styles when we traveled to places like Kansas City, Arizona, and Cabo San Lucas in Mexico.”

The acre lot they chose is in an area being developed by Brad and some partners. It features 23 sites ranging from half-acre to two-acre lots. For the builder, they chose Jim Harmeyer of Tyler Homes. As Brad says, “We have looked at so many of Jim’s homes, and we just like the feel of them. They have a friendly Northern European feel. Plus, when he works, he can go ahead and pop out an idea. He just always has lots of creative juices flowing.”

“We knew we wanted to use lots of different materials in the house,” Mary Lynn explains. “We really like the look of texture that comes from mixing wood, stone, glass, decorative concrete, and iron in the home’s details. Plus, we felt those materials could stand up to three boys.” The couple and their three sons, Hunter, 11; Carter, 8; and Trever, 4, moved into the 7,000-square-foot home last November.



Clockwise from top left: The back of the Baumler house north of Grimes showcases turret styling, a covered deck, huge windows, and a pool for family fun. • A waterfall lends lilting sounds to the pool. • The outdoor kitchen on the deck is perfect for family meals. • The Baumlers' three sons totally enjoy the pool.



Opposite: The great room features a stone fireplace and a 22-foot ceiling. **This page, far left:** The office/library off the entry has a custom double desk, just right for homework projects. **Left:** Mary Lynn and Brad Baumber.

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Traditional touches

As contemporary as the home is in terms of technology, it incorporates a number of traditional touches that add character. There are some dormers with window seats and a butler's pantry between the kitchen and dining room for storage and a beverage center. There are pocket doors in some rooms for efficiency and to add interest, a laundry chute from the boys' bedroom area, and five fireplaces in the home. "They not only can add real heat, but they also create visual warmth," Brad says.

The heart of the home is the open kitchen and great-room. Glazed alder cabinetry gives a warm feel. The granite countertop on the curved island makes food preparation easy and invites the boys to pull up a stool for a snack. A striking stucco-style range hood makes a dramatic focal point. Nearby there's an oversize round table in front of a bank of windows overlooking the pool below. Brad says having a pool is a new experience, and the boys have, of course, loved it. Just off the kitchen is a covered deck, which leads down to the pool area. The deck features an outdoor seating area and kitchen with counterspace and a large built-in gas grill, perfect for making lunches or dinner meals.

In the great-room a big-screen TV over the stone fireplace coordinates with a black curved leather sofa and animal-print

chairs. The ceiling is 22 feet, and a curved wall reinforces the theme of subtle curves throughout the home. In this casual room with slightly formal overtones, a massive wall of windows overlooks the backyard. And in this room and others, ceilings with beams and curves create "ooh" and "ah" factors overhead.

A butler's pantry leads to the dining room, welcoming with its wood-beamed ceiling and stucco/stone-style mantel. Earthy wood and textural stone get a formal touch from a chandelier with numerous mini shades. Nearby is the office/library off the home's front entry. The room features pocket doors with a raised tree pattern in the glass insets that allow light into the room. The library also has a custom double desk, perfect for homework responsibilities for the older boys. Throughout the main level, an abundance of trimwork lends a rich look.

Efficient spaces

Mary Lynn's magic shows up in storage, storage everywhere. "I wanted everything to run efficiently. Wherever there was going to be dead space, I asked for shelves." In the back entryway from the garage, for example, everyone in the family has an area for hats, mittens, gloves, and shoes. The busy mom added a shelf in the shoe cubbies for holding even more shoes. In shelves in the



so-called command center, she added plug-ins for cell phones, iPods, and all things electronic.

Also near the back entrance is the laundry room, perfect for leaving uniforms after games. Mary Lynn's office is at hand, too, for keeping track of school papers, craft supplies, and details of running the home.

Peaceful getaway

At the other end of the main floor is the master bedroom, a peaceful sanctuary for parents. It is architecturally interesting because of the home's turrets. At one end of the brown and turquoise room, the rounded turret with five windows creates an inviting sitting area. Another fireplace is the focal point of the room, and Mary Lynn suggested shelves with a rounded configuration to carry out the curve detail.

The master bath has a "WOW" factor created by another turret. Along with his-and-hers vanities, the whirlpool tub sits perpendicular in the middle of the room, backed by a curved travertine wall. The rounded shower is behind that wall, a first for builder Jim Harmeyer. "The master shower with its dual doorless entry turned out beautifully. I'm really pleased with how it emphasizes the curved aspect used in so many of the rooms."

On the home's second floor are the three boys' bedrooms, each with its own full bath. In these rooms Mary Lynn incorporated built-in desks with granite counters and built-in shelves and bulletin boards above the desks. "That way we don't need another piece of furniture in each room. It just seems to work out nicely." A toy and game room also is on that level so that the boys' electronic games and pastimes can be in one location for easy access to their rooms.

The home's walkout lower level is geared to fun for family and friends. "It's all about creating memories," Brad says. A rounded bar area is useful for parties and snacks, as are a kitchenette and a temperature-controlled wine cellar. Here, too, is a blend of materials—iron grates, stair railings, and granite counters. Down two steps are a game room with pool table, a trophy room to display Brad's hunting passion, and a family room. Throughout their home the Baumlers feature the work of Des Moines artist James Navarro. One poppy-inspired piece in the lower level represents the family at a point in time. Full, open poppies represent Brad, Mary Lynn,

Above: Wood beams and a stucco-style fireplace in the dining room give a welcoming feel. **Right:** A striking range hood is the focal point of the kitchen.





Hunter, and Carter. Trever, who hadn't arrived yet, was a bud in the painting. It's a special piece for the family.

The boys also love the "hidden room," a theater room behind a sliding bookshelf. With eight recliners, popcorn-themed carpeting, red walls, big reels on the walls, and roll-out drawers in one wall for movies and blankets, it's an intimate family gathering spot. "It's not the biggest theater room around, and that's by design," says Mary Lynn. "We wanted a really cozy spot where we can gather on a cold, snowy night. We had so much fun with it last winter."

She also planned for the entry spot in the lower level from the pool. "There we have storage for towels, goggles, and sunscreen. A shower is right there. It works out really well."

Builder Harmeyer enjoyed the many interesting features of this home. "The trophy room certainly is a departure from many other homes, and this house has storage everywhere, even in the garages. No space was wasted, to be sure," he says. "Also, the boys' game room on the second floor is a great idea. Families have often put that in the lower level. This makes so much sense near the boys' bedrooms. This house also has fantastic curb appeal."

He also appreciates the Bridge Creek properties. "I truly think this is likely the next Glen Oaks area when it comes to a spot for building luxury homes in the metro area."

What has surprised the Baumlers most about their new home is a priceless commodity. "It felt homey the very first day we moved in," Brad says. "We honestly didn't expect to feel so peaceful and to be able to decompress as completely as we do out here. It's wonderful." ■



Clockwise, top left: With its seating area in the turret and rounded ceiling, the master bedroom is a peaceful retreat. • A sliding bookcase leads to the home theater on the lower level. • The kitchenette downstairs has a wine cellar. • Repeating rounded shapes show up in the kitchenette. • The master bath has a curved walk-in shower behind the tub.