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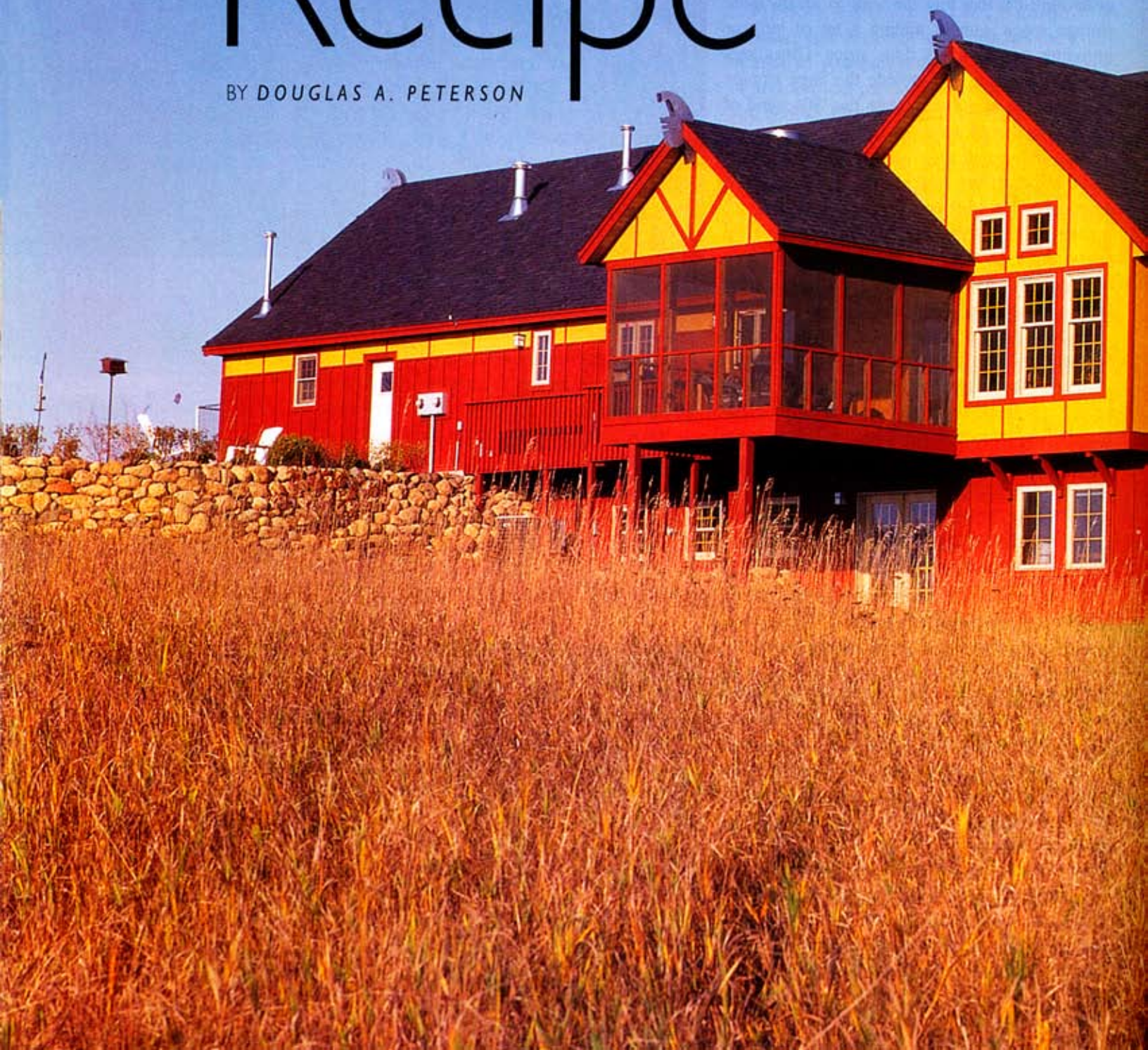


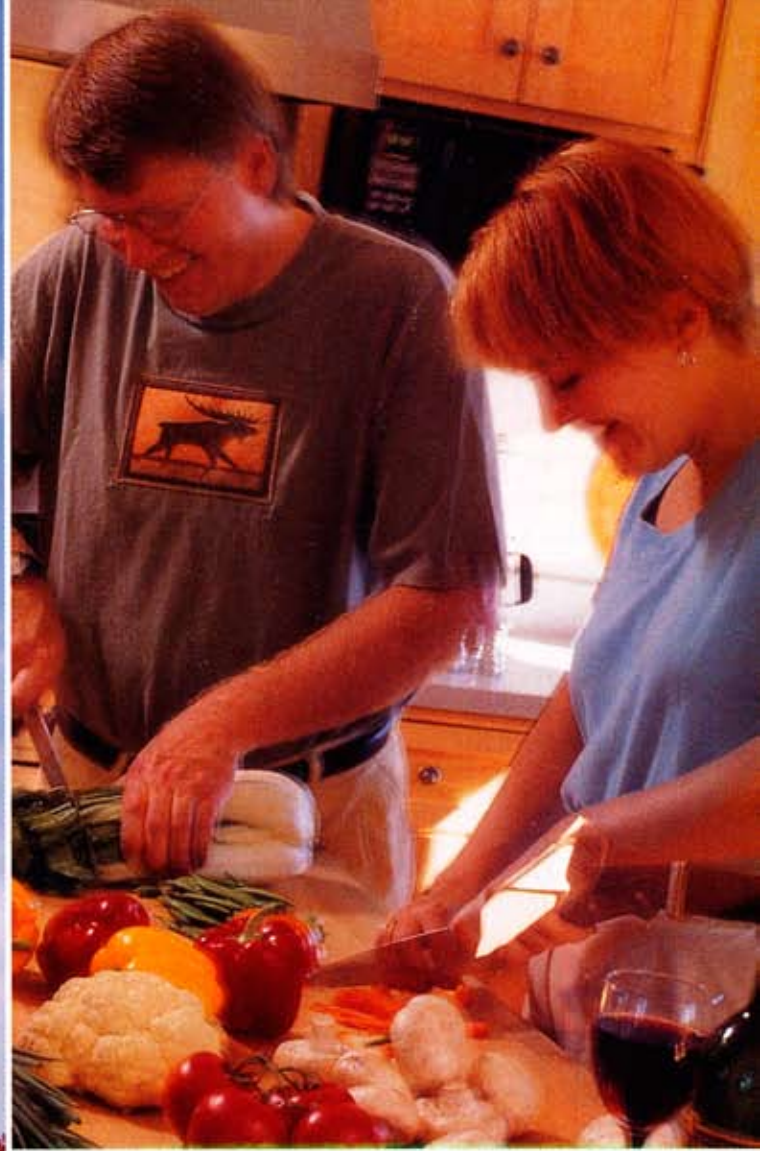
CROWNING ITS PRAIRIE LANDSCAPE,

THIS HOME WAS INSPIRED BY THE
DESIGN OF TRADITIONAL
MIDWESTERN FARM BUILDINGS.

Family Recipe

BY DOUGLAS A. PETERSON







WWith three growing girls and a pastry business rising just as quickly, Kirsten and Ronald Johnson faced a space crunch. But it was nothing 50 acres and a spacious house with a commercial-quality kitchen couldn't fix.

The Johnsons had been living in a 1914 farmhouse on 14 acres near Stillwater, Minnesota, just east of St. Paul. Their kitchen was filled with the aroma of cheesecakes, tortes, cakes, and other desserts that Kirsten baked. "My cheesecakes became really popular," she says, especially at local restaurants.

A home-based business was perfect for the Johnsons: Kirsten could be at home with the children while Ron worked as a chef at a private golf club. "We decided long ago that our priority was our children and that one of us should stay at home with them," Kirsten says.

To grow the business and comply with state health regulations, the Johnsons needed a commercial-grade kitchen to supplement the family kitchen. Plus, "we knew we were running out of space," Kirsten says. "Two of the things we were really missing were play space for the kids and space to entertain."

For an upgraded kitchen, they considered adding to the farmhouse they had already remodeled. Builders contacted for bids set them straight: An addition would require costly foundation work. "We never even drew up plans because everyone who looked at it had a look on their faces of *Why are you even considering this?*" Kirsten recalls. That left starting from scratch.

Near where they lived sat 100 acres of pristine Minnesota prairie, with a ridge overlooking the St. Croix River. "We knew we enjoyed living out in the country, a little bit away from the town, but not too far away, so we can enjoy the benefits of a big city," Ron says. After they persuaded the owner to sell half the land, two bizarre problems cropped up: stories of buried garbage and a deed from the late 1800s allowing neighbors to bury their dead on the ridge.

The Johnsons had to place

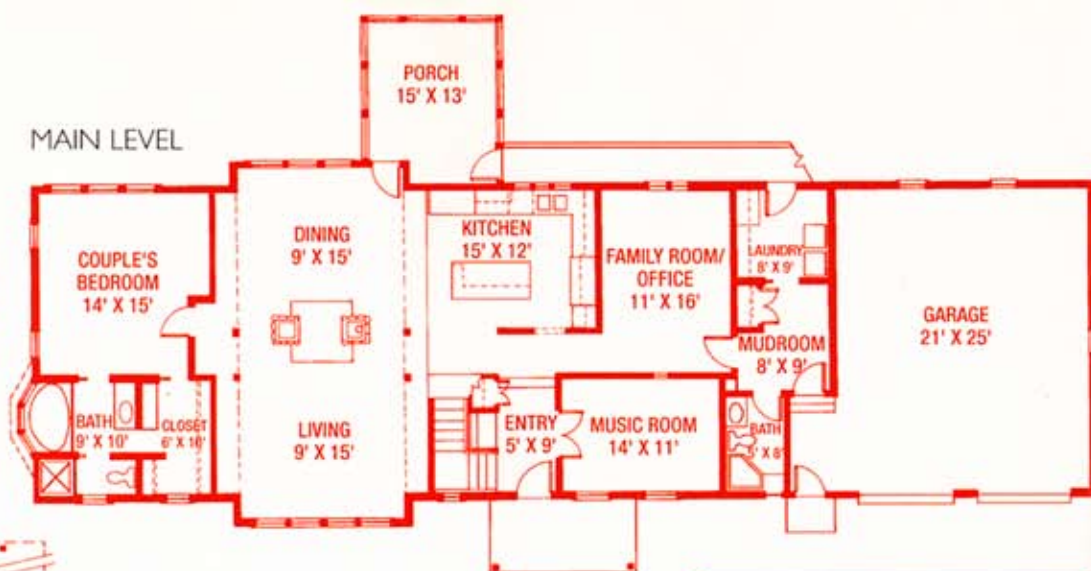
On previous page:
Drawing on Ronald and Kirsten Johnson's Norwegian heritage, architect Dale Mulfinger added galvanized-steel gable ends shaped like the Gallic symbol for chef.

A massive fireplace, left, opens to the living room and the dining room. The maple mantel adds a light element to the dark stone, which covers the fireplace to the top of the chimney.

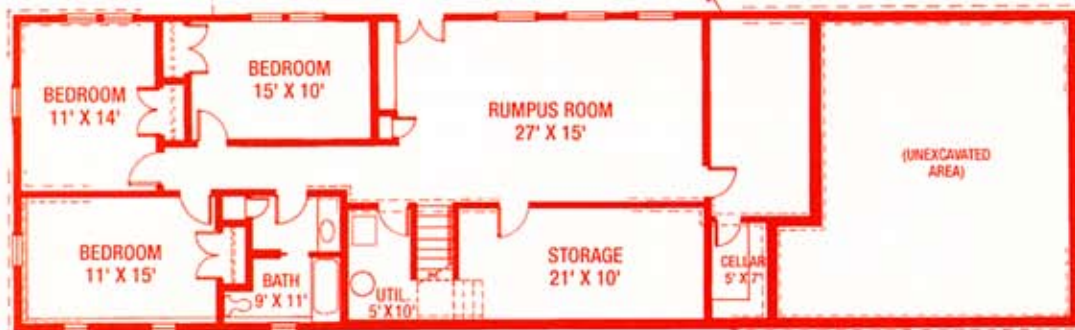
The coat closet and bench greet guests in the foyer below. The bench opens for storage of hats, gloves, and other winter accessories. The storage cabinet includes space for stereo gear. The cabinet also helps define the stairwell without enclosing it.



Not everyone needs a commercial kitchen, so the plan shown utilizes this space as a family room or office in addition to the living room and lower level rumpus room.



LOWER LEVEL



Plan number 32069

Total Living Area:	2,902 sq. ft.
Main Level:	1,716 sq. ft.
Lower Level:	1,186 sq. ft.
Bedrooms:	4
Bathrooms:	3
Exterior Wall Framing:	2x6
Foundation Option:	Basement
To Order Plans:	139
Blueprint Price Code:	E

Please note:
The photographed home may have been modified to suit homeowner preferences. If you order plans, have a builder or design professional check them against the photographs to confirm actual construction details.



Board-and-batten siding stained red and yellow enlivens the exterior above. Dormers and secondary gable elements visually divide the roof's long ridge line.

legal notices in the newspaper to clear the deed and ensure no one wanted to claim burial rights. They also hired someone to search the land for trash and graves. The result: no junk or bodies, only rumors. "We really went through the gamut of problems we could have," Kirsten says.

Home on a hill

In the meantime, the couple had been doing their homework on the style and size of home they wanted, as well as checking out builders. "I think we spent three years going to every parade of homes. We were looking to get ideas and check out quality," Ron says.

All that research helped Kirsten and Ron make some basic choices about their new home. "As we looked around at styles and shapes, we realized we loved the walk-out/rambler concept," Kirsten says. "So we knew when we bought this property that's what we wanted to do."

With the help of Minneapolis architect Dale Mulfinger, they developed those ideas into a powerful design. "There needed to be a house in scale with the ridge," Mulfinger says.

He achieved that by drawing upon houses built in the region during the 1800s. Those homes included space for people at one end, animals at the other, and hay or grain in the middle. The only livestock in the Johnson house are a dog and a cat, but their new home is long and narrow, with its roof line echoing the ridge on which it sits. "There was nothing they were suggesting to me that wanted to make it feel like a house built into the hill. It wanted to feel more like the agrarian buildings you see out in the rural landscape that claim the hill," Mulfinger says.

The home captures spectacular views of the St. Croix River Valley to the east and the rolling prairie to the west. "It's incredible," Kirsten says. "It's like living on a postcard."

Those views influenced Mulfinger as he developed the floor plan. He placed the rooms used most—the two kitchens, dining room, master bedroom, and lower-level playroom—to the back of the house with views of the river valley.

Kitchen pros

Lines are blurring between residential and commercial kitchens, with hulking, stainless-steel appliances in more homes. "The trend is going that way, especially with bigger stoves," Kirsten Johnson says.

But taking the full leap to a commercial kitchen, as the Johnsons did, involves more than bringing in stainless-steel appliances and surfaces—preferred in commercial kitchens because they are easily cleaned with harsh disinfectants.

"I suppose you get spoiled when you work in a commercial kitchen," Ron Johnson adds.



*With two professional cooks in the family,
the Johnson kitchens are places
to both work and play.*



Many of the commercial models feature larger capacities and more precise controls, for example.

A ventilation system— independent from the rest of the house—that's massive enough to vent steam is also a major part of any commercial kitchen.

"You need to bring air back into the kitchen," Ron explains. "If it's 30 below zero outside, that air has to be heated."

The list goes on.

"All of the things are somewhat dictated by the health department," Ron says. "The health department said, 'You need seven sinks.' We talked them out of two."

The Johnsons' commercial

kitchen also features a special floor that is easily cleaned— again for health reasons.

"We have a poured-resin floor, which is basically a sealed membrane," Ron says.





Shopping for appliances

When selecting equipment for your kitchen, choose appliances that have only the features you'll really use, because appliance prices are based primarily on options. Many models of a manufacturer's product line share such components as oven-heating elements or refrigerator compressors.

Your cooking style and kitchen layout will determine which cooking appliances are best for you.

■ Gourmet cooks who like to entertain may choose a six- or eight-burner professional-style range with double ovens. If two of you in the family like to cook together, choose a cooktop for one location in your kitchen and wall ovens at another.

■ Heat sources affect cooktop and range prices. The least expensive is electric-coil heat, followed by gas, solid-element, sealed-

gas, halogen, and induction.

■ Microwave ovens are priced by size and wattage. Microwave/convection ovens are the most expensive.

■ Size and configuration are important when selecting a refrigerator: Freezers are most efficient when full, so avoid one that's too big. Side-by-side models offer more freezer space than refrigerators with top or bottom freezers, but they require more floor space and cost more. Ice makers, in-the-door water and ice

dispensers, and zoned temperature and humidity controls also raise prices. Color can increase prices up to 5 percent.

■ Avoid buying decisions based on looks, rather than performance. Buying an oven that only looks like a professional oven will cook the same as the one you've always used, but it will cost more.

"We wanted the kitchens to look out across the long view and be sunny."

—Kirsten Johnson

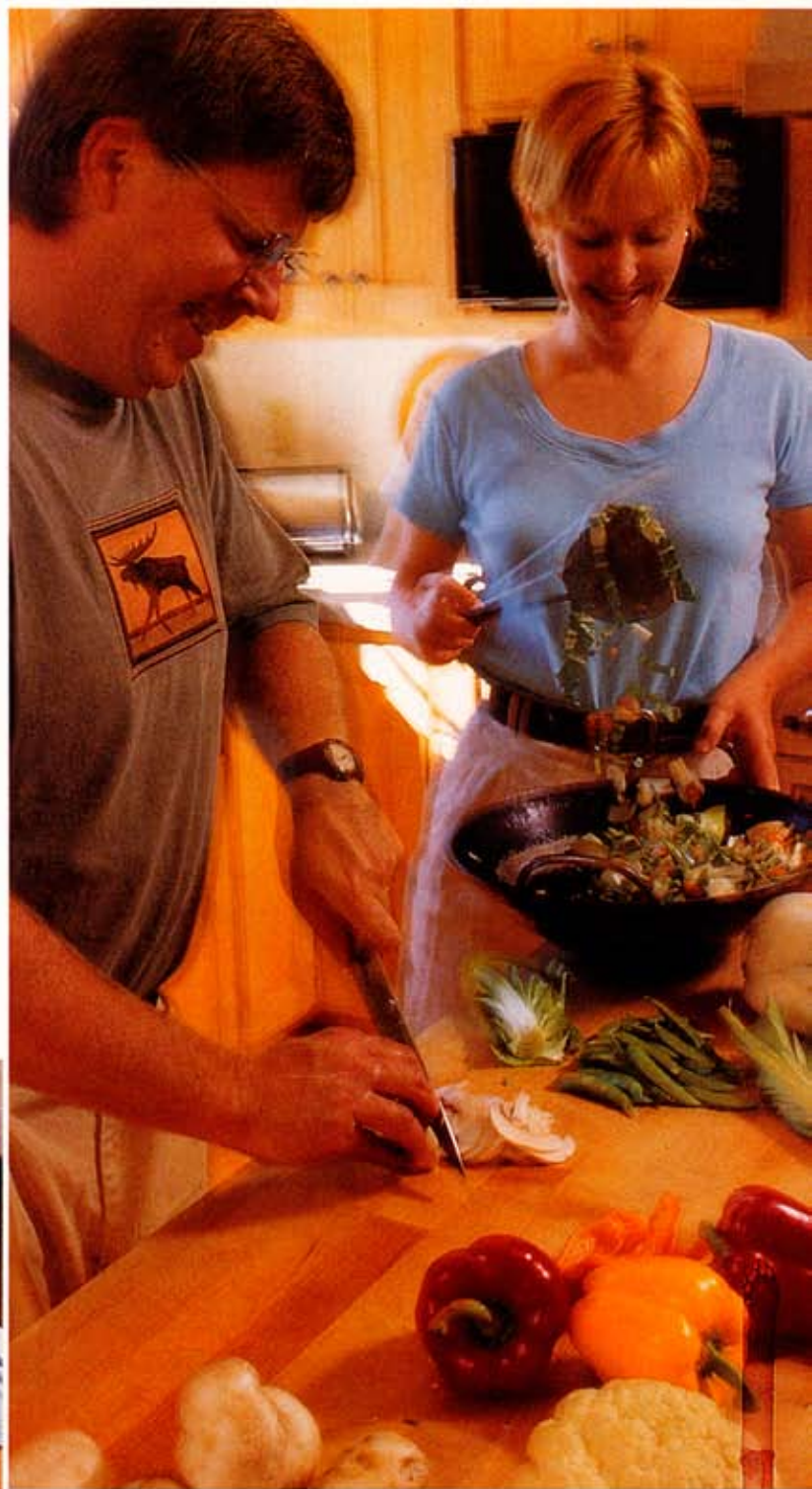
Sunlight and warmth

A massive stone fireplace adds warmth to the dining room and opens to the living room. "We had this image of the space, with this fireplace in the middle, separating the living room from the dining room," Kirsten says. "I like the fact that you can be dining with guests on one side, and when you're done, you can go sit on the other side and still enjoy the fireplace." Sunlight bathes both spaces during the day through windows that nearly fill the walls at both ends.

The two rooms form a cross-gable to the house, allowing a vaulted ceiling that spans both rooms. It provides a voluminous feeling on the interior, and breaks up the roof peak on the exterior.

The openness of the two rooms works well for the Johnsons, especially when entertaining. Both cooks are frequently in the kitchen and wanted to make sure they could still visit with guests or family in the dining or living rooms.

The family kitchen is an L shape with an island and solid-surfacing countertops and sink. Maple woodwork throughout the house reflects the light that pours in through the windows—an important element for surviving long Minnesota winters.





The music room is “an oasis”
from the rest of the house.

A high-end residential stove, rather than an uninsulated commercial-grade stove, fits the needs for the family kitchen. The stove also includes a convection oven. “If you’re doing fish sticks, which I do quite often for the kids, or Tater Tots, they really get crisp,” Kirsten says. It looks great, too—another reason they chose it over others.

The commercial kitchen backs up to the family kitchen, but can be completely shut off from the rest of the house. “We had to do that because of [the state health] code,” Ron says. Both kitchens include windows so Kirsten can watch the children as they play out back and she works. “We wanted the kitchens to look out across the long view and to be sunny,” Kirsten says.

Personal spaces

At the other end of the house, off the dining room, is the Johnsons’ master suite. “We didn’t know how we’d feel about the master suite being so accessible from the dining room,” Kirsten says, “but all we have to do is shut the door if we’re entertaining.” It’s the only bedroom on the main level; the children’s bedrooms are on the lower level. “Ron and I always wanted to have our bedroom separate from the children’s,” Kirsten says. Even though they’re a floor up, Kirsten and Ron can still hear their young children if they need comforting in the middle of the night.

The master bath is accessible from the bedroom and the walk-in closet, which is nice when Ron has to get up at 4 a.m. to get ready for work. That allows him to close both doors as he’s dressing and not awaken Kirsten.

Music is so important to the Johnsons, they devoted a main-level room to it to the right of the entry. “It’s fun to play in there because you can have a bustling household and still feel like you can go there to practice,” Kirsten says. French doors at the room’s entrance are actually exterior doors, for an extra sound barrier. “It’s an oasis



Three tall double-hung windows with two transom windows, left, allow light deep into the dining and living rooms. “In the dining room, we really get some beautiful morning light,” Kirsten says.

The music room above is a special space that feels removed from the rest of the house. The gabled ceiling makes this room seem like a house within a house, Mulfinger says.

The master bedroom right is on the northeast corner of the house. Windows on the east side greet the morning.

The bump-out of the tub area creates space in the master bath below and adds interest to the exterior. "It helps decorate the north wall of the house," Mulfinger says. The shower and the toilet are across from the tub in an alcove.



from the rest of the house," Mulfinger says.

Mulfinger lowered the entry a couple of steps to separate it slightly from the main floor. "I find that at about that level, you don't really feel that you're in a split-entry house, you just feel that you are a couple steps down. It gives greater height to the entry," he says. It also allows light to flow down the steps into the lower level.

The lower level includes three bedrooms and a playroom with a painted concrete floor that's easy to clean up after craft projects. Windows and a door to the backyard brighten the basement's atmosphere. "We love the walk-out basement, and with this house we wanted to make the lower level warm and livable, and not a dark, gloomy, damp space," Kirsten says.

The challenge, Kirsten says, was incorporating a living space with a commercial kitchen. With two chefs and an architect involved, however, cooking up a solution was no problem. □

RESOURCES INFORMATION ON PAGE 141.

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