

DREAM HOUSE

ON A BUDGET

Special to The Press

Annie and John Horzen had lived in their third home in Sheboygan since 1990 and with their children grown and out of the house, they decided to build something as close to their dream house as they could on a limited budget.

However, they didn't realize how overwhelming the project would be, despite the fact that they did their homework.

The Horzens had started to talk about building a home two to three years earlier. They began to research the project by going regularly to home shows and looking at building magazines in the library.

"We went into sticker shock," Annie said. "We decided not to build because it was too expensive but John still secretly had his heart set on it and when I found that out I said 'let's go for it.'"

They found the right size lot in Prairie Ridge Estates, a Sheboygan Falls subdivision, and started to interview builders again. They interviewed three of them before hiring Tom Pagelow.

"He comes highly recommended and we'd seen his work in the Parade of Homes two years before. His workmanship is outstanding, plus I liked his energy and felt I could trust him," says Annie.

The Horzens got their house plan from an advertisement for pre-built homes in The Sheboygan Press. The plan had a very large front window which appealed to them because, as Annie explains, "Most of all we wanted sunlight and to be facing west, that was on our wish list."

They took the plan from the newspaper, plus a plan from Master-Craft homes, to Oostburg Lumber and had the best of both modified into a blueprint which they took to Pagelow.

The builders wanted to have the foundation dug by Thanksgiving but it didn't happen. In fact it didn't get done until December. Consequently heaters had to be put in the basement to keep everything warm because concrete cannot get really cold or it cracks.

"We got these huge heating bills," Annie says. "It was an extra expense from building in winter that we hadn't allowed for. Tom warned us it was going to happen but we went into denial."

Annie took an eight-week interior design course from Lakeshore Technical College. "It was invaluable" she says. "I took the house plans and we talked about lighting and floor coverings and the effects colors have on rooms and the pros and cons of different kinds of furniture."

"Our original plan called for French doors in the dining room that opened onto the deck but the instructor, Debra Hoffman, suggested sliding doors because otherwise we wouldn't be able to use the space where the doors opened into the room. So we modified the plan and it was much better. She also helped us become knowledgeable about floor coverings."

Despite the help, Annie found choosing the lights an overwhelming process. "Not only are there thousands to choose from but you don't know how they're actually going to

look in your house or what kind of light they will cast. I pored over lighting catalogs for months," she said.

The color scheme was never in doubt, however, as the Horzens have always loved purple and hunter green. The walls and carpets are off white, all the wood is oak and the fixtures brass.

The choice of lever style brass door handles

instead of round ones was made because, as Annie notes, "They're easier to use if your hands get stiff. It's for our dotage, we plan to retire here."

As part of John's homework, he researched foundations and on the basis of that decided to go with concrete block basement rather than poured concrete.

The Horzens' new ranch style home is 1,800 square feet, smaller than their previous home of 2,100 square feet. "We wanted to go smaller" Annie says, "but not so small that we would be on top of each other."

"We also wanted a place that was big enough so that when all of our kids and their spouses and grandkids come over we can all sit down together and have a meal. That was one of the reasons we did a formal dining area."

The living room faces west as does the den. The master bedroom faces east, as does the dining room off the kitchen, and the formal dining area off the living room.



Above, of all the aesthetic touches that often put Annie (pictured) and John Horzen over their builder's allowance, the most expensive was the front door. The Thermatru glass door cut into a striking sunburst design came from Direct Source in Manitowoc.



At left, the Horzens wanted a home that was big enough so that when all their children and their spouses and grandkids come over, they can all sit down together and have a meal. That was one of the reasons they incorporated a formal dining area.