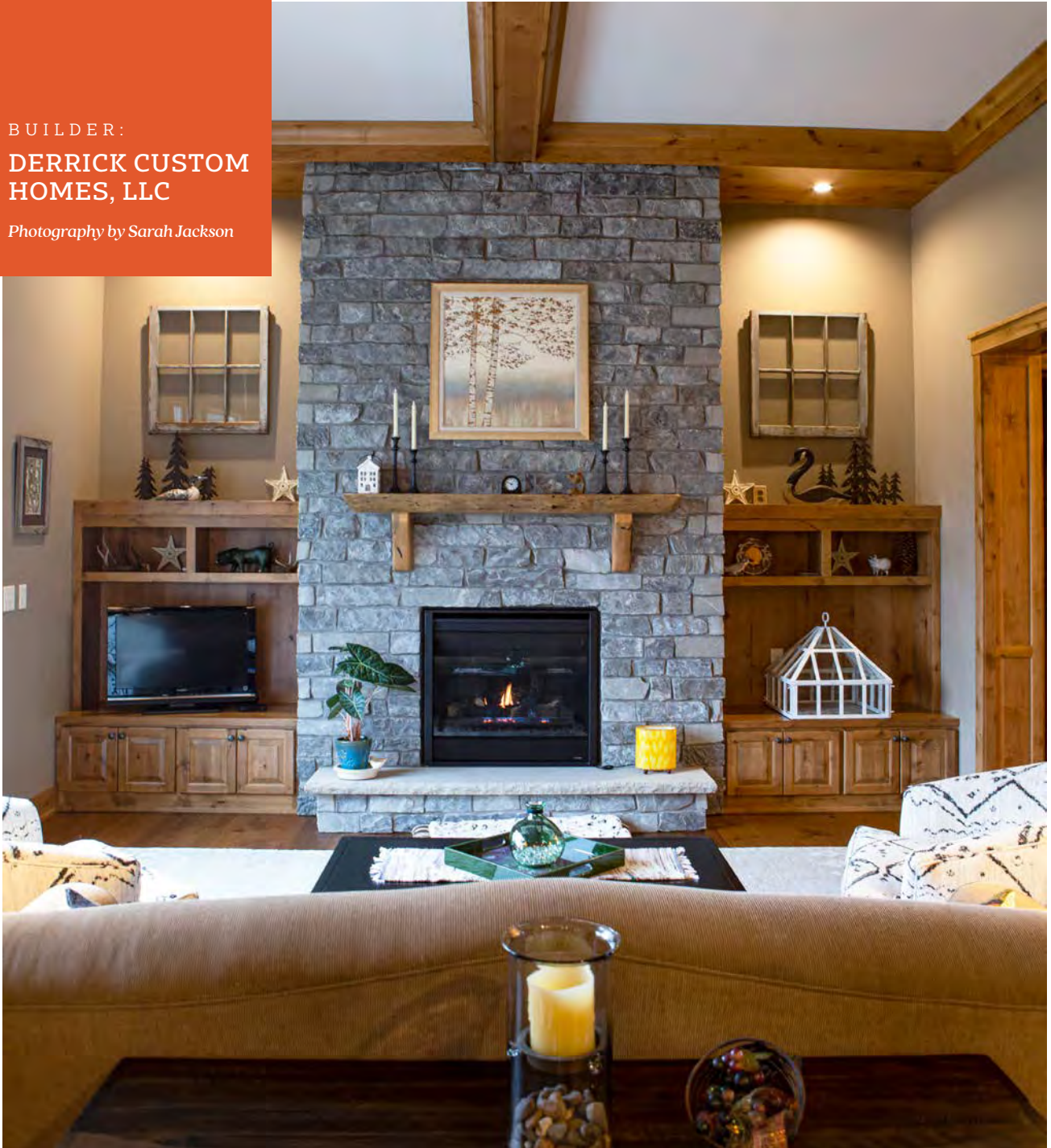


BUILDER:
**DERRICK CUSTOM
HOMES, LLC**

Photography by Sarah Jackson



A *Rustic* Retreat

Taking inspiration from their cabin up north, Candy and Stephen bring a cozy atmosphere to their new home in Stillwater's Miller Farms development.

by Taylor Hugo

After 22 years in their Lake Elmo home, Stephen and Candy were ready for a change. With two grown kids, a cabin up north, and a vacation property in the Florida Keys, maintaining three acres at their main residence didn't make sense anymore. "It was a lot to take care of, so we just decided to downsize," says Candy.

Five miles away, they found the ideal spot to build their "last home" from the ground up: a one-acre lot in Stillwater's Miller Farms development, which they fell in love with for its privacy and beautiful views. Backing up to a conservation easement, the only neighbors behind their property are those who walk the ample pathways—and the occasional buck or two.

Taking inspiration from their cabin on Lake Washburn, Candy and Stephen wanted to incorporate a rustic vibe into

the 5,170-square-foot, four-bedroom new build. A variety of wood species and styles were used throughout the home to achieve the look—from the stained knotty alder cabinetry, trim, and beams on the main level to the custom live-edge pine fireplace mantels, accented by floor-to-ceiling stone work. Five-panel doors, cove moulding, and great room beams add grandeur without detracting from the home's coziness.

"The homeowners got to pick out all the wood pieces themselves," says Lena LaPorte, the project manager for builder Derrick Custom Homes. "That's one of my favorite parts, all the custom woodwork. You see so much painted enamel trim and cabinets in houses lately, and their house is really warm. It's more woodwork than you typically see."

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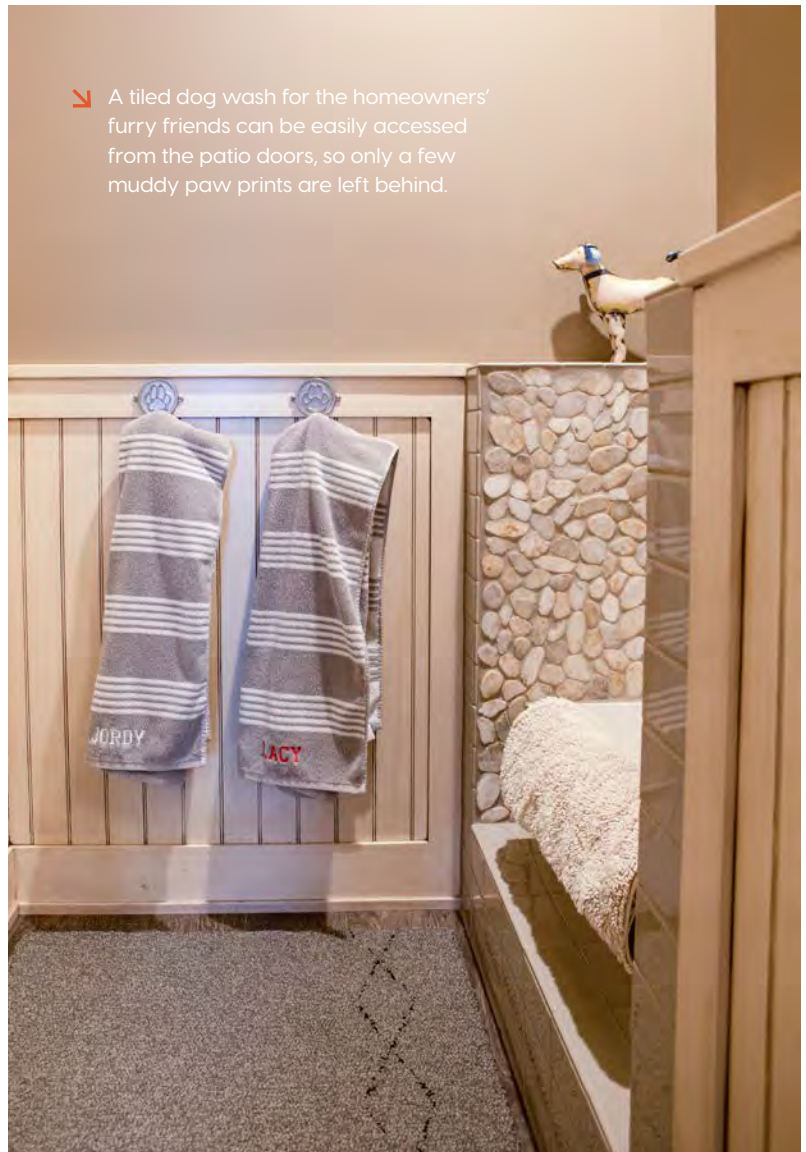
A fully equipped bar features a live-edge pine countertop and dark-stained knotty alder cabinetry. →

Dark-stained wood pieces continue the theme in the walkout lower level, where Stephen drew on his time as a bartender in college to guide the design of his very own bar, complete with a kegerator and tap, wine cooler, and beverage fridge—plus a Packers helmet and New Glarus Brewing Company Spotted Cow beer sign, a nod to his Wisconsin roots. “The wet bar goals centered around ensuring size—six stools—and authenticity in form and function were attained,” Stephen says. “I wanted friends and family to feel they were actually sitting at a sports bar, only without the crowd.”

While the couple admits they aren't big entertainers, creating a space for family gatherings was a top priority for the empty nesters, whose two children and four grandchildren live close by. A large media area adjacent to the bar offers a spot for watching football on Sundays or movies during sleepovers, while a card room hosts late game nights. Additional seating can be found on the three-season porch, allowing natural light to pour through walls of windows, and a nearby tiled dog wash ensures that even their two dogs, Jordy and Lacy, have their own dedicated space. Upstairs in the kitchen, where Stephen loves to cook, a large island can sit four people, and its open floor plan makes for easy conversation with guests who are seated in the dining room.

For the most part, however, Candy describes herself and her husband as “peace and quiet-type people.” So it's no surprise that their favorite room in the house is the four-season porch off the dining room. Featuring in-floor heat, rustic German Schmeier brick, and Aspen ceilings, expansive windows frame a view of the lot, half of which they're in the process of restoring to a prairie. That's “hands-down my go-to place,” says Stephen. “Whether it's coffee in the morning, reading the newspaper, having a cocktail in the evening, or just plain relaxing, you will find me there.”

CONTINUES ON 32 →



→ A tiled dog wash for the homeowners' furry friends can be easily accessed from the patio doors, so only a few muddy paw prints are left behind.

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Photos courtesy of NH Homes



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→ CONTINUED FROM 30

Practical design decisions ensure this home will suit them for years to come. A four-car garage with an attic above provides space for storage, as does the attached shed, a special request from the homebuyers when they learned outbuildings weren't permitted in the development.

“Ask for everything you can imagine, then sort it out at budget time,” Stephen advises other homeowners. “Work with experts who design for a living. Architects, engineers, interior and exterior professionals, along with an excellent home decorator, are musts. They will take your wants and needs, and transform them into a home with beautiful and functional spaces that will conform with the landscape and environment around you.”



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STEPHEN, HOMEOWNER