

A Charming Life

WRITER LESLEY STANLEY | PHOTOGRAPHER STEVEN SIMPKINS

Southern Influences Take the Lead When Designing One Couple's Home

Inspired by the rich architectural details of houses found in the Southern United States, Mid Michigan residents Mark and Susan Willett were determined to bring a similar sense of elegance and comfort, combined with their own traditional style, when it came to building their approximately 3,500-square-foot, two-level home. "We wanted our home to feel warm and welcoming," says Mark. "Right from the beginning, we knew we wanted a porch with a walkway to it so when you drive up the street, it's inviting and comfortable."

Finding a builder who would support and nurture their vision for the long haul was a few years in the making. The Willetts first came across Cobblestone Homes about three years ago during a Parade of Homes event and took note of their quality craftsmanship. "They were building houses that catered more to our traditional tastes," says Mark. "We really liked their woodwork, molding and window finishes – that just kept bringing us back."

With over a decade of building and design under their belt, Cobblestone Homes owners, Mark and Melissa Wahl, were immediately on board and committed to building the Willetts a home based on the company's foundation of providing education, aesthetic and design for a lifetime. "We strive for durable, healthy, and sustainable building of homes in the community," says Melissa. "With that, we're also into making homes aesthetically pleasing because it adds to the quality of life."

After nearly a year of brainstorming and collaboration, the result is a sophisticated, traditional home that boasts warm interiors with a generous touch of southern hospitality. A beautiful combination of spacious rooms with 10-foot ceilings and an open layout creates an easy flow from one spot to the next. Rich, dark hardwood floors spread throughout the house in the family room, kitchen, and dining



room, while a soft, neutral color palette serves as a backdrop to architectural focal points, like the stone fireplace. Custom-made cream-colored cabinets set among an ornate multi-colored glass backsplash in the kitchen captures the seamless fusion of the Willett's traditional style and Cobblestone's attention to detail.

The home speaks volumes to who Mark and Susan are as people with the class and elegance it embodies," says Melissa. "We care about the people we build with. It's important the home meets their vision, but also that they feel they had a pleasant and exciting experience."

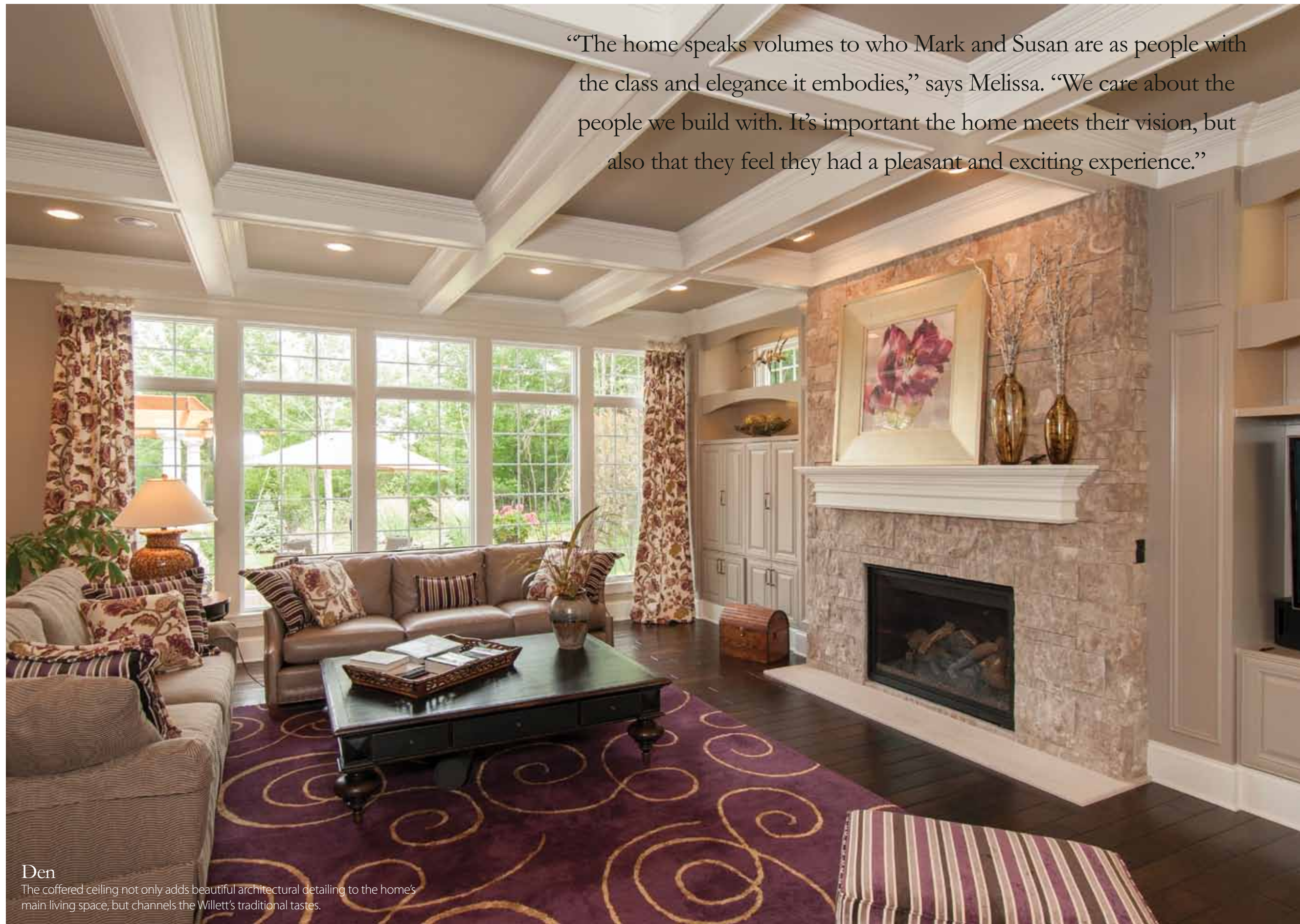
The library is a definite eye-catcher with its tall built-ins and stunning dark wood beam detailing on the ceiling. A side door leads to the wrap-around porch where the Willetts say they spend many mornings enjoying coffee and reading the newspaper. At the back of the house, an additional outdoor space features a spa, grill, and seating area complete with a fountain and overhead pergola. You'll notice that these are installed on tall, white columns, which match the columns seen on the front exterior, to provide shade on sunny days, and a nearby fire pit offers extra entertainment on cool nights.

"Melissa basically takes you step-by-step through the process," says Susan. "She gave us the time to make decisions, and as many times as we mulled choices over in our heads, it didn't unnerve her. She was very concerned for the end product to be what we wanted – that was her goal."

The end result exemplifies the importance of the partnership needed when building a home. More importantly, it speaks to the hard work and patience required to make it a place worthy to call home. □

Porch

Located on the east side of the house, this comfy spot is ideal for enjoying morning cups of coffee.



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Den

The coffered ceiling not only adds beautiful architectural detailing to the home's main living space, but channels the Willett's traditional tastes.



Kitchen

Subtlety is key in the kitchen where circular-shaped designs, seen here in the table, chairs, and chandelier, are eye-catching without being overpowering.





Study
Dark hardwood floors, built-ins and unique ceiling detail enchant in the study.



Master Bedroom
A neutral color palette creates a soothing place to rest.



Staircase
White, wainscoting following along the stairway adds charm while heading up to the second floor.



1 | Mud Room
This cozy nook, located off the garage entrance, is perfect for storing personal belongings.



2 | Laundry Room
A spacious area with ample storage makes washing clothes less of a chore.



3 | Office
A stylish spot to start and finish work.



Master Bathroom
Relax and refresh among the captivating contrast of dark wood and light flooring.



Master Bedroom Closet
Every personal item has its own custom-designed spot in the master closet.



Back Yard

Ideal for entertainment or relaxation, the back patio features a fountain, spa, and snug seating area complete with an overhead pergola for shade, and an outdoor fan for circulation.



Cobblestone Homes

PRINCIPAL OWNERS: Mark and Melissa Wahl

YEARS IN BUSINESS: Formally, just over 10.

ESTABLISHED IN: 2003

EDUCATION:

Mark has a bachelor's degree in business and Melissa has a master's degree and an education specialist degree.

BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY:

To bring innovation and craftsmanship together to lead to a better lifestyle for the individuals in which we build with.

WHAT SETS YOUR BUSINESS APART?

Our passion for home building began together in high school and has evolved into the development of a top rate building team. Our constant thirst for knowledge has led to our dedication in building environmentally friendly and energy efficient homes that are not only innovative in their construction but also beautiful.

HOBBIES, VOLUNTEERISM, ETC.:

We do a lot to support our local charities, school programs, and community organizations. We also enjoy showing Hackney Show Ponies.

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