



community minded

A Berwyn family gets in on one of the area's best-kept secrets. *By Tara Behan*

It's an idyllic place with a beautiful natural lake surrounded by sandy shores, where families congregate for swimming, fishing and ice-skating, with tennis courts and a playground nearby. Even better, it's in the heart of the Main Line.

Five years ago, when John and Purusha Mostoller began their property search, it didn't take long for them to

settle on Leopard Lakes. "Homes there rarely get onto the MLS," says John of the quiet Berwyn community. "Most of the time, they are sold by word of mouth."

The Mostollers' custom home is one of an increasing number of new houses replacing the ranch-style and two-story residences built back in the 1950s. Inspired by ideas they'd seen on trips to places

like Nashville and Aspen, Colo.—not to mention Purusha's home state of North Carolina—the couple knew from the start that their home would be anything but traditional. And they found the perfect cul-de-sac location.

"Our friends like to make fun of us because, whenever we go on trips, we visit custom-home *continued on page 48*

resources **architect:** R.A. Hoffman Architects, 55 Plank Ave., Paoli, (610) 889-0660, hoffman-architects.com. **builder** Sextant Building and Development, Berwyn, (610) 225-0915, sextantbds.com. **interior designer** Weixler Peterson Luzi Interior Design, 232 Church Road, Suite 2B, Ardmore, (215) 592-9570, wplinc.com.



CHALET INSPIRED: (Clockwise from opposite page) The kitchen's stonework and curved archways are among the countless custom touches throughout the Mostoller home; a two-story fireplace and post-and-beam ceiling lend a sense of drama to the living room; another fireplace brings relaxed elegance to the master bedroom; in the master bathroom, a shimmering glass-tile wall hides the walk-around shower.





The home's inviting foyer (left) and a girl's bedroom.

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communities," says John. "There's so many wonderful details we found that we brought to the design of this home."

It also helped that the Mostollers have experience in the business: John is a developer, and Purusha is an interior designer. When it came to their new home, neither was afraid to make unconventional decisions—like opting for a

first-floor master bedroom and a second-floor media/rec-room.

The Mostollers are quite taken by Southern architecture. That much is apparent in the brick-and-stone façade and majestic wrought iron front doors of their French-chateau-inspired home. Inside, a combination of warm colors and natural materials evoke the feel of a sophisticated mountain lodge.

"The Mostollers are the perfect clients because they know what they want and they're both so knowledgeable," says the home's Paoli-based architect, Rene Hoffman. "They didn't want a conventional house, and they certainly didn't get it. Everything has a texture to it—and where there isn't texture, there's color. It's a house that's definitely rich in materials."

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Hoffman describes his work as "country home with relaxed architecture" and an open floor plan ideal for entertaining. The two-story living room's handcrafted, post-and-beam truss roof carries through to the exterior. A fieldstone fireplace makes for a dramatic focal point, and the second floor landing also has stonework.

In the center of the first-floor master bathroom, a soaking tub surrounded by granite is separated from an elaborate walk-around shower by a glistening wall of glass tiles in amber, gold and cream. Exposed wood beams help to ground the space's unusually high ceilings. "Most homes have the soaking tub against the wall next to a window," says Hoffman. "Purusha had the vision of designing the room with the shower against the exterior wall—and there's not many like it."

Walls made of stone frame the breakfast area, with curved archways leading into the kitchen and family room. In the kitchen, a sink made of a striking espresso-colored stone from a mountain in Mexico drove the design choices for the rest of the room. A large, two-tiered center island holds both the main and secondary sinks. Purusha chose to accent the island's deeper granite shades with perimeter counters made of neutral granite. A unique stucco application on the hood above the commercial-grade range brings yet another natural-looking element to the space.

When the Mostollers aren't preparing meals inside, they're outside grilling on their covered porch, just off the family room. The couple considers the space an extension of their living area, and it's outfitted just so, with comfortable furniture, a masonry fireplace with a television above, and a built-in grill area. "We live outside as much as inside," says John.

In an additional space on the second floor above the garage, the couple created a dual-purpose room, with a bar and pool table in one section and a step-down area leading to a home theater with two rows of leather chairs and a big-screen projector. The room was designed around the pool table—a family heirloom that once belonged to John's father.

It's telling that, soon after moving into their home in Leopard Lakes, the Mostollers sold their Shore house. "My husband feels like he's already on a vacation when he's at home," says Purusha. "I feel the same way."

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