



A Dream Team Creates a Minneapolis Dream Home

By Merritt Rethlake
March 20, 2019

Be bold. Live life fully. Monica Eckberg encourages the clients of her wealth-management practice to do this every day. “Have a vision that inspires your savings behavior and makes your intentions a reality,” says the two-time *Finance & Commerce* Top Women in Finance honoree. For the past 20 years, she’s helped clients realize their goals. So when it came to achieving one of her own — building a dream home — she and husband Darren made the most of that mantra.

The Eckbergs purchased this Minneapolis lakes property and enlisted an A team — Elevation Homes, Martha O’Hara Interiors, and Murphy & Co. — to create a house that met their needs for relaxing, hosting and putting down roots in the community. A sense of community applied to that dream team as well. “Darren and Monica laid such amazing groundwork, and everyone rallied together to take chances,” recalls Elevation Homes Senior Project Director Joe Crowley.



Photography by Camille Lizama

“Community sparked our move — to not only be part of this community but to contribute to it,” Darren notes, standing next to artwork by local painter Jillian Lee. “If you moved this exact house into a different neighborhood, it wouldn’t be home.”

Every element of the four-bedroom abode is soft and welcoming, striking a balance between sophistication and approachability. The red tile roof, wrought-iron railings and stone fireplace are cornerstones of the Mediterranean architecture yet blend with the interior’s traditional style punctuated by glamorous details. Classic damask patterns pair with a tempered palette of gemstone accents — jade in the kitchen, fuchsia in the living room, chartreuse in the office — while other elements pay homage to Monica’s Indian heritage and the couple’s European travels.



Photography provided by Troy Thies

“We designed each space to fully serve the needs of their everyday lives so that being at home is totally effortless,” says Krystal Kellermann, award-winning designer at Martha O’Hara Interiors. Every square foot was thoughtfully designed to maximize usage, whether entertaining in the open-concept living/dining area or relaxing in a quieter space.

It was also important to the Eckbergs that this new build have plenty of character. “Jeff Murphy figured out a way to achieve both,” Darren says, pointing to the house’s crown molding, butler’s pantry and built-in cabinetry.



“We want anyone to come into our home and be who and how they are,” Monica says, as natural light pours in through six sets of double doors in the formal living room. Though “formal” it is not. “No room is off-limits,” she adds. “This is a home to be lived in.”

There’s a standing invitation here “no matter if it’s a dinner party or takeout,” Monica says. If the former, friends comfortably fill the formal dining room and enjoy sweeping lake views thanks to Juliet balconies. Downstairs, a guest suite provides privacy (her parents are frequent visitors), while upstairs awaits the couple’s secluded sanctuary.

The master suite exudes a level of tranquility that rivals that of a five-star spa. “It’s a quiet escape for the two of us,” says Darren. “You mean the three of us,” Monica smiles, nodding to their pintsize Yorkie, Priya.

The space includes a bedroom, a master bathroom, his-and-hers closets, and a sitting room with a balcony overlooking the lake. The interior designers made careful selections to complement the getaway-like feel. “In the master, a luxurious soaking tub is a focal point, with tile that embraces a classic black-and-white pairing,” explains designer Stephanie Doering. “We took classic materials like marble and added detailed variation. A special tile runner draws the eye yet is soft and neutral to create a serene retreat for every day.”

Darren and Monica took up residence here last June and attest to having lived life fully each and every day since. “There’s a difference between a dream house and a dream home,” she concludes. “A dream home is not about the look of it — it’s how it makes you feel. To us, this home makes us feel like we’re exactly where we’re meant to be.”

The Team

- **Architects:** Jeff Murphy and Dan Demeules of Murphy & Co.
- **Builder:** Joe Crowley of Elevation Homes
- **Interior Designers:** Krystal Kellermann and Stephanie Doering of Martha O'Hara Interiors