



The great room features a gas fireplace with a white, hand-crafted mantel, and a generous view of the woods.

# A Change of Plans

## The Kerns add personal touches to their Bob Webb Montclair model

By Duane St. Clair

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPHER KEELS

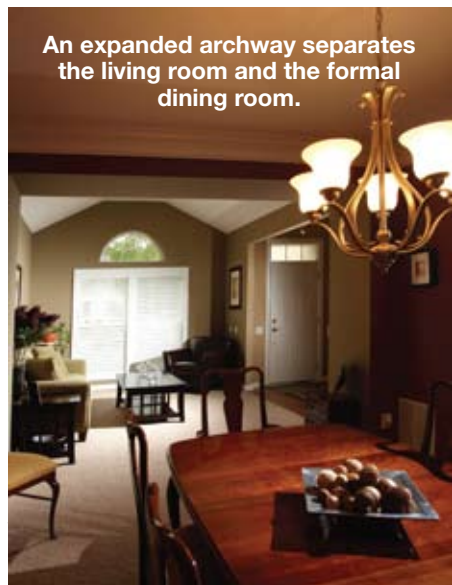
New home buyers tend to change a builder's standard plans before construction starts, in order to make it their own, especially when they're working with a high-end builder of quality homes.

So it was with Jason and Jennifer Kerns, who found they liked most features and amenities that Bob Webb incorporates into its basic plans. They worked with the builder to put their signature on the Montclair, a 3,400-square-foot home they had built on a wooded lot in a section of the sprawling Highland Lakes development in southern Delaware County. At the beginning of summer, only one "spec house" remained in their new neighborhood.

While Jason and Jennifer liked the floor plan, it didn't call for the side-load, three-car garage that Jennifer says was mandatory. Their lot was wide enough, another factor in choosing the location, so the front-entry garage plan was simply revised.

The change also resulted in big pluses inside for the Kerns. Just off the wood-floored foyer to the left is an office space that would have been the small garage in a three-car setup. Handsome, dark wood furnishings make it a comfortable amenity that was not in the original plan.

A hallway to the left off of the foyer leads to an expanded laundry room with ample cabinets both above and below the counter and laundry equipment. Access to the garage would have come through the room, but Jennifer didn't want that. The access door was



An expanded archway separates the living room and the formal dining room.



moved to what amounts to another small foyer with a bench and shelves, all neatly tucked into the opening off the garage.

To allow these changes in wall locations, the powder room was moved slightly and a large, two-door closet was cut in half, leaving adequate storage.

To the right off of the entry foyer, the couple retained a living room readily accessible through an enlarged opening. An expanded archway separates the living room and formal dining room, which Jennifer also wanted, particularly for hosting her visiting family.

The foyer leads directly to the eye-catching kitchen that opens to, but is subtly separated from, the great room. The Kerns opted not to build short walls between the two rooms and had decor-



**The kitchen includes an enlarged island with a tan and black granite countertop, cherry cabinets and tall ceilings.**

or off-white,” which is not the case working with Kowalski, who helped pick various color selections throughout the home, Jennifer says.

Also, in a production home, an electrical switch is likely to control a receptacle nearest the door, even though that may not be the best place for a light. In their new home, however, they could designate that a switch might control light on the far side of the room, Jason says.

To document their wishes for the new home, decisions on interior features and pricing impact took more than three dozen pages to detail, and almost each page is happily signed by the buyers. “It’s a fun process to make it your own,” Jennifer says. ♦

tive columns placed farther apart to create more openness.

An enlarged island with a 4-by-7-foot tan and black granite countertop is the focal point of the kitchen. With 9-foot ceilings, wall cabinets are 42 inches, and the Kerns picked striking cherry that adds another color element to the layout. The perimeter cabinets have black granite countertops with a custom-designed backsplash of tumbled marble. The 6-by-6-inch tiles are highlighted by 1-inch square pattern dots.

In the great room, one wall features a 60-inch television that is part of a sound-system installed throughout the home. Universal speaker controls are under the television that’s placed adjacent to an angled gas fireplace in a corner next to the rear exterior wall. A white, hand-crafted mantel – one of several designs Webb offers – and a marble-tiled front incorporate the installation adjacent to windows that overlook the woods.

A windowed door leads to a custom-designed wood deck that rises 12 feet above the ground. A stairway with two landings winds to the ground, where the Kerns expect to add a patio accessible from the walkout lower level they eventually will finish.

Stairs leading off the great room to the lower level were left open at the top and a wood railing was installed. When the 1,700-square-foot lower level is finished, stairway walls at the bottom will be removed so the area will be more fluid with the rest of the home.

At the top of the stairs between the foyer and the second floor, French doors to the

master suite create an impressive air, an example of a feature the Kerns liked in the original plan. The generous bedroom has a high, multi-faceted sloped ceiling to add ambience.

His and her walk-in closets are located in the short access hall to the master bath.

A large, glass-walled shower and soaking tub are at one end of the bath and a twin-sink counter along another. A small but important add-on is a linen closet in the bath.

Also on the second floor is a guest room with its own full bath. Two other bedrooms have a Jack-and-Jill bath that will work nicely if and when children arrive, Jennifer says.

As they discussed and planned the home through Kathy Kowalski, Bob Webb’s designer, or various sub-contractors, the Kerns say they found all of the tedious decision-making a pleasant experience. If the couple wanted something incorporated or changed, the builder readily agreed or suggested acceptable alternatives.

The Kerns had built their previous home in New Albany through a production contractor and found the experience somewhat exasperating. Every change in plans was an add-on. Paint choices were “white

*Duane St. Clair is a contributing editor for Luxury Living Magazine.*



**The Kerns’ master suite connects to the master bath through a short access hall, which conveniently includes his and her walk-in closets.**

