

GREAT LAKE STORY

CHAPTER THREE

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WAINSCOT PANELING IS SHOULDER HEIGHT.

“It’s the end product of a team effort: A quality architect who lays a timeless foundation and is open to collaboration, and a builder who executes with excellence, setting the platform for us to do our best work,” Mary said of her partners, architect Wayne Visbeen and Falcon Custom Homes builder Nathan Abbott.

“From three designated areas of expertise, we work for a home’s common good. Respecting and being receptive to one another brings everything together.”

DESIGNING SPACES

Certain colors work well in Michigan, Mary said. Those she chose for this Craftsman cottage were inspired by the lakeshore — water, sky, grasslands and dunes. “The beauty of this region stays in the home throughout those seasonal bouts of gray,” she said. “Next, texture is most essential to developing inviting spaces.”

Carpet, fabrics, wicker, rattan, painted pieces and tile blend throughout the house with wood, metal, stone and light to create depth, warmth and interest. I especially loved the light fixtures — “designer-driven styles” in clean, crisp nickel, enhanced by different textures like silk, linen and glass.

All of these and the furnishings, I learned, came from Mary’s own

Scott and I visited Rose and Ben in Grand Rapids this weekend. Six months into her first pregnancy now, our only child truly did glow as she opened the door to a sweet cupcake-themed nursery: We have a granddaughter on the way!

I couldn’t wait to move forward with our second home in Benton Harbor.

Monday on the way back to Chicago, we stopped at The Fairways at Harbor Shores to tour the custom two-story we liked on Golden Bear Court. Though we learned the shingle-style model was about to sell, interior designer Mary Burns was in town from Rockford, planning for a photographer.

She welcomed us into the foyer with a zest much like Rose’s — and it took only seconds to appreciate why. This house just embraces you.



DETAILS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE!



5,000-square-foot showroom and full-service design studio, Gallery Interiors in Rockford. This business also houses Rockford Kitchen Design.

Project management and space planning are offered through both, she explained, along with all products needed to complete the job.

“We do a lot of site design — interior surfaces are huge for us,” she said. “Sometimes you don’t know what opportunities or bare spots may arise as a house comes together. In this one, what had originally been planned as beadboard in hallways and rooms became shoulder-height, creamy-white wainscot paneling. It elevates the home’s presentation, and makes it feel more spacious.”

Having only time to make mental notes then, Scott and I have since arranged for copies of the home’s photos, and to gain insights, too, from Wayne and Nathan. We’re not entirely sure what our own end result will be.

But we’re excited to embrace it.

Joan and Scott Willet’s exploration of The Fairways at Harbor Shores continues in the Spring Issue of Michigan BLUE. To learn more visit www.miblue.com.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHNNY QUIRIN

DESIGNER-DRIVEN LIGHT FIXTURES PAIR NICKEL WITH TEXTURE.