

The celebrated home

BY R.J. WEICK

By definition, tranquility is the quality or state of being calm or at rest. It is an element many talented minds and hands have sought to capture in the built environment—such as Minoru Yamasaki’s search for serenity in architecture or the simple beauty in the curve of a chair—and often requires a long term dedication to the pursuit itself.

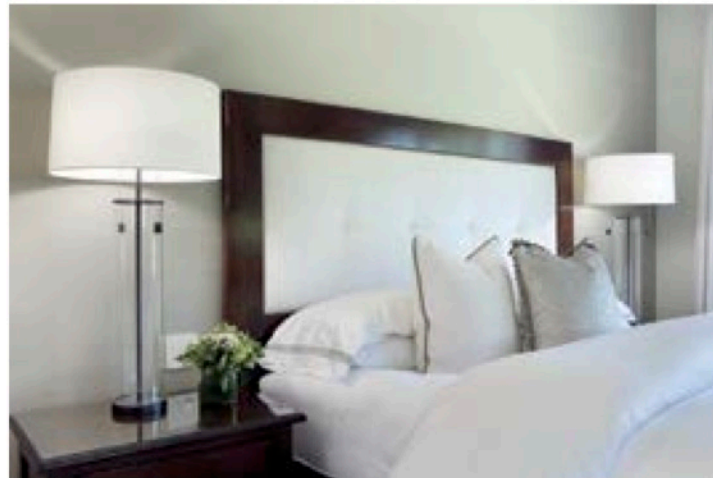
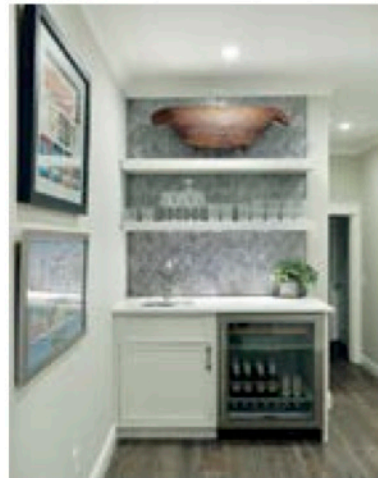
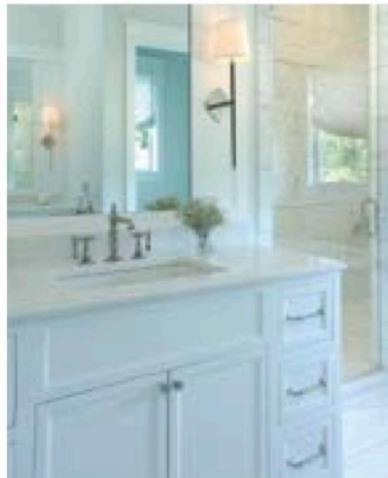
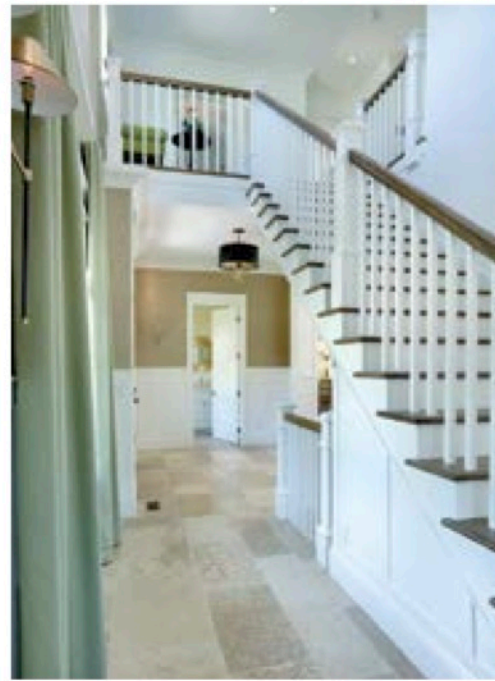
In the residential market, capturing a sense of tranquility within a structure often starts in the landscape and is influenced not only by its surrounding place and interior space, but also more ephemeral elements of light and emotion evoked by material selections.

For Jim Rose, sports anchor at ABC Channel 7 in Chicago, and Lakesha Rose, founder of L Rose Interior Design, the search for serenity and a location for a second residence that would eventually be called home was nearly a decade in the making.

“Jim and I had been casually looking for a second home location for about 10 years and it felt like we were always trying to stick a square peg into a round hole. It just never felt right,” Lakesha Rose said. “In 2016 after we sold our home in Lincoln Park, we decided to again set out casually on this journey.”

In search of land—and a place—that captured them from an emotional standpoint, Jim and Lakesha Rose turned their attention to southwestern Michigan after staying overnight in a small coastal community known for its culinary and fine arts, and pristine sand dunes.

“We happened to come up sort of on a whim and as we got off of Blue Star Highway and stayed at the Wickwood Inn, it reminded me so much of an experience I had in my childhood—I grew up back East in New England on Rhode Island,” Jim Rose said. “We stopped at this artist gallery and the two gentlemen running it were so wonderful and they were from back East like we were.”



Working with Melannie Hay of Beachwalk Properties in South Haven, the Roses found the ideal location in a local premier residential community known as The Ravines Condominium Association, which not only provided access to the 18-hole Arnold Palmer Signature Golf Course at The Ravines Golf Club, but also would accommodate space for a woodworking shop and the landscape to create a relaxed, albeit sophisticated farmhouse retreat.

"When we went through the entrance, it reminded me so much of going down Magnolia Lane at the Augusta National," Jim Rose said. "The thing that sealed the deal was, I said: 'I'm going to play a round of golf.' I'm hitting the ball—and I'm hitting it good—and I couldn't believe how I was playing. I had never broken 90 in my life. I scored an 89. I said: 'We're here. This is where we are going to be.'"

Lakesha Rose, who noted finding and deciding on the right property is often based on emotion and how the location makes the person feel, said while they initially thought another nearby town would be where they would plant their roots, she knew Hay saved the best for last the moment they stepped into the residential-golfing community.

"It seemed like Jim and I both breathed at the same time and said, 'this is it,'" Lakesha Rose said. "As a Chicagoan who lives in the heart of the city, there is so much at your fingertips that it can sometimes create a spoiled thought process when you go to other places. The reason we picked Saugatuck was for their very-evolving food scene, which means so much to us and our friends. The culture for a small town is pretty fantastic: Saugatuck has a city-dweller's sophistication with a small-town charm."

Upon identifying the specific lot, the Rose's then turned to the next step in the design-and-build process: finding the right partners to draw and build their dream home. With a vision for a farmhouse with an understated elegance, the Roses looked to bring in Wayne Visbeen, AIA, IIDA, principal and founder of Visbeen Architects LLC, an architectural planning services firm with locations in Grand Rapids, Michigan and Chicago, Illinois; and Richard Bloem, founder, owner, and project manager at Homes by True North in Grand Rapids.

"I have worked with enough architects to know the good from the bad and [Visbeen] has such a gift of space that this

trait can only come naturally. [Visbeen] has been given that gift; it's almost hard to put into words," Lakesha Rose said. "I can better express it by feeling when I see a floor plan, and he does it every time."

Visbeen Architects is an award-winning, full-service firm that has received national recognition for its diverse portfolio of high-end, custom residential projects. The firm has also worked in commercial and retail industries, and since its establishment in 1992 has worked in more than 20 countries.

"[The Roses] were looking for a low country-style design, mostly found in the Carolinas," Visbeen said. "We have done several low country homes that are very similar in the fact that it is somewhat symmetric, walk in the center entry and it opens up to a central room and an outdoor living space, and they have this low access from the ground."

Though it is inspired by a vernacular defined by large overhangs and porches, tall ceilings, and shutter-flanking windows; this nearly 4,300-square-foot residence evokes a sense of estate-like grandeur from its position overlooking the downward sweep of land through its more minimalist and bright exterior and interior palette tempered with a hint of soothing hues of green and gold.

"Saugatuck has a relaxed, sophisticated country feel, so the town inspired the design of the house and how we wanted to feel when we would spend time in this lovely town arriving from the fast pace of Chicago," Lakesha Rose said.

Upon approach from the brick-lined drive, the two-story home and connecting three-stall garage welcomes visitors in true country style hospitality with its large front porch and characteristic pillars. Once inside, the foyer opens up into a spacious living room, kitchen, and dining area wrapped to one side around the central focal point of the outdoor living space beyond. The foyer also serves as a connection to the master suite, which flanks the outdoor patio opposite of the kitchen and dining areas, and a stairwell leading to two additional bedrooms, a raised flexible space, and bathrooms.

"By utilizing the foyer into the great room, we could access the space to make the house feel and live bigger even though it is pretty efficient living. The outdoor living is easily created in the back, because it is flanked by the master bedroom, the living room, and the dining; creating a natural porch with three sides. All we

had to do to create that porch was create one screened wall—a Phantom Screen—that opens up," Visbeen said. "Lakesha [Rose] also loves to cook, so having access to a great kitchen, nice pantry, big range and island, and lots of cabinetry for entertaining was really important."

The lower level also features a theater room with an adjacent bar area complete with floating shelves, a woodworking shop, and an exercise room.

"The Roses were just a pleasure, because Lakesha has such great taste and Jim is a woodworker. So here we have an artisan and an artist working with us on a house, which of course makes my job easier," Visbeen said. "It immediately translated what I was doing, they got it, and then they took it to the next level."

Once the architectural design had been finalized, the Roses met with Bloem from Homes by True North based on a referral from Hay of Beachwalk Properties.

"When we met Bloem, he had such a nice, mild-mannered demeanor that Jim and I felt so assured he was the right man for our home. Homes by True North is not driven by money—that was proven so many times during the process—they are driven by pure intent and service," Lakesha Rose said.

Jim Rose also noted after previous experience working with individuals in the building trade, he was taken by Bloem's character and the team of sub-contractors who collaborated throughout the process.

"It is more than a client-business relationship; we are friends with them and [Bloem's] on-site manager, Alex Goosen is the absolute best," Jim Rose said.

"I'm sort of an idealist. I always grew up with my father's words ringing in my ears: always leave someplace better than when you found it. One of the companies they hired is called Semper Fi; they did the framing for the house, actually built the house, put the frame up, roof joists, and did some of the carpentry work. It is a gentleman who served in the Marines and he found a bunch of guys like him. I've never seen a group of guys with more character," Jim Rose added.

Although there was the challenge of addressing the site and house orientation days before breaking ground—which was pointed out by the excavator and admittedly saved the Roses thousands of dollars by flipping the positioning—Lakesha Rose said the whole process went smoothly.

"This is our fourth house. In Chicago,



the three that we had we were never really emotionally tied. This house—we have so much love and emotion in it. I see this house and it is a whole different feeling,” Lakesha Rose said.

“We put so much blood, sweat, and tears into this place, that I actually can say I love this home and for me, I love people, I don’t love objects,” Jim Rose added. “I like my job, I’ve liked some of the cars I’ve had, I’ve liked some of the homes we have had, but this is different.”

In this case, not only did Lakesha Rose bring a strong design vision to the overall vernacular and layout of the home, but also provided the interior design services, while Jim Rose handcrafted nearly all of the custom cabinetry found throughout the modern farmhouse—and the floating shelves found in the kitchen were designed collaboratively by the couple. From the kitchen and island cabinets, living room bookcases, butler’s pantry, and beverage center adjacent to the basement theater room, to the textured wallcoverings, artwork, and fabrics woven within the home, there is a personal investment and touch to the details on the interior.

Hours spent pouring over pillows, fabrics, trim, wallpaper, paint, decorative hardware, and crafting woodwork culminated into a residential project inspired by the very surrounding landscape and intimately reflective of its owners. Greens, grass cloths, playful patterns, set against a white backdrop are complemented by a sophisticated blend of grays and whites, and oversized orb-like light fixtures creating a soft accent to the clean lines and bright hues in the kitchen.

“I wanted to create a relaxed sophis-

tication in the country. What I mean by that is getting inspiration from what was outside, bringing those colors in, and choosing sophisticated fabrics that also looked relaxed in addition to being durable—and covering furniture that have clean lines, but still feel comfortable so people aren’t afraid to sit down,” Lakesha Rose said. “I wanted friends and family to feel fancy and relaxed at the same time.”

In curating the tailored sophistication, Lakesha Rose also noted she approached the project the same way she would have for a client of L Rose Interior Design: by asking questions early on in the process to ensure the two of them were happy in every room. From the architectural process—and perfecting light aspect in regard to windows and natural lighting—she said it then moves into interiors, collaborating with the architectural integrity of the structure, to enhance the space with texture, fabrics, furnishings, and color.

“My strength lies in the integration of interior and structure. I would describe my trademark style as a sophisticated use of texture, color, and light,” Lakesha Rose said.

“When you put the architectural elements and the interior elements together, they have to be together, they have to dance together in order to have a room or a house that is aesthetically pleasing. When anything is aesthetically pleasing, it becomes emotionally pleasing,” Lakesha Rose said.

Lakesha Rose, who has been in the design industry for more than 15 years, involved with nearly \$150 million in construction, and done the interior selec-

tions on more than 600 units, said when designing for someone else and picked to create the aesthetics of another’s home it really should be a great honor.

“They are inviting you into their personal space to say, ‘I’m choosing you to reflect my personality,’ and they are saying, ‘I believe in you to design something that will happily reflect my personality,’” Lakesha Rose said. “I think if you go into any design project or work, you are always going to be successful, because it is a true honor to be selected to design someone’s home.”

That said, with the level of hands-on, personal investment both Jim and Lakesha Rose put into their own home will leave as lasting an impression on them as the picture the residence leaves from the street.

“I’m not into design as much as [Lakesha] is, but for me this whole project has been a labor of love. I will add one little caveat to that; I would call it a comfortable labor of love,” Jim Rose said.

For Lakesha Rose, the collaboration working with her husband as he designed and built the cabinets—which realistically became a second job for a nine-month-period—was one of her favorite aspects of bringing their home to life.

“He knocked it out of the park. I really enjoy working with Jim, because we have the same intention, motivation, and work ethic. It’s very romantic,” Lakesha Rose said.

“Great design is impacting all six senses in a positive way and not really understanding why a place makes you feel that good, happy, and satisfied. I designed our house in a way that now Jim and I refer to this home as the happy house. The best compliment I am given is when people walk through the house often describing the house as a happy house without me initially describing how I feel about it. They don’t even realize how that warms my heart,” Lakesha Rose added.