

STYLE

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Adoption 
Creates Strong Families

Coming Home



♥ Coming Home ♥

By Lynette Chilcoat

For different people, those two words hold a variety of meanings. Overall, though, they evoke a sense of walking into a place of comfort, personal style, and most importantly, belonging.

Such is the case with the distinctive home built by Schroetlin Custom Homes for Theresa Branney and her husband, John Bradford Branney within the heart of Redstone Canyon.

John's retired from his initial career as a geologist, and now uses a segment of the new house as an in-home office for his follow-up avocation as an author. Theresa continues to work in natural gas marketing.

The Branneys have found their luxurious retreat to be an out of the way haven as they shift into a more leisurely lifestyle.

"This is kind of a sanctuary," mentions Theresa Branney. "We listen to the coyotes at night. Their yipping is like a concert. We can see all the stars and often fall asleep watching them. You forget how powerful and fresh the smells are, like the scent of sage. It's a place to regenerate your soul."

John Branney adds, "There isn't a bad view here. The back

patio is phenomenal and we have a lot of fun entertaining."

The 40 acres the house is situated on ensures those views will remain consistent.

"We are close enough to town and culture, yet still far enough away," says Theresa about the mere 15 miles from Fort Collins that separates city from rustic backcountry.

A plethora of wildlife abounds, from deer to bears, with an occasional glimpse of either bobcat or cougar. The terrain is prime rattlesnake habitat, too, so the Branneys are cautious. They take care where they step and keep a close eye on their three German shepherds.

The drive itself follows a meandering route from modern civilization into a glimpse of prehistoric times, a theme John embraces in his writing.

After turning off a paved two-lane and venturing north into Redstone Canyon, the hard-packed dirt road narrows,







red rock formations rimming the way. A creek parallels curvy switchbacks. Copses of cottonwoods in their autumn garb of green, turning to gold and bronze, offer a colorful passage as well as roadside shade.

Through a coded gate and up a hill, the Branney's home sits innocuously on a level expanse of property. The natural rock and wood elements of the exterior blend well with the landscape.

Builder, Mike Schroetlin, found few challenges, but one was the approach to the site.

"It was tough, it's definitely up there a ways," says Schroetlin. "In addition to the distance, each contractor and vendor needed the security code and directions. We had to have good communication. But the Branney's were fun to work with. A lot was spelled out in the original plans, so I just needed to get to know them and figure out their preferences in colors and materials."

Walking through the front door is like stepping into a sturdy structure that somehow, miraculously, is a mere extension of bringing the great outdoors inside. Designed by John Dengler and Associates of Fort Collins, the overall feel of the interior is immediately one of flowing, continuous movement.

A great room greets the eye, with floor to ceiling windows sweeping across the entire southern wall. An open floor plan presents the living room, dining area and kitchen as a whole. Each room sports an attention to detail highlighted by soft, neutral tones.

Beyond the thick glass, a patio inlaid with water features and a firepit are in evidence, highlighted by a xeriscape garden full of indigenous plants. Open to the prairie, with forested foothills and red mesa beyond, the entire scene is a sweeping live canyonlands portrait.

"The house fits the land. They go together," says Theresa.

A sentiment echoed Schroetlin, who from a practicability standpoint thinks the house wasn't difficult to build. "There was a clean, flat surface site," says Schroetlin. "The rear patio is really nice, mixing the indoors with the out. The house has a geothermal heating system, which is complex, but very energy efficient and green."

On the western side of the great room, a gas fireplace takes center stage. Influenced



by both the Branney's backgrounds, the structure is constructed of quarried stones in beautiful shapes and hues. As self-described rock hounds, John and Theresa are especially proud of this feature. On either side are a series of built-in shelves intended to host the Branney's recently acquired hobby of bronze and pottery collecting. The same fireplace also offers heated ambience in John's office space, then ties into the master bedroom and basement great room as well.

In the kitchen, the cabinets are made of alder, a light brown wood so mellow the brushed tint resembles a doe's pelt.

From there, the floor plan circles through a hallway to the east, where Theresa's office space is tucked into a cubbyhole next to the master suite, which exhibits a continuing extension of the south-facing glass wall. Moving north, the walk-in closet holds a hidden treasure — a door on the opposite end that leads into the expansive utility and mud room.

In the western portion of the house is a guest suite and John's office, where a single wall is constructed of pine-beetle wood, a lovely bluish pine with intricate whorls. The room is filled with displayed southwestern artifacts that John has collected.

"All were surface-found on private land of the high plains of Rocky Mountain states," notes John.

Although the upper level was designed to contain everything necessary to accommodate their aging process, the basement has been fully finished.

The floor is sheathed in large square granite tiles with a swirling gray and white pattern. An inviting great room, kitchenette, wine cellar and weight room complement the main level amenities.

There's also a storage bunker capacious enough to house an elk herd, an asset when heavy Colorado snows fly and going back and forth to town becomes an issue.

Of the symbiotic relationship between the Branney's and Mike Schroetlin who served to create a quality home built to last a lifetime, Theresa says, "We felt we could trust him and could work with him."

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