



# Rustic Refinements

The best of both worlds

When Alan and Alexis Nitchman moved to the Quad-Cities a few years back, they searched for the perfect location to build their new house. On one hand, it had to be close to urbania—shopping, entertainment, groceries, and the like—on the other, the location had to be

remote enough to have trees, creeks, a little wildlife, and privacy. The Nitchmans found the “best” of both worlds in an area not known for its rural setting...the middle of Moline, Ill. “We’ve lived all over the United States, and we’ve had homes in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Florida, Denver, Minneapolis, and

Wisconsin. And this is as nice a place as any of those,” acknowledges Alexis, who also owns and operates an interior decorating business called Ambiance. Architecturally, the Nitchman’s home is a combination of styles reflecting both modern and traditional house design. The front

facade offers a New England Cape Cod, complete with cedar shakes and low-slung rooflines. When the house is viewed from the back, it offers a contemporary feel complete with a wrought iron spiral staircase traversing an upper-level deck to the ground-level patio. “When we found this location, we knew it was perfect. There



is a small creek that runs behind us, and sitting near the fire pit during a warm summer evening is super. The serenity of the running water along with all of the beautiful trees ... this is the perfect spot to be for peace of mind," adds Alexis.

As you enter the Nitchman's home, the first thing that strikes your attention is the craftsmanship of the hardwood flooring and woodwork prevalent throughout the house. According to Alexis, Quad Cities home builder Mark McManus used Cherry hardwood for all of the flooring and trim work. "We love the woodwork. Mark did a wonderful job. The attention to detail is super," Alexis notes.

Moving from the foyer, you enter directly into the great room with its spectacular fireplace and superb view of the scenic back lot below. In addition, the visitor is welcomed to a house filled with an eclectic mixture of antiques, modern art and family heirlooms. "I don't have a style per se," says Alexis. "It's very eclectic. I like to use what is available in the home to decorate. We have many family heirlooms that are prominently displayed all over our house. They're what make the house a home."

Walking through the house, you notice all of the beautiful paintings and drawings by Nicole Hertzog, one of three Nitchman daughters. "Nicole has always been very talented from an early age, and we love her artwork as you can see. Having real artwork is important."

The great room features a huge fireplace, designed by Alexis, surrounded by black slate with terracotta tiling accent. "I like the straight lines of Craftsman styling, and it was my inspiration for this room," she points out, referring to the large picture windows facing the rear of the house.

Just off the great room is the kitchen and dining area. Featuring solid cherry cabinets and more hardwood flooring, the kitchen serves as the focal point for entertaining and offers further, a splendid view of the rustic outdoor scenery. "You'll notice we don't have a formal dining room. We purposely did this to keep the floor plan open," Alexis explains. A striking feature of the Nitchman's kitchen is the use of dark, almost black, granite countertops. "These set the room apart. The countertops are Brazilian Ubatuba granite." Stainless steel appliances round out the kitchen's appearance and continue the unique blend of modern and rustic styling prevalent throughout the home.

The master bedroom is also on the main

level, and again, the room affords the Nitchmans a splendid view of the outdoors. Complete with his-and-hers walk-in closets, the real gem of the master suite is the master bath with its tumbled marble flooring and countertops.

No home of this caliber would be complete without an office. Located in an upper-level loft that overlooks the great room is where the Nitchmans conduct family business. Here, you'll find prominently displayed photos of the two pictured with former United States Presidents George Bush and Richard Nixon. "We have a letter written to Alan from former First Lady Barbara Bush. We're very proud of that," Alexis says.

Heading to the lower level is like entering another house. It is completely furnished and boasts two bedrooms as well as a large open area that features a pool table, piano, and an area where guests can watch TV. "This is where our guests stay," adds Alexis. "They have complete privacy here."

A centerpiece of the lower level is the fireplace with its stunning tile surround. "I love this fireplace. If you look closely at the tile, you can see various plant fossils embedded into the stone. I think they're amazing, and they add so much to the overall look of the fireplace."

From the lower level, you're also able to visit the Flagstone patio where the wrought iron spiral staircase gracefully makes its way to the deck above. "Alan wanted to add the spiral staircase. By its virtue of being round, it complements the straight lines of the house."

According to Alexis, decorating a home is a learning process and is developed as you go. This philosophy is carried over to the way she decorated their home. With its heavy use of family heirlooms mixed with modern stylings, the combination works.

The Nitchmans have created their own country paradise: Their home features a comfortable, remote-like atmosphere yet is tucked neatly among urban amenities. "We like the great interaction between the indoors and the outdoors. Our home and its location give us the best of both worlds. We really wanted something out of the ordinary and not something you'd find in a stamped-out development." ::::



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