

Taking a 'Leap of Faith'



When Fred Hackl suffered a heart attack several years ago, he and his wife Marita were in the midst of designing their home north of Harbor on a rugged piece of land with a steep back drop-off and wildly varying topography.

His daughter suggested it would be a leap of faith to continue with the elaborate property plans.

So that's what the house is called today, "Leap of Faith." "This design isn't for everybody," said Hackl, an architect who designed the unique structure that has no north-facing windows.

"I couldn't go out and build this in Birchwood."

An unassuming front door, plain brown with no fancy accoutrements or decorative glass, leaves a visitor wondering what they'll find inside. From the front entranceway, it's not even possible to tell the house is on the lake.

Which is the point, according to Hackl, describing his house from the road as not "look-at-me architecture."

He worked with Steve, Noah and Melissa Adelaine, owners of Adelaine Construction, in undertaking the mammoth task of building on the precipice of a 300-foot-drop to



Homeowners Fred and Marita Hackl

the forest below and lake beyond. It was started in 2000 and completed in '02. "This site was very challenging to build on. This ridge is the highest point in the county," Hackl said. "A lot of engineering went into keeping it up here and not down there. It was quite an engineering feat."

Once inside, the sweeping view of Lake Michigan becomes apparent, as the house flows from entryway to living area and up to an oversized eyebrow window and architectural masterpiece of a ceiling, an inverted truss. In a "wow" moment, the kitchen sneaks up to the right and opens into a daring space with no cabinet doors for quite a lived-in look. "A lot of the design is about procession," Hackl said.

The cedar interior absorbs sound and helps to create a peaceful interior environment, even in a 4,800 square foot house, that harmonizes with the surrounding scenery. All

the wood used in the home, including the exterior cedar shake, is intended to age and change in appearance through the years.

A next-door annex and garage holds 8 vehicles and an apartment, outfitted with a basket-weave ceiling and simple décor. The lower level of the two-story garage was constructed with concrete trusses 36 feet in length and 4 feet in width, with no vertical columns, for a clear span across the room — another engineering feat worth noting at the property.

Marita lives in the home year round, preferring the cooler Northern climate to their native Memphis, Tenn., to where Fred continues to commute for architectural projects on a regular basis.

Coming home means being able to head down a winding stone staircase a couple hundred feet to "Fred's Folly," an outdoor patio, fireplace, adobe oven and in-ground bean hole cooker, plus horseshoe pit.

Back up on the lengthy span of deck, the view out to the lake is rivaled by the dense forestland covering the landscape cascading down the free-formed pathway and stone-slab steps. Intentionally placed viewing areas allow climbers to catch their breath and take in tree-framed views of the waters before taking the next step — a way to look before you leap, so to speak. HL



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