

# MEETING THE MCKENZIE

Jane and Kameron Maxwell love riverfront living, especially now that their 1970s Saltbox

is oriented to the world-class trout river running 50 feet behind it!



before

"The house wasn't oriented to the McKenzie River before we remodeled," says Jane of the Saltbox that a builder constructed for his family in the 1970s (left). The addition that Eugene, Ore.-based architect Richard Shugar designed includes French doors that open to the river and great spaces for outdoor living.

BY MICHEL GREGORY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SALLY SCHOOLMASTER



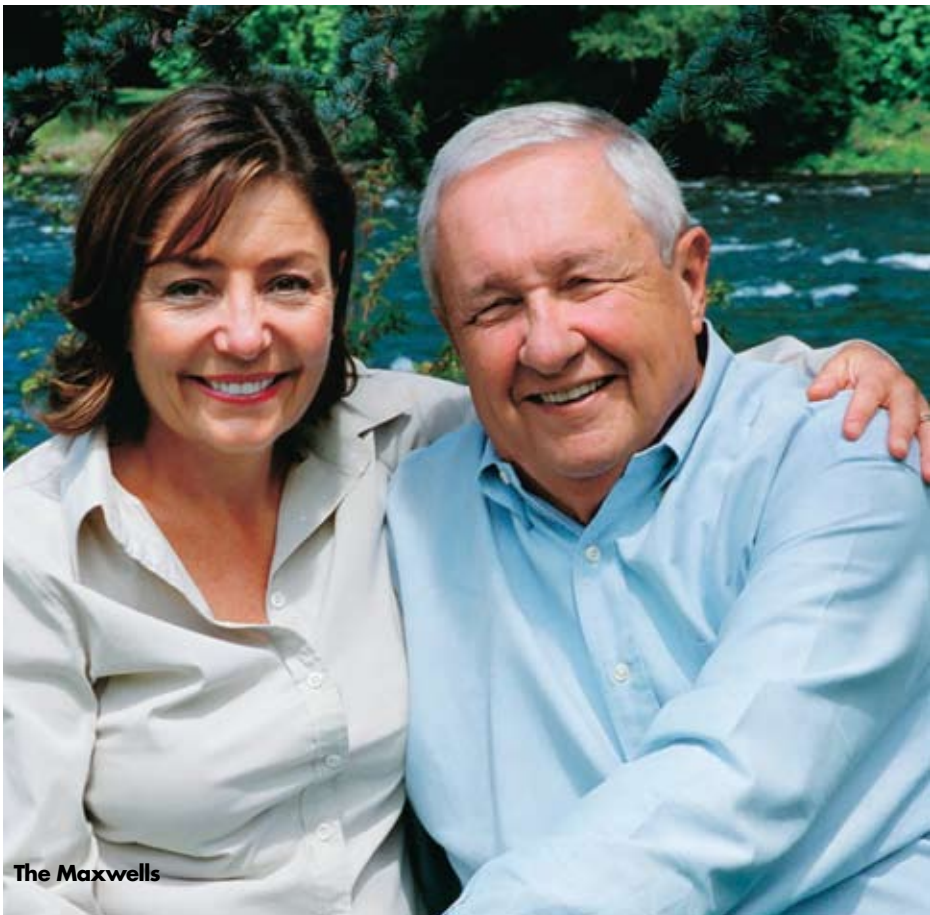
WHEN JANE AND KAMERON Maxwell decided it was time to leave Southern California four years ago, they knew there would be a river in their future. They just didn't know which one. But with family in Salem and Lake Oswego, it didn't take long to narrow the search to Oregon.

"I've had a lifelong dream of having a house on the river," says Jane, who loves fishing, gardening and being outdoors. "I always thought it would be a little cabin second home in some remote part of the country. But when we decided we were going to move from the San Diego area, I said, 'Let's buy a house on a river and it'll be our main house.' "

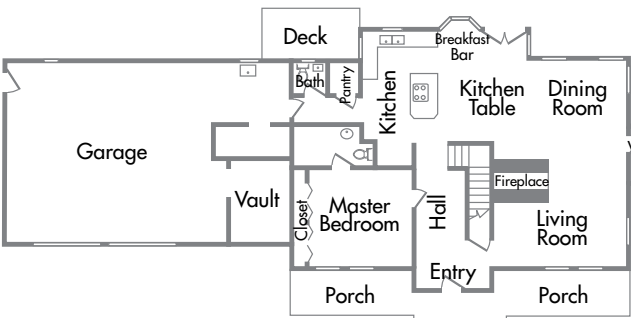
On Memorial Day weekend in 2004, they set out on a four-day watershed exploration that took them to riverfront properties on waterways from the Columbia, Deschutes and Metolius to the McKenzie and the Willamette. Working with a different real estate agent each day, they looked at 80-some properties before returning home to Rancho Santa Fe.

"We'd planned to pick the watershed we were interested in, and, during the next year, return there and really zero in on a property," says Jane. "But we got home and Kameron said, 'I think we should buy that white house on the McKenzie.' "

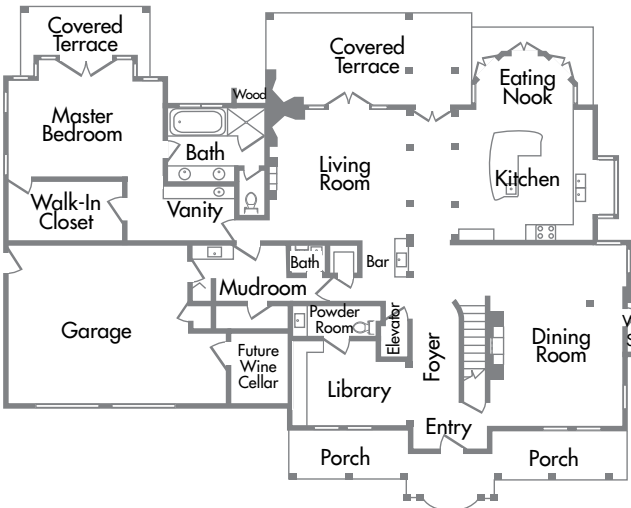
It wasn't until Kameron reminded her of the home's New England-style saltbox architecture, greenhouse and six-acre setting on a sunny open meadow that she



1ST FLOOR (BEFORE)



1ST FLOOR (AFTER)



**Shaking up a Saltbox:** The Maxwells' house originally had a rectangular 3,000-square-foot footprint that had one set of doors opening to the river-front backyard (*left, top*). A new 2,000-square-foot addition (*left, bottom*) has six sets of French doors and covered terraces from which to watch the McKenzie roll by.

"I added an arterial walkway through the house," says architect Richard Shugar about why he redesigned the original staircase (*left*), which blocked the view of the river from the front door. Pillars now delineate the space (*opposite*).



"I love the airiness and the roominess of the new hallway," says Jane. "I know it takes up a lot of space, but it helps make this house a fun house to have parties in because the guests have tons of space to spread out in." A chiseled maple floor give the 1970s house an Old World look.



remembered it out of the 15 or 20 McKenzie River homes they'd visited.

Jane agreed to buy the 3,000-square-foot house under two conditions: It had to have tall ceilings and it would have to undergo an extensive remodel. Kameron agreed to both, so when the real estate agent confirmed that the house had 10-foot ceilings, they made an offer based on one 15-minute walk through the house.

"The house was very rectilinear and it felt spartan," says Jane. "It felt like a New England boarding school because upstairs, it was just bedroom, bedroom, bedroom. Plus there were a lot of '70s finishes—oak floors, oak railings, oak cabinets—and oak is my least favorite wood. But the house did have high ceilings, very pretty Pella® windows and beautiful clear-fir doors that had aged to that cognac color that I just love. And the lot was fabulous! I could just see, because of its tall ceilings, what the house could turn into. Seeing its potential wasn't that big of a leap for us."

Fast forward eight months, and the Maxwells moved onto the property they've named Barking Trout Farms. Jane, who was gradually transitioning into retirement from a demanding career with a scientific software company that had her working 70 hours a week, went to work planning the first remodeling project she and Kameron had ever done together. Kameron is a consultant for the pharmaceutical and medical device industry.

"The plan was, we were going to come to Oregon and retire," says Jane. "Well, I was able to retire a year after our move, but Kameron is still consulting on some clinical trials, some of which take him overseas. A couple of years ago, he went to China nine times in one year."

AFTER PAINTING THE GRAY INTERIOR walls a cheerful butter yellow, the Maxwells prepared for their dream home to emerge. The ticket to that dream was archi-

tect Richard Shugar, the principal behind 2Form Architecture in Eugene, Ore., who the Maxwells hired after an eight-month search. Although he was the first architect they interviewed, his portfolio of mostly modern, smaller-scale projects prompted them to continue looking. However, no one else felt right, so they called him back and—based on glowing recommendations and the fact that they liked him—asked him to develop initial plans.

Shugar's primary marching orders were to improve the flow of the house for enter-



taining, design an addition that included a kitchen, den and spacious master suite, and take advantage of the home's river-front location. Jane, who admires the work of architect Robert A.M. Stern, also shared dozens of magazine photographs of classic Stern-inspired elements that she and Kameron wanted to incorporate into the remodel, including arches, pillars and elliptical accent windows.

When Shugar came back with plans, the Maxwells were blown away. "Richard probably had put 30 or 40 hours into the plans, so he had some pretty advanced plans for us to look at with side views of the columns and everything," says Jane. "He really kept in mind all of the ideas

that we wanted to incorporate."

From Shugar's point of view, the big ideas for the redesign were hatched pretty easily. "Sometimes working up floorplans take forever and sometimes a floorplan will just spill out of you—and this was a case where the new floorplan spilled out," says Shugar. "I remember telling people in the office as I was off for my first real meeting with the Maxwells, 'I'm either going to be fired again or they're going to be very happy.'"

The plans changed the circulation pattern of the main floor, incorporating half columns set atop casework to draw visitors from the entry through the house to the outdoors. The 2,000-square-foot addition reaches toward the river with an expanse of cottage-style windows and six sets of French doors that open from a charming half-octagonal eating nook, the central interior walkway, the den and a private master suite. An outdoor living space with a fireplace and kitchen flows from the den beneath a covered trellis supported by columns, and a covered porch with a barrel-vaulted roof stretches beyond the master bedroom.

"I wanted to capture the experience of being drawn to the light and drawn to the outdoors," says Shugar. "I used the columns as an organizing element, but it's not designed in such a way that it's like a hall where it's a barrier. It's almost like someone's hand is taking you through the house. While the Maxwells are formal in many ways in their taste in art and architecture, the part of the house that I designed is meant to be lived in in an informal way. It's open and it's easy to walk from one place to the next, yet each area is distinctly defined in some manner—whether it's with the columns or how I dealt with the ceiling."

With the plans taking shape, Jane and Kameron brought together the rest



**"Did you notice that the cabinets are pulled forward a little bit?" asks kitchen designer Kathleen Donohue. "Richard likes to do countertops that are 30 inches deep instead of the usual 25 inches deep." The extra inches allow for keeping cookbooks or small appliances next to the backsplash yet still having enough counterspace to prep or cook. Décor cabinets in cherry and granite countertops from Bennett Stone & Tile add to the luxe look. The oval-backed bar chairs are from Ballard Designs.**



of their dream home dream team. They hired Dennis Coduti of Dennis Coduti General Contractor in Vida, Ore., as the general contractor. He was the builder behind several impressive homes in the area that they admired. And they recruited Portland designer and fine artist Scott Sonniksen to advise on color, lighting and other design decisions. “My mom was a designer, so I grew up in antiques stores and fabric stores, but I knew I needed help with the details, so I hired Scott,” she says. “He is just a wizard with things like color. There are actually six different colors on the walls in the master bedroom suite, but you don’t know it. It just feels right.”

To help fine-tune the kitchen and cabinetry design, she teamed up with Neil Kelly kitchen designer Kathleen Donohue, who is based in the Bend, Ore., showroom. Shugar says that the collaboration between all the team members and craftspeople was a big reason the project turned out to be so successful. “Both Kathleen and Scott took what we started with and just made it better,” he says. “They brought their own expertise and refined, refined, refined. Then ultimately, Dennis’ craftsmanship and execution was magnificent. All the pieces worked really well together. There wasn’t a weak link.”

Although Shugar designed the bones of

the kitchen, he understood that Donohue would bring expertise to the project that would ensure Jane got exactly the kitchen she wanted. Jane recalls that early on Richard asked her what room she considered her sanctuary. “I didn’t even have to think about it,” she says. “My *kitchen!* I love to cook. I love to entertain. I love to garden. I love to can. I love to create delicious food for friends to enjoy with us.”

Donohue helped Jane make her new kitchen that perfect sanctuary. “First we played around with how the kitchen would work, then we added detail,” says Donohue. “Jane wanted a very traditional look. She was leaning toward a deep rich wood tone and she wanted lots of architectural detail and styling in the molding, and a furniture look for the cabinetry. She wanted cabinet doors that were classic and simple, but she wanted an intricate finish. So we showed her a glazed finish that’s a stain with a black glaze over it that gives it extra depth and a furniture look.”

To help keep the cabinetry budget under control, yet still deliver detail and quality, Donohue recommended cabinets made by Décor in Ontario, Canada. “Décor is a cabinet company that has figured out how to build a fairly inexpensive, utilitarian box, but there are lots of upgrades you can get on the hardware and drawers, and their finishes are right up there with the best,” says Donohue. Jane selected cherry cabinets with mostly solid doors (a few doors are fronted with New German Antique Glass, which has an Old Style wavy texture), panels and moldings.



The best river view pre-remodel was from the kitchen sink (above, right). Now Jane looks out to a majestic tree in the sideyard from the 30-inch-deep bay window beyond her kitchen sink, but has a new outdoor fireplace and outdoor kitchen with riverfront views.



“When I laid out this design, I wanted the places in which people would spend the most amount of time to be the rooms that had the best connection to the river,” says Shugar. “Since Jane loves to cook, we added this eating nook so she could see the river from the kitchen. The nook also gives Jane and Kameron a special place to enjoy the river and the eastern light every morning.” Pottery Barn sells Jane’s dining room chairs as occasional chairs. The chandelier is from Ballard Designs.





The northern end of the new addition replaces shrubs that used to front the east side of the garage (right) and houses the master suite. “I saw these big chunky sinks in a *Street of Dreams* house a couple of years ago,” says Jane of their new basins (right, top). “We had our cabinetmaker bump out the vanity to follow the oval of the sinks.” The ‘blanket chest’ at the foot of the bed contains a pop-up TV.

Through several rounds of revisions, Donohue and Jane refined the cabinetry with features like stacked moldings, egg-and-dart detail, an arched panel over the window, lighted display space and a pantry that looks like a piece of furniture. While Donohue provided advice on other details, Jane had already selected many materials, including the richly colored

granite countertops, pillowed Travertine tile for the backsplash that echos the hand-hewn, clear maple floor throughout the house, a six-burner Wolf range, a Sub-Zero fridge and the plumbing fixtures. “Truly, *this* is my dream kitchen,” says Jane. “I just had a specific vision for the kitchen and I got it. Every kitchen I’ve ever had—and I’ve had some really pretty kitch-

ens—has been limited in counter space. This is my first kitchen where it doesn’t matter how much counter space I need; there’s always enough. One of the things that Richard designed into it, which I love, is that the counters are five inches deeper than a traditional counter. I never feel as if I don’t have enough counter space.” Just beyond the kitchen, Shugar placed

an eating nook based on one Jane saw on the cover of *Traditional Home*. The space is a half-octagon, with three sets of French doors topped with fixed transom windows and an exposed beam ceiling. Jane remembers the day she handed Shugar the magazine clipping, one of 150 she’d collected for ideas for the remodel. “I told him, ‘I don’t care where you put





# WHERE'D THEY GET that?

## ... the house name platter.

From ceramic artist Teresa Knight, Art & Photos, go to [artphotos.com](http://artphotos.com). Some homeowners save the backsplash behind the cooktop for a “canvas” of

decorative tile, but Jane decided to embed this 19-inch-wide by 12-inch-tall ceramic platter as one of her gourmet kitchen’s focal points. She commissioned Portland-based ceramic artist Teresa Knight to create the vintage-looking new platter that bears the name of the property, Barking Trout Farms. The hand-lettered platter features a primitive rendering of a turning trout done in air-brushed layers of glaze and is edged in an outline of real gold.

But not to worry that fish in the McKenzie River can actually talk. “My husband has all these country expressions, like, ‘Jumping trout and barking dogs don’t bite!’” says Jane about the whimsical name. “I tend to get his expressions mixed up, so I’m always asking him, ‘What was that saying about the barking trout?’ Then we met some neighbors who love to feed the trout dog food, so I started saying, ‘No wonder the trout are barking!’”

“Well, when we put in the garden, friends were asking what I was going to name it and I jokingly said, ‘Barking Trout Farms,’ and the name has stuck for the whole property. Now I give Christmas gifts of baskets filled with jars of things I’ve canned like plum chutney and boysenberry jam. I even have FROM BARKING TROUT FARMS labels. I’ve become locally famous for my bread-and-butter pickles.”

... the Waterford crystal lamp. From her mother. “Actually, my mother has given me this lamp twice,” says Jane. “She gave it to me 10 years ago when Kameron and I were living in a very formal, Georgian mansion-style house. I put the lamp out, but because everything in the house was very tailored, it looked as if it was from a brothel. So I ended up giving it back to my mother.

“After we moved into this house, I called her and said, ‘Remember that Waterford lamp you gave me?’” says Jane. “I think it would look beautiful in *this* house. May I have it back?” The plan was to put it in the library, which we’re still working on. I unpacked it to measure it for the new shelving in the library, but after



I got it out, I thought, *I’m not going to pack this away again; I’ll try it in the master bedroom. I think it looks really nice on the table in there.*

## ... the mountainscape.

From Kameron’s family. “This is a painting of Mt. Nebo in Utah, where Kameron was raised,” says Jane. “A painter named J.H. Stansfield did it in the 1950s, and he’s since become famous. The painting used to be in Kameron’s office, but I like it over the mantel in this dining room. In the winter, we have dinner parties in here and we have the fireplace going, dim the lights low and light candles on the table. People always say things like, ‘I feel as if I’m having dinner in an Austrian lodge!’”



*this*, but I need this room tacked onto the house!” she says. “And the ceiling in this nook really shows why Dennis is the world’s best contractor. He said, ‘I have some really, really beautiful old-growth fir and old-growth cedar in my mill shop and I’ve been waiting for five years for the right house in which to use it. Would you be interested in using it for this ceiling?’ And we said, ‘Yeah!’ So that was one of the reasons why we ended up about a billion dollars over budget; we did a whole bunch of those ‘little’ changes! Dennis isn’t the *cheapest* game in town, but he’s a lovely man and a hard worker and a real perfectionist. Everything in this house is so perfectly fitted and plumbed and true.”

Distinctive ceiling treatments help define the spaces in several of the new and remodeled rooms. Working with Sonniksen, Shugar improved the scale and formality of the cavernous vaulted entry by dropping the ceiling and adding a recessed oval with a light fixture that drops down from it. In the den, a coffered ceiling features bird’s-eye maple in the recess—in four triangular pieces, the points of which meet perfectly in the center of the ceiling—to give the room added warmth and resonate the wide-plank maple flooring below. And in the master bedroom, a finely plastered barrel-vault ceiling creates a soft effect that enhances the room’s quiet, restful feeling.

“Ceilings are a very important component in making a room feel whole,” says Shugar. “In the places where we didn’t give a lot of definition to the ceilings—such as the foyer—the ceilings are continuous and take you through the building and to the outside. The whole idea is to draw you through the house. But where people come to rest, ceilings take on a different type character and that’s of greater detail and more definition. There’s a centeredness about each of the ceilings in the rooms.”

Though Jane’s heart is in her kitchen and Kameron’s sanctuary is in his upstairs office, the new master suite is one of the Maxwells’ favorite places. It’s a stark contrast to their old bedroom, which was

## KEEPING THE LOOK CLASSIC



TRANSFORMING A 1970S SALTBOX HOUSE INTO A GRACIOUS TRADITIONAL HOME was possible thanks to 10-foot ceilings and the guiding vision of homeowner Jane Maxwell.

Here are four ways in which architect Richard Shugar and kitchen designer Kathleen Donohue gave the Maxwells the classic character they wanted from their remodel.

**Use classic elements like columns in proper proportion.** Placing half columns on casework allowed the columns to remain narrow enough for the scale of the room. “I used the columns as an organizing element, like someone’s hand taking you through the house,” says Shugar. “But there are classical proportions that it’s important to stick with. If they were taller, the columns would have to be a lot fatter.”

**Maximize light with transoms above French doors and windows.** “Transoms add more natural light up toward the ceiling, and the light that comes in is reflected off the ceiling so you have a better balance of light in the room,” he says. “With the tall ceilings, transoms also help break down the scale of the room.”

**Opt for traditional details and finishes on cabinetry.** “Wherever possible, incorporate traditional moldings, detailed panel ends and furniture detailing such as furniture feet and toe-kicks,” says Donohue. “A kitchen that had painted cabinets could’ve ended up looking as traditional as the cherry ones we went with, but Jane wanted a rich formal look. We could’ve gotten the same look with a variety of finishes, though it would’ve been difficult with a light maple.”

**Extend interior details to outdoor living spaces.** “Each of the outdoor rooms—the porch off the master suite and the terrace with the pergola—are rooms to themselves, but they’re also extensions of the rooms to which they’re adjacent,” says Shugar. Exterior pillars mirror those inside, and the arch of the porch echoes the curve of the barrel-vault ceiling in the master bedroom.

—M.G..



small, had no view and sported blue shag carpeting. “Now *this* is very Robert Stern,” says Jane, pointing up to a barrel-vault ceiling that runs the length of the master bedroom, “and the elliptical windows are, too. There is indirect lighting on the so-fits. The novelty of waking up in this bedroom has *not* worn off! We love to hear the river and we never pull the drapes. It’s a really special room and it’s not wasted on us. This is our newest toy, this collapsible TV stand that we just had built. I don’t believe in TVs in the bedroom, but Kameron wanted one, so he said, ‘You’re just going to have to figure out a way to make

it go away and not block the view.’ And I did. And now, I admit, I like having it. It’s great if we want to finish watching the end of a movie in bed.”

One of the elements that brings soft light into the east- and north-facing bedroom is a triptych of three arched slumped-glass panels—a large 35-by-50-inch panel centered between two 18-by-30-inch panes—set high into the wall between the walk-in closet, which has a skylight as well as a glass panel at each end of it, and the bedroom. Eugene, Ore.-glass artist Annah James, whose work is at Pratt & Larson Ceramics and who is also Shugar’s office

manager, fabricated the panels, which feature bas reliefs of clematis. “Jane told me she wanted a flowering vine kind of look, and I’m a total leaf girl, so I used the huge evergreen clematis that grows in my backyard as inspiration,” says James.

The glass panes override the bad rap that north-facing rooms get as spaces devoid of natural light. “The north side of the house *can* be dark in the winter and Richard didn’t want us to feel like we were living in a cave when we were in the bedroom, so he put in the glass panels,” says Jane. “It’s amazing how much natural light comes into the walk-in closet and then lights up the bedroom. Adding those panels was a stroke of brilliance on Richard’s part.”

From either the bedroom or the adjacent bathroom, Jane and Kameron can enjoy a two-sided gas fireplace. “I’ll light a fire and run a bath in the winter and watch the geese fly up and down the river,” she says. “There’s something nice about having a river always flowing in the background. It becomes a big part of the rhythm of your life.”

Now that the project is complete, the Maxwells can spend more time enjoying the rhythm of that river life. Jane tends a robust garden filled with rows and rows of lettuces, herbs, garlic, onions, tomatoes and berries, fenced in to offer protection from the deer and elk that browse the pasture. She enjoys growing climbing and hybrid roses (“We call it the Martini Meditation Garden!” she says). She cans the vegetables she grows and, of course, they both spend time fly-fishing for trout on the McKenzie River.

“I’ve got to tell you, Kameron and I have been fortunate to do a lot of international traveling, both business and pleasure, and we’ve stayed in some of the best hotels and it’s really hard for us to wake up somewhere else and beat *this*,” Jane says. “We feel so fortunate to have found this house and to have found the right people to work on the house. Do you know what Richard said when he first came into this house? I asked him whether the house had ‘good bones’ and he said, ‘Well . . . the bones of *this* house is the river!’ He was so right.” □

## meet the professionals



### The Architect

**Richard Shugar**, principal, 2Form Architecture, Eugene, Ore.

**Years having own company:** 6

**On Jane’s commitment from Day 1 to only use natural materials for finishes:** “The materials that Jane used in this remodel are stunning—real rocks and stone, real wood windows instead of vinyl ones,” he says. “They share the same richness.”

**On nailing the size of the pillars:** “It was important to me to stick with classical proportions for the pillars to determine their length and width,” he says. “Columns that were fatter wouldn’t have fit the scale of the rooms.”

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### The Builder

**Dennis Coduti**, owner, Dennis Coduti General Contractor, Vida, Ore.

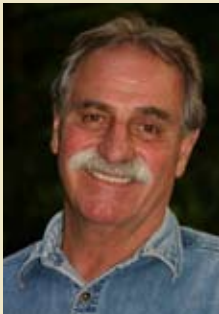
**Years in the trades:** 36

**Years having own company:** 32

**On the craftsmanship it took to create the vaulted ceiling in the half-octagonal nook:** “That was difficult to put together,” he says.

“We couldn’t make the 70-degree cuts on the rafters with a standard saw, so we spent an entire Saturday cutting and fitting that ceiling.”

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### The Kitchen Designer

**Kathleen Donohue**, senior designer, Neil Kelly, Bend, Ore.

**Years as a designer:** “A bazillion—28 years,” she says.

**Years at Neil Kelly:** “A million—18 years,” she says.

**On Jane’s demand for detail:** “Jane wanted a lot of attention paid to the *details* in her house,” says Kathleen. “In the kitchen, that meant using wavy-textured glass in some cabinets for a little obscurity. We added egg-and-dart moldings in some places and a different molding underneath the cabinets. The granite countertops

are 5 inches deeper than usual for better functionality. We thought through every little thing!”

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**“Fishing takes you to beautiful places you wouldn’t go otherwise,” says Jane as she casts for trout in the McKenzie. “My father gave me an appreciation for the outdoors when we lived in Colorado. When I was little, we’d hike to lakes above timberline and catch gorgeous fish and camp. I guess those memories come to roost after a while; that’s why I always wanted a place on a river. Even though it’s a thrill to land a trout, steelhead or salmon, for me, fishing is about being there.”**