

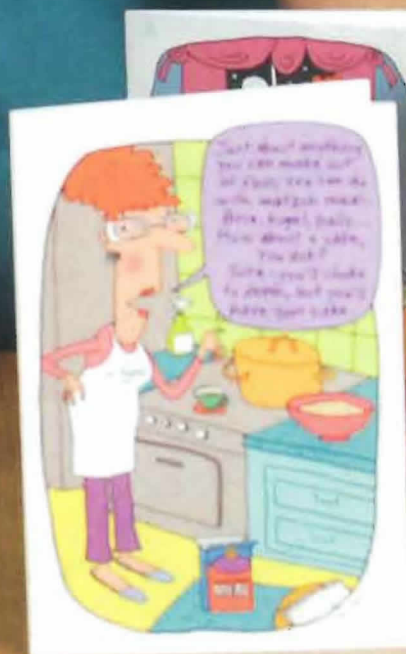
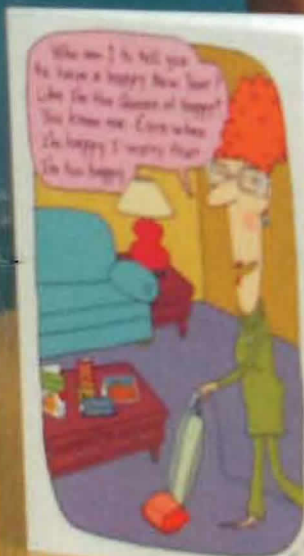
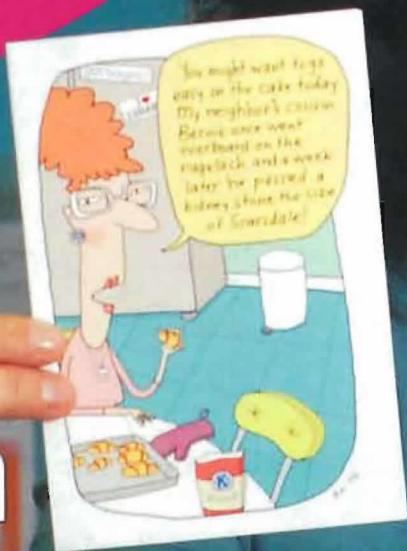
KANSAS CITY  
JEWISH

# Life

FALL 2011

## Rhona

Hallmark's cards appeal to Jewish sense of humor



**Home and Garden** Space designed for today and tomorrow  
**Focus on Health** Yoga relieves mental and physical stress  
**Business** Estate sales reflect owners' personalities



A fabric tapestry over the gas fireplace expertly hides the TV in the living room.

# An Eye for Design ... &



## COUPLE'S RESEARCH COMBINES WITH DESIGN TEAM'S EXPERTISE TO ACHIEVE HOME THAT STANDS THE TEST OF TIME

When Ron and Kathryn Zack went to their first meeting with some of the top home building and design experts in the city, they toted a movie video and a small TV. The couple had put months of research into figuring out exactly what they wanted their home to look like and happened to find a perfect example in the movie "The Muse," so they brought it to show their carefully selected design team.

Kathryn spent months reading design books, including her favorite, "Not So Big House," while the couple traveled around taking pictures and borrowing ideas from others. When they finally pinned down the direction they wanted to take, Kathryn interviewed nine firms before selecting architect Wolfgang Trost, designer Steve Nuss and builder Keith Eymann of Ambassador Homes.

During the year it took to design the Zack's dream home, the team kept the Zacks' growing family and their eventual aging needs in mind. As a result, all the key spaces are found on the main level – laundry, kitchen, bathroom, living room and a master bedroom; and all doorways are wheelchair accessible. The main level was finished down to the last detail, but the second level was finished with less design detail and the lower level was left unfinished, leaving these two areas with more flexibility for the changing family.

# Transition

BY MONICA HUMBARD • PHOTOS BY KEVIN BLAYNEY



This table and matching buffet were found in an old French farmhouse. Though antique, the chairs are durable and have been refurbished many times.

### FAMILY FRENCH

The Zack home is a cozy mix of Old English and French with lots of color and timeless fabrics for kids growing up. Fabric was even used on the walls, providing richer color and more depth than wallpaper. Dark wood floors hand painted with a black diamond pattern in the main walkway areas lead you through the entry and into the living room area where the family spends much of its down time. Not a fan of visible TVs, Kathryn points out that, at the push of a button, the fabric tapestry over the gas fireplace rises like a window shade — invented and designed by Ron and Nuss — to reveal the TV.

Multiple seating styles covered in rich, yet durable, complimentary fabrics enhance the room's French flare without being stuffy. The comfy sofas beckon you to relax and listen to Kathryn reminisce about the boys jumping from couch to couch while they played tag with the dogs when they were younger. She quickly learned that the silk fabric on one of the sofas was not the right choice. In fact, with the boys still playing tag in this room at 14 and almost





On this day the dining room is ready and waiting for guests to arrive. Most days, the Zack family uses the table for homework and family activities.





The kitchen is perfect for entertaining, with lots of counter space and two dishwashers.

16 and thoughts of grandchildren some day, she doesn't foresee that ever being a practical choice for her active family.

### **DOUBLE-DUTY DINING ROOM**

To the left of the entry, is the dining room. The Zacks utilize this space for many tasks. If the table isn't set for dining, a puzzle might be in progress there or the kids could have it spread with homework. The openness of the dining room allows the boys to easily cross the entry, pass through the sitting room and enter the small office — originally designed for Ron — to use the computer for homework. The couple doesn't allow TVs or computers in their rooms.

### **LIVABLE KITCHEN**

During the design process, Kathryn says Nuss helped her “manage” her house. For example, he convinced her to install two dishwashers and an additional small sink in the kitchen, which can provide a handy spot to chill wine for parties.

A table and matching buffet off the kitchen set the tone for this space. Nuss found them in France in an old farmhouse. The Zacks have re-caned, refinished and re-cushioned the antique chairs multiple times. Kathryn recalls that, when they first became engaged, Ron said, ‘When we have kids, let's *live* in (our house) and not hold off getting something we want. Let's just get it and live in it.’ They have followed through with that plan, replacing, reupholstering and refinishing whenever necessary. Kathryn describes their lifestyle as “easy living.”

### **DEUX MASTER SUITES**

The house was designed with two master suites, one upstairs and one on the main level. The couple originally planned to stay upstairs with the boys when they were little and later move downstairs. Instead, they settled into the main level bedroom and the upstairs suite became a guestroom. A small sitting area in the main level master served as a nursery and later a playroom for the young boys and their Army men and Legos. Now it's a sitting area, but a

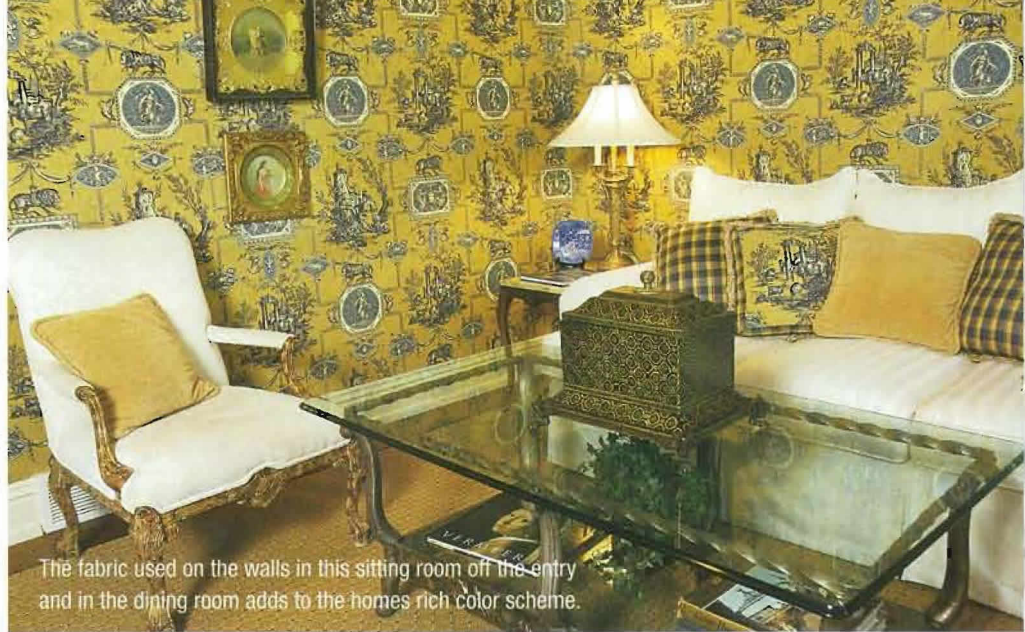
few toys remain for an occasional visit from a young niece or nephew. Kathryn raves about Nuss' choice of furniture for this room because they have easily moved it around to transition the space through the years.

### SECOND LEVEL LAYOUT

Up a flight of stairs off the entry is a spacious landing leading to the boys' rooms, the second master suite/guestroom, a game room with ping pong and air hockey tables, and a potential second laundry room. Kathryn appreciates the natural light that streams in on the landing from a skylight that the design group recommended to avoid the impression of a dark tunnel as you ascend the staircase.

### WORKABLE WALKOUT LEVEL

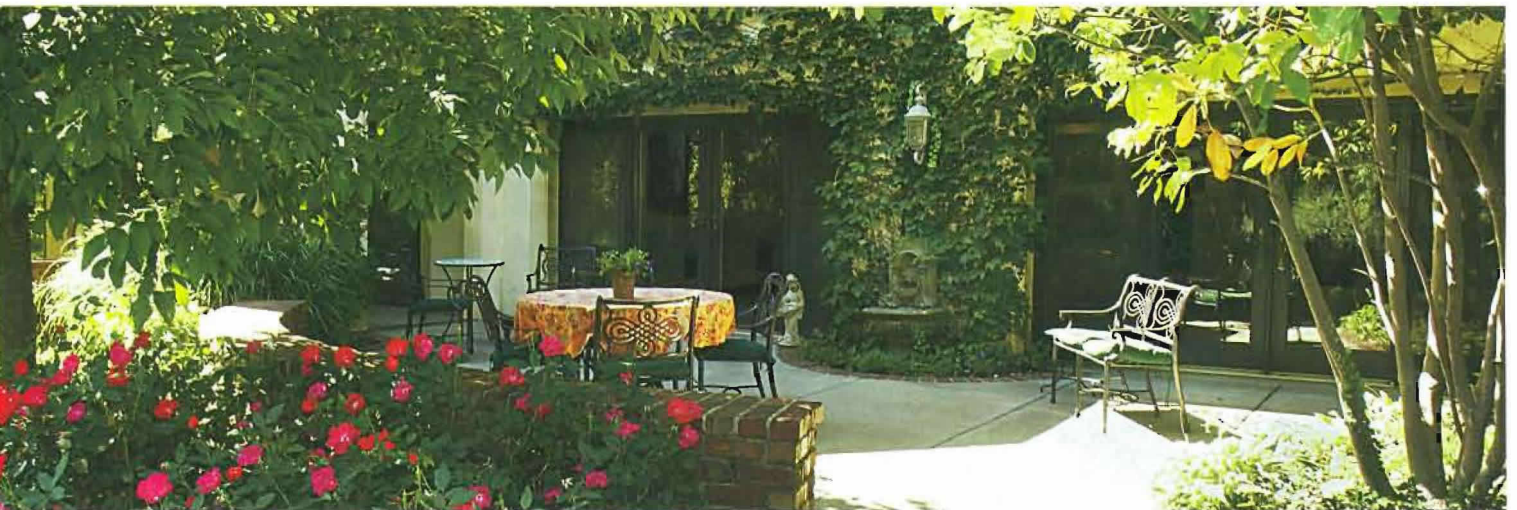
For several years, when the boys were little, they Rollerbladed and played in the unfinished lower level. But when pieces started falling off the fixtures from the boys also playing in a second-story game room, the Zacks decided to finish part of the walkout lower level with a spacious family room, exercise room and eventually a bathroom. They kept the lower-level family room simple and open (12-foot ceilings) so the boys and their friends would have plenty of space to move the furniture around and wrestle. (Josh is a high school wrestler.) This level is definitely "boy land," she says, with a gaming area, exercise equipment, a punching bag, drums and a pool table.



The fabric used on the walls in this sitting room off the entry and in the dining room adds to the homes rich color scheme.



This beautiful sitting area off the main level master bedroom once was a playroom and now is a peaceful place for Kathryn and Ron to relax.



The landscaping surrounding the home and the patio make the patio a great place to relax with a cup of coffee on a weekday morning or dress up for entertaining weekend guests.

For large gatherings, such as 14-year-old David's recent Bar Mitzvah brunch, the open family room provides additional tables/seating for at least 50 guests. Exterior doors allow the party to flow outside onto the patio. Using a large sheet of Styrofoam, Ron temporarily transformed the pool table into a serving table.

### THE GREAT OUTDOORS

The Zacks chose their home's lot because of its green space with owls, deer, snakes and even a coyote nearby. When they were little, the boys would come in covered in mud from playing in a creek that runs through the property. "I wanted them to feel nature," Kathryn says. "We wanted them to be outside without a lot of TV and video games."

Adjacent to the deck and behind the driveway, the pavement drops several feet to a basketball court. The boys can play there without being visible from the street and the basketball goal doesn't distract from the beauty of the front of the house.

While the landscaping on the front of house is more formal, the Zacks like the back to have a more natural, flowing appearance. A downed hedge from a recent storm blends right into the rest of the landscaping and adds interest to the natural setting. Vines freely weave around the deck and across part of the stucco exterior. Sweet magnolias provide fragrance around the deck all summer. A fountain on the patio helps convert this area into an outdoor French café when small

tables are dressed up for entertaining.

### ANOTHER TRANSITION

As Kathryn begins to think about the boys leaving home in a few years, she makes plans for another transition. She foresees adding more stationary furniture and possibly a bar to the lower level to transform it into more of an adult space. And just around the corner in the still unfinished part of the lower level, she would one day like to have a gardening work space near a set of double doors that open to the outdoors.

### DREAM TEAM

Kathryn gives the design team much of the credit for the home's functionality and flexibility. She feels the house has stood the test of time from both a function and design standpoint because of the team's professional guidance. But she also believes her and Ron's research upfront paid off in helping them discover what they wanted and in finding the right design team.

"It's a creative process," Kathryn says. "You have to be relaxed and open. The energy has to flow. If it doesn't, then that is probably not the right firm for you. There are a lot of talented people out there."

Even after almost 10 years, Kathryn still lights up when talking about the experience of designing the family's home. "It was so much fun," she says. "It was like an art project, and I'm really thankful I got to experience it." **JL**



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