

Francophile Style

ON FOX LAKE



**NORMANDY WAS THE INSPIRATION BEHIND
THIS GRAND ABODE THAT WAS ARTFULLY
CONSTRUCTED AND BEAUTIFULLY APPOINTED**

By Shayna Mace | Photography provided by Michael F. Simon Builders



BUILDER: MICHAEL F. SIMON BUILDERS **DESIGN:** LAURIE DRISCOLL INTERIORS
 9,800 SQUARE FEET | 5 BEDROOMS | 5 FULL BATHS, 2 HALF BATHS



The homeowners are Wisconsin natives and lived in Maryland for 25 years. They were excited to return home permanently and spend time with relatives in Wisconsin. The living room has furniture and artwork passed down from family members, too.

When a pair of Wisconsin natives and Maryland transplants decided to build on Fox Lake, they had a very specific vision in mind. They wanted their home to be "a piece of architecture—something you don't see anymore," explains the husband. And that meant constructing a grand abode that resembled a 110-year-old French country home that you would see in Normandy, or on the Brittany coast of France.

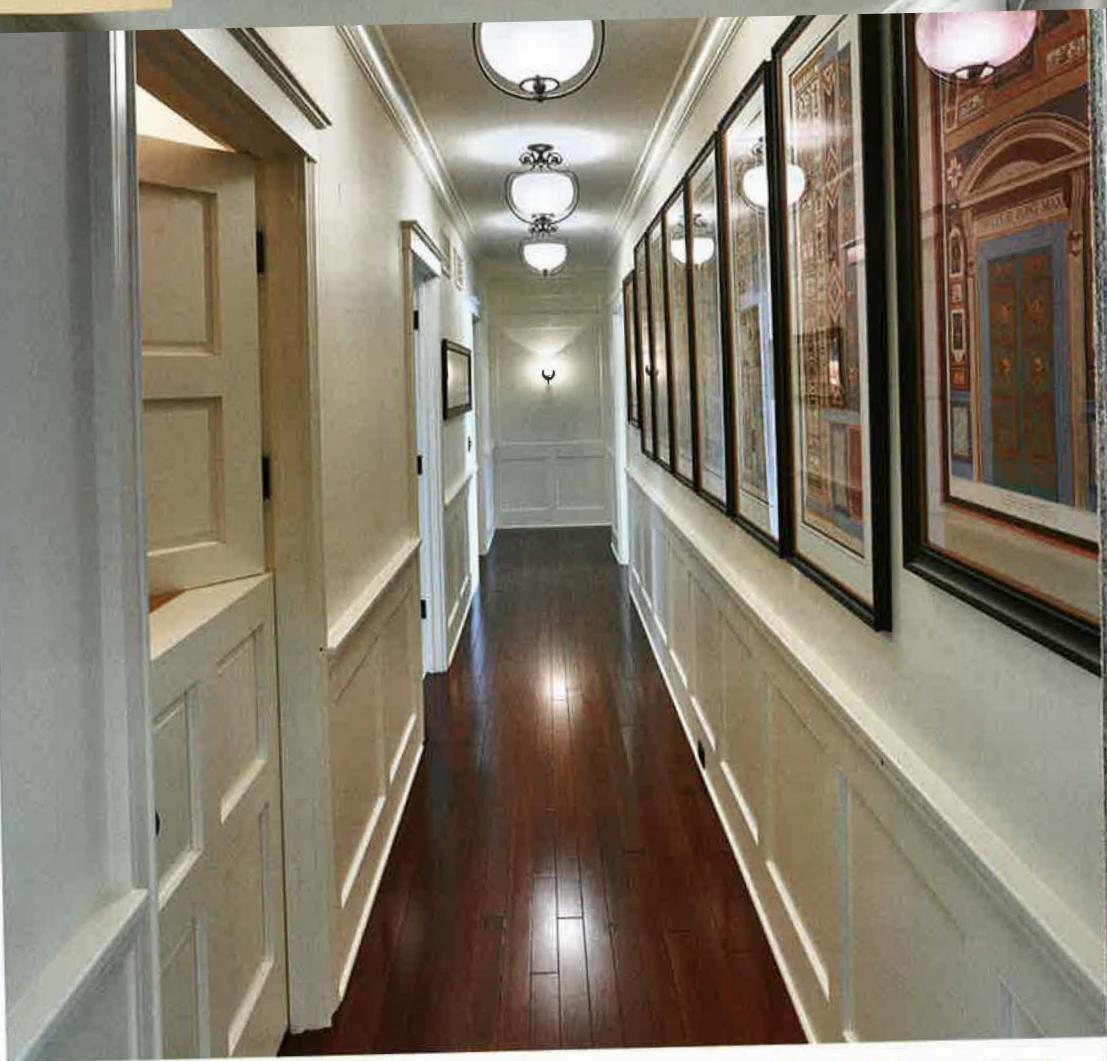
The stunning property is indeed a welcoming sight driving down the road—and is certainly set apart from the neighbors. A cobblestone driveway and noble front entrance greet visitors, beckoning those who visit to come inside. The couple's exquisite taste is showcased spectacularly in each room—and no detail was overlooked. But the hus-

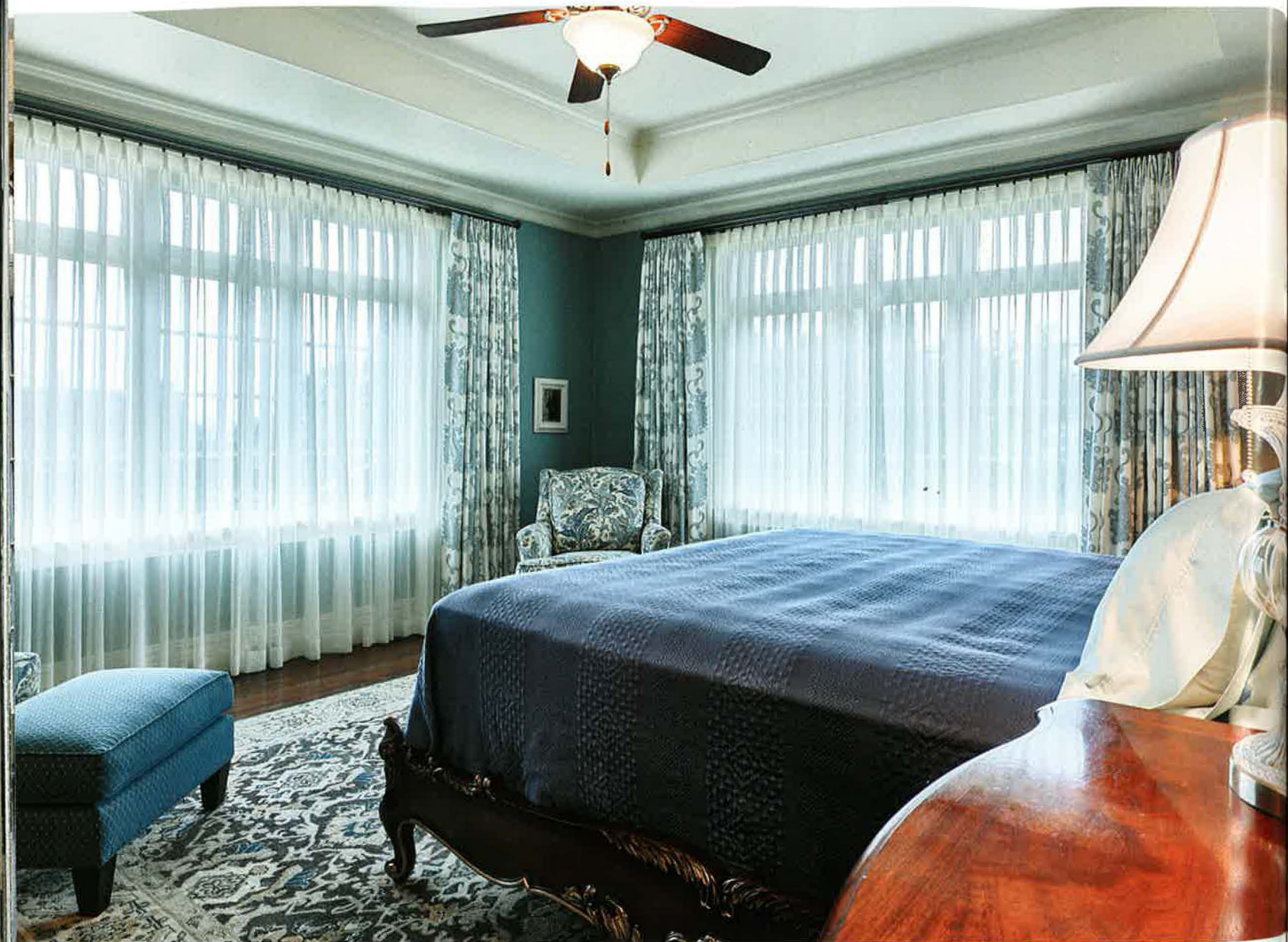
band is quick to add that even though the home was meant to look old, "we didn't want to make it a museum—we want it to be comfortable."



DREAMS BECOME REALITY

Four years ago, when the couple started dreaming about their future home, they began pulling photos and realized all of them referenced old homes. The couple wanted the house to be an exact replica of an early 1900s French home—even down to the minute details, like light switches and baseboards. So they set out to find a builder and a designer that could realize their vision—which admittedly, was a challenging one, says the husband. "I'm Michael Simon of Michael F. Simon Builders bought in, and so did Laurie Driscoll of Laurie Driscoll Interiors," he says. The couple says both Simon and Driscoll, an interior designer, were integral in helping them fully construct and outfit the home.





In the master bedroom, the large windows let in a lot of sunlight to lend the room an airy feel. In the adjacent sitting room, the couple can walk right out on to the back deck to enjoy sunny mornings and the lake view.

The house is a thoughtful mix of new elements made to look old as well as antiques that seamlessly blend together. The kitchen is one of the few rooms in the home where everything is new including the weathered farmhouse table, found by Driscoll and the wife at a furniture store. Black soapstone countertops provide stunning contrast to the white walls and cabinetry, and gray marble tile floors. The homeowners especially like the floors because even though they resemble marble, they're low maintenance and easy to clean. Vintage-look cabinet pulls and clean white subway tile, a popular design element from that time period, were incorporated for pops of style.

The show-stopping stone hearth, something the wife wanted, was a feat to procure and install.

The couple originally looked into a quarried stone hearth, but found out the sheer weight would be impossible to support. So they secured a custom-made hearth from Texas out of pulverized stone, which is lighter.

DETAILS WITH CHARACTER

In the home's comfortable living room, the homeowners left no element overlooked. After all, everything had to look 100 years old, says the husband. The carved detail above the built-in bookcases is period specific. The fireplace presented a challenge, because back then coal fireplaces were used. But since those aren't used anymore, they found the next best thing: a gas fireplace that replicates a coal-burning look. The light switches are push-button, baseboards are a

specific height and the items all look vintage. Furnishings are a mix of family heirlooms as well as procured from Janet's Antiques. The retro, refurbished radio in the corner works and an elegant grandfather clock holds court in the room.

Adjacent to the living room is a long hallway (another characteristic of old homes, notes the husband) decorated with nine rare 16th century intricate prints of the Vatican as well as lovely bird prints. In the adjoining powder room, period-appropriate wallpaper is juxtaposed beautifully against real marble tile and a vintage cabinet that was turned into a vanity. Bird prints created by the same artist as the ones in the hallway also hang in here. The homeowners credit Driscoll for creative eye in this room: "When you take a look



Like in the kitchen, dark soapstone counters offer contrast with white painted cabinetry in the master bath. Faucets from Kohler's luxury line, Ballista, are used here as well.

at the design, Laurie was so smart about it. When she would recommend a design, she would say, "This is where I saw it, and this is where it's from," referring to the historical aspects of elements in the room.

In the corner of the home is the dining room, and the couple pushed to place it here in the home design: "When Michael of Simon Builders was designing it, they wanted to put it in the front of the home, but if we were going to have a dining room we wanted to have a view of the lake. We don't use it enough, but we wanted a view," says the wife. Creamy yellow print wallpaper punctuates the room and an elegant dining table completes the look.

Attached to the dining room is a screened-in porch with outdoor kitchen and grill for warm summer days and nights. The space is even outfitted with electric shades that can be lowered when the sun is strong.

COMFORT FOR GUESTS

Hospitality was crucial to the couple when designing their home. So all of the bedrooms are comfortable and spacious with couches to relax on. Rooms are outfitted with antique pieces and family furnishings that were passed down.

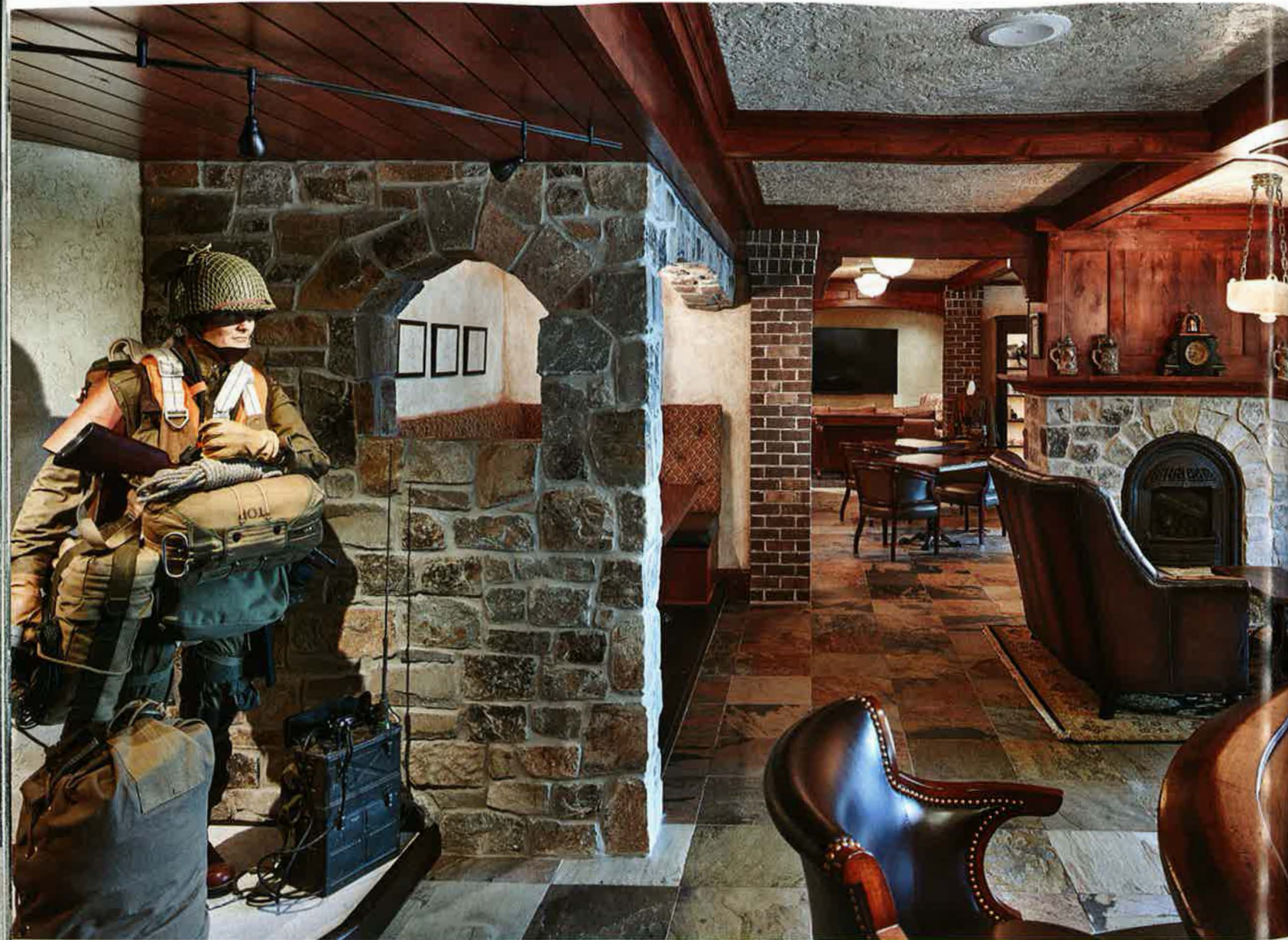
In their main-level master suite, a cool blue color scheme is used in the bedroom, which the wife says isn't necessarily a historic nod, but rather a personal preference. Adjacent to the bedroom is

a pleasant sitting room with a couch, flat-screen TV, mini fridge, coffeemaker and sink. In the stunning, spa-like master bath, the stone-look tile floors and dark soapstone counters are carried over from the kitchen in here. The zero-entry shower is spacious with multiple showerheads, and faucets are from Kohler's Kallista line. Again, period-specific, notes the husband.

"When you come here, we have a terrycloth Turkish robe and slippers for you. Why? You have to feel special, because this is a special place," he says.

LIFE EXPERIENCE DRIVES DESIGN

Perhaps the most unexpected, yet special space in the home is the entire lower level. Although there's an ultra-modern conference room and



The WWII paratrooper was custom-made for the husband in Maryland by a man who makes museum mannequins. His radio actually works, too. Hanging down here are a series of paintings by military artist Don Stivers purchased from Gary Millard of Gary's Art and Frame in Middleton.

bathroom down here, which differs dramatically from the rest of the home's design, the husband says it was important to have because the home is used as a second base of operations for his company.

But just steps away from the conference room, visitors are transported to a European-style pub/French officer's club. This space is a nod to the husband's time overseas as an Army intelligence officer

"[The room] is patterned off of different pubs I had been to in France, Belgium, England, Ireland and Germany. All of the woodwork was hand done. It's the most-used room in the house!" he says.

The entire space has slate floors, a mix of leather and wood furniture (much of which was custom-made by Federal Restorations in Mineral Point) and brick walls—all meant to look over

100 years old. The mahogany bar was built and deliberately aged by Federal Restorations and the commercial back bar was designed and built by Kavanaugh's Restaurant Supply. They also built the back bar that boasts a fridge, pizza maker, coffee maker and coolers.

Overseeing the scene is a mannequin dressed in WWII paratrooper gear and genuine WWII artifacts and replicas. As a collector of WWII memorabilia, the husband has amassed glass cases of weapons and treasures that dot the basement as well.

"We want people to have fun and relax," he says. "If you're invited in our home, you're welcome."







Smart Security

Protect your home and family with the swipe of your smart phone **I** By *i* Laura Keller

We've all felt it—that shudder of fear upon hearing a strange noise, seeing a fleeting shadow or discovering an unlocked door or window in your home. As a homeowner, you are likely to be concerned about your property's security and your family's safety. For the majority of homeowners, today's technology puts affordable home security within your reach, and puts your valuables beyond the reach of criminals.

With home security systems costing as little as \$100 to as much as several thousand, many people can now affordably protect themselves.

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And best of all, security systems can be tailored to meet the specific requirements of your home and surrounding property: It's like a smorgasbord. You can pick and choose components of a system to create the level of security for your specific situation.

"Home security products have gotten better and more reliable, and in some cases more affordable," says Jeff Beckman, owner of J&K Security Solutions in Madison. "Cameras have become more affordable and prevalent in the residential segment, as has the ability to access and control

your security system via smart devices, which allow homeowners to get a text or email when a problem occurs."

SECURITY BASICS

In its basic form, a home security system is a low-voltage electrical circuit with sensors on entry doors and windows. When a door or window is opened, its sensor detects the interruption in the flow of electricity and triggers an audible warning signal or a silent alarm that is monitored by the security company and the local police.

(vian)' security systems also include motion detectors that monitor areas inside and outside a home. When something moves within the detector's range, a siren sounds. The most sophisticated motion detectors are able to distinguish between the nocturnal wanderings of a pet and the threat of an intruder.

As with any technology, significant strides are continually made to improve security technology to meet the changing needs of the home environment. Just as would-be thieves become more adept at their efforts, so too do the security systems used to stop them in their tracks.

"Not a lot has changed in home security itself over the last few years," says Michael Creeden at Digital Innovations in Spring Grove, Ill. "If you include camera technology in that discussion, we have seen many evolutions there. Security-based homeowner requests are still one of the higher things we get asked about. The evolution of cameras from analog to IP is one of the larger areas of change we have witnessed. The largest change we see is a single app interface on smart phones being used to control all forms of technology while in and away from the home.

As Creeden explains, the technology to incorporate smart phone technology with home security technology is actually not that new.

"However, most of the individuals who had been selling it were not that good at the IT side of it," Creeden says. "That knowledge is critical in viewing your home while away from it." Now, new built-in cloud-based features within the camera recording devices (DVR or NVRs) make this a bit easier to set up and maintain.

"The invention of intuitive smart phone apps to view things have also helped further this technology," Creeden says.

Indeed. Today's smart phone apps play a key role in home security functionality, allowing you to view your property or unlock a door remotely to allow a service provider access without meeting them. In addition, these apps provide the ability to install a thermostat to allow off-site adjustment of the temperature in your home or vacation home.

AT ITS CORE

As with any high-tech device, each year improvements are made in the technological prowess of home security systems. Teeming with bells and whistles aplenty, these systems offer everything from remote access monitoring of your home to

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tracking the potential for theft before it happens. Over the last several years, security technology has changed significantly and has resulted in key "must haves" in any high-functioning home security system, which include a solid home network, cameras and automated smart lighting that complements the system.

In addition, Creeden recommends homeowners consider investing in upfront early design of innovation security technology programs, a centralized control system of the home's technology, lighting control and motorized window treatments.

"Mobile technology being utilized in helping homeowners manage their home security systems has been huge in this industry," Creeden says. "They have almost single-handedly changed how people interact with everything within their homes. Whether they are in the home or halfway around the world." The newest burglar alarm systems now allow users remote access to check the status, as well as arm and disarm them from a cell phone. And network connections allow any function that can be completed on a keypad to be done through a network browser.

Beckman stresses that today's homeowners also need the ability to arm and disarm their alarm system with a phone or smart device. "Having the ability to view cameras on your smart device is also key, as is the ability to adjust temperature of your heating or cooling system on your phone or

smart device," Beckman says. "Everyone seems to have a smart phone and we all use them. The ability to do all from these devices is appealing and convenient."

As Beckman explains, there are multiple "automation platforms" available to allow a homeowner the ability to control anything through a single app.

"Of course there is a cost involved in getting into this and the amount is dependent on what you all want to control," Beckman says.

The types of electronic security systems vary from a simple system costing a few hundred dollars to more elaborate systems, which monitor both interior and exterior spaces, provide video coverage and cost thousands of dollars.

The overall approach of security must be addressed by any homeowner. There are property considerations that will decide the type of investment. For example: how long will the homeowner be at the current location? Most security systems are not easily relocated. Is the property rented or owned? Traditional alarm systems are considered part of the property when they are installed.

When you begin to evaluate the home security system investment, one thing's for sure—you find the "latest and greatest" in security equipment by finding a reputable security consultant or security system integrator. Ask a lot of questions and make sure you do your homework with regards to proper background checks and references on the company you hire.

And remember, there is no magic "one size fits all" home security system. Each location and each customer presents unique sets of challenges. A good security professional treats each project individually and can only recommend a system once they get a clear understanding of the security challenges the location and owners are facing.

So what does the future hold in home security "bells and whistles?" In the future, voice recognition devices that complement the already installed smart devices within the home will also provide additional security for homes.

"Having the ability to scan and stop an oven or stove remotely, or adjust temperature has already hit the market," Beckman says. "Advancements will keep coming for years as long as the demand is there for more control. It's a fun business to be involved in and I am consumely looking and thinking about 'what's next?'"