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Riverside Luxury

A magnificent home on the banks of the Red

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By Todd Lewys

WHEN Veronica Kresz had her home at 2334 St. Mary's Road custom built in 1990, her foremost goal was to create an abode that was livable from top to bottom.

In her mind, three ingredients were necessary to achieve that goal. First, a large lot in a prime location was required to provide room to build and outdoor space for recreational purposes. Second, she wanted a house that would let in as much daylight as possible. And third, the home had to be built to the highest standards.

Upon seeing the 50-by-235-foot lot for the first time, she knew immediately her first goal had been realized. It was simply a matter of visualizing how the final product would look. A meticulously manicured front yard, complete with an interlocking brick front drive capable of holding six to eight cars is the first hint of what is to come.

Then, there is the backyard, which backs onto the banks of the Red River.

"I just love it -- it's like having your own park in your backyard," she says of the extensively landscaped yard, which contains a perennial garden, assortment of mature trees and a deck with built-in bench seating from which to enjoy the river view. "It's so private back here, it's like being in your own world."

Jeff Stern of Maximum Realty Limited, the real estate agent charged with selling the St.Vital-area home, can't say enough about the environment surrounding the southeast Winnipeg home, which is only minutes from the Perimeter Highway.

"The grounds are absolutely spectacular, especially the backyard area," he says. "Not only do you get the great view, but walking paths can take you into Normand Park. You can go for a walk if you're an active person, or you can just sit and relax in the backyard. It's a win-win proposition, if you ask me."

With the issue of location taken care of, Kresz then concentrated on designing a house that let in as much of the outdoors as possible. That meant there would be an abundance of windows in all areas of the home.

Walking into a foyer flooded with sunlight via a large skylight in the roof, it would be fair to say that -- without seeing the rest of the house -- the goal was well met, and then some.

"I wanted enough daylight coming into the home to make it beautiful inside without having to turn the lights on," Kresz explains. "The skylight was positioned in such a way that the sunlight coming in doesn't glare down; it bounces off the walls, so that the upstairs and foyer are lit quite evenly."

Directly in front of the foyer is a spiral oak staircase that winds gently up toward the upstairs, which houses the 3,974-square-foot home's four bedrooms (and two bathrooms; more on that later). A cascading crystal chandelier adds an elegant -- and practical -- touch to the home's primary entranceway.

'Spectacular'

"The chandelier is just spectacular when you walk into the home at night," she says. "It's not only beautiful to look at, but it also provides light for most of the upper level and a good portion of the main floor."

Gazing into the 15.75 foot-by-14.60 foot gourmet kitchen, six huge windows in the 15.75-foot-by-14-foot eating area combine with the high ceilings to create a well-lit, cheery atmosphere. When nighttime falls, another smaller crystal chandelier and recessed pot lights provide illumination.

A four-burner gas top stove with barbecue and built-in double commercial wall oven provide the means to whip up

sumptuous culinary creations, while an upright fridge and freezer pair -- both commercial size -- provide all kinds of storage room for cooking supplies.

High-quality pink corian counters, custom-designed lavender cabinetry with purple accents (lots of it) and a stainless steel triple sink add to the kitchen/eating area's list of the amenities. There's even a small desk to sit down and write recipes on, as well as recessed ceiling speakers to pipe in music to dine to.

"The view of the backyard from the windows in the eating area is spectacular," says Stern. "The area, from front to back, has a lot of traditional elegance with some nice contemporary touches."

Adjacent to the eating area is a 21-foot-by-15-foot family room -- complete with a red marble three-way fireplace -- that runs directly into the 18.8-foot-by-16-foot four-season sunroom. There's no better place to relax after enjoying a good meal, says Stern.

"First, you enter the area through the beautiful glass french doors. Then, there's the incredible view from the sunroom through its 10 windows down; six windows up top let in even more light," he says. "If you want to reduce the glare or want a bit of privacy, there are blinds in between the glass to control the lighting. There's lots of room for things like furniture, exercise equipment, or whatever you might want to put there. There is also access to the eating area from the sunroom."

While the kitchen and sunroom are the highlights of the downstairs area, the master bedroom is unquestionably the main attraction of the upstairs area. At 31.3 feet by nearly 16 feet, no less than six oversized windows provide an elevated view of the river and surrounding area.

It also houses a luxurious five-piece ensuite, which shares a two-sided gas fireplace with the master bedroom. Front-and-centre is a large jettied Jacuzzi tub, and separate shower stall. Both have glass blocks incorporated into their design. In the case of the Jacuzzi, the blocks are lit; meanwhile, the blocks serve to let natural sunlight into the shower area.

'Comfortable and functional'

More pink corian countertops, a ceramic tile floor, ample linen storage and separate his and her sinks, along with a one-piece toilet and bidet round out the list of amenities.

"Everything was designed to be comfortable and functional," says Kresz. "It's a bit big for one person now that all my children have moved out, but it's provided a lot of relaxation over the years."

Three other bedrooms -- all have large windows -- round out the home's upper level. Two of the three are more than 20 feet by 10 feet in size, with large mirrored closets and built-in desks and shelving. The fourth bedroom, at 11 feet by 10 feet, would make a good guest room, office or nanny's room, says Kresz.

The home's lower level, complete with 10-foot ceilings, is fully developed. An expansive rec room has plenty of rooms for a games area, which includes a pool table that stays with the house. Adjacent to the games area is a family room with a Tyndall stone fireplace that matches the home's front exterior. Shelves abound to provide storage space for a personal library.

It goes without saying it will be difficult to say goodbye to a home that has provided so many good memories, says Kresz.

"I've bought a smaller home in Linden Woods so I can be close to my children," she says. "This home was built to the highest standards so it would last, and designed to provide a great living environment. I hope the people that buy it enjoy it as much as I have."