

CREATING A RETREAT



ON THE LAKE

LOCAL COUPLE IS TRANSFORMING THEIR HOME INTO A SOFT PLACE TO LAND

WITH AN AMAZING VIEW OF LAKE LOTAWANA AND A FLOOR FILLED WITH BUNK BEDS, MARK AND JAMI NATO HAVE A VISION TO USE THEIR HOME AS A PLACE WHERE FAMILIES CAN GET AWAY FROM THE STRESSES OF EVERYDAY LIFE AND ENJOY SOME TIME ON THE WATER.



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Jami admits she did not initially see the possibilities in the home as she says she is not a water or lake person. After all, Jami and her husband, Mark, also own a home in Leawood, and they were not looking to buy a home at Lake Lotawana. A realtor friend then told them about the home and encouraged them to come take a look.

The home was large with four floors, including an elevator. Everything needed to be redone, and Jami thought they had enough projects going at their primary residence in Leawood.

"Not every relationship is love at first sight," Jami says.

the kids. On the bunk floor they replaced the old carpet with hardwood floors.

Jami says the home can sleep about 24 people comfortably, giving it the capacity for large-scale hosting. As enthusiastic as they are about hosting, their family also enjoyed the excellent reprieve the home provided during quarantine time—with the kids replacing screen time with lake activities.

"It has been one of the best investments not only for real estate, but for our mental health," Jami says. "I couldn't have guessed how calming the water would have been and how much we would have needed this when we (okay, just I) reluctantly bought the home two years ago."

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Yet she could not stop thinking about the view, and she noticed the sparkle in her husband's eye when he talked about the home. Before she knew it, she was lying awake thinking about painting the cabinets and walls. Today, they are spending their second summer there and enjoying the retreat it provides.

"When you retreat, you are supposed to rest," Jami says. "Our goal with the place is to give people a soft place to land."

To date, they have redone the main floor with the kitchen and transformed another floor into the bunk floor. They painted the walls on the main floor white, painted the island emerald teal and installed new countertops. An eating area with bench tables is a favorite place for

They haven't knocked out any walls but have instead rethought how to use different spaces to avoid changing the layout.

"At the lake house we didn't do any major splurges on furniture because we don't want anyone to feel bad for really relaxing and using the house," Jamie says. "It's made to be lived in and loved and used. I can't imagine owning a home out here and just letting it sit or only using it one time a year. We want to be good stewards of such a large space and wonderful lake community. Homes are made for hosting, not hoarding. Now more than ever, we hope people feel seen and loved and rested when they walk through our doors. It is one of our greatest joys to invite people into a space we love dearly."

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