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Welcome to our Old World-inspired six bedroom, two-story home, where the classic detailing and quality craftsmanship meet modern amenities and forward-thinking energy efficiency.

In approaching this 1/3 acre city lot, we started the way in which we always begin a project – by carefully considering the total environment and ecological options. With this particular home we faced two distinct challenges.

The first concerned how to retain our commitment to the highest energy standards on a standard lot. Geothermal systems are difficult to fit into a lot of this size. However, by sinking the wells vertically, rather than horizontally, we were able to utilize this very efficient method of heating and cooling despite the relatively modest land area. The geothermal system was also applied to our water system, coupled with an electric back-up option to allow homeowners more flexibility and convenience while maintaining a green outlook.

This system is just one aspect of the Five Star Plus energy efficiency built into this home and certified by an independent inspection service. We believe that our homes should not just look beautiful; they should function beautifully as well. Quality building materials, the highest energy standards and a complete security system, which can be accessed on any television screen or computer monitor in the house, provide a level of functionality that lives up to our distinct designs.

The second challenge involved incorporating a large retaining wall located at the rear of the lot into a cohesive and aesthetic landscape. This was a particularly sensitive issue, as it would not only effect the outdoor living spaces, but also the views from the largest windows and most important gathering areas of the home.

The answer to our dilemma was inspired by our theme of the Old World. Large arborvitaes were planted to draw the eye forward and away from the expanse of concrete, while immense boulders anchored the tall trees to the hardscape and plantings in the backyard. These terraces were further blended into the environment by using the same boulders to frame our window wells. This subtle touch created interesting sight lines from the lower level windows, and garnered much appreciation from Parade-goers.

This tranquil setting houses a trio of entertainment spaces: a kidney-shaped patio, a pergola-covered deck and a paneled three-season porch offer options for all kinds of weather and multiple seating arrangements for barbeques or cocktail parties.

The texture and substance of the landscaping boulders also blends with the earthy color of the fire resistant, sound-dampening, cement board siding and stone of the house's exterior. A fieldstone walkway from the courtyard-style three-stall garage area further enhances the front landscape and relates it to the treatment of the rear yard.

From the first step through the cinnamon-tone front door, our commitment to architectural detailing is apparent. The eye is drawn from the rich Santos mahogany flooring, up paneled walls to substantial crown moldings and a beautiful barrel-vaulted ceiling. While this soaring entry is built on a grand scale, the thickness of the moldings and trim create a balance such that the space does not feel overwhelming, but welcoming.

The entry leads seamlessly into a dining room gleaming with more thick, classic moldings and a custom crafted, built-in hutch. The rich paint color on these walls, as well as those throughout the home, creates a vibrant environment. While each room makes a bold statement, the scheme works as a whole, with glimpses of complimentary shades visible through doorways.

The kitchen, just off the dining room, is a natural gathering place. Visitors are drawn to the uniquely textured black granite countertops, and can't help but run their hands over the appealing surface. The subway tiles of the backsplash suggest the appearance of an old brick wall, a charming backdrop to the lustrous cinnamon-tone custom birch cabinets.

The attached great room is another breathtaking space that maintains its homey sensibility. A classic cast iron fireplace capped with crisp dentil molding is the cozy centerpiece of the room, while a wall of windows allows light to stream in and captures views of the lush landscaping beyond. The coffered ceiling, which blends the look of hammered copper and wood, adds further dimension to the room.

The master bedroom off the living area is the passageway to total relaxation. The claw-foot tub set in the center of the master bath is an island of luxury surrounded by a cocoa-

tone custom vanity, makeup station and linen cabinet, while the nearby black-and-white tiled shower is ready to soothe and rejuvenate. Glass shelves behind the tub keep bath salts handy, while the nook cleverly hidden over the door opposite the tub allows soakers to watch their favorite television show in private.

Through doors to either side of the bathtub, the adjoining walk-in closet has a place for everything - and everything will stay in place with the handcrafted, solid wood fittings including a full height shoe storage unit, drawers, and rods for shirts, pants and dresses. Storage is even built into the window seat across from the shoe system, the perfect spot for deciding between loafers and heels.

The nerve center of this floor is the transition room, a point of entry off the kitchen that includes a bench and storage for outdoor gear; a laundry; a half bath and a command center – a desk and storage area with a dynamically etched steel surface which not only makes a great place to sit while making family appointments or checking the calendar, but is in itself an organizational tool. Magnets stick to the metal surface, ready to post notes about the comings and goings of a busy family. This unique treatment of the metal surface is continued in the half bath, where the countertop and mirror frame repeat the whimsical pattern.

Back in the foyer, a small textured glass window high up on the paneled wall hints at the secluded space awaiting at the top of the cherry staircase. A reading loft, complete with a spotlighted bookcase, provides another spot for repose. Glossy newel posts frame the nook and reflect the coffered ceiling design of the great room, onto which the second story hideaway opens.

Down the hall, two bedrooms are conveniently located near a bath accessed through pocket doors. Every detail has been given careful consideration, from the out-of-season clothing storage built into each closet design to the polished chrome hooks attached to a wainscoting frame that hang ready for robes and towels in the bathroom.

The nearby third bedroom is a flexible space, with a built-in desk for homework, a window seat with hidden storage for cuddling up with a book, and a private lounge area outfitted with five-channel surround sound and ready for video game action or chilling out to some tunes.

Flexibility is also the vanguard of the lower level. The main room was designed to allow for separate gaming and conversation areas. A wet bar provides refreshments before guests adjourn through French doors into the theater room with seven-channel surround sound. If movies are not the homeowner's main focus, this room could easily be repurposed as a playroom or office.

Similarly accommodating, one of the two lower level bedrooms is wired with higher amperage for exercise equipment if a home gym is preferred. And the secure concrete storm cellar could easily convert to a wine cellar or storage area.

From Five Star Plus energy efficiency to classic solid core doors; extensive home automation in sound, security and networking systems to timeless black and white octagonal tile in the master bath; our Parade home succeeds in blending the best of the Old World and the best of the new. Indoors and out, we made it our goal to create an environment that was distinctive and elegant, yet comforting and sensitive to today's homeowner's needs. Our Parade home is indeed the best of both worlds.