

From a webcam to monitor construction to a dog shower, Ken and Joan Lauterstein paid close attention to the little things in their new home on Gills Creek.

## Down to the last Detail

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When Ken and Joan Lauterstein began dreaming up their dream home, their vision included features other homeowners might not have imagined in their wildest dreams.

Included in their plans was a custom shower for Cody, their 7-year-old Welsh springer spaniel.

"I thought, 'If this is going to be a custom-built house, then I want to bathe my dog standing up,'" said Ken Lauterstein, who suffers from back pain.

Lauterstein got the idea for a dog shower from a magazine

article. The tiled shower, located in the laundry room, has a base of about 4½ feet with storage room for pet supplies. "It's worked out great," he said.

So far. The Lautersteins, who live in Ashburn, are counting down the days until March 2007 when they can permanently occupy their 5,000-square-foot dream home on Gills Creek.

They've been traveling to the lake every other weekend since construction began. And for the times they couldn't be there, the couple followed the progress via a webcam that Ken Lauterstein installed on the dock.

It's the attention to detail  
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Ken Lauterstein gets Cody, the family's Welsh springer spaniel, ready for a bath in a custom-designed dog shower.

Photos by Elizabeth Hock | The Roanoke Times

See more pictures of the Lauterstein's home @roanoke.com



**Owners:** Ken and Joan Lauterstein

**Located:** On Gills Creek

**Contractor:** Phil Floyd of Floyd Enterprises in Hardy

**Project manger:** Don Winter; foreman: Dave Farber

**Designer:** Interiors by Kris

**Square feet:** 5,000, plus a partially finished bonus room over the garage

**Includes:** 4 bedrooms, 3 full baths, 2 half baths, great room, dining room, laundry room, media room, library, workshop, two offices, three-car garage, screened-in porch, deck spanning width of the house

**Amenities:** Custom shower in laundry room for Cody, a Welsh springer spaniel; Internet-wired dock housing air-conditioned cabana with refrigerator and microwave, boat slip and personal watercraft lift; barrel ceiling in entryway; stamped concrete resembling stone on porch and lower patio; outside shower area with French drain leading to deck; great view of holiday fireworks from the deck

**Cost:** approximately \$900,000



Photos by Elizabeth Hock | The Roanoke Times

Red, lots of it, is the prevailing color in daughter Amy's room (above); the color scheme of the main living areas, such as the great room (right), are more muted with color found in the accent pieces and upholstered furniture.



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that the Lautersteins said they shared with project manager **Don Winter** of Phil Floyd Construction, who helped turn their dreams into reality and made the house a perfect place to spend their retirement.

"It helps to be an aeronautical engineer, too," said Lauterstein, who retired from the Federal Aviation Administration after 26 years and was called back to join the Transportation Security Administration after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. His wife of 29 years also is retired from government work.

Among the details that make life easier for the couple are outlets strategically placed where they won't be visible; an outdoor shower with a French

drain that will help keep lake mud and muck out of the home; a backup generator in case of a power outage; a kitchen island that's the perfect height for Joan to knead bread; and an extra-wide landing to avoid a closed-in feeling on the stairs leading to the lower level.

In Ken Lauterstein's office on the upper level, a custom-built desk occupies three-fourths of the wall space; it was modeled after a "space ship" Lauterstein designed when he was 12 years old. Other details: granite countertops in the kitchen; built-in bookcases; master bath with Jacuzzi tub; custom cabinets by Carter Cabinets; hickory hardwood floors; and a built-in toy box for their year-old grandson,

#### Michael.

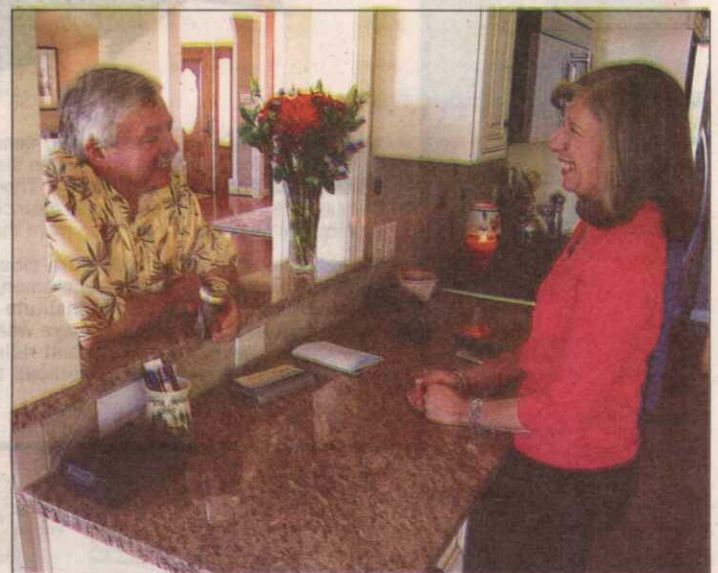
"They [Winter and his associates] suggested so many of the details and then made sure they were done right," Lauterstein said. "If we had to do it all over again, we'd use the same people."

Joan Lauterstein said one of the things that eased the home-building process was the familiarity of the contractor and subcontractors.

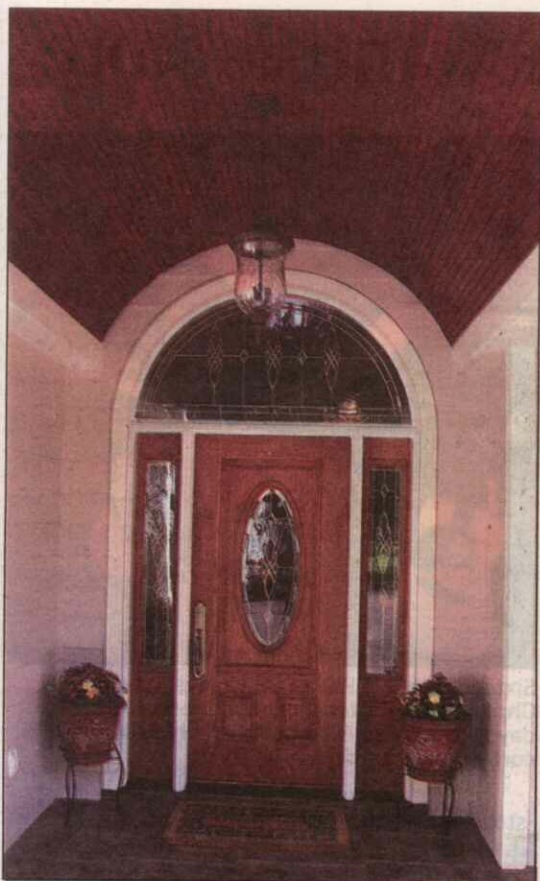
"They all knew each other; they weren't strangers. They had their moments when they disagreed or whatever, but they knew how to work together," she said.

One detail the Lautersteins didn't design but acquired by design is the stunning view of

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Joan and Ken Lauterstein in their kitchen; the couple has been married for 29 years.



The entryway to the Lauterstein home features a barrel ceiling (left). The level lot on Gills Creek provides a clear view of the lake and Smith Mountain (above).  
Photos by Elizabeth Hock | The Roanoke Times

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design is the stunning view of the lake and mountains, visible from many of the home's rooms.

Ken Lauterstein, a native New Yorker, grew up spending summers in New York's Catskill Mountains and decided he wanted to spend his retirement in a similar place.

"I knew I wanted to find a lake with mountains," he said.

They were tipped off by a newspaper article they saw in 1992 that called Smith Mountain Lake a "best-kept secret." The couple visited during

Memorial Day weekend of 1993 and were hooked.

"We just fell in love with the place," Joan Lauterstein said.

The Lautersteins bought a boat and then a condominium at Bernard's Landing, where they lived for 10 years while searching for the perfect spot to build. What they found was practically in their condo's back yard. They bought the lot, located across from Bernard's, and built a dock before they started construction on the house, which is positioned to take full advantage of the view of Smith Mountain.

"In the morning when I get up, I can see the sunrise, and they're all different," Ken Lauterstein said. "I love the view; after 13 years, it's always like I'm seeing it for the first time."

Joan Lauterstein looks forward to visits by the couple's son, **Nathan**, 26, his wife and their year-old son; and from daughter, **Amy**, a sophomore at Virginia Commonwealth University. Joan calls their home "a dream come true."

As for Ken, he's a little concerned about the landscaping.

"The hardest thing about building the house is grow-

ing the grass," he said. "The rain keeps washing the seed away." He's installed netting and a sprinkler system, and that's helped some, he added. If there's another solution, Ken

Lauterstein probably can come up with it.

In the meantime, he's moved the webcam to an upstairs window in the house. It lets him watch the grass grow, or not.



The screened-in porch is accessed from the kitchen and from a deck that winds around the back of the house.

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