

# A *Lakeside Oasis* ON RUSH LAKE

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FEATURE  
HOME





*It all started with a sketch on a piece of notepaper.*

Once Dave and Amanda Bush found the perfect lake lot after years of searching, Amanda began drawing sketches of the perfect home to build on the property.

Architect Kelli Wegscheid, of Harmonious Architecture in Perham, still keeps those original drawings in her files.

"They both had pretty strong ideas of what they were looking for, and since they were such great ideas, my design stayed fairly true to what they were thinking," says Kelli, who

knew the Bushes from their children's sports and activities. "With so much wide-open space, we were able to work together to create exactly what they wanted."

Situated on an 8-acre lot on the shores of Rush Lake in Ottertail County, Kelli says the striking two-story gray structure, with white trim and brick accents, isn't necessarily any one style, but rather "a great mix of styles that fits perfectly in that location."

The homeowners think of it as more of a modern spin to a classic two-story lakeside oasis.

Or it could ultimately be defined as "Amanda Style."

**"WITH SO MUCH WIDE-OPEN SPACE, WE WERE ABLE TO WORK TOGETHER TO CREATE EXACTLY WHAT THEY WANTED."**

*Kelli Wegscheid - Harmonious Architecture*





From the secret bookshelf doors to the theater room with leather reclining chairs, Amanda was involved with every idea and every light fixture.

"I can't tell you how many times I fell asleep with my laptop open, looking for items, especially light fixtures, which aren't stocked as much in showrooms anymore," she says. "It's a time-consuming challenge to find all these different light fixtures that don't necessarily 'match,' but would work well together."

#### MAKING A LIST AND CHECKING IT TWICE

The Bushes have lived in Perham since 2012, where they own and operate a health care business. With four children – Peyton, Matthew, Madison and Bo – they wanted to find a place in the same general area where they could all enjoy it as a vacation, or getaway, and then someday it would become their retirement home.

"I had a checklist of must-haves," she says with a laugh. "One of the things we weren't sure we would find is a flat lot with no house on it. We also wanted something in close

# Harmonious 1/2



proximity to Perham with a good view, good fishing and good boating.”

That list was always evolving, but they’re happy with the lake home they’ve built while they still have a home in Perham.

“We’ve done so many remodeling projects in the past that I wasn’t sure I wanted to go through that again, so we felt very lucky to find this piece of land where we could take our time and build exactly what we wanted,” says Amanda. “It was also important for us to find the right builder, since we would be our own general contractor.”

They chose Brandon Nelson Construction.

“I’ve worked with Kelli at Harmonious Architecture before, and I felt it all went flawlessly,” says Brandon, who operates his business a few miles North of Perham. “The Bushes put a great deal of thought and planning into this project to ensure it would go smoothly. Dave has experience in construction, knows the ins and outs, and happens to be one of the few people who can do a great job acting as a general contractor.”

Since it was their decision to choose the subcontractors, it was also important for the Bushes to work with as many local businesses as possible.

“Except for the HVAC business out of Fargo, which happens to be my brother, Tom Zander of Patriot Air Inc., we were able to stay local,” says Amanda. “They were all wonderful to work with, especially Phil Stoderl of Lakes Woodworking in Perham, who took all my

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*Brandon Nelson - Brandon Nelson Construction*



ideas, drawings, and online photos, and created the specialty items I dreamed up.”

Bookcases that actually open up as doors give a “secret room” kind of feeling to the under-the-stairs storage on the first floor, and another hides a furnace room on the second floor. In the master bedroom closet, there are several more custom items, including a “Lazy Suzie” revolving shoe carousel.

“I’m a custom shop, so every job is personalized,” explains Phil, who grew up in Perham and has been in construction since he was 16 years old. “In the kitchen, they have some unique appliances, so I gathered all the specs and then made the cabinets to fit.” He agrees with the builder that the project went smoothly because of the amount of planning and detail.









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*Amanda Bush-Homeowner*

“They took their time, working everything out ahead of time, hiring an architect, and then following the well-drawn plans,” he adds. “There are challenges with every job, of course, especially since I had to see a picture of what Amanda wanted and then try to mimic it with my own techniques, but that seems to be the trend. People find items and ideas online, and then I try to create them.”

#### FROM THE OUTSIDE

When Amanda turned over her house plan sketch to Kelli, the only things she wasn’t clear about were where to put the stairway – and what the outside of the house should look like. The lake side of this exceptional home features distinctive windows, an expansive patio, lush landscaping, and a covered deck off the master bedroom on the second floor.

“That deck is actually a roof over the top of the dining room,” Brandon explains. “It looked great drawn on paper, and I wanted to be sure to get it right the first time, especially regarding any water issues. We eliminated those issues by installing some hidden gutters

underneath the decking to divert the water, and that particular project is one of the things about this house that stands out for me.”

A portion of their lake frontage will remain undeveloped, but the 200 feet of usable shoreline provides a surprising level of sand found hidden just beneath the berm, giving the property its oasis feel.

Although there was no home on this particular lot, a nearby boathouse was grandfathered into their property. While they were somewhat restricted with the improvements they could make because of its proximity to the lake, they’ve achieved a bright, lighthearted theme on the inside of the renamed “Game House,” with plenty of activities for the family to play together.

Around the back, the street side of the house can’t really be seen from the street due to the long, winding driveway. Amanda still felt it was important to get it right because, she says, “I see it every day.”





An initial delay in beginning construction led her to re-think the exterior on that side, and she went back online and found ideas for extending the porch to wrap around, and adding arches and gables for a more dramatic effect.

"We kept Kelli busy with all our changes, but we were almost grateful for the delay that gave us additional time to work out some of the details," adds Amanda, who also moved around a few other things on the interior during that time that made the house "so much more of what we love now."

#### TO THE INSIDE

The most significant change to the interior during the construction delay proved to provide a true focal point for the main floor.

"We had a fireplace that I initially wanted on one of the interior walls, but one day I was at the Wild Goose in Perham, where they have a see-through fireplace," says Amanda. "I knew immediately that was what we needed with our open floor plan, and I called Dave right away so he could come take a look at it. We





are so glad we added that, and it proves that some things are meant to be."

With four children and an active outdoor lifestyle, the luxury vinyl plank floor they chose for the living areas and kitchen is both beautiful and practical.

"It's a high variation Armstrong product with a wood pattern that looks very realistic, and it works well in their large downstairs area and part of the upstairs area," says Rich Winkels, owner of Winkels Carpet Center in Perham. "It's ideal for their situation at the lake, especially the fact that it's 100% waterproof."

The kitchen boasts all the modern amenities, including an oversized refrigerator and a commercial style KitchenAid range and grill.





"The one item Dave had on our list of must-haves was an indoor grill," says Amanda. "He's the cook in the family."

One hobby they share is wine making, and a floor-to-ceiling wine wall in the family room displays some of their home-made sweet red wines. A lot of "trial and error" have led to wines with names such as Chateau Bush and The Prince of Wine, and their favorite is a raspberry chocolate port.

The family loves to watch movies together, so the spacious theater room in the back of the house, with an oversized TV, comfortable seating, a popcorn machine, and blackout shades to cover the windows, provides the right atmosphere for a true cinematic experience.



#### UP THE STAIRS

The location of the stairs in this open floor plan worked out perfectly, and Amanda's only other initial concern was about blending the wood-look floor with the wooden staircase to the upstairs. By mixing dark brown and white on the steps and handrail, along with adding decorative iron rails, the result is warm and inviting.

Besides the terrace off the master bedroom through French doors, a raised fireplace is the upstairs focal point of this luxurious master suite. Also reflective of "Amanda Style" are amenities like specialized cabinets for jewelry and shoes, innovative storage space, a walk-





in shower, a soaking tub, and even a sauna in this closet that is not only well-designed, but beautiful and practical.

"This entire master suite is truly a fantastic area of the house," adds Kelli. "An additional door at the back of the bath connects to the bonus room over the garage, which they currently use for their exercise equipment, and a second stairway winds down into the garage."

Three other bedrooms for the children round out the upstairs, and they all love spending time at the lake, where they can enjoy water activities like fishing, jet skiing, paddle boarding, jumping on a water trampoline, and swimming at the sandbar.

#### THE VISION

When Dave and Amanda first pulled up to this lot several years ago, they could see the possibilities, but it was undeveloped at the time. A few years later they went back to find the land was divided and developed into buildable lots.



"We got out, walked the property, and decided to buy it that day, which was about three years ago," says Amanda.

She feels like they bought the right lot, hired the right architect, the right builder and the right craftspeople, and everyone in the family is very happy with the way it all turned out.

"It's truly a beautiful home," adds Brandon. "It's one of the nicest homes I've ever built, and I'm very proud to put my name on it." ~L&H





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