



COUNTRY DREAMING

STORY BY PHIL DAVIES

INSTALLATION BY PROLINE

INTERIOR DESIGN BY INTERIOR DESIGNS OF WAYZATA

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KAREN MELVIN

Tom and Jan Kordonowy are accustomed to the sights, sounds, and rhythms of the country. Tom, president of a Twin Cities development firm, spent his boyhood on the North Dakota prairie, while Jan grew up on the green shores of Lake Minnetonka in suburban Minneapolis. He likes to golf, listen to classical music, and read with only birdsong and the sougning of windblown trees as an accompaniment; she loves to ride and take time out from raising four children to tend flowers and vegetables.

So it was only natural that the Kordonowys should build their new home on a 90-acre estate sequestered among wooded, rolling farmland 30 miles southwest of the city. The 12,000-square-foot shingled house nestles in a hollow at the end of a long dirt road. Maple and oak trees bend close to the windows, and an old farm-

*A big city system
in the heart
of the country*

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house surrounded by soybean and corn fields is visible from the living room.

"You can sit here, or in the dining room, and watch the corn grow," Jan says. "It's very Minnesota." For variety, the Kordonowys also watch movies and sports—and indulge their respective musical interests—with an audio/video system as sophisticated as any you'd find in a big city high-rise. Abetted by cunning camouflage and superbly crafted cabinetry, the two-zone system melds easily into the rich, traditional interior of fieldstone, cherrywood, and marble. St. Paul architect Fred Richter's design combines elements of the century-old New England shingle style—fieldstone walls, turrets, steep gables, dormer windows, oversize doors, and trim—with a free-flowing contemporary floor plan. The kitchen is huge, reflecting Jan and Tom's passion for cooking, and a massive fieldstone fireplace rises 18 feet into a vaulted space that lets the sky shine in on an informal sitting area. At the couple's request, Richter incorporated marble-faced fireplaces, tall archways, oak parquet floors, and curved walls that echo the rounded exterior.

"We wanted the house to have a sense of elegance," he says. "To me, the shingle style is kind of a casual style, but at the same time, you want to have a classic sense of arrival, of formalism." Not ones to merely sit and watch, the Kordonowys took a hands-on role in the creation of their home. Tom visited the site three times daily to supervise construction, and he personally selected half a million pounds of native fieldstone, "moved here by the last Ice Age," for the double fireplace and exterior walls. Jan's imprint is evident in the eclectically homey interior, replete with warm wood, well-padded furniture, and vibrant botanical motifs.

"People ask me, 'What colors are in your house?' and I can't think of a color that's *not*





One of the home's informal sitting areas is eclectically decorated with warm wood, well-padded furniture, and vibrant botanical motifs. A native fieldstone fireplace soars 18-feet as music filters down from twin Infinity ERS 600s tucked into the vaulted ceiling.



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in the house," Jan says. Interior designer Susan Hoffman laid out the kitchen, designed several fireplace settings, and helped Jan find new items to supplement the variety of English antiques she had collected over the years. However, when it came to installing an audio/video system, the Kordonowys bowed to the expertise of Andy Willcox and Steve Raitt of Pro Line Audio in St. Paul.

"The element of trust was very important, because I'm completely ignorant of these systems," Tom says. "I have no technical background; I break into a sweat when I look at the back of a television. Rather than describe

what we wanted, Andy came to us with a series of suggestions for us to accept or reject. Ease of operation was crucial. I don't know how the system does what it does; I switch it on, put the CD in, and there's sound."

Eight months of labor behind the sheetrock produced a powerful, flexible system that pipes sounds and images from the world beyond the corn to a home theater, eight other rooms on two levels, and an expansive pool and patio area. The family room houses audio gear for listening to CDs, cassettes, and radio, and video equipment for watching movies or pulling in TV signals from a 12-foot satellite

In the family room (opposite), a Pioneer 50-inch rear-projection TV is at home beside a Brobdingnagian fireplace. A pair of Infinity ERS 600 in-wall speakers modulated by a Niles volume control help the Kordonowys entertain guests in the more formal living room (above).

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A cherrywood cabinet in the family room (below and opposite) houses a comprehensive system including an A/V receiver, surround-sound processor, Hi-Fi VCR, speaker switcher, three amplifiers, and other components.

dish planted on the front lawn. The house has eight TV monitors, including two large screens, and 17 pairs of speakers flush-mounted and painted to blend into walls and ceilings.

"This is the first project we've ever done that has speakers in a different color in almost every room," Willcox says. Infrared wall sensors activated by Memorex CP8 Turbo remotes allow the Kordonows to summon music and video from anywhere in the house. A Niles volume control is never more than a few feet away, and A/B

buttons in the study/billiards area and master and guest bedroom suites upstairs offer a choice between music or TV sound through wall speakers.

That amount of control is vital to a socially active couple with four children aged 20 through seven. "The remote system allows us to turn the system on and off in each room; that's a very nice feature," Tom says. Adds Jan: "I love being able to sit in here [the living room], or in the dining room, when we have company, and play



