

# ITALIAN CASTLE MAGIC

*A taste of Italian luxury & grandeur  
permeates every aspect of this magnificent  
home in Old Kinderhook*

*by Susan Creel | photography by Donny Larsen*

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**I**f you visit the Italian countryside you can't help but "ooh" and "ah" at the sight of ancient castles built on hilltops overlooking green and golden fields. The home of Stephen and Maureen Schaller in Old Kinderhook is reminiscent of just such castles, rising as it does high above the golf course, the country club community, the beautiful blue Lake, and looking out at the rolling hills of the Missouri countryside.

The Italian experience surrounds you as you walk through the massive front door and into the huge foyer. High above your head hangs a wrought iron chandelier of epic proportions. Sweeping before you, the travertine marble floor is inlaid with the mosaic design of a tree, its branches reaching towards the gathering room.

There the mantle of the stone fireplace is supported by cherubs above the marble hearth. ▶ please turn page ▶

A TRUE ITALIAN CASTLE EXPERIENCE AWAITS ALL THOSE WHO ENTER THE SCHALLER HOME AT OLD KINDERHOOK. LARGE FIREPLACES, ORNATE COLUMNS, FLORAL-STYLE APPOINTMENTS, A GAME ROOM WITH A HALF BASKETBALL COURT, A BEDROOM ADJOINING A BATHROOM AND A HOME THEATER ARE JUST SOME OF THE MANY FEATURES.

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Another mosaic design, this one being the wild turkey symbol of Old Kinderhook, is set in the floor in front of French doors opening to a deck made of stone and with wrought iron railings.

Stephen and Maureen have owned the home which was built in 2000 by the original developer of Old Kinderhook since April 2010. They extensively remodeled and renovated the original house to achieve the masterpiece that it is today.

Seven bedrooms on three floors, each with its own bathroom or personal sink, its own control of heating/cooling, and its own flat screen TV accommodate fourteen comfortably. There are seven baths and a four car garage.

The Schallers are originally from St. Louis. They now reside, along with

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daughter Stephanie, in Cincinnati where Stephen is a corporate attorney and Maureen manages the couple's real estate and serves as the vice president and member of the Board of Directors of One Way Farm Children's Home. They love spending time at their Kinderhook home but also invite corporations seeking a unique venue for corporate retreats and private wedding parties to enjoy the luxury.

An intimate dining room shares the gathering room's expansive view. From there family and guests pass through pillars to the gourmet kitchen. All cabinets have a crackled finish in taupe with a hint of lavender, and crystal drawer pulls. The refrigerator and wine cabinet have wrought iron grapes and grape vine door handles. Counter tops are tile with lavender-grey grout and granite. Grapes also decorate



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the cabinet tops and crown molding, and all door frames are intricately decorated. Three ovens, a warming drawer, and a built-in wok enable the cook to create recipes fit for a king. Maureen has, however, also made sure that the restaurants of Old Kinderhook will provide catering services for any special event.

The master suite is also located on the main floor. A multi-sided fireplace warms both the bedroom and the bath. French doors lead to the private balcony. A wet bar, huge Jacuzzi tub, and even more impressive steam shower offer further relaxation. Most charming are the his-and-hers sinks decorated with pink roses and the story of Sleeping Beauty.

The first floor beneath the main story is decorated in more subdued hues. Brown textured walls and brown

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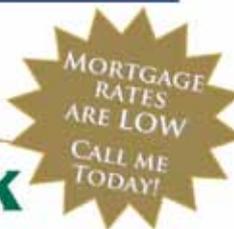
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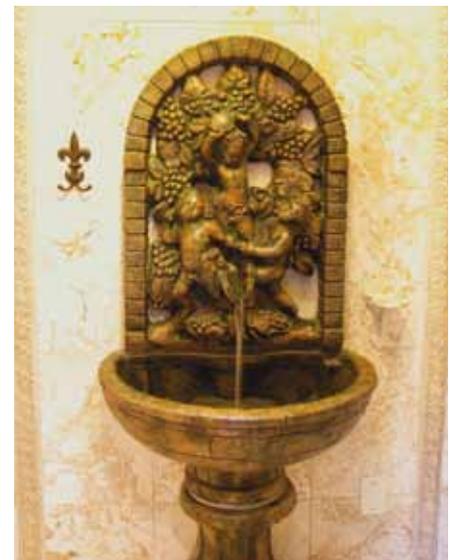
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carpet lead to the dark green theater trimmed in gold. Maureen has seen to it that corporate guests have only to plug in their lap tops and the room is presentation ready. Comfortable leather chairs invite movie/presentation viewers to devote their attention to the full sized screen. Outside of the theater there is a large conference room with a plug and play TV as well as a lap top station. There are also private offices for executive use. Having lived in the corporate world, Maureen feels she is well equipped to anticipate every need for any corporate retreat.

Not many castles offer family and guests a half basketball court upon which to play, but the lowest level of the Schaller home is built for fun. There is a pool table that converts to an air hockey game, table shuffle board, and electronic chess. Above



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the basketball court the disco ball is a reminder that there is plenty of room to dance. If you work up a thirst there is a drinking fountain. Thinking of something stronger, go to the full wine cellar built to house over 350 bottles. Snacks can be prepared in the full sized kitchen. A complete bedroom and bath suite are also found on this level.

Other toys are available for outdoor games and future plans for the outdoors include a putting green. A golf cart stands ready to shuttle guests to the Kinderhook golf course, to any of the three pools, or to the Marina. Boat slips as well as boats, complete with captains, if desired, can be rented.

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## About Dan Crouse

Imagination, vision, and a great contractor were requirements to convert the Schaller's home from the state in which they first saw it to the masterpiece it is today. They hired Dan Crouse of Crouse and Associates, Inc. to remove the mold and dry rot beneath the stucco caused by leakage under the crawl space and missing roof flashings. Dan corrected construction errors and rebuilt the home as he repaired the extensive damage.

Dan, who has lived in the Lake area for over 38 years, is a School of the Osage graduate. His father, Larry Crouse, was one of the Lake's major contractors as the area was first being developed.

Crouse and Associates, Inc. includes several divisions that demolish, restore, and construct buildings around the world. While the business continues to expand, Dan's personal goal is to pull closer to home to enjoy all of the beauty that the Lake offers.

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Maureen says that tranquility is the essence of the home, from the waterfall cascading to the street level pond to the surrounding 90+ acres of woods. Like those magical castles in Italy, the Schaller home welcomes family, friends, and guests to experience a world apart from the every day, a world of classic beauty.

**For more information, please visit [www.lakeozarkretreat.com](http://www.lakeozarkretreat.com) or [www.oldkinderhookresort.com](http://www.oldkinderhookresort.com)** ■

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