

ISSUE NUMBER 87-88
THE MAGAZINE PUBLISHED
IN THE INTEREST OF
PRESERVING AND
RESTORING THE
MODEST AMERICAN
20TH CENTURY HOME,
THE BUNGALOW,
AND THE RICH LIFESTYLE
THAT IT AFFORDS

AMERICAN BUNGALOW

RESTORATION
ACCESSORIES
HISTORY
FURNISHINGS
EVENTS
ARTS AND CRAFTS
UPGRADING
PHILOSOPHY
GARDENS
PROJECTS
LANDSCAPING



By TIM COUNTS

WHEN BARBARA, a landscape architect living in Minnesota, set out to buy a house in 1999, she was looking for something modest.

"I wanted a little house with a nice view and a big yard for gardening," she explains. While hoping to find something she liked, she wasn't expecting to be swept off her feet. She was caught off guard early one day by a handsome 1905 Arts and Crafts house overlooking a quiet bay of Lake Minnetonka, a large, irregularly shaped lake on the western edge of the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area.

"I fell in love with this house the minute I saw it," she says with a wistful smile. "Harder than I've fallen for any guy."

But love at first sight often comes with complications. The house was much larger than she wanted or needed. And it needed work—a lot of work. So she turned away. But there were murmurs that the house would likely become a teardown, a common fate for picturesque old homes on Lake Minnetonka that occupy prime land.

"That thought set the hook pretty deep in my throat," Barbara says. "By the time I got to work that morning, I was crying because someone was going to tear down MY house that I wasn't going to buy because it was too much work."

Fortunately, love isn't entirely rational, and the chance that her house might be lost forever was too much for Barbara to bear. Soon she and the house were joined for life.

A SUMMER HOME

The house was built in 1905 by John Flett Cargill, a member of the family that founded Cargill, Inc., of grain and agricultural renown (the company's headquarters are still nearby). John Cargill was a widower by then, and he sought to summer at Lake Minnetonka with his only child, a daughter. Though one can now drive from Minneapolis to Lake Minnetonka in well less than an hour, getting there a century ago was an all-day journey.

JOINED FOR LIFE

THE SHELTERING STRUCTURE OVER THE REAR DOOR IS ORIGINAL. IT WAS REMOVED, RESTORED, AND REATTACHED TO THE NEW BACK WALL OF THE HOUSE.



The house's main entrance faces the lake, as was common in the era. In 1905, occupants and visitors typically arrived lakeside by trolley a half-mile from the Cargill house. They would have boarded one of several circulating boats that delivered people, mail, and supplies to the hundreds of private docks along Lake Minnetonka's 125 miles of shoreline.

Though the home's rooms are generous, from the lake it appears even larger because of deep porches that wrap around three sides. On the south is the winter porch, positioned to permit the low sun's rays through massive, double-hung windows in cold months. At the opposite end of the house, wrapping around its northwest corner,

is the expansive sunset porch, perfect for contemplating radiant evening views across the lake. Between the winter and sunset porches is an open porch, accessible from the living room through two sets of French doors. From here, steps descend to the shore.

"I love the way the original designer sited it on the land," Barbara says. "It's got such a beautiful vista out over the lake. I love the way the stone foundation settles it onto the ground. I wouldn't change anything on the exterior." She pauses. "Except I did." She laughs, then quickly explains that the front of the house, viewed from the lake, still looks as it did 110 years ago.

JOINED FOR LIFE



ORIGINALLY, ONE ENTERED THE BACK DOOR DIRECTLY ONTO A STAIRWAY LANDING AT ONE END OF THE LIVING ROOM. DAVID HEIDE DESIGN STUDIO CREATED THIS NEW, MORE GRACIOUS ENTRY. THE ORIGINAL FRONT DOOR, SEEN OPEN AT LEFT, WAS ONCE POSITIONED AT THE OPENING AT RIGHT. THE NEW CEILING LIGHT FIXTURE IS BASED ON A LOUIS SULLIVAN PATTERN; THE RUG BELOW WAS CUSTOM-MADE USING THE SAME DESIGN. THE WINDOW AT LEFT IS A PRECISE REPLICA OF THE HOME'S ORIGINALS, DOWN TO THE ROPE-AND-PULLEY COUNTERWEIGHT SYSTEM.



DAVID HEIDE DESIGN STUDIO

SETTLING IN

Once the house was hers, Barbara spent several years taking care of much-deferred maintenance and repairs. Much of the electrical wiring was original knob-and-tube, and she was alarmed to find that someone had stuffed several live electrical boxes full of shredded socks, presumably to seal air leaks.

"I'd never heard my handyman swear before that day," Barbara recalls. The home's plumbing was also original to the house. She remembers poking at an ancient galvanized pipe—"My finger went right through it."

THE WINTER PORCH AT THE SOUTH END OF THE HOUSE IS A FAVORITE GATHERING SPOT IN SHOULDER SEASONS, AND IF THE SUNLIGHT IS STRONG, EVEN IN WINTER. THE ORIGINAL CONCRETE FLOORS WERE IN POOR SHAPE, SO THEY WERE REPLACED WITH BRICK TILE WARMED FROM BENEATH BY A NEW GEOTHERMAL RADIANT HEAT SYSTEM. THE VINTAGE WICKER FURNITURE IS BY THE HEYWOOD COMPANY.



ADDING FOLDING DOORS ACROSS THE SUNSET PORCH CREATED ANOTHER OF THE HOME'S MANY DINING AREAS BY SHIFTING SPACE INTO THE INTERIOR.



A TABLE IN THE MORNING ROOM IS THE PERFECT PLACE FOR ONE OR TWO PEOPLE TO HAVE BREAKFAST. OVERHEAD IS ONE SPECIMEN OF BARBARA'S ECLECTIC COLLECTION OF VINTAGE LIGHT FIXTURES. "I LIKE LIGHT FIXTURES," BARBARA EXPLAINS. "THEY'RE THE ONLY KIND OF JEWELRY I EVER BUY, EXCEPT FOR EARRINGS."

THOUGH THE BACK OF THE HOUSE IS ALMOST ENTIRELY NEW, IT HARMONIZES PERFECTLY WITH THE HOME'S ORIGINAL FRONT SECTION. EVEN THE EYEBROW DORMER WAS REPLICATED FROM AN ORIGINAL THAT HAD BEEN SET FARTHER BACK ON THE ROOF. LUSH GARDENS OFFER PEACEFUL VIEWS TO ROOMS THAT FACE AWAY FROM THE LAKE.



The home's expansive double-hung windows were original, but badly in need of restoration and re-hanging.

"Someone had placed segments of birch logs upright on the porch's window sills," Barbara says. "I thought they were decorative, but it turned out they were to prop the windows open."

The home's main drawback was the kitchen. Barbara loved to have family and friends over to prepare communal meals. But the compact kitchen, which had been remodeled in the 1980s, was situated inland, at the back of the house. This arrangement wouldn't have been a problem for a well-heeled homeowner of 1905, when the kitchen was the domain of hired help. It was designed to be isolated from public rooms. But Barbara and her guests

would be spending many hours there, and one couldn't even see the lake from the kitchen.

A ROOM WITH A VIEW

Enter David Heide, founder of David Heide Design Studio, housed in the 1928 Grain Exchange Building in downtown Minneapolis. Barbara originally engaged Heide to source appropriate living room furniture for her new home, but she soon discovered his design sensibilities were an impeccable fit for a whole-house renovation.

Heide's primary task was to reconfigure the service rooms at the back of the house, which had already been altered more than once by previous owners.

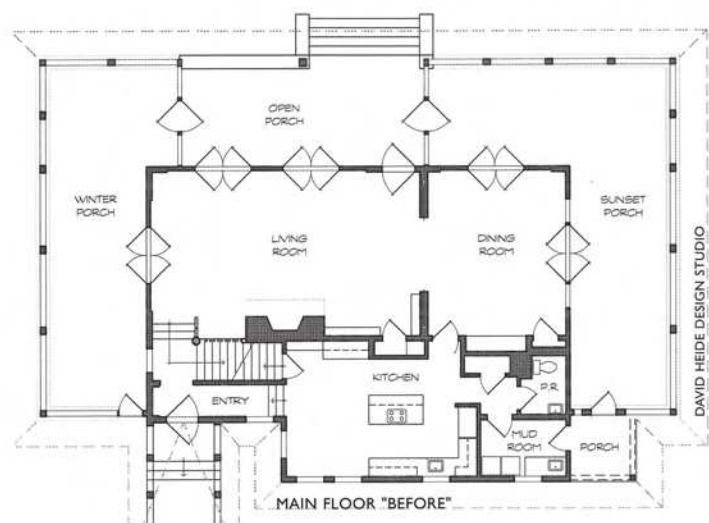
Explains Heide: "Most buildings need and ought to evolve in order to meet the needs of users and not become obsolete and endangered."

Coming up with a feasible plan was neither easy nor fast. Heide assigned Brad Belka, the company's longest-term designer, to the project, and a months-long collaboration was launched among Barbara, Heide, and Belka.

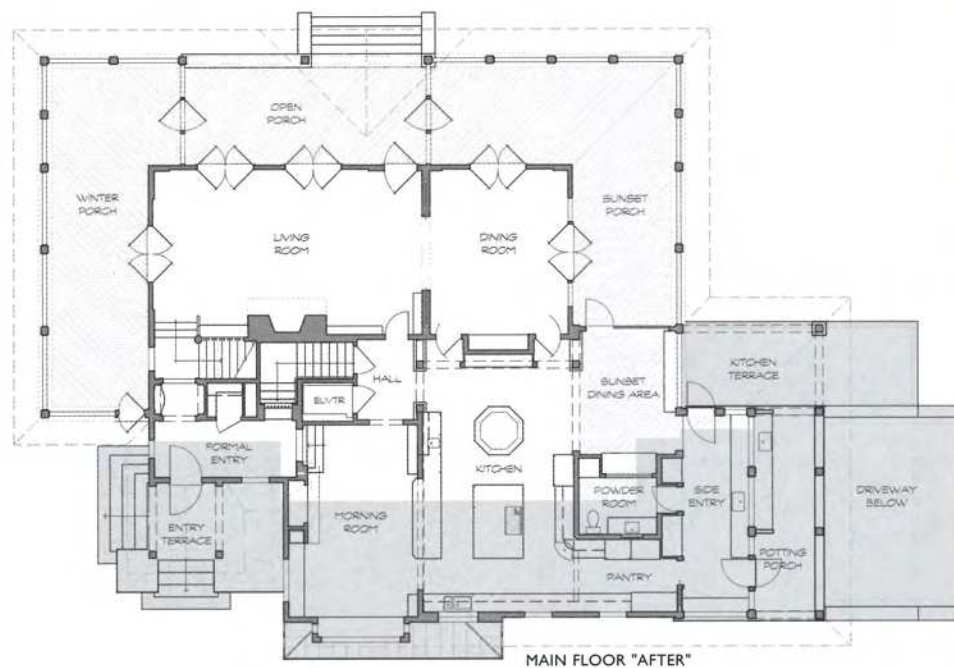
Says Heide: "The key word in this project is 'collaboration'—among the three of us. Barbara asked us to help her create her vision, and I think we all succeeded."

"I rejected kitchen designs one through 18, I think," Barbara says with a laugh. "But number 19 was a winner!"

JOINED FOR LIFE



DAVID HEIDE DESIGN STUDIO



THE SUNSET PORCH WRAPS AROUND THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF THE HOUSE, PERFECT FOR EVENING VIEWS ACROSS THE LAKE. THE EXPANSIVE DOUBLE-HUNG WINDOWS WERE RESTORED WITH THE ORIGINAL ROPE-AND-PULLEY MECHANISMS. "THEY GLIDE UP AND DOWN WITH ONE FINGER," BARBARA SAYS WITH SATISFACTION.



THE NEW KITCHEN WAS SHIFTED TOWARD THE NORTH END OF THE HOUSE SO THAT A VIEW OF THE LAKE THROUGH THE SUNSET PORCH WOULD BE POSSIBLE. THE KITCHEN'S SIZABLE CENTER ISLAND (DESIGNER DAVID HEIDE CALLS IT A "SUB-CONTINENT") WAS DEVISED SO THAT BARBARA'S NUMEROUS DINNER GUESTS CAN PREPARE MEAL CONTRIBUTIONS TOGETHER.



The new arrangement expanded the kitchen and shifted it toward the sunset porch end of the house, into space previously occupied by a tiny powder room and laundry/mud room. A large section of the kitchen's north wall was opened directly onto the sunset porch, permitting a diagonal lake view from most vantage points in the kitchen.

It was a bold (and likely costly) concept, and Barbara was understandably cautious.

"Rather than just looking at it on paper, I wanted to actually walk around the new kitchen," she explains. So Heide found empty warehouse space and he and his team laid out the kitchen plan on the floor with tape. Barbara invited a dozen people to a virtual kitchen party.

"We served Triscuits and Cheez Whiz and drank champagne out of plastic glasses," Barbara says. "We pretended we were doing what we'd normally do—preparing a meal that everyone contributes to."

The group's verdict on the new kitchen?

"The floor plan stayed pretty much like we designed it," Belka says with satisfaction.

Reworking the kitchen threw the arrangement of rooms in the back of the house into question. In the end, the rear wall of the house was removed and the few existing small rooms transformed into a formal entry, a large kitchen, a morning room, a side entry with an ample powder room, and a sheltered outdoor potting porch.



THE OWNER'S SUITE DRESSING ROOM WAS A WALK-IN CLOSET WHEN THE HOUSE WAS BUILT. THOUGH THE MAHOGANY CABINETRY IS NEW, THE ART GLASS HOPPER WINDOW IS ORIGINAL TO THE HOUSE, DEVISED TO ALLOW VENTILATION BETWEEN THE CLOSET AND THE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY.

The upper floor was also expanded, though to a lesser degree. It originally consisted of four bedrooms, a large sleeping porch, a study, and two bathrooms. The new plan retained four bedrooms, though two of them were roughly doubled in size, and included a modern-day luxury: four bathrooms.

"We strived to maintain the proportions of the house," Heide says. "That was really important to all of us, that we come to understand, respect, and then further the proportions."

The reconfiguration also added a feature that some might consider unusual for a two-story home: an elevator.

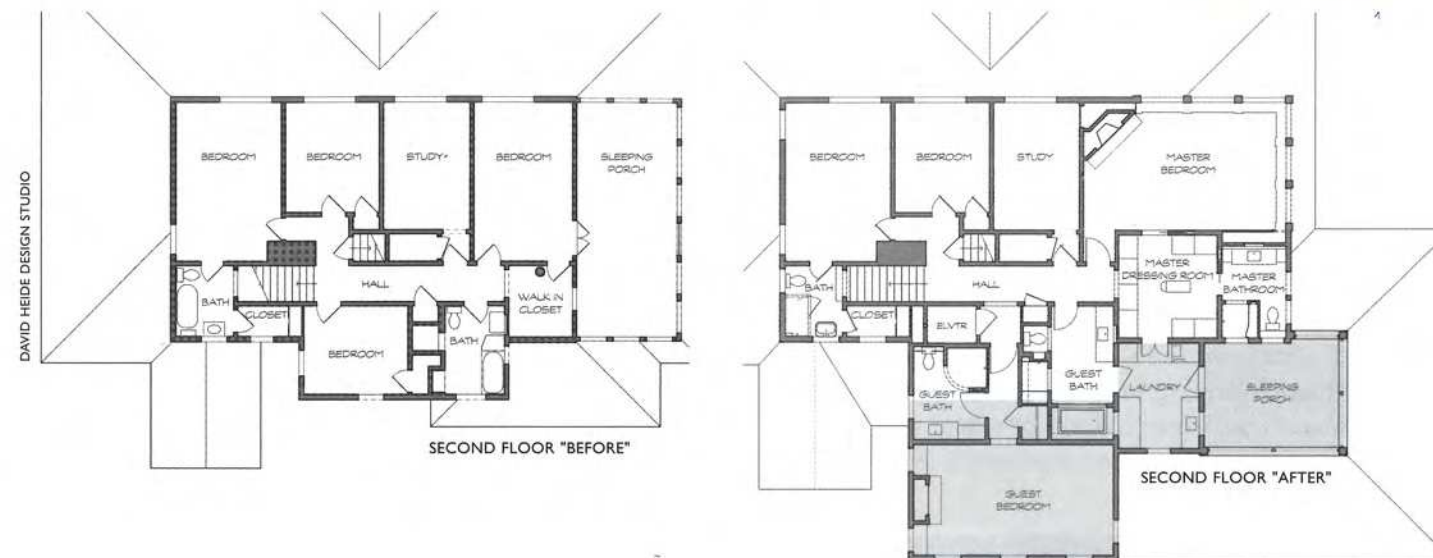
"We're all aging," Barbara shrugs, "and we're all going to have handicaps." She declares that she intends to live in the house "forever," and that an elevator will help ensure accessibility.

A BEAUTIFUL QUILT

The original, public rooms on the lake side of the house were left virtually intact and restored as necessary. Extensive oak trim and built-ins in the living and dining rooms had darkened almost to black over a century, so the finish was cleaned and evened out.

"I love the fireplace nook, the built-in bookcases, the dining room hutch," Barbara says. "I love to look at the

JOINED FOR LIFE



BARBARA'S BEDROOM WAS ORIGINALLY TWO ROOMS: A SMALL BEDROOM AND A CONNECTED, SCREENED SLEEPING PORCH. THE TWO ROOMS WERE COMBINED TO CREATE A SPACIOUS BEDROOM WITH AMPLE WINDOWS. ART GLASS TILES WERE USED IN MULTIPLE APPLICATIONS, INCLUDING IN THE CEILING LIGHT FIXTURE AND ON THE TOPS OF THE WOOD BOOKCASES UNDER THE WINDOWS. "GLASS TILE IS SO MUCH MORE PRACTICAL THAN WOOD IN THAT LOCATION," BARBARA SAYS, "ESPECIALLY IF YOU HAVE PLANTS THERE."

joinery in the windows and doors. It's all pieced together like a beautiful quilt. The seams are still as tight as the day they were built."

She also likes that the property isn't predictable.

"It's sited in a complex landscape and it doesn't reveal itself all at once. Some modern homes have a wide-open plan, but they lack the layers that give it human scale and a sense of framing the views—into another room, through a doorway, through a window, and out to the lake."

Though the home's style is Arts and Crafts inside and out, there are quirks. One is the pair of large, ornate corbels integrated into the Rookwood tile fireplace surround. They are clearly of a different era, or at least a different design sensibility.



THE BATHROOM IN THE OWNER'S SUITE OFFERS LUXURIOUS MATERIALS, INCLUDING A GRANITE CALLED "YELLOW BAMBOO." THE CARVED WOOD ELEMENTS WERE DESIGNED BY BRAD BELKA.



“They’re ... exuberant,” Heide observes diplomatically. “Well, they’re a masterpiece of carving,” Barbara says.

Curious to know if they might be a later addition, the team removed the corbels to examine construction details for clues. All agreed that they were original to the fireplace, so they were reinstalled.

A LANDSCAPE REBORN

Barbara’s vocational skills as a landscape architect came into play when reshaping, or at times restoring, the grounds. At the home’s rear, where rooms lack a lake view, Barbara created extensive gardens filled with cutting flowers, herbs,

vegetables, and ornamental shrubs. There’s also a verdant rain garden, which thrives on runoff from the home’s gutters. In front, grass was impractical on the steep slope down to the lakeshore, so Barbara formed a small prairie of native Minnesota plants. It needs no mowing, just periodic burning.

Bewilderingly, a previous owner had built a three-car garage at one end of the house, blocking a significant swath of the lake view. It came down. In its stead, the drive turns around and down to a new, two-car garage tucked under the north end of the house. It is so expertly integrated into the landscape that first-time visitors don’t notice until they are almost upon it.

THE STATELY LIVING ROOM IS VIRTUALLY ORIGINAL, INCLUDING THE IMPOSING ROOKWOOD-TILED FIREPLACE WITH STYLISTICALLY DISCORDANT CORBELS. A PORTION OF THE HOME’S WINTER PORCH CAN BE SEEN THROUGH THE WINDOWS AT RIGHT.

BLOSSOMING

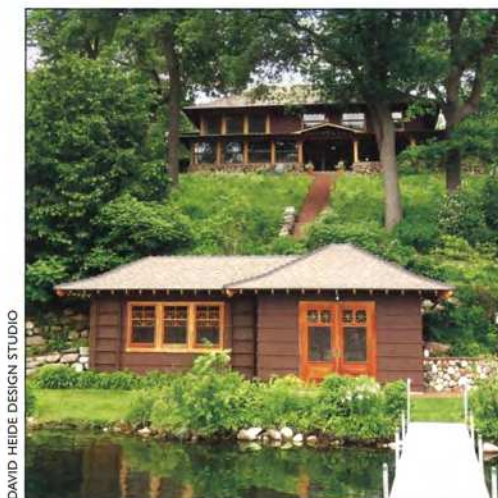
Sixteen years after Barbara purchased—and likely saved—the home, it has blossomed. Barbara is now retired, though between gardening, boating, volunteering, entertaining friends, and hosting visitors, she’s certainly not retiring. And her love for her home has only deepened.

“I wake up every day grateful to be here. Some days I just can’t believe it. I look out and I live in beauty. I’m so lucky that I get to take care of it a while.”

The house functions as she dreamt it would—guests come and go regularly, often to participate in one of her celebrated potlucks. The new kitchen easily allows up to



A FIREPLACE ENLIVENS THE MORNING ROOM WITH IRIDESCENT GLASS PIECES SET INTO THE MORTAR LINES.



POSITIONED AT THE FOOT OF THE HILL JUST STEPS FROM THE LAKESHORE, THE ORIGINAL STRUCTURE HAD FALLEN INTO DISREPAIR. THE RESTORED BOATHOUSE TAKES ARCHITECTURAL CUES FROM THE MAIN HOUSE, INCLUDING HORIZONTAL BOARD-AND-BATTEN SIDING AND DECORATIVE RAFTER TAILS AND RIDGE CAPS.

Resources

ARCHITECTURE, INTERIOR DESIGN & RESTORATION

David Heide Design Studio
612 337-5060
dhdstudio.com

CONTRACTOR

Welch Forsman Associates
612 827-4455
welchforsman.com

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Frank Fitzgerald Cuningham Group Architecture
612 379-3400
cuningham.com

STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING

Barr Engineering
952 832-2600
barr.com

STONEWORK

Jose Mesa Landscape Renovations
651 769-0010
landscaperenovations.com



THE POTTING PORCH IS A NEW ADDITION. SAYS BARBARA, "SOMETIMES WHEN I'M WORKING HERE I HAVE TO SAY TO MYSELF, 'OKAY, ROLL YOUR SHOULDERS BACK, TAKE A DEEP BREATH, FACE THE LAKE, AND JUST ENJOY!'"

20 people to prepare their contributions, and in the warm months the garden supplies vegetables, herbs, and even edible flowers.

"Goat cheese-filled nasturtium blossoms," Barbara murmurs. "So good."

As the sun moves in an arc throughout the year, she loves having options for where she and her guests gather to eat.

"In February we're in the sun on the winter porch, and in June we're on the opposite porch," she explains. "If the wind off the lake is too cool, we can retreat into the cozy dining room."

JOINED FOR LIFE



A TABLE CUSTOM-MADE IN THE KITCHEN SERVES AS A HANDY PLACE TO SET HOT SERVING DISHES. THANKS TO ITS CORK INLAID TOP, THE DESIGNS, CARVED IN RED BIRCH THAT EXHIBITS BEAUTIFUL CHATOYANCY, ARE INSPIRED BY THE WORK OF PRAIRIE SCHOOL ARCHITECT AND DESIGNER GEORGE GRANT ELMSLIE.

FROM THE LAKESHORE, THE HOUSE APPEARS AS IT DID WHEN IT WAS BUILT IN 1905. THE BRICK STEPS ARE NEW, BUT THE STONE CHEEK WALLS AND "FAT BOYS," AS BARBARA CALLS THEM, ARE ORIGINAL. SAYS BARBARA: "I WOULD GO PUT FLOWERS ON THE GRAVES OF THE ORIGINAL STONEMASONS IF I KNEW WHO THEY WERE."



RETIRING

The house has also come to function as a station for visitors recuperating from illness or an operation. "People who have stayed here say that this house has a healing quality to it," Barbara says. "They say it has helped their recovery to be able to lay on the porches in the sunshine, read a book, listen to the waves on the shore, smell the flowers. I like providing that to my friends and family." Then she laughs. "I have a lot of actor friends, and one refers to this as the 'Home for Aging Comedic and Dramatic Actors.'" But there's an element of truth in the jest. Barbara says: "I'm sure there are people who are going to move in with

me permanently as they age. I wanted to make sure there was space for me, my friends, my family. It will be a communal nursing home."

She pauses. "That sounds horrible!" she laughs. "How about: A community of aging, like-minded, fun adults?" She beams. "Much better." 