



CUSTOM CARPENTRY INC.

How a Strip of Land Became a Riverside Reprieve

WRITER | CARRIE BISTLINE PHOTOGRAPHER | W. PATRICK CHAMBERS

Chris Lozano, founder and owner of Custom Carpentry Inc., prides himself on running a full service home building business. There is simply no better word than “custom” to describe his method. Custom plans, custom architecture, custom client collaboration and, of course, custom carpentry.

“Every house is custom. Every job is tailored to the client’s needs,” says Chris. “And I’ve never built the same home twice.” In fact, he has refused on more than one occasion the request to build a duplicate home in a different location.

What does this mean for his clients? It means, from picking the plot to the ribbon cutting, Chris is a constant presence. More than merely “the builder,” he becomes the go-to, what-if, why-can’t-we, how-to man. If he can’t do it—which is rare—he finds someone who can.

Homeowners Tom and Suzy Battjes agree. “We had complete confidence in Chris,” says Tom. “Any issues were always resolved immediately, sometimes before there was even an issue.”

This confidence stems from Chris’ understanding that good results are

a product of competent labor. As he puts it, “All of our subcontractors are chosen for their quality and dependability... not for their price.”

The guarantee of a literal one-of-a-kind home under the umbrella of assured quality made choosing Custom Carpentry Inc. a no-brainer for Tom and Suzy. When the parents of three post-college children were ready to build their dream home on the Kalamazoo River in Saugatuck, Michigan, Chris Lozano was the first person they called.

To begin, Chris directed Tom and Suzy to his long-time colleague, architect and friend, John Hurst. Suzy—having more than a little artistic proficiency—worked closely with John in creating the plans. The result?

A 3,200-square-foot, 3-bedroom, 3-and-a-half-bath riverfront home built for the dual purpose of enjoying the outdoors and entertaining company in an ideal location, while still providing the owners with a reprieve, a personalized living space in which to recharge.

With an emphasis on “bringing the outdoors inside,” as Chris says, the living room boasts an enclosed wood-burning, stone masonry



fireplace. This provides the comfort of warmth and grandeur, while the 20-foot ceiling and walls painted in the mid-toned Bleeker Beige by Benjamin Moore (BM) exude that aura of boundless space typically only found out-of-doors.

On this floor is the kitchen, an equally rustic masterpiece designed by Jane Hynes of Jane Hynes Cabinetry and Design. Adorned with cabinetry of eucalyptus, a glass tile backsplash of varying hues of sea green and ivory and a quartz-countertop island complete with walnut butcher blocks, this distinguished culinary quarter deserves a rustic nod.

Another nod goes to Chris and his team for the balcony on the second floor overlooking the living room. On this floor are the personal spaces designed for escaping the busyness of the river and the road flanking either side of the house. Here, the master bedroom with a cherry sleigh bed from Van Hill Furniture, walls of Bleeker Beige (BM) and a broad river-view window all provide the same unencumbered feeling of the main floor.

Also on the second floor are a guest bedroom and the “his and hers” rooms, so to speak—though the couple quite congenially interchange and share their spaces. Suzy’s room is a naturally lit art studio. Complete with a utility sink, walls of Hawthorne Yellow Aura (BM) and a desk facing the river through a four-paned casement window, this room is the ultimate nook, a perfect getaway for the artist.

Tom, who is a black belt in karate, has his fully functional exercise and recreation room. This room was specifically designed with a reinforced floor for Tom’s practice, as well as a wide variety of fitness equipment used by both, Tom and Suzy.

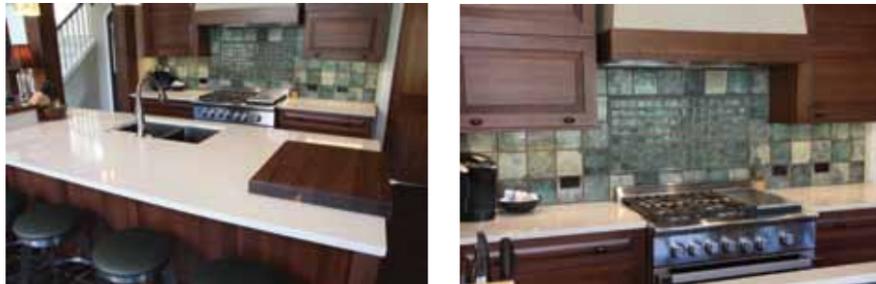
Just as important as having their indoor reprieve, however, is having the balance of an outdoor space in which to enjoy nature and take in all the excitement of the Kalamazoo River traffic. The outdoor patio with a stone barrier and a stone wood-burning fireplace was designed for this purpose.

Also gracing this picturesque riverside haven are two ornamental deer made of wooden branches. These anomalies are by Richard Morse, an artist Tom and Suzy enlisted after meeting at the 2013 ArtPrize in Grand Rapids. The deer are a small piece of the mosaic that has become this home. The decorations, furnishings, and general bells and whistles hail from all across the nation.

The front door of knotty Alderwood, for example, was custom-made and shipped from a company in Utah. The dining room light, the glass pendant lights above the kitchen island and the sconces in the stairway are all hand-



Kitchen
Lighting of handmade blown glass from an artist in San Diego.



blown glass made by and shipped from Diane Lowery of Lowery’s Hot Glass in San Diego.

Bringing the lake into an already boundless space in the living room is the sailboat watercolor painting above the fireplace mantle. This was created by Suzy’s close friend and fellow artist, Pat Cammilo.

“Pat was indispensable in this whole process,” says Tom. “We were constantly bouncing ideas off her.” In addition to the fireplace painting and invaluable expertise, Pat also designed and made the upholstery covers for the dining room chairs.

The Most Indispensable Award in the creation of this waterside workmanship, however, still goes to Chris Lozano and Custom Carpentry, Inc. Tom and Suzy’s hours of research and the months of collaboration with Chris all culminated into one moment, that moment of knowing the end product is even better than they had hoped.

“If we were to build tomorrow, there would be no question. Chris would be our guy,” says Tom.

Suzy’s sentiments are much the same. In fact, at the completion of the home, she looked at Tom and Chris and said, “Ok, let’s do it again!” Tom isn’t sure he’d go that far, but Chris is game—just as long as it isn’t the same home. □

Art Studio

Complete with drawing desk, utility sink and vibrant natural lighting.

Workout Room

Fully functional fitness area with reinforced flooring and surround sound system.

Den & Foyer

Earth tones and natural stone hearth bring the outdoors inside.





Master Bedroom
A full view of the river, neutral tones and original artwork add to the customized rustic-but-modern living spaces.



“Living on the river is a busy place. So busy you need a getaway space.”
- Tom Battjes

Master Bathroom

White-framed windows flanking the mirror and a frameless glass shower create a spacious, clean and modern effect.



Back Exterior

Natural, uncultured stone joins Cedar Shake siding in presenting a rustic yet contemporary riverfront facade.



Back of Home

The boatdock, fireplace and patio with plentiful seating give backyard entertainment a new meaning.



Back Patio

Affectionately names “Jack’s Shack”, for the family Golden Retriever’s favorite hangout.



Outdoor Fireplace

Wood-burning, stone tabor fireplace built into the real stone patio barrier.



Custom Carpentry Inc.

PRINCIPAL OWNERS: Chris Lozano

YEARS IN BUSINESS: 13

ESTABLISHED IN: 2001

BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY:

We are a small company with all the resources of larger firms. Personal service is what we guarantee.

WHAT SETS YOUR BUSINESS APART?

We are a small firm with all the resources of a larger company. We get the job done while giving all the personal service the client needs.

HOBBIES, VOLUNTEERISM, ETC.:

Chris and his wife have been married for 27 years and have two sons. He enjoys most outdoor activities, like boating, fishing, clay target shooting and hunting. Chris also works for Saugatuck Township as an adviser to the Board of review.

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