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New media room is cozy retreat for the whole family.

Living the Luxuria Life

WRITTEN BY **PAM SCHUR**

Spend a few minutes with interior designer/builder Jeannine Scheck and you'll be ready to turn your home over to her. Scheck, president of Luxuria Homes, exudes the same comfort and understated elegance she applies to her design techniques. This is evident in one of Scheck's current remodeling projects which feature innovative art niches, unique textured hand painted walls, creative functional spaces, and inviting overstuffed furnishings. In other words, it's the signature of the Luxuria Homes lifestyle. Luxuria Homes, Inc., based in Vernon Hills, caters to homebuyers who have the luxury to purchase their dream home and customize it to fit their needs. Luxuria offers the complete package to its clients – design and build services which include a vast array of skilled artisans who have been acquired over the years.

One of the company's Luxuria works with is Northbrook-based PowerHouse Advisors. The company is headed by Founder and President Wendy Cohen, formerly

of Lincolnshire-based Orren Pickell Designers and Builders. As former vice president of sales and marketing for Pickell for 16 years, Cohen helped put the company on the map. Three years ago, she went independent and launched PowerHouse Real Estate Advisors and Consultants, LLC, offering business consulting and marketing services for practitioners in the luxury home design and building industry.

PowerHouse has two divisions: one serving consumers (homeowners and homebuyers) and the other serving business owners in the luxury design build market. The divisions are PowerHouse Home Building & Remodeling Consultants and PowerHouse Advisors. Luxuria Homes is one of PowerHouse Advisors' clients. "We provide Luxuria Homes branding and marketing communications consulting," explained Cohen. "PowerHouse Home Building & Remodeling Consultants are proud to include Jeannine Scheck and her talented team in their PowerHouse Platinum Portfolio."



PowerHouse matches homeowner clients with professionals from their Platinum Portfolio helping turn client's visions into smart decisions.

The Gayle Court Project

For the past five years, Scheck has been an integral part in the redesign and customization of Ami and David Handler's home in the luxury home Stonegate subdivision in Northbrook. The Handler home is a prototype for remodeling projects of the future. As homeowners are confronted with less mobility in the housing market, they also come to realize that their homes have appreciated substantially in the past 6 to 8 years. Even with the dramatic adjustments in the past 12 months, many houses are not balanced in value to the land beneath them. Couple this with a desire to improve many changes in today's living lifestyle, and many homeowners are beginning to take a fresh look at the possibilities a home and property have to offer.

The Handlers and their family lived in their home for four years prior to the transformation. "As our family grew, our needs changed," said Ami Handler. As a busy mother of three daughters (ages 9, 12 and 15), Handler claims she always knew what she wanted in her home but needed someone like Scheck to make it happen.

Scheck, a graduate of the International Academy of Design Technology in Chicago, has been working with the Handlers for the past five years. The remodel took place in three phases. "When I first meet with clients, we walk through the house, discuss what works and what doesn't," explained Scheck. "We can do one room at a time or several but at the same time we discuss together what is the most efficient and cost-effective way to proceed once I have developed a master plan. This way the client isn't incurring additional costs and we try not to affect an area that we will be remodeling later. Even though that can't always be avoided, the goal is to develop a master plan that allows each space to work seamlessly within the home. For the Handler project, Scheck worked with her long-time cabinetry partner Kurt Sauser, Designer Kitchen & Baths to develop/implement the master plan. "The master plan may entail moving walls, redefining room functions and adding space," said Sauser. "We work hand in hand with the designer/builder and homeowner to find the most efficient and cost effective ways to create these new living areas."



Arched openings, display niches and open floor plan designed for entertaining

With this plan in mind, Scheck says, "Every area of the home is designed based on how a family functions. Our goal is to come up with a plan that makes life and living in the house easier."

Prior to construction, Scheck creates floor plans that include cabinetry, furniture, carpets, and designs for window treatments and custom faux finishes for walls.

Phase One

The initial phase of the Handler home consisted of remodeling the first floor. First, the entry to the dining room was enlarged and an arched case was added to give that opening a more important presence. An alcove in the foyer was created to replace the entry into the living room. The living room was turned into a media room complete with a wall unit designed by Scheck. The high ceilings and two story flowing window treatments, along with the overstuffed cozy furniture add to the elegance of the room.

In addition to the media room, Scheck's plan included new furnishings and custom design wall finishes in the dining room and music room. Hardwood flooring, from Mr. Floor Companies, Skokie, IL, was installed to match the existing floors and all first floor wood floors were refinished to match the new rich color.

As a standard member of the Luxuria Homes construction team, Mr. Floor was brought in as the wood flooring expert. The



Throughout furniture & fabric transform house into home.

company was charged with the task of providing new wood flooring in the family room to match the existing wood floor in the rest of the home. In order to accomplish this, the existing wood had to be properly identified. The existing wood floors were identified as being a select and better grade of Red Oak with a 2-1/4" width and a 3/4" thickness. The company delivered the corresponding wood from its fully acclimated warehousing facility where all wood is stored in a temperature and humidity controlled environment. After installation the wood flooring was put through a proprietary sanding and buffing

process in preparation for staining and multi-coat finishing procedures. The color of the existing wood floor had to be matched on site by mixing wood stains and pigments together until an exact color match was accomplished. "Our personnel are very proficient at matching new wood floors to existing ones," said Igor Murokh, sales manager, Mr. Floor. "Upon completion and a thorough walk-through by our staff, the new wood floors were turned over to the homeowners who were absolutely delighted with the final product. The new floors look outstanding and match perfectly to the rest of the home," he added.

In addition, handmade, custom silk and woven rugs from Rugport in Palatine, IL, were placed throughout the first floor.

Rugport, established in 1979, has been working with Scheck since 2001 to provide her clients with exclusive, high quality masterpieces. Clients can take a rug home and live with it prior to making a purchase. "No sale is final, unless the customer is happy," says the company's owner. They also provide in-home consultations, and arrange for pick-up and delivery.

Phase one also included redesigning the stair case and changing the rail from wood to wrought iron. "To cap off this phase, we added crystal chandeliers in the dining room and in the foyer," Scheck added.

Phase Two

Continuing in the timeless elegance style of the home, Scheck and Sauser created a beautiful, functional and luxurious master suite which began by building out above the garage. The old master bath and closets became the master sitting area complete with a flat screen TV and a beverage center.

In the Handler's home, the existing master bedroom had a niche created for a built-in furniture armoire coordinating with the new sitting room cabinetry. In addition, the master bedroom has 'his and hers' Bombay chests, on both sides of the bed. "I like to mix things up," said Scheck. "Amy's Bombay chest is more feminine and David's more masculine. The combination of the two, along with the side table, window treatments and different accessories, add personality and character to the bedroom."

A quaint toilet room was built off the sitting room, and the master bath is right next door. "By keeping the toilet where it



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Master Bedroom - A retreat to inspire and transform.

was, we were able to eliminate the cost of redoing the plumbing," said Scheck. "We do like to keep costs down where we can." With that said, no stone was left unturned in the master bathroom which is complete with heated floors, an oversized shower with a rain dome, body and hand held sprays, and a ball and claw footed tub. The bath also features "his and her" furniture style vanities and Ami's ensemble incorporates a fully appointed makeup center with a French influenced settee. "We also incorporated an



Master closet with window allows for natural light.



Rugport carries area's largest selection of Nomadic rugs

angled cabinet with wire and glass to display perfume bottles and atomizers," added Sauser.

Sauser was also responsible for designing a master closet. "We created boutique-like dressing rooms with custom function and coordinating furniture finishes," he explained. "The dressing room features a

custom wardrobe and a grand island complete with marble countertop and chandelier."

Also incorporated into the master suite design is a spacious second floor laundry room. "The second floor laundry room is the perfect example of our desire to make a house livable for today's lifestyle," noted Scheck.



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Throughout the upstairs, new carpeting, faux finishes and accessories were added, in addition to a recessed desk area in one of the girls' bedrooms. The second floor remodel also included the addition of a second floor laundry room.

Moving outside Scheck and the Handlers were confronted with the challenge of creating their vision of outdoor living and entertaining in a confined space. Scheck called upon Steve Macklin, president, Sam Mormino Landscapers to develop and execute a design that addressed all of their desires. Sam Mormino Landscape Corporation, a full service design and construction landscape business, has been serving Chicago and the North Shore for more than 50 fifty years.

The company specializes in the design and installation of various hardscape features using natural stone or brick pavers; these projects include the installation of outdoor kitchens, outdoor fireplaces and fire pits, water features, rock gardens, seat walls, decorative columns, planters, and specialty patio and deck surfaces. In addition to Macklin's unique hardscape construction, the company also designs and coordinates



Sam Mormino Landscape Corporation specializes in the design and installation of various hardscape features using natural stone or brick pavers; these projects include the installation of outdoor kitchens, outdoor fireplaces and fire pits, water features, rock gardens, seat walls, decorative columns, planters, and specialty patio and deck surfaces.

the installation of swimming pools, underground sprinkler systems, landscape lighting and custom softscape projects.

The involvement of Sam Mormino Landscape Corporation begins early in the design process, laying out hardscapes and engineering landings and stoops for creative terracing and grade elevations. As each project progresses, Macklin works closely

with clients to develop a comprehensive plan that will best accomplish their goals and build upon their original vision.

The company has been involved with Luxuria Homes for several years. Macklin works closely with Scheck and her clients to enhance and beautify her projects. The Handler's were two such clients who requested the expertise of Sam Mormino

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Patti Nordyke, Eileen Malcolm, Laura Harris and Wendy Cohen

Landscape Corporation to enhance the appearance of their home's exterior. Macklin and his experienced crew were able to maximize the living space in their yard and provide them with a beautiful landscape environment to enjoy for years to come. In fact, they created what Handler called "the unthinkable" by adding a pool in the backyard.

"Our backyard is not that big," said Handler. "The fact that Jeannine and Steve turned our backyard into this beautiful pool/bar/party area is a testament to their talent," she added. The pool, from Platinum Poolcare Aquatech Ltd., is a 15'x30' rectangle sport pool great for lap swimming or just splashing around in. It also has a 3' high by 10' long water feature that delivers a dramatic arching waterfall into the pool. Swimmers can sit under the water feature on a 10' underwater bench. The pool also has two underwater color-changing lights that produce a rotating scheme of different colors. Surrounded with a band of Indiana limestone coping at the deck level, the pool also has a row of 6" Gothic blue waterline tile with a Super Blue DiamondBrite interior surface for the floor and walls that delivers a Caribbean blue water color. For safety, ener-

gy and chemical conservation the pool also has an undertrack automatic pool safety cover that rolls on and off with the simple turn of a key switch. "Given the fact that we were very limited in the amount of yard space we had to build the pool," says Mike Higgins, Platinum Poolcare Aquatech, Ltd., "it was important to discuss with the Handler's how they wanted to use the pool and make sure that it blended in with all of the other elements of the outdoor backyard living space."

In addition to the pool, the backyard now features magnificent landscaping, patio/bar area, sound system and lighting, new fence, and retaining wall and a Dacor built-in outdoor grill and access glass doors.

Dacor is known for its innovative and colorful appliances and, in addition to providing outdoor appliances, the company is changing the perception of the kitchen by importing color into the family's favorite room. Neutral hues like anthracite or a slate green with a gray undertone can transform the kitchen from practical and utilitarian to exciting and alluring.

"Homeowners can complement the design choices they've made in the rest of



Platinum Poolcare Aquatech Ltd. creates custom indoor and outdoor pools designed to meet client needs and work with the surrounding home and landscape. Shown here the "shell" pool.

the home by installing an appliance from the Dacor Preference Collection with glass front panels in one of six stunning hues: Anthracite Gray, Sterling Gray, Titanium Silver, Blue Water, Slate Green or Black,"



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said Steve Joseph, vice president, marketing, Dacor. "Visually breathtaking while providing premium performance, each appliance in the collection offers the same level of innovative technological features and high-quality craftsmanship that is Dacor's signature.

"Whether it's a smart wall oven, intuitive dishwasher or a refrigerator that predicts defrost patterns, we offer a complete line of kitchen appliances designed to satisfy any homebuyer/owner," added Joseph.

Dacor's state of the art line of appliances include the Preference Discovery™ Wall Oven featuring Dacor's patented RapidHeat™ Bake Element for faster pre-heating, even temperature control and easy clean-up. The company's Preference 36" French Door Refrigerator provides accurate temperature readouts ensuring the freshest food and energy efficiency. It is equipped with sensors that alert when the internal temperature increases, the water filter needs to be changed or if the door is left ajar for several minutes. The Adaptive/Pre-Emptive Defrost memorizes how frequently the door opens and closes and recommends defrost cycles based on usage patterns.

Joseph says with the Dacor Preference Collection even dirty dishes can look good. "In addition to a stunning exterior appearance, the Preference 24" Dishwashers features intuitive controls and precise engineering capabilities to provide industry-leading cleanability," he said. "Boasting an AHAM rating of 95.6, which ensures dishes are cleaned thoroughly the first time and every time, each unit is fully insulated for virtually whisper-quiet operation, so there is no longer a need to leave the kitchen to have a conversation when the dishwasher begins."

Dacor has also introduced a new line of microwaves, the Preference Microwave, which includes all of the features and conveniences that have made the microwave the go-to appliance. These features include preset buttons for popcorn, defrosting and reheating. Stylish trim kits allow for a sleek, stacked installation with other appliances in the collection.

In addition, the company is excited about its colorful accessories. With elegant lines, gentle curves and sophisticated touchpad controls, the Preference 36" and 30" Wall-Mounted Chimney Ventilation System is designed to quietly and efficiently improve the indoor air quality of the



The Preference® Collection of color-infused glass appliances from Dacor is available in six custom colors: Blue Water, Slate Green, Anthracite Gray, Titanium Silver, Sterling Gray (shown above) and Black.

kitchen by removing steam, grease and cooking odors. Also, the Preference 30" Warming Drawers ensure that special occasions as well as everyday meals meet every expectation by preserving taste and keeping food warm at the perfect temperature until the meal is ready to serve. The warming drawers feature a new hidden electronic touchpad that provides precise control of a gentle heat ranging from 100° to 200°, for up to four hours, or as long as needed when operating in Sabbath Mode.

While Dacor was not the provider for the indoor appliances in the Handler home, the company is well known in the custom home industry for its quality, service and innovative style.

Off the family room is a cozy outdoor area with a sofa and what now has become a signature of the Handler home, a flat screen TV. Above the outdoor sitting area is a retractable awning. "I love the way the backyard turned out and the pool is the perfect size. The girls can have their friends over and play and I don't have to worry about them," added Handler. Lastly, the first floor mudroom and laundry were reconfigured to accommodate space for a pool bath.

Phase Three

The final part of the remodel consisted of the kitchen, family room and first floor powder room. In the kitchen, Scheck and Sauser worked with the existing floor plan

and carefully reconfigured function and focal points to include a dramatic cooking center complete with custom carved stone and hood backsplash. "The overall wall layout was fine, but the functional layout needed help," Sauser explained. "By moving the refrigerator and cook top slightly, we were able to create a dramatic cooking hearth area instead of a standard micro hood. We changed the island and message center into furniture pieces with all the custom storage functions Ami Handler requested including pull out dish storage and file drawers. The antique Irish cream glazed finish gave the room its now timeless old world character. With drastically reduced remodeling costs, it really represents a great value," he added.

Corbels and other furniture details enhanced the kitchen design. Scheck reused the cabinetry hardware which she had installed two years earlier to give the old cabinets a small facelift until they were ready for Phase Three.

"I hold myself and all my trades and vendors to the highest standards, and Kurt Sauser has always exceeded my expectations regarding design expertise, professionalism, and quality of work," said Scheck. "We have been working together for nearly 20 years and although we can anticipate each other's thoughts, we still challenge each other with every project. The results are uniquely tailored and designed for each client."

Steve Weiner of family-owned ABT Electronics, Glenview, IL, along with Scheck and Sauser, assisted the Handlers with their appliance selections. Abt, established in 1936, has been providing the customers in the Chicagoland area with the finest appliances and audio/video equipment for more than 70 years. The company offers everything from college dorm refrigerators to hand built French ranges.

The team examined features of each product and explained their specific performance capabilities. Scheck coordinated the delivery to maintain a tight schedule. "I've been working with Jeannine for more than 15 years and have enjoyed working with her on over one hundred projects," said Weiner. Weiner and Scheck meet with clients in the store to determine appliance selection, and Weiner works closely with the Luxuria Homes staff to ensure a smooth transaction for our customers.

The Handler's new Wolf double oven is one of the finest products in its category, according to Weiner. The oven features convection baking/roasting, self-cleaning, temperature probes for accurate roasting, and

timeless looks. The SubZero 48" refrigerator/freezer, from the newly revamped built-in refrigeration product line, offers 29 cubic feet of food storage, an air filtration system, an icemaker featuring a water filter, and it accepts cabinet panel fronts to conceal the appliance. The team chose a Thermador commercial style range top which features 6 high-output burners for intense searing and sautéing. A new dishwasher was also a part of the remodel. "The Miele dishwasher is fully integrated – you can't tell it's a dishwasher until the door is opened," said Weiner. "It's whisper quiet, offers the largest capacity, and does an excellent job of washing dishes."

Miele of Princeton, N.J., is a world-renowned family-owned and operated company. With more than 110 years of experience in designing and manufacturing innovative home appliances, Miele is committed to protecting the environment. "To Miele, preserving the quality of the environment is as important as improving the quality of its products," said Tanya Kuhn, account executive, Miele.



Abt, established in 1936, has been providing the customers in the Chicago land area with the finest appliances and audio/video equipment for more than 70 years.



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10 things should know about... Luxuria Homes' Jeannine Scheck

INTERVIEW BY PAM SCHUR

North Shore Magazine recently spoke with Luxuria Homes' President Jeannine Scheck to find out what inspires her talent for design.

Jeannine Scheck: I have always found design and architecture to be incredibly interesting. I was drawn to it because I saw my father the sign painter draw and skillfully move a brush and manipulate patterns and designs in paint. I was in awe. We could speak about the power of color and movement. I think I found architecture because I dreamt about beautiful places that as a child I thought I would never experience. I grew up in the projects in Milwaukee and used to dream about living someplace beautiful. My uncle also inspired me later in my career as he was a well published architect in Milwaukee.

North Shore: What's your favorite type of project?

Jeannine Scheck: I love problem solving – creating spaces for clients that fulfill specific needs of the client. Regardless if it's remodeling or new construction, every detail is driven and designed with the clients' needs being most important. Making it beautiful is the easy part.

North Shore: Why do you think your clients choose to work with you?

Jeannine Scheck: All of my clients have been referred by clients and friends. I think that clients choose Luxuria Homes because we listen to their needs. In fact, we oftentimes teach them what would simplify and organize their lives to allow them to exist and enjoy time with their family and friends. It's our level of expertise from design and construction to the quality execution of every detail. We also provide interior design services. So when we're originally designing the spaces, we are also designing landscaping, materials, color, furniture, lighting, wall finishes, fabrics and window treatments. What becomes clear to them is all elements relate to each other. In other words, whether it's a room or an entire home, touching every detail results in a more cohesive product.

North Shore: What's your client service philosophy?

Jeannine Scheck: It's all about the client...and all about the work. My goal has always been to make sure my clients have a wonderful experience. Most people are uncomfortable and are terrified of making a mistake. We take the fear out of the process. We educate them and step them through the process so they are comfortable with every choice. We take great pride in the quality of service and the expertise of all of our trades. They are a pleasure so the clients also find comfort when meeting trades and working with trades. Our trades are experts in their fields and they care and take pride in their work. The journey is as cherished as the destination.

North Shore: What is your design philosophy?

Jeannine Scheck: I enjoy a challenge and an opportunity to be creative. My philosophy is to create an artful environment that works and functions specifically for each client. Our homes are about architecture, custom technology and design details. Our goal is to create a home that's a reflection of the needs of today's family and create space that energizes and restores balance and harmony.

North Shore: What's the best thing about your job?

Jeannine Scheck: I have very intimate relationships with my clients that I truly treasure. I think it's amazing that I get to create spaces that affect their lives and the way they live, and affect their spirit every day. When I complete or have finished a project, I feel as though I leave a piece of myself there. I take my work very personally and bear my heart and soul.

North Shore: What's the most challenging aspect of your job?

Jeannine Scheck: Perfection! There is always something unexpected or something that perhaps was not planned that presents a challenge. It is how you handle or resolve these challenges that make a difference.

North Shore: What advice would you give newcomers to the industry?

Jeannine Scheck: It's imperative that you are clear and that you understand the needs of your clients so listen, then design and guide them. It's important that you manage your clients' expectations. It's all about the client and their needs. Be sure to always design "in" those needs and the execution of every detail. Never promise anything you can't deliver and be honest. If you don't know something or have a question, then research the answer.

North Shore: If you weren't in this field, what would you be doing?

Jeannine Scheck: I can't imagine doing anything else. I do love dancing and music. I care deeply about the underprivileged, and battered women and help whenever possible. I would spend more time on philanthropic causes.

North Shore: What words best describe you?

Jeannine Scheck: Honest; have integrity; meticulous, passionate; determined and driven.



Miele's Independence™ Series refrigerator is the greenest - Miele 30" bottom mount refrigerator is rated #1 for energy savings by Energy Star®

All Miele appliances are designed to be energy-efficient – meeting or exceeding ENERGY STAR® requirements. Miele has never packed all its green credentials into a single flagship model – the entire range of products is designed for energy efficiency. According to Kuhn, the company has been committed long before the current 'green' movement. Every laundry system, dishwasher and all of the refrigeration products are compliant. The new Independence™ Series 30" bottom mount refrigerator uses the lowest amount of energy according to ENERGY STAR® data. Also, there is little risk of products becoming technically outdated on account of their extended life expectancy.

"Miele's research and development teams are constantly striving to improve the performance of our appliances and the manner in which they are manufactured," explained Kuhn. "In doing so, we ensure that raw materials, energy, water and other natural resources are used efficiently and sparingly." Caring for the environment reflects the Miele family's deep-felt vision of *Forever Better*. Forever means doing everything they can today to protect and preserve the planet's finite resources for tomorrow.

Near the dishwasher, the team designed drawers complete with dish dividers; they house plates and bowls to



DK&B custom kitchen featuring sculpted drawer fronts, graceful curves, boldly carved elements. Highlights include the refrigeration armoire and cooking hearth.

make unloading the dishwasher easier. "This was another example of functional design," Sheck added. Off the kitchen is a cheerful breakfast nook with a sofa, table and flat screen TV.

Walking through this dream house, enveloped by vaulted high ceilings with beams, surrounded by exquisite window treatments, crystal chandeliers, unique custom handpainted wall designs, overstuffed

traditional furnishings, an endless array of unique accessories, one element remains constant – it's a house that says *home*. It's traditional, yet cozy. It's elegant yet warm. It's a Luxuria Home. It's timeless. ✨

ARCHITECTURAL INTERSECTIONS



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