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Project Spotlight: A Custom Built Home



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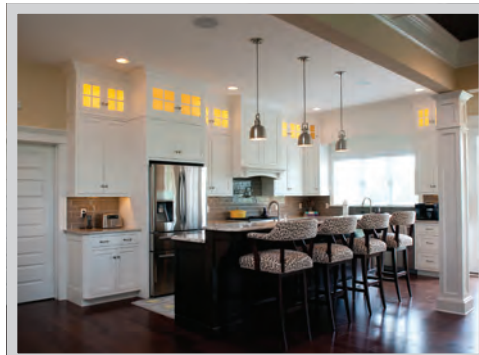
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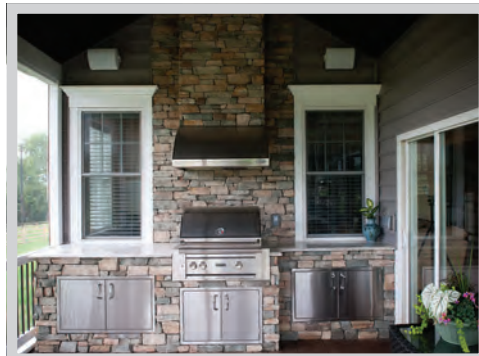
When we first met Dave and Melissa, they'd done their homework, including spending many hours touring houses in the Parade of Homes. Along with getting the feel for space and design in walking through these homes, they also spent time researching design trends and ideas on Houzz.com. Their next step was finding a builder who they felt could provide the quality they were looking for along with incorporating their design ideas into the build.

After a few meetings, Dave and Melissa decided to work with us at Metzler Home Builders, and we were thrilled to team up with them and bring their visions to reality. The home would be situated on several acres surrounded by farmland in a beautiful country setting.



The craftsman touches on the exterior of the home include tapered porch columns and gable louvers as well as a stunning combination of beaded siding and natural stone veneer. The expansive flagstone front porch with a stained wood ceiling creates a welcoming entrance to the home.

Once inside, the unique details continue. A foyer with a formed stone wall is a welcoming focal point as you enter the home. The formal dining room with tray ceiling and great room with coffered ceiling, gas fireplace and built-in storage shows off some of the many custom moldings and built-ins throughout the home.



The custom kitchen, three-story open staircase, master suite and screened porch with outdoor kitchen are all breathtaking features of this one-of-a-kind home.

We hope you'll enjoy these pictures and get inspired for your own project.



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WHAT IS YOUR SQUARE FOOT PRICE?

As a new home builder, we get the “What is your square foot price?” question quite often. If you have ever heard the term “loaded question,” this certainly applies for us as home builders.

But in our case, as a true custom home builder, we believe this is probably an even more difficult question for us to answer than for a large production builder because they typically only build pre-determined floor plans and offer a limited number of options with set prices.

At Metzler Home Builders, we like to say that we build homes of all shapes, sizes and for all budgets, and because of this philosophy, it is basically impossible for us to have a one-word (or number) answer to the square foot price question. Our answer is going to be much more complex because of all the variables that go into the cost of building your customized home.

In this article, we will attempt to break it down in simple terms and highlight some of the major factors in determining the cost of your new home.

“UP vs. OUT”

In terms of cost of building, one of the first things we discuss with clients is that it's cheaper to build “up” than “out.” In the most basic terms, building a two-story home is

going to be cheaper per square foot than building a one-story or ranch-style home. The biggest reason is because with a ranch home, getting the square footage you want all on one level requires a larger (or more sprawling) foundation and also more roof area.

The most cost-effective plans for new homes are often two-story designs with simple roof lines and a minimum number of offsets in the exterior walls. More corners, angles and offsets designed into your home generally equates to a higher cost per square foot. This often becomes a delicate balance, as it is also what gives a new home its “curb appeal.” However, there are many ways to dress-up a home's exterior appearance even if it is simple and efficient in design.

NOT ALL SQUARE FOOTAGE IS CREATED EQUAL!

Another factor to understand about building a custom home is that not all square footage is created equal. Basement square footage can be finished at a lesser cost than the rest of your home. The same applies to potential bonus space over a garage. It is because

essentially the “framework” or shell of that space is already created with the foundation or framing of your home, and you are only paying for the finish trades to get the usable space that you want.

Another misconception is, people sometimes assume that if they are over budget with their home plans, they can just cut out a few feet here or there. They calculate the savings by multiplying the square footage times the cost per square foot. Unfortunately, it isn't quite that simple. While decreasing your overall square footage will help, it usually doesn't equate to the savings most would like to see.

A better approach to saving money on your custom built home is by taking a hard look at your amenities, and often the kitchen and bathrooms are where you spend the most. It may actually be a smarter choice to reassess the quality of finishes rather than sacrificing square footage. You can always upgrade your kitchen countertops, flooring or bathroom fixtures in the future, but you probably won't put an addition on to make your living area or bedrooms a few feet wider after the house is built.

FINISHES INSIDE & OUT

Another reason why the “What’s your square foot price?” question is so difficult to answer is because everyone has different expectations regarding the level of finishes in their custom home. Some may be happy with hardwood flooring in the foyer of their home, and carpet and vinyl throughout the remainder; others may want hardwood throughout their home, including the bedrooms. While this is just one example, you can see how this scenario can be applied to flooring, kitchen cabinets,

countertops, vanities, plumbing and lighting fixtures, fireplaces, paint and trim finishes ... and more.

Additionally, exterior finishes can cause the price to vary just as much as the interior finishes. Vinyl siding is one of the most affordable options for the exterior of your home, but masonry products such as brick, stone and stucco, while great options, will also add to the cost.

FOR LAND’S SAKE!

Your lot can also be a big component of the overall cost of building your home, and when it comes to custom home building, it can have just as many cost variables as what you are putting inside your home. Here are a few factors that go into this cost:

- Is the lot served by public water and sewer, or will it require a well to be drilled for water supply and a drain field for your septic system?
- Will the house be situated close to the road, or will it be set back a few hundred feet resulting in a longer driveway with more excavation and paving costs?
- Will your home be located in the woods, requiring tree clearing and topsoil to be imported so you can establish a nice yard?
- Does your lot have an approved stormwater management plan? The regulations have recently changed, and depending on the plan that has been or needs to be designed, this can add considerable cost to your project.



All of these “land-related” items can swing the square foot cost considerably, and make it especially difficult to estimate the cost of a home prior to knowing the location of where it will be built.

OUR APPROACH

In recent years, we have built basic spec homes ranging from \$90/SF to large custom homes that were \$250/SF, so you can see why the question “What is your square foot price?” is a difficult one for us to answer – we don’t want to mislead you.

We work hard to give our clients the best idea of costs we can based on the design of the home, their expectations for finishes in the home and the land where the home will be built. We use all of these factors to approximate cost per square foot; however, our best option is always to get firm pricing from our subcontractors and suppliers and deliver a contract price that spells out exactly what is included. This is part of our fair and honest approach to designing, pricing and building your custom home.





Looking for Home Tips?

If you are looking for tips, let us be your go-to resource.

Every month we publish a Home Maintenance Checklist containing things you can do around your home to keep it looking nice and in good structural health. Additionally, we've also recently published tips on topics like how to keep your home secure and how to save water, and later this month, we'll publish our annual Halloween Safety Tips for having fun and keeping safe.

You can check out these and other articles on our blog (MetzlerHomeBuilders.com/blog) or follow us on Facebook.

