



DOUBLE VISION: Opposite, the sun sets on the Yellow Bank Landing home of Jeff and Jennifer Danhauer. Next door, far right, sits Jeff's parents' home in its compatible coastal style. Views of the river can be enjoyed from every level, but they are near panoramic from the third floor balconies of both homes, below.

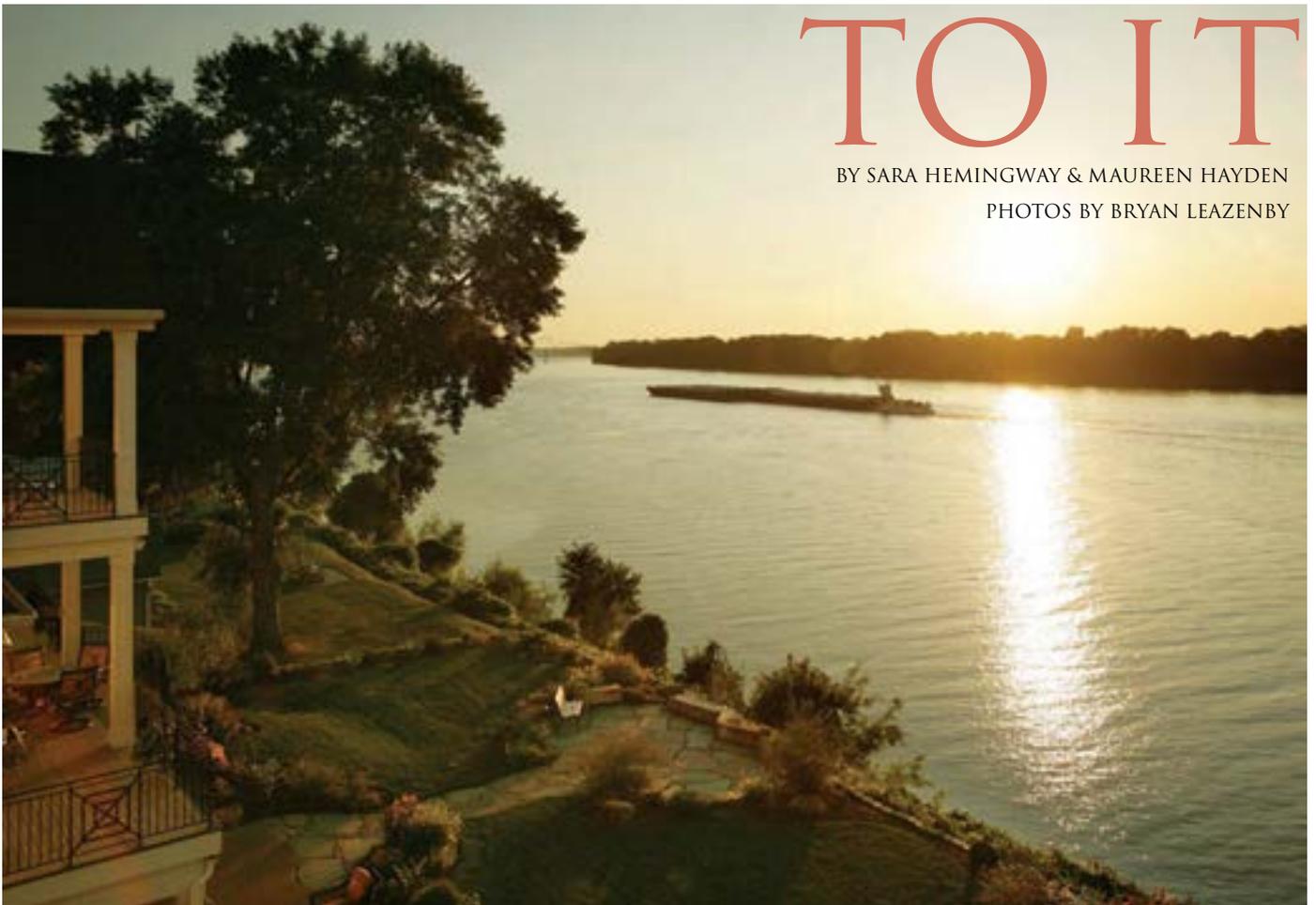


A family history of connections to the Ohio River inspired Owensboro, Ky., residents Jeff and Jennifer Danhauer to build their dream home so that

A RIVER RUNS TO IT

BY SARA HEMINGWAY & MAUREEN HAYDEN

PHOTOS BY BRYAN LEAZENBY





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ASK JEFF DANHAUER HOW DEEP HIS LOVE FOR RIVER LIFE RUNS,

and he'll tell you a story about the Great Depression and the Danhauer brothers who scraped together their nickels and dimes to buy a mail-order rowboat. It was an extravagant purchase at the time, given that the father of the boys, pharmacist William Danhauer Sr., was, as Jeff says, "struggling to keep his little drugstore afloat."

But the sea-worthy vessel, ordered from a catalog by Jeff's dad, William Jr., would provide many adventures in the years to come as the brothers — six in all — set sail on the Ohio River. And it would lay the foundation for a seacoast-style home that Jeff would build decades later, designed to give its land-bound occupants a feeling of life on the river.

The soaring three-story home, built on the bend of the Ohio River just east of downtown Owensboro, across from the scenic Yellow Bank Island, is the culmination of years of daydreaming by Danhauer — a third-generation pharmacist still in the family business — including two years of life in an RV, parked on the property and inhabited by Jeff as he oversaw the home's construction from the ground up.

The woman he was dating at the time, who later became his wife, was a bit skeptical, Danhauer recalls. "She was a little apprehensive at first," says Danhauer of his wife, Jennifer. "But it became a team project." And, as he notes, her doubts were washed away in the fall of 2006, when they moved in to their home and discovered the joys of a near-panoramic view of the river from on high. "We come home now after a stressful day, and no matter how uptight we may be feeling, we just look out the window, and we can just feel the tension flow right out of us," Danhauer says. "It's so peaceful. It's so relaxing."



GENERATIONAL LANDSCAPE: Yellow Bank Landing is home to three generations: Jennifer and Jeff Danhauer; Jeff's parents, William and Jean Danhauer; and Jennifer's daughter Kellye Cantrell and Jeff's daughter Jenny Danhauer. The inviting landscaping extends the families' living spaces and integrates natural elements in the gardens.









REFLECTING CRAFTSMANSHIP:

The Danhauers' dining room (left) has a tray ceiling designed like a ship's hull. The interior is rich in hardwoods and filled with nautical details, including a wooden helm on a curved crosswalk (below) that resembles a ship's bridge.



THE DANHAUERS CREDIT a team of people for executing their vision of a home reminiscent of life on the water. For Jeff, it's a vision developed as a little boy, spent boating with family on area lakes, and later honed learning to sail. "Jennifer and I wanted a nautical theme but didn't want a home filled with ropes and anchors," says Danhauer. "We wanted more subtlety than that." Architect Terry Blake of RBS Design Group in Owensboro worked closely with the couple to design the home, maximize their view of the river, and infuse the home with elements of craftsmanship mastered by the mariners of old.

A cross walk on the top floor of the home has a railing that curves outward resembling the bridge of a ship. A wooden helm rests against the rail, adding to its maritime feel. A remarkable tray ceiling



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DRAMA LEVEL: The Danhauers' home is designed to capture the dramatic view of the water at each level of the home, and in doing so, it floods the house with natural light from the master bedroom and bathroom on the third floor (above) to the expansive living room (below). By installing 10-foot ceilings and 8-foot glass doors, the rooms have a soaring effect.



ing above the dining room table is designed like a ship's hull. The home is filled with doors and floors made from hardwood — mahogany, maple, and cherry — “like those found in the old paddlewheelers,” Danhauer says.

The couple told Blake that one of the most important design details was getting the angle of the home just right. “We wanted to capitalize on our wonderful view of the river at each level of the house,” Danhauer says. “From the ground floor, we have about a 60 percent view of the river. Go up one level and it's 85 percent, and on the top floor, where our master bedroom is, we have a 100 percent view of the river. All the rooms are focused on that river.”

To achieve that focus during the design phase, Danhauer asked Blake to take a ride in the hydraulic lift of a Bobcat



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— Homeowner, Jeff Danhauer

loader to photograph the view. “Jeff has a keen knowledge of architecture,” says Blake, “and had a good feel for how he wanted to experience the space.”

It was Owensboro contractor Marvin Purcell who brought the design to fruition. “I spent a lot of time on site,” says Danhauer. “Sometimes three and four hours a day working with the builder. We knew what we wanted, and he helped us capture that.”

Integral to the home’s design are the 10-foot ceilings and 8-foot glass doors and windows that allow natural light to flood the home with warmth and give the family a breathtaking view of the river year-round. “It’s like watching a forever changing mural,” Danhauer says. “Whether it’s fog rising off the river in the morning or a beautiful sunset, we see it all. Even on gloomy, cloudy days, we love it,” he says. “The river has a mystical sense to it, even on those dark days.”

Yet the most spectacular views are those from the third-floor master bedroom. Jennifer had asked for window blinds to be installed in the bedroom, but Jeff assured his wife: “No one can see in.” So, with the windows unadorned, the moonlight shines in. “There’s nothing like watching the moon set,” he says. “It’s even more dramatic than watching the moon rise.”

DANHAUER’S FATHER, William Jr., instilled in his son a love of the river and an affection for boating of all kinds, so it’s fitting his father now lives next door to him in a home designed with a similar coastal-style motif. “My dad knows boats,” says the younger Danhauer. “He was the one who encouraged us to learn how to sail, and that taught us a lot about self-reliance. He taught us that you have to adjust your sails to the wind, and how true that is at those times in life when the sailing isn’t always smooth.”

Danhauer’s father, known as Bill to friends and family, lives on the family compound, dubbed Yellow Banks Landing, with wife Jean, who initially questioned the notion of a three-story

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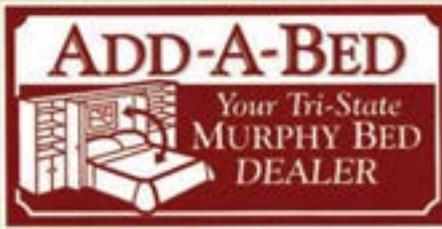
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home for the older couple. But the architect and builder came through with a design to accommodate needs Bill and Jean may have in the future, including an interior elevator and an easy-to-access expansive porch overlooking the river.

Tying the homes together is a landscape design that celebrates the riverfront setting while maximizing the family entertaining spaces that the extended Danhauer family enjoys. Jeff and Jennifer commissioned landscape artist Dallas Foster of Landscapes by Dallas Foster, Vincennes, Ind., for the job with the only requirement, Jeff says, "to keep the yard in a natural setting." That's Foster's forte. He spent time walking the property and getting to know both couples before creating a design that integrated elements from the river such as driftwood in the garden beds and stone benches. He also labored to create a sense of privacy, despite the homes' location not far from a busy state highway. Foster took note of a theme that ran through the conversations he had with the Danhauers, who often talked about the sense of escape they felt when they arrived home at the end of the day. "I live two miles from work, and in five minutes, I can lock my office door and be on my boat," Jeff told Foster. Inspired, Foster created a landscape filled with clever details such as a driveway of cobblestone that serves as a transition, physically and psychologically, from the city to what Jeff calls, "our own private resort."

Foster also took care to create several outdoor living spaces, including one centered around a stone fire pit that serves as a favorite gathering spot for the extended family, including Jeff's children, Sarah, Jenny, Bill, and Jennifer's daughter, Kelly. To complement it all, the Danhauers asked outdoor lighting specialist Chris Mitchell of NiteLiters in Owensboro to design a subtle exterior lighting plan that would both guide visitors to the home's entry but not interfere with their vision of the river at night. "He added just the right amount of accent lighting," Jeff says. "He's done it in a way that entices you to the river side of the house, and helped us extend the day well into the night."

It all serves to satisfy one master principal — Jeff Danhauer's desire to let the river wash away the worries of the world. "When I was a boy I used to ride my bike to the old lock and dam and dream of a place on the river," he says. "Now I'm here, and I just love this place." ●



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