

# Timeless elegance, lasting appeal

Reputation for trustworthiness and reliability put Emerald Park Homes at the top of homeowners' list

By Trilby Henderson



Photography by: Digney Photographics Ltd.

Whether they're planning for a growing family or settling in to enjoy retirement, building a new home gives homeowners the perfect opportunity to design a living environment that meets all of their current and future needs. When Emerald Park Homes is the builder, clients can also rest assured that their new home will feature timeless elegance and lasting appeal to keep their investment secure.

It's been more than nine years since Lorraine and Hartley Markusson hired Emerald Park Homes to construct their new house, but they say they love their home as much today as the day

they moved in. Whether relaxing together, hosting their five grandchildren for the afternoon, or entertaining a large group of guests, Lorraine says their home functions perfectly for all situations. "It's a very easy home to live in," she says.

The Markussons started the process of building their first brand-new home in 2000. As empty nesters, Lorraine says they wanted to design a house that would fit their lifestyle, with space for their future grandchildren to visit and an open-floor concept for entertaining. "I really liked [the open floor design] because you're not stuck in the kitchen.

Everyone can see each other as they sit and visit, so it's nice," she says.

The couple researched several home-builders before choosing to work with Emerald Park Homes. "We were pretty fussy in selecting our builder," says Lorraine. "Reputation was important and we heard good things about Emerald Park Homes."

## Trustworthy, reliable, open

Themselves operators of a family-run business, they were drawn to locally owned Emerald Park Homes because owners Garry and Lorena Sawchyn



appeared to share the same core business values: trustworthiness, reliability and open communication, Lorraine says. Gary's hands-on involvement in the construction of their new house was also a comfort to the couple because it meant he would personally oversee each detail.

"It's important that you know, and really tell your homebuilder, what you want," says Lorraine. The Markussons had spent plenty of time perusing home-design books and visiting show homes prior to starting on their own build, and Lorraine says they had many ideas of what they wanted in mind before meeting the architect, including the open floor plan, garden-door access to the backyard and pillars throughout.

Prospective homeowners should bring magazine clippings and other visual examples of what they want when

meeting with the draftsman, says Garry. This is especially true if they want to include built-in features, such as bookcases, fireplace surrounds and window seats, that need to be incorporated into the plans.

Lorraine says knowing what she wanted the home to look like and trying to visualize it based on the architect's drawings were two different things, and it was also a little scary to look at the plans. Many first-time homebuilders find the planning process intimidating, says Garry. However, a highly-trained draftsman will know how to ask the right questions to find out what the homeowner wants and needs so that they can make the best decisions for their home and turn the design process from "scary" to exciting.

While it can also be easy for homeowners to get caught up in designing the floor

plan, Lorraine's experience taught her not to overlook small details such as fixtures. In fact, she recommends that homeowners choose all items, from flooring and cupboards to doorknobs and faucets, early in the process and be very specific about what they want. "It can be hard to upgrade after the fact," says Lorraine, pointing out that quoted prices are often based on a standard and upgrades can have a big impact on a person's budget.

### Stay involved!

Lorraine says new homeowners should also be prepared to invest their own time in the project and stay involved in each step. Keeping the lines of communication open with the homebuilder not only quickens the building process, but helps the homeowner avoid any unnecessary surprises or last-minute adjustments. Fortunately,





Garry made this easy by making himself accessible to the Markussons whenever they had a question or concern, or simply wanted to check in on the progress.

When their home was finished, Lorraine says it met all of their expectations, and even now there are only a few minor things she would do differently if she had the opportunity to do it all again.

The two-bedroom, three-bathroom home features a bright kitchen with white cupboards and ceramic-tile flooring. The rich hardwood floors and bold natural paint colours in the living room and master bedroom contrast nicely with the white baseboards and trim, giving each space a crisp-but-elegant appeal. Other features include high arched ceilings, numerous windows throughout to allow in natural light, and garden doors that open onto a large deck and spacious, well-manicured backyard.

Talking openly about the budget is essential to ensuring the homeowners gets the features they want at a price they can afford but, overall, building a custom home is more cost-effective than renovating because homeowners can choose what they want up-front

instead of paying to change or replace things that don't suit them, says Garry. "Why make-do with someone else's style? Why not have it your way?"

Garry says it's common for new homeowners to stagger certain aspects of the building process, such as finishing the basement or adding a deck, to accommodate changing family dynamics or make a new build easier on their budget. Lorraine says they chose to wait two years before finishing their home's basement, which now includes two bedrooms, a recreation room, a toy room and an office. When it came time to lay the basement carpet, she says

the installer was very impressed with the condition of the home's foundation—a testament to the quality of Emerald Park Homes's construction.

## Ongoing support

In fact, Lorraine says they have had no real problems with the home in the decade they have lived there, although Garry has stopped by over the years to touch up a few odds and ends. "We could call Garry at any time if there was something we were worried about," she says. The ongoing support and care that Emerald Park Homes has shown is very much appreciated.

Resale value was another important consideration for the Markussons when they decided to build their new home. Lorraine says the couple plans to spend their retirement between their cottage at the lake during the summer and their property in Florida during the winter months. Although they currently enjoy their home's large, beautifully landscaped yard, she expects they will move to a lower-maintenance residence, such as a condo, in the future. When the Markussons do decide to sell, the evident quality and care that was put into constructing their home is sure to be a big selling point for prospective buyers.





Emerald Park Homes continues to put that same amount of care into each home the company builds, whether constructing a new house in their own community of White City and Emerald Park or elsewhere within the one-hour radius of Regina that they serve. Those who choose to take advantage of the small-town comfort and big-city convenience found in White City and Emerald Park will find the company's 20 years of experience in the area has made it expert at finding the best location to meet any new homeowner's wants and needs.

For the Markussons, choosing Emerald Park Homes to build their new house has proven to be a great decision and one they are more than happy to share with others. Lorraine says the couple has readily recommended Emerald Park Homes to family and friends over the years and will continue to do so in the future.

"I really, really love my home," she says. "Working with Emerald Park Homes has been a real treat." flr



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