

Home & Design

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Worth the wait

ELIZABETH V. ROBERTSON / Inquirer Suburban Staff

Ed and Barbara Idzik, of Ocean City, can now finally enjoy their 7,000-square-foot home, which has four guest bedrooms, an elevator, a wraparound porch, and a view of the water from virtually every room.

The original plan was just to renovate a summer house at the Shore. Three years, a razed house, and two gazebos later, this new Victorian became the couple's permanent home.

By Diane Goldsmith
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

OCEAN CITY, N.J. — After more than three years of twists and turns, the Idziks are finally settling into their dream house on the bay — a 7,000-square-foot green-grape-and-mauve-colored honey of a Victorian.

Workmen last week were hustling to install floating docks out back and finish up on features of a "smart-house" system, while interior designer Donna Massey arrived with antique chairs and a kneeling stool to give the parlor a final tweak.

It was a scene that warmed Ed Idzik's heart as he recalled the saga of the new home.

The original plan was to expand an existing seasonal house to be a place where he and his wife, Barbara, could enjoy spending more time as new retirees. Later, it would become their year-round residence.

But opportunities arose, plans changed, and the Idziks ended up with a brand-new house. In the process, one home was razed, two others were moved, and the Idziks made their new house their permanent address.



The Idziks' parlor features a piano in a bay window and a fireplace whose mantel was salvaged from a Biddle family mansion. It was stripped and refinished by the couple's interior designer.

That last step got under way soon after the new home was furnished in mid-March. Unable to ignore the zest of the suburban Philadelphia real-estate market, the Idziks sold their main Radnor residence.

So the couple were still sorting things out last week as Ed led the way through the elegant, formal foyer and anteroom of the new home with its inlaid mahogany floors, and through the family room out to the back of the house where decking, new pavers and newly landscaped gardens yielded a finished look.

There, a serene view of the shoreline of Ocean City and Somers Point awaited past small grassy outgrowths in the bay.

"This will be one spectacular house," the couple's architect, the late John Olivieri, pre-

dicted, and indeed, he delivered by positioning the building in such a way as to offer a view of the water from virtually every room.

Outside, he gave the couple the gingerbread they love with nicely executed turrets and spires, cartouches and a cupola, plus a wraparound porch, two gazebos and lots of decks.

Inside, he fashioned an open floor plan with all the amenities and accommodated the empty-nester couple's desire to entertain with not one but two granite-topped islands in the large kitchen, four guest bedrooms, a game room, and an exercise room.

The home even anticipates the future. There's an elevator, and one of the guest bedrooms. See **SHORE HOUSE** on E14



Overlooking the bay, this gingerbread-adorned gazebo is attached to the house's wraparound porch.

Their dream house was worth the wait

SHORE HOUSE from E1 rooms is decorated for grandchildren yet to be born.

As they entered retirement four years ago, the Idziks sought to transform their former, seasonal Ocean City home into more of an ultimate house, but were frustrated by the limits it imposed.

"We may have been able to make it work but it would have been nice to have 9-foot ceilings," Ed recalled.

Then, a next-door neighbor phoned just as they were about to leave on vacation: She was going to put her home up for sale and would they be interested in buying?

The Idziks bought the house and with mixed emotions, demolished it. That gave them a double lot.

Then, a neighbor down the block with an opportunity to move his rancher elsewhere bought the Idziks' 3,600-square-foot home and hauled it to his empty site, freeing the land for new construction.

"That made Barbara and I feel better because we had done a lot of things to the home and felt bad about destroying something that pretty," Ed remarked.

Years before, the Idziks had also purchased an 18th-century Blue Bell mansion once owned by the Biddles and razed it when it proved unworkable — but not before salvaging some architectural elements which they've incorporated into the new house.

"We had aspirations of doing something with that mansion," Ed recalled thoughtfully. "If I would have come across a John Olivieri then, perhaps it would have taken a different turn."

Idzik is outspoken in praising the talent he and his wife assembled to create their new home.

"Barbara and I worked hard to find Olivieri," whose team, including Paul Kiss and Dave Wiley, continued the project after Olivieri died last summer.

"The same with Eberlein [Design Consultants] and the builders [John Van Duyne and John Bruin].

"We looked for craftsmanship and, click," Idzik said, referring to chemistry.

With the couple's commitment and the time to stay involved in details, the Idziks maintained control over the architecture, interior design and landscaping, which they won't put an overall price tag on except to say that construction alone cost well over \$2 million.

"They called me assistant construction manager N.P. — that stands for nonpaid," said Idzik, noting that the house provided focus as he made the transition to retirement from his long workdays as owner of a direct-mail shop and an operation that warehoused and managed material to be mailed.

Since selling both, he's continued as a consultant to the businesses while enjoying boating and fishing.

Barbara has also had to adjust. The unexpected move from Radnor this spring was "a big change," she said. But she's been busy creating the flowering planters on the large deck — one was abloom with pink mandevilla, New Guinea impatiens, petunias and marigolds last week — and was enjoying the company of her friend, Evelyn Beisel, who's a regular-enough visitor to rate a guest bedroom named "Evelyn's room."

"She's the sister I never had," said Barbara as she, Ed and Donna Massey led the way through one guest room after another upstairs, pointing out this unusual bedspread, that needlepoint rug. Al-

See **SHORE HOUSE** on E15



Barbara Idzik's bookcase houses the "smart house" system. The doors are a trompe l'oeil painting.

Now it's time to enjoy the dream house

SHORE HOUSE from E14 though the home is Victorian outside, Massey avoided an overly dark and heavy appearance upstairs by using softer-looking furnishings.

Downstairs, in the formal areas, the decor is more classically oriented, yet warm and welcoming.

With the exception of a few cherished pieces, Massey had a clean slate on which to create a custom-furnished look, working with the architect to fine-tune layout, millwork and more.

The Idziks "were looking for a house that felt like the Shore but lived like a main house," said Barbara Eberlein, president of Eberlein Design Consultants. "That's hard to accomplish and keep both feelings — the level of casualness most people expect in the beach while getting the architectural detailing you want in a year-round house."

Faux bookshelf

Such detailing heightens the sense of discovery as you move from room to room. In Barbara's solarium — an octagonal sitting room off the kitchen with a beautiful tiered ceiling — Massey had a trompe l'oeil bookcase painted on the doors of wall cabinets.

"Book titles" include *The Perfect Storm* and *Villa d'Idzik*.

The room is built around extraordinary green, yellow and blue "tree-of-life" tiles and copper-toned Mercer tiles of ancient ships the Idziks got from the Biddle mansion. Behind the cabinets are some components of the "smart house," including one unit that automatically tapes the couple's favorite TV shows without being programmed.

On a nearby hallway wall, a master screen offers the option of setting the home's overall ambience to create, say, "party mode," which automatically adjusts lighting, heating or air-conditioning, and audio accordingly.

Dimmer switches in each room operate on a delayed response to let the occupant leave before it becomes dark.

The Idziks were getting accustomed to the gadgetry last week when Ed remarked that he wants to stay informed about new developments in home technology. Both he and his wife are also looking forward to developments of another sort once their daughter, Michelle, marries in September.

The couple also have a grown son, Michael, who is single.

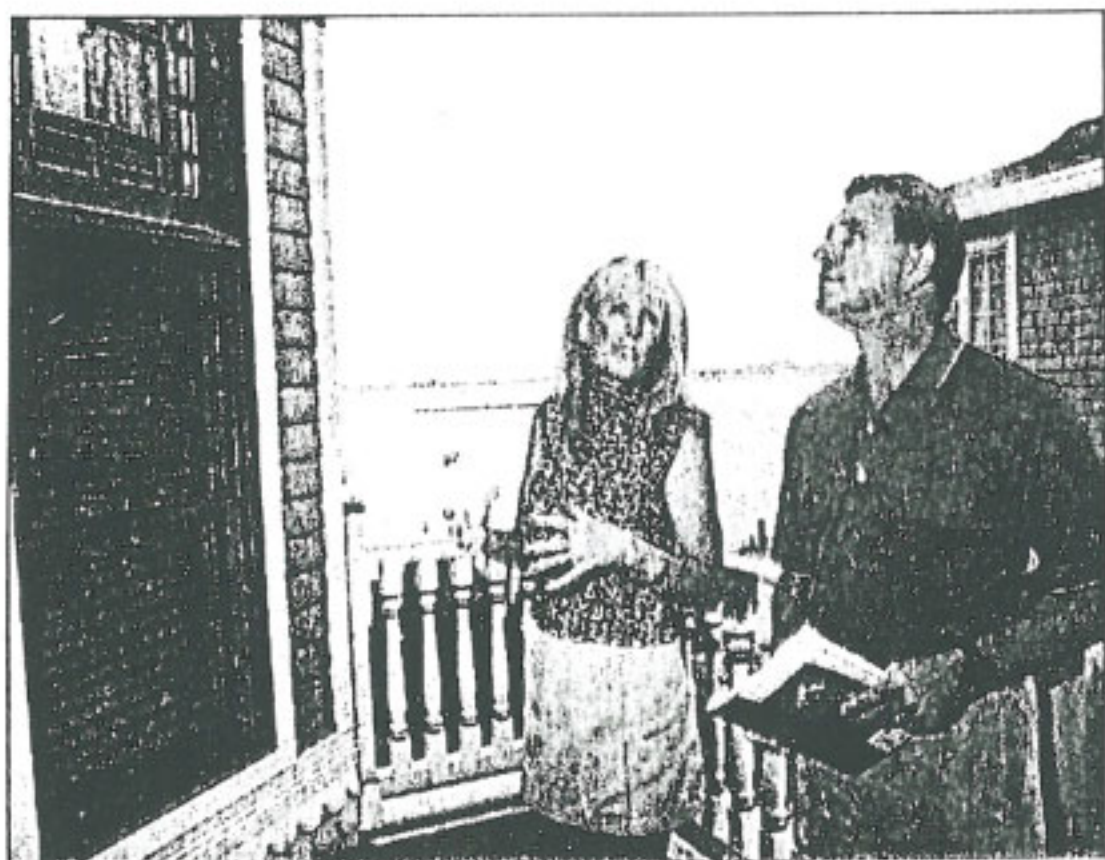
Returning to a new home

The Idziks have dubbed one of the guest bedrooms filled with stuffed bears Barbara's been collecting "the teddy bear room." The thought that grandchildren might someday play there is dear to the Idziks' hearts — as is the memory they cherish of the day in mid-March they returned from a cruise to China, India and Africa, knowing they'd find their new house entirely furnished.

Before they left, it had been painted, wall coverings and carpets installed, furniture and fabrics ordered. "But they had no idea what it would look like when they arrived."

"I couldn't believe this was my house," recalled Barbara when she entered.

"We were like two little kids running from room to room," Ed said.



Interior designer Donna Massey discusses additional lighting options with Ed Idzik. Massey created a custom-furnished look for the house.