Architects' 'nest' grows with family

Bodo and Kitty Claus in front of the house that has grown with their family

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The Clauses added this sunny living room, the most used room in the house, that looks out on large back yard.

As Bodo and Kitty Claus' family grew, so did their house. Over the years, the two architects had three additions — in the form of babies and square footage — at their home on East Bluebell, a dead-end street in a quiet subdivision near Lee Drive.

"It was a good setup for raising a family," Bodo Claus said.

"But now they're all grown up," his wife added.

The extra space comes in handy when the couple's large extended family visits.

"We bought this house in 1967, mostly for the lot," said Bodo, a native of Germany. "In those days, there weren't a lot of subdivisions that had something to them."

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The privacy made it possible to "have as much glass as we wanted" in the big family room — the first addition built 20 years ago, Kitty said.

"It's a beautiful lot, and we wanted to take advantage of it," she said.

Picture windows offer a sweeping view of the back yard and adjacent brick patio. An outside wooden porch runs the length of the room.

"The porch was an afterthought, but now it seems so natural," Bodo said.

The Clauses put in a fireplace with a wide brick hearth — large enough for plenty of people to sit on

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said. Her husband added, “The only good thing about the (home’s) flat roof is that you can add on. There are no limits visually.”

The Clauses roughly doubled the home’s size; there is now 3,800 square feet of living area.

After the family room was complete, the couple added a master suite and enlarged the dining room. The third addition was a workshop for Bodo’s woodworking, where he built cabinets for the bedrooms, Kitty said.

Kitty thinks the dining room is a tad too small. A glass table placed diagonally, where she often “squeezes” in 10 people, takes up most of the space. A photograph mural of a forest fills one wall and “makes the room seem bigger,” Kitty said. A picture window looks out on a little fenced garden.

“We enjoy working in the yard,” she said.

The results of the couple’s gardening skills show through the windows of the master suite, which consists of a bedroom, bath and dressing area. As their children got older, the parents needed a place “where we could retreat when the kids had their friends over,” Kitty said.

Although the Clauses have an empty nest right now, their 21-year-old son soon will be moving back in for awhile, Kitty said. Photographs of the couple’s children line the entry hall and kitchen.

The house, after all, is a testament to them.