

# The Bright House

WHETHER PULLING UP BY BOAT OR CAR, IMAGINE BEING ABLE TO UNLOCK your house, choose which lights to turn on and select the music you would like to hear when you walk through the door, all with the click of a remote. Such is the high-tech reality at this newly built Lake Minnetonka home, embedded with 17 miles of electrical wires that allow every electronic component to be

controlled remotely. The owners decided to make a “smart house,” and jokingly admit that their home is “much smarter than anyone living in it.”

#### REMOTE ULTRA-CONTROL

Their plans necessitated a nearly two-year collaboration between their contractor, Vogue ICF Homes and New Horizon

Sunlight pours into the open kitchen, which includes glass cabinet panels that change colors at regular intervals.



Technology, a specialist in home automation and digital surveillance. Within the house, every electronic device can be controlled by touch-screen monitors. When out of the house, the systems can be accessed via cell phone, computer or car- and boat-ready key fobs. Whether it is a television, window shade, DVD player or toaster, it can be controlled from any room in the house or any location in the world. "From Palm Springs, we could change the temperature in our refrigerator," the couple explains.

The level of customization that the electronic controls allow is extraordinary: The system includes a comprehensive "House Off" option as well as entertainment settings pre-programmed with specific lighting, music and water feature schemes.

"Party 1" is set for conservative business dinners; "Animal House" is the name for the most elaborate and raucous entertaining. With all this technology comes equally elaborate security. The couple installed 24 cameras on the property, all viewable from various locations, and with zoom-in capabili-

ties so precise that they can see clearly into any vehicle approaching the house.

#### THE LIGHT FANTASTIC

The 9,000-square-foot residence, set on nearly 300 feet of lakeshore, is literally a play on light. The couple owned the property for more than two decades, and by building on the existing footprint they were able to come as close as 17 feet to the lake. Contractor John Vogstrom says the expanse of windows required almost 3,000 square feet of glass, and from most rooms it can feel like you are looking out from a yacht.

More than 500 lights were installed inside and outdoors, including illuminated frosted-glass panels on the kitchen cupboards and the 12-person wet bar, all of which can be programmed to different colors or set to a sequence of alternating patterns. More than 300 linear feet of LED light strips illuminate the stair rails on a series of floating staircases that connect the home's six levels. The balustrades on a rooftop deck, also accessible by elevator, are similarly lit by LEDs.



The 18-foot-long Swarovski chandelier is one of a kind and requires a custom pulley system for changing bulbs.



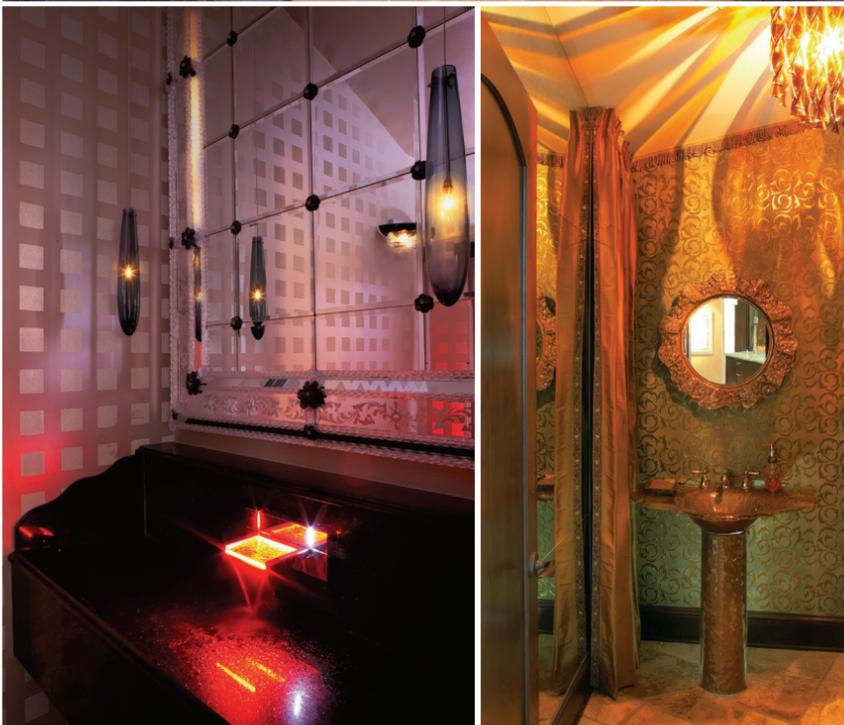
This page: In the master bath, mosaic tiles and a series of Swarovski fixtures dazzle from 30-foot vaulted ceilings. Other powder rooms feature an illuminated faucet that changes color according to water temperature (below left) and a chandelier that casts ribbons of light onto embossed and gilded wallpaper.

The sunlight that bounces off the water and pours into the home is reiterated by the reflective materials selected for the interior décor, none more grand than the 18-foot Swarovski crystal chandelier suspended from the nearly 30-foot dining room ceiling. An electronic pulley system allows for cleaning this and other large chandeliers. Every room boasts a Swarovski fixture, and even the kitchen hardware is studded with Swarovski crystals. Two interior and three exterior fireplaces are filled with turquoise “Fire and Ice” glass. The fireplace surrounds, as well as the kitchen backsplashes and the master bath, are finished with mosaic tiles that reflect a prism of colors.

#### A SOCIAL PLACE

In their first month of occupancy, the couple hosted 200 friends and family members. In addition to family dinners and spontaneous karaoke nights, events have included friends’ renewal of their wedding vows on the rooftop deck and a granddaughter’s 12th-birthday sleepover, with the guests choreographing dance routines beneath a ceiling fresco (of Dale Chihuly’s *Fiori di Como* glass installation at the Las Vegas’ Bellagio Hotel) adorned with Swarovski crystal stars.

Vogstrom, who admits the technical marvels required some “unusual” and at times “difficult” feats of engineering, sums up the house as nothing less than “spectacular and completely different from anything else out there.” It certainly inspires every visitor to have a lot of fun. ♦



Left: The bar — which could be mistaken for one on a cruise ship — is equipped with a karaoke system, textured glass panels that change colors, glass shelves lined with LEDs and individual spotlights for each bottle.

#### THE SMART HOUSE

A high-tech house should be full of creature comforts. When designing a smart home, balance practical functions with fun features.

- Choose a specialized electronics firm to customize a system to your lifestyle and be available for consultation and adjustments after installation.
- Be sure that all electronics remain user-friendly and that the basics, like turning on exterior lights and water features, can be controlled in one click.
- Think of what you turn on and off on a day-to-day basis, and aim to simplify or automate those processes.
- Create settings for various types of entertaining. This will allow for quick comparisons of lighting and music environments without the effort of racing from room to room.
- Don't forget to include some eye-popping surprises!

#### RESOURCES:

- ARCHITECT**  
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- AUTOMATION AND SECURITY**  
New Horizon Technology  
952.486.1893  
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- CONTRACTOR**  
Vogue ICF Homes  
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- LIGHTING DESIGN**  
Light'n Up  
952.442.8898  
www.Lightn-up.com

D: 398570  
size: 3.812 by 617.554

ID: 398570  
size: 3.778 by 612