

Custom Home

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DESIGN

96

WHAT'S HOT

CUTTING EDGE
HOUSES

BOOT UP FOR
DESIGN/BUILD





Home Free

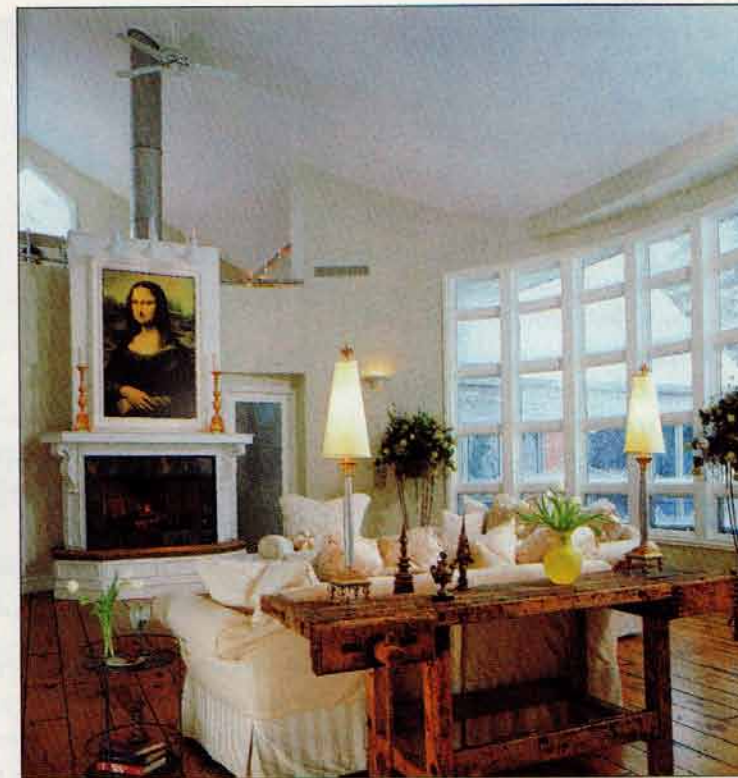
Here's a house that addresses some of the most problematic client needs with great success and style. The brainchild of residential designer Jeffrey King, the house was planned specifically for long-time friend Judi Haynes, who is physically challenged, and her husband Gerald. When an accident left Judi paralyzed and legally blind, the couple's previous home couldn't accommodate her wheelchair or support her need to live with dignity and independence. "I wanted to solve [my friends']

housing dilemma," says King, who has worked with many physically challenged clients.

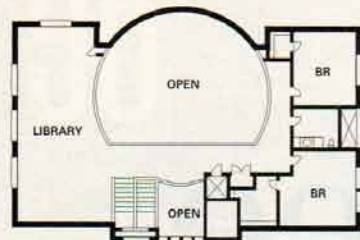
The steel-framed house, located in Bloomfield Hills, Mich., encompasses barrier-free design, environmentally friendly products, and fully automated electronic systems. Its H-shaped floor plan is the best layout for traffic flow, says King. He eliminated unused rooms, such as a formal dining room and living room, in favor of what he

calls an open "California contemporary" plan. The house is absolutely free of thresholds at every door, including the roll-in shower and the entrance to the specially graded garden. It's equipped with a barrier-free hot tub and sauna (which are integral to Judi's rehabilitation) and a wealth of physically friendly appliances. An elevator permits Judi to travel anywhere, including the second-floor library and the lower-level home theater. Serpentine grab bars in the bathrooms look like works of art. Light switches and the kitchen island are at wheelchair height.

King helped builder Norm Clements spec low-maintenance, environmentally friendly products like brick and faux limestone,



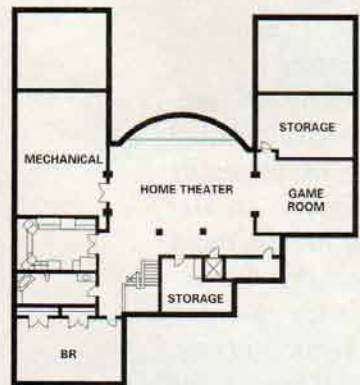
(Above) The rounded great room admits plenty of light and allows Judi Haynes to easily navigate its furnishings and raised-hearth fireplace in her wheelchair. (Opposite) The sun room's distressed-wood beams give Judi height cues without diminishing the drama of the high ceiling.



SECOND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



LOWER LEVEL

water-based sealants, blown-in cellulose insulation, and solar-film windows. The home's lighting, heating, and other functions are linked to a phone-operated automation system.

One of King's primary concerns was to select items that would make seeing easier for Judi, who can only discern black and white. Besides providing good traction for her wheelchair (and hiding gouges), the distressed-pine flooring's random patterning creates visual depth, while white base molding provides good contrast with the dark floors. Non-structural ceiling beams give height cues, and expansive glazing admits plenty of light. Light-motion detectors allow her to access the lower-level pantry. Even the patio is laid out with multi-colored flagstone to enhance visibility.

The Hayneses were so appreciative of their dream home that they eagerly agreed with King's suggestion to open it as a showhouse before moving in. Local charities used the space for fund-raisers, and thousands of people—many of whom were physically challenged—toured the home and came away with hope. "If everyone left with one idea to improve their life, then our goal was completed," says King. For their part, the Hayneses are like two kids in a candy store. "Both of us can't believe we live here," says Gerald.—*Jill Tunick*

BUILDER: Norm Clements, Inc., Troy, Mich.
RESIDENTIAL/INTERIOR DESIGNER: Jeffrey King Interiors, Birmingham, Mich.
LIVING SPACE: 4,800 square feet
SITE: 20,000 square feet
CONSTRUCTION COST: \$125 a square foot
PHOTOGRAPHER: Beth Singer

A list of products in this house is on page 98.



(Top) The kitchen sink's deep toe-kick (make that lapkick) lets Judi pull right up to the basin, as does the specially engineered island. (Above) The exercise room boasts a beamed ceiling like the sun room's, plus plenty of weight equipment for Gerald and a special hydrotherapy tub for Judi. (Opposite) The steel-framed structure is faced with no-maintenance brick and faux limestone. (Opposite, bottom) The bathroom's bold, repeating patterns help orient Judi. A glass panel artfully conceals a roll-in shower.



A cut-out in the kitchen island allows a wheelchair user to pull right up to the island. Raised countertop and lowered bar stools put everyone on the same level.



Strong visual cues for a sight-challenged client: bold patterning on the bathroom's walls, and vari-colored edging on the kitchen's solid-surface countertops.

BARRIER-FREE IDEAS:

Take a tip from Jeffrey King: If your client has special needs, have the client test details before they are finalized in the house. King tested color contrasts by holding up material samples and asking Judi if she could see them. Other physically friendly ideas:

- Rustic wood floors hide wear, require little maintenance.
- No thresholds allow wheelchair user to move freely about the house.
- Raised-hearth fireplace allows wheelchair user access to fire's warm glow.
- Raised flowerbeds in garden allow wheelchair user to plant flowers, enjoy plants.
- Raised legs on furniture put able-bodied people on the same level with a wheelchair user. To do this, simply build up existing furniture legs.