dream home

Dr. Steve Silverstein took a handful of doodles made on cocktail napkins and 12 years of dreams to his first meeting with Scott Bickford of Bickford + Company. Together the dreamer and the architect formed a unique design partnership and charted the construction of an extraordinary home. Other partnerships were formed as Silverstein looked for the “best of the best” to design and build the home he’d always wanted.

The lakeside residence borrows from a number of architectural traditions—Tuscan, Lodge and contemporary—to create something absolutely unique. It is a home that plays with bringing the outdoors in; natural materials were used wherever possible, and the line between what belongs inside and out is repeatedly blurred. From the organic shape of the spiral staircase to the 10,000-pound, 720-gallon saltwater aquarium that floats between the living room and kitchen, one-of-a-kind surprises abound. It’s all part of the dream.

And in the end, Silverstein was able to assemble his very own “dream team”—one that included artisans, contractors and specialists. “The vision is in the details, from the duct work to the HVAC to the tile work,” he notes. “I found the best people and I let them be the guide in terms of what was best.”  ▲
Four principles guided Silverstein as he built his dream home. The first was that the house had to be large enough to accommodate visits that might include eventual grandchildren. Check: The finished space has five complete bedroom suites. Next, he insisted that an aquarium be a cornerstone of the structure. Check: Floating between the kitchen (above) and the living room (opposite, bottom), the aquarium (opposite, top) achieved all that he had hoped for and more. Suspending the 10,000-pound tank was an engineering feat conquered by Chris Owens of Custom Aquariums by Design, the Bickford team and the home’s contractors, Holthaus Builders. The finished product lends its peaceful, soulful colors to two rooms: its nighttime reflection in the living room’s floor-to-26-foot-ceiling windows is breathtaking.

The aquarium’s exotic zebra wood trim continues in the kitchen cabinetry. There, the organic lines of the island, which is topped with iridescent labradorite, and a well-planned wall of appliances—all the brainchild of the team at Portfolio Kitchen & Home—make the space both beautiful and functional. The backsplash is a custom creation by Madden-McFarland designers and was cut using three-quarter-inch marble. With ample storage, a pullout pantry system, a coffered ceiling and perfect scale, it is a show-stopping kitchen designed for someone who actually cooks.

The show continues in the living room. Montana pine columns and a variety of tactile surfaces—nubby upholstery on the sofa; rough-hewn, stone walls—bring the outdoors in; a stunning Barry Thomas canvas (not pictured) completes the Lodge effect. Bracketed by breathtaking lake views and the vibrant blue of the aquarium, it is a room made for sophisticated, inviting comfort.
Silverstein’s third guiding principle was a desire for a wine cellar situated “in the middle of the action” and accessible from the kitchen and entertainment areas. Equally important was its aesthetic. The resulting 1,200-bottle, glass-walled wine room (below) is located just off the home’s entryway—steps from the kitchen—and features custom-made, wrought-iron racks.

In a nook created by one of the wine room’s walls is a small tasting bar. Red, ultrasuede chairs and pendant lights by Dierk Van Keppel of Rock Cottage Glass Works lend a pop of sophisticated color to the area’s natural hues. David Zebley of Portfolio Kitchen & Home hand-mixed the stain on the bird’s eye maple cabinetry, as specified by Silverstein, who wanted to match the finish of a Lexus steering wheel.

Meanwhile, the unique ceiling in the formal dining room (above and right) was conceived over dinner with architect Scott Bickford. In a room where the star shines overhead, Madden-McFarland Interiors kept the furniture simple and appropriately scaled.

The spiral staircase (opposite), which spans three floors and recalls a nautilus when viewed from below, is accentuated with a stunning railing made especially for the home by the artisans at Bob’s Ornamental Iron Studio. Aspen trees inspired their design, and the team took great care in reproducing individual leaves and even root systems. The staircase is topped with an 18-foot-tall glass dome.

But it was on the lower level that Silverstein’s fourth and final wish was realized: Just off the game room (opposite, bottom), the Silversteins’ state-of-the-art home theater, installed by Integrated Electronics, is the perfect spot to enjoy a movie or play a video game. In addition to comfortable seating, plenty of games and homey hues, the entertainment room has its own, fully functional kitchen adorned with bamboo cabinetry. During parties, the glass doors that lead outside can be folded back, creating a seamless transition from indoors to out.