



The Granums wanted a backyard that was both beautiful and functional. A faux creek runs into the swimming pool, creating the illusion of a natural water feature, while still giving the kids a great place to swim.

# Character Building

HOMEBUILDER GEOFFREY GRANUM JOINS FORCES WITH ARCHITECT AARON INOUYE TO CONSTRUCT A PERSONALIZED PROJECT: HIS FAMILY'S OREM HOME

BY ERIN MOORE PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOT ZIMMERMAN



Dozens of mature trees shade builder Geoffrey Granum's family home. Granum spent hours with his team tweaking the orientation of the dwelling to preserve as many existing trees as possible.



The great room's ceilings extend to the second floor, allowing people in the kitchen to hear what's going on upstairs. "We wanted the house to be open so that even if we were in separate areas, we could feel like we were a part of the action going on elsewhere," says Jenn Granum.



LEFT: Geoffrey and Jenn Granum relax on their backyard patio.

BELOW: Architect Aaron Inouye created stone archways to separate halls and living areas and to frame interior focal points. Dark stained millwork lends continuity to the home's decor.

AS THE OLD ADAGE GOES, the doctor's children go untreated and the cobbler's children run around with no shoes. So when Geoffrey Granum—custom homebuilder, president of Silver Creek Homes, and father of two—invites guests into his Orem abode, curiosities are piqued: How does the builder's family live? As it turns out, the old adage doesn't apply here. Granum's family home includes intricate details, a finely tuned floor plan, and thoughtful touches only a man with his skills would think to add.

The home's most impressive details become apparent as soon as Granum opens the front door. A verdant panorama of the Cascade Mountains and the greens of the Riverside Country Club—framed by a two-story bank of windows—greet visitors the moment they cross the threshold. Of course, this powerful first impression didn't happen by accident.

"Our top priority was to capitalize on the view of the golf course and the mountains," says architect Aaron Inouye, who worked closely with Granum. With this goal in mind, they kept the entryway as open as possible—no grand staircase or formal living room to block the view. And they situated the home on its lot so everyone entering would be greeted by the mountains' majesty.

The scenery's grand scale is echoed in the entry and adjoining great room, where the





ceilings reach a soaring 30 feet. “To me, it’s not about how big the house is, it’s the cubic square footage that matters,” says Granum. “Volume is really what makes things feel grand.” He and Inouye maintained the interior’s spacious feel with 12-foot ceilings on the main floor and 10-foot ceilings upstairs. These are several feet higher than standard ceilings, and, Inouye adds, an easy way to add breathing room without expanding a home’s footprint.

Of course, with so much open space, the home was in danger of feeling like one vast hall. To enclose each room without compromising the home’s expansiveness, Inouye used inventive methods. For example, he sank the great room two steps below the kitchen and the entry, demarcating it as a separate space without walling it off. And throughout the

home, archways into each room indicate spatial shifts and formal transitions—an informal rock arch leading to the kitchen and a tailored set of beams to the formal dining room.

In spite of these fluid transitions, the spaces still tended to feel oversized. Armed with years of experience, Granum and Inouye knew how to solve this problem using finishing details to make the house feel airy and comfortable. Sconce lighting, hung at eye level, creates low focal points that make the space more intimate. Additionally, all of the home’s wood moldings and trim are darkly stained, which not only shrinks the space visually, but also supports the home’s air of rusticity.

Granum chose the home’s rustic flavor to echo its surroundings. “If this were a beach house, it would feel entirely out of place,” he



ABOVE LEFT: Set back from the rest of the room, the master bathroom’s jetted tub feels secluded without being separated from the rest of the space.

BELOW LEFT: “We always raise vanities,” says Granum, “because they look more finished, like a piece of furniture.” Here in the master bathroom, light-colored cabinetry makes the space feel roomier, while dark detail work continues the theme from the rest of the house.

RIGHT: Like the home’s wood floors, the stairway’s treads are hand-scraped, lending a timeworn look and a comfortable feel underfoot. And although the paneling and wood trim are beautifully detailed, Granum chose knotty woods to instill a more rustic look.





Striking stone and wood details fill the kitchen: The granite countertops are thicker than standard, adding significant depth to an already-weighty material. The countertop's raw edge emphasizes its heft. Wood and slate grid flooring is both warm and cool underfoot and adds a stylish pattern to the surface.

The billiard room overlooks the great room, so communication between the two areas remains easy and open. Decorative details to both spaces create a sense of continuity from floor to floor.



says. But the choice also reflects his personal style. “I love bringing exterior elements inside the home, so there’s a lot of rock and timber here,” he adds. From the hand-scraped walnut floors to the solid alder front door, warm woods flow throughout the interior. Slate tiles, rock arches, and extra-thick granite countertops add a cool touch. These elements are not only beautiful but are practical as well. All of the wood and stone treatments are durable enough to stand up to the abuse the Granums’ sons and their friends dish out.

As a counterpoint to all of the exterior elements featured indoors, Inouye and Granum incorporated more refined elements in the treasured outdoor living areas—ceiling fans, comfy wooden furniture, and even outdoor speakers. “Covered patios and verandas help us bridge the space between outdoor

and indoor,” says Inouye, “and I think they encourage us to spend more time outdoors.” Granum’s wife, Jenn, agrees. “In the summer, we practically live in the backyard,” she says, “so it’s nice that there are so many functional and comfortable details out there.”

Inside and out, each room flows easily into the next. “A lot of homes have a kitchen and family room on the main floor, then you go to the basement and they’ll have another kitchen and another family room down there—it’s redundant,” says Granum, “and no one ever says ‘Well, let’s get up from this family room and go to the one downstairs.’” To avoid a rambling floor plan, Granum planned this house so every room feels like a destination.

Take, for example, the built-in theater. Rather than setting up a big screen TV in the family room, the Granums dedicated one space



ABOVE RIGHT: Red barn doors enclose a television in the kids’ playroom. Hidden crawlways on the left and right of the barn lead to fortress-like cubbyholes built into the room’s walls.

BELOW RIGHT: An antique ski chair serves double duty as a bench and a nightstand in the childrens’ room, which is on the opposite end of the house from the master suite. “That way, they can make all the noise they want and don’t have to worry about bothering us,” says Granum.

LEFT: A snack-filled pantry leads into the theater room, where three tiers of seats accommodate comfortable moviegoing. The pantry tempts Chase and Caden Granum with sweet treats as they run in to catch a show.





RIGHT: Although the backyard frequently teems with the neighborhood kids, it offers a few corners for a shady respite at the end of the day.

BELOW: Architect Aaron Inouye incorporated numerous covered patios around the home's exterior, providing relaxing venues from which the Granum family can enjoy beautiful views.



solely for catching the latest blockbusters. To take the boys to a movie, they simply walk upstairs. There, a concession-style pantry and two swinging doors lead into a theater with tiered seating, a popcorn machine, and framed film posters on the walls. Thanks to these intricate details, entering the theater room is as exciting as going to the Cineplex—with an added bonus: no sticky floors.

After a movie, the boys can run down the hall to their playroom. At first glance, it looks like a regular kids' room, with a toy chest and sofa, but it's filled with enchanting secrets. A red barn door swings open to reveal a TV cupboard, and all around the room, tiny crawlways lead to a multi-level fortress built into the walls. It's a child's fantasy, and because of its specific purpose, it feels like a natural addition to the home, rather than just another spare bedroom converted for a secondary use.

In the end, says Granum, that's what matters most in homebuilding: remembering the inhabitant's needs. "You might desire things in your home that most builders don't always think about," he says. "What's important is to think about how you utilize space, instead of just copying what's in other homes." Sound advice, from a man who put it to work in his own home. ■



Located off the kitchen, the veranda creates a pleasant place for adults to sit in the shade while the kids romp on the lawn or in the pool. Ceiling fans, outdoor speakers, and easy access to the interior turn this area into an outdoor living room during the balmy summer months.