

Pine Canyon Country Club in Flagstaff

Written by David M. Brown

Fred and Jackie Westland's "Eagle's Nest" in Flagstaff sits at 7,200 feet—high enough to protect them from the predatory heat of the Sonoran Desert summer that is two hours and 5,000 feet south.



Here, at the 600-plus acre Pine Canyon Country Club in Flagstaff, the Westlands slide open expansive family room windows in July and August, when, at twilight, the mercury sinks into the 60's, sometimes lower. Later, on the covered rear porch, they listen to the pines and aspens rustle in the cool evening air. It is a welcome summer respite: in the winter months, they live in North Scottsdale's Desert Highlands community.

A few late-day golfers, working the eighth or ninth fairway just beyond the Westlands' 4,800-sq.-ft. Mountain-style home, may stop while Fred throws them—literally—some cold beverages and cool words of golfing advice. Just by the sliding window, he spins the family's bronze eagle sculpture, which rests on a pedestal atop the finished pine log stump that serves as its "nest." Meanwhile, Jackie reads in her favorite chair and enjoys a glass of wine before dinner.

Hours later, an elk herd may pass across the same fairways; and then there are those mesmerizing moonlit nights below the San Francisco Peaks and late-night shrieks and stridulations from the surrounding forests. Someone has to live like this.

On a half-acre lot at the Estates at Pine Canyon—one of the club's five neighborhoods—the Westlands' four-bedroom, four-and-a-half-bath home was built by Scottsdale's Platinum Homes from July 2006 to June 2007, and designed by Scott Giesen, principal of Phoenix-based Giesen Design Studio, a full-service firm specializing in luxury custom homes. The home's simple, elegant interior design is by Amelia Kizerian of Park City and Scottsdale.

"It is hard to believe one can drive two hours from the Valley and find this paradise," says Fred, who is in his 80's and still golfing and gardening regularly. After he and Jackie moved to Arizona in 1970 from Michigan (they were both born in the Midwest), they owned a lot in the White Mountains and, later, at another Flagstaff country club. But, these communities just weren't ideal.

"I always said that someday someone would build a fantastic club in Northern Arizona," Fred says. "The minute I drove into Pine Canyon, I knew it had happened!"

One of the premier golf communities in Arizona, Pine Canyon offers a Jay Morrish-designed 18-hole course (finishing off at a magical island 19th); homes, townhomes and homesites; an award-winning clubhouse; and ponds, lakes and streams. Almost always in sight is the state's highest point—the 12,637-foot Humphreys Peak—and always accessible are miles of hiking, running and biking paths.

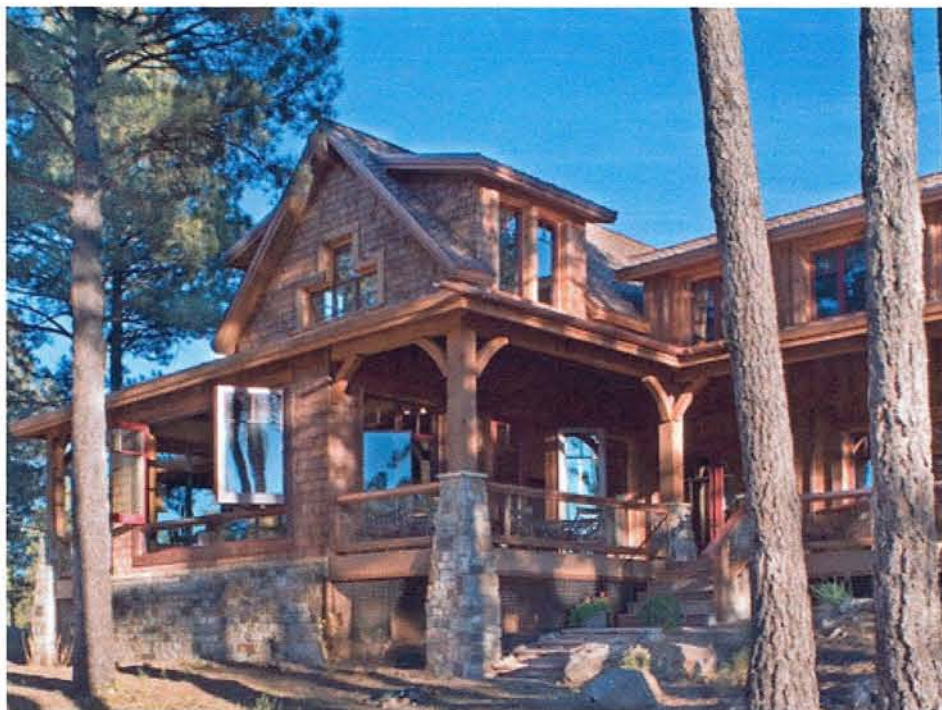
Inside the \$22 million, 35,000-sq.-ft. clubhouse, Fred and Jackie can work out in the 1,600-sq.-ft. fitness room; get a massage; play cards with friends; enjoy the heated pool; or dine at the restaurant, with outside dining views of the lake, fairways and mountains.

In the summer, children and grandchildren of community members can enjoy Camp Pine Canyon, with activities such as catch-and-release fishing, nature hikes, sliding into the pool and arts and crafts. "The kids often don't want to go home at the end of the day," Fred says. "They're having so much fun."

After the couple bought their lot, they needed a builder. Fred already had a detailed picture in his mind of just what their light-filled getaway would look like. He asked the club's sales representatives for a recommendation. "After a lot of probing, I found out that Platinum Homes was their choice."

After interviewing with Dave Reese, owner of Platinum Homes, Platinum assembled the design/build team and introduced the couple to Giesen and Kizerian. Reese's family also owns a home in Pine Canyon, and Platinum Homes is building several projects there, including a family lodge concept home designed by Giesen.

Giesen met with the Westlands and showed them a detailed sketch he made of a mountain home months earlier. "That's it," I told him," Fred recalls. "This was what I wanted. We didn't change a thing." The sketch hangs in the home, with many of the couple's other artworks they've acquired during more than 50 years of marriage.



"This was a great experience from start to finish—a very happy 'arranged marriage,'" explains Fred, who commends Giesen, Kizerian and Platinum—in particular, the latter's very able construction manager, Chuck Bebee, for collaborating as a team to build their dream getaway.

"I wanted a cabin that wasn't dark inside or out," Fred says. Their two-level "cabin" totals 6,451 square feet including the covered patio, three-car garage and mechanical space.

Giesen's design combines strong materials on the exterior for a clean, rustic appearance: stone; cedar siding; copper and asphalt on the roof; additional copper on the dormers; and metal railings. The front entrance welcomes guests with a bridge over a pond and waterfall; tumbled Belgard pavers add to the gracefully aging look.

This look continues inside with features such as Douglas fir-exposed trusses manufactured on site for the high ceilings in the family/living room and foyer, and heavily distressed antique planks and sealed quartzite flagstone on

the floors.

Kizerian's work reiterates the Giesen/Platinum theme: "My focus for the Westlands' home was on minimalist design to enhance its natural beauty—concentrating on using high-quality materials with varying textures to create spaces that are modern yet inviting." She was inspired in her color and materials selections by the landscape: "Many of the details were influenced by objects that could be found right outside."

The Westland home is not a "don't-touch-it" showcase; it's a home to be enjoyed and lived in. The living room has a large flat-screen television instead of focal-point artwork, for example. "We love to just put our feet up and enjoy," says Fred, who happily admits to often falling asleep there in the early evening. And the sofas and chairs have many miles, and many miles to go.

"One day, shortly after we moved in, the doorbell rang," Fred recalls. "Jackie answered. A man was standing there. He said, 'I worked on this house and told my wife about "The Orphanage."' She is with me today and would love to see it."

Fred took them upstairs to tour the expansive room with four beds and a bath—an arrangement reminiscent of "Little Orphan Annie." From their two children, the Westlands have five grandchildren, four of whom now occupy the "orphanage" when they stay: "The fifth one snores, so that one sleeps downstairs," Fred says, with a laugh.

The downstairs powder room is a favorite of the Westlands and their visitors. Here, Kizerian placed a marble bowl and added undercounter lighting and handmade glass tile on the vanity and its surrounding area. "The tile highlights the arches in and around the vanity while staying within the natural inspiration for the rest of the home," Kizerian says.

Fred's the cook. The kitchen centerpiece is a granite-topped island counter: In one piece, eight men were needed to set it, he remembers. Framed in iron, a large light fixture over the counter is the work of two California artisans. Eight 100-watt light bulbs illuminate the island and antique tin ceiling.

Says Giesen, "You only have one chance to get it right: the design, the views and, most of all, client happiness. Successful projects are always the ones that the clients are crazy about. Ask Fred: He'll tell you."

To Learn More:

Pine Canyon Country Club, www.pinecanyon.net.

Platinum Homes, www.platinum-homes.net.