

ARCHITECTURAL State of Mind

Abby Tow, Classic Photography



↑ Holly & Company's Kenwood plan boasts high vaulted ceilings and an open-concept living space. "It really wows people as they walk into the open living area," Holly Rieger notes. The open feel works perfectly for entertaining and day-to-day family living.

For two local women, architecture is much more than a career choice



Holly Rieger,
architectural designer
and president of Holly
& Company. Classic
Homes



Kelli Wegscheid,
architect and founder
of Harmonious
Architecture

Photo by Kelli Chase

BY AMY LIESINGER

THE INGREDIENTS of a house are simple enough – wood, brick, windows and doors – but for two local women, putting these ingredients together with passion, creativity and good design is what builds a home.

Upon meeting Holly Rieger, architectural designer and president of Holly & Co. Classic Homes in Fargo, it is clear that her profession is marked by passion. From the initial floor plan to the final finish selections, Rieger's vision and passion impact her every choice, resulting in a home that is distinctive – or as some have coined, "a Holly house."

Rieger has always wanted to design homes, but when the opportunity came a few years ago to start her own residential building firm, she was pleasantly surprised. Within a few weeks of starting Holly & Company Classic Homes, they were digging their first house. Success quickly followed; their first home was awarded the Home Builders Association of Fargo-Moorhead Parade of Homes Horizon Award in its price point.



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↑ The award-winning Sheffer plan by Holly & Company incorporates traditional elements, such as an inviting front porch and bedroom window seat, with an open layout on the main floor and a large four-stall, attached garage.

“To me, it’s in the little stuff – not big grand spaces, but how you are going to live in the space 24/7.”

– Holly Rieger

“It was crazy” she remembers. “We knew we were doing something right.”

Yet for Rieger, success lies in the details of the home, especially in how the home functions.

“I’m always imagining how I would live in each plan that I develop,” she says about the design process. “To me, it’s in the little stuff – not big grand spaces, but how you are going to live in the space 24/7.”

Her perspective both as a builder and as a woman has given her the ability to connect with her clients to determine what they desire in a home. Rieger recalls once asking her clients about what type of vacuum they owned. “The husband looked at me like I was crazy,” she remembers, “but his wife was thinking, ‘Yes, of course, that totally makes sense!’” Asking the right questions about how each space will be used or what type of storage is needed, even down to the vacuum cleaner, is the foundation for a well-designed home and a key to Rieger’s success.

Rieger also tries to infuse her homes with classic details and tried-and-true design standards, drawing inspiration from older homes. “There is something about the timelessness of older homes. They were able to do so much with such a little amount of space,” she notes. “There is a certain amount of charm (in new-construction homes) that has been lost.” She tries to “reboot” some of that old charm and make it work for today’s lifestyles. “It’s gratifying to build a home that someone years from now will still be inspired by.”

For Kelli Wegscheid, architect and founder of Harmonious Architecture in Perham, Minnesota, there was little question about her career path. Growing up around construction sites sparked her initial interest in architecture. “My father was an electrician, so I would go with to job sites and see how everything worked together,” she remembers.

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“My passion is in residential work because it is so personal.”

– Kelli Wegscheid

→ This home on Big McDonald Lake takes full advantage of the “spectacular views to the lake,” architect Kelli Wegscheid remarks. “Interior stone accents on the window wall and fireplace brings the outside in, creating a true connection to the outdoors.”

↓ Wegscheid designed this lake home to meld with the landscape. “This site lent itself to a side walk-out level, instead of the typical walk-out to the lake,” she says. The entire home was designed to take full advantage of the beautiful scenery.



Kelli Wegscheid



Kelli Wegscheid



Kelli Wegscheid

But it was her love of her family lake cabin on Otter Tail Lake that fueled her passion for designing custom lake homes. “Designing a lake home definitely has a different feel and focus than designing a home in the city,” Wegscheid explains. “My passion is in residential work because it is so personal. Every single project is unique because every family’s lifestyle is different. Every property is unique.”

Designing a home for a client starts with listening to what he or she wants and tailoring each project to each client’s specific needs. Because of that level of customization, Wegscheid does not have one distinct style. “I don’t have any one certain design preference, so I can embrace every client’s desire for what they want their home to be,” she says.

Her projects do have common elements, however. Wegscheid incorporates new technologies with time-honored methods to create the best results. “I incorporate as much natural light as possible with the newest cutting-edge windows,” she says, as an

↑ Wegscheid made sure the design of the home became an integral part of the landscape: “An earth-friendly color scheme blends seamlessly with its surroundings. The entry becomes a main focal point, and flanking windows become design elements as well.”

example. She also integrates the fundamentals of green design into her homes. “It should be true to nature, with views to nature and elements of real stone or granite, which is the essence of green design.”

Her beliefs are reinforced in her company’s tagline – a beautiful blend of form and function. “Of course the home has to function,” she says, “but it can be beautiful and inspiring and fun to live in as well.”

The end goal is ultimately the satisfaction of the families she works with. “I love the interaction with the clients,” she says. Her inspiration begins with the first walk through of a property. “Walking out onto a property, seeing its views and the opportunity to create something where there was nothing before, is so exciting for me. To see it all come together and to witness the excitement of the family at the end is rewarding. If the family is happy, that’s the pure joy of it.” ✿