

## At Home With... JOHN AND JANE DAGUANNO

### Minimalist look, maximum joy



John and Jane Daguanno, along with their dog, Scooby, enjoy the modern feel of their Waukesha condo.

*By Joanne Kempinger Demski, Special to the Journal Sentinel*

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When it comes to interior design, John Daguanno is a minimalist who loves clean lines. His wife, Jane, loves clean lines, too, as well as texture, soft colors and lots of light.

So it was no surprise to family and friends when they bought an über-modern condo, then filled it with sleek new furniture - with nary a knickknack in sight.

"John is drawn to more modern, clean lines - he hates clutter," Jane said.

"I'm happiest when I'm taking something to Goodwill," he added.

What the couple loved about the 2,100-square-foot condo in Waukesha was its contemporary style, open floor plan and all the light that poured in through its large windows.

They also liked the fact that because it was a new construction, they would be able to make modifications and select the amenities they wanted - such as additional lighting, high-end tile, a fireplace and wood flooring. They also upgraded doors, hardware, kitchen cabinets and appliances.

It also would be the perfect space for all the new furnishings they wanted to buy.

They had lived in an English Tudor-style cottage near Carroll University for about 15 years and had amassed furnishings that were all specific to the period of that house. Because they wanted their new house to look totally different, they got rid of most of their furniture and hired an interior designer to help them achieve the look they wanted.

"We worked with Dawn Adamec, of Urban Abode in Waukesha. She has a beautiful shop, so we knew we would like her selections. She helped us pick colors and we got a lot of furniture from her," Jane said.

"We bought almost everything new. It was great fun and a little overwhelming. We only kept a few pieces from our old house - that made my husband happy," she added.

There was just one suggestion the designer made that the couple didn't like.

"She wanted to get knickknacks. We don't like knickknacks. All our knickknacks from our former house are confined to the curio cabinet, and they don't get to come out," she said.

But looks weren't the only thing that attracted the couple to the condo. They also liked the location.

"We looked for a condo for more than five years in Milwaukee and Waukesha counties. We liked a lot of condos we saw, but they were too far from our manufacturing business, Aquarius Systems, which is located in North Prairie," John said.

"We also like living 30 minutes from the airport, 20 minutes from Lake Country and being 25 minutes from downtown. And we liked the urban sensibility here," his wife added.

"The Fox River is right behind our house and Veterans Park is right behind that. Historic Main St. is about one block away. There is also a riverwalk. We can step out onto a bike trail and walk to pubs, restaurants and shops. We're not on the lakefront, but at least we have a river," she said.

Another plus was the view, which Jane said seems to change from week to week throughout the year and looks different from each level of their home.

"The river changes, too. The water level changes, and there is different wildlife throughout the year. Last winter it froze over and was covered with snow. There are animals all the time and we see people going by in canoes. We're in the city but still have a little nature," she said.

The couple recently opened their home for a tour and talked about their love of contemporary design. While they talked, their border terrier, Scooby, relaxed nearby.

**Q. Who built your home?**

**Jane:** Ogden Construction Group was the developer and it was their first project in Waukesha. The project is called Townhomes at Mill Reserve. It was nice to see a Milwaukee company come out here and test the waters. The architect was Continuum Architects + Planners.

**Q. Are the units full yet?**

**Jane:** No. We're looking forward to having more neighbors.

**Q. Why did you switch from a single-family home to a condo?**

**John:** It was new construction. Before, there was always maintenance.

**Jane:** And John got tired of mowing and shoveling. Now it's someone else's problem.

**Q. How is your home configured?**

**Jane:** The entire house is built around a winding staircase that goes from the ground level to the third floor. On the ground floor there is the entryway, an extra-deep two-car garage and a utility room. The first floor has a living room with a large sliding glass door that leads to the lower deck, and there is the dining room, kitchen and a powder room.

**John:** We also call the TV room the doghouse because it has the only sofa we let Scooby sit on.

**Q. What are the stairway railings made of?**

**Jane:** It's steel, stainless steel and stainless steel cable. I like to look down the stairway to the bottom. John doesn't like to look down - he gets dizzy. You can see the computer desk at the bottom. We have a contemporary screen saver on it and we play our music through the computer.

**Q. What are the amenities in your home?**

**John:** A light-colored maple tongue and groove floating floor system called "eco wood." The floor is a composite wood that is topped with real wood so it can be sanded/refinished in the future.

**Jane:** We also have unique tile on the floors and walls. The tile has an Asian feel. It reminds me of Japanese paper because it has a lot of texture, different color hues and silver threads running through the pieces.

**Q. What color is the tile?**

**Jane:** We have the same tile in three spots and in three different colors. In the entryway it's a greenish gray, in the master bathroom a coppery brown and in the full bath it's pale beige.

**Q. Can you describe your kitchen?**

**Jane:** It has a large peninsula and dark, grayish green Cambria quartz countertops. There is plenty of room for cooking. The cabinets are maple and have flat fronts to make them look contemporary. It also has a squared double stainless steel sink with a raised grate at the bottom. The grate helps protect the sink and keeps water spots from forming. I use the grates to drain vegetables or dishes.

**Q. How did you decorate in your bedroom?**

**Jane:** The bedroom set is an espresso stained oak. Now my bed linens are tan, brown and blue and they accent the blue foam colored wall behind the bed. In winter I switch to a poppy red colored set.

**Q. Do you use your dining room often?**

**Jane:** We entertain at least once a month. It has an espresso stained wood dining room set with chairs that have leather seats and backs with vertical slats. The slats help let light through and make the room look airy. There is also a matching buffet with a mirror over it and we installed a hanging lamp.

**Q. How did you decorate your living room?**

**Jane:** We got a light brown herringbone patterned sofa with a button back that goes with the curio cabinet we kept from our old house. We also bought a green side chair that has fine strips in different shades of green.

**John:** And a butterscotch colored recliner. That's the man chair. We also have bookcases in cherry wood, a cherry side table, a cherry computer desk with aluminum legs, a '40s-style boomerang glass table and a retro modern reproduction '50s chair.

**Q. What are your plans for artwork?**

**Jane:** That's going to be a work in progress. I like pictures from our travels because they have memories. We had artwork in our other house and we had it reframed to be more contemporary. We have original pieces from Japan, Malaysia and San Francisco in our living room. We love to attend art events. There are four or more crawls here a year. We intend to buy local art in the future.

**Q. Any challenges when you decorated?**

**Jane:** When you're working in a space like this, it's challenging to find furniture that is more compact yet still stylish. So many homes are bigger, and furniture is made large for these large McMansions. But I think furniture companies are starting to produce more compact piece for this type of home.

**Q. What's your favorite room?**

**Jane:** The living room because I like to sit on the couch and enjoy the view. We enjoy watching the snowfall and at the same time we can see the fireplace.

**John:** My favorite room is the House of Guinness, an Irish pub on Main St. I don't have to drive. I can walk home!