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Decisions, decisions

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By YVONNE BETOWT

Times Staff Writer yvonneb@htimes.com

Patience, ability to compromise needed when building a home

Lisa and Scott Huzar of Madison may feel a little bit like they're in the Army: Hurry up and wait. "Before we left town (for the holidays), we had to have all of our plumbing fixtures picked out," Scott said. "Three weeks later, they are still sitting in the garage waiting to be installed."

But he isn't complaining.

"Those things happen when you are building a house," he said.

John Allen of Southern Construction and Design agrees.

"We try to schedule things, but things happen - bad weather, someone gets sick or has a family emergency," Allen said. "Then everything gets backed up. If you wanted to have total commitment from a builder, you couldn't afford to build the house."

It's still an agonizing wait for Lisa, who is anxious to move from their tiny, cramped apartment.

"The process is so slow," she said. "You come over here and no one is working. It's very frustrating."

Allen says a builder often has several houses and possibly a couple of remodeling projects going on simultaneously.

"The subcontractors are not just working on that one house," Allen said. "They have several houses they are building and remodeling, so things don't always get done as quickly as the owner would like. Also, when the owners don't make their decisions when they should, it slows down the process."

Scott has new responsibilities at work that require more of his attention than when building began last fall. That has meant less time for making decisions on the house.

"It is a little more difficult now, but my biggest problem about some of the decisions we have to make is that sometimes I get stuck because I just don't like the options I'm given," he said.

The Huzars also realize that the holidays were not the best time of year to be building a home, even though it's not the first time they've done it. The first time, however, they had no children and lived in Florida near relatives.

This time they had to travel hundreds of miles with two small children to visit family in Florida for the holidays.

"The last time we built, we never left town," Lisa said. "We were at the house every day."

The biggest problem with their first home in Florida was when their builder filed bankruptcy.

"This time we feel so much better about John (Allen) than the other builder," Scott said. "We have a lot of faith in him."

The Huzars said they really haven't had any major disagreements with each other - yet.

"I'm sure that's coming," Scott said with a laugh.

The Huzars were surprised it only took them one hour to pick out the plumbing fixtures (tubs, sinks and faucets). The windows were also an easy decision once they discovered the arch-shaped ones they wanted were too expensive.

"The reason we have all vertical windows is because we found out what the arch windows cost," Lisa said.

The Huzars were familiar with Pella-brand windows, which are popular in Florida. Even though they said most people in North Alabama favor another brand of windows, they opted for the Pella windows. They said it saved them thousands of dollars.

The next major decisions are the appliances and light fixtures.

"We've done a lot of homework and know what we want," Scott said. "We've been to several places, but Lowe's is where we will buy most of the appliances. We've developed a kind of relationship with an employee, Danny Wellingham, and he has really helped us with them."

They also plan on purchasing most of the light fixtures and ceiling fans from Harvey Fest of In-line Lighting.

"Harvey was excellent and laid out where the light fixtures will go," Scott said.

Lisa likes the idea Fest will not only install the lights and ceiling fans, but will come back to adjust them if necessary, a service she said most big chain stores do not offer.

"Our ceilings are so high, Harvey said it would be difficult for us to adjust them," said Lisa. "We didn't have that kind of service in Florida."

The house is about halfway completed and the building process had gone relatively well until they saw the stairs, which extended farther out into the walkway from the foyer than expected.

The workers had to cut into the top part of the stairway to bring the steps in closer.

Another issue is the laundry room, which has some dimensional problems.

"We may have to change the layout because the appliances we want may not fit," Scott said.

Next for the Huzars after appliances - picking out cabinets, countertops, flooring and paint. Stay tuned.

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