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Designing Texas



designing frisco

by deann daley holcomb

SEEING CONSTRUCTION IN FRISCO IS NOT UNUSUAL, but what might catch your eye at one residential construction site is the anchor of a camera and the sight of a weekly television crew.

Welcome to the latest “Designing Texas Dream Home” project in Starwood, one of Frisco’s exclusive, master-planned luxury residential developments.

“Picking Frisco was a natural,” says Jocelyn White, founder, host and producer of Designing Texas. “We knew we wanted to be in a dynamic area that was growing with lots of exciting things going on. We wanted an upscale, well-conceived master-planned community and Starwood was a perfect fit. Our goal is to share with our audience how a “dream home” is built.”

At the construction site every morning you can hear hammers pounding like music as workers are busy building the frame of this 7,000-square-foot custom home, located in “The Buttes” neighborhood of Starwood at 4865 Orchard Park Drive. Passersby can see the prominent Designing Texas sign publicizing the project as the “Drais-Thompson Designing Texas Dream Home at Starwood,” the show’s building partners.

“Our first dream home project, with the flavor of the Austin Hill Country, was located in the Castle Hills development in North Dallas,” White said. “In Frisco we wanted something different like an old-world, very elegant and tasteful, stone feel. Drais-Thompson came up with an ideal design that was a perfect fit for what we were looking for.”

Peter Drais of Drais-Thompson Custom Homes, a local builder, says the atmosphere of the home, inside and outside,

will fit in comfortably with the backdrop of native trees, creeks and hills that are a staple of the Starwood development.

“We want to create a warm, inviting home, with lots of wood and texture, a unique structural design with multiple fireplaces, plenty of windows, high, vaulted ceilings and a view of the backyard and swimming pool from nearly every room in the house,” Drais said. “It’s a country-English style six-bedroom home. We’re having a lot of fun developing different ideas, like placing the media room downstairs next to the family room.”

What caught White and Drais by surprise was the huge number of Web site visitors who regularly view the new Frisco home construction over the Internet.

“It’s like Bob-the-Builder for grownups,” White said.

“You go to the website, click on the camera, and there you are, watching the home being built. Once it’s framed, we’ll move the camera inside. It’s really an exciting, interactive process.”

This is a publicity triumph for the city of Frisco with the local construction industry, vendors and contractors are getting exposure from the weekly television show and over the Internet.

“On the website once the camera goes inside the house, think about how you are going to be able to watch workers lay tile or wood floors,” Drais said. “Later, we’ll be giving viewers choices

like which counter tops in the kitchen or which two types of cabinet designs they like – it's a fun thing to do."

That loyal audience continues to grow. The eight-month

Frisco project is televised weekly on Designing Texas. A monthly average of 10,000 people visit the website. More than 15 percent of those visitors are participating in the Dream Home design selection process.

Frisco resident Ben Harrison says he has tuned in to the website several times.

"I was flipping around on the television and heard about the house in Frisco so I looked up the website," Harrison said. "I find it interesting, especially watching the home being built from the ground up. I'm looking forward to seeing what the dream home comes out to look like."

Website viewers like Harrison also enjoy watching the craftsmanship involved in home construction.

"From installing marble and granite counter tops, tile or wood floors in the kitchen or stone around the pool, viewers learn how important the craftsman's job really is," White says.

The Designing Texas television show has a distinct southern/southwestern flare that can't be found on other television shows. Now in its fourth season, airing weekly in Dallas, Austin, San Antonio and coming soon to Houston, the 30-minute program highlights the homes, garden landscapes and the lifestyles of the

Lone Star State. It spotlights Texas architects, builders and interior designers.

"Texas is more than ranches, boots and cowboy hats and this is a golden opportunity to show it," White said. "It is also a chance to honor the hard work of the vendors and sub-contractors who have key roles in the building of a home but are often overlooked."

The Frisco dream home construction should wrap up by the end of February. Right now workers are finishing the frame of the house. Then contractors will install the plumbing, air, heat and electrical wiring followed by mandatory inspections. Next comes the dry wall installation on the inside and the brick and stone placement on the outside.

"By Thanksgiving you'll see the home really take shape and then the fun begins with the floors, cabinets, painters and other interior design work," Drais said.

After the Frisco dream home is completed, White says an open house celebration is planned and then Drais-Thompson Custom Homes will put the house on the market, now estimated at \$1.6 million.

In the meantime, catch updates weekly on the Designing Texas television show, every Sunday morning at 11 am on WFAA-TV/Channel 8 or on the website at www.DesigningTexas.com.

DeAnn Daley Holcomb is a freelance writer living in Plano.