

Home suite home: Families welcome in-laws and boomerang kids with a

Larry Finley

The suite life might be just the thing for mom or dad.

The greater number of extended families today could mean a home addition is the right option for an elderly parent or an adult "boomerang" child.

Master suites, with their own bedroom and separate bath, are a given in most new single-family homes and larger town houses. An in-law or guest suite can give the sense of space and privacy needed when another family member joins the household.

The new Long Meadow Farms, in unincorporated Lake County near Long Grove, will have at least two custom homes with extensive in-law suites that couples are building for elderly parents, according to Curtis E. Perlman, president of Empeco Custom Builders, of Vernon Hills.

"The two in-law suites we are designing will have separate garages, entrances and kitchens," Perlman said. "Basically, they will be a fully contained, 1-bedroom apartments within the house. One will have an elevator in the garage, so they can pull right in and take their elevator right up to their apartment."

Even if an elevator isn't built into the house initially, a custom home can be constructed to allow for the installation of one later, Perlman said.

"In quite a few homes, we have designed them so that an elevator can be retrofitted at a later date," Perlman said. "So, if their in-laws do come to live, they can have that elevator."

This is accomplished by building a walk-in closet on the ground floor and another directly above it on the second level. The elevator can be installed in the shaft formed by the two spaces after the ceiling is raised, he said.

"We seem to be carving out a niche in the industry for these suites," Perlman said. "People have heard we are doing this, so they are coming to us."

Another recent in-law suite they built consisted of separate rooms on the ground floor, for a parent who could not manage stairs, he said.

"The most important thing is to make certain that the in-laws feel they have their own home," he said. "And that they have privacy, and they are not intruding."

Home prices will start at about \$1.2 million for the house and a one-acre site. Call (847) 996-0855.

"In-law suites have become a very popular option for us," said Robert Meyn, vice president of sales and marketing for Ryland Homes.

The demand is such that nearly all of Ryland's larger single-family homes can have an optional suite installed on the ground

floor, instead of a den, he said.

"You can't really do it in a smaller home," he said. "We offer it on a number of floor plans in a number of communities. We have people who buy it who may not necessarily need it right away, but want to build flexibility into their plan for the day there may come a need for that."

The den and adjoining bath are enclosed by adjusting walls to make a corner suite, Meyn said.

"It does not take any space away from the kitchen or family room," he said.

Some of the suites have been for elderly parents or adult children returning home, he said. Another ground-floor suite was customized for a handicapped child, and it had a handicapped-accessible sink and shower, Meyn said.

The price of the suite option varies widely, he said. If an extra bathroom is added, it could be \$5,000 or \$6,000. If the suite is just a reconfiguration of walls and rooms, it costs about \$2,000, he said.

For information on the nine Ryland developments where the option is available, call (224) 293-3143 or visit www.ryland.com.

At Evergreen Park, in the suburb of McHenry, Centex Homes is trying out a model with two master suites as standard. The Amethyst plan has two suites on the second floor of the 1,571-square-foot design.

While a second suite is an option in some other developments, it comes standard with a package of other upgrades at Evergreen Park, according to Laura McKay, marketing manager for Centex.

"It is laid out so they are on opposite sides of the building," McKay said. "So you have your own private suite. One goes to the right at the top of the stairs and the other goes to the left."

On the first floor, there is a great room, dining room, kitchen, powder room and 2-car garage. Both suites have a bedroom, large closets and private baths. The town house lists at about \$217,000, and has been selling well to both singles and couples, she said.

"If you decide you don't want to use the second master suite as a guest room, you can use it as office space or a family room," McKay said. "The storage space in the walk-in closet is really helpful."

There are three other two-story plans with 2 or 3 bedrooms, 1 to 2 bathrooms and 2-car garages. Prices start in the low \$200,000s.

Evergreen Park is at McCullom Lake Road and Blake Boulevard, in McHenry. Call (815) 430-2301.

Two master suites are offered in new town houses by Fairfax Development LLC at Violet's Farm in Darien. The 2- to 4-bedroom town houses start at about \$395,000, and range from 1,950 to 2,350 square feet.

The two master suites are found in the appropriately called "Master" design. One suite is on the ground floor, and the other is optional for the second level, according to Neal Singer, owner of Fairfax.

"There aren't many town homes in and around Darien that provide the ease and flexibility of a master bedroom on the first level, which is appreciated by many empty-nesters and those who want to climb fewer stairs," Singer said.

The ground-floor suite is suited for an older parent's quarters because it is accessible without stairs, according to Sara Herman, of Coldwell Banker, the sales agent.

"They have been very popular," Herman said. "Not only for those who want the first-floor master suite, but for families who want the in-law arrangement. It works out great. One isn't sacrificing the master bedroom for the other."

The first-floor suite has a standard closet and a walk-in closet, as well as a master bath, she said. The suite upstairs is the same except it has two standard closets.

The plan also comes with upgraded standards such as granite countertops, hardwood floors, breakfast rooms, mud rooms, laundries, full basements and 2-car garages, she said.

Options include fireplaces, additional bedrooms and finished basement packages with walkout access, family rooms, dens and baths. Many of the town houses will be built as duplexes.

Some of the buyers are local couples who are downsizing from larger houses, Herman said. Others have moved from Burr Ridge, Hinsdale, La Grange, Ottawa and Chicago.

Violet's Farm is at Cass Avenue and Clarendon Hills Road, in Darien. Call (630) 518-4760 or visit www.violetsfarm.com.

At Herrington Estates, in Bolingbrook, luxury single-family home buyers have the option of adding a complete suite for in-laws, children or guests.

The 2,893-square-foot Forestview model, for example, can be expanded to 3,232 square feet, and is a popular plan with buyers who want to tailor a home to their family's needs, according to Janey Amidei, vice president of sales and marketing for Kirk Homes. The 4-bedroom Forestview is priced from \$467,000.

The extra suite is created by converting the first-floor den, which has an adjoining bath and is next to the family room.

"Buyers can choose to add a super family room with 400 additional square feet of living space, and a guest suite with a full bath," Amidei said.

Upstairs, the master-bedroom suite features his and hers walk-in closets and a private bath, while three other bedrooms and a loft are served by a hall bath.

The main floor also includes a two-story foyer, living room and dining room separated by arches, spacious informal living area highlighted by a two-story family room, kitchen, breakfast area, powder room and a laundry room with access to the 3-car garage. There is also a full 9-foot basement.

Other two-story plans have 4 or 5 bedrooms, 2 or 3 baths, 3-car garages and starting prices of \$453,000 to \$506,000. Two other plans have guest suite options, also.

Herrington Estates is at Weber Road and Wingfield Way, Bolingbrook. Call (630) 771-1072.

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