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RELOCATION GUIDE 2024



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WARM WELCOME

*The Huckaby family transforms
a Mystic Creek craftsman*

*Text by: Virginia Brown
Photography by: Dero Sanford*





When Bonnie and Aaron Huckaby were looking to make the move from their longtime home of Dallas-Fort Worth to Arkansas, they quickly centered on El Dorado.

“Everywhere we went, people were engaging and welcoming and wanted to get to know us,” says Aaron, noting in particular two local women who live in the Mystic Creek Golf Club neighborhood. “Talking with those two friendly ladies about the area and Mystic Creek really sold us on El Dorado.”

Aaron, who grew up in Fort Worth and graduated from Texas Christian University, serves as the site director for the Camden Operations Facility for Lockheed Martin, which was the primary reason for the move. Bonnie, a University of Texas Longhorn, is a Certified Physician Assistant.

In 2021, along with their daughter, Lauren, 11, and son, Preston, 10, they packed up and crossed the state line. That June, they landed on a home in Mystic Creek that backs up to Mystic Creek Golf Club, a rolling, semi-private course nestled among the towering pines of southern-central Arkansas.

“We instantly could see our children growing up here, running around, riding bikes – there are a lot of open areas for them to play in,” says Bonnie. “We could see [other] kids around, so that also sold us on where we wanted to live.” Ashlee Allen with Southern Realty Group helped the family find the home.





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Mystic Creek, an 18-hole course designed by Kenneth Dye, Jr., was recognized as one of the best new courses by Golf Digest in 2013 and named the No. 1 “Course You Can Play” in Arkansas by Golfweek.

The serene setting was just what the Huckabys were looking for. “It’s a very tight-knit neighborhood,” notes Aaron. “We’ve enjoyed riding around on our golf cart, getting to visit with people.” Plus, it’s quiet, something the family isn’t used to, coming from a major metropolitan area.

Their craftsman home overlooks a pond and is surrounded by trees at tee box 12. The couple says the home already had a great design and layout for their lifestyle and entertainment needs. “We just wanted to update a few elements to reflect our style,” says Aaron.

They linked up with Julie Mays, a Ruston, Louisiana-based interior designer, and worked on updating the space into something contemporary and calming. One of their favorite rooms is the living room, with floor-to-ceiling windows, vaulted ceilings with exposed wooden beams, and cozy seating. “I love sitting in our chairs looking out onto the golf course, overlooking the pool, drinking our coffee,” Aaron says. “It’s very tranquil.”

Local remodeler and painter Carlos Lopez with C and C Remodeling worked tirelessly to sand the original dark wood throughout the house and update the walls and other surfaces to meet the Huckaby’s aggressive move-in timeline. “Pretty much every wall we painted a different color,” says Bonnie.

“Maybe the toughest aspect was trying to pick out colors, especially for the kitchen island,” notes Bonnie. “We envisioned



this [particular] blue color, and Julie was very patient with us in trying to get the right color.”

Finding the right countertop for the kitchen island also proved a lengthy process. “We went to so many places to look at different stones,” says Aaron. “The whole thing was a lot of fun, being in a new area and getting to explore.”

Eventually they found a beautiful white quartzite with blue-gray veins. “Bonnie had this particular vision for how she wanted the kitchen to look, and it proved to be a little bit more difficult to find the right stone,” says Aaron.

They also updated the guest bathroom with a custom vanity from Nick Sappenfield with El Dorado Cabinets. “He gutted the bathroom, built custom cabinetry, and also built a custom mantle aligned more to our style,” says Aaron.

Along with the painting and stone choices, another major undertaking was replacing all the lighting fixtures. “Julie Mays was also very helpful in picking out transitional pieces and determining scale given the open nature of our home,” says Bonnie.

Two local El Dorado firms, Advanced Electric and Glenn Mechanical tackled the electrical, plumbing, heating, and cooling updates.

The Huckabys put personal touches on the home as well. In the living room, they showcase several original pieces by Shelly Nealy, a Ruston, Louisiana artist. They also added a few of their own meaningful touches. “My mom is a wonderful artist. She’s painted several pieces for us which we’ve incorporated throughout our home,” says Bonnie.

Another designer the Huckabys worked with after getting situated was Magnolia-based Rebecca Gosnell with Elizabeth Rose Designs who helped them bring their home office vision to life.

Since Bonnie works from home seeing patients virtually, outfitting a home office was a priority. “I wanted to make sure we had a dedicated place for a study,” she says. “I love the study – and especially how both designers worked to incorporate meaningful memorabilia we have collected over the years.”

“Rebecca exceeded expectations and even customized some artwork for us, which makes the space even more special,” Aaron adds. “It’s inviting and very comfortable.”

The Huckaby children also found some perks with the home - their new house has a movie room and a pool in the backyard. And local landscapers with Aydani Gardens helped round out the feel of the home outside.

It didn’t take the Huckaby family long to grow accustomed to their new tranquil surroundings.

“Sitting out on our back porch, it’s quiet, there’s no traffic noise,” says Bonnie. “We love it here.” □

