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Berkshire showcases latest in luxury-home features

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Contrary to news reports of a housing slowdown, Empeco Custom Builders is not experiencing any dropoff in interest in its upscale suburban single-family residences. In fact, business has been so brisk that the custom builder recently unveiled its new luxury model home earlier than planned at Long Meadow Farms -- a community of 41 custom homes located in the Long Grove/Kildeer area in Lake County.

Since Empeco sold its last model at Prairie Trails of Long Grove, homebuyers have been eagerly awaiting the opening of The Berkshire, Empeco's newest model that made its recent debut as part of the Lake County Tour of Homes. This two-story, four-bedroom, 4½-bath residence features a brick and stone exterior with expansive views of a 30-acre nature conservancy that includes a scenic pond.

The Berkshire's arched mahogany entry door welcomes visitors, who quickly discover the spacious elegance of 10-foot ceilings and extra-large 8-foot doors. A walk through the huge gourmet kitchen featuring Wood-Mode cherry cabinetry reveals honed granite countertops and double islands -- one of which includes a vegetable sink adjacent to a built-in butcher block that is set lower than the usual countertop height to ease fatigue and make it easier to perform various kitchen tasks.

A large second-floor computer loft is one of the home's exciting family friendly features. It provides a wide open space for kids to do homework and surf the Internet while under the watchful eye of mom and dad. Audio and video feeds are pre-wired throughout the model, with in-ceiling speakers in virtually every room. The Berkshire's walkout basement offers even more living area and plenty of room to work and play with its extra-tall, 10-foot-high ceilings.

The upstairs master bedroom includes a luxurious 23-foot long walk-in closet with built-in shelving, while the master bath boasts heated travertine marble flooring and a distinctive waterfall effect done in natural stone. The oversized, spa-like shower showcases a rainhead faucet and an assortment of Kohler's newest products including body spray tiles.

Curtis Perlman, Empeco Custom Builders' Vice President, said "It has virtually every high-end amenity you can think of." The dining room, for example, features picture frame molding with an elegant stencil glazing, an illuminated cove-lit ceiling, and a walnut inlay while the first-floor study is graced with a coffered ceiling, cherry wood paneling and a floor that mirrors the design of the beamed ceiling in a unique combination of oak and slate tile. And topping off the model, like sweet cherries on a sundae, are multiple fireplaces and a four-car garage.

Priced at \$1.89 million, the 5,600-square-foot Berkshire is available for immediate delivery.

"Throughout this home, from the eye-catching exterior to the finest architectural facets, our famous attention to quality and details is strikingly evident," said Perlman. "This is the most exquisite model we have ever crafted, one that embodies everything Empeco Custom Builders stands for."

Perlman said that the opening of the new model shows that "we're responding to the needs of our customers, who want to walk through a completed residence that is representational of the kind of custom home we're capable of building for them. A big part of our business is referrals, and just in the past month traffic has been tremendous. A lot of shoppers are coming out and taking a closer look -- not tire kickers, but prospective buyers who are serious about purchasing soon."

Situated on the east side of Old McHenry Road, just a half mile north of Route 22 (Half Day Road), Long Meadow Farms is set on an idyllic and picturesque parcel of 76 acres -- almost 30 of which will remain dedicated open space. Each homesite includes city sewer service and is approximately one acre, on which Empeco Custom Builders can craft a one-of-a-kind, personalized home.

Lot-plus-home packages at Long Meadow Farms start at \$1.2 million.

For buyers anxious to move into a new home without a wait, Empeco Custom Builders has a new luxury home available for immediate delivery at nearby Prairie Trails of Long Grove, a community of 62 completely custom residences. The Alexander offers many upscale amenities, including four bedrooms, 4½ baths and a gourmet kitchen with a Bosch dishwasher and Sub-Zero refrigerator that are both attractively concealed behind high-end Wood-Mode cabinetry. The dazzling kitchen also features an island with a brushed granite countertop that serves as a nice contrast to the surrounding polished granite countertops, both of which provide plenty of workspace. The Viking dual-fuel, six-burner range with griddle and double ovens rounds out the well-appointed room.

Meanwhile, every bedroom in The Alexander has its own bath and its own walk-in closet, while the master bedroom provides a 23-foot long, boutique-inspired closet featuring a center island. The master bath sports travertine marble throughout, a jetted tub, glass enclosed shower and heated floors.

Priced at \$1,499,900, The Alexander includes over 5,000 square feet of living space.

"Prairie Trails of Long Grove is a wonderful, family friendly community," said Perlman. "The Alexander overlooks a conservancy where we planted 80 trees. No two homes back up to each other, so the buyer of this home will have a huge, private backyard with a western exposure that provides ample sunlight during the afternoon hours." **Empeco Custom Builders**

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