

AND BUILD How to Design Your Dream Home (in 25 Years or Less!)

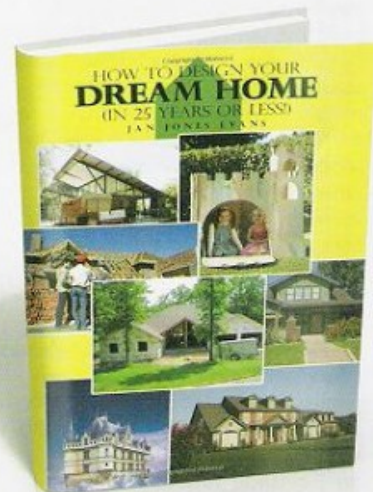
A BOOK REVIEW AND INTERVIEW WITH AUTHOR JAN JONES EVANS, OF SHELL KNOB BY DORI THOMAS



Since childhood, author Jan Jones Evans has been a home designer. As the daughter of a real estate developer, she has doodled and sketched since she can remember, but in 1986 it all became real for her when she and her husband were camping in the Ozarks. A trip into town on a rainy day changed their lives forever.

Twenty-five years and many many pieces of paper later, the Evanses are living in their dream home and Jan decided to share her skills, challenges and missteps in a book titled, *How to Design Your Dream Home (in 25 Years or Less!)*. The book is dedicated to Jan's many friends and family who cheered, assisted, and listened to her over the years and especially those, since the house was built, who encouraged her to write a book. The dedications show the
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love and support she has in her life and expresses the depth of the book's purpose, which is to help others through experiences and lessons learned. The author jokes that she wrote the book to help pay her mortgage – but visiting with her for a few minutes shows a deeper sense of purpose in her life. She put her heart and soul into the creation of her home and one can get a sense of her love of design with the turn of each page of this how-to-book.





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How to Design Your Dream Home (in 25 Years or Less!) is easy to read at a mere 163 pages, but is full of knowledge and advice. The author says on page 12 that she, "Wanted to write the book so that even the most inexperienced novice could pick it up and benefit from it." Jan gets right to the point on the important elements of home design and building. She lays it all out in her introduction, giving equal time to her successes as well as her less-than-successes, in an attempt to prevent others from making such costly mistakes.

During a recent interview in her beautiful home, the author shared that she started writing the book about a year after they moved into their finished project. "I could have saved myself at least \$100,000 if I had read my book prior to designing and building our home," she stated. It really did take twenty-five years to complete the home from design to move-in, which she does not necessarily recommend for others. She does suggest that anyone interested in home construction read her book a year or more in advance of starting the project. This allows time for the many major components and weighty decisions of such a lasting project.

A self-admitted "obsessive compulsive person who is very detail oriented," Jan wanted to be sure she didn't miss a thing. She worked diligently to cover all aspects of home design and building to ensure

everyone is happy with the finished product for many years to come because "there are no do-overs when it comes to major construction."

The book covers everything from layout and design to choosing the right location, assisting beginners and pros alike on how to make decisions about what goes in a home ahead of time. Although Jan does not have a degree in engineering or architecture, she has many years of life's experiences to work from: four home remodels and her dream home to complete her resume. She states in the book that she is "a regular person who has always been intrigued with houses and studying/drawing various floor plan ideas" and as she shared her story it became evident why.

Jan Jones Evans found her "calling" in education. Raised in Oklahoma, she enjoyed working in her father's office and started college as an Interior Design student. Sometimes meeting the right people at the right time changes everything and that is

exactly what happened to Jan many years ago. Tearing up as she recalls the story of the little girl who changed her life, she shared that she had a moment of clarity and knew that she was not in the right place yet. That meeting altered her career path and she's been grateful ever since. As a speech/language pathologist and special education teacher she was able to affect many special people. Teaching others comes naturally to her and one can recognize the experience in the book's firm yet cultivating and inspiring tone.

Jan is quick to mention that she does not take all the credit for the wonderful success her home has become. Praising excellent construction and contractor advice from builder Mark Welch, she encourages readers to "find a builder/contractor with that kind of a reputation. It can make all the difference in what kind of home you actually end up with." She also hired a professional architect to draw up the final plans when it was time. Since a draftsman is necessary, she advises as to what type of firm to look for and ways to make it easy on the bottom line.

How to Design Your Dream Home (in 25 Years or Less!) is also a valuable resource for anyone considering remodeling. In a short chapter devoted to those contemplating making changes to an existing home or looking for a fixer-upper to renovate, her advice is the same.



"Start from the beginning of the book and consider all the same areas as if you were starting from scratch." After the experiences of her previous remodels, she asserts that "adding a new addition to an existing home is more expensive per square foot than starting new," due to working around the structure and utilities, so more care must be taken and that care doesn't come cheaply.

Advice on working within a budget and "Going Green" are also covered. Your carbon footprint is a choice and there are distinct phases to the process during a build or remodel where those decisions can have APRIL 2015

an effect on many aspects including budget. Your impact on the environment comes with a cost and *How to Design Your Dream Home (in 25 Years or Less!)* touches on the value of preserving nature and precious resources. The options for wood, recycled or other materials are discussed, as is the difference between compact florescent and incandescent lighting. More ink is given to the final amount of efficiency when starting with the right building materials and finish up concentrating on conservation of natural resources such as water and electricity.

Jan leaves nothing out and plasters every detail of decision and design for every

room in the house, devoting a chapter to each of the main living areas including the kitchen and bathrooms. Storage, closets, safety exits, and handicapped accessibility are also covered. Jan leaves nothing out after wrapping up with decorating, color, furniture and art placement.

How to Design Your Dream Home (in 25 Years or Less!) concludes with the Evanses' dream home floor plans and the option to purchase engineering print building plans of the home. Helping others save time and resources while building their dream home is a wonderful by-product of Jan Jones Evans' many years of measuring, sketching and planning. She is going forward with the torch her parents gave her when they inspired her love of family and "The American Dream" of home ownership. ■

Find Jan's Blog and get your copy of *How to Design Your Dream Home (in 25 Years or Less!)* at www.customhomedesignonline.com www.authorhouse.com or visit amazon.com for Kindle version or hard or soft cover editions.