



Living...

A Mail Order Home



When you walk through Kris and John DeJean's beautiful home on Riverfront here in Yankton you may get the feeling you're looking at something out of a catalog. Well, you wouldn't be too far off. This grand and gracious 4,000+ square foot home started out as a 1914 Sears catalog house with a much smaller footprint.

From the early 1900's to World War II, Sears and other companies offered almost 1,000 different home models through catalogs. Between 1908 and 1940 more than 200,000 American families purchased a new home from the same catalogs where they purchased clothing, hardware, housewares and other domestic necessities. The mail order house gave thousands of Americans the opportunity to purchase and build an inexpensive home. Prior to World War I, prices ranged from \$146 for the Sears' Golden Rod cottage, up to \$5,140 for the Magnolia, the grandest of all the homes.

These "homes by mail" serve as a symbolic reflection of the time period in which they were constructed. Catalog homes were offered in a variety of architectural styles such as Colonial,

Craftsman and Tudor Revival. Buyers often customized the original plans to their personal preferences and needs. Many of these houses remain in existence today and are found in most towns and cities across the United States, including Yankton, South Dakota. Later homeowners modified exteriors, removed walls, changed windows, enclosed porches or made additions to the original structure.

In the DeJean home, the formal entry, mahogany stairs complete with gold cupid light on the newel post, stained glass windows, wide baseboard trim, and coved ceilings are all still there. Successive owners have enlarged the original footprint, holding true to its original integrity. The previous owners added an enlarged garage, reconfigured second floor and spacious master suite complete with private balcony on which to sit and relax while the eagles soar the Missouri River right in front of your eyes.

Kris and John wanted to continue to increase the footprint of the house by adding on tiers of decking around the home. Kris attributes the vision to John, and the work to a team of local contractors. The decking is built to observe the majesty of the Missouri River, as well as the natural habitats of several species of birds. John has thrown wild flower seeds down the sides of the bank, to a beautiful



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