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# Bird's eye view of southern Lancaster County

*Reprinted from the Intelligencer Journal*

Standing atop a Susquehanna River cliff, this barn-style home located in southern Lancaster County gives owners Paul and Shirley Risk a panoramic view from land that has its seeds in a William Penn grant.

More than 32 years ago, the couple purchased the property from Jesse Cutler, who owned the land which was part of an original grant from William Penn.

Then, the Risks literally and figuratively sat on it. That is to say, they made no improvements, but didn't hesitate to visit the property which Shirley dubbed "Eagle's View."

Said Paul, "We would, on occasion, sit on the point of the rock cliff watching the sunset and dreaming about our home someday blending into the setting and maximize our view."



The Risks made a commitment to develop the property in a way that would respect the natural resources and their flying friends.

When a wooded lot is purchased, there are many tough decisions that have to be made on what trees stay and what trees go.

"About the time we started to take trees down, Shirley stood her ground and would not let one particular tree be cut down, even though it presented a significant hazard to the house," said Paul.

After a year, the couple topped the oak tree and left 15

feet stand for what Shirley planned as a stand for a bird-house. The couple were then prompted to have a life-sized eagle chainsaw sculpture cut into the top of the tree, which Paul said, "watches over people who enter the property."

Additionally, it became a symbol for the home that Shirley calls "Eagle's View."

As in all barns, wood is the key to the design, and most of it came from the property, with exception of the timber frame elements which were supplied and erected by the crew at Lancaster County Timber Frames, Inc. of Lititz, PA.



**Paul Risk checks out the view from his new home.**

"We are not retired or ready for the rocking chairs," said Paul, who still does some designing for others in Paul Risk Associates (PRA).

Shirley, who helps out with PRA every now and then also enjoys volunteer work and traveling with her family.

PRA is a building/construction company. Some of the company's projects include the Lancaster General Hospital Health Campus and Willow Lakes Retirement Community. Paul has 50 years in construction and 35 years developing PRA, which is based in Quarryville.

The Risks chose to hire Lancaster County Timber Frames, Inc. to help make their vision become reality with the construction of a timber framed barn structure, which is open throughout the interior. Lancaster County Timber Frames, Inc. worked with PRA on two previous jobs, which were the Hamilton Barn in Willow Street and Plain & Fancy in Birdn-Hand. To continue the barn theme, the Risks even included a three-story silo, which is finished with stucco and dryvit.

"The first floor of the silo is Shirley's office and the second has an entertainment

table. The third floor, accessed by a ladder, is my office," said Paul.

The main living area is surrounded by large windows, giving the Risks a full view of the river. If these large five foot windows are not enough to take in the sights, the Risks can retreat to their three season room, which is adjacent to the living room.

Also adjacent to the living room is the kitchen, which incorporates the Douglas Fir left over from the timber frame. The Risks chose to separate the two areas by using an island highlighted with hanging lights.

Visitors to the house are greeted with a trio of stone arches. Two wooden garage doors are highlighted with the arches, while a similar one welcomes guests through the entranceway.

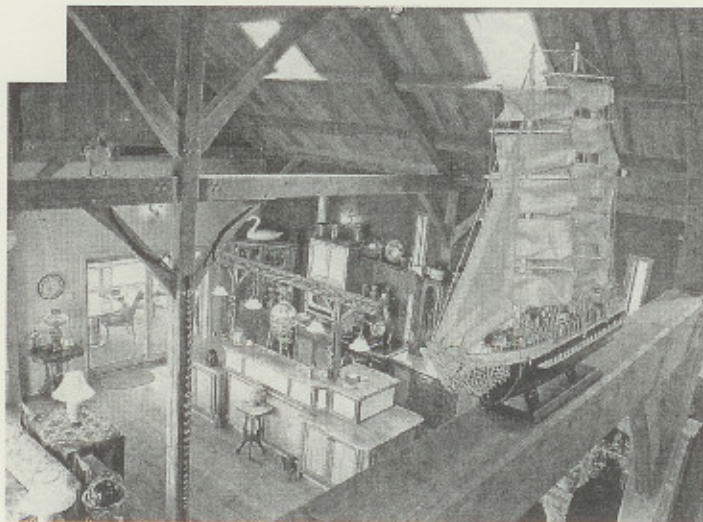


The Risks relax in one of the silo rooms.

Small, narrow windows that resemble "the old air slots, found in old stone barns," help to complete the front facade.

"All our life, we've designed for everyone else, so now we finally did one for us," Paul said. "This is a different house—you won't find many barns like this."

*By Barry Decker and  
Joan Decker*



View of the kitchen from the loft.