HGTV Smart Home 2026 winner is from Jacksonville

growthspotter.com/2026/08/14/hgtv-smart-home-2026-winner-is-from-jacksonville

Tiffani Sherman August 14, 2026



With a soft coastal palette and thoughtful architectural details, the exterior of HGTV Smart Home 2026 offers a welcoming first impression from the street. (Courtesy of Scripps Networks)

The winner of the HGTV Smart Home is already familiar with the Florida lifestyle the designers were going for.

She's 77-year-old Karen Hiers from Jacksonville, and soon she'll own a brand-new home in Apopka's Eden Crest neighborhood.

Hiers is a retired high school substitute teacher who has been married to her husband Bill for 55 years. They have two children, three grandchildren, one great-grandchild, and three cats named Tigger, Rags, and Jack.

Tampa-area-based HGTV designers Mika and Brian Kleinschmidt put their talent and creativity into the home Hiers won.



Tampa residents Brian and Mika Kleinschmidt, hosts of HGTV's 100 Day Dream Home, designed the network's 2026 Smart Home. (Courtesy of HGTV)

“We wanted it to feel comfortable but livable,” Brian Kleinschmidt told GrowthSpotter. “Our goal of this was to make sure the house felt like whoever wins it feels like they’re on vacation 24/7, 365, and it really does. When you’re there, you would not need to leave.”

Hiers said she is a fan of the married designers and their show, 100 Day Dream Home, and is a loyal HGTV viewer. She entered the Smart Home contest twice a day and wins the fully furnished, approximately 3,000-square-foot home and $100,000 in cash, for a total prize package worth more than $1.3 million.

There were more than 75 million entries in the contest that ran from April 21 through June 19, 2026.

Like many people who get lots of spam email, she said she did not believe the email notification saying she was a winner at first, but then believed it after asking her son to do some sleuthing, which confirmed it was real.



The backyard at HGTV Smart Home 2026 is designed for easy outdoor living. A resort-style pool with a swim-up bar anchors the space, while an outdoor kitchen and covered patio make entertaining simple. Lounge areas, a putting green and a movie-night setup add even more ways to enjoy the outdoors. (Courtesy of Scripps Networks)

While Bill Heirs is a furniture builder and Karen enjoys gardening, they won't have to do any work to this new place for quite a while. The furniture is included, and the backyard is a show-stopper that Karen Hiers said she particularly likes, with a pool, putting green, movie area, and outdoor kitchen.

The outdoor area was also a favorite of the designers.

"I would probably just hang out outside most of the day," Mika Kleinschmidt said.

Orlando builder Hartizen Homes built the house in Eden Crest, a new community combining both single-family homes and townhomes with resort-style amenities. Prices start at about $345,000 for townhomes and $475,000 for detached homes.

"The reason why we built the house and designed it the way it is … we want the sunrise in the front and beautiful sunsets in the backyard," Brian Klienschmidt said. "That's the exact way that this house is set up, so you kind of take advantage of both those."



The Kleinschmidts could have added a fourth bedroom, but they opted to expand the upstairs loft, which is the main hangout area and features a sports simulator. (Courtesy of Scripps Networks)

The home has three bedrooms and three bathrooms along with lots of living space with smart features throughout, including privacy glass that changes from clear to frosted with a flick of a switch, something Brian Kleinschmidt especially liked.

“I think you’re going to see that technology a lot very soon,” he said.

The home has a Florida feel and some local touches.

“We found a local muralist to do the powder bath,” Mika Kleinschmidt said. “We wanted to keep it true to the area that it was in.”

Brian Kleinschmidt chimed in, “There’s so much talent in Orlando, so we wanted to highlight as much as we could. I think we did a good job of doing that.”

It’s unclear if the Heirs will move into their new home or put it on the market, as other HGTV contest winners have done in the past.

“I would like if they would keep it, and if they do end up selling it, they can just contact us, because we’ll just list it for them,” Mika Kleinschmidt, a licensed real estate agent, said with a laugh.