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Timeless appeal





The last thing this family expected was a whole-house remodel, but now that it has been completed, it feels like it's always been home.

BY EMILY GURNON

When they went out house-hunting last year, Kristie and Troy Thibodeau had several things on their wish list.

The yard at the home they were moving from in Maple Grove was small, and they wanted a much bigger lot for their family to enjoy. They wanted a neighborhood that had a lot of charm and character to it. And they were decidedly not interested in buying something that needed work.

"We had no intention of doing a remodel," Kristie Thibodeau said. "But we couldn't find what we wanted unless it was already done (and) uber-through-the-nose expensive."

So how did they end up buying a home in Deephaven that, as Revision LLC's co-owner and managing partner John Daly described it, "needed the whole 100 percent finish to it?"

It started with a real estate agent who decided the Thibodeaus needed to get acquainted with Daly, his business partner and Revision, which specializes in remodeling projects.

As Daly describes it, they looked at two other homes in the Heathcote neighborhood of Deephaven. Neither fit the bill. "Everything was very white-washed, had a very 'cottage' look," Thibodeau said. "We wanted something a little warmer."

Daly and his team worked with the Thibodeaus on selecting a house and helping them envision the design potentials — sort of a "picture your dream" exercise.

"We went through the process on the front end before they actually bought the house and then we executed the full design plans and the building of it," Daly said.





The original house was built in the 1950s or early '60s, Daly estimated. "It was a typical ranch-style rambler of that era, with a walk-out basement, two-car garage on the front, three bedrooms on the main, one in the basement."

"It was a beautiful house," Thibodeau said. "It was impeccably maintained. We were fortunate to be able to do some remodeling to fit our kids' ages and our desires and our tastes."

But even with four bedrooms and around 2,000 square feet, the old house was small by today's standards.

"We over-doubled the house from a square-footage standpoint," Daly said. "We added a whole second story to the existing structure of the house. We



also expanded on the back side of the house to add another two-car garage off the back of the house and then a master suite (in back)."

First, the old house had to be "pretty much torn down to the studs" over a nine-month process, Daly said. The original home, like many of its time, consisted of discrete rooms that were very much separated from

each other, Thibodeau said.

So all of the interior spaces were redone, while keeping the footprint of the foundation.

When the Thibodeaus sat down with Tom Flint, the architect Daly had hired, they talked about what kinds of things they had in mind. What styles they liked and didn't like, how they wanted to live in the house, what was important to them.



Above: The original exterior from the front, left, and the back yard.

Top: The new master suite, an addition off the back of the house.



“He was fantastic because he nailed it right away,” she said. “We had a wish list of what we wanted to have happen and the first iteration was 90 percent there.”

They had a similar meeting-of-the-minds with the designer, Kristen McCormick of Studio M Interiors.

“She’d give me ‘home-work’ to go find lights or different things and literally out of the thousands and thousands of lights, we’d have the same lights,” Thibodeau said. “She figured us out so quickly.”

Thibodeau’s favorite part of the house?

You guessed it: The kitchen. Its most prominent feature is a huge, 10-foot island with room for five stools. Grays and greens on the tile walls and lower cabinets — earthy colors that the Thibodeaus like — contrast with the darker wood tones of the upper cabinets and the doors.

And naturally, it’s the central gathering hub of the house, Thibodeau said. “I’m a big believer (that) you figure out how to make a home-cooked meal no matter what your schedule — so the kids do their homework right there, and when we entertain that’s where everybody is.”



Top: The new open kitchen is a gathering spot with a 10-foot island.

Above and left: The kitchen and the dining room before.



The work of cooking is made easier by things like Thermidor-brand appliances and an “appliance garage,” a space where things like the mixer, food processor and steamer can “hide” instead of sitting out on a counter or on an out-of-the-way shelf.

The Thibodeaus also wanted a walk-in pantry off the kitchen. Daly and his team created it, using an actual piece of the old house: a Dutch door that had been the original door to the outside in the back. In the new house, it has been painted a rusty red. Also reused was the original “chunky wood” front door of the home, Thibodeau said.

The upstairs of the house contains the three bedrooms for the kids; the master suite is on the main level.



The fireplace is now part of the living room, above, instead of the old dining room.

The red pantry door, left, was originally the home’s front door.



Also upstairs is a kids' — and parents' — dream: a bonus room, which Thibodeau described as “half hang-out/TV/sleepover-type room and the other half as having rubber flooring and monkey bars,” plus exercise equipment and a climbing wall.

It has been several years since the Thibodeaus bought their first house, a 1920s Tudor in Minneapolis. They both loved that home for its quality, its attention to detail and its charm.

And although the Heathcote home is essentially brand-new construction, it feels similar in a way; it feels “timeless,” Thibodeau said. It accommodates nicely some of the family’s antique pieces that Kristie and Troy inherited — including chests that came through Ellis Island that have been transformed into end tables.

“They look like they should be here,” she said. ■

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