



The Home Stretch

The Shepherds' Smart Approach to Home Renovation Reaps Rewards

By Manya Kaczowski • Photography by Jerry Luterman

Dennis and Jacqueline Shepherd's new 2,500-square-foot home was the right size in 1992 — sans children. But two kids — Nick, now 15, and Hannah, 12 — and one Wheaton Terrier later, the house was bursting at the seams. "Basically, we had to make a decision: to move or to stay here," says Dennis. "We were getting pretty cramped."

They liked the location of their home in the Elmbrook area, so a remodel was the answer. The Shepherds did considerable research and went to local home shows to talk to contractors. At one show, they met Gary Sannes, president and owner of S. J. Janis Company. "What drew me to them," says Jacqueline, "was the color of their display stand! I liked the stain, so I went over to ask what it was."

That meeting led to a firm relationship between the Shepherds and S. J. Janis. In fact, the contractor has completed two remodels for the family, and a third project is a possibility. Working in phases has allowed the Shepherds to renovate their home in an affordable way that accommodates their changing needs over time.

First Things First

For Phase One, completed in 2003, the primary motivation was space. A great room was built at the back of the home, and the kitchen was expanded to include a breakfast area. But the home really required re-thinking from top to bottom, to best accommodate the Shepherds' lifestyle. Some rooms changed dimensions; others were repurposed; even the front hallway was widened. Skylights and large windows were installed, contributing to the new open, casual feeling, and a full basement was put in underneath the addition. "When we did the first phase," says Sannes, "we were looking at the future. We roughed in the basement plumbing, gave it higher ceilings, and put in egress windows."



The first phase of renovations included adding on a great room (opp.) and expanding the kitchen to create space for a breakfast area (above).



But before the construction even started, the Shepherds went to work. They reviewed plans and contemplated dimensions, even extending the great room another six feet when they realized the size wasn't quite right. "We actually spray-painted the grass to get a feel for what it would be like," says Dennis, smiling.

That forethought paid off; the Shepherds have created a home full of light, color and open spaces, without the "added-on" look that can sometimes result when the size of a home changes. In fact, carefully planned elements pull the overall design together, such as matching white trim on windows, baseboards and doorways. Rich oak flooring, installed by Malkin's Carpets, flows from room to room throughout the main level. And Dennis came up with the idea of extending the front hall wainscoting up the stairway to the second floor, providing a transition between the two levels.

The front hallway was opened up considerably, changing the

dimensions of the surrounding rooms. "Previously, the hall closet was in this space," Dennis says, standing between the open French doors that lead to the formal living room, with its large bow window and gleaming baby grand piano.

"You painstakingly pick things out, so a piece of your heart is in every aspect of the house."

— Jacqueline Shepherd

In the dining room, family friend Heidi Dutcher-Bohn painted the walls with alternating stripes of Newbury Port Blue in matte and gloss. The Ethan Allen cherry dining room set was selected with the help of local designer Kay Fronk. (See the Ultimate Home Guide 2008/2009.) In fact, Fronk shared her expertise throughout the home, helping select colors, furniture and window treatments.

In the kitchen, the first thing you notice is the expanse of light, pouring in from two walls of windows surrounding the breakfast area, and from a skylight. The kitchen is open to the great room, where even more glass brings in views of the backyard. The large space is perfect for entertaining, which the Shepherds frequently enjoy. Their home can comfortably accom-



The redesigned kitchen is bright and pleasant to cook in, with professional appliances, granite countertops and an overhead skylight (left). The customized mudroom (above) completes the first level.

moderate as many as 75 people. “Now we can have a big group,” says Jacqueline, “and I can participate.”

High-end appliances satisfy Jacqueline’s inner chef: there are Thermador double ovens, a Viking gas stove, a Sub-Zero side-by-side refrigerator and a Bosch dishwasher, set up off the floor so that it’s easily accessible under the 36-inch-high granite countertops. Plus there’s a Sub-Zero two-temperature-zone wine cooler built into a hutch across from the open kitchen counter. “My husband surprised me with that for my birthday!” she says.

The great room — Dennis’ favorite spot to relax — provides casual seating in shades of cream and red wine, across from a beautiful Lannon stone fireplace and television, built into a maple cabinet that matches the cabinetry in the kitchen. A lofty cathedral ceiling draws the eye up to the windows flanking the chimney. And a stately grandfather clock commands attention from a corner.

The yard is accessible from sliding doors off the breakfast area (onto a wood deck), and also from the great room (onto a lovely paved patio). The Shepherds spend a great deal of time outdoors in season, gardening and relaxing. “That’s the kids’ garden,” says

Jacqueline, pointing to a fenced-off square in one corner of the yard. “My dad made the white fence and the arbor next to it.”

Back inside, a mudroom customized with lockers for each family member, a laundry area and an office (formerly a small family room) complete the first floor.

Upstairs, the master bedroom, which was expanded above the great room, has oversized casement windows overlooking the backyard. Smaller casements above the bed have window treatments with a clever twist: Fronk designed them so that the bottom of the curtains only slightly covers the top of the windows, making them appear much larger.

Ready for Phase Two

By 2006, the Shepherds were ready to begin Phase Two, which resulted in a complete overhaul of the master bathroom, from floor to ceiling. Now, they have a custom shower with five separate faucets, including an 8-inch diameter showerhead in brushed nickel.

The elegant look of the cabinet, designed by Cabinet Craft from West Bend, was carefully conceived. “We wanted a





The second phase of renovations included a makeover of the master bathroom (left and opp.), with new furnishings and a custom glass and ceramic tile shower. The new look complements the couple's bedroom (above).

furniture look," says Sannes. "The front overhang has rope lighting underneath it," he continues, "which can serve as mood lighting, and also as a nightlight." That subtle lighting is Jacqueline's favorite thing in the room.

The shower, meanwhile, has two walls of glass and two walls of ceramic tile, set in a decorative mosaic, with another mosaic on the shower floor. The tile is from 21st Century in Butler, and Mike Kuhns from Horizon Tile & Stone in Waukesha did the installation.

The careful selection of contractors and thoughtful planning of each project in the Shepherds' stunning home has paid off: Phase One received a Gold medal from the Wisconsin Remodelers

Association (WRA) in 2004, and the master bath remodel took Silver medals in both the WRA competition and the *Milwaukee Home & Fine Living* 2007 Design Awards (see our February 2007 issue).

Planning Part Three

The Shepherds are already thinking about the next project: a rec room in the basement. "I would kind of like to put in an English pub," says Dennis, "with a bar and billiards table."

That's on the horizon, but for now, they're happy with their home. After all, says Jacqueline, "You painstakingly pick things out, so a piece of your heart is in every aspect of the house."