



Lovely bones

Shorewood remodel preserves architectural integrity of 1920s gem and updates space for 21st century enjoyment

A hand-painted mural in the solarium of Bruce and Antonette McDonald's Shorewood home depicts the four seasons. A tile-detailed fountain, which had sat dormant for 20 years, has been restored to working order.

When they were relocating from Detroit to Milwaukee, Bruce and Antonette McDonald knew they wanted to live along Lake Drive, though Lake Drive properties at the time were hard to come by. Three bids later, they became the fourth owners of a 1928 Shorewood home within sight of the Drive.

The minute they walked through the doors and saw the travertine marble floors and oak-paneled walls they knew this was the house for them. "It had such a presence and such good bones," Antonette says.

"We never had an old house before," Bruce says. "We like the character of the older homes, but now we understand the drawbacks. We invested in more expensive renovations in order to maintain that character."

"We lived in the home for five months before we began the renovations, and they have now been going on for over three years," Antonette says. "And we still have two projects left to complete."

They have embarked on a full kitchen and basement remodel as well as renovations to the master suite. These projects required a keen attention to detail in

order to make modern changes while staying true to the original architecture. "We focused on things like archways and panel details in keeping with the history of the home," Bruce says.

"From the doors to the door hardware, we tried to consider everything in order to maintain the integrity," adds Antonette.

Wade Weissmann Architecture, Ruvin Brothers Artisans and Trades, Burmeister Woodwork, Bonnie DeYoung of The Finial and Bryan Albert of the Bryan Albert Painting Studio worked with the McDonalds on the projects.

The kitchen underwent a complete



A mix of textures creates an Old World aesthetic of the kitchen. Modern amenities include a counter-height fireplace (not pictured), warming drawers and radiant heat flooring.

“Throughout the design process, we kept the traditional European style of the home in mind, always referring to the original materials.” Candyce Tice

overhaul in order to improve the flow of the kitchen as well as its aesthetic appeal. The McDonalds wanted to create a space that was light, bright and functional. The team worked painstakingly through the details to create what Antonette refers to as her dream kitchen. French Country and Old World Tuscan styles combine to create an inviting space.

“Throughout the design process, we kept the traditional European style of the home in mind, always referring to the original materials,” says Candyce Tice, designer for Wade Weissmann Architecture. “We worked to achieve a light, warm color palette. The foyer and dining room have beautiful original white oak paneling, so we wanted to integrate that feel into the kitchen. By incorporating white oak into the island and other mill work details, we tied the whole house together.”

A mixture of textures, from painted and glazed to stained and carved woods, natural stones, metal inserts, tile and glass, create a period flavor. “I love the combination of textures; the flooring patterns, wall treatments and cabinetry all pull together to give that Old World feel,” says Burmeister’s Joel Gauthier.

A counter height fireplace that takes the place of an old incinerator, a hall closet turned kitchen pantry and an island that seats six for dinner are just a few of the improvements to the kitchen. Additional conveniences include a large corner sink, three dish drawers, panel front appliances, recycling drawers, warming drawers, extra deep storage and radiant heat flooring. In addition, a computer station and a desk area provide plenty of work space.

The remodel of the kitchen not only improved the function and storage capacity, it incorporated unique design elements for a fresh aesthetic. Decorative tile details offer a floral motif with playful butterflies, birds and dragonflies. Random tile placements allow the brightly colored insects and birds to fly around the kitchen. In addition, Albert created additional views on the window wall by painting murals that offer a glimpse of a lush garden instead of the brick of the neighbors’ house. The creamy bright kitchen comes alive with greens, yellows, pinks and roses in

the painting and tile details.

In Bruce’s first-floor study, cosmetic changes were made to the fireplace and ceiling moldings, and built-in units were added to give the space a stately presence.

A solarium that adjoins the living room offers a spot to bask in the sun. A tile-detailed fountain, which had stood dormant for 20 years, is the highlight. Bruce was adamant about restoring it to working order. With the trickle of the bubbling water, the McDonalds can enjoy the window views or admire the intricately painted ceiling, another Bryan Albert project within the home.

“The four panels depict the four seasons in a style inspired by Giovanni Batista Tiepolo,” Albert says. “We used muted, weathered colors. I wanted everything to look like it had always been there, so I painted it and then kept toning it down to make it look older and older.”

In the basement, there is a media wall painted in creamy yellow tones and downlighting and uplighting, including ceiling-mounted fixtures, soffit lighting and decorative pendants, work to brighten the lower level family and entertaining area.

A wood bar with hand-carved details and left in the home by one of the previous owners now serves as a focal point of the lower level. The team repositioned the bar and built a back bar wall to create an original McDonald tavern experience. Rich red paint, a mirrored cabinet area, an antique copper collection and crystal pieces add ambiance to the space. Burmeister studied the carvings in the original bar in order to carry the details throughout key features of the lower level. The fireplace in the billiard area was refaced and a garland motif from the bar ties the rooms together.

Bathrooms on every level were renovated and the master suite on the second floor received a makeover. The entry to the bedroom was repositioned in order to maximize the space for the bedroom, bathroom and large walk-in closet. A creamy neutral palette, natural light, numerous light fixtures and mirrors help to breathe life into these areas. A mix of textures continues a sophisticated Old-World appeal. The walk-in closet with a curtained door to the master bath provides plenty of his and her



The focal point of the lower level is the wood bar with hand-carved details. It was left in the home by a previous owner. A newly created back bar echoes the rich detail of the bar.

space as well as privacy and an additional exit from the suite.

"The original layout was not user friendly," Tice says. "Now it flows much better and allows one person to get up and out of the house without disturbing the other. The design works with their active lifestyle."

In this approximately 5,000-square-foot home there are four bedrooms, each with its own bath. While the couple stayed true to many of the architectural details of the home, they had differing opinions on exactly how to replicate style and color in various areas.

"Sometimes my wife and I need a referee for our design decisions," Bruce says. "So, the easiest way to handle it was for her to do one bathroom and me to do another." He prefers art deco inspired plumbing and light fixtures, geometric and clean lines as well as intricate tile patterns, resulting in a black and white checkerboard tiled floor in one of the guest bathrooms.

Antonette likes a few more frills, so she painted her guest bath with black walls and white trim and added an ornate mirror detail over a European-inspired furniture-style pedestal as well as a chandelier.

The couple continues the legacy of the short list of owners by staying true to the architectural integrity throughout the renovation process. "We love the character and stateliness of this home," Antonette says. "You feel so settled and secure in a house like this." ❧