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Overdue update leads to new home and marriage

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It began the way many renovation projects do. Jim Corrigan, a widower who had built his 2,500-square-foot home in 1996 in an established subdivision in south Manatee County, saw a stone floor he liked in a story in At Home in the spring of 2010. He contacted the builder featured in the piece, Tim Macksey of Old World Master Builders, to say he wanted the same floor in his kitchen.



A rose garden welcomes guests to the home of Kim and Jim Corrigan, who live in an established neighborhood in southern Manatee County. The house is 2,500-square feet and was built in 1993. Jim Corrigan is the original owner and was a widower for seven years when he met Kim. STAFF PHOTOS /THOMAS BENDER

The contractor showed up to consult about the installation of the tumbled travertine floor in the Versailles pattern and then somebody uttered the four most dangerous (or potentially wonderful) words in the language of home renovation: "While we're at it ..."

You guessed it. What followed was a complete gut of the kitchen, a new laundry room, new master bathroom and guest bath, rerouting of air conditioning ducts, new lighting, window treatments and wall color and wallcoverings and so forth, including a new shingle roof and new windows that meet hurricane code. The stunning new double front glass doors at the entrance are frosted, etched and clear glass that are also hurricane impact resistant. And they're an art feature.

Jim Corrigan ended up with essentially a brand new house, including a colorful and inviting new rose garden at the front entrance.

But, during the six months of the renovation project Jim was also dating and at Christmas, he and Kim married, which began the process of blending two households and two visions for how to use and decorate the house.

Another vision was added when interior designer Jonathan Slentz joined the team to guide the homeowners through their choices and to suggest innovations they were not aware of, such as a wallcovering that would match the contemporary silverleaf chandeliers they selected for the master bath, foyer and dining room.

"There is a coincidence here, too," said the designer. "When Jim and his wife were looking at homes back in 1996, they saw a model in this neighborhood and were so impressed with it that they bought a lot and built that model home. I was the designer who did the interiors for Medallion Homes for all the models in this development. So when Tim Macksey suggested to the Corrigans that I come to the project, it was like revisiting my past. I knew exactly what could be done to this flexible floor plan to bring it right up to date in terms of style and convenience. "

The designer added 9-inch crown molding and deep baseboards throughout the house and gave all the door casements a 3 1/2-inch trim in white.

He and Kim chose a neutral color palette of taupe, beige, sand and some gray tones.



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In the guest bathroom, Kim opted for a spice-red wallpaper that references a red vein in the granite counter tops. In the living and dining area, the paint color is Sherwin Williams Softer Tan. A color called Macadamia is in the kitchen, laundry room and family room.

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Probably the most dramatic improvements came in the kitchen, laundry room and family room area. Besides installing the travertine floors that were the catalyst for the whole project, the kitchen was opened up and completely redone with granite counters, an onyx back-splash, cherry cabinets (by Cook's Design Studio), new stainless-steel appliances and a redesign that gives the homeowners more usable space.

Macksey extended the same materials from the kitchen into a luxurious laundry room with the onyx backsplash and quality cabinetry. It can double as a butler's pantry but the space can be closed off by a pocket door.

"Originally, Jim didn't see any need for a sink in the laundry room," said Macksey, "but when Kim got involved in the project, she knew it was a good idea to have it and we installed a stainless under-mounted, extra-deep one in there. We removed a wall in the kitchen to open it up to the rest of the living space."

And how about the travertine floor?

"Jim decided to extend the stone floor throughout the whole house, which is a good ideal because it's an open floor plan and the floor unites the spaces visually. Plus, it's just plain gorgeous," said the builder.

Slentz used the same marble from the kitchen counters in the master bathroom, which the renovation team enlarged and updated with new fixtures, wall covering and cabinetry, including a make-up vanity for Kim with concealed plugs and extra hidden storage. Hunter Douglas window shades emit light but ensure privacy and, best of all, they are remote controlled.

"We also raised all the counter heights in the bathrooms to 36 inches," says the designer. "That's a given today with any kitchen and bath renovation. Higher counters are much more convenient."

Corrigan, who moved out for four months during the renovation, says he originally planned to make some modifications to his kitchen.

"I saw the kitchen remodel as a do-it-yourself project but was having difficulty getting past step one, which was arriving at a basic design," said Corrigan. "Magazines provided ideas but weren't useful in helping me organize those ideas into a workable plan."

Is the Corrigan renovation finally finished? Maybe.

"Jim and Kim will probably move on to replacing some furniture and reupholstering other pieces that they already have," says Slentz. "They need to live in the house together for a while to see what little changes would make the style of their furniture their own. The best décor evolves over time."

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