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April 2014

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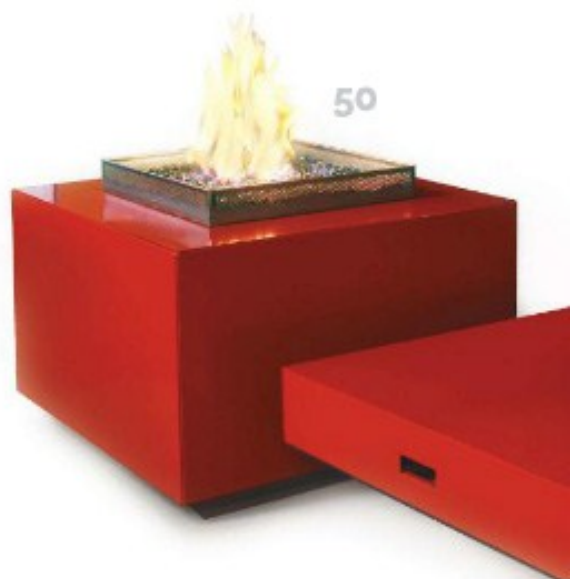
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COMPANY INFORMATION

Harth Builders, Spring House, Pa.
harthbuilders.com

Full-time employees: 16

Average annual revenue:
\$2.85 million

Annual remodeling projects: 78

Residential: 100 percent

Single-family: 100 percent

Design-build: 100 percent

PROJECT INFORMATION

Mayers kitchen and deck
Dresher, Pa.

Project cost: \$267,000

PRODUCT INFORMATION

Windows: Paradigm

Locksets and hardware: Schlage

Paint/stain: Sherwin-Williams

Cabinets: Wellborn

Sinks: Franke

Faucets: Delta

Range and refrigerator: Viking

Exhaust hood, oven, dishwasher,
microwave over: Miele

Tile: Sutherland

Flooring: Tabula Tile

Brick/stone/stucco: Owens
Corning and Southern
Ledgestone

Fireplace: Empire

Lighting: Sea Gull Lighting

Decking and railings: TimberTech

Pavers/patio: Techno-Bloc

Photos: Mike Irby

Finally, **FUNCTIONALITY**

Long-overdue remodel opens space, enhances home life for empty nesters



Before the remodel, the kitchen was a cramped, uninviting space. Opening the walls around connected it to the living area to create a functional, large space.

back of the house—in the family room, dining room and kitchen—is now where the family spends their time,” Riggall says.

CURVING ELEMENTS

Curved elements play a vital role in the updated home’s aesthetic. “You’ll see curves everywhere,” Riggall says. “We had to curve the stairway. There was a step that went down to the family room we framed as a curve, and we put in curved soffits, too.”

To create the custom curved soffits in the kitchen, the carpenters built the perimeters, which necessitated plotting the centers of the circle sections on the floor and charting the arcs with the given radii.

Once the curved soffits were drawn on the subfloor, the carpenters laid down MDF boards and transferred the arcs to the material, where the boards then were cut to shape and replicated with a router. A single top plate was glued and screwed to the ceiling and a double bottom plate was fabricated for strength. The team repeated this process four times to create the perimeter for the two inner and two outer soffit edges. The inner and outer soffits were studded with 12- and

Some homeowners remodel to create more square footage. Some want to make better use of existing space. Some want an upgrade to dated rooms, while others just want some sort of change. For one family in Dresher, Pa., it simply was time to remodel.

“We came across this remodel because the clients’ son was one of our field staff,” recalls Jeremy Riggall, CR, operations manager with remodeler Harth Builders, Spring House, Pa. “His parents had been thinking about doing a remodel to their whole house for a long time, but I think college tuition and other things got in the way. Now, they’re just about empty nesters, and they said it was time.”

AN OPEN HEART

“It began with a kitchen project, but as often happens, it turned into something much bigger and affected the entire first floor,” Riggall recalls. The outdated house had undergone few improvements throughout the years; it needed something new.

The client spent years thinking about what she would like, so she came to the table with many ideas and products. “Our challenge was to take all of those ideas she had swirling in her mind and pull them together so they looked good,” Riggall says. “We had to let some of her ideas go, we brought some of our own ideas in, and, collectively, we were able to design what you see today.”

The kitchen is the heart of the home and, as such, the clients wanted to open the space and enhance the functionality of the first floor. Harth Builders removed a wall, merging the dining room and kitchen. Because of this change, the back of the house, from the kitchen through the living room, is open and inviting. “They had never used their living room because it was in the front corner of their house, and life didn’t happen up there,” says Riggall. “Now they use it because it’s close to where life happens in the kitchen and dining area.”

New kitchen features include seating, multicook space, easy access to the dining room and easy visibility to multimedia in the family room. “That whole

PROJECTS: Design Solutions

6-in. studs, respectively, before the balance was framed out. Soffit faces were overlaid with 1/8-in. Lauan plywood to create a smooth transition between framing members; two layers of 1/2-in. drywall were installed on the curved sections to create the elegant curvature.

"It was definitely a challenge, but my carpenters really enjoyed the work," Riggall recalls. "It was a little outside of the box. It was a day different than your typical days."

PLENTY OF DETAILS

Another significant challenge facing the design team was how to support the slab of granite the clients wanted to put stools under looking into the family room. "They didn't like the idea of legs, and neither did we," Riggall says. "With corbels, your knees knock into them. We ended up making a Z-shaped steel brace underneath the granite that ran down the knee wall and sat underneath the piece of granite on the lower cabinets. This helped to carry the weight of the overhang of the upper

Curved elements, such as the step into the living room, are a common design theme.

cabinets. It took a lot of thinking and measuring to get the pieces right, but it turned out beautifully and we were able to give the clients that overhang beyond what typically would be allowed for granite, without extra support."

The remodeled space also has integrated tech controls and features. A rack in the garage holds components such as the cable box, receivers, amps, CD players, DVD players and other related equipment. With the help of a third-party electronics integrator, Harth Builders placed ceiling speakers and hidden speakers throughout. A sub-woofer is hidden inside a wall cavity. The clients can control their media wirelessly through their smartphones, tablets and remotes.

The use of stone throughout the family room, kitchen and dining room further ties the areas together. Alongside granite countertops, cabinetry and a tile floor that mimics hardwood, the homeowners ended up with



what Riggall describes as a "cool look." Glass mosaic tile, which is sealed and grouted to protect against grease splatter, comprises the backsplash behind the range.

Other details include pull-out storage for spices; dish drawers; general, task, accent and natural lighting; a picture window over the range; and ample contrast

through the use of light and dark colors and materials.

In addition to the interior work, Harth Builders removed the old deck and built a new, larger one. Because of the sloped yard, the team had to be diligent about ensuring the retaining wall was built properly. "It had to support the whole patio and tie in with the dimensions of the deck," Riggall explains. After careful calculation and execution, the family has a beautiful outdoor living space in which to further enjoy its home.

"I was over there about a month after completion, and they had their speakers going and music playing throughout the kitchen and dining room," Riggall remembers. "They just loved it. They're both people who enjoy having others over and sharing what they have; I think they're going to make excellent use of this space." **QR**

The kitchen and living area open into each other to create a large common space.

