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Classic Collaboration

RIVER HILLS REMODEL IS A TEAM BUILDING EXPERIENCE

BY JANET RAASCH | PHOTOGRAPHY BY DOUG EDMUNDS



Reclaimed Wisconsin barn wood and fieldstone create a warm, cozy mood in the great room of the River Hills home renovated by Wade Weissmann Architecture, Moore Designs and Peabody's Interiors.

In embarking on the renovation of their River Hills home, the homeowners came to the drawing board with family furnishings, previous renovation experience and four active children, now ages 2 to 11. They teamed with Wade Weissmann Architecture, Peabody's Interiors and builder Moore Designs in a superior collaboration to rework the interior flow of a 1970s home. The reveal is a thoughtful, relevant and beautiful family gathering place. José Carlino, design director, Peabody's Interiors, and Wade Weissmann, principle, Wade Weissmann Architecture, talk about the project.

M: The great room is a statement room.

What is it saying?

JC: "I think it's really about rustic and informal living. The room was transformed to make it cozy. When we first got to the room it had a very different feeling. We created the existing living room to be the dining room. Now this room becomes more of the public entertaining room because we did create a family room adjacent to the kitchen, which is where the kids live. This is more for entertaining or quiet time for the parents."

M: What are its special features?

JC: "The reclaimed barn wood on the ceiling and the reclaimed stone fireplace. (The fireplace) was moved from the corner of the room to give it a focal point opposite the bay window. There is a bar adjacent to the room, which was a hallway before. It serves well for entertaining since it joins the great room and the dining room."

M: In what ways do the interior design and architecture work together?

WW: "The flow of the house really sets the tone for the project. We reworked renovations and additions that the house had incurred over the years. We repositioned doors, windows and architectural features that allowed for better furniture groupings, art and decorative lighting. Then the palette of materials used for the floors, walls, ceilings and features could re-emphasize each space to work with its neighbor while heightening the experience of the interior design when fully integrated."

M: Describe the personality of the home design and the homeowners and how they mesh?

JC: "The homeowners are a young, vibrant couple with young children, and with a flair for style. The wife had supervised the renovation of several homes before settling in Milwaukee. Having lived in Texas and on the East Coast and being from the South, she has a flair for color — bold, and what we called zesty, decorating — adding modern touches to furniture that had been handed down from family. So it's a collection of family antiques, comfortable upholstery and formal shapes, but very informal fabrics and a color palette that's warm and fun or 'modern zesty.' We embraced what we had and added pieces that were more in keeping with the scale of the rooms."

M: What is the function of the hearth room?

JC: "It's children playing; it's quiet time with parents and children; it's reading to the children. There is always something going on or someone in the kitchen. It's the private area where the kids and family are together; the housekeeper, dogs and pets all are very comfortable there."

M: What is the color palette and how did you go about choosing it?

JC: "It sort of evolved. My experience is that people from different regions of the country have different tastes in colors. In the south, there are longer summers and (a tendency toward) brighter colors. We paired those with darker, richer colors for the Wisconsin winter to make it feel more comfortable. We used orange, reds, greens and browns."

M: What are the imperceptible elements of the architectural design that give the house its character?

WW: "Wherever possible we used informal materials to contrast formal geometries like in the gathering room. There we let the reclaimed barn wood bring down the space while still providing the soaring ceiling. The small vestibule entry to that room was given the perfect contrast by positioning a collection of porcelain against the reclaimed wood. The biggest change is really not recognized when experiencing the house, which is the addition of the pantry that helped push out the kitchen toward the family room, thus opening up the kitchen space into a well-lit room. Likewise, reclaiming a circulation spine along the stair from the master closet allowed the house to feel logical in the general plan organization."

M: If this house were a painting, in what style would it be?

JC: "Fauvism because of the bright, bold use of color. Architecturally our inspiration all along was an English cottage in the countryside."

M: How have the architectural changes altered the personality of the house?

WW: "Hopefully the context of the property and the style of the house from the exterior are reinforced by acknowledging the country influences in the design of the interiors. By refashioning the details with historic accuracy and simplifying the flow, we have made a more pure form of the existing house. When experiencing the remodeled version it's hard to imagine the house in its previous state. The design team wanted the new version to be logical and comfortable in its shell."



A fireplace separating the kitchen and family room was moved to an outer wall to join the two rooms and improve the views of the property from the kitchen. A lower ceiling over the island defines the two spaces. The family room ceiling echoes the dramatic ceiling of the great room.



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1. The children's bath was gutted and renovated to double as a guest bathroom for out-of-town visitors. With its arched openings, white tile and marble tops, it's kid-friendly yet sophisticated. José Carlino and Jennifer Schuppie of Peabody's Interiors worked with the homeowners and architect to create and execute the interior design scheme for the home. 2. A guest room is located on the second floor near the children's bedrooms. 3. "We wanted it to be glamorous and bold and seductive," Carlino says of the first-floor powder room. It's accented with dark purple wallpaper with gold star bursts, modern lighting and a high-lacquered custom vanity. 4. The existing bed and bedding were the inspiration for the girl's room. A large-scale floral pattern wallpaper gives the room a boldness, Carlino says. A cabinet fitted with mirrored doors add a modern touch. The room's 11-year-old occupant embellished the light fixture with handmade paper flowers. 5. Fieldstone fireplaces add to the English cottage feel of the home. The outdoor fireplace shares a wall with the great room fireplace. 6. A vestibule that includes a wet bar leads to the great room. M



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