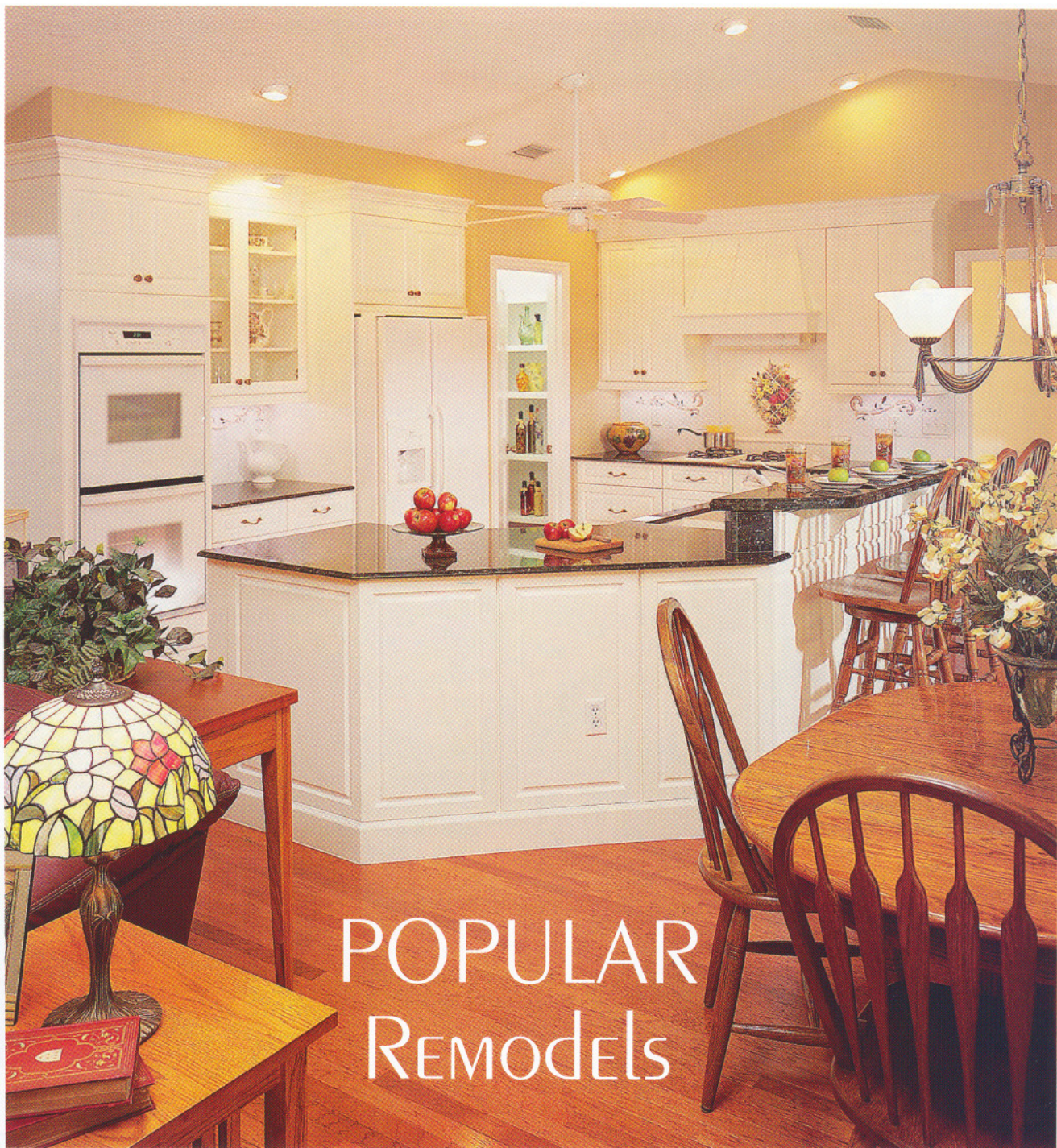


Homes & Estates

CHANGING PLACES

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POPULAR REMODELS

Photos courtesy of Michael Lowry Photography

By JILL KRUEGER Staff Writer

Bobby Moore, president and founder of Race Rock Restaurant on International Drive, and his wife, Susen, recently renovated the kitchen, added an outdoor kitchen and redid two bathrooms at their 3,500-square-foot home in the Cypress Pointe community in southwest Orlando.

The Moores are not alone in their quest to renovate.

Kitchens, bathrooms and master bedroom suites are the three most popular remodeling projects, notes Bruce Hartmann, president of Inspirations to Innovations Inc. in Winter Park.

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Photo courtesy of Everett & Soule Photography

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Homeowners are upgrading their kitchens and bathrooms with more ornate details such as marble and granite, as well as adding on master bedroom suites and making them into spacious, luxurious retreats.

"Clients are making them more dressy, detailed and higher quality," explains Wayne Forehand, president and owner of Architectural Elegance Inc. in Altamonte Springs.

Kitchens

The two top renovation projects that will add value to a home are kitchens and bathrooms, local home improvement experts say.

Homeowners choose to renovate for several reasons. The main reasons: The house is older and needs a

fresher look, or the owners are simply tired of the look and want something different, says Vern Keck, customer service manager for Handyman Connection in Orlando.

Another reason is the kids have moved away from home and dad springs for the kitchen or bath remodel to reward mom, Hartmann adds.

With kitchen renovations, Hartmann points out that the hottest trend is to expand and open up the kitchen.

Designers move the walls around to make the kitchen more spacious and also create more of a social area to interact with guests, family and friends.

"It also typically gives them more work area, more conveniences and a feeling of pride in their home," Hartmann adds.

PSG Construction recently handled a \$400,000 project that involved enlarging a kitchen to include an



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eating area and adding a game room/bonus room.

Homeowners also are going upscale with their renovations by replacing outdated fixtures with granite countertops, stainless steel appliances, additional lighting, wood floors and under mount sinks, says Paul Gidus, a partner in PSG Construction in Winter Park.

Further, he says kitchen cabinets are becoming much more detailed architectural features.

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Photo courtesy of Everett & Soule Photography



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Steve and Cheryl Eckard decided to gut the kitchen of their 3,000-square-foot, four-bedroom, three-bath home in the Woldunn subdivision in Lake Mary when they got tired of looking at dark green wallpaper and counter tops.

"We just felt like the kitchen dated the house more than anything," Cheryl Eckard says.

So the Eckards remodeled their countertops with Zodiac quartzite, a granite-like, but more durable, material, a new under mount sink, stainless steel appliances and additional cabinet space created by closing in a useless door.

They also added more molding to the cabinetry to dress it up, soft, romantic lighting under and on top of the cabinets, and a black splash with tile to tie in the cabinets with the countertop.

Meanwhile, the Moores redesigned their kitchen because the appliances that came standard with their 12-year-old house weren't large enough to accommodate their needs.

In fact, when they moved into their home at 9076 Great Heron Circle seven years ago, Susen Moore joked about her "Barbie" oven. So the Moores recently had the kitchen remodeled and replaced all of the standard-size appliances with larger Viking appliances.

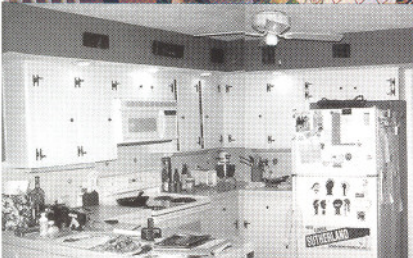
For convenience, they added an outdoor summer kitchen and equipped it with an exhaust hood, heat lamps, and the largest grill and burners Viking makes.



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The Moores chose a modern look for their upgrade, in keeping with the home's design. Building on the fact that the house features a lot of stainless steel, Bobby Moore designed a contemporary theme that is repeated throughout the indoor kitchen and a bathroom with an unusual stainless steel cone.

For instance, a 22-inch-tall stainless steel cone, 22 inches in diameter at the top and 4 inches at the bottom, holds up an island in the kitchen. Additionally, the bar stools feature the stainless steel cone design and



BEFORE

are 4 inches at the bottom, 18 inches at the top and 30 inches tall.

The indoor kitchen also features maple hardwood floors trimmed with stainless steel and granite counter tops,

with 8-inch black granite kicks at the base of the cabinet and stainless steel recesses. The cabinets also are trimmed in stainless steel.

"I just wanted something really unique," emphasizes Moore. "It's hard to find contemporary here. They (Architecture Elegance) had what I was looking for."

Bathrooms

With bathrooms, families are adding value by taking a dated bathroom and transforming it into an upscale lavatory.

A homeowner also can take a dated bathroom and make it larger or convert it into a small closet or bedroom, Hartmann suggests.

"They either have something that's out of style, too dated looking or a plain model put in by the builder," Hartmann says.

Homeowners are dressing up powder rooms as well as master baths, including vanities, sinks and hardware, says Forehand.

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Families are even getting fancier with their bathroom cabinetry. Forehand says they are adding more ornate detail by changing out the brackets and hardware beneath granite counter tops and carved cabinetry. This is a relatively inexpensive way to spruce up a bathroom, he says.

They also are adding high-end plumbing fixtures such as nickel-plated, stacked cabinets on top of counters, lighting and earth-tone tiles.

The Eckards decided to replace their countertops and under-mount porcelain sinks in their three bathrooms. They also added crown molding to the bedroom and master bath and removed the wallpaper, replacing it with beige paint.

For instance, the Moores continue the contemporary theme of their upgrade in the bathrooms they are remodeling. They did this in one bathroom by installing a pedestal sink held up by a stainless steel cone

that is 4 inches at the bottom and up to 18 inches at the top. They also installed black granite countertops.

Other families prefer to install a straight walk-in shower without a curb or glass doors. For instance, Hartmann has this design in his own house, with house plants sitting in the shower to give it a garden-type atmosphere. This type of a shower is easier to take care of and get in and out.

"We are trying to minimize maintenance," he says.

Master-bedroom suites

The "bigger is better" idea applies to master-bedroom suite renovations, as well.

Owners are more than doubling the size of their existing master suites from 250 square feet to 600 square feet, Hartmann points out.

With the master suite, the focus also is on creating a spacious, relaxing retreat, he says.

"The owners can come home and relax in a spacious whirlpool bath or luxuriate with a hand-held massag-

ing shower, or even a built-in unit with jets mounted in the wall."

With master-suite additions, manufacturers are making the cabinets, counter tops and commodes taller to accommodate taller people, says Hartmann.

In the master bedroom, homeowners are installing built-in cabinetry and recessed lighting.

Other popular master suite upgrade features include a walk-in shower with built-in seating, walk-in closet, garden tub and potty room designed to provide a spacious, airy look, Hartmann adds. He says glass block windows also have gained appeal because they provide privacy but still let in a lot of light.

In addition, several new finishes for plumbing fixtures are available, including new solid surfaces, colors and patterns from around the world, he says. Of these, natural stone is one of the more popular choices.

"Even in the newer homes they are adding more detail, which adds value to their home," Forehand says.