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# THE INCREDIBLE ENLARGING HOME

A perfect home becomes less than perfect as a family's needs grow. The solution? An extensive expansion.

BY CHRISTY SMITH

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PHELAN EBENHACK









Anne van den Berg

**A**nne and Egerton van den Berg were excited when they found their home on Little Lake Fairview 17 years ago. Nestled between the lake and Dubsdread Golf Course, the house was perfect, Anne felt. Almost too perfect. "It's funny. I told my husband that the only problem with the house was that it was perfect," she says. "I didn't want to do anything to it."

The home was built in 1951, and when the van den Bergs purchased it, it represented 1980s chic—complete with *Miami Vice* pastels.

"When we moved in, I loved the pink décor of the house. And there was one wall that was a lovely teal. It was beautiful."

Eventually, though, it started to seem, well, not exactly perfect.

"You have kids and discover what your needs are and what you have to do to the house to meet what you need," van den Berg says. And with six children, ranging in age from 6 to 18, what the van den Bergs needed

was more room—a lot more room.

That's when the van den Bergs teamed up with Paul and Stephen Gidus, owners of PSG Construction. PSG helped them get some much-needed elbow room by adding a substantial amount of space to this 1950s-era ranch home.

PSG started the initial remodel by taking out an existing carport and turning it into an elegant living room. In fact, a paint closet from the carport was converted into built-in shelving for the living room. The former living room was then converted into the dining room. Also part of this extensive home remodel were a trophy room for Egerton's hunting hobby; two bedrooms, one of which serves as Anne's study; and a three-car garage.

"The first renovation was so substantial," says PSG's Paul Gidus. "It had a huge impact. In addition to the interior changes, we added a courtyard. We had to do a new drain field. Every room had a little something done to it."

Also created was a playroom, which is indispensable in this large family household. The ample playroom is welcoming for both the girls (Olivia, 12, and Sophia, 6) and the

boys (Michael, 18, David, 16, King, 13, and Karl, 8); dollhouses and pirate ships peacefully co-exist.

"The playroom probably had the biggest impact," van den Berg says. "It reduced the mess level in the house and gave the kids a place where they weren't always underfoot."

While the basic layout of the open family room remained unchanged, new flooring and custom built-in cabinetry were added for the children's computers.

When it came to the interior design of their new addition, the van den Bergs didn't have to look far for advice. Edwyn Sloan, Egerton's mother, is also an interior designer.

"She really helped me with the paint choices, tiles and materials," says van den Berg.

"The addition took on an Italian feel," explains Sloan. "We wanted something that had a sense of permanence to it—like it was an old addition. We designed this before any of the other baronial designs in town. They have become quite popular. What we did here was really quite new at the time."

While Sloan helped with the design of





many of the rooms, including Egerton's trophy room, it is the living room that makes her most proud.

"I like the open feel we created in this living room," Sloan explains. "We really had to scour for tiles and the look we wanted to create. Anne and I worked together very closely. We did some antiques for big pieces that were not on the scene at the time."

It's the open feel of the room that Sloan likes best. "Most of all, I like that the [extended] family gathers here in this room ... and we open presents here and such."

As the family continued to grow, the renovations kept coming. Pregnant with their fifth child, the van den Bergs realized their kitchen would no longer accommodate the growing brood. Anne wanted one large space that could be used simultaneously by several people. And that's exactly what she got.

Three rooms were dismantled and turned into one large, open kitchen. The renovation increased wall space and improved traffic flow.

Working with Architectural Artworks, a design company, PSG had a plan that called for an Old World French-look that seemed lived in and vintage. Among the most noticeable features in the kitchen are the large, beefy beams that run across the ceiling.

"The kitchen beams are from a farm in upstate New York," Anne explains. "I love them because they have all these cool [markings]. There's a hook that we use that was in the beam originally. They [the beams] were more than 100 years old."

A custom limestone hearth and distressed pine cabinetry, finished in a warm honey stain and deep-red paint, add a time-loved warmth to the kitchen. Granite countertops and a deep farmhouse sink keep with the earthy feel of the space. To accommodate the large family, the kitchen is also equipped with two dishwashers, two ovens, a 48" gas cooktop, and a 36-inch refrigerator and 36-inch freezer.

Several task areas were designed to make the kitchen truly multifunctional. The kitchen has a main cooking area, a dining table, a work desk, a seating area for adults and an arts-and-crafts station, which was placed at a lower height for the children. The children's area also has a small sink for clean-ups and an under the counter refrigerator for snacks.

"The children's area gets used a lot. It really is the heart of our home," van den Berg says.

However, the renovation meant being without a kitchen for a substantial period of time—a major problem for a large family with young children.

"With five children, I had to have a kitchen," van den Berg says. "I couldn't use a toaster oven."

So a temporary kitchen was created in one of the children's bedrooms. The sink was set up in a closet and temporary plumbing was run under the floor, which was situated on a crawl space. A 220-volt line for the appliances was also run under the flooring.

"It was wonderful," van den Berg says. "I could still do normal cooking. It made life during construction bearable."

Temporary insulated walls were also installed to close off the construction site from the rest of the house. A temporary entrance for construction workers was created to minimize the inconvenience to the family.

The kitchen addition made the kitchen roomier and more efficient for this large family, but it also had, perhaps, some more tangible benefits.

"The kitchen renovation has changed the quality of my cooking because, while I enjoyed cooking before, I really love cooking in this kitchen," van den Berg says. "I enjoy being in there, so I always try something new. It has kind of inspired me to improve my cooking."

Even though their large home has been renovated and expanded, the van den Bergs





The guesthouse addition



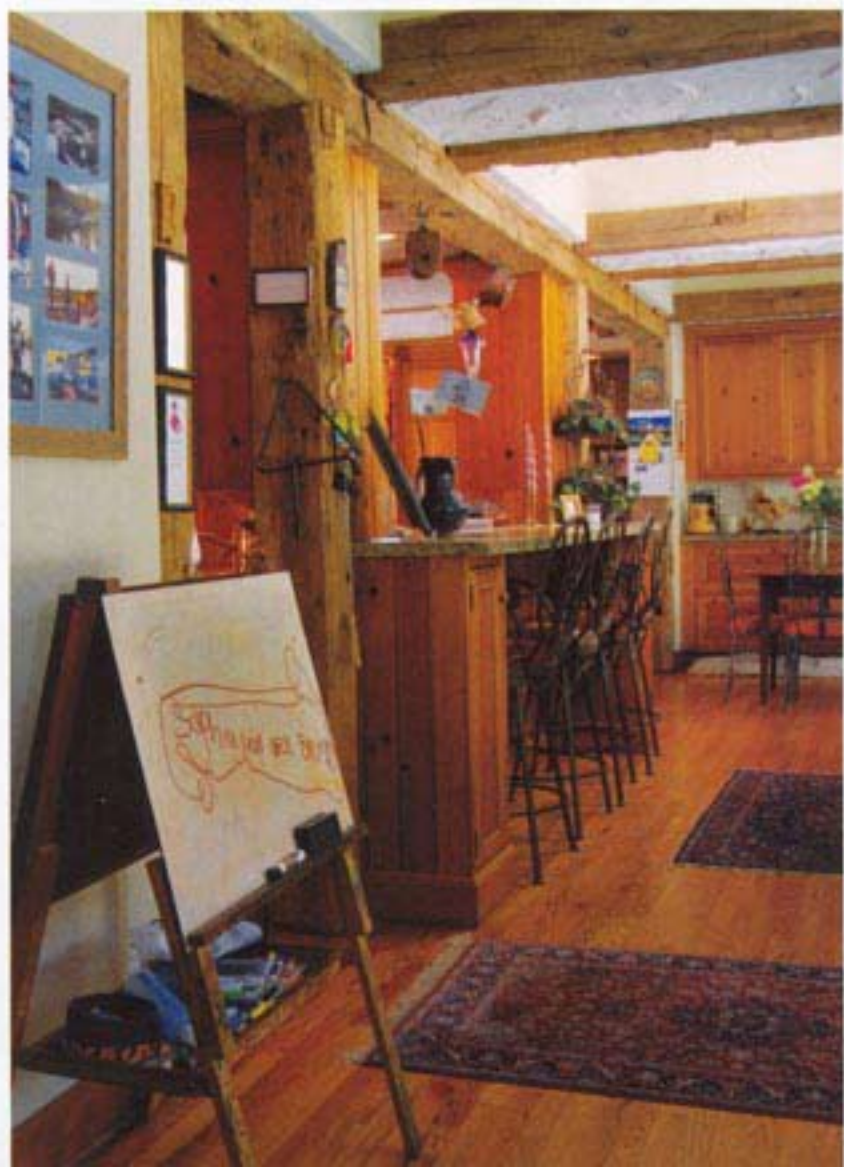


had trouble finding suitable recreational space for their children—especially for Michael, an aspiring musician. That is, until a small home next door was put on the market. The van den Bergs purchased the house to use as a guesthouse and added a recreation/music room.

The room addition was designed with a 16-foot vaulted ceiling made of tongue-and-groove, ocher-stained pine, which complements the heart pine in the guesthouse. Floor-to-ceiling windows line one wall to bring in plenty of natural light. However, the focal point of the room is the 22-foot built-in entertainment center, which houses a 65-inch high-definition television and two 32-inch TVs that can serve as monitors for computers and video games. Behind the built-in is a walkway that gives access to wiring for the electronic equipment.

Since the room was going to be used as a practice area for Michael's band, the van den Bergs wanted to ensure the addition was built with soundproofing in mind. "When we added the addition onto the guesthouse, we installed a two-by-four wall that was extremely well-insulated, plus we added sound board and drywall," Gidus explains.

"This is where I like to be," Egerton van den Berg says. "The room is basically sound-





proof. You can stand right outside the door and you could barely hear the band."

While the recreation room added an impressive 1,200 square feet to the guesthouse, it also gave the family some additional peace and quiet—and peace of mind.

"The addition next door drew the kids out of the house," Anne van den Berg says. "If I can't find anybody, I go look over there. It has also brought a lot of my kids' friends here, so I always know where they are."

In addition to the recreation room addition, the guesthouse received an overall update. "We did a superficial remodel. We didn't move any walls or anything," says Van den Berg. "We redid the floors, the bath, the kitchen; repainted everything. It's turned into a great little cottage. It's a guesthouse that's used all the time."

According to her, the family has finished its major renovations; now they are only planning aesthetic updates of areas such as the master



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bath, which still holds true to its original 1980s era, right down to the pink countertops.

The van den Bergs have slowly transformed their home into a dream come true, each time meshing practicality with beauty.

They also determined that the simple act of considering a redesign helped them better appreciate the home they have.

"Every time before [that] we planned a major renovation, we'd go house hunting, and each time we ask ourselves, 'Does it make sense to sink the money into this house or should we look for another?' And each time, we determined we simply couldn't find all we were looking for in another house," explains van den Berg.

She adds: "This is the place where most of our children came home from the hospital. They have grown up here, and there is so much joy in this house. We just couldn't find that somewhere else."

"We really feel connected to this home. In fact, my youngest daughter, Sophia, asked me, 'Where are you going to live when I grow up, because I'm going to live in this house.'"

"I said, 'Perhaps we can share it.'" ■