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SPC SPECIALS

reconsider your roof

This Florida family raised the rafters to give their home a completely new look.



Cardboard boxes often need an arrow to denote which end is up. A house shouldn't require the same graphic treatment. Unfortunately, the concrete-block abode of Paul Gidus and his family had a top that was as flat as its bottom.

Despite its horizontal, boxlike look, the house wasn't a lost cause. "Although we found things in run-down condition when we bought it," Paul remembers, "the house's structure was sound, and it was located in an up-and-coming area of Orlando."



before

When the homeowners bought this 1957 concrete-block rancher, they were confronted with a flat roof; an outdoor laundry room connected by a carport; and sparse, neglected landscaping.



Updated with a new hipped roof, enlarged windows, and an enclosed garage, this home sits comfortably within its lush Florida surroundings.

The Giduses chose to gut and update the 1957 structure and turned to residential designer Ray Wolters for help. Because Paul and his brother, Stephen, operate a local construction firm, Paul himself served as builder.

worthwhile changes

One of the first and most dramatic decisions involved the addition of a hipped roof. Positioned at a pleasing 30-degree rafter pitch, the new roof transforms the home's appearance. Paul and Ray also chose to keep the wide cornice of the existing housetop.

This element, along with the elevated roofline, gives the house a definite cap.

The concrete-block walls proved to work with the renovation as well. After attaching a metal lathe to the exterior, Paul applied stucco coats to create a smooth, durable finish that successfully conceals the mortar joints. Where new, more ample windows replaced the original ones, the homeowners enlarged the block openings and enhanced them by adding half-round stucco sills.

Next, Paul enclosed the carport and outdoor laundry room, turning this space into an official garage where the Giduses could protect their cars from the Florida climate. They also gained storage for the numerous bikes, skateboards, and toys enjoyed by their two young children.

new and improved landscaping

The Giduses' house wasn't the only thing affected by the renovation. The front yard, especially the main entrance, also underwent needed improvements. In place of the existing concrete walk, pale brick pavers form a meandering path that leads to the front door and stoop. Lush plantings of saw palmettos, ferns, and boxwoods line the path, softening its appearance.

Standing at the newly landscaped entryway that's surrounded by ancient live oaks and dripping Spanish moss, Paul offers solid advice to homeowners planning big changes: "Hire a professional remodeler and designer to help you create a place that will agree with your living needs."

Looking at his home's transformation, who could argue with that? ♦



A pale brick-paver walk rimmed with new landscaping creates a tranquil approach to the covered entryway and stoop.