

## The Renewed American Home: Keeping history alive in the 21st century

**This house adopts a contemporary look without sacrificing its old-fashioned charm.**

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Preserving the past while creating living spaces for the present poses a special challenge when renovating a century-old home. A dramatic case in point can be found in the yellow-clad confines of The Renewed American Home, which is the first remodeling project showcased at the annual International Builders' Show.

The home was moved from its original location on the corner lot next door, gutted and expanded. As a demonstration home for the convention, which ended Saturday, the \$3 million-plus home will be open to the public for two consecutive weekends.

And because this home features a major renovation in addition to new products and features, homeowners seeking ideas to enhance their own environs can gain an unusual perspective on home improvement.

### Digging in

A short flight of brick stairs leads to the circa 1909 home's gracious entryway, but it's what lies beneath that makes this home a rarity for Central Florida. Before the home was moved to its present location, the lot was dug 5 feet and an elevated foundation was built to create a spacious daylight basement. Along with a rear addition, this more than doubled the home's size to 5,439 square feet.

Wine with everything. The most luxurious accouterment in the basement is a climate-controlled wine room with storage for 1,500 bottles and a cozy cafe table and chairs for sampling and sipping. You might not have the room or means to build such a space in your own home, but you can go for the next best thing and carve out an intimate wine-tasting corner with a bistro set and racks to hold bottles nearby.

A complete wash-up. The jumbo laundry room boasts a wheeled work island and gift-wrapping station with dedicated drawers for ribbons, tape, paper and more. With all the mobile utility stations and do-it-yourself storage items available on the market, you can make your laundry room work a little harder with the right equipment.

### Moving on up

Upstairs on the first floor, a large kitchen; dining, living and entertaining rooms; a bold black-and-white toile-papered powder room; and a spacious guest suite take up most of the well-planned space.

Location, location, location. Instead of visitors being relegated to a remote part of the home or being bunked with the clutter and chaos of the family bedrooms, guests stay in a suite in the main part of the home. Keeping them close to the heart of the home's action will make them feel more welcome.

Service entrance. This house was designed for real-life families, and nowhere is that more evident than in the rear entry. It's close to the driveway and carriage house, so it's only sensible that this, not the front door, opens to a mudroom that serves as command central for the home. A large wall hanging with seven framed chalkboard inserts labeled with the days of the week has room for writing in schedules, reminders and grocery lists; a row of hooks below can hold keys, purses, leashes, coats and backpacks.

### Top of the world

On the home's top floor, the rooms are charmingly decorated with a period touch, in keeping with the home's turn-of-the-century Florida vernacular roots. Chin-high wainscoting along the hallway walls and old-fashioned stair rails contribute to the old-fashioned feel.

No vacancy. Despite the period ambience, the second floor takes a contemporary approach to design and function. This part of the house is a self-contained space reserved for families. With the master and children's bedrooms and bathrooms and a fully equipped kitchen that runs along the extra-wide hallway, it would be easy to stay up there for days on end, giving guests free run of the ground floor and the basement.

A circus atmosphere. In the girl's room, brightly turned out in vivid shades of pink and green, the designers capitalized on the peaked ceiling by painting it with broad awning stripes in alternating hues of green and white.

Blooming where they're planted. Simple metal planters are painted and hung on the wall as shadowboxes, each framing a handmade shoe.

#### Past and present

Today's emphasis on outdoor living and entertaining can be experienced in a small courtyard between the carriage house and the rear of the home. Additional alfresco space is under the roof overhang of the carriage house.

Torch song trilogy. One of the most appealing aspects of the home is the use of gaslights around the home's exterior and carriage house. Their flickering lights bathe the outside walls in a dance of light and shadow, harking back to a simpler time of horse-drawn wagons and glass milk bottles delivered to the door each morning. There's a practical advantage to this delightful anachronism as well: If the power goes out, this house can still shed some light when the sun goes down.

Natural gas also feeds tiny corner fireplaces in the master bath and carriage-house apartment, both of which throw off plenty of heat and atmosphere.

Master of disguise. Gaslights may add to the home's old-fashioned ambience, but a brick wall with a water feature at the rear of the home conceals a thoroughly modern amenity that would be welcome at any house when the power goes out. A massive generator is designed to meet the home's electricity needs. The wall shields the utilitarian eyesore from view and also defines the outdoor space and provides privacy for the rear courtyard and its adjacent covered entertaining area.

Screen gems. The home's sheltered alfresco entertaining space has a large gas-fed fireplace and a peaked roof created by the carriage-house apartment overhang. When evening falls and stinging insects come out, motorized screens descend upon command to shield the area.

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