

White, gray, beige and black color scheme and clean contemporary lines throughout the house are sparked by pattern in library sofa.

JOHN STORMZAND/staff photographer

Renovation takes prize

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could do makeshift changes or scrap it and start over."

They elected to start over. When carpenters working in the kitchen acted squeamish about crawling into the attic, Mary sympathized. "Think about a 30-year-old ceiling and what's up there," she said. Rather than send anyone into the dusty mysteries overhead, the Primeaus decided to take the whole ceiling down to open and brighten the kitchen.

The present high-ceilinged kitchen combines with the family room where Paul says, "We do 90 percent of our living." A pair of black leather sofas and a fireplace lend the room comfortable warmth. The Primeaus resurfaced the former dark brick fireplace with creamy beige marble to update and brighten it.

After redoing the kitchen and an adjacent powder room, they created a first floor laundry by borrowing space from the garage. "The down side of borrowing space was that then the garage was too small," Paul said, so they built a new three-car garage to house their cars as well as the Model T Ford Paul's restoring piece by antique piece.

With an efficient, updated white oak kitchen, ground-floor laundry, bathroom and new garage, the house had moved into the 1980s. "I knew we were starting to get civilized when my mother-in-law came in and took her coat off," said Mary.

After the kitchen was finished, the project kept moving of its

own momentum, and they worked with three architects to finalized plans for remaining construction. Paul credits Mary with originalizing the designs they used and with being "chief construction and project manager."

ALTHOUGH THE renovation evolved in stages and the Primeaus didn't initially have a master plan, a bright spaciousness unifies the decor, and traffic patterns flow with smooth efficiency. High ceilings, abundant windows overlooking the yard and lake, and a color scheme of white, beige and gray create a clean, contemporary home bathed in light and personalized by colored accents such as Mary's collection of antique posters. The oak floors in the entry and living room have been bleached white, and all painted walls are white.

"I only paint walls white," said Mary. "I paper if I want color," so smaller rooms such as bedrooms and baths in the Primeaus' award-winning house sport colorful wallpaper.

As a graphic designer, Mary's eye for line and color stamps every detail of the renovation. She knew she wanted to convert the former porch into a dining room and "make the living room and dining room one. I wanted a big circle so we could party." She chose to forgo lights in the dining room in favor of candles. "I don't like overhead spots. People look better by candlelight." She admits her addiction not only to graphic design, but to the delights of structural design. "If I had it to do over again," she

says, "I'd be an architect. Graphic designers do little tiny sketches that stay little; they just multiply but architects do little sketches that get monstrously big — they just blow up."

Although Paul works as a hospital administrator, he earned a degree in engineering before going for his masters of business administration. His knowledge of engineering came in handy when they decided to tear down weight-bearing walls. Every time they took down a structural wall, they had to build a substructure to carry the weight until the new wall could provide essential support. Demolishing old walls is one of the pleasures renovation. "Gutting is fun," said Mary. "It's such a power trip." Paul speaks of the financial realities of gutting the old and replacing with new. "It would be less expensive to build a new house because then you don't have the expense of tearing apart the old."

THE PRIMEAUS have — settled into enjoying the lake and the lot that first attracted them. Paul keeps a Hobie cat, a canoe, and a windsurfer for sporting on the water. Mary gardens, and together they enjoy the neighbors and the local wildlife including snarling swans and a friendly, fat raccoon who stops by for regular visits.

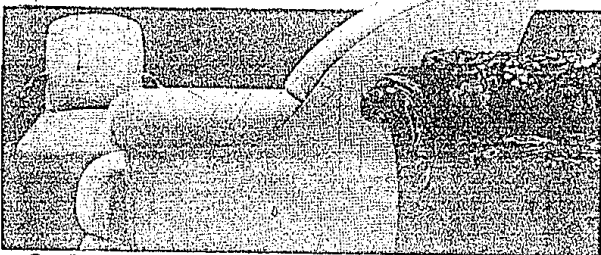
When pressed, Mary admits, she thinks about adding a studio and a second story. "I don't like sleeping on the first floor. I guess I have a typical designer personality. Designers never finish. They always want to begin again."

Expanded entry steps down into the living area.



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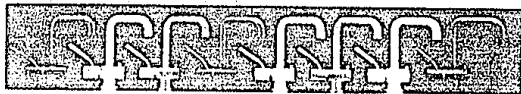
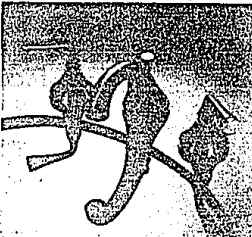
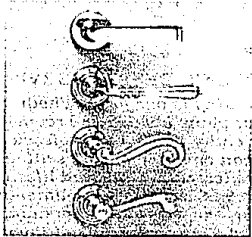
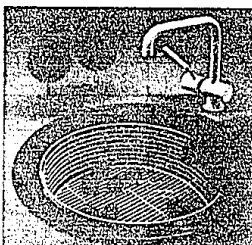
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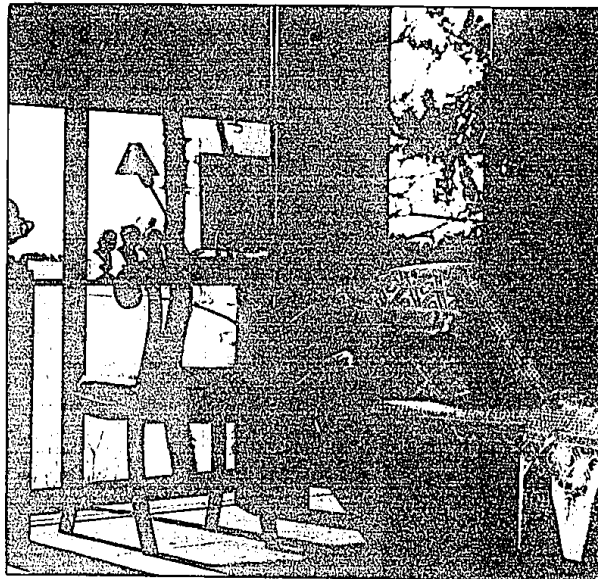


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