

Cooking up new kitchen is team effort

BY CORINNE ABATT
Special Writer

The kitchen and dining area were top priority when a Bloomfield Township couple decided to bring their 1950s ranch style home into the 21st century.

They liked their location. They liked the overall size of the house and the way the lot slopes down from front to back, giving them a lower-level walkout and great landscaping challenges. But the house needed updating.

The kitchen with its smallish windows, flowered wallpaper, cramped cupboards and too many walls had to go. The homeowners drew up plans for the kitchen. They considered various styles from all-white high tech to a more informal look with pickled wood floor and cabinets.

They deliberated for several years. Finally, the husband told his wife, "Either we fix it up or we move."

That's when they decided to call in a team of specialists - Kitchens by Lenore and Richards Inc. and Shirley Maddalena Edson of Maddalena Designs Ltd.,

On the cover: Designer Shirley Maddalena Edson of Birmingham shows the new dining area she worked on in an area house. Staff photo by Dan Dean.

both in Birmingham.

"It was team effort all the way," said Edson, who worked with the homeowners to establish a long-range plan for the entire house that coordinates all present and future updating.

"It takes vision by both the designer and the clients to do this," she said, adding that her clients have excellent taste and are fun to work with.

"Good chemistry is important." The kitchen at the front of the house, along with the pantry and adjacent powder room, were gutted and a new floor plan established. The foyer was expanded to include part of the former dining area and a guest closet in the

foyer was expanded and relocated. A large sunroom above the walkout lower level and overlooking a lovely backyard was recently winterized. New windows and skylights were installed.

The new dining area, between the sunroom and the kitchen, has wide archways opening to both rooms.

"I'm doing this a lot, knocking walls out and opening up the kitchen to the dining room."

This works beautifully because the wonderful materials used for this new kitchen are repeated throughout the house. That's part of the long-range plan.

For instance, rich cherry is the wood of choice. Not only is it used for all the kitchen cabinetry, but every one of the house's original birch hollow-core doors has been replaced with a three-panel cherry door. The cherry cove molding in the new kitchen was continued throughout the house along with new windows with marble sills.

"To me, one of the best parts of this project was my clients' willingness to go with such lovely cherry doors."

The use of empress green marble is another coordinating element in the long-range plan. It replaced the old slate floor in the redesigned/larger foyer where new leaded, beveled glass French doors open to the sunroom.

Behind the white Corian counters in the kitchen is an empress green marble backsplash.

"It is the same marble as in the front hall, only it's cut in six-inch squares, put on a 45-degree angle. That gives it more of a European look."

This classical European look pleases the homeowners, who love to travel abroad and collect things for their home. They found the beautiful lace curtains for the new kitchen at a small shop in the old section of Nice, France, before the remodeling started.

The kitchen floor is a ceramic that looks like polished granite. It matches the lightest shade found in the empress green marble. A row of tiny toe lights just under the base of cabinets throughout the kitchen adds an almost mystical touch of glamour. The busy flowered look has vanished. In its place are walls glazed white on white with a matte finish.

Still, in the midst of all that is new and exciting, the marble-topped coffee/dessert station between kitchen and dining area ranks as one of the most appealing features.

"It has become the buffet for the dining room," Edson said, explaining that her clients love to entertain and include their teenagers, lots of family and friends of all ages.

It has a built-in wine rack on the din-

ing room side and lots of cabinets on the other, plus a small stainless steel sink.

The new cherry, empire style dining room table seats 12 comfortably. Larger groups can easily expand to the sunroom just beyond.

The powder room and first floor laundry room were redesigned. The door to the powder room was relocated to be less obtrusive. A mirror covering the width of the seven-foot wall along with the crown molding, green marble splash and cherry cabinets make it appear much larger. Instead of an afterthought, it has become an integral part of the new classical look of the home.

New and larger cabinets, counters and an area for sewing were incorporated into the redesigned laundry room, turning it into an attractive work/hobby room.

"I think the most important thing a designer can do is come up with a concept. You ask your clients what do you want to achieve? How do you want it to feel?"

Here, the homeowners have already implemented a plan perfectly suited to their needs and tastes. The stage is set for an exciting future.



STAFF PHOTO BY DAN DEAN

A sink in sync: Marble and cherry wood are found throughout a Bloomfield Township house after the renovation by Shirley Maddalena Edson and Kitchens by Lenore and Richards Inc.

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