



let the sun shine in

A vintage 1922 Lake Harriet cottage is reinvented for a 21st century family



OPPOSITE PAGE Custom screen doors on the new deck are made like wooden farmhouse doors. The deck takes its shape from the angled garage addition below.

ABOVE In the space that was once a three-season porch, a sun-filled casual dining area now overlooks the deck and the bectops. Furnishings are vintage '40s and '50s, including a classic Warren Platner glass coffee table.

Diane Bielen and her young son loved their south Minneapolis 1922 cottage—a cozy space big enough for two, just off of Lake Harriet Parkway, close to schools and downtown, and within walking distance of the Linden Hills shopping area. Then seven years ago, Bielen married Bruce Bahreman and their blended family of four tried living in the original space. In a year, they began thinking about a move.

For several years, Bielen and Bahreman looked at land and other homes. They found houses that were larger, but also more expensive and in need of lots of work. "Finally, we asked ourselves why we were doing this," says Bielen. "We're baby boomers, so why would we want bigger and not necessarily better?"

As they considered their future, which may eventually include a retirement home in a warm climate, they decided to stay put now and remodel. Changes in the lower level were made in the 1990s to accommodate a home office, the boys' bedrooms, and a living room area. The kitchen was also modernized.

BY BERNADETTE BACZYNSKI PHOTOGRAPHS BY KAREN MELVIN



OPPOSITE PAGE The long, narrow bathroom posed a redesign challenge, but the space was compartmentalized to divide its length and to separate bathing areas from its powder room function. **RIGHT** In addition to a granite-topped center island, the new kitchen has a Viking range and built-in nooks for a television and microwave. Colorful kitchen light fixtures were made by Bob Gent, a blown-glass artist from Kansas City.



Then, the couple turned for help to Y+A Architecture in Minneapolis to meet their changing needs. Principal architect Martha Yunker and project designer Bryan Carpenter came up with a plan that carefully blended old and new. "The big thing we wanted was lots of windows and sunlight," says Bahneiman. "And we wanted the new space to flow, not just look like it had been tacked on."

"Diane and Bruce wanted to open up the kitchen and have a larger family room and a casual eating area," says Carpenter. He and Yunker began by adding onto the existing kitchen while staying with the home's vintage look. Recessed-panel painted doors in the addition harmonize with existing laminate doors. A new island, generously sized for two cooks together, merges spaces, as do stainless steel counters and brushed chrome fixtures. Roll-out shelves and built-in nooks for the TV and microwave keep clutter off counters. Hand-blown light fixtures are custom made in shades of amber and cobalt blue, repeating accents in the adjoining family room.

To highlight the family's collection of vintage modern furnishings—Bahneiman is a partner in the area Knoll Furniture distributorship, Bielen is an interior designer specializing in commercial interiors—the architects kept the detailing simple and atypical of a traditional home. In particular, Carpenter notes, the fireplace is open on the front and on one side, positioned so fires can be seen from the kitchen. "In a traditional plan, we would

have created more of a mantel and hearth." Adjacent to the kitchen, an open staircase joins upper and lower levels.

The biggest change was in the new family room. After eliminating the step-down sun porch, the architects raised the floor level to meet the existing family room, creating one large, unobstructed space. The old three-season porch is now a sun-filled casual dining area that overlooks the deck and trellis. Furnishings are vintage '40s and '50s, including the classic Warren Platner glass coffee table and the Eero Saarinen dining table. Lining the dining area's perimeter, oversized double-hung windows, adorned with simple plantation shutters, can be opened to catch the breeze.

The new deck takes its shape from the angled garage addition below. Bielen especially loves the custom screen doors that lead to the deck. "They were made like wooden farmhouse doors, so you get that wonderful slamming-in-the-breeze sound when they close," she says.

The addition has changed the way the family uses the home, especially as the kids grow up and the family extends to include in-laws. "The old living room has become a cozy conversation area, and the new family room has taken over as the main entertaining area," says Bielen. "The house still feels comfortable when it's just us, but roomy when everyone's here." ■

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