

SOPHISTICATED LIVING



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Arched doorways on all four sides allow the chic library lounge to serve as the axis of the first floor.



RECORD TIME

Following a comprehensive renovation of their 1970s-era home, “vintage” now only applies to their vinyl collection.

Written by Bridget Williams / Photos by Robert Burge

Surrounded by mature trees and a vast expanse of unblemished lawn with views that extend from their hilltop lot to the Ohio River, the wife said it was precisely this verdant and peaceful setting that drew her family to this home when they relocated during the pandemic from Chicago. In the same breath, she talks about a similar feeling garnered from a coveted living room view in their old Chicago brownstone. “The wall of the adjacent home was covered in ivy, so it gave the impression that we were surrounded by greenspace,” she recalled.

The couple had looked at another home for sale on the same street, but they felt that this particular property offered tremendous potential to accommodate an active family of six. The classic, proportional exterior belies the spaciousness inside. “Although we more than doubled the living space we had in Chicago, the house looks relatively modest from the street,” said the wife. The extensive renovation included adding square footage over the garage, finishing the basement, and reconfiguring the back of the home inside and out to take full advantage of the idyllic setting.

While the couple is adept at managing moves and renovations, the wife admits that this project's scope quickly snowballed. As a room

began to take shape, she said they found themselves saying, “Well, while you're at it...” to a team comprised of architect Chip North of North{dwell}, contractor Bill Wilkinson of Wilkinson Builders, and interior designer Ron Wolz of Bittners. In addition, John Korfhage is credited with perfecting the landscape, which included removing a large tree that fell across the street during a winter storm.

The aura of quiet elegance extends to the interiors, introduced in the foyer via a hand-screened grasscloth wallcovering. The pattern, Wolz explains, “is a subtle nod to the Ohio River.” The wife remarked that despite the initial sticker shock, the installation is one of her favorite aspects of the home. Blue hues are a recurring theme, expressed in the foyer via an oriental rug and a geometric stair runner from Carpet Specialists. The first in a series of perfectly aligned arched doorways that bisect the center of the home provide an architecturally intriguing frame for the river vista.

Similar to the setup of their Chicago home, the spacious formal living room does double duty as a dining room, with the table and chairs among the few pieces making the cut during the move. Wolz refreshed the room with a limestone mantel and ethereal blue walls.

A chandelier designed to resemble a kalidesope of butterflies in motion counters the substantial Bittner's-made dining table with an iron base and strapping.







The stone hearth and hewn mantle mimic the design of the original fireplace at the opposite end of the long enclosed breezeway.





Built-ins in the library lounge display the homeowners' vinyl and book collections.



The primary bathroom boasts a barrel-vault ceiling and access to a second-floor balcony.

Interior designer Ron Wolz of Bittners said he selected the foyer's hand-screened grasscloth wallcovering as "a subtle nod to the Ohio River."



Wolz achieved symmetry within the existing enclosed breezeway at the rear of the home, replacing a more Federal-style mantel with a stone surround whose design mirrors an existing one with a nineteenth-century mantel at the opposite end of the long space. A gold chandelier designed to mimic a kaleidoscope of butterflies in motion counters the rustic and substantial nature of a Bittners-made dining table at the center of the room. Along nearly the entirety of the home's backside on the first floor, Outswing Andersen folding doors with integrated screens permit true indoor/outdoor living and unfettered access to a newly installed covered limestone terrace that leads down the gently sloped lot to the pool lawn.

Perfectly aligned arched doorways on all four walls of a chic library-style lounge with seating for four allow it to serve as the home's axis. Built-ins with decorative brass mesh on the upper cabinets provide ample display space for bourbon and the couple's extensive vinyl collection.

A passthrough on the kitchen side accommodates entertaining, while mirror backs on the opposite side lend the impression of the same.

The kitchen and hearth room underwent a dramatic change. Existing dark wood beams, now sharing the ceiling's chroma, transitioned from imposing to interesting. A large island anchors the space, orchestrated by Architectural Kitchens. Tambour paneling on the side of the island facing the hearth room reoccurs on the accent wall surrounding the range. White oak cabinets deftly bridge the space between contemporary and current; their execution is not too trendy to be out of harmony with the home's eclectic mix of rustic and refined elements.

Although its primary intention is to be a hangout for the children, the grownups carved out covetable spaces in the lower level: a workout room and a wine cellar, both marked by a glass-walled entry. The latter boasts reclaimed wood on the walls and ceiling and a marble-topped tasting bar with a waterfall edge.

The second-floor primary suite, completely reconfigured into a tranquil retreat, boasts a spa-like bathroom with a barrel-vault ceiling and access to a balcony. Here, as throughout the home, Wolz is judicious with color, sprinkling in an unexpected hue via the upholstery, the rugs, or accent pillows. The resulting spaces lend a feeling akin to spending time running with an old friend: comforting and exciting. 