



A Place to Grow

It started as a simple remodel and developed into a major renovation—and now, this Cherry Hills Village home is the perfect spot for a happy family of seven

BY MARY BARTHELME ABEL

PHOTOGRAPHY BY J CURTIS

IN THE DESIGN WORLD, IT'S CALLED THE DOMINO EFFECT. You buy a home with the intention of changing just a few details. That turns into remodeling a few rooms and incorporating a small addition. Before you know it, the home is stripped to the studs and ready for a major do-over.

That's precisely what happened with Chris Bittman and Kenda Noble, who purchased their Denver home in order to put down roots and raise five children. But to say they embarked upon a complete renovation is an understatement. With the help of San Francisco-based architect Kurt Lavenson (who helped them renovate two previous homes), the couple nearly doubled the size of their 1970s home with additions and a basement expansion.

A Grand Gathering Place

The family expanded the home to add the well-appointed great room (*opposite*), or as they like to call it, The Ballroom. "Our home in California was built in 1932 and had a western ballroom," explains Bittman. "We wanted to recreate the look of that space here." Hand-scraped walnut floors, large timber trusses and rustic chandeliers from Laura Lee Design create the western feel; sofas upholstered in luscious Bruntschwig & Fils royal blue chenille paired with an eclectic mix of antiques keep the room from becoming overly themed. "We wanted a place to entertain, where our family could just hang out by the fireplace," Noble adds.

Literary Masterpiece

"We think all homes should have a library," Bittman says. And since the formal dining room doesn't get much use, the couple decided to give the space a split personality by lining the walls with custom shelves in which to display their extensive book collection.

It is a collection well worth showcasing; each and every book is signed by its author—including 24 American presidents. "The room is a great conversation piece for guests," Bittman says.

Also attached to a good story is the stunning mahogany ball-and-claw table, made by Bittman's great-grandfather around the turn of the century. A Pakistani rug from Soraya Rugs in San Francisco grounds the decidedly masculine space, and a crystal chandelier adds a touch of feminine sparkle.





Family-Style Dining

"There are seven of us, and more often than not, a few other kids," Noble says. "We needed a big table, and that drove the size and flow of the room." The commanding table, from Colorado Style Home Furnishings, expands to seat twelve. A circa-1890 Tibetan cabinet, pendant lights from Visual Comfort and a perfectly faded rug from Shaver-Ramsey complete the space.

Adjacent to the kitchen, the open and sunlit dining space is part of a long view from the kitchen to the great room. "This sort of flow works well throughout the house," Lavenson says. "Walking through that narrow passageway into the great room makes entering the space much more dramatic."



The Starting Point

Although the home itself called to the couple—"We knew we could be happy here," recalls Bittman—it was the lush, park-like 2.5 acres on which it is situated that really sealed the deal. "The lot was beautiful, with a pool and a great gazebo," says Noble.

As beautiful as it was, Bittman and Noble were still able to add their personal touch. They worked with Lavenson to renovate the tired pool, and with landscape designer Mike Eggleton to upgrade the gardens.

Revamping the home's entrance was also high on the priority list. "The original entry was uninviting and hard to find," Lavenson says. "We redesigned it so that it sweeps you into the home. Its relationship with the house is now completely different."

Light and Airy

The design of the charming family room started with the drapery fabric, Lee Jofa's Bambu Volante, which Noble "fell in love with right away."

Like other spaces in the home, this comfortable room is filled with an easy mix of new furnishings and collected pieces Bittman and Noble picked up during their travels. "Actually, I think the pieces collected us," laughs Bittman. "We like things that have a great story. Even if we don't have a place for an item, we're compelled to buy it if it has a great story and a sense of history."

Here, a new sofa from Moda Antica is flanked by a 1920s Spanish Revival console found at a shop in Pasadena, California. A simple sisal rug keeps the space light, while a handsome upholstered side chair and an abstract painting by Miani Carnevale from Walker Fine Art add a lively pop of color.



Fit For a Crowd

One of three kitchens in the home, the main kitchen is a shining example of form married to function. The large island, custom-made by Jay Minors of Golden Cabinets & Design, was inspired by a picture of an old French kitchen island Noble tore from a magazine. "Its construction was a labor of love," she says, "and it can seat a lot of kids for breakfast." With a butcher-block top, a large Vermont Soapstone sink and two dishwashers, the centerpiece brilliantly combines modern convenience with an Old-World aesthetic.

Lining the perimeter of the space and framing the Lacanche range, the rich red cabinetry by Aspen Leaf Kitchens keeps this hard-working room from feeling too serious. Custom leaded glass panels made by Denver's Bella Glass Studios add to the aged feel.

The homeowners love the room for its old-meets-new appeal, and how the space is perched within the house. "The room faces west and looks over the back grounds. It's up one level from the main floor, so you really feel like you're in a treehouse."



A Hostess's Dream

This additional full kitchen is just one part of the fully renovated and expanded basement that also includes a large family room, guest suite, gym and wine cellar. Leading outside to a pool and play area, the small but convenient kitchen allows the family to keep outdoor parties to one level. "We really enjoy entertaining and this has been a fun addition to the house," Bittman says. Pretty blue-and-cream tiles from Decorative Materials add pattern to the quiet Durango travertine countertops and warm wood cabinetry.

Grown-Up Retreat

What was once a dark, claustrophobic space is now a bright and spa-like escape. "The original master suite was large and in a good location, but it was sort of 'old country style,'" Bittman says. "Dark, with pine everywhere." The solution? Steal space from the attic to raise the roof, add skylights and paint the ceiling white.

With reclaimed tumbled marble flooring (which required the floor to be reinforced), Jerusalem Gold mosaic tile surrounding the tub and lining the back wall, and warm mahogany cabinetry, the space is pure luxury. A large trough sink from Sonoma Cast Stone keeps the space from feeling too formal.

The master bedroom is also elegant yet casual. The bed, with its pretty upholstered headboard and casual linens, takes center stage, while classic side tables, modern lamps and fun benches continue the home's eclectic, not-so-serious style. Rich grasscloth wallpaper and a Karin Schminke print add warmth to the space, with the help of a fireplace opposite the bed.

A Happy Ending

"When we first saw this home, we knew that a large family had lived here and that it was a happy place," Bittman says. "We don't have a single style that we favor," adds Noble, "but we knew we could make the home ours: comfortable and focused around our family." □



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