

February 2004

midwest home & GARDEN®

urban living

lakes, river, cityscape, arts scene
lure many to twin cities

throw a tapas party
global wares

a supplement to
Minnesota
Monthly





Natural light, warm woodwork, and lake vistas make the living room a well-used room for Colette Gandelot, foreground, Suzanne Butzow, and Dudley.

Jewel box

Artisans turn an ordinary house into an extraordinary gem

BY ALECIA STEVENS PHOTOGRAPHS BY SUSAN GILMORE

One of the joys of living in Minneapolis is the chain of lakes that winds its way through the heart of the city. Colette Gandelot had outgrown her home but not the lively neighborhood near Lake Calhoun. She couldn't imagine leaving the area. And she didn't need to when she found a 1950s split entry with a wonderful view of the lake and the marsh on its western shore. Gandelot, marketing director for Vujovich Design-Build in Minneapolis, immediately saw potential in the unremarkable house. "This house has the bones," she says. "On top of that, to get a city lot on one of the lakes with a view that will never change is so rare."

Fellow homeowner Suzanne Butzow, who had lived in the suburbs for 22 years, also found the urban setting compelling. "I love the energy of the lakes," Butzow says. "It's wonderful to be at home and see people out there every day of the year. The joy of this site is that you get a sense of the city but there's privacy, too, because the marsh is between us and the lake."

Those who regularly cruise the shores of Lake Calhoun closely followed the transformation of the 1950s split level.

Artists from Gaytee Stained Glass Studios made an art piece of the pocket door leading from the entry to the kitchen.



Gandelot and Butzow, both having worked in the art business and being avid art collectors, were committed to building a “jewel” of a home. They wanted the house itself to be a work of art—and it is. Quality materials, creativity, and craftsmanship were the hallmarks of the renovation, completed in March, which called on the talents of metalworkers, ceramists, stained glass artisans, landscapers, painters, cabinetmakers, and stone masons, as well as the architect and builders.

However, the two did not want to tear down the existing house or radically alter its footprint in order to

build their jewel box. Butzow says the house felt proportional to the size of the lot and the character of the neighborhood. Architect Jerry Allan, of Criteria Architects in Afton, added only a conservatory on the main floor. Allan used the horizontal nature of the original structure to create a Prairie-style house made of stucco, stone and wood. When he showed Gandelot and Butzow his model, they said, “This is our home!”

Inside, Allan used the concept of *enfilade* to create vistas that extend the length of the house, so that one can see through the conservatory, dining room, living room,



AFTER

and front veranda, to the marsh and lake views beyond. Gandelot and Butzow have relegated those spaces as public, because of their design and location, which make them visible from the street.

Because of its visibility, the renovation became a kind of communal experience. Daily walkers kept an eye on the project, often stopping to remark on the latest progress. In nearby coffeeshops, conversation about "that Prairie house on Calhoun" could be heard over cappuccinos. For the owners and Vujovich team, listening to the suggestions and comments of passersby was an



BEFORE

Eric Rattan's detailed ceramic fireplace surround in the conservatory that captures the idea of "leaves falling from the sky and puddling onto the floor." The artists were given few parameters so as not to quiet their Muses. The house also features the work of metal artist Pete Vanni, whose work includes the curving dragonfly bench on the front veranda; Brian Leo, who hand-forged the interior hardware in warm, sensual bronze; Laura McCaul, who created an exquisite expression of the marsh as the fireplace surround in the library; artisans from Gaytee Stained Glass Studios, whose work graces a

door and a window, and a team of cabinetmakers and craftspeople from Vujovich.

This is a home suffused with art. It was created as a collaboration between talented hearts and minds that shared a common vision laid out by the homeowners. It is a house that artists rebuilt. ■

Alecia Stevens is developing her interests in writing and human development as a graduate student after a 25-year career in fashion and interior design.

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT RESOURCES NAMED IN THIS ARTICLE, PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 164.

The bathroom connecting the master suites is accented by backlit stained glass. An unexpected, playful touch to the tub is fiber optic lighting designed to shimmer with the astrological signs of the homeowners and their dog.





STORYTELLING WITH CERAMICS

The fireplace surround in the library was set aside for blackware artist Laura McCaul. Colette Gandelot and Suzanne Butzow had been impressed by her work since first seeing her tiles exhibited at Gallery 360 in Minneapolis.

Originally a printmaker, McCaul turned her attention to clay. She has found her artistic home with blackware, an ancient firing process used by American Indians in which earthy tones and flashings are produced by throwing sawdust into the kiln at the end of the firing. Carbon released from the burning sawdust is absorbed by the clay. To create additional interest, Laura adds subtle color. Ultimately, she surrenders to the alchemical

process of firing for the final result.

McCaul is most inspired by nature. She and her husband, Jim McCaul, a furnituremaker, moved to rural Wisconsin several years ago. For this project, she realized that she shared an important commonality with Gandelot and Butzow: views of marshes. This became the inspiration for the fireplace surround.

"The morning sun rising up over the lake and marsh is breathtaking," says Butzow. A dark red sun takes a prominent position at the top center of the work. Building from the water up, fish swim near the bottom, with iris and other plants growing upward, inviting birds to perch on their branches and leaves.

Most of McCaul's

work is commissioned and is a shared expression of both client and artist. A story Butzow had related about pesky squirrels that had troubled her at her last house inspired McCaul to include one at the lower right of the scene. This collaborative and creative relationship may best embody the original and true meaning of Arts and Crafts.

—Alecia Stevens

