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RENOVATION OF THE YEAR

Beneath detracting layers of previous renovations, Judy and Bob Hendel found a house with good bones for a remodel of their own

by ***Lee Cutrone*** / *photography by* ***Sara Essex Bradley***

Facing page: The living room's furniture, from the couples' previous home, was a perfect fit for the space. Judy chose a subtle pink for the ceiling (and for the ceilings in the dining room and foyer) to highlight the white of the medallion and the moldings. The mantel, from The Bank, was retrofitted for the fireplace. The chandelier is from Kevin Stone Antiques.

summer

When empty nesters Judy and Bob Hendel relocated to New Orleans from Miami so Bob could head up Tulane University's Heart & Vascular Institute, they originally thought they wanted to downsize to a smaller home. But after touring a huge Victorian Uptown, the Hendels put aside any notions of compact living. Both Judy and Bob were taken with the beautiful architectural details of the house, and the property conveniently included a carriage house where they could live while renovating.

"The original bones were good from the get-go," says Judy. "When I walked in the door and saw the medallions, I had never seen anything like them. They were sculpture. I was sold."

Other amenities that enticed the Hendels were the sizeable pool area, where they could build an outdoor kitchen like the one they enjoyed in Miami, and the house's legacy of artist owners. It was originally owned by well-known artist and Tulane professor William Woodward and later by artist and Tulane professor Pat Trivigno and his wife, Eva, also an artist. It was Trivigno's studio that drew Judy, herself a painter of vibrantly colored large-scale florals and underwater scenes, to view the listing in the first place.

Facing page: The kitchen's cabinetry by hides appliances as well as a pantry that includes a desk area. The island is topped with Quartzite. Bottom: Judy had the dining room table made with bargeboard taken out of the house during the renovation. Table made by Chip Martinson of Monkey Wid-A-Fez. The chandelier of vintage Venetian glass is by Louise Gaskill.

Top: Judy spray painted the foyer's existing chandelier the same color as the walls. "The monochromatic look updates the space and accentuates the glorious staircase," says Judy. The painting above the stairs is by Judy. Facing page: The wine room combines a masculine palette of navy blue and brown. The tufted leather chair, a favorite of Bob's, is from Restoration Hardware. Light fixture, from Arhaus. The painting above the mantel is by Judy.

Facing page: Top, left: The house was originally built by well-known artist, architect, educator and preservationist William Woodward. Top, right: Reclaimed bricks were used for the steps outside the combined kitchen and family room. Judy continued the same "Nantucket blue" accent color used inside for visual continuity. The first floor was extended four feet and is now flush with the balcony level. Bottom, left:The Hendels transformed an unfinished storage space attached to the guesthouse into an outdoor kitchen modeled on the one they had in Miami. Bottom, right: An addition made during the 1960s was gutted and redesigned with French doors for views of the outdoors. The Tufenkian rug and sunny yellow and white Ikat chair were brought from the owners' previous home in Miami. The kitchen island is stained slate gray (exposing the wood grain) to suit both the pale gray cabinets and dark brown floors. Pendant fixtures with gunmetal shades, from Pemba Electric.

At the same time, the house was in dire need of TLC. Of the five existing bathrooms, none was fully functional.

Working with Leslie Raymond of Albert Architecture, the Hendels had their contractors peel away dated layers from renovations that had taken place over the years — pickled oak flooring and paneling, aluminum replacement windows, and faux brick laminate floors to name a few — and saved and restored as many original features as possible, including plaster walls and medallions, heart pine floors and elaborate moldings.

"Our plan for the house was to bring it into this century while restoring its antiquity," says Judy. "Though many renovations are successful due to the contrast and juxtaposition, we wanted a subtle transition from old to new."

The project called for updating the house with new plumbing, electrical and HVAC, a new master suite and new bathrooms. It also meant gutting and redesigning an addition made during the 1960s to include outdoor views and a chef's kitchen with immediate access to an outdoor kitchen newly carved out of the existing carriage house. The couple grills outside most evenings.

"Leslie was really good about carrying over the feel of the front of the house, but the kitchen and living space in the back is a little more contemporary and meets our needs of today," says Judy.

By bumping out the exterior wall, removing drop-down ceilings and dated fixtures, and emphasizing outdoor views, the redesign accommodated the couple's desire for open concept living and helped the space feel more appropriately in scale with the house. Raymond's use of a large cased opening between the kitchen and family room also makes the addition feel consistent with the rest of the house.

"Leslie was right," says Judy. "The two rooms present as one, but they don't look like we created a new space. The cased opening showcases the kitchen, like a beautiful frame and helps to define the space. It anchors the kitchen so it's not floating in the room."

Judy was trained at the Art Institute of Chicago and decorated all 5,000 square feet of the house, using showrooms and resources in New

Judy transitioned from Sherwin Williams' Agreeable Grey downstaires to a neutral beige upstairs in the master bedroom, which also has a grape-colored wall for interest. Facing page: Top, right and bottom, left: A doorway was eliminated in the guest room to create a full wall for a bed. The ensuite bath, added during the 1920s was gutted and remodeled as well. Bottom, right: The floor tiles and textured tiles on the shower wall of the master bath are both porcelain. The vanity is topped with aqua Quartzite from Triton Stone.

Orleans, Miami, Denver and Chicago and an organized "gigantic" file kept in a notebook that her sister sent her for the remodel.

"Judy is an artist, so she took the lead on the interiors," says Raymond. "We worked together on the general style we were trying to achieve, but she has a great design sense and knows what she wants, so it was an easy collaboration."

"I was not afraid to just hoof it," says Judy. "I went to every store around for a two-year stretch."

Many of the Hendels' design choices were custom. After stockpiling bargeboard removed during the renovation, Judy had the wood used to make a trestle table for the dining room and an accent wall in her studio. She spent hours researching salvaged materials at Ricca's and The Bank. She did hands-on jobs, including repairing tilework on several fireplaces, spray-painting light fixtures in the foyer and wine room, and repurposing narrow windows as closet doors. But most importantly, she made sure that the renovation was designed in sync with how the couple lives.

"I'm from Miami; I love the water and I'm big on views," says Judy. "I didn't want to see a house next door; I wanted to be able to look out and have the sunlight come in. I wanted a lot of windows."

"They love to swim and the outdoor space was one of the main attractions for them," says Raymond. "We did try to design the renovated spaces to have extensive views of the side yard, and the connection of the kitchen to the outdoor kitchen was very important to them, down to the way the door would swing when Bob was walking in with dinner from the grill."

Judy has an extensive collection of silver and china, so incorporating a large pantry into the kitchen design was important. Because the couple are wine enthusiasts, a first-floor parlor was turned into a wine room. There is also, of course, a studio where Judy can paint.

"I loved the whole process and would do it all again," says Judy. "And my husband takes a lot of pride in this house. Even when he wasn't sure where I was headed with something, I'd usually get to win the battle, and he's happy with the results."

After all, the couple says they fell in love with more than a house. They fell in love with a city, its friendly residents and its love of impromptu gatherings.

"One of the things we love about New Orleans is that we know our neighbors," says Judy. "It's easy to entertain in this town. It doesn't take much."