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WRITTEN BY HALLE REESE SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY BY HOLLY AND FRED STICKLEY



WHAT STARTED AS A KITCHEN FACELIFT BECAME A WHOLE HOUSE REMODEL THAT TOOK JACK AND ROBIN RUSCIGNO'S LAKE OSWEGO HOME DOWN TO THE STUDS. ARCHITECT DAVID JENKINS, DESIGNER DONNA SHEPARD AND BUILDER OLSON & JONES CONSTRUCTION TRANSFORMED THE OUTDATED RANCH EXTERIOR INTO A CHARACTER-RICH CHARMER WITH AN EQUALLY DELIGHTFUL INTERIOR. THE HOME IS NOW A MATCH WITH ITS SPECTACULAR SURROUNDINGS.



The renovation team removed a wall between the kitchen and dining room and added a fireplace flanked by built-in display cases. They transformed the kitchen with vaulted and beamed ceilings, hand-finished walnut cabinetry, antiqued granite countertops and limestone floors. OPPOSITE: The home's façade changed dramatically with a master bathroom addition to the left of the front door and an office built over the garage. Gray wood siding was replaced with stucco and fine stonework.

RATHER THAN TEAR DOWN THEIR ONE-LEVEL 1970s RANCH and build a McMansion, Jack and Robin Ruscigno retained the best of the original house and updated the worst.

The home sits at the edge of a cliff overlooking Oswego Lake, with views of Mt. Hood to one end and forested bluffs to the other. "It's like living in the mountains," says homeowner Robin Ruscigno, a Nike executive. "Eagles fly by overhead. When it snows, it's like someone painted a picture for you."

The whole back of the house is glass with giant picture windows floor to ceiling—something the Ruscignos wanted to keep. They also liked the one-level living. The home was custom-built in the 1970s by an older couple. "It was built for aging, which wasn't a bad thing," Ruscigno says. "The layout was great, but the surfaces and finishes were not."

Robin Ruscigno grew up in New York City and had always lived in classic older homes with beautiful crown moldings, floors and fireplaces. She wanted to bring that New York brownstone feel into the space through richer finishes like dark wood floors, detailed woodwork and natural stone.

The Ruscignos knew they wanted to update the kitchen and master bathroom; however, "If we'd only done the master bath and the kitchen, I didn't want the rest of the house to look old," Ruscigno says. On recommendation from their good friend and interior designer Donna Shepard, the Ruscignos hired architect David Jenkins and Olson & Jones Construction to remodel their home. The Shepards had used the same team to build their own house a few years prior.

In the end, "The house was taken down to the studs," says Ruscigno. "My husband joked we needed the kitchen painted and we wound up with a new house."

"The house was stripped to the bones, including the roof and siding," says Olson & Jones Project Manager Jeff Jones. "Only framed walls and sheathing and some of the original truss roof were left intact."



Ruscigno knew she wanted to use marble in the master bath. "I wanted a very timeless bathroom that was spa-like," she says. "It has a great tub." Carrara marble wainscoting and floors, detailed moldings and walnut cabinetry custom-made by Simon & Toney create the luxurious feel that the Ruscignos wanted.

A new barrel-vaulted ceiling and arched window fit perfectly in the master bathroom. Rope lighting tucks into the beadboard ceiling, and the ceiling fixture is alabaster. The design team incorporated both natural and artificial light, Ruscigno says. "Each sink has a window plus overhead light and a side light."

The bathroom floors, shower floor and shower bench (out of view) use radiant heat, which is controlled by a programmable thermostat. The heat automatically comes on at different times throughout the day and night. The shower was relit to the vanity area to let more natural light into the shower.

The bathroom design incorporated a walk-through to two master closets (out of view). "Hers" was built bigger than "his." They also added two linen closets and two vanities. With a water feature outside the master bedroom window, "you always hear the sound of water, which is very soothing," Ruscigno says.



Jones upgraded the home's energy efficiency with fully enveloped foam insulation, a high efficiency furnace, a heat recovery ventilator and all new mechanical and electrical systems. "I like to start with the most efficient shell possible," Jones says.

One of the most dramatic differences between "before" and "after" is the home's exterior. Dated, gray wood siding was torn off and replaced with true stucco and stonework at the foundation. "Lake Oswego was once a home of cottages," says Ruscigno. "We wanted the house to look like it had always been there. Not like it just suddenly plopped down from the sky."

The formerly L-shaped house is now U-shaped. A bump-out to the left of the front door contains a new master bathroom, and a cherry-paneled den/office was built over the garage. The kitchen and dining room were each pushed out about four feet. A backyard pool was removed and cement and concrete were ripped out to lay a new brick and stone hardscape.

Jones says they did not change the footprint much, but "We did a lot of robbing the old space to borrow for the new." The now 3,600-square-foot home was about 2,800-square-feet before the renovation. "Robin was thinking in a grand scale, but we got a lot of elements she wanted into a compact space."

Olson & Jones Construction removed a non-load-bearing wall between the kitchen and dining area, and added a fireplace flanked by custom bookcases. Built-in downlighting showcases the Ruscignos' collection of Asian ceramics. "When you're in the kitchen, you can look through into the dining room and into a small family area in front of the kitchen," says Ruscigno. "The kitchen has a great view now."

Simon & Toney created all of the custom cabinetry in the kitchen and master bathroom. They painted the kitchen cabinets cream but left the center island and bathroom cabinets a dark stained walnut. "The detail and handwork is spectacular," Ruscigno says.



The Ruscignos removed a backyard pool and put in a new brick and stone hardscape to make the space more clean-lined and usable. The home sits at the edge of a ridge overlooking Oswego Lake, and floor to ceiling windows frame views of Mt. Hood, the lake and forested hillsides.

By design, the kitchen's lower cabinets are pull-out drawers instead of doors. "The drawers are easier to use," Ruscigno says. "You can open them and see all of the contents."

Ruscigno wanted absolute black granite countertops but, to keep the run of counters from looking like a shiny bowling alley, she chose antiqued granite instead. Antiqued countertops are lightly abraded to create a satin-textured finish that resists fingerprints and is easier to maintain.

"The kitchen and bathroom are two rooms I disliked the most that now I love," says Ruscigno. "I always have a smile on my face when I'm in them." The master bathroom has new windows, a barrel-vaulted ceiling, marble floors and wainscoting, two vanities, two linen closets and two master closets. Jones also added programmable lighting and radiant heat in the floors and shower. "We have a shower with a huge bench," Ruscigno says. "You could fit a party of six in that shower. Jeff put heat in the bench. Without it, sitting down is a cold surprise."

"You can program the floor heat to come on half an hour to 45 minutes before you wake up so it's already warm before you get up," Jones says.

One of Ruscigno's favorite things about the renovated home is the vaulted ceilings. "The ceilings now have beautiful woodwork and beaming," she says. "There is a nice, warm feeling like being in a cottage. The remodel definitely enhanced the views you see while sitting in the house."



REMODELING CONTRACTOR

Olson & Jones Construction, Jeff Jones 503.244.7467

ARCHITECT

DIVO, David Jenkins 503.538.7173

SOURCES: Bath Fixtures: The Fixture Gallery; Jado; Kitchen Cabinetry: Simon & Toney; Countertop Fabricator: de la tierra; Countertop Supplier: Intrepid Marble & Granite; Windows & Doors: Portland Millwork: Marvin; Kitchen Fixtures: The Fixture Gallery; Grohe; Tile: Ann Sack's Tile & Stone; Tile Fabricator: Old World Stone; Appliances: Range: DACOR; Refrigerator: Sub-Zero; Range Hood: Vent-a-Hood; Fireplace: Brothers Masonry; Garden Maintenance: Green Valley Maintenance; Flooring: Kip's Hardwood Flooring.