



# MODERNIZING A TRADITIONAL HOME

## Georgian Architecture With A Twist

By DANA W. TODD  
Photography by VERNON WENTZ

A chain reaction of events inspired a local empty-nester couple to re-imagine their home. A place where they raised a family over the last 20+ years, their 4,600-square-foot Georgian style home was one of the original homes built in an upscale gated master planned community in San Antonio which is home to families and celebrities alike. Although designed in the most sought after aesthetic of the mid-1980s, the home had become dated over the years. The homeowners did not originally plan to overhaul the entire home. Then the chain reaction began.

“The homeowners have been clients of mine for several years,” says architect Roy Braswell, AIA, of Braswell Architecture, Inc. in San Antonio, who worked on the project along with project producer Gabriel Guzman. “They contacted me again recently to update their adjoining kitchen and family rooms. I brought along

kitchen designer Christi Palmer of Palmer Todd to the initial meeting, and she made a passing comment about re-doing the master bedroom and bathroom. I think she planted the seed for a whole house renovation,” he continues.

### The Family Room and Kitchen

The design and construction team, which included Mauze Construction Corp., began the first phase of the project by gutting the kitchen and family rooms down to the studs. An exterior wall in the family room was moved slightly to add more space, and the kitchen was refreshed with new appliances, chandelier and under-cabinet lighting, granite countertops, cabinets, and flooring. “The space is not grand, but we accomplished a lot within the square footage of the kitchen,” says interior designer Debbie Baxter of Baxter Design Group in San Antonio. For the first time,



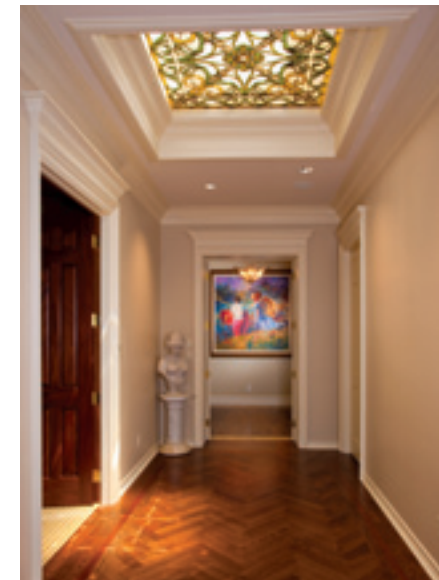
*“Our challenge was to stay true to the original Georgian structure but modernize it for today’s aesthetic and lifestyle.”*

*Roy Braswell,  
Braswell Architecture, Inc.*

the homeowners can enjoy a kitchen island with bar stools, a handy feature when you have many grandchildren living in the neighborhood constantly coming over for visits.

Painted beamed ceilings in both the kitchen and family room help the spaces flow together seamlessly. A wall of floor-to-ceiling windows transforms the family room into a light-filled retreat overlooking a new lanai, or covered pavilion, outdoor kitchen and fireplace steps from the pool and surrounding landscaped gardens and lawn area. “The homeowners wanted to keep an interior red brick wall in the family room which challenged us on color selection,” says Baxter. “But I found a beautiful rug with prominent teal and blue colors with just a hint of brick red in it. That rug set the tone for the entire room.” Baxter’s associate, Susan Jung, coordinated paisley linen draperies to finish the look.





### Moving on to the Master Suite

As the main family area rooms were being finished, the homeowners decided to update the rest of the house – a phase two initiative. The domino effect that began in two main living areas continued to include construction of the new lanai, an upstairs media room with attached balcony, a master suite addition, a much larger laundry and hobby room, a library, upstairs repainting and redecorating, and backyard re-landscaping. The additions expanded the house by another 2,300 square feet. “The plan evolved after construction began,” says Braswell. “Our challenge was to stay true to the original Georgian structure but modernize it for today’s aesthetic and lifestyle,” he adds.

“The project increased in scope because we wanted to do things right,” says the homeowner. “We found a few things not designed to today’s building codes, and we fixed them. We decided if we were going to do extensive work, then we wanted to make sure nothing was substandard.”



Perhaps the most stunning part of the renovation is the new master wing. A custom designed gallery entranceway to the suite includes a herringbone wooden floor with an inlaid marble laser cut border. In the ceiling is a custom designed leaded glass skylight. Doors lead to a vestibule area and on into the master suite. “We drew inspiration for the flooring from a design in one of the paintings on the gallery’s wall,” says Baxter.

The homeowners chose a gold and white color scheme in the attached master bathroom. “The master bathroom is stunning,” Baxter says. “A beautiful coffered ceiling, a series of chandeliers, onyx countertops, and inlaid onyx and honed marble floor create a soft, warm hue in the room. The space makes you feel good,” she says.

“The master wing was the most interesting part of the project,” says Braswell. “Bathrooms and closets are bigger now than when the home was constructed in the 1980s. We were able to modernize it to compete with the newer homes being built in the neighborhood.”

The former master suite became a study. “The study had to be appropriate for business meetings, and I did not want visitors entering the study through private rooms. With the odd hours I sometimes work, I also didn’t want to be forced to go outside to enter my study,” says one of the homeowners. The newly freed spaces answer the need perfectly.



**Bonus Spaces**

“We nicknamed the new space over the garage the ‘Sunset Room’ because of its southwestern orientation,” say the homeowners. “We originally planned the room as storage space which then turned into an air-conditioned space, which gave way to a stairway addition and windows. Next we ran plumbing ‘just in case’ for the future. Finally we decided to design a full-fledged media room with an adjoining bathroom and a beautiful balcony designed by Roy Braswell to take advantage of sunset views,” they add. The domino effect strikes again.

There are other new, unplanned spaces that turned into happy surprises for the family. A new rose garden and low stone wall helps complete the outdoor entertaining area surrounding the backyard pool. The covered lanai adds outdoor entertainment space that was formerly non-existent. And inside, extra floor space was added onto the small laundry room to create a much more expansive combination laundry and hobby/craft room. “Between all the grandchildren’s birthdays and Christmas time, we use the room a lot as a gift wrapping room,” say the homeowners.

“We are really happy. We like to travel, but we love coming home now. It’s our favorite place to be,” they say. ❖



**RESOURCES**

**Baxter Design Group**  
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**Braswell Architecture, Inc.**  
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**Mauze’ Construction Corp.**  
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