

THE PLAIN DEALER

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SPORTS



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2010

FULL HOUSE

Couple rescue a house, turn it into a new home



SUSAN
CONDON LOVE

Jeanette Paus is still in a state of disbelief. Or maybe she's just too tired to absorb her new environment.

Last month, after two years and two months of nearly nonstop labor, she and her husband, Stanley, moved into their completely rebuilt (renovated is too tame a word), four-bedroom, 2,500-square-

foot Lakewood home.

"I feel like I am in a five-star hotel," said Jeanette, on a phone call. (She later added cheekily, "Where's the maid service?")

"I still can't believe it."

Jeanette and her husband first noticed the dilapidated, 1946 stone and yellow-brick home a couple of years ago when driving by the house in the early-morning hours while delivering newspapers.

As Jeanette said in 2009, when the couple were in the early stages of reconstruction, "We wanted a one-level home. I thought, 'Maybe we can live there.'"

The house was attractive because it offered one-level living and an unimpeded, panoramic view of the Cleveland Metroparks' Rocky River Reservation. The structure itself was downright scary, with a roof down to plywood in parts, big holes, broken windows and siding that looked as if it had been installed by a toddler with a toy hammer.

As timing would have it, the Pausas became interested just when Lakewood came into ownership of the abandoned home because of tax liens. The city fielded more than 200 offers — including the winning bid of \$32,500 from the Pausas. Per the agreement, the couple had to make the home habitable and up to code, and use the house as their primary residence for five years.

They took ownership Labor Day weekend 2008. Fast forward to October 2010.

Jeanette lets visitors in the side door, via a rebuilt side porch. Visitors walk in, seeing first custom-built (by Stan) cherry-stained steps leading to the basement (soon to become Stan's "man cave").

A sharp right turn leads from a nook filled with shoes — evidence of Jeanette's meticulous house-keeping at work — into a gourmet kitchen.

Light-gray granite counters, black appliances,

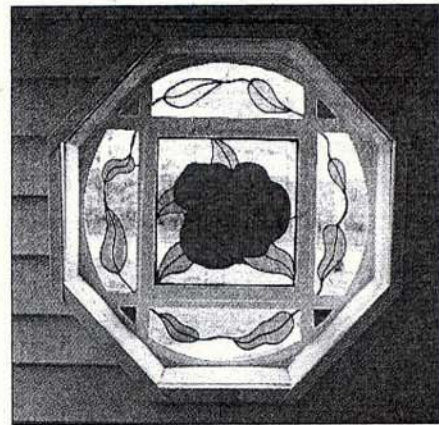
a slate-looking (it's really fiberglass flooring from Empire Today) floor and custom cherry cabinetry speak of casual and efficient elegance.

An extra-wide, 7-inch granite windowsill over the double sink is dotted with pots of herbs. A movable island, also with a granite top, sits in the middle, perfect for food preparation.

The room is a far cry from the original space — rotted floors, broken windows, ancient and broken appliances. The last owner, a senior beset with dementia, had no utilities by the end of his stay in the house.

SEE FULL | E5

This octagonal stained-glass window was one of the final touches in the rehabilitation of the Lakewood house.



Stanley and Jeanette Paus stand in the custom kitchen of the home they have spent the last two years rebuilding. When they bought the home from the city of Lakewood in fall of 2008, you could stand in the basement and see the sky above.



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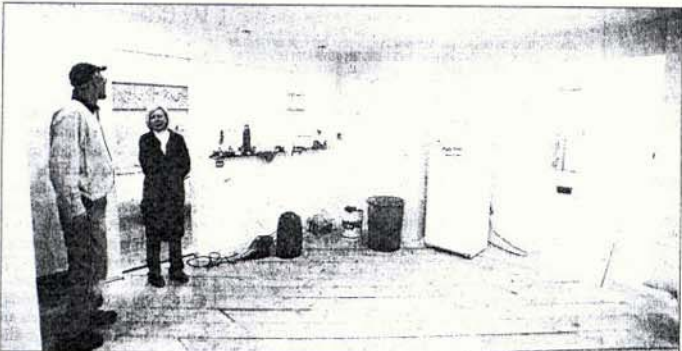
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JOSHUA GUNTER | THE PLAIN DEALER

Custom countertops and cabinetry, including a movable center island, were created by Wood Dimensions Inc. of Cleveland. This Lakewood home was an abandoned mess when it was bought by Stanley and Jeanette Paus.



JOHN KUNTZ | THE PLAIN DEALER

In November 2009, Stanley and Jeanette Paus stood in what would be the kitchen of their "new" old Lakewood home.

FULL

FROM E1

Couple turn house into home

Stan discovered, in the course of gutting the house "down to the bricks," that he apparently had done his cooking over live flames in the kitchen. Timbers were charred.

Stan, a mechanic at Barry Buick in Lakewood for 34 years, did the majority of the manual labor in the rehab, with lots of help from his brother, Doug Paus.

"Stan is amazing," said Jeanette. "He really is."



JOSHUA GUNTER | THE PLAIN DEALER

Walls were moved in the home's old configuration to create a master suite that includes a huge walk-in closet (on the right) and a luxury bathroom.

In addition to rebuilding steps, floors, ceilings, walls (several rooms in the floor plan were reconfigured) and even the roof, Stan learned such new skills as creating crown molding for the oversize living room — the one with the super-size window overlooking the valley.

To the left of the kitchen is an open counter perfect for the couple's grandchildren to dine. Jeanette baby-sits, at various times and in various configurations, all six of the children — Lila, 7; Daria, 6; Tiana, 4; Patrick, 5; Callie, 2; and Kaila, 1.

An elegant dining area is beyond the counter, decorated with a dining room table, and two (yes, two) of Jeanette's wine cabinets. The set and cabinets are some of the only furniture the Paus brought from their old home.

"We have a new house," said Jeanette. "I wanted all new furniture for it."

On the other side of the kitchen, Jeanette requested a custom pantry (created by Wood Dimensions Inc. of Cleveland) and storage area complete with a built-in ironing board and a large closet for the washer and dryer.

Beyond this area are the two first-floor bedrooms — the master suite and a room dedicated as the children's playroom.

Originally, there were three first-floor bedrooms. The Paus reconfigured the third, giving part of the space to the pantry, and part to an enlarged master suite, which has a huge walk-in closet and a luxurious bathroom.

Every window in the house had to be special-ordered, said Jeanette. As a result, the windows were covered in plywood for more than a year after the couple started working on the home.

That situation caused some ill will, with people sending terse e-mails.

The new windows — along with all the custom curtains Jeanette ordered from the J.C. Penney in Paramatown Mall — are spectacular.

Plush, light-gray carpet was installed alongside the fiberglass flooring (all flooring was done by Empire Today).

Jeanette scoured every furniture store in town to find the perfect seating for her very long living room. She ended up ordering a custom, curved leather couch and

Costs

Cost of home: \$32,500

Demolition and reconstruction (including roof): \$79,500

Heating and cooling: \$9,000

Furniture: \$10,500

Electric (including fixtures): \$14,200

Bathroom cabinets: \$5,000

Custom cabinets and countertops: \$22,800

Custom wardrobe: \$5,200

Appliances: \$7,500

Carpet and flooring in the kitchen/bathrooms: \$8,994

Interior doors (unfinished): \$3,037

Exterior doors (two doors and two storm doors): \$2,040 (not counting installation done by Stanley Paus)

Custom windows: \$5,200 (not counting installation done by Stanley Paus)

Custom stained-glass window on front porch: \$600

Window treatments: \$3,400

Total: \$209,471

Bonus: Amount of free gas obtained in a little over two years by purchasing Home Depot gift cards through Fuel Perks at Giant Eagle: \$14,200.

ONLINE: See a slide show with before and after pictures at cleveland.com/insideout

a double-seated velour brown chair from Wayside Furniture.

One advantage of starting from scratch is that all the wiring in the house can now accommodate TVs hanging from the walls, as well as internet and telephone wiring.

A niggler in Jeanette's side? When they signed on for cable TV, all that wiring was suddenly visible. "I hate that," said Jeanette, frowning.

The granite and cabinetry, for the kitchen and all the bathrooms, were done by Wood Dimensions Inc. and Rocksolid Stoneworks of Cleveland. Owner Tom Rocks personally supervised little touches such as the deep granite windowsills (his suggestion) and special drawers to accommodate lids and pans.

"They did a fantastic job," said Jeanette.

On the second floor, the couple have created a two-bedroom haven for visiting adult children, including a snazzy, all-purple full bathroom.

The basement was a crusty, scary place in the beginning where, if you looked up, you could see sky, and, looking down, you saw a sad remnant of a shuffleboard court in faded paint on the floor. Stan redid all the floors with a Home Depot floor epoxy kit that simulates Nature Stone flooring.

The basement will eventually become Stan's "man cave," said Jeanette, "but not before he finishes my [basement] pantry."

In the beginning, the couple started by filling five 40-yard Dumpsters and two 20-yard Dumpsters. Included were 27 cheap plywood doors, all the flooring, trash from all the rooms, and all the ceiling materials.

"Everything was just shoveled out," Jeanette said back in 2009.

Now that all is said and done, does Jeanette wish she had done anything differently?

"Not a thing," she said, firmly. Then she paused and laughed. "Maybe not do it at all?"

Again, Jeanette stopped to think for a minute. "I said to Stan the other day, 'Remember coming home and thinking of the weekend and just relaxing?'"

There are still projects to be done — they are still moving things from their other home to the new place — and there is always work to be done on the couple's rental home in Lakewood.

But now they can come home and relax just a little ... At least to take the time and look out the picture window, past the custom floral stained-glass window on the porch, and across Riverside Drive to the trees of the Metroparks.

Not a bad sight to behold.

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Previous columns online: cleveland.com/columns