

# single-floor living *florida style*



**F**or Lyn and Bev, taking on a major home project was not a big deal—they've been there and done that...several times. Years earlier, they had a home built and were very much involved throughout the process. The same went for a fixer-upper lake house they purchased and immediately opened it up with a new floor plan. Later, while their two daughters were still at home, they bought a 25-acre farm in eastern Lancaster County and oversaw the complete restoration of the 19th century, 5-bedroom, 3-story farmhouse with 8 fireplaces—keeping the restoration as true to the period as best they could. Lyn, who describes himself as a backyard architect with an eye for detail also served as the project's general contractor while Bev with her background in antiques, kept her eye on the prize. Over the years she acquired an extensive collection of antiques and now had a beautiful vintage home in which to showcase them. Life was good.

Fast forward a bit and things start to change. The girls were no longer at home and all of a sudden the spacious farmhouse seemed a little TOO spacious—and the stairs, all 4-stories of them (yes, there was a basement), were

taking a toll. While not quite ready for a senior living community, the middle-aged couple realized that a change was needed—if not then, not far off. With downsizing and single-floor living as their goal, Bev and Lyn set out on their Lancaster County new home search.

Despite easier alternatives such as purchasing a home already on the market or having another one built, the couple once again couldn't resist putting their personal stamp on their new home—at least one more time. In the end, Bev and Lyn chose a well-built older house in a beautiful, older neighborhood that, because of its construction, could be entirely gutted to allow them to completely redesign the space to afford them an open floor plan that they were looking for.

Unlike their previous renovation projects, Lyn decided to relinquish his role of handling the general contractor duties and hire a professional to deal with the inevitable headaches of pulling everything together. The professional they selected was Eric Weaver, owner of Pinnacle Building & Design—an award-winning design-build company

based in Leola. As you'll see from the photos, this was a very impressive transformation of a typical-styled rancher. The changes are dramatic and the curb appeal is absolutely stunning. Walking into the home with its abundance of natural light and its airy and open floor plan you get the sense that you are in a Florida beach home. Contributing to that feel are the various contemporary selections including the beautiful plantation shutters throughout most of the rear portion of the home.

As you would expect, the homeowners are exceedingly pleased with how things turned out and absolutely delighted with the performance of Pinnacle

## project description

Type:	Complete Exterior and Interior Makeover
Contractor:	<b>Pinnacle Building &amp; Design, Inc.</b> (see ad p. 35)
Trade Partners:	Art Craft Cabinets (see ad p. 42) Cornerstone Fence and Deck, LLC (see ad p. 38) Iddings Electric Inc. (see ad p. 42) JB Zimmerman (see ad p. 40) J.G. Graybill Plumbing, Inc. (see ad p. 46) J.W. Phipps Masonry Contractor (see ad p. 38) Musselman Lumber Inc. (see ad p. 37) Red Rose Cabinetry, Inc. (see ad p. 40) Shank Door Company (see ad p. 39) The Blind Spot (see ad p. 44)
Scope:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete demolition of interior of home, including removing walls to open up living space to a more modern floor plan</li> <li>• Remove existing exterior brick kitchen wall into existing sunroom with clear view of their pool and allow a lot of natural sunlight to come into the living space</li> <li>• Opened family room and hallways to create a more open foyer allowing guests entering home to see through to entire other side of house</li> <li>• Created an open stairway with custom handrail leading to basement level</li> <li>• Modernized master suite by changing closets around giving a larger space, creating a master bath with walk-in shower and modern amenities such as a custom shower jet system and double bowl his and hers vanity; bath counter is a brushed texture granite with undermount sinks and brushed nickel faucets and hardware</li> <li>• House has hand-scraped hickory hardwood floor throughout; Sisal inlay rug framed by the hickory hardwood floor installed to create a focal point in family room</li> <li>• Natural stone travertine cobblestone floor in sunroom</li> <li>• Created new curb appeal and redesigned entire exterior of home; Over-framed the existing roof to create a higher pitched roof giving modern lines; Dormers for architectural appearance; Repainted exterior siding, relocated front door to balance house architecturally; made porch larger to allow seating, more appealing</li> <li>• Made the front walk into a large patio walkway to accommodate large potted plants, flowers and landscaping for a grander entrance</li> <li>• Added 4-panel glass sliding door in master suite leading to a new stamped concrete raised patio that allows access from master suite and sunroom area to pool and hot tub</li> <li>• Laundry remodeled with custom cabinetry and work center</li> <li>• Created his and her offices with custom cabinetry</li> <li>• New kitchen with custom cabinetry featuring a brushed texture white cabinetry designed for optimal storage, granite countertops</li> <li>• Walkway with pergola leading to a new 3-car, 3115 sq. ft. garage along with 1660 sq ft area workroom for crafts</li> </ul>



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Building & Design and their team of talented trade partners. For more details of their experience, we sat down with Bev & Lyn and here's what we learned.

**Like many in your age group, downsizing and single-floor living is becoming more and more popular. Tell us about your decision to go with the renovation project route rather than simply buying a new home or building one? Certainly there were plenty of single-floor options to choose from.**

Bev: We actually did look at places on the market, a lot of them, but none were in locations where we wanted to live or the floor plan just wasn't right.

Lyn: We spent nearly two years looking...driving all over—Manheim, Lititz, the Eshleman Mill Road area and almost everywhere on the eastern side of the county.

Bev: Despite the options, we kept coming back to the New Holland area primarily because of its convenience. We liked the small town

feel to it...the convenience of having everything so close—doctors, dentists, banking, grocery shopping, restaurants—everything you need conveniently located in one small, easy-to-get-around community.

Lyn: When this house came up for sale, we took a good look and liked what we saw. It was obviously very well built, had good size but not too big, with a nice corner lot. I wasn't crazy about the swimming pool but the grandkids were. Once we confirmed from an engineer that the interior walls could be removed without compromising the structure, we got really interested. We had already started envisioning a new floor plan that would open things up. The only problem was that the seller didn't accept our offer. After nearly a year of looking elsewhere without success, we finally looked at each other and said we need to force the issue with this New Holland seller. Long story

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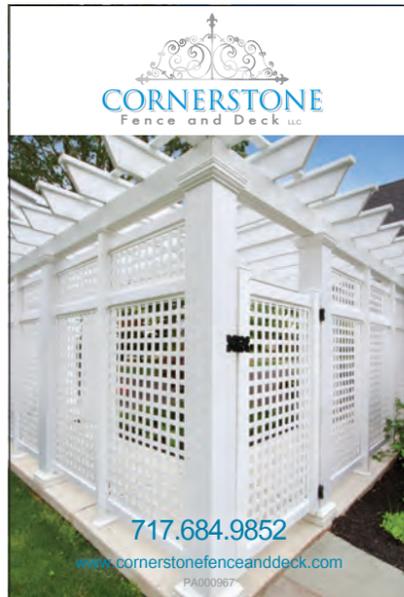
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short, we came up in price and he came down. The deal was done.

**Tell us about how you found Eric and settled on Pinnacle Building & Design?**

Lyn: We originally met Eric at one of the home shows in Lancaster. This was even before we bought the property.

Eric seemed to be passionate about his work and he had a very impressive portfolio showcasing many of his projects. We liked him as well as what we saw. Once we made the purchase, we asked him for a bid along with another builder we met along the way.

Bev: Before even meeting Eric, I had heard of Pinnacle and seen some of their work in R&A Magazine. Everything we saw of Pinnacle seemed so upbeat and now. Although I love my antiques, I also like contemporary designs and Pinnacle's work certainly got my attention. Anyway, both builders provided designs but what really sold us on Pinnacle were Eric's plans to remove the old kitchen wall that separated the sunroom from the rest of the house.

Lyn: We knew we wanted the wall removed and we knew it was going to be expensive. Eric came up with a solution on how to make it happen without breaking the bank. As you can see, it turned out great.

Bev: Eric and his space designer were very good at listening to our ideas and incorporating them into the plans.

Lyn: Yes, they were fantastic. In addition to the quick grasp of what we were looking for, they produced 3-dimensional computerized drawings which were a great help, especially to Bev.

Bev: Lyn is very good at visualizing

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things, I'm not. The drawings that Pinnacle produced actually allowed me to see it and I can't tell you how helpful that was. It really was fantastic.

**From the before and after photos, the changes to your home's exterior is very dramatic. For the benefit of those who aren't quick to identify the specific changes, what were some of the major ones?**

Lyn: There were several great ideas for the exterior that dramatically changed the look of the house. Among them was the relocation of the front door, shortening the eaves, adding dormers, and probably the most dramatic—raising the roof line. Increasing the roof pitch really changed the look. Instead of the old fashioned, shallow roof line typical of a ranch-style home, the increased height and pitch made all the difference. Complementing the new roof



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line were shortened eaves and elongated dormers which are not very typical. We think it's a great look.

Bev: They simply built on top of the existing trusses—the old roof is still underneath.

Lyn: All this seemed like a big deal to us, but Pinnacle didn't seem fazed in the least. They've done this sort of thing before and the way they were handling things really put us at ease—we were developing a very high comfort level with Eric and his team.

**We understand that you were still in your farmhouse until the project's completion, but spent much of the construction time in Florida. How did that work out in terms of keeping involved with the project?**

Bev: First off, not living onsite during the project was absolutely wonderful. Previously, we weren't so fortunate and being able to live away from the construction was a big plus this time.

Lyn: Eric did a great job keeping us informed as things progressed. We were on the phone as needed but otherwise used email and faxes. Eric sent us a ton of photos showing their progress. I guess our comfort level was due to the fact that we had a lot of faith in Eric. I can honestly say that I felt very, very comfortable with him and his people. His foreman, Matt Stauffer, was just spectacular. When you look at the workmanship, the small details, the quality of the work, everything was just done so well. As you would expect, our punch list at the end of the project was very small.

**Tell us about your décor and what influenced you?**

Lyn: For years, Bev had been an antiques dealer and has quite a

collection. She tried to bring as many of our nicer pieces and blend them in with the new décor. She has a great eye for design and placement...I think she did a beautiful job.

Bev: I was looking for a nice mix. I certainly didn't want to give up all the antiques but didn't want to overdo it either. Overall, I wanted a contemporary feel and I think with the open, bright and airy floor plan along with the new furnishings, we achieved it.

Lyn: According to our friends, I'll say we have. One by one as they visited, we got the WOW reaction. They definitely like the Florida feel they get walking in. One of them has actually given her husband a new




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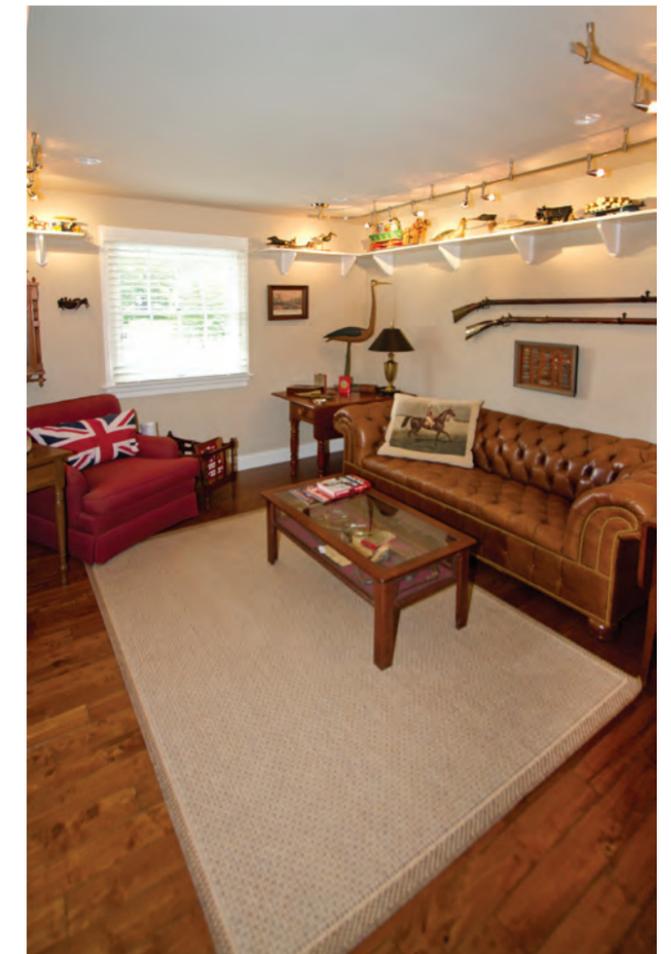
item for her wish list—a one-story home like ours.

Bev: I wasn't necessarily going for the WOW look...nothing is really over the top. I just wanted an overall look that was bright, airy, and contemporary.

Lyn: Maybe so, but walking around here in the morning with the sun shining makes it seem so fresh and lively—very much like the sensation of being in Florida. To me, that says WOW! Many of the homes we looked at, including many of the new ones, had such small windows in the back. The limited amount of natural lighting made things look pretty dismal in comparison.

**We noticed that your entire driveway has a very unique and attractive block border. What can you tell us about it?**

Lyn: There's actually a history behind them. Originally from Belgium, the



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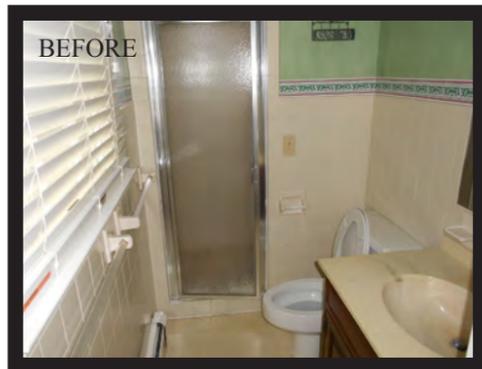
blocks were used to balance empty English cargo ships for their Atlantic crossing. This goes back to the 18th century. Once here, the blocks would be replaced with cargo for the return trip. Because of their hardness, the blocks ended up being used as pavers on colonial streets and these particular ones came from an old torn up street in Philadelphia. For years, I had a few loads stored at the farmhouse. It's good to finally put them to use.

**So what is your overall assessment of Pinnacle Building & Design and the team they put together?**

Bev: Eric and the entire Pinnacle team were absolutely outstanding. They were all very professional and knew what they were doing. We felt like we were in very good hands.

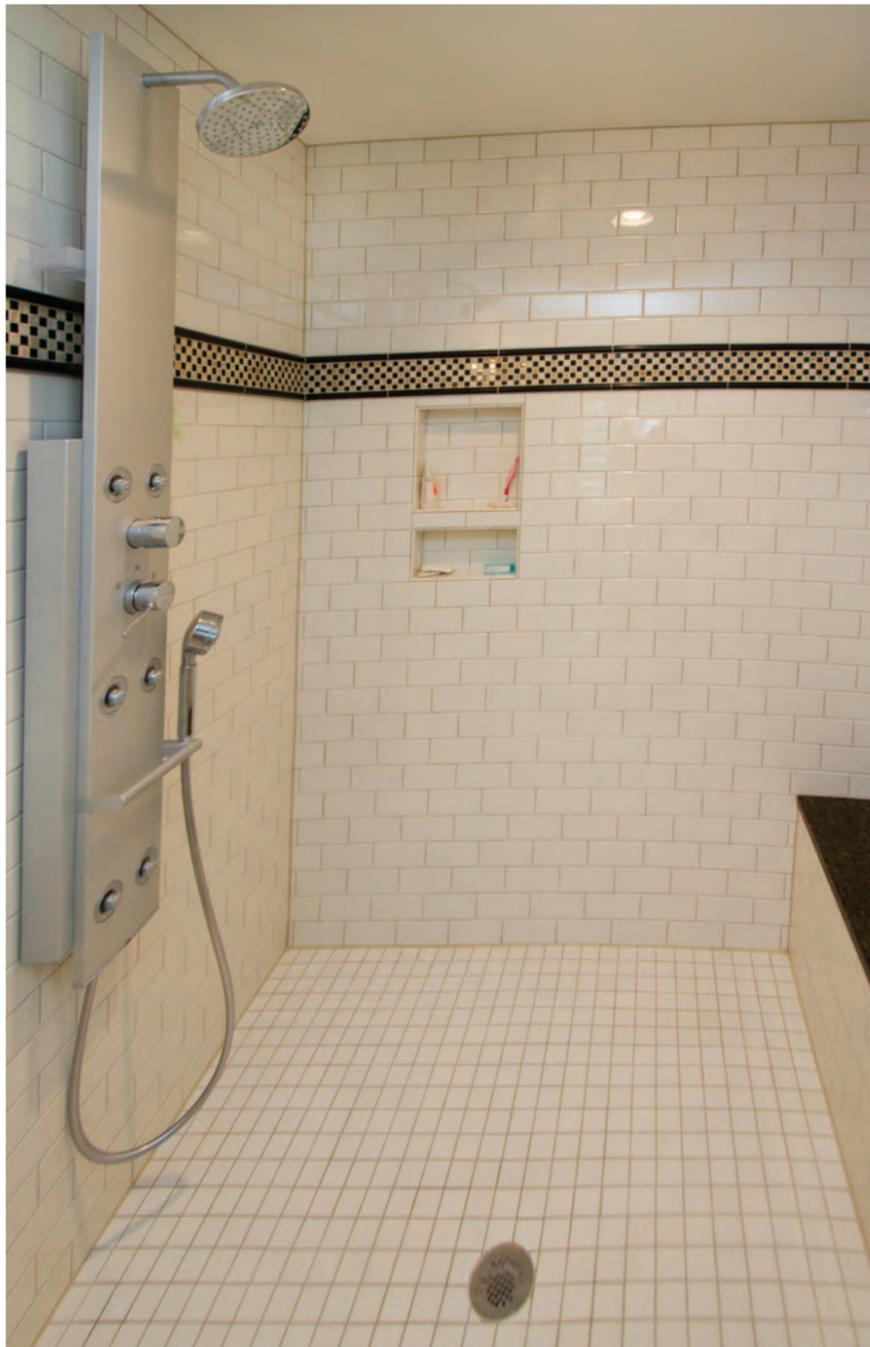
Lyn: This was not your everyday type of job so I want to think that they enjoyed the challenge of working on such a radical transformation project. I actually think they had fun. They have every right to be proud of their work—we certainly are and we very much appreciate their efforts. They were all outstanding.

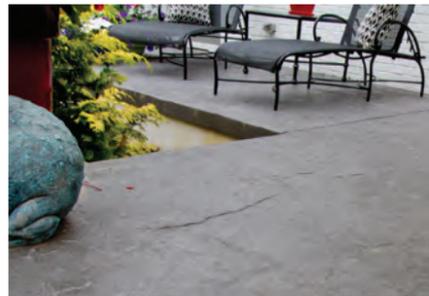
Bev: While I don't want to slight anyone by not mentioning them specifically, there were some on Pinnacle's team of subcontractors that we had a lot of personal dealings with. Sean Iddings of Iddings Electric was one. He was very accommodating in helping us decide on where switches and receptacles should go. We were very impressed with the way he runs his business as well as his staff.



**Aside from the team Pinnacle assembled, did you bring in any companies to the project that you'd like to comment on?**

Bev: Yes, there were a few of companies that we dealt with that were not part of Pinnacle's scope of work. The Blind Spot for one did our window treatments including the plantation shutters. The





owner, Joe Desimone, personally did the measuring and installation. What a fantastic job!

Lyn: Yeah, I was definitely impressed with Joe. I'd recommend him and his company to anyone.

Bev: Another one I'd like to single out is Ed Artz of Art Craft Cabinets who custom made our beautiful, African Mahogany dining table as well as the custom end tables in the living room. In addition, we had Ed trim our tall antique corner cupboard to fit our new, lower ceiling dining area.

**If you had to do it over again, would you do anything differently?**

Lyn: Generally speaking, there isn't anything that I do not like. I suppose if we could do it over again, I'd change a thing or two out on the patio, but nothing major.

Bev: The only thing I can think of is the laundry room. I probably focused too much on looks rather than what was really practical...lesson learned.

**Any advice for homeowners who may be contemplating a project?**



Bev: Yes, my advice is go for it! In fact, I've given that advice already. Friends who were with us in Florida asked us the same question. They're thinking about doing a project of their own but, after hearing all the back and forth discussions we had with Pinnacle and all the decisions that had to be made, were having second thoughts. Without hesitation, I told them that I absolutely would do it again...and that they should just go for it!

Lyn: Unlike some couples, we actually like to do this sort of thing. It's been so much a part of our life over the years that it's almost second nature. We've always enjoyed the challenge and rewards of creating our own space through various renovation projects. I know it's not for everyone, but with all the professional help that's available especially here in Lancaster County, they can make it happen fairly painlessly. Pinnacle certainly did that for us.

R&A

