

Home Renovations a phased approach



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hile most of the home improvement projects that we've showcased as our cover stories were done as one big project completed in one fell swoop, homeowners Chris and Mike opted to tackle their home renovation plans one project at a time—over a period of years. And unlike those who prefer to live through the construction process only once, these homeowners have found that spreading their projects out over time allows them sharper focus on each particular facet. And for Chris, who especially enjoys the fine details of researching materials and finishes and exercising her creative nature, each stage proved to be an exciting and welcome challenge.

As for some background...when the couple purchased their home back in 2003, it was in the late stages of construction and what they saw sold them immediately. In addition to a great location in an attractive neighborhood, the home had a very appealing open floor plan and came with a sizeable, uniquely sloped backyard. While the builder-grade finishes throughout the home were fine at the time, the couple knew early on that they would eventually make upgrades.

While their home improvement ideas started percolating with thoughts of bathroom remodels, it was actually a major water leak in the kitchen that necessitated immediate action. According to Chris, "the kitchen damage

lead to our fortunate introduction to David White and Kitchen Encounters."

Through an internet search, Chris found Kitchen Encounters and was very impressed with their credentials. Upon meeting David White, the owner of the family-run business located in Neffsville, she and Mike were even more impressed. Of all the prospective contractors they talked to, David was the one who won them over—hands down.

As you'll read from the homeowners' comments sprinkled throughout this article, the couple appreciated David's sharp listening skills, his creativity, and his genuine excitement about their project. Chris found David espe-

cially easy to work with and enjoyed their time collaborating—bouncing ideas off each other, exploring options, and really diving into the details.

Upon completion of their beautiful and transformative kitchen project it was a no brainer for Chris and Mike to request Kitchen Encounters' help in tackling their future bathroom renovations. Chris recognized the unique creative synergy that she had with David and completely trusted him and his team to deliver a finished product that would match their high standards.

As with the kitchen project, the couple's bathroom projects (a master bath, a full hallway bath, as well as a powder room) went without a hitch and turned out well beyond their expectations. With Kitchen Encounters, they found a contractor to hold onto and they had no intentions of letting go. What followed later was a move to the living room and a complete replacement of the long balustrade (bannister) that was improperly installed when the home was built. Not only is the stairway finally safe—the replacement is a great-looking living-room feature.

What's next you might ask? Rumor has it that Chris is thinking of a basement remodel. Stay tuned.



Featured Builder

Kitchen Encounters

(see ad on inside front cover)

PROJECT TRADE PARTNERS

Dtail Painting (see ad p. 30)

Natural Stoneworks (see ad p. 28)

Zimco Plumbing (see ad p. 30)

KITCHEN ENCOUNTERS' PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Phase I — Kitchen/Laundry. The kitchen project started with a desire to better utilize the area the desk occupied, increase the amount of storage and countertops as well as somehow incorporate an island. With the available space being what it was, there was no way to really fit an island into the kitchen without taking space from somewhere else. Since the breakfast area of the kitchen was out of the question, the only space left was the mudroom/ laundry that was between the garage entry and the kitchen wall. So we did identify a space we could use, but the homeowner also wanted to retain the first floor laundry. Since there was no other place on the first floor it could go, we decided to incorporate a stackable unit inside a tall cabinet, so that it could stay on the first floor in the expanded kitchen space, while also being concealed by cabinetry. This solution allowed us to remove the wall between the kitchen and laundry, assume that floor space as kitchen, install an island, and still maintain the first floor washer and dryer.

Once the overall footprint of the new kitchen had been determined, we were able to relocate the sink into the island so that it faced guests in the breakfast area as opposed to the corner windows. We also were able to claim the wall that housed the desk and corner of the mudroom to incorporate a wall of shallow pantries. This change helped to both offset and increase the storage that was originally available in the mudroom and kitchen. Overall, by simply removing a partition wall between the mudroom and kitchen, we were able to dramatically improve the kitchen plan while maintaining what was most needed in the laundry. As for the finishes, the homeowners chose custom cabinets with a painted finish, honed granite countertops, subway tile backsplash and a site finished wood floor that matched the existing hardwood in the adjoining family room. New lighting, appliances and plumbing fixtures rounded out the remodel.

We found Kitchen Encounters on the internet and saw that they were voted Best of Lancaster and Best of Houzz for kitchen design at the time. We talked with several contractors and David is the one who listened and was truly interested in our ideas. He was very easy to talk with and was excited about our project.

Homeowners, Chris & Mike

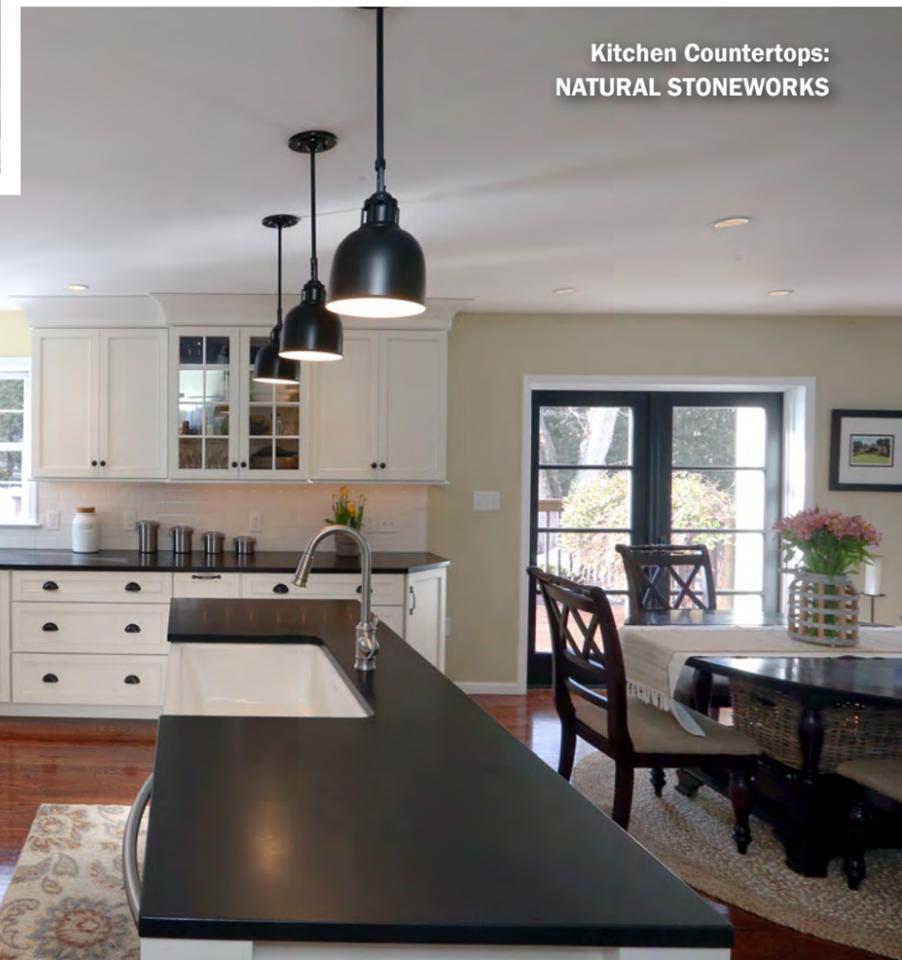


David and I have very similar tastes. When we sit down on a project, it can take hours to work out the details. We enjoy the creative exchange. He will give you all the time it takes to plan a project the right way. He never says, "We can't do that" and over multiple projects he has always done what he said he was going to do.

Homeowners, Chris



BEFORE



Kitchen Countertops:
NATURAL STONEWORKS



(see ad on inside front cover)



Left to right, David, Eden, and Danelle.

Kitchen Encounters is a small family business that started in 2007. Over the years we've grown (and aged) to include the second generation of the White family. David heads up the sales and design team (while managing the overall operations). David's wife Danelle provides administrative support, client support and a friendly daily contact during job production. Their children are also part of the Kitchen Encounters team. Eden manages job sites as well as the social media accounts; providing content and direction to both real and virtual Kitchen Encounters sites. Isaiah works as an apprentice finish carpenter and cabinet installer, learning the art of remodeling. His continued growth in the trade is facilitated by David's brother Phil, who expertly transforms our beautiful kitchen and bath designs into reality. Together with a number of highly skilled and conscientious trade partners, Kitchen Encounters consistently remodels homes of all sizes, ages and styles.

Kitchen Encounters is a full-service kitchen and bath remodeling company, with experienced designers and a skilled team of installers and sub-contractors. Our promise is to clearly and honestly communicate project schedules and production status, during the entire construction process. Our highly-organized team works closely together from the initial design consultation to the final walk through. We strive to exceed your expectations.



Kitchen Encounters is the best that we've worked with and we tell everyone so. David does a great job planning and overseeing the project. Danelle is in contact with us every morning during the remodel. She cheerfully asks every day if we have any questions for David or the contractors on site that day. She always gets the question to the right people and gets things resolved. And Phil White's attention to detail and finish work is impeccable.

Homeowners, Chris & Mike



The new kitchen was breathtaking for us. Now we enjoy all the time that we spend in there making meals for our family. We gather in there now as it has become the hub of the house.

Homeowners, Chris & Mike

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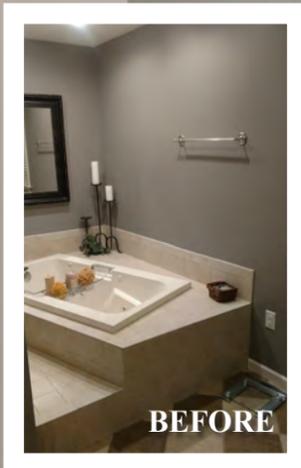
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KITCHEN ENCOUNTERS' PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Phase II — Baths. All of the 2 ½ baths in the home were updated and remodeled to different degrees. The powder room consisted of simply replacing the toilet and vanity as well as painting and installing flooring. The upstairs bath was gutted and upgraded in every way. The builder grade tub/shower enclosure was removed and replaced with tile walls and higher quality fixtures. The remaining walls were also tiled and grouted with a dark grout to create depth and texture. Lastly, a new upgraded vanity, counter top, toilet, fixtures, lighting and accessories were installed to provide a more custom second bath space.

The master bath went through a bit more of a transformation. We determined immediately like many people remodeling bathrooms that were designed in the 90's and early 2000's that the large drop in tub took up way too much space, and that the shower was horribly undersized. The solution to this disproportionate allocation of space was to simply swap their respective locations. By moving the shower into the alcove once housing the tub, we were able to increase its size dramatically, install a comfortable bench, and install multiple shower heads to provide an open, bright space that feels like a spa. The area where the small shower once sat, became somewhere to place a freestanding tub that is both beautiful and functional. This is the first object you notice when you enter the room, so instead of an acrylic box in an alcove, you are met with a focal point that beckons you to relax and unwind. The vanity is custom, with furniture ends and feet that give it the appearance of furniture instead of conventional cabinetry, while still retaining the functional necessity of drawer storage that's always needed in a bathroom. Classic chrome plumbing and lighting fixtures embellish every corner, and provide the highlights to the mostly white with black color palette.



Our larger bathroom is now big enough for both of us to move around comfortably at the same time. It has gone from a drab, small bathroom to a bright, roomy, and elegant space that gives you a great start to the day.

Homeowners, Chris & Mike

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Bill Zimmerman
Owner

My advice for anyone considering a project is to take your time and do your research. Get what you want and don't except anything less. David and team helped us realize our aspirations. Others tried to convince us to do it their way while David supports you to do it your way. That's why we repeatedly go back to Kitchen Encounters for all our remodeling needs.

Homeowners, Chris





Kitchen Encounters gives you a detailed list of the sub-contractors and a schedule of all phases of the remodel and sticks to it. They respect your home and always keep it clean while protecting the other parts of the house. Their work is of the highest quality and their attention to detail is apparent in the finished product. We've had few changes since we spent so much time planning and designing with David. When we did have a change, they adjusted smoothly. For example, when our shower was framed, we realized it was too small and Kitchen Encounters was able to quickly make the adjustments without interrupting the build schedule.

Homeowners, Chris & Mike

KITCHEN ENCOUNTERS' PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Phase III — Family Room. The family room project was born out of necessity. A long balustrade adorned the stairs and was never really installed correctly. It was somewhat rickety and frankly dangerously loose considering it was meant to protect a staircase ascending a 9-foot ceiling height. It also lacked the style the homeowner preferred so it was time to remove and replace it. Retrofitting newel posts and balusters into an existing staircase can be a challenge if the goal is to retain treads and the stairs themselves. In order to accommodate the style of newels preferred (box newels), we would at the very least, be tasked with replacing the first step, since it was originally designed with a goose neck, turned out handrail and bull-nose tread. This was removed and replaced with a square tread that allowed us to reposition and securely fasten the lower newel post. From there it was a simple matter of installing the new balustrade. Additionally, the steps, stringers, risers, and all the new materials were freshly stained and painted. The last bit of work in the family room involved adding some wainscot panels and doing some additional painting.

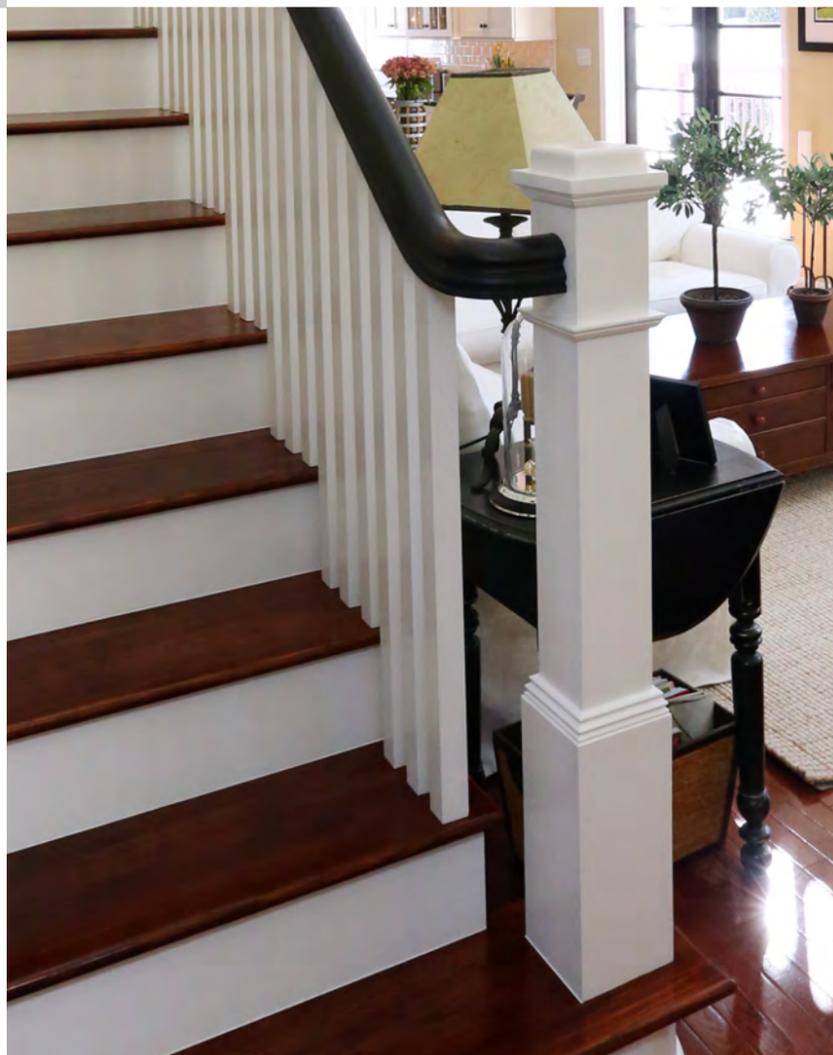
Our staircase railing was loose and very unattractive. Now, it is sturdy and amazing to look at. It turned out much better than we ever anticipated.

Homeowners,
Chris & Mike



Not surprising, our family and friends love what we've done and have been curious as to who did the work. Needless to say, we've been enthusiastically passing on the contact information for Kitchen Encounters. We could not be more pleased with their performance!

Homeowners, Chris & Mike



The finished product in each space remodeled proved that it's the quality of the products and design that provides the feeling of luxury in any remodel; not the size of the rooms being updated. By simply repositioning functional objects and replacing builder grade materials with upgraded pieces, we were able to create beautiful new living spaces that are timeless and elegant. This renovation was a joy to do and a reward to see come to fruition. We hope you agree and can take inspiration for your home as well!

David White, Owner
Kitchen Encounters