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Mag

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# FANTASY REMODELS

BY Charlyne Varkonyi Schaub

## When are any of us really satisfied with our homes?

We go on house tours, visit show houses, read decorating magazines and watch HGTV. Everywhere we look we find enticing ideas of what our dream homes could look like.

If moving is impossible right now, remodeling can give your home the facelift it desperately needs. Changes can range from major surgery to the equivalent of a little Botox with some minor changes.

Our three remodels provide inspiration – for everything from kitchens and powder rooms to family rooms. You can borrow major concepts or just an idea to transform your abode into the home of your dreams.



## Before

The new owners bought this home in North Palm Beach for the view, but the view from the water was mundane, especially with the unattractive second floor addition.

## After

The remodeled exterior now takes advantage of the waterfront view with a new window configuration, a private balcony off the master bedroom and a covered outside area for a summer kitchen and seating. A hot tub was added to the pool.

## From minor facelift to major surgery

Realtors love to repeat the mantra: Location, location, location.

In South Florida, location often translates into waterfront, waterfront, waterfront. Just ask a snowbird couple from Boston who knew they had to buy the home in Lost Tree Village in North Palm Beach when they saw the nearly 180-degree panoramic water view of Little Lake Worth.

They recognized the 1970s house needed work and estimated they would have to redo the bathrooms and create a more open floor plan. But once they started talking with architect Brian Collins of Affiniti Architects in Boca Raton, they saw the possibilities, and a minor renovation turned into a major facelift.

"The exterior architecture and interior were pretty chopped up and 1970ish," Collins says. "The house had no architectural theme whatsoever. They really had their heart set on a Key West style, with bright colors, planking and details that describe a Key West home."

Collins designed a new façade, added siding and a metal roof, new paint, details such as brackets and columns, a covered patio (with room for seating and a summer kitchen) and a private deck on the second floor. An addition of a few hundred square feet enlarged the kitchen and first floor bedroom. The front door, which was right next to the garage, was relocated and a covered entrance was added.

"The owner wanted to block the ugliness of it from the front as well as give it a facelift from the rear," Collins says. "The house just sits out there facing the water for everyone to see."

So why not take the typical South Florida solution: Tear down and start over?

"We gave them that option and, in hindsight, it maybe is the route we should have gone," says Michael Conville, president of Beacon Construction Group. "They would have had a brand new house with the exact floor plan they wanted. Still, it saved a couple of hundred thousand in this manner. Since they didn't tear the house down, the renovation presented some major challenges, such as leveling floor slabs and bringing the old structure up to new building codes, Conville says.

Collins saw "an extremely ugly second floor addition that was haphazardly put on the rear of the house" as the major problem. The addition resulted in a low ceiling height



— about 8 ½ feet — on the first floor. Typically rooms today have ceiling heights ranging from 10 to 12 feet. When they opened up the downstairs space to feel larger, they had to add steel beams to hold up the second floor.

What should you expect when doing a renovation?

"You should expect the unexpected," Collins says. "Seriously, when you do a renovation you really don't know what you have. We knew we were dealing with an ugly second floor, but we had no idea what we would find when we opened it up."

His final advice: "When you are planning a renovation, the important thing is to have the architect and the builder in place. I want to stress that we worked together on this. We can save the owner money when the builder and architect work together."

**Architect:** Brian Collins, Affiniti Architects, Boca Raton

**Builder:** Michael Conville, Beacon Construction Group, North Palm Beach

**Photographer:** Daniel Newcomb



### Before

The original house, built in the 1970s, featured an off center front door, a dull color scheme and little architectural character.

### After

Brian Collins of Affiniti Architects in Boca Raton relocated the front door, added a covered entrance, architectural interest and a new metal roof.

