

The old kitchen was closed off to the dining room, making it feel small and unwelcoming. Now, grandkids can snack or color at the much larger island. “The blue [Adagio by Benjamin Moore] was inspired by a pair of chairs they had in the living room,” interior designer Krysta Gibbons says. “It was kind of a risk, but they didn’t hesitate.” Handmade glazed ceramic tile, by Pratt and Larson, lines the backsplash, and quartzite countertops are easy to maintain. The plaid-fabric chairs, which tie into the family room’s cottage feel, are from MillerRossom in IMS.



HITTING *Refresh*

A traditional Lilydale home transforms into an oasis of light and color—without compromising its classic roots.

BY MADISON BLOOMQUIST ♦ PHOTOGRAPHS BY JESSIE PREZA

Depending on the season, you can see clear across St. Paul from the kitchen windows of this Lilydale house, the owners say. They can peer through the surrounding trees and see the Mississippi River below, downtown St. Paul, the Highland Park Water Tower, and beyond. The light of the city and the lushness of the trees fill the home today—but it wasn’t always that way. The homeowners, a couple of empty nesters, built the house nearly 20 years ago in a traditional style that separated formal and casual living spaces. But now, as they get older, that floorplan no longer works with visiting young grandchildren running in and out of the house.

“All the light was in the back of the house and didn’t get to the spaces that weren’t being used,” says interior designer Krysta Gibbons. The homeowners had been a fan of Gibbons’s work for years. She and the team at Kipling House Interiors had worked on the homes of the couple’s daughter and neighbors. The couple loved her classic-with-fresh-flair style and decided to tap her to open up the space and take advantage of the natural sunlight and views in their home. They let go and trusted the designer completely with the renovation plan, up to and including being willing to purge most of what they owned in the process, but Gibbons ended up incorporating many pieces of furniture and art the owners had collected through the years.



"It was important the kitchen have an informal dining space," Gibbons says. The kitchen's tile backsplash extends through the space, giving some texture, while the recently refinished golden oak floors and pedestal table add depth and contrast to the otherwise light and bright room. The vintage framed art is from The Atelier Collection, in Excelsior.



"The house was in wonderful shape," Gibbons says. "I don't know anyone who takes that good care of their house. They had items that were 20 years old that didn't show much wear. Because they have wonderful taste, we were able to work with a number of their items. They have a great aesthetic, and we were excited to infuse it into the space."

The result, which involved the team at Erotas Custom Building removing a wall between the kitchen and dining room and refinishing the original oak floors in a darker hue, is bright with coastal elements that nod to its riverfront location and modern details to balance the traditional architecture. A sky-blue kitchen with a custom-made zinc hood and a brilliant white family room give space for the entire multigenerational crew to gather, while the glam adjoining dining room invites lingering after meals.

"We wanted to create an opportunity for each space to have an identity," Gibbons says. "We didn't want a totally open-concept home, so we added architectural details and transitional wallpapers to make all spaces feel independent."

The homeowners say they appreciate the livelier design that maintains the home's traditional bones. "Krysta did a great job of making the space feel cohesive without punching you in the face with it," one of the homeowners says. "She just got it. She got what we liked." ■



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*"FIND SOMETHING YOU LOVE,
AND THAT CAN BE THE
INSPIRATION MOVING FORWARD."*

— KRISTA GIBBONS, INTERIOR DESIGNER



COASTAL CONNECTIONS

Comfort was key when designing the family room, says Gibbons. Originally, it was dark and a little stuffy—but a fresh coat of paint on the woodwork, V-groove paneling on the ceiling, and curtains in buffalo plaid fabric from Kravet give it a relaxing coastal-cottage feel. "We kept the grandkids in mind when selecting the ottoman," which is from Highland House, Gibbons says. "We didn't want them running around and bumping their heads."



GOLDEN HOUR

The dining room's botanical wallpaper, Twiggy Paperweave from Schumacher, pairs perfectly with brass candle wall sconces the homeowners already owned.



TRANSITIONAL TWISTS

The formal dining room, used mostly for family dinner parties (and intense puzzle nights) serves as a transitional area from the bright, airy kitchen to the moodier living room. "The wallpaper's ethereal design is a nice neutral that brings in some playfulness," says Gibbons. And the tulip chandelier, by Julie Neill from Circa Lighting, was a "modern push," she says. "The homeowners were all for being current and not scared to be a little more on trend." Chairs, re-covered in fabric from Pindler and from Schumacher, were the homeowners' own.

CLASSIC COMBINATION

"That's one of my all-time favorites," Gibbons says of the grass cloth wallpaper, Acanthus Stripe from Schumacher, in the powder room (right). "We repeated the white detail from the dining room chandelier and the blue from the kitchen." A brass mirror frame mimics picture frames around the house, while reeded accents on the custom vanity are reminiscent of the Asian notes of the dining room wallpaper.



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