

SAN DIEGO[®]

magazine

A CURTCO MEDIA PUBLICATION

CRAFTSMAN FOR THE NEW AGE

A modern couple beautifully
restores a historic Mission Hills home

By Jill Esterbrook Photographs by John Durant



T

Previous page: Meticulous handiwork and attention to detail ensure that the rear addition to this Craftsman home blends in with the original structure—a requirement for architect Sam Chereskin, who was tasked with meeting strict criteria for the home’s historic designation.

Right: Pat and Linda Stouffer fell in love with the “good bones and strong character” of the worn structure and were hands-on with its restoration.

The original living room (below) had such presence that Chereskin chose to replicate the boxed beam ceiling and expand it into the new family room (opposite). An open kitchen design brings modern functionality to the Craftsman home, where the Stouffers often entertain family and friends.



LINDA AND PAT STOUFFER HAVE long had romantic notions about living in a grand old home in a well-established San Diego neighborhood. So it wasn’t exactly love at first sight when, in the summer of 2003, after months of searching from Kensington and North Park to the tip of Point Loma, they stumbled upon a ramshackle, two-story Craftsman-style home in Mission Hills. Overlooking the peeling gray paint, shabby wood shingles and sagging front porch, the Stouffers were attracted to the “good bones and strong character” hidden just beneath the drab surface of the century-old structure.

“We were really lucky that very little had been done by previous owners,” says Pat of the 2,300-square-foot bungalow. “It had been neglected but not butchered, and we felt confident it could be returned to its former glory.”

The pair enlisted Encinitas-based architect Samuel Chereskin, AIA, of Chereskin Architecture, to advise on the extensive restoration. They also tasked him with designing a 1,200-square-foot rear addition that would include a new kitchen and family room, expanded second-floor master-bedroom suite and a finished basement with laundry facilities and powder room. In addition, the Stouffers had applied for historic designation of their home, meaning the renovations would have to preserve the architecture of the front elevation, while the rear addition would have to reflect the home’s historic fabric.

“Linda and Pat have a large family and many friends they love to entertain,” Chereskin says. “The goal was to update the home to accommodate contemporary living, yet remain true to its historic style and classic Craftsman charm.”

The Stouffers didn’t just collaborate with Chereskin on the remodel, they took





Forgoing granite and other stones commonly used in kitchens today, the Stouffers chose to remain true to period style with subway tile for the backsplash and hexagon ceramic tile for countertops. A raised eating bar and modern appliances bring the space up to date.

a hands-on approach. For more than two years, the couple lived in a small upstairs bedroom while methodically and meticulously reconstructing their home. Before beginning demolition and reconstruction, they toured historic homes and pored over “practically every magazine and book published on Craftsmans,” says Linda, a bank executive and watercolorist who selected the 20 different paint shades used throughout the home.

Pat took on the painstaking job of reproducing period details such as picture rails and corner guards. A former builder of new condos and apartments, he eased right into the project, yet he concedes remodeling an older home presented many modern-day challenges.

“Dealing with ancient pipes and wiring is tough,” he says, “but try matching intricate wood trim and leaded glass, replicating custom cabinetry and oversized window casements, or re-creating a boxed beamed ceiling.” The craftsmanship and carpentry skills Pat devoted to the project are testament to the couple’s passion for preservation.

“We wanted to preserve or put back what might have been in a gorgeous old home, like the built-in bookcases and inglenooks on each side of the fireplace,” Linda says.

The kitchen took top priority. Chereskin and the Stouffers shared the same goal for the dated space: Bring it into this century without losing its vintage feeling and charm. Rejecting today’s widespread affinity for granite, they opted for traditional subway tile for the backsplash and white hexagon ceramic tiles for countertops. Modern appliances and a palette of primary colors give the kitchen updated functionality and modern flavor.

Keeping in mind the Stouffers’ knack for entertaining, Chereskin didn’t enclose the kitchen. Instead, he added a raised eating bar that looks onto the family room. With Pat’s handiwork, they reproduced the boxed beam ceiling original to the front room. Elephant-leg tiered posts also help to seamlessly blend new spaces with the old.



“We showed considerable restraint by not overmodernizing with volume ceilings and other lavish appointments,” Chereskin says. The same could be said for both the first-floor expansion and the new master bedroom. In keeping with period style, the suite comprises a small sitting room, a balcony overlooking the backyard, a walk-in closet with built-ins and an old-fashioned laundry chute.

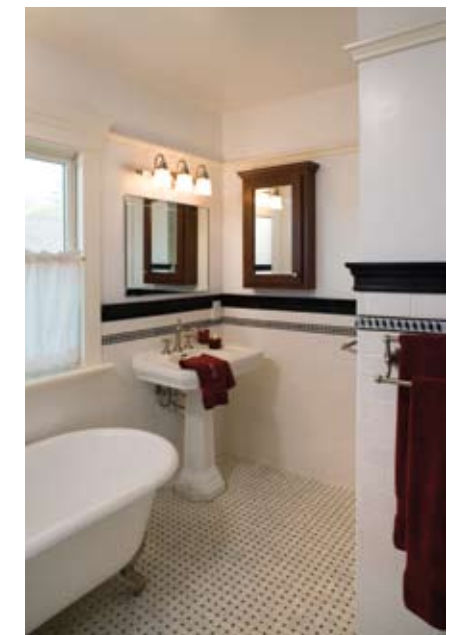
Wherever possible, the home’s original materials were rescued and reused. An oval window from the original front door now adorns the pullout door in the kitchen pantry, while an old swinging door now hangs between the dining room and new butler’s pantry.

Intent on finding just the right accents for their Craftsman home, the Stouffers spent weekends at Architectural Salvage in Little Italy. They hunted for crystal doorknobs, brushed-nickel hardware and ceiling-mounted light fixtures like the three “miraculously matching” orbs in the laundry room.

A trip to China last April brought a treasure trove of Asian furnishings and accents. The Stouffers, who designed the

interiors on their own, found pieces apropos to the Arts & Crafts period—from the silkscreen above the mantel to the majestic rosewood table gracing the dining room to the cobalt-blue silk spread spilling luxuriously across the Mission-style bed in the master suite.

Four years after purchasing the home, the Stouffers are still adding final touches to their beloved Craftsman, which now proudly displays its historic-landmark designation. Pat recently installed a mail slot that had been lost from the original plan, and Linda is looking in catalogs and antique shops for that “perfect little basket” that will hang inside to catch letters and parcels. ■



Top: Throughout the remodel, Chereskin and the Stouffers kept to the spirit and period of the original design. One case in point is the new master bedroom and bath (above), designed to appear as though they had been there long ago.