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Jan Kuittrauer has a talent for bringing people together.

Owner of a company that produces corporate meetings and special events, Jan is also a gifted entertainer known for hosting hundreds of guests at memorable parties. So when she decided to make big changes to the small, 1930s ranch-style house she had lived in for 30 years, the first thing she did was assemble a team of enthusiasts, creative professionals to help.

The first two choices were easy: Jan already knew contractor Michael Ludovic from several impressive remodeling projects in her neighborhood. Her longtime friend Sherry then would do the interior design. But she also needed remodeling plans, and those concepts solicited from architects left her ailed.

"Nobody was being creative," she says. "Nobody was being fun." Then Ludovic recommended Brian Bishus Smith, an Atlanta architect who proved irresistible. "When Brian came in and suggested moving the front door and opening up the entry to the mainline, I knew he was the guy for me," Jan says.

The first order of business was taking square work on the two-bedroom, one-bath home, which was no longer up to code and had suffered termitis damage. A faulty rain that served as a second living room had water damage from still active leaks. The kitchen was typical of the style and age of the house—small, with limited work and storage space, and poor traffic pattern—certainly not a great match for Jan's cooking and entertaining demands. And the home's small windows and limited outdoor



opposite page If stone facades and a pair of stone pillars replaced the home's original flat iron and glass front, **opposite bottom** A small front patio is Jan's favorite spot to sit with her dogs while greeting neighbors who stroll by. **above** There's a dining nook that paid off: Black cabinets have a dramatic backdrop for rich maple cabinets and stainless-steel appliances. To quiet the site, maple panels in the island were finished with black.

right Complementary design choices pay off again as the intricately crafted kitchen floor, where polished stone tiles are interspersed with oak planks.





above: Symmetry reigns in the piano studio—spaces that use a former closet serving the master bedroom. Builder Michael Cadden used a small window as a size template for the mirrored wall panels he installed. Matching French doors behind the couch lead to a screen porch.

opposite: Above the French doors in the dining room, a quartet of transoms windows were written to echo a similar treatment at the front door. The doors here lead out to the entry patio, which is shown on page 38.

access made it difficult to take full advantage of the large lot, which Jan had romantically landscaped herself.

Besides fixing what was wrong with the house, Jan wanted a home that would showcase the art she has collected through the years and would provide a welcoming place for friends. She also envisioned a calm highway for herself, with a roomy master suite where she could recover from hectic workdays and frequent business travel.

To transform the house into the home Jan envisioned, Smith began by elevating walls and adding rooms to the main living area. The front entry was moved about 20 feet, and an inviting new foyer took over space that had previously been a small dining room. The original living room at the front of the house became the dining room, and the former family room toward the back of the house became the great room.

The walls separating the kitchen, dining room, and living room came down, and an 8-foot ceiling over the main living space was opened up to a 20-foot-high peaked outline.



At party time, guests mingle inside and out.

living on-site: in the belly of the beast

Once Jan Kullweaver decided to undertake a major renovation, she began thinking about where to live during the 10-month job. She wanted to be available to the builder and crew during the project for the inevitable questions and problems that would arise, and she didn't want the expense of renting another home.

So Jan opted to move into her own basement, which offered 1,500 square feet of living space. About a year before the main-level remodeling began, she contracted to build a fully equipped one-bedroom basement apartment with a separate entrance. Just before the bigger project launched, she moved in.

The decision proved a good financial investment, turning

money into property upgrades instead of losing it to rent payments. But Jan isn't sure she'll do it again. The building crew often arrived with the sun—beginning work at dawn. The noise overhead deprived Jan of much-needed rest, and all the sawing, hammering, and wall didn't let up throughout the day. Sometimes events unfolded down quite literally into her living space.

"One day I was downstairs working and something started dripping from the ceiling of over my desk," she says. "It turned out that one of the workers had knocked over his coffee on the subflooring, and it spilled through the spaces between the boards and soaked through the ceiling tiles in the basement."

If you are considering similar living arrangements while you remodel, count all the costs carefully. Your daily life will be disrupted because construction comes with predictable chaos. Noise, dust, and debris are byproducts of the disruption.



above: The master bedroom presents a sophisticated flair with a fireplace surrounded by black glass, rich grain on a carved wooden mantel, and a bed draped like Jean-Croissant to her take-no-prisoners needs.

opposite page (right): Another view of the master bed's morning side—on escape table—made for soothing away workday stresses. Windows open to let in fresh air and the sound of a backyard waterfall. To keep her feet happy, the floor is heated. **opposite bottom:** A glass shelf mounted above the small laundry provides a place for sundy items.

"We totally completely changed the character and the function of the house, from being a ranch with sort of sequestered cabins and limited access to the outside—both front and back—to being an airy, open space where the flow of the floor plan highlights different views and local points as you move through the house," Smith says.

Jan still wanted the individual spaces to have some definition, so a fireplace intended initially for one dining room wall was eliminated in favor of a double-sided stone fireplace set between the great room and dining room, leaving wide paths for people to circulate. There's a casual seating bar with a trio of stools between the kitchen and the great room. A wet bar for libation preparation is just a few feet away.

Key ideas in the kitchen include plentiful storage, professional-grade appliances, a large maple island, a quartz-surfaced countertop, and a prep sink. All is designed to make cooking for a crowd a little easier.



The original bedrooms and bath were left mostly as they were, but a new powder room took shape in the former entry hall. On the other side of the house, an elegant master suite was added, increasing the home's footprint by 750 square feet. The suite is decorated in the harmonious range of earth tones used throughout the house.

To integrate the outdoor and indoor living spaces, Smith designed a small front porch, with French doors leading into the new dining room. On the back of the house, a rustic screen porch now overlooks Jan's well-used fire garden. Laidis used cedar post-and-beam construction, a stone fireplace, and a galvanized-metal roof to give this porch a mountain lodge feel. Jan often escapes there—unless she's out on the easy front porch, sitting quietly in her piano nook, or reading a book by the master suite





Despite, Jan wanted a completely new place to enjoy her beautiful yard. Builder Laska partnered with the real-estate pros, which included a fireplace for indoor warmth. It's easy to imagine the cabin coming down on the porch's standing-wood metal roof, which can be seen through a latticework of cedar beams and rafters.

Project: This is a home of remarkable balance. There's plenty of space to entertain friends and family, but there are also settings for solitude.

"I travel 30 weeks a year," Jan says. "When I get home from the airport, I walk in and it feels like a retreat, a sanctuary." ■
FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 132.

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the change

In a move to openness, a small, traditional space sheds its interior walls. Public spaces are ready for indoor-outdoor entertaining, while private nooks offer refuge.

what it took

- Replacing the original, nonreciprocal entry by building a dramatic porch featuring cedar trimmers and stone veneer on its welcoming facade.
- Adding a screen porch to back and a small courtyard in front, both accessible through French doors, to bring the outdoors in and invite guests to enjoy the landscaping.
- Giving the dated kitchen a complete facelift, with new professional-grade appliances and custom cabinetry.
- Adding a new master suite, with an exercise tub, fireplace, and luxurious fabrics for a serene environment of rest and rejuvenation.



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