

Bungalow Built for 2

Fitness instructor Joanne and Bob Saubon shape up their home to suit their new life together.

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Natural tones and compelling accent pieces give the living room an eclectic, contemporary style. With their remodeling done, Joanne and Bob Saubon, left, have more time for reworking.

The first time Joanne Buckner saw the 1930s house that she and husband Bob would call their own, she was taken with the arched, the hardwood floors, and above all, the location. The house is in a friendly neighborhood in Buckhead, just a short hike ride from Joanne's popular workout studio, Joanne's BodyTone. "I just knew it had potential," she recalls.

The Buckners, who were married less than a year ago, decided to remodel before moving into their new home, and agreed that Joanne would oversee the construction work as well as the decorating. Using her instincts to decide where to spend and where to save, Joanne hired Brad Crickshank of Crickshank Incorporated to do the remodeling. They decided to target the back of the house, giving most of the square footage they needed. She made family projects of the more menage-a-tout, and worked with a talented friend to pull together the interior. Joanne kept up with the construction by riding her bike between the house and her studio during breaks. "She has since added e-bike riding to her transportation options to keep up with Bob on his long outings."

The couple kept the front exterior of the house basically the same, except for a few subtle changes that made a big difference: new paint, strategic landscaping, and the removal of an old metal awning over the door. But the back exterior underwent a complete transformation. The architectural lines were altered to accommodate a new master bedroom and bath in the unfinished attic and a spacious deck off the family room and kitchen area. Joanne says she loves the design Crickshank came up with because it kept the roofline intact, even though the changes were drastic on the inside. "The new gable and skylights," explains Crickshank, "set ways we gained head room and introduced light while keeping the scale of the new 'additions' in proportion to the house."

Inside Joanne aimed for a "light, clean California look," especially for Bob, a tax attorney from southern California. This

meant she had to find a way to blend her new purchases with the pine furniture and Southwestern accents from her apartment days. Joanne proved a talent at making great buys, often shopping with friend Sherry Hart, who also bought a new house. She relied on Hart to help her put it all together with harmonious appeal. Sometimes they were joined by Hart's sister, Maggie Virgil, who has her own design firm. "I had my living room totally different than it is now," says Joanne. "It's really worth it to have someone come in, even if it's just to arrange the stuff you already have."

When Joanne began the living room, she started with her selected color scheme of cream and beige, purchasing two rich chairs upholstered in beige silkweave



and a beige couch. But she later interpreted Joanne when Hart urged her to use a faintly lustrous sheet in place of a rectangular ottoman in front of the couch. "My great-grandfather made it," says Joanne. "so I wanted to use it somewhere." Joanne bought the pictures and antique accessories during just two fruitful shopping trips, and watched as the designing women arranged and rearranged them until they achieved perfect results. Since Joanne picked out what she liked, without any particular plan, she was more surprised than she at how well her purchases worked. "I don't think I could do it again if I tried," she marvels. "It just happened." A

snappy ovalside rug completes the room by pulling together the dark hues.

Joanne and Bob decided to leave the living room walls the same color a previous owner had painted them, and extended the color into the dining room, doing all the work themselves. They also kept the old vacation blinds in the two rooms, and upholstered them by spray painting the slats and replacing the striping. "We saved a lot of money there," says Joanne. She made the dining room table by taking a glass top from a contemporary table Bob had and gluing it on cast polystyrene. And she bought the chairs at a half-price sale and had them painted antique white. The sideboard was an existing piece that Joanne lightened by striping it down to the natural wood. Another inexpensive trick: the pictures over the sideboard were rescued from a junk store and framed. (A friend later identified the subject as the late blues singer Bessie Armstrong.)

The new kitchen received new life by combining the original kitchen, a breakfast room and a pantry. It now features a uniquely shaped island with seating, and makes a natural divider for the kitchen and new family room. A backsplash of tumbled marble introduces a splash of color, and the farmhouse and wares are enhanced by Joanne's decorative assortment of baskets and pottery. When she first considered putting glass fronts on the upper cabinets near the windows, Joanne says she had flashing visions of her grandmother's farmhouse: "I thought, oh gosh, I'm gonna have to buy new dishes!" With few changes, it all came together and worked as an eclectic display.

During the warm months, the Buckners often cook dinner on the deck grill. "We eat chicken and fish cooked just about every night," says Joanne. A single door gives them easy access from the kitchen to the deck, and a double door opens from the family room—a room made by leaving down a wall into what was a spare bedroom. The main floor now has two bedrooms instead of three. The deck was designed in time to avoid a shady light of



Below

steps and, says Crickshank, so that it could be accessible from upper levels. "The horizontal shape of the lower deck resembles the various paths to and from the pool and the house."

When the new master suite was in the design stage, Crickshank instinctively planned for a large bed in the only part of the room where the ceiling would permit one, outlining the space with windows. Joanne furnished the room with an iron bed she already owned, and had a bedspread and three pillows custom-made from white denim. "I just wanted something soft," she explains. A kilim rug and three pillows add a splash of color.

The Buckners have embraced the lifestyle that their new house and its convenient location afford them. They regularly walk to dinner at nearby Buckhead restaurants. And Joanne now spends so much time on her bike that she has sold her dog. Whenever they want to get away for a few days, they head to Florida. But they always have a great place to return to: a lovely home that holds dreams for the future, and stands as proof of dreams already realized. □

Four stone walls in the foyer, facing, provide a transition from the exterior stone to the interior rooms; bamboo stalks in decorative urns offer a sculptural alternative to plants. A spacious white kitchen, above, replaced a small corner kitchen. Joanne's dining room chairs, center, were bought at a half-price sale and painted white. The master bedroom, below, has a niche designed for the Bedouin's tall bed. The lower levels of the southwestern style of Joanne's previous home.

