

Time & Quality Top Their List

Homeowners knew what they wanted

By Margaret Anne Fehr

Photography by Michael Roberts

Dean and Christina moved into their Royal Wood home three years ago and because the house was a former display model, the couple was spared the inevitable home decorating issues that most new homeowners face.

The upstairs was already painted and colour coordinated which was a tremendous timesaver for this busy career couple who were also new parents. But when the time came to upgrade the framed basement into additional living space, the couple chose to go their own way in terms of amenities and décor.

Says Christina, “Even when the basement was unfinished, we

were still spending a lot of time down there. We laid down an area rug, hooked up the TV and brought down our son’s toys so that he could run around safely down there while we kept a watchful eye on him.”

Since the family spent so much time downstairs, when the time came, they knew exactly what they wanted to do. Their plans included an entertainment and TV room, nearby play area, in-home office for Dean, a spare bedroom, three-piece bathroom and laundry/storage area.

After interviewing three home renovation companies, the couple chose All Canadian Renovations (ACR) to handle the job.

Christina outlined a number of critical factors that were important to them. Topping their list was the time issue. “We needed to have the project completed within a nine week time frame. When we started this project, our son wasn’t even a year

old, and we were on a timetable to move a lot of our belongings into the garage to prepare for the renovation.”

“Money, of course, was important to a certain degree, but at the same time, we wanted to make sure that we wouldn’t be compromising quality.”

And quality was an imperative for the couple, especially for Christina, whose father was a finishing carpenter and had built her childhood home. “It’s something I recognize and value.”

Christina and Dean wanted to make sure that their new living space wouldn’t scream ‘basement’. “There’s a big difference between ‘basement’ and ‘lower level’, and what we wanted was a lower level, with lots of light,” says Christina.

“Mike Kerr of ACR was very helpful about showing us how to keep it bright down here with using some simple refinements that we weren’t aware of.”

Instead of blinds on the windows, Mike had suggested using a tinted film that is applied to the window for a soft, infusion of light within the space and acts as a privacy screen from the outside.

“We also went with a frosted glass panel inset door to the spare bedroom and two French doors with clear glass insets for Dean’s office.” The office window received the same film treatment as the bedroom and also provides a primo viewing spot on the window ledge for the family’s cat, Midnight.

The TV area has been designed to accommodate the wide-screen TV, with audio and video components neatly housed in their custom-sized spaces and overhead lit art niches of varying sizes that add an easy elegance to the room. An electric fireplace visually anchors the wall and provides a convenient source of heat on chilly days.

The three-piece bathroom with curved glass shower unit has been equipped with extra lighting to banish dark areas, and black retro-style cabinets provide a rich contrast against the pale green walls for an invigorating effect. Linoleum flooring with a richly textured, irregular dark slate pattern offers a satisfying finishing touch. Says Christina, “We wanted to do something totally different from the two upstairs bathrooms and it’s worked out very well.”

A multi-tone Berber carpet, soft underfoot and forgiving of occasional spills and dust provides a safe place for playtime for the couple’s young son and visually unites the entire lower level space.





Top & above right: the wide view of the lower level - lots of room and lots of light. Left: The three piece bath is also bright and features a curved glass shower and black retro-style cabinetry.



Mike Kerr from ACR said, "This couple knew exactly what they wanted and it went well from our end. We are always wanting to inject that WOW factor into all of our projects and, in this case, it focused on maintaining the natural light in this lower level. That's why we suggested the film tint on the windows. Not only did it successfully solve the lighting problem, but it also came in at about one-tenth of what blinds may have cost."

Sound proof insulation was also installed in the ceiling along with acoustic tiles to minimize the noise from the basement and ACR managed to divert some expenses from the laundry/storage room that is not totally finished, but is still very functional, to use in other areas of the renovation. "Christina was very happy with that," says Mike.

Christina sums up. "ACR really gave us good suggestions based on our needs. I really like that. We don't necessarily want to hear that we could do anything we want. We don't know everything. We need a few suggestions. We want to have that feedback from an expert. We felt that Mike and ACR cared about us and that things worked for us and really met our needs." ^R