



DESIGNING BARRINGTON LIFESTYLES

A 1980s semi-custom, two-story builder's grade home gets a common sense makeover into a sophisticated country farmhouse with an urban touch.

INTERIOR DESIGN BY **MICHELLE LECINSKI/ ADVANCE DESIGN STUDIO, LTD**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **JIM PRISCHING (PAGES 1, 2) AND JOE NOWAK** | WRITTEN BY **LISA STAMOS**



Homeowner Jennifer McHugh talks with interior designer Michelle Lecinski in her newly renovated kitchen.

COUNTRY FOR HIM, URBAN FOR HER

JENNIFER MCHUGH GREW UP on a 17-acre hobby farm south of Kansas City, Mo., but when she moved to Chicago with her husband, who had grown up there, she embraced the urban architecture of the city. But with the birth of their first child, he wanted to move to the country. The year was 2002, and following the events of the year before on Sept. 11, he wanted to leave the city. They would find a new home in the suburbs and the new dad would commute to work.

One of McHugh's friends from her college days at DePauw in Greencastle, Ind., was from Barrington. So, the couple decided to check out the suburbs, including Barrington. While house hunting, McHugh didn't see the architectural details she saw in the city. "I loved city architecture and urban style, but I didn't find that in Barrington, or anywhere," she said. "So, I stopped looking at the houses, and focused on buying a great location. They found the perfect 2-acre property in Deer Park, complete with a slice of marshland in the far backyard.

The home they bought showcased the signature style of the mid-'80s—oak everywhere, small shiny white floor tiles, laminate flooring, plush carpet, and large soffits. The outside standard red brick and tiny shutters were on every home in the neighborhood. The couple went through several phases for their "big cosmetic renovation".

McHugh looked for her perfect design partner and remembered seeing an ad in Quintessential Barrington with the tagline, "Common Sense Remodeling", and she liked the ad's featured kitchen. Though she didn't recall what page the ad was on, she googled that tagline and found Advance Design Studio, located in Gilberts. She called the studio and her future designer, Michelle Lecinski, answered. Advance Design's owner Todd Jurs and Lecinski made an initial visit to discuss the project and the firm was hired.

The homeowners had started interior renovations including taking out walls and a bathroom in the space that is now the great room, prior to the kitchen proj-

ect being completed by Advance Design. They refashioned the laundry room space into a mud room and locker space, and the laundry room went to the basement. Minor renovations were made to the existing powder room. The garage entry was moved from its position in the kitchen to the mud room. Then the kitchen renovation took place. Phase two tackled the master bathroom upstairs, adding a screened porch using the garage attic and an outdoor shower located on the bridged walkway between the bathroom and the porch. Phase three was the home's exterior.

"We had hired Chris Young, from CY Painting in Barrington, who was painting our deck, and he suggested that we could paint the exterior brick, as long as it was the right shade. It wasn't easy stepping down from the front door to the driveway, so Young also suggested a front porch be added. The home was painted a light Revere Pewter and the new porch accented the home with Pennsylvania bluestone. Phase four was now in focus. "We waited until our appliances died, which was 15 years into the home for us, and then invested in replacements," McHugh said.

McHugh credits Advance Design for its project management, and Lecinski for her design training and skills. "Michelle is vibrant, and she's not designer-driven, but rather a listener for what we were looking for. I asked her many questions, gave her my wish list, discussed the scope of work, timeline, and budget," McHugh said. "All of the renovation plans including a proposal book were delivered on paper before construction, and a complete Install Book was given to us for quick reference on the job and naming the various contractors."

There were few new decisions in the middle of the projects. McHugh says for her vision to be realized, there had to be a lot of trust, and that includes Advance Design Studio and the timely and responsive Village of Deer Park. Now it's time to enjoy what is their one-of-a-kind, personalized home. 

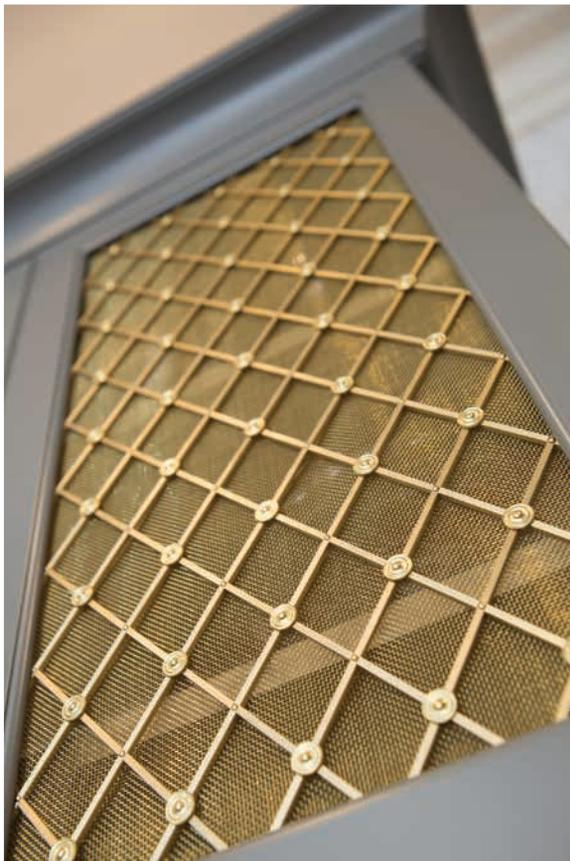


The main focal point of the kitchen is custom zinc and brass ventilation hood with a vintage sheen. It's like a sculpture, a real piece of art. Your eye is drawn towards this elegant yet practical hood that eliminated the home's downdraft problem and added a striking conversation piece at the same time. The beautiful hood centers proudly over the stunning black enamel and brass range. This unique, breathtaking combination anchors the entire kitchen and is apparent immediately as you walk into the great room that surrounds the space.



The entire project consisted of a kitchen remodel, mudroom upgrade with powder room, and garage entry relocation. The finished design drew out elements of the home owner's style and personality. The designer and homeowner called the look "sophisticated farmhouse" when describing the kitchen renovation to family and friends. The result was a beautifully crafted, authentic-feeling space that satisfied the homeowner's dreams 15 years in the making. Open shelving provides elegance and convenience, making dishes and ingredients easily available when cooking.





ABOVE: Custom cabinets with a unique gray paint color paired with a storm blue was developed so that the new kitchen looked like it belonged to the existing space. Unlacquered brass faucets and hardware were important to the home owner because she wanted the living finishes to age over time. Remarkable brass diamond mesh cabinet door inserts imported from the UK continue to add this one-of-a-kind kitchen renovation; giving it a “you won’t see this everywhere” quality. The use of old railcar flooring for the coffee bar countertop and reclaimed oak for the open shelving gives an authenticity to the space uncommon in kitchens today.

RIGHT: Relocating the garage entry to the new mudroom was a huge priority and has finally separated the family’s arriving home functions from their kitchen. Now coats and shoes and bags have their own area for dropping once members arrive. Matching gray cabinetry helped create gorgeous, purposeful lockers for the family. A reclaimed vintage sink and custom wall paper were added to the tiny powder room to beautify the once previously only functional space. There is even a custom space for their dog to sleep while the family is away.



Project Designer Michelle Lecinski strives to create design elements that truly reflect her client's personality, often adding custom elements to her kitchen and bath designs intended to make her clients smile every day. With the often-overwhelming vastness of product and options available for renovation projects today, her clients count on her to routinely demonstrate resourcefulness and an intense attention to detail, taking advantage of her years of experience. For 15 years she ran her own design company providing extensive interior design services including cabinetry, kitchens and baths, full home design and more. Desiring to be part of something bigger, and after completing a project in partnership with Advance Design, she joined the team in October 2016. For many years, she had admired the company's presence in the community, their smart business approach, and the way they invest back into the company. To reach Michelle Lecinski or the team at Advance Design Studio, call 847-836-2600 or visit online at www.AdvanceDesignStudio.com.