



BY JOHN BYRD



BEFORE

(Top) On annual vacations to Deep Creek Lake (MD), the Romans discovered how much they enjoy sitting by an open fire. Situated on two rolling acres and surrounded by woodland, the home's setting provides the perfect backdrop for an extensive indoor-outdoor solution.

(Above) The only rear exits to the outside in the previous plan converged in a recessed hyphen joining the two main blocks on the rear of the house. This was designated as the site for the new screen porch.

Whole House Makeover

EMBRACES COMPREHENSIVE INDOOR-OUTDOOR SOLUTION

Begun with repairs, this Great Falls remodel evolves into extensive family entertainment component that works for multi-generations

Sometimes a significant home improvement starts with small repair considerations. In fact, as Roger Lataille, senior design consultant at Sun Design Remodeling, recalls it: his first discussion with Jeff and Sharon Roman of Great Falls concerned how to solve a water drainage problem.

"There were no gutters over the three garage ports, and rain water splash-back was causing the garage doors to deteriorate," Lataille remembers. "Also, the front entrance was too exposed. And the original wooden deck on the back of the house had decayed so badly it wasn't being used much at all."

Then there was the problem with woodpeckers regularly attacking the house, a reflection of moisture build-up and bug-infestation under the home's sprayed-on stucco exterior.

Yet rectifying these everyday dysfunctions turned out to be a comparatively small part of the Roman's agenda, as Lataille soon discovered.



Photos courtesy of Greg Hadley



(At left) The spacious new screened porch demonstrates how highly durable materials can be shaped to meet demanding aesthetics. The Ipe decking chosen to the porch flooring is one of the one of the most enduring natural hardwoods offered for outdoor surfaces; installed in a tongue-and-groove pattern, it keeps out bugs more effectively than screen mesh. The fiberglass charcoal screen, likewise, makes it hard to see the porch interior from the outside.

Likewise, on the rear elevation, opportunities for self-expression quickly became inspirations.

Situated on two rolling acres and surrounded by woodland, the home's setting provided perfect sprawling backdrop for an extensive indoor-outdoor solution.

Boasting a southwesterly view from the rear elevation, the existing rear deck was usually bathed in soft sunsets on summer evenings. The visual display was, likewise, available from the house, too-- except the windows were too small and the only exits to the outside converged in a recessed hyphen joining the two main blocks on the rear of the house.

"Ironically, we've always *loved* spending time outdoors," Sharon explains, "so it's surprising that we hadn't changed the exterior of the house in the 13 years we've lived here."

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As the conversation progressed, the outlines for a sweeping, state-of-the-art makeover began to take shape even as the home's exterior was gradually re-imagined as a distinctive architectural statement fully integrated with its sumptuous green setting.

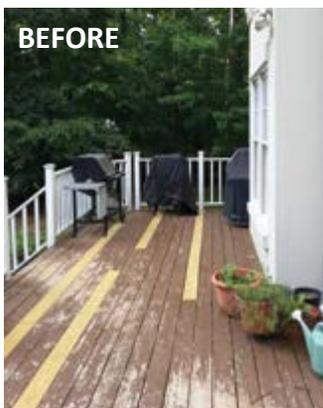
At 6,500 sq ft, the nearly twenty year old, six bedroom center hall Colonial offered considerable grandeur, yet the facade lacked detail, definition, even warmth.

"There were a lot of distinctive architectural themes in place," Lataille notes. "Our first concern is always helping the owner articulate a program that suits their goals, and then initiating an effective collaboration process."

This in mind, the solutions proposed for the home's front elevations came right to the point. A metal-clad overhang supported by decorative brackets above the garage doors not only re-directs

rainwater into a discrete functional drainage system, but also gives the facade a unifying linear accent that ties in with the re-designed front entrance that now features a distinctive Adam-style portico.

More pointedly, the defective stucco cladding has been replaced with sand-colored Hardiboard and a stonework "water table" motif that scales back the mass of the looming three level facade, making the whole feel more intimate and approachable.



(At right) To assure the durability of the deck's surface, Sun Design specified Trex planking instead of wood, and narrowed the span between joists from 16" to 12".



(At left) The front elevation's failed stucco cladding has been replaced with a sand-hued Hardiboard that alternates with stonework in a "water table" motif. White trim board provides appropriate linear accents. The effect is warm and welcoming.

(Below) The original recessed front door lacked definition. It was also too weather-exposed.

With no gutters over the three garage ports, rain water splash-back had caused the garage doors to discolor and deteriorate.

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During summer vacations at Deep Creek Lake in Maryland, however, the Romans discovered how much they enjoy sitting by a fire pit on pleasant evenings. This revelation prompted thoughts of adding not only a fire pit, but a screen porch on the rear of the house— one that could be used from early in the spring and well into the fall.

"I also pictured more natural light in the back of the house," Sharon says. "A rear elevation with oversized windows and doors that invites in the beauty all around us."

As the vision evolved, the Romans decided on a plan with four main components: a 20' x 15' screened porch, a 21' x 16' grilling deck, a ground level sunken patio that exits from a lower level room, a stand-alone fire pit with seating for six.

"We were thinking ahead in many ways," Sharon says. "Jeff and I have elderly parents, and a lot of family in the area. A direct entrance to the lower level, for instance, might make it easy to convert the space into an in-law suite if needed."

Overall, the Romans sought the capacity to comfortably entertain up to 40 or 50 people.

Of course, for a fete of that size-- well-constructed decking is essential. Phase One to the new plan was, thus, a nod to architectonic necessity: re-design the decking system to accommodate traffic circulating from directions never previously in the picture.

"We learned immediately that the concrete supporting the existing 20-year-old

deck hadn't been properly set," Lataille says. "Also, to assure the durability of the deck's surface, we specified Trex instead of wood, and narrowed the span between undergirding joists from 16" to 12".

Structurally, the new decking is not only an upgrade, but thoroughly necessary since it's now directly accessible-- through oversized double glass doors-- from the family room, the dining room and the billiards parlor. It's also linked via a new flagstone walkway to both the fire pit and the new rear entrance to the lower level.

"Access to the outdoors from the house is one of the most fundamental features of an integrated indoor/outdoor solution," Lataille notes. "Bringing the aesthetics of nature into your daily life is a lifestyle change: the goal is to create spaces that can be easily maintained, yet allow owners to comfortably extend the open-air season."

On this point, the spacious new screened porch demonstrates how highly durable materials can be shaped to meet demanding aesthetics. The Ipe decking chosen to the porch flooring, for instance, is not only one of the most enduring materials offered for outdoor surfaces, but--installed in a tongue-and-groove pattern-- is more effective in keeping out bugs than a screen mesh under girding. Ipe-- which is Brazilian walnut-- was also specified for the porch handrails.

Meanwhile, the fiberglass charcoal screen—which makes it hard to see the porch interior from the outside-- creates a cozy sense of closure. Overhead, the fir-beaded tongue-and-groove wood



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ceiling lends a natural burnish to the open-air ambiance.

Taking the leads from other finish work details, the design team installed a stone work "water table" for the porch's inside wall—a textured backdrop for the wide-screen TV.

Equipped with both overhead fans and portable heaters, the outdoor room is habitable in all but the coldest days of winter.

"It's really our preferred family room now," said Sharon Roman. "With overhead fans, shades and other convenient adjustments, we can use the porch from early spring to late fall."

Sun Design Remodeling frequently sponsors tours of recently remodeled homes as well as workshops on home remodeling topics. Headquartered in Burke, the firm recently opened a second office in McLean. For information: 703.425.5588 or www.SunDesignInc.com ❖

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