

A JONATHAN ADLER chandelier hangs above the custom-made dining table. The Danish Modern chairs, which interior designer Michael Ferzoco upholstered in Luxe Boucle fabric from Chella and finished with brass tacks for a tailored look, are from the homeowners' collection. The wallpaper is Daphne by Scalamandre. A vintage wall scone hangs by the mantel, which conforms to the curve of the oval room.





Renovation

2.0

IN A TRIUMPH OF FORTITUDE, TWO HOMEOWNERS PERSEVERE AFTER WINTER WREAKS HAVOC ON THEIR NEWLY UPDATED HOUSE

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Photographed by Michael J. Lee*



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uying a house that needed work wasn't in the plan. Neither was the winter of the damned — ice dams, that is. But if challenges are the stuff of better living, Chris Prokop and Mark Battista are living well indeed.

Their house is a sweet Shingle Style Queen Anne Victorian with a center entry and steep twin gables. It sits on a hill on a winding street in a well-established neighborhood of houses of similar vintage and size in a Boston suburb. Oh, and there is a pond worthy of Currier and Ives across the road.

No wonder they succumbed to its charms.

"We were looking for the opposite," says Prokop, a partner in a real estate development company. "We didn't want an old house, and we wanted no work." A circa 1890s ark was not on the wish list. They

THE FAMILY POSES in the living room with Lulu, their puggle (a pug/beagle mix); **(FROM LEFT)** Chris Prokop, Sophia and Ana Prokop Battista, and Mark Battista. The painting is by Mike McGuire, a Provincetown, Massachusetts, painter.

A PLAYFUL PORTRAIT of Elton John by Matthew Gamber hangs on the curved wall of the dining room, where Battista and Lulu take a break. The foyer (FACING PAGE) has parquet floors, a reflection of the history of the house. Portraits of Sophia and Ana by Provincetown, Massachusetts, artists Cedric and Joannette Egeli are behind the arched front door.



wanted a turnkey residence they could move into with their twin daughters, 6-year-old Ana and Sophia, and be done.

But in real estate parlance, they had an “emotional response” to this house.

“We knew right away we could make it a long-term home for our family,” says Battista, a former advertising executive and now a stay-at-home dad. “We loved the history and the charm,” adds Prokop, “but we needed to make it work for today’s environment.”

That meant rethinking spaces, updating bathrooms, and insulating walls. Structurally, the building was sturdy, the rooms large — not the tiny warrens so often found in Victorian-era houses — and the layout had good flow.

They hired interior designer Michael Ferzoco of Eleven Interiors in Boston to help them hatch a plan. The goal? Make this a home where no space is off-limits. “We wanted it to be beautiful and livable for us and our girls,” says Prokop.

Ferzoco is a master of designs that are full of energy yet speak to a laid-back lifestyle. With considerable attention to detail, he combines modern sophistication with barefoot ease in rooms that look as though they came together effortlessly. He set out to make the exquisite traditional architecture the backdrop for a fresh, modern design scheme.

IN A CORNER of the living room, a swivel chair by Jonathan Adler is paired with a custom ottoman (BELOW) and proves to be the perfect place for Ana and Sophia to share a book while Lulu rests on the window seat beneath the diamond-patterned windows. Comfortable seating is oriented to the living room fireplace (RIGHT TOP). On the far wall, built-ins display objets d’art beneath the beautifully detailed windows. Steep twin gables distinguish the house’s exterior (RIGHT BOTTOM).





SECOND FLOOR BEFORE



- 1 PLAYROOM
- 2 GUEST BEDROOM
- 3 POWDER ROOM
- 4 CLOSET
- 5 GIRLS' BEDROOM
- 6 MASTER BEDROOM
- 7 MASTER CLOSET
- 8 MASTER BATH
- 9 GUEST BATH
- 10 HALL

SECOND FLOOR AFTER



- 1 PLAYROOM
- 2 GIRLS' BATH
- 3 GIRLS' CLOSET
- 4 GIRLS' BEDROOM
- 5 MASTER BEDROOM
- 6 MASTER CLOSET
- 7 MASTER BATH
- 8 GUEST BATH
- 9 GUEST BEDROOM
- 10 HALL

BUILDER G and S Construction



AGAINST A BACKDROP of Scrapwood wallpaper by Piet Hein Eek in the kitchen (ABOVE), old schoolhouse desks that belonged to Prokop and his sister when they were children are meant to encourage the girls to do their homework. The den (BELOW) was painted red by the previous owner. "We liked it, so we kept it," says Prokop. Ana and Sophia each have their own patchwork wingback chairs.





It took some nine months working with TJ Greeley of G and S Construction of Boston, but the renovated house was everything Prokop and Battista hoped for. They moved in the spring of 2014, never imagining that one of the worst winters in history was headed their way. Snow piled high and deep and despite their best efforts, they couldn't fend off the ice dams. "The steep roof is a challenge to clear of snow and ice," says Battista. "The gutters freeze and then the ice melts when the sun comes out." Like so many homeowners in the Northeast, they lost the battle. A telltale brown dot, a sign that water was seeping into the wall in the dining room, appeared and began to spread. Then another stain crept into the bedroom. The rest is the stuff of New England nightmares. Walls and ceilings were ruined. Insulation was rendered useless. Much of their beautiful renovation was in shambles. It would have to be redone.

It is a credit to their collaboration with Ferzoco that they had no design decisions to make. They wanted the house restored exactly as it was when the renovation was first completed. Another four months of repair work ensued before the house was back to its former self.

The generous foyer sets the stage for what lies beyond. From there the dining room, an oval marvel with walls sheathed in Scalamandre's Daphne wallpaper in a delicate aqua pattern, is beautifully framed by the detailed double-door frame. Around the rectangular dining table are two custom wing chairs and six Danish Modern armchairs, all upholstered in off-white fabric and trimmed with brass tacks. "We do laugh about the white on the dining chairs," says Prokop, "but it is treated to be stain-resistant and kid friendly."

THE OVERSIZE HEADBOARDS in the girls' bedroom (RIGHT) inspired Ferzoco to have the wall behind the bureau painted in a similar diamond pattern. Ana and Sophia have a walk-in closet of their own (ABOVE LEFT), where their shoes are kept in orderly fashion. The color scheme continues in their bathroom (ABOVE RIGHT), where a pink-and-orange tile mosaic lines the shower and one side of the custom-painted vanity is in orange, while the other is in pink.

To the right is the inviting living room where Chilmark Architectural Woodworking in Worcester, Massachusetts, had to copy and replace damaged original millwork. "There was a lot of water damage here," says Ferzoco. "It all had to be repaired." The room had to be reinsulated, plastered, and painted.

Furnishings here are an eclectic collection of seemingly disparate pieces that, in Ferzoco's hands, come together in easy harmony. The custom sofa in navy blue cotton-linen anchors the room while the footed wing chair from American furniture maker BDDW adds a whimsical note.

Television watching is relegated to the small den off the foyer. "It's very cozy," says Prokop of the room furnished with a leather sofa for the dads and a matching pair of kid-size patchwork-covered wing



