

# AT HOME<sup>TM</sup>

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## Before & After

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# AT HOME

IN ARKANSAS



## Leap of Faith

A young family gives a neglected 1970s-style house in Little Rock new life as a happy home with modern-day appeal

Interview: Paulette Pearson Photography: Nancy Nolan Styling: Diane Carroll/Paulette Pearson



before



before



Homeowners Robyn and Kyle Allmendinger worked with designer Krista Lewis to renovate their home in Little Rock's Pleasant Valley neighborhood. A Dash & Albert rug from Cobblestone & Vine lines the stairs and lighting by Visual Comfort welcomes guests through the entry into the kitchen, where Lewis designed a banquette featuring Pindler & Pindler fabric. Facing page: The façade received a fresh coat of paint, a new awning and copper lighting from Light Innovations.



A built-in office space by Renaissance Custom Cabinets simplifies sorting mail. Facing page: Robyn achieved her dream white kitchen (painted Benjamin Moore's Carrington Beige) with Princess White granite on the island and a backsplash with subway tile from ProSource. Roman shades by Angel Threads feature fabric from Cynthia East Fabrics, the oven and refrigerator are Kitchen Aid, the apron-front sink is Kohler, and hardware is from Restoration Hardware.



before



**At Home in Arkansas:** When you and your husband, Kyle, purchased your home three years ago, it hadn't been updated since being built in the 1970s. What made you decide to tackle such a big project?

**Homeowner Robyn Allmendinger:** We brought in interior designer Krista Lewis, who happens to be Kyle's sister, to see if she'd have some kind of a vision for it. It had been on the market for more than a year, but Krista realized its potential and was so excited when she saw it that we finally decided to just bite the bullet and do it. At the same time, we loved the idea of being able to gut it and create an entirely new space for our family, including our two young sons, Grant and Davis, to grow into.

**As sisters-in-law, you seem to have enjoyed a fun collaboration.**

**Interior designer Krista Lewis:** We have similar tastes and prefer the same colors—traditional with an occasional trendy element, and blue as a thread throughout.

**RA:** I loved the traditional bones. It just needed major updating, and I wanted it to be light, open and airy. When Krista began showing me her ideas, we were on the same page, which was really nice.

**What did the planning process involve?**

**RA:** We tried to have plans in place during the 30-day period before we closed on the house. We didn't hire an architect—Krista drafted layouts that the contractor was able to use for the kitchen and master suite. Those were the major structural changes and the

The kitchen opens to a comfortable hearth room, where Lewis added a mantle to the original brick fireplace. A sofa from Cobblestone & Vine pairs with a Ballard Designs ottoman, and a Cobblestone & Vine velvet crewel pillows tops a Furniture Classics chair.

aspects of the project that were most important to us. From the magazine tears I collected, I knew I wanted a white kitchen, and a big, comfortable master bedroom and bathroom suite was also a priority.

**What steps did you take to modernize the 1970s-style kitchen without making it appear stark and cold?**

KL: Before, it was choppy with a wet bar area, laundry room and breakfast nook. We decided to create one large open space with an elongated island and a banquette for extra seating. To me, it doesn't feel cold because it opens to the den. You experience that space even though you're not in it, which adds color and texture through the fabrics and brick fireplace.

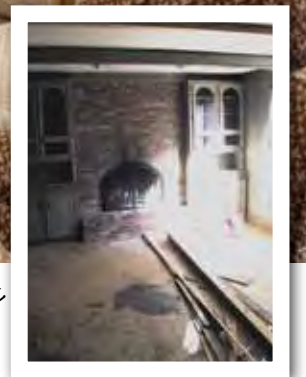
**How did you achieve the comfortable master suite you always wanted?**

RA: We converted a bedroom into our bathroom, and Krista designed an adjoining 300-square-foot master bedroom addition. Her idea for vaulted ceilings makes the bedroom feel cozy and cottagey rather than formal, and I love our spa-like bathroom. It reminds me of one you might see in a really nice hotel, which is exactly what I wanted.

KL: What I like so much about the bathroom is that it has everything you need—big tub, shower, two sinks—within a luxurious but intimate space.

**Were you worried that the bedroom addition would have a tacked on feel?**

KL: It was important to Robyn to have all of the renovations completed at the same time rather than piecemeal. All the floors and trim throughout the home are consistent, and I think that helped give it a cohesive look.



before

# “I wanted it to be LIGHT, OPEN and AIRY.”

—HOMEOWNER ROBYN ALLMENDINGER



In the dining room, you opted for wallpaper. It's making a comeback!

KL: We used it for texture and pattern, and I think it adds a nice layer to the room. Since the wallpaper was a splurge, having the tray ceiling helped because it meant we'd need a little bit less of it.

Do you have any advice for homeowners embarking on a remodel as hefty as yours?

KL: Make sure you talk with contractors before you buy and that you have a good idea of the cost involved, because whatever you think it will be, it will always be more. With renovations, you never know what's behind the walls.

RA: After we completed the remodel, so many people told us they had looked at the house when it was on the market but didn't have our vision. Unless you're the visionary or creative type, it helps to have a professional's help. When Krista said, "we can do this," I didn't know exactly what that meant, but I trusted her belief that we'd be happy with the end result.



before

A circle theme prevails in the dining room, featuring Visual Comfort sconces, a round dining table from Haverty's, chairs with circular cutouts by Cox Manufacturing Company and a blue Safavieh buffet through K. Lewis Design, jute rug from Pottery Barn and Visual Comfort chandelier. Schumacher wallpaper and Sherwin-Williams' Latte on the wainscoting and trim updated the space.





Spa-like was Robyn's goal for the master bathroom, painted Benjamin Moore's Tranquility and featuring a Jason Hydrotherapy tub from LCR Plumbing. The mirrored vanity area by Renaissance Custom Cabinets conceals a television and features marble countertops, while tile throughout is from ProSource. Facing page: In the spacious master bedroom, a duvet from Cobblestone & Vine, pillows from Cynthia East Fabrics, and architectural element from Park Hill Home flank a Hooker bed.



**Design Resources**

Contractor Fiser Construction, LLC, Little Rock, (501) 960-8920  
 Interior design Krista Lewis, K. Lewis Design, Little Rock, (501) 716-2664  
 Landscape Horticare Landscape Companies, Little Rock, (501) 407-2727, horticare.net

Accessories, rugs Cobblestone & Vine, Little Rock, (501) 664-4249; West Little Rock, (501) 219-3676; cobblestoneandvine.com  
 Appliances Metro Appliances & More, Jonesboro, (870) 933-7800; North Little Rock, (501) 758-1988; Springdale, (479) 750-2200; metroappliancesandmore.com  
 Ceiling fans TEC Electric, North Little Rock, (501) 758-5483, tecelectric.com  
 Custom cabinetry Renaissance Custom Cabinets, North Little Rock, (501) 803-3868  
 Dining table Havertys, Little Rock, (501) 223-8435; Pine Bluff, (870) 536-8000; havertys.com  
 Drapery trim/roman shade fabric Cynthia East Fabrics, (501) 663-0460, cynthiaeastfabrics.com

Granite Arkansas Granite & More, (501) 315-4500, argmore.com  
 Kitchen pendants, jute rug Pottery Barn, locations statewide, potterybarn.com  
 Lighting-exterior Light Innovations, Little Rock, (501) 223-9026, blog.light-innovations.com  
 Marble counters/tub surround Triton Stone Group, Little Rock, (501) 562-9994, tritonstone.com  
 Paint Benjamin Moore, locations statewide, benjaminmoore.com; Sherwin-Williams, locations statewide, sherwin-williams.com  
 Plumbing fixtures LCR Plumbing Warehouse, Little Rock, (501) 664-4183  
 Tile-bathroom/kitchen ProSource, North Little Rock, (501) 758-0801, prosourcefloors.com  
 Window treatments Angel Threads, Inc., Little Rock, (501) 228-8850, angel-threads.com  
 Woven wood shades Mountjoy's Custom Draperies, Mabelvale, (501) 455-2216