

A RAMBLER TRANSFORMED

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PETER SANDALL

By Lesa Sawahata
Photographs by Gregg Krogstad

THE WOODWAY HOUSE HAD A CHARACTERLESS FAÇADE AND INVISIBLE FRONT DOOR (*inset*). ARCHITECT PETER SANDALL BUMPED OUT THE ENTRY AND ADDED CRAFTSMAN DETAILING TO GIVE THE HOUSE MORE PRESENCE ON ITS 3-ACRE SITE.



A '50s RELIC IS UPGRADED TO SUIT THE SPLENDOR OF ITS SETTING

FINDING THE PERFECT HOUSE can be like locating your soul mate: Your first glimpse is compelling, things feel right, but it may take time—and work—for the whole affair to come to the point of full satisfaction.

That's how it happened for Chris and Ron Cantu. Ron first saw his Woodway home 12 years ago, when he bought the owner's dental practice. He came away impressed by the beauty of the 3-acre site, which included a barn and gently sloping garden filled with mature rhodies and azaleas in a surround of stately cedars and firs. It remained in the back of his mind for years and, as fate would

have it, the house ultimately came up for sale and the Cantus purchased it in 1996.

While they had definitely acquired their dream site, the house was another story: A typical 1950s rambler (dark, cramped and without much style), it had been remodeled in the late '70s to look more like a steakhouse than a home. There was a brightly polished, never-to-patina copper hood over the living room

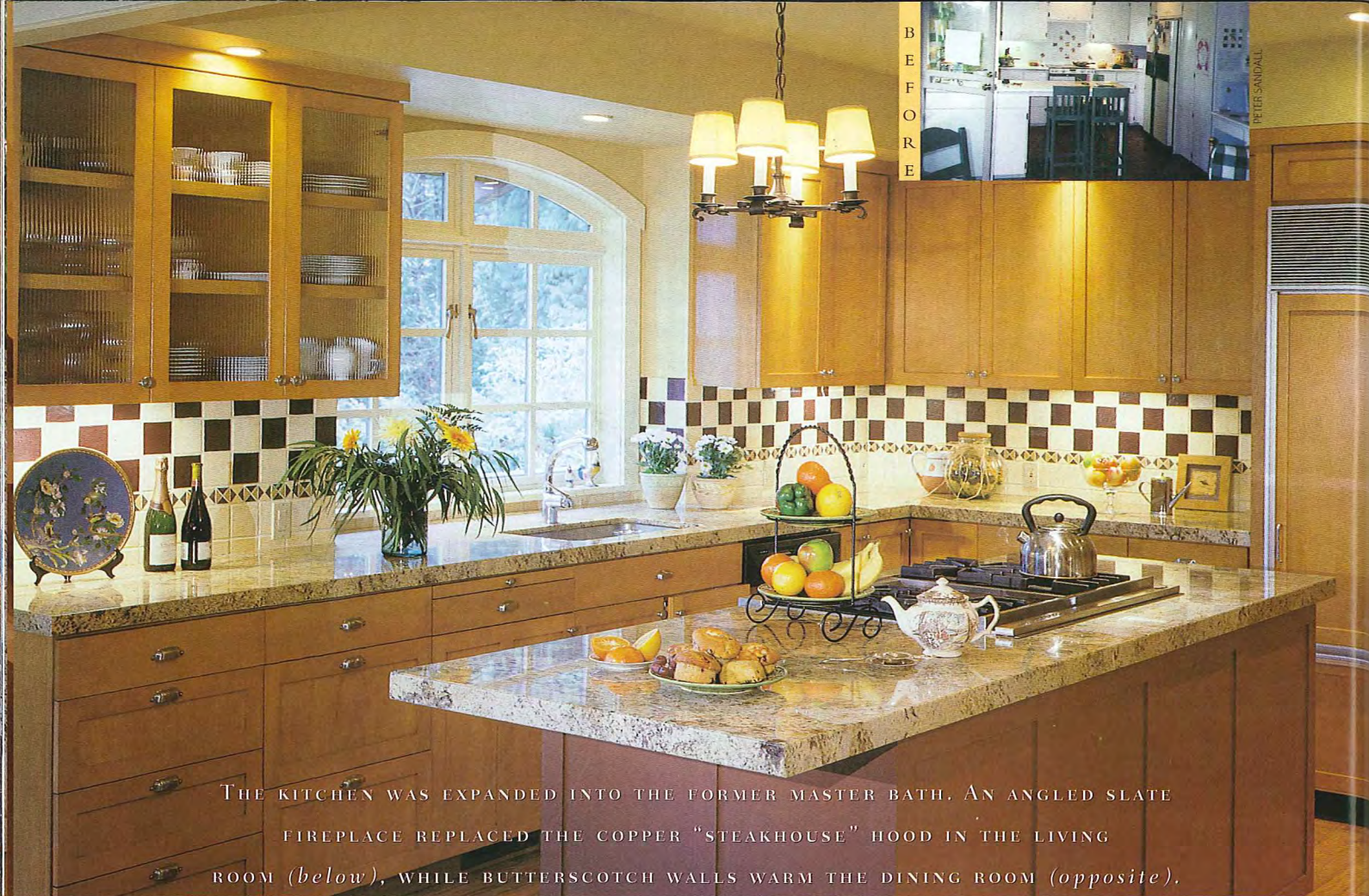
fireplace, and a blender/ice crusher combo built into the kitchen counter.

"The kitchen was especially bad, really dark," says Chris, noting that the range hood required one to duck down in order to see or speak to those on the other side.

Driving up the lane leading to the house, it was difficult to locate the front door. Once inside the small entrance hall,

THE INTERIOR WAS OPENED TO THE ROOFLINE (*opposite*); ROOMS FLOW OFF A NEW CENTRAL HALLWAY. DECKS AND A DAYLIGHT BASEMENT (*below*) TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PASTORAL SETTING.





THE KITCHEN WAS EXPANDED INTO THE FORMER MASTER BATH. AN ANGLED SLATE FIREPLACE REPLACED THE COPPER "STEAKHOUSE" HOOD IN THE LIVING ROOM (below), WHILE BUTTERSCOTCH WALLS WARM THE DINING ROOM (opposite).

you faced a puzzling series of doors and a direct view of the powder-room toilet.

That, above all else, got the Cantus thinking about remodeling. They contacted Peter Sandall of Sandall Norrie Architects to see if it was possible to create a more open, comfortable and viable home. "I thought, 'Here's this tired house—how do we camouflage it?'" says Sandall.

It was clear that new windows were required to add light to the interior, that the entryway needed help, that the kitchen required major upgrading. But the sticking point was style. "I wanted a French farmhouse," says Chris, who backed down when told the roof line wouldn't accommodate that approach. When a craftsman style was

proposed, she demurred, considering the form "too masculine." But looking at Greene & Greene houses from the turn of the last century sold her.

It was an inspired choice. Although construction added a mere 330 square feet to the home, interior and exterior



have been transformed in a way that both suits the Cantus and pays respect to the beauty of the site. While craftsman-inspired, the new exterior melds local materials (river rock and clear cedar siding) with a faint Asian influence, in a way that is uniquely Northwestern. The new entrance, with its pop-up roof, is both visible and dramatic, leading out onto a patio defined by a tall, beefy trellis that bears a slight resemblance to a Buddhist temple gate.

The same lofty sense of light and height has been repeated inside. On the main floor, Sandall pushed the home not just out but up, creating vaulted ceilings that rise to meet a row of clerestory windows (a virtue of the original house). Thinking

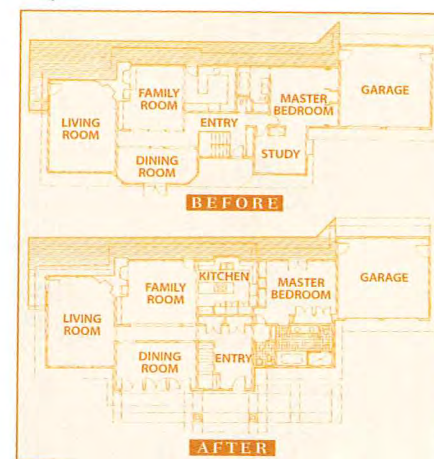
vertically optimized the openness of the existing floor plan; the expanded entryway flows naturally into the central part of the house, where the family room is now completely open to an enlarged and reconfigured kitchen. To expand the latter, Sandall co-opted space once taken up by a cramped master bathroom. A small study area across the hall from the master bedroom was transformed into a new and improved master bath.

The living room fireplace no longer sports its bold copper hood, featuring instead a slate façade created by the general contractor, Scott Gjesdahl. An antique tin light fixture is suspended over the formal dining table.

A rerouted staircase connects the entry with the daylight basement, which now features a central entertainment area for the Cantus' teens, and enlarged windows



that afford a ground-level view of the rhododendron-rimmed back lawn. The same view can be had from a slightly higher vantage point on the main floor, thanks to new (though not enlarged) windows installed across the back of the house, and French doors connecting the master bedroom to a deck overlooking the garden.



SANDALL NORRIE ARCHITECTS

Throughout the house, walls have been painted with soft, washy, almost pastel colors inspired by William Morris wallpapers from the turn of the last century. Oak flooring lends a sense of warmth and history to the main level; the master bedroom, however, features fine-grained pecan flooring—the discovery of which was one of the joys of the remodel.

As any remodeling veteran knows, joy is not the chief emotion associated with the process. It makes demands of the remodelees, and in this case required the family to vacate the home for 10 months. Ultimately, however, the Cantus are delighted with their "country lodge."

"This place is so close to the city," marvels Chris, "and yet we see herons and eagles all the time." ■

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