

modern appeal

BY WENDY DANKS

John's home held a lot of memories. He grew up in the 1916 cottage located across the street from Minnehaha Creek and adjacent to city parkland. Then he came back "maybe 10 years ago. I moved in with my father after my mother had passed away," explained John. "I helped him stay here for an extra year or so until he finally went to assisted living, and then he passed away about five years ago." John has lived there ever since, and carried his bride, Mila, over the threshold in 2005.

The couple had been thinking about updating, but with Mila's travel (she's Vice President of a consulting firm and manages projects in the Caribbean for three to six weeks at a time), and John's biking hobby (he commutes to work on average three days a week, summer and

winter), they took their time. They had considered rebuilding a new home a few years ago. "We had a plan, but it was going to be quite costly to build at the time and when we got a final appraisal we realized it just wasn't the right time to build new," John said.

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Over the next couple of years they continued to think about making some changes, which led them, in the fall of 2010, to visit some of the homes on the Remodelers Showcase. That's where they met Jeff Nicholson and Quartersawn, and "we liked what we saw on the house in the Showcase," Mila exclaimed.

They were ready to get serious about updating their home and "initially approached Jeff about renovating the existing house," John reported. "By spring we were working together,"

That's also about the time they discovered the home had enough structural problems that it just made more sense to tear down the original home and start over. Working with Jeff on the architecture and his interior designer, Christine Frisk from InUnison Design on the interiors, John and Mila's ideas blossomed into reality.

Even being out of the country a lot, Mila was impressed with how she was able to stay in the loop throughout design and construction. "What's really great with Quartersawn is that every week we'd have a status meeting," she said. "I'd just call in and we'd all discuss the project."

The couple also discovered they had similar tastes and ideas about how they

wanted their home to live. "We knew we wanted the main living space to be upstairs to take advantage of the views," John said. "We wanted something that was wide open, not a lot of small rooms, and Mila really wanted vaulted ceilings." And, they both "love modern design," he continued. "It seems like our tastes really mesh."

The construction process took about seven months, which John and Mila spent in a nearby apartment. They were thrilled when they moved back in at the beginning of June and began making it their own. They brought in a few amazing paintings from John's uncle. And they pointed out three features they kept from the original home: a kitchen beam post taken from the old basement, the front door which is now a glass-top table in the office, and a linen cabinet faced with two original oak windows.

"Looking back, there wasn't a whole lot that was frustrating, it was a great experience," John said. And they both agreed the best part is "the final product." Mila pointed out why: "we have had an input in every single thing in this house. We just love this, it's our house."

They will be welcoming visitors to see the final product during this fall's Remodelers Showcase. Mila said, "we're happy to see people's reaction."

