

# Triple the Pleasure

What started as a kitchen makeover, ended with additional remodels in two bathrooms

**By Cindy Hodnett**  
Special Sections Writer

When Craig and Kathy Sparks began talking about a kitchen renovation in their Lewisville ranch home, the main goal seemed simple enough.

"We needed a functional kitchen for a large family," says Kathy, mother to four boys ages 16, 14, 9 and 5. "We have a very active household, and everyone wants something different to eat at every meal. I needed a kitchen that would allow me to do everything at one time."

The Sparks had completed several earlier remodeling projects, and they knew that a kitchen renovation would be challenging because the small rooms and closed spaces typical of the house's era were not conducive to an open floor plan. However, they decided that it was worth an effort to at least try to make improvements, and they called builder David Mock for help.

"This kitchen used to be two rooms, and the dining room was so small," says Craig. "This is a 1950s house, and nothing had ever been done to it, so David decided to gut the space down to the subfloor when we began remodeling."

Mock had previously done some work for the Sparks, and he knew that the kitchen project would involve more than simply changing the cabinetry.

"We had already been through some structural issues on another project," says Mock. "We actually had to take the kitchen down to the floor joists and rework them before we started anything else."

Before the makeover, the Sparks' kitchen had two small, dark rooms with knotty pine cabinetry and dated paneling. The Sparks told Mock they wanted to add some light to the room, and they also wanted the space to function as a comfortable household hub.

"When cooking, I didn't want traffic all around me, so we did things like placing the snack pantry on the opposite side of the island from the stove," says Kathy. "Now the boys can come in, get a snack and then go around to their seats without coming by the stove."

The easy flow of the kitchen came about after several floor-plan revisions, including one generated by an event that is quickly becoming a favorite family anecdote.

"Kathy went to the Triad Home and Garden Show and found a table that she really liked," says Craig. "Well, I called

to ask about it, and they told me that the table had been sold already — to Kathy."

"I just fell in love with this table," Kathy says, as she points out the convenience of a butcher-block countertop and the detail of the table's turned legs. "I'm a country girl, and this table has almost a French country look. But it also reminded me of my great-grandmother's kitchen, so I told Craig and David that I had to have it in the new kitchen."

"When I heard that we had already bought the table, I crumpled up the plans we had and told David to just send me the bill," says Craig with a laugh. "Fortunately, David didn't miss a beat, and we went from the original kitchen down to the joists and back to this new space in four and a half weeks."

The Sparks' current kitchen includes a convenient cook top, a built-in computer desk, and the now famous table that sits next to a multilevel island. An existing bay window functions as a casual reading nook, and multiple fixtures bring light to every corner of the kitchen.

"David was so great to work with because if I suggested something that he thought might not work, he'd just give me this look and say, 'Are you sure about that?'" says Kathy, laughing.

In addition to the kitchen renovation, the Sparks worked with Mock to update two bathrooms. They were again seeking function, but they also wanted to create two distinctive spaces where all members of the household could relax.

"I had always promised Kathy a big bathtub, and we planned to build a master bath where our screened porch is," says Craig. "But David told us that doing this would be very expensive, and he suggested that we put in a hot tub instead."

"Everything that we've done, we've plumbed and rewired," says Mock. "In the main bath, we also removed the upper cabinets and replaced the old bathtub with a jetted version."

The new bath is bright and seems at least twice the size of the old one even though no square footage was added. In the master bath, Mock created a true retreat with a spacious shower, heated tile floor and a soothing color palette.

"I told David I wanted something easy to clean and also functional," says Craig. "So he suggested that we do this great shower. Then he asked me if the floors were cold in the bathroom in the morning and when I said, 'Man, yes!,' he suggested that we use the heated tile floor."



Photos by Allie Brown

**PLANNING STAGES:** Contractor David Mock (from left) and Craig and Kathy Sparks reworked remodeling plans several times before deciding on the final layout.



## LIVING WELL

The Sparks and their four boys can now enjoy a spacious kitchen and this beautiful new bathroom.

Now that the Sparks are enjoying their new kitchen and baths on a daily basis, they have come to appreciate Mock's attention to detail even more.

"David saved us so much money," says Craig. "If you don't have a good contractor, you can really get taken."

"The movie Money Pit comes to mind when we think about all the remodeling we've done," says Kathy with a laugh. "But David was wonderful the entire time. In fact, our youngest thinks 'Mr. David' is the greatest — he's like family at this point!"

Many homebuyers who are looking for a home with both acreage and an affordable mortgage choose older properties and settle for small rooms, choppy space and dark interiors. However, projects like the Sparks' offer valuable insight into the many design possibilities of an older home.

"The new kitchen is great, and we enjoy it every day," says Kathy. "I even have some of my great-grandmother's china stored in the new table."

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