

# A big 1970s update

BY JEAN MURPHY



Wheaton and Glen Ellyn are the historic crown jewels of DuPage County, attracting lovers of beautiful, close-knit communities that also boast a historic flavor, with both villages dating to the 1830s and displaying exemplary homes of many eras.

Craig and Mary Pieters and their three sons moved into their Wheaton home, built in the late 1970s, in 1993 and spent more than 20 years concentrating on daily life.

Of course, there were some things about the house they didn't particularly like, but the Pieterses didn't want to disrupt their lives with a major renovation project when their children were still living at home. So they put off those decisions.

Recently, however, with two of their sons in medical school and the third away at college, they decided to take the home improvement plunge.

After years of hearing rave reviews about Glen Ellyn's Drury Design, an award-winning full-service design and remodeling firm specializing in custom kitchens and baths, Mary Pieters approached the company for suggestions on a redesign of her kitchen and laundry room. Renovations of the family room and master bath later were added to the project.

"It was my sisters who finally urged me to remodel the house," Mary Pieters said. "We had been thinking about it ever since we moved in, but our lives were busy and my husband is a physician and he has a low tolerance for inconvenience.

"I had heard good things about Drury Design, so I approached them, met one of their designers, Janice Teague, and it was a very good fit," she said.

The big project, as far as Mary was concerned, was the kitchen. The home's original owner had worked for Sears, so he





had Sears cabinetry. More than 30 years later, the cabinets barely closed and the Pieterses were ready for a change.

They also were tired of the cream-colored porcelain floor tile that ran throughout the first floor and that also was used around their mantel-free family room fireplace.

“Now that we are empty-nesters, we were ready to add the finishes that we really wanted and not worry about the kids damaging them — like wood floors, pendant lighting and so forth,” Mary said. “Now that the project is done, we have a home that is more entertainment-centered than kid-centered and we are absolutely happy with the result.”

Teague, the consultant chosen by the Pieters, had an immediate rapport with Mary.

“We struck a chord and were able to work together very well,” Teague said.

“They had a screened porch off the kitchen and we were able to expand the kitchen into the porch space once our engineers made sure we could direct heat out there,” she said.

“We replaced the ’70s-look oak cabinets with white; rearranged the placement of the refrigerator and steam oven; sealed the

entrance to the dining room; made a new eating area where the screened porch once was; and were able to add a pass-through to the family room with a nice-sized hutch that she can use as a buffet area.”

The new, larger kitchen island features honed Taj Mahal quartzite as a countertop and hickory cabinetry below with a truffle finish (which coordinates with the new hutch). Above the island are three tech lights on a monorail.

The perimeter cabinetry is now white with a taupe glaze (to coordinate with the new maple floors) and the countertops are brown antique granite with a satin finish. ➤

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** “It was my sisters who finally urged me to remodel the house,” Mary Pieters says. “We had been thinking about it ever since we moved in, but our lives were busy ...”

**ABOVE:** With their three children out of the house, Craig and Mary Pieters decided to work with Drury Design of Glen Ellyn to renovate portions of their 1970s-era Wheaton home — including the kitchen.

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The Pieters always wanted a mantel for their fireplace, so they created a lovely fireplace with a wood mantel and wooden surrounds that are more fitting to the scale of the cathedral-ceilinged family room.

**BELOW:** Once the remodeling process began, the Pieters also decided to create a new master bath.

Below the longtime bay window there is now a wine bar, as well as drawers where Mary can store her office items. Windows and transoms are plentiful along the back of the kitchen with its view of the neighboring forest preserve.

The adjoining laundry room was Mary's secondary focus. Like most laundry rooms, it had become cluttered and inefficient. So they removed the old wood cabinets and replaced them with white cabinetry. They also removed a seldom-used pull-down ironing board; made space for the microwave they seldom use but didn't want to dispose of; and installed a bench where they can sit to put on shoes and boots.

The Pieterses, in coordination with Teague, also decided to overhaul their family room fireplace. It always bothered them that there was no mantel, so they remedied that deficiency, creating a lovely fireplace with a wood mantel and surrounds that are much more fitting to the scale of the cathedral-ceilinged family room. They also replaced the former brass fireplace doors and opened up and modernized the bar area next to the fireplace.

Finally, since they were already going to be under construction, Mary chose to renovate the master bath. She and Teague chose to add a sophisticated and modern sliding entrance door made of lightly frosted glass and wood. They also added dark taupe quartzite

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countertops, hickory cabinetry and large porcelain floor tiles.

They replaced the old whirlpool tub with a streamlined soaking tub that is equipped with a back warmer and installed a new shower that features a low-lip shower pan because they did not want floor grout to clean. They installed a bench, which will help them to age in place.

It is also worth noting that between the two bathroom sinks there is now a tall wall cabinet with compartments for each of them (hinged on opposite sides) and the soffit that now runs above the sink area and the soaking tub houses recessed task lighting that can be dimmed and presents a clean, simple look.

“The scope of this project presented a challenge,” Teague said.

“But now that it is done and we are empty-nesters without kids to worry about ruining beautiful new finishes,” Mary said, “we are very happy.” ■

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