

# MICHIGAN DESIGN CENTER @Home





# Heart *of the Home*

by Theresa Kissler | Photos by Beth Singer

A gorgeous kitchen renovation,  
eight years in the making





**THE GREAT DIVIDE:** Designed to accommodate the client's love of entertaining and cooking, a large peninsula separates the kitchen from the family room area. The contemporary bar stools invite guests to relax while last minute preparations are being completed in the kitchen. The cooktop is shielded from view by a beautiful walnut slab atop of a box of quartz. "I feel like I could be on a Food Network show," exclaims Fulmer.

Before the renovation, Fulmer selected a 48-inch Wolf range with six burners and a grill. While Zebrowski admits it was a challenge to incorporate the oversized piece into the long, narrow space, he feels the finish selections "help it blend seamlessly into the room."

**W**hen Dan Fulmer stumbled upon a late 1950s ranch in Beverly Hills a little over eight years ago, he immediately knew it would become his home. "At that point, I had already looked at over 200 houses. When I walked in here, it just felt right. I knew this was the house," he explains.

Looking beyond the original blue carpet, yellow painted countertops and powder blue walls, Fulmer and his partner John Krupinsky began to envision what the home could become and decided to follow their hearts. That same intuitive sense served them well during their recent renovation.

After having begun the process five years ago with another contractor, Fulmer put the project on hold after he received the initial drawings because he felt the design scheme wasn't moving in the right direction. When he decided to give the renovation another try, early last year, he spent hours online researching kitchen design firms and narrowed it down to three options. His first visit was to the *Extraordinary Works* showroom in Michigan Design Center where he met Robert Zebrowski. The rest is history. "I never met with the other two options. After meeting Robert, I felt so comfortable, I didn't go anywhere else," explains Fulmer.

Fulmer put his trust in Zebrowski who helped assemble the design team, including Karen Crorey-Dallafor of *K.C. Interiors* and a contractor to perform the actual demolition and installation. "We specialize in the cabinetry which is pretty complex as it is. Clients often think they just need a kitchen remodel and are going to pick out cabinets, but it all has to work together, and that involves much more than just us," says Zebrowski.

This team approach worked well for the clients who quickly became huge fans. "This was the first major project I have ever been involved in and Karen and Robert made it so easy and so smooth," exclaimed Fulmer. "The entire project took three months and I was never stressed," he adds.



Photo by Jeff Aisen

The project was completed in early June of 2011, and the homeowners have hosted guests every weekend since. “I am so excited when people stop by because I just want to show my house off,” says Fulmer. “It is amazing. We always knew what we wanted and Robert and Karen made it all possible. It really, really touches our hearts,” he adds.

**FUNCTIONAL FURNISHINGS (top left):** Zebrowski incorporated a multi-functional wall unit into the kitchen to provide additional storage. The piece also serves as a pantry and can be set up as a bar for parties. “We varied the height of this piece and removed the toe kick so that it looked more like furniture,” said Zebrowski.

**LIGHTEN UP (top right):** Stainless steel accents highlight different work areas. “People are afraid to use dark wood in a small space but with light countertops and flooring, it can really work,” explains Crorey-Dallafor, adding, “It’s all about how you balance the finishes.”

**DREAM TEAM (bottom right):** Fulmer (maroon shirt) and Krupinsky review plans with the design team in their newly renovated dining room. After completing the kitchen and other modifications, including new windows, updated trim, and a new color palette for the main areas, Fulmer quickly decided to redo his dining room. “I walked in one day and realized it didn’t measure up to our new kitchen,” says Fulmer. Now, he has another room to gush about. “It is so amazing,” he says.



**BALANCING ACT:** The remodel included removing a dividing wall that separated the family room from the kitchen. "We also removed headers and widened the openings into the foyer and hallway. This helped integrate and visually expand the space," explains Crorey-Dallafor. The custom entertainment center features the same finishes used in the kitchen and includes a dry bar, lighted display shelves and houses all of the electronics for the television and built-in speaker system. "It provides a strong design balance to the powerful kitchen," Crorey-Dallafor adds.

"Everyone that comes over asks, 'How did you coordinate all of this?' I didn't, my design team was amazing. Their resources were phenomenal."

— Dan Fulmer, homeowner

 A living room featuring a white sofa with a patterned throw pillow, two green upholstered armchairs with dark wood legs, and a black metal coffee table. The room is decorated with a framed picture of a house and two yellow ceramic lamps on side tables. A large window in the background shows a view of trees.
 

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