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BAREFOOT LIVING

AN URBAN FAMILY
TURNS A ONCE-
FORMAL HOME INTO
A CASUAL OASIS
WHERE SHOES AND
SOCKS ARE OPTIONAL

Indoor and outdoor life blend in this family home. Sliding glass doors lead from this unique renovated interior to a gorgeous outdoor living space.



ON WARM AFTERNOONS, the shoes in the Bridges family get a break. The three sets of patio doors along the east, west and south sides of the main level of their moss green home are thrown open, the indoors meld into the outdoors and barefoot pursuits are the agenda of the day.

Nine-year-old Jack is usually bouncing around with some friends on the family's trampoline. His dad, Dean, can be found sauntering between the barbeque, the vegetable garden and the kitchen, as he grills something tasty for the family. As for mom, Jill, you'll find her caring for her immense flower garden. And in the midst of it all, the family dog, Oso, lounges in the sun or laps up some well-deserved attention. >>

As day fades into evening, the family usually enjoys a meal with neighbours and friends on the multi-level wooden deck on the south side of the house, followed by an evening fire to extend the time they can spend ambling between the main level of their home and their tree-lined backyard.

For Jill and Dean Bridges, this house, located in one of Calgary's inner-city southwest neighbourhoods, is all about family and casual living. In fact, Jill grew up in this very house. But when she left at 17, she had no idea she'd be moving her own family back into the same house — with a few changes, of course — 20 years later.

For years, when the couple visited Jill's father at the house, Dean would gaze into the backyard and comment that if Dad ever decided to sell, he wanted to buy the house. So when Jill's father finally decided to downsize five years ago, the house was theirs for the taking.

While they loved many features of the '50s-era, architect-built home — including the recta-linear design, the south-facing backyard, the mature trees and the ample number of windows — they decided to embark on a renovation project to open the space and add some modern elements.

"We wanted it to be really casual living so that every space was lived in and we didn't have any formal areas," says Jill. "We really wanted our main floor to be our living space and have it as open and as bright as possible."

The layout of the main floor was typical of that era, explains Jill. "Just a closed off kitchen, then a formal dining room and formal living room," she says. "So we just opened it up — we took off quite a few doors and opened up the wall between the kitchen and dining room."

Since Dean is a designer, the couple decided to do the majority of the renovations themselves, starting by tearing down some walls. This alone changed the feel of Jill's childhood home dramatically.

As she laughingly recalls: "When I grew up here, you didn't even enter the dining room or the living room if you didn't have guests. And the curtains were closed all the time."

The renovation took about nine months to complete. Along with opening the space up, the couple also updated the kitchen with

RENO TIPS FROM THE BRIDGES FAMILY

DO AS MUCH OF THE WORK YOURSELF AS POSSIBLE

While admittedly this was easier for the Bridges because Dean is a commercial designer, Jill still learned a few skills and took on some renovation tasks to help make the house what they wanted. She helped with demolition, including painting and grouting tile. Even if you're not on a tight budget, doing some of the work yourself will free up some cash for other extravagances.

LIVE ELSEWHERE DURING THE RENOVATION

At the height of construction, the house was missing its basement windows and in complete mayhem, so the Bridges rented a nearby house during the renovations. This ensured they were close by, but didn't have to live in a house that was under construction.

KNOW YOUR LIMITS

Don't attempt your own electrical or plumbing unless you have training.



new cabinets, counter tops and appliances, replaced the shag carpet with stone-coloured ceramic tile and, of course, took down the drapes to show off the backyard.

The house offers something special for each member of the family.

For Jill, it's the family room. "I like it most in warm weather, because we can open up all these windows and you feel like you're outside," she says.

Dean, on the other hand, is happiest in the kitchen. "We love food," says Jill, "and my husband loves to cook, so that's a big



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part of our life. He hangs out in the kitchen most of the time — if you're looking for him, you know he's going to be there."

Jack, meanwhile, lays claim to most of the basement, which is equipped with a playroom and a drum set — perfect for hanging out with friends when the weather hampers outdoor play.

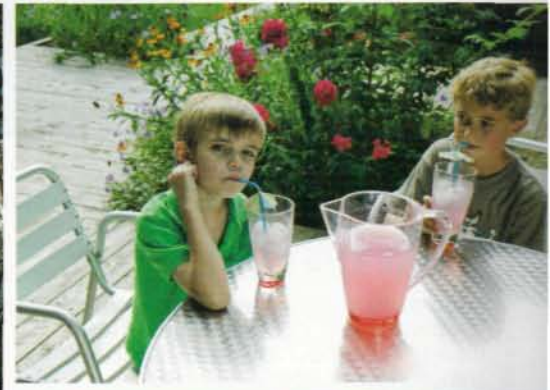
The rest of the house offers many functional spaces for the family. A raised

level located off the east side of the main floor features a family computer room, two bedrooms and a main bath. And, along with Jack's playroom, the basement houses a laundry room, a half bath and a painting studio for Jill.

So, despite the house having a fairly small footprint of about 1,200 square feet, the completed project resulted in an ideal living space for the family. >>



Throughout, the emphasis in this house is on casual sophistication. As inside, the outdoor space is divided into living spaces for different uses: play, gardening, relaxation, eating, cooking. And with three sets of patio doors and large picture windows in the home, the ample views to outdoors create easy transitions between the house and yard.





Top: By removing non-load-bearing walls, the Bridges created a much more open and bright space.

Above: A more contemporary look was achieved using blinds rather than draperies.

Near right: The Bridges' eclectic style combines modern elements with antique pine furniture such as this.

Far right: Modern chrome and wood stacking chairs contrast with the antique pine table. Underfoot, new ceramic tile has replaced dated carpet.



WHAT THEY DID

Removed non-load-bearing walls between the kitchen and living room.

Removed doors in the main living space, leaving doorways open.

Updated the kitchen by replacing cabinets, counters and appliances.

Replaced dated shag carpeting with easier-to-maintain ceramic tile.

Removed draperies to allow in light and create a more casual, contemporary look.

Repainted the home throughout.

"As far as the size of the house, because we have one child, it's just perfect; we wouldn't really need more space," says Jill.

Along with the structural changes Jill and Dean made to the home, they used decor to stamp the house with their personal style. "We're pretty eclectic," says Jill. "We kind of like old and we like modern."

This dichotomy of time periods is most obvious in the combination of the modern design of the house and the Bridges' taste for antiques. The home features several pieces of Québécois pine furniture the couple purchased from Junktiques and refinished themselves. But even these antiques have modern accents. For instance, the dining area's long Québécois pine table is offset with

new-again Fritz Hansen-style chrome and wood stackable chairs.

"Everything in here means something, every little piece," says Jill.

That includes a painting given to her parents before Jill was born by the director of the Alberta College of Art, architectural antiques from a trip to Portugal and even the large wooden boxes Dean built to house the vegetable garden. Everything tells this family's story.

In fact, a walk through the house is like walking through a living family album. If you're lucky enough to visit on a warm day, you can leave your socks and shoes at the door and experience how the Bridges meld their indoor family life with the world outside their door. **F**

For Sources, see page 90.