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Modern LOVE

This Charlestown grand dame stood tall as its family grew up and out, and now it gets its turn to shine.

Text by ERIKA AYN FINCH

Photography by GREG PREMUR

Produced by
KARIN LIDBECK BRENT

The dining room's fireplace had been boarded up with plywood, which Bannon Custom Builders removed, rebricking the firebox with bricks painted black. Note the ombre hardware that transitions from brass to copper to blackened steel on the cabinetry.



After living in the same townhouse in the Boston neighborhood of Charlestown for twenty-five-plus years, two homeowners looked around their dated space with its 1990s cherry cabinetry, Tuscan-style tile, and awkward primary suite layout and decided enough was enough. While scrolling through modern kitchens on Instagram,



ABOVE: The Doca kitchen cabinetry features cut-out finger pulls in lieu of hardware. Three Lawson-Fenning barstools boast Brentano vegan-leather seats and backs covered in a Romo fabric. **FACING PAGE:** "The fireplace elevation was a form and function focal point," says interior designer Jill Najnigier of the fluted-plaster design with its leathered-quartzite bench. "These clients love the entire woodburning experience including gathering the wood."



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rich and age-old materials in a clean, modern design.”

—INTERIOR DESIGNER JILL NAJNIGIER

the wife stumbled upon Jill Najnigier’s sophisticated designs, and she reached out. The two became instant friends. It didn’t hurt that Najnigier’s office is a stone’s throw from the circa-1852 home.

The homeowners, who had raised their two children in the space, also reconnected with Bannon Custom Builders, the firm they’d worked with on the remodel of their

Cape Cod home. From the beginning, everyone knew a down-to-the-studs renovation was in order. The overhaul included subtracting four feet of space from a back deck to expand the entry level’s living room and completely gutting the kitchen, dining room, powder room, and entry. Second-floor guest bedrooms and bathrooms received facelifts. The team gutted



ABOVE: The team at Bannon removed the concrete pad in the lower-level media room by hand in order to install radiant heat and polished concrete flooring. Najnigier painted the cabinetry Farrow & Ball Lichen. **LEFT:** Romo wallpaper depicting an abstract garden envelopes the power room. **FACING PAGE:** Najnigier loves the Kelly Wearstler for Visual Comfort pendants that hang above the waterfall island because of the marble spheres suspended from inside each one.



the third-floor primary bath and reconfigured the bedroom to improve flow. On the lower level, they added a media room, mudroom, laundry room, and gym.

“They were craving contemporary and uncluttered,” says Najnigier. “We interpreted that to create a timeless classic by using rich and age-old materials in a clean, modern design.”

That didn’t mean taking a sledgehammer to the home’s past, though. On the contrary, great lengths went into pulling up the original hardwood flooring to install radiant heat. The pumpkin-pine planks were restored and treated with an ultra-matte water-base finish. Each one was painstakingly put back where it belonged, recalls project manager Jarrod Bannon.

The team also refreshed the original front door, restored crown molding, and preserved the dining room’s original marble fireplace surround.

Arguably, the most dramatic transformation happened in the kitchen, which went from dark and heavy to bright and airy.



pected appearance on built-in cabinetry and a plush sectional in the media room. Texture abounds, whether its boucle on the living room sectional, pleated linen on the primary bedroom walls, reeded glass on the entry door, slatted oak on the primary bath vanity, or fluted plaster around the living room fireplace.

“I look at the rooms from different angles and realize it all turned out exactly the way we had envisioned from the start,” says the wife. “It’s traditional but fits with the modern elements that we really wanted. It all melds and flows beautifully.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: For details, see Resources.

INTERIOR DESIGN: JN Interior Spaces
BUILDER: Bannon Custom Builders

LEFT: Marble tile from Ann Sacks on the bathroom floor and walls features a faint blue undertone; one side of a teak bench mounts to the shower wall. **BELOW:** Najnigier designed the slatted-oak vanity, which was built by RF McManus Company. **FACING PAGE:** Najnigier says the colors in the primary bedroom’s pleated printed-linen wallcovering remind her of a winter sunset. DiCarlo Upholstery carefully covered the sconce switches in the same Romo boucle fabric as the wall-to-wall headboard.

Touch-to-open bronze-finished cabinetry from Divine Design Center, leathered quartzite countertops, and a showstopping unlacquered-brass range hood make the biggest impact, though Bannon admits mounting a modern hood in an 1800s-built townhome came with challenges, including venting the hood to the outdoors.

But the biggest issues arose when the team realized the kitchen ceiling would need to be lowered three inches to make it level with the floor-to-ceiling cabinetry—after everything had already been installed. Down came the hood and cabinets to dial in that streamlined, modern vibe the homeowners desired. “It can be tough when you’re dealing with a house with old bones,” says Bannon.

Growing pains aside, the homeowners feel relaxed in their sophisticated new space. Throughout, warmed wood mixes with stone, steel, and aged brass, while misty blue hues mingle with dusty pinks, rose, and gold. Green makes an unex-

