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The Inside Scoop at DeHaan Remodeling Specialists

THE ART OF REMODELING!

Pat and Kay Thomas say they are thrilled with their easy life style and their new residence, which now couples DeHaan craftsmanship with the Thomas artistic eye.



“The principles of creating a painting, such as balance, color and shape, overlap into design, so it was natural for us to be involved.”

- Kay Thomas



Patrick and Kay Thomas

The Thomas Remodel

Patrick and Kay Thomas's home on the west side of Kalamazoo was far more than just their house. It also served as a studio for pastel landscape artist Pat (he's been painting since he was a child and was elected to the Pastel Society of America in 2014), a workshop for Kay, who mats and frames her husband's paintings, and a gallery where the couple hosted art exhibitions and receptions. The house, which they built in 1977, was itself a showplace, both inside and out. The landscaping, designed by Pat and lovingly (and painstakingly) maintained by husband and wife, was included on many garden tours.

Then it came time to downsize. Pat retired from his day job as a microbiologist in 2005, and Kay, a nurse, retired from Bronson Hospital in 2002. Both house and yard required more time and effort than they could give any more. The challenge, they knew, would be to find something radically smaller than their 2,300-square-foot ranch (with a basement gallery that same size).

Finally in 2016 they found a condo in Quail Meadows, off Stadium Drive in Kalamazoo, which had not only potential, but also a nature preserve-like setting that appealed to Kay, Pat and Princess Consolata, their cat. The next and even bigger challenge would be to make their new home meet their unique aesthetic desires and to carve out space for Pat's studio and Kay's workshop.

Fortunately, the Thomases had already met Bob DeHaan. The previous year, when they were contemplating a move to a different condo complex, DeHaan Remodeling had designed a plan for them. Though the Thomases decided to forget about that condo, they never forgot DeHaan. (Pat says that he liked Bob because they are both perfectionists.) When it was time to start personalizing their new Quail Meadows condo, it was DeHaan Remodeling the couple called.

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The centerpiece of the project – and ultimately of the condo itself – would be a dramatically redesigned kitchen. Before that, Bob and his sons tackled some lower level rooms, to create studio and workshop spaces. A basement bedroom had a window that provided good light, so that room was fitted out with shelving and counters that Pat could use when he painted. There was also room to store the backlog of paintings ready for future gallery exhibitions. (Pat's art has appeared in many galleries in the area, and he has a long history with the Synchronicity Gallery in Glen Arbor.) Kay's workshop, meanwhile, fit nicely into another basement room. The DeHaans built Kay a hinged table whose

legs could fold flat when not in use. That, plus ample space for her matting and framing materials and equipment, transformed the new basement into a work space that would be the envy of many professional framing shops.

Then it was time to move upstairs and address the kitchen. At first the Thomases planned to make just small changes there, but, says Pat, "We were sure that still wouldn't give us what we wanted." Kay: "Then I said—flippantly—that we might as well take the walls out." "Yeah!" husband quickly agreed. Oddly, the same plan that Bob DeHaan had designed for the condo the Thomases ended up not taking converted into the footprint for the condo they now had.

The plan included removing walls, introducing a 10-foot-long island, installing white maple cabinetry, replacing appliances and new hardwood flooring. The kitchen lighting was also replaced and enhanced with LED cabinetry lighting above and below. The new countertop, made from stunning exotic granite, introduces a natural and organic theme that echoes the woodland scene outside their windows and includes pop-up electrical outlets in the island (see above photo).

Bob DeHaan told Kay that he had never had homeowners as deeply involved in every step of a project as they were. But, says Pat, the principles of creating a painting, such as balance, color and shape, overlap into design, "so it natural for us to be involved."

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