

At Home With



# Cottage Revival

A major renovation is “green” certified, and the collaborative efforts of the general contractor, interior designer and landscape architect produce award-winning design.

Story by **Rolanda Hatcher-Gallop** ■ Photos by **Rob Downey**



*Above: Sunlight and panoramic views of the backyard bring the outdoors into this main dining area of the Tinker family home. Designed to maximize natural light, the windows were also upgraded to low-emittance (Low-E) coated windows to reduce the UV rays and radiant heat flow into the home.*

**A**ddison Tinker’s parents will have one heck of a story to tell her about the family home when she gets older. That’s because the 1-year-old was the inspiration for Mark and Kristen Tinker to rethink the remodeling plan for their cottage-style home.

Built in 1985 and purchased by the Tinkers nearly a decade ago, the house is nestled on Merritt Island among beautiful mature live oaks, with about an acre for Mark and his young children to play and explore.

“We had already remodeled our kitchen and were going to mess around with the kids’ bedroom when we learned Addison was on the way,” said Mark. “That’s when we realized we couldn’t fit a third child in this space.”

Wanting to maintain as much of the home’s original structure and character as possible, the Tinkers figured the best plan was to go up instead of out. The end result was a major renovation that added about 1,100 square feet of living space – featuring a second floor with three bedrooms



and two full bathrooms. "Right now, there are five bedrooms in the home and we're just under 4,000 square feet," Mark said.

Every step in the project was carefully considered to preserve the home's casual cottage look, said Kristen, adding: "This is still the house we fell in love with when we first moved in, now even more so. It's organized so that it's functional, but you can sit down and enjoy each other."

Also, the addition of energy-efficient features – new insulation, air condition-

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Far left : The kitchen was designed in the first phase of their remodel process. The split countertop features Petoskey stones, a fossilized coral that is the official state stone of Michigan. Mark Tinker spent summers in Michigan growing up and collected the rocks. The designer, Christine Whiteley, was able to incorporate these rocks in this custom-designed island. Jim Correa of Roomscapes of Brevard collaborated with Christine to select cabinetry and appliances for the kitchen. Left: The fireplace and chimney are encased in white Texas limestone—much to the delight of Mark, a seismologist who as a youth lived in the Lone Star State. Two chairs, made from branches of azalea, sit in front of the fireplace with a copper-and-iron table, giving the room a warm feeling.

ing, lighting, and tankless water heaters -- make the Tinker home one of the first residential remodels certified by the Florida Green Building Coalition as a “green” home. David Foley was the Tinkers’ general contractor and the person they credit for getting the green certification.

“Once we got the design together, we asked him about specific ways we could save energy,” said Mark. “For instance, he knew that I was frustrated with the original house because it bled energy like a sieve.”

Foley, president of Home Solutions Specialists, Inc. in Rockledge, sealed the home with foam insulation – even in parts not under renovation – to keep from wasting energy.

“Some of the features in the home, like

the insulation system, are cutting edge,” explained Foley, a certified “green professional” through the National Association of Homebuilders. “Rather than using that old fuzzy stuff, or blown insulation you have in the attic for insulation, we used a foam insulation that went all the way up to the roof and all the way out to the walls.

“Basically, we made the house like a Styrofoam ice chest,” he added. “The temperature in the attic is about six degrees above the temperature in the rest of the house.”

Mark added that the original home’s two air conditioners were very noisy. “Now, they have a single, four-zone, high-efficiency unit.”

The zoned AC unit allows the family to

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turn off air conditioning to parts of the house not in use, saving energy costs. When the Tinkers go to bed each night, they only leave on the zones in the sleeping quarters instead of cooling the whole house.

The house is also a "smart" home in that the air conditioning unit is electronically connected to the smoke detectors, heat detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. If any of the alarms go off, the air conditioner automatically shuts down.

The remodeled home also uses two tankless water heaters, one in the garage and the other centrally located in the house. "The water heaters are fantastic! You have hot water as quickly as other heaters and you never run out of hot water," Mark said.

Another energy-saving move involved the windows, all of which were replaced with low-emittance (Low-E) coated windows to reduce the UV rays and radiant heat flow into the home. And to increase durability during storm season, the windows contain high-impact glass and are protected by a shutter system.

Foley said the home's energy-smart construction and features



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Far left: View from the screened porch off the dining area. The mature oak trees add visual interest to the landscape while providing shade to the home. Left: The Tinker family enjoys time together outside. Their home was one of the first residential remodels certified by the Florida Green Building Coalition as a "green" home. Above: Susan Hall, the landscape architect on this project, worked closely with general contractor, David Foley, and interior designer, Christine Whiteley to produce this award-winning design.

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Right: A visual focal point in her design is the dark gray gravel terrace on the north side of the house; it's surrounded by Texas limestone and a water fountain that features a large copper bowl. "It provides ambience and the soothing sound of water," explains Hall. Below: A backyard patio features weather-resistant furniture and fabrics.

helped it receive a high score on the Home Energy Rating (HERS) Index, which measures energy efficiency and function. "Getting a high score is very difficult to achieve in a remodel, where you have some degree of standing walls," he noted.

As excited as the Tinkers are about the home's features, they were equally pleased with the amount of time it took to complete the project. Addison was a newborn when the family moved out in October 2007 and the project began. They were settled back in by February. Mark and Kristen credit the collaborative effort between Foley, interior designer and space planner Christine Whiteley, and landscape architect Susan Hall.

"Christine designed it, drawing the plans by hand, and literally all three of them would come out together to work," Kristen said.

Whiteley, who owns Concepts & Dimensions in Cocoa, handled architectural detailing on the project, taking care to bring old-house elements to the new construction. "We made the fireplace inside and outside to look like it had been there in the original structure, even though it was new," said the state-licensed interior designer and professional member of the ASID.





Left: There is an ease to the transition from the indoor to the outdoor spaces. Designer Christine Whiteley selected colors from nature, and Mexican tile with a high gloss finish to cover most of the living area on the first floor. Above: The soothing color scheme and tile flooring are carried through the guest bath downstairs providing continuity to the design.



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*Above: The staircase in the background leads to the recently created second story. The home now boasts nearly 4000 square feet of living space. "We really love how everything turned out," shares Kristin Tinker, "We love our house and our neighborhood, so we know we'll be here for many years to come."*

The fireplace and chimney are encased in white Texas limestone — much to the delight of Mark, a seismologist who as a youth lived in the Lone Star State. Two chairs, made from branches of azalea, sit in front of the fireplace with a nice copper-and-iron table, giving the room a warm feeling.

The limestone is also used for the three-foot-tall knee wall along the exterior of the house.

Hall suggested the limestone for its unique white, chisel-faced stone veneer. "The white of the Texas limestone really pops up against the contrast of the silver metal roof and dark charcoal color of the house," said Hall of Hall, Bell, Aqui landscape architects in Merritt Island.

A visual focal point in her design is the dark gray gravel terrace on the north side of the house; it's surrounded by Texas limestone and a water fountain that features a large copper bowl. "You see it from the master bedroom and from the front foyer as you walk in and look down the hall. It provides ambience and the soothing sound of water," said Hall.

Even with all its awards — the remodeled home also

won the 2008 winner of the Parade of Homes sponsored by the Home Builders and Contractors Association of Brevard — Mark and Kristen Tinker said the most important overriding objective was to ensure the home's livability.

"It was incredibly important to us to make sure it's livable," said Mark. "It's definitely that now, and spacious. There's plenty of room for me and the boys to lay on the floor and tussle."

Added Kristen: "We really love how everything turned out. We love our house and our neighborhood, so we know we'll be here for many years to come."

For his part, Foley believes the family will reap energy savings for years, even after Addison graduates from college in 20 years. "The great news is, with the reduced energy bill and the energy efficiency of their home, Mark and Kristen can pay for her college," he said. ■

Our thanks to the following sources: David Foley, Home Solution Specialists Inc.; Christine Whiteley, Concepts & Dimensions; Susan Hall, Hall, Bell, Aqui; Jim Correa, Roomscapes of Brevard. See Resource Directory for contact information.