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REAL-ESTATE

Designer transforms a Med Rev home in The Oaks in Sarasota

A 1999 home in The Oaks with a drowsy design scheme wakes to creative possibilities by a designer

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The 1999 modified Mediterranean Revival home in The Oaks, an exclusive gated community in Osprey was purchased at a

bargain by a couple who never imagined themselves living it it, says their designer Mark Dalton.

“My clients bought it as a flip and commissioned me to give it some personality and a general re-fresh before they put it on the market,” said Dalton who is the founder and chief designer at the Sarasota-based Chic on The Cheap design firm.

“This couple has other homes including a condominium on Siesta Key and they come to Florida seasonally. So, they never intended to live in this 5,000-square-foot Oaks house but they knew it had value because of its country club location and MacEwan Drive neighborhood. It’s a well built house with some excellent features such as a handsome

stone fireplace, arched doors, niches, crown molding and high ceilings. The bones of the house and the layout were fine. But, its good features were not being accentuated and the whole place was cloaked in a dull pale yellow. My job was to revitalize this four-bedroom house in under two months.”

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Dalton did not take down any walls, but still required the services of a contractor, J&K Building & Remodeling. They put hardwood

flooring in all four bedrooms. The design team completely redid the master bathroom while leaving the honed-stone flooring throughout the house because it was in excellent shape and did not date the house. They added wallpaper to the master bath, changed out the lighting, fixtures and all the hardware. In the master bedroom suite the designer added a full-size stacked washer and dryer to the woman's walk-in closet for the convenience of doing laundry without have to use the main laundry room.

The designer had the bedroom walls paneled and painted a soft gray and added custom drapes to the room. The new bed and side tables are from Robb & Stucky. The bed linens are from RH and lighting from Bee Ridge

Lighting. But, it's the original ceiling treatment that gives the room its stamp of glamour and European sophistication. Dalton inserted a wide swath of Phillip Jeffries metallic blue-gray wallpaper between bands of deep crown molding. The look is unique and elegant.

“The metallic paper actually came with a disclaimer from the company that it might interfere with Wi-fi,” said the designer, “which is a good reason to keep devices out of the bedroom, I guess.”

In the large family room just off the kitchen Mark Dalton took design inspiration from thick wood casing around the sliding door to the lanai. “I liked the look of the wood and decided to continue it in the room,” he said,

“so I did a feature wall for the television that is backed in grasscloth and trimmed the wood with wood shelving. It has a really comfortable feel and we brought in big casual pieces of contemporary furniture. It’s a big room but now it feels intimate and it has nice natural light. My clients particularly like the electric fireplace on that wall.”

The bathrooms got new counters, lighting, hardware and wallpaper. In the kitchen the counters were replaced but the existing cabinets were painted and the designer brought in a new backsplash, sink, lighting and new Wolf and SubZero appliances. The house already had a separate beverage bar and the designer made it stand out by painting it

black and installing a black and gold backsplash.

The hallmark of Dalton's design scheme for this house was his extensive and confident use of black. All the interior doors and the front door are painted black. Black light fixtures, black tile, black painted furniture, black wallpaper, black ceilings and touches of black on the trim of the dining chairs and black accessories are strategically placed throughout the entire house to give black an intentional presence in the decor. Why?

“Black elevates the sophistication of a space,” said the designer, “but it also creates a neutral, comfortable backdrop that too many people ignore because they think of it as too far out there. But, it's not. If you want to get

used to using black more prominently in decor start by painting a few doors. I promise you'll be convinced. And if you do, use satin-finish paint, not flat. A black flat paint will show fingerprints and you don't want that. The satin-finish is not shiny. Black kitchen faucets and black hardware for bathrooms are a trend right now and there are plenty of good looking pieces out there. Perfect if you want to do a black and white bath or kitchen or if you want to use black as your third color in a design plan. My point is get used to seeing black as an option and it will open up new worlds of design for you."

Dalton finished this whole-house renovation in six weeks and when he revealed the "new" home to his clients he was as surprised as they

were. “It turned out that they fell in love with the place and decided not to flip it but to move in,” said the designer. “They told me that no amount of profit could replace what they had in this home and that they didn’t want to part with it. Which shows that sometimes you don’t need to get rid of your house, you just need to make the most of what you already have.”