

The Cherokee Gardens home was built in 1939. Although their interior changes were substantial, the homeowners remained respectful of the home's original traditional architecture.



FIT FOR A KING

Cara and Jimmy King reinvent a Cherokee Gardens home to reflect a modern take on timelessness

Written by Bridget Williams / Photography by Andrew Kung

Cara and Jimmy King were about to embark on a second-phase remodel of their Cherokee Gardens home when a covetable residence in the same neighborhood hit the market. On her first walk-through, Cara was smitten with the heritage that the home's traditional architecture embodied. "When I stepped foot into this home, a spark was ignited," she explained. "The character of a home lies not only in its intricacies but also its ability to adapt to modern luxuries. This was the perfect opportunity to illustrate my vision."

Completing Cara's conception for the home, built in 1939 and mostly unaltered since, went way beyond a run-of-the-mill renovation. "We essentially constructed an entirely new home,

while preserving the architectural integrity," said Cara. Working with architect and builder Doug Schmidt, Jimmy and Cara took a future-forward approach by adding a first-floor master suite, and putting a great deal of thought into room sizes and trim detail.

While the couple embarked on the project with their eyes wide open, having experienced the highs and lows of renovation at their previous residence, this time around, differences in scale and a smaller lot size increased the complexity of the build. "I didn't want the vast expanses commonly seen in modern homes, yet I wanted each room to deliver a curated collection of pieces that transform, inspire, and redefine each space," Cara articulated.

Groundworks Channels wallpaper by Kelly Wearstler enlivens the walls in the dining room.



The unique wine display was inspired by a restaurant in New York City.



Chic brass hardware and white Aurea quartz countertops provide a fresh perspective on the classic white kitchen.

When the construction dust settled, Cara got to work on the interior design, collaborating with a few of her "very talented friends," including Lindsey Schultz and interior designer Ron Wolz of Bittners. Wolz, who served as a sounding board from the project's conception, applauded Cara for her keen eye, saying the two had a "symbiotic relationship" when it came to discussing colors.

The inspiration for the interiors came from a multitude of sources. In the years before Pinterest, Cara poured over print magazines looking for ideas. She tore out pages from projects that appealed to her and stored them in a binder to refer to as needed. Other ideas were informed by personal experiences, such as the King's unique wine display, which they initially spied at a restaurant in New York City.

Cara's philosophy is that when a home reflects your lifestyle, style is eternal and remains consistent with fundamental design principles. "The ability to reinvent and reimagine a space is what creates a timeless look. A refined style always transcends time," she said.

White is purposefully predominant, as Cara believes that the timelessness, adaptability, and simplicity of the hue "accentuates an ethereal beauty in all aspects of form." She added that "It withstands time and embraces a cleansing calm, which, all things considered, is a luxury in its own right." Each room has been carefully edited and is void of extraneous bric-à-brac, so that the pieces that made the cut get due diligence. As an example, Cara cites the living room's bold velvet drapes that create a captivating contrast to the stark white walls.



With its proximity to the covered patio and family room, the kitchen is able to facilitate indoor/outdoor entertaining.



Intending this to be their "forever home", the King's added a first floor master suite as part of the renovation.



A judicious use of color is found throughout the home. In the living room, bold velvet drapes make a strong statement when juxtaposed with white walls.



Swathed in marble, the design of the new master bathroom meshes well with the home's original architecture.



A busy realtor with Lenihan Sotheby's International Realty who is always on the go, Cara remarked that her home gym is an amenity she cannot go without. "I love being able to walk upstairs and escape, whether it's taking a spin class on the Peloton, lifting weights, or doing yoga or Pilates in my infrared sauna," she said.

In a house full of superlatives, Cara singles out four rooms that she's particularly fond of: the formal living room, the kitchen, the back patio, and her closet. The arrangement of the formal living room, with four oversized white chairs strategically centered around a marble table, makes the list because she appreciates the way the comfortable and sophisticated setup invites intimate conversation.

The hub of family activity, Cara said the kitchen's chic brass hardware juxtaposed with the stark white Aurea quartz countertops evokes a "requisite, familial warmth," that is echoed in the design of the back patio. "I created it to be a space where we could dine,

entertain or simply enjoy one another's company while immersed in the beauty that the outdoors offers," she added.

Any fashionista would undoubtedly agree that the home's pièce de résistance is Cara's closet. Referring to it in such simplistic terms belittles its significance, as it takes the idea of shopping your own closet to a whole new level, a notion she joked that her daughter has fully embraced. "I envisioned my closet to be more of a dressing room where I could entertain girlfriends," she explained. The blush pink color strikes the perfect balance of femininity and discernment.

From room-to-room, a youthful exuberance rests upon the home's dignified bones, paying tribute to its heritage while staying entirely in step with the King's active family life and penchant for entertaining. Cara says, "Interior design requires little more than good taste and creative imagination," both of which she has in spades. ST

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