



## CRUICKSHANK REMODELING BUILDS A “TREE HOUSE” IN THE CITY

Long-time townhouse resident and Cruickshank Remodeling client, Elkin Alston, was feeling a bit cramped in her Ansley Park home. It had been over 10 years since her Cruickshank Remodeling whole house renovation had taken place and the interiors needed freshening up. So in January of this year, she invited Brad over to discuss her ideas and look at possibilities for opening up the feel of her home.

Many of Elkin’s neighbors had balconies off their living rooms, but hers did not. Instead, two windows overlooked a small walled garden, the tree-lined streetscape beyond, and Midtown’s towers in the distance beyond that. The view was perfect, but the windows left Elkin feeling separated from the beautiful outdoors.

So together, Elkin and Brad designed the perfect small balcony to be accessed by new French doors in the place of the two living rooms windows. As with every project they’ve done together, dimensions were determined by functionality. Elkin wanted room for a small, two-person table to expand her dinner party capacity, and enough room so that when not in use, a person could easily pass by the table.



Soon enough, plans were completed, permits received, scheduling settled, and Cruickshank Remodeling began construction. The two double-hung windows with transoms were removed, the brick wall was cut and removed to the floor, and French doors with transoms were fit into the new openings. Custom shutters, longer than the originals, were installed flanking both doors to give it the final finishing touch.



The interiors received a new paint job, hardwood floors were re-finished, several light fixtures were replaced, and four precisely placed electrical receptacles were added to eliminate extension cords.

The morning after the project was complete, Elkin emailed Brad with a beautiful observation that made the project that much more satisfying for him as a client-focused business owner: “As I sat on my balcony this morning with my coffee...how wonderful it is to sit in a virtual tree house.”

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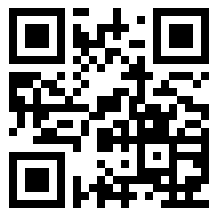
## DID YOU KNOW?

In addition to adherence to sound business practices, Cruickshank Remodeling is strengthened by diversification through its "Reliant Commercial Construction" division. Reliant is a regional self-performing handyman company that services retail stores across the Southeast. Reliant technicians bring the same "Cruickshank Care" level of quality and service when performing repairs in retail stores, but they call it "Reliant Blue Shirt Service." You may see a Reliant blue shirt tech at Lenox or Phipps, or at your local Publix store.



Brad and Reliant Tech Bryan Hellums

### CRUICKSHANK REMODELING



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## BATH TRENDS IN ATLANTA

For many, the bathroom is the one space in the house where they can get some alone-time in peace and quiet. So it's hardly a surprise that more and more people are re-vamping their baths to better suit not only their functional needs, but their aesthetic desires as well. While there are endless design options available depending on your space, we've been seeing some trends that are proving quite popular.

**Small Baths:** Smaller bathrooms, such as those in condos or smaller homes, require a thoughtful approach to design since space and options are limited. Consider replacing standard tubs with showers with multiple shower heads for a spa-like experience. Kohler makes a fixture to retro-fit tubs.

Tiles, especially those made with natural stone, can add to the upscale feeling and eliminate drywall problems associated with steam from the shower. Additionally, using larger tiles is a visual trick that makes the space appear larger. Glass tile is also a popular accent.

Keep lines clean and modern to keep from feeling cluttered, and integrate storage.

**Large Baths:** Homeowners with larger bathroom spaces are separating functions – opting for separate showers and free-standing tubs where space allows. Jetted tubs have lost popularity to soaking tubs. Integrated storage, natural materials for tiles, and plenty of natural light are must haves.

**Baths for Everyone:** Regardless of size, radiant electric heated floors are a wonderful addition to any bathroom. Heated towel bars also add heat to an often cold room while eliminating the dampness in a just-used towel. Quiet ventilation is a must. New, quiet fans are available with a humidity sensor to insure that they run when required to eliminate mildew. Framed mirrors are still popular although we are seeing more expanses of plate glass mirror.

Air circulation and natural light can also be improved while maintaining privacy by adding transoms, high windows, frosted glass doors, and skylights. We have very few problems with Velux skylights which offer integrated blinds, and remote controls for opening/closing.



## CRUICKSHANK REMODELING IN ATLANTA'S TOP 25 AGAIN

The August 10-16, "Home Quarterly" issue of *Atlanta Business Chronicle* again listed Atlanta's top 25 Residential Remodeling Contractors. Cruickshank Remodeling again made the list at #18. I've never tried to be the biggest, instead I've focused on providing a high level of quality and service for a select group of homeowners who truly value their homes as an important part of their lifestyles. We are a boutique, and proudly so.

One other thing to note from the article is that only two firms on the list are older than Cruickshank Remodeling (we're at 32 years and counting!). Ten firms on the list have not passed their ten year anniversary. Unfortunately, remodeling has a high rate of failure and/or burn-out in the first 5 – 10 years, often due to poor management practices. To avoid this, I have spent nearly 20 years as a disciple of the two major remodeling industry mentor firms, "Business Networks" and "Remodelers' Advantage".

Earlier this year, in May, *Professional Remodeler* magazine published their 2012 Market Leaders Report which names the Top 5 Remodelers in 20 major markets. There, we were named #3 for the Atlanta area.

## DENNIS VAUGHN HONORED FOR 15 YEARS OF SERVICE

Good employees are the heart of any business; especially a service business like repair and remodeling. So maintaining the company tradition, Brad took Reliant technician Dennis Vaughn to Soaring Eagle Lodge in honor of Dennis' 15 years of service to the company.

Brad and Dennis floated and fly fished the San Juan River in NW New Mexico. It's a unique landscape with high rock bluffs overlooking arid, desert-like land, except where massive Cottonwoods line the river. Despite its southern location, the San Juan is a premier trout tailwater with an incredible population of browns and rainbows. Soaring Eagle cabins look out onto the river and the dining room menu is superb.

Here's to another 15 years!



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Major structural repair	2
Painting	1
Cabinets	1
Accessibility	1
Misc repairs - interior	1
Misc repairs - exterior	6
Wine cellar	1
Design/consulting	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>



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*Founded in 1980*

## HERE TO SERVE -- TODAY AND TOMORROW



*Brad Cruickshank, Founder*

Remodeling is a tough business. A study by the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard found that as many as 20% of start-up remodelers fail in their first year. Remodeling is an industry with a low barrier to entry, so many who jump into the business lack financial discipline or basic business acumen. Additionally, all remodelers, not just the new ones, are subject to business cycles, the tendency to specialize and/or are tempted to grow too rapidly.

As I pondered what to write for this column, I detected a theme amongst the various pieces I've included -- Cruickshank Remodeling's tremendous business stability. Our first job for Elkin Alston was 17 years ago (see "Tree House" cover story). Tim Joyce was a carpenter then and performed the work. The "Did You Know" piece highlights my Reliant Commercial Construction division where I also have several long-term employees.

The study concludes that despite the tendency of remodeling firms to specialize for efficiency, diversified firms are more likely to survive difficult market conditions. I've gained efficiency by training and keeping good people. You all seem to take some comfort in familiar Cruickshank faces returning to your homes and businesses.