



A CUSTOM KITCHEN CHALLENGE

By Brad Cruickshank

One thing I've always loved about remodeling is the challenges it presents. Bringing a 1905 mansion back to its glory, figuring out where to place the stair for a second story addition, coming up with a structural solution, even how to cut \$15,000 of construction cost on a major renovation—these are things I enjoy. Two years ago, we were presented with a photograph of a kitchen, published in Southern Living Magazine, by a client who wanted a similarly styled kitchen. Little did I know the challenges and joys this project would present.

A FLUTED CHALLENGE

The kitchen in the photograph was characterized by fluted faced cabinets with a sort of driftwood finish. My immediate thought that these were custom cabinets was confirmed by calls to the original project designer and cabinet shop, both in Alabama. Unfortunately, using that source was not a viable option so we would have to go a different route. To that end, I called my local custom cabinet maker, as well as a cabinet manufacturer to see what they could do.

AN EXPERIMENT WITH WOOD

To keep the project moving, I picked up a wide white oak board which we cut into panels so we could experiment

with finishes. Using lye and hydrogen peroxide (a method learned from research on the web) Cruickshank Remodeling Production Manager Tim Joyce and I began making samples using variants on the basic method. It was a bit of a mess, but fun and educational for puzzle-solvers like us. At the same time, my custom cabinet shop produced two rudimentary fluted samples. Soon after, the Minnesota-based manufacturer provided their sample. By then, we had produced four distinct white oak finish samples, one of which was approved by our client. After considering cabinet warranty and delivery time, we cut the selected finish sample in two and sent one half to Minnesota for a sample door. Halving the control sample is the way I've learned to share what we want, while retaining a sample to use to evaluate what is provided. Despite this preparation, it took four iterations of samples to get to the right finish and wood grade. As with many projects, vigilance and patience are keys to getting things done right for our clients.

DESIGNING AND REFINING

While the cabinet door style and cabinet finish were in development, our kitchen designer was designing and refining the kitchen plan which I had developed. With detailed kitchen plans and elevations, we then worked on

cont. on page 2



AN ALASKAN ADVENTURE



When I returned from my Alaska Kobuk River trip on the south slope of the Brooks Range in September of 2010, I knew I needed to go back to Alaska. It was the wildest and most pristine place I'd ever been. It took me four years, but last January, with the recession somewhat dimmer in my memory, I found the trip I wanted to do—a river float trip down the Kongakut River on the north slope of the Brooks Range.

I picked the trip for three reasons:

- 1) **To catch a male Arctic Char, fully colored-up for the spawn**
- 2) **To see a musk ox**
- 3) **To get to the most remote place I've ever been**

So on August 15th, having recruited a college friend I hadn't seen in 30 years, I headed to Fairbanks, AK. From there we flew 2.5 hours north, over craggy peaks and river valleys full of last winter's ice, to land on a gravel bar along the upper river to begin a 9-day paddle toward the Arctic Ocean.

More than I could ever properly describe, the trip was full of beautiful scenery, awe-inspiring solitude, and even a few hairy moments just to keep us on our toes. Best of all, I achieved all three goals of my trip.

A CUSTOM KITCHEN CON'T.

the cabinet, door and drawer dimensions to get the vertical fluting on the cabinet faces to run through from wall cabinet above, to drawer head and base cabinet door below. Not an easy task and certainly not one left to chance! Since the client wanted hidden appliances, the last part of this alignment puzzle was laying out the appliance panels so that the fluting on their panels did not break the continuity of the fluted cabinet faces surrounding them. Due to the fixed dimensions of appliances this was especially vexing.

THE FINAL FINISH

All told, this distinctive kitchen design was a four-month process of developing samples, prototypes, construction techniques and profiles to get the look and feel the client really wanted. While this process may have confounded some, it's these kinds of challenges that really excite me as a remodeler and make success all the sweeter when we get it right. The finished product of this process is pictured on the cover.

Do you need help with remodeling challenge that you're thinking about taking on?

Call us today and let us help!



CRUICKSHANK REMODELING NEWS



NEW CRUICKSHANK REMODELING WEBSITE!

We've been remodeling! But this time it was to our website, and the results are beautiful! With a clean, bright new look, project gallery, and lots of information, please check us out at www.cruickshankremodeling.com.

CRUICKSHANK REMODELING IN THE NEWS:

In September, Cruickshank Remodeling was featured in **The Atlanta Journal-Constitution** newspaper for our work on the Brookhaven garden project that was featured on the NARI Tour of Remodeled Homes in October.

In August, the Atlanta Business Chronicle named

Cruickshank Remodeling as one of **Atlanta's Top 20 Residential Remodeling Contractors!**

The **AJC** also featured Cruickshank Remodeling in July, in an article about different ways Atlanta homeowners have customized their porches for various uses. From simple entranceways, to informal entertaining spaces, to sleeping porches, porches are making a comeback in our daily lives!

All three articles can be found on our new website in the "News" section at www.cruickshankremodeling.com/company-news.

SERVICE: As the year of his NARI presidency comes to a close, Brad Cruickshank will move on to become 2015 Chairman of the Board for the organization. He is very proud to continue to serve with this worth-while association, having been an active member for over 20 years.

HOME TOUR SUCCESSES: The 5th Annual **NARI Tour of Remodeled Homes** was held on October 18th and was a great success! Over 140 visitors toured the Brookhaven garden project that was completed several years ago. With formal and informal gardens, a pavilion, outdoor fireplace, and tons of whimsical details, the project is a stunner.



The 2014 Ansley Park Tour of Homes was held on October 18-19th and featured eight homes that highlight the architectural diversity and décor of Ansley Park—including the home of Brad Cruickshank himself! A 1921 Dutch Colonial, purchased in near teardown condition in 1996, has undergone three major renovations that include the addition of a family room and garage, the complete remodel of the kitchen, three bathrooms, and the master suite, as well as the patio, gardens, and terrace. The results are impeccable and plenty of visitors got to enjoy it.



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Brad Cruickshank, Founder

Normally I am reluctant to ask my clients to sacrifice their privacy by opening their remodeled homes to the public, but two opportunities for home tours, hosted by organizations I strongly support, presented themselves in October. This year I serve again as president of the Atlanta chapter of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI). Given the home improvement industry's history of unscrupulous players, I feel strongly about supporting NARI's efforts to raise the level of professionalism. So I am fortunate that a Brookhaven client agreed to open their extensive Cruickshank designed and built garden for the NARI tour benefitting Cure Childhood Cancer. That same weekend, my neighborhood, Ansley Park, hosted its tour of homes. My wife, Cheryl, and I opened our house for the benefit of the Ansley Park Beautification Foundation which now maintains the parks and islands that characterize our neighborhood. The weather was perfect and both events could not have gone better. Both tours featured projects that were the result of months of detailed planning and effort by my whole team of designers and craftsmen. So I find myself both pleasantly surprised and refreshed by tour goers' comments of marvel and amazement. Yes, we do many projects that replace worn out roofs, fix plumbing leaks and repair rotten trim, and we are rewarded by solving these problems. But I am still most challenged and satisfied by those special projects where we can create home spaces that will marvel and amaze, while making their homeowners lives better every day.

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