



INSIDE DESIGN

Four remodels focus on four trends: outdoor spaces, kid retreats, green design, and charming details.

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RESIDENTIAL EXTERIOR AND SUSTAINABLE
REMODELING

Remodeler: DiGiacomo Homes
and Renovation

Project: South Minneapolis

PROJECT SCOPE: A cramped, one-car detached garage on a small South Minneapolis lot led to the transforma-

— The Great Outdoors —

tion of this backyard. The homeowners thought if they were going to invest in a new two-and-a-half car garage to accommodate their collector's car, a white Citroën, they might as well transform the entire backyard into a space that better accommodated the family's lifestyle and values. The couple's wish list included an outdoor 'room' with a patio and wood-burning

fireplace, ample gardens, and a movie and play area for the couple's two young sons and their friends.

Also, the homeowners wanted the project to employ as many green products and systems as possible. For instance, the backyard needed a new drainage system to divert runoff from rainstorms and car washes away from the alley sewer that



Patio with fireplace

spills its contents into the nearby Mississippi River.

RESULTS: DiGiacomo Homes and Renovation was able to fit all of the homeowners' requests and more onto a postage stamp-size lot that now delivers big value in terms of sustainability and livability. Built

"Most people have white-collar jobs these days, and they really look forward to being outside. And [an outdoor room] is a catharsis for a lot of people."

— Rocky DiGiacomo

with Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified lumber and James Hardie fiber-cement paneling that resists moisture and holds paint "forever," the garage also sports green functions such as a gutter that directs rain into a barrel for watering plants. Water that spills onto the driveway is diverted to a dry well—and away from the alley sewer—thanks to a complicated set of pitches and slopes. "Pretty much all the hard surface run-off is utilized," says

Rocky DiGiacomo of DiGiacomo Homes and Renovation.

The new garage blends beautifully with the architecture of the 1928 Tudor-style house. The attached trellis that shelters a permeable block paver patio and wood-burning fireplace defines the casual entertaining space where summer cookouts and kids' parties take place. Locally sourced stones are used for the retaining wall that doubles as extra patio seating and runs adjacent to the gardens that have replaced most of the backyard grass.

The couple's kids still have plenty of space to play. A swing set—complete with a soft landing area made from recycled, shredded tire mulch to protect knees and elbows—extends from the garage. Summer nights are spent at the 'drive-in' where movies are projected onto a big screen that can be hung from the garage door.

It's truly an urban oasis for the entire family during Minnesota's precious short summer months. "When there's so little time to use it, you want to make the most of it," says DiGiacomo. —J. J.



— Kid Central —

Builder: Knight Construction Design
Project: Remodelers Showcase project #48 in Bloomington

PROJECT SCOPE: Look inside any home with school-age children and you'll most likely see kids and parents operating at warp speed—running between soccer and choir practices and cranking

out homework assignments in between.

Editor's PICK

Given these kind of hectic

schedules, it's no surprise that this family of six wanted a kid-centric study area that would serve as command central.

The homeowners requested that the room do three things: operate as a homework hub, project area, and information center. "In my mind I knew what I wanted the room to do, but I didn't know how I wanted the room to look," says the homeowner.



Mudroom with lockers