

Al Platt

Platt Architecture

KITCHEN

If there's one thing that irks the generally softspoken Al Platt, it's rummaging under a stack of handcrafted plates or bowls to find the correct vessel. "My wife collects a lot of pottery," says the Brevard-based architect. And because it's art ware, "it doesn't necessarily match."

His solution was to build a custom pantry that recalls a fine library. Deep-golden pecky cypress cabinets are fitted with slender vertical shelves that simultaneously shelter and showcase each ceramic piece. The addition was part of Platt's 2006 kitchen renovation on his 1990 house. He painted a prep island black and resurfaced it with copper that will accrue a changing patina but never crack under use. Original countertops were replaced with brushed granite and complemented by a wonderfully festive glass-tile sink backsplash, a mosaic of desert greens and oranges straight out of a Diego Rivera painting.

But the dark-stained Mexican tile on the kitchen floor stayed as is. "It was meant to be durable, and it has worn well for 21 years," says Platt.

It had to. Platt has his grown children and their families living nearby. Entertaining frequently means "dinner for 12 or 15 people," and the kitchen "connects everything together." Doors lead to the back entrance, a covered patio and the family room. In the winter, when outdoor dining isn't an option, the kitchen becomes a destination room in itself. The house is a rancher with the typical horizontal lines, but six skylights in the kitchen make it "the only space that has a lot of height," explains Platt.

"The room is very light at all times," he says. "It's like a magnet."

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Parker Platt

Platt Architecture

LIVING SUITE

Anyone who's ever dwelt in an older Craftsman house knows the layout:

a narrow living room with a whitewashed (usually defunct) fireplace that links to a slightly larger dining room and dwindles back to a small kitchen. Livable but tight.

With a little construction and many ingenious artistic touches, Brevard architect Parker Platt (son and business partner of Al Platt) and his wife Susi have transformed the expected rooms in their 100-year-old, 1500-square-foot bungalow into an airy, connected suite. Platt installed a working fireplace in the living room and extended the mantel to span the entire area, enclosing a bookshelf and a tastefully recessed entertainment center. On into the dining wing, walls are light and floors are maple. The kitchen, Platt reveals, "is totally new," with leathered black-granite countertops and painted white cabinets. Niche innovations include an oak desk wedged low beneath one window.

"The way it's built in, the desk works really nicely. One person can be checking e-mail while the other cooks — it's a way to be together in the evening."

Sophisticatedly melded décor — a cohabitation of gracious and hip — is key. "Wow" pieces abound, including a 15th-century grandfather clock (from Susi's Swiss family) and much local art. Vibrant paintings by Shellie Lewis-Dambax adorn two walls. And Platt is an avid fan of Lake Toxaway artist George Peterson, a lifelong skateboarder who transforms discarded "decks" — the board without the wheels — into aboriginal-inspired wall sculptures.

The house is configured so that all three of the main spaces "live as one," says the architect. "It's about honoring what was here, but not being slavish to tradition."



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