

The background image shows a sophisticated interior space. On the left, a staircase with a black wrought-iron railing leads down. In the center, a dark wood double door is set into a white wall. To the right, a tall, dark wood display cabinet holds various decorative items, including vases, bowls, and a small plant. A large snake plant in a white pot sits on the floor to the right. The floor is made of light-colored stone tiles. A chandelier hangs from the ceiling. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

NARI MINNESOTA —
2026 ROTY AWARDS
PROJECT: REFINED COUNTRY LIVING
CATEGORY: ENTIRE HOUSE \$250,000-\$500,000

PROJECT SUMMARY

When this retired couple decided townhouse living wasn't for them, they began looking for a home with more space, privacy, and room to enjoy. They found it in this 2,600-square-foot 1970s rambler situated on 3.5 private acres. While the home offered beautiful vaulted ceilings and plenty of potential, much of the interior was original, including dark wood beams, a lava-rock fireplace surround, and dated finishes throughout.

Despite being a rambler, the home wasn't designed for true one-level living—all three bedrooms were located on the lower level. Creating a comfortable main-level primary suite became a priority. We transformed a portion of the oversized living room into a spacious primary bedroom and added a small addition to accommodate a generous walk-in closet.

The homeowners have an eclectic style and a beautiful collection of art, furnishings, décor, and even a few special light fixtures they wanted incorporated into the design. Our goal was to create a warm, neutral backdrop that allowed those collected pieces to shine while still giving the home character of its own.

To improve the main living spaces, we removed the wall between the kitchen and formal dining room, along with a deep built-in buffet. Rather than lose that valuable depth, we creatively reversed the recess into the front entry, creating the perfect niche to showcase some of the homeowner's favorite pieces while adding architectural interest to the foyer.

Not everything original needed to go. We preserved several features that worked beautifully with the new design, including the entry's original stone flooring, wood ceiling beams, fluted oak wood paneling and iron foyer railing. By blending these authentic elements with updated materials and a warm, cohesive palette, we gave this 1970s home a fresh new chapter while honoring some of its original character.

CLIENT WISHES / GOALS

- Remodel the entire first floor of their new rambler.
- Convert large family room into a new primary suite.
- Large walk-in closet with washer and dryer.
- Try to keep or re-use existing windows
- Incorporate warm tones while still brightening the space.
- Open kitchen to the living and dining spaces.
- Remove raised floor in family room.
- Primary bathroom must have walk-in shower and enclosed water closet.
- Update both fireplaces
- Re-design mudroom to accommodate space for their two dogs.



DESIGN

Goals

Our goal was to create a bright, beautiful, and highly functional home where our retired clients could comfortably enjoy one-level living while surrounding themselves with the art, furnishings, and collected pieces they love.

The foundation of the design began with new white oak hardwood floors, black Shaker-style interior doors, updated trim, and a soft white paint color throughout. Together, these elements created a warm, neutral backdrop that allows the homeowners' eclectic collection and personality to take center stage.

The Kitchen

The new kitchen combines soft beige cabinetry with warm stained maple for a layered, inviting look. Quartz countertops, new appliances, gold fixtures and hardware, and a movable island provide both beauty and flexibility.

One of our favorite details is the custom wood range hood. Rather than discard the fluted wood paneling from the original kitchen, we carefully saved and repurposed it as part of the new hood design—a subtle connection between the home's past and present.

Countertop-level upper cabinets conceal everyday necessities, while oversized drawers and pullouts maximize accessible storage. Glass-front upper cabinetry helps break up the solid cabinetry and gives the homeowner additional space to display some of her favorite pieces.

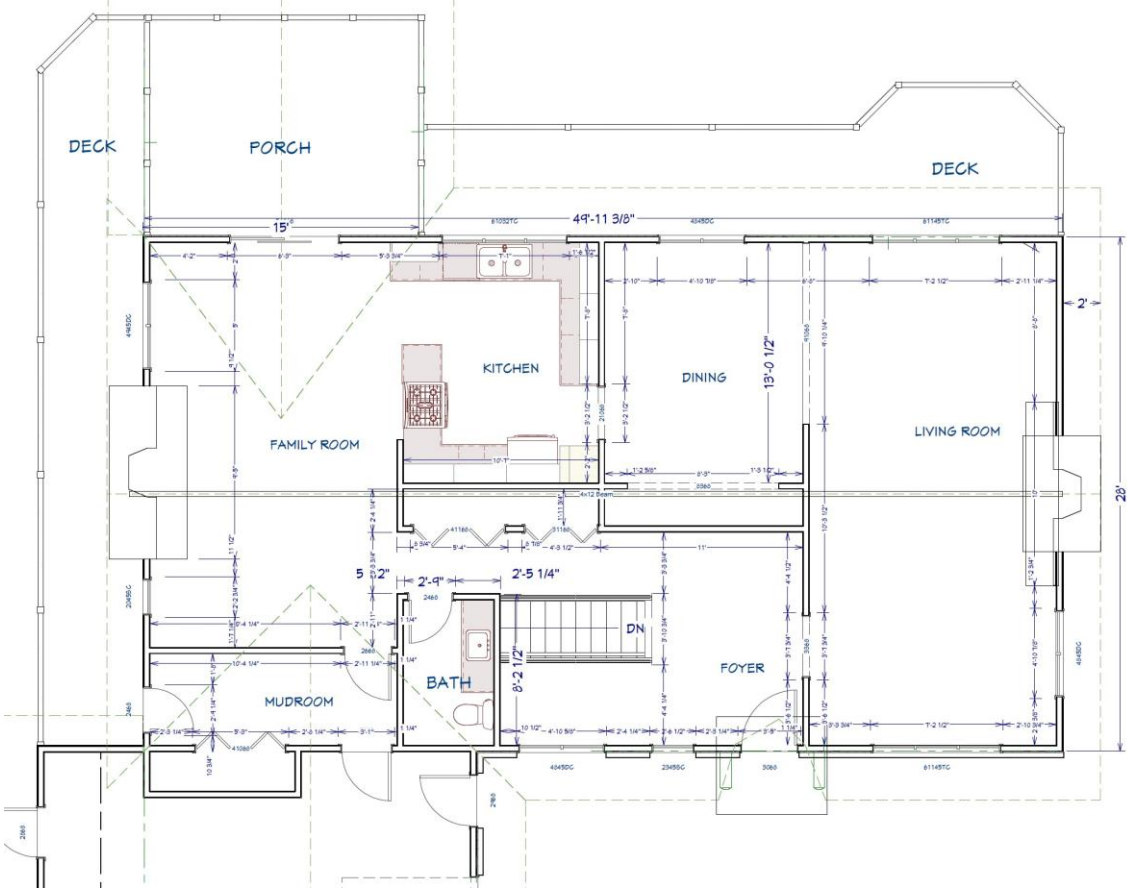
The Family Room

The family room fireplace became another opportunity to introduce personality and color. Fluted marble tile creates texture and interest, while the custom mantel, finished in a rich deep green, was selected to complement the homeowners' artwork and coordinate with the custom kitchen hood.

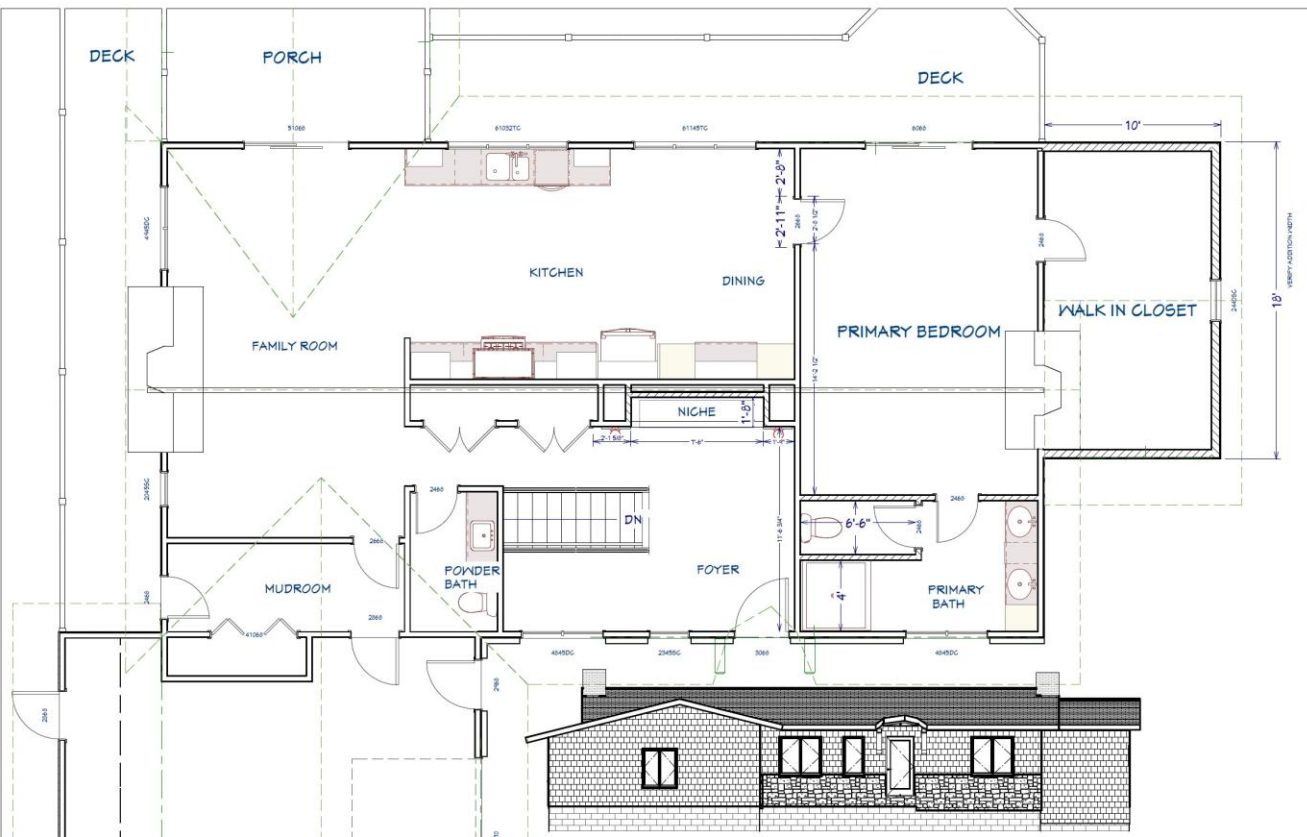
Additional design details and the story behind the transformation will be highlighted throughout the presentation with before-and-after photography.



BEFORE FLOOR PLAN



AFTER FLOOR PLAN



RENDERINGS



BEFORE



The original stone flooring and iron railing were preserved, while new white oak flooring, black Shaker-style doors, and crisp white trim gave the entry a fresh, updated look. The new kitchen design gave us the opportunity to use the wall depth for a recessed display niche, creating the perfect place to showcase the homeowner's collected pieces. The existing railing was painted black to match the interior doors and front door.

AFTER



BEFORE



The wall opening from the foyer to the old living room was closed off for the new primary bathroom.

AFTER



BEFORE



Another view of the front entry - A beautiful new maintenance free front door with brass hardware ties in with the black light fixtures, railing and interior closet doors.

AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER



View looking from the family room to the front entry. The ceilings feel taller with the trim, beams and walls all painted the same color. The white walls are the perfect backdrop for the homeowner's artwork.

BEFORE



The family room space was dark and outdated with the large heavy fireplace surround and dark wood beams. A fresh coat of paint, white oak flooring and a new custom fireplace surround brightened the space and

AFTER



BEFORE



Removing a portion of the wall and the existing peninsula opened the kitchen to the family room, creating a more spacious feel and improving the flow between the two spaces. Relocating the range to the wall allowed it to become a focal point of the new kitchen, highlighted by a custom hood crafted from fluted oak panels salvaged from the original kitchen.

AFTER



BEFORE



In this view, you can see the original fluted oak paneling that was carefully saved and repurposed on the new custom range hood. The reimagined kitchen layout provides better workflow, while the movable center island adds flexibility and function. A floor outlet beneath the island provides convenient access to power when needed. From the kitchen, a beautiful sightline extends through the new primary bedroom and into the walk-in closet, where the homeowner's treasured family heirloom armoire becomes a focal point.

AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER



BEFORE



The new eat-in dining area incorporates pantry storage and a built-in buffet as a seamless extension of the kitchen. Carrying the cabinetry into this space visually expands the kitchen while providing additional storage and a beautiful, functional connection between the two areas.

AFTER



BEFORE



This view shows the new wall separating the primary suite from the dining area. We were also able to remove the step and make the two spaces one level.

AFTER



BEFORE



The large living room was just the right size for the new primary bedroom and bathroom. We updated the fireplace with a beautiful limestone surround and added a narrow window to the right of it for light and view of the landscape. A pocket door separates the new primary bathroom.

AFTER



BEFORE



The window in this photo was replaced with a new sliding patio door to the rear deck. The existing window was relocated to the dining area to maximize the view of the back yard.

AFTER



BEFORE



The large window overlooking the driveway was replaced with a smaller window, providing greater privacy while allowing us to expand the shower. We also closed off the former access to the front entry, creating a more private and functional primary bath. The wall between the vanity and shower is wrapped in the same beautiful porcelain tile, creating a seamless, cohesive look. Warm beige cabinetry, crisp white quartz countertops, and acrylic hardware complete the space with a soft, sophisticated feel.

AFTER



AFTER (PRIMARY BATH)



A smaller footprint doesn't mean sacrificing luxury, style, or function. Warm neutral tones, richly veined porcelain tile, and soft beige cabinetry create a serene, sophisticated backdrop, while the dramatic black doors add just the right amount of contrast. Thoughtful details, including acrylic hardware, polished fixtures, beveled mirrors, and a spacious glass-enclosed shower, give this primary bath the refined feel of a boutique hotel spa.



BEFORE



AFTER



The existing powder room felt dated and lacked personality. We completely transformed the space, replacing the original vanity, tile flooring, beadboard wainscoting, and finishes with a more sophisticated and cohesive design. A furniture-style fluted wood vanity brings warmth, texture, and character to the room, while a crisp white quartz countertop provides a clean contrast. Brass accents, a large framed mirror, and elegant glass sconces add a touch of understated glamour. New white oak flooring visually connects the powder room to the surrounding living spaces. We added a subtle geometric wallpaper overhead—an unexpected detail that draws the eye up and gives this small space a memorable finishing touch. The result is a powder room that feels warmer, more spacious, and much more reflective of the homeowners' eclectic style.

BEFORE

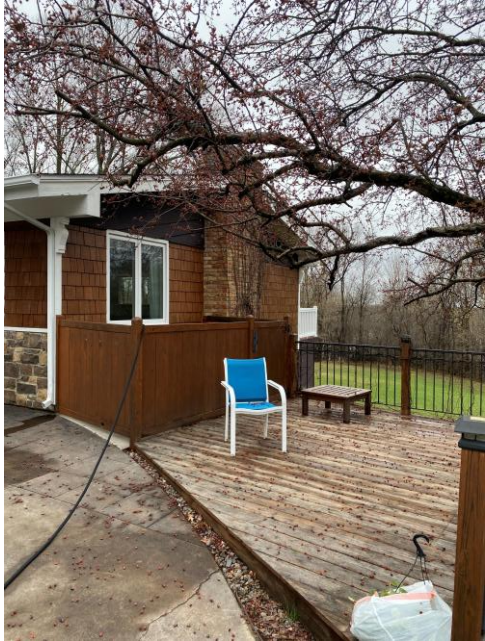


AFTER



The existing mudroom was a narrow, utilitarian space that lacked both storage and personality. We transformed it into a warm and welcoming transition into the home, designed with both the homeowners and their dogs in mind. The dated flooring, doors, trim, and lighting were replaced with finishes that coordinate with the rest of the remodel, including white oak flooring and dramatic black doors. An underutilized closet was opened up and reimagined with built-in shelving for attractive, easily accessible storage. The lower portion was intentionally left open to create cozy, dedicated resting spots for the homeowners' dogs. Warm wall color, updated lighting, and thoughtful furnishings give this hardworking space character while maintaining the durability and function a mudroom needs. What was once simply a passage into the home is now an inviting and purposeful space—even for the four-legged members of the family.

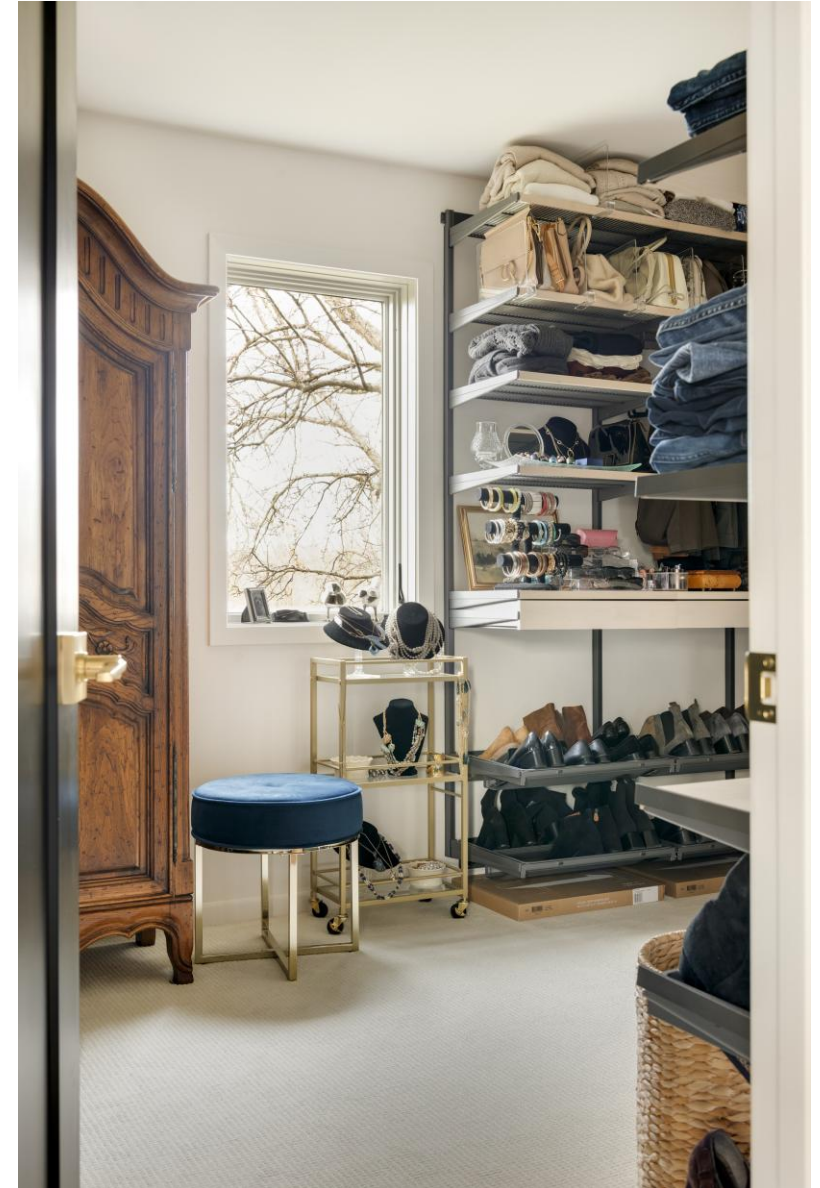
BEFORE



AFTER



The new primary walk-in closet addition seamlessly blends with the existing home while leaving the adjacent patio completely undisturbed. More than just a closet, the space also incorporates a new washer and dryer, allowing the homeowners to enjoy the convenience of true one-level living without trips to the lower-level laundry. Inside, the closet was designed around a treasured family heirloom chest, creating a beautiful focal point upon entering the room. A new window brings in natural light, while soft off-white carpeting keeps the space feeling bright, warm, and inviting.



AFTER

