

Art of the Home: A Great Addition



**BY MIKE RUSSELL, CR AND KATHE RUSSELL, CKBR, CAPS
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Imagine, if you will, a half finished sewing project hanging on the back of the door in your guest bedroom. Nearby, in the corner of your living room is a recently started watercolor canvas and several paint brushes in a glass of water waiting to be put away. In your garage is a potter's wheel with bags of clay waiting to be molded and shaped into a work of art. When Bob and Robin Slakey looked around their home, that's what they saw. The situation frustrated Bob and Robin. Robin, an art teacher and talented artist, clearly needed a place to create her art but there was not a dedicated space.

When homeowners are considering an addition, it's best to see if the problem can be solved by reclaiming or repurposing an existing space in their home. Because the Slakey's project was also part of a larger whole house remodel, there was some flexibility to repurpose spaces. A room formerly used





for catch-all activities became a sewing area immediately adjoining the art studio. However, storage and display space were such big issues that an addition was also needed.

Robin's vision for her art studio was vivid and her directive was clear—"Make me say wow!" One of the "wow" features that Robin wanted was a custom window arrangement to display her hand-blown glass artwork. With her vision, the team designed and engineered a block of custom window cabinets with glass shelves. The design allowed natural light during the day and spotlighting at night, as well as the ability to adjust the shelves and take the art glass out for periodic cleaning.

The practical concerns were just as important to Robin. She needed specialized storage for different size canvases, art supplies, and materials. To address this, the team created an open vertical storage unit for storing canvases of varying sizes. In addition, the team built custom drawer storage to fit different sizes of art paper. Ample rollouts for Robin's paints and other supplies provided easy access and storage in the clean up area. In the adjoining sewing area, specialized storage was created for storing bulky materials and a variety of sewing supplies.

Counter space for mixing paints and preparation for Robin's projects was also critical. There needed to be accessible water sources for easy clean up on the countertops and the floor. To minimize water dripping onto the sink cabinet, a farm sink with an apron front was installed. We also provided a pull out faucet with a spray feature for easy clean up in the sink. Because many of Robin's art projects would take place on the floor, a custom stained concrete with easy cleaning abilities was chosen. In addition, a hose bib in the studio with a drain in the center of the room so that the floor could be hosed down easily helps with clean up. To prevent water damage a rubber material was added to the cabinetry toe kicks. A ventilation system was also installed to accommodate Robin's kiln and various art mediums.

Perhaps one of the most important features to an artist, of course, is lighting. In addition to the art glass windows and window above the sink, two skylights and a slider door were added. At nighttime, artificial and task lighting are available so that Robin can continue to create.

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Ask Mike and Kathe

Got a remodeling question?

Feel free to email us at info@ourdreambuilder.com and we'll publish our response in our monthly column.

Dear Mike and Kathe,

We are thinking about building an addition because our existing kitchen is too small. What are some of the things that we should be considering before we have it designed?

~ John T., Sacramento

Dear John,

Before you design, you should answer these three questions: 1) How long will I stay in my home? 2) Can I solve my space problem without building an addition? And 3) If not, how much will it cost? While most people can answer the first question fairly easily, the other questions will require some thought, as well as the help of a qualified professional. Because building an addition is generally more expensive than remaining within the existing footprint, it is definitely worthwhile to explore other ways to solve the problem before you add on. *~ Mike*

Dear Mike and Kathe,

I've been hearing a lot about quartz as a countertop surface. What is the difference between quartz and granite?

~ Cindy F.

Dear Cindy,

There are many options for countertops these days and quartz is definitely growing in popularity. Quartz is an engineered granite with a resin based composite. It is extremely resilient and does not require sealing. Granite, on the other hand, does require sealing and a little more maintenance. Price wise, you can find options for both in similar price ranges. It basically boils down to what your taste preferences are. People who want a cleaner, simpler design tend to choose a solid color quartz or pattern with little movement. Granite tends to be more traditional and have more movement. Popular quartz brands include Cambria, Caesarstone, and Silestone. *~ Kathe*



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You don't have to be an artist to enjoy the benefits of a hobby room. And regardless of your budget, having a dedicated space for your hobbies is possible. Whether it's simply reclaiming an unused area in your home, repurposing a room that you currently use for something else, or building a custom addition, the possibilities are endless.

Mike Russell, CR and Kathe Russell, CKBR, CAPS are the owners of Dream-Builders Home Remodeling, an award winning design build firm specializing in kitchens, baths, and whole house remodels. Their showroom is located in El Dorado Hills. Mike is a licensed general contractor and Kathe is an interior designer. Together with their design and construction team, they have helped hundreds of clients achieve their dream spaces. For more information, please visit their website at www.ourdreambuilder.com or contact (916) 993-3506 to schedule a consultation. ❖

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