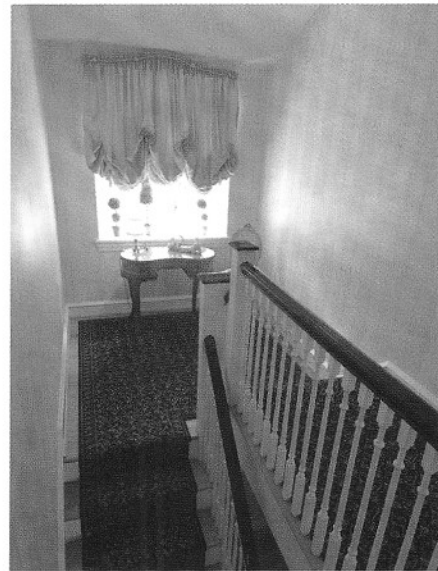
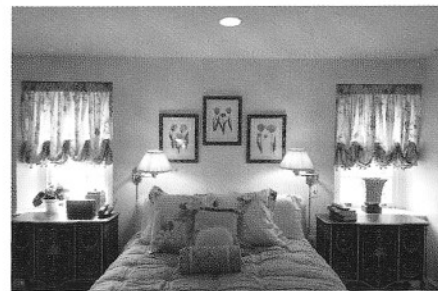
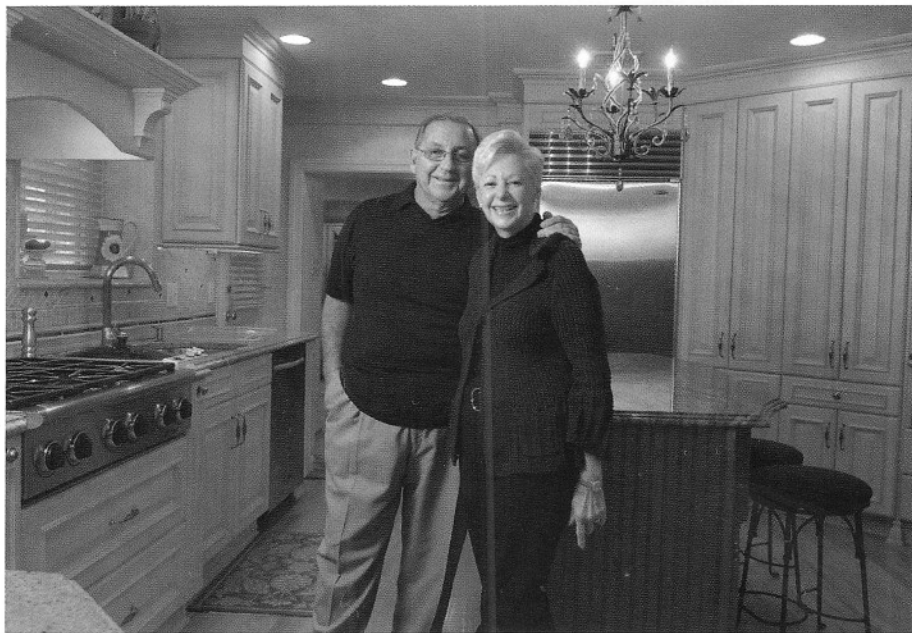


# Total makeover

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## One Room At a Time



After decades of piecemeal renovations, including two kitchen remodels and some structural tweaks, the Campanales have finally got their Bala Cynwyd house just the way they want it.

BY SEAN SCULLY, PHOTOS BY MIKE MERGEN

**W**hen Mary Ann Campanale and her new husband Frank moved into their Bala Cynwyd home in 1967, it was just about the biggest place she had ever seen.

"I [had] lived in a row house in South Philly," she recalls. "I remember the day we moved in — the boxes got loaded off the truck and, of course, my husband went right back to work and I was there with a little 6-week-old baby and I was

thinking, 'Oh, my god, this is so big. What am I going to do with this?'"

But fairly quickly, as the couple added two more children, she realized that the family needed more room. By the early '70s, she had embarked on a slow, steady makeover of the house that has taken more than 30 years and has changed the house almost completely.

For a lot of homeowners, a total home makeover isn't feasible, convenient, or affordable. So they do what the Campanales did: Whatever is needed at the moment.

"It was always nice," says Mary Ann. "It was always livable, but we started making it a little bit nicer as we went along. I feel like it's bigger, it's more comfortable. It's

Above and at left: Mary Ann and Frank Campanale have made and remade their home several times over the years.

much easier to have all my children and grandchildren here. It's me. It's definitely much more me."

Much of the change has come at the hands of interior designer Rocco Marianni of Haddonfield, N.J., who got involved in the house in the '80s and has helped the family through remodeling of the dining room, living room, master bedroom, kitchen and, twice, the family room.

The things they have done over the years "look really nice to me and I'm very satisfied ... a couple years later, I still like it," Marianni says. "The client still likes it. That's really great."

The family started the long-haul remodeling on their own — enclosing a back porch to create a music room that's now an office, finishing the garage to create a family room, and removing an old attic staircase to create better access to the bedrooms upstairs.

They also needed to redo the kitchen, which had not been touched since the house was built in 1933.

The whole house "was very old-fashioned... We walked in and they had these big velvet drapes hanging... The kitchen was very narrow and had a little tiny

nook. That was the extent of the kitchen," Mary Ann says.

In its place they opted for a stark, very modern kitchen of a late-'70s vintage, she says, "with black and silver and white. It was glass and silver with big bulb lights. That kind of thing."

Marianni became involved when the family was searching for more room to entertain. He quickly realized that he could revolutionize the house by switching the existing small dining room and large living room.

Over the years, he's done a variety of projects for the family.

Most recently, Marianni renovated the '70s kitchen, warmed up the adjacent family room by adding trim and other details, and, most notably, knocked out the wall between the kitchen and dining room to create a dramatic open space.

"When everything started falling apart in my kitchen we decided it was time to redo it ... so we started with some small plans and it wasn't really working out," Mary Ann says. "It was nice and it was pretty, but it wasn't really getting us more than what we had. So then we started knocking walls down. And I just love it."

Marianni says that some previous projects in the house, like the old kitchen and family room, had emphasized highly contemporary detail, which can quickly become dated.

"The first time we did [the family room], it was real contemporary — red, white, black and red. Really hip and cool at the time ... That was a trendy sort of look. Now it's really not — it's more of a classic



Above and below: The family found space to entertain by switching the small dining room with the larger living room.

look," he said, surveying the family room. "This room won't go out of style ever."

Likewise, the kitchen now has a pleasing timeless look. The new kitchen features granite counter-tops, semi-custom cabinetry, extensive custom tile work on the walls, and a large functional island with a wine cooler and food warmer built in.

"Because the other kitchen was so stark and modern, almost unfriendly, we wanted it to be warm, a little bit contemporary, a little bit country... We just wanted to warm it up, make it a lot more homey and interesting, and sophisticated, too, at the same time," he says.

Mary Ann says she has no way of knowing how much the family has spent on renovations. "A lot," she says. But by doing it bit by bit, she thinks, she's managed to do more, and get more value for

her money, than doing just one or two big overhauls.

And, she says, it's allowed her to make the most of the house she continues to love, despite her seemingly insatiable desire to make it over.

"It's a good floor plan," she says. "If you see new houses today, they're beautiful, but there's so much wasted space. They have these huge cathedral foyers and on the second floor, they have that humongous master bathroom then all the other rooms are this big. This is a good floor plan; it's your basic center-hall Colonial but it works in a lot of different ways."

The stresses of home renovations are legendary and Mary Ann admits that at times the constant reworking has been difficult.

"The second kitchen we replaced, I will never do that again," she says, standing in the home's third kitchen. "That was an imported kitchen and it took forever and ever and ever. We lived with a hookup on the sink and a lot of boxes and whatever because we wouldn't go anywhere because the kids were in school. I was using paper dishes and washtubs for water."

Lately, it has gotten a bit easier. The kids are all grown and the couple can spend weekends at their Shore house when work is under way.

Along the way, she's learned some valuable lessons — most importantly, always use a professional designer for big projects.

By trying to do it all yourself "I think you end up spending more money, you like every individual part, you get them all," Mary Ann says. "But putting them together, you realize you've overdone it. Maybe you didn't need all the extra, extra special things."

Marianni agrees.

"I find solutions to problems," he says. "The client presents a problem, [and] my job is to help them see different alternative solutions and together we pick out the best solution ... If they don't have a plan ahead of time, before they start buying things, they buy mistakes a lot of the time."

Much as Mary Ann has enjoyed remarking her home, she says that now, finally and at long last, the house may be finished.

"I am done. I am done. I am really done," she says. "And it's killing me because I am so sorry I didn't do it earlier." ■

