

PLATEAU

February/March 2022

MOUNTAIN LIFE IN HIGHLANDS-CASHIERS NORTH CAROLINA

Love Language

Fine Jewelry Says It All

Wise Guys

Mountain Preparedness

Save the Date

Valentine's Dining
On the Plateau

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WELL STYLED renovations

Ramifications of the pandemic and shipping snafus do not have to be impassable roadblocks for your complete home—or even room—makeover.

Innovating and Renovating

Designers on the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau aren't letting the sluggish supply chain slow down progress to keep things beautiful

By BRITTANY CONLEY » Photos by GIL STOSE

I KNOW WHEN I PUT AWAY THE TWINKLING LIGHTS FROM MY CHRISTMAS TREE AND BEGIN rearranging my home back to its normal pre-holiday layout, I get the itch to change something. In years prior, I have usually focused on something simple, such as a new rug, lampshade or perhaps a piece of art. Right on schedule, I now seek to refresh and revamp a few things this year as well, as soon as I spied the first signs of the changing season. I am not alone in this, of course, especially as the initial vibrant spring colors emerge from the rather bleak grayscale of winter. But, after so many years of changing out smaller details like throw pillows or curtains, sometimes our spaces need a total overhaul, and after all the time we have spent in our homes these last couple of years, I think most of us genuinely crave change.

A complete home—or even room—makeover can be a daunting task, especially with seemingly never-ending news stories of an unstable supply chain which occasionally leaves us with more question marks and empty shelves rather than goods or choices. Luckily, the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau is

Renovations may be as simple as new finishes.



blessed with some incredible designers who are thrilled to ensure your home makeover or renovation project is as sweet as a spring breeze and navigate any pesky supply chain issues that might arise so that you don't have to.

Potential supply chain issues aside,



(above) Initially starting out primarily with kitchen and bath remodels, Black Rock realized they were more than capable of addressing the inherent issues of full-home remodels on the plateau; (right) It is a designer's job to embrace details and inspiration the home owner loves and translate them into a successful transformation of their new home or space.

home makeovers and renovations in a relatively remote area such as ours have their own unique set of challenges from a logistics standpoint. The landscape, access to diverse products, sourcing skilled labor and even the unpredictability of the weather can turn a seemingly simple project into something far more involved. Therefore, design firms on the plateau must not only be experts in dreaming up gorgeous, functional ideas, but they must also possess unsurpassed proficiency in planning—sometimes for the unexpected.

Black Rock Design Build of Highlands is one such company ready and eager to guide you through the process step by step. Initially starting out primarily with kitchen and bath remodels, Black Rock realized

they were more than capable of addressing the inherent issues of full-home remodels on the plateau. “We now furnish a one-stop-shop experience to potential clients offering three showrooms, a collection of products such as varied styles and materials in tile, beautifully handcrafted cabinetry, custom-inspired lighting, European Oak engineered flooring, German-engineered appliances, and artisan-inspired stonework and countertops,” says Black Rock designer, Gregg McLain.

Marveling at the variety of offerings in the stunning showrooms is where the fun really begins for prospective clients. After browsing the Black Rock website, curious and keen homeowners often pop in to visit or may call to make an appointment for a

full-blown consultation. “We offer a tour of the showrooms and do a quick interview defining their needs and then schedule a visit to their home,” says McLain, emphatically stating the in-home consultation is the most enjoyable part of the process for him as a designer. “...We dream through the house and inspire ideas and possibilities beyond what is before us,” he says. Deciphering the wants and needs of a customer is crucial to a successful project, even if it is difficult to articulate, and the ability to do so is the calling card of a skilled and passionate designer.

Truthfully, the brainstorming usually begins long before a designer steps into the picture, however. Some may still clip pictures from magazines and tack them to a corkboard, though others use an online inspiration board, such as Pinterest, to organize the design elements they long to see in their own homes. Either way, most homeowners approach Black Rock with at least an inkling of an idea of the direction they would like to take, yet sometimes need help refining and defining what they originally envisioned. “Oftentimes, clients will have collected inspiration photos of what they want to see in their mountain home, while other times they are looking for guidance about the aesthetic. Discussing what they see and love in these photos is paramount as everyone sees different details. It is our job to embrace those details and translate them into a successful transformation of their new home or space,” says McLain.



After the homeowner's hopes and wishes are transformed into actionable plans, the client and designer will settle on a budget and prioritize a list to grant as many of the homeowner's desires as possible.



A truly skilled designer can walk with a homeowner through their initial ideas and revolutionize them, taking things perhaps once considered impossible and turning them into attainable realities. "That may be as simple as furnishing new finishes. It may be more involved, like moving walls and windows or repurposing existing spaces for a new function. In some cases, a new entry will set the stage for a new, fresh interior space," says McLain. "Black Rock approaches spaces and homes from a different perspective and will, as a rule, push the envelope as far as is comfortable to achieve maximum results." After the homeowner's hopes and wishes are transformed into actionable plans, the client and designer will settle on a budget and prioritize a list to grant as many of the homeowner's desires as possible. While sometimes this may require a little creativity and compromise, designers like Gregg McLain always endeavor to maximize what a client can achieve with what they are comfortable investing in the project.

Yet perhaps the most important element



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of a successful home renovation or makeover project isn't even combing through endless color swatches, fabric samples or blueprints, but instead is something more intangible. It is the implicit trust the client desires in their architect or designer to implement their ideas and dreams not only beautifully and within budget but also within the agreed-upon timeframe. After all, clients desire nothing more than to simply enjoy living in their homes. Confidence that a design project will not go on longer than necessary is a key element to a truly satisfied customer.

While issues lingering from a sluggish supply chain have affected every industry imaginable, it is natural one might worry about the timeliness of their renovation project. But Black Rock Design Build is hardly backing down from these challenges—they are instead innovating their way through them so that you do not have to worry about the details. "Trust, to a large degree, is responsible for the success of a plan inspired by the vision. Our reputation is first based on trust. Black Rock has developed a look that has also

become [its] own. We are masterful at placing carefully selected materials in an environment of cohabitation that creates a unique character to a space or home,” says McLain. Adapting their practices makes your project seamless, so your home is in order sooner. “We have used it as an opportunity to get creative with what we have in terms of availability [...] we are able to work around supply issues by fabricating our own stone countertops and walls, rustic and painted cabinetry and custom metalwork pieces,” says McLain, who also cites being especially diligent during the planning phase as a critical part of skillfully combating any issues they may encounter. “It creates more work for us on the front end, but having a satisfied client with a successfully completed, vision-inspired project is the best possible result.”

It is no secret we have all spent an abundance of time in our homes over the last couple of years. We have had ample time to grow tired of our outdated tile, to imagine the possibilities of what we could do with a new, exciting kitchen layout or with our basement finished. The very idea of escaping into our own man caves or crafting until our hearts are content in our she-sheds is enough to bring back the sparkle in our eyes if our homes have lost a bit of luster. Our imaginations have had room to run wild, and we yearn for transformation and something extraordinary. And yet there are persistent ramifications of the pandemic and shipping snafus few of us could have predicted, but they do not have to be impassable roadblocks. Thankfully, there are talented and hard-working people out there, like the dynamic team of designers at Black Rock, with a clear vision and determination, who can use their infinite talents to find inventive solutions before we, as consumers, even realize there is a problem.

If like many others, you are ready to revamp and renovate your home, the innovative team at Black Rock Design Build is delighted to show you how they can turn your makeover dreams into reality with their unique vision and emphasis on customer service. Check out their website at www.blackrockdb.com or call their friendly staff at 828-482-4424 to schedule your showroom tour or consultation. You can also find plenty of inspiration by visiting their photographer's website at www.gilstose.com. It is time for the change we seek. After all the months we have spent in our homes, we deserve to fall in love with them all over again. ■



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