



**your home makeovers**

## escape from the city

*Urban transplants infuse a sleek sensibility into  
a mid-century-modern home in Lincoln.*

By Marni Elyse Katz  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY NAT REA

A

lthough Jonathan Rapaport grew up in Lincoln, he never imagined he would move back as an adult. But when he and his wife, Sarah, began to feel the limitations of New York City as a place to raise their son, they settled on his hometown as a family-friendly alternative. Attracted to its rural feel, proximity to Boston, and inventory of mid-century architecture, they decided to trade in their loft for a cool modern house in the country. "We didn't want to do the in-between suburban thing," Jonathan says. "We wanted somewhere with few neighbors and lots of trees."

In June 2012, the couple, who founded and run Thanks for Everything, an online thank you note-writing service for newlyweds and new parents, purchased a 4,000-square-foot mid-century-modern home in the Deck House style—with post-and-beam construction, a tongue-and-groove ceiling, open floor plan, and lots of glass. Although the structure had great bones, the interior needed updating. So they turned to Colin Flavin, principal of Boston-

THERE'S A BIT OF URBAN CHIC IN SARAH AND JONATHAN RAPAPORT'S HOME, WITH ITS CERUSED OAK FLOORS AND PAINTED TONGUE-AND-GROOVE CEILINGS, WHILE ITS QUIET LOCATION IS IDEAL FOR RAISING THEIR YOUNG SON.



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ton-based Flavin Architects, who is married to Jonathan's sister. "The previous owners celebrated the woody end of the design spectrum," Flavin says. "Jon and Sarah wanted something less rustic."

By reworking the colors, the Rapaports, along with Flavin and Howard Raley, the project architect, transformed the house into a sleek abode that looks very this century while retaining its mid-20th-century roots.

When it came to choosing the ceiling color, the couple found inspiration in their cat's gray fur.

They started from the ground up, removing the flagstone and old oak floors and replacing them with cerused oak in a bluish-gray tint. Flavin recalls that the installer "read us the riot act for wanting to 'ruin' the floors, but Jon and Sarah insisted, and it was worth it." Needham-based finisher Wayne Towle executed the tricky cerusing process to perfection.

Next they painted the cherry-stained open-beam ceiling light gray, deciding against stripping the wood back to its natural finish—a time-consuming technique that doesn't always yield attractive results. When it came to choosing the color, the couple found inspiration in their cat's fur. "We held up different colors against Haywood," Jonathan says, "and went with one that matched."

The multi-windowed home with an open floor plan didn't need a ton of tweaking. Flavin removed a sliding barn door to enlarge the dining area and reworked the kitchen walls to create an airy but separate space, complete with pass-through window and pocket door. The kitchen



POST-AND-BEAM CONSTRUCTION AND PLENTY OF WINDOWS ARE HALLMARKS OF THE DECK HOUSE STYLE.

is outfitted with new everything, including custom-built but economical cabinetry made from MDF particleboard. A lesser-known brand of quartz countertop, Chroma, helped keep costs down, too, while the Heath Ceramics tile backsplash was a major splurge.

The couple wanted to use concrete to cover the stone wall between the living room and library, but the budget didn't allow it. Instead, they tiled the fireplace hearths and stained the mantels. In addition, Flavin uncovered the home's major load-bearing beam, which they painted dark gray. Together, these elements helped tie the new color scheme to the stone, redeeming a feature they had initially disliked.

The simple fixes work brilliantly and help maintain the home's mid-century character. "The masonry, which juts though the exterior facade," Flavin says, "is typical of the era, with strains of Frank Lloyd Wright."

Simultaneously crisp and comfortable, the home captures the sophisticated design the couple were loath to leave behind in New York. In addition to being a happy place for their 3½-year-old son, the house has a strong connection to the outdoors. "Each season is framed beautifully by the windows," says Jonathan, "right before our eyes." ■

Marni Elyse Katz blogs about design at [StyleCarrot.com](http://StyleCarrot.com). Send comments to [magazine@globe.com](mailto:magazine@globe.com).

AFTER

BEFORE



THE REDESIGNED KITCHEN (LEFT) FEATURES STREAMLINED GRAY CABINETS AND A HEATH CERAMICS BACKSPLASH (WHICH JONATHAN FIRST SAW IN A SPIDER-MAN MOVIE AND TRACKED DOWN). THE ORIGINAL INTERIORS (ABOVE) SKEWED DARKER AND MORE RUSTIC.



THIS BATHROOM HAS MARBLE TILE FLOORS AND HOLDS A FREESTANDING TUB BY WET-STYLE AND CUSTOM VANITY OF CERUSED OAK BY JAY HOLLIS & ASSOCIATES.