

# Best grandparents ever? This couple remade their home to welcome their adult children and grandkids

The designer of the Canton home converted two bedrooms into guest rooms and a third into a nursery (grandchild number 6 just arrived).

By **Marni Elyse Katz** Globe Correspondent, Updated February 6, 2020, 7:12 a.m.



Homeowner Ann Ackil and two of her grandsons, ages 2 and 4, in the entry of the Canton home where she and her husband, Albert, raised their four sons. MICHAEL J. LEE

Ann and Albert Ackil's house, a single-story ranch in Canton that they built more than 40 years ago, has done right by them. "We raised four kids here, and loved it all those years," Ackil says. When she retired and the kids — four sons now in their 40s — began visiting with their own children in tow, the house started feeling its age. "It was cluttered and bedraggled, and the appliances were on [their] last legs," Ackil says. "We either had to move or redo it."

Over the course of three years, designer Sashya Thind Fernandes guided the couple through a three-phase makeover, gutting some rooms and sprucing up others. Fernandes, design principal of ID8 Design Studio, maintained the layout and a few key elements, including the fireplace. "I needed a connection to the original house," Ackil says, "especially as I saw parts of it being demolished."

The master suite set the tone for the entire makeover, though Fernandes notes that she initially had no idea that she would be doing the rest of the house. She took direction from the architecture, using clean lines and a neutral palette with earth-toned accents and pops of black. "I took the open, calm feel all the way through the project," she says.



The three-year-long project included redesigning the master bath with clean lines and contemporary finishes. Oversize porcelain wall tiles resemble travertine and the floor has radiant heat, while matte black wall-mounted plumbing fixtures make cleaning the Silestone countertop a snap. MICHAEL J. LEE

Fernandes's design will allow the couple, who are in their 70s, to age in place comfortably and stylishly. This is particularly true in the master bath. "We balanced usability and aesthetics to give them the spa-like feel they wanted with the function they might someday need," she says. A curbless, doorless shower makes for easy access, as does the wide deck on the tub. "They can sit and swing their legs over it," Fernandes explains. The drawers in the vanity can be removed to render it wheelchair accessible, leaving the sleek waterfall countertop intact. Meanwhile, Ackil loves the ample storage. "The way these huge drawers pull all the way out so nothing gets lost, it's fabulous," she says.

Along with renovating the master and guest baths, Fernandes refreshed the bedrooms, two of which she converted into guest rooms and a third into a nursery (grandchild number six just arrived). Next she concentrated on the main living spaces, then turned her attention to the office and playroom. Decades-old wall-to-wall carpet came out to expose original wood floors, heavy draperies came down, and new lighting went in. Walls were painted in Benjamin Moore White Dove, a warm white that looks beautiful in the New England light and pairs well with new pale wood cabinetry. As for furniture, Fernandes replaced some and retained other pieces, reupholstering where necessary. "They had invested in a lot of good pieces that stood the test of time," she says.

Fernandes swapped the solid entry door with a glass one, flooding the area with natural light. She also turned a closet into a functional design feature — a rift-cut white oak-lined niche with a bench — where the couple can perch to pull on shoes and help the grandchildren with theirs. The hand-painted porcelain tile that Ackil chose more than four decades ago still graces the floor; its handmade vintage aesthetic has come full circle and is once again on-trend.

At one son's urging, the couple gut renovated the kitchen, which was dark, dated, and dreary. The terra cotta floor tiles, brown wood cabinets, and red Formica countertops came out, as did the bulky hood that loomed over the island. The cooktop is at the perimeter, where a rift-cut white oak floating shelf tops a neutral backsplash of handmade tiles by Heath Ceramics. Ackil became so enamored with the 72-year-old San Francisco-based company that she replaced all her dishware with their pieces, too.



Rift-cut white oak cabinets in the den echo ones used in the kitchen. The deep red of the backsplash tiles echoes the brick fireplace across the room. MICHAEL J. LEE

Fernandes transformed the adjoining den into a tailored sitting room with a wet bar, a room that the couple uses for reading and entertaining. “We moved the television out of there and put a big one in the living room, which used to be the formal room that nobody sat in,” Ackil says. “Now, we all watch movies together in there.”

The redesign has not only refreshed and decluttered the rooms, it has brought them back into service. “Every part of the house is being used,” Fernandes says. “It’s become a really nice home for everyone, again.”

## RESOURCES

**Interior Design:** ID8 Design Studio, [id8designstudio.com](http://id8designstudio.com)

**Contractor:** Unite Contractors, [unitecontractors.com](http://unitecontractors.com)

**Kitchen:** New England Building Supply, [nebltdgsupply.com](http://nebltdgsupply.com)

**Woodwork:** Wood Theory Design, [instagram.com/woodtheorydesign](https://www.instagram.com/woodtheorydesign)

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Designer Sashya Thind Fernandes updated the fireplace in the living room with sconces and painted the oak trim white. Existing wingback chairs were reupholstered to complement the new neutral sectional sofa and Persian rug. Abstract paintings are by Fernandes’s grandmother Kavita Kapoor, an interior designer in Mumbai. MICHAEL J. LEE



The fireplace, before the renovation. COURTESY OF THE ACKILS



The overall kitchen layout didn't change, but everything else did, including installation of Shaker-style cabinets with a brushed linen finish. MICHAEL J. LEE