

TRADITIONAL HOME.

# RENOVATION STYLE

October 2002

the before-and-after magazine

making the  
most of one  
ugly ranch

beautiful  
and on  
budget

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# ranch dressing

THE OLD WORLD MEETS THE NEW WEST IN A REWORKED KANSAS CITY HOME.



# sitting on the sofa

chatting with Roger Pilley and David Griffith, you'd never guess just by looking around the room that you were spending a lazy afternoon in suburban Kansas City, Kansas. The South of France, maybe. Even the Southwestern United States. But not the *norm* prairie. The finishes and furnishings in the house reveal a thoughtful blending of French-inspired decor and rustic materials. From the adobe-like walls to the heavily trimmed ceilings and doorways to the unique tile-and-ouk floors, the delight of hand is a testament to the renovation talents of Roger and David—who just happen to be, respectively, an architectural designer and an interior designer.

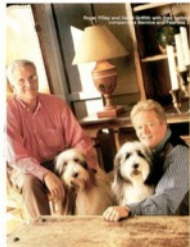
"We were looking to pare down quite a bit from our last house," says David, referring to both the size and the style of their heavily French-influenced former home. In the market for a ranch with one-level living, the pair happened upon this house, ideally set back on a corner lot with plenty of privacy and mature trees. The L-shaped layout of the house perfectly fit Roger and David's vision for a new place.

"The house had a kind of Western look, and we could see the possibilities of using one wing as large entertaining spaces and having the other wing hold the baths and bed-

rooms simply that the 'south of somewhere' is all pretty similar in philosophy—relaxed and casual. That's why we went with this house, to sort of play with the architecture in its loudest form, rather than trying to do a French house in a ranch style."

To begin the transformation from suburban to a laid-back "south-of" style—and to open up the house for more living and entertaining areas—David and Roger made just a few simple alterations, leaving the basic footprint of the ranch intact: A screened porch was enclosed and converted into a formal dining room. A wall that separated a narrow family room from the living room was removed to create a generous 32x21-foot great room; a new fireplace—the focal point of the combined space—is made of Kansas fieldstone wrapped around an oversized European firebox. And in the kitchen, a staircase to the basement was removed and reset in the long entry hall that separates the home's public and private areas. The move enabled them to include a pantry in the kitchen and allowed more room for cooking.

Throughout the house, doors and windows were replaced with French doors wherever it was feasible—most notably



from the French, demonstrating flexibility and pragmatism. The new windows, doors, and casings put the house in a more relaxed mood. The new tile-and-ouk floors in most rooms are a mix of rustic and modern. The new fireplace that was in the living room was moved to the dining room, and the new fireplace in the living room was moved to the dining room. The new fireplace in the living room was moved to the dining room, and the new fireplace in the living room was moved to the dining room.



**In the summer**—with the French doors open on each end—it's almost like dining alfresco.



Photo by J. Spiller © The  
 Williams and Morrow Collection  
 featuring the Williams and Morrow  
 dining table. The Williams and  
 Morrow dining table is made  
 of solid oak and is a perfect  
 example of the Williams and  
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## character traits

One of the reasons Roger and David's wonderfully textured home is so lovingly treasured is the weathered and beautiful woodwork that runs throughout the home. Imagine how different the house would look and feel with shiny perfectly finished surfaces if you can't find a source for salvaged lumber in your area and you're aching to do it yourself. How do you save? Easy ways to give an aged appearance to new lumber. Simply round up a hammer, some chisels, rough-cut sandpaper, soap... whatever's handy... and begin pounding. Then experiment with a variety of stains to give the wood instant age. Start with a sample! You'll want to do it. Just keep at it until you get the look you want.

Diminutive round porch columns were replaced with heavy posts partially clad with Kansas fieldstone.



The loggia opens to the backyard pool and an outdoor firepit, which was originally intended to be placed inside the room. During some months, an indoor fireplace and two upholstered lounge chairs take the place of a bright, comfortable place to read and relax.



great-room, the kitchen, and the dining room, ceilings were vaulted to follow the roofline, and the walls were given a heavy, weathered texture that Roger and David consider one of their trademarks. The ceilings were given a coat of the rough finish, too. "We didn't want the texture to stop at the eight-foot wall line, because we'd have had more ceiling than wall," says David. "And the same feel and warm honey tone throughout the rooms gives you a lofty, home-like feeling."

With the screened porch adapted into a dining room, Roger and David looked for a way to replace that lost outdoor living space—one that would coincide with their plans for a backyard pool. Their solution was to add a 260-square-foot loggia off the great-room. The transitional space ties the house to the pool and opens up completely to the outdoors through sliding French doors that were installed on a commercial-grade track system.

On the front, a new circle drive eliminated the long walk to the front door and put the focus more on the angle of the house's distinct L shape. A coat of cigar-brown paint then helped unify the house into the landscaping and the trees. "All of the house and trim are the same color," says David. "It's a more rustic feel rather than a gingerbread look. Too many accent colors and it can get real colonial—I'd rather have it sophisticated but relaxed."



Once an unremarkable house with stark white walls and no real distinguishing details, the home now looks—both outside and, especially, inside—nothing like its former self. The change is amazing, given that David and Roger did it without adding acres of square footage or knocking out and moving every wall in the house. It's a beautiful example of how radically a house can swing from one style, or even era, to another—in this case from mid-century Modern to the Old World via the Old West. **D**  
 Designers: David Griffin and Roger Pilley  
 For more information, turn to Sources on page 126.