

- Other editions:
- Mobile l
- Mobile text alerts l
- RSS Feeds l
- E-Newsletters
- Find it:
- Jobs l
- Cars l
- Real Estate l
- Apartments l
- Home Services l
- Deals l
- Place an ad

HomeNewsPoliticsSportsEntertainmentLifeCommunitiesOpinionObituariesWeatherClassifiedsCustomer Service
Quick links:State wrestlingOlympicsSpecial reportsContestsDataMetromixMomsChatsJuicePhotosBlogsVideosForums

FIND A NEW JOB
Search more than 1,000 Des Moines jobs

- Your browser's security settings are preventing some features from appearing. [See instructions for fixing the problem.](#)

The Barzens infuse their latest old house with character, history ... and Arthur

Updated 11:00 pm

BY CRAIG SUMMERS BLACK • JANUARY 21, 2010

Comments (2)

Recommend (5)

Print this page

E-mail this article

Share

Type Size AAA

Imagine, if you will, being a high-powered financial planner and meeting with your high-powered financial clients something like this:

"Good morning, Mrs. Greenback, so glad you could watch your head!

"Oh: Sorry about that. I'm sure we'll be able to lessen your exposure to certain international upheavals in the tertiary markets if only Hey, Randy, that doesn't go there. It's for the kitchen. Mrs. Greenback, watch those loose boards there or you may lose a heel. What, Matt? What? I can't hear you with all that pounding. OK, I give up: Everybody just take the day off. No, not you guys! My guys!

"Mrs. Greenback, would you like to continue our conversation perhaps at Starbucks?"

That's kind of how it was for Kristy and David Barzen, who bought, moved in and immediately started renovating a 1924 South of Grand house, all while using it as their home office. Needless to say, their staff and their contractors got to know each other very well.

And now that they're finished with the renovation? Yes, the place looks gorgeous. Although the upheaval is no longer and the house is finally nice and quiet, the couple has moved their offices out of the house and just down the road. Ameriprise Financial has left the building.

Kristy and David liken their house project to their financial work.

"We had to craft everything to fit the house," David says. "It's like with our jobs. For every single person, what we do has to fit around them."

"It's the detail," says Kristy. "We don't have a Plan A or Plan B to show our clients. The plan has to fit them. It's like when we had to pick out our doorknobs here."

This is the Barzens' third home, and they were all 1920s-era charmers.

"As long as I'm married to David Barzen, I know I will be living in an old brick house," Kristy says.

"Our first one gave me an appreciation of old houses," David says. "And I got into antiques."

"Everything we have done has been to try to change it back to the '20s," says Kristy. "Where most people are going forward, we were going backward."

And a word of advice from these now-seasoned renovators:

"Whenever you modernize something, it will always feel dated," David says. "The next person will have to update your update. And the next person will have to update that."

Says Kristi: "If you want a new house ..."

And they both chime in: "... Buy a new house."

It really was David's passion that drove the renovation, and he led the project.

"David has picked out every doorknob, every hinge," Kristy says. "He has all the ideas. He strategized with our master carpenter. And he loves the hunt."

"I love the art of historic architecture," David says. "Everything is handmade. Everything has character. Everything is solid. Everything has a story. Modern architecture has kind of lost that."

"David put a lot of himself into this house," says Kristy. "No one else's house will look like this. It's David.

"I figure out that to stay married" she's kidding... kind of. "I had to look around and see what was really important to me and stake out just those things."

For starters, she knew she wanted floral carpeting.

"My grandmother had floral carpeting, so that was important to me. I pushed on that," she says. "And the kitchen. I spend the majority of my time in there. I picked those appliances."

The fridge and oven are colorful repros of period appliances.

"A friend told me about them 15 years ago, and I just filed it away," Kristy says. "I knew all along I wasn't going to budge on those.

"Then I just stepped back and let David run. It's his passion. He loves it. And it keeps the peace."

Well, Kristy didn't really let Dave bypass her entirely. There is the matter of Arthur. The suit of armor. Their painter named him that.

"I found him at a farmers market in Kansas City and said, 'I'm buying that.'"

"He was lying in a pile," David says.

A pile of knights?

"A pile of knights."

"David said, 'You are not buying that,' and I said, 'This is not a discussion,' and I bought it."

"I thought she was crazy," David says, laughing. "The thing is what? 7 feet tall?"

"He goes out front a lot," says Kristy. "It's a signature piece. It's easy to give directions to our house. We're the house with the knight."



Photos by PAUL GATES

Financial advisors David and Kristy Barzen, with sons Jackson and Roman, lived – and worked – in the renovation upheaval. A downstairs mural evokes the Sistine Chapel and a touch of Italy.



The upstairs street scene was taken from photos the Barzens took on European vacations. Note the name of the store, however: "D.G. Barzen Antiques."



Murals such as the castle theme in the third floor were painted by Darren Evans, a Welsh surfer who also did their tile work.



In the dining room, the light fixture is original to the house. The china, Old Country Rose, is the Barzens' wedding pattern. The rug is from Home Depot. "I don't want anything expensive," Kristy says. "We eat in here."



Master carpenter Matt Frideres built the fireplace. "He can do anything," Kristy says.



A German knight stands watch over a fireplace. Restoring original woodwork, such as in the entryway, was as important as updating and decorating.



Most Viewed Stories

FOLLOW THE REGISTER:    

2
[Story chat](#)
Read and share comments on this story.

Newest first ▼

characters left
[Submit](#)

Today | Yesterday | Last 7 Days | Last 30 Days

- Des Moines officer charged in sexual assault case is fired
- Olympics: U.S. hockey team ready for Finns, and an R-rated crowd
- Hit squad, Iowa bank's credit cards are linked, police in Dubai say
- One Walnut educator fired, another on paid leave
- ISU men's basketball: Cyclones snap six-game losing streak
- Counterfeit bills popping up in Des Moines
- Indictment charges Robert J. Knapp with illegal asbestos removal
- Did Becker plan slaying, or was he legally insane?
- Today's inbox: The insane may not be totally out of touch
- Driver killed in crash with school bus in Linn County

desmoines.metromix.com on Facebook

Latest Blog Posts

 Olympics
They really do give out medals
20 minutes ago

 Fitness Challenge
Positive Reinforcement
20 minutes ago

 Got tickets?
By: cubbiebear
From: Des Moines Register
2/25/2010 5:21 PM CST

[More blogs](#) | [Create your blog](#)

NEWS ON YOUR CELLPHONE

 Sign up for breaking news text alerts.
Enter your phone number:

Cancel Alerts | Modify Alerts | Privacy Policy
Msg&data rates may apply. To Opt-out text STOP to 4INFO (44636). For more information text HELP to 4INFO (44636).
Contact your carrier for more details.
powered by 4INFO.
More text alerts | **Email newsletter**

Contextual linking provided by Topix

Inside Desmoinesregister.Com



Share your photos

Show off your sports teams' photos in our reader-submitted photo gallery.

Movie awards

Predict which movies will win big, and you could win tickets to the Fleur Cinema.

Winter in Iowa

View more than 100 photos from Register photographers of our brutal 2009-10 winter.

Find a new home

Search hundreds of homes for sale in Des Moines and surrounding communities.

Sinfully good desserts

Finish your meal with one of 12 delightful desserts available at restaurants in the D.M. area.

Site index

Full index

Marketplace

Classifieds
Jobs
Cars
Real Estate
Apartments
Place an ad
Garage sales

News

Business
Opinion
Columnists
Politics
Crime
Education
Nation & World
Obituaries
Databases
Photos
Video

Communities

Ames
Ankeny
Clive
D.M. East, North
D.M. South
D.M. West
Jolieton
Urbandale
Waukee
West Des Moines

Sports

Preps
Bulldogs
Cyclones
Hawkeyes
Panthers
I-Cubs
Sports stats
Auto racing
Golf
Outdoors

Lifestyle

Travel
Health
Bulldogs
2 cents worth
MomsLikeMe.com
Vacation Iowa
dmJuice.com
Engagements
Weddings
Anniversaries
Recipes

Entertainment

Metromix
Restaurant guide
Events calendar
Dining
Music
Arts & culture
Movie Listings
TV Listings
Datebook
Celebrity news
Horoscopes

Extras

Obituaries
Photos
Today's headlines
Forums
Blogs
Newsletters
RSS feeds
Mobile Site
Text alerts
Sudoku
Comics

- Partners:
- Jobs: [CareerBuilder.com](#)
- Cars: [Cars.com](#)
- Apartments: [Apartments.com](#)
- Shopping: [ShopLocal.com](#)
- Homes: [Homefinder.com](#)

- [Contact Us](#) l
- [About Us](#) l
- [Work for Us](#) l
- [Subscribe](#) l
- [Place an Ad](#)