

A show of appreciation

Creative approach



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Louis LaFratta (from left), decorator Suellen Gregory and Mark Franko sit in the dining nook of the Massey home. Franko LaFratta Construction Inc. renovated the Fan District house.

Fan District couple let firm showcase its work on their home

BY CAROL HAZARD

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Ivor and Maureen Massey opened their renovated house in the Fan District last week to architects, designers, decorators and real estate agents.

Only they didn't come to their own party.

The open house was to showcase the work of Franko LaFratta Construction Inc. and the craftsmanship that went into the renovation.

"Franko LaFratta asked if they could show our house to potential clients," Maureen Massey said. "We are so happy that they created the look we wanted, so we said yes."

The open house was a creative approach to business development in a difficult market, she said.

"Richmond has so many really good local companies. We wanted to do anything we could to help them [the renovation team] and keep these fine people working."

Louis LaFratta, a partner in the firm, said the open house was a way to get to know more design professionals. "It was an opportunity to talk about the new year and invite folks to see the work we've done."

In the slow housing market, people might not move as much as they did in years past, but they may be thinking about renovating, he said.

"This was an opportunity to get us in front of people."



In the Massey house master bedroom bathroom, mirror panels are shutters that open to the outside.



The Massey's kitchen now has custom-built mahogany cabinets, art deco mahogany cabinets for audio-visual equipment and a narrow, deep grain wood table.

The Massey's kitchen was gutted and redone with custom-built mahogany cabinets, art deco mahogany cabinets for audio-visual equipment and a narrow, deep grain wood table with a glass top and pedestal legs.

The master bath features a curved teak vanity, mirrored

teak shutters, a curved glass shower stall with a pebble-inlaid floor and heated tile floors and towel racks.

In the master bedroom is a ladder attached to a rail system to get to built-in storage areas above a wall of closets.

Custom-built doors were made from 200-year-old cypress.

Old radiators covered with

years and layers of paint were sandblasted to uncover a metal pattern finish. A skylight was framed with mirrored panels. A guest bathroom features a painted black vanity and glass tile flooring in a basket-weave design.

"Ours is not the perfect house for most folks but it absolutely is the perfect house for us," Mrs. Massey said.

The Masseys declined to say how much the renovation cost.

"We spent more on the renovation than the cost of the house," said Ivor Massey, who describes himself as a recovering lawyer who manages investments for a family group.

The renovation also included a 10-foot wide bump-out addition on the side of the house that allowed for an open floor plan in the kitchen.

A second-story porch was added to the back of the house along with an elevator from the basement to the second story. A tile mosaic floor was crafted

on the front porch. A copper roof was installed on the garage.

Every inch was carefully planned.

"The tile in the kitchen relates to the fabric in the master bedroom," said Suellen Gregory, the decorator.

The house flows from front to back, with nothing that doesn't fit or blend, she said.



During the 12-month renovation, the Masseys met weekly with the contractor, architect Bob Boynton and the designer and had guest appearances from carpenters, electricians and tile contractors.

"There was never a cross word, never a disappointment," Mrs. Massey said.

"Everyone exchanged ideas and we ended up with a real good product," Mr. Massey said. "We got the best out of everyone."

Minutes were kept from the meetings. The process of choosing faucets and fixtures was a group trip to the plumbing store.

"A successful project is about communication, collaboration," LaFratta said.

"You hear about the horror stories, where at the end of the project, the client and contractor aren't getting along."

LaFratta and his business partner, Mark Franko, work on a fixed-price basis. "Clients know what everything will cost and how much time it will take, so there are no surprises," he said.

Ivor Massey's son, Nick, who studied architecture at Virginia Tech and finished graduate school there, was on hand to observe at the open house.

"My dad has eclectic taste; that's the best way to put it."

The house is a blend of traditional and contemporary, he said.

• Contact Carol Hazard at (804) 775-8023 or chazard@timesdispatch.com.



See the renovations

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"A successful project is about communication, collaboration," Louis LaFratta said. Here, original woodwork on the first floor is preserved.