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Larry & Jenell Burk

By Melody Young | Photography by Patrick Tregenza





Plenty of room for the whole family.

It's the house on the hill with the windows. That's how Larry and Jenell Burk's home is known to people who know Markham Ranch. Yes, all houses have windows, but not like these windows. They are one of the outstanding features of this French Normandy inspired property, which commands center stage because of its location and architecture.

The home and grounds were originally and lovingly constructed in 1987 by Markham Ranch's master developer Buck Brieholz and his wife Sylvia. The couple created the property drawing on timeless style and old world craftsmanship. They spent many hours designing and creating a unique and unforgettable home. Buck and Sylvia were fiercely proud of the result; however, life moves on and so did they.

When the Burks found the home in 2010 it had been vacant for some time and was in need of a face lift. Jenell loved the traditional feel and quality of a bygone era while Larry loved the location and the grounds. And who wouldn't love the view! They realized they were looking at the perfect place to raise their family. Although the home worked wonderfully for a family of two in the 1990s, it didn't work as well for a family of five living today's lifestyle to the fullest. The Burks have three children and two dogs which makes activity in the home lively and energetic. Their major changes to the floor plan included a completely new kitchen, laundry room and master wing.

Larry and Jenell decided they needed collaboration with a team of professionals to realize their vision for the perfect home. They enlisted the help of architect Aaron Tollefson of AST Design to put their ideas and dreams on paper. Joe Russo of Russo Construction was called on to turn their vision into reality. Jenell had a clear idea of what her family needed and what she and Larry wanted in the finished



Oh, those magnificent windows.



Jenell's dream kitchen.

The updated dining room.



So fresh and bright.



project. She enlisted my help as owner of MY Designs to facilitate and aid in those decisions.

The first task was removal of a butler's pantry, opening up the family room and completely razing and expanding the original kitchen. The resulting space is generous and airy. The large kitchen island is a popular gathering spot for both children and adults. State-of-the-art appliances, granite countertops, a separate beverage refrigerator and walk-in pantry completed the kitchen renovation. These spaces are infused with vintage charm and comfort. Much time and effort was given to incorporate as many original details and custom features as possible. Hand-forged hardware and custom-designed windows and doors were repurposed wherever possible. A unique feature of the new kitchen is the rooster chandelier hanging over the kitchen table. It is a

A classic wine cellar.



family joke between Jenell and her father which serves as a reminder to not take life too seriously.

The family room is now completely open to the kitchen which allows a flow of family activity from room to room. This is Jenell's favorite space and the hub of the Burk home. The comfortable, relaxed furnishings are a blend of soft colors and textures, and nothing is too precious to be used and enjoyed.

Needing the existing bedrooms for their three children, the Burks decided to add a master suite off the side of the home. The result is a serene and comfortable place to relax at the end of a hectic day. Vaulted ceilings, multi-paned windows and wood floors blend the new addition seamlessly to the existing home. The soft hues of taupe, indigo and cream settle the mind and soul. Jenell's vintage finds combine beautifully with the other bedroom furnishings. The master bath is a delicious space with its own private courtyard.

The master suite addition created a more cohesive outdoor patio area for a wonderful new barbecue and entertaining spot. Guests can cozy up by the fireplace as their hosts cook at the outdoor kitchen. The surrounding oaks are enhanced by new patios and landscaping just waiting for the warm Corral de Tierra weather to arrive.

Although there were many other minor changes, the remainder of the home was left as it was originally designed. One of the most charming features is the fireplace in the entry hall welcoming family and guests with warmth and character. This space flows into the living room with soaring ceilings, exposed timbers and magnificent windows. The vista



A dream utility room with Lola standing guard.



A warm welcome with a sweeping staircase.



A masterful master.

A reflective corner.



The stunning master bath.



beyond draws visitors into the room. To the right of the entry is the formal dining room with the original mirrored wall. The custom dining table accommodates up to ten guests with ease. The combination of new chairs and a vintage bench creates a casual and intimate feel. The home also boasts a wine cellar, study, play room and an elevator, which is the favorite feature for the kids.

Reviving a neighborhood landmark can be a daunting task, but the Burks took it on with gusto. They managed to breathe life back into the walls, and best of all, the Breiholzes stopped by recently and they loved it! Although the home is now even more generous in size, it exudes a feeling of warmth and comfort. It is clear a family lives and loves here, and that's what makes a house a home.



A perfect, private retreat.



Outdoor kitchen and lounging.



Classically French front courtyard.