





What else is a remodel than a melding of old with new, a transformation of space that infuses fresh life and inspired character? Asian aesthetic meets Prairie flair in these five East meets Midwest Madison-area revamps

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## A WISE REMODEL

**A home is one of the few places** in a hectic, run-from-here-to-there life that can truly be made one's own. But sometimes we need to breathe new energy into our space or we'll lose interest. While some might ditch their place altogether, others instead opt to create something new and fresh.

Ramona Steele decided that as she and her husband grew older, their 45-year-old home could age with them. They knew a second story master bedroom and laundry would not work as they reached into their 80s and 90s, but they loved the neighborhood and location as much as the home they've shared for the last 30 years.

So the Steeles converted the first floor to accommodate a future master, laundry room and Universal design features including wider doorways, and lever handles on doors and plumbing fixtures. The couple worked with Dybdahl Design Group to develop the home's architecture and infuse

their love of Asian design into the remodel.

The Steeles had collected fine artwork and artifacts over many years of travel. Jill Dybdahl, owner at Dybdahl Design Group, worked to marry the home's structure with the Steeles' décor.

"The cabinet on the back of the kitchen island has several small glass panels reminiscent of Asian furniture," says Dybdahl.

A Shoji screen-style door used as a partition mirrors the concept of this cabinet and melds the Asian influence of the formal dining area with the contemporary feel of the kitchen. As a gourmet cook, Steele took advantage of the newly expanded kitchen to include two sinks, one for prep and one for clean up, and a strategically placed island that "allows guests to enjoy appetizers and beverages from the buffet on the backside while not getting into the cook's work zone," Dybdahl notes.

A four-season sunroom addition brightens the entire first floor, and the improved flow makes this previously aging home feel new again and ready to enter the golden years with its owners.

# PAGODA MEETS PRAIRIE

Photographed by Shane Quesinberry (opposite) and Scot Weidemann Photography (this page)

**When a custom furniture artisan** decides to expand his basement woodworking shop, not many imaginative design opportunities appear. But when he decides to build more living space above the new addition, the creative juices start flowing—for homeowner and contractor alike.

“The original genesis of inspiration was to add a workshop for the homeowner’s furniture business,” explains Jayne Johnson, project manager with Home Works Remodeling. “It morphed into an energy-efficient entire-house retrofit and sunroom addition.”

According to Johnson, “The homeowner was also the architect on this project, so the design credit goes to him. His Prairie style was reflected in many of the details.”

The first step was to dig out the crawl space under the existing three-season porch on the back of the house to build the workshop expansion. The living space above became a four-season sunroom and master bedroom with en-suite bathroom, creating a comfortable retreat for the owner and bumping up the resale value.

Strategically placed windows allow natural light to brighten the rooms from

the floors to the new cathedral ceiling. The richly stained pine trim is juxtaposed against a light color palette to take center stage, and draws the eye to the owner’s displayed custom furniture, imagined and built just one floor below.

On the exterior, the remodeling crafted elements mimicked from these creations, taking cues from the owner-artisan’s Craftsman style and adding a slight Pagoda feel. Asian architecture pays special attention to a building’s roofline, an element sometimes lost in the cookie-cutter American homes. This project lends itself to that Asian aesthetic, with intricate design work applied to the multiple gables.

“Miratek material was used for the exterior detailing in the gables and banding,” explains Johnson. “A mix of cement board siding reveals and shakes created the rest of the look.”

Johnson notes that the finished work, including the newly insulated shell of the house (which greatly reduced street noise), far exceeded the homeowner’s expectations—a monumental task when the owner is also a highly skilled artist with an eye for design.





## IN WRIGHT'S STYLES

**While this home's claim to fame** is that it was built by a Frank Lloyd Wright protégé, its '80s-chic kitchen begged for an update.

Built around the landscape—instead of vice versa—the home features exterior horizontal lines, elements that hint at the inspiration Wright found early in his career following a trip to Japan. Wright passed these ideas to all of his students and left a mark felt around Madison today.

“The homeowner wanted a Prairie-style kitchen that would be a reflection of [Wright's] impeccable taste,” says Michelle

Schildgen, a designer at Not Just Kitchens (NJK).

To enhance the Asian influence of the Wright-inspired home and maximize its limited functional space, NJK crafted custom maple cabinets with rich cherry trim in a design that channeled the symmetrical and airy feel of the Shoji screens typically used in Japanese design to partition a room.

“Notice how the facing hides the refrigerator and dishwasher,” Schildgen points out. “The owner loved the clean lines and uncluttered look this created.”

Standing in the dining area, the focal point becomes the China cabinet, faced with Prairie-inspired lead and colored glass inlays, and is a reminder that Wright is the



original inspiration of this room.

“The cabinet is highlighted by a very wide granite toe kick that ties in the matching granite countertops and backsplash,” Schildgen notes.

Although NJK refinished the hardwood floors throughout the space, the original laminate tile in between the back wall and island posed a problem: Try to match the now bare area with the rest of the flooring, or use it as an opportunity to create a unique design? The team went with the latter, much to the homeowner’s delight. Although the shade of wood coordinates with the cabinets, the design is a pleasant surprise when you step behind the island and completes the eye-catching, yet tranquil feel of the room.

# CALM AND ORDERED

**Unnecessary walls** and a disjointed floor plan had this homeowner feeling boxed into her 1970s ranch, which she purchased from her parents. The remodel task: give this flavorless Midwest-style ranch a new life with a contemporary Asian flair.

Purchased mostly for its large lot, the homeowners were ready to transform and open up the interior.

“It now has a very open, flowing floor plan, and the spaces are bright with added windows to bring in natural daylight,” explains Nancy Kaiser, a project design manager with TDS Custom Construction.

Once the wall that housed the pantry closet and range was removed, the kitchen became the focal point of this home, allowing the dining and living spaces to flow into it. The rich, espresso stain on the quarter-sawn white oak trim and cabinets brings out the fresh feel of the light hickory floors throughout the house.

Incorporating natural elements is a key component of Asian design. The home’s

recycled glass tile compliments the remnant granite from a local stone yard. In a nod to the homeowner, an allergy-sufferer, TDS also consciously used paints, stains and materials with no VOCs (the chemical stuff that makes paint smell like paint).

“The home had a fair amount of carpeting and particle board underlayment that came out with the remodel also,” Kaiser points out. “With that removed, [the homeowner’s] allergy symptoms were greatly reduced.”

Taking the clean minimalist lines and rich stain of the new contemporary kitchen, the designers created a Shoji screen door to partition off a new arts and crafts room. Hung from an extended wall next to the new front door, which pops with burnt orange, the Asian influence welcomes visitors into this now bright and airy ranch.

“I think the Asian feel brings with it a sense of calm and tranquility,” Kaiser notes. “Things are ordered and it provides a relaxing surrounding.”

Photographed by Erica Hess (this page) and Jeff Augustine (opposite)





**A door barely clearing the sink** on its inward swing. A guest bumping a head on an over-the-toilet cabinet. These aren't exactly elements of successful feng shui design. The owners of this cramped, dimly lit powder room had two priorities when they contacted the team at Not Just Kitchens (NJK) for help: They needed to stay in the confines of the current bathroom footprint, and the design focus must be on a green glass Japanese plate, cherished but without a rightful display in their home.

To create a feeling of more space and give the door more clearance, NJK created an angled vanity and twisted the toilet 90 degrees. The new vanity, says designer Michelle Schildgen, also added sought-after counter space and storage.

With the countertop suspended from the wall, the cabinet floats above the floor,

## A PEACEFUL OASIS

leaving the room as open and airy as possible. And the horizontal grain of the Verde Bamboo granite, small greenish brown glass tiles and the clean, minimalist lines of the vanity and sconces, draw the eye to the focal point of the room: the round Japanese plate now housed in a shadow box and backlit with an LED light strip.

The asymmetry of the sink and the natural Japanese plaster composed of sand and bamboo grass, tie in distinct Japanese elements and turn this utilitarian bathroom into a peaceful and organic oasis.

"The homeowners were ecstatic," says Schildgen. "They now call this room their 'jewel box.'"

## JUNE HOME EVENTS

Need to spruce up your gardens or fix up your home? Find inspiration at these classes and tours

### REMODELED HOMES TOUR

June 2 | 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Madison area homeowners who recently completed kitchen, bathroom and other renovations with National Association of the Remodeling Industry contractors open their doors to curious neighbors. Featured homes are located downtown and on the west side of Madison. Tickets: \$10 per couple. [narimadison.org](http://narimadison.org)

### PARADE OF HOMES

June 8-23 | Mon.-Fri. 3-7 p.m., Sat.-Sun. 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

The annual new-build showcase put on by Madison Area Builder's Association is in its 63rd inspiring year. Featured homes are in DeForest, Verona and Waunakee developments. Tickets: \$12 for adults, \$6 for children and seniors. [maba.org](http://maba.org)

### UW ARBORETUM NATIVE PLANT GARDEN TOUR: WHAT'S BLOOMING?

June 19 | 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Learn all about our state's native bloomers on this free informative tour through the beautiful UW Arboretum. Discover a vast array of flowering trees, scrubs and plants that originated right here in Wisconsin. [uwarboretum.org](http://uwarboretum.org)

### OLBRICH BOTANICAL GARDENS

All summer | Various days and times

Olbrich Botanical Gardens offers a bounty of tours, workshops and classes focused on plants and gardening for adults and children. Stroll 16 acres of specialty and display gardens, visit the tropics in the glass dome—and don't miss the outdoor summer concerts in June and July. [olbrich.org](http://olbrich.org)