

# Updating a farmhouse

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It was nothing less than love at first sight when Mercedes Plant and her husband glimpsed the 25-acre farm near Wanamaker. The land would provide plenty of space for their horses and an opportunity to reconnect to nature, they thought.

But the property's 1930s farmhouse left much to be desired.

"Many people would not have moved into this house," Plant said. "But we looked beyond the

house. We looked at what was outside because that is what is meaningful to us."

Rather than build a new home on the land, the couple opted to remodel.

"I personally believe you end up with a home that has a lot more character," Plant said.

## Going with the flow

Architect Mark Demerly and Maple Road Construction were brought in to update the farmhouse and accommodate the new owners' lifestyle and preferences. The original goal was to create a modern kitchen and master suite on the main level.

Joe Wallace of Maple Road Construction suggested the couple live in the home for a time before moving forward with the remodel — and it's a good thing they took his advice. They discovered that the HVAC system was inadequate and the second-level infrastructure required attention.



Submitted Photos



Maple Road Construction recently brought a 1930s farmhouse into the 21st century.

"You have to go with the flow of the old house and the new goal," said Plant, who has remodeled other homes. "Whenever you are working with an older home, you have no idea what you are going to find. You end up with surprises."

## Green, clean and streamlined

Plant didn't let these surprises deter her from her original plan. She wanted the kitchen space to have a "very refined look" to complement her own streamlined, uncluttered style.

"This project was unique because it is a contemporary kitchen," Wallace said. "They used all high-quality maple cabinets and stainless-steel appliances, and the floor is cork, which falls under the green label. Our big push this year is to be energy-efficient, green builders. We keep educating ourselves on the process, and we encourage the use of recycled and other green materials."

Cushy cork is easy on the

feet and warms up a kitchen that contains an abundance of glass and stainless steel. The focal point of the new kitchen, which originally consisted of three separate rooms, is a 14-foot oval island. Fashioned from maple and stainless steel, it features a quartz countertop, another green building material. A new bay window provides additional light, and the original stained glass in the transoms was replaced with a contemporary design. A mud room, a necessity for horse owners, was created from part of the original kitchen space.

## Final reward

"I love my kitchen," Plant said. "Instead of enclosed rooms, I have a kitchen that is open to the dining room and the family room, and I am surrounded by glass. It enhances my life because I can look at nature — the birds, trees and the fish in the pond. I love to sit there and have my coffee. I even cook more now."

A walk-in closet and a connecting functional bath were created within the master suite. A hallway between that area and the dining room was added to create privacy.

Throughout the remodel, which lasted about six months, the family lived on the second floor.

"It's very stressful if you are not prepared for what you are going to go through," she said. "It's never a piece of cake, even when you have the very best people working with you. But the final result is so rewarding."