

... could find that matched the room's theme and color.

# Then I thought, 'Oh no!' Now the owners really know we love this house."

— Jillian Miller, after taking a family picture on the staircase of a house the family was interested in buying but before the deal was completed



The entry hall and staircase with very unique flooring and woodwork can be found throughout the house.



In the past three years, Cole and Jillian Miller have started to bring to life the potential in their home at 1644 Vermont.



The living room features a tiled fireplace and pocket doors in the entryway.

... effort, especially when older homes are involved. In the past three years, Cole and Jillian have started to bring to life the potential of 1644 Vermont — and they have learned plenty in the process.

The Millers both grew up in older homes; Jillian admits she cried when her family moved from the Monckton mansion on Quincy's north side. The Millers named only one deal-breaker in their search for a home, which began on the Internet while they were living across the state.

"We didn't want any painted woodwork," Cole says. "We wouldn't have bought the house if there had been."

Although the building had been a rental property since the 1960s, it had been carefully maintained, and the couple knew they could turn their attention toward restoration.

The dramatic foyer with the elaborate staircase that captured their imagination has been restored to its original glory. An intricately crafted parquet floor complements the ornate carving of the newel post and the turned spindles on the stair.

"We have only seen a pattern like this on the floors of the Quincy Museum," Jillian says.

"The craftsmanship is unbelievable," Cole agrees.

Covered for years by two layers of carpeting, the floor was protected against daily wear and tear. However, removal of that carpet was no

... built around 1899 or 1900," Jillian says. "At that time, people spent lots of money either on the exterior or the interior, and we think in this case it was the interior."

The brick home omits the turrets and gingerbread associated with the high Queen Anne period, but it fits in well with the other examples of the later style on this block.

The Millers have transformed a former dining room into a convenient contemporary kitchen, using the original kitchen as a mud room. A room previously used as a kitchen in the second floor apartment now provides the convenience of a laundry near the four spacious bedrooms, which include a master suite with attached balcony.

On the main floor, the front parlor with its handsome tiled fireplace is the perfect setting for Jillian's voice studio. The imposing pocket doors glide smoothly into place to divide it from the family room, where the three children gather to enjoy their favorite games and videos.

The Millers have even brought their love of history to the home's expansive third floor, which recreates a Revolutionary War inn. The area, which includes an authentic bar and sleeping loft, provides a welcome retreat for visiting friends who share their love of historic re-enactment.

Cole offers advice to anyone interested in tackling a home restoration.

"Don't sell yourself short," he says. "It takes a lot of work, but it's incredibly rewarding. There are people who will help you.

"I love showing off the floor in this foyer, and it wouldn't be the same if I had hired someone to finish it."