

By Barb Schleppenbach

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Some people just have a knack for choosing the perfect gift.

Henry and Julie Bocke consider themselves lucky that Henry's parents, Rich and Marilyn Bocke, fall into that category.

Rich Bocke has designed flexible and attractive built-in storage units, some of which became gifts for various occasions. In addition, he and Marilyn donated many hours of painstaking work as they refinished the home's extensive cypress woodwork.

This mammoth task involved removing and numbering the long sections of baseboard that extend through the living room and dining room before stripping, refinishing, and replacing them.

The loving efforts of both families reflect their pride in this residence. The striking tapestry brick bungalow at 1823 Vermont is, in Julie's words, "five minutes from anywhere in Quincy," which makes it ideal for a busy family.

Raising four children and, for a time, operating a home day-care, encouraged the Bockes to seek convenience and warmth as well as style. The 1917 structure provided an ideal starting point, and "keeping everything as original as possible" was the right formula for success.

The home was built by George and Willa Vasen; George's brother constructed his house one door west. Henry and Julie are only the second owners, and they have lived there for 18 years.

The eye-catching exterior features two bold front gables finished in white with red trim to recall a Tudor influence.

A spacious sun porch on the east side reflects the conversion of an old screen porch that provided a side entry. The Bockes enclosed the space and carefully refurbished the bricks from two demolished chimneys to use in matching the addition with the rest of the building.

Bold lines are the rule inside as well. A wide brick fireplace, flanked by window seats, dominates the living room, and an elaborate doorframe with built-in glass cabinets leads to the dining room.

French doors with numerous rectangular panes echo the front door, with its custom made-to-match storm door. The recent addition of wooden shutters that closely match existing woodwork completes the dynamic definition provided by contrasting the plaster walls with elements of wood, brick, and glass.

The rich and extensive woodwork is a highlight of the home, so the efforts of Henry's parents had a significant impact.

When the Bockes moved in, "every single inch" had been painted either "Pepto Bismol pink" or a tarry black, Julie says, and returning the wood to its natural look was no small feat.

Now the glowing cypress sets off walls of opulent Chinese red in the foyer and warm sepia tones in the living room. A mellow shade of spice in the kitchen highlights the cheery breakfast nook that was created when the Bockes eliminated an old butler's pantry.

Birch doors removed in that process were converted by Rich Bocke into pocket doors and sliding doors used elsewhere in the house.

"My dad is pretty creative," Henry says, and it appears that such talent runs in the family. The children have taken a hand in designing their bedrooms in the converted attic, adding unique personal touches to their own spaces. Ellie chose a blue ceiling with white wisps like puffy clouds, and Catherine took on the task of painting



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Jeanne Long

Restoration of the rich wood inside this 87-year-old house at 1823 Vermont, pictured at top provides Henry and Julie Bocke and their children Lee, Cathrine and Ellie, kneeling, left, with a sense of accomplishment and a pleasing home. The dining room, above, is situated next to a spacious sun porch that captures morning sun.

her own room last summer.

Cozy and elegant at the same time, the Bocke residence reflects the interests and the talents of the entire family.

Working together to perfect their home is a gift that will continue to brighten their lives for years to come.