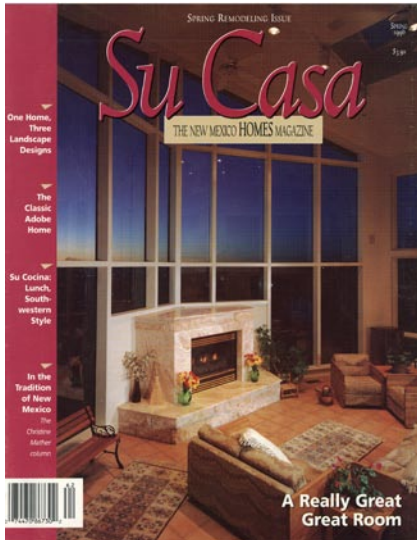


## A Great Room With a View



Dramatic. Open. Livable. A Great Room—for family; for entertaining large groups; with unobstructed views to the west; and practical, too. This is what Sharon and Harry Morris wanted when they opened up their house—and this is what they got with the teamwork of Tom Poulin, of Poulin Design Remodeling, Inc., and Kerry Rose, designer.

Sharon was quite specific: “We didn’t want to compromise the view. We had really tricky, real requirements—light, space, room for the whole family at Christmas. We have a well-lived-in house. Comfortable.” Her instructions were: “Don’t obstruct our view and make it practical, economical.”

The 1,200 square foot addition to the Morris home cost approximately \$140,000. This cost covered the great room that now soars 17 feet high, the renovation of Sharon’s mother’s rooms, two new decks, as well as new roofing and stucco for the whole house.

Kerry remembered their wants and needs clearly, “The Morris’s wanted to entertain, they wanted an open room, to be able to move up and downstairs easily, to connect spaces. There were two dens and it was hard to get people to move between the spaces. It became a circulation study. Oh, and it had to be dramatic.”

“There were a lot of design problems,” said Sharon. “We didn’t want vertical support posts in the middle of the room—we wanted it open open open. The room is almost 30 feet across and some builders wouldn’t even talk to us. Engineering-wise, it was a real challenge.”

Tom agreed. “We had to think and design. I used my expertise as a carpenter and input from my team—Kerry, Bill Hood (lead man on the job)—of design and construction experts.” On this job, the team included a structural engineer as well because the project had such specific technical challenges—wind load, shear strength, the height and size of the room, the location near the mountains, the potential heat gain on the room, and the desire for the mullions between the windows to be as small as possible. “We had to design it from scratch.”

The end result—angled walls of glass—actually formed a more stable structure than a more traditional flat wall—and it provided more indirect light. “The client wanted it all to tie in,” said Kerry. “They wanted 180-degree views. An angle, rather than a curve, allowed the roof lines to tie together, to look like the existing home.”

Deep into the project a change was made to lift the roof line and add glass at the top of the wall. It had become apparent that the skyline was going to be obstructed when viewed from the balcony, which was

unacceptable to Sharon and Harry, who wanted to drink coffee in the mornings and look at their western view. In the middle of construction, they had to stop and re-think what they could do.

According to Tom, this was easily accommodated because he had developed a process that allows every project to go through phases, separate and discreet from each other. In this case, the clients knew exactly what they wanted, and the design team was able to listen and solve the technical problems as they arose. "This design-build process, with a lead man (one contractor in charge of the whole project from start to finish), has inherent flexibility to allow for changes, to take advantage of opportunities. It lets clients have some control, and they can stop the process at any point."

Listening seemed to be key in the success of this project. Sharon spoke of Kerry Rose, "He could listen. He said I want practical, elegant, a little bit of whimsy. He did the original design and it's very much what you see."

"Listening. I'm interested in listening," said Kerry, "to see what they're trying to achieve. I'm not so interested in making an art form. I look at their home, their art. I deal with feelings. What are they comfortable with? Feelings will tell me more about what needs to be added to this home."

One of Tom's roles, as consultant, was facilitating a smooth project from design to final. "Every client has different needs, and they have different ideas," said Tom. "You listen to their needs, and use your expertise in design and construction to meet those needs. The result of our design-build process is that project."

A real team developed during construction. "We were really active partners," said Sharon. "We were probably tough customers. I am not a wimpy woman. Ask Tom. We had definite ideas, but they let me participate and they did what we asked."

Kerry agreed that there were real challenges on this project. "The site was sloped, the western exposure. The clients wanted solid glass, totally unobstructed view up and down. There were structural problems—wind load, heat gain into the room. We ended up adding skylights, and windows to the side as well. Tons of glass. It was a great marriage of contractor, engineer, ideas, and clients."

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