



this sunroom is a tropical paradise

*By karen appold
photos by allyn harth*

Ken and Tamara Barbet, Newtown Township, Bucks County, PA, have a formal home. They wanted a cozy sunroom to kick back and relax in that would also provide a suitable play area for their three young children. Additionally, Tamara wanted to see the kids while working in the kitchen. A deck outside the master bedroom, above the sunroom, would make this addition complete.

The interior has a distinct look, but still ties into the adjoining rooms.



Harth Builders used a 42-inch vinyl railing for the sundeck in lieu of the standard 36-inch rail, which eased the homeowner's concerns for their young children's safety.



An ornate architectural medallion above the Casablanca fan is consistent with the rest of the house.



The EP Henry paver patio provides a graceful transition from the sunroom to the existing walkway to the pool and driveway.



A set of recently purchased drapes was reused in the sunroom.

But the addition had to blend with the existing house. "I hate when you see an addition and you can tell it was added on," Tamara says.

Finding a contractor was challenging and took several years. The Barbets found Harth Builders in Spring House, PA, through a customer referral service. "They were eager to do the best job they could," Tamara says. "They would drive out here to answer my questions immediately. Allyn Harth, the owner, is knowledgeable and patient and his son, Greg, is energetic and always willing to go the extra mile," Tamara says.

Taking the time to find the right contractor and obtain the desired look was definitely worthwhile. The sunroom and deck captured a 2004 local COTY Award for Residential Addition Under \$100,000.

CHOOSING WINDOWS AND DOORS

Having a sunny room was a priority: the 15 by 18 foot sunroom is surrounded by glass on all walls, which opens up the first floor by

allowing natural light indoors and providing a panoramic view of the surrounding beauty.

Originally, the Barbets wanted five 6-foot sliders with matching 6-foot circletops. To cut costs and stay within their budget, three 6-foot sliders and corresponding arch windows were replaced with full height windows and one double window from the common wall was reused. The two remaining 6-foot sliders with matching circletops provided sufficient entrance and egress to the sunroom and gave the feel of a full wall of glass.

Andersen® sliders and circletops on the southern wall match existing windows and doors. A triple slider provides access from the master bedroom to the sundeck. Harth Builders recreated the existing box window on the west wall to allow the homeowners to reuse a fairly new wine-colored velvet seat cushion and a box window. A pair of 6-foot mullied windows complete the east wall.



Porcelain tile achieved the look the homeowners wanted at half the price.

FIXING A MAJOR LEAK

Harth explains that after the addition was framed and the roof finished, a leak between the existing house and the addition was discovered. Several sources were believed to contribute, including water running down the house wrap behind the existing stucco, as well as soft stucco under the original upstairs triple window.

To eliminate the leak, a 2-inch

band was cut into the stucco above the decking and filled in with silicone caulk. Then it was covered with metal and the top edge was color caulked, providing a clean, aesthetically pleasing look.

STUCCO POSES A CHALLENGE

Matching existing stucco was another problem. The first attempt was too gray. The homeowners thought the existing color was



A LCD TV hangs in the corner and covers the cable and outlet.



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Subcontractors were wary of Sunny, the 150- pound bullmastiff. However, it was really Honey, the 4-pound toy fox terrier, who was the one to watch.

antique white, which isn't a standard color offered by any local stucco supplier. "We used a trial and error process to discover the right formula," Harth says. After creating many samples, it was determined that the original color was one antique mixed with three white.

CAREFREE CHOICES

The Barbets wanted materials that would be maintenance free. They chose a porcelain tile floor with a stone-cut look in lieu of flagstone.

The wide half-inch grout line complemented the 18 by 18-inch tile and enhanced the rough look. Tamara initially desired slate, but when she was told it was high maintenance and would require resealing, she changed her selection to porcelain.

They also wanted a maintenance free sundeck. Harth Builders recommended CertainTeed Boardwalk in a newly offered tan color along with Fairway white vinyl railings and turned balusters. A gothic cap put the finishing touch

on the railing.

RESOLVING STEP ISSUE

Overcoming the 32-inch difference in elevation from the first floor to grade was instrumental in making this project a success. Harth notes, "the Barbets didn't want a lot of steps leading into the sunroom."

To resolve this problem, two interior steps were built from oak and stained in cherry to match the kitchen floor. A brick EP Henry paver patio with two sets of outside steps finishes the transition. Tamara says this brick matches the front of the house and a walkway leading from the basement to the pool.

TROPICAL PARADISE

Tamara wanted the sunroom to not only be informal, but also to have a tropical feel. Interior decorator Jere Bradwell, of European Home Collection, Inc., Buckingham, PA, was instrumental in achieving this look. "It's a place for the family to gather. It's a place where you can kick your shoes off and relax," Tamara says. The furnishings, stuffed with goose feathers, are soft. A tropical

ceiling fan and lots of plants complete the desired look.

The homeowners chose a black cast iron and hand blown glass look for the exterior lighting. Dimmers were used in the recessed lights and second floor exterior lights to provide low level ambiance.

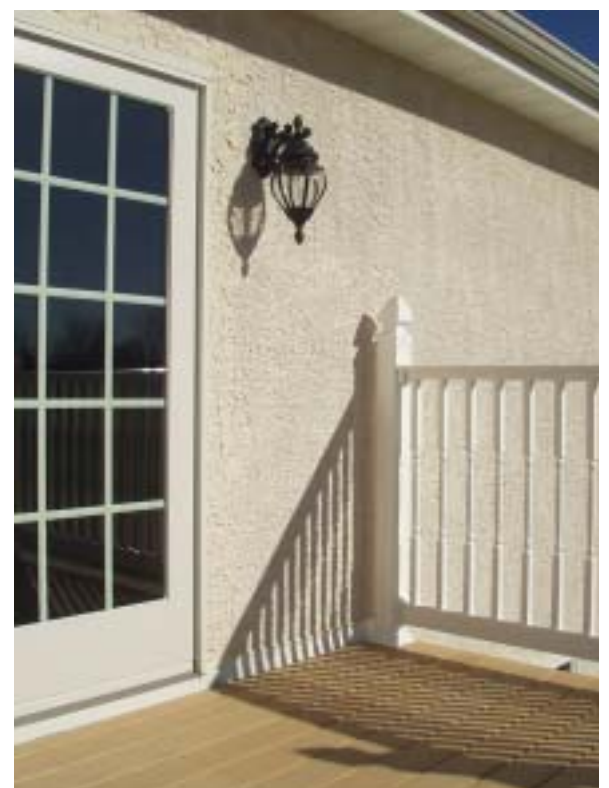
The Barbets are pleased with the final product. "This room makes me feel like I am on vacation," Tamara says. "I love stepping into it and seeing the kids playing in the backyard, on the swing set or in the pool. I feel like I am with them."

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Harth Builders was awarded Remodeling Magazine's Big50 2004 Award for "Sales & Marketing". This prestigious award by Remodeling Trade magazine recognizes excellence and leadership, and the companies who belong to this select group set an example for the rest of the remodeling industry.

Harth Builders, founded in 1996, is an award-winning company located at 1 Mill Race, Spring House, PA, 215-654-0364. The company, founded by Allyn Harth, is managed by Allyn and his son, Greg. Harth Builders is a member of NARI, National Institute of Fire Restoration, Institute of Inspection and Cleaning and Restoration and Residential Warranty Corp. For more information visit www.harthbuilders.com.



The sundeck requires no maintenance and looks great.