

BY ALECIA STEVENS | PHOTOS BY ALEX STEINBERG

Ever Green



Jim and Karen Ashe and their three children loved the bucolic setting of their home in North Oaks, but the 1969 dwelling was showing its age. The family considered building a new home on the incomparable site. Instead, with the guidance of Paul Neseth, principal of Locus Architecture, and Lucy Penfield, principal of Lucy Interior Design, the Ashes opted for the more conservative, affordable, and "green" approach: reclaim, reuse, and renew.

The kitchen is a good example of this philosophy. The original layout worked well for Jim, who is described by his wife as an "incredible, intuitive cook." It was important to maintain the functionality of the space, while opening it to the seating area. Likewise, Karen loved the room's connection to the landscape. "We feel like we live in a very fancy tent here," she says. To bring even more of the outdoors in, she wanted the newly remodeled space to "feel like a glade of evergreens. Lucy and Paul took it from there."



1 Reuse and Renew The original brick fireplace wall was dark and dated. Painting the brick white maintains texture while minimizing color. Dark steel covers now wrap the original mantel and add a strong, modern horizontal element—a striking contrast to the vertical sliver of the adjacent window.

2 Artful White It is hard to go wrong with white on white. The iconic, round Saarinen table seems made for this corner spot—guests can move in and around without gouging a thigh. For daily use, the armless Tulip chairs with green Knoll upholstered cushions soften the hard laminate. Against the white wall and green exterior landscape, it is more than form and function. It is art.

3 Modest Materials Although the Ashes contemplated using stone flooring, they

opted for a softer material: rolled Marmoleum, an environmentally friendly, affordable, machine-age material made from linseed oil. For cabinet interiors, Karen chose white laminate for a clean look and easy care. Counters of white CaesarStone are modern, clean, and slightly more affordable than granite or marble.

4 Outdoor Connection Neseth and Penfield interpreted Karen's mandate to create a "glade of evergreens" literally: Base cabinets are walnut, stained the color of tree bark; uppers of a playful green laminate mimic the leafy elms. The backsplash is back-painted glass, keeping seams to a minimum and replicating the sky. **MH**

ALECIA STEVENS IS A MINNEAPOLIS INTERIOR DESIGNER AND FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO *MIDWEST HOME*.

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