



# Building Trust

A young couple who disagree on the path to their dream home find that creating it is about more than floor plans and materials

STORY BY ANDREA DARR

PHOTOS BY JENNIFER WETZEL

Most men know to avoid confrontation with a pregnant woman. But Tim Tiegreen tested the limits of such sage advice and bought a house his six-months-pregnant wife Jessica had never seen. Can you say chutzpah? “He came home and said, ‘Honey, I bought a house,’” Jessica recalls. “Needless to say, I was furious.”

The parents-to-be had been house hunting for months on end when Jessica declared a hiatus from the stress. “We were driving around every Saturday and Sunday, and I just wanted to relax,” she says. The search for the perfect place had hit a two-fold snag: Tim had tunnel vision of a life in Mission Hills, while Jessica preferred the newer communities out south; he wanted a project to make his own, while she wanted something move-in ready. “Everything was a debate,” Tim says.

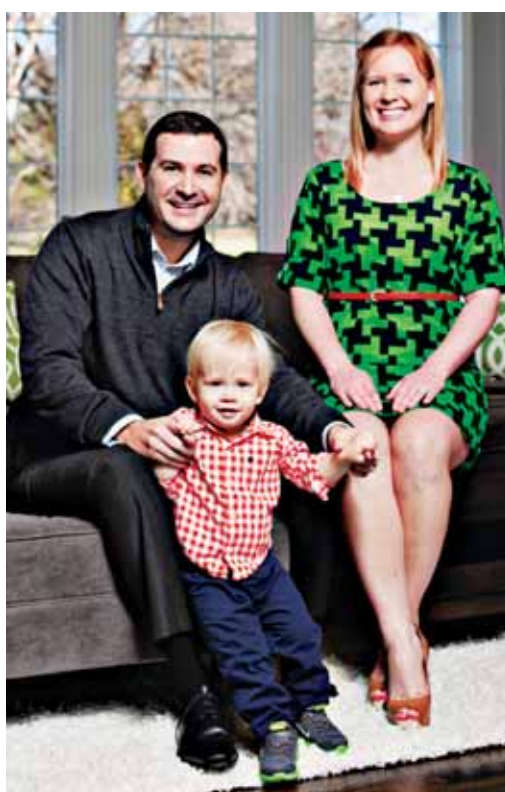
“We’re the reverse of the stereotype,” Jessica adds. “He’s the big spender. I’m the one who says, ‘You don’t really need that.’”

*Continued on next page >*





Before



Tim Tiegreen bought this Overland Park home without consulting his pregnant wife, Jessica, feeling he had finally found a well-built canvas that could be transformed into the couple's perfect home. After a major renovation, some of the original elements still remain, including the beams in the living room ceiling that were painted white.





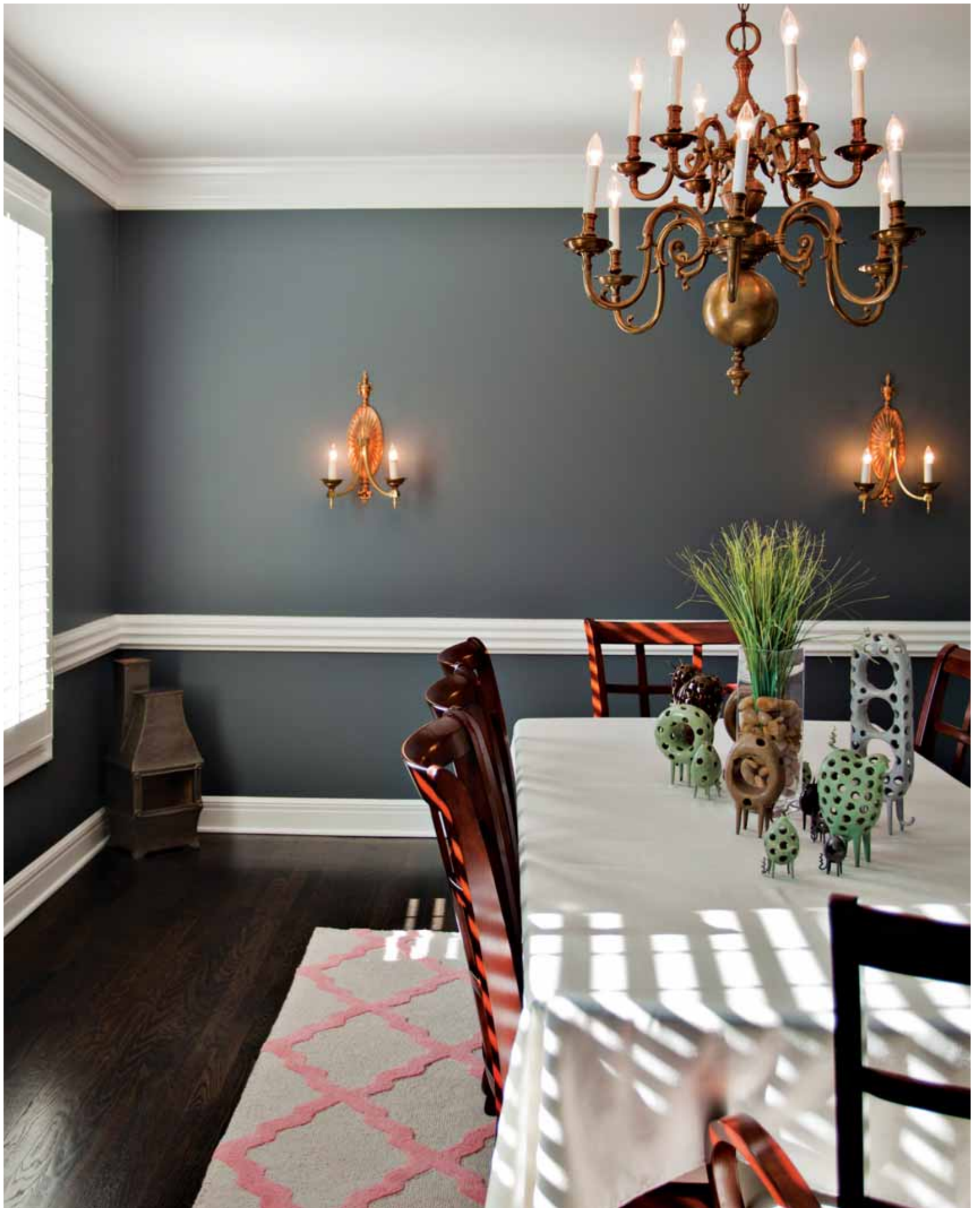
The rustic-style, brick home wasn't an ideal fit for Tim and Jessica, who both prefer clean lines and gleaming white.

With help from Lauren Scassellati of Portfolio Kitchen & Home, who redesigned the kitchen and baths, and Asmus Construction, the project came together beautifully.

One could almost see this head-to-head collision coming, the couple's opposites-attract relationship beginning like a joke: So a plunge-forward Internet entrepreneur and a pragmatic financial analyst meet at a bar (well, Kona Grill)... They marry, start a family and a real estate punchline develops.

Even though they couldn't agree where they would live, or how they would achieve their desired goal, they harmoniously envisioned what their future home would look like. The pair were into HGTV and Pinterest, sharing a similar taste of clean lines, gleaming white kitchens and a bit of a "modern Nantucket." So when Tim called up his real estate agent for a late-night look at his new purchase to show his wife, Jessica was reasonably miffed at the more, shall we say, "rustic" style of the mid-1990s brick manse. However, what she couldn't see, outside the windows at 9:30 p.m., was that the house sat on 2.5 acres of land with a pool and an orchard of peach and apple trees—quite an idyllic place for their son to grow up. And they were near 143rd and Nall—definitely not Meyer Circle, where Tim dreamed of living.

*Continued on next page >*





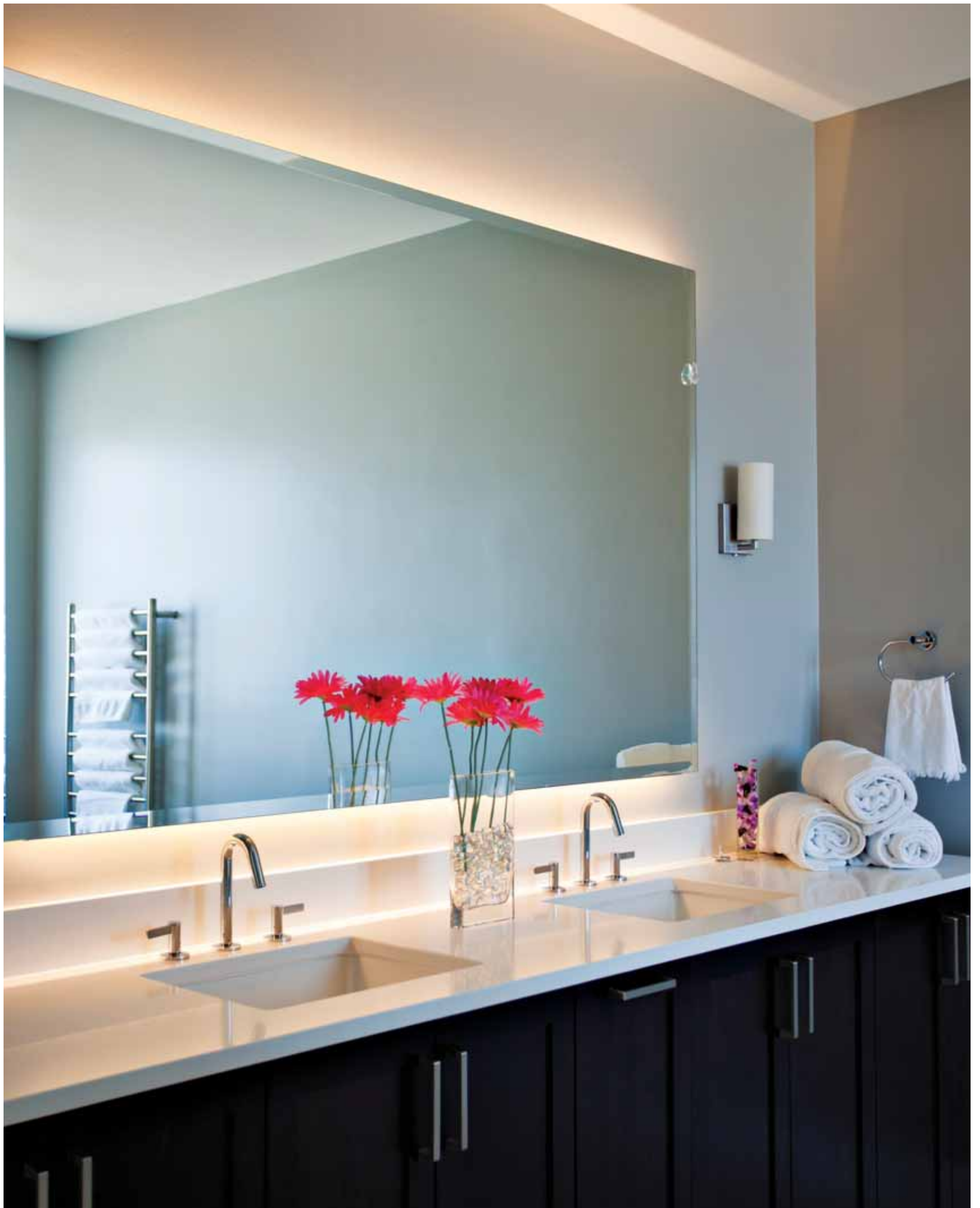
“I was so ready, so versed in good bones,” Tim says. “We had spent a year in trial and error, and once I saw how well-built this house was, I knew it was the perfect canvas.”

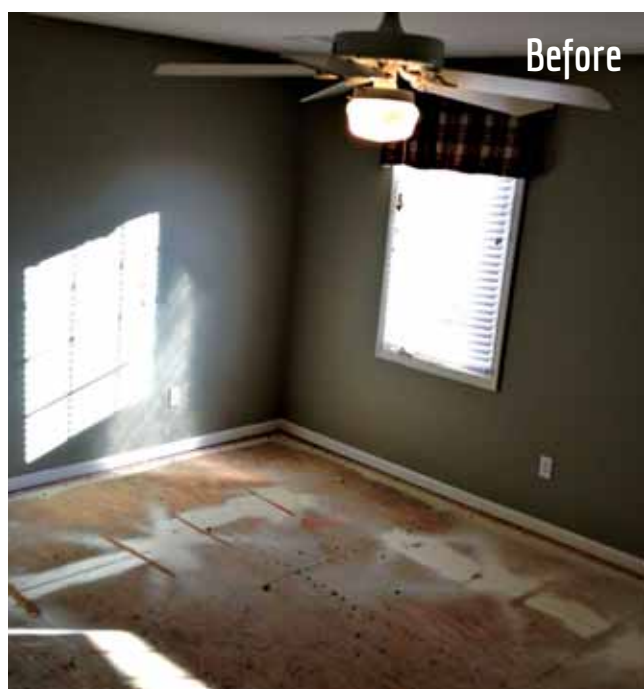
A bewildered Jessica could only concede to her husband’s enthusiasm and his certainty that this was the right place, the perfect balance of location and make-it-your-own style. “It was the biggest leap of faith I’ve ever taken in my entire life,” she says.

Jessica warmed to the house’s potential as she and Tim redesigned the interiors. The updates were fairly cosmetic: A wall came down between the hearth room and kitchen; new paint and light fixtures brighten the rooms; lockers organize coats and bags at the rear entry. “I love how light, bright, open and clean it is now,” Jessica says. She sourced the light fixtures while on maternity leave, and she stuck to her

Improvements to the home included removing a wall and adding a new coat of paint and light fixtures to brighten the rooms. The kitchen also got gleaming white countertops, but the old ones didn’t go to waste—they found a new home of their own in the family’s basement.

*Continued on next page >*





The Tiegreens' tastes finally show through, creating a light and elegant home with unexpected features. With a pool and orchard of peach and apple trees on its 2.5 acres, it's the ideal place for their son, Maxton, and their second child on the way to grow up.

instincts about keeping the beams in the living room ceiling—although they are now painted white—because of the architectural definition they gave the room. “Everyone was against you because they said it would look odd with the wall gone,” Tim says to her, “but I’m so happy you did that.”

Lauren Scassellati of Portfolio Kitchen & Home redesigned the kitchen and baths, and Asmus Construction, a hands-on two-man team, made it all happen. “We really want to give credit to them because they were phenomenal to work with,” Tim says.

Not long after settling in, after piling up a few odds and ends on a to-do list, Tim laid another doozy on Jessica: “Hey, I’m going to finish the basement.” And just like that, he drew up a plan that designated spaces, sent it to Asmus and said, “When can you start?”

Remodel Round Two included a comprehensive entertainment destination, including a glass-enclosed exercise room, chalkboard wall, table tennis area, kitchenette, massage table, full bath, and a fully loaded home theater with 171-in. screen. The couple reused the former upstairs kitchen and master bath cabinets in this new space, freshly repainting them and installing new tops. “The conservative part of me couldn’t waste them,” Jessica says.

*Continued on next page >*







The lower level is obsessively soundproofed for maximum enjoyment for those on either side of the floor. “If she’s clunking around in the kitchen or I want to have the sound up, we don’t bother each other,” Tim says. For social events for all ages, it’s an ideal setting. Maxton, now 2, and his cousins can play as hard as they want down there, as can their adult supervisors.

So, in the end, was Tim selfish to make such a grand unilateral decision or was it the grandest gesture of providing for his family? The impetus that spurred his quick actions was always nesting, he says.

With a second child on the way, one can forgive this man who thought fast and made a gut decision for his growing family. Jessica has. “We are lucky to have found this place,” she says. “We absolutely love the finished product.” ●