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There's No Place Like Home

HOW AN ARCHITECT-LED DESIGN/BUILD TEAM PUT THE JOY BACK IN STAYING HOME

By Sarah Huber

Photos: Dane Cronin Photography

When the Cooper family asked Boulder County's premier design/build team Rodwin Architecture and Skycastle Construction to fast-track their 2020 remodel, they couldn't imagine the gift coming their way. Not only did Rodwin and Skycastle deliver a transformative home celebrating beauty, function and sustainability, but the Coopers were able to move in a week before Governor Jared Polis' springtime stay-at-home orders. Amy Breeze Cooper said, "To say we are grateful to be here would be a massive understatement. We have four kids ranging from ages 4 to 10, so our home is busy. We are all about cultivating an environment in which we can all thrive. Living here made it possible."

Rodwin Architecture firm principal Scott Rodwin, AIA, LEED AP, said a commitment to thriving is the heart of Rodwin and

Skycastle. He explained, "Due to COVID, our homes have become more important to us than ever. They are a safe place to connect with nature. They have become our sanctuary. Our office. Our school. Our movie theater, gym and yoga studio. They have expanded to include our parents and grown children. All of that has made us consider more carefully than ever how to create a home that will optimally function to support our client's life."

Brandon David, Skycastle's head of construction, continued, "There is extremely little existing housing on the market that meets all of our clients' needs, and because of that, we have seen an enormous increase in the last year in people looking to build their own dream home."

Pre-remodel, while the Coopers' "Big House on the Prairie" possessed "good bones," Rodwin said, the interior felt outdated, generic and dysfunctional. The remodel commenced with demolition even during the design phase, completed in partnership with Kate Van Sluyter of Kimball Modern Design

+ Interiors. The kitchen was opened to the great room, and a new large window was precisely positioned to enable Amy to keep an eye on her children playing outdoors. As the family wished to gather around the kitchen island “to eat, talk, play and do homework,” Rodwin said, “we created a space to fit all six members.”

Cooper noted, “(Rodwin and Skycastle) started out by listening. They wanted to understand us, our family and how we use our home so they could help us envision a dream home that would perfectly support our lives. They’re all about possibilities and creative problem solving. So often in the design process, ‘no’ is the first answer. With Scott’s team, their first response was ‘let us figure it out.’”

For the Coopers, Rodwin’s understanding of their lifestyle resulted in a light-filled home unexpectedly ideal for staying home in a year like no other. A minimalist design throughout the home enhances the family’s art collection, and the removed walls creates a vibrant kitchen/dining/great room social center and keeps the family connected – one of the Coopers’ top priorities. “Texture and light were given primary consideration,” said Cecelia Daniels, Rodwin’s senior designer on the project, and elegant finishes, a warm color palette and a show-shopping cascading chandelier by Stone Lighting in the entry reflect the family’s contemporary style. Cooper said, “We love the combination of comfort and flow with the beauty of the modern design.”

Downstairs, the formerly cavernous beige basement became “an entertaining mecca,” Daniels said, “with a glowing modern wine room, full bar, media room, arcade, billiards room and professional gym.” Cooper added, “The design needed to deliver on both form and function. We feel like the team really understood how to deliver both.”

Indeed, as an architect-led design/build firm, Rodwin and David’s teams “are trained to gather two pieces of information – the needs and preferences of the homeowners with the opportunities and constraints that are afforded by the site – and we try to wed them in the most intelligent way possible,” David said.



For example, since sustainability was paramount to the Coopers, the remodel included the installation of high-speed electric car chargers, high-efficiency mechanical systems, LED lighting and 17kWh of solar photovoltaics. The remodel also greatly enhanced the indoor/outdoor connection; with help from Environmental Designs Landscaping, generic lawns gave way to organic gardens, shaded pavilions, broad flagstone patios, and play structures, all surrounding the existing pool.” We wanted to create a safe, beautiful and fun place for the whole family to play and connect to nature”, said Rodwin.

Rodwin Architecture and Skycastle Construction together are one of Colorado’s most experienced custom home design/build firms, and have completed some of the greenest and most recognized houses in Colorado (their LEED Platinum Hoefling House was the Home Builders Association’s CARE Awards 2019 “Custom Home of the Year” and is a nod to the team’s mastery of green building). Brandon David said, “We make sure that the details of our houses are designed down to the inch to fit our clients and that they are built to the highest standard.” ■

> Rodwin Architecture offers a free initial consultation to potential clients. To learn more, visit rodwinarch.com and skycastleconstruction.com.

