

Mokena family follows path to new baths

Orland Park firm also installs new windows, siding

Staff Report

Richard and Kathryn Carlson weren't tiring of their step-up ranch in Mokena after 15 years, but they knew it was time for some changes — particularly in the baths, which were overdue for major updates.

"We were having some trouble with the ceramic tile and grout loosening in our two bathrooms," Kathryn, who had the home built new back in 1994, said. "Plus, it was time for a new look in each of them and an improved layout."

In the master bath, primarily used by Kathryn, the couple yearned to take out the square-footage-robbing Whirlpool tub and install along an adjacent wall a new cast iron soaker tub and a frameless, glass surrounded shower next to it. Richard, meanwhile, dreamed of gutting his three-quarter bath, replacing the tub with a deluxe standing shower and decking out the room with upgraded components.

"Years ago, we had shopped around for different contractors and remodelers, but found it was hard to get someone to return your calls or provide an honest, accurate estimate," Richard said. "Luckily, we were familiar with Distinctive Companies, which had constructed a number of office buildings near us on Wolf Road. We liked the way they were designed and

built, so we thought we'd give them a call."

Before long, the Carlsons were visited by Mike Carroll, president of Distinctive Remodelers — a division of Distinctive Companies. Mike evaluated their project, offered several key suggestions and so impressed the couple that they ultimately enlisted Distinctive for the job, which would also include installing new replacement windows and exterior siding as well.

"These two bathrooms had a lot of potential for more spatially efficient designs and improved comfort and luxury," Carroll said. "Kathryn and Richard both had creative ideas about what they wanted to do in each, so it was a true collaborative effort in planning the new spaces."

Carroll and his crew began by gutting Richard's three-quarter bath. They built a standup shower that included four body jets along the tile walls and brushed nickel hardware. They then inserted custom-made cabinets, a granite-topped vanity and installed handsome stone tile along the floor.

The challenge in this room was to incorporate more natural light, as it lacked a window, Richard said. So, Carroll devised a plan to incorporate a skylight by cutting into the ceiling, inserting a shaft up to the roof and installing a glass skylight.

"The tricky part was getting around all the plumbing and electric in the ceiling, but we were able to accomplish our goal," Carroll said, who added that the skylight is remote controlled, allowing



Richard to open it at will. "If he ever forgets to shut it, the skylight has a sensor to detect if rain, sleet or snow is imminent and it automatically closes itself."

Next, the Distinctive team implemented new Energy Star windows in the bedrooms, master bath and kitchen, being careful to match the interior trim woodwork, and installed new tan vinyl siding on the home's exterior.

"Our wood siding was peeling and would have cost too much to have prepped and painted," Richard said. "Now, we don't have to worry about any siding maintenance and the outer wrapping of the house looks clean, fresh and bright."

Lastly, Carroll and his crew razed the master bath and installed a classic cast iron slip-

per tub with brushed nickel claw feet, "which provides a timeless look and elegant charm," Kathryn said.

A frameless, glass surround standup shower — with a special coating on the glass to prevent spots — was created across from the tub. Among other highlights in the new full bath are a new custom vanity, spacious linen closet, new window, crystal chandelier light over the soaker tub, a glazed porcelain tile floor that truly catches the eye and, like Richard's bath, wainscoting along the walls.

"The difficulties in the master bath were related to reconfiguring the plumbing, as we were moving the toilet and the tub to another area of the room," Carroll said. "But,



ABOVE: Distinctive Remodelers installed a new cast iron clawfoot soaker tub in one of the bathrooms of the Carlson home.

LEFT: Distinctive Remodelers installed a new custom vanity and spacious linen closet in one of the bathrooms of the Carlson home.

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