





The
**Art & Science
of Remodeling**
Inside tips from an expert

By Ann Larson
Photography by Aspen Architectural Photography



To better understand the nuances of the property, Kennedy lived in the home to see what worked and what didn't; Kennedy with faithful companion Jake.

Preceding page: Charles Kennedy and homeowner Erin Pariser enjoy the view overlooking downtown Aspen from Red Mountain.

High-end improvements are driving the remodeling market these days and this trend is poised for further expansion. A recent study by Harvard's Joint Center for Housing shows home improvement spending by Americans has increased steadily in the past decade and has grown to nearly one-quarter of a trillion dollars, with high-earning households accounting for 60 percent of it.

Though upgrades may be driven by personal comfort, they are guaranteed to enhance a home's resale price. Still, some homeowners remain reticent, and for good reason.

"There are so many decisions to make," said Charles Kennedy, who has mastered the art and science of remodeling properties in Aspen and Snowmass Village. From choosing appliances, wall finishes, flooring, window coverings and plumbing fixtures to deciding on how and where to add extra space, the homeowner contemplating a remodel is often overwhelmed by thousands of choices.

"Don't be afraid to remodel," Kennedy advised. "Surround yourself with great people, reputable people and let them do their job. Also, you'll never be sorry for doing too much. You'll only remember what you didn't do."

Kennedy lived and worked in Texas for 30 years, owning a home furnishings and gifts business. That's



One of Kennedy's signature remodels is Top of Nighthawk on Red Mountain. He bought a 1970s box-style home with a flat roof and turned it into a showcase home.



courtesy Charles Kennedy

where he developed a great love and understanding of how to create livable and esthetic interiors. At the end of the millennium, he sold the business to venture capitalists.

One of Kennedy's hobbies over the years was remodeling homes. In 1996 he bought his first Aspen property. By the time he quit the furnishings business, in 1999, he had already remodeled and sold town homes here.

Thus began his passion and lifestyle of buying town homes and houses, totally remodeling and selling them. "All my properties have sold in under 30 days," he said.

One of Kennedy's signature remodels is Top of Nighthawk on Red Mountain. In 1997 he bought a 1970s box-style home with a flat roof; he turned it into a showcase home. Before starting the redevelopment in the fall of 1998, Kennedy lived in the house to better understand the property. He needed this insight in order to take the house to another level of living.

"Nighthawk had many important issues," Kennedy said. "The house had maxed its FAR (floor area ratio) but it was missing something. It needed 50 square feet extra for a master bath, 50 square feet for an entry and 150-200 square feet for an office. Also, it didn't have a second living area or a theatre room." continued to page 36



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courtesy Charles Kennedy





Before and after changes were startling in the makeover of a residence at 121 Hyman Ave.



“Details, details, details are what it’s all about in remodeling.”

How do you pull off 300 square feet of living space from thin air and at the same time turn a simple, outdated home into a real gem? By thinking outside the box.

Kennedy cut off the front of the house and redistributed and relocated the space into a barrel-vaulted addition. This created a welcoming and grand entry area on the ground floor, with its three guest bedrooms and media room. Upstairs, the vaulted main living space or “great room” is surrounded on three sides with floor-to-ceiling glass walls and backed by a large limestone hearth. Add to this mix a state-of-the-art kitchen, fabulous views of Aspen Mountain and a staggering 2,000 square feet of decks and patios.

Kennedy was able to increase the living space by eliminating hallways and excavating 10 feet below grade to create an area of 900 square feet for the laundry, caretaker apartment (the fifth bedroom) and mechanical room.

“It’s an aesthetically pleasing remodel that blends in beautifully with the environment,” he said. His team of professionals included architect Ted Guy and interior designer Donna Guerra, who helped transform an uninteresting home into something totally original.

“Mountain Modern” is what Kennedy calls the style he has developed with Guerra. “We’re selling a mountain lifestyle,” he said of the company Kennedy Originals.

Details, details, details are what it’s all about in remodeling. “What can we do to make this the best property it can be,” he said rhetorically. “Ask yourself, ‘how does this home live, not just how does it look?’”

These days, typical upgrades include granite or

cement for the countertops, remote controlled or solar controlled window blinds, marble vanities in the bathroom and geothermal heating throughout the residence.

During his relatively short stint in the Aspen market, Kennedy has enjoyed more than a modicum of success.

“It’s exciting and scary at the same time, but if you do great work, great things happen.”

The owner of Nighthawk, Paul Pariser, seconds that view.

“Charles put together a great team of an architect and interior designer along with his own fantastic taste to remodel and redevelop a home which is not only attractive, but also functional. It maximizes the usable area of the house with a fabulous style,” Pariser said. 

For more information about Kennedy Originals, call 970.925.2830.

What’s in & what’s out

IN

- WARM WOODS AND RICH TONES
- OPEN KITCHEN WITH SECOND FAMILY AREA
- RECLAIMED WOOD FLOORS
- OUTDOOR LIVING SPACES
- ROBUST WIRING TO ALLOW FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE AUTOMATION

- HEAVY LOG LOOK
- OVERSTUFFED FURNITURE
- BUILT-IN MEDIA CABINETS

OUT