

# IT STARTS WITH THE FLOOR

Owners of a flooring store, a Ridgewood couple wanted their thoroughly renovated home to make a statement from the ground up.

Design by **Allison Handler Design**  
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**A designer big on details** went the extra mile to accentuate the floors for a young family gut-renovating their four-bedroom home in Ridgewood. What else would you expect when the husband and wife own a Basking Ridge flooring store and share an eye for beauty?

Sure, Travis and Sarai DeLeon of Sparkle Floors & Carpet wanted their A-frame, mountain-style house to be a work of art all the way up. But from their perspective, flooring is the first element one notes upon entering—after all, one needs to look where one walks—and should create an impression.

“It’s all psychological,” says Travis. “You know you get that feeling of, ‘Oh, wow, nice floors,’ and then you look up and pan

The translucent quality of Cristallo quartzite makes a showpiece of the family-friendly island in this renovated Ridgewood kitchen, but equally impressive is the brass-inlaid hardwood flooring.







around, and you would hope that the walls marry with the floors nicely.”

Sarai also saw the floors as a canvas to “express our personalities,” and she applauds their designer, Allison Handler of the eponymous Ridgewood design company, for a style in sync with her own. “I love everything she did to the home—and the open communication,” says Sarai. “I almost felt like part of her team.”

Finding the right designer was key because this is meant to be the young couple’s “forever” home—a step up from a Bernardsville starter that Sarai says was “getting tight” with the couple’s two kids, currently ages 3 and 5. Satisfied their move-up home had good bones, the couple snatched it up in June of 2023, determined to trade its dark and dated look for a more modern aesthetic.

Travis’s company, DeLeon Development, went down to the studs to create an essentially brand-new house. Though they stuck to the original blueprint, they eliminated a nonsensical boxed office inside the kitchen, which hindered flow for this entertainment-oriented family. And though the original cherry paneling

had a beauty of its own, the home owes its new light and bright air to the right stain, Handler says.

One of Sarai’s favorite kitchen features, a black herringbone pattern inlaid with brass, is striking as it delineates the Shaker-style white island and makes its Cristallo quartzite pop. While initial plans called for black tile to contrast with the lighter perimeter of rift-and-quartered oak, Handler proposed hardwood for all, and True Black stain did the rest. As an added touch, ceiling beams are clad in white oak and stained in harmony with the flooring, she says.

His enthusiasm not limited to floors, Travis suggests that the translucent quartzite on the waterfall-edge island is the equivalent of “God’s sculpture,” while Sarai says of the stone, “It was love at first sight.”

Maximizing a good thing, Handler extended the crystal effect to the window trim for a modern feel and introduced sconces with the same crystalline quality. Also starring in this makeover are brass-and-linen pendants by Krew, oversized on



This page: So close to the kitchen, this powder room gets in on the act with Cristallo quartzite but adds in lighting for a unique glow. Opposite page: A fluted plaster, custom hood plays a starring role in the entertainment-style kitchen, which features top appliances like Wolf.





purpose to stand out and in good company with brass highlighting the Ferguson faucet, leather counter stools by TOV Furniture and hardware, she says. Besides the pendants, another focal point is the custom fluted-plaster hood joining the Wolf stove. “We loved the idea of adding texture with plaster,” says Handler.

She also loves white kitchens. While some may consider the color too cold for comfort, Handler explains that the secret is elevating with details like the handmade Zellige backsplash by Garden State Tile, which delivers color variations and texture.

To fulfill their wish list, Handler created a tea-and-coffee bar with style worth waking up to—a fluting effect for tile backsplash and glass cabinet doors.

The Cristallo quartzite was such a hit that it also plays a lead role in the powder room off the kitchen. “I think the powder room is all about the countertop,” Handler says. A floating vanity glows due to quartzite-integrated lighting, as another stone—alabaster—spotlights the ceiling. Brass infuses warmth via the faucet and mirror, while the backsplash resonates with fluted beige tile. Like the

kitchen, the flooring creates a pattern with brass inlay, but its contrast stems from black tile squares in handmade terracotta, Handler explains.

The master bathroom draws much of its beauty from a vaulted ceiling which, styled with white oak beams and a feminine chandelier, creates a spa zone for an asymmetric oval tub flanked by nature-beckoning windows. “We wanted to continue with that modern organic feel, so on the floor we went with a creamy star-and-cross pattern and the shower walls we did in a mauvy blush color,” courtesy of Zellige tile, she says. The double vanity with fluted white cabinetry and the backsplash dazzle with Taj Mahal quartzite, while brass accents the faucets and oval mirrors.

Big in dimensions and now in style as well, this family’s forever home was worth the seven months of renovation that ended in March. “The kids absolutely love the home,” says Sarai. “It’s a brand-new house, it fits our entertainment needs, and we have room to enjoy.”



This page: An asymmetrical oval tub nestled amongst nature-inspired windows soaks the cares away. Opposite page: Taj Mahal quartzite gives the master bath's double vanity its look of class.

