



Clear Lake Shores residents Ronnie and Nancy Richards live in an elevated two-story, two bedroom, two and one-half bath traditional home with lower level two-car garage.

Photos by Kevin Cox

Repurposed wood, Murano glass transform home

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The city of Clear Lake Shores has come a long way since 1926, when it was sparsely populated and you could get a 20-by-100-foot lot for \$69.50 with a subscription to the Houston Post-Dispatch newspaper.

Today, the island community is a mix of early bungalows and newer construction, where almost everyone rides around on golf carts and knows each other's name. Clear Lake Shores is home to 1,443 people and 1,500 boat slips. Ronnie and Nancy Richards became island dwellers four years ago when they purchased their waterfront home.

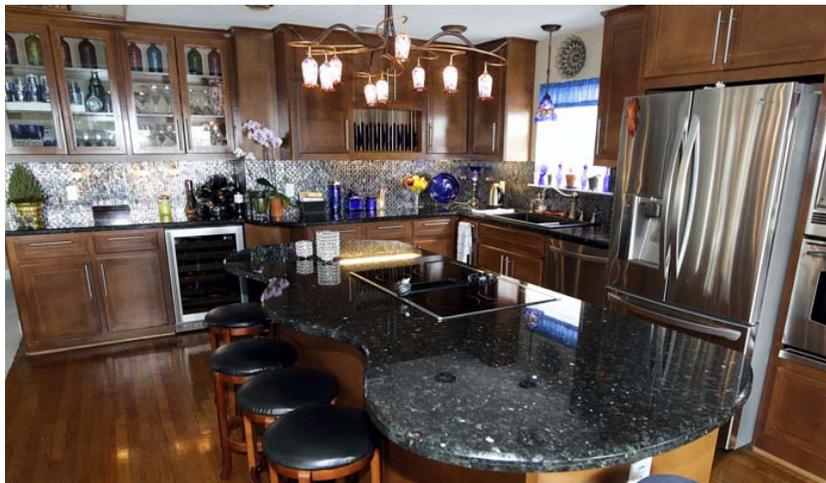
The elevated two-story, two bedroom, two and one-half bath traditional home with lower level two-car garage was built in 1996. But when the Richards moved in, they immediately began major renovations. Working with a builder, Nancy Richards designed the house herself and did all of her own decorating.

“There was a palm tree in the middle of the driveway and a solid concrete deck on the second level that was unsafe,” Richards said. “So, we removed that and rebuilt a covered porch.”

Stairs were added to the front of the house and an interior staircase was moved and rebuilt to provide an open, airy look. An elevator also was installed.

“The kitchen was a closed-in, tiny galley, but we opened it up and enlarged it to be part of the living room,” she said.

She doesn’t mind that the entrance to the house takes you right into the kitchen from the upper deck.



“The kitchen is the heart of your home and where everybody hangs out, so this is what we wanted,” she said. “Even with a formal dining room, everyone congregates in the kitchen.”

The kitchen includes custom oak cabinets, granite countertops, a large kitchen island and glass-tiled backsplash. But the most interesting thing about it is

the red oak hardwood floors taken from older homes in The Heights in Houston.

“My builder did a lot of remodeling there and kept the wood from the old floors,” she said.

The wood was painted various colors, but after a good sanding and staining, they fit in nicely.

The kitchen also includes a wine refrigerator and Murano handblown glass light fixtures as well as nifty collections of old seltzer bottles and Apollo space mission glasses. (Richards’ father was chief docking engineer for the Apollo missions.)

At 1,724 square feet, the house seems much larger because of its openness. The living room has a halogen fireplace and enormous picture window offering a nice view of the water as well as the upper deck, which Richards decorated with wispy white curtains.



The half bath under the stairs is known as the “Southwest Airlines” bathroom because of its size, but the nautical accessories give it a personality all its own.

The downstairs master bedroom was previously two small rooms. It also has a halogen fireplace and the master bath is a roomy 154 square feet filled with Richards’ vintage mirror collection.

Other amenities include vessel sinks, separate vanities, custom built cabinets, walk-in closet and a huge double walk-in shower.



“The best thing about the bathroom and the rest of the house is that it is entirely handicapped accessible,” said Richards, who has dealt with knee and ankle surgeries related to her former careers as professional water skier and ice skater.

Upstairs is a second master bedroom and master bath (original to the house) with antique vanities. This bedroom also functions as an office and houses a curio cabinet full of

Steiff stuffed animals. The recycled wood from The Heights also was used on the interior stairs and upstairs landing.

The lower-level two-car garage also functions as an exercise/storage area, but unfortunately the Richards moved in before Hurricane Ike, which struck in September 2008. The house took in 8 feet of water after renovations were completed.

“The hurricane destroyed all my antiques I had stored there,” Richards said. “But my daughter was supposed to get married that weekend, so that was the least of my worries.”

The wedding was moved to October and everyone was high and dry.