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Remodeling News

A Note from Jack and Matt Philbin...

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletters, and for continuing to tell friends and family about our company! We appreciate and treasure the referrals, and will continue to do our very best to continue earning them! The main purpose of our newsletter is to highlight a recent project we are proud of, and to allow our clients to tell their side of the story. If you've received these for some time, you probably noticed that many of the projects we have displayed have been fairly elaborate, and often costly remodels. We would like this newsletter to be different. The purpose of this issue is to showcase two recent projects, and client's stories that go with them. What's different? Both of these projects came with significantly lower price tags! Especially in today's economy, we feel it is critical that homeowners invest wisely in their homes. There are many improvements that one can make to a home that will require a smaller investment, and continue to offer a return of value as one looks to the future! Philbin Construction & Remodeling is interested, willing, and able to help you with many of these projects! Please contact us for details!!

And now a complete kitchen remodel in the "Under \$20,00" Category"

Many home construction projects include the luxury of time – time to design a project, order materials, complete the teardown or removal process, and time to do a first-class installation.

But sometimes construction companies find themselves under the gun, working with deadlines that, at least on the surface, suggest that compromises might be made in order to finish a job on time. Is it possible to operate under a time crunch and still deliver top notch service and a beautiful product? Here is a story about a 73-year-old woman and her contractor, Philbin Construction—a story with a happy ending.

Louise Wacyra is an Italian immigrant who has lived near Midway Airport the last 16 years in an old two-bedroom frame house. This past summer, a long awaited reunion with her half sister was set to take place – a reunion that marked the end of decades of being apart.

"I was living here most of my life, and hadn't seen my step-sister since I was a young child," Wacyra said. "We wrote and called each other, but I'm not a traveler. I learned this summer that my sister was going to come here to Chicago along with my nephew and his wife. My kitchen was in really bad shape, and I was hoping to fix it up in time for their visit."

When it came to finding a contractor, Wacyra said she wasn't interested in thumbing through the phonebook. Like most folks, she turned to friends and family for a referral and found out about Philbin Construction.

"A friend of my daughter had used Philbin Construction 2 years ago, and she gave me Matt's number," Wacyra said. "When Matt first talked to me, he said that the time frame we'd be working with was very small, but that his company would do its very best."

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Wacyra said she and Matt worked together to design the project and pick out materials. The kitchen remodel would include replacing countertops, flooring, and cabinets, relocating a sink & faucet, some minor electrical upgrades, and adding new ceramic backsplash tile. The time frame was tight, but Philbin said that he and Louise worked together well.

"The deadline we had was relatively short – just five weeks from the date of my first appointment with her," Philbin recalled. "I had to design a kitchen, go through client selection meetings, order the materials, make sure we received everything in good condition, schedule the labor crew to be together on one project, and get the job done before the deadline. We used a local cabinet supplier, Monarch Cabinetry, because they had a faster lead time for delivery of materials without any sacrifice in quality. We were able to get her kitchen cabinets and trim in about four weeks. Louise was very good at picking out the countertops, flooring, and the faucets that were needed and made decisions quickly and easily."



Wacyra said she relied on Philbin's expertise regarding which materials would work best, and also is especially grateful for a new storage pantry she has in the kitchen – a nice touch that takes her back to her days of apartment living years ago.

"I told Matt I always enjoyed these big pantries we had in the apartments where I lived, and he said he could do that here," she said. "He came up

with lots of storage options for me and with places to put things that I don't use every day."

Like all of Philbin's clients, Wacyra said she enjoyed the personal attention given by Philbin and his crew as well as their meticulous habits in her home.

"Everyone was very sociable and was very nice to talk to, and I told Matt the workmen all deserved a raise," Wacyra said. "The crews were exceptionally clean and there was never a mess when they left for the night. Matt was always available. I remember when one of the cabinets was delivered and there was a scratch on one side. I called Matt and he said he'd be over and take care of it, and he did. And when ever I called people at his office, they were just as nice as well."

In what became an ABC-television sort of Home Makeover effort, Philbin pulled his entire work crew in on the job. With the lead time for procuring materials being 4 weeks, it left the construction company just one week to meet the deadline.

"I had made a promise that we could have this ready on time, and on Monday we began the demolition," Matt said. "We used our entire crew on her project, and everyone worked long days while we were there. We relocated the plumbing for the kitchen sink, moved some electrical items, and rearranged the layout of the room. We were able to give her additional storage space inside of beautiful maple cabinets, install new Alloc laminate flooring, and use matching decorative crown moldings to help "dress up" the room.

"In the end, we finished the project almost a full day early, and were still able to provide our usual level of craftsmanship and attention to detail," Philbin added. We pulled off a complete kitchen remodel in less than a week, just like on TV."

Wacyra said she is satisfied well beyond her expectations and her family members all admitted they were envious of her new kitchen. "My nephew and his wife, who live in this million-dollar house, recently visited us. When his wife saw my cabinets, she said they were the kind she wanted! They have all this money, and she liked my cabinets better!" Wacyra said.

"My only regret is that I waited as long as I did to do this. At my age, you never know how much time you'll have, and I wish I was younger so I could spend more time enjoying what I have now." 





And a complete kitchen in the “Under \$30,00” Category”

Contractors come in all sorts of shapes and sizes, and offer service in a variety of ways. But regardless of the work they do or the accolades bestowed upon them – in the end, you hire a person who hopefully inspires trust, confidence, and provides a fair value for whatever you’re paying them to do.

Jeanette Wantroba is a single woman living in a two-bedroom, two-bath condo that was built around 1985. She moved in about four years ago and decided after a number of months that her kitchen needed some work. Her cabinets were outdated, and she wanted storage space. The ceiling featured outdated fluorescent lighting and she wanted a new floor.

When the time came to find a contractor, Jeanette took a road less traveled: without anyone to provide her with a reference, she went searching on the Internet for contractors in her area and found Philbin Construction. And then she started digging.

“I found the company name on the web and started checking them out,” she said. “I went to the Better Business Bureau and entered their name to check out their history and see if anyone had filed complaints about the company. There were none. And then I met Matt. From the very beginning, he put me at ease and was someone I connected with right away.”

Jeanette went on to find another contractor who, along with Philbin, offered her a bid. Wantroba said the cost estimates were close, but admitted she never felt she would hire anyone but Philbin.

“The other company’s bid was a little higher, but they did have some good ideas that I later brought to Matt,” she said. “I also found out that in addition to Philbin Construction’s good reputation with the Better Business Bureau, Matt was also a Certified Remodeler with The National Association of the Remodeling Industry. The other contractor didn’t have this certification.”

Jeanette hired Philbin Construction and Matt began the work to turn his client’s dreams into reality. Wantroba said she had a good idea of what she was looking for, and using some of her own ideas and a few she had picked up along the way, she and Matt began to assemble plans together.

Philbin said the project included a virtual overhaul from top to bottom.



“The kitchen that was there was the original one, and had a recessed area in the ceiling where the original builder had installed commercial fluorescent light fixtures,” Philbin said. “We eliminated all the fluorescent lighting, and raised the ceiling up in the center to give the room a sense of space. Recessed can lights were installed around the perimeter of the room for light with more warmth.” Raising the ceiling up created space for a ceiling fan that Jeanette uses to circulate the air in the kitchen.



The original kitchen also had a closet in one corner that was used for a pantry. The closet was removed completely and a custom tall pantry cabinet was installed in its place. A half wall that divided the kitchen from the dining room was reconfigured, with new cabinetry added and a new Corian breakfast counter. Backsplash tile that she selected herself and a new Alloc premium laminate floor featuring an attractive stone pattern completed the job.

One of the hallmarks of Philbin Construction is the professionalism of their crews and the respect and courtesy shown to clients and their homes. Jeanette’s condo is on the building’s second floor, which meant that her neighbors would likely be affected by the work. Her relationship with them throughout the 3 ½-weeks of remodeling was never compromised.

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"I told my neighbors that I was having the construction done, and that there might be some noise," she said. "Matt and his crews always came when they said they would, and were gone at the end of the day when they promised they would finish. The job actually was done a few days ahead of schedule, and no one ever complained about noise."

Wantroba also praised the cleanliness of the job site as well as the personable and professional way crews conducted themselves.

"The other tenants in my condo unit were receptive to them, and some of them actually got to know the Philbin guys and talked with them as they were arriving or leaving," she said. "It sounds corny, maybe, but everyone got along nicely."

As a single woman, Jeanette said she was leery of opening her home to crews she didn't know and also was concerned about whether she would get what she paid for, without being gouged. Somehow, from the very first moment, Matt Philbin resolved all her fears.

"If someone asked me to give the reasons I'd hire Matt and Philbin Construction, my response would be because I trust them, they respect people, and because once I met Matt, I thought he was a great guy who really made me feel comfortable right from the start. I know I looked at another contractor, but in reality, I never thought anyone would take Matt's place. I just felt good about him right from the start, and I wasn't disappointed with a single thing about the job they did." 



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