

eXtreme team

Story By
Rebecca R. Konya

Local contractor, Mukwonago Remodeling, was selected to remodel a home in less than a week for a national talk show.

After two East Coast contractors backed out of a kitchen remodel that ABC's morning show "The View" had promised one of its most loyal fans, it looked as though the producers might have to pull the plug on the much-hyped segment. Then someone suggested contacting a small Wisconsin contractor, Mukwonago Remodeling. Little more than a week later, a South Philadelphia couple's dismal kitchen had undergone a complete makeover and was ready to be unveiled on national television.

"It was almost comical how it all took place," says Scott Riemer, who runs Mukwonago Remodeling with his father, Bob. A producer from the ABC network tracked down Riemer on his cell phone on Thursday, Nov. 11. After telling Riemer he had heard from an acquaintance that Mukwonago Remodeling was the best contractor in the Midwest, he explained the concept of the show. The next day Riemer was on a flight to Philadelphia to survey the site and determine if the project was feasible. Once he accepted the challenge, he was on a plane back to Milwaukee to gather his gear and his crew. By Sunday, Riemer and five others were in Philadelphia ready to work.

But it quickly became evident the Tuscan-style kitchen that designer Libby Langdon, who hosts "Design Invasion" on FOX, had in mind needed to be scaled back. "She had 10 pounds of stuff in a five-pound bag," explains Riemer. Langdon remembered that another contractor who considered the project said she was out of her mind. "He said I was overambitious," says Langdon. "But I thought, 'I make over entire rooms on Design Invasion in 12 hours. I just need somebody who's going to jump in and do the work I want to do.'" When Langdon proposed her plans to Riemer



Bob and Scott Riemer of Mukwonago Remodeling are back to their normal routine after doing an extreme home remodeling job for the national show "The View."

during the initial site visit, she said he had a twinkle in his eye. "He knew what I wanted to accomplish was crazy, but he knew he and his crew could make it happen," she says.

The project's ever-shrinking timeline also forced Riemer to alter Langdon's Tuscan inspiration into something more attainable. When Riemer and his crew finally got to work, the original one-week timeline had dwindled to just three and a half days. "We were putting in 20 to 22 hours per day," says Riemer. "But we made the impossible happen without cutting corners."

The Pierandozzi kitchen was in rough shape prior to the makeover. The impossible was transforming a disaster of a kitchen into a functional family gathering place. Cindy and Mike Pierandozzi, the couple whom "The View" had chosen as the recipients of its kitchen makeover, valued their children's education over home improvements. And with four children in private Catholic school, Cindy, a stay-at-home mom, and Mike, a transportation inspector, had little money left over in the family budget.

When Riemer made his first site visit, he saw a kitchen in dire shape. Original to the home, which was built post-World War II,

"We were putting in 20 to 22 hours per day, but we made the

the kitchen had faux brick walls, outdated cabinetry and a cramped layout. "The floor was so badly pitched you could roll an egg from one end to the other," recalls Riemer. Add to that a gaping hole in the water-damaged ceiling and a general lack of counter space and Riemer's crew had their work cut out for them.

Following Langdon's design direction, Riemer and his team tore out cabinets, ripped up flooring, built out walls and patched up holes. Crew members replaced the sagging linoleum floor with sleek hardwood, hung pre-fab cabinets complemented by three-piece crown molding and installed all new appliances, including a wine chiller, courtesy of Sears, which sponsored the project for "The View." The remodel also spilled over into the adjacent dining/living area, which received a fresh coat of paint, new trim and a fold-away breakfast bar. Riemer estimated that a remodel of this degree normally would carry a price tag of at least \$40,000 and typically takes four to five weeks to complete.

Mukwonago Remodeling created a Tuscany feeling in the kitchen with warm colors, wood and tile. "Some of the detail work is what you would see in a remodeling project in River Hills," explains Riemer.

With just three and a half days to complete a major kitchen remodel, it's no surprise there were blunders and bloopers along the way. Riemer recalled how Sears delivered the wrong stove an hour before deadline and how the refrigerator was two-and-a-half inches too tall for the space allotted.

impossible happen without cutting corners."

Scott Riemer



The Pierandozzi kitchen was in rough shape prior to the makeover. The floor was so pitched you could roll an egg all the way across it.

Limited work space also made for an interesting experience. The Pierandozzis' home, located in an older Italian community in South Philadelphia, is a row house flanked by similarly imposing homes on either side. With a backyard that was little more than a concrete slab, Riemer's crew was forced to work shoulder-to-shoulder at times, even staining cabinet doors in the breezeway between homes. "The neighbors were really great," says Riemer of nearby residents who graciously put up with the noise that flowed around the clock in the tight quarters. Although patience eventually wore thin on the accelerated work schedule, Riemer says there was definite bonding among his crew members.

"Everyone said it couldn't be done and we proved them wrong," says Riemer. In the end, the Pierandozzis' reaction made the sweat factor and sleep deprivation worthwhile. The couple, who love to cook and entertain, were overwhelmed by the transformation. "There wasn't a dry eye in the house," says Riemer of the reveal.

Riemer even received a phone call from Cindy Pierandozzi around the Christmas holidays thanking him and his crew again for the amazing transformation. Pierandozzi's phone call wasn't the only follow-up call Riemer received after the segment aired on "The View" Nov. 23. Shortly before the new year, an ABC producer again contacted Riemer. The morning show is considering reprising its home makeover contest and Mukwonago Remodeling is first in line for the job of general contractor. In fact, designer Langdon said she wouldn't work with any other crew. With the promise of a looser production schedule this time around, Riemer said it's a challenge he and his team are definitely up for repeating. ❏



Mukwonago Remodeling created a Tuscany feeling in the kitchen with warm colors, wood and tile.