



TURNING SOMETHING OLD INTO SOMETHING NEW IN PELICAN BAY

By Kevin Caffrey

The vision started evolving in the summer of 2009 when Porter VanArsdale Construction President Larry Porter first set eyes on the villa that Canadians Gordon and Diane Craig had purchased in Interlachen at Pelican Bay in North Naples. Originally designed by an architectural firm founded by Frank Lloyd Wright and built in the 1980's, the two-bedroom, two-bath residence struck Porter as being tired, dark and out of date. The dining room and master bedroom had peculiar looking cone-shaped ceilings. The

remainder of the home had eight-foot ceilings and the floors throughout the living areas were tiled. A wrap-around lanai included a screen porch on the rear of the residence and an area off the dining room that was essentially wasted space. The small kitchen was painfully outdated. A wall with a fixed window stood between the living room and an open outdoor courtyard. Simply put, the villa was old, completely out of style and certainly not befitting a community of Pelican Bay's stature.

Historic restoration and reno-

vation projects are Porter's forte. While he knew that providing the Craig's with a "2011 home" would be challenging, he also knew the villa space offered tremendous possibilities. He teamed with Naples architectural firm Weber Design Group to create a plan for totally transforming the Craig's home into something fresh and new.

"The development of Pelican Bay was a landmark in the history of Naples," said Porter. "It's one of Naples' premier communities and helped define the luxury,

beachfront lifestyle that makes Southwest Florida such a popular destination. I believe it's important to restore and maintain those parts of our history that shaped the way we live today and to protect the value of what we have. Transforming existing structures in a way that provides the modern, up-to-date features that home owners expect without altering the exterior architectural styles that contribute to Naples' charm is part of that process. The Craig's villa is one of several residences we've transformed in Pelican Bay. It's a



The old kitchen was dismantled to make room for a third bedroom and bath and the wall separating the dining room from the wasted space on the lanai was pushed back to accommodate a new island kitchen with granite countertops and fine cabinetry. The wall with the fixed glass window in the living room was torn out and replaced by a pocketing slider that opens to what is now a screened outdoor living area. Another wall separating the living room from the old screen porch was also removed and the walk-out

matter of seeing a space and envisioning what it can become."

The design concept developed by Porter and Bill Weber at Weber Design Group essentially called for a total re-make of the Craig's villa. The old ceilings, including the peculiar cones, were ripped out. The ceiling heights were raised to accommodate beautiful coffered treatments. The tile floors and bedroom carpeting were removed, and after the concrete underlayment was broken up to allow the installation of new plumbing lines, Travertine marble floors were installed.





from the master bedroom to the porch was walled-in. The porch space was then converted into a spacious family room with casement windows overlooking a lake, privacy blinds and an impressive built-in.

In addition to its new coffered ceiling, the master suite features a new bath with a larger shower, a garden tub with a granite surround, granite countertops over beautiful cabinetry and a separate water closet. New doors, new high impact windows that meet today's codes, new lighting fixtures and Porter's signature trim and molding details were installed throughout the home.

"We bought the place in April of 2009, met with Larry, and after all of the planning and permitting were completed, the remodeling

started in October," said Gordon Craig. "The work was finished by the end of February, 2010. The original owners had not done a thing. Larry would say 'We're going to do this with the ceiling,' and we'd say 'What's that?' And



he'd say 'Never mind, leave it to me.' Aside from Larry and his professionalism and ideas, he had the best line-up of tradesmen in virtually every category - plumbing, electrical, framing, flooring -

they were all great. No suggestion was too small, and if there were hiccups, they were addressed immediately. We had a great relationship with all of them and with Larry."

"It was amazing to see how the place was transformed," added Diane. "Larry takes great pride in his work and he demands a lot from his tradesmen. We wanted a three-bedroom, three-bath home and Larry and his people were able to transform an older, two-bedroom, two-bath home into something completely new that is exactly what we wanted. We spend six months a year in Naples and the 2011 season was our first full season in the new place. It's absolutely beautiful and certainly provides the space for visits by family members and friends."

Gordon Craig is from the East Kildonan community in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada and is a legend in Canadian broadcasting circles. He began his career in television in 1955 as an office junior delivering mail at CBWT Winnipeg. Over time, he amassed



a strong technical and production resume before joining CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) Sports in 1965. He eventually became Head of CBC Sports, and lead the landmark broadcast of the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal. In 1984, Craig was named the first president of The Sports Network (TSN) - the Canadian version of ESPN - and later became Chairman and CEO of NetStar Communications.

In 1988, TSN was acclaimed as the first cable specialty service to carry the Olympic games, with 115 hours of coverage from Calgary. Gordon's production credits include coverage of multiple Olympic Games, the Commonwealth Games, the Queen's Plate (the Canadian version of the Triple Crown in horse racing) and curling competitions, including the first televised World Curling Championships in 1968. He is credited with putting

curling on the map in Canada and made the sport a TV favorite. Gordon is a Sports Media Canada Lifetime Achievement Award recipient and has been named to the CBC Sports Hall of Fame and the Curling Hall of Fame. He retired in 2000 after selling NetStar to CTV, Inc.

Diane was born in the mining community of Kirkland Lake, Ontario and then moved even farther north to the departure point for trains going to James Bay. Her father was a pharmacist who owned the largest store in the Canadian north country.

"I also worked in television," said Diane. "I was a production assistant and Gordon was a producer/director in sports. That's where we met. We used to go to Clearwater Beach for Toronto Blue Jay baseball when Warren was still working. He wanted to buy a condo there, but I didn't like the area. Some friends invited us to visit Naples and we were immediately sold. This was 12-13 years ago. We've been in Pelican Bay the entire time. We rented for 2 years, and then we bought. We had a condo in one of the Interlachen buildings for 8-9 years. I wanted more space, he wanted a garage and we wanted to be able to grill. When this place came on the market, we bought it and moved in when Larry was just about finished with the remodeling job. Now we have a beautiful, brand new villa to enjoy whenever we're here."

"We love Pelican Bay, particularly its location," said Gordon. "We can walk to the golf course or the beach. We wanted to stay here. Now that it's been so beautifully remodeled, our villa will be a place our family can enjoy for a very long time."

"Homes such as the Craig's villa were certainly considered state-of-the-market when they were built," said Porter. "However, after 20 to 25 years with little or no renovation, there are many residences in Pelican Bay that need updating. When owners see the features and finishes found in current designs, and compare them to what they have in their residences, they realize the importance of remodeling and protecting their home values. It's a prudent investment in today's economy and contributes to maintaining the integrity and appeal of Pelican Bay. Just as importantly, a remodeled residence that meets current building codes provides the owner with a greater sense of comfort and peace of mind. When I look at the Craig's residence now, I see a home, not just a villa. The place was dark and now it's airy, full of light and feels good. It's a 2011 residence now.

Porter VanArsdale Construction was founded in 2004 and is known for its commitment to the restoration of existing historic homes and the preservation of the old Florida architectural style in its new build projects. Porter VanArsdale is also known for its creative and value driven approach to renovating and remodeling residences in a wide variety of styles. Visit Porter VanArsdale online at portervanarsdale.com.