

## Making a Grand Entrance: Innovation, Expert Craftsmanship Lead to Award-Winning Design

**A recent project of ours didn't just prove rewarding for the homeowners. In October, the National Association of the Remodeling Industry presented its annual Contractor of the Year awards. DG Liu Contractor, Inc. was named Merit Winner for Best Residential Addition Under \$250,000, thanks to the renovation described below.**

Building a two-car garage was a top priority for Tony and Kathy Fitch of Olney, MD. The couple wanted the addition to fit the Williamsburg style of their home and neighborhood, and to provide enough space for storage and a workbench. They also hoped to create a better entryway (having never liked how the front door was tucked into one end of the house), improve curb appeal, and remove a large in-ground swimming pool from their back yard.

"Part of our objective was to create a portico with the garage that would give the front door a presence and make it more inviting," Tony says. "Once we worked out

a plan, I thought it might make sense to spend a little more money and create a spare office or bedroom above the garage as well."

Tony admires how the addition ties into the existing house, and says this blend of old and new is what pleased him most about the project. "The design we settled on really enhanced the house," he says, "The portico sets off the front door, and this became a very important design feature. They also replaced the roof, which helps tie it all together."

When it came to using the best materials and workmanship, "there were no shortcuts," Tony says, recalling the concrete beams that were added to the garage foundation. "Most garages are built on slab these days. But since we were doing a second-level room above, DG Liu thought they should put beams in, so the floor will never crack. Also, since the whole neighborhood is built with old-style Williamsburg brick, they found a used brick dealer. Terry Ensor (Production Manager)

actually picked out each brick by hand, to avoid ones that were too soft and wouldn't last. That's how conscientious they are."

Tony has had a longstanding relationship with Jerry Liu, having first met him during a commercial renovation nearly 20 years ago. Not long after, he and Kathy hired DG Liu to build a screened-in porch onto their house, and replace single windows with triple ones. In 1987, we gutted and remodeled their kitchen. And just last year, we replaced more windows and wrapped their wood trim.

The Fitch's neighbors have followed suit, hiring us for renovations on two nearby houses. "I've had the opportunity to recommend DG Liu several times," Tony says. "I told them, you'll get great quality work and great people doing it."

Is your home in need of change? Call us!  
**1-866-99dgliu**



Before

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Mollie Wise had a couple of problems. She wanted to take out a few walls to open up the small, closed-in rooms of her McLean home, and to transform a seldom used, screened-in porch into a year-round room. But her biggest problem was finding a company who would listen to her needs and actually perform the work she wanted done.

"When I interviewed design/build firms, I vaguely knew what I wanted," Mollie says. "But almost every firm tried to talk me into doing something different—make the kitchen bigger, get into a different scope of design that, in my mind, took away from the integrity of the house. Three companies told me I couldn't do what DG Liu eventually did." Mollie credits the DG Liu sales and design team for actually hearing her. "They understood exactly what I wanted, and translated it into this project."



Our crew undertook a first-floor modernization by eliminating walls to open up the space and turning the porch into an enclosed room. Since the house backs up to woods in Langley Oaks subdivision, we also brought in the feel of the outdoors with plenty of windows. "Because this house was part of a subdivision," Mollie explains, "it wasn't sited to take particular advantage of the setting. But DG Liu opened up a back room, so now it's completely surrounded by a view of the woods."

Mollie appreciated the attention paid to details as well. "They installed a green onyx stone surround at the fireplace, which is quite beautiful, and they upgraded the trim throughout the house, so it looks like an older, custom home." Reclaimed, seven-inch-wide pine flooring makes the house feel open and unified. Other little touches, like replacing air duct returns with restoration style designs, and

creating custom cabinets and a built-in pantry, give the place the look and feel of a historic home.

During the renovation, Mollie decided to sell her house, and was thrilled to find that her investment paid off. "This is one of the smaller models in the neighborhood," she says, "and they usually go within a certain price range. But the price I was offered was substantially higher. DG Liu transformed a subdivision home into a real custom home that the buyer and agent recognized was unique for the area."

And the final sale? "The house sold 15 minutes after its MLS listing went public," says Mollie, "and brought in \$25,000 over asking price."

Mollie Wise's house is an example of how a quality renovation can be a wise investment, especially if your unique needs are taken into account. "This is not your run-of-the-mill, pop-out-the-back stuff," Mollie says. "It's all integrated into the home, and it's made the space much more beautiful and useful."

Have ideas for your own renovation? We're ready to listen! **1-866-99dgliu**

## STAFF PROFILE



### Meet Production Manager Terry Ensor

Terry Ensor has worked as DG Liu's Production Manager for more than six years. He was the project manager for Tony and Kathy Fitch's renovation (see article on previous page), overseeing staff and materials for the job. Terry says he very much enjoyed working with the Fitches on this particular assignment, and feels the best part was "seeing how it transformed the house," he says. "The garage and upper room were really integrated into the existing structure, so they look like they've always belonged there."

"Terry takes ownership of his projects and his job. He is a contractor's dream Production Manager." —Jerry Liu, President

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and lose your weekends doing  
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