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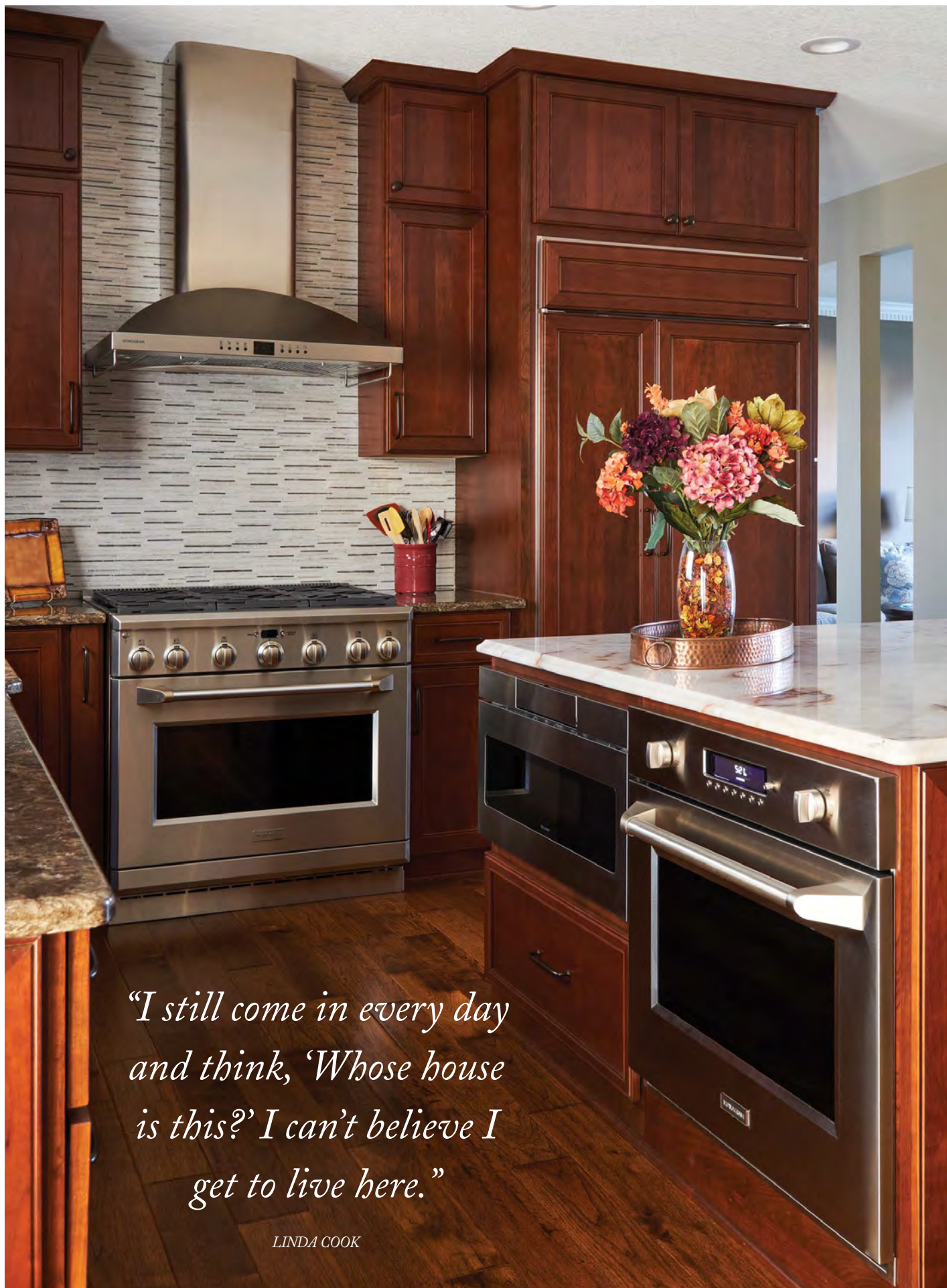
GREG KENNETT

WORTH THE Wait

A Clive couple gets
everything on their
wish list—and more.

BY TRACY DICKINSON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
TIM ABRAMOWITZ

The newly designed
island became the focal
point and the heart of the
remodeled kitchen.



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LINDA COOK



Greg Kennett and Linda Cook bought their Clive two-story in 2005. Although they didn't consider some of the interior aspects ideal, they focused their energy on exterior projects. But as the years went by, they found themselves with a wish list of items they would change inside the home if they could.

Finally, last April, they decided it was time.

"We had met with a couple of remodelers the year before," Greg says. "But as soon as we sat down with Alex, I knew he was the guy for the job."

Alex Marske of AIM Kitchen & Bath in Beaverdale says, "Greg and Linda had some very definite ideas about what they wanted. But at the same time, they didn't have a specific plan or design in mind. That made my job a little more challenging but also a lot of fun."

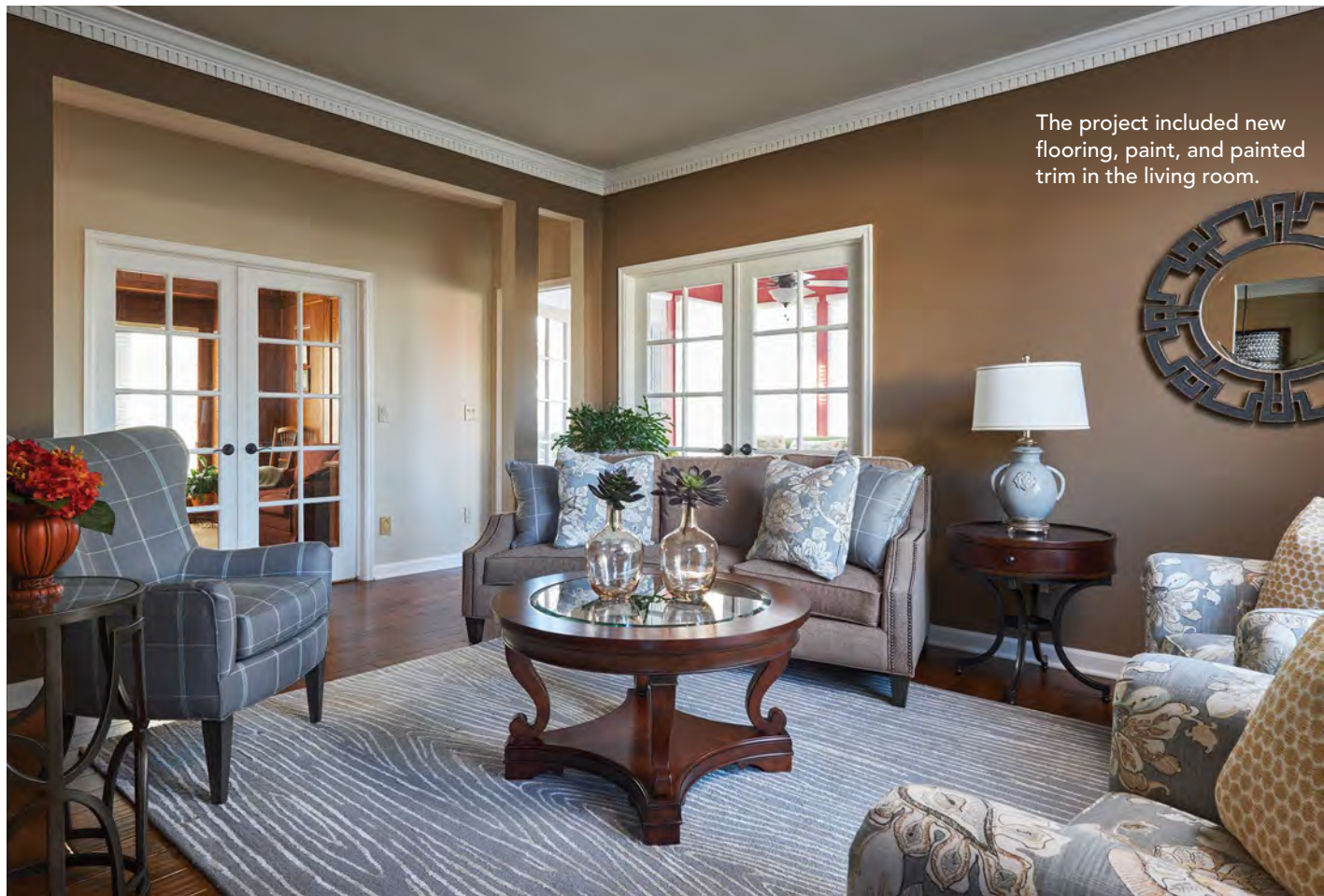
Linda says, "When Alex came to the house the first time, we had this mental list of things we wanted to do—the upstairs baths, the kitchen—and we didn't know where and how to start."

"To me, that's an easy question to answer," Marske says. "Start with the kitchen. You live in it every day. Making the kitchen more livable and efficient will have the greatest impact on your lives."

Like most kitchen remodels, this one started small and grew. Both Greg and Linda have no regrets about the additions they added to their original list. The couple knew they wanted high-end appliances, updated cabinetry and counters, and "something done about the island." Greg describes the original island as "just wasted space. It was too small to be useful as a serving area because the cooktop was in there."

Marske started with the island and worked his design around that. The result transformed the entire main level of the home. "We changed little things in the floor plan. But for the most part, the footprint is the same," he explains. "It's just so much more efficient this way."

This spread, from left: Marske's design expertise gave Cook the commercial-style range and hood she wanted, but without sacrificing the second oven, now located in the island, along with a wealth of storage. • Removing an unused butler's pantry allowed space for a double-door pantry. • A new island makes the most of the kitchen space.



The project included new flooring, paint, and painted trim in the living room.



AIM updated the fireplace tile but coordinated the home's existing trim with the new trim and cabinetry.

For example, the new plan replaced a walk-through butler's pantry between the kitchen and dining room with a full-scale two-door pantry. This eliminated what had become a catch-all countertop and hallway, and it added significant storage space.

Marske replaced the island cooktop design with a commercial-style range along the wall, which allowed for two ovens. He also expanded the island by 2 feet, creating a dramatic focal point for the new space and incorporating a variety of storage options. "That island countertop was an Alex pick," Greg laughs. "But he was right."

As with so many of the design elements, once Marske had a sense of the homeowners' tastes, he would make preliminary selections from which they would choose. Linda says this made the process so much more manageable. "Alex just seemed to know what we wanted and what we like. He would give us a limited number of choices every time we had to make a selection, which we appreciated. Otherwise, it's just too overwhelming."

"There were a couple things Alex had to convince me on. He would make a suggestion—like the multiple wood finishes—and I wouldn't be sure. But he'd show us what he had in mind, and he was always right," Greg adds.

As an industrial engineer, Greg had specific ideas about what he wanted. But most of those ideas were behind the scenes, like running an extra gas line for a future outdoor project and including USB ports in the kitchen outlets.

"We wanted Greg involved at that level because he had opinions about details many homeowners wouldn't have cared about. But they mattered to him. It's always nice to have the homeowners involved in those decisions because they do know what they want, and it's their home," Marske says.

In addition to replacing the old appliances with updated, high-end models, which had a major impact on the kitchen's livability, Marske recommended replacing floors throughout the main level and updating the nearby laundry room.

"When Alex first suggested doing the laundry room, we thought, 'No, it's just a laundry room. It's fine.' But he was right again," Greg says.

Linda agrees. "We avoided the laundry room before. Now I have a special place for my laundry baskets. I have room to fold laundry. It's a really usable room. It's wonderful!"

Marske replaced the laundry room's original cabinetry and a never-used desk area with cabinetry that matches the kitchen, and he reorganized the space to make it more efficient.

New wood floors extend throughout the main level, transitioning to wood-look tile in the sunroom. New paint, trim, and lighting complete the transformation.

"I still come in every day and think, 'Whose house is this?' I can't believe I get to live here," Linda says.

And Greg, who paid attention to every detail of the remodel project, says, "There are none of those 'I wish I'd done this' elements. It's exactly what we wanted." ■



Complementary tile flooring in the sun room mimics the wood floors used elsewhere on the main floor.