



Caroline Holmes, 3, and kitten Chloe cuddle in the family's West U kitchen newly renovated by Sanders Construction & Management Co. Caroline's grandmother, interior designer Lucindy Ward, chose Sea Grass Limestone for kitchen countertops, which were fabricated and installed by ICM Marble & Granite.

BY LINDA BARTH • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIRO DVORSCAK

TRADITIONAL, TRANSITIONAL OR MODERN

NATURAL STONE BY ICM MARBLE & GRANITE LOOKS RIGHT AT HOME
IN THREE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT DESIGN STYLES

Robert Sanders is a true connoisseur of houses. A 20-year veteran of the construction business, he has operated his own home building and remodeling company, Sanders Construction & Management Co., in Houston for 15 years.

You might say building is in his blood. Some 10 generations of his ancestors have been builders, and he is especially proud of his forebears who worked on the Texas State Capitol building in Austin in the late 19th century.

Sanders' portfolio is broad: He appreciates and builds homes in any number of styles, from ornate Victorian to minimalist modern. The homes he builds or remodels are highly personal, seemingly tailor-made to the personality of the people who will dwell in them.

Most of Sanders' clients want natural stone countertops and accents in their homes. Since he's owned his own construction company, Sanders has hired ICM Marble & Granite to fabricate and install natural stone countertops in all of his projects — "Except one," Sanders says. "And that was a home for another builder who had his own stone guy."

WHY ICM MARBLE & GRANITE?

Sanders says he likes working with Ivan Martinez and his crew at ICM Marble & Granite because "they're real particular." When they say they will be at a job site at 9 a.m., Sanders says, "They will be there on time. And they want me there as well since I run all the crews. They don't want to take chances. You can depend on them."

"When I have a competence level with people, it just makes it a whole lot less stressful," he says.

Sanders has faith in the competence of ICM Marble & Granite, and that confidence is returned. "Rob is talented, trustworthy and detail-and deadline-driven," says Dollie Martinez of ICM Marble & Granite. "I notice that he is very value-conscious with an emphasis on providing his clients a home they treasure and a project he is proud of."

Here are three recent homes on which Sanders and ICM Marble & Granite have collaborated. The homes couldn't be more different, but they all are well built, and they all incorporate natural stone as essential elements of style.

TRANSITIONAL IN WEST UNIVERSITY

The charming 1930s cottage-style home of Hank and Claudia Holmes in West University had a classic, tiny West U kitchen that was far too small for their growing family of three children, a new kitten, two hamsters and a fish. They engaged the services of Houston architect

Kirby Mears of Murphy Mears Architects and Sanders Construction to make several improvements, including bumping out the kitchen wall an extra 7 1/2 feet and remodeling the upstairs master bath. Claudia's mother, interior designer Lucindy Ward, did the interiors.

"We had the best contractor in the world," Ward says, "because I've been through the worst ones."

The remodeled house's style is traditional with very clean lines, making it transitional. The new 7 1/2-foot addition to the kitchen is seamless.

For the kitchen countertops, Lucindy and Claudia chose Sea Grass Limestone in a soothing gray color. "We wanted a color that disappeared more than made a statement," says Claudia. Some limestones have minor crevasses and gouges on the surface, but Sea Grass Limestone is solid surface. "It had to be a material that the children could do their artwork on," says Lucindy.

Limestone is a softer stone than granite, so homeowners who choose it for kitchen countertops need to be aware it may develop a few nicks or scratches. "It will have the patina of daily life," says Claudia, "like a fine antique develops patina. It wouldn't be a fun antique without it."

For the master bath, they chose Crema Marfil Marble for the vanities and tub deck.

MODERN NEAR THE HEIGHTS

Jack Chism interviewed three architects before he found the one he knew could design the modern light-filled house he wanted on a wooded lot near the Heights. He chose Houston architect Val Glitsch to design his house and Sanders Construction as general contractor.

Chism knew he wanted granite countertops for the house. "I remodeled a house in the Heights with granite," he says. "I like it a lot. It seems very rich and easy to maintain."

Sanders directed Chism to ABC (American Brazilian Company) where he chose a Brazilian Mahogany Granite to top his kitchen countertops, as well as master bath vanities. Chism consulted with Ivan on where joint



The master vanity countertops and tub deck in the Holmeses' new master bath are Crema Marfil Marble installed by ICM Marble & Granite.



Above: Brazilian Mahogany Granite brings a gleam to the kitchen in this light-filled modern house designed by architect Val Glitsch and built by Sanders Construction & Management Co. Inset: The same rich Brazilian Mahogany Granite in the kitchen is brought into the master bath for vanity countertops and tub and shower trim.



In the Heights kitchen of Christopher and Cynthia Haycraft, Dakota Mahogany Granite with a DuPont Edge fabricated by ICM Marble & Granite complements the dark woods chosen for the kitchen. Christopher ordered the slate sink from Maine after seeing it in Old House Journal.



The rough wood of shiplap and the rich gleam of Verde Pavao Granite provide a contrast in textures for the Haycrafts' vintage home in the Heights.

lines would be located on kitchen countertops.

The two joint lines are barely noticeable. The countertops look like one piece and beautifully reflect light and shadow from the house's luminous windows and trees.

TRADITIONAL IN THE HEIGHTS

When Cynthia and Christopher Haycraft bought their turn-of-the-century house in the Heights in 1991, "The renovation started with taking the aluminum foil off the windows," says Cynthia.

Wondering which contractor to choose for their mammoth renovation task, Christopher asked Houston Heights-based architect and architectural historian Bart Truxillo to recommend someone. Truxillo recommended Sanders.

The kitchen, the first room to be renovated, was finished five years ago. Cynthia asked designer Marni Molinari to help her with colors and wallpaper. Christopher ordered a slate kitchen sink from Maine that he had seen in *Old House Journal*. To complement the sink and the dark woods of the kitchen, they chose Dakota Mahogany Granite. ICM Marble & Granite fabricated a special DuPont Edge for the countertops. "They did an amazing job," says Cynthia.

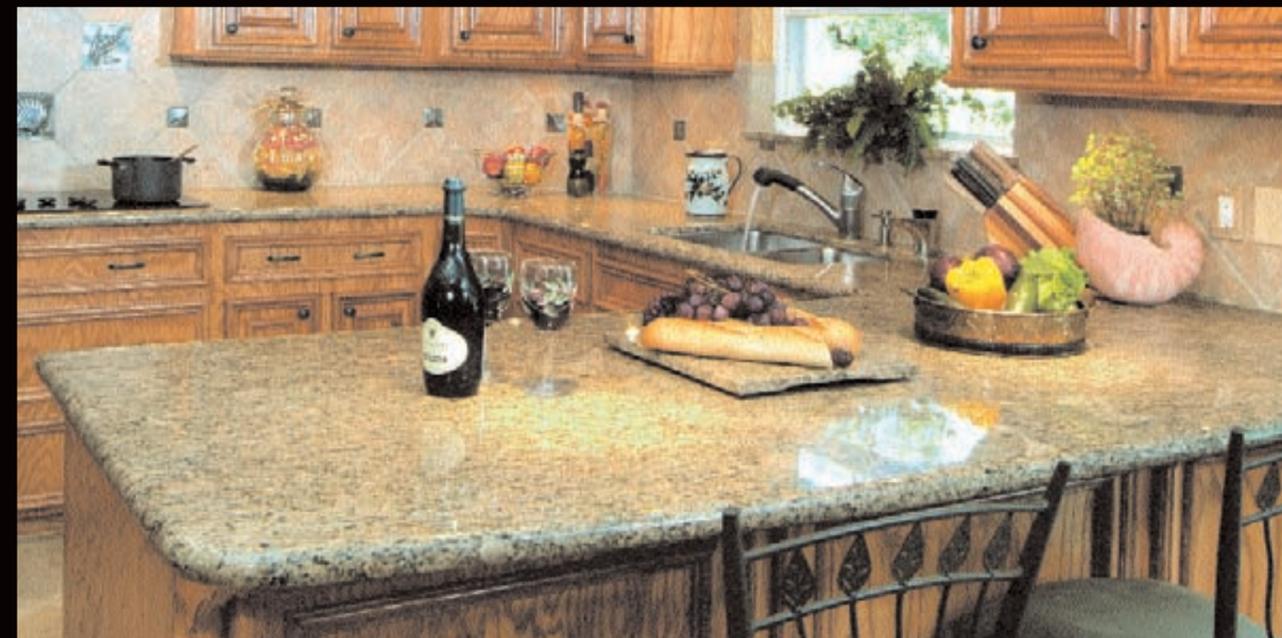
"This is my therapy area," she says now of the kitchen, the center of a busy house where she fosters stray dogs for the Houston SPCA.

Recently the Haycrafts had Sanders renovate their master bathroom. They've chosen to leave the shiplap exposed, trimming the windows, molding and other wood work with crisp white paint. "The bathroom is plain in one sense," Cynthia says. "It has clean simple lines without being overstated."

In these three different houses, natural stone enhances the look of each distinctive style the owners have chosen for their homes.

This month's In the Spotlight is sponsored by ICM Marble & Granite. Call them at 281.242.9009 or visit www.icmmarble.com.

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