

**Gehman Design Remodeling**  
TRANSFORMS A COUPLE'S MAIN  
LINE HOME INTO A BESPOKE HAVEN  
FILLED WITH AIRY, OPEN SPACES.

BY LEIGH STUART

# Open Design

**D**ennis D. Gehman, MCR, is a craftsman through and through, and has been since starting in the industry nearly 50 years ago.

"For us in the remodeling industry—those of us in design, as well as tradesmen and craftsmen—we are artists," says Gehman, the president and co-founder of Gehman Design Remodeling in Harleysville. "Remodeling is the medium with which we express it."

One need look no further than the images of the home of a Main Line couple that Gehman and his team fully renovated. He says the renovation requiring the gutting of "everything down to the subfloor, rafters, and studs."

"The only thing that remained was a fireplace," he adds. "The clients liked it, so we then used that in designing the rest of the renovations and décor."

The fireplace—the feature the clients loved most about their existing space—served as the inspiration for the stucco finishes throughout the rest of the home's interior.

"The clients had bought the property about five years prior to reaching out," Gehman shares. "They had worked with other contractors and had a new roof and windows installed, keeping the wood siding. Also, because the house is on the side of a hill, there were some erosion issues that needed to be addressed."

Though the couple loved the location, they wanted a skilled professional to help them achieve a fresh look for the home's interior. The clients' remodeling wishes were so extensive that they actually moved out of the house during the process, giving the Gehman Design Remodeling team free rein to craft the home according to the couple's wishes.

"The way we can serve people best is to ask a lot of questions," Gehman says. "Many times, people have a lot of ideas and don't know how to express or verbalize those. They can be hesitant because they feel they have to speak construction or design lingo. By listening, we can provide feedback."

The Main Line couple's remodel took seven months to complete. While the remodel was substantial, the couple had done their research, checked references, and believed Gehman Design Remodeling could handle the scope of their project in a fashion timelier than competitors. Utilizing advanced 3D computer-aided design software, Gehman Design Remodeling was able to show the clients multiple options for spaces in a three-dimensional format.

One particular point of interest: Gehman's team removed a central loadbearing wall in the home, replacing it with an exposed stained-wood support beam to achieve a more open floorplan. The project underscores the fact that Gehman and his team never shy away from a good challenge.

"Sometimes something is a design challenge, sometimes something is a structural challenge, and sometimes it's both," he says. "All I know is that I had to get a beam in this home so it would work structurally and aesthetically look nice."

"We offer a 10-year warranty on our structures, and in 32 years of business we've never been called on a structural warranty," he continues. "I jokingly say there are two ways to hold up pants—a belt or suspenders. We want both when we're making structural changes."

In the kitchen, a custom island offers sink space as well as seating for four at a raised-glass countertop. The open floorplan also features dining and living areas, as well as the beloved fireplace.



Sustainable and durable bamboo floors run throughout the home, with the exception of the tile floors in the bathrooms.

"Bamboo is more than twice as hard as oak or ash hardwood flooring," Gehman shares. "It has its own specific look. It's not a bold grain look, but because of the process used to make bamboo flooring—bamboo is put in a big pressure cooker and cooked until it's pulpy—it doesn't need to be stained or painted, just a clear coat. The company we use coined the term 'fossilized' for it."

In addition to these remarkable spaces, the home features a two-car garage, a laundry room, and a home gym with a flat-screen TV.

In its entirety, the home remodel is a testament to Gehman's commitment to "doing it right." Although the right way might take longer, he believes it's the only way.

"I use the analogy of a pebble in a shoe," he explains. "Some clients worry that if they don't like something and say something, the project will take longer. But, like a pebble in a shoe, each time you notice it, it'll hurt more until you stop and get it out of there. That's not how I want people to remember us. Rather than having sore spots later, I want the clients to be happy now." ■

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