

## Renovation Keeps House Cool and Costs Down

Canada's renovation market is hot -- as hot as last summer's temperatures. Already this year, some days have been uncomfortable enough for many homeowners to consider adding air conditioning to their renovation plans.

But central air conditioning may not be necessary for you to keep your cool. As Brad and Sue Francis recently discovered, a properly insulated home protects from the heat of summer, just as it insulates from freezing temperatures.

Brad and Sue recently gutted their 50-year-old home and rebuilt the interior, then built an addition on the back. By adding more Fiberglas Pink insulation to the original structure, and a combination of Fiberglas Pink and Glasclad Exterior Insulation Sheathing to the addition, they were able to double their living space while actually lowering their heating bill by almost 25 per cent. And although the new ductwork allows for central air conditioning, Brad and Sue say the house was quite comfortable during the recent hot, muggy weather.

The renovations came about because Brad and Sue were faced with a problem that is becoming more common for young homeowners -- their home was too small for their growing family. It was cold and drafty -- "literally falling apart," says Brad.

Real estate values were increasing much faster than their savings accounts, so the option of buying another house was looking less attractive every day. Yet, their own house was so run-down that they could get little more than land value if they sold the property.

They decided the \$50,000 in their bank account could be better used for renovation than buying a new house. But it wasn't enough to pay for everything that needed to be done, so Brad and Sue decided to renovate in stages, and to stretch the money by doing some of the work themselves.

Friend and neighbour Joe Perepeluk, a renovation contractor, guided Brad and Sue through the process. The first step was to gut the interior of the home. Then they concentrated on the mechanical systems -- a new gas furnace replaced the old oil unit, Brad rewired the home with help from Joe and the hydro inspector, and copper plumbing was installed.

In addition, a basement was dug out so the room could serve as an office for Brad and a year-round playroom for children Sharon Anne, 7 and Paul, 4. The addition has 2 x 6 stud wall construction with R-20 Fiberglas Pink insulation, and on the outside, above ground, Glasclad was applied and taped to ensure a comfortable, draft-free living space

and covered by aluminum siding. The second storey of the addition has a dramatic cathedral ceiling in the master bedroom.

This was Brad's first attempt at most of the jobs, but with the help of Sue's father and Joe, everything went smoothly. Professionals were hired to do the framing in the new addition and install the furnace and ductwork, but the insulation, vapour retarder and drywall were all do-it-yourself projects.

The most expensive part of the renovation (almost 25 per cent of the cost) was the new kitchen. It's a bright, u-shaped work center with a large breakfast nook and a walk-out to the backyard.

There's lots of work left to do, all of it cosmetic. The flooring is still plywood, and Sue ruefully notes that their furniture is either old or non-existent. The upstairs bathroom has a new whirlpool tub, but needs a new floor, tiles and finishing trim.

By having the patience to wait for the decorative materials until they could afford them, Brad and Sue now have a house that is warm in winter, cool in summer, comfortable and quiet all year long. The property value has already gone up enough to pay for the first phase of the renovation, and Brad just negotiated a new mortgage so he and Sue can begin the next phase.

## Pick a technician with care

Would you trust a stranger with your wallet -- or your life?

That's what you'd be doing if you have your vehicle repaired by a service technician you don't know. Fortunately, both industry and government studies show your trust would be well placed in the vast majority who are competent technicians. But why take a chance?

Choosing your service technicians needn't be a hit-and-miss proposition if you approach it with the same care you would in choosing your family physician. You're looking for many of the same qualities.

### Word of mouth best

Yellow pages and other advertising are great places to start, but it's word-of-mouth that really tells the story.

How long has the service station been in business? Are you satisfied with their service? Are they thorough, prompt? Is it a good place to deal? These are the questions you want answered.

Even though a service station has been recommended to you, take time to personally inspect the premises and satisfy yourself that the service staff are certified before committing yourself.

There's a lot riding on your decision -- the money you've invested in your vehicle and your own safety. So, be fussy.

You have a right to be treated with courtesy and to do business in

clean, neatly-kept surroundings. A good technician knows the difference between 'pay dirt' -- the dirt that drops to the shop floor from the car he's working on -- and the accumulated dirt of a poorly-run shop.

Before your doctor examines you, he talks to you about your symptoms; and pays particular attention to your medical history.

Well, your technician should operate in exactly the same way -- when was your vehicle last serviced and what repairs were performed? How has your vehicle been performing?

Only then can he offer his diagnosis -- which should include a reasonably-accurate estimate of service and repair costs and a written guarantee to cover all parts and service.

It's important to remember that the charge will include parts and labour. The repair may only require a \$2 part, but take an hour-and-a-half to complete.

If your technician is doing his job, you'll be informed of this long before he begins the work. You'll also be made aware of any unexpected trouble he may find and be asked what you want done about it.

### Make him a list

You can help your technician by making a list describing your vehicle's problems, with instructions on which items you want serviced or repaired.

Don't be surprised or miffed if you're not invited to watch him service your vehicle. Safety regulations and insurance contracts don't permit customers in the service bays.

When the work is completed, road-test your vehicle right away and report anything that isn't right so your technician can make adjustments.

Finally, if you've been satisfied, tell him. Better still, tell a friend. He'll be interested in your recommendation.



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