



>> Cement board siding, copper shingles, and blue stone (above) give the back a geometric order. Responding to the owners' fondness for New Orleans, architect Richard Blender incorporated a balcony off the master bedroom and French doors leading to the garden. The palette complements the blue and creamy yellow of the front of the house (above right).



**2** When they bought their house in the spring of 2002, this couple—a lawyer and an investment manager who prefer not to be named—had one child. When they moved in after the renovation, they had two. Now they have three. “We’re done,” says the husband. That goes for fixing up their new place, too. His wife is from Oklahoma; he grew up on the South Side. They were living in a townhouse in Lake View when they decided to look for something larger. A colleague of his owned a place on the block, as did the orthopedic surgeon he consulted for a thumb injury.

Proximity was again a plus for Wilkinson Blender. “We liked the fact that they were so close,” the husband recalls. “And they didn’t stop at doing the architectural plans; they oversaw all the details. It gave us a sense of comfort that we weren’t being taken advantage of.”

Richard Blender took the lead on this project, and he urged the couple to think about which spaces they would live in and which might be destined only for show. “We knew that we would never use a formal dining room,” the wife says. “But we could not

have been less help basically. We didn’t know anything about architecture or homebuilding; we knew nothing about decorating.” Now they do. But with three young children, they have decided that the good furniture can wait.

To make the couple members in good standing of the social scene on the block, Blender restored the front porch, which a previous owner had enclosed. Four bedrooms on the second floor were reconfigured into three, with two bathrooms and a laundry. A deck is now accessible from the level above.

By relocating the stairway on the first floor, Blender opened space along an outer wall for a two-and-a-half-story atrium. “This gives you a clear view from front to back,” he explains, “and it makes a dynamic stair.” The towering glass wall is a steady source of pleasure. “Even on a miserably cold day, the house is warm and sunny,” the wife says. Blender had lighting installed outdoors to give the atrium an evening glow. Eliminating the dining room and slightly reducing the size of the living room allowed for a large kitchen with painted cabinets, Carrara marble countertops, and a built-in booth.