



# 2013 HOME IMPROVEMENT



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Photo by Michael Jacobson

Nick and Maggie Utsch, who live near Roscoe off Co. Rd. 123, undertook their largest remodeling project yet at their country home last summer, completely rebuilding their great room (shown), their dining room (adding a small corner addition), and their kitchen.

## Nick and Maggie Utsch remodel great room

*Roscoe couple undertakes largest remodel project yet on country home*

By Michael Jacobson

For Maggie and Nick Utsch, efficiency while keeping the country character is motivating the ongoing renovation of their farm house.

Last summer, the couple, both 1996 PHS grads, undertook their biggest project yet...completely rebuilding the main sec-

tion (living room, kitchen, and dining room) of their house near Roscoe.

After getting married, the couple lived in Paynesville, where Nick, who has done construction for 17 years, remodeled their house. But with four kids – Grace, 11; Matthew, 9; Josiah, 7; and Nicholas, 3 – their in-town home got too small.

So, in 2006, they bought their country home, along with 10 acres, from LeRoy Hillbrand, who had lived there with his family since 1941. (Their property is the site of the old Zion Church, whose foundation still sits next to their driveway.)

"We had looked for a place for quite a while," recalled Maggie, who loves trees,

so the mature oaks on the property (some maybe 300 years old) were a huge draw. Plus they wanted room for their kids to play outside and room to raise animals (calves, chickens, sheep) and to have a big garden. "We've been trying to do as much as possible to be sustainable," said Maggie.

Since purchasing the house, they have done a series of projects to update and improve it. Right away, they added lights (since the house mostly relied on lamps), combined two small bedrooms into one larger room for the boys, removed wallpaper, and painted. Then, in 2007, they did a couple projects: adding a more efficient

fireplace (which they use to heat the house, along with a corn stove in the basement) and remodeling the laundry room, which also serves as a mud room.

Their house is not particularly big, so they have to be efficient, said Maggie, who hates wasted space. Since the house had been built as a little, square farmhouse and then enlarged by a series of additions, "everything was pieced together," said Maggie.

Last year, they actually did two projects. First, last spring, they redid their master bedroom and bathroom, as well as widening the garage and jacking it up 18 inches. For their bedroom, Nick salvaged

wood from the old white house in Paynesville that sat behind Queen Bee's Bar and Grill, which was demolished last year, and then used the antique wood for the floor and a tray ceiling. "I've wanted that forever," said Nick of the tray ceiling, "something different."

Maggie, who loves old wood, wanted to maintain the country character of their home. "We wanted the house not to feel new," she said. "For me, it was keeping the integrity of the house."

While they were redoing their bathroom, Nick added a walk-in tile shower (sacrificing part of his closet).

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