

nordic light

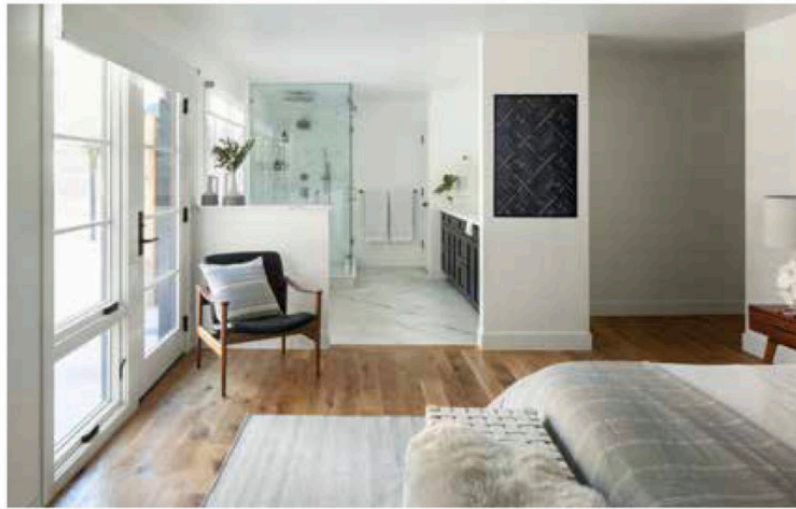
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The thoughtful renovation of a Cherry Creek ranch proves that old world hygge can find its place even in a sprawling interior when the design sticks to simple, clean lines.

Even if some of us struggle with how to pronounce the word hygge—a quick internet search turns up everything from *hyoo-guh* to *hih-guh*—we can all agree on one thing about the popular Scandinavian influence on architecture and design: that it is about light-filled, minimal interiors designed with a focus on coziness.

When the architecture and design team behind Factor Design Build met with Kiely and Merel Wilson in the fall of 2017, just after the couple had moved into a 4,904-square-foot ranch in Cherry Hills, they were struck by the home's empty feeling. As Merel Wilson, born in Holland, began describing what she wanted—intimate spaces where her family, friends and three children would frequently gather—the team recognized that the floor plan would need an overhaul.





“Things definitely evolve during the design process. That’s the beauty of a design build. It is easier to change course in the middle of construction without a major impact on the timeline.” —Jennifer Murphy, Factor Design Build

living area before advancing to the bedrooms and baths, once they met with Factor it was agreed that the varied floor heights required installation of the floors throughout the home all at once. With that, the Wilsons moved out so the renovation could begin.

The first challenge was to rebuild a sunroom that had been added to the original home. “The flooring was a different material. The ceiling heights were different. The windows were lower,” said Fiester. “So we ripped out the floor, vaulted the ceiling, and framed it in so it would not look like an addition.”

This also meant the roof needed to be rebuilt so it actually looked like part of the original structure. Architect Jane Blumer said, “We added a matching hipped roof with the same slope as the rest of the house, but it was right next to a gabled roof, so it was a challenge to make that work and give the correct feel to the house.”

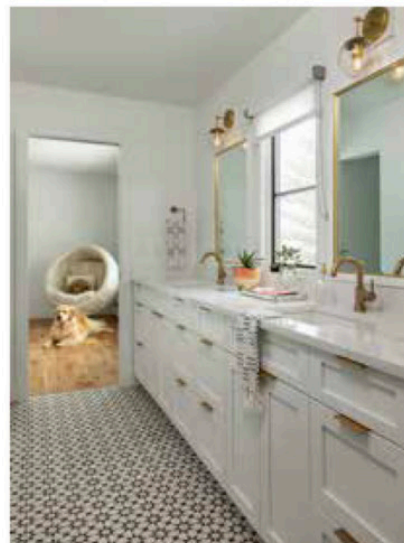
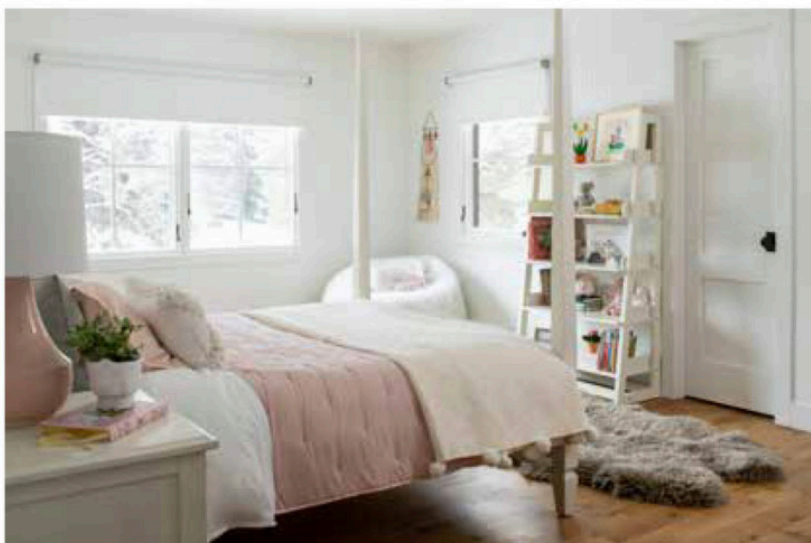
Factor selected ebony-clad Marvin window frames to reflect the modern feel of the interior but remain congruent to the exterior, which Blumer described as French provincial. “The original windows were like French windows with the diamond-shaped glass.”

The new windows had an immediate impact, and the space started to match the spirit of design that Merel Wilson was seeking. “I’ve always liked windows, probably because my parents lived in older Dutch houses where the windows are tiny,” Merel said. “My taste is more like the Amsterdam Canal house feeling, with bigger windows and lots of white everywhere.”

As they proceeded into the kitchen, the Factor team reinforced the flooring to accommodate a new 350-pound LaCanche Range and then buttressed the ceiling to house the mounted oven vent above.

Layers of bedding from Rough Linen and The Citizenry soften the edges of a mid-century nightstand and the Parallel bed from Design Within Reach. Hanging above, Deborah Zlotzky’s Wallflower, curated by Ann Benson Reidy and Associates, by Robischon Gallery.





A Jack-and-Jill bath connects the daughters' bedrooms. The black and white cement tiles, custom cabinets by Ultracraft and gold Delta Trinsic fixtures create a timeless scheme designed to endure as the girls grow up.

“We wanted to keep the oven in the center of the island,” said Merel, “but we didn’t want this awful hood coming down in the middle of the room.” The almost invisible Zephyr 63 Luxe Ceiling Hood was worth it. Now nothing blocks the view from the dining room into the library or out to the pool.

Initially, Merel considered black cabinets. “I wanted contrast against the white oak floors we selected,” she says. Her husband felt it would be too dark, especially after the newly installed windows had just brightened the space. In the end, the couple agreed on walnut wood to maintain a contemporary feel that would provide contrast against the floor. The design team added the walnut to the peninsula counter, the breakfast table top and the custom cabinets.

The original wood-burning fireplace, a Hygge element if ever there was one, had to stay, said Merel. So the design team configured the breakfast

nook and coffee station in front of the mantle, creating the perfect space for Merel to catch up with her husband and children.

Although the kitchen remains large and open, Factor defined separate areas within the larger spaces. “They wanted an area where the kids could make smoothies and they wouldn’t be in the way if somebody was cooking at the stove,” Blumer says when explaining how the breakfast table and coffee bar area took shape in the design plan. “And they both like their espresso.”

Once the new dining space was established as part of the overall kitchen, the former dining room needed a new purpose. The Wilsons considered making it an office, but Murphy noticed that the family often gravitated to the space because it has the best light, so she suggested turning it into a library instead. The Factor team added a reading nook and additional shelving to inspire lounging and hours of reading.

One of the homeowners’ favorite areas evolved while the home was still gutted. On one of her daily walks to visit during the framing process of the construction, Merel arrived after large windows had been installed. Captivated by the impact of the flood of light into the master bedroom, she and her husband decided to forgo building a wall between the master bedroom and bathroom as originally planned.

“Things definitely evolve during the design process. That’s the beauty of design build,” said Murphy, adding that it’s easy to change course in the middle of construction without a major impact on the timeline.

And what could be more hygge than soaking in the freestanding tub in front of a large, open window? There might be one thing more blissful than that, Merel says. “I love that we can be in our bed, look out the window and have all of this light coming in.” ■