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BALANCE SHEET

The Other Side of Levittown

Built by the 'father of suburbia' in the 1940s, a Tudor-style home in an upscale community on Long Island's North Shore undergoes a decadelong, \$1 million renovation

BY NANCY KEATES

AS THE BUILDER of flagship stores for Calvin Klein and John Varvatos, Anthony Faglione is well versed in modern and contemporary design. But when it came to his own home, he focused on the past.

"I am a purist. Being of European descent, I felt it was important to live in a European-style house," said Mr. Faglione, a young-looking 51-year-old. Born in a Brooklyn tenement, "this is what I always aspired to."

It took 10 years and nearly \$1 million to restore Mr. Faglione's home—a Tudor in the Long Island suburb of Manhasset, N.Y.—to his exacting standards. Purchased in 2000 for \$825,000, the 3,400-square-foot, four-bedroom, four-bathroom house was built in the 1940s and designed by Levitt & Sons, which was headed by William Levitt. While Mr. Levitt's developments of inexpensive, identical homes gained him the title "the father of suburbia," the real-estate developer also built communities of European-style homes targeted toward more affluent home buyers. Mr. Levitt spared little expense in his effort to make these homes as authentically European as possible—a spirit continued in Mr. Faglione's meticulous renovation.

Work began in 2003, and the first step was an expansion onto the garage. Mr. Faglione blew out the side of the second floor of the main house, extending it 700 square feet over the garage to create another living space. Anticipating the extensive nature of the work, he installed a temporary kitchen there and lived in the space with his wife and two kids.

"It was lots of jackhammers and moving from room to room all through middle school and high school," said Mr. Faglione's son Paul, now 21. The room eventually became Mr. Faglione's daughter's room.

As is often the case, much of the renovation's expense was in the kitchen. Mr. Faglione chose high-end designer Clive Christian, installing cabinets that retailed for about \$100,000. Mr. Faglione also selected a 2-inch-thick granite slab for the center island instead of the usual 1-inch thickness, for a grander look. Weighing 2,000 pounds, the slab had to be delivered by crane, and an additional structure in the basement had to be installed to support it—adding the island's cost to about \$20,000.

As nod to his own Italian heritage, Mr. Faglione also decided to put an authentic brick pizza oven in the kitchen. While the actual oven kit was about \$10,000, getting the structure and the chimney installed cost close to \$70,000. Mr. Faglione admits not using it too often—it's a lot of work to make the fire and the dough and clean up the mess—but says he



ORIGINAL CONDITION To keep the facade of the house the same after the renovation, owner Anthony Faglione used brick and stone reclaimed from other homes that were demolished but came from the same era.



TOP-SHELF CHEF The kitchen's cabinets retailed for about \$100,000, choosing heavy 2-inch-thick granite for the counter raised the island's cost to about \$20,000.

doesn't regret the investment. "We are foodies. I'd do it again," he said. The most time-consuming mistake happened with the roof. Though a builder named Mr. Faglione had hired a contractor, Mr. Faglione says his wife told him he never finishes what he starts, and he was busy at work. But the contractor didn't install the slate the right way, making it look wrong. Using his own workers, Mr. Faglione had the entire roof removed and reinstalled, purchasing additional slate sourced from the era the house was built. The mistake cost him three months, an extra \$20,000 and the inconvenience of living with a blue tarp over the house in the middle of winter.

Another hitch: The center of the house had sunk 6 inches. Jacking up the house and installing steel beams added a couple of weeks and about \$10,000 to the project. In order to keep the facade of the house the

same, Mr. Faglione used brick and stone reclaimed from other homes that were demolished but came from the same era, tripling the price of the materials.

The house now looks like it could be in an English storybook, with dormers, stone peaks and copper gutters.

Inside the feel is more Tuscan, with lots of stone, tile and marble. The dining and living areas have a formal feel, while the back, where the kitchen opens up to an eating area and then a den, are open and casual. Out back the limestone patio that backs up to stone walls looks like it has been there for a century.

Mr. Faglione attributes his business success to attention to detail. Raised in Brooklyn and Queens by Italian immigrants, Mr. Faglione started working construction part time when he was 13. After taking



BIG JOB The renovation took 10 years; a view of the home office.



EVERY LITTLE DETAIL A window in the addition, now the daughter's room.

some time off for architectural-design school, he went into commercial construction. His first fashion gig was in 1995, when he was called in to help with Calvin Klein's fashion show during a snowstorm. From there he went on to specialize in fashion, building stores, sets, offices and showrooms, interjecting the creative designs for brands like Ralph Lauren into technical construction details.

Mr. Faglione was inspired to make his renovation an authentically authentic by a similar renovation down the street. About six of the score 800 Levitt homes in his neighborhood have been renovated in keeping with how they were built, he says.

"I think the house is worth what I put into it," Mr. Faglione said. "Besides, I wasn't really focused on what I got back. I work really hard. You want to come home to something you're proud of."



UPPER CRUST Installing an authentic pizza oven wound up costing \$70,000.



FASHION GUY Anthony Faglione is a go-to builder for fashion designers.

SOME OF THE MAJOR COSTS

Clive Christian kitchen cabinets

\$100,000

Three bedrooms with Carrera marble countertops

\$100,000

Patio and hardscaping

\$90,000

Pizza oven

\$70,000

Kitchen island

\$20,000

Fix slope/make house level

\$10,000

Fix inadequate roof job

\$20,000

OVERALL COSTS:

About \$1 million