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ACCENT ON PERSONALITY



The Berlin Borough kitchen of Kristin Braidwood and Len DiGiacomo is a work in progress. Renovation includes floor, backsplash and countertops.

Berlin Borough couple's ongoing home renovation reflects its owners

By **CANDY GRANDE**
For the Courier-Post

A splash of color here, some new accent pieces there and Kristin Braidwood and Len DiGiacomo's Berlin Borough house is becoming a home.

The twosome began their renovation project in June. With help from interior decorator Teresa Tocco they are transforming their country style house into something more traditional.

"Teresa's guidance has been very beneficial and she has been very committed to us," says DiGiacomo, a controller for Puroclean in Southampton.

"Kristin and I have full input in the decision making. As far as everything we've done, we are happy."

Much has been done in the past few months. New accent pieces and furniture, such as end tables and a television console, have made the family room of their three-bedroom town home almost complete.

be considered, but Braidwood says they're waiting to see how the renovated kitchen looks before they select a color for the curtains.

The couple already had spent about \$6,000 on furniture in the family room, kitchen and master bedroom when they were featured in the Courier-Post in June. Since then, they've spent an additional \$1,500 on the family room and about \$7,000 on the kitchen.

Tocco, owner of the design firm Absolute Living Today in Mount Laurel, recommended the metal artwork that now hangs on the family room's previously bare wall.

"The unique wall art is very colorful," says Tocco. "It pulls out all of the colors in the room. My goal is to create a warm, welcoming feeling that the family warrants. I want the home to reflect their personality."

"I like the art on the wall," says Braidwood and DiGiacomo's 5-year-old daughter, Kaylee.



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■ Read the story that introduced the Braidwood-DiGiacomo home renovation. Visit the Web and add */your life*. To read Kristin Braidwood's blog

Photos by DENISE HENHOEFFER/Courier-Post

A candle holder (top) enlivens the renovated family room of Berlin Borough residents Kristin Braidwood and Len DiGiacomo and daughter, Kaylee.

Design/A renovated house is becoming a home

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"I like the colors in it."

The kitchen, however, has proven to be more complex.

"Len actually hated the kitchen when we moved in," says Braidwood, a social worker in the Berlin Township school district. "It had a blue countertop and a peach backsplash with fruit. It was very country."

The couple is replacing the

floor, countertops and backsplash.

"It's pretty torn up right now," Braidwood adds, "but I know it will look really good" when it's finished.

Tocco did disagree with some of the couple's decorating decisions for the kitchen. They wanted a granite countertop in grayish-white and a gray-colored backsplash. Tocco thought it might be better to add more color.

"I told them I'd work with them for the granite, but I didn't like the backsplash because it was too gray," says Tocco. "We looked at other backsplashes and chose one that has some burgundy, tan and gold in it. It's really very beautiful."

DiGiacomo admits he had his doubts, but he's happy with the

kitchen's color scheme. Now the biggest challenge he faces is finding time to do the work.

"I wanted to do the backsplash and floor installation," the 37-year-old admits. "But because of the time frame and working all week, I may need to hire someone to at least do the floor."

Braidwood's biggest challenge is trying to live in a home where so much work is occurring.

"It's hard being patient while

the work is being done," explains Braidwood, 30. "But everything has been going well and it's been amazing. We are really making the house our home."

After the kitchen is complete, the family is thinking of moving on to the foyer and living room.

Tocco is looking forward to helping with the next rooms. "It's been fun working with them," she says. "They are a sweet couple and we laugh a lot."



DENISE HENHOEFFER/

An entertainment center is a new addition to the Braidwood couple's home in Berlin Borough.