

# Remodeling

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## Design Awards 2010

A light and airy modern makeover of a cramped historic rowhouse wins Best of the Year.

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One remodeling company's franchising effort, back-to-basics sales tips, causes of customer dissatisfaction, working with an automated estimating system, benefits of built-in seating, kitchen storage solutions, and more



**Location:** Darien, Conn.  
**Contractor:** Joe Filanowski, J&J Custom Builders, Milford, Conn.  
**Designer:** Robert A. Cardello, Robert A. Cardello Architects, Norwalk, Conn.  
**Stair fabricator:** New England Stair, Shelton, Conn.

**CRAFTSMANSHIP/DETAIL  
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## Dramatic Twist

When architect Robert Cardello designed a new house for his clients, he needed to create a visual focal point in the plan. He had designed a two-story glass enclosure for the stairs and wanted to include a dramatic structure for that space. "As a whole, in houses we design, we often see the stairs as a piece of furniture, which I

often use as a design feature in the home," the architect says. "This house is no exception."

Cardello designed the stair to "float" within the enclosure. "This was used as a lens to flood the interior with light," he says.

The treads on this dramatic traditional stair are made of custom wide-plank character oak. The



structure features custom mahogany newel posts and a custom decorative balustrade with a cast iron shoe that adds a finishing touch to the design.

"The metal balusters were chosen to reinforce the light and airy feel of the design," Cardello says. The mahogany handrails were fabricated on site. —N.P.

