

# **A Campanelli Ranch Transformation with a Hidden Heat Pump Debacle**

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## **What we wanted / How we planned our HVAC improvements:**

- Existing boiler ~40 years old; no gas on street; No central AC ; opt to explore heat pump options with electric backup heat
- Heat pump coaching before soliciting estimates
- 6 different estimates from reputable companies for ducted air-source heat pump and hybrid water heater installation
- Vetted different approaches to zoning, system sizing, and proposed equipment
- Advocated for larger hybrid water heater based on guidance from Heat pump coach
- Final approach: 5-ton ducted air-source heat pump with 65 gallon hybrid water heater.

## What we got:

- Installer ruptured the water main to our house during one of first days on site
- Installer failed to provide ducting plan or consistent management of installation such that different installers arrived each day with no clear direction on installation
- Upon startup, system is incorrectly ducted – with some rooms/vents connected to the wrong zone; or in one case, not connected to the system at all
- System blows too strongly and with lots of noise. Doors blow shut.
- 1.5 years of advocacy with installer documents high static pressure in system and attempts to remedy it. We are told it is resolved; but problems/weird behavior continue.
- We hire outside electrician and 2 HVAC companies to troubleshoot ongoing problems. Finally in March 2026, we pay for full load calculations to evaluate current system, which diagnoses that equipment is oversized and ducts are undersized.

## Where we are now:

- Assembled formal inventory of all interactions with Installer
- Solicited outside recommendations and estimates for proper equipment and duct sizing
- Sent formal letter of complaint to Installer, with supporting documentation of all timelines, problems, previous complaints, new J-load calculations and system recommendations. Letter included promise of further complaints to Attorney General, Bryant, and MassSave, pending their response to our complaint.
- Installer contacts us and asks to make site visit. We allow this only with Bryant Representative in attendance as well.
- Everyone agrees that our system is a disaster. Installer attributes this to previous employees who they have subsequently let go. Installer asks to work with us on designing an entirely new system, with Bryant as part of design team, and to see if we would consider letting them replace entire HVAC system at no cost.

## What we learned / Recs for Coaches & clients:

- Ask for a formal J-load calculation to confirm size of heat pump relative to heating and cooling loads; Ask for formal duct plan; and have them both in hand before project proceeds.
- Customer should be coached to expect a consistent installation team throughout project and to be an advocate.
- Customer should expect, at start of project, walk-through with installation team so everyone is on the same page; daily updates from installation lead; final walk-through and sign-off with installation lead.
- Customer should be coached to advocate for system balancing as part of final fit-out (this is not always outlined and included in estimates)
- Good research, reference checks, and advocacy do not always guarantee a strong result.

Thank you!

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