

~~YOUR THIS~~ Old House

JUNE 2008

SPECIAL ISSUE!

100% READER-CREATED

**YOU
VOTED!
remodel
contest
winners
SEE P. 80**

> **Your Projects**

Best before & afters
Budget kitchen redo

> **Your Problems Solved**

Take control of clutter
End contractor troubles

> **Your Ideas & Tips**

Money-saving strategies
Clever ways with paint & tile

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We gave it impressive towing capacity. Plenty of payload.² And the most fuel-efficient available V8 you can get in a full-size truck.^{3,4} Around here, improvement isn't an option, it's a way of life. Just because it hasn't been done, doesn't mean it can't be done.

*Data are based on body weight and distribution. **Estimated egg with up to 0.5 mg/kg in FW. If dry/0.01 kg, Daphnia also will be exposed to 0.01 mg/kg. In this case, the egg will be exposed to 0.01 mg/kg and the embryo will be exposed to 0.01 mg/kg.

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Electrolux

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After all, I can't come up with all the ideas.

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THEM EXTRACRUNCHY.
NEW FLAVORS KETTLE ROASTED PEANUTS.

INSTINCTIVELY
GOOD

House

june 2008 | CONTENTS

features

80 Our Reader Remodel Contest Winners

The housefuls have moved in! But Sharon and Jim Wicks put it back together and there's more. Your choice for best whole-house makeover

88 One-Room Wonders

Your votes for best backroom, basement, bedrooms and more

92 Home Numbers

Data from our highly anticipated reader survey of your home-related fears, dislikes, wishes and dreams

94 On the Couch With This Old House

Your word on better neighbors, analyzed by our columnist Shirley

98 This Old House Saved!

A popular request: Save This Old House progress reports

107 Family Project

Take a tip from the nation's best

READER REMODEL CONTEST WINNERS



80



98



Next time you walk into your house, check their progress. Are they courtesies enough to take off their boots?



ON THE COUCH
80 Remodel winners
88 Read before it's too late
92 Budget before it's too late
94 I'd love to see your house
97 Your money-saving tips and tricks

Come along with
Sharon and Jim Wicks
to the top of the page

reasons to linger



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in every issue

THIS MONTH ONLINE 12
FROM THIS OLD HOUSE 10 | HWB 17

around the house

13 **Renovation archaeology** | Decorative painting | How to store your seasonal

departments

20 **Kitchen Design**
Two men swap a show off their high-quality low-cost redo

35 **Luxuries**
Got a collection gathering dust? Seven stylish options for displaying your stuff

42 **Landscaping**
How one reader created a lush garden—and found a new career

47 **Around My House**
A lady in the west coast remodels her home

58 **Savings**
Make your own savings like mine with help from the Savings Challenge adviser

67 **Paperwork**
Our readers' best penny-pinching tricks

61 **Decorate of a Style**
Bring details of the Craftsman style—modern ways to get it

67 **Toolbox**
Your Father's Day tool wishes fulfilled

73 **Step-by-Step**
Creating a backyard pond

140 **Save This Old House**
A sturdy 1866 barn—yours for \$1

workshop

116 **Ask This Old House**
Can I be alright? How to paint a wall? Putty your spose? You asked, and our experts weigh in

125 **Home's Notebook**
Spray guns, table saws, and bird nests: readers' top tools from the 10th Annual carpenter

127 **Directory**
Find the products and services featured in this issue



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House

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The Old House

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 Co-Host: **Kevin O'Connell**
 Carpenter: **Tommy**
 Electrician: **Tommy**
 Plumber: **Tommy**
 Painter: **Tommy**
 Carpenter: **Tommy**
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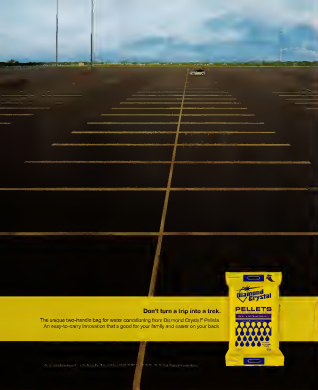


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letter FROM YOUR OLD HOUSE

You Asked for It...

YOU ASKED: Easy locks. Obstacles. Structural. Parody out of your mind.

And we have you for it.

Yep, the editors sure heaved a lot about you while sifting through the thousands of e-mails and photos submitted to the yourTOOL pages on our website for this special reader-created issue of *The Old House*.

For example, we know that Mylind Cowan, personally lives in a Dumpster. That heinous home will not stop Merry Kupstchik from using her porch as fire. That Jim and Sherita Wade are willing to resort to bribery to get into the house of their dreams. And not just any bribery—we're talking bribery of children.

But as you flip through the 43 pages of reader contributions in this issue, I think you'll agree that all your feedback, though at times unorthodox, yielded pretty amazing results. In the case of the Wade's lake-side home in Texas, the outcome is as remarkable as the family dream was unreal. What's a what they got the first-time *The Old House* Reader Remodel Award, as chosen by all of you. By the way, the ever-ongoing you picked it was far and away the favorite vote getter, handsily beating the Wade's living room, dining room, and a close-up of their culinary.

Back in December, when we asked for help creating this issue, we didn't know how things would shape up, whether we'd get many responses, or if any of the ones we did get would be sharp enough to publish. Then your e-mails started to arrive. Your comments and plans began to pile up. Your ideas and advice, your tips—each one laser-sharp and laser-focused on where home fans were then and now.

We couldn't have worried about getting enough good stuff; we needed to worry about having too much!

In the end, I think this is the best issue of *The Old House* I've ever read. And around here, we all wish we could clean some cobble. But the work on your homes and in these pages is all yours. Thanks for doing such a great job.

Sam O'Connell
SENIOR EDITOR

P.S. Inside there's a lot of advice you can put to the test. I'm going to give Tracy Calton's pecking tip (on the right) a try while doing the roosts in my house. I'm taking pickers, too (you guys aren't the only ones who can show off). Keep an eye out for them in our before-and-after issue later this year.

HOW'D WE DO?

Tell us what you think of our first-ever reader-created issue (we can trim it, really) at voat@readershouse.com



As used in *Readers' House*, this home is a Dumpster. The home is a Dumpster. The home is a Dumpster.



We thought we'd give you a chance to see what we did with the Wade's lake-side home.



Jim and Sherita Wade's home is a Dumpster. The home is a Dumpster. The home is a Dumpster.



Jim and Sherita Wade's home is a Dumpster. The home is a Dumpster. The home is a Dumpster.



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Jim and Sherita Wade's home is a Dumpster. The home is a Dumpster. The home is a Dumpster.

READER TIP

"Before using a new paint roller cover, wrap it with tape, then pull it off to remove lint that would otherwise end up on your walls."

—BRAD CLIFTON
PROJECT ONE



We strive to get every detail right during our how-to photo shoots, but sometimes we goot up—and our mistakes prompt more e-mails from you (and more embarrassment for us) than forgetting our safety glasses. One style does not fit all, though, so here's a quick look at a handful of different faces. —Justin Salazar



Best Places to Buy Bloomers

Join us to **Matthew Flannery** **Enforcing** **Months**, and when we asked where you buy your fertilizer, many of you named the biggies, like White Flower Farm, Jackson & Perkins, and Noyes & Gardner. But we were psyched to hear about all these lesser-known nurseries on your list. —CHRISTOPHER SCHEIDT

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and in dry climates and should be considered.

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READER PROFILES

Brush With Greatness

Decorative painter Damon Bopp shares a few of his secrets

Like many readers, Damon Bopp tears out pages and pictures from *The Old House* to use as inspiration for his own work. But his work is anything but typical. The owner of Boppco (boppco.com in Fairfield, New Jersey) paints stunning murals and accents that reject a wide variety of subjects: murals of patterns found on antique fabrics and stenciled deer motifs to indicate they make perfect book marks.

His first project was painting stripes on the walls in his apartment, as he says, "I wouldn't brag about it," he says. Later he opened up his Los Angeles-based decorative painter for eight years before launching his own business. His stress at his client's calls for "quote a big time" before finding the right way to reconstruct the space's architecture without going over the top.

Even novice painters can add flourishes to their walls or floors, Bopp says. One of his tricks is using stencils, which he makes out of clear tape to cut Mylar when painting. He uses a stencil brush and dips the paint on from the stencil's edges from the middle to keep it from dropping outside the lines. His most important advice: "Have a lot of patience!" —*ANNE SCHUBS*



Bopp added his idea! His decorative is a client's basement (TOP). At his old house, stenciled bird and flower motifs adorn wallpaper (MIDDLE), and a deer stencil (ABOVE) incorporated geometric and nature-inspired shapes.

READER TIP

"When painting a decorative accent, choose a color that's two shades darker or lighter than the surrounding area so the detail stands out but isn't jarring." —*DAMON BOPP (BOPPCO.COM)*



10 USES

MAGAZINES

You've often held up that you save every issue of *The Old House*, but when the price at glasson in your neighborhood's has hit, use these ideas: —*JOANNE CRUMP*

1. STRONGER THAN BONES. Secure a rolled-up magazine with tape (the ends) in between card around it to keep it from tangling.

2. LINE & PINK. Before adding a later piece a thick layer of vinyl, use paper from the surface of the magazine area to keep rocks and holes from puncturing the floor (Newspaper works, too.)

3. KEEP GLASS HANDS OFF. When you're painting, before putting on your gloves, use the pages of newspaper, paper and press them onto the glass to protect the surface. After painting, the paper pulls off easily.

4. PROTECT YOUR SURFACES. Line your worktable and the floor beneath it with magazine pages for easy cleanup after a messy job.

5. MAP A PRESENT. When you're gift wrapping, use magazine pages from old magazines instead.

6. IMPROVE AT THE TABLE. Blank magazine, make four different sets and use the box with tape and then use magazine pages, labels, or wallpaper to the table.

7. USE YOUR CHANNEL. Use heavy-weight magazine pages to keep down bottom chairs.

8. NOVELTY TRICK. Use magazine center's hot pot or dish to protect your tabletop.

9. MAKE PROTECTS. Roll up sheets of magazines and put them inside lat bands while they dry.

10. GIVE IT A PLANT. Perfect plant fertilizer for a painter! Fill bags with the bottom of the paper, a cup of the potting.



Every illness is a journey. It helps to have a guide. Introducing the new Health.com. A website that delivers better answers to all your health questions. We combine expert medical information with the real-life experiences and problem-solving insights of patients who've been where you're going.

Health.com
Where to turn



RIGHT: From left to right, volunteers Joe Medina, Edward Monardi, Ralph Bice, Dick Benson, Neil Lyndale, and George Strauss meet before their Wednesday shift. **MIDDLE:** George Strauss installs a sink handle for John Stevenson of Fair Lawn, New Jersey.



GOOD DEEDS

GOING INTO REHAB

Reader Jack Gardner e-mailed to ask if we'd write about the home-repair program he works with. We liked his story—so here's our story.

Many people who enjoy tinkering with their houses put their skills to work for others: parents, friends, even perfect strangers. That's the case for handy retirees like Jack Gardner, George Strauss, and Edward Monardi of Bergen County, New Jersey, who volunteer for Chore Service, a county-sponsored program that recruits local community members to perform minor household repairs for the elderly and disabled. Clients pay only for materials. "We have a high proportion of elderly residents, so the service is very much needed here," says program director Maureen McCormick.

Most of the Chore volunteers are building pros. "They're basically handy people who are comfortable working with tools," McCormick says. "And because we send out crews during the week, most of our volunteers are retired—they have the time to help out."

And the enthusiasm. Chore Service has more than 30 volunteers, who seem as grateful for the work as those they assist. "Even if you're just replacing light-bulbs, people gush over us. What's better than that?" says Strauss, 71, a former printer. "Volunteering gives you a considerably that you lose when you stop working." Monardi, also 71, puts it a different way: "Home improvement keeps me young." —**ELIZABETH HITCHAM**

Want to test your skills in Chore Service or similar group? Find out if volunteer homes repair organizations near the county, state or at www.volunteer.org or www.volunteer.org



READER TIP

"Stick a piece of tape to a rechargeable battery you've just juiced up. That way, you'll know it's ready to go."

—**JOSEPH LUNDA BRIGHT**, WISCONSIN

"How Do I Get Rid of Old Rechargeable Batteries?"

That's a question we got from **Lee Cantu** of San Antonio, Texas, (and other readers) when we asked you for ideas for this issue. Here's the 411.

Most trash haulers won't take rechargeable batteries from cordless drill/drivers, circular saws, and the like because they contain heavy metals that need special recycling. But Call2Recycle, a national collection program, maintains a network of about 30,000 retail stores that serve as drop-off spots for old electronics, including Target and Home Depot. Here's how to find one.

1. LOCATE A DROP-OFF SITE. Go to Call2Recycle.org or dial their toll-free 1-800-8-BATTERY.

2. CALL AHEAD. It's worth clipping the store to find out where to take your batteries once you arrive. That way you can avoid waiting in line at the information desk. Large home and electronics retailers are often your best bet, because they sell lots of items that use rechargeable batteries.

3. HAVE A BACKUP PLAN. If Call2Recycle doesn't list a drop-off site near you, try calling 800-CLEAN UP. A hotline set up by a nonprofit called E-Cycle360, which lists recycling resources. In all states, call your local department of sanitation. Some will pick up rechargeables in electronics collection days, or they can refer you to another collection spot. —**SARAH SCHMIDT**

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An Advisor immediately connects into your vehicle to see if you're okay and can send emergency help to your exact location using GPS technology. They share the vital crash data with first responders, who are then better prepared to treat you at the scene. Honda Accord and Toyota Camry don't offer anything like it. Chevy Malibu offers it standard for the first year.

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1-75 NORTH
1/4 BLUE

Directions can also be shown on your radio display.

of a button. You'd have to pay extra for navigation on Camry or Accord. But with Chevy Malibu, it is standard for one year.

The engine talks. The brakes report. The tires inform. Month to month, Malibu tells it like it is.



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Like an update from your best friend, your Malibu checks in every month. OnStar Vehicle Diagnostics³ runs hundreds of checks on Malibu's engine, transmission, ABS, and more. Then it e-mails you the results, as well as any action you need to take. It'll even remind you of periodic maintenance issues. It's an ongoing conversation with your car from the convenience of your computer. You can even run a

diagnostic check from the road by pressing the blue OnStar button. This peace of mind service is standard for Malibu owners for one year. Accord and Camry? They aren't big on conversation.





NEED TO KNOW

SHARING YOUR RENOVATION STORY

On a given day, you sift on heavy cardboard and stacks of pictures of your remodeling projects. Not anymore! We've teamed up with Reader Remodel Entries for this issue at thisoldhouse.com/yourTOD, and we get scores of photos e-mailed to us every day. Which is great. The only problem is, our e-mail system is bogged down with memory-hogging attachments, and if you're sending pictures to friends and family, we bet their systems are, too. So, to ease some of the inbox burden, here are three nifty e-mail Internet options for showcasing your home-improvement projects. They're easy to use, even if you're not much more confident with a crawler than a computer. —CHRISTOPHER

FOR THE TIME-CONSCIOUS—UPLOAD TO PHOTO-SHARING SITES

Free websites like Flickr.com and KodakGallery.com let you create online photo albums to share with family and friends. Just upload your photos, enter the recipient's e-mail addresses, and hit "send." A single message with a link to your slideshow will be sent out to everyone, so your fast-to attach attachments necessary. Flickr.com, another popular site, promotes a personal webpage for sharing your photos, and while creating an account is free, you'll get more storage space if you upgrade to a pro-account for an annual fee of \$24.95.

FOR THE ASPIRING WRITER—START A BLOG

Blogs are a simple way to chronicle your renovation with detailed backstories and pictures. Websites like Blogger.com and WordPress.com let you create web pages filled with text, images, and links. You can update your site as often as you like, and family and friends can view it their own time to keep up with your latest projects.

FOR THE REMODEL VETERAN—POST TO HOME-IMPROVEMENT SITES

Let's face it: Your loved ones might be sick of hearing about your kitchen overhaul. Why not let your staff or others going through the same joy and pain? Keep us posted your photos at thisoldhouse.com/yourTOD for the world to see. Or start an account at RemodelBlog.com, which features blogs from more than 100,000 Remodelers. Each site offers comment areas and message boards for giving (and getting) advice.

READER TIP

"The best pictures of our remodeled house show off textures, like brick and wood. Capturing those details really brings the photos to life."

—ASHLEY VAUGHN
FORT WORTH, TEX.

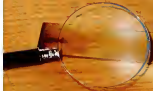


photos better just this properly." **Lighting tips:** Use natural light as far as possible. Avoid harsh shadows. If you're using a camera, use a tripod to keep the camera steady. If you're using a camera, use a tripod to keep the camera steady. If you're using a camera, use a tripod to keep the camera steady.

FIVE TIPS FOR GETTING GOOD SHOTS

- 1. Shoot from the eye level.** If you're shooting a room, get down low. Most people shoot the room from the waist up. Get down low and take a picture from the waist up. This will give you a different perspective on the room.
- 2. Shoot from the beginning.** If you're shooting a room, get down low. Most people shoot the room from the waist up. Get down low and take a picture from the waist up. This will give you a different perspective on the room.
- 3. Shoot from the end.** If you're shooting a room, get down low. Most people shoot the room from the waist up. Get down low and take a picture from the waist up. This will give you a different perspective on the room.
- 4. Shoot from the side.** If you're shooting a room, get down low. Most people shoot the room from the waist up. Get down low and take a picture from the waist up. This will give you a different perspective on the room.
- 5. Shoot from the top.** If you're shooting a room, get down low. Most people shoot the room from the waist up. Get down low and take a picture from the waist up. This will give you a different perspective on the room.

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INSIDE: Drop vinyl floors, prime laminate counters, antirisk cabinets make this 2004 kitchen feel solid and gleamy. **AFTER:** New laminate floors, granite counters and crisp white paint on the cabinets make this outstanding kitchen remodel look like a million bucks.

"We Redid Our Kitchen for \$6,000"

► You e-mailed us in search of affordable remodels. TOH readers **Augie and Emmeline Harrigan** share theirs: a luxe, low-cost kitchen built with quality secondhand stuff and sweat equity



IT'S A COMMON KITCHEN RENOVATION quandary: How to afford a great feel and meet so many second-hand-and-luxury budgets? For Augie and Emmeline Harrigan of Milford, Connecticut, the answer was to preserve those elements of the existing kitchen that were still in good shape, cut out labor costs by doing the work themselves, and shop sales and Craigslist's online classifieds for the best new and used cheapies.

They were just being realistic: "To stay within the \$6,000 we allotted for the project, putting the whole kitchen was out of the question," says Emmeline. By keeping the basic layout (with some minor tweaks) and painting the oak cabinets rather than replacing them, the couple was able to save big right off the bat. Then there was the carpentry course that Augie took at a local community college, and the Red Bull-funded night spearfishing his new DIY skills to the test. For her part, Emmeline cruised the Internet and scoured the sales of big-box stores in search of well-priced replacements for their small appliances, discovered "harvest gold" vinyl flooring, and coordinating laminate countertops. Her first find was a cast-iron steel stainless steel Bosch range on Craigslist for a third of its original price. The next bigger, greater compromise from wholesale dish stores.

"Sometimes we felt like we cheated," says Augie of their resourcefulness. "But the truth is, you just have to know where to look. See those glass counters by the sink? Only five bucks."

BY JENNIFER STIMPSON
PHOTOGRAPHS BY
JACOB FRANK

Their Plan

30 Subtle changes made an already workable layout more efficient.

What They Did

1 **MOVED THE TALL PANTRY** cabinet farther down the range wall so the door wouldn't open out toward the tip of the peninsula and block the path between the kitchen and adjoining dining area.

2 **ADDED AN UPPER AND-BASE CABINET** that Angle and a friend built themselves between the range and the pantry, creating extra counter-top work surface and storage. Also, painted an upper cabinet along the range to make room for a larger ventilation hood.

3 **REMOVED UPPER CABINETS** over the peninsula that obstructed the view of the dining area. Added two new cabinets with seeded glass doors to fill the leftover void and to place on additional storage on the sink wall.

4 **EASED THE PASSAGE** to the family room by exchanging a sharply angled corner for a longer, gentler angle. This yielded more counter space and allowed for open display shelves below, now used for storing dry goods in glass containers (found on Craigslist for \$5 each).

5 **MADE THE PASS-THROUGH PRACTICAL** by adding a mid-height island for serving up drinks for the couple's two boys while they play in the family room.



READER TIP

"I cleaned out the stock of clearance-priced bin pulls and cabinet knobs at three nearby Home Depots to get enough matching ones for the whole kitchen." —DANIELA HARRISON, MILFORD, CONN.



LEFT Connections from the kitchen to the dining area allow Angle and Kimmberlin to watch their sons, Drew, 4, and Owen, 3, at the table and to pass plates across the peninsula.

BEFORE A narrow path between the peninsula and the pantry made it hard to pass through with the pantry door open. **AFTER** New cabinets on the range wall shifted the pantry and improved traffic flow.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFFREY M. HARRISON

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"Ice Bats!" "Beer Steins!" "Salt-Glazed Pottery!"

» TOH readers have some crazy collections. And clever display ideas. Here are seven more options we like

BY NADALIE RODRIGUEZ
PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID PERICE

FOR EDWARD TYLE OF ALTON, Massachusetts, it's a collection of beer steins. For Shelley Mackinnon of Ithaca, Massachusetts, it's anything related to "Buffy the Vampire Slayer." For Kenneth Sell of Jersey City, New Jersey, it's "an unusual assortment of odd crap," including a Dutch Tiger. But the craft beer is part of it.

Our readers collect stuff—lots of stuff. And they can't all be as creative as Cath Strong of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, Canada, who builds wall of glass shelves in the powder room to hold her Western-style salt-glazed pottery. Lucky for you, there are shelves of great-looking shelving units out there to display your cherished possessions. Traditional or modern, horizontal or wall-mounted, tall or short, metal or wood—the choices on these pages add a character to warmer even when they're empty. (But think how much better they'll look holding your baby-blue, face-lauged-for-forever, which is what Gus Duxford of Hoboken, New Jersey, collects.) And with enough creative storage options, you won't have to do what Kenneth did: buy a second house just to have a place for his journal!

READER TIP



"Dedicate one room to your collection, such as a powder room that doesn't see high levels of humidity."

—CATH STRONG, MAGNA ON THE LAKE, ONTARIO, CANADA (COLLECTS WESTERN POTTERY)



2 | CONTEMPORARY CUBES
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4 | HAND CRAFTED
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—SHELLEY MACHAMER, *ILLUMINATING MATHS: THE LIFE OF AN ATOM*

HIDDEN INTELLIGENCE

It always photos on the face and hairline in the top, but the best thing about this stuff may be the 1000 compartments on the inside. The king of beard drops down to store photo negatives. Remember those? CDs and anything else you want to hold there too. \$45 improvementcatalog.com

4 | REVENUE FORECAST

A free, undistorted landscape is perfect for displaying poultry and showing birds. Different birds keep well spaced apart. This one, with Craftsman detailing, is an handsome in the finished look. Call or visit us online. Or from agribusiness.com

91 THE JOURNAL

Proctor's extra info (8/8/06).
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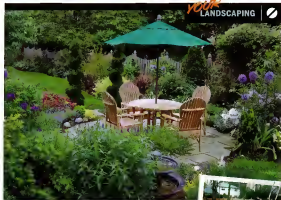
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"I Wanted to Create a Relaxing Retreat"

After a winter stuck inside renovating her 1890 farmhouse, Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania, TCH reader **Maria Hasenecz** was eager to head outdoors. Here's how her garden grew

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARIA HASENECZ



THE WIND WAS DESOLATE when we moved in: neglected, weedy, with just some lopsided rhododendrons, Norway maples, and a lone purple cornflower milliwinding. The previous owner, who'd been there for 38 years, hadn't been able to upkeep the place. Not only did my husband and I intend plantings to bring the place back to life, we also needed to build in privacy from neighbors on both sides, mask traffic noise, and fence in our dog.

After working ardently through that first winter to cross-hatch the interior of our new home—an 1890 stone farmhouse—located some five-six miles, I had created a garden at our old home, on a postage stamp size lot in the city, so this 35-by-100 four parcel seemed large by

HISTORY: Maria (pictured), George, with their dog, Trent, in the back corner of the yard, admire the newly designed fence they installed soon after moving to NY100. Just beyond the fence is back door to the duplex (top photo) patio front (bottom photo) garden designed. In over 8 years, I also placed for a 42' x 12' table and four seats with cover to pull out the chairs and with comfortable around them. Today it's surrounded by lush perennial garden that extend all the way to the laundry room

MORE GREENERY

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companion. “We started around the foundation, planting *Persea* [spikes for emergency structure and hydrogen for color]. To define the path’s perimeter and contain our pet, we added a cedar fence, and planned to let it mature to blend into the privacy plantings of trees and shrubs that we would layer behind it.”

We needed a place to sit and dine outside, so we installed a circular flagstone patio near the back border fence. “Because the layout of it would frame the view of a ‘garden’ garden I later designed, formal, mirror-image beds that flank a lawn path that leads to a focal-point view, then winds as we go to a back sitting area with a small pond.”

Today, the result is an oasis of garden space with formal English “barren” and a wilder thicket of flowering perennials, trees, and shrubs. The beds have layers upon layers of leafy flowers, contrasting foliage, and garden ornaments that offer a surprise around each corner.

All the hard work—it took three years partly lay out what you see here—has only added space places we cherish as a retreat, it also led me to a new career. After taking numerous classes through the local horticultural society, I went for a full-fledged degree. I’m now a landscape designer, and I thrive on helping clients do as their homes when I did as my own: create a garden with focus on areas that can be enjoyed from inside the house as well as out, and that provide endless hours of joy.



A PASSION FOR PLANTS Reader Maria Hernandez (LEFT) courted a lush garden on her property. **BELOW:** A strip of lawn is flanked by rows of flowers, being formal borders that are dotted with semi-circular trees to add height. This garden designed along a central axis that lines up with the studio at the top for an endless, unified look that makes the path appear larger. **SCOTT:** Maria likes to use colorful plants. In this border, we combined deep red with orange, yellow, and pink, and red, and red perennials. Looking garden color right up to the house.



READER TIP



“Use accent pieces—birdbaths, containers, urns—to draw the eye through your garden, to brighten a shady corner, or to dress up a foretorn spot up near the house.”

—BARBARA LUNDGREN



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to add interest to multi-level homes. One plant to try is the narrow 75- to 100-foot-long strip of the leeks and fennels are turned out with curves that add through the property.

PLANT FOR PRIVACY In front, as a line of greenery provides a buffer between the house and the street. Along the driveway. Leyland cypresses, arborescences, hollies, and dogwoods and redwoods across the house and door. On the other side, a semi-circular stone-lined bed 6 1/2 feet tall and 10 feet long sits against the fence to block the view of the neighbor's house from the patio.

CHOOSE OUT DOOR ROOMS A slowly formed garden path for strolling with a view of long formal beds along with a series of trees in a backyard space for relaxing in an informal place. Start with the sound of flowing water—there are several species of plants—across the stream, waterfalls, and waterfalls.



—498— 中国音乐学(二) 1992年

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"The Day I Set the Porch on Fire (and Other Disasters)"

» In which TCH reader
Mary Kayaselsuk commiserates
with our editor on the heartache
of fixing up an old house

BY MARY KAYASELSUK
ILLUSTRATIONS BY DERRI ALDORE



LAST DECEMBER, in his letter to readers announcing this special issue, *This Old House* editor Scott Orndorff recounted the string of misadventures that had befallen him since he'd bought his 120-year-old fixer-upper, including basement floods, roof leaks, electrical fires, window damage, and invasion by flying rats. Then there was the bodily injury: a cracked rib, a shoulder strain, a concussion, and—his worst nightmare—weight gain from antacids every Little Debbie chocolate sandwichline pain. The source of his consternation? The place was cursed, possibly haunted. But before he could castor good on his threat to end his misery by hurling ketchup into the fireplace (and because he was afraid he'd just roll back over and



light up the rug, he recovered the following words of encouragement from reader Mary Kapanick of Newport News, Virginia: "We liked what she had to say so much that we decided to share her letter with you."

Dear Scott,

In late 2004, I acquired a humble, 6,300-square-foot duplex in Virginia that dated to 1900. The former owner had run a five-two-story front porch and demolished the two-story carriage house. In the previous 10 years, boards had wended what was once a sidewalk. Set up boyfriend, Benno Bishop, and I thought we could rehabilitate it in a year or so and make it lovely. Since then, we've spent all our spare moments—and cash—on its restoration.

Yet we still don't live there.

On the day I took possession, the regulator valve on the furnace failed, causing a building of noons. The radiator went berserk, raising water from the third floor to the basement. Next, my armoire sagged when an overloaded trash bin filled with old plates tipped over and trapped me underneath. For months I lingered around on a foot the size of a watermelon. In the winter, a leaky window shattered the sagged old wavy glass in a dozen large windows. In the summer, I sat the back porch on fire while stripping paint with a heat gun, so severe sparks ignited some dry leaves under one of the cypress shrubs. Fortunately, we were able to extinguish the fire with only the loss of a pair of toes.

Things went along fine until Labor Day 2006, when we came back from vacation to find a giant ice hurricane across the restored porch, courtesy of Tropical Storm Ernesto. It took months of wrangling with the insurance company to obtain a settlement (the payout was \$10,000 less than it should have been because of the tropical cyclone deductible).

And while "Dope! Did It Again!" happened, last spring I was stripping paint and on the side porch alone when I touched a shrouded neighbor's tree in the cuff. I didn't

know there was a problem and axels started curling out from both ends of the pants. This time around the situation was far more serious, requiring the services of three fire trucks, a herd of horses, and several chainsaws. The furnace faded and snowed with abandon through the porch's tongue-and-groove ceiling and interior soffit wall. They climbed out of the second-floor windows and onto the roof, punching big holes in it in several places. They also wrenched three exterior plaster walls that were in sound condition behind me. And, after they had accomplished their demolition mission, they toured the house, telling me what a nice old place it was. A year later, we are still rebuilding both porches.

The house we live in on the fourth of July weekend we were away watching fireworks might have been the first victory, saying that the thieves took a break around and apparently felt so bad for us that they stole nothing except a pizza with frozen beans and one each of strawberry Mozzarella. In fact, they left some tools stolen from our neighbors—a box of rusty wrenches and loose bolts—so we could continue our work.

And like you, Scott, we have put on weight. Once I reach 115, I'm over 130 and growing! I prefer Lush Debbie-Honey bees to your chocolate marshmallow past. I agree that our place may be cursed, but at least mine is not haunted...I don't think. Besides, if a ghost does decide to make its presence known, I won't have time for such foolishness and

READER TIP



"If you don't know what you're doing, hire someone who does. Also, if you're not in a relationship, consider marrying someone wealthy."

—MARY KAPANICK, NEWPORT NEWS, VA

will order it to move on to another house down the block. Nor shall I throw myself into the fireplace, because that is not a particularly in the best case of our fireplace (presently works). I'd prefer to hurl myself off the roof, because death would be instantaneous when I smelt my body on the rusty spikes of the cast-iron stove. And don't even try to talk me off the ledge, unless the TOH crew members come with you and they're wearing their seat belts.

Sincerely, Mary Kapanick

P.S. Have you ever tried heating your Mozzarella in the microwave for 10 seconds? It matches the most ordinary marshmallow dessert in a culinary masterpiece.



Get Inspired

To see more before and after remodels, tips and ideas from 1,575 *This Old House* readers like you, visit thisoldhouse.com/yourTOH



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This Old House

THE WIND'S WHIPPING
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"Her Tile Work Rocks"

» Your online votes are in: You loved how Salvage Challenger Rosi Zingales upgraded her home with vintage tiles. And I did, too. Here's how she helped me with my project

BY AMY B. HUGHES PHOTOGRAPH BY KENNETH CREW

FOR CENTURIES, DECORATIVE TILES have transformed the random decorum of a house—usually floors and walls—into works of functional art. This Old House reader Rosi Zingales is a master at this type of design. In her submission to our online Salvage Challenge, she demonstrated how to turn a black-hole fireplace into a centerpiece by decorating the hearth with merris of vintage blue, white, and black tiles. The mosaic recalls the wares at the beach near her 1970s ranch house in Hampton Bays, New York.

"When I e-mailed Rosi to tell her how much I loved her work and to see if she'd lend a hand with my salvaged tile project, she was happy to oblige. 'But if you like what I did inside the house, you should see the outside,'" said Rosi, who forwarded me another shot of her handiwork. This one was of her home's concrete foundation, the front of which is completely covered in colorful tiles.

Though Rosi's style is more eclectic than antique—she perfects tiles from the 1920s to the late-19th-century ones that I love—I know she'll be able to match me a few tricks. Plus, it's always more fun to work in two. So turn the page to see how we blended Rosi's creativity and tile know-how with my salvage-sleuthing abilities.



This Old House reader Rosi Zingales (at left, above) and I assembled an assortment of tiles for my project. She suggests checking their backs for stuck-on mortar, which is hard to chip off without breaking the tile.

† Create a Vintage Tile Tabletop Like Ours

Part of the fun of making this table was rooting through the tile crates with TCM reader Ross Zingales at *Oldie Good Things* in New York City. Our first find was an 8 1/2-by-6 1/2-inch depicting a Spanish Colonial mission, for \$45. This, we agreed, would be the centerpiece. Next were four flowered accents, 2 1/2 each, and 20 yellow-and-white marbled tiles there on old fireplace surround that we brought in both for \$30. We also uncovered the wrought-iron table base with a cross for a glass top (in a dusty corner of the shop, too).

WATCH NOW
See a video of this step-by-step—or share us your salvage project—at thisoldhouse.com/your-salvage



Step-by-Step

1 Lay out your tile design in a 1/2-inch-thick Masonite board that's 1/2 inch to the inner dimensions of the tabletop's inside, and cut it inside the base. (Use the person board—front and back—with a coat of polyurethane plus, such as Watco's, first so it won't absorb the tile adhesive.)

2 Set 1/4- and 1/2-inch spacers (also, very handy on the layout) between the tiles to hold them in place.

3 Mark the tile locations where they overlap the edges of the table, being careful to follow the contour of the top.

4 We wear latex gloves and protective glasses, use level, too, to align the tiles along the pencil lines.

5 Smooth jagged edges with a groutstone (shown) or tile file.

6 Replace the tiles as they go to back the fit. If there's still a slight overlap, tap off the excess with the groutstone.

7 Working from the center out, remove tiles one at a time, spread ceramic adhesive on their backs, and then stick them on the board (like a thick mastic such as Henry 354 (\$9 at hardware



store), which allows you to build up a bed under the tiles so their surfaces are all level. Replace the spacers and let the adhesive set for 30 minutes, then remove them.

8 Position a flat board on top of the tiles, and weight it down. We used pattern weights from Ross's costume shop (he makes clothes for theater and film), but bricks or a couple of phone books will do.

9 Wait 24 hours for the adhesive to dry before removing the weights, popping the board out of the table base, and grouting the tiles. Use a sanded grout for filling gaps 1/4 inch wide or wider. Spread a thick coat of grout over the surface, and then work it into the gaps.

10 Remove the excess grout from the tile faces with a rubber squeegee. Scrub with water, and sponge off any remaining residue. If the tiled top back in the base, and let it set for 48 hours before applying a sealer to the grout lines. Then go ahead and use your stylish new table.

(Note: This table is fine for occasional outdoor use, but it should not be left out during rain or snow.) ■

READER TIP

"For small tile jobs, I use an old rubber spatula, instead of a trowel, to work the grout into tight spaces. It's more flexible, and it spreads the grout like cake frosting."

—ROSEMARIE
HAMPTON, EATS & EATS



Cooling Classic Homes the Modern Way

Window air conditioning units are noisy, drafty and unsightly. And installing conventional air duct systems in old houses often requires carving up closets and walls at great expense and disruption. There's an easier, more efficient way.

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Halcyon Benefits At-A-Glance

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*Source: "Improving the Efficiency of Your Cool System," U.S. Dept. of Energy



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YOUR
PAPERWORK

"I Want to Be in the Cheapskate Hall of Fame"

» How TOH online users saved \$52,280 (and counting)
on home improvements

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ASHLEY BARSON

HERE AT THIS OLD HOUSE, we don't mind when people call us tightwads. In fact, we're proud of it—check out these thrifty combinations to read up on some creative ways to cut costs when remodeling ("21 Ways to Save on Your Remodel") and getting the very items for less ("Save While You Sleep"). But you taught us a thing or two about thriftiness when we asked you to tell us how you're saving money on projects these days. As you pointed out, there are loads of ways to shave a few bucks—or even a few thousand bucks—off a project without sacrificing your goals. Here are some of the shrewdest tricks you shared.



PEW! PUNCHING HOME Sourcing her own materials

TIPSTY: *Wendy Moore, Anchorage, Alaska*

NOT PROJECT: Remodeling two bathrooms. My husband and I split a large full bathroom into two half baths and a master bath. After getting several bids from reliable contractors, Wendy was still more than we had planned. Local contractors supply materials at retail prices, so I asked what the charge for the work would be if we bought materials ourselves. By having our contractor do installation only and buying materials online or from discount sources ourselves, we were able to afford the remodel.

WHAT THEY SAVED: \$6,000

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FOUR PRO-TIPS MON:
Pitching in on the prep work

TIPS: Tiffany Campbell, Lynn, right, helps Matt



HER PROJECT: Redoing her kitchen floor.

"We watched The Old House and end-of-the-world remodeling shows, but it seemed like a lot of problems, confusion. Some friends seemed to install their flooring, so I had to choose a lower grade material to fit our budget. But our contractor told us we could put up the existing floor ourselves and prepare for him to remove the old stuff, so we got the floor we wanted."

WHAT THEY SAID: \$1,800

FOUR PRO-TIPS MON:
Repositioning bedroom furniture

TIPS: Mike Dedekos, Oco, Morris, Iowa



HER PROJECT: Putting a two-piece vanity in the bathroom.

"The previous homeowners left an old dresser in the basement. I cleaned and painted it, then cut out the back of the top drawers to accommodate water lines. Then I had the top of the dresser put a couple of hollow-core ceramic-pipe boards for extra strength. They're deep enough to hold the sink, and board some expensive bar faucets to complete the vanity."

WHAT THEY SAID: \$1,000

FOUR PRO-TIPS MON:
Cutting cheaper products to size

TIPS: Diana Link, Reynolds, W.V.



HER PROJECT: Reorganizing her open-plan kitchen.

"Instead of paying a lot of money for a big bookshelf, I measured the bookshelves I wanted to install and supply store, and got a pair of plain steel end caps. But for the space, I found it so useful, and it fits perfectly into the design. For my next bookshelf, I decided to make one by buying butcher block for \$20 and having my contractor cut it to fit. I then stained it to match my floor. With an open kitchen plan, it really gives a finished look to the space."

WHAT THEY SAID: \$2,000



FOUR PRO-TIPS MON:
Faking it with wallpaper

TIPS: Elise Van Doren, Alameda, Calif.



HER PROJECT: Installing a "tin" ceiling.

"My husband and I wanted the look of a tin ceiling without having to feel the oil."

for the real thing. So we used adhesive wallpaper on embossed tin-plate paper. We bought it online for \$10 a roll; you can also find reproduction adhesive wallpapers online. It gave us the look and texture of a tin ceiling without the extra cost. We're very happy with the results."

WHAT THEY SAID: \$400

FOUR PRO-TIPS MON:
Making her own tile

TIPS: Tina Gallagher, Los Angeles, Calif.



HER PROJECT: Concrete flooring.

"I decided that my Spanish-style ranch house would look best with 12x24 concrete tiles spaced after 18th-century tiles. But after spending with some contractors, I found out that concrete tiles would cost me between \$1,000 and \$15,000. Then I found a website called TheMasonry.com where I could buy the tools and materials, and I'm making the tiles myself for about 25 cents a square foot. Makes sense, right?"

WHAT THEY SAID: \$9,000

FOUR PRO-TIPS MON:
Dumpster diving

TIPS: Mylene Condon, New Rochelle, N.Y.



HER PROJECT: Replacing windows, siding, flooring, and a front door.

"Dumpster-diving houses that are being demolished then lots of great materials, and many subcontractors will let you take whatever you want as long as they're working so they don't have to throw it away. The things I've gotten by salvaging from the trash would have cost me my investment. I bought them new from the past 10 months of salvaging my 1940s house with new windows, flooring, recycled hardwood kitchen floors, and French doors. All saved from the trash and installed myself."

WHAT THEY SAID: \$33,000



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Craftsman: Hallmarks

An overview of the details that give the style its look

SEE ALL 24 HOUR STYLES

Learn more about American architecture at thisoldhouse.com/style

A CENTRAL FOCUS

The fireplace is the heart of a Craftsman living room. This level-topped, supported wall of Craftsman Home, Buster Stebbins's *Edithmore*, under scores the style with an original inscription. The fire is from "Chaco." The style is short, the craftsman long to come.

LEAVE IT IN

The simple shape of a Japanese paper lantern inspired Marie Perle's Craftsman Home. 50 feet long, open-plan living room. Like the contemporary, the architect, Charles and Henry Greene, Stebbins used copper and art glass in place of hardware and color paint.



CONTRAST JOINTS

One style displays several joints in construction. Tables, and seating are the easiest way to identify the style. On this table, a horizontal "key" fastening the support is one of a Craftsman's signature.

ON LEATHER

Overlaid leather, often the only leather in a Craftsman's furniture and detail that's also functional is securing leather upholstery and table legs.

A CRAFTY

DETAILS The Craftsman is built in individual details. Stebbins added the white felt roof supports of awnings and these backs in the window.

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COLOR NO. M5672

Midnight grey

The graying stones that connect my house to my workshop—ok, garage.



COLOR NO. M5608

Bandwagons red

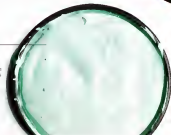
The well-stocked toolbox that's been with me through countless DIY projects.

the self portrait no. 12 renovator

COLOR NO. M5337

Vintage teal

The corner's tiles that taught me some jobs are best left to professionals.



MARTHA STEWART
COLORS

MARTHA STEWART COLORS

My color palette is inspired by my passions. Find your palette exclusively at Lowe's. Visit lowes.com to find a store near you.



Craftsman: Getting the Look Today

» Think pieces that look handcrafted, from front door to bedroom

1 | HANDED CLOCK

Delivering tradition, this clock features the most iconic, the look of a handcrafted clock. A great one for your dresser. \$225. textileart.com

2 | HICKORY HONEYCOMB

Hand stitched hickory, this piece brings back a few years. It's a great one for your dresser. \$225. textileart.com

3 | COUNTRY

The classic Art Nouveau style, this piece is a great one for your dresser. It's a great one for your dresser. \$225. textileart.com

4 | HICKORY HONEYCOMB

Art Nouveau style, this piece is a great one for your dresser. It's a great one for your dresser. \$225. textileart.com

5 | ARTS & CRAFTS

Formed in a traditional style, this piece is a great one for your dresser. It's a great one for your dresser. \$225. textileart.com

6 | HICKORY HONEYCOMB

Formed in a traditional style, this piece is a great one for your dresser. It's a great one for your dresser. \$225. textileart.com

7 | HICKORY HONEYCOMB

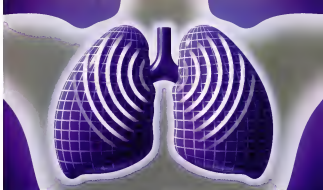
Formed in a traditional style, this piece is a great one for your dresser. It's a great one for your dresser. \$225. textileart.com

READER TIP



"Patterns on textiles either complete or defeat a period look. Find ones made the year your house was built at TextileArt.com."

—SUE GARDNER, NEW YORK



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If you have COPD associated with chronic bronchitis, ADVAIR 250/50 may help. ADVAIR works differently than other COPD medications. It is the only product with an anti-inflammatory and a bronchodilator working together to help improve lung function. Talk to your doctor and find out if ADVAIR is right for you.

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It's not known how this information works with COPD.

Important Information: ADVAIR DISKUS 250/50 is approved for controlling symptoms and preventing exacerbations in adults with COPD associated with chronic bronchitis. The benefit of using ADVAIR DISKUS for longer than 12 months has not been evaluated. You should only take 1 inhalation of ADVAIR DISKUS 250/50 twice a day. Taking higher doses will not provide additional benefits but may increase your chance of certain side effects. Patients with COPD taking ADVAIR DISKUS may have a higher chance of pneumonia. Call your doctor if you notice any of the following symptoms: change in amount or color of sputum, fever, chills, increased cough or increased breathing problems. Patients at risk for developing bone loss (osteoporosis) and some eye problems (cataracts or glaucoma) should be aware that use of inhaled corticosteroids, including ADVAIR DISKUS, may increase your risk. You should consider having regular eye exams. ADVAIR DISKUS does not replace fast-acting inhalers for acute symptoms.

*Measured by a breathing test in people taking ADVAIR DISKUS compared with people taking either fluticasone propionate 250 mcg or salmeterol 50 mcg. Maximum effects may take several weeks. Your results may vary.

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FDA

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Here's a table saw in make tables of life now. Well, we recommend this Bosch table saw—its blade guard safety prevents kickbacks and its "ripstop" block" brace keeps you cuts true. Best of all, when you're not using it, the saw is "gravity-lift" stands easily against the wall and lets you store it out of the way. (ASCT) \$600. www.bosch.com

Since "Hart Dog" already has the compressor, this Genghis Household spray gun should be just what he needs to "go to town" on his indoor and outdoor "landlark." He can use it to spray latex paint, milder stains or primer. \$30. chow.com

We heard this request for a simple, easy-to-use, and lightweight tool that could be used by anyone in the field. The result is the new 3000 Series, a portable, lightweight, and easy-to-use tool that can be used by anyone in the field. The 3000 Series is a portable, lightweight, and easy-to-use tool that can be used by anyone in the field. The 3000 Series is a portable, lightweight, and easy-to-use tool that can be used by anyone in the field.



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The perfect fit for your period home.

Period ending:
Month/Year for the above analysis:

DOI: 10.1002/anie.200400044

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Staring at one 99-piece collection will make a nice replacement for that cheap board item you left at work that "Mellow800" has for sale. He is apparently new to the site and has the four-figured gold number against the scratch-resistant black chrome, which should make keeping them organized a breeze. www.etsy.com/shop/13004146/mellow800



"Lead seller/stapler with experience"

Using this combo kit, install 20 gauge nails 2 gallon bag tank compressor and 12 feet of hose "welder" to disconnect the chain from living room or pump up bike tires and basketballs. \$79.99, [amazon.com](#)

**MOORE'S TIP**

"To use and care for some of the tools on these pages, check out the tips and advice in Norm's Notebook on p. 125."



UT Pro trial link

He said he liked this bag for its two large pockets—great for showing drills, circular saws, or bulky-hand tools—but that it was built to withstand a lifetime of use. It's a reasonable 24-compartment tool bag organizer. \$119, dulinkindesign.com

"RedwoodENC TECHNOLOGY A
"new flash drive"

He turned his last flashlight when it slipped off the rail. He suggests using the Energizer third case next time. The ultrabright warm bulb in its swiveling beam can handle areas of up to 15 feet. \$13, energizer.com

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YOUR
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WEEKEND
PROJECT SERIES



"We Wanted to Listen to the Water"

>> How to create a backyard pond like the one T&E reader Dan Gibbon built

BY JENNIFER STEPHENS PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN SMITH

Dan GIBBON HAS SPENT the last three-and-a-half decades around Wisconsin's big lakes, but the flowing waters of Lake Superior, where he grew up, were always on his mind. So recently he put aside the shovel and started exploring a pond. His wife, Gloria, had her doubts ("I wasn't that worked up like the idea of digging up the backyard," she said). But her husband melted away when she saw the beauty of Dan's lake.

Dan's pond attracts birds, frogs, butterflies, and even in two unexpected, though, thanks to the growing season, it also attracts Dan and Gloria. The couple often up their coffee there while watching the sunrise, and lounge by the gurgling water after dark. "My wife is usually really tired I admit," says Dan. "And so we sit—sit in rocking."

Now, we figure if a second-schoolteacher can build a pond as a weekend, so can you. So we asked The Old House senior editorial editor Mark Brown to show you how to make the one you see here—just like Dan's. All you need is a shovel and a few augers, and before you know it, you'll have your own little "great lake" to enjoy.

COST:
\$100 to \$200 for a 40-horse-hp pump

TIME:
A month

DIFFICULTY:
Easy if it's in digging and

not much digging. Prepare your site and a pond before the first frost.

TOOLS:
Shovel

LEVEL, to spot the right spot
STIFF WIRE to cut the line

FOR COMPLETE
INSTRUCTIONS, TURN THE
PAGE AND UNFOLD



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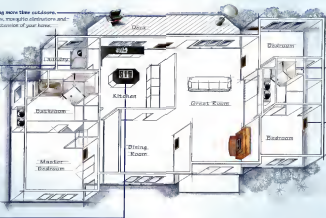
He won't take you to the cleaners.
Propane dryers cost about half as much as their electric ones. And...
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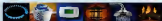
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STEP-BY-STEP WEEKEND PROJECT SERIES



overview

A **FREE FORM POND** like Dan Gilbert's (see "The Local Watering Holes" for right) can be customized for any landscape, with different rocks, plants, shapes, and waterfalls. But we'll give you some helpful points on placement, size, and materials.

Before you start, call **ALL** of your local one-call center to have electric and gas lines marked so you know where to dig to steer clear of them. Then, when you mark out the location of your pond, put it where it will be noticed—visible from a window, off a patio, or along a walkway—but away from the play areas of small children or pets. Keep a star of major root systems or mature trees, which can block too much of the sunlight plants and fish need. You'll also need to be within reach of a grounded exterior outlet so you can plug in a pump, an essential tool for keeping the water aerated; most pumps come with a maximum cord length of 25 feet, and extension cords are not recommended! You may need to bury the power cord a few inches down in PVC pipe to hide it.

Space permitting, you need at least 40 cubic feet for your pond—about 7 feet by 4 feet—to keep the water clean. An initial shallow terrace just inside the perimeter of the pond holds rocks that conceal the liner edge and keep it in place. A second, deeper terrace supplies plants that live in the water and help balance the pond's ecosystem. As you dig, you must slope the sides of the pond so that, if the water freezes, the ice will push up instead of rip apart the liner. Even in warmer climates, small ponds can change temperature rapidly, so if you're adding fish you'll want a deeper pond that will maintain a more consistent temperature and accommodate the fish—38 to 24 inches for goldfish and at least 3 feet for koi.

To maintain the consistent depth of the water, you need to line the pond. A thin layer of sand and old newspapers or burlap bags softens the jagged edges of rocks and roots. But over that you'll need to put a water-proof skin. There are several types of flexible liners meant for small ponds—made from polypropylene and EPDM, among other materials. Look for one that's weather-resistant, so it will stand up to UV rays and freezing temperatures. It should also be rated "fish safe" if you plan to stock your pond and come with a warranty of 10 to 20 years so your pond will be water-tight for many years to come.

shopping list

- 1) POND LINER:** Available at the outdoor garden centers or great malls, buy one that's longer and wider than your pond dimensions to fit in the corners.
- 2) GENERAL PURPOSE SAND:** Look for sand with even grains or wash. There are few bags small enough.
- 3) NEWSPAPER:** To bury, to cover the sand.
- 4) SUBAP 204:** To help seal the pond.
- 5) PEXA GRVEL:** To create a rougher surface.
- 6) LARGE ROCKS:** To create the terrace and water fall. Gilbert's team found the pond at a local yard.
- 7) SUBMERSIBLE RECIRCULATING PUMP:** To aerate water and circulate it in the pond. Get one that pumps 200 or lower gallons per minute for a profit loss.
- 8) AIR LINE TUBING:** To carry the air to the submersible. Available at hardware stores or pet stores that sell tanks.
- 9) 3-INCH PVC CONDUIT:** To protect the air line and pump.

step by step

Excavate the area

Lay out the size and shape of your pond with a rope in a garden hose. Using a shovel, dig down 18 inches to a 2-foot-wide ring outside the outline to create the stone border shell. Next, create a plant terrace by digging a 2-foot-wide shell 18 inches deep inside the rope outline (about 11). Only dig the bottom in areas where you'll plant larger plants.

Continue digging inside the plant terrace to reveal the bed of the pond—a minimum of 18 inches deep, with a slight slope.

Set a belt across the excavated hole and lay a level on top of it (12). Roughly level the pond edges. Then come out a 6-inch-wide, 1-inch-deep channel on one side to protect overflow. Also dig a shallow trench to the nearest electrical outlet for the PEXA conduit, which will hold the pump cord.



Prepare the base

Begin by laying a 1-foot layer of sand around the entire base and on the terrace and slopes. Cover the sand and the sides of the hole with 10-inch-thick bags of newspaper (3,2,1). This provides a protective layer under the liner. Smooth the entire surface by hand and remove any rocks or stones that could snag through the lining.

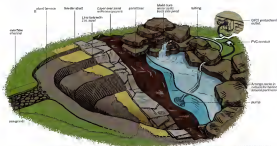


ILLUSTRATION BY
GREGORY NEMEC

Line the pond

Get a piece of liner to be four feet wider and longer than the pond. Cover the liner over the hole on three sides to 2 feet outside the hole and the ends of the terrace on the opposite side. Set two stones on the other side to hold the liner in place. Beginning at the end, press the liner down along the inside edge and then along the bottom of the hole, working your way around the pond (13, 14). Smooth out creases and folds and push them deep right to the corners.

READER TIP

"Avoid building your pond directly under a tree or you'll find yourself cleaning quite a few soggy leaves in the fall." —DAVE MARTIN, NORTON, MASS.





READER TIP



"Whenever you water your plant beds, also 'water' your pond to make up for any liquid that has evaporated over the week."
—DAN GIBSON, MEDFORD, ME

4 Fill the pond

Use a garden hose to fill the pond with water. As it fills, continuously patch the liner (but on each side [LEFT]) if necessary have a helper pull from the opposite direction. Fill the pond until the water reaches the top border shelf.



5 Create a rock border

Fill the overflow channel with pine gravel for drainage.

Arrange the rocks along the border so the first ridge is covered but no more than one-third of each rock hangs over the water. Then cover this first ring of rocks with a second one. Stagger the seams between the stones, and set them back from the edge of the first ring a bit. Arrange and rearrange the rocks until they sit in an interlocking pattern (RIGHT). Experiment with your outcropping until you have a natural, staggered look.



6 Install the pump

Thread the pump's cord through several feet of PVC conduit (at least 1/2 inch longer). Place the PVC conduit in the trench and backfill the soil. Hold one end of the recirculating hose to you set the pump in the deepest part of the hole (LEFT). Where the hose exits the water, wedge it between two rocks without crushing it. Connect it with a third hose (RIGHT). Arrange and secure the hose through the rocks and over a stick to position the water fall.



Once the pump and hose are secure, plug the cord with an exterior GFCI outlet. Watch the water flow and make sure it looks natural looking the hole (but still spills back into the pond).

Add plants in and around the pond. Keep the pump on during daylight hours but shut it off at night so it doesn't attract nocturnal animals.

Their Local Watering Holes

A couple of TOH web users got creative when building their own backyard water features. Here's a look at how they did it



OWNER: Dan and Gloria Gibson
LOCATION: Medford, Wis.



When Dan finally started building his pond (after dreaming about it for years), he looked online and at local garden shows to get ideas. Eventually he bought a full-size pond liner to make the 20-by-14-foot pond and installed it. The hardest part was the rocks, which he bought in his property and had to be used in a whole lot of "20-by-14" (both helped by suggesting where to put them," says Dan. "There was a lot of moving and relocating and adjusting, but finally got it."

Dan worked to make the ponding naturalistic, possible. He had to be successful, because a lot of visitors came around to check it out. "The enjoyment we receive from this project is well worth the time and effort," he says.

WHAT HAVE YOU BUILT?
Show us your relaxing backyard spot, at thisoldhouse.com/your-yard

OWNER: Dave Martin
LOCATION: Medford, Mass.



Dave jumped at the idea of a free upgrade when a local contractor offered to give him their old job. Then he realized he had to do something with the one he already had. Not wanting to do a great job like this, he decided to do it himself. He did what any Yankee would do: He salvaged it. "I thought there must be a better way," he says. "Then I decided on me. I'll make a pond."

When he started working, he had dug a 4-foot hole. "I told a client to fill the hole first, so I wasn't hitting the hole," he says. "He put the hole in the hole. Then I started building it using the same methods as I saw on TV."

His pond is a great place to sit and watch the birds. "It's a perfect combination as you look out from the house," says Dave. "And the sound of the water falls is soothing. I often go out in the morning with a cup of coffee and just listen to the gentle gushing of the water."



READER REMODEL CONTEST WINNERS



**FROM FORLORN
TO FAMILY-FRIENDLY
SETTING** Perched just inside the
1990 Queen Anne captured
Steven Wade's imagination on
a modest street in Austin. Moved
to a leafy front lot, set on a raised
foundation and topped with
a spruce new roof and along.
"This house is our dream family
home," Steven says.



You saw their hard-earned home on
thisoldhouse.com, then gave their Queen Anne redo
top honors. **Meet the Wade family**—and see how
they put the shine back on this Texas find

BY JENNIFER HODGKINS • PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEPHEN KUBSCH • STYLING BY KIMMY



Jim and Steven Wade enjoy
the fruits of their labor with
the family, now 20, and their
15-year-old daughter, Lindsey,
in their vintage-style kitchen.

My wife, Sharon, has been in love with old houses since we were high school sweethearts, and I'm in love with her, so when she fell for this house, I quickly caved.

We found the one-gond Queen Anne in hour south of our Dallas neighborhood. By some weird stroke of luck, we came across while driving around the small town of Corsicana, about five minutes from a lakefront building, for we'd just purchased.

When Sharon got a look at the old place, she called and asked over the phone to come in. On the front porch and the chimney, three columns supporting a wrap-around porch. It was practically perfect in my eyes for her, with a house being an old building, advertising a house never available to relocate it. While Sharon perused through the pretty windows, I remained taking the leap. For the money we'd spend building a new house, we could park this house next to our home, and get some real estate clients in the process.

That night I phoned the house owner to make down the house. In yet another lucky break, she was a nice, preservation-minded woman who'd bought the house to save it from a bank that wanted to build a drive-through in its place. She agreed to sell it to us for \$15,000, plus guide us in the house moving process, which she'd been through when she moved another old house to her own property.

Our luck ran out the minute we landed her the check. The structural masonry broke the news that the house would have to be over a half of its original size to go anywhere at all. Apparently, you can't blow a masonry 3,500-square-foot house intact. Sharon and I watched anxiously as the house we were trying to hold together got hauled in two. Opening to clear off the top floor and have a rebuild later was another bleak occasion. But moving a historic house was the only way to avoid the extra \$25,000 the town charges to move an old building into its path.

We consulted ourselves with the fact that, inside, we'd only lose an unfinished attic and a sleeping porch (and beyond repairs) but we ended up each new step added on to the estimated \$35,000 in moving costs. By the time the house began to move back down on its own, blocking traffic for 3 hours, we were buying the oldest existing in the town for \$100,000 and paying \$250 to the Professional Restoration Association to take

(continued on page 24)



READER REMODEL CONTEST WINNERS

VICTORIAN-ERA DETAILS
In OFFICE, TOP: Stripped painted and repainted the wrap-around porch features fluted wood for columns and table tops. The historical paint scheme highlights the exterior millwork including the painted third entry and barches.

• **OPPOSITE BOTTOM** Inside, another fluted column is graced as three tables to create pocket doors that close off the dining room from the kitchen and the front hall. The doors were salvaged from the old floor before the couple repaired their original white mechanical and installed new hardware.

• **THIS PAGE** Stripped on the dining room's table and woodwork are new fluted columns. In the original Victorian style, the couple covered with mahogany and painted blue egg and shell cream, creating a new original look that was also designed by her. The 1920s glass chandelier was another find.



READER TIP

"Dental tools are great for stripping paint from the crevices in carved wood moldings."

—SHARON WARD, CORNICIANA, TX



the strap-on of no arch entrance.

With the money behind us, we're in the big league here. "You're doing up left!" shouted our then 14-year-old son, Spencer, just a month into the project, as we were planning another weekend work-a-thon. We're pretty traditional, and, as name as it sounds, Skane and I were counting on Spencer and our daughter, Lindsay, then 9, to be our built-in renovation crew—supplemented by friends and contractors—even though none of us had welded more than a fence prior, never mind operated an ester house. But Spencer comically rebelled against the weekends of strapping paint and cutting out debris to step to Dallas and play football and Nintendo with his friends. Lindsay merely went along with our plans, as long as she felt occasionally allowed to bring a friend to help. Then, before we had a chance to reunite the house's two big men and put on the roof, word came needed the exposed entrance. Procrastinate turns no match for the words, after ending there down our weekend, we'll enter the following hallway in final form wrapped around the crew.

But by month three, finally seeing the two halves of the house married on our own rental car again. It was all there—a long master hall and morning with a porch and closing master on-side, the master bedrooms and living room on the other, and a guest bed room and the kitchen in the back. As we made necessary of death salvaged from the old location, even the kids gave a nod—with a little cash incentive. After a while, it seemed paying Spencer and his friends \$3 for stopping corner pieces of door (continued on page 86)

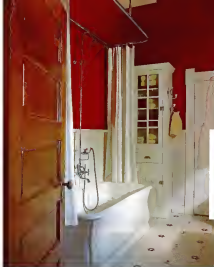


OLD-FASHIONED CHARM

• **10/11/11** The old kitchen had beautiful wood on the walls and ceiling, but no remaining cabinetry. This built-in cupboard, which was original to the property, set the tone for the new Skane-style cabinets—in old paint, built from 1940's July 2003 issue featuring kitchen-remodel story titled "A Green Game Plan."

• **11/12/11** Skane and Wade bought the pristine 1950s Skane's gas range on eBay and built it into the wall with a shut-off safety valve for \$200. The durable gray granite countertop made the look of period appropriate but more risk-prone appearance.

• **12/12/11** Skane painted the built-in plate rack, glass-front doors, the pots and national kitchen materials the spirit of the local kitchen.



BATHING BEAUTY

• **12/11** Skane and Wade up the walls and 1 inch hexagonal floor tiles removed the master bath to the 2012 cash-in job that came with it. The cabinet is an antique-style foot that was built into the wall to serve as a towel rack.



READER TIP



"Instead of paying for a custom tile pattern, I applied epoxy paint used in parking garages to create the look with stock white hex tiles."

—SHARON NICK, CORONA, TEX.

FLOOR PLANS

The main floor's layout remains as it was with a few small exceptions. The kitchen was enlarged by moving its existing pantry and cabinet wall to create a full bathroom. The new doors and stone windows that had lined the four walls of the master bedroom were also moved. Since the roof and eave had been removed to resolve light and ventilation for the house drive, the laundry room is entirely new.



50+ WINNING HOUSES
See the other remodels
you thought were winners at
thisoldhouse.com/reader-remodel

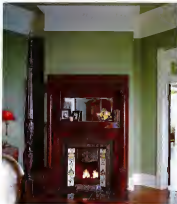
and window trim, and \$10 for 8- to 10-foot-long boards. Lindsay traded bread-scraped cups to the mill or more in exchange for hours spent removing nails from doors. After that, it was all smiles on weekend rides to the home to chip away at debris such as clunk and hardware. In the end, Lindsay would pour out boards with splinters and doors so similar to eggs. With the heavy lifting done, Spencer was eager to invite friends down to help, noting as I did, "work done to death."

While we were initially disappointed to lose the roof when we topped off the attic, starting from scratch allowed us to build a full second floor. New rafters planned for higher ceilings and two master-class bedrooms, a room for the pool table, and a TV room. Setting the house up on a second foundation created a 32-inch crawl space that provided another chance to modernize in a way you can't see. At the suggestion of the movers and two HVAC contractors, we used the crawl space to house new ductwork too thick to wind through the area between floors.

Inside, Sharon's exhaustive Googling of renovation topics such as "removal of pocket-door mechanisms" and "ways to remove rust on hardware" was paying off. And the stained glass windows, headboard, columns, capitals, and glass rails emerged from under layers of paint that she and the kids stripped off. It took only two scratched door covers before Sharon realized the best way to strip them expertly. Her extensive googling also saved a good deal of money. This master doorcrafter for \$16 a year currently has \$100 per door a piece. A Submerging the old hardware is tedious of molasses, a run-around up the ladder on an automotive repair, new hardware weapons.

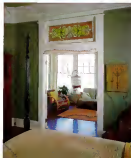
Now when we came to the house—at least two weekends a month and for longer stretches with extended family—it's mostly to play, for lake-side volleyball, ATV riding, and water-skiing. Sharon says as one wants to race at or on Dallas house anymore, as she wants to move up the date for relocating here, to our dream retirement home.

I guess I'll just have to continue



A MASTERFUL SUITE

▲ **1970s:** The original oak fireplace mantel in the first-floor master bedroom (labeled) has been painted black and the surrounding walls are a new look made to look like an old wall and ceiling. The new mantel is a new look made to look like an old wall and ceiling. The new mantel is a new look made to look like an old wall and ceiling.



JIM'S TOP 5 TIPS FOR TACKLING A MAJOR RENOVATION

1. Research moving a house thoroughly.

Moving a house is not the moving furniture. Before you commit, take a month or so to learn all the ins and outs of dismantling, seasonally moving of overhead wires, labor for utility lines, police escorts and charges for oversized trucks. We had no idea that moving took very long and on top of the work. One of the day the use of public roads or local paths, the houses light and weight and so on. The next day we got brownie-points to consult the International Association of Structural Movers (iam.org).

2. Investigate the house's condition.

Inspector by a licensed engineer before you lay down any money. Because we expected extensive renovations, we didn't even look into how much work we were facing up front. We mistakenly assumed that we could move whatever was still standing without factoring in hidden damage from water leaks and termites. Luckily our visit, the critical place in holding the house together, were sturdy planks at 100-year-old cypress, which naturally resist termites and rot. Prepare for the worst and make sure the house has enough architectural detail to make piecemeal salvaging worthwhile.

3. Motivate friends and relatives to help.

We didn't make until about a year into the project that simply getting the kids taken around was the way to motivate them—and get a lot done. Meanwhile, after a friend told Sharon to quit school for every work session, we found out that food, beer, and a little downtime fishing or playing cards by the lake were compensation enough for adult family and friends, including those with generous renovation experience. The volunteer help we got in carpentry, painting, and driving saved us roughly \$45,000—and brought us priceless moral support.

4. Let look-alike materials keep down costs.

Sharon is a scholar for authentic details, but she recognized when modern materials could save us money. For us, adding glass railings in the living room to match what was in the dining room was more important than having it milled from solid wood. So we used MDF, since we planned to paint it.



A SWEAT-EQUITY SCRAPBOOK

TOP TO BOTTOM LEFT TO RIGHT: With the second floor, new windows, and a full bath, Jim and Sharon's renovation was a labor of love. Sharon's painting the master bedroom walls and the new mantel in the master bedroom (labeled) has been painted black and the surrounding walls are a new look made to look like an old wall and ceiling. The new mantel is a new look made to look like an old wall and ceiling.

5. Scout the Web for sources, troubleshooting, and support. Sharon taught herself to strip paint, remove rust, and repair doors almost entirely on her own. Instead of the time, but without her all right Googling we would be missing a lot of great pointers and ideas—thisoldhouse.com was invaluable for information about insulation, new windows, and exterior paint colors. By staying open to new sources, Sharon was able to find helpful restoration tips from a local antiques shop.

ONE-ROOM WONDERS

Not every reader project sent to our website was a whole-house renovation. Here, the winning entries you voted on online, in a whole bunch more categories.



Best Laundry Room

WINNER: GRETCH HOUNS, BEACON, PA



THE PROJECT Combine two back-of-the-house rooms to make a laundry/gentry mudroom.

THE PLAN "This 5 by 3-foot space that runs parallel to my kitchen was once two separate areas: a pantry and a mudroom. I wanted to take down the dividing wall and create a space that served the old purposes but also let the washer and dryer come up out of the basement."

THE PROCESS "After demolition, I covered the floor with a checkerboard of post-and-stick tiles. I carried in a couple of design elements from the 1870 Italianate kitchen in order to connect the two spaces. One is the wicket subway tiles, which don't actually look like the 11-foot kitchen ceiling and are also easy to clean. The other is the library molding, which defines both the kitchen cabinets and the counter tops. I couldn't find roof beams small enough to fit on the library molding in the new mudroom, so I used doorposts in a brushed-nickel finish, which worked perfectly."

"The hand-holding washer and dryer fit behind a quartz counter top that steps down over a built-in perimeter at the far end. It's a generous counter space for folding clean clothes or saving through the nearby back door and separating errands of groceries. Among the many subjects I pulled into the room is a small orange bench where you can sit to change your shoes before heading out into the garden. The room also resulted not only in a bright passageway in the back of the house but is a great spot for getting the chores done."



Best Bathroom

WINNER: J. FRANKS, NEWPORT, RI



THE PROJECT Give a nondescript bathroom period style.

THE PLAN "Our condo is in a converted 1963 corner house and still has a great lot to give the 5th square-foot second bath period details. When I reflected a

sidewalk, I bought, for \$20 from the owner of a gray-spoon dresser, it became the room's focal point."

THE PROCESS "The sideboard's wood top was covered in old muck and only clean for the mirror surround. I removed the sideboard, then rest it into new cabinets. I rebuilt the stuck bottom drawer and few cabinets the sink out of the upper drawers' bases, then reconnected the knobs with flip-down pin hardware. Then I stopped, sanded, stained, and coated the

wood with polyurethane. A local glass supplier made a beveled mirror insert for my rebuilt surround and a counter top shop fabricated the vanity top and sink out of solid-surface material."

"Another restoration is a hand-painted lining, dating back to the 1830s, inspired the floor. I bought a source to custom make a soapstone pattern in 12 by 36 inch sheets, installed them, and grouted. Now this is my bath—I've given the master to my wife instead."

See more winning bathroom remodels at thisoldhouse.com/bathrooms



Best Bedroom

WINNER: CHASE AND JOSE KELLY, SAN ANTONIO, TEX.



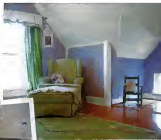
THE PROJECT Convert an unfinished attic into a girl's bedroom.

THE PLAN "As a young girl, I had an attic bedroom, and we wanted to turn our 1927 stone cottage's attic space into a room for our daughters, Eden, 4 and Lay, 3 years. We have a 20-month-old son, Archer."

THE PROCESS "My husband, Josh, removed a wall with a door that had sealed off the dormered window. Then he refinished the 80-year-old pine planks—a tedious job. The dormer had only subflooring, so Josh installed floorboards oriented to match. A carpenter helped finish the ceiling."

"Josh, an Air Force surgeon, worked furiously to finish the conversion. He was deployed to Iraq in January. A week night the night before he left, he removed the quarter round. He said, 'Should I go to Lowe's to get the last piece?' We're all proud of Josh's work—and can't wait to hug him when he gets home this month."

See more about boy's bedroom remodels at thisoldhouse.com/bedrooms



Best Basement

WINNER: JIM AND DENISE DUBOYNE, WESTCHESTER, MASS.



THE PROJECT: Turn an unfinished basement into a living space.
THE PLAN: "Our 1928 Colonial-style house needed a space where our kids—ages 13, 11, and 7—could go to get away from the adults. We were renovating upstairs and had finished the basement, so we decided to get it done while we were in there."

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Best Pergola

WINNER: DEBBIE AND MICHAEL SMITH, WARREN, N.J.

THE PROJECT: Turn a backyard into a dining, party-friendly pergola.
THE PLAN: "My wife, Deb, got the idea from a picture in a magazine. We put the pergola in a 20 by 20 foot corner garden spot where trees had blocked the sun."

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Best Shed

WINNER: BOB AND DEREKA WELSH, LINCOLN, NEB.



THE PROJECT: Put up an outbuilding for storage and workshop space.
THE PLAN: "My husband Bob talked about what we called his 'imaginary shed' for so long, we thought it would never be. He found the plans at a lumberyard. He doesn't know I submitted it to your website for the Reader Remodel Contest—it's a surprise!"

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Best Stairs

WINNER: CONNOR TUTTLE, LA JOLLA, CALIF.



THE PROJECT: Open up a formerly enclosed attic/basement.
THE PLAN: "We converted our 90-plus-year-old bungalow's attic to a master suite. As the project's first phase, we removed the 12-step staircase."

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7% KITCHEN

38% GARAGE

55% CLOSET

WHERE YOU
NEED TO
ORGANIZE

HOME NUMBERS

What do you like? What annoys you? And how do you really feel about your contractor? Thousands of you took our survey at thisishouse.com/yourTOH. The results aren't exactly scientific, but they are interesting, and sometimes even surprising. Here's a little snapshot of you, our readers and web users.

Exactly half of you chose kitchen cabinets as the product that gives you the biggest sticker shock (followed by window treatments and faucets)



YOUR
FAVORITE
HOUSE
COLORS



YOUR
FAVORITE
HOUSE
STYLE

21% VICTORIAN



11% MODERN



48% CRAFTSMAN



20% CLASSICAL

HAPPY HOUSEHOLDS

Here's how often you and your significant other argue about home improvement.

Never—we're totally in sync → 18%

Occasionally, but we always work it out → 59%

Frequently—if it's Saturday, we must be arguing → 17%

The divorce will be final next week → 6%

DEPARTMENT
OF CAN'T LIVE
WITH 'EM,
CAN'T LIVE
WITHOUT 'EM



35% of you could **YOURSELF** LIVE AS YOUR OWN CONTRACTOR

For the rest of you, here's how you feel about the pros everybody loves to hate

29% "Whoa, ho!"

13% "Eh"

22% "Aaaaaagh!"

Which explains why when asked to hire a handyman, 52% of you chose: "Enough to keep my weekends booked for the next five months"

GET BACK IN THE KITCHEN:

As we expected, most of our readers want a new kitchen

48% of you will **bring it in!** Kitchen, bath, or other living areas in your lead big remodeling project



But even though 36% of you said your bathroom is the room in your house you hate most, versus 30% who said the kitchen, **more than half of you** would still choose to redo that kitchen! You would be the room makeover, only a quarter of you would do the bathroom

Almost two-thirds of you want a new refrigerator over a plasma TV or a washer/dryer

HOME IS WHERE THE HURT IS

When asked whether you've ever injured yourself working on your house, you said:

Nothing a Band-Aid couldn't fix → 79%

Yes, I needed a doctor or emergency-room visit → 18%

Where can I buy a four-fingered glove? → 3%

FLOWER
CHILDREN



Exactly half of you said your yard is the place you look like a big garden—more than those who want sports courts, a splashroom lawn, or even decks and patios for entertaining

But something doesn't add up: 50% of you also said that the best part of summer is playing on the back patio while only 33% think it's seeing the garden bloom

Couch

On
The
With

This Old House

Wherein our reader therapists listen to your remodel sob stories and offer strategies to avoid that next home-improvement trauma—no inner child involve

Illustrations by John Hershey



by *Kristin Pauls*
PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Ryan Korte*
STYLING BY *Kari Gallen*

THIS OLD HOUSE SAVED!

YOU ASKED FOR IT: a follow-up story on those *bygone beauties* we featured on our back page each month. Read on for the **UPDATE** on a half-dozen homes that our readers have *rescued*.

VIC AND GINNY YOUNGWER PLANNING ON ENDING UP back in Ohio. Sure, the Buckeye State was dear to their hearts—Vic grew up in Cincinnati, and Cindy spent many years in nearby Lebanon—but after racing up to Colorado and then living abroad, the couple figured their heartland days were far behind them.

But when their four children ended up settling in the Midwest, coming home started to look like a pretty good idea. "We decided to find a place where they would all be able to come down as just one day to visit us," Vic says. But not just any place. They wanted a historic house in a historic town. And since Vic, a full-time creature of old houses, was looking for a new DIY project, it wouldn't hurt if the place were a fair-appeal, too.

They got their wish with the property featured in our December 2009 Save This Old House column. So atop a steep hillside overlooking the Ohio River in the town of Piquette, the 1940s Bulfinch had original

SAFE AT LAST
THIS PLACE: This long-unoccupied Bulfinch on the border of the Ohio River was originally featured in the December 2009 Save This Old House column. Now it's a beautiful historic residence thanks, thanks to the Youngs' efforts. It's also the last of the featured 20



[SAVE THIS OLD HOUSE UPDATE](#)

double hung windows crowned with duglasc hunch, balustrade columns flanking a wide front porch, and hooded eaves supported by cast-iron brackets. "It looked no different up there on the hill," Vic recalls of the house, which had stood abandoned for decades. "There were never major repairs to be found, but this one spoke to both of us."

The league told the tale of a pasture-homes town, a vital part for the country's tobacco and pork markets before the railroad took over.

In 2,200 square feet encompassed three large rooms off a grand central hall downstairs, with a winding staircase leading to two single bedrooms upstairs. Around a century ago, the house was carved up into apartments and a two-story ell, with a downstairs kitchen and an upstairs bath tacked on—apparently with an exterior staircase. “One day when I was working on the house, a 100-year-old woman came up to me,” he says. “She told me she’d lived in it as a child and used to enter through a second-story back door.”

The first fire had caused gutted roofs and left almost 20 years ago. As time wore on, the paint chipped off, the plaster walls crumbled, and, night and day, the wind whistled in, rattling the second floor ceiling on the fire. The house was empty and deteriorating by another decade before the town council finally condemned it and started a demolition. Just past the wrecking ball was not to swing, a group of Hight residents formed a limited liability company, or LLC, to purchase the house. Just "How to Save an Endangered Old House," to 1002. They rebuilt the second floor, installed a new roof, and put a back on the missing, hoping the right person would come along and finish the job. "They were very conscious of who they sold it to," We says. "Everyone had to feel good about it, that we would stay the course and save this house."

The first project We took on was restoring the original windows, which involved removing and reinstalling 2,127 individual panes of glass. Some many of these were broken, he combed down the eavestrough on the front of the house and used new panes in back. He then handcrafted replacement for the missing or damaged roof brackets and restored the old fireplace mantels. Other projects included replacing damaged poplar lap siding, refinishing the floors, and updating the hardware-plaster walls in the third floor. In a job of rubble, We discovered a canvas fireplace cover and two of the house's ornate glass chandeliers, which he rescued and

PRIORITY REVIEW

► Homeowner Cindy Young says the "Bum Earth" poster she chose for the exterior was controversial at first. "People thought, 'Oh my God! It's pink! But I think it has proven them!'"



NEW LIFE FOR AN OLD STADIUM

• Instead of laying carpet on the original subfloor, Mr. Young pointed a tunnel along the line where the old carpet was TACKED down. The original floor floor was not to go to be saved, so Mr. Young's with heavy sub hardened as



APPLY FOR EMPLOYMENT

REGON LEFT is the dining room. He built a four-fingered totemal samaras line, which ran behind it.
REGON RIGHT Hides carver's legs under beddings out of the second floor of the old adobe.



READER TIP



"Save the original windows! It's a lot of work, but it maintains the character of an old house more than anything else." —*veruca*

decided. "What he didn't find was the house's original hardwood, almost all of which was stolen during the house's long abandonment. "That was frustrating," he says.

Fortunately, Vee, who learned his DIY skills from his father, did almost all of the work himself, occasionally relying on books, manuals, and back issues of *The Old House* from his oldest son, Darren, he got help by waiting the 12-foot-high walls, which took three coaches to complete. He also got support from the neighborhood—granted by Jerry and Hylda Strang, part of the LLC that would be the house. During the years with the Strangs, he lived with the Strangs, not far, while Cindy, who works for a real-estate company, stayed behind in Colorado.

Now everything is just about done. Cindy has added her own touches to some exterior masonry decorating with an emphasis on personal belongings. The only thing Vee has left on his to do list is restoring a new outbuilding that he plans to use for additional bedrooms. While the couple restores their residence in Colorado, the Kopley house now serves as a family retreat and a gathering place during holidays and vacations.

It took a lot of hard work to save this old house. But more than has even great equity, Vee's old people like Jerry, Hylda, and the entire community at Kopley for making the dream a reality. "They certainly helped me succeed," he says. "If I hadn't had them, it would have been a different story."

> HOW TO SAVE AN ENDANGERED OLD HOUSE

The people of RIPLEY, OHIO, figured out a way—and you can too

Finding a house? If you want to live in an old house but don't have the time or money to fully renovate it, here are three alternatives.

FORM AN LLC. Before they found it, Vincent and Cindy Young, a house owner, had to demolish by the Kopley town council. In response, resident Phil White asked for a 30-day reprieve. Then, he recruited 10 of his friends and neighbors to form a limited liability company, an LLC. This allowed them to pool their money and purchase the house from a local lender, perform the necessary repairs, then sell it to the Youngs. LLC members are only liable for the amount of money invested in the business. Phil's company was rejected while replacing the roof. Phil and his crew could be used only for the amount they paid for the property. Having an LLC is relatively easy. Just fill the formal paperwork (the fee is \$200 to \$300 depending on where you live) create an operating agreement, establish each member's rights and responsibilities, and either print required licenses and permits.

GET THE COMMITTEE. Some local residents as a chair with the town. Historic might reveal why a house threatened with demolition is worth saving. Maybe it was home to a notable resident or part of the building stock. If so, you'll have a strong case to present to the community without planning commission as to why the house should be preserved. Contact the local group. If you find anything, discussing an article might build more community support.

FORM COALITIONS. It's hard to save an endangered property all by yourself; working with others is important. The best way to ask for help is through historic preservation agencies, which can provide financial support and resources. But there are other parties who might be interested in your cause. For example, if the demolition of a house implies redevelopment that might have an environmental or economic impact, get environmentalists involved. If it affects car or bus routes, get local businesses, and the chamber of commerce for support. And if there's a threat it will harm parking or the quality of life in a particular area, a local neighborhood group might want to get involved.

THEY SAW THEM HERE FIRST

Five more SAVE THIS OLD HOUSE subjects scooped up by our readers



ALL IN THE FAMILY

COYOTES—Stewart and Joyce Glynn and Joyce Glynn
What's the story?
Township of the
Coyotes
September 2005

WHILE STEWART AND JOYCE GLYNN have been small homeowners for years, nothing like Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, farmhouse was special. In honor of Stewart's father, who passed away in 2002, the Glynn family made the restoration of this circa 1757 home into a family affair, as well as a tribute to Stewart's dad. "He did a lot of work on home repairs," says Joyce, "and those would have been right up his alley."

Despite its more than 150 years of history, the house was in danger of being demolished by the local school district, which wanted to use the land for athletic fields. Fortunately, the Historic Pennsylvania Trust of Lancaster County convinced the district that knocking down a rare 18th-century farmhouse was a bad idea. Luckily for the HPTLC, the Glynn family was willing to help preserve the house and bought from the school district for \$150,000. The 3,400-square-foot residence was in bad shape. Most of the original windows topped with thick pediments, as well as a wrap-around porch with curved posts. Over nine months, Stewart, Joyce, three six children, and three grandchildren rescued the original walls, installed aluminum drywall, added a cedar shake roof, and dressed up the concrete floor porch with stone veneer.

Now the Glynn family is looking for someone to make this house a home and have put a bid on the market for \$479,000. While they won't be living there themselves, they're already transformed the relic of old Pennsylvania into something Stewart's father would have been proud of.



IT TAKES A VILLAGE

"Water and Cindy Young did a lot of work on this house. It's a lot of work, but it maintains the character of an old house more than anything else." —*veruca*

Historic might reveal why a house threatened with demolition is worth saving. Maybe it was home to a notable resident or part of the building stock. If so, you'll have a strong case to present to the community without planning commission as to why the house should be preserved. Contact the local group. If you find anything, discussing an article might build more community support.

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PRIDE OF THE SMOKIES

2

OWNER: Jesse and Martha Andrus
Location: Knoxville, Tenn.
FEATURED: June 2009

THIS 1838 Craftsman four-square was just pretty right when we featured it. Not only did it need a little painting, patching, and TLC, it was also standing in the way of a proposed expansion to the local business. Facing the home's decline almost all her life would succumb to the Caterpillar, owner Iva Vance sold it to the preservation-minded Knoxville Heritage, which agreed to move the house to an adjoining lot. After securing its future, Knoxville Heritage stabilized the house and updated the electrical, plumbing, and HVAC systems. They also added a brick foundation and installed a new roof. The rest of the work, including some cosmetic touches and a complete kitchen remodel, fell to the hands of Jesse and Martha Andrus, who purchased the house from Knoxville Heritage in 2007. "Our past two houses were new construction, but we really wanted to find an older historic house," says Jesse. Now the couple can relax in the same front porch where posing Iva Vance used to sit and watch her mother teaching flowers to the front lawn, adding a rather layer of memories to a house that was almost lost.



FROM TEARDOWN TO TEAHOUSE

OWNER: Pat McLaughlin
Location: St. Joseph, Mo.
FEATURED: September 2008

SAVING A CORNER OF POLISH food on the north parker's train, the centerpiece of this 1969 Gothic cottage in St. Joseph, Missouri, is a done deal. It will soon be back on its feet, not just as a house for new owner Pat McLaughlin, but also as the Gothic House Tea & Eatery, which Pat is opening on the first floor. While the business will occupy the two original first-floor parlors, the kitchen will be housed in a new Queen Anne addition constructed in 1987.

During her past renovations, Pat, an artist, and in line the could re-create the original look and layout of the house, which had long ago been divided up into apartments. She tore out wooden divider walls and, more probably, rebuilt an entire first floor into a single unit in the 1940s in the name of modernization. She did the gutting work herself, having a son design by Andrew Jackson Downing, the 19th-century American landscape designer who was a fervent proponent of the Gothic Revival style. She also restored the original oak floors and pine newel posts and was able to rescue all of the original windows such as the front door. Unfortunately, the second floor walls were beyond repair.

Someone has seen home's long-term survival, Pat also worked with a local preservation commission to have it listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Best of all, when a descendant of one of the house's original owners popped by to have a look, he told her that she had the old floor plan down pat. "He was amazed," says Pat, who was happy to see that her weekend day restoration of the historic house was right in line with its past.



A SOUTHERN RELIC RISES AGAIN

RESTORED BY: George and Becky Greer
Location: KY
FEATURED: April 2008

4



BUILT BY CONFEDERATE ARMY VETERAN John P. Greer in 1880, the 1 1/2-story received some damage when he built, but a neighbor's column was it added in the 1890s, making it one of the most stylish houses in town. But by the time George and Becky Greer acquired it in 2001, the structure had lost much of its charm and was in danger of collapse. While the couple didn't want to relocate their home, they wanted to save it. "I just wanted it to be saved," says Becky. "It was worried it would explode from rot and water damage." The couple purchased the house in 2001 for about \$350,000. The couple worked on the house for about a year, with George and Becky working on the house, including gutting a new addition, replacing rotten joists, and putting up the middle of the house, which had begun to sink. Despite the terms and water damage, the Greers saved most of the house's original heart pine floors, oak millwork, and wainscoting. Once repairs were done, they sold the house to a couple who are now the proud owners of what's still one of the town's most stylish homes.



WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER 32?

Get updates on all the houses you've wanted to save over the years at thisoldhouse.com.
Alert

PRESERVATION IN THE PEACH STATE

OWNER: Dale Couch and Greg Jarrell
Location: Georgia
FEATURED: January/February 2005

DALE COUCH AND GREG JARRELL believe historic architecture is nothing to be trifled with. So it's little wonder that after searching up the 1797 street, built by a Revolutionary War veteran to resemble the neoclassical houses of his native New England, these two hardy homeowners barely peeked away the years to bring back its original character.

In doing so, they restored the original windows, stripped off the stain on its yellow pine floors, applied some good old-fashioned by walls to them—"It was popular when the house was built," says Couch—and painstakingly repaired most of the original plaster walls and ceilings. No high-tech drywall in this house.

While the place is looking great, Couch says there's still a lot of work to be done, including the complete restoration of a fire floor. "One of the things provided to us is doing this is that the preservation of any house is, first, a mass of things that must go down quickly, and, second, a lifetime commitment to things that will go down carefully, gradually, and slowly." ■



First there was wood.
Then composites.
Now there's AZEK Deck.

► Our decks go equally well with red wine, BBQ sauce or ketchup.

AZEK Deck, the #1 brand of stain resistant decking, is a superior decking option that is refinishing- and re-siding-free. The very notion of building a deck. Engineered with ProCell™ Technology, AZEK Deck virtually eliminates the shoddliness associated with wood and composite decking so you can forget the stain problems that are common with the leading decking products.

Built to withstand a host of household objects, homeowners can actually live on their AZEK Deck. Spilled wine, fruit punch, even hamburger grease are no match for AZEK Deck's stain resistance. And since it's scratch resistant, you won't have to worry about scuffs during installation and AZEK Deck will keep looking great for years.

AZEK Building Products has more than 20 years of experience in cellular PVC manufacturing. We make AZEK Trim, the #1 brand of trim, and AZEK Moulding. And now we're bringing our leadership and innovation to AZEK Deck.

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THIS OLD
HOUSE
FAMILY
PROJECT

PROJECT ► **Building a
Sandbox**

How to create a backyard play area, with
Instructions for parents and kids

By Christine Fiedler Photographs by Wendell T. Webber

AGE RANGE ► 10 and up
COST ► \$150 to \$200
TIME ► 2 days

DIFFICULTY ► Moderate. There
are many heavy parts, but
the cuts are easy and the
assembly straightforward.

COMPLETE INSTRUCTIONS INSIDE ►



A SANDBOX BRINGS a little bit of the beach into your backyard, and the playtime is even more fun when the box itself has an imaginative shape. Drive kids to the playground for hours of fun in this red car. It even has special storage under the hood for when you're ready to make a pit stop.

This project is a bit challenging, so older kids may want to help build it with the younger ones. Pressure-treated lumber is heavy and requires a few strong bodies

to carry it. Before you cut it, you'll need to support the big pieces on blocks, as well as clamp plywood pieces to a worktable. You can build the basic box in your garage, then park it on a level spot outside. With the whole family pitching in, it will take just one weekend to get this car road-worthy, and you'll soon be ready to roll.

SAFETY FIRST

Teach kids good workshop habits from the start. Here are a few guidelines for the tools used in this project.



HAND TOOLS

Get kids used to being in the workshop and handling tools by having them do safe jobs like measuring, marking, and painting.



POWER TOOLS

Jigsaws are better off in adult hands. Older kids can help out by using the drill with adult supervision.



GEAR

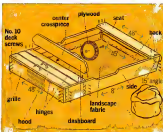
Keep sleeves away from saw blades and drill bits. Whenever the jigsaw is on, safety glasses are a must.



Lay out and cut the parts

> Using a jigsaw, trim two 2x12 boards to even 8-foot lengths for the sides. Then make the tail fins by cutting off one end of each side piece at a 15-degree angle. Cut one 2x12 into two 48-inch pieces for the grille and the seat, cut the other into two 45-inch pieces for the back and the center crosspiece. Cut the 1x6 decking into four 48-inch pieces for the hood.

> Using the measurements shown here or the handy templates at thisoldhouse.com/family, lay out and cut notches on the sides (to represent doors) and on the ends of one decking piece (to make the dashboard). Using the holder that the wheel cover came on as a template, trace a circle onto the 1/2-inch plywood. Cut out the steering wheel.



MAKE IT EASY Get expanded step-by-step instructions and download full-size templates for this and other family projects at thisoldhouse.com/family

TOOLS YOU'LL NEED>

- Tape measure
- Speed square
- Jigsaw with coarse, wood-cutting blade
- 4-foot pipe clamps
- Drill/driver fitted with 1/4-inch bit
- Safety glasses
- Paint brushes
- Shovel
- Steel rake
- 4-foot level
- Utility scissors
- Staple gun

MATERIALS TO BUY>

- Four 8-foot pressure-treated 2x12s
- Two 8-foot pressure-treated 1x6 decking boards
- 1/2-inch pressure-treated plywood
- 2x4 wood block
- Steering wheel cover
- No. 10 deck screws
- Two drawer handles
- Two sets of stainless-steel butt hinges
- Latex exterior stain
- Latex exterior paint
- Landscape fabric
- 20 bags of natural sand





Hey, Kids!
You can help out
by holding the
pieces of wood
together so they
don't wobble.

2

Assemble the sandbox

> Stand the side pieces on edge, with the door natches facing up. Fit the back piece on edge

between the sides. Line it up with the corner of the tail fin that's on the ground. Hold the pieces together with pipe clamps.

> (NOTE: Before screwing any parts together, make pilot holes with a 1/16-inch bit.) Screw through the sides into the ends of the back piece with deck screws.

> Screw scrap blocks inside the box's front corners. Put the grille across the front of the box. Attach it by screwing it to the blocks.

> Screw the center crosspiece between the sides, 16 3/8 inches from the front edge. Screw the seat on top of the back of the box.

> Stand the notched dashboard up vertically, and screw it behind the crosspiece. Screw a piece of decking to the crosspiece in front of the dashboard.

3

Paint the car

> Lay another decking piece on top of the one in front of the dashboard. Attach hinges to both pieces to connect them. Hinge the last decking piece to the front of the car. Together these hinged parts should open like a book.

> Stain the sandbox red. Also stain the plywood steering wheel and the 4x4 block.

Using a compass, draw the wheels and headlights. Use black and silver paint for the wheels, headlights, and grille.



Think About It

HYUNDAI

DO 30 MILLION PEOPLE KNOW SOMETHING YOU DON'T KNOW?

If you've never set foot in a Hyundai, then the answer to this question is yes, they probably do.

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Whatever it is, it means the kind of owner loyalty you'll expect from the sixth leg-

> CONTINUED at ThinkAboutIt.com



4

Set up the sandbox

> Find a level spot of ground for your sandbox. If necessary, dig out an area until it is level, then rake it smooth. Put the sandbox on the ground. Using a 4-foot level, check that the sandbox is level; if it isn't, rake or dig the ground underneath until it is.

> Line the bottom with landscape fabric, and staple the edges to the inside of the box. Fill the box with natural sand, and rake it smooth.



TO PARENTS: The sandbox is quite heavy and may require two or three adults to carry it.

5

Add the finishing touches

> Attach the two handles to the hinged decking so they face each other and look like a hood ornament.

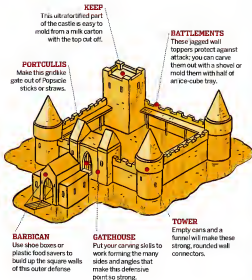
> Fit the wheel cover around the plywood steering wheel. Screw the 2x4 block to the dashboard. Then screw the wheel to the block through the center, using a washer between the two so the wheel can pivot. Now grab some digging toys, and hit the road!



ONLINE BONUS Watch videos of building this and other family projects—or share one you've built—at thisoldhouse.com/family

Build a Castle

Sand castles aren't just for the beach. With your new slice of the shoreline right in your own backyard, you can build a sandy stronghold any time. Just study these basic parts, and you'll be able to make a perfect, custom-designed medieval fortress.



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At least not when it comes to your family. And if you really want to ensure their safety, comfort, and well-being, there's nothing better than the 2008 Hyundai Santa Fe. It includes all those vital safety features standard, though they hardly begin to tell the whole story.

A Santa Fe is born different. It takes 2,000 pre-

→ CONTINUED at ThinkAboutIt.com



 HYUNDAI

YOUR WORKSHOP

TECHNIQUES, TIPS, AND YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

READER TIP



"I never use water to clean my putty knife. Mostly, I just wipe it clean and put it away, but if there's any crud that won't wipe off, I'll use mineral spirits."

—BEN BIDDLE, LEBRON 140



This stiff-bodied putty knife belongs to reader Ben Biddle, who got it from his grandfather. Biddle himself is a Canadian carpenter. The knife is more than 100 years old but still serves its family well. Biddle explains the wisdom in his vintage house: "Someday I'll pass it on to my kids," he says.

116 Ask This Old House
29 answers, plus how to patch old plaster

125 Norm's Notebook
Tips on the tools you want: paint sprayers, brad nailers, and reciprocating saws

127 Resource Directory

PHOTOGRAPH BY
LEE BROWN



ASK THE EXPERTS

Buying a heating and cooling system should not give you a headache.

When buying a heating and cooling system, do you know what to look for? Anyone? Anyone? It's actually quite easy. And after reading the tips below, you too will know what to look for.

Make sure it's energy efficient. Like the gas mileage in your car, the higher the rating, the more efficient the product.

Know what refrigerant your air conditioner is using. Systems that use Puron® refrigerant are non-toxic, non-flammable and more energy efficient than Freon®.

Make sure it increases the comfort level in your home. Systems with "ComfortNet" technology accurately predict the need for heating while cutting temperature swings in half.

If you need more information on what to look for in a heating and cooling system, visit carrier.com or call 1-800-CARRIER to talk to an expert.

Carrier

Turn to the Expert.

WORKSHOP Ask This Old House

Tom Silva comments: If an engineer says your existing roof structurally sound, and it matches the slope of your planned second floor, you could find someone to cut the existing roof off the walls, lift everything—rafters, sheathing, and roofing—onto the new walls, crane, then build the new second-floor walls and lower the old roof back on top of them. It's an expensive proposition, but if done, with less risk of water damage than if you build a roof from scratch.

"General" asks:
What can I do to save my crab apples? Rabbits start the way around the bark on two trees this winter.

"CDMAUSEN/SHORT" REPLIES:
Most likely the birds are to blame, and the rabbits are a bonus. Some rabbits nibble on the cambium layer that transports the tree's water and nutrients. But if the trees are young, rabbit damage tends to be fatal. Try putting a trunk guard or fence around the trees and see if they live. No guarantee, though.



Roger Cook comments: I'd water those trees like crap and watch what happens when they leaf out. This leaves you with the trees brown, the tree is dead. The trunk guard suggestion is a good one. Just wrap a piece of 3-foot-wide hardware cloth loosely around the trunks of your remaining trees and push it down into the soil as deeply as possible. Loosen the guards as the trees get bigger, but as long as there are rabbits around, keep the protection in place.

"DITTY" asks:
What type of paint should I use on my children's room?
Even when I have used the best latex paints available, anything placed on them tends to stick, and the paint pulls off when the object is picked up.

"Jesse" replies: I used an epoxy enamel paint on shelves in my kitchen and bathroom and never had a problem with sticking or peeling. Just let it dry for a week before putting anything heavy on it.

Painting contractor Richard O'Neil comments:
Another great solution: we've used to prevent sticking is to apply two coats of a water-based polyurethane over either epoxy- or water-based paint. It makes a beautiful, smooth finish that is more durable and harder to let "rocky" than paint alone.

"Judy" asks:
Can I raise my basement ceiling?
The floor is a concrete slab. What I find is difficult was to attach 2x4 joists to the existing 2x4 floor joists, then lift 2 inches off of the slab. Will getting that additional 2 inches of height compromise the structure of the house?

"Jesse" replies: If I was trying to gain headroom in a basement, I would look down at mud up. It's not that unusual to take out the existing slab with a diamond-blade circular saw and jackhammer, then pour the wet concrete and repair a 4-inch concrete floor. That could get you a lot more than 2 additional inches. When you do this, though, you need an in-situ consultation from a structural or structural engineer.

"Jesse" replies: The house could also be raised by jacking a spreader along some more secure blocks to the foundation. This was the solution for a house I was working on a floodplain.

Steve Adams comments: For work "as of 2007," I think going down is the best solution as long as there aren't water issues, there is no bedrock below, and you take care not to undermine the bearing for the existing foundation.

"General" asks:
Should I add more insulation to my yard? 18" of 12 inches of rain, everything is under water. Grass won't ever grow in the low spots.

"Jesse" replies: You need to look at the overall grade of your lawn. If you simply make one area higher, water will just collect in a different area. My brother's a regular problem, and contractors suggested the yard with a slight slope so the water flows toward the street.

"JAC" replies: If the water on your property is coming from your neighbors, talk with them about a solution. Also, you don't want your sagged lawn to push water into their land.

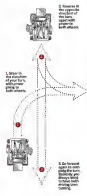
"Nancy" replies: We had the same problem and completely fixed it with a single, stone-filled "crack" that runs through the yard. All the downspouts lead within a week, so it's quite fun to watch after successful jobs when water actually runs in it.

"Jesse" replies: Here about collecting the water in a dry well? Basically, you dig a pit, line it with landscape fabric, fill it with drainage rock, then direct the water to the pit using perforated pipe set in gravel-filled trenches. We installed one, and it actually did the trick.

Roger Cook comments: All of these suggestions could work. When I encounter grading problems, the first thing I do is a grading survey with a laser level. Once you have that, pick your poison. If regrading was too bad, keep the pitch over 1% and use a laser level.

"Nancy" asks:
How do I turn a zero-turn mower?
I'm having a difficult time leaving him to turn my new mower without tearing up the lawn.

"Red Head" replies: I've worked for a landscape maintenance company for five years now and know exactly the instructions you're having with the zero-turn mowers. One of the first things I teach the new guys is ignoring our big mowers. Don't make right



turn on a wet lawn. Either the stopped wheel on the inside of the turn digs a hole in the lawn or the mower pivots on it, or the driving wheel on the outside of the turn spins too fast and leaves a big old mark. I tell them to play it safe and take the extra 3 seconds to make a three-point turn in a safe spot.

Roger Cook comments: Yes, three-point turns are a good idea with zero-turn mowers. Taking slow turns always helps with those machines.



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Product Information LEVITRA® (vardenafil HCl) Tablets

LEVITRA is a prescription medicine used to treat erectile dysfunction (ED) in men.

LEVITRA works by increasing blood flow to the penis, which helps you get and keep an erection. It is used to treat ED in men who have not responded to other treatments. It is not a cure for ED, but it can help you get and keep an erection when you take it. It is not a cure for ED, but it can help you get and keep an erection when you take it. It is not a cure for ED, but it can help you get and keep an erection when you take it.

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WORKSHOP Ask This Old House

Another thing to consider is changing the board end of the yard slightly so that you don't have to make sharp turns.

"Why do the bulbs keep burning out?"
Ever since we replaced the front-light fixture, the bulbs burn out every few weeks. Top and sometimes just a day or two. What is wrong?



"JAGUAR35" REPLIES: Different things can cause bulbs to fail. First, the fixture may need to be secure, causing it to shake or vibrate when someone runs down the stairs or slams the door. If you can't reduce vibration, movement get a rough-wear bulb, which is designed to withstand vibration.

Second, the bulb might be overheating. Check that you're using a bulb that is the correct wattage for the fixture.

Third, the fixture might be getting too much voltage—more than 120 volts—which will cause the bulb to burn out. You can easily check this with an electrical test tool called a multimeter. If that's the problem, call your power company.

Block electrician **Alan Galant** comments: "Jaguar35" must be an electrical because his suggestions are the same ones I would give. I'm suspicious that too much voltage is the problem, however. If that were the case, all the bulbs in the house would be fried. A car would

PHOTO: (TOP) MARK WILK; (BOTTOM) PHOTO COURTESY OF THE QUIKRETE

or dirty socks might also be causing the bulb to burn out. Turn off the power at the circuit-breaker panel, then twist out the socket with steel wool. Also, gently bend out the tab at the bottom of the socket. It may not be making firm contact with the bulb. Alan Galant has been the electrical contractor for a number of this Old House TV projects.

"Deck Paint" asks:
Deck paint or stain?
I treated my deck with an oil-soluble paint stain/water, but it lasted only a couple of years. Would painting the deck offer any advantages over staining? I'm thinking that paint would look better.

"Jo-mo" replies: The previous owners of our house painted the deck. It looked neat, but the paint was very slippery in rain and snow. On the worst side of the house, which gets the most weather, the deck just lined two years on the side deck, four years. From

now on, we are going to stain our new deck a natural color.

"Jeff" replies: A painted deck will probably need repainting in four or five years, and you'll need to scrape and sand it first. I find it easier to stain and re-stain a stained deck, rather than having to deal with paint.

"Betsy" replies: Horizontal painted surfaces don't hold up well to the weather. I'd prefer to let the paint go, and, after two or three years, to make up looking worse than it they'd done nothing in the first place.

Painting contractor **Richard O'Neil** comments: I strongly discourage any customers from applying paint or solid stain to decks, for all the same reasons given above. There is a penetrating "seawoold" decking stain made by Cabot that's so much greater than it's nearly as opaque as paint. But if applied properly, it will not peel and prevent great damage.



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After weeks of plaster, damaged plaster is removed. This Old House general contractor Tom Silva makes the cracks that were left in a floor over wood joists look good.

Catherine and Garry ask:
How about a nitty-gritty plastering article?
 Visitors to thisoldhouse.com asked for help with dinged, gouged, and cracked walls. Here's an easy way to get a smooth surface that lasts

YOU GOTTA BELIEVE PLASTER. This red-headed substance, which was applied to the walls and ceilings of nearly everyone's indoor country until the 1930s, gives us surfaces that are seamless, mold resistant, fire resistant, and noise deadening. But what to do when plaster cracks, buckles, and pops loose? It's a perplexing question for many of our readers, including Tim Theng, whose house in Providence, Rhode Island, is filled with badly blemished plaster. "How do I patch 100 years of gouges, cracks, and screw holes in the walls that look bad and clean when painted?" he asks us in an e-mail.

The first step in any fix is to remove the plaster work the strips of wood lath underneath. Otherwise the cracks come back, no matter how many times you patch over them. That's why This Old House general contractor Tom Silva usually attaches lath with screws and metal washers before reapplying a repair. Recently, though, he used Ego's Wholly Plaster Magic, a homeowner-friendly adhesive that uses the control of screws (plastermagicego.com). While screws aren't the same as metal washers, method is an absolute must: \$133, versus \$20 for 100 metal washers—the final finishing is easier and looks better because there aren't any washers to cover. First, a guide board, two finger-thin acrylic corner protectors, Fibre, Tom shows how packing old walls back together can make them look as good as new.

PHOTOS: BOB LANGRISH FOR THIS OLD HOUSE

1. DRILL. Using a 1/4-inch masonry bit, drill a hole in the plaster about 2 inches from the crack. When you hit lath, stop—the bit won't go through wood—pull out the bit, and drill another hole about 10 inches from the first and about 1/2 inch from the crack. Try to hit a strip of lath in every place you drill. (If you miss, the bit will skewer right to the crack. Mark each hole with a pencil as a reminder not to reset them with primer or adhesive in the next steps.) Try drilling again about half an inch up or down. Continue until there is a series of holes about 4 inches apart on both sides of the crack. Vacuum the plaster crumbs out of all the holes.

2. PRIME AND SEAL. Put on safety goggles and disposable gloves. Then spray a pump sprayer with the acrylic conditioner. Fill each of the holes (but not into any you've marked). One or two sprays should be enough. Spray the edges of the crack, too, and clean up drips with a wet sponge. Wait 10 minutes for the milk-thin conditioner to soak into the plaster and wood.

3. MOUNT THE ADHESIVE. Place the adhesive tube in a hole in one of the primed holes. Gently squeeze the caulking-gun trigger until the creamy glue fills the hole and a little backs out around the nozzle. Do this same for all unprimed holes. Scrape off the excess and wipe the walls clean with a wet sponge.

4. GLUE THE WALL. Slice 2-inch plastic washers over a 1/2-inch drywall screw, and drive it into the lath through one of the adhesive-filled holes. The screw pulls the lath against the plaster's back side while the washers press the screwhead a wide stamping surface. Place washers about 8 to 12 inches apart on both sides of the crack.

5. WIFE AND WAIT. Wipe away any excess adhesive with a wet sponge. Wait a day or two for it to cure, then back out the screws and scrape off the washers. (Leave them for another plaster repair project.) Also, scrape off any dried adhesive poking out of the holes.

6. FILL THE CRACK. Mix up a small batch of setting-type joint compound and use it to fill the crack and all the holes. Smooth the wet compound with a trowel. Then, as it begins to harden, wet it and smooth it again. After the compound sets, sand the area lightly. Then prime and paint. ■



READER TIP
 "To get a smooth finish without dust, scrape away dried ridges on the wall with a taping knife, then wipe with a large, damp sponge."

—MARK KANDYSHIN FOR THIS OLD HOUSE



READER TIP
 "In corners, smooth one surface, wait for it to dry, then do the adjacent surface. This prevents gouging of the soft compound and provides a straight edge to run the knife against." —CHRISTOPHER LUTHER



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Norm's Notebook

Fatherly Advice for Father's Day Tools

If you regularly watch *This Old House* master carpenter Norm Abram on TV or read this column, you know that he's pretty smart when it comes to tools. Turns out, those who comment on the TOW blog *The Hardware Alibi* (hardwarealibi.blogspot.com) are, too. In fact, some of those folks are so savvy we asked Norm to share space with them in this corner. Below, their tips, techniques, and general advice on the goods you'll find in Toolbox on page 62.

RECIPROCATING SAW TIPS

Yard work...

"Our workshop mall for felling outdoor old evergreen landscaping... especially when it had green color around metal parts." —Tom

Pest proof...

"Good for cutting up bones for my dogs." —Mona Coombs

BRAD NAILER TIPS

Picture hanging...

"I set the compressor pressure really low and shoot a nail so that it sticks out of the wall by 1/8 inch enough to keep the picture wire. Practice makes perfect!" —Jim

Chiseling...

"A miter comes in very handy for trim work and building corners. Practice before using, sawing, or drilling." —Jim

TOOL BAG TIP

Storing...

"Saw your fingers from getting pinched by loose nails and screws on the bottom of the bag. Put these fasteners in empty mail bins labeled to you labeled at bottom." —Tom Mather



Unlike a roller wheel, which provides snap-in plastic backing for a few steps, using any plastic backing would be for almost all the day of work. Even if you're not finished with the project, any backing in the gun can become overnight and really thing things up. I find everything out with the appropriate wheel and spray the back of a 3-gallon bucket. —Norm Abram

READER TIP



"A new table saw is supposed to be tuned at the factory, but check it anyway. If the fence isn't parallel to the blade and vice versa, wood can bind and kick back, and that hurts a lot!" —Tom Malone

NORM SAYS:

To check a table saw, measure from the nose slot to the front and back edge of the blade, and in the front and back of the fence. Each pair of measurements should be the same. But once a properly adjusted saw can kick back if the blade is dull or it's pushed by variable wood. So the safety's rule, always use the saw's splitter and anti-kickback guards and never stand directly behind the blade when ripping wood.



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ON THE DOOR WITH THEIR OLD HOUSE
See 94-97

Thanks to Rory McDermott, Duze Construction, New York, NY: 212-395-2400; duzecc.com. Ross Kussman, Fly For Detail, San Gabriel Valley, CA, 626-761-6263; flyfordetail.net; ross@flyfor.com and Mike Lissner, author of The Happy Remodelers (Atria Press, 2007), Atria Press, Mill Valley, CA; atriapress.com.

THEIR OLD HOUSE PAINTED Joe 96 805
 The Old House Properties is pleased to announce the sale of a historic property in the heart of the city of Knoxville, Tennessee. The property is a two-story brick house with a large front porch and a full basement. The house has been recently painted and is in excellent condition. The property is located on a quiet street and is surrounded by mature trees. The house is a great investment opportunity for anyone looking for a historic property in a great location. For more information, please contact Joe at 96 805.

WORKSHOP
Ask This Old House (pp. 136-137)

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* Figures in *Figure 1* of 44.1 and Table 14.1 in *Appendix 1* are corrected.

This Old House blueprint

Abstract

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THE OLD HOUSE
Wanda Vogel

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Rob Old House kicked off the 2008 K/TV Show with a VIP dinner at the famed Chicago Freshhouse Restaurant. Special thanks to everyone who joined us.

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"I drive by this wonderful Italianate in my town all the time. I'm hoping someone will come rescue it." —SARAH CHAI, 4, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

NEWLONDON CONNECTICUT was known for its bluegrass hotels as a vital Northeast support its once thriving whaling industry—and an abundance of New England vernacular architecture. But for This Old House under Sandra Kestner Chalk, it's unfortunately earning a reputation for something more nefarious to preservation-minded people: Weirdest teardowns. We're proud of our town's history," she says. "But a lot of buildings have been demolished in the name of urban renewal."

In her last battle against the wretched bird Chalk is asking TDH to help find a owner who will relocate the 10th Street belfry. While it is a danger of being demolished by a neighboring church looking to expand! The house was built in 1916 on land once owned by John A. Harrell, ancestor of a famous dairy farmer in the 19th century. He lived in the west of the house which had been in his part. Some remodeling took place. And just as the streets were built to attract the most vibrant tenants, the houses were equally sold. Many flowers and glassed with all had most of the house's original charm. The wretched 10th street brownie door and wooden corner, a elegant glassed corner, ironed, and hand carved eye master.

Chick would love to see the team stay in her hometown, of course, but more importantly that it escape demolition. Anyone who sees it will be rewarded with a home so well crafted that it'll easily weather another 302 years. —*JOHN HENCKS, II*

An
endangered
public worth
saving.



(1) The house originally had a full length front porch, a rear addition constructed in the early 1920s. During the addition is optional (driving it behind would reduce the end of the porch.
(2) A second floor addition is furnished by two original double hung windows. (3) This winging staircase features its original balustrade. (4) One of the former sunny glider modifications.
(5) A hand-cranked wooden stand is a porch.



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A DISGRUNTLED
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I used to be considered somewhat of a luxury item. When people saw me hanging in a shower they'd say, "Ooohh, a loofah." They were impressed. Now they've got these fancy showerheads, hand showers and body sprays spouting out of every wall—I feel like I'm watching a show in Vegas. Unlucky if I even get noticed. If this is life in a custom shower, I want out.



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