

This Old House

101
value-packed
ideas for
your home

gain more space

cozy finished attics
smart basement remodels
built-in storage solutions

*our best
budget
redo yet!*

P. 24

warm
up your
walls with
paint
P. 30

8 bonus projects

tile backsplash how-to
custom details from DIY kits
handy message center

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2010

THISOLDHOUSE.COM

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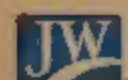
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27
SHOPPING



FIND MORE SPACE

idea file

- 20 before + after: attic**
A new dormer helps turn unfinished space into a comfy home office and master suite
- 39 Photoshop redo**
Entry upgrades and cottage-style touches breathe new life into dull digs
- 50 detail oriented**
A weekend woodworker polishes his 1834 Greek Revival gem with built-up molding, Shaker-style cabinets, and other details
- 60 basement bonus rooms**
See how one family put every inch of their basement to use, then check out five other upgrade ideas

money savers

- 24 the \$967 kitchen revamp**
A sad, dreary kitchen gets a sleek makeover
- 66 stylish kitchen upgrades right out of the box**
Six DIY kits that deliver custom-look carpentry

TOH tv

- 72 all the right rooms**
A Dutch Colonial gains spaces for fun and peaceful pursuits with a fine-tuned floor plan and two-story addition

upgrades

- 27 shopping** A dial-up scale, malt-shop mixer, and 11 other colorful countertop classics
- 32 get this look** Create a harmonious, global look in your living room
- 80 all about** Entry sets

{ January/February.10 } **contents**



60
BASEMENT
BONUS ROOMS



50
DETAIL
ORIENTED



72
TOH TV

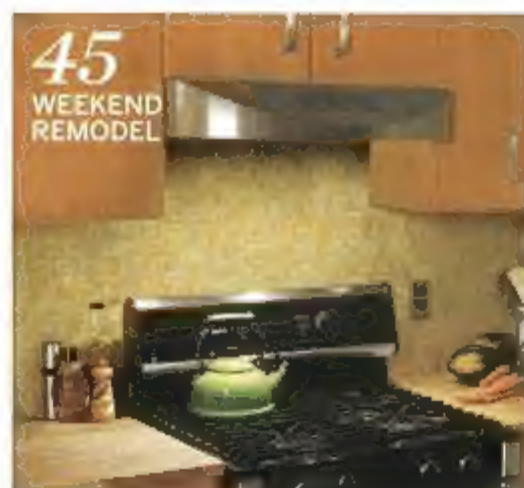
on the cover



20, 60, 15, 72 Gain more space
24 Our best budget redo yet!
45, 66, 41 8 bonus projects
30 Warm up your walls with paint
Cover Photograph by WILLIAM ENOS
Styling by MICHELLE GRECO



Create storage beneath the stairs for your wine supply with a pull-out rack that blends into the wall.



home solutions

- 15** Clever wine storage; vent-free gas fireplaces; electric-powered snow-melters; and more

how-to projects

- 30 paint ideas**
Make stamps for a handprinted pattern on your walls
- 35 landscaping**
A pro's pruning tips to get a magnolia—or any small ornamental tree—in flourishing form
- 41 salvage style**
Turn a vintage medicine cabinet into a message center
- 45 weekend remodel**
Spice up your kitchen backsplash with sheets of glass mosaic tile

ask this old house

- 89 Q + A** Reset a spirit level; keep downspouts ice-free; repair gaps in crown molding joints; enclose a forced-air furnace; and more
- 92 step-by-step** Replace a thermostat
- 94 Norm's tricks of the trade** Repair mangled muntins

in every issue

- 7 **letter from This Old House**
- 8 **thisoldhouse.com**
- 9 **reader mail**
- 10 **checklist** Easy ways to improve your home right now
- 12 **home news** Just right-sized houses; fiberglass window sales take flight; and more
- 96 **directory**
- 106 **save this old house**

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excuse me
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and rules at
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John L. Brown
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House**
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letter {from This Old House}

Cheers to you!

I held up the photo from this issue's Letter From This Old House and asked my wife, "Why is the man in the picture popping the cork?"

"Because you finally managed to finish one project before starting another?"

"No," I said.

"Because you went to the hardware store and bought the right thing the first time, didn't have to go back, and didn't have to return it?"

"Uh, no," I said.

"Well, by the clock on the wall it's almost the stroke of midnight, so it could be to toast the New Year."

"Yes," I said, "'Auld Lang Syne' and all that. But, no, that's not why either."

"Okay, then, how about because you've made it through another 12 pages of calendar and I haven't divorced you yet—though I'm going to if you keep making me play this guessing game."

"Okay, okay," I said, "I'll tell you." I know when not to push my luck, and causing the most delightful person I know to divorce me would be bad luck indeed.

And, truth be told, opening the champers has nothing to do with me or her or the usual subject of this column: our never-ending renovation and the choices (some would say mistakes) that I make that cause it to never end. In fact, the bubbly is for roasting the success of someone else's remodeling: yours!

Yup, I want to raise a glass to all of you because your work, your DIY derring-do, earned *This Old House* a fine reward. We just learned that Folio magazine has recognized the 2009 Reader-Created Issue, aka *Your Old House*, with an Eddie Award for best issue of a consumer magazine. Great, huh?

So kudos to Dorian and Elaine Walker, who provided us with the remodel of the year. Cheers to David Burton, who proved that not just a tree but a whole garden can grow in Brooklyn. A salute to Ed and Joan Serafino, who managed their remodel from Ed's hospital bed; to David and Becky Britt, who showed us that you can make a home for young people who don't have one of their own; and to Sara and Andrew Taylor, who took the second plunge: remodeling right after getting married.

Congratulations to all of you and every single one of the hundreds of other readers who helped create the best issue of *TOH* we've ever published.

Of course, we'll need to do it again. And better. With bigger awards. How about next year we go for an Emmy? Yes, that means we'll have to turn the thing into a TV show, but with your DIY skills that shouldn't be a problem ...

Scott Omelianuk

SCOTT OMELIANUK
EDITOR



THREE WAYS TO BE IN THE 2010 READER-CREATED ISSUE

1. Go to thisoldhouse.com/yourTOH

and submit a project to our remodel contest, or tell us the clever ways you saved money for a chance to make it into our Cheapskate Hall of Fame.

2. E-mail me ideas

for stories you'd like to see covered. I'm at scott@thisoldhouse.com.

3. Log on to the message boards

to tell us what topic you'd like to know all about, what tool is on your wish list, and what must-have item you'd like to send us shopping for. Time's a-wasting—let's go!

thisoldhouse.com

4 Ways to Create a Cozy Family Space



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readermail

We never stop being impressed with the level of curiosity and passion for detail our readers demonstrate. Whether you're digging further into what another homeowner did to save money or calling our attention to how much difference one word can make, you remind us that for homeowners and editors alike, the learning curve never ends.

Replacing cabinet doors

In the amazing Reader Remodel in the November issue it is stated that "to save money, the homeowners reused the lower kitchen cabinets' boxes and drawers...adding Shaker-style doors to match the new upper cabinets." However, the doors and drawers were not simply replaced, because the old cabinets clearly were standard overlay style, while the final doors and drawers are inset. Can you get Tom and/or Norm to show us how to make that conversion?

—BILL DENTON, MEMPHIS, TENN.

Bill, Fitting inset doors accurately requires fairly advanced carpentry skills, which is why the homeowners hired a cabinetmaker to create the replacement doors and drawer fronts to fit the old openings.

Stovetop fires

In "Home Safety" [Home News, November] you recommend dousing a frying pan oil fire with baking powder. Wow! Most [safety guides] recommend baking soda, not baking powder.

—SIXTYTIDE, BY E-MAIL

The editors reply: We'll consider that idea for a future project,

The editors reply: You're absolutely right. Baking soda, not baking

powder, can be used to quench a stovetop fire. Baking powder should never be used for this purpose because it could make the flames worse. Our apologies for the misinformation, which was the result of an editing error. And if you're afraid of grabbing the wrong box from your baking supplies in an emergency ("OMG! Was it soda or powder?"), remember the other solution we mentioned: Grab a pan lid to smother the flames.

Corrections

→ In Ask This Old House "Question of the Month" [December] the chimes featured in Step 6 are the Traditional Musical Wired Chimes with Cherry Finish, Model LA310CY, made by Nutone Inc. (nutone.com).

→ In Ask This Old House "Crawl-space vents: open or closed?" the thickness of plastic sheeting for moisture protection should have read "6 mil," not "6 millimeter." We apologize for the editing error.



Chow time

ANTHONY CATANESE, SAYVILLE, N.Y.

Building a feeding station [Animal House, October] for Cheddar, our 2-year-old yellow Lab, was a fun family project for all of us (including Cheddar). We modified the design and created a one-bowl station with no door, and personalized it with Cheddar's name and paw prints. Please keep the pet projects coming!

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Published letters
are edited for clarity
and length.

checklist { January/February 10 }

EASY WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR HOME RIGHT NOW



Fortify your entryway

Combat damage from soggy scarves and muddy boots with a few heavy-duty additions to your foyer. Place a boot tray and scraper by the front door, and add wall hooks to hold woolen layers. Set up a bench or stool so that the kids have a spot to take off their gear before scampering upstairs. For more mudroom tips, go to thisoldhouse.com/bonus.



What's on your checklist?

"I'll be putting in a new motor for the garage door. The old one is giving out, and the steel door weighs close to 200 pounds!"

—Adam Hartmann, Gainesville, Fla.

E-mail us your ideas at checklist@thisoldhouse.com.

Brighten up winter's gloom with flowers

To give your interior a lift on dreary winter days, snip a few branches from spring-flowering trees and shrubs and bring them indoors, where warm temps will force buds open early. Place them in a mix of 1 part bleach to 10 parts water (to discourage bacteria), and put them in bright, indirect sunlight. While forsythias open in a few days, cherry and crab-apple blooms take a few weeks.



Pick cherry or crab-apple branches with lots of flower buds, which are fuller than leaf nodes.

TOH TIP

Mildewproof your bath

You're not the only one who loves a steamy shower—mold spores do, too. To keep mildew from taking hold, recaulk everywhere it's needed and fill in cracked or missing grout between tiles. Put the vent fan on a timer and set it to 20 minutes to be sure to air things out after every bath or shower.

Clean out fireplace ashes

While an inch of insulating ash at the firebox bottom helps retain heat, too much can hinder air circulation. Here, steps for mess-free cleanup:

- Wait at least three days from your last fire to make sure all the embers are cold.
- Sprinkle damp coffee grounds on top to minimize dust. (A mask and goggles protect you best.)
- Open the damper and crack a window to encourage dust to go up the chimney.
- Use a fireplace broom and scoop to shovel the ashes into a metal bucket with a lid.
- Wait one day to dispose of them in the trash, or spread wood ash as mulch.



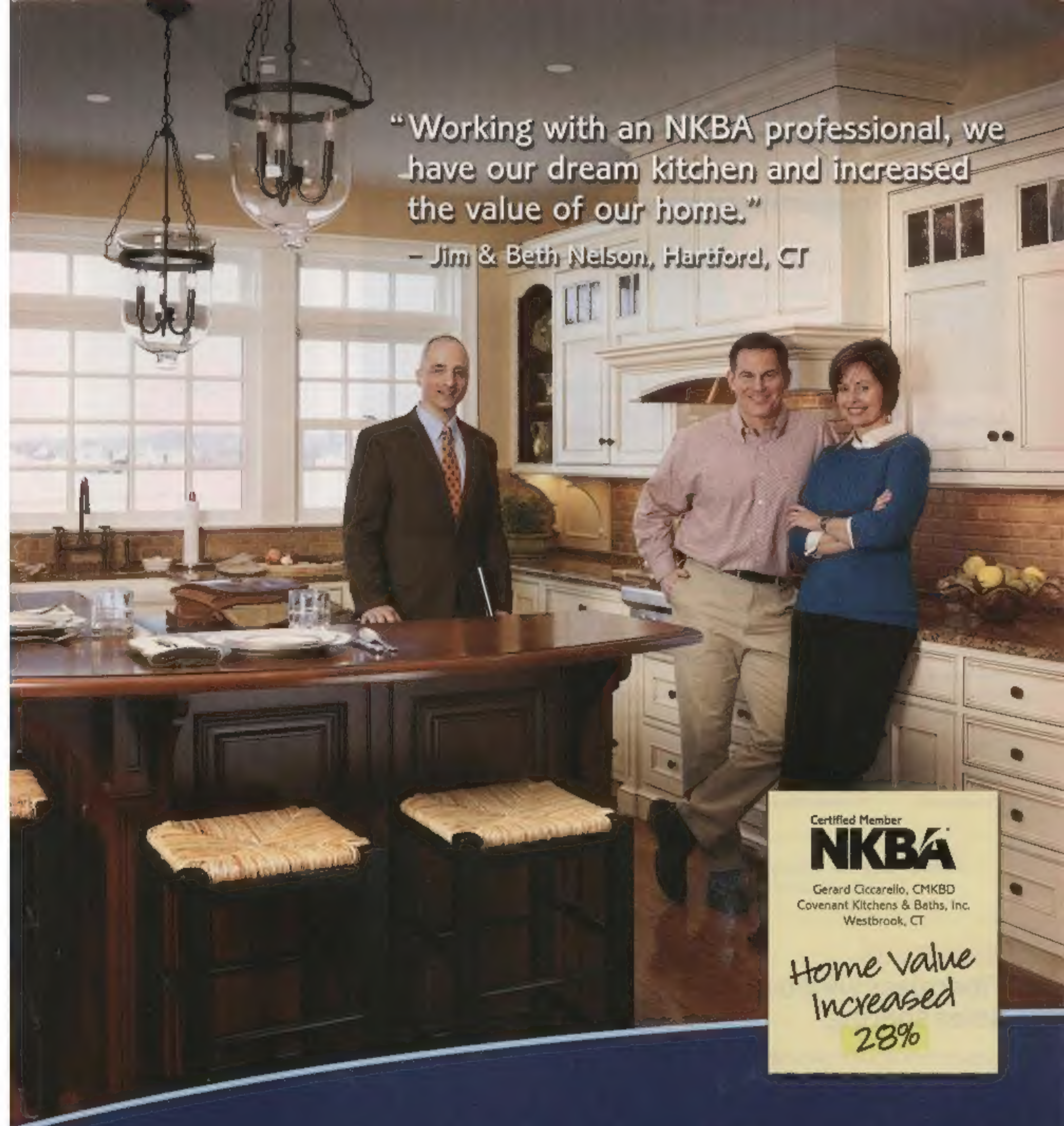
Create a DIY project planner

It's the start of a new year—time to map out your projects for 2010. Using a notebook or free scheduling software, like the one at openworkbench.org, budget out your time and money, and break big projects into small, actionable steps.

PHOTOS (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT): AMY KOSLOWSKI; ROSEMARY CALVERT/ALAMY; TED MORRISON (2)

"Working with an NKBA professional, we have our dream kitchen and increased the value of our home."

—Jim & Beth Nelson, Hartford, CT



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NEWSFLASH

→ Thanks to humpback whales, your ceiling and HVAC fans might soon be quieter and more efficient. The bumps on WhalePower's unique blades mimic those found on humpback whale fins, creating fans with less drag and less noise.



Find blueprints for eight not-so-big houses at thisoldhouse.com/bonus

HOME PLANS

Build a "not so big" home of your own

So you wanna build a house in the middle of a recession, eh? Then it's best to think small. After all, no one wants to heat and cool a McMansion these days. Lucky for you, architect Sarah Susanka, author of the bestselling book *The Not So Big House*, is making her own special blueprints for just-right-sized houses available online. Plans run between \$5,000 and \$6,500 but come with 20 pages of detailed drawings, so they're builder-ready. And that's no small feat.



NEWSFLASH→ New Jersey now has 4,000 solar-panel systems, making it the second most solar-powered state—after California.

INTERIOR TREND

Fiberglass window sales soaring

Go figure: While sales of windows sank 18 percent overall last year, the market for fiberglass models shot up 9.4 percent. Experts attribute the bump to consumers' growing familiarity with the material and that, unlike vinyl, the pricier fiberglass is as paintable as wood and lasts longer since it expands and contracts with window glass.

Reporting by Keith Pandolfi and Natalie Rodriguez



TOH 30TH ANNIVERSARY

→ Home size

The American home sure has grown since TOH TV aired its first episode back in 1979.

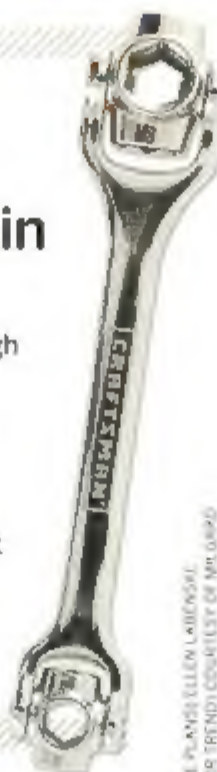
1979
1,645 sq. ft.

2009
2,219 sq. ft.

COOL TOOL

Never lose sockets again

Sockets can easily be misplaced, leaving you high and dry when it's time to loosen that nut and bolt. Craftsman's Dog Bone SAE wrench solves that problem, since it has eight common socket sizes built right into the wrench. \$20; sears.com



HEALTHY HOME

Reducing radon

The World Health Organization is one-upping the EPA's radon limits, cutting acceptable indoor levels of the odorless, cancer-causing gas from 4 picocuries per liter (what the EPA allows) to 2.7. FYI: Radon seeps into basement cracks from the soil below. Learn how to keep it out of your home at thisoldhouse.com/shortcuts.

PHOTOS (NEWSFLASH) SHAKEL/DANIEL J. COVATTA/GETTY IMAGES; (HOME PLANS) TELLER LARSEN/REUTERS; (TOH 30TH ANNIVERSARY) MARK SUGAL/GETTY IMAGES; (INTERIOR TREND) COURTESY OF MR. GARD



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ANTHONY K., MAPLE VALLEY, WA



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home solutions

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→ SMART IDEA

Under-the-stairs wine rack

Some people have wizards living under their stairs; Lisa Hudson has wine. The pull-out bottle storage installed in the void beneath the stair landing in her Laguna Beach, California, home is a custom-built unit 20 inches wide, 3 feet deep, and 2 feet high that holds up to 32 bottles. The beadboard front panel is the same piece cut out for the opening, so the cabinet blends seamlessly into the wall.

Inspired to do the same? First, make sure your stairs are self-supporting and that there's no hidden wiring or ductwork in the way. Once you're in the clear, construct a box to your specs out of ¾-inch plywood. Then add slide-out shelves fitted with cutout fronts that cradle the bottles' necks—or simply fill the box with a prefab wine rack. Finish with heavy-duty glides and a decorative front panel or cabinet door. And, like magic, you've got bonus bottle storage.



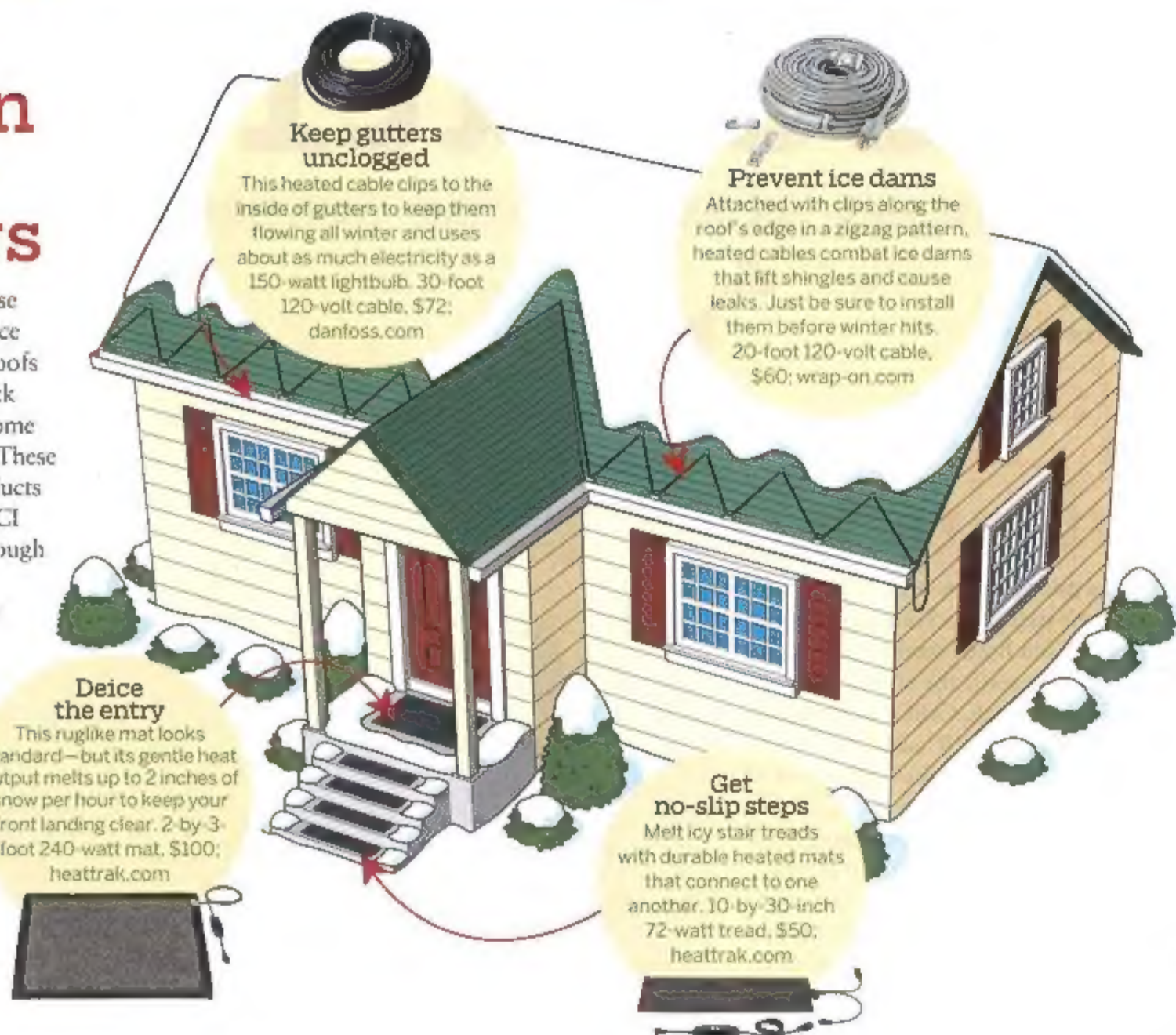
Use high-grade steel drawer glides that can stand up to the weight of the cabinet and wine.

→ PRODUCTS

Plug-in snow-busters

A snow-capped house may look pretty, but ice and slush can cause roofs to leak, gutters to back up, and stoops to become dangerously slippery. These electric-powered products plug into outdoor GFCI outlets, generating enough heat to melt winter hazards—and maybe even get you out of shoveling duty.

—JENNIFER STIMPSON



→ UPGRADES

Cheery fire, no chimney needed

Sound like a pipe dream? Not with vent-free gas fireplace appliances. They hook right up to a gas line, go on with the flick of a wall switch or click of a remote, and provide real flames that burn much hotter and cleaner than traditional gas or wood-burning fireplaces. There's no need for a flue since fuel burns so efficiently; a sensor and safety valve ensure that carbon monoxide won't build up. Available as log sets, inserts, and full fireplaces in a range of sizes, there's an option to suit every home (for retailers, go to hpba.org). —NATALIE RODRIGUEZ

If you have: A nice fireplace in good condition with a nonworking chimney.
Opt for: **A LOG SET**
 Faux logs, typically cast out of ceramic or concrete, hook up to a gas line and contain a fire starter. The logs are molded to resemble a variety of wood species; some sets even replicate the look of glowing embers. Can be installed right on top of the log holder used in a converted wood-burning fireplace.
Cost: \$400–\$1,000

If you have: An existing fireplace that has a damaged or stained firebox and/or surround.
Opt for: **AN INSERT**
 A metal cabinet equipped with a vent-free log set and glass doors fits right inside your existing firebox. Most have concealed, built-in blowers that circulate heat out into the room, making them more efficient heaters than log sets alone. May come with an optional surround to create a whole new look.
Cost: \$3,000–\$4,000

If you have: A blank wall where you'd like to add a fireplace without the expense of a chimney.
Opt for: **A FIREPLACE**
 Essentially a vent-free gas insert that has a decorative mantel and surround (like the model at left from majesticproducts.com). Can be added to any interior or exterior wall. Though typically surface-mounted, these fireplaces can be recessed if you're in the midst of a remodel or don't mind the hassle of cutting into a wall.
Cost: \$3,000–\$5,000



Packing peanuts

Sure, you can keep the little foam squiggles around for boxing up breakables—or you can put them to use in these innovative ways

1 Hold nails in place.

To drive little brad nails or finish nails with small heads without bashing your fingers, push the tip through a peanut and use it to steady the nail against the wall. After a few hammer taps, pull away the foam and finish driving the nail.

2 Apply sticky stuff.

In place of a small foam brush, use a peanut to spread wood glue and other adhesives, then toss it when you're done.



3 Buffer sharp blades.

Cover the tips of pointy tools, like awls, with peanuts to keep fingers safe from jabs when rummaging around in the toolbox.



4 Use them as spacers.

Cut peanuts in half and glue them to the back corners of hanging mirrors and picture frames to protect painted walls.



5 Give blooms a boost.

Stuck with dried flowers that are too short? Add peanuts to the bottom of the vase to lift them to the right height.

7 Doctor a screw

To make a screw fit into a slightly-too-large hole, insert the screw into a peanut, drive it into the hole, then pull away the extra material. Foam bits that cling to the threads help to secure the screw.

8 Lighten up big, heavy planters.

Pour peanuts into a large pot and add soil to boost drainage and make it easier to move.

—ELIZABETH ROEHRIG

6 Fluff up a beanbag chair.

Unzip the cover and stuff in a few handfuls of peanuts to restore the chair's loft.

8 Line a ditch.

Dig a trench to carry water away from a downspout extension,

9 Glue up a snowman.

Put extra peanuts in your kids' craft area. Glue them together to build a faux Frosty and friends.

got new uses for stuff?

Your ideas may appear in our Reader-Created Issue. Go to thisoldhouse.com/bonus

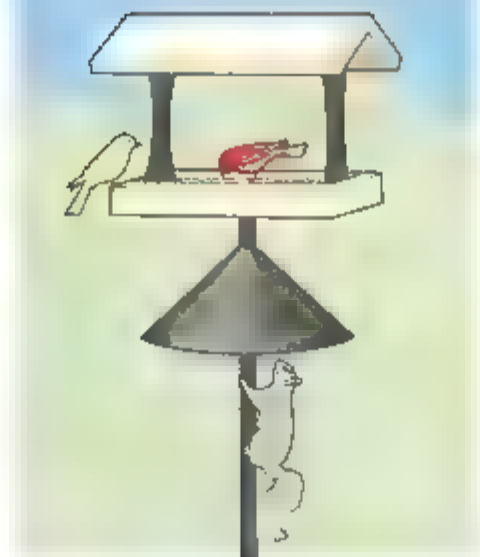


→ INSTANT VINTAGE

Salvaged wainscot

Give a plain-Jane bath a bit of well-worn character with repurposed wood paneling. Used in place of pricey tiles or recycled from elsewhere in your home, it can even be a money-saver during a remodel. These distressed painted boards, originally kitchen wainscot, were reinstalled here to give the bath a warm, rustic look. Attached to blocking so that the paneling stands several inches from the wall and capped with a window stool and a band of salvaged 1x4, it also provides a handy storage shelf. Another plus: Since the planks are already weathered, water spots aren't a worry.

MEGHAN DOCKENDORF



→ CRITTER CARE

Bird feeder dos & don'ts



Want to make your yard the most popular avian hangout this winter? Here's where to put your feeder—and how to keep out pesky squirrels—to get a flock to roost a while.

Site it right Place the feeder 8 to 10 feet from a shrub or tree where the birds can perch while waiting their turn to eat. Try to position it in a spot clearly visible from the house so that you can watch the action.

Deter pests A feeder hung from a tree branch gives squirrels and other climbing critters easy access to seed—and birds. Instead, mount it on a straight pole that's 4 to 5 feet tall. Attach a cone-shaped baffle below the feeder to prevent animals from clambering up for a free meal.

Keep seed types separate Stock each feeder with a single type of seed. Why? Birds peck through mixes and eat their favorite treats first, scattering less favored seeds on the ground. When they fly down to eat the discarded seeds, they're at greater risk from predators.

Clean seasonally To prevent mold, always clear snow from the feeders and, in spring and fall, wash them down with a solution of 1 part bleach to 10 parts water. —SARAH VAGL, CA



→ STORAGE

Use a coat rack to hang cookware

SARAH DIGUILO

Need help with your to-do list?



Deer-proof shrubs
Replace bathroom vanity
Insulate walls
Install rain-catcher barrel
Find and fix that darn leak!
Add crown molding
Replace rotted fence post
Refinish antique desk

Just Ask...

Tune in this month to *Ask This Old House* and learn how to tackle these projects and many more. For local listings, visit thisoldhouse.com/tv. To ask your question, visit thisoldhouse.com/askaquestion.



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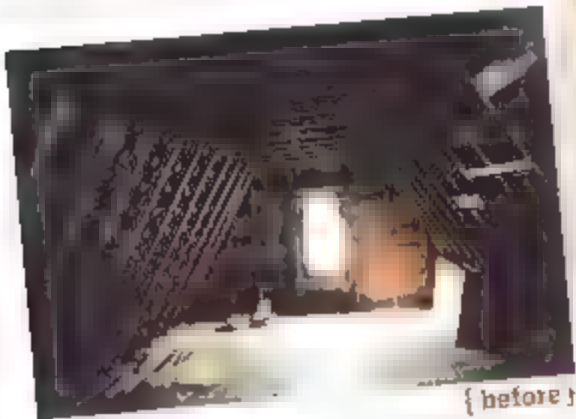
A suite retreat upstairs

By CHARLOTTE BARNARD Photographs by WILLIAM ENOS

Sometimes in the search for more living space there's no place to look but up. When Alan Koch bought this 1933 cottage in Portland, Oregon, he knew he'd be finishing the 600-square-foot attic sooner rather than later. The Craftsman-Tudor hybrid was charming, but lots of original wood trim left it dark. And as a work-at-home educational and marketing consultant, Alan hankered for a light, bright office where he could spread out. By tapping the upstairs, he figured he could carve out just such a space, as well as a comfortable master suite, reserving downstairs bedrooms for guests and TV viewing.

Working with designer Kevin Fischer, he expanded the attic space by 100 square feet with a gabled dormer and, serving as his own general contractor, hired out HVAC and roof work while tackling demo and finish details himself. Two years in the making, his airy abode is now complete. Says Alan, "It's such a homey space and, with views of sky and trees, an uplifting one, too."

The existing unfinished attic rose 7 feet to the collar ties. With the structure reworked, the bedroom gained a 9-foot ceiling. A large skylight brightens the dressing area.



{ before }



Building on the way the structure was reworked, the area is now for built-in bookshelves and a desk.

A pocket door on the right keeps the passage to the stairs clear and clean.

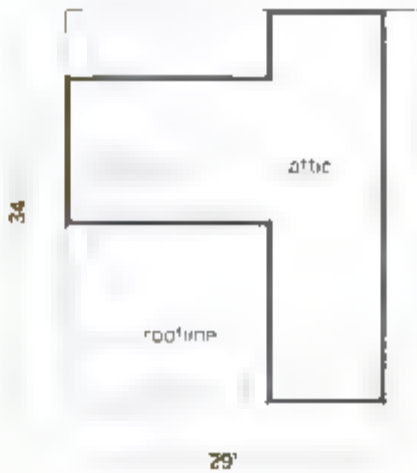


A long run of built-in bookshelves makes use of what might have been wasted space.

Low bookcases turn space at the top of the stairs into a library. The second-to-last one on the right (not shown) is set on casters, so it can be pulled out to access crawl-space storage.

before

A staircase from the ground floor led to an unfinished T-shaped attic space.

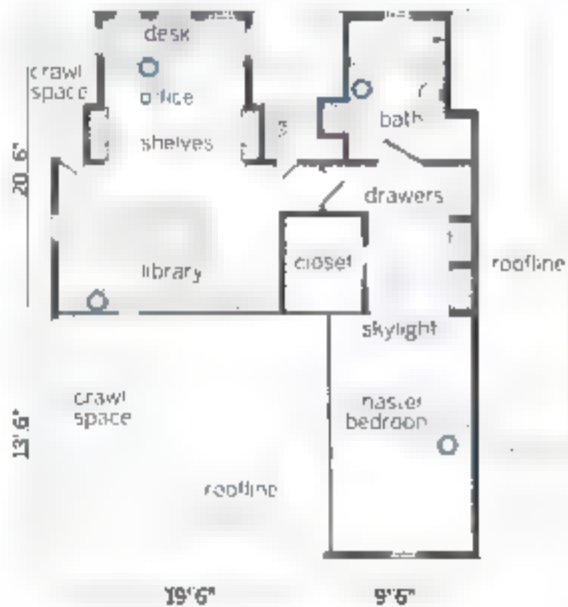


after

Adding a dormer provided 100 square feet for the home office, located near the top of the stairs. It was left open to the stairwell and library wall for a feeling of spaciousness. The mechanicals closet and a door separate these areas from the master suite.

1 The office occupies a dormer bumpout. The desk stretches wall to wall and is framed by windows.

4 Low bookcases line the library wall opposite the office and behind the stairwell balustrade.



2 The bath, in the shortest arm of the old T, gained room by recessing the toilet into the mechanicals closet. A skylight brightens up the space.

3 The master bedroom fits into the largest open space. The room narrows at the entrance for a closet and built-in bureau with a skylight overhead.



homeowner tip
ALAN KOCH, PORTLAND, OREG.
"Acting as your own GC may be part-time for you, but it comes with full-time expectations. Subs expect you to be on top of everything and have the site ready for them. It makes the difference in the job moving ahead smoothly and on time."

→ The windowed wall in the shower is lined with marble rectangles, with hand-cut trim tiles framing the arched casement. Window: Jeld-Wen

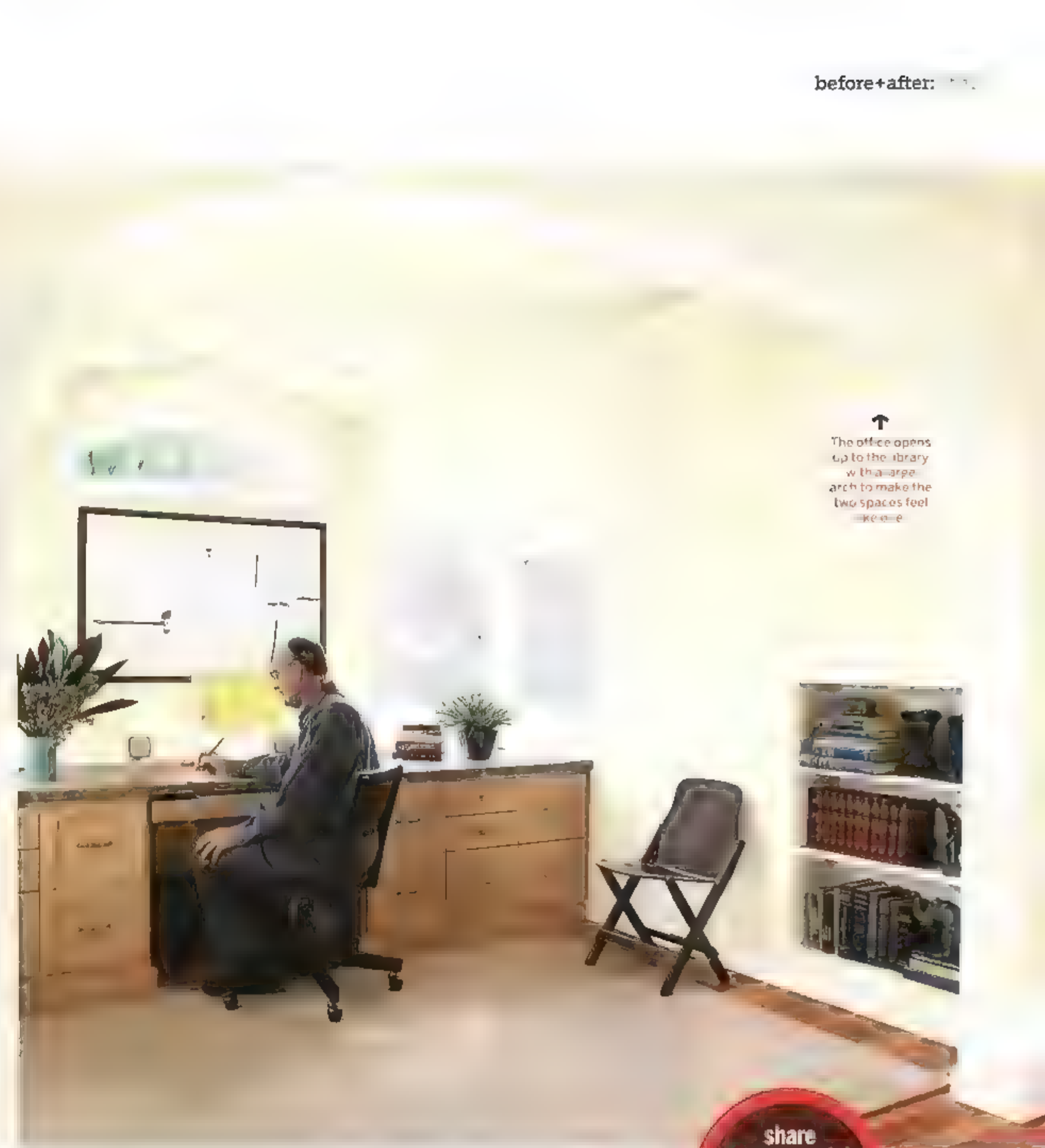


↑ A glass partition keeps the room from feeling airy and costs much less than a shower enclosure.



↑ The built-in window, high above the desk, echoes the room's arched entryway and casts indirect light over the workspace, so glare isn't an issue. Window: Jeld-Wen

↑ Built-in built-in is tucked into a niche, preserving open floor space and the cozy sloped ceiling.



↑ The office opens up to the library with a large arch to make the two spaces feel like one.

↑ A built-in desk runs the length of the new dormer's north wall. Because the room was built from scratch, homeowner Alan Koch was able to run all wiring and cables behind the walls, hooking them up to computer equipment hidden in custom cabinetry. Desktop: Formica



The \$967 kitchen revamp

Warm brown paint, glass mosaic tile, and fresh fixtures update a drab old kitchen
By NATALIE RODRIGUEZ + Photographs by DEBORAH WHITLAW LLEWELLYN

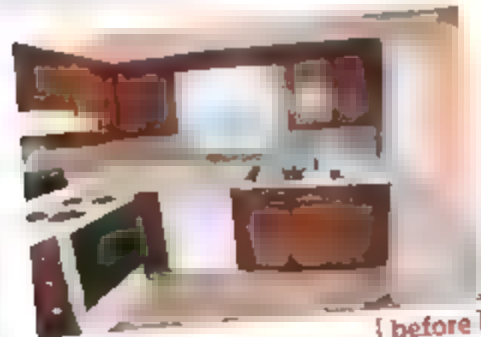
With kitchens, simple does not necessarily equal streamlined. For homeowners Eduardo Perez and Moo Sirikititup, the kitchen that came with their Atlanta condo fell short on both fronts and function. Builder-grade cabinets and white laminate counters set a cheerless, monotonous tone in an open space that can be seen from the front door. And washing dishes meant looking at a worn wood cabinet, as the window didn't line up over the sink. Opening the dishwasher blocked the oven door and vice versa. "It was a sad-looking space," says Eduardo.

So after a year—and with some DIY know-how passed down from his contractor dad—Eduardo spent two weeks removing the oak cabinets, refinishing and reinstalling them, then putting in new counters. The sink and the dishwasher swapped places, improving the room's flow, and sleek new hardware and fixtures updated the space. A green and white glass-tile backsplash brought in a finishing touch of color. Says Eduardo, "Now, when I walk in and see the kitchen, it makes me smile."

before A bland color scheme and an awkward layout made this kitchen boring and inconvenient
after Chocolate-colored paint updated the cabinets. Nickel finish pulls and cool green mosaic tiles complete the contemporary makeover
Countertop: IKEA, Paint: Behr



↑ The green walls of the adjacent dining room inspired the kitchen's new backsplash



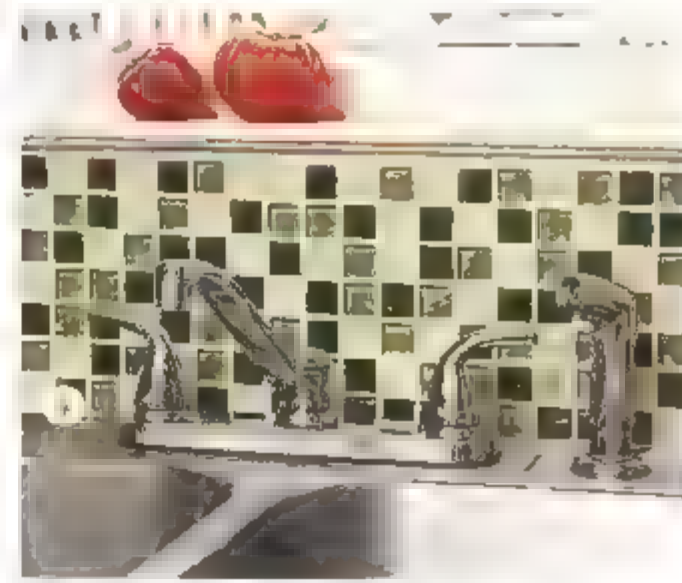
{ before }



- 1 An inexpensive home-center find, the spotlight fixture targets its beams on the kitchen's separate workstations.
 - 2 The homeowners are saving for the next phase of the makeover: new appliances.
 - 3 Rectangular bar pulls updated the cabinets.
 - 4 The priciest splurge was the colorful mosaic tile; the new faucet has a graceful shape.
- Pulls: IKEA, Lighting fixture: Home Depot, Mosaic tile: Casa Italia, Faucet: Delta



homeowner tip
EDUARDO PEREZ, ATLANTA
"I got a small wet saw for just \$59; it cut the glass tiles like they were cookies. It was so easy."



the project tally:

Removed and reinstalled original cabinets in slightly new configuration	\$0
Replaced mid-laminate counters with new ones that have a stainless-steel edge banding	\$300
Put a fresh coat of paint on walls and ceiling	\$34
Sanded original oak cabinets and brushed on a gallon of new chocolate brown paint	\$28
Added a three-light ceiling fixture in brushed nickel	\$35
Swapped in nickel-finished cabinet pulls	\$80
Upgraded the kitchen faucet	\$45
Added under-cabinet puck lights for task lighting	\$45
Installed new glass mosaic tile backsplash	\$400
total	\$967



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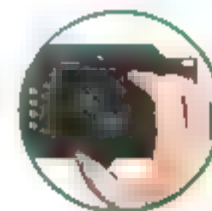
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Intuitive and interactive display



Configuration interface



Energy saving



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by Schneider Electric

Countertop classics

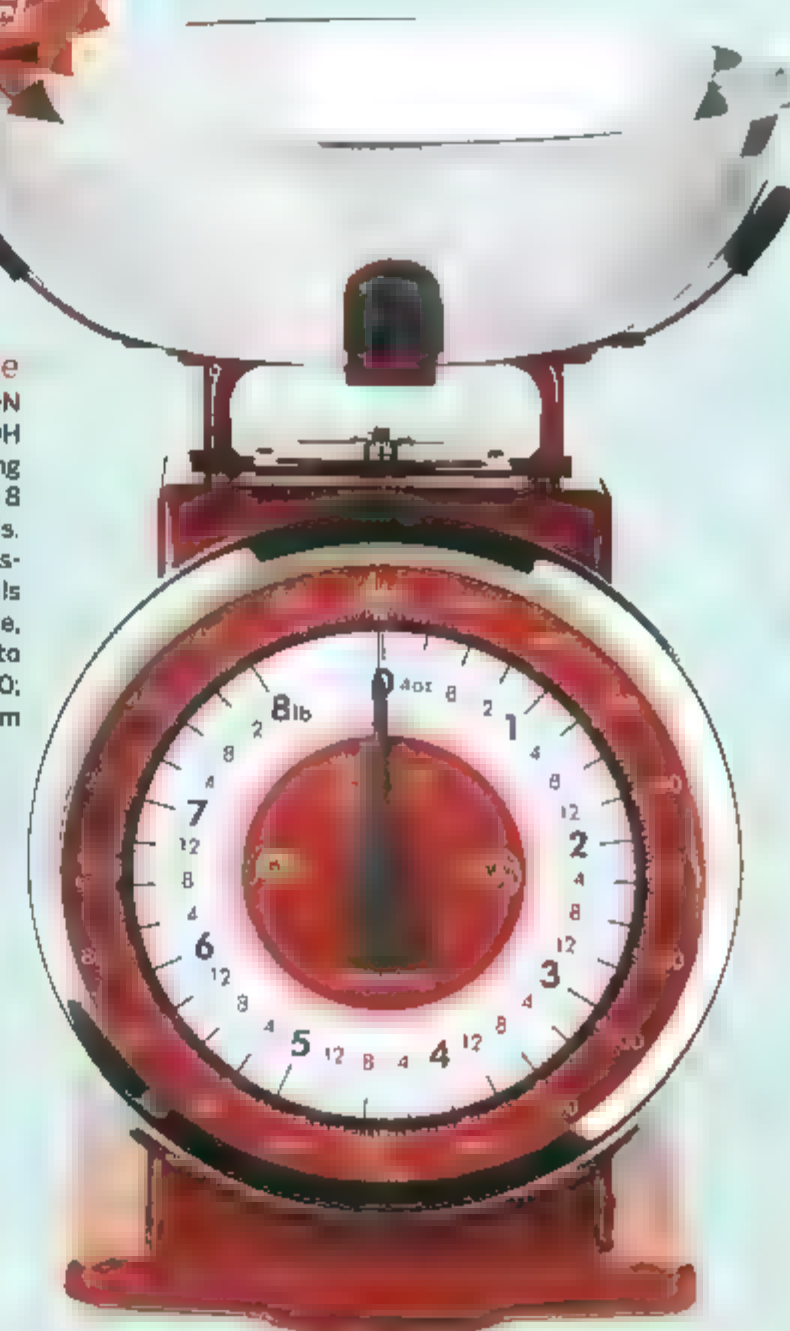
In both the Black and the better-known yellow, these small wonders will pick up any plain vanilla kitchen in less time than it takes to fix a cold drink.

By MEGHAN DOCKENDORF • Photographs by ELLEN McDERMOTT

Some of these helpmates have been serving up dishes and drinks since June Cleaver was in home ec. While many have since taken on more streamlined shapes and zingier colors, their M.O. remains the same: Get the job done and look cool doing it. With a rainbow of shades to choose from, there's one to complement any kitchen scheme or to mix in for an instant pop of color. Here, 13 of our favorite hardworking gizmos that manage to look lively even at rest.



dial up scale
TYPHOON
Size 8W x 8D x 10H
Basics This spring scale weighs up to 8 pounds of dry goods.
Bonus Its stainless-steel bowl corrals grains and produce, then goes right into the dishwasher. \$40; amazon.com



lime squeezer
SAGA FORM
Size 5W x 6D x 14H
Basics The manual lever cranks juice out of every kind of citrus.
Bonus The pit-and-pulp-catching cup comes out for easy cleaning. \$50; bedbathandbeyond.com

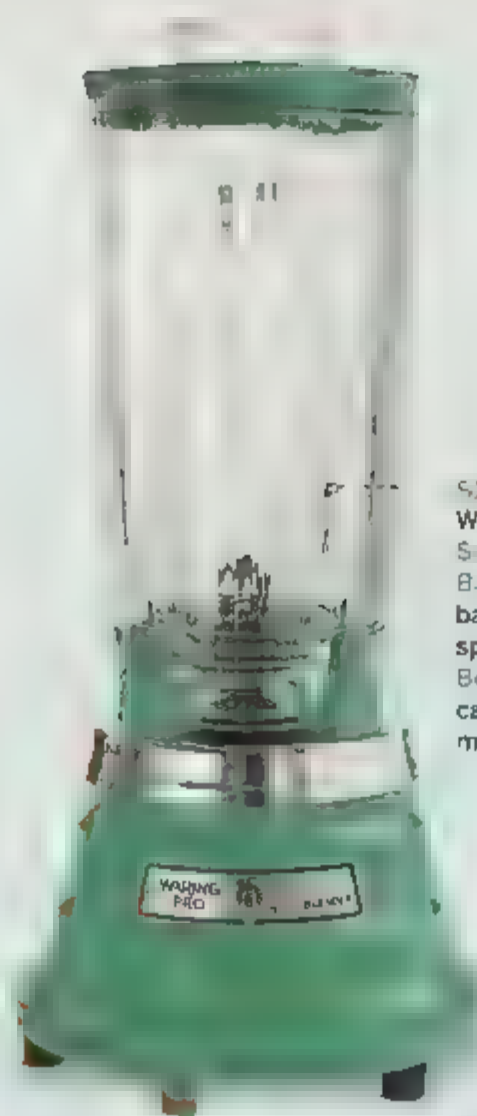


golden oldie
DUALIT
Size 10W x 8D x 9H
Basics This 1940s-style toaster's wide slots fit bagels and buns.
Bonus A switch in front turns it into a thrifty single slicer. \$240; everythingkitchens.com





pasta producer
ROMA EXPRESS
Size 14W x 12D x 11H
Basics This electric pasta machine rolls out sheets in nine thicknesses, optional attachments cut noodles to size.
Bonus A built-in safety switch cuts power when the plastic blade cover is opened. \$150; westonsupply.com



smoothie warrior
WAR NG
Size 8W x 7D x 15H
Basics This bar blender's beehive base toggles between two speeds—all you really need.
Bonus The center of the glass carafe's cap doubles as a 1-ounce measure. \$122; amazon.com



speed demon
CUISINART
Size 8W x 3D x 6H
Basics This 1930s look-alike has an easy-to-clean LED-display touch pad control.
Bonus Electric cord pivots for comfy right- or left-handed use. \$50; surlatable.com



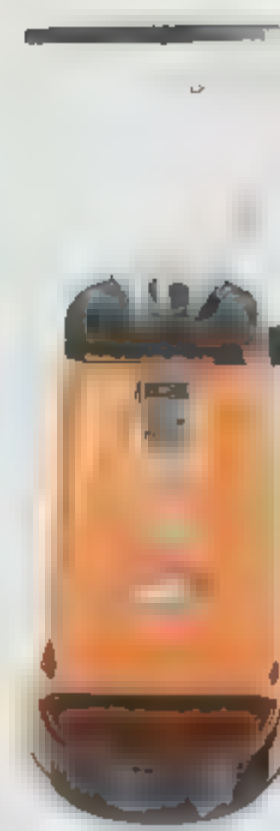
whip's not
KITCHENAID
Size 9W x 14D x 14H
Basics This 90th anniversary mixer packs 10 speeds, a big beater, and stainless-steel bowl—in new "yellow pepper."
Bonus It comes with whisk and dough-hook attachments, too. \$300; shopkitchenaid.com



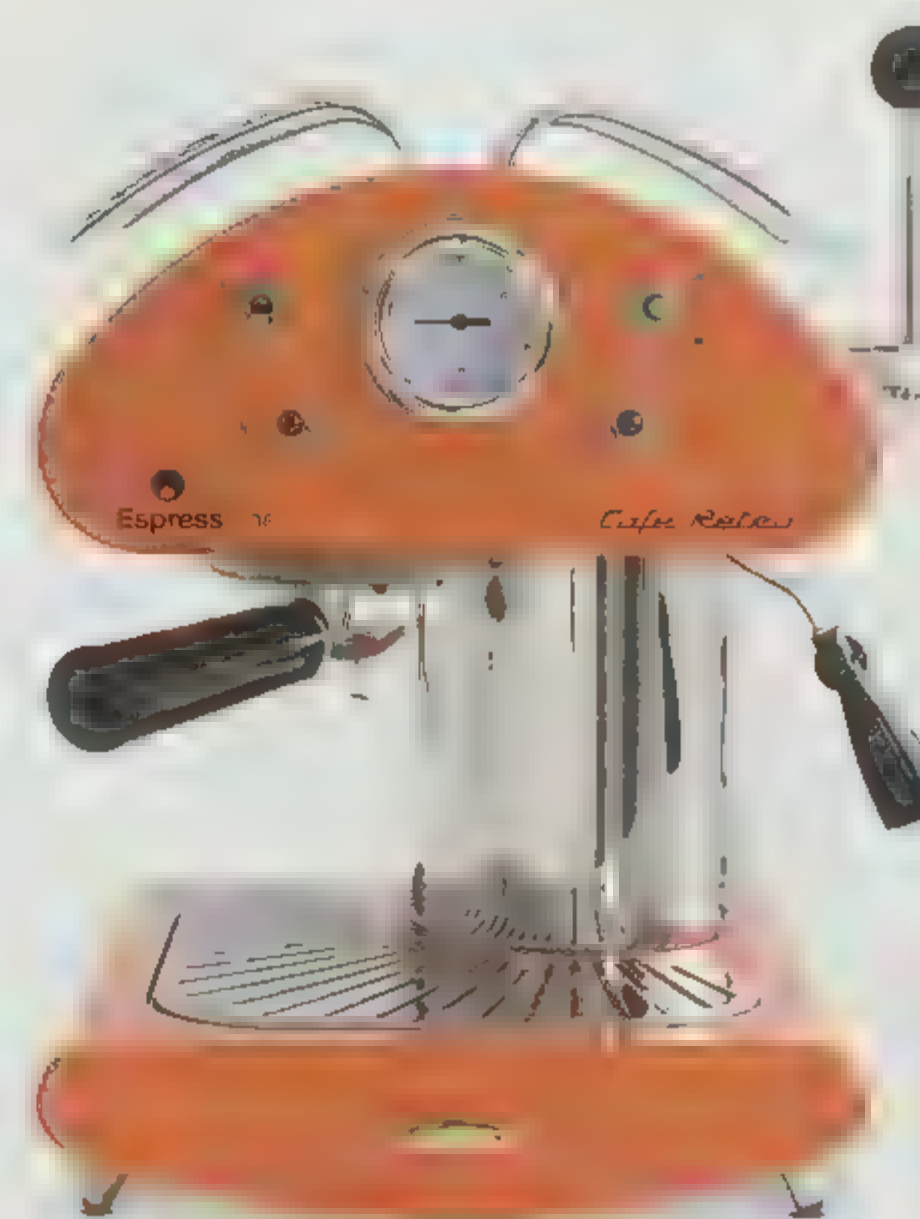
blast size mixer
HAMILTON BEACH
Size 7W x 9D x 18H
Basics The commercial grade spindle on this 1950s staple delivers a smooth milkshake.
Bonus Its 28-ounce cup—yum. \$100; kohls.com



colorful brew
SWISSMAR
Size 8W x 8D x 8H
Basics This heat-and-eat enameled cast-iron pot sits above a candle flame.
Bonus The lid cutout keeps six color-coded fondle forks in place. \$60; amazon.com



blasty grind
ASCASO
Size 6W x 11D x 16H
Basics Cone-shaped burrs deliver fine grounds for espresso and coarse ones for drip coffee.
Bonus The hopper holds 1.3 pounds of beans for not-so-frequent refills. \$255; jlhufford.com



retro brew
ESPRESSIONE
Size 13W x 12D x 14H
Basics This espresso and cappuccino maker has retro switches and an aluminum boiler.
Bonus Racks on top keep cups warm and at the ready. \$400; walmart.com



power punch
VIKING
Size 9W x 10D x 16H
Basics Turn the dial on this heavyweight 12-cup food processor for on, off, and pulse control.
Bonus Rear wheels make it easy to move; cord stows neatly in the metal base. \$368; vikingrange.com



toasty toast
NORTHSTAR
Size 22W x 20D x 13H
Basics It's a 1.2-cubic-foot, 1,000-watt microwave and convection oven.
Bonus It grills, too, with the help of a removable rack. \$749; elmrastoveworks.com



Add a lively pattern with stamps

Craft foam cutouts, and two shades of paint turn child's play into wall art

By DEBORAH BALDWIN Photographs by DEBORAH WHITLAW LLEWELLYN

Remember those potato stamps you made in school? Now imagine a less starchy—but no less fun—medium made with a sheet of flexible craft foam and squares of scrap wood. The pattern shown here was applied with two homemade stamps and semigloss paint. “It’s a great way to add energy to a small area,” says decorative painter Brian Carter, who came up with the pattern as a way to enliven a plain white bath painted with Benjamin Moore’s White Dove. “The wainscot provides an orderly block of color so that the handprinted pattern can dance above it.” A base coat of Benjamin Moore’s Hawthorne Yellow serves as the pattern’s backdrop. The look is akin to hand-made wallpaper.

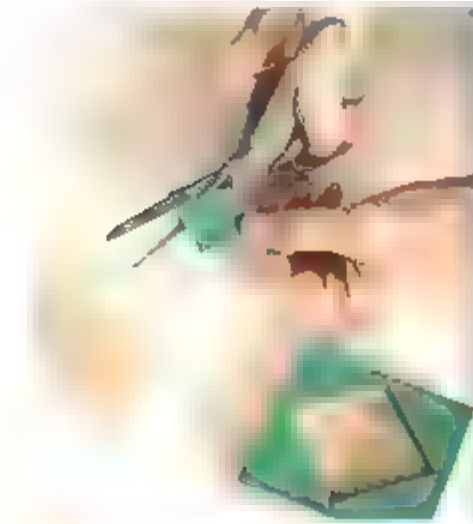
Carter likes the contrast of a semigloss pattern on a flat base coat. To keep the look loose, he moved across the wall, stamping squares with diamond cutouts at 4-inch intervals in freehand fashion. Then he went back and added smaller circles in the blank spaces. “Try out your pattern on a piece of colored paper, and if you don’t like the way it looks, vary the amount of paint on the stamp or make a new one,” he says. And save the paper—it’s great for gift wrap. For a step-by-step look, read on. ■

Cost: About \$65
Time: Two days
Difficulty: Easy—just be sure to practice on paper first

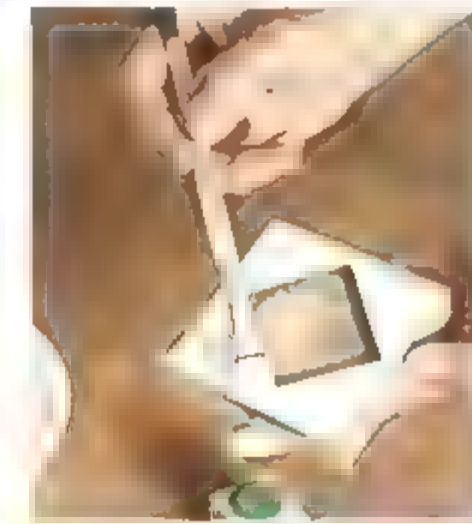


HOW IT'S DONE

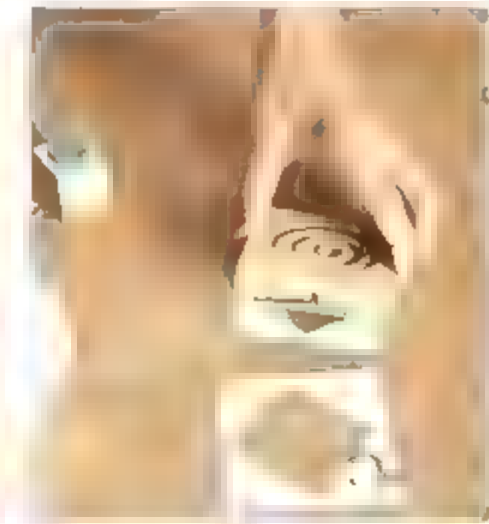
1. Create the stamps. Figure out shapes by drawing a pattern on paper. Here, a 1-inch circle and 4-inch square were cut out of craft foam, then glued to wood blocks. A diamond was drawn on the square and cut out with an X-Acto knife.



2. Apply the paint. Pour latex (here, it's Benjamin Moore's White Dove) into a small roller tray or onto a disposable plastic plate. Dip the stamp into the paint to load it or use a small artist's brush to cover the foam surface.



3. Practice stamping on paper. As you get a feel for it, adjust the amount of paint on the stamp and the pressure you're using. “Don't press so hard that you extract every bit of paint—you want it somewhat uneven,” says Carter.



pro tip
BRIAN CARTER
DECORATIVE PAINTER

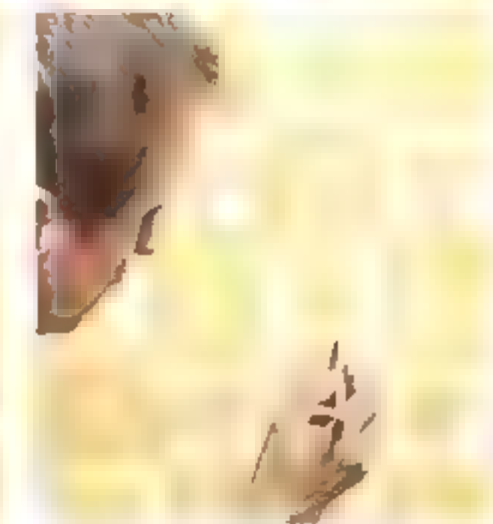
“For a softer look, lower the contrast of the colors and finishes. If you want more energy, crank up the contrast—semigloss yellow on flat navy, for example.”



4. Press the stamp flat to the wall. Move across the wall in horizontal rows. Here, Carter stamped every other 4-inch square. If you're worried about wavy lines, let a chalk line be your guide. Adjust spacing when you near the end of a row so that you end with a full square.



5. Center circles in blank squares. Gently press with the dot stamp to avoid thick, solid dots—you want a bit of the base coat to show through. Don't worry too much about placement. “It's a small stamp, so if it's off a little bit it'll still look fine,” says Carter.



6. Touch up thin spots. Use a small artist's brush to add a little more where the paint seems too meager or a lot of the outline of the pattern is missing. Then all that's left is to stand back and enjoy your handwork.



Melting-pot living room

In this lively gathering spot, elements from far-flung cultures blend harmoniously. Here's how to duplicate the global effect in your home.

By ELIZABETH ROEHRIG Photograph by ROGER DAVIES

An artful mix of influences from around the world coexists peacefully in the living room of this Spanish Colonial Revival house in Los Angeles. Vibrant ethnic textiles are juxtaposed with classic furniture shapes, giving it the feel of a world traveler's den. With a base of neutrals, including tobacco-colored sofas and pure white walls, the strong hues and patterns don't overwhelm. "I wanted to use a lot of bright colors that vibrated together, so I grounded them with a backdrop of neutrals," says interior designer Jackie Terrell, who furnished the space. To create the global look she was after, she chose ornate, Moorish style chests in aid with bone, a kilim covered ottoman that's rooted in the Middle East, and an Indian patchwork throw.

Here are some traditional and ethnic inspired pieces to create a similar look at your house. ■

pedestal table

This slim wooden accent table has a gold-painted floral design on the top, a nod to French antiques. \$199; accentfurnituredirect.com

classic club chair

Flanking the fireplace with a pair of English-style button-tufted chairs covered in green canvas creates a cozy conversation area. \$1,092 each; bernhardt.com

paisley pillows

Exotic toss pillows stitched with paisley, a design that originated in India, liven up the seating. \$35 and \$40 each; pier1.com

oversize ottoman

Upholstered with a kilim, a traditional Turkish rug, this ottoman is large enough to serve as a coffee table. \$995; restorationhardware.com

tripod lamp

With a spare black-and-white drum shade and an iron finish base, this architectural table lamp is the perfect counterpoint to a vibrant room. \$187; lumens.com



pro advice

JACKIE TERRELL, INTERIOR DESIGNER, LOS ANGELES

"Always temper bright hues with neutrals or more muted shades. If every color in a room has the same value, it ends up looking like a nursery or Pee-wee's Playhouse."



hand-painted chest

Add graphic punch—and provide practical storage—with a black-and-white chest painted with Moroccan inlay-inspired designs. \$795; livingmoroccoonline.com

colorful rug and throw

Create an eye-popping backdrop with a textured wool rug in bright red. Dress up a plain sofa with a cotton throw woven with an ornate paisley pattern. 5-by-7 1/2-foot rug, \$432; rugsdirect.com; paisley throw, \$50; worldmarket.com

How to prune a tree

An arborist demonstrates how to shape up an overgrown magnolia with lessons you can apply to any small ornamental tree. Text and Photographs by KAREN BUSSOLINI

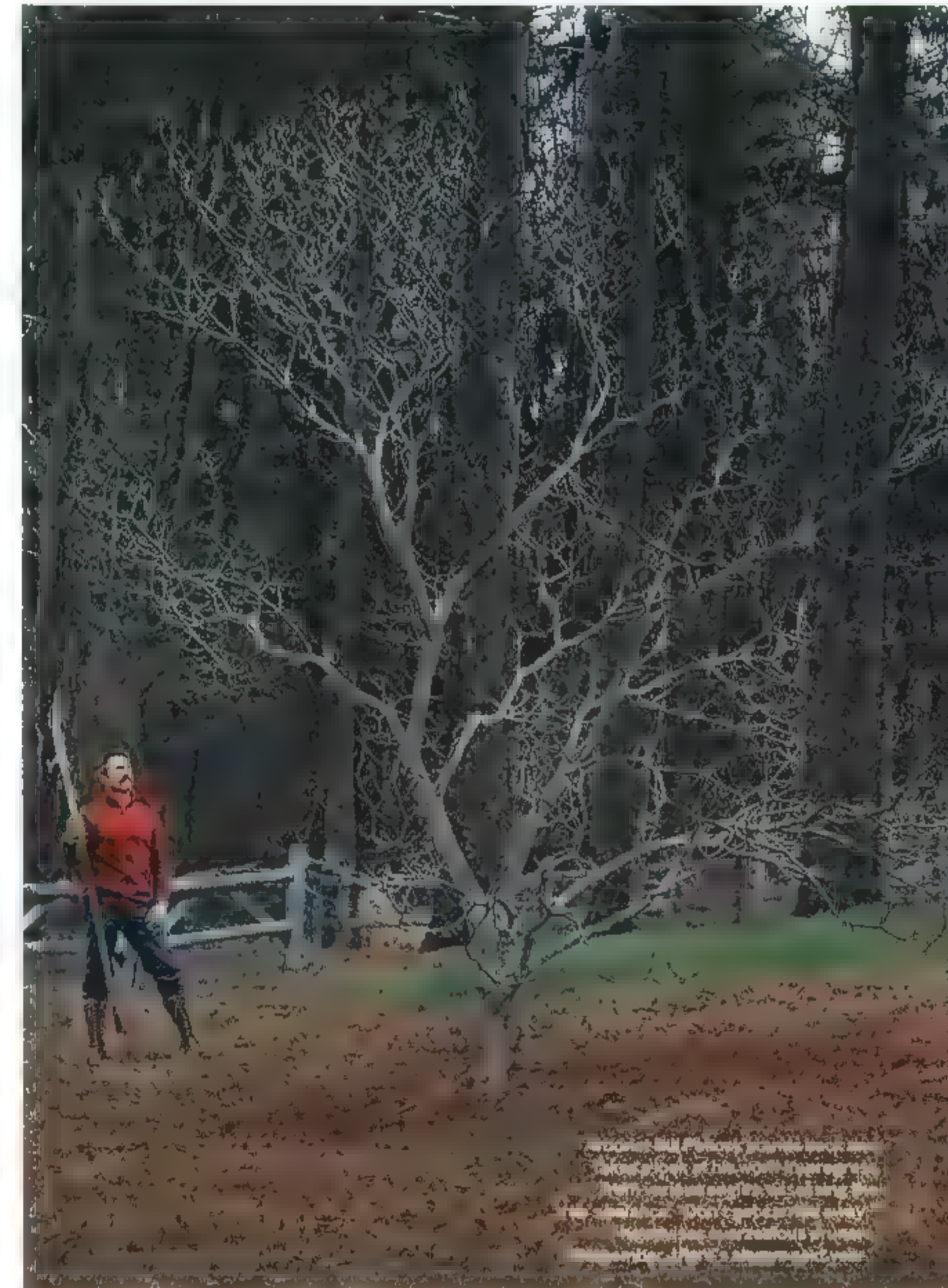
We all know proper pruning can enhance a tree's health and beauty. But tangled branches that don't look like the neat illustrations in books can be daunting. So where do you begin?

First, be sure it's a job you can handle. A small ornamental tree 12 to 25 feet tall—such as a flowering cherry, magnolia, crab apple, or Japanese maple—is one you can tackle yourself. Bigger trees that require chain saw and ladder work are best left to a pro.) Then be sure you understand a few key principles.

"Pruning stimulates growth," says Bill Pollack, co-owner of Arbor Services of Connecticut. "The goal is to encourage the tree to grow strong, healthy branches headed in the right direction." So Pollack makes health-promoting cuts first, removing competing, misdirected, and weak branches. Then he prunes to enhance the tree's natural form. "A magnolia has a graceful, open habit with main branches that grow up and out, and sweeping lower branches," he says. "You want to remove branches that don't look like a magnolia." A common mistake is to "top and shape" by clipping the ends of branches. "Healthy shaping is done mostly from the inside," he adds.

The best time for the kind of remedial pruning an established, long-neglected tree—like the one in this story—needs is winter or early spring, when active growth has not yet begun. Bare branches allow you to stand back and really see what needs to be removed.

Follow along as Pollack puts his pruning know-how to work to sculpt this magnolia.



Odds of a child being diagnosed with autism: 1 in 150

Some signs to look for

• Not making eye contact

• Not responding to name

• Not talking by age 2

To learn more of the signs of autism, visit autismspeaks.org



AUTISM SPEAKS
It's time to listen



1

1 Plan the biggest cuts first. Here, Pollack has marked different problem branches with colored tape to illustrate his approach. Keep in mind that you should never remove more than one-third of the tree's growth at a time. A vertical internal stem, with orange tape, competes with established leaders (the tree's main stems) and sticks up too high. Pink tape marks rubbing branches that can injure protective bark. White tape indicates either damaged or broken branches, or dead ones, which are dark and shriveled. Yellow tape marks vertical shoots, called water sprouts, that crowd the tree's interior. Pollack tackles the biggest cut, on the large stem, first. Using a pole saw and cutting in increments to prevent tearing, he prunes the stem back to a lateral branch to reduce its height and encourage additional branching.

2 Use a three-part cut on big branches to prevent tearing. Any branch 3 inches or more in diameter requires a pruning saw and will fall under its own weight before the blade can get all the way through. This can tear good wood or bark and trap the saw if the branch is cut from below. To prevent this, Pollack starts about 6 inches from where he wants his final cut to be, sawing partway through the branch or stem from the direction in which he wants it to fall away from the trunk for a vertical, on the underside for a horizontal. Then he saws through from the other side, slightly above the first cut and sawing into it (A). He cuts off the 6-inch stub at an angle (so that it will shed water) just above the branch collar (B), which will grow over the wound (C).

3 Remove suckers at the base. These vigorous offshoots of the trunk detract from the tree's beauty and siphon energy from more attractive, productive parts that may yield flowers or fruit. Bypass hand pruners or loppers make quick work of thin suckers. Where they're too crowded or large to clip, Pollack uses a pruning handsaw, taking care not to nick the bark on the trunk, which can open it to disease.



2



A



B

C



3



4

4 Cut close to the branch collar. Pollack always positions his blade just outside the branch collar, a thickened area of wrinkled bark from which a branch emerges. Once a cut is made, hormones are released that cause the collar to grow over and seal the wound.

5 Clip water sprouts. These vigorous shoots grow straight up and can crowd and shade a tree's interior, so remove them while they're small. Here, Pollack does the job with loppers that extend his reach when dealing with upper limbs.

6 Remove inward-growing and rubbing branches. This curved branch took a wrong turn; in a few years, every branch it crossed would be wounded by rubbing. It's also headed into the center of the tree, where it wouldn't get enough light to produce good leaves or flowers.

7 Enjoy the spring show. The pruned magnolia has fewer blooms the first year, but ultimately it will produce more. Its healthier, more open and balanced form also makes the tree less vulnerable to damage from heavy winds, ice, or snow. ■



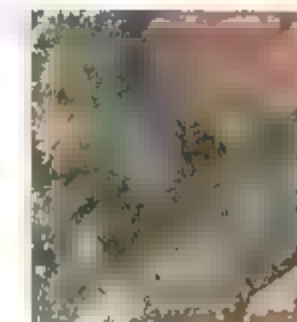
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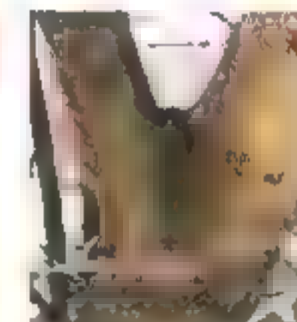


Branch basics

To make conscientious pruning cuts, the first step is to simply walk around a tree and study it until you can pinpoint the problems. Here are some good, and not so good, things to look for—and one common pruning mistake to avoid.



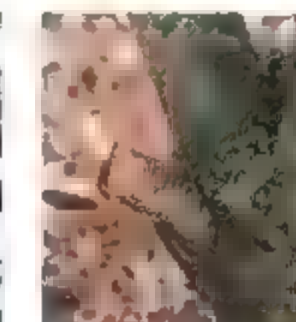
The good A U-shaped crotch or joint with a well-defined branch collar indicates strong attachment. The thick bark ring envelops the branch where it's attached to the trunk.



The bad A V-shaped crotch with a ridge of bark between the branch and main stem is a weak joint likely to split in high winds or heavy snow. Remove it unless doing so will leave a big hole.



The bad An improper single cut on a branch larger than 3 inches in diameter can cause it to tear under its own weight. A three-part cut will prevent this.



The ugly This badly pruned stub was too long for the branch collar to enclose. Cutting too far properly now will allow the branch collar to grow over it, sealing out disease.

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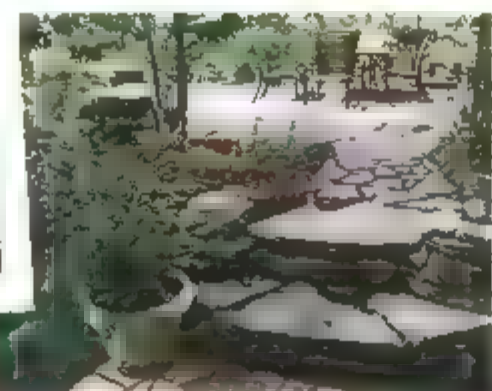
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photoshop
redo

Perking up a plain two-story

Facade details and a front porch perk out the old this home's street presence.
By DEBORAH SNOONLAN • Photo Illustration by HOWARD DIGITAL



before



Adding shingle and lap siding to the facade gives it texture and distinction.

Stone veneer adds a finished look to the exposed concrete foundation.

"We plan to overhaul our home's exterior, but we're stumped for ideas," says Tina Ramirez, who lives in this 1,200-square-foot 1916 house with her husband, Val, and their four children. So *This Old House* asked architect Timothy Langan to propose some options for their project.

Langan pinpointed Tina's biggest challenge: "The house lacks architectural detail, so it looks rather lifeless," he says. If her budget is limited, he suggests concentrating on improvements to the entry, such as a better door and hefty porch columns. The next priority would be incorporating facade elements, such as frieze boards and window casings, to give it more character. Noting the home's modest size, he also proposed a two-story addition to give the family more gathering spaces and breathing room. The new gable adds to the house's architectural appeal, and the bigger porch would connect to an existing patio behind the house.

"I love these suggestions, especially the color scheme and the larger porch," says Tina. "We can't make all the changes, but these ideas are a great starting point." ■

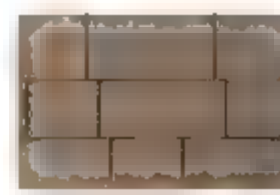
Finishing touches

Cottage-style products and materials have a classic, timeless appeal.



paint

This palette of neutral tones and rich blue parks more punch than plain white. O'Keefe Grey lap siding, Scroll Beige shingle siding, and Midway Blue entry door by Golden (\$22 per sq. ft.)



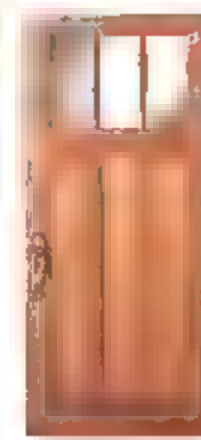
shingle siding

A breeze to maintain, these paneled fiber-cement shingles won't split or rot. James Hardie, starting at \$5 per square foot.



sconce

The bronze finish adds warmth here; a pair brings light to the facade in spots that the porch pendants don't reach. Bellacor, \$230.



entry door

The trio of lights at the top echoes the tripe windows on the house's first floor. Simpson Door Company, starting at \$600.

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Medicine cabinets

By AMY R. HUGHES PHOTOGRAPHS BY KRISTINE LARSEN

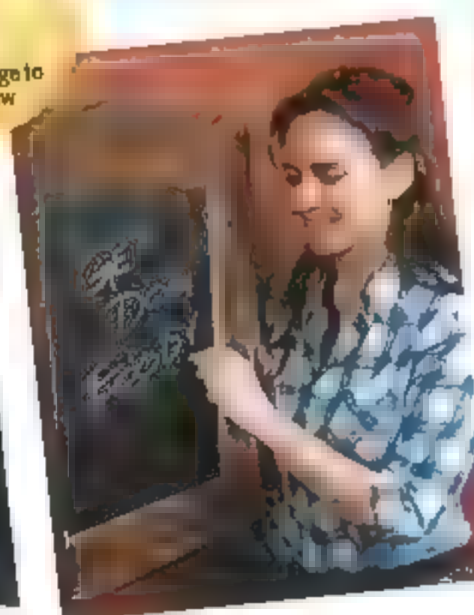


The bathroom-fittings section of your local salvage yard can feel a bit like a fun house, its halls lined with mirrored medicine cabinets of different shapes and sizes. Behind the kaleidoscope of looking glasses are even more curiosities, such as shelves and cubbies sized for old-timey remedies and grooming aids. A spritzing of hair tonic, anyone?

Lucky for us house-part recyclers, those same compartments work equally well to corral modern mousse, making vintage medicine cabinets right at home in bathrooms today. In varied styles, from Art Deco metal cabinets with arched tops and flower-etched mirrors to boxy wooden Arts and Crafts ones fitted with cupboard latches, they've got more pizzazz than most of those sold at a home center.

When shopping for yours, decide whether you want a wall hang or recessed model that fits between the studs. Surface-mount cabinets tend to be older, some dating to the mid-1800s, and are typically made of

Turn the page to
learn how



Turn an old medicine cabinet into a message center

shop smart You can find a vintage medicine cabinet at flea markets, antique stores, or online. Look for one with a recessed front panel and a door that opens to reveal shelves.

wood. Recessed ones made of either wood or metal became popular around the turn of the 19th century, in part because of the Victorians' obsession with cleanliness. It was thought that protruding ledges, specifically those in kitchens and baths, harbored sickness-inducing microbes.

Prices typically range from \$50 to \$250 for a vintage cabinet, with the best deals at flea markets and online auctions. Compare that with \$350 to \$1,000 or more for repro models.

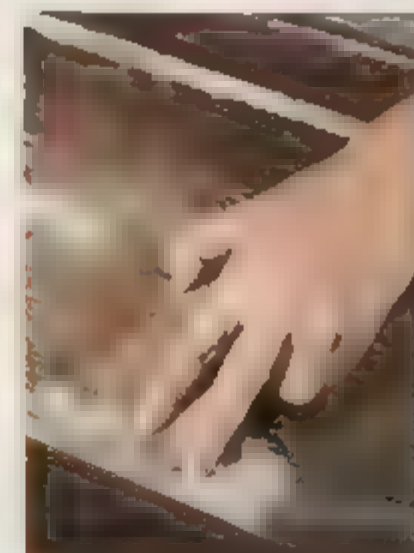
Besides its obvious utility in a bathroom, a medicine cabinet can double as a kitchen spice rack or a curio cabinet. I recently spotted a wood one with a plate-glass door displaying a handsome collection of vintage wind-up alarm clocks.

You can also use one to hold keys and letters, or, if you're still sore like me, the occasional missive to mom about that icky cod liver oil she used to make you gulp down. Read on to learn how to build just such a medicine-cabinet message center. ■

\$90 for cabinet, cork, chalkboard paint, and cup hooks
2 hours plus dry time
Simple, not fancy
carpentry skills required

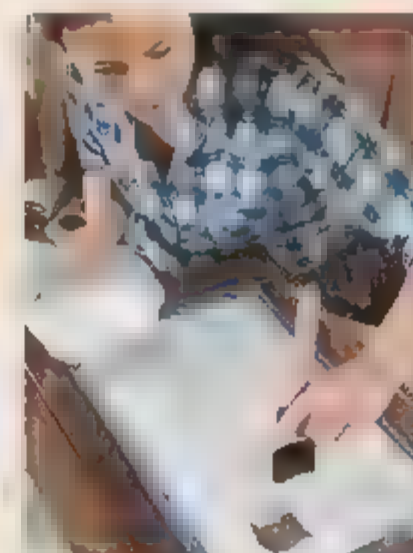


1 Fill cracks or gouges. Smooth out damaged areas in the cabinet door's recessed front panel with wood putty. Let dry, then sand.



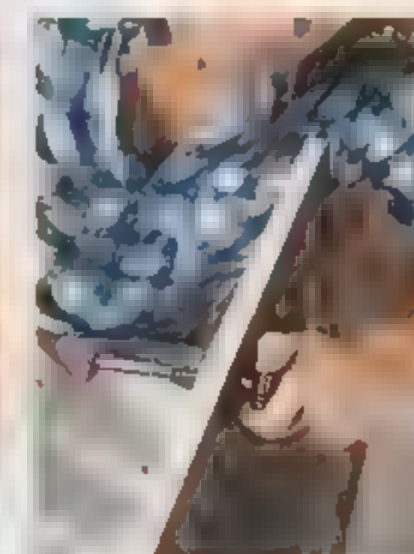
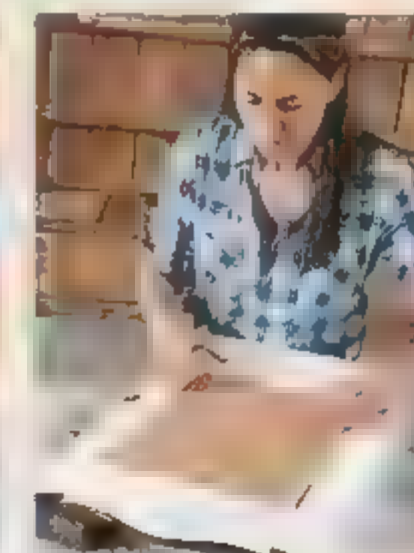
5 Add a magnetic catch. Screw the magnet component to the cabinet's inner side wall. Align and secure the metal strike plate on the door. (Skip this step if your cabinet has an operable latch.)

2 Brush on latex primer. Prep the wood recess so that the chalkboard paint will adhere properly. Tape around the recess to protect the surrounding stiles and rails from errant brushstrokes.



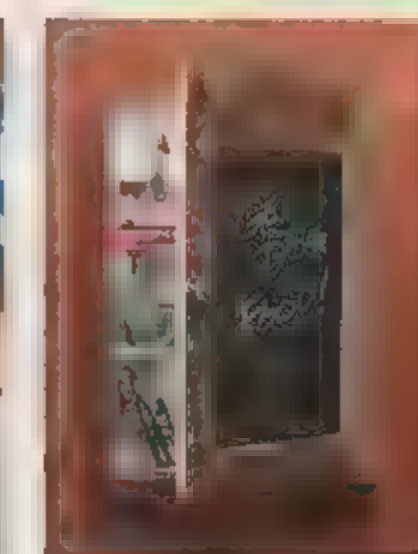
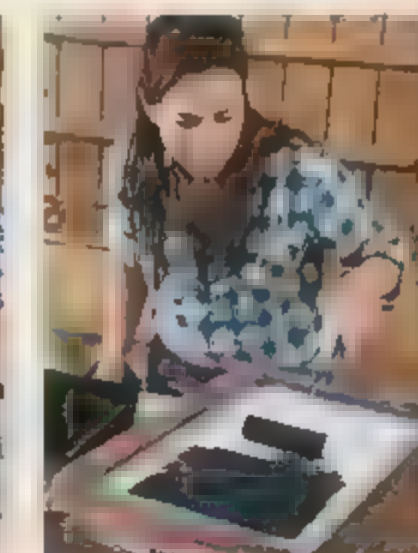
6 Screw in cup hooks. For dense hardwood cabinets like my oak one, use a drill/driver to bore pilot holes into the cabinet's inner top ledge. Then twist in the hooks to serve as key hangers.

3 Cut the cork. Trim two 12-by-12-inch craft tiles (\$7 for four, joann.com) to fit within the recess on the back of the cabinet door. A few passes with an X-Acto knife will ensure crisp edges. Adhere cork in place with wood glue.



7 Add a door pull. Position it over the existing hole where the old door hardware used to be, and secure the pull from behind with a screw. (Skip this step if your cabinet still has its original.)

4 Apply chalkboard paint. Use a small foam roller to evenly spread Rust-Oleum's low-odor latex (1 quart, \$12, homedepot.com). Let dry; it cures to the touch in 20 minutes and is ready for a second coat in 4 hours.



8 Condition the board. Wait three days for the paint to fully cure, then prepare the slate for use by rubbing the side of a piece of chalk over the entire surface and erasing. Once you've got a clean slate, use it to—ahem—bark out an order or two.

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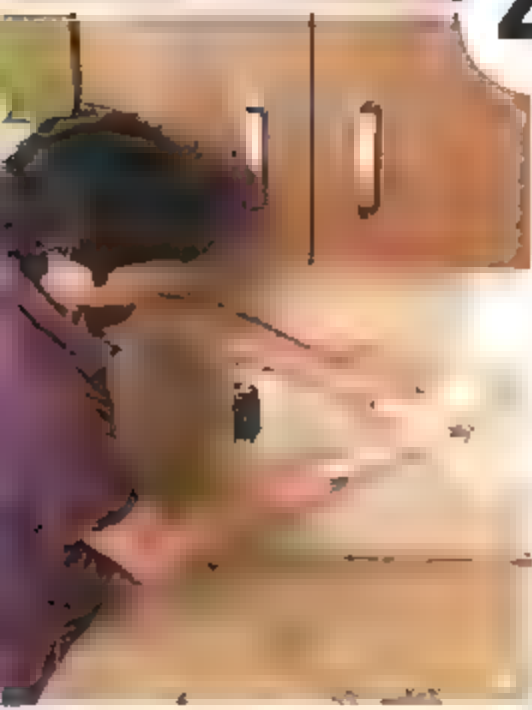
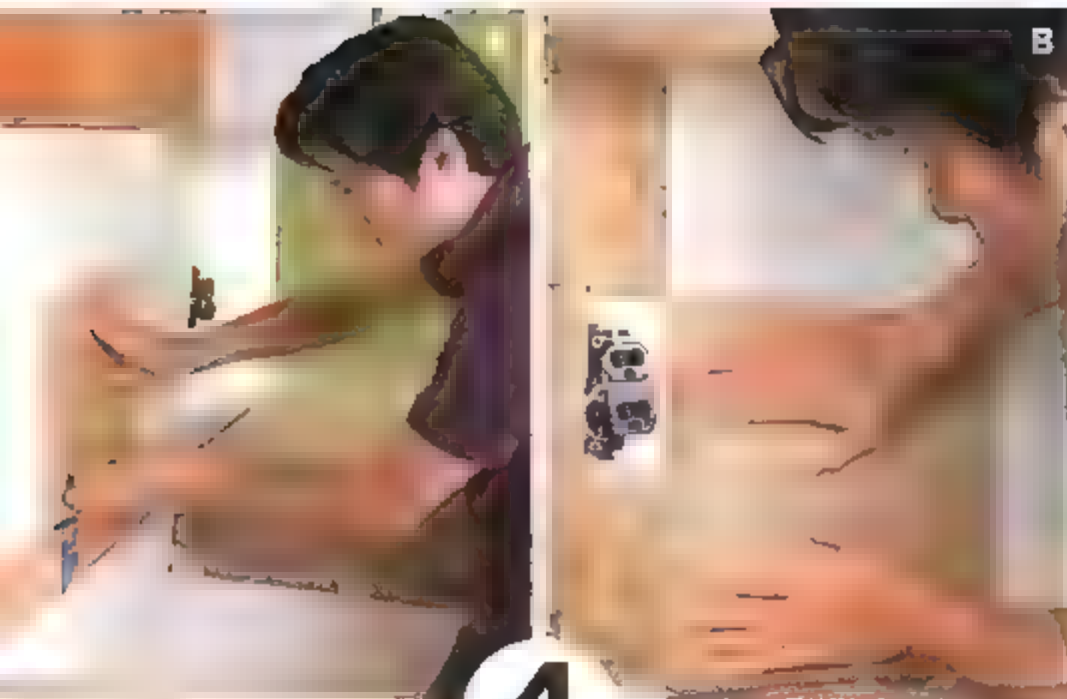
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Install a glass
mosaic backsplash

DIY-friendly sheet tile transforms a plain kitchen wall into something special

By JENNIFER STIMPSON • Photographs by KOLIN SMITH

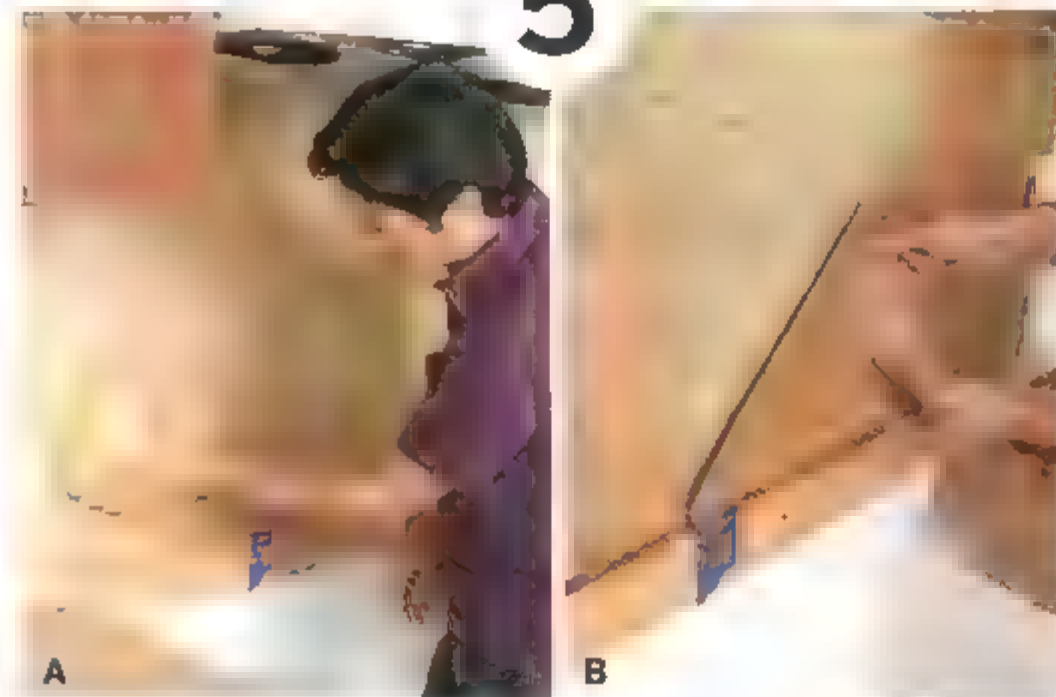




Tip Don't be tempted to substitute a rubber mallet for the hammer when setting glass tile. Its "bounciness" will cause the tile to shift out of place on the wall.

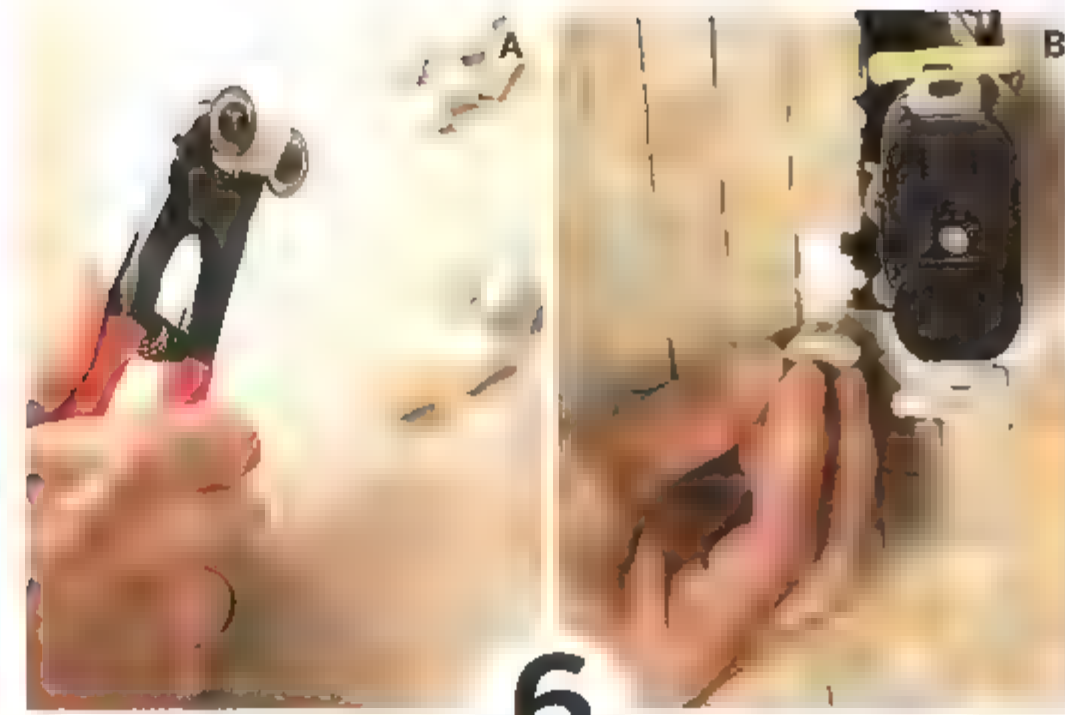
4. Set the tile sheets

A Place the first sheet. Using both hands, press the first sheet of tile into place along the center line, according to the layout you created in Step 1. Apply even, gentle pressure to the entire sheet, and set the tiles in place by holding a block of wood over the sheet and lightly tapping it with a hammer. **B Install the field.** Continue to add tile sheets to the wall in the focal area, working from the bottom up. When that spot is complete, fill the rest of the field, working from the centerline outward then upward. Line up the joints between sheets to be slightly tighter than the joints between individual tiles, so one sheet but not so close that they touch one another. Doing this makes the joints between sheets disappear, so that the tiles look continuous on the wall. **C Make sure all sheets are set at a consistent depth.** As you add sheets, hit the wall about others, hold a block of wood over the joints between sheets and tap lightly with a hammer. Do the same at the corners where a sheet meets



5. Remove the paper facing

A Saturate the paper. After the paper is in place, saturate it with water. The water will begin to seep out of the back of the paper, and you'll be able to adjust as necessary. This is the right time to remove the paper facing. To do so, the adhesive must be damp enough to wet the paper but not so soggy that it soaks the paper. When thick, blot it off the facing several times over a period of 5 to 10 minutes. **B Peel off the paper.** Once the paper is saturated, slowly peel it off, starting from the upper corner and pulling diagonally. You may not notice tiles that have shifted out of place on the wall, but get them back into position at a time, keeping your hands wet so that the adhesive residue on the tile won't stick to your fingers as you work. Repeat Steps A and B as appropriate as you install.

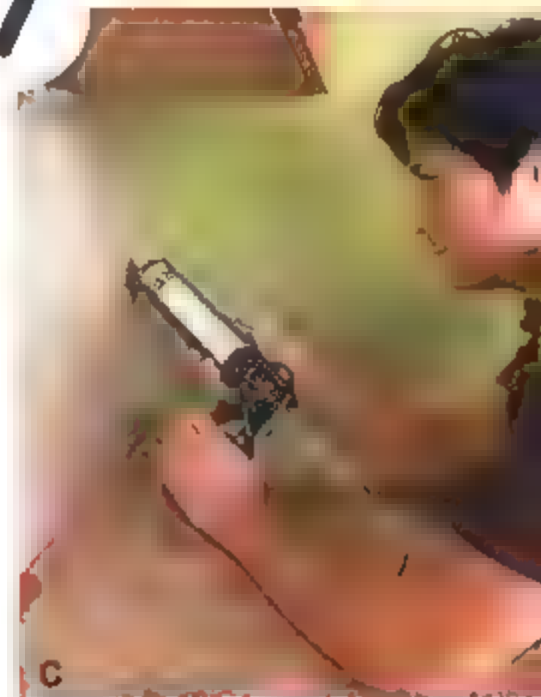


6. Cut and install individual tiles

A Cut each tile. You may need to cut a few tiles to fit a round electrical receptacle or other obstruction. To do this, soak a sheet of tile in water and remove the paper facing. Cut individual tiles using two wheel glass cutters. **B Install each tile.** Back butter at least a layer of the set tile with the paper. Make sure you back butter the entire tile, not just the edges. Repeat for all tiles. Let the tiles set for 48 hours before moving on to the next step.

7. Grout the joints and caulk the perimeter

A Clean the tile. To prepare the wall for grouting, remove the adhesive residue from the face of the tile with a wet sponge. Use a nylon scrub brush to reach the areas between grout lines. **B Grout the joints.** Stir the grout mixture thoroughly but thoroughly, so the texture is uniform. We used a grout mixer fitted with a blunt mixing bit at a slow speed. Let it sit for a few minutes until any air bubbles have dissipated. Working on one small section at a time, wipe the tile with a wet sponge until the surface is slick. Apply grout using an epoxy grout float, holding it horizontally and vertically over the tile to work it into the joints. Once the joints are packed, push the float diagonally across the tile to remove excess from the joints. Then hold the joints to eliminate high points by wiping the tile in a circular motion with a wet sponge. Remove traces of grout from the surface by lightly wiping a clean damp sponge diagonally across the tile. Repeat section by section until the entire wall is done. **C Caulk the perimeter.** Using a grout and tile coordinating acrylic caulk for your grout, apply a bead to the perimeter of the backsplash area where the tiles meet your walls, cabinets, and counters. Let it cure for an entire day. Reinstall the electrical receptacles using large screws if necessary. Remove the ledger before replacing the range



a

b

c

Detail Oriented

A passionate weekend woodworker expands and renews a historic 1830s house with miles of hand-applied moldings

d

FROM PLAIN TO FANCY Before its recent redo, the 1834 Greek Revival house held a warren of small rooms and cried out for ornamentation.

Living room a) A wide opening was cut into the wall that divided the original two front parlors, easing the flow of light and traffic.

b) Reely crown molding now gives definition to walls and ceilings.

c) Both parlor fireplaces get face lifts with a built-up blend of stock pieces and custom ones made by the homeowner in his basement workshop.

Gabled front d) The classic street-facing facade was dressed up with decorative molding and flat corner boards.

By JILL CONNORS

Photographs by WENDELL T. WEBBER

Produced by COLETTE SCANLON

Styling by INGRID LEES

If the theme song of smart real-estate transactions is “Location, Location, Location,”

then in the search for a vintage house the chorus is surely *Details, details, details*. But when Michael Sarasin and Renee Matteson found a Greek Revival gem with everything but the latter, they did not hang back.

The couple had been looking for a waterfront home when they came upon a street in Mystic, Connecticut, lined with 19th-century houses. There, right on the Mystic River, was a four-bedroom, two-bath house with a classic front gable and triangular pediment. Built in 1834 and enlarged to form an L about two decades later, it was structurally sound and ideally located for two people who love small-town charm. And even without improvements, it would have plenty of room for the two of them and Renee's daughter, Alyssa, now 13.

As for the missing details, what Michael couldn't see he could easily picture. A lifelong woodworking buff who asked for a radio saw for Christmas—at age 11—he had a ready-renovated one other home. “There's nothing I like better than building stuff,” he says. “I just find it incredibly satisfying.”

As he and Renee toured this house, with its narrow doorways and chopped-up rooms, he envisioned a way to rework the layout—and a chance to add Greek Revival-inspired ornamentation along cornice lines, doorways, and windows. Also on the plus side were four fireplaces and well-preserved heart-pine floors in every room but the kitchen. On the downside, the fireplaces didn't work and the family craved more light and open space.

Michael figured that the best way to develop a home's future was to live with its iterations, past and present. So he began slowly—upstairs. It was a calculated move, for two reasons: First, he could experiment with the floor plan and architectural trim before moving to the showplace areas of the house. Second, Renee would have a haven while he was rebuilding the rest of the rooms. “Let's face it: Living through a renovation is a pain,” says Renee, who was about to learn that lesson firsthand.

The couple wanted a master suite with a sitting area, so Michael took down a wall between two small bedrooms. In its place he built a partition 20 inches thick with wraparound wainscoting and hidden closets.



Kitchen A new addition widened the L-shaped house to accommodate a large kitchen that opens to a step-down family room with lots of light and vintage detailing. **e)** Homeowner Michael Sarasin made the Shaker-style cabinets his choice. **f)** A granite-topped island with turned-legs allows Michael, Renee, and Alyssa to slide from cutting board to cooktop without blocking access to theovens or fridge.

More space, better flow

The original two-over-two box, enlarged to a 2,300-square-foot L-shaped house, was opened up with wide passageways and an addition. The 800-square-foot addition allows for a family room, powder room, and mudroom upstairs, now a four-bedroom, three-bath house with a laundry room.





Wide passageways became a motif, repeated downstairs, where the parlors were opened to create one living area, and in the entry from the new mudroom to the future family room. Paneling became a motif too, as did Michael's two-tier treatment of the bedroom's fireplace.

Soon, in fact, he had developed a signature approach. Add definition to walls and ceilings with crown and base board molding. Descend to basement workshop to make flat and raised panels, window trim, etc. Return upstairs, where handy miter saw is kept. Fit everything in place.

Repeat.

As his panel-making kicked into high gear, Michael experimented with using it to different effects. To accentuate the living area's 9-foot ceiling, he placed panels under the tall six-over-six windows and integrated them with the casing, creating floor-to-ceiling frames that draw the eye upward. To give the dining room and master bedroom a cozier feel, he installed chair railing and extended the paneling horizontally as wainscoting.

Another whole-house routine took shape: taking exterior walls down to the studs, which allowed Michael to add insulation and upgrade the wiring, plumbing, and heating. Radiators were replaced with forced-air heating and cooling delivered via unobtrusive 2-inch holes in the floors. A chimney crew revived the fireplaces while Michael tackled the surrounds.

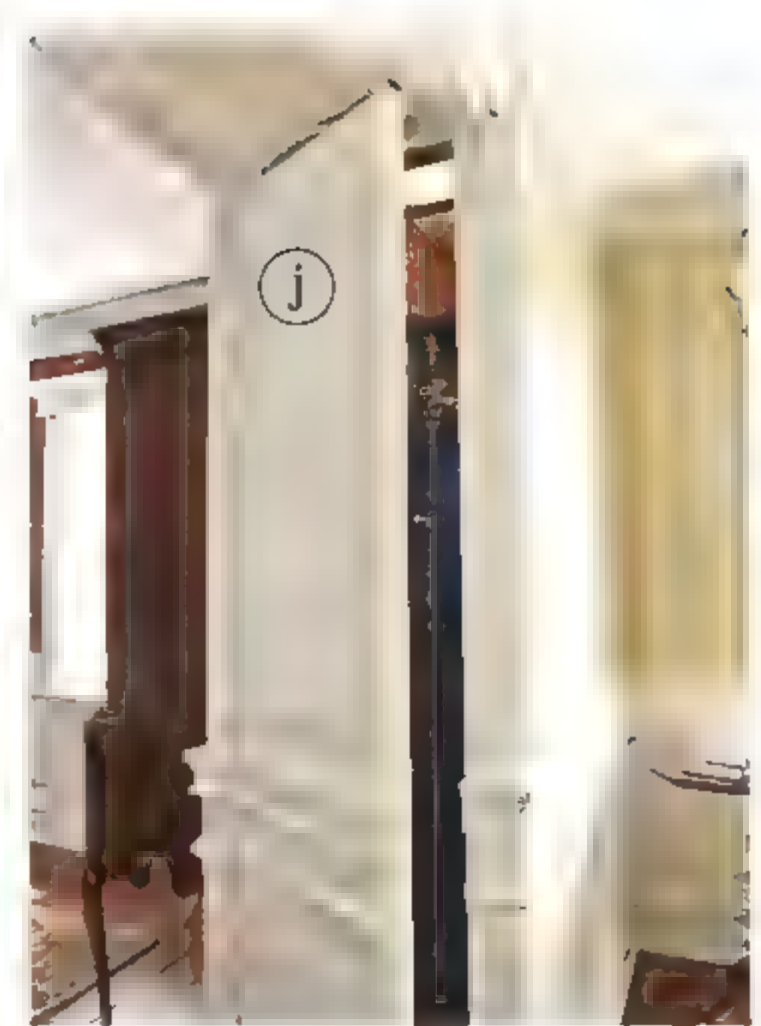
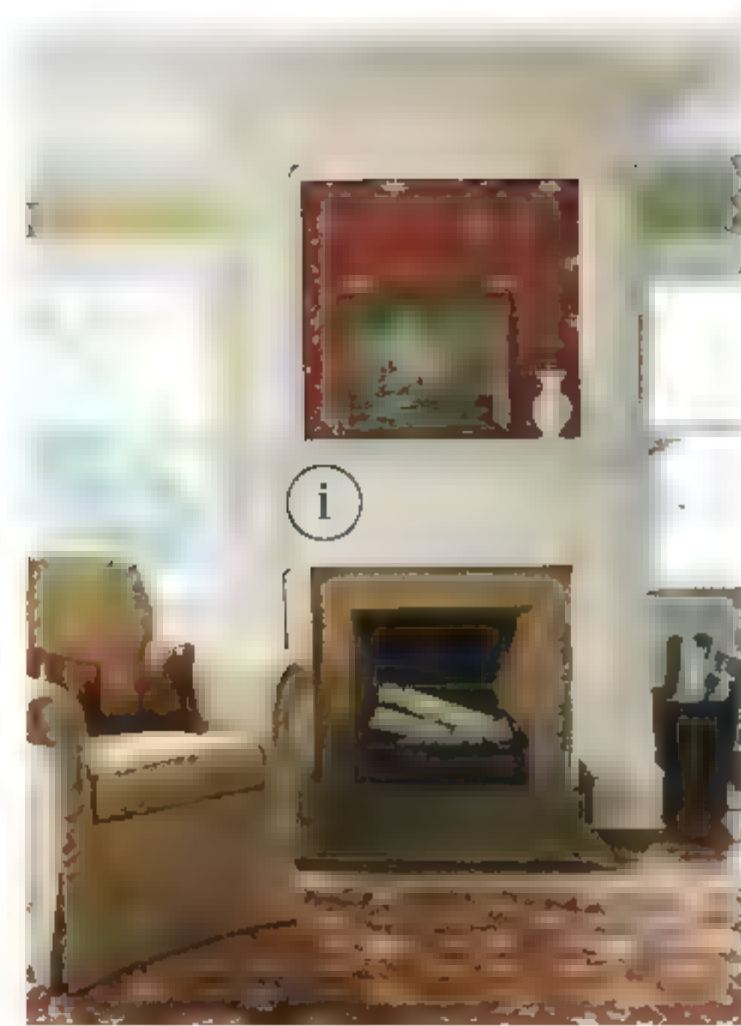
Two and a half years into the renovation, the couple was ready to add that new family room and an expanded kitchen. Because the house sits squarely in a historic district, they turned to local architect Peter Springsteel for help not only with the design but also with meeting the requirements of the tough-minded local historic commission. The result is a two-story, 800-square-foot addition stepped back from the front and down from existing rooflines. "It expands the existing ell while remaining secondary to it," says Springsteel. "That was important to the commission because additions are traditionally smaller."

Adding on meant tearing up more walls, so Renee orchestrated a move into her mother's house in a nearby

Continued on page 58 →

Family room g) The family room's gas fireplace was finished in a less ornate style than the one used for those in the original portions of the house.





Master suite
Two small
bedrooms
became a master
bedroom with
a sitting area.
h) Decorative
chandelier hanging
from the ceiling
style was added.
i) A new
adjustable height
mantel frames
the fireplace in
what is now the
sitting room.
j) A new partition
is thick enough to
hold closets
their doors
disguised with
raised panels.
k) In the bath, a
mirror triptych
was angled
to reflect the
window.
D) Subway tile
wainscoting helps
give the bath
its vintage look
while the roomy
shower signals
modern
convenience.

town. Michael brought his tools upstairs and hired a framing crew and a friend, former contractor Roland Baron, to help during the 12-month sawdust phase.

When they were done, the reworked kitchen opened onto the new family room, blending old and new areas of the house. "We wanted to keep this area traditional looking but with a modern flow," Michael says, pointing to his vintage-style cabinets and wainscoting, and a new floor made from salvaged heart pine beams.

When he wasn't adorning walls with molding and paneling, creating a coffered ceiling in the family room, or piling on trim around the fireplaces, Michael was fussing over less obvious details. After installing mahogany co-intertops in the kitchen, he rubbed on a thin coat of polyurethane "and just kept layering—13 coats, one every 6 or 7 hours," he says, to create an impervious-to-water surface.

Because he couldn't salvage all the interior doors, he installed the old hardware and locksets on new ones, along with glass doorknobs found at flea markets. "Yeah, it's a lot of work to carve out the mortise, but

it would be such a shame to have new doors and hardware—it wouldn't be right," he says. He even fashioned lead caps to top the black-painted exterior shutters for period-appropriate protection from rain.

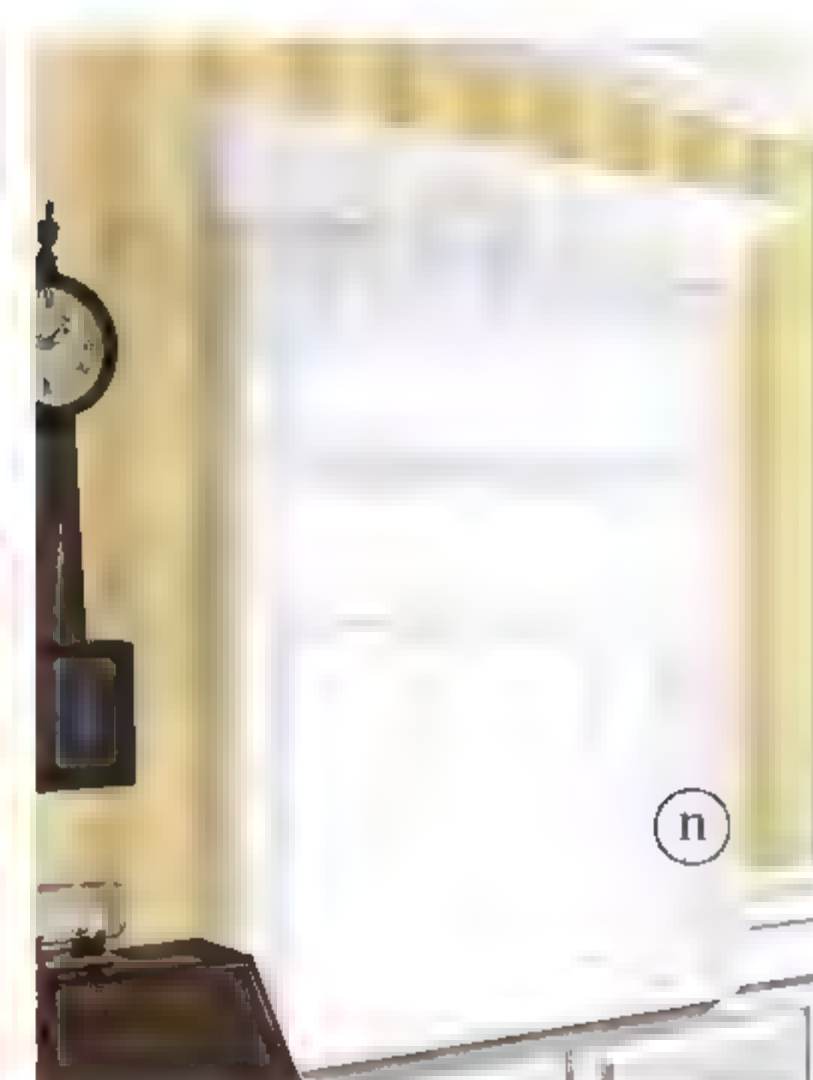
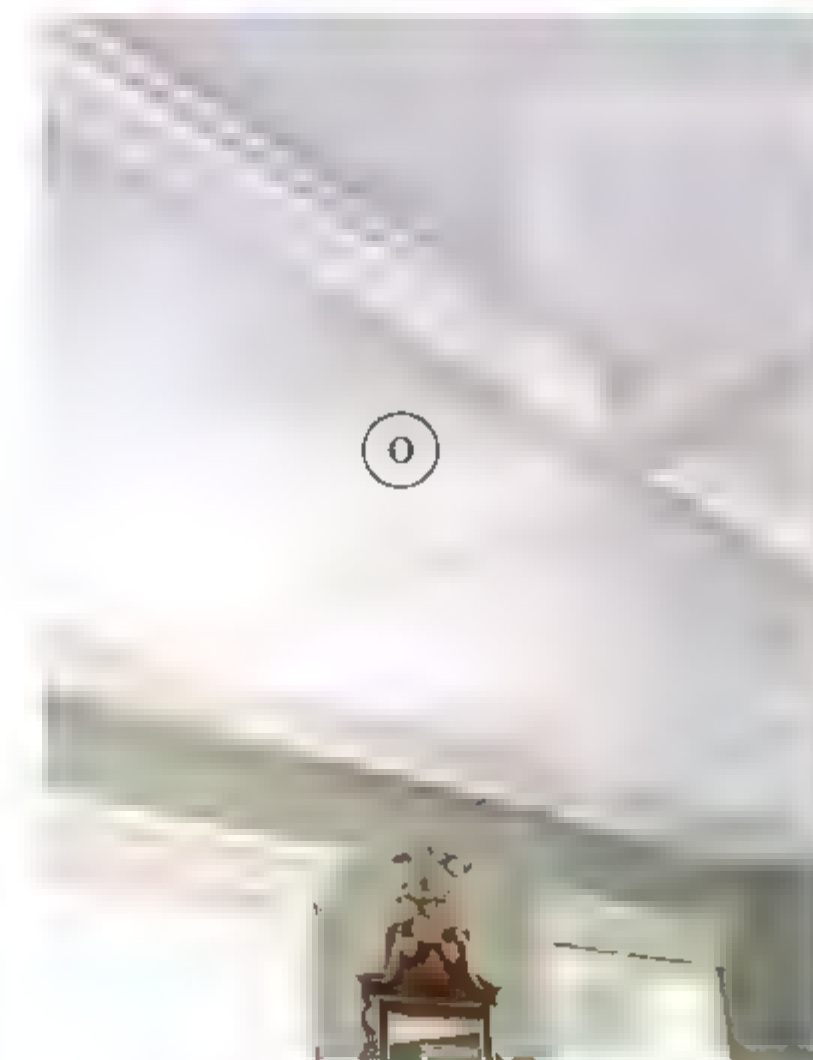
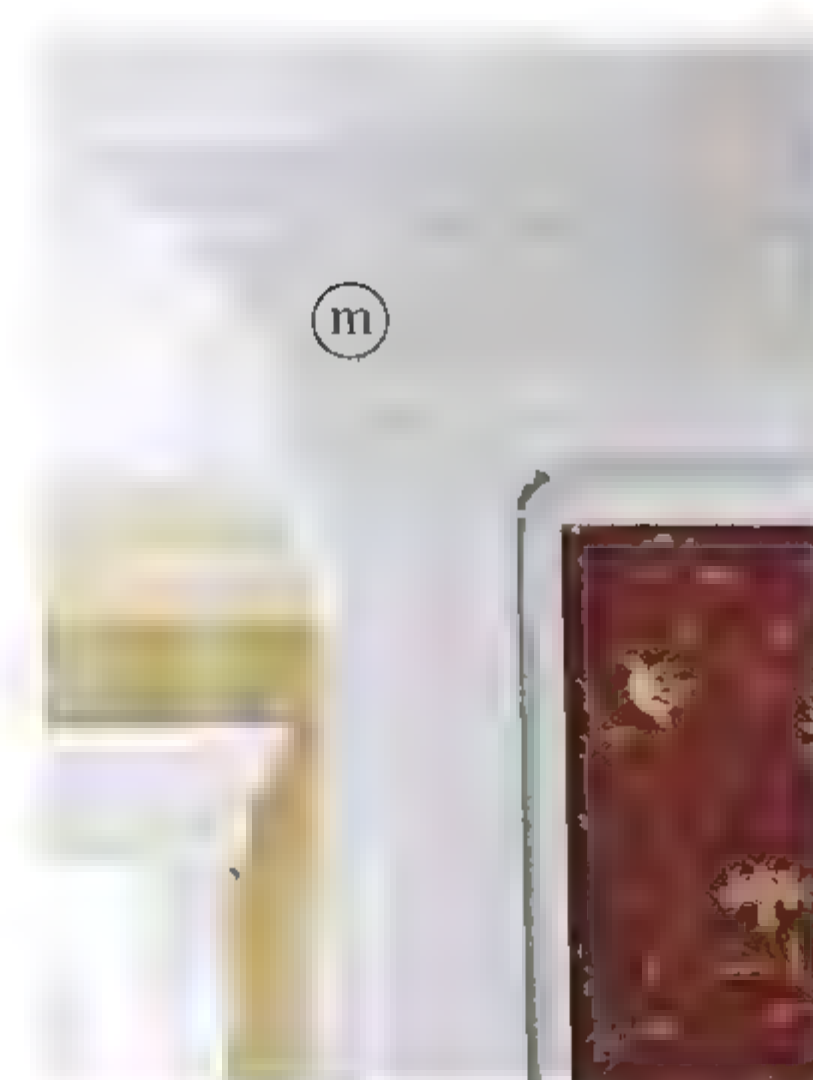
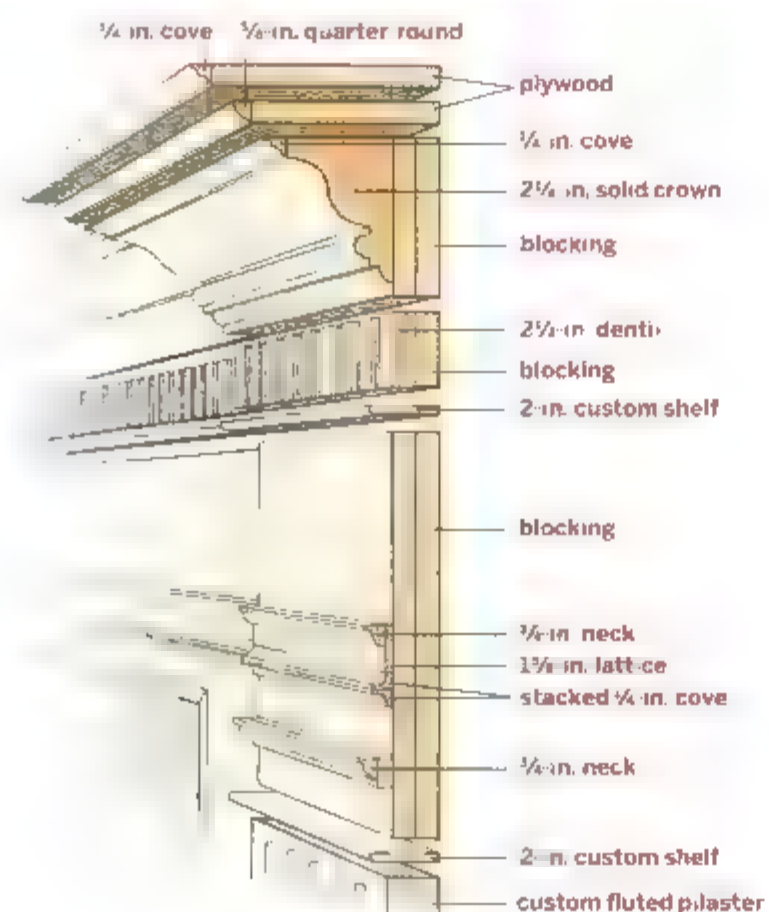
Springsteen upgraded the exterior in more visible ways. "Lots of Mystic houses of the Greek Revival era are plain, they are more representative of simple Yankee craftsmanship," he says. "We dressed up the exterior by building out a flash gable at the back to match the projecting gable on the front, and by adding dentil molding. We also widened some trim boards and enlarged the corner boards."

Today, one addition and 247 panels later, Renee says she appreciates the effect of all that painstaking attention to detail. She's even willing to admit that it was worth living with a man so obsessed that he figures he poured 4,000 hours into their home—10 hours every Saturday, 6 or more on Sundays, and 1 hour a night Mondays through Thursdays—for five years.

For his part, Michael says he's happy with the result and still loves Greek Revival detail. But he readily admits it's time for a new project. "I'm done with raised panels," he says. At least for now. ■

Make a mantel from molding profiles

It may not look like a single work of art, but when you finish a mantel, it's a work of art. This is a simple way to create a mantel that looks like a single work of art. The mantel is made from a variety of molding profiles, including a 1/4-in. cove, a 1/2-in. quarter round, a 2 1/4-in. solid crown, a 2 1/2-in. dentil, a 2-in. custom shelf, a 1/4-in. neck, a 1 1/2-in. lattice, a stacked 1/4-in. cove, a 1/4-in. neck, a 2-in. custom shelf, and a custom fluted pilaster.



Overmantel

m) Over the fireplace, the mantel is made from a variety of molding profiles, including a 1/4-in. cove, a 1/2-in. quarter round, a 2 1/4-in. solid crown, a 2 1/2-in. dentil, a 2-in. custom shelf, a 1/4-in. neck, a 1 1/2-in. lattice, a stacked 1/4-in. cove, a 1/4-in. neck, a 2-in. custom shelf, and a custom fluted pilaster.

Window casing

n) In the same room, the windows are finished with a simple casing. The casing is made from a variety of molding profiles, including a 1/4-in. cove, a 1/2-in. quarter round, a 2 1/4-in. solid crown, a 2 1/2-in. dentil, a 2-in. custom shelf, a 1/4-in. neck, a 1 1/2-in. lattice, a stacked 1/4-in. cove, a 1/4-in. neck, a 2-in. custom shelf, and a custom fluted pilaster.

Coffered ceiling

o) The ceiling in the family room was made with a gridwork of poplar trim trimmed with built-in crown molding.

Window panels

p) In the living room, the window panels below the windows meet extended casing to form a vertical unit that adds formality and draws the eye upward.

Basement Bonus Rooms

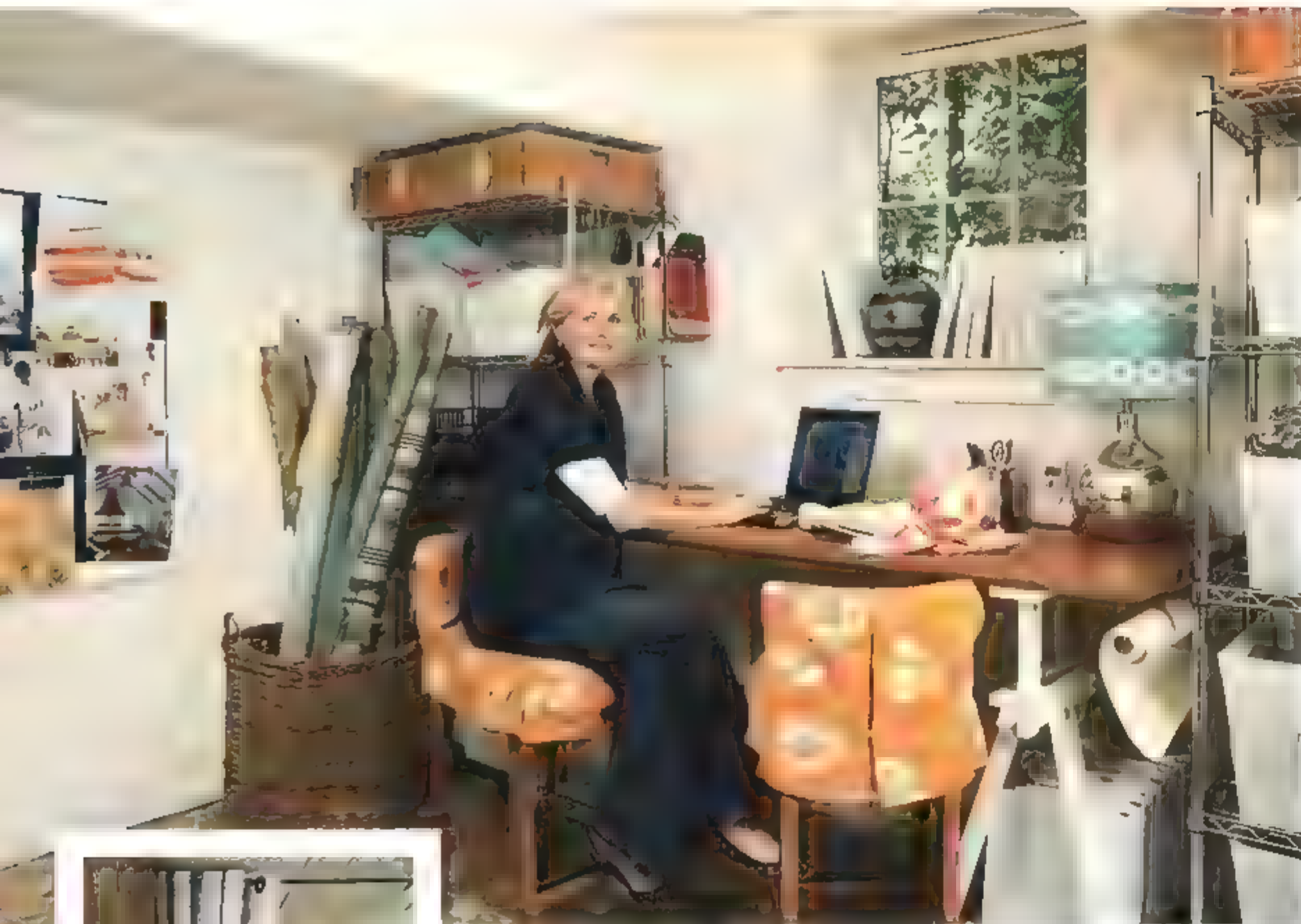
See how one family turned dead space into a comfy place for unwinding, entertaining, and working. Plus, five more smart basement redo ideas

By Deborah Baldwin
Photography by Deborah Whitlaw Llewellyn
Produced by Colette Scanlon
Styling by Brian Carter



A barn door adds texture and visual interest. It can slide over to hide the adjacent wine cellar.

SOMETIMES THAT EXTRA ROOM YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED IS RIGHT UNDER YOUR FEET. Elizabeth Willett, an interior decorator in Atlanta, was looking to fulfill several needs in her family's 1927 Tudor-style house when she saw untapped potential in its walk-out basement. "It already had a fireplace and a tiny bath, but it had never really been properly finished," she says. While the ceiling was low, it wasn't too low, and moisture—that bane of basement remodels—wasn't a problem. Soon Elizabeth and her husband, Chris, were picturing the equivalent of an 830-square-foot addition, minus the new footprint, with a whole host of amenities. Working with architect Jack Davis and contractor Rod Boyer, the couple created a family retreat and entertainment space at the bottom of the stairs. Guests can hang a left to check out the wine cellar or plop down on a sofa facing the stone fireplace and a TV. Davis even managed to fit in a full bath, a laundry area, a food pantry, and a home-office space. "There were lots of nooks and crannies, and we've used every square inch," Elizabeth says. While their redo was unusually ambitious, it involved design solutions to problems that crop up in any basement conversion. Turn the page to learn how the family went from floor plan to finished space, then find five extra basement design ideas.



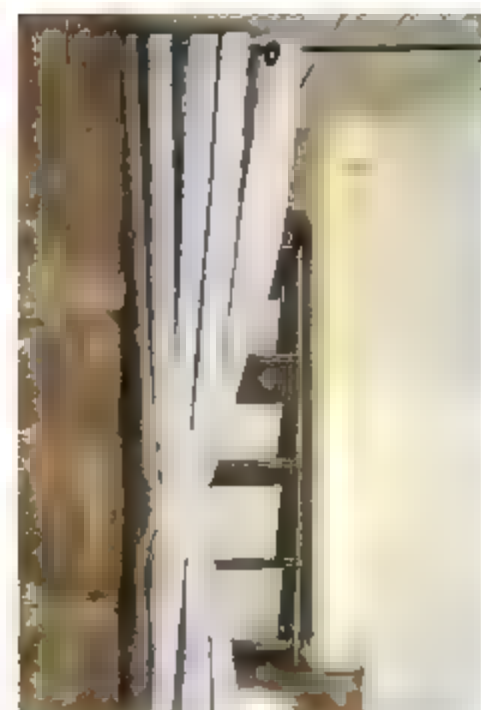
Cottage-style office

ABOVE Homeowner Elizabeth Willett, an interior decorator, created a corner office with casual touches, such as a sawhorse desk and stools with pumpkin-orange slipcovers. Commercial-style shelves hold files in canvas bins—"one per client," she says. The redo benefited from existing windows, deep new sills offer impromptu storage and display space. Working with a lighting pro, Elizabeth augmented natural light throughout the basement with task lamps, wall sconces, and recessed fixtures with halogen bulbs. Walls throughout are finished with painted rough-sawn plywood; battens create the look of paneling and hide any seams.

Canvas bins: Bed Bath & Beyond; Lamp: West Elm; Slipcover fabric: IKEA

plan for a multiuse space

Architect Jack Davis laid out the 830-square-foot basement around a family room and home office, with the existing hearth dividing them. He finished rooms including a wine cellar, pantry, bath, and mechanics closet into the remaining space like a sawhorse desk, creating a rooming for the laundry and bath at the back of the house.



Curtained partition

ABOVE Off-white paint and mostly neutral furnishings keep the basement's nooks and crannies bright. A soft canvas room divider, which echoes the office's storage bins, hangs on one side of the fireplace, allowing air, light, and traffic to flow between the two areas.

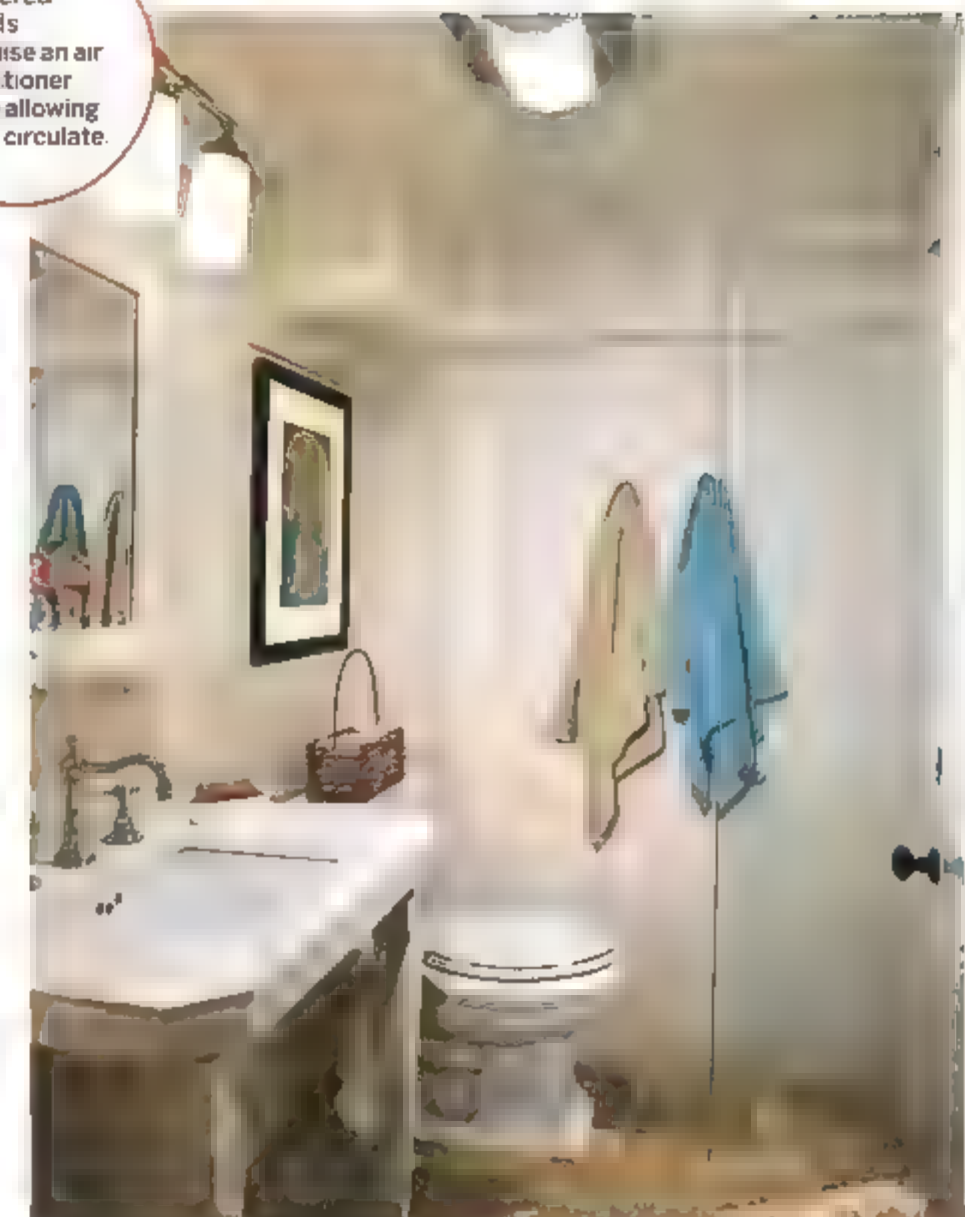
Paint: Benjamin Moore's Linen White



Rustic wine cellar

ABOVE In a 78-square-foot chamber lined with open wine racks, a painted column stands as an emblem of the basement's past. While wine cellars are often a solid bet for cool basements, this one gets a boost against Atlanta's heat with AC. To warm up the space visually, Elizabeth incorporated family heirlooms, including a rug and corner cabinet handed down by her father-in-law.

Louvered panels disguise an air conditioner while allowing air to circulate.



Vintage-look bathroom

ABOVE Paneled walls and doors, a porcelain pedestal sink with a cross-handle faucet, and a space-enhancing glass shower door give the bath a timeless look. Limestone floor tiles, used throughout, add a light-reflective surface and have a pragmatic side: They can't be compromised by drips or leaks.

Sink: Kohler; Faucet: Rohl

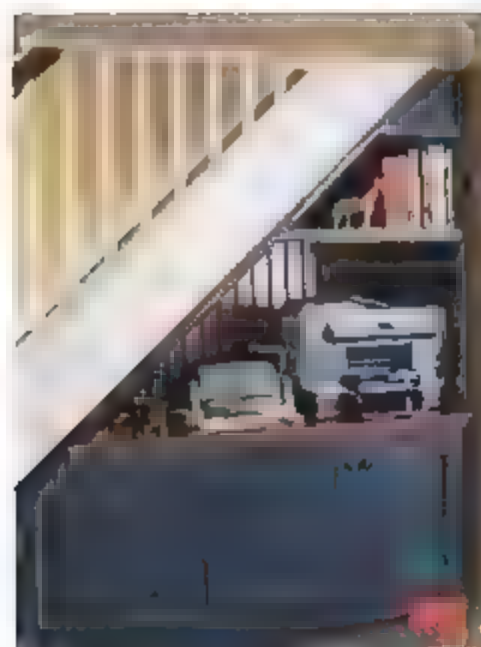
Adjustable shelves hold laundry supplies and free up folding space on top of the machines.

Neat, clean laundry room

RIGHT The corner laundry nook is so inviting, no one minds dashing in there during TV commercials to fold sheets and match socks. A small sink with extra storage underneath is convenient for spot-washing and cleanup.

Washer/dryer: Kenmore; Faucet: Moen





Homework central

Problem: Four kids—and their backpacks—were cluttering up the kitchen after school.
Solution: A group homework station inspired by library carrels. The upper cabinets hold school and art supplies, and also hide ductwork. Nearby under-the-staircase space (above) provides storage for a shared printer and holepunch. The grown-up decor echoes the one upstairs.

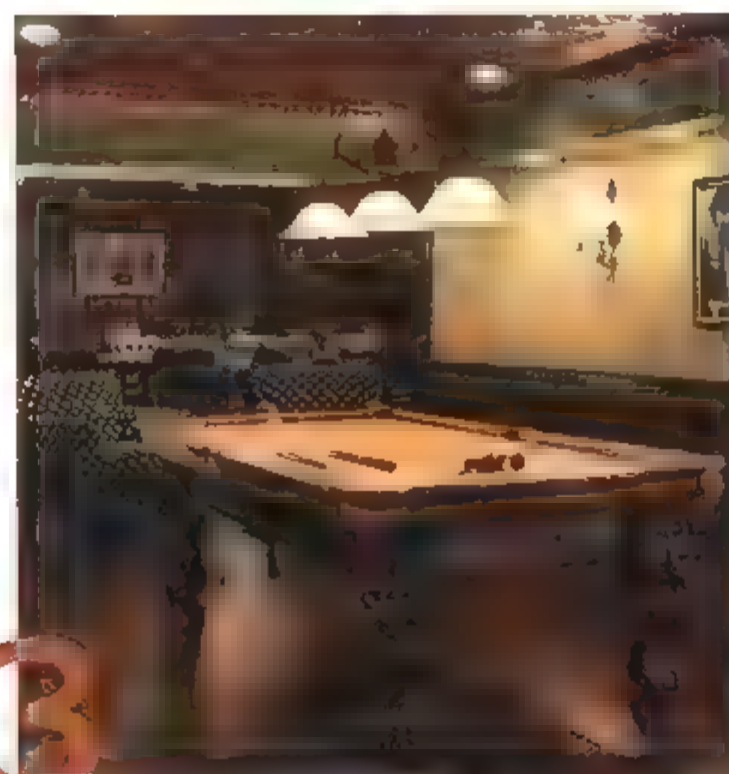
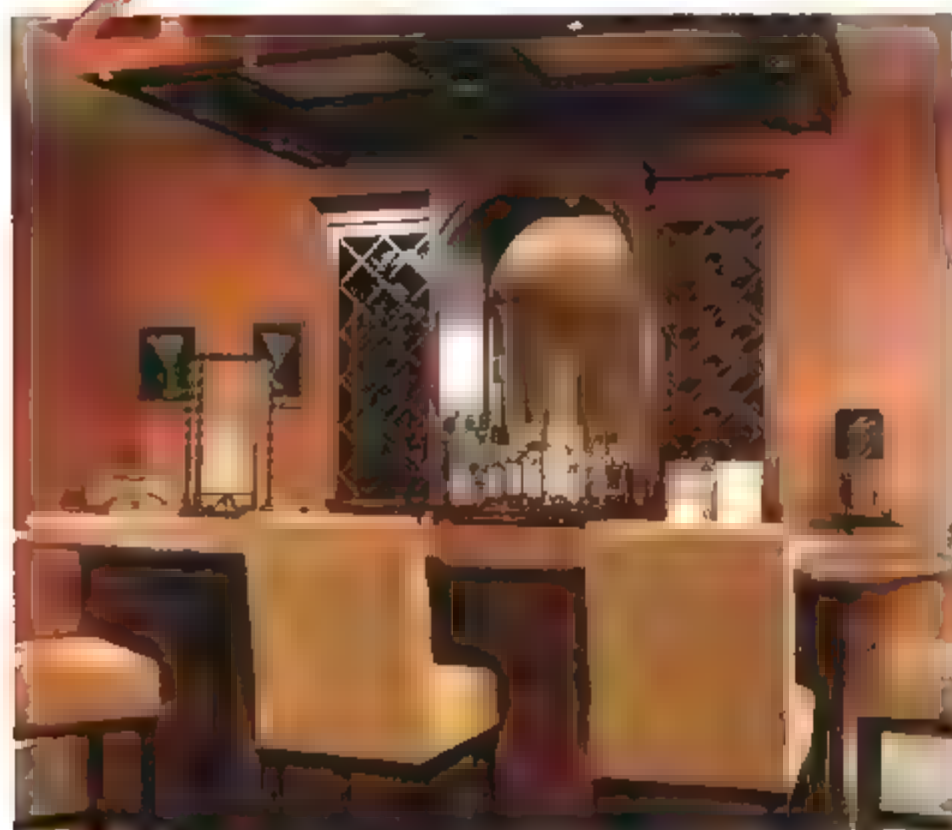
5 problem-solving redos

Creative thinking turned these basements into high-functioning bonus rooms as nice as the ones upstairs



Drinks station

Problem: Refreshments were a flight of stairs away when family and friends hit the basement TV room.
Solution: A wet bar with a granite top and mini fridge for snacks. Wood tones and peach-colored walls warm up the snug space, which is adjacent to a sitting area with a flat screen. Stained-birch coffering overhead helps define the area; recessed lights on dimmers keep the atmosphere cozy.



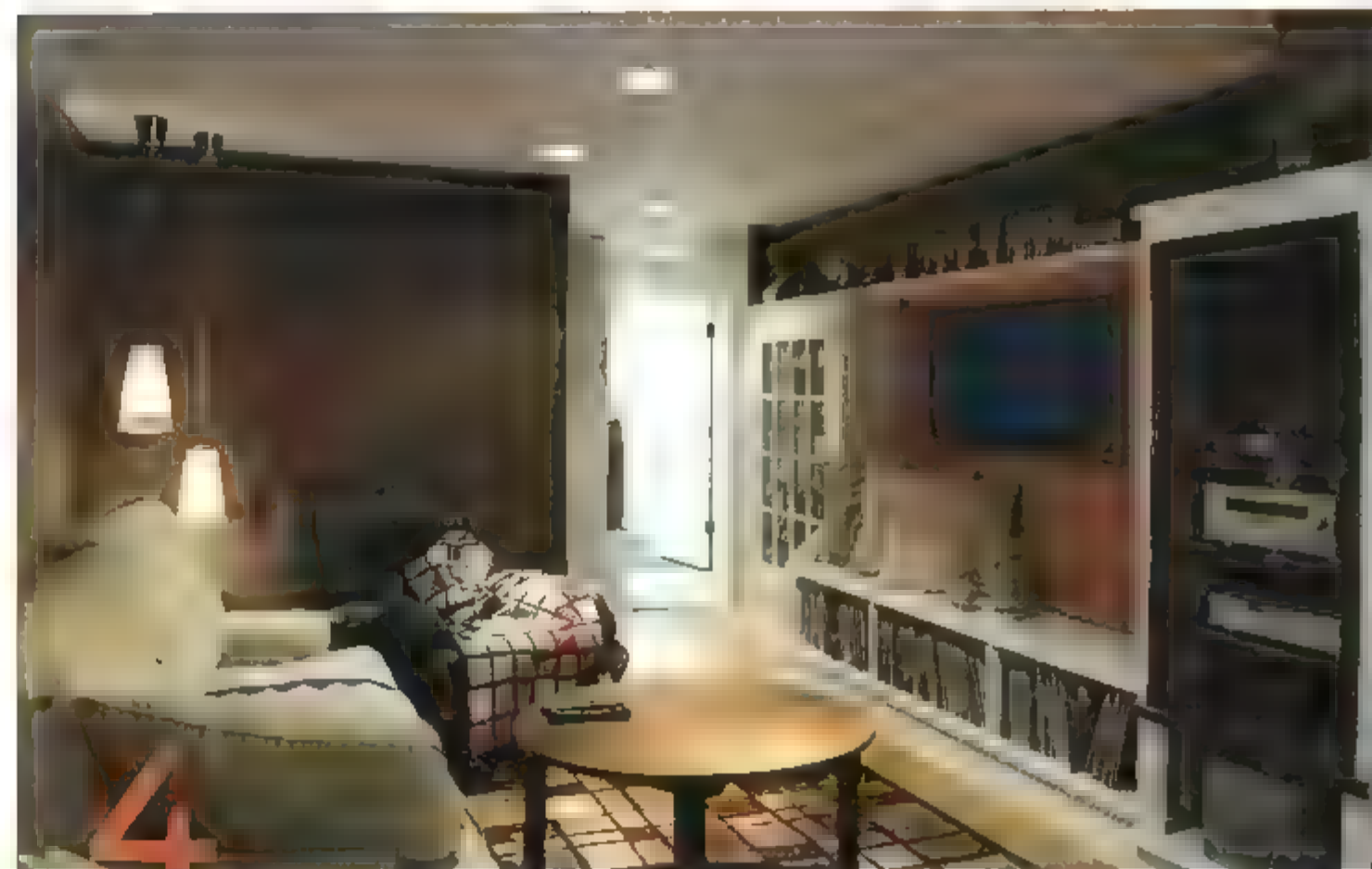
Place for fun and games

Problem: No room upstairs for a longed-for billiards table.
Solution: A basement space with plenty of elbow room for pool, plus a poker table set on a carpeted platform. Vintage-style light fixtures, dark wood finishes, a coppery ceiling, and faux-leather upholstered walls create an elegant setting.



Airy suite for guests

Problem: Houseguests needed a room of their own.
Solution: A suite modeled after the homeowner's favorite boutique hotel, with clean lines and a crisp palette. She boxed out the support column and ductwork, put down leather-look 18-by-18-inch porcelain floor tiles, painted the walls bright white, and hung framed photos. A sitting area allows the basement to double as a party space.



Cozy home theater

Problem: A teenager had outgrown his room, and the family's new TV was outsized for its space.
Solution: Move the media center to the basement so that the teen could spread out—and build a TV cabinet big enough for movie viewing. Recessed lights make the most of the ceiling height, while pendants create a reading nook. The shelving unit was made for under \$100 with 2-inch framing lumber and a salvaged window. A tip from the kid's dad: Be sure to prime and paint before installing a built-in like this.



STYLISH KITCHEN UPGRADES RIGHT OUT OF THE BOX

Shows you how to bring
order and a custom look to your
with six easy DIY kits

By Jennifer Stimpson

Photographs
by Wendell T. Webber

BUILT-IN SEATING

With the Shaker Warming Bench, you can add a built-in seat to your kitchen.

THE KIT WE PICKED:

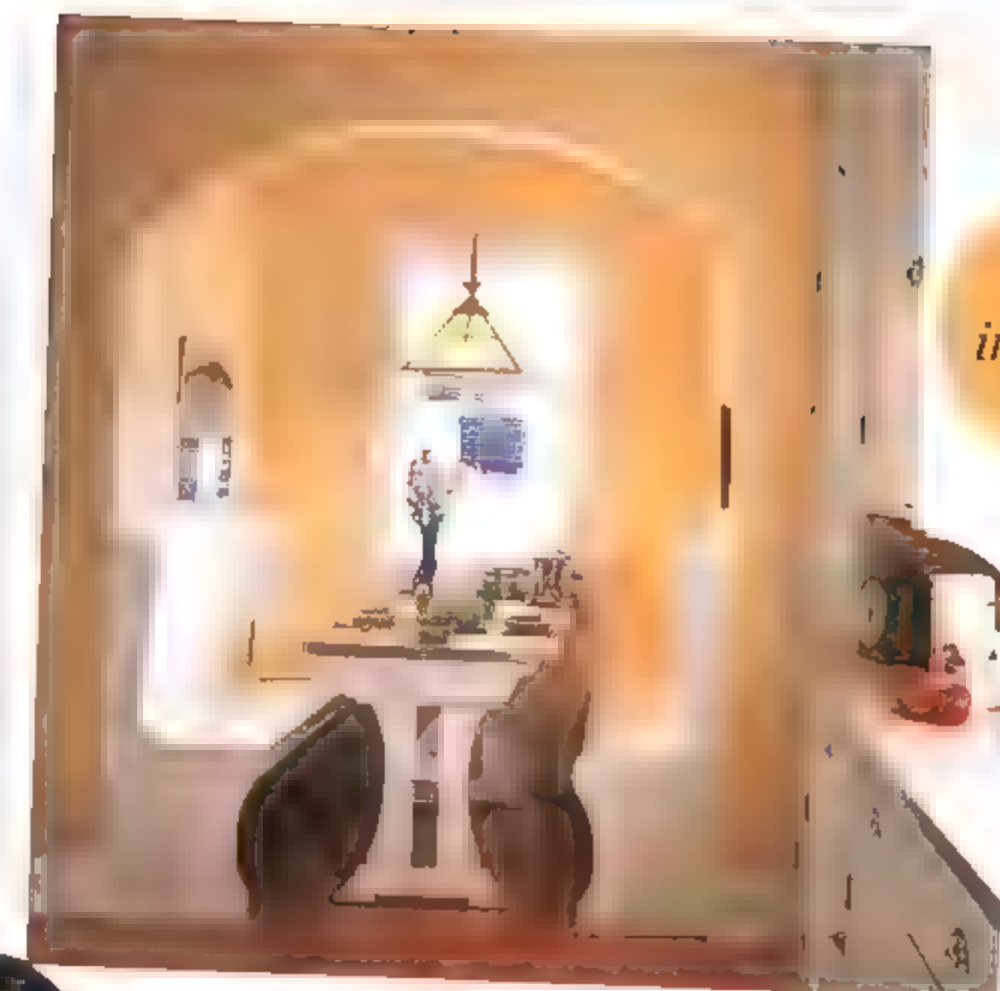
Shaker Warming Bench,
vandykes.com

WHY WE LIKE IT: Creative freedom. The kit includes pre-cut pieces crafted from sturdy unfinished stock, the necessary fasteners, and little more, leaving custom tailoring and the final finish to your imagination.

THE SPECS: Red oak, 13½ by 37½ by 48 inches.

WHAT IT COSTS: \$240

HOW MUCH YOU SAVE: About \$360. A similar fully assembled and finished white pine bench from a furniture company costs around \$600.



what
inspired
us



To smoothly drive fasteners and prevent wood from splitting, drill additional pilot holes where pieces come together. Insert your drill bit through the existing pocket screw holes to create a path for the screw in the adjoining piece.

Use a router to create a bead along the edges for a more decorative look.



Reattach the back panel, which is designed to be glued in place with ¼-inch wood screws for added strength. This will also push the panel tight against the seat's rear edge, preventing any gaps where paint or stain could pool.

Recess the seat apron by ¼ inch to create a nice reveal.



CABINET INSERTS

THE KIT WE PICKED:

Plate Display Rack,

omeganationalproducts.com

WHY WE LIKE IT: Easy installation. The kit shakes out of the box like pickup sticks without directions, but it's still a cinch to assemble.

THE SPECS: Four 30-inch top and bottom maple rails and thirty-two 12-inch dowels. Trim the length of the rails and height of the dowels to fit your particular cabinet dimensions.

WHAT IT COSTS: \$51

HOW MUCH YOU SAVE: About \$250. A custom cabinet manufacturer charges around \$300 for a similar insert.

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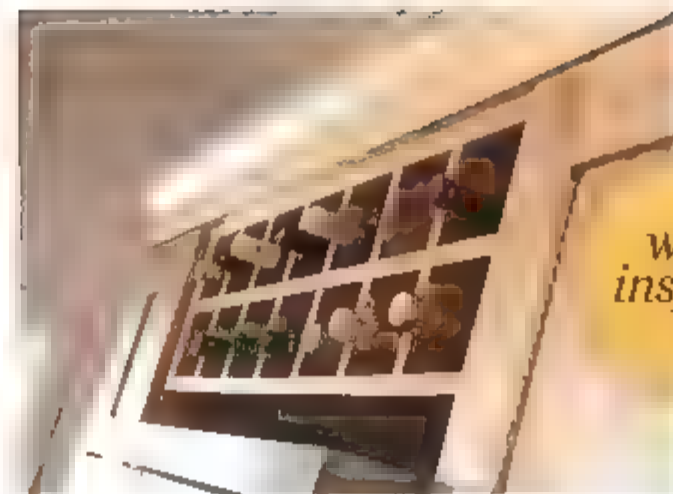
Use your own plates as a guide. Before securing the rack in place with wood glue and screws, make sure dishes are centered inside and don't stick too far out of the cabinet. Leave at least 2 inches at the front and back.



1. Paint or stain individual dowels and rails before assembly for easy access to small parts and to prevent drips inside the cabinet.

2. Cut your own spacer strips and glue them between the front and back sections to form a single self-supporting unit. This way you don't have to mess with aligning the two separate pieces inside the cabinet.

what
inspired
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THE KIT WE PICKED: Sonoma Series Wine Rack, kitchensource.com

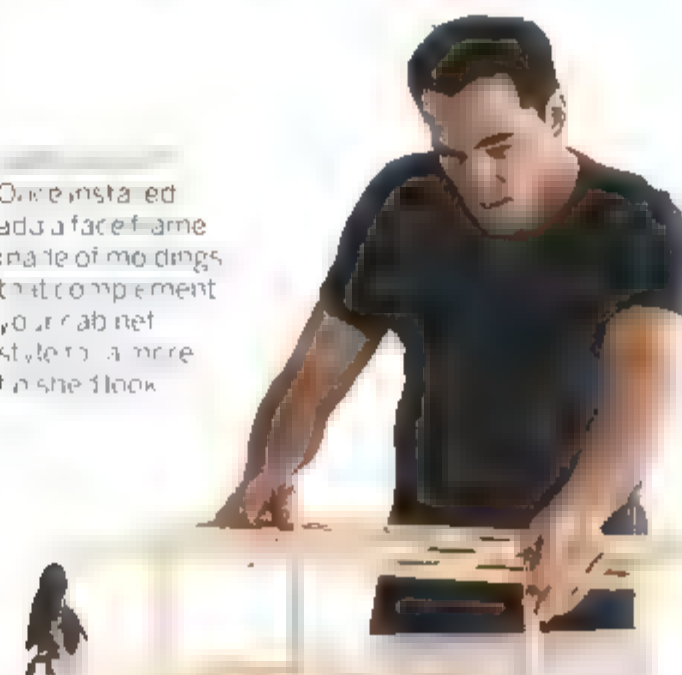
WHY WE LIKE IT: Lots of sizes. Components can be ordered to fit various cabinet dimensions; the largest one corral 28 bottles.

THE SPECS: The one we chose has two 17 by 29-inch maple attachment grids to fit in a standard-size upper cabinet and securely hold 18 bottles.

WHAT IT COSTS: \$94

HOW MUCH YOU SAVE: About \$900. A custom cabinet manufacturer charges up to \$1,000 for a similar built-in rack.

Once installed, add a face frame made of moldings that complement your cabinet style to make it more finished.



For the spacer strips, use a combination of wood glue for long-term strength and yellow hot glue, which is stronger than clear, for quick tack during assembly.

what
inspired
us



APPLIANCE GARAGE

THE KIT WE PICKED: Straight Appliance Garage, cabinetparts.com

WHY WE LIKE IT: Simple assembly. Pieces easily fit together like a puzzle with tongue and groove joinery. Just add wood glue for extra strength.

THE SPECS: 18-inch-tall solid maple frame, spring-loaded solid maple tambour door, and maple-veneered sides.

WHAT IT COSTS: \$133

HOW MUCH YOU SAVE: About \$67. A cabinet manufacturer will charge you around \$200 for a unit like this one.

If the distance between your countertop and cabinets is more than 18 inches, install a decorative header board to fill the space. If less, the frame can be shortened by up to 6 inches.



RANGE HOOD COVER

THE KIT WE PICKED: Hardwood Range Hood, hoffco.biz

WHY WE LIKE IT: Easy to retrofit. An optional conversion kit with two fluted filler strips lets you fit the hood into a 30- or 36-inch opening between your upper cabinets. Choose from five different wood species, including maple (shown below).

THE SPECS: 30-inch wide by 24-inch tall hood metal liner that mounts to surrounding cabinets and filler strips.

WHAT IT COSTS: \$281. Internal vent filters, which start at \$119, are sold separately.

HOW MUCH YOU SAVE: More than \$500. A wood hood manufacturer charges upwards of \$800 for a model like this one.

what inspired us



Personalize your hood with a decorative apron. Make tout of stock molding from the home center, or choose from three styles offered by the kit manufacturer starting at an additional \$37. English country apron is shown here.

Paint or stain the hood to match surrounding cabinets, or finish it in a complementary color for a bold accent.



did you save with a kit?

Your project may appear in our Reader-Created Issue. Send photos to scott@thisoldhouse.com.

what inspired us



Create a parking spot for your ladder by installing a track that's about 2 feet longer at one end than your bank of cabinetry. That way it won't block access to doors or appliances when not in use.

Choose a hardware finish that echoes the tone of your existing cabinet knobs for a pulled-together appearance.

Order a ladder that's at least 5 inches taller than the height of the wall on the wall. Any shorter and the angle will be too steep to comfortably climbing any longer and it'll eat up valuable floor space.

ROLLING LADDER

THE KIT WE PICKED: Quiet Glide Wooden Ladder and Hardware, eshardware.com

WHY WE LIKE IT: A la carte ordering. Parts are sold separately in a variety of wood types and hardware finishes, letting you customize a kit for your kitchen and budget.

THE SPECS: We chose an 8-foot tall, unfinished red oak ladder with metal rung supports, an 8-foot long track, top rollers that allow the ladder to glide on the track, and bottom wheels.

WHAT IT COSTS: \$802

HOW MUCH YOU SAVE: \$200 or more. Prices for a similar setup from a library ladder manufacturer start at \$1,000.

Save next a \$200 by purchasing just the hardware and installing it on your own ladder.





All the Right Rooms

At TOH TV's latest project house, minor floor plan tweaks and a modest addition gave a family of four new places to gather, play, and spend quiet time. See what they did—and put their ideas to work for you



ABOVE Homeowners Bill and Gillian Pierce enjoy after-school cookes in the revamped kitchen with kids Liam, 8, and Catharine, 11

by
Deborah
Snoonian

photographs by
Anthony
Tieuli

styling by
Kathryn
Precourt



BEFORE A three-season porch sat at the rear of the existing house. ABOVE The two-story addition was built on the porch's footprint with the same gambrel roofline as the area to the left

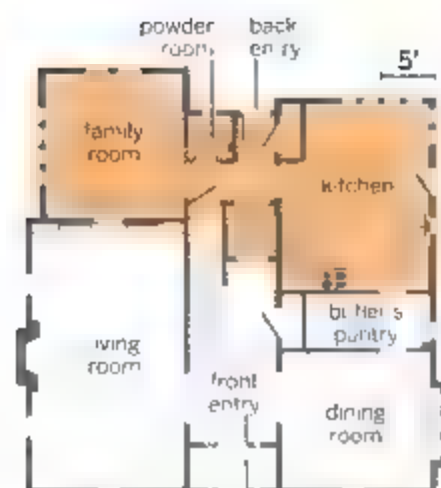


GOOD-BYE, GARGANTUAN GREAT ROOMS. SAYONARA, massive master bedrooms. Just as the average new home size in the U.S. has dipped, additions have been shrinking too, a sign that we're taking steps to curb energy consumption and lower remodeling costs in an era of rising utility prices and uncertain home values. As many of us learned the hard way, the race to renovate often led to spending too much on a too-big addition with too little planning and, ultimately, rooms that didn't meet our needs.

The renovation and expansion of this 1915 Dutch Colonial in Newton Centre, Massachusetts, the site of *This Old House* TV's latest project, is a handsome example of the kind of modest scale, well-planned remodel that's more in tune with the times. "When we moved in, we knew we wanted a bigger kitchen and more room for working at home and having people over," says homeowner Bill Pierce, a writer and editor, whose wife, Gillian, is a professor at Boston University. "But we decided to live here for a while to get to know the house before plunging into a big project."

It took the Pierces three and a half years to figure out what spaces they needed and a year of working with local architect Paul Rovinelli to flesh out the floor plans. At 330 square feet, the addition gives them just enough breathing room. Keep reading to see how their refurbished house suits their lifestyle—it's an inspiration for anybody who wants more room at home.

WHILE YOU DECIDE UPON AZEK
CEILING, FLOOR, WALL CERTAINTEED
CLASSIC GUTTER SYSTEMS
PODS PORTABLE ON DEMAND STORAGE



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

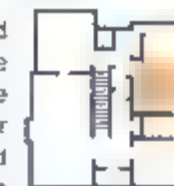
A BETTER MIX OF SPACES

The 1915 Dutch Colonial had good bones, but its floor plan needed an update. A three-season porch came down to make way for a family room and relocated powder room downstairs, and an office and library nook upstairs. The back entry and part of the center hall were also overhauled, and the kitchen was enlarged without changing the home's footprint in this area. The other rooms were left alone, save for repairs and replacing knob-and-tube wiring.

new and renovated spaces

A kitchen for a family that loves to cook

BEFORE The old, outdated kitchen suffered from an awkward layout and lacked upper cabinets. **BELOW** The room was made longer and wider by removing a second stairway and relocating the half bath. Now it boasts plenty of cupboards and drawers for storage, as well as a handy (and compact) 3-by-4-foot prep island where cooks can chop and slice their way through recipes, thanks to a thick top of end-grain sapele wood. White painted cabinets with antiqued-brass hardware were designed to mimic those in the adjacent butler's pantry original to the 1915 house and lovingly kept intact during the renovation. Glass-fronted upper cabinets flanking the sink and window underscore the room's bright, airy feel.



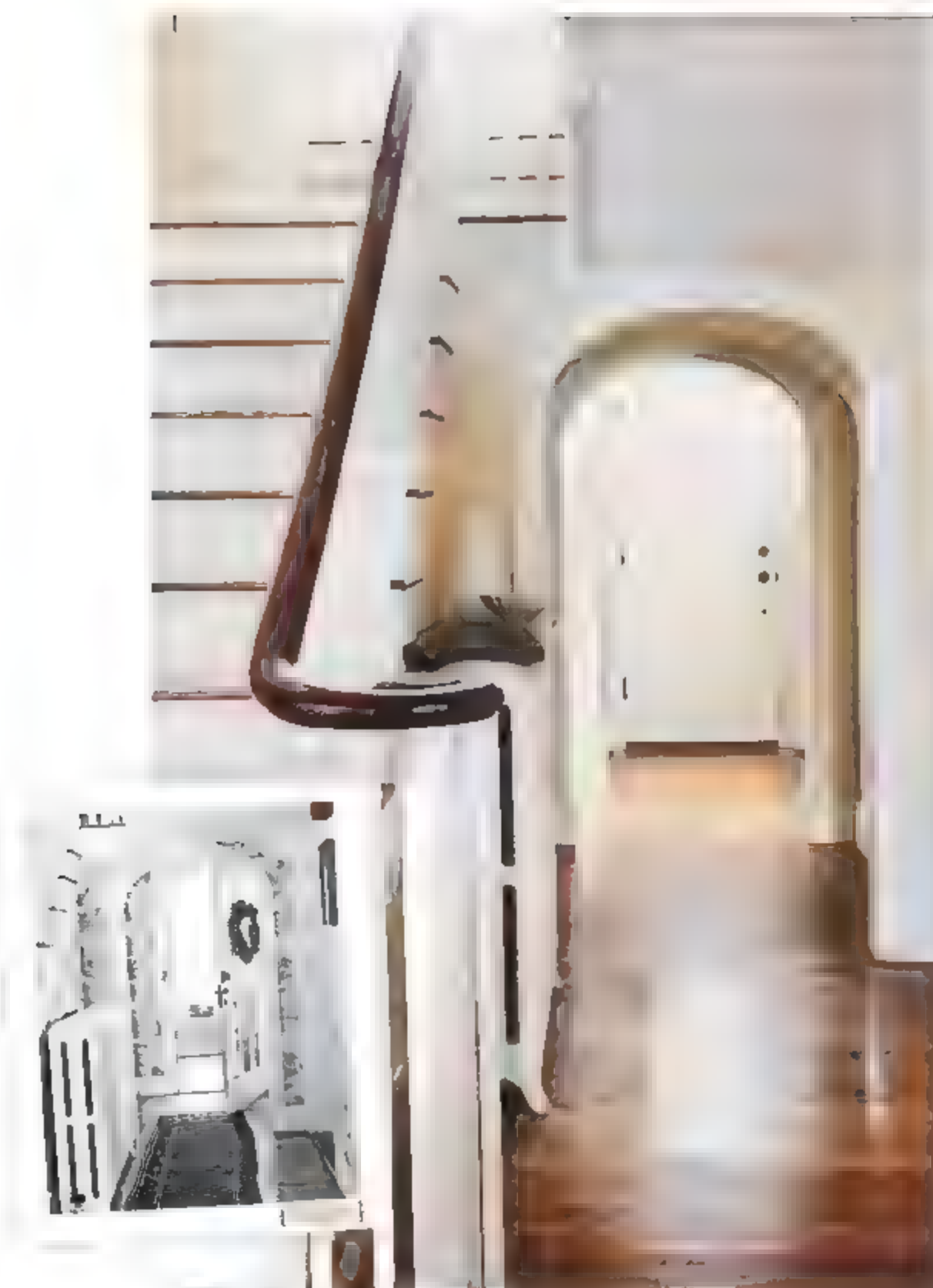
An eat-in nook with room to move



BEFORE The kitchen table sat in a tight spot between the fridge and a doorway to a side entry. **ABOVE** The table now takes center stage in a cheery, window-lined spot that once housed a half bath. Open shelves keep serving pieces handy for everyday use. Gill also plans to store her vast array of cookbooks here so that they're always at arm's reach.

APPLIANCE: GE Appliances
CROWN POINT CABINETRY: Crown Point Cabinetry
FLOORING: Farrow & Ball
FURNITURE: GE Monogram
MICROWAVE: GE Café
PLUMBING: The Grothouse Lumber Company
COUNTERTOP: CaesarStone from Stone Technologies
PAINT: Farrow & Ball
ROOFING: Daltile
SINK: Kohler
STOVE: GE Appliances
TILE: Daltile
WALLS: Staples Cabinet Makers
WINE: Yale Appliance and Lighting
WOODWORK: Broan-NuTone





Paint Benjamin Moore
Windows and Doors Marvin Windows and Doors

A dedicated family room where the kids can hang out



BEFORE The underutilized three-season porch sat adjacent to the living room, where most socializing took place. "Our living room is a good size, but it was tough when the kids had friends over. There was no place for them to play separately," says Bill. **BELOW** The porch footprint became a 13-by-14-foot family room, where adults and kids alike can play games and watch television. Alternatively, the younger set can take over the family room while the grown-ups kick back in the living room; a doorway between the two spaces allows for easy interaction and circulation. Both entries to the family room were finished with pocket doors, so the space can be closed off to shut out the sound of loud movies or video games. Because the sofa wall is on the street-facing side of the house, smaller windows were placed high up to give the room some privacy without sacrificing natural light.



A hallway that bridges old and new



BEFORE The back entry was framed by a graceful arched opening in the center hallway. **ABOVE** The existing opening, preserved during the renovation, inspired a clever modification to the hallway. Steps leading to the new rooms upstairs had to be cut into the first-floor ceiling in this area during the renovation, resulting in uneven ceiling heights. To mask the problem, TOH general contractor Tom Silva built a second arch, connecting the two with a barrel-vault ceiling that disguises the height discrepancies and creates a cozy transition between the original parts of the house and the revamped and new spaces. "We thought it was a great way to turn a problem into a distinctive feature of the house using an existing architectural element," says Gillian. "And we'll always be proud of our Tom Silva original."

share your
remodel

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Issue. Post entries to
thisoldhouse.com/yourTOH



A home office that doubles as a guest room



BEFORE The Pierces often work from home, so Gillian had turned a spare bedroom upstairs into her office, while Bill's desk sat in the living room. Not an ideal spot for getting work done, he says. **LEFT** Bill moved his desk into Gillian's old office, allowing her to take over this new light-filled corner room above the family room, right off the library nook. "I feel like I'm in a cocoon when I'm in here. It's so peaceful and quiet," she says. (That's partly due to the soundproofing qualities of the addition's spray-foam insulation.) Guests can sleep on the pull-out sofa, and a closet (not seen) makes the space flexible for conversion to a bedroom in the future.

Get the right rooms for your reno without blowing the budget

Keep an inspiration file. Gillian had been collecting photos of kitchens from catalogs and magazines for years. So by the time she and Bill were ready to tackle the renovation, she had already begun to whittle down the features she wanted most in her dream kitchen. "Her planning and diligence saved us time and helped us make decisions more quickly," says Bill.

Have a design pro pitch in. The Pierces had hired a different architect to draw up plans for the first project, a small master bath. But they didn't pay him to oversee its construction. "In retrospect, that was a mistake," says Gillian. "It was worth every penny to have our architect, Paul Rovinelli, involved all the way through this time. He came up with ideas we'd never have thought of on our own, and he helped us resolve tricky issues that came up during construction."

When possible, build up instead of out. A two-story addition saved the Pierces major bucks

on pouring the foundation, because its footprint is relatively small. Plus, they avoided having to build on an unused area of their miscellaneous 0.15-acre lot, even a tiny yard is a highly prized amenity in their small-scale neighborhood.

Walk through rooms when the walls are open. It's relatively easy then—and cheaper to boot—to make changes that maximize the functionality of each space. "We looked at our family room before it was done and were able to mark the right spots for putting in speaker wire and coaxial cable," says Bill.

Know what you don't need. To avoid falling prey to the budget-busting "might as wells" during a renovation, amenities you can do without in each room. "I'd decided early on that I didn't want a double oven in the kitchen because I never used the second oven in our previous house," says Gillian. "So when this option came up, it was easy to turn it down and avoid the extra cost."

Check out other photos and see videos of the Newton Centre renovation at thisoldhouse.com/bonus



A nook to nourish a love of reading



BEFORE When the Pierces first moved into their home, Bill's handy father built some shelves around the window on the stairway landing, which housed a small fraction of the staggering number of books owned by this well-read family. Paul, our architect, loved how light poured down from this window to the front entry, says Bill. "Since we were adding a second story, he suggested enlarging the space, putting in more shelves, and installing extra windows." **ABOVE** The resulting 8-by-10-foot library nook, with custom shelving hand-fashioned by Tom Silva and TOH master carpenter Norm Abram, is now home to much of the family's impressive book collection and serves as an appropriate entry to Gillian's new office to the left. Kids' games and other items are stashed in cabinets below the shelves, and a window seat gives son Sam a quiet spot for playing chess, one of his favorite hobbies. "We're thrilled with how this space turned out—it exceeded our expectations," says Bill.



Paint: Benjamin Moore, CertaSpray by CertainTeed
Radiator: A Tru-Galpor
Curtains: Lumber Liquidators

ALL ABOUT

Entry sets

Get a lock on style—and your belongings. This Old House's experts help you pick an entry set that suits your taste and budget without compromising your safety. By Sal Vaglica

Consider the front door the welcoming face of your home and the entry set its hearty handshake. This lock and trim hardware is a small detail that makes a big first impression.

An entry set is also your home's guardian, allowing you to key a dead bolt into place with a satisfying snap. This familiar sound, which precedes our every trip across the threshold, reassures us that everything—and everyone—inside is safe and sound. For added security and convenience, some newer locks don't even need keys; they're opened with a touch pad or a smartphone, such as a BlackBerry.

While the lock is all business, the trim that surrounds it is about pleasing our senses, how it feels matters as much as how it looks. No wonder that entry set manufacturers offer so many knob, lever, thumb latch, and escutcheon options, as well as a slew of different metals and finishes. Choose from oil-rubbed cast bronze, brushed stainless steel, and lustrous forged brass coated with a high-tech finish so that it will never tarnish. Some companies even sell entry set parts à la carte so that you can customize the door hardware you've got for a fraction of the cost of buying new.

On the following pages, TOH explains the different trim and lock types, what to look for when shopping for a new set or upgrading an old one, and which style is right for your house. Because dressing up your entryway isn't just for a winning first impression—it's also about helping to form a lasting one that both you and your guests will remember long after closing the door.

Anatomy of an entry set



VITALS

What types of locks are there?

A tubular lock has its latch bolt and dead bolt in two separate holes. In a mortise lock, both bolts are encased in a steel box that fits in one hole.

What do they cost?

Tubular thumb latch sets start at about \$100; mortises, \$200. Custom sets from specialty shops can easily surpass \$1,000.

How long do they last?

Most entry sets come with lifetime warranties; on their locks, they're covered for as long as you own your house. Coverage on the finish ranges from one year to a lifetime.



DIY or hire a pro?

Upgrading the entry set on an existing door is fairly easy as long as the new lock is the same type as the old one. In a new slab door, drilling the holes for a tubular lock is a task most DIYers can handle. Cutting the slot for a mortise lock is more difficult; in this case, hire a locksmith to rout the mortise and install the lock.

This forged brass set with full-coverage steel plates is a great detail for an early 20th-century style handle (only); hick

Save or splurge?

Both of these classic thumb latch handlesets are virtually the same size and hide your lock under a peek-a-boo key hole cover. A closer look reveals why one is so much pricier than the other.

<budget>

<high end>

EMTEK
Rectangular full-length handleset
with interior lever. capecodbrass.com
Price: \$275 (mortise),
\$201 (tubular)
Size: 2 1/4 x 19 inches
Warranty: Five years on construction

Material: Solid sand cast bronze; the escutcheon is covered with scratch marks left by a grinder.

Details: The casting process creates smooth, comfortable curves and crisp edges, time after time.

Design: This smooth, graceful handle shape looks right at home on Colonial-style doors with four to six panels.

Finish: An oxidizing treatment darkens the metal, but this uncoated living finish will show bright brassy tones in spots that are rubbed repeatedly.

Fasteners: The Phillips head screws holding the escutcheon to the door are visible only from the inside.

BOTTOM LINE: This sturdy entry set trim has a classic styling that won't grow old. And its price can't be beat, if you're looking for low-maintenance bronze.



HARDWARE RENAISSANCE
Verona thumb latch with interior lever
hardwarerenaissance.com
Price: \$2,105 (mortise only)
Size: 2 1/2 x 18 1/2 inches
Warranty: Lifetime on construction

Material: Hand-forged steel; each piece has a unique pattern of hammer marks that add to its old-time charm.

Details: The hand-wrought patina on the keyhole cover would be difficult to replicate through casting.

Design: The rough, handcrafted appearance is well-suited to Tudor or Spanish Colonial Revival houses.

Finish: Hot wax brushed on at the factory darkens the steel and protects it from rust.

Fasteners: Sotted oval-head screws are inspired by old European wrought-iron hardware.

BOTTOM LINE: This one-of-a-kind piece shows off its handworked details. An occasional waxing will keep it looking good for a lifetime.

Tubular or mortise?

TUBULAR →
PROS: Easily installed using a spade bit and hole saw; readily available at home centers.
CONS: Trim styles and material options are limited; not as solidly constructed as mortise locks.

Shown: Soho trim in polished chrome, tubular lockset (left) \$570; mortise \$860; baldwinhardware.com



← MORTISE
PROS: Very durable; locks have more features, and trim is easy to replace or upgrade because, unlike tubular locks, latch and lock fit in one hole.
CONS: Costs about 50 percent more than tubular; usually requires a locksmith to install. A special-order item; allow up to 10 days for delivery.

HOW STRONG IS YOUR LOCK?

The security of a tubular entry set depends on its dead bolt, but not all bolts are of the same caliber. They're graded 1 (the highest), 2, or 3 based on how well they withstand a battery of independent tests, spelled out below.



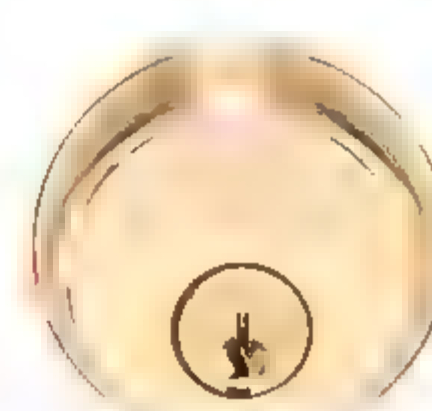
attack resistance

In one test, the dead bolt is fed into a metal-cutting band-saw blade. Grade 1 and Grade 2 locks can survive this treatment, as well as drilling, punching, pulling, and prying, for 5 minutes.



weather resistance

All graded locks have a finish that remains intact after being assaulted with abrasives, humidity, UV light, and salt spray.



wear resistance

To simulate how well a lock stands up to wear, a machine repeatedly turns the key, throwing the bolt and then retracting it. Grade 3 locks can go just 100,000 cycles without failure; Grade 1, 250,000.



pick resistance

Each grade is strong enough to thwart a professional lockpicker for 10 minutes.



kick-in resistance

An assembled door is rammed with increasing force until one component—the bolt, strike plate, or screws—fails. Grade 1 locks can take a total of eight such blows, including two of 150 foot-pounds each.



pro advice

CHARLES STUTTGIG, CHARLES STUTTGIG SAFE SPECIAL, ST. GREENWICH, CONN.

An easy way to beef up door security: Replace your existing strike plate with an \$8 box strike, which attaches directly to one of the studs supporting the doorway.

Hands-on handles

Choose from four basic ways to open your door

- 1 Lever** Much easier to operate than traditional-style knobs, making them the preferred openers for people with disabilities or hands full of groceries or kids. Weave design, forged brass with a polished chrome plate, \$914 (mortise only); vonmorris.com
- 2 Knob** An old standard that's found on most American doors, this twist-and-push handle tends to be the least expensive of the lot. Egg-shaped knobs like this one are easy to grip and turn. Rectangular escutcheon with a Carlisle knob, forged brass with an oil-rubbed bronze finish, \$340 (tubular), \$570 (mortise); ashelynorton.com
- 3 Thumb latch** Doors have been opened this way since Colonial times. Comes in two styles: sectional, where the lock is separate from the handle, and full escutcheon (shown), where lock and latch share the same backplate. Templeton Craftsman design, forged brass with a lacquer finish, \$559 (mortise only); rejuvenation.com
- 4 Pull** These sturdy grips, originally used on commercial doors in the 1800s, have become fashionable for residential use. You latch the door by locking the dead bolt, installed separately. Georgian roped pull, cast brass with a lacquered oil-rubbed bronze finish, \$138 (tubular dead bolt), \$255 (mortise dead bolt); lookintheattic.com



Caring for your entry set

Sticky lock Squeeze powdered graphite, available at hardware stores, into the key slot, then turn the dead bolt with a key to distribute the powder. (Do this every couple of years to prevent sticking.) Steer clear of spray lubricants, such as WD-40, which collect dust.

Stubborn latch bolt Latches also need occasional lubrication. A squirt of silicone or WD-40 on the extended latch is just what the locksmith ordered.

Spotty lacquer When lacquer starts to peel or wear in spots, remove all the finish with a methylene-chloride paint stripper. Be sure to protect your skin and adjacent door surfaces, and provide plenty of fresh air. Wipe down the clean metal with ammonia, then care for it as recommended below.

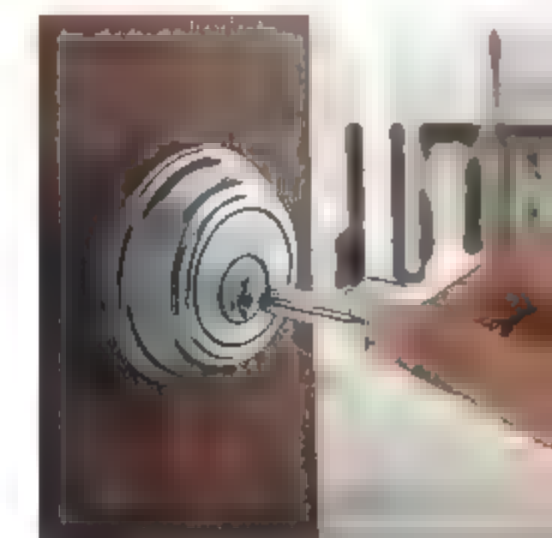
Tarnished metal To keep it shiny, rub on jeweler's rouge, such as Flitz (\$6; doitbest.com). Keep it away from the keyhole so that it doesn't clog the lock. For a soft patina that fits nicely with an old house, buff on a clear, protective layer of car wax, like Turtle Wax, every three months or so. Waxing will also preserve lacquer that's still in good shape.



Buffing on a coat of wax every three months will keep a lacquered finish, like the one on this chrome Baldwin entry set, looking like new.

PREVENTING BREAK-INS

Lock bumping is a fast and unobtrusive way for thieves to open a door without leaving a sign of forced entry. All it takes is a modified key that fits in the lock slot. Tapping the key with a hammer "bumps" the locking pins out of the way so that the cylinder can turn and retract the bolt. To thwart the bad guys, manufacturers have developed bump-resistant dead bolts, like Kwikset's SmartKey with BumpGuard (shown), \$30; kwikset.com.



COLONIAL RIM LOCK

This venerable predecessor of the mortise lock mounts on the door's interior surface, making installation a snap. The cast-brass model shown, styled after a 1700s original, has a covered keyhole on the exterior that accepts a 5-inch skeleton key. For additional security, pair a rim lock with a dead bolt. Brass Colonial Rim Lock with an unlacquered, oxidized finish, \$261; houseofantiquehardware.com



For the chronic key-loser

With a touch-pad lock, your pointer finger is your key. Just punch in a four-digit code and a battery-operated motor frees the latch. Some touch pads, like this LiNK dead bolt from Schlage, can be reprogrammed remotely with a smartphone, so the plumber can get in when you're not home. The battery has a three-year life and will alert you when it runs low; if it does die, the lock also works with a key. \$200; schlage.com

Dress up your old lock

With new handles or escutcheons, you can upgrade an entry set in less than an hour

Search for replacement parts in specialty shops or on websites that have salespeople who can steer you past pitfalls. Here's the lingo and measurements you'll need to know.

Backset The distance between the edge of the door stile and the center of the hole drilled for the lock cylinder. Your replacement escutcheon will center on this hole, so make sure it's not too wide. When the door's closed, there should be no less than 1/4 inch between the doorstop and the escutcheon.

Center-to-center The distance from the center of the hole drilled for the lock cylinder to the center of the knob hole. This corresponds to the location of the holes in replacement escutcheons.

Right- or left-hand swing Particularly important when installing levers. To identify a door's "handedness," stand outside and note which side the hinges are attached to. For example, a right-hand door is hinged on the right and swings to the right.

Spindle The metal rod on which knobs and levers are mounted. You need to know the spindle's width and thread count to make sure new hardware is compatible with it. Spindle length is determined by the thickness of your door stile. If a spindle is too short, the knobs can't connect; too long, and the knobs won't sit tight against the escutcheons.

Hole size An escutcheon should be wide enough to hide the holes in the door. Before you buy a narrower escutcheon, remove the one you have and see how big the holes are.

Classic door trim, such as these knobs and keyhole covers and this Gothic-style escutcheon, all from houseofantiquehardware.com, adds vintage appeal to any door.



Choose your look

Some of the best entry set designs are inspired by American architectural styles.

1 Queen Anne This stamped brass repro of a late-1800s design from famed 19th-century hardware maker P. & F. Corbin has an antiqued finish that doesn't use lacquer. Roanoke pattern, \$470 (mortise) and \$242 (tubular); houseofantiquehardware.com

2 Folk Colonial In the late 1700s, blacksmiths pounded hot iron into graceful, curved handles. This modern-day thumb latch set in forged brass has a flat finish that looks like wrought iron. Richmond in satin black, \$796 (mortise only); baldwinhardware.com

3 Contemporary This easy-to-grab lever is paired with a Grade 2 dead bolt. Most off-the-shelf dead bolts for residential use are Grade 2 or 3. Tustin lever with 780 dead bolt in satin nickel, \$70 (tubular only); kwikset.com

4 Mountain Rustic Sand-casting leaves tiny pits in the bronze, flaws that impart a time-worn look and make this piece unique. Rectangular silicon-bronze set with Egg knob and a rust patina, \$916 (mortise) and \$740 (tubular); rockymountainhardware.com

5 Craftsman Boxy shapes are a hallmark of Arts and Crafts hardware. This forged-brass set has the look of aged hand-hammered copper. Kingston thumb latch in antiqued black copper, \$575 (tubular only); hickoryhardware.com





30
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improvement
questions

Q I found this interesting saw on eBay. What can you tell me about it?

PAUL COOPER
OWNEDOWN HEIGHTS, ALA.

A Interchangeable blades allow this tool to morph from a project saw (far left) to a pruning saw to a backsaw (for making dovetails) to a jab saw (for cutting holes in drywall). Getting four saws for the price of one seems like a good deal, but only if a solid connection can be made between the handle and section of the blades. Otherwise, it's just an unusual, and not very useful, artifact.

PHOTOGRAPH BY
JOSÉ RICAYO

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General Contractor



NORM ABRAM
Master Carpenter



RICHARD TRETHEWEY
Plumbing and Heating Expert



ROGER COOK
Landscape Contractor



KEVIN O'CONNOR
Host

Is there any way to reset a spirit level that isn't accurate? I've been told that turning the level counterclockwise about four times will reset it.

BRIAN BOLFING, CRAWFORD, TEX.



Tom Silva replies: Not exactly. Here's how to go about it. Place the level on edge on any flat surface—it doesn't have to be level, as long as you can see both ends of the bubble in the vial. Now keep the level horizontal, rotate it 180 degrees, and put it down in the same place. If the bubble's position hasn't changed, the level is accurate. But if the bubble is in a different position, the vial is not accurate. Use the same technique to check the vials in the ends of the level, which show you whether a surface is vertical. When you find a vial that's gone bad and can't be adjusted, cover it with tape so that it won't mislead you. If none of the vials are reliable, you have a nice straight edge, not a level.

An adjustable vial has screws holding it in place. To reset it, hold the level flat against a wall surface, move it until the bubble reads level, then draw a line on the wall along one edge. Now flip the level around, position it on the line, and move it until the bubble reads level. Draw another line along the same edge. If the level isn't accurate, the two lines will diverge. Now position the level so that one end is where the two lines meet and the other is halfway between the diverging lines. This is true level, so loosen the screws and adjust the out of whack vial until it reads level. Retighten the screws and retest it.

CONTROLLING CONIFER HEIGHT

We planted a group of evergreen trees in our yard some time ago: a blue spruce, a Norwegian pine, and one that I can't

identify. The biggest one is about 10 feet tall, and we'd like to keep them all about the size they are now. Is there a way to keep them from getting taller?

KATHY SPENCER DOSTBURG, W.S.

Roger Cook replies: Yes, it's possible to keep your trees about the same size they are now, but it will be a constant battle. They normally grow 30 to 60 feet tall, depending on the species, and can reach 10 to 30 feet in width. To keep them at about their current size you'll have to chop off their tops and aggressively prune the lateral branches. The best time to do this is in the winter, while the trees are dormant.

For tips on how to prune conifers, visit thisoldhouse.com/bonus.

Topping a tree isn't a step to be taken lightly, because you're interfering with the natural way a tree grows. So here's another possibility to consider: Move one or two of them and let them grow unimpeded. A local landscaping company can tell you what it will cost to relocate them.

ENCLOSING A FURNACE

We live in northern Vermont, where it gets kind of chilly in January. Would it be okay to enclose my forced-air furnace and feed outside air into the enclosure so that the furnace won't use air from the house?

BOB LINDSEY, COTTAGE, VT.

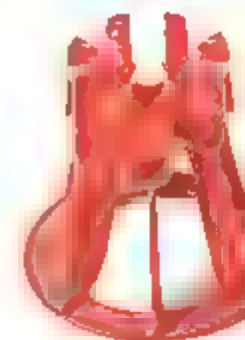
Richard Trethewey replies: Enclosing your furnace and supplying it with outside "combustion air" will probably improve your comfort and save some energy. But you should coordinate your work with a local building inspector, who can make sure that it meets local codes and is safe. A sealed enclosure without enough combustion air will actually reduce furnace efficiency and increase the chance of "back drafting," which can poison the air with carbon monoxide and other gases.

First, you want the enclosure to be large enough for the furnace to be serviced easily. I'd leave at least 3 feet of clearance at the sides and back, and some more at the front of the unit. Check with the folks who

maintain your furnace and ask them what they'd prefer. And don't forget to make the doorway big enough to remove the furnace if it ever has to be replaced.

Next, size the duct supplying the combustion air so that there's 1 square inch of opening for every 1,000 Btu/hour capacity of the furnace; the manufacturer or the owner's manual has this information. Code requires the duct's intake to be at least 10 feet from any appliance vents, plumbing vents, or exhaust fan outlets, unless those outlets are at least 3 feet above the intake. It can't be located in a garage, close to a driveway, or in an unheated crawl space; it has to be at least 1 foot above grade, and it must be covered with a screen, to keep out animals.

Position the outlet end of the duct near the floor in the vicinity of the furnace's combustion-air inlet. Don't connect it directly to the return-air vent or the combustion vent; that could be bad for your furnace and increase your fuel bills. And keep this duct away from any water pipes—you don't want all that "kind of chilly" Vermont air causing them to freeze.



A Plant stand

B Spray-gun nozzle

C Pipe clip

D Or...?

FOR THE ANSWER
SEE PAGE 94

ICE IN THE DOWNSPOUTS

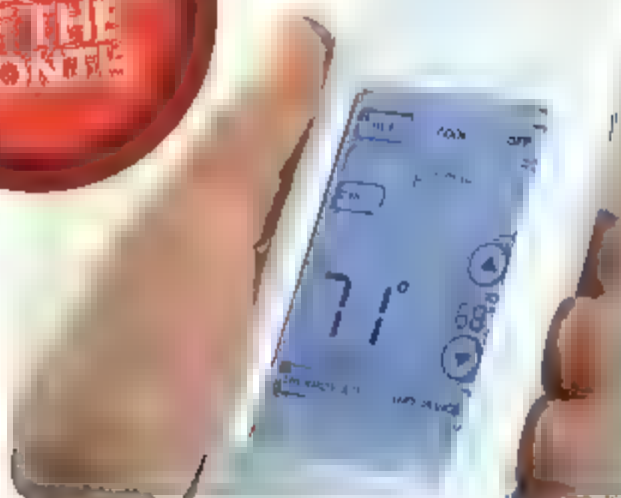
I have a problem with ice clogging up one of our downspouts. I've used a hose and hot water to melt the blockage, but is there a better solution?

EDWARD KELLOGG, WALDEN, N.Y.

Tom Silva replies: Absolutely. The same electric heat cables that keep plastic or metal gutters from clogging with ice can also maintain a clear passage for water to flow through frozen downspouts. The cable should run the length of the downspout—don't just stick it down halfway.

At the very least, connect the cables to a dedicated thermostat that will turn them on and off automatically when the temperature drops below freezing. Some products have sophisticated sensors that sit in the gutter and turn on the cables only when weather conditions are likely to result in icing.

Continued on page 94



Honeywell's Prestige HD programmable thermostat can be adjusted by touching the color screen or with a remote control.

I'd like to put in a new programmable thermostat to better control my energy costs. Can I install it myself?

SAM ALEKSY, CHICAGO

Lance Marques, HVAC contractor, Swezey Fuel Co., replies: Sure you can. Upgrading to a thermostat that automatically changes the indoor temperature setting is fairly easy, and it can trim about \$180 off your annual heating and cooling costs, according to the EPA.

Simple models that only control heat are sold at home centers for

around \$25. More expensive products, such as the Honeywell Prestige that I installed here, handle many more functions, including cooling and humidifying. Typically they're purchased through and installed by HVAC contractors, but you can also buy them online.

Before you buy a replacement thermostat, however, take a peek at your existing wiring. If there are only two wires, the simplest solution is to get a replacement with a battery-powered display. Full-featured devices like the Prestige need power from a third wire, something best installed by an HVAC or electrical contractor.

Cost: \$475 for the thermostat shown

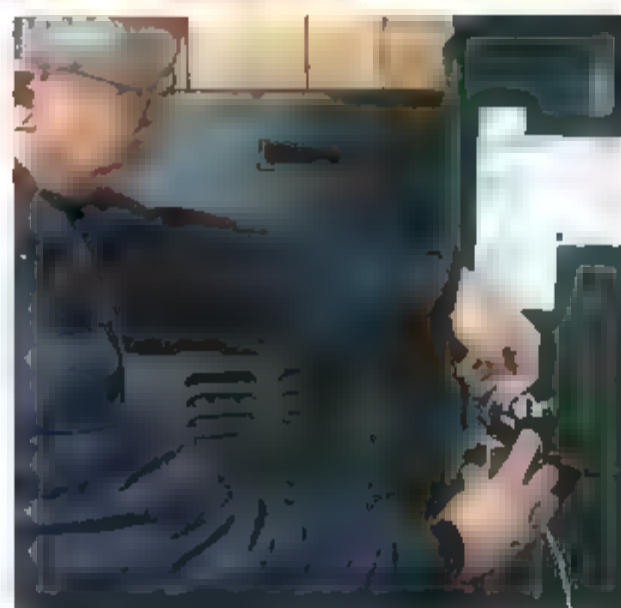
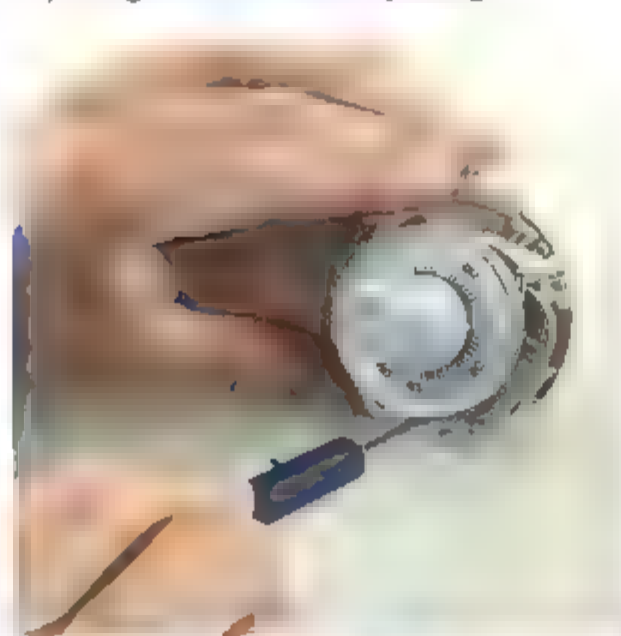
Time: About 1 hour

Difficulty: Easy, but if additional wires are needed, hire a contractor

CONVENTIONAL

1 Remove the old thermostat.

Cut off power to the furnace using the emergency shutoff or breaker switch, then unscrew the thermostat's mounting bracket. As you disconnect each wire from its terminal, label the wire with the letter of the terminal it came from. Tape the wires to the wall so that you don't lose them. Some older thermostats contain mercury; for information on proper disposal, go to thermostatrecycle.org.



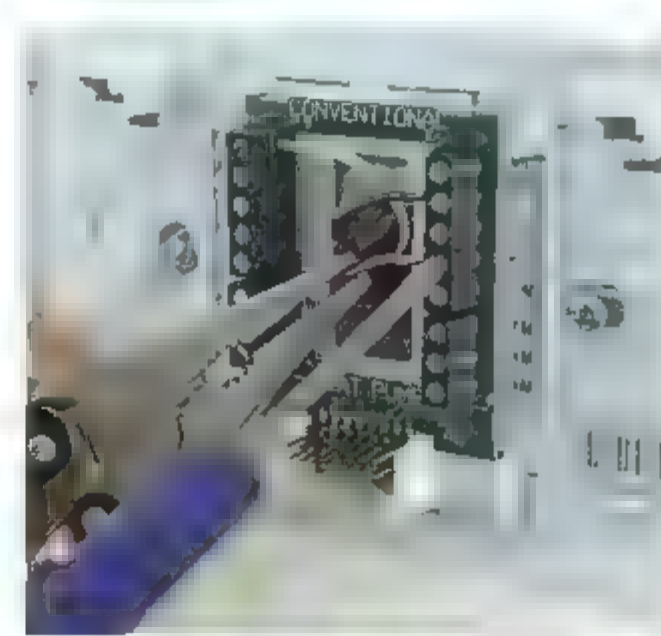
3 Connect to the furnace.

Let your contractor hook up the new wire to the furnace and turn on the furnace's power. Now snap the thermostat's face onto the bracket. When it lights up, follow the prompts to set the temperatures you want the house to be when you wake up, leave for work, return home, and go to bed.

INSTALL A PROGRAMMABLE THERMOSTAT

2 Connect the new thermostat.

Line up the new bracket with the hole in the wall, and connect the wires to the terminals on the bracket, following the diagram in the instructions. This thermostat needs at least three low-voltage wires: a black one and a white one, which turn the furnace off and on, and one that powers the thermostat. If you have only two wires, call an electrician or HVAC contractor to run the additional 18- or 22-gauge wire.



4 Mount the outdoor sensor.

This wireless, battery-powered device allows the thermostat to display outside temperatures. Turn it on while standing next to the thermostat. When both units establish a connection, place the sensor in a bracket mounted on the north side of the house above the snow line.

He's a tough guy. But he cleans up after himself.



No Residue Duct Tape.

To find out where to buy, go to ScotchToughTape.com



Norm's tricks of the trade

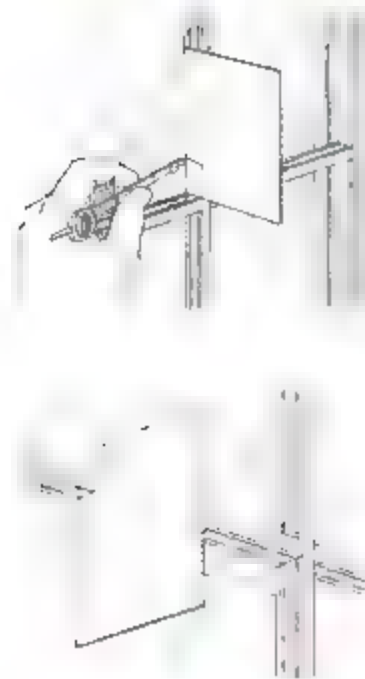
The muntins on my windows have been mangled by sash locks carelessly left closed. Is there a way to repair the damage?

—ALRAMOZZER FAIRFIELD, CONN.

As long as you're planning to paint the window, the best method I've found to repair this sort of damage is with a slow-curing architectural epoxy and a plastic spreader shaped to match the muntin's profile. You can use this same trick to restore the profile on any damaged trimwork around your house.

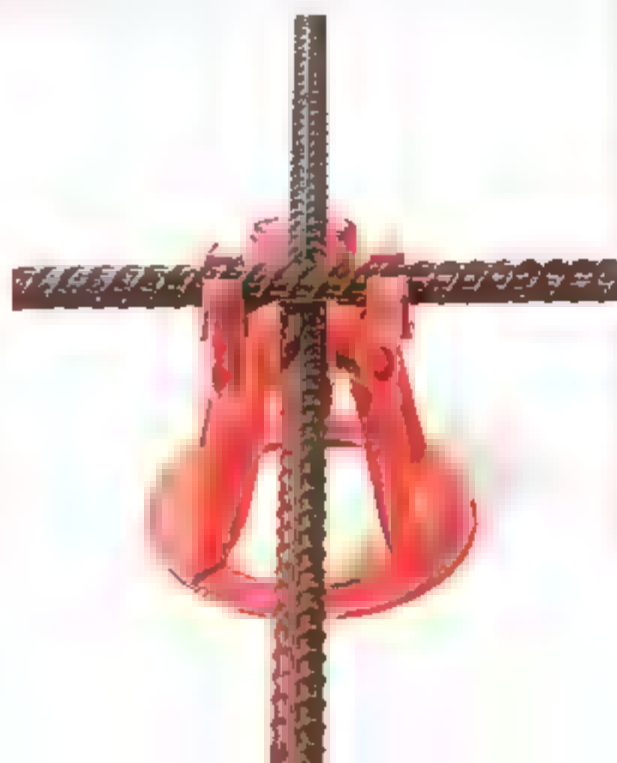
1 Holding the spreader vertically, place it square against the glass and one of the undamaged horizontal muntins. Draw a vertical line about 1 inch long on the spreader even with the muntin's outer edge. Set the points of a compass about 1 inch apart. Keep them aligned vertically as you run one point over the muntin profile. The other point traces the profile on the spreader. Cut along the layout lines with a coping saw or utility knife. Check that the final profile is smooth and matches the profile on the muntin exactly.

2 Mask off the glass with painter's tape beside the area you're repairing. Wearing gloves, mix a small batch of epoxy until it's the consistency of peanut butter. Dab a thick coat onto the damaged area with a plastic putty knife. Now place the spreader vertically on the glass and drag its profiled cutout slowly across the muntin, scraping away the excess epoxy. One pass should be enough for shallow repairs; if the damage is deep, add more epoxy and make more passes. After the epoxy hardens, sand, prime, and paint it.



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SHRUNKEN MOLDING

My wife and I renovated our family room one summer, and the following winter the joints in the crown molding opened up, even though they were nailed and caulked. The gaps look awful. Is there anything we can do to fix them?

—NATE COLLINS BRIDGEWATER, N.J.

Norm Abram replies: Caulk and nails won't hold joints together if the wood wants to shrink. The problem could be that the molding's moisture content was too high when it was installed and it shrank when the heat came on, or that your house is too dry, or both.

In your area, the molding should have a moisture content between 8 and 12 percent when it's installed, and the relative humidity in the house should be 35 to 40 percent during the winter. If your inside air is drier than that, crank up a humidifier and see if the moldings tighten up when the air reaches the correct level. Don't expect a change overnight; it takes a while for the wood to swell.

If your humidity is already in the proper range, caulk any gaps 1/8 inch or smaller. For gaps larger than that, consider replacing the molding and starting over.

Here are a few things to keep in mind if you do replace it: Install the new molding in the spring or the fall, when the humidity is moderate. Prime the pieces on all sides, including any cut ends. And use cope joints in the corners and bevel joints on the runs. (See how to cut copes at thisoldhouse.com/bonus.) These steps will go a long way toward keeping wood movement in check.

DO-IT-YOURSELF SPRAY FOAM

I'd like to insulate my basement ceiling with a do-it-yourself polyurethane foam spray kit. Are they hard to use?

—JOHN R. JONCK LAKELAND, TENN.

Tom Silva replies: Spray foam is great insulation, but it's fairly demanding to apply; the kit instructions have to be followed exactly. In fact, study them before you buy your kit so you know what you're in for.

Foam is very sticky, you'll need to wear



disposable coveralls with a hood, and gloves, a face mask, and eye protection. It takes some practice to spray foam evenly and, because it expands so dramatically, to control its depth. 2 inches is a good need-to-seal-the-leak cavities. You need a clear area so that you can work without interruption; any pause longer than 30 seconds will clog the nozzle and require putting on a new one. It's also critical that the air temperature stays between 75 and 85 degrees.

Here's a simpler, less expensive alternative: Cut some 2-inch-thick rigid foam insulation and glue it to the subfloor between the joists or support it with nails driven partway into the joists. Then fill any gaps between the edges of the foam boards and the joists using the canned spray foam sold at home centers or hardware stores. An even easier option is to nail the foam panels against the bottom edge of the joists and seal the joints with canned foam, but you'll lose some headroom and access to any pipes and wires between the joists. As with spray-foam kits, protect yourself and the floor from the dripping globs of canned foam. A full-face shield, gloves, and a hat would be a good start.

Whichever insulation you choose, make sure that all of it is covered with a layer of 1/2-inch drywall to shield it from fire. ■

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Cover Stylist Michele Greco **Paint** (similar to showy walls in Weston Flax HC) and woodwork in Marbhead Gold HC. Benjamin Moore benjaminmoore.com **For more** see the listing for *Before After Attic*

Home Solutions (pp 15-18) **Under the stairs wine rack** Carpenter Charles Williams Construction Inc. Laguna Beach, CA 949-494-4043 **Cheery fire, no chimney needed** Thanks to Sue Walker. Air Conditioning, Heating and Refrigeration Institute. AHRahrinet.org **Bird feeder dos & don'ts** Thanks to Stephen Kress. National Audubon Society audubon.org

Before + After Attic A suite retreat upstairs (pp 20-23) **Architect** Kevin F. Scher. Avice Design. Portland, OR 503-280-9026 **Interior design** Charlotte Conney. Domestic Arts, Portland, OR 971-227-5675 **Cabinetry** DC Woodworking, Malibu, OR 503-829-9061 **Wall sconces** The Nausea Lantern Shop, 800-899-2660, nausealantern.com **Ceiling fan** Industry in Rust

The Modern Fan Co. 888-588-3267, modernfan.com **Wool carpeting** Woolshire Carpet Mills, 800-799-6657, woolshire.com **Windows** Jeld-Wen Windows and Doors, 800-535-3936, jeld-wen.com **Sink** Jado/Porcher, 800-359-3261, porcher.us.com **Faucet** Grohe, 630-582-7711, groheamerica.com **Shower fixtures** Rohl, 800-777-9762, rohlhome.com

Budget Redo The \$967 kitchen revamp (pp 24-25) **Countertop** Numera, KEA, kea.com **Hardware** Metrick Hardware, KEA, Paint, Behr, 877-237-6558, behr.com **Glass tile** Green Mix Mosaic Glass Floor and Decor, Outlets of America, 877-675-0002, flooranddecoroutlets.com **Light fixtures** Home Depot, home depot.com **Faucet** Delta, 800-345-3358, delfatafaucet.com

Paint Ideas Add a lively pattern with stamps (pp 30-31) **Decorative Painter** Brian Carter, Atlanta, GA 678-642-3409 **Paint** Wamsco, trim and stamped pattern in white Dove OC-17 and wash in Hawthorne yellow HC-4, Benjamin Moore, benjaminmoore.com

Get This Look Melting pot living room (pp 32-33) **Designer** Jackie Terre, Jackie Terre Design, Los Angeles, CA 323-571-1622

jackeknows.com **Lamp** Shinto Tripod by Robert Abbey, Lumens Light + Living, lumens.com **Rug** Frankie by Lolo, Rugs, Rugs Direct, rugsdirect.com **Armchair** Bilton, Tufted in Antelope, #M2082, Martha Stewart Furniture with Bernhard, 888-562-7842, bernhardt.com **Ottoman** Kimm Ottoman, Restoration Hardware, 800-940-9836, restorationhardware.com **Throw** Marrakech throw, World Market, worldmarket.com **Pillows** Paisley tasseled pillow and embroidered paisley pillow, Pier 1, pier1.com **Pedestal table** Butler Artist's Originals #1583119, arcent furniture direct.com **Chest** Moroccan Cabinet, Elhica Living, Morocco, livingmorocco-online.com

Landscaping How to prune a tree (pp 35-37) Thanks to B. Pollock, Arbor Services of Connecticut, Warren, CT 800-690-2726, aboret.com

Photoshop Redo Perking up a plain two-story (p 39) Thanks to T. Mothy, Langan T. Mothy Langan Architecture and Design, New York, NY 917-214-3376, langanarchitecture.com **Paint** Gudden, 800-454-3336, glidden.com

Continued on page 97

Sconce Dartmouth by Arroyo Craftsman from Belacor, 877-723-5522, belacor.com **Shingle siding** Straight edge notched panel, James Hardie, 888-542-7343, jameshardie.com **Entry door** Marvin Windows and Doors, 888-537-7828, marvin.com

Weekend Remodel Install a kitchen backsplash (pp 45-49) **Tile** Ann Sacks Profile mosaic in Clay, Ann Sacks, annsacks.com **Hydroment ReFlex thinset mortar and TruColor premixed grout** Bostik Inc, 800-726-7845, bostik.com. Thanks to David Fatula, Oceanside Glasstile, 866-642-6169, glasstile.com. Anna Daly, Ann Sacks, New York, NY 212-529-2800, annsacks.com

Detail Oriented (pp 50-59) **Architect** Peter Springsteel, Mystic, CT 860-794-0324, springsteelarchitect.com **Stock molding** Garden State Lumber Products, 800-526-4708, gardenstatelumber.com **Ornamental moldings** 800-779-1135, ornamentalmoldings.com **Light fixtures** Connecticut Lighting Centers, 860-249-7631, ct-lighting.com **Tile** Mystic Coastal Flooring, 860-415-4863, myshcoastalflooring.com **Cooktop, ovens, and downdraft** Wolf, 800-332-9513, wolfappliance.com **Refrigerator** Sub Zero, 800-222-7820, subzero.com **Dishwasher** KitchenAid, 800-422-1230, kitchenaid.com **Dishwasher drawer** Fisher & Paykel, 888-936-7872, fisherpaykel.com **Sink and faucet** Kohler, 800-456-4537, kohler.com **Gas fireplace** Mendota, mendotahearth.com **Living room wallpaper** Powell House Damask, The Williamsburg Reserve Collection, F. Schumacher & Co., 800-523-1200, ftschumacher.com **Master bath sink** Kohler, 800-456-4537, kohler.com **Faucets** Rohl LLC, 800-777-9762, rohlhome.com

Basement Bonus Rooms (pp 60-65) **Willett house** **Architect** Jack Davis, Atlanta, GA 404-237-2333, jackdavisarchitect.com **Builder** Rod Boyer, Atlanta, GA 404-372-6929 **Homework central** **Architect** Carol W. Kurth, A.A. Bedford, NY 914-234-2595, carolkurtharchitects.com **Builder** Legacy Construction Northeast, 914-273-4511, legacydevelopmentllc.com **Drinks station** **Design and construction** Durst Construction, Charlton, NY 518-857-6107, durstconstruction.com **Christopher Molesk Fine Woodworking** Whitney Point, NY 607-323-5081 **Place for fun and games** **Design** No-Design, Lowest Valley, NY 516-609-9065, no-designinteriors.com **Cozy home theater** **Design** Luciana Samu, Saratoga Springs, NY 518-854-3389 **Airy suite for guests** **Design** Maria Billis, Saratoga Springs, NY 518-879-6360, mariabillis.com

Builder Stephen Ethier, Saratoga Springs, NY 518-469-8001

TOH TV All the right rooms (pp 72-79) **Architect** Paul Rovinelli, H.P. Rovinelli Architects, Boston, MA 617-236-1770, hprovinelli.com **Dishwasher and refrigerator** The Monogram Collection, General Electric, 800-626-2005, geappliances.com **Range and microwave** GE Café Series, geappliances.com **Kitchen table** Staples Cabinet Makers, 508-695-1155, staplescabinetmakers.com **Kitchen island countertop** Sapele end grain butcher block, The Grothouse Lumber Co., 877-268-5412, glumber.com **Kitchen counters** CaesarStone in concrete, from Stone Technology, 781-458-6500, stonetechnology.com **Backsplash tile** Daltile, Daltile Corporation, 214-398-1411, daltile.com **Kitchen and bath fixtures** Kohler, 800-456-4537, kohler.com **Kitchen lighting** Yale Appliance and Lighting, 866-925-3463, yaleappliance.com **Custom cabinetry and hardware** Crown Point Cabinetry, 800-999-4994, crownpoint.com **Cabinet paint** Farrow and Ball, 888-511-1211, farrowball.com **Paint** Benjamin Moore, benjaminmoore.com **Powder-room fan** Broan-NuTone LLC, 800-558-1711, broan.com **Family-room pillows and library rug** Dash & Albert, 800-658-5035, dashandalbert.com **Flooring** Lumber Liquidators, 800-427-3966, lumberliquidators.com **Radiant floor heating** Uponor, 800-321-4739, uponorusa.com **Windows** Marvin Windows and Doors, 888-537-7828, marvin.com **Exterior PVC window trim and beadboard** Azek, 877-275-2935, azek.com **Woodscape roof shingles and CertiSpray insulation** CertainTeed, 800-233-8990, certainteed.com **Copper gutters** Classic Gutter Systems LLC, 269-665-2700, classicgutters.com **On-site storage** PODS Portable On Demand Storage, 877-633-7637, pods.com

All About Entry sets (pp 80-87) Thanks to Ben Anker, Kraft Hardware Inc., 212-838-2214, krafthardware.com **Charles Stittig Safe Specialist** Greenwich, CT 203-861-7233 **Jon Eaton, House of Antique Hardware**, 888-223-2545, houseofantiquehardware.com

Ask This Old House (pp 89-95) **Ice in the downspouts** Heat cables, Warmzone, 888-488-9276, warmzone.com **Question of the month** **Thermostat** Prestige Comfort Systems, Honeywell, yourhome.honeywell.com. Thanks to Pat Tessier, Honeywell, Lance Marques, Swezey Fuel Co., Patchogue, NY 631-475-0270, swezeyfuel.com **Norm's tricks of the trade** **Architectural epoxy** Advanced Repair Technology Inc., 866-859-2787, advancedrepair.com

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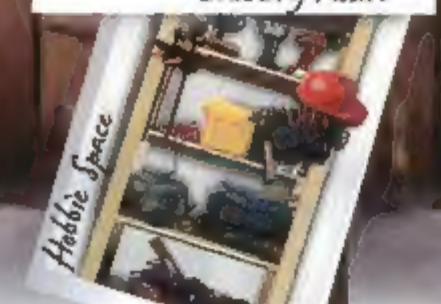
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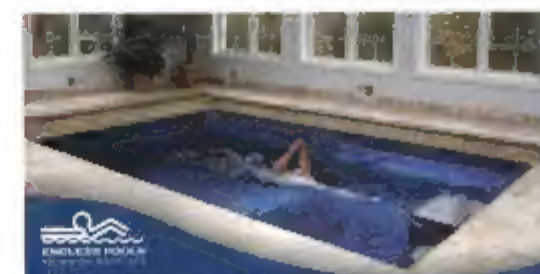
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save**thisoldhouse**

Price: \$20,000
Location: Kansas City, Kans.
Contact: Ed Rust,
913-706-0658

The history: When he and about 800 other Wyandot Indians were forcibly relocated from Ohio to Kansas in 1843, Mathias Splitlog made the most of it. He built a gristmill and a sawmill and, in about 20 years, became one of the wealthiest men in town. In 1870, Splitlog tapped his fortune to build this stately brick Italianate home on a wild-strawberry-strewn bluff overlooking the Kansas River, then embellished it with Queen Anne details in the 1880s. The house stood alone for decades, until Splitlog sold his land—which would become today's Kansas City—for a price high enough to earn him the moniker the "Millionaire Indian."

In the 1980s it was subdivided into apartments, fell into disrepair, and was slated for demolition until the current owner, a history buff, rescued it and had it listed on the state register of historic places.

Why save it? In addition to its illustrious history, the home has its original details, including oak and maple mantels and woodwork from Splitlog's own sawmill.

What it needs: The place is structurally sound, with new gas and water lines plus a new furnace. The dilapidated front porch was torn off and must be rebuilt, and new drywall is needed throughout. Financial incentives are available from the city, so you don't have to be a millionaire like Splitlog to finance the restoration.

—KEITH PANDOLFI



got a house to save?

We may include it in our Reader-Created Issue. Send photos to savethisoldhouse@timeinc.com

1. The four-bedroom house is located in what's now known as Strawberry Hill, a neighborhood that's gaining popularity among members of the city's artistic community, who are restoring many of its homes.
2. There are three mantels, each featuring unique Italian tile fireplace surrounds like this one.
3. Original 8-foot oak pocket doors on the first floor lead from the parlor into the dining room.
4. An inglenook is tucked under the front stairwell.
5. This 1970s photo shows the front porch, sunburst details in the front gable, and large hipped roof, which shelters about 700 square feet of unfinished attic space.



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