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*% majority of STIHL power tools are built in the United States from domestic and foreign parts and components.



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STIHL

Contents JAN/FEB 2017

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25

[illegible]*features*

G4
generation.nest

Toll introduces an initiative to help fill the skills gap. Plus: Meet eight up-and-coming architects.

76
surprise inside

The shiffling made of a 1950s Colonial bloused betrays a hint of the bright color and bold designs favored within

84 next trick

Borrowing some square footage from an adjacent area helps new parents create a spacious, laid-back setting for

88 **staking her claim**

A wren, robin, shrike and a
dozen mountain robins,
crouching a cozy cottage for
one with just 11 square
feet of living space.

the transformers

Most family-owned businesses are on lower numbers eight — and counting.

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Heating Classic Homes the Modern Way

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A comfortable home is a happy home. That's why thousands of families choose Fujitsu for whisper-quiet, energy-efficient cooling & heating systems. These sleek wall-mounted units require no ductwork and allow for flexible, room-by-room temperature control. And, with available utility rebates, the savings start on day one. Fujitsu quietly revolutionizes home comfort.



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departments

29 home solutions

Upcycle for a new laminate kitchen to increase your kitchen's resale value, clear unwanted items, and set up an orderly space for baking and more.

34 budget redo

An engaged homeowner creates a DIY Dutch door.

36 before + after: bath

A cramped bathroom becomes a sophisticated suite serving the whole house.

38 fast person

Last night of a home filled with memories.

39 shopping

Be a pro in your order with last and coat books from Columbia to contemporary.

34 photoshop redo

A weekly script 1950s house gets a modern makeover.

37 TOH TV

Tom Silva helps a woodworker put his art to work in a garage workshop.

40 fix it

It's a work as drywall repair with tape that creates the benefits of paper and fiberglass mesh.

47 ask this old house

Make an extension and more a lot of old and new through new and plan to keep your interests from modern to modern.

in every issue

17 reader mail

102 directory

106 cover story



on the cover



Over 100 photos of the best in home design.



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Jacob Spector
Illustrated with autism

Link: #Speech is a sign of autism. Learn the difference. www.autism.org/links



How to reach us

E-mail the editors at
TOL@theoldhouse.com or write to
The Old House magazine
262 Parker Drive
Stamford, CT 06902

* Include your full name, address, and
phone number. Published letters are
edited for clarity and length.

Reader mail JAN/FEB 2017

TOM SILVA WAS ON THE COVER, but *Rich Trethewey* will likely be interested in much of the feedback we got on our October issue. Readers wrote in with electrical safety dos and don'ts, plumbing fixes and tips, and—inspired by our “Read This Before You Buy a Toilet” article—even showed off their own thrones.

Safety before style

While reading the October 2016 issue and enjoying it so much, I almost dropped my cup of tea when I saw the photo of a handy person wearing a bathrobe (“One-Stop Wonder”). The NEC Article 400.10(D) does not allow this type of attire when at work. I should also think what would happen if someone standing in water would grab the batrobe.

—GARY WILLIAMS LACROSSE, IA

THE EDITORS REPLY: *Chandeliers and other pendant-style fixtures are undoubtedly that's looking pretty good on you brought that it's a safety concern. For the National Electrical Code, we're looking at it as a safety issue, but only if you have a high ceiling. To most code, as part of it can come with look for safety and if it's a safety issue, we'll be sure to note it. Even then, the light is not so to be sure, and for safety reasons.*

No more leaks

Your article “23 Things You Didn't Know You Could Fix Yourself” (October 2016) just saved me about \$800. A recent leak in our master bath had a bad leak that kept getting

worse. We called a plumber, who told us that due to hard water damage, we'd have to replace the faucet—which meant replacing two if we wanted our dual sinks to match. That's when I saw your article. Sure enough, Home Depot had a Moen replacement kit and within 45 minutes we were dry—free!

—SALLY POMER DEDHAM, MA

Low-flow slowdown

I read “Do It Right: Read This Before You Buy a Toilet” (October 2016) on information and interesting. While comparing the fixtures we were considering, I spotted the label inside the toilet. Chances are, the toilet didn't mention this, and consumers choosing product without tell you, I would be a taxpayer who most TOH readers don't know about the warning.

—JACQUES DUBOIS PORTLAND, ME

THE EDITORS REPLY: Yes, there is such a thing as a “no-leak” toilet, and plastic components located on the bowl. For more insight into this and other on only household solutions, search “best household solutions” on theoldhouse.com.

Ladder safety

In the October issue's Home Solutions, you use no less than the number-one rule of ladder use. Anyone in the service will tell you that the first, second, and third rules of using a ladder are to use it to check for overhead obstructions like power lines. Ladder lines can be cut, but touch a live wire with your ladder and you may skip the ETL and go straight to the morgue.

—BENJAMIN CHAMBERS FORT MITCHELL, PA



A rockin' upgrade

—JOEY TOLBERT MICHIGAN, MI

Have a Seat! (Do It Right, October 2016) made me want to replace the throne I made for the bathroom my mom gave. What I enjoy most about The Old House is that you let me know I'm not alone. I needed this to cut up a gutter worth a couple of hundred dollars!



BETWEEN LOVE AND WAR IS MERCY

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Edited by Deborah Bolden

home solutions

INSIDE | COOL TASKLIGHTS | SMART SMOKE ALARMS | HOW TO SHOVEL SNOW | MORE

For the birds

Edible ornaments are a festive way to catch the eye of cold-weather birds like chickadees and finches, and making these seed treats is easy, especially if you haven't yet retired your holiday cookie cutters. Just mix 4 cups of seed with 2½ tsp. plain gelatin dissolved in ½ cup cold water, like added with 2 Tbs. corn syrup and ½ cup flour. Press into oiled cutters, using a straw to create a hole for the ribbon. To move and let dry, then hang outside your trees where you can see the action.



Smaller birds like chickadees can perch on the ornament itself.

Create a baking station

Before you tackle a Valentine's Day tart or hand-glazed chocolates, give yourself a bit of pie-style prep space. You could just place a marble pottery board on the kitchen table, of course, but for a more ergonomic setup, spring for a cart with a dough-friendly surface, dedicated storage, and wheels.



Get this look by retrofitting a table or an island with a new-tile island surface.

Go for marble. It stays cool, and that's what you need when working with battery-powered or the kinds of chocolate that melt in your hand. Since you often have discarded remnants that can be cut to size.

Get it at the right height. Unless you are very tall, the typical counter-top is too high for mixing, kneading, and rolling out dough. Aim for table height (30 to 32 inches) or your waist height. If you are adding wheels to a table, you may need to shorten the legs, and make sure the wheels lock to steady the surface.

Assign storage space. Baking is a lot easier if everything you need is in one place. An open shelf like the one shown is useful for holding smores and bowls, and full-extension drawers can keep whisk, spatulas, and clean dish towels right where you need them.

Four lights are better than one

Power outages can be a problem at the time of year when daylight is at a premium. These portable LED lights will come in handy whenever comes your way.



Weather-ready Compact Rechargeable Light

Keep this 5-inch high 25-lumen light plugged in near your bed; it casts a light when the power goes out. That's just bright enough to guide you around stairs, hallways, and bathtubs. \$15. energypower.com



M12 LED Metal Flashlight Get an M12 cordless drill? This battery will run a comparable flashlight—like this 800-lumen number, whose charge lasts for up to 5 hours on a full charge. The beam adjusts from spot to flood to beam, and allows the battery to be swapped. \$199. new.ferretool.com

Winged Gen3 18V Hybrid Folding Panel Light

Unlike hot-fragile halogen work lights, this set boasts 2,500 lumens while running cool. Point the panels straight ahead, or bend them back for a 360-degree pool of light. Turns off at a battery or an inverter card. \$100. homedepot.com



PowerLight Bundle

This system reflects two pack lights to a 200-lumen lantern that converts to a flashlight. The battery can run up to four extra lights, or fully charge three smartphones. \$80. batterypower.com

—SAL HANCOCK

Smoking out the new alarms

Standard smoke detectors have saved countless lives, but these battery-powered sensors can drive you crazy with false alarms, and middle of the night chirps ("Help! my battery needs changing, now!"). Some new smartphone-connected smoke and carbon monoxide detectors offer fixes for that—and more. Here is a sampling.



Nest Protect

This combo fire and CO detector has an eye-catching design. It speaks up as well as sends a tweet, and can also be shut off via smartphone. Want more noise and a wake-up, it indicates when vent off fumes, so you can ride out the heat. \$99. nest.com

OneLink Smoke + CO Alarm

Along with a free smartphone control, this smoke and CO detector has a 30-year battery, so no time need for annual battery replacement. When it's linked to Apple's HomeKit, you can silence it by talking to Siri. \$220. onealarm.com



Blink Smart Detector

Detects CO and lets you tell it falling for smoke and a burst tweet, and a home assistant to do the weather—sending updates to your phone about pollen counts, VOC, and CO levels, and more. \$20. getblink.com

Helix+

Smart about identifying smoke and CO, and it also sends an alert when you see a tornado, say, in the sky over your way. That feature needs no energy, however, as the one sensor only has a battery. \$29. helixinc.com



Worth it: retrofit

More than just a smart alarm, this 5-inch square CO detector and it will send a smartphone alert when the alarm goes off. It turns out to be a few dollars you can save just when you're about to shut it off. The battery lasts up to five years and sends a message when it's about to die—no more chirping in the middle of the night. \$39. getlink.com



3 ways to make a paint job last

Debra Zimmer of the Paint Quality Institute, a trade group, offers this advice.

1. **Don't skip.** The thicker the dry paint film, the more protection you'll get. You can't get away with water if it's formulated to be used as is.
2. **Add a second coat.** The weathering involves the paint film and could add a couple of years to the life of the paint job.
3. **Choose a light sheen.** The thicker the sheen, the more "slippery" the effect, but this can be at the cost of durability when it comes to removing stains and marks. In busy traffic areas, opt for an easier-to-clean sheen such as satin or semi-gloss. Keep in mind that higher sheens show more imperfections, more so than matte areas, so careful prep is key.



Clean-plate club

Boost your dishwasher's cleaning power

- **Load it right.** Don't rinse, scraping aside. The detergent is designed to attack food—when your dishes are already clean it goes after the finish. Peel leaves down, but alternate forks and spoons up and down to give them rising space.
- **Read the manual.** Seems obvious, but you may be overlooking features like an adjustable rack that can tilt to accommodate a platter, a water softener dispenser, a cycle that uses extra hot water, or a filter that may need occasional cleaning.

Healthier ways to clear snow

After 2 minutes of shoveling, a fit person's heart rate jumps to 85 percent of its max capacity. For less strain, says John Forrest, M.D., a heart-health expert at Yale University, push the snow forward. If you must lift, pay attention to these tips:



- **Choose the right tool.** An ergonomic shovel encounters proper form. The aluminum shaft of the 30-inch model is light and lightweight, and its design helps reduce hand fatigue (\$35; hikm.com).
- **Think small.** A heavy load can cause you to lose your balance or pull a muscle. Another way of snow that's wet, Dr. Forrest says, is heavy lifting compresses blood pressure (see p. 10) too high.
- **Lift smart.** To avoid injuring your lower back, as you lift, bend at the knees and hips. Always avoid twisting your torso. Turn your whole body around.
- **Throw it lower.** Instead of building a snail's pace, which requires throwing your load higher and higher, distribute the snow over a wide area—alongside a path, for example.
- **Switch it up.** You're likely to feel most comfortable with your dominant hand on top of the handle, but your shoulders will thank you if you periodically swap hand positions and give the left arm a break.
- **Give it a rest.** "Listen to your body," Dr. Forrest says, and take breaks. One benefit of regular exercise: he notes is that you know what's normal for you. In any case, do not ignore chest pains.
- **Treat yourself.** Soothe sore muscles with a heating pad and an anti-inflammatory pain reliever. Hot cocoa with mini marshmallows certainly won't hurt, either. —HEAT WOOD



Can I hang a modern light fixture in a traditional setting?



Jill Cordova, an interior designer in San Francisco, says you can mix styles, especially if the new elements are clean-lined. She suggests the following:

- **COORDINATE FINISHES.** If you have a subway-tile or subway-tile look, stick with that finish. Darker and warmer metal finishes mix more easily than any chrome and antique brass. Black goes with almost anything.
- **GO FOR A SIMPLE SHAPE.** A clear globe or lantern is best. Or replace a candlestick chandelier with a Sputnik style fixture—its touch of gleam or translate well to a traditional interior.
- **PAY ATTENTION TO SCALE.** Add up the length and width of the room's feet: that number, in inches, will give you the ideal diameter for the fixture. Or if the fixture will be over a table, make it a third of the table's length.

—CHARLOTTE HENRIKSEN

PHOTO: JEFFREY M. HARRIS; STYLING: JILL CORDOVA; PHOTO: JEFFREY M. HARRIS

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Dutch door for \$63

An intrepid homeowner saves the cost of a new Dutch door to contain her dogs—by cutting her existing front door in half. **BY KATHLEEN HILL**



ADVICE In the past, Lari Squak's husband has said, "Lara and I only would try to understand each other's ideas because we both don't

Wright Led a DIY Dutch door solution greater a custom look for very little cash. The two-part door also offers the bonus of a nice cross breeze in the evening, when the upper section is open.

WORST DOG-LOVING KNOW what it's like to greet a guest at the door with two excited pups scrambling at their feet, trying to break free? That's exactly what spoiled houndwoman Lois Spaulk is doing in pacing out Dutch doors for her North Tazewell, Colorado, home—until she found they cost nearly \$2,000 and weren't even the style she wanted. After acknowledging that it was a risky move, Lois decided to end her never-ending quest: Dutch doors in half, just above or below large lower panels. Before taking it down, she installed a fourth hinge to support what would become the door's upper portion and added an extra dead

THE PROJECT TALLY

lined ceiling at the 10th floor. Foreign investigators said it would be the upper portions of One World. **\$5**

Purchased a
dead battery and
added a second
description. . . . **\$30**

Crafted a poplar shirt using a router with a 1/4-inch rounded bit and cordless drill with a 1/4-inch Roman eye. **\$7**

Attached for the 3 strong-wired systems by company I've seen on the internet. They cost and the best is with some changes. **\$2**

filled the scene
on the auditor with
went her shopping
and midday. — **\$2**

Added a slide latch on the inside to join both halves of the door together. **\$3**

TOTAL \$63

hole. Then the lead the door flax, made a pegging clamps and scrap wood—and the lead seen Norm Abrams do on *TOHTV*—and made a straight cut with a circular saw, despite never having used one before. With both halves of the door released, the added a decorative bridge on the exterior and weatherstripping and mudding on the interior to conceal the seams. Then the gentleman the screw holes and touched up the exterior paint.

Even so, she'll tell you she took the leap. "I feel much more comfortable now than I don't have to talk to my neighbors through a crack in the door," she says. "Most important, she does not talk." ■

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Artful upgrade

No window? No problem. A once-dingy, two-part bath gets a bright new look thanks to a smarter layout and sophisticated finishes

BY SHARLENE BARNARD • PHOTOGRAPHS BY BEN OUTMAKER

SECONDARY BATHS are often overlooked. As long as the essentials are there—sink, toilet, tub—a family can make do for years. But when the vanity door in this son's builder-grade bath came unbolted, Chip and Heidi Hudley knew it was time for an update, especially since the bath also served the nearby studio room and parents' suite.

The couple called on designer Nicole Yee, who had previously refaced the master bath of their Blackhawk, California, home. "The first addition was, creating a hallway vestibule between the bedrooms and the bath,

giving each room its own entry door. Inside the bath, she removed the wall that separated the walk area, and shifted the closet wall and doorway to allow for a double vanity and a water tub. Large-format Ceramic tile adds color with mosaic inserts now defining the tub wall and floor. Blue-gray built-in cabinetry stylishly connects the bath to the walk-in closet and establishes an attractive sight line as you enter. "It all came together, between what was needed functionally and then visually, too," says Heidi. "It's super-deep practical, but also a work of art."



BEFORE The dated bathroom's entrance was crowded by doors to the bedroom, the closet, and the rest of the bath. **AFTER** Marble tile brightens the enclosed space, and the large double vanity provides more storage. Photo courtesy Moore's Bathroom (by family). Styling by Camille Rose



homeowner tip

MICHOEL BLANKENHORN

"Plan for ample lighting, especially if you don't have natural light. And put it all on dimmers!"



Large 24 by 32 inch marble tiles with a framed mosaic inset cover the tub walls. A 6-inch shelf keeps toiletries close.

before

The entry was directly off the bedroom, and these doors jammed up the sink area.



after

A vestibule now serves as a buffer between bedrooms and bath. One lane wall allows for a double vanity and better flow overall.

1. Moved the closet wall by about 2 1/2 feet to boost the bath's footprint by 23 square feet.

2. Installed a double vanity along the new wall to fit more storage.

3. Built in a capstone to match the vanity for a cohesive look.



A 30-inch wide mosaic runner connects the bath to the walk-in closet. A built-in linen capstone matches the vanity and color of the vanity for visual continuity. Moore's Bath.

A favorite feature: the polished nickel mirror keeps with star backplates, which echo the silver-embossed stone. Photo: Schatz and Company.

Moving on

The little Tudor cottage bore witness to her growing independence and her daughters' childhood milestones. Who would they be if it were no longer there?

BY PAMELA GWIN KIRKE • ILLUSTRATION BY GINA TRIPLETT

THE SPANISH chandelier, last to leave our previous home five blocks east, swayed as the fluted in front of me, regard up to a horizontal pole. You can't fly down crystal pendents, even if they are crawling just a half mile through sleepy streets. I followed behind, like Secret Service. I remember that day, 13 years ago, that my daughters and I moved into our little brick-and-stone Tudor, a cottage, really, with stained-glass windows, flower moldings, and an arched ceiling that rose above the living room hardwood, and our new lives.

The chandelier swayed in the sun as it made its way. Everything else had been trucked over earlier in the day, while my children were at school. Their beds went first, with their quilted sheets and quilts, in its pecking order when you move. I had done it eight times before, when I was married, so I was pretty sure about the beds. It felt as if you live there, when you take in blankets and fluff pillows in ones.

The electrician hung the light fixture in the dining room, and it tripled in size, the space so much more modest than the last. I hadn't bought a house on my own before, and this one would be important, I knew. A New Yorker, I had landed in Dallas with fashion-house babies who would grow up as Texans, with a taste for horses and golfing, equines and boots, and a reserved pace, except on the athletic field. They would learn everything and become everything in this house, this 1931 bungalow with tiny closets and no upstairs like I had, and it would send to another



them, protect them, and, in time, send them off, ready.

I didn't realize it then, but the little Tudor would do the same for me. An experienced housewife, once both of my girls had entered college, I would return to New York, where I was born and used to live. Last

summer, two childhood friends, the day arrived. I sold the house to a builder who intended to make the improvements that I couldn't, he would convert the kitchen into a kitchen, refinish the attic, and create more modern-day living space while retaining the architectural elements

that characterized the original neighborhood. Too many of the vintage homes had been leveled, I was relieved that someone was going to preserve ours.

With my daughters' sheets and quilts tucked in on campus, I returned to Dallas for a week, one strange week alone in the place where we all grew up. The kids had used their good-byes to the house, knowing that another family would be living under its delectable live oaks the next time they saw it. It was my turn for transactions and runs of pokeys, for me, long time and moving along.

Two months after arriving in New York, I received a phone message from my younger daughter, who was visiting Dallas on a long weekend.

"They ran down our house!"

I was in the park with our dog, in front of Grace Museum. I called back, and Cooper picked up immediately.

"I thought they were keeping it," she said.

"That's what they told me. I'm moved."

"Me, too."

I was heartbroken. I had no idea that the house was gone, so I couldn't prepare for the job. So much in wrapping up in my childhood home, and it was difficult enough for Cooper to leave it for college, and for good, at the same time. It would have been a comfort to at least know by when she would be back, a look at her house, remind and show me, washed over and showing its next phase, as the new. The 1,300 miles between us felt cavernous

then. It sat down on a bench.

"Are you okay?"

"It's sad, and weird," she said.

"I'm so sorry, Coop, but remember, it's not the house and the wood, but the memory. We have a million happy memories."

Parasol my correct things such as this, knowing they are just things sometimes. I had a hard time hearing myself say it, even. May be it was wrong to move here, I thought. It felt selfish, selfish. Charlie by the mayor's house and sitting by the river while my daughter stood in her front driveway, thick, no parent close by, no front porch or pushed roof. No fragment of the place she loved in her mind. I imagined a rush of

the house, a new road had pushed three inches up through the front path. My mother knew that someone would rip and break a new and life a personal injury lawsuit. When she returned once, she took a walk and returned with a man dressed in white, like a cookie. A man, he wanted \$1,500 to fix the walkway. Instead, I simply worried whoever entered and exited, calling out in time to avoid a spill. No one ever fell, not even a stumble. Room and house and people that are in the house without our knowing, I thought, wondering about how it would come to make peace with the particular memory, as I had done with the others before.

My phone buzzed. An image of

"They would learn everything and become everything in this home, this 1931 bungalow with tiny closets and unexplainable drips."

birthday parties and dinners in the kitchen, dark and home work, and I imagined. Sleepovers on couches and school dances, covering on fire-time beds. Kicking balls in the yard and outdoor articles and getting around me. Hiding from cornucopias in Mom's closets. Trick-or-treating in socks and paper skeletons, metal cups devised in the dining table. Homemade ice-cream cakes and old dogs. New dogs. Safety, worry, joy, sadness. Little, big, beginning, End. Next.

Stars twined, rising up the East River. Charlie, what time are you? In the 12 years that we lived in

an empty lot of land, bordered by chain-link, flanked on the street—and then vanished. I heard myself gasp and immediately sensed the symbolism of the scene in front of me. There was a lot to comprehend, if I let myself. The realization of youth, unimportance of place and time, society as a working ball. Standing up from the bench, I shook off the temptation to philosophize too much, and told myself the pure things that I had told my daughter, looking a lot like she did, once. Then I found the photo of the empty lot, obliterated it, and headed home. ■

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• shopping

Hat and coat hooks

Whether you're looking for a standout piece to grace your entryway or multiples for your mudroom, you'll want these hanging around

BY KATE WOOD • PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW MCCAUL

HOOKS FOR OUTERWEAR had their heyday in the Victorian era, when highly ornamented styles adorned the home's hallways and entryways. Before the advent of the wire clothes hanger, in 1904, these hooks also kept outerwear down and wardrobes at home. In public spaces—schools, churches, and workplaces—simple utilitarian styles were arranged in rows mounted along wood rails. With doorway deep sinks rooming more attention these days, hat and coat hooks are enjoying a renaissance. From faithful reproductions to streamlined versions with modern appeal, here are 15 ways to get hooked.



1> inner beauty

REPRODUCTION
Made of Solid brass, powder-coat
Size: 7 1/2" H x 2 1/2" D
Highlights: This serene number replicates a bank vaulting handle in steel
\$26, vondy.com

2> heavy metal

REPRODUCTION
Made of Cast Iron
Size: 8 1/2" H x 8 1/2" D
Highlights: Turn of the-century railroad stations inspired this substantial rail. Finished piece: \$39
redletterhouse.com

3> coiled appeal

REPRODUCTION
Made of Iron
Size: 5 1/2" H x 4" D
Highlights: Instant with it, this hook is a contemporary take on a Victorian masterpiece.
\$12, vondy.com





4> old school
HOUSE OF ANTIQUE
RESTORATION
Made of Cast Iron
Size: 3 1/4" H x 6 1/2" D
Highlights: Also called a horse hook, this sub-house made hat has deep edges.
\$12 (houseofantiquerestoration.com)



5> nailed it
RESTORATION
HOUSEWARE
Made of Cast Iron
Size: 7 1/4" H x 4 1/2" D
Highlights: An old-fashioned cottage with a wide collar, adding lower neck gets a graphic update.
\$20 (restorationhouseware.com)



6> zebra stripe
ANTHROPOLOGUE
HOUSEWARE
Made of Brass
Size: 3 1/4" H x 4 1/2" D
Highlights: An old-fashioned cottage with a wide collar, adding lower neck gets a graphic update.
\$20 (anthropologie.com)



7> cottage cool
ANTHROPOLOGUE
HOUSEWARE
Made of Cast Iron
Size: 3 1/4" H x 4 1/2" D
Highlights: The hand-painted finish gives this model the look of hand-painted iron.
\$20 (anthropologie.com)



8> curled up
HOUSE OF ANTIQUE
RESTORATION
Made of Cast Iron
Size: 3 1/4" H x 4 1/2" D
Highlights: With its dark wood straight lines, and sleek, pointed base, this hook won't suit a Modern style house.
\$12 (houseofantiquerestoration.com)



10> sweet spot
HISTORIC
HOUSEWARE
Made of Cast Iron
Size: 2 1/4" H x 3 1/2" D
Highlights: This elegant hand-forged design fits in a third-generation city home.
\$12 (houseofantiquerestoration.com)



11> USA-made
ACORN
Made of Steel
Size: 6 1/4" H x 2 1/2" D
Highlights: This elegant hand-forged design fits in a third-generation city home.
\$12 (acorn.com)



12> tip-top
HOUSE OF ANTIQUE
RESTORATION
Made of Cast Iron
Size: 3 1/4" H x 4 1/2" D
Highlights: This hat hook looks like a top-hat type.
\$12 (houseofantiquerestoration.com)



13> take it easy
BRASS
Made of Die Cast Zinc
Size: 4 1/4" H x 2 1/2" D
Highlights: You're more of a casual cup wearer than a top-hat type.
\$12 (brass.com)



14> scalloped
ANTHROPOLOGUE
HOUSEWARE
Made of Brass
Size: 3 1/4" H x 4 1/2" D
Highlights: This hat hook looks like a scalloped cup wearer.
\$20 (anthropologie.com)



15> rustic look
VINTAGE 3
Made of Copper
Size: 6 1/4" H x 4 1/2" D
Highlights: Hand cast in solid copper, this Victorian inspired style brings a rustic feel to your home.
\$24 (vintage3.com)

Warming up a blank box

A vintage house that's lost its charm gets improved proportions and some needed personality. BY KATE WOOD • ILLUSTRATION BY DRUMMOND



Simple, sized-style elements feature substantial and less putting in the improving. High-end planter.

THE IRON HOUSE Monique Showalter recently moved into in Park Ridge, Illinois, is the right size for this eager owner but lacks curb appeal. "I'd like a more inviting entrance, and I'm open to other ideas," says Monique. "We turned to Tim Hawkins of Benin Architects for suggestions on fixing up the block inside."

"I'd break up the big box with better proportioned elements, evolving this into a modern farmhouse," says Hawkins. First, he would add a porch spanning the entire facade, with wide, flat-facing steps. Clapboards to the top of the new porch's metal hip roof, and board-and-batten above them spike up the large expanse of siding. Shutters and two-over-two windows make the dining room appear wider; a second window balances the symmetry of the first floor. "The house looks completely different," says Monique. "I am impressed!"

finishing touches

Thoughtful details enhance the vintage house's farmhouse appeal while giving it an updated look.



shutters
Simple recessed panel shutters lift the farmhouse style. Timberline PPG Flat Panel Products. Wood shutters, from \$25 per square foot. timberline.com



paint
Deep teal and gray accents tie into the blue-toned siding and gray Saltillo tile. Timberline (floor) and Dorrville (shutters) from \$25 per gallon. shawna-williams.com for colors



sconce
A square cage cage with half-and-half and zinc brushed metal accents. This angular modern design. Union Fiberglass. Clear Glass. From \$200. unionfiberglass.com



planter
A tall, slim, modern and classic. The off-center door gives it a sense of asymmetry. 30-inch Cubica Cottage. Wood and Metal. Watering. Planter in \$200. garden.com

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Space-saving workshop

This Old House general contractor Tom Sihn helps a hobbyist woodworker turn her small garage into an efficient workspace—with tips anyone can use

BY SAI VAGUELA • PHOTOGRAPHS BY NATHAN KIRKMAN

WHEN STEPHAN BACHRETTT'S offer relocated to Chicago's River North neighborhood, the new address was only a couple of blocks away from the old office. But while the move wasn't a big deal, she did lose something major—workshop access. The building where Sihn, who does research for an industrial-design firm, used to work had housed a large shop outfitted with a table saw, an assembly bench, and a drill press. So Sihn decided if she could no longer go to that shop, she'd have one to her by converting her garage into a workshop for building small-scale furniture projects.

Filling her garage with tools and clamps would



Setup to make **swivel**
ABOVE: During a recent episode of *Ask This Old House*, Sihn showed how master carpenter Michael Fowler fit an efficient workshop in her one-car garage, complete with fold-up workbench.
BEFORE: The table saw fit by itself in the garage, but needed some smart space planning.

be been easy, but because it has to pull double duty, storing tools and her car during winter, the layout required some problem solving. That's where Tami Selva stepped in.

The solution focused on mobility. "Selva has a long, narrow space, so we made the big tools easy to move around, letting her squeeze her car in," explains Tom. He added a folding stand to a table she had placed on a work bench under the window, where it was too high to use comfortably. Tom shifted the saw to one of the long walls and, in front of it, built a Murphy table that folds up and out of the way when not in use (see how, opposite). "The new bench is lower, about 33 inches off the ground, so it's more comfortable when standing or using hand tools," he says. "But it also works as an optional support that prevents plywood or long boards from sagging on the table now from falling down."

To save more floor space, Tom suggested a sliding outer cover on an articulating arm, instead of rails that stick out to the back. The new design lets Selva make concrete on boards up to 14 inches wide with the saw resting up against the wall. Its wheel-and-axle design has cutters to support long boards or lengths of molding, as easy to move around, and holds it steady flat against the wall.

That shop is short on space, too. To add to a few details that a workshop of any size can benefit from: He and Selva hang a 2-by-8-foot strip of pegboard above the back attached to a frame of 2x4s and leaned up against the wall. "It was tacked behind the workbench, so you couldn't access the lower part of the pegboard," says Tom. Incorporate 2-foot square foam floor mats and back-saving softness underfoot during long shop sessions and prevent dropped tools from crashing onto the concrete floor. Tom also fixed the top of a metal box for work with two threaded bolts that attach to two more bolts screwed into a 2x4 anchor that spans the window. This will allow Selva to blow air from her dusting vacuum and blow out sand and fumes when she's working.

"I made about 50 linear feet of oak open shelving," says Selva, describing her first big project at the new setup. The woodshop works so well, it could be bad news for the car. "It's really dropped off my radar," she says of the Impala and Ford Focus hatchback. "It's really good for getting lumber and then coming home."



Small upgrade, big impact
While there is really no such thing as too much space in a workshop, details like these can yield more efficient storage and a more comfortable setup for using tools.

TOP: Pegboard mounted to the wall with existing screws through a frame of 2x4s is the most near-vertical way to keep frequently used tools close at hand and off the floor.

HIGGLE: A sheet of 1/2-inch square foam floor mats keeps feet and back happy. The interlocking tiles are also easy to remove to make room for a car.

NOT TO WORRY: Space provided from backboard to extra shelving allows for hanging in the window can pull through or sand a chest of drawers and a chest of drawers.

STEP-BY-STEP

Build a space-saving Murphy table



1) Make the tabletop support and legs
Build a frame from 2x4s and deck screws. This one is 46 by 34 inches. Add a couple of 2x4s across its width for stability. Cut a pair of 2x4s to 32½ inches for legs so the table's height is just below the saw. Securely fasten the legs to the frame and first joint as shown.



4) Attach the first section
Counter-sink pilot holes in the first piece of plywood, as shown, to prevent the screw heads from damaging chests or a regular sawbench. Fasten through the top into the frame.



2) Attach the frame to the wall
Add three evenly spaced hangers to the back of the frame. Then screw the other frame 2x4s (cut) holding the frame ½ inch under the finished height. Temporarily support the chest and drill two pilot holes as shown. Fasten with masonry screws.



5) Add the second section
Measure the distance between the first piece of plywood and the wall, and use a circular or table saw to rip a second piece of plywood to fit the wall. Position the second piece of plywood as shown and drill counter-sink holes. Fasten with screws.



3) Top with plywood
Tom used the frame to support a two-piece trade with easy-to-transport 2 by 4 foot sections of ¾-inch plywood. Lay down the first piece, as shown. Then pull away from the wall to create a 6-inch overhang which will provide a surface to clamp to.



6) Secure the latch
Fold the table up and mount a latch with the arm to a 2x4 wood spacer that extends just beyond the frame front. Fasten the spacer to the top ½ inch side and to the frame. Flip the latch around the arm so it catches. Drill pilot holes, then fasten with masonry screws.

Patch a ceiling

How to put a fresh face on brown, blistered, water-damaged drywall

BY THOMAS EMER • PHOTOGRAPHS BY WENDELL Y. ABERN

GET IT?
TIME: About 1 hour
DIFFICULTY: Easy
thought: It's a long process of patch compound to the right consistency takes some practice



TOOLBOX

- drop cloth or tarp
- utility knife and safety glasses
- 6- and 12-inch taping knives
- soft-bristle paintbrush
- joint tape
- bucket of hot sponge
- 20-minute setting-type joint compound
- spring roll of wallpaper
- medium-grit sanding sponge
- flat shank
- water-based primer
- ceiling paint
- roller frame and covers
- tape glue



TALE OF THE TAPE

Most tape that is found on drywall joints is made of paper (above, top). It's strong and impervious to moisture and doesn't bleed with joint compound. Fiber glass mesh tape (above, bottom) is a better choice because it doesn't bleed with joint compound and it's more resistant to moisture and doesn't bleed with joint compound. It's the tape we used for this project.

STEP-BY-STEP

1) Score the perimeter. Place a drop cloth beneath the work area. Put on safety glasses, then use a utility knife to make a shallow cut around the damaged area. This cut helps to keep your new material from dropping the paper face off the undamaged drywall during the next step.



2) Remove. Use a 6-inch taping knife to peel off the loose layer of joint and paper, and the crumbly bits on the drywall's support plaster core. Take care to keep the knife blade from going beyond the score line you cut at step 1. Dust the exposed area clean using a soft-bristle paintbrush.



3) Tape the cracks. If the blistering occurred at a seam between drywall patches, or if there are cracks in the plaster over cover, there will need tape to keep the repair from cracking. Mix up a small batch of 20-minute setting-type joint compound to a peanut butter consistency and the ceiling with water from a spray bottle—just enough so the compound will set properly—and apply a thin layer of compound to the ceiling with the taping knife. Then use it to press the tape into the wet compound, as shown.



4) Spread the compound. After the tape layer hardens, mix a bigger batch of joint compound and transfer it from the bucket to the ceiling with the 6-inch taping knife. Now switch to a 12-inch taping knife and use it to smooth the compound and feather its edges. Wait several minutes for the compound to firm up, then mix and smooth it some more. With patience, you can eliminate most imperfections with the knife before the compound becomes too hard to work.

5) Sand. When the compound is hard, use a medium-grit sanding sponge to erase any blemishes. Pay particular attention to the edges.

6) Prime and paint. Wipe off the dust with a damp sponge. When the patch is dry, brush or roll on a water-based primer. And when the primer dries, follow up with a coat of ceiling paint. Then stand back and admire your handiwork. ■

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ask This Old House

Q The power cord on my new 220-volt table saw is too short. Can I rig up an extension cord?

—ANTHONY JOHN TROMBELL, CT

A I'd recommend making your own extension cord from a length of 12-gauge SJ-type portable cable, like the one at left. These flexible, severe-wear-rated cables can easily handle the load of a big table-saw motor, and their thick rubber pockets shrug off abrasion. High-leverage cable cutters (shown) are specially designed for trimming round cables like this, but side-cutting pliers will also do the job.

—SCOTT CARLIS, MASTER ELECTRICIAN
FOR THE OWNERS OF CAROLSELECTRIC

PHOTOGRAPH
BY FLAMEN PETROV

45

tips, tricks, and
answers to
your home-
improvement
questions

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General Contractor



HOME BARNES
Master Carpenter



RICHARD TRETHEWEY
Plumbing and Heating Expert



ROGER COOK
Landscape Contractor



KEVIN CONRATH
Host

Our baseboard radiators get very noisy when the boiler kicks on. Can you tell me how to fix this?

—REYNOLDS VOGHNSPORT, VA



Before he can adjust a valve, Trethewey has to drain some water out.

RICHARD TRETHEWEY REPLIES: It may seem as though hot water baseboard heating systems can't help but make clicks, squeaks, and cracks, but in fact these systems should be completely silent.

Most times, the noises can be traced to installation shortcuts that don't account for the way copper tubing can shrink as it heats up and expands as it cools down. Fortunately, it's fairly easy to dig down and correct these issues and get some peace and quiet during the heating season.

To start, turn down the thermostat and allow the tubing to cool. While you're waiting, pop off the baseboard covers so that you can see the system's inside air fins and tubing. Now turn up the thermostat setting. As hot water is pumped into the tubing, listen for any noises and try to pinpoint their source. For instance, if the fins are making a clicking noise, check that they're resting on a plastic slider that allows them to move smoothly back and forth at each panel support, a bracket called a corner. Add sliders where they are missing, or reposition those that are off center.

If there's a second-to-beat-the-boiler sound running alongside the one with fins, make sure that it's

noting on some kind of spacer at each corner to prevent metal-on-metal squeaking. Foam pipe insulation or weatherstripping felt will do the job, but I like the plastic spacers on clips made by Shodor (shodor.com). They have ending tabs that resemble Mickey Mouse ears, so I call them "Mickys."

Now focus on where the tubing runs across floors and walls or runs through framing that's where you're likely to hear creaking as the metal pipe rubs against wood. A Micky or a long, split plastic spacer can isolate the two materials and put a stop to that particular noise.

At this point, you've probably quieted most of the din. But if it continues, see whether there's a good 1/4-inch gap for the tubing to expand into at the end of each run. If not, the tubing is probably bowing and banging against the cover. To fix that problem, have a plumber to cut out a small section and clean it up, or install a compensated flexible connector. Either way, that will require draining the rest, so I'm doing it last, and then refilling when the work is done. Before opening the panel's hose bib, the plumber should shut down the boiler, close the valves to the other rooms, and have a bucket ready to drain the water out.

Making a potter for wires in a slab

We're remodeling our kitchen and adding an island. We'd like it to have electrical outlets, but the floor is solid wood over a concrete slab. How do we route wires through concrete without wrecking the floor?

—ERICA VANDER MILLER, PLAIN, NY

What is it?

- 1. Feeler gauge
- 2. Wire stop
- 3. Impeller for leaf blower
- 4. Shellac mixer

FOR THE ANSWER, SEE PAGE 39

Whenever an island is installed in a kitchen, code requires that it be equipped with at least one receptacle. For most islands, two is preferable.



SCOTT CORDON REPLIES: Just as you know, having a receptacle on a kitchen island is not optional, it's actually required by the National Electrical Code on any island with a countertop bigger than 12-by-24 inches. Your work is then completed.

Routing electricity to your island shouldn't be too difficult, especially if you're taking out the existing cabinets. And it will only require one single strap or two of flooring. If you have scraps left over from when the floor was installed, I doubt you'll be able to

sell that any work has been done.

Basically, you'll have to cut a 2-inch notch in the concrete for a PVC conduit, which will carry the electrical cable under the floor. The best spot for that trench will be underneath a flooring strip that runs perpendicular from the nearest wall to the spot where your island will be. Cover the neighboring strips with painter's tape to protect their finish, then run a circular saw lengthwise down the middle of the strip. Make a second cut 16 inches away and parallel to the first, use a chisel and hammer to remove the three scrap pieces. Next, cut out the exposed strip of plywood or OSB that covers the slab, but don't go all the way through, the concrete will run over your blade. Instead, finish the cut with a utility knife. Since the wire is a utility knife, since the wire is a utility knife.

The next step is to rest on electric conduit-casting saw with a dry-cut diamond blade. Use it to make four parallel kerfs about 16 inches apart in the exposed concrete. These cuts will lock up loads of dust, so be

wear to wear safety glasses and a dust mask. Having a helper hold a wet dry saw hose next to the blade will help support some of the load.

Constant marking the flow paner down each half until they are all at least 2 inches deep. Then break off the corners of concrete by knocking them sideways with a hammer.

Wear the debris out of the trench, then lay in a length of 1-inch diameter PVC conduit with a 90-degree bell-end elbow on each end. That diameter allows you the option of running up to three

Scot Goran, a licensed master electrician and the owner of Goran Electric in Lexington, MA, appears regularly on TV episodes of Ask This Old House.

What is it?

Visc stop

This stop accessory prevents a vice from sliding when you clamp work off center. Each polyethylene item is just 0.30 inches thick, allowing for precise adjustments of up to 4 inches. \$17, lenovapay.com



cables to your island if you, or a future owner, decide to install appliances there. To fill the trench, dampen it with water, run a power-hoed cement grout, such as Quikrete's Non-Shrink Prepacked Grout (quikrete.com), to a pourable consistency, put it into the trench,

and trowel it flush with the slab. Twenty-four hours later, to be the step of subfloor you cut out earlier, spread a moisture-cure construction adhesive over its bottom side, and stick the subfloor to the slab. Now you can glue a strip of replacement flooring to the subfloor. But first,

cut off the top of wood just below the strip's groove. That will allow you to insert the strip's tongue in the groove of the neighboring strip and fit the replacement flush with the existing floor.

Window-trim rules of thumb

The double-hung windows in my new house don't have any inside trim. How should I go about installing it?

—SCOTT HICK SANITON, IA

TOM SICKA REPLIES: How you decide what style you want the trim to be? There's Colonial, Craftsman, and Victorian, to name a few, with lots of variation within

each category. With a little research, you should be able to find a look that suits your window and the rest of the house.

Whatever style you choose, the basics of installing window trim remain the same. Here are the rules of thumb and the sequence that I use.

Start with the steel. This part, which many people mistakenly call the sill, is glued and nailed to the bottom of the window frame using lid nails. It should be long enough to span the width of the window, the width of both side casings, plus twice the distance you want the steel to extend out from the face of the casing. In other words, the horizontal distance from the edge of the steel to the face of the casing

should equal the distance the steel will extend past the outside edge of both side casings. If the steel has a profile, highlight it by nailing each end and attaching returns. Make sure the steel sits level and square so the joints that will help the rest of the trim go in easier.

Side casings come next. These pieces cover the vertical gap between the window's side jamb and the wall. Start one end of the casing on the steel and line up its outside edge with the jamb's inside edge. Mark where the casing meets the horizontal head jamb, and cut the casing to length. Do the same on the opposite side. Apply wood glue to the edge of the jamb and the end of the casing, then nail the casing to the jamb with 6d nails. Nail the



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PROJECT OF THE WEEK

other side of the casing to the wall with lid nails. To keep the casing's lower end in place, drive an lid nail up through the bottom of the stool and on each casing's lid grom.

Install head casing next. If the stool is level and the window is square, cutting the head casing should be as simple as holding the stool in place, stop the side casings and marking where to make the cut or cuts. If the side casings are skewed, you can find where to start the ends of the head casing by running it upside down, setting it on both side casings' raised joints, and marking where they touch.

Finish with the apron. The apron, which sits under the stool, is cut and installed so each end lines up vertically with the outside edges of side casings. If it has a groove, tuck the ends and glue on a retan. Glue the apron's top edge to the underside of the stool and nail the piece in place with lid nails.

The stool will be used to seal around a window in place, drive an lid nail up through the bottom of the stool and on each casing's lid grom.



Hold the soil. In winter, salty slush from the road sometimes ends up on grass lawns and kills the grass. Is there any way to prevent this?

—DAVID DODD/NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J.

ROGER COOK/REPLIES: When salt gets into the soil, grass, shrubs, and trees all suffer. That's because salt needs moisture and so creates drought-like conditions for the roots, even when the soil is damp.

The best way to prevent this damage is to keep salt from getting on the soil in the first place. Consider erecting a temporary barrier or plywood screen to block the slush and spray flung by snowplows, and take care when shoveling or snowblowing to deposit salty snow in a place where it won't melt into your yard or garden. And if that snow does end up in those places, get rid of it as soon as possible. This is especially important in late winter and early spring, when plants are emerging from dormancy.

Once salt gets in the soil, it's not easily reversed. You can try flushing it away in the spring with daily deep watering. This strategy works best on soils amended with sand and compost, both of which enhance a soil's ability to drain.

Incorporating gypsum into the soil also helps because it chelates sodium ions and allows them to be washed away. Have your soil tested first so that you know just how much gypsum to add.

Here's another approach that may be less of a chore: Instead of growing grass, cover birds with salt-tolerant shrubs and perennials in those areas where road salt can't be avoided. There are a number of such plants, including Russian rose (Rosa rugosa), creeping juniper (Juniperus horizontalis), fountain grass (Pennisetum setaceum), Cheddar pink (Dianthus gratiopolitanus), and Sea purslane (Sesuvium portulacastrum). And they can survive your long winters, too. Making this small sacrifice from snowplow splash may be the best way to save your lawn.

Ask THE OLD HOUSE

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Be sure to include your name and daytime phone number. Substantive questions will be asked for clarity and depth and may require an extra month. We regret that, because of the volume of mail we read, we are unable to reply to unsolicited questions.

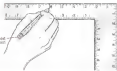


Norm's tricks of the trade

I have a framing square with markings that are hard to read. Is there a way to make those markings pop?

—SCOTT ARMENTON/ST. LOUIS, MO

A One way to make the marks easier to read is to take an oil-soluble paint marking pen like a Sharpie permanent marker and carefully highlight the square's faded markings. I did that on my own framing square and it worked pretty well.



Do you have any tricks for not wasting sandpaper when sanding by hand?

—ERIC JOYCE/CHESNAUT

A Here's a simple trick that also saves a lot of time: Fold a full sheet of sandpaper in half across its width. The whole sheet is half as wide as shown. That keeps the abrasive sides from rubbing against each other and losing their sharpness, and provides a more no-slip grip for your hand. As each strand gets flat, just turn or refold the paper and keep on sanding until the entire half sheet is used up. ■



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PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER SHANE

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Generation NEXT

As skilled carpenters, plumbers, and electricians retire, there aren't enough trained craftsmen to take their place. So we're rallying **scholarship support to help young men and women** embark on a gratifying, hands-on career • by Jill Connors

WHEN NIDRAM ABBAS, interior carpenter for The DEI Home Store, started his career as a builder, working alongside his father, the work covered all aspects of construction. His skilled hands touched every inch of the structure by the time a house was complete—from the structure, making roof and walls weather tight, sealing windows and doors, hanging kitchen cabinets, laying floors, installing trim, and much more. It's a creative process that he has always found immensely appealing. "It's all about transformation," says Nidram. "Building from scratch, you start with nothing on the job site, then watch a house take form. With a tired old house, you're bringing it up to date while preserving its historic character."

“These are jobs that don’t require a debt-laden four-year college degree. But they do require training.”

Mike Rowe professes no such skepticism with tools, his mastery lies in his ability to appreciate and highlight the work that craftsmen do every day. "For me, it's like magic when I see a skilled craftsman come out something beautiful from nothing at all," says Rowe, whose grandfather was a master electrician and his mother a pianist who could build a house with his own hands. In eight seasons as a coactive producer and host of the TV show *Fine Jobz*, Rowe has celebrated the work of tradesmen and their tools as necessary and often overlooked.

Today, both men share a laser focus on one thing: the need to stop poisoning people to go into the building trades. This Old House recently announced a commitment to raise awareness of the

skills shortage and raise funds for the makewere@WORKS (MRW) Foundation's Work Ethic Scholarship Program, which supports students training for the trades.

"The allure of building a house, and indeed the appeal of The Old House as a television, has always been that it is such an authentic, hands-on, personal pursuit," says Eric Thorburn, CEO of The Old House Ventures. "We are filling a leadership position in supporting the MRW Foundation's scholarship program by reaching out to many companies and organizations and asking them to donate. It's our way of helping to support as many young people as possible to go into the building trades."

The skills gap in the U.S. is particularly acute in the construction industry, with the U.S. Department of Labor estimating that nearly 7 million jobs will need to be filled by 2024. The reason: Construction workers are retiring at the same time that construction projects are on the rise as the economy strengthens. "There are jobs that don't require a debt-laden, four-year college degree," says Rowe, "but they do require training."

Although the conventional path for people in the building trades—which includes electrical, plumbing, masonry, carpentry, general contracting, landscape contracting, a host of traditional building trades careers collectively as the preservation trades, and many related crafts such as furniture making—may once have been to learn from an older family member, the training avenues have multiplied. Today, they include union apprenticeships, trade schools, job centers, two-year associate degrees from community colleges, and four-year university programs that combine hands-on training with academic coursework. Remarkably, the training, in some cases, is absolutely free.

Some trade unions are actively supporting their efforts to recruit young people. For example, the UA, the United Association union of plumbers, fitters, welders, and service technicians, is recruiting in high schools. "We are under number eight now to replace 18 percent of our members, the majority of whom are between 46 and 52 years old," says Tom Bagley, UA director of education. For a high school graduate, a UA apprenticeship is the equivalent of being awarded a full ride academic or sports scholarship to a top university. The five-year UA apprenticeship is not only free, the apprentice is paid for full-time work, receives health benefits from day one, and earns accrued pension and 401(k) benefits after a probationary period, usually six months.

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) and National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) are conducting a grassroots campaign by talking to school principals, posting videos aimed at teenagers on

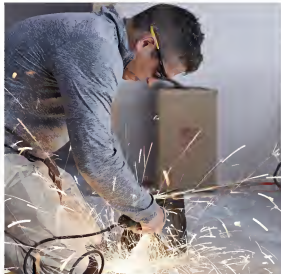
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outlook for
the trades. An
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as much
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social media, and by reaching out to parents and educators. "There's been such a conversation around four-year college education for so long that high school guidance counselors often don't even understand what apprenticeships are," says Jennifer McIlford, director of business development for the labor-management effort of IBEW Local 58 and NECA in Detroit, and a recruitment consultant for the construction industry. "We are also trying to have conversations with the parents of high school students who don't know the long-term career outlook for the trades. An electrician can make as much money as an electrical engineer." During a five-year IBEW and NECA program, says McIlford, an apprentice will earn \$22,500 in wages and benefits in stark contrast to a college student taking on debt to earn a four-year degree.

The nonprofit Home Builders Institute (HBI), which operates more than 500 training programs across the country, often in conjunction with a local builders' association, sees a great need for training as basic skills as a career career. "We are lacking coming out of high school with little or no knowledge of how to hold a drill or read a tape measure," says Stephen Cousins, HBI's director of training and technical assistance. Through the HBI programs, students can pick up the basics about some-on-the-job specialties—including carpentry, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC), and painting, to name a few—and then come out on for advanced training through other venues.

Trade schools and community colleges are key venues for two-year associate degrees in construction such as construction management or carpentry, and many universities offer four-year bachelor of science degrees in a range of building technology disciplines. Unlike union apprenticeships or HBI programs, however, this type of training involves tuition, but students can seek financial assistance from sources such as the makewere@WORKS Foundation's Work Ethic Scholarship Program, which Rowe created in 2008. The foundation has been instrumental in awarding over \$3 million in scholarships for technical and vocational education across the country.

Beyond the need to prepare tradespeople to build new houses, there is also a need to provide training in a wide range of traditional building methods known as the preservation trades. These trades, which often evolve into a high level of craftsmanship, include everything from timber framing, drypoint masonry, and ironwork to plasterwork and architectural carpentry. The American College of Building Arts (ACBA), in Charleston, SC, is devoted to training students in these skills. "We found that a four-year college was the best way to attract young people," says Tim Chisner, a faculty member at ACBA. The program merges a traditional



liberal arts education with a hands-on apprenticeship. "There are many technical schools preparing students in modern construction methods," says Chisner, "but our students can do the old world stuff. Our students pick a trade, and they also learn the context so they understand how all the components fit together."

The whole-house approach is one that Tom Silva, general contractor for The Old House TV, knows well, for he, like Norm Abram, did every part of the process of building a house when he started out, the learning from his father. "When I was a kid, I never wanted to

do anything but couldn't get enough," says Tom, who notes that today there are many specialties within the building trades—but they all rely on knowing as a few steps. "It all starts with putting a tape measure or a batten in someone's hand at a young age and seeing if they like it. Then they're on their way."

Meet 8 up-and-comers

Turn the page to learn how some young men and women are going the trade route

JoHanna Clendenning, 24 Lower Burrell, PA | Plumbing

SOME PEOPLE THRIVE on the rigors of a 40-hour workweek coupled with several nights of school, and JoHanna Clendenning is one of them. “I love the job and the training, especially working with my hands,” says Clendenning, now a fifth-year apprentice with the Pittsburgh Plumbers Local 27 of the UA. Internationals building trades since she was very young, she got a taste of the work at a local vocational technical high school and considered careers in both electrical and plumbing. After a year at the Red Rock Job Corps Center in Sullivan County, PA—a program of the Department of Labor which operates centers around the country offering vocational training and education at no cost to people 16 to 24 years old—she worked for a plumbing company and took apprenticeship, then applied for the UA apprenticeship.

It's been a lot of hard work and valuable training ever since, as well as a paid full-time job. Clendenning takes pride in the fact that she has passed her journeyman plumber test, and is enthusiastic about the last year of her apprenticeship, which includes instruction on computer-assisted design. “I got called in today to start a new project, and I see that skill as something I will be using for years to come.” She hopes to become a master plumber and pursue both residential and commercial work. “I'd values the career advice and on-the-job training right now.” “I like working with the other plumbers, communicating during our workday, and knowing that the big projects we do are helping to build up our town's identity. That's every satisfying.”



PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS LUNGER



Caleb Smith, 18 New Plymouth, OH | Construction Management and Carpentry

CALEB SMITH'S INTEREST in pursuing a career in the building trades was sparked when his parents bought a 1970s three-upper in rural New Plymouth, OH, six years ago. “With an older house, you can see the effect of previous owners making little mistakes along the way,” says Smith, who has helped his stepfather—a self-taught remodeling hobbyist—do everything from fixing sagging floor joists while removing a drop ceiling to converting a

one-room guest cabin. Today, Smith is pursuing a two-year degree in construction management, with a focus on carpentry, at the Layan Campus of Hocking College outside Columbus, OH. He is the recipient of a one-year scholarship from the Ohio Construction Education Foundation, the apprenticeship program for which he is studying. The S.W.A.T. (Skill & Work Attitude & Talent) Pledge, included in the pledge are commitments to “work my butt off” and “show up early, stay late, and cheerfully volunteer for every

chance task thrown.” The pledge immediately resonated with Smith. “I am accustomed to hard work, and when I looked at the pledge, I saw all the things I valued and that were important in life, but I had never known how to word them—I thought the pledge was too good.” After graduating, Smith is on track to get a work full-time. “My preference is to get into residential carpentry with a general contractor, and just keep learning. I would love to learn more about everything.”

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN STEIGER



Voncaira Williams, 30
Detroit, MI | Electrical

VONCAIRA WILLIAMS HIT roadblock after roadblock in her path toward a career in the trades. After high school, she tried vocational school and community college, but found it hard to juggle work, classes and tuition payments. Working in a factory as a tool and die trader, she found there was no room for growth. Frustrated, she heeded the advice of a coworker who encouraged her to check into union apprenticeships. With a natural aptitude for

math—"It was my strongest subject in school"—Williams was accepted for a five-year electrical apprenticeship with the IBEW/Local 55 and NECA in Detroit. She is now three to four years into the training. Williams, describing her first days: "They put me in a construction site, with lots of dirt and mud, and when our foreman put me in, I was nervous, but my foreman showed me how to work smart in situations

where I couldn't rely on physical strength. I've been skydiver since. The full-time paid apprenticeship includes one day of class every other week for Williams, who also juggles the role of mother to her 12-year-old daughter. But she finds the demanding schedule well worth it. "I'm really good hands as far as the training, there are so many things I can do like the hands-on work doing math everyday and being part of one of the most highly skilled of the trades."

Ross Burr, 23
Newport, RI | Architectural Wood and Stonework



NOT MANY COLLEGE GRADUATES could credit a classic historic cemetery restoration as inspiring their career choice, but Ross Burr does. A recent graduate of the four-year Cultural and Historic Preservation program at Salve Regina University in Newport, RI, Burr had known since high school that he wanted to be a builder. "I liked history, and when I got an internship logo to Salve, I was thrilled because I knew there were so many historic houses and buildings in Newport," says Burr. He worked for a carpenter during his first two summers home from college, which fueled his interest in restoring pre-20th-century houses. During his sophomore year, the historic cemetery restoration class was awarded Burr to the skills involved in preserving architectural wood and stone. He was able to get mentorship with the Preservation Society of Newport County, which has evolved into part-time jobs and has been doing conservation work for the last two years. "We do things like re-patina pieces of bronze, patch repair stone urns and fountains, and reverse old techniques that have caused damage," says Burr. For a recent project, he helped repair intricate carvings on a marble column at one of the Gilded Age mansions in Newport.

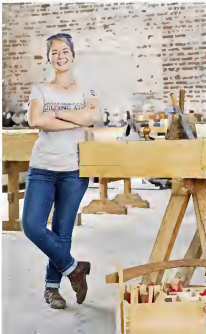
Having completed his B.A. in culture and historic preservation, he plans to apply to restoration programs to do work in architectural wood or stone. "I know I want to work with houses and buildings," says Burr, "but until I enter the program, I didn't know about history or historic preservation. I hope more people get the opportunity to explore this kind of work."

Jennifer Sustar, 29 Milwaukee, WI | Timber Framing

COMING FROM A FAMILY of carpenters and cabinetmakers, Jennifer Sustar should have known she would end up working with wood. Today, she is a first-year timber framing major at the American College of the Building Arts (ACBA) in Charleston, SC, a four-year college that combines hands-on skill building in the preservation trades with academic coursework.

Sustar became interested in old buildings as a teenager in her native Milwaukee, where she volunteered at the Soldiers Home, a national historic landmark built to care for Civil War soldiers. "Many people don't pay attention to these buildings and I thought they were amazing," says Sustar, who took three years out after high school to travel, teach and work for AmeriCorps, which included a stint at a commercial farm in Wisconsin. After that, she completed a B.A. in historic preservation at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, VA, where she learned the research and documentation aspects of preservation.

Now, at ACBA, she is gaining the hands-on experience that will enable her to devote herself to work in the preservation of rural architecture. "I love farms and old agricultural buildings. They tell a part of our history." Her first-year work at ACBA includes learning the basics of hand tools and wood science, and Sustar couldn't be happier. "I have always been a hands-on learner. My biggest fear is having a job where I sit at a desk all day. I love being out there doing things."



PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER SHAW



Nick Portnoy, 34 Watertown, MA | General Contracting

BOSTON AREA NATIVE Nick Portnoy headed west just after high school to study at the University of Southern California for a career in the film industry, but a stagehand job at the campus theater fresh many years changed everything. He started out doing basic carpentry tasks for the theater, and when word came that summer, he asked for a builder. "I recall Portnoy, 'I really loved the feeling of making something when you step back and look at the work and what you've

accomplished.' Convinced he would one day work in the building trades, he added construction management as a minor when he returned to USC and continued to take on larger carpentry projects at the theater. Graduating in 2004 with a B.S. in petriol science and construction management, Portnoy went directly to work for a builder in Watertown, MA, as a carpenter. "I had enough experience as a stagehand and from summer jobs that I knew my way around the

tools, but there was so much to learn in the field." In 2007, he started his own residential remodeling and construction firm in Watertown. Now, with three people working for him, he sees the process of training from a different perspective. "In the field, you need to do things at a certain pace—it's nice to have a teachable moment, but you really can't afford to do it all the time. It's a big help if people have some basic education. Really counts for a lot."

PHOTOGRAPH BY CARL TRIMBLAY



Geoffrey Keating, 41
Colorado Springs, CO | Furniture Making

WHEN GEOFFREY KEATING USES the phrase "loop of faith" to describe the move he made to leave a Ph.D. program and professor's job to become a furniture maker, he means it in the fullest sense. Keating was working toward a doctorate in theology at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana when he decided to leave a different calling. "I just said, 'I'm not cooking small things for friends, and then larger pieces like decks, for professors,'" he recalls. "I realized I made

no conscious sense for me in terms of how happy I was. Academia just wasn't a good fit." Descending stairs along one of his furniture makers on his mother's side, he was exposed to the craft while growing up in Amarillo, TX. Today, Keating also occupies the ground floor of an 1880s Gold Rush-era building in Colorado Springs, CO, that he and his wife, Anna, bought several years ago. They like upstairs with their two young children. His passion for the work is evident

in the details of each piece, from the beautiful hand-rubbed oil finishes to the refined materials of black walnut and ash to the dovetailing on every drawer. His clients, primarily individuals and designers, hail from around the country. Guided by a strong desire to give back, Keating also mentors all students from near by Colorado College, sharing with them his reverence for the craft and his belief that "making furniture is an incredibly satisfying pursuit."

Samantha Lombardo, 26
Medford, MA | Gardening and Horticulture



GROWING UP, Samantha Lombardo wants to ensure she wanted to further her love of animals. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Agriculture from the University of Massachusetts, a degree school with an emphasis on farming, animal husbandry, horticulture, and conservation. Then something unexpected happened—she learned that horticulture was not a degree in horticulture and a bachelor's in urban forestry. She credits the college's emphasis on internships with exposing her to the actual work of gardening.

Today, Lombardo serves as head gardener and horticulturist at Jean Brooks Landscapes, a landscape firm in Chelsea, MA. "I love when I finish installing a site back and the garden is completely transformed," she says. Horticulture continues on the job. "It's fun trying to deal with people who are not as plants. Right out of college, I didn't necessarily know how to do that because I had never managed anyone." As a gardener in cold climates, she enjoys the perk of being able to travel for a month during the winter. But then it is back in February, and she starts her pruning, she adds. Her goal is to one day run her own business, or return to her high school science major. "I definitely know in the future, it's so important for our future."

Surprise Inside

A little more room, a little more color, and a lot more personal style turn a family's once-bland 1950s Colonial Revival into a home that's truly their own



By **Deborah Baldwin**
Photographs by **Alexandra Rowley**
Produced by **Colette Scanlon**
Styling by **Lauren Payne**

ABOVE: The house was in good shape but the living spaces felt uninvited and impersonal. With the help of a Bloor project team, the homeowners' parents of two young kids, had vision to give their old a Bloor

RIGHT: The family room serves as an escape for the busy household. Cabin red accents of red and white, along with a custom coffee table made from a salvaged table, plus a dining table and chairs that everyone can use for weekend work, that's living. Photo: J. J. Jones





Being able to read a room is like having a third eye. One glance and you know exactly where the sofa belongs—and exactly how it should look. Add three scrupulously proportioned accent pillows, a perfect color palette, an arm rug or two, a few cool light fixtures, and maybe some Roman shades, and boom, you're done. Time to take a look at the dining room.

Or maybe you're happier reading a book.

On leaving your head against the wall, "I would spend hours in House," says self-described visually challenged homeowner Suzanne Buckle, referring to the popular website and evoking a scenario that many readers will find familiar. "All I wanted was something I could copy, but nothing was remotely possible in the space I had, and I thought, How do

ABOVE: Homeowner Suzanne Buckle liked the kitchen but came with the house had it needed greater features. When the open shelving unit wasn't right, she turned to a contractor designer who would do all the heavy lifting. After being through this process, Buckle says, "I truly believe you either have an ability to visualize what something will look like or you don't." *Project: Visual Comfort Stock Photo*

people do that? These million pictures, there should be something I cannot do this. I just paint—that's what we called her."

The years on the other end of the line belonged to Jules Duffie, an interior designer in Madison, New Jersey, who also qualified as a decorator, soundboard, project coordinator, and creative coprocessor—in so, "The wallpaper you picked out before I got here is a little paring, but we can work with it."

"Many times homeowners come to me when they are stuck," says Duffie, whose supportive demeanor and proven portfolio put her clients at ease. "They've made some purchases but they are having a difficult time, and homeowners are not inexpensive." Paraphrasing an old adage, Duffie says, "Referring to a certain real-estate



ADJECTIVE: A light-filled living space of the bar and at breakfast, the table to do business with, with a long range of the look. Finished with durable hardwood and stain-resistant materials, the gathering space is designed for hard knocks, as is a storage-packed mudroom built on ADJUSTABLE Table Trolley Furniture Company's Marquette Series Delinea & Lilla.

Floor Plans

The 2000 house came with four bedrooms, two and a half baths, and a one-story bump-out in back that the previous owner had added to make it a good-size family room. This latest work added 100 square feet of space over the bump-out for a total of about 3,000 square feet, allowing a master suite with matching walk-in closets. In the process, the hall bath lost a window and gained a skylight.





helps when that rug that had crept into the home of Suzanne and her husband, Dave, the says simply, "We forced a way through that."

The house, a 1930s Colonial Revival, in Fair Haven, New Jersey, came with an updated kitchen and pleasing elements like an evocative, arched passageway between the kitchen and family room. But the place felt empty and the rooms didn't really hang together. The master suite was dated and cramped, with a master bath and a boy's bedroom so tightly fit, Suzanne drolly recalls, "if someone came to the front door they could look up the stairs and see laundry piled on our bed."

The couple had two, married, and merged their various farmhouses or a starter house in Wyland, Massachusetts, and moving to the New Jersey suburbs, Suzanne says, gave them a chance to furnish their first "real" house. "The children were 2 and 4, and we had a very hard time to decide—on

ABOVE LEFT The dining room absorbed an existing kitchen table and chairs, complemented by ornate, tapered chairs, a plush rug, and richly patterned curtains. *Photo: Jeffery Ray, Japanning*

ABOVE RIGHT A custom console table in the family room wrapped in patterned fabric. *Lighting: American House Interior, Middle Bucks*

OPPOSITE The family room is a striking mix of old and new, featuring a built-in and painted fireplace, a custom console table, and a plush rug.



practically bought a house," Suzanne says. "But we got very lucky, because we lost the house and the neighborhood."

They couldn't say the same about the contents of their moving van, or about the few things they acquired in the flush of new-home-ness.

"We wanted to update and bring some freshness to the house and also preserve the integrity of the look," Suzanne says reasonably. But then there was that rug, along with two upholstered island stools that had also caused Dave's concern. Plus a pair of pendant fixtures to go over the kitchen island, which, once out of the box, "didn't look right at all," Suzanne says.

In fairness, she had several solidifying design tips from another market at the playground, whose high-design expertise she had admired, and it's hard to get the best selection when you're scouring showrooms with a restless 3-year-old boy.





"[Help] is probably what I started with," Sumner says of her first call to Duffy.

Duffy took up the question of the pendant fixtures then turned to the family room, a gathering space blessed by a row of windows on one wall and period-style bathtubs on another. With so little enclosed wall space, Duffy left aside suggesting a dropped ceiling, as that would add dimension, giving the room, in his opinion, "a singular personality without making it feel too heavy." And incidentally, the scheme made the problem rug look intentional, allowing it to stay.

Data in the dining room, where the unlabeled kitchen table seemed oddly at home among polished finishes like full-length mirrors, a candleless chandelier, and another roomed wall covering, that one offering a subtle mental break.

With the weight of decision-making reduced, the homeowners were ready for bigger things, and every year later they expanded the team to include

architect Marcus Goodman and general contractor Dele Marcelli, both of whom longtime homeowners picked to move forward with maximum second-guessing. "They were open to ideas, with no preconceived notions, and that made it so much easier," says Goodman.

The happily copacetic team hammered out a plan to capture space above the existing one-story addition while also gutting the old master suite, yielding 104 square feet to rebuild and finish from scratch. They laid out a waste route, in bedroom capped by a new tray ceiling finished with runs in keeping with the rest of the house. "With a master suite you want to get a little fancy out of it," Goodman says. "When there's an attic above it, it's an opportunity to get extra space, so it's not just a larger child's bedroom."

The bed, moved away from the door for a more private feel, now stretches out between two windows, and the bath is down a "hall" of facing walls or closets. "Everything feels just a little bit bigger," Goodman says.

"It's clean and finished there's plenty of room," says Sumner. "I can really relax in here—it's where I want to hang out after the kids are in bed."

To accommodate the new space, Marcelli had to engineer a deck on the edge of the roof, doing in longer rafters before rebuilding a third of the roof. He was delighted to find framing for the floor already in place—the previous owners had clearly planned to add on in much the same way—as construction was relatively painless.

He says a big help was having nice people to work with. "They were actually fun," he says of the homeowners, adding, "with no ego." It really helped that Mr. Foster is so great a home-making decorator. "That hasn't always been her forte, at all, because 'Cinderella' the couple's new found confidence—and a little boost from their favorite pro. ■

OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE
 Marcus Goodman increased space from the attic to create a big living room in the new master suite from Lefebvre while from "Kemper's" drawings, "And a couple extra feet of height makes it grander." Left: remodels will be well-represented and symmetry will be the same as in the first floor. Right: Carpet, Silver Carpet, Bloomington Carpet.

ABOVE The design team created a sight line from the terrace into the new master suite. The new master suite is a mirrored wall and two new ones are a clock double vanity. The modern cabinet is off to the side. Source: House Comfort.

before + after

Neat trick

Sleek new cabinets and a second pantry create order and enable entertaining in this family-friendly cook space

BY NEIL MALACH | PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAURA MOSS
PRODUCED BY TIGRA LEUNG | STYLING BY JENNIFER VITELAND HUBERMOTT

Kitchens are naturally clutter prone, only becoming messier as when kids enter the picture. As parents to be, Ryan and Meredith Maffei Kapp had just that in mind when designing the new cook space in their 1935 farmhouse in Franklin Lakes, New Jersey. "We needed more storage to hold baby gear, plus prep surfaces resistant to chips and scars," Meredith says. "And that 'tilt down' had to go!"

To begin, they annexed part of the adjacent den to create a walk-in dry goods pantry with room for the refrigerator alongside it, opening up space for an island. To improve flow, they carved out a second passageway to the living room. As for the sink wall, that turned out to be no easy fix. "We found confusing framing, plus different water and gas lines and two electrical boxes banded in that exterior wall," Ryan says. "So we ended up gutting the whole mess." Sleek black bamboo replaced the worn laminate flooring as easy-care quartz countertop and childproof latches were in on all the fussy panel cabinet doors—a move with daughter Kate, now 2. And when company comes over? The host's pantry turned double station is ready to serve.

The DIY duo handled about a third of the redo work themselves, and they love the results. "We entertain a lot, and our friends and family have children, so a big, open, clutter-free kitchen is vital," says Meredith. "New ones is perfect."

BEFORE Dark cabinets set a gloomy mood and offered little space for both storage and prep.

AFTER An island replaces cluttered in the room's layout and creates the work surface. The couple sweetened the marble tile wall by installing a new backsplash.



BEFORE

Shelves of soft fabric towels in front of the window bring the outside in.



before + after

Smart storage

Smart appliances can encroach on needed counter space, so the Kipsos installed these pantry shelves with a lock-out cutoff for the microwave and toaster oven. French doors with glass fronts let you see the pantry's food and ensure it stays orderly and it's on display.



homeowner tip

MINOR vs. MAJOR RENOVATIONS: No "Test butcher block with mineral oil, inexpensive and easy to find at both grocery and drugstores, it's also completely food safe."



Special effects

The seafaring owner wanted the bar for a party to have a fresh look without drama molding and brass pulls and hinges. The owner chose a sophisticated stainless-steel bar with a mix of polished and brushed metal. Undercabinet lighting adds a glamorous glow to the bar at night.

At your service

To accommodate tall bottles on the counter, the Kipsos took out a wall to raise the upper cabinets by about 6 inches. To burst up the vintage appeal, they refinished the boxes with 1/2-inch plywood and raised the original brass undercabinet lighting, adding a glamorous glow to the bar at night.



Adding dishes and a dog tag pendant to the bar's mounted surfaces also pendant.

Storage central

In the island, above the recycling and trash while drawers hold everything else and cookware. A wine fridge stands ready to dispense party drinks or a quick beverage. An overhang at one end of the butcher block countertop offers just the spot to grab a bite or make a shopping list. **Interior cabinets: Green Demolition**

before

The kitchen was short on food storage and prep space, and the fridge wasn't integrated.



after

By bumping it feet into the den, the kitchen gained a second pantry, a place to park in the fridge, and an island—for a total of 277 square feet.



1. Removed upper cabinets, added floating shelves. Kept dishwasher sink and cooking locations the same.
2. Put in a storage island with a new fridge and an overhang at one end for casual dining.
3. Bumped 4 feet into the den to create a walk-in dry goods pantry lined with shelves.
4. Built an L-shaped peninsula that tucks up to right to create a sit-down dining area near the kitchen.
5. Removed a built-in island to create a second pantry for better circulation between kitchen and living room.
6. Shipped the refrigerator and reinstalled it between the two pantries to fine-tune floor space.

Staking Her Claim

A homeowner hits pay dirt with an abandoned miner's cabin in the San Diego mountains

by David Masello
photographs by Lisa Rortensen
produced by Nicole Caputo Polly
styling by Sunday Henderson



Cathy Scott, above, in front of her renovated 1920s cabin in Julian, California. RIGHT: The circa 1900s mine house is making new look includes an expanded front deck and a canopy to shelter the front door. Shingled railroad ties to rise the slope in front of the house before the deck is built to decorative and practical keeping out unwanted visitors





All the clues were there, for a hint telling our crime author. She came upon the body lying some 4,100 feet up the Cuyamaca Mountains in San Diego County. By her estimate, the victim had been left unattended for more than 50 years, though its age could be traced from as far back as 1938. The body, in this case, was a 334-square-foot man's cabin. Some of its parts—deck boards, shingles, fixtures—were scattered close by, and there was evidence of prior visitors, and even squatters, some of whom clearly had been up to no good.

Despite its battered condition the little house as alleged writer Cathy Ryan. As she saw it, the cabin was still mostly intact, facing west and perched securely on its original stone foundation. "The reason I first saw the cabin, I stood in front and envisioned myself living in it," she recalls. "When I was growing up in San Diego, my dad bought an up to this area every year to pick grapes off the vines. I love this mountain and the trees." It was on her second visit recently later due she put in an offer to buy it.

While the cozy cabin had an immediate appeal for Cathy, the nearby one-third acre lot surrounding it was a dither with oak trees and tangles of vines, and strewn with trash that, as the result, "It looked like nightmare all the time. No sunlight came through." So one of her first tasks was to clear and trim trees,

ABOVE: Opposite the living area's sofa is a 42-inch flat-screen TV with a stainless steel wall above it. A wooden oak vanity sits in one side and the kitchen is on the other. Glass panel doors on white cabinets help keep the space light and bright. Outdoor cabinets. All Brothers' Fine Woodworking

Floor Plan

The 32 by 44-foot cabin has an open plan, the only interior room. The built-in is concealed behind a pocket door to eliminate a door swing. The built-in is tucked into a cozy nook formed by one of the bathroom walls.



CEILING: The vaulted ceiling and its white paint palette adds brightness and height to help the small space feel expansive. The new solid-oak front door has a rustic Spanish Colonial look. Tempered glass dual panes in the apartment vinyl frames bring the windows up to date. French-style door windows. All wood

PHOTOGRAPHY





sightings could show in the little 13-by-18-foot house.

At the time, Carby was living and working in Las Vegas, writing her popular books, which include *Master of a Mafia Daughter* and *The Killing of Tupac Shakur*, as well as teaching journalism at the University of Nevada. She spent four months in New Orleans researching *Parasites of Extremes*, which documents the rescue of animals following the hurricane, the largest such endeavor in American history. The sight of New Orleans's ruined residential neighborhoods made a lasting impression, changing Carby's perspective on how to live and what to own. "I realized I didn't need a lot of things to be well," she says, "and I wanted to make as low an impact on the environment as I could."

As a writer accustomed to out-of-control chaos, Carby discovered early on that the reason the cabin was so well was because it had been built from a lot of good by Sears, Roebuck and Co. back in the 1920s. Made from quality materials, these mail-order houses, when assembled correctly, were as strong today. Once it was finished, the cabin had likely served as a back house for local masses seeking gold and later,

SPOTLIGHT Carby found small-scale fixtures and appliances that would meet her needs. The 20- by 17½-inch sink is large enough for bathing her three dogs just 20 inches under the shelf no more holds four barbers. The fridge is 25 inches high side to side. *See: Signature Hardware Range, Ascent Porcelain and Suburban Summit*

ABOVE LEFT The bed is headboard is attached to the wall. A tiny shelf supported by brackets serves as a bedside table.

ABOVE RIGHT Tucked behind a peckerholer, the bed includes a 30-inch vanity and a window cabinet. *Ascent from Sears stand the shower and toilet (not shown). Vase: Signature Hardware's*

owners searching for something when the colored material became a popular jewelry moon. After determining that it was structurally sound, she started in on the renovation.

With money from each new book advance from her publisher, Carby would embark on the next round of work on the cabin, proceeding in stages. Her contractor, Larry Noble, provided a plan as it was during what became a nearly five-year-long process. "As far as the structure itself went, not a whole lot needed to be done," says Noble.

One of the more significant exterior issues involved removing two existing doors on the front of the cabin that were hinged like carriage doors. After taking them down, Noble rebuilt the whole wall, down to the framing, installing the new front door and flanking it with upgraded windows.

The footprints of the house remained the same, but Noble did replace the shiplap siding with clapboards, followed by the deck, the roof, and eventually the interior walls. "We removed some of the drywall and saw that the studs on the inside were fine, but we did frame up the walls with double



the transformers

You thought a powder-room redo was hard? Try juggling the countless details that go into a whole-house renovation, then summoning the stamina to do it again—and again. It's no big deal for these serial renovators, with eight houses behind them and energy to spare

It's a warm fall day, the kind that propels many people toward the rustic outdoor cafe. But Juliet Frost isn't out to sit at all, and certainly not today. Instead, she's atop a ladder, reaching to snap hinges on a front door she happens to be fixing up. "I'm enjoying the whole thing," she says of renovation projects, large or small.

Meet one of America's leading home-improvement champs, an unflappable real estate mogul, landscape, project manager, DIYer, and interior-designer whose, against all odds, has mastered renovation without tears. Or procrastination, regret, and humiliating cost overruns—unless you count the time she and her equally handy husband and renovation partners, Nigel, were interrupted while on vacation by an emergency call involving a septic tank. "That was expensive," she says mildly.

Known for their caring approach to homeownership, the couple, in their fifties, share a passion for righting architectural wrongs and making rooms feel airy and comfortable. "I can stand in the driveway and know that a window needs repainting and another one over there," says Juliet, who has similar instincts when it comes to paint colors and plastering. Soft-spoken and slightly reserved, she is the visual genius, while Nigel applies his financial smarts, manages the crew, and dry walls it

OPPOSITE: AS in the family—Juliet and Nigel Frost tackle their most recent job. The couple's 1980s shingle-clad wood-and-stone house first came with a fine challenge here. The couple got a hand from their 22-year-old son and Juliet's 85-year-old dad.

BY ROMY POWRNY WEINBERG • PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID YELLEN



ABOVE: Family members go to Connecticut house No. 5 to review the plans. From left: Juliet Frost's father, John van Amerongen; Nigel and daughter, Georgia; Juliet manages many of the details from generalizing computer renderings and securing permission to select fixtures. Her favorite sources include Restoration Hardware (the windows) and Pottery Barn (the dining table). They're going to go to eat!

ELIZABETH: Georgia at age 8 was already showing such grown-up behavior: granddaddy John

house to help make everything go smoothly.

Before moving to Wrentham, Connecticut, 35 years ago, the couple bought, repaired, and sold three houses in England. Their first find on this side of the pond, a white clapboard house that dates to about 1945, may have sent other buyers packing, but to them the property "just felt right," Juliet says with characteristic aplomb. "And it was in better condition than some we'd seen."

That house is still their home base. But they have since picked up four other ready projects, one by one. Rather than fix and flip, this successful couple trades and rents out.

Setbacks that might panic others are par for the course. Credit their British sangfroid and upbringing. As a child, Juliet heard her mother, a photographer, talk about color and narrow design, while her dad did his own carpentry and masonry, at one point building an addition from scratch. "When some thing went wrong, we never called someone in to do it, that was Dad," Juliet recalls. Years later, when her parents started a commercial interior-design business, Juliet joined in.

Though her mother is no longer living, her father, John, still serves as Juliet's sounding board and occasional crew member. "I call him every day," she says. John and Nigel are old chums. Back in 1986, Nigel would Juliet by offering to help his future father-in-law install his down. More recently, when Nigel needed help building a deck, John jumped on a plane.

At a time when renovations in their neck of the woods are uncommon as hedge fund managers, here are two passionate old-house lovers who believe in preserving what's there. "They have a clear vision,"

says architect Steve Kozilek, who has worked with them on several renovations, "particularly when it comes to adding onto and restoring an old house that most people would turn their backs on."

What's more, they are making a second living by doing a sensible, tasteful, and well-cost-conscious design in mind. Sub Zero fridge and Wolf range? They'd rather have old-fashioned walls in purity.

"Our perfect house is somewhere between a knockdown and what an enthusiastic DIY person would want," says Nigel. "We look for one that has good—a first dream—home, and a location where the house sits well." And while it's hard to predict the vicissitudes of the real estate market, they aim to be able to sell a property for 25 percent more than they have paid in, even while generating 6 percent off their investment each year in rental income.

No sooner had the two survived reconstructing their own house than they "got the itch to do another," Juliet recalls. Conversely, a "90s era house with some cash appeal happened to be for sale right across the street." Five years we dreamed of how we could improve it," Juliet says—where it was on the market, the couple felt like they'd been given a giant high five. They gave the dog a major face-lift, successfully improving the view from the rear front yard and turning the house into a source of central



family portfolio

After moving through three whole-house renovations in their home country, England, Nigel and Juliet Frost took their skills to Connecticut, where they have been busy indeed



PROJECT 1

In 2001, the couple acquired a circa 1800s white clapboard house with a barn. Working with architect Steve Kozilek, they renovated and sold it. They still live there—and are still saving improvements.



BEFORE



PROJECT 3

Next comes a cottage with a capping roof. The couple moved it there, among other things, and cleaned up the facade. This Juliet, having earned a landscape design certificate and a capstone letter. See, the yard



BEFORE



PROJECT 2

Acquired 1970s house across the street from Project 1. It fell into the couple's hands four years ago. They gave it a major face lift, removed it inside, and found a partner before the paint was dry.



BEFORE



PROJECT 4

Two years ago, the couple tackled a 1750 farm house on the same property as Project 3. After a lot of trouble, the house had seen it all. They repaired the foundation, and rebuilt the facade and interior. For Project 5, the time has come.



BEFORE



THE PLAN



And it's on to PROJECTS

Last year the couple couldn't find another local spot: a 1960s stone and wood clad house with four fireplaces, a horse stable—and a kitchen without access. 1971. The back of the house, as work was underway, looked like the first photo. **BELOW** will give wide shed dormers with a gable over the stone and wood windows, as shown in the rendering. **INSET**



months. Then, like a chef who polishes all designs and promptly starts thinking about breakfast, they looked around for more.

Three houses and three great contractors later, they are still going strong—and, when it comes, still speaking to each other. Indeed, it's hard to find evidence of the usual years-over months, paint colors, and who gets to spread it all day in the garage, a building permit. Each time, says Juliet, "we've done it how we wanted to do it, asking ourselves, 'What would we want if we lived in it?'"

The pair even managed to measure their beds. At age 18, Georgia was doing work gloves to help her. Now 25 and working toward a Ph.D. in neuroscience, she can still be spotted, on occasion, walking around the yard on a six-down mower. Her brother, James, used to bring home a pair of pants when he was a teen. Now 22, he came home from college last summer to paint the barn behind house No. 5. "No one likes painting," he says philosophically, "and not I happy when I'm doing it? Probably not! But anyone could pay to have a nice-looking barn when you've done it your way." ■

It helps that Juliet takes charge while Nigel is off in New York City, where he works by day as an investment banker. It also helps that he comes

through the door at night with his head in architectural imperfections—he was trained as a structural engineer—and it's not too painful to strip wallpaper and patch walls.

One benefit of turning pro is developing ongoing relationships with other pros. The Franks' support system includes a real estate agent, Debbie Rehr, who knows what they like (and how to make it marketable) home inspectors who can often call out potentially costly repairs; and Kordle, who makes demands their values as well as how to pick up a blind ladder with a dozen or so parties.

It was Rehr who introduced them to their current general contractor, Ricardo Carro. "We want to do lots of things ourselves," Nigel says. "Some builders don't like that and it costs more." Juliet repays the favor by jumping in her truck when Carro needs supplies and making a run to the lumberyard.

"It's hard work," says John with barely a grin. Says Juliet, "You have to want to do it, to be happy doing it." The odds "I actually find it really satisfying. You take something that's new and you finish it and you've accomplished something." As for those who'd like to follow in her footsteps, her dad has a few wise words. "Think about it very, very carefully. And then maybe do something else!" ■

ABOVE Juliet centers with general contractor Ricardo Carro during the gut renovation of the couple's latest project in Brooklyn, Carroll Gardens. They own most of her houses, but in one, including all three, he generates income for their social-media empire.

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THE HISTORY This is prominent landowner Thomas Turner built the house around 1860, he likely saw it as little more than a practical home for his wife and seven children. But the complicated history began with its design, believed to have been done by estate known only as Turner, who had been sent to England for architecture and training to create his master's house.

Decades later, the house was inherited by Turner's granddaughter Nellie, who, in 1918 moved to an adjacent lot on large timber with the help of a tenant house, and the house fit in addition into the structure. The house stayed in the family through World War II and has been well cared for by successive owners. Now it must be redesigned to make way for an industrial park. Preservation North Carolina is all caught for time to save owner with the means and motivation to tackle the project.

WHY SAVE IT? The house was built as a Greek Revival and retains distinctive features, including marble-and-onion framing. Inside are original period details such as one-over-one windows and a handsome staircase, as well as updates from Nellie's time, including a Craftsman style mural.

WHAT IT NEEDS The 3,850 square foot house is in remarkably good shape, but with the move will lose the ivy-like plaster registers as well as new windows. The project offers a unique chance to view a piece of local history in the town of Henderson located just 40 minutes from Raleigh and the state's Research Triangle. —PAUL HOPE



1



2

2. The original indoor pool and stone bathroom.
3. An upstairs bedroom shows off a handsome paneled floor casing, half heartboards and wall-to-wall yellow pine floors.



3

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4

Free!
Nice Greek
Revival in need of a
new home

1. The four bedrooms have 10-12 inch wide, a standing-seam metal roof, a full width porch, and is finished by brick chimneys.
2. The Craftsman style mural was added during a 1930 renovation.



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ActiClean™
Self-Cleaning Toilet



You may not be ready for unexpected visitors. But your toilet will be.

Introducing the ActiClean™ self-cleaning toilet.

In a world full of surprises, it's nice to know you can always count on a sanitized, deep-scoured toilet. With a simple push of a button, the new ActiClean™ toilet takes one of the most dreaded jobs on your to-do list and scrubs it right off. The best part? It's more affordable than you think. See how it works at americanstandard.com



Cleaning cycle control panel is discreetly located on the toilet tank lid. Just flip up the panel cover to use.

*American
Standard*