# This Old OUSE

### Editors' Picks

Our favorite furnishings to brighten your home

# Easy cottage projects

Simple wall paneling
 Furniture finishes with patina
 Vintage-look coatrack

SEPTEMBER 2012 | THISOLDHOUSE.COM

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602000

5925T/bEO

15 cozy

ideas

DAVID H WILLIAMS 517 HIDDENBROOK DR 5833-8683 MAHAUNC 2703-8683

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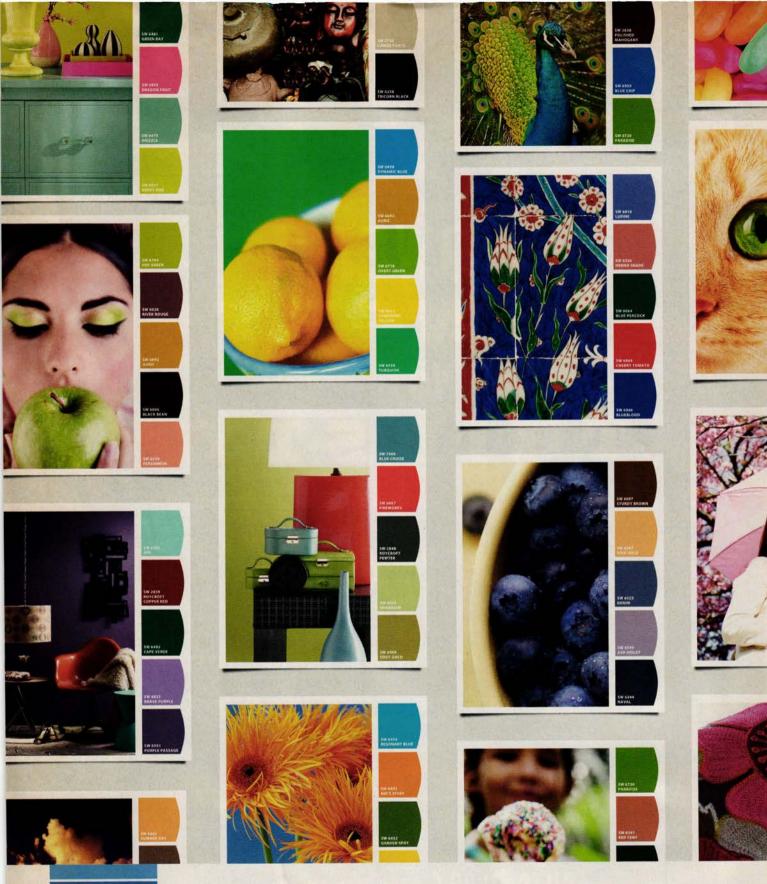
#5804 6272 360# ТН 099NC02 ФРЕДЗ #6×идети ининининиске-кт Lotank-039 built-ins, beadboard, painted floors, and sunny gardens

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12









by

SHERWIN-WILLIAMS.

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# {September 2012} Contents

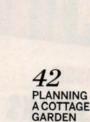
### COTTAGE STYLE SPECIAL

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COZY BY DESIGN



# 

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Cover Photograph by RAY KACHATORIAN Styling by CARYL EAGLE

# FROM OUR TABLE TO YOURS

We've very passionate about what we do. We love our work, we love our land and we want to keep it in the family for generations. And that's something people can feel good about.

Rich Roth 1x Ranch Montana

### Mustand Repper Beet Steales A ROTH FAMILY COOKOUT CLASSIC MUSTARD PEPPER BEEF STEAKS



### Total recipe time: 30 minutes

### Ingredients

4 boneless beef top loin (strip) steaks, cut 1 inch thick (about 21/2 to 3 pounds) Salt (optional)

### Marinade

- 1/4 cup apple juice or apple cider
- 2 tablespoons coarse-grind Dijon-style mustard
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 4 large cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon coarse-grind black pepper

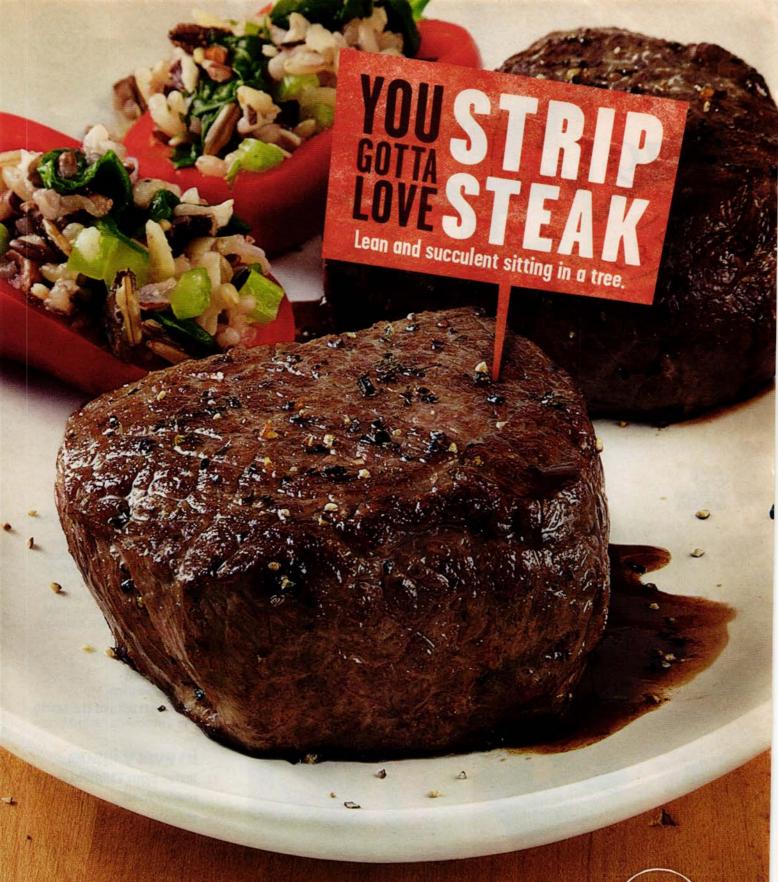
### Makes 8 servings

- 1. Combine sauce ingredients in small bowl. Remove and reserve 1/4 cup for basting. Brush steaks with remaining sauce.
- 2. Place steaks on grid over medium, ash-covered coals. Grill, covered, 11 to 14 minutes (over medium heat on preheated gas grill, 11 to 15 minutes) for medium rare (145°F) to medium (160°F) doneness, turning occasionally. Baste steaks with reserved 1/4 cup sauce during last 10 minutes of grilling.
- 3. Carve steaks into slices. Season with salt, if desired.

Nutrition information per serving (1/8 of recipe): 205 calories; 7 g fat (3 g saturated fat, 3 g monounsaturated fat); 68 mg cholesterol; 142 mg sodium; 2 g carbohydrate; 0.3 g fiber; 31 g protein; 8.9 mg niacin; 0.7 mg vitamin B<sub>6</sub>; 1.7 mcg vitamin B<sub>12</sub>; 2.2 mg iron; 36.0 mcg selenium; 5.7 mg zinc; 118.9 mg choline.

This recipe is an excellent source of protein, niacin, vitamin B<sub>6</sub>, vitamin B<sub>12</sub>, selenium, zinc and choline; and a good source of iron.





S-I-Z-Z-L-I-N-G along with 10 essential nutrients. Now that's a love story. Get the "Petite Steaks with Wild Rice Baby Peppers" recipe at BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com. Funded by The Beef Checkoff



### contents { September 2012 }





Give boring kitchen cabinets a boost with four simple fixes, like this bright and cheery open-shelf treatment.









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# letter { from This Old House }

### How a redo deadline is born

I have questions, though I don't know if anyone can answer them. The first: Why did my brother decide to remodel his kitchen six weeks before his pregnant wife's due date?

I tried to ask my brother this when he drafted me to help, and before I could even finish the question, he yelled, "Because I'm nesting, that's why!" I told him nesting was something that pregnant women did, not men whose bellies might make them look pregnant.

Didn't matter. After I dodged the hammer he tossed at me, we both got to work on the rebuilding, at our usual slow pace. Just to put that pace into perspective: There was one Saturday not long ago, while redoing his basement, when we added a grand total of one 2×4. We spent the rest of the day bickering. This is a wellknown phenomenon in our family.

So it came as a serious wake-up call when, at B (for *baby*) minus four weeks and counting, and with the kitchen only rewired and drywalled, we learned his wife had a condition that might require an early delivery—as in the-next-few-days early!



We kicked into high gear, and while it was at first unclear that we were working faster, we were definitely sniping at each other at twice the normal rate. On the first Saturday, we replaced a window, added a washer and dryer, and hung the upper cabinets. During the next week, my sister-in-law continued to get dire reports; but the floor tile arrived, and my brother installed it over two nights and grouted it on a third. And the next weekend, with the help of our uncle Joe, we moved a gas line and heat registers and installed all the lower cabinets and the appliances.

It was something of a miracle: a new kitchen, save the professional installation of the countertops, in only three or four full working days. Some might think it's also a miracle that just as we were finishing up, late that Saturday, my sister-in-law heard from her midwife. Surprising news! The latest tests came back and things had improved—there wouldn't need to be an early delivery!

And that brings me to question number two. Just how clever is my sister-in-law? Was there really a condition? Or was it just a diabolically brilliant scheme to achieve what my brother and I could never figure out how to do ourselves: finish a project on time? We'll never know. She and the baby aren't talking.

SCOTT OMELIANUK, EDITOR scott@thisoldhouse.com

...Oh, and before I forget, question number three: What does this Letter From TOH have to do with the theme of this month's issue, cottage style? Nothing, other than to serve as an emotional antonym. Whereas my brother's remodel was forced, fast, and frantic, cottage is relaxing. The very word itself is comforting. Attach it to anything, and that thing gets better: cottage fries, cottage pies, cottage pudding, cottage cheese...well, not cottage cheese—no one likes cottage cheese—but you get the idea. I hope you enjoy the issue.



### Have you tried TOH on tablet yet?

Thousands of print subscribers have begun to

get *This Old House* free on the iPad, Kindle Fire, and Nook Color. Beginning with this issue, there's even more reason to download our app. The tablet edition contains exclusive content, including bonus images for the "Cozy by Design" story, on page 72, and a video tour of the home featured in the Save This Old House column. It's fast, easy, and free to download, and you won't find it anywhere else. Check it out, and let me know what you think.

# readermail

**July's 100% Reader-Created Issue** was a hit—especially with the readers whose hard work offered inspiration on every page. Our Reader Remodel Contest curb-appeal winners shared their celebration (if not a bite of the fabulous cake, below). A few readers questioned the ethical implications of one Cheapskate Hall of Fame caper, while others let us know why they consider *TOH* a keeper come renewal time.

### Edible garden

Dawn [Peters] and I had a party to celebrate our house's appearance in TOH magazine ["One-Room Wonders," July 2012, page 84] and my birthday. She surprised me with an awesome birthday cake created by our friend, Kim Mixer. The cake design was based on photos of our parterre (formal boxwood garden). [See it at thisoldhouse.com/sep2012.] It was a hard cake to cut because it was simply amazing! People are still talking about it, and I know that I will never forget it. Thanks again to TOH for selecting us as the curbappeal winners in this year's Reader



Remodel Contest—you inspired a great cake and a wonderful memory! —DIANA KRIEG, BLOOMINGTON, ILL.

### Pebble rustlers, beware

I was upset to read "Cheap Feat: Scrounging Stone" in your July 2012 Cheapskate Hall of Fame (page 62), where a reader describes being too



### Westport chair

I checked specialty lumberyards all over Kansas City and could not find the <sup>5</sup>/<sub>4</sub>×10 cedar boards called for in the June 2012 Weekend Remodel. So I adjusted the plans slightly by using three <sup>5</sup>/<sub>4</sub> deck boards for the back, two for the arms, and two for the rear legs. It's a fantastic-looking chair. Great project!



cheap to pay \$30 per square foot for pebbles for his spa bathroom and instead mined stone from a lake. He took vital habitat for aquatic life—habitat that took thousands of years to form. What if everyone did this to our rivers and lakes? Please go to the lumberyard or quarry and buy tumbled stones, and leave the river and lake beds where they belong: in the rivers and lakes.

-MICHELE L. TREMBLAY, BOSCAWEN, N.H.

### TOH makes the cut

I have subscribed to many magazines over the years, and I am currently paring them down. So many are simply filled with page after page of ads and very little real content. But your magazine is one that I will be renewing. Thank you for having pages and pages of useful content. I appreciate it.

-LIZ FERGUSON, BY E-MAIL

### Correction

→ In Photoshop Redo, August 2012, the price for the DaVinci Roofscapes polymer shakes should be \$2.95 per square foot. Our apologies for the fact-checking error.

> how to reach us

The editors: E-mail TOH\_letters@ thisoldhouse.com or write to This Old House magazine, 135 West 50th Street, New York, NY 10020. → Include your full name, address, and phone number. Published letters are edited for clarity and length.

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Most recessed medicine cabinets come preassembled; you just cut a hole in the wall and create a wood frame into which the cabinet slides. The payoff is a smart bathroom upgrade with a beautiful new mirror and storage space.

You'll find a huge selection of tools to help with this or any home project at The Home Depot nearest you.

For easy how-to instructions and a list of the tools and materials you'll need, go to thisoldhouse.com/project

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# Get Ready for Back-to-School!





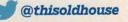
3 Ways to a Perfect Homework Station → make room to work

- → banish distractions
- → organize supplies

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# {September.2012} checklist

### EASY WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR HOME RIGHT NOW

# Prep your lawn for autumn

Keep grass vibrant and unmatted beneath fall's leaves by gradually lowering your mower's height to 2 inches (any shorter and you risk damaging the roots, giving them a weaker grip in the soil). Rest the mower on a flat surface and measure the blade's height; adjust a bit before each mowing for a few weeks until you reach 2 inches.





PHOTOS: (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) ISTOCKPHOTO: MEREDITH WINN PHOTOGRAPHY/GETTY IMAGES JENNIFER CHEUNG/GETTY IMAGES: DAVID BUFFINGTON/GETTY IMAGES

### U What's on your checklist?

inspect the attic to make sure critters haven't turned it into an open house, then replace the old roof-vent screens to keep them out."

-Harold Hunt, Garden Grove, Calif. E-mail us your ideas at checklist@thisoldhouse.com.

### M Feed the birds

It may still be warm, but our feathered friends are already sorting out where to get their wintertime meals. Make your yard an avian haven by installing a seed feeder filled with broadappeal varieties, such as blackoil sunflower seeds, millet, or cracked corn. To foil scavenging squirrels, place pole-mounted feeders at least 10 feet from trees and install a cone-shaped baffle beneath each one, or choose hanging feeders that have weight-sensitive perches or are mounted inside cages.

Keep birds healthy: Wash feeders at least monthly



### Clean bath-vent fans

They've been working overtime, given summer's humidity and constant postyard-work showers. The how-to: Switch off the power, then remove the cover and wash it with dish soap. Use a damp rag to wipe the fan blades clean. Dry all parts before replacing the cover, to keep water from corroding the wires.



# Say thanks to tradespeople

September 21 is National Tradesmen Day. Show your appreciation for your plumber, electrician, or roofer with a thank-you note (and prompt payment when the work is done to your satisfaction). For those who gave you exemplary service, write a recommendation or post one on a review website. Kind words are always welcome.

### Repair blistered paint

The good news: You completed all your summer paint projects. The not-so-good: High temperatures and steamy weather can cause paint to bubble or blister, even after it's dry. If



you spot air pockets, don't assume you need a total do-over. Scrape and sand them away until the finish is smooth, then apply a primer over the damaged areas before touching up as needed.



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# home lited by Amy Roberts Solutions MORE

inside

10 USES **CREATIVE REUSE** 

**KITCHEN UPGRADE** 

Get a paneled look with paint

Giving a room cottage style is as easy as putting brush to wall. To create faux planking, space stripes 6 to 10 inches apart, using the room's scale as your guide; for a wainscot-like effect, add vertical lines below an existing (or new) chair rail. Your most important tools for getting them all just right: some good painter's tape; a plastic putty knife for smoothing tape in place to prevent seepage at the edges; a 4-foot level, to be sure lines are straight; and patience. Diligent prep leads to top-notch results. For a detailed how-to on this type of painting project, visit thisoldhouse.com/sep2012.

style

# **Pipe insulation**

Once your plumbing is snugly wrapped, don't let leftover material go down the tubes. Use the flexible foam sleeves in any of these handy ways



Protect walls from accidental dings by using insulation to cushion a stool's top handle rail and other parts that may cause damage.

# 2 Shield a sapling.

Before staking a young, thin tree, wrap a length of foam around its trunk as a barrier to prevent wire from cutting into the bark.



↑ Sheathe a saw. Slide a length of insulation over the blade of a handsaw to protect the teeth and your fingers when it's stored.



### Make a grip more comfortable.

For a better hold on yard tools, such as rakes or shovels, cushion the handles with sections of insulation; secure with adhesive if necessary.

### 5 Anchor trash bags in place.

Stop the bag from slipping down into the can by securing it to the can's rim with a few foam sleeves.

## 6 Smooth a slipcover.

To pull fabric taut, place a long piece of insulation atop the slipcover along where the back and the seat meet, and push the foam down into the seam. No more wrinkles!

Cut a 2-inch-long Diece of foam and use it

piece of foam and use it to hold a looped extension cord for storage.

### 8 Pack a box in a pinch.

Don't have packing peanuts? Insulation, left in longer pieces or cut into chunks, makes great padding to keep a box's contents from jostling.

### Store tarps.

Tidy up drop cloths by using a 2-foot section of insulation as a spool. Fold the cloth lengthwise to the length of the insulation, then tuck one end into the slit before rolling it up. paintbrushes. Slip insulation over a paint tray's edge. Cut notches; tuck brush handles in so bristles

↑ Prop up

stay out of the paint. -AMANDA SHETTLETON

> more 10 uses Find more smart uses for leftovers at thisoldhouse .com/sep2012

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home solutions HOW-TO CREATIVE REUSE STORAGE FIX KITCHEN UPGRADE

# Smart care for vintage pieces

Some folks love to make period furnishings feel new; others aim to keep them looking nice while retaining their authentic charm. If you fall into the latter camp, take these cues from veteran appraiser Patrick van der Vorst, founder of Value My Stuff (valuemystuff.com), which offers expert valuations for under \$10.

Let stained wood show its age. Dining tables often show wear at the center, while chairs show age on the front legs. Dry-dust often, but skip polish in favor of wax just twice a year.

Reupholster with care. Unsurprisingly, 150-year-old original fabric might look a little shabby. It's fine to cover up the fabric—just leave it intact beneath the new material, to preserve the item's integrity. If the upholstery isn't original, don't bother saving what's there.

> Research before revamping. Fix pieces that are wobbly, but before a bigger overhaul, check historical resources to find materials and finishes that are periodappropriate.

-GILLIAN BARTH

### Shutter turned idea board

When you're planning a remodel, why hide color swatches and inspiration materials in a file folder? Put them on display on a propped-up wood shutter, and you can review and add to your collection easily. If you don't have a shutter ready for reuse, pick one up at a home center or local salvage yard. (Guard against potential lead-paint hazards by coating old painted shutters with a spray-on satin-finish clear polyurethane to keep the exterior from chipping.) Simple binder clips keep items securely in place but allow them to be moved as your ideas take shape. —ALLIE CUTLER



### Keep a patio set high and dry

TOH reader Steve Lavender, of Renton, Washington, came up with a clever way to stash his outdoor table and chairs in the garage without taking up floor space. To rack 'em up like Steve does, drill a hole through each table leg, 4 inches up. Screw a 3%-inch eyebolt into each one and secure with a nut. Locate the ceiling joists, and buy four slotted angle brackets long enough to span two of them. Align the brackets with where the table legs will go, and secure each bracket to two joists with 2½-inch lag screws. Use a 45%-inch double-ended snap hook to secure each leg's eyebolt to a bracket. "Of course, you'd never do this with a glass table," Steve says. "But mine's aluminum." –CODY CALAMAIO

# Easy cabinet makeovers

Stretch the life of dated or ho-hum kitchen cupboards by giving them a low-cost, high-impact cottage-inspired face-lift. These simple projects can be done in a weekend and pack enough punch to give the entire room a brand-new personality –MEGAN BAKER

### cottage style special

### Open shelving

Ditch cabinet doors to create more airiness. Remove hardware from bottom to top, then pack screw holes with wood filler. When dry, sand smooth, prime, and paint. (For instructions, visit thisoldhouse .com/sep2012.)





### Interior curtains

Mimic café windows by adding curtains to glass-front cabinets. Fold fabric in 1-inch pleats before stapling the top and bottom to the inside of the door. Cinch in the middle with matching fabric straps.





### Painted borders

Make rails and stiles stand out-or create the illusion that cabinets have them-with a dose of bold color. For crisp lines, use painter's tape to mask adjacent areas or to map out a 1- to 2-inch border on slab doors or drawer fronts before painting.

### Door cutouts

Delicate cutouts add handcrafted charm. Trace a design onto the doors and use a drill and a jigsaw to cut it out. Sand edges until smooth, then prime and paint. Or go bladeless: Get the look with paint and a stencil of your choice.

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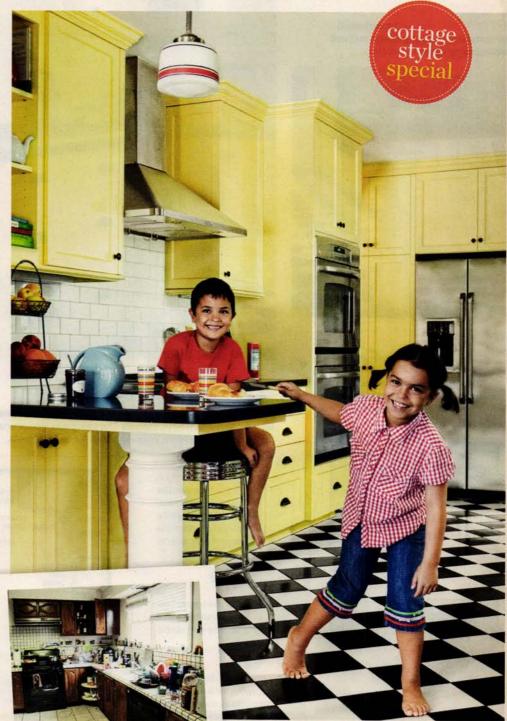
### before+after: kitchen

# Added function and lots more charm

A minor size adjustment plus major changes in style and layout make this kitchen a better fit for the house—and the family who uses it By DEBORAH BALDWIN + Photographs by JOE SCHMELZER

When a 75-year-old house loses its soul, few things are more gratifying than getting it back. That's how Nadine Wener felt after erasing all evidence of the 1980s from the kitchen of her 1937 ranch, in Long Beach, California. "Before, it was claustrophobic and dark, with a dreadful fluorescent ceiling fixture right in the middle," recalls Nadine, who is an enthusiastic cook. Working with designer Dana Jones and general contractor Thomas Cole, she set in motion a six-week redo that improved the room's size and function as well as its cottage spirit. Says Cole, "We stripped it down to the bones," then annexed a small laundry room, added insulation, and repaired the subfloor. He also installed a Dutch door that Nadine had bought for \$50 years earlier and stored, like a hope chest. Jones sketched out seven layout options; ultimately Nadine opted to keep the space as open as possible by widening the passageway to the dining room and setting it off with a small peninsula. "It's a nice place to sit and have a cup of coffee," says Nadine, "and the children love to eat there in the morning. It's my favorite spot."

before The 1980s left behind dark cabinets, black-grouted tile countertops, and dingy floors. after Classic cabinets in sunny yellow get a boost from a high-contrast checkerboard floor. Twins Luca and Nina gravitate to the little peninsula.



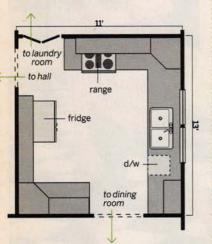
### before+after: kitchen

 Durable solid-surface countertops mimic soapstone and provide a sophisticated contrast to snow-white subway tile and yellow Shaker-style cabinets. Countertops: LG Hausys. Tile: Daltile



### before

The boxy 143-square-foot space was claustrophobic, with chopped-up prep space and no place to sit down.





### after

Adding 55 square feet allowed the hall doorway to move and the layout and traffic flow to improve. The space was also opened up more to the dining room, creating a spot for the peninsula.

### I\_Took down a wall to annex the laundry room and put the fridge and a new pantry near the largest prep space.

### 2\_Shifted a doorway to improve traffic flow

and create a place for the wall ovens.

### 3\_Widened the

passage to the dining room for a more open connection, making room for a peninsula and stools.



### 4\_Replaced the exterior door with a salvaged Dutch door, which invites in fresh air and friendly neighbors.

### 5\_Added prep and cleanup space within easy reach of the sink, microwave, fridge, and pantry.



↓ Reeded-glass fronts and crown molding contribute to the custom cabinets' vintage look.



↑ A custom pullout near the cooktop keeps spices and condiments where they're needed. Cabinets: Nelson's Cabinets



pro advice DANA JONES, LONG BEACH, CALIF.

"Ask the countertop fabricator to make a matching windowsill to go over the sink. It'll be splash-proof and one of those accents people notice."



+ The generous apron sink offers a period touch—and has plenty of room for pots, too. Sink: Rohl. Faucet: Franke



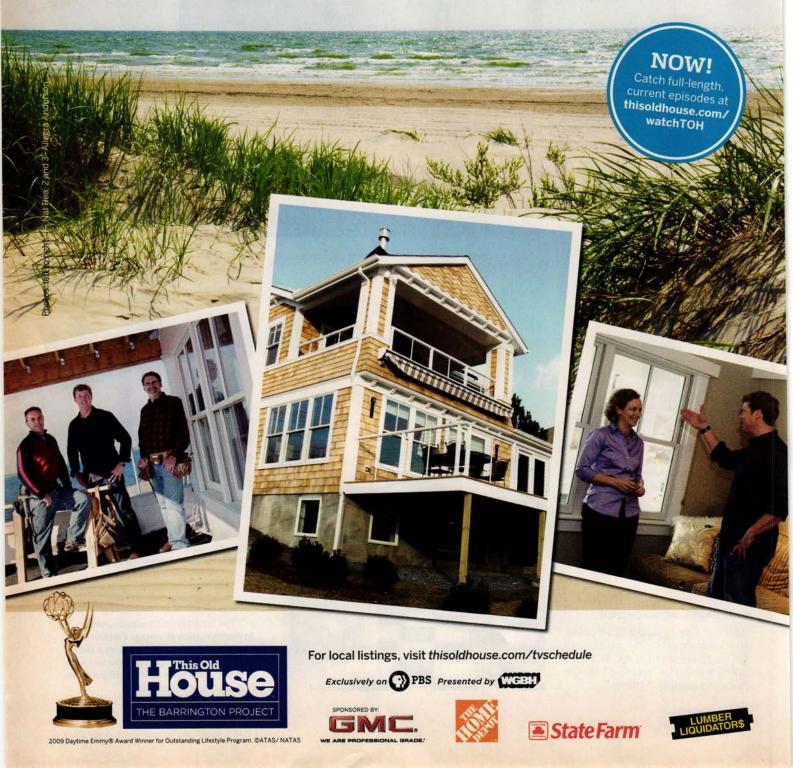
↑ A broom closet, which caps the cabinets enclosing the fridge, is wide and shallow for easy access. Step stool: Costco

+ The Dutch door was painted to match a piece of vintage Fiestaware. Nearby prep space incorporates a niche for the microwave and open shelves with pull-out baskets for onions and potatoes. Pull-out baskets: Rev-A-Shelf

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Tune in to watch the renovation of a 1925 seaside cottage in Rhode Island.



### before+after: bedroom

cottage

# From catchall to orderly retreat

A multitasking guest room gets a little help from space-maximizing built-ins by MEGAN BAKER + Photographs by MARK LOHMAN



A bedroom without a closet is bad enough. But when it also falls short on workspace and creature comforts, you've got issues. Just ask Larry and Dona Burns, whose home, in Oceanside, California, had a guest room with plenty of potential but not enough function. "We wanted to have a space where Dona could work on her sewing projects, and visitors could relax and watch TV," says Larry. Plus, they needed storage because the one closet had been annexed by an adjacent bath. Designer Beth Bynon found the fix: custom built-ins, including a platform bed, drawers for clothes and linens, a hidden-wire TV mount, and a desk fit for a sewing machine or a laptop. Assembled off-site and installed over new oak floors, the built-ins look as if they came with the room, thanks to matching 6-inch crown molding on the walls and cabinets. Beadboard, bin pulls, and glass-front doors give the space a charming bed-and-breakfast look. "Whatever we don't have a place for we store back here," says Larry. "And then, of course, we leave some drawers available for our guests."



before The bare-bones space had a daybed with a trundle and little storage room. after Beadboardbacked built-ins have an inviting cottage vibe, along with drawers for clothing and linens, and open shelves for books and keepsakes. before+after: bedroom



# before

The 190-square-foot space had an awkward "foyer" and was about to lose its closet.



### after

1 Rebuilt the

The footprint stayed the same, while two walls of built-ins help the spare bedroom multitask as a storage and sewing room.

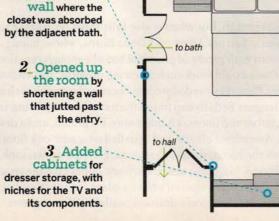
↑ Storage cabinets made from maple and poplar have open shelves for TV components and drawers that stop 2 inches short of electrical outlets.

14'2"

->

to patio

0



13'6"

- 4\_Built in a bed with drawers, a to-the-ceiling headboard, and nightstands topped with open shelving.

5\_Created a work zone with a desk big enough for sewing and surfing the Web. FLOOR PLANS: IAN WORPOLE

Drawers in the bed platform
have full-extension slides that can handle
100 pounds. Pulls: Pottery Barn



The nightstands have curved bases and recessed toekicks to give them the look of standalone furniture. Drumshaded sconces add a soft glow; the task lamps below them are reader-friendly. Sconces: Lamps Plus



homeowner tip LARRY BURNS, OCEANSIDE, CALIF.

"To achieve a hiddenwire look without damaging built-ins once they're in place, have an electrician move outlets and cables closer to where you'll need them before the cabinetmakers arrive."





built-in basics Find step-bystep instructions for built-in bookshelves at thisoldhouse .com/sep2012



↑ Beadboard panels made of medium-density fiberboard create a cottage-style backdrop for the platform bed. Like the cabinets, they were finished with white lacquer for a smooth surface that's easy to wipe down.



\*\*\*

Cats everywhere are having a hard time smelling their litter boxes.

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freshstep.com

### budget redo

# A mudroom built-in for \$470

Opening up a builder-grade closet and installing custom shelving creates a zone that organizes the whole family by MEGAN BAKER



Sometimes standard issue just doesn't cut it. At Shelley and Cason Smith's Salt Lake City home, five years with no mudroom and three kids under the age of 7 had turned the poorly lit, inaccessible foyer closet into a hazard. "It took my stumbling over coats and literally falling inside for me to say something had to be done," Shelley says. So, over one week, the seasoned DIYers removed the door and 2½ feet of wall next to it to create an open alcove in the closet's existing footprint. Cason installed a medium-density-fiberboard (MDF) bench hung on a cleat of 2×4s and trimmed with molding—perfect for pulling on shoes. He built cubbies finished with corbels and hand-cut curved dividers for mail and schoolwork, leaving room at the top for baskets to hide lightbulbs, batteries, and the like. They lined the alcove with horizontal beadboard and finished it with casing and leftover paint. Two lightweight, kid-friendly poplar boxes hide everyone's shoes. "We wanted something functional but beautiful, since it's in our front entry," Shelley says. "Now we all have a place to stop and drop."



before The dark, hard-to-reach closet interior made storage a hassle. after A sturdy built-in creates a drop spot and helps organize necessities.

### the project tally

Removed the closet door and opened the wall.	\$0
Built shelves, cubbies, and a custom MDF bench.	\$175
Nabbed slightly damaged precut foam at 80 percent off for the custom cushion, then had a cover sewn from Jo-Ann clearance fabric.	\$70
Installed beadboard, door casing, and finish molding.	\$77
Made the poplar crates for storing shoes.	\$51
Finished everything with leftover paint.	\$0
Added sturdy IKEA hooks for coats and bags.	\$5
Furnished the cubbies with wire baskets from Etsy, for mail and schoolwork, and straw baskets from Pier 1, for hiding household necessities.	\$92
and the second second	

\*\*\*\*\*

\$470

total

# Upholstered storage ottoman

Use plywood, foam, and fabric to create a custom piece, or select a ready-made version By AMANDA SHETTLETON + Photograph by LAURA MOSS

The ottoman has had a long history of multifunctionality. It served as extra seating in early American households that had tight quarters and tighter budgets. Today, versions with under-lid storage, like the handsome example at right, push the utility ever further. It's the perfect place to stash blankets or store books, and the geometric design of the upholstery makes a bold statement.

If you're thinking of buying one, look for lids that either lift off or have safety hinges. If you'd rather have the satisfaction and creative control of building your own piece, your primary materials will be birch plywood, 2-inch-thick high-density foam, and-the most variable expense-a fabric of your liking. Customize the upholstery to fit your household decor or needs: stain resistant for pets and children, or suede for a lusher feel. And vary the height and style of the off-the-rack legs to complement existing furniture. Whether you build or buy, kick up your feet and enjoy your new focal point.

### get more info

Find a full cut list as well as materials to build an ottoman like this one at thisoldhouse.com/sep2012

> Shown: Tailored Storage Ottoman in Domino Green, \$445; ballarddesigns.com



## build it or buy it

## build it •

Follow the online cut list to size the plywood, then construct the ottoman and upholster it

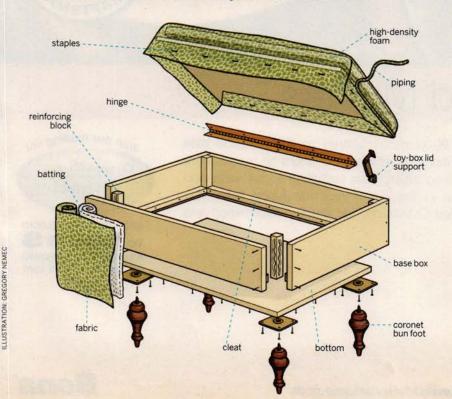
**I**\_ **Build the base.** Cut <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-inch birch plywood for the base, top, and bottom. Glue and clamp the four sides together to form the base box, then drill pilot holes and secure the pieces with screws. Cut 1×1 pine cleats and install them around the base's interior, <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inch above

**Cost:** \$200-\$300 **Time:** 8-10 hours **Difficulty:** Moderate. It's easy to build, but upholstering requires time and patience.

the bottom edge. Attach reinforcing pine blocks to each inside corner. Glue, drill, and screw the bottom piece to the cleats.

2\_ Upholster the base. Cut batting and upholstery to wrap the base. Coat the back of the fabric with fast-drying spray adhesive, and stick the batting onto it. Spray the batting and, starting at the center rear of the box, wrap the material around the sides and overlap it at the seam by ½ inch. Fold the material over the top and bottom, and staple it in place.

3\_ Upholster the lid. Trim 2-inch-thick high-density foam to cover the lid, and use spray adhesive to stick all but the perimeter to the plywood. Then spray the foam's edges with adhesive and fold them down to meet the plywood. Wrap the top in fabric and staple it on the underside. Starting at the rear seam, line the perimeter with piping and staple it in place.
4\_ Add the top and feet. Join the upholstered top to the base with a continuous hinge and a toy-box lid support. Attach four 5-inch maple coronet bun feet, painted or stained to your taste. – JOSEPH TRUINI



## buy it

Pick a size, then choose upholstery options to suit your budget and style

## <sup>\$100</sup>

the basic model Two generous compartments make it easy to stow and separate games from blankets; jcpenney.com.



### \$173

the mid-range model Tufted seating and nailhead trim enhance the classic appeal of this practical piece; sears.com.



## \$211

the luxury model Cushioned for comfy seating, this bright bench also comes in blue or red if you prefer a pop of color; wayfair.com.



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## But will it handle hard knocks?

Nothing adds cottage flavor faster than beadboard, and sheet goods go up quickly. Here's how to choose the right material for your space by DEBORAH BALDWIN + Photographs by ANDREW MCCAUL

Old-fashioned beadboard went up stick by stick, yielding a tough surface with a lot of character. But humidity is hard on wood, causing boards to pop and paint to crack. Quick-install plywood panels solved that problem but can't take a deep bead. Which brings us to panels made of medium-density fiberboard, or MDF-wood fiber and resin, in various proportions, melded under pressure. These sturdy, ready-topaint sheets, typically 4 feet high and 8 feet wide, can be milled to look like the real thing. But before you gather your tools and put in an order, here are five things to consider.

#### Choose a style

For a traditional farmhouse look, try 2½-inch V-bead (near right) or 1%-inch V-bead (top). Wider "boards" tend to look less busy in a large space. There are also custom styles, like casual, random-width V-bead (far right).

#### Check out the profile

For the most convincing look and best durability, choose panels at least ¼ inch thick with deep, clean cuts and beads. Get samples before you commit.

#### Consider the application

Panels in a bath should be specially formulated for moisture resistance; for porches and other outdoor areas, you'll need exterior-grade fiberboard or PVC. High-quality panels are carefully milled to create crisp profiles that mimic individual boards.

#### 4 DIY tips

If you're starting from scratch, ½-inch panels can go right onto the framing, reducing the need to build up window and door trim to accommodate beadboard installed over drywall; ½-inch is also easier to miter at an outside corner, say—than ¼-inch.

#### 5 Repair it right

MDF is about as tough as oak, but, like wood, it can scratch. Sand small blemishes, and fix larger ones with a polyester auto-body filler such as Bondo, which adheres well and sands smooth.

Samples of MDF panels in three styles by Nantucket Beadboard; beadboard.com

## Three steps to a timeworn look

If you can paint and sand, you can faux-age wood furniture. Here's how By ERIC HAGERMAN + Photographs by WENDELL T. WEBBER

You've probably worn blue jeans that came already broken in from the factory, complete with bald spots in all the right places. Turns out you can take a similar approach to giving wood furniture an aged finish-fast. But instead of pumice stones and bleach, some matte paint and a little sandpaper do the distressing. The trick is to put down two coats of color-ideally a light one followed by a darker one-then selectively sand the edges, corners, and contours where natural wear would occur, revealing the paler base coat. Sand a little more to reveal glimpses of unpainted wood to further the effect.

Here, decorative painter Ingrid Leess used the technique to add depth and interest to a big blank armoire. "It works best when there are finish details, like molding, which suggest the piece has a past," she points out. In other words, it's easy to make an ornate mirror look timeworn but less convincing to turn a streamlined Parsons table into a find with a treasured painted patina.

Another plus: There's no need to prep the surface before you start painting. Any imperfections that could cause the paint to flake off will only add to the piece's authentic history—as faux as it may be.

#### rubbed the right way Two coats and two colors of

paint—Behr's Sonata over White Truffle—cover the exterior of this armoire. Sanding the finish in spots lets the lighter one show through.



cottage

0





*L* Finish the interior. Wipe down the inside with a damp cloth to remove any dust or dirt. If it's really grimy, use a degreaser. Cover the insides of the doors and cabinet with primer, using a disposable chip brush and short, erratic strokes. Keep the brush pretty dry; you want the undercoat to peek through to give the interior a clean yet worn appearance.

another easy how-to Learn to master the three-step art of sponge painting at thisoldhouse .com/sep2012



2. Paint both coats. Using a chip brush, paint the entire exterior with a light base-coat color in a flat finish. Go in the direction of the grain, but you don't need to be too fussy about the brushstrokes. Once the base coat is dry, lightly apply a darker top coat, again in a matte finish. Be careful not to overload the brush.

3 Sand to finish. Wait two days to allow the paint to dry completely. Using a medium-grit sanding sponge, scuff corners, edges, and details where the piece would naturally show wear, letting the underlayer of paint—and even a bit of raw wood—peek through in spots. Continue until you get the distressed look you want. ♠

**Tip** Unless the piece is destined for a damp location, such as a bathroom or a laundry room, don't clear-coat the painted finish. Any added sheen just takes away from the aged look.



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- Zach G., Minneapolis, MN

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- Catherine & Eric S., Acton, MA

The lines are really crisp and straight. I'll buy it again.

- Bobbi S., Danvers, MA

My kitchen has needed painting for a few years so I'm glad it's done. FrogTape made the job easier and as a bonus, I don't have stray yellow paint marks on my brown cabinets.

- Tracy W., Gurley, AL



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## Planning a cottage garden

Now's the time to sketch out your plan for beautiful results next spring. Here's how to get started by SUSAN HEEGER

A cottage garden says, Come in. Wander. Stay awhile. It's freewheeling, not formal; generous, not stingy. Its abundance may be what you notice first: Vines clamber up porch posts, roses twine across arbors, flowers overflow their beds in the company of herbs and other edibles. "Cottage gardens are personal and embracing," says Lisa Moseley, a Santa Monica, California, designer who has created quite a few. "They're bursting with color, and their happy clutter complements the character of the house, often within the confines of a tiny lot." She adds that almost any style of home can get a charm boost from traditional cottage plants: old-fashioned hollyhocks and delphinium, iris and hydrangea, catmint and pinks, selected, of course, for local growing conditions and deployed en masse.

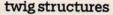


#### classic components

ABOVE: White climbing roses and leafy grapevines scramble up a porch's posts, while pots of kumquat and rosemary flank the steps at a cottage garden created by Santa Monica, California, designer Lisa Moseley. LEFT: A rustic stone retaining wall edges a bed overflowing with fragrant catmint and salvia.

cottage

## landscaping



Cut grapevines are woven into a naturalistic fence, garden gate, and arch that support 'Joseph's Coat' climbing roses and 'Roger's Red' grapevines that have broad heart-shaped leaves.

and rambling flower stems. Natural, rustic materials—painted wood, bent willow, even latticed bamboo suit this purpose, as long as they harmonize with the house. This goes for front gates, too, which, in keeping with the cottage, are often welcoming and low, marking entries rather than discouraging approach.

#### Walls and hedges

While landscapes and houses should always relate, with a cottage garden each supports the look and purpose of the other. Space is tight and every inch counts. So, more than just a backdrop, the cottage is another garden surface, ideal for overflowing window boxes and trellises for vines to climb. The garden in turn extends the home's lines outside, sometimes in walls that echo its textures while enclosing areas for living. As a lessexpensive alternative, Moseley recommends clipped hedges, which can define space and provide "bone structure" for sprawling plants. To maintain order year-round, choose evergreens like boxwood, wax myrtle, or yew for hedging. Along with small trees and other shrubs, plant these early in the process to give them growing time.



painted pickets Crisp white fencing creates a frame for a profusion of pink 'Cecile Brunner' roses, purple shrubby wallflower, and showy pink evening primrose. Dating in this country from colonial days, the first cottage plots provided needed food and cheering beauty in the face of hard times. Today, still eclectic and naturalistic, the garden is closely bound to the house it frames, which guides its layout and materials. In fact, says Moseley, with all its color-mad chaos, a cottage garden needs a bit of order to look its best. Planning before you plant will ensure it is cohesive, despite the wildness at its heart. Here are some elements to consider.

#### **Fences and gates**

Historically, cottage plantings were enclosed to keep livestock out, and the picket fence is still a shortcut to an old-time "grandma's garden," separated from the street but visible—and friendly—to passers-by. A front fence neatens the look of sprawling plants and supports tall

#### landscaping

#### informal pergola

Wood poles form a simple overhead structure that supports climbing roses and wisteria and shades a pea-gravel patio edged with boxwood. White foxgloves peek in around the edges.

#### **Paths and pergolas**

Even small landscapes can seem larger when broken into parts, says Moseley, adding variety and purpose to an everyday stroll. Cottage gardens are meant to be used, and walkways connect the pieces, linking one experience to the next. Informal paths work well and can carry through paving themes-gravel from a driveway, say, or flagstone from a patio. Vine-clad overhead structures, typical of this garden style, contribute romance and shelter as they point out special spots. A wisteria arbor might show the way to a hidden bench; a fruiting grape might wrap a pergola above a dining table. Inspired and shaped by the house, these vertical features add architectural richness outside.

#### **Backbone** plants

Think cottage, and certain old-time flowers come to mind, including roses, coneflowers, and phlox. But the list of what works is almost endless, and though blooms are sweet, not everything need flower to be fitting. Consider where you live: In the dry Southwest, rosette-shaped succulents make more sense than the thirsty foxgloves you might favor in New York. Foliage is important, too-in varying tones, textures, and shapes, which persist when blooming fades. Groundcovers, such as creeping Jenny, bellflowers, or lady's mantle, are vital, especially in sup-



pressing weeds and reducing maintenance. For year-round interest, consider evergreens, such as dwarf conifers, in your mix, along with more-typical cottage perennials, such as peonies, columbines, and true geraniums. To extend the season, tuck in annuals like violas and calendulas. For greater impact, Moseley advises, group border plants in masses rather than ones and twos, and arrange so you can see them-short in front, taller toward the back. Choosing a color theme, such as pink, purple, and white, or yellow and lilac, keeps borders from getting overly busy.



#### exuberant plantings

ABOVE: An energetic mix of columbine, iris, and roses sprawls beside a tiny cottage. RIGHT: Biennial hollyhocks, an old-fashioned favorite, bloom mid- to late summer. To grow them when and where you want, snip and save the seed pods, then plant in fall or early spring.



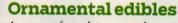


#### lattice arch

Painted a deep green, a wood fence and arbor offer a subtle backdrop that highlights the white blooms of a hawthorn shrub and the pink flowers of a clematis vine.



#### focal-point fountain In this garden, a path of decomposed granite is lined with banks of towering foxglove and punctuated with a tiered fountain circled by pots of boxwood globes.



A tepee of scarlet runner beans not only works as an ornament in a blooming border but also harks back to the early aim of the cottage plot: to feed the body and the soul. Moseley sees this time-honored combination as a solution to the widespread contemporary gardener's conflict between wanting to grow food and wanting to have pretty flower beds. Since most edibles and blooming plants need sun, it's hard to reconcile making separate spaces for both, especially on a small lot. In the eclectic cottage garden, dill looks at home among dianthus, while chard

#### veggie tepee

Fruits and vegetables grow side by side with colorful shrubs and flowers in a typical cottage garden. Here, weathered wood poles provide a climbing structure for scarlet runner beans. can pick up the hues of daylilies, pulling the color palette together. Another way to work food in is with an apple or pear espalier—on a wall or as a fence. One cautionary note: For fertilizer and pest control, use organic products if you have plants you plan to eat.

more blooms Check out our favorite cottagegarden flowers at thisoldhouse .com/sep2012

#### **Decorative objects**

Amid the teeming beds around a cottage, sundials, birdbaths, and fountains can focus the eye, still the mind, and make us smile. Moseley encourages people to have fun with such decoration but to use restraint so as not to complicate the picture. Plants themselves, she notes, can be ornaments. She often adds clipped boxwood globes, in garden beds or in pots, as a living substitute for sculpture. Such trim lines serve as a welcome foil for cottage plants' naturally untamed beauty.

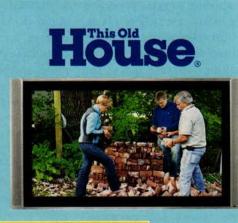




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## Build a wallmounted coatrack

No room for an entryway closet? No problem. Keep outerwear organized with this simple-to-build piece By JOSEPH TRUINI + Photograph by WENDELL T. WEBBER

Cost: \$50-\$60 Time: 2-4 hours, plus paint-drying time Difficulty: Easy. Cutting the French cleat takes patience, but assembly is quick and simple.

A pileup of coats and jackets near the front door is never a welcoming sight. But if your house lacks a proper foyer or entryway, as many do, finding a spot to store this stuff can be a challenge. Our solution? Build a low-profile, cottageinspired coatrack that takes up just a few feet of wall space. This Old House general contractor Tom Silva made this one from 1x lumber and embellished it with a couple of strips of decorative, fluted door casing, available in a range of profiles and materials at home centers. Double coat hooks and wire storage baskets for holding mail, gloves, and miscellany maximize storage space, and the board-and-batten-like design protects the underlying wall from dings and dents. Best of all, the price tag won't send you into sticker shock-we dare you to find an off-the-shelf coatrack that's this easy on the eyes for less.

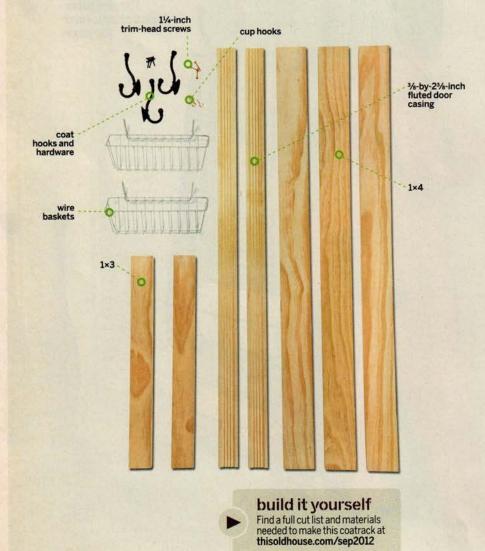
For complete instructions, turn the page

Casing: ¾-by-2¾-inch Whitewood Casing, \$8 per 7-foot length, Hooks: Brainerd Decorative Flat Black Garment Hooks, \$4.50 each. Both available at lowes.com

#### HOW IT'S DONE

## Make a wall-mounted coatrack

Our piece measures 48 by 24 inches; you can easily change the size to suit the space you have. *This Old House* general contractor Tom Silva added a French cleat to the back side to make installation simple, so you'll need a circular saw or table saw to make the bevel rip cut. If you don't have one, fasten the piece directly to the wall by driving screws through the upper and lower cleats into wall studs or anchors.



*I*\_Crosscut the parts. Use a miter saw to cut the seven boards to length. Crosscut the two 1×3s to 24 inches long, then cut the three 1×4s and two 2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>-inch-wide fluted casings to 48 inches.





5 Add the fluted casing. Turn over the frame and position the fluted casing pieces so that they're centered between the 1×4s. Attach the casings to the cleats with wood glue, and clamp in place until dry. Sand all surfaces with 120-grit sandpaper, and prime and paint the coatrack. 2 Make a French cleat. Adjust the bevel angle on your circular saw to 25 degrees, and set the blade depth to slightly deeper than the board's thickness. Cut the 1×3 upper cleat lengthwise to create two identical beveled strips.



3 Attach the French cleat. Lay the two outside 1×4s parallel on a flat surface and place one half of the French cleat across them, flush with the edges and 6 inches below the top. As shown, the cleat's narrow face should rest on the 1×4s, with the square edge facing the top. Drill pilot holes, then attach with wood glue and 1¼-inch trim-head screws.

**4** Install the lower cleat. Glue and screw on the 1×3 lower cleat, 6 inches from the bottom end of the 1×4s. Next, slide the third 1×4 beneath the cleats, centered between the outside 1×4s. Fasten it to the two cleats with wood glue and 1¼-inch screws.







**6** Paint the wire baskets. While the rack dries, coat the wire baskets with spray primer and paint so that they match the coat hooks. Allow the paint to dry for at least two hours, then flip the baskets over and paint the other sides. Add a second coat of paint if desired.



7\_Install the coat hooks. Attach one coat hook to each 1×4, using the screws provided. Position the hooks about 9 inches down from the top end of the coatrack, and be sure each one is centered on the 1×4.



8 Hang the baskets and install the coatrack. Hold the baskets in place and mark positions for two cup hooks per basket. Screw the hooks into the 1×4s, and hang the baskets. Screw the other half of the French cleat to the wall, with its narrow face resting on the wall and its square edge facing down. Hang the coatrack on the wall-mounted cleat.

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## photoshop redo

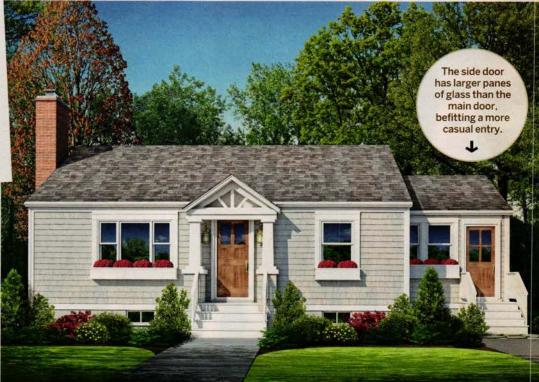
## Perking up a plain Cape Cod

A revamped entry and a more detailed facade add polish to a basic box By DEBORAH SNOONIAN + Illustration by HOWARD DIGITAL



For the past couple of years, Mark DiGiovanni has been slowly upgrading the exterior of his 1956 Cape Cod, in Wilmington, Massachusetts. "But even with new siding and windows, it still looks unfinished," he says. To help him, we asked architect Thaddeus Siemasko, of Beverly, Massachusetts, for ideas about enhancing its curb appeal.

"A simple, cottage-like house such as Mark's doesn't need radical changes," says Siemasko. "Adding detail to the facade and making the entry a stronger focal point will boost its look substantially." His proposed entry features a gable roof with an exposed truss, supported by columns resting on shingle-sided walls that flank a painted wood landing. Wider trim around the doors and windows, along with corner boards, frieze boards, and water-table trim above the foundation, offers crisp definition. Flower boxes serve to visually lengthen the windows, which seem a bit short. Mark's ready to jump in and make these changes. "I never thought about adding trimwork, but it really does help make my house look complete-finally!"



#### **Finishing touches**

column

The tapered shape of this

fiberglass option suits

the entry's small scale.

HB&G; from \$424

Classic accents add warmth, texture, and visual variety to a gray-and-white palette. →

window box

Constructed of PVC, this one will

weather any climate and offers an

annuals. Hooks & Lattice; from \$100

easy-to-access spot for colorful

door handle A sturdy thumb-latch entry set in oil-rubbed bronze is a handsome upgrade to any door. Weslock; \$104



entry door Rich walnut complements the gray-stained cedar siding and adds warmth. Simpson; from \$700

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## weekend remodel

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## Install a flat-weave cotton stair runner

Use a stock runner (or two) to add a splash of color and cushiony comfort to bare wood stairs by JOSEPH TRUINI + Photographs by LAURA MOSS

#### **Cost:** \$375 **Time:** 6–8 hours **Difficulty:** Easy. Installation goes pretty quickly, but it does require a lot of kneeling.

If you have plain old stairs, a runner can make a statement and soften your footsteps. Runners made of woven cotton are affordable and easy to work with, and they range in style from beachy to baroque; here, we chose heathered stripes to complement a cottage-style interior.

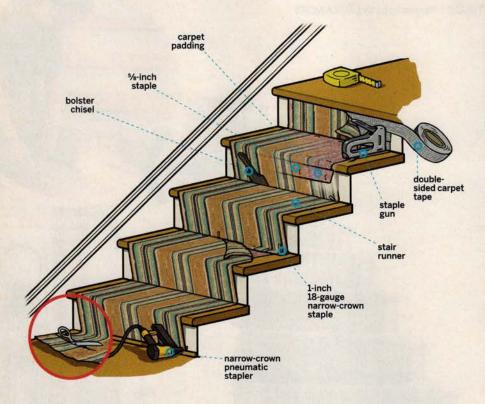
To simplify the job, *This Old House* senior technical editor Mark Powers employed the waterfall method: The runner cascades from step to step, a look that suits the pattern and is more casual than tightly wrapping the nosing. Follow along on the next page to spruce up your stairs.

Runner: Blue Heron Stripe Woven Cotton Rug by Dash & Albert, 30 inches by 12 feet, \$124; dashandalbert.com

September 2012 THISOLDHOUSE.COM 55

## Day-to-day timeline

SATURDAY MORNING Size and install the carpet padding (Steps 1–2). SATURDAY AFTERNOON Staple down the runner (Steps 3–5).



#### tools

tape measure combination square

chalk line for snapping long cutlines on the carpet padding scissors for cutting the padding

and runner 3-foot straightedge for marking

crosscut lines on the padding felt-tip marker to draw cutlines

staple gun to secure the padding

thin pry bar for removing molding

narrow-crown pneumatic stapler and air compressor to secure the runner bolster chisel for tucking in the runner

#### materials

felt carpet padding to cushion the runner

flat-weave cotton runner(s)

double-sided carpet tape to adhere the top end of the runner

**%-inch staples** for the staple gun, to secure the padding

1-inch 18-gauge narrow-crown staples for the pneumatic stapler, to secure the runner



### 1. Determine the layout

**A\_ Measure the steps.** Measure the riser height and the tread depth of one step. Multiply the riser height by the number of risers and the tread depth by the number of treads. Add those results together and tack on an extra 6 inches for waste to find the total length of one runner. If you need more than one, add another 12 inches for each splice, the seam where two runners meet.

**B\_ Size the runner.** Measure and mark the centerline of the stairs on the narrowest tread, and line up the middle of the runner with the mark. (Conveniently, our runner has a stripe down the middle.) Use a tape measure to make sure the reveal on each side is even, then mark the tread at each edge of the runner, in pencil. Use a combination square to replicate the edge marks on each tread.

## 2. Install the padding

**A**\_Cut the padding to width. Slip a piece of felt carpet padding under the runner, inset from the edge to form a smooth transition to the tread, as shown. Measure the difference, and calculate how wide to cut the padding. Unroll the padding, use a chalk line to snap a cutline along its length. and cut along the line. Then, using a straightedge, cut it into sections 4 inches deeper than the tread, one for each step. **B**\_Taper the sections. Lay a section on a tread, its back edge a fingertip away from the riser, and wrap the front over the nosing. Mark the edges where they meet the riser, then draw lines at approximately 45 degrees to the front edge. Snip off the corners, as shown. Use this section as a template to trace and trim the pads for the remaining steps.

**C**-Staple the padding to the steps. Center a section of padding on the bottom tread, leaving a small gap at the riser. Use a staple gun to secure it. Drive in five staples, working out in both directions from the middle of the back edge. Smooth out the padding and staple it five times along the front, about 1 inch back from the nosing. Gently smooth it over the nosing, being careful not to stretch and pucker it, and staple it to the riser, as shown.

Tip Start installing the padding at the bottom step. That way, you'll have a built-in cushion to kneel on as you work your way up the staircase.



### 3. Start the runner

**A\_ Tape the runner to the top riser.** Remove any interfering molding and apply strips of double-sided carpet tape on the top riser. Press the finished end of the runner directly under the nosing and tack it to the riser with a pneumatic stapler. Start in the middle and work out in both directions, stapling every 4 inches. Put two staples down each side, too. Press the runner firmly onto the tape. **B\_ Tuck and staple.** Use a bolster chisel to tuck the runner's edges with the pencil marks, and drive five 1-inch staples into the tuck. Smooth the runner over the nosing of the next step, tuck it into the gap, and staple it. Don't overstretch the runner or you may distort its pattern. Continue until you hit the end of either the runner or the stairs. If one runner covers your staircase, skip to Step 5.





#### see how it's done To watch a video of this project, scan this bar code with your smartphone. Or go to thisoldhouse



.com/sep2012

### 4. Join two runners

**A\_Trim the first runner.** As you near the end of the runner, spread it over the last tread it covers and tuck it in at the base of the riser with the bolster chisel. Mark the runner 2 inches beyond the tuck and trim it to length. Fold under the cut end, leaving about 1 inch of runner protruding from the joint, and hold it in place with the bolster chisel, as shown.

**B\_ Secure the first runner's end.** Secure the fold to the tread with the pneumatic stapler, as shown, working from the middle out.

**C\_ Mate the second runner.** Set the factory-finished edge of the second runner over the end of the first runner, as shown. There's no need to tuck it into the corner, but do be sure that the stripes on the two runners line up perfectly. Using the pneumatic stapler, drive staples straight down through the hemmed ends of both runners and into the tread. Continue to gently pull, tuck, and staple the second runner until you reach the bottom step.

## 5. End the runner

**A**\_ **Trim the bottom end.** Use the bolster chisel to crease the runner along the base of the bottom step. Measure out 3 inches and use a felt-tip marker and a straightedge to mark the runner. Cut it to length.

**B**\_Tuck and staple the end. Fold under the end of the runner to create a hem. Pull it taut and staple it along the bottom edge of the riser, as shown. If the base of the riser is trimmed with molding, as ours was, tack the runner right along its top edge. When the runner eventually wears out, you can easily take it up and do it over again.



#### weekend remodel

## More runner styles

A striped stair runner is an easy way to make over one of your home's major architectural assets. The linear patterns keep the look uncluttered, and the flat-weave material keeps it casual. Here are just three examples of the wide range of options you have to explore.



bright and colorful

Turn up the volume on a plain path to your attic or basement with playful colors in mixedwidth stripes. Da Bomb Woven Cotton Rug, Dash & Albert, \$84 for a 30-inch-by-8-foot runner; dashandalbert.com



historically inspired Complement turned balusters with a cotton runner modeled on 19th-century American designs. Reading Collection, Woodard & Greenstein, \$369 for a 27-inch-by-8-foot runner; woodardweave.com

#### bold and graphic

Light and dark stripes add impact but don't compete with other decor. Similar to shown: Hampton Grey Stripe, Capel Rugs, \$159 for a 24-inch-by-8-foot runner; capelrugs.com

## House blueprint

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Over the years, this **century-old cottage** had lost its color and spark, until a **period-driven redo** and many trips to the salvage yard brought it back

by Deborah Baldwin • photographs by Ray Kachatorian produced by Colette Scanlon • styling by Caryl Eagle







#### setting the scene

LEFT: The star of the show is a 1950s O'Keefe & Merritt stove, refinished to match a vintage-green dishwasher and flanked by cabinets with salvaged-beadboard doors. ABOVE: The new eating nook was designed to fit seamlessly into the circa 1913 bungalow, which has held on to its original board-and-batten walls. Dishwasher: Big Chill. Sink: Shaws. Faucet: Rohl. Fabrics: Tumbleweed & Dandelion. Pendant light: eBay

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VERY house has a story. Some homeowners are just better listeners than others. When Erin Donovan and Chris Long found

their Venice, California, bungalow, they could almost hear its thin walls talk. Take me back to my salad days, it seemed to say, back when Venice and I were both new.

Situated within easy driving distance of Pasadena, a birthplace of the American Craftsman movement, the circa 1913 bungalow had "all the basics, like the original fireplace and mantel, floors, and built-ins," Erin recalls. But time and other people's taste had tamped down its spirit. The downstairs bath, for example, last renovated in the 1990s, had all the personality of a Motel 6.

The couple decided to roll back the years, aided by a general contractor with a name like something out of a Woody Allen movie and a commitment, as he puts it, "to make the house what it wants to be."

Most renovators could care less about what the house wants, but Mox Moeschler is not your average GC. Erin and Chris aren't your typical suburban homeowners, either. She's a writer and voice-over actor; he's a producer and director for TV's *The Mentalist*, which features a crime-fighting psychic. A general contractor who doubles as a house medium was the perfect fit.

The couple had found their period piece while downsizing from a home nearby, where they raised two kids and took in two dogs and a cat. "A menagerie!" says Erin, whose infectious enthusiasm for character-filled homes shines through in phone conversations that are so entertaining, it's hard to hang up. "Some people are foodies," she says. "I'm a housie, with a sweet tooth for a turn-of-the-century Craftsman."

Not that their redo was all fun and great finds. Back when the bungalow went up, on the iffy outskirts of a town conceived as one part Venice, Italy, and one part Coney Island, Brooklyn, it was more poor-man than Craftsman. Having to replace the brick foundation with more-earthquake-resistant concrete, Moeschler says philosophically, meant shelling out "\$30,000, and you don't see anything." The stairs squeaked like caged mice—come to think of it, they still do—and tree roots were buckling the floor in the sunroom, a gabled space that had started out as the front porch.

In order to make the one fireplace work without harming the stone surround, Moeschler had to find a mason willing to

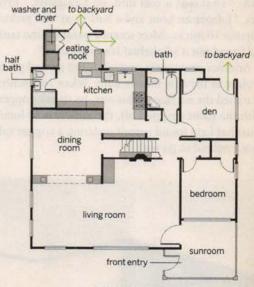


## **FLOOR PLANS**

The 1,926-square-foot bungalow—its gabled front porch long ago converted into a sunroom—kept its original footprint and much of the existing layout. On the first floor, a mudroom wall came down to create the eating nook. Upstairs, one wall was moved and another added to turn two bedrooms into a master bedroom with a walk-in closet and an adjacent bath.



**FIRST FLOOR** 



SECOND FLOOR



#### storied finds

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Visitors enter through the sunroom, where they are greeted by reclaimed tile from France, spruced-up rattan hand-medowns, and a weathered chandelier found on eBay. Throw pillows: Home Goods

FLOOR PLANS, IAN WORPOLE

shimmy down the chimney, Santa Claus style. The upstairs felt like a pizza oven, thanks to hot air trapped behind the ventless knee walls. Adding a bath up there seemed like a no-brainer until someone realized the rustic walls held no place to run pipes. "That was a complex operation," Erin says gamely of Moeschler's space exploration under the stairs.

But if the three-bedroom, one-and-a-half-bath house was no museum piece, it had plenty to offer a jaded 21st-century eye. Along with the original fireplace, the living space boasted lofty cove ceilings and the original wood floors and built-ins, some topped with graceful tapered columns. While the picture window in front was surely more recent than early last century, other windows still had their wavy glass. The roof was serviceable, the siding was sound, and the board-and-batten walls, while arguably a budget choice at the time, now qualified as a cool design element.

It's the upsides you hear about most from Erin and Moeschler, who share an avid interest in the provenance of things, whether of a washer for an outmoded toilet or floor tiles with a French pedigree.

Consider the drawn-out search for a kitchen faucet as old as the house. Rummaging around on eBay, Erin found just the thing. But, once installed, it leaked like crazy, forcing Moeschler to find a later model. Then there's the quirky toilet in the guest bath: "That was a real find, on Craigslist," Erin says. "I drove an hour and a half away and picked it up for 10 bucks. Mox scraped paint off the tank and found out it's Bakelite! It's super rare."

Another previously cast-off toilet gained pride of place in the new master bath: When Moeschler scratched the surface of this one, he struck copper. With the paint stripped off, the tank was so luminous that Erin found herself ordering a copper tub from England to go with it. early open plan BELOW LEFT AND

RIGHT: Original builtins and wainscoting, refinished with a walnut stain, unite the living spaces and, along with the cove ceilings, help make the compact first floor feel more spacious.





### sunny side up

The light-filled second-floor landing has its original balustrade and built-in drawers, dressed up during the redo with salvage-yard pulls.

#### back-in-time guest bath

LEFT AND BELOW: The main bath on the first floor, "remuddled" in the 1990s, was stripped down and refurbished with salvaged finds, including an old tub—painted to pick up the accents in the new hex-tile floor—and a corner sink with separate cold- and hot-water taps. The tub filler popped up on eBay. Tub: Gayle's Pasadena Architectural Salvage. Tile: American Restoration Tile



Things like these aren't just home improvements; they're conversation pieces. Take the vintage O'Keefe & Merritt stove, which replaced the boring old Viking that was already there. The vintage cooker had belonged to Erin's mother and needed only a complete overhaul. Or the sunroom's faded tile, said to have been reclaimed from old French farmhouses. It has a daisy pattern—"Our daughter's name is Daisy," says Erin—and was tracked down through a Brit living in Burgundy, who shipped it through Belgium and Amsterdam to San Pedro, California, "where U.S. Customs got all funny about it," says Erin, remembering a similar kerfuffle with the British tub.

She nabbed two cast-iron beds closer by, at a place in Malibu colorfully known as Cathouse Antiques.

To channel the bungalow's past while making it fit for a 21st-century household, Moeschler replaced questionable upgrades with new as well as old parts. The stove is complemented by a retro-style fridge and a matching dishwasher, and hex-tile countertops are trimmed in Deco black. Salvaged beadboardcomplete with "lumps, bumps, and scratches," Erin notes—became cabinet doors, finished with fresh paint and beat-up hardware.

Moeschler also dropped in a modern-day skylight over the first-floor bedroom and opened up the kitchen to add an eating nook. It's framed by a marble-topped peninsula with a convenient niche for the microwave. Laundry machines hide discreetly behind beadboard doors.

Secondhand flotsam for the main first-floor bath, unearthed online and at salvage yards in nearby Orange and Pasadena, includes not only that prelow-flow toilet but also an old tub, now painted to match the green accents in the new hex-tile floor, and a corner sink with 1876—could it be the date? stamped on the back. Moeschler popped in separate taps, which he lovingly distressed to look even older.

To revive the second floor while maintaining its bungalow flavor, Moeschler opted for blanket insulation and whirly-bird attic fans. Alongside the copper tub and its salvaged-tin backsplash he added a worn pedestal sink, elevated on a marble block to better serve 6-foot-1 Chris. Bringing in a vintage French tub faucet proved unwise: It leaked worse than the one in the kitchen had. "Erin and I thought the house was working with us," Moeschler says, "but it was remarkable what it would not let us do."

In the end, everything came together remarkably well—even the exit pipes for the second-floor bath. "There was a cove right where we needed it to get the drain line for the toilet," Moeschler says. "It couldn't have gone 1 inch to the left or 3 inches to the right.

"Working on an old house, sure, there are always things that come up," he says, sounding pleased. "But the house kept making it possible."

Put another way, all you have to do is listen.



#### new-old master bath

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e!

The new tub plays off a salvaged-tin-ceiling backsplash and a vintage ceiling-mount showerhead and wall-mount fittings. Tub: William Holland. Shower-curtain rod: Sunrise Specialty



#### romancing the attic

LEFT: The master bedroom, tucked under the dormer, kept its existing tongue-andgroove ceiling while gaining ventilation, knee-wall storage, and a painted iron bed. ABOVE: The master bedroom's new, freestanding source of heat uses gas. Stove: Jotul



#### scene setters

After eight months of work, Erin Donovan and Chris Long, photographed at the front door with their dogs, Phoebe and Dashiell, finally moved in. "Each room I walk into," says Erin, "I think is my favorite."

## cheery cottage style special charmers

#### grain-sack pillow

Printed with a replica of a pre-World War II graphic, this muslin cover looks vintage but is sturdy enough to toss in the washer. Horse Pillow Cover, \$25; annadaisydesigns .etsy.com

PT

RIB

Forget fuss and frills. Set aside shabby chic. The TOH take on cottage-style furnishings is cleanlined, colorful—and guaranteed to make your place feel classic, not cute

by Amy Roberts photographs by Andrew McCaul

#### rocking chair

This lively slatted seat, finished with weather-resistant polyurethane paint, makes a relaxing perch on the porch but would be equally welcome in a kitchen or sunroom. Porch Rocker in Cornflower, \$149; gardeners.com GET 17% OFF! SEE PAGE 71

#### bright bowls

A multihued take on vintage yellowware, these ceramic nesters are microwave- and dishwasher-safe. Tabletops Gallery 5-Piece Mixing Bowl Set in Retro Multi, \$25; kmart.com

GET 20% OFF! SEE PAGE 71

#### beadboard mirror\_

Made from reclaimed paneling, this mirror frame gives color and patina to the typical white-painted wall covering, Primitive Antique Beadboard Mosaic Mirror, \$225; usawoodworks.com



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#### fillable lamp

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A sophisticated spin on the vase-shaped crafts-store version, this boxy glass lamp displays collections. Think river rocks, sea glass, even vintage marbles. Atrium Lamp, \$149; potterybarn.com

#### glass hardware

With smooth surfaces, these knobs and pulls add color to cabinets, minus the usual fancy fluting. Mushroom Glass Knob and Glass Bin Pull by Lew's Hardware, \$7.65 and \$14, respectively, in cobalt, green, and amber, each with a brushednickel finish; atgstores.com

#### jelly cupboard

0

Originally used to hold home-canned goods, nowadays, cabinets like this 40-inch-tall one supply storage for toiletries, audio equipment, and more. Painted a lemony yellow, it's also a focal point. Primitive Unfinished Jelly Cupboard, \$110; holeestars.net

Paint: Behr Premium Plus Semi-Gloss Enamel in Spiced Butternut. \$15 per quart; The Home Depot



#### iron accent

The graceful shape of this magazine rack evokes that of an old cottage garden gate. It does double duty as a slim, 16-inch-wide side table. Wrought Iron Traytop Magazine Rack, \$148; sundancecatalog.com



#### striped blanket

Those graphic lines are a favorite on casual cotton rugs. Here, they're reinterpreted on an oversized, oh-so-soft cotton throw. Ranch Stripe Woven Cotton Throw, 60 by 78 inches, \$74; dashandalbert.com

GET 20% OFF! SEE PAGE 71

#### slipcovered seat

Draped in linen with a mattress-ticking stripe, this side chair has box-pleated corners rather than ruffles all around. Slip-Covered Country French Parsons Chair, \$199; inessa.com

#### floral wallpaper

0

A refreshing alternative to chintz, this wall covering has a bold two-tone flower-andbutterfly pattern and a subtle spongepainted-like texture. Scenic Vines in Sunny Yellow and Meadow Green, \$98 for a double roll; yorkwall.com

#### vintage-look fan

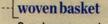
Styled after an early electric model in enameled black metal, this fan with finger-safe grills gets jazzed up in a juicy hue. Ecco Orange Desk Fan, \$72; wayfair.com GET 15% OFFI SEE PAGE 71

plant pedestal

This 28-inch-high stand puts potted plants in line with windows for optimal sunlight. It has a sleek shape that's sturdy, not dainty. Painted Cottage Plant Stand in Garden Green, \$89; Ilbean.com

#### stoneware pitcher

The white ironstone pitcher gets a sunny makeover with this high-fired Dijon-yellow enamel finish. Because the clay is so dense, hot liquids stay hot and cold liquids stay cold. \$30; lecreuset.com



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Supple sea grass tends to slouch, but not when woven on a metal frame. Use this structured, displayworthy bin to stash spare linens out in the open. Grand Portage Bin in medium size, \$40; landsend.com

#### star light

A symbol of warmth and welcome, the Moravian star is a popular porch light. Traditionally clad in dark metal and dangling from a chain, this updated model has a shiny finish and semiflush-mount styling. Moravian Star Ceiling Light in Nickel, \$179: shadesoflight.com

#### turned-leg table

With its simple spindle-like supports and warm gray finish. this coffee table brings contemporary flavor to a cottage living room mainstay. Isala table, \$199; ikea.com

#### step stool

Used in turn-of-the-century kitchens to access high cabinets, portable wood stairs are still valued for their utility. Given a fiery paint job, this one becomes a showpiece, too. Unfinished Pine Step Stool, \$90; robertkollman.etsy.com

Paint: Behr Premium Plus Semi-Gloss Enamel in Red Hot. \$15 per quart: The Home Depot

braided area rug This single-braid rug is more glam than granny.

thanks to its squared-off shape and plush spotcleanable yarn. 3-by-5foot Chenille Braided Rug, Rectangular, in Vintage Multi, \$199; Ilbean.com

#### exclusive discounts!

Visit thisoldhouse.com/deals for special offers on select cottage-style furnishings in this story.

# COZY BY DESIGN

TOH's guide to the architectural elements and interior details that give any house, big or small, cottage character

**COMFORTABLE—AND COMFORTING.** More infused with a spirit than put together according to a set of rules, cottage-style interiors have a happy informality. Rooms are airy and intimate at the same time, with nooks and alcoves that offer both curl-up daydreaming spots and space-saving built-in storage-after all, who can relax if there's clutter all around? From colorful weathered paint to warm stained wood, finishes are touchable rather than hands-off and only get better with age. These spaces often get a dose of nostalgic charm from vintage-look fixtures and fittings, hardware, and woodwork details that seem to turn back the clock on today's high-stress, high-tech lifestyle. Most any place can use a helping of cottage coziness, as long as the goal is to create an inviting interior with a carefree, well-lived-in look. Here and on the following pages, we highlight some key features that you can borrow to give your own home that uplifting, easygoing feeling.

WALLS Wood planks, like this beadboard, stand up to dings and dents. Traditional white paint brightens the room.

**DETAILS** Bin pulls, a deep apron sink, a vintage-style faucet, and painted open shelves with wood brackets give a kitchen casual charm.

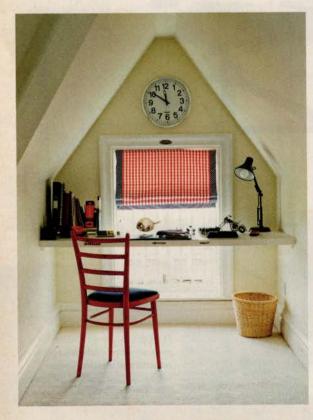
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# **BUILT-INS**

Step through the door or walk around the corner and what do you discover? Tuckedin shelving and furniture that ingeniously make use of every nook and cranny

**DORMER DESK** Even the simplest built-in can add a big dose of personality in a snug space. Here, a writing surface made from wall cleats and 2× boards spans a tight spot in an attic, turning a low-clearance corner into a light-filled workstation with a view.





MINI MUDROOM An awkward entry gains practical charm with a tower of open shelves, top cabinets with tilt-up doors, and a bench with curved supports. Simple battens hold coat hooks. Durable paneling and a soft shade of green paint knit the pieces together.





DEVIS BIONAZ/GAP INTERIORS: ) ERIC ROTH

PHOTOS: (CLOCKWISE FR (OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM LI

#### ALCOVE BUNK BEDS

What could be cozier? Stacked twin beds get a character boost from an arched enclosure. This pair is finished with wood paneling and white paint that tie in with the rest of the room. Books find a home on shelves at the head of each bed; extra linens hide in the lower bunk's deep drawers.

#### STORAGE NICHE

Tucked between wall studs and just below the eaves, a beadboardlined, trimmed-out cubby provides a perfect spot for extra towels in a diminutive powder room.



**AWAY-FROM-IT-ALL BENCH** A narrow three-season room benefits from seating that's tailor-made for the space. Drawers hold outdoor decor; a colorful cushion, throw pillows, and a patterned rug offer a comfy place for a private moment. SPRUCED-UP STEPS A coat of fresh white paint sets the staircase apart from khaki walls and stained wood floors; old-fashioned numbers stenciled onto each riser add a welcoming bit of whimsy.

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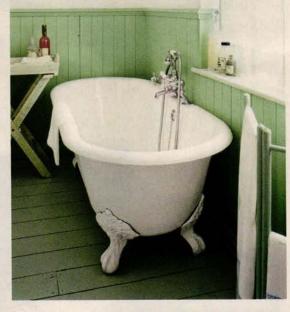
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2



Playful color and pattern underfoot add a lighthearted touch—and a finished surface that wears its age well

> COLORFUL CHECKERBOARD Large squares of sunny yellow and soft cream change the mood of a living space instantly—no further upgrades needed. Added bonus: Paint is a nice way to disguise flaws on old floorboards. (For instructions on painting a checkerboard floor, go to thisoldhouse.com/sep2012.)







# PLANKED WALLS

Back in the day, wood boards made cheap and durable walls for hardworking rooms. The look has endured, thanks to its casual, homey appeal

TO THE CEILING Machine-milled beadboard took off in Victorian times for kitchens, baths, and work areas. Running the entire height of the walls, as well as up the banquette, it's still an eye-catching, easy-care surface for a busy dining nook.



WRAPAROUND WAINSCOTING This beadboard wainscot is capped with a flat rail that acts as a shelf for toiletries, keeping them within easy reach. The material also wraps the tub surround and is painted the same spring green for a cheery, built-in look.

RUN SIDE TO SIDE Installing boards horizontally suits the proportions of this long, narrow bedroom. The same planks are used on the ceiling, creating a pleasant sense of enclosure; an all-white palette makes the small space feel bright.

# **VINTAGE DETAILS**

Well crafted and practical, period-look woodwork, fixtures, fittings, and hardware add a personal touch—and a sense of history—to informal spaces



WALL-HUNG STORAGE Old-timey kitchens were smaller. Plate racks and hanging shelf units took up less room than freestanding hutches and sideboards. This piece's graceful arch, curved brackets, and beadboard back are traditional touches; the cubby organizer updates it for today.





#### **OPEN SHELVES**

Nothing's better for keeping everyday dishes close at hand. Oversize brackets lend these shelves a handcrafted feel; screw-in hooks put colorful cups on display.

#### INTERIOR SHUTTERS

Originally, operable shutters were used to keep out the sun. Today, they're both functional and decorative. The well-worn paint finish on this pair adds a rustic touch of texture in a simple bedroom. WIRE DOOR PANELS Chicken wire was originally used on pantry doors to let air circulate around stored root vegetables. Installed behind glass fronts, it provides a hint of country charm.





**CLAW-FOOT TUB** Elevated on ball-and-claw feet, an old-school soaker in porcelain-coated cast iron might just be the height of laid-back style. Plum paint, used on this tub's sides and on the surrounding wainscoting, gives it an updated look that's right at home with dark-stained wood floors. CAST-IRON SINK Swooping basins with

built-in backsplashes and wall-mounted faucets have a handsome utilitarian look. This oversize double sink anchors a shared bath, offering plenty of room for cleanup after a day's work. The shelf below the mirror makes up for the lack of deck space.



WOOD PEG RAIL In a bath, it's a fuss-free way to hang towels—just toss them there to dry. Throughout the house, peg rails can function as both millwork accents and storage solutions for everything from dish cloths to backpacks. ●

PHOTOS: (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) NICK CARTER/GAP INTERIORS: THIBAULT JEANSON: JULIAN WASS: HEATHER LEWIN/IPC IMAGES. (OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT) DEBORAH WHITLAW LLEWELLYN: CHRISTOPHER DRAKE/LOUPE IMAGES; DAVID PRINCE



# A L L A B O U T

# window seats

Turn unused space around the house into extra seating and storage with a minimum of carpentry—and get a snug, homey haven for daydreaming, reading, even napping. The experts at TOH tell you how **By Jill Connors** 

It's no wonder window seats are often the most loved element in a home. They offer comfort—especially with a thick cushion on top—and views to the outdoors. They create a sense of coziness and security, thanks to the niche that defines a window seat. And they provide extra storage when fitted with drawers, cabinets, or a simply hinged bench top. But perhaps it's their ability to take an unused or awkward space and turn it into a charming focal point that warms our hearts most.

You can find window seats in homes representing just about every American architectural style, from colonial to contemporary, and the fact that they've endured this long speaks to their form

and versatility. They also have a place in every room, whether as a banquette in the kitchen, a boot bench in an entry, or a hideaway for reading a book in the den, and can be trimmed to match existing moldings.

On the following pages, you'll find all the information and inspiration you need to create a window seat that's right for you, from designing and tricking one out to tips on building your own seat on a shoestring—no pros or complicated carpentry required. We'll also guide you on project particulars, such as which materials to use and what measurements to follow, all with the ultimate goal of giving you a satisfying "feet up, say *ahhh*" result. Window-seat dimensions Use these measurements to ensure a comfy seat.

Backrest: 10 to 20 inches high to lean, either below Depth: the window or 16 to 20 inches against a side wall to sit facing forward with feet on the floor Length: Minimum of 30 inches to face forward, 50 inches to sit sideways About 18 inches, including cushion (2 to 4 inches). This chair height makes it ideal for dining when a table is pulled up. with legs extended



#### VITALS

#### What's it made of?

Depending on its look and function. a seat can be constructed of hardwood, plywood, MDF, or even kitchen cabinetry.



DIY or hire a pro? Handy homeowners can use stock cabinets or construct a sturdy open or enclosed bench out of lumber and plywood. Consider calling in the pros for an exact match to a room's existing millwork or a challenging configuration, such as a curved bay window.

#### What's it cost?

A 3-foot-long DIY window seat costs as little as \$100 for one with open storage underneath or \$350 for one made with stock cabinets. For custom. expect to pay from \$1,000 to \$3,000, depending on the size and design.

A L L A B O U T →Window seats

# Where to put a window seat?

Every room in the house. All you need is a window and a niche provided by a dormer, bay, or bumpout. Two side walls are ideal, but one will do





Take advantage of a nook created by existing his-andhers closets to add a sunny seat. Paneling on this seat's base makes it a focal point in the room, while a lavender cushion and throw pillows echo the wall color.



↑ entryWay Create a welcome place to pull on shoes or set down packages. Here, a cubby keeps trip hazards safely stowed and drawers help organize small items, such as dog leashes and toys.

→ den/home office Recess a seat between built-in bookcases, and invite readers to take a load off. This seat's creamy white paint and chunky baseboards complement

the window's raised-panel casing.



#### +living room

A built-in perch in a bay window offers extra seating for guests. And unlike a freestanding sofa against a window, it doesn't hinder views to the outside. Sturdy wood shutters on this bay provide both a backrest and privacy when needed.



**† kitchen** A windowed alcove creates the perfect opportunity for a space-saving banquette (or two) in a kitchen. Here, side drawers make efficient use of what would otherwise be an empty cavity within each banquette's boxed base.





#### ↑ stair landing

Use a window seat to turn wasted space at the top of the stairs into a mini room. Here, wall sconces provide lighting for reading or practicing guitar.

#### ← bathroom

Fill the void alongside a shower stall or a vanity with a spot to sit while slathering on lotion or blow-drying your hair. This triangular seat is clad with beadboard to match the wainscoting on the walls.



#### No niche for a seat? Make one

If you have a blank wall with a window, the simplest way is to flank the opening with ready-made shelving or wardrobe units and span the distance with a seat. The trick is getting the measurements right. Standard shelf depth is 12 or 16 inches; for comfort, the window seat should stand proud, for a total depth of about 18 inches. Wardrobe units for hanging clothes are about 2 feet deep, so here it's best to recess the seat by 6 inches or so. That way, you can sit facing into the room with your back supported and both feet on the floor.



18-inch-deep seat

# Three basic types

Window seats take different forms, with looks, location, budget, and storage needs among the determining factors for the type you choose

**Shelf:** A window seat made of a shelf-style bench outfitted with an upholstered cushion allows for open storage under the seat. This option, which you can make yourself or hire out, is great in utilitarian spaces such as mudrooms, entryways, or even a laundry area. Fasten the underside of the shelf to 2×4 cleats screwed to wall studs along the back and side walls. For added strength, install vertical supports, which can also act as cubby dividers.

**Box:** An enclosed window seat can be made by adding wood paneling to the front and any exposed sides of a shelf-style seat (shown on the banquette at right) or by cladding it with drywall to create a seamless surface with the surrounding walls. Another option is to build a six-sided box set on 2×4 framing that's screwed to the floor. By hinging the top, the seat doubles as a storage bin.

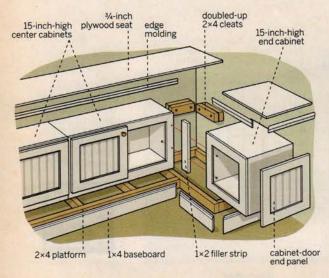
**Cabinetry:** Modular units with doors or drawers offer a premade base. Choose from thrifty stock cabinets sold at big-box stores, such as The Home Depot and IKEA, or made-to-order units from a local mill shop or a custom-cabinet company. Though pricey, custom lets you maximize every inch of storage beneath the seat while unifying the built-in with the rest of the room, from door style to trim to finish. Cabinets typically rest on 2×4 framing, but some stock and semi-custom models come with legs or a pedestal with an integral toekick.



#### pro advice

ARTHUR MCLAUGHLIN, INTERIOR DESIGNER, ARTHUR MCLAUGHLIN & ASSOCIATES

"In a kitchen or a family room, cover the window-seat cushion with outdoor fabric. It won't fade from the sun coming in and can handle people putting their feet up."



#### Our favorite DIY window seat

Start with two stock 15-inch-high by 12-inch-deep double-door cabinets designed for use above a fridge (the width depends on the size of your nook). Screw cabinets together through their sides and set on 2×4 framing to support and raise them to seat height. Use 1×4 baseboards to hide the framing, and top cabinets with ¾-inch plywood trimmed with edge molding to create the seat. For a window seat that turns a corner (shown at left), add single- or double-door cabinets on the ends, supporting them from below and finishing the tops the same way as the center cabinets. Use filler strips to bridge gaps in front, and extra doors as end panels.

**Note:** Most stock wall cabinets are 12 inches deep, less than the suggested 16 to 20 inches for comfort. Make up the difference by furring out and supporting the cabinets from behind with doubled-up 2×4 cleats secured to wall studs. Use a wider plywood top that will rest on the cleats and overhang the cabinets by an inch or so in front. Fasten the cabinets and the top to the cleats, as well as to each other.

# Trim out your seat

To tie it in with the rest of the room, look to existing moldings. Baseboards, for example, should wrap around the seat where it meets the floor. Here are more ways to give your seat character

paneling A recessed-panel design creates an elegant look in keeping with traditional house styles, such as Georgian and Colonial Revival; design the panel to duplicate existing trim in the room for a unified effect. **beadboard** Suggesting cozy cottage style and casual gathering spots, beadboard adds instant charm, whether used as cladding for the window-seat base, the backrest area, or both, as shown here.





brackets Shelf-type seats open the way for brackets, which can be both ornamental and structural. Trademark trim in Craftsman bungalows and Victorian gingerbread cottages, windowseat brackets can echo existing ones.





vertical timbering Similar to board-and-batten wall paneling, these applied lattice strips have a simple farmhouse feel. When painted a contrasting color, as shown, they make a window seat pop.



# Seats for sleeping

Gain extra accommodations for overnight guests with a window seat sized for a standard twin mattress (39 by 75 inches). Popular additions to bedrooms, the oversized seats can also offer an inviting spot for a catnap in a home office or a den. A lowered or arched ceiling (shown above, covered with wood slats) adds to the snug effect. Install builtin bookcases and lighting to mimic the usual nightstand elements, or make the window-seat platform area longer than the mattress itself to give you extra surface area for placing books and other objects. If cabinets or drawers are included in the windowseat base, include a toekick so that it's easier to stand close to the bed when changing linens.

When hiding a radiator in a window seat, sheathe the face with lattice panels to let heat escape. A hinged top allows the radiator to be easily accessed and serviced.





# Making the most of awkward spaces

Complex arrangements, such as curved bays or windows with radiators tucked beneath, call for clever solutions. It all comes down to carpentry. For a bay window without right angles, that means following the curve. To do this with stock cabinets or DIY boxes, arrange units side by side so that just their faces meet at the corners, like a hinged toy snake. Cut a plywood top that matches the contour and covers the gaps between the units at the rear. Be sure to fully support the seat from below and behind. For a perfect fit and for a large bay, such as the turret-style one shown above, go the custom route. This will push the \$3,000 envelope, but rest assured that the built-in will add value, especially if you integrate storage.

## Best ways to build in storage

You can't have too much stowaway space. Here's how to take advantage of the voids below, inside, and surrounding your seat



↑ hinged top This simple and thrifty

approach relies on sturdy piano hinges. The only drawback is having to remove cushions to access storage. In homes with kids, add supports designed for toy chests to keep the lid from slamming on little fingers.

#### → open cubbies

For shelf-type seats, dividers can offer support and carve out distinct spaces for organizing books or holding baskets filled with small or unsightly items, such as sports gear in a mudroom.





↑ sidewall shelves Carve out shelves in the walls flanking your seat. The wider the shelf the better, but even a narrow, between-the-studs recess gives you a lot of storage.



#### + drawers

These provide easy access without removing a seat cushion. Some cabinet companies sell what's called a "pedestal drawer" with a built-in toekick that simplifies construction.



↑ doors Standard with stock and custom cabinets, doors offer tidy, enclosed storage. But unlike with drawers, you must crouch down farther to reach inside. Be sure there's ample room in front to accommodate door swing.



#### Comfort and convenience boosters

**CUSHIONS:** A seat cushion should be as thick as a sofa's (2 to 4 inches). Additional 20-inch-square firm pillows lining the back offer more support, as do soft throw pillows that can be tucked behind the small of your back or your head.

LIGHTING: Augment natural light with recessed cans in the ceiling, sconces on side walls, or a table lamp on a shelf (shown at left) so that it's easier to read or jot notes at your seat. Use dimmers for energy-efficiency and to create a soothing space for napping. ELECTRICAL OUTLETS: Not just for curling up with a paperback anymore, window seats increasingly are places where people plug in a laptop. Outlets also let you easily charge an e-reader or a tablet without leaving your cozy perch. Tuck them into the toekick or side walls.

WINDOW COVERINGS: To prevent glare or heat gain from the sun coming in through windows, add shades or blinds, which can be chosen in materials and fabrics to complement the room's furnishings. If the window seat is used for sleeping, consider installing drapes in front of the seat to conceal the entire alcove, creating a room within a room.



# ARRRGH.



Beating your head against a wall won't get that bath done. But once we get you started, it won't be long before the pain of a bath remodel becomes a pleasure.



# askthisoldhouse

inside

tips, tricks, and answers to your homeimprovement

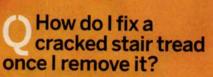
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SEALA DOOR

STOP SLUGS

HANG A FLAT-SCREEN TV

MORE ()



-BOB RICHARDSON, VALPARAISO, IND.

A Simple: Apply yellow carpenter's glue to the split, then clamp the pieces together until the glue cures. A couple of bar clamps like these antique wood ones would do the trick, or you can use modern metal equivalents. Just be ready with a damp rag to wipe away any glue that squeezes out. Keep the clamps in place for at least an hour, then wait a day before reinstalling the tread. At that point, the glued seam will be stronger than the rest of the tread. —THE EDITORS

PHOTOGRAPH BY VICTOR SCHRAGER

#### → Our cast of veteran experts



TOM SILVA General Contractor



NORM ABRAM Master Carpenter



RICHARD TRETHEWEY Plumbing and Heating Expert



ROGER COOK Landscape Contractor



KEVIN O'CONNOR Host



The original weatherstripping on our front door has worn away, and I can't find replacement strips that fit the grooves in the door's bottom edge. Is there a long-lasting fix?

-JOHN LUNDELL, CORALVILLE, IOWA





Tom Silva replies: Any weatherstripping will eventually wear out and need to be replaced. So what you need is something that allows you to easily swap in new parts when the time comes.

Look for a product called a door shoe, which I'm installing at left, like those sold by Niagara Conservation (niagaraconservation.org). It's an L-shaped aluminum extrusion with a removable vinyl gasket on the bottom. While you're at it, buy a couple of replacement gaskets to have on hand. The shoe should have elongated screw holes, which allow you to fine-tune the fit by raising and lowering it slightly after installation. Set the shoe so that the gasket compresses about halfway when the door is closed. Any tighter and the fins will just wear out faster.

#### SLUG AND SNAIL CONTROL

Slugs and snails seem to love our compost bin. Is there any way to get rid of them so we can use the compost in our garden without poisoning our vegetables or flowers?

-ELLEN KNOTT, LILLIAN, ALA.

Roger Cook replies: There are several organic methods you can use

#### askthisoldhouse

to keep snails and slugs under control without poisoning the soil, the plants, or other animals. One way is to give these mollusks a moist, shady "hiding" place, like a board, a newspaper section, or an upside-down melon rind raised an inch or so off the ground to lure them in. Then you just turn your trap over and scrape them into a can of salty water. Or you can put a shallow container on the ground, filled about halfway with beer. Slugs and snails can't resist the scent, so they crawl in and drown.

Beer traps are effective over a few square feet. For larger areas, spread a thin layer of diatomaceous earth, a white powder. Its granules have sharp edges, which cut and kill the pests if they crawl over them. Replenish the powder after a rain; it loses effectiveness once it gets wet.

#### **TRIMMING A RAISED** COUNTERTOP EDGE

The laminate countertop on our kitchen island is edged with wood. which stands a fraction higher than the surface of the laminate. Is there a way to make it flush so we don't have to replace the countertop?

-STEVE SIR WILKINS, BEND, OREG.

Norm Abram replies: If you try to sand the edge flush, you'll scratch the laminate, guaranteed. Better to put a flush-trimming, bearing-under bit in a small router and run it over the edge.

The bit has to be bearing-underwith a bearing at the end of the bit. not at the base of the shaft-so that the bearing will roll on the laminate and trim off only the wood that stands up above the surface. Before using this bit, however, carefully set its depth: You want to be sure its cutting edges do not extend past the wood-laminate joint.



A 

Log splitter

#### B- Nonslip ladder foot

C→ Highstrength magnet for retrieving out-of-reach metal objects

D-) Or ...

#### OR THE ANSWER

Yellowing maple leaves with crispy brown edges and leaf spots show signs of mineral deficiency, lack of water, and fungal infection.

If the counter were on wallmount cabinets, a router couldn't reach all the way into inside corners or where the edging dead-ends at a wall. Those areas would have to be trimmed carefully by hand, using a sharp chisel. Luckily, you won't have this problem on your island.

#### MAPLE LEAVES **TURNING BROWN**

Toward the end of every summer, the leaves on our red maple tree turn brown along the edges. It happens only on the tree's south face. Is there a way to prevent this? -GINO FAVERIO, CANTON, MICH.

Roger Cook replies: There are three things going on with your tree. The brown circles on the interior of each leaf are tar-spot fungus, which can cause the leaves to drop prematurely. Remove fallen leaves promptly to



prevent fungal spores from causing further problems, but otherwise let the problem run its course-it isn't usually treated.

The pale coloring of the leaves is due to chlorosis, a condition caused by alkaline soils-those with a pH above 7-that prevent a tree from getting the minerals it needs to make chlorophyll. Have your local cooperative extension service test a soil sample for pH, manganese, and other elements that can cause chlorosis, then ask them how to correct it.

Finally, I think the brown edges on the leaves are caused by a lack of water. If the tree is growing in a lawn area, remove the turf from a large circle around the trunk and add mulch. Then, during dry spells, give the tree a couple inches of water about once a week; red maples thrive in wet conditions. One good way of doing that is to bury a soaker hose in the mulch.

O SAVING EXPOSED BEAMS The painted wood beams that shade our front patio are rotting on top, and my husband's Bondo repairs are no longer holding. Can they be saved?

-KRISTIN MARKHAM, DALLAS

**Tom Silva replies:** Polyester autobody fillers like Bondo aren't ideal for exterior wood repairs because they don't flex with the wood as it expands and contracts. As a result, water usually finds its way underneath the patch and the rot resumes. You'll have better luck using borates and epoxy, as long as you prep the wood properly.

First, however, probe the beams with a knife or screwdriver to see if they're strong enough to be salvaged. If the damage goes more than a couple of inches deep, have a contractor or structural engineer investigate.

But if the damaged area isn't too deep, follow these steps: Pry off the Bondo, dig out as much rot-softened wood as you can, and vacuum up the debris. Then mist the bare wood with a borate-based liquid, such as Bora-Care (nisuscorp.com). Borates kill rot fungi and guard against their return, and also deter termites, carpenter ants, and wood-boring beetles. After the wood dries, coat the excavated area with an architectural epoxy primer and filler, like the products sold by Advanced Repair Technology (advancedrepair.com), which remain flexible after they cure. Smooth the epoxy flush with the surrounding wood, and when it hardens, sand and paint it to shield it from UV rays.

For additional protection, cover the tops of the beams with a layer of builder's felt and metal flashing. The felt keeps any condensation on the underside of the metal from soaking into the wood. Also, make sure the flashing's edges overlap the beam's sides by about ½ inch.



## I want to hang my flat-screen TV on the wall without any wires showing. How can I do that?

-MARK CHRISTENSEN, PHOENIX

Tom Silva replies: The first step is to buy a wall mount rated to hold your TV, so you'll need to know your set's weight and screen size. Then choose a mount type. Fixed, non-adjustable mounts hold a set tight against the wall but limit how high the TV can go. (The screen should be at eye level when you're seated.) With a tilt-swivel mount like the OmniMount installed here,

> **Cost:** \$250 for the wall mount, plus \$100 for the PowerBridge **Time:** 1 hour with two people **Difficulty:** Medium. Get a hand lifting a heavy TV.

the TV sits farther off the wall but rotates side to side up to 90 degrees and tilts up to 15 degrees. That allows you to put the screen higher on the wall than a fixed mount and still enjoy comfortable viewing.

Building codes don't permit TV power cords to be buried in the wall, so you'll want to use a system like the PowerBridge shown here. This two-piece receptacle kit comes wired to safely hide the cord and A/V cables behind the drywall and pick them up at the base of the wall near your signal and power source. For an even neater installation, run the cables through the hollow arms of the mount.

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#### STEP-BY-STEP

#### Hang a flat-screen TV

#### 1\_Mark the studs

Find and mark a stud where you want the TV mounted. Measure to the left or right 16 inches and mark the center of the next stud. Using the template that comes with your mount—make sure the template is level—mark the position of four lag screws over two studs.

#### 2\_Install the wall mount

Drill pilot holes for the lag screws. Hold the mount up to the wall and position it over the holes. Install the lag bolts and washers with a socket wrench, but don't tighten them completely. Slide the mount left or right depending on where you want the TV, check for level, then tighten each screw, as shown.

#### 3\_ Cut the receptacle hole

Determine the least-visible spot for the PowerBridge's upper receptacle box, then use a stud finder to make sure that you have a clear shot to the bottom of the stud bay. Place the receptacle template in this spot and trace around it. Use a drywall saw to cut out the wallboard along the template's outline.







#### 4\_ Connect the power

Locate the lower receptacle box within 6 feet of an outlet and repeat Step 3. Insert the upper box and snake the power cord down the wall. Use a screwdriver to twist the wall plate's tabs, locking them behind the drywall. At the lower hole, plug the male end of the power cord into the female end of the lower receptacle.



#### 5\_Insert the cables

Back at the upper receptacle, fish the HDMI cable and any other cables through the box's rubber gasket. Leave enough slack to reach the TV at it's maximum extension and then some. Pull the cables through the hole near the base of the wall and through the lower receptacle's rubber gasket. Then attach the wall plate to the drywall, as in Step 4.



#### 6\_Mount the TV

Fasten the unattached half of the mount to the back of the TV. Have someone help you lift the TV and hold it steady while you bolt the two halves together. Tighten the nuts with a socket wrench. Plug the TV's power cord into the upper receptacle, then use the supplied extension cord to run power from an outlet to the bottom receptacle.

#### WOOD SHAVINGS FOR MULCH

I'm an amateur woodturner and would like to use the cherry and maple shavings from my shop as mulch for my garden. Good idea?

-JAMES CARLIN, ROYAL OAK, MICH.

**Roger Cook replies:** Shavings from domestic hardwoods are fine for gardens-and lawns-if used in moderation. I'd combine them with grass clippings and let them decay for a few months before applying them around your plants.

If you were turning tropical woods, however, it could be a different story. Some species contain potent pest- and rot-repellent substances that might not be good for your plants.

CABINET-FINISH PROBLEM On my cherry entertainment center, I put a glossy water-based polyurethane over a water-based stain. But even after multiple coats, the brushstrokes are still evident. How can I get a nice, smooth finish? - JOHN STEVENS, MARYSVILLE, CALIF.

Norm Abram replies: Finishes can be tricky. Temperature, humidity, timing, the type of wood, and the brushes you use all affect the results. In your case, I think the problem is related to how you prepared the cherry or applied the polyurethane.

Before I use a water-based stain or poly, I sand hardwoods in stages up to 220 grit. Anything finer burnishes the surface, so it won't accept stain. Next, I spray the surfaces with distilled water, to raise the wood grain. (Tap water may contain minerals that stain wood.) After the wood dries, I give it a very light sanding with 220 grit-just enough to knock the grain back down-tack it clean, and apply the stain. Waterbased finishes tend to raise the wood grain, so I lightly sand the surface again after the stain dries. I'll repeat the process until the wood feels smooth and I'm satisfied with the way the stain looks.

Now I apply the poly. Water-based polyurethanes dry very quickly, so I prefer to spray rather than brush them on. But when I do brush them, I use foam brushes and just a few strokes at a time to minimize the chance of stroke marks in the final finish. I also sand lightly with 220-grit paper between each coat and tack off the surface to ensure good adhesion of the next coat.

With your cherry project, I'd suggest that you brush on a few more coats of poly, sanding lightly between coats, and then smooth away the brushstrokes using a sanding block. Take care not to sand all the way through the poly and down to the stain. When you are satisfied that everything is smooth, lay on one last coat using a foam brush, and the finish will be as smooth as it can be.

#### **BOARD-AND-BATTEN** BASICS

I want to put board-and-batten paneling on my inside walls. What's the best way to go about it?

-JACK SMITH, PHILIPP, MISS.

Tom Silva replies: There are a couple of good ways to get the boardand-batten look. With the traditional route, which is also the most expensive and time-consuming, you set 1×10 or 1×12 boards vertically, edge to edge, and cover the seams with narrow wood strips, or battens. The battens are typically 1/2-inch lattice strips or 1× that butt into a horizontal fascia board at the top of the wall and a baseboard at the bottom.

You can't just nail boards and battens directly to drywall or plaster and expect them to stay put. But with construction adhesive and dabs



Simple board-and-batten paneling complements the Arts and Crafts styling of this dining room.

of hot-melt glue, you can stick the pieces to the walls.

A faster, less expensive way to install board-and-batten is to use 1/4-inch hardwood plywood or medium-density fiberboard (MDF) as backing. Glue the sheets to the wall, nail them to the studs with 7d nails, then nail on the battens.

If your walls are tall and you use plywood, which tops out at 8 feet, you'll end up with a horizontal seam before you reach the ceiling. To hide it, cut the sheets so that the seam lands at chair-rail height and cover it with a horizontal batten before applying the vertical ones. If you want a seamless installation on a tall wall, go with

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Include a complete address and daytime phone number. Published questions will be edited for clarity and length and may be used in other media. We regret that, because of the volume of mail received, we're unable to reply to unpublished questions.

#### askthisoldhouse

MDF-it comes in sheets up to 12 feet long.

You can save even more money by forgetting the boards and gluing battens directly to the wall, assuming it's flat and smooth. Most folks won't even know something's missing.

#### WIRING SAFE

Recently, I found out that some of the wiring in my 1967 ranch-style house is aluminum. I've also learned that my insurance company won't insure a house with aluminum wiring. What can I do? —HARRY COTTON, WILLINGBORO, N.J.

Kevin O'Connor replies: Copper was in short supply in the mid-1960s, so many builders switched to cheaper aluminum wiring for branch circuits. Unfortunately, aluminum is prone to corrode and overheat at splices and terminal connections, so the practice was discontinued in the mid1970s and is now prohibited by code.

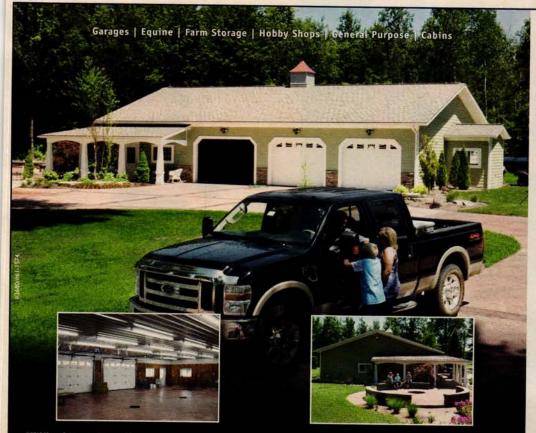
The best solution, according to the Consumer Products Safety Commission, is to replace all the branch-circuit aluminum wiring in a house. But if that's not practical, its next-best fix is to disconnect all the wires and attach a short length of copper wire to the end of each aluminum one using a COPALUM connector. A specialized compression tool squeezes the connector onto the ends of the wires with 10,000 pounds of force, making a crimp that actually welds both metals together and eliminates any future corrosion. Finally, a plastic tube is heat-shrunk over each connector and the copper wires are spliced together or attached to each terminal.

This is no DIY job. Only electricians trained to use the crimping tool are authorized to install COPALUM connectors. If this approach works for you, ask your local code official if COPALUM crimping is allowed. If so, then call your insurance company to see if that will change their minds.



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## **Under pressure**

For tough cleaning tasks, like removing stains from concrete, or monster ones, like washing an entire house, elbow grease goes only so far. This range of pressure washers gets the job done faster—and better—than you and your brush.—SAL VAGLICA

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#### CAUTION A pressure washer is

not a garden hose. Never direct the spray toward any living thing, as it can maim. Always wear boots, long pants, gloves, and eye protection.

# GENERAC RAPCHER 2,800 CU CRAFTSMAN 2,210 CU NOMAD 45 CU

CLEANING UNITS Don't be dazzled by psi, or you may end up with plenty of pressure but not enough flow. Instead, calculate cleaning units (CU) by multiplying psi by gpm. This factor better represents the cleaning power you really have. The higher the CU, the deeper you can clean and the faster it'll go.



#### TROY-BILT 020413 \$280; troybilt.com

This basic gas model is the pick for annual jobs too big for an electric unit. The go-to 25-degree fan tip handles most cleaning, but please shelve the fierce 0-degree tip, lest you accidently carve your name into your deck. Large wheels make the machine easy to maneuver. The consumer-grade sealed axial pump means no oil changes, but it also means the unit may need to be replaced after seven years of normal use. **Fine print:** 2,500 psi, 2.3 gpm, 190cc engine, 60.7 pounds

#### **GENERAC 5993**

\$630; generac.com

Prosumer-grade pressure washers like this gas-powered one compress water with a robust, triplex pump. Ceramic-coated heads generate less heat and last hundreds of hours longer than those on standard axial pumps. A side grip helps you direct the spray while keeping your hand a safe distance from the tip. For the user who wants the durability to clean the whole house—as well as all the others in the neighborhood. **Fine print:** 3,000 pounds per square inch (psi), 2.8 gallons per minute (gpm), 212cc engine, 113 pounds

#### top-line features

 A handle, with slots for the tips, hose, and wand, that collapses for storage.
 A steel-reinforced rubber hose will outlast PVC versions.
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 Puncture-proof wheels.

#### How to clean wood with care

A pressure washer can force water behind siding or gouge your lovely deck—unless you learn to harness the power



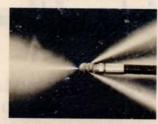


**SIDING** Fit the wand with the soapdispensing tip and spray the siding with a cleaner, then switch to the 25-degree tip to rinse. Move side to side, keeping the tip 12 to 18 inches off the siding and the spray fan perpendicular to the grain. Angle the wand slightly downward to prevent water from being forced behind the siding. Move in closer if you have a less powerful unit. DECKING Start by spraying on a cleaner made for decks; use the soap-dispensing tip and follow the cleaner's directions. With a 25-degree tip held 9 to 12 inches off the deck, hold the spray fan perpendicular to the grain but move the wand with the grain. Don't linger—you may gouge the wood.

TIP: "Run an \$8 can of Pump Saver through your pressure washer before storing it for the winter to protect the pump and keep the seals from drying out." –BILL MIKENIS, PRESSURE WASHERS DIRECT

#### Upgrade your wand

Clean large or hard-to-reach areas faster with these specialty attachments



Clog buster Fit this flexible drain flusher to the wand, snake it down a clogged pipe, and pull the trigger. One jet breaks up the blockage, while two rear ones push the snake forward. From \$99; cloghog.com

#### Surface cleaner

Push this disk over a patio and it leaves a clean, streak-free 12-inch-wide path with no overspray. \$50; karcher-usa.com

#### **Telescoping wand**

Extend this wand up to 18 feet and use it to spray a cleaner on second-story windows and then rinse them—from the safety of the ground. \$140; mtmhydro.com



#### KARCHER K 5.540 \$280; karcher-usa.com

GREGORY NEMEC

LLUSTRATIONS:

The 2,000 psi this unit produces is the max for a 110-volt electric washer, which features a long-lasting water-cooled pump. You'll appreciate practical features like the integrated hose reel, the adjustable spray head (no separate fan tips to lose), and an attachment that creates a circular pattern, boosting cleaning efficiency by 50 percent, for jobs like cleaning a brick walk. **Fine print:** 2,000 psi, 1.4 gpm, 13-amp motor, axial pump, 60.7 pounds



#### CRAFTSMAN 75286 \$215; craftsman.com

This compact washer includes two wands, one for the pressure washer and one for steam. The latter is a smart way to melt grime off grill grates or muck off car tires. It takes about 20 seconds for the heating element to turn distilled water into a stream of hot vapor. As for the pressure washer, it's great for light-duty cleaning, like patio furniture.

Fine print: 1,700 psi, 1.3 gpm, 12.5-amp motor, wobble-plate pump, 22.5 pounds



#### NOMAD MCOR35 \$250; nomad2go.com

More of a cordless cleaner than a pressure washer, this unit won't revitalize a deck. But it packs enough punch to blast mud, sand, and gunk off boats, cars, or even Fido (without maiming him). The 18-volt battery will run through the 3.5-gallon tank three times on one charge. The sprayer works like the one on a traditional garden hose and adjusts from 90 psi to a soft fan of water. **Fine print:** 90 psi, 0.5 gpm, 20 pounds

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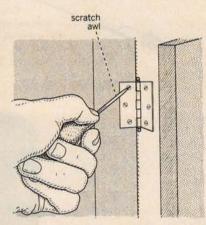
## Norm's tricks of the trade

We're planning to refinish the original cabinets in our 1930s kitchen, but the hinges are buried under layers and layers of paint. How do we remove the hinges without damaging them or the surrounding wood?

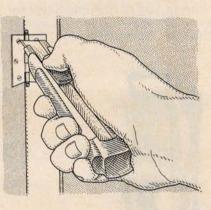
-BARBARA BARNES, LA MESA, CALIF.

A In order to take off the hinges, you'll have to back out the old straight-slot screws that hold them in place. That requires clearing the screws' paint-clogged slots. Given the age of your house, there are probably layers of lead paint on the hinges, so before you start, put on a respirator and lay down a wide piece of plastic sheeting under the work area to catch any paint chips.

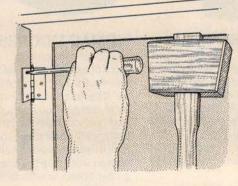
**1** To clear a slot, set a sharp scratch awl at an angle in the center of the slot and tap it lightly, first one way, then the other. Do the same for the other screwheads.



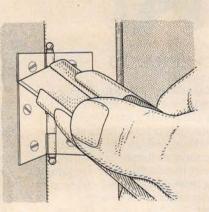
2 Remove any remaining paint with a utility knife, and clean up the paint chips with a vacuum equipped with a HEPA filter.



Place the tip of a screwdriver in a clean slot, and give it a light tap with a wood mallet. The shock will break the paint's grip on the screw so that you can back it out. For this to work, the screwdriver's tip has to be in good condition, with square edges and sharp corners.



4 Once the screws are out, it's possible that the hinges will come off easily without chipping the surrounding paint. But if chipping does occur, cut around each leaf with a utility knife before you remove a hinge.



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# {September 2012} directory

Cover: For information, see the listing for "True to Form."

Checklist (p. 17) Thanks to Cheryl Reed, Angie's List; angieslist.com.

Before + After Kitchen: Added function and lots more charm (pp. 25-27) Designer: Dana Jones, CKD, Long Beach, CA; kitchenadvice .com. General contractor: Cal Spec Builders, Seal Beach, CA; calspecbuilders.com. Paint: 60YY 77/332 Southern Cross (cabinets), AkzoNobel: available through Glidden retailers. Crystal Bell (walls), Swiss Coffee (trim), and custom blend (Dutch door), Dunn-Edwards; dunnedwards.com, Backsplash and floor tile: Daltile: daltile.com. Pendant lights: Rejuvenation; rejuvenation.com. Barstool: Overstock; overstock.com. Cooktop, wall ovens, refrigerator, and microwave: GE: geappliances.com. Range hood: Kobe: koberangehoods.com. Sink: Rohl; rohlhome.com. Cabinets and pull-out spice rack: Nelson's Cabinets; nelsonscabinets.com. Slide-out baskets: Rev-A-Shelf; rev-a-shelf.com. Countertops: Hi-Macs, LG Hausys; Ighausys.com/us. Faucet: Franke; frankeksd.com.

Before + After Bedroom: From catchall to orderly retreat (*pp. 29–31*) Designer: Beth Bynon Interior Design, Oceanside, CA; bethbynon .com. Cabinetry: Southwest Contempo, Vista, CA; 760-598-1160. Paint: 912 Linen White (cabinets and trim), Benjamin Moore; benjaminmoore.com. Nigerian Peony (walls) and custom blend (ceiling), Ralph Lauren; ralphlaurenhome.com. Painting: "Lovers Point," Jacqueline Osborn; visionsinart.com.

Budget Redo: A mudroom built-in for \$470 (p. 33) Homeowner: Shelley Smith, blogger, The House of Smiths; thehouseofsmiths.com. Pillows: Vintage Blossom Azure, KimoleyDeco; etsy.com/shop/kimoleydeco. Floral Ikat Decorative Pillow, Willa Skye; etsy.com/shop/WillaSkyeHome. Paisley and Frilled Pillows, Home Again; homeagainconsignment.squarespace.com.

Build It or Buy It: Upholstered storage ottoman (pp. 34–35) Ottoman: Tailored Storage Ottoman in Domino Green, Ballard Designs; ballarddesigns.com.

Landscaping: Planning a cottage garden (pp. 42–45) Designer: Lisa Moseley Garden Design, Santa Monica, CA; 310-829-9859; lisamoseleygardendesign.com.

Photoshop Redo: Perking up a plain Cape Cod (p. 53) Thanks to Thaddeus Siemasko, Siemasko + Verbridge, Beverly, MA; svdesign.com, Column: PermaCast Craftsman, HB&G; hbgcolumns.com. Window box: Laguna Premier Direct Mount Flower Box, Hooks & Lattice; hooksandlattice.com. **Door handle:** Single Cylinder Entry Handle Set #6661, Weslock; build.com. **Entry door:** 2132 in Walnut Finish, Simpson Door Company; simpsondoor.com.

Weekend Remodel: Install a flat-weave cotton stair runner (pp. 55–59) Thanks to William Laidlaw, special projects manager, Dash & Albert; dashandalbert.com. Runner: Blue Heron Stripe Woven Cotton Rug, 30 inches by 12 feet, Dash & Albert. Finish stapler: SB-2IN1 18-Gauge Finish Stapler Kit, Stanley Bostitch; bostitch.com.

True to Form (pp. 60–67) General contractor: Mox Construction, Venice, CA; moxconstruction .com. Kitchen: Stove restoration: Antique Stove Heaven, Los Angeles, CA; antiquestoveheaven.com. Dishwasher and fridge: Big Chill; bigchill.com. Sunroom: Floor tile: The Antique Floor Company; theantiquefloorcompany.com. Roman blinds: Tumbleweed & Dandelion; tumbleweedanddandelion .com. First-floor bath: Tub and medicine cabinet: Gayle's Pasadena Architectural Salvage; pasadenaarchitecturalsalvage.com. Second-floor hallway: Ceiling fixture: pasadenaarchitecturalsalvage.com.

#### All About Window Seats (pp. 80-87)

Thanks to Ned Capozzi Jr., president, Modern Design + Construction, Providence, RI; mdcdesignconstruct .com. Dean Martineau, contractor, East Providence, RI; deanmartineau.com. Arthur McLaughlin, Arthur McLaughlin & Associates Interior Design, San Francisco, CA; arthurmclaughlin.com. Plain & Fancy Custom Cabinetry; plainfancycabinetry.com. KraftMaid Kitchen & Bath Cabinetry; kraftmaid.com.

Ask This Old House: Question of the Month (pp. 92–93) Wall mount: ULPC-L, OmniMount, Phoenix, AZ; 800-668-6848; omnimount.com. Power extension: PowerBridge TSCK, Littleton, CO; 855-755-9838; powerbridgesolution.com. ■

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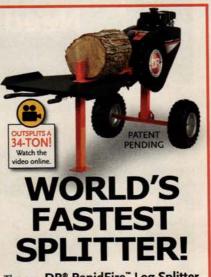
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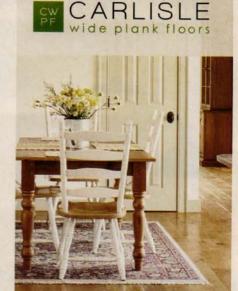
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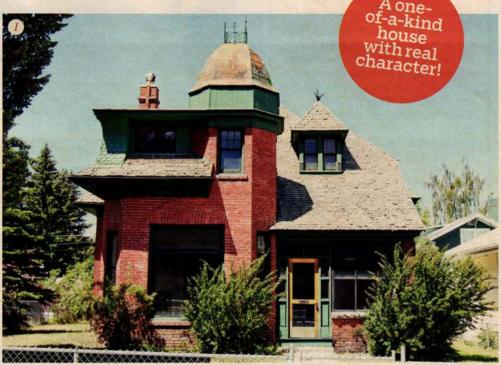


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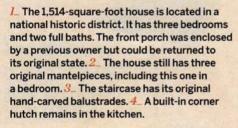
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Price: \$51,900 Location: Anaconda, Montana Contact: Donna Volberding, 406-560-6746

The history: Once home to a massive copper-smelting facility. Anaconda was booming in the late 19th century, when its wealthier residents started building stylish houses on the town's tony west end. Those residents included grocer Albert MacCallum, who, in 1895, built this solid-brick three-bedroom on Main Street. In 1904, he sold it to Dennis Roach. owner of a prosperous wholesale company that sold pool tables, cigars, and flowers, among other things. After Roach's death in 1925, his widow. Maude, remained here for almost 30 years. Their daughter, Katherine, briefly converted the house into a kindergarten before turning it back into a single-family residence. Why save it? The house is an interesting mix of two distinct architectural styles, with a partial mansard roof, reminiscent of Second Empire houses, butting up against the domed tower of a Queen Anne. It retains its original doors, windows, built-ins, millwork, and fireplace mantels. What it needs: The plumbing is fine, the electrical could use updating, and you'll need a new furnace. The current owners recently reglazed the first-floor windows and installed a new water heater. Although its coppermining days are long gone. Anaconda retains its historic downtown. There's a ski resort nearby and the town is now home to a golf course designed by Jack Nicklaus, so there'll be plenty of leisure activities to enjoy once your work is done. - KEITH PANDOLFI







Got a house? If you know of an old house that should be saved and is for sale, write to savethisoldhouse@timeinc.com or This Old House, 135 West 50th Street. New York, NY 10020.



