## HOUSE Old See

**TOP 100!** 

Best new gifts & product picks

charm to every room

22 KITCHEN UPGRADES

ASSESSED FOR FREE FROM

11 TABLETOP LOOKS

**18 BATH IDEAS** 

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2014 | THISOLDHOUSE.COM

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DAVID H WILLIAMS 0003

Gee-whiz gadgets to

make your home

smarte

p. 45

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#S804 6272 360#TH 2350NC02 M APR15 #BXN6FYN \* FIXES FOR SPOTS, SPILLS, AND

27 simple spruce-ups to do in a day p.96

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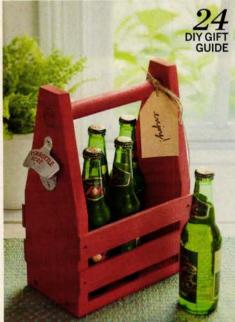




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Deck Your Halls with Holiday Must-Haves

Shop editors' picks from the pages of This Old House







A. 3-Light Hanging Lantern by Troy Lighting
B. Essential Candle Holder (Set of 3) by IMAX
C. Boho 8" Dessert Plates (Set of 6) by Rosanna
D. Tabletop Tree by Vickerman E. Ikat Linen
Pillow by Vanderbloom F. Ombré Velvet Pillow
by Kevin O'Brien Studio G. Circa Linen Pillow
by Chooty & Co.





## Letter FROM THIS OLD HOUSE

### Fact is, we're all getting smarter

once was dumb. A dunce, really. Which you can plainly see in the little photo on the iPad I'm holding over there. Look close, I even have the hat on.

Actually, I should be a little bit clearer about this. I wasn't broadly dumb, the opinions of most of my family aside, but dumb about smart. Smart stuff, that is, chatty electronics, the hardware and software combination some collectively call the Internet of Things but that I better know as, uh, gizmos.

Having spent some time fiddling with a few of the partyfriendly gadgets for the special Smart Home section you'll find on page 45, I'm now wiser, brilliant even-at least when it comes to using the Perfect Drink smart-scale cocktail machine. Now, the sober-minded among you might wonder if such a gadget is necessary when a recipe book and a 99-cent shot glass accomplish the same thing. Well, all I can say is, there was a time when we never used to need the microwave,

but just try to find a remodel in TOH that doesn't feature one. Not that you'll need the microwave once you get your hands on a Wi-Fi-ready GE Profile Convection Oven that you can control via your smartphone. That's in there too, along with other clever pieces of equipment.

Perhaps just slightly less gee-whiz but no less interesting or useful is our annual list of what we consider to be the year's best new home products, the TOH Top 100, on page 65. Our staff examined thousands of entries to come up with this list. We think it's a good one, stocked with money-savers and splurges, problem-solvers and products that beautify. Everything a home improver could possibly need (except the Perfect Drink smart-scale cocktail machine).

In either case, we're making it all available to you. We're testing a new shopping service in this issue. If you have the Blippar app on your smartphone or tablet, you can scan any one of the Smart Home or Top 100 pages and, with a couple of screen taps, buy any of the products you see via our partner ShopAdvisor. If you don't have the app, it's free and easy enough to download, so give it a shot. E-mail me to let me know if you find it useful. If you do, we'll offer the opportunity on more pages in future issues, and there'll be no more having to hunt down a product you see between these covers; just blipp and have it delivered to your door. Nothing duncy about that.

> COTT OMELIANUK, EDITOR scott@thisoldhouse.com







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### More holiday. Less madness.

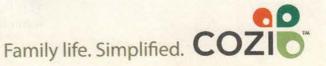
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### Reader mail



AS CONFUSING as it can be for people to select paint, they sure have opinions about it, as we saw from readers' tips and comments in response to our September issue. And take a look at a reader project that put a heavyweight twist on our butcher-block island how-to.

### Pick your piece wisely

Re "Painted Patina" [September 2014], on creating a distressed paint finish: I suggest that someone wanting to paint a piece of old furniture do a little research beforehand into the history and value of the piece. Antiques are not "born" as antiques; they are survivors of a period in which they went out of fashion before they became antiques. I can't tell you how many times I have seen a valuable piece ruined by an ill-advised paint job.

-STEVEN A. JUDGE, ROYALTON, VT.

### A paint pro's plea

It's great that homeowners sample colors in the room they want painted, but keep in mind that *how* you do it impacts

the prep work painters should do for the final job. It's best to paint samples on big sheets of paper so you can move the color from place to place in the room. Clients often use a brush to paint big patches on the wall. Part of my prep as a contractor is to smooth out old brushstrokes, sand out the finish, and prime over the unwanted colors. Those patches add time and materials to my job.

-STACY ERICKSON, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA.

### Lighter underfoot finishes

I'm an avid TOH reader, but I take exception to the designer's advice about painting floors in dark colors ["11 of Your Most Crazy-Making Paint-Color Questions Answered!" September 2014].

READER PROJECT OF THE MONTH

### **Island remix**

KATY TOWLER, RALEIGH, N.C.

My husband and I saw your online how-to on using iron pipe to build a butcher-block island and got busy creating our own. We topped it with a \$5 piece of granite picked up at a yard sale and used pipe that fit within its existing holes. We are loving the finished product. Thanks for the inspiration! [Find the how-to that inspired the Towlers at thisoldhouse.com/novdec2014]





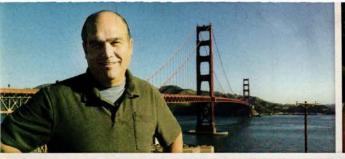
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### Reader mail

I once had a black painted floor. Every dust mote and pet hair showed! I later moved to a house in which none of the oak floors matched, and the best and most economical solution was to paint them. White has stood up well for 21 years.

-JACK KIRKBY, GALENA, ILL.

### Upcycling tips for leftovers

I read your advice in Ask This Old House about recycling old paint in the September 2014 issue and wanted to share a tip of my own. I decided to dejunk my garage and do something about all the old latex paint I had collected over the years. So I used it to brighten the inside of my garage. Partial cans of paint? You can make each wall a different color, or do a wall half-and-half, or give it a racing stripe. Avoid discarding old paint at a landfill and enjoy your "green" garage!

-EDMUND C. DOMIAN, FARMINGTON, UTAH

My tip for getting rid of leftover paint? I put a "curb alert" message under "Free" on Craigslist. Artists use it for murals, faux finishes, and priming canvases; landlords mix it and use it as primer. My paint is gone in an hour, and I feel good that someone is using it.

-LYNDA DELALLO, MARIETTA, N.Y.

### Crazy for color

A lot of readers suggested the July 2014 issue was your best ever. I, however, am most impressed with your September 2014 issue. It is packed to the gills with paint-color tips and how-tos and gorgeous photos. Along with the photos, the paint-drop color chips are extremely helpful; such a thoughtful touch. Thank you for this lovely, comfy, homey "Fresh Color Ideas" issue. I will keep—and leaf through—this one for a long, long time.

-BETTY HORNER, SAN JOSE, CALIF.

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### HOW TO REACH THE EDITORS

E-mail **TOH\_letters@thisoldhouse.com.**Please include your full name, address, and phone number. Published letters are edited for clarity and length.





PRESENTS

## Kitchen Solutions

An all-new online mini-series from the producers of This Old House!



Join This Old House host Kevin O'Connor and renowned designer Kathy Marshall as they share expert planning tips and design advice to help you create the kitchen of your dreams.



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## Checklist NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2014

Easy ways to improve your home right now

### Preserve perishable decorations

Natural holiday trimmings have an expiration date, but there are ways to prolong their life. Spray cut foliage with an antidesiccant. Look for one made from nontoxic pine-tree resin, such as Wilt Stop, and reapply it once more during winter. Give popcorn and berry garlands a coat of clear spray shellac, but keep these decorations indoors-they could be harmful to wildlife if eaten.



### ■ November 15 is Clean Out Your Refrigerator Day

You'll need to clear space for the turkey, but don't stop at the shelves: Give the fridge a top-to-bottom deep cleaning. With the refrigerator unplugged, remove the bottom grille and drip pan and clean with soap and water. Use an old toothbrush and a mild bleach solution to scrub the rubber door gasket, often a hot spot for mold. Loosen dust around the condenser coils with a refrigerator coil brush, then vacuum with a brush attachment.



### Climb with caution

Between readying roofs for winter and decorating for the holidays, ladder-related injuries spike at this time of year.

To avoid accidents, place straight or extension ladders 1 foot from the surface they rest against for every 4 feet of ladder height. Maintain three points of contact with the ladder at all timeseither one foot and two hands or two feet and one hand.

### Disinfect bird feeders

Even in winter, outdoor feeders can harbor mold and bacteria, putting birds at risk of contracting diseases. Toss old seed every two weeks and, wearing rubber



gloves, scrub the feeder inside and out with hot, soapy water and a stiff brush. Soak for 2 to 3 minutes in a 10 percent bleach solution. Let dry before refilling. Rake up any debris below.



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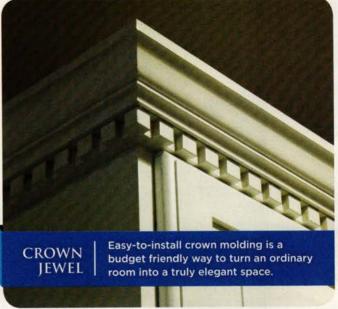
Martha Stewart Living™ Ox Hill Cabinets in Heavy Cream Martha Stewart Living™ Quartz Countertop in Sierra by LG Hausys Viatera®



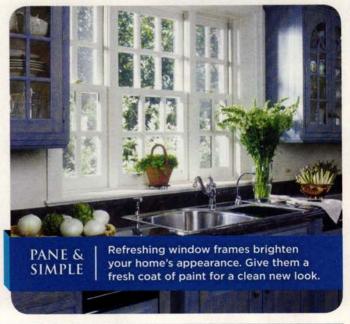
### REFRESHING REWARDS

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## home 1 \* Edited by Michelle Brunner SOLUTIONS

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### Homes for the holidays

Looking for a fresh way to amp up the festive factor? House-shaped luminaries will set a merry mood on bookshelves, tabletops, mantels, and more. Luckily, it doesn't take a village to make them in multiples. Using radiator screen from the home center (\$17 for a 24-by-36-inch sheet), we made one continuous cut to form the walls-with two peaks for the gables-and bent the metal to make corners. The roof is one rectangular piece folded in half; clear fishing wire threaded through the openings closes up the side and secures the top. Furnished with simple string lights, they'll glow on and on.



A house full of people and something's bound to get stained or nicked. Raid the pantry or medicine cabinet for quick-fix remedies that will have you back to your guests in no time. -MEGAN BAKER



### Red wine on a tablecloth

Chase it with a splash of white wine while it's still damp, to help neutralize the stain. Then cover with baking soda and let sit for 5 minutes to absorb the remaining liquid. Rinse over the sink with boiling water.



### Oily spill on carpet

Blast spots left by salad dressing or gravy with shaving cream, working it in with a clean rag or an old toothbrush to help absorb the grease. Once dry, rub with a soft, damp cloth.



### Scuffson hardwood floors

Scrub 'em out with a little white (nonwhitening) toothpaste and an old toothbrushthe combo works as a gentle abrasive. Wipe up the paste with a damp cloth, then buff the floor to a shine with a tiny bit of olive oil.



### **Greasy finger** markson upholstery

Sprinkle the spots with cornstarch to help absorb the grease and lift the stain from the fabric. Leave on for a few minutes, then vacuum it up. Repeat as needed.



### Mystery mark

Your guests left a stain on carpeting or upholstery but you've got no clue what it is? Dab on a teaspoon of 3 percent hydrogen peroxide mixed with a little cream of tartar or white (non-whitening) toothpaste and rub with a soft cloth.

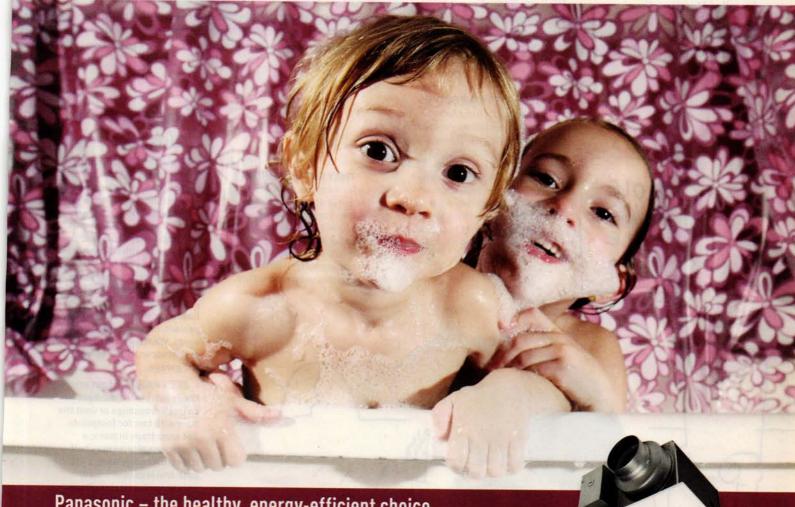
### On-the-spot fixes for ice dams

Icicles may look pretty dangling from your roofline, but they can spell trouble. That's because the same conditions that allow icicles to form—snow-covered roofs and freezing temperatures—may also lead to ice dams. When snow melts on insulated portions of your roof and the water flows down to uninsulated eaves, it can refreeze, creating thick ridges of solid ice, or dams, that can tear off gutters, loosen shingles, and cause water to seep inside. The result can be soggy insulation and ruined ceilings, not to mention mold and mildew. If you spy an ice floe overhead, here are three ways to tackle it right away. -PAUL HOPE

- > TURN ON A FAN: If water is leaking into your house, set up a box fan in an uninsulated attic, set it on HIGH, and point it at the source of the leak. Blowing air where the ice dam is forming will cause it to refreeze within an hour or so. Leave the fan in the attic and switch it on whenever temperatures fall below freezing.
- > USE A SNOW RAKE: While using this long-handled tool is generally a preventive measure, it can also be helpful if a dam has formed. Standing safely on the ground, sweep excess snow off your roof to keep the problem from escalating.
- > MAKE A MELTING SOCK: Unlike traditional rock salt, calcium chloride ice melt won't damage your roof or any plants below it. Fill an ice-melting salt sock (\$10: amazon.com) with calcium chloride pellets and lay it over the dam to melt the ice.



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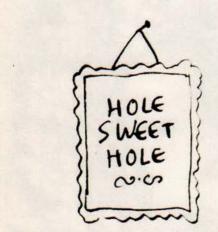
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### Meet the house mouse

It's called Mus domesticus for a reason: While it can survive outdoors, it prefers a roof overhead, especially when the weather's cold. Once inside, these naturally curious creatures like to poke about at night, cruising for carbs and opportunities to hook up. Big ears, tiny paws, and long whiskers may make these mice Beatrix Potter-cute, but they can spread salmonella as they scamper, chew electrical wires, and keep you awake with their infernal nightlife. Had it with these sticky-fingered houseguests? Familiarize yourself with their MO. -DEBORAH BALDWIN



### THEY'RE HOMEBODIES

Males battle it out for real estate and stake claims by spreading around their allergy-inducing urine: a boss mouse on a tear is basically incontinent. House mice prefer to stray no more than 30 feet from their comfy nests, though they will travel up to 75 feet when their shelters are disrupted or they're compelled to forage for food and lodging.

### THEY EAT LIKE BIRDS

Mice evolved on seeds and grain, but these days they are happy having what you're having. And only about 4 grams a day-nibble, nibble, nibble. No need for running water: The moisture in edible debris can suffice.

### THEY HAVE MUSCLES

Mice can climb, jump, swim, squeeze through tiny cracks and holes, and survive long falls. They like to chew on wood, plastic, and-to the alarm of firemen-wiring. They rely on finely tuned whiskers to navigate, along with impressive muscle memory ("If the baseboard is on my right as I enter, it will be on my left as | exit-duh!").

### THEY'RE POLYGAMOUS(E)

Mice use their keen noses to pick up on pheromones and determine the age and gender of likely mates. Dominant males mate early and often; females can produce litters of six or so wee ones every couple of months. Mice burn their candles at both ends because life is short-about 18 months.

### IT'S A LOVE-HATE THING WITH CATS

Sure, cats enjoy batting mice around like pinballs. But a well-fed feline also naps a lot. When a mouse finds a food bowl big enough for a crowd-and the guard's sleeping on duty-it'll dive right in.

### Say good riddance

SEAL OPENINGS Trim foliage within 18 inches of the foundation, and inspect your exterior for 1/4-inch and larger holes and cracks. Same goes for indoors. Pack voids, plus gaps around pipes and utility lines, with silicone or polyurethane sealant that stretches with temperature changes. Fill larger holes with coarse steel wool or fine metal mesh and flexible sealant. Screen exhaust vents. Weatherstrip doors

and windows; don't forget

the garage.

- ► SET TRAPS Find out where they nest: Use a flashlight to track droppings or dust the floor with talc for footprints. Set snap traps in pairs; a suspicious mouse may halt if it senses something in its path and leap over trap 1, only to land on trap 2. Place the bait end against the baseboard. Mice go nuts for bacon, peanut butter, chocolate-and cotton balls, which make comfy bedding.
- PUT OUT POISONED BAIT The trick is to place it in the path of hungry mice but away

from curious kids and pets.

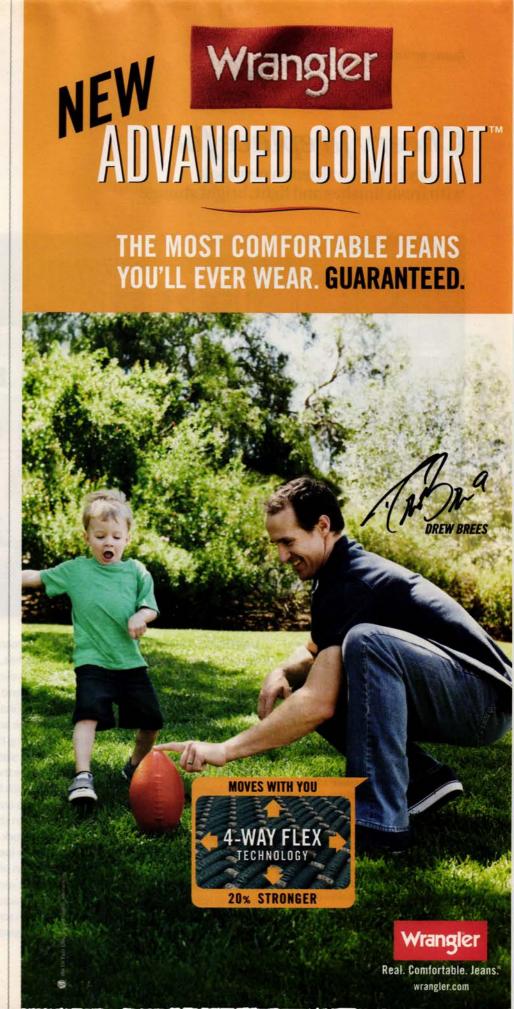
CLEAN UP Dispose of your catch with rubber gloves, and disinfect the area with a weak solution of bleach and water. All this killing, cleaning, and safety concern give you pause? Consider hiring an exterminator.



### TLC for wood furniture

Dinged dining room table? Ring around the guest-room nightstand? Revive wood pieces with these tips.

- > Buff out white spots: White rings result when water droplets form on the outside of a glass and aren't caught by a coaster. To buff out these marks from wood surfaces that have a clear-coat or an oil finish, use a cloth barely dampened with denatured alcohol; wipe just once to open up the finish, releasing the moisture. Take care not to apply too much or you will remove the finish, leaving dull areas, says Michael Dresdner, author of The Woodfinishing Book.
- > Repair surface scratches: Rub a shelled walnut gently across superficial marks; its natural oils will conceal any discoloration. For deeper scratches, use a wax wood-filler stick that closely matches the color of the finish. Overfill the area, smooth with a credit card, and wipe off excess with a clean, dry cloth.
- > Recolor worn edges: In spots where wood stain has worn away, opt for a felt-tip stain pen, being careful not to color over neighboring areas where the finish is intact. Apply a coat of clear paste wax over both the repair and adjacent surfaces; buff to an even sheen.
- > Keep it clean: Strong ammonia-based cleaners can damage a furniture finish, so use a gentle cleanser made for wood, such as Murphy Oil Soap. Dust regularly with a just-damp cloth or microfiber duster to keep grime from accumulating and attracting grit that can scratch the surface. Skip aerosol polishing and dusting sprays; many contain silicone, which creates buildup that will need to be stripped down the road. —KATELIN HILL



### Cheery fireplace for \$795

A dingy hearth wall gets a new look with fresh finishes and light, bright storage



BEFORE

BEFORE The fireplace's tall swath of dark faux stone dominated the room, where the only display space was the mantel shelf. AFTER A new fireplace surround, hearth, and mantel lend the space a lighter, brighter look. **Built-in shelves and base** cabinets on either side provide both open and closed storage. DATED FINISHES CAN really bring down a room. At Erin and Kurt Tassone's 1980s ranch house, in Twin Lakes, Wisconsin, the gas fireplace in the family room was such an eyesore that the couple and their three kids couldn't bear to spend time in the space and gathered in the basement instead. Finally, after eight years, Erin decided enough was enough. So she and Kurt yanked out the faux stone and dark hearth tile, replacing them with new drywall above stacked-stone veneer and large slabs of pale gray stone on the raised hearth. Rather than replace the brass doors on the opening, Erin spray-painted the trim black to make them disappear. Kurt installed secondhand cabinets on both sides of the fireplace to house puzzles and games; open shelves above leave room for the family TV, photos, and artwork. The mantel shelf came from Erin's woodworker brother-in-law, who knocked off a pricey version she had seen—for a fraction of the cost. The finishing touch: a flea market divided-light window turned frame to hold portraits of the kids. "Before, I would look at that fireplace thinking, I can't wait to redo this," Erin says. "Now we love to hang out here as a family." -MEGAN BAKER

### THE PROJECT

Tore out the old faux-stone veneer and hearth tile.....\$0

Installed new drywall, stone veneer, and stone slabs......\$500

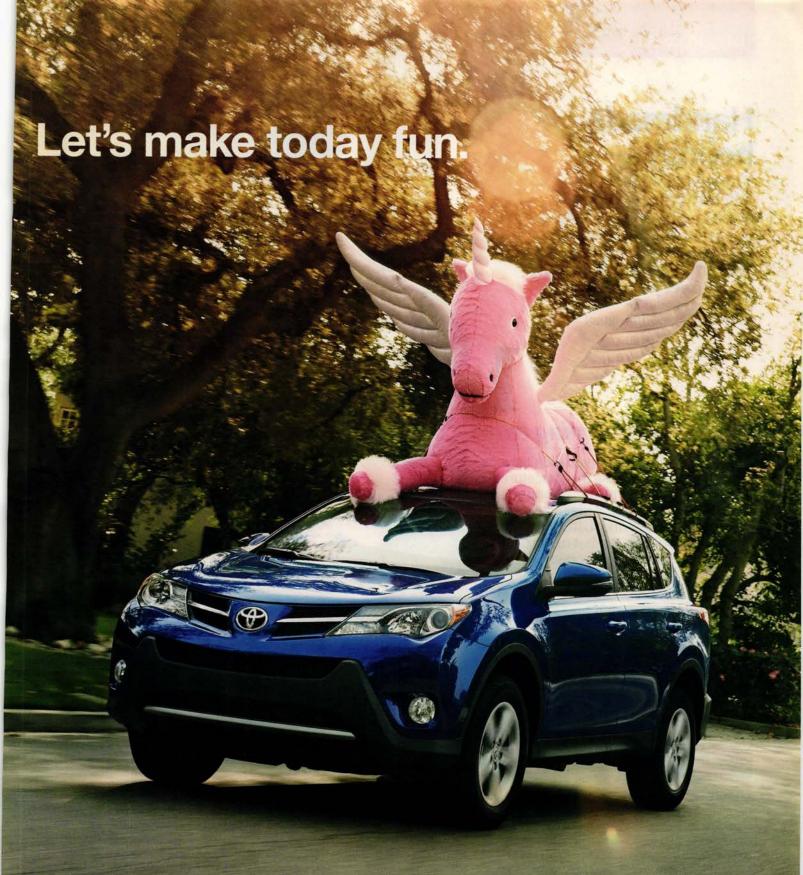
Painted the room a soft green.....\$30

Made over the brass fireplace doors with heat-resistant 

Built in secondhand cabinets capped with an old oak desktop......\$0

Added open shelves and crown molding...... \$200

Replicated a designer mantel using stock lumber and molding; hung a flea market window frame for family photos......\$60



Toyota RAV4
toyota.com/rav4

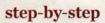


Let's Go Places

This year, don't buy it-DIY it! Make like Santa's elves and hit the workshop to craft one-of-a-kind gifts for the special people in your life. Here, four creative ideas to get you started BY MICHELLE BRUNNER PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN GRUEN

### tiered serving tray

Nobody needs to know you didn't sweat over a lathe to make this graceful oak server: Just pick up turned furniture legs at the home center. A stain made from white vinegar and rusted steel wool, plus a wax finish, lends it rustic charm. Here's how it comes together.





**LMAKE THE TRAYS** Cut 8-, 10-, and 111/2-inch squares from a 1/2-inch oak board. Drill 5/16-inch holes through the center of each tray, and glue

mitered trim to the edges.



2\_ADD THE FEET Cut small squares of oak for feet. Apply a dab of superglue to the bottom corners of the base tray. and glue the feet in place.



SUPPORTS Grip the bottom post and drill a 1/4-inch hole into its top. Do the same to the middle post.

3\_PREP THE



4\_INSERT SCREWS Unscrew the threaded bolts from the middle and top posts, and replace them with 5/16-inch dowel screws.



THE SERVER Starting at the top, screw the posts together. capturing the trays between them. Fasten the base with a washer and nut. Stain and finish.

5\_ASSEMBLE

For complete step-by-step instructions and videos for all the projects in this story, go to thisoldhouse.com/DIYgifts



We're so excited to be ranked "Highest in Customer Satisfaction with Kitchen Cabinets" in J.D. Power's most recent study.

Get inspired and start building your dream kitchen at IKEA-USA.com/kitchens



IKEA received the highest numerical score among cabinetry brands in the proprietary J.D. Power 2014 Kitchen Cabinet Satisfaction Study.™ Study based on 1,740 consumer responses measuring 10 companies and measures opinions of consumers who purchased kitchen cabinets within the previous 12 months. Proprietary study results are based on experiences and perceptions of consumers surveyed January-March 2014. Your experiences may vary. Visit Idpower.com

AKURUM kitchen with ORSA birch doors and drawer fronts. Clear lacquered birch and birch veneer. Requires assembly. \*The total price includes cabinets, fronts, interior shelving, drawer and door dampers, hinges, toekicks, legs, visible moldings and panels. Your choice of countertop, sink, faucet, handles, appliances and lighting are sold separately. See IKEA stores only.



### bottle-vase holder

Presenting flowers may be somewhat predictable, but not when they come in this tabletop display piece. All it takes is a simple framework made from stock oak and molding. Pluck the "vases" from the recycling bin or buy new ones with a shape you like. Ours look like scaled-down milk bottles, bringing a touch of old-timey character to the table.

### step-by-step



### 1\_MEASURE THE TOP

Evenly space bottles on a 1×4 oak board to divide its length into thirds and determine where to cut for length. Mark the center of each section.



### 2\_MAKE THE HOLES

Fit your drill with a hole saw sized slightly larger than the mouths of the bottles; bore holes through the top, centering the drill over the marks. If necessary, widen the underside of the holes with a rasp.



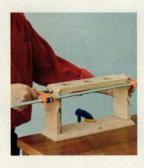
### 3\_CUT THE SIDES

Trace and cut two pieces of molding to the width of the top to create the sides.



### **4\_ATTACH THE SIDES**

Cut the 1×4 base 11/2 inches longer (or twice the thickness of your molding) than the top. Glue and clamp the sides to the base; fasten with trim-head screws. Glue mitered molding around the base.



### 5\_GLUE THE TOP

Position the top between the sides and adhere with glue. Clamp until dry. Finish with stain. Slip in the bottles.



## cutting board

Treat the chef on your list to butcher block done better. A nice thick chunk makes a hard-wearing prep surface, and a few strokes of a jigsaw transform it into a unique conversation piece. Find the template for this and other house shapes at thisoldhouse .com/DIYgifts.

TIP We used IKEA's unfinished Numerär beech butcher block for this project. At just \$129, the 2-by-6-foot piece of countertop yields at least five nice-size boards.



**L**POSITION THE TEMPLATE With a restickable glue stick, adhere the cut-out template to the butcher block.



2\_MAKE LARGE CUTS Using a jigsaw fitted with an aggressivetooth blade, follow the template, stopping short at the corners.



3\_TRIM THE CORNERS Use a fine-tooth pull saw to finish cutting the corners. Clean up rough-cut edges with a rasp, then sand.



4\_FINISHIT Season the board with three or four coats of butcher-block conditioner (we used Howard's Naturals).



### step-by-step



### I\_MEASURE THE SIDES Mark 1½ inches in from each side at the top of a 5-inch-wide pine board. Draw a line from each mark to the midpoint of each side of the board



2 CUT THE SIDES Using a jigsaw, cut along the lines to form the tapered sides of the carrier.



3 MAKE THE HANDLE OPENING Using a 1-inch paddle bit, drill a hole 11/2 inches down and into the middle of each side for the dowel handle.



4\_ CUT THE BOTTOM AND ATTACH THE SIDES

Cut a 5-inch-wide board to 71/2 inches for the base. Attach the sides to the ends of the base with 11/4-inch countersunk screws.



### 5\_ADD THE SIDE RAILS AND HANDLE

Drill 1/8-inch pilot holes into oak "rails," then attach to the sides with 1-inch trim-head screws. Glue the handle in place. and paint (we used milk paint and antiquing wax). Attach the bottle opener.



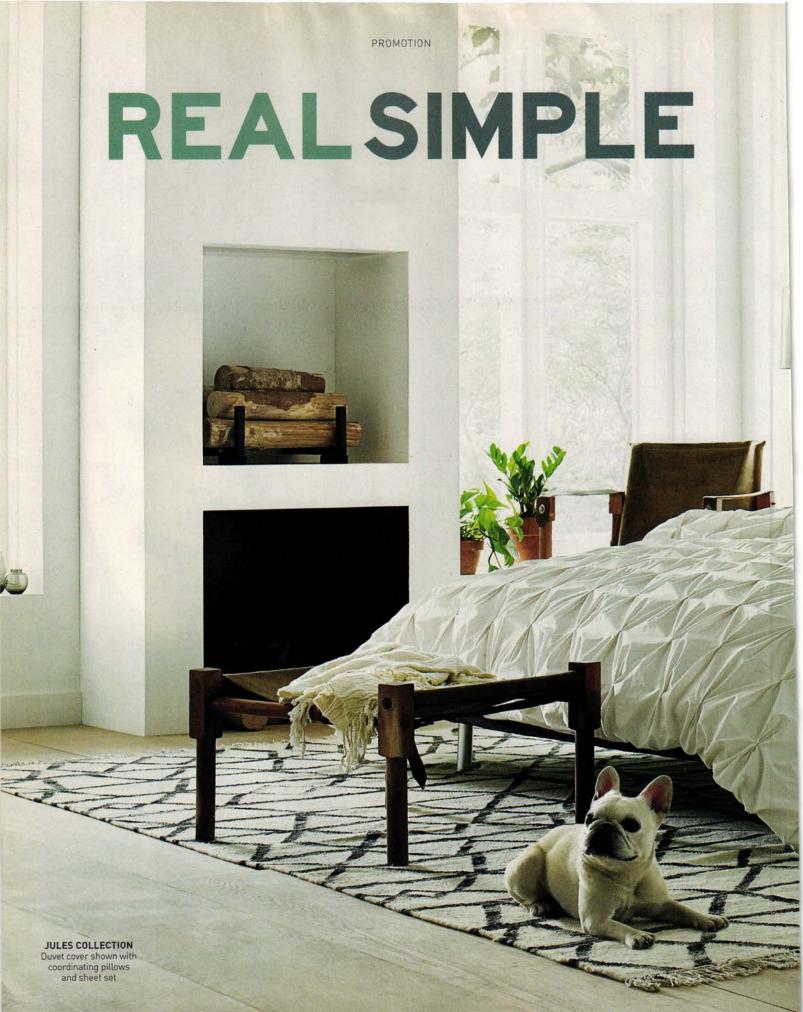
BYOB gets a style upgrade with this classic caddy, modeled on an old-fashioned tool box. It securely holds half a dozen beer or soda bottles, and its dowel handle is a pleasure to grab and go. The vintage-look bottle opener (\$6; restaurant supply.com) screwed to the side will really get the party started.



### LEARN TO MAKE COPPER TREE ORNAMENTS

For step-by-step instructions for this bonus project, get your tablet edition at thisoldhouse.com/tablet







### Farmhouse revival

Two DIY owners devise a recipe that's one part modern function and two parts colonial charm by Deborah Baldwin + Photographs by John Gruen





**BEFORE** Previous redos lowered the ceiling in the cook space and finished it with pink faux beams. AFTER The new owners gutted the first floor, exposing the original beams, and moved the kitchen, reviving its period style.

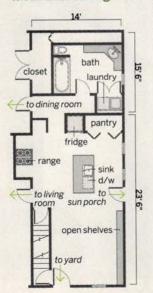
A TIGHT BUDGET CAN SLOW DOWN a redo, but pausing can pay off in more ways than one. "I'm glad we waited," says Burgess Clark of the paint scheme he and partner Daniel Blake ultimately chose for their 18th-century house, in Walden, Vermont. He could have easily been referring to every aspect of the project, from devising a better layout to finding the right appliances. During demolition the DIYers uncovered the first floor's original ceiling beams and granite hearth. Then, during two long years of prepping meals on plywoodtopped sawhorses, they spaced out expenditures while working alongside subs to replace pipes and wiring, restore a set of stairs, shift the cook space's location, and add a fireplace and chimney. All the while, they were digging into the history of colonial-era kitchens and scouting for ways to achieve an updated period look. A friend with carpentry skills donated weekends to help build and install wainscoting, paneling, and a mantel, while Daniel, the head chef, had time to find the perfect range, and Burgess to score an apron sink on eBay. As for paint choices, they went from bright colonial colors to soft neutrals. Given their busy jobs in Boston and all that work on the house, says Burgess, "we needed something earthy and calm."





### before

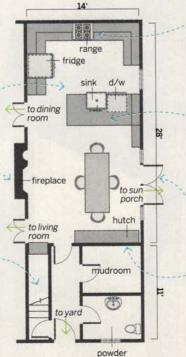
The 280-square-foot space was poorly organized and lacked an eating area.



### after

The kitchen shifted position, gaining 116 square feet and making room for an eating area.

- Demolished walls, absorbing a former bath, laundry, and dining room closet.
- 2] Added a fireplace and chimney in the spot where the 18th-century fireplace once stood.
  - 3] Eliminated the stairs to the second floor and reversed the steps to the basement, moving its entry out of the kitchen.



- 4] Moved the range to an exterior wall, easing exterior ventilation. The fridge and the sink are just steps away.
- 5] Removed the island in favor of a peninsula that delineates the work zone.
- 6] Swapped out a window and a door for view-enhancing French doors with sidelights.
- 7] Erected a wall that holds a freestanding hutch near the table; a new mudroom and powder room went in on the other side.



The homeowners salvaged vintage bricks and worked with a local mason to turn them into a colonial-style fireplace.

The storage-packed peninsula allows the cook to take charge of prep and cleanup while conversing with guests.

Sink: Shaws. Faucet: Moen







Custom cabinets hold cookbooks while masking a new plumbing chase. The cabinets were inspired by vintage kitchens with separate cupboards and sets of drawers. Cabinets: Redline Design





Moved and improved

An awkward bedroom nook becomes a lavish, light-filled master bath BY NINA MALKIN + PHOTOGRAPHS BY STACEY BRANDFORD



**BEFORE** The narrow end of the long bedroom put the dresser miles from the closet at the opposite end. AFTER Relocating the bath to the bay-windowed space allowed it to nearly double in size. Custom vanities, milky marble surfaces, and a generous shower create a feeling of luxury. Ceiling fixture: Robert Abbey

BEFORE

REMODELING IS OFTEN a matter of tough trade-offs: What will you sacrifice to gain what you really need? But not for Don and Gail Souter, owners of a roomy 1960s splitlevel in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. They eagerly ceded 78 square feet of their bedroom so that they could scrap their cramped bath in favor of building a new one nearly twice its size. "The old shower was so tiny you could barely turn around in it, and we had no storage—our toiletries cluttered up the sink counter," says Don. The existing bath and walk-in closet were also inconveniently located at opposite ends of the bedroom. Privacy was a problem too, since the bath and bedroom doors led directly out into the hallway, which is open to the floor below. The Souters also craved a certain something special: "Glamour and romance," says Gail.

Enter designer Laura Stein, who rearranged the suite's floor plan to make better use of the space. The new bath claimed an awkward bay-windowed area of the bedroom; the closet filled the void of the former bath. The bedroom shifted to annex the area where the closet had been. Now the spa-like shower takes advantage of the window bay's broad bench. Marble surfaces add elegance; heated floors are another luxe touch. Says Gail, "We've gone from asking ourselves, 'Why did we buy this place?' to falling in love with it all over again."

The window bay is lined with marble to be watertight. Privacy film with a frosted look shields bathers from view while allowing light to stream in. Window film: Apex. Tile: Tile Solutions





Separate mahogany vanities sit on opposite sides of the room. Frameless medicine cabinets set into mirrored wall panels create an expansive reflective surface. Faucets: Brizo Baliza

Mounting sconces directly on the mirrored walls effectively doubles the light in the room. Sconces: Restoration Hardware



#### before

An oversized tub was rarely used, and the separate shower was way too small.



NDA FELTON, FLOOR PLANS

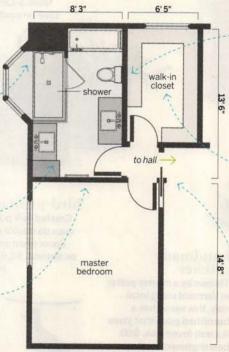
#### after

The relocated bath is bigger and more functional.

1] Put the shower in the window bay to take advantage of the light and wide bench seat. Placed the tub in an alcove nearby.

2] Built in a linen tower for both open and closed storage.

3] Erected a wall to partition off the 78 square feet taken from the bedroom.



4] Installed the toilet on the opposite side of the wall, since the waste line couldn't be moved. Put in separate vanities to maximize the remaining space.

5] Relocated the closet to the old bath space. The former sink wall was moved 19 inches to better ventilate the kitchen below.

6] Created new entries for a more cohesive, private master suite that can be closed off with a pocket door.

# **Festive farmhouse** dining room

Natural elements, pale neutrals, and pieces with patina capture the warmth of the holidays by KATHRYNO'SHEA-EVANS

LONG BEFORE HOLIDAY DECORATIONS became massproduced, electric-lit gizmos, people decked their halls with the eye-catching offerings of the forest: ivy, holly, and fragrant pine. "Showcasing evergreens indoors was a symbol of life in the dead of winter," says Colonial Williamsburg's Laura Viancour. It's a traditional approach that can still look right at home today. Take this dining room, where leafy greenery, pinecones, and birch bark mingle with rustic furniture finds, handmade pottery, and soft silvery accents. Striking glassware and pale china plates help keep the mood light, as do candles twinkling from tabletop to mantelshelf to chandelier.

Looking to bring the same homey feel to your own seasonal celebration? Read on.



handmade

Thrown by a master potter in Vermont using local clay, this vessel has a burnished glaze that gives it a well-loved look. \$60; benningtonpotters.com

pitcher

#### bird-print mugs

Crested-lark porcelain cups do double duty as decor when arranged on shelves. \$6.95 each; hm.com





glass decanters

Nothing says celebrate like a few wine-worthy carafes on display. From left: \$23, \$15, and \$20; crateandbarrel.com



candle chandelier

get this look for less

Cast a flattering glow over the party with this hanging votive holder twined with vines. \$30; save-on-crafts.com. Faux ivy, \$6.99; jamaligarden.com



A seven-step staining process gives the top a weathered look; white-painted turned legs dress the piece up. \$400; pier1.com

farm table

vintage seating
A chapel chair's built-in
back pocket (made to
hold a hymnal) provides a
perfect place for seasonal
decor. Try a gift package
that doubles as a place
card. Search online
listings; we found this

one on Craigslist for \$75.

table setting

A silvery ruffled charger glams up a gray transferware plate, while washed flax-colored linens add a down-home touch. Chargers, \$40 for a set of four; macys.com. Linen rectangle, \$9.95; hm.com. Porcelain plate, \$37; spode .com. Wineglass, \$4.95; crateandbarrel.com

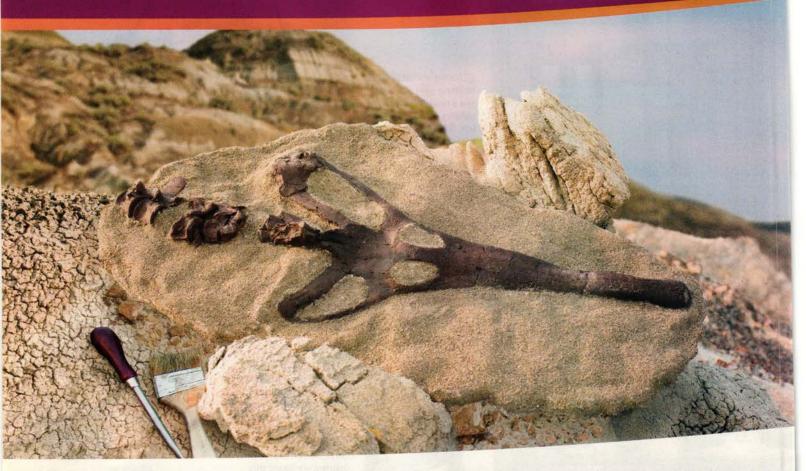
#### votive holders

Here's an easy way to "heart" the holidays: Use tin cans to make a version of the galvanized candle

holders at left. We used industrial-strength scouring pads to soften the shine, then taped a printed Clipart heart over the can and hammered holes through with a finishing nail.



For people with a higher risk of stroke due to Atrial Fibrillation (AFib) not caused by a heart valve problem



ELIQUIS® (apixaban) is a prescription medicine used to reduce the risk of stroke and blood clots in people who have atrial fibrillation, a type of irregular heartbeat, not caused by a heart valve problem.

#### IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION:

- Do not stop taking ELIQUIS for atrial fibrillation without talking to the doctor who prescribed it for you. Stopping ELIQUIS increases your risk of having a stroke. ELIQUIS may need to be stopped, prior to surgery or a medical or dental procedure. Your doctor will tell you when you should stop taking ELIQUIS and when you may start taking it again. If you have to stop taking ELIQUIS, your doctor may prescribe another medicine to help prevent a blood clot from forming.
- ELIQUIS can cause bleeding, which can be serious, and rarely may lead to death.
- You may have a higher risk of bleeding if you take ELIQUIS and take other medicines that increase your risk of bleeding, such as aspirin, NSAIDs, warfarin (COUMADIN®), heparin, SSRIs or SNRIs, and other blood thinners. Tell your doctor about all medicines, vitamins and supplements you take. While taking ELIQUIS, you may bruise more easily and it may take longer than usual for any bleeding to stop.

- Get medical help right away if you have any of these signs or symptoms of bleeding:
  - unexpected bleeding, or bleeding that lasts a long time, such as unusual bleeding from the gums; nosebleeds that happen often, or menstrual or vaginal bleeding that is heavier than normal
  - bleeding that is severe or you cannot control
  - red, pink, or brown urine; red or black stools (looks like tar)
  - coughing up or vomiting blood or vomit that looks like coffee grounds
  - unexpected pain, swelling, or joint pain; headaches, feeling dizzy or weak
- ELIQUIS is not for patients with artificial heart valves.
- Spinal or epidural blood clots (hematoma). People who take ELIQUIS, and have medicine injected into their spinal and epidural area, or have a spinal puncture have a risk of forming a blood clot that can cause long-term or permanent loss of the ability to move (paralysis).

# I was taking warfarin. But ELIQUIS was a better find.

#### I TAKE ELIQUIS® (apixaban) FOR 3 GOOD REASONS:

- 1 ELIQUIS reduced the risk of stroke better than warfarin.
- 2 ELIQUIS had less major bleeding than warfarin.
- 3 Unlike warfarin, there's no routine blood testing.

ELIQUIS and other blood thinners increase the risk of bleeding which can be serious, and rarely may lead to death.

#### Ask your doctor if ELIQUIS is right for you.

This risk is higher if, an epidural catheter is placed in your back to give you certain medicine, you take NSAIDs or blood thinners, you have a history of difficult or repeated epidural or spinal punctures. Tell your doctor right away if you have tingling, numbness, or muscle weakness, especially in your legs and feet.

- Before you take ELIQUIS, tell your doctor if you have: kidney or liver problems, any other medical condition, or ever had bleeding problems. Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, or plan to become pregnant or breastfeed.
- Do not take ELIQUIS if you currently have certain types of abnormal bleeding or have had a serious allergic reaction to ELIQUIS. A reaction to ELIQUIS can cause hives, rash, itching, and possibly trouble breathing. Get medical help right away if you have sudden chest pain or chest tightness, have sudden swelling of your face or tongue, have trouble breathing, wheezing, or feeling dizzy or faint.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see additional Important Product Information on the adjacent page.

Individual results may vary.

Visit ELIQUIS.COM or call 1-855-ELIQUIS

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The information below does not take the place of talking with your healthcare professional. Only your healthcare professional knows the specifics of your condition and how ELIQUIS may fit into your overall therapy. Talk to your healthcare professional if you have any questions about ELIQUIS (pronounced ELL eh kwiss).

What is the most important information I should know about ELIQUIS (apixaban)?

For people taking ELIQUIS for atrial fibrillation: Do not stop taking ELIQUIS without talking to the doctor who prescribed it for you. Stopping ELIQUIS increases your risk of having a stroke. ELIQUIS may need to be stopped, prior to surgery or a medical or dental procedure. Your doctor will tell you when you should stop taking ELIQUIS and when you may start taking it again. If you have to stop taking ELIQUIS, your doctor may prescribe another medicine to help prevent a blood clot from forming.

ELIQUIS can cause bleeding which can be serious, and rarely may lead to death. This is because ELIQUIS is a blood thinner medicine that reduces blood clotting

You may have a higher risk of bleeding if you take ELIQUIS and take other medicines that increase your risk of bleeding, such as aspirin, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (called NSAIDs), warfarin (COUMADIN®), heparin, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) or serotonin norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs), and other medicines to help prevent or treat blood clots.

Tell your doctor if you take any of these medicines. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure if your medicine is one listed above.

#### While taking ELIQUIS:

- you may bruise more easily
- · it may take longer than usual for any bleeding to stop

Call your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of these signs or symptoms of bleeding when taking ELIQUIS:

- bleeding, unexpected bleeding that lasts a long time, such as:
  - unusual bleeding from the gums
  - nosebleeds that happen often

- vaginal bleeding that is heavier than normal
- bleeding that is severe or you cannot control
- red, pink, or brown urine
- red or black stools (looks like tar)
- cough up blood or blood clots
- · vomit blood or your vomit looks like coffee grounds
- unexpected pain, swelling, or joint pain
- · headaches, feeling dizzy or weak

ELIQUIS (apixaban) is not for patients with artificial heart valves.

Spinal or epidural blood clots bleeding (hematoma). People who take a blood thinner medicine (anticoagulant) like ELIQUIS, and have medicine injected into their spinal and epidural area, or have a spinal puncture have a risk of forming a blood clot that can cause long-term or permanent loss of the ability to move (paralysis). Your risk of developing a spinal or epidural blood clot is higher if:

- a thin tube called an epidural catheter is placed in your back to give you certain medicine
- you take NSAIDs or a medicine to prevent blood from clotting
- you have a history of difficult or repeated epidural or spinal punctures
- · you have a history of problems with your spine or have had surgery on your spine

If you take ELIQUIS and receive spinal anesthesia or have a spinal puncture, your doctor should watch you closely for symptoms of spinal or epidural blood clots or bleeding. Tell your doctor right away if you have tingling, numbness, or muscle weakness, especially in your legs and feet.

#### What is ELIQUIS?

ELIQUIS is a prescription medicine used to:

· reduce the risk of stroke and blood clots in people who have atrial fibrillation.

 menstrual bleeding or • reduce the risk of forming a blood clot in the legs and lungs of people who have just had hip or knee replacement surgery.

> It is not known if ELIQUIS is safe and effective in children.

#### Who should not take ELIQUIS (apixaban)?

#### Do not take ELIQUIS if you:

- currently have certain types of abnormal bleeding
- have had a serious allergic reaction to ELIQUIS. Ask your doctor if you are not sure

What should I tell my doctor before taking ELIQUIS? Before you take ELIQUIS, tell your doctor if you:

- have kidney or liver problems
- · have any other medical condition
- have ever had bleeding problems
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if ELIQUIS will harm your unborn
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if ELIQUIS passes into your breast milk. You and your doctor should decide if you will take ELIOUIS or breastfeed. You should not do both

Tell all of your doctors and dentists that you are taking ELIQUIS. They should talk to the doctor who prescribed ELIQUIS for you, before you have any surgery, medical or dental procedure. Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Some of your other medicines may affect the way ELIQUIS works. Certain medicines may increase your risk of bleeding or stroke when taken with ELIQUIS.

How should I take ELIQUIS?

Take ELIQUIS exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Take ELIQUIS twice every day with or without food, and do not change your dose or stop taking it unless your doctor tells you to. If you miss a dose of ELIÓUIS, take it as soon as you remember, and do

not take more than one dose at the same time. Do not run out of ELIQUIS (apixaban). Refill your prescription before you run out. When leaving the hospital following hip or knee replacement, be sure that you will have ELIQUIS available to avoid missing any doses. If you are taking ELIQUIS for atrial fibrillation, stopping ELIQUIS may increase your risk of having a stroke.

What are the possible side effects of ELIQUIS?

- See "What is the most important information ! should know about ELIQUIS?"
- ELIQUIS can cause a skin rash or severe allergic reaction. Call your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following symptoms:
- chest pain or tightness
- · swelling of your face or tonque
- trouble breathing wheezing
- feeling dizzy or faint

Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all of the possible side effects of ELIQUIS. For more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

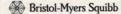
Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

This is a brief summary of the most important information about ELIOUIS. For more information, talk with your doctor or pharmacist, call 1-855-ELIQUIS (1-855-354-7847), or go to www.ELIQUIS.com.

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### Create a built-in look

Smart use of color unifies a simple coatrack and separate bench

WEALL KNOW that color can trick the eye, but we're still wowed when we see a stunning example of the principle at work. Consider this entry-area catchall. Before its paint makeover, it had a cookie-cutter, unfinished look. Painting the entire wall a single, dramatic shade knit the pieces together and yielded a more finished space. Two elegant surrounding shades help enrich the scheme. "The plum is dark enough to not fight with the green," says Andrea Magno, a design expert at Benjamin Moore, "while the creamy white on the trim brings out the millwork details and complements the classic architecture." Playing support roles are new walnut-stained flooring and plum, green, and ivory undertones in the rug, cushions, and wall art. The result: A once bland alcove is now a cohesive entry-area focal point.

BEFORE A bare-bones shelf with hooks above a bench did not a mudroom make. AFTER Benjamin Moore's Vintage Wine, Wasabi, and Hush create three-part harmony and a polished built-in look.





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House

SMART HOME BONUS





# HIGH-TECH WAYS TO MAKE ENTERTAINING EASIER





FROM THE EDITORS
OF THIS OLD HOUSE
PHOTOGRAPHS BY TARA DONNE
STYLING BY MEGAN CAMP
FOOD STYLING BY MEGAN MILLER

ECEMBER 2014 THISOLDHOUSE.COM 45









4\_Prevent a scary situation
Suddenly, while at the stove,
you're compelled to go fluff the
guest towels. Fret not: The
Wallflower, a sensor installed
behind the range, pings your
smartphone to remind you
that the stove was on when
you left the room. \$200,
available in 2015; wallflower.com

5\_Pull off perfect poultry
A dry bird is bad. A raw one is
worse—like, ER-visit worse. So
you hover by the oven, poking
and prodding. No more. With
iDevice's Bluetooth-enabled
Kitchen Thermometer, you
insert the probe once and go
about your day; your phone will
ping when the turkey is done.
\$80; idevicesinc.com

6,7 Control your slow cooker You're on a beer run but need to set the slow cooker to warm? The Crock-Pot Smart Slow Cooker with WeMo lets you schedule, monitor, and control the appliance from anywhere with the tap of a phone app. \$130 for the cooker, \$50 for the plug; belkin.com

8\_Welcome guests from afar
Friends are arriving, and you've
got gravy to stir. The videoequipped SkyBell Wi-Fi Doorbell
with Motion Sensor allows you
to see, hear, chat with, and wave
in visitors with your smartphone
—and without going to the door.
\$199; skybell.com

9\_Adjust the lighting
Dimmers are so last year. With
the GE Indoor Floodlight with
BR30 that talks to a central
hub, plus the Wink app on your
phone, you can let there be light
as bright or as soft as you like.
\$20 per bulb; \$20 for a hub,
with the purchase of two bulbs;
homedepot.com

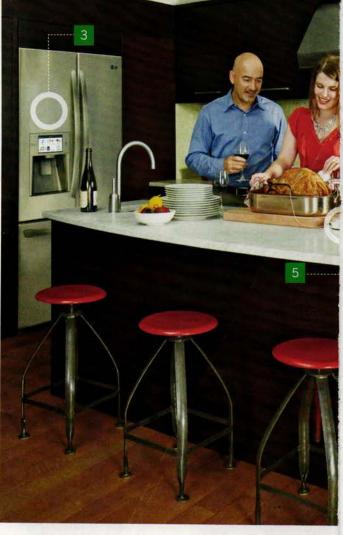
10 Order your oven
You're bound to overeat once
the festivities get under way.
That's why you might want to fit
a morning run in. No worries
about the time—you can hit it
hard while heating up the
Wi-Fi-ready GE Profile 30-inch
Convection Oven using your
smartphone. \$2,800;
geappliances.com

#### **LOVE A HOLIDAY GET-TOGETHER?**

Sure-especially when someone else is hosting. Throwing your own shindig this time of year can be about as much fun as a stocking full of coal, what with all the other stress of the season. But a slew of new Jetsonsworthy gadgets are on the way to help. Some are a major convenience, some are really cool, and a few are a little outlandish. (Hey, every invite list needs a wild card or two, right?) Across the board, though, the promise they hold is pretty sweet: No burned turkey. No miscalculated cocktails. No overheated atmosphere. No unflattering glow. To show you how new Internetenabled and appcontrolled devices can put the "woohoo!" back in hosting, This Old House staffers decided to throw a party of their own. The result: less plug, more play.

# GET THIS PARTY STARTED

How to keep your cool while whipping up a feast? It's simple when your kitchen is programmed to make fête prep a snap





1\_ Call in your coffee order A hot pot of morning java is the perfect way to ease into party prep. Forgot to switch it on before heading out to walk the dog? Set the WeMo-enabled Mr. Coffee Smart Coffeemaker using the smartphone app, and the brew will be ready when you walk in the door. \$150; mrcoffee.com 2 Mop the modern way You've got a lot to do-but swabbing the decks isn't on the list. The iRobot Scooba 450 robotic mop frees you up for more important things, like taking it easy. And it sweeps before it scrubs, so no broom needed. \$600; irobot.com 3 Take culinary inventory Avoiding dinner disasters means having all recipe ingredients on hand and at their peak. The LG Smart ThinQ fridge has a Wi-Fi-enabled freshnesstracker LCD screen that gives at-a-glance info on what's inside-and what's on the way out. \$3,144; amazon.com

Caséta Wireless

Control your lights. Anytime. Anywhere.



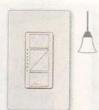


#### Coming home

Turn on entryway lights from the safety of your car and never enter a dark home again.







In-wall dimmer (overhead lights)

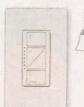


#### At home

Dim lights for reading and turn lights off before you fall asleep.



Pico remote



In-wall dimmer (overhead lights)



Plug-in dimmer (table lamps)

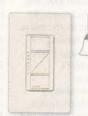


#### While you're away

Monitor and control lights no matter where you are. You can also schedule lights to turn on or off at set times.



Smart Bridge and FREE Lutron app



In-wall dimmer (overhead lights)



Plug-in dimmer (table lamps)

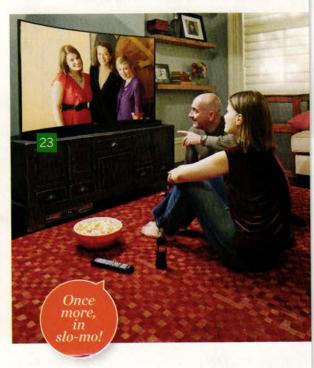


These are just a few of the ways you might use Caséta Wireless, but the possibilities are endless.

Add additional dimmers and remotes to build on to your system, as well as Lutron battery-powered shades and thermostat control - for a complete, connected home.

Find out where to buy at www.ChooseCaseta.com.





chip shards and popcorn



15 Craft cocktails quicker
Wow everyone by making
correctly proportioned drinks
with the Perfect Drink smartscale. An app provides an
extensive list of cocktail recipes,
while the scale weighs each

ingredient precisely. \$50; brookstone.com 16\_Make like a chocolatier First, play the lottery—and win. Then indulge in the most decadent dessert concept known to man. The Choc Creator relies on additive layer manufacturing technologyalso known as 3-D printing—to build chocolate confections with millimeter-scale detailing. \$4,500; chocedge.com 17 Light the way You've got your hands full with guests around. Fortunately, the Zuli Smartplug uses Bluetooth to track your phone as you move through the house, turning lights on or off as you go from room to room. No Wi-Fi required. \$50; zuli.io 18, 19 Enjoy some privacy Cozy up with the blinds drawn using Lutron's Smart Bridge and battery-powered, automated Serena window shades. Use the smartphone app to close (and open) the window coverings and operate any lights or thermostats hitched to a Caséta dimmer. From \$399 per shade; serenashades.com. \$150 for the bridge; casetawireless.com 20 Keep the carpet clean Snack foods may fly during a particularly hard-core game of charades. The LG Hom-Bot Square Robotic Vacuum Cleaner will quietly go about its business of picking up stray

kernels, reducing post-party cleanup. \$800; lg.com 21 Supersize the game board Who wants to keep track of all those little plastic pieces? Lenovo's Horizon 2 Tabletop PC 27-inch portable touchscreen lies flat on your coffee table and comes preloaded with games, including Chinese checkers, air hockey, and pinball. From \$1,500; bestbuy.com 22 Direct your drink-bot R2-D2's got nothing on this little guy. The gyroscopically balanced 8-inch-high WowWee MiP robot will not only serve drinks, he'll dance and do other party tricks at your smartphone's command. \$100; wowwee.com 23 Relive the revelry When the last guest has (finally) gone, boot up video footage of the festivities on a 55-inch ultra-high-definition curved TV screen, Samsung's HU9000. Had enough of you-know-who wearing the lampshade on his head? Talk into the remote's mic to launch apps, stream games, and surf the Web. \$3,500; samsung.com

FINISH THE HANDRAILS

A] Bore the spindle hole. On the inner face of one handrail, measure and mark a point 4 inches down from the top along the centerline. Chuck the %-inch Forstner bit into the drill/driver and make a hole, stopping when the top

of the bit is flush with the board, as shown. Repeat on the mirroring face of the other handrail.

B] **Rout the grooves.** To form the tread grooves, make a guide from 1×4 scrap with parallel 12-degree ends. To find its length, compensate for the router's base: Flip the tool over, measure from the edge of the <sup>13</sup>/<sub>16</sub>-inch straight bit to the base's flat edge, and subtract from 10 ½ inches—the distance between treads. Cut your guide, clamp it flush with the bottom of one handrail, and rout a ½-inch-deep

groove across the handrail. Wedge 1× scrap in the groove to brace the guide for the next cut, as shown. Work your way up the handrail, stopping shy of

the spindle. Repeat with the other handrail.

C] **Rout the bullnose.** Fit the router with the 3%-inch roundover bit. Clamp down the handrails and the 1×5 tread stock with one edge of each board extending off your worktable. Rout the edge of each board, flip the boards over, and rout the edge on the opposite side, completing the bullnose profile. Do the same on the opposite edges of each board, as well as on the top edges of each handrail.







TIP Router bits spin clockwise, so for the greatest control, move the tool in the direction that keeps the bit biting into the wood.





#### 2 PREP THE TREADS

A] **Drill the holes.** Fit the drill/driver with the ½-inch bit and drill two pilot holes into each tread groove, each one inset ¾ inch from a handrail's edge. Switch to the <sup>23</sup>%4-inch bit and drill a hole ½ inch below the bottom of each groove, centered side to side, to accept the rung supports.

B] **Finish the pieces.** On the miter saw, cut the bullnosed 1×5 into individual treads. Measure and mark spots ½ inch from each corner along the edges and connect each pair of marks to form a diagonal cutline. Set the miter saw to 45 degrees and cut the treads' corners, as shown.

Use 120-grit paper to sand down the handrails, spindle, and treads. Prime and paint the pieces using the 2½-inch angled sash brush, leaving grooves and tread edges bare to grip the glue during assembly.

#### · weekend remodel





#### FINISH THE ASSEMBLY

Al Attach the treads. Run a bead of wood glue in each groove and the spindle hole of one handrail. Press each tread in place, standing upright, then the spindle. Apply glue to the grooves of the other rail and settle it on top of the treads and spindle, tapping it home with the mallet. Use the drill/driver to fasten two of the supplied 13/4-inch washer-head screws through the outer face of each rail and into the ends of each tread. Measure diagonally from the top of each handrail to the bottom of the other one to make sure the ladder is square—the two numbers must match.

B] Install the supports. Attach nut caps to one end of the rung supports. Thread a support through a pilot hole, as shown, and attach it at the other end with a nut cap. Use the hex-key wrench at each end to tighten the sleeves. Install the remaining supports.



SEE HOW IT'S DONE To watch a video of this project. scan this page with the Blippar app or go to thisoldhouse .com/novdec2014

#### MOUNT THE LADDER

A] Attach the rollers. Position the rolling hardware at the angled top of a handrail. Fit the drill/driver with the 1/8-inch bit, hold the hardware in place, and drill pilot holes through the bracket holes into the edge of the handrail. Fasten the hardware with the included wood screws. Drill a second set of 1/4-inch pilot holes through the bracket holes on the side of the rollers, through the handrail, as shown, and secure the rollers with the

included through bolts and nuts, tightening them with a hexkey wrench. Install the hardware for the second handrail.

- B] Attach the wheels. Center a wheel along the mitered bottom edge of each handrail, and drill pilot holes through the bracket into the handrail. Use the hex-key wrench to tighten the through bolts while securing the nut with the adjustable wrench, as shown. Drive the supplied wood screw into the hole at the base of each bracket.
- C] Mount the ladder. Thread the metal brackets into the track's groove, spacing them to line up with the stiles on your bookcase, no more than 32 inches apart. Hold the track against the bookcase, drill pilot holes at the bracket on one end, and use the screwdriver to attach it with wood screws. Hold the track level and install the remaining brackets. Thread a finial onto each end of the track, and hoist your ladder into place.







# The home improvement experts at **House** trust flooring from Lumber Liquidators...



When it comes to the best in hardwood flooring, nobody beats the flooring experts at Lumber Liquidators.

In fact, our high quality floors have been featured on television's most prominent home improvement shows, such as This Old House. And after 20 years in business, our stylish floors can be found in **over two million homes**.

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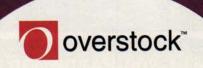


Proud sponsor of House



# Do more than just improve your house. Make it home.

This holiday, visit Overstock for all your gift ideas. Jewelry, books, kitchen, bath, electronics, outdoor products and more. Search for your money-saving coupons in the following pages.













hen it comes to innovation, tech companies get all the glory these days—especially, we've noticed, as it relates to the home. Indeed, smart-home gear is everywhere, including within the pages of this issue (see "High-Tech Ways to Make Entertaining Easier," page 45). That's fine. And though we've selected a few such products to receive the TOH Top 100 mantle—we couldn't resist the brilliant DIY security camera on page 73—our mandate goes well beyond stuff made with silicon. We're

Top 100 mantle—we couldn't resist the brilliant DIY security camera on page 73—our mandate goes well beyond stuff made with silicon. We're talking about a clever spit to oven-roast the perfect chicken (page 66), trash bags that stand up by themselves (page 76), a suite of moldings with matching doors (page 79), and a drywall knife notched to leave the ideal joint in its wake (page 71). These are decidedly low-tech yet very smart, and they possess a quality we value above all others: They make owning or renovating a home a better experience. Which is to say, they deserve some glory too. Turn the page to see what we mean.



#### **SHOP THE TOP 100**

Find deals on the year's best home products and sign up for sale alerts with the ShopAdvisor tool. Scan the following pages with the Blippar app for access.





# **KITCHEN**



TO SHOP FOR THESE ITEMS, SCAN THIS PAGE WITH THE BLIPPAR APP OR GO TO THISOLDHOUSE.COM/TOP100



#### BETTER, CRISPIER, JUICIER

THE ULTIMATE CHICKEN ROASTER. BY WILLIAMS-SONOMA

This clever contraption suspends a roasting chicken facedown on the grill or in your oven, allowing air to circulate freely around the bird and juices to stream down and baste the breast, keeping it moist. The result? Perfectly crisp skin, and dark meat that's done cooking long before the breast meat is bonedry. \$30; williams-sonoma.com



#### MADE THE CUT

TWIN-CUT COMPACT 2-IN-1 SCISSORS. BY JOSEPH JOSEPH

Slide a catch forward and the spring-loaded, stainless-steel blades open; close them and these scissors hang from a hook or fit neatly in a drawer. In locked position, they double as a box cutter. \$13: josephjoseph.com

#### YES IT CAN

45-LITRE SEMI-ROUND SENSOR CAN.

Here's how you build a better trash can: Make it open with the wave of a hand and stay open as the task requires. Extra points for the half-round shape. which hugs the wall instead of hogging kitchen space. \$120; simplehuman.com



BY SIMPLEHUMAN



chrome wire design will stand up to leaks and drips.

\$240 for a 291/2-inch-wide version; rev-a-shelf.com

WRAPAROUND STORAGE UNDERSINK PULLOUT U-SHAPE BASKET WITH

We're big-time fans of cabinet drawers that

that wraps around undersink plumbing. The

maximize hard-to-access space, all the more so when they fit as precisely as this U-shaped slider

SOFT-CLOSE, BY REV-A-SHELF

TERNA PENDANT FAN. BY KICHLER

Five smartly engineered blades push air sideways, not down, so this compact pendant fan won't blow recipes off the counter, snuff gas burners, or cool down dinner. \$447; kichler.com



#### WATER NOW!

POWERED WATER FILTRATION SYSTEM, BY AQUASANA

If the drip, drip, drip, of a filter pitcher isn't cutting it, consider a countertop apparatus that plugs in to push out a gallon of clean water in 2 minutes. Filters 96 percent of chlorine, lead, and other contaminants. \$130; aguasana.com



#### HANG'EM ALL

PULL-OUT COOKWARE STORAGE, BY GLIDEWARE

We're happy to say good-bye to that jolting clatter of rooting around for an early breakfast frying pan. This dreamy drawer organizer mounts to the top of any base cabinet and arrays your pots and pans (and their lids) on a single extending rack with adjustable hooks. Dual glides on ball bearings make it one smooth operator. \$199; glideware.com



#### SLICK!

MASTERPIECE SERIES FREEDOM INDUCTION COOKTOP, BY THERMADOR

Instead of dedicated "burners," this 36-inch cooktop is studded with 48 individual coils that sense the size, shape, and position of up to four pots—or a single 23-by-13-inch pan—so that you can focus your juggling skills on the salad. It sits flush with the countertop. \$5,499; thermador.com





#### **DOCK IN A BOX**

DOCKING DRAWER SLIM USB, BY JTECH SOLUTIONS

Counters covered with charging smartphones and tablets? Install this handy apparatus in the back of an existing drawer and plug it in, and you can power up to four devices at once, all while keeping them stashed out of sight. \$219; dockingdrawer.com



#### SNACKER'S DELIGHT

SIDE-BY-SIDE FOOD SHOWCASE REFRIGERATOR, BY SAMSUNG

Grab a bite without letting out all the cold. This fridge's stainless-steel outer door opens onto shallow bins for drinks, snacks, and condiments. The transparent inner door offers a glimpse of what's inside the main compartment. \$2,999; samsung.com

### FOOLPROOF PICKLES

FRESHTECH AUTOMATIC HOME CANNING SYSTEM, BY BALL

This countertop canner takes the guesswork out of preserving fresh foods. Follow one of the 26 included recipes, load the appliance with up to six half-pint, three quart-size, or four pint-size containers, and set it for the food you're canning. You'll be left with perfectly preserved fare, no stockpot needed. \$299; freshpreserving.com





#### SUPER SURFACE

DEKTON COUNTERTOP, BY COSENTINO

Quartz, porcelain, and glass are compressed under extreme heat and pressure to produce this nonporous composite countertop. The result is a surface material so strong that you can use it in a 12-inch overhang with no supports—great for islands and bar tops. And because it's nonporous, it works both indoors and outdoors. From \$58 per square foot; dekton.com

#### SHOCKINGLY STURDY BAKEWARE

OVENCHEF TEMPERED GLASS BAKING DISHES, BY DURALEX

Tempered glass bakeware is nothing new, but these French-built beauties will withstand temperature swings of nearly 400°F without shattering, and they're oven-safe to a scorching 572°F. Six sizes, from \$15; duralexusa.com

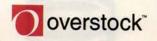




#### UNDER PRESSURE

WOLFGANG PUCK PRESSURE OVEN, BY KITCHENTEK

Using the same principles as your grandma's classic pressure cooker, this appliance has a sealed door designed to build pressure and slash cooking time. It'll belt out a beautifully browned chicken in a staggering 35 minutes—more than an hour less than a conventional oven. \$249; puckoven.com



express your personal style



**BRIGHT IDEA** 

BY KOHLER

NIGHTLIGHT TOILET SEAT,

doesn't involve wood grain.

A soft light built into the seat

hinge illuminates your target at night, and a timer turns it

off in the morning. No need

to switch on the overhead

light-or remove splinters.

From \$66; kohler.com

At last, an upgrade to

ye olde toilet seat that

#### TRUE BLUE

BLUE DOLOMITE TILE. BY ANN SACKS

We can't say we've ever seen natural stone quite like this before. It's beautiful. The incredibly rare blue dolomite radiates an icy-blue hue contrasted with streaks of brilliant whites, grays, and blacks. From \$37 per square foot; annsacks.com



#### **SOUEAKY CLEAN** STEAMBOY PRO,

BY RELIABLE

Witnessing this sterilizing steam mop lift crud from grout opened our eyes to the power of 248°F water vapor, sans chemicals. If steam alone isn't enough, the scrubbing bristles should be. Other attachments handle any flooring or carpeting, and the swiveling triangular head keeps up with corners. \$109; reliablecorporation.com



#### **CLEANER GLASS**

EASY CLEAN GLASS TREATMENT KIT, BY ENDUROSHIELD

This spray-on treatment repels water, oil, dirt, minerals, and soap scum, rendering cleanup all but effortless. Our favorite feature? One application lasts three years. Great for shower doors-and windows and windshields too. From \$35 for a kit that treats 40 square feet; enduroshieldusa.com



#### ON THE SIDE

BATH MIRROR WITH PULLOUT, BY DECORÁ CABINETRY

It's nice to see such a novel concept for cramped baths: a medicine cabinet with shelved drawers that open to the sides so that you don't have to duck a swinging door to grab your toothbrush. From \$1,622: decoracabinets.com



#### VALET SERVICE

SWASH, BY P&G AND WHIRLPOOL

Pop your favorite dress shirt, sequined sweater, or cashmere jacket into this magic machine to have it spritzed with a neutralizing solution and then speed-dried. Ten minutes later, ta-da! Your garment is refreshed. de-wrinkled, and clean-smelling. Reserve trips to the dry cleaner for actual stains. \$499; swash.com





#### SOFT SPOT

PREVAIL SHOWER DOOR WITH COMFORTRACK, BY STERLING

Here's a brilliant answer to the universally uncomfortable metal track on bath and shower doors: a soft and flexible rubbery bottom track that gently compresses under pressure. Cleaning the tub is now a tad less of a pain. From \$280; sterlingplumbing.com





#### TIMELESS ACCESSORIES

PITTOCK CUP HOLDER AND SOAP DISH, BY REJUVENATION

We couldn't resist the shiny curves of this classic Victorian-inspired wall-mount design, a tidy way to keep the essentials out of the splash zone. \$65 each in polished nickel; rejuvenation.com

#### DEEPLY IMPRESSIVE

ASHLAND CERAMIC UTILITY SINKTOP, BY RONBOW

Who decided laundry sinks had to be big ugly plastic tubs? We're impressed by the depth and shine of this ceramic utility sink, which can swallow a soaking comforter and look great doing it—for a price. \$1,180 for the 37-inch model shown; ronbow.com





#### WATER-SAVER

STEALTH DUAL FLUSH TOILET, BY NIAGARA CONSERVATION

This dual-flush throne takes the crown for an industry-low average of 0.65 gallon per flush, well under the challengers' gpf rates. That's thanks to a tank redesign that creates a pressurized trapway to pull wastewater out of the bowl. From \$322; niagaracorp.com

#### SAFE BET

TERRA TILE, BY NEMO

Terra-cotta isn't necessarily the most durable of flooring materials, so we're tickled to see an attractive and earthy look-alike made from porcelain, a hard-wearing material. From \$7.85 per square foot; nemotile.com



#### POTENT PLUNGER

MAXPERFORMANCE TOILET PLUNGER, BY KORKY

We love low-flow toilets. Until they clog. This clever implement is the first model designed to fit the elongated bowls of high-efficiency commodes, thanks to a conical insert that seals against the waste hole. Works with conventional flushers too. \$14; korky.com



#### SELF-STARTER

FS-300 ADJUSTABLE BATHROOM CONDENSATION CONTROL, BY DEWSTOP

Picture a wall switch that automatically turns on the vent fan when certain people "forget" that they just took a shower—then shuts it off once the humidity level is back to normal. Now picture it tracking humidity levels to know what's normal for your home so that it won't be fooled by weather. Pretty smart. \$49; dewstop.com

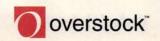




#### PLUMBER'S HELPER

TOILET GASKET, BY SANI SEAL

Rejoice! No more dashing out for a replacement wax ring because you mangled the first one. With this flexible one-size-fits-all polyurethane foam gasket, you can lift and reposition the toilet until it's just right. It keeps bolts upright, too. \$12; saniseal.com



experience

a home created by you

# **TOOLS**



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#### SPRAY-FREE SAWING

7-INCH TILE SAW WITH HYDROLOCK SYSTEM, BY SKIL

We're not sure why it took so long to line the blade guard of a wet saw with a water-corralling rubber gasket, but we're delighted that the time has finally come. Now we can cut tile without getting sprayed by a steady stream of sludgy water. \$149; skiltools.com

#### TANK-FREE TACKING

AIRSTRIKE 16-GAUGE CORDLESS STRAIGHT FINISH NAILER, BY RYOBI

A compression chamber built into the body of the tool lets you fire fasteners with the power of a pneumatic nail gun—and without the compressor. The 18-volt battery will fire 800 nails on a single charge. \$199; ryobitools.com



### CYCLONIC CUTTER

DUST COLLECTING CIRCULAR SAW, BY ROAN TOOLS

Ingenious open ports on the blade guard create a pressure differential that pulls sawdust into the clear chamber as the saw cuts—no vacuum, no hoses, no kidding. Made for siding contractors handling toxic dust, it's a boon for the average DIYer, too. May we please have a miter saw version? \$179; roantools.com





#### LOST AND ROUND

CHIPOLO LOCATOR TAG, BY CHIPOLO

Stop shouting, "Honey! Have you seen my tape measure?" and start using this chirping Bluetooth-enabled tag and its smartphone app to track items that often go missing. Can't find your phone? Shake the tag to make it ring. \$29 apiece; chipolo.net

#### KRAZY WOOD GLUE

NEXABOND 2500 INSTANT WOOD ADHESIVE, BY SIRRUS

With this versatile, one-part adhesive, there's less clamping time—it sets in as little as 60 seconds and cures to 80 percent in 30 minutes—and less prep work because it doesn't shrink or stain like woodworking glues. Also works on metal, plastic, ceramics, and rubber. \$7.79 for 1 ounce; sirruschemistry.com





#### ON POINT

SMART POINT 18-GAUGE BRAD NAILER, BY BOSTITCH

Ever notice how the contact arm—that safety mechanism wrapped around the nose of most nail guns to prevent you from firing into the air—is so bulky that it blocks you from seeing where your brad will go? So did Bostitch. That's why they built it into the nose, greatly reducing its profile. Hello, Hollywood! \$120; bostitch.com



#### SMOOTH MOVE

RED HEAT PORTABLE CERAMIC SANDING BELT, BY NORTON

We don't enjoy cleaning sanding belts any more than changing them, so we welcome the first belts with all-ceramic abrasives. They cut sanding time and last up to five times longer than standard aluminum-coated options. From \$5.20 each: nortonconsumer.com



RACHAELRAY

#### **HEAT SEEKER**

FLIR ONE INFRARED IPHONE CASE, BY FLIR

With this case piggybacked onto an iPhone 5 or 5s, you can see through your home's walls into a hidden world of hot and cold—indicators of air and water leaks, missing insulation, buried pipes, even termite infestations. The compatibility is limiting, but it's such a cool tool that we think it would be worth hanging on to your phone: The case costs a fraction of a stand-alone device. \$349: flir.com





#### WRITE ON

INKZALL MARKERS, BY MILWAUKEE TOOL

Jotting down a measurement on a scrap of most anything, from a greasy pipe to a cinder block to a sawdusted 2×4, just got easier. The non-permeable acrylic tips in these markers don't clog up like typical felt-tipped options. From \$1.29 each; milwaukeetool.com





#### **EASY DOES IT**

20-VOLT MAX LITHIUM CORDLESS DRILL WITH AUTOSENSE TECHNOLOGY, BY BLACK+DECKER

We have to applaud a self-adjusting clutch that automatically cuts power when it senses that a screwhead is flush with the surrounding material. When you need to sink a screw below the surface, simply override the setting. \$80; blackanddecker.com



#### MUD BY NUMBERS

PERFECT PASS JOINT KNIFE, BY WARNER MANUFACTURING

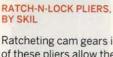
Taping and patching drywall joints is an art. The notched lip on this taping knife builds the ideal layer of compound over butt joints, making mudding a skill within anyone's reach. Now, if only it could sand and paint, too. \$12; warnertool.com



DUALSAW RS1200 RECIPROCATING SAW, BY DUALTOOLS

All hail the first recip saw with two blades. Cutting in opposing directions, they offset each other's push/pull, reducing vibration and kickback. Now get out there and find a wall to demolish. \$198; dualsaw.com





**GET A GRIP** 

Ratcheting cam gears in the jaws of these pliers allow them to slip, lock, or ratchet, depending on the need, so you can twist wire, pull nails, or tighten a hex nut, all with one uncompromising tool. \$20; getskil.com



#### **ALL REVVED UP**

POWER READY WIRELESS CHARGING SYSTEM, BY BOSCH

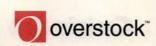
This impact driver's inductive dock charges the battery without it coming off the tool, letting you juice as you work. The only downside? The old "my driver isn't charged" excuse will no longer cut it when you're trying to avoid projects around the house. \$279 as shown; boschtools.com



#### IGNORE THE GAP

CAMO MARKSMAN EDGE, BY NATIONAL NAIL CORP.

This spring-loaded drill attachment lets you install pressure-treated deck boards snug up against each other, fasteners buried in their edges so that when they naturally contract you'll be left with a smaller gap between boards. \$35; camofasteners.com



excite

and inspire your culinary creativity

# **HOME TECH**



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#### CORDLESS CLEANER

AIR CORDLESS, BY HOOVER

Gone are the days of sacrificing canister size and run time for the convenience of cordless. This vac has the same capacity (1 liter) as corded models and two batteries that last 25 minutes each. Did we mention there's no cord? \$300; hoover.com





#### HOCKEY PUCK WITH SMARTS

LYRIC THERMOSTAT, BY HONEYWELL

We like the friendly round shape and the fact that there's no programming. It detects your comings and goings (actually, your smartphone's) from seven miles away and automatically adjusts temperature settings to save energy. \$279; lyric.honeywell.com

## ULTRAEFFICIENT COOLING AND HEATING

H2I MSZ-FH DUCTLESS HEAT PUMP, BY MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC

As the only mini-split that functions down to minus 13°F, it can be used in climates previously out-of-bounds to heat pumps. And nothing matches its cooling efficiency: more than double the Energy Star baseline. Helpfully, it turns itself on when people enter the room and shuts off when they leave. \$3,900; mitsubishipro.com





#### **CUTE CUBE**

POWERCUBE OUTLET ADAPTER, BY ALLOCACOC

With receptacles arrayed onto four of its six faces, the compact PowerCube offers plenty of elbow room for each plug.
Available with or without USB ports and extension cords. Daisy-chain them to make your own power strip. From \$20; powercube-usa.com



#### **VERY COOL UNIT**

AROS WINDOW AIR CONDITIONER, BY OUIRKY

Meet our favorite product of the bunch: the first window air conditioner that we consider tolerable. It's sleek, for one. And smart, too. It adjusts output to your patterns and shuts down when you step out, until it senses your return. Or you can turn it on with your smartphone before you arrive—to a nice, cool space. Ahhh. \$279; quirky.com



BLUETOOTH SMART TRUE HEPA ALLERGEN REMOVER, BY HONEYWELL

You'll breathe easier with this room air purifier, which lets you control air quality with your smartphone. We love that it notifies you when pollen and mold counts are high in your ZIP code and adjusts its cleaning settings accordingly. \$270; honeywellcleanair.com





#### **OUT-OF-SIGHT CHARGER**

TECHTOP, BY LG HAUSYS

Can you spot the phone charger?
Nope. It's mounted discreetly under the countertop, allowing smartphones with Qi wireless-charging technology or a Qi-enabled case to recharge simply by placing them on the right spot. Available on LG HI-MACS solid-surface countertops.
From \$100; Igtechtop.com



Cuisinart

GUOGAN A CAMBAN COLLINS AN AUTOM AND COLUMN COLUMN

#### SIMPLIFIED RADIANT HEAT

WARMSOURCE, BY WARMBOARD

LOOKS OLD.

For anyone lamenting

incandescents, this bulb

has that same warm glow

instead of flimsy filaments.

an electromagnet energizes

and familiar shape. But

plasma that excites

phosphors to produce

light, so it lasts longer-

15,000 hours-and only

\$10; finallybulbs.com

draws just over 14.5 watts.

the loss of 60-watt

WORKS BETTER

FINALLY ACANDESCENT, BY

THE FINALLY LIGHT BULB CO.

We're all for anything that reduces the cost of installing radiant heating. and this plug-and-play unit does that significantly. The pumps are built right into it, saving you the expense of hiring a radiantheating specialist to build a custom wall of connections. Saves space, too, Available in early 2015. \$3,900; warmboard.com



#### **SOUNDS LIKE** A WINNER

SOUNDLINK BLUETOOTH

The sturdy body, the slim profile, and a battery life of 14 hours make this our favorite speaker to grabeither. The only question cover colors to choose? \$300, and zip-up cover. \$35; bose.com



SPEAKER III. BY BOSE

and-go. Impeccable audio performance doesn't hurt left: Which of five optional

#### JUST ENOUGH JUICE

SYNERGY STANDBY GENERATOR, BY GENERAC

This variable-speed natural-gas- or propane-powered 20kwunit adjusts its output to match a household's actual need for electricity. The payoff? It's quieter and runs more efficiently than a typical single-speed standby generator. The neighbors will thank you-from the comfort of your couch. \$5,299; generac.com





#### WHO GOES THERE?

GOJI SMART LOCK, BY GOJI

This dead bolt keeps an unblinking eye on visitors, snapping photos of anyone within 6 feet of your door and sending them to your smartphone. Not home when the plumber arrives? E-mail a digital key for temporary access. When you get home, it unlocks with a phone. a fob, or even a traditional key. \$278; gojiaccess.com



#### MOISTURE MONITORS

WALLY HOME-MONITORING SYSTEM. BY WALLYHOME

Placed around the house, these little wireless sensors alert you to water leaks, frozen pipes, and mold growth-the stuff of homeowner nightmares. Amazingly, they last 10 years without a battery change. \$300; wallyhome.com

#### **FLY ON** THE WALL

PIPER HOME AUTOMATION AND SECURITY, BY ICONTROL NETWORKS

Using the smartphone app to marshal the capabilities of this home-monitoring system-from the 180° HD lens to the temperature sensor to the piercing audio siren-you can set rules like: If window opens. record video, sound alarm, send text. No monthly fees or installation costs. We're sold. \$199; getpiper.com

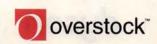


#### SUPER SUCKER

DELTA FORCE CORDLESS HAND VACUUM.

Cleaning up Fido's fallen fur just got a whole lot easier. At 2.9 pounds, this hand vac is the lightest model made, yet it still has the guts to suction up pet hair, even on upholstered surfaces, with an assist from the easy-to-clean bristled-brush attachment, \$185; rowenta.com





explore

our selection of home appliances



# **OUTDOOR**



TO SHOP FOR THESE ITEMS, SCAN THIS PAGE WITH THE BLIPPAR APP OR GO TO THISOLDHOUSE.COM/TOP100



#### THE STRONG, SILENT TYPE

EGO POWER+ MOWER, BY EGO

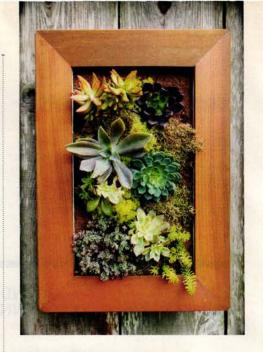
With its industry-first 56-volt lithium-ion battery, this 20-inch mower packs the power of a gas engine minus the fumes, noise, and weight, and runs up to 45 minutes. The battery recharges in just 30 minutes. \$499; egopowerplus.com

#### COMING UP ROSES

TEA ROSE DECORATIVE TILE, BY MOTAWI TILEWORKS

Hand-stamped and hand-glazed tiles reproduce a 1909 Craftsman rose illustration by iconic designer Dard Hunter. The hefty 4-by-8-inch size slides right into Motawi's house-number frames to create an artful welcome. \$54 per tile; motawi.com





#### WALL ART

CLASSIC VERTICAL G(ART)EN KIT, BY PLANTASY

We love vertical gardening, even more so with a kit that deftly manages the chore of watering. Just plug your plants into a spongy mat of organic materials, fill the reservoir on top, and let it drip water at precisely the right rate. From \$89 for a 10½"×22"×3½" kit; plantasy.us



#### **NICE GRILL MARKS**

BARBECUE REUSABLE GRILLING SHEET, BY COOKINA

Let's hear it for the first grill-friendly foil that manages to transfer attractive (and flavorful) grill marks onto food, so you can keep racks clean and keep smaller items from falling through. \$15 per roll; cookina.co



#### IT'S TEATIME

ORGANIC PLANT FOOD MAKER, BY BURGON & BALL

The alchemy of transforming comfrey and nettle leaves into nitrogen-rich, fast-acting fertilizer tea just got a whole lot easier with this stainless-steel infuser bucket. Cut. Soak. Brew. Feed. \$68; burgonandball.com



DUXXBAK COMPOSITE DECK BOARDS, BY GREEN BAY DECKING

Pure genius: The interlocking edges of these composite deck boards form drainage channels that funnel water to the ends, leaving that formerly unusable space underneath dry. Available in lengths up to 20 feet. \$4.30 per linear foot; greenbaydecking.com



#### PITCHER PERFECT

AUTOSEAL PITCHER SET, BY CONTIGO

The first-of-its-kind automatic sealing function of this BPA-free plastic pitcher means you can entertain outdoors without worrying about sloshing, spills, or sugar-crazy party invaders like bees and wasps. \$30; gocontigo.com





dyson

#### TATER TOPS

COLORFUL POTATO GROW BAG, BY GARDENER'S SUPPLY COMPANY

Never had a fresh-dug spud? Time to grow your own. This clever contraption removes the tilling and hilling of in-ground potato planting: Just add more soil to the 18-inch-tall bag as plants grow, then dump it out at harvest. \$15; gardeners.com



#### SPRINKLER IN A BOX

AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER SYSTEM, BY RAIN BIRD

As much as we love fiddling with plumbing fittings, this sprinkler kit removes the guesswork from designing your own system, giving you everything you need—and nothing you don't—to water a lawn of up to 3,000 square feet. \$180; rainbird.com



#### GARDENER'S GO-TO

AEROCART, BY WORX

This super-ergonomic wheelbarrow can be used as a handtruck to carry mulch or soil or fitted with included straps to easily cart propane tanks, planters, or even boulders, all while lightening a 200-pound load to feel like a mere 17 pounds. \$160; worx.com



#### **LEAVE IT OUTSIDE**

RAIN OUTDOOR FABRIC, BY SUNBRELLA

We're pleased to meet the new waterproof version of this already terrific fade-resistant fabric. It'll keep your alfresco furniture cushions delightfully dry long after you've forgotten them outside. Prices vary; sunbrella .com/buy for retailers



INDOOR PLANT FOOD, BY MIRACLE-GRO

Houseplants give us a horicultural headache: Too little fertilizer, they pout;

too much, they wither. This ingenious foam-based plant food cracks the code, delivering a precise rate of nutrients with each pump. \$4; miraclegro.com





#### A CLASSIC, ENERGIZED

MARTINI IRON STACKABLE BISTRO CHAIR, BY ALFRESCO HOME

We're suckers for color, as well as for this fresh take on the bistro chair: A kicky lime-green powder coat over lacy wrought iron infuses a jolt of energy into your patio. \$325 for a set of two; alfrescohome.com



**GET A GRIP** 

TOOLS, BY CORONA

COMFORTGEL GARDEN

Ultra-cushy, ultra-grippy

handles are easy on the

bargain price is nice, but these stainless-steel tools—

including the transplanter.

hoe/cultivator, and weeder

cheap. From \$9.99 each; coronatoolsusa.com

shown-are not at all

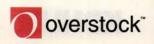
joints and a breeze to hang

on to in sweaty weather. The

#### **REMOTE TANK-READER**

REFUEL PROPANE GAUGE, BY QUIRKY

This handy propane tank scale works over Wi-Fi, so you can see how much fuel is left while you're picking up the steaks—instead of when the flames fizzle out beneath them. \$50; quirky.com



# **BUILDING PRODUCTS**



TO SHOP FOR THESE ITEMS, SCAN THIS PAGE WITH THE BLIPPAR APP OR GO TO THISOLDHOUSE.COM/TOP100



#### STEEL IS A DEAL

HD STEEL CRAFTSMAN WITH ELEMENT GLASS DOOR, BY MASONITE

Craftsman is one of our favorite house styles, and we're elated to know that now, with this new embossed-steel door, you can get the look at your front entry-at a fraction of the price for a fiberglass or wood version. From \$755; masonite.com



QUAD-PANE WINDOW, BY **ZOLA EUROPEAN WINDOWS** 

Amid the rush to reduce home-energy use, it's gratifying to discover a tilt-turn, clad-wood window with a whopping R-11 rating. Its four panes of glass make it 3.3 times better than the Energy Star performance requirement. From \$1,084 for a 28-by-48-inch tilt-turn; zolawindows.com



A trash bag that stands upright on its own. The material is thicker than the stuff used for standard contractor bags, making these sacks a cinch to fill and strong enough to hold 200 pounds of rubbish-a big help when you're kneedeep in demo debris. \$13 for 12: gorillatough.com



#### **ROCK ON**

JETBOARD, BY JETPRODUCTS

Fireproof, waterproof, insect-proof, and strong, this sheet good, made of lightweight magnesium oxide cement, does it all. Use it instead of plywood for sheathing, instead of gypsum board on interior walls, or instead of backer board under tile. Even the sawdust from it is harmless. \$25 for a 4-by-8-foot, 1/2-inch-thick panel; jet-board.com



#### LOOKS JUST LIKE THE REAL THING

TRUGRAIN PORCH DECKING. BY WESTECH BUILDING PRODUCTS

Lots of composite decking tries to look like tropical wood. This slip-resistant product, made with rice hulls, mineral oil, and salt, actually pulls it off. It won't crack, splinter, or rot, and you can stain it immediately—with a sealer that has a 10-year life span. \$3.25 per linear foot; westechbp.com

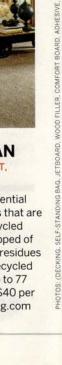


#### GREEN AND CLEAN

WEAR-DATED ALLURE CARPET. BY MOHAWK FLOORING

This is the first residential carpeting with fibers that are made from 100 percent recycled plastic bottles and then stripped of nearly all the dirt-attracting residues that normally make it into recycled carpet. Each yard diverts up to 77 bottles from landfills. \$36-\$40 per square yard; mohawkflooring.com







**KOHLER** 

#### PRETTY IN PINK

CARPENTER'S COLOR CHANGE WOOD FILLER, BY ELMER'S

The rule with wood filler is, Sand when dry. But how to know?
This filler takes out all the guesswork by shifting from a pink hue to white (or beige) when it's dry. Interior use only. \$5 for 4 ounces; elmers.com





#### HI-TECH ANTIQUE FLOORS

GRANDE COLLECTION, BY KÄHRS

A sustainable update of an old-world penetrating-oil finish tops this engineered wide-plank flooring, allowing you to easily touch up scratched or worn areas with a pine oil. There's no need to sand the whole floor down to bare wood. The 9-foot-long boards can install as a floating assembly. From \$11 per square foot; kahrs.com

#### STONE-AND-SLAG SHEATHING

COMFORTBOARD IS, BY ROXUL

Here's a great alternative to rigid foam, made from basalt rock and iron slag. It's breathable and water-repellent and insulates exterior walls, roofs, foundations, and basements at R-4 per inch—and that won't diminish over time. It's also noncombustible and a near-perfect sound absorber. \$53 for 48 square feet; roxul.com





#### GLUE IN A CAN

SMARTBOND HEAVY DUTY CONSTRUCTION ADHESIVE, BY DAP

We'll take any innovation that replaces the cramp-inducing caulk gun. To apply this adhesive, simply pull the can's trigger, and a stream of sticky, strong polyurethane foam will shoot out. You get eight tubes' worth of adhesive from a single can. \$17; dap.com

#### NO BUGS WERE HARMED

ZINSSER B-I-N ADVANCED SYNTHETIC SHELLAC SEALER, BY RUST-OLEUM

Meet the world's first manmade shellac. It has all the magic of the original finish excellent sealing, easy recoating, fast drying—and cleans up with water instead of ammonia. Plus, it costs less than the stuff made from lac bugs. \$36 per gallon; rustoleum.com



#### STONE FLOOR IN A SNAP

ECOSLATE FLOOR TILES, BY QUALITY CRAFT

A real stone floor without messy mortars and grout? Yup. These click-together tiles feature a thin veneer of slate over fiberboard and cork, giving you genuine stone that's warmer and more cushioned than solid stone, and that goes down quickly. \$7.99 per square foot; qualitycraft.com

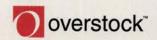




#### PIN IT DOWN

CPTZ CONCEALED POST TIE, BY SIMPSON STRONG-TIE

What a slick way to anchor a post in concrete and protect it from rot: Slip the kerfed end of a post over the bolted-down base, then tap three pins in place, just like a timber framer. \$30 for a 4×4 base; szstrongtie.com



exceptionally

sleek with a touch of shine

# FINISHING TOUCHES



TO SHOP FOR THESE ITEMS, SCAN THIS PAGE WITH THE BLIPPAR APP OR GO TO THISOLDHOUSE.COM/TOP100

#### FARMHOUSE FABULOUS

FREEMONT COLLECTION SCONCE, BY FEISS

This indoor variation on the barn light transcends its down-home roots with a touch of unexpected glamour: Clear crystals shimmer at the fixture's neck. \$139; feiss.com



#### A KALEIDOSCOPE UNDERFOOT

MODULAR CARPET TILES, BY KINDER GROUND

Created for kids, these wool carpet tiles have resonated with design-minded grown-ups, who, like us, love the creative possibilities presented by three shapes, six patterns, and five solid colors. The price is outlandish, but maybe you'll want to splurge. From \$400 per piece; kinderground.net

#### **ARTISTIC TILES**

WOOD TILES, BY MIRTH STUDIO

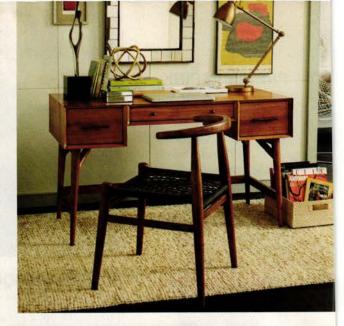
Your artistic skills may have peaked in Pre-K, but having a hand-painted floor is as easy as installing these unique tiles, designed by artist Sally Bennett and digitally printed on a durable engineered hardwood. Choose from a classic gingham or a fun floral, or customize your own for a few extra bucks. From \$15 per square foot:



#### **SLEEPING BEAUTY BARGAIN**

THE TEN. BY TUFT & NEEDLE

We're glad to see someone else is as appalled as we are at the prices of foam mattresses. This medium-firm polyfoam sleep aid is just \$500 for a queen, delivery included. \$300–\$600; tuftandneedle.com



#### PERFECT PROPORTIONS

MID-CENTURY DESK IN ACORN, BY WEST ELM

If a desk is too bulky, it dominates a room; too petite, and it skimps on workspace. This beauty, made of FSC-certified eucalyptus, has a winning mix of great lines and enough surface area to get the job done. \$599; westelm.com



### PUT THE HEX ON IT

HEX KNOB, BY SCHOOLHOUSE ELECTRIC & SUPPLY CO.

We took notice of the matte oil-rubbed bronze and brass finishes on these otherwise classic-look pulls because they feel right at home with contemporary fixtures, too. Available in 1-inch and 1½-inch sizes. \$14-\$17; schoolhouseelectric.com

#### NIFTY NIGHT-LIGHT

SNAPRAYS GUIDELIGHT, BY SNAPPOWER

Looking to add a nightlight without robbing yourself of an outlet? This clever receptacle cover snaps onto an existing outlet and has built-in LED night-lights that turn on and off automatically. \$12-\$15; snappower.com



PLOTOS TTI ES MAIDES MOLDINO DINS WALL BADED! WENDEL



Coupon applies only to orders of \$150 value or more before tax and shipping. Purchases of gift cards and products from he "Electronica" store and from the "Books, Movies, Music & Games" and "Cars" categories are not included. Discount will spear on the billing page before submitting the order. Offer applies to U.S. orders only. This promotion carnot be combined with pay other offer or discount. Offer subject to mission or termination at any time. Offer ends Discounts 31, 2014.



### THE NEW OLD SCHOOL

EVERLY COLLECTION SCHOOLHOUSE MERCURY GLASS MINI-PENDANT, BY KICHLER

Judging by the popularity of these vintage-inspired lights, schoolhouse style will be in session for a long time. That's why we love this glam makeover, which incorporates the look of mercury glass in a curvier silhouette. \$214; kichler.com

#### STEPPING STONE

DECO TRIBECA, BY PORCELANOSA

We're suckers for the look of handpoured concrete, but it can be laborious and not that inexpensive. This large-format through-color porcelain tile offers a similar look with the nice touch of a floral accent, and it requires no sealer. \$13 per square foot for 23-by-23-inch tiles; porcelanosa-usa.com





#### MARVELOUS MOLDING

THEN AND NOW FINISHING COLLECTIONS, BY METRIE

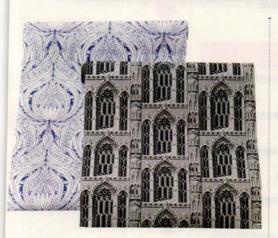
The mostly original profiles in these five coordinated collections of moldings are impressive enough, but what won us over are the designed-to-match doors—taking the confounding guesswork out of finishing off a room remodel. Shown: Fashion Forward poplar chair rail, panel molding, and Ikon rosette, from \$2.26 per linear foot; metrie.com



**BUNNY WILLIAMS COLLECTION, BY DASH & ALBERT** 

RUGS WITH A PEDIGREE

Decor from high-society designers is beyond the budget of most of the homeowners we know. Hats off to this tasteful collection of indoor/outdoor area rugs for making owning a piece of American interior design history imaginable. Starting at \$59; dashandalbert.com



#### PLAY IT AGAIN, SAM

V&A COLLECTION WALLPAPER, BY GRAHAM & BROWN

Patterns from the early 1800s through the 1950s housed at London's Victoria and Albert Museum get respectfully reinterpreted, including this riff on a graphic print by Arts and Crafts legend C.F.A. Voysey and a bold architectural motif. \$85 for a double roll; grahambrown.com

#### CUE BARRY WHITE

BR30 LED WITH DIMMABLE WARM GLOW, BY PHILIPS

Getting LEDs to work with dimmers was Step 1. We're thrilled to see a bulb that has moved on to Step 2: fading to a warmer color temperature as you dial down its 730 lumens, creating a cozy, incandescent-like glow for recessed fixtures. \$17; usa.philips.com

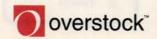


#### BEEN THERE, DONE THAT

CORK GLOBE, BY SUCK UK

Show off your peripatetic exploits by sticking pins into this 10-inch cork globe—it's imprinted with a simplified world map—to mark all the places you've been. Pins included; you supply the bragging rights. \$200; suck.uk.com





have an

extraordinary



# INDEX

#### KITCHEN

Chicken roaster

Wave-to-open trash can

Under-sink pull-out basket

Powered water filter

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Pendant fan

Induction cooktop

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Hidden charging station

Snacker's fridge



Countertop pressure oven

\* S

Shockproof baking dishes

Indoor-outdoor countertop

Foolproof canning system

Pull-out cookware storage

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Scissors-knife combo

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\$

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Steam mop

Medicine cabinet \ <del>-||</del> \$

Shower-door track

Soap dish and cup holder

Low-flow toilet plunger

**Humidity sensor switch** 



Toilet gasket

Terra-cotta-look tile

Lowest-flow toilet



Porcelain laundry sink



Clothing refresher



Glass treatment

Night-light toilet seat

#### **△**₩ TOOLS

Tile saw

Slim-nosed brad nailer

Infrared smartphone case

+

Multisurface markers **● +** 

Dual-blade recip saw

Decking-fastener guide

Notched drywall knife

Self-adjusting clutch drill

Multiuse pliers -17

Induction charging battery

Ceramic sanding belts

Instant wood glue

Locator tags

+ 0

-17

**Dust-catching circular saw** 

Cordless brad nailer

#### HOME TECH

Cordless upright vacuum

Smart thermostat



Ultraefficient heat pump



Modular power strip

Radiant heating unit 

Variable-speed generator



Video-enabled dead bolt



Home-security camera



Lightweight hand vacuum







Induction lightbulb



Phone-charging countertop







Smart air conditioner



#### OUTDOOR

Battery-powered mower



Decorative



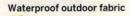
Self-irrigating living wall



1



Convertible wheelbarrow



Colorful bistro chair

Propane tank sensor



Foaming plant food # 0

All-inclusive sprinkler kit

Gardening hand tools

**₩** 44

Interlocking deck boards



Compost tea brewer

Auto-seal outdoor pitcher

**Grilling sheets** 

#### BUILDING PRODUCTS

Craftsman-look steel door



Quadruple-pane window



Stainable composite



Color-change wood filler



Old-world wood flooring



Slate-veneer click tiles



Synthetic shellac 





Clean carpeting

Waterproof construction board



Stand-up garbage bags



#### FINISHING TOUCHES

Colorful sconce

Mid-century-modern desk



Mercury-glass-look pendant

Concrete-look tile



Coordinated molding

High-society rugs



Cork globe

Warm-glow LED bulb



Reproduction wallpaper



Night-light outlet cover



Hex knobs



Modular carpet tiles



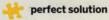
Affordable foam mattress



#### **ICON KEY**



easy upgrade



eco-friendly



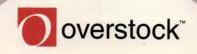
splurge



# Your home tells a story.

It's about more than just furniture. Let us help you author the look of your home that reflects your personal style.





# Allthe ntorts lome

This 1896 house was so historic it boasted lead pipes, drafty windows, and no garage. Then along came new owners with kids, cars, dogs-and a preservationminded remodel plan

> By Deborah Baldwin Photographs by Anthony Tieuli Styling by Anna Molvik

BY CONCORD STANDARDS, the house was practically new. It had gone up a mere 115 years earlier, long after the town was incorporated and British redcoats had put it on the Massachusetts map. But with its stalwart gambrel roof presiding over a busy corner in a high-profile historic district, the Victorian-era house had its own kind of period style, and no one-least of all its new owners-wanted to mess with that.

Inside, the handsome front rooms and center staircase looked as if they'd been preserved in amber. "Not much had been done," says Alex Allen, recalling the first time he and his wife, Andrea, saw the honey-colored floors and cozy inglenook. The black-cypress woodwork and heavy quartersawn-oak newel posts had never seen paint and showed no signs of wear. During her 60-year reign, it turned out, the previous owner had restricted her kids to the rear of the house.



Back there, the new owners could see room for improvement. "It was really run-down," Alex says. "There was a chimney that once served a coal stove, but it was sealed up and did nothing." The rest of the kitchen and pantry weren't exactly carrying their weight either.

And, um, where to put the car?

"That's why it sat for so long," Alex says, recalling how the house and its dirt drive lingered for months in for-sale limbo. "No garage."

The couple had been raising their two kids in Vero Beach, Florida, while working for a family-owned business that manufactures bike racks for cars. Concord was a draw because the schools are good and both sets of grandparents live nearby.

"Never having owned a house there, we didn't have any idea how hard it would be to get a garage approved," says Alex.

And that was just one item on a redo list that ended up keeping the family in Florida a year longer than planned.

As many pros like to say, administering to a house of a certain age can be tougher than building from scratch. Getting this 1896 dowager back on her feet would require a team of crack "gerontologists" able to update without altering the spirit of the place or raising the neighbors' hackles. (This is no ordinary neighborhood. It boasts a fence designed by Henry David Thoreau.)

"It's not a flagship property, but it's prominent," says John Battle, the architect who took charge of the redo and ended up running interference with the local Historic Districts Commission. "It's on Main Street and highly visible, so the commission was going to give it a lot of scrutiny. We knew we had to be responsible."

Translation: Many late-night meetings, and forget about erecting an attached garage.

Halsey Platt, the general contractor who waded in next, was similarly aware of the need for kid work gloves. Every system would have to be replaced, while making every effort to preserve the good stuff. It would be like dragging a house into the 21st century by horse and buggy. "A house like this, with very few modifications and repairs since it was built, is quite rare," he says, adding quickly, "I thought it was wonderful."

The interior designer, Janice Battle, architect John's wife, realized the challenge lay in knitting together the redesigned back of the house, and its inevitable familysize show kitchen, with the quainter front half. "The owners wanted to keep the Victorian feel of the house but not to make it look like Grandma's parlor," she says. "That was a little tricky because the house has a dark quality from all the wood." Finding the right stains for new flooring, woodwork, and window frames alone

RIGHT: The living room's original black-cypress woodwork had never seen paint. Soft neutrals and red accents flow from this room to other living spaces. **BELOW: The living** room's now-working fireplace has a screen made from a refurbished cast-iron fireback, Paint: Benjamin Moore's Lenox Tan (walls). Spindle chair: Century Furniture. Fabric: Elanbach, Rugs: Steven King Decorative Carpets. Curtain fabric: Kravet







LEFT: The dining room has new William Morris wallpaper and an original built-in bench with storage for table linens. The existing windows were mirrored after a bumpout at the back of the house blocked the view. Light fixture: Visual Comfort. Tables and chairs: Woodbridge Furniture Co.



"was a huge project," she says. In spots, the crew had to patch, borrowing casing and trim from other rooms with varying sun exposure. Tinkering with stain colors, she says, "went on for many, many weeks."

At the same time, however, there was virtually no lead paint to hassle with. Restoring the inglenook, with its fireplace and bench seat, required more finesse than heavy lifting and included bringing in specialists who love old things. "There were two old sconces that ran on knob-and-tube wiring," Platt says. "The electrician came up with the wonderful idea to rewire them to be low voltage and put the transformer in the basement, so we could keep them and meet code." Then there was the skilled mason who not only relined the inglenook chimney—using an intricate process called the Ahrens system,



SHOP THIS STYLE

To find furnishings similar to those used in this house, scan this page with the Blippar app or go to wayfair.com/thisoldhouse

which leaves the brick unscathed—but also was able to seamlessly swap in replacements for cracked terra-cotta hearth tiles. A blacksmith stepped in to repair the living room fireplace's cast-iron fireback.

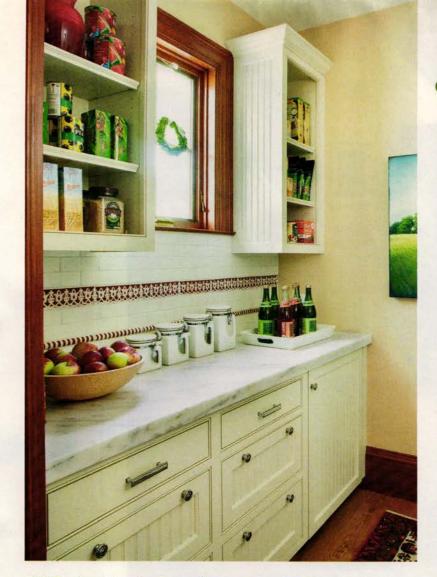
Before he could get to these satisfying details, Platt had to open up walls to replace all the wiring and plumbing, including lead waste pipes so old and eccentric that one plumber asked if he could take pictures.

An unusual type of "back plastering" in the front exterior wall had created air pockets for insulation but no way to blow in the closed-cell foam that Platt had planned. To help cut drafts, he placed rigid foam in the portions of the weight pockets that served the upper sashes of the old double-hung windows. "We permanently fixed the upper sashes, which allowed us to remove the window weights and add the foam. Then we reinstalled the weights for the lower sashes. It's a great



RIGHT: Andrea and Alex Allen gather with kids Gabby and Jimmy in the new kitchen. BELOW: A marble-topped island dispatches breakfast and homework at one end and dinner at the other. Cooktop: DCS. Sink and faucet: Rohl





ABOVE: In the windowed pantry, beadboard panels, patterned tile, and wide oak floorboards add cottage charm. Cabinets: Platt Builders. Wood stains: Old Masters

DIY fix for old houses." New triple-track aluminum storms added another buffer, as did a "hat" of closed-cell insulation on the third floor.

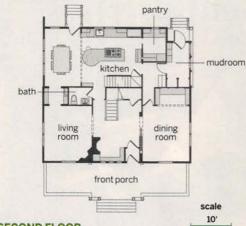
Dragging away the hulking cast-iron Burnham furnace in favor of two stainless-steel wall-hung Buderus boilers was one thing; harder was threading air-conditioning ducts and hot-water lines for the forced-air system up through the dining room walls to air handlers added on the third floor. To make way for more lines over the foyer, Platt says he had his crew pull down the plaster ceiling and cypress box-beam trim and put it back. How's this done? "Very carefully," he says.

The big challenge for the architect was reinventing the mainly original back of the house to suit a household more interested in kitchens than front parlors. The rear was narrower than the front and crammed with small, closed-off spaces, and "there was no flow from front to back—it was severed because the help

# floorplans

Bumping out the first floor of the house added 300 square feet, and an upstairs porch became part of the new master suite. The kitchen, which now opens to the front rooms, and the master suite and baths are new. The freshly painted clapboard-and-shingle house is now a roomy 3.818 square feet, which includes a third floor (not shown) with a guest room and a TV room.

#### FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR







LEFT: Polished guartersawn oak adds presence to the original center-hall staircase. Runner and Oriental rug: Steven King Decorative Carpets

went to the back," Battle says. After working out several options in some detail, he won the historic commission's approval to gut this section and bump out the sides, aligning the back with the front.

All this allowed a spacious kitchen with openings to the dining room, living room, and foyer. The new porous connection allows air and light to flow and sets up ideal traffic conditions for working parents with equally busy kids—Gabby, age 14, and Jimmy, 12—bird-dogged by two energetic French pointers.

Above the kitchen, Battle created a master suite. It, too, absorbed a cluster of spaces, including a sleeping porch suspended precariously off one side. The kids scooped up the handsome rooms fronting the street, but "ours is in the quietest part of the house and gets morning sunlight," Alex says.

Along with the kids' rooms and two new baths, the second floor now has a laundry room and an office for Andrea, while the bonus third floor was remodeled to

hold a TV room and overnight guests. "The house is fairly sizable," says John Battle, "but inside it's cozy, especially the public rooms, which have an intimate feel."

The one large, open space is the kitchen, where Alex, the household's top chef, put in a request for room to cook and hobnob. "I thought of my parents' house," he says. "The kitchen is where you always hang out." When Andrea put in her own request for an island that could handle homework and breakfast as well as dinner prep, John Battle studied appliance needs and traffic patterns some more before working out a one-island-fits-all design, with a 48-inch cooktop planted at the business end and a bulbous gathering spot with seating at the other.

Alex also wanted thick marble countertops. Platt accommodated all that stone by reinforcing the floor. To warm up the open space, Janice Battle painted the island red, with a softening ochre glaze.

"This was a fabulous project because each member of the team cared enormously about the finished product,"



RIGHT: In the new master bath, a marble-topped double vanity and glass-front shower enclosure reflect light from the new west-facing window. Sconces: Visual Comfort. Sinks and faucets: Kohler. BELOW: New floorboards and casing in the master bedroom were stained to match those in the original rooms. Bed: Grange. Lamps: Visual Comfort. Bedside table: Minton-Spidell





says Platt. "We also had the luxury of 11 months and the budget to do the things that needed to be done. Oftentimes those things don't all come together."

As for the garage, one neighbor just plain didn't want it, and the historic commission balked about its looks. "It was stressful," says Alex. "I went to the first hearing, then we decided to let John work it out."

The end result, which Battle calls "a sweet little gem," proved pleasing to homeowners and neighborhood preservationists alike. While smaller than origi-

nally planned—and detached from the house—it still manages to squeeze in two cars, three bikes, and a second-floor office for Alex. "I have nothing but good things to say about the process now, even though it wasn't a whole lot of fun," Alex says. "The architectural integrity is there, and that's what's important."

"In the end, everything worked out well," he continues, not least the luxury of a kitchen that is big enough for a crowd and nearly as sunny as a Florida room. "For us, this house turned out to be a perfect fit."



ABOVE: The new garage has a home office upstairs and echoes the lines of the house.





Pounding washers, knocking pipes, roaring exhaust fans, whistling windowsnuisance noises are especially annoying when guests are on the way. But here's something to be thankful for: There are easy fixes for quieting the din, and many are less strenuous than, say, roasting a turkey or shoveling the driveway

BY JOSH GARSKOF ILLUSTRATIONS BY ZOHAR LAZAR THUMPING WASHER

The washer pounds out a syncopated beat you could dance to.

THE FIX: If you're not overloading the machine or creating unbalanced loads (mixing sheets and towels, for instance), check for level and adjust the feet as necessary. If that doesn't fix the problem, put your washer on antivibration pads (such as those made by Derens, available at home depot.com) to keep it from moving across the floor. If the machine is in a cabinet, apply stick-on rubber bumpers to the inside walls where the machine bumps it, to muffle the impact.

2 BANGING PIPES
If your supply lines didn't bang before, a new high-efficiency appliance is likely the cause. Today's washing machines and, to a lesser extent, dishwashers have quick-acting valves that slam from fully open to fully shut in a millisecond, repeatedly. That change in pressure can cause the pipes to jerk, whacking

them against the house's structure. THE FIX: Adding pipe hangers will prevent the pipes from moving, but that will stop the noise only if you can find the exact spot where the pipe is hitting. This spot could as easily be hidden inside a wall or a floor as exposed somewhere in the basement.

A better solution is to install water hammer arresters-shock absorbers that cushion the change of water pressure—connected to the appliance causing the hammering sound. They'll help relieve pressure throughout the system but will have the greatest effect when placed beside the offending machine. Detach the washing machine's hot- and coldwater supply hoses from their spigots, and screw on the arresters between the spigots and hoses.

# 3 HAUNTED-HOUSE DOOR HINGES

Your interior or exterior doors creak loudly as they swing open or shut. THE FIX: Lift each hinge pin about 1/2 inch by hitting a nail inserted into it from below with a gentle hammer tap. (You may have to unscrew the hinge-pin finials first, depending on the hinge style.) Squirt a few drops of 3-In-One oil on the pin, move the door back and forth to work the lube down into the hinge, and reposition the pin.

# 4 GROWLING GARAGE DOORS

The mechanical whirring of the garage door as it opens and closes disturbs guests in the room over the garage or irritates nearby neighbors. THE FIX: Inspect all bolts and screws on the door and tighten any loose ones, being careful not to overtighten or strip them. Lubricate chains, pulleys, springs, wheels, hinges, and tracks with garage-door grease (a heavy-duty lubricant that dries quickly, so it won't gum up with dirt and other outdoor debris). If that doesn't quiet the riot, hire a garagedoor company to swap in a higherquality motor that uses a belt instead of a chain and to replace the metal wheels with nylon ones that move through the tracks with more stealth.

5 SHUDDERING SASHES
If your windows rattle when the wind blows or a school bus goes by, start by checking the sash lock-it's likely broken or misaligned. This latch is designed to press the upper and lower sashes tightly together and tightly against the frame so that there's no movement.

THE FIX: You can order replacement latches for almost any window (try houseofantiquehardware.com). If there are too many screw holes to allow for easy installation, go with two new latches instead of one and space them evenly on the meeting rails. Start by installing the catch on the back meeting rail, making sure the lower sash won't hit it when it opens. Then install the cam latch, spaced so that it pulls the windows tight when it's at about 90°.

You can also adjust the stopsthe narrow strips that hold the sash in place—on old wood windows. If the stops are screwed into place, tighten as necessary. Stops that are nailed in should be pried off and reinstalled so that they fit snugly against the window; consider replacing nails with window-stop bead adjustors and screws (available at smithrestorationsash.com) to make future adjustments easier.

6 CREAKING BED
Although beds can get noisy when box springs wear, slats rub, or balusters loosen, the most common cause is the loose metal brackets connecting the rails to the headboard and footboard. "I see the problem twice a week," says San Diego Furniture Repair's Scott Gressitt. Most beds made in the past 60 to 70 years use metal rail brackets with hooks to fasten the side rails to the headboard

and footboard. As these brackets become worn, the hooks can open, causing a metal-on-metal squeal.

THE FIX: Take the bed frame apart and look at the hooks; if they've opened up, tap them gently with a hammer to reposition them and create a tight, parallel slot for the receiving

# **GROANING STAIRS**

Fasten a noisy step tight against the support below using a cordless drill to sink a Squeeeeek No More screw (mcfeelys.com) through the tread and into the stringer. The screw-head will automatically break off right below the surface. This fastener holds better than a finishing nail but leaves a similarly inconspicuous hole.



# **BUZZING CHANDELIER**

Dimmers work by flickering lights on and off 120 times per second, causing a cheap incandescent bulb's thin filament to vibrate and buzz. Install brandname incandescent "heavy service" bulbs, which are designed to resist vibration and shock, or incandescent bulbs rated for 130 volts. instead of the standard 120 volts.



bracket. If that doesn't work, tap a shim between the reassembled rail and headboard or footboard of each offending joint to take play out of the connection.

RATTLING STORMS

Aluminum triple-track storm windows rattle most when they're not fully engaged in their tracks.

THE FIX: Remove both panes and the screen and brush debris out of the tracks. Spray with a silicone lubricant and reinstall, making sure each component is engaged at all four corners and locked into place. If the storms keep rattling, the frame could be torqued due to the house settling. Remove the entire frame with the windows intact and reinstall, caulking the top and sides with a waterproof sealant. If the problem persists, order replacements from a home center or window supplier.

DEAFENING DRAWERS Old wood-on-wood drawers, such as those in an original linen closet or a butler's pantry, can shriek almost as if in pain when they're pulled open or pushed closed, especially when loaded with heavy items. THE FIX: Ease the friction by rubbing

candle wax on both surfaces, says This Old House general contractor Tom Silva, or purchase low-friction glides from a woodworker's supply outlet, such as rockler.com.

JET-ENGINE FRIDGE

Refrigerators get loud when they're working extra hard, says Glenn Burk, president of Appliance Guys repair service in Portland, Oregon. The sound you hear is the cooling fan blowing onto the hot condenser coils. It'll start to complain during long stretches of heat and humidity-or simply because the compressor coils aren't dropping in temperature as easily as they should, thanks to dust and debris.

THE FIX: Remove the cover plate from the back of the fridge. On older models, the plate is likely mounted on the rear of the unit; on newer ones, it's often found at the bottom or the top, depending on where the freezer is located. Use a flexible refrigerator coil brush to remove dust bunnies and dog hair from the coils. You'll make the fan's job easier and therefore quieter, and save electricity. Also, make sure there's an inch of clearance behind and above the machine for proper airflow.

# 12 CHATTERING FURNACE

If you hear a loud zzzzz coming from your boiler's electrical control box when the system is idle, a recently installed programmable thermostat with a rechargeable battery may be to blame. These smart thermostats charge themselves by drawing a few watts of power from the circuit while the system is off; it's not enough to fire up the heat, but it can cause the electrical relays to buzz and pop.

THE FIX: Install a thermostat that uses replaceable batteries instead of rechargeable ones-or hire an HVAC specialist to add a common wire to your circuit to provide a separate power supply.

13 RACKETY VENT HOOD

If you hear a fluttering noise

during windstorms, it could be the flap on the exhaust outlet outside. THE FIX: Use construction adhesive to attach a washer to the flap to weight it down enough so that it won't blow around in the wind but will still open when you turn on the hood fan. If the fan itself is ridiculously loud, try cleaning the grease filters and the fan blades with warm water and a mild dish detergent. Or

hire an HVAC pro to install a new remote blower in the attic or on the roof, where the noise won't bother you as much. (Learn more at this oldhouse.com/novdec2014.)

# 14 JANGLING BALUSTERS

Your balusters ring like a wind chime when someone uses the stairs.

THE FIX: Tack them in place by first drilling a small pilot hole and then hammering an angled 4- or 6-penny finishing nail through the top of the baluster and into the banister on the high side. If that doesn't work, angle one through the tread and into the tenon at the base of the baluster and into the same tread again beyond it.

# 15 SQUEAKY OVEN OR DISHWASHER DOORS

The hinges on these appliances take a lot of abuse: exposure to high temperatures and moisture, and the weight of a heavy door moving up and down.

THE FIX: All they need is a liberal dose of white lithium grease applied, via the built-in straw, directly on the hinge pin and the attached spring that lightens the weight of the door.

## 17 WHISTLING HVAC RETURN

If your register trills like a boiling tea kettle, it's time to take a closer look. THE FIX: Look for a buildup of pet hair and dust on the backside of the grill—and vacuum it up. If that doesn't help, replace the filter, which could be clogged. "Replacing your return filter is like washing your feet," says *This Old House* plumbing and heating expert Richard Trethewey. "You can't do it too much."

18 NOISY DUCTWORK
The clanging that forced-air
heat can make when it comes on is
the result of the furnace and ducts
heating up quickly. Going from 60°F
to 130°F in just minutes causes the

metal to expand and knock.

**THE FIX:** Insulating the ducts with a blanket wrap or sleeve-style material can help keep them warmer so that the change in temperature isn't as drastic. It can also help muffle the sound.

19 RATTLING DOORS
A door that shakes and rattles
when it's closed isn't resting firmly
against its stop—the strip of wood
trim on the doorframe against which

the door closes-as it should be.

THE FIX: Placing a small felt or rubber bumper on the doorstop can prevent the closed door from moving around when wind blows through open windows or trucks rumble by. Otherwise, you can adjust the latch strike plate to keep the door tight against the stop when it's closed. Or, if that's not possible, remove the stop and reinstall it against the closed door to ensure a tight fit—and be prepared for significant touch-up painting.

# 20 CREAKY WOOD FLOORS

Wood floors squeak because the boards—or the subfloor underneath—are rubbing against each other or against a nail. Silencing them requires a careful diagnosis of where the movement is coming from: joists, subfloor, or finish floor.

THE FIX: Have someone step on the squeaking spot while you're down on all fours looking and listening closely. If just a single floorboard is moving while its neighbors stay stock-still, it's the culprit. Fasten it down using a pair of 8-penny finishing nails. "Set them an inch or so apart, angled like a V, and they'll

16 RADIATOR RACKET
That banging is the
sound of steam entering and
colliding with cool water pooled in
the radiator. Check for level, then
insert a piece of plywood under the
feet opposite the riser to pitch the
unit slightly toward the pipe. This
allows water that condenses out of
the steam to drain out. Learn more
at thisoldhouse.com/novdec2014.





# 21 SCREAMING SHOWERHEAD

This fixture gets loud when the flow restrictor inside becomes clogged with mineral buildup— or debris kicked up by plumbing work upstream in the system.

Disconnect the head from the shower arm and dismantle it, and remove any visible pieces of grit. To remove caked-on minerals, soak overnight in a zip-top bag filled with white vinegar. Apply new plumber's tape to the pipe threads before reinstalling.

lock the board into position," says Tom Silva. Or try Squeeeeek No More screws (see number 7).

# 22 THUNDEROUS BATH FAN

Noisy vent fans that rev like a motorcycle often don't get used, leading to bathroom moisture problems.

**THE FIX:** Start by bending the cover springs to take the play out of them and ensure they're pulling the cover

snugly against the unit, preventing vibration. Or, with the circuit breaker off, vacuum the fan and lubricate its spindle with a few drops of motor oil. If these fixes fail, try replacing the motor with an upgrade kit. Broan's 690NT (broan.com) fits most units, takes about 10 minutes to install, and can cut the decibel level in half.

# 23 GURGLING WATER HEATER

That ominous rippling sound is caused by bubbles rising up through sediment in the bottom of your tank. THE FIX: Attach a garden hose to the tank's spigot and run it to the sump pump or outside. Shut off the valve on the tank's water-supply line, open the valve connected to the hose, and let the water drain out. Turn the supply on full blast for several minutes to dislodge the buildup and allow the water to drain fully; repeat a half dozen times. "If that doesn't work, the buildup is too hard and thick and your water heater needs to be replaced...soon," says Richard.

# 24 CLICKING BASEBOARDS

A click, click, click when your hotwater radiators are warming up happens when a supply pipe is sitting too close to a floorboard, tile, pipe strap, or other immovable object. As the pipe heats up and expands, it rubs against the neighboring surface. THE FIX: If you can track the noise to an accessible location, spray silicone lubricant on the pipe. Don't cut the tile or wood back, as there's too much risk of damaging the pipe, says Tom. With baseboard heat, a plumber can drain the system and shorten the horizontal pipe that runs through the radiator, thereby relieving the pressure point where the pipe comes up through-and rubs against-the floor. If the radiator itself clicks, the fins are rubbing against each other or the floor, the cover, or the baseboard molding. Remove the cover and lift the fins onto the brackets designed to hold them. If the brackets are missing or broken, place folded-up cardboard where the fins touch the floor.

# 25 WARBLING FAN

Ceiling fans can get loud when their blades become unbalanced or loose. THE FIX: Turn off the circuit breaker and measure the distance from one blade to the ceiling, then manually rotate the fan and measure each blade against the same spot on the ceiling. If the measurements aren't identical, gently bend into alignment the metal bracket to which the blade is attached. "You can't move it a lot," says Tom. "But there's often enough play to rebalance it and quiet the fan down."

# 26 SPRINKLER WAKE-UP CALL

That hiss you hear when an automatic lawn-watering system starts up is air that settled inside the pipes and is getting pushed out of the nozzles ahead of the water.

**THE FIX:** Forget about quieting the racket; simply change your watering time instead. Early morning is ideal, but nobody said you have to use the standard 5 A.M. setting. Set the timer for just past the hour your family usually gets up.

# 27 RUNNING TOILET Your toilet flushes fine, but it

doesn't know when to quit and is wasting gallons of water a day.

THE FIX: Most often it's a simple fix. Turn off the water at the shutoff valve on the wall behind the toilet. Lift off the tank cover and remove the rubber flapper from the flush valve inside the tank. Replace the flapper if it's damaged or discolored. Check that the float on the chain is at the same height as the water level; adjust if necessary. Whether or not you replaced the flapper, make sure it's creating a watertight seal.

# nathas baths full of style



The powder room is one of the busiest rooms in the house, especially this time of year. So why not make yours more welcoming? Read on for easy style upgrades, clever storage solutions, and one-step fixes to perk up your half bath before company comes

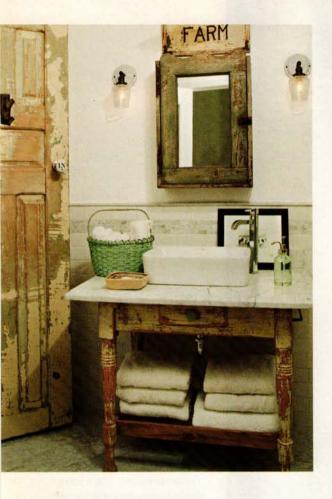
by Kate Karam





# pattern play

"There are four excellent reasons to use wallpaper in a powder room," says Jane Coslick, an interior designer based in Savannah, Georgia. Without a steamy shower, there's no worry about peeling paper. Continuous patterns-like the eyecatching blue-and-white print here-have the effect of making corners disappear, so small spaces feel more expansive. And you don't need much material, so you can spring for the good stuff. Best reason of all: "The wow factor when you open the door!" says Coslick. Shown: Rosslyn wallpaper (walls), \$225 for a 58-square-foot roll; us.farrow-ball.com



## repurposed character

Turn a flea-market table or a discarded dresser into a unique bath vanity (see how at thisoldhouse.com/novdec2014). Here, a vintage table becomes an unexpected base for a rectangular vessel sink; other distressed elements include the weathered medicine cabinet and salvaged door. Subway tile, marble, and a single-stem faucet mix in for a rustic-meets-sleek look. "A powder room is a great place to showcase your style with something fun, whimsical, or offbeat," says Birmingham, Alabama—based designer Lindsey Ellis Beatty. Similar to shown: Blanton sink, \$140; signaturehardware.com

## deep thinking

"People worry about using a dark color in a tiny room," says Rita Wilkins, a designer in Avondale, Pennsylvania. "But a coat of white paint isn't going to change the fact that it's small-you might as well embrace it!" Consider a deep red, like the one here, or an equally intense blueberry, peacock, plum, dark gray, or chocolate brown. "These shades can make the room rich, luminous, and cozy all at once," says Wilkins. To get the right depth of color, she advises prepping with a tinted primer, following with at least three coats of paint. "If you don't love it," she says, "it's not much wall to repaint." Similar to shown: Valspar's Front Door Red, \$34 per gallon; lowes.com



## upscaled elements

Often among the last areas to be revamped, powder rooms can suffer from "builder-basic syndrome," with home-center cabinets and minimal mirrors. Go from standard to striking by adding one oversized element, such as a huge mirror, as shown here. "You can use scale and proportion to create the illusion of a higher ceiling and improve the proportions of a small room," says Wilkins. A powder room mirror typically measures two-thirds the width of the vanity and two-thirds the height from sink top to ceiling. To oversize, go up proportionately in thirds, such as a 36-by-48-inch mirror over a 36-inchwide vanity. Similar to shown: San Marco mirror, \$390; wayfair.com



# stylish storage

Got 15 minutes? An afternoon? A weekend? Here, three easy ways to boost stowaway space



Baskets Company's on the way? In minutes you can install a wall of baskets so that guests never run out of TP. Similar to shown: Rachael basket, \$12; worldmarket.com



Floating shelves Plain planks with hidden hardware offer sleek, low-profile display and storage space. Similar to shown: Home Decorators Collection, from \$22; homedepot.com



Built-in niche In a half bath with little elbow room, a recessed cubby is an ideal solution. Get the basics for creating space between wall studs at thisoldhouse.com/novdec2014.



#### standout sink

An unusual shape, size, or material can make a sink special enough for guests but ideal for family use, too. An extra-deep utility basin, such as this one, which is set into a handsome wood base, is superfunctional when the powder room is also hand-washing central for kids. In fact, the twin faucets make it doubly so. Just don't neglect to put in high-quality fittings. "Too often people install a cheap faucet, figuring, 'It's just the powder room," says Ritch Holben, an architectural designer based in New Marlborough, Massachusetts. "But in a busy household that sink can get a lot of use." Similar to shown: Harborview sink, \$2,900: us.kohler.com

# lighting done right

While powder room grooming is likely limited to handwashing and a quick swipe with a comb, flattering light is critical to making guests feel comfortable. Task lighting in the bath shouldn't come from overhead, as it casts unflattering shadows. The better option, according to Holben, is to create a cluster of lighting, with overall ambient illumination coming from a small chandelier, pendant, or flush-mounted fixture on the ceiling, and task lighting provided by a pair of dimmable wall sconces set at eye level on either side of the mirror. Similar to shown: Adele chandelier, \$560; potterybarn .com; Wilcox Globe sconce, \$70 each; amazon.com





a plan that's right for you, you can go where life takes you.

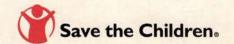
BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina

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# WE SEE TOMORROW IN TODAY'S CHILD

**Save the Children** is the preeminent voice for children in the US and around the world. We invest in childhood, giving children the best chance for success — a healthy start, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm — every day and when crisis strikes. We transform children's lives, changing the course of their futures and ours.





#### textural touches

The trick to making a primarily white half bath spa-like rather than lab-like is mixing and layering textures, says Coslick. Budget-friendly white ceramic subway tiles are easy to install (and to clean) and leave a space feeling sparkly and bright. Adding detailed millwork and a splash of cheery color—like the wood-frame medicine cabinet and green-painted beadboard here—are sure ways to warm it up. Similar to shown:

Pennington console sink with polished-nickel stand, \$700; signaturehardware.com

# worthy extras

You know the basics every powder room needs. Here are the little upgrades that designers rely on to up the luxe factor

**1.** Handsome hardware With just a screwdriver and a few new knobs, you can instantly update an old vanity. Knobs, \$9–\$12; rejuvenation.com



2. Soft-close seat Save guests (and yourself) from the unceremonious sound of a slamming lid. Q3 Quiet-Close toilet seat, \$50; kohler.com



- 3. Wall art Seek affordable prints with graphic punch, or create a custom piece from a cell-phone snap. WPA poster print, from \$15; vintagraph.com. Canvas prints of your own photos, from \$35; allposters.com
- 4. Special hand towels In an intimate space, guests are going to

notice details, such as nice towels. Look for Egyptian cotton or ones with embroidery or trim. Matouk Cairo towel, \$23; gracioushome.com

5. Cushy rug A plush textile underfoot can soften a powder room's hard surfaces. One with a distinctly horizontal or vertical pattern can trick the eye and make a space feel longer or wider. 2-by-3-foot rugs, \$83 (left) and \$95, dashandalbert.com ▲





# DOWNTON ABBEY

GC Gifts for Every Lord and Lady Mo



See the complete Downton Abbey collection at shopPBS.org/DowntonGifts

# THIS OLD HOUSE

INSIDE

POCKET-DOOR FIX SHRUB SHELTER CEILING UPLIFT RADIANT BASICS



Our cast of veteran experts



TOM SILVA General Contractor



NORM ABRAM Master Carpenter



RICHARD TRETHEWEY Plumbing and Heating Expert

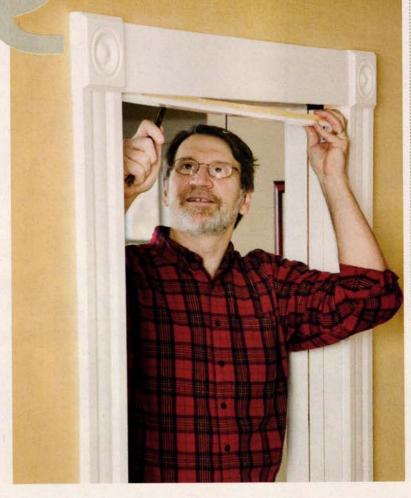


ROGER COOK Landscape Contractor



KEVIN O'CONNOR

A pocket door in our 46-year-old Cape has come off its track and is now resting inside the wall. What can I do to get it working again? – JEFF SNIDER, DAYTON, OHIO



When a pocket door doesn't work properly, Norm Abram pries off one of the trim pieces behind the head casing. Then he can peer up into the pocket and check out the door's rollers and track.

NORM ABRAM REPLIES: Pocket doors in newer houses like yours are fairly easy to fix. They hang from two sets of rollers that ride on a metal track extending from the pocket in the wall to the opposite side of the doorway. Pocket doors that roll along the floor, once used in really old houses, are harder to put right.

In order to access the track and rollers, you'll have to remove the split headers—horizontal strips inside the head casings that trap the top of the door when it's closed. Use a utility knife to break the paint bond between the strips and the head casings, then unscrew or pry off the strips, as I'm doing here. Using a flashlight, peek inside the pocket and see how many wheels each roller has—two, three, or four. That will determine how the door can be removed.

To get a stuck door out of its pocket, fit the hooked end of a small pry bar under the door's bottom edge and push down on the bar. This will lift the door up and out of the opening just enough so you can grab it. But first, tape down some cardboard to protect the floor.

It may be possible now to put the wheels back on the track. Otherwise, drag the door out of the pocket as far as you can. If the door has two-wheel rollers, which ride in a C-shaped track, pry off one of the split side jambs that cover the pocket. Now

you can grab the door, lift it off the track, and take it out. For doors with three- or four-wheel rollers, leave the jambs alone, and disengage the lever holding each roller to the top of the door. Lift the door off the rollers, and slide them out of the gap at the end of the track.

Carefully inspect the track and the rollers. If they're in good condition, clean them, lubricate the wheels, check that all the fasteners are tight, and rehang the door. Put back the split headers and the split jamb, if necessary. If a wheel is damaged, replace the roller assembly with a matching one. A Web search should turn up a replacement. But if the track is damaged, you'll have to cut open a section in the pocket wall just below the track, detach the old track, and put in a new one.

This might be a good opportunity to upgrade the track and the rollers, if the pocket is wide enough to accommodate them. In my experience, pocket doors with three- and four-wheel rollers have sturdier tracks and aren't as troublesome as those with two-wheel rollers.

#### New treads for carpeted stairs

I want to tear out the carpet on the stairway and cover the construction-grade treads and risers with nice wood. Is this something I can do?

-MARGIE AUSTIN, WOODSTOCK, ILL.

TOM SILVA REPLIES: You can certainly tear out the carpeting yourself. Using a hammer and a pry bar, lift the carpet and pad off the staples and tack strips that are holding them in place, then pull off any of the strips or staples left behind.

A number of companies, such as NuStair (nustair.com), do offer







Stud finder









their branches safe from snow.

replacement treads and risers for just your situation. You can choose species like red oak or Brazilian cherry, finished or unfinished, for either open or closed stairways. Treads that come with the nosing and cove molding already attached will save installation time. Most replacements are 5/8 inch thick, though you'll probably need a 3/4-inch-thick landing tread at the top of the stair to fit flush with your existing flooring.

Installing these treads is not a job for a beginner. You'll need a table saw, a pneumatic nailer, a slidingcompound miter saw that makes dead-straight cuts, and a fair amount of carpentry experience. If you don't have the tools and the experience, I'd recommend letting a professional trim carpenter tackle this job.

#### **Protecting shrubs** from snow

Last winter, heavy wet snow damaged the shrubs in my front yard. How I can avoid that problem this year?

-ROBERT GAUTHIER, GLEN BURNIE, MD.

ROGER COOK REPLIES: There are two ways to protect shrubs: Tie them up or cover them up. To tie, just

wrap a spiral of three-strand jute twine around the plant, starting from the bottom and working upward. Snug up the twine enough to pull the limbs into a conical shape but not so tight as to snap them. This shape helps them to shed snow and prevents any single limb from having to carry a snow load.

Untie the twine in the spring as soon as the threat of snow has passed. Your shrubs will return to their normal shape as the weather warms up.

However, a twine wrap may not be enough to protect plants close to the house from the snow and icicles that drop off the roof. In those locations, cover your plants with simple wood A-frames. They are easy to build: Get a couple of 1/2-inch exteriorgrade plywood panels big enough to shield a shrub on two sides, pup-tent style, and screw 2x4s along their side edges. Line up the ends of the 2x4s with the panels' top edges, but let them extend several inches past the panels' lower edges to form short legs. Hold the two sides together at the top with metal straps or old door hinges. Then you can close them up like a book and use them again year after year.

To prevent the frame from toppling or shifting when it gets hit by

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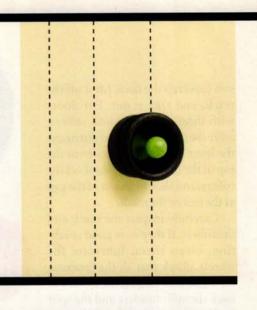
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an avalanche off the roof, anchor the legs to wood stakes. A coat of paint will extend the life of the little structure.

Leave the ends of the A-frame open so air can circulate and some sun can reach the shrub. And as with the twine, remove the frames as soon as snow season is over.

#### Seasonal ceiling gap

The crown molding that we installed in the second floor of our 1980s house looked perfect until it separated from the ceiling in the winter. We caulked it and it looked fine-until the next winter, when the same thing happened again. What can we do to stop this?

-LINDSAY RUDY, COLUMBUS, OHIO

TOM SILVA REPLIES: It sounds like you're having a problem with uplift caused by the seasonal movement of roof trusses.

If you go into your attic, I bet you'll see webs of 2×4s connected with metal plates. These lightweight roof trusses are fairly common in houses built in the 1980s and are still widely used. Unlike traditional rafters, which carry only the weight of the roof, trusses support both the roof and the ceiling below it. As a result, when the 2×4s dry out and shrink during the winter, they pull up slightly on the bottom part of the truss-the bottom chord-and the ceiling drywall attached to it.

There's no way you're going to stop

those chords from moving. But you can stabilize the ceiling somewhat. Measure the distance between the bottom chords -24 inches is standard spacing—and cut some 3/4-inch plywood into 12-inch-wide strips an inch short of that distance. Take these strips into the attic and screw them to the top plate of the wall or walls that run perpendicular to the chords near the center of the house. That's where chord movement is most pronounced. The overhanging lip of the plywood strip rests against the drywall ceiling and keeps it from lifting.

And for anyone planning to install crown molding in a ceiling fastened to a roof truss, here's a tip: Nail the crown only to the ceiling, not the wall. That way the crown will slide up and down the wall as the ceiling moves, and you'll never see a gap or a crack open up.

#### **Cutting-in question**

How do you paint a crisp boundary between the walls and the ceiling when they are different colors?

-STEVE HOTRA, WEST MILFORD, N.J.

KEVIN O'CONNOR REPLIES: To find out what the pros do, I asked Rich O'Neil, owner of Masterwork Painting, who has shared his expertise on Ask This Old House TV, to explain his technique.

"It's a fact of life that you have to cut in-paint a boundary along edges of a

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5 FAST FIXES FOR COMMON DECORATING GOOFS

#### **Plus! Easy DIY**

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- ✓ Bath storage
- ✓ No-fail, low-water container garden

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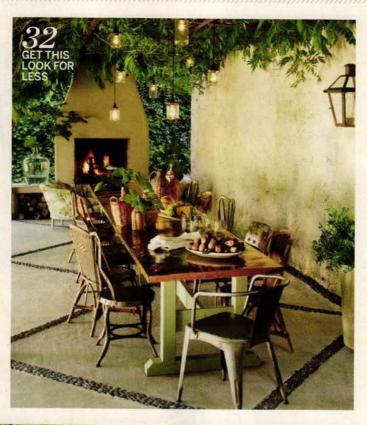
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# The case of the disappearing patio

had moved two tons of gravel before I came either to my senses or near total physical collapse. When your muscles begin to howl and you actually believe you hear them, it's hard to tell whether it's your brain offering a smart warning or your back giving out. Either way, it had been a long, hot day carrying 80 separate 50-pound bags of something called Susquehanna pea gravel into the backyard for the pebble-stone patio we were building. I was done. Cooked. And so I staggered to a chair for a beer. I looked to my left and saw a small man with horns and wings. I looked to my right and saw a roaring lion.

I knew I was not hallucinating—just beat. I'd picked up the gargoyles to use as decoration in the garden—much like the statuary in the beautiful backyard story "Garden Ornaments," on page 62—and with the hard-earned arrival of the gravel, they would finally find a proper place in the flower beds that surrounded it.

What I thought was a hallucination came some days later, when

I started to believe that the gravel, my gravel, was disappearing. Right there at the foot of the back steps where I'd labored to spread a 3- or 4-inch layer of the 3%-inch stone. At first I'm sure I didn't notice—sort of like Humphrey Bogart and the strawberries in *The Caine Mutiny*. Soon, though, I felt less cushion stepping off the stair. Bit by bit my work seemed to thin out. And then one day it was down to the landscape fabric. Where was it all going? Was I mad, a Captain Queeg in the making?

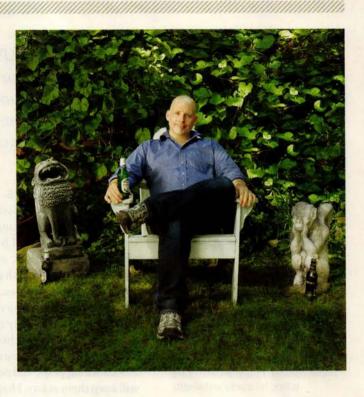
I looked around the yard and the lion sat staring at me with jaws agape. And that's when I saw it. On the very back of the lion's tongue—which acted as a raceway right through the animal from when it was more properly used to channel rainwater away from a building—sat a brown pebble.

"Aha!" I said, now knowing where my stone was going. "The lion was eating it!"

And with that I heard my wife, who'd come outside with our 3-year-old to play in the stones, say, "Why are you talking to yourself?"

"Someone's stealing my pebbles," I said, "and now I know who!" She gave me that look, the one that said I had indeed gone mad. And as she did, my son bumped into me as he picked up a scoop of gravel at my feet with his purple plastic shovel and wandered over to dump them into the lion's mouth. I heard the rushing clatter of the pebbles speed through the statue and out the other side in a crush of noise. "Feeding the lion, Daddy," my son said. I smiled, looked behind the lion and there, in a pile among a tangle of daylilies, were a couple of bags' worth of stone. Relieved that I was still sane, I bent to grab a handful of the stuff. I knew the howl I heard this time was most definitely my back.

SCOTT OMELIANUK, EDITOR scott@thisoldhouse.com



The editor, kicking back and sharing a beer with his gargoyle companions er, garden ornaments.



Share your DIY gaffes, goofs, and gripes with me on Twitter @scottomelianuk using #TellTOH.

# Reader mail



#### 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. PRACTICAL BEAUTY appeals to This Old House readers, as evidenced by our in-box this month. Here, words from the wise on our June 2015 outdoor getaways piece, successful tips from Norm, hardwood decking, and more. And not one but two reader projects suitable for gardeners!

#### Pest-free getaways

After your June 2015 issue featured more wonderful outdoor living spaces ["Great Outdoor Getaways"], I had to write. They all look very beautiful, and they're full of ideas. However, if you share outdoor living spaces with mosquitoes, forget anything without screens! We have had a deck for years but unfortunately can use it only in early spring and after the first frost in fall. In summer, we get murdered by those bloodsucking pests, and nothing but screens will keep them at bay. How about featuring more three-season-type rooms?

-KEN LINK, CROWN POINT, IND.

THE EDITORS REPLY: We are sure to revisit screened and three-season rooms in future issues, Ken, but in the meantime you can find previous TOH articles and ideas on that topic—plus some skeeter-beating ideas to try—at thisoldhouse.com/aug2015.

#### Finish tips from Norm

I've been refinishing furniture, usually antique, for over 60 years. I recently purchased a decrepit old maple desk and saw the Ask This Old House Q + A from TOH master carpenter Norm Abram about wipe-on polys [June 2015]. I was unfamiliar with this type of product and decided to try it. I was thrilled with the results. The material was so much easier to use, and the desk turned out beautifully. Thanks!

-SHIRLEE N. GLASS, CENTENNIAL, COLO.

#### lpe caveat

Regarding "All About Hardwood Decking" in the June 2015 issue: I have used ipe decking over the past 15 years on a number of projects and always had excellent results while living in a coastal environment. But once I moved to Nevada, with its much drier climate, and started using ipe for several different projects, I found it to be



#### Sewed-up planter

-MARGIE BIGGS, SANDOVAL, ILL

I saw your idea for a planter made from an antique sewing-machine base [Home Solutions, April 2015, at far right]. We had one from my mother's barn. My wonderful husband, Mike, used scrap wood and leftover paint to make the box. Spent about \$40, including the plants. Thanks for the great idea!





# READER PROJECTS OF THE MONTH

# Rack'em

-BARBARA AND BILL BRETHERICK, WAYCROSS, GA.

We tidied up our messy porch with your **boot-stand project** [far right] and are thrilled with the results. It's a modified version, with 10 balusters instead of eight, but perfectly fits my *mise en place* attitude! [Good for muddy gardening clogs, too; find the how-to at thisoldhouse.com/aug2015.]





prone to shrinkage. After about six months, every plank shrank across its width by 10 to 15 percent, causing noticeable separation between boards.

I would caution consumers to consider their climate before assuming the advertised stability of ipe and other hardwood decking.

As a lifelong woodworker, I thank you for all the informative articles you publish each month in your magazine.

-JOHN FARROW, BY E-MAIL

# Safer passage

The freshened-up porch [Home Solutions, June 2015] could do with one more improvement: I would have also put in a new storm door, with the hinge on the left. This would put persons exiting or entering more in line with the steps. It may seem like a small point, but for a person with mobility problems, it could mean a less restricted environment and greater safety.

-KAY HILL, MINERAL WELLS, W.VA.

# It pays to save TOH issues

We still have the original locks on all the doors in our 1936 home, and we use the old skeleton keys to unlock those doors. A while back, our daughter lost one of the two original skeleton keys we use for an entry door, and we needed to replace it ASAP.

Luckily, I remembered there was a previous *TOH* story about making a replacement key [Ask This Old House, March 2014, photo below]. Sifting through my back issues, I found the article I needed, with all the information to make a new key. I purchased blank skeleton keys online, and, following the instructions to the letter, I was able to make new keys (filing carefully) and also clean out the lock so that it works



Reader-tested: Replacing a lost skeleton key just takes careful marking and filing.

better than ever. Thanks, TOH! I save your old issues and you saved the day! —DON MASTRO, ENDICOTT, N.Y.

THE EDITORS REPLY: Glad to help, Don. And if anybody missed that issue, you can find the skeleton-key how-to at thisoldhouse.com/aug2015.

# Stories and inspiration

I get a bunch of decorating and homedesign magazines, but *TOH* editor Scott Omelianuk's is the only editor's letter I read. It's a story in itself and shows he's right there with the rest of us. Most magazines waste that page on a summary of the issue.

This Old House provides lots of great ideas. Some of what you feature is beyond my skill set, but who knows? I may learn to handle some power tools instead of just a paintbrush. Thanks for all the inspiration!

- MARCY CAMPBELL, BY E-MAIL

### Correction

→ In the June 2015 TOH Editors' Picks, the website for finding Terminix AllClear Mosquito Bait & Kill should have been baitandkill.com, not terminix.com. Our apologies for the error.

Easy ways to improve your home right now

# 6 FAST FIXES

☐ Shop late-season plant sales: Raid nurseries for late-summer deals to fill in any holes in beds and borders.



- ☐ Stay safe in storms: Trim branches hanging over your roof or near windows to help avoid costly storm damage.
- ☐ Help out your freezer: A fuller freezer will keep food cold longer in case of a power outage. Fill any gaps with a couple of bags of ice or a milk jug filled with water.
- Perk up pillows: Set out cushions in direct sun for a few hours, flipping halfway through, to help them plump up by evaporating interior moisture-it'll kill allergycausing dust mites, too.
- ☐ Check fences: Inspect for loose posts and rotting wood; repair as needed. Cut back encroaching greenery, which can speed wood decay.
- ☐ Keep AC drain lines clear: Prevent algae buildup by pouring 1/4 cup of bleach down the access pipe. After 30 minutes, flush with a gallon of water.

# M Beach-proof your washing machine

Sandy laundry won't just damage other garments in your load-it can also clog the machine if it builds up in the drain hose. To keep the summer memories but prevent future headaches. shake out towels and suits before tossing them in the wash. Afterward, wipe around the rim of your washer and gasket with a wet paper towel to pick up any lingering grains.



# Clean up the dehumidifier

Hot, humid summer days will have your dehumidifier working overtime, but a quick cleaning can keep things running smoothly. After unplugging the unit, empty the water tank and wash it with water and dish soap to prevent mold and mildew. Vacuum dust and debris from the air intake and the exhaust grill to maintain proper airflow.

# □ Outwit prowlers

Finally taking that summer trip? Protect your house with these low-cost tricks: 1. Place wood dowels cut to length to fit snugly in the bottom track of sliding doors so that they can't be pried open. 2. Cover garage windows with opaque film so that



it's not obvious when your car is gone. 3. Hold off on socialmedia vacation chatter until you return, to avoid tip-offs about your empty house.

# ☐ Check vour trees

The invasive Asian longhorned beetle has killed more than 130,000 birch, ash, and



elm trees in the U.S., so take the time now to look for warning signs in your backyard. Watch for dead branches, dime-size holes in trunks, or shallow scars in bark, and report any damage to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. A certified arborist can help with safe tree removal. Go to asianlong hornedbeetle.com for more information.



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# Edited by Michelle Brunner home solutions

WOOD FINISHES YARD CARE COOKING TIPS OUTDOOR LIVING MORE



# tile table

In summertime, the projects should be just as easy as the livin'. Take this outdoor table: All you need is a few extra tiles, a folding luggage rack, plywood, and a length of molding. To create our tabletop, we laid out tiles, then cut the plywood to size. Adhesive mat (SimpleMat, \$22; homedepot.com) quickly set the tile, which we then grouted. We added molding for a tray-like rim and caulked where it meets the tile. Screwing the top to the luggage rack from below adds stability; blue paint ties it together. The result: a perfect spot to relax-and plenty of weekend left to enjoy.

Merola "Revival Ring" ceramic tile, \$1.97 each; homedepot.com



# Fix a stain mistake

Applying wood stain can be tricky. but don't reach for the paint can just yet. Here, three ways to remedy a stain job gone wrong. -KATELIN HILL

# GOOF 1: The color isn't right.

Going darker is easy enough—just add more stain. Too red? Minwax's PolyShades is a tinted polyurethane that lets you change the tone by adding, say, brown, to balance it out. It's always best to build your color gradually—the one thing you can't do is go lighter.

### GOOF 2: It's streaky.

First, strip as much of the color as possible: If you're using an oil-based stain, scrub the surface, while it's still wet, with a Scotch-Brite pad and mineral spirits or naptha. For water-based stains, use a lacquer thinner. Scrub out the streaks, then reapply the stain liberally. Wipe off the excess with a rag immediately.

### GOOF 3: It's splotchy.

Some tree species contain pockets of sap, which cause the wood to absorb stain unevenly. Start by stripping off what you can (as described above), then seal the wood with a water-thin mix of de-waxed shellac and alcohol. Saturate the wood with the solution and wipe it off. Let it dry for 2 hours. Then switch to a 100 percent pigmented stain, such as Varathane (most stains are a mix of dye and pigment). Wipe away as needed to even out the differences in color.

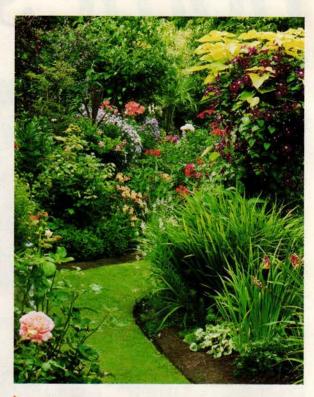
# Tools and tips for tackling weeds

You've fought the heat with regular watering only to find stubborn weeds flourishing. Extract the intruders with this trio of targeted tools.

-SAL VAGLICA

## FOR FLOWER BEDS: FINGER WEEDER

This nimble tool fits over your pointer finger and goes where larger weeders can't, so it's perfect for detail work in flower beds. But don't go overboard: Disturbing the soil too much brings new weed seeds to the surface. \$5; theringweeder.com

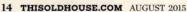


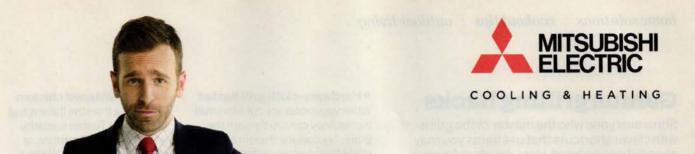
# FOR VEGGIE BEDS: LONG-HANDLED LOOP WEEDER Reach weeds between

crop rows-and save your back-with this 2-in-1 tool's long handle and sharpened steel loop that lets you extract small weeds at their roots in damp soil. Bonus: You can use the cultivator to loosen densely packed beds next spring. \$43; garrettwade.com

# FOR YOUR LAWN: **TAPROOT HAND WEEDER**

Mowing over weeds doesn't remove their roots. The distinct bend of this weeder acts as a fulcrum, making it easier to dig around and pull out the taproots of dandelions. chickweed, and plantain. Don't forget to fertilize: A healthy crop of dense turf gives weeds less of a chance. \$8; fiskars.com







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# Genius grilling hacks

Show everyone who the master of the grill is with clever shortcuts that use items you may already have on hand. Here, six ideas for your next cookout. - к.н.



# » Hardware-cloth grill basket

When vegetables are cut into small pieces, they can slip through the grate. Try cooking them in a pouch made from a scrap of stainless-steel wire cloth. Fold in half a piece large enough to hold the food, then fold over the edges to close it up on two sides like an envelope. Clean with warm water and a few drops of mild dish detergent. Grill with one end open so that you can pour the veggies out while they're still hot.

# » Speedy skewered sausages

Rather than throwing sausages on the grill and waiting for their centers to cook or heat through, thread each one lengthwise with a flat metal skewer. This not only makes turning easier but also helps reduce cooking time because the metal conducts heat.

### » Brick-flattened chicken

Take a cue from the Italians and prepare the Tuscan specialty known as pollo al mattone, or chicken under a brick. Wrap a clay brick in foil and place it on top of a butterflied whole chicken. Since this creates a more even cooking surface, the chicken comes out juicier and crispier.

# » Paper-egg-carton firestarter

When you're getting ready to grill. it can take a little nursing to get the fire going. For a simple shortcut, pack an empty paper egg carton with charcoal briquettes. Set the whole thing in the grill, pile more charcoal on top, then light the carton. By the time the cardboard burns away, the coals will have caught.



# » Cedar-1×4-grilled salmon

Salmon always tastes better a la plancha, but cedar planks can go for as much as \$4 for a single-use piece in cookware stores. Instead, buy an untreated cedar 1×4 at the home center, cut it down to roughly 10-inch pieces, and sand well to create a clean surface. Soak in water for about 30 minutes before cooking.

# » Onion grill cleaner

While the coals are still hot, use tongs or a fork to rub half of a large onion cut-side-down over the grill grate. The onion's oils will help to loosen the debris.

# MORE BBQ SHORTCUTS

For additional grilling hacks, go to thisoldhouse.com/aug2015



# TURN ON THE FAN

When used consistently, fans can reduce the need for air-conditioning by as much as 30 percent, depending on where you live. They can make you feel 3 to 8 degrees cooler by blowing hot air away from your body. That means you can raise the temperature on your AC several degrees and still feel comfortable.

—MAX SHERMAN, PhD. SENIOR SCIENTIST, LAWRENCE BERKELEY NATIONAL LABORATORY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY





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# ZOHAR LAZAR LLUSTRATIONS

# Five design goofs to avoid

Impractical upholstery, wall paint that's too bright—we've all made a misstep or two when it comes to finishing our living spaces. Here, designers dish on five things homeowners often get wrong and offer tips on how to get them right, -M. BRUNNER

# **BUYING EVERYTHING** FROM ONE STORE

Perusing your favorite catalog, it's tempting to buy everything you see. "Stores make it easy by setting up vignettes that create a mood," says Robin Colton, an Austin. Texas-based interior designer. The upside: Everything goes together. The downside: Matchymatchy decor can feel a little soulless. "A mix of styles, scale, and proportion is key to a room's feeling lavered and comfortable. You want a space that's uniquely you and not the image a store is selling," says Colton.

# LINING THE WALLS WITH YOUR FURNITURE

You'd think pushing everything against the walls would make your room seem bigger and more open, but putting too much space between pieces makes a room feel uninviting, "When you move things away from the wall, you create intimate spaces that allow for interaction and comfort," says Colton, If your living room is on the small side, anchor some of the furniture on just one wall-for example. the sofa and end tablesas a solution.



DESIGNING FOR THE LIFESTYLE YOU WANT VS. THE ONE YOU HAVE Sure that pristine white sofa looks appealing in the showroom, but if you've got kids or pets or you just like to eat chips and salsa in front of the TV, think twice. "You're not going to change human behavior, so you need to be realistic about mess and clutter," says Nicole Sassaman, a Los Angeles-based interior designer. With seating, opt for stain-resistant indoor/outdoor fabric. Another problem: not enough storage. Many people fall in love with, say, a leggy console table, then complain that they have nowhere to stash throws or board games. Look for storage ottomans or pieces with doors to keep clutter out of sight.



TOO-SMALL **RUGS** Besides being a cozy cushion for your feet at the end of a long day, a rug helps define a space and add color, texture, and pattern. If a rug is too small, it looks skimpy. "Either all of your furnishings should be completely on the rug, or the front two legs of sofas or chairs should sit on it," says Colton. Since larger rugs can be pricey, one solution is to lay two identical smaller ones side by side. A carpet repair pro can even stitch them together for a more permanent fix.

# SELECTING PAINT COLORS BEFORE FURNITURE Flip through any

paint deck and you'll see a dizzying number of shades. It's much harder to find the right home furnishings, draperies, and rugs, which is why Colton recommends making paint the last thing you choose for a space. To preview a color, paint adhesive-backed sample boards (Small Wall boards, \$5.69 for a two-pack; mysmallwall.com for retailers); they can be repositioned, so you can move them around the room at different times of day. One more tip: Don't count on a store to match a paint color from another company. Says Colton, "It's a surefire way to get a color that's not what you were expecting.'



# Buggy bed companions

After decades of lying low, bedbugs made a major comeback in the late 1990s and liked what they saw: a world of globe-trotters blithely unaware of how they could further the bedbug cause. In 1999, just a quarter of polled U.S. pest pros were battling the little biters; in 2014 it was all of them, with summer the busiest season for many. The first global bedbug summit, held this year, floated such desperate measures as deploying bedbug-eating pharaoh ants indoors. Short of that, a certified, licensed pro can help, along with these tips. -DEBORAH BALDWIN

### THEY LIKE TO TRAVEL

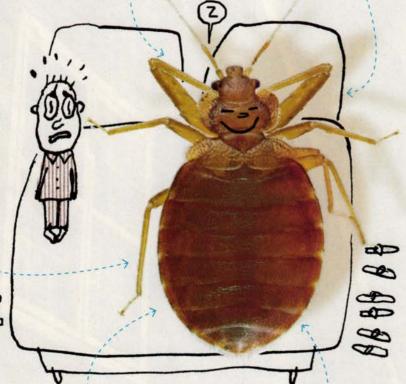
This pest's preferred mode is hitchhiking-in your suitcase, for example. They will also move around inside walls and even down the hall, making treatment of multifamily housing tricky: They can decamp quickly, leaving behind eggs.

### THEY ARE BETTER VAMPIRES

Before settling down for a blood meal. they inject their victim with a painkiller and an anticoagulant, Clever! Bitees continue to sleep peacefully but will probably awake with itchy welts, an allergic reaction, Luckily, these suckers don't transmit disease.

### THEY CAN GO FOR MONTHS WITHOUT **FOOD OR DRINK**

If bugs move in, you may be tempted to simply move out. But take your time: You'll need five months to starve out bedbugs. whether you're abandoning your home or isolating a suspect chair in the shed. Any less and you will likely find the same hungry pack, much hungrier now, of course, given your absence.



## DARKNESS IS THEIR OLD FRIEND

When exposed to light, these tiny, wingless insects flatten themselves and wiggle into cracks, crevices-anyplace that's dark and protective. Bedsprings. mattress seams, and upholstered furniture are favorite spots, but they have also been caught red-bodied in dressers and behind switch plates and artwork.

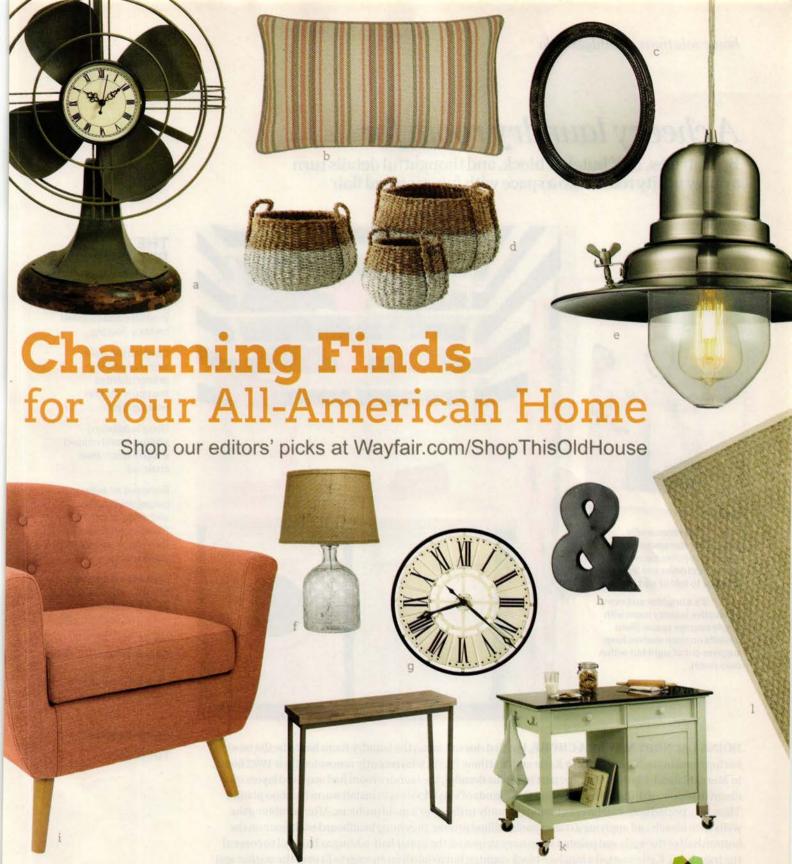
## THEY HAVE CRAZY, PRODUCTIVE SEX

Picture a needle-like male appendage that bypasses the female's genitalia, piercing the exoskeleton and filling its cavity with sperm, which somehow finds its way. Females have a defense mechanism, but it's a losing battle: Other males line up, one thing leads to another, and may the best sperm win. The methodology seems to serve the species: Females lay one to five eggs per day-per bug.

# Take back the night

An invasion big enough to feel and see is big enough to warrant a pro. While awaiting treatment:

- ► HUNT AND PECK Use a flashlight and a credit card to pry into mattress seams. Attack with a vacuum cleaner equipped with a bag and a crevice attachment. Put the vac bag in a sealed plastic bag. and ditch it far away from human homes. Then scrub down the attachment
- FREEZE OR BAKE Bag small items, like books and shoes, and store at 0°F for four days. Bedding and clothes can be tossed in a dryer set at 115°F to 120°F (medium to high) for at least 30 minutes, Low-vapor commercial steamers can kill the eggs as well as the bugs, but only on contact.
- **► USE PROTECTION Zip** mattresses and box springs into bug-blocking covers. Outfit the legs of bed frames with special preventive bedbug-interceptor cups.
- POISON Pros rely on specially formulated insecticides and desiccants, like diatomaceous earth and boric acid, to get into crevices and other places where bugs and their eggs may nest. Foggers don't work; and, no matter how tempting, don't reach for a blow torch.



## Search by item number on Wayfair.com:

a. Fan Clock IMX4146
 b. Boudoir Pillow NCX1481
 c. Wall Mirror RD1091
 d. 3-Piece Basket
 Set NHG1976
 e. Mini Pendant ELL6277
 f. Table Lamp HW3787
 g. Oversized Clock HW3787
 h. Letter Block PVL7017
 i. Arm Chair LMS2574
 j. Console Table SNPN2321

k. Island Cart SAU1957 I. Natural Rug FV34823



# A cheery laundry room for \$420

Bold stripes, DIY butcher block, and thoughtful details turn a dingy utility room into a space with function and flair



BEFORE The room sorely lacked tidy storage solutions—cleaning supplies sat on the washer and dryer and there was no place to fold or sort clothes.

AFTER It's a brighter and more productive laundry room with ample counter space. Deep baskets on open shelves keep supplies out of sight but within easy reach.



DOING LAUNDRY MAY BE A CHORE, but that doesn't mean the laundry room has to be the most boring room in the house. Just ask Katie and Matthew Parris, who recently renovated their 1992 home, in Merritt Island, Florida. Over the past two-plus decades, the laundry room had acquired layers of dingy, dated decor. First task: ripping up three kinds of vinyl flooring to install warm bamboo planks. Then they peeled back two layers of wallpaper only to discover a mold problem. After scrubbing the walls with bleach and applying a coat of mold-killing primer, they hung beadboard wallpaper on the bottom half of the walls and painted crisp navy stripes on the upper half, adding a chair rail to conceal the transition. Katie wanted a butcher-block counter, but a slab deep enough to fit over the washer and dryer was not in the budget. Matt's solution? Edge-glued cedar 1×4s screwed into a plywood base, with a 1×4 turned on edge and trimmed to finish the front. Open shelves, storage baskets, and a punchy ironing-board cover provide the finishing touches to a space that's no longer an eyesore. "I used to hate going in there," Katie says. "Now it's my favorite room in the house!" —KATELIN HILL

# THE PROJECT TALLY

Tore up three layers of peel-and-stick vinyl tiles and installed bamboo flooring....\$110

Covered the walls with mold-killing primer; painted the upper portion white and navy......\$40

Hung beadboard wallpaper and capped it with a decorative chair rail.....\$50

Removed an awkwardly placed shelf, hooks, and a mirror; patched the walls; and installed three open shelves with wood brackets......\$110

Built a faux-butcherblock countertop using plywood and cedar 1×4s, and sealed it with polyurethane.......\$35

Added storage baskets, a colorful ironing-board cover, and a throw rug.........\$75

тотац......\$420

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# Bigger and better

Two serious cooks with salvaging skills and DIY smarts expand on the charms of a 285-year-old house by Deborah Baldwin + Photographs by Eric Roth

**TACKLINGA HOUSE** so old it predates George Washington requires a willing suspension of common sense. But Matthew and Ami Cecil weren't fazed by the fixer-upper they bought in Sharon, Massachusetts, even though its kitchen had last seen a carpenter maybe 40 years ago. "My parents and Ami's dad always had some project going," Matthew says of the couple's lifelong exposure to home improvements. Still, a sweeping redo of the 1730 house took a little longer than most DIY projects. "There wasn't a piece of wood that didn't have to be sistered or jacked up," Matthew says.

Working with a carpenter friend, Marty Barrett, and a cabinet and countertop company, the Cecils turned the breakfast room into a kitchen suited for enthusiastic cooks with two young children. Only one thing gave them pause: maneuvering a massive, salvaged cast-iron sink into place with a house jack that could move it just 6 inches at a time. "We treated it with kid gloves for a while," Matthew says of the sink's vintage porcelain finish. "But you can't really hurt it, and anyway, it should look old." That's why they like it, after all.

BEFORE The new kitchen's location held a space-hogging fireplace and a breakfast table.

**AFTER Rebuilt using original** beams and floorboards, it's now finished with Shaker-style cabinets and soapstone countertops. Cabinets and countertops: Metropolitan





Custom replacement windows, added during the whole-house redo, evoke period style in a seating spot tied to the cooking area by Caribbean blue. Paint: Benjamin Moore's Tranquil Blue. Windows: Andersen. Area rug: Dash & Albert

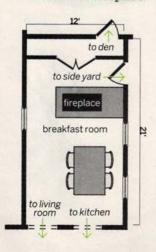




The hardworking island doubles as a breakfast spot for the kids. Sink: New England Demolition & Salvage. Faucet: Elkay. Range: Capital. Tile: Daltile

# before

The 252-square-foot breakfast room was the starting point for the new cook space.



Widened and shortened to hold 340 square feet, the space is now a high-functioning family-size kitchen.

1] Moved one exterior wall out about 2 feet and added a 2-foot bumpout for a box bay to hold a window seat.

2] Rebuilt the openings to the former kitchen and living room as a single, wider passageway to a dining area within open living space.



=====

3] Enclosed the standard-depth fridge for a flush, built-in look.

> 5] Moved the other exterior wall out about 4 feet and put a 6-foot-long sink under the windows.

4] Added an

a microwave,

and seating.

a second oven.

island with

6] Flanked the new range with storage and prep space.



The DIY light fixtures over the island recall fireflies captured in a jar.



The homeowners salvaged old framing to make the island top and finished the floor by piecing together original floorboards from other rooms. The second oven is especially helpful at holiday time.

Oven, refrigerator, and microwave:

KitchenAid



homeowner tip MATTHEW CECIL, SHARON, MASS.
"We turned a pair of mason jars into pendant lights with inexpensive conversion kits from the home center."



The old kitchen, a dilapidated 12-foot-wide galley, was absorbed by open-plan living and dining spaces. New oak ceiling beams were ordered roughcut and stained to match originals in the new kitchen. Chairs: Serena & Lily



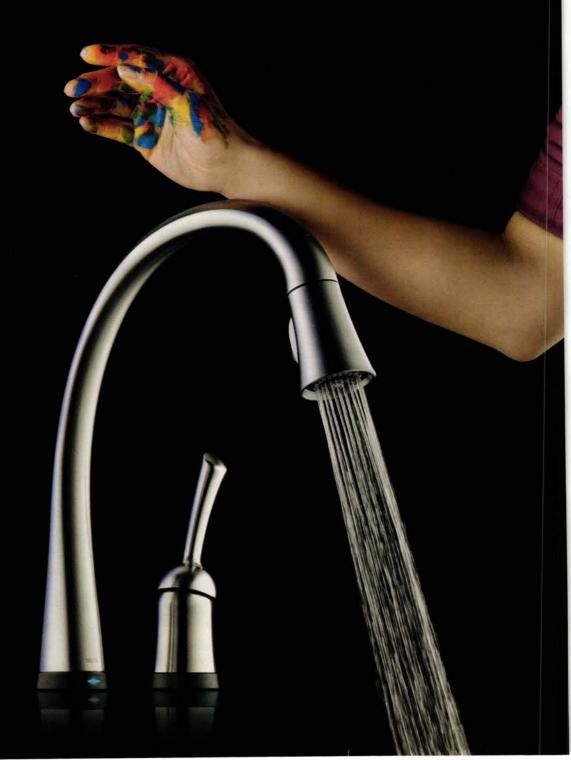
A custom wine rack caps a cabinet run along the route to the dining area.

COLORFUL KITCHENS Find 12 great combos, from aqua and white to red and yellow, at thisoldhouse .com/aug2015

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# Open and accessible

Reworking a cramped master bath using the principles of universal design allows everyone room to move

BY MEGAN BAKER + PHOTOGRAPHS BY DEBORAH WHITLAW LLEWELLYN



**BEFORE** The hulking corner tub and vanity cabinet were among the master bath's obstacles.

BEFORE

AFTER A wide shower that's open at both ends makes for smooth entrances and exits. The two vanities are open underneath.

NO MATTER THE SIZE, a bathroom is useless if it's inaccessible. That's what Lena and Ted Swanson found when they bought their 1980s home, in Walterboro, South Carolina, shortly after Ted was diagnosed with ALS, a degenerative neuromuscular disease. Knowing that they'd need to rethink the space to make it easier for Ted to navigate as the years progressed, the couple sought the help of Charleston designer Sandra Gaylord. With Ted's needs in mind, Gaylord gutted the space—including a massive walk-in closet—to set the stage for an open floor plan that would accommodate a shower chair and attendants. The centerpiece: a spacious, curbless shower with four wall-mount sprays, long grab bars, a rainhead, and an adjustable-height hand shower, plus openings at both ends for easy comings and goings. One of the two new vanities provides clearance for a wheelchair, and a wall of built-ins organizes toiletries and equipment. With its expanse of clerestory windows and crisp white and blue walls, the room feels warm, not sterile. "We spend a lot of time in there, so we love the windows," says Lena. "It's so nice to be able to look out and see the sky."

# • before + after: bath

A ceiling track guides Ted's lift system, which runs from the bath into the bedroom.

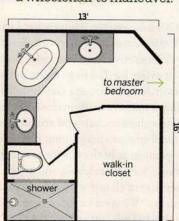


High-tech shower controls store water-temperature preferences for comfort and safety. Shower controls, rainhead, and grab bars: Moen



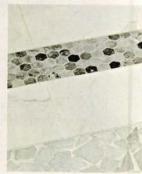
# before

A walk-in closet and a giant corner tub left little room for a wheelchair to maneuver.





Clerestory windows in the shower let in plenty of natural light without sacrificing privacy or requiring cumbersome blinds or curtains. Two large glass panels on the interior shower wall filter light all the way through the room.



Large, rectangular floor tiles are wheel-friendly; smaller border tiles and irregular shapes in the shower have plenty of grout for extra grip.

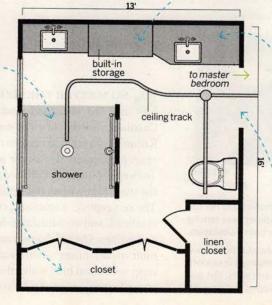
# after

Swapping the large closet for two smaller ones, plus a built-in cabinet, freed floor space to create an easily navigable open layout.

3] Built in cabinets and drawers for most-used equipment.

1] Replaced the old shower with a wide roll-through space that leaves enough room for attendants.

> 2] Added a shallow closet that puts everything within reach without obstructing valuable floor space.



4] Created two vanities, the larger of which has knee-to-toe clearance for wheelchair access, plus large counters to keep essentials close at hand.

5] Widened the entry to 42 inches and kept the door off for maximum accessibility.



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# Tuscan outdoor room

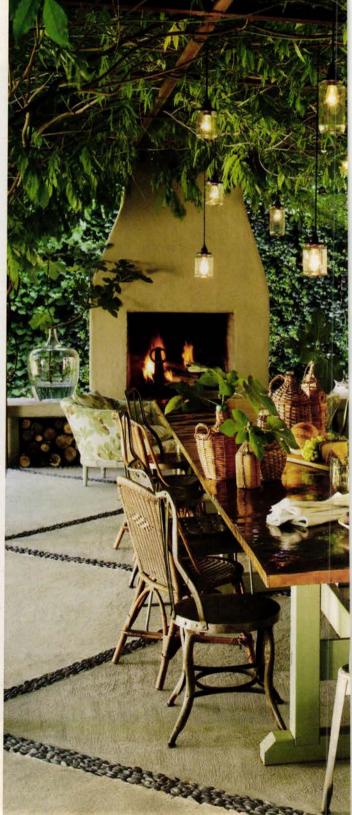
A leaf-covered patio gets a romantic upgrade with vintage furniture, mood lighting, and a party-ready trestle table

BY KATHRYN O'SHEA-EVANS + PHOTOGRAPH BY TRIA GIOVAN

ALFRESCO MEALS, twinkly lights, verdant gardens-Italians know how to do summer nights right. But living la dolce vita can be yours for less than the cost of a ticket to Rome. Take this patio, which designer and fervent DIYer Heather Chadduck, the style director at Southern Living magazine, put together in back of a house in Birmingham, Alabama. Using an overgrown pergola from the movie Under the Tuscan Sun as muse, she added a simple iron structure and let wisteria grow wild. A long copper-topped trestle table edged by a medley of metal and woven chairs begs guests to sit and stay awhile under the glow of lights she fashioned from pickle and okra jars. Wicker-wrapped bottles act as vases and wine decanters; a fireplace supplies needed warmth on cooler evenings.

To bring the idyllic look to your own backyard, read on.





# winejugs

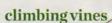
Enterprising oenophiles have long used wicker-wrapped bottles to prevent breakage. We found these on etsy.com for \$14 and \$16, respectively.

# jar lighting

Outdoor cord kits and black paint turn pickle and okra jars into rustic pendant lights. Extra holes and 25-watt Edison bulbs prevent overheating. Cord kit, \$6.95; paperlanternstore.com

# tub chair

The homeowner's mismatched seating adds a lot of charm; it includes 1930s-style armchairs like this one, which look even better after a few storms. \$100 for a pair; target.com



Grapevines grow more quickly than wisteria, but they provide the same shade and bear fruit to boot. Search vinifera at landscapers-companion.com to find the best type for your area.

# leafy prints

DIY

Upholster a chair like the homeowner's in lush-looking outdoor fabric that can take the sun; just bring it indoors if the forecast calls for rain. \$30 per yard; outdoorfabrics.com

# copper-topped table

Chadduck's handy father built the 17-foot trestle table, and a roofer topped it with copper sheeting. To make a

similar version, we used contact cement and copper nails to affix a 30-gauge copper roll to doubled-up plywood. Trestle legs painted the same hue as the homeowner's table (Farrow & Ball's French Gray) form the base. 36-by-40-inch copper roll, \$127, and 1 pound of copper nails, \$24; basiccopper.com.

Trestle legs, \$15 each; ikea.com





# THREE QUESTIONS FOR

# Norm Abram

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You've been with the show for all of its 35 years.

How has residential building changed in that time?

I think it's changed for the better. The development of new, innovative building materials and energy-efficient heating and cooling systems and appliances gives us the opportunity to renovate and build homes that are stronger, smarter, and cleaner to run.

Are there any trends in home-building today that you're particularly excited about? Maybe it's just my age, but I'm very excited about the whole concept of universal design. Having dealt with aging parents, the idea of downsizing our personal life has been on my mind recently. The Essex project we did recently (TOH TV, Season 33) came at just the right time, and it's influencing our decisions in a very positive way.

What's the biggest mistake first-time remodelers make? And how can they avoid it? Thinking only in terms of how they want the project to look in the end. They should first ensure that the house is solid and weather-tight before improving the living spaces to avoid much bigger—and more expensive—problems down the road. It doesn't do any good to have a beautiful kitchen in a house that has structural or mechanical problems.



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# Glass cabinet knobs

Delicate crystalline hardware brings a sense of history and often a welcome dose of color—to drawers and doors

BY MEGAN BAKER + PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK LUND

AS HARDWARE GOES, there's nothing more gemlike than glass knobs. A product of the 19th-century industrial boom, glass knobs were both beautiful and easy to massproduce, making them popular among homeowners and manufacturers alike. Since then, they've graced drawers and doors through a range of architectural eras and decorative-arts styles, from intricate Victorian Eastlake to sleekly geometric Art Deco. Most of the originals were clear, but over time they grew more and more colorful-and these days the jewel-like fixtures come in a rainbow of hues. Here, 18 of our favorite finds.

# in the clear

PIER1
Size: 11/4 inches across
Highlights: Scalloped edges
create a sculptural look.
To buy: Clear Glass Knob,
\$6; pier1.com

# pressed flowers

HOUSE OF ANTIQUE HARDWARE
Size: 13/4 inches across
Highlights: This Empire-style
knob offers plenty of heft for
large built-ins.
To buy: Large Pressed
Glass Dresser Knob With
Flower Design, \$8.79;
houseofantiquehardware.com





HOUSE OF ANTIQUE HARDWARE
Size: 1 inch across
Highlights: Antique-inspired
amber warms up a traditional
ridged shape.
To buy: Small Fluted Glass
Cabinet Knob, \$4.39;
houseofantiquehardware.com

### frosted look

NIFTY NOB
Size: 1½ inches across
Highlights: Delicate details
become clear on this otherwise
opaque knob.
To buy: Grass Green Etched
Knob, \$11; wayfair.com

# deep blue

LEW'S HARDWARE

Size: 11/4 inches across Highlights: The basic button, in a sapphire-like hue, is versatile enough to suit any style of cabinetry.

To buy: Cobalt and Brushed Nickel Knob, \$14; gracioushome.com

# bubbling up LIBERTY HARDWARE

Size: 1.14 inches across **Highlights: Green Depression** glass and a smattering of irregular bubbles give this knob a feeling of history. To buy: Vintage Style Green Bubble Glass Knob, \$4.98: homedepot.com

# pretty petals

DWYER HOME COLLECTION Size: 11/4 inches across Highlights: Pink Depression glass in a fluted shape has a soft, romantic glow. To buy: Daisy Knob in Peach, \$6.25; dwyerhomecollection.com

# flower power

D. LAWLESS HARDWARE Size: 13/8 inches across Highlights: Frosted glass helps give a raised flower-petal pattern extra oomph. To buy: Betsy Fields Glass Knob in Amber, \$5.37; dlawlesshardware.com



# starburst

WORLD MARKET Size: 11/2 inches across Highlights: Yellow-green glass is grounded by bronze-toned metal.

To buy: Green Glass Knob, \$9.98 for two; worldmarket.com

# crystal ball THRESHOLD

Size: 1.17 inches across Highlights: Faceted for a dose of Hollywood Regency-style glamour. To buy: Crystal Faceted Knob, \$23 for four; target.com



# totally hexed

D. LAWLESS HARDWARE Size: 11/4 inches across Highlights: Milky, opaque glass helps this knob's blue-green color pop.

To buy: Antique Milk Blue Glass Knob, \$2.25; dlawlesshardware.com

# mirror, mirror

DWYER HOME COLLECTION
Size: 11/4 inches across
Highlights: Timeworn mercury
glass gets an update in a modern
pyramidal shape.
To buy: Antique Silver Mercury
Square Design, \$8.50;

dwyerhomecollection.com

# summer melon

CENTURY

Size: 1½ inches across
Highlights: A quintessential
Victorian-era profile in a lovely
spring green.
To buy: Taboe Collection Glass

To buy: Tahoe Collection Glass Round Knob, \$13; build.com

# metal head

ATLAS HOMEWARES.
Size: 2 inches across
Highlights: Encased in decorative
pewter armor, this cobalt glass
knob is strikingly un-dainty.
To buy: Tangeres Glass Round
Knob, \$16; homedepot.com



D. LAWLESS HARDWARE
Size: 11/a inches across
Highlights: A simple barrel knob
channels Art Deco style.
To buy: Glass Barrel Knob, \$2.75;
dlawlesshardware.com







splashy WORLD MARKET

Size: 1 inch across
Highlights: A flattened globe
and swirling bubbles
impart a handmade look.
To buy: Aqua Glass Bubble
Knob, \$7.98 for two;
worldmarket.com

squared away

HOUSE OF ANTIQUE HARDWARE Size: 11/s inches across Highlights: A square in rubyred suggests Craftsman style. To buy: Square Glass Cabinet Knob With Nickel Bolt, \$4.59; houseofantiquehardware.com

# geometric look

RESTORATION HARDWARE
Size: 11/4 inches across
Highlights: Its octagonal
shape and the hint of a
violet hue make this one a
vintage classic.
To buy: Traditional Violet
Glass Knob, \$16;
restorationhardware.com



Drilling drawer holes for new knobs? Position them slightly above vertical center—that way, when viewed from standing height, they'll appear perfectly in line.

# The home improvement experts at **House** trust flooring from Lumber Liquidators...

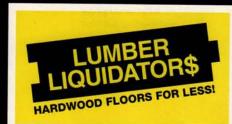


# When it comes to the best in hardwood flooring, nobody beats the flooring experts at Lumber Liquidators.

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Classing up a cottage

A timeworn beach bungalow gets charming and useful upgrades, from a larger second story to a more practical stoop

BY KATHRYN O'SHEA-EVANS + ILLUSTRATION BY DRAWGATE INC.



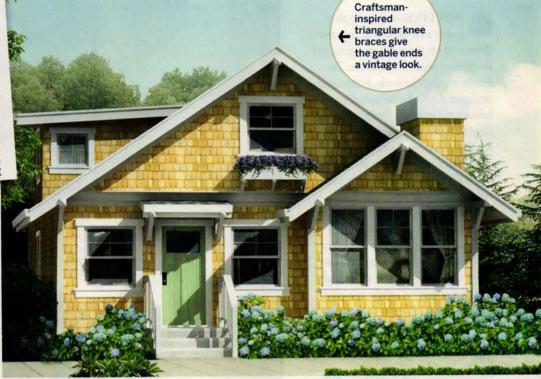
"THIS HOUSE could definitely use a face-lift," says Stephanie Engel of the 1928 cottage she shares with her husband, Cristiano, in Santa Cruz, California. We turned to local architect Eugene H. Sakai for ideas.

"There've been so many weird additions over the years," Sakai says, pointing to the shed dormer and off-center front door. He would add living space to the 1,680-square-foot interior by changing the hip roof to a gable, increasing the usable space on the second story. "It's an expensive thing to do, but it adds value," Sakai says. Centering the entry between two windows and installing four-over-one doublehungs throughout balances the facade. Local zoning laws made the Engels' request for a porch moot, but a shed-style portico roof helps shield the existing landing.

"It looks really cute," says
Engel. "And that upstairs bedroom
could use the extra space!"

### WANT A PHOTOSHOP REDO?

Send snapshots to redo@thisoldhouse.com



# finishing touches

The formerly muddled facade nabs a style boost from these classic finds.



### stain

A soft yellow hue makes the house's new cedar shingles look warm and welcoming and will take on a subtle patina with age. Olympic Elite Stain; \$43 per gallon



# window

An aluminum exterior helps this wood double-hung brave the elements; the four-over-one divided lights have a simple cottage look. Marvin; from \$369



## window box

This sturdy PVC number draws the eye up to the handsome gable and adds some flowery cheer. Hooks and Lattice; from \$176

# entry set

This model is made of solid forged brass with a hammered-bronze finish to suggest a handcrafted texture. House of Antique Hardware: \$460

# Multi-stripe accent wall

Bands in varied widths pull together a lively palette. Running them sideways boosts the oomph by deborah baldwin + photograph by kindra clineff

HOT PINK warms up this space as it travels across the floor and up the wall, stopping off to claim a place at the table. To create a cohesive look, home-decor designer Annie Selke opted for horizontal stripes—"more dramatic than vertical and a great backdrop for the furniture," she says—in shades drawn from the furnishings. For a similar effect, balance zesty colors with soft neutrals; find your design by painting separate sheets of paper with each color and assembling strips in different widths that "keep the eye moving," Selke says. Pin up your design so you can consult it while painting.

Other tips: After measuring and taping off the first set of stripes, paint over the edges of the tape with the base color to prevent gaps and bleeding. Use a roller for the wide stripes, and the next day, create the narrower stripes the same way, this time filling in with a brush. (For a more detailed step-by-step on painting multi-stripes, go to thisoldhouse.com/aug2015.)

The project takes time, but think of it this way: You won't need artwork.

Use delicate-surface tape and a separate roller or brush for each color, as well as separate paint trays or cups.







# STEP-BY-STEP



# 1] Measure and tape.

Once the base coat your lightest color—is dry, use a level and ruler to mark the boundaries of the widest stripes lightly in pencil. Take care to position the tape outside the areas you are about to paint.



Shoji White



Feverish Pink



Tuberose



Rosily

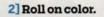


Trusty Tan



Passive

ALL PAINTS BY SHERWIN-WILLIAMS



Paint the wide stripes, leaving some stripes the base color. When the paint is fully dry, tape off the narrow stripes, again taking care to position the tape above and below the areas you want to paint.



# 3] Pull off the tape.

When a set of stripes is almost dry, remove the tape at a 45° angle.
After the final set is done, use a small artist's brush for touchups. ■









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**Curbside** gardening

Turn the struggling ribbon of lawn between the sidewalk and the street into a glorious garden with tough, easy-care plants by Jeanne Huber



CHECKING OUT FRONT GARDENS as she drove around near her home, in Saint Paul, Minnesota, Evelyn Hadden found herself focusing on the no-man's-land between the sidewalk and curb. So often she saw nothing but "ratty little lawns." Couldn't they be colorful, welcoming gardens, especially since they are the first things you see when you look at a house?

Hadden answered her own question by authoring Hellstrip Gardening last year. She found that it's possible to do something pretty spectacular with this space, which goes by plenty of polite terms, including planting strip, boulevard, and street lawn. But Hadden's label cuts to the core of why many gardeners overlook the sliver of grass.

The hellstrip is where dogs urinate, trash collects, heat from paving dries out soil, and people exiting parked cars pay little heed to what's underfoot. Planting there is challenging, Hadden says. "But you can find something that grows a lot better than lawn and is more self-sustaining."

Despite the obstacles, gardeners are planting hellstrips in city neighborhoods from Boston to the Twin Cities, down to suburban Tampa and west to Seattle and San Diego, swapping grass for borders packed with low-maintenance perennials, shrubs, and small trees. Some streetside gardens encourage those passing by to sit and stay awhile, with benches or water bowls for dogs. These gardens have also popped up in early-20th-century A strip once filled with a struggling band of turf is now a colorful flower patch of lavender, salvia, and lowgrowing periwinkle, providing both curb appeal and a lovely walk-through garden for neighbors and passersby to enjoy.

# landscaping | curbside gardening

suburbs and communities where there is renewed interest in walkability. "Done well, it makes people feel good about their neighborhood and gives a street a sense of place," says Nina Bassuk, a professor with Cornell University's Urban Horticulture Institute. Some cities, such as Seattle, offer incentives to convert hellstrips into runofffiltering rain gardens. In San Francisco, discounts kick in when a community shares in a block-long makeover. In Southern California towns that offer rebates for replacing lawns, hellstrips qualify.

Ready to get planting? Hellstrips are usually part of the public right-of-way, so start by checking with your municipality about permits and restrictions. To preserve sight lines, plants typically need to stay under 3 feet tall and often 2 or more feet from driveways. There are also rules for a plant's proximity to signs, fire hydrants, and power lines. Trees generally need to stay below any power lines and to be limbed up about 7 feet so they don't block views. Where hellstrips already include trees, Bassuk recommends keeping plants at least 6 feet from the trunks, to avoid damaging major roots, and to consider using a raised planter that drains well and is filled with a mix of soil, compost, peat moss, and perlite.

The biggest issue, though, is the planting-strip width. The narrower it is, the faster the soil dries out; and restrictions like the 12-inch-wide plantfree "courtesy strip" some cities require alongside parking spots will eat into usable space. But even a 6-inch-wide strip can look good with liriope in the warm and humid Southeast, creeping succulents in arid Southern California, violets in the cool and damp Northwest, or sweet woodruff for shade and 'Autumn Joy' sedum for sun in the Northeast.

Hellstrip plants face some special issues. Where winter snow piles up, they need to withstand salt. The soil is often compacted and limited in depth by the sidewalk's base aggregate, so pick varieties that are unfussy about growing conditions. Plants that survive on rainfall alone are recommended to keep maintenance low, and they should stay naturally compact without extensive pruning. Because these strips can be right above buried utilities, make sure to call 811 before digging.

But even the littlest hellstrip gardens can have a big impact. "They contribute disproportionately to your home's curb appeal," Hadden says. "They also beautify your entire neighborhood and make it more welcoming for people passing by in cars, on bikes, or on foot."

# Bands of color

Check out these hellstrip designs for smart ways to use perennials. dwarf shrubs, and groundcovers



### ▲ Water misers

Once established, this low-maintenance mix of orange threadleaf coreopsis and dwarf 'Blue Chip' butterfly bush needs little water, 'Rubrum' purple fountain grass, a perennial in warmer climates, is prized for its rich color and feathery foliage.



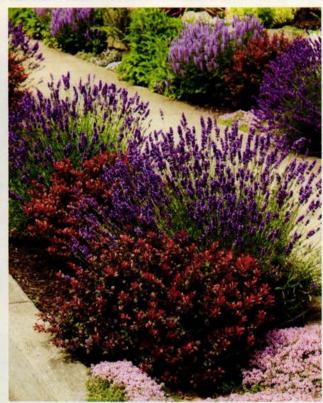
# **Low growers**

Tough red potentilla shares this strip with drought-tolerant 'Purple Heart' wandering Jew and blue-green succulents. Good choices next to busy parking spots, these plants top out at about a foot high, staying clear of swinging car doors.



#### **◆**Exuberant cottage style

This rambling riot of color has a spilling pink 'Sweet William' rose at one end and a dwarf lime-green smokebush at the other, with blue delphinium, blazing star, and pink foxglove in between.



#### **◆Pattern play**

A rhythmic planting of crimson-leafed dwarf Japanese barberry, lavender, and pinkflowering thyme (at bottom) echoes the colors used along the opposite side of the sidewalk, which incorporates purple salvia as well. Such repetition is an easy way to unify the two gardens.

#### BUT THERE'S MORE! Find six additional plants

perfect for a hellstrip at thisoldhouse.com/aug2015

#### Hellstrip stalwarts

Not every plant is resilient enough for a streetside garden. Here are some bulletproof varieties that don't skimp on color

#### 1\_BLUE FESCUE

(Festuca glauca) This evergreen ornamental grass, like 'Blaufuchs' (shown), produces clumps of finely textured light-blue leaves topped in summer with buff-colored seed heads. Grows up to 12 inches tall and 10 inches wide. Drought and salt tolerant, it prefers sun but handles some shade. Zones 4-8

#### 2 YARROW

(Achillea) While this carefree perennial can reach 8 feet high. woolly yarrow (A. tomentosa) has a ground-hugging habit with bright yellow flowers that grow to 10 inches tall. For more height, 'Moonshine' (shown) grows 2 feet high with similar blooms. Yarrows like dry to medium-damp soil; full sun. Zones 3-8

#### 3\_'MOONBEAM' COREOPSIS

(C. verticillata 'Moonbeam') Butter-yellow daisy-like flowers from June through August. Most coreopsis varieties self-seed, but 'Moonbeam' (shown) is sterile, so you won't find plants sprouting on the other edge of your sidewalk. Grows up to 2 feet tall and wide. Zones 3-9

#### 4\_SWEET WOODRUFF

(Galium odoratum) Tiny white flowers on this species (shown) pop up among lush green leaves from April through May. Sweet woodruff spreads by runners, so a planting strip with built-in edging is a perfect location. Good to use under trees-even black walnuts, where few groundcovers grow. Grows up to 12 inches tall and wide. Zones 4-8 €









#### Three-tiered bath stand

A stand-alone piece with a trio of shelves provides a handsome platform for toiletries and such by thomas baker + Photographs by Wendell T. Webber

WHEN YOUR BATHROOM countertop becomes overpopulated with lotions and potions, maybe even a candle or two, here's an attractive way to contain the clutter: a freestanding unit with open shelves. Often called an étagère because of its French origins, it's handy when stationed beside the tub or shower for keeping bath essentials within easy reach.

While many étagères are made of metal and glass, those made of wood can be at home in a bath as well. Two nice things about a wood étagère: the choice of looks-from the warmth of exposed grain to the coolness of a painted finishand the fact that you can buy one or build it yourself.

Either way, be sure to choose materials that will stand up to a wet and humid environment. Avoid legs made with veneers or with engineered composites like MDF, which can absorb water and swell. A stand made with solid wood and rustproof fasteners and covered with a water-resistant finish will provide useful storage in your bathroom for a long time to come.

> Shown: Three-Tier Towel Shelf in solid plantation-grown teak, 133/4"W × 155/8"D × 353/4"H, \$200; signaturehardware.com



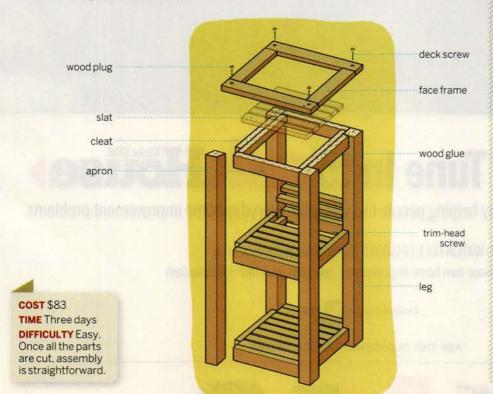
#### MAKE ONE YOURSELF

For the tools and materials you'll need to build the project on the next page, go to thisoldhouse.com/aug2015



Oiled or waxed oak won't sponge up water perfect for a bathroom

- 1] Cut and mark the pieces. Use a miter saw to cut the pieces to length, per the cut list at thisoldhouse.com/aug2015.
- 2] Make the shelf frames. Glue and screw a cleat to each of six apron pieces, flush along one edge, with the apron centered between the ends of the cleat. Glue and clamp the other six aprons to the ends of the cleats to form the frames for all three shelves, and create a notch at each corner to fit against a leg. When the glue dries, glue slats to the cleats on two of the frames, using tile spacers to maintain consistent gaps.
- 3] Attach the legs. Mark the locations for the bottom and middle shelves on the legs. Place two legs on the table, apply glue to the notches on one shelf, stand it up between the legs at its marks, and clamp everything tight. Working from the underside of the shelf, drill a pilot hole through the cleat and into each leg, then drive a trim-head screw into each pilot hole. Glue and screw the next shelf to the legs at its pair of marks. When the glue dries, attach the shelves to the other two legs in the same way.
- 4] Assemble the top shelf. Flip the top shelf frame upside down and attach it flush with the tops of the legs. Next, glue together the pieces to make the face frame, which covers the tops of the legs and surrounds the slats. When the frame is dry, line up its corners with the corners of the legs. Use a combination countersink bit to drill pilot holes and bore recesses for plugs through the frame and into the legs. Glue the frame to the legs and aprons, and drive in deck screws. Now glue the slats to the cleats. Space the slats evenly, but leave no space between them and the frame. Glue wood plugs over the face-frame screws and sand them flush. Finish the piece with oil or wax.



#### BUY IT

Bamboo is easier on the wallet than painted wood or customcrafted reclaimed wood

\$70

#### the basic model

This 28-inch-high étagère, with its bamboo frame and slatted shelves, can be assembled in minutes. macys.com



\$199

#### the mid-range model

Paint protects the poplar frame, MDF shelves, and handy pull-out shelf on this 32-inch-high unit. potterybarn.com



\$300

#### the luxury model

This rustic 36-inchhigh stand, made of reclaimed barn wood, includes an ample bottom drawer. timelessjourney.co







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Revive a beat-up deck



IF YOUR SHABBY OLD DECK has become a source of shame, there's a fix other than replacing all the boards. Assuming they're not rotten or decayed and the structure is sound, deck boards can be salvaged. We used a thick, water-based paint with sand mixed in: It creates a nonslip coating that extends the life of deck boards by filling cracks and forming a protective seal. The catch? Prepping the surface is a bit tedious, and you must follow all the directions to a T-or risk having the paint peel. Do you really need to sand and wash the deck after stripping it? Yes, you do. You also need a clear forecast, as the coating requires 48 hours to dry before taking on rain. That said, the transformation is dramatic. Follow along as This Old House senior technical editor Mark Powers walks you through each and every step. After all, there's still plenty of good deck weather to be had this summer.

Finish: Rust-Oleum Restore 10X Advanced Resurfacer, shown in Winchester, \$25 per gallon; rustoleum.com

SATURDAY Strip, sand, and clean the deck (Steps 1-4). SUNDAY Apply two coats of resurfacer (Steps 5-7).



#### TOOLS

oscillating multitool for surgically removing rotted deck boards

drill/driver 5-in-1 tool wide-head nailset hammer garden hose garden pump sprayer goggles rubber boots rubber gloves stiff-bristled push broom pressure washer sanding pole with 50-grit sandpaper caulk gun putty knife 9-inch paint roller with extension handle 4-inch paint roller paintbrush corded drill/driver

large mixing paddle

#### MATERIALS

3-inch deck screws masking tape plastic drop cloth dust mask

Wolman DeckStrip Get 1 gallon for every 150 square feet.

**Rust-Oleum Restore Deck and Concrete** Cleaner

Rust-Oleum Restore 10X Advanced Resurfacer Get 1 gallon for every 40 square feet.

solid-color stain Get a color to match the resurfacing paint, for vertical surfaces.

paintable caulk paint bucket **Rust-Oleum Restore** 

9-inch roller covers **Rust-Oleum Restore** 4-inch roller covers

1/2-inch nap 4-inch roller covers for applying solidcolor stain

4-inch chip brush to back-brush the finish coat (optional)





## Prep the deck

A] Fix boards. Inspect your deck for rot. Remove any damaged deck boards and cut off the rotted portion-all the way back to the centerline of the nearest joist. Use deck screws to reattach the good end, then cut a piece of like decking to fill the gap, and screw it to the joists. Check the handrails and balusters, and replace any damaged sections. Use the 5-in-1 tool to remove large splinters. Reset raised nailheads with the nailset and hammer, as shown.

B] Protect the surroundings. Tape plastic sheeting over the siding from the deck up to about waist height. Cover or remove anything beneath the deck as well. Use the garden hose to soak plants and shrubs around the deck so that they'll absorb less of the potentially harmful runoff during stripping and cleaning.

# 2 Remove the finish

A] Apply the stripper. Regardless of how desiccated your deck boards may look—and even if they've never been stained—they need to be stripped for this product to stick. Fill the pump sprayer with the recommended stripper and suit up with protective gear, including goggles and rubber boots and gloves. Working in 20-square-foot sections, saturate the deck boards and handrails.

**B]** Work in the stripper. Let the stripper stand for 15 minutes. Then use a push broom or brush with synthetic bristles to work the stripper into the coated areas. Watch your footing—it's slippery in rubber boots.

**C] Rinse it off.** Install a 40° fan tip on the pressure washer, and set it to spray between 1,500 and 2,500 psi for pressure-treated wood. Wearing your protective gear, work from an inside corner outward, using long, controlled strokes to push the stripper off the ends of the boards. Keep the tip about 6 inches from the wood's surface, and repeat several times until the runoff changes from foamy to clear.











# 3 Sand the surface

A] Sand the deck. Once the wood has dried, don a dust mask and use the sanding pole and 50-grit paper to roughly scuff the entire surface of the deck, including the handrail and balusters. Always sand with the grain. Sweep off any dust.

**B] Test the surface.** To check for any residual sealants, pour a capful or two of water on different surface areas—high traffic and low traffic, shady and sunny, exposed and covered, new and old. The water should soak into the wood quickly, in less than a minute. If it beads up, you'll need to strip and sand those areas again, then redo the water test.





## 4 Clean the deck

A] Wash the deck. This may seem like overkill, but it's important to remove any remaining stripper, dust, and oils from the surface that could interfere with adhesion. Fill the pump sprayer with deck-cleaning detergent and the appropriate ratio of water, according to the directions. Spray the mixture on the deck and let it sit for 5 to 10 minutes. Then work it in with the push broom, as shown.

**B] Rinse the deck.** Use the pressure washer with its 40° tip to rinse the deck with plain water. Now let the deck dry overnight.

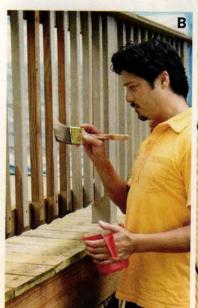
# 5 Prep for paint

A] Fill cracks. Once the wood is dry, fill any gouges, holes, and cracks deeper or wider than ¼ inch with a paintable acrylic caulk. Use a putty knife to scrape off the excess, then allow the caulk to set until it skins over, probably 30 minutes.

**B] Coat the balusters.** Use a small roller or a brush to coat all the vertical surfaces with the solid-color stain. If your deck requires more than one gallon, it's a good idea to combine equal parts from multiple cans to ensure the color is evenly mixed. Once the stain dries, look for any missed gaps or cracks, fill them with caulk, and restain them when the caulk is dry.

**C] Cut in.** Before coating the deck, use the paintbrush to work the stain into the gaps between deck boards, which will be hard to reach with the thick resurfacing paint.

SEE HOW IT'S DONE
To watch an instructional video of this project, go to thisoldhouse.com/aug2015







# 6 Paint the field

A] Fill in the field. Use the corded drill/driver and a stout mixing paddle to thoroughly mix the resurfacing paint, blending batches if you have more than one. Working from a back corner, use a heavily saturated Restore roller cover and slight pressure to push a bead of the paint ahead of the roller into the surface cracks—in one direction only. Note: Using a thick-napped roller will not work. Do not roll back and forth, as it will peel up the coating.

**B] Break the film.** The coating is so thick that it will span the gap between boards on most decks. Run the 5-in-1 tool along the gap to break the film, letting the excess drip down along the edges. Allow the first coat to dry for 4 to 6 hours. When the surface is no longer tacky, start the second coat.

**C] Cover problem areas.** For cupped boards, use a small roller and go across the width of the board to apply the coating.









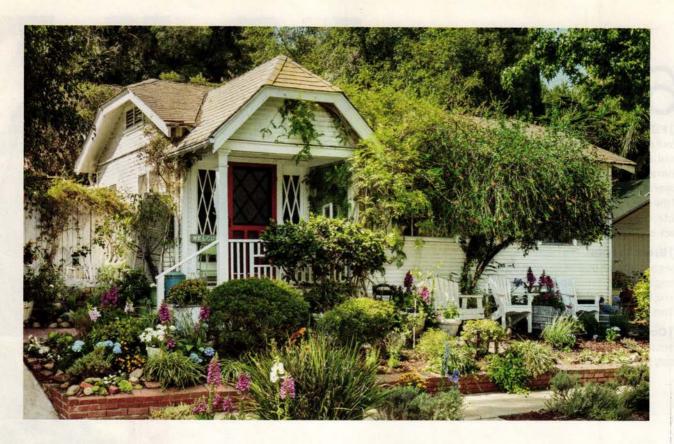


TIP Using a 4-inch roller on the second pass does a nice job of filling any remaining cracks because it fits perfectly between the edges of the boards.

# Apply the finish coat

A] Fill any cracks. Apply the finish coat in the same manner, covering all the flat surfaces. Take care to fill any visible fissures and cracks in boards.

B] Smooth the finish. Optional: If you want a less textured finish on the handrails, use the chip brush to back-brush the second coat while it's still wet. Now comes the hardest part: Allow the finish coat to dry for at least 24 hours before walking on it, and four days before placing any furniture. Oh, and don't let it rain for 48 hours after you finish.



# Carefree Cottage

A DESIGNER WITH AN
EYE FOR A FIND GIVES HER
HUMBLE **1920**s **HOUSE**A CLEAN AND PRETTY LOOK

BY Deborah Baldwin PHOTOGRAPHS BY Mark Lohman STYLING BY Andrea Caughey





ABOVE: The cottage came with a 1940s enameled O'Keefe & Merritt stove. Lizzie added the painted hutch and custom cabinets, just 16 inches deep to maximize floor space. An open shelf replaces upper cabinets, which would have "suffocated" the 6-footwide room, she says.

RIGHT: Original windows in the kitchen overlook the new back porch. Grocery lists go on the blackboard; Lizzie started collecting old signs years ago because they were cheaper than artwork. Wall and floor tile: Royal Stone and Tile. Accent pillow: Dash & Albert

Rattling around in a 14,000-square-foot Tuscan McMansion may sound swell, but imagine trying to feather a nest that size—the rugs you'd need, the bill for accent pillows! "I've been hired by people who like all kinds of styles, and I try to design for them," says Lizzie McGraw, who helped decorate said mansion on behalf of Hollywood denizens Brooke Burke and David Charvet. "But I have my own thing going on, which is much more pared down and more casual."

It's not every interior designer whose own home could fit in one of her clients' wine cellars. But Lizzie, who also runs a cottage-decor shop in Venice, California, is comfortable toggling between homespun and luxe. "I'm lucky. They're nice to work with," she says of clients like actor Josh Brolin and jewelry designer Sara Weinstock, "and that's always helpful."

Possibly the well-heeled residents of Malibu find it refreshing to step into a store with the sweet name of Tumbleweed & Dandelion and the down-to-earth appeal of a farm stand. Faded signs, thrift-store-style dressers, and "driftwood" tables mingle





#### floor plan

Before the redo, the 716-square-foot one-story cottage was midway through a renovation but still had a rundown kitchen and bath and faulty wiring and plumbing. Along with interior walls, the homeowners built a new kitchen and bath and added about 148 square feet to enlarge the bedroom and put in a screened back porch that doubles as a dining room.

scale 5'



#### SHOP THIS STYLE

To find furnishings similar to those used in this house, go to wayfair.com/thisoldhouse

with other emblems of secondhand chic. "I like to think I was an unwitting pioneer," Lizzie says of a now ubiquitous look she calls urban farmhouse. "But for me it was completely practical—I couldn't afford to buy all new things, so I recycled and reclaimed before it was fashionable and everyone else was doing it."

Just cast an eye around the 1925 cottage she shares with her private-chef boyfriend, Jonathan Fineman, and their menagerie of dogs and chickens. Located in low-key Inglewood, California—at the time the house was built, the world's chinchilla-

farming capital—it provides an ideal backdrop for Lizzie's rotating collection of vintage-inspired chairs, tables, and squishy pillows.

When they bought it, the elfin house was barely big enough for two. You couldn't say it had good bones—the previous owner had begun, then suspended, a whole-cottage redo, leaving walls demolished but not replaced. You couldn't even say it had hidden charm. The wiring appeared to be authentic Edison-era and the plumbing wasn't much younger. What the home had was outdoor space, with shade trees and enough room for a garden—and

ABOVE LEFT: Lizzie enjoys a rare moment of down time. Working with her dad, an architect, she carved out space for the kitchen and finished it with flea-market cookware, salvaged brackets, and white Carrara countertops. Ceiling light fixture: City Farmhouse. Hinges and pulls: Restoration Hardware. Area rug: Dash & Albert



ABOVE: Lizzie likes to rotate furnishings between her cottage and the home-decor store she runs nearby. She made the ottoman out of an old wood box and fabric patterned after vintage grain sacks. The festival sign, layered on blistered shutters. came from a store near Nashville, a favorite stop-off during crosscountry buying jaunts.

**RIGHT: Gauzy curtains** hang high, making the living room's French doors a focal point. Sign: City Farmhouse. Sofa, chair, and ottoman: Tumbleweed & Dandelion

garden parties. It was also near Lizzie's store, itself a cottage, where she and Jonathan, plus two dogs and two cats, had been living in a "hut" attached to the garage while trying to find a real home they could afford.

"So one day I was driving through this neighborhood and saw the house," Lizzie recalls. "A lady was putting a sign in the yard, and I pulled over."

The sale almost didn't go through—at the 11th hour the owner, worried that she wasn't asking enough, threatened to renege. But the couple prevailed and were soon standing in the remains of a half-done redo, puzzling out their next step.

Enter Lizzie's dad, William, at the time an established architect living in a historic octagonal house, in Fredonia, New York. Already mystified by his daughter's decision to hang out a shingle-with no business plan—on Venice's then dicey Abbot Kinney Boulevard, he rolled his eyes at her latest folly. Then he got to work, drawing up plans for a fluid layout and what Lizzie calls an East Coast-style back porch.





She thought about but ruled against adding a second story—right now, there's just an empty attic, accessible only by ladder—and she also forwent new windows, deciding instead to scrape down the originals, which she prizes for their authenticity.

Jonathan proved to be an amiable silent partner, bowing, for example, to Lizzie's request to restore the 1940s stove that came with the place. ("He wanted a Wolf," she confesses.) He even agreed to hang his extra pots and pans in the rafters of the garage—near the fridge. Seems Lizzie needed the fridge's assigned parking space in the kitchen for a beloved hutch. "It's very rustic and very humble," she says of the arrangement.

"I've never owned a dishwasher, and when my brother came to see me, he's like, 'Where's the refrigerator?' It's right in the garage, two steps from the porch! It was just tight in my kitchen."

Working with general contractor Sam Bienduga, the couple replaced pipes, wiring, and fixtures; erected interior walls; and built a new kitchen and Beadboard wainscoting, framed artwork found at a Paris flea market, and nubby textiles add to the layered look of the bath. Paint: Behr's Ultra Pure White (beadboard and trim). Toilet: American Standard



#### 5 steps to cottage style

INTERIOR DESIGNER LIZZIE McGRAW'S ACQUIRED WISDOM, DISTILLED:

- ⇒ Layer with white. Two or three shades throughout can create a finished look and a sense of spaciousness while providing a cohesive backdrop for eclectic furnishings, as seen in the kitchen and porch areas, above.
- ➤ Add space overhead. Lizzie raised the ceiling about 18 inches by exposing the joists above two morsel-size rooms to draw the eye up and create a larger and loftier feel.
- ⇒ Salvage the charm. After replacing past-its-prime infrastructure, like shaky pipes, Lizzie paid to restore the original enameled stove and used paint to preserve the original floorboards. "They're maple," she says of the floors, "but they looked dated. Painting them white gave them a fresh look."
- ➤ Unify with accessories. Throw pillows, area rugs, and kitchenware can inject accent colors in small doses and can be easily swapped out for a new scheme.
- ⇒ Edit your finds. "I believe in everyday clutter," Lizzie says, "but at the same time you need to know where things are. A happy home is easy." Clients with too many things occasionally need a nudge, she says, but that's what she's there for. "It's like a friend helping you choose the right outfit."





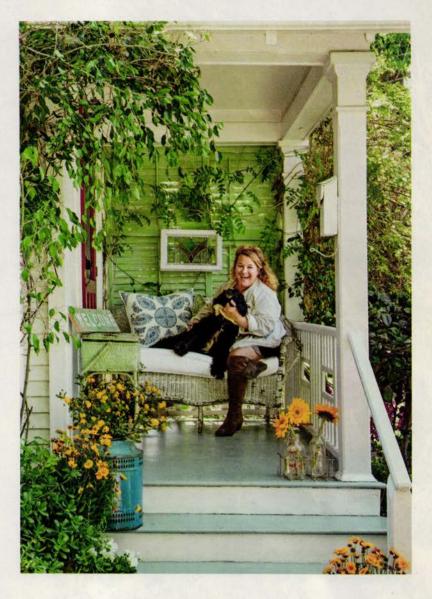
bath. A small forced-air system supplies heat; with all those shade trees and the occasional breeze, the couple doesn't really crave air-conditioning.

The crew at the store's workshop in downtown L.A. made the cabinets and some of the furniture. Lizzie regularly swaps in and out pieces she has gathered while traveling on a tour bus with her brother, country singer Sean Patrick McGraw, whose label she helps manage. She thinks nothing of asking the driver to brake for bargains; Antique City in Walnut, Iowa, is a regular hunting ground.

Same thing goes during cross-country treks with her chief enabler, Jonathan, who helpfully pulls over and loads up the truck knowing that some items will never make it to the store, or at least not right away.

"Johnnie wants you to know I change the house all the time, and he can't find anything," Lizzie joked via cell phone one day while the two were barreling around in her 1997 Jeep.

Lizzie kept the conversation going even after debarking at a leather factory, where she fielded questions while negotiating a price on behalf of a well-heeled client. "An expensive proposition,"



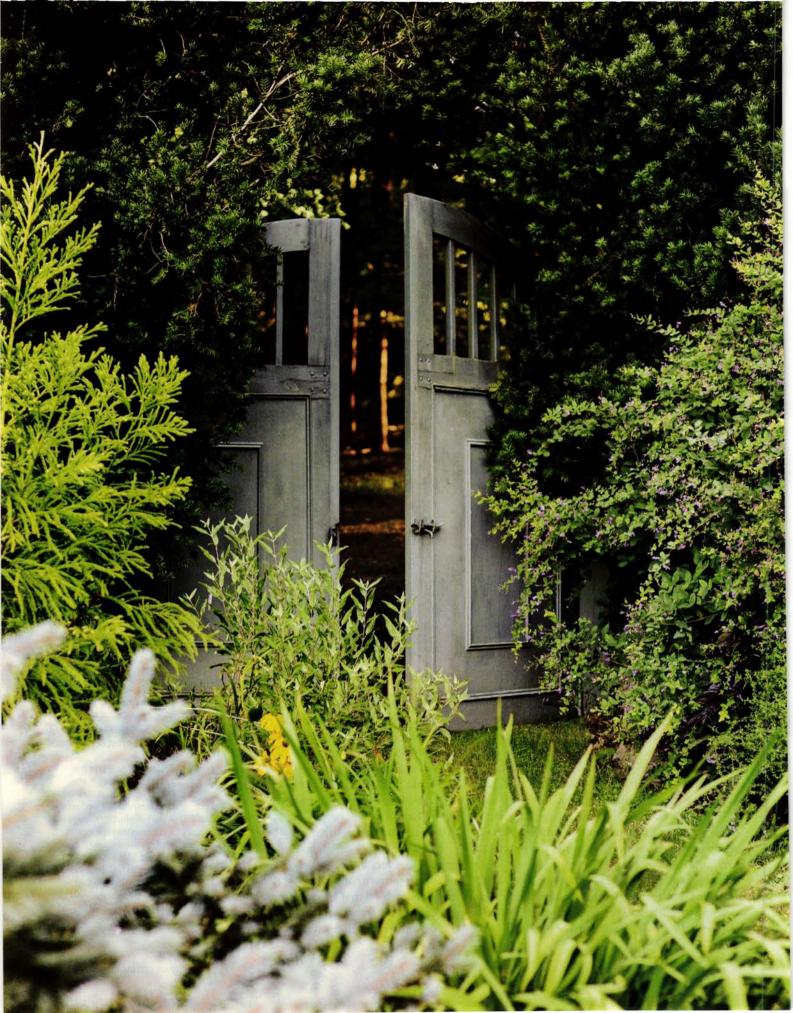
she said of the client's keen desire for well-tanned hides for upholstery. "I personally prefer faux."

In fact, her home and place of business are advertisements for natural materials like linen, cotton, and salvaged wood—their own kind of status symbol thanks to tastemakers like her. Her store, housed in a rare cottage left standing amid glossy new boutiques, has even spawned a brand carried by other stores eager to market urban-farmhouse chic.

Lizzie credits her dad, who died in 2008, for her start. "I was very lucky, my design aesthetic and my abilities came from him," she says, adding, "I learned from him early on that knowledge is nothing unless you can put it to practical use"—turning a crinkled cottage into a tasteful showcase included.

ABOVE LEFT: Lavish use of white adds airiness to the cozy den. Red accents help tie it to the rest of the house.

ABOVE: Lizzie and her springer spaniel, Katie, find curling-up space on the diminutive front porch. A wall of shutters, painted a custom vintage green and dressed up with a stained-glass "window," suggests an outdoor room, finished with milk-bottle vases and a cushioned wicker settee.









# GARDEN STANIENTS

Here's how landscape designer Wesley Rouse creates showstopping moments in his home garden using a variety of decorative accents

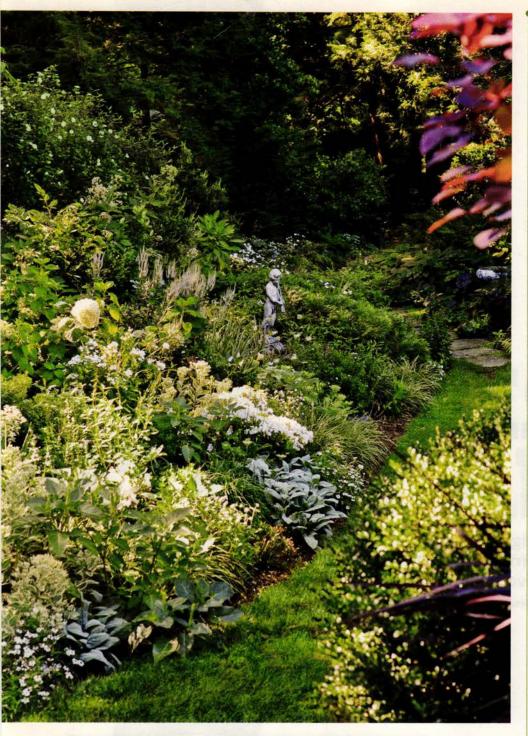
By Kate Karam • Photographs by Matthew Benson • Produced by Tovah Martin





#### a gate can create mystery

The sprawling Connecticut garden of landscape designer Wesley Rouse is a series of rooms with walls, hallways, and sometimes even a magical roof of vines. He keeps each room distinct from the next by using structures like this gate to separate them; its only purpose is to literally stop you for a moment as you transition from the bright, landscaped areas of his garden into the dimly lit, mossy woods beyond. Bring this idea into your own garden, no matter its size, by closing off a section behind a screen, a lattice wall, or even a pair of tall curtains hung from a tree.



#### silver and gray ground a white border

Garden designers often layer plants with silvery leaves into white-flowering beds for much-needed contrast; Rouse goes one better, adding a small iron statue in a metallic blue-gray to this white and silver border. Here, spires of white Culver's root (*Veronicastrum virginicum*), 'Snowhill' hydrangea, and white shrub roses stand out against a gleaming foil of silver-toned variegated grass (*Carex*), sedum, and lamb's ear.

#### sculptural pieces surprise and delight

Rouse loves nestling iron, stone, and concrete ornaments into beds or tucking them under trees. Happening upon a statue, a fountain, or another decorative element as you stroll brings enchantment to the garden.

#### 1. find the right scale

Most people choose garden ornaments that are too small for their site. Rouse suggests cutting a piece of cardboard to the height and width of a piece and placing it in different locations until you find the perfect spot. He chose this foot-tall iron statue for its bronze tones, which blend into a shady garden bed filled with dwarf azalea, hosta, and hepatica.

#### 2. add falling water

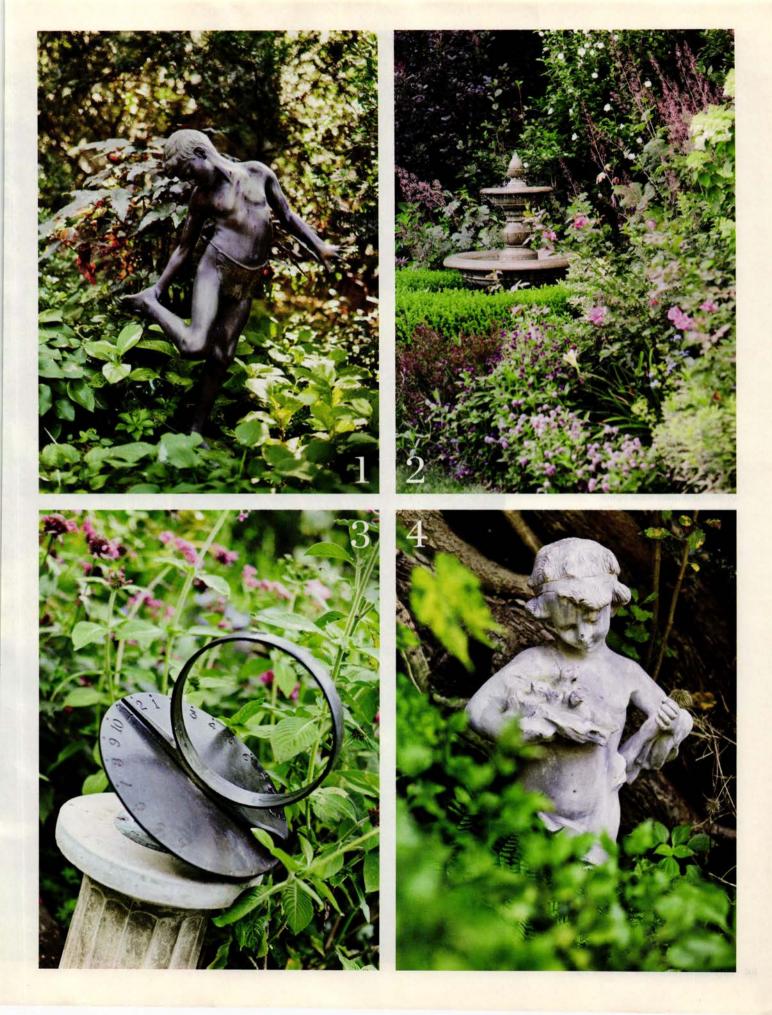
Fountains look best with negative space around them to spotlight their shape. Rouse sites his in long borders to provide a three-dimensional focal point and add height and mass—and for the sound, which draws visitors like bees to honey. This tiered cast-stone fountain's pointed finial plays up the flowering panicles of the 'Tardiva' hydrangea in the background, and its reddish hue echoes the plume poppy behind it.

#### 3. consider a classic

If you don't love statues and fountains but you want to bring art into your garden, try a sundial. Simple in form and with a storied history, sundials work in urban, rustic, and contemporary gardens. This metal one has a modern design, but set on a fluted concrete pedestal, it isn't such a departure from the garden's more traditional decorative elements.

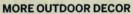
#### 4. create contrast

Statues can be especially striking when they contrast with their surroundings, as the smooth surface and delicate look of this concrete maiden does with the rough woody texture of nearby tree trunks.



# fence panels and posts can frame a view

Open lattice panels flank a vista of the formal garden and trees in the distance. Their airy structure and deep blue hue create enclosure without obscuring the view. Low boxwood hedges also lead to the entry, their curving shapes offering a soft counterpoint to the geometry of the wood panels. In another bit of sleight of hand, Rouse distinguished this space by raising the grade by about a foot, clearly signaling the transition from one area in the garden to another. Fronting the lattice are a pair of pots planted with a dramatic combination of sword-leafed 'Pink Spike' phormium, shimmering 'Silver Falls' dichondra, and frothy 'Morning Light' maiden grass in subtle colors.



Find additional ideas for decorating your garden, whether it's big or small, at thisoldhouse.com/aug2015







#### potted gardens focus the eye

Rouse uses planted containers throughout his garden to introduce a new mood, define entrances, and highlight architectural accents. Follow his lead and keep the palette simple—but be fearless with form.

#### 1. make an entrance

The front door is an ideal place to showcase a spectacular container, such as this one with a swan-figure pedestal. Rouse chose this pot and the tall plantings to balance the height of the door and fill the space between it and the nearby window. Cascading 'Silver Falls' dichondra and Calitunia (a cross between a petunia and a calibrachoa) highlight the rich colors of compact 'Autumn Glow' hebe and burgundy oxalis.

#### 2. punctuate a pathway

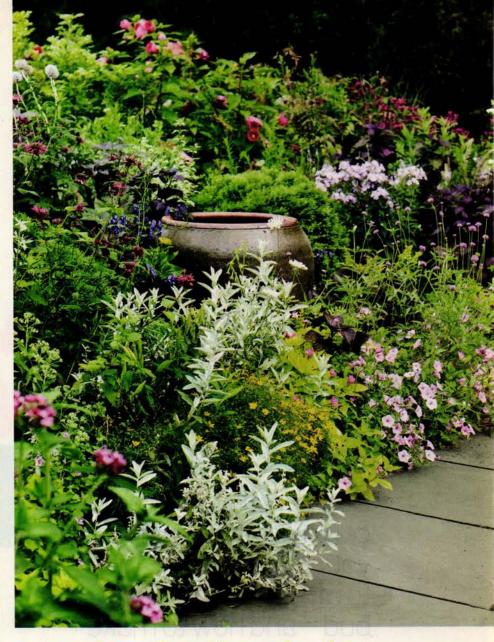
"Bigger is better" is Rouse's advice when selecting a pot—not just for creating pleasing scale but also to give plants plenty of room to stretch their roots and grow. As a general rule, the pot should be about one-third to one-half the height of the planting at maturity. Here, Rouse combines dramatically spiky New Zealand flax with fuchsia, coleus, and sweet alyssum.

#### 3. raise it up

Elevating a container and placing it where visitors might brush past brings its vibrant mix of colors and shapes into focus. Here, a rustic stacked-stone wall provides a perfect shelf for a rectangular planter overflowing with Calitunia, coleus, and angelonia.

#### 4. round out a corner

Rouse muted the hard vertical line of this deck-mounted lamppost and "erased" the dark corner by placing a container in front of it. Annual pink 'Alice du Pont' mandevilla scrambles up the post; 'Morning Mist' coleus adds volume, and pink dipladenia and 'Snow Princess' alyssum cascade over the pot edges.



#### a shapely urn breaks up a border

Spectacular garden borders can be almost overwhelming, with so much going on that you can't take it all in. At the other end of the spectrum, a border might be lots of bare earth with a few new plants in need of time to fill in. In both instances, a wedged-in container works magic. It can interrupt the eye as it scans the mass to say, "Stop, look at me" or serve as a sculptural focal point that distracts from sadder spots. When adding a container to a border, place a paving stone or a few inches of crushed gravel on top of soil that's been tamped down, to ensure proper drainage and help prevent the pot from sinking. Here, Rouse snuggled an urn, glazed in earthy colors that complement the nearby plants, into a dazzling border of mixed pink and purple perennials.

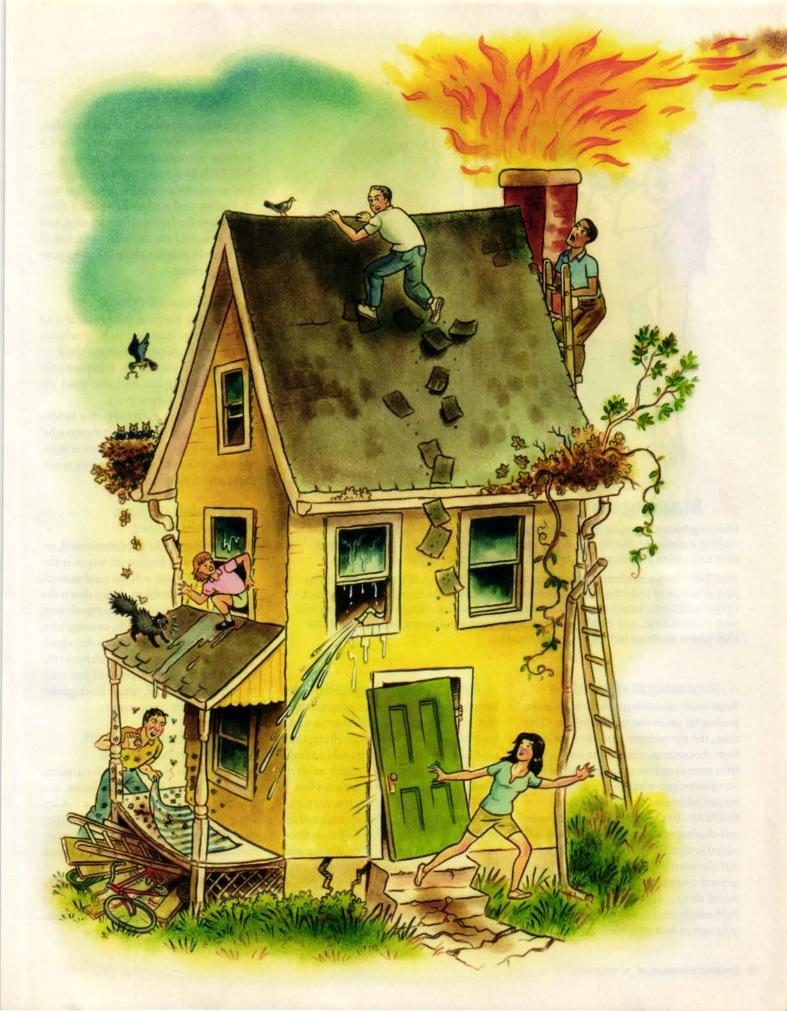
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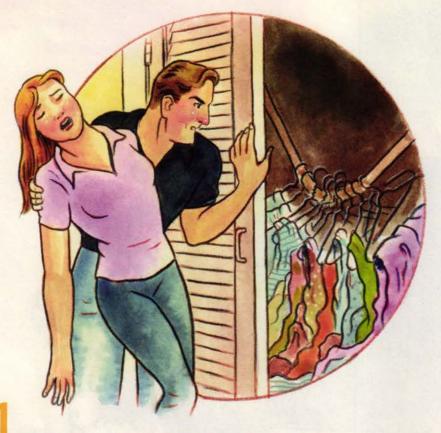
Bad homeowner habits could be undermining your house. Here's how to **nip serial "oopses"** in the bud—and how to make them right



YOUR HOME MEANS THE WORLD TO YOU—of course you intend to do right by it, from the front door to the wood floors to the walls, the roof, the porch, and yes, the septic system. But sometimes you may (unwittingly) get it wrong, and then compound any potential damage you inflict by repeating your mistake again...and again. Luckily, we're here to help. Coming up: our list of common ways even the most well-intentioned homeowners habitually hurt their houses, with advice on how to do better from here on.

by Sal Vaglica illustrations by Ross MacDonald





Maxing out closet rods

Hanging too many duds on that pole can not only cause it to bend or breakrisking a pileup on the floor-it may also strain mounting hardware installed with undersize anchors, making Swiss cheese of your drywall.

INSTEAD: Only use steel rods and metal supports. The pole's length should be just 1/4 inch less than the span between the rod supports for maximum contact. Install additional brackets every 48 inches to stabilize a long rod. Screwing into wall studs is best, but if that's not possible, secure hardware to a length of 1×4 that spans studs on both sides of the closet.

#### 2 | Slamming the front door

Repeatedly slamming a hefty entry door pushes its jamb out of alignment. Over time, the momentum can force the door from the opening, causing the seam where trim meets jamb to separate and leaving an exterior gap where moisture and cold air can infiltrate.

**INSTEAD:** Replace existing hinges with self-closing versions. "These can be adjusted so that the door closes softly without slamming," says This Old House general contractor Tom Silva. On heavy wood doors, replace all three hinges; lightweight steel doors may need to have only one or two upgraded.

#### 3 Letting outdoor rugs lie

Inviting as they might be for summer's bare feet, outdoor rugs with rubber or vinvl backings shouldn't be left in place; they tend to trap water and invite mold and mildew, leading to spongy porch or deck planks, not to mention creepy-crawlies.

INSTEAD: Choose an open-weave rug that allows rainwater to evaporate and air to circulate. To clean your alfresco floor covering, rinse gently with a hose and hang over a railing until fully dry.

#### 4 Neglecting gutters

When water flowing off the roof can't move through gutter troughs thanks to

fallen leaves, pine needles, and branches, it dumps along the foundation, where it can seep into tiny cracks and crevices.

INSTEAD: Make sure to clean gutters before spring rains, checking to see that winter's snow and ice haven't pulled them away from the fascia. After cleaning, and while you still have the ladder out, install mesh gutter guards to help speed up your next degunking.

#### 5 Walking on the roof

It's true that keeping gutters clear and spotting roof damage early precludes pricey repairs, but stepping onto the shingles is risky for any DIYer. It can not only damage roofing but will also void the manufacturer's warranty.

INSTEAD: Clean gutters from a ladder with a stabilizer bar to protect the troughs' thin-gauge metal. Check for worn or missing shingles using binoculars while standing safely on the ground.

#### 6 | Flushing all those "flushable" wipes

The rise in popularity of premoistened, socalled flushable bathroom wipes is the root cause of many a home (and municipal) plumbing problem. Once down the drain, the nonwoven fabric congeals with grease and other materials, causing icky, stubborn clogs that aren't easily dislodged. INSTEAD: Place a covered trash bin in the bathroom for safer disposal or just stick to good ol' paper TP, which biodegrades like lightning by comparison.

#### 7 | Storing too much stuff under a porch or a deck

Making use of the space under a wood deck or a porch floor makes sense, but packing in outdoor furniture, a ladder, the grill, and more during the off-season can hinder air circulation, trapping moisture and building up enough heat to warp the boards.

INSTEAD: Leave at least 12 inches of open space beneath the joists to allow air to move in and out. And never put termite food-er, firewood-under there.

#### homewreckers

#### 8 Building fires too big

A hearth fire shouldn't look like a blazing bonfire; the more it roars, the more likely it is to do damage. "Burning wrapping paper or pizza boxes can cause a fire to jump from 300°F to 1,700°F," says chimney expert Mark Schaub. Those high temps can buckle a metal lining or crack one made of terra-cotta.

**INSTEAD:** Keep fires paper-free and small enough to see the flame tips. Schaub likes to start fires with a log across the back of the grate, another in front, and a fire-starter brick in the middle. Light the brick, and as soon as it catches, rest a third piece of

wood diagonally across the first two. If you've had fireplace or chimney work done during the warmer months, you need to take particular care. Use one log at a time for the first four burns, to allow the new masonry to cure.

#### 10 Storing stuff in an over-the-showerhead caddy

Your morning refuge may need more perching places for shampoo and bodywash bottles, but a showerhead storage unit loaded with containers will stress the threaded connection behind the tiled wall, potentially causing leaks.

INSTEAD: Store jumbo bottles on the shower floor or tub surround. For lighter stuff, try shelves that attach with suction cups. Got a whole family's worth of bottles and soaps? Stick them on an over-the-shower-door caddy, which can hold about 10 pounds.

#### 11 Tossing bleach tablets in the toilet tank

Those handy blue toilet-tank blocks will keep the water fresh and the bowl clean —and cause premature brittleness or breakage to the flapper valve and other rubber and plastic parts.

**INSTEAD:** Go old-school with a toilet brush and an occasional dose of cleaner, or use a flush-by-flush product that puts the cleaner in the bowl, not the tank.

#### 12 | Straining circuits

With a "click, click" you might get the toaster browning bagels again, but repeatedly resetting tripping breakers is bad practice. Too many clicks can cause the safety mechanism to wear out, increasing the risk of an electrical fire.

INSTEAD: Unburden the breaker by running fewer items on the circuit. "Dehumidifiers, countertop convection ovens and microwaves, and air conditioners are often overload culprits," says master electrician Scott Caron. He suggests having an electrician replace a breaker that's tripped five times, and, for a long-term fix, upgrading the entire circuit to handle a higher load.

#### 13 | Scrubbing grout with vinegar

If you, your jug of Heinz, and that old toothbrush are rendezvousing regularly with the bathroom grout, look out. Traditional white grout is a sand-and-cement mix; that cement is an alkaline compound and the acid in vinegar turns it yellow and crumbly.

INSTEAD: Choose a traditional alkaline hard-surface cleaner, like Spic and Span, or an oxygen-bleach-based one. Always rinse well; and to really lift dirt up and out, try a few passes of your utility vac to dry it.



Extension cords everywhere

Extension cords are *temporary* helpers, not the cure for your old-house lack-ofoutlet blues. Placed on the Consumer Product Safety Commission's Substantial Hazard List in 2015, some cords—especially the no-label, dollar-store variety prompt constant recalls that cite electrocution and fire risk.

INSTEAD: Throw away old extension cords and any with loose plugs, split casings, or cheap-looking construction. Don't run cords under rugs or around furniture, as they can overheat or crack, sparking danger. Use the right cord for the job: a 16-gauge cord to power small household appliances, such as a fan, that draw up to 13 amps; a 14-gauge cord for large power tools, like a table saw, that use up to 15 amps; a 12-gauge cord for items that need 20 amps, such as a compressor. And consider upgrading to grounded receptacles where you need them most.

#### homewreckers

#### 14 Closing vents

Shutting the louvers on grills to force conditioned air to go where you want it might help control the temp in a room, but it causes a pressure imbalance in the ducts that can make the furnace work harder or the cooling coil freeze over.

INSTEAD: Have an HVAC contractor install branch dampers in the main runs of your ductwork. Use them seasonally to force cooler air to the second floor in summer and warmer air to the ground floor in winter.

#### 15 | Mislubing locks

A quick spritz with an all-purpose spray will improve the movement of most stubborn locks, but it won't provide long-term lubrication, which is why your rough-turningkey problem always seems to return.

INSTEAD: Your handy can of multi-lube is a quick answer for cleaning, de-rusting, and chasing condensation from inside the lock, but it's only the first step. After loosening a crotchety cylinder, latch, or dead bolt, use a silicone spray or a squeeze of graphite powder for lasting lubrication. Never apply household oil, which attracts dirt and can lead to an even greater gunk issue.

#### 16 Not grounding a "cheater" plug

Those orange or gray three-prong/twoprong adapters are handy when only two-slot outlets are available, but using them lazily by bending or breaking off the grounding tab results in an ungrounded connection and raises the danger of shocks or fire.

INSTEAD: Make sure that your twoprong outlet is a grounded one. A three/ two adapter's wire or metal tab should be connected to the screw in the outlet's cover plate to ground the plug. Longterm, consider installing three-prong outlets housewide, if wiring allows.

#### 17 Using drywall screws for everything

You risk having upper cabinets, open

shelving, or even heavy mirrors come crashing down if they are hung with fasteners that are too brittle. Hardened-steel drywall screws break under heavy loads where other screws flex.

INSTEAD: Keep a variety of wood, cabinet, and deck screws on hand so that you're always prepared with the right fastener for the job. Wall cabinets will have ample holding power if you drive two 21/2-inch (you guessed it) cabinet screws, with washers, through cabinet backs and into wall studs-never, ever into drywall alone.

#### 18 | Hanging dry cleaning on a doorknob

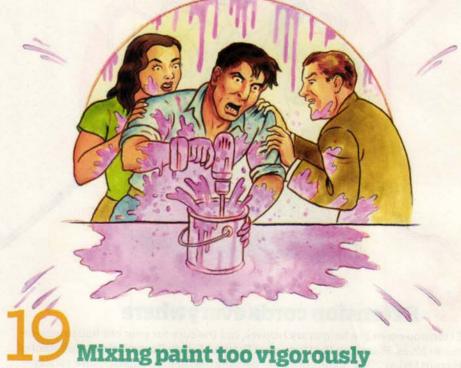
Four pairs of pants and eight shirts might weigh 81/2 pounds. Hooking that load of dry cleaning on a door handle every week can strain the knob and even the hinges, pulling the door out of alignment.

INSTEAD: Walk directly to closet upon entering. Open door and hang dry cleaning on properly mounted closet rod (see No. 1). Repeat. Every week.

#### 20 Overdoing drain cleaner

Serial doses of clog-dissolving liquids or crystals containing sulfuric or hydrochloric acid or lye-even those that say "septic safe"—can wipe out the essential bacteria that break down waste in a healthy septic system.

INSTEAD: As a first line of attack against a clogged drain, flush with boiling water. For stubborn clogs, a routine mechanical cleaning with a closet auger snake is less damaging than those drain-clearing



Taking a can of paint back to the store for a spin on the shaker is fine. Stirring paint with a drill attachment, or even extensively by hand? Not recommended. "You'll create air bubbles that stay in the paint and leave thin spots in the finish," says John Calderaio of the Paint Quality Institute. "Overmixing also creates grit," he adds, "by making paint molecules clump together."

INSTEAD: Stir slowly and gently with a regular old wood paint-stirring stick. You'll know you're done when there are no solids at the bottom of the can and an even, uniform stream of paint dribbles off the stirrer.

chemicals, which should be used only if necessary, and then only sparingly.

#### 21 | Letting receptacles rock

Electrical outlets can loosen over time, especially heavily used ones, like those on a kitchen backsplash or where you usually plug in the vacuum. That wiggle can cause the wires to pull out, increasing the chances of arcing—and fire.

**INSTEAD:** Turn off the power to any loose outlet at the electrical panel. Unscrew and remove the outlet cover, tighten loose wires, and use plastic shims to stabilize the receptacle's "ears" before putting the plate back on.

#### 22 Stressing trusses

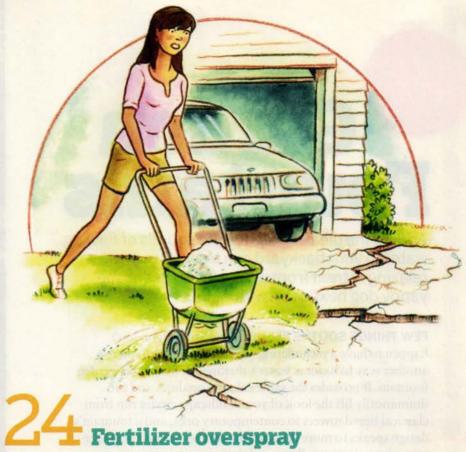
A 4-by-8-foot sheet of ¾-inch plywood weighs 71 pounds. Balancing a few of them, along with stray 2×4s, wainscoting scraps, and a bundle of shingles up in that open space above your head can tax garage and attic trusses, causing them to bow—or maybe collapse. Even a traditionally framed roof, which is stronger, can fail if overloaded above the joists.

INSTEAD: Store heavy materials where they won't need to defy gravity; leaning plywood against a garage wall is one space-saving solution. Take advantage of the dead space in corners by installing a triangle shelf to keep things like roofing shingles flat. To make one, bolt a pair of 2×6 ledgers to the wall, then screw on a ¾-inch-thick plywood pie-slice wedge. Concerned your trusses could be compromised? A structural engineer can tell for sure. Tom Silva suggests strengthening joists or a weakened ridge beam from underneath using engineered wood.

#### 23 | Painting over rust

Slapping a coat of paint over metal that still shows signs of rust is a temporary

HAS DISASTER STRUCK? Study up on survival skills every homeowner should know at thisoldhouse.com/aug2015



We know: You're just trying to feed your lawn's every last hungry blade. But fertilizers that contain sulfates or ammonias can chemically react with the cement in concrete, wrecking a walkway, damaging a driveway, and even causing cracks in your home's foundation.

INSTEAD: Stick to fertilizers with synthetic urea as their nitrogen source—unlike ammonium nitrate, it won't damage concrete. If your product contains ammonia, keep granules at least 6 inches from concrete surfaces. And use a broom, not a hose, to corral rogue pellets, since water activates the harmful compounds.

cover, but not a fix. The iron oxide will prevent the new paint from grabbing hold, so sooner rather than later the bond will fail and flaking will begin.

**INSTEAD:** To properly coat rusty railings and metal furniture, use a scraper to remove surface corrosion and peeling paint, feathering paint edges with 100-grit sandpaper. Treat spots with a rust primer before coating the whole thing with direct-to-metal (DTM) paint, a special acrylic formulation.

#### 25 | Using the provided wall anchors

Assuming you can rely on those expand-

ing blue plugs that come in the package with the picture ledge or window shade or towel bar just doesn't cut it. These ubiquitous sheaths are designed for dense masonry and plaster walls where they can grab onto holes in the material; if you're sinking them into drywall, which is more likely, the material around them will eventually crumble.

INSTEAD: Drywall calls for an anchor that can grab the thin wallboard and hold a screw. Choose a threaded anchor and an appropriate fastener that is twice as long as the material is thick. Toggle bolts are another good choice and not nearly as combative as they look. ■

# Garden Fountains

Adding the pleasing sights and sounds of flowing water to your backyard can transform it into a relaxing retreat from workaday stress or the yappy dog next door by SAL VAGLICA

FEW THINGS SOOTHE like running water. If you don't happen to have a meandering stream in your yard, there's another way to harness water's therapeutic benefits: a garden fountain. It provides the same calming qualities and can dramatically lift the look of your landscape. Styles run from classical tiered towers to contemporary orbs, and a fountain's design speaks to more than aesthetics; the architecture determines how the water flows and the music it creates, from a splashing that drubs out street noise to a bubbling that provides a subtle background score to patio conversation.

On the flip side, the way the water moves and catches light has a lot to do with the feature's visual appeal. Water sheeting off a colorful, rounded urn is more playful than a forceful stream pouring from basin to basin. You pick a fountain for its looks, but knowing the options in materials can streamline the search. Glazed ceramics come in colors that pop; lightweight fiberglass can be elaborately shaped; cast concrete looks just like stone. In any case, you'll want to head to the garden center to see them in person. That is, right after you read everything you need to know on these pages.

#### ANATOMY OF A FOUNTAIN

A pump hidden in the basin of this classic tiered fountain recirculates the water, sending it through the tubing to the top, where it continually fills and overflows each tier.





#### VITALS

#### WHAT'S IT COST?

About \$150 for a kit with a 3½-foot-tall two-tier fiberglass fountain and pump, or \$500 for a cast-concrete version that size. An ornate 7-footer in cast concrete can easily run up to \$2,000, not including delivery.

#### HOW MUCH MAINTENANCE?

Keep the fountain filled with debris-free water during the season so the pump doesn't burn out. Before winter, drain the basins to prevent water from freezing and cracking the structure.



#### PRO OR DIY?

Pair a pump with rocks or an urn to create your own, or buy a kit and set it up yourself unless the fountain is too heavy. Call in a pro to install cast-concrete kits over 150 pounds.

SAFETY If toddlers will be present, go with a "pondless" type that collects water below ground, to nix any risk of drowning.

On a patio bound by pavers and boxwood hedges, this formal tiered fountain begs guests to sit and stay awhile.

#### Falling water, five ways

The path water takes down the fountain helps set the tone of the feature, not to mention the volume level and how often you'll have to refill it

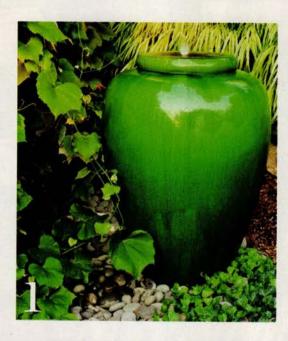
1>RUNNING A sheet of water slips down the surface of an object, such as an urn, to a reservoir that holds a pump beneath a layer of decorative stone (a pondless fountain). Smooth surfaces make the water sound like a running garden hose, while something textured disrupts the flow, creating more of a trickling sound. Water clinging to the side of the fountain is not easily lost to splashing, but that thin layer evaporates quickly on hot days, so frequent refilling may be required.

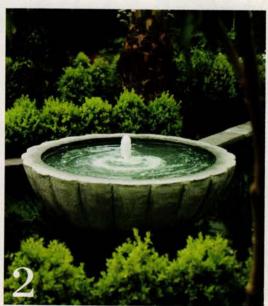
2>BUBBLING A bubbler set in a basin gently churns the surface of the water, providing a primarily visual experience—and a strong magnet for birds and butterflies. Because the water doesn't tumble down the side, bubblers are probably the quietest fountains. They lose very little water to splashing or wind, minimizing your refilling duties.

3> RAINING Dozens of droplets squeezing through holes and falling like a beaded curtain into a pool of water or a rock-filled basin create the hypnotic patter of a rain shower. The taller the structure and the deeper the pool, the louder the storm. A lot of water splashes out and gets carried away by wind, so plan on replenishing the pool frequently.

4> POURING Concentrated streams of water gushing from one level to the next into open pools make a forceful sound, like that of a pot filler-distracting for some, meditative for others. Leapfrogging basin-to-basin leaves the water vulnerable to wind gusts, so maintaining the level can be a bit of a chore.

5> CASCADING Water spilling over from the top pool and into subsequent tiers produces a symphonic splashing that can mask unwanted noise. This fountain also needs to be refilled more often than the other configurations, save for the rain fountain. The pump's flow control can reduce the fountain's volume and splash loss, but the point of this style isn't to cue up quietude.

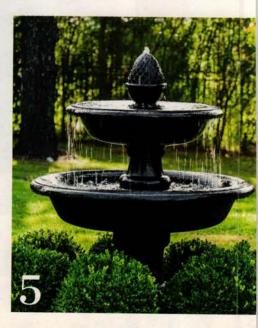




TIP Fountain too loud? Try adding a layer of river rocks to the basin. They'll soften the crash of the water while reducing the distance the water falls.





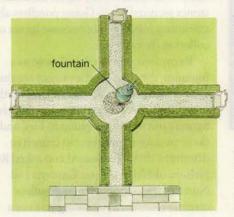


#### THE BIG PICTURE: WHERE TO PUT YOUR FOUNTAIN

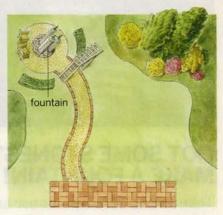
There's a fountain for every kind of yard, but selecting the right spot calls for balancing its size and shape with the style of your garden



THE ACCENT Tucked into a planting bed, a gently bubbling urn attracts pollinators. Scale it slightly taller than adjacent plants to make it visible from other points in the yard, and keep it away from loud mechanical noise—air conditioners, say—that might overpower its soothing sounds.



THE CENTERPIECE A 6-foot-tall fountain is hard to miss, from either the yard or a window with a view. Place a traditional tiered version at intersecting pathways in a formal design that divides the lawn into quadrants. Keep a feature this large about 8 feet from any entertaining area, to avoid having to shout over your glass of rosé.



THE DESTINATION Use a fountain as the focal point of a gathering place set in a far corner of the yard. Encourage guests' sense of discovery with a style that can be seen or heard from a distance, and create a winding path to its location. Complete the scene with planted containers and seating, and you have a relaxing little hideaway.

#### Prep steps

Before you haul your new fountain home from the garden center, you need to prepare the spot you've picked



Most people simply use a hose to refill the basin. Another option: Install an autofill valve, which taps into an existing irrigation line and provides automatic refills.

DIG A FOOTING> Water won't flow properly from a fountain that isn't level, and you can't expect it to stay that way if you plop it on a patch of turf. Treat the base under a fountain like a mini patio: Pack a mix of <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-inch crushed stone and stone dust in layers; top with a flat stone or paver if the pedestal has a narrow footprint.

RUN ELECTRICAL> Hire an electrician to install a dedicated 110-volt line to a protected GFCI outlet. To determine the outlet's location, subtract about 4 feet from the pump cord's length to leave ample slack to install the pump.

PLAN FOR WATER> How often you need to refill a fountain depends on its size, the way water moves over it, and heat and humidity. Quick access to a spigot makes a sometimes daily chore easier.



### SCREEN OUT NOISE

To help mask the constant hum of a neighbor's air conditioner or the rumble of street traffic, situate the fountain between your main seating area and the offensive noise. Place quieter fountains, like these urns, about 6 feet from where guests gather.



#### **GOT SOME STONES?** MAKE A FOUNTAIN!

Take a stack of rocks—or use an old planter or any decorative garden object—and pair it with a pump to create your own water feature. Here's how to do it

The most practical DIY option, aside from sticking a bubbler in a bird bath and calling it a day, is to build what's called a pondless fountain. Pondless, as in there's no visible pool or basin-water collects in a reservoir below ground, where the pump pushes it to the top of whatever object you want the water to run down. The beauty of this approach is that you can repurpose just

about anything as the fountain, as long as you can drill a hole through it for the water line (we used a masonry bit on the creek stones pictured here). Going pondless also minimizes maintenance because leaves can't collect in the reservoir.

Regardless of what you choose as a fountain, the steps for the project are the same: Dig a pit for the reservoir, rig up the pump, and cover everything. The trick is figuring out how big a pump to buy, and there are a lot of numbers to crunch to determine that. We cheated and asked Rolf Nelson, of Nelson Water Gardens and Nursery, which popularized pondless ceramic fountains. Assuming you use a reservoir at least 2 feet square and 1 foot deep, the main variable is the fountain's height. You want a pump with enough oomph, expressed in gallons per hour (gph), to reach the top.

#### HE RECOMMENDS:

120-200 gph for a 1-foot-tall fountain 250-350 gph for a 2-footer 350-700 gph for a 3-footer 900 gph for anything taller, up to 5 feet.



#### **GO PONDLESS**

To see how to build this fountain. go to thisoldhouse.com/aug2015



#### LIGHT IT UP

If you want to illuminate the water with a blast of white light as it rushes from the top of your fountain, upgrade it with an LED fixture. A doughnut-shaped fitting ringed with eight waterproof LEDs slips onto the end of the water tubing and lights up the water as it passes through. A lowvoltage power cord threads along the tubing and plugs into the GFCI outlet. Built-in photo cells automatically turn the lights on at dusk and off at dawn. \$35 per fixture: atlanticwater gardens.com

#### Stay ahead of common upkeep issues



WATER LOSS Water evaporates faster in smaller fountains than in larger ones. Check the water level after 8 hours of usesooner if your fountain splashes excessively or the location is windy.



**MOSQUITOES** When the pump is on, the moving water keeps mosquitoes from landing. Add drops of a pet-safe mosquito killer to dispense with the pests when the fountain is off.



ALGAE Use an algaecide safe for ponds to kill green slime. The additive doesn't evaporate, so replenish it only when refilling water lost to splashing, lest it become too concentrated.



**LEAVES** Remove them before they settle inside the fountain's lowest tier, where the pump can suck them in and get clogged. Consider proximity to deciduous trees when planning the fountain's location.



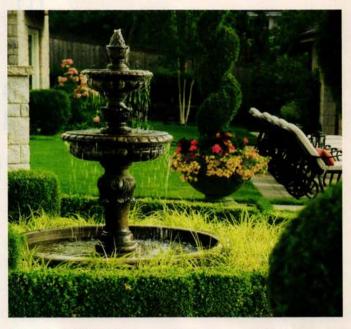
**FREEZING Before the first** frost, drain and vacuum the basins, and bring the pump indoors. Drape towels over the edge of the lowest basin, to absorb condensation, then cover the structure with a tarp.

#### A great garden's finishing touch

Fountains look best when they echo the feel of the surrounding landscape. Here are four ways to use them within a variety of garden settings



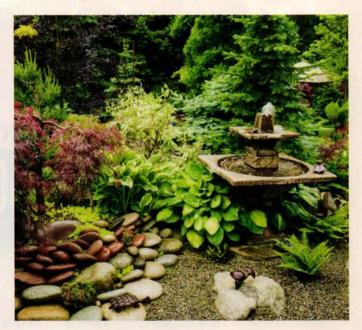
I > EARTHY ACCENT Screened behind a fence of greenery to create an inviting alcove, this running urn is scaled to complement the nearby salvia and hosta. The plume is a dominant visual element, and it can be lowered at the pump to a more discreet level.



2> FORMAL FOCUS Set among topiary shrubs and sheared hedges, this traditional two-tiered fountain's aged finish underscores the garden's classical feel. Hedges encircling the basin keep children a safe distance from the water.



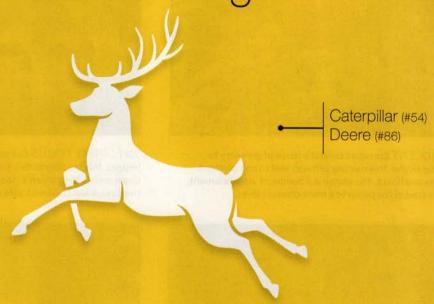
3>ROMANTIC RETREAT This sculptural pedestal adds a striking vertical element with water spraying in a fan pattern that draws attention; the cast concrete in earth tones blends with the surrounding flagstone, letting the garden's more saturated hues take center stage.



4> ASIAN OASIS Nestled among a Japanese maple, evergreens, hostas, and ferns, this weathered fountain looks as if it predates the garden itself, giving the impression that the landscape has evolved over time. ■

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tips, tricks, and answers to your home-

improvement questions

#### INSIDE

HOT-AND-COLD WALL SPIGOTS/STEEP SLOPES
/RUSTY LINTELS/MOLDY CAULK/MORE

What should I look for in a garden trowel?

-JENETHA WILLIAMS, MARTINSBURG, W.VA.

Durability and comfort should be at the top of the list. A trowel with a forged one-piece blade and tang, like the one at top left, will stand up better to vigorous prying and digging than the colorful stamped-steel ones also shown here. And you'll get a much better grip on a bare-wood handle than on one of painted metal.

-THE EDITORS

PHOTOGRAPH BY BURCU AVSAR



Our cast ofveteran experts



TOM SILVA General Contractor



**NORM ABRAM** Master Carpenter



RICHARD TRETHEWEY Plumbing and Heating Expert



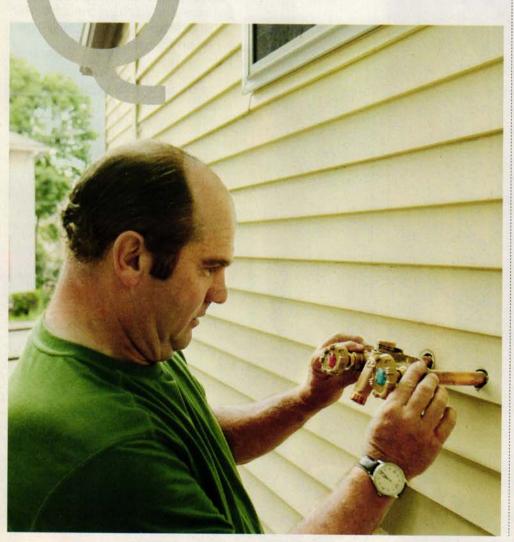
ROGER COOK Landscape Contractor



KEVIN O'CONNOR Host

I'd like to get warm water outside to bathe my dogs and wash my cars. What's the best way to do that?

-JOSH HELM, BETHLEHEM, N.Y.



#### RICHARD TRETHEWEY REPLIES: I

think I have the perfect solution for you: a hot-and-cold wall faucet. You'll probably be using it fairly often in the winter, so a frostproof version is a must; the valves actually shut off the water inside the house. so there's no danger of the faucet freezing and cracking.

Installing one is fairly simple. Most people take off the existing spigot and use its line to supply cold water for the new faucet. Then they install a new hot-water line next to it. To do that, you'll need a tubing cutter; a hole saw, to drill through the siding and sheathing; enough tubing to reach an existing hotwater line; and a soldering kit or no-solder fittings like those made by SharkBite (sharkbite.com). Use a silicone sealant to keep water from getting behind the faucet, and make sure to add a dedicated shutoff valve inside the house for the new hot-water line, in case of any future repairs.

You can watch me install one of these valves at thisoldhouse.com/ aug2015.

Richard Trethewey attaches a frostproof outdoor hose faucet that delivers both cold and hot water, a boon in the winter when dogs-or cars-need to be washed.

Flatten out the slope

My backyard is steep; it has a 30- to 40-foot drop over 100 feet, which makes cutting the grass difficult. Can the yard be terraced, or are there other options?

-JOE D'URSO, HOLDEN, MASS.

ROGER COOK REPLIES: To make the grade less steep, you'll need some sort of retaining wall to hold back the soil. The magic number for wall height is 4 feet. For anything taller than that, most states require homeowners to pull a permit and install a railing on top of the wall to prevent falls. Tall walls also require the equipment and expertise of a contractor and possibly the input of a civil engineer. You get the picture: It will cost you plenty.

But with your steep grade, you'll need a number of 4-foot walls-at least eight, by my count-without a lot of flat ground between them. If you still want to go that route, consider building them out of interlocking concrete blocks, which are more durable than timbers, cheaper than stone, and simple to install.

The easiest solution would be to not build any walls at all. Just give up the grass—and thus the mowing—and plant groundcovers and shrubs that won't require much maintenance. You could still build a few terraces, too, if you want. The combination of plantings and retaining walls would make for a striking backyard.

Window finish

All the wood dividers on my 78-light living room window are covered with a water-based stain that seeps onto the glass every time I wash it. Can you recommend a protective finish to seal the stain?

-NANCY KOVALEFF, SAXTONS RIVER, VT.

NORM ABRAM REPLIES: For ease of application and good durability, a water-based polyurethane should do the trick. If the stain is still in good shape, mask off the



This serpentine wall, made of interlocking concrete blocks, has the look and durability of stone, without the high installation cost.

glass with painter's tape, clean the sash and the dividers-which are known as muntins-with a dry microfiber cloth, and brush on a thin coat of the poly with a small synthetic-filament brush.

Apply a minimum of three coats. After the first and second coats dry, scuff them lightly with a 220-grit sanding sponge and wipe up the dust using a rag moistened with denatured alcohol. When the final coat dries, place a broad putty knife against each muntin as you remove the tape. Without the knife, you risk pulling off some of your carefully applied finish along with the tape.

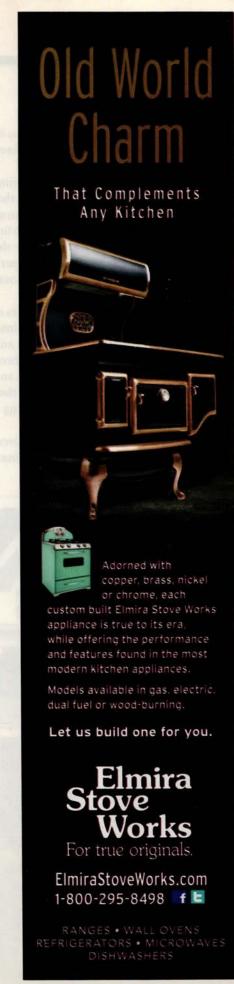
Rusty lintels

Our brick house has some slightly rusted steel lintels above the windows and exterior doors. The home inspector said we should keep an eye on them, but does that mean they need special maintenance?

-ZAK MACKAY, HOUSTON

KEVIN O'CONNOR REPLIES: I took your question to Brian Trimble, a vice president of engineering services and architectural outreach at the Brick Industry Association. Here's what he had to say.

"Once a lintel is embedded in the wall, about the only maintenance you can do



is to brush a coat of oil-based paint on its exposed underside. That will help keep the rust at bay.

"The top of the lintel butts up against the brick, so it can't be painted, but that area should be covered with flashing, which should be visible just above the lintel's exposed edge. If you can't see the flashing, a deeper inspection by an experienced mason—and the removal of some bricks—may be justified.

"Likewise, make sure the weep holes in the vertical mortar joints above the lintel aren't plugged with caulk or debris and that the lintel's exposed edge hasn't been sealed with caulk. Blocked weep holes and a sealed lintel will trap any water that leaks through the brick veneer, causing a host of problems inside the wall.

"Now, if a lintel does rust to its core, the steel can expand as much as 10 times its original thickness and actually lift and crack the brick veneer. But rust-jacking takes several decades, even in a corrosion-prone climate like Houston's. Your lintel will show signs that it needs replacing long before that."

#### One layer of roofing or two?

Our original 20-year-old asphalt roof shingles need to be replaced. We're considering ones with a 40-year warranty. Is it better to apply them over the existing shingles or to tear off the old stuff and start from scratch?

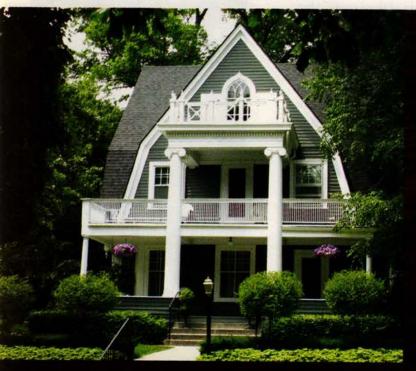
-GLEN DALRYMPLE, JAMESTOWN, IND.

TOM SILVA REPLIES: Laying new shingles over old may save you some money—tearing off a roof does take longer and increases disposal costs. But if you do that,

the new shingles probably won't last as long as you expect.

Here's why: Two layers of asphalt shingles get hotter than one, and that shortens the life of the top layer. Also, doubled-up roofing is more vulnerable to impacts, like those from hail, because the bottom layer doesn't provide firm support. For those reasons, most roofing manufacturers void the warranty if their product is installed over old shingles.

As a contractor, I don't like all the extra weight that a top layer adds to the rafters, or the lumpy look of a two-layer roof. Besides, when I strip a roof, it gives me the opportunity to inspect—and, if necessary, repair—the roof deck and any flashing before the new roof goes on. The additional cost of a tear-off is a bargain compared with fixing the damage caused by a two-layer roof that ends up leaking.



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#### Peeling paint-again

Every spring, the paint in one section of our cedar siding bubbles and comes off in sheets, right down to the bare wood. Why is this happening? What can be done about it?

-DAN SHAPIRO, HUNTING VALLEY, OHIO

KEVIN O'CONNOR REPLIES. According to painting contractor Mario Guertin, paint—and solid-color stain—peels for one of two reasons: poor adhesion or moisture migrating from behind the siding.

Guertin, owner of Painting in Partnership, in Palatine, Illinois, says that poor adhesion is usually caused by slapdash prep. "Paint can't adhere well to dusty, mildewed, or sun-damaged surfaces," he says. Here's the fix. "Scrape off all the peeling bits, sand the remaining paint to a feather edge with 60-grit paper, kill the mildew on

the old paint with a mix of diluted bleach and dish soap, then rinse thoroughly. When the bare wood is dry, sand off the decayed layer with 80-grit paper, taking care not to dish the siding." To ensure the surface is dust-free, wipe it twice with denatured alcohol and clean rags, followed with a brushed-on coat of oil-based primer, such as Cover-Stain (rustoleum.com). "Wait about an hour, then brush on the top coat of 100 percent acrylic paint."

The next step, Guertin says, is to watch what happens next spring. If the new paint peels despite all the careful work, moisture migration is the likely culprit. "When the sun warms up the wet siding, the paint pops right off."

Solving a moisture problem is not so easy, he says, in part because it's tough to know where it's coming from. Missing or damaged flashing, a leaking roof, and



This solid-color stain peeled off in sheets, either because it was applied over a dirty, poorly prepared surface or because moisture migrated through the wood from behind the siding.



#### PROJECT ore saving

More doing:

#### HOW TO **INSTALL A FLOOR MEDALLION**



If your room could use a decorative focal point, consider an ornamental floor medallion. Each medallion is made to order using colorful pieces of precisely cut hardwoods mounted to a plywood backing, and carefully sized to match the thickness of your flooring.

Installation requires cutting into your floor with a router and bedding the medallion in an adhesive spread that's on the subfloor. The process is painstaking, but thanks to the router template supplied by the factory, it will take only a few hours to complete.

You'll find all the tools and supplies necessary for this - and any home project at The Home Depot nearest you.

For step-by-step instructions, go to thisoldhouse.com/project

#### ASK THIS OLD HOUSE

water vapor from inside the house due to inadequate ventilation are some of the possible sources, and they need to be identified and fixed. Also, make sure there's no caulk or paint buildup in the seams where the clapboards overlap. If those seams are sealed, cut them open so that moisture has a way to escape without affecting the paint. Prep the siding by scraping and sanding, as above, then check the wood with a moisture meter. If it reads 15 percent or less, it's safe to repaint.

But if the peeling persists even after all those issues have been remedied, Guertin says there's only one surefire way to break the cycle of scraping and repainting: Remove the old siding and start over.

Make sure to cover the sheathing with a rainscreen, like the ones made by Benjamin Obdyke (benjaminobdyke.com). "A rainscreen creates a gap behind the siding so that moisture can vent out the top of the wall or drain out the bottom. That allows the back of the siding to dry out if it ever does get wet," Guertin says. It's also important to use siding that's primed on both sides. "Back-priming does a great job of keeping moisture out of the wood. All cut ends should be primed too."

Guertin admits that this solution is expensive but says it greatly extends the longevity of the paint job. After you paint the new siding, it shouldn't need another coat for a decade or more.

#### Banish the caulk, spare the tub

How do I remove the moldy silicone caulk around my fiberglass bathtub without ruining the tub's finish?

-SIDNEY NAU, VIA E-MAIL

TOM SILVA REPLIES: This job needs to be done with care. Fiberglass tubs are easily scratched, and you have to get rid of every trace of the silicone sealant because nothing will stick to it, not even more silicone.

Start by running two strips of painter's tape around the tub, one below the joint



Tom Silva uses mildew-resistant acrylic latex caulk and two strips of painter's tape when he seals the joint around a bathtub.

and one above it, to protect the tub's finish. Use a sharp utility knife to cut into the center of the silicone, and carefully cut up to the edge of the caulking. Now grab the bead's cut end with needle-nose pliers and try to pull the whole thing out in one piece. If it doesn't come loose, work a razor blade under one edge of the silicone, then another to sever its grip. Finally, trim away any leftover silicone bits, pull off the tape, and scrub the joint clean, first with WD-40, then with a solution of diluted bleach and detergent, to kill any mildew. Rinse thoroughly.

Once the surface is dry, run two strips of tape again and recaulk. Be sure to use a mildew-resistant acrylic-latex sealant formulated for bathrooms. It will be easier to replace than silicone, when the time comes. To see how I recaulk a tub, go to thisoldhouse.com/aug2015.

#### ASK THIS OLD HOUSE

Go to: thisoldhouse.com/asktoh

Or write to: Ask This Old House This Old House magazine 135 West 50th Street New York, NY 10020

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.



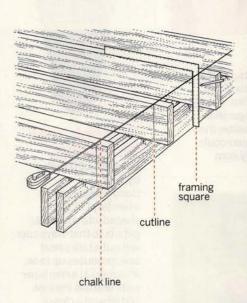
# Norm's tricks of the trade

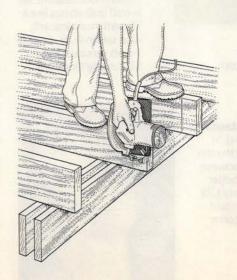
I just started building my first deck. It looks pretty good so far, except that the ends of the joists don't line up. I measured everything so carefully. What happened?

-KEVIN BETKER, PORTLAND, ORE.

I'll bet you committed a mistake that many people make: cutting the ends of the joists to a set length. But that only works on ledgers that are perfectly straight, and they seldom are. To correct this, go back and trim your joists using the following technique. It ensures that the band joist covering the ends of the joists will be arrow-straight as well.

- 1] Snap a line. Measure out from the house along the first and last joists to the length you want, then mark each one's top edge. Stretch a chalk line between those marks and snap it, leaving a mark on the top edge of each joist. Now take a framing square, rest its long blade on the joist, and line up its short tongue with the chalk mark, as shown. Draw a vertical line along the tongue from each mark down the face of each joist.
- 2] Trim the ends. Using a circular saw, slice through each joist along the vertical cutline. Note: If you work from above, as shown, gravity will provide an assist as you make each cut. When the band joist is fastened to the ends of these joists, it will be absolutely straight.







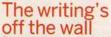
#### More great stuff

Of the many new tools, materials, and other home-improvement products that we discover every month, here are the standouts. -THE EDITORS



#### Better than sandpaper

SandBlaster Ultra Flexible Sanding Sheets, by 3M How do you improve sandpaper? By taking away the paper and bonding the abrasive to a plastic film. These sheets resist clogging, last up to 15 times longer than regular sandpaper, and conform to profiles better than a sanding sponge. Perfect for final and between-coats sanding, wet or dry. \$5 for four sheets; 3mdiv.com



Sketch Pad dry-erase coating, by Sherwin-Williams

Roll this clear, two-part finish onto any wall surface to create a high-gloss dry-erase board that lets the underlying color show through. Scribble away when inspiration strikes,



then wipe clean. A 1-quart kit with a foam roller covers 50 square feet. \$50; sherwin-williams.com



#### Whirlpool in a bowl

VorMax high-efficiency toilet, by American Standard It looks like an ordinary toilet—until you lift the lid. In place of the traditional wash-down holes under the rim, a side-mount jet creates a vigorous, counterclockwise vortex of water that cleans the bowl two times better than those clog-prone holes. Each flush uses only 1.28 gallons but still achieves the highest score in tests of solid-waste removal. \$288; americanstandard.com





#### Stain without stopping

Renuvo deck-staining tool. by Wagner SprayTech

Deck maintenance goes faster when you don't pause to reload a roller. Squeezing the Renuvo's handle-mounted trigger feeds stain from a removable half-gallon reservoir to a nylon pad and an integral groove brush, so the deck-board faces and edges are coated at the same time. \$35; wagnerspraytech.com



Good things happen when tiny LEDs are shaped into rods: You get a bulb that stays cool without a bulky heat sink, produces up to an amazing 131 lumens per watt, and has the look and glow of a classic Edison incandescent. An 8-watt bulb shines like a 75-watt incandescent. Also sold in 4-, 5-, 6-, and 7-watt versions. From \$10; axplighting.com



#### Short in the tooth

Steel Demon metal-cutting blade, by Diablo

Meet the first recip-saw blade with carbide teeth for cutting metal. Those tiny teeth are tough enough to chew through steel up to a half-inch thick, as well as cast iron and even stainless steel. The blade cuts faster and lasts far longer than a typical bimetal blade—you'll burn through 20 bimetals before this one needs replacing. From \$8 per blade: thegamechanger.com

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COVER: See the listing for "Carefree Cottage."

HOME SOLUTIONS (pp. 13–22) Buggy bed companions: Thanks to Dr. Jim Fredericks, Chief Entomologist and Vice President of Technical and Regulatory Affairs, National Pest Management Association; pestworld.org. For more information: Field Guide to Urban Wildlife, by Julie Feinstein; stackpolebooks.com. Infested, by Brooke Borel; press.uchicago.edu. Budget redo: Homeowner's blog: acoupleofdreamers.com.

BEFORE + AFTER KITCHEN: Bigger and better (pp. 24–27) Architect: GEV Design, Canton, MA; 781-828-5500. Kitchen design, cabinets, and countertops: Metropolitan, Norwood, MA; 800-698-8999; metcabinet.com. Carpenter: Marty Barrett, Stoughton, MA; 508-294-8347. Paint: OC-52 Gray Owl (walls) and 2051-50 Tranquil Blue (accent wall and island); benjaminmoore.com. Knobs and pulls: restorationhardware.com. Range hood: xoventilation.com. Fridge, dishwasher, wall oven, and microwave: kitchenaid.com. Sink: New England Demolition & Salvage, New Bedford, MA; nedsalvage.com. Mason jar conversion kit

(similar to shown): ctwhomecollection.com. Flat-screen: samsung.com. Window-seat fabric: Franklin Mill Store, Franklin, MA; franklinmillstore.com. Barstools: serenaandlily.com. Accent pillows: shopthomaspaul.com.

BEFORE + AFTER BATH: Open and accessible (pp. 29–30) Bath designer: Gaylord Design LLC; 843-327-4635; gaylorddesignllc.com. Contractor: Classic Construction of Summerville, Summerville, SC; 843-817-1721. Cabinets: Dave's Custom Cabinets, Charleston, SC; 843-608-4828. Granite countertops: Stone Horse Imports, Bluffton, SC; stonehorseimports.com. Sconces and faucets: restorationhardware.com. Toilet: totousa.com. Sinks: us.kohler.com. Tile: walkerzanger.com. Overhead track: allinoneaccess.com. Grab bars: moen.com. Handheld shower: grohe.com. Shower fixtures: molufs.com.

PHOTOSHOP REDO: Classing up a cottage (p. 39) Thanks to Eugene H. Sakai, AIA, LEED AP, Studio S Squared Architecture Inc., San Jose, CA; 408-998-0983; studios2arch.com. Stain: Olympic Elite 550075 Tintable Tan Base Semi-Transparent/Semi-Solid Exterior Stain; lowes.com. Window: Next Generation Ultimate Double Hung; marvin.com.

Window box: XL Hampton Premier Window Box; hooksandlattice.com. Entry set: Craftsman Mortise Lock Entryset with Providence Knobs; houseofantiquehardware.com.

PAINT IDEAS: Multi-stripe accent wall (pp. 40–41) Designer: Annie Selke: freshamericanstyle.com. Paint: SW 7042 Shoji White, SW 6087 Trusty Tan, SW 7064 Passive, SW 6859 Feverish Pink, SW 6578 Tuberose, and SW 6574 Rosily; sherwin-williams.com.

CAREFREE COTTAGE (pp. 54-61) Interior designer: Lizzie McGraw, Tumbleweed & Dandelion. Venice, CA: 310-450-4310: tumbleweedand dandelion.com. General contractor: Ikon Construction, Oceanside, CA; 949-378-4520; ikonconstruction.org. Back porch: Table: Gabriel Perez; tumbleweedanddandelion.com. Kitchen: Cabinets: Jose Ventura; tumbleweedanddandelion .com. Countertops and floor and wall tile: Royal Stone, Los Angeles, CA: 310-477-3223; royalstonela.com. Faucet: deltafaucet.com. Living room: Vintage sign: City Farmhouse. Franklin, TN; cityfarmhousefranklin.blogspot.com. Striped pillow: dashandalbert.com. Bath: Wall tile: royalstonela.com. Front porch: Large pillow fabric: peterdunhamtextiles.com.

**GARDEN ORNAMENTS** (pp. 62–69) **Landscape designer:** Wesley Rouse, Pine Meadow Gardens, Southbury, CT; 203-264-6066.

ALL ABOUT GARDEN FOUNTAINS (pp. 76–81) Thanks to Stephanie Barton, SB Garden Design, Los Angeles, CA; sbgardendesign.com. Demi Fortuna, August Moon Designs, Stony Brook, NY; 631-689-9637. Michael Glassman, Michael Glassman & Associates, Sacramento, CA; michaelglassman.com. Christine L. Massarelli, Massarelli's, Hammonton, NJ; massarelli.com. Laura Morton, Laura Morton Design, West Hollywood, CA; lauramortondesign.com. Reindert Nefkens, Fiore Stone Inc., Corona, CA; alsgardenart.com.

ASK THIS OLD HOUSE (pp. 83–90) Q+A: Rusty lintels: Thanks to Brian Trimble, Brick Industry Association, Reston, VA; gobrick.com. Peeling paint—again: Thanks to Mario Guertin, Painting in Partnership, Palatine, IL; paintpartner.com, ■

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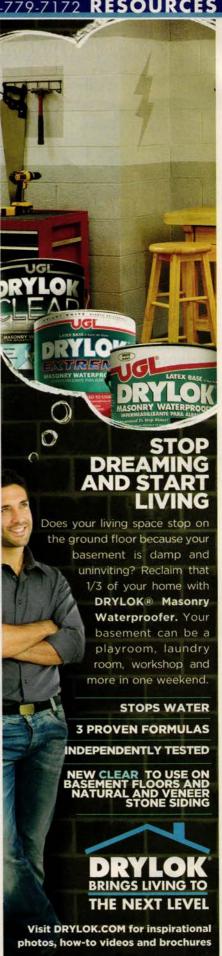


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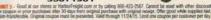




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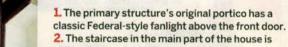
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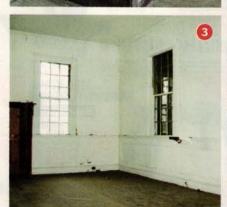
WHY SAVE IT? This quaint cottage turned refined farmhouse features a blend of Federal and Georgian styles. The simple facade showcases a hallmark Federal portico. Inside, the rooms have tall ceilings and wide-plank heart-pine floors, wideboard and paneled wainscoting, and wood trim around the nine-overnine and six-over-nine windows. WHAT IT NEEDS The Federal portion of the house has fared better than the older Georgian part, which has lost most of its flooring. Electrical and plumbing systems need updating throughout, and you'll have to replace some windows and part of the roof. The house must be moved within 25 miles of its current location. The good news is that suitable lots start at \$2,500 per acre-and with its powerful pedigree and stately style, Branch Grove is worth the effort. -MEGAN BAKER





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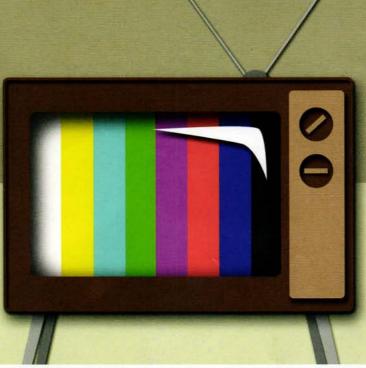
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