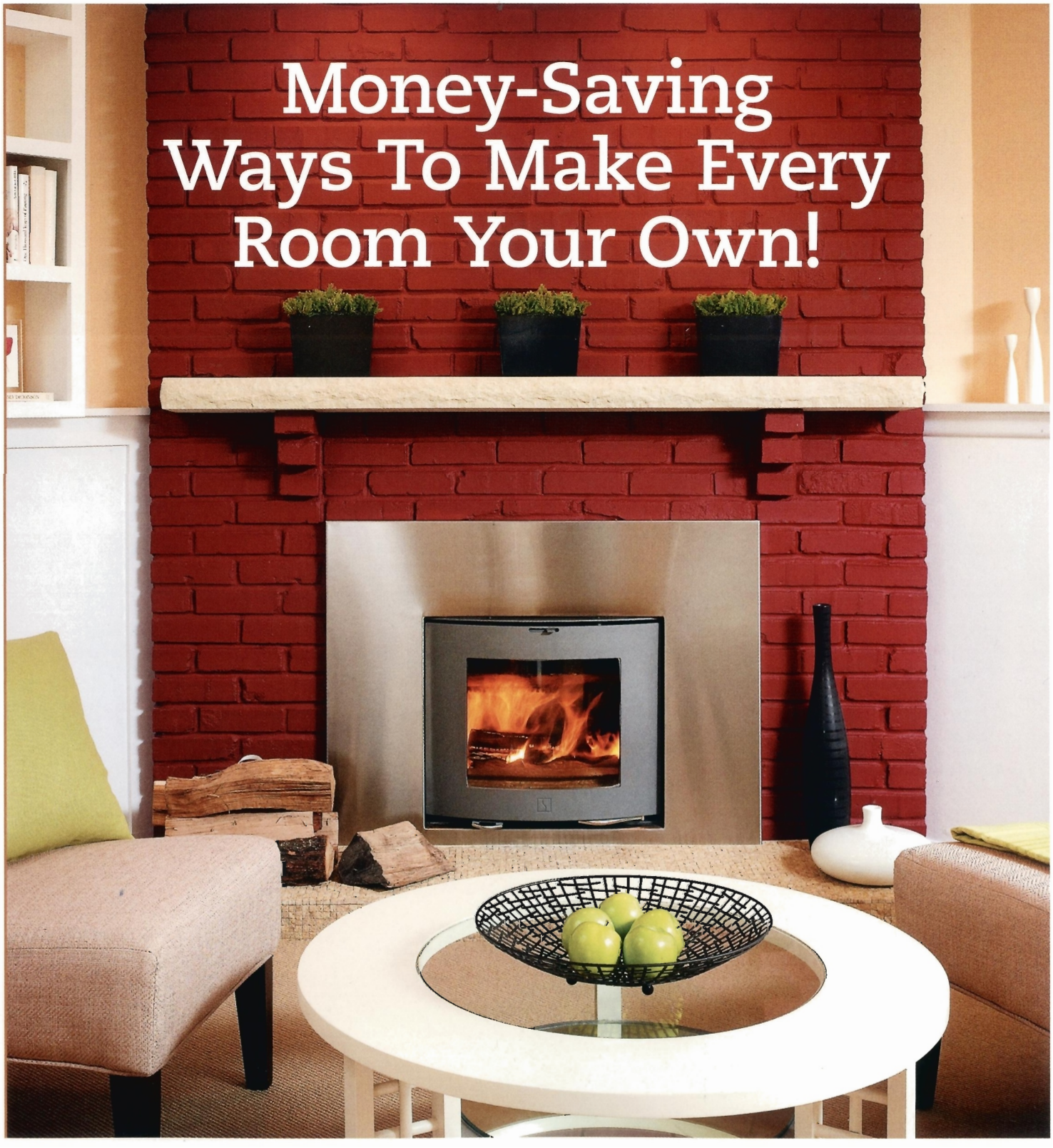
my home
my style

simple Weekend Makeovers

Money-Saving Ways To Make Every Room Your Own!



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editor's notes

Creating a home that's truly your own requires more than just filling it up with your stuff. You also need to add your own personal style. That way, it reflects who you are, not who the producers of mass-marketed, store-bought "style" think you should be.

You may think that creating a one-of-a-kind style for your home would be time-consuming and expensive, but *Simple Weekend Makeovers* will prove that it doesn't have to be. We've packed every page with inspiring ideas that you can use to infuse your unique style into the place you live. And because we know your time and budgets are often tight, we've made sure that you can accomplish every project in just a weekend or two without spending a lot of money.

Of course, ideas alone aren't enough to ensure success. That's why every project in *Simple Weekend Makeovers* is presented with step-by-step instructions, clear photos, and detailed illustrations that will give you the guidance and confidence you need to do it all. You'll understand what to do and why to do it so that you can personalize each project to suit your needs and your style.

For even more help, you can also log on to our Web site, MyHomeMyStyle.com. There, you'll get exclusive access to additional techniques, articles, and project plans. And it's all free. All the details are on page 97, along with information about our free E-Tips. Sign up, and you'll get great advice delivered right to your e-mail box every week.

Enjoy *Simple Weekend Makeovers,* and use it as inspiration to transform your house into the home you've always wanted.

Dave

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POEMS
BIG CHERRY HOLLER

the room changers

Sometimes small changes can have a big impact. And these six room makeovers are a perfect example. Rather than redoing the entire room, just focus on a few key elements. As you'll see, the results can be astounding.

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high-impact, low-dollar Kitchen conversion

Is it time to do something about your drab kitchen? Open your mind before you open your wallet. That's what homeowners Sean and Haley did. In just a couple of weekends, and for less than $2,500, they breathed new life into their tired kitchen.

The repainted cabinets are one of the more striking updates in this kitchen, so we'll start by showing you exactly how we helped them achieve this look. Then we'll highlight the other elements that helped make the homeowners' dreams come true: the creative reworking of under-utilized cabinet space, some new hardware, a DIY granite countertop, and a one-of-a-kind glass tile backsplash.

As you see this kitchen transform, it's up to you to imagine your own kitchen in a new light by choosing one, a few, or all of these projects. The tools, techniques, and materials you'll need are all DIY-friendly. With our resources and your resourcefulness, you truly can have a premium kitchen without the price tag of a complete remodel.

Too often, kitchen cabinets look worse for the wear after years of scuffs, splatters, and sticky fingers. In other kitchens, the cabinets are perfectly acceptable but miss a huge opportunity to add color and style. Fortunately, if your cabinets function fine but just don't look great, painting them can change the personality of your entire kitchen. Paint can revive a dreary space with bold, rich color, turn back the hands of time by covering damage, and increase your home's value for a modest investment.

That's why the first step in Sean and Haley's kitchen conversion was breathing new life into their outdated cabinets with a few fresh coats of paint. If you're considering painting your own cabinets, here are all the steps you need to know to get great results in your own kitchen.

UNIQUE CHALLENGES

Painting kitchen cabinets differs quite a bit from painting walls. Surface preparation is the most time-consuming part of the process, but it's critical to your project's success.

That's because kitchen cabinets take a lot of abuse on an ongoing basis. They're opened and closed countless times every day, often with oily or greasy fingers. They reside in a room where the air can be very dry one hour (when the oven is on) and very humid the next (when you're steaming veggies on the stovetop). These changes can wreak havoc on paint finishes.

To achieve a finish that will look great for years, start by making sure all surfaces are completely free of grime and food residue. Remember that even in the cleanest kitchens, cooking leaves an invisible film just about everywhere. To eliminate it, take off the cabinet doors, and lay them flat on a work surface. Remove all hardware, including hinges, knobs, and pulls.

Now you can mix a solution of TSP Substitute (Dap.com) and wash the doors, cabinet frames, and drawer fronts *(Fig. 1)*. It's important to thoroughly clean the cabinets now because sanding will grind any grease or grime into the surface. Rinse all surfaces with clean water, and allow them to dry.

1] Start by thoroughly washing all surfaces with a solution of TSP Substitute in warm water to remove any greasy film or residue left by sticky fingers.

2] Lightly sand all surfaces to dull the sheen of the previous paint job.

3] Using a putty knife, slightly overfill nicks and screw holes with filler.

SAND, FILL, & SAND AGAIN

Whether your cabinets are painted or stained and varnished, they will now need to be thoroughly sanded. Using a sanding block with 150-grit paper, lightly sand all of the cabinet surfaces *(Fig. 2)*. While this might seem a bit tedious, it's important to give the primer a surface that it can adhere to.

After sanding, it's easier to notice any nicks, dents, and scratches. Fill these with a hardening, multi-purpose filler such as Bondo (3M.com), which is available in home centers. Just mix the putty and catalyst according to the manufacturer's directions, and apply it with a putty knife *(Fig. 3)*. Don't mix more than you can use in a few minutes — it hardens quickly.

If you will be installing new hardware, fill the mounting holes, too. Once the filler is dry, you'll need to

do a little more sanding *(Fig. 4)*. Then vacuum off as much dust as possible, and wipe down the surfaces using a rag dampened with mineral spirits or a crumpled-up tack cloth.

Before you start painting, be sure to protect surrounding surfaces. Cover the floor with a drop cloth, and use painter's tape to mask off the ceiling and walls where they contact your cabinet frames *(Fig. 5)*.

6] After priming, use a roller to evenly apply two coats of oil-based enamel paint. Touch up the edges with a small brush, and allow the paint to dry.

PRIMED FOR PERFECTION

Now it's time to prime. If you're tempted to skip this step — don't! Primer forms a better bond to surfaces than paint alone, and in a kitchen's demanding environment, paint needs all the help it can get. Select a good-quality, interior oil-based primer. Oil-based paints and primers are preferred for kitchen use because they're more durable than water-based ones, which soften when exposed to heat or oil.

When working with oil-based paints and primers, it's helpful to stir in a paint conditioner, such as boiled linseed oil or Penetrol (Flood.com). These help reduce brush marks and leveling problems, giving you a smoother coat. A conditioner also makes paint and primer easier to apply because it extends the open time. The container will tell you how much to add.

If your cabinet doors are perfectly flat, you can apply the primer with a roller. For a smooth finish, use a roller with ¼" nap — longer nap leaves an orange-peel look. If your cabinets have raised panels or molding, you will need to brush on the paint. You'll find tips on how to paint frame and panel cabinet doors at MyHomeMyStyle.com.

4] Sand the filler until it's completely smooth and blends with the surface.

5] Use tape to mask all ceiling and wall areas that contact the cabinets.

APPLYING THE PAINT

Now that you've created a good foundation, you can start to see your kitchen come back to life as you apply the color of your choice. It might be tempting to try to flow on one heavy coat and be finished. But to achieve a lasting cabinet paint job, it's necessary to apply at least two thin coats of paint.

As you roll paint on the doors, maintain a wet edge to reduce roller marks *(Fig. 6)*. Then switch to a sash brush to paint the cabinet frames *(Fig. 7)*. Follow the structure of the cabinets as you paint, and keep a wet edge where horizontal and vertical pieces intersect.

Allow the first coat to dry, and then lightly sand all surfaces with 400-grit sandpaper. This will reduce any imperfections and help your next coat of paint adhere better. Wipe off all dust, and then apply the second coat.

After your last paint coat has dried, lightly sand again, and roll on a polyurethane topcoat. This final clear coat will give your cabinets the smoothest possible finish. Polyurethane also improves durability because it's more scratch-resistant than paint.

Be sure to allow the topcoat to dry overnight before you reassemble your cabinets and attach the hardware. For even more ideas for your own kitchen makeover, turn the page to see the rest of the changes the homeowners made to this kitchen.

7] Apply paint to the cabinet frame using a 2½" sash brush. Allow the paint to dry, and then apply a second coat for complete coverage and good durability

Beyond the fresh new color on the cabinets, our intrepid homeowners also completed several other high-impact revisions in their kitchen.

Consider taking on any or all of these cost-efficient projects to add character to your own kitchen. Of course, each idea can be adapted to suit your room and your personal style.

THE FINER DETAILS

We're all familiar with cabinet doors that swing to the side. But why not rotate that standard and add some variety to the arrangement of your cabinets?

As you see by comparing the *Photo* above with the *Before Photo* on page 4, Sean and Haley replaced two sets of side-hinged upper cabinet doors with single top-hinged doors. The new doors are just plywood with rounded-over front edges and rabbeted backs.

They also removed the doors from the cabinets above the sink, along with the scalloped valance just beneath them. The valance would be out of place with the new style of the kitchen. As for the cabinets, a bit of paint and some cherry plywood back panels changed this marginally useful storage area into tasteful display space.

To extend this embellishment, they replaced the non-operating panel in between the two display cabinets with a custom clock. A matching piece of cherry, four evenly positioned sections of aluminum barstock, and an inexpensive clock mechanism are all you need to get the same look. For more detail on this clock and display space makeover, check out MyHomeMyStyle.com.

The final touch for the cabinets was new hardware. The old lightweight, white wire pulls, which got lost in the field of white doors and drawers, were removed, and larger, bolder stainless steel pulls and complementary hinges were added to complete the cabinet modernization.

COUNTERTOP CONSIDERATIONS

A countertop often establishes the level of sophistication in a kitchen — good or bad. The dated countertop you see in the *Before Photo* was not content to simply lie flat and go unnoticed — its ugliness spread all the way to the backsplash and to an inexplicable end-wall structure. Sean and Haley were anxious to replace it with something more sophisticated.

The couple had dreamed of granite countertops, but nearly gave up that hope when they learned how expensive a professionally installed granite surface can be. The large, thick slabs of granite that countertops are typically made from are far beyond the ability of a typical DIY homeowner. And the couple was unimpressed with the granite tile solutions they had seen. That was until we introduced them to the "Kitchen in a Box" options from Bedrock Creations (BedrockCreations.net).

Colorful sheets of glass tile can be custom-designed in your pattern of choice from Trend Group and applied as a stunning backsplash.

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This particular granite tile system is different from others in that it comes complete with decorative edge tiles, which help create the illusion of solid granite. Still, it's no more difficult to install than conventional tile.

To make the solid-granite illusion more convincing, the Bedrock Creations tiles get a black grout treatment. Sean and Haley also splurged on an undermount sink to add to the sophistication of their new kitchen.

Bedrock Creations' decorative edge tiles, quarter-round sink-edge tiles, and thin grout lines combine to create the illusion of a solid granite countertop.

A BETTER BACKSPLASH

The perfect backsplash material was a point of some discussion for Sean and Haley. With the stainless steel sink and drawer pulls, a stainless steel backsplash seemed to be the natural choice. But they also toyed with the idea of extending a single, narrow band of the granite tile partway up the wall, so the backsplash would match the countertop.

Eventually, they decided that the backsplash was a great place to bring some new colors into the mix, and tile seemed like the ideal way to do it.

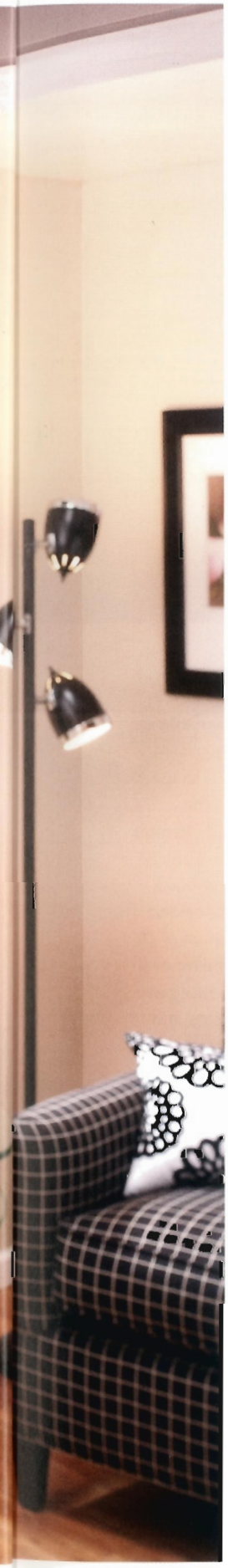
After doing some research, Haley came across a unique glass tile product from Trend Group. What sets these tile sheets apart from other glass tile is that you can select the colors of the individual 1" x 1" tiles, and how much of each color gets used in each 12" x 12" sheet. TrendGroup-USA.com features a design tool that lets you mix and match as many as ten colors, textures, and patterns and assign each a percentage. The application then generates a preview of a tile sheet using the colors and quantities you prescribed. Once you decide on the perfect color blend for your project, you can download a spec sheet of the tile you created and take it to the nearest Trend Group dealer to place your order.

Sean and Haley's tile cost about $17 per square foot and took about two weeks to make. The square foot price may seem a bit high, but the total price of the tile was under $350 because it took relatively little of it to cover the small area. And there's no doubt the dramatic impact of the tile was worth the investment.

Along with ordering the tile, the local dealer helped select the right adhesive and grout for the project. They even offered some pointers on installing the tile. Really, it wasn't much different than installing ceramic tile (*Photo, left*).

Whether you redo your kitchen as extensively as Sean and Haley did or just pick a few of these projects, the endeavor will noticeably improve the value and style of your kitchen. Plan carefully, shop thoughtfully, and work diligently — you'll soon be able to open your new, premier kitchen to your friends and family, who may never believe how much you did yourself and how much you saved for the effort.

— Written by Bill Link and Louise Ritchhart, projects designed by Kent Welsh

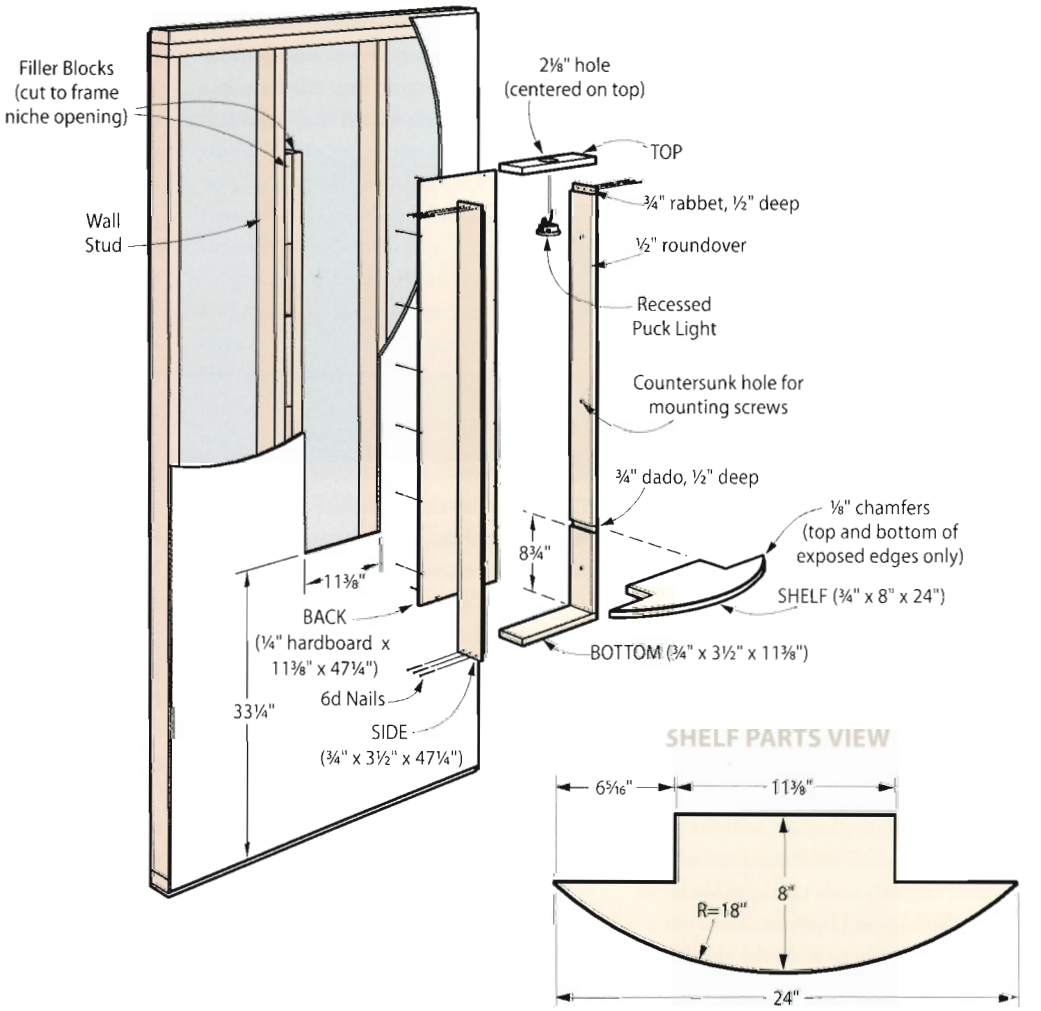


Display Niche

Only a display niche this bold could hold its own against these picante-colored walls. The black tile backdrop, the light overhead illuminating the vase below — this niche doesn't accent the wall; it owns the wall.

And take a look at that stylish curved shelf — it juts almost defiantly into the room, as though the niche is resisting its status as a mere "recess in the wall."

Even the outside corners of this display niche make a strong design statement. Notice there are no fancy trim pieces around it to steal attention. Instead, a simple rounded corner blends the niche seamlessly with the surrounding walls.



Building & Installing the Niche

This display niche starts out as a simple wood box. After it's built, installing it requires cutting an opening in the wall and inserting the box, as shown in the *Illustration* on the previous page. A bit of drywall "taping and mudding" creates the smooth transition between the box and the surrounding wall, and then the tile and shelf get installed.

Get Tile First — Before building the box, you'll want to have the tile that you plan to use on hand. The reason for this is simple: You want to be able to fit the tile widthwise into the box without having to cut it.

For our project, we bought 13"-square sheets of mosaic tile. That tile was too wide for the proportions of the niche we wanted, but trimming three rows of tile off each sheet produced a more pleasing proportion. That meant we had to build the box with an inside dimension of 10⅜".

Find a Location — The box is designed to fit between two wall studs with a little space on either side. If a stud lies within the space where you want to mount the display niche, however, you're not out of luck. You can remove the stud using a simple technique that we've included online at MyHomeMyStyle.com.

Build the Box — As for the box itself, the top, bottom, and sides are made from ¾"-thick pine, and the back is ¼" hardboard. You'll need to cut a rabbet in both ends of each side to accept the top and bottom. Then cut a dado in each side to hold the shelf.

To create a smooth transition between the box and the wall, the front edge of each box side also gets rounded over with a router. Then drill countersunk holes in the sides for mounting screws.

1] Use a utility knife to cut a clean, smooth opening. It will take a few passes to cut through the drywall.

2] Frame the sides of the opening with 2x4s. You may need to add blocking to get the frame flush with the opening.

3] Slide the box into position to check the fit, and make any needed adjustments before screwing it in place.

After cutting all the parts, assemble the box with glue and nails. If you plan to install a puck light, cut a hole in the top for this light now. Then prime the box, and set it aside.

Make the Shelf — The display shelf is made from ¾" MDF. Depending on the size of your niche, the size and shape of this shelf may vary, but you can use the dimensions shown in the *Shelf Parts View* on the previous page as a starting point. There's also a full-size pattern of the shelf available at MyHomeMyStyle.com.

It's easiest to cut the shelf to shape using a jigsaw. After that, sand the edges smooth, and rout a small chamfer on the front edges. Now prime and paint the shelf. (We used glossy black spray paint.) Then set the shelf aside, too. It gets installed later on.

Install the Box — With the box complete, you can cut the opening in the wall to accept it. First, locate and mark the wall studs on either side of it. You also need to make sure no pipes or wires are in the way. To do that, cut a small opening between the studs, like the one you see in *Fig. 1*. Then look and feel around inside to make sure you're in the clear.

If so, you can lay out the precise location of the box using a tape measure and a 4-ft. level. Then use a utility knife to cut out the drywall to form the opening *(Fig. 1)*.

As mentioned earlier, the niche is narrower than the space between the wall studs. That means you'll need to build out the sides of the opening with filler blocks. The thickness and number of these blocks will vary depending on the location and size of the niche, but the ultimate goal is to create a

4] To adhere the tile, start by raking a thin bed of mortar across the back of the niche with a ⅛" notched trowel.

5] Using a hammer and a scrap block, lightly tap the surface of the tiles to seat them securely in the mortar.

surface that's flush with the sides of the opening, as shown in *Fig. 2*.

Next, install the puck light in the top of the cabinet, if desired. We wired this light into a junction box located in the attic of the home. (You may want to consult an electrician for this.) Now slide the box carefully into position to check the fit *(Fig. 3)*, and make any necessary adjustments. Once the box fits, screw it to the filler blocks.

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FINISH THE ROUNDED CORNERS

A big part of the appeal of this display niche is its clean, contemporary look. And a major element of that look is the rounded outside corners that blend the niche seamlessly into the wall, as you can see at left.

While this rounded corner makes for a modern look, it does require a bit of drywall work to complete it. Specifically, that involves taping the seam between the box and the wall with self-adhesive mesh drywall tape, applying drywall joint compound over this tape, and then sanding the edge smooth. After sanding the compound, you'll need to apply another coat or two of joint compound to achieve a smooth, flawless surface.

If you're not experienced with taping and mudding, be assured that you don't have to be an expert to get good results. We've provided some tips and techniques at MyHomeMyStyle.com that walk you through the entire process.

FINAL DETAILS: TILE & SHELF

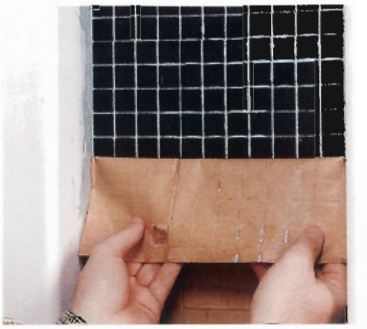
What really gives this display niche its bold, distinctive flair are the mosaic tile backdrop and the display shelf.

The ¾" tiles we selected come in a sheet with paper on the front face. To cut a sheet to size, simply slice through the paper facing with a utility knife. Then you can install the tile, as shown in *Figs. 4-7*. Before grouting the tiles, mask off the sides, top, and bottom of the niche to keep excess grout off the project.

When the grout dries, slip the shelf into the dadoes to see if the back edges of the shelf fit tightly against the wall (*Fig. 8*). If necessary, sand them to fit. If any small gaps still remain, you can fill them with a dab of caulk later.

Before installing the shelf permanently, mask off the tile so that you can texture and paint the wall and sides of the niche. Once the paint dries, complete the niche by applying glue to the dadoes and shelf sides and sliding the shelf in place.

— Written by Wyatt Myers, illustrated by Matt Scott, project designed by James R. Downing



6] After 24 hours, sponge warm water over the paper facing, and carefully peel it off the tiles.

7] Mask the opening, and use a grout float to press grout between the tiles. Sponge off excess, then buff off any haze.

8] When the grout dries, check the fit of the shelf. Sand or file the back edges as needed to produce a tight fit.

Fireplace redefined

Good fireplaces should always give the homeowner a feeling of coziness and warmth. But when Matt Scott, one of our illustrators, purchased his home a few years back, the fireplace *(Photo, below)* left him feeling cold.

The arched opening may have been a stylish look when the home was built, but today it looked dated. And the black mortar between the dark bricks certainly wasn't helping.

Those weren't the only problems with this old fireplace, either. The mantel was nothing more than an unattractively stained slab of wood. And on top of that, the hearth wasn't even up to code.

At first, Matt entertained the notion of completely tearing out the old fireplace. But he soon realized the cost and the mess would be more than he wanted to deal with. So he decided to take a different approach.

The transformation he had in mind included a few cosmetic changes, such as painting the unattractive brick and mortar, replacing the drab wood mantel with a bold slab of limestone, and enlarging and tiling the hearth. He decided to boost the fireplace's efficiency, as well, with the addition of a wood-burning insert.

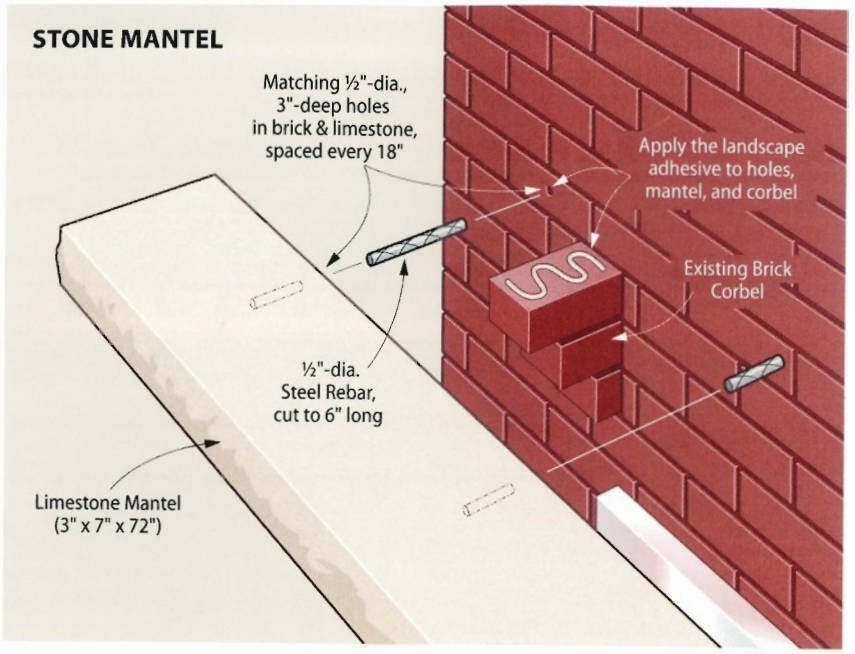
This project also presented an interesting opportunity to mix DIY work with help from the pros. Matt took care of the paint, tile, and mantel work himself, but he decided to leave the fireplace and stainless steel surround installation to the professionals.

The result is not only dramatically better looking *(right)*, but it provides a warmer, more efficient source of heat, as well. Over the next few pages, we'll give you all the ideas and insight you'll need, in case you're faced with your own unsightly fireplace.

BEFORE

This fireplace started as an eyesore *(left)*, but soon became the showpiece of the home thanks to paint, stone, tile, and a new wood-burning fireplace insert.

"Transforming this old fireplace boiled down to four simple and achievable mini projects."



A thick limestone mantel provides some much-needed interest to the fireplace facade. It's also heavy, which demands a sturdy mounting system.

4 Simple Steps to a Bold New Fireplace

The task of transforming this old fireplace might seem daunting, but it really boiled down to four simple and achievable "mini" projects: painting the brick facade, replacing the old wood mantel with stone, adding a fireplace insert and a custom surround, and facing the hearth with tile. By breaking up these projects over the course of a few weekends, as well as doing some yourself and hiring others out, they become a lot more realistic.

1] New Life from Paint

The first order of business was updating the brick facade. Rather than tear it out or cover it up, the easiest solution ended up being to paint it.

Painting brick isn't always the best course. That's because it's tough to ever go back. But for this dated brick, paint was definitely the right choice. In fact, paint alone can totally transform a brick fireplace as long as you do it right.

The procedure for painting brick isn't particularly difficult, but it does require using the right supplies and techniques. That starts with a thorough cleaning of the bricks using a scrub brush, soap, and water. After letting the bricks dry, prime them with a stain-blocking primer, and then follow up with two or three coats of paint.

Obviously, painting brick is a little different than painting a flat wall. The key is to use a high-quality synthetic bristle brush and take the necessary time to get into all the cracks, holes, and mortar lines for complete coverage.

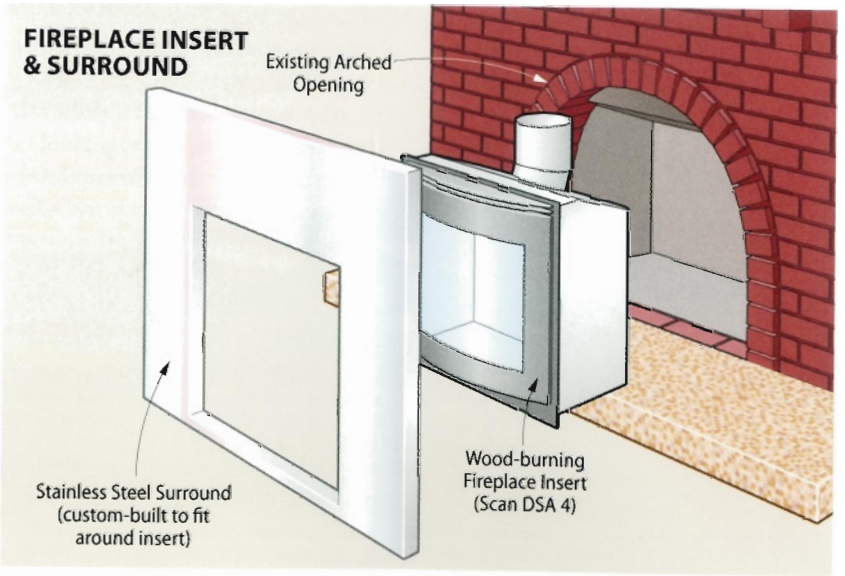
An eggshell finish paint provides a great-looking surface that stays free of scuffs, without standing out too much like a glossy finish sometimes does.

2] Stunning Stone Mantel

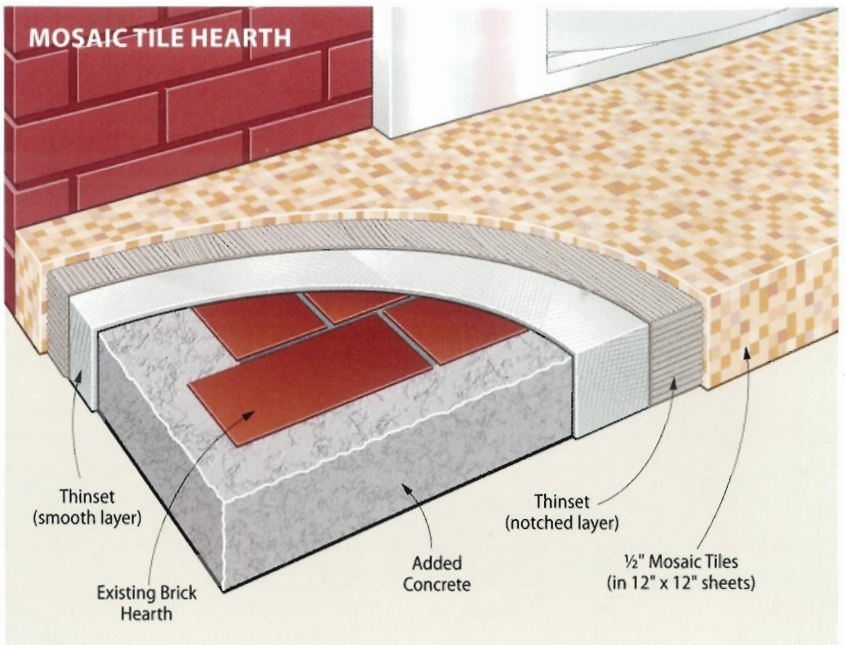
The existing mantel was just a piece of darkly stained, rather uninteresting oak. What's more, it extended past the brick facade and onto the shelving on either side of it, which created a distraction and an uneven appearance.

A thick slab of limestone, cut by a local stone supplier, provides the perfect complement to the painted brick. It was machined with a smooth edge at the back to fit flat against the brick, but the front edge and ends were left rough to create an interesting look.

The fireplace facade already had a pair of brick corbels that the existing mantel was resting on, so removing the oak board and setting the stone in place was simple. Still, to be safe, a few extra precautions were warranted to secure the stone in place.



A wood-burning insert greatly increases the fireplace's efficiency, while a custom steel surround hides the arched opening from view.



This hearth was expanded with concrete, and then topped with thinset mortar and mosaic tile to complete the great new look.

As you can see in the *Illustration*, above left, the mantel is secured with a few pieces of steel rebar that fit into mating holes in the stone and brick. The rebar can be cut to length with a hacksaw, and the holes should be drilled with a rotary hammer. Then use landscape adhesive to secure the rebar in both the mating holes. Also run a bead of adhesive along the back edge of the stone and on top of the corbels for extra holding power.

3] Add an Insert & Surround

While addressing the stylistic concerns of the fireplace, Matt decided it was also a good time to maximize its efficiency. That called for a fireplace insert.

A fireplace insert is a self-contained unit, made of cast iron or steel, that's available in sizes to fit your existing fireplace. The reason you'd want one is simple — efficiency. While a standard fireplace burns at 5 to 10 percent efficiency, inserts are around 65 percent efficient, meaning they'll generate much more heat in the winter months.

Most inserts are available with a glass door at the front, so you can still enjoy the great look of the fire. Matt decided to go with a wood-burning insert because he enjoys a natural wood fire, but gas inserts with amazingly realistic flames are also available.

The fireplace installation is best left in the hands of professionals. Along with installing the fireplace insert itself, they also had to run a new flue up the chimney in order to vent the fireplace. Your installer should be able to determine your specific needs.

While the insert took care of the efficiency issues, one thing it couldn't eliminate was the dated arched shape of the fireplace opening. Ordering a custom unit was cost-prohibitive, as was entirely rebuilding the opening, so Matt just chose the largest stock insert that would fit. Of course, that left gaps that needed to be covered.

That was accomplished with a custom stainless steel surround, which was made by a local steel fabricator. With its clean, square look, it hides the edges of the opening and blends well with the more contemporary appearance of the freshly painted brick.

Matt was able to have his surround created for about $400 — pretty reasonable for a custom piece of solid stainless steel. For your own surround, you'll want to check with your fireplace manufacturer. Most offer a number of surrounds for different fireplaces in their product line. Or if you find that you need a custom piece, chances are good that there's a steel fabricator in your area who's up to the task.

4] Help for the Hearth

If there was any one part of this fireplace that *had* to change, it was the hearth. That's because the existing hearth wasn't even up to local building codes, which call for a depth of 20". Considering that this hearth was only 12" deep, and surrounded by carpet to boot, it was definitely a cause for concern. You'll also notice that, like the mantel, the old hearth extended all the way to the wall on either side.

To get the hearth up to code and update the look, it was first enlarged with concrete and faced with tile. This process started at the edges of the hearth, where the brick that extended past the facade on either side was removed for a cleaner look. The next step was to build a form with 2x4s that matched the size and shape of the new hearth. This form was then filled with concrete, which was poured over and around the bricks, and then smoothed with a flat trowel.

This fireplace was on a concrete floor, so adding more concrete above it was easy. If you have a wood sub-floor, you'll want to screw down a layer of cementboard beneath the area where the concrete will go before pouring.

Once the concrete dries, you can remove the form. Then apply a smooth layer of thinset to even out any minor irregularities between the surface of the brick and the concrete. When that's done drying, rake out another layer of thinset with a notched trowel before laying the tile *(Illustration, above)*.

Matt chose to use ½" mosaic tiles for his hearth. These tiles come in 12"-square sheets that can be trimmed to fit the desired surface. The tiles Matt chose are also close enough together that no grout is needed between them once the installation is complete.

—Written by Wyatt Myers, illustrations and project design by Matt Scott

5 EASY STEPS FOR A *hallway makeover*

Turn a ho-hum hallway into a dramatic display area for your family photos or favorite works of art. All it takes is a coat of paint, some new hardware, a simple-to-install light fixture, and our innovative but easy-to-build photo display system. You can complete this total transformation in one weekend for less than $300.

A route from room to room. A lifeless space between living areas. A means of conveyance. These are the usual utilitarian roles that a hallway plays. Because of that, and because hallways offer little space for adding accents, they generally get little attention when it comes to decorating a home. The result is a space that often looks a lot like the *Before Photo* shown above.

But with a little imagination, you can turn an ordinary hallway into something more. And you can do it without investing a lot of time or money in the project.

As you can see in the *After Photo*, we turned this humdrum hallway into a dramatic gallery for a collection of family photos. You can do it, too, in just one weekend. Now instead of being a raceway from room to room, your hallway can celebrate your family and give everyone something to see as they travel from point A to point B.

A Five-Step Solution — The centerpiece of this high-style hallway is the photo rail system. And every part of it (except for the framed photos, of course) came from the home center for a total of less than $70. That includes everything from the rails to the cables to the clips that hold the frames.

Although it's the focal point, the photo rail system is actually the last step in this hallway makeover. The first four steps — painting the walls, revitalizing the trim, replacing the door knobs, and installing a track light — are also economical. Plus, they're downright easy, as well. We'll cover the details of all five steps on the next couple of pages.

SHED NEW LIGHT WITH AN ADJUSTABLE TRACK FIXTURE
SWITCH THE HARDWARE TO AMP UP THE STYLE
DISPLAY FAMILY PHOTOS ON A SLEEK RAIL SYSTEM
BRING NEW LIFE TO OLD TRIM AND DOORS USING PAINT
PAINT THE WALLS FOR A BOLD NEW LOOK

FIVE PROJECTS — one dramatic hall

Transforming this hallway from dull and dated to light and lively didn't require a major overhaul or special tools or skills. A drill, screwdriver, wire cutters, pliers, and painting supplies are about all you'll need. With those in hand, just follow these five steps:

UPDATE TRIM AND DOORS

Chocolate brown oak was once the rage, but these days, interiors are lighter and brighter. Replacing the trim and doors, though, just didn't make sense. Instead, we picked up a gallon of paint and coated these surfaces with a bright white. The difference is dramatic.

Keep in mind that painting a light color over dark-stained wood can require several coats. You can cut down on coats by covering the wood with a stain-blocking primer before applying your first coat of paint.

To maintain a smooth finish on the doors, apply the primer and paint with a foam roller instead of a brush.

WAKE UP THE WALL COLOR

Like the woodwork, the gold walls sucked up a lot of light and made the hallway feel smaller than it really is. Neutral gray paint helps push the walls away visually, opening up the space. An eggshell finish is a good choice because it's easy to clean, yet doesn't look too shiny under the new lights.

BRING IN THE RIGHT LIGHT

Those new lights are part of a brushed steel track system that mounts to the ceiling. The fixtures clip into the track and can be aimed exactly where you want them.

Our setup is sold in a kit that includes the track and three lights for about $60 (#EC3470BA; HomeDepot.com.) We actually purchased two kits and connected the tracks together, so that we could mount more fixtures to completely illuminate the photos.

Installing the new lighting system couldn't be simpler. Just remove the existing light, and then connect the power wires to the wires on the track. (Of course, make sure to shut off the power first.) Then mount the track to the ceiling, and install the cover plate included with the kit to hide the junction box and wires. Once that's done, just clip the fixtures into the track, and turn the power back on.

INSTALL NEW DOOR HARDWARE

With the new lighting installed, the old brass doorknobs looked completely out of place. But it only took about 15 minutes to swap them out for new satin-chrome levers (Schlage.com). These set us back $25 a set.

ADD THE PHOTO RAILS

The final step in this project is to build and install the photo rail system. This system looks similar to ones that are used in galleries and cost hundreds of dollars. But ours only costs about $70. That's because, as you can see in the *Construction View* on page 21, the entire system is made from ordinary materials picked up at a home center.

The rails are ½"-diameter steel tubes that you can buy in a variety of lengths or easily cut to fit with a hacksaw. They're mounted to the walls on nylon "cable clips" that are meant for installing audio and video cables.

The photos hang on lengths of braided steel cable. It's sold by the foot and can be cut easily with wire cutters. At the top end of each cable, there's a hanger that slips over the rail. At the bottom, you can mount one of several clips, depending on what frames you want to hang. Here's how it all goes together:

Lay out Your Frames — Before you mount the rails, lay out your arrangement of photos or draw a diagram to determine where each frame should go. That makes it easy to figure out how high to mount the rails and how long to make the cables.

Mount the Rails — Once you determine where to install the rails,

cut them to length, if necessary. Then slip a pair of cable hangers onto each rail.

Position the rail on the wall, make sure it's level, and then mark the locations of the mounting screws. If the screws won't hit studs, be sure to install hollow wall anchors. Then install the rails, using nylon spacers to hold them away from the wall.

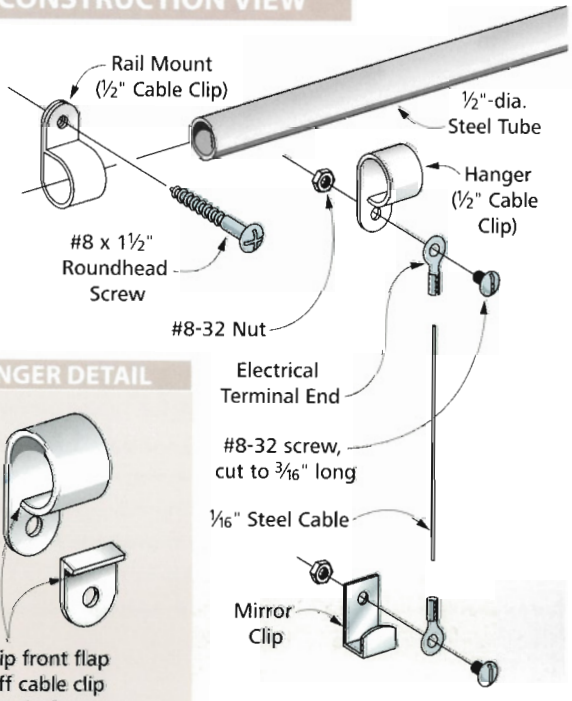
Make the Cables — Now you can make the cables. First cut a pair of cables to length for each photo you want to hang. Then add the cable ends. At the top, we used wire terminal ends, which we picked up in the electrical department at the home center. Short bolts pass through the terminal ends to attach the cables to the hanger.

At the bottom of the cables, the type of end you choose depends on what type of frame you're hanging. Take a look at the *Frame Hook Options*.

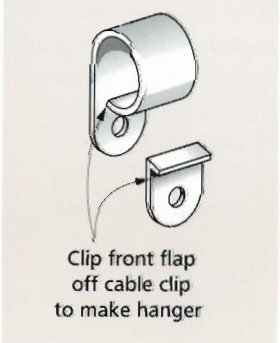
Whichever ends you're using, you need to make sure each pair of cables is the exact same length. To ensure that, we used a simple sizing board, like you see in the *Illustration* below. Once you have the ends in place, simply crimp them onto the cables using locking pliers. Then you can bolt on the hangers, slip them onto the rail, and hang the photos.

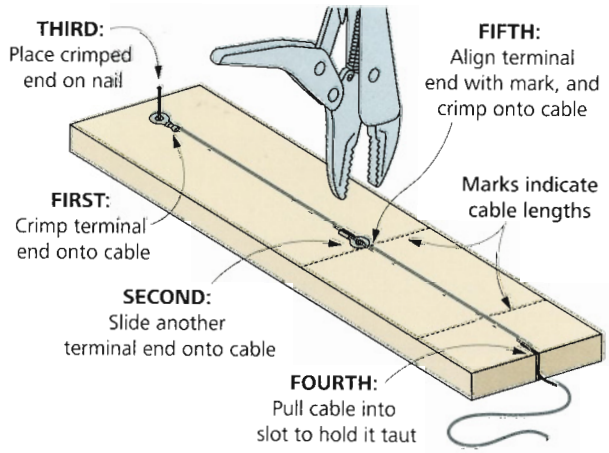
— Written by David Stone, illustrated by Kim Downing, project designed by James R. Downing

CONSTRUCTION VIEW

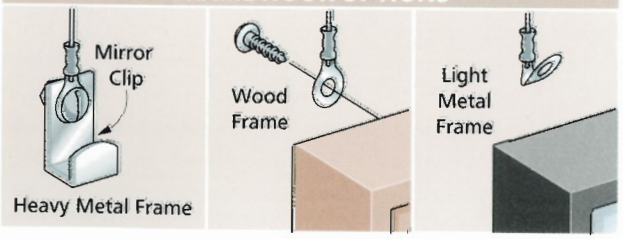


HANGER DETAIL





FRAME HOOK OPTIONS



MDF "Tiles"

When stained and varnished, the texture of MDF is accentuated to create interesting tiles. Just cut MDF squares, round the corners, add stain and finish, and you'll be on your way to a beautiful, cost-effective backsplash.

INSTANT MAKEOVERS:

Build a Better Backsplash

If you want the same kind of backsplash that all of your neighbors have in their kitchens, grab your checkbook and head over to the tile store. But if you prefer something that's a little more unique and attention grabbing, consider taking on one of the creative endeavors you see here.

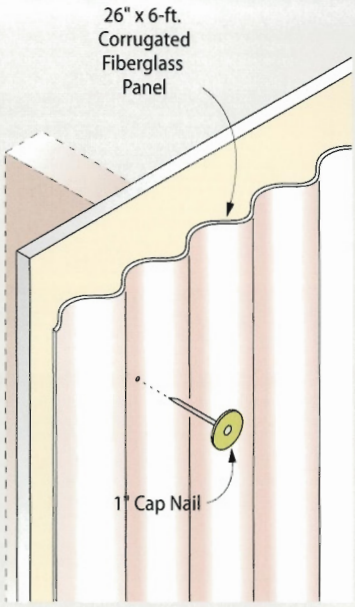
Decorative copper panels, cork flooring material, or even common MDF can be installed as a stunning, one-of-a-kind backsplash. The materials are much less expensive than most ceramic tiles (especially MDF, which only costs $1 per square foot). Still, they look great and are resilient enough to hold their own in your kitchen. In just one afternoon, you'll have a professional-quality backsplash that's far more distinctive than one actually produced by professionals.

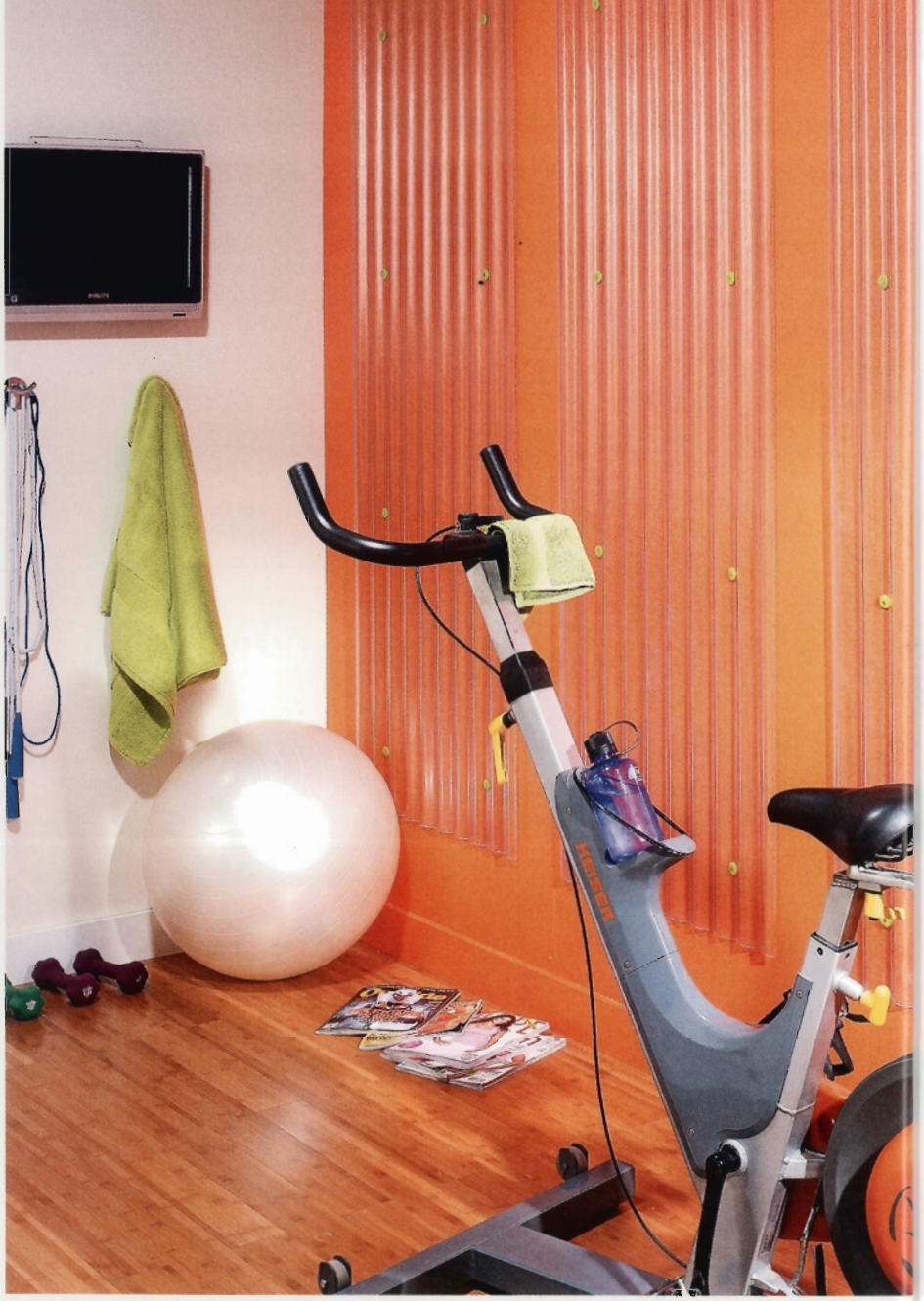
Clever Cork

Cork flooring is an eye-catching and eco-friendly addition to your kitchen — but the floor is certainly not the limit. To achieve this look, obtain your backsplash dimensions and purchase enough cork flooring to cover the area. (Our material cost about $9 per square foot.) Cut panels to size, and glue them to your wall with construction adhesive. There are many styles of flooring available to choose from, and they're all water-resistant, so no additional finish is needed.

Cool Copper

Decorative thermoplastic panels give this kitchen an instant designer look. At approximately $6 per square foot, they mimic classic tin tiles for about half the price. The thermoplastic construction allows the material to be used in wet areas and near ranges without any problem. You can choose from several appealing finishes. Just cut the panels and trim strips to fit, and adhere them to your wall with construction adhesive.





Cool Corrugated Panels

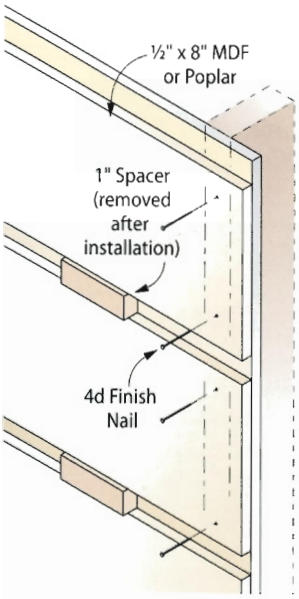
Anyone who has spent much time on a treadmill or exercise bike knows that staring at a blank wall gets old fast. Translucent fiberglass roofing panels sold at home centers offer an eye-catching solution. Turning these corrugated panels into a bold accent wall couldn't be easier. Just use "cap nails" (the ones that come with colorful plastic caps) to attach the panels to the wall. Two coats of Benjamin Moore's "Tangerine Melt" give this workout room a surge of energy.

INSTANT MAKEOVERS:

Accent Walls That Wow

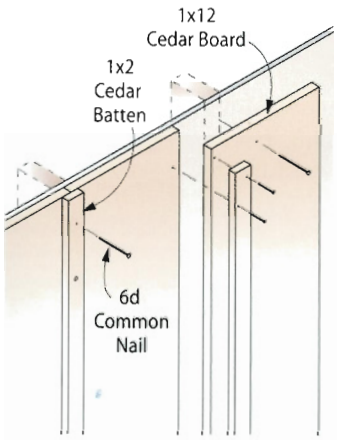
Creating an accent wall — that is, treating one wall differently than the others — is an easy way to give any room a dose of style. For a very modest investment in materials, accent walls can rescue architecturally challenged, shoebox-shaped rooms.

To make one, you'll first have to decide which wall in your room should get the special treatment. A solid wall without windows or doors works best. Ask yourself where you want to draw attention because an accent wall will become the room's focal point. You can choose the wall behind the largest piece of furniture in the room, like a bed or sofa, or accent the wall people see first when they enter the room. Whichever wall you choose, just be sure to give it a treatment that complements your room's unique style. Here are three possibilities to get your imagination going.



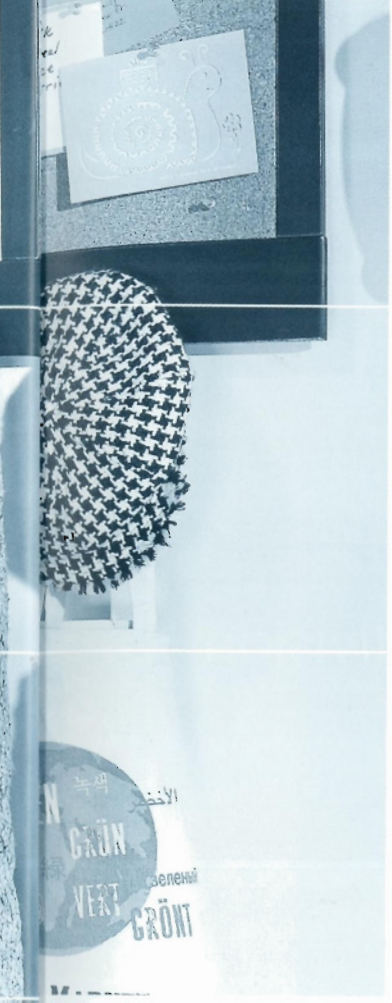
Wall-Widening Lines

The clean geometric lines of this accent wall fit perfectly in a room that's all about precision, such as this craft area. It's made with ½" x 8" MDF or poplar boards that are simply nailed to the wall (be sure to hit the studs). One-inch removable spacers *(Diagram, above left)* make it easy to position the boards. Accent walls that feature horizontal stripes, like you see here, help make a small room appear wider. "Westminster Gold" paint from Benjamin Moore finishes our cheerful sewing space.



Rustic Board & Batten

You can almost hear the wolves howl in this room inspired by north-woods cabins. Its bold accent wall is a twist on traditional board-and-batten siding (often called "barn siding"). The 11¼"-wide rough-sawn cedar boards alternate with 1½"-wide battens that are installed to cover the seams. Although board-and-batten siding usually runs vertically, you can also install it horizontally. We applied Cabot Interior Wood Stain in "Peppermill" to give this timeless wall treatment a fresh look.



picture-perfect projects

Seemingly small projects often provide the biggest rewards. Whether you want to conquer a cluttered entryway or add the finishing touch to your living room decor, these ideas will help you bring your space together.

28
Folding Screen
Turn basic boards into a simple, sophisticated screen that will bring balance to any room.

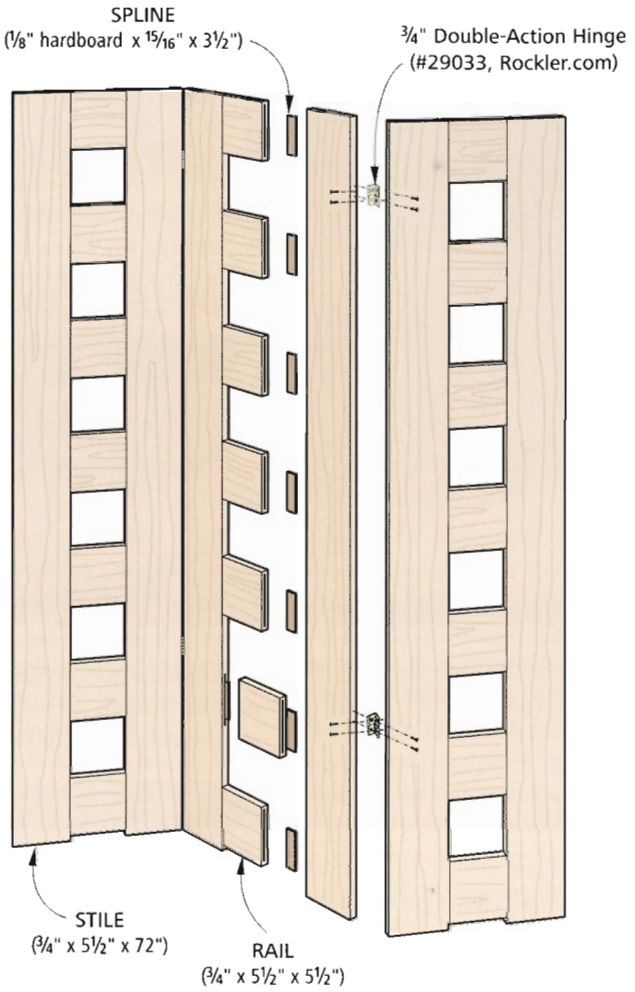
32
Entry Storage & Seating
Transform your entryway with this bench and mirror combo that can be built in a matter of hours.

36
Placemat Photo Frames
You won't find photo frames that are simpler to build than these. And what really makes them special are the unique placemats that cover the fronts of the frames.

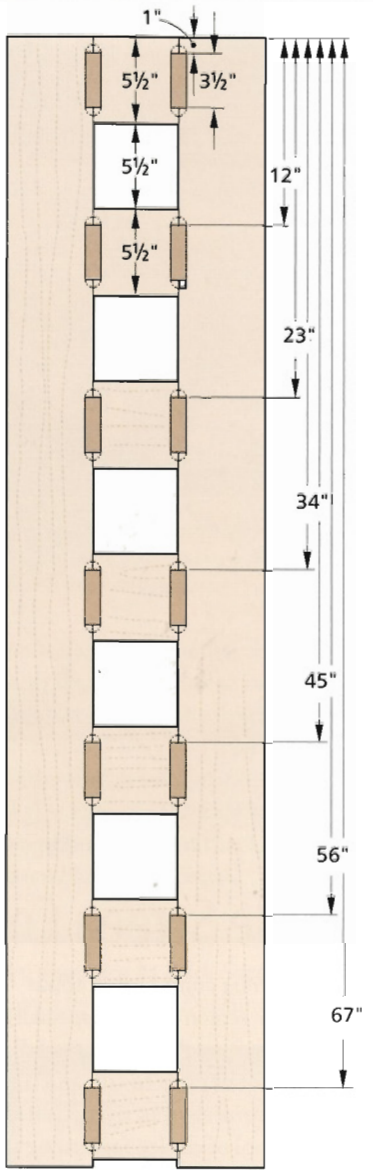
+
40 | **Faux-Finish Frames**
Turn ordinary picture frames made of MDF into stunning works of art with faux-finishing techniques.

folding screen
easy elegance
meets simple division

CONSTRUCTION VIEW



SLOT LAYOUT



Define and refine your living space by adding a folding screen. Use it to break up a space, add a touch of privacy, or provide a decorative backdrop in any room.

Whether it's serving as a piece of art, hiding an unsightly radiator, or dividing a large space into smaller ones, this folding screen can fill a variety of roles in just about any room.

Simple virtues are what make this folding screen shine. It's prominent enough to discreetly redirect traffic through an open space. The square openings can either frame or hide what lies behind the screen. And the design lets you configure the screen in a variety of shapes to suit your needs.

Uncomplicated construction adds more allure to this great-looking screen. It consists of three panels that are made from 1x6 poplar boards *(Construction View)*. That means all you have to do is cut the individual parts to length.

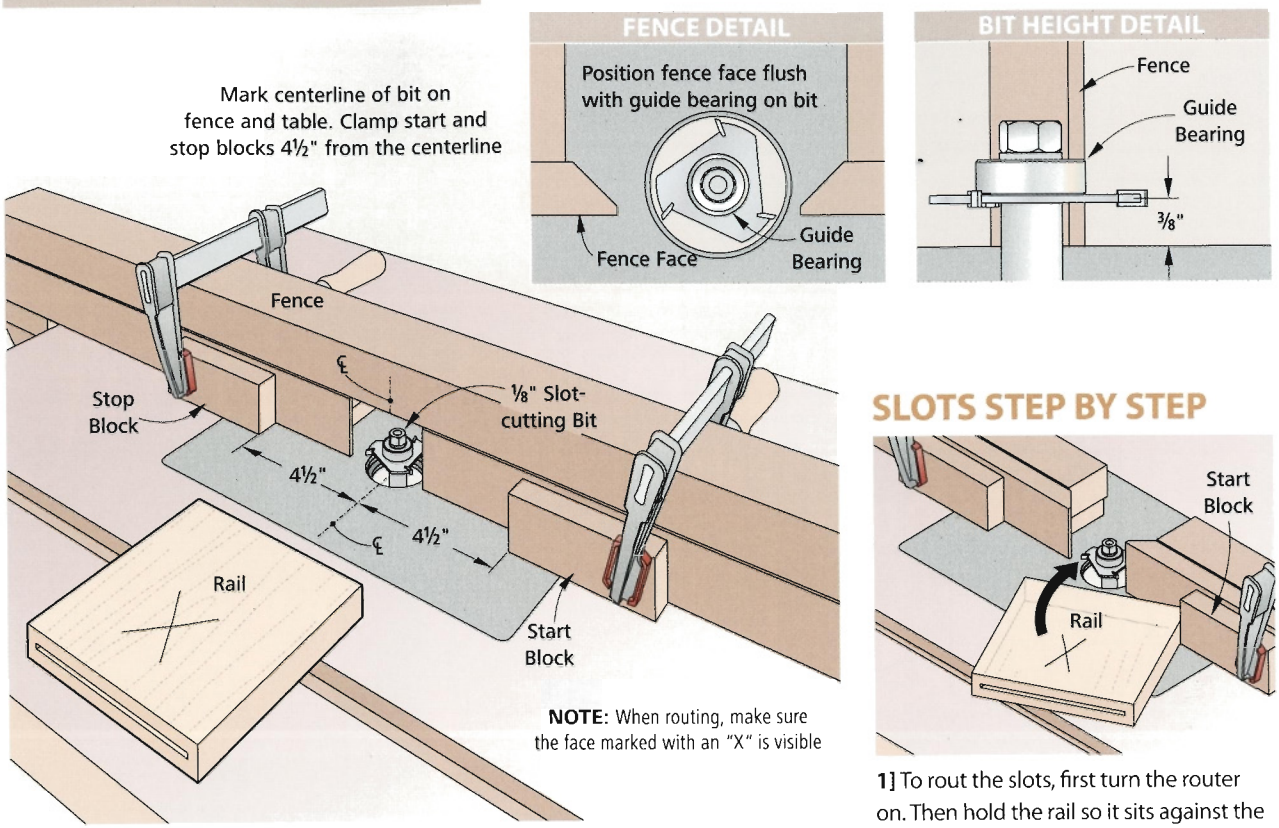
Each panel is a simple assembly of stiles and rails. To ensure that the pieces align and stay together for the long haul, they're joined using hardboard splines.

Those splines fit into slots that get cut using a router table. If you're not familiar with using this versatile tool, this project presents the perfect opportunity to learn how it works.

We'll explain how to rout slots for the splines, as well as the rest of the construction details, on the following pages. For an even more in-depth look at the process, you can download a free set of builder's drawings from our Web site, MyHomeMyStyle.com.

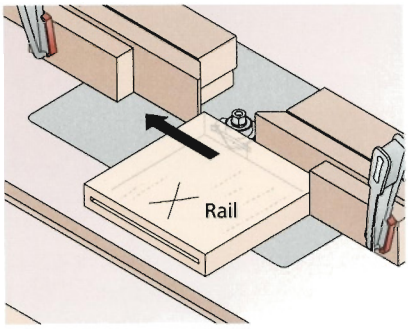
Once the panels are assembled and hinged together, you can fill the open squares or just give the screen a coat of paint and let the light shine through.

ROUTING THE SLOTS

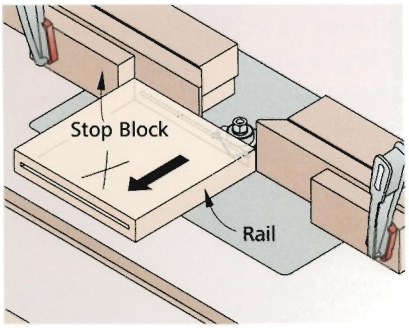


SLOTS STEP BY STEP

1] To rout the slots, first turn the router on. Then hold the rail so it sits against the start block but doesn't contact the bit.



2] Pivot the rail into the bit until the rail contacts the fence face. The spinning bit will hold the rail against the start block.



3] Push the rail left, holding it against the fence. Once the rail contacts the stop block, pull it away from the fence.

Simple Screen Construction

There's nothing complicated about building the screen panels, especially since all three panels are identical. But there are a lot of parts to cut, and they need to be consistent in size. A miter saw is the tool of choice for cutting the pieces because you can use a stop block for surefire repeatability.

Make the Rails — Start by setting up your saw with a stop block 5½" from the blade. Then cut a test piece, and make sure it's square. Once everything checks out, go ahead and cut seven rails for each of the three panels.

Move on to the Stiles — Now you can cut the six stiles to length. Unless your miter saw is equipped with a long fence, you won't be able to use a stop block, so measure carefully to make sure all the stiles are the same length.

Get Ready to Rout — Before you rout the slots for the hardboard splines, mark an "X" on one face of each rail and stile. When you rout the slots, keep the "X" face-up on each piece. That way, the faces of all the pieces will fit flush, even if you don't get the slots centered exactly.

Next, lay out the positions of the slots on the stiles *(Slot Layout, page 29)*. As you do this, just remember that the stiles are mirror images of one another. So lay the stiles side by side in pairs with the "X" faces up, and then draw layout lines for the slots across the stiles where they meet.

Rout the Slots — At this point, you're ready to rout the slots. Start by installing a slot-cutting bit in a table-mounted router *(Routing the Slots)*. Then raise the bit so that the cutter will be centered on the thickness of your workpieces *(Bit Height Detail)*.

Now move the fence into position *(Fence Detail)*, and mark it above the centerline of the bit. If there's no place on the fence face to make this mark, just apply a piece of tape, like you see in the *Photo* on the opposite page. Also mark this centerline on the router table.

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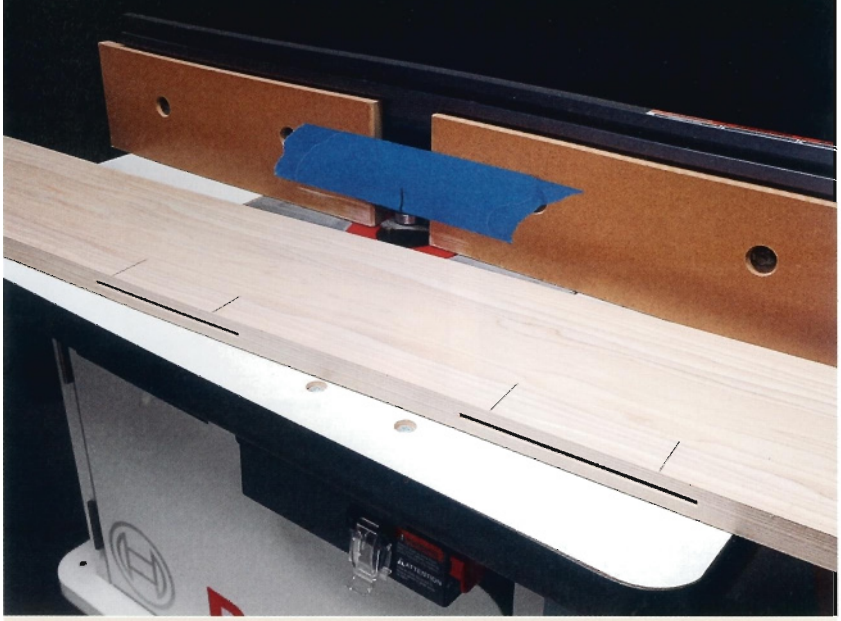
Next, you'll need to set up the start and stop blocks on the fence, like you see in the drawings. Then you can go ahead and rout slots in each rail.

To do that, place the rail against the right-hand (start) block, making sure the face with an "X" is up *(Fig. 1)*. Then push the rail against the bit *(Fig. 2)*. Slide the rail to the left until it hits the left-hand (stop) block *(Fig. 3)*. Now pull the rail away from the fence. Then turn the rail end-for-end, and rout the slot on the other end. Repeat this process on the rest of the rails.

Routing the slots in the stiles is a similar process, except that you can't use stop blocks because the stiles are too long. So you'll just have to line up the start and stop lines by eye as you rout each slot *(Photo, right)*.

Cut Splines & Assemble — After routing all the slots, the only pieces left to make are the splines. They're cut to size from ⅛" hardboard. And you'll need 14 for each panel.



A line on the fence marks the center point of the bit. Line it up with the layout lines for the slots, and you'll know exactly where to start and stop your cuts.

With the splines cut, you're ready to assemble the panels. Before you glue the panels together, though, it's a good idea to "dry fit" the stiles, rails, and splines to check that they fit together properly. Once you're certain they do, glue the pieces of each panel together. As you clamp the panel, make sure the openings are all 5½" tall.

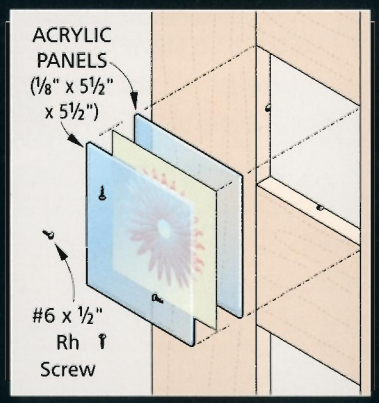
Add Hinges & Paint — All you need to do now is install unique double-action hinges, which allow the panels to swing either direction. There's no special trick to mounting them. Just connect the first two panels, and then add the third panel.

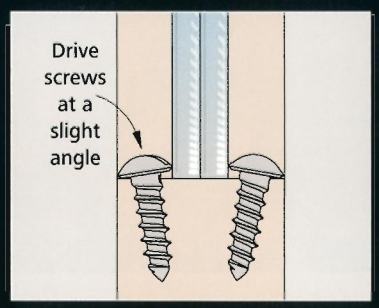
After that, remove the hinges, and give each panel a final sanding. Then prime and paint them before reassembling the screen.

— Written by David Stone with Erich Lage, illustrated by Erich Lage, project designed by James R. Downing

ADD ARTWORK OR PHOTOS FOR A CHANGE OF VIEW

Another way to personalize the room divider is to turn the openings into frames for photos, dried flowers, or almost anything else that can be flattened and fit into the opening. For each opening you wish to fill, just cut ⅛"-thick acrylic plastic into a pair of 5½" squares. To hold the panels in place, drill holes and drive in roundhead screws on all four sides of the opening *(Illustrations, right)*.





This entryway storage system is a snap to create thanks to its simple design.

EASY *entry storage*

Busy families often turn entryways into dumping grounds, but this simple-to-assemble project can help you solve the storage challenges that are common in this high-traffic area.

Whether you come and go through your front, back, or side door, the area just inside it is bound to face some organizational issues. With parents, pets, kids, and friends barging in and out with everything from book bags to groceries, it doesn't take long for entry areas to succumb to clutter.

But our clever storage duo can help keep this area organized and looking great, too. The wall unit sports two bulletin boards, a mirror for quick peeks as you head out the door, and a row of pegs for hanging coats and scarves. Beneath it, a sturdy bench provides a handy place to pull on boots, while open cubes at each end offer additional storage.

- Milk
- Cereal
- juice
GREEN
CRÜN
VERT
GRÖNT
WORLD MARKET
One World. One Store.

Assembling the Storage System

This entry storage system keeps your accessories and necessities in one convenient place, so you can enter the house or dart out the door without any hold-ups. And to accommodate the same busy lifestyle that this system is designed for, the project is quick and simple to assemble.

[2]

For instance, the bench is a hybrid of purchased cubes and a seat that you make from a couple pieces of inexpensive MDF. And the wall unit is created by gluing poplar frame pieces to a plywood backer. You'll simply paint the frames, glue in a couple store-bought cork squares and mirror tiles, and add some pegs that serve as coat hooks. That's all there is to it.

Gather Your Supplies — Starting from the ground up, the first thing you'll need before you begin is a pair of sturdy cubes. The ones shown here are available at Target.com (New Port Open Cube/Distressed Black). Then, to make the bench seat, you'll need ¾" MDF, as well as some wood glue, black paint, and eight 3" panhead sheet metal screws with washers.

For the wall unit, you'll need two 12" cork squares, two 12" mirror tiles, ½" x 1½" and ½" x 3" poplar for the frame, and ½" plywood for the backing board. You'll also need to pick up construction adhesive, five pegs, and two metal hangers for the back.

[1]

Start with the Bench — You want the bench seat to be durable, so it's best to make it from two layers of MDF. To do this, start by cutting two MDF panels that are 16" x 54". Evenly coat one side of one piece with glue, carefully position the panels, and clamp or screw them together. Wipe off any glue squeeze-out, and let it dry.

Next, you'll want to seal the edges of the seat. This will make the two panels appear to be one solid piece, plus it will prevent the MDF edges from soaking up an excessive amount of paint. Just stir up a 2:1 mixture of water and wood glue, brush it on the edges, and give it some time to dry. Then you can coat all surfaces of the seat with black enamel paint.

The cubes we used had a distressed finish. To achieve the same look on the seat of the bench (and later, on the wall unit), gently rub the edges with an abrasive pad so some of the MDF shows through *(Fig. 1)*.

[3]

To mount the seat to the cubes, pre-drill mounting holes *(above left)*. Then clamp the cubes and seat together, and drive in screws with washers *(left)*.

You'll want to distress the finish on the pieces you make, so it matches the finish on the cubes. Just lightly soften the edges of all the painted parts with an abrasive pad.

Once that's done, you can attach the seat of the bench to the two cubes. Lay the cubes on their sides, and drill four holes completely through the top of each *(Fig. 2)*. Position the seat flush with the front and outer edges of the cubes, and use clamps to hold the assembly in place. Then attach the bench seat with sheet metal screws and washers *(Fig. 3)*.

Move to the Wall Unit — With the bench complete, you can get started on the wall unit. Begin by cutting the plywood backer and the rails and stiles to size. The plywood backer is ½" x 16½" x 53". Cut all of the frame pieces from ½" poplar in these dimensions: top rail — 1½" x 54"; bottom rail — 3" x 54"; and four stiles — 1½" x 12".

At this time, you can drill five ½"-diameter holes evenly spaced across the bottom rail to hold the pegs. Then paint all of the frame pieces black. When they're completely dry, distress the edges with an abrasive pad, just like you did earlier on the bench.

Now that everything is cut to size and finished, you can start assembling the wall unit. Mark a line 2½" above the bottom edge of the plywood backer to indicate where to position the bottom rail. Then go ahead and glue the rail in place *(Fig. 4)*. Note: The backer is 1" narrower than the finished frame will be, so the frame pieces will overhang it by ½" all around.

The key to correctly positioning the mirror tiles, cork squares, and vertical stiles is to work from the center out. Keeping that in mind, mark a line in the center of the backer, and position a mirror tile on either side of it *(Fig. 5)*. The mirror tiles can be secured in place with adhesive squares. Then use construction adhesive to adhere a stile along the outside edge of each mirror. The cork squares can then be attached using the same adhesive squares used for the mirrors. Finish up by adhering the remaining two stiles to the outside edges *(Fig. 6)*. Then add the top rail.

To complete the wall unit, glue the pegs into their holes, and attach two picture hangers to the back. Finally, you can mount it over the bench, and load the duo with your family's most frequently used gear.

— Written by Louise Ritchhart, project designed by James R. Downing

personalized placemat PHOTO FRAMES

Nothing draws the eye in a room quite like framed photos. But the snapshots don't have to be the only things that capture attention. You can add character to the frames themselves with colorful, texture-rich placemats.

Displaying framed photos is a popular way to add a personal touch to a home. Of course, you get to show off your favorite photos. But it's also a chance to express your style with the colors, patterns, and textures of the frames.

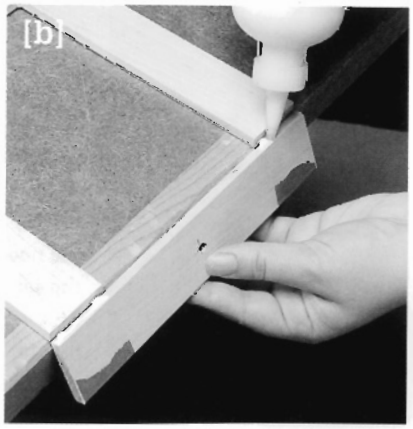
The frames we created for this project are very simple — if you can cut wood to size, then you shouldn't have any trouble making them. Each frame is made from two assemblies, which are glued together with the joints offset for durability. The back assembly is slightly smaller than the front assembly. This automatically creates a recess where a piece of acrylic, your photo, and art board backing can rest. As you see in the *Photo* below, it's all held in place with turnbuttons. And to give the frame some flair, material from a placemat covers the front. For a closer look at the construction of the frames, check out the free, detailed builder's drawings at MyHomeMyStyle.com.

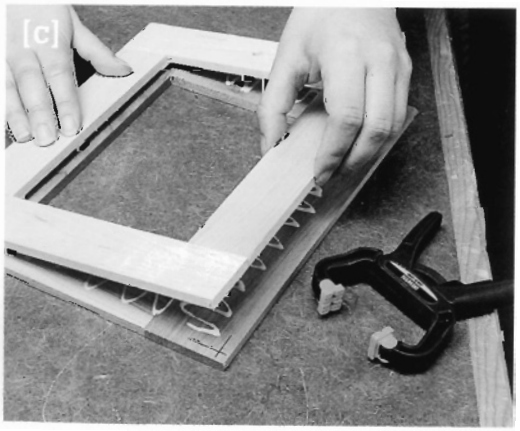
Simple Supplies — All the frame parts are made out of ¼"-thick maple (sold as "hobby stock"). You might have to rip it to the correct width if you can't find it pre-cut. A ¼" wood dowel keeps a frame upright on a table, or a sawtooth picture hanger can be used to turn it into a wall frame. You can cut the acrylic needed for the photo coverings to size or get it cut at a home center. Wood glue and the placemats of your choice complete the supply list.

The project only requires some wide tape, small clamps, and weights for keeping the placemats flat after gluing them to the frames. If you plan to use a dowel to hold your frame up on a table, you'll also need a drill with a ¼" bit.

One of the best things about this project is that it doesn't require any hard-to-find supplies. You can get attractive placemats at just about any store that sells linens, and many of them are inexpensive. We found some for as little as $2 at a discount retailer.

[a]


[b]


[c]

A personalized frame is the perfect place to display your favorite vacation photo. The placemat we chose to decorate this frame was made up of strips that worked perfectly to cover the edges of the frame. We just cut some of the extra strips to fit, leaving us with a clean, professional-looking edge.

Here, we'll show you how to assemble a frame for a vertical 5x7 photo (but of course, it's no trouble to rotate it). We've developed several other sizes and styles, as well, and those builder's drawings are also available online.

1] Start by cutting the parts for the larger front assembly from ¼"-thick maple. Cut two 2" x 10½" vertical rails. Then, cut two 2" x 4½" horizontal rails.

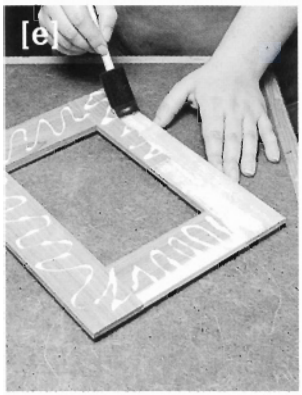
2] When all of the front rails are cut, you can work on the back rails. Cut two 1½" x 8" horizontal rails, and then cut two 1½" x 7" vertical rails.

3] If you're going to add the dowel for setting the frame on a tabletop, measure 4" from the end and ¾" from the bottom of one of the 8"-long horizontal back rails. Mark the spot, and then drill a ¼" hole.

4] The next step is putting the rails together, starting with the front assembly. We used a unique process to do so, with tape to hold the pieces together as they dry. Position the two horizontal rails between the vertical rails, and then pull the tape taut over the seams to hold them, as shown in *Photo A* on page 37.

5] Now you can glue the rails together, with the horizontal rails still in position between the vertical ones. The tape makes this possible without misaligning the pieces. Bend the rails apart as shown in *Photo B*. The rails will still be attached by the tape. Apply glue along the length of the seam, and then bend the rails back to sandwich the glue in the seam. Then repeat this procedure to glue the rest of the seams.

6] Put tape over the other face of the newly glued seams, so that all of the seams are covered on both sides. This will pull the frame flat and keep the rails in place. Now repeat the entire process for the back assembly, this time attaching the vertical rails between



the two horizontal rails. Then let both frame assemblies dry.

7] Remove the tape from both assemblies when the glue is dry. On the front assembly, measure ¼" from each outside corner, and mark the points in the corners where the measurements meet. Apply glue inside the marks as shown in *Photo C*. Center the back piece with the corners on the marks, then use small clamps to secure the pieces *(Photo D)*. Wipe any excess glue away, and let the frame dry.

8] Once the glue is dry, you can apply the placemat covering. To attach the placemat, use two pieces of scrap plywood at least as big as your frame to serve as the clamping plates. You'll sandwich the frame and placemat between these plates. Lay the placemat facedown on one of them.

9] Apply glue to the front frame face using a foam brush *(Photo E)*, and then set the frame on the placemat. If your placemat has a pattern, make sure you line up the frame as shown in *Photo F*.

10] Put the other clamping plate over the frame, and evenly distribute weights, such as paint cans, on top to ensure good adhesion *(Photo G)*.

11] After the glue dries, cut around the frame edges with a knife *(Photo H)*. If you use fabric placemats that fray when you cut them, coat the ends with clear-drying glue or liquid seam sealer. Finish the frame edges with leftover placemat strips, or paint them.

12] Now all that's left is getting the frame ready to display. Install turnbuttons on the back of the frame, lay the acrylic piece into the frame, and then secure the photo in place with art

board backing. Put the ¼" dowel into the hole, or attach a sawtooth picture hanger to make it a wall frame. Either way, you can display it alone or with others to create a focal point.

— Written by Alyssa McNab, project designed by James R. Downing

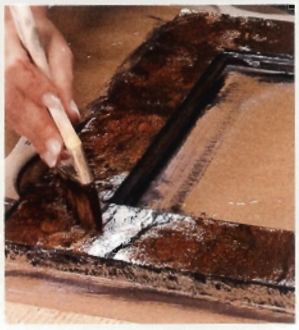
www.MyHomeMyStyle.com

ONLINE EXTRAS

» *Complete Builder's Plans*

Half the fun of this project is finding placemats that both complement your home and make your photos stand out. You can buy placemats made from many different materials, such as straw, faux leather, and even twigs. We found that placemats with a lot of texture made the best-looking frames.

1] Apply joint compound over cheesecloth. Then peel it back to reveal the interesting texture.



2] Dab on two colors of stain with a chip brush, and blend them together with a rag.

Aged Leather

The secret to this look is cheesecloth. Applying thinned drywall joint compound over cheesecloth results in a leather-like texture beneath. After peeling it back (*Fig. 1*), use two stains to create the variegated topcoat (*Fig. 2*).

INSTANT MAKEOVERS:

Faux-Finish Frames

A stylish, custom-made picture frame would cost big bucks in a frame shop. But you can take on the project yourself by making a basic MDF frame and applying one of these faux-finishing techniques. With common items like paint, glaze, and drywall joint compound (thinned with primer, 3:1), you can create a distinctive frame that looks as good as the photograph it surrounds.

The frames are basically just rails and stiles that are cut to size and glued together. For decorative touches, we added poplar accent strips to the edges of the aged leather frame and corner blocks to the woven fabric frame. Each is assembled with butt joints, so you don't have to fuss with miters. And a simple rabbet accepts the glass, photo, optional mat, and foamboard backing. After a basecoat of paint, you're ready to apply the faux finish. You can find full plans for each of these frames at MyHomeMyStyle.com.

1] Use a freehand approach to layer on joint compound with a putty knife or scraper.

2] Achieve the metallic effect by dabbing black glaze over a layer of silver paint.

Mottled Metal

This textured metal finish is the simplest of the three. Apply thinned drywall joint compound directly to the MDF frame (*Fig. 1*), leaving some parts bare to add depth. After giving it a coat of paint, dab on black glaze with a coarse chip brush (*Fig. 2*). Then use a dry rag to mop up excess glaze for a multi-toned look.

1] Create the texture by making a smooth, sweeping motion with a graining comb.

2] Use a chip brush to dab glaze onto the frame for a multi-toned look.

Woven Fabric

The illusion of fabric is created on this frame with a rubber graining comb (MisterArt.com). After completely coating the frame with thinned joint compound, comb it in one direction, and then the opposite direction, to produce the look (*Fig. 1*). Sand down any high spots, then glaze the frame as shown in *Fig. 2*.

A Young Merlot
2 0 0 6
Yellow Ta
CAPOLA

simple shelving

Style plus function — that's what these simple shelving options are all about. Not only do they allow you to display your treasures, but the shelves themselves are worth a second look.

44
Glass Display Shelving
Distinctive doesn't mean difficult or expensive with these glass display shelves. Make their clean look yours this weekend.

48
Curved-Rail Wine Rack
Store a few bottles of your favorite wine and add a stylish touch to your kitchen or dining room decor with this curved-rail wine rack.

+

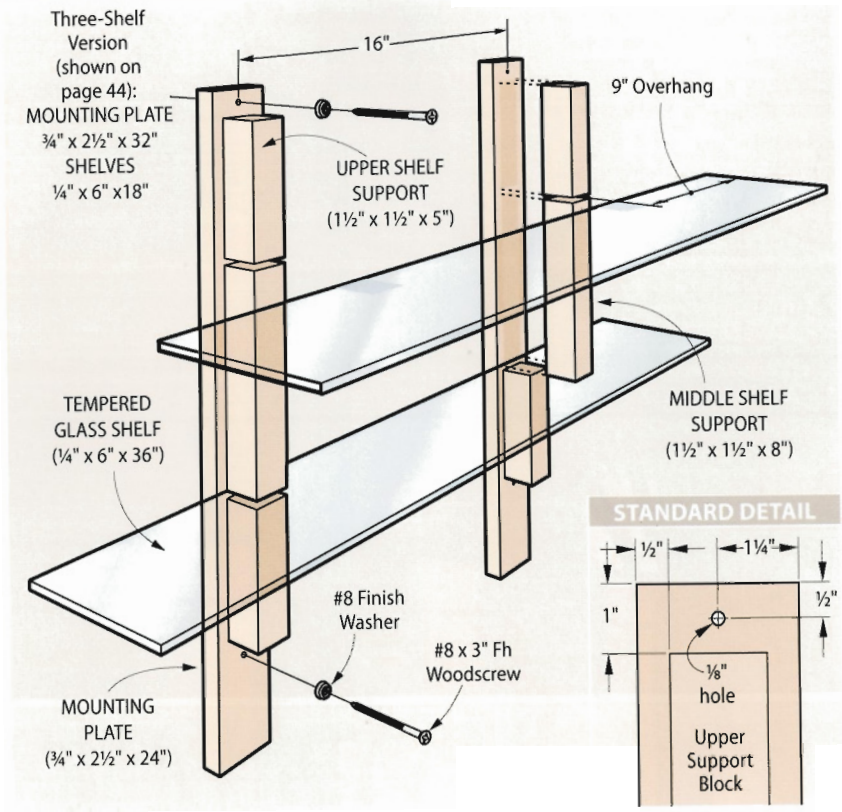
52 | **Over-the-Top Shelves**
Improve your outlook by adding these unique display shelves above the windows in your home.

A TOUCH OF GLASS

display shelving

Distinctive doesn't mean difficult or expensive with these glass display shelves. You can make either of the versions shown here in a couple of hours — for less than $50.

CONSTRUCTION VIEW



Making the Shelves

In addition to its stylish good looks, this glass shelf has a simple design that makes it extremely easy to build.

For larger walls, you may want to make the version shown here with two shelf standards (vertical supports) and a pair of 36"-long shelves. For narrower walls, try the single-standard version with three 18"-long shelves that's shown in the *Inset Photo* on page 44.

Round Up Materials — Either way, it won't take long to round up the materials. We used ¼" tempered glass for the shelves, which we purchased from a glass shop for less than $30. The wood parts are poplar, which is available at most home centers. Poplar is a pale, greenish-white wood that doesn't have much character. But applying a dark-colored stain produces a warm, rich tone *(see Staining Poplar on page 47)*.

Start with the Standards — With the materials in hand, you're ready to get started on the shelf standards. Each standard consists of a vertical mounting plate and three thick shelf support blocks *(Construction View)*. The glass shelves simply slide into narrow slots between the blocks.

To make the mounting plates, crosscut a 24"-long piece from a 6-ft. 1x6, and rip two 2½"-wide strips from it. Then drill mounting holes, as shown in the *Standard Detail*.

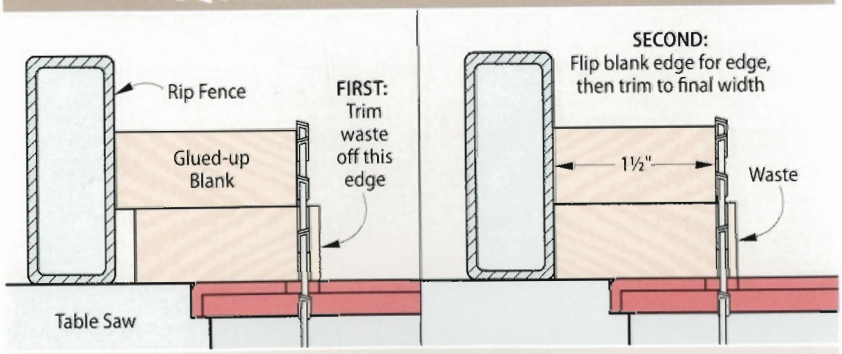
With the mounting plates done, it's time to focus on the shelf supports. These are 1½"-thick wood blocks that hold the shelves in place. If you have 1½"-thick stock, you can go ahead and use it. If not, it's just a matter of gluing and clamping two pieces of ¾"-thick stock face-to-face.

If you decide to glue up the blocks, you'll find that tightening the clamps can make the pieces twist out of alignment. So it's best to glue up pieces that are about ½" wider than needed. Just be sure that one piece overlaps the edge of the other by about ¼" along its entire length. This way, you'll have a continuous straight edge to guide against the rip fence. Then rip the glued-up blank to width on the table saw *(Squaring Up a Glued-Up Blank)*.

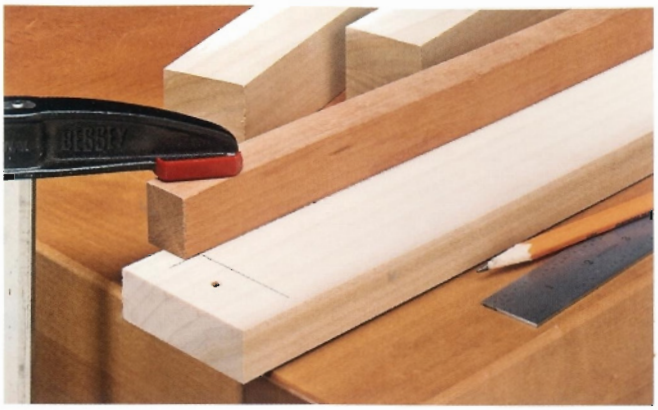
Now you can cut the shelf supports to length. To provide plenty of height for items on the bottom shelf, the middle support is 3" longer than the other two. Note that the three-shelf version has two middle supports.

At this point, you're ready to glue the shelf supports to the mounting plates.

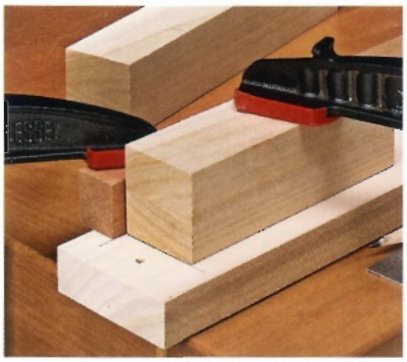
SQUARING UP A GLUED-UP BLANK



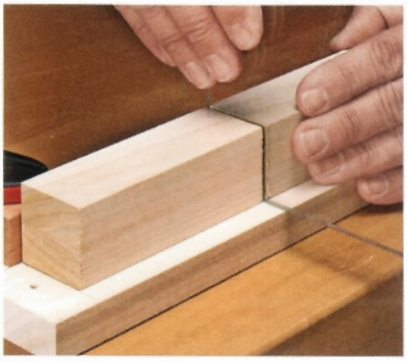
To square up the blank for the support blocks, set either one of the overhanging edges against the rip fence, and trim the opposite edge *(left)*. Then flip the blank, and trim it to final width *(right)*.



1] Mark a line to accurately position the upper shelf support. A scrap clamped to the mounting plate aligns the blocks vertically.



2] Set the upper block against the scrap, align it to the mark, and glue it in place.



3] Use the glass shelves as spacers to position the middle and lower supports.

Transform the pale color of poplar *(left)* into the warm look of walnut *(right)* with the staining technique shown below.

For appearance (and to prevent the shelves from binding), the supports must align both vertically *and* from one standard to another. The tips in *Figs. 1 and 2* above help accomplish that.

The alignment of the shelf supports is important, but it's the spacing between them that's critical. The goal is to get a snug fit. Of course, if it's too tight, the shelves won't fit. Too loose, and the shelves will wobble. To ensure you end up with a perfect fit, use the glass shelves as spacers when positioning the support blocks *(Fig. 3)*.

Install Shelves — After applying a stain *(below)*, it's time to install the shelves. To help secure them, apply a dab of silicone to the back edge of each shelf where it will contact the standards. Then, working on a flat surface, wiggle the shelves into place. Finally, mount the standards to the wall with a couple screws and washers.

— Written by Tim Robertson, illustrated by Kurt Schultz, project designed by James R. Downing

STAINING POPLAR

Poplar can be tricky to stain because it has a tendency to blotch. And the dark-colored stain we used would make that even more conspicuous.

To minimize the blotching, sand the surface using progressively finer grits of sandpaper (120- to 220-grit).

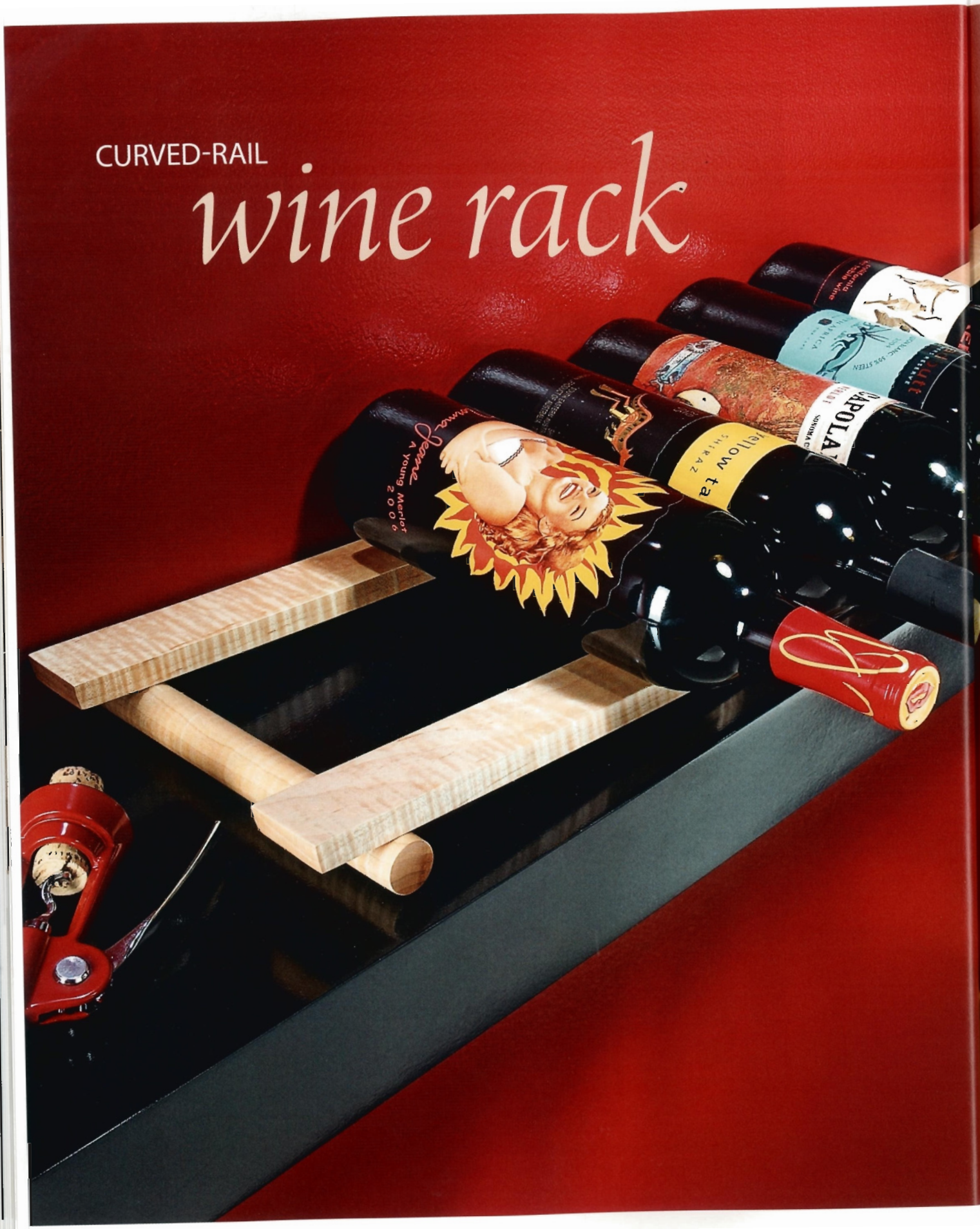
Another trick to reduce blotching is to use a gel stain *(Figs. 1 and 2)*. It's thicker than other stains, so it won't penetrate the wood fibers as deeply. That results in a more uniform color.

1] Apply a liberal amount of gel stain with a cloth, keeping it out of the slots between the supports.

2] After wiping off the excess, use a dry foam brush to remove any built-up stain in the corners.

CURVED-RAIL

wine rack



Store your wines in style on this elegant wall-mounted rack. The curved rails cradle several of your favorite bottles, and the shelf provides additional space for accessories or display.

With its elegantly curved maple rails and handsome gloss-black shelf, this wine rack is as much about style as it is storage.

But don't let its sophisticated appearance, or the lack of visible wall supports, fool you. You'll find the construction process is surprisingly easy. And the rack that results will be strong enough to hold several bottles of wine, plus a few accessories or decorations.

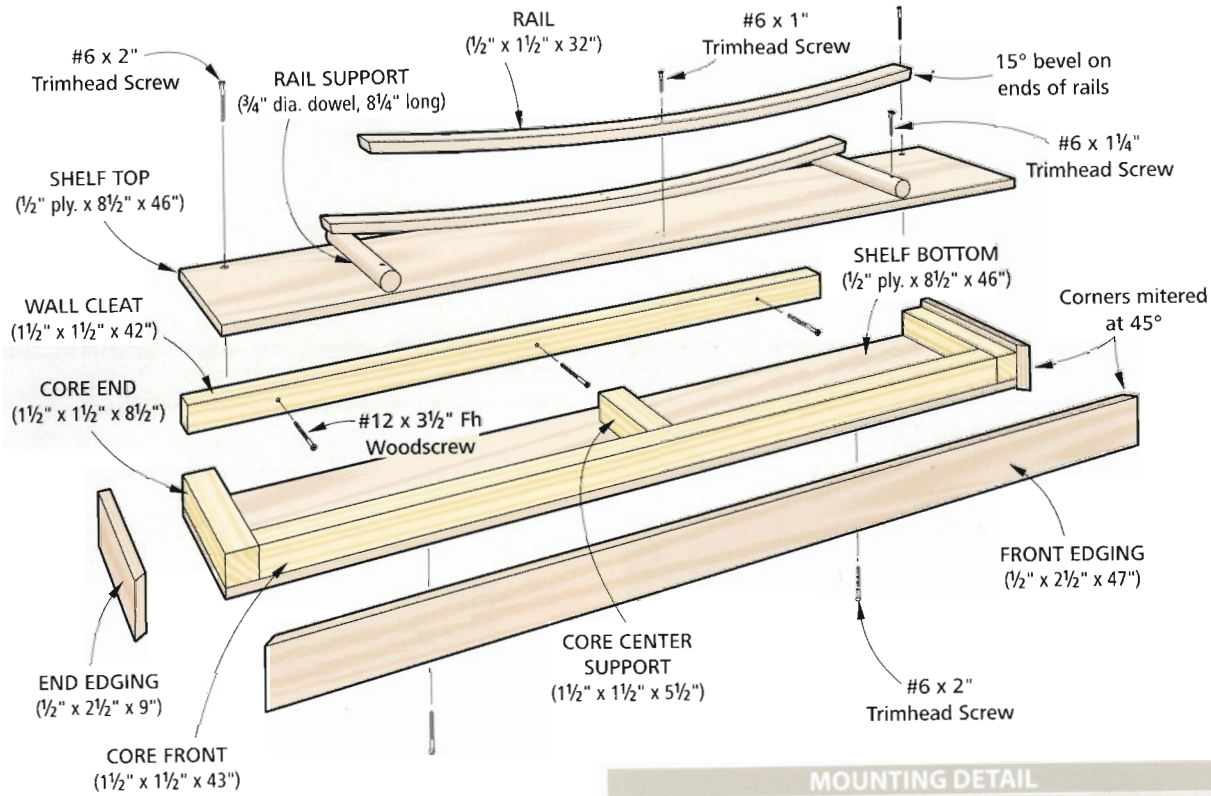
The shelf component of this project looks similar to expensive store-bought varieties, but the look is easy to achieve yourself. You'll create a hollow box out of plywood and 2x2s, then add a few pieces of poplar to finish off the edges. And it mounts to your wall with a simple cleat.

Shaping the rails atop the shelf is no challenge either. The two strips of maple start out flat. When fastened to dowels attached to the shelf, however, they flex into a gentle curve.

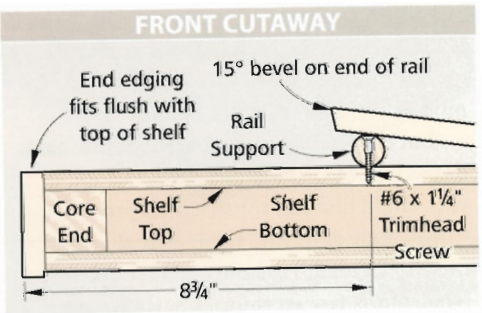
What makes this project even more distinctive is the finish. The natural grain of the maple contrasts with the gloss-black paint on the shelf for a unique look and style.

On the following pages, you'll find step-by-step instructions that you can easily work through in a matter of hours to build your own curved-rail wine rack.

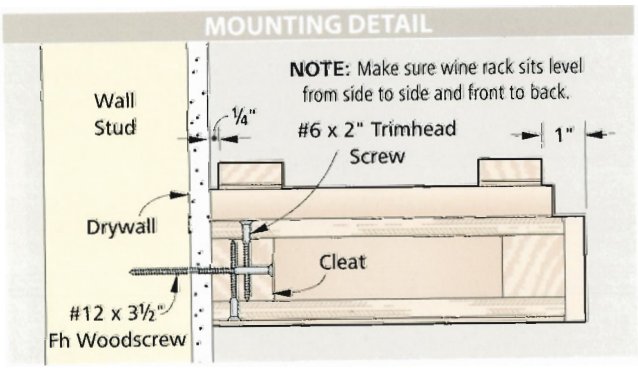
CONSTRUCTION VIEW



FRONT CUTAWAY



MOUNTING DETAIL



An Easy-to-Build Wine Rack

The supplies for this wine rack —2x2s, ½" plywood, maple, and ¾" dowels — are easy to find at your local home center. Then you can easily put them together in the following steps:

1] Begin by cutting the shelf top and bottom to size from ½"-thick plywood.

2] From a straight pine 2x2 (which is actually 1½" x 1½"), cut the shelf core front, ends, and center support to the lengths shown in the *Construction View*.

3] Lay the shelf bottom on your work surface with the good face down. Then glue and clamp the core pieces to the shelf bottom. Make sure the core pieces don't stick out beyond the edge and ends of the plywood.

4] Before the glue dries, apply more glue to the top of the core pieces, and lay the shelf top in place. Verify that all the edges and ends of the shelf top and bottom are aligned. Then clamp the assembly together.

5] After the glue dries, it's time to add the front and end edging that covers the shelf core. The edging is made from strips of ½"-thick poplar. Notice that these pieces are mitered at the corners. The easiest way to get tight-fitting corner joints is to start at one end, and then work your way around to the other end — mitering, measuring, and cutting each piece as you go. Once you have all the pieces cut to fit, glue and clamp the edging to the shelf.

6] Now you can make the two rails that cradle the wine bottles. They're cut to length from ½"-thick, 1½"-wide strips of maple. You'll notice, though,

On this wine rack, wood dowels lift the ends of the rails to establish their graceful curve, while a slight bevel on the ends of the rails adds subtle style.

that the ends aren't square — they have a slight bevel that adds a subtle but stylish touch *(Front Cutaway)*. So before cutting the rails, set your miter saw (or table saw) to 15°. Then you can cut the rails to length.

7] To complete the rails, drill counterbored shank holes for #6 x 1" trimhead screws that will attach the rails to the shelf. Lay the rails on the shelf so the rear rail is ¼" from the back edge, the front rail is 1" from the front edge of the shelf, and both are centered lengthwise. Then mark through the shank holes to locate pilot hole locations in the shelf. Drill the pilot holes, but don't attach the rails yet.

8] While you have the drill handy, drill holes for the screws that attach the shelf to the wall cleat later.

9] At this point, you can cut the two rail supports to length from a ¾" maple dowel. Lay out and drill counterbored pilot holes through the rail supports, 1" in from each end. Then position the supports on the shelf, and mark the locations of pilot holes for mounting screws. Drill the pilot holes, but don't attach the supports just yet.

10] Now you can paint and finish the wine rack. Start by sanding everything through 180-grit. Use wood filler to conceal the seam and any gaps between the poplar and plywood, and then sand these areas smooth. Next, spray a coat of primer on the shelf. Once the primer is dry, spray on two coats of gloss-black paint, followed by two or three spray coats of clear gloss lacquer. For the rails and rail supports, just spray on a couple coats of the clear lacquer to allow the maple to show through.

11] After the paint and lacquer dry, you can go ahead and mount the rail supports to the shelf with screws, like you see in the far left *Photo*. Then set the rails on the supports, apply some pressure to bow the wood, and attach the rails with screws *(Photo, near left)*.

12] Now that the wall rack is complete, you're finally ready to mount the shelf. To do this, start by cutting a cleat to length from a 2x2. Then mount the cleat to the wall using 3½" woodscrews *(Mounting Detail)*. It's important to make sure that the cleat is level and that it's secured to at least two wall studs, preferably three. Now just fit the shelf over the cleat, and check to make sure it sits level from front to back. Then you can secure it with two 2" screws from above and two more from below.

—Written by David Stone, illustrated by Matt Scott, project designed by John Doyle

Position each rail support over the pilot holes drilled in the shelf earlier. Secure each support with trimhead screws.

Bend each rail using your hand or a clamp until the rail rests against the shelf. Then drive 1" screws into the mounting holes.

Classic Corbels

Add old-world elegance with a shelf that's accented with leaf-motif molding and sitting on carved corbels. Start by wrapping a maple 1x6 with molding. Miter the molding pieces to length, and then glue them to the shelf so that the shelf is centered on the height of the molding. Then drive screws through the shelf and into each corbel. Coat everything with clear polyurethane. Mount the shelf using the corbels' built-in keyhole hangers.

INSTANT MAKEOVERS:

Over-the-Top Window Shelves

Window treatments are a great way to personalize your home. But traditional treatments such as drapes and valances just cover up the window. And unless you lay out big money for custom coverings, you'll have to settle for off-the-shelf items that look just like the ones everyone else has. These window treatments break away from that mold with an idea that's quite literally over the top.

To add a bit of interest to these windows, we installed unique display shelves. They take advantage of that narrow space above the window by turning it into a decorative highlight instead of a decorating dilemma. Plus, they add some useful storage and display space in an area that usually goes to waste. You can use one of our three inexpensive, easy-to-make ideas — one traditional, one whimsical, and one in between — or shelve them in favor of your own design.

Twisting Tradition

Mix metal rope-twist brackets, a piece of poplar, and decorative molding to create a striking shelf. Start by ripping a 1x8 poplar board to width to match the shelf brackets. Cut rope-twist molding to fit around the board, mitering the corners for seamless joints. Now glue on the molding, so the top edge sits flush with the upper face of the board. Then stain and finish the shelf. Finally, you can install the brackets, and then mount the shelf to the wall above the window.

Dolphin Display

Catch a fun wave in a kid's room with this ocean-inspired shelf. We offer the patterns and drawings you'll need on our Web site, MyHomeMyStyle.com. All the parts are made from poplar boards, and the wave and dolphin shapes are easy to cut out with a jigsaw. The shelf and bracket parts can be cut with a table saw. Then it's just a matter of softening sharp edges with sandpaper, and applying colorful glossy paint. The parts are assembled and mounted with screws and nails.

MISSION
BEVERAGES
headbutt

inviting lighting

High-class lighting can be simpler and less expensive to create than it seems. With your own personal touch of creativity, these options can completely transform a once-dreary room into a bright, unique space.

56
Sleek & Stylish Desk Lamp
Lighting isn't all about function. Bring style to the office with a custom desk lamp. All you need is an LED light, some aluminum tubing, and a little ingenuity.

60
Electrifying Light Bar
With two types of specialized lighting and some decorative built-up molding, you'll be able to add a stunning, functional accent to any room.

68 | **Powerful Pendants**
Think outside the box to create even more great pendant possibilities.

64
Pendant Lights
Make the lighting in your home a conversation starter with these unique, inexpensive, and easy-to-build pendant lights.

SLEEK AND STYLISH desk lamp

When it comes to desk lighting, style doesn't have to take a backseat to function. You can make your own eye-catching lamp from an LED under-cabinet fixture and simple materials such as aluminum tubes and a poplar base.

The role of a desk lamp seems simple: It must adequately illuminate your work area. But interior designers will tell you that lighting is one of a room's most overlooked features. By purchasing a run-of-the-mill desk lamp, you're cheating yourself of an opportunity to add a creative edge to your decor.

LED desk lamps offer bright lighting as well as a sleek, sophisticated look you just can't get using conventional bulbs. But pricey LED models could cost you $100 or more. That's why we've created this contemporary lamp for DIYers who won't settle for expensive off-the-shelf lamps.

If you've never worked with lighting before, you couldn't find a much easier introduction. Since the project calls for a bright LED fixture from the home center (UtiliTech, #288741), the difficult wiring is done for you. Plus, the lamp's base and structure are easy to assemble from poplar and aluminum tubes.

You'll just need a jigsaw to cut a square hole in the base, and a hacksaw or miter saw to cut the aluminum. A drill press makes quick work of drilling straight holes through the aluminum, but if you don't have access to one, you can use a portable drill guide. To finish up, you'll cut the LED fixture's power cord, feed it through the tubes, and splice it back together with heat-shrink tubing *(see page 59)*. Full plans that show all the part dimensions and hole locations are available at MyHomeMyStyle.com.

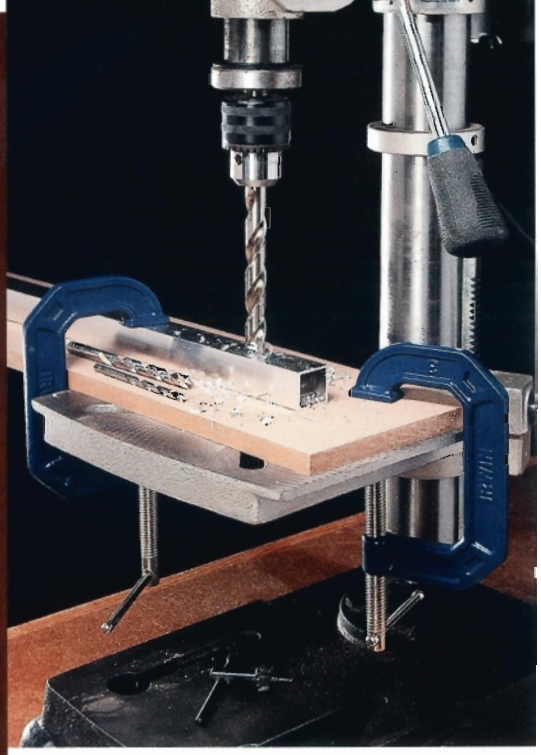
CREATE THE BASE

First, cut the lamp's base out of poplar. Eventually you'll cut the base to 7" long, but for now start with a piece that is at least 12" long. The extra length will allow you to clamp the board in place while you cut the hole for the square tubing.

To cut the square hole, lay it out, and then drill a ⅜" hole inside the square. This provides a place to insert your jigsaw blade for cutting out the rest of the square *(Photo, page 58)*. When you're done, test-fit the square tube, and sand or file the opening to get a snug fit. Then cut the base to 7" long.

DESK LAMP MATERIALS

- UtiliTech #288741 LED light (available in Lowe's stores)
- ½" round aluminum tube, 18" long
- 1" square aluminum tube, 16" long
- ½" x 5½" poplar
- (2) #6 x ¼" sheet metal screws
- (1) #6 x ½" sheet metal screw
- 3/16" vacuum hose, 1-ft. long
- ⅛" heat-shrink tubing
- (4) ½"-diameter stick-on feet
- Paint
- Spray-on lacquer



After cutting the aluminum body to length, a drill press makes quick work of drilling straight holes through the tube.

PREPARE THE LAMP'S BODY

Now that the base is cut, turn to the square aluminum tube that will serve as the "body" of the lamp. You'll want to make sure that your cut line is straight and clean on this piece since the bottom of the tube will be flush with the bottom of the base. That's easy to accomplish with a miter saw. You could also use a square to mark all the way around the body, and then cut it carefully with a hacksaw.

Once the body has been cut to length, you're ready to drill a hole through it to accommodate the ½" round tubing that will act as the "arm" of the lamp. This is probably the trickiest step of the project because the holes on opposite sides of the body must align perfectly. If they don't, the arm will be tilted. Even this step isn't that hard, though, if you use the right tools and techniques.

First, mark the location of the hole on the lamp's body. Then use a drill press to create the hole through the body, as shown in the *Photo* above. Another option is to use a drill guide, which you can purchase through retailers like Lee Valley (LeeValley.com) or Rockler (Rockler.com).

Next, drill two more holes in the body to accommodate the LED light's power cord. You'll only need to drill these holes into one side of the tube instead of drilling them all the way through the tube. One of the holes is below the arm hole, and the other is near the bottom. Then turn the body, and drill a ⅛" hole into the side. This hole will accommodate a screw later to secure the arm to the body.

CONNECT THE BODY & BASE

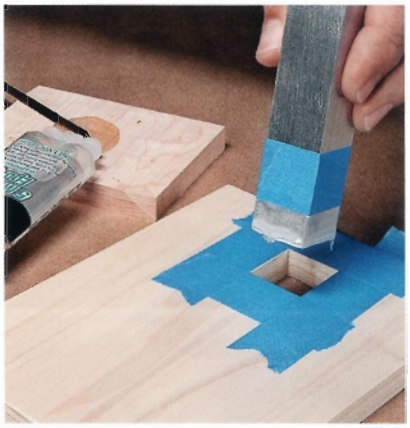
Since all of the holes are now drilled in the lamp's body, you can polish it with 400-grit sandpaper. If you want a shiny finish, coat the body with spray-on lacquer and allow it to dry before moving on to the next step.

Once the lacquer is dry, attach the body in its hole in the base with quick-set epoxy *(Photo, right)*. To keep the epoxy from getting on your other project parts, tape them off before you adhere them. The epoxy sets quickly, so you won't have a lot of time to align the body and the base. Make sure the lamp's body is immediately positioned square with the base.

CUT & DRILL THE ARM

At this point, you can cut the ½" round tube to length, so it can serve as the lamp's arm. Next, you need to mark mounting holes for the LED fixture. Drawing a straight line on a round tube can be difficult, so we came up with a trick that helped us get the holes aligned. Just use a permanent marker to draw a 7"-long line running parallel to the arm *(Photo, top of page 59)*. Position the LED light so that the mounting holes are on the line, and use them as guides to mark their locations on the arm. Then drill the holes.

You'll find that it's much easier to screw the LED fixture to the lamp's arm if you create threads in the holes that you just drilled. You can do this by turning a #6 x ¼" sheet metal screw into a hole until you can't turn it further, backing it out, and then turning it into the hole a bit more. Repeat this process until the holes are threaded. When you're finished, mark and drill the hole on the arm that the LED fixture's cord will fit through.



Use a jigsaw *(top photo)* to cut the square hole in the base. Then mask off the exposed surfaces, and join the project parts with epoxy *(above)*.

ATTACH THE ARM

Once those holes are drilled in the arm, you're almost ready to attach it to the body. But before you do, sand the arm with 400-grit sandpaper and coat it with spray-on lacquer, just as you did with the lamp's body.

When the lacquer is completely dry, attach the LED fixture to the arm with #6 x ¼" sheet metal screws. Then slide the arm through the ½" hole in the body. Turn the arm until the LED fixture is parallel with your work surface. When the fixture is in place, use the ⅛" hole in the body as a guide

You can align the mounting holes for the LED light by marking a straight line on the lamp's arm. Drawing a straight line on a round tube may seem difficult, but try our trick: Simply hold the arm steady, lay a permanent marker flat on your work surface, and slide the marker along the tube for a perfectly parallel line. Then mark the mounting holes on that line.

to drill a 3/32" hole into the arm.Then use a #6 x ½" sheet metal screw to secure the arm to the body.

Now that the lamp is assembled, you can sand and paint the base. Just be sure to tape off the body of the lamp first, so you won't get any paint on it. When the paint is dry, add stick-on feet to the bottom of the base to protect your desk from scratches.

INSTALL THE WIRING

With the base, body, and arm connected, you just need to thread the LED fixture's power cord through the arm and body. You obviously can't thread the cord through the arm and body when it's still attached to the transformer, so you'll have to use wire cutters to cut the cord a few inches from the transformer.

Later, you'll splice the cord back together with heat-shrink tubing as shown below. But first, you'll need to protect the cord from damage at the points where it threads through holes in the aluminum.

The solution is to slip pieces of 3/16" vacuum hose, which you can purchase at an auto parts store, over the cord in those places. This tubing will keep the cord from fraying. Once the first section of vacuum hose is in place, thread the cut end of the cord through the hole in the arm and out the other end. Continue slipping pieces of vacuum hose over the cord and threading it through each hole.

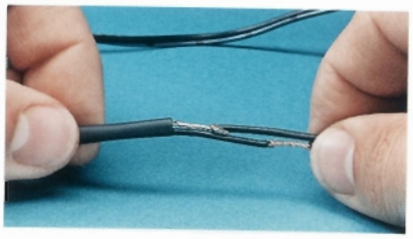
After the cord has gone through the lamp body, splice it back together with the cord that's connected to the transformer as shown below. Then you're ready to use your bright and stylish LED desk lamp.

— Written by Alyssa McNab, project designed by James R. Downing

www.MyHomeMyStyle.com
ONLINE EXTRAS
» Builder's Plans: Stylish Desk Lamp

SPLICING WIRES 101

1] Slit the two wires, and cut them apart so they're offset. You don't want both wires spliced side-by-side. Strip the wires until ½" of each is exposed. Slip heat-shrink tubing onto the cord, and then twist the wires back together.



2] Now you can slide the heat-shrink tubing into place over the splice. You'll want to make sure the tubing is long enough to cover both of the splices. Because the light fixture is low-voltage, soldering won't be necessary.

3] To finish everything up, you can use a kitchen match to heat the tubing, holding the flame directly under it. (Just be careful not to scorch the tubing.) This secures the tubing permanently over the cord to mend the cut.

SOHO

ELECTRIFYING *light bar*

Add drama to any room with this simple lighting project. All it takes to turn on the style are a few pine boards and some off-the-shelf lighting from the home center.

Decorative moldings and accent lighting are both powerful features that completely transform the look and feel of a room. But if you were to combine these two elements, just imagine the dramatic impact. That's exactly what we accomplished with this unique "light bar."

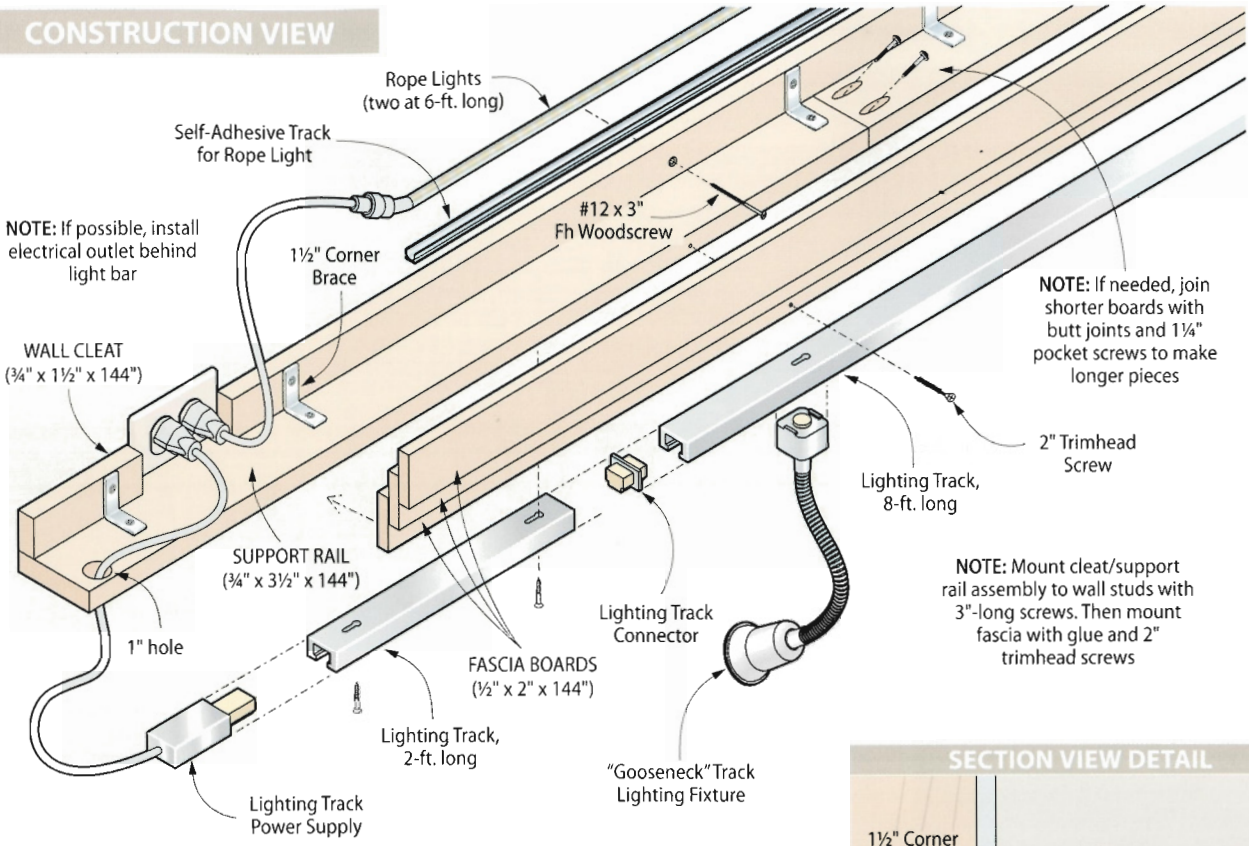
Simple Project, Amazing Look — Our "bar" consists of pine boards that are assembled to form a built-up molding, though you can create other styles just as easily. This molding houses two types of lighting: accent and ambient lighting.

Accent Lighting — Underneath the bar, we attached a track light system. It accepts flexible "gooseneck" light fixtures that highlight special pieces of art you have on display. Other fixtures can also be used to create different visual effects.

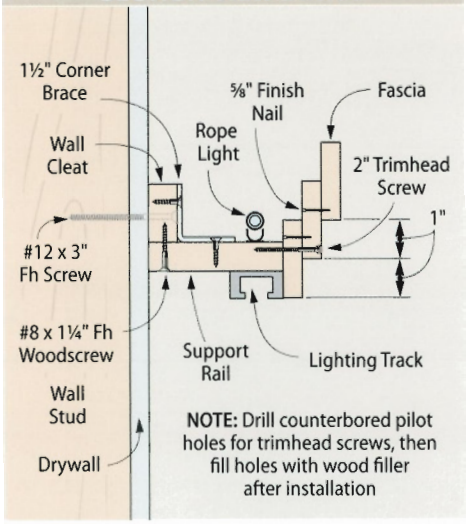
Ambient Lighting — Above the bar, an attractive wash of light illuminates the wall and ceiling. This "ambient" lighting is created by LED rope lights, which are mounted to the bar in a self-adhesive track. (To learn more about both kinds of lighting, see page 63.)

All told, the material to create this light bar cost around $100. Not bad for a project that totally transforms a room.

CONSTRUCTION VIEW



SECTION VIEW DETAIL



Build Your Own Light Bar

Before you begin building your light bar, you need to decide how long it will be. We made ours about 12 feet long to span a single wall. You could also "wrap" an entire room with light bars, or make shorter bars for specific areas.

Assemble the fascia upside down, using a spacer to create the reveals and scrap blocks to steady the assembly.

Electrical requirements also need to be taken into account before building the light bar. We recommend installing an outlet behind the bar to hide wires from the track and rope lighting *(Construction View, above)*. You'll also want to install light switches in a convenient location.

As for the parts of the light bar, they consist of a 1x2 wall cleat, a 1x4 support rail that holds the fascia and track lighting, and three ½"-thick boards that get built up in "steps" to form the fascia.

When selecting boards for your bar, there are a couple of things you'll want to keep in mind. First, if you're planning to install a long bar, you may need to make long pieces from shorter boards. To do that, simply butt short pieces together, and join them with pocket screws.

You might also have a hard time finding straight boards in the required widths for this project. If that's the case, you can just purchase wider stock and rip it to width using a table saw.

The complete instructions for building the bar shown above are covered in the following steps.

Also, see the top of page 63 for a couple of alternative design ideas.

1] The first thing you'll need to do is cut the cleat, support rail, and "stepped" fascia boards to size using a table saw and miter saw.

2] If you're planning to create a long bar by butting the pieces together, stagger the crosscuts, so they don't align from one piece to the next. (This will give you the strongest possible assembly.) Now drill pocket holes

at the butt joints, and drive pocket screws to create the long boards. Fill and sand any gaps between the boards.

3] Dry-clamp the cleat and support rail, and drill pilot holes through the underside of the support rail and into the cleat. Now you can glue and screw the two parts together *(Section View)*.

4] To reinforce the assembly, screw a corner brace between the support rail and the cleat every 18" or so.

5] Now it's time to make the "stepped" fascia. It consists of three long strips that are glued and nailed together. The tricky part is keeping these pieces aligned as you assemble them. To do that, we used a 1"-wide spacer to establish the "reveal" between each strip. It's also a good idea to have a few ½"-thick scrap blocks on hand to prevent the assembly from tipping as you glue and nail the fascia together *(Photo, below left)*.

6] Next, clamp the fascia to the cleat/support rail assembly. Drill pilot holes in the fascia to accept trimhead screws, but don't mount the fascia yet. Now prime and paint both assemblies.

7] Attach the track lighting you've chosen to the underside of the support rail with screws, and attach the rope lighting to the top of the rail using self-adhesive mounting tracks.

8] Now you can recruit a friend, level the cleat/support rail assembly, and attach it to the wall by driving a few long screws into wall studs.

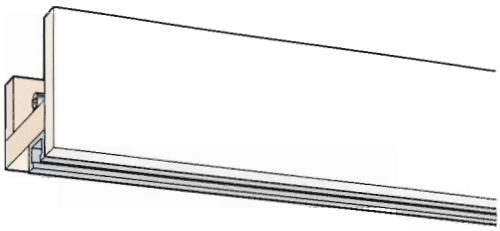
9] Next, position the fascia on the support rail, and attach it by driving screws into the holes drilled earlier.

10] Fill the holes with wood filler, sand the surface smooth, and apply the final coat of paint to the fascia.

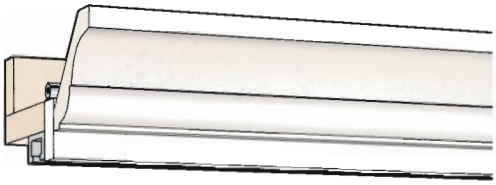
11] Accessorize the track with light fixtures of your choice.

— Written by Wyatt Myers, illustrated by Erich Lage, project designed by James R. Downing

DESIGN OPTIONS



Flat Fascia. To create a contemporary look, use a single board for the fascia rather than the built-up "steps."



Classic Crown. For a more traditional look, attach crown molding to a front cleat that also hides the track light.

TWO GREAT WAYS TO LIGHT IT RIGHT

Two types of specialty lighting make these light bars possible: track lighting and rope lighting.

Track Lighting — As its name implies, track lighting consists of a track and an assortment of fixtures that plug into it *(Photo, right)*. You can buy similar fixtures at home centers and through online companies. The track is available in different lengths, and you can add connectors to put two or more tracks together to cover a long run.

As far as fixtures go, you have quite a few options. We decided to go with "gooseneck" lights that allowed us to bend them away from the wall and then back toward it to highlight artwork.

Rope Lighting — To create ambient light in the room, we relied on LED rope lighting. The lights come in various lengths and connect at the ends *(Photo, right)*. The ropes fit in a self-adhesive track that's sold alongside the lights.

Connectors on the rope lights let you plug in additional lights to create a rope up to 250 feet long.

BEVERAGES

ORDINARY OBJECTS

extraordinary LIGHTS

Turn everyday objects like these canning jars into attention-getting pendant lights. All you need are a few tools, an inexpensive light fixture, and a healthy dose of imagination.

Lighting is one of those decorating touches that can really make the look of a room. Unfortunately, lighting can also break your decorating budget, especially if you want something more original than the off-the-shelf fixtures found in home centers.

But what if you could have one-of-a-kind pendant lights at home for as little as $40 each? By making your own, you can. The key is to start with a pre-wired pendant light fixture. We found one at Lowe's that comes with a cover plate, an adjustable-length cord, and a light socket (*Buyer's Guide on page 67*). It can be mounted to the junction box in your ceiling without complicated electrical work.

Once you have your fixture, you can go out and find objects that can be turned into interesting pendants. The pendants at left provide a great example of what's possible. They're made from half-gallon canning jars from the early 20th century. We found them at a local antique shop, complete with lids, for about $5 each.

The jars also came with loads of personality. Bubbles and inconsistencies are abundant in the old glass, and the logos ("Atlas," in this case) are unique. Ample supplies of these jars are readily available through eBay and other online venues, as well.

Transforming the jars into pendant lights is surprisingly simple. We'll walk you through the process on the following pages.

Canning jars aren't your only lighting option, either. You can find all sorts of off-the-wall items in antique shops, and even big retail stores, that would make fun and functional pendants, as well. Variations are simple to come up with, so just think of the canning jar pendant lights as inspiration for you to shed your own light on this project.

1] Position the jar on the bottle cutter, and then rotate the jar five or six times, pressing firmly, to score the glass.

Preparing The Pendant

The lighting effect that the canning jar pendant creates is dramatic. This is due to the fact that the bottom of each jar gets removed, allowing the light from a modest 20-watt bulb to illuminate objects below the pendant.

The remainder of each jar gets a frosted finish that produces a soft, diffuse light — perfect for hanging over a dining room table, for example *(Photo on page 64)*. That frosted finish is sprayed on the inside walls of the jar, so the outside retains its original look. The bubbles, imperfections, and color of the glass still show.

You might imagine that cutting the jar would be difficult. But it's actually rather easy if you use a bottle-cutting device to score the glass. (I found one at DelphiGlass.com.) You can get an idea of how it works in *Fig. 1*. With a little pressure and several revolutions, the cutting tool will score an even line around bottles of just about any size.

After scoring the glass, it's time to break the bottom of the jar off at the score line. One good way to go about

2] Hold the jar with the score line directly over the flame of a candle and rotate it several times to heat and stress the glass.

3] Run cold water over the jar to crack the glass. If it doesn't crack completely, use the cutter again to complete the cut.

4] Use a diamond file and cutting oil (both are available at craft stores) to smooth the edge, making it safe to touch.

5] The frosted finish comes from a spray can. Simply aim through the jar neck first, then through the cut end.

6] If an old glass seal remains in the lid of the jar, you'll need to remove it. Either pry the seal free, or break it with a hammer and remove the pieces.

doing this is to stress the glass by heating it and then quickly cooling it with cold water. Light a small candle, and rotate the jar with the score line positioned directly over the flame, as demonstrated in *Fig. 2*. Then run the jar under cold water (*Fig. 3*) or stick it in a bucket of ice. The drastic temperature change should cause the glass to crack all the way around the score line. If it doesn't, you'll need to go back to the bottle-cutting device, further score the sections that are still connected, and go through the heating and cooling steps again.

Once the bottom of the jar is off, you'll want to round over the sharp edge of the glass, like you see in *Fig. 4*. A small file and some cutting oil handle the task nicely.

7] Drill a 1⅛" hole in the lid for the socket. The zinc lid drills easily with a spade bit. Use a clamp as a handle to hold the lid. That way, if the bit grabs, it won't pull the lid from your hand.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

Portfolio Mini Pendant Available in several colors and finishes at Lowe's stores.

Ephrems Bottle Cutter
#5121; DelphiGlass.com

Other Tools:
1⅛" Spade Bit, Candle, Hammer, Drill, File, Cutting Oil, Frosted Spray Paint

That done, finish up the pendant by spraying the inside of the jar with frosted finish, as shown in *Fig. 5*. You can pick up a can at just about any craft store.

At this point, the jar is ready to illuminate. There's just one remaining step: attaching it to the actual light fixture. As you can see in the *Photo* on page 64, we used the original lid of the jar to do this. After removing the seal inside the lid, like you see in *Fig. 6*, we simply drilled a hole in the top to fit over a standard light socket. *Fig. 7* shows a good way to accomplish this safely.

Of course, the final step to complete the pendant light is to add the wiring. But that's a no-brainer thanks to the pre-wired fixture. Just slip the socket in place in the lid, secure it with the provided lock ring (*Fig. 8*), and install the fixture according to the manufacturer's directions.

— Written by David Stone, project designed by Mike Donovan

8] Slip the light socket through the hole and install the lock ring. Tighten it by hand, so you don't deform the lid or break the socket. Then screw on the jar.

Clever Cube

This sleek look starts with a simple "Walnut Medium Wall Cube" that we picked up from Target.com. To turn it into a pendant, the first thing you need to do is add a ¼" plywood top to the wall cube, and then drill a hole in the plywood for the socket. For the final touch that gives this pendant its individuality, drill holes on each side, and then add decorative 3/16" steel rods.

INSTANT MAKEOVERS:

Powerful Pendants

On the previous pages we showed you how to create stunning pendant lights from old canning jars, but the options for pendant shades are practically endless. So don't rule out looking around for other ideas. As we were exploring pendant possibilities, one idea that continued to pique our interest time and again was using boxes as the shades.

Boxes seemed to make promising pendant shades for several reasons. For one, their shape is naturally suited to the task, but they also reflect the shape of the room itself. Boxes are also available in all kinds of shapes and styles, so they're well-suited to lighting a kitchen, an office, or any other room in the home. The boxes can be installed on the same pendant light kit shown on page 67. Feel free to use one of our ideas, or think outside the box to create your own.

Shining Storage

A storage box for compact discs from Target.com works perfectly as a pendant. You can find boxes like this in a variety of colors and sizes, and they're often lined with patterned or colored paper to brighten any room. Just flip the box upside-down and glue the lid to the bottom. Then finish up by boring a hole through both, and slipping in the light socket.

Wire Wonder

This industrial-looking pendant would be perfect in an office or any other contemporary space. But it's actually nothing more than a "Tabletop File" that we also found online at Target.com. The only challenge with this shade is cutting the metal bottom to fit the light socket. We found that a Dremel rotary tool with a metal-cutting blade worked great for this, but you could also snip the wires with side cutters to make the hole. Once that's done, simply install the fixture just as you did with the other lights.

salvaged treasures

Don't take the value of outdated or damaged furniture for granted. You'll find that it's surprisingly simple to return castoffs to service with these inspiring ideas. Add a bit of imagination, and you can keep pieces with a lot of potential out of the landfill.

72
Reclaimed Bath Vanity
Contemporary and traditional blend nicely in the bathroom. It's possible with this vanity made from an antique table and a modern sink.

76
New Life for Retro Furniture
A few easy-to-learn techniques are all it takes to turn old furniture into modern masterpieces. We'll show you how to transform chairs, a table, and a chest with a bit of paint and upholstery.

+

80 | **Storage on a Roll**
Add casters to furniture to get organization right where you need it.

method

RECLAIMED bath vanity

Most people wouldn't think "vanity" upon seeing this old table from an antique store. But just a few cuts and a little paint and finish transformed it into a one-of-a-kind piece that brings a unique look and feel to this bathroom.

If you want a new look in the bathroom, start by looking outside the bathroom. An old piece of furniture can be changed into a great-looking vanity with just a few minor alterations. Here, we'll show you how we gave new life to this old table.

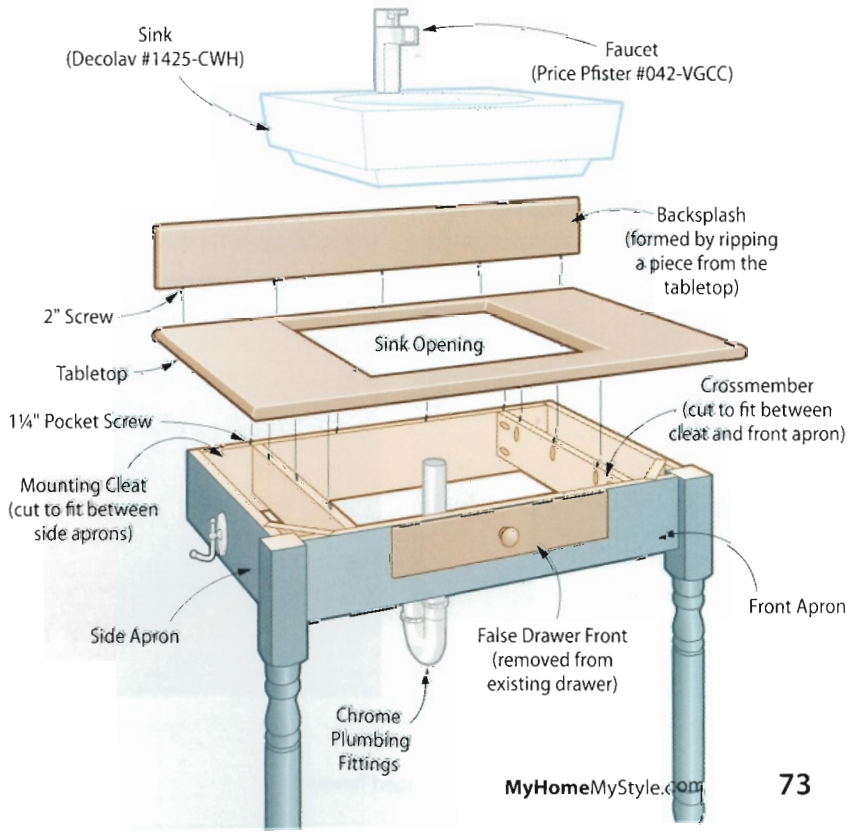
In this home center world, it can be difficult to find something unique for your home. This is especially true for the bathroom, where many of today's factory-built vanity options look an awful lot alike.

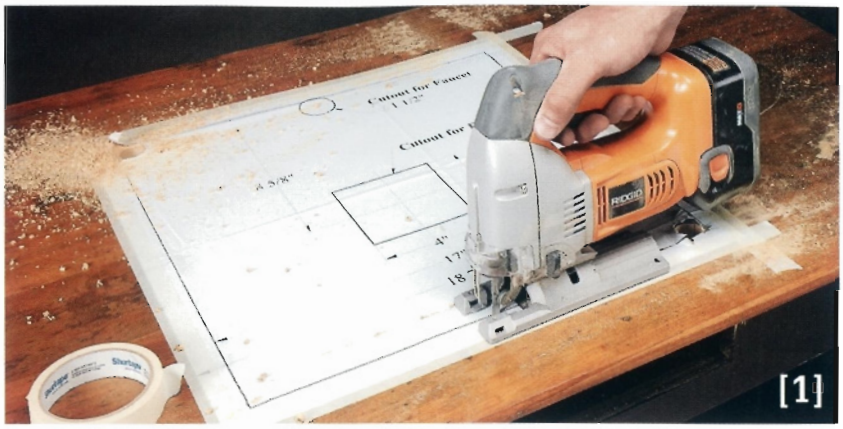
One way to break out of that mold is to use a conventional piece of furniture, such as a dresser, sideboard, or table, in an unconventional way — by turning it into a vanity.

Creating a "reclaimed" vanity offers a lot of advantages. You get a one-of-a-kind look that just can't be duplicated by any store-bought item. Since you're reusing a piece that would otherwise probably end up in a landfill, it's also a "greener" way to improve your home. What's more, the conversion is fairly straightforward: Usually it just takes a few minor alterations to accommodate the sink and plumbing.

For our own reclaimed vanity, we went with a vast departure from the typical look by using an antique table. As you can see at right, we did a number of things to make this table more "vanity-like," such as installing a modern-looking sink and faucet, removing the back legs in order to mount the vanity directly against the wall, cutting a section off the tabletop to make a backsplash, and creating a unique painted finish for the legs.

Here, we'll give you an in-depth look at our bathroom vanity transformation. Then you can use these same ideas and techniques on a different piece of furniture to create your own one-of-a-kind vanity.





[1]

The first consideration for reclaiming a vanity is, of course, finding the right piece of furniture. Good places to look include flea markets, architectural salvage stores, antique stores, garage sales, and the Habitat for Humanity ReStore if your community has one.

Once you've selected your piece, you'll want to pick out a sink and faucet, as well as any accessories, to go along with it. There are a couple of lines of thinking here: If you go with an older piece of furniture, you might want to choose a traditional-looking sink and faucet style to complement it.

Another interesting approach is to select modern fixtures to contrast with the antique style of the vanity. We chose a contemporary sink and faucet to go with our old table, to interesting effect.

From Table to Vanity — We came across this table at a local antique store. It may look beat-up to some, but our project designer saw potential in the weathered patina. Paired with a sink from Decolav and a faucet from Price Pfister, he knew it would create a perfect blend of classic and contemporary for our bathroom makeover.

Check the Size — With any vanity conversion project, one of the first steps is to determine if you need to cut the legs or top of your furniture piece to reduce the height or depth. We needed to reduce the depth. It worked out great to use the cutoff portion of the top as a backsplash behind the sink *(Illustration, page 73)*.

1 While we weren't ready to cut the top to size just yet, it was important to make this decision up front, as it affected the placement of the sink. Once we knew the size of the top, we could use the paper template that came with the sink to determine its position.

With the template taped in place, we used a drill equipped with a spade bit to bore holes at opposite corners of the template. These holes provide a place to insert a jigsaw blade. After that, it was just a matter of cutting along the lines of the template *(Fig. 1)*. This cut doesn't have to be perfect, as the edge of the sink will hide small imperfections.

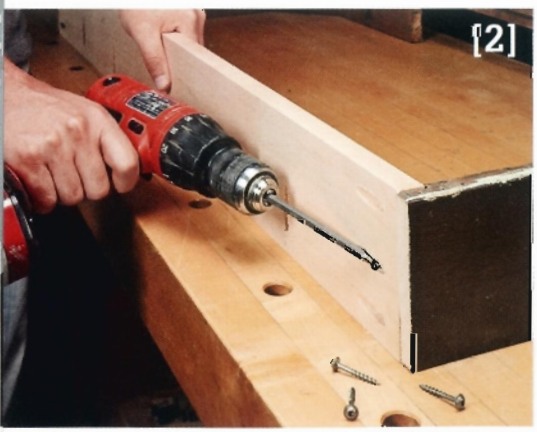
On our table, we had to remove the drawer and drawer guides in order to position the sink. Later on, we used the drawer front as a false front on the table.

2 With the sink opening cut, we moved on to the other modifications planned for this table: removing the back legs in order to mount the vanity directly to the wall, adding a back apron to serve as a wall cleat, and cutting down the top to create the backsplash.

To make things easier to work with, we began by unscrewing the top from the apron and leg assembly. After that, we unbolted the back legs. Then we measured the side aprons and cut them to match the desired depth of our vanity.

With the back legs off, our vanity needed a sturdy mounting point. This came in the form of a ¾"-thick cleat, which we sandwiched between the side aprons and mounted with pocket screws. In *Fig. 2*, you'll notice a few additional pocket holes along the edge of this cleat. These will be used to reattach the tabletop later on.

To further stabilize the structure, we added crossmembers on either side of the sink *(Illustration, page 73)*. Like the mounting cleat, these are held in place with pocket screws. They also have pocket holes for securing the top.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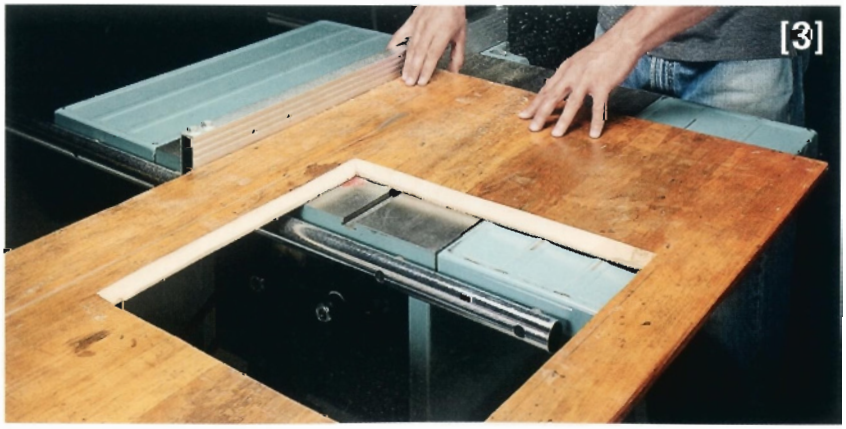

[3]

[4]

3 At this point, we turned our attention back to the tabletop and backsplash. A table saw with outfeed support was really the best tool for cutting the top to create the backsplash *(Fig. 3)*, but a circular saw and straightedge would work in a pinch.

4 After making the cut, we attached the backsplash to the tabletop by clamping it in place, countersinking pilot holes in the underside of the top, and driving in screws *(Fig. 4)*.

With the construction complete on the top and leg assemblies, it was a good time to finish them. We liked the aged patina of the top, so we opted to simply preserve it with a few coats of exterior polyurethane for moisture protection.

We wanted to give the legs and apron a weathered look to match the top. To accomplish that, we painted them a light blue and then sanded back the paint after it dried, so some of the original color would peek through.

Once the finishing was done, we reattached the top to the apron. Then we disassembled the drawer box and reinstalled the drawer front by driving in screws from inside the front apron.

5 At this point, we were ready to remove our old vanity and install the new one. To do this, there are just a few important steps. First, shut off the water supply to the faucet. This is as simple as turning a couple of knobs on the supply lines that lead up to each knob on the faucet.

Next, disconnect the sink and faucet from the existing plumbing fittings. This includes the faucet supply lines and the trap beneath the drain in the sink. Now remove any caulk between the vanity sink or counter and the wall with a utility knife. Finally, remove the screws holding the vanity to the wall, and it should come right out.

Installing the new vanity is as simple as locating the wall studs, and driving long screws through the mounting cleat and into these studs. Set a level on the countertop to help you position it before driving in the screws *(Fig. 5)*.

Now it's just a matter of mounting the sink and faucet, and connecting them to their respective plumbing fittings. You'll start by mounting the sink, which is accomplished by running a bead of plumber's putty, caulk, or silicone sealant around the opening

[5]

(your sink installation manual will tell you which product to use). Then set the sink in place. Usually a bead of caulk around the rim of the sink is also desired after installation.

As long as you didn't move the vanity too far from the location of the old one, you should be able to use the existing plumbing fittings. If you're installing the vanity in a new location, you'll want to consult with a plumber before trying to move any pipes yourself.

One issue that often comes up when replacing a vanity is a height difference between the old sink and the new one. For the faucet, most supply lines are flexible and long enough to accommodate different heights. To connect the drain trap and the sink, however, you may need to purchase additional fittings.

Since the plumbing is exposed beneath our vanity, we used chrome fittings instead of PVC. These cost more, but don't present any unique plumbing challenges. If your existing vanity was plumbed with PVC, it's a good idea to take the fittings to the hardware store and get chrome ones to match.

That done, we accessorized with towels, hooks, and other items to create a bathroom that's truly one of a kind!

—Written by Wyatt Myers, illustrated by Matt Scott, project design by Mike Donovan

NEW LIFE FOR *retro furniture*

There's hardly a more green endeavor than rescuing old furniture from a yard sale, auction, or vintage shop. Every time an existing piece is refurbished and put back into service, that's one less item in the landfill. And we all know that's good for our planet.

With that in mind, we took a trip to a local secondhand shop and returned with a wicker table and chair set and a cedar chest. The wicker pieces had suffered a '70s-era redo that left them garish yellow and burnt orange. But the woven wicker was in excellent condition, and all three pieces felt sturdy and wobble-free. Considering the current popularity of wicker furniture, these pieces had lots of potential.

The cedar chest *(page 79)*, from the 1930s, featured graceful raised carvings, attractive walnut veneer, and classic bun feet. On the down side, it had quite a few chips and scratches, the finish was faded and dull, and the veneer on the lid was missing. But there was nothing a weekend in the shop couldn't remedy, so we chose to give this lovely piece a second chance.

Triage Those Treasures—When you're shopping around for vintage furniture, it's important to take the time to evaluate whether any damage is structural or cosmetic. A charming piece isn't necessarily a good candidate for a DIY facelift.

If you're not experienced with furniture repair, and you don't want to pay a professional restorer, remember that repairing a frame is a major job. It's best to avoid pieces with frames that are broken or warped, have dry rot, or just feel flimsy. Also, if you're considering an upholstered piece, check to make sure the frame isn't so full of nail holes from previous upholstery jobs that new nails won't hold.

On the following pages, we'll show you some quick ways to give deserving flea market finds new life. With the right materials and techniques, you can update styles and correct most common damage without spending a lot of time or money.

> "With the right materials and techniques, you can update styles and correct most common damage without spending a lot of time or money."

1] Coat the leg with glue, and wind the paper wicker snugly around it.

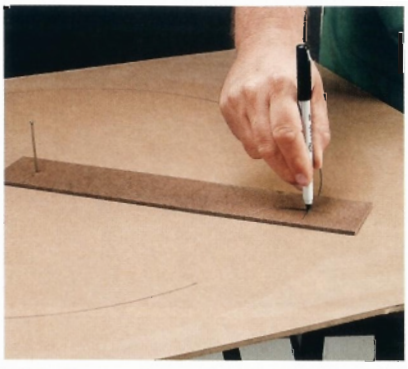
2] Stretch the new fabric tight, and attach it to the frame with tacks.

TRENDY WICKER TRIO

People have been weaving wicker items for thousands of years, and today wicker furniture is more popular than ever. Our set just needed updated colors and fabric and a few minor repairs.

Technically, "wicker" refers to an end-result product, such as a "wicker basket." Many types of materials can be used for weaving wicker, including rattan reed, willow, bamboo, and paper fibre rush, a man-made product commonly called "paper wicker." Paper wicker has a rope-like twist and is the color of a brown paper bag. It's often used for wicker repair and can be found at upholstery shops and cane suppliers.

We used paper wicker to repair a few areas on the chair legs where the original material was missing *(Fig. 1)*.



3] To draw a circle, use a scrap of hardboard to make a simple trammel.

After that, we allowed the glue to dry overnight. Then, to wipe out the yellow color, we gave all three pieces two coats of brown exterior latex enamel.

Creating New Cushions — The moldy old chair cushions needed to hit the trash can, so we cut new ones from 4" high-density foam and re-covered them with a durable indoor-outdoor fabric. The old upholstery, taken apart, worked perfectly as a pattern for making the new cushions. Lastly, we secured new 2" foam and matching fabric to the front and back of the chairs using upholstery tacks *(Fig. 2)*.

Revive with Veneer — Like the yellow wicker, the orange top and shelf on the table had to go. Our first thought was to strip and stain them, but a noticeable crack in the tabletop was a problem. We started by screwing steel mending plates to the underside to increase stability. Then we smoothed the crack as much as possible with a hand plane and filled the crack with wood filler. After it was dry, we sanded the top smooth.

4] Smooth down the veneer, being careful not to create air bubbles.

5] Trim the veneer around the hardboard tabletop with a utility knife.

That still didn't get the tabletop perfectly flat, so we decided to apply hardboard over both the top and the shelf and cover them with adhesive-backed maple veneer. We traced circles on the hardboard with trammels *(Fig. 3)* and cut the top and shelf with a jigsaw.

Next, we applied the veneer *(Fig. 4)* and trimmed it to fit with a utility knife *(Fig. 5)*. Then we just glued the veneered hardboard discs to the old tabletop and shelf with construction adhesive, and brushed on two coats of polyurethane.

SUPER CEDAR CHEST

In its earlier days, this piece served as a young woman's "hope chest" to store things she wished to bring into her marriage. Today, cedar chests are still valued for their generous storage space. The aromatic cedar lining even keeps clothes, blankets, and linens fresh and insect-free. (A light sanding will release the wood's oils and reinvigorate that wonderful scent.)

Do No Harm — *Antiques Roadshow* has taught us all that refinishing old furniture can diminish its value. And if your find is truly a classic example of craftsmanship, or made by a notable artisan or manufacturer, you'll want to leave fix-up tasks to a professional. But run-of-the-mill old pieces can actually gain value when carefully cleaned and brought back to a usable condition.

If you're not sure about a piece, look for any marks or labels that might indicate its origin. Contact a professional who deals with antique furniture if you suspect you might have stumbled upon an extremely valuable item.

In this age of cookie-cutter, mass-produced furniture, it's satisfying to return a vintage piece with quality and character to service.

1] Use a soft cloth to rub Restor-A-Finish evenly across the surface.

The Action Plan — We researched our chest online and learned that, while beautiful, it isn't a rare antique. Still, it's often best to take the path of least resistance. The original patina added to the chest's character, so we chose to simply enhance it with Restor-A-Finish from Howard (HowardProducts.com), which doesn't dissolve existing finish. With the wipe of a cloth, minor imperfections virtually disappeared *(Fig. 1)*.

For deeper scratches that had gone through the varnish layer, we then used a stain marker *(Fig. 2)*. Use a light touch, and blend the stain into the surrounding area with a cloth. Experiment in an inconspicuous place first — you might need to blend two different colors to get just the right shade. If in doubt, start with a lighter shade of marker.

2] Blend out deeper scratches with a matching stain marker.

3] Fill gouges and chips in the veneer with a stainable wood filler.

We also patched a few chips in the walnut veneer with stainable wood filler, as shown in *Fig. 3*. When dry, sand the repaired spots carefully, and touch them up with a stain marker.

Rather than veneer the lid, which would require tricky stain matching, we just bought a new pad, so the chest can pull double-duty as a bench. With its timeless style and unique history, there's hope for this chest again.

— *Written by Louise Ritchhart*

BEFORE

Serving Cart

To begin preparing this chest of drawers for service, give it a durable work surface by replacing the top with a pre-made butcher block slab. Add an open shelf by removing the top drawer from the chest and lining the opening with plywood. Next, install a set of bun feet and casters. Replace the drawer pulls with wooden knobs. To finish the cart, apply a coat of dark green paint. Then sand the edges and raised areas for an antique look, and wipe on a dark brown glaze. For the final touch, mount a couple of towel hooks.

INSTANT MAKEOVERS:

Storage on a Roll

With a little creative thinking and a few simple design changes, you can repurpose furniture so that you always have storage right where you need it. All you need to do is add casters, and you'll have stylish storage that's ready to roll.

This simple idea has applications all over the home. For example, an outdated three-drawer chest can be converted into a functional farmhouse-style serving cart with just a few new details. You can also increase bedroom storage and get extra mileage from an old dresser by using the drawers for under-bed storage. Or store office supplies inside decorative chests to add storage in rooms that need to serve multiple purposes. The three projects shown here should spark your imagination with ways to gain both storage and style.

Under-Bed Storage

Many of us have an out-of-style dresser somewhere around our home. But it can still serve a useful purpose by providing storage in an under-utilized space — under the bed. To carry out this idea, all you have to do is remove the drawers, paint them inside and out, and install new hardware if desired. Then add four casters to the bottom of each drawer, and slide them into place. If space allows, you can place drawers under both sides of the bed to maximize your storage potential and accessibility.

Treasure Chests

Add style and function to any room by converting chests into an office on the go. You can use chests that you already own, or purchase several in your favorite style. From there, it's simple to turn the chests into mobile organizers. The first thing you'll need to do is mount casters on the bottoms of the larger chests, and then install hanging file folders inside. To bring it all together, set an office supply organizer inside the smallest chest and tuck notebooks and binders in alongside.

paint power

Paint can work wonders in any room. Whether you're looking to use multiple colors or a single shade, these techniques will help you give walls drama and character in an inexpensive way. Then see page 94 for two ways to take paint beyond the walls.

84
Metallic Glaze
Turn an ordinary wall into a work of art with this simple, high-impact painting technique.

88
Add Style with Stencils
Use stencils to make an impression by mimicking molding and other architectural elements.

92
Color-Washed Walls
Create a subtle mottled look with color washing, a technique that's about as easy as basic painting.

94
Plastic That's Fantastic
Transform time-worn plastic outdoor furniture with simple spray paint and some creativity.

+

96 | **Got Milk Paint?**
Rediscover old-fashioned milk paint and its unique, vintage look.

Anna Quindlen

10 simple steps to a Metallic Glaze masterpiece

Many old masters worked in metals to create their masterpieces. They employed elaborate tools and nearly mystic techniques to shape bronze, copper, silver, and gold into works that are as breathtaking today as when they first sprang from molds centuries ago.

Now imagine having the ability to apply the same coveted qualities of those metals to any wall in your home. The tools you'll need to use are much simpler: a seamless paint roller, a cloth rag, painter's tape, and white chalk. Likewise, the skill required can be cultivated in minutes rather than decades. And while you won't technically be working with metals, you will be using a collection of glazes that are formulated to simulate the color and texture of the most desirable metals *(Photos, below)*.

Like all glazes, these are transluscent, which simply means they allow the base color underneath to show through. This also means that the base coat is just as integral to the end result of the technique as the glazes. For this project, we chose Benjamin Moore's "Yukon Sky," *(Paint & Supplies, right)*. This vivid, blue-violet color, once washed in layers of glaze, hints at a steely blue that completes the illusion of metallic blocks.

The real artistry begins with the blocks themselves. By first designing the blocks on a scale drawing of your wall, and then transferring that design to the wall using chalk and painter's tape, you can easily create your own work of art that will be framed by everything else in the room.

paint & supplies

Benjamin Moore Paints
www.BenjaminMoore.c
800-344-0400

Base Coat: One gallon of Super Spec Yukon Sk (CC-920), eggshell finish

Color Blocks: Studio Finishes Metallic Glazes quart each of Gold, Cop Silver, and Bronze)

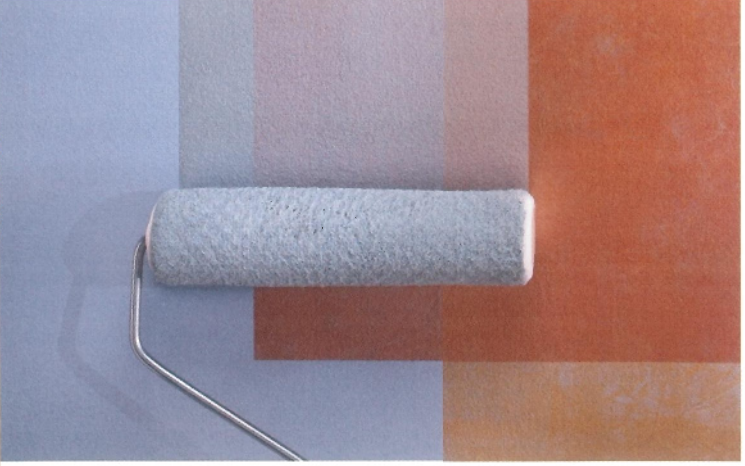
Other Tools: 2"-wide painter's tape, paint rag white chalk, graph and tracing paper, primer, 4-ft. level, 4" or 6" seam paint rollers

COPPER

BRONZE

SILVER

GOLD



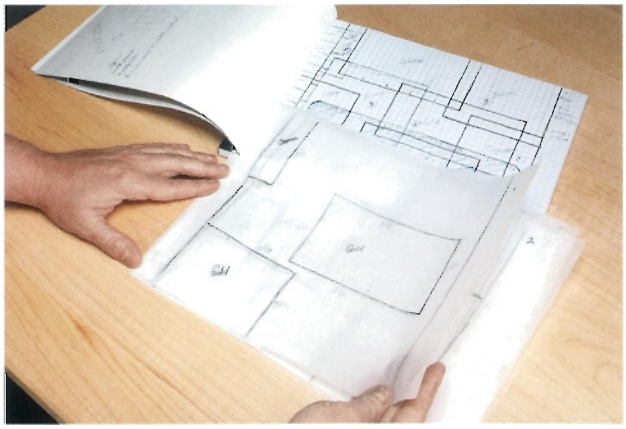
planning the perfect project

The most important step in this technique is designing the layers of color blocks. As you begin, keep in mind the key elements that will make or break your project: the size of the blocks and the arrangement of the colors.

There is no hard-and-fast rule about block size. The best guideline we can offer is that bigger walls require bigger blocks to establish a pleasant sense of scale. To find the proper balance for your wall, first sketch your design on graph paper and tracing paper *(Fig. 1)*.

Once you've hit upon a design you like, arrange the colors. The important thing here is to plan your blocks in layers, with dark colors (copper and bronze) making up the first layer. A medium tint (gold) makes up the next, and the lightest color (silver) is used for the topmost layer. This allows the dark colors to show through the lighter ones, creating even more color variations and enhancing the illusion of texture and dimension. From there, simply transfer the design to the wall, and follow the steps shown in the sequence of photos on this page and the next.

— Written by Bill Link, project designed by Kelle Collins



1] Draw the layout of your wall and all of the color blocks on a sheet of graph paper. After you've found a design you like, use tracing paper to divide the blocks into layers of color.

roll on the base coat — then lay out the blocks

2] Prime the wall, and add two layers of the complementary base coat. Let the paint dry for 24 hours.

3] Outline the first layer of your design on the wall with white chalk. Use a level to keep your lines straight.

tape, paint, & dab

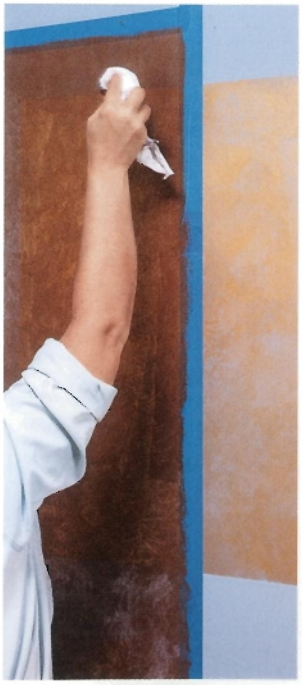
4] Apply painter's tape along the chalk lines. Press the edges of the tape down firmly with a stir stick or similar tool.

5] Wipe off the chalk lines with a rag. Then apply a coat of glaze with a 4" or 6" seamless roller. The glaze will dry quickly, so work on one block at a time.

6] Use a damp rag to "rag off" just enough glaze to let the base coat show through.

a new color—with an overlap

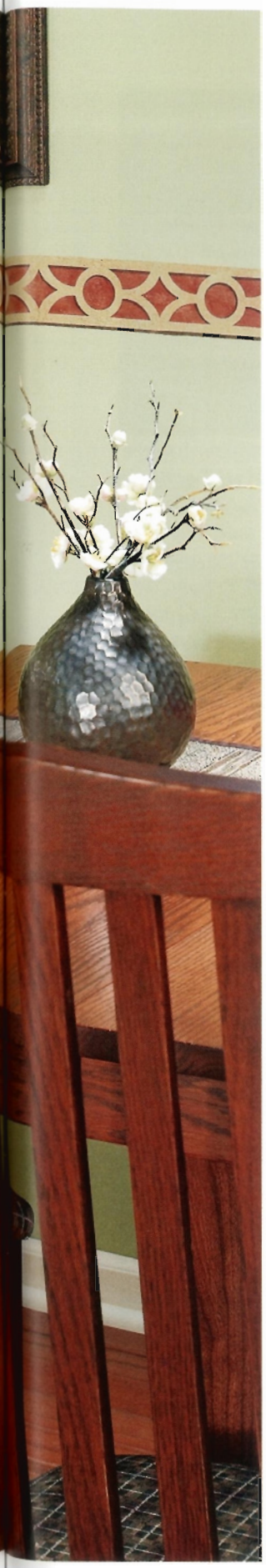
7] Let the glaze dry for two hours before removing the tape. Then add the next layer, using the roll-on, rag-off sequence.



8] Consistent ragging pressure will ensure even coloring within the block.

9] As you roll on the final layer of color, remember that it will naturally appear darker where it overlaps other colors. Focus on applying the paint evenly.

10] Because the top layer of paint is lighter than everything beneath it, less ragging off will be required to let the other layers show through.



ADD *style* WITH *stencils*

If you haven't looked at stencils lately, you're in for a pleasant surprise. This method of decorative painting has undergone a transformation in recent years and now features elegant patterns that will add drama to any room. We'll show you step-by-step how to master an easy stenciling technique that mimics high-quality architectural molding.

Stenciling used to be all about English ivy and silhouettes of farm animals. But today's stencils are interesting, elegant, and at home in all kinds of decor, not just cottage and country. In fact, the art of stenciling is more popular than ever.

"Some people wonder if stencils are out," says decorative painter Kelle Collins of Des Moines, Iowa. "But they're very much in, and there are hundreds of new things you can do with them."

One thing about stenciling *hasn't* changed — it is one of the easiest decorative painting techniques to master, requiring next to no artistic ability. If you can stick a pre-cut stencil on the wall and dab on paint with a brush, then you can master stenciling. And your investment is small. In addition to the stencil, you only need a few tools and materials.

Hot Trends — One of the most popular effects now is architectural stenciling, which mimics anything from ceramic tile and brick walls to marble columns. Professional painters refer to this style as *trompe l'oeil* (or "trick the eye") painting. Since stencils allow you to repeat a pattern or design perfectly over and over again, they are ideal for reproducing architectural elements.

For this project, we chose an architectural stencil that simulates high-end Chippendale molding and positioned it to look like a chair rail.

Over the next few pages, we'll introduce you to the unique supplies and materials used in stenciling. Once you're familiar with them, you can just follow the photos and captions for all the techniques you need to know to achieve professional results for your own project.

// PREPARING THE WALL //

1] We decided to paint our molding pattern at chair-rail height, but you could also apply it near the ceiling or just above your baseboard. Use a level to ensure the pattern runs straight, and mark lightly with a soft lead or watercolor pencil.

2] After laying out the location of the stencil, use blue painter's tape to establish the borders of your design.

Understand Stencils — There are almost endless options in stencil designs. Paper and vinyl stencils, in single or multiple layers, are sold in craft stores, home centers, and online. The multi-layer stencils let you create intricate, dimensional designs, like the one shown the *Photo* on page 88.

Note that multi-layer stencils come with registration marks (small cut-out triangles) in the corners of each stencil. These marks make it easy to align the stencil pattern as you move it from point to point on the wall, and they ensure that the layers in multi-layer stencils overlap correctly. You will paint these marks right on the tape that secures the stencil to your wall.

Tips for Taping— Speaking of tape, it's important that you select the right one for holding stencils in place on the wall. Blue painter's tape is a bit more expensive than standard masking tape, but it works much better.

Painter's tape adheres well, but won't mar the surface when you pull it up. That's important because you will be lifting the stencil frequently to check registration and see how the design is developing. (To protect delicate or newly painted surfaces, choose a lower tack, "safe-release" white tape.)

For most applications, tape will do the job for holding the stencil in place. But you may encounter some situations that call for a little extra help to keep the stencil flat and secured to the surface — particularly if you're working around corners, on ceilings, or with large or flimsy stencils. In those cases, you'll want to use a spray adhesive made for stenciling.

Brushes & Brushing —Stenciling also requires using unique brushes, as well as brushing techniques that are different from those you're used to in traditional painting.

Stencil brushes are densely packed with soft, natural bristles. Sizes range from ⅜" up to 1". Get a separate brush for each color in your design.

As you might expect, the size of the brush you use depends on the size of the area you are stenciling. Large brushes hold more paint, so they're effective for large, solid areas. Choose smaller brushes for more delicate areas where you need to carefully control the application of paint. Small brushes are also the best choice for shading.

// CREATING A BASE LAYER //

3] For most stencils, you want to apply paint lightly. That requires wiping off most of the paint on a paper towel.

4] Using a 1" stencil brush, begin painting the base layer by dabbing "Burnt Sienna" in hard-to-reach corners.

5] Continue painting the base layer, using a sea sponge to thinly apply the paint. Don't stop within sections.

Not only are the brushes themselves different from standard paint brushes, but they're also used differently. Instead of using a back-and-forth stroke, you hold the brush perpendicular to the wall and apply the paint with a dabbing motion.

Use a "Dry" Brush — In addition, stenciling requires a "dry brush" technique. That means you'll load the brush with paint, and then "off-load" most of the paint onto a paper towel. Dry brushing, combined with dabbing, helps keep paint from getting under the stencil's edges. Because a firm motion is used for off-loading paint, good-quality paper towels are another essential supply.

Plan, Practice, & Paint — Before you get to painting, it's important that you understand the pattern you are creating, lay it out carefully, and practice painting your stencil on a piece of poster board. "Always play before you go to a wall," Collins stresses. That's because if you're not used to working with multi-layer stencils, understanding what to do with each stencil can be a little tricky.

The architectural molding stencil we used has two layers: One creates the main pattern; the other adds a shadow that gives the pattern depth and dimension.

To make this stencil look its best, the geometric pattern needs to be carefully aligned as you move the stencil from point to point along the wall. This means it's critical that you lay out your stencil location accurately.

To do that, you'll need to measure carefully and use a level to locate the top and bottom borders of your "molding." Use a soft lead pencil to mark your layout lines, pressing very lightly so they will be easy to completely erase. (You can also use a watercolor pencil for marking lines. It can be wiped off with a damp cloth when the painting is done.)

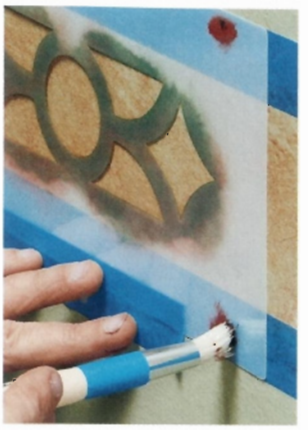
Once your layout is complete, apply painter's tape to mask off the top and bottom of the molding. With that done, you're ready to start painting.

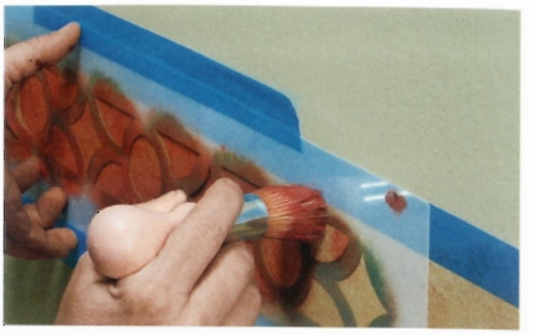
Before we actually painted either of the stencil layers, we used a sea sponge to apply a neutral base layer of "Burnt Sienna" within the area we had taped off for the stencil. This preliminary step really helped give the stencil the wood molding look we were after. Then we used "True Burgundy" for the main pattern layer and "Burnt Umber" for the shadows.

Follow the step-by-step instructions we provide in the photos to stencil your pattern, and then get ready to accept some compliments. Your new *trompe l'oeil* "molding" will add dramatic impact to any room, without costing more than a weekend of your time and the price of some basic supplies, paint, and plastic stencils.

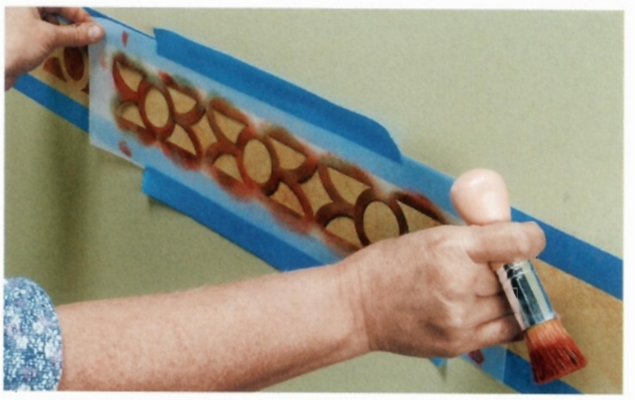
— Written by Louise Ritchhart, project design and stenciling by Kelle Collins

// STENCILING THE PATTERN //

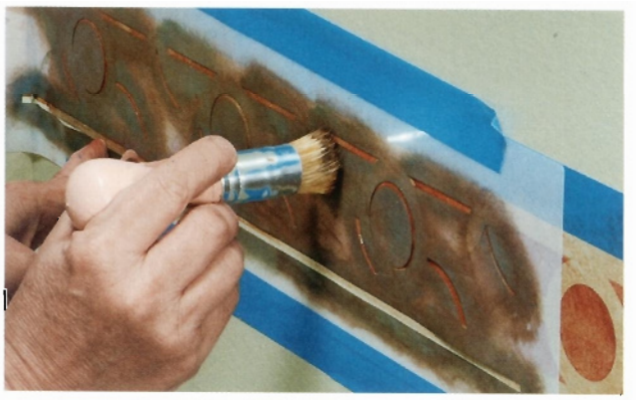




6] Paint the registration marks, which will align the stencils as you go *(left)*. Then apply "True Burgundy" on the first overlay, dabbing evenly *(above)*.



7] As you finish painting each section, advance the stencil before the paint dries completely. Keeping this wet edge ensures that the paint will blend evenly as you move from section to section.



8] For the second stencil layer, carefully line up the registration marks, and apply "Burnt Umber." This dark color provides shading and gives the pattern its three-dimensional appearance.

SIMPLE, SOFTER color washing

If you're bored with plain walls, give no-fail color washing a try. The technique produces a subtle effect to enhance any decor. We'll show you how this quick and simple paint process can add alluring softness and depth to any space.

Color washing is perfect for anyone who thinks, "I'm not so sure about faux finishes..." It's meant to produce a very subtle effect that won't overpower a room. At the same time, the technique adds plenty of drama with its undulating shades of color. Color washing is also one of the easiest and most forgiving decorative paint techniques. It's a simple process that involves mixing latex paint with tintable glaze and then blending two layers of colors together.

Materials Needed — You'll need satin interior latex for the base coat, tintable glaze, and two increasingly darker shades of interior latex to mix with the glaze. For tools, you will need a 4" brush, painter's tape to mask off areas you don't want to paint, a paint roller and pan, and your choice of a cloth, a brush, or a sponge for blending.

Choose Your Colors — To get started, you'll need to decide on a color palette. Paint stores and home centers offer brochures showing color washing done in various paint hues and glazes. If you're new to the process, you might want to choose one of the suggested combinations. The colors shown are from Behr. The base is "Twilight Sun." The first glaze layer was blended with "Golden Straw Hat," and the second was mixed with "Sunny Outlook."

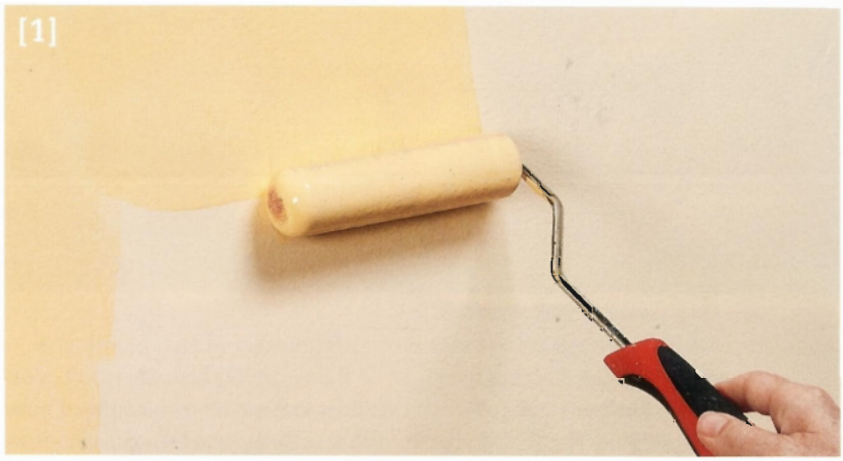
The Technique — First, roll on the "Twilight Sun" base coat, and let it dry. Then mix a bucket of "Golden Straw Hat" and the tintable glaze. Use a 3:1 or 4:1 glaze-to-paint ratio. Increasing the amount of glaze will give you a more translucent mixture with a longer open time. Now mix a bucket of "Sunny Outlook" and glaze.

Pour the "Golden Straw Hat" mixture into a pan, and roll it over a manageable section of wall, about five square feet *(Fig. 1)*. While this glaze is still wet, use a brush to apply large X's with the "Sunny Outlook" mixture *(Fig. 2)*. Finally, use a cloth to blend the two shades of glaze together *(Fig. 3)*. Repeat the process until your wall or room is complete.

— Written by Louise Ritchhart

// ROLL, BRUSH, & BLEND //

1] Working quickly, roll "Golden Straw Hat" interior latex mixed with tintable glaze across a five-square-foot section of wall. 2] With a mixture of "Sunny Outlook" latex and glaze, brush large X's on top of the still-wet "Golden Straw Hat" glaze layer. 3] Now use a wadded-up cloth, a brush, or a sponge to blend the two layers together.

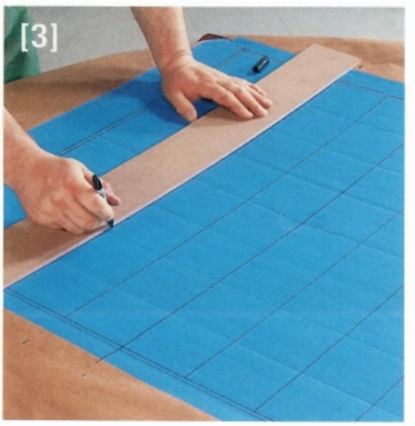


plastic THAT LOOKS fantastic

Give your kids more ways to enjoy the outdoors with this great game table. All it requires is some old outdoor furniture and two cans of spray paint.

Some of the best home makeovers are also the easiest. And this outdoor game table is a perfect example. It started out as a typical old outdoor furniture set. But with the creative use of some spray paint made for plastic and some painter's tape, we were able to give it a new purpose in just a couple of hours.

If you have your own old set of plastic furniture that's fading in the sun, consider painting it before you pitch it. Or you can always buy a new set of plastic furniture and paint it. The new spray paints for plastic are simple to use, hold up great, and are available at most hardware stores and home centers. Here are the steps we took to transform an old patio table and chairs.



Get in the Game — When we started working on the table and chairs, we knew we wanted to add more than just color. And since kids are always looking for ways to keep busy outside, we decided to create an oversize game table with a checkerboard top.

To do this, you'll need to gather painter's tape, a utility knife, a yardstick, a marking pen, paper for masking, and two colors of paint. We chose to use Krylon's "Honeydew" and "Blue Hyacinth."

You should start by cleaning the table. For weathered plastic, you'll want to wipe down the surface with an ammonia-based cleaner, and let it dry. (If the plastic is new, wipe it down with paint thinner for best results.)

Apply a light coat of "Honeydew" to the table *(Fig. 1)*. For a smooth surface, apply multiple thin coats, and let it dry 30 seconds between coats.

After the paint dries overnight, apply painter's tape to the entire area reserved for the checkerboard *(Fig. 2)*.

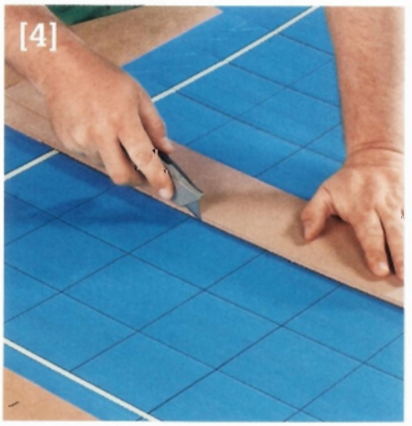
Keeping in mind that a checkerboard is eight rows by eight rows, figure out the size of squares that works for your table. After that, cut a template from hardboard or heavy cardboard that's the width of one row. You can use this to make quick work of laying out the squares *(Fig. 3)*.

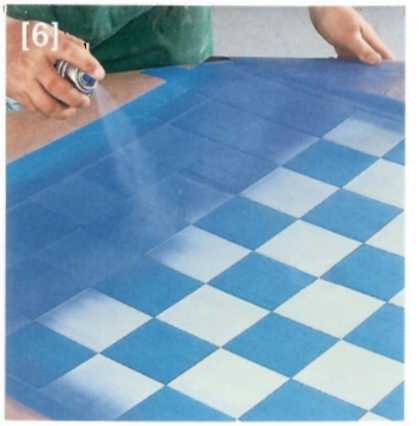
With all 64 squares marked, you just need to cut through the masking tape along the lines *(Fig. 4)*. Remove sections of tape to reveal alternating squares *(Fig. 5)*. Then lay tape around the perimeter to create a ¼"-wide border. Finally, mask off the remaining tabletop with paper.

To paint the checkerboard's dark squares, spray "Blue Hyacinth" across the entire game surface *(Fig. 6)*. When it's dry, peel up the remaining tape.

To complete the whimsical look, we painted the table legs and chairs alternating colors. We cut ½"-thick slices of a tree branch to make the checkers and stained half of them dark.

— Written and designed by Louise Ritchhart





1] Brushing a lighter shade over a dark base coat helps achieve the worn look.

2] Once the paint is dry, burnish the edges until the dark coat shows through.

Distressed Stool

Sometimes a time-worn finish suits an item better than a brand-new one. For this vintage look, first wipe down the item you plan to paint with a damp cloth. Then apply a dark green base coat, and let it dry. Next, brush on a lighter shade of green *(Fig. 1)*. After it dries, use an abrasive pad or sandpaper to burnish areas that normally show wear, like edges, until the dark coat shows through *(Fig. 2)*. Milk paint gives the stool a distinctive flat finish and slightly rough texture.

INSTANT MAKEOVERS:

Got Milk Paint?

If you want to create a different look for furniture, give old-fashioned milk paint a try. Its natural formula makes it safe for the family and the environment. It has a vintage appearance, so it's perfect for recreating an aged look.

Milk paint is easy to use. The product actually comes as a powder that you mix with water to create the finish. You can even create custom tints by mixing white milk paint powder with colored powder before adding water.

On its own, milk paint creates an attractive matte finish. But it can also be used in interesting faux finishes, such as a "crackled" appearance or the distressed finish shown on the stool above. For more information or to order your own paint, visit the Old-Fashioned Milk Paint Company's Web site at MilkPaint.com.

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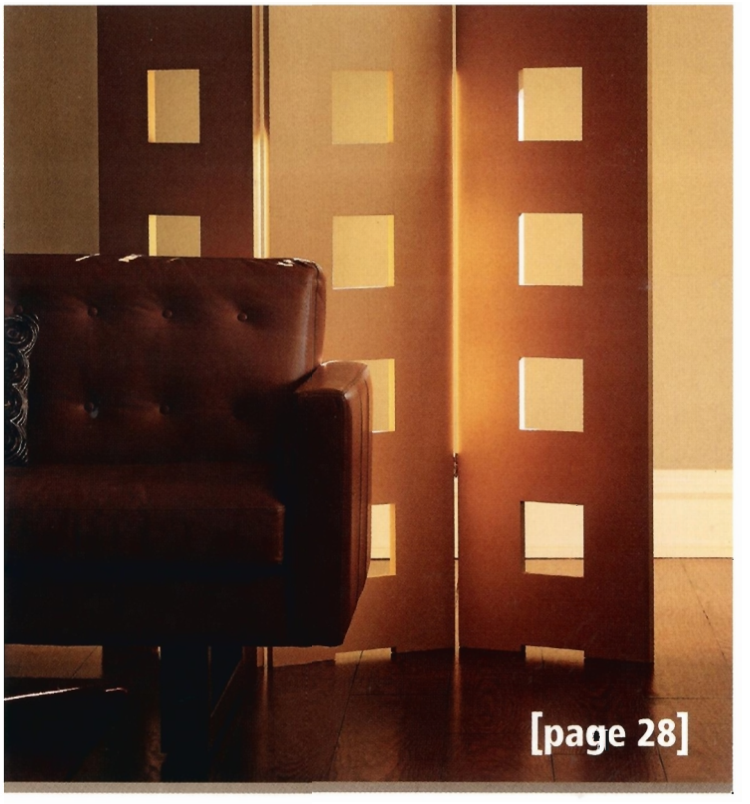
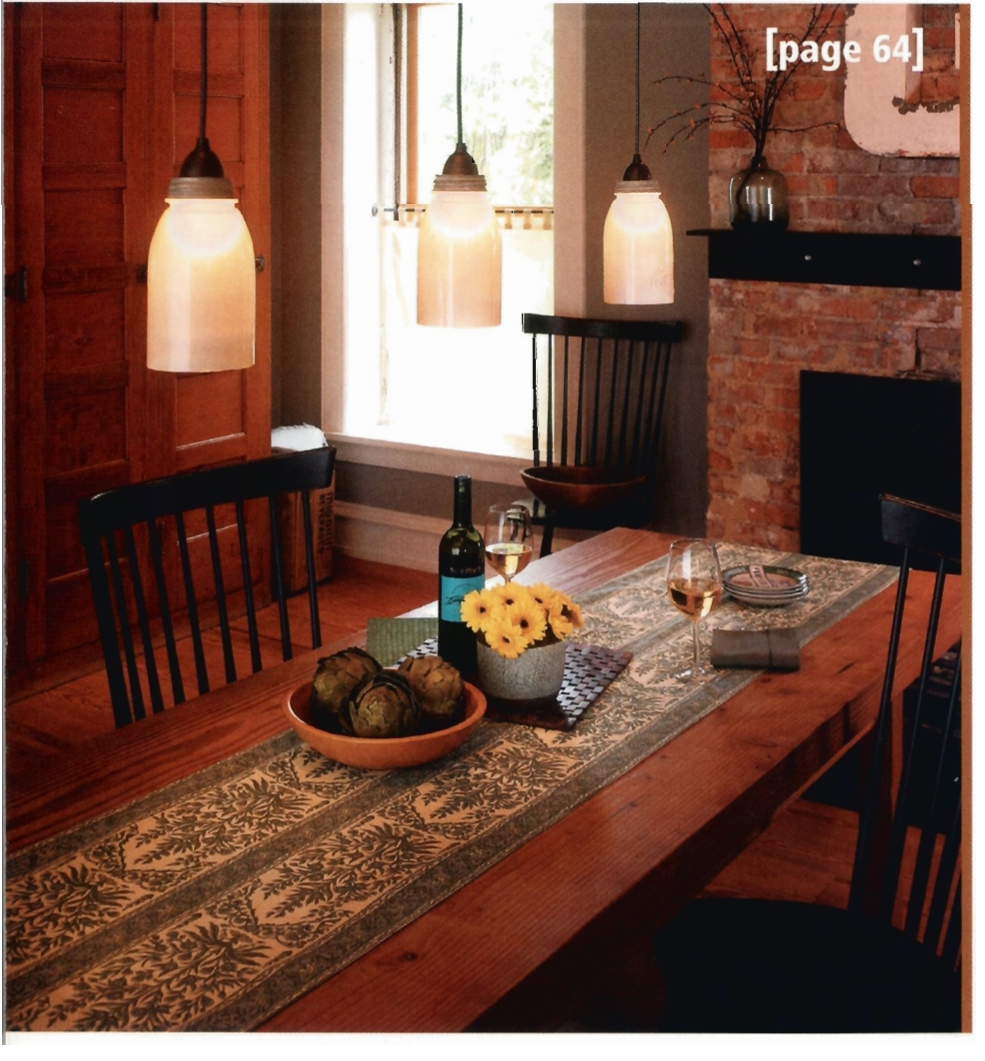
a look inside





Entry Storage & Seating

This entryway system is perfect for the DIYer on the go. In no time at all, you can assemble ready-made items into a convenient bench and wall unit.

Folding Screen

There's a place for a folding screen like this in just about every home. Not only is it decorative, it's also a great way to divide space and conquer clutter.

Extraordinary Lights

Discover the potential of everyday objects and create one-of-a-kind fixtures, like these canning jar pendant lights, without breaking your budget.