

Chicago

*Love where
you live*

HOMES + GARDEN

COLOR ISSUE

WHAT WORKS,
WHAT DOESN'T
**DESIGN
ADVICE**

PINK
BOLD,
STRONG,
GROWN-UP

FRESH
PAIRINGS
**MIX
IT UP**

PLUS
A COOK'S
GARDEN IN
BARRINGTON
HILLS



Oversized gray porcelain tile covers a structure near the back door that houses a closet, a built-in bookcase, and a fireplace (not visible here) facing the kitchen table. Floors are clad with the same material. The bench in front of the chalkboard wall (with drawings by seven-year-old Alya) wraps around the structure and continues as a fireplace ledge.



JUST ADD

Bold accents have real
impact in a lean, eco-smart,
family-friendly home

COLOR



BY LISA SKOLNIK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
KATRINA WITTKAMP

STYLING BY DIANE EWING





M

ajor renovation projects are rarely short and sweet. But when Janan Asfour and Tom MacDonald decided to gut a fire-damaged Wicker Park two-flat and turn it into a single-family home, they had a pithy and pragmatic plan, a tight timeline, and a tried-and-true team to execute the scheme.

"It had to be spacious, efficient, low-maintenance, budget conscious, and green," ticks off Julie Fisher, a partner, with Rachel Crowl, in the Chicago architecture firm fcStudio. "They wanted a house that was smart, not extravagant." And they couldn't drag the job out because they had sold their prior home and needed this one habitable by moving day, a mere six months away. The architects, who had designed the couple's nearby restaurant, The Bluebird, were accustomed to their rational and practical modus operandi. "They have two children, and wanted large living areas and small bedrooms and bathrooms to foster family togetherness," Crowl says.

Fisher and Crowl devised a plan that added a stepped, two-story addition to the back of the structure, giving each 1,000-square-foot level another 800 square feet and allowing more headroom for a climbing wall in the basement. They also reconfigured both floors, creating large, open living, dining, and cooking areas on the first floor—complete with two fireplaces—and four bedrooms and an airy hallway-cum-homework station on the second level.

Everyone worked on making it green. Asfour researched and supervised installation of a geothermal HVAC system and tracked down ultra-hard, super-durable mesquite flooring from a Texas mill, while the architects had floor joists and beams undamaged by the fire crafted into stair treads, built-ins, and a harvest table and bench.

But when the job was almost finished, on time and on budget, it was clear that something was missing. "All the natural materials and earthy hues were lackluster," admits Fisher. Despite the home's dramatic new bones fleshed out in intriguing and attractive eco-friendly materials, "it was monotonous," says Asfour. The architects and homeowners came up with the same solution. "It needed color. Really bold hits of color," says Asfour.

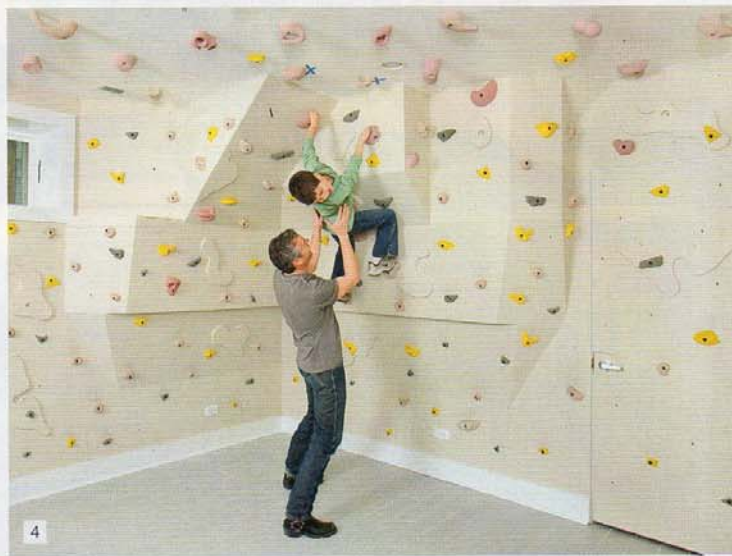
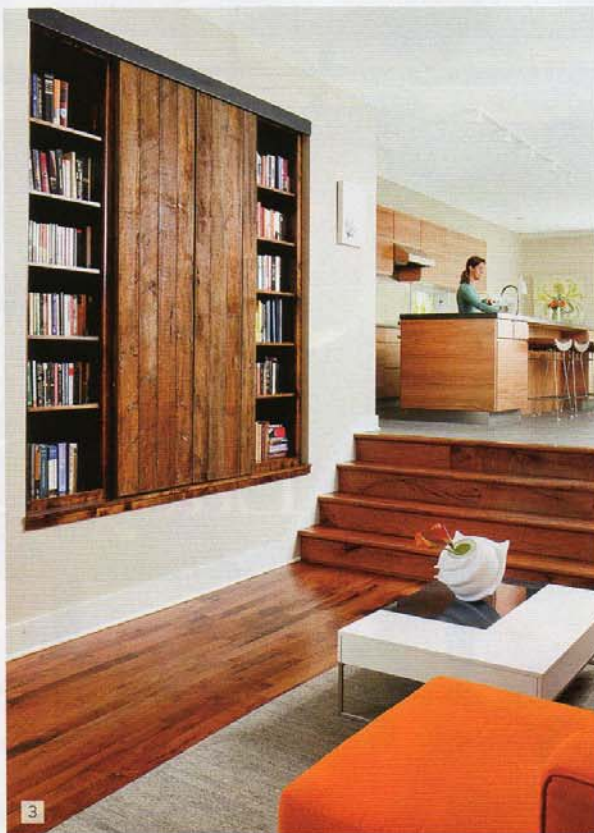
They had not bought furniture yet, so the inspiration occurred at just the right moment. Doors were painted glossy orange; fixtures, furnishings, textiles, and decorative accessories in bold hues were added. "Ironically, the color came last, but it's what you notice first," Crowl says.

Resources: See Buy Guide, page 100.



A painting by Jeff Kruse hangs in the gallery-like entryway (above). Durable mesquite, a fast-growing hardwood used on the floors here and elsewhere, was left unstained and finished with tongue oil. A stepped, two-story addition nearly doubled the home's square footage (top). The graphic over the fireplace (opposite), created with colorful tape, was a spur-of-the-moment installation by an artist friend.





DETAILS

1. Paper wallflowers (made out of romance novels!) bought on Etsy provide a playful touch in the daughter's room, where a hidden door next to the bed leads to a secret passageway between the two children's rooms. 2. The contractor, who saves remnant materials from other jobs, had enough natural stone on hand for countertops in the bathrooms. 3. He also had wood available for custom millwork, such as the built-in shelves in the living area. A cost-effective and attractive Ikea system and Corian countertops were installed in the kitchen. 4. The stepped-up addition allowed enough basement height for a climbing wall; the floor gets covered with padded mats (not shown) when the wall is in use. 5. The stair treads are made with reclaimed wood. Beneath the staircase is a riddling rack for wine, which came from the Champagne region of France. The large painting is by Mary Livoni. 6. A bold rug and bedcovering brighten nine-year old son Will's room.