

SUMMER 2016

OUR COUNTRY HOME

LATE SUMMER 2016

Discovering A Picker's Find
...and losing eBay

Need a jackhammer?
Why buy when you can rent?

That extra-special kitchen
It's all in the details

Letter from the editor

This third issue of the 2016 Our Country Home takes a look at household tools, the equipment you use to do things in your house, the implements you need to fix things, and the technical people who will do it for you after you've tried your hardest to DIY and maybe even goofed up.

For instance, not too long ago I was desperate to get rid of a one-inch-thick "rat slab" that occupied the floor of my chicken coop because it was cracking and buckling in a dangerous way. A jackhammer, I discovered, was very heavy and would vibrate my entire skeletal system, plus it cost about \$600 to buy. Thankfully, renting was an option, as was hiring the person to operate the creature. Meet some of our area experts specializing in equipment rentals of all kinds in Nancy Dymond's article, "Need a jackhammer?"

Before renting, however, you may first want to inspect your very own tool box and in doing so, perhaps even add to it. Check out Wallis Brandt's "Top ten tools" (other than the obvious ones that are already in house). You may or may not agree with her, but comparing is always fun! And if you still insist on doing it yourself, Jonathan Charles Fox's "Blood, sweat and tears" will be a huge reminder of some of the details that go along with a sudden inspiration.

The kitchen is one of any home's prime



workspaces, as well as being, in the eyes of many, the home's heart. Isabel Braverman interviewed local design experts for their tips and tricks on making that space beautiful as well as functional, in "It's all in the details."

And when it comes to furnishing a kitchen, or any other space, you'll get some great tips on how to find unique—and economical—household items in "Discovering A Picker's Find." At the Honesdale, PA family-owned establishment, shopping for vintage household appliances and old-time tools is a wondrous and even educational experience.

Ramona Jan
Section editor



Cover photo: Contributed by Designer Kitchens of Honesdale, PA.

In this high-tech age, consumers are demanding more and more cutting-edge appliances like the stainless steel ovens seen here. But that modern look can't always capture the warmth of traditional styles. What the designers at Designer Kitchens in Honesdale, PA have done here is to come up with a design that marries hi-tech function with all the old-fashioned coziness of a brick hearth. It's the best of both worlds.

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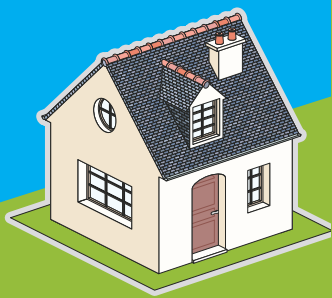
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Need a jackhammer?

Why buy when you can rent?

BY NANCY DYMOND

Homeowners, listen up! There are far easier and faster, even less expensive, ways to do your dreamed-of renovations. You say you want to pull up the tiles to replace the flooring? A floor stripper with a vibrating blade will kick all the tiles right up off the floor, according to Rent-E-Quip, Inc. manager, John Streever.

Streever walked down the line of equipment showcased in Rent-E-Quip's Honesdale office, describing each item and rattling off its use: a sandblaster to remove paint, jumping jacks to compact soil after you dig a trench, concrete floor grinders with attachments, a paver saw that also cuts cinder blocks, a walk-behind saw for accurate cuts on roadwork, sheet rock lifts for hanging drywall, floor dryers, carpet cleaners, pressure washers, jackhammers, laser levels, pumps and more. "We rent anything from a handheld screwdriver to a bulldozer," Streever said proudly.

Rent-E-Quip owner, Steve Motichka (also of A Picker's Find), started the business 30 years ago out of a van. He went from job site to job site, talking with contractors to pinpoint their needs. Soon he was renting and selling so much hardware and equipment that he needed a building. In time, the business outgrew its small headquarters, and today it exists as a complex on Old Willow Avenue. In one of the buildings Steve's daughter, Joelee Motichka, runs



Rent-E-Vent's Joelee Motichka and David Goldstein manage the party division of Rent-E-Quip.

Rent-E-Vent, a division of Rent-E-Quip, Inc. that provides event tents and a complete line of party supplies. Joelee and her assistant, David Goldstein, offer consultation for large and small events. "We do all the tent rentals, tables, chairs, basically everything. You can show up with nothing and we'll have everything there for you to have the biggest, best party."

Dave Chicosky and his wife opened C & C Equipment Rental Co. in Hawley, PA in 1989. Since the '70s they had vacationed at Lake Wallenpaupack and loved the area. With 14 years of experience at a Bucks County equipment rental company, Chicosky felt he was ready to begin his own business. Today, this family of five all work various



Dave Chicosky of C & C Equipment Rental Company in Hawley, PA has rented equipment since 1989.

jobs in their successful company.

Convenience is the top reason people rent instead of buying, according to Chicosky. "People buy a pressure washer and put it in their shed. Next spring they try to start it up. They find they've left water in it; it's frozen and won't start. By renting, they don't have to worry about maintaining or storing it or anything else."

"What people rent depends on the season," Chicosky observed. "In the spring and summer it's yard and garden: chippers, log splitters, excavators, backhoes. In the fall a lot of people will do their floor sanding, tile work, repairs. Before winter comes, some will be putting in foundations, anything to do with breaking the earth before the frost."

For 30 years, The Rental Center of Monticello, Inc., owned and operated by Jeffery Sternberg and his wife, Judith, has been renting tents, party supplies, and large and small equipment. Sternberg's original inspiration came to him in the Far East while enjoying the trip of a



TRR photos by Nancy Dymond

John Streever manages Rent-E-Quip in Honesdale, PA, a company that began out of the side of a van.

lifetime: a contest prize he'd won. Wowed by the booming trade of the rental equipment industry in Singapore, Sternberg brought the idea home to Monticello, where it prospered and continues to grow.

In addition to being a Yanmar dealer, this year Sternberg has expanded the business by adding three more lines of tractors and mowers for sale. The Rental Center of Monticello is now the place to find the Mahindra line of tractors as well as Ferris commercial lawn mowers and Simplicity mowers for homeowners.

One of the challenges that rental equipment companies face is that often the renter is not familiar with the piece of equipment that will do the job they want to do. "For instance," Sternberg explained, "they'll come in and say they want a stump removed. So you have to ask them if they are doing one stump or 20 stumps. Are they little stumps or are they two feet wide? Do you want to grind them down or dig them up? Each answer requires a different machine. We try to make sure that they get the right thing for the right purpose."

All of these businesses provide instruction on the equipment they rent. Rent-E-Quip offers basic instruction, but stresses that it is up to the renters to either learn how to operate the piece of equipment or have someone who is qualified operate it for them. The Rental Center of Monticello demonstrates the equipment

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JACKHAMMER

Continued from page 4

at the store to familiarize the customer with the method of operation. "We go over step-by-step operations with everything we rent," said C & C Equipment's Chicosky. "If we're not comfortable, we won't rent it out."

But what if you're in the middle of a job and the equipment just stops working? Fear not. All three companies have service mechanics that will make your problem their priority. C & C Equipment Rental Co. will do whatever they have to to help you get your job done. "If we have another machine like it, we'll bring it out and switch. If a hose breaks, we'll go out and fix it at no additional cost."

Repairs? Whether it's your equipment or theirs, most rental companies are also repair shops staffed with experienced mechanics and service people. Rental companies are the ones that come to the rescue of late-night construction crews when their light or power goes out.

Rental agents need to have skills of all sorts, so it's no surprise when the companies expand into other areas of sales or service. Rent-E-Quip offers a full steel supply, which they will custom cut using a plasma torch. They also do steel fabrication. Tent rentals are big business during the warm months. If you like to grill outside, check for promotions on buying and refilling propane tanks during the summer months. Watch this paper for money-saving promotions.

Both Rent-E-Quip and The Rental Center of Monticello periodically offer promotions on equipment and delivery. Although C & C Equipment Rental Co. doesn't run promotions, Chicosky says to check his prices because they are the lowest year round.

Pleasing the customer is a top priority among all three area companies. Their specialty is in providing you with the know-how to complete your project. Drop in. Ask questions. They invite you to become a very satisfied customer.



TRR photos by Nancy Dymond

Why buy a roller when you can rent one?



The Rental Center of Monticello, NY with owner Jeffrey Sternberg and his crew represents 30-years of business.



This mystery tool is a Kett Saw used to cut sheet metal without cutting into the interior framing, like cutting the skin of a metal door to install a window lite or a louver vent.

Some places you can rent equipment

Rent-E-Quip, Inc.
Construction Equipment Supplier
Address: 416 Old Willow Ave, Honesdale, PA 18431
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www.rentequip.com/hme/hme.aspx

The Rental Center of Monticello, Inc.
150 Bridgeville Rd., Monticello, NY 12701
Phone: 845/794-0100
www.rentalcentermonticello.com/

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Discovering A Picker's Find ... and losing eBay



A bevy of old school windows with true divided lites would make a great outdoor greenhouse.

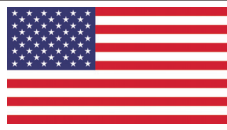
BY RAMONA JAN

“He’s a picker and always has been,” says Jenna Motichka of her dad, Steve, the founder of A Picker’s Find in Honesdale, PA. Papa Motichka, a self-taught welder, metalworker, machinist, mechanic, plumber, electrician and carpenter, collected for about 40 years before opening A Picker’s Find in the spring of 2011—a shop that daughter Motichka now proudly runs. “He loves the mechanical side of things—anything mechanical or industrial,”

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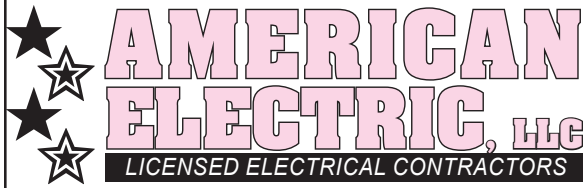
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DISCOVERING

Continued from page 8

continues Jenna, pointing out that as a teenager her dad originally began amassing items that needed fixing, like bicycles and cars.

Upon arriving at A Picker's Find, you're greeted by an outdoor bazaar of sorts where you'll find some recognizable items like a Morris Minor automobile, a fire hall alarm and window shutters, alongside an oddball assortment of unidentifiable stuff including what appears to be a bona fide astronaut's suit, a life-sized primitive sculpture made of rusted metal and other objects unknown. (One could spend an afternoon making a guessing game in the outdoor area alone).

On the inside, the place and its contents seems endless and at first in total disarray but, assuredly, "finds" are grouped in categories. For the homemaker—pedestal sinks, soaking tubs, ceramic toilets, fruit scales, vintage metal fans, kitchen appliances like Hoosiers and Magic Chef Ovens as well as smalls such as linens, china and crockery. For the home improver there are doors of every imaginable size and shape, windows with float, leaded and/or stained glass, and a whole room just dedicated to vintage tools. For the collector: a fully restored barber chair, hobby trains and train memorabilia, a doll and

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TRR photos by Ramona Jan

For the "bathifier," an oak-rimmed soaking tub with copper sheeting



This early kerosene stove would be the perfect focal point in almost any kitchen.



According to the label, this small stovetop oven with blue enamel door provides "exceptional baking results."

DISCOVERING

Continued from page 10

toy section (including metal toys), vintage film equipment, block and tackle, and advertising signage.

Many of the appliances are in working order, but some do require a DIY mindset. “It’s wise to bring a plumber or other knowledgeable person when looking at an appliance in any vintage store,” advises Jenna. “We want to move things along, but the benefit is that we price low—real low. We recently sold a vintage refrigerator in perfect working order for \$100.”

“I need some photographer’s lights. Got any?” I asked Jenna in a frenzied phone call one day.

“Sure do. Just got them in this morning and I haven’t even taken them out of the box. Hold on. Let me check.” And sure enough, she checked the lights over and told me they were in good order and would cost only \$20.

For twenty bucks, I immediately hopped in my car and took the half-hour drive to Honesdale to pick up the lights. When I arrived at A Picker’s Find, I found that these particular vintage lamps (made by the Acme Lite Company of Chicago), were not only functional but gorgeous and a much better deal than similar lamps offered on eBay. They needed re-wiring, but that was okay with me. I vowed from that point forward, before searching eBay, I’d call A Picker’s Find for all my material needs. For pricing, Jenna factors in what the item cost them, if it needs fixing or cleaning, and what it’s worth on eBay according to the sold, not the asking price. At A Picker’s Find prices are inevitably lower than on eBay.

On the way out, I spied what looked like a white ceramic oval-shaped thingy that stands on legs and has a hole in the middle. “What’s this?” I asked.

“I don’t know yet,” says Jenna, who then explains that she’ll either ask an octogenarian or go online to find out.

While in high school, Jenna worked at a local ski shop. Upon seeing how much she loved retail, her father suggested that she “work real

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For the mid-century aficionado, an early '50's dishwasher with built-in sink.



Aside from cooling food, this 1940s refrigerator/freezer emits a soothing hum.

PICKERS

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This substantial pedestal sink with a single spout is in perfect condition.



A sausage stuffer that doubles as a citrus press would add old-time charm to any kitchen.



A wide range of china, silver plate, Franciscan ware, Depression glass, California and Italian pottery are displayed on a for-sale farm table.

At one time, this vintage Toledo scale weighed deli items and probably even babies.

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DISCOVERING

Continued from page 13

hard and buy the shop.” But that idea was a bit too enterprising for a girl still in her teens. Upon graduation in 2008, however, Jenna relocated to Manhattan where she studied fashion at the New York Art Institute—for about six months. “I loved it but didn’t want to spend that much money to be taught something I already knew how to do—sew,” explains Jenna. When she did the math, she figured out that she’d have to stay in the city for years just to work off her educational costs.

“I moved back to Honesdale because I love the beauty, nature, farms, food and the fact that I don’t have to pay to go to a gym, that I can just go down to the river for a swim. Visiting the city is great, but I’d never want to live there again.”

Jenna and her father spent the last three years restoring a ’64 Avion camper from top to bottom. They replaced some of its exterior anodized aluminum panels and then gutted the entire interior and replaced and/or restored the floor, plumbing, insulation and wood cabinets. They tossed the decomposed couch pieces and changed the old toilet for new. Eventually they’ll add solar heating. When done, it will be Jenna’s home.

As for Mama Motichka, “She isn’t much of a collector anymore,” says Jenna, “She loves her key pieces and decorates with antiques, but has more of a minimalist style. If something isn’t serving a purpose anymore it gets moved out.”

At A Picker’s Find there is something for everyone and the exceptional finds are constantly changing. You never know what you’ll discover—like sellers. “People come into the store to sell things, and they want top dollar,” says Jenna, “and I often have to explain to them that we also need to make a profit, and many things hang around for years, or the next person who walks in might break it.” Still, she is polite and gracious and will usually either buy outright or put something on consignment.

“What size are you looking for?” Jenna asked a customer looking for table vices (it’s charming the way Jenna treats A Picker’s Find as if it were a big department store with stockpiles of other sizes in some back storage area).

My latest request included a miter box and saw, a tabletop artist’s easel and a collapsible baby stroller. (My needs are often broad and somewhat incomprehensible). Yes to the miter box and saw—in fact there were several to choose from—yes to the artist’s easel, and “not right now” to the stroller. Since there’s no baby on the way (the stroller is just for parts), I’ll call in a week, and they’ll probably have a half dozen by then because that’s just the kind of happenstance you’ll find again and again at A Picker’s Find: 570/253-0207.



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Photography by: Lawrence Brawn

The Velvet Maple is an avant-garde fashion and home design headquarters based in Honesdale, PA. The store opened its doors in April 2016 to spotlight owner Alessandra Maria's primary business: interior design consultation for commercial and home renovations. The Velvet Maple, open every day besides Tuesday, carries a variety of items, from emerging designers in women's apparel, to ethically imported accessories, and modern innovative housewares. Alessandra's eye for design extends to The Velvet Maple's Airbnb outpost: a three bedroom renovated vacation rental available this year in Callicoon, NY. Email inquiries to: velvetmaplelifestyle@gmail.com

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Top ten tools

Aside from the usual

BY WALLIS BRANDT

Aside from the obvious claw hammer, multiple-head screwdriver, utility knife (aka box cutter), wire cutters, needle-nosed pliers and their like, tape measure, jackknife (or Leatherman if you're so inclined), drill gun, saws (including hack and maybe even chop), staple gun, wrench set and the endlessly versatile wire hanger, IMHO, these are the top 10 essential tools for dummies like me.

10. Metal snips

Different from metal sheers, which are larger and a lot more seriously professional, I got these babies online for less than \$10, delivered. They are small—only about 6 inches in total length—but they'll cut through layers of cardboard, a plaster cast and even a penny. I ask myself: How have I lived this long without them?

9. Vice grips

It may take a few tries, but once you get the hang of vice grips, which hold onto anything with a vengeance, you'll find it very, very hard to go back to using ordinary pliers. It's like having a third hand.



8. Horsehair brush

Soft and subtle with a wooden handle, nothing beats a horsehair brush for quick, dry clean-ups—sawdust from the table legs you just trimmed, hair from when you shaped your husband's beard and even crumbs from the dinner table. Just brush the debris away or under the rug—whatever suits you best. No need to worry about scratching anything with a horsehair brush.

7. The mighty awl

I once showed a schooled (but very young) carpenter how an awl works: position the pointed end, and then tap the handle ever so slightly with a hammer to make a tiny pilot hole for any nail or screw. "It's as simple as that," I said, all the while remembering a passage from the Bible, "Take an awl and push it through his earlobe... and he will become your servant for life." Of course, that could be good, too, especially if you're talking about a carpenter servant. Although a nice cup of coffee, some food and a cash bonus might work better.



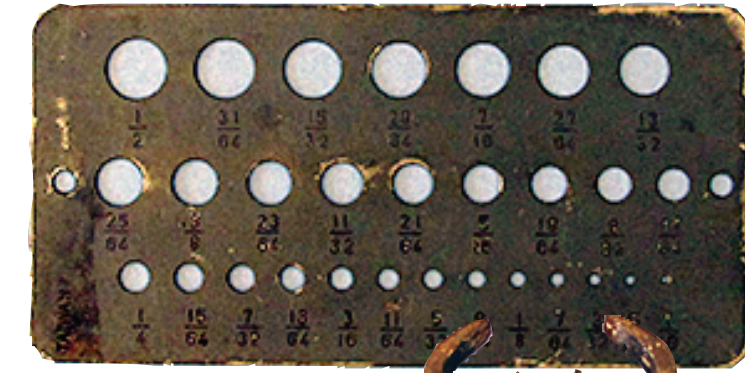
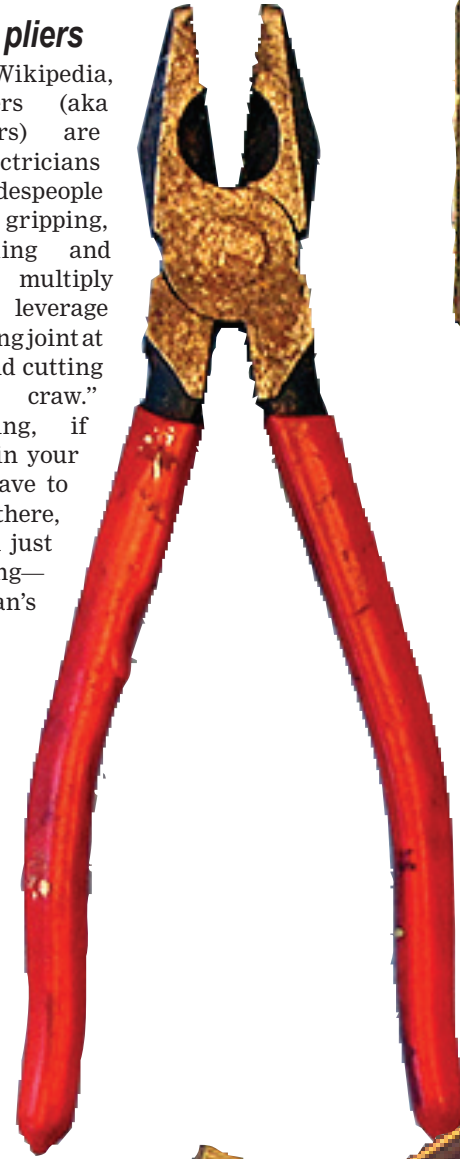
6. Wooden folding rule

There's nothing more annoying than trying to measure something very tall from the ground up with one of those uber-flexible and insistently retractable tape measures that wiggle and bend to no end. Of course, you'll eventually get an accurate measurement, but only if you can keep up with its contortions. Better to use a folding wooden rule for such measures. And yes, it's called a folding wooden "rule," not ruler.



5. Lineman's pliers

According to Wikipedia, lineman's pliers (aka linesman pliers) are "used by electricians and other tradespeople primarily for gripping, twisting, bending and cutting. They multiply force through leverage with their gripping joint at the snub nose and cutting edge in their craw." Plainly speaking, if something gets in your craw and you have to yank it out of there, and you've tried just about everything—use the lineman's pliers.

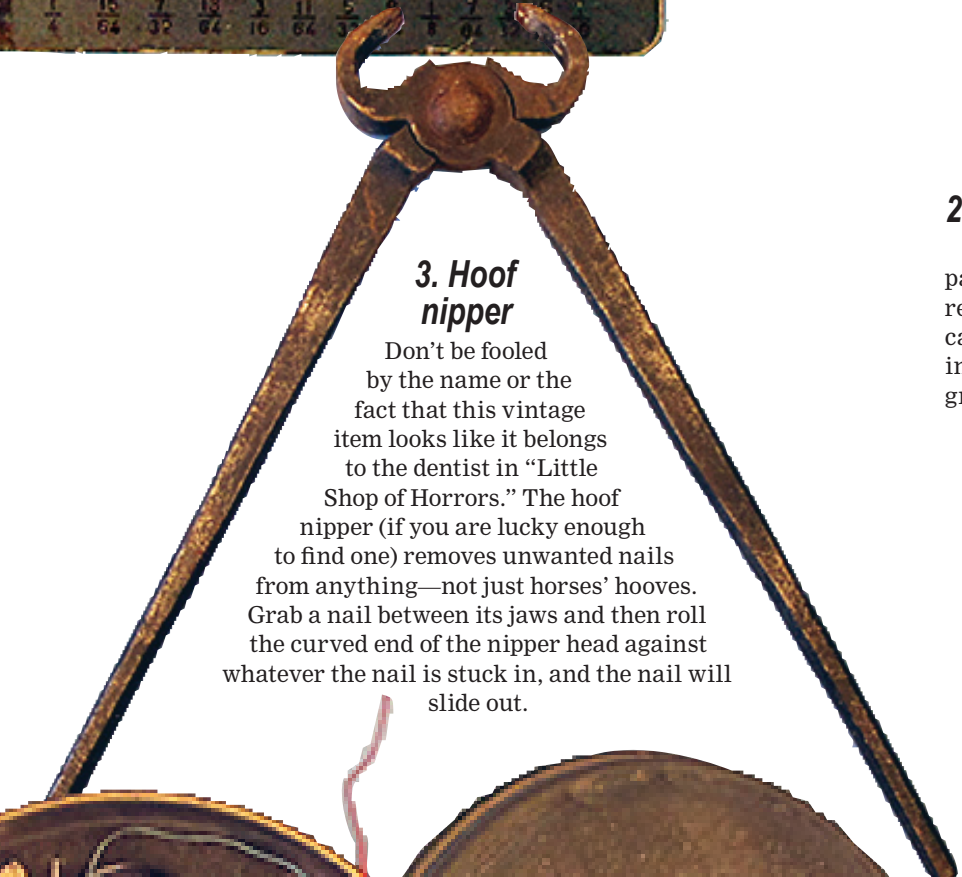


4. Drill bit index/gauge

You've already got the drill gun and the bits. Now don't make the wrong-sized hole. This handy-dandy gauge, also called an "index," will help you choose the exact right bit for the screw you are about to sink.

3. Hoof nipper

Don't be fooled by the name or the fact that this vintage item looks like it belongs to the dentist in "Little Shop of Horrors." The hoof nipper (if you are lucky enough to find one) removes unwanted nails from anything—not just horses' hooves. Grab a nail between its jaws and then roll the curved end of the nipper head against whatever the nail is stuck in, and the nail will slide out.



2. Five-in-one

Just as it says, the five-in-one scrapes paint, spreads compound, cleans rollers, removes putty and opens cracks. The young carpenter who didn't know what an awl was introduced this tool to me, and I am forever grateful.



1. Sewing kit

The number one tool that you will need, ladies and gentleman, (drum roll) is the sewing kit, which contains needles, thread, tiny scissors, buttons and anything else you can squeeze into it. Not only can you repair curtain hems and burst pillow seams, you'll be a hero rescuing blouses from popped buttons and dresses from lopsided hems. Plus, it's the one tool you can carry out of the home without seeming at all odd.



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It's all in the details

When designing your kitchen, look for the small accents that make a big impact

By Isabel Braverman

Whether you're designing a new kitchen or renovating your current one, pro designers agree the small things add up to create a beautiful picture. "The seemingly small details like the sink, faucet and hardware are just as important to the overall design and must not be afterthoughts," says Ilene Goodenough. She and Regina Moran are the kitchen and bath designers at Designer Kitchens in Honesdale, PA. They offer kitchen and bath design sales and have a showroom with all of the latest trends, tools, and tech in design. Here they offer their tips and tricks for creating a space that's special.



Interesting design details, like these large wooden spoons hanging above the stove, add character and charm to a country kitchen.

Tips for designing your kitchen or bathroom

- Come prepared when shopping for your project; photos of what you like, measurements, and even photos of your current kitchen if it is a remodel. Websites like Pinterest and Houzz are super helpful in the planning stages.
- Trends in kitchen and bath tend to be longer-lasting than in clothes fashion, so do not be afraid to follow them.
- Quartz countertops are currently the most popular, especially colors that look like marble, i.e. LG Viatera-Everest and Minuet Everest.
- Gray tones are still strong.
- Special touches like fancy crown molding and glass cabinet fronts add a more personal look.
- Found materials like architectural salvage and old wood are common accents and add a rustic charm to new cabinets.



White cabinets with minimalist hardware give this kitchen a clean and cool look. The marble backsplash makes an upscale enhancement.

Upgrade your tech

It seems like it's common practice now to have a lot of electronic devices: smart phones, tablets, e-readers, etc. It can be hard to keep track of them and keep it organized. One thing you might not think of is that these devices are incredibly helpful in the kitchen. Want to follow a recipe on your tablet? Play music on your phone while it charges? This all becomes easier with helpful updates, such as storage solutions and charging stations.

Goodenough said, "When we think of tech in the kitchen we think of what people are including and designing into their new kitchens." For her clients, she has installed charging stations in drawers and cabinets, so it is out of sight and also convenient. She also recommends power strips that pop out of your island top. Creating a charging station means you'll be reminded to charge your phone and you'll always know where it is.

Another tech upgrade that is small yet makes a big impact is specialty lighting. This can include battery-powered sensor cabinet drawer lighting and strip cabinet lighting. Goodenough recommends lighting strips from Schrock Cabinetry. The versatile strips can be linked together and are LED and energy efficient.

Other advances in technology for the kitchen include faucets. Even if you don't want to do a major renovation in your space, just changing up the faucet can enhance the overall look. "Most companies now have touch faucets, and now Delta even has a touch soap dispenser," Goodenough said.

Take some or all of these ideas and upgrades and you can create a kitchen or bathroom that fits your needs.

Continued on page 26



A charging station can be concealed in cabinets to keep devices hidden and also for convenience.



Yes, stainless steel appliances are nice—but there are more imaginative alternatives, especially if you have a more antique-oriented design aesthetic. Old-fashioned style cabinetry concealing the stove vent and a patterned tile that complements the willow-patterned plates on display make this range a focal point of the kitchen design rather than a purely utilitarian element.

DETAILS

Continued from page 25

Farmhouse sinks

In recent years, an old-fashioned style of sink, the farmhouse sink, has become cutting edge. These are generally deeper than sinks of more recent design, and are installed so that there are no cabinets or counter intervening between the user and the edge of the sink, allowing you to get closer to whatever you're working on.

Farmhouse sinks are also usually installed so that the front protrudes a bit beyond the surrounding cabinetry, meaning that any water that gets splashed or spilled over the edge will fall to the floor rather than ruining the cabinetry. And the top of the sink, as shown here, is set a bit below the surrounding countertops, so that it is easy to wipe water or debris directly from the countertops into the sink.

Here, the designers have matched the old-fashioned sink with antique elements including turned legs on either side of the sink. Together with the wide old wooden boards chosen for flooring and vintage-looking faucets, it completes the nostalgic mood of a real old farmhouse, true to the sink's name. But if you go for a more modern look and still would like the functional advantage of these big, deep sinks, don't despair: they also make stainless steel ones with a sleek, streamlined, modern appearance.



Photo courtesy Designer Kitchens

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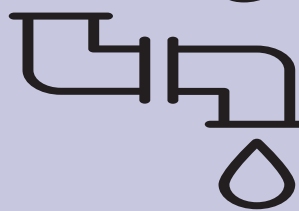
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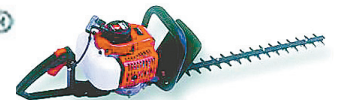


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BY JONATHAN CHARLES FOX

O kay... so I'm not exactly a handyman. That does not mean that I'm not handy, and there is no question that I'm a man, but I have issues. For one, I'm Jewish. We're not exactly known for our skill with power tools, and my father never encouraged me to pick up a hammer, but Mom did, bless her heart—and there was never a project too big for her to tackle, whether she knew how to do it or not, so there's that. In fact, when my family purchased the groundwork for a cottage on Seneca Lake back in the '60s, it was Mom who insisted that we could do the lion's share of the "finishing work" ourselves, and so we did.

While it may have been unconventional, Mom taught me how to use said power tools, and over three summers we managed to put up drywall, install carpeting and hardwood floors, even going so far as to use how-to manuals for installing windows, some minor electrical work and small plumbing projects. But it was the "creative" efforts that suited us most, and there has been no lack of those in the intervening years. Because of Mom and her can-do attitude, I've tackled some monumental projects over the years, some with great success and others that turned out to be dismal failures. But as she was fond of saying: "Give it a shot. What's the worst that can happen?"

Well... the worst that can happen is a trip to the hospital to repair the occasional broken bone, stitch up the gash in your one good arm, or walk with a limp for the rest of your life because you dropped a sledge hammer on it one too many times.

Creativity. It's what drives me to this day, and a few months ago, I spied something intriguing outside a local antique shop in Callicoon. It was a child's play kitchen, replete with a sink, "gas" burners, a fridge and assorted cupboards. It was made of hardwood and painted cherry-red, and I discovered that it was made by a company called "Kid Kraft" and intentionally designed with a retro '50s feel, so it looked really vintage. It was pretty beat up, missing hinges and doors, while the spigot on the sink swung drunkenly from abuse, but as Mom would say, it "looked like a challenge," so I picked it up for a song. "What on earth are you going to do with it?" my pal Gayle asked when I showed it to her. "It's a mess!"

"Well," I explained, "My plan is to fix it up and hang it on the wall in the kitchen, as a clever way to increase my shelf space and look cool in the process. But I'm gonna need help. This sucker weighs a ton." And so it began. I measured twice, as conventional wisdom suggests, and went off to the hardware store, paper in hand, with a rough sketch, a plan and a James Taylor song in my heart. I had already used Gayle's stud finder to locate the best spots to hang the thing on the wall, which was never the



TRR photos by Jonathan Charles Fox

Voila! A child's play kitchen becomes a kitchen cupboard. The finished project is properly mounted to the wall and serves a purpose.

Continued on page 34



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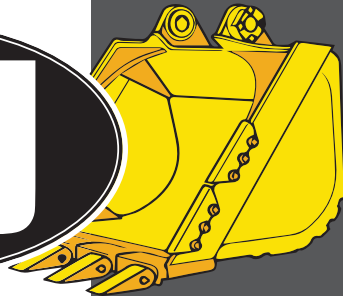
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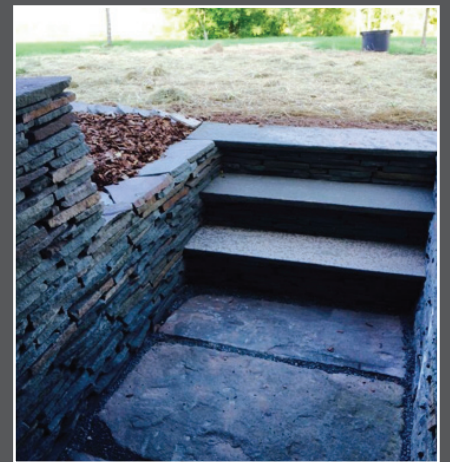
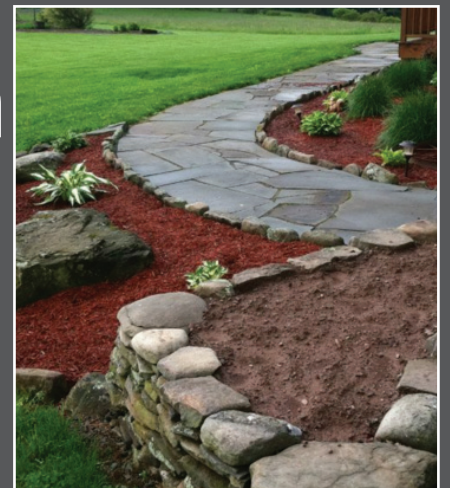
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The River Reporter's 21st Annual 2016 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

THE BEST BALLOT IS BACK!

We have revamped our ballot and it's better than ever! We ask that you simply vote for the people, places or businesses that you think are the BEST. Thank you for your participation and we look forward to receiving your votes. If there is a category that we are missing, let us know!

We will publish our 2016 WINNERS in our annual Readers' Choice Awards "BEST" supplement in January 2017. Remember, you can always vote online at riverreporter.com/best

Good Luck to all!

Food

Appetizers _____
 Atmosphere _____
 Authentic Meal _____
 Bagels _____
 Bakery _____
 Bar Atmosphere _____
 Bar Overall _____
 Barbecue _____
 Barbecue Food _____
 Beer Selection _____
 Best Bagel Shop _____
 Breakfast Buffet _____
 Breakfast Menu _____
 Brunch Buffet _____
 Brunch _____
 Budget-friendly _____
 Buffet _____
 Buffet Chinese _____
 Burger Place _____
 Burrito _____
 Candy Shop _____
 Catering _____
 Cheese Steaks _____
 Chicken Wings _____
 Chinese Restaurant _____
 Chocolates _____
 Coffee _____
 Coffee Shop _____
 Deli _____
 Desserts _____
 Diner _____
 Dinner _____
 Dinner Specials _____
 Early Bird Specials _____
 Ethnic Cuisine _____
 Family Restaurant _____
 Fastest Take Out Service _____
 Fine Dining Restaurant _____
 Food Truck _____
 French Fries _____
 French Restaurant _____
 Fried Chicken _____
 Friendliest Service _____
 Gourmet Popcorn/Snacks _____
 Gourmet Restaurant _____
 Greek Restaurant _____
 Grocery Store /Supermarket _____
 Hamburgers _____
 Happy Hour _____
 Health Food Store _____
 Hoagie _____
 Home Cooking Restaurant _____
 Hot Dog _____
 Ice Cream Shop _____
 Indian _____
 Italian Restaurant _____
 Japanese Restaurant _____
 Kid Friendly Restaurant _____
 Latin Restaurant _____
 Local Watering Hole _____
 Local Winery _____
 Locally-Sourced Menu _____

Lunch _____
 Lunch Bargain _____
 Lunch Under \$5 _____
 Martinis _____
 Menu _____
 Mexican _____
 Microbrewery _____
 Most Romantic Restaurant _____
 New Restaurant _____
 Off The Beaten Path _____
 Outdoor Dining _____
 Overall Restaurant _____
 Pasta Dish _____
 Pizza _____
 Pizza Place _____
 Place to Have a Cocktail _____
 Place to Have First Date _____
 Prime Rib _____
 Ribs _____
 Romantic Restaurant _____
 Salad _____
 Salad Bar _____
 Sandwiches _____
 Seafood _____
 Soup _____
 Sports Bar _____
 Steakhouse _____
 Sunday Brunch _____
 Sushi _____
 Sweet Shop _____
 Taco _____
 Tavern _____
 Tea Room _____
 Thai Cuisine _____
 Vegetarian _____
 Wedding Cakes _____
 Wine Bar _____
 Wine Selection _____
 Wings _____
 Restaurant - Delaware County _____
 Restaurant - Orange County _____
 Restaurant - Pike County _____
 Restaurant - Sullivan County _____
 Restaurant - Wayne _____
 Restaurant - Region _____

People & Places

55+ Active Adult Community _____
 Accountant _____
 Acupuncture _____
 Apartment Community _____
 Appliance Dealer _____
 Architect _____
 Assisted Living Facility _____
 Attorney _____
 Auction House/Service _____
 Auto Glass Repair _____
 Auto Mechanic _____
 Auto Painting Collision Repair _____
 Auto Parts _____
 Auto Repair _____
 Auto Service Station _____

Baker/ Specialty Cakes _____
 Bank _____
 Bank Teller _____
 Barber _____
 Barber Shop _____
 Bartender _____
 Bathroom Remodeler _____
 Best Place to take a Zumba Class _____
 Best Place to Work Manufacturing _____
 Best Place to Work Overall _____
 Best Place to Work Trucking/Transportation _____
 Best Place to Work Warehouse & Distribution _____
 Builder/Developer _____
 Butcher _____
 Cable/Phone Provider _____
 Cancer Center _____
 Car Salesman _____
 Car Wash _____
 Career Training Facility _____
 Carpenter _____
 Carpet Cleaning _____
 Caterer _____
 CDL Driver Training _____
 Cell Phone Provider _____
 Chef _____
 Child Care Provider _____
 Chiropractor _____
 Christmas Tree Farm _____
 Clergy _____
 Coach _____
 College Local _____
 Computer Repair _____
 Cosmetic Dentist _____
 Cosmetic Surgeon _____
 Credit Union _____
 Custom Cabinetry _____
 Custom Framing Service _____
 Customer Service _____
 Dance School _____
 Day Care Center _____
 Day Spa _____
 Dentist _____
 Dermatologist _____
 Doctor _____
 Drug/Alcohol Treatment _____
 Dry Cleaners _____
 Elder Care Facility _____
 Electrical Contractor _____
 Electrician _____
 Emergency Room _____
 Emergency Services _____
 Employment Agency _____
 Engaging Facebook Page _____
 Event Planner _____
 Excavator _____
 Eye Care Center _____
 Eye Center _____
 Eyewear Store _____
 Family Doctor _____
 Family Practice _____
 Fertility Center _____
 Financial Planner _____
 Fireplaces/Woodstoves _____
 Fitness Center _____
 Fitness Equipment _____
 Flooring/Carpet Store _____
 Friendly Staff _____
 Funeral Home _____
 Furniture Store _____
 Garbage & Junk Removal _____
 Garden Center/Nursery _____
 Green Business _____
 Gym _____

Gymnastic Center _____
 Hair & Nail Salon _____
 Hair Salon _____
 Hair Stylist _____
 Hardware Store _____
 Health Insurance Provider _____
 Health/Natural Foods _____
 Hearing Aid Center _____
 Hearing Aid Specialist _____
 Heating & Air Conditioning _____
 Heating Fuel Company _____
 Holistic Practitioner _____
 Home & Garden Store _____
 Home Builder _____
 Home Health Service _____
 Home Improvement Store Local _____
 Home Inspector _____
 Home Insulation Installation Local _____
 Home Renovation _____
 Hospital/ Medical Facility _____
 Hospital/Health Network _____
 House Cleaning Service _____
 HVAC _____
 Insurance Agency _____
 Insurance Agent _____
 Interior Decorator _____
 Interior Designer/Design Center Local _____
 Internet Provider _____
 Jewelry Watch/Clock Repair _____
 Kid's Camp _____
 Kitchen & Bath Store _____
 Kitchen Designer/Remodeler _____
 Landscape Supply Center _____
 Landscaper _____
 Landscaping _____
 Laser Hair Removal _____
 Law Enforcement Officer _____
 Law Firm _____
 Lawn & Garden Equipment _____
 Lawn Equip Sales & Service Local _____
 Lawyer _____
 Lighting Store _____
 Limo Service _____
 Local Hero _____
 Martial Arts School _____
 Mason _____
 Massage Therapist _____
 Maternity Unit _____
 Mattress Store _____
 Medical Spa _____
 Medical Specialist _____
 Modular Homes _____
 Mortgage Company _____
 Nail Salon _____
 New Business of the Year _____
 Non- Profit Organization _____
 Nursing Home _____
 Nursing Services _____
 Obstetrician _____
 Oil Company _____
 Optometrist _____
 Orthodontist _____
 Orthopedic Services _____
 Painter _____
 Painting And Decorating Store _____
 Painting Service _____
 Patient Care _____
 Patio Furniture _____
 Paving Contractor _____
 Pediatrician _____
 Personal Care Home _____

More on the other side

The River Reporter's 21st Annual 2016 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

- Personal Fitness Trainer _____
- Pest Control _____
- Pet Boarding Kennel _____
- Pet Pampering _____
- Pet Day Care _____
- Pet Grooming _____
- Pet Groomer _____
- Pet Trainer _____
- Pharmacy _____
- Photographer _____
- Photography Studio _____
- Physical Rehab Center _____
- Physical Therapist _____
- Picture Framer _____
- Place to have a Baby _____
- Plumber _____
- Plumbing & Heating Supply _____
- Podiatrist _____
- Politician _____
- Pool Builder/Contractor _____
- Postmaster _____
- PreSchool _____
- Radio Personality _____
- Real Estate Agent _____
- Real Estate Attorney _____
- Real Estate Company _____
- Real Estate Website _____
- Recreation & Entertainment _____
- Recycle & Transfer Station _____
- Rehabilitation Services _____
- Rental Center _____
- Retractable Awnings _____
- Roofer _____
- Roofing Contractor _____
- Salvage Company _____
- Septic Service _____
- Spa or Personal Pampering _____
- Storage Center _____
- Sunrooms _____
- Surgeon _____
- Tailor _____
- Tanning Salon _____
- Tattoo Parlor _____
- Tax Preparation _____
- Teacher _____
- Temp Agency _____
- Therapeutic Massage _____
- Towing Service _____
- Truck Center _____
- Tuxedo Rentals _____
- Veterinarian _____
- Veterinarian Clinic _____
- Vocational Technical School _____
- Waiter/Waitress _____
- Waterproofing Basement _____
- Weight Loss Center _____
- Well Driller _____
- Window Replacement _____
- Window Treatments _____
- Women's Health Center _____
- Yoga Studio _____
- Yoga Teacher _____

Shopping

- Antique Store _____
- Antiques/Collectibles _____
- Auto Dealer Domestic _____
- Auto Dealer Foreign _____
- Auto Dealer PreOwned _____
- Auto Parts Store _____
- Baby Gifts _____
- Baby/Kids Store _____

- Beer Distributor _____
- Boat Dealer/Rental _____
- Boat/Marine Service _____
- Bookstore _____
- Botique _____
- Bridal Shop _____
- Camera Shop _____
- Card Shop _____
- Cigar Shop _____
- Clothing Store _____
- Clothing Store Men _____
- Clothing Store Women _____
- Collectibles Store _____
- Computer Sales _____
- Consignment Shop _____
- Convenience Store _____
- Craft Beer Selection _____
- Craft Supply _____
- Department Store _____
- Electronics _____
- Ethnic Food Store _____
- Fabric Store _____
- Farm Equipment Retailer _____
- Farmers Market _____
- Flea Market _____
- Flooring Store _____
- Florist _____
- Formal Wear _____
- Furniture Store _____
- General Store _____
- Gift Shop _____
- Gold/Silver Buying _____
- Golf Apparel/Accessory Store _____
- Grocery Store _____
- Hardware Store _____
- Hobby Store _____
- Home Décor _____
- Jewelry Store _____
- Kids Clothes _____
- Knit Shop _____
- Liquor Store _____
- Local Sweet Corn _____
- Locally-made products _____
- Lumberyard _____
- Mall _____
- Medical Equipment _____
- Motorcycle Shop _____
- Music Store _____
- Musical Instrument Store _____
- Novelty Shop _____
- Outdoor Recreational Vehicles _____
- Outlet Shopping Complex _____
- Party Supply Store _____
- Pet Store _____
- Pet Supplies _____
- Place to Buy Art _____
- Place to Buy Pool/Spa _____
- Pool Table or Game Store _____
- Pottery Studio _____
- Poultry Market _____
- Produce Local _____
- Rare Coin Dealer _____
- Religion/Spirituality Store _____
- RV Sales/Service _____
- SeafoodStore _____
- Sewing Machine Service/Supply _____
- Shoe Store Child _____
- Shoe Store Local _____
- Ski Shop _____
- Speciality Store _____
- Sporting Goods Shop _____
- Tattoo/Ear Piercing Shop _____
- Tire Sales/Service _____

- Toy Store _____
- Tuxedo Rental _____
- TV/Electronics _____
- Vacuum Cleaner Store _____
- Vintage Shop _____
- Wellness & Personal Style _____
- Winery/Vineyard _____

Community

- Ambulance Squad _____
- Amusement/ Fun Park _____
- Animal Shelter _____
- Art Gallery _____
- Atmosphere _____
- Bed & Breakfast _____
- Bowling Lanes _____
- Canoe Livery _____
- Campground _____
- Chamber of Commerce _____
- Chicken BBQ (Volunteer) _____
- Cider Mill _____
- Civic Club or Organization _____
- College _____
- Community Festival or Street Fair _____
- Conference Center _____
- Dance Studio _____
- Day Trip _____
- Fair _____
- Family Night Out _____
- Farm Market _____
- Fire Department _____
- Golf Course _____
- Historic Site _____
- Horseback Riding _____
- Hotel _____
- Law Office _____
- Library _____
- Live Music Venue _____
- Artist _____
- Author _____
- Celebrity _____
- Farm _____
- Getaway _____
- Golf Pro _____
- Musician/Band _____
- Potter _____
- Local Products _____
- Locally Produced Beer / Spirits _____

- Locally Produced Cheese _____
- Locally Produced Eggs _____
- Locally Produced Meats _____
- Locally Produced Maple Syrup _____
- Locally Produced Wine _____
- Meditation Center _____
- Movie Theatre _____
- Museum _____
- Neighborhood _____
- Pancake Breakfast _____
- Parade _____
- Penny Social _____
- Place to Hold a Prom _____
- Places to Play Bingo _____
- Place to Take out of town guests _____
- Place to Take the kids _____
- Playhouse Theatre _____
- Post Office _____
- Private School _____
- Radio Station _____
- Resort _____
- Shopping Area _____
- Ski Lodge _____
- Special Area Attraction _____
- Sullivan Renaissance Project _____
- Wedding Reception Location _____
- Winery _____
- Youth Center _____
- Youth Program _____

HOW TO VOTE: Please print clearly your choices for "THE BEST" from the categories listed. Best choices are limited to Delaware, Orange, Pike, Sullivan and Wayne counties. You may also VOTE ONLINE: www.RiverReporter.com/BEST

HOW TO ENTER: NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Additional ballots are available at **The River Reporter** office at 93 Erie Ave, Narrowsburg, NY. Ballots **MUST** be complete and include full name, address and phone number of voter. All ballots must be received by December 15, 2016. Employees of **The River Reporter** and **Stuart Communications** are permitted to vote but not eligible to win prizes. Entries that are late, damaged, illegible or missing voter's name will not be eligible. One entry per person. Mechanically reproduced or Photocopied entries are not eligible. A business, organization or person may win no more than three (3) categories. Winners will be chosen based on the number of votes received by December 15th, 2016.

HOW TO WIN PRIZES: All ballots will be included in a random drawing for prizes. Drawing will be held in January 2017. No duplicate winners. BEST Winners will be notified in January 2017.

OFFICIAL "BEST" BALLOT ENTRY FORM

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

- Name _____
- Address _____
- City, State, Zip _____
- Phone _____
- E-mail _____

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BLOOD, SWEAT

Continued from page 28

intent of “Kid Kraft,” since it was clearly designed with legs to stand on its own four feet. Although I was pleased that it had been much loved, I noted that some little darling had smeared it with jam and crammed peanuts into every crevice, so a good cleaning was in order. But those legs were the first to go. I purchased heavy metal angle irons, some wall anchors, screws and assorted nuts and bolts with which to shore up the cupboard doors that still remained and went to work, listening to Taylor singing “I’m Your Handy Man” in the background.

Having completed the prep work, I called Gayle to let her know that I was ready to mount my fake “kitchen” to the actual kitchen wall and was ready for her assistance. She showed up with her own power drill because mine was “inadequate,” and an enormous level, because mine was “too small,” and we went to work. It didn’t take long to realize that the stud-finder was inaccurate. I blamed Gayle, because it was hers to begin with. What started as a plan for nine well-placed plugs in the wall quickly escalated into 12, then somewhere between 16 and 20, as we kept coming up empty handed for structural support, and my once pristine wall began to resemble Swiss cheese.

We hung it. It fell, slamming into Gayle’s left arm, and we hung it again. Still top-heavy, it swayed again. But Mom’s voice rang in my head, as Gayle cut and sprained a thumb and the thing fell on my shoulder, causing searing pain, but driving the determination to win over a “damn piece of wood.”

As the hours went by, we were both swearing at each other, mopping our brows and applying Band-Aids, while wiping up rivulets of blood cascading from our hands, wrists and arms. Feeling that it was at least strong enough that we could stand back and take a look without literally holding it up, we did just that. I asked Gail what she thought. “Well...” she said, swabbing her other arm. “It’s not the stupidest thing I’ve ever seen.” Flying into an unprecedented rage, I screamed, calling her every name in the book while demanding to know who made her the “expert of what looks cool.”

After adding yet another bracket and walking away from it for a bit, we took another look, and when I announced that it was “beyond clever” and “ridiculously imaginative,” Gayle sighed and nodded her head. “It really is,” she said, “I have to admit, I was just really mad at it in the heat of the moment, but take a picture and send it to the guy you bought it from. Your mother would be proud.”

I did as she suggested, and he sent a note back with one word: “Fabulous!” and he’s right—it is. While there was no shortage of blood, sweat, or tears, sometimes the vision pays off, and I know Mom is smiling from handyman heaven. P.S. Hats off to Gayle. We’re still speaking.



Upon closer inspection, I’m glad the cupboard was finished in a blood-red; that way my own blood, sweat and tears blends in nicely. Note the small details, like the miniature grocery list and mini-magnets on the “fridge.”

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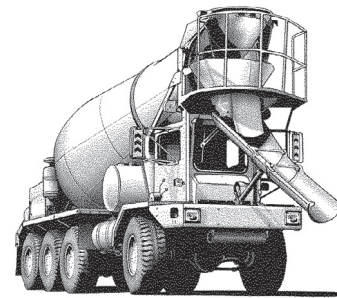
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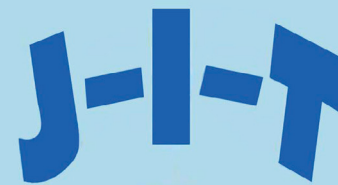
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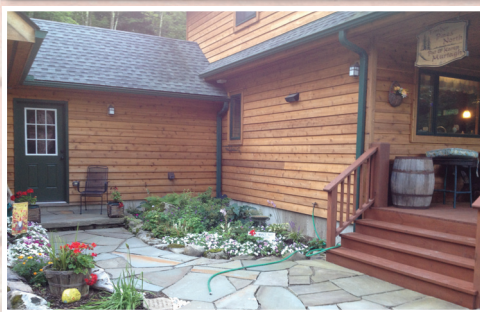
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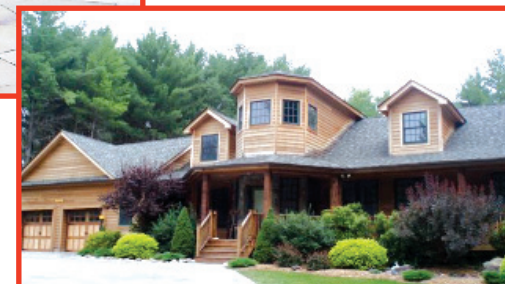
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