



STARTING SMALL

Redoing a bedroom blossomed into a whole-house makeover that turned a 1970s Dutch Colonial into a modern farmhouse fit for the 21st century.

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opposite: The whole-house renovation included new garage doors constructed of Western red cedar with extra-tall windows and chevron detailing. “I get compliments on them all the time,” homeowner Amanda Ramos says. “People leave notes in my mailbox asking where I got them.” The answer is Carriage House Door (carriagedoor.com), a California company that builds custom garage doors. **this photo:** Wrapped in nickel-gap shiplap, the entry hosts a bench, a row of custom hooks, and striking iron-and-glass scones.

this photo: The family room was an addition by previous owners; it just needed an upgrade to match the rest of the renovated house. To that end, the wood floors were stained darker, the walls and trim were unified with white paint, and charcoal-hue paint neutralized and modernized the red brick fireplace and wood mantel. "It's not as busy, and you can focus on the beautiful furnishings in the room," designer Jenn Sanborn says.





SOMETIMES, STARTING SMALL REAPS THE BIGGEST

rewards. Such was the case when Amanda Ramos wanted to revamp her sons' bedroom; Ben, now 21, and his younger brother, Luke, 17, had shared a room for years and still had bunk beds. She called interior designer Jenn Sanborn for help. "I walked through the house, and it absolutely did not represent her," Sanborn says. "She would bemoan certain things," such as the dark, dated paneling, bulky baseboard radiators, nearly unusable office and living room at the front of the house, and the tiny galley kitchen. After Sanborn ran through some of her ideas for overhauling the 1970s Dutch Colonial in suburban Boston, "I felt ready to get this house the way I wanted it," Amanda says. "If I was going to be here long enough—and I am—it would be worth it in terms of money and quality of life."

And what a transformation! Sanborn took the main level down to the studs and tweaked the footprint in strategic spots. She removed a coat closet and relocated a powder room to open the sight lines from the front door all the way to the sun-soaked family room at the back of the house. She also expanded the cramped kitchen into the adjacent dining

above: The television looked like a black hole against the white shelves, so Sanborn tempered the harsh contrast with gray grass cloth behind the shelves. "Whenever you add in a little pattern and texture, it feels much richer than just paint," she says. **right:** The stairwell, formerly hemmed in by oak banisters and thick carpet, opened up with a new iron railing, white oak stair treads, and a carefully pieced wool runner that matches the rug in the entry.



this photo: Both the sink and the cooktop sit under banks of windows, so whether Amanda is prepping meals, cooking, or cleaning up, she has a view of the outdoors. She had requested two full-size ovens, and Sanborn obliged by installing one on either side of the cooktop. Without handles or knobs, the Wolf ovens “are integrated and sleek and don’t feel too heavy,” Sanborn says. Amanda is still in awe: “Honestly, it’s been life changing!” she says of her new kitchen.





room to give Amanda the island, double ovens, and expansive windows she'd been longing for. The dining room then moved into the formerly useless living room.

With the layout perfected, Sanborn turned her attention to creating cozy and cheery surfaces that Amanda and her children (who also include daughter Sydney, age 19) interact with every day. Flooring is now wide-plank white oak with radiant heat underneath so it's always warm and comfortable; it also eliminated the radiators. Furniture is comfortable while being tailored and clean-lined. And each room has several special touches to personalize it and elevate the decor: a patterned wool rug, chevron tiled walls, elegant wallpaper, or midcentury light fixtures with brass accents.

Amanda is thrilled she took the leap. "Aesthetically it looks beautiful and simple at the same time," she says. "Farmhouse style is subtly beautiful, and modern touches bring it into the current times. I'm so happy with it."

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above: The waterfall-style island countertop is black Milky Way granite. White oak base cabinets wrap the room, while tall, slim upper cabinets in white offer pleasing contrast against black casement windows. **left:** This little drink station just off the family room "was a total splurge, and I absolutely love it!" Amanda says. It includes a Miele espresso machine, a wine cooler, and plenty of mugs and glasses. Tile behind the shelves is a fun shot of pattern.

• LESSON 9 •
farm made
MODERN

Brass as an accent is rich, fiery, and glamorous. Interior designer Jenn Sanborn used this metallic hue throughout the house in light fixtures, cabinet hardware, and faucets for the warmth and shine a mostly neutral home needs.



this photo: The wood accent wall in son Luke's bedroom is constructed with prefinished cerused oak flooring, a cost-effective, time-saving option. *opposite top:* What had been "my most dreaded and despised room," as Amanda calls it, the office got an additional window, magnolia-printed grass cloth, and high-fashion light fixtures to take the room from dreary to dazzling. A sliding door (with the wallpaper's pattern carefully matched) hides a closet for files, paperwork, and a printer. "It really is stunning," Amanda says of the space now. *opposite, bottom left:* For a shot of warmth and glitz, Sanborn chose brass fixtures in the main-level powder room. *opposite, bottom right:* A subtle wallpaper behind Amanda's headboard lends extra interest. Sanborn placed a mirror above the far nightstand to balance the window on the other side.



“THIS PROJECT IS SUCH A GREAT BALANCE OF MODERN ELEMENTS WITHIN A WARM, TRADITIONAL FRAMEWORK.”

—interior designer Jenn Sanborn

