



* The only baby steps in this house are little Owen's.
Mom and Dad believe in decorating by


LEAPS &

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A BUNGALOW, BABY
Megan and Brent
Hodge, *opposite*,
breathed new life
into this 1920s
bungalow—just in
time for their son,
Owen, to make it a
real family space.

BOUNDS



SUNSHINE STATE
The Hodges envisioned the sunroom as a bright family space with architectural interest. Brent installed the wainscoting and a coffered ceiling to highlight the home's Arts and Crafts heritage.



Tempting as it might be to call it love at first sight—or to say baby Owen's vigorous kicks in Mom's belly gave Brent and Megan Hodge the sign that this bungalow should be theirs—

that's not quite true. After a long search for a house with the magic combo of spaciousness, charm, and a good floor plan, the couple took a leap of faith.

And it was a leap. "I'm a Realtor's dream and a spouse's nightmare," Brent says, noting that he'd already dragged Megan through dozens of ramshackle fixer-uppers, so she was skeptical. But the bones of this house were great—a delightful front porch, large living room and sunroom, and ample bedrooms and storage. Still, its large Victorian-print wallpaper, doilies, and curios were suffocating. Brent, visual merchandising manager for the Williams-Sonoma Home store in Cincinnati, could see beyond the floral flounces and frumpy wallpaper. He envisioned a bungalow where the couple's vintage-modern aesthetic would feel right at home. Megan agreed.

Creating that look meant digging in without second-guessing. The Hodges began peeling wallpaper but eventually painted over it to speed the overhaul. They claimed niches for their favorite accessories; hung shelves and funky light fixtures; and nailed up paneling, molding, and beaded board—doing it all, room by room, before they lost their nerve. Why so fast? They wanted to have company and couldn't abide the decor they'd inherited. "Parties or special events are great deadlines to give yourself," Brent says. "Sometimes that means buying a gallon of paint in a color you love, painting over the wallpaper, and just seeing if it's right." You can always try another shade, but if you stall too long, you lose momentum.

FAST AND FABULOUS HOME ACCENTS

1

see double:

Two storage cube ottomans function as cool cocktail tables—and a place to secretly stash Owen's toys, *above*.

2

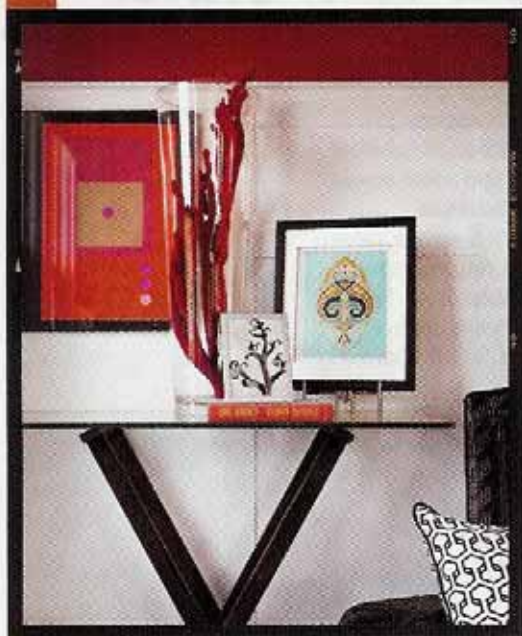
make art:

Brent framed a construction paper collage and vintage wallpaper samples as quick art, *far left*. The coral? Spray-painted sea sponges.

3

fan fabulous:

Bored with a ho-hum shade, Brent reinvented the ceiling fan light fixture, *left*, by replacing the glass globe with a drum-style shade.





SHAPE UP

When accessorizing the dining room shelf, *above*, Brent assembled flat, curvy, narrow, and wide shapes. He also blends matte, shiny, and rustic finishes for textural interest.

Mismatched hardback books become accents with his trick: Turn the jackets inside out.

NOD TO NOSTALGIA

The liquor cart, *above right*, is a throwback to the cocktail hour aesthetic of the 1940s and 1950s. Brent made the paint-splatter artwork.

Brent adheres to a philosophy he calls design empowerment—meaning, to borrow a familiar slogan, “just do it.” If a room needs a splash of color, grab a few art canvases and slap some paint on them or create an abstract collage from colorful paper. Frame it, and it’s original artwork. “It’s quicker, more effective, and it’s a great creative outlet,” Brent says.

His philosophy applies to hanging artwork (chances are the arrangement will cover the old holes), arranging accessories (he constantly rearranges), and placing furniture (there’s always room for a new piece). Do it when inspiration strikes, he believes, even if it isn’t perfect. You can always go back and change it.

Design empowerment also means not being afraid to incorporate pieces at varying price points with different looks. Forget the perfection of furniture showrooms and start layering the fabulous wares you find as you come across them, whether they’re from discount retailers or a high-end boutique.

In a living room reading corner, for example, Brent started with a piece of distressed tin he snatched from someone’s garbage. He reupholstered a chair from his father’s basement and set it beside nesting tables from Target, which hold a pricier lamp from Williams-Sonoma Home. Brent shies away from buying all his furnishings at one place, opting instead for an acquired look. “It’s much more interesting that way,” he says.

After all, pieces and the stories behind them give a room its soul. That’s why the Hodges believe in following instincts. You can always tweak, repurpose and rearrange. But just get started now, Brent says: “It’s quicker to get to something you love by just taking action and doing it.”

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“PEOPLE TEND TO OVERTHINK DESIGN. SOMETIMES YOU JUST NEED TO DO IT AND SEE IF IT WORKS.”

— BRENT HODGE, homeowner



FINDERS, KEEPERS The Hodges found this old plywood sign, from a nearby manufacturing plant, in their basement when they moved in. It not only pulls in the coral hue from the adjacent sunroom, but it's a great dinner conversation piece.



FLEXIBLE SEATING Megan and Brent can easily pull the bench up to the table for additional seating. The tripod lamp fills the corner with atmospheric light—and shapely impact.



Reality Check: Restoring charm

Bye-bye, froufrou. The Hodges looked beyond the home's decor when they bought it. Behind busy wallpapers, lace doilies, and bric-a-brac, they saw built-in bookcases, beautiful moldings, original fireplace tile, and warm wood floors.

Hello, simplicity. Rather than let the long living room amble, Brent focused on seating around the fireplace and staged the center of the room as a chic entry with a console, chandelier, and rug.

MAKE AN ENTRANCE
The home lacked a formal foyer, so Brent created a focal point with a lamp, mirror, table, and art objects, above, opposite the front door.

RADIATE STYLE
Radiators can be charming. Use their ledges for display, right. The curtains are made from men's suiting fabric.

DIVERSE MATERIALS
Brent covered the chimney wall, far right, in grass cloth to introduce texture to the living room.





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— BRENT HODGE

MODERN REINVENTION
The living room is layered with pieces that represent modern design in each decade from the 1900s on—including a midcentury-inspired sofa and accent tables from Target.

ROOM TO GROW

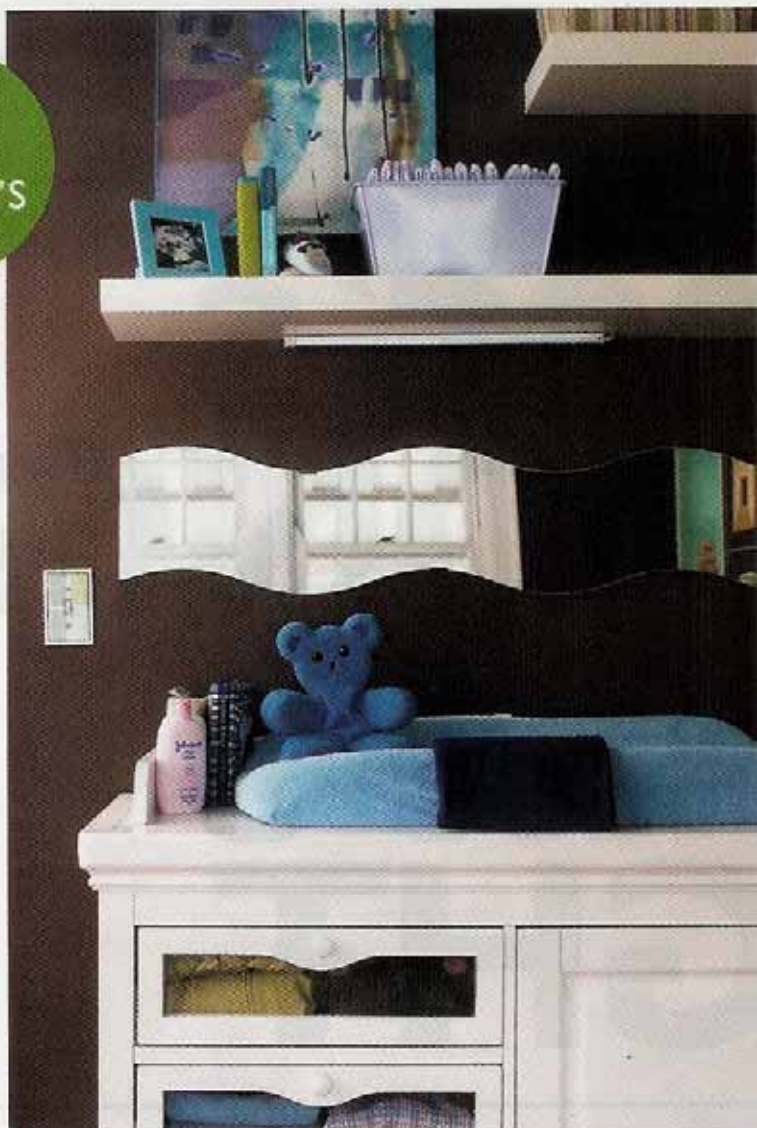
The Hodges wanted to avoid babyish pastels and create a bright, visually stimulating nursery. They chose an unthemed look so that Owen can add things he thinks are cool, such as fish or dinosaurs.



EDITOR'S PICK

A SQUARE DEAL

To create the wall detailing, Megan and Brent painted it white, then marked off a grid with 1-inch painter's tape. They painted each block a different color, then removed the tape to reveal the 1-inch borders between squares. "It's easier to do it this way because you paint the whole wall at once. Plus, it creates a windowpane look," Brent says.



BRINGING UP BABY ON GOOD DESIGN

1

see well:

In Owen's changing area, *left*, a wavy mirror catches his gaze while acting as art beneath open shelves. Under the bottom shelf, Megan added a strip of low-voltage rope lights that offer dim light for diaper changes in the dark.

2

be mod:

Inspired by a rug motif, Brent cut mod squares from plywood, *below left*, painted them with leftover wall paint, then hung them in overlapping layers from thin chains screwed into the ceiling. They serve as overhead art for Owen and an eye-catcher to all who enter.

3

add oomph:

By painting large contrasting blocks behind framed art, *left*, Brent makes small pieces look larger and visually pop from the wall.

