



in a new light

An old home gets a lift with splashes of crisp white, welcoming sunshine, and two dance-happy little girls.

BY JODY GARLOCK | PHOTOS LAURIE BLACK | STYLING ED GALLAGHER



“Every room of this house gets used,” Stephanie Knight says of her renovated 1923 Portland, Oregon, home. She brightened the grayish-blue dining room, *this photo*, with white touches and tall mirrors (one on each side of the sideboard) that bounce light around.

It's dinnertime in the Knight home, and that means another round of "roses and thorns."

Stephanie, John, and their two girls take turns telling the best and worst parts of their days. Odessa, 6, is happy that she played soccer with the boys at recess. Helena, 4, is bummed about poking herself with a needle while learning to sew.

The family roundtable has become a tradition, just like the 5:30 dinners in the dining room, where meals often end in laughs. "We don't take ourselves too seriously," Stephanie says. The same can be said of the decor in her Portland, Oregon, home. Stephanie wanted it to look polished ("Everything had to go through the pretty filter," she says). But above all she wanted the home to be bright and at ease. A brown sisal rug in the dining room camouflages stains. In the living room, chairs reupholstered in a vibrant zigzag fabric are a perch for Peanut, who does his cat-chirpy thing at birds in the camellia trees outside. The bubble art piece above the mantel incorporates mirrors that Stephanie loves to decorate with.

Since renovating the home to improve flow and natural light, the Knights have made better use of every room. The girls appear from the sides of the dining room's widened doorway (stage left and right, they call it) to put on a show for Stephanie in the kitchen. After dinner, the couple lingers at the dining table, enjoying the view out the windows. "This house is so livable—every room is relaxed," Stephanie says.



Two chairs placed in front of windows jump-started a sunny reading area in the living room, *above*. The peace sign art (actually a tray) adds a bit of fun and shimmer. The coffee table, *right*—a salvaged door on a steel frame—is a kid-friendly craft and snack station. A new built-in serves as a media center.



HANDY HIDEOUT
Built-ins stow the TV for a streamlined look.

AT HOME WITH Stephanie Knight, Portland, Oregon
PERSONAL STYLE Classic modern.

DECORATING ADVICE To keep things fresh, I'll take everything off shelves or the mantel every few months and put them in different places.

MY PROJECT TAUGHT ME Don't be afraid to make mistakes. We painted some walls three times!



With skylights and French doors, light pours into the kitchen, *this photo*. "It's amazing—we spend more time here now," says Stephanie, shown with her husband John and their girls Odessa and Helena. The couple enlarged the space by taking over a small bathroom and hallway. The marble countertop brightens the gray island.



CLEVER!
A mirror creates a space-expanding backdrop in the built-in.

Built-ins in the sunroom, left, give the Knights a light-filled office. Stephanie, who likes to switch accessories around, moved a mirror from the entry to the desk area. "It was one of those lucky things—it fit perfectly." Odessa's painting is the art.

Creamy white walls and fabrics make the small master bedroom, opposite, seem larger. Beaded board covers a wall with a window, creating space for the bed and nightstands. "It was an inexpensive way to really improve the flow of the room," Stephanie says. The dresser, below, is her girly spot, with perfumes and jewelry contained in little dishes, on a tray, and dangling from a manzanita branch.



tricks for lightening up

Light is a precious commodity in any home. Here's how the Knights brightened theirs.

MIRROR, MIRROR Light-reflecting, room-expanding mirrors are a favorite with Stephanie; she has at least one in almost every room. Bonus: "They're inexpensive pieces of art," she says.

OPEN MINDED Walls and large furniture cast in neutrals keep rooms from closing in. Another trick: Silvery accessories and, in the kitchen, clear glass pendants that keep sight lines open.

MOOD SWING Where there's drab (or dark), there's also white. In the dining room, walls covered in gray-blue grass cloth get a lift from white slipcovers, lamps, and mirror frames. Marble counters and bar stools brighten gray kitchen cabinetry. Even something as simple as placing a white tray on the dark bedroom dresser does the trick.

AU NATUREL The Knights grabbed light wherever they could, including adding skylights and French doors. In the kitchen, glass-front cabinet doors—and frosted ones on the pantry door—expand space, too. ■

For buying information see page 244.

"The master bedroom is like a little oasis. Everything about it—the wall color, the draperies—is so light and crisp. It's calming."

Stephanie Knight



IN A MINUTE
Pull a chair into a corner. Instant reading nook!