

Three Favorite Inns for Summer's Last Escape

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**left and below:** By removing the dark paneled walls and adding more windows and French doors to bring natural light from the front of the house to the back, the owners turned this room into one of the most livable areas in the home. An ebony-stained coffee table with red undertones adds an exotic touch to the traditional decor.



## Updated for Family

With practical choices and stylish innovation, this couple made the most of a barely used room.

Families today are busy, so it stands to reason that living spaces within homes should be inviting and equipped to handle whatever comes their way. That was the motivation behind this renovation. With a trio of young sons, Brock and Cathy Himan immediately recognized the potential of an outdated space in their Asheville, North Carolina, home.

Although it was used as a garage by previous owners, the Himans decided that using it as a family room would better meet their needs. After all, the room is spacious and easily accessible to the kitchen and other living areas; it also offers an element of privacy.

Working with architect Jim Samsel, the couple began an extensive remodeling project. "Our design approach to open it up worked well for the family, connecting them to the home and the landscaping outdoors," Jim notes.

On the exterior, new stucco in a shade of putty, with taupe trim, was selected to enhance the 1927 English Tudor-style home. The addition included tall windows, a fireplace, and French doors leading out to a terrace.



PHOTOGRAPHS: LAUREY W. GLENN / STYLING: LISA POWELL

**above:** The grid effect on these walls is a simple application of wood strips nailed over gypsum drywall in a rectangular pattern. Minimal accessories rest on the table, which is a family piece.

### Architectural Details Meet Interior Design

"Inside, I wanted a traditional look with an eclectic flair," Cathy says. In an understated approach, interior designer Susan Nilsson masterminded the interiors with comfortable colors, fabrics, and furnishings. "Cathy and

Brock are a fashion-conscious couple on a budget," Susan says. "With three sons, they needed rugged finishes that also had style."

The paneled effect on the walls is an intriguing idea that gives a dramatic lift to the room. "The technique incorporates simple strips of wood nailed to the wall in a grid pattern," Jim explains.

The result is a subtle patterned backdrop painted a biscuit color. The accent hues and fabrics Susan used for the room's pillows and draperies are bold and cheery. "Working with bright green and cream provided a light-hearted approach," she says.

Susan kept accessories to a minimum. "We used our budget to purchase all the major pieces the family needed," she says. "A pair of English club chairs, mounted on swivel bases, sport sturdy fabric. The sofa, covered in a neutral leather material, is suited to a room that must be tough as nails."

Ideal for busy toddlers and sophisticated grown-ups, the space that once housed another family's vehicles now anchors this family's active lifestyle.

MAJELLA CHUBE HAMILTON