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THIS PHOTO AND OPPOSITE: The Blakes plastered and painted the living room's original brick walls a creamy white but stripped paint from exposed beams and returned them to their original wood finish. New slipcovers perk up sofas, and throw pillows—some in vintage fabrics—give a punch of color. Hand-made items, such as the small bowls on the coffee table, subtly nod to the house's hacienda style.



With their first child on the way, Bill and Barbara Blake bought a modest brick house in an ideal family neighborhood. Never mind that the one-story, hacienda-style structure was in a bit of a shambles, Barbara, an interior designer with a degree in architecture, could envision its possibilities.

Twelve years later, the family now includes three active sons, ages 12, 9, and 6, and the house has grown from 3,000 square feet to 5,300. "And we use every inch of it!" Barbara says. Over the years, two major additions have given the entire family spaces for privacy, play, and entertaining. And, thanks to careful decision-making, it's impossible to tell which rooms aren't original.

After buying the house, the Blakes immediately did a basic fix-up—a new roof, doors, windows, and some landscaping. The first addition came six years later: "We had to be patient, which was probably a good thing," Barbara says. "By living in a place as full before making big changes, you learn what you really need." Once the third baby arrived, what the family clearly needed was more space. "It was either move or add on," Barbara says. "But we really did love it here." So with the help of an architect, the Blakes built an expanded kitchen and family room, plus a master bedroom wing to the east. At the same time, they planned the future addition of a wing to the south that would meet the needs of their growing children. Five years later, as toys, sports equipment, and backpacks piled up, they moved forward with that project.

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"WHEN THE FIRST ADDITION WAS DONE, THE SECOND WAS ALREADY THOUGHT-OUT. BUT WE HAD TO WAIT."

—HOMEOOWNER BARBARA BLAKE



remodeling 101

When remodeling or adding on, take the extra time and effort to seamlessly blend new spaces into your existing home. And, even with the smallest project, be prepared for a topsy-turvy home life.

CREATE CONTINUITY. Match the architectural style, as well as trim, window, and casing styles, with the old. The Blakes' new rooms feature exposed beams and rafters, just like the originals. **Use** the same or similar flooring throughout. **Keep** color palettes for walls and upholstery within the same family. It's OK to use different colors and fabrics, but sharing a similar palette will enhance the stylistic whole. **Seize** the moment to

update, reupholster, or repaint in existing rooms, too. "It was a two-week job," Barbara Blake says, but the Mexican tile floors in her home were all stained dark at the same time for consistent color throughout.

BE PREPARED. Have a temporary-escape plan in case construction creates too much dust and noise or disables the kitchen. **Warn** the neighbors, with apologies and estimated dates. They, too, will be subjected to the rumbling machines and daily hammering. **Expect** changes in the timetable. Some jobs are more complicated than first anticipated and many can take longer than originally estimated.



OPPOSITE: In the family dining area, a display of blue-and-white ceramics echoes cherry fabrics on cushions and pillows. The rustic antique bench was a local find. "This room," Barbara says, "is the only room in the original house that hasn't been remodeled." **ABOVE:** The kitchen island, a favorite spot for the kids, is topped with gray-green soapstone. "It just gets better as it gets used," Barbara says. **FAR LEFT:** Dining chairs get comfortable with colorful cushions. **LEFT:** Barbara dressed the island's ends with distressed architectural brackets and Bricks.

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"WHEN YOU LOVE YOUR LOCATION, AN ADDITION ALLOWS YOU TO CREATE EXACTLY WHAT YOU WANT."

—BARBARA BLAKE

OPPOSITE: To dress up the brick-walled master bedroom, interior designer Berkeley Vallone chose fabrics in chocolate and white hues. LEFT: Contrasting with the pale duvet, the bench wears a striking dragonfly-pattern velvet. The chair's polished-cherry check makes a bold statement. BELOW: A bedside vignette reveals Barbara's love of antiques.

The second addition brought the boys a large game room, an extra bedroom and bath, a computer room, and an expanded pool area in the backyard for all to enjoy—not to mention lots of clever storage to quell chaos and keep everyone's belongings organized. "How you actually live in a place becomes the key to how to change it," Barbara says.

In every room, Barbara's passion for crisp blue-and-white fabrics, balanced by more subtle neutral tones, collaborates happily with the home's Mexican tile floors and exposed beams and rafters. Though she collects handmade Mexican artifacts, her personal style is more traditional than overtly Southwestern—"Santa Barbara cottage," she dubs it. The mood is cozy and cheerful, with a sophisticated edge in the adult rooms. But even this now-retired designer needed help with decorating, so Barbara called in interior designer Berkeley Vallone. With two pros on the job, "it was a genuine collaboration," says Vallone, who helped Barbara introduce updated fabrics and furniture.

These days, life with three sons is a lot calmer, Barbara says. When friends are over, the two older boys might be swimming or playing ping-pong in the game room, where the youngest is busy with his toy trucks. Grown-ups inhabit the living room and entertain outdoors in the new ramada and pool area. This little house grew up and now has room for all these activities. "And," Barbara says, "it's not going to grow any more!"

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OPPOSITE: With space for ping-pong and football, as well as puzzles, crafts, and reading, the new playroom is ever-active. The sleek, black-and-chrome scheme makes this a room that can grow up with the boys. RIGHT: With the latest addition, each child now has his own bedroom. Nautical stripes dress this one, and a trundle bed welcomes sleepovers. BELOW: Barbara feminized the former playroom with juts of bright pink and created her own office, complete with a gift-wrap center.



flexible footage

An addition lends the opportunity to reassign existing rooms and spaces so they work harder for your family.

Create outdoor rooms. How much lawn do you need? A patio could become your new warm-weather dining room.

Add light. Adding a bay with windows to a room takes little space but can double the room's natural light.

Use a small space to make a big difference. The kids used to tromp in and out of the house through the family room. "It was a freeway, a dust bin!" Barbara says. A mudroom off the garage provided welcome relief, but, to carve out space, the Stakes had to eliminate a bath and a family room nook. It was well worth it, Barbara says of the mudroom where 8-year-old boy has his own locker.

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THIS PHOTO: A transformed backyard hosts a lavish pool area, with copious space for relaxing. "Be ready to cook and entertain," Blake says. "Do not see the space as just." OPPOSITE TOP: The pool is hand-painted, robust. Mosaic tile border continues around the raised hot tub. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Outdoor fabric cushions and pillows encourage lounging.



keep kids in mind

Organize their stuff. Devoting space to specific gear, such as sports equipment, minimizes clutter. In the Blake's mudroom, each boy has a locker. In the game room, long and low cabinets with slide tops double as seating. Built-in shelves with cabinets also help tame the mess in bedrooms.

Choose furniture that will grow up. That finger-painter will soon be writing history papers. Invest in sturdy, smaller-scale furniture that is not so cute kids will dislike it later. Washable slipcovers help keep furniture clean and are more affordable to replace than traditional upholstery.

Go play. But where? Consider finishing a basement, winterizing a porch or little-used garage space, or partitioning a large living room to give kids a place to play.

Keep an eye on the computer. Situate the computer near a family space. Choose a converted closet or pantry area if you want to close off technology when it's not in use.



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