



# Home Made

DIY decor and meaningful flourishes turn a basic 1970s home into an artful family abode.

BY SARAH GOLDBLATT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY EMILY MINTON REDFIELD

CURATE EVERYTHING

Even the stair risers got homeowner Kerri Cole's DIY treatment. "Painting numbers or a favorite quote along stairs can add a bit of whimsy and fun," she says.



Book pages!



**GO GRAPHIC**  
 “I usually don’t like drapery, but this room needed a pop of color to offset the dark walls and furniture,” says Cole of the Thomas Paul graphic print fabric she used in the dining room.



At their annual Fourth of July party five years ago, Kerri Cole and Patrick Neely shocked their 100-plus guests by sneakily turning a rowdy match of capture the flag into an impromptu wedding ceremony. As the guests gathered in the couple’s expansive backyard to start the game, they were delighted to find Neely and Cole—and Cole’s two children—dressed for a walk down the aisle. Even the designated team captains (unknowing ring bearers) were left in the dark. “We surprised everyone, including our parents,” says Cole, a designer and co-owner of Denver’s entertainingshoppe.com, an online party-supply store.

That same creative spirit radiates throughout the sunny Cherry



Hills home the couple has cultivated with Cole’s children, Matthew (18) and Linnie (15). The reimagining of the 1979 brick home started five years earlier when Cole was charting a fresh course for herself and her children following a divorce. “I wanted a home where my kids felt at ease; one that was warm, fun, and something I could put my own





STAY OPEN

"Open kitchen shelves are ideal for a house full of teens and partygoers," Cole says. "Everything you need is in plain sight."





**THINK SEASONALLY**  
 "I change my sofa slipcovers, artwork, flowers, and pillows with the seasons," says Cole, who is always redecorating. The key? Neutral wall colors make rooms more flexible.



**INVITE CREATIVITY**

Left: Black chalkboard paint turns the breakfast nook into an impromptu opportunity for expression. Facing page: An antique medical gurney is a conversation-worthy base for the living room console table.

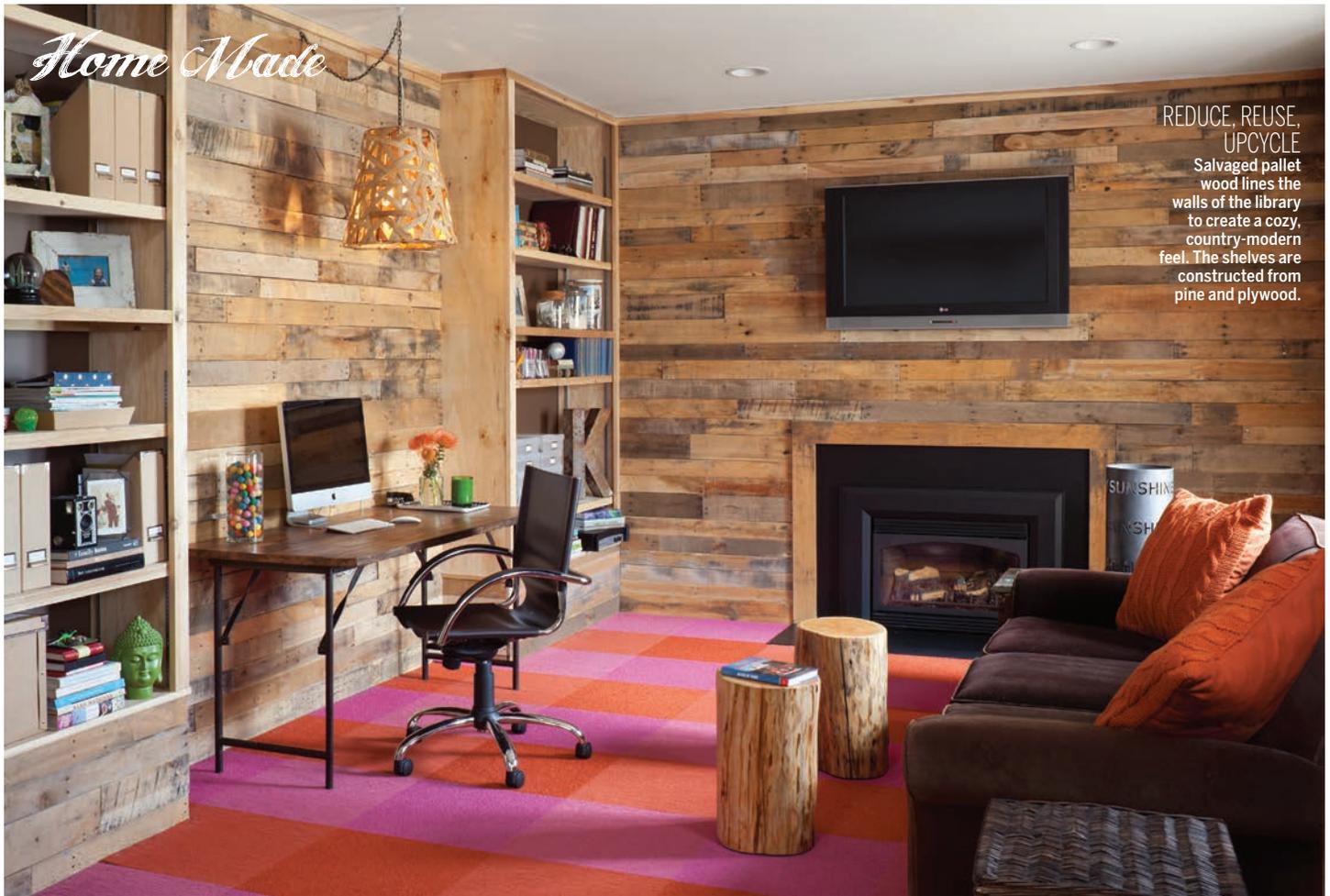
spin on," she says. "I walked into the house and knew it had good energy."

Cole did not let the home's '70s quirks—a yard-consuming circular drive, a yellow country kitchen—deter her. She quickly set out to infuse

it with her personality and panache, applying her expansive experience in interior design, which includes owning the beloved, now-defunct Cherry Creek home accessory store Americana; working with acclaimed Los Angeles designer Joe Ruggiero (known for his contributions to HGTV); and dreaming up spaces for her own interior design and real estate staging firm, Design LLC.

So it's no surprise that the family's home has a flawless country-modern look. Folk art wood pieces—some family heirlooms, others handmade—in both dark and pale hues contrast with soft, oversized furnishings with vivid bursts of color and pattern. The original amber-toned oak floors are stained a rich espresso, allowing the coastal white walls and cabinets to pop. "Almost every inch of the house has been touched," Cole says.

The home's first reno projects were more out of necessity than style—Cole added new appliances and a screened-in porch to facilitate dining alfresco. Next, she reworked the front entry: first by removing



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**REDUCE, REUSE, UPCYCLE**  
Salvaged pallet wood lines the walls of the library to create a cozy, country-modern feel. The shelves are constructed from pine and plywood.

the Colonial-style doors and replacing them with contemporary doors with matching sidelights, and then by painting the frames in Louisiana Hot Sauce (by Benjamin Moore) to add a splash of modern color.

Once Neely moved in, the DIY duo embarked on a series of projects, quickly realizing that they made a great design-and-build team. Neely drew upon his years of experience renovating and selling houses and working in the kitchen and bath industry to further transform the home. "I like the challenge of taking something that is old and distressed and bringing it back to life," says Neely. "Kerri will often come up with the idea and provide some rough parameters," he explains, pointing to the mobile chalkboard coffee table he built. Cole happily admits that Neely "makes it all come to fruition."

The couple's collaborative design approach works well, particularly in a home where entertaining is a way of life. In the kitchen, where guests inevitably gather (and linger), an 11-

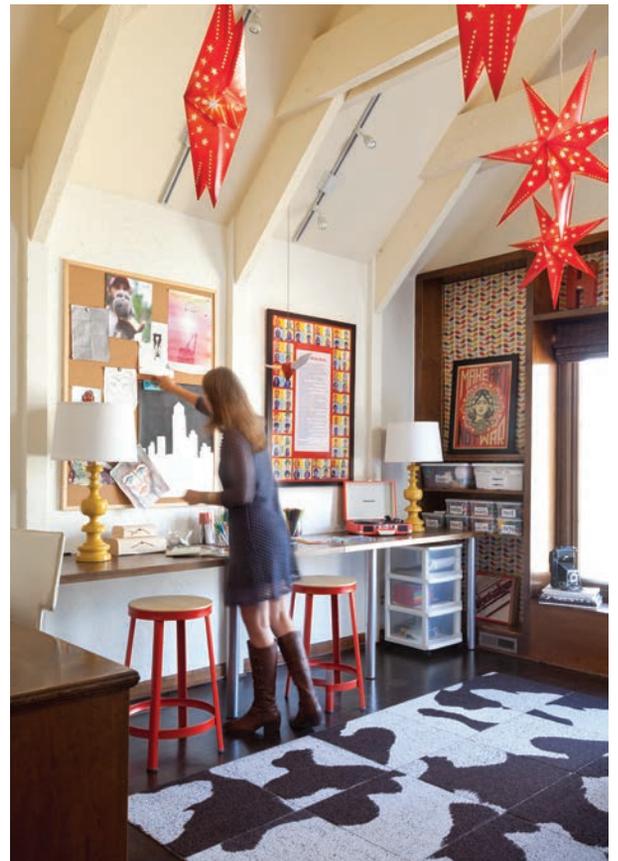


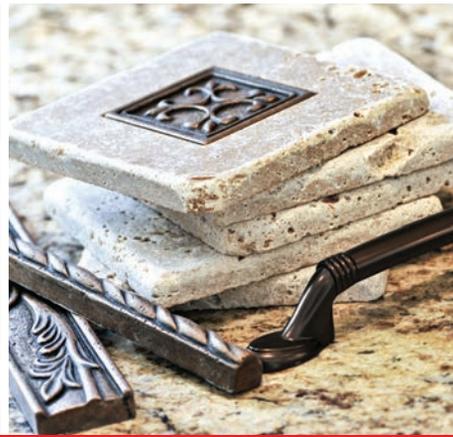
### BE PRACTICAL

**Top and right:** "I am a big believer in Flor carpet tiles," says Cole, who uses them in various patterns and colors throughout the house. "A single stained tile can be removed, washed down, or swapped out entirely." She selected hot pink and orange for the library and cowhide for the office.

### FIND YOUR HAPPY

**Right:** In the office, hanging stars from Ikea make the room "a happy place to be," says Cole. **Above:** Book pages torn from some of Cole's favorite tomes create custom (and interactive) wallpaper in the entry.





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## BE BOLD

A custom-upholstered graphic headboard and saturated paint (Benjamin Moore's Clinton Brown) liven the bedroom, while the master bath (below right) features a playful blue glass tile. In the entry, a pendant is made from recycled bottles (below left).

foot black concrete island doubles as a community table. "For parties, we unroll craft paper and tape it down the length of the counter, and it makes a great space for a drink station and appetizers," Cole says. Open shelving and classic white subway tiles give the room a timeless look. "I love that you can walk in and find what you need. It has a help-yourself kind of feel."

Neely is appreciative of Cole's design sense and also has grown accustomed to her habits of moving furniture, changing wall colors, and swapping out slipcovers to align with an inspired vision. In fact, to convert the home's dated den into a hip library, Neely drove up and down alleys for weeks, plucking discarded wood pallets from dumpsters. He hauled them back to his shop, salvaging what he could, and then he and Cole reassembled the cast-off pieces into floor-to-ceiling wall panels.

"I think people are amazed because I don't spend a lot on design. There are companies that have made it very affordable, even Target, to



quickly change a look," Cole says. But it's the assemblage of cherished objects, such as the vintage duck pins that march along the fireplace mantel, that make this house so special. In the same spirit as the couple's surprise wedding, Cole says, "We like to surround ourselves with things we love that also tell a story." ■



# Lights Out



## FREE SWIM

**Contemporary and cool, this pool house brings sexy back to a stately Hilltop home.**

**👁** MATCHING DESIGN STYLES IS SO LAST CENTURY. Here's proof: This sleek recreation space sits in the shadows of a historic home designed by the renowned 20th-century Denver architect Jacques Benedict. Instead of mimicking the main home's ornate Italian Renaissance Revival style, the design team—architects at Semple Brown Design and landscape designers from Dig Studio—took a minimalist approach. A 700-square-foot pavilion made of glass, steel, stucco, and wood houses the active family's exercise area. Oversized sliding glass doors bring the outdoors in, and the heated, buff sandstone pool deck provides space for gathering and lounging (post-workout, of course). Best of all, the 25-meter lap pool seems to steal a slice of Colorado's expansive blue sky—and that's *always* in style. —SARAH GOLDBLATT