

# bolt of genius

Can an old cottage learn new tricks? A design pro shares her secrets for unifying an odd layout with color, fabrics, and clutter-concealing furniture.

by SHARON OVERTON photos JAMES CARRIERE styling MICHAEL WALTERS

Sue Schwarzgruber (pictured) worked with designer Jeannie Fraise to turn her awkward living room into a family haven.



Sue Schwarzgruber fell in love with the natural light in this cute 1920s cottage, which she shares with her husband, John Rogers, and their children, Kelly and Elizabeth. But the awkward L-shape living area had her stumped. "I just couldn't wrap my head around how to make this a cohesive room," she says. Designer Jeannie Fraise served up six smart solutions.

### 1. call it curtains

Stationary curtain panels subtly define the enclosed porch as a reading nook. "It literally transformed the space," Sue says.

### 2. unite colors

A bright palette of raspberry red and pear green links the separate seating areas and gives the family's traditional furnishings a fresh, modern twist. Larger pieces, such as the sofa, coffee table, and rug, are pale neutrals to balance the bolder hues.

### 3. layer on pattern

When it comes to the number of fabrics in a room—or on an upholstered chair, for that matter—the more the merrier, Fraise thinks. Her advice: Stick with unfussy prints that feature one color on a white or ivory background and "leave some big solid places"—the sofa or neutral woven blinds—for the eye to rest.



#### 4. tuck it away

An antique Swedish secretary gives Sue an attractive place to sort mail and organize her day. She stashes a laptop computer in the drawer below the fold-down desk and a small printer behind closed doors above. "When I'm not using the desk, I close it up and turn the chair around for extra seating," she says.



#### 5. manage clutter

Because the cottage lacked a foyer or entry closet, John built sturdy plywood shelves and Fraise designed a pretty skirt that can conceal shoes and boots, as well as baskets for hats, camera equipment, and games. A glass top makes cleaning easy.

#### 6. be distinct

Fraise lined the stationary curtains with a contrasting pattern to give each "room" definition. ♪

*For buying information see page 259.*



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