

# This Old House

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# a Lot More Livable

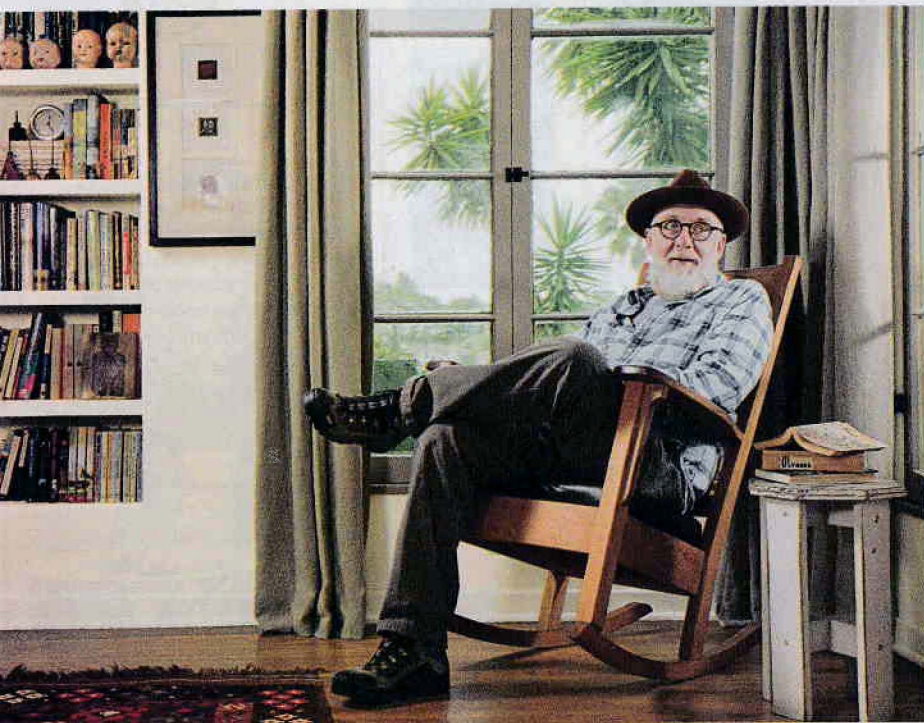


Small adjustments inside plus a deck addition out back allow a beloved vintage house to realize its potential

By **Deborah Baldwin**  
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Styling by **Andie Black**

**You've heard about pregnant women** falling in love with their obstetricians? Then you know how Patrick McGee and Sally Bartow feel about the surgical team that handled their renovation, delivering a dwelling with perfect features after only eight months of hard labor.





**ABOVE LEFT:** Homeowner Pat McGee grabs a seat in a living room reading nook.

**ABOVE RIGHT:** A new hallway niche brings order to the couple's flea market finds, honoring them with salvaged-wood shelves.

**OPPOSITE:** Artful cement floor tile, hand-glazed wall tile, and a curvy tub dress up the guest bath. *Floor tile: Granada Tile. Wall tile: Ceramic Concepts (custom color). Tub: Victoria + Albert. Tub filler: Sunrise Specialty. Sink and faucet: Kohler*



kitchen. They might both still be there if Pat hadn't been lured back to L.A. by TV projects like *Nip/Tuck* and, more recently, *Bosch*.

Finally, nearly 30 years after first moving in and still working far afield, they were ready to renovate in L.A. and turned to Vidal. The attraction was partly chemistry, partly driven by her firm's ability to dispatch every design-and-build detail.

Vidal lives nearby and says the house, with its modest facade and hidden depth, is typical of Silver Lake. "It's very hilly," she says, "so it's not uncommon to see an unassuming front and then the house goes back and down; it looks like nothing, then—wow!" Houses tend to be Spanish Revival or Craftsman or a bit of both, she says, with the living room in front and two bedrooms flanking a shared bath.

This one ended by just falling off in back, with no route to the rear patio except by way of the side porch and a faltering set of stairs. That drawback, among others, caught her eye. The house had a rear view, after all, if it could be opened up to catch sight of it.

Soon Vidal, working with production architect Esteban Garcia, was mapping out options. The process proved engaging to two absentee homeowners who hadn't realized how much fun it could be to tinker with a house they already loved very much.

"What we told Karen was we don't want a bigger

house, we just want more livable, workable space," Pat says. Adds Sally, "The proportions are lovely, and I must say she completely got it."

Though she did have to bring them around to the notion of a second bath. "There's no room for it, how would it even work, it's going to make the kitchen too small!" Pat recalls telling Vidal. "Then she calls in a friend, a Realtor, actually it could have been an extra from central casting—she was there in one minute," he continues, laughing, "and she was 'Oh my goodness, you *have* to do it, this is what everyone wants, a two-bedroom, two-bath house,'" and of course, Sally concludes, "it was completely the right decision."

Vidal began in the back and bumped out, grafting on a deck and dressing room atop an arched old-world arcade. "That was big, being able to just walk outside and enjoy," she says. To smooth the path from the kitchen to the newly enlarged patio, she added rear stairs with terra-cotta treads and tiled risers, Spanish Revival style. Along the way, the team put in new wiring and plumbing, and rebuilt the sagging side stairs—the foundation and original terra-cotta roof were mainly in good shape.

To ease traffic jams and add function, Vidal annexed the side porch, allowing for a larger kitchen and behind it that second bath. Original windows

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