

**CREATE THE STYLE
YOU CRAVE ON
A BUDGET YOU
CAN AFFORD**

**THE SWEET
SPOT GUIDE
TO HOME
DECOR**

DESHA PEACOCK



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“WE ALL HAVE A STORY TO TELL, AND PART OF THE WAY WE DO THIS IS THROUGH OUR HOMES.”
INTERVIEW WITH AMERICA’S FAMOUS DESIGNER NATE BERKUS, *ELLE DÉCOR*

Beyond Home Décor

Create the Style You Crave on a Budget You Can Afford is different from most decorating books. It goes beyond home décor, beyond the material, and is the first book of its kind that incorporates New Thought Philosophy/Personal Development with home décor.

While filled with visual eye candy, it also explores how creatively expressing yourself in your home and gardens helps you create the life you really want to live. As the ever so popular “Law of Attraction” is causing a paradigm shift in thought, it’s essential that your life, wardrobe, career, and yes, your home décor reflect the essence of who you are and your inner heart’s desire. In this book, you will learn how to surround yourself with beauty and create an environment that reflects who you are and what you want so you can draw more of that into your life.

Your Style, Your Budget

Do you desire a comfy cozy home with quilts and china teacups or maybe a bit of glam to invoke your inner pop star? Are you attracted to clean modern lines or do you want to surround yourself with culturally diverse motifs to remind you of world travels and nostalgia? Perhaps it’s a mix of several styles. Whatever it is, this book will help you create the style you crave on a budget you can afford.

Inspiration

In these pages you’ll be inspired by stories of everyday men and women with busy lives and limited budgets who have infused personal values, meaning, and style into their homes. Instead of feeling overwhelmed, you will feel inspired as you see how others like you have done it.

Additionally, you’ll discover how I created my favorite room on the tiniest of shoestrings. It’s my own private Sweet Spot where I look over my garden, have a glass of wine, and work on the creative projects that give me so much joy. I call it my cabin.

Finally, you’ll find tons of resources to inspire you both online and off. We’ll pull it all together in a mood board and leave you inspired to create your own amazing Sweet Spot home.

I’m so glad you are here; let’s begin!

Remember, your home doesn’t need to be **perfect**, but it does need to be **you**!



PREFACE

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THE SWEET SPOT?

SWEET SPOT STORIES

USING COLOR TO CREATE THE FEELING YOU DESIRE

HAVE A VISION! CREATING MOOD BOARDS BY HAND OR ONLINE

CREATING INSPIRED OUTDOOR SPACES

I'D LIKE TO ADD FRENCH DOORS TO MY LIFE

RESOURCE GUIDE

LET'S TALK ABOUT MONEY

DECISION MAKING 101

A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN, HOW TO CREATE YOUR SWEET SPOT STYLE ONE ROOM AT A TIME, FEATURING
DESHA'S CABIN

MANIFEST YOUR DREAM HOME

I'M NOT READY TO SAY GOODBYE, ARE YOU?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR, PHOTOGRAPHERS, AND CONTRIBUTOR

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND PHOTO CREDITS



Can I share a little secret with you?

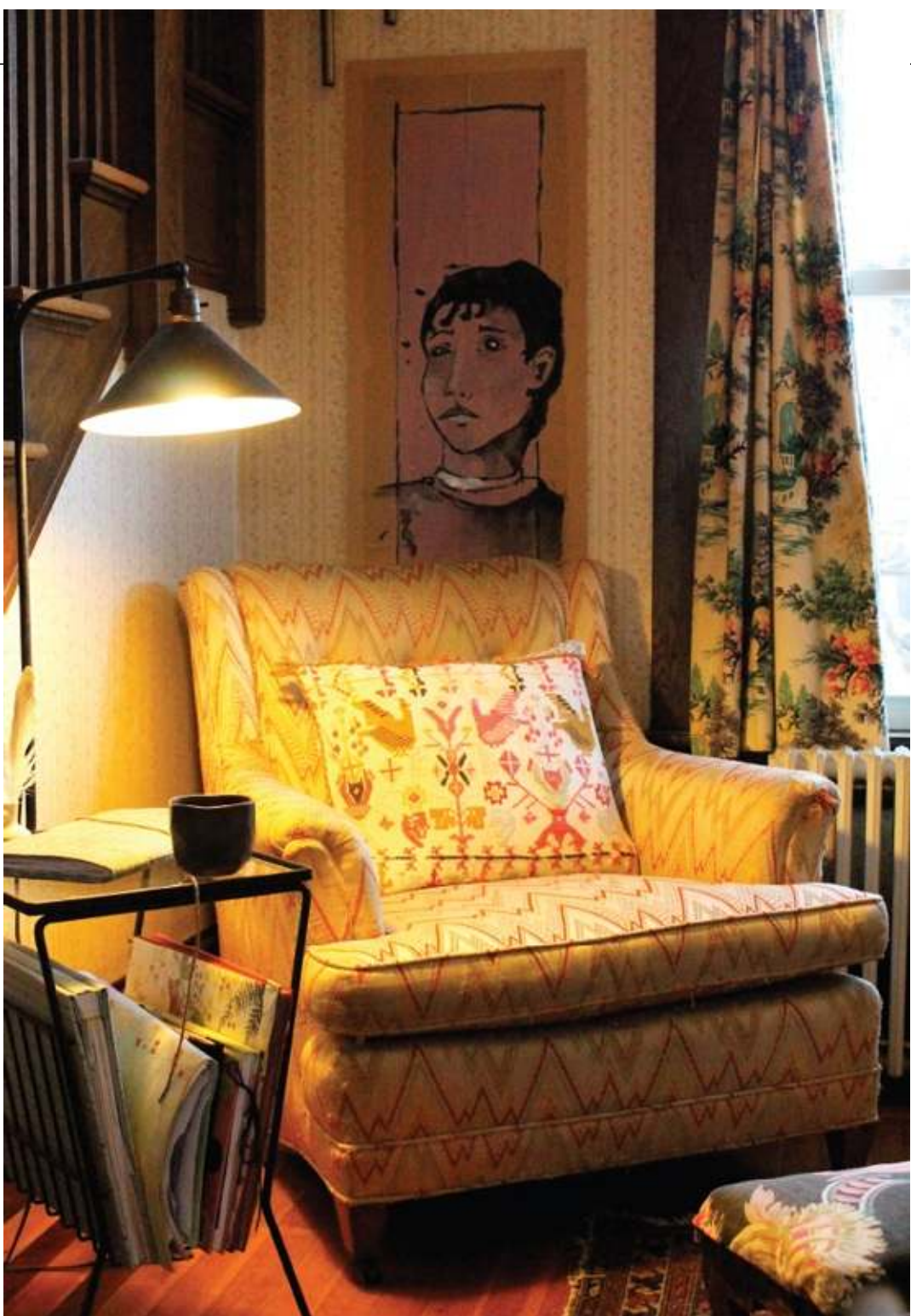
My mother and I used to drive around the historic neighborhoods of Little Rock, Arkansas, where I grew up. We would admire the tree-lined streets, unique architecture, and charming neighborhoods. Then we would drive home to our little duplex on Laramie Cove where I spent my first twelve years of life.

Those drives were full of hope and yearning—not just for a prettier home but also for a better life. And while there wasn't much I could do about it as a child, a deep desire was planted in me that one day I might live in lovely home and share it with my daughter.

I was motivated by desire, by that deep craving. That's how I was able to create it for myself. It's easy to fall into despair when you don't have the home (or life) you desire, but the secret is this: you don't have to wait to live in the style you crave; you can begin to create it now.

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LET YOUR CRAVING FUEL YOU.
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

I'd like to encourage you to live your life in a meaningful way in all aspects of your life, and that includes being surrounded by beauty (your kind of beauty) in your home.



Rebekah's brown paper trash bag painting is mounted on simple cardboard in my foyer. This is one of my favorite places to write and have a cup of tea.

WHAT IS THE SWEET SPOT?

“SOME PEOPLE LOOK FOR A BEAUTIFUL PLACE, OTHERS MAKE A PLACE BEAUTIFUL.”
HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN, FOUNDER OF UNIVERSAL SUIFI

As someone deeply passionate about connecting to a higher purpose while enjoying the present moment, I’ve been a student of Sweet Spot Living for over ten years now and have incorporated the concept into every part of my life—from my livelihood/career to my family and to my *home*. I began to interview people who are living in their Sweet Spot and documented their stories on *The Desha Show*, a local TV show that I produce here in Southern Vermont.

What I learned from that experience is that everyone has his/her own definition of what the Sweet Spot is. It’s self-defined, meaning you get to decide what makes your life, career, or home feel good to you. Too often we are pressured by family and society to live a certain way, but there is a paradigm shift that teaches us that it’s okay to allow our inner hearts and spirits to guide us and to give us faith that we are on the right path.

When it comes to the home, it’s very important to feel like you’re in your Sweet Spot. If you want to live in a tiny cabin by the ocean so you can go surfing any time of the day or night—so be it. If you want a luxurious mansion filled with chandeliers and white carpet (and can afford it), so be it. Your home is your nest, a place that embraces you, a place where you can let go of all pretenses and simply be yourself. You can create a home that makes you feel like you are in your Sweet Spot by creating an environment that reflects your personal style, values, budget, and your dreams.

A dear old friend of mine who I had not seen in years called me up one day as she was travelling north headed towards Nova Scotia from Minnesota, and of course I was hoping she’d pay a visit to our Vermont home, which she did.

The first thing Rebekah said when she arrived at my house was, “Ohhh, your front porch!” As a fellow misplaced Southern gal, we both purchased homes with front porches; it’s a nod to our roots, a way to keep us connected to the slow moving way of the south. A common thread between us.

The second thing she said as she walked into the foyer was, “Ohhh, my painting!!” Fifteen years ago, Rebekah came over to my Little Rock home, grabbed a brown paper bag, ripped it open, plopped on the floor with two or three paints and a *National Geographic* for inspiration, and promptly turned out a really cool piece of art. She was about to throw it away, when I asked her if I could have it. Her trash was my treasure, a reminder of Rebekah’s artistic talents and why I tend to hang out with artists—I’m inspired by them.

That night Rebekah and her fiancé crawled into the guest bed and tucked themselves into the wooly quilt that she made for me as an engagement present ten years prior. Later, she told me she’d given away all but one of the many quilts she’d made, and what a pleasure it was to sleep under the wooly quilt on

chilly night in Vermont. Perfection.

The porch, the painting, and the quilt are all things that I cherish in my home. They each tell a story and are glimpses of what's important to me. They're part of what make my home feel like I'm in my Sweet Spot.

At the end of Rebekah's visit she told me, "Your home is really *you*"—which I take as a compliment. She said one of the best things about travelling cross-country is getting to see old friends and that you can begin to "catch up" and learn so much about the person and their life just by staying with them in their home. And it's true. Whether you plan it or not, your home does reflect your life. And I have to agree, I love getting a glimpse of the inside of people's homes. I don't love a particular style—I love many styles—but what I love most is learning about the person and what is meaningful to them. And that is what this book is all about!

Answer these questions to find out how you can live in your Sweet Spot at home:

- How do you want to feel in your home?
- What currently makes you feel this way in your home? Why?
- Is there any area of your home that makes you feel uncomfortable, stressed, or that you avoid? Why?
- Do you have a space of your own that feels completely wonderful? What do you do there? If not, can you imagine a space like this in your home?
- What can you do to make your home feel like you are in your Sweet Spot?

CAUTION!! SOUR LIST

There are a few things that will take you right out of your Sweet Spot, leaving you feeling like a sour put when it comes to your space. Watch out for:

1. **Overspending**—spending more than you can afford on the purchase or decoration of your home is a sure fire way to make you feel stressed, resentful, and could lead to feeling stuck in your life (think opposite of *freedom*).
2. **Dirt!** Having a dirty house is a direct reflection of you. There's a time and place for being a dirty girl, and this isn't it, sugar sweets.



Vintage finds and pops of color reflect the owner's sense of style in this remodeled Vermont barn apartment designed by Sarah Johnson of Kokuun.

3. **Massive Clutter**—I'm all for personalizing a home with family pictures, plenty of art and collections—but clutter often leads to disorganization which blocks creativity and increases inefficiency. You're not in your Sweet Spot if you are yelling, "Where are my damn keys?!" It doesn't mean you have to get rid of your precious stuff, but please, at least organize it.
4. **Overstuffing**—related to Massive Clutter, you don't want to overstuff your home, your closets, drawers, or art space. If you haven't used it in a year, chances are you won't use it all. If your linen closet is overstuffing, it's going to drive you nuts every time the thirty towels fall on your head, right? And do you need thirty towels anyway? Keep the best ones and donate the rest. Somebody will be happy to get those towels for twenty cents apiece and you'll love not being clobbered by a towel waterfall every time you reach into your linen closet. Take this concept and apply it to every nook and cranny of your home. You'll thank me, and yourself for it. Promise.
5. **Think of the others.** I know this book is about *you* living in *your* Sweet Spot, but here's the thing—if you live with other people it's worth helping them to have a Sweet Spot home too, because when your partner comes in and starts stressing about this or that in the house, or your child doesn't have a proper place to play and get messy—you will feel their stress and mess. When thinking about decorating your home to make yourself feel awesome, take a moment and think about the others who share your home. You can even ask them the same questions you are asking yourself: "Honey, what makes you feel awesome in our home?" He/she might surprise you.







My personal mission is to encourage (and hopefully inspire!) everyone to live fully in their Sweet Spot, whether personal style, home, or career. The saying might be cliché, but it still holds true, “Home is where the heart is.”

I wish I could sit down with you over tea and brownies and hear your story. I’d love to help you creatively express yourself in your home and create a space that reflects your unique personal style and values. I’m guessing you already have a good idea of what makes you feel good in a space, you just need a little inspiration and encouragement.

While I’m a huge fan of glossy magazines and home décor books, we all know there’s a lot of staging going on. How many times have you thought to yourself “Ok, who is the professional interior designer behind this space?” or “Yeah, I could do that too if I had a giant budget, or a sugar daddy with a big fat wallet.”

I wonder what these homes look like once the photographer and stylist have left. I’d love to know, who are these people and how do they really live? Where do they work? Do they have kids? How do they really live with all of those white couches??? Do they really have clean desks with just a lamp, one pretty graphic notebook, a few pens, and a giant vase of peonies?

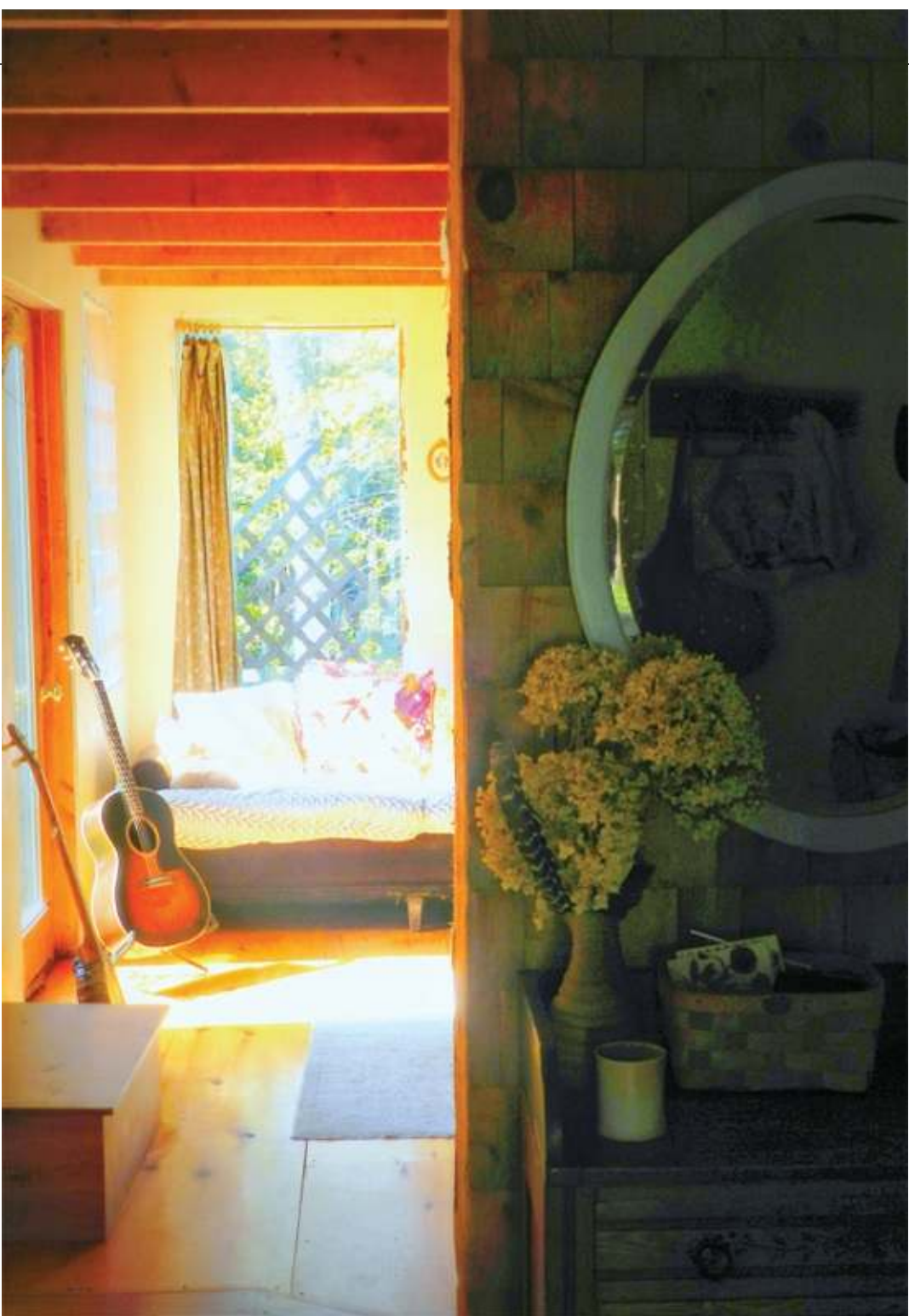
Ok, so not to judge *at all*. I think it’s awesome if you can afford to hire a designer and use their creative skills, and it would be super nice to rely on one big sugar daddy income, it’s just that many of us don’t live in that reality.

You can look at picture perfect magazines all day long, but I would like to show you some spaces of everyday people sans the super styling that you normally see in a book like this. And don’t get me wrong I love me some fantasy—it’s just a lot to live up to, that’s all.

Just like unbuttoning a pair of tight jeans, I hope through the following stories and images you can let your breath out a bit and relax knowing that everyday people live in real spaces that are seldom always *perfectly* perfect, but that still feel and look great.

As famous interior designer Nate Berkus says, “We all have a story to tell, and part of the way we do that is through our homes.” In the next section, you will become intimate with people who have created a space that reflects their aesthetics and values. You will learn about their occupation, family life, goals, dreams, and desires. I hope that through their stories you will be inspired and encouraged to live fully in your own Sweet Spot.







Lives in: **Marlboro, Vermont**

Describes her Style as: **Funky. Luminous. Sustainable.**

“I have a claw foot bathtub, which is not at all radical, but in my heart I still dream of being a hairdresser in a trailer in the desert somewhere, and that dream is essential to my understanding of what makes me, me.”

—Robin MacArthur

Robin MacArthur, writer and lead singer of Red Heart the Ticker (featured on *Prairie Home Companion*), built a one-room cabin at age sixteen and has added to it since then, deepening ties to the land and her soul.

A dear friend, Robin is an inspiration in many ways from the music she makes, words she writes, her natural and relaxed parenting, and her devotion to maintaining a sense of self amidst it all. Robin resides with her husband Tyler and two small children in Marlboro, Vermont.



What makes your home feel like you are in your SWEET SPOT?

My home feels like an organic extension of my body and it also tells a story. The story is both my story and the story of this place: my house is built with trees that my dad, husband, and I cut from the land here and had milled into boards and beams. There are tap-holes in my kitchen cabinets from where my parents drilled to collect sap for maple syrup and there are windows salvaged from my grandparents' barn. There is a beautiful, antique slate sink we collected from a neighbor's shed. Every inch of it was built by us (including the foundation and septic system, oy), and with that comes an organic and tactile relationship. It's full of two of my favorite things: wood and light. I can't imagine living anywhere else because this house is me. It's me at sixteen, drinking wine and smoking pot; it's me at twenty-two, driving home from the cities where I lived to curl up next to a wood stove; and it's me at thirty-four, a

mother to two children, one of whom was born on the pine floor of the upstairs bedroom.



How does the creation of your home reflect you and your lifestyle?

Our house has been an ad hoc creation that seems to reflect the stages of my life to a tee. It began with a small, one room cabin I built with my dad when I was sixteen. It was breezy and full of salvaged windows and sat on crooked stumps and piles of rock. I would go there to drink wine with friends and sleep with boyfriends and write poetry and smoke cigarettes by myself. It was perfection. At twenty-five my boyfriend (now husband Ty) and I were living in New York but wanted to have a place to return to for all seasons of the year, so we added on another small rectangle that was insulated.

It was still funky—the electricity came from a two-hundred-foot extension cord that ran through the woods, the windows were old breezy single-panes, and there was no running water, just an outhouse and a stinky bucket under the sink. Also perfection! We spent summers and a few winters there, then moved to Philadelphia. At twenty-nine we decided we wanted to have a baby and that we wanted to raise that baby in the woods on the land where I was born. So addition number three: this time with a septic system and real electricity and some double-pane windows. We just got a dishwasher, which makes our house verifiably bourgeois.



This amazing farm style sink was found in a neighbor's barn; patches of locally milled wood and Vermont concrete add spunk and variety to the countertops.

You are a writer and musician. How does your home reflect your creative passions and values?

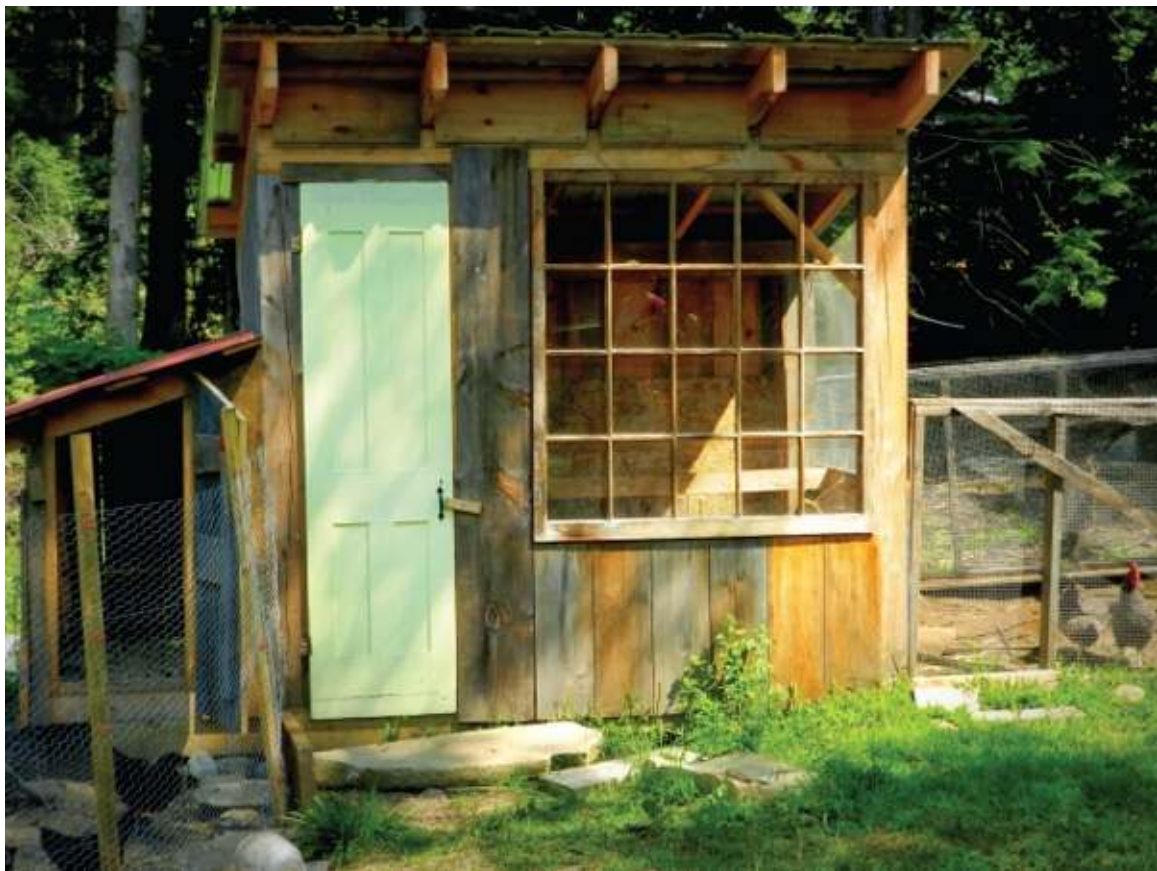
Books. I love books, and read probably six in a month. I have an MFA in fiction writing and though I usually devour fiction, the last four months I've been after much more lyrical things, tied to what's real. My favorite poem right now is Olds's "New Mother," which if you've ever given birth, might mean something to you. ". . . the first time you're broken, you don't know you'll be healed again, better than before."

Although I have many musician friends for whom music is the primary thing of their lives, it's not at all like that for me. In order to rid myself of the anxiety of wondering how I can make room for all my passions, I've starting thinking of my life as a quilt of sorts, which is, fittingly, a very feminine art form. I'm currently thinking of it as a log cabin design, with repeated colors and patterns. Music is one of those patterns and colors in my life. Playing it around the house might be a deep gray color—I was raised in a family of folkies and so a banjo and a guitar around the wood stove feel like a cat purring on one's lap. Performing is the bright red one—the time when I get to don tight jeans and cowboy boots and eyeliner and leave my kids with my parents and stand up under lights and feel radically young again. The rest of my life is quite earthy and domestic—a vegetable garden, mothering, chickens, cooking, writing while my children sleep. For those reasons I desperately need those splashes of Red Heart the Ticker.



What's one thing that makes your heart sing?

The indomitable spirit of my daughter makes me unbearably happy. As she and I like to say to one another, "It's just too much! I just love you too much!"



How does your home reflect you, your dreams, aspirations, and desires?

My grandmother, Margaret MacArthur, had a heart-shaped pink Jacuzzi-style bathtub in the upstairs bathroom of her muted, antiques-filled 1803 farmhouse. That bathtub has always exemplified to me the

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