

How one couple strapped on
their tool belts and built a dream

On Golden Pond





WHEN KARI AND CHARLES BROOKS DISCOVERED THAT buying a house in their native Los Angeles was nearly impossible without a movie-star bank account, they headed north to Grants Pass, Oregon, and bought five acres of what used to be a dairy farm. They couldn't afford an architect, so Charles, a landscape designer/contractor, designed the plans for their new home. "I was a little stressed," Kari says with a laugh. "The only thing he'd ever built was a doghouse—and not a very good one, at that."

She needn't have worried. The self-taught couple not only built the home themselves on weeknights and weekends, but also landscaped the property, including a commercial greenhouse and an orchard. Thirteen years later, Brooks Farms and Gardens has become the "plot of countryside" they always yearned for.



OPPOSITE: A shady sitting area on the front porch is a favorite spot to relax with friends. **TOP:** Audrey and her cousin, Riley, both 4, cast off into one of three ponds located on the

property. **ABOVE:** A ballerina cupcake pirouettes atop a lusterware plate and ruffled glass charger. **LEFT:** Glass floats and coral add interest to vintage decanters on the bar.

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"I'm drawn to soothing ocean hues."



KARI AND CHARLES, WHO GREW UP near the Southern California sand, wanted to bring a beachy vibe to their living room. So Kari accessorized with old globes, nautical fabrics, and seashells. Armed with a nail gun, she and her sister,

Jennifer Bright (co-owner of Confetti, a party-favor company featured in our December '05/January '06 issue), made a bar by topping an old corbel with a piece of wood molding, **RIGHT.** "It was really satisfying—and I got the bar I always wanted." The spiral staircase was an afterthought when Charles discovered that a standard staircase would have gobbled up an entire wall. "It really adds to the home's postmodern farmhouse feel," he says.



ABOVE: Kari's mermaid mosaic will eventually grace the master bath. **BELOW RIGHT:** Bottoms up! Seashell botanical

prints hang above the cutest mini-bar in all of Oregon. **BELOW LEFT:** Charles' drafting board bulges with blueprints.





CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Kari, who's starting her own line of baby clothing, couldn't resist hanging a white dress with hibiscus appliques that she wore as a child. Although Audrey has outgrown the pale peach frock, the colors are so beautiful it's on permanent display. Dominoes stashed in glass jars provide graphic punch.



WHEN IT CAME TO DECORATING DAUGHTER

Audrey's bedroom, Kari gravitated toward the soft pinks and apricots that "sprang out" from a trio of seashell prints above the bookshelves.

"It's kind of an anti-kids room: no primary colors, no cartoon characters."

Instead, she artfully arranged natural elements, vintage toys, and mementos. And as usual, she improvised. When the perfect striped fabric for the drapes eluded her, she whipped up a pair from a canvas shower curtain.

For the master bedroom, RIGHT, she jumped through hoops to import a British Colonial sleigh bed made of reclaimed teak from India.





A



AFTER THE DYNAMIC DUO FINISHED

their dream home, they moved on to the backyard. Charles designed the pool to follow the shape of the pond so that when you're sitting poolside, the pool appears to empty into the water beyond. "The ponds are so well stocked with largemouth bass, blue gill, and catfish that if you cast your line, you're guaranteed to catch one," Kari says.

Whether it's a chorus of croaking bullfrogs or an osprey diving in and snatching a fish from the pond, *Wild Kingdom* moments are a daily occurrence here. "All we ever wanted was our own patch of green," she says. "We never dreamed we would be able to create such a sanctuary."

OPPOSITE: Cool drinks on the "deck; dock," a platform that sits over the pond, are a summertime staple. **THIS PAGE, TOP LEFT:**

Kari designed the swimming pool's abstract compass rose mosaic. **TOP RIGHT:** Riley heads to the water to sail

a Vintage Bahamian sailboat. **LEFT:** Charles found this readymade gate on the Internet. 🍋



are going through a very difficult time.