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Designer Stephen O'Brien may wear the creative pants in the family, but his wife, Eileen Deymier, knows a thing or two about good-looking interiors herself. As a regional editor for *Traditional Home*, Eileen stays on the lookout for beautiful spaces that designers like Stephen bring to life.

So in 2006, when the time came to begin the sixth house redo of their 20-year marriage (you read it correctly, *sixth*), the imaginative pair knew exactly how to operate their well-oiled renovation machine to transform the circa-1880 house they had just purchased and bring it into the present.

The house, located in Easton, Maryland, had problems—some functional, some aesthetic—but there were plenty of endearing attributes that pulled Stephen and Eileen away from their established waterfront location back into the heart of the town. “It was one of about half a dozen gambrel-roofed houses in town, a style most commonly found in New England,” says Eileen. “Ours was even more unusual because it had wrought-iron balconies in front of the living room windows and elaborate wood cutouts framing a few of the second-floor windows.”

Unkempt landscaping required Stephen and Eileen to incorporate a thorough exterior makeover into their renovation. Indoors, the vanilla-colored entry hall required only a quick color pick-me-up; Stephen had it painted a fresh apple-green to signal the color intensity to come throughout the house.

Going farther into the home, however, he faced some tougher design decisions. The large space that served as a living and dining room was heated by a gas-fired furnace and multiple radiators that limited furniture placement. Stephen was prepared to design around this challenge, but Eileen, who describes herself as the keeper of the “less glamorous” parts of any renovation (the budget, along with mechanical and electrical issues), did an efficiency analysis, prompting their decision to remove the entire system and replace it with a new furnace that eliminated the need for radiators. The extra wiggle room allowed space for a new fireplace and a large built-in unit that Stephen designed with loads of shelving, including space for a flat-panel television. Long windows afford so much natural light

Right: In the narrow entry hall, an oversized painting of a cat face that hangs above a black lacquered altar table adds a note of insouciance. Top left: Used as a breakfast area by the former owners, the sitting room now glows with a warm scheme of yellow, brown, and red. The print used for slipcovers on the armchairs drove the palette for the entire house. “We didn’t want or need a breakfast area,” says Stephen. “So we turned it into a space that was useful to us.”

Far left: Eileen Deymier and Stephen O’Brien.

Left: The gambrel-roofed house was painted an insipid yellow when Eileen and Stephen bought it. They updated it in taupe and added contrasting white trim.

Preceding pages: In the living room, an elegant palette of chocolate brown and ivory provides a classic backdrop for a mélange of furnishings with contemporary lines.