

GROWTH STRATEGY

Modest renovations add up to plenty of room for handmade touches in an architect-artist duo's Cambridgeport home.
BY RACHEL LEVITT



BACK IN 1995, BILL BOEHM was a bachelor and a recent graduate of MIT's School of Architecture and Planning. He'd served in the Peace Corps in Malawi, had worked at the Boston Architectural College, and was preparing to open his own firm focused on affordable housing. At the same time, he began rehabbing his outdated 900-square-foot Cambridge home.

Tackling most of the construction with the >>

FAMILY AFFAIR: Danielle Sauv  and her children, Rosa and Th o, in the living room. Her husband, an architect, kept the exterior window frames in place when he built the 2002 addition.

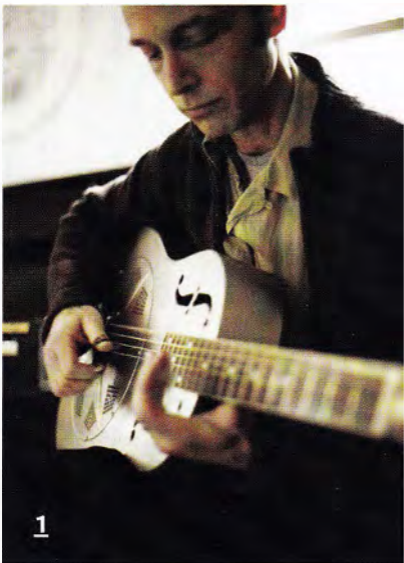


1. Théo sits in front of a photograph by the Montreal artist Raymond Avril. Boehm found the cabinet (next to Théo) at a yard sale, painted it, and added new hardware for a vintage-chic look. **2.** A Martin acoustic and a resonator-style guitar hang side by side in the kitchen for impromptu singalongs. **3.** While in Malawi, Boehm bought this kinetic toy made of scrap metal and discarded fabric. **4.** Rosa perches on an Eames rocker from Design Within Reach, a birthday gift from Boehm to Sauv . **5.** Th o and friend Graham Cod, age seven, drew a chalk mural of fantasy animals on the basement blackboard. **6.** Boehm built this model of Newbury Street row houses with his students at the Boston Architectural College using cardboard, Homasote, and radiator cover screening. **7.** One piece of Sauv 's ceramic installation *Places of Refuge*, 2004, hangs in the living room above the piano. **8.** Boehm built the modern architecture-inspired plywood dollhouse for Th o in 2004. Now it's Rosa's favorite toy.



help of friends, Boehm took down walls, enlarged the kitchen, and generally opened up the modest Victorian, while striving to preserve original period details. For example, he conserved a patchwork of wood flooring and exposed the chimney's original brick. As a result, the house doesn't feel as though it was built all at once but rather seems like the result of several cycles of construction and deconstruction.

Five years later, Boehm met visual artist Danielle Sauv  at a mutual friend's house in New Hampshire. Shortly thereafter, she left her faculty position at  duard-Montpetit College in Montreal to join him in Cambridge. With a child on the way, they renovated the bathroom, installing a big soaking tub with glass mosaic tile, and created a small



BLUEPRINT AT HOME WITH

1. Théo bounces on the Danish modern reading-room chair in front of Boehm-built shelves, which hold an impressive art and architecture book collection. **2.** The basement below the addition is now a playroom. Sauvé finished the space with carpet tile flooring and a big Fatboy beanbag chair. **3.** The children's room is finished with cork flooring, topped with polyurethane to increase resiliency. Bleached fir tongue-in-groove paneling runs along the walls and ceiling, illuminated by a long fluorescent cove fixture. Boehm built a window seat around the air conditioner to keep it hidden from view.



den opposite the living room. Eventually, they erected a 300-square-foot addition to accommodate an office and a children's bedroom. Boehm kept the windows where they were, now part of the home's interior, but removed the glass.

Today, Boehm's one-time bachelor pad happily absorbs a family of four. With its generous kitchen and quirky spaces, the house offers the kids a surprising number of places to run, hide, build Lego spaceships, and hold puppet shows. Still, Boehm sometimes feels a little squeezed. "We wonder about the one-bathroom situation when the kids get older," he says with a smile. "I can envision a line of people waiting for my daughter to finish her shower." Thankfully, Boehm's a renovator to the core—his work will never really be done. ■

1. Boehm serenades his family with pitch-perfect Delta blues on his National Steel guitar. **2.** A glass-block skylight in the addition doubles as a deck above. The 8-foot-high door leads to a garden. **3.** Now stripped of its plaster and walls, the free-standing chimney is a prominent feature of the home. A new brick surround and slate mantel complete the hearth. **4.** In place of walls, Boehm installed new door casings and rosettes, which echo the house's original details.

