

If houses could talk Designers share what their homes say about them

By Sally Pollak
Free Press Staff Writer

SOUTH BURLINGTON

Kim Deetjen had her eye on a house in South Burlington more than 10 years ago when she was living in Boston.

She had lived in Burlington before moving to Boston, had fallen in love with a house she never set foot in, and knew one day she wanted to live in Burlington again. When she learned the house she coveted was for sale, she knew it was a sign to move back to Vermont.

"I loved this house; I loved this location," she said. "I loved the quality of light here."

Deetjen, 46, is an interior designer and principal at the Burlington firm TruexCullins. She lives in the home she spotted from the road with her husband, architect/builder Cliff Deetjen, and their sons Alex, 10, and Ben, 8.

Her home — which includes the original house and a major addition — says something about Deetjen and her family: It is fun and formal; it mixes ancestors' pieces with kids' art; it celebrates light and brings the outside in.

It has built-in bookshelves and a built-in advantage: Deetjen and her husband are designers. She specializes in interiors; he works at Peregrine Design/Build in South Burlington.

Deetjen can make a jar of jelly beans look composed, and can match Tiffany silver with a department-store star.

"I think the best designed rooms, someone walks in and it just feels right," Deetjen said.

See DESIGN, 3C



Designer Kim Deetjen's home in South Burlington is fun and formal.

EMILY MURPHY, Free Press

Decor: What we'd like to be and who we are

By Sally Pollak
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On the big porch of her Richmond home, where the overhangs are too deep for flowers to flourish, Greta Sloan hangs orange curtains.

"They give a dollop of color that I felt was missing in the summer on the front of our house," Sloan said.

The ribbon-like curtains — 7 feet high and 22 inches wide — blow in the wind and give her porch a cabana look, she said. They also inspired reaction among Sloan's neighbors — a generational response that Sloan found interesting.

"A couple of my older neighbors said what the hell is up with those orange curtains!" Sloan said. "My younger neighbors thought that it was brilliant

— an exotic, creative look for a Colonial farmhouse."

Sloan, 50, is an interior space planner. She helps people organize space, de-clutter, think about color, design solutions to particular housing concerns.

"I think we're more conservative in our homes than we'd even like to be," Sloan said. "A lot of us live with houses that are much tamer than we'd like them to be."

"Our houses kind of portray what we want people to think we're like. But in fact we might be more daring, more interesting, than even our houses represent."

In Shelburne, Joanne Palmisano's home speaks to her interest in making use of recycled and salvaged material.

See DECOR, 3C



In Joanne Palmisano's kitchen, the island top is from an 1880s railroad building in St. Albans. The floor is local cherry from the Bristol area. The sink is an 1880s soapstone laundry sink. The refrigerator is from Recycle North and so is the clock. The back splash came from a pile of salvaged soapstone.

Courtesy photo



Make the most of your kitchen's potential by getting organized.

Woman's Day's tips to organize your kitchen

From the editors of
Woman's Day magazine

The kitchen is easily the most bustling, well-used room in the house. No wonder chaos and clutter take over in record time. Reclaim your kitchen's potential with these tips from Woman's Day.

5 days to fantastic

Organize based on the way you live:

Day 1: Move the monsters. Reassign large or rarely used appliances (turkey roasters, bread makers) to the garage or basement.

On the Web

Find the complete article at:
www.womansday.com/kitchen

Day 2: Face the madness. Pull out all kitchen items and group them (dishes, silverware, pans, and cookbooks). Toss damaged items; set aside extras to donate. Once storage areas are empty, measure them and make a list of containers to buy.

Day 3: Shop for storage. But first rethink how the room should look. Could you put a lazy Susan atop the fridge? Hang hooks inside a pantry door? When you restock everything, include this new storage.

Day 4: Create stations. At-

range coffee, mugs, spoons, sugar and the coffeemaker together on a counter tray. Love to bake? Store items you'll need in a movable butcher block.

Day 5: Add polish. Clean surfaces make your newly organized space look even nicer. Put fresh flowers or a big bowl of colorful fruit in a nook.

5 tough areas, tackled

What to do when you're faced with:

1. Piles of papers. Since paper is one of the biggest clutter culprits in the kitchen, you need a fail-proof way to process it. If you have a kitchen office, buy folders and containers so you can file papers and other items weekly. Otherwise, create a mini-command center (check-

book, laptop, mail sorter) from an unused shelf, cabinet or portion of counter. Hang a calendar and dry-erase board on the wall.

2. Overflowing dishes. If you're drowning in dishware, try adding a few plate shelves or under-the-shelf cup holders. And customize your cabinets by adjusting shelves to fit dishes (be sure they have movable pegs).

3. Out-of-control pantry. Try organizing it by breakfast, snack, lunch and dinner, so you know what's really there. Keep often-used meal ingredients within reach and place school-lunch items on the lower shelves so kids can get to them. Over-the-door racks and stackable bins

See TIPS, 2C

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DESIGN: What your home's decor says about you

Continued from Page 1C

The original structure is a 1940 Pantone stone cape, a west-facing home that stands on the edge of a field, and offers big views and lovely light.

Five years ago, the Deetjens built an addition on the south side of the house — a family room with a soaring cathedral ceiling and special space for each member of the family.

"I really believe that a person's home should be a reflection of who they are and what they're about and what they believe in," Deetjen said. "And what they love and who they love."

The addition, designed by the couple, resembles a carriage house, though it is attached to the original house and functions as a light-filled family room.

"This is where decoration meets function," Deetjen said. "It's a reflection of who we are. This is what it's about. Everything in here has meaning to us, or it wouldn't be here."

When you enter the room, you see a big arching window, comfortable couches and chairs set before a gas fireplace and TV (that can be hidden behind cabinet doors), a clutter-free work area at the far end of the room (through an open doorway), and Alex's loft space, accessible by a ladder that slides along a rail.

If you turn around, you see the boys' artwork, a Nerf-ball target drawn in blue marker, elaborate Lego arrangements, made by boys who inherited their mom's design sense, and a flower-potting area where Deetjen puts together floral arrangements that fill the house.

Against one wall there's an elliptical exercise machine and a Foomall hockey game.

Like other spaces in the Deetjens' home, this one is multi-functional. They've hosted a wedding in the room, with the bride and groom exchanging vows by the window.

On New Year's Eve, they clear furniture to one side, create a cozy space for hanging out and open up the floor for dancing beneath a big disco ball. Oh yes, there might be a live band in the corner.

But that's a one-night-a-year event.

Any day, you might find Alex playing with his electric trains in the loft, Ben building Legos against the room's north wall, their father on the elliptical machine or by tying the fisherman at his desk, and their mother filling a vase with tulips or reading on the sofa.

In her own work corner, a bulletin board and bookshelves form a kind of collection of Deetjen's life: family photos, design books, a business card, a Christmas cactus and a Mother's Day card from her kids.

While the house has personal touches throughout, there is no sense of clutter or chaos: A pillow purchased on a trip is a re-



Designer Kim Deetjen suggests blending family heirlooms with everyday items as well as family photos for a bit of whimsy.



Clean lines, natural light makes for an inviting space.



Deetjen suggests keeping a clean and inviting entrance to your home.



Deetjen uses jars of seasonal candies and bowls of fruit to create an inviting feeling.

DECOR: What we'd like to be

Continued from Page 1C

She works in marketing for area design firms. Palmisano, who has a longtime interest in design, is writing a book called, "Salvage Secrets, Transforming Reclaimed Materials into Design Concepts."

Among the salvaged objects in her home are an 1880s laundry sink that is her kitchen sink and trusses from a railroad building in St. Albans that form the top of the island in Palmisano's kitchen.

She said the trusses were in the backyard of farmer who lives near the Canadian border, and she was told about them

by an architectural salvage person.

"Our house has elements of salvage," Palmisano said. "It's not what it's all about, but it does bring an amazing amount of character to the home."

"It says I'm very casual, but it also says that I like to let the history of the material speak for itself. I like to think that my house has soul, cause it has all these older pieces. I care about our planet and how much stuff we use."

Contact Sally Pollak at spollak@burlingtonfreepress.com or 660-1859.

mother's delicate gold leaf complement Hitchcock chairs, from her childhood, that inspired her mother's artwork.

"We're looking for our roots, and for a sense of his-

tory," Deetjen said. "When I walk into my house, I have a sense of my mother. I have a sense of my childhood. And my children have contributed their art."

The children helped pick

out the dog bowl and polka dot mat that greet visitors who enter through the backdoor and into the mud room — the way family and friends arrive at the Deetjen home.

Coats are hung neatly, sweaters and hats are stacked in shelves, and an interior window shared by the mud room and the downstairs bathroom let's in western light. (It is aligned with a window to the outdoors that's in the bathroom.)

"Decorating, I don't think should be for pure decoration sake," Deetjen said. "Your home has to be functional. When you come in, the first thing is a sense of entry. When you turn around, there's the functional mess." (The kids' jackets ARE on hooks; something you can try at home.)

In her kitchen, remodeled

in the 1980s and a space Deetjen would like to "blow up" one day for a designer's kitchen, little touches speak to her design sense — and her childhood.

Who wouldn't notice, as a first thing, not only the tulips and daffodils on the counter, but the big glass jar of Oreos. Deetjen remembers a childhood friend who kept Oreos in a jar, and she made the look her own. They look so good, and she has a constant presence, the boys don't even devour them.

When the boys are in bed, in the second-floor bedroom they share, their nightlights come from a light in the scapolite on top of the addition to the pitched roof of the family room functioning — and glowing — in the stillness of bedtime.

Contact Sally Pollak at spollak@burlingtonfreepress.com or 660-1859.



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