

# Tapping existing potential

Clever built-ins and warm finishes, plus new plumbing and wiring, turn an unloved top floor into a cheerful bedroom, bath, and office By GILLIAN BARTH + Photographs by SUSAN SEUBERT



Yellow walls and ceilings and white trim unify the rooms and create flow.

A small-space remodel can be as exacting as a jigsaw puzzle. That's what Matthew and Darci Haney found while renovating the three-room upstairs space in their Carlton, Oregon, cottage. Former owners had turned the tucked-under-the-roof space over to their cats, leaving the rooms, along with the rest of the house, in sore need of a redo. Holding to a \$14,000 budget, the couple hired a plumber and an electrician to work with Matthew, an experienced carpenter. He demolished one wall and took others down to the studs to create a top-floor master suite, office, and reading nook with closets, cabinets, and open shelves cut into the knee walls. Old peel-and-stick tile and carpet came out in favor of cherry-look vinyl planks. The team added a marble-lined bath with two sinks and placed a shower area under the highest point of one gable to create a luxurious sense of space. Rather than haul furniture up narrow stairs, Matthew built two desks, a platform bed—with storage cubbies along the base—and wall-hung nightstands on-site. He wiggled the mattress and box spring in through the new office window. After 10 months, all the pieces fit cozily in 500 functional square feet. "Everything is where we need it," Matthew says. "It's warm and comfortable, and makes you realize you can do a lot with the space you have."



**before** The tiny top floor had good headroom under its three gables, but the three-room space lacked style—and plumbing.  
**after** New windows meet fire code, and built-in furniture, cabinets, and open shelves—together with a new bath—make use of every square foot.



before+after: **attic**

→ **The Craftsman-style glass-panel door**, salvaged from the entry of the 1938 house, channels light through the space.  
*Light fixtures: Norwell Lighting and Accessories. Bin pulls and label holders: E.B. Bradley Co.*



**homeowner tip**

MATTHEW HANEY, CARLTON, OREG.

“We hung nightstands on the wall with brackets and used console sinks in the bath to keep floors as open as possible. When square footage is at a premium and ceilings are low, open space below eye level helps make rooms feel larger.”

→ **A new 5½-foot-tall window** added light in the office and a way for the mattress and box springs to circumnavigate the narrow stairs. *Window: Jeld-Wen. Vinyl floor planks: TrafficMaster Allure in Brazilian Cherry*



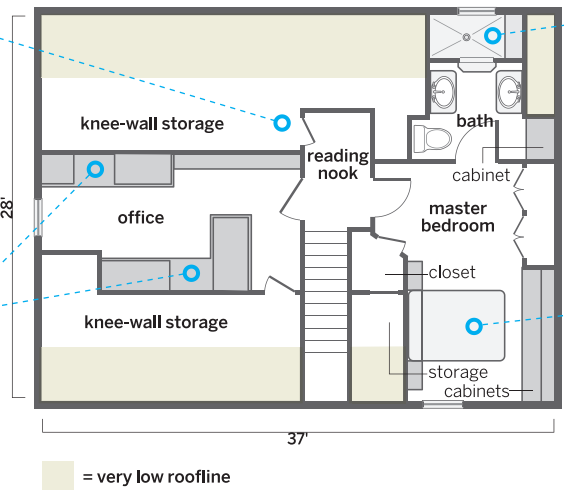
↑ **A reading nook** on the stair landing serves as a buffer between the master suite and the office.  
*Chair: Macy's. Pillows: Petit Coterie*

• **before + after**

Removing one wall helped turn two small rooms into a bedroom; a third room became a new bath. A reading nook, knee-wall storage, and built-in furniture wring extra function out of the space and give it a finished look.

**1. Rebuilt the knee walls** with 3-foot-high doors to create storage voids where the slope of the roof is too low for standing.

**2. Added built-in desks** with file cabinets underneath.



**3. Placed the shower** in front of a window under one gable's high point, adding light and a sense of spaciousness.

**4. Built in a bed** with storage compartments underneath and a pair of wall-hung nightstands.

FLOOR PLAN: IAN WOPPOLE

**did you redo a room?**  
Enter your revamped room or house in our upcoming Reader Remodel Contest for a chance to win a new truck and cash. Go to [thisoldhouse.com/yourTOH](http://thisoldhouse.com/yourTOH)



↑ **Built-in flat-panel cabinets** and open shelves tuck media equipment under the sloped ceiling. *Sconces: Sea Gull Lighting. TV: Proscan. Cabinet pulls: Etsy*

← **Curvy console sinks** give the bath an open look. The marble-lined shower, raised to create space for plumbing, fits under the highest point of one gable. *Sink: Nottingham Brass. Faucet and shower fittings: Kohler*