

SMART
SPACE

TOWER POWER

A modern, window-filled tower helps an old Victorian house see the light.

By Sarah Latta

"SEMIDISTRESSED" isn't usually a term on a first-time homebuyer's wish list, but for Daniel Thomas, it signified opportunity. When he purchased an 1888 Victorian in Portland, it was a run-down version of its former self. "Eleven-foot ceilings were hidden under low drywall. It was stripped of ornamentation, save for some windows and a few doors," says Thomas. Worst of all, it still had the tiny, fractured rooms typical of the era, so it brought in almost no natural light.

Thomas, co-owner of green building firm Hammer & Hand (hammerandhand.com), decided to banish the shadows in an unconventional way—with a three-story tower that functions as a light well at the back of the house. He hired Leela Brightenburg and Alissa Pulcrano of Bright Designlab (brightdesignlab.com) to create the tower and to play up the then-and-now polarity in the interior decoration. Today, new additions mix with restored historical details to help the old home feel ahead of its time.

Photographs by THOMAS J. STORY



IDEA

A black accent wall lets the art stand out.

**IDEA**

Hardie board painted white contrasts with reclaimed wood.

**TOWER**

The 10- by 10-foot tower, left, occupies a small footprint, but its brightening effect is no small feat. Sunlight from 11 windows facing north and east travels through an open loft space above the kitchen to the main floor's living spaces. The façade was constructed using leftover wood from a Hammer & Hand project. "The texture is beautiful, and the wood will age nicely over time," says Brightenburg.

BACK PATIO

When Thomas purchased the house, it was a series of warrenlike rooms. "I wanted a strong connection between the kitchen, the backyard, and the rest of the house," he says. The designers raised the patio, left, nearly 30 inches to meet the interior floor level, and installed a folding door to encourage movement between indoors and out.

KITCHEN

The designers borrowed the ethos of an unfitted kitchen, typical of old houses, and gave it a commercial-inspired reincarnation. "We love the juxtaposition of things that seemingly don't go together," says Brightenburg. Metal cabinets (*imbue kitchen.com*) and stainless steel appliances pair with reclaimed floorboards and marble counters, above.



DIGITAL BONUS See 23 homes transformed in our before & after gallery: sunset.com/remodel.



BACK ENTRY

A ladder in the tower, above, was originally added for roof maintenance but regularly lures Thomas upward. "I gaze at treetops and catch a glimpse of downtown," he says. Soon he'll build an exterior stair for easier access.

LIVING ROOM

To restore the living room, above right, to its former glory, Thomas added a tin ceiling, plaster walls, and mahogany trim and paneling.

HALLWAY

The designers pulled out drywall ceilings to make room for skylights and expose original rafters in the hallway, right. To fill the wall, Thomas enlisted a designer friend and collector of vintage mirrors to create the light-reflecting installation. The painted white frames echo the doorway trim.



"I'm not drawn to any one period, but rather the graceful mix of eras."

—DANIEL THOMAS



LET THERE BE LIGHT

III

Leela Brightenburg and Alissa Pulcrano, from Portland's Bright Designlab, share their ideas for bringing light into a space without breaking down walls.

(1)

Paint the walls a pure white, like Vanilla Milkshake by Benjamin Moore.

(2)

Install a solar tube, a cylinder connected to the roof that diffuses natural light into a room.

(3)

Add mirrors to an outdoor garden to reflect sunlight into an adjacent room.

(4)

Fake a window or skylight with translucent panels and lighting behind them.

(5)

For soft, ambient light, mount LED strips where the ceiling meets the wall. M60 by Selux can be installed flush with drywall.

III



BEDROOM

A large-scale thistle wallcovering by Timorous Beasties, right, updates the ornate wallpaper that's classic in Victorians. Thomas, above, is a prolific artist, so the designers made choices that were "unusual and dramatic," says Pulcrano. The vintage bed frame is powder-coated cyan blue. Thomas kept as much of the room's original molding as he could.

BATHROOM


Metallic elements mingle with warm woods for contrast in the bathroom, below. The design team stripped away paint layers on the door to reveal original wood. Glazed porcelain tile, colored to look like metal, adds an industrial note, while the glass ceiling pulls in light and reveals the rafters above.



IDEA
A ticking stripe mimics the original floor.



FRONT EXTERIOR

The shingle siding, left, was painted charcoal to modernize the house, a task made easier by the neon numbers. 

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ORGANIC BELIEVE FEELS

A modern Washington cabin blends a couple's opposing styles while making the most of the landscape.

BY LYDIA LEE

PHOTOGRAPHS
BY THOMAS J.
STORY

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FOR YEARS, JEN AND KIRK SCHUMACHER'S weekend house in Washington's Methow Valley was simply a place to drop their bags before hitting a rock face or ski slope. But once they had their first child, they dreamed of replacing the tiny cabin with a full-time home.

With "forever" in mind and ideas flying, the stage was set for a design battle. Jen is a traditionalist, while husband Kirk describes his style as "much more sparse." Jen elaborates: "You know those very modern interiors with stark white walls, a black floor, and a single set of antlers on the wall? That's Kirk."

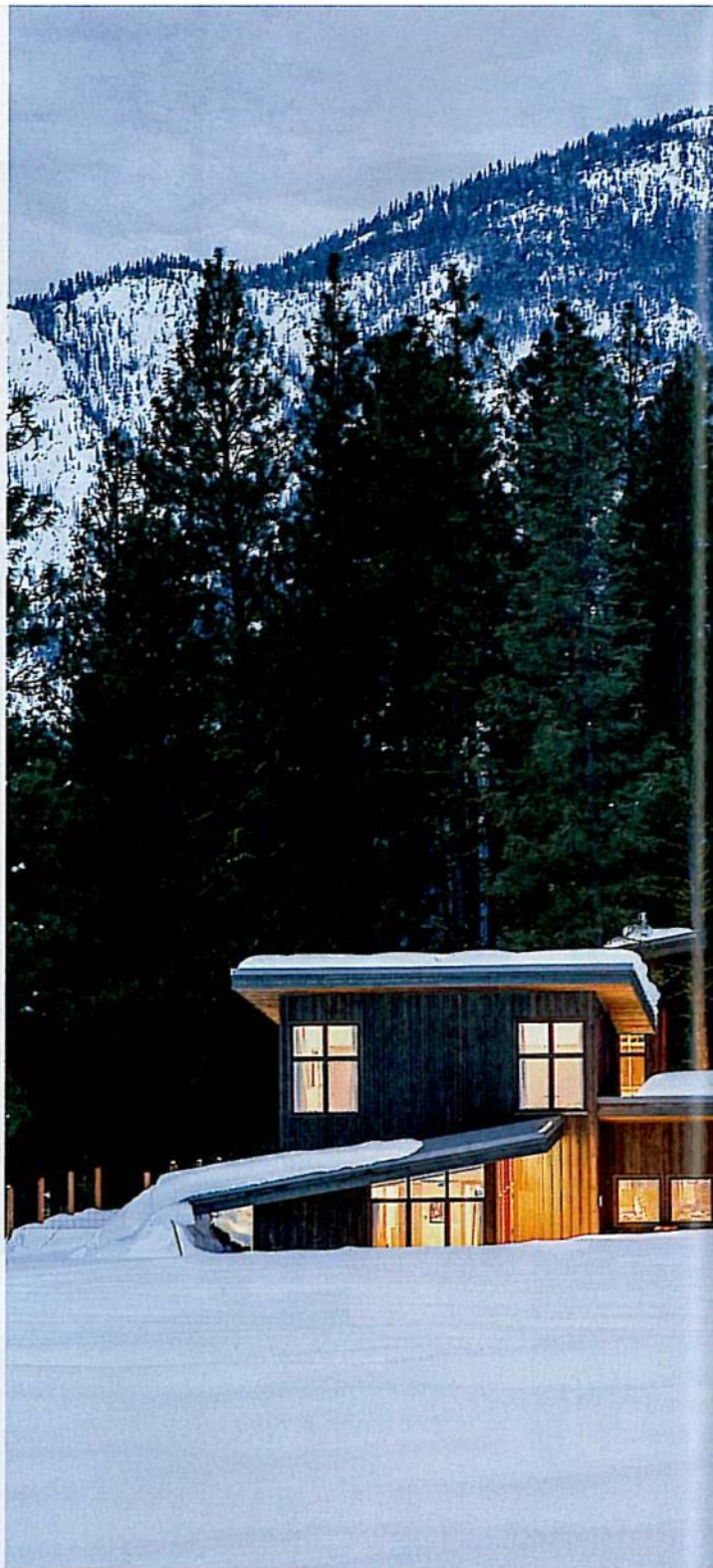
Fortunately, the Schumachers found Thomas Lawrence, an architect who doesn't mind providing couples therapy. "We talked to a few other architects and could see that they leaned toward one style or the other," says Kirk. "Tom was very understanding and good at melding our visions." It helped that Lawrence had experience designing everything from rustic cabins to contemporary structures of glass, steel, and concrete. "It was fun to try and figure out a solution that they both liked," says Lawrence.

The Schumachers did agree on one thing: They wanted a small house on the 1-acre lot. Lawrence was happy to comply. "To create a nice compact house requires more creativity than designing a big one," he says. The resulting home squeezes a great room, a master suite, and bedrooms for the couple's son and daughter into just 2,000 square feet, with a 500-square-foot loft over the garage for guests.

Lawrence used computer renderings to help the Schumachers see the ramifications of different style choices. Jen originally wanted a country lodge with a wraparound porch, but came around to Kirk's vision of a more modern silhouette. "Tom showed us how a gabled roof would block a lot of the views of the mountains," says Jen. The porch morphed into a wide patio, where the kids can ride their bikes. Dark brown board-and-batten wood siding clads the house, appealing to Kirk's minimalist leanings, while the windows are outlined in tomato red, one of Jen's favorite colors.

In addition to a small footprint, the couple also wanted their home to be environmentally friendly. On-demand hot water, electric in-floor radiant heating, and ceiling fans in lieu of air-conditioning keep energy usage down. To help modulate the area's temperature extremes, Lawrence also designed a super-insulated roof.

The interior reflects the couple's shared love of the outdoors—and blends their competing tastes. Large windows and glass doors seem to bring snowdrifts and fir, cedar, and aspen trees into the rooms. In quirkier fashion, the couple decided to sub climbing hangers (the metal bolts they frequently use for rock climbing)



for drawer pulls. "They're way more affordable than traditional pulls, and you can open a beer bottle with them!" says Kirk. Beer or not, the adjoining kitchen and living room is party central. "We wanted the rooms open to one another so we could dance around with the kids," Jen says.

Jen's rustic style prevailed through elements like reclaimed barn wood ceilings, corrugated metal wainscoting, and pendants made from recycled fuel tank lids. "I'd wonder, Is that going to be too crazy?—and



then decide to just go for it," she says. Contemporary fixtures and poured-concrete floors, however, keep the vibe industrial, not country-kitsch. "The modern aesthetic underneath everything makes the rustic materials stand out more," says Lawrence. It's a middle ground that lets both Jen and Kirk feel like they came out winners.

ARCHITECTURE *Thomas Lawrence, Seattle; lawrence architecture.com.*

EXTERIOR

The home's shed-style pitched roof, above left, is a contemporary version of a traditional shape. Lawrence designed a combination of glass doors and fixed-pane windows, providing big views at less cost than expanses of solid glass.

LIVING ROOM

A board-formed concrete fireplace, above, features an efficient Morsø wood-burning stove and a handy niche for storing wood. The concrete floors were dyed to create a mottled appearance and to complement the reclaimed wood

of the coffee table (fashioned from a railroad car) and the cabinets in the adjacent kitchen.

RUSTIC RESOURCES

To furnish her home, Jen Schumacher ordered almost everything, from light fixtures to bathtubs, online. Here are her favorite sources.

LIGHTING

Specializing in vintage-style industrial lighting, Barn Light Electric also offers charming pendants made from recycled fuel tank tops and from mason jars. *barnlightelectric.com.*

RUGS

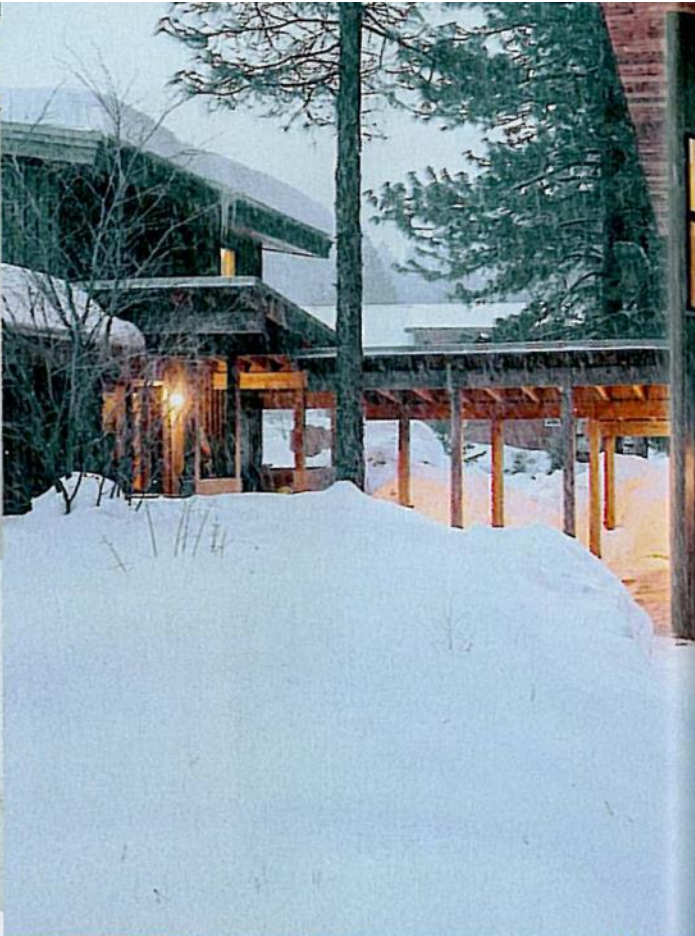
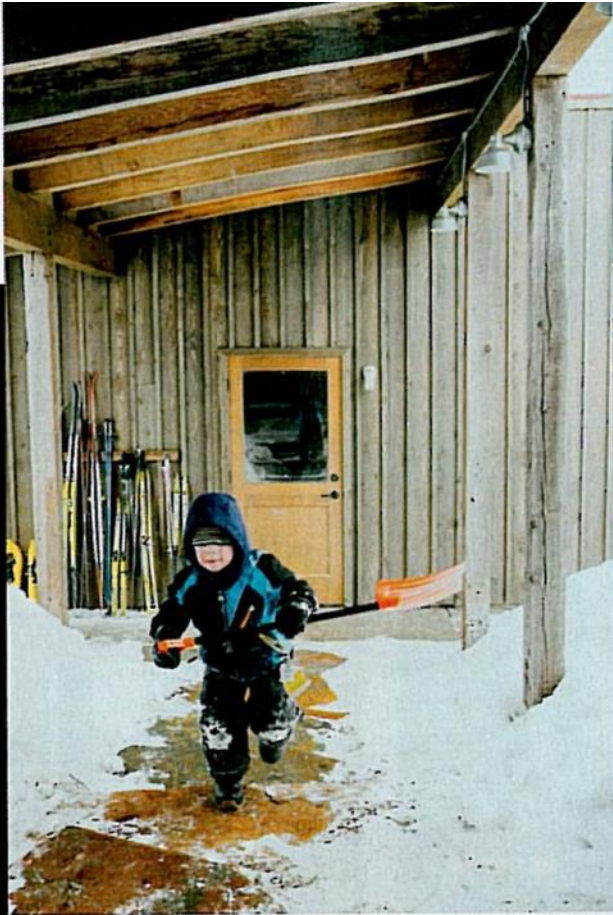
"L.L. Bean's braided wool rugs are so sturdy," says Jen. "My grandmother had hers for 50 years." Plus, they come in a huge variety of colors and shapes. *llbean.com.*

BATH FIXTURES

Jen found her ultimate bathtub, the Callaway slipper tub with ball and claw feet, at Signature Hardware. The company also offers Japanese soaking tubs and outdoor showers. *signaturehardware.com.*

BEDS

The cast-iron bed in the master bedroom is The American Cast Iron Bed Company's Laredo model in the aged iron finish (the company has 36 finish options). *antiqueironbeds.com.*



EXTERIOR

For the covered walkway between the house and the garage, above left, Lawrence combined a modern form with traditional board-and-batten siding. Through the door, a stairway leads up to the guest quarters over the garage. Above, the insulated-metal garage door—more economical than wood—is a splash of color against the house.

LIVING ROOM

Lawrence installed a custom bench in the living room, left, that pulls out into a twin bed. Pushed back in, it's a cushioned seat.

MASTER BEDROOM

In this relatively small room, above right, the couple kept it simple, with a reproduction cast-iron bed and a custom chest by local Cliff Schwab of Winthrop Wood Works.



KITCHEN

The reclaimed wood cabinetry, above, was also built by Schwab. "I'd never used barn wood that had been weathered for 100 years and simply covered it with a clear finish, but I think it turned

out great," Lawrence says. Inspired by a room with corrugated metal siding in an old issue of *Sunset*, the Schumachers chose the affordable material for the backsplash. The wooden shelves have hidden supports drilled into the wall

studs for a cleaner look. "They're high-tech rustic," Lawrence says jokingly.

MASTER BATHROOM

One of Jen's favorite spaces in the house is the master bathroom, left. "It's very

peaceful," she says. The walls are covered in whitewashed reclaimed wood and corrugated metal wainscoting. ▽