



# Saving Grace

*A fresh mix of vintage and modern elements transform a timeworn 1937 Georgian Cottage into a gracious, high-style home in Salt Lake's Federal Heights neighborhood.*

BY BRAD MEE PHOTOS BY SCOT ZIMMERMAN

**A**fter more than a year of scouring Salt Lake City for a fixer-upper, designer Gregg Hodson and his partner Gary McClellan finally found a diamond-in-the-rough dream home in the city's Federal Heights neighborhood. "We were looking for a sad sack that needed to be totally redone," Hodson explains. Within a day after discovering the neglected property, the couple had purchased and taken possession of the small 1937 shingled Georgian Cottage. "Even though it was a mess, I could see that it could be transformed into an amazing and gracious gem," says Hodson, who had renovated many homes for clients and relished the challenge. This house would provide many.



In the living room, draperies tailored from Lee Jofa raw silk deliver a shock of color against walls and trim painted in contrasting finishes of darkened Galveston Grey by Benjamin Moore. "Painting the trim dark helps create a cozy, den-like feel," Gregg Hodson says.

**Left:** Located near the top of Salt Lake City's historic South Temple, the small cottage was built in 1937. New exterior colors and a front door in glossy black hint at the interior's captivating style.





To begin, the small three-level, 2,600-square-foot cottage was dark and timeworn. Undersized windows provided only dim light for cramped rooms clad in tattered shag carpeting, “smokers-beige” paint, ‘60s paneling and failing fixtures. Structurally, the main-level floor sloped, the tiny foyer seemed to trip into the adjoining living room and the kitchen and baths had, as the designer recalls, seen much better days. Hodson and McClellan responded by gutting the interior down to the studs, replacing and expanding most of the windows and fashioning a fresh look for every room. “I considered how they would have done things in 1937 and then interpreted them for today in terms of livability and style,” says Hodson. Doggedly, he and McClellan created a décor that’s decidedly dashing, yet nods to the home’s period past.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the living room, where darkly dramatic gray walls and stately molding envelop the space and create an elegant backdrop for a keenly choreographed mix of furnishings, colors and collectibles. Accessories, lamps and a mid-century console discovered at antique stores and online meld easily with a sofa and chairs richly upholstered in mohair, leather and woven fabrics. “The fabrics’ colors are subtle, but their textures are bold,” Hodson explains. Gold raw silk draperies adorn new, dark-framed windows and join pillows in delivering vibrant color and pattern to the mix. Paintings, drawings and photographs gleaned over time gather in collections that perform as delightful focal points. The new marble fireplace surround and “beefed-up” built-in



Homeowners Gregg Hodson, left, and Gary McLellan.



Lillian August host chairs upholstered in a bright orange outdoor fabric animate the relaxed dining room. A reintroduction of a 1960's Floss Pendant light from Light Spot Modern Design hangs above a table from West Elm. Hodson updated Early American style side chairs with a coat of black paint.

**Opposite:** Hodson deepened the new casement wood windows above the living room's built-in bench and painted their frames dark to replicate metal. He renewed the built-in shelves, added sconces and created a new mantel and marble surround for the fireplace. An oil painting by Cary Henrie hangs above the fireplace.



"The only thing I kept in the dining room was the existing maple built-ins," Hodson says. He updated them with fresh white paint and lowered the base of the wall's new window. An upholstered bench provides casual seating to the light-filled dining area. The indoor/outdoor rug is from Artifacts.



Designed by Hodson and Clint Call of Call's Design, the kitchen features Caesarstone countertops from European Marble & Granite and porcelain wall tile from Daltile. The duo grooved the gray-stained walnut cabinets to create a subtle vintage detail.

**Below:** A sleek hood and Miele induction range foster the kitchen's clean, uncluttered style.

shelves bask in the glow of a jaw-dropping chandelier and help finish the glamorous, yet relaxed, room. "I wanted it to be like stepping into a great lounge that pampers you after a hellish day," Hodson says.

The rich mix eases in the dining room, where light walls along with enlarged windows and paned-glass doors, opening to a covered patio lounge, brighten the casual, cottage-style space. New, naturally toned oak floors flow here and throughout the home. "I wanted them to resemble the originals and not look glitzy like dark wood would have," Hodson says of his understated choice. Original built-in maple cabinets, freshly painted white, frame a large window seat piled with colorful pillows. "These cabinets were pivotal in how the design of the house came about. I wanted to honor the home's history, so I kept them and painted them to look current." Nearby, vivid-orange wing chairs, boasting large-scale and modern silhouettes, anchor the ends of a farm table serving the adjacent kitchen—the project's most daunting space.

How does one create contemporary kitchen that fits in a 1937 house and looks like it could have almost been there from the beginning? For Hodson, capturing the space of an existing pantry and dingy hallway in the new kitchen and then using tile, lots of tile, were key to his solution.





2

## HAUTE HOUSE

1. Teak bookshelves from CG Sparks, an antique rug and a table freshly painted white furnish the upstairs landing.
2. Contrasting paint gives the refurbished stair rail a fresh, elegant style. A collection of art adds color and form.
3. Hodson removed a stairwell wall and replaced it with railing that opens the space to an upstairs office.
4. A vibrant arrangement by Jessica St. Thomas of St. Thomas Floral Design punctuates the dining room with brilliant autumn tones.
5. The living room shelves illustrate Hodson's flair for fine-tuning molding and beautifully composing even the smallest vignettes.



3



4



5



Hodson matched the master bedroom's drapery fabric with the walls painted Berlin by Kwal Howells. "This prevents the many draperies from standing out and visually cluttering the room," he says. A lantern, found at a salvage yard and refurbished, glitters like jewelry. **Below:** Geometric marble mosaic tile gives an updated vintage look to the guest bathroom.

"The room is small, so I wanted it to look like it is a bright tile box," he explains. He clad every wall with white 4-by-12-inch tiles, and even covered the backside of the open wall separating the kitchen from dining room in tiles. "It helps connect the spaces visually."

To foster a vintage feel, Hodson chose gray stain rather than chip-prone paint for the custom, clean-lined cabinets and worked with Clint Call of Call's Design to develop the vertically grooved, grained finish. Terrazzo-patterned Caesarstone countertops—a nod to mid-century, says Hodson—join appropriately proportioned appliances and simple lighting to keep the little space bright, clean-lined and uncluttered.

The home's classically detailed, yet modern, bathrooms, eclectically furnished bedrooms as well as the roomy landing and graceful staircase also reflect Hodson's savvy ability to honor the home's heritage without becoming a slave to predictable period design. Linked by savvy molding treatments, seven grayish wall colors and a mix of timeless and unexpected furnishings and fixtures, the entire home belies its small size with big style and undeniable charm. **USD**

