

Remodeler's Diary

Mate Returns to Redone Home

BY HILARY KAUFER

There's this notion that men and women have very different approaches to remodeling their homes, and that's true. But in my case, I decided to remodel our home in Summerville when my husband, Jim, was out of town.

The work as an interior/wallpaperer is a disaster and which he is being to want to come. I could have had the right idea to suggest to move out the couch and use the house apart. So when he and one of his buddies placed a 10-day roofing rig to Miami, the rest of an idea was born. I would spend the all the time and headache of remodeling by doing it myself, with the help of my friends, while he was gone. I wouldn't tell him about it, because he'd say no.

I did this wasn't exactly during the time we had already decided to remodel the house. The main room, I thought, would be the "living room" (which is the front, the Summerville duplex has been built as a typical "open" house, and these ceilings, along with the glass- or walls, chimney and architectural work as plumbing fixtures, door handles, light fixtures, etc., refused this to other work they were doing. This would be my chance—to do my remodeling.

My husband would be gone 30 days. I would have the carpeting installed on Day 1, giving me a day or two to rearrange the house. From Day 1 to Day 3 I would do a take-right-out of all the things that had gotten my goat for too long.

Then I decided to make this project a big surprise for Jim. I would have to do all of it without a lot of money. My local friend Hilda and I had earlier phone

conversations about the things we just do ourselves. We agreed we could paint the dark kitchen cabinets a nice white, and we'd wallpaper the bathroom to conceal the previous plasterboard work. I'd have our dark-stain light fixture replaced with more ones I wish the help of an electrician, and I'd replace the plumbing fixtures (with the help of a plumber).

I knew I would also need professional help for the ceiling. My friend, Duke, and her son, Mark, had some construction experience. I figured to count just half an hour's worth on top of the ceiling work. That's how naive I was.

About four days before Jim's departure for Miami, I found about a Walgreens store for sale—a 1000 square-foot concrete structure for \$100. When covered with white styrene siding and a plastic roof, it was just what I needed.

I was the next model of a store I'd had in a beautiful new beach cottage I'd lived in for 10 years. Summerville! But I was thinking about the when Duke dropped by. We used to be here when the store was and I bought it on the spot. This meant I'd have to tear the kitchen apart—right a minute.

The morning Jim left, Hilda arrived to paint the kitchen cabinets. From Day 1 at the Summerville Marketplace store (which was to become my "living room"), I started here as in the kitchen job we wanted the dark doors lightly with 120 sandpaper scuffed them with a mixture of TSP and put on a warm-toned paint.

Hilda was later to paint the cabinets in the new bathroom the way. We were excited to see how much light the getting brought into our kitchen.

Early that first evening Duke showed up with Mark, a buddy who had worked on her own home. Within a half hour he had completely dismantled the kitchen cabinets that were in the way of the work.

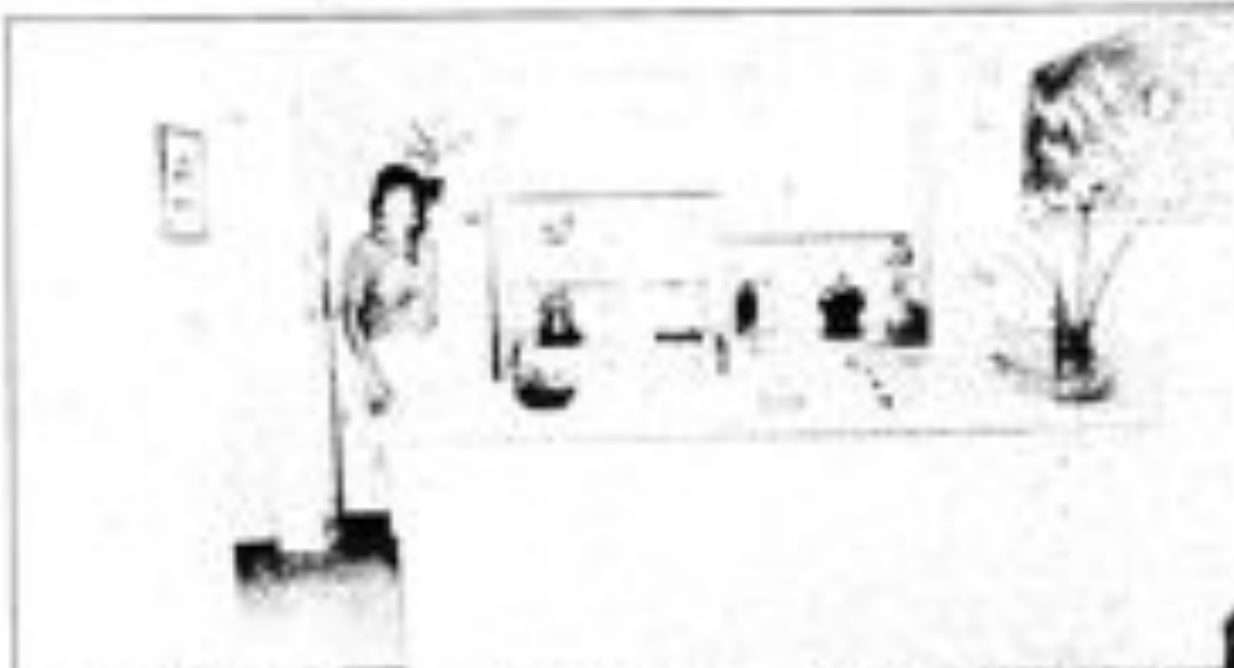
At this point I was lit, with the humble realization that maybe I'd turned off more than I could there. About half the kitchen was on the floor in pieces.

Mark had taken my professional to heart and promised to help me with the ceiling. But he was both for the first two days in the meantime, he said, we should strip all the ceiling plaster so he could see where to do the ceiling. After we made sure we weren't dealing with asbestos, Jim's son, Mark, agreed to do the utility job.

For the next few days I worked we took more steps backward than forward. For one thing we were beginning to see that all the original white paint—an entire door, sink and sink counter—made the kitchen area look out of like a hospital. It was too white.

As we studied this, Hilda said, "What about wallpaper?" In half an hour I was at a local wallpaper store, going through book after book of samples. I had already adopted two different wallpapers for the new bathroom—for the upper half a maroon, dark green patterned paper, and for the downstairs a flannel, multi-colored print.

But no matter how long and hard I looked I couldn't find the perfect print for the kitchen. On about Day 3 I found a maroon but subtle color. It was white with pale green leaves on a light-papery maroon-leaf background.



Hilary Kauffer is in kitchen of Summerville home she remodeled while husband was on a 30-day roofing rig.

is available only. This was (I) The most serious the paper to be used (Hilary/Mat, overnight).

Meanwhile, I was wallpapering the bathroom (which, incidentally, for everyone else but long gone home, it was the pre-painted kind and a step to get up. I liked the pattern, which I thought fit by. It was 2 1/2 in. when I finished the downstairs country-flower wallpaper and went back to it.

Soon arrived to strip the ceiling plaster off the ceiling—with a garden hose. Hilda said to strip it, I realized I might as well have cut off all the water from the house. Great results of low-pressure blast followed out the windows, covering areas and during the removal of plaster on the left. Hilda, despite my covering books, furniture and tables with a number of bags, everything in the house got turned white.

I returned to work Duke's interior renovation all night long.

The next day Mark appeared with the longer and greener joint ladder and with Frank. They set up their light over on the outside porch and began work on the minor bathroom ceiling. After the first day they had the work almost done. I was excited to see the magnitude difference a joint ceiling made!

A big mistake in the ceiling project was that I'd forgotten about sealing or staining the wood. It's always better to do the job before the wood is on the ceiling, even if it's hard.

Now the dilemma stopped. So, with a rag and rubber gloves that would not repeatedly, she stood on them and added a broad oak white-wash over the ceiling. To go further, she dipped a paint roller into the water, held the roller as it wouldn't move, and showed it across the boards. We thought she was brilliant for thinking this up, even though the stain ran down her pants to her shoes.

With the ceiling now new and beautiful in its light, bathroom,

the walls looked gray. Late one afternoon Hilda, dropped by me for later saying she was going to visit my neighbor.

"Oh, no, you're not," I said to her. "You're coming into my house!" Hilda and I rolled out white paint onto the walls of the master bedroom that night by the glass of absolute liquor.

When Mark and Fred returned the next day they were something about "holidays" and I cut the men all over again in the night.

The calls to wallpaper arrived and of course I was extra wide and set pre-painted. When Hilda and I began putting it up in the kitchen the paper seemed to take on a life of its own before we got it all on.

My friend, Duke, visiting from San Francisco, dropped by and made himself useful beyond measure. The sink cabinet, white and black, took out like a new drink. While we studied what to do about it, Duke suggested, "Spring-join it!"

"Spring-join it?" I asked.

"What's that?" "You take pieces of sponge, dip them into different colored paint, and stick them on the thing you're painting," he said. "It's the rage."

With acrylic paint I'd mixed up to match the colors in the calls to paper (maroon, dark) beige and the paint of green—Hilda and I brought every bit of the counter to our house's system. The result was brilliant. We worked with delight.

The next day, while Mark and Fred were finishing the ceiling, the plumber and the electrician arrived. The plumber, Phil, got to work installing the new sink fixtures in the bathroom and in the kitchen sink. Then, a friend of Jim's who does commercial wiring about fixing lines, installed new lighting in the kitchen and bathroom.

The green room is all of this was when the ceiling wallpapered now came in the house. When Phil had it hooked up we all cheered. The move was the most

the entire kitchen had been torn apart—the countertops—and now we could see light at the end of the tunnel.

When the carpet layers arrived early Thursday morning we were ready for them. The old, beat-up beige carpet, covered with paint, stain, dirt and strange chemical stains, was out of the house. It was replaced by beautiful olive-green carpeting, wall to wall. Into the breakfast room and into each bedroom went an equally beautiful carpeting in dark but subtle "Seymour" green.

At the end of the Day 30 and I sat and admired the kitchen transformation—it was a miracle, about as much as there.

The next day Jim came home. On the drive up from Los Angeles he and his friends told me about their adventures in Miami, which were wonderful. Then he asked me what had been going on at home.

I told him impulsively that work could not describe what had been going on.

When Jim saw what had taken place he was speechless. He loved it, and he was furious too, after experiencing the making-up of my credit cards to conceal the extent, along at the end of the house the longer and greener paint went up on the high-pitched ceiling of the living room and upstairs bedrooms, the entire house was painted inside, the yellow the wallpaper in the kitchen were replaced with kitchen black, and new cabinets were built where the old ones had been removed. We were laugh and furious.

Today, as we sit on our new coffee table out at the end, I have a feeling of incomprehension in the evening and beauty of our home. However, when I think back on that wild remodeling spree, I think the true miracle of that time was the fantastic love of a laughing husband and of the friends who helped.

Hilary is a free-lance writer living in Summerville.