



text Michelle Gringeri-Brown

photography Jim Brown

Oringdolph & Company

The email read: "Main bath tile: style: Feel; color: Live; size: 4.5"x24". Main bath flooring: Marmoleum, Dutch Design MO412, Claudy Jongstra. Second bath tile accents: Candy Glass; color: Cocoa Powder; size: 1"x1". Kitchen pendant lights: Modernica, George Nelson Cigar and Saucer" and went on through several more rooms; this was obviously the product of a highly organized mind.

The sender was Nicole Olszewski, the homeowner/project manager on the remodel of her family's Pacific Northwest home. She showed us a fat book holding notes, receipts, drawings, samples and myriad details of the project, one she spearheaded alongside Steve Bock of GSBock Design in Portland, Ore., a guy who grew up in a split-level Atlanta ranch.

"When they first said Nicole wanted to work as the general contractor, I thought Uh-oh," Bock confesses, "but when she showed up at the next meeting with a notebook with dividers for plumbing, electrical, appliances, etc., I thought, OK, this could work. She and Brett were great clients—they weren't resistant to anything I suggested."

The Olszewskis had a fairly typical wish list for their house search: good schools, single-story, plenty of light, a big lot for their kids and dogs to play. They just didn't expect Nicole to find and buy it while Brett was out of town.