



Bright idea

text Michelle Gringeri-Brown
photography Jim Brown

The wall behind the dining area was opened up to allow sunlight to filter down the stairs and to tie the lower level visually to the open plan main floor. Furnishings include an Eames Sofa Compact and two Danish-style chairs (all recovered in ultra suede, which their cat finds unappealing), an IKEA bench and estate sale tables and floor lamp.

“When we were buying 10 years ago, we were absolutely committed to a ranch because of its living spaces,” says Portland, Ore., real estate broker Tom Cotter. “We wanted the open floor plans, the hardwood floors, the windows and that quality of light, plus the connection to the garden.”

Tom and his partner, Doug Beebe, also a broker, recently completed a remodel of their modest-on-the-outside, wow!-on-the-inside ranch. They say that it all started with a dripping showerhead in the upstairs bathroom, and ended with a sherbet-colored kitchen and an underground pond next to a soaking tub. From start to finish it took eight months, something like \$150,000 and plenty of martinis.

Below Grade

“A lot of people think you need to go up to gain space, but if we find good headroom in the basement we push that more than anything,” says designer Libby Holah, who partners with her architect husband, Greg, at Holah Design+Architecture. “Tom and Doug had really great headroom downstairs and essentially a blank slate, but often it’s hard for people to envision what an unfinished basement can look like finished.”

