

# DIVIDE AND CONQUER

A snug, open-plan space was transformed into an innkeepers' suite that provides both privacy and proximity to B&B guests.



## MULTIFUNCTIONAL MATTERS

The leather cube in front of the sofa acts as a place for storage, an ottoman, a seat, and, when the lid flips over, its tray even holds drinks.

## 950-SQUARE-FOOT ATTIC REDO

■ **DECORATING STYLE:** "New York Loft"

■ **RENOVATIONS:** Ceiling raised 1½' to feel more expansive; dormer added for more natural light and headroom; bathroom and kitchenette added; wall-to-wall carpeting installed for comfort and insulation against noise to/from the guest rooms below; cabinets and storage units assembled on-site

■ **BEST SOLUTIONS:** Built-in storage (including closets beneath dormers, cabinets in knee wall around perimeter), and concealed and visual storage in room divider to compensate for not being able to have big dressers

■ **BIGGEST ADVANTAGE:** Low maintenance—owners have to keep the B&B pristine, so their space must be easy to keep clean

BY MARY CALDWELL

**W**hile developing plans for their bed-and-breakfast, which greeted its first guests in October 2008, Jeff Wells and Mac Pence visited various other B&Bs for inspiration and ideas. One thing they found they definitely preferred *not* to emulate: establishments where the innkeepers sacrificed their own comfort. "We didn't want to feel like we were living in the hole in the wall in the basement while our guests were enjoying all the guest rooms," says Jeff.

So, when they renovated and updated a 1916 Richmond, Virginia, house to create their bed-and-breakfast, known as Maury Place at Monument ([mauryplace.com](http://mauryplace.com)) and located in Richmond's Museum and Monument Avenue Historic District, they made sure to give due consideration to the third-floor attic that would be converted into the innkeepers' suite.

## A Place To Escape

Downstairs, the owners decorated the B&B's guest rooms in an elegant and tailored neoclassical style, outfitting them with antique or reproduction furniture. In their own space, however, Mac and Jeff opted for an altogether different ambience.

"In the innkeepers' suite, we wanted to be totally different from the rest of the house," says Jeff, "because we wanted to feel like we were in a different place."

Guest rooms have the stately ambience of yesteryear, in neutrals and earthtones inspired by the owners' collection of Roseville pottery. The converted attic, on the other hand, has a



**SEE-THROUGH SMARTS**  
To help lighten the effect of the room divider, open side shelves display snow globes, and other transparent or translucent collectibles.

PHOTOS BY TONY GIAMMARINO



**AN OPEN-AND-SHUT CASE**  
This four-sided room divider, brought up in pieces and assembled on-site by Vanguard Woodworks ([flconstruction.com](http://flconstruction.com)), holds the TV on one side and clothing on the other.



**THERE'S HIDDEN STORAGE EVERYWHERE**

The custom-made duvet cover and burnt-red accent wall behind the bed, above, coordinate with a red sofa Jeff and Mac already owned. The leather bench doubles as seating and linen storage, and there's additional storage built in under the platform bed, on either end of the headboard and recessed into the wall.

**STEP INTO YOUR PRIVATE SPA**

With the attic renovation, the top floor gained a bathroom (opposite page, bottom left) featuring a walk-in shower with multiple nozzles, a heated marble tile floor and blue glass wall tiles. The walk-in shower's appealing ceiling gets its shape from the contour of the home's roofline.

**A LITTLE KITCHEN MAGIC**

Because they prepare all meals in the full kitchen downstairs, Jeff and Mac needed only a streamlined kitchenette in their apartment for after-hours beverages and snacks, below. The stainless steel counter, a surface chosen for its easy care, fits in with their contemporary style.



room divider to separate the sleeping space from the living area without walling it off. The divider is a dramatic focal point, but it was purposely designed with ample open shelving to prevent it from overwhelming the scene.

The bathroom also was planned with comfort and elegance in mind to be, once again, just as those in the guest rooms below—but with contemporary rather than traditional styling. There's a heated marble tile floor, and blue glass tiles in the pentagonal shower enclosure and on the walls; the shower boasts a rainshower and multiple nozzles.

While a kitchen can be a space hog or clutter magnet, that didn't pose a problem for the innkeepers' suite. Downstairs, the inn is equipped with a fully appointed kitchen where Jeff and Mac prepare guests' breakfasts and their own meals. Upstairs, they decided that a kitchenette with an under-counter fridge, single-bowl sink and microwave would suffice.

As proof that their design has succeeded: Jeff Wells says, "It's a space we like going back to at the end of the day."

sleek, contemporary "New York loft" kind of look, with burnt red and touches of blue to punch up the creamy background. Decorations include Broadway show posters as well as pottery, textiles and carvings gathered on the owners' travels to farflung countries including Malawi, Guatemala and Italy.

**Dramatic Focal Point**

When Mac and Jeff bought the house, the attic already had a floor and benefited from natural light brought in by dormers on the sides and the front. They had the ceiling lifted about 18"—bringing the height close to 8' for a more expansive feeling—and added a new dormer at the back for more light and additional headroom at the top of the stairs.

Instead of carving the long, somewhat narrow attic into separate rooms with walls, Mac and Jeff used a multi-sided, furniture-style

## How To Fit Big Furniture In Snug Spaces

While the raw, open space of the Maury Place attic seemingly offered multiple possibilities for furniture configuration, accessing that space was another story, as the only staircase to the attic is very narrow. Consequently, when it came time to deliver the carpeting, the roll wouldn't fit up the stairs and through the door. In the end, a crane had to be hired to lift the roll outside and deliver it through a window.

To avoid the headache of your favorite couch not making it into your new apartment or, even worse, getting hopelessly wedged on the landing, here are some ideas:

■ **MEASURE TWICE, MOVE ONCE** Measure every entry access (doorways, halls and stairs), and also measure bulky furniture or appliances well ahead of delivery. Remember that a hallway or

staircase that takes a turn will further restrict the size of solid objects coming through.

■ **THINK THIN** Sometimes you can gain just enough extra room by removing doors from hinges; in tighter spots, removing door trim can buy you the smidgen needed to squeak through.

■ **PUTTING IT TOGETHER** Mac and Jeff avoided delivery problems with most of the cabinetry by having it custom-built and assembled on-site rather than delivered pre-built. If you're investing in new furniture but can't afford a carpenter, consider buying modular or sectional pieces, or "assembly required" furniture (e.g., Ikea, Staples, Crate & Barrel, Lowe's). If you're not comfortable doing it yourself, inquire about assembly services, offered by many stores.

By the same token, you may be able to buy space by disassembling some furniture or appli-

ances you already own (or hiring a service to do so), such as unscrewing legs from tables or couches, or removing the door from a refrigerator. In extreme cases, there are specialists who will break down furniture in ways you didn't think it could be done—and then reassemble it after you get it into your new home.

Some movers will provide hoisting services if delivery through a window is the only way to get something inside. Inquire if the hoisting price includes removing and repairing window frames, if necessary. This can be expensive, so you'll have to evaluate your personal cost-benefit ratio. If you have old (but not valuable) furniture, the value of the furniture may be less than the cost to move it into your new space. On the other hand, replacing a favorite old couch could exceed the price of moving the old one.

