



WHO THEY ARE

The Scott twins, 39, are stars of HGTV's *Property Brothers*, which has spawned four spin-off shows, a housewares line and a new book, *It Takes Two: Our Story*, out in September.

HOME SPECIAL

Never Too Late To Renovate

TV's Property Brothers, Jonathan and Drew Scott, share cost-efficient secrets on upgrading, downsizing and feathering that empty nest By David Hochman

THE KITCHEN

From Easy to Elegant

Bulgatz Family

Las Vegas

Budget: \$50K



NUTS & BOLTS: With four kids off to college or beyond, and three more growing up fast, Kelly, 52 (a CPA), and Sheldon, 65 (he works in the direct mail business), know it won't be long before teen swim parties and late-night homework sessions give way to—*whoa!*—quiet days and nights together at home. The large eat-in kitchen served a Bulgatz army for 17 years. But with a bit more financial freedom and the at-home children (17, 13 and 9) gaining independence, it's time to upgrade the vibe from chicken fingers to chardonnay. "We're looking down the road past 'Hey, Mom. Hey, Dad. What's for dinner?'" Kelly says.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT: In your 50s, you may be thinking ahead to possible retirement and spending more time around the house, so gear your redesign to a comfortable living space that can be functional for years. As Sheldon explains, the idea is to transition from a kitchen that's been "a dumping ground for every stray kid in the neighborhood, which we loved" to something "more clean and uncluttered, where Kelly and I can have our own friends over and, you know, pretend to be adults." Says Kelly: "It's time for some grownup toys, like maybe a walk-in pantry and a cool built-in ice machine."



JONATHAN Scott walks into the house and smacks his forehead. “Oh, great,” he says, looking at five small glass-fronted wine refrigerators Kelly and Sheldon have hiding in plain sight. “Mom and Dad require one extra wine fridge for every kid they’ve had. You clearly need our help!” Brother Drew isn’t worried: “Downsizing doesn’t mean downsizing your style or quality of life, so drink up,” he says. “As the nest empties and space opens up, you get opportunities to do whatever the heck you want.” With room to breathe and a healthy budget, the Bulgatzes have the luxury of going for an ambitious kitchen remodel. Here’s what the Property Brothers recommend.

THE PLAN

1 Dream Big

Kelly and Sheldon should be thinking about a re-design for life. “Visualize what you want your ideal home to look like, both with your kids and once they’re out,” Drew says. Then separate the must-haves from the optionals. Kelly lusts after marble and hardwoods and trendy gray-wash cabinets. But wood-patterned vinyl flooring, for example, can look great and save big.



BEFORE



3 Think Ahead

The Bulgatzes are still in their prime, but “major renovations after 50 should always consider the what-ifs,” says Drew. What if you won’t want to sit on high stools or that trendy low-slung sofa a decade from now? “For older homeowners, we recommend counters at regular height instead of bar height, and lounging spaces and seating options with higher profiles so it’s easier to sit and stand,” he says.

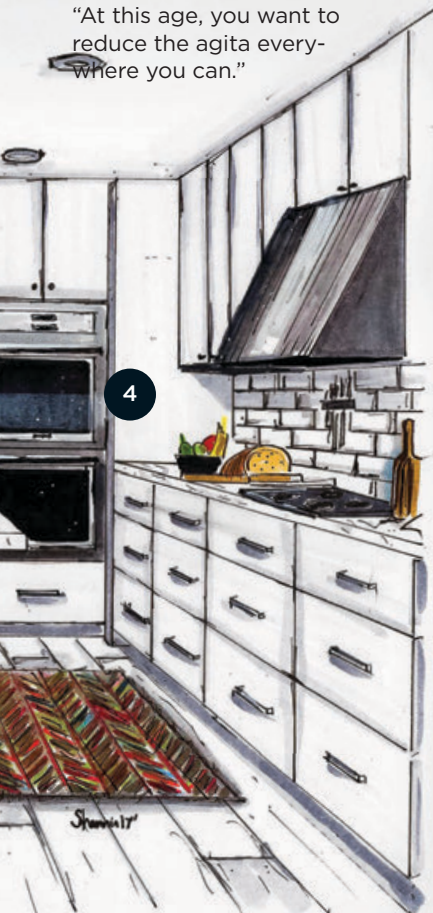


A Room of Her Own

Becker Family / Galveston, Texas / Budget: \$10K-\$15K

2 Don't Make Trouble

Alas, that walk-in pantry Kelly longs for would require breaking a wall and pulling construction permits, doubling costs and problems. Instead, Drew and Jonathan suggest replacing the shabby old kitchen cabinets with new ones that go to the ceiling. "That adds space, saves Benjamins and averts the permit headache," Jonathan says. "At this age, you want to reduce the agita everywhere you can."



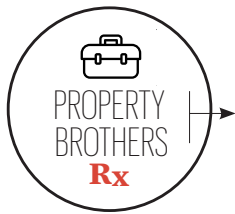
4 Look Rich, Be Frugal

It's OK to splurge a little as payback for decades of hard work. But don't spend your nest egg. Though the Bulgatzes would love gleaming top-line appliances by Wolf or Sub-Zero, it's better to save thousands by instead going with a great-looking professional-grade series (typically the line with all the stainless steel) from a warehouse club or big-box store.



NUTS & BOLTS: The Beckers' 1926 Craftsman-style abode is loaded with fascinating history (legend has it that Frank Sinatra once got drunk on the front porch). But Suzanne, 63, and Rick, 65, who bought the local landmark in 2012, are willing to lose a few ghosts to make room for Suzanne's thriving second-act sideline as a home-based printmaker and paper artist. The retired elementary school teacher now works with paints and inks to make collages, cards, gift books and journals, which she sells with friends at a booth at a small monthly art market in Galveston.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT: The jam-packed upstairs art studio occupies a former galley kitchen that still has a vintage sink, old-time cupboards and a Vent-A-Hood that's not actually venting anything. Every available surface is piled with Suzanne's design books, art supplies and works in progress. But she wants retirement to be about creativity, not clutter.



IN YOUR 60S, a specialty room—whether it’s for yoga, playing a new instrument or spreading out with a coin collection—gives legs to a diversion. Just try not to let it overrun you. Even if you’re an artist, “nobody wants to see your stuff spewing out into the room,” Jonathan says, playfully whacking his brother with a paper roll from a crowded shelf. Adds Drew: “The crafts are cool, but the mess is not.” Their tips for the Beckers apply to anyone creating a hobby or work space.



1 Modern-Eyes

Older eyes need better lighting. Replacing scattered traditional lamps and flickering fluorescents with efficient desk and overhead task lighting gives an old room a new glow. Plus, “newer LEDs burn longer and cooler,” says Drew.



2 Compromise

For longtime couples, the rules for getting along remain the same as ever. Rick loves the 1940s vintage vent hood, but it’s an eyesore to Suzanne. Jonathan takes Rick aside. “Donate it, sell it—just get it out of here, my friend,” he says.

“Always remember:
Happy wife,
happy life.”

3 Capitalize

Renovators in their 60s should consider the needs of future buyers. So the Beckers’ dated laundry setup on a creaky porch is getting a makeover. And they decide to go with a modular sit-stand desk in the crafts room, which perfectly suits Suzanne and can be removed if they move.

4 Prioritize

Since Suzanne’s goal is creative elbow room, “we need to focus on efficient storage,” says Drew. Installing custom floor-to-ceiling built-ins would be ideal, but his solution is more pension friendly: using prefab cabinets and organization systems.

THE BONUS ROOM

Space for Everything

Harris Family / Nashville / Budget: \$15K-\$25K

NUTS & BOLTS: After 50 years together in a house that Andy, 73, and Betty, 73, bought from Andy's mother, the feisty, fun-loving couple want an activities space.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT: Building a three-car garage gave the Harrises the welcome option of a second-floor bonus room. Now they're happily bickering over whether to make it Andy's man cave, Betty's lair or a rumpus room for visiting grandkids.



BEFORE



"WE LOVE A blank slate, and we love couples who love each other," Jonathan says. "I don't think we'll have any trouble getting Andy and Betty to see eye to eye."

1 Celebrate Your Years

Wear your age proudly. The brothers recommend lining most of one wall with floor-to-ceiling built-ins, leaving open shelves here and there to showcase favorite artifacts and pictures. Oh, and one large opening goes to Andy for a big flat-screen.



2 Wiring for the Future

Even if Andy doesn't want cinema-quality surround sound, a future buyer might. Drew suggests running cables and wiring, as well as hookups for recessed lighting, before the drywall goes up. "It's cheap to do now."

3 All in the Family

The Harrises decide to use furniture to section the room into thirds. Betty gets an area where she can play cards and games with her grandchildren. A few reclining sofas give Andy his own private Cineplex. The rest is a fun zone for the grandkids.

