

MAKEOVER ANNIE SELKE

PART 3

The Facade Gets a Face-lift

Interview by
CHRISTINE PITTEL

Any house can look better. Annie Selke started with simple changes, like a fresh coat of paint, and moved on to those weird little windows...

What's the easiest change you can make?

ANNIE SELKE: I painted the front door. It just needed something—I said, 'What the heck. Let's paint it pink.' *Whoa!*

I know, but I was so calm and restrained everywhere else. I can change it out—it's easy to repaint—but I like what it says, that I'm willing to be a little playful.

When did you decide to get rid of that porch?

About two seconds after I saw it. It's fake, made out of some sort of plastic, just like the shutters. Somebody tried to put these Colonial touches on a 1960s ranch house. It's ridiculous—the shutters are too small to cover the windows. I couldn't wait to take a screwdriver and get them all off.

Then you repainted the whole house. How did you pick the color?

There weren't that many colors that related to the landscape. I thought about white, but John Gilmer, my architect, said absolutely not—it just shows too much dirt and the house is not architecturally distinguished enough. So I painted it the color of bark.

And you changed the windows—a much bigger fix. How come?

They were all single-paned, so heating costs would have been a nightmare. The new ones are double-paned and will save a lot of money and energy over the long haul. And there's no maintenance—they're clad in anodized aluminum and never need to be painted.

Are they custom?

Nooooo. Stock, from

Andersen. But John made it work and tied them all together. The arrangement was a little random before.

How did you rework it?

JOHN GILMER: We started with the living room windows, which Annie liked. They had a large fixed pane of glass with an awning window at the bottom, and we took that idea to the front of the house for the dining room and kitchen windows. In the stairwell next to the front door, I inverted it and put the awning window on top to follow the line of three clerestory windows to the left. You want the same proportions and height so your eye isn't confused.

Is there any way to keep the costs down?

JG: Do what we did. Take a look at all the available stock pieces and then put them together into a unique configuration. We also installed most of the new windows in the same location as the originals—much less expensive than putting in new framing—and just made them two feet taller in some cases.

Whose idea was it to add that trim to outline them?

AS: Mine. The windows came in white or this brown color I chose. But the brown didn't work for me right next to the bark-colored paint. One was warm and the other was cool. I needed something in between to make a smoother transition, so I added a trim in a lightish gray that picks up the roof color. It's subtle, like contrast piping on a sofa. It just completes the thought.



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EXTERIOR WALL COLOR
BENJAMIN MOORE AURA
Silhouette AF-655



EXTERIOR TRIM COLOR
BENJAMIN MOORE
Plymouth Rock 1543

GET IT RIGHT: WINDOWS

- When picking a window, first look at the style of the house. Then think about the kind of weather you get and how you like to experience it. Do you want to have fresh air during a storm, but still keep the rain from coming in? An awning window might do the trick.
- Then it's a question of maintenance. Do you want traditional wood, or some sort of cladding? You can often have the cladding custom-colored for an additional charge.
- You want a window that is well-built and feels solid. Choose a reputable dealer and installer.
- Have either your contractor or your installer come out and take the measurements themselves. You don't want to be responsible for a window that doesn't fit.
- UV protection on glass has come a long way from that murky film and can protect your furniture and fabrics from fading.
- One of the smartest fixes is to take your windows down to 12 inches above the floor. It will change the proportions of a room entirely and make you feel more connected to the outdoors.

NEXT MONTH:
THE KITCHEN AND
DINING ROOM

1. Selke tried various paint samples and looked at them in all sorts of light before she made her decision. 2. "Ye olde shutters, lantern, screen door, and porch had to go," she says. 3. "You can see that pink door for miles." It's painted Drop Dead Gorgeous by Benjamin Moore. New thermal windows by Andersen.

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