

**GOING UP** This master bedroom was once unused attic space. The large arched window corresponds to a sizeable exterior shingled gable (below), and brings in plenty of light.



## Room in the Attic

A second-floor expansion gives this Virginia-Highland cottage extra space and a new look.

BY LISA MOWRY

SEPARATE SINKS ARE THE KEY TO A HAPPY MARRIAGE. Ask any couple who has tried to brush their teeth and get ready for work with just one shared basin. Jill and Steve Edwards made do in their cramped, dated bathroom for a few years, but when the couple found out they were expecting a baby, they decided it was time to expand their 1920s-era Virginia-Highland cottage.

“We knew from having people look at our attic space that it was a good candidate to turn into a second floor,” Jill says. “The house has a steep roof, so we had height to work with.”

Jill and Steve had recently enlisted residential designer Brian Patterson to revamp their kitchen. Pleased with the job he did, they decided to call him again. Upstairs, Patterson carved out attic space to give the couple a small nursery, a master bedroom with a sitting area, a master closet, and a bathroom with all the contemporary luxuries—including two sinks.

Patterson reconfigured two gabled dormer windows on the front of the house to provide extra room for the sitting



**CURB APPEAL** Large shutters replace what was once wood siding along the Edwards’ sun porch. Residential designer Brian Patterson added more wood trim around the new front door to give the house a cottagey look.

## DOUBLE TAKE

area and shower, which is actually housed in a street-facing dormer window. To address obvious privacy concerns, Patterson incorporated a clever decorative element. “We added closed [outdoor] shutters over the main window, with a Palladian window transom on top of that, which provides both privacy and natural light to the shower,” he says.

As long as Patterson was making

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**VINTAGE CHARM** Soft blue walls, an antique pine console, and beadboard trim add old-fashioned style to this attic bathroom. An elegant chandelier adds dazzle, and the twin pedestal sinks allow the couple to have their own spaces. Although the shower area (right) is mostly white, mixing subway and hexagon-shaped tiles adds interest and dimension.

changes to the exterior, he suggested additional improvements that would enhance the home’s charm factor. To conceal some unattractive siding on the original sun porch, Patterson designed two large shutters for the windows. He also added shutters on the large upstairs window, and installed a window box that is easily changed each season. Finally, Patterson upped the curb appeal with a new Craftsman-style front door, then beefed up the surrounding woodwork.

It was important to everyone that all the renovations stay true to a 1920s-style house, particularly in the bathroom. “In lieu of designing a typical vanity, we decided to use period pedestal sinks flanking a wooden furniture piece under the window, which brings in contrast,” says Patterson. For more variety, he chose classic subway tile for the shower, and opted for beadboard on the walls to add warmth and texture.

The bedroom makes the most of the roofline by using a low part of the room for bookcases. Facing twin arched windows in the bedroom and bathroom are natural focal points and bring in plenty of light—something that is important in any project, but particularly in an attic, Patterson says.

Jill decorated with neutral furnish-



## DOUBLE TAKE



ings and incorporated soft browns and blues to make the most of the compact space. Hardwood floors throughout keep the rooms open and airy.

And as for those separate sinks? Says Jill, “Steve and I look at each other across the room while we’re brushing our teeth and I know we’re both thinking, ‘This is great!’” **H See Resources**



**IN THE DETAILS** In the bedroom, the brick chimney (left) is exposed to provide an interesting architectural element. A small hallway leads to the nursery. Jill and Steve were fortunate that portions of their attic space had high ceilings—the bedroom’s sitting area (above) feels spacious thanks to the 9-foot clearance.