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To support their non-stop lifestyle, Mindy and Brian Baschnagel and their three teenagers needed a home that spoke the language of comfort.

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Casual and colorful, this remodeled ranch house is the perfect place to kick off shoes and recharge body and soul.



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TO CALL THEM an all-American active family falls just a little short. For 10 years Brian Baschnagel played wide receiver for the Chicago Bears. Mallory, 17, plays tennis and soccer; Allie, 16, also plays and is a high school cheerleader; and Luke, 14, is an avid soccer and basketball player.

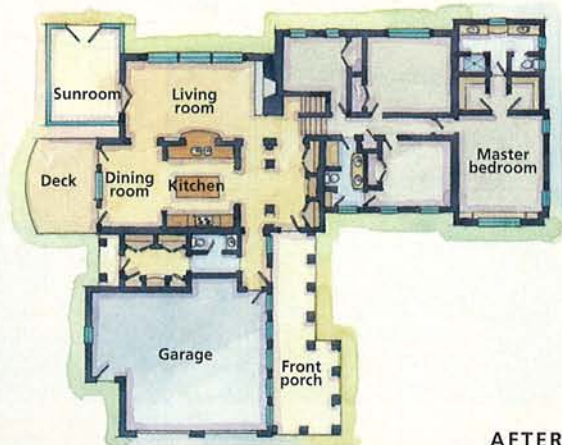
Brian is now in sales, and Mindy, when she's not playing backup to one of the kids, runs her direct-sales clothing business from their home in Glenview, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. Add Tucker, the family's still-rambunctious 11-year-old Lab, and you get the picture: high-voltage energy seeking a place to land.

So much so, they had no time to invest in their lackluster 1940s home the first dozen years they lived there. But Mindy did the next best thing. "For 12 years I clipped pictures of rooms I loved from magazines," she



(Clockwise, from above) Closets flank an entry bench. Enclosed by landscaping, the front porch can double as a new room. A garage and porch were added on; the master suite replaced the old garage.





AFTER



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recalls. "By the time we contacted an architect, we were pretty sure what we wanted. He said all the pictures were the same style—a cottage look—and they made his job easier.

"I love that warm, cozy, friendly, comfortable, inviting feeling," she adds. "I wanted people to come here and feel at home."

It also helped that their existing ranch wasn't exactly an architectural trove—less to change or preserve.

The remodeling added character, not formality. "We don't do anything formal," Mindy insists. "Our lives are very casual and easygoing. Our dining room remains our only eating area. Our family room is our living room. The only ones who are ever here are friends and family, and they don't care to have a formal room."

The wish list involved everyone. Brian wanted a larger garage he

could use without tripping over bikes. Mindy coveted a big four-season front porch for admiring the pie-shaped acre of oaks and pines. Allie hoped for a bathroom off her bedroom. Mallory wanted her own closet, and Luke, a room large enough for a king-size waterbed.

New Special Spaces

The big changes were the addition of a master suite and sunroom. The sunroom, atop the old porch, has French doors and glass all the way around, and a vaulted ceiling. "We



(Above) Nothing structural changed, but new windows, trim and paint freshened the family room. (Right) A classic cottage pass-through joins family room to kitchen. (Left) Flea-market canisters mix with new kitchen cabinets and appliances.





(Left) The dining room blends new windows and an antique sideboard. (Below) A rear deck was a remodeling bonus. (Right) Beaded board and antique plates lift the eye in the new view-rich sunroom.



initially thought we'd just clean up the porch a little, but the space evolved," architect Fred Wilson says.

"The sunroom," Mindy says, "is where I enjoy my first cup of coffee in the morning."

The family room stayed in its original footprint; yet, a new bank of windows and a cutout to the kitchen give it a much airier feel. "It's almost like one big room," Mindy says.

Her cherished window above the sink had to go to make the layout work. But she got compensation: Her sink is located at the pass-through.

"Standing at the sink," she says, "I face the family room and can see the yard through all the windows."



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Tucked beneath the kitchen pass-through, the TV is neither conspicuous nor relegated behind closed doors—after all, they use it. The unit snugs into custom cabinetry with red-brown mahogany countertops.

Mindy's collection of McCoy pottery and other American pieces from the 1930s and 40s now dwells in the family room's built-in shelves.

One of Mindy's favorite old-time pieces is the gleaming light fixture hanging above the sink: "I carried it home from a flea market in Paris, with it filthy dirty on the plane."

Cottage Keys

Before, the house had modern leanings, skimping on trim in the name of a cleaner ranch style. Sleek, certainly, but not the cushy comfort the Baschnagels wanted.

Architectural embellishments made a comeback, for example the trim around the shelving and the new crown moldings. New small-paned windows and French doors support



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the cottage character and present fresh, light living spaces. Deft touches such as bun feet give the kitchen's new white-painted maple cabinets the look of old-fashioned freestanding furniture.

"These features are very Mindy," Fred says. "They softened it all up."

The remodeling also reflects the family's new commitment to color. "Before, we'd played it safe and kept things more monochromatic," Mindy says. "This time, we wanted color."

We decided we wouldn't wait to think things over. We'd paint now, and if we didn't like it, we'd repaint."

The sunroom's ceiling and the dining room's walls are vivid, clear periwinkle—an embracing pick-me-up, unusual for a blue hue. Apple green in the master bedroom makes the white woodwork pop. Sunshine yellow (a classic English cottage color) in the family room adds warmth appropriate for this clan.

And what about that wish list? Brian got a new garage at the front of the house. Some internal shifting landed Allie a handier bath. Mindy has her front porch, complete with stately columns. It's a warm-weather hangout for the whole family.

"The Baschnagels have the 'life thing' down," Fred Wilson says. Now, they have the "house thing" going, too. ■

For product resources, see page 204.



(Left) An arched window and built-in space for collectibles bring soft, homey cottage style into the master suite. (Above) As in the kitchen, bun feet on the master bath vanity create a vintage furniture look.