

Making a Good Plan GREAT!

DESIGN

the CHALLENGE:

Taking a good plan & finding ways to make it better



A good design made even better. Design Basics' popular plan, #2285 the Prairie, was subjected to a thorough "tweaking" by three women builders.

Because tastes and trends in home design are constantly evolving, we asked three women builders to sit down and "tweak" one of Design Basics' perennially popular plans to better suit the needs of their current buyers.

It was, indeed, a challenge because each of the builders was separated by several hundred miles as they modified plan #2285, the Prairie, via the miracle of conference calling. But in the end, **Joan Heffington** in Derby, Kansas, **Suzy Couture** in Manchester, Connecticut and **Brigitte Snemis** in Valparaiso, Indiana transformed the Prairie into the Deville, #30001. We thought you would enjoy seeing how these designing women changed the plan as much as we did.

As you read their comments on how they would alter the Prairie, refer to the corresponding changes shown in the Deville on page 21 (numbered in red).



Suzy Couture
Superior Builder, Inc.
Manchester, CT

Suzy grew up working in the homebuilding business that her father started in 1986. After graduating from college with a business and marketing degree, she took on the role as the company's Sales and Marketing Manager. Following her father's death in 2000, Suzy and her brother Peter assumed leadership of the company and today build homes priced from \$350,000 to \$450,000.



Joan Heffington
Heffington Homes, Inc.
Derby, KS

Joan entered the homebuilding profession with a wide variety of experiences. A former police officer, Joan also worked for the Boeing Corporation for 17 years (where she even helped design the interior of Air Force One). Today, as a homebuilder, she designs, builds and decorates homes as personal artistic creations from \$250,000 to \$350,000. She prefers open floor plans that include large laundry rooms and formal dining areas.



Brigitte Snemis
Snemis Construction, Inc.
Valparaiso, IN

Brigitte has been in business with her husband David since 1990, primarily building one-story homes from \$350,000 to \$450,000. Intertwined with the homebuilding business, however, was her eleven-year career teaching high school Spanish. Her passion for teaching (and learning) has resulted in extensive international studies and travel. (She also speaks Russian and previously lived in Spain for more than two years.)

#1 Brigitte suggested the first change inside the home: eliminating the 2-story entry (see page 20) to provide a truly spacious bedroom or den on the second level. "I walked through a Prairie where this had been done," she explains, "and because the stairway and the great room are connected to the entry, it didn't feel closed in." Brigitte also wanted to eliminate the recessed hutch space in the dining room because today's hutches vary so widely in size. The room was also made two feet longer to accommodate larger dining tables.

#2 Because all three recommended changing the trapezoid windows in the great room, our designers changed the fireplace to a direct vent and surrounded it with three arched windows.

#3 Suzy proposed flipping the kitchen and dinette and opening up the dinette to the great room. "I would incorporate arched openings to the great room combined with a half wall," Suzy elaborated. "That way, it's not totally open, but you can see into the great room and see what's going on." Joan expressed preference for a separate wall oven/microwave in the kitchen, along with a cooktop in the island.

Other changes in the kitchen's final design include:

- stretching the kitchen/dinette three feet to the side
- a desk in the eating area
- a corner walk-in pantry rather than a cabinet pantry
- transom windows above the cabinets on the outside walls

#4 The entire group favored increasing the size of the laundry room, which allowed designers to add lockers for outerwear. Also reflecting today's preferences, the laundry was separated from the garage entry and a bench and additional lockers were added.

#5 In the master bath, our designers followed Brigitte's suggestion to place the whirlpool under the window in the front of the home and add glass block on the side. This provided additional space in the bath for a linen closet. Joan's idea to incorporate an ironing board behind the door in the closet was also included.

"I would incorporate arched openings to the great room combined with a half wall," Suzy elaborated. "That way, it's not totally open, but you can see into the great room and see what's going on."

The main floor changes resulted in 287 additional square feet. All interior doors throughout the home were changed to a 2'8" minimum and all main floor ceilings are now a minimum of nine feet.

#6 In order to accommodate today's SUV's, the garage was stretched one foot in width, two feet in depth and given larger doors. Double doors were added in the back of the garage for convenient storage of a lawnmower or garden equipment.

The upper level grew 288 square feet. To give the back of the home a cleaner look, the window seat was removed in Bedroom 3, which became three feet wider, providing extra space for a walk-in closet and a built-in desk.

#7 Due to Brigitte's comment that a view of the tub from the staircase in the original plan was less than desirable, the bathroom was re-configured, adding a laundry chute and a separate dressing area with a double vanity.

#8 Thanks to the stretch downstairs, Bedroom 2 became three feet wider and acquired a walk-in closet and a built-in desk.

#9 With all of the extra space gained by extending Bedroom 4 over the entry, a generous desk/home office was created with a built-in desk and interesting ceiling detail.

#10 After making such extensive changes inside the home, it seemed only natural to give it a new elevation as well. Done in an overall Craftsman style, it reflects an updated sense of tradition. The original porch spindles have been replaced with brick bases topped with tapered columns. Roof brackets, a metal roof and Craftsman-style garage doors complete the new image.

When we asked Joan, Suzy and Brigitte to suggest their changes, we didn't want to impede their creativity by restricting them to the Prairie's original square footage. That said, the Deville's size increased by 575 square feet to 2690. At that size, it's just the right size for many of today's homebuyers. And for these three builders, it's just right. Period. There's nothing left to tweak.

ORIGINAL plan

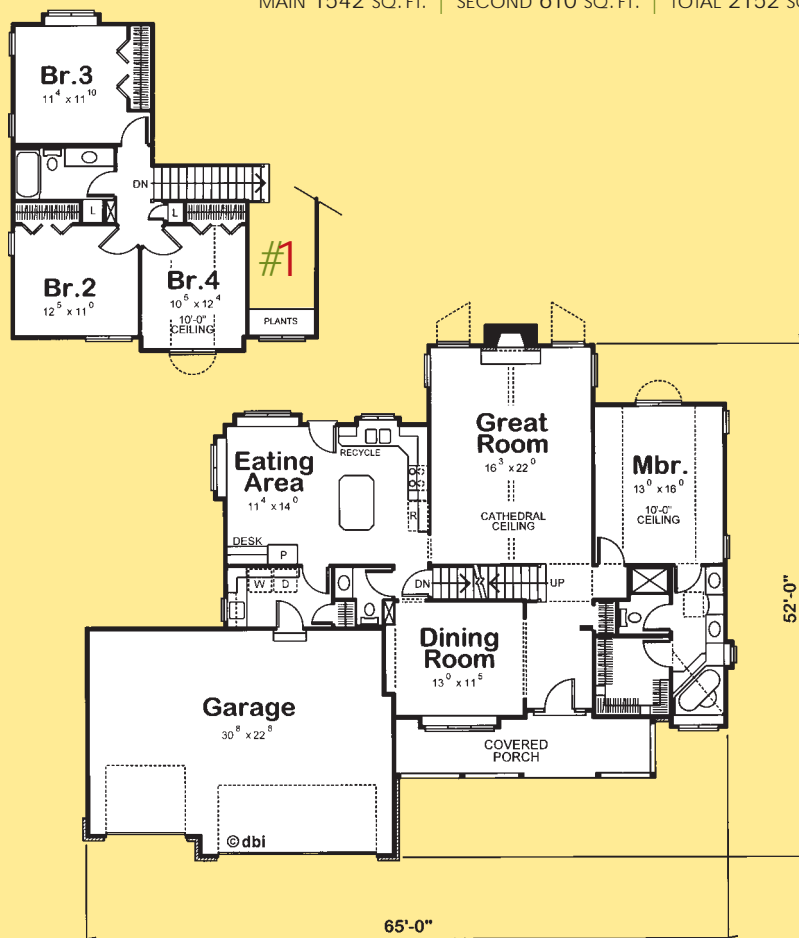
ANY DESIGN BASICS HOME PLAN...just the way YOU WANT IT!

Having trouble finding a home plan that's just right for you? You're not alone. Since each of us have unique tastes and lifestyle needs, it's rare to find a home plan that has everything we want. But don't fret. Any of our plans can be altered to fit you perfectly. And it's easier than you might think.

- Choose a home plan that is somewhat close to what you desire regarding appearance, square footage, room arrangements, etc. (Remember, in most cases, rooms can be added, subtracted, stretched or otherwise altered to meet your needs, so don't be discouraged by the original design.)
- Call Design Basics at 800-947-7526 and talk with one of our Customer Support Specialists about the alterations you'd like to have made to the plan. (You'll receive our full attention along with a free quote for the cost of changing the plan.)
- Once you've decided to have us make the alterations, sit back and relax. You'll receive a complete set of altered construction drawings within 2-3 weeks. (Just think. A home plan designed just the way you want it!)



2285-54A Prairie better living | PRICE CODE 21
MAIN 1542 SQ. FT. | SECOND 610 SQ. FT. | TOTAL 2152 SQ. FT.



Any plan can be changed!

To learn more go to herhomemagazine.com/homeplans.asp and click on "Search for Plans," then click on "Plan Alterations."

TWEAKED plan



30001-54A Deville PRICE CODE 26

MAIN 1792 SQ. FT. | SECOND 898 SQ. FT. | TOTAL 2690 SQ. FT.

