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A basic box  
embellished  
in just the right  
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an architect  
money on her  
first home

# Balancing COST and style

BY ERICA BROBERG

**BEAUTY ON A BUDGET** Erica Broberg designed a simple building, took a few clever shortcuts, and splurged on things that mattered. At right, modern furnishings complement the traditional details in her cozy and comfortable living room.



I built my house out of foolish desperation. It happened nearly five years ago, when I was a young architect drawn to a place where I could stretch my design wings: the East End of Long Island, where the clients have sophisticated ideas about design.

I wasn't sure, though, that I could afford to live there. But I got lucky. I inherited just enough money for a down payment on some land, and I found a small lot I could afford. I had no clue what to expect from the loan and construction process, but I knew how to design a house, so I did.

## Design details

My design decisions were based on two things: my practical experience as an architect and my personal wish list. Both were tempered by my budget. I knew if I kept the design straightforward and easy to build it would be cheaper. I thought about the houses I'd lived in over the years and what I could do to make this house feel like home. I gave careful consideration to every wall, window, trim, finish, and detail.

In the end, the simple shape of my small house combined with my choices of materials (see sidebar, p. 45) enabled me to complete