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WHAT DEAD
SOLDIERS LEAVE
BEHIND:

*A Portfolio
of Photographs*

BY ASHLEY
GILBERTSON

THE

HBO

AUTEUR

*David Simon
takes his unique
brand of
TV storytelling to
New Orleans.*

BY WYATT MASON

Introducing
the *New*
ON LANGUAGE
Columnist,
Ben Zimmer.

David Simon on
the set of his new series,
"Treme."



WHAT ARE SOME EASY WAYS I CAN TRANSFORM MY HOME?

HOLBROOK: If you have a suburban home, the easiest thing to do is improve your landscaping. You plant borders with a mix of shrubs and annuals that will provide interest year-round. If you have a basement hatch that you dislike, obscure it with shrubs. **GROSSWENDT:** Paint is the simplest, most cost-effective way to transform your environment. Change carpeting, drapes and doorknobs, and you can just move the furniture around. **WAHAB:** My question to you is, are you willing to move out or are you living in the house at the same time? If you move out, we can replace the windows and doors and maybe even pop in a few new windows and skylights. All that fresh light is going to change the way you see your home.

What's an upgrade or extra that people put in their homes and never use?

DISALVO: We have removed countless whirlpools, hot tubs and saunas in renovation projects to make room for other things. **GIOVANNITTI:** People will install sliding doors, and they never use them. People think, What if I want to close off my open kitchen? But it turns out even if it is easy to move the door, people don't do it. **MARELLI:** Home theaters. All the technology that goes into the theater becomes obsolete within a few years, and in short order, you have a technological dinosaur in your basement with some expensive seats. And they eat electricity and they generate a lot of heat, so they need their own cooling systems. I say, go to the movies. It isn't worth it.

Why do my radiators clank, and what can I do about it?

WIENER: The most common reason is condensed water. Steam comes from the boiler and heats the radiator. The steam condenses as the

radiator cools, and that water is supposed to drain. Sometimes, however, the water gets stuck. When the boiler heats up again, you'll get the same phenomenon as when you heat a pan and pour water into it and it makes a popping sound. This sounds like banging in the radiator. **POLUMBO:** The radiator must be pitched properly toward the steam pipe. There are one-pipe or two-pipe systems, but the radiator has to be pitched properly. **SLOVAK:** There are other reasons you get banging. Radiators expand and contract with the heat, and if the radiator is attached to the wall improperly, it can bang as it pulls away. Air in the tubes can cause clanking. Pipes that are improperly installed can bang. You may need to hire a plumber to assess the situation and make corrections.

There are so many choices, how can I select the right wood flooring?

WAHAB: The first decision is between laminated or prefab flooring versus a solid wood



plank. Most prefab flooring is cheaper, easier to install and gives you a uniform look. However, when it's damaged, you can't sand and refinish as you can with the solid wood floor. **MARELLI:** The tendency is to want wider wood floor boards, because it looks nice, but I like to recommend less than six inches wide. As a home goes through heating and cooling cycles, the boards expand and contract, and if you have smaller boards, the changes are less noticeable. Also, you should probably choose a wood that is as local as possible. That's an ethical concern. **WIENER:** Go to a flooring showroom. They'll have 50 floors laid out, and you can see how the floor will wear because of all the wear and tear it gets in the showroom itself. Over time your floors will look exactly like the showroom floors. Don't believe the salesclerk, who says you won't get the same amount of traffic.

How easy is it to have the electronic devices in my house controlled by a central

turkey when I am three hours away from my house. **POLUMBO:** As part of a renovation or new home construction the wiring is easy. If you are doing it as an add-on to an existing home, you can also go wireless, although no one who I have ever met is entirely happy with the wireless version. The right way to do it is to wire the entire house.

What is roof algae, and what can I do to get rid of it?

DISALVO: Roof algae is a result of continuous exposure to dampness and moisture, which usually occurs in shady parts of the roof. It is easy to remove with a pressure washer. Then the source of the moisture, like a back-pitched or leaking gutter, needs to be corrected. **SLOVAK:** It can look like black stains on the roof that make you think it is grime or dirt. In fact, it is a kind of moss or lichen that kind of adheres to the asphalt or cedar shingles. There are commercial cleansers, which I think are a waste of time and money. The best thing is to use bleach or chlorine like you'd use on your swimming pool with a handheld sprayer and clean it off. **POLUMBO:** The algae is hard to get off if you have a significant infestation. You can try to do it yourself, or hire a professional abatement company. If the algae is on a surface that people are walking on, you have to get rid of it, because it is very slippery. **Edward Lewine**

THE PANEL

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