

OPEN HOUSE

HUDSON VALLEY, NEW YORK

So you've got the itch to renovate but aren't sure what to expect? Six Hudson Valley designers sat down with **editorial director Joanna Saltz** to shed some light on the reality of the dream home makeover.

IS THIS WHAT YOU WEAR TO RENOVATE?



Joanna Saltz
@josaltz

WANT TO TALK?

E-MAIL ME AT EDITOR@HOUSEBEAUTIFUL.COM.

Kate Cummings
@freestyle
restyle



▶ **Joanna Saltz:** Renovating is a serious process. What's your favorite part?

Kate Cummings: The first step is really understanding the house at its core, in terms of history. That is my favorite part. I like to know who lived there, if there are any crazy stories about the place. Were there any specific functional elements that the house could have again?

Brad Ford: I like collecting information, from not just the clients but also furniture, lighting, and materials. Then funneling those through to make decisions. **I love the idea of being an editor.**

Will Brinson: We work with old houses, so finding quirky things and figuring out how to renovate around them? I love it.



FOR THE RENOVATION OF A CABIN IN UPSTATE NEW YORK, KATE WENT WITH RUSTIC CEILING BEAMS AND BARN DOORS.



Ariella Duker
@arielladuker



ARIELLA USED GRACIE WALLPAPER (HAND-PAINTED ON METAL LEAF) TO GIVE THIS FARMHOUSE STAIRWELL A MODERN ZING.

Susan Brinson: That's being historically sensitive! I see us as storytellers, and a renovation starts at the very beginning of the story.

Maryline Damour: Where I start is always interior architecture and maximizing the bones of the space. My favorite part is once we've cleared out, the walls come down, and now I can see that it's a complete blank slate.

Jo: I'm going through my own kitchen renovation right now, and that part is so much more

magical than I had ever imagined. When stuff starts coming in, you're like, "Oh, things have to come in?"

Maryline: Absolutely. **When you're not encumbered by anything else, all you see is possibility.**

Ariella Duker: For me, the most exciting part of the challenge is creating an instant nostalgia and a collected feel. Especially upstate, I'm trying to create a feeling that when you walk into a home, it might have been there for some time.

PHOTOGRAPHERS: ALLIE HOLLOWAY (PORTRAITS); HAIR & MAKEUP: NINA SORIANO (SALTZ); HAIR & MAKEUP: DRE BROWN (DESIGNERS); EMILY GILBERT (DUKER INTERIOR); DEBORAH DEGRAFFENREID (CUMMINGS INTERIOR); TREVOR TONDRO (FORD INTERIOR)

FOR A MEDITATION ROOM AT THE 2019 KINGSTON DESIGN SHOWHOUSE, MARYLINE COLLABORATED WITH MEL JONES ON A CUSTOM SOFA.

Maryline Damour
@maryline_damour



Jo: What do you wish the world knew about the reality of a renovation?

Kate: Have we all seen the triangle? Fast, cheap, and good?

All: Oh yeah.

Kate: That should be a business card. Clients get to choose which two they want, and we'll work from there.

Brad: It's the same thing with furniture and big-box stores. People want things faster and cheaper, but there's such a cost that comes with that. One of my favorite things to say is, "**Just because something is free doesn't mean there isn't a price to pay.**" At some point...



Maryline: You'll pay.

Brad: It's the truth. A tree that grows slowly has deep roots. It's worth the wait.

Susan: I'm nodding in agreement, but I'm the most impatient person. I'm thinking, You know, he is right—but I also want to get it done now.

Jo: I'm like, "Grow those deep roots faster!"

Will: We find so much more engagement with people who want to know, "How did you put in the flooring? How long did it take?" Susan and I are really into the slow and intentional renovation, and bringing people along step-by-step.

Kate: I do think the

younger generation that's following us through this journey, they're smart. They know that things don't happen quickly, and they are looking for people who are doing it in real life on a real timeline.

Ariella: In the Hudson Valley, I think clients don't anticipate how much site development you need. You have to create all your utilities! For instance, you don't get town water—you have to put in a septic. And you have to dig a huge hole for propane. For my own home, I had to hire an architect to make my plans less expensive

to build! But it was the greatest education I have received.

Jo: Renovations are sort of like driving a car, riding a bike—you couldn't possibly explain it. You really have to go through it to understand.

Will & Susan Brinson
@houseofbrinson



Brad Ford
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"We work with old houses, so finding quirky things and figuring out how to renovate around them? I love it."

—WILL BRINSON



BRAD PAINTED THIS WOOD-PANELED ROOM IN A PREWAR APARTMENT CRISP WHITE TO MAKE THE SPACE FEEL FRESH.