



The Gasterlands' Minneapolis kitchen, a sunny 12-by-13-foot space, is packed with features that provide accessibility for people of all abilities.

## Body and Soul

Over the years, Minneapolis architect Rosemary McMonigal has designed many homes for people with special needs. But the particular concerns that Minneapolis residents Barb and Hans Gasterland brought to her were downright daunting. They wanted their new house to accommodate not only the couple's 17-inch height difference but also Barb Gasterland's health issues. She uses a wheelchair on occasion and also suffers from chemical sensitivities.

Those health concerns permeated every aspect of the home, but they're especially apparent in the kitchen, a 12-by-13-foot space open in the center to allow a wheelchair to turn around. Countertop heights were dictated by the couple's kitchen roles. She's the cook,

so the stovetop and peninsula prep area are 30 inches high. He's the dishwasher, so the sink's countertop is 36 inches high. A set of steps can be pulled out from below the sink to give her standing access to that area, too. Should she move into a wheelchair full-time, the under-sink cabinets are easily removed. Other accessibility features in the kitchen include outlets, light switches, and appliance controls mounted on the front face of cabinets; an easy-to-reach appliance garage and oven; and a roll-under space at the peninsula.

More challenging than the accessibility concerns, though, were her chemical sensitivities. For nearly two years, every single material that was used in the house was tested to determine her sensitivity. That included the solid maple flooring, laminate countertops, and the cabinets made of maple veneer over non-formaldehyde composite panels. —*Kathleen Stanley*

Builder: Luloff Inc., Minnetonka, Minn.; Architect: McMonigal Architects, LLC, Minneapolis; Photographer: Andrea Rugg. ■ Resources: Dishwasher/oven: KitchenAid, Circle 190; Kitchen plumbing fittings: American Standard, Circle 191; Kitchen plumbing fixtures: Elkay, Circle 192; Range: Thermador, Circle 193.



Materials used in the upstairs hall bath (this photo) and the first-floor powder room (below) don't telegraph their universal design features.

## Hidden Help

The standard sink fit into the apron of the countertop in Barb and Hans Gasterland's first-floor powder room is a good example of the kinds of design touches that architect Rosemary McMonigal used throughout the house. "When you think 'accessible,' you often envision the kind of wall-hung sink that you'd see in an office building," she says. "But here we were looking for something that would read as residential when you're in the space but still provide accessibility."

That guiding principle—accessible but not institutional—is behind the use of brushed nickel grab bars that are also put into service for towels. They're slightly smaller in diameter than most grab bars, which disguises their accessible application and fits Barb's small grip.

Only the hand-held shower bar in the upstairs hall bath hints of any special need. It's longer than a normal bar to accommodate the couple's 17-inch height difference. Floors are commercial-grade solid body tile, backsplashes and roll-in shower are done up in ceramic tile, and fixtures are standard issue.

Cross-ventilation is crucial for her chemical sensitivities,

so even the bathroom has wide-open expanses of double-hung windows. "The corner windows look into their backyard, so there's a very private feeling," says McMonigal. "They bring in lots of light, even between the sinks, which is something that Barb and Hans really wanted."—*Kathleen Stanley*



Builder: Luloff Inc., Minnetonka, Minn.; Architect: McMonigal Architects, LLC, Minneapolis; Photographer: Andrea Rugg. ■ Resources: Bathroom plumbing fittings: American Standard, Circle 400 and Kohler, Circle 401; Bathroom plumbing fixtures: Aquatic, Circle 402, Kohler, Circle 403, and Porcher, Circle 404.