

# For Expert in Thrift, Home as Idea Lab

By KATHRYN MATTHEWS

"I HAVE one dollar and a room that needs to be redone. What can you do for me?" the home-style entrepreneur Katie Brown would ask tradesman and suppliers with a wink and a smile as she renovated her family's

weekend cabin in the Berkshires.

She was kidding. Sort of.

Frugality is an opportunity for Ms. Brown, the host of "Katie Brown Workshop" on PBS and the author of five books on the domestic arts. From homemade apple popovers to quirky animal topiaries, she brims with ideas that are creative and stylish yet practical and thrifty.

A veteran of three previous home renovations, Ms. Brown made a point of incorporating salvaged materials acquired for little or no money into the cabin, like free doors from an old house nearby and a \$10 marble countertop in the kitchen from the shower of an old school.

"Our weekend place is a virtual lab," she said. "Everything turns into something, sometimes even a segment for my show."

Ms. Brown, 45, entered the spotlight over a decade ago in "Next Door With Katie Brown" on the Lifetime channel. She shares the Berkshires home with her husband, William Corbin; their 4-year-old daughter, Prentiss; and their 4-month-old baby girl, Meredith. Mr. Corbin, 40, a former television executive, is president of his wife's production company and chief executive of Restaurant Row, an online dining guide.

Few things thrill Ms. Brown more than an extreme home makeover, which the dilapidated log cabin on an overgrown 16-acre property in Buckland, Mass., required. Her vision for its transformation

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**RETREAT** Katie Brown, of "Katie Brown Workshop" on PBS, with her 4-month-old daughter, Meredith.



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