

## Homo Destructus:

# A gay man and a fixer-upper

by Kevin Isom  
Special to Q-Notes

I just did the last thing I ever thought I would do. I bought a "fixer-upper."

No, not a mail order boyfriend. (Though I've had a few fixer-uppers in that department. Heck, I was probably once a fixer-upper myself.)

Rather, I bought a house "significantly under market value" which was "structurally sound" and in need of only "cosmetic improvements." These are catch phrases which, when strung together, mean one thing: "Run! As fast and as far as you can!"

Seriously though, I figured there was nothing a little fairy dust couldn't fix. I'm gay, after all. My people are known for their home renovations expertise. Far be it from me to let the tribe down!

Now, I am reasonably confident that I can do anything I set my mind to, but I've discovered that my gay gene didn't prepare me for certain aspects of homo-ownership. Actually, several.

I've learned that, as in the kitchen, I'm terrible with sharp things. All of my fingers are currently band-aided, from broken light bulbs to broken glass to the time I thwacked myself with the pruning saw (which I've learned, incidentally, should not be used as a machete in an overgrown yard).

I already knew that I was terrible with electrical things, ever since the incident in Paris years ago. I hadn't had my morning coffee yet, and I couldn't get my razor plug to fit, so I pressed in the prongs with my index fingers and pushed the plug into the outlet. Voila! Well, let me tell you—220 volts is enough to throw you back six feet across a room. So for my house, I called a hunky gay electrician. Besides, I liked his slogan — "licensed to remove your shorts." You can't beat that.

I'm totally creeped out by the basement in my house. It has sort of a *Silence of the Lambs* feel to it, and every time I'm down there, I keep expecting to hear a voice say, "It has such pretty

skin..." So whenever I go into the basement alone, I tuck my can of pepper spray into my belt. I figure all I have to do is point and shoot—since I got the kind with a 20 foot wide firing radius. Why, I could take down a whole gang of Hannibal Lechters. But if one more friend of mine starts laughing when he sees me preparing to enter the basement, I'm gonna start using that pepper spray. Oh, and a word of warning. Do not test your pepper spray indoors.

I've also learned I should never be nude except for tennis shoes in the basement. After the aforementioned electrician had changed out my plugs and grounded my hard wiring (it just sounds sexual, doesn't it?), I was so excited to have a washing machine finally connected that I stripped right down, despite the fact that I then had no holster for the pepper spray.

But the electrician had disconnected the hoses to get behind the washer, so when it reached the rinse cycle, as I was putting in the basement in the aforementioned tennis shoes, the basement suddenly began to flood. I butchly stopped the washer and connected the hose, satisfied with my fix-it prowess. Then the sump pump suddenly became a geyser, spewing sudsy water all over me.

I quickly figured out that sump pumps must be plugged in if they are to work. So I did that. And mind you, at this point, I was naked and wet. Had I not had the tennis shoes on, the shock would have been much worse, I suppose.

But that was nothing compared to the wood epoxy. I should have known that anything with the word "pox" in it couldn't be good. But I had to fix a place in the kitchen door where the previous owner's dog had clawed, apparently, for several years. The box said to mix equal parts of this and that, so I decided to just mix it in my hands. It felt like silly putty, and I was rather enjoying myself, back and forth, back and forth, like Lucy in the candy factory. This was fun! Until I was ready to put it on the door, and it wouldn't come off my hands. I finally had to hurl it against the door, peel off my latex gloves (I only do safe

epoxy), and run to get a putty knife.

So it came as something of a relief, finally, to discover that I am very good at something. Namely, I have learned that I am really, really good at destroying things. Gotta get the tile off the wall? Great! Give me a hammer and a chisel. Need the wall taken out? Where's my sledge hammer? Cabinets need to come down? No problem!

Yes, I somehow failed to get the gay remodeling gene in its entirety. But if I were a gay superhero, my name would have to be Homo Destructus, the Gay Wrecking Ball.

Hopefully, my fixer-upper will survive. ▼  
[Kevin Isom is the author of the book *Tongue in Cheek and Other Places. His new book, It Only Hurts When I Polka, will be out this summer. Isom may be reached at isomonline@aol.com.*]



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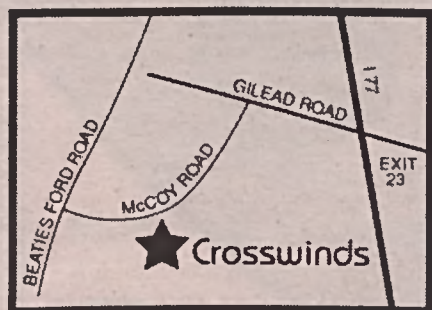
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