

# OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL

APRIL 1997

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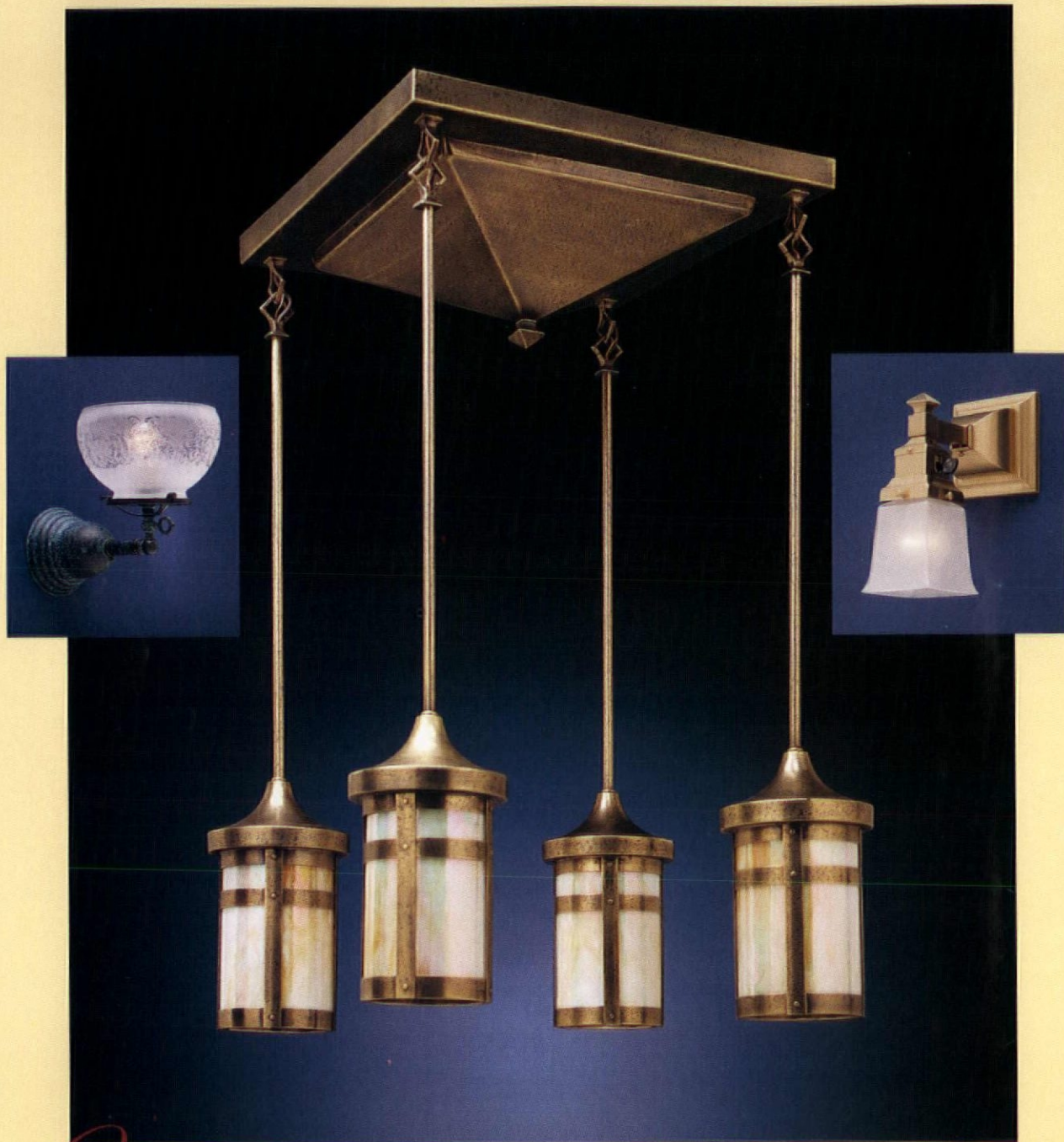
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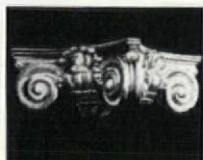


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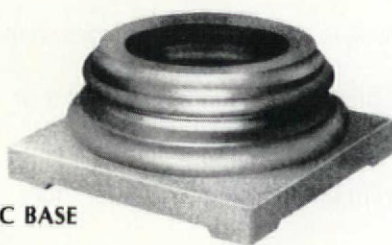


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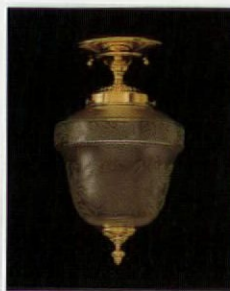
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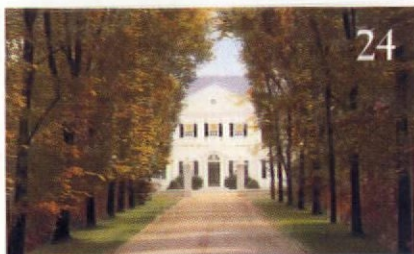
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COVER PHOTO BY TOM CRANE

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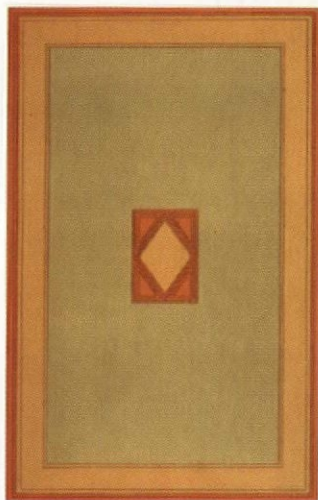




## Writing on the Walls

**F**OR ME, ONE OF THE MORE ENJOYABLE ASPECTS of putting together this issue, with its solid information for working on walls and ceilings, was being able to spend a midwinter's day with Frank Mangione in his shop. There among the ladders and lime-dusted benches, as we set up a textured plaster "laboratory" for the article on page 38, I was reminded of the rich vocabulary that is unique to many building crafts.

Sometimes colorful, often short, but always to-the-point, such terms and nicknames are part of a specialized language. For example, Frank might refer to "mud" when discussing wet plaster, or a "sweeter" mix if he was making a point about lime content. (I've always thought "hawk" was a nifty name for a tool, too.) Forthwith a few of my favorites from several wall and ceiling trades:



**ALLIGATORING**—Cracking of paints, varnishes, or other coatings into a pattern of plates, similar to the reptile's hide.

**BLUSHING**—A ghostly, whitish cast that mars lacquer, varnish, and shellac as they dry.

**CAT'S EYE**—Filler putty crudely smeared to cover a set nail or other depression.

**CAT FACES**—Imperfections in a plaster finish that show up as hollows after surfacing with a float.

**CRAWLING**—A finish defect (usually the result of poor surface preparation) where paints or varnishes shrink, slide, or migrate out of place.

**CROWS FEET**—Checking of a finish that appears as pattern of three cracks, resembling the foot of a bird.

**CURTAINS**—Sags or runs in a painted surface, particularly when they occur in a line.

**DIMPLE (ALSO SMILE)**—An undesirable depression left in

finish trim or flooring by a hammer face.

**FAT EDGE**—Paint buildup on an edge—a door is a good example—usually the result of poor brushwork.

**FISH EYES**—Small craters or pimples in a newly painted or varnished surface, typically caused by oil contaminating the substrate.

**FISH TAILING**—A condition in paint brushes where the

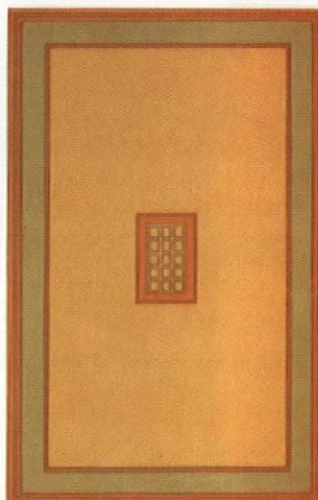
center bristles wear down more than the outer bristles, often the result of painting pipes.

**HOLIDAYS**—Areas where paint (or other coatings) are missing.

**HORSE**—A wood block that backs the metal template used in running plaster mouldings.

**PICKLING**—Any one of a number of simple finishes typically used on open-grain woods where the first step is to brush the surface with a transparent stain (often green), followed by white paint or varnish.

Two 1882 treatments for Victorian ceilings from *Modern House Painting* by Rossiter and Wright, architects.



**PUGGING**—The old-time practice of plastering the backs of walls, floors, or ceilings for purposes of sound-deadening and primitive insulation.

I once made the acquaintance of a carpenter who was working with a box full of blind-wall anchors—little mechanical gizmos like molly bolts that he called "gazintas." Not ready to admit I was unfamiliar with the product by name, I asked him how they were used. "Like this," he said with a smile, "you hit this end with a hammer, and the whole thing 'goes-inta' the wall."

*Edwin Beck*





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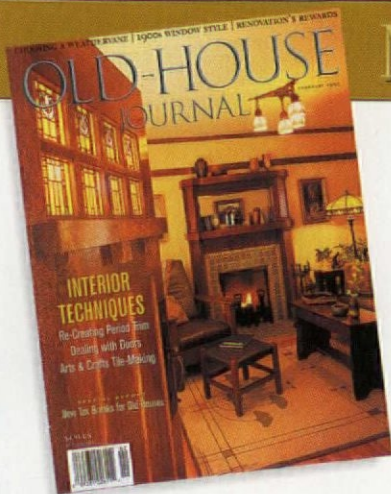
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INDIANA IS ANOTHER STATE THAT offers preservation tax incentives ["Pennies From Heaven," Jan./Feb. 1997]. While our program is not designed for residences, it provides for a state income tax credit of 20% of the preservation cost for eligible projects, up to a maximum of \$100,000. To qualify for the program, buildings must be listed on the state's Register of Historic Sites, be income-producing (such as a bed & breakfast), and meet size and age criteria.

—TOM MEREDITH  
*Division of Historic Preservation  
 and Archaeology  
 Indianapolis, Ind.*

**COMMENT ON CONTENTS**

I AM SORRY THAT YOU ABANDONED your two-page table of contents. I realize this saves a page, but the detail of the old style is very helpful when I go back through old issues in search of an "Ask OHJ" or "Restorer's Notebook" tip.

—ROBERT L. FOOTE  
*Crawfordsville, Ind.*

**MORE ON STANDARDS**

MARK EDWIN NORRIS ["BUCKING THE Standard," Mailbox, Jan./Feb. 1997] is right. The Secretary for the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation were not handed down from the mountaintop, carved on tablets of

stone. A number of them—including the standard that additions should not match the original building too closely—do not make good sense to many of us in the preservation and restoration community and ought to be changed. Your pages are a good place to start the effort.

—RICHARD L. ZILLMAN  
*San Francisco, Calif.*

HERE'S A VOTE IN FAVOR OF ARCHITECTURAL guidelines for historic buildings. There are none in my historic seaport hometown, and we've seen some unfortunate remuddlings.

—ALFRED AFFRONTI  
*Port Jefferson, N.Y.*

**ANOTHER GHOSTING**

HERE'S ANOTHER KIND OF OLD-HOUSE "Ghost Story" [Jan./Feb. 1997]. When we removed the asbestos siding from our 1910 farmhouse in our

Ohio River town, we found evidence of an old floodline 6' high on the clapboard siding underneath. Locals tell us the river flooded the entire town in the '20s. As far as we know, this is the only long-term effect the flood left on our house, which is structurally in good shape.

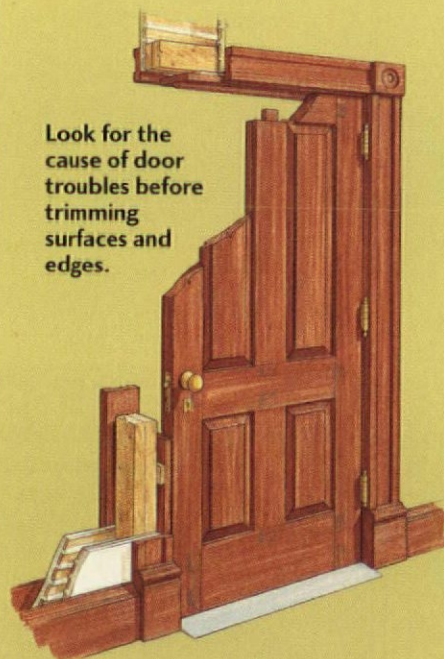
—ESTELLE HALL  
*St. Mary's, W.Va.*

**RADIANT OVER STEAM**

DAN HOLOHAN'S ARTICLES ON STEAM heating ["Radiator City Study Hall," Nov./Dec. 1996] are a godsend. Keep 'em coming! I was astonished to read that as much as 40% of total heat transferred from a radiator was actually "radiated." Our 1883 Victorian is heated by unusual steam radiators from the A.A. Griffing Iron Co. Steam is exciting! Steam is fun!

—LESTER S. RUTH  
*Fall River, Mass.*

**KEEPING DOORS IN TRIM**



Look for the cause of door troubles before trimming surfaces and edges.

IN "OPEN DOOR POLICY" [Jan./Feb. 1997], John Leeke advocates trimming door bottoms with a circular saw. In my opinion, trimming should be done only as a last resort. When I have to trim doors, I use a plastic-bottom 3 horsepower router fitted with a 1/2" double-fluted bit (which yields a smoother cut), guided by a fence clamped to the door. Use Quick Grip-type clamps, as screw clamps will loosen from the router's vibration. For the smoothest possible cut, make your last pass in reverse, removing no more than 1/8".

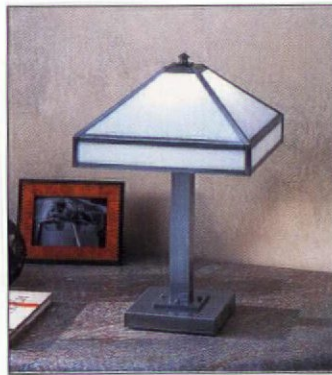
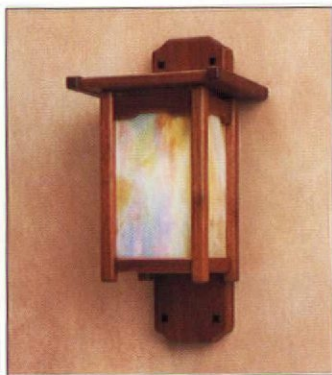
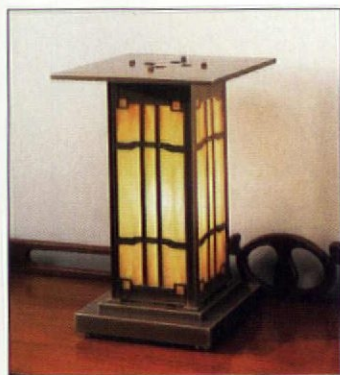
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 —Toledo, Ohio



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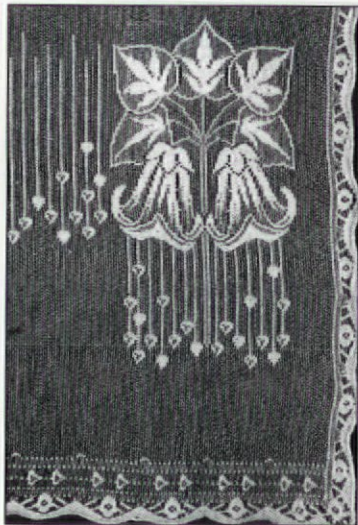


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## M A I L B O X



### ARTFULLY CRAFTED

HAVING SEARCHED HIGH AND LOW for affordable Arts & Crafts tiles, we found "From Earth to Hearth" [Jan./Feb. 1997] quite interesting. After seeing the labor involved in making them, we begin to see why they are so expensive. They weren't billed as Arts & Crafts tiles, but we are delighted with the matte tiles we found for our kitchen backsplash (similar to those in the fireplace on your cover) for about \$12 per square foot. "True" Arts & Crafts tiles might have cost four or five times as much.

— WENDY AND BOB PARRISH  
Lexington, Mass.

### HIGH STYLE IN MICHIGAN

I WAS PLEASED TO SEE ONE OF THE finest Queen Anne homes in Bay



Restoration at the Parrish house made use of new tiles in the Arts & Crafts tradition, including these from Blue Slide of California.

City, Michigan, in your Sept./Oct. 1996 issue ["That Which We Call Victorian"]. This picturesque house was built in 1887 for Charles C. Whitney, a businessman known for his extravagant taste in art and architecture. As always, we look forward to your next issue.

— DALE PATRICK WOLICKI  
Bay County Historical Society  
Bay City, Mich.

### RUSTY CONCRETE

A FRIEND GAVE ME A RECENT COPY of your magazine, which I found to be very enjoyable. I don't live in an old house, but my parents do, and it often falls to me to take care of day-to-day repairs. To remove stubborn rust stains from concrete [Ask OH], July/Aug. 1996], try Bar Keeper's Friend, a scouring powder that contains oxalic acid. Sprinkle on a thick layer, dampen with water to form a poultice, then cover with plastic and let it work for several hours before rinsing.

— MICHAEL R. IRWIN  
Fairfax, Va.





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## RX FOR MILK PAINT

*I'm trying to find a recipe for milk paint. Can you help?*

—George Covell  
Monterey, Calif.

OLD PAINTING TEXTS BRISTLE WITH recipes for milk paint—a dead-flat, homespun coating that is probably more popular today for “country” furniture than it ever was inside old houses. However,

nothing beats this easy recipe OHJ originally published more than 10 years ago (Ask OHJ, Jan./Feb. 1984). It's simply a mix of nonfat dry milk and color.

Make a test batch by dissolving 1 cup of powdered milk in just enough hot water to make a thick soup. Mix thoroughly, then add pigment a little at a time. Use universal tinting colors (available in good paint stores) or dry pigments.

Continue to stir the paint, which will gain color as it blends, until the consistency is smooth and paint-like. Test for color by brushing some of the paint on a piece of bare wood. To increase the opacity, add more pigment; to decrease it, add more hot water. While we can't vouch for the long-term stability of the paint, the look is authentic.

## STUMPED OVER STUCCO

*Over time, stucco picks up particulates that add texture to the rough surface. When my architect designed a compatible addition to my stuccoed 1924 Country Italian villa, we found it impossible to match its 70-year-old characteristics. Do you know of a technique to successfully “age” new stucco?*

—Michael McCue  
Columbus, N.C.

THE BEST WAY TO ARTIFICIALLY AGE new stucco is to lightly mist the final coat with water before it sets up, says OHJ author Jacob Arndt, a specialist in historic masonry in Madison, Wisconsin. Some of the surface lime (the “cream” between the particles) will wash away, giving the texture a weathered look. Or allow the stucco to cure overnight, then mist it with water and brush away some of the surface lime with a soft, nylon bristle brush.

For fully cured new stucco, try a muriatic acid bath. While this method won't harm the stucco if used correctly, some precautions are in order. Muriatic acid is a powerful solution commonly used in masonry cleanup. It can damage woodwork and painted surfaces. Also, the stucco must be thoroughly

## HAVE A SEAT



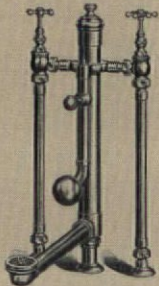
A sight for sore posteriors, this ca. 1907 sitz bath is fitted with a bi-transit waste valve (below), a plumbing fixture that no longer meets modern plumbing codes. (Waste water could potentially be siphoned back into the fresh water supply.)

*We found this plumbing fixture half-buried behind the shed. All the faucets and drains are intact. What on earth is it?*

—Robert Digiacinto  
Ithaca, N.Y.

YOU HAVE A SITZ BATH, ONE OF A variety of fixtures popularized by the craze for cleanliness at the turn of the century. Also known as a seat bath, the sitz (from the German: “act of sitting”) was a specialized bath for soaking the posterior—presumably to ease ailments brought on by heavy, indigestible Victorian meals.

Typically 24" to 27" long, 22" wide, and 12" to 17" inches high at the front edge, the sitz bath began appearing in well-appointed bathrooms by the 1880s. As noted in Mott's Illustrated Catalog of Plumbing Fixtures, it could double as a foot bath. But this alleged versatility couldn't save the sitz, which slipped out of fashion as bathrooms became smaller and standardized in the 1920s and '30s.





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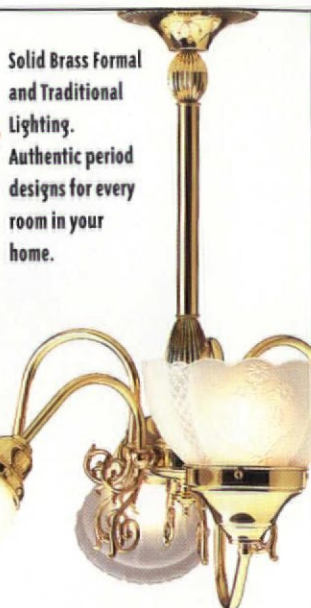
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**Left unpainted, this prefabricated steel façade is vulnerable to rust.**

soaked with water before the acid bath is applied. Otherwise, the acid will be absorbed too quickly, and could damage the substrate.

Use a ratio of 1 part muriatic acid to 4 or 5 parts water. Since this solution can severely burn skin, wear protective clothing, including rubber gloves, a long-sleeved shirt, and protective glasses. You may want to test the strength of the bath on an out-of-the-way part of the building before proceeding. Apply the acid bath with a long-handled bristle brush, beginning at the top of each wall, and broadcast the wash around. The surface should begin to bubble, indicating that the acid is wearing the lime away and exposing more of the sand in the finish. This will affect the way light is reflected off the surface, resulting in an older-looking appearance.

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*My old house is a 100-year-old commercial building with a cast-iron or cast-steel front by Mesker Steel. What painting and preparation techniques are appropriate for metal-front buildings?*

—Susan Decker  
Boonville, Ill.

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Unpainted steel oxidizes easily, so it's important to keep it painted. Prep the surface by removing loose paint and rust using a combination of hand scraping, chipping, and wire brushing. Low-pressure grit blasting will remove excessive paint build-up or extensive corrosion, but avoid using aggregates harder than sand or iron slag. Use just enough pressure to effectively remove the rust; under no circumstances should you exceed a pressure of more than 100 pounds per square inch.

To avoid oxidation, immediately prime the metal surface, preferably with an alkyd metal primer rich in iron oxide, zinc oxide, or zinc phosphate. Use a brush or an airless sprayer; rollers do not provide enough contact with the surface. The finish coat should also be an alkyd paint. While you can use water-base paints for finish coats, there's a danger of oxidation if the primer is damaged or imperfectly applied.



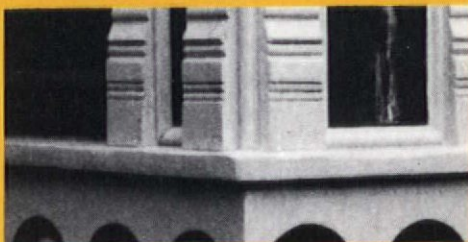
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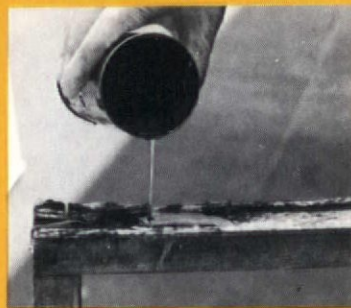
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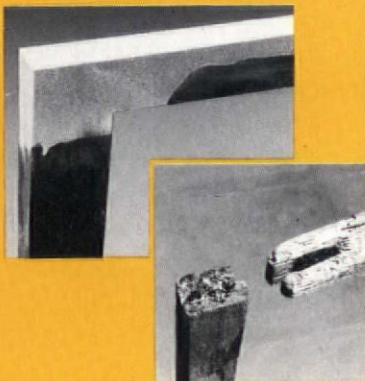
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# RESTORER'S NOTEBOOK

## EPOXY FOR YOU

**E**POXY CONSOLIDANT IS NOT JUST for repairing rot, it can also prevent deterioration. Because epoxy is non-porous, it makes an excellent waterproofer for vulnerable areas. I always apply a thin coat of consolidant over the end grain of exterior wood, especially for posts and other members that contact soil.

—VICTOR TURNER  
*Memphis, Tenn.*

## DOORBELL FIX

**W**HEN OUR DOORBELL STOPPED working, I discovered that it ran off a battery, which had gone dead. Rather than replacing the battery or buying a doorbell transformer and wiring it into the house's circuitry, I decided to use a spare part I had lying around: an A/C adapter salvaged from a deceased answering machine. I just cut the cord and connected the wires in

place of the battery. Our transformer supplies 14 volts direct current, but one supplying as low as 9 volts would work. It was an effective fix for our doorbell, but it does require an outlet nearby.

—DEBORAH CHILDRESS  
*Sykesville, Md.*

## GETTING DOWN TO BRASS

**I**HAVE TWO OFFERINGS FOR OLD-house owners who have tarnished brass or copper hardware. First, after removing the protective lacquer with commercial paint stripper and cleaning it, try this for removing oxidation: Slice a lemon in half, sprinkle salt on it, and rub it on the piece. Rinse with water and polish. My second tip is to use floor wax as an alternative to lacquer. It won't last as long, but it makes polishing much easier in the future.

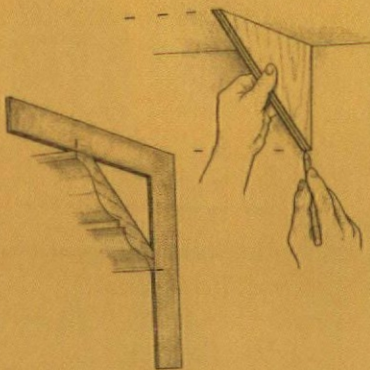
—JANE WHITEHEAD  
*Monterey, Calif.*

## CROWN JEWEL

**H**ERE'S A TRICK WE USED TO help position the new crown moulding in our parlor. It's sprung moulding—installed on an angle so it spans the corner from ceiling to wall—which can be hard to place at just the right angle. We set a scrap length of moulding inside a framing square to determine its proper bearing points. Then we made a triangular template of those dimensions with a scrap of plywood. We positioned the template at nailers around the room and marked where the crown would sit. (If there are some spots where the template won't fit—due to settling—just measure out from the corner and mark the proper

dimensions.) Then, as we installed the moulding, we simply aligned it with the marks.

—HEATHER DICKENMAN  
*Dodge City, Kans.*

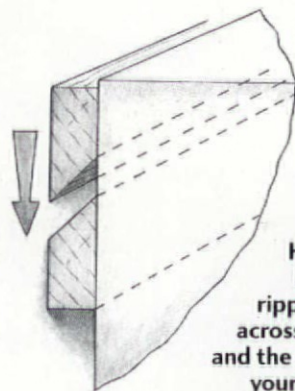


Measure the moulding's bearing points and use a template to mark its placement.

## INSTANT HANGERS

**U**SE THIS SIMPLE HANGER FOR everything from kitchen cabinets to shop tool racks. Rip a length of 1x4 stock in half with the table saw blade at 45°. The corresponding angles on the two resulting pieces make an excellent hanger.

—FRED WALLASKI  
*Boulder, Colo.*



## SLIDE TO THE RESCUE

**O**N A WINTER VACATION, WE CAME across balusters that were the perfect design for our porch. I knew I could reproduce the profile on the lathe, but tracing the balusters wouldn't work because ours would be a different height. So we snapped a few slides to document the profile. Back home, we hung a posterboard on the wall and marked the 17" height of our balusters on it. Then, we projected the slide onto the posterboard and moved the projector closer and farther until the image was the right size. I traced it on the board and had my proportional pattern.

—DAN MILLER  
*Elgin, Ill.*

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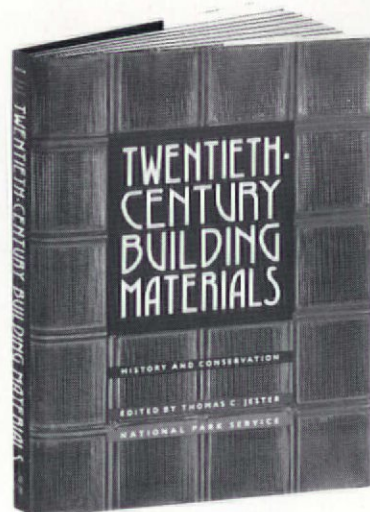
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# Dream Come True: Finding the Original Plans

BY JAMES C. MASSEY AND SHIRLEY MAXWELL

**D**ISCOVERING A PEARL OF ARCHITECTURAL DISTINCTION in sea of old houses is not an unusual bit of luck, even among a species as rigorously straightforward as the Foursquare. Much less likely is identifying the architect of such a house—if indeed there was an architect. However, latching onto both a good house by a known architect and his basic contract documents—the “working drawings” and the written specifications—well, that’s downright rare.

The architect’s drawings are by far the most important single research tool for studying a building. When signed, they offer absolute, proof-positive evidence of the building’s original design and the creative hand behind it. Without such documentation, all that is possible is an educated guess at the influence that various architects may have exerted on the design—or speculation on whether it came from stock plans adopted, legitimately or not, by a builder. Drawings put an end to such questions.

## A Sketchy History

AN INTERESTING EXAMPLE OF the doors that drawings can open comes from reader Paul M. Martin of Mason City, Illinois. He is the fortunate owner of a 1900 Foursquare with excellent Arts & Crafts-style features (above). He also has copies of the drawings (showing the design and dimensions of the building) and written specifications (detailing the materials and methods of construction). They are clearly labeled with the architect’s name: E. E. Roberts of Oak Park, Illinois.

A little research tells us that Eben Ezra Roberts (1867–1943) trained in the office of a great Chicago architect, S. S. Beman, before opening his own practice in Oak Park in 1893. (Son Elmer joined his father in 1923, and the firm was called Roberts and Roberts until 1926.) Roberts was a significant though little-known member of

the Prairie School, and his work blends that tradition with more conventional building design. Oak Park in the early-20th century was a heady laboratory for progressive young architects. Frank Lloyd Wright and his close followers set about building a modern architecture in their Prairie School designs, a movement that would leave its mark far beyond their Chicago suburb. It is easy to spot such influences in Roberts’ design for the Martin House, from its insistently horizontal lines to its broad eaves.

Architects’ drawings can crack many other mysteries as well. For one thing, they confirm a general date for the building. For another, they often include preliminary designs, perhaps even a rendered perspective—a watercolor, colored-pencil, or shaded-line drawing of the building, generally axonometric. Other drawings may identify a series of changes arrived at through the give-and-take of architect and owner, or dictated by the realities of cost estimates from the contractor.

By the time the construction drawings were issued, numerous changes in the house may have taken place; small revisions typically followed during construction. Such was the case with Mr. Martin’s house. Subtle changes were made in colored ink on the drawings and in the added notes. In order to identify post-construction changes or additions to vintage buildings, one usually has to rely on physical evidence or outright guesswork. Equipped with the working drawings for the original construction, though, it is possible to be fairly certain of what was there originally.

## Drawing on the Past

IT WAS NOT UNCOMMON FOR THE ARCHITECT TO GIVE A set of drawings to the client for use in maintaining the structure. The copies were typically blueprints made



**Without the original plans, one might never know that in 1900 this house had pilasters, porch brackets, and an unsung Prairie School architect.**



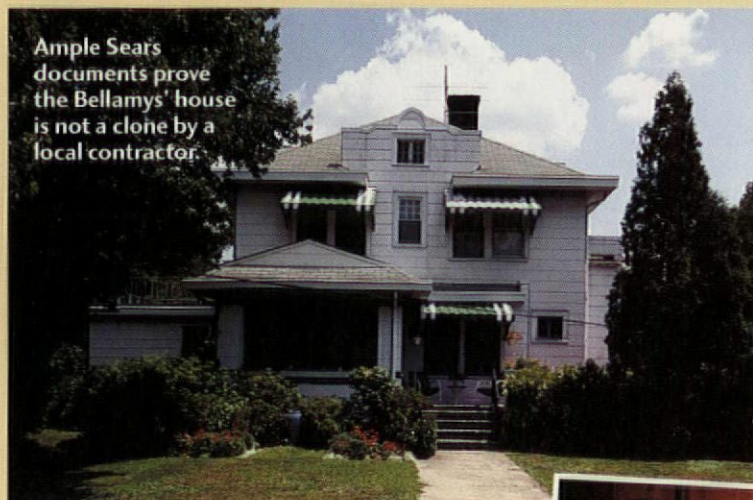




from original drawings—that is, copies printed on a bright blue background with the lettering in white. Many other duplicating methods—Ozalid, Diazo, even greenprints—pop up, too. The original drawings, however, were usually done in ink on linen, or pencil on tracing paper. The copies may have been filed away or left in the attic for a hundred years, but they survive only infrequently.

Original drawings by major architects of the 19th and 20th centuries, such as Louis Sullivan or Frank Lloyd Wright, may be preserved in architectural repositories—assuming that clients, disciples, or the architect himself had a proper sense of history. Drawings for relatively recent buildings (say, those constructed within the past hundred years or so) are sometimes filed with building permits in municipal offices. Because of space considerations, these are most likely to be on microfilm. Drawings dating from the 18th century (usually design renderings) are more rare—and obviously more valuable.

The hope of discovering such treasures makes it well worthwhile to do a bit of digging in places such as major university and museum libraries. The Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, which can be contacted through the American Institute of Architects Library and Archives (1735 New York Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006), may also be helpful. For biographical information about specific architects, the basic sources are the 1956 *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* by Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Withey, and the massive four-volume *MacMillan Encyclopedia of Architects*. The *Avery Obituary Index of Architects and Artists* (1963), available at most large architectural libraries, can also fill in many gaps.



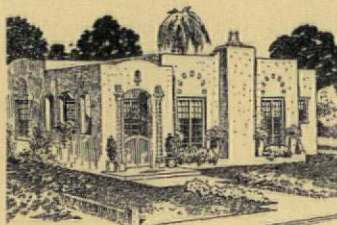
### Stalking Stock Plans

Tracing the source of an old house built from mail-order plans or parts is a hunt of a different kind. Sears, Ward, Aladdin, and other pre-cut “kit” houses are particularly tricky to authenticate because many local builders ignored copyright laws and churned out unauthorized copy houses.



The only absolute assurance of provenance is a set of blueprints or a contract. Ray Bellamy's house, a Cheverly, Maryland, rendition of the popular “Alhambra” design published in Sears' *Modern Homes* catalogs from 1918 to 1929, is a good example of a well-documented catalog house. In this case, the owner has the building's entire construction history in hand, from blueprints to mortgage papers.

The mail order-plan houses common in the late-19th and 20th centuries are equally difficult to pin down, and solid proof of authorship is often elusive. Columbus, Ohio, reader Dino Melfi found a close resemblance to his own house in the 1923 Homeowners Service Institute's planbook, *The Book of a Thousand Homes: Volume 1* (reprinted by Dover as *500 Small Houses of the 1920s*). Both the plan and the front elevation of the Melfi house, built in 1926, are slightly different from those shown in the book.



Plan No. 354 (top) was sold as “a bungalow of the popular Spanish Mission style.” The Melfi house (above) looks close, but it's guesswork without evidence.

Since they don't appear to be post-construction alterations, they could well be revisions to the Homeowners Service Plan either before or during construction. Or—and here's the rub—the house could be a builder's copy of the published plan. This is one case where original drawings would come in really handy!



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Curved and meandering walks and drives were more common in backyards and gardens than in front of the house. This gravel example is behind the 1846 Bowen House in Woodstock, Connecticut.





# A Period Approach to Walks and Drives

BY MICHAEL WEISHAN

**C**REATING WALKS AND DRIVES FOR OLD HOUSES presents the classic restorer's conflict between the historical and the practical. You don't want modern blacktop leading to the home you worked so hard to restore. Yet, you can't imagine slogging through 2" of wood ash mud to get to the door. Here's a set of guidelines I've developed for building walks and drives that are sympathetic to a pre-1900 house without asking you to sacrifice convenience.

## Design Decisions

LAYING OUT YOUR ROUTE IS THE fun part. Follow original walks and drives. Walks may have disappeared—leaving an unused front door or side porch stranded—or may have been modified beyond recognition. Look for a depression in the lawn, pieces of curbing, or perhaps a border of large trees. Beyond that, proceed along the most logical path. Chances are there's a muddy trail worn in the grass by the kids, the dog, and the postman. Whether you're restoring a carriageway or adding a new drive, there's rarely any choice about its location.

For some reason, many people have an aversion to laying out straight walks and drives—the direct path seems too prosaic. Yet, for most of this country's history, principal walkways took the shortest route possible. Only in the second half of the 19th century did elaborate semicircular front drives and curved walks become common. This typically Victorian attempt to combine "grace with utility" got out of hand, though, according to the garden writers of the day.

"From the street to the house door—from the kitchen to the well, or the stable—the communication should be as direct as possible. Over paths that must be traversed many times a day, and often, perhaps, in hot haste, no one wishes to be compelled to describe the lines of

beauty, though Hogarth himself had drawn the graceful curve," wrote Henry W. Cleveland, et.al., in *Village and Farm Cottages* (1856).

I recommend a straight route for walks and drives that are less than 50'. If the site is large enough, and a curved walk or drive feels right, by all means use it, but be gentle with the curves. "Nearly all amateur landscape gardeners will blunder in their first attempts to lay out roads or walks, by making their curves too decided," wrote Frank Scott in his influential 1870 style book, *Suburban Home Grounds*.

Consider, too, the issue of width. In the colonial and Federal periods, walks were just as wide as necessary—3' or so except in the largest houses. Victorian walks were more generous, and often flared out near the house. For principal walks, Scott recommends a width of 4'–6' (rear walks can be 3' wide). For drives, 12'–14' was common, and this is generally sufficient for one-way passage of modern vehicles as well.

Chart your scheme on paper, preferably to scale. I also like to lay out prospective walks with stakes or garden hoses. In this

manner you can look at, walk along, and live with the proposed path, and adjust it until it's right.

## Paving Particulars

UNTIL WELL INTO THE 20TH CENTURY, MOST DOMESTIC walks and drives were covered with wood ash, hard clay, crushed oyster shells, gravel, or coal clinkers. Yet there were other alternatives. The following hard-surface materials were common from 1750 to 1900:

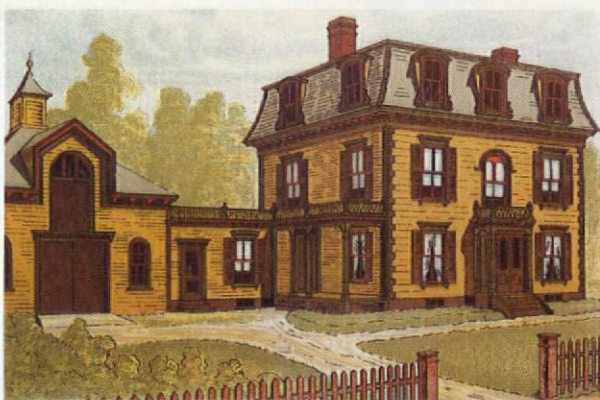
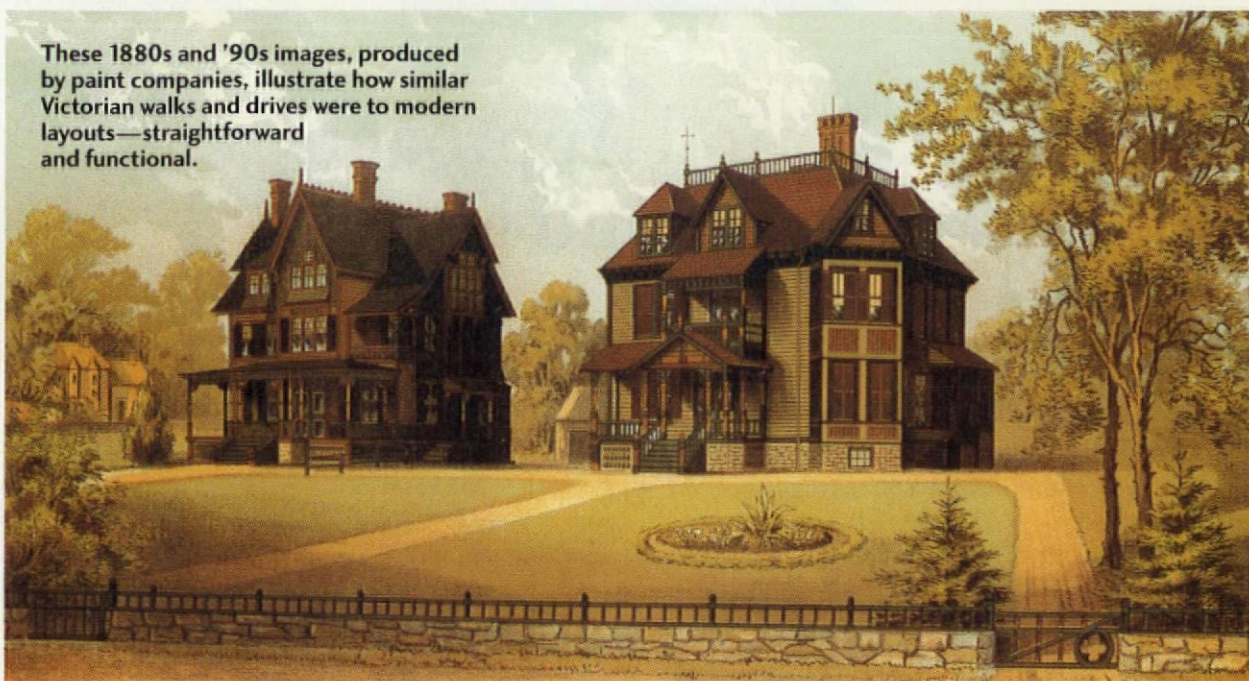
**CURBING:** The Victorians, especially, were very fond of well-defined boundaries. Most walks and drives, even the most humble, had curbing to keep their edges visually crisp. Bricks (whole or part), cobbles, rough



A straight drive graced by elm trees offers dramatic entrance to this Michigan house, in a 1931 photo.



These 1880s and '90s images, produced by paint companies, illustrate how similar Victorian walks and drives were to modern layouts—straightforward and functional.



stones, cut stones, shells, steel strips, and clay tiles were commonplace. These materials provide visual clarity, and they also saved their owners the considerable labor of edging several times a year by hand.

**GRAVEL:** For country courtyards and later for suburban drives, gravel was the material of choice from the colonial period onward. I also like gravel for walks that are not to be the main entrance and egress for the house. The most historically correct gravel is river-washed pea gravel (the size of a pea). Add 10% crushed stone as a binder.

When I propose gravel drives I am inevitably asked about maintenance and winter plowing. It is true that there is some work involved—mainly a yearly raking and a bit of weeding (or spraying) in the less trafficked areas. As for plowing, I have not found this to be a problem as long as the person plowing is aware that the drive is gravel and sets the blade 1" or so higher than normal. It is imperative that all gravel walks and

drives have curbing to contain the aggregate.

**STONE:** In the mid-1800s, streets in the affluent port cities of the East Coast were paved with square, granite cobbles. Cobbles make fine drives, but not walks because the cobbles are far too uneven, especially for high-heeled shoes. Their cost (\$2–4 per cobble, plus labor) puts them out of reach for many homeowners, and did so even centuries ago.

Paving stone, such as bluestone or other local flagstone, was a favorite material for walks. Once again, cost may be a deciding factor. Except in the warmest climates where heavy frost is not a problem, avoid using thin, irregularly shaped paving stones such as slate, especially when set in a mortar base. Frost will inevitably buckle this type of path and break the stones out of the mortar. Instead, follow the traditional formula and use large, heavy, regular stones at least 1.5" thick bedded in stone dust or sand.

**BRICK:** Although brick has [continued on page 28]



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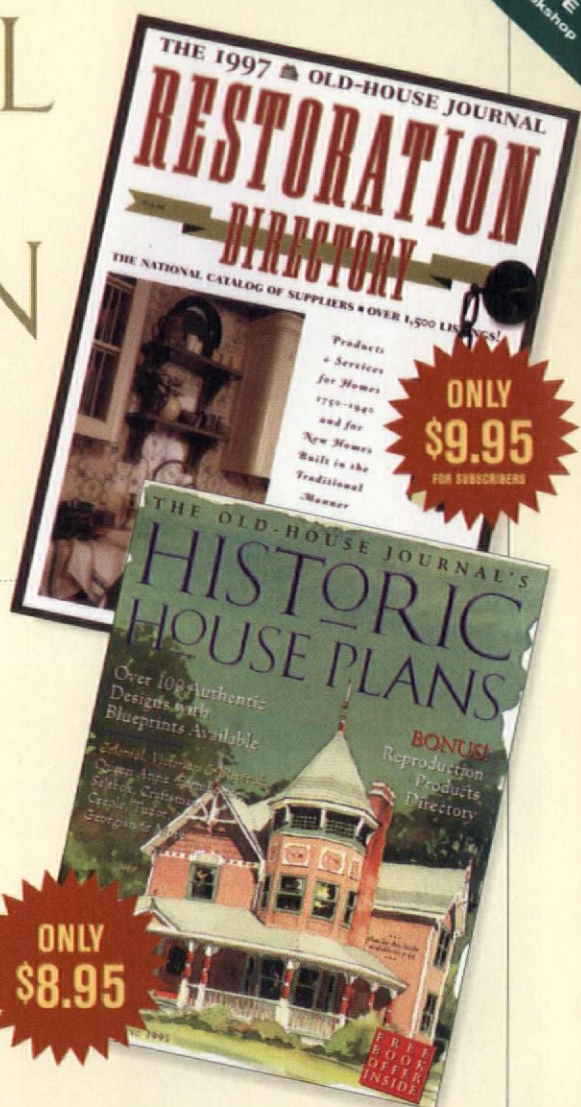
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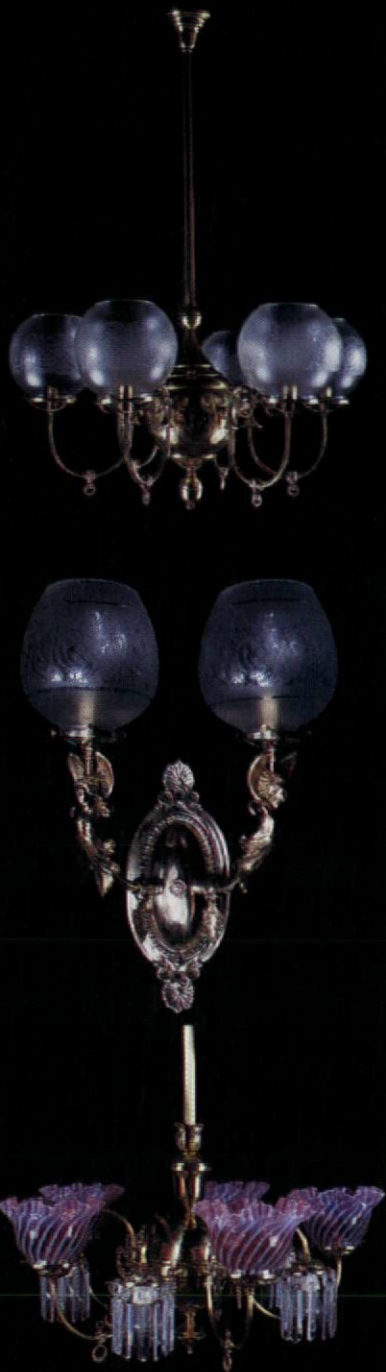
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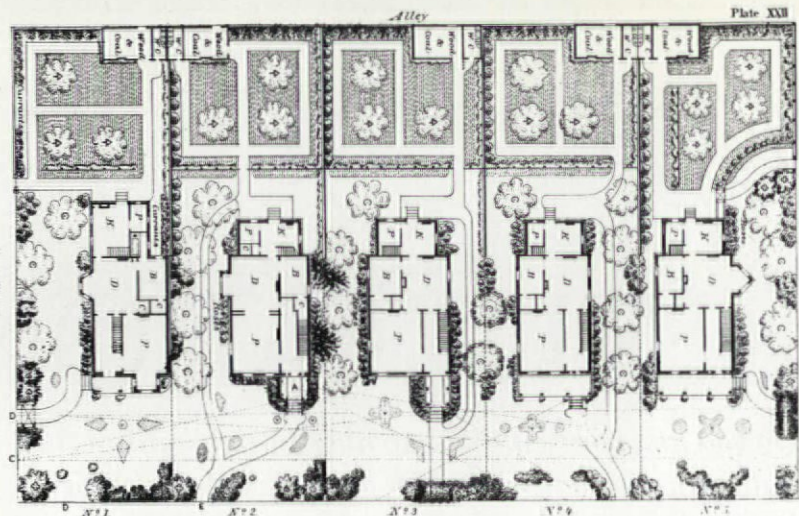
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[continued from page 26]

been used for paving in this country since colonial times, it was fairly rare in most areas. The relative scarcity of good clay and the high cost of transportation made brick expensive. The exceptions are parts of the South, where clay was common, and in the major urban areas of the East, where modes of transport were sufficiently advanced. If you choose brick, pick a historic pattern, rather than the standard and rather mundane running bond pattern.

**ASPHALT/CONCRETE:** Asphalt (also called macadam after Scottish engineer John McAdam, 1756–1836, who perfected the asphalt production process) was the first modern paving material. The walks in New York's Central Park were paved with this asphalt before 1870, and some wealthy landowners followed suit. By the turn of the century, it had come into widespread use. I don't much care for asphalt walks, but for urban driveways, asphalt can be quite attractive, especially when it's made using more aggregate than is normal for modern asphalt. The addition of various types of crushed stone and tints alters the asphalt, making it look more like traditional macadam

**An imaginary block of houses indicates options for front walks and rear gardens in 1870.**

and less like a mall parking lot.

The first concrete paving was laid in this country in Bellefontaine, Ohio, in 1894, and its use spread widely. If your house was built after 1910 or so, concrete is an appropriate and durable option.

**WOOD:** In rural areas, plank-ing makes an attractive walk. One caveat, however: wood can be treacherously slippery when wet. From the 1700s onwards, pine planks, their bottoms coated with tar, were often used as walkways. Today's alternative, of course, is pressure-treated wood. Planks should be laid across the path on cleats and then cut to length and shape on each side once in place.

As Edward Kemp wrote in 1852, "Walks that are not carefully formed in accordance with all these conditions will appear more or less slovenly, deficient in the expression of art, and indicative of unrefined taste."

MICHAEL WEISHAN is principal in GardenWorks, a period landscaping firm, and is editor of *Traditional Gardening*, a journal about restoring classic gardens. Both offices are at The Barn at 189 Cordaville Road, Southborough, MA 01772, (508) 485-3637.



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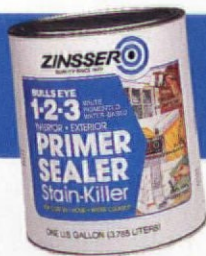


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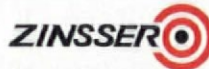
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# The Other Proper Style

CALL THEM ELIZABETHAN, OR JACOBEOAN, OR TUDOR REVIVAL, virtually any house built with half-timbered construction, rustic stone, and a medieval flavor qualified as Tudor in the years between 1880 and 1940. In fact, the general label describes 30% to 40% of the architect-designed houses featured in leading journals during this period. Thousands of Tudor dwellings exist throughout North America—not simply in the former English Colonies, but in California, Texas, the Deep South, and even the Southwest. Colonial Revival houses may have eclipsed them in popularity, but

**Right: Hewn half-timbering sets off Meadowbrook Hall in Birmingham, Michigan—four centuries after its medieval English model. Above: Tudor stucco, gabled entries, and tall chimneys toned down for the suburbs in Mission Hills, Kansas.**

not in panache. How the Tudor style came into being, and why it spread so far, is a story that is just coming into focus after half a century.

**BY MARK ALAN HEWITT, AIA**











Top: In Edwardian England, designers like C. Harrison Townsend were building free-style Tudors using "Surrey vernacular" motifs—even railroad ties for half-timbers. Above: An American Tudor from the early 1900s with typical asymmetrical massing, complex roof forms, and mixed materials. Right: Stockbroker Henry W. Poor turned naturally to the Jacobean style for his 1896 house and library of old English texts in Tuxedo Park, New York (designed by T. Henry Randall).



BOSTON ARCHITECT RALPH ADAMS CRAM, one of the most astute observers of American architecture, noted that two kinds of English-influenced houses achieved widespread popularity in the early-20th century. He suggested that only one maintained its associations with "historical" themes in the mother country, thereby establishing real roots. Today we would call that style "Tudor," and its more common rival "Colonial." To the real-estate trade, these names still mean quality and market value. To homeowners they are archetypes, symbols for the romance and longevity of a bygone era.

### Why Tudor?

AMERICANS BEGAN BUILDING THE FIRST BONA fide Tudor-esque houses in the 1880s. The development of these eclectic variants was sparked by a new "historical awareness" of the differences between domestic Colonial or Georgian architecture and earlier English styles. Our great-grandparents did not view their vernacular 17th- and 18th-century buildings as remarkably old or noteworthy. So, despite the popularity of "colonial" houses as models, designers looking to capture the flavor of antiquity, of deep English roots, often turned to earlier precedents. The more Americans studied the architecture of their ancestors, the more they discovered to emulate in early English buildings and styles.

In England after 1870, the same kind of antiquarian interest had spurred architects and patrons to roam the countryside in search of houses from the "Old English" or "Queen Anne" periods. There was great romance to be found in houses that seemed to grow directly from the soil, built in layers over tens—perhaps hundreds—of years. A truly aged dwelling was one with a pedigree from the darker times of late-medieval England, or perhaps the reign of Henry VIII, Queen Mary, or Elizabeth I. The Tudor dynasty provided a genealogical stamp for what was to become a quintessential Anglo-American house style.

Two factors contributed to the rise of a new kind of Anglophile interest in America: publication of picture-book histories of English domestic architecture with fine photographs and real scholarship, and a general interest in English culture stemming from patriotic and xenophobic im-





pulses. Following the 1876 Centennial, amidst a backdrop of immigration and nationalistic fervor, native-born Americans became more interested in demonstrating their genealogical purity. This was the era of the first country clubs, the first social register, and the proliferation of elite social organizations for the likes of Mayflower descendants, daughters of the Revolution, and sons of the Cincinnati. Being Anglo-American, or at least seeming so, was tantamount to having a green card.

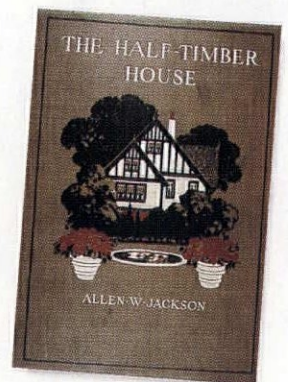
### From Shakespeare to Stockbrokers

ENGLISH DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE APPEALED to Americans for practical as well as sentimental reasons. Writers like Allen W. Jackson argued that these medieval precedents made apt models for modern, residential America. Indeed, the ancient yeoman's house, with its great hall, oriel windows, and simple layout, seemed ready-made to meet the requirements of affluent suburban life.

"Now let us suppose," wrote Jackson in 1912, "that a small but prosperous farmer of the year 1500 wishes to build a comfortable house for himself and his family somewhere in the south of England. He will scorn the idea of admitting cattle under the same roof, as his forefathers did, and is able to afford a house of some comfort, even luxury. He will have a large room for living and eating, with great fireplace and ingle, window-seat and row of glazed and leaded windows, a low, heavily beamed ceiling and a floor of tile or flags." If such a house was ample enough for Henry VIII's subjects, it was just fine for the stockbrokers, dentists, and automobile dealers of early-20th-century America.

Architecture in post-Victorian suburbia had even a broader end when it served to telegraph social class, economic status, and other identity codes. In this role the Tudor style, in any of its several recognizable variants, was an illuminating

**Skylands Manor (top) was built in Ringwood, New Jersey, for another prominent Wall-Streeter, Clarence McKenzie Lewis, in 1924. Books on English domestic architecture, such as *The Half-Timber House* (1912), abounded in both North America and Britain.**







## A Man's Tudor is His Castle

Readers of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser, and Tennyson alike embraced Tudor as they had loved Collegiate Gothic reading rooms and study halls during university days. Diplomat Alexander Weddell not only traveled and collected all over the world, but he also had a personal library of more than 10,000 volumes and pamphlets. When he learned that the 12th-century St. Sepulchre Priory in Warwick, England, was to be razed, he had it imported, reassembled, and revised on American shores in 1925.

The site was Windsor Farms, a development in Richmond, Virginia, that attracted another wealthy transplanter of English architecture, Allen J. Sayville. Ardent anglophiles, Weddell and his wife Virginia spent three years overseeing the meticulous stone-by-stone reconstruction of the building and planning its furnishing; the surrounding gardens took 20 years. The result is Virginia House, a 30-room version of an English manor in the best tradition of the American Country Place movement.

With Virginia House in the background, the rear view (top) shows the work of landscape architect Charles Gillette, who worked with the Weddells to transform eight acres into a European-style estate replete with rare plants and reflecting pools. Sulgrave Room (below) is the Weddells' reconstruction of the great hall of Sulgrave Manor in England — George Washington's ancestral home.





cultural marker. Initially, Tudor houses were built by the wealthiest Americans—captains of industry who saw themselves as tastemakers in the late-Victorian era. These were powerful and often famous people, such as Stuart Duncan of Newport, members of the Elkins family in Philadelphia, Frank Seiberling of Dayton, Alexander W. Weddell of Richmond, and W.E. Aldred of Long Island, New York. The prestige of the early Tudor mansions they built rubbed off on the style.

Another strong image conveyed by Tudor houses was the cachet of expensive materials—copper, slate, and especially stone—eventually associated in the public mind with stockbrokers. It was much more than a myth. For example, one of Wall Street's paragons, Clarence McKenzie Lewis, constructed an elaborate Tudor farm, Skylands Manor, in the Ramapo Mountains of New Jersey following the Roaring Twenties. Another reason that the style stuck to financial men was the association with clubs. English and Tudor mixed well in the country club set, like a dry Beefeater martini. While golf took root in Scotland and tennis in the mother country, it was America that popularized the country club, often designed with a deliberate nod to English country life taste. The number and variety of these Tudor country clubs is as great as the houses which influenced them.

Literary and historical associations ran strong with the Tudor style. Many bibliophiles looked nostalgically at medieval universities—mainly English ones—when thinking about the design of their libraries, and the Tudor style made a particularly comfortable environment for both books and their readers. Linenfold paneling, dark fumed oak case-work, and hammer beam ceilings abound in the libraries of Tudor country houses—an equivalent to leather bindings and illuminated parchment.

If the builder's penchant for things old and English was strong enough, he or she might acquire not only a library, suits of armor, tapestries, and thrones, but an entire house. Alexander W. Weddell was one of a score of wealthy Americans who bought English manor houses and had them re-assembled on this side of the Atlantic (see page 34). Today his "Virginia House" in Richmond's Windsor Farms is interpreted

## VARIATIONS ON THE TUDOR THEME

Armed with a new grasp of the richness of English domestic work, Americans built an astounding range of Tudor-related houses, ranging from archeologically correct assemblages of fragments from history books, to freely designed cottages with just a hint of the Cotswold village dwelling:



In planbook designs of the 1920s, Elizabethan half-timbering labeled a house as Tudor.



Vernacular English Cotswolds houses became sources for the "English plaster cottage" rage.



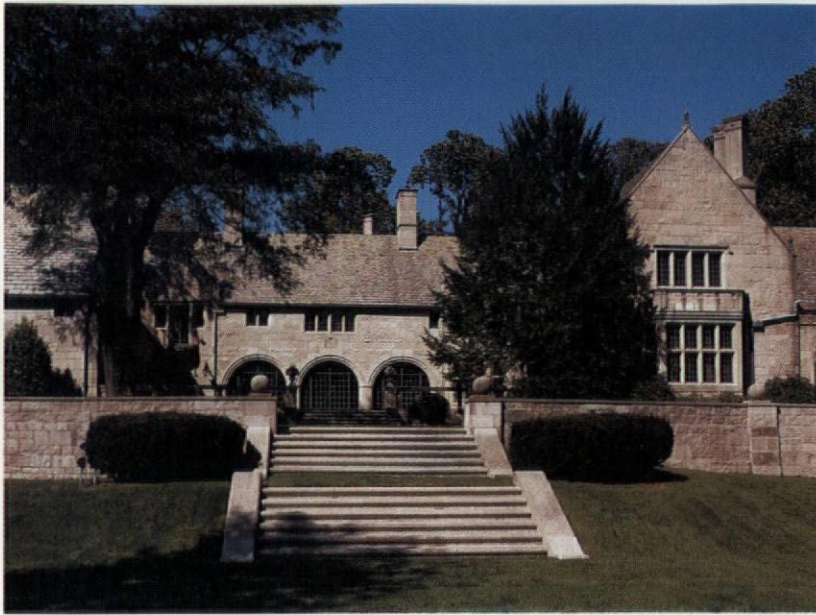
Charles Barton Keene was one of a number of Philadelphia architects to combine Arts & Crafts features with Tudor half-timbering.

**ELIZABETHAN**—The archetypal Tudor house, when eventually translated into middle-class types, nearly always sported one prominent half-timbered gable (the more rustic the better), a bold, sculptural chimney or two, and a steeply pitched roof. Materials might range from stucco and brick, stone accents, and even a slate roof in higher priced (architect designed) houses, to cheaper materials in the streetcar suburbs.

**ENGLISH PLASTER**—A more generic form of modern English cottage, often inspired by the Cotswold dwelling, became popular during the late 1910s and 1920s. Built predominantly of stone and stucco in the British Isles, these houses were executed in the most durable, modern materials in the United States. Hollow tile and concrete block manufacturers sponsored competitions for the design of houses using their materials; Tudor or Cotswold variants proved to be tops in popularity. When referred to in the literature, these dwellings were simply called "English plaster" houses. Stucco covered the actual structural materials—sometimes even poured concrete was employed.

**ARTS & CRAFTS**—The most elusive variant of the Tudor style stems from the inevitable linkage between the English Arts & Crafts movement and the interests of its proponents in medieval vernacular dwellings. William Morris and his followers were inveterate medievalists and folklorists. Their own dream houses—Kelmescott Manor springs immediately to mind—were the most venerable examples of fine house building from the Tudor period. However, when handled by the leading architects of the movement, such as Philip Webb and C.F.A. Voysey, the typical "Arts & Crafts" house was more tangentially related to historical precedents than many American Tudor examples. The Arts & Crafts label is best used only when a dwelling was designed by recognized adherents of the movement in North America.



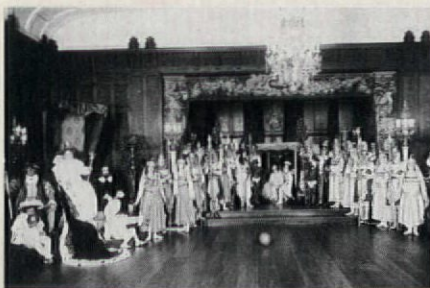


A late example of the Tudor style is Roger Bullard's Rynwood (above), the Samuel Salvage estate on Long Island in New York. Tudor even took root in the tropical environment of Pensacola, Florida (right).



## Popularizing the Past

Publications of all sorts seeded the Tudor zeitgeist after 1880. Books, such as Joseph Nash's *Mansions of the Olden Time*, cultivated a taste for the dress, manners, decor and culture of Elizabethan times.



Tire magnate Frank Seiberling of Akron, Ohio, built a Tudorbethan country house, Stan Hywet (1911–15)—and he re-enacted Elizabethan pageants regularly.

view of Tudor- and Stuart-era country houses. Periodicals featured the best modern English design from the likes of C.F.A. Voysey and Ernest Newton. America even had its own version of *Country Life* magazine, based appropriately in the New York suburb of Garden City.

Illustrators such as Howard Pyle, Maxfield Parrish, and N.C. Wyeth painted their storybook visions of King Cole, the Arthurian legends, and Falstaff's London, kindling a spirit of adventure and childlike fantasy.

Between 1880 and 1920 a spate of fine books, led by the *English Country Life* series, offered Americans and English alike a spectacular

as a museum of 1920s eclectic taste rather than a bona fide medieval English relic.

In the inevitable mixing of high- and middle-brow culture that followed the first era of country house building, Tudor houses were assimilated into smaller, suburban models. These were either designed by architects or marketed by pattern-book plan sellers or building materials manufacturers. The materials and historical earmarks of the Tudor house made it ideal for those who sought higher quality and durability in a dwelling. In an era of wood building, for instance, most Tudor houses were constructed of masonry or concrete, making them more expensive than the average home. As building costs escalated during the 1920s and incomes plummeted in the Depression, homebuilders grew ever more conscious of the price of quality construction.

## In Search of Stucco

TUDOR HOUSES ARE FOUND IN CITIES, SUBURBAN areas, and country locales throughout the United States and Canada. Because the style was eventually marketed by mail-order and pattern-book manufacturers, such as Sears, Aladdin, and Radford, one is likely to turn up examples wherever middle-class homeowners chose to live and work during the period of peak popularity—from World War I to the late 1920s.

Initially, large, English-influenced country houses were built in the country club enclaves surrounding major cities such as New York, Boston, Cleveland, St. Louis, and Philadelphia. As the style gained popularity with builders and mail-order companies, subdivisions and garden suburbs became crowded with variants.

The stamp of durability and quality attracted developers to the style. Many of the detached houses and apartments in places like Jackson Heights, Queens, and Mamaroneck, New York, were deliberately built with Tudor associations and storybook materials. Forest Hills Gardens and Roland Park, two planned garden suburbs, featured architect-designed ensembles based upon English models (albeit the more modern work of Parker and Unwin). George Woodward visited England prior to commissioning his quaint, architect designed "Cotswold Village" in Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania.





Conventional Tudor houses grace many garden suburbs. Teaneck, New Jersey's Winthrop and Standish Road Historic Districts are rife with gems like this one.

Philadelphia's garden suburbs are particularly rife with examples of Tudor-inspired architecture, featuring the region's distinctive building stone, Wissahickon schist. Pittsburgh, too, embraced the English mode in its suburban and country environs during the years after 1900.

### Twilight of the Tudors

THE MAIL-ORDER HOUSE MARKET WAS LESS quick to adopt Tudor, perhaps since it was more difficult to execute half-timber and brick details in low-cost substitute materials or simple balloon framing. Nevertheless, major building material and house-plan companies featured Tudor models in their most popular catalogues. Magazines such as the *Ladies Home Journal*, *House Beautiful*, *House and Garden*, and *Country Life in America* often featured stories on proper Tudor details, materials, decoration, and garden types. Homeowners seeking information on paint colors, period details, and stylistic features should consult these pop-

ular periodicals and trade catalogues, now most often found in university libraries.

If you own a Tudor house from the revival era and value its materials, ambiance, and quality, treat it with care. Preservationists are just now beginning to see the domestic architecture of the early 20th century as a significant and threatened segment of our heritage. Many materials use in their construction are no longer made (though manufacturers continue to respond to the reproduction market). These buildings are a vital tradition in modern domestic architecture, and as much a part of the American dream as their Colonial Revival counterparts. 🏠

MARK ALAN HEWITT is a historical architect and principal of the Princeton Design Guild, a multi-faceted design and construction firm (25 Route 518, Princeton, New Jersey). He is the author of *The Architect* and the American Country House, 1890-1940, and the forthcoming *Gustav Stickley's Craftsman Farms: A Parable of the Arts & Crafts Movement*.



Design 612-B



Design 615-B

As high-style models from the era of the country estate were assimilated into middle-class culture, pattern books, builder plans, and mail-order house catalogues began to feature models in the Tudor style.



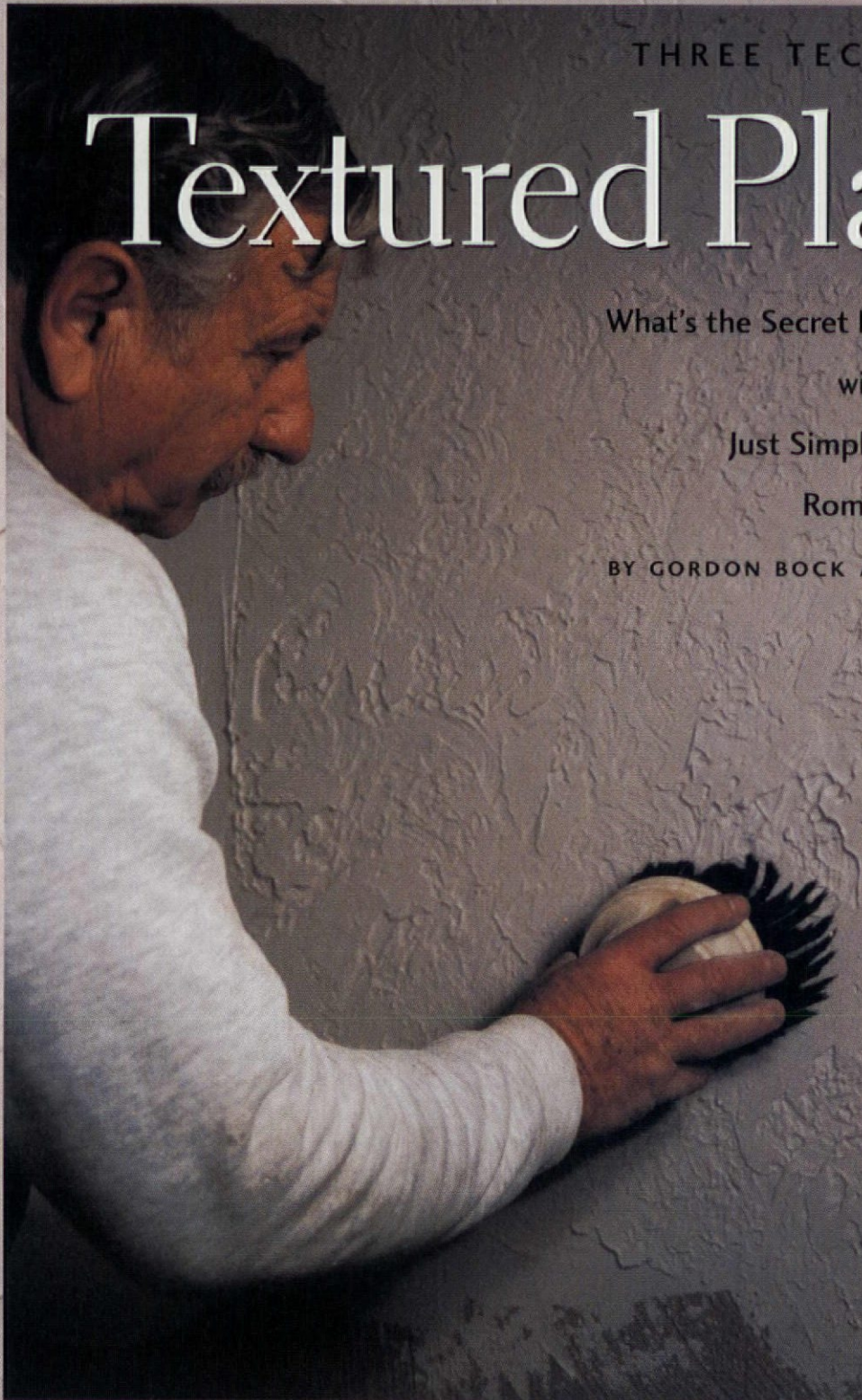
THREE TECHNIQUES FOR

# Textured Plaster

What's the Secret Behind Creating Walls  
with Sculptural Effects?

Just Simple Tools and a Feel for  
Romantic Revival Finishes.

BY GORDON BOCK AND FRANK MANGIONE







**T**EXTURE IS A DIRTY WORD TO MANY restorers. Too often, walls or ceilings with surfaces like cake frosting are the signs of trouble—a tell-tale coverup with joint compound or paint mixes that hide a failing foundation of original flat plaster. Such quickie finishes are destined to go, but only after hours of jabbing with a scraper. Alabaster-smooth plaster, though, was not the intent in every old house. To successfully match these walls—or just blend in repairs—you’ve got to know how they were done.

The vogue for rough walls of any sort comes and goes, and by the building boom of the early 20th century, plaster textures were solidly in. Romantic-style houses especially

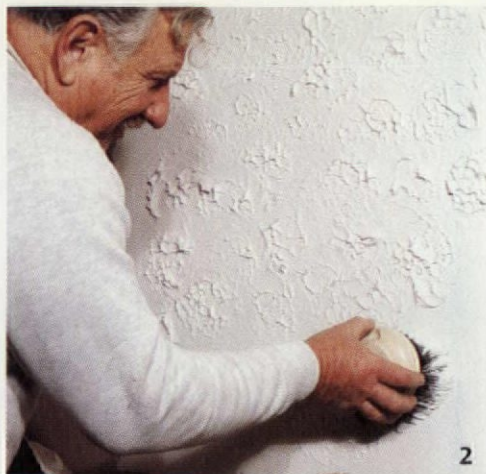
made much of so-called Moorish, Gothic, Holland, and Monastery walls. Similar to exterior stucco, these “artistic” surfaces had visible, true-relief effects and patterns that were designed to produce an ambiance of antiquity and the picturesque.

Like much good cooking, some seemingly complex or exotic finishes are really achieved with a few common materials—plus a dash of solid skills and creative whimsy. To crack the textured plaster code, we visited Frank Mangione in his Saugerties, New York, shop for a lesson in three classic finishes. Such plasterwork is well within the reach of a handy old-house owner, and it’s a bit of fun to do. The results, as you’ll see, are remarkable.

**Wall fashions swing back and forth between dead-flat plaster, brought to new perfection in the Victorian era, and the shadows produced by textured finishes—both obvious and barely noticed.**



**SPANISH TEXTURE:**  
 (1) Loading a soft-bristle brush with plaster from the hawk. (2) The first step is to fill the wall with generous peaks of plaster in a random pattern. (3) Twisting the brush as you pull it away puts the characteristic swirl in the plaster. (4) Finally, the peaks are flattened with a clean, wet trowel.



## Spanish Texture The key to craters is all in the brush



Deep shadows and subtle whorls of plaster are the hallmarks of Spanish texture.

ONE OF THE MOST EVOCATIVE—BUT easily executed—wall finishes is variously called “Spanish” or “Italian” because it loosely emulates the deep relief of Mediterranean-style plasterwork and stucco. The key to this effect is the proper brush, one that is able to deposit the plaster in large mounds.

Plastering tool manufacturers make specialized stippling and stucco brushes that are often employed for this finish. For our sample, however, Frank chose a large, natural-bristle brush that actually came from a car-washing wand. The long bristles hold a lot of plaster, and the brush has a generous circumference, but is still easily held in one hand. As a young man, Frank remembers that a natural sponge was popular. (The pores held ample plaster, but it got on your hands.) Other choices need not be exotic;

use whatever is supple, easily loaded, and produces the right effect. Test your brush first on a piece of drywall to see how it handles the plaster. If the bristles are too stiff, you’ll know because the brush will be stingy about leaving plaster behind.

### Press and Twist

FOR OUR SAMPLES, FRANK STARTS WITH A “hard” brown coat that was applied two days before (see “Working with Veneer Plaster,” page 42). Next he trowels on a white coat of plaster to hide the brown base. Before this coat dries comes the brushwork. Working with a hawk full of plaster in one hand, Frank loads the brush in one motion, then applies a glob to the wall in another.

There’s a bit of technique employed here. The trick to “Spanish” texture is a little “press and twist.” In rapid succession, you



plant the brush quickly on the wall so the plaster grabs, pull the brush away so it leaves "peaks" of plaster, and at the same time rotate the brush so the peaks are given an appealing swirl. In the hands of a professional, it all takes seconds to execute, but it's a skill that can be mastered by anyone with a little practice.

Frank continues to fill the field of the wall with plaster swirls, one after another. An identifiable pattern is not the object here, just a wall covered with haphazard peaks. If you find you've left a void, simply return and fill it. At this point, the wall could be considered complete, similar to what was once called "palm" finish. However, producing the standard "Spanish" appearance requires one more step.

### Flatten As You Go

ONCE THE PLASTER HAS STARTED TO SET UP and stiffen, Frank "knocks down" the peaks with a clean, wet trowel to complete the texture. He does this by slowly skimming the tops of the peaks, about  $\frac{3}{16}$ " off the initial surface, working slowly in long strokes from the bottom, up. "Always trowel up, against gravity," says Frank, "—troweling down destroys the texture." This flattening leaves the recesses of the globs untouched, making deep shadow pockets, but levels the peaks in a way that produces a secondary pattern of flat, white areas. The longer the plaster is allowed to set, the more intact the swirl pattern remains. Within the parameters of the basic texture, the effect is determined only by individual taste.

It's worthwhile to add a short note here about personal safety when working with plaster. The ingredients—especially lime—can burn if they come in prolonged contact with skin. If you choose a sponge or brush for swirling that is messy to use, protect your hands from plaster by wearing rubber gloves. (Thin, dishwashing types are flexible and work well.)

Yellow or beige paint was a common way to finish "Spanish" texture in the past. Frank remembers seeing many houses from the 1920s and '30s where the texture was set off in panels with wood mouldings in an otherwise flat wall. Frank also notes that the same technique—except executed without the twist in the brushwork—was popular as "English" texture. ■



## California Texture

Walls gain interest when trowels leave their mark

THE PINNACLE OF REFINED WALL PLASTERING is a die-straight, marble-smooth surface. Yet the subtle shadings left by trowel marks, suggestive of long-ago labor, have their own rustic appeal. One of the simplest trowel textured finishes is called "California" in some areas because of its recent popularity west of the Mississippi.

### Just Skip It

TO START "CALIFORNIA," FRANK TROWELS ON a thin coat of plaster to cover the brown coat. Next, he loads the trowel with little bit of "mud" (plaster) and applies this to the wall with only slight pressure. Just skimming the surface in a "skip-trowel" technique, some of the mud escapes the trowel at the sides, leaving subtle waves. It is also acceptable to have the corners of the trowel nick the plaster. The passes should be short and random in direction, but need not be premeditatedly helter-skelter. In fact, the easiest way to skip-trowel is to work up and down. To the ob-



**CALIFORNIA TEXTURE:** A "skip-trowel" hand pushes additional plaster out in shallow waves—exaggerated here for this sample (top). Nicks, rises, and other trowel marks are the essence of California texture (above).



## Working with Veneer Plaster

For all the finishes in this article Frank used veneer plaster, a relatively new product designed for producing a hard, high-quality finish on a gypsum board base. Frank strongly advocates veneer plaster for textured finishes, especially when done by non-professionals. Besides the excellent results, veneer plaster takes a long time to set (about 45 minutes)—much longer than traditional plaster and plenty of opportunity to create and correct a finish on the average 10' x 10' wall. Moreover, while traditional plaster takes a skilled proportioning of lime and gypsum to obtain the correct hardness, veneer plaster is premixed and nearly foolproof to prepare. For texture work, Frank simply mixes the plaster with water, using a mixing bit and power drill, until it has a mayonnaise consistency.

Veneer plaster does require some careful preparation, however. When working with a gypsum board base, be sure to prepare the surface first with a bonding agent. When working with a brown coat base, include two full shovels of sand per bag of Structolite to make a "hard" brown coat. This way, the base will be compatible with the hard veneer plaster and prevent cracks. Then let the brown coat lie untouched for a day. Just before beginning, dampen the brown coat well with a roller so it does not absorb water out of the plaster.

server this appears to be an artless step, but it actually takes conscious wrist control to get the trowel to leave different levels.

After the plaster has set slightly (about five minutes), but is still quite soft, it is possible to subdue this texture even further, if desired. To do this Frank slowly guides a clean, wet trowel over the just-finished waves, holding it at an even distance over the surface. He moves from bottom to top in regular paths. Working this way, the trowel just grazes the high spots in the waves, flattening and moving the plaster into a hint of counter-pattern.

By the late 1920s, finishes similar to "California" were being done with plastic paint—any one of a score of now-extinct products that were heavy in pigment. When brushed, stippled, or scraped with a palette knife, plastic paint was capable of several, somewhat theatrical, textured effects. The best textured finishes, however, were always the work of skilled plasterers on a traditional three-coat plaster wall. ■

# Travertine Texture

Faux stone becomes a naturalistic texture



Even before paint, groups of cavities divided into blocks by thin mortar joints effectively create Travertine texture.

ONE OF THE MOST COVETED VENEER and flooring stones is travertine marble, an ivory-colored limestone pocked with many coarse holes and cells that give it a unique decorative character. "Travertine" texture is a convincing imitation of this stone produced solely with plaster and simple tools.

Like the previous textures, "Travertine" starts with an initial coat of plaster, but this time it needs to be troweled flat enough for a finished wall. The reason is, once the texture effects are applied, this will still be the finish surface representing a smooth cut-stone face.

### Your Level Best

THE NEXT STEP FOR MOST CRAFTSMEN IS creating the mortar joints. Armed with a mason's spirit level, Frank first lays off the horizontal courses, typically 16" apart in the real veneer. Then he incises the joints simply by raking out plaster with a rod nail. Once all the horizontal courses are struck, he returns to lay in the vertical joints, staggered

every other course to make blocks 24" long in a running bond.

At this point, Frank is ready to create the stone cells within each block by using a stiff brush. A small corn whisk broom is the classic tool for this step, but some craftsman prefer the results from a brush with spring steel or wire bristles.

### Stone by Stone

WHATEVER THE TOOL, THE IDEA IS TO POUNCE the plaster in more or less horizontal bands at different levels of height. This is quick work, just jabbing the plaster deliberately five or six times in groups 8" to 16" apart. With each pounce, the brush pulls away some of the plaster. The point is to create the appearance of individual blocks—no cells that straddle mortar joints—yet still give the feel of masonry that has been matched for patterns.

Once all the cells are in place, Frank lightly trowels them over to knock down displaced plaster peaks and even-out the surface. Frank moves the trowel slowly and

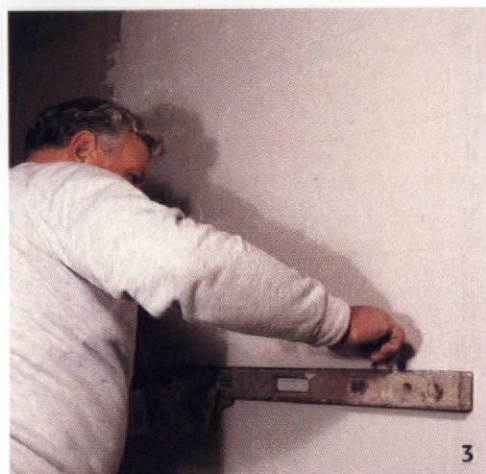




1



2



3



4

**TRAVERTINE TEXTURE:**  
 (1) Though non-professionals may be best advised to begin with the mortar joints, for our samples Frank starts by pouncing in the stone cells with a whisk broom.  
 (2) When all cells are in, Frank flattens them to refine their appearance.  
 (3) Horizontal mortar joints are raked in continuous lines with a nail and level.  
 (4) Vertical joints are staggered.


horizontally across the surface so the pocks are dragged slightly into the groups of craters characteristic of natural travertine.

When the plaster is dry, the travertine texture is ready for its finishing touch: the paint job. After the plaster has been primed and painted in an all-ivory color, the surface is brushed with a thin glaze stain, typically in a raw umber tone. Immediately afterwards, the stain is rubbed off with a rag. This produces ochre-colored highlights over most of the surface, but leaves stone cells and other depressions a deep brown. In some installations, the painted and stained texture is also given a thin coat of varnish to protect it.

This technique is not limited to travertine stone alone, either. By stippling the entire surface, then scoring off 9" x 18" blocks, the plaster can be made to simulate French Caen stone, another desirable veneer material.

These steps are only basic guidelines. The variations are limitless. Experiment with different brushes and tools (even hands) for alternate effects. For large wall areas—say a run over 10'—the typical texture job

requires two individuals to work as a team to keep up with the material. One worker, for example, does the brushwork for "Spanish" while a partner follows behind, doing the troweling once the plaster is ready to be flattened. In any event, don't feel compelled to seek perfection in a textured finish; irregularity is typically part of the process.

Note, however, that a textured finish that is aggressive or has a deep relief can be overpowering on a large wall. As a general rule, keep the effect conservative and the trowelwork light. (Going over the finish with a wet sponge or brush just after it has set is one way to soften a completed texture that has come out too strong.) Don't hesitate to test a texture first in a corner of the room. As Frank says: "Plaster is the most practical of materials. You can always scrape a sample off before it gets hard and start over." 

FRANK J. MANGIONE, INC. specializes in the restoration and duplication of ornamental plasterwork (21 John Street, Saugerties, N.Y., 12477; 914-246-9863).

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H O W - T O

# Victorian Lining and Striping

At its height in the 19th century, striping defined the sign- and carriage-painting trade, adorning coaches and advertisements. In houses, decorative painters used striping to border or further decorate stenciled walls and ceilings. Striping also dresses up interior woodwork in imitation of fancy moulding profiles, and it's a time-honored decorating technique for country furniture. More than artistic ability or even a steady hand, it's practice that you'll need — that, and knowing a few tricks.

BY STEVE JORDAN

According to Franklin Gardner's *The Painters Encyclopaedia* (M.T. Richardson, N.Y., 1891), lines are less than  $\frac{1}{16}$  of an inch wide. Stripes are wider than  $\frac{1}{16}$ ".



**B**EFORE DECALS AND SPRAY PAINT came along, most lines and stripes were applied quickly with simple tools and confidence—and without fuss. Striping is a basic brushwork technique that you can use to paint decorative lines for any purpose: enhancing flat cabinet doors and drawers, subtly detailing window and door casings, refinishing furniture, and adding quick graphics or wallpaperlike character to walls. Give the technique a try and you'll be free of messy masking tape.

You'll need the right tools and materials to create clean lines. Use high-quality paints for opaque stripes and lines. Architectural wall and trim paints are okay. But sign painter's paints (glossy) and Japan paints (flat) are ideal because of their high pigment content. You can purchase these at most art-supply stores. For a transparent stripe, reduce oil-based paint with glazing liquid or varnish, and thin this with mineral spirits or turpentine. Reduce latex paints with latex glazing liquid or latex varnish, and thin it with water.

Mixing your paint correctly for striping is critical. If the paint is too thick, you can't pull a long line. If the paint is too thin, it will run everywhere except where you want it. Try some tests on a sample board with various batches of thinned paint. Generally, the paint must be thinner than wall or trim paint, a little thicker than heavy cream.



Fig. 43—Champion Sword Stripers.

Painters once used sword stripers, lining fitches, and small brushes called “pencils” to run lines and stripes. You can stripe with various brushes depending on the desired width of the line. I prefer Grumbacher “Prestige” badger hair fitches (available at art-supply stores) because the bristle count



Fig. 37—Striping Pencils.

is high, enabling them to hold a lot of paint and apply it neatly. Brushes must be high quality and in excellent condition. Remember to use natural-bristle brushes with solvent-based paints, and synthetic-bristle

(polyester) brushes with latex paints. Believe it or not, those cheap foam brushes that work in both alkyd or latex paint produce exceptional results when used for wider stripes. [Ed. note: Many books recommend preparing the painted surface before lining or stenciling with one coat of matte varnish or white shellac, so mistakes wipe away easily.]

### The Straight and Narrow

ON SMALL JOBS (SAY, DRAWER FRONTS), YOU probably don't need to mark the line. Just eyeball the placement of your straightedge or guide before you apply paint. On larger areas such as walls or trim, use a level or a plumb bob to place a straight line, then lightly mark points along the surface with a hard lead artist's pencil. Your painting guide will be placed along these marks.

The type of straightedge you need depends on the surface and the type of brush.

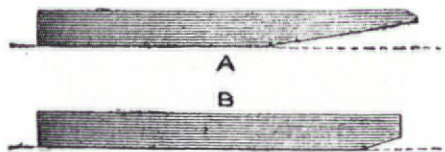


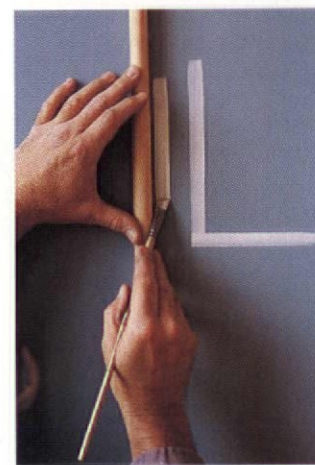
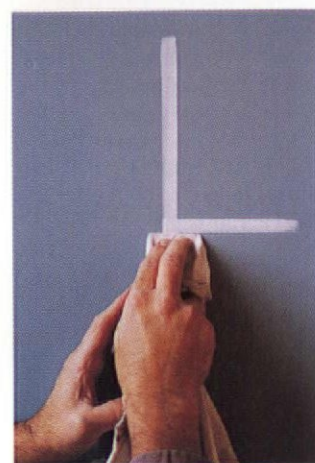
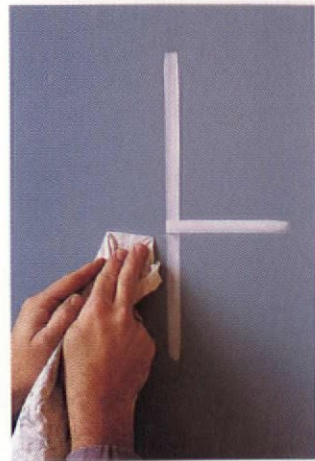
FIG. 146.—STRAIGHT-EDGE.

The edge that serves as the running guide for your brush must be beveled or undercut, with a void between the edge of the guide and the surface being painted. Obviously, an edge that touched the surface would collect paint to creep and smudge underneath, and would transfer paint to the clean surface every time you moved it. In some cases, your brush's ferrule will ride the straightedge, so it should be thick enough to keep the paint-laden bristles clear of the surface.

For narrow lines applied with a fitch brush, use a straight strip of wood—similar to but thicker than a yardstick. For wide stripes made by a larger brush, try using a dowel (a wood closet pole is perfect). If you're painting parallel lines, you can carefully roll the dowel along the surface to place the next line. This takes a lot of practice, but eventually you'll have to mark only the first line; then simply roll the straightedge to the next position.

### How to Pull the Line

HOLDING YOUR GUIDE FIRMLY IN PLACE WITH your left hand, and with your paint easily within reach, take your loaded brush in



To turn a corner, overpaint your line (top) and then wipe away excess with a rag-covered putty knife (middle). To paint parallel lines, use a dowel for a straightedge and carefully roll it to the next location (above).





Hold your brush loosely and comfortably to pull an even line (above). After refilling the brush, start above where the previous stroke left off (right). Let your fingers ride the edge to create freehand stripes (far right).



## SUPPLIERS

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your right hand. (Left-handed folks do the opposite.) Put the ferrule of the brush next to the guide—bristles on the surface—and firmly pull the brush down the guide using the same pressure along the way. On vertical surfaces, begin at the top and work down. On horizontal surfaces, begin ahead of you and pull the paint toward your body. [Period texts recommend holding the brush at the extreme end in order to achieve a straight, even line.]

Once you get the hang of it, you should be able to pull lines 12" to 18" in length. Long lines, of course, require several dips in paint and several strokes. Note that each stroke begins with a heavy line that diminishes in width and opacity as the paint is dispersed onto the surface. When you continue your line, begin a few inches above the place where you left off. If the finished stripe looks uneven, reload your brush and make one sweeping stroke along the entire length.

To create a corner, don't just stop one line and start the other. Pull your stripes past the intersection and wipe away excess. If you like, end the stripe with a fancy flourish, drawn freehand or with a stencil.

Clean up a wavy edge and the overlap at corners with a rag dampened in the appropriate solvent, wrapped tightly around the blade of a putty knife. And clean any paint from your straightedge before proceeding to the next line.

## The Freehand Tradition

IN SOME CASES, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO USE A guide so you'll have to draw the lines freehand. You can't do this in the middle of walls; the surface must have an edge or moulding that your fingers can glide along as a guide. To line or stripe a door casing, for example, use the edge that returns to



the wall as a guide. Holding the brush like a pencil, press your third or fourth finger firmly to the side of the casing and draw the brush downward, using the same pressure along the entire length.

Freehand striping can be tricky, but it'll be old hat for you carpenters and dry-wallers who use your fingers to guide the pencil when marking long cutlines near the edge of stock. When you're painting parallel stripes, just switch between your third or fourth finger as a guide along the edge to change the position of the line.

Whether pulled along a straightedge or done freehand, hand-drawn lines and stripes give an authentic decorative effect. This versatile paint decorator's technique adds handmade artistic character you won't get by using tape.

STEVE JORDAN is a decorative painter and preservation consultant in Rochester, New York.



## How To Cheat

The truth is, painting a straight, even line on a painted surface in one swift move is a hard trick to master. Experts agree that the way to become proficient is to get an expensive lining fitch, or a sword liner, and a suitable thinned paint, then just practice, practice, practice on a smooth prepared surface until you gain confidence. Special brushes allow you to take up enough paint on the long bristles to draw a nice long line before you have to recharge the brush. Well-painted lines add definition and a certain professionalism to the job, be it a wall or a dresser. But there are easier (if not quite as beautiful) ways to get the effect.

(1) With a steel rule or straight-edge and a sharp, new scalpel (X-acto) blade, score the paint surface (not too deeply but enough to show) with two parallel lines as far apart as the desired stripe width. Then draw your sword liner along, and you'll find that the paint stays in the "tracks."

(2) Use a felt pen (really!) in the suitable thickness, pulled alongside a ruler. Once it's varnished over or shellacked, it will look fine to anyone but a lining snob.

(3) To line in negative, buy a roll of the pin striping used on car bodies. Stick it down, paint as usual, and let it dry. Then peel it off to reveal a line of the base color.

Lines usually look best painted in a slightly transparent paint, especially if they're stripes more than  $\frac{1}{8}$ " wide. Whatever method you use, remember that applying a coat of clear varnish or thinned white shellac over your painted base allows you to wipe away botched lines.

—adapted from *Decorating with Paint* by Jocasta Innes (Harmony Books), with thanks to decorative painter Sally Kenny.



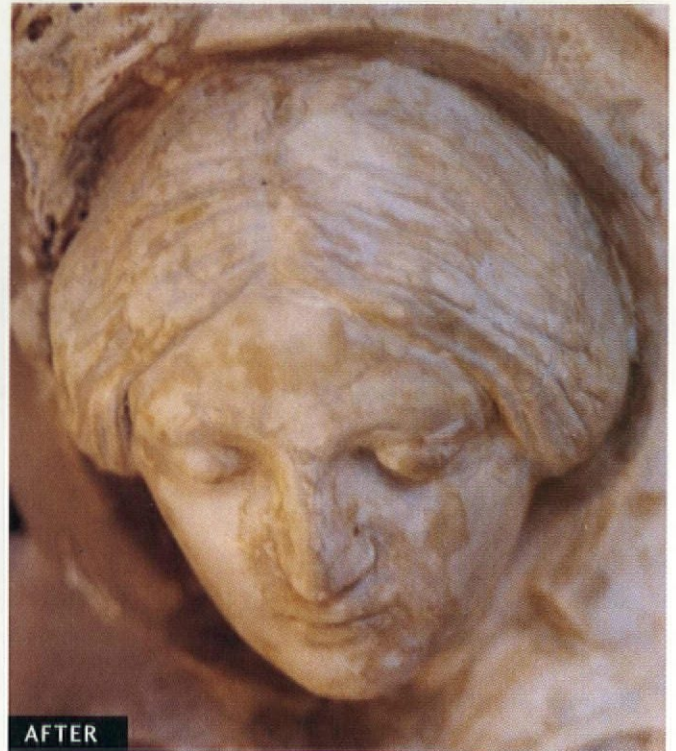
Two fine examples (no cheating here): Above, lines painted freehand give a soft effect; the center stripe was filled between two lines. Below, simple lining creates three-dimensional "panels."







BEFORE



AFTER

Undeterred by caked-on paint, nicked plaster, and a missing fruit-cluster drop, this homeowner restored an intricate, 140-year-old ceiling medallion.

## Ceiled with a Kiss

BY KYLE HUSFLOEN

**R**EVIVING THE ROCOCO CEILING medallion in my ca. 1858 villa posed several challenges. As is typical for original plaster ornament this old, layers of dirty paint obscured the intricate detail, and some of the cast ornament was completely missing. After considerable research, some trial and error, and lots of hard work, the medallion is good as new. I'll outline how I proceeded in hopes that I can save fellow restorers a few headaches—and neckaches.

BEFORE I COULD REPAIR—OR even clearly see—the medallion, I had to strip the thick paint buildup. A commercial stripper dissolved the outer layers of oil-based paint, but proved useless for earlier coats. I discovered the oldest paint was calcimine, a water-based

“whitewash” for ceilings in common use before 1940.

Remove the oil-based paint first, using these steps. Working in small, manageable sections, brush an extra-thick liquid stripper on the scrollwork and let it sit for 15 to 30 minutes. Apply additional coats as the first begins to dry out. When the outer layers of paint start to curl and wrinkle, begin scraping the gunky residue away with homemade tools, such as an old spoon with a pointed tip.

To strip the water-based calcimine, apply a solution of one part vinegar to one part water using pieces of coarse cloth (old terry cloth towel is ideal). Let the vinegar water soak in, then gently scrub the plaster with a toothbrush. The calcimine should soften



**Above:** Paint and dirt obscured the detail in the faces of the medallion's four idealized “beauties” (left). Thorough cleaning revealed strands of hair and fine modeling around the eyes, nose, and lips (right).



and begin to lift right off the plaster. To dislodge stubborn patches, prod carefully with a nut pick.

Rinse each work area carefully with clean, warm water to insure that future paint will adhere. A word of caution: plaster is very porous and while it absorbs a good deal of water without damage, it can soften or even begin to "melt." To repair minor plaster damage, rub a premixed, lightweight spackling compound into nicked and eroded areas. The compound is easy to work with; you may even be able to do some free-hand molding of small details with your fingertips.

### Creating a Latex Mold

TO REPLACE MY MISSING ELEMENT, A FRUIT-cluster drop, I made a mold of a matching, undamaged element using latex casting material (available in hobby or craft stores). Because the latex mold tends to shrink slightly, this method is not suitable for multiple pieces that must line up, such as dentils. For bigger jobs, use liquid urethane rubber (see "Award-Winning Medallions," Sept./Oct. 1995).

After reading the directions carefully, dust the drop thoroughly with talcum powder to prevent sticking. Next paint on 12 to 14 layers of liquid latex, allowing each coat to dry completely before applying the next. If the element you're replacing is intricate, be sure to work the casting material carefully into every nook and cranny to insure that fine details reproduce in the mold.

Since my mold was teardrop-shaped and larger in the middle than at either end, it needed to be removed with care. I knew that latex molds can be made more durable and rubbery by boiling them in water. After I had applied the recommended number of coats to the drop cluster, I vulcanized the mold in place by submerging it in a bucket of hot water. A few minutes of exposure was just enough to firm up the mold and yet leave it nicely elastic. With no trouble at all, I carefully peeled it off the drop, then rinsed and dried it.

### Casting the New Drop Cluster

TO CAST A NEW PIECE, I USED PLASTER OF paris (gypsum). Since this plaster sets up quickly, the mixture can't be too thick or it will begin to harden before the mold is filled. A too-thin mixture won't provide a

strong casting. The plaster must be thin enough to fill every crevice, but thick enough that it sets up within minutes of filling the mold. It pays to do a few trial runs to find the right density. After my second batch had air-dried in the mold for 24 hours, I removed a nearly perfect drop cluster.

The spot where my original drop had broken off was almost flat, which made matching up the new casting easy. When there's too much material on a new casting, it's simple to remove the excess with a knife or saw blade. If there's a void in the existing plasterwork where you want to attach your new element, it can be filled with a little plaster.

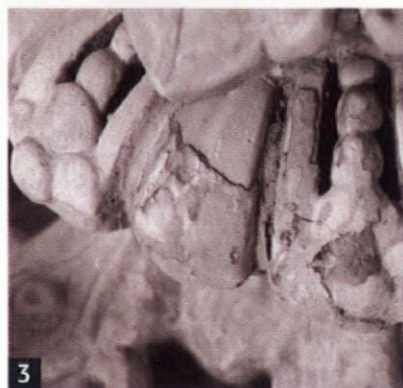
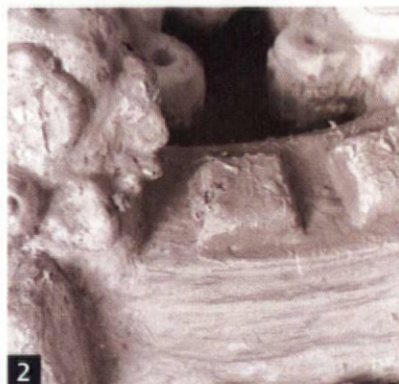
Scarify (scratch) the mating surfaces with a saw blade. I used a white glue that contains polyvinyl acetate (PVA), which will "rewet" when it comes in contact with wet plaster. You can use the glue straight or blend it at a ratio of about 90% glue to 10% gypsum plaster. Soak the new piece in water before you reattach it so that it doesn't absorb all the water in the glue before the bond is formed.

Once the bond was tight and clean, I went back and filled in around the edges of the new joint with premixed spackling to smooth it out. A light coating of a primer/sealer such as Kilz evens out the finish of the whole medallion, revealing the detail you worked so hard to uncover and repair. 🏠



Among the treasures inside this little villa in Galena, Illinois, was a full-blown Rococo cast-plaster medallion (inset, opposite page).

Ornamental medallions this old are likely to be covered in multiple layers of paint, including some with different chemical properties. After the application of a liquid stripper, the outer coats of thick, oil-based paint softened up (1) and scraped away easily (2). A vinegar-water bath softened the calcimine underneath (3). Residues were cleared away with a toothbrush and nut pick, leaving the original creamy white plaster smooth and unscathed (4).







Burlap paneling in the dining room of this 1913 Seattle home lends a quieter effect than the "excessive" use of paneled woodwork, *Bungalow Magazine* noted in the 'teens.

# MATERIAL BENEFIT

## Finding Fabrics for Arts & Crafts Walls

What did turn-of-the-century Arts & Crafts homeowners do with their walls? Free to choose among wallpaper, calcimine coatings, and newly popular ready-mixed paints, many folks decided to hang humble fabrics of one ilk or another. The fashion for unpretentious, almost industrial-grade wall textiles was short-lived, fading soon after World War I. Though few examples survive, it's clear that fabric was once the covering with cachet — yet simple enough to re-create today. **BY STUART STARK**

WOVEN TEXTILES HAVE DECORATED WALLS for generations, but it took a great sea-change in residential design to offer more than damasks and tapestries only the well-to-do could afford. Instead, tastemakers encouraged homeowners to work with their architecture by using a wide range of new materials specially designed for Arts & Crafts interiors. Gone were the cut velvets and cabbage-rose wallpapers of the previous gen-

eration. In their place appeared textiles such as burlap, hopsacking, leatherette, buckram, linen union, and canvas. These rustic fabrics blended with the plainer, cozier, "artistic" interiors popularized in the planbooks and magazines of the era. Also, their relatively coarse textures gave the impression of hand-manufacture—the quality so admired by adherents of the Bungalow lifestyle.

## Burlaps in their Place

IN THE LEAST EXPENSIVE AND SIMPLEST BUNGALOWS, burlap and canvas were used as wainscot in halls, dining rooms, and dens. As a substitute for the all-wood wainscot found in upscale homes, plain burlap (factory-dyed in a variety of colors) was simply framed top and bottom with a plate rail and baseboard, giving a pleasing texture that contrasted with varnished woodwork and calcimined walls.

Where the construction budget was ample, wood mouldings were more lavish



and the amount of fabric proportionately decreased. High-priced homes eliminated fabric wainscots altogether in favor of expensive, polished, all-wood wainscots in dark tones. Where wood wainscots were installed, fabric migrated up the wall and took pride-of-place as a textured frieze. Occasionally, entire rooms—usually dens—would have fabric-clad walls.

Sometimes a fabric frieze might even be stenciled. Simple Bungalows could be decorated with repeating stencils of common Arts & Crafts motifs such as pine cones, ginkgo leaves, roses, or vines. Huge mansions were also built according to Arts & Crafts principles. Here, specially commissioned stencils used stylized imagery of vines, roses, or local themes—such as salmon.

MOST FABRICS SUITABLE FOR ARTS & CRAFTS walls have a dense weave with a slightly rough texture. At the turn of the century, they were all lumped under the heading “burlap,” a family of coarsely woven fabrics that included jute, hopsacking, Hessian, and linen union. Weaves were typically 14 to 15 threads per inch. The low-grade burlap common today is too loose to stand up as wall covering.

Wall burlap advertised specifically for the Arts & Crafts market was available “up to 72” in width” and “obtainable in every shade.” Manufacturers met the public’s appetite for novel tone and texture with specially dyed colors. Some were stiffened with a glue-like material that made the fabric easier to hang. Look for trade names stamped on the back of the material. Plain and tapestry fabrics made by Art Ko-Na, FABRIK-O-NA, and Tapestrolea promised non-fading colors and spongeable surfaces.

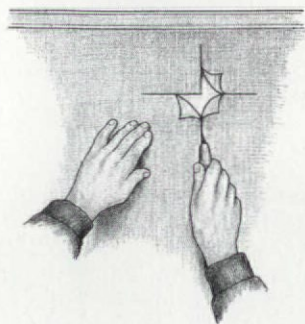
Other specialized but less-common wall fabrics included buckram (also known as book-binding cloth) and leatherette. Buckram, which has a fine texture, was occasionally embossed with delicate leaf or floral designs. Originally a cheap substitute for Spanish leather, leatherette was initially regarded with disdain. As manufacturers refined the product, leatherette flourished in a variety of imitation leather patterns. The material lent a handsome and rich character to a library or den wainscot at a fraction of the cost of real leather. The fad for things Japanese still ran strong at the turn of the century, bringing with it grasscloth.



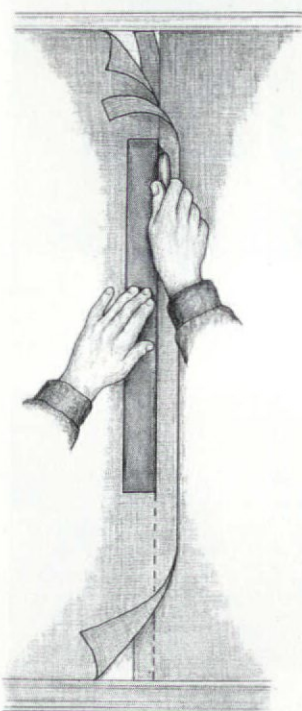
Stenciled fabric friezes were used lavishly at Overlynn, a Tudor-influenced Arts & Crafts house in Burnaby, British Columbia. Top: The elaborate paneled frieze over the dining room mantel is stenciled with a salmon motif. At left: Intricate patterns and deep, rich colors contrast with the coarse texture of the fabric. Above: Simpler stencils included stylized imagery of vines and roses, like this one in the hallway at Overlynn.



## Working with Wall Fabrics



To repair fabric "bubbles," cut an X in the loose material with a sharp knife and repaste. Take care not to use too much adhesive, or the excess will show.



To join sections of burlap, press a long, metal straight-edge over two layers of overlapping fabric, then cut through to the wall with a sharp utility knife. Pull the selvage edges off and press the seam down.

Made of woven grass laminated to rice paper in 30" widths, grasscloth offered the natural texture and subtle coloring so prized by Arts & Crafts devotees.

### Applying Fabric to Walls

IF YOU ARE RE-DOING THE WALLS IN AN ARTS & Crafts house, fabrics remain an appropriate user-friendly covering. At the turn of the century, woven wall fabrics were usually hung on finished plaster walls, but the newly invented and heavily advertised plaster wallboard was considered a perfect surface to be "burlapped." While plaster walls had to be sized first (to prevent the adhesive from migrating into the plaster), wall-paper or burlap could be hung as soon as the wallboard was in place.

**HANGING BURLAP**—Arts & Crafts-style burlap is heavy and unsized, so it is necessary to put paste on the wall. But first identify where the seams will occur around the room. At those points, paint stripes down the wall in a color matching the fabric. If the seam isn't perfect, or the fabric

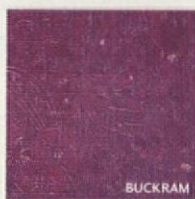
shrinks slightly (always a possibility with unbacked textiles), the painted stripes will camouflage the gaps.

To hang burlap, apply paste evenly in sections, then press the dry burlap onto the pasted surface. Use a wheat-flour paste or a thinned down version of SHUR-STIK 111, a heavy-duty adhesive for textiles and vinyls. Each piece of fabric should overlap the next by an inch or two. Make sure that the grain of the fabric is even on the wall.

The most successful way to join sections of burlap is with lapped seams. While the paste is still wet, press a long, metal straightedge over the sections where they overlap. Cut both layers through to the wall with a sharp utility knife to make the seam. Pull the selvage edges off and press the seam down. There should be enough paste left to hold the fabric flat, but if there is a dry spot or two, add a small amount of paste under the edges with a small brush. Smooth down the fabric; you should have an almost invisible joint.

To finish a wainscot, apply wood mouldings on top of the burlap to divide it

## GLOSSARY



BUCKRAM



GREEN BUCKRAM



LEATHERETTE



GREEN AND RED BURLAP

### Arts & Crafts Wall Fabrics

**BUCKRAM** Fine, glue-stiffened linen or hemp fabric traditionally used in book binding or to stiffen garments and adapted for use on walls. Produced in many colors and sometimes embossed with floral motifs.

**BURLAP** Sometimes called "Hessian," a coarse, light brown fabric made of jute, flax, hemp or manila used for sacking. Finer grades were intended for curtains, upholstery, and walls.

**CANVAS** A heavy, strong, closely woven fabric of hemp, flax, or cotton. At the turn of the century it was sometimes specially made with painted and stippled effects for walls.

**HOPSACKING** Coarse bagging for hops; in some fabric stores the term refers to a fine kind of burlap. Available in various colors in 36" and 48" widths.

**JUTE** This naturally brown fiber is used in making coarse bags; sometimes the fabric itself is referred to as jute.

**LEATHERETTE** Paper or cloth imitation of leather, printed and embossed to look like alligator skin, for example, in widths up to 50" wide. One early trade name is "Rexine."

**LINEN UNION** A tough linen/cotton fabric often used for upholstery and curtains. Frequently printed in patterns, it also comes dyed in plain colors, suitable for wall finishes.



into panels. The woodwork should be pre-finished to avoid splattering.

**HANGING SIZED FABRICS**—Sized fabrics, such as prepared canvas and buckram, are narrower than burlap and lighter in weight. Glue or sizing agents make them stiff, so they can be cut, pasted, and trimmed like paper—even carefully fitted into existing wainscot panels.

### Reviving Original Wall Textiles

IF THERE'S ORIGINAL BURLAP OR OTHER WALL fabric in your house, you have a decorative rarity worth keeping. Even if the fabric is dirty, faded, or unattached in places, it can often be brought back with touch-up techniques.

**CLEANING**—Always start by cleaning the fabric. Gently vacuum the surface using a low-suction setting. Do not rub the vacuum nozzle directly against the fabric, as it can burnish it and create shiny marks. If the material is particularly fragile or loose, tape some nylon net over the vacuum nozzle to prevent the fibers from being broken and sucked into the vacuum.

**REATTACHING FABRIC**—Where fabric has come away from the wall, carefully cut an X in the bubble along the warp and weft using a sharp knife. Lift the flaps and lightly paste both wall and fabric with a small brush. Gently lay the fabric back in position, lining up the weave. Dab away small amounts of paste with a soft cotton ball.

**RE-DYING FADED BURLAP**—Despite manufacturer's claims to the contrary, the original factory-dyed burlaps seem to have been particularly susceptible to fading. To find samples of the original unfaded hue, check behind light switches, heating registers, sconce canopies, or wooden mouldings.

While you can't change the basic color of a badly faded fabric, you may be able to revive it by applying a deeper, more vibrant shade of the existing red or green. You'll need fabric paint (available at graphics and crafts stores) that can be thinned down and sprayed with an airbrush. The trick is to thin the paint enough to work in the airbrush while retaining enough pigment to act as a penetrating dye. If you can't find an airbrush, try an autobody paint kit (about \$5 at auto parts stores). A pump spray bottle might also work, although getting an even and consistent application of dye will be more difficult.

Test the thinned paint on a piece of



The original dark green burlap in this wainscot, later painted beige, has recently been revived with green paint applied with an airbrush.

similar fabric, or do a trial run in an unobtrusive area of the room. Once you're ready to paint, remove all furnishings and mask all adjacent woodwork, floors, and walls. Hold the airbrush about 10" from the wall and spray with gentle sweeping motions, taking care to coat the fabric lightly and evenly with a fine spray. Two or more fine, light coats are preferable to a heavy spray.

**PAINTED FABRIC**—Regrettably, many fabric wainscots have been painted over in the course of changing fashions. Fabric thick with encrusted paint cannot be revived. However, it may look better when repainted in a more tasteful Arts & Crafts color. If some of the original fabric texture still survives, careful wiping, stippling, or even a fine sponging in darker and lighter shades of the desired color can often successfully hide the previous paint color. Use flat paint to most effectively emulate the original fabric surface.

Wall fabrics in historical weaves and colors can help return the correct proportion and color palette to many Arts & Crafts interiors. They're part of the original intent to have furniture, fabrics, and architecture all complement each other. 🏠

STUART STARK is a restoration consultant with Stuart Stark & Associates, 2049 Oak Bay Avenue, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8R 1E5; (250) 592-1282.

### SUPPLIERS

**CHARLES RUPERT DESIGNS**  
2004 Oak Bay Ave.  
Victoria, BC V8R 1E5  
(250) 592-4916  
Linen union in burgundy, green, terra-cotta, natural.  
Ppd. 4x5 samples, \$2 each.

**NORTH END FABRICS**  
31 Harrison Ave.  
Boston, MA 02111  
(617) 542-2763  
Buckram, heavy canvas in white, natural; A & C colors.

**ROSE BRAND**  
517 West 35th St.  
New York, NY 10001  
(212) 594-7424  
Heavy-weight canvas in natural, green, etc.

**ROGERS & GOFFIGON LTD.**  
979 Third Ave., Room 1717  
New York, NY 10022  
(212) 888-3242  
23-oz. designer linen in deep gold, dark green, etc.

**COUNTRY CURTAINS**  
Red Lion Inn  
Stockbridge, MA 01262  
(800) 456-0321  
Cotton duck in natural, dark green. Swatches available.

**CROWN CORP.**  
3012 Huron St., Suite 101  
Denver CO 80202  
(800) 422-2099  
Anaglypta simulating burlap.



# Purchasing Power A Consumer's Guide



This hedge trimmer, as well as a lawn mower, grass edger, leaf blower, are all powered by Black and Decker's interchangeable batteries.

Americans spent \$600 million on cordless tools in 1996, three times more than in 1992. With that kind of market at stake, manufacturers are racing to build the most-powerful, most-novel, most-anything product they can engineer.

**W**E LIVE IN THE CORDLESS AGE. We can call home from the Interstate, compute at 30-thousand feet, and get an electric shave wherever we please. Old-house work, too, has become more convenient with the growing array of battery-operated tools. They are the hottest selling tools for both professional and amateur woodworkers.

If you're shopping for a substantial tool that carries its own power supply, you'll find the shelves stocked with products that cost between \$100 and \$500. You'll come across voltages ranging from

9.6 volts to 24 volts. And you'll see highly charged marketing that touts mysterious features like "fuzzy-logic" and "soft-pulse" technology. Here's how to get the best product for your hard-earned money and for your own brand of work.

## On Volts and Batteries

THE MOST NOTICEABLE ADVANCE IN CORDLESS tools is ever-increasing voltage, which means more power. The first cordless drills, popular in the early 1980s, ran on just 6 to 7.2 volts, not enough for more than finish carpentry. Until a few years ago, 9.6 volts was the industry standard. Now most companies





## to Energetic Cordless Tools BY JOSH GASKOF

offer 12- and 14.4-volt products and some sell 18- and 24-volt tools.

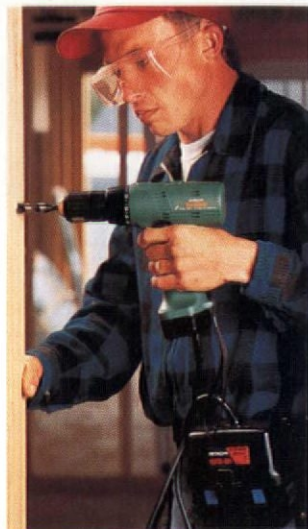
What does all this mean? To put it simply, *volts* measure electrical force. Think of circuitry as a pipe and electricity as water moving through it: voltage is akin to water pressure. Bigger, stronger batteries are needed to power reciprocating saws and hammer drills, but not other tools—such as light-duty saws, finish sanders, or the most popular cordless tool of all: the  $\frac{3}{8}$ " drill/driver.

Ask yourself how much power you really need because a supercharged battery will drain your wallet. Most 9.6-volt tools have a list price less than \$200. For 12-volt tools, the suggested price jumps to more than \$300, and 14.4-volt tools list in the \$400 range. Supercharged tools demand an even higher price. (Expect lower prices from discount stores and mail-order companies.)

More importantly, holding all that power in your hands can be tiring. Most 9.6

volt drills weigh under 4 pounds. Each jump in battery pack size from there can add  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound. And since the components of a battery have a given weight, the only way to lighten a tool besides reducing voltage is to use a lighter motor, which reduces power, or thinner plastic housing, which makes the tool fragile. Ergonomic design (such as T-handled drills) helps balance the tool, but doesn't lighten the load. Heavy drills tend to rotate in your hand, making it tough to drill a straight hole. Will you want the added mass that comes with extra power when you're working long hours or operating the tool overhead?

Resist the temptation to get the Corvette of the product line. Consider, instead, a sedan. For most old-house work, from minor framing to finish carpentry, 9.6 volts or 12 volts will be plenty. For professionals and serious amateurs who'll use their cordless tools daily for tough jobs, look at 12 volts



Hitachi lets you put the weight on your waist. Their belt pack holds two batteries for extended run time and takes the battery pack out of the tool.

Left to right: Milwaukee's cordless Sawzall offers an impressive 2,000 strokes per minute, compared to 2,800 for its plug-in models. Battery packs are all very similar. The most significant difference is that some manufacturers place two cells in the neck, which leads to a thicker handle on the tool. The newest addition to the battery-powered market, Milwaukee's cordless jigsaw, was introduced in 1997. DeWalt leads the voltage arms race with a complete line of 18-volt products, including this  $\frac{1}{2}$ " pistol-grip drill.





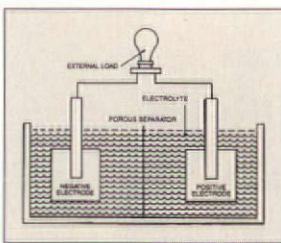
Right: Ryobi's T-handled cordless drills are coated with a non-slip material that eases the strain on your hands. Below: This 12-volt pack contains nine cells in the base and one in the neck.



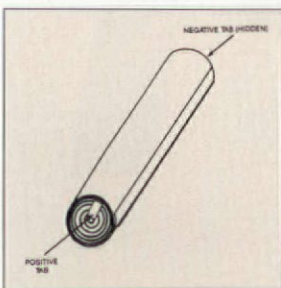
## Look Ma, No Cord!

Rechargeable batteries power everything from heated ski boots to small cars by storing energy in chemical form. Inside your battery pack's plastic shell (above), a cluster of cells are connected in a series, much like the stack of disposable batteries in a boom box. These cells (about the size of a "C" battery) supply 1.2 volts each. The voltage of the battery pack depends on how many cells are linked inside it. A 9.6-volt battery contains 8 cells, a 14.4-volt battery contains 12 cells, and so on. That's why battery weight is proportional to voltage. While there is no limit on how many cells could be linked in a series to provide higher voltages, manufacturers are limited by the weight of additional cells, the increased heat created, and the time required to charge them.

Each cell contains two metal electrodes, one positive and one negative.



As these react in a liquid electrolyte, ions move from positive to negative, creating a current. In disposable batteries, this is a one-way chemical reaction. But, for rechargeable batteries, the chemical reaction is reversed when electricity is put back through the battery.



Top: Ions move from the positive electrode to the negative electrode, creating electricity. Above: Nicad electrodes are rolled around each other for compact energy storage.

Today's cells are more efficient versions of technology from Thomas Edison's era. The first cell, ca. 1800, used zinc and silver electrodes in sea water. For most of the 19th century, variations of these large batteries were the only source of electricity for homeowners. The rechargeable lead-acid battery, which powers car starters and cordless telephones today, was developed in the 1880s. About 1912, Thomas Edison introduced the rechargeable nickel-iron battery; about the same time, a Swedish inventor created the first nickel-cadmium (Nicad) battery: basically a cadmium plate and a nickel plate in a potassium electrolyte. Nicad cells power your cordless tools.

to 14.4 volts. If you're regularly cutting 2-by stock, using a 1/2" bit, or boring into masonry, 18-volt tools may be worth their weight.

## Ample Power

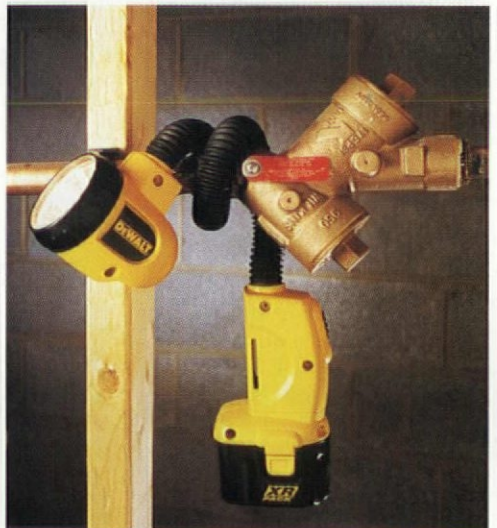
SUPPOSE YOU'RE UP ON THE ROOF MARVELING at how effortlessly your new cordless monster drives home 2" galvanized decking screws. Then, the motor changes its tune and loses power. It's time to climb down the ladder and set up the charger.

When you're operating high in the air or in a building without power supply, just how long a battery will last between charges may be more important than how much brute strength it has. Battery capacity is measured in *ampere-hours*—the quantity of electricity supplied over time. If voltage is the water pressure in a pipe, amperes are the volume of water passing through the pipe at one point. Amp-hours are a way of expressing this flow over time (amperes x hours).

Cordless tool batteries generally run from 1 to 2 amp-hours. You can't translate this into specific amount of time because every task drains a tool differently, but the higher this number is, the more stamina you can expect.

## Best in Performance

SO FAR, WE'VE LOOKED AT WHAT THE BATTERY can do. But the battery doesn't spin the 1" auger bit or carbide-tipped saw blade, the motor does. High-voltage batteries provide



If you're likely to buy additional cordless tools in the future, select a brand that offers interchangeable batteries. Some manufacturers even offer inexpensive flashlights that accept the battery packs from their tools.





Tough jobs, such as driving lag bolts, are made easier with an impact driver, which delivers impulsive torque.

the potential for more power, but the tool has to take advantage of it. The strength of the motor, the gearing ratio, and the *resistance* of the wiring and switches, among other things, affect the tool's output. (Resistance limits the flow of electricity, like the diameter of a water pipe.) A beefy battery with a small motor, for example, may accomplish less than a powerful motor that requires fewer volts.

So how do you determine a tool's power and run time? In addition to the battery's specs, check out the performance data of the whole package. The best measurement of brute force for drills is the *torque* (turning force) of the bit; for circular saws, compare revolutions-per-minute; for reciprocating saws, look at strokes-per-minute. To determine capacity, investigate the runtime of the tool on a single charge. The numbers that manufacturers report can be hard to compare because they use different tests. Make sure testing was done while the tools were doing similar tasks.

### Taking Charge

WHAT REALLY SETS APART THE BEST CORDLESS products may not be the tool at all, but the charger. Battery packs will last anywhere from 500 to 3,000 charge/discharge cycles — largely depending on the quality of the charger. Recharging can take from 15 hours to 15 minutes. The fastest chargers are not only better for your patience, they're better for the battery.

Chargers apply power to the battery where this electrical energy is stored as chemical energy. When the battery pack is fully charged, excess charge is turned into heat inside the battery. Heat is the most damaging force to affect batteries, and the amount of overcharge put on a battery influences how long it will last.

*Standard* (or "trickle") chargers are the slowest and cheapest. They're used in low-priced tools with fixed batteries, which are

**Top to Bottom:** DeWalt's ambitious circular saws have a 5½" blade, big enough to cut 2-by-stock. If you're cutting wood trim, try Skil's 3½" saw. Makita's cordless chain saw has a 4½" cutting capacity.





## Portable Tool Care

To get the maximum results from your battery, use the tool until the power is too low to do the work, then charge it completely. Do not charge the battery before its voltages drop off or interrupt the recharge cycle before it's done. These precautions are especially important if you don't have a top-of-the-line charger that can identify and account for differing battery conditions.

Do not, however, discharge the battery all the way. Many folks place rubber bands around the trigger until the motor quits. They resort to this practice because of the "memory" myth—that is, if you don't discharge your battery completely before recharging it, the battery can take on a "memory" of the shallow cycle and act like it has less capacity. In fact, memory is not a problem for power tool batteries, and draining a battery repeatedly can short out some of the cells inside.

Beyond overzealous, well-meaning owners, the biggest enemy of batteries is heat. New high-end battery chargers won't charge a hot battery, but if your tool is a few years old or isn't a top-drawer model, take matters into your own hands. When you remove a hot battery from the



Panasonic, the only tool company that manufactures its own batteries, offers an intelligent charger which switches into standby mode if the pack is hot.



Most manufacturers offer kits that contain the tool, charger, and either one or two batteries. If you'll use your tool a lot, selecting two batteries will make your life easier—no matter how fast the charger.

tool, let it cool before charging. Likewise, let a freshly charged battery cool before popping it into the tool.

Keep the charger's vents free of dust and other jobsite debris. They dissipate heat from the charging process. If the vents are clogged, your battery can overheat or the charger may be forced to slow down. Store the charger in its carrying case when not in use, and set it up to charge in an out of the way area, protected from things like plaster and wood dust, moisture, and hot sun. You can even store your extra battery pack in your lunch cooler to protect it from extreme summer days.

Also do not pack a hot battery in its storage case. And never store a

battery-powered tool in a hot shed, attic, or car trunk where environmental heat can damage the cells. If you'll be storing the tool for a long period of time, disconnect the battery pack from the tool. In about six months, the battery will lose its charge, which is not particularly good, but a few cycles should bring it back to full performance. (Since cordless tools can't be unplugged to prevent accidentally turning them on, they should have a safety lock-off switch. Get into the habit of locking the tools—especially saws—when they're not in use.)

The metal contacts on the battery, charger, and tool can get gummed up with dirt and corrosion. This may reduce the tool's ability to draw power off the battery, may slow the charging process, and may cause malfunction. The best way to clean the contacts is with a pencil eraser. Do not use any solvents because they can melt the plastic housing of the tool.

Some day far in the future, your battery will reach the end of its useful life. (Batteries are typically considered kaput when their capacity drops 50%.) The components of the battery pack present serious environmental hazards. Do not burn batteries or dispose of them through normal trash collection. They must be recycled (by law in most states) either through the manufacturer or at a hazardous waste collection facility.



Porter-Cable's heavy-duty motors mean high-torque drilling.




stored on their chargers. At their low charging rates, excess electricity during overcharge is dissipated as heat at non-damaging levels.

**Quick chargers** recharge in three to five hours. These higher-quality battery cells are designed to handle the increased overcharge rate. Again, excess charge is dissipated as heat, but leaving the battery in the charger for a long time after it's full will shorten its life.

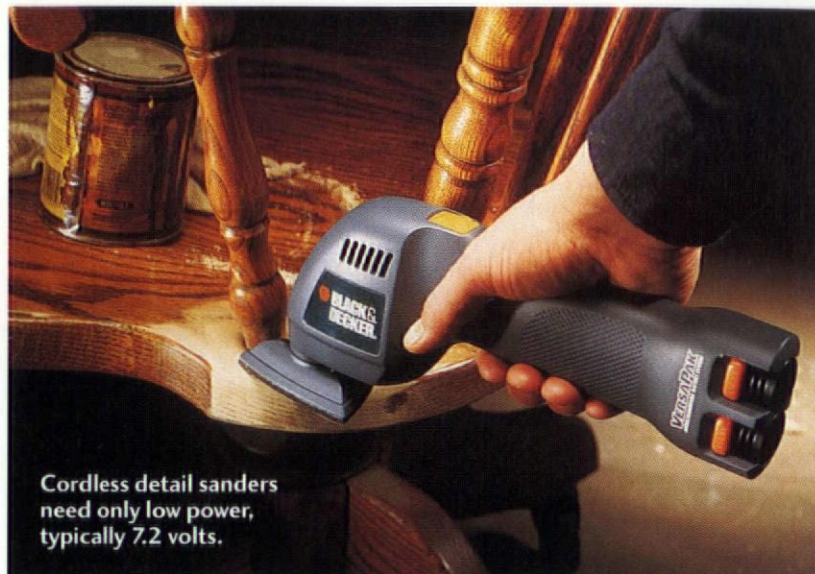
**Fast chargers** are the best option for professional-quality power tools. They recharge the battery in one hour or less. At these high charge rates, overcharge would damage or even explode the battery pack. So, as the battery nears full charge, the units turn off, or switch to a safer trickle charge to top off the battery.

What differentiates fast chargers is the way they determine when the battery nears maximum charge. Budget chargers measure the total electricity applied to the battery or time the charging process. Slightly better chargers read the voltage or temperature of the battery pack. Premium chargers monitor the battery with a number of these techniques—most importantly temperature and voltage sensing—and process the information with a computer chip.

By watching all the battery's vital signs, the best chargers can accurately read when the battery is almost full, can slow down the charging process if the battery gets hot, and can eliminate certain other damaging forces. Whatever their proprietary name, these "intelligent" chargers completely control the charging process for the fastest and least damaging charge. The results are batteries that last for more than 1,000 cycles. If your tool comes with a choice of batteries, choose the higher cost of a "high-capacity" pack, which contains better cells.

Professionals and homeowners alike have an amazing appetite for everything cordless. Manufacturers will continue to whet this taste with new cordless tools that have more power and capacity, and are more environmentally friendly. It'll take real breakthroughs in storing power to make possible the Holy Grail of battery-powered tools—long-ranging electric cars. 

*Thanks for technical assistance to Dave DeVries, Energizer Power Systems; Leslie Banduch and Dave Keller, Porter-Cable; Rich Mathews, DeWalt; and David Noggle, Skil-Bosch.*



Cordless detail sanders need only low power, typically 7.2 volts.

### Shopper's Checklist

If you feel like a kid in a candy store when you walk into the power tool aisle, here are some concrete ways to compare the products:

**Ampere-Hours:** The size of the battery's gas tank, ranging from 1 to 2 amp-hours. If the tool's stamina between charges is a concern, select a product with a high amp-hour battery.

**Charge Rate:** How long it takes to recharge the battery. For serious old-house work, select a fast charger, which operates in less than one hour. "Intelligent" chargers use computer chips to regulate the process.

**Cycle Life:** The number of charge/discharge cycles a battery can be expected to handle before it fails, anywhere from 500 to 3,000 cycles.

**Tool Performance:** The actual power and capacity of the tool, measured in torque, revolutions-per-minute, and strokes-per-minute, depending on the tool, and in the battery's runtime under similar work loads.

**Voltage:** The horsepower of a battery, from 9.6 to 24 volts.

**Weight and Comfort:** How heavy is the tool? How does it feel in your hand? Depending on your hands and your work, you may prefer a pistol or T-handled model.



Above: For drilling into masonry and metal, Bosch's 24-volt Rotary Hammer delivers up to 1,200 revolutions and 4,400 blows per minute. Below: With the push of a button, Makita's power-display batteries indicate charge level.





*We spotted the derelict carriage house off an alley in town.  
So we moved it, then rebuilt it ourselves.*

## Salvage Labors

BY RICHARD AND SHARON SCHMIDT

**W**HEN WE FIRST SPOTTED THE CARRIAGE HOUSE in an alley during an early morning walk, we couldn't deny it was quaint. It had clipped gables, tongue-and-groove siding, and a gingerbreaded dormer. In spite of its decayed roof, rescuing it seemed like a great summer project for a social-studies teacher and a social worker in need of an outbuilding. (We have a part-time antiques business and not enough storage.) The idea of fixing the old building didn't scare us; we'd restored three historic buildings here in Merrill, Wisconsin, including an 1885 Victorian and a former saloon built in 1896. But we weren't quite sure how we'd pick this one up and move it across town.

Acquiring the outbuilding was not an issue. With a knock at the door of the nearby house, we learned that the stable was not only available, but that the owner had tried to give it away for lumber the previous summer. (Fortunately for us, no one had answered the ad!) Money, however, was a concern. We have watched enough TV fix-it-up shows to know that you can make an outhouse look like the White House if you want to spend the dollars. Lacking a White House budget, we contacted the local structural movers for an estimate. They told us that moving the building was a relatively easy project for them. But, they told us, it would cost us a fortune to have the overhead utility lines dropped along the route.

It dawned on us that we could keep our costs in check by taking the roof and rafters down to the top wall plate. (Projects are easy when you're doing them in your mind.) The roof was in terrible condition anyway; gutting it would bring the move in at an affordable \$2,500. Then

the city's building inspector told us that by law the building couldn't be moved, because it had deteriorated to less than 50% of its original value. Adding to our legality issues, our lot wasn't quite wide enough to provide the required setbacks. A glimmer of hope emerged, though, when the inspector told us that we could appeal to the zoning board for variances on each point.

Like two rookie lawyers preparing for our first court appearance, we assembled our brief as the hearing approached. We stuffed a paper bag full of "evidence," including pictures of other buildings we had rescued. To our surprise, the city fathers were encouraging. They asked the usual questions about our plans and our timetable and such, but we didn't have to twist any arms to convince them we could make the building fit into the neighborhood. We had taken the time to talk to our neighbors, explaining what we were doing in detail. No neighbors objected to our request

for shallower setbacks, so we got both approvals in about 15 minutes. Case closed, client saved. After all our consternation, it was the easiest roadblock we were to pass.

### Folding a Roof

THE "SELLER" OF THE CARRIAGE HOUSE AGREED TO SHARE the cost of a dumpster to dispose of building debris: spent shingles, rotten wood, and what turned out to be years of accumulation. Inside, the carriage house was a catalog

**For the ride across town, gable ends were lowered into the loft; Sharon is bracing them in the photo above. The building was derelict when we bought it (opposite). After work that included installation of new sills, the carriage house makes a nice storage shed for our part-time antiques business.**











We disassembled the dormer piece-by-piece, so that we could put it back together in its original form.

of historic refuse, filled with old truck engines, remnants of harness, old car parts, forgotten tools and garden implements, and ladders of various vintages.

Structurally, the building was quite sound (a tribute to the carpenters who built it), but the leaky roof had taken its toll on the loft floor. It was hard to believe this old lumber had once held the weight of a horse and wagon. Demolition included removing many planks in the loft, as well as roof sheathing boards and shingles. These came off easily on the heavily weathered south side. The north-side roofing was a challenge and had to be “persuaded” with a heavy iron bar—all this during one of Wisconsin’s nastiest hot spells. One of the stable’s interesting features is its dormer, so we took pains to disassemble and label it piece-by-piece for reconstruction.



After we installed new sheathing and shingles, the building was dry for the first time in decades.

After two weeks of a little blood, a lot of sweat, and a few tears, the roof was down—but the gable ends were still high enough to raise havoc with utility lines. We considered tearing down the end walls until they were low enough to pass, but this would have entailed ripping off the old tongue-and-groove drop siding—and then trying to reassemble it at the new site. We felt we’d probably wreck more siding



With a solid floor underfoot and a sound roof overhead, Sharon finishes up on the interior.

than we’d save using this option. Perched above the building one day, we hit on another idea. We would use hinges to fold the gables down, siding and all, into the loft floor. If it worked, our move would come in on budget and reassembly would be easy. If not...well, the building could still be razed for lumber.

We nailed a couple of 2x4s on the interior of each gable to use as levers and braces while we made our cuts. Using a sawzall, we cut through the gable-end wall studs between laps in the siding. With each stud cut, we installed a hinge on the inside between the two sections.

At the moment of truth, we gently lowered the gable ends into the loft using the braces. When the tip of the clipped gable rested on the attic floor, we knew we’d succeeded. Our tall building had become much shorter, making it easier to move. We also realized we would be able to wire-brush and prime the gable-end walls from the relative comfort of the loft floor.

### Rollin’, Rollin’, Rollin’

ONCE THE ROOF WAS DOWN, THE MOVERS ARRIVED WITH some serious equipment. After cutting two holes in the end of the building, they placed two 30-foot I-beams in place along the length. Then they placed several smaller crossbeams over them, and nailed 2x6s to the studs on the side walls over the beams. They nailed braces in all door openings to carry the weight of the walls to the beams. In not too much time at all, the building was jacked up and off the ground.

We had been tempted to [continued on page 64]



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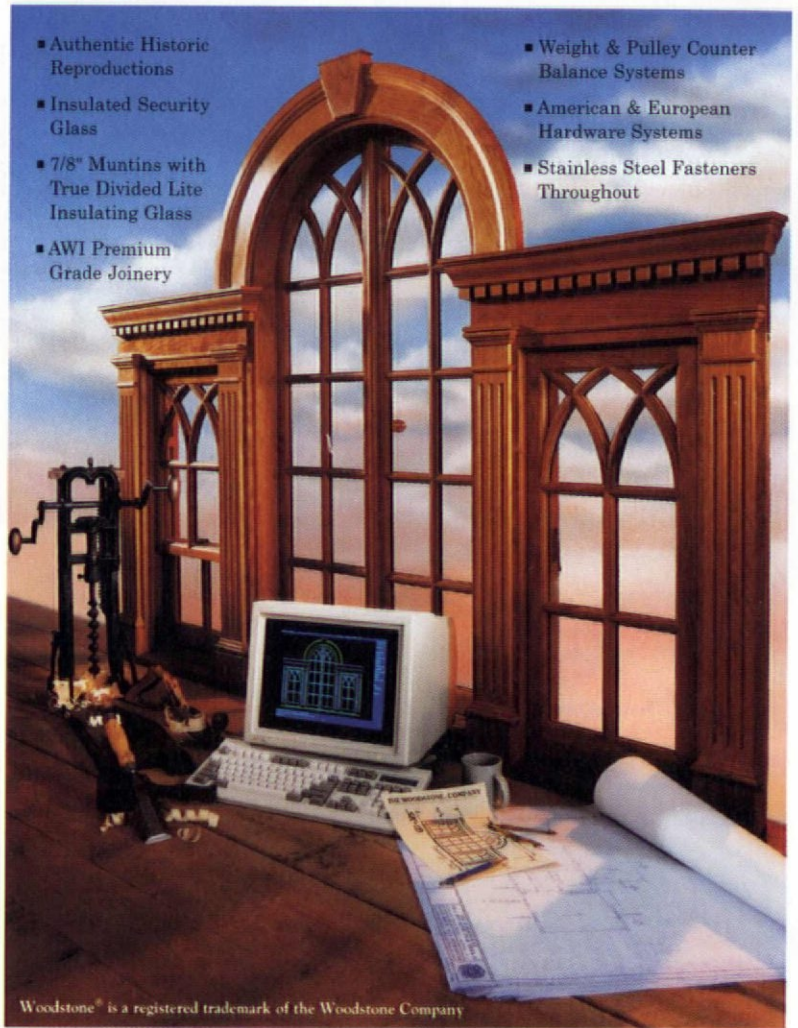
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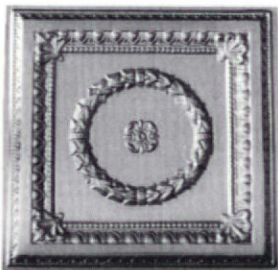
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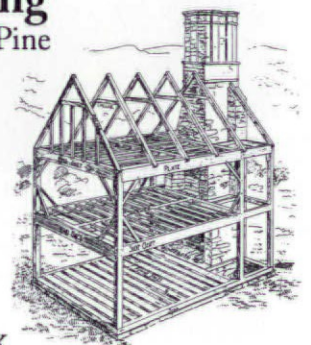
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Under a four-color paint scheme, the rehabilitated carriage house retains much of its original building fabric, and its unique roof shape.

[continued from page 62]

reuse the original 8x8 foundation timbers, but they were heavy and might have compromised the integrity of the rest of the structure during the move. So we left the old timbers behind and, after the building was jacked up four feet, we nailed new, pressure-treated 2x4 sills to the bottoms of the studs. The movers bolted sets of wheels to the I-beams, and we were ready to go on the road.

Our carriage house predates the whole concept of rush hour, and it couldn't compete with modern traffic. We moved it during the wee hours. The concrete slab on the new site, poured weeks before, was cured and ready when the building arrived. By midmorning on a warm July day, the old stable was sitting on its new foundation. Richard closed up the holes where the I-beams had been and caulked them tight. The new paint job would hide them completely.

### Racing the Calendar

IT WAS ALMOST AUGUST BY THE time we could begin restoring our new old outbuilding. None of the neighbors ever complained, but we're sure some of them wished they'd gone to that zoning-board hearing to express reservations. One passerby asked what we intended to do with

"We think it was built in the 1890s. One end was for harness and tack, the other stabled a horse."

"that pigshed." Unfolding the gable ends was our first priority. Because lifting the ends would be far harder work than lowering them, we asked a neighbor to help. A few hinges had popped off the studs. We strained against the water-logged gable and finally walked the first end-wall into an upright position. With that wall straight, we proceeded to sister new 2x4s to the old studs and remove the hinges. Then we repeated our technique on the other gable. Thanks to laps in the siding, it's impossible to tell from the outside that the ends were ever cut.

We thanked our neighbor and got started [continued on page 66]



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2. Apply saturant to area to be covered.



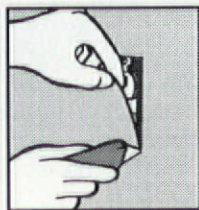
3. Apply fiberglass mat to wet surface.



4. Trim excess mat where wall meets ceiling.



5. Trim mat at baseboard and window.



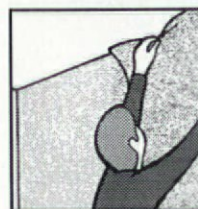
6. Trim mat at outlets, switches, etc.



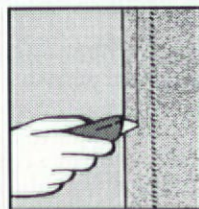
7. Apply second coat of saturant to wet mat.



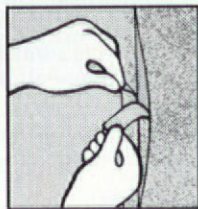
8. Apply 1st coat of saturant to adjacent area.



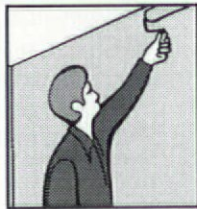
9. Apply mat to 2nd area, overlapping by 1".



10. Cut down center of overlap (both layers).



11. Remove mat strips on both sides of cut.



12. Apply 2nd coat of saturant (include seam)



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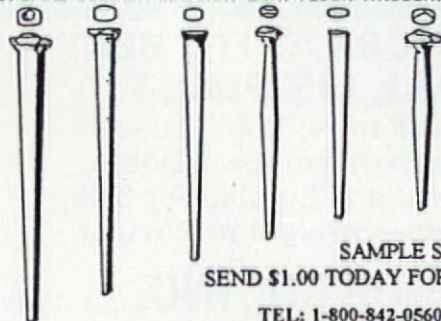
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[continued from page 64]

rebuilding the roof rafters and dormer. As we began to sort the pieces, a rainstorm hit—a real gully washer. We were about to put down our tools and wait it out when we noticed our careful re-assembly marks blurring: the marker we'd used hadn't been waterproof! So instead of taking a break, we redoubled our efforts. Needless to say, rebuilding the dormer was like putting together a three-dimensional puzzle.

Now final details came together. Daylight was shrinking so our workdays were shorter, too. Most of the roof's rafters were sound, but a hundred years of Wisconsin snow had bowed some of them. We scabbed new rafters next to the old ones to pick up the load.

We replaced rotted boards in the siding; up went new sheathing and roof shingles. We scraped off the last of the old paint and made the neighbors happy with a handsome new paint scheme.

WE DID ALL THE WORK OURSELVES (with the exception of the move and pouring the concrete slab). It was well beyond the amount anticipated. Yes, we could have hired a contractor to build a standard, two-car garage, probably for about what we spent on the carriage house. But by now we knew that our carriage house was built in the mid-1890s. It had one set of swinging doors where the buggy was kept; one end was used for harness and tack, the other to stable a horse. There's hay stuck in the loft walls to this day. In later years, the second set of doors was added to provide access for a "horseless carriage." We got our money's worth, because the old building reminds us of the days when horsepower really meant just that.

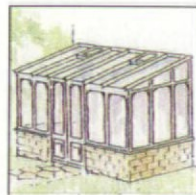




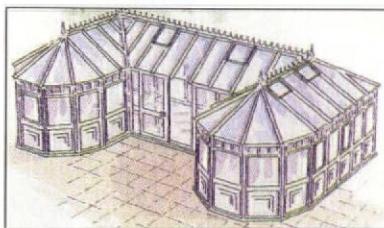
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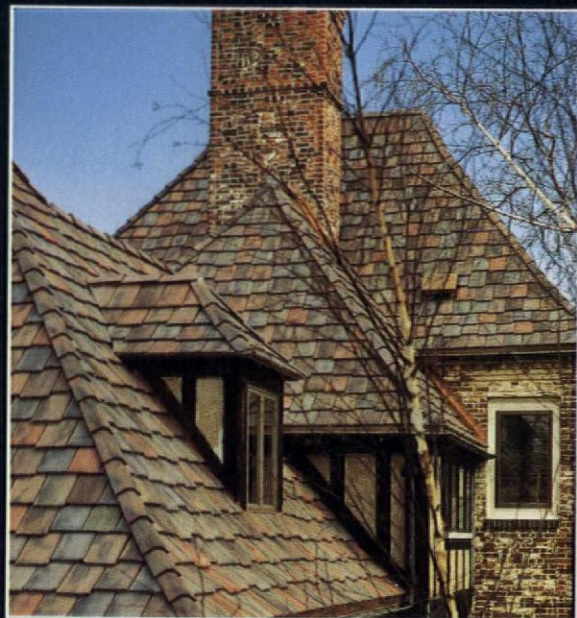
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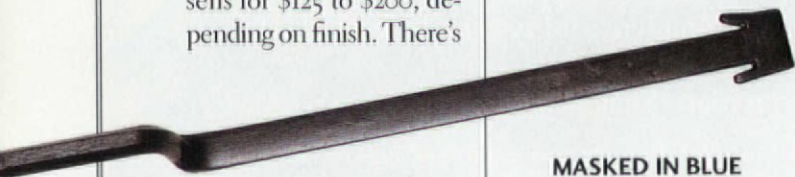
This acorn sconce with a 5 1/2" opalescent glass globe and a brushed nickel finish reflects the machine-age aesthetic between the world wars.

narrow-stemmed pendants. Trim finishes include brushed nickel and other machine-age metals. The acorn sconce (above) sells for \$125 to \$200, depending on finish. There's

also a line of restored prismatic pendants with original vintage glass and new mountings. The prismatic come in widths from 10" to 21" and cost between \$300 and \$500, depending on finish. Order from Brass Light Gallery, 131 South First St., Dept. OHJ, Milwaukee, WI 53204, (800) 243-9595.

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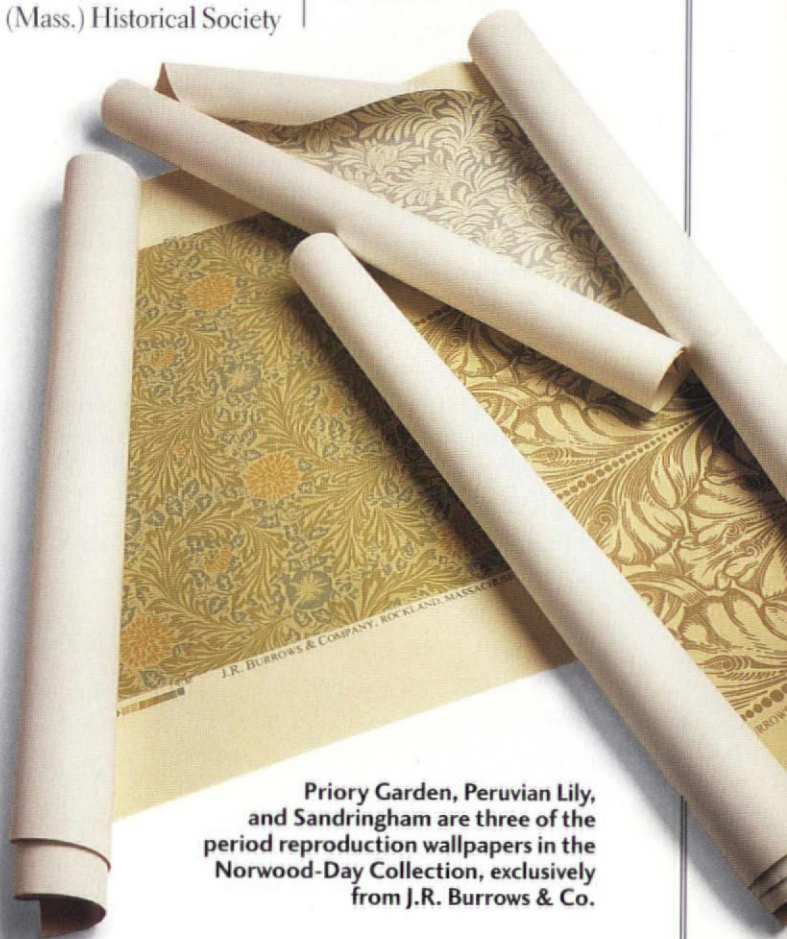
trol with the classic look of a wide-pan sunflower shower head. For about \$500, the Perrin & Rowe thermostatic mixer with adjustable levers regulates both water flow and temperature. It also has the capacity to handle the 10 to 12 gallons per minute a 12" showerhead delivers. Pressure-balance mixers (which work best on smaller sunflower heads) are also available, beginning at \$295. Showerheads come in a choice of finishes and range from \$166 for a 5" model to \$472 for a 12", both in chrome. To locate a sup-

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**Priry Garden, Peruvian Lily, and Sandringham are three of the period reproduction wallpapers in the Norwood-Day Collection, exclusively from J.R. Burrows & Co.**



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You can order actual blueprints for all the houses featured. These plans are designed to conform to national building-code standards. However, the requirements of your site and local building codes mean you'll probably need the assistance of a professional designer (your builder may qualify) or an architect.

For the houses shown in this issue, blueprints may include:

- Detailed floor plans showing dimensions for framing. Some may also have detailed layouts and show the location of electrical and plumbing components.
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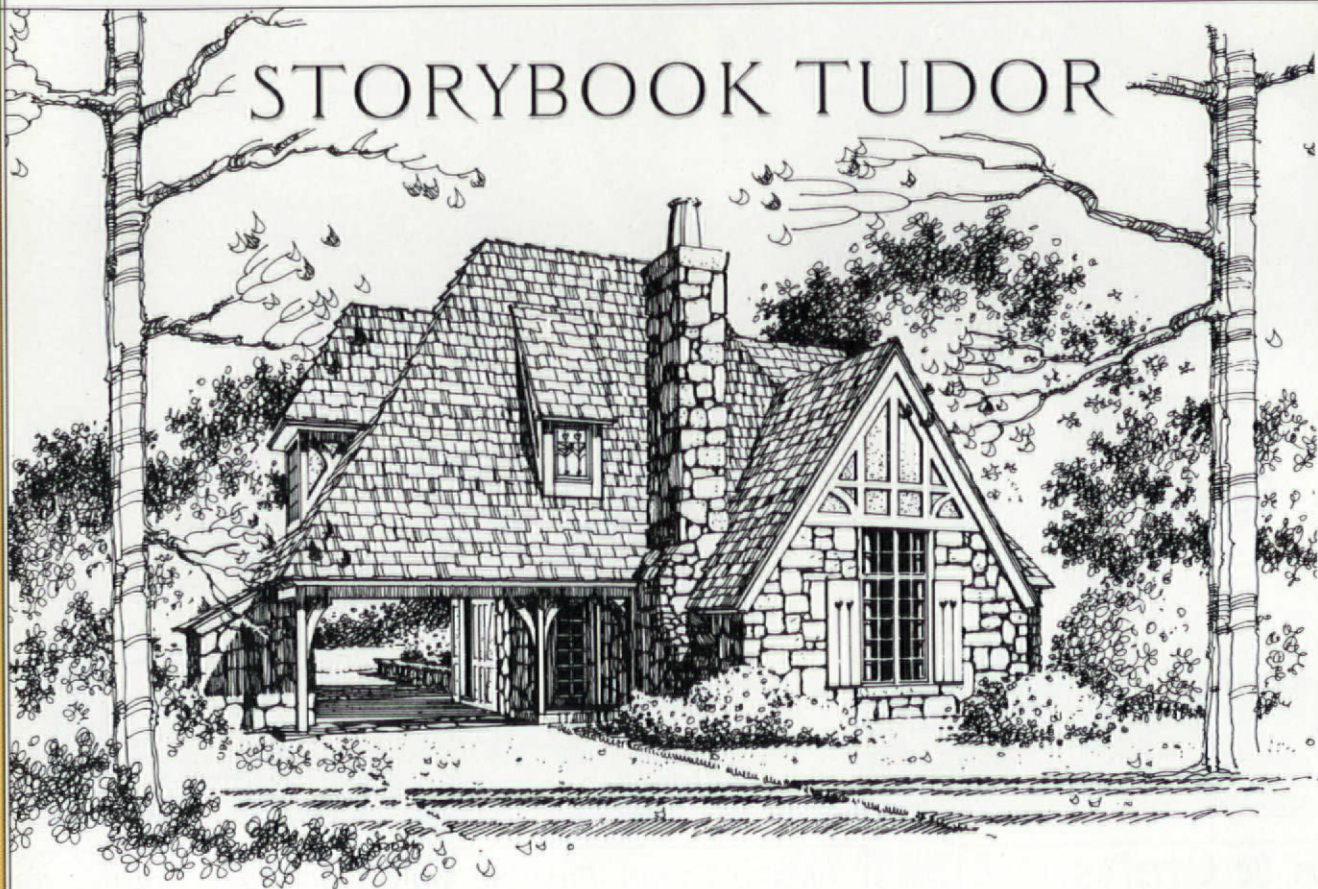
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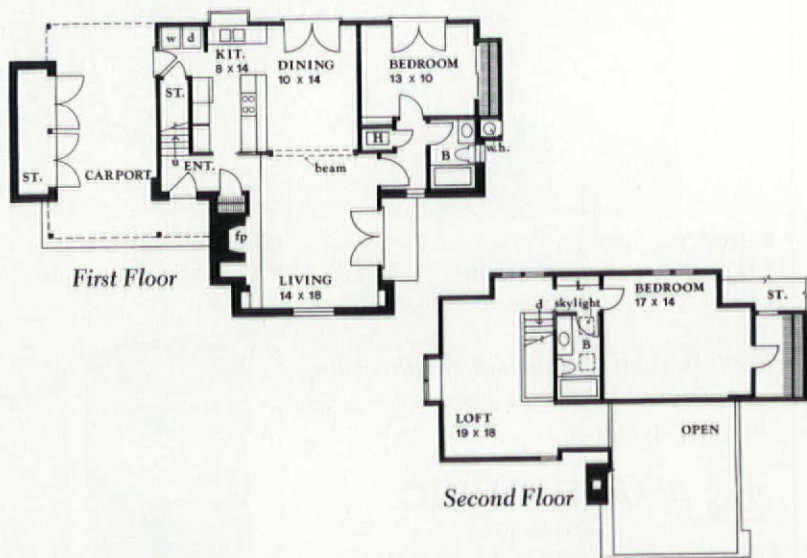


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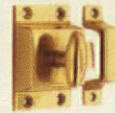
NW-168, Meadows



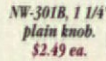
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NW-301B, 1 1/4" plain knob.  
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NW-311B, 1 1/4" rope knob.  
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NW-319, 1 1/8" oval knob.  
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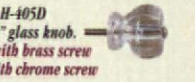
NW-22B, 1 1/4" spool knob.  
\$2.69 ea.



B-16, 3 1/2" bin pull.  
Authentic stamped brass.  
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B-17A, 3" handle.  
Glass with metal screws.  
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H-405D  
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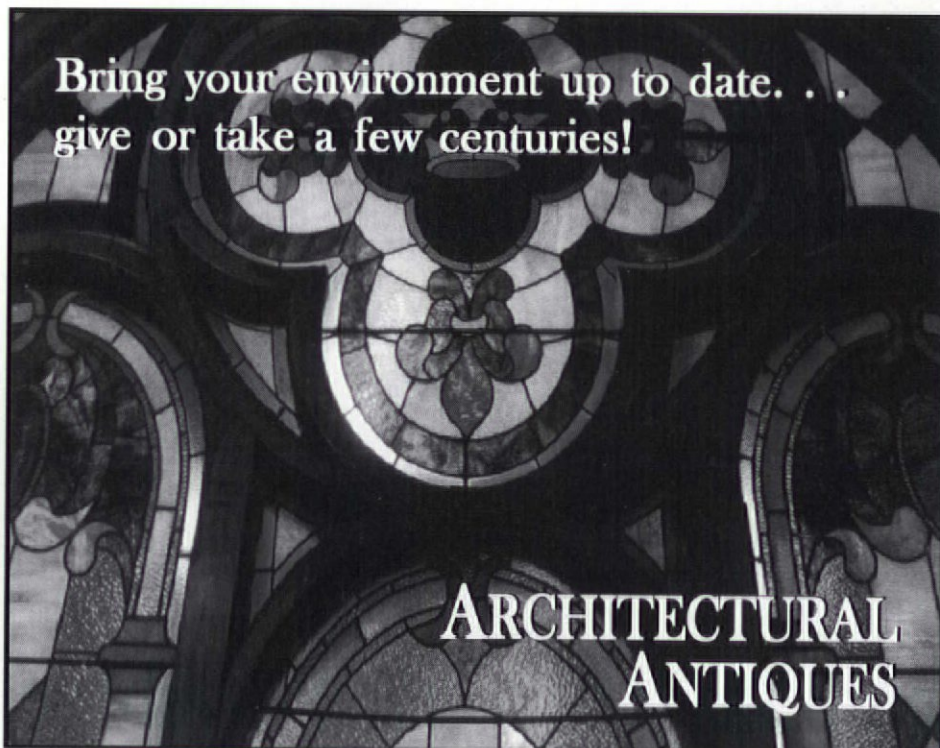
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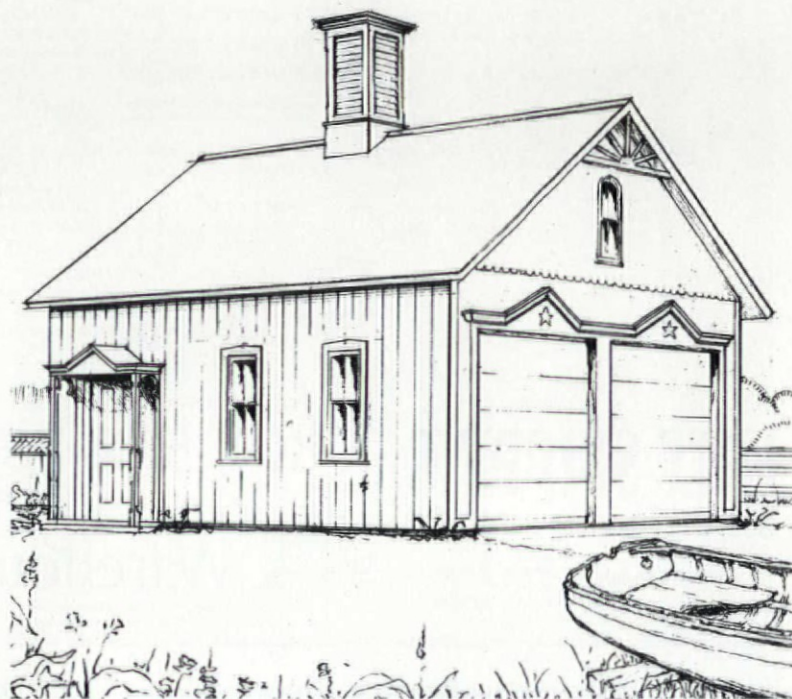
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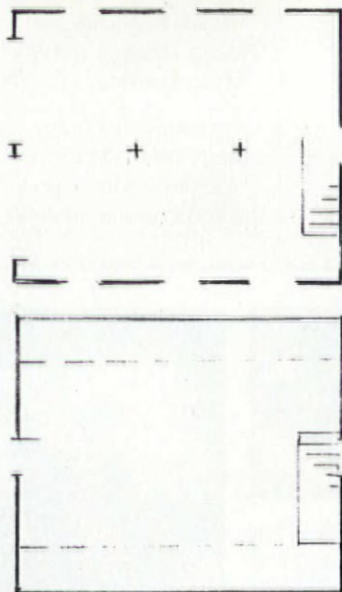


# VICTORIAN COACH HOUSE



### Plan CD-21-GA

Cost ..... \$50  
 Square Footage ..... 572'  
 Roof Height ..... 22' (ridge)  
 ..... 29' (cupola)  
 Overall Dimensions  
 Width ..... 22'  
 Depth ..... 26'



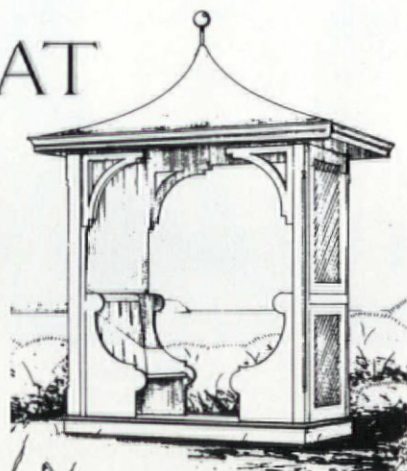
**S**IMPLE 19TH-CENTURY DETAILS INCLUDING PEDIMENTED DOOR mouldings, a cupola, and gable truss decorations put a horse-and- buggy exterior on this two-car garage. Inside, there's plenty of maneuvering room—more than 570 square feet, including the full-sized loft. The 9x9 overhead doors will accommodate oversized vehicles or a boat on a trailer. A walk-through door and sash windows complete the coach-house picture.

# COZY GARDEN SEAT

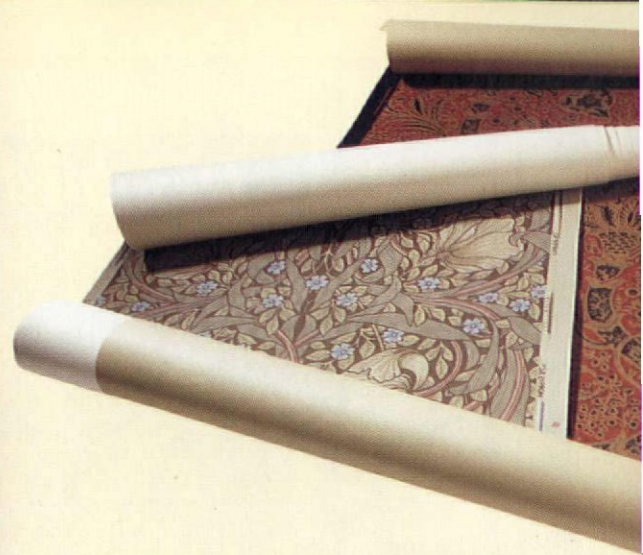
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### Plan CD-22-GA

Cost ..... \$25  
 Square Footage ..... 36'  
 Roof Height .. 10' 10" (peak)  
 Overall Dimensions  
 Width ..... 6'  
 Depth ..... 6'







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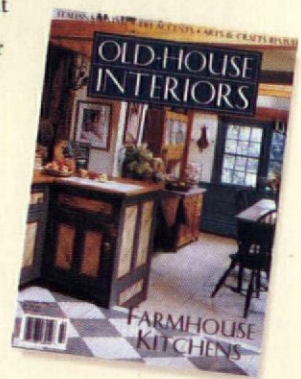
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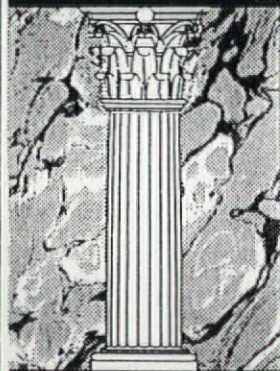
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For Sale/Swap • Real Estate • Events

## Real Estate

**EUREKA, CA**—Historic houses owned by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) are being offered for sale in a series of sealed bid sales over the next year. The houses present a remarkable array of 19th Century architectural styles, including Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Eastlake. Most are contributory to a Nat'l Register-eligible Historic District. Sealed bid sales are tentatively scheduled for May, August, and/or September 1997. Further information can be obtained from the Excess Lands Office, California Department of Transportation, P.O. Box 3700, Eureka, CA 95502-3700, (707) 445-6426. Internet Web site: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/property/>

**HANOVER, CT**—1914 Wm. G. Park's "Four Birches" Country Estate. Magnificent, perfectly restored Colonial Revival with strong Craftsman influence. Fifteen rms on three full levels featuring hardwood floors, woodwork, 9' ceilings. Four exquisite acres, 3 outbuildings, half-way between Boston and NYC. \$450,000. (860) 822-1239



**WESTPORT, CT**—Registered home in historic district, 1856 Federal with Victorian additions, 7 rms, 2 baths, basement, center of a block. Quiet, privacy, and charm, .6 acre. Barn 18'x25' with unobstructed second floor. \$450,000. (203) 227-3461

**SOUTH BEND, IN**—Secluded, 80-acre estate 5 miles south of South Bend. Quarter-of-a-mile private drive, 1902 oak framed 5 BR house with oak woodwork that has never been painted, oak Hoosier cupboards in the kitchen, 12 acres mature woods. \$360,000. P.O. Box 536, Osceola, IN 46561.

**BURLINGTON, IA**—On the mighty Missis-

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**BARDSTOWN, KY**—Magnificent Georgian (ca. 1820) lovingly restored. Three-storey entry with circular staircase. Elaborate mouldings, crystal chandeliers, inlaid floors, 1st floor master with spectacular view bath. New gourmet kitchen, mechanicals, roof, laundry. Five-6 BR. Designer's home on Nat'l Register. Convenient to Louisville, Lexington, Nashville, Cincinnati. \$495,000. Nancy S. Dysart, Paul Semonin Co., (800) 626-2390 ext. 5315

**NORTH ADAMS, MA**—Mountaintop Victorian, ca. 1890. Three BR, ornate wood, stained glass, country kitchen, large yard, lilac hedge, stone wall, Great Alphen views, garage. Needs work! Near skiing, New Mass MOCA, Tanglewood. \$40,000. Leave message, (305) 285-8644.

**CENTRAL NJ**—1812 Brick Federal Philadelphia house, historic register and district. Spacious, original detail, gracious entrance hall, careful restoration. New slate roof, efficient heat, very livable. Friendly community, blue ribbon schools, convenient to Princeton, NYC, and Philadelphia. \$185,000. (609) 259-9294

**HILLSIDE, NJ**—Ca. 1870 12 room, 2 1/2 bath mansard, restored, 6 fpls, beautiful woodwork, doors, stairs, plaster work, updated systems, 3-car garage, Victorian society preservation award, large corner lot, convenient to NYC. \$279,000. Debra Whelan, (908) 965-1610.

**PHOENIX, NY**—Lovely ca. 1895 on Oswego River Canal. Built by packet boat builder. Eight rms, 2 full baths, fpl, in-law apt, porches, perennial gardens, detached garage with workroom or boathouse. Hardwood floors, gas hot water, heat. \$150,000. Before 4/15/97: (561) 225-3094; after 4/15: (315) 695-5773.

**BEAR MOUNTAIN AREA, NY**—Beautifully restored 1790 gem on 1+ acre with great mountain views. Stone/clapboard exterior. Spacious LR, DR, Kit, 2 BR, 1 1/2 baths. Original details throughout: wide plank floors, hand-hewn beams, 2 fpls, cathedral ceilings in MBR, rocking chair porch. 45 min. to NYC. \$219,000. (914) 446-5854

**JERSEY CITY, NJ**—Near NYC, historic district 1860s 3-family brick rowhouse, 2-car garage, completely renovated. Owner's custom 1 BR+ duplex with 2 full baths, custom kitchen, a/c, Jacuzzi, garden, patio, fpl, plus two 1-bedroom rentals. \$299,000. (201) 792-2500

**AVON LAKE, OH**—Ca. 1900 "Farmers' Gothic" style, wood-frame lakefront home on Lake Erie. 2,100 sq. ft. house on 1/2 acre lot at end of long, tree-lined drive. Three BR, 2 baths, formal DR, original stone fpl. Spectacular lake view from 3-season porch.

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**ASHLAND, OH**—Restored Nat'l Register Gothic Revival home. Solid brick, 5 BR, 3 baths, newer furnace and roofs. Beautiful curved staircase, crown mouldings, original millwork, 5 fpl mantels. B&B.

Three-car garage. \$149,000. Eileen Trobaugh, Coldwell Banker Ward Real Estate, (419) 281-2000.

**CINCINNATI, OH**—Historic business district, 1,500 sq. ft. store front currently private museum. Four-room apt above, 2 bay

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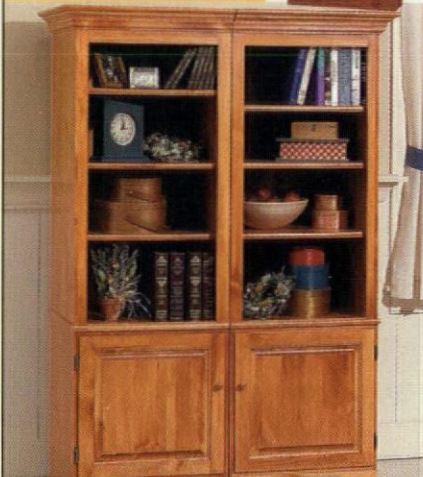
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**DOYLESTOWN BOROUGH, BUCKS COUNTY, PA**—1870 Carpenter Gothic with recent 3-storey carriage house/garage/studio. Margaret Mead's childhood home; on Pennsylvania Register. Commuting distance to Philadelphia and New York. Four-5 BR, attached 2 BR rental unit. Zoned for B&B. \$449,000. (215) 348-0634

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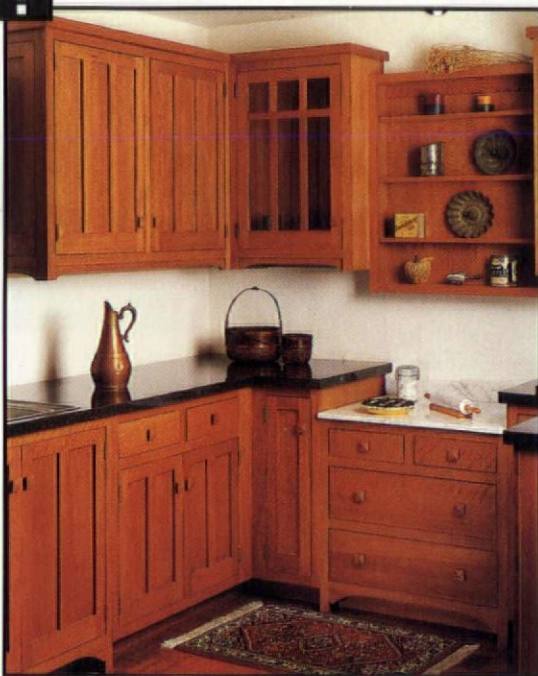
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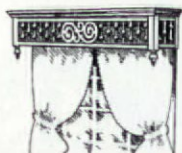
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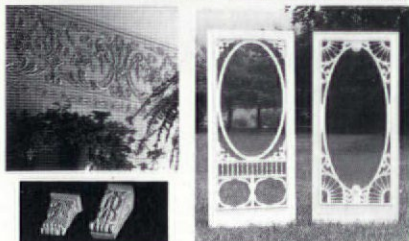
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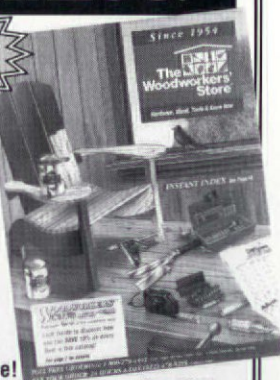
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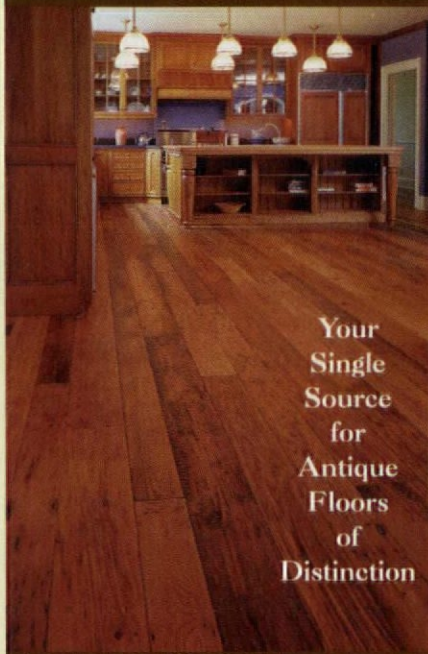
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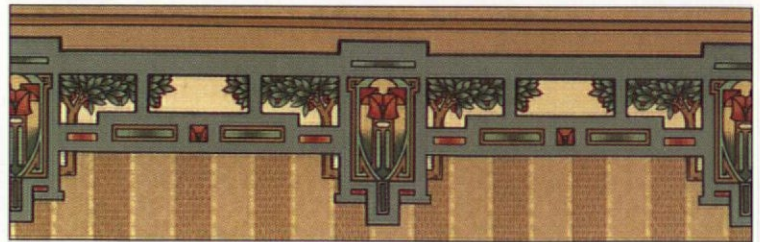


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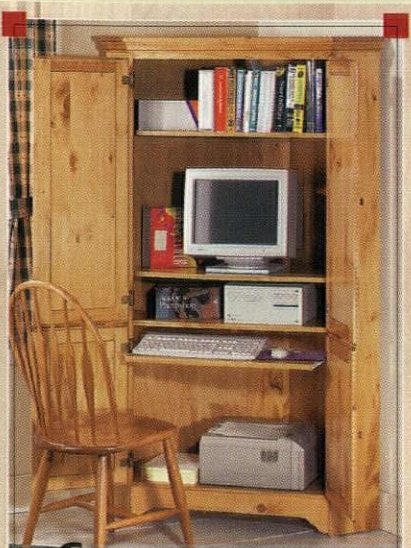
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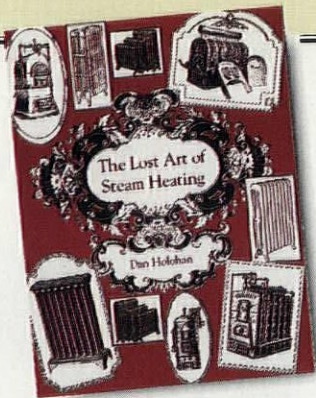
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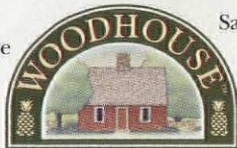
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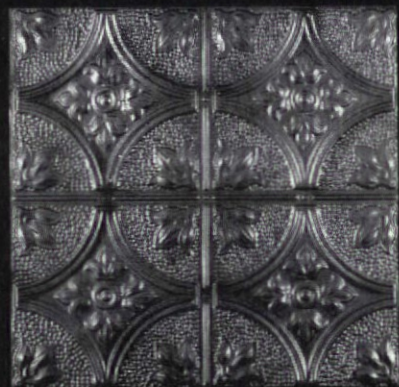
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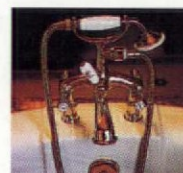
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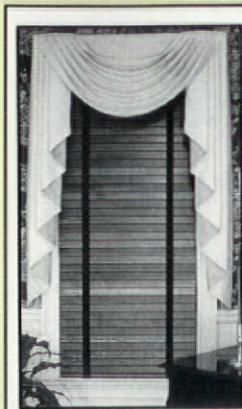


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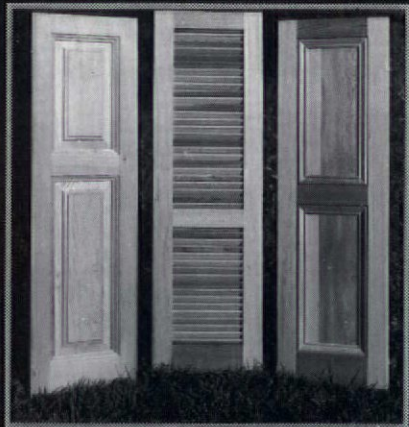
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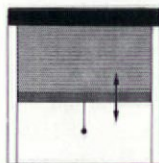
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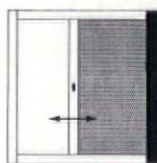
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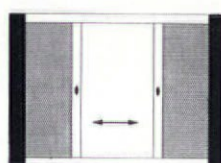
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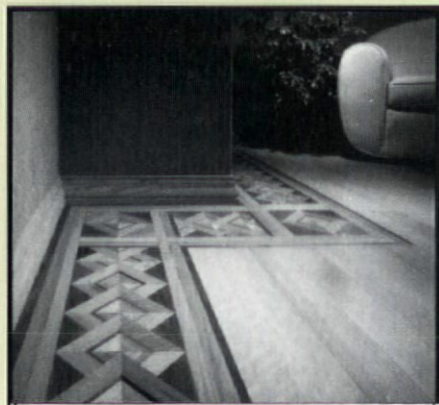


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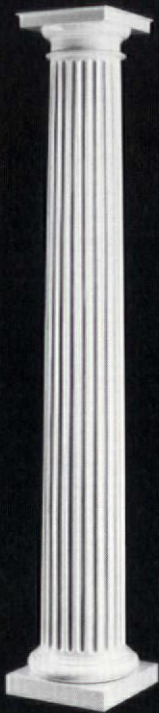
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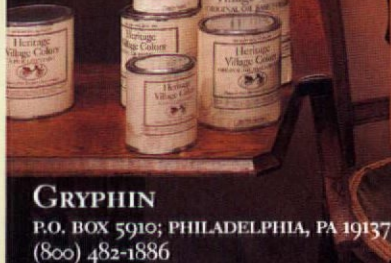
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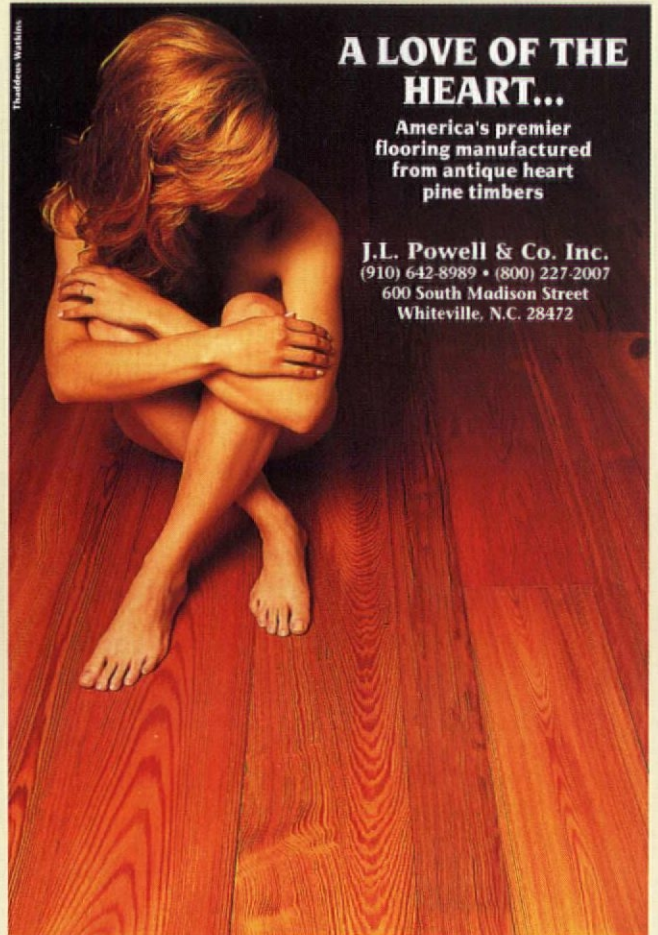
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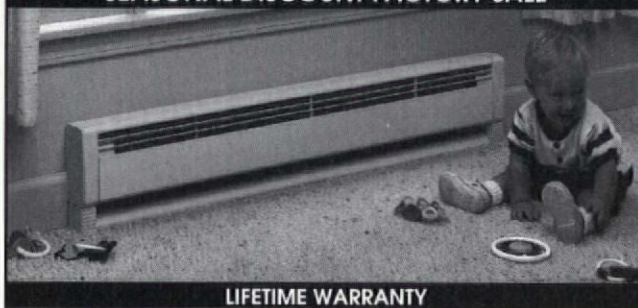
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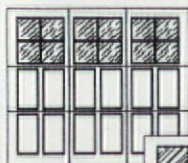
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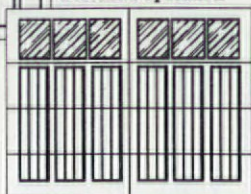
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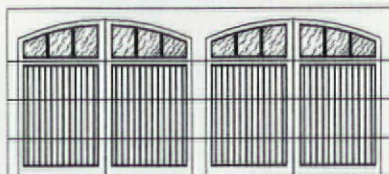
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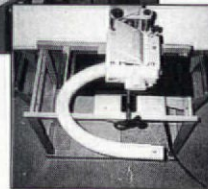
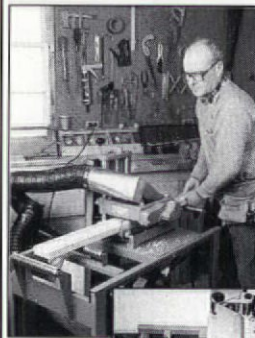
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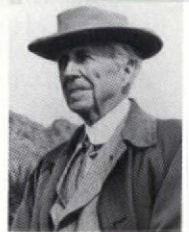


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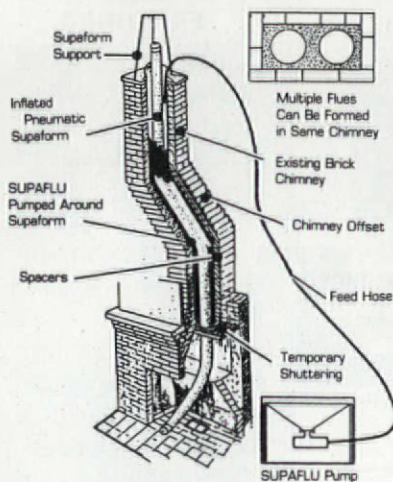


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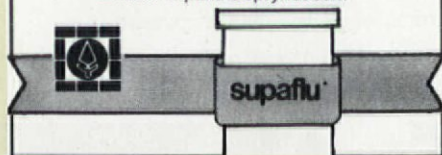


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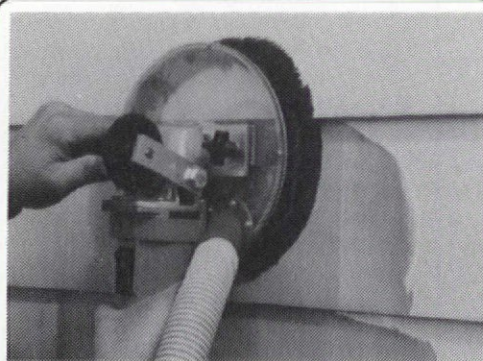
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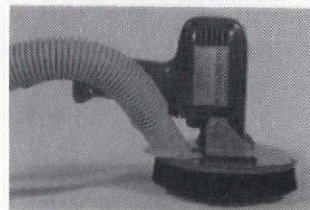


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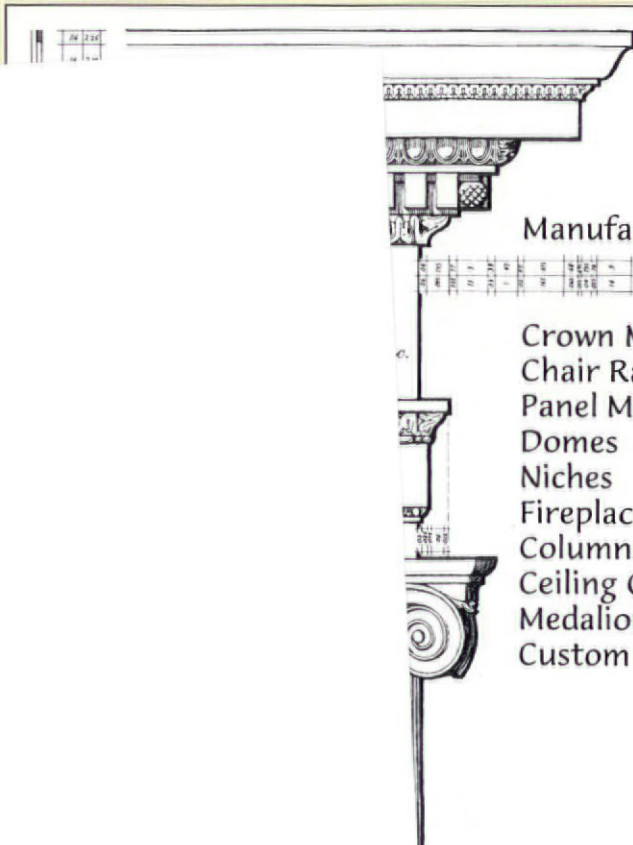
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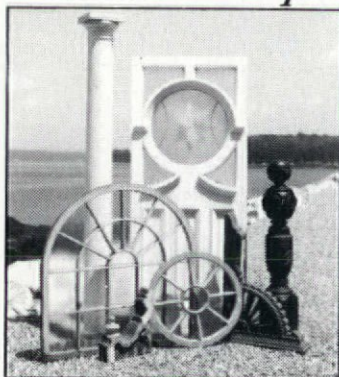
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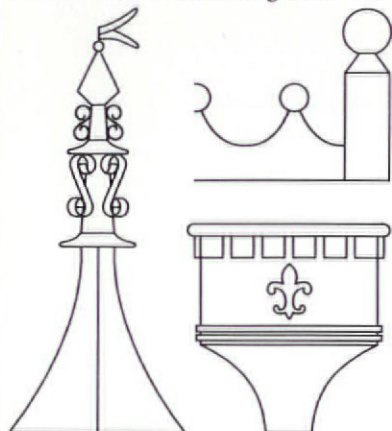
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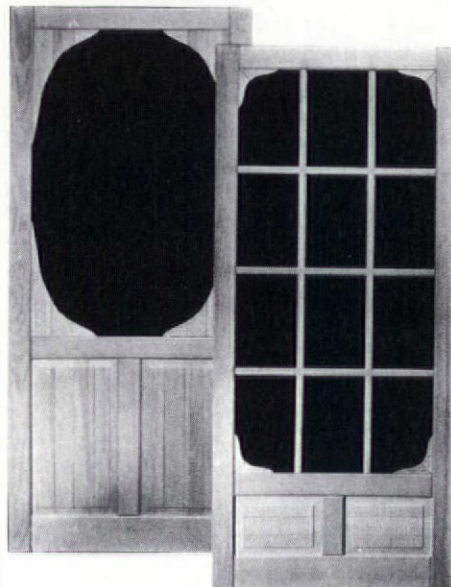


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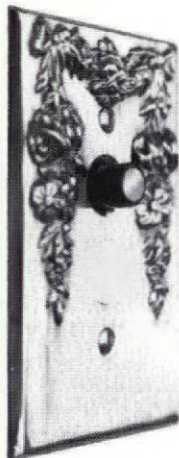
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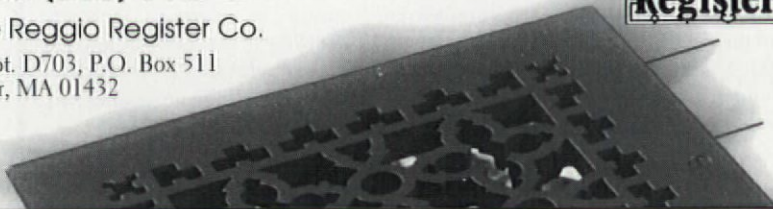
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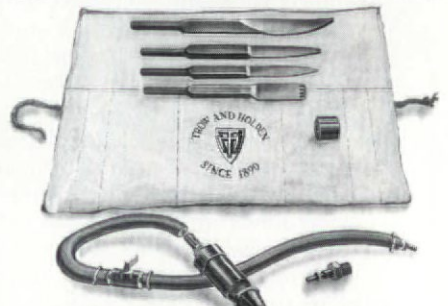
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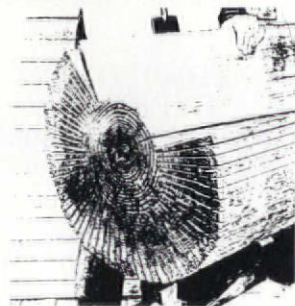
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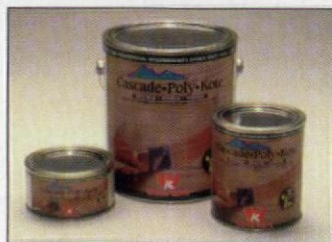
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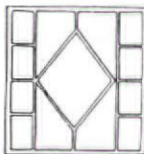
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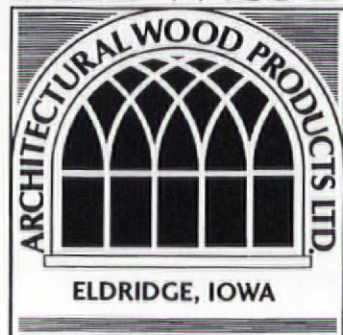
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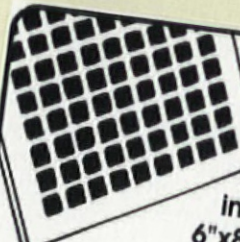
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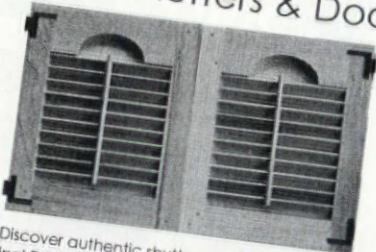


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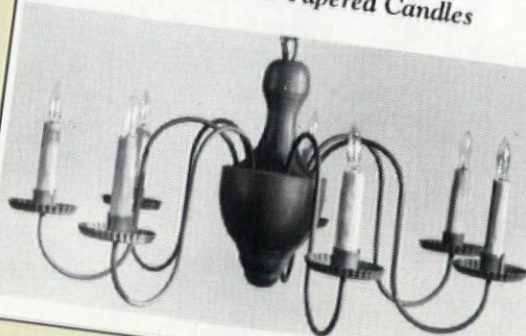
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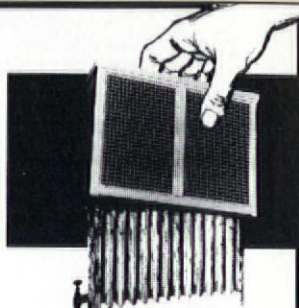
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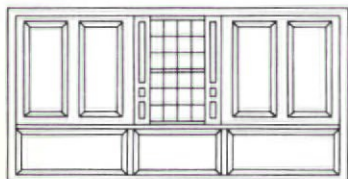
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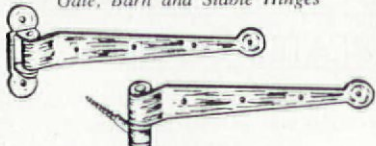
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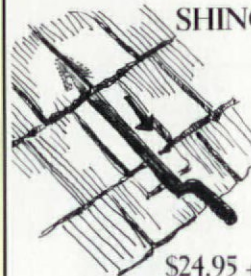
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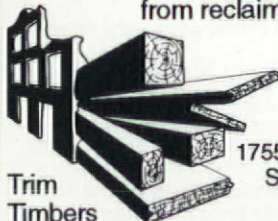
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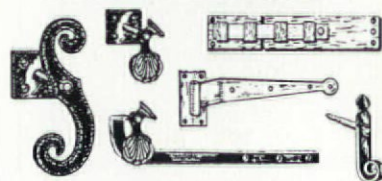
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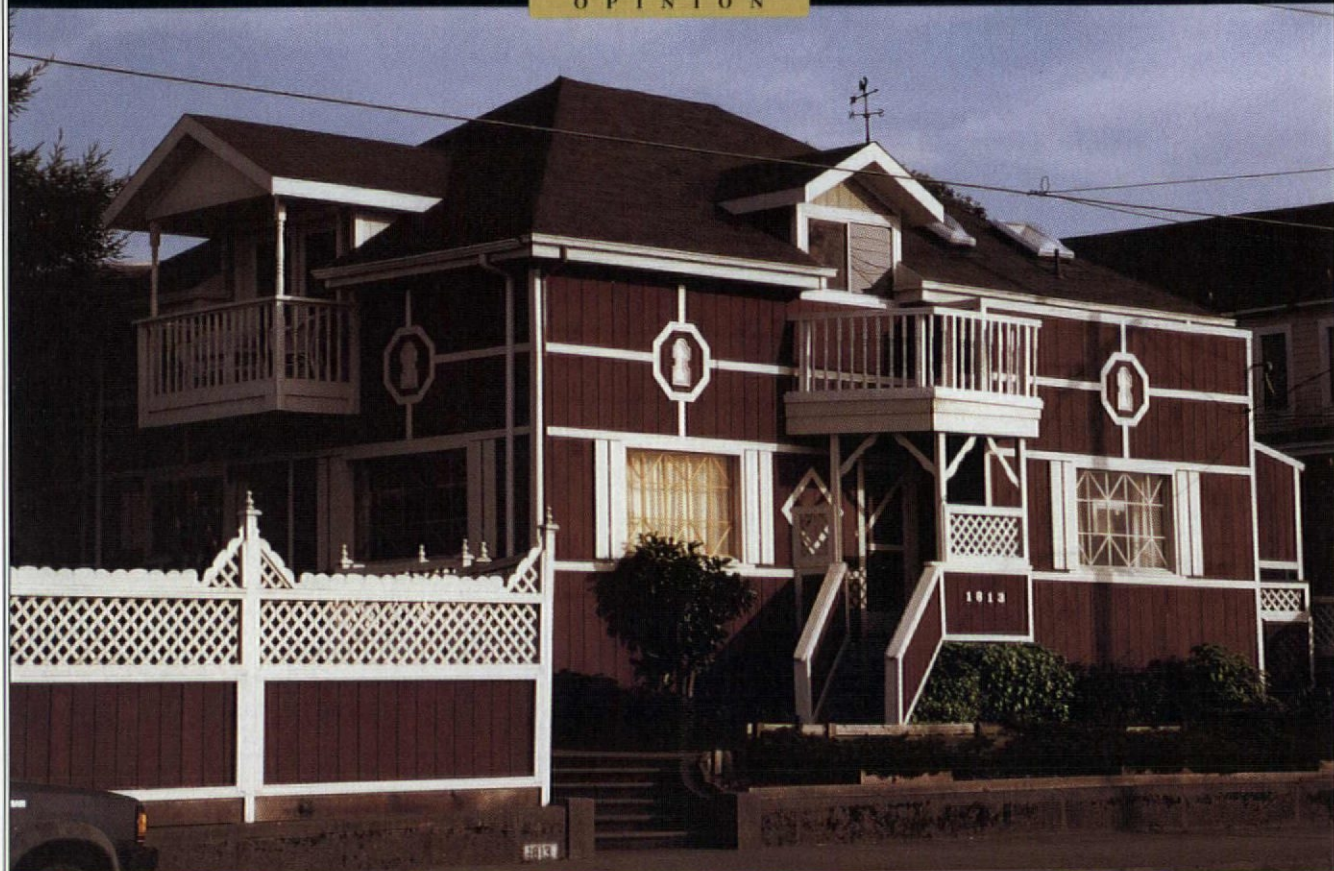
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## A Sleeper in Eureka

**T**HIS PHOTO IS SUBTLER THAN SOME YOU'VE PUBLISHED," SAYS Susan Fox of Eureka, Calif., "but it cries out to be shared with your readers." You can say that a little louder, Susan. If there's a one-storey, hipped-roof cottage slumbering inside this rambling brown building, it could use a wake-up call.

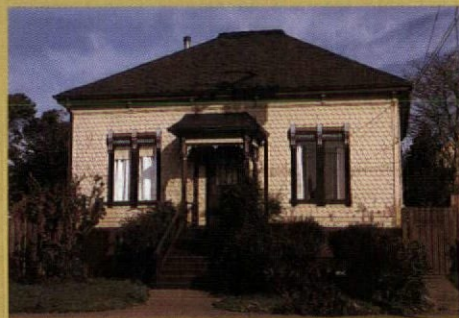
Characterized by a nearly square shape, front-entry porches, and restrained ornamentation, West Coast hipped-roof cottages like the one on the right are ubiquitous throughout the Northwest. These snug house types may be simple, but they're well tucked in: Victorian details often include porch friezes and scroll brackets over windows.

Not so with the building above. The hipped roof lies dormant, blanketed by jutting dormers and (sleeping?) porches on each wall.

White trim, running from the eaves

to the "hospital" corners, divides the façade into a patchwork quilt. And where do those pillow-shaped designs above the picture windows come from—a dream?

Would a peek inside reveal a vernacular cottage in deep hibernation? Maybe, but it will take more than a kiss to rouse this Sleeping Beauty.



Peel away siding and multiple porches from the house at top, and you might end up with this classic Victorian hipped-roof cottage.

**WIN FAME AND \$50.** If you spot a classic example of remuddling, send us clear color slides. We'll award you \$50 if your photos are selected. The message is more dramatic if you send along a picture of a similar unremuddled building. (Original photography only, please; no clippings.) Remuddling Editor, Old-House Journal, 2 Main Street, Gloucester, MA 01930.

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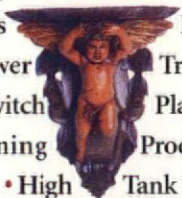


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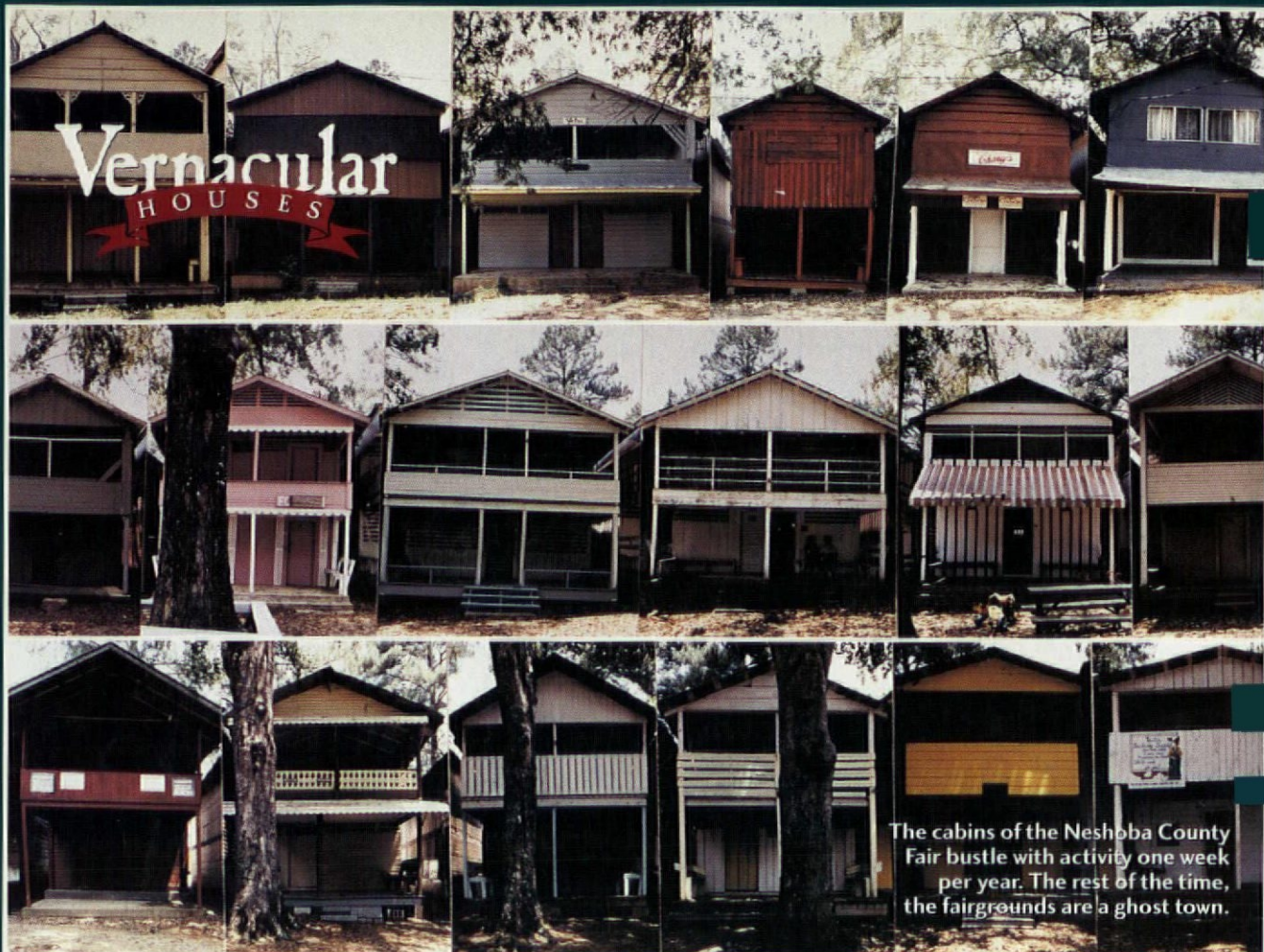
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## FAIR CABINS OF MISSISSIPPI

WITH THE ZEAL OF A REVIVAL meeting, farm families have gathered annually at the Neshoba County Fair just outside Philadelphia, Mississippi, since 1889. At first, fairgoers overnighted in ox-drawn wagons, but in the 1890s they began building permanent structures, largely from salvaged materials. Barely a shoulder's width apart, nearly 600 cabins now line the narrow streets around the fairgrounds.

Built and rebuilt as they fell down or sank in the mud, these balloon-framed cabins sit on masonry or timber piers and are rarely more than 14' by 24'. Wood siding without any windows is typical. To vent the hot summer air, the cabins rely on a screened gap in the wall sheathing be-

tween storeys. Most have metal roofs and wood floors. Many share gutters along abutting eaves.

Few buildings adhere to the adage "form follows function" as closely as these cabins. Most are two storeys: a single, open room for entertainment downstairs, another for sleeping above. Kitchens—designed for serving, not cooking, since most preparation is done before the fair—have yards of counterspace and two or more refrigerators. A Spartan, closet-sized bathroom is tucked into a first-storey corner. Most importantly, the cabins are anchored to the public ways by their two-storey front porches. From here, families greet passersby,

wage ferocious card games, and take refuge from summer showers.

Each cabin has its own character defined by the makeshift approach of the builder. Improvised construction—initially pragmatism—has become tradition, according to Mississippi State University Professor Robert Craycroft.\* One cabin, owned by a tire dealer, has front steps and a foundation made of wheel rims. Unusually ingenious building and decorating methods can give a cabin legendary status among fairgoers.

—FRANK BRISCOE  
& ELLEN BOURDEAUX  
Richmond, Texas

\* The Neshoba County Fair, by Robert Craycroft, 1989, University Press of Mississippi.

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