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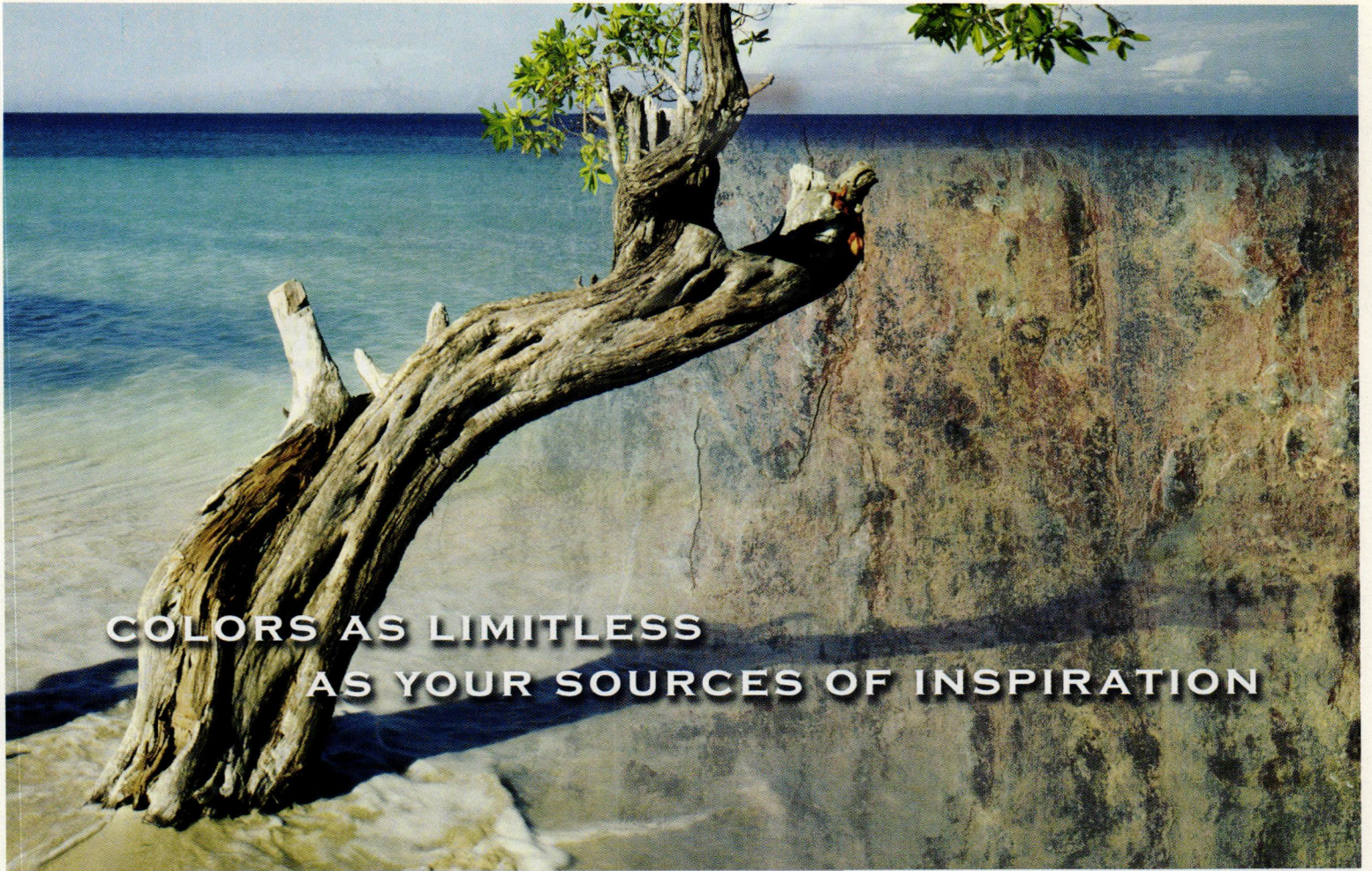
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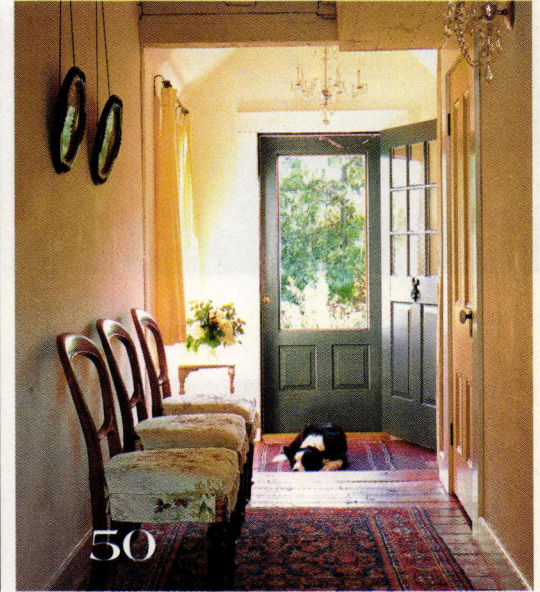
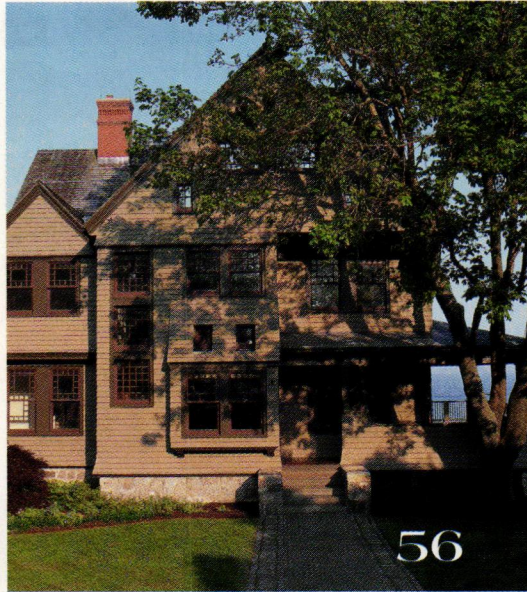
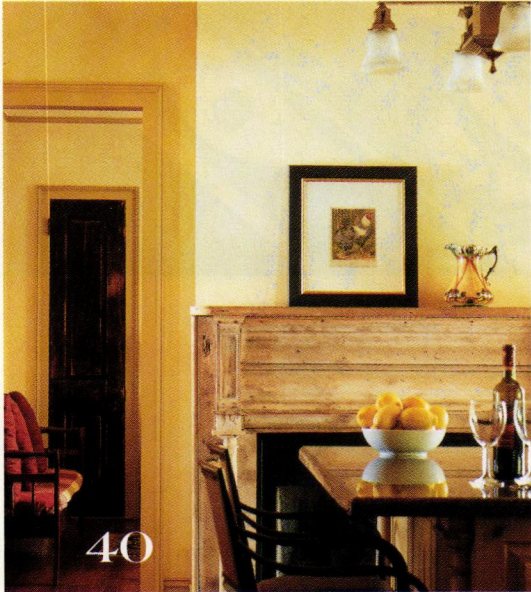
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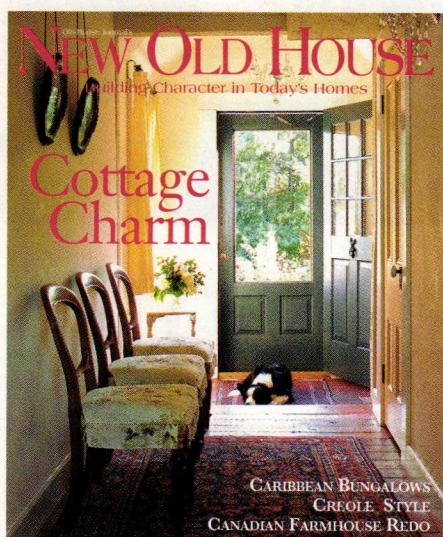
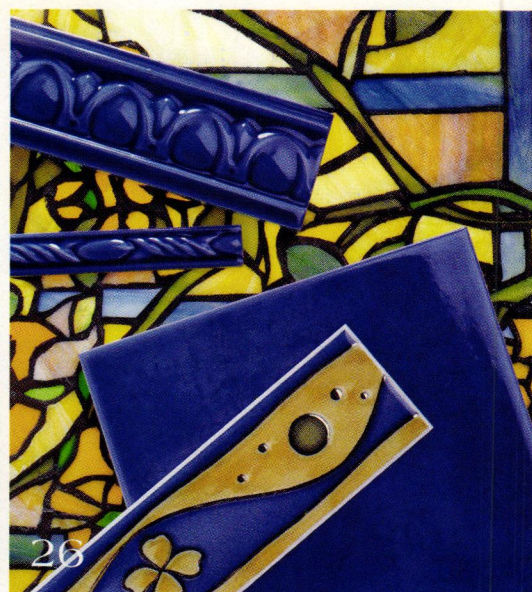
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Cover photo by Robin Stubbert.  
An 1830s Canadian centerhall farmhouse is renovated and turned into a charming quest cottage.

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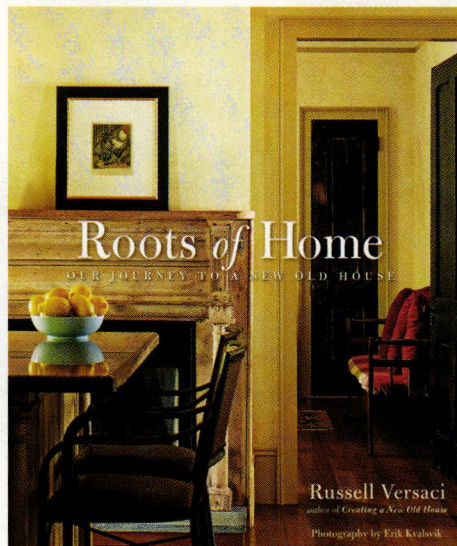
# Truly Inspired

We know new old houses are beautiful. Sturdy and implacably crafted for their environment, they are timeless structures that serve their inhabitants well. But where does the inspiration come from for these houses?

In this issue, we explore with our editor-at-large, Russell Versaci, some of the ideas behind his new book *Roots of Home: Our Journey to a New Old House* (Taunton Press, October 2008). Versaci discusses in this masterfully written book where the American home came from or as he says it best, "the roots of home." Versaci details the different regions where European colonists settled and how they "relied on a blend of customs, climate, and context to build their homes." This blend of custom and environment has developed "over generations into a classic style that defines the character of place."

In Versaci's column, Architect's Principles, he dives into the origins of Florida's Gulf Coast community Alys Beach and discovers that the town's planner, Jason Comer, and its architectural firm, Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, drew inspiration from the island of Bermuda—for its sturdy stucco dwellings that could withstand the most voracious storms—to create their town houses and single-family dwellings.

Writer Nigel Maynard further explores the origins and structures of Alys Beach in his feature story, "City by the Sea." Built while keeping in mind its subtropical climate and unforgiving storms, Alys Beach's homes are not only well built and timeless in their beauty but also environmentally friendly in their design. The homes are created to pass Florida's green building codes. For instance, they allow for natural cooling



and the homes are also properly insulated to promote energy efficiency when the air-conditioning is needed during Florida's hottest months. The buildings are also painted white to reflect sunlight so the houses stay cooler.

In Versaci's feature story "The French Creole Cottage" (an excerpt from *Roots of Home*), he explores this house style to its fullest and how local restoration builder Ron Arnoult has re-created this traditional design and all its hallmarks in a new old house in Madisonville, Louisiana. The cottage's timber framing, *galerie* porches, and a pavilion roof are elements that resemble those found on medieval houses of Normandy, France—where many of Louisiana's settlers came from. We hope you enjoy this issue celebrating the inspiration behind the new old house and that the articles will inspire you to create your own new old house.

Nancy E. Berry  
Editor

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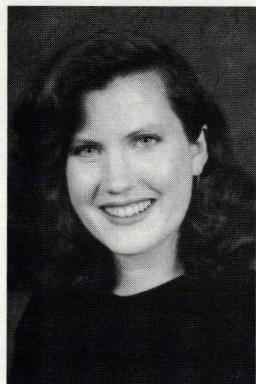


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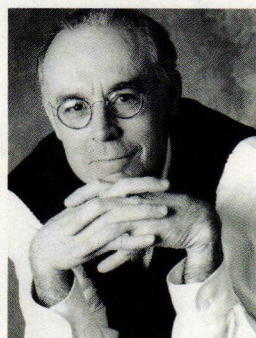
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**Christine G.H. Franck** is a designer and educator with a practice in New York City. She is the former director of the academic programs of the Institute of Classical Architecture & Classical

America (ICA&CA). She sits on the board of directors of the ICA&CA and the management committee of INTBAU and holds a master of architecture from the University of Notre Dame. She was honored by the Prince of Wales with the first Public Service Award of the Prince's Foundation for her outstanding contribution to the study of architecture and design.



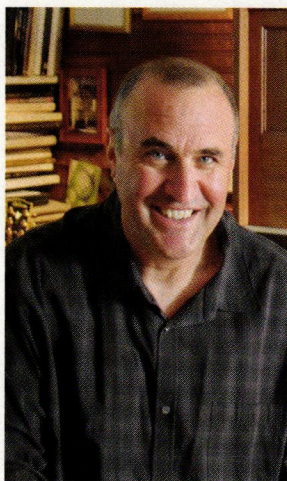
Editor-at-Large **Russell Versaci** is a residential architect who has spent two decades designing traditional houses. He attended the Harvard University

Graduate School of Design in 1973 and received his graduate degree from the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Fine Arts in 1979. He has designed traditional country houses, cottages, and farmhouses, as well as restorations and significant additions to period homes. Also an author, Versaci's debut book is titled *Creating a New Old House* (Taunton Press, 2003).



**Michael Weishan** is host emeritus of PBS's "The Victory Garden" in 2001 and has shared his design tips, expert advice, and trademark sense of humor with gardeners of all levels. In addition to head-

ing his own design firm, Michael Weishan & Associates, which specializes in historically based landscapes, he has written for numerous national magazines and periodicals and authored three books: *The New Traditional Garden*, *From a Victorian Garden*, and the *Victory Garden Gardening Guide*. Weishan lives west of Boston in an 1852 farmhouse surrounded by 3 acres of gardens.



For more than 30 years, **Eric Roth** has been capturing life through the lens, which has guided him on local, national, and international journeys. He has shot for such publications as *Traditional*

*Home*, *Metropolitan Home*, *Elle Decor*, and *Coastal Living*. He lives in Topsfield, Massachusetts. He has two lovely daughters.

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# Roots Offshore

Importing Traditions for a New Old House TEXT BY RUSSELL VERSACI

To my eye, a Mediterranean villa will never look at home in a Virginia cornfield. Houses that are native to a place grew out of a blend of culture and customs that are particular to that area. I call them “roots of home.” In every region, homes were shaped by the landscape, climate, materials, and traditions of the people who settled there, and they are tailor-made for the area.

But what if you are planning to build a house in a place that lacks a well-established style? There are times when importing a traditional style from afar makes real sense. But be careful. To look like it belongs, the style should come from an area that shares a similar climate, topography, and natural resources. If it doesn't, it probably won't ring true, but if it does, it can work very well.

On Florida's Gulf Coast, the climate is so extreme that houses have a tough time standing up to the elements. Searing sun, high humidity, voracious insects, and raging hurricanes take their toll. In 1993, years before Hurricane Katrina struck, Jason Comer was planning a new waterfront community called Alys Beach, and he wanted to make sure that it would withstand the most ferocious storms. For help, he enlisted Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company (DPZ), whose projects at Seaside and Rosemary Beach had been wildly successful, and together they began searching for an inventive architectural solution. They found it on a small island 600 miles off the Atlantic coast.

Admiral George Somers had stumbled upon the island in 1609. His ship, the *Sea Venture*, was headed for Jamestown with a hold full of English colonists when it got caught in the crosshairs of a mid-Atlantic hurricane. Driven far off course, Somers battled the storm for three long days before sighting an unknown land. In desperation,



Eliot O'Hara, Bermuda Gate, St. George's, 1932

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the captain drove his ship aground on its rocky coral reefs, allowing his thankful passengers to swim ashore on the island that became England's second colony in the New World—Bermuda.

For the next nine months the survivors of the *Sea Venture* were stranded on

Bermuda, biding their time by building ships and houses from the local cedar and palmetto palms. With no native population to challenge them, plenty of wild hogs, fowl, and fish to eat, and a gentle year-round climate, the castaways thought they had found Eden ... until



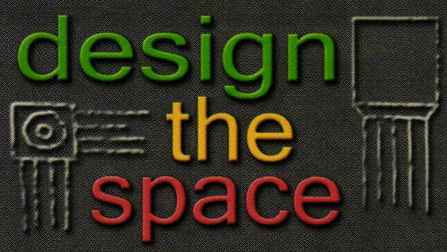


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the fall hurricanes roared in to blow down their houses and spoil the party.

The new Bermudians needed sturdier homes to stand up to the storms, and something stronger than wood to build them with. They found it right under their feet, beneath a layer of rich topsoil, where they struck bedrock.

The island of Bermuda had been shaped atop an extinct volcano by wind-driven sand, shells, and coral that created a thick icing of limestone rock. While the limestone was soft and easy to cut with chisels and handsaws, it hardened naturally when exposed to the air, becoming a rugged building material. For the next 350 years almost all Bermuda houses were built with this "coral stone," and blow as they may, hurricane winds couldn't budge them.

By virtue of its isolation far offshore—1,000 miles from the Caribbean and 600 miles off the Carolina coast—Bermuda was aloof from the Creole blend of cultures in the West Indies and beyond the reach of the Atlantic colonies. As a result, Bermuda developed its own original architecture, a fitting response to the climate and natural resources of its place, perfectly adapted and sustainable.

The classic Bermuda house is a picturesque mosaic of wings and multiple roofs in the shape of gables, hips, ogee curves, and pyramids. Its exterior walls are made of stone blocks several feet thick and plastered with white lime mortar. The walls are braced on the gable ends by massive splayed chimneys that taper outward in stepped rows of coral stone. Built as buttresses to reinforce the structure against storms, the chimneys look like stalwart bookends.

The roofs are framed in Bermuda cedar covered with 1-inch thick coral stone slates lashed to the timbers and overlapped like a layer cake. The slates are plastered and whitewashed to make them watertight and to purify the runoff of rainwater, the only source of drink-

ing water on the island. Adjacent to some houses is a "buttery," a small stone outbuilding with a minaret-shaped roof and cool interior that was used to store perishables.

Bermuda's unique vernacular architecture has survived to the present day almost completely intact. Until the twentieth century everything and everyone from off-island had to get there by ship, and for years the island existed with little outside interference. The architecture was preserved through benign neglect, neither gussied up nor bulldozed down by successive generations.

Tourism became Bermuda's mainstay after World War II when thousands began to come for vacations, drawn by the island's beauty, beaches, and quaint culture. That change could have spelled disaster. But with profound foresight Bermudians took steps to protect their built heritage and discourage unsympathetic alterations by foreigners. Today it is nearly impossible to buy or build a house in Bermuda unless you are a native, and all building is regulated.

Essentially unaltered for three centuries, Bermuda's modest houses have caught the eye of today's traditional architects searching for classic building forms. When Jason Comer called on DPZ for help in planning Alys Beach, the architects looked to Bermuda for a natural fit in a challenging coastal environment of intense sunlight, humidity, and tropical storms. While not native to the region, these offshore roots of home made perfect sense on the Florida Panhandle.

DPZ had created successful communities at Seaside and Rosemary Beach, but over the years residents there wanted more privacy for the close-set houses. For Alys Beach, DPZ decided to combine Bermuda traditions with town-planning ideas from fifteenth-century Antigua Guatemala, a Spanish colonial city where urban *casas* line the edges of the streets behind enclosing courtyard

walls. Inside the walls these townhouses are private domestic worlds, cool oases offering refuge from the teeming throng and searing sun.

By blending Antiguan and Bermudian traditions, DPZ created a new urban environment that is well suited to the conditions of the Gulf Coast. Alys Beach is a compact town of streets, alleys, and courtyard homes modeled after Antigua, and like the roofscapes of Bermuda, it is startling because it is pure white.

The color white is not just an aesthetic choice. It is part of a multi-layered strategy for sustainable building. Since white reflects sunlight and heat, all walls and roofs must be white. The walls are made of solid-filled concrete blocks to create thermal mass, while the roofs are covered in thick concrete tiles, overlapped and screwed to the frame to secure them against hurricane winds.

Alys Beach's architecture is garnering awards and accolades these days because of its sustainability, but it is also incredibly beautiful. From scalloped parapet walls to stepped-stone roofs, louvered plantation shutters, and tapered chimneys, the houses translate Bermudian forms into today's building materials. Many architects have created these lively interpretations, their designs unified by a common palette of white walls and roofs. They look like white fortresses built to last for centuries, just like their predecessors in Bermuda.

Alys Beach's twenty-first century reprise of Bermudian architecture and Antiguan town planning shows us how old styles can be used in new places to meet age-old challenges, and perfectly illustrates the wisdom of importing traditions from afar when the fit is right. By looking to the past for guidance, we discover the roots of home in traditions that can inspire the design of authentic and enduring new old houses. **NOH**

*Russell Versaci is an architect and author of Roots of Home (Taunton Press, 2008).*

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# Replicating the Past

Carpenter Brent Hull re-creates interior details for a Texas showhouse.

MARY GRAUERHOLZ

For Henry Francis du Pont, life was a grand affair. With family wealth cushioning him from the blows that most Americans endured in the early 1900s, du Pont was able to devote himself to sublime pastimes—decorative arts, antiques, early American furniture, horticulture. He modeled his country estate, *Winterthur*, in Winterthur, Delaware, after eighteenth-century European estates and filled it with fine art and historic furnishings. Today, operated as Winterthur Museum & Country Estate, the former du Pont home is a picture-perfect showcase of the history and social customs of du Pont's sophisticated lifestyle.

Beyond the lush gardens, sumptuous furnishings, and priceless art of *Winterthur* is one of the finest meeting points of Georgian and Federal architecture in the world. Brent Hull, expert millworker, author, and owner of Hull Historical in Fort Worth, has captured the early twentieth-century estate's classic beauty and proportion—and its elegant air—in a benefit designer showcase home in Fort Worth. The showhome is a collaboration of Historic Fort Worth and Winterthur Museum & Country Estate.

From the intricate dentil wrapping around the high walls of the master bedroom to the raised paneled walls in the study, the interior woodwork in the Fort Worth home is a lovely reflection of Georgian and Federal styles—Georgian on the first floor, Federal on the second floor. Although the millwork is meticulously, mathematically detailed, the appeal of the home's moldings and carved detailing draws on our humanness, just as all fine architecture does.

"There is a reason that people feel good walking into certain rooms," Hull reflects. "They fall back to the classic Greek and Roman rules of architecture, which are based on a human scale and

model." The rules that create proportion and scale in a space, he says, also do something much simpler—they make us feel good, right down to our roots.

Hull accomplished the task by drawing inspiration from four rooms in *Winterthur*. With 175 rooms designed in period detail of 1640-1860 America, *Winterthur* offered beautiful potential for reproduction woodwork. Hull reproduced its moldings and detailing for the showhome's master bedroom, study, dining room, and casual living room.

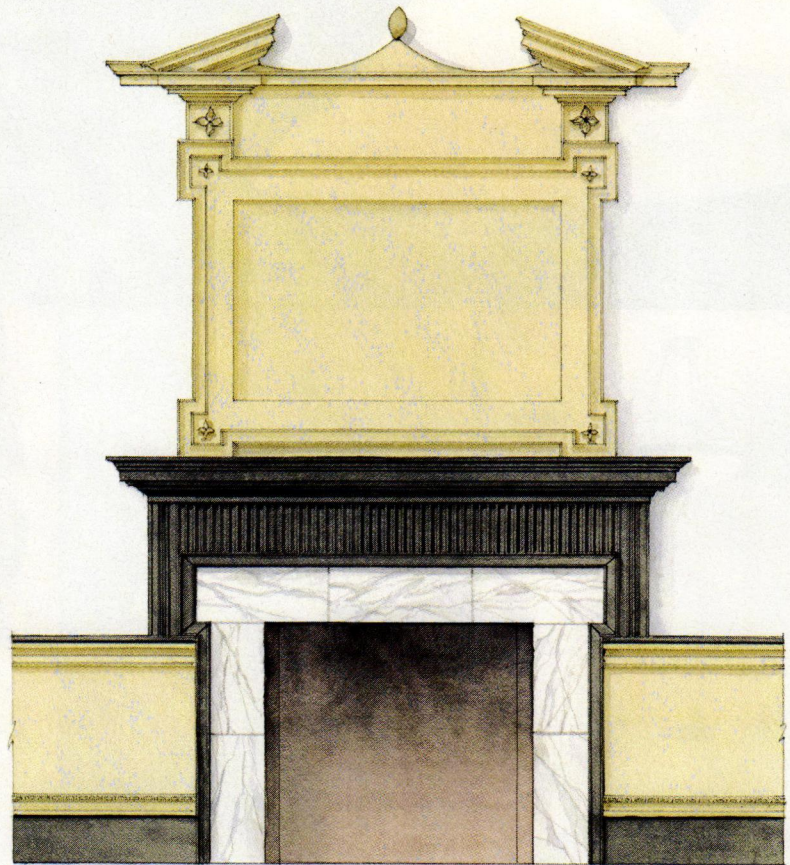
"I fell in love with four rooms in *Winterthur*," Hull says. "We decided we

A rendering of the Chestertown fireplace surround that will grace the Fort Worth, Texas, showhouse.

wanted to try to capture those rooms as much as we could." With paint colors and furnishings that embellish the classic interior woodwork, the home carries easily into twenty-first century Fort Worth.

Achieving that feeling of emotional grandeur in the 6,800-square-foot, two-story Fort Worth home involved the hands and minds of many people.

Hull's primary partner was the firm of John Milner Architects, Inc., based in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, and noted for



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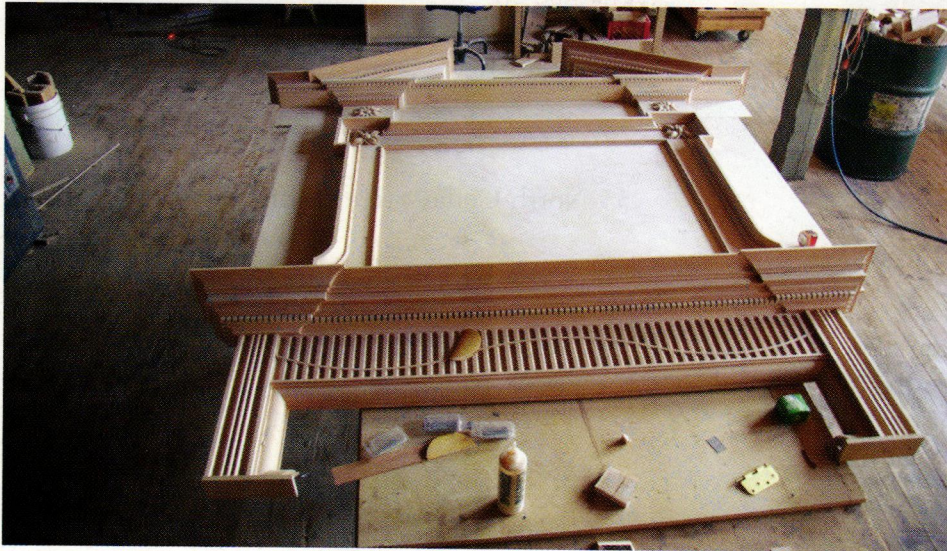


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Moldings in the showhouse reflect moldings found throughout Winterthur. Left is the Chestertown room at Winterthur. Brent Hull re-created the mantel for the showhouse's living room.

plan and maintain the elegance of the period," O'Barr says. "A house this size never would have been built at one time in the 1700s. We wanted to make the showhouse look like it had been built over time. As the family would have prospered and grown, so would the house." This was accomplished with a hyphen, or link, that connects the garage with the house. "That keeps the main formal part of the house defined," O'Barr says. The elegant center of the home is further defined by a front entry embellished with a Georgian Revival doorpiece that is typical of the high style of the era.

Leaving the millwork design to Hull was exactly the right thing to do, O'Barr recalls. "In most of the houses we do at John Milner Architects, we thoroughly design all of the millwork. In this house, we were working with such an expert—Brent Hull—that we gave our sketches to him."

Hull's love of architecture goes back to the early 1990s, when he attended the North Bennet Street School in Boston. His architectural chops quickly developed, and he returned to Texas to start Hull Historical. "It really happened in Boston," Hull says of his professional awakening.

"It was hands-on study." Mostly, he says, his training taught him the value of classic structures.

Working with John Milner and Scott O'Barr helped revive some of that classical training, Hull says. "John and Scott came up with some great details that I had studied in Boston but had forgotten about," he says. "It was somewhat of a rebirth for me, falling in love with the moldings, the scale of the rooms."

The four *Winterthur*-inspired rooms of the showhouse are on the first floor. "These are the 'hero' rooms," Hull says. The moldings and detailing in the rooms are in the Georgian style (1725-1775), with a symmetry based on the location of the fireplaces. Georgian-style moldings tend to be heftier, sometimes projecting three inches off the wall. Upstairs, Hull followed in the Federal style, which encompassed the years 1775-1820. "Federal is a little more dainty, simpler, cleaner," Hull says.

The Georgian-style dining room is off the entry hall, entered through an arched elliptical opening. It is a spacious room, with symmetrical doors on either side of the fireplace (one door is false; the other leads to the kitchen). The genesis of the room's moldings and details is the Hampton Room in *Winterthur*. Hull created crown molding that wraps around the top of the room, with engaged pilasters in the four corners, as well as base molding. "The fireplace is the highlight," Hull says. Besides anchoring the room architecturally, it features exquisite flower motifs carved by Ian Agrell, a master carver from Kent, England.

At some locations in the showhouse, the moldings do more than add beauty and balance to the rooms. They add human scale. The study, for example, has full paneled walls. "Before we put the paneling on the walls," Hull recalls, "the room felt really small. I was worried. But when we put the paneling up, the room felt right." The room is based on the Bowers Parlor in *Winterthur*, which was reproduced from a 1763 Massachusetts home.

The showcase home's first-floor living room, or family room—inspired by *Winterthur's* Chestertown Room—has

the restoration of historic buildings and the design of new homes in traditional styles. The on-site architect in the Fort Worth home was Scott O'Barr. O'Barr recalls delving into the project with Hull and the creative process that followed.

"I think the challenge in the design of this house was to give it a modern open

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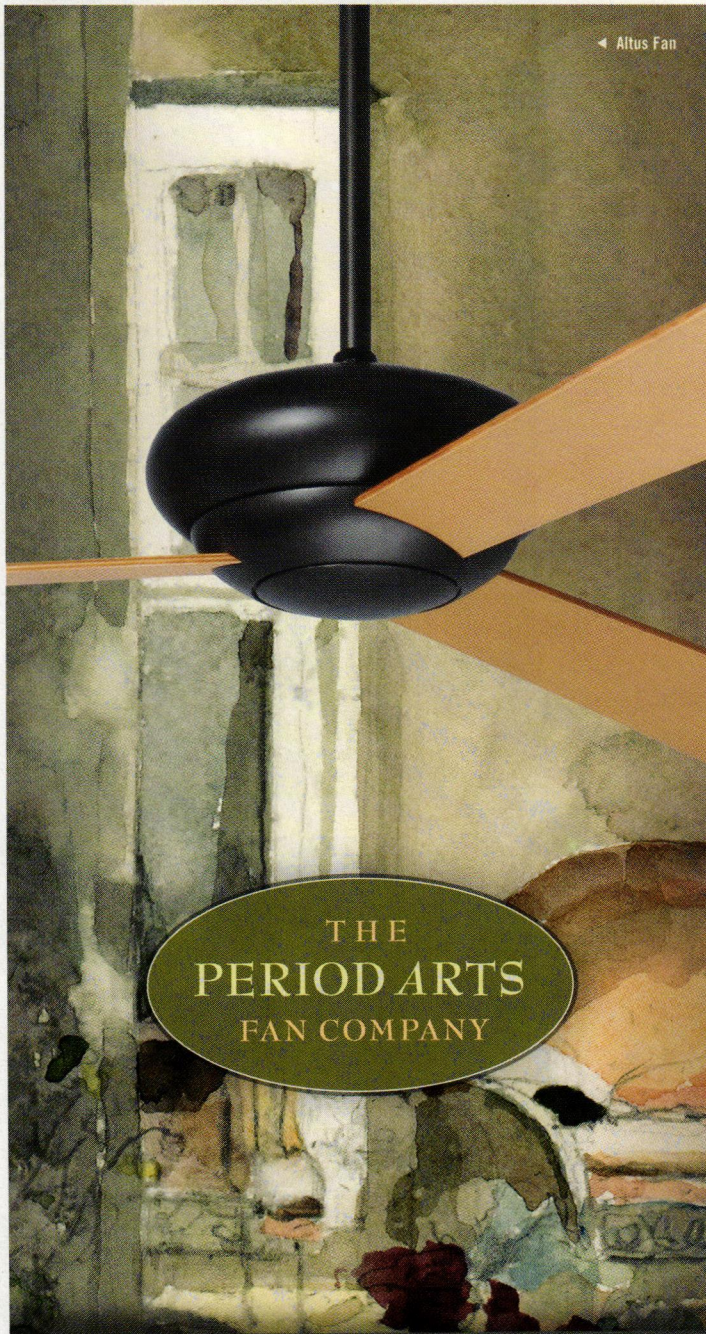


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## DRAFTING BOARD



The Fort Worth showhouse, shown above under construction, is modeled after the Winterthur Museum and Country Estate.

more formal moldings. The show home's mantel is enriched with a frieze containing a beautiful serpentine detail. Built-in bookcases complement other architectural elements, such as an elaborate carved chair rail.

Other stunning detail lies in the master bedroom, with its full-panel fireplace wall defined by simple molding around the firebox. The rest of the room is wrapped in wainscoting and fretwork dentil work at the top edge of the room, which looks like it is cut from three sides. One of the home's finest molding details, the dentil reflects a beautiful scrolling technique. As Hull says, "It is almost a puzzle piece that gives it a new sense of depth that is quite wonderful."

The overall effect of the showhouse is timelessness based on a human scale, much of it imbued by the meticulous moldings and detailing. Hull is happy about showing the house to the public. "I hope the experience of this house will be 'this feels right.'" But Hull hopes it will be a subtle effect. He pauses. "Maybe," he says, "they'll say, 'I don't know why I like it, but I like it.'" **NOH**

*Mary Grauerholz is the communications manager at the Cape Cod Foundation and a freelance writer.*

The showhouse is open November 1st through the 16th. For information, visit [www.historicfortworth.org](http://www.historicfortworth.org).

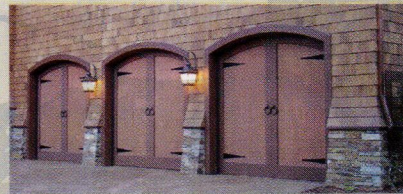
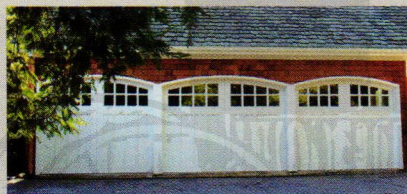


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# Yesterday's Kitchen Today

Want to bring an old soul to your new kitchen? Here are five tricks for creating a period kitchen. **TEXT BY JUDI KETTELER PHOTOS BY ERIC ROTH**

Historically, kitchens have warmed, protected, and nurtured families, both physically and emotionally. Even with the advent of modern technology, the kitchen remains a sentimental space, deeply tied to history, says Pasadena, California, designer Liza Kerrigan of Blue Studio. "We are so mechanized that there is something wonderful and immediate about touching a butler's pantry with an old sink," she says. With today's wide selection of products, there are many ways to bring the craftsmanship, texture, and style of an older kitchen into a newer home.

Here are five tips from our panel of design experts for all things old.

## 1. Reimagine the Space

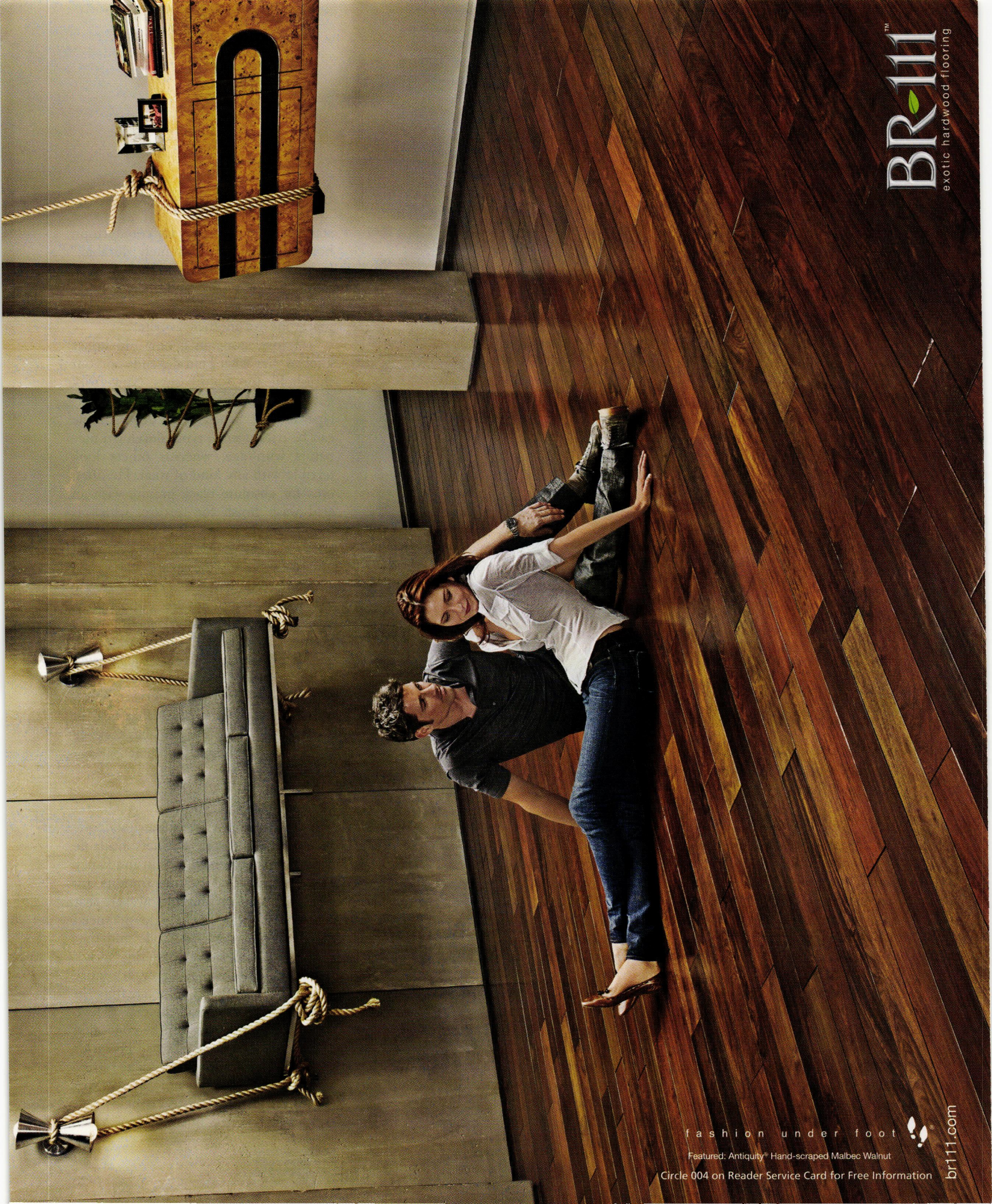
"This might be radical, but forget for a minute about its function of being a kitchen," says Kerrigan, because many of the oldest kitchens were just spaces or rooms that evolved into kitchens. "I like a kitchen that doesn't scream 'kitchen,'" she says. There's a lovely makeshift quality about many new old house kitchens. After all, some of the best cuisine is prepared on rough wooden cutting boards and in old farm sinks.

"I call it an unfitted kitchen," says Montpelier, Vermont, architect Sandy Vitzthum. "It's more of a family space, where you only have as much storage as you really need for everyday use and you're using pieces of furniture that have an identity of their own rather than just banks of cabinets." That way, the focus is on preparing food, having conversations, and helping people relax—all elements of old kitchens. Kerrigan is of a similar mind and often opts not to do upper cabinets; instead, she will hide storage in a thick wall or a deep pantry. "We can



Adding a vintage stove and a faux ice chest can give your kitchen a period look. Wooden floors also add a touch of olden days sensibilities.





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Cabinets that resemble ones found in butler's pantries of the past offer a vintage feel in the kitchen.

plan our storage so well now," she says. Lining a wall with floor-to-ceiling cabinets is not the only option.

## 2. Create a Hearth

"In colonial kitchens, the fireplace was the center focus of the room and where people gathered," says Vitzthum. "I still like to make the stove the primary focus." She will spend more time searching out the right stove than she'll spend on any other appliance because it sets the tone for the room. She likes the ranges from AGA and Heartland because they have a presence and stature about them that help create that older feel. Beyond choosing the stove itself, Vitzthum says, it's about composing the wall properly. "You don't want the hearth too crowded—I like space on either side because there should be room for gathering or

multiple people working," she says.

Even though they are a twentieth-century invention, range hoods are another opportunity to add character and presence to your new old house kitchen, says Middletown, Virginia, architect Russell Versaci, principal in Russell Versaci Architecture and author of *Roots of Home: Our Journey to a New Old House* (Taunton 2008). "I'll sometimes fabricate a range hood from copper," he says, because it has an old feel.

## 3. Choose Appropriate Materials

Versaci almost always opts for durable materials when designing new old house kitchens because older kitchens were built to last and to look better (not worse) with wear and tear—that's part of that "makeshift" quality that defines them. "It used to be common to use

stainless steel or copper for countertops, both of which are extremely durable," he says. "I like to use them in small portions—a detail here and there." Sinks and countertops fabricated entirely of soapstone are another favorite.

"I love stone in a new old house kitchen, but what kind depends on your threshold for stain," says New York City-based architect Gil Schafer, principal of G.P. Schafer Architect. Marble can be tricky; some types develop a nice patina with age, whereas others look terrible with any kind of wear. He often opts for absolute black granite with an acid wash finish for texture, which is mostly impervious. "Butcher block is another great option for counters, and it's less expensive," he says.

Wherever you get a chance to use old wood, jump at the opportunity, says Versaci. "I love a salvaged antique floor. I've worked with old tobacco farm boards, which have a great rough-sawn finish but are very comfortable on your feet," he explains. A quick search can turn up lots of companies that deal in repurposed wood; Versaci likes Carlisle Wide Plank Floors for their salvage selection.

## 4. Furnish with Charm

These days, there are some good off-the-shelf period-style cabinets available from manufacturers like Plain and Fancy or Kennebec, and custom options are limitless. Keep in mind, however, that a new old house kitchen doesn't need to conform to any one style and that authenticity doesn't necessarily spring from total historical accuracy. It's more about the feel that you're creating in your kitchen with your choices. "I love that today's appliances can be concealed by cabinetry," Schafer says. He tries to hide modern appliances like refrigerators, dishwashers, and microwaves whenever possible because it helps create a more seamless furniture look.

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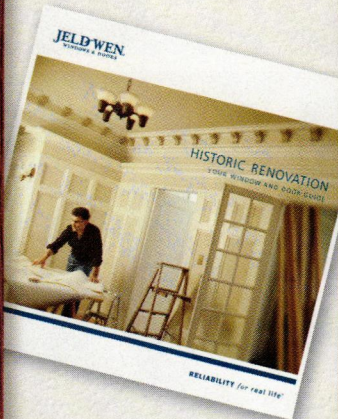
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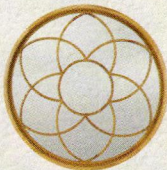
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Architect Ben Nutter designed this new old house kitchen using traditional detailing. The hand hewn beams offer authenticity to the space.

Definitely make the most of the areas where you can easily incorporate that found look, such as your kitchen table, your sink, and your display pieces.

“You shouldn’t be afraid to touch these spaces. That’s why I like pieces that can take abuse and look better for it,” Vitzthum says. Antique and distressed tables and chairs, well-worn butler’s pantries, and farm sinks (Kohler even makes one now) are rich in historical charm—even better, they’re durable.

### 5. Get the Details Right

“I like to keep the look of the entire kitchen as if it’s one thought,” Versaci says, and that extends to even the smallest details. He will spend hours poring over old catalogs and reference books to get ideas for detailing, things like the cabinet moldings, the shape of the paneling, the lighting, and the hardware. “It’s so easy to overlook the hardware,” Versaci says. “It’s a small detail, but it’s one you touch

all the time.” You don’t have to spend a fortune tracking down custom hardware; retailers like Restoration Hardware have plenty of good options these days, he says. He also likes Crown City Hardware and, for a high-end option, Nanz Custom Hardware.

Whether you have hundreds of dollars or tens of thousands of dollars to spend to get the new old look, it really comes down to being in love with everything you choose and knowing why you want it. “Creating a new old house kitchen has everything to do with the romance of the past,” Kerrigan says. “Fill your kitchen with old things that have been designed for specific purposes,” she says, and the rest will fall into place. **NOH**

*Judi Ketteler is a freelance writer living in Ohio.*

*For Resources, see page 71.*



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## Creative with Clay

Spain's tile trade produces works of art in one of the world's oldest building materials.

TEXT BY NANCY E. BERRY

A slurry of clay and water fired at high temperatures creates beautiful, durable building material—ceramic tile. The Spanish tile trade has been in business for centuries, and today its products are available through U.S. distributors.

“Be Creative” was the theme of this year’s Cevisama, the International Ceramic Tile and Bath Furnishings show, in Valencia, Spain. And creative it was. Using one of the oldest building materials in the world—clay mixed with water—Tile of Spain members showcased innovative ways to make, use, and adorn tile.

Spain is a world leader in the production and export of tile, with many of the companies concentrated in the province of Castellon. This area—reminiscent of the arid southern California landscape, including a dotting of haciendas—has been producing tile for centuries, because







of its proximity to a viable port as well as its artisans. The clay in this area makes for a supreme tile (it has a high percentage of kaolinitic minerals—excellent for the composition of ceramics), and since the clay is gathered locally, it means that the majority of the clay to make the tiles is not shipped from another location, saving on fuel consumption and cost, and reducing its carbon footprint.

#### How Tile Is Made

Clay tiles have been used for more than 4,000 years in the history of our built environment. The oldest Egyptian pyramid walls were adorned with clay tiles. Moorish Spain was employing tiles well before other European countries (think AD 1,000).

Traditionally, tiles were made by hand and dried in the sun and then fired in a kiln at extreme temperatures

(earthenware, 2,200F; stoneware, 2190 to 2350 F; porcelain, 2,500F.) Today, tradition and manufacturing blend to produce two ways to fire clay—single and double firing. The double firing process: After a pressed body is fired to create a “bisque,” a glaze is applied and the body is once again fired to its final finish. In the single firing process, a glaze is applied directly onto the pressed tile and then fired. Although double firing was more common in the past (a process that could take up to 40 hours for the first firing and 20 hours for the second firing), today both techniques produce a strong tile. However, single firing is more practical and economical, with firing lasting only 45 minutes.

#### Sustainable Products

Ceramic tiles are noted for their hygienic qualities, fire resistance, easy main-

tenance, and longevity. Spain also produces its tiles with the environment in mind. The tile company Roca, which is one of the largest manufacturers of architectural tile, recycles all the sludge created during the process of tile making, and also reuses 100 percent of its industrial water. The tile company Alfa recycles surplus heat from its kilns to supply other machines in its factory with energy. Waste products are also collected and filtered during the production process. The company even provides bicycles for its employees to go from one site to another. (Now that’s green thinking!)

Natucer, also located in the cluster of tile factories in Castellon, is in tune with respect for the environment. The company practices energy efficient methods and reuses of most of its raw materials. The company produces its



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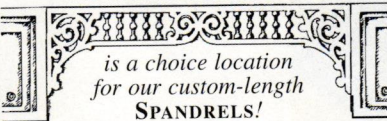


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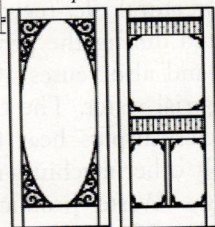


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Traditional tile floors are popular in new old houses inspired by Spanish Colonial Revival design.

tiles using the extrusion process—soft clay is forced through an extruder, and the continuous ribbon of clay, formed to the desired shape, is then cut into individual tiles. This process creates a handmade look, which also helps enhance the old-world feel of tiles used, say, in a new old Spanish Colonial Revival house.

Tau Ceramica employs sophisticated methods of producing tiles that are also as green as possible. The company reduces the amount of dust particles that get into the air in its raw materials warehouse by sucking in the dust and filtering the air—sending clean air back into the atmosphere. Tau also uses co-generated turbines to generate electricity and hot air for the tile-drying sheds. It also recycles 100 percent of its wastewater, so there is zero discharge outside the factory.

**Tile Makers**

Spain's tile trade has pushed the envelope when it comes to innovative designs and manufacturing methods. Roca has developed a new concept in tile cutting. This technology involves rectifying raw edges before they are fired in the kiln, allowing for a natural finish. The company also relies on the tried-and-true "golden rule" for the proportion of its tiles. Although it is creating tiles that replicate other materials such as stone, it still believes in creating "tile for tile's sake." Roca creates tile for the traditionalist, such as period-inspired subway tiles for the bath and kitchen.

Another company, Rocersa, makes wall tiles that replicate rock, marble, and metal. Called its Extreme Collection, these tiles resemble hard natural surfaces. These amazing ceramic tiles can



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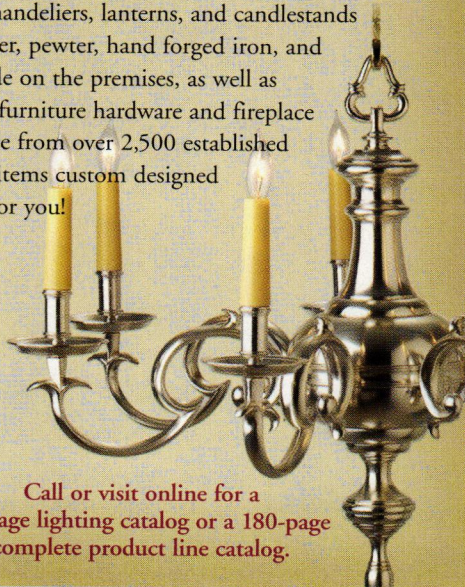


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From Natucer's line of wall tiles, shown above is Sheltand.

withstand a variety of conditions because of the firing process they have undergone, which makes them strong.

Natucer makes wall tiles, coarse stone tiles, and earthenware tiles. The company is also creating tiles to resemble a wood grain hand-painted finish. Piamonte is its line of extruded rustic floor terra-cotta tiles, which offer an old-world look. It also produces a new floor tile that is 21 inches by 14 inches—the largest tile produced in its factory. The company also produces all its own trim pieces.

One of my favorite tile companies at the show was Onix. It produces beautiful mosaic glass tiles. Perfect for a bathroom, the tiles come in a kaleidoscope of colors.

Creativity being the key theme in this year's show, Tau is developing a sensory tile, whereby you touch a tile surface on entering a room and the lights go on. The company added a bit of humor to this new concept, demonstrating the "diet tile": placed in front of a refrigerator, it is set to go off if stepped on late at night. Other innovations from Tau are its ability to customize tile, such as silk-screen printing and water-jet cutting. The company also developed a dry ceramic underlay that requires no adhesive.

It was a treat to see how Spain is getting it right when it comes to creativity and caring for the environment with one of man's oldest building materials. **NOH**

For more information, see page 71.



# My Style



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# Autumn Color

Woody shrubs add color to the garden when the weather turns cool.

TEXT BY MICHAEL WEISHAN PHOTOS BY JANE BOOTH

There's a certain fatigue evident in the autumn garden: The heat of summer has long since burned away the green vibrancy of spring; the light turns golden, soft, and attenuated; most perennials, shrubs, and trees, having finished their floral labors, begin a grateful descent toward dormancy. Often, there's a certain fatigue evident in the autumn gardener as well—at least there is for me. Try as I might to maintain my horticultural enthusiasm, after a long spring and summer season of weeding, watering, pruning, and primping, I'm pooped. Though I'm well aware that fall is a wonderful time to make improvements to the beds and borders, many a year those autumn catalogs with their smiling seas of scintillating new bulbs and perennials beckon in vain. I know the garden will be poorer from my lack of effort, but I just can't muster the energy to turn over another spadeful of soil—until next spring, that is, when my passion for gardening returns almost simultaneously with the first warm, sunny days.

Fortunately for lazy gardeners like me, Mother Nature offers an easy solution for those who want their gardens to continue to look great through the fall with little effort—the answer lies in including a judicious selection of woody plants in your beds and borders. Unlike annuals and perennials with their constant maintenance demands, most woody shrubs require a major expenditure of effort only once, at planting time. After that, a handful of fertilizer and a quick annual pruning are all that's required to keep the plants looking good. Here's a selection of my favorite woody shrubs for the fall garden, guaranteed to add a bit of effortless vim and vigor to your landscape.



Holly is a perfect addition to a fall garden. Its bright red berries and dark green leaves offer vibrant color to the garden.



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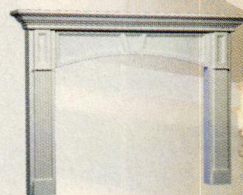


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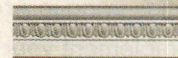
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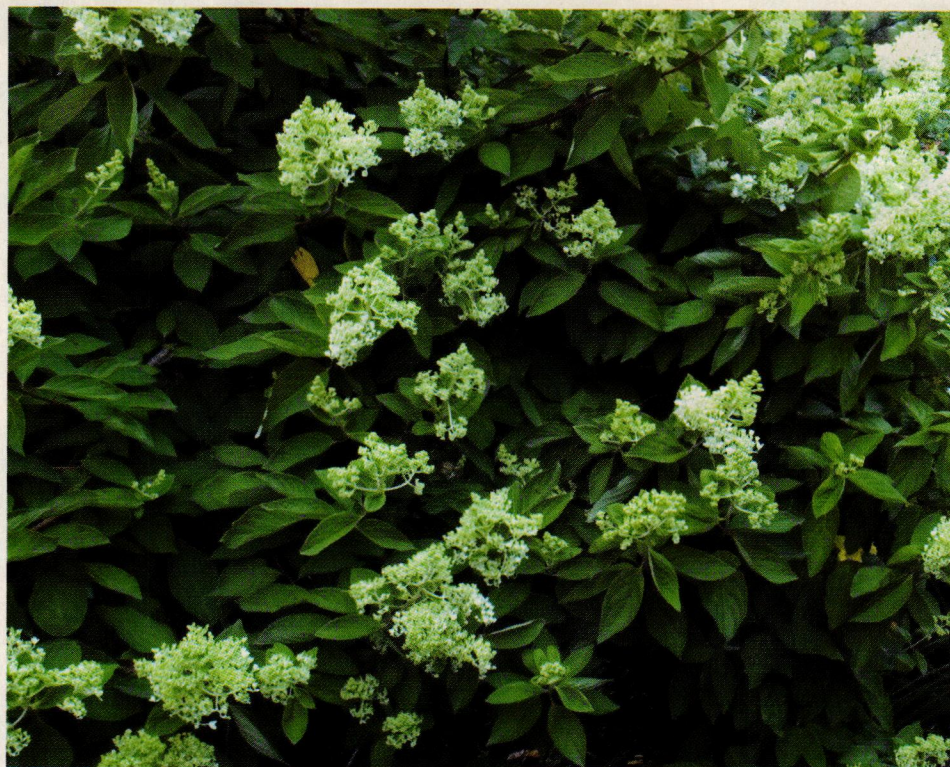
CROWN MOULDINGS

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Anyone who has an old-fashioned garden (or who knows someone who does) has probably seen one of autumn's stars, *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Grandifolia,' pee-gee for short. This shrub was hugely popular with the Victorians, and deservedly so, as it covers itself every fall with gigantic flower heads in a unique mixture of chartreuse, rose, and cream that last for months outdoors or can be cut and dried to make fantastic indoor arrangements. The pee-gee's only drawback is its size: Mature specimens can easily reach 15 feet, and the flower heads are often so large that the entire bush becomes overly pendent, especially when the blossoms are weighted with water. Lately, however, breeders have been doing considerable hybridization with this species and have produced some spectacular new varieties. A real favorite



Pee-gee hydrangea, with its light, airy blooms, creates romance in the garden.

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is *H. paniculata* 'Limelight' (zones 4–8), which grows only 6–8 feet tall and keeps its lovely greenish-pink flowers erect all through the fall. I have this particular shrub in my own garden, and it's truly become one of my preferred autumn plants. There's another just-introduced variety that I'm dying to try: *H. paniculata* 'Pinky Winky.' Despite the silly name, this hydrangea looks to be a knockout. Its cream flowers continue to open on the tips of long trusses for weeks, while the older flowers change from white to light pink to rose.

Despite the fact that viburnums are native to most of the Northern Hemisphere, these flowering shrubs are strangely neglected in our gardens. Certain types such as *Viburnum carlesii*, mostly noted for their incredibly fragrant spring blooms, are seen occasionally, but the rest of this clan remains MIA in America. This is extremely unfortunate because viburnums truly are the stars of

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## HEIRLOOM GARDENS

the late summer and fall garden, not so much for their flowers (which are spectacular but occur mostly early in the season) but rather for their absolutely showstopping display of colored berries and fall foliage. Particularly noteworthy are *V. dentatum* 'Blue Muffin' (zones 3–9), which yields clouds of bright blue berries followed by yellow and red foliage in the fall; *V. dilatatum* (zones 4–7), which covers itself with thousands of red berries that often persist right into winter; and *V. nudum* 'Winterthur' (zones 5–9), which has a display of blue-black berries in late summer followed by maroonish-purple foliage in the fall. Like all viburnums, these selections have a multibranched, upright, mounded habit as well as moderate size and excellent disease tolerance.

Another notoriously neglected berryed wonder is *Ilex verticillata*, common-

ly known as the deciduous holly. These shrubs are in fact so unprepossessing for much of the season that for many years I never paid them much heed. In spring they bear the tiniest of white flowers, and in summer, they produce a full cloak of plain green leaves. But come autumn, watch out! Once the first frosts have done their work and removed the obfuscatory leaves, the stems are revealed in all their glory—covered with greenish berries that soon turn shades of yellow, crimson, or red (depending on the variety). Planted in masses along the verges of woods or in the damp, partially shady places they adore, the shining berry clusters are visible from hundreds of feet away. Strangely, the very vibrancy of the display forms my sole objection to deciduous hollies: The berries are so lovely and so well advertised that they attract

Red twig dogwood creates a network of color through its red branches. Its variegated leaves add another level of color to the garden.



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flocks of hungry wild turkeys to my backyard. On some occasions turkeys are a treat to behold, but when these birds arrive ravenous in the late fall, they soon reduce the clusters of berries—normally persistent for months—to a few paltry remnants within mere days. Witnessing this desolation from my kitchen windows every fall, I must admit that my temptation to switch to wild turkey for our annual Thanksgiving feast grows with each passing year.

Finally, there's a number of shrubs I jokingly call the "stickies," members of the dogwood and willow clans that are not planted for their flowers, foliage, or berries but rather for their stems, which turn brilliant yellow and red in the late fall and winter. If you have a bit of space and are floristically inclined, these shrubs are garden essentials, as their starkly sculptural twigs are ridiculously expensive to purchase and are pretty much *de rigueur* in fall and winter arrangements. Particularly useful are *Salix alba* spp. 'Britzensis,' with crimson stems; *Cornus sericea* 'Flaviramea,' with yellow ones; and *Cornus alba* 'Siberica,' with red stems. All these shrubs are hardy over zones 2/3–8 and are practically maintenance free. The best-colored stems, however, come from new growth; thus a rigorous removal of the old woody branches once a year is a must for optimal color.

So this autumn, if you're feeling a bit of garden malaise, take heart: There's no need for that perennial dash to settle the borders before the snow flies. Simply include a few of my favorite autumnal woody show-stoppers in your landscape, and next year, sit back, put your feet up, and enjoy! **NOH**

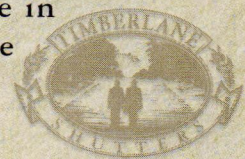
*Michael Weishan is a freelance writer and owner of Michael Weishan & Associates. He has authored many books, including The New Traditional Garden and The Victory Gardening Guide.*

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# Proper Plumbing

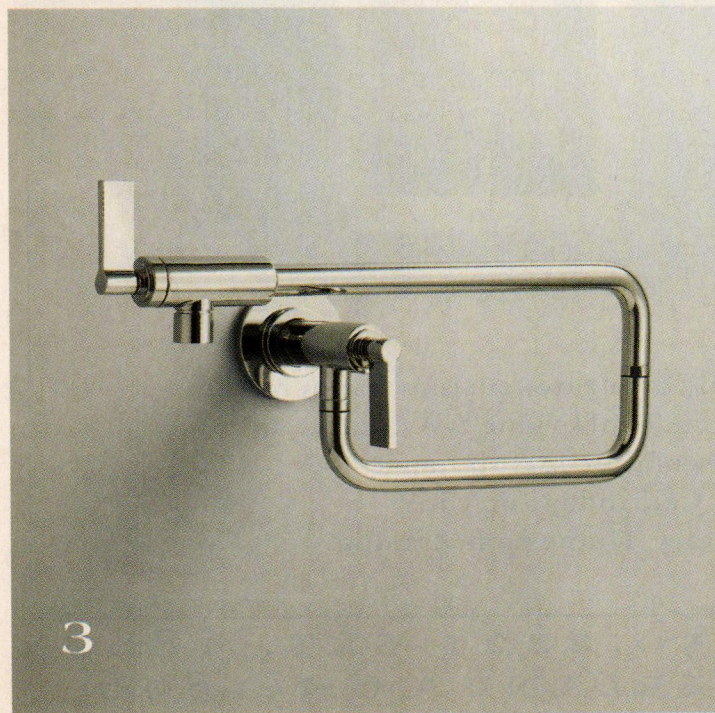
Perfect additions for the new old house look.



1



2



3

## 1 Laundry Tub

Wide laundry sinks were popular additions to old houses at the turn of the last century. Add one to your new old cabin or home to create a traditional atmosphere. Shown here is Kohler's Harborview Utility sink—practical and handsome, this makes a perfect addition to the laundry room or kitchen. For more information, visit [www.kohler.com](http://www.kohler.com).

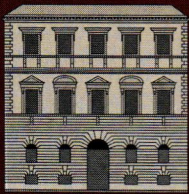
## 2 Water, Water Everywhere

When space is tight, the Bayview utility sink is the item to go for. Compact and wall-mounted, this efficient and space-saving sink is the perfect option when you don't have a lot of room to splash around in. For more information, visit [www.kohler.com](http://www.kohler.com).

## 3 Pot Filler

Pot fillers are handsome, as well as handy, additions over the traditional cookstove. This sleek style has an arm that folds back neatly onto the wall. For more information, visit [www.kallista.com](http://www.kallista.com).

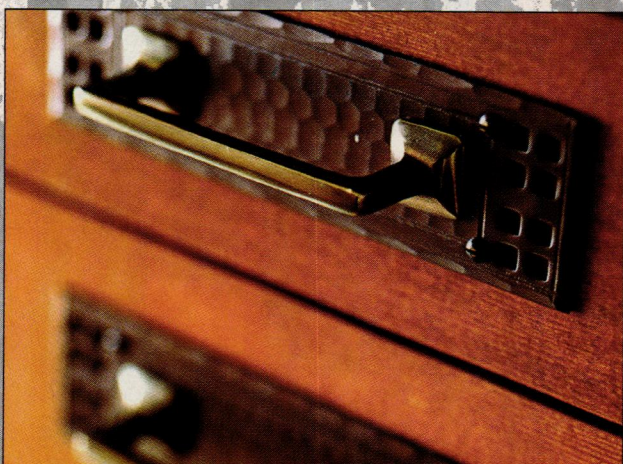
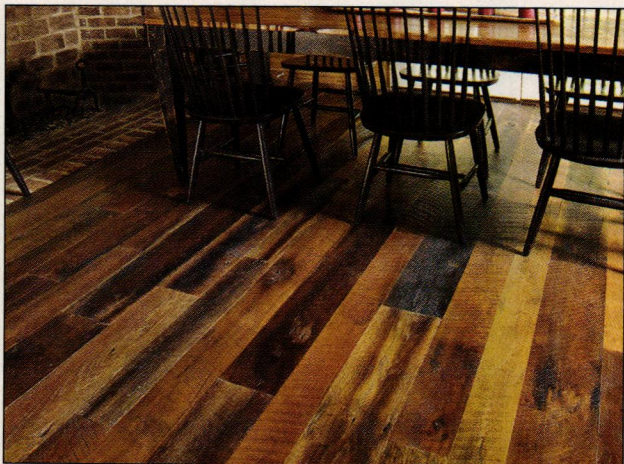
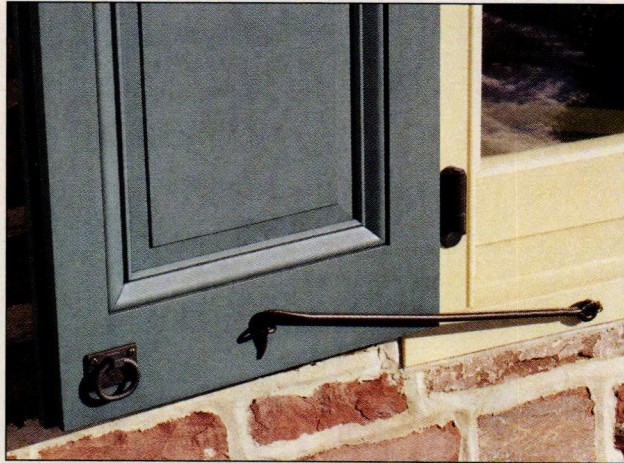




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# The French Creole Cottage



The territory the French called La Louisiane encompassed the entire Mississippi River basin, including the Ohio and Missouri river valleys, and reached from the Appalachian Mountains to the western plains.

The Mississippi River towns are comely, clean, well built, and pleasing to the eye, and cheering to the spirit. The Mississippi Valley is as reposeful as a dreamland, nothing worldly about it...nothing to hang a fret or a worry upon.

— Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi* (1863)

TEXT BY RUSSELL VERSACI FROM ROOTS OF HOME (TAUNTON PRESS 2008)  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIK KVALSVIK







Thomas Jefferson's purchase of the Louisiana Territory from Napoleon in 1803 is one of the great triumphs of American history. The Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the New Republic and annexed all that remained of France's colonial dominions in the continental United States. With this prize came control of the Mississippi Valley and the cosmopolitan city of New Orleans, a melting pot of cultures from around the globe.

Across Lake Pontchartrain from New Orleans, along the banks of the Tchefuncte River, sits the old Creole town of Madisonville. There, restoration builder Ron Arnoult has re-created a traditional Creole cottage with roots in French Colonial architecture. Its half-timbered walls resemble the medieval houses of Normandy that inspired French colonists who settled in Canada. Blending the timber frame with *galerie* porches and a pavilion roof derived from the plantation houses of the French West Indies, Arnoult has revived all the hallmarks of the classic Creole cottage.

#### Creoles and Cajuns on the River

In the seventeenth century, the Louisiana Territory covered the vast heartland of the American continent, held by France in isolated forts and trading posts scattered throughout the wilderness. In the wake of French explorers, soldiers and traders followed the Mississippi south from the Great Lakes to the Gulf, creating sparsely settled colonial outposts all along the way. Duluth was founded in 1679, then Cahokia near St. Louis in 1699, followed by Natchez in 1714, and the capital of New Orleans in 1718.

During the eighteenth century, the Mississippi Valley between St. Louis and New Orleans was alternately controlled by France and Spain before being purchased by Jefferson in 1803. The valley became home to a cross section of old-world cultures that bred an unusual architectural tradition known as Creole, meaning of mixed European ancestry.

French Acadians (Cajuns) heading down the river encountered French, Spanish, and African émigrés (Creoles) from Haiti and Cuba paddling north. As they mingled and traded in the river towns, over decades their architectural traditions merged in designs for cottages, plantations, and town houses suited to the climate of the bayou country.

The hybrid Creole cottage is a perfect marriage between the half-timbered houses of French Canada and the deep

This Creole cottage re-created by Ron Arnoult in Madisonville, Louisiana, is a reprise of the classic hipped pavilion roof and gallery porches that defined the raised cottages of the French colonial era.

#### French Timber-Post Construction

Many early Creole houses were made of heavy timber posts set upright in the ground, a primitive form of log construction called poteaux-en-terre. The spaces between posts were filled with bousillage, a mixture of clay, lime, and Spanish moss, and covered with a protective layer of stucco or weatherboards. When an infill of soft brick nogging was used, it was known as briquette-entre-poteaux. In poteaux-sur-sole construction, vertical posts were mounted on a wooden sill, forming a timber frame that was raised aboveground on stone or brick piers, a style known as the Creole "raised cottage."





The gallery porch of the new old house is an outdoor living room that opens to the house through French doors. Its timber ceiling is painted gros rouge, also called Spanish Brown, a classic Louisiana colonial paint color.





covered porches of West Indies plantation houses. From Canada came the pavilion roof and half-timbered structural frame, both with origins in the traditional longhouses of Normandy. Creoles from the West Indies contributed the shaded gallery porches, stucco walls, and raised foundation piers that are trademarks of Creole cottage design.

### Classic Creole Roots

Arnoult calls the raised Creole cottage he has re-created in Madisonville the Cemetery House because it is across the street from the town's oldest cemetery grounds. Sitting on a quiet corner where the neighbors don't say a word, the house recalls the architecture that Arnoult has known all his life. He was born into an old New Orleans family with Creole culture in its blood.

Before he began building the new house, Arnoult did his homework. He went on a refresher tour to study historic details, traveling through old towns along the Mississippi from Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, to St. Francisville, Louisiana. With camera and measuring tape in hand, he cataloged the telling details of classic Creole cottages.

Cemetery House captures the true spirit of a raised cottage in its gallery porches and hipped roof. It is a single story tall and appears low and long, even though it is lifted several feet above the ground on masonry piers. Raised foundations were a customary architectural detail on early Creole cottages, allowing air to circulate under the house to keep it cool and to prevent moisture from rotting the floor timbers.

### An Umbrella Over the Porch

A tall, hipped pavilion roof, known locally as an "umbrella roof," dominates the appearance of the house from the street. Thought to derive from the houses of French Normandy, the pavilion roof found its way to Louisiana via Canada. In the Mississippi Valley, the Normandy roof merged with the West Indies tradition of shallow roofs covering gallery porches, creating a unique roof that breaks in two distinct pitches. Pavilion roofs grace plantation houses all along Louisiana's River Road.

A half-dozen stairs climb up to the front porch of Cemetery House. Known in French as a *galerie*, the gallery porch runs the whole length of the facade, tucked under the roof and supported by simple posts called *colonnettes*. Before there was air-conditioning, the gallery was a necessity in sultry Louisiana as an outdoor sitting room. It was where you got out of the sun at noon, chatted with the neighbors in the evening, and sipped mint juleps after dark.

French doors open onto the gallery porch from the front parlors. These doors are old salvaged pairs that Arnoult collected in his years as a restoration builder in New Orleans. Made



of cypress wood, the door panels are weathered and scarred with a rough patina of age that only nature can produce. The window panes are old crown glass with surface ripples and tiny air pockets typical of early nineteenth-century glass making.

The stucco walls of Cemetery House, painted French yellow ochre, are set within a timber frame. Although the half-timbers are fake, they recall the way early Creole cottages were put together with heavy posts and beams. The wide gaps between timbers were filled in with *bousillage* to serve as infill, insulation, and finished wall surface.

### Creole Hall-and-Parlor

At the back corners of a traditional Creole cottage, there were often two small rooms called cabinets used for spare bedrooms or storerooms. The cabinets opened onto a covered back porch running between them called a *loggia*. Back rooms were often added by enclosing gallery porches to make more interior living space. The back rooms of Cemetery House are sided with wood clapboards rather than stucco, imitating a Creole cottage that has changed over time.

Inside an early Creole cottage, the floor plan was called a *salle-chambre*, or hall-parlor, arranged in a row of two or three rooms that filled the front of the house. There was no real front door. Instead, pairs of French doors opened from the front parlors onto the gallery porch. Since there were no hallways in French Creole houses, the gallery became a passage between rooms.

Arnoult's plan for Cemetery House rearranges the traditional plan to accommodate modern lifestyles but does so with few compromises. Two parlors and the master bedroom string



Simple square posts called colonnettes support the pavilion roof over the front porch. Known in French Colonial architecture as a galerie, the gallery porch is the distinctive feature of Creole cottage design.





together across the front, while the back has the kitchen in the middle instead of the traditional loggia. The master bathroom and guest bedroom are in the back corners where the cabinets would have been. The new arrangement is so simple that it makes the house live larger than its 2,300 square feet while still preserving authentic Creole roots.

Creole ceilings were made 10 feet tall or higher to draw hot air to the upper part of the room, a practical system of cooling in the days before air-conditioning. The tall ceilings of the new house are finished with wooden boards instead of drywall. Another old Creole tradition, ceilings were planked rather than plastered to resist damage from humidity, then painted in strong colors such as indigo, verdigris, and yellow ochre. Throughout Cemetery House, the walls and woodwork are earthy mineral colors, the eighteenth-century French palette that reinforces the authenticity of this new old Creole cottage.

#### Mississippi River Towns: Ste. Genevieve and Cahokia

Cemetery House has forbearers in small towns scattered up and down the Mississippi. Beginning in the late seventeenth century, French Colonial houses were built all along the river from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. Almost none of the earliest French houses survive, but a splendid collection of later vintage has been preserved in the town of Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, which Arnoult toured in search of telling details. Founded on the river near present-day St. Louis in 1735, Ste. Genevieve's fertile bottomland became the breadbasket of the Mississippi Valley, supplemented by nearby salt springs and mineral deposits. The old trading town is now a living village of French Colonial architecture, with many of the restored homes still inhabited. Two outstanding landmarks are the Louis Bolduc House of 1785 and the Bequette-Ribault House of 1793.



Salvaged French doors weathered by time add the patina of age, with much of their original glass and narrow wood muntins still intact. Antique box locks painted with a traditional coating of black asphalt are mounted on the face of the doors.



Pairs of board-and-batten shutters frame the doorway to the loggia porch outside of the kitchen.



The interior walls and woodwork are painted in a traditional eighteenth-century French palette of earthy yellow ochre, mustard, and walnut brown. *Opposite bottom* The living room mantelpiece is an antique nineteenth-century Creole design with deep side panels. French Colonial mantels wrap around the chimney breast and touch the back wall, standing proud in the room like a piece of fine furniture.





Louis Bolduc was a Canadian fur trader who built his French Creole cottage out of squared timbers set into the ground. The timbers are spaced 6 inches apart and insulated with a filling of clay, manure, and horsehair finished with lime-wash. The high-peaked roof is framed of oak trusses pegged together in a technique reminiscent of medieval France. A *pieux debout* fence of pointed cypress planks surrounds the house as a stockade to keep animals in.

The house of Frenchman Jean Baptiste Bequette is of classic poteaux-en-terre construction. Its vertical log walls are surrounded on four sides by gallery porches raised above-ground on porch posts—a practice the French adopted from the West Indies. Inside the long, rectangular one-story house are two rooms separated by a central stair up to the attic sleeping loft. A French-African, Clarise Ribault, purchased the building in the 1840s, making the Bequette-Ribault House the only home in Ste. Genevieve owned by a free woman of color.

The earliest permanent French settlement on the Mississippi River is the town of Cahokia, Illinois, founded in 1699. Originally the riverside summer camp of the Cahokia Indians, the village became home to both French and Indians who comfortably intermingled in trade, worship, and marriage. The poteaux-en-terre house built there by Jean Baptiste Saucier in 1737 was purchased in 1793 to be a county courthouse.

Now known as Cahokia Courthouse, it is the oldest surviving example of French pioneer log construction in the Mississippi Valley. Its log walls rest on stone foundations beneath a pavilion roof that extends over gallery porches. After being dismantled and moved to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis in 1904, the courthouse was rebuilt on its original site by the Works Progress Administration in 1938.

### Creole Rising

Creole architecture runs deep in the hearts of Louisiana's native sons, among them Baton Rouge architect A. Hays Town (1903–2005). Carrying the vernacular tradition into the late twentieth century, Town became synonymous with elegantly crafted interpretations of the Creole style. His work blended a thorough knowledge of Louisiana's French, Spanish, and American precedents with an inventive use of salvaged timbers, antique bricks, and cypress paneling. Town's marriage of history with the necessities of modern living made him one of the early pioneers of the new old house.

Town mingled building details from West Indies plantations, Creole town houses, and Acadian raised cottages into an architectural story with a unique personal signature. His homes were an elegant synthesis of Acadian raised porches, Spanish courtyards, and French doors with full-length shutters. Other trademarks included plantation outbuildings such as *pigeonniers* (a French pigeon roost), courtyard fountains, cypress paneling, and brick floors coated with beeswax. Almost every home built in Louisiana during the last 20 years has been inspired in some way by Town's work. NOH




### Pavilion Roof

The steep hipped pavilion roof looks like a pyramid stretched out along the length of the house, a shape unique to French Colonial architecture. The roof is "hipped" because all four sides are sloped at a steep angle, unlike a gable roof, which has only two sloped sides.



For details on how to order Russell Versaci's *Roots of Home*, see page 71.





For years this enchanting little center hall cottage sat unused, until homeowners Maria and Wouter Eshuis brought it back to life.




# Guest Quarters



An 1830s farmhouse is transformed into an  
enchanted retreat.

TEXT BY SALLY LAMOTTE CRANE PHOTOS BY ROBIN STUBBERT





An old woodstove graces the original firebox.  
*Opposite top* The dining room's rafters are exposed to create an Old World look.  
*Opposite bottom* The furnishings are a mix of antiques.



London, Ontario, known within Canada as the Forest City for its appealing greenery, is in the heart of the province's southwestern peninsula, which is bordered by three Great Lakes—Huron, Erie, and Ontario. A few miles outside of London, nestled against a hill on a tranquil farmstead, the cozy circa 1830s guesthouse of Maria and Wouter Eshuis appears timeless in its simplicity.

Only 945 square feet in size, the home's humble scale, like most early-nineteenth-century Ontario farm dwellings, was dictated by the challenges of keeping a family warm in the howling winds of a harsh Canadian winter. It possesses many of the features found in the simple Cape-style homes popular throughout New England and eastern Canada at the time: a wood clapboard exterior, small-paned glass windows, and a square-topped doorframe with simple pilasters. It is one and a half stories in height. (Interestingly, houses in this province, known as Upper Canada during the early 1800s, were taxed on the number of stories they had. To save funds, most homeowners built only a half story on the upper floor.)

By the time the Eshuises, natives of the Netherlands, bought their 56-acre property in 1983, the petite cottage was overshadowed by numerous additions, culminating in a 1970s aluminum-clad ranch house at its far end. According to Wouter, the entire farm was in disarray. "It was a student campground; the grasses were knee-high, and there was debris all over," he says. Undaunted, the Dutch couple moved into the far end of the house, at the time being used as a duplex, and began transforming their surroundings, which they named *Belle Vie*, French for "Beautiful Life."

"In 1993, we cut loose the 1830s house, poured a new foundation, and moved it to the pool," says Maria. "We packed all our furniture into the cottage, enclosed the exposed side in plastic, and had builders move it." For years the cottage sat largely untouched, except for use as a play area by the homeowners' five children. At the time, the Eshuises' main priority was to personally design, renovate, and expand their own home on the property, now clad in stone, and to plant extensive gardens throughout the grounds.

Five or more years later, the homeowners decided to bring the 1830s center hall cottage back to life. At the time, it had no plumbing, and the upstairs ceilings were barely 7 feet tall. The Eshuises gutted the interior. "We took every board off the walls and reorganized it," says Maria. "We found vintage newspapers lining the walls going back to 1828, which helped date the house." They also found a notation in township records that someone settled there in 1828, likely building the house over the course of the next few years.

The Eshuises removed the ceilings downstairs and upstairs, insulating along the roofline. According to Maria, "Some of the exposed beams appeared as if the original builder had salvaged them from a previous structure. Wouter had to reinforce many of the timbers. Some were black, as if having been touched by fire." The Eshuises painted the beams and the exposed planks





The small yet charming kitchen has a farmhouse sink and open shelving for dishes. *Opposite top* An AGA stove graces the small guesthouse kitchen. *Opposite right* The cottage gardens create a serene spot to read and relax.





in the downstairs ceiling a buff color to lend a sense of height and lightness. They refinished the original pine floors downstairs, but the second-story floorboards needed replacement. Wouter purchased maple floorboards from an old tobacco company warehouse. They were so thick that he had them resawed for use not only in this cottage but also in another building on the property.

"We scrimped and saved, using every salvageable bit of the wall panels," says Maria. Two noticeable sections of the random-width panels rest behind the AGA stove in the kitchen and above the woodstove in the living room. Wood from the walls was also used in making bookcases as well as risers for the rebuilt stairway. The treads were made from the same maple boards used for the floors upstairs.

The second story of the guesthouse has two bedrooms and one four-piece bath, including a claw-foot tub and a glassed-in shower. Each bedroom also has its own pedestal sink. The sinks and tub were bought at auctions or from reclamation dealers. The first floor has a half bath and living room off the hallway on one side and a kitchen with dining space on the other side. Maria also collected the crystal chandeliers and sconces at auctions. "We wanted to give this house a French look," says Maria. "Even though it is a plain Ontario cottage, the whole of it gives a European feel." Maria selected colors that keep the rooms light and airy. "Yellow is the thread through the house," she adds. All the interior doors are yellow, and white is used for trim; light blues, pinks, yellows, creams, and whites appear in fabrics or painted designs throughout. The curtains in all of the rooms are made from Laura Ashley fabrics.

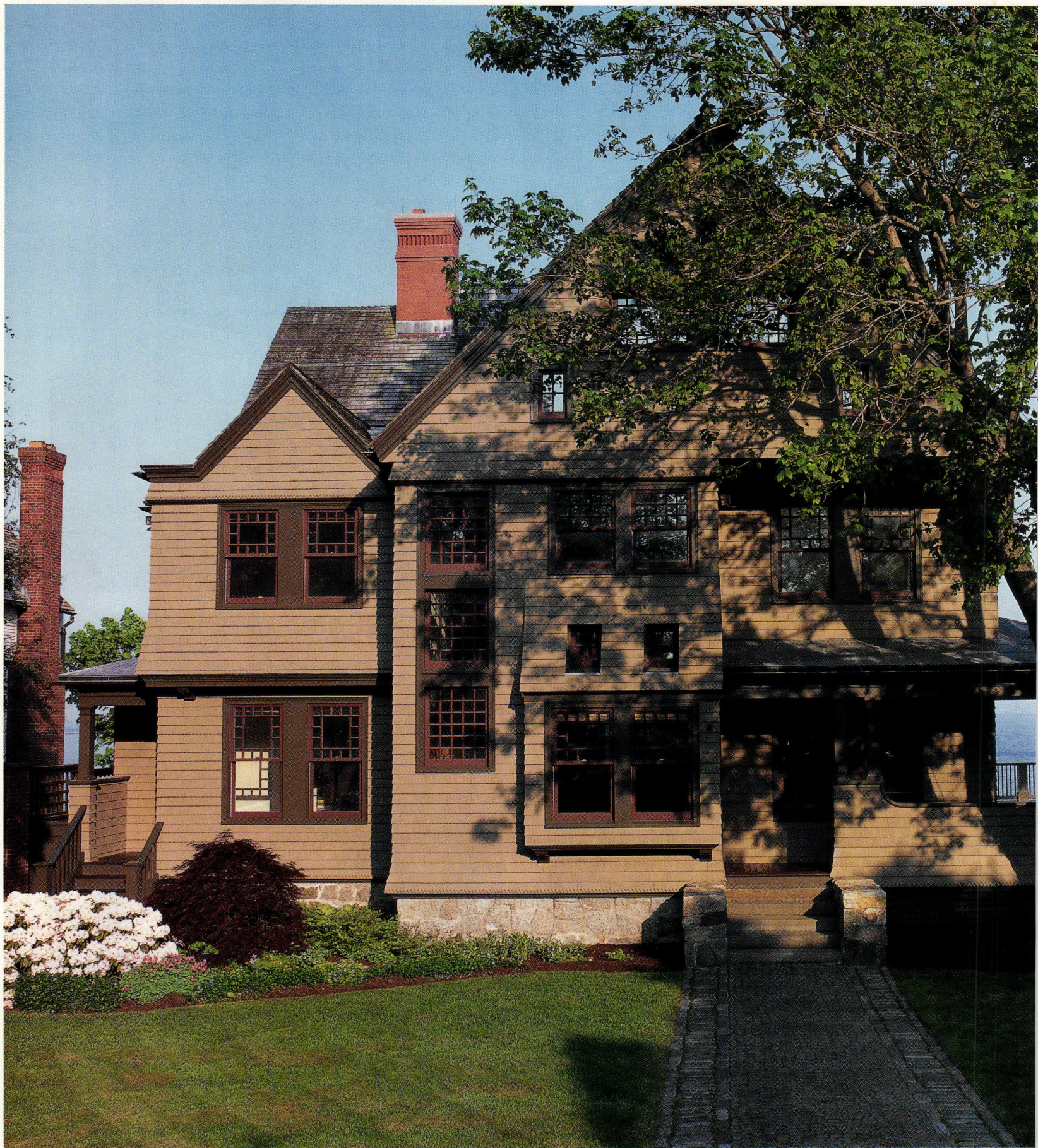
On the exterior, the homeowners built a vestibule on the rear side of the house, in part to preserve the refinished floorboards from rain, mud, and snow. New eight-over-eight double-hung windows by Marvin add a period touch to the first floor's appearance, allowing views of the tranquil scenery surrounding the cottage. A heated swimming pool sits right outside the back door. Immediately adjacent to the pool is a rock garden. Along that hillside, the Eshuises have a mixture of evergreens and deciduous plants. In spring, lilacs, forsythia, and flowering crabapple provide color; in summer, roses and daylilies bloom. Along the path that leads to the cottage, Maria has a perennial garden that includes numerous spring flowering bulbs as well as roses, campanula, and phlox. Guests can enjoy an outside seating area on the far side of the guesthouse, with views of a sloping lawn, gardens, and woods.

Throughout the year, houseguests come to take cooking workshops, led by Maria in her own kitchen, on how to use an AGA stove (she and Wouter are the Ontario dealers for AGA). For those who desire exploring the region farther afield, the southwestern peninsula of Ontario boasts renowned bird sanctuaries, freshwater beaches, and numerous theater venues, including Canada's famous Stratford Shakespeare Festival. **NOH**

*Sally LaMotte Crane is a freelance writer and editor who resides along the coast of Maine.*











# Saving Beauty

A Shingle-style home on the coast of  
Massachusetts receives a much needed  
face-lift.

TEXT BY FRANK SHIRLEY EXCERPTED FROM *NEW ROOMS FOR OLD HOUSES*

An addition to the front of this house returned it to grandeur. Extending 6 feet beyond the original facade, the addition (at left in the photo) is capped by a broad gable roof. Windows are arranged asymmetrically for a bold appearance.







Overlooking the Atlantic Ocean atop a 60-foot granite cliff, this 1883 Shingle-style home had lost its balance. Once bold and elegant, it sat exposed and tired; storms, time, and poor renovations had taken their toll. Originally, the house featured a tower, which dominated the front facade, provided a focal point, and visually anchored the house to its granite foundation. But 50 years ago, a winter storm toppled that tower, and the subsequent renovation paid little heed to the home's character, leaving it with a meek appearance. The original design also featured a prominent porte cochere that announced the home's entry. Later, the porte cochere was replaced with an incongruous Colonial entry.

On the inside, the front entry was small and dark, too small for a house of such stature. It was painfully constrained by a cumbersome, ill-lit staircase, which had been accommodated by dropping the entryway ceiling to 7 feet. The new owners wanted a more inviting entry, in scale with their home.

#### Bringing Back the Style

The house was clearly out of balance, but the owners, recognizing that the bones of the structure were sound, committed to an expansion. They recounted to me numerous weekend drives studying precedents, taking photographs of Shingle-style homes, and sometimes stopping to measure key elements. They considered—and rejected—the idea of rebuilding the tower. This would neither improve the dark and uninviting entry, nor add space where needed.

The owners decided that an addition in the spirit of the original was the best approach. To restore balance inside and out, the middle third of the front facade was extended 6 feet and capped with a large cross-gable roof. This simple change had a profound effect.

#### A Spacious Entry Hall

The addition provided much needed space to the foyer and stair and allowed for two simple but dramatic changes. First, the direction of the stair was reversed so that as it descended, it flowed into the foyer, greeting visitors with a charismatic welcome. Second, the addition was left open to the second floor, creating a soaring space through which all house activities now pass.

The previously forbidding entry is now an inviting room. Its scale is in proportion to the scale of the house; both the entry and the house have a strong, dramatic presence appropriate for the spectacular site they inhabit. The weight of the tall,

*Opposite* This cozy seat is a relaxing haven in the entry hall, and recalls nineteenth-century living halls that were designed as a place to both greet and relax.



*Top* This photo, taken not long after the house was built, shows the dominant tower in the foreground with the porte cochere behind. *Above* Without its defining features, the facade falls flat. A few bad renovations later, it had been twice replicated but still couldn't fill the shoes of the original tower. The ill-conceived Colonial frontispiece addition didn't help.





From the entry hall, views of the water beckon one to proceed to the vista-filled rooms beyond. An axis, or regulating line, organizes the rooms and windows to frame the water view and heighten the anticipation.



rectangular door is asymmetrically balanced with the broad, curved stair. Balance can be found in the details, too. A crown molding more than 15 inches tall caps the two-story room. The crown molding found elsewhere in the house—none of which exceed 5 inches—would have been too small for the entry. It would have been out of balance.

Regulating lines organize the defining elements of the stair hall. Large windows are stacked three high and aligned with the stair, providing a continuous exterior view when descending the stairs. The stairs, in turn, end opposite the entry door. Cased openings are aligned front to back, defining circulation without a confining corridor. The window seat, aligned with the cased openings, gives guests approaching on the outside walk a view through the house to the ocean beyond.

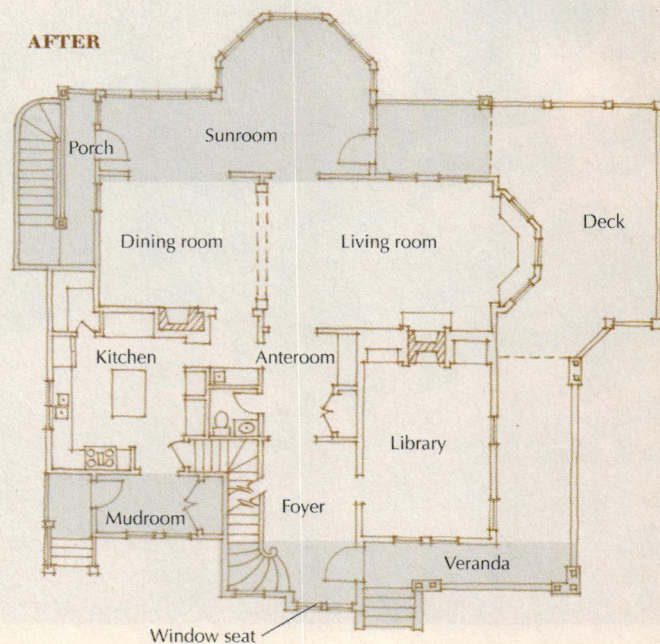
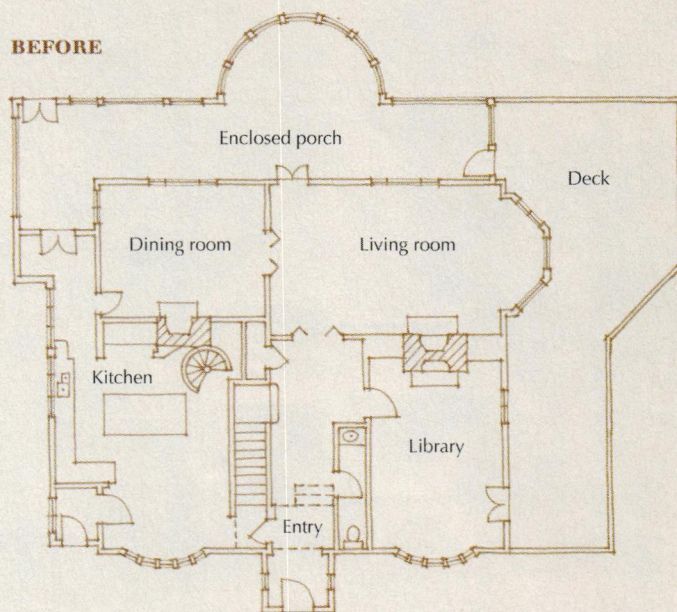
#### A Revitalized Façade

Since the removal of the porte cochere and the storm's damage to the tower, the facade had lost its defining elements. The addition is capped by a new defining element: an imposing gable roof. The gable extends to the house's edge, and is the first thing you see when you look at the facade. Whereas the tower acted as the focal point for the original house, the gable now takes center stage, and several individual elements coalesce around it. As the massive trunk of a tree balances its freeform branches, the large gable balances the deep soffit, shingled bracket, and curved walls. Without the gable they would be visual oddities.

The homeowners worked within the language, or the historical design elements, of the original house by repeating the steeply pitched gable roof. The new gable roof also relates to the existing diminutive dormer to its left and accentuates a major-minor relationship. The new gable says, "Look at me." Such a gesture is more than surface deep, for under its broad span lies the centerpiece of the home: the new entry and stair hall.

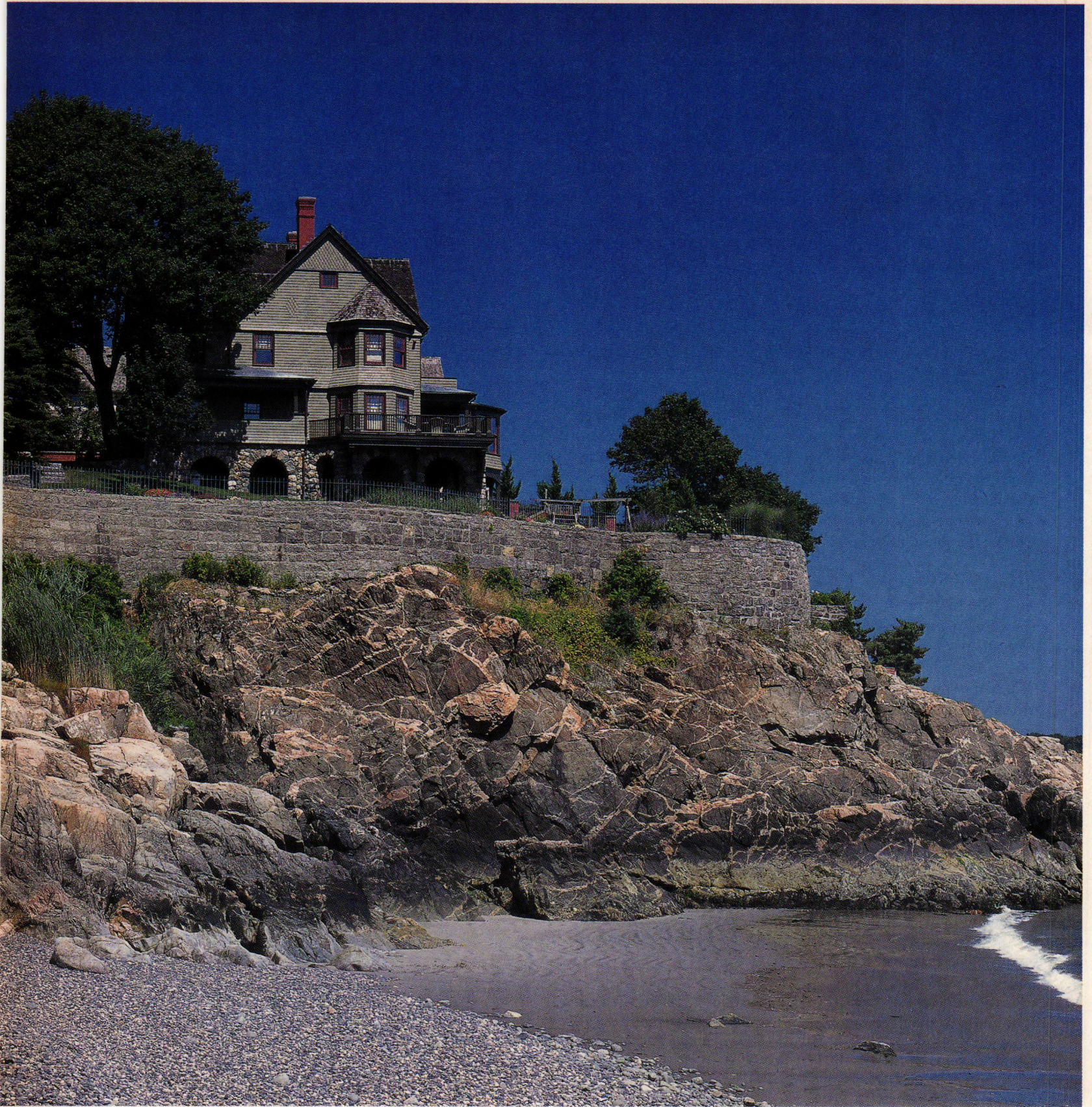
The addition exploits the Shingle-style language with an asymmetrical arrangement of shapes and forms, carefully organized to present a dynamic balance. Trim is used minimally in favor of a skin of shingles that wraps the building uninterrupted. To express the elasticity of the shingle skin, the walls are curved in and out and the shingles follow. Even the large bracket supporting the new gable roof is sheathed in shingles.

Today this home is an imposing structure resting confidently in an awesome setting. It says, "I'm going to be here, powerful and beautiful and enchanting, for a very long time." NOH



The new stair flows into the spacious entry hall. The entry door, tucked under the veranda for protection from Atlantic storms, is aligned with the stair.





The house's bold perch is evident from the beach below. The new turned gable, so distinct on the front facade, has a quieter presence on the side.

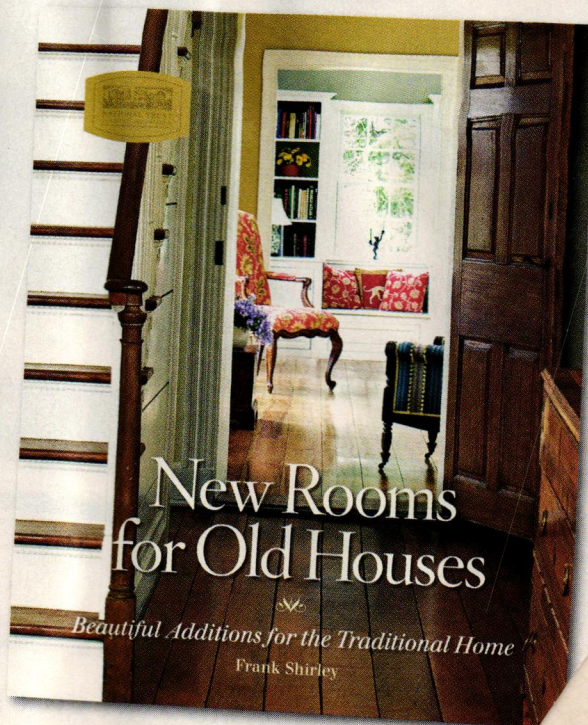




### The Shingle Style

It is not the wood shingle itself, but how the wood shingle is used that is unique to the Shingle style. Architects exploring the Shingle style were emboldened by the less formal designs of their Queen Anne predecessors. H. H. Richardson and McKim, Mead, and White, et al., weary of the use of ornament in earlier Victorian homes, sought a more relaxed, cottage-like aesthetic. This pursuit, coupled with a fresh look at the materials and shapes of buildings from medieval France and England, led to the Shingle style.

The wood shingle was essential in expressing the fluidity and elasticity of the house's exterior. By using only one material, Shingle architects accentuated the dynamic and asymmetrical shapes and forms of their designs. Towers, bows and bays, dramatic roof lines, and deeply recessed windows soon became associated with the style. Covered in shingles and unencumbered by other ornamental details, the sophisticated compositions at the heart of the style are accentuated. The humble wood shingle was reinvented as a graceful, even sensual, design tool, and a truly American style flourished.



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# City by the Sea

Alys Beach, located in Florida's panhandle, is a new community that is both eco-friendly as well as progressive in its planning.



The white and green New Urbanist development  
Alys Beach blooms on the Florida panhandle.

TEXT BY NIGEL F. MAYNARD

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Fall 2008

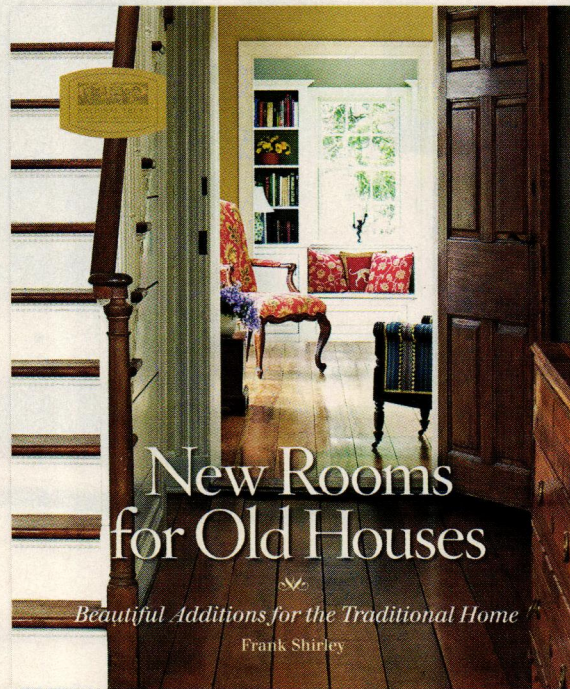




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Alys Beach, located in Florida's panhandle, is a new community that is both eco-friendly as well as progressive in its planning.



The white and green New Urbanist development of Alys Beach blooms on the Florida panhandle.

TEXT BY NIGEL F. MAYNARD





If you were building the perfect seaside community, you'd be hard-pressed to do better than Alys Beach. Like any other waterside retreat, this 158-acre development in north-west Florida has a prime location and a postcard-ready vista that's to die for. But with an eco-friendly agenda, disaster-resistant building construction, and a progressive land use plan, Alys Beach is no ordinary seaside sanctuary. "Alys Beach may well be the most truly innovative community under construction in the United States today, and it will eventually be imitated everywhere," Andrés Duany has said. He should know. His firm, Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company (DPZ), which has designed over 300 new towns and revitalization projects worldwide, was responsible for the master plan.

Alys Beach is located along Route 30-A, a scenic 20-mile artery that hugs the coast between Destin and Panama City on the Florida panhandle. It features 1,500 feet of beaches along the Gulf of Mexico and, when completed, will have over 600 villas, row houses, courtyard homes, and family compounds. A traditional neighborhood development, the town is pedestrian-friendly, with narrow streets to discourage speeding and with amenities located within a short walk of the homes. Mindful of the location near the shore, developer EBSCO Gulf Coast Development Company also made sure the environment was a priority. In addition to its 21-acre preserve, the town uses native plants, i.e., climate adapted, and it is landscaped with organic fertilizers. Hard surfaces, such as cobblestone streets, are designed to allow 35 percent of rainfall to flow directly into the ground, and exterior lighting illuminates only where necessary to avoid unwanted glare.

This strict environmental agenda also applies to construction. Constructed using Florida green building standards, buildings are oriented to permit natural cooling, and many of the homes feature spray foam insulation that tightly seals the structures for improved energy efficiency. Ductwork is located in conditioned space to reduce energy use for heating and cooling, which in some cases is provided by geothermal heating and cooling. Even the white exteriors reflect sunlight, so the neighborhood stays cooler.

If you happen upon Alys Beach and get the sense you could be in the Caribbean or in Spain, it's no accident. Duany drew inspiration from such diverse areas as the Caribbean, southern Europe, and even North Africa. "It's very much a marriage of styles," says Marianne Khoury-Vogt, principal of Khoury & Vogt, the town architect of Alys Beach. "The covered hallways lead you from the public street. Generally, the courtyard would be flanked by galleries, which are covered loggias, and then you have your house." The attached courtyard style is rooted in homes found in Antigua Guatemala, while the architecture references Bermuda, southern Spain, and Morocco. This style is marked by such indicators as all-masonry construction, sash windows, wood shutters, and shallow eaves.

Town spokesman Mike Ragsdale says the courtyard homes are not just for show; they serve to extend the indoor space and provide privacy. "The idea is that you can open your house in a very safe way to the outdoors and still have a very private living environment," he explains. "It's been done for centuries, because when you don't have





air conditioning or you don't want to use it as much, opening the house to the outside is a great way to offset that."

As town architects, Marianne and her husband, Erik Vogt, ensure that the privately built homes at Alys Beach respect the established architectural vision—the duo also designed many of the public buildings and the developer's spec houses—including the one they eventually purchased. "There was one lot that was a little bit smaller, and [town founder] Jason Comer wanted a house that was about 2,000 square feet," Khoury-Vogt explains. "Eric and I said we would take the challenge and design a smaller house for the lot. We never thought we would end up buying it."

The architecture is only one reason George and Ann Hartley moved to Alys Beach. "We've known the developers for as long as we've lived in this area," Ann Hartley explains. "They are incredibly warm, wonderful people who, like us, love the area and want to see it developed in an eco-friendly way." Full-time residents, the empty-nester couple had lived in nearby Seagrove Beach but purchased one of the developer's courtyard homes before construction even started.

Alys Beach is certified by the Institute for Business & Home Safety to be the first officially "fortified" community in the world, which means it's designed to resist disaster—in this case, hurricanes. It's the reason Dean D. Trelvelino and his

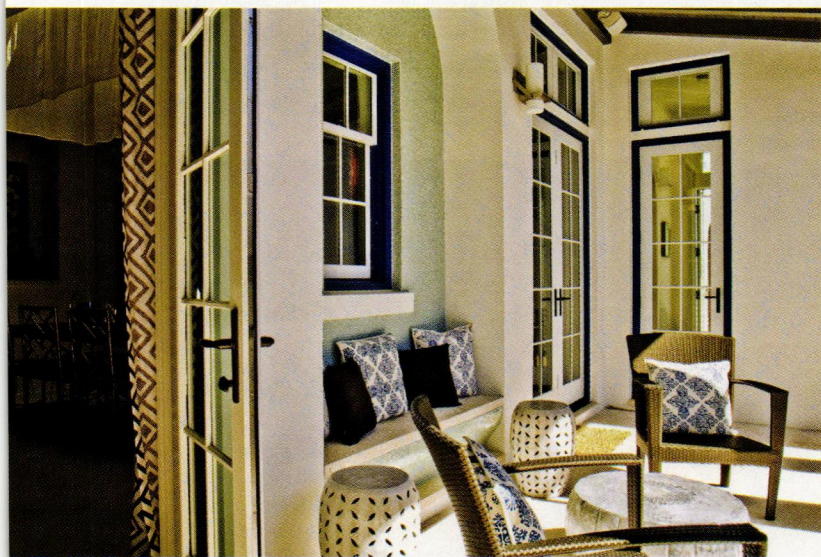
business partner, Jenna Keller, decided to build themselves a 2,500-square-foot courtyard vacation home.

"It's the first all-fortified community, so its ability to withstand a hurricane is rather significant," says Trelvelino, of Trelvelino/Keller Communications Group in Atlanta. "That was particularly important to us because we had lost a house in Atlanta from Hurricanes Ivan and Jean in 2004. The idea of building a home on the water a couple of years ago seemed absurd to us, but learning about the fortified nature of Alys Beach gave us the comfort level in doing something like this."

Alys Beach caters to its visitors as much as it does to its full-time residents. And the Caliza Pool is, perhaps, the showpiece of this indulgence. It features a 50-foot by 100-foot saltwater pool, a 60-foot family pool, a 75-foot lap pool, a spa whirlpool, and numerous outdoor living areas landscaped by tropical palms and gardens. In addition, ponds, parks, a lake, an amphitheater, a beach club, and several restaurants support life at the town. "The amenities are way beyond anything we've seen, heard, or experienced," Trelvelino says. "We jokingly call the Caliza Pool 'the Ninth Wonder of the World.'"

"The hope is that it will be a self-sufficient place with a church, a school, and other amenities," Ragsdale says. "We're going to continue to expand commercial ventures as well as resort amenities." A church, an observatory, and an environ-





mental center are also planned.

As it turns out, Route 30-A was a logical location for Alys Beach. The area has become a hotbed for architecturally driven New Urbanist developments—some of which were planned by DPZ, such as Rosemary Beach and Seaside (site of the Jim Carrey movie *The Truman Show*). Local officials recognize the importance of the area and have taken steps to preserve the view with a 40-foot height restriction on all buildings in the county. “The idea is to ensure that we don’t have a bunch of high-rise condominiums going up along the coastline,” Ragsdale says.

DPZ’s previous planning efforts along 30-A have been wildly successful, and there’s no reason to think Alys Beach will be any different, especially since Duany himself has referred to Alys Beach as 30 years’ experience poured into this one town, Ragsdale says. To build on his previous efforts, Duany conducted focus groups with residents of Rosemary Beach and Seaside to determine their likes and dislikes so he could correct any mistakes. “I think that an important evolution you see from Seaside on up is that Duany has learned something at each point along the way,” Ragsdale says. If conventional wisdom is any indicator, the project will be a smashing success. NOH

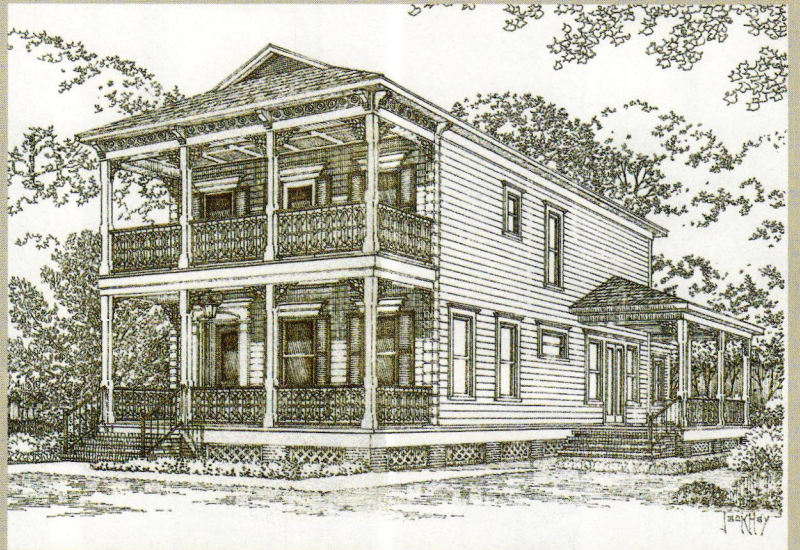
*Nigel F. Maynard is a freelance writer in Washington, D.C.*



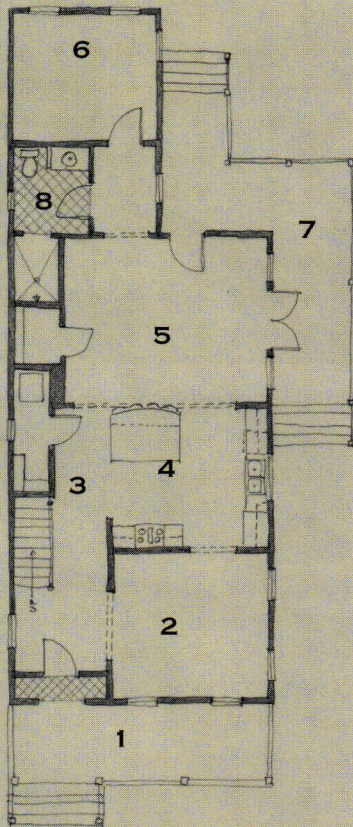
*Opposite Homes at Alys beach offer traditional courtyards with tranquil fountains. Above interiors The interiors at Alys Beach are tastefully appointed and offer timeless features with a modern sensibility. Above exterior Awning shutters dress an exterior facade at this seaside community.*



# Southern Tradition

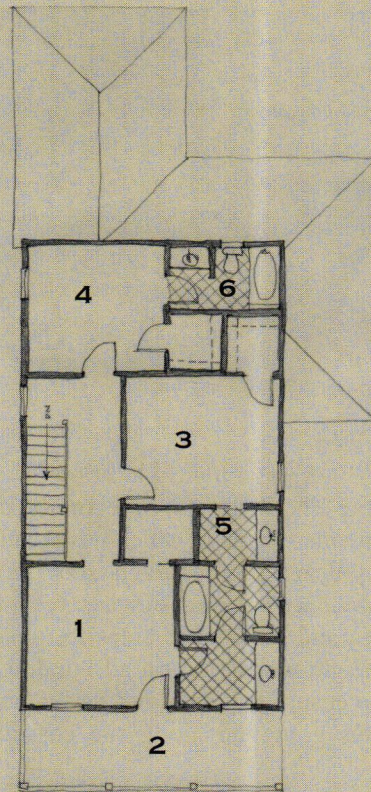


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- 2 DINING ROOM
- 3 FOYER
- 4 KITCHEN
- 5 GREAT ROOM
- 6 BEDROOM
- 7 PORCH
- 8 BATHROOM



## Second Floor

- 1 MASTER BEDROOM
- 2 PORCH
- 3 BEDROOM
- 4 BEDROOM
- 5 BATHROOM
- 6 BATHROOM

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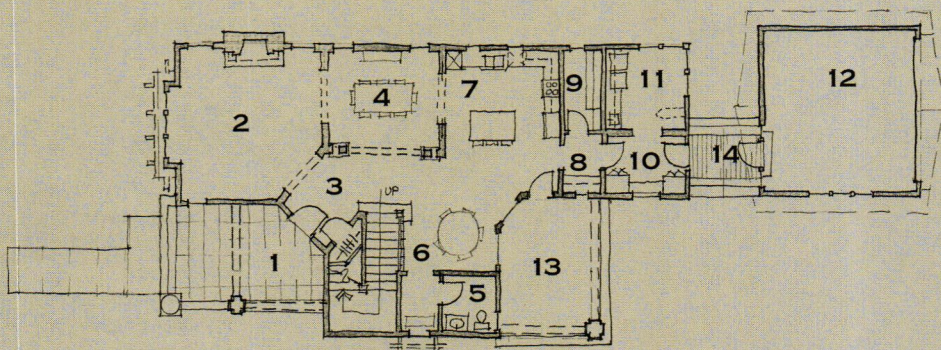
# Craftsman Design

## Square Footage

MAIN LEVEL - 1,762 SQUARE FEET

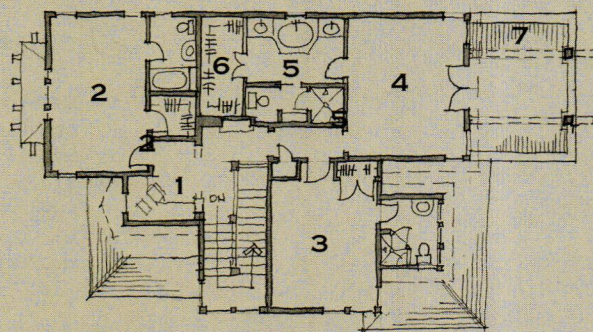
UPPER LEVEL - 1,503 SQUARE FEET

TOTAL 3,265 SQUARE FEET



## First Floor

- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1 FRONT PORCH    | 8 WINE BAR       |
| 2 LIVING ROOM    | 9 PANTRY         |
| 3 ENTRY          | 10 MUDROOM       |
| 4 DINING AREA    | 11 LAUNDRY       |
| 5 POWDER ROOM    | 12 GARAGE        |
| 6 BREAKFAST NOOK | 13 COVERED PORCH |
| 7 KITCHEN        | 14 TERRACE       |



## Second Floor

- |                    |
|--------------------|
| 1 COMPUTER STATION |
| 2 BEDROOM          |
| 3 BEDROOM          |
| 4 MASTER BEDROOM   |
| 5 MASTER BATH      |
| 6 MASTER CLOSET    |
| 7 TERRACE          |

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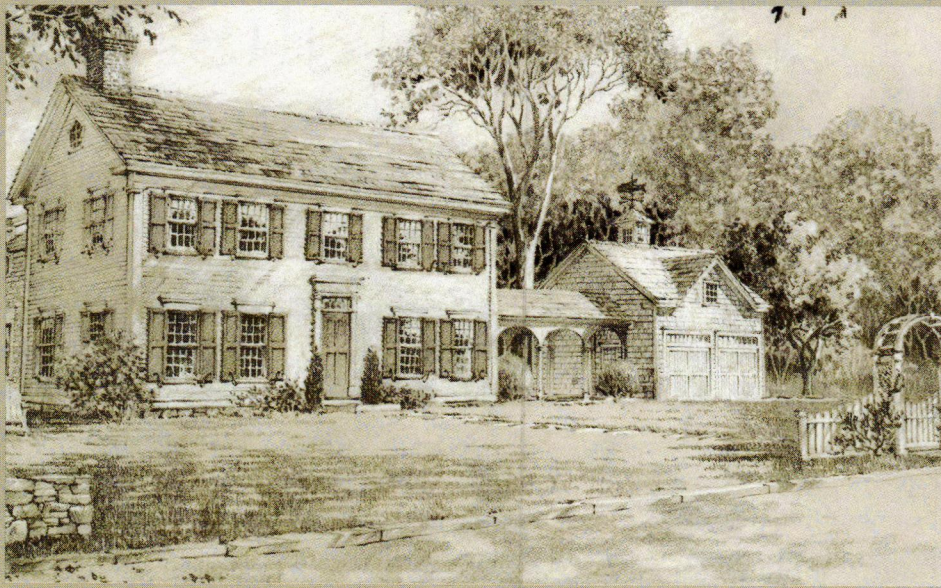
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# New England Appeal

*Square Footage:*

- MAIN LEVEL - 1,950 SQUARE FEET
- UPPER LEVEL - 1,625 SQUARE FEET
- GARAGE - 485 SQUARE FEET
- BREEZEWAY 140 SQUARE FEET

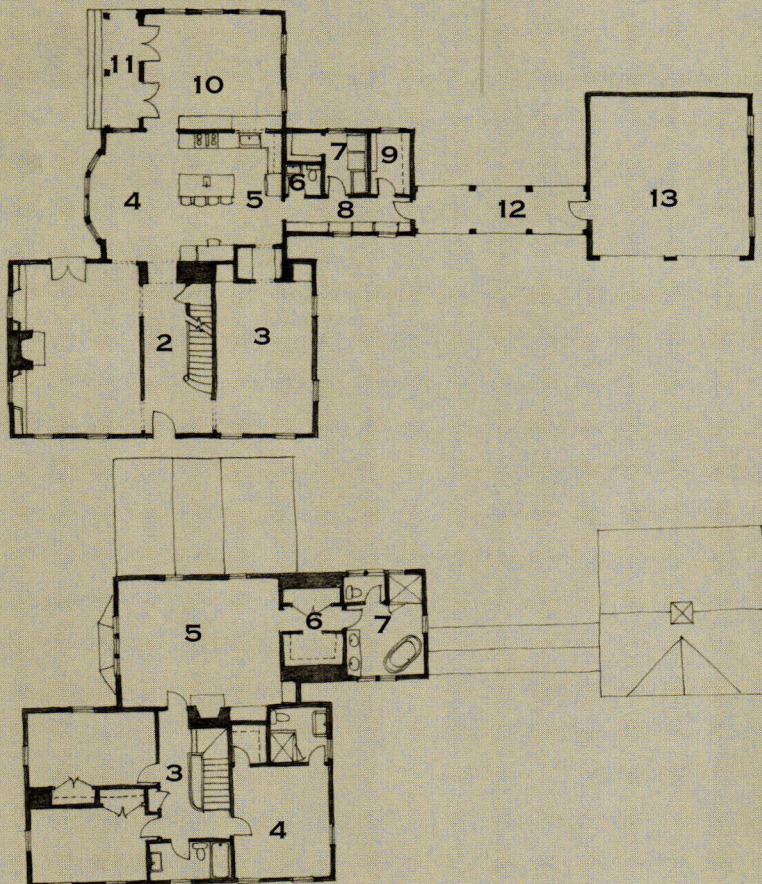
## *First Floor*

- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1 LIVING ROOM    | 8 MUDROOM        |
| 2 FRONT HALL     | 9 WALK-IN CLOSET |
| 3 DINING ROOM    | 10 PORCH         |
| 4 BREAKFAST NOOK | 11 FAMILY ROOM   |
| 5 KITCHEN        | 12 BREEZEWAY     |
| 6 POWDER ROOM    | 13 GARAGE        |
| 7 LAUNDRY        |                  |

## *Second Floor*

- |                  |
|------------------|
| 1 BEDROOM        |
| 2 BEDROOM        |
| 3 HALL           |
| 4 GUEST BEDROOM  |
| 5 MASTER BEDROOM |
| 6 MASTER CLOSET  |
| 7 MASTER BATH    |

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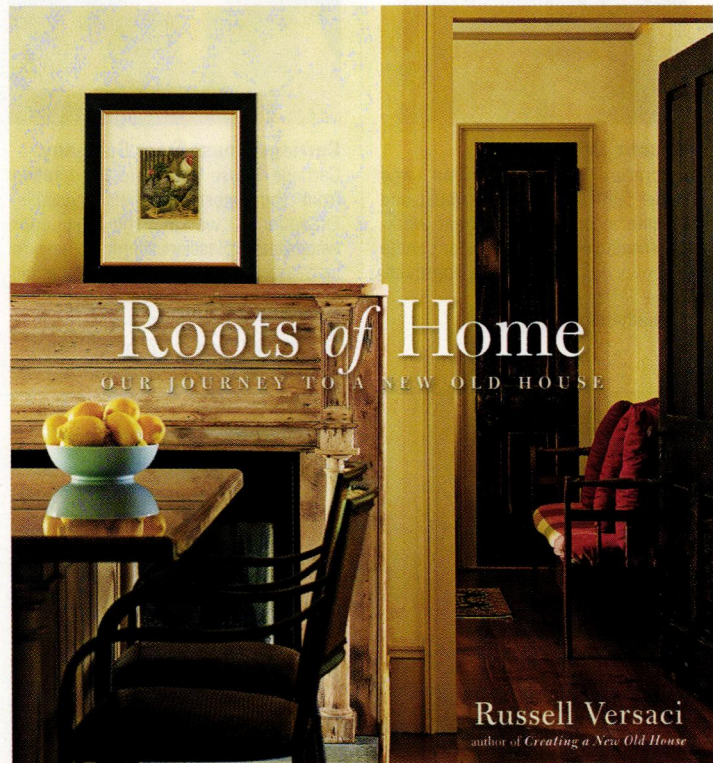
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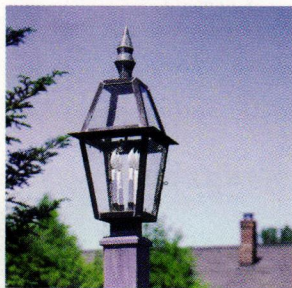
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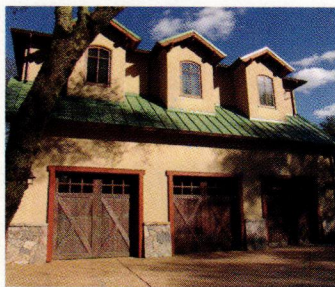
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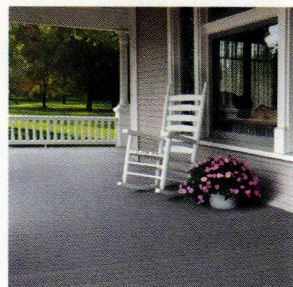
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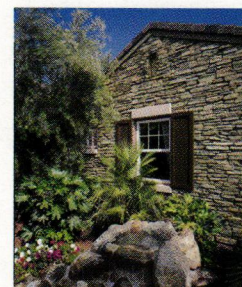
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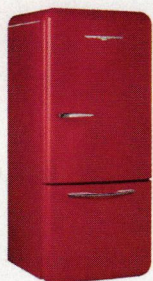
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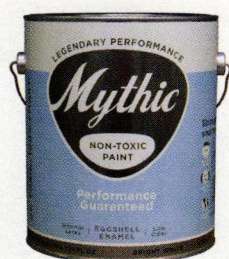
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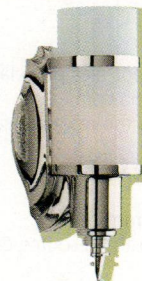
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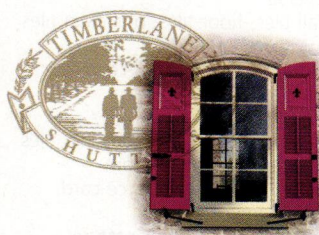
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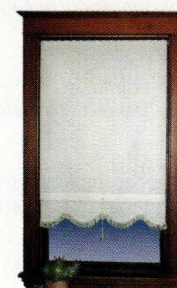
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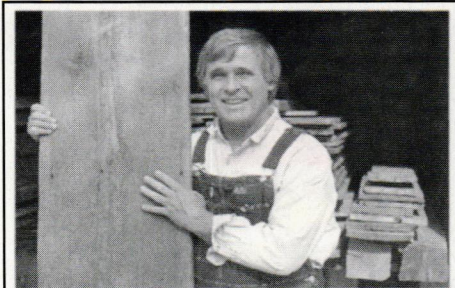


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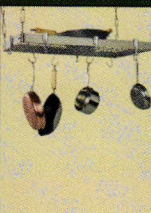
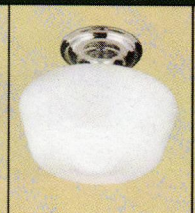
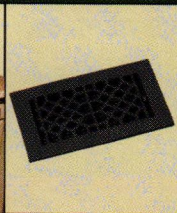
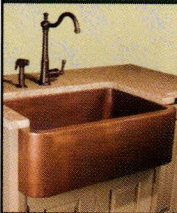
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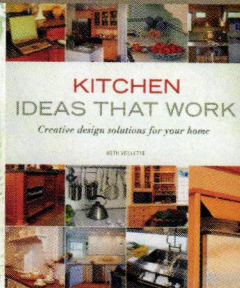


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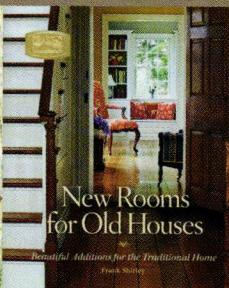
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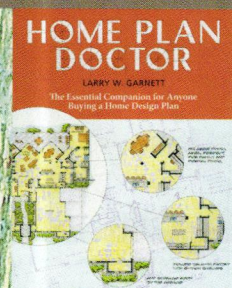
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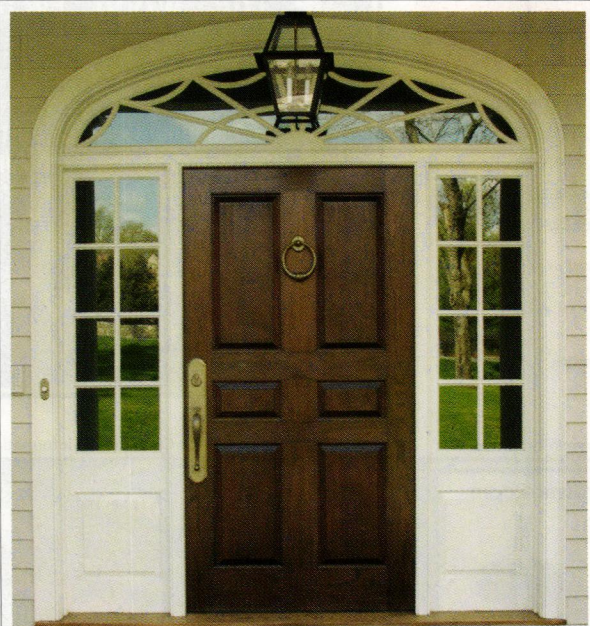
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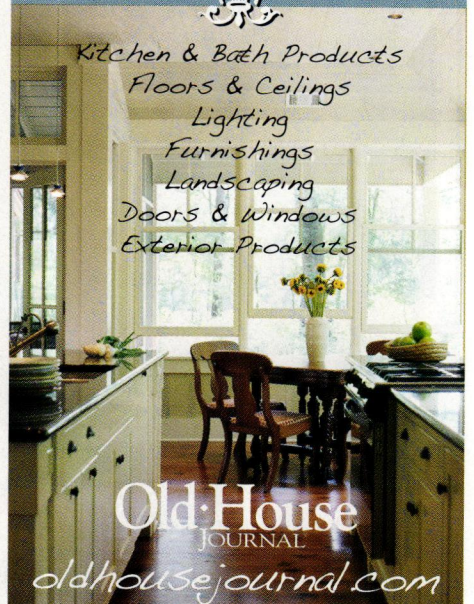
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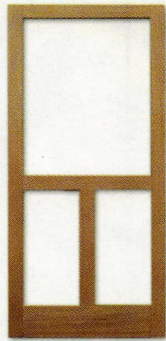
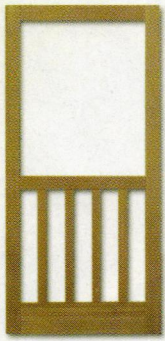


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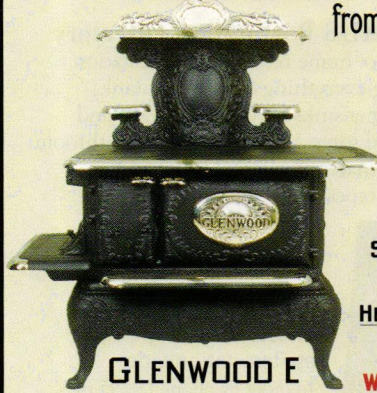
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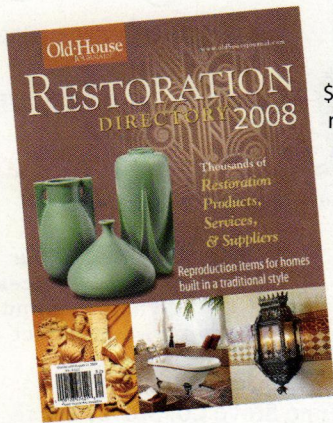


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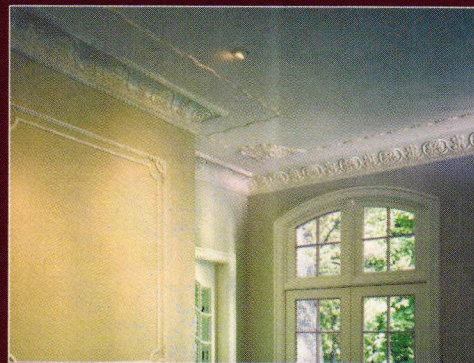
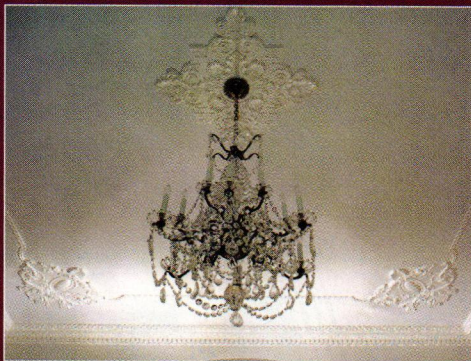
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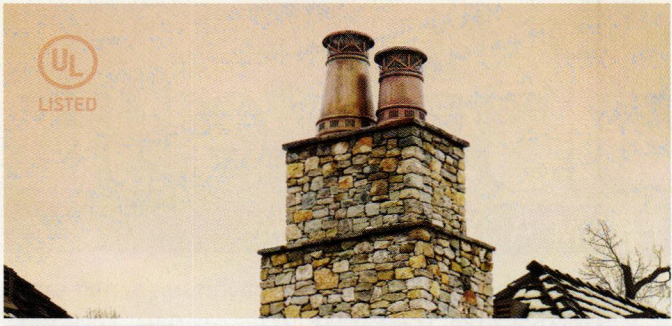
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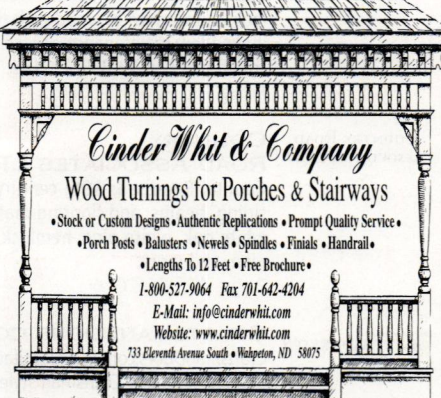


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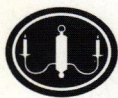
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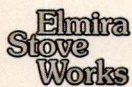
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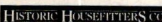
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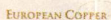
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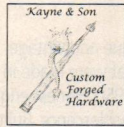
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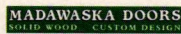
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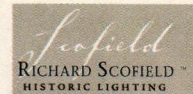
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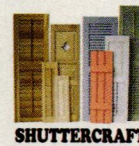
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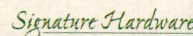
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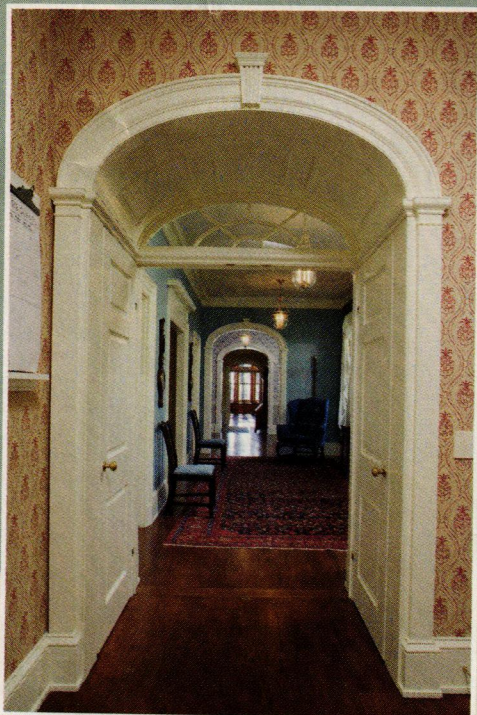
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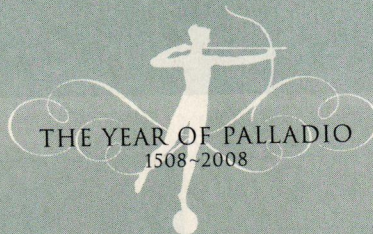
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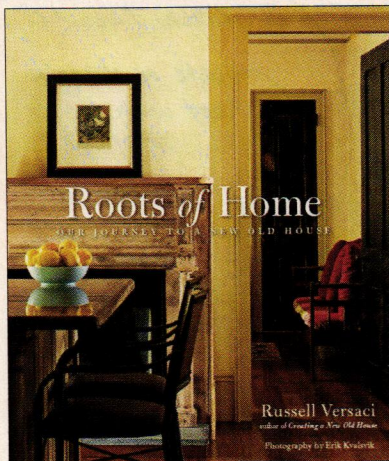
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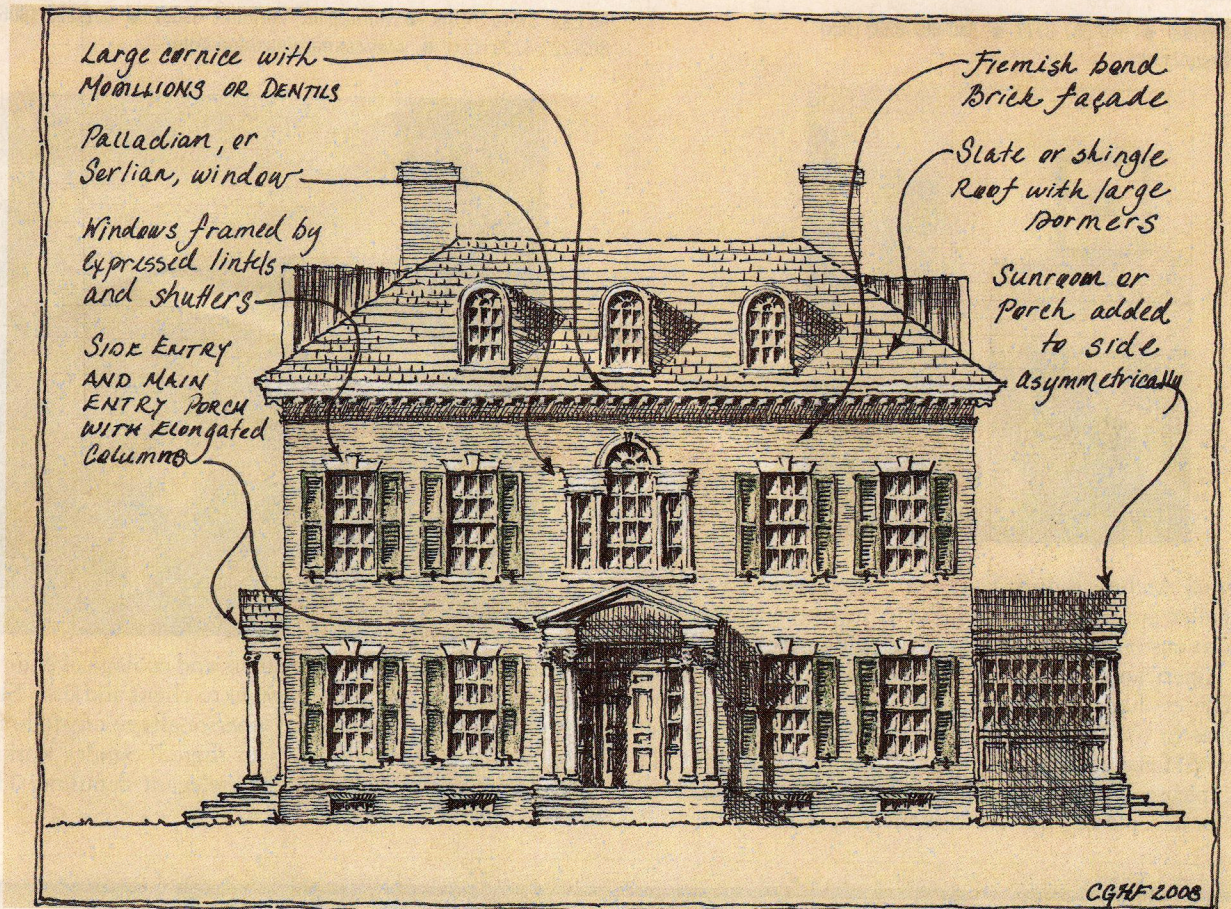
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## Colonial Revival Style

TEXT BY CHRISTINE G. H. FRANCK

With the population expanding, immigrants arriving, and rapid industrialization and urbanization taking place, it is little wonder that late-nineteenth-century Americans viewed their simpler colonial past as a golden age. Emerging wearily from Reconstruction, Americans patriotically celebrated this past and their future at Philadelphia's 1876 Centennial Exhibition. The "New England Farmer's Home and Modern Kitchen" was a particularly popular exhibit. Inside this log cabin, women in colonial dress exhibited artifacts, such as a Pilgrim's cradle and spinning wheel, idealizing an America heroically hewn out of New England by hardworking colonists.

Popular taste for the colonial, no matter how loosely defined, was fueled and fed by entrepreneurs such as Wallace Nutting. His Old America Company sold reproduction furniture and textiles, as well as millions of hand-tinted photographs of bucolic landscapes and colonial homes. Concurrently, interest in studying and preserving history was growing. Organizations like the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (1910) were formed. The Metropolitan Museum of Art opened its American Wing of period interiors in 1924. And in 1926, Rockefeller and Goodwin began restoring Williamsburg from a "straggling, dusty ghost" to its eighteenth-century character.

With some degree of patriotic reaction against European

Revival styles, architects rediscovered America's past. Colonial buildings Jefferson once characterized as "rude, misshapen piles of brick" were now admired. From books such as *Early New England Interiors* (1878) and Whitehead's *Monograph Series* (begun 1916), photographs and measured drawings of early American buildings became available. Whether custom-designed for the wealthiest or distributed as a kit through catalogs, Colonial Revival houses were available to all.

Colonial Revival architecture purposefully draws on English, Dutch, or even Spanish Colonial architecture, as well as later Georgian and Federal styles, although buildings are generally larger and proportions more slender than historical examples. Details are borrowed freely, but not without care. If architects began loosely interpreting the past, they were soon fluent, creating new architecture worthy of its sources.

Colonial Revival architecture is a complex part of American material culture. One may argue that the Colonial style lives on today in the worst pseudo-traditional architecture populating American suburbs. On the other hand, the architecture of early America, its rediscovery during the Colonial Revival period, and much of today's classicism all branch from the same classical root. In this architectural lineage, the highest ideals of American culture are manifest. NOH






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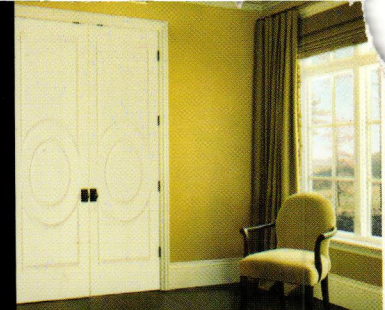
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