

OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL

APRIL 1998

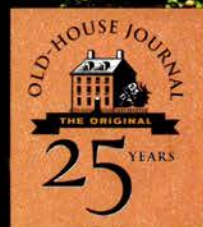
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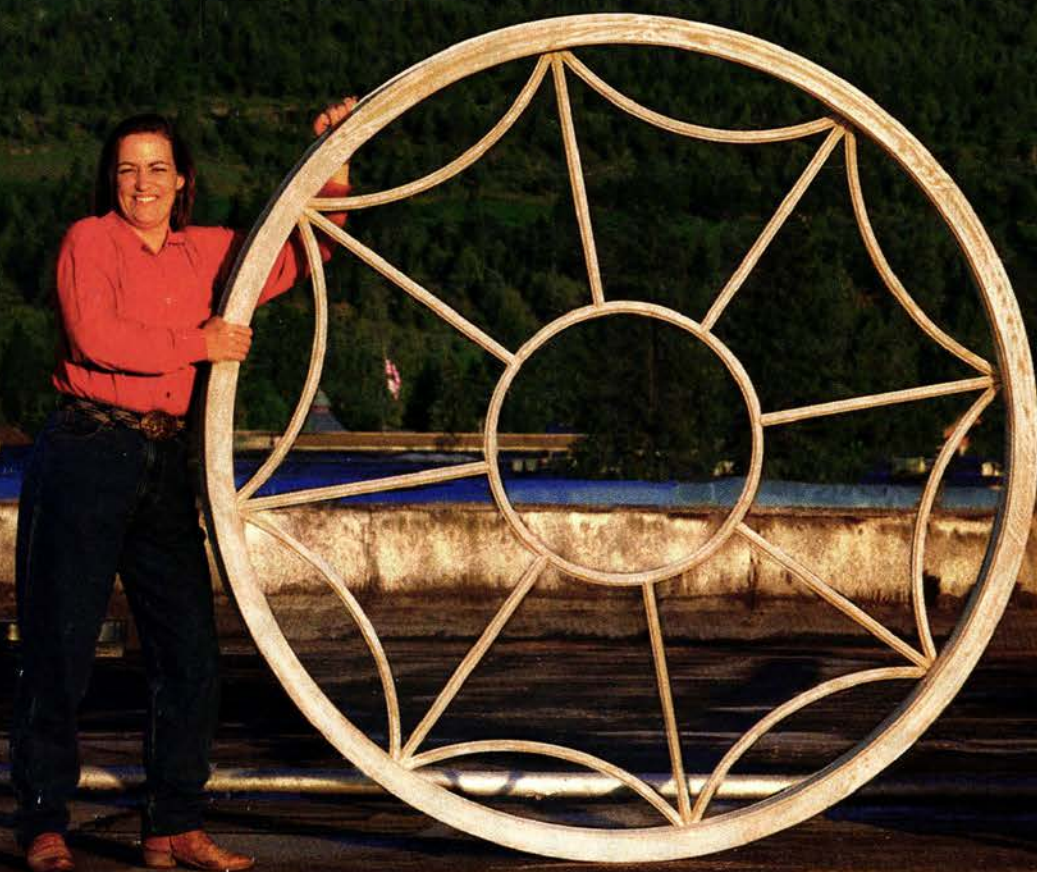


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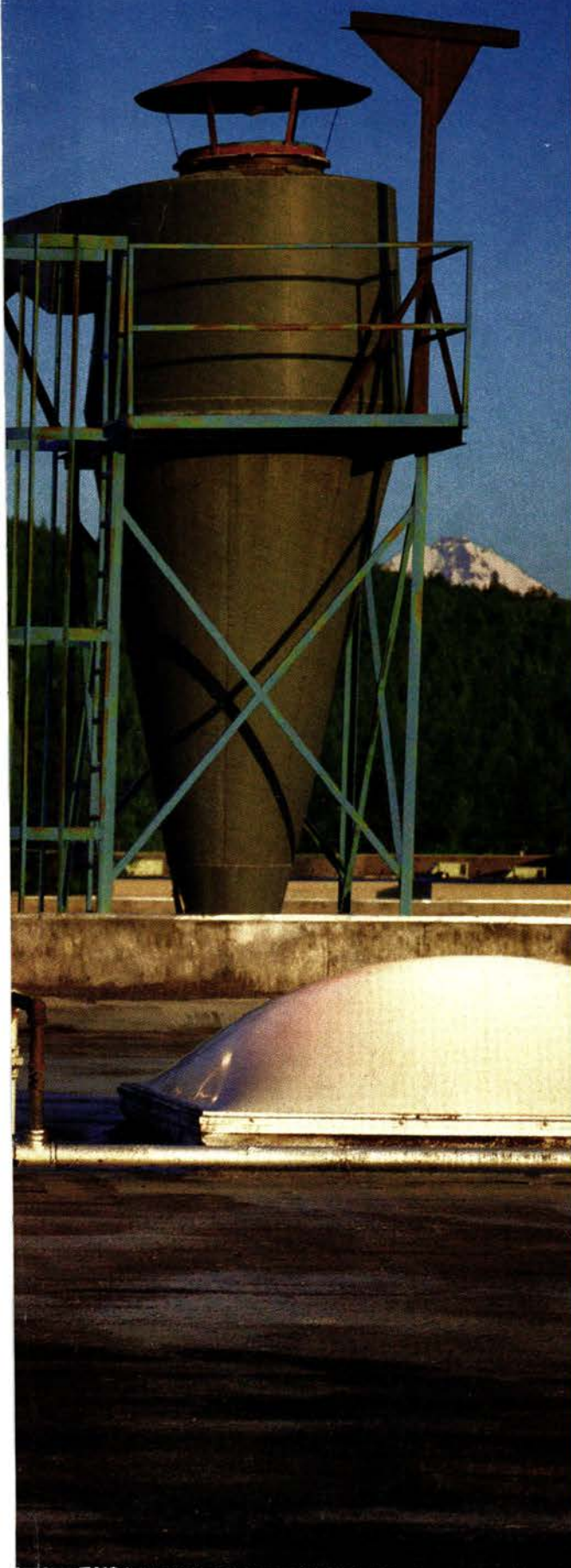
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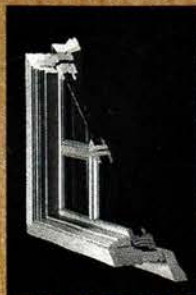


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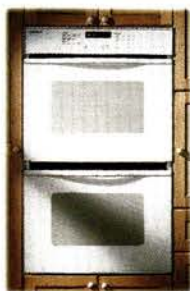
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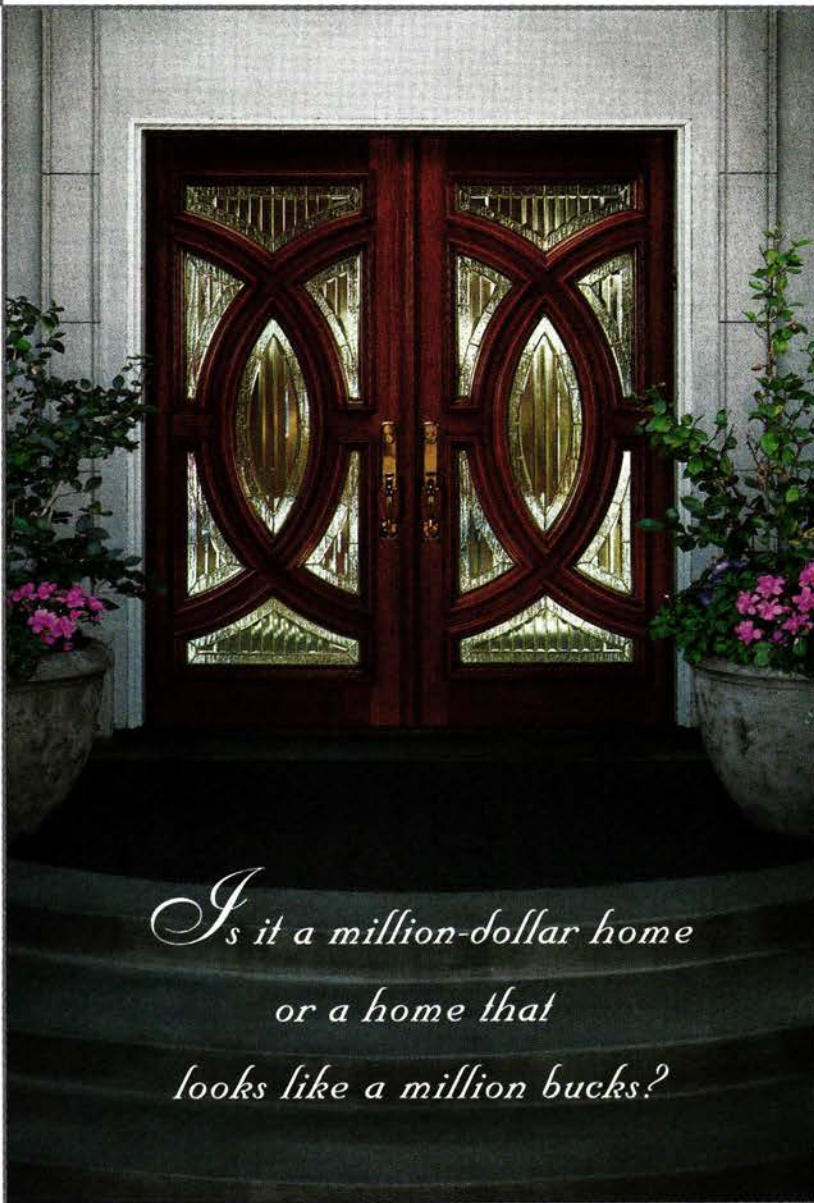
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See Dealer Listing on pg. 22

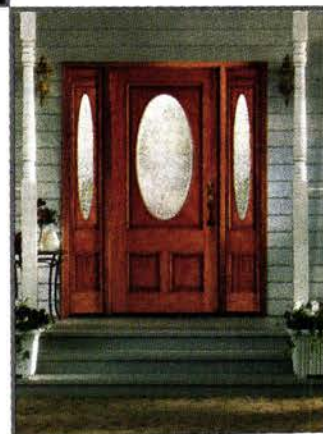


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BY JO ANN GARDNER

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Bernard Maybeck

The life and times—and buildings—of an unclassifiable visionary.

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Lightning Rods, Old and New

The ornamental rods of 1900 have been replaced by nearly invisible, state-of-the-art systems. But you can upgrade an old system, and today's reproduction rods meet modern codes.

BY SANDY EASLEY

ON THE COVER: Clay tile roofing—historic, bold, beautiful, and diverse—is found in shapes and colors suitable for every style, from the romantic revivals to Arts & Crafts. But tile is most associated with Mission- and Mediterranean-style houses, such as this ca. 1920s example in Los Angeles.

COVER PHOTO BY ELMO BACA



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Houses of the Ladies' Home Journal

Between 1895 and 1919, well-known architects produced house plans at the behest of this venerable magazine.

OHJ subscribers live in some of them!

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Practical and sold in almost infinite variety, resilient flooring is still a great choice for the 20th-century house.

BY SHIRLEY MAXWELL
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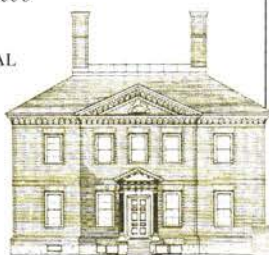


Swinging Styles

“ARCHITECTURE,” ACCORDING to Le Corbusier, the famous French architect, “is merely frozen music.” That image is a bit of a reach for even this writer, but I’m a big believer in the basic comparison. Symphonic music and historic houses share many creative characteristics, such as rhythm, coloring, and syncopation. More to the

Classical

REGULAR
SYMMETRICAL
UNIFIED
SIMPLE
STATIC
SMOOTH
FORMAL
RATIONAL



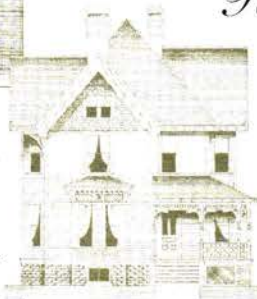
point, they can both be divided into the same historical categories: classical and romantic.

If you remember your high-school history, the general term *classical* describes traditional forms in the arts, especially where they reflect the ideals of the ancient Greek and Roman world. Like a Grecian temple, for example, classical music is carefully ordered, proportioned, and restrained. On the other hand, *romantic* refers not to Valentine’s Day cards, but a movement in literature, painting, music, and architecture that flourished during the late-18th and 19th centuries. Romanticism was sparked by the ideals of the French Revolution and, with its emphasis on nature and the senses, was in part a revolt against the rigidity of classicism.

In North America, the pendulum of taste in house styles has swung back and forth between classical and romantic for over 200 years. Not convinced? Historians have long noted this yin-yang relationship. In the series *American Buildings and Their Architects*, William H. Pierson Jr. writes that, in many ways, romantic houses are “anticlassical.” Taking this idea a step further in his slide lectures, architect Allen Hill has even queued up adjectives that help make the point (see below).

Romantic

IRREGULAR
ASYMMETRICAL
VARIED
INTRICATE
DYNAMIC
ROUGH
INFORMAL
QUIRKY



You can learn a lot about an old house—and what sidings, mouldings, or paint colors may be appropriate—by first observing if it springs from either the classical or romantic tradition. Tudor Revival houses and most Victorian styles, for instance, are under the romantic rubric; Georgian, Greek Revival, and Colonial Revival houses are clearly classical. Listen to your house’s architecture; it will sing you its own song.

Gordon Bock

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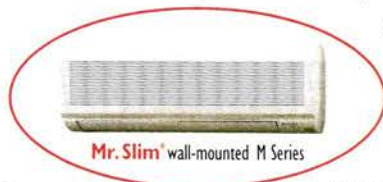
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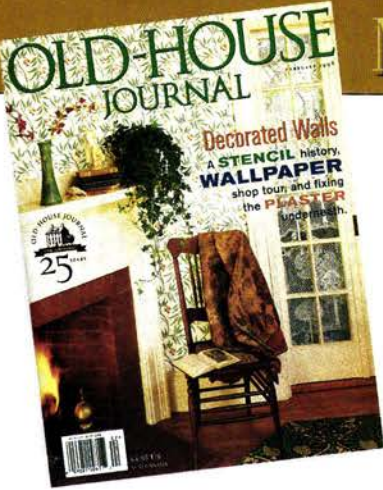
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M A I L B O X

SAVE 'LITTLE HOUSES'

I ENJOYED YOUR PIECE ON *THE Little House*, by Virginia Lee Burton ["Editor's Page", Feb. 1998]. Since I read the book over and over again as a child, it probably fostered my interest in urban planning and land use. While I understand your good-intentioned connection between the story line and your readers' love of old houses, the story also ironically illustrates the thinking that led to post-war sprawl in America—namely, that the solution to urban problems is to abandon the city and start over in the country. This "homesteader" mentality is arguably wasteful, non-sustainable, and responsible for ugly cities and suburbs.

Your East Coast readers who live in desirable, inner-city historic neighborhoods may not appreciate what I'm talking about. I could spend days driving around Pittsburgh neighborhoods full of enormous Victorian and Colonial Revival houses, most of which are subdivided into apartments and owned by people unable or unwilling to maintain them. These once-beautiful neighborhoods were abandoned by residents who retreated to ever-widening rings of new suburbs in the face of what they perceived as hopeless urban problems. Today, developers are laying new water and sewer lines in cornfields 35 miles from downtown so people can burn yet more gasoline getting to work. Such wasteful sprawl would be regrettable even in a growing metro area; in one with

a shrinking population like Pittsburgh, it is shameful.

I realize I am preaching to the choir, because many of your readers are fixing up old houses in established neighborhoods. If we could collectively influence public policy to encourage more such activity, our property values, our cities, and what's left of our countryside would all benefit.

—GREG FUHRMAN
Pittsburgh, Penn.

JUST LAST NIGHT MY SON AND I WERE watching an old episode of the Walt Disney-hosted Sunday night program about "animating inanimate things." One of his examples was the Disney-produced short subject based on Burton's *The Little House*. I had never read the book, nor had I seen the "short." When it ended, I thought, What a great little cartoon! It really illustrates what we try to do in preservation and restoration!

—JEANE WHARTON
Executive Director
Historic South Dakota Fdn.
Pierre, S.D.

HELP WITH GLASS

"AT HOME WITH LEADED GLASS" [Feb. 1998] mentioned professional assistance. The Stained Glass Association of America, founded in 1903, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation and preservation of stained-glass windows. The Association offers many resources for the leaded-glass owner and practitioner, including a quarterly publication (*Stained Glass*), a scholarship program, an annual summer conference, a speakers' bureau, standards and guidelines for restoration techniques, and membership information.

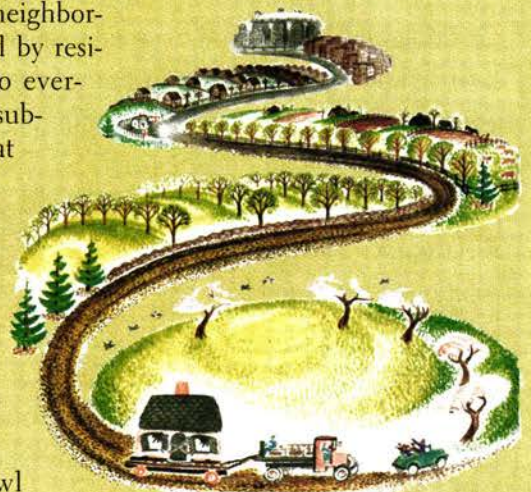
To order our annual sourcebook, which provides a roster of our current accredited members, please call (800) 888-7422.

—KATHY MURDOCK
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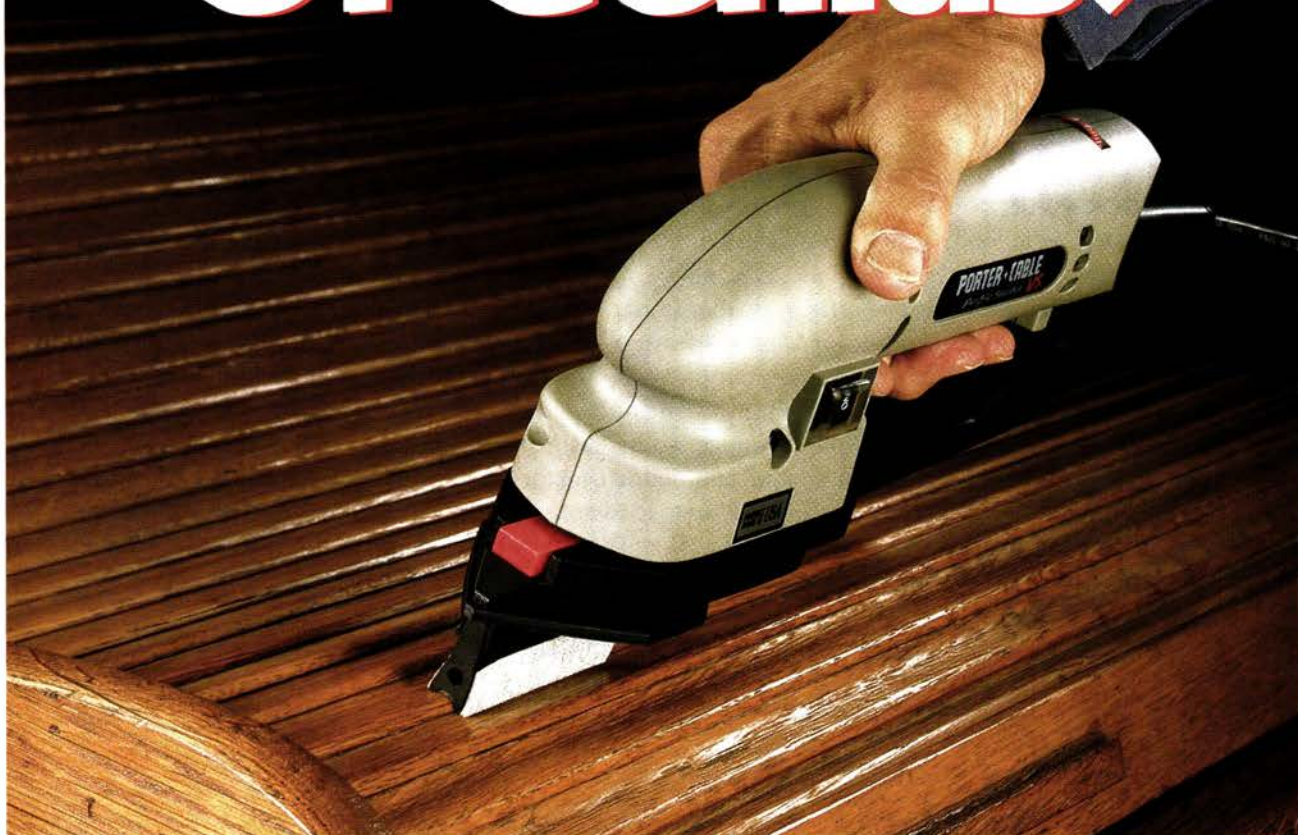
LEGAL ACID

"QUICK CLEANING TIPS" [FEB. 1998] recommends the use of oxalic acid as a bleaching agent for removing various stains, and warns of the hazards of using it. Recently I was told that compositions containing oxalic acid have become illegal. Where and how can I get oxalic acid?

—HERBERT S. SYLVESTER
Mountain Lakes, N.J.
[continued on page 12]



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LOOKING UP

"TREE PEDDLERS" [FEB. 1998] GETS it almost right regarding tall growing and wide-spreading trees. However, readers who intend to plant these varieties must look up before they dig. Tree limbs and power lines don't mix. Trees can sometimes cause power outages by simply brushing against the lines. As trees age, limbs fall and break them. Children climbing near power lines face

the possibility of electrocution. Those beautiful, tall-growing trees planted 25 years ago have to be continually trimmed and eventually removed. It is far better not to create the problem in the first place.

—BETTY HIGGINS
Pulaski, Tenn.

STRIP TIP

RECENTLY MY ATTENTION WAS DRAWN to your article, "Stripping Wallpaper" [Dec. 1997]. We are removing wallpaper from drywall in our 1950s ranch. I stumbled on an extremely simple method. It doesn't directly involve many tools and supplies. Spread a thin layer of drywall joint compound over the wallpaper, and in 5 to 10 minutes merely scrape the wallpaper away with a putty knife. It was so simple I could-

n't believe it! The moisture in the joint compound did what steam normally does to the paper, with a lot less bother.

—SAM LYON
Brandywine, Md.

MORE ALADDIN MAGIC

YOUR MAGAZINE MAKES OLD-HOUSE living personal; a recent issue proved the point. Remodeling my 1916 bungalow revealed a metal stamp on trim with "Aladdin Houses, Bay City, Michigan" on it. Intrigued, I had a bookstore search for and order a reprint of the Aladdin catalog in print at the time my house was built.



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MAILBOX

Sure enough, on page 29 I learned I lived in "The Plaza," its design inspired by "one of the best-known bungalows in Pasadena, California." Pretty cool in itself, but what really excited me was to recognize the first "Heavenly Kisser" in your article as "The Plaza"! ["Heavenly Kissers," Aug. 1997]. The material used on the exterior of my home varies from other versions, but there is no doubt they are "kissin' kin"!

—TONI GIUSTO
Augusta, Georgia

Unabridged republications of the 1917 "Aladdin Homes Built-in-a-Day Catalog," ISBN# 048628591X, can be ordered by mail through Dover Publishers, Dept. CRX, 31 East 2nd St., Mineola, NY 11501-3582 for \$14.95 ppd.
—Ed.

R & R IN BOSTON

RESTORATION & RENOVATION, the major exposition and trade show for the restoration industry, will be held March 12–14 at the World Trade Center in Boston. Formerly known as **RESTORATION**, the show and conference will feature more than 250 exhibitors, including representatives from *Old-House Journal* and *Old-House Interiors*, product demonstrations, and a full schedule of workshops with practical information for tradespeople and homeowners.

Jane Nylander, the president of SPNEA (Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities),

will deliver the keynote address. Other speakers include prominent restoration architect Ann Beha, of Ann Beha Associates in Boston, and Michael Lynch, past president of the Association for Preservation Technology (APT).

Conference topics include masonry cleaning, window restoration, kitchen design, historic lighthouses, Anglo-American Arts & Crafts, façade restoration, designing traditional gardens, and more. Registration forms and a full program will be available by the end of December. For more information, call EGI Exhibitions in Boston at (978) 664-6455.

Sometimes it's easy.



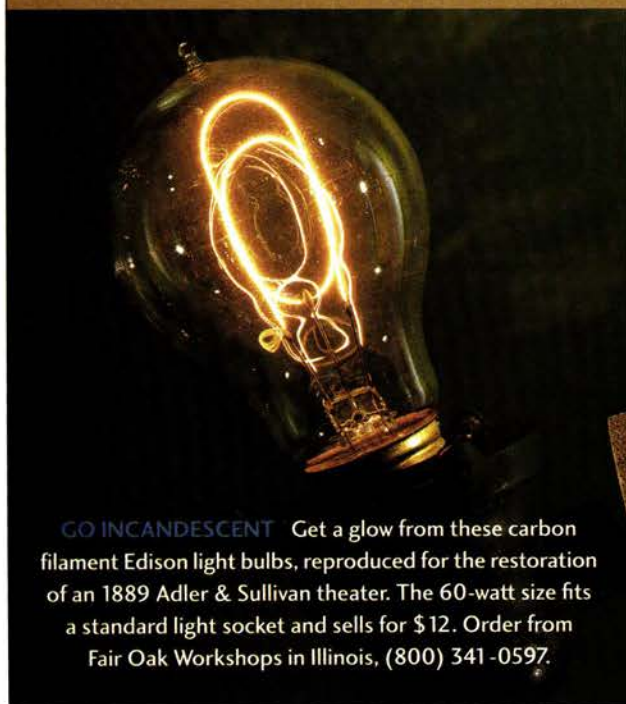
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BY MARY ELLEN POLSON

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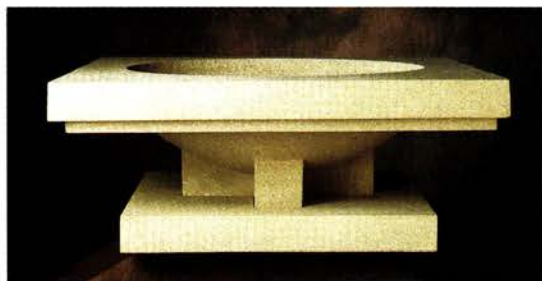
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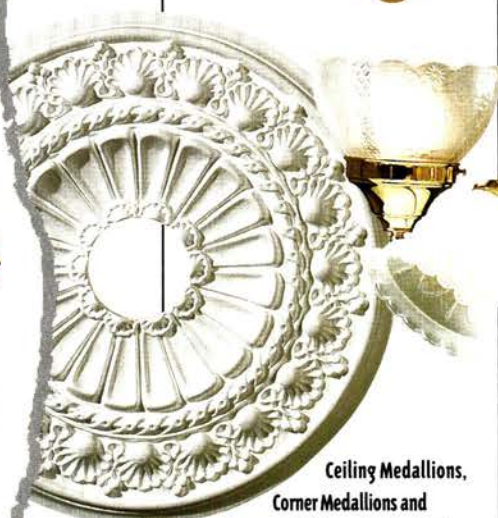
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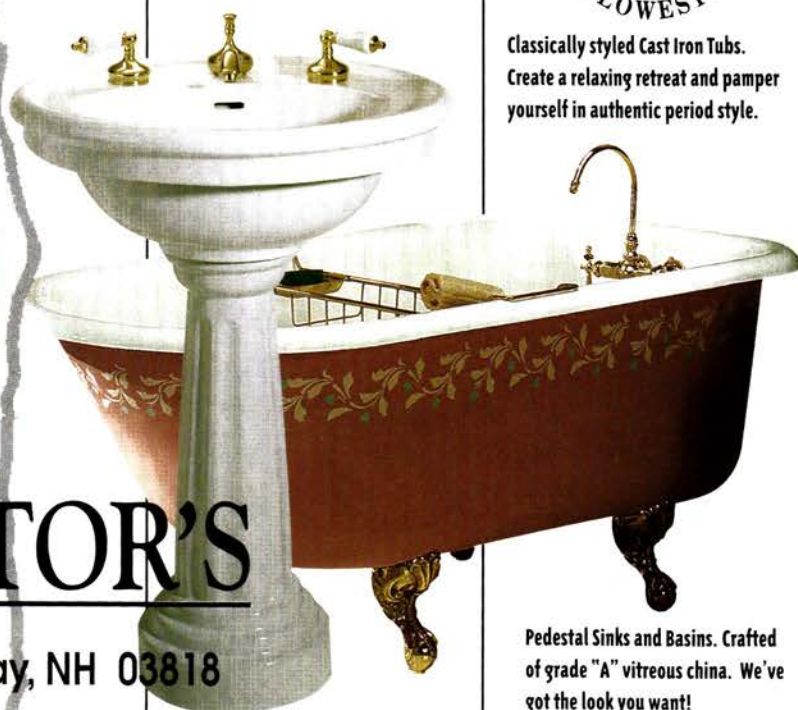
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RESTORER'S NOTEBOOK

FEED BAG DEMO

LAST WEEK WE GUTTED A LARGE bathroom on the second floor of an old house. We used to use buckets to carry out the debris, but now we've switched to something better: feed bags from a nearby horse farm. They're free, and they don't waste space in the truck like a bed full of buckets. Plus, you can fold the top of the bag over once you've filled it with tile and plaster. This way, a minimum of dust gets out as you carry the bags out of the house.

—GILBERT JORGENSEN
Perkasie, Pa.

ANOTHER CAP FOR CAULK

TO KEEP PARTIALLY USED TUBES of construction adhesive and caulk from drying out, I use elec-

trical wire nuts and petroleum jelly. I always keep small quantities of both in my tool chest. (I find the red, medium-size nuts work best.) When I need to plug the end of a tube, I simply fill the wire nut with petroleum jelly and screw it on the end of the tube. The combination produces an air-tight seal that preserves the contents for use later on.

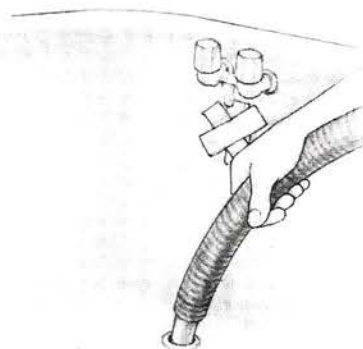
—DOUG COATS
Orem, Utah

BATH TRAP BREAKTHROUGH

IN OUR OLD HOUSE THE BATHTUB is connected to an old-style drum trap mounted in the floor. The tub had been draining slower and slower, so it was clearly time to check the trap for debris. Unfortunately, it was almost impossible to

reach in a tight corner. Since the plumber wanted a fortune just to look at it, I started thinking of other ways to access the trap.

My solution was to vacuum out the trap with a wet/dry shop



To clear a clogged bathtub trap, one restorer used a shop wet-vac while keeping the overflow vent sealed.

vac made for cleaning up carpets and other wet surfaces. First I plugged up the overflow in the tub (to limit air access to just the drain). Then I set the shop vac on maximum suction and held the hose tightly on the drain. It did a great job of sucking up the hair and muck that had been restricting the water. The bathtub has been draining nicely for over a year.

—FRANK L. GRECO
Pittsburgh, Pa.

SLIP 'EM IN

KEEP AN OLD BAR OF SOAP HANDY when you're doing finish carpentry or cabinet work. Wood screws drive easier when you give them a swipe of soap first!

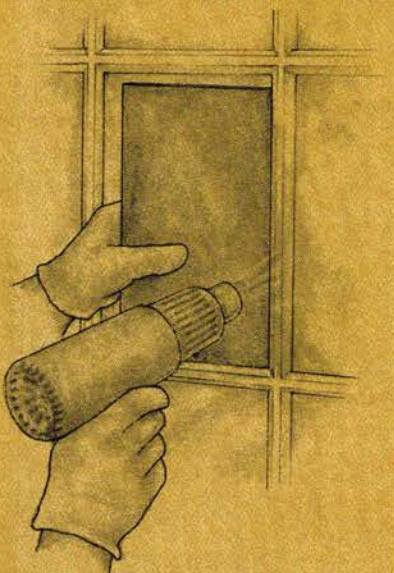
—TIBOR RADSCZ
Horseheads, N.Y.

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I cut a piece of sheet metal slightly smaller than the area of the exposed glass and hold it snug against the wood sash as I work. The metal acts as both a heat shield and a heat sink, drawing most of the heat away from the glass. You need point the heat gun at the paint, not the metal or glass, and keep moving the metal along as you work. Wear gloves, and let the metal cool down



Use a square of sheet metal—as a shield for softening glazing putty.

periodically. Of course, there are no guarantees the glass will never break, but odds are much better than dry scraping.

—MIKE DEERING
Ann Arbor, Mich.

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TERRA COTTA CRAZE

The terra cotta ornamentation on my 1895 home was painted at some point. Now the paint is peeling, taking with it the original glaze. What should I do to restore it?

—Jack Seyler
St. Louis, Mo.

TERRA COTTA IS A FIRED CLAY PRODUCT first widely used in the United States in the late-19th century. While you may or may not have terra-cotta trim on your capitals, it isn't likely that peeling paint would decompose the glaze. Terra cotta usually fails because of the freeze-thaw effect of water penetration.

Since terra cotta is often supported by structural components, have a restoration professional experienced in working with terra cotta examine it for underlying damage. According to Deborah Slaton and Harry J. Hunderman of Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates in Chicago (312-372-0555), a deep repair may require fastening the fractured clay together with pins, then patching it with a cementitious mixture painted to match the surrounding glaze.

Terra cotta is easily adapted to decorative shapes, including mouldings and capitals.

Nonmoving cracks can be pointed with a mortar of roughly the same strength and hardness as the terra cotta. If only the glaze is damaged, it can be repaired with a breathable masonry coating similar to the adjacent glaze. The coating will allow moisture to escape from the terra cotta while it prevents any additional moisture from entering the clay.

CRUSTY LINCRUSTA

Is there any way to restore 90-year-old Lincrusta covered with latex paint? I've been chipping away at it with an X-acto knife.

—Laura M. Knusli
Stafa, Switzerland

REMOVING LATEX PAINT FROM LINCRUSTA originally painted in oil poses a tough restoration problem, says Ed Pinson, of Pinson & Ware Painted Ornament in Monrovia, California (626-359-6113). Chemical strippers and heat won't work because they'll melt the oil layers along with the latex. Rather than chip away at the panel with a knife (which can also damage the Lincrusta), consider reviving the pattern with new applications of primer, base coat, and glazing.

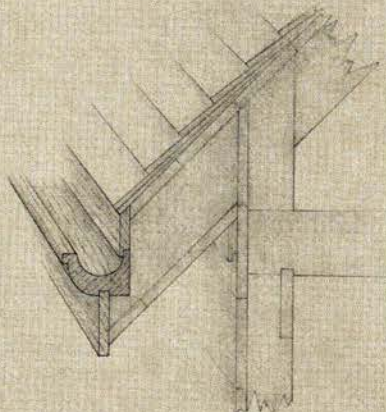
Clean a large enough section to get an accurate sample of the original oil-based colors, patterns, and application techniques. Then experiment with color-matching and finishing techniques for the
[continued on page 22]

ROUND GUTTERS

I'd like to add round wooden gutters to my 1901 wood-frame house. Can you help?

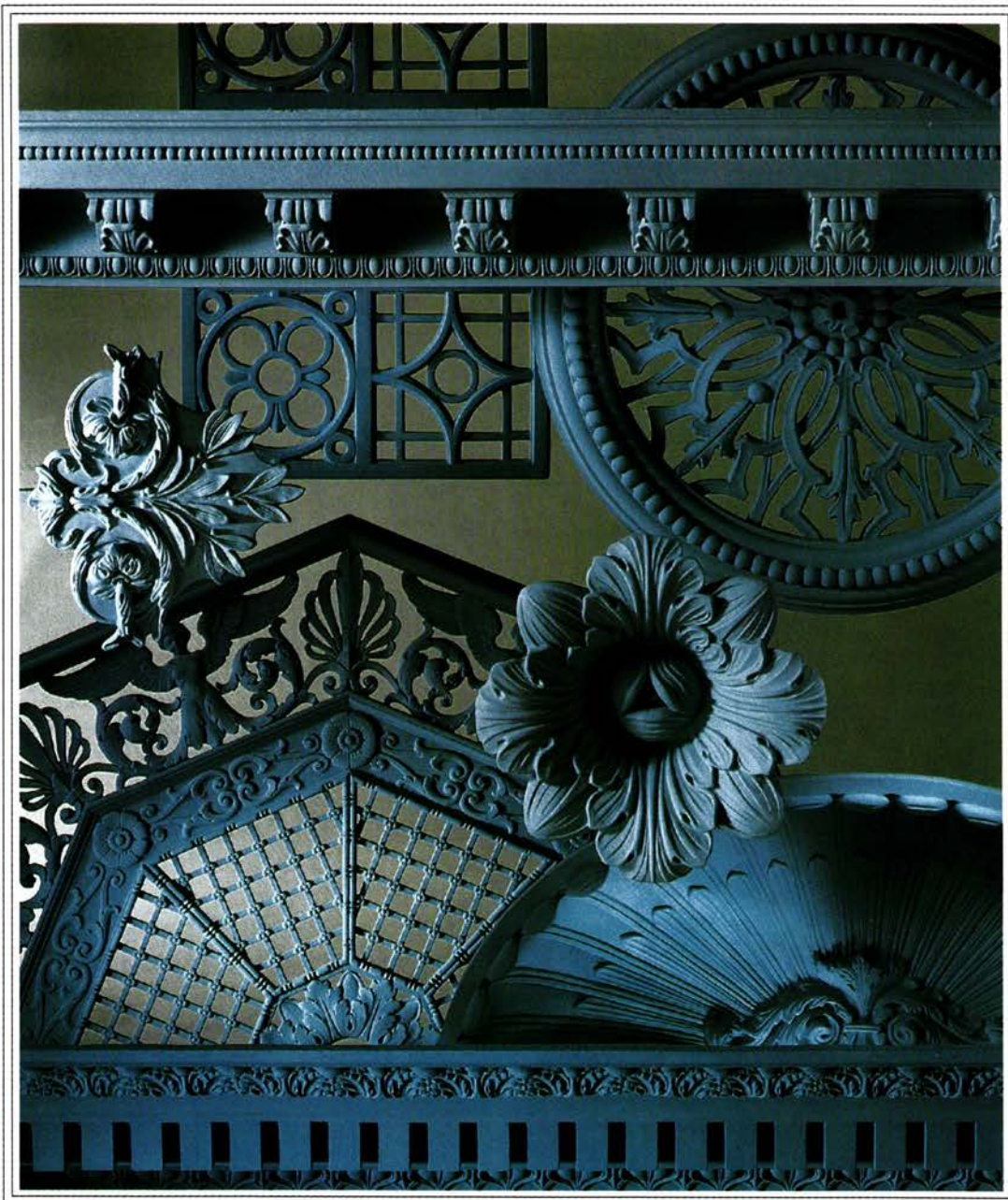
—David Mason
Ashland, Oreg.

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Finish the gaps between rafters with facing boards above and below the gutter.

build wooden gutters yourself, you may want to contact a wood gutter specialist, such as Lewis Industries in Crescent City, California, (707-464-5844).



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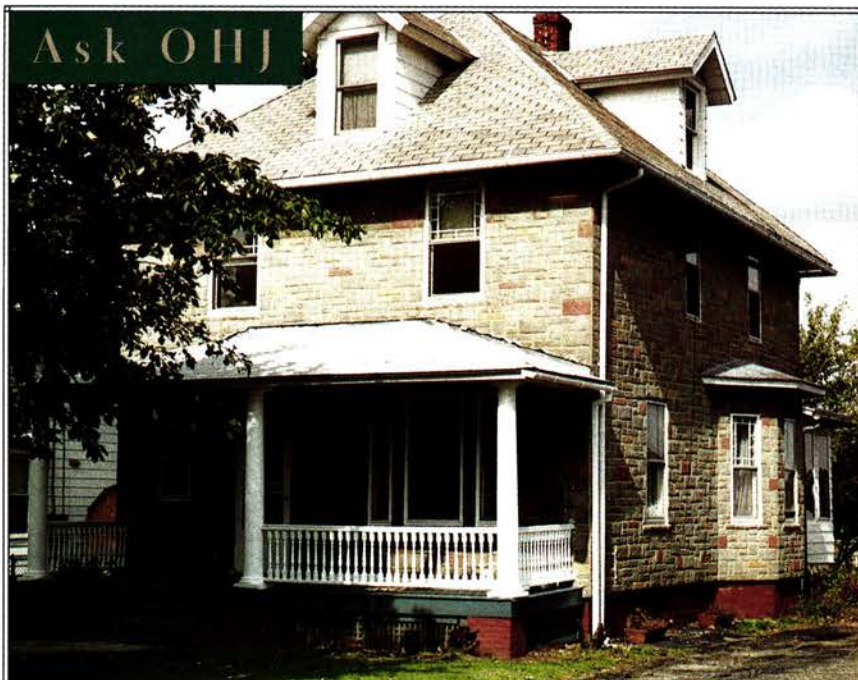
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glaze coat, such as washing or drybrushing. While you'll lose some of the fine definition of the embossing, your Lincrusta will look a lot more authentic.

STUCK-ON STONE

Our 1913 Foursquare is covered with Formstone siding. What is this material, and how do we go about removing it?

— David and Joanne Healey
Chesapeake City, Md.

FORMSTONE WAS ONE OF A NUMBER of artificial masonry veneers tooled and colored to resemble stonework in the early- to mid-20th century. Its debut in Baltimore in 1937 led to its widespread application in that city—most infamously in the historic Federal Hill district. Formstone was applied much like three-coat plaster, either directly to a masonry surface, or over wooden or metal lath attached to wooden siding. The stone pattern was rolled on or cut into the top coat with a trowel while the material was still wet, then tinted in colors ranging from buff to pink. The entire veneer is usually about $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick. While some consider these

Formstone, a 20th-century masonry veneer, masks many of the architectural details on this Foursquare.

masonry veneers historic, Formstone and its ilk (trade names included Perma-Stone, Fieldstone, Modern Stone, Rostone, etc.) are subject to water damage and structural deterioration once the surface integrity is broken.

Provided that lath was applied to the original surface, removing Formstone is a straightforward—if messy—process. To check for lath or mesh, remove a small section of Formstone in an inconspicuous area to see what's underneath. If lath has been nailed to the siding, you should be able to remove the veneer. Use a scaffold and work from the top of a wall down, taking care to stand above and away from heavy falling debris. Break through the masonry material with a hammer and chisel. Force a prybar behind the lath or mesh, work the tool in, and pull straight back to loosen chunks of material. Once the walls are clear, you'll likely need to replace damaged siding and missing trim work around door and window frames.

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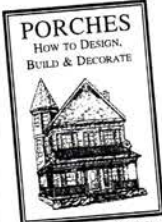
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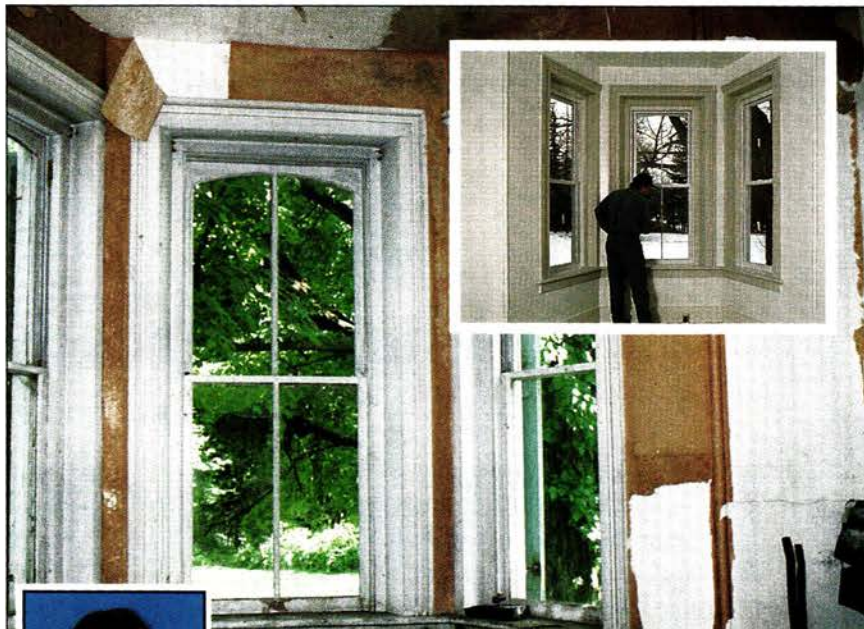


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Where Lilacs Bloom

BY JO ANN GARDNER

THE LILAC'S INCOMPARABLY SCENTED BLOOMS herald the first truly warm weather of the year. Reappearing faithfully season after season, from one generation to the next, these pale lavender blossoms are an evocative link to the past. "Nothing but lilacs for an old house," wrote Frances King, author of *From a New Garden*, in 1928. "And they should be the common lilac, too."

The common lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*) was the first flowering shrub imported to the New World after the rose. While other shrubs thrive or wither with changing fashion, this native of southeastern Europe has never fallen out of favor since its introduction in the 1600s. The North American tradition of planting a single lilac bush by the cottage door caught the eye of travelers from abroad 200 years ago. One European visitor, much taken with humble dooryard gardens "full of laylocks," observed that the road from Marlborough, Massachusetts, to Boston seemed to be one continual garden.

The common lilac, a bush that can grow to 15', bears large, loose and irregular clusters of lavender blossoms for two weeks each spring. Until about 1850, the common lilac and the Persian or Jasmine lilac (*S. persica*) were the only varieties grown in North America. The Persian, introduced about 1753, reaches just 6' and blooms about two weeks later than the common lilac. The smallest of the lilacs, its branches are covered with small, scented, pale flower clusters. In the late 19th century, a flood of new plants from Asia brought several new cultivars to American gardens, among them the Korean lilac (*S. oblata dilatata*). This is the earliest blooming lilac (10 days before the common lilac) and very hardy, growing to 12' with scented pink flower clusters. As a colorful bonus, its foliage turns red in the fall. The Japanese tree lilac

(*S. amurensis japonica*) produces late blooming, creamy-white flower heads. Useful for creating screens or wind-breaks, it can grow to 30'.

As the 20th century approached, horticulturalists such as Victor Lemoine of France and John Dunbar of the U.S. began crossing cultivars of the common lilac to produce what are now called French hybrids. These hybrids (some of which are not French) not only extended the lilac blooming season, they produced unheard-of colors, including cobalt blue and primrose yellow.

Exotic lilacs such as these piqued the interest of leading garden authorities and arbiters of fashion, who actively cultivated them. 'Sovenir D'Alice Harding', a white lilac named for a wealthy American socialite, is still sought by collectors.



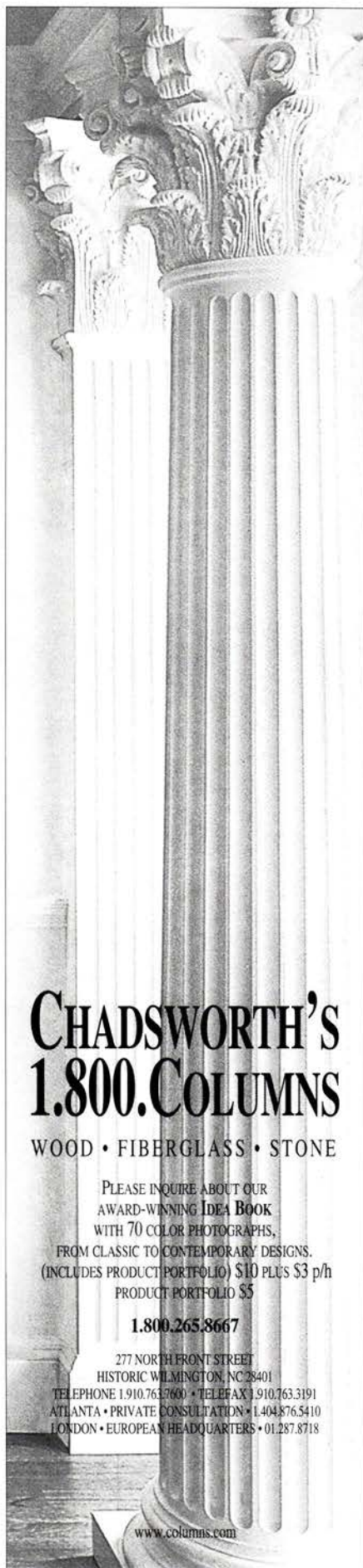
Lilacs have been an American metaphor for spring since colonial times.

Planting Tips

- Grow lilacs in any well-drained soil where they can get five hours of sun a day. Give the plant a good shake—before and after watering—to eliminate any air pockets in the soil. Water the lilac well, and lightly trim back terminal buds, even those that look promising.
- Position lilacs in front of the house to reinforce a connection to the rural past. Lilacs were commonly grown just outside the entrances of country dwellings.
- Use lilacs as part of a hedge, screen, or outdoor divider where space permits. Shrubberies—a planting of lilacs and other shrubs to mark the edge of a lawn—were common during the Victorian era.
- If you live in a harsh climate, buy only lilacs grown on their own roots (not grafted as with French hybrids); otherwise, the lilac may revert to its common lilac roots if hurt by frost.
- Feature the Persian lilac as a specimen planting on the front lawn, where its dainty, [continued on page 26]



Bursting with scent and color for two weeks each spring, lilacs thrive in almost every part of the country.



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Exotic crosses of the common lilac resulted in the milky white 'Miss Ellen Willmott' (left) and the deep purple 'Ludwig Spaeth' (right).

full-flowering form will have the greatest visual impact.

- Encourage blooming by removing spent flowers as much as possible. Cut out the oldest wood, allowing new shoots to replace it. Avoid over-fertilizing lilacs (you'll get leafy growth instead of blossoms), and prune just after blooming to keep shrubs in shape.
- Enhance any lilac planting today as in the past with tulips, iris, and peony—spring flowers that bloom with the lilac.
- Use the attractive shapes of mature lilacs of tree size as focal points for a shade garden.
- Rejuvenate woody, overgrown lilacs by pruning in winter. Cut out one-third of the largest old stems and small shoots the first winter. The second year, cut another third; year three, remove the last third. The lilac will be gradually reduced in height without sacrificing all the bloom.
- Bouquets of lilacs belong in old houses. To prolong the lives of cut flowers, trim away some of the lower bark and dip the stems in nearly boiling water, leaving them in the water to cool before arranging.

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- 'President Lincoln' (1916), single blue, large clusters.
- 'Primrose' (1949), single yellow fading to white.
- 'Souvenir D'Alice Harding' (1938), very double white.

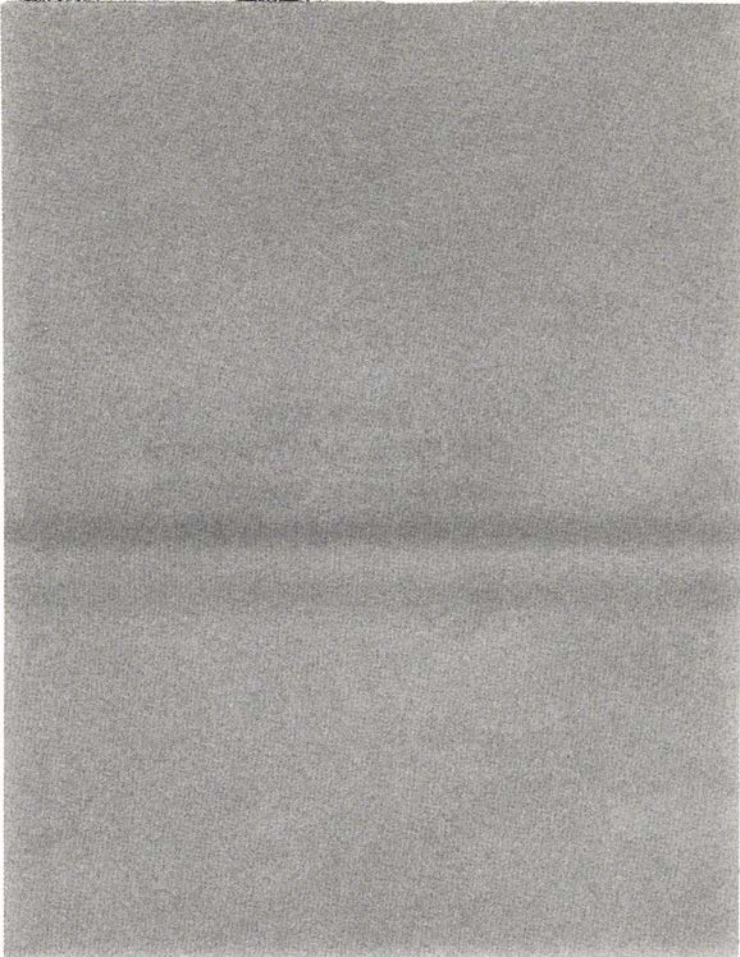
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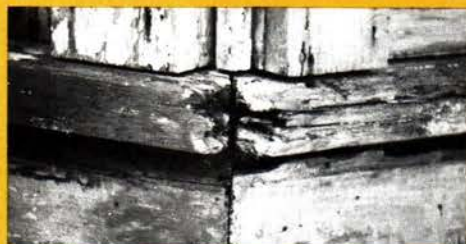
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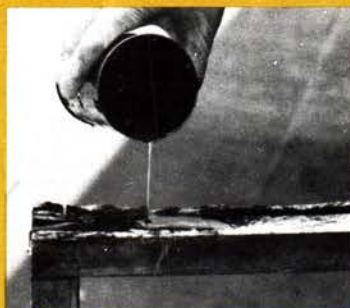
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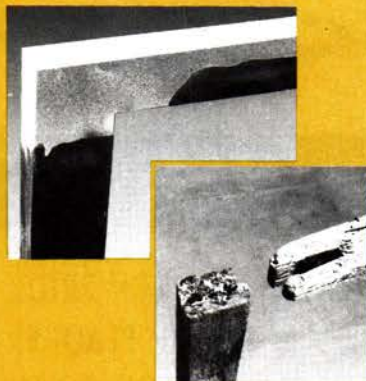
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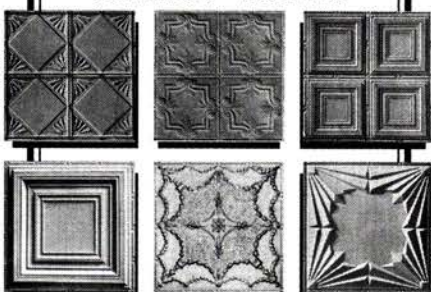
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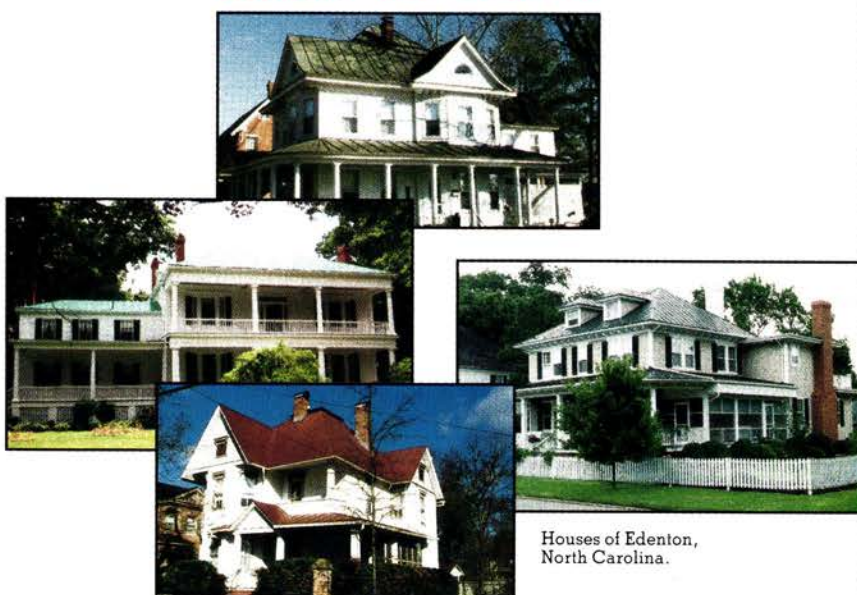
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Bernard Maybeck

BY KENNETH H. CARDWELL, F.A.I.A.

THE ARCHITECT CREDITED WITH TWO OF THE MOST beautiful structures ever built in California—the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Berkeley, and the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco—was a modest man who worked quietly for devoted friends and patrons for over 50 years. Dismissed by many as a poet or eccentric for much of his career, at age 89 he received the Gold Medal of the American Institute of Architects in 1951. I was fortunate to know Bernard Maybeck personally, first visiting him when I was a student. The many reminiscences I heard sketch a remarkable individual who saw the possibilities of new technologies as clearly as the fantasy and delight in older architectural forms.

In 1950 I became an instructor of descriptive geometry at the University of California, Berkeley. Maybeck had held a similar position when he was hired to teach drawing there in 1894. He was curious about what my students were up to, so I took him to see a geodesic dome they were building. Buckminster Fuller, the tireless proponent of the dome, was to be a visiting critic at the University. Later, when Fuller learned of Maybeck's interest in the structure, he expressed a desire to visit with him.

After greeting Fuller in his outdoor studio, Maybeck asked, "Well young man, what is your interest in architecture?" Fuller described his geodesic and tensegrity structures, explaining them as investigations in the separation of tensile and compressive forces in construction. Maybeck was intrigued and remarked that he too had experimented with that idea in designing the Great Hall of the University Faculty Club (1902). I was fascinated by the rapport that developed between two individuals reputedly so dissimilar. One was a romantic architect, the creator of the glamorously classical Packard automobile showroom

in San Francisco (1929). The other was a technocratic engineer, the inventor of the futuristic Dymaxion house.

Shortly after Fuller's visit, I enjoyed a glimpse of Maybeck's creative eclecticism at work. His wife Annie phoned to report that Ben, as his family and close friends called him, was most anxious to see me. "It has something to do with that man and his domes," she said. When I arrived at Maybeck's studio, he had spread before

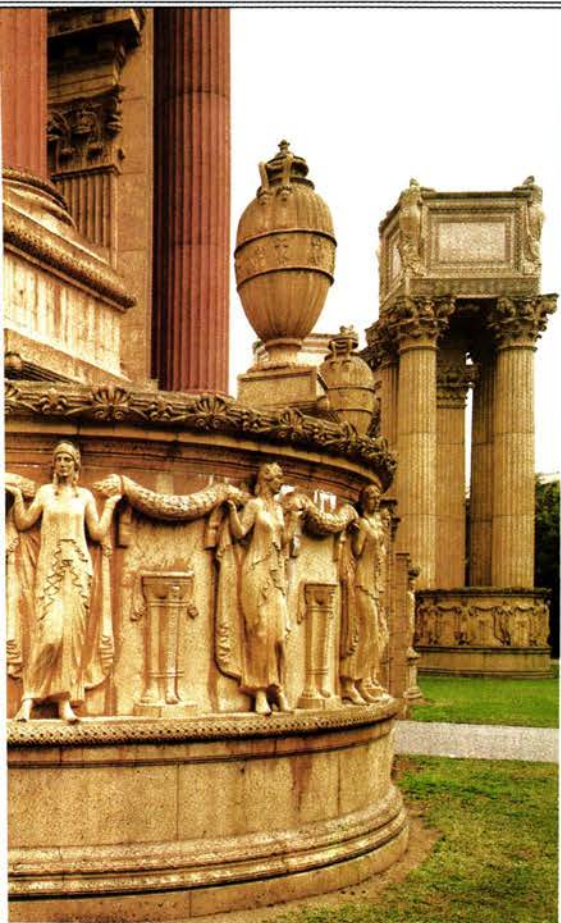
him a copy of *Life* magazine showing Sir Basil Spence's proposal for the reconstruction of Coventry Cathedral as a war memorial. "Look, look," he exclaimed, "a reconstructed Gothic cathedral is not what is needed; what should be done is to preserve the bombed ruins as a memorial." He then suggested that a large, glazed geodesic dome covering the ruins would be the perfect solution, and urged me to contact Fuller to initiate the project.

Time and again I was reminded of Maybeck's unflagging interest in the latest technology. One of his earliest commissions for the Hearst family was the legendary Hearst Hall

(1899) at the University. He designed this large reception hall around massive laminated wooden arches so that it could be demounted and relocated as the campus expanded. After a 1923 fire in Berkeley destroyed hundreds of houses—including his own—he experimented with a lightweight concrete that had been developed by a friend. "Bubblestone," as it was named, was an air-entrained cement that frothed when mixed with water. When hard, gunny-sacks dipped in bubblestone formed a strong shell, a permanent skin for a building. In 1927 Maybeck used bubblestone to roof a house for Dr. R.I. Woolsey. The sacks produced soft, curving forms as they covered ridges and hips and hung from the eaves. The effect was similar to reed thatching—an association [continued on page 32]



Discussing domes in 1954 at the University of California: Professors Kenneth Cardwell (center), John Rauma, and Bernard Maybeck in trademark beret.



Clockwise from left: Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco (1915, reconstructed 1962); addition to the Hopps house (1925), now a bedroom; main staircase in the poured concrete Lawson house (1907); house for Packard dealer Earle C. Anthony (1929).





Maybeck Milestones

Six years younger than Louis Sullivan and seven years older than Frank Lloyd Wright, Bernard Ralph Maybeck was born on February 7, 1862, in the heart of Greenwich Village of German-American parents. Though he entered the College of the City of New York to study languages and science, he did not take to chemistry and left to follow his father's trade as a cabinetmaker. Work in the shop kindled a desire to become a designer, so his father decided to send young Bernard to Paris to study. In the spring of 1882 he passed the examination for architecture at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, the premier classical institution of the day.

Returning to New York in 1886, Maybeck worked with John M. Carrere and Thomas Hastings (his roommate in Paris) on Henry Flagler's Ponce de Leon hotel in Florida. Maybeck was intent on starting an independent practice,

however. He found his way to San Francisco, a land of growth and opportunity, via Kansas City, where he met his wife Annie.

As an instructor at the University of California at Berkeley, he gathered about him a group of engineering students primarily interested in architecture, among them Julia Morgan (see "Who They Were," March/April 1996). Maybeck was instrumental in forming an international competition for the university architectural plan, and designing several buildings. He resigned in 1903 to devote his full time to his practice.

Maybeck designed more than 200 projects in the Bay Area over the next 30 years. Outstanding are his many distinctive houses with their masterly use of open planning and direct structural expression (G.H. Boke house, 1902), new materials (A.C. Lawson house, 1907), or solutions to a hillside site (L.L. Roos house, 1909).



Top: Maybeck's masterpiece, the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Berkeley (1910), is an exquisite synthesis of 20th century industrial materials, such as poured concrete and metal windows, and 12th century imagery. Above: The Great Hall of the University Faculty Club (1902) is spanned with an ingenious system of wooden half-trusses—Gothic in appearance, but advanced in engineering.

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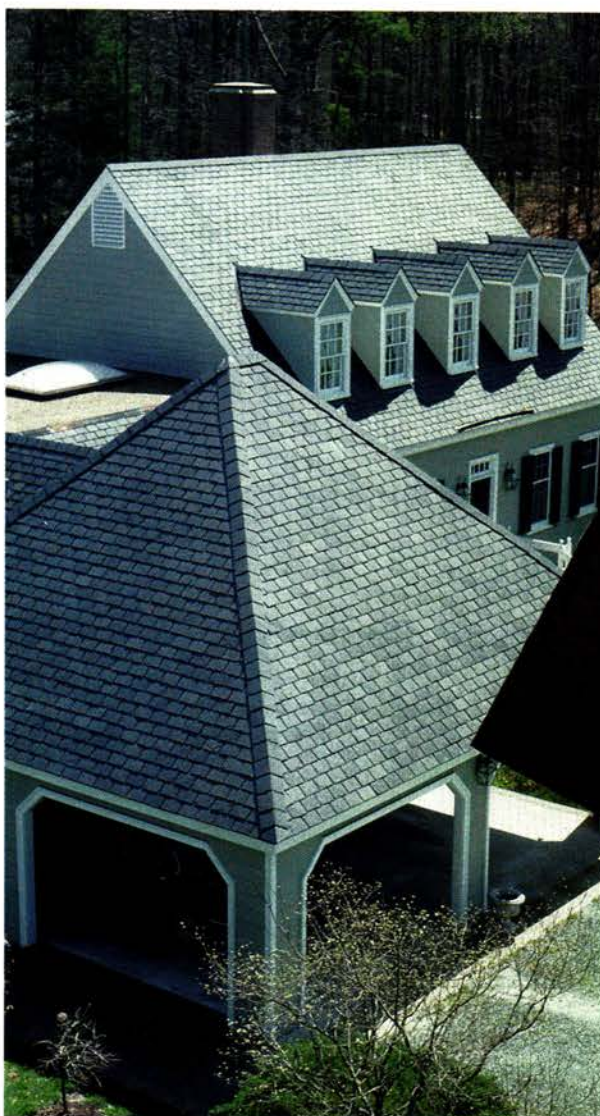
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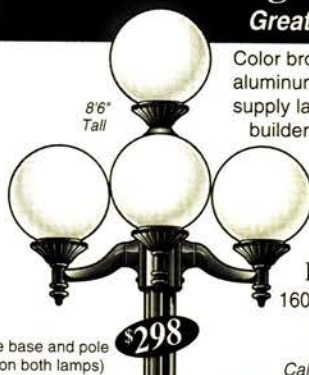
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Maybeck's drawing talent was encouraged by his father and refined at the Ecole. This tempera frontispiece for playwright Isaac Flagg, who was also a building client, shows Grecian structures in authentic colors.

with cottage architecture that pleased Maybeck. It was just one example of the romantic designer fusing with the innovative, early 20th-century architect.

Mrs. Woolsey remembered others. As Maybeck inspected the nearly complete house, he complimented the mason on the neat tilework for the fireplace hearth, but said it wouldn't do. He instructed the mason to take his hammer and break a tile here and there, then go back and reset them. The results would give the hearth a used look and a more interesting pattern. Years later, when her children had grown, Mrs. Woolsey asked Maybeck to make some additions to the house, but she worried that her request might destroy the design. Her fears were unfounded. Changes, Maybeck assured her, only made a house more beautiful by recording the growth in family life.

The Maybeck I knew was a modest man, seldom basking in praise for achievements. His reputation (and his practice) grew

with the universal acclaim for his design for the Palace of Fine Arts at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915. One day he decided to live up to his role as a prominent San Francisco architect by buying a new hat. His high spirits lasted until he faced his office staff. As he removed his hat, he was chagrined to find warm smiles of amusement. The supporting cardboard of the new hat had come free of its box and ringed the headpiece in a crowning halo.

After a lifetime of work that rose quietly above the prevailing tide of superficiality, Bernard Ralph Maybeck passed away on October 3, 1957. His unique legacy is proof that modern architecture can have its roots in American practice as well as European theory.

KENNETH H. CARDWELL, F.A.I.A., Professor of Architecture, Emeritus at the Univ. of Calif.-Berkeley, is the author of *Bernard Maybeck, Artisan, Architect, Artist (Hennessey & Ingalls, Santa Monica)*.

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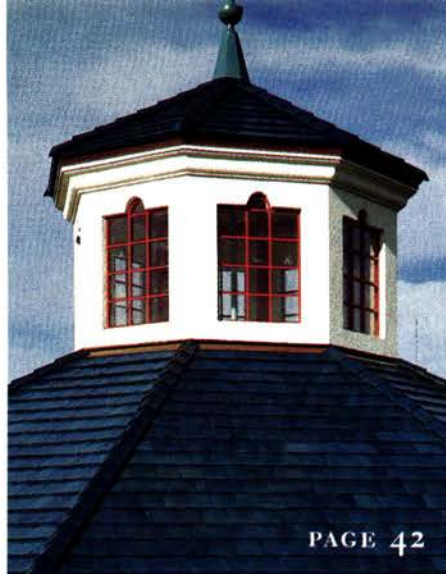
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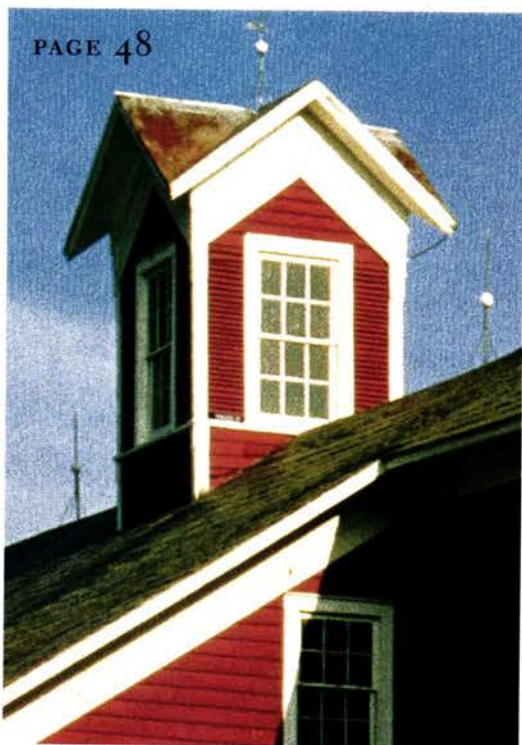
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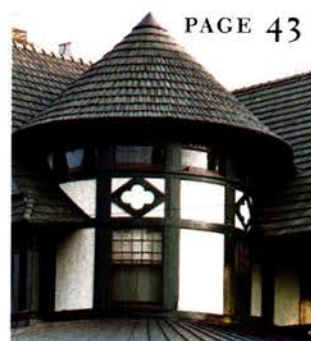
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rooftop to kitchen floor, it's apparent that old houses are best served by quality. Sometimes the old way makes for a better job, other times it is modern innovation. A material of exceptional quality may be historic (clay tile, for example) or the product of space-age technology (membrane roofing). Old and new often blend (as when Victorian whimsy and a UL-listing come together in a fancy lightning rod). Under the right circumstances, new materials and technologies can serve the finest restoration. ♦ Sometimes what we think of as "modern"—asphalt floor tiles, say—are convincingly historic as they approach or pass 50 years of service. Take a second look at the 20th-century



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floor coverings, most of them still available, that delivered on their promises. ♦ Quality lasts. Between 1895 and 1919, the *Ladies' Home Journal* offered plans for "homes of moderate cost." But consider the young architects who designed them for the magazine: Ralph Adams Cram, Bruce Price, Frank Lloyd Wright. The homes built from their plans continue to delight owners. —THE EDITORS



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"The island was made of cheap plywood and starburst Formica; filthy indoor-outdoor carpeting and an avocado refrigerator completed the decor. 'My kitchen is neither good nor bad, it simply is,' I chanted daily."

—PAGE 64



A defining element of the Mission Revival and other Spanish-influenced idioms, clay tile is versatile enough to shelter houses built in almost every conceivable style.

CLAY IN CONTEXT

A roof should stand up to the architectural character of an old house.

Tile has always been fit for the task. *by Mary Ellen Polson*

CONSIDERED OVER THE LIFESPAN OF A HOUSE, a clay tile roof is a bargain. This colorful, richly dimensioned, historically appropriate roofing material can last for hundreds of years with proper maintenance and care. It's also exceptionally durable. Fire resistant and capable of withstanding hurricane-force winds, clay tile even survives earthquakes. It's no wonder that clay tile has been one of the premier roofing choices for millennia.

If your home has an original tile roof, by all means keep it. As a rule, the fasteners and underlayment—even lead-coated copper flashing—will fail long before the tile will. An original roof is especially valuable because it is part of the architecture of an old house. Since a new or vintage tile roof

can cost \$20,000 to \$60,000 or more, treat yours as an irreplaceable asset.

While repairing or replacing a clay tile roof isn't for the faint of pocketbook, the good news for old-house owners is that both new and vintage (i.e., salvaged) tile are widely available (see "Suppliers," p. 43). Before you shop for a new roof, arm yourself with some basic knowledge about the shape, mechanics, size, color, and sources of origin of this extraordinary building material.

SHAPE—While literally hundreds of types of roofing tile have been made throughout history, most styles available today fit one of six or seven basic shapes. These include Spanish (or "S"), Mission (also called barrel), shingle (or slab), English, French, and Roman (or pan). Variations on shingle tiles



Above: Roman pan and cover tiles are still in vogue 2,000 years after they were first invented. **Below:** A colorful selection of special-purpose tiles for finishing and capping hips, ridges, gables, eaves, and edges.





French tile was invented in the 1890s, making it a suitable choice for a Neoclassical dwelling. The diamond pattern above was created by combining Ludowici tiles in two different shades of matte and glazed green.

alone include textured (or “rustic”) tiles, thick and irregular slab or “crude” tiles, and cambered tiles. The concave shapes of exposed Spanish, Mission, and Roman tiles create undulating patterns and interesting shadow lines. Deeply grooved French tiles and interlocking English shingles offer well-defined shadow lines, while flat or cambered shingle tiles afford softer edges.

MECHANICS—To make a watertight roof, tiles must either overlap or interlock. Interlocking tiles fit together with either a lip or one or more raised edges; since less coverage is required, the design promotes a more economical use of the material. Overlapping tiles lack both lips and raised edges. They may fit together by alternating concave and convex shapes, as with Mission and Roman tiles, or through staggered coverage, as with shingle tiles. While interlocking tiles weren’t unheard of before the Civil War, many innovative designs were created by late-19th-century manufacturers and designers, such as George Babcock of Celadon Terra Cotta Co. (later Ludowici-Celadon), who patented more than 30 tiles. Then as now, manufacturers were

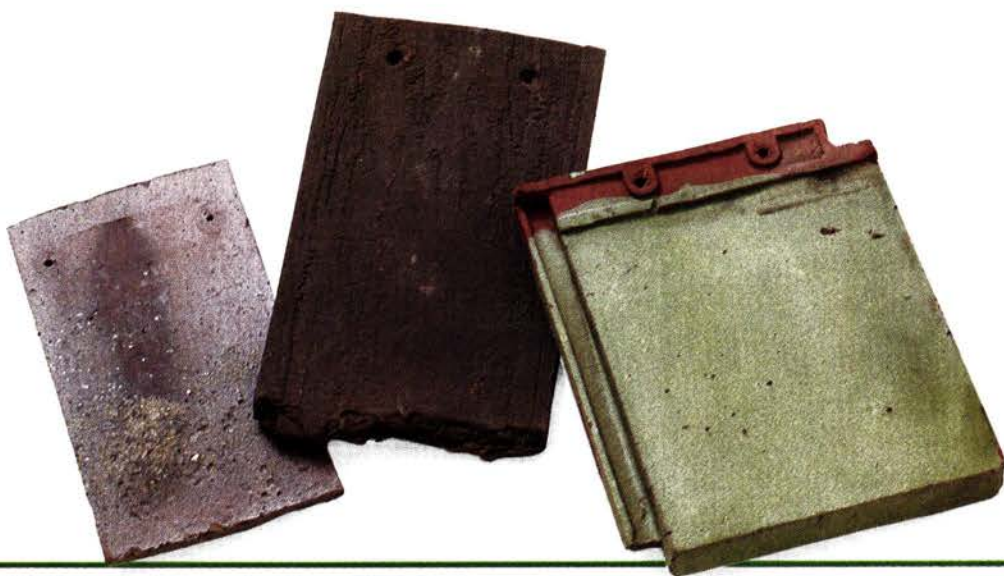
looking for ways to make the material cover more surface area at a lower cost.

SIZE—The earliest American-made tiles were on the small side; some colonial-era shingles measure as little as 10" x 6". Since larger tiles make it easier to cover a broad expanse of roof more quickly, manufacturers had an economic incentive to gradually push stock sizes upward. This pattern has continued late into the 20th century; stock sizes of a standard profile may be 2" to 3" longer than similar tiles dating to, say, 1900.

COLOR—Color is another variable in matching tile for an existing roof. Traditional unglazed tile is terra-cotta red, a result of the high percentage of iron oxide in the firing mixture. Natural variations on this hue range from light buff to pale orange and pink, deepening to reddish- and dark brown to black. Just as mineral content and firing techniques can alter the color of a piece of pottery, tile makers were adept at manipulating the firing process to produce unusual shades. Black, grey, purple, dark blue, and green casts weren’t unusual on turn-of-the-century tiles. Manufacturers experimented

THE SHAPES OF CLAY

Tiles have evolved over the centuries in many different lands and climates. Here’s a sampling of some of the more common profiles found on North American homes.



SHINGLE—Also called slab or English flat, these overlapping tiles are usually plain and smooth-surfaced. “Rustic” varieties may be textured to produce weathered effects. Comes in earth colors.

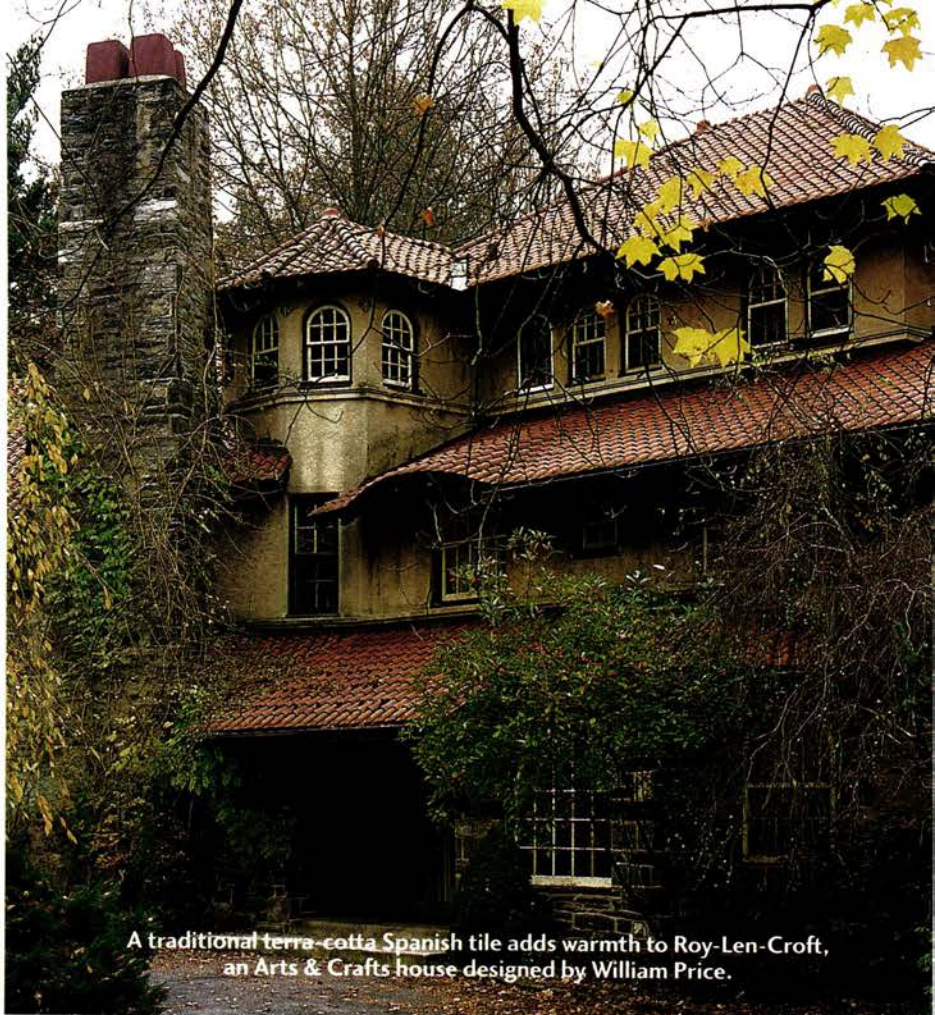
CRUDE—A thick, heavily textured or distressed slab shingle that overlaps, sometimes featuring a chipped or irregular butt. Hues range from terra cotta to black.

ENGLISH—A plain, flat tile that interlocks at the head and one or both sides. Some English tiles are textured to imitate slate or wood shingles. Available in a wide range of natural colors.

Alternatives to Clay

Affordable substitutes that mimic the look of clay roofing tile include metal tiles, introduced about 1870, and concrete tiles, which caught on early in the 20th century. A steel version of the Spanish “S” tile was popular on Spanish Colonial Revival and Mission Revival styles of the 1920s and '30s. Far lighter and easier to install than clay tiles, they were also fireproof. Metal tiles can last 100 years or more if they're kept painted. Metal tiles will generally cost \$400 to \$500 per square to install.

Thicker and heavier than clay, concrete tiles create the subtle shadow lines associated with traditional tiles. They're made of a dense mixture of portland cement and aggregates including sand and pigment. While concrete tile lacks the color permanence and subtle color variations of clay, this durable roofing material can last up to 75 years. Be sure to check the back of the tile to make sure the color goes completely through it. Concrete tiles make it possible to approximate the look of clay for about \$500 per square installed.



A traditional terra-cotta Spanish tile adds warmth to Roy-Len-Croft, an Arts & Crafts house designed by William Price.



FRENCH—An interlocking shingle tile with two deep, fluted grooves. A favorite for glazing, it's available in a rainbow of hues from black to sea green and blue.

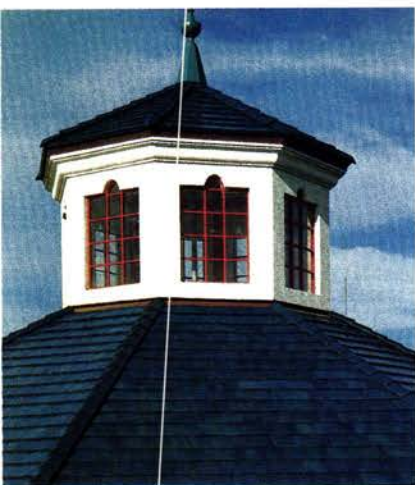
MISSION—Also called barrel, this concave tile overlaps with a convex mate. Typically seen in terra cotta and other earth-tone hues. Mission tile roofs have a higher profile than Roman or Spanish tile roofs.

SPANISH—This S-shaped, concave tile with an interlocking lip can be glazed or unglazed in terra cotta and other earth colors. Spanish tile creates a pattern similar to Mission tile.

PLAIN—Flat, overlapping tiles cut in decorative shapes such as diamond, round end, and special tab cuts dubbed “New York” and “Washington” were the precursors of fancy Victorian-era wood shingles. Available in terra cotta.

Right: The vintage Spanish tile on this Renaissance Revival house in Omaha is a recent restoration.

Below: Greek pan and cover tiles, embellished with acroterions. Lower left: New Ludowici Mediterranean Blue tile crowns a roof and cupola.



Shouldering Up to Clay

Clay tile is heavy. A square of roofing tile—enough to cover 100 square feet of roof surface—can easily weigh 1,000 pounds or more. While the tiles need to be adequately supported on boards or battens, the crucial determining factor in whether the roof will support their weight is pitch. The minimum roof pitch for interlocking types of tile is 14 degrees. Roman and Spanish tiles require an 18-degree minimum pitch, while straight barrel mission and certain crude and rustic shingle profiles require a pitch of 22 degrees or more.

Installing or repairing a tile roof is a job for a professional roofer. Since failure usually occurs at points where the tile joins other structural features, the quality of the supporting materials should match the quality of the roofing tile. Make sure your roofer uses ring-shank stainless steel or copper nails and stainless steel fasteners. Choose the longest-lived material you can afford for flashing, preferably copper.

with colored glazes, introducing shiny and matte greens, blues, and even lavender tiles to late-19th-century rooftops.

ORIGIN—Between 1870 and 1930, dozens of factories churned out product in locations as diverse as New York, Ohio, Texas, Tennessee, Florida, and California—often tapping a rich source of natural clay. Two hardy survivors—Ludowici Roof Tile in Ohio and Gladding, McBean of California—still produce clay tile in many traditional profiles and colors. They're also able to re-create some vintage patterns they no longer carry as stock items. Since many manufacturers stamped the factory name on the back of the tile, samples from your roof may yield clues to its place of origin.

Picking and Choosing Tile

GIVEN THE DIVERSITY IN TILE PROFILES, colors, and sizes available over just the past 100 years, it's astounding that anyone can find a match for a historic tile roof. If you're contemplating a repair, replacement, or an addition to an original tile roof, you'll need professional assistance to choose and install the new material. Here are some guidelines to follow.

- Most of the basic profiles haven't changed significantly in generations. However, manufacturers have altered their products over the decades. For this reason, vintage salvaged tiles are often better candidates for a period house restoration or addition than are new tiles of the same profile.
- If you know the tile on your roof was made by a manufacturer still in business, contact the firm directly to identify the pattern. Even if the tile is no longer in stock, the company may be able to re-create it by striking a new mold and color-matching the tile. This is usually an expensive proposition, especially if you only need a small quantity of tile.
- Tiles are either handmade (barrel tiles were traditionally formed over the legs of workers) or machine made. Machine made tiles were introduced about 1870; if your house was built after that, you likely have machine-made clay tile.
- Like most roofing materials, tile is usually sold by the square (the quantity needed to cover 100 square feet when laid with average exposure). Quoted prices usually include installation, which can equal or exceed the cost of the materials. The price per



French clay tiles can stand up to eclectic architecture, like this half-timbered and turreted Arts & Crafts home in Pennsylvania.

square, installed, can run from \$700 or \$800 to several thousand dollars. Most houses require between 20 and 40 squares, depending on the pitch and complexity of the roof.

- If you need only a small amount of tile, you may be able to buy it by the piece. Expect to pay proportionately higher prices for small lots.

- Don't allow a roofing contractor to talk you into removing a clay tile roof. A good tile roofer should be able to demonstrate his or her skills to you (such as rigging the scaffolding to prevent damage to the tile) and should also be knowledgeable about sources for both new and vintage tile. You might want to consider breaking in a prospective roofer by having the company perform routine roof maintenance.

- Let architecture guide you to an appropriate tile selection. For instance, choose Spanish or Mission tiles for a Spanish-influenced design; French tiles for a Chateausque or French Provincial house; interlocking or flat English tiles for a Tudor Revival home.

- Finding a match for existing tile usually

means working closely with a reputable salvage tile dealer. You'll need to send samples of the tile taken from the field (broad area of tile) where replacements are needed. For many common types and colors, a dealer can often find a match from the same production run from the same factory.

- Bear in mind that color choices in the past were limited. The color palette for a period house will usually fall in the earth-tone range, and most tiles will be unglazed.

- Some types of vintage tile are harder to match than others. Popular common profiles, such as unglazed Mission and Spanish tiles in terra-cotta red, are easier to come by than a vintage crude tile. Tiles were sometimes flash-fired in the kiln to produce a black, dark-brown, or almost blue random cast over about two-thirds of the face. Because of the danger of explosion, tiles are no longer made this way.

- To achieve the aged look of a traditional English roof, choose a shingle tile with a cambered (slightly bent) shape. Rustic and crude slab shingles will also yield interesting aged effects.

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The Rundown on Rubber Roofs

A Primer on the Installation of Membrane Roofing

BY GORDON BOCK



Membrane roofing is increasingly popular for restoring old-house roofs with low pitch. At The Mount, Edith Wharton's home in Lenox, Massachusetts, EPDM is even being installed under slate on steep roofs for extra protection.

THE PERFECT ROOFING MATERIAL MAY YET lay waiting to be discovered, but until that day comes, modern membrane roofs will do their level best. The polar opposite of traditional, layered roofing, such as shingles or slate, membranes are a class of waterproof sheets that cover a roof like a continuous skin. In recent years, they've been making the jump from commercial buildings to low-pitch roofs on houses—particularly old houses.

Membrane roofing, especially the synthetic rubbers, are worth considering for many old houses. Membranes have proved to be a superior replacement for built-up roofing on the flat tops of urban row houses as well as the low hipped roofs of Ranch and Prairie-School style houses (see "Cantilever Tales," May/June 1990 OHJ). They work well on the levellest portions of mansard roofs as well as porches of all types. Plus, they can be a problem solver for tricky locations such as cut-out bays on windowed dormers, hoods on protruding windows, or cellar bulkheads. If membranes sound tempting, here are the basics you'll need to know about using them on your old house.

Why Single Ply?

MEMBRANE ROOFING IS KNOWN AS SINGLE-ply roofing because it is installed as a single thickness of material. This is in contrast to multiple-ply roofing—that is, the built-up roofing common for most of this century. Built-up roofing is simply layers of asphalt-impregnated felt laminated together with hot asphalt (a process called "hot-mopping")

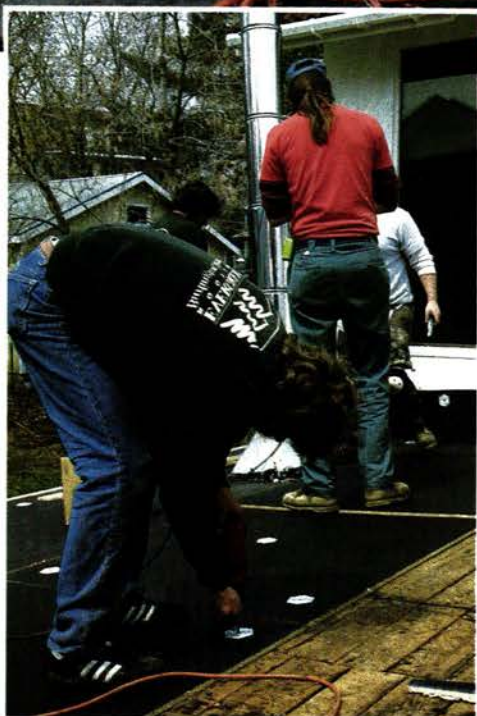


that produces a roof four or more plies thick.

The EPDM membrane, originally developed for pond liners during World War II, was tried for roofs at Chicago's O'Hare airport in the 1960s. The "energy crunch" of the 1970s gave EPDM a big boost in use when it proved to be more flexible over insulation than built-up roofing. Since then EPDM's advantages have made it the dominant single-ply material for low-slope—that is, 3 in 12 or less—residential roofs.

- Rolls of EPDM come in large dimensions—typically, 10', 20', 40' and more in width—that minimize seams.

- Since EPDM is designed to accept ballast (a coating of stone or gravel) for commercial applications, it can support on-roof decks. (However, these are best made so they can be disassembled for servicing the roof.)



Far left: Rubber-roofing an old house often begins with laying undersheeting. Materials such as board insulation must be anchored with screws and special washers. Left: An EPDM roof is usually fully adhered to the deck with adhesive. Above: To make seams in the EPDM membrane, likely necessary on large row-house roofs, the laps are rolled with a special primer, then joined with butyl tape.



Vents and other penetrations are made watertight by fitting patches of uncured EPDM (top), then rolling and coating with sealer (above).

• The high carbon black content of EPDM makes it extremely resistant to UV radiation. This means the membrane remains highly flexible over its 15- to 20-year service life, and it will move without cracking.

Carbon black, however, also makes EPDM coal-colored and a poor reflector of the sun's heat. In warm regions, an EPDM roof will transmit heat to the building's interior, and it can encourage moisture condensation in the roof substrate material—and rot, if that material is organic. If you must have a white roof, consider Hypalon or one of the thermoplastics. An EPDM roof can be had in color, too, but not without some tradeoffs.

Ins and Outs of Installation

DESPITE ITS SIMPLICITY, AN EPDM ROOF CAN- not be installed blindfolded. It takes teamwork, meticulous measurement, and a thorough understanding of how the material works. The installers cannot assume the material will be similar to more conventional types of roofing. A built-up roof, for example, is very forgiving: an accidental cut in one layer will be covered by the next layer or a slather of asphalt. A single-ply roof offers no such margin for error.

For this reason, most residential EPDM roofs are still installed by contractors—though a few specialty suppliers are begin-

ning to service the owner–restorer market. Specific installation instructions and details vary from manufacturer to manufacturer, but the following scenario is typical.

Decks and Preparation

IN COMMERCIAL WORK, EPDM ROOFS MAY BE attached with fasteners, or laid loose over the deck. In most residential roofs, however, the rubber is fully adhered—that is, bonded to the substrate with an adhesive. Bonding not prevents wind uplift and movement of the membrane, and it is a good precaution against leaks. Should the EPDM be punctured, the leak will not be able to migrate under the membrane. Bonding also helps the membrane conform to the shape of the building.

An EPDM roof can only be to be bonded to wood, concrete, or metal that is clean and even. On an old house, this usually means removing all old roofing, and applying some type of undersheeting—both to create a clean surface and to level dips and waves. Exterior-grade plywood is an acceptable substrate for EPDM. However, it must be screwed—not nailed—to the building, and screw heads must be countersunk below the surface of the plywood. Edge fasteners such as “H-clips” cannot be used.

Even better than plywood is a ¼" inorganic undersheeting (such as Dens-Deck, a gypsum product made by Georgia-Pacific). Rigid isocyanurate insulation board is used extensively on commercial EPDM roofs and may also be a good option for houses, especially where there are cathedral ceilings. These materials have to be applied with washers as well as screws. It is possible to install EPDM over an existing roof, but you will first have to cover it with undersheeting, typically exterior plywood.

Whatever substrate is chosen, it is vital to wind up with a smooth, clean, oil-free surface. The EPDM membrane can be punctured by dirt and raised fasteners, or softened by the mineral spirits in asphaltic roofing compounds. All evidence of old cement must go. Once the substrate is ready, it is coated with an adhesive similar to contact cement, and the membrane is laid in place.

Seams and Details

FINISH DETAILS ARE CRITICAL WITH ALL MEM- brane roofs. The most likely failure points with EPDM are 1) seams between sheets, and

Sorting Out Single Ply

Single-ply roofing falls into several general groups by composition, especially where old houses are concerned:

MODIFIED BITUMEN—Depending upon the manufacturer, this is a general term for the old built-up system blended with single-ply technology. Usually these products are base sheets of plastic film, glass fibers, polyester mat, or inorganic felt laminated with bitumen. The bitumen itself is modified with compounds such as styrene or butadiene to improve strength and flexibility. Modified bitumen remains popular because it is relatively inexpensive and conventional to install.

THERMOPLASTICS—These materials, chief among them PVC (polyvinyl chloride) are so named because they can be fused together with heat. PVC has never really caught on in the U.S. to the level of other membranes. While thermoplastics have a slight advantage in the sun belt (they can be colored in heat-reflecting shades), these membranes require expensive heat tools and experience to install, lending them less readily to residential work.

ELASTOMERS—These synthetic rubbers are thermosetting membranes that must be joined with an adhesive or tape. The most commonly used types are EPDM (ethylene propylene diene monomer) and CSPE (chlorosulfonated polyethylene), which is commonly sold under the trade name Hypalon. The latter was initially very popular in commercial work because it is highly resistant to chemicals—an asset for processing plants and the like.



Above: With EPDM seams of all kinds, the first step for a good seal is cleaning the membrane of powder. (During the rolling process, manufacturers apply either mineral talc or mica to the rubber so sheets won't stick to each other.) Right: Metal flashing is one option for terminating the membrane at roof edges. Butyl tape, which is extremely sticky, completes the job.



2) roof edges. Moreover, properly installed terminations at walls and eaves not will employ different methods than traditional roofing, and they may look different.

SEAMS—The ideal EPDM installation avoids all seams in the material. In the real world, however, this is not always possible. Today, most manufacturers have switched from glued seams to butyl rubber tape—an uncured version of the membrane. While the technology continues to improve, the current procedure is straightforward. First the lapped portions of the sheets are cleaned thoroughly. After the laps are primed with a special primer, the tape is applied and the laps rolled together. Over time the rubber tape cures for a finished seal.

ROOF EDGES—These have to be terminated somehow to prevent wind uplift and to keep the roof in place as it shrinks slightly over

years. This is accomplished either with a metal bar and screws or flashing and nails.

SIDEWALLS—Like most membranes, EPDM is self-flashing. Making a joint where the roof meets, say, a clapboard wall, requires simply running it 15" up under the siding and bonding it to the wall. Typically a few inches of EPDM are left exposed between the end of the siding and the top of the roof.

PENETRATIONS—Where vent pipes must penetrate the membrane, the seal is made with a manufactured boot or patches of uncured rubber. Since the uncured EPDM has no memory, it stretches readily to cover an irregular shape—just like the skin it is. 🏠

Special thanks to Lee Jaslow of Resource Conservation Technology and Steve Smith of Evergreen Roofing (44 Briggs St., Burlington, VT 05402; 802-865-2264).

SUPPLIERS

FIRESTONE BUILDING PRODUCTS

525 Congressional Blvd.
Carmel, IN 46032
(800) 428-4442
www.firestonebpco.com
Triumph brand EPDM; contact for local distributor.

GEORGIA-PACIFIC

133 Peachtree Street, N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30303
(800) BUILD-GP
Dens-Deck roof board;
contact for distributor.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION TECHNOLOGY

2633 North Calvert St.
Baltimore, MD. 21218
(410) 366-1146
User friendly EPDM
membrane and materials.

Rubber roofing in a spray-on technology:

ARMOR-PLUS INT'L

820 Water St.
Racine, WI 53403
(800) 654-4203
Contact for local distributor.

SPECIFICATION CHEMICALS, INC.

824 Keeler St.
Boone, IA 50036
(515) 432-8256
Contact for local distributor.



Lightning Rods, Old and

The ornamental rods of 1900 have been replaced by nearly invisible, state-of-the-art systems. But you can upgrade an old system, and today's reproduction rods meet modern codes.

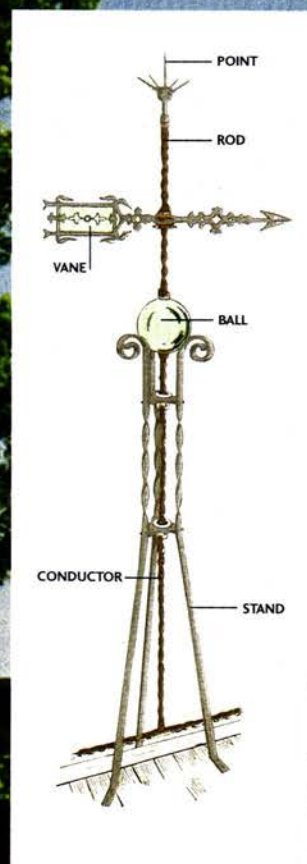
BY SANDY EASLEY

Stormy darkness, then sizzle, crash, boom! Through the centuries, homeowners had no way to safeguard their buildings from lightning until a true genius of the Enlightenment, Benjamin Franklin, conceived a protective system using the lightning rod. Still perched like weathervanes atop countless 19th- and early-20th-century houses and barns, antique lightning rods are often quite decorative. Their modern counterparts, while more reliable, are designed to be nearly invisible—so much so that some folks believe lightning rods are no longer needed. Not true: many millions of dollars are spent on lightning protection every year. With a little knowledge about how lightning

protection systems work, you'll find it easy to choose among the options available for state-of-the-art and reproduction equipment.

How do they work? As Benjamin Franklin proved in the 1750s, lightning is essentially static electricity. You know the little sparks that come from shuffling on a wool carpet or sliding across a vinyl car seat? Multiply them by several million and you have a rough idea of the origin of lightning. In nature, clouds are the bodies that generate these huge static electricity charges (exactly how is not well understood). As a cloud bank accumulates a negative charge, this electrical potential seeks the shortest and best path to a positive charge on the earth's surface. If that path is through your old house,

New



Above: This catalog cut from the St. Louis Lightning Rod Company shows a typical rod-and-vane model from the 1920s. Below: Much rarer were pendant-style rods with suspended balls.



serious damage can and probably will result.

A lightning rod, correctly installed and in good condition, provides a more desirable path for the lightning. Here are the main components of a modern system:

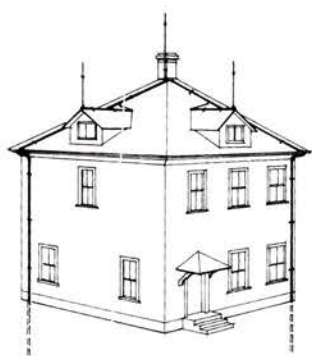
- Lightning rods—The technical term is “air terminals.” These are the metal spires mounted strategically at high, sharply angled parts of the building.
- Main conductors—Special cables of copper or aluminum that connect the rods and conduct electricity to the earth.
- Ground terminations (or ground rods)—Conductive rods embedded in the earth and connected to the main conductors.

A system may also include bonding connections between grounded metal parts

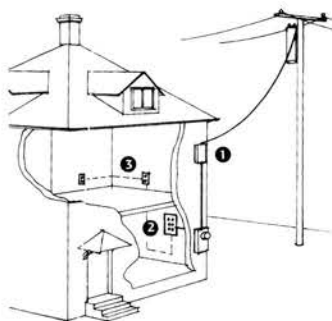
in the house, and surge suppressors that protect the wiring from inductive (magnetically produced) electricity.

Does lightning damage the rods? High-speed photography has shown that, during an actual lightning strike, an arc propagates up from the ground to meet the bolt from the sky. In an open field, they typically meet about 150 feet off the ground. Where there are lightning rods, the arc propagates from the rod, meeting the bolt some 150 feet away from the tip of the rod. In other words, the destructive energy is dissipated 150 feet away from your structure.

Lightning tends to propagate from a sharp point, so rods are made with sharp tips. Without lightning rods on your roof, light-



Above: All lightning rod systems are essentially the same: a heavy conductor connects terminals on top of the building to terminals in the ground. Below: Surge protection is worth adding at 1) the electric meter, 2) the service panel, and 3) outlets.



ning will look for the next sharpest object: a chimney, roof edge, or roof peak. Because chimney masonry and most roofing materials are poor electrical grounds, the arc does not propagate up, and the lightning bolt hits your house or chimney. When it strikes it blows out most of the electrical appliances, usually damages the structure, and often starts a fire.

Ready to do something? The first step, whether you are upgrading or installing a brand-new system, is to get a copy of "Installation Requirements for Lightning Protection Systems" for \$35 from Underwriters' Laboratories (333 Pfingsten Rd, Northbrook, IL 60062). The second step is to locate a professional installer, who will have the right tools, hardware, knowledge, and experience to make sure your system meets the lightning protection code. If you are planning major reconstruction, or adding an outbuilding, you can probably hide the cable and functional hardware inside the roof and walls of the building. That way, only the rod (and stand, if used) will be visible on the roof.

Upgrading Antiques

IS YOUR ANTIQUE LIGHTNING-ROD SYSTEM still protecting the structure? It has the potential to work if (1) it's still properly connected; (2) it isn't damaged; (3) it has been maintained. Most old lightning rods, however, have not had any maintenance or updates in 40 or 50 years. Can you restore

your system and upgrade it to meet modern lightning protection codes? It depends upon the type of antique system you own. Most old systems need these improvements:

- Replace ground rods—Ground rods are good for roughly 30 years, much less under harsh conditions. Without good ground rods, your system can actually *attract* lightning. Therefore, at least be sure to have the ground rods replaced!

- Add rods to all chimneys—In the old days, they didn't attach a rod to the chimney, they just mounted it nearby. This is considered inadequate by today's code.

- Bond all electrical grounds—Your main circuit-breaker box or service panel, the telephone, gas meter, TV antenna, lightning protection system, and metal plumbing should be electrically tied together.

- Add surge protection—A lightning strike (it doesn't even have to be a direct hit) creates huge electrical impulses in nearby wiring. These impulses overload electrical equipment of all sorts, particularly today's voltage-sensitive, solid-state devices: TVs, VCRs, stereos, and computers. Today, surge protection—that is, equipment designed to absorb excess electricity—is required for the system to meet modern codes, and makes a very wise upgrade to an antique system. Surge protection devices fall into three general categories:

Meter protection. The local utility can install a surge suppressor on the power

Early Lightning Rods

Benjamin Franklin didn't just prove that lightning is really a form of electricity. He went on to invent the very first lightning rods. Made of wrought iron, they extended 5" to 10" above the house and an equal distance into the ground. After eyewitnesses verified that the lightning rods worked as Mr. Franklin said they would, their popularity started to grow worldwide.

For well over a hundred years, lightning rods were called "Franklin Rods." Even today you might still find an old lightning

rod with the trademark "CBFR" stamped onto the shaft couplings. The letters stand for Cole Brothers Franklin Rods—an early lightning protection company doing business around 1900.

Glass balls were first patented by the Smith Hewitt Company, which embossed PAT'D JULY 77 in the glass. After Smith Hewitt's patents expired around 1900, virtually every lightning protection company offered glass balls. Plain round glass balls, 4½" in diameter, were most common, but some

manufacturers had their own unique designs. (Before 1877, ornamental lightning-rod balls had been made of tin and wood.)

In the heyday of glass ball—probably the 1920s—color helped sell rods. Besides the opaque white and light-blue balls left on thousands of roofs today, standard colors were cobalt blue, ruby red, silver, and gold. Some manufacturers offered a few specialty hues, such as green, opaque yellow, opaque pink, opaque orange, and black (really a deep shade of violet).

lines between the utility pole and the house, to protect you in the event of a strike here.

Circuit breaker protection. An electrician can add one or more circuit breaker-type suppressors at the service panel. These will protect particular branch circuits (say, those powering TVs and computers).


Outlet protection. User-installed surge suppressors are devices that plug in between the wall socket and electronic appliance. These range from simple adapters to sophisticated U.P.S. units (uninterruptible power supplies). Make sure these units are specifically rated for lightning protection.

Reproduction Parts, Systems

AN ANTIQUE ROD CAN BE RESTORED, TOO, IN the decorative sense. Note the construction of an old-fashioned lightning rod, illustrated on page 49. Most people are intrigued by the glass balls, which had two purposes: pure ornamentation, and as a sales tool for lightning-rod salesmen!

You might be able to find replacement balls at an antiques store, but the search can be frustrating. Balls are rare, expensive, mismatched, in poor condition, or not the correct size. Fortunately, glass lightning rod balls are back in limited production (see "Resources").

Another option for the old-house owner is a reproduction system. Rather than scrounge for old parts, you can order period-style rods that look like the originals but meet modern lightning protection codes. Furthermore, you can safely mix and match modern, reproduction, and even antique equipment, because the basic functional components—cables, connectors, and ground rods—are the same. Ornamental lightning rods cost more than simple ones, of course. But the cost of the system (typically \$1,000 to \$1,700 for an average house) is mainly dependent on the number of peaks and ridges on the building, and the choice between copper or aluminum cables.

Lightning causes millions of dollars' worth of damage every year, not to mention the death of people and animals. Almost all of it can be prevented by correctly installed lightning protection. 

SANDY EASLEY, owner of New Old Products, became interested in antique lightning rods while reroofing an 1885 farmhouse with a ca. 1900 system.

Specialty manufacturers are using original tooling to reproduce antique lightning rods, such as the "Limited Edition" shown here, as well as glass balls in several colors.



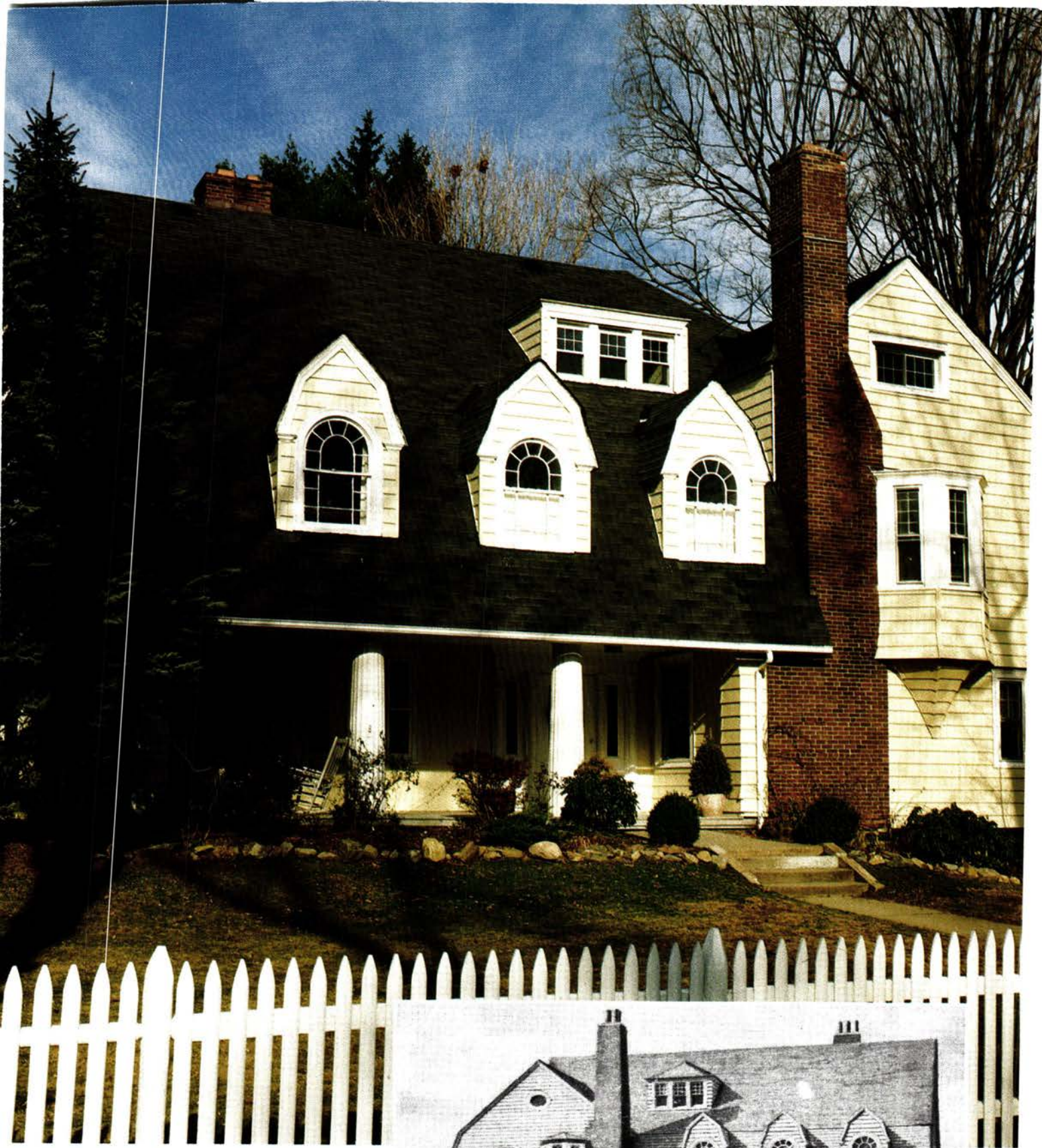
RESOURCES

MAXWELL LIGHTNING PROTECTION OF FLORIDA
P.O. Box 22683
Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830
(407) 827-6328
United Lightning Protection Association literature.

MODERNE CONTRACTING & MANUFACTURING, LLC
8925 W. Burleigh St.
Milwaukee, WI 53222
(414) 442-4107
Reproduction period lightning rods, balls, and parts; new systems.

NEW OLD PRODUCTS
P.O. Box 1272
Kokomo, IN 46903-1271
(765) 868-3092
Reproduction period lightning rods, balls, and parts; new systems.

SQUARE D COMPANY
1415 S. Roselle Rd.
Palatine, IL 60067
(708) 397-2600
Secondary surge arresters for service panels and service entrances.



As built in the New York City suburbs, the Creans' house (above) is flopped, but otherwise a dead-ringer for the 1904 plan by E.G.W. Dietrich (at right). Dietrich was a New York-based architect who also did early plans for Gustav Stickley's magazine *The Craftsman*. One of "Two Pretty Homes for \$5000 Each," its ample Colonial Revival proportions are a good example of the *Ladies' Home Journal* plans at their peak.



Ladies' Home Journal HOUSES [1895-1919]



A CENTURY AGO, the *Ladies' Home Journal* took the business of mail-order houses to a new level by marketing plans through a phenomenally successful magazine. Historians have often cited a few sketchy details about the service—designs by Frank Lloyd Wright, hundreds of houses built—but little else. In August 1997, *Old-House Journal* asked our readers to tell us what they knew about these plans—and the houses that existed. Over the following months we had letters, photos, plans, and offers of leads from Arkansas to California. Not surprisingly, several folks had already researched the exact construction date and plan of their house; some even knew the original builders. In the following pages, we'll take a look at three houses and their owners while exploring the history of these plans and the people behind them. Our thanks to all who wrote for helping us tell the tale. —GORDON BOCK

Pretty Home for \$5000

DESIGNER: E. G. W. Dietrich

STYLE: Shingle/Colonial Revival

PUBLICATION DATE: August 1904

Original specifications call for shingle siding, hemlock framing, and leaded glass.



\$1500 House for 25ft. Lot

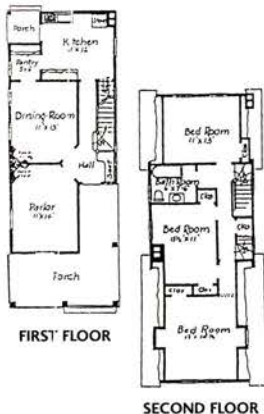
DESIGNER: "The Journal's
Special Architect"

(possibly William L. Price)

STYLE: Colonial Revival

PUBLICATION DATE: March 1898

This house was seventh in a series of *Ladies' Home Journal's* "Model Homes of Moderate Cost." Although all designs in the series belong to the *Journal*, a local architect slightly modified the interior plan and passed it off as his own.



Current owners Lyn and Philip Woods and family



EDWARD BOK, THE INNOVATIVE EDITOR OF the *Ladies' Home Journal*, claimed he never really understood women as individuals, but as a group he had a gift for addressing their concerns about families, society, and the world at large. When the *Journal* began offering house plans in 1895, it was on its way to a million paid subscriptions, the first periodical in the world to reach this figure. It did so by recognizing the growing economic power of women and their influence on homebuilding.

At the time, the *Ladies' Home Journal* was the only general circulation magazine to publish house plans. In 1846, *Godey's Ladies Book* had begun promoting the "Own

Your Own Home" movement and, over the next 50 years, published some 450 house plans. However, *Godey's* was a popular ladies' magazine, not a shelter magazine devoted to plans, gardens, and building. It appealed to fashion-conscious women, and was written to educate and guide them through Victorian society. Other shelter magazines, such as *Country Life* and *The Craftsman*, would regularly run plans, but not until after 1900.

According to his autobiography, Bok's goal was "making the small-house architecture of America better" by presenting plans from reputable architects at moderate cost. The vast majority of American architects opposed him. They disliked popular magazine publicity, feeling it cheapened the profession

BY SHARON FERRARO

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN FAZIO (TOP)
FAMILY PHOTO COURTESY OF LYN WOODS (LEFT)
CAMDEN-ROCKPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Architects at a Glance

The list of designers associated with the golden years of the *Ladies' Home Journal* plans reads like a *Who's Who* of turn-of-the-century architects—no doubt, precisely what Edward Bok had intended. Philadelphia provided Bok's own architect, **William Lightfoot Price**, who was then setting up an independent practice. In April 1896, another Pennsylvanian, **Bruce Price** of Wilkes-Barre (no relation to William), contributed a \$5,000 Dutch Colonial house. Price, the versatile designer of the Chateau Frontenac in Quebec City and Tuxedo Park in upstate New York, was equally at home with large-scale and residential commissions. Three designs by **Walter Keith** of Minneapolis appeared in 1897. Keith, a plan publisher in his own right, frequently advertised in the *Journal*. In July and February 1901, while still in Chicago, **Frank Lloyd Wright** presented two designs for what are now called Prairie-School style homes. Today, the legendary Wright remains one of the most famous architects to have worked in the series. **Robert C. Spencer Jr.** began designing a series of farmhouses for Bok in October of 1900 that ranged in cost from \$2,000 to \$3,500. Spencer opened his architectural firm in 1894, and was a close associate of Wright's during their Chicago years, with an office next door. The prolific artist **Will Bradley** worked in every medium from posters to typography. He contributed an eight-part series of room designs beginning in November 1901. The *Journal* printed its first color plans in October 1910 with a "Fireproof Home for the Bride" by Chicago architect **Charles E. White Jr.** White, who trained for a time in Frank Lloyd Wright's first Chicago office, was an energetic promoter of bungalows and wrote for many magazines, including *House Beautiful*.



Will Bradley also wrote and illustrated children's stories, and it shows in his whimsical, fantastic style. His designs for a model house, published in black and white, are equal parts Charles Rennie Mackintosh and *Mother Goose*.

and opened the door to criticism by other architects. Stanford White, then America's superstar architect, was a vocal critic. However, White reversed his opinion shortly before his death in 1906:

"I firmly believe that Edward Bok has more completely influenced American domestic architecture for the better than any man in this generation. If Bok came to me now, I would not only make plans for him, but I would waive any fee for them in ret-ribution for my early mistake."

By 1895, Bok had convinced William Lightfoot Price, one of Philadelphia's foremost architects, to create the first *Ladies' Home Journal* house. Ralph Adams Cram of Boston, who helped design the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City, was

responsible for the second plan. Next came Edward Hapgood, designer of Connecticut's buildings at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. Over the next two decades of Bok's editorship, many of America's most illustrious architects contributed to his plans.

The Plan Behind the Plans

THE *LADIES' HOME JOURNAL* PUBLISHED AT least 169 house plans over nearly 25 years under Edward Bok. Professional architects provided an overwhelming majority of the designs. One third did more than one plan; some submitted a whole series. From 1895 to 1909, almost all of the 85 house plans were commissioned specifically for the *Journal* and presented in illustrated articles.

Readers could obtain plans in differ-

Some early plans are credited to "The Journal's Special Architect." The identity—or identities—behind this *nom de plume* remain a mystery, but William Lightfoot Price and Walter Keith are likely suspects.

ent ways. For 15 of the plans, architects offered to adapt a published plan to the reader's site for a fee, generally 5% of the estimated cost. The architect's office address appeared in the article for further inquiries. For other plans, more information required writing directly to the *Journal*.

Bok established a few ground rules for design. Servants' rooms were to have at least two windows to allow cross ventilation, and be double the average size. The formal parlor and hall should be eliminated in favor of a single library or living room. After Bok's own house was completed in 1900, multiple bathrooms became common, especially the half-bath off the downstairs coat room. Bok believed the suburb embodied the best environment for living and raising a family. All but one of the *Journal's* house plans specified a suburban lot or setting.

When Edward Bok recruited architects for his *Ladies' Home Journal* plans, he began with the East Coast, but by 1900 he was tapping the Chicago area and beyond. The first Los Angeles architect appeared in 1909. From then on the West Coast provided the majority of designs for bungalows.

In the interconnected way of many professions, they often knew each other or apprenticed in each other's offices, as with the Chicago circle centered around Frank Lloyd Wright. The architects appear to be influenced by similar outside sources, but rarely from each other directly through the magazine. A few clearly drew from the Scottish designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

Another source of talent was contests. In late 1904, Bok started a competition for the best \$3,000 house design. He required that "the house planned could actually be built for \$3,000 and that each plan should be accompanied by two estimates from two trustworthy builders." The best design received a \$1,000 top prize.

It's hard to know if the *Journal* architects were motivated by anything more than money, but there are some tantalizing hints. Frank Lloyd Wright, for example, was willing to design for the *Journal*, though he doubted Bok's readers would share his aesthetic vision. He proved correct.

At the turn of the century Will Bradley reigned as America's rising star in the Art Nouveau style. In 1901, he designed an editorial prospectus for the *Journal* that resurrected an old typeface called Wayside. Bradley claimed his changes brought an additional 50,000 subscribers to the magazine. When this project was finished, Bok asked Bradley to design a complete house with interior views of all the rooms. An eight-part series resulted. Bradley enjoyed his celebrity status and Bok traded on it, introducing the articles with "Will Bradley's Ideas."

Mail-Order Architecture

AT A TIME WHEN A SKILLED WORKMAN WAS well paid at \$800 a year, and a businessman's salary might be \$1,500, the average \$3,500 design in the *Ladies' Home Journal* was a pricey house to build. Indeed, though subscribers enjoyed reading about widely var-



Edward W. Bok

Edward Bok in Brief

Edward Bok arrived in New York in 1870 at the age of seven. His father had left the Netherlands to start over after financial reverses, but died within a few years, leaving the children to support themselves and their mother. Bok became an entrepreneur, reporting on young people's parties for an area newspaper and assembling children's picture books from fruit-can labels. Upon finishing school, Bok went to work as a stenographer for the publishing firm Henry Holt and Company. Two years later, while employed at *Scribner's Magazine*, he started one of the first newspaper syndicates, the Bok Syndicate Press. ♦ In 1889 Cyrus Curtis of Philadelphia offered Bok the job of editing the *Ladies' Home Journal*. For a short time Bok hesitated; it meant a move to Philadelphia and selling the syndicate. He took the job, though, and by 1896 had married Curtis's daughter Mary Louise. ♦ Once married, the young couple and Bok's aging mother lived with the Curtis family at the edge of the city and Bok quickly fell in love with suburban living. By 1897, consumed with a desire to build a home for his family, Bok began a study of domestic architecture. With the help of a draftsman, the young couple laid out their ideal home, insisting on many windows and seven bathrooms. In 1898, architect William Lightfoot Price designed the outside of the house to wrap around Bok's ideas for the inside. On St. Valentine's Day, 1900, the family moved in.



A Fireproof House for \$5000

DESIGNER: Frank Lloyd Wright

STYLE: Prairie

PUBLICATION DATE: April 1907

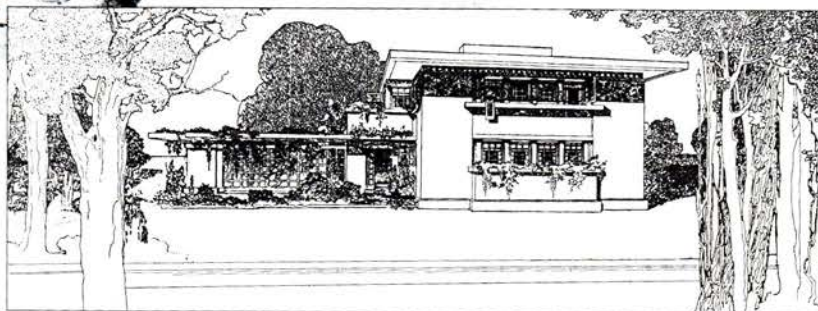
Perhaps the most mythical of Frank Lloyd Wright's plans for *Ladies' Home Journal* is "A Fireproof House for \$5000," shown here in La Grange, Illinois. Construction costs aside, such a house required lots of room to build. In another plan he proposed that four of the same homes, set differently on their lots, be built in one block—an early version of his "Usonian" quadruplex of the 1930s.

ied house styles, they chose to construct only the most conservative plans.

For the most part, the *Ladies' Home Journal* plans all appear to be early, mainstream post-Victorian styles. The most frequent designs were transitional Colonial Revival permutations. Next in popularity were Craftsman-style houses, incorporating exposed beams and built-ins in many rooms. The Tudor Revival style showed up in 16 plans, ranging in size from a country house for the wealthy to a \$1,000 home. Various architects, including Frank Lloyd Wright, contributed a total of 11 Prairie-School-style houses, and five plans were specifically labeled as Bungalows.

The series did highlight the practical needs of the new suburban family, however. Spurred no doubt by Bok's seven bathrooms, a third of the plans featured multiple bathrooms. Sleeping porches were promoted for good health and appeared at least once a year in plans, or as how-to articles. New, coal-fired, central-heating systems permitted open floor plans.

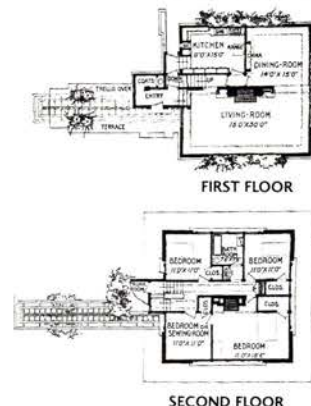
In 1909 the *Journal's* plans went through a sea-change that would last the remainder of Bok's tenure as editor. During the next 10 years, the house plan articles became smaller and less ambitious. They included floor plans, but were essentially reports on



homes designed by outside architects and already built at least once.

As the benign climate of southern California became a building boom area before World War I, the traditional architecture of the Southwest found perfect expression in the spread-out, single-storey bungalow. Throughout the next decade, the *Ladies' Home Journal* led the magazine pack in promoting them. In 1921, many of the bungalow plans published over the previous decade and a half were compiled in the book *The Journal Bungalows*.

Over the entire span of Bok's editorship, 82 architects contributed designs to the *Ladies' Home Journal*. He understood the importance of professional design in architecture, and guided readers during the transition to a new century.



SHARON FERRARO began researching the *Ladies' Home Journal* plans while working on her *Masters' Degree*. She continues her preservation consulting at Past Masters in Kalamazoo, Mich.

resilient flooring

LINOLEUM, the wonder floor of the 19th century, was the forerunner of a multitude of mass-produced, manmade materials that were sold—and are still sold—in the 20th century. The quest for the perfect floor inspired a wide and overlapping range of innovative choices, from rubber and cork to asphalt, asbestos, and vinyl. Although these products have all come in a variety of forms, it was easy-to-work-with resilient tile—a dense, nonabsorbent class of flooring materials characterized by an ability to bounce back from scuffs and abrasion—that proved most popular with homeowners from the 1930s through the 1960s. In an increasingly competitive market, manufacturers hoped to convince consumers that their particular brand of resilient flooring was not only the most attractive, economical choice, but was suitable for any room in the house. If it could be installed by the home handy person, so much the better.

RUBBER TILE In 1894, the well-known Philadelphia architect Frank Furness patented a system of interlocking 2" x 2" x $\frac{3}{8}$ " rubber tiles for interior use. Sheets of calendered (rolled) rubber were strengthened by vulcanization before being die-cut into smaller pieces. The color range was limited, but the tiles could be laid out in eye-catching geometric patterns such as checkerboard and herringbone—designs similar to those in marble and ceramic tile floors.

Since the rubber content of most of these tiles was usually about 25% or less, the term “rubber” is something of a misnomer. Furness improved his original design in

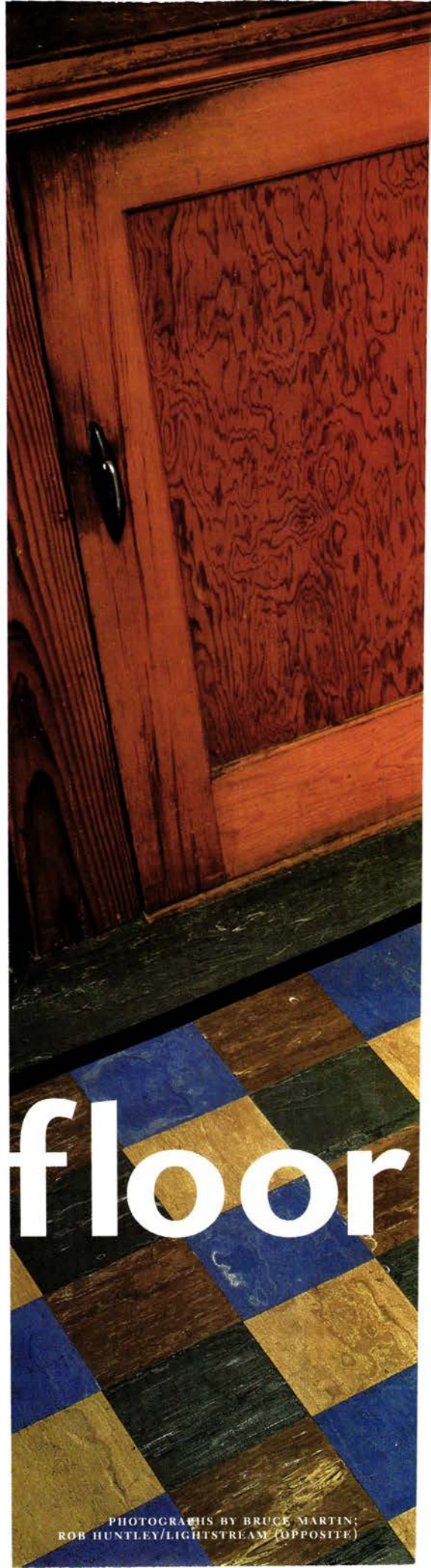
The Perfect floor

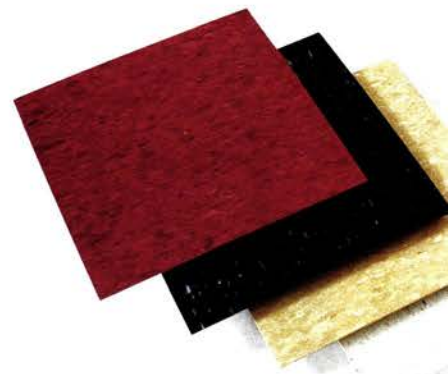
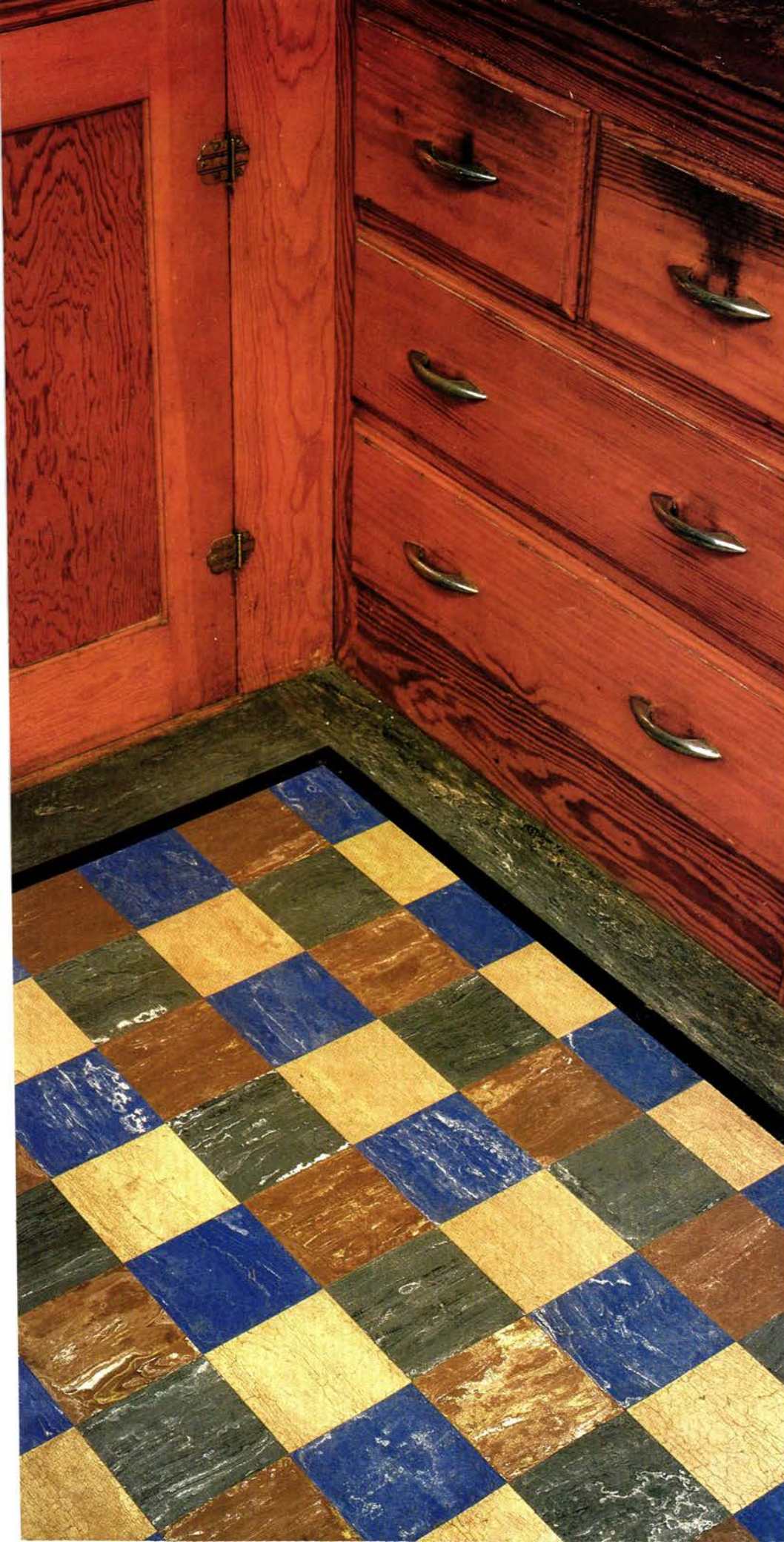
AVAILABLE IN ALMOST INFINITE VARIETY, RESILIENT FLOORS

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OR AT LEAST FOR EVERY ROOM IN THE 20TH-CENTURY HOUSE.

BY SHIRLEY MAXWELL AND JAMES C. MASSEY

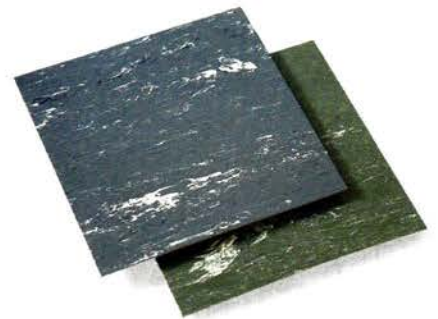




VINYL



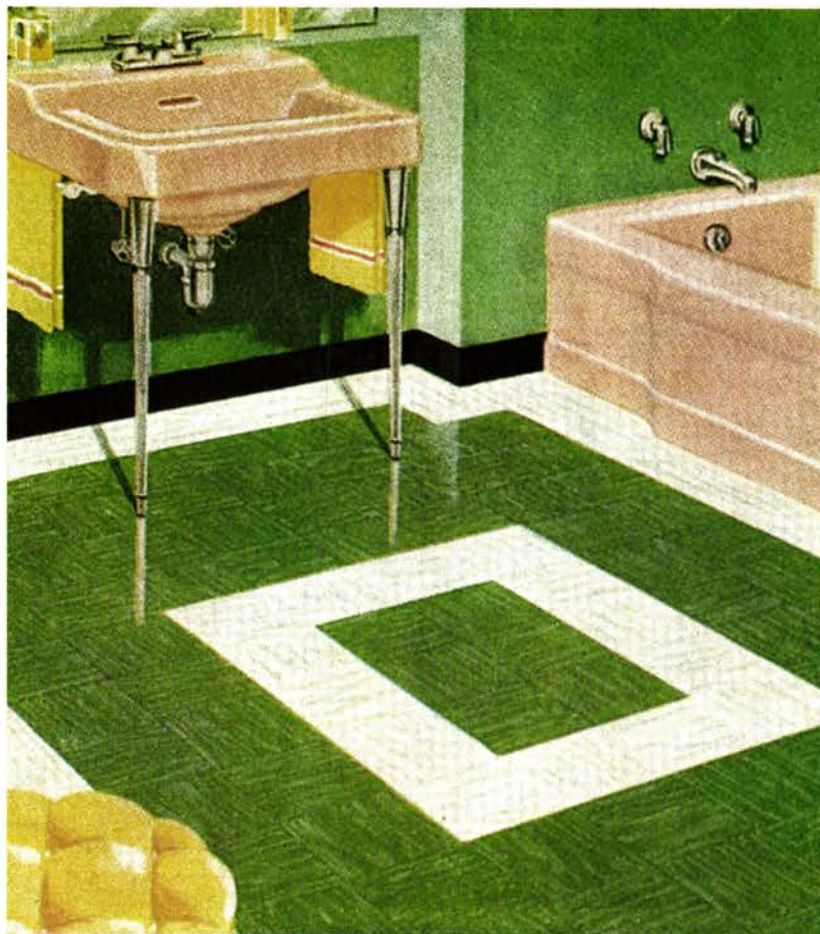
LINOLEUM



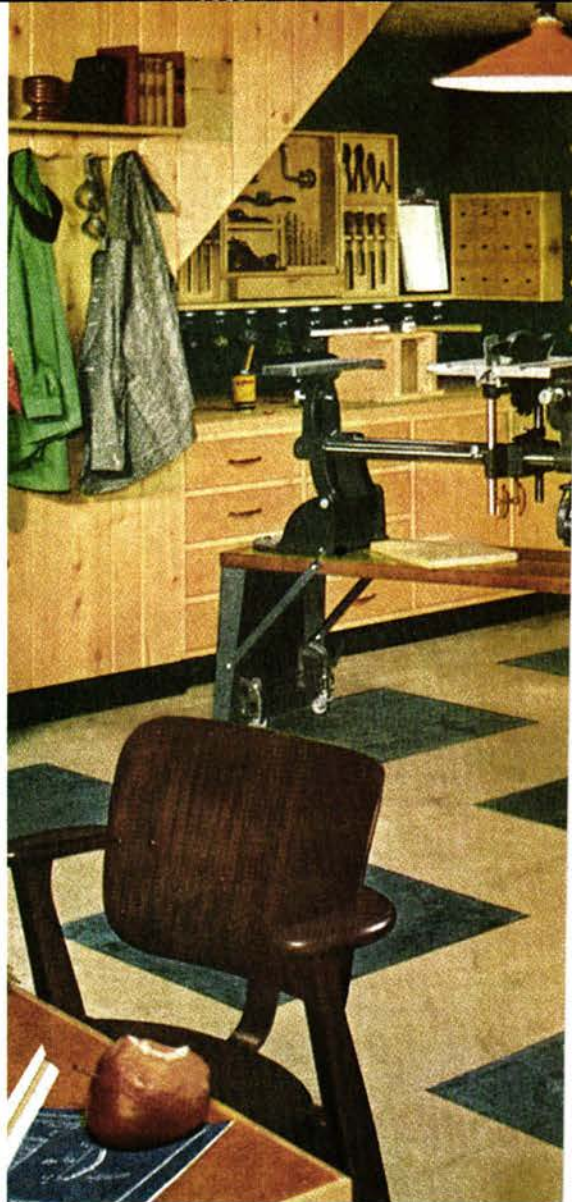
RUBBER



CORK



Above: Soft underfoot and non-porous, rubber tile was a natural in the bathroom. Right: Asphalt-asbestos tile made a better choice for basements because it stood up to alkaline moisture. Far right: Vinyl tile, like this Flexachrome pattern, quickly captured the hearts of homeowners in the post-war years with its range of clear, bright colors and versatile designs.



The goal was a smart-looking floor that was easy to clean, sanitary, comfortable to stand and walk on, and soft enough to deaden the noise of clattering china and rambunctious children.

1896 by adding recessed tabs that allowed the tiles to be nailed to the subfloor. Square tiles without tabs were soon introduced, offering easier installation and more versatility in pattern. By the 1920s, the design range expanded to include solid and marbled patterns, paisleys, and inlays.

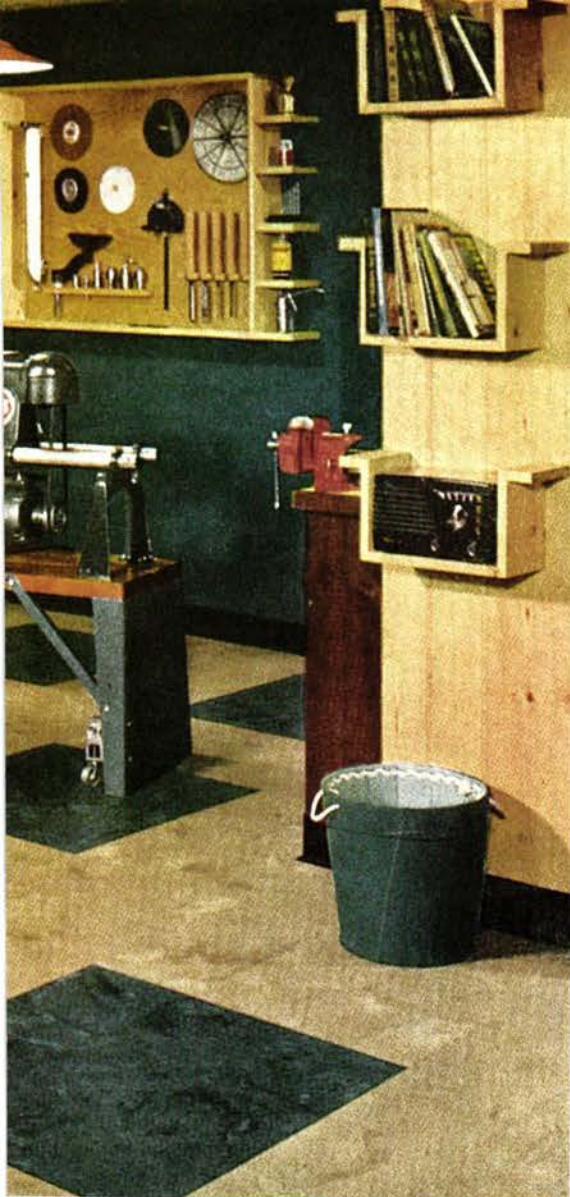
Rubber tiles offered many advantages over linoleum: They were resilient, sound-deadening, water-resistant, relatively easy to clean, and easy to install. On the down side, rubber picked up oily stains, and it deteriorated over time from exposure to oxygen, ozone, and solvents. And, like linoleum, it was a poor choice for installation in basements because it deteriorated in the presence of alkaline moisture. Also like linoleum, it was expensive.

CORK TILE As an original component of linoleum, cork was a natural in the race to produce a better tile. The first cork tile floor was probably installed in 1899. The Armstrong

Cork Company, which began production in 1904, came to dominate the cork flooring industry, paving the way for its later products.

Cork tiles were made by pressing ground-up cork chips and shavings into iron molds and subjecting them to intense pressure. Beveled cork tiles were an early improvement that eliminated the need for sanding to compensate for irregularities in subflooring. Coved cork tiles for baseboards eliminated the germ-laden crack between wall and floor. Although constrained by a tight budget, the famed expatriate Bauhaus architect Walter Gropius chose cork tile floors when he built his home in Lincoln, Massachusetts, in 1938.

Cork tile was the most resilient of the flooring types during its 1920s heyday, but it was also the most porous. It was expensive, especially when compared to asphalt. Also, the natural colors of the cork—light, medium, and dark—limited its range of



color and design. Cork tile production declined in the 1930s, largely because of competition from rubber- and asphalt-based products. It never completely died out, however. The Dodge Cork Co., which only began making cork tiles around 1947, installed its first vinyl cork tile in 1949.

ASPHALT TILE Based on its composition, it would have been more logical to call asphalt tile “asbestos” tile. First developed in the 1920s, this durable product was originally composed of 50% asbestos, 25% mineral fillers, and 25% gilsonite asphalt. In the 1930s, hydrocarbon resins replaced some of the darker asphaltic binders, allowing for lighter colors.

By the 1950s, 9" x 9" asphalt-asbestos tiles were the most widely used resilient floor tiles on the market—a billion square feet were turned out each year. Asphalt tile’s popularity was fueled by its low initial cost—about half that of linoleum and only a third



A Good Foundation

If you want to lay new rubber, cork, or vinyl tiles and sheets, remember your flooring installation will only be as good as the surface that supports it. Old-house wood floors often show gaps and waves from years of use and building settlement. Shrinkage of boards and layers of earlier flooring materials don’t help. These holes, cracks, and patterns can quickly show through the thin, flexible material of the new flooring.

The solution is to cover defects with a good quality underlayment, such as $\frac{1}{4}$ " to $\frac{1}{2}$ " PTS (plugged and touch-sanded) plywood or high-density particleboard. For added leveling on floors that dip and slope, cut the underlayment into pieces no larger than 4' x 4'. You may also want to consider using tongue-and-groove plywood to minimize the presence of joints. Underlayments were traditionally covered with felt specifically manufactured for use under resilient flooring. While felt can smooth the way for a new floor, it’s an optional choice today.

Before you begin, inspect the existing floor for raised nails and severe low spots by dragging a straightedge across the surface. Set or pull all protruding nails—they’ll only interfere with the new work. Then fill major depressions by troweling in a ready-mix floor-leveling product (sold at hardware stores).

Stagger the underlayment sheets to avoid continuous seams as much as possible, then nail them down aggressively, every 4". To do this, rule off lines 4" apart down the length of the floor, then at right angles across the floor. At each intersection, drive ring-shank underlayment nails, $1\frac{1}{4}$ " to $1\frac{1}{2}$ " long, to securely grab the subfloor. Install finish flooring in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.



Caring for Resilient Floors

Detergents can dull the sheen of resilient surfaces, and dirt, grit, and abrasives can damage them. Rather than routinely clean a resilient floor with detergent, damp-mop it regularly with water.

RUBBER Use only cold water mixed with a small amount of ammonia, followed by a clear rinse. For heavier cleaning, add a mild vegetable or oil-based soap, or Ivory Liquid. Avoid naphtha, turpentine, and pine-oil cleaners with solvents; they can interact with chemicals in the rubber. To protect the surface, use a water-based emulsion floor polish. Paste waxes, which contain petroleum distillates, should be applied only over a water-based floor polish.

CORK Damp-mop cork sparingly, taking care to wring the mop out well. Use a linseed-oil based cleaner or well-diluted Ivory Liquid. Rinse with clean water and dry with a clean mop, removing all traces of water. About once a year, clean and buff the floor with a paste or liquid wax, such as Butcher's Wax or Johnson Paste Wax. Protect high-traffic areas such as doorways with mats or other floor coverings.

ASPHALT/VCT To create a clean, easy-to-maintain surface on an asphalt or vinyl composite tile (VCT) floor, seal it with several thin coats of either non-styrene resin (for asphalt) or metal cross-linked acrylic floor polish (for VCT), available from hardware and home builders' stores. Damp-mop or wet-scrub the floor using a nonalkaline floor cleaner. When the floor is dry, apply a coat of the appropriate sealer. Allow the floor to dry at least 20 to 30 minutes before adding the next coat. Apply additional coats until you have the surface sheen you want. Three to four coatings will produce a matte or satin surface. Five or six coatings will build up a glossy surface. To maintain the floor, damp-mop regularly with warm water, occasionally using a detergent formulated for resilient tile floors.

as much as vinyl. Furthermore, the tiles could easily be installed by the homeowner, with a large saving in labor costs.

Tough, durable, and highly resistant to abrasion, the tiles did not rot or dry out. Both the tile and its mastic were moisture-resistant and also—thanks to the asbestos content—the most fire-resistant of all resilient floors. The pattern and color extended all the way through the tile. However, even the lightest and brightest asphalt products were limited to plain and marbled patterns. As many present-day owners of old asphalt-asbestos floors can testify, the tiles tend to become brittle with age and may be difficult to take up—especially in light of modern safety removal standards for asbestos [see “Testing for Asbestos, Nov./Dec. 1997 OHJ].

Replacing damaged asphalt-asbestos tile in kind is no longer possible or desirable, but safer alternatives include linoleum and



Miles of asphalt tile paved the way to better floors in the 1940s and '50s. Patterns could easily be cut out of sheet goods—an opportunity commercial-grade VCT, linoleum, and rubber still offer today.

commercial patterns of VCT (vinyl composite tile, see below).

VINYL TILE In the 1920s, a synthetic resin (coumarone-indene) began to replace asphaltic binders in floor tiles, and by the late 1940s, tiles contained almost no asphalt. Vinyl made its first big splash in 1933 when Vinylite, a vinyl-asbestos floor tile, was displayed at the Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago.

Because of the scarcity of vinyl during the Depression and war years, vinyl flooring was not widely marketed until the late 1940s. Considered the nearest thing to an all-purpose flooring ever invented, vinyl tile eventually took over the flooring market almost completely.

Originally vinyl was used mostly for high traffic areas, but it soon became the most popular choice for all floors. Vinyl tiles and sheets came in three basic versions: 1) VCT (vinyl composition tile), a flexible blend of

polyvinyl chloride and inert fillers with the pattern running through its full thickness; 2) backed tile, featuring a clear wear layer over either an embedded or printed vinyl pattern; and 3) a semi-flexible vinyl asbestos tile (VAT), popular in the 1950s.

Perhaps the most remarkable part of the resilient flooring story is that, in an age when many 20th-century building materials have been lost to history, all of the major types of resilient flooring tiles—with the notable exception of those made of asbestos—remain in at least limited production. (The king of them all—vinyl flooring—will likely be with us well into the next century.) And that's good news for restoration-minded owners of vintage homes of the 1920s through 1960s.

FOR FURTHER READING: *Twentieth-Century Building Materials: History and Conservation*, Thomas C. Jester, editor. (McGraw-Hill, 1995).

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A Zen Kitchen

BY CATHLEEN MILLER

AFTER YEARS OF DREAMING OF A SIMPLER life, my husband Kerby and I decided to leave our high-pressure advertising careers in the Dumpster and move from San Francisco to rural Pennsylvania. Like the Zen masters, who believe that a life fully lived is the ultimate meal, we were ready to embrace work we deemed more spiritual, more tactile. And we wanted to do it in the right kind of house. With limited means, we bought an 1890s farmhouse in an Amish corn patch. It needed work, but we were willing to get our hands dirty.

Our house possessed breathtaking woodwork, but the kitchen combined the worst of low-budget remodeling with old-house inconvenience. One of our greatest joys is cooking together and entertaining friends. Yet this kitchen was so poorly laid out that we had to draw imaginary battle lines with our toes. If Kerby crossed my line, or I his, a fight would ensue.

In most kitchens, the cabinets and appliances sit against the walls, but our kitchen's six doors and two windows prevented that easy solution. An island placed between the windows boxed the cook into a cramped corner and cut the room in half, blocking the view to the dining room.

It helped that the kitchen was large and well proportioned, with chestnut wainscoting and a signature floor-to-ceiling chestnut cabinet. The island, made of cheap plywood and starburst Formica, housed the electric range and an ancient sink. Filthy indoor-outdoor carpeting and an avocado refrigerator completed the decor. Drawing on my Buddhist training from our California days, I meditated daily. My mantra became: "My kitchen is neither good nor bad—it simply is."

If my approach was to accept the

kitchen as it was, Kerby's was to mull over books and real-life examples of 19th-century joinery and cabinetmaking. At dinner parties, I'd find him in the kitchen fondling the host's cabinet hardware. "We're only going to do this one time," Kerby said, "so we better get it right."

After months of deliberation, Kerby announced that the new cabinets had to match the original cupboard. That meant trouble, because chestnut—nearly wiped out in a blight 100 years ago—is now rare and expensive. I sighed and resumed my Buddhist contemplation of the kitchen. For the time being, the kitchen simply was.



Kerby and I fled the fast pace of the city for a simpler life in this country farmhouse.

THERE WERE PLENTY OF OTHER DISTRACTIONS. I worked toward a Master's degree at Penn State while Kerby built furniture at a local factory. We redid the bathroom, replaced a drop ceiling in the living room, and painted the house inside and out. Over the course of three years, Kerby methodically rebuilt window frames and reglazed all 29 windows.

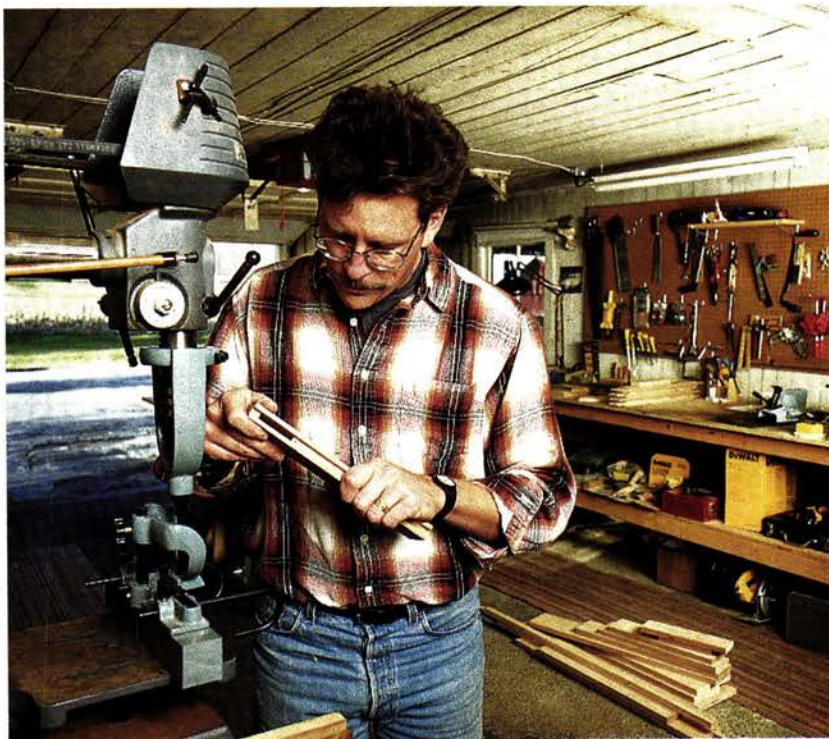




Perseverance and
good luck helped us
turn a harvest of
found materials into
our dream kitchen.



Above: Our new peninsula cabinet features mortise-and-tenon joinery. **Right:** Kerby checks the cut of a mortise for a stile.



The last of these were in the attic. When he took down the curtains to work on the sashes, sunlight flooded in, illuminating the normally dark corners. In a moment of revelation, Kerby got his first good look at the wood covering the soffits. Brushing away years of dust, he found rough-sawn chestnut under his hands—chestnut the same age as the house, chestnut the same age as the kitchen cupboard! He bounded downstairs, his heavy work boots thudding, yelling my name.

I soon found myself on the ground beneath the attic window. Kerby was already lowering the precious, 12'-long boards two at a time. My job was to guide the load and stack the wood. When we were done, there were 25 chestnut boards stowed in the garage—several thousand dollars' worth, more than enough to build the new, double-sided peninsula cabinet we had in mind.

Although we'd found a chestnut mine in our attic, it didn't seem likely that the house would yield countertops as well. We yearned for durable, historically appropriate slate, but high cost put it out of our reach. Or so we thought until Kerby noticed an old slate blackboard in a friend's barn. It wasn't for sale, but it gave us the inspiration we needed.

Early the next Saturday, we drove through a blizzard to a salvage shop in Altoona. We found a pile of blackboards in the basement of the unheated building. One of them still had an adolescent obscenity scrawled across its rough black surface, but we'd found the treasure we'd come for. We bought three boards for \$35 and went out for a sumptuous breakfast.

IN A FEW DELICIOUS MOMENTS, KERBY SMASHED THE flimsy island to bits with a sledgehammer. In the weeks that followed, I resorted to washing dishes in the claw-foot tub. Each time I rolled the bath mat into a pad to kneel, I felt like I was giving penance for wanting a new kitchen. Buddha said desire is the beginning of all suffering, and my aching knees were proof of that. I took a deep breath and carried the clean dishes downstairs.

Out went the putrid carpet, in went a new checkerboard floor. Kerby brought the cabinet frames in from the garage and assembled them. To replicate the look of vintage cabinetry, he'd hand-planed the wood and finished the surfaces with a scraper instead of sandpaper. He carefully stained the wood to match the honey-brown of the chestnut original. Even the brightwork didn't escape his scrupulous eye. He stripped the non-tarnish finish from new hinges, then blackened them in our coal furnace. When a photographer came by to document the finished kitchen, he couldn't tell the difference between the old cabinet and the new one.

Our reincarnated kitchen looks as though it has always been part of the house. And it fits us—there's no need to draw lines with our toes. Kerby can work on one side of the peninsula while I work on the other. If our guests wish, there's ample space for a third, fourth, or even fifth cook in our kitchen. That's one set of hands to knead dough, another to toss a salad, and still another to poach salmon. We may never attain the ultimate meal in our Zen kitchen, but we're going to savor every course.



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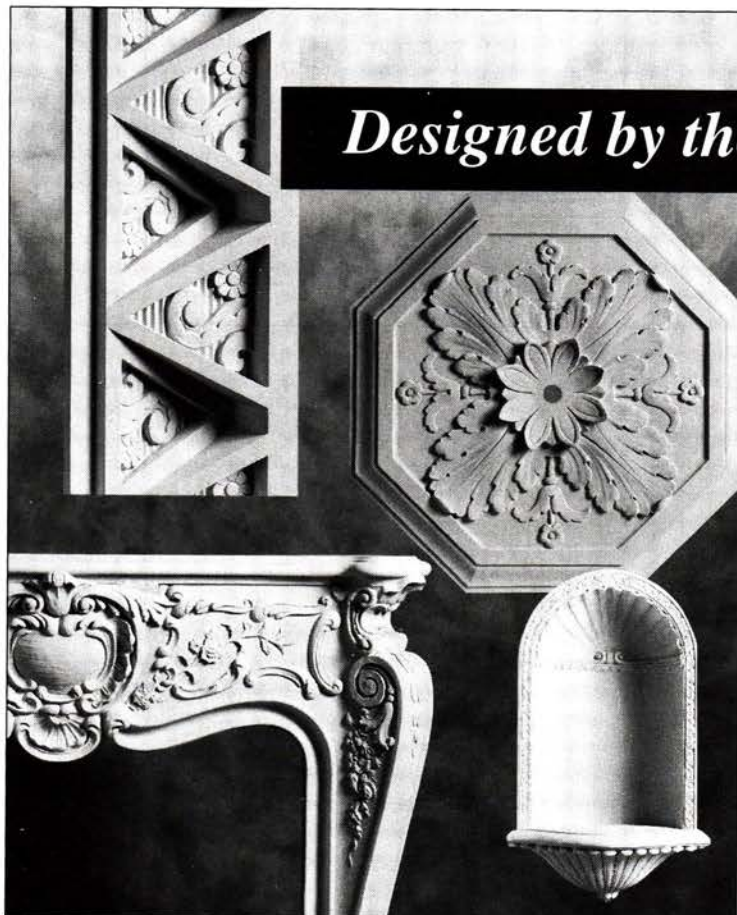
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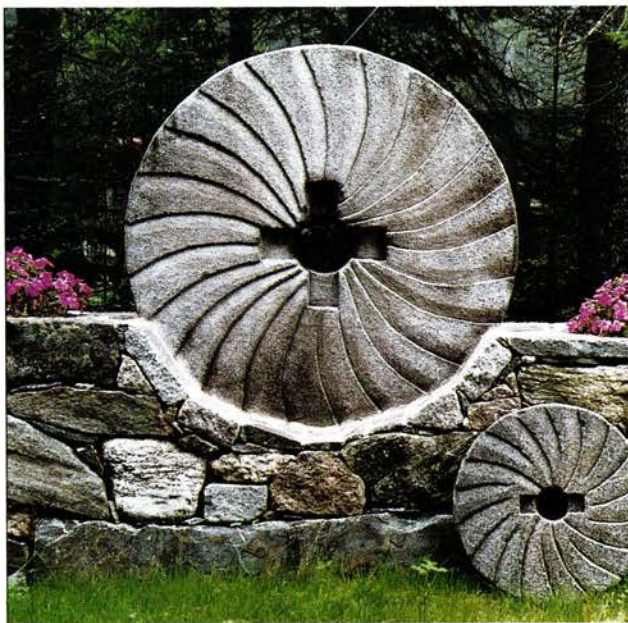
by Mary Ellen Polson

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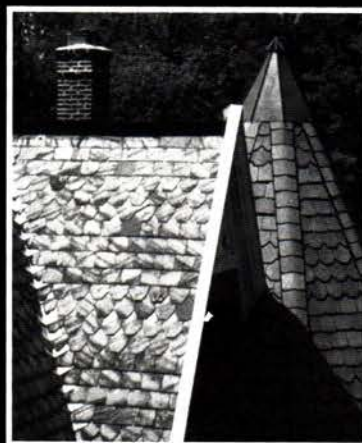
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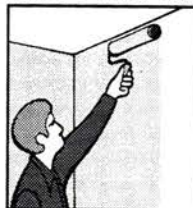
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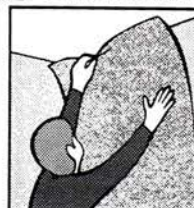
HOW TO USE THE **NU-WAL**® SYSTEM:



1. Cut fiberglass mat 2" longer than height.



2. Apply saturant to area to be covered.



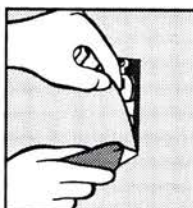
3. Apply fiberglass mat to wet surface.



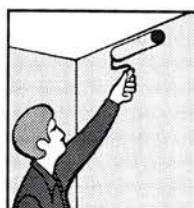
4. Trim excess mat where wall meets ceiling.



5. Trim mat at baseboard and window.



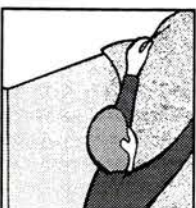
6. Trim mat at outlets, switches, etc.



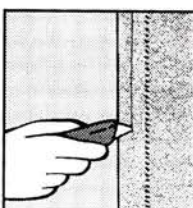
7. Apply second coat of saturant to wet mat.



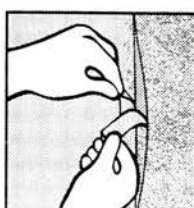
8. Apply 1st coat of saturant to adjacent area.



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



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



11. Remove mat strips on both sides of cut.



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



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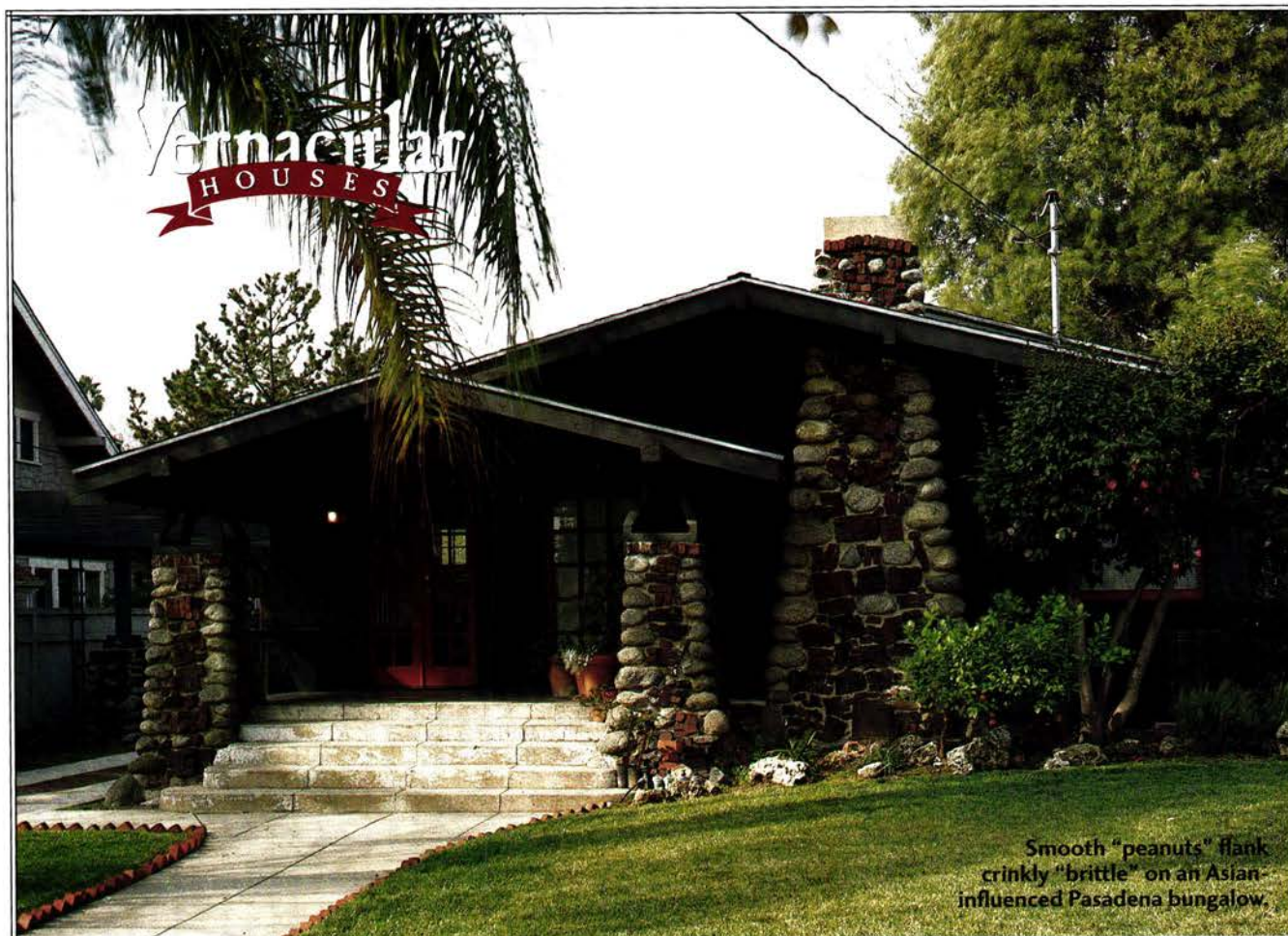


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Smooth "peanuts" flank crinkly "brittle" on an Asian-influenced Pasadena bungalow.

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WHEN SOMEONE COMPARED an irregular combination of clinker brick and stone on an Arts & Crafts-style house to nut candy, an unlikely sobriquet was born. The peanut-brittle effect—also called rubble mix—incorporates a scattering of smooth, rounded river rock, basalt, or other local stone (the "peanuts") projecting from an irregularly laid, deeply textured background of clinker brick (the "brittle").

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The peanuts in this 1912 Arts & Crafts bungalow in Spokane, Washington, are basalt, a volcanic rock.

influential architects Charles and Henry Greene. The Greenes' expressive use of masonry, which visually anchored their wooden

houses to the landscape, was popularized through national periodicals such as *Ladies' Home Journal* and *The Craftsman*. The peanut brittle effect ultimately spread from substantial Craftsman-era houses to the humble bungalow.

While the typical California cobblestone was grey, the irregularly shaped clinker bricks (oven-fired rejects) offered contrasting tones of terra cotta, brown, purple, and black. Rare even in Pasadena, peanut-brittle detailing crops up elsewhere in California and the Pacific Northwest—each example a unique expression of an individual stonemason's creativity.

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Second Floor 704'

Ceiling Height

First Floor 8'

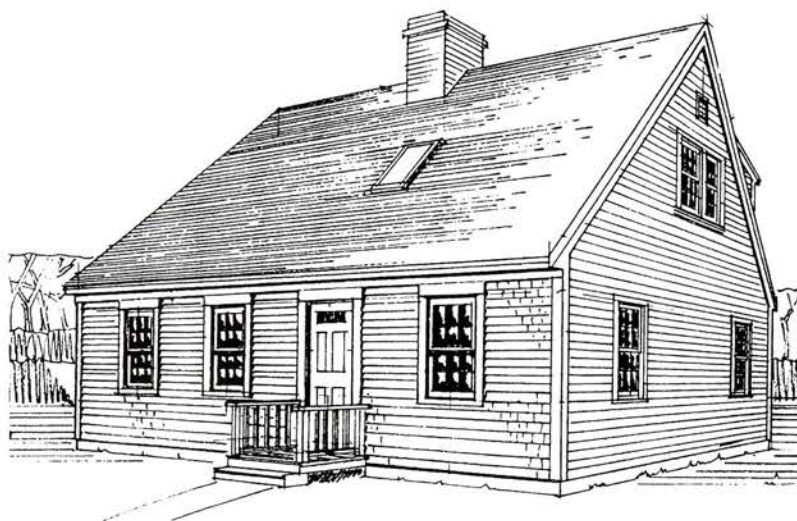
Second Floor 8'

Overall Dimensions

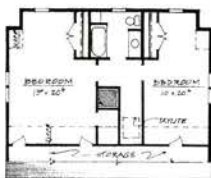
Width 32'

Depth 28'

ISLAND CAPE



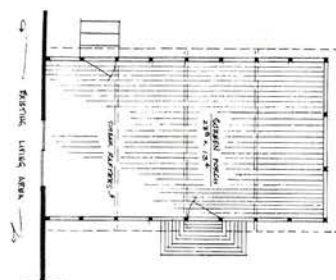
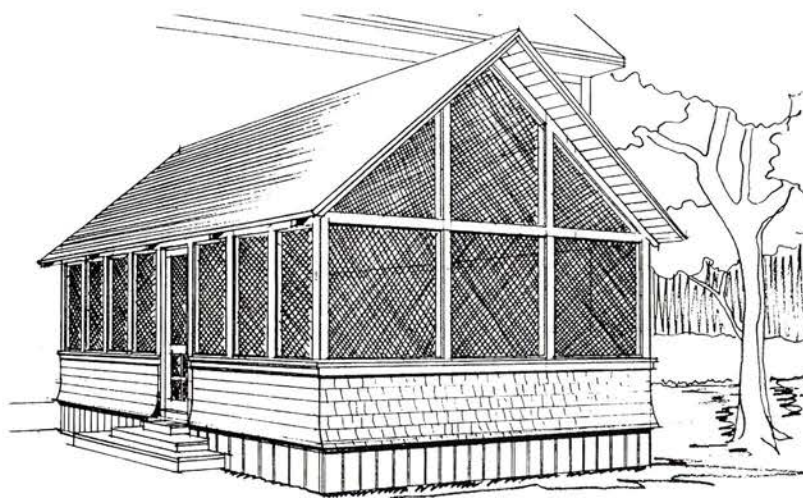
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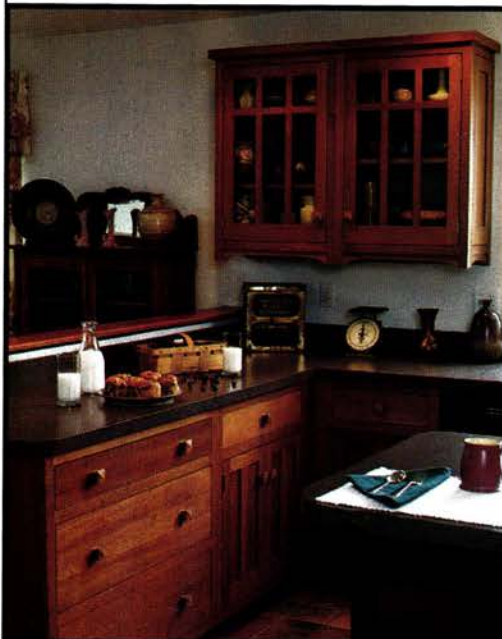
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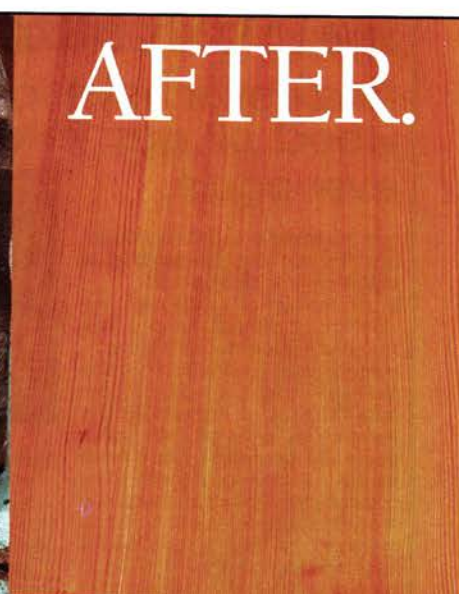
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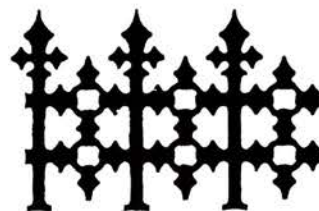
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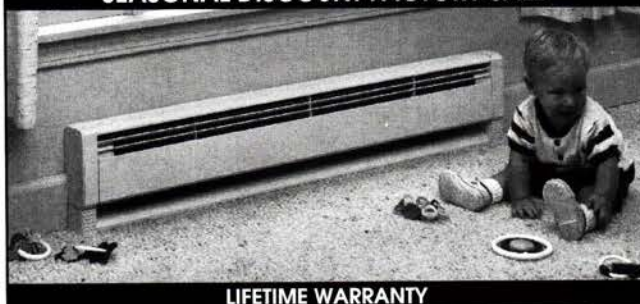
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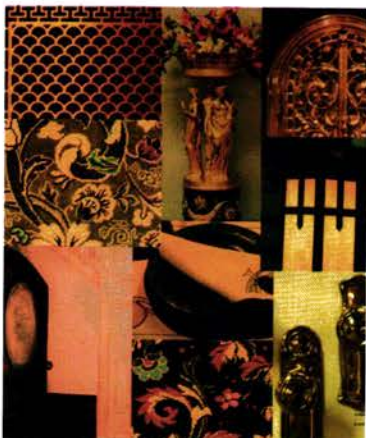
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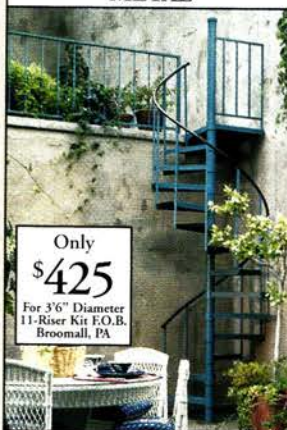
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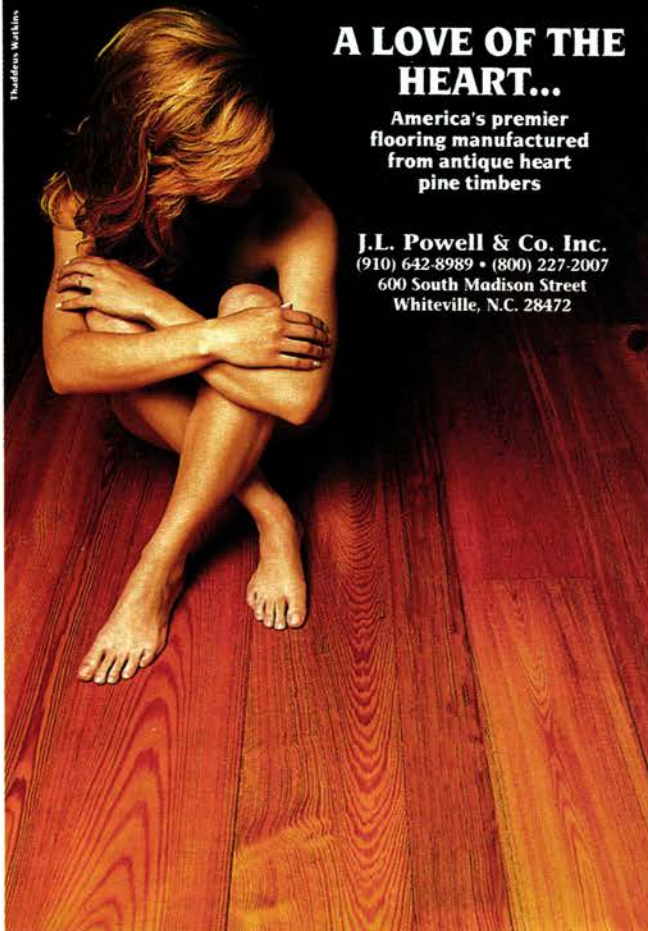


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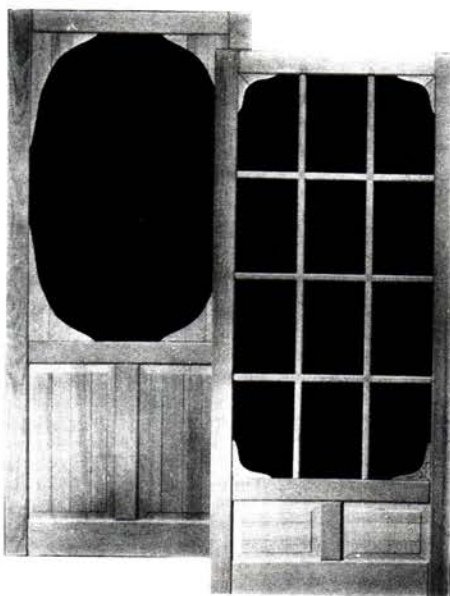
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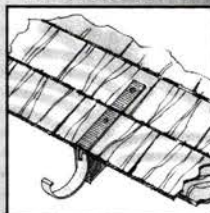
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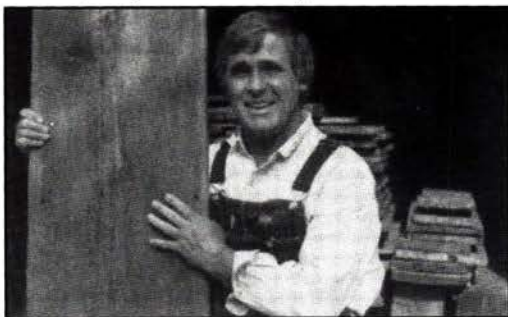


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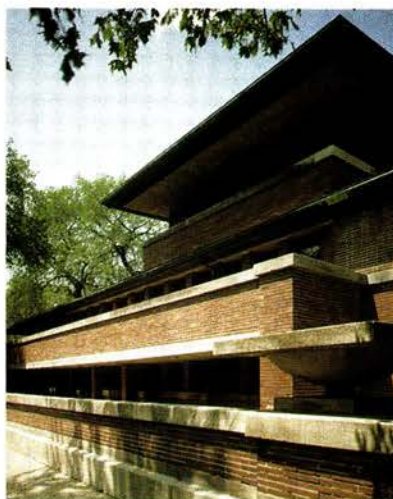
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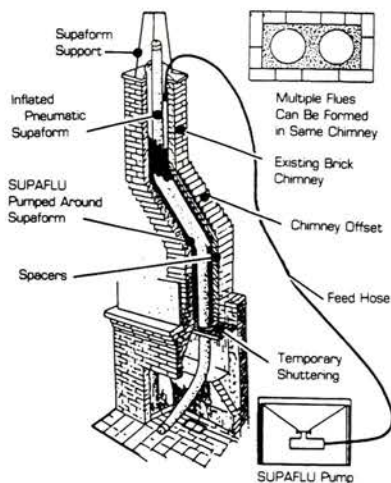
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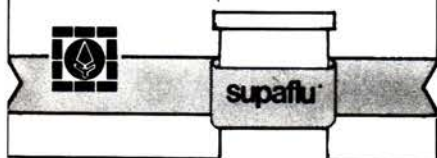
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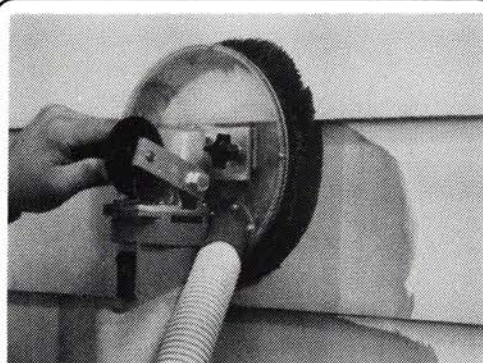
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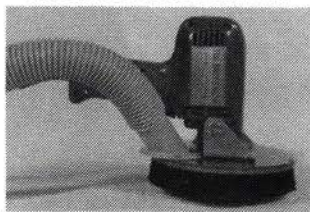


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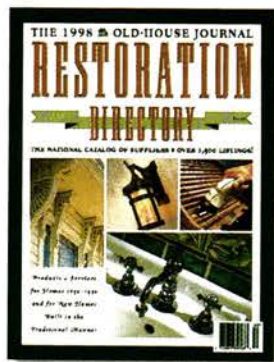
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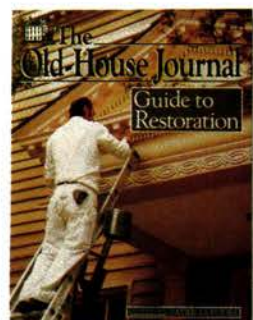


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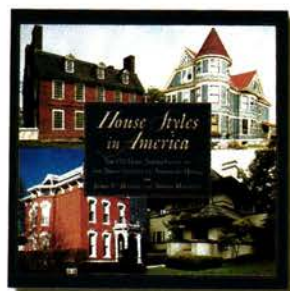
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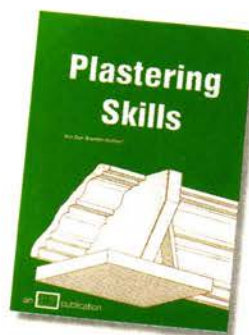
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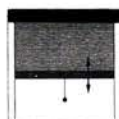
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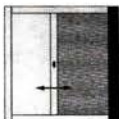
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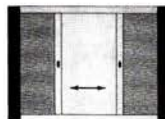
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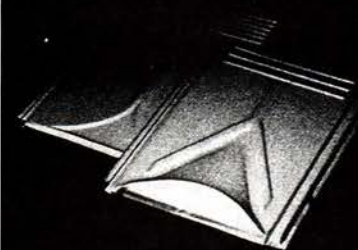
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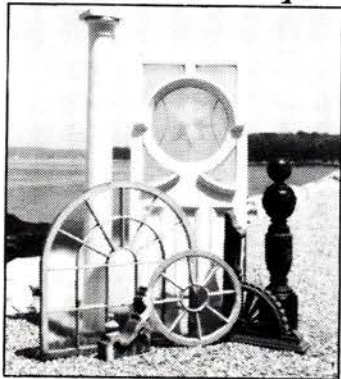
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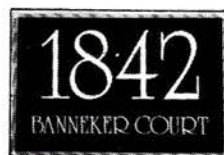
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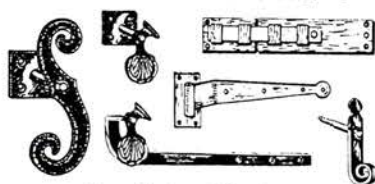
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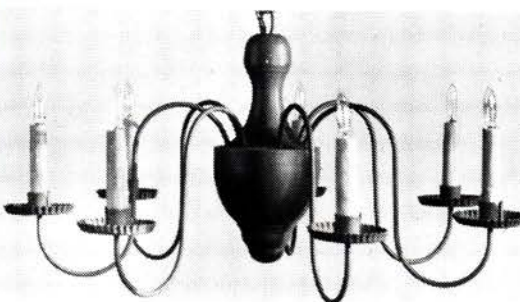


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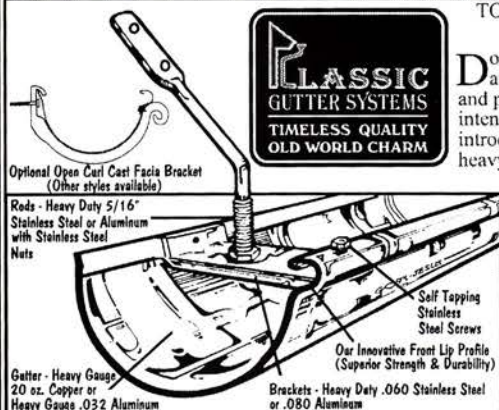
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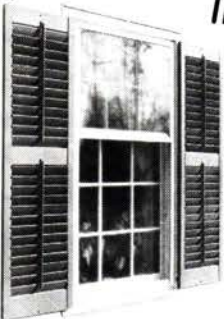
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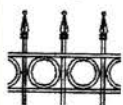


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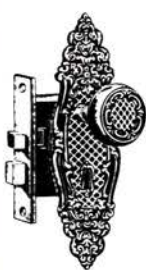
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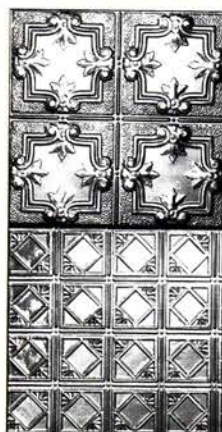
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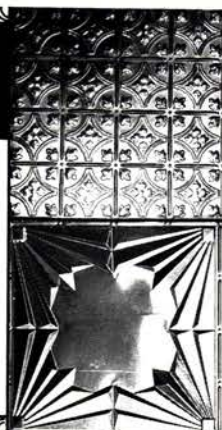


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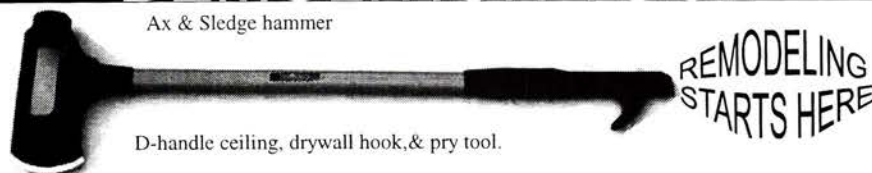
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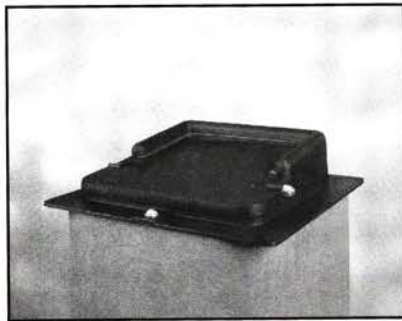
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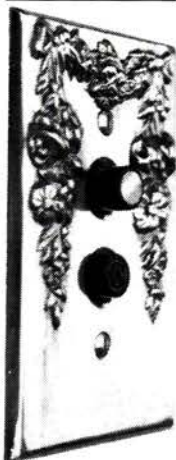
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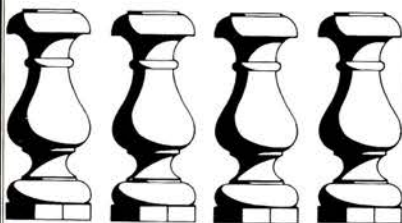
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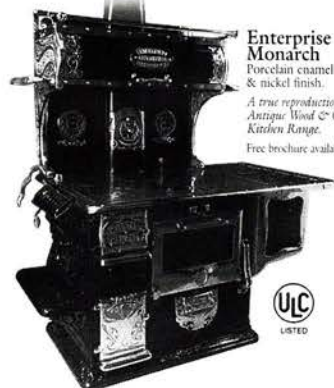


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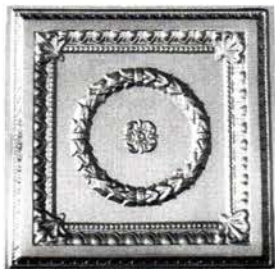
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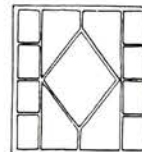
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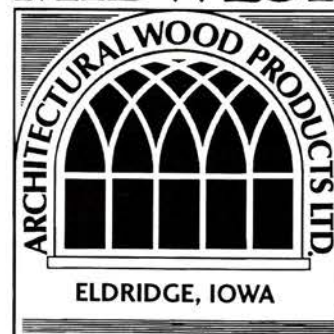
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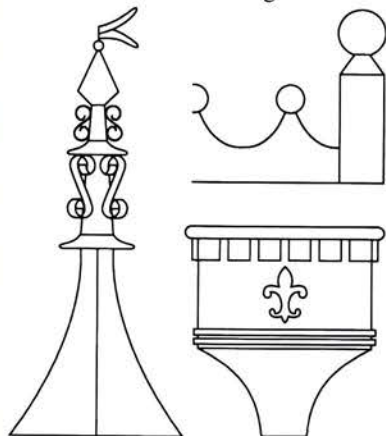
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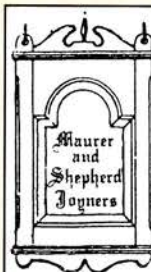


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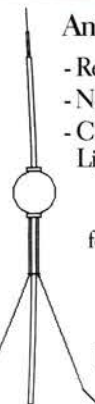
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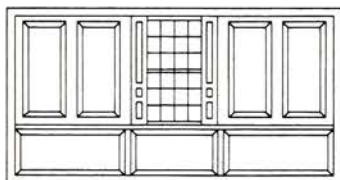
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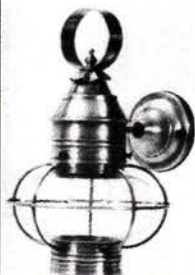
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chimneys and the steep pitch of my hipped roof, you probably wouldn't be able to recognize me at all.

Thanks to Tom Moates of Floyd, Virginia, for sending us this photo.



Like this re-creation at Colonial Williamsburg, the house (top) used to resemble the Georgian style. That was before the unfortunate addition.

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

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