

Old House JOURNAL

The Original Restoration Magazine

THE ART OF INTERIORS

Installing Raised Metal Ceilings

How to Revive Wood Finishes

Adding a Heating Zone

What's Colonial Revival?

Plus:

The Greek
Revival Style

Milling Your
Own Lumber

Cultivating
Camellias

Fireplace
Safety Advice

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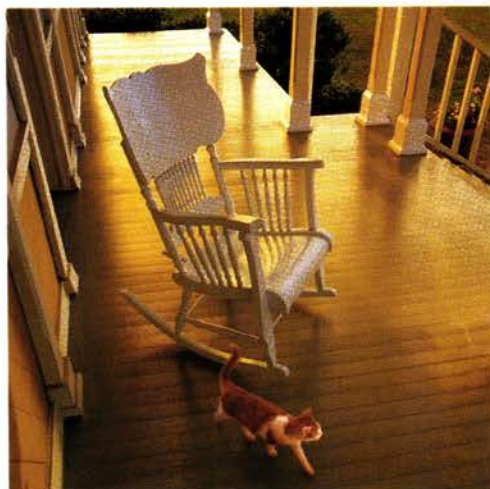
{ "What is the victory of a cat on a hot
on it, I guess, as long as she can..." }



tin roof? I wish I knew. Just staying
- Margaret, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof }

HE MADE HIS TIN ROOF IMMORTAL. NOW WE'VE DONE THE SAME FOR HIS FRONT PORCH.

When the great playwright Tennessee Williams wrote *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, he created formidable, enduring roles. But, when the Columbus, Mississippi, Chamber of Commerce decided to restore his birth home, one thing was clear - Williams' front



{Tennessee Williams' home - Columbus, Mississippi}



porch hadn't been built of the same stuff as his characters. Restorers looked into possible materials. Most would require aggressive maintenance, something the Columbus Chamber of Commerce really wanted to avoid. Enter Tendra®.

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it's a wise choice. A TendraPlank porch lives a long, long time. That's why the restorers of Tennessee Williams' home chose it.

People say the kitchen is the heart of the home. Used to be the tongue-and-groove front porch was its soul. It was where we thought, planned, and dreamed. Where the drama that is our lives took place. With TendraPlank, the traditional wood front porch is back. With the warmth and tradition of simpler days, but the timelessness of great theatre.



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has the look and feel
of the 1x4 tongue and
groove it replaces - with one
big difference - it does not rot.

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By James Boorstein

A pro offers ideas on assessing, cleaning, and conserving interior woodwork.



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Designs for every interior style and ease of installation make metal ceilings worth considering for overhead problems.



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By George Abry

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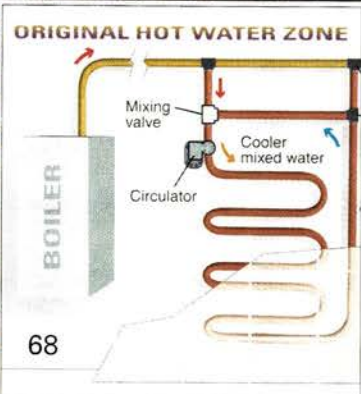


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By Dan Holohan

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By James C. Massey and Shirley Maxwell

If you think this style is all about grand plantation houses, take a new look.

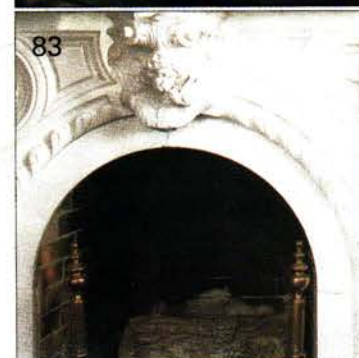
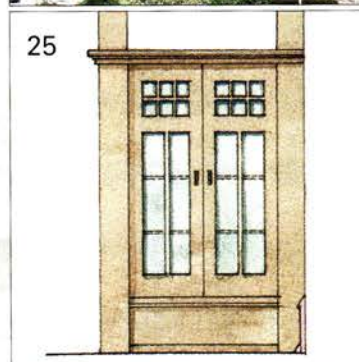
On the cover:

The James Patterson White House in Belfast, Maine, was designed in 1840 by Boston architect Calvin Ryder. A crown jewel of Greek Revival architecture, with a temple façade, eight-sided cupola, and 23 rooms, it's operated today as The White House bed and breakfast. The cover shows the music parlor, which now appropriately boasts a baby grand piano. The "Greek ears" at the corners of the door and window casings are signature interior details.

Photo by
Brian Vanden Brink

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Through the magazine's well-known RESTORATION DIRECTORY, OHJ Online has long been a treasure trove of information on companies that offer period products and services. Now, you can go right to the source by ordering free product literature from companies appearing in OHJ's latest issue. Just go to the "New Products" section on the Web site, click on the link at the top of the screen, and follow the simple instructions, which also include direct links to suppliers' sites.

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Notes on Notes

When a good friend of mine moved from Chicago to Los Angeles a few years ago, I asked him what it was like living in the land of free-ways and endless summer. "The only thing anyone ever talks about here," according to my acerbic compadre, "is what they're *not* eating."

Now we all know that there's a lot more important conversation fodder than this in the City of Angels, but he had put his steak-loving finger on an interesting phenomenon of our day. Perhaps, after the conspicuous consumption of the 1980s (a decade I think of as "The Age of Acquire-ious") we've come 180 degrees, so to speak, to the point of conspicuous abstention. It's not only healthy to give something up—be it a possible noxious food or nasty habit—but also, in some circles, hip, soigné, ahead of the curve.

Ever quick to jump on the next bandwagon, I've decided to apply this concept to my own, idiosyncratic lifestyle. By way of sharing some personal New Year's resolutions, here's what I'm not doing around my old house in the coming months.

I'm *not* filling and sanding every little scratch and gouge in the door I'm refinishing. There's so many of them, they're dulling the edge on my expensive putty knife. Plus, they're part of the personality of the door, and if I did fill them all, the door would look too good to match the surrounding woodwork.

I'm *not* replacing the clothes dryer. Though it's showing a few wear marks in the paint, it still gets hot and spins with a bearable rumble. Even better, it's practically historic and original to the house (before we bought it, anyway).

I'm *not* throwing out that pile of lumber odds and ends in the corner of the basement. Yes, most of it is short lengths and odd shapes, but it would be wasteful (not to mention ecologically insensitive) to haul it away to the dump or burn it. Besides, I have plans for some of those triangles of plywood, and you never know when you might need a 2x12 only 7" long.

I'm *not* mowing the lawn every week this summer. Lawn mowers contribute to air and noise pollution, and grass is a natural partner in the ecosystem. What's more, a Victorian-era rural house never would have had a micro-managed lawn anyway.

Not doing something won't push a project to new heights of completion, but it can save a bit of sanity by helping you *not* worry about what you didn't get around to doing this weekend.

Gordon Bock





The house is early Victorian.
The air conditioning is from the Dark Ages.

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Letters



Great Look

I appreciate and enjoy the latest format of OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL. It's easy to identify feature articles and the graphics enhance the text very well. Nice going!

Michael Gorecki

Lee's Summit, Missouri

More Than Mortar

Thanks to Bob Katz for his essay, "Benediction" (July/August), which put into words the concept of a house meaning more than mere property.

Two and a half years ago I bought my first home at age 45. The house was 47. After moving to the neighborhood I met several foster and adoptive parents.

Before long, I had taken training classes and was receiving requests to take children in. The comfy older house went from too quiet to being filled with the sounds of laughter, play, and crying. A group of four siblings now lives with me, and it looks like they're staying. I am the most surprised.

My house's history enhances its value, too. A lady in the neighborhood lived here as a teenager and her parents were the original occupants. The neighbor across the street still takes my garbage out once a week as he did for that elderly couple.

My foster children know the lady who grew up in our house. We look forward to creating our own heritage worth remembering.

Priscilla Hancock

Salt Lake City, Utah

Church and State

I enjoyed the "Copycat Houses" pictorial (September/October). To add to your collection I thought you would like to know that Richmond, Virginia, has had for many years a church that looks like Monticello. I wonder what Thomas Jefferson would say about that?

Thomas Cox

Richmond, Virginia



This Richmond, Virginia, church does its darnedest to ape a famous Charlottesville mansion.

Old House JOURNAL

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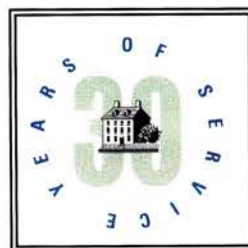
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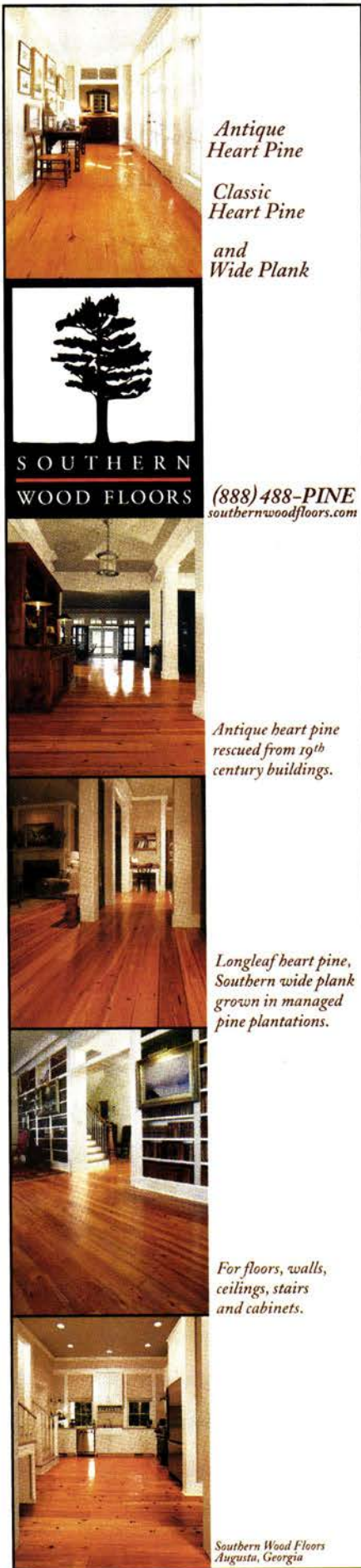
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Tile Tale

We just finished our bathroom remodel when I saw the article by Marylee MacDonald ("Tracking Down Historical Tile," September/October). I wanted to share what we were able to do with tile styles out there now.

The original bathroom dated to 1914 but the tile in the tub surround was from the '70s. We still had the original white hex floor (but unsalvageable) along with medicine cabinet, tub, sink, and toilet. During the remodel, we took all the walls and the floor down to studs and joists.

We also took the opportunity to update plumbing and electrical installations. Since I broke the toilet during removal, we upgraded to a 1920s American Standard Modernus.

We were able to rehab the original shower and tub faucets and reinstall them. We bought the 3" by 6" green field tile at Expo Design while the black trim, sizzle strip, and porcelain hex floor are from Dal Tile. We cut out selected white floor tiles and replaced them with black ones to tie the floor in with the trim on the walls and toilet seat. The walls above the wainscoting were two coats of skim coat plaster over Durock. We based the look on bathrooms we had seen in various old buildings. Except for the tile, which we had a pro install, the rest was a DIY project.

Thanks for the article. There was some information in there I could have used sooner and will incorporate into my next project. Your magazine is a great resource. Keep up the good work. Chris Barbanica and Catherine Mahoney Berkeley, California



One reader's evidence that old-style tiles are out there.

The Town Gargoyle

I enjoyed James Massey and Shirley Maxwell's article on Romanesque Revival (November/December). The library in our city is an H.H. Richardson design, an amazing building both inside and out. Recent restorations have returned the art galleries to their original use. My favorite feature is a gargoyle near the entrance, which was adopted as the city's 350th anniversary mascot. I'm lucky to have such a great piece of history in walking distance. Thank you for showcasing other fine examples of this architectural style. Mary Murray Malden, Massachusetts

Great Guide to Lead

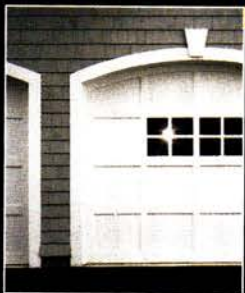
Thank you for the article on how to deal with lead paint (November / December). It's the best resource I've seen on the subject. We live in a 1925 house and everything has been painted over. I've done extensive research on lead paint because I have two small children, but any help I've gotten has been minimal. I've felt helpless

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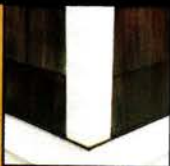
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Letters

in terms of how to deal with the situation, especially when people said the only choice we had was to take out all the woodwork in the house—that really wasn't an option for us. You gave me a truly practical guide. The magazine is fabulous.

Linda Dyer
Upper Montclair, New Jersey

Protecting Native Plants

I was incredibly pleased to see Kathleen Fisher's article "Whacking Wicked Weeds" (September/October). I'm executive director and president of the Center for Plant Conservation, dedicated to preventing the extinction of America's imperiled native flora. Alien invasive plants, such as honeysuckle and kudzu, threaten 49 percent of these native species.

The role of the homeowner in recognizing and controlling invasive species cannot be overemphasized. Homeowners who live near natural areas should be especially vigilant about invasives escaping. Because birds or wind can spread seeds for miles, all homeowners should be aware of invasive plants growing on their property.

By helping readers identify and eradicate invasive species, you're helping to protect our native plant treasures.
Kathryn Kennedy
St. Louis, Missouri

Mantel Mix-up

I enjoyed reading "The Architecture of Art Tile" (November/December) but stopped short at the photo identified as the Gamble House dining room. As a volunteer docent at the building, I can assure you that the fireplace is not from the Gamble House at all. Overall, I find *OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL* to be a great publication and resource for those of us who are restoring or preserving our architectural treasures, great and small.

D. Estrada
Pasadena, California

Oops! You're right. The large fireplace on page 40 is actually part of an inglenook in Walter Burley Griffin's 1912 Mess House in Winnetka, Illinois. The fireplace, designed by architect and master draftsman Marion Mahony (Griffin's wife) is faced with 4" square tiles from Teco (1899-1924), the art pottery division of the American Terra Cotta Company of Crystal Lake, Illinois, which survived until 1966. —Eds

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WASHINGTON, D.C.

Through August 10

Do It Yourself: Home Improvement in 20th-Century America

This exhibition at the National Building Museum examines the historical, social, and cultural context of the do-it-yourself phenomenon through vintage tools, advertisements, and how-to manuals as well as hands-on activities. For more information visit www.nbm.org.

MAITLAND, FLA.

February 7-8

2nd Annual Florida Winter Antique Art Pottery Show

The show will feature U. S., European, and Scandinavian art pottery from the late 1800s to the 1970s. Art pottery dealers from all over the country will display some of the rarest examples of art pottery available. General daily admission is \$6. For more information call show manager Patti Bourgeois at (508) 679-5910 or visit www.potteryfest.com.

BOSTON

February 8-9

7th Annual Old House Fair

Questions such as where to go when your house's original contractor has been dead for 120 years will be answered at this fair, sponsored by the Boston Preservation Alliance and held at the Boston Center for the Arts. For more information visit www.boston-preservation.org.

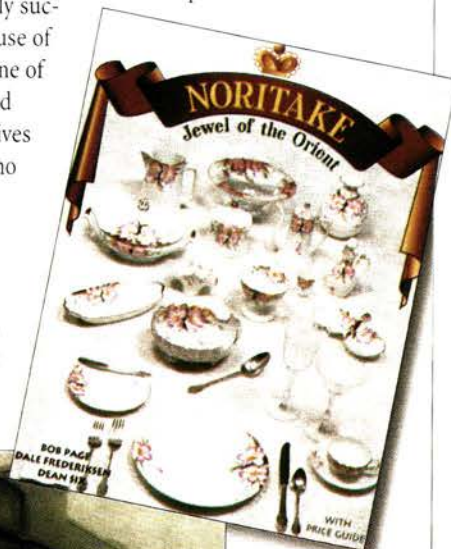
Good Dish on China

When old-house restorers dream of a central source for obscure building parts, their vision probably looks a lot like Replacements, Ltd. Since 1981, collectors have turned to this unique company for buying or selling hard-to-find china, crystal, and silver. Now this tableware matchmaker has a new book, *Noritake, Jewel of the Orient*, which documents the history and myriad designs of one of the most popular names in 20th-century ceramics. By comparing your pattern to the full-color photographs, most with enlarged details, you can identify its name or number and ultimately its value.

What's the connection to historic architecture? More than you might expect. Noritake and its related trademarks found their way into thousands of pantries across the country because the company was quick to adapt to American tastes, such as the vogue for Art Deco. Moreover, from 1912 to the 1930s its china was marketed by the legendary Larkin

Company of Buffalo, New York. These soap manufacturers not only grew to become mail-order retail giants on a par with Sears, Roebuck and Company, but they were also highly successful pioneers in the use of premiums and clubs. One of the masterminds behind these marketing incentives was Elbert Hubbard, who went on to found the Roycroft Arts & Crafts colony in nearby East Aurora. When Larkin built a new administration building in 1906, it turned to none other than Frank Lloyd

Wright, a young designer in search of his first commercial commission. It's just one of several readable tales among 321 pages of decorated cups and saucers in this \$27.95 book. Call (800) 737-5223 or visit www.replacements.com.



In 1906 Frank Lloyd Wright designed his first commercial structure—the new administration building for the Larkin Company in Buffalo, New York (left).

Baltimore R&R Jammed with Residential Topics

The Restoration & Renovation Exhibition and Conference in Baltimore, March 19 to 22, will feature four conference tracks of special interest to homeowners and professionals working on residential projects. "Residential Styles" will embrace catalog houses, 18th- and 19th-century housing styles, and the row houses and painted screens that give this Maryland city its unique feel. Under "Additions and Restorations," attendees can learn about porches, timber-frame structures, and designing more sensitive additions. The "Materials and Media" track is packed with 22 sessions, from greenhouses and stained glass to wood flooring and plaster repair. Other topics are the perennially popular millwork and windows, plus wood flooring, scagliola, Victorian tiles, faux finish-

es, decorative painting, and three lectures on roofs—historic roof systems, slate and tile, and wood shake roofs.

If interior design is your passion, you can hear about ornamental plaster, Arts & Crafts bungalows, expanding small spaces, historic paint palettes, Victorian lighting, and early 20th-century kitchens and baths.

The theme of the event is Restoration Redefined: Beyond the Building, and keynote speakers and others will explore such contextual design issues as urban infill, downtown redevelopment, and new design in historic context. A number of speakers will address "green" architecture and materials as used in restoration and traditional styles. For more information visit www.restorationandrenovation.com.

Calendar

ASHEVILLE, N.C.

February 21-23

16th Annual Arts & Crafts Conference & Antiques Show

Arts & Crafts enthusiasts from across the country descend on this mountain town each year for an education in the history and craftsmanship of this early 20th-century movement. Held at the Grove Park Inn. A three-day pass costs \$125. For more information call (828) 628-1915 or visit www.arts-crafts-conference.com.

OXFORD, ALA.

March 9-15

Decorative Woodwork Conservation

Heritage Conservation Network's latest hands-on workshops for architectural and site conservation will place volunteers at the 1830 Allen Weathers House in Oxford, Alabama to restore the house's federal-period woodwork. For more information on this workshop call (303) 444-0128 or email workshops@heritageconservation.net.

Don't Forget to Register

The Historic Preservation Training Center will hold a conference on "Preserving and Using Covered Bridges" June 5 to 7 at the University of Vermont campus in Burlington. It will cover bridge preservation case studies, maintenance, and fundraising strategies. Registration is \$210 if postmarked by February 28. Call (802) 674-6752 or visit www.uvm.edu/covered-bridges.

Move It

Who says you can't get anything for free these days? McLean Hospital in Belmont, Massachusetts—one of the oldest psychiatric hospitals in the country and a recent National Register of Historic Places nominee—is offering five of its antique patient "cottages" to anyone willing and able to move them to another location. Each architect-designed Tudor or Colonial Revival is a brick 1 1/2- to 2-storey structure built between 1894 and 1927 to house a single patient and his or her family on the hospital's pastoral grounds. The hospital needs to move the buildings as part of a plan to develop a large portion of its 239-acre campus as public open space, senior housing, a soccer field, and a cemetery.

Established in 1811 as part of Massachusetts General Hospital in Charlestown, the original psychiatric facility was designed by architect Charles Bulfinch. (Although privately owned, McLean is still affiliated with Mass. General.) In 1895, inspired by the concept that nature acted as a tranquilizer for those suffering from mental illness, hospital administrators



One of the five turn-of-the-20th-century houses on McLean's property in need of a new home.

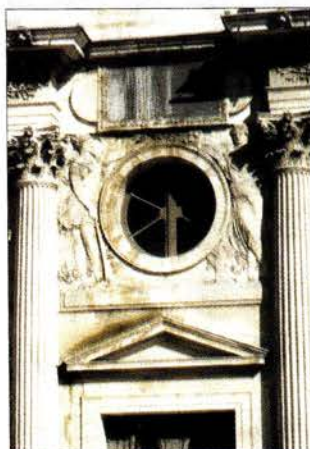
moved the facility to a grassy hilltop in Belmont. The design of the buildings and grounds reads like a Who's Who of 19th-century architects: Fredrick Law Olmstead designed the extensive "cottage" grounds, while top American firms, such as Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge and Shaw and Hunnewell, designed the larger patient and administrative buildings.

A far cry from the neglected 19th-century almshouses elsewhere in the country, the stately brick single-patient residences were designed by noted Boston architectural firms, such as Wheelwright and Haven and Fehmer and Page. Brownsville slate gable roofs, Tuscan columns, English and Flemish bond brickwork, corbelled

chimneys, semicircular porticos, sunrooms, original woodwork, and open porches are just a few of the architectural features.

"These houses are historically significant because McLean was the first psychiatric hospital to have single-patient units," says Terry Bragg, hospital historian and archivist.

"Our main goal is to preserve these cottages," says Michele Gougeon, executive vice president and chief operating officer. "Moving these homes would be a positive outcome for the whole process of redeveloping the land." For more information call Cathie Bowen at (617) 855-3450.



JACOB ARNDT

Study Building Methods Abroad

Looking to stretch your knowledge of traditional construction to new horizons? Historic masonry specialist, architectural stone sculptor, and longtime OHJ contributor Jacob Arndt is developing a program to reexplore traditional building materials and methods through a two-week study tour in Europe in spring 2003. The course, which is scheduled to take place in Normandy, France, in late April/early May, will cover working with materials such as lime mortars, traditional plaster, mortise-and-tenon timber framing, and thatch roofing and is offered in conjunction with Maisons Paysannes de France. For more information on the course, contact Arndt at Northwestern Masonry & Stone Company, 527 Mulberry Street, Lake Mills, WI 53551 or call (920) 648-2232.

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OHJ's 30th Anniversary Countdown

Discovering Comfort

Foursquare, Tudor Revival, Mission, bungalow. All are familiar terms today, but 30 years ago these houses were snubbed by architectural historians as unworthy of study.

It took a January 1982 article in *OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL* and a 1986 book commissioned by the magazine to put post-Victorian houses on the map. The article, written by OHJ editors Clem Labine and Patricia Poore, was "Comfortable House," from a line in a 1914 book extolling the joys of warm rooms, hot water, tight windows, and dry basements.

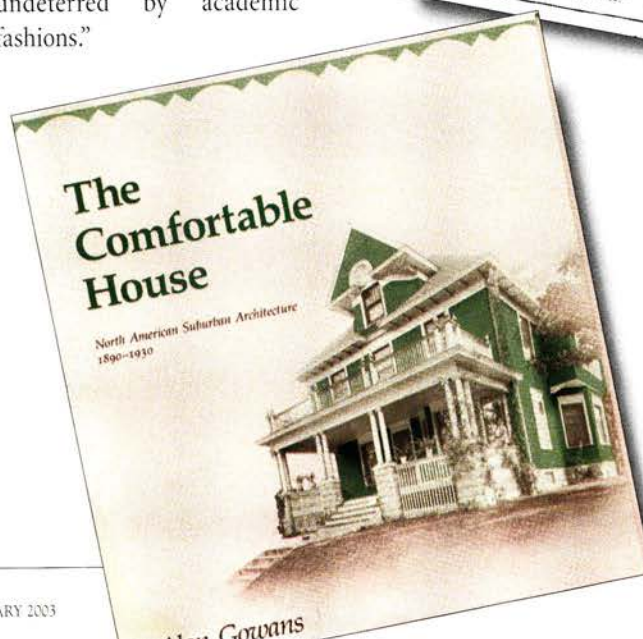
In the book of the same name, published by MIT Press, author Alan Gowans notes that until the end of the 19th century, houses had largely been uncomfortable, whether grand palace or sturdy homestead. "Even so characteristically American forms as the early 19th-century Classical Revival temple-house and the High Picturesque mansion of the 1860s and 1870s subordinated comfort to the making of statements about ideology and social status," he writes.

OHJ founder Labine and scholar Gowans, former chair of the University of Victoria history in art department who died in 2001, are credited with popularizing the label "Foursquare." More important than coining any one term, however, was the idea that architectural styles shaped by

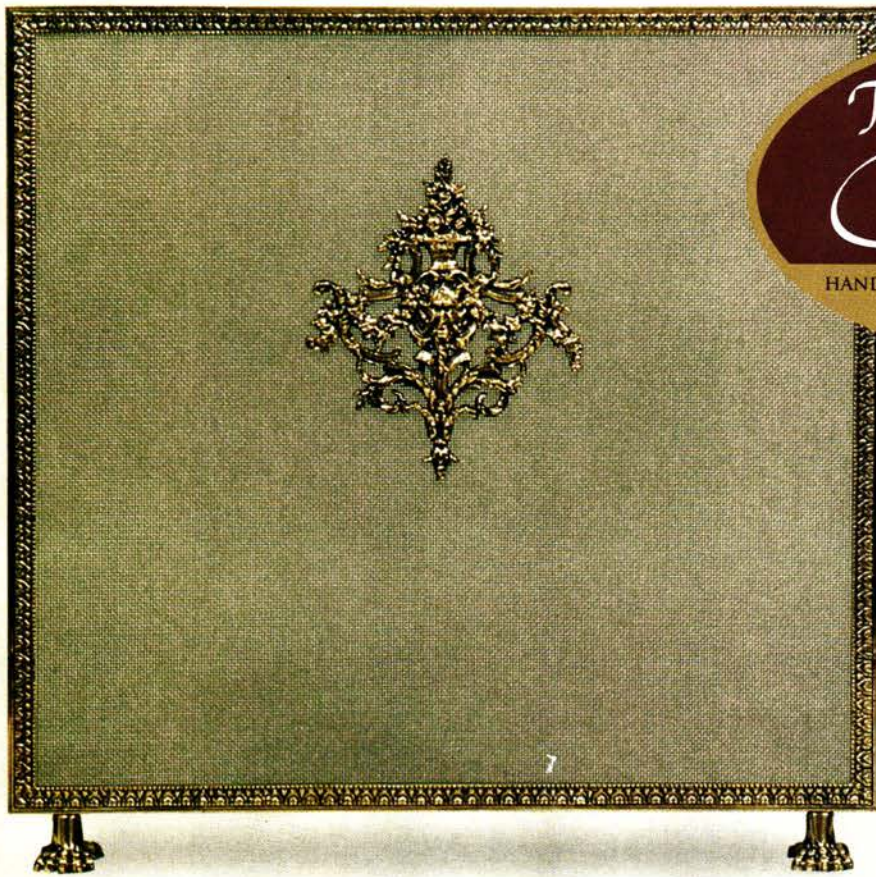
Americans for Americans of average means were worth serious scrutiny.

A Canadian, Gowans gives Colonial Revival a particularly interesting analysis. He begins by defining colonial houses as visual statements of origin by settlers from throughout Europe. Thus he saw "colonial" as encompassing not only Georgian and Adam mansions, gambrel-roofed Dutch dwellings, and stuccoed Mission houses, but also the French Quebecois form, to be found in such scattered locations as Louisiana's Cajun country and Cleveland's Shaker Heights.

John Crosby Freeman, a former University of Victoria colleague of Gowans, called him "a brave and sometimes solitary" champion of art and architecture as cultural expression. *The Comfortable House* and his *Images of American Living* will remain popular among the real consumers of American culture, who are undeterred by academic fashions."



A couple decades ago the Foursquare (top) was a house in search of a pedigree. OHJ and Alan Gowans, who taught a generation of museum curators and cultural historians at the University of Delaware's Winterthur program, brought respect to post-Victorian houses in an article and book published in the 1980s (above and left). *The Comfortable House* is now out of print.



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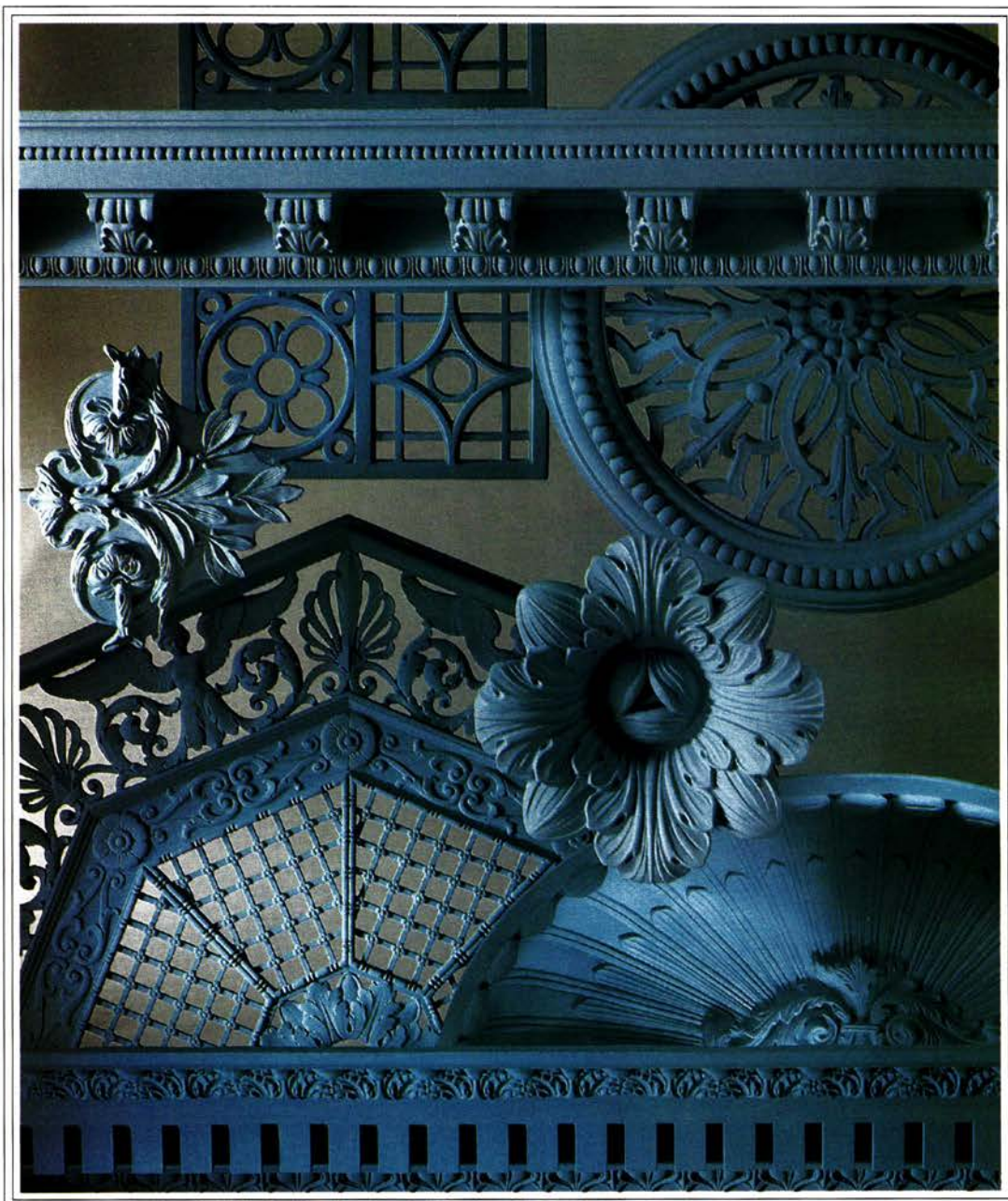
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Tale of Two Tudors

My husband and I just bought a large 1917 stucco and limestone Tudor house in the Rockhill District of Kansas City, Missouri. We also own a smaller 1920s Tudor that we will be moving to an adjacent lot. We don't want their colors to be the same, but would like them to be complementary.

Penelope Smith
Overland Park, Kansas

Pennsylvania-based color expert John Crosby Freeman first notes that the raised stone foundation

of your "stockbroker" Tudor's front façade doesn't extend all the way around. He advises that you pick up that stone color along the first-floor stucco walls to fulfill the architectural goal of the stonework and give all sides a visually solid base for the second floor.

You can give the body color of the English cottage Tudor a livelier color because of its smaller size.

When you paint the half-timbering and other trim, emphasize aesthetics as you downplay the functional. For instance, highlight the properly scaled belt course between floors as well as the window casings that are tied to the half-timbering (or that seem to serve another decorative purpose). Paint others off-white or cream. Because the industrial veranda railings are merely for security, "paint them out" with your stone color.

A basic principle in selecting accent colors for Tudors is that narrow half-timbering (such as yours) requires a darker accent color than wide half-timbering.



The stone foundation of this stockbroker Tudor doesn't extend all the way around the house. Stone paint colors on the first storey will strengthen the architecture.



Dark half-timbering needs a midtone color for the stucco panels.

Traditional paint colors for half-timbering imitate the look of ancient weathered timbers and continue to be made with the same yellow to red iron oxide colorants darkened with carbon black. They are among the least expensive and most durable of exterior colors. Choices include dark brown, dark reddish brown, dark brownish red, and dark olive green. Black is also traditional, but will "cook" the wood more than the others.

Freeman notes that proper prep before you paint is essential. Half-timber-

ing is a road map of joints eager to soak up moisture, pop off paint with hydrostatic pressure, and eventually, rot. Pull all old paint and caulk out of the joints, using a hacksaw blade for the tighter ones. Soak the cross cuts with a premium exterior wood sealer, and also consider sealing the sides of the boards, especially the horizontal ones. Spot prime these areas with an oil-base primer and top coat with an all-acrylic paint.

Smaller houses, like this English cottage Tudor, can handle brighter colors. The narrow half-timbering of both houses needs a darker color than if it were wide.

Classical Gas

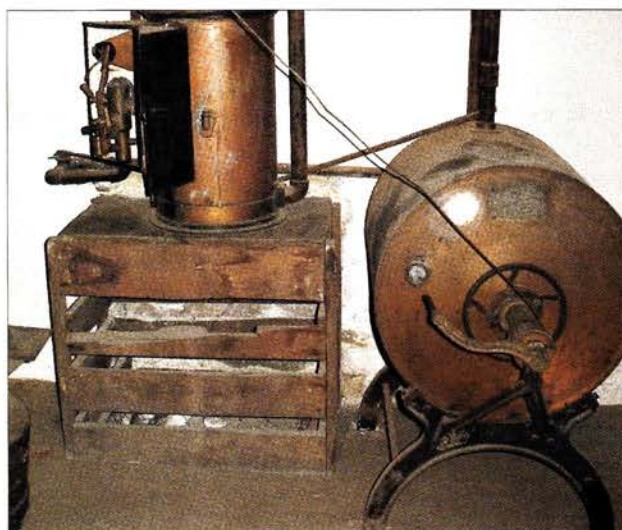
In the basement of our 1891 house is what appears to be an intact machine with weights, pulleys, tanks, and a mixer. The plate on it says "Elkins and Royal Gas Machine." We've heard of city gas for lights, but not machines for individual homes.

Lark and Michael McCarley
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

In the gaslight era, country folks wanted the same amenities as their urban brethren, and they actually had a couple options for gas-powered lighting: acetylene gas and what a 1914 book calls "gasoline gas." That book, *Successful Houses and How to Build Them*, includes a drawing of an apparatus to

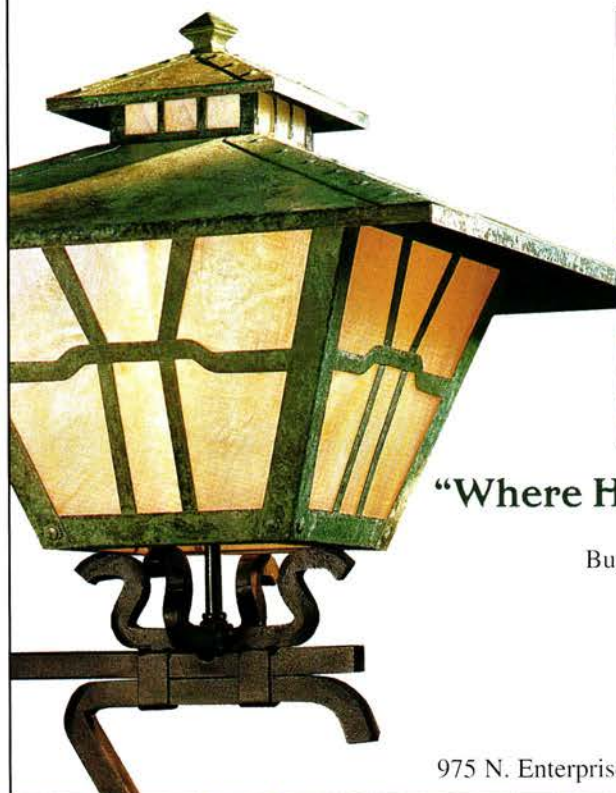
generate the latter that is identical to your machine. It operated akin to a large Coleman-type camp lantern.

What your photos don't show is the carburetor, a tank containing the gasoline supply, which was buried some distance from the house. Some carburetors, pressurized by water, a windmill, or a hand pump, mixed air and gasoline and passed the resulting vapor into the basement. In the case of your machine, a revolving drum (an air pump) maintained the pressure, driven by a weight that was wound up about once a day. If



Weights reset daily maintained air pressure in the revolving drum on the right. The vertical drum to the left was a mixer from which "gasoline gas" fed gaslights.

you forgot to wind the weight you might feel like Ingrid Bergman in the 1944 *Gaslight*—your lights would dim and eventually flicker out. 🕯



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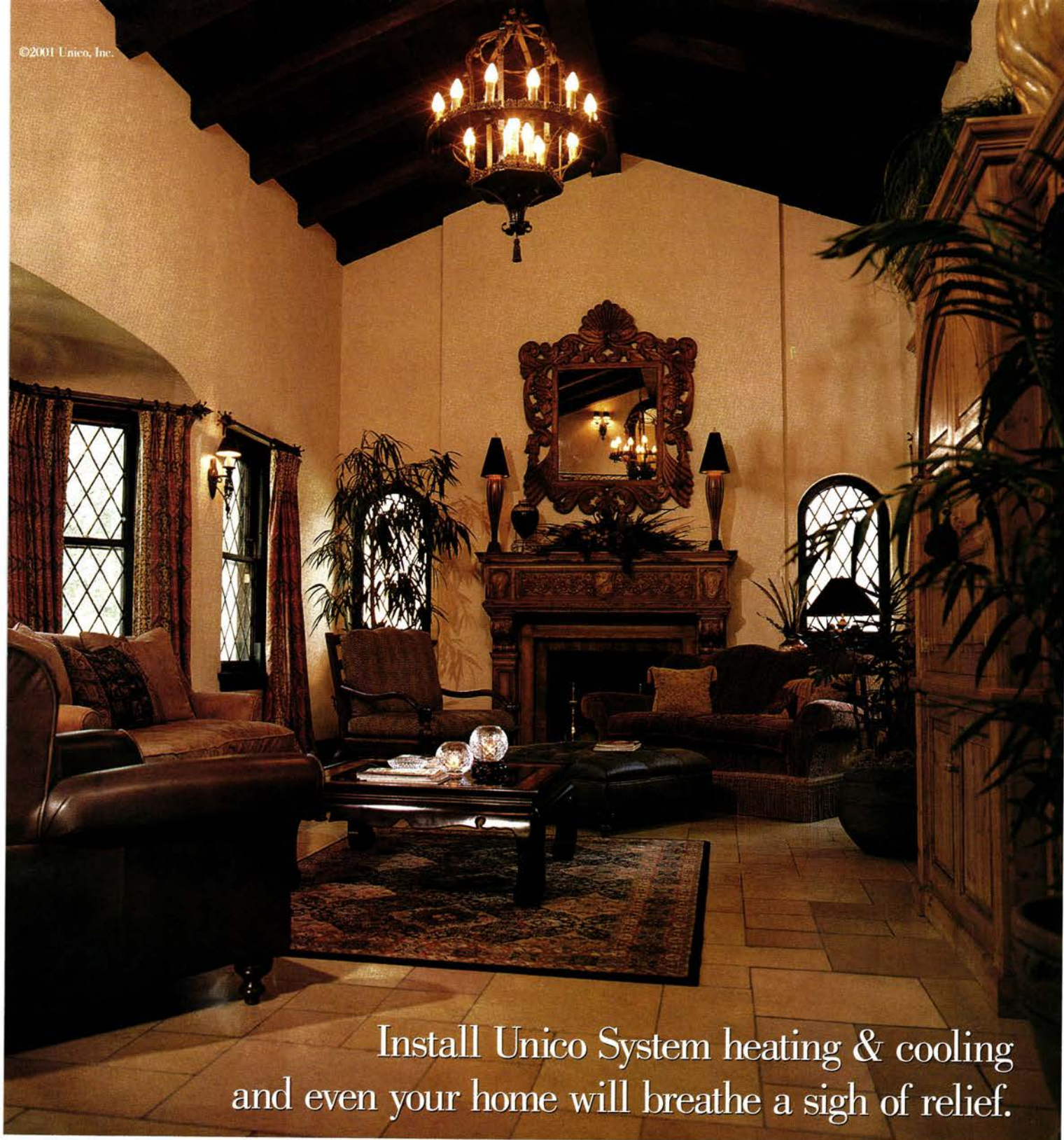
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Arts & Crafts Colonnade

Drawings by Rob Leanna

Since last year's feature article on restoring a colonnade ("New Home for a Bungalow Colonnade" January/February 2002), many readers have asked for more information about recreating these once ubiquitous built-ins. Also called "dividers" and "openings," prefabricated colonnades were staples of mail-order millwork catalogs up to the 1940s and plans are therefore uncommon. This circa 1910 design, while basic, incorporates all the typical features and is easily adapted by the builder to suit the space or décor.

Colonnades are installed in mirror-image pairs that attach to the wall and support a false beam.

8" on a side
typical

60" opening
typical

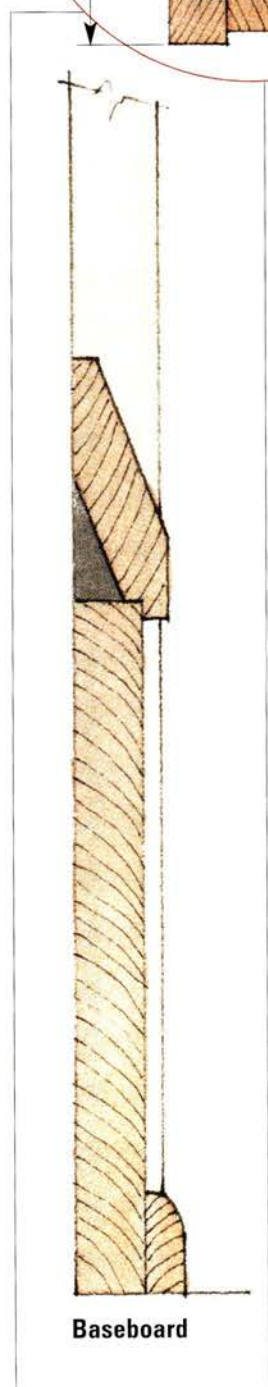
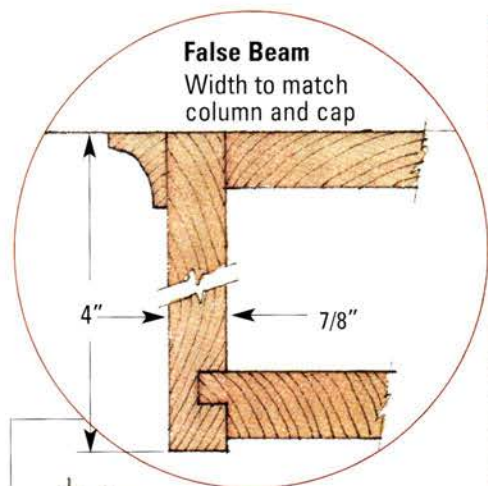
11" to 12"

Living Room Side

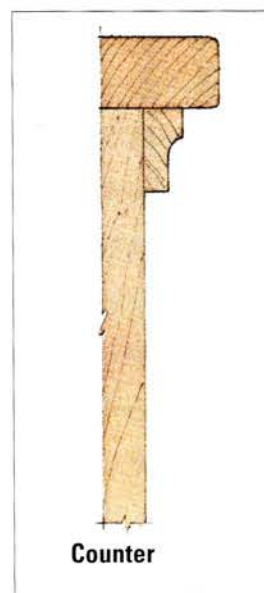
Glass doors enclose the bookcase base of oak, fir, or other clear-finished wood.

40" to 57"

30" to 36"



Baseboard



Counter

The colonnade base is designed as a book-case with art glass doors on the living room side, paneled backs on the dining room side. All trim details are typically flat and square with unmoulded surfaces except for occasional coves and rounds. The columns shown here are square and uniform for ease of construction, but may also be battered (angled on each side) for a more Arts & Crafts effect. Dimensions are for general reference only.

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Bronze Beauties

BY GORDON BOCK



If you can live with its flaws, bronzing in shades from silver to gold is a period way to paint your radiator.

Hard to believe today, but a century ago radiators were cool—as stylish as they were high tech. Manufacturers cast each radiator body with ornate raised filigree, creating a ferrous canvas for the homeowner to complete to taste with paint. Metallic paint was assumed to be the perfect coating for radiators, and the decorative method most widely used was bronzing.

Bronzing is a traditional, easy-to-master technique that is still practical within limits for any old-house owner to employ today. A mixture of bronzing liquid (clear acrylic) and fine metallic powder, bronzing produces a richer finish in a wider range of colors than, say, simply spray painting from an aerosol can. Good, traditional paint or art-supply stores carry the powders in several shades of bronze as well as related tints. These can range from bright copper and brassy powders that emulate gold, to one or more aluminum powders that, once applied, shine closer to nickel or silver. All were available a century ago and are historically appropriate today.

Bronzing is not difficult, but neither is it particularly cheap in materials or time. A quart of bronzing liquid costs about \$10 (not much more than quality enamel paint), but a pound of powder will set you back around \$27—and you'll need the better part of a pound for the average-sized radiator. Add to your shopping list some sandable grey spray primer (choose the rust-resistant kind sold for autobody work) and a soft sable or camel's hair brush. The brush does not have to be special, but avoid the stiff bristles of paint or varnish brushes; they can leave streaks.

NOT-SO-HEAVY METAL

Start with a clean radiator free of dirt and flaking paint. Stripping off built-up paint down to bare iron will maximize any cast ornament, but bronzing will cover just as well over a decent existing paint job. Either way, be sure to first prime any naked iron. Originally, radiator decorators used bronze primer made for the job or even just a coat of bronzing liquid served up neat (that is, without powder pigment), but autobody prime is fine. Heat-tolerance is not an issue, but you don't want to use anything water based that will, of course, rust the iron in no time.

Next mix up a batch of paint. Today as a century ago, the standard procedure is to start with a cup or so of liquid, then add powder until you achieve a mixture that is the consistency of cream—an odd metaphor for what looks like molten metal, but one that remains remarkably apt. Silver—that is aluminum powder—seems to go farther than the bronze

Left to right: Whether or not you strip your rad down to bare iron, do your best to remove any loose rust or scale; grey autobody prime in one or two light coats is fine; apply your bronzing mix with a soft-bristle brush to get the most luster out of the powder.

colors, but in any event be prepared to use materials in roughly the proportions of one pound of powder to one quart of liquid.

Then simply brush on the paint. The actual bronzing demands anything but advanced skills; nonetheless, most folks develop a technique as they work on their particular radiator. Flowing on the liquid in a robust, but not too thick coat often produces a richer look than common brushing. Second coats in selected areas will smooth out sandy areas of the casting or create highlights on ornament. Period texts even advocate painting a radiator while it's warm to enhance the luster (a method uncorroborated for modern materials). The aesthetically daring or artistically inclined might even try bronze polychroming. Radiator companies of the past suggested going over the raised ornament on an already bronzed radiator with a stiff brush and complementary bronze in the following combinations:

- Copper ornament on silver body
- Silver ornament on copper body
- Gold ornament on copper body
- Gold ornament on blue-green body

METALLIC DRAWBACKS

Bronzing is durable and gets a bit darker and mellower as it ages. Come to find out, though, the perfect paint for a radiator—at least as far as heating efficiency is concerned—is actually anything *but* metallic. In the 1920s, heating engineers took radiators into the lab to determine as accurately as possible what made the best coating for a radiator. In terms of physics, radiators heat a room through two modes: convection (heating the surrounding air) and radiation (heat energy emitted directly from the metal as waves). While tests revealed that radiator paint had no effect on convection it could dramatically influence radiation. As it turned out, only the last, exposed coat of paint had any impact and, among the oil-based paints tested, color made no appreciable difference. Ironically, metallic paints (and galvanizing) cut radiation by 7.4 to 9.2 percent.

So, if you're concerned about squeezing the maximum amount of heat out of your steam or hot-water heating system, you may want to think twice about bronzing. In the real world of old houses, though, there's more to the equation. Radiation accounts for only around 40 percent of the heat output of the typical radiator, and given that most turn-of-the-century heating systems are grossly over-spec'd by modern standards, you're probably not going to freeze as a result of a little bronzing—especially if you're not bronzing every radiator in the house. In fact, old-time heating contractors used to purposely bronze hyperactive radiators to moderate their heat output. Then too, if you're excited by the gleaming possibilities of radiators decorated with historically concocted metallic paint—not to mention restoring your whole house—are efficiency and saving a few pennies the only things that matter? Naaah! 🐷



The artful might want to explore high-lighting raised ornament with a contrasting metal tone—either lightly brushed over a base color or applied first then exposed by a deft wiping.

Good paint suppliers still sell bronzing materials, such as powder by the pound.



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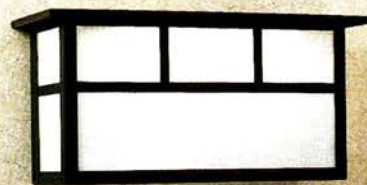


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When a friend sent us an "old-house" postcard in this handy frame, we knew we had to have more to protect several vintage postcards we'd found in our own house. They were gradually disintegrating from sheer brittleness. The simple handmade device uses copper tape for the "frame," a heavy paper back that serves as a pocket for the postcard, and a plastic hanger. You can order the hanger attached for either vertical or horizontal display. The seller, Harvey's Wallhangers in Mission Vallejo, California, is technically a wholesaler, so your best move is to ask your favorite local antiques dealer to stock up. We did persuade them to sell us a box of a dozen for \$28.80 plus shipping. For more information call Harvey's helpers at (949) 380-9699. Circle 2 on resource card.



Liner Notes

Wallpaper that was still clinging to rooms of the early 1900s Peerless Hotel in Ashland, Oregon's, old railroad district inspired not reproduction paper, but designs for three patterns of ceramic tile "liners." Liners were popular in that period for running around a room to visually break up a solid field of white tiles and add excitement at minimal cost. The "Peerless" patterns from Illahe Tileworks' are Trailing Leaf (shown), Chevron, and Greek Scroll. The 3" by 6" tiles sell for \$14 in one color, \$20 when hand painted. To get more information about Illahe's other period tile patterns, call (541) 488-5072 or visit www.illahetile.com. Circle 3 on resource card.

Life in the Faust Lane

Author Johann Wolfgang van Goethe spent the summer of 1814 at the country seat of the Brentanos in the Rhinegau area of Germany, visiting its resorts and sampling its wines. It was thought to be the only period in which he mingled freely with "the masses." This silk-screened border was copied from the Brentano house and like Goethe's occupations that summer, is considered rather unpretentious for its period. Hembus wallpapers of Frankfort, Germany, offers a whole line of wallcoverings copied from rooms where Goethe lived, as well as castles and salons from 1700 to the present. "Lotus Arcades" is 4 1/2" wide with a 4 1/4" repeat and sells for \$13 a yard. For more information visit www.hembus.de and click on the "Hembus" logo. Circle 4 on resource card.



Sun Bathing

There's nothing more indulgent than a late afternoon bubble bath under a sunny window, but not all of us can count on total privacy—nor do we necessarily have a view of the Rocky Mountains or a roiling ocean. For sunlight without visual assault in either direction, consider a decorative window from ODL. (Of course, the windows have similar advantages in bedrooms and else-

where.) The insulated tempered glass has an obscuring outer layer. Glass options included clear and sandblasted bevels, and textures of granite, soft wave, glue chip, and English muffle. Caming choices include brass, bright zinc, and dark zinc. Shown here is Expressions, in which granite glass surrounds clear bevels and grey renaissance glass. Suggested retail for the popular 4' by 4' size is \$1,440. For more information call (800) 253-3900 or visit www.odl.com. Circle 5 on resource card.



Etching to Go

Need a house-warming gift for a friend or client? Physician Stuart Callé has turned his photography hobby into a literal cottage industry—etching old houses (as well as interiors and landscapes) onto black marble. Working from a photograph, he etches the image onto stone 6" by 6", 9" by 9", or 12" by 12" at the respective prices of \$75, \$100, and \$125, inscribing names or dates as requested. The etching has a hook on the back for hanging and comes with an easel for displaying on a table top. Orders take about two weeks. For more information call (860) 742-6440 or write to 44 Depot Road, Coventry, CT 06238. Circle 6 on resource card.



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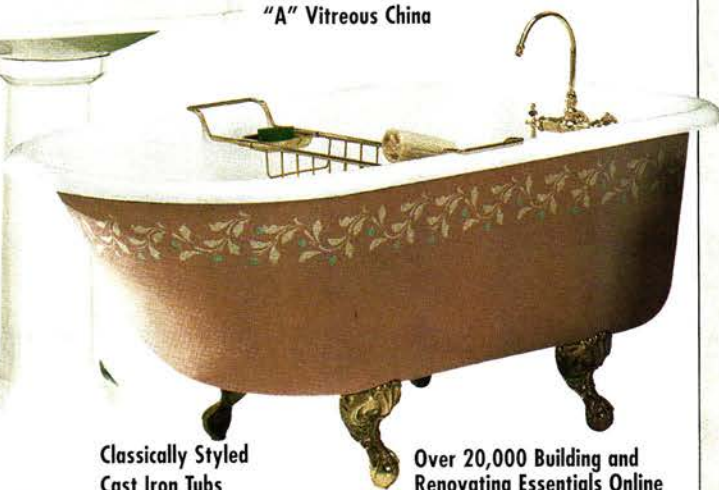
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Romancing the Camellia

BY SUSAN DAVIS PRICE



KEN MEYER

'Narumi-gata' is a *Camellia japonica* cultivar introduced in 1898. Japonicas are spring bloomers that can get caught in a late freeze.

Like many of America's favorite plants, the camellia is native to Asia. One tradition holds that Europeans and Americans first wanted the plants for commercial cultivation—*C. sinensis* for tea and *C. oleifera* for seed oil used in cooking and cosmetics. Instead of supplying these species, which produce understated little flowers, the Chinese slipped traders plants and seeds of showy japonicas and blowsy-headed *C. reticulata*. Some reports have camellias in Europe as early as the 16th century; we know for certain they were in England by the early 18th century and in America soon after. While southerners struggled in vain to turn the tea plant into a cash crop, growers in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast were having better luck growing their more floriferous cousins in the greenhouse as florist plants. As specialty nurseries and camellia-smitten individuals created new cultivars in the 1840s, the plant caught on as a garden plant in the antebellum South. The Civil War put an end to grand southern landscapes, but the cold-challenged camellia, with its waxen leaves and elegant flowers, was the ideal plant for coddling in Victorian greenhouses. Artists

From the time I was in pig-tails, growing up in Louisiana, my father would lead me outside every January to inspect his 'Purple Dawn' *Camellia japonica*, growing in majestic solitude by the driveway and beaming its deep red flowers at passersby when the rest of the garden was brown and grey.

After duly admiring the new blooms, Dad clipped off one to float in a shallow dish on the dining room table. We could enjoy one of those crimson blossoms each evening for six weeks or more, since camellias, unlike azaleas, just keep unfurling new flowers. I've since learned that 'Purple Dawn' is a popular name for two camellias, each with an impressive lineage—'Julia Drayton,' developed at Magnolia Gardens in South Carolina in 1908, and 'Mathotiana,' named by a Belgian breeder in 1847.

These sumptuous evergreen shrubs were never relegated solely to plantations.



KEN DRUSE

Camellia sasanqua is the earliest of the fall-blooming camellias and unusual in having a scent—though one not altogether pleasant.

Outside the Old House

Take heed when planting camellias, which can easily grow more than 15' tall and 10' wide.



DEREK FELL

Growing Tips

*Plant in fall in the South, spring in the North.

*Plant level with or slightly above the soil line. Mulch well.

*Give acid soil, high dappled shade, and northern or western exposure.

*In the North, shelter from wind and wrap against frost for the first two or three winters.

*Drought tolerant once established.

*Fertilize lightly, not after June.

*Most can take heavy pruning but don't need it.

rendered them in watercolors; needleworkers embroidered them on silk and damask, belles wore them to balls. By early in the 20th century, when things Victorian were no longer admired and World War I was closing down conservatories, camellias were almost forgotten, except perhaps on the West Coast. Nurseries that had carried hundreds of varieties whittled their inventories down to a handful. Besides, many gardeners thought the camellia out of place in the era's new, more casual landscape style.

The scene began to shift again in the '30s, as more gardeners came to realize that the camellia wasn't a delicate prima donna but a trouble-free plant in the right conditions. At the end of World War II the revival heated up even more. Savvy homeowners saw shrubs as ideal plants for a labor-saving landscape—none of them with dense evergreen foliage or extended off-season flowering to equal the camellia.

Thus a camellia can be right for your landscape whether you own a mini-Tara, a Queen Anne in the Mid-Atlantic, or a Pasadena Craftsman bungalow. Although an antique specimen can grow to 20' tall and wide, you can take advantage of modern breeding to find one that will stop growing at 3' or 4' tall, or that is cold hardy north of the traditional "camellia belt." Clifford Parks of the University of North Carolina, one of two breeders of this tougher camellia generation, draws the new line from Winston-Salem, North Carolina, to Richmond, Virginia, and up along the Atlantic Coast through Washington, D.C., to Long Island. The most widely available of Parks' plants bloom in spring, and many can be recognized by the word "April" in their names. Parks' son David, who sells camellias as co-owner of Camellia Forest Nursery in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, especially likes 'April Remembered,' with pink and cream petals, and the red 'April Tryst.'

William Ackerman, retired from the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, D.C., is most closely associated with his cold-hardy fall-blooming camellias, many of which helpfully have the word "Winter" in their names, like the peony-flowered shell pink 'Winter Beauty' and the semidouble medium reddish pink 'Winter's Fire.'

Camellia flowers haven't changed appreciably in past decades. They range from single and semidouble to forms resembling other flowers—peony, anemone, and rose—to the



'Pink Perfection', a long-time favorite for corsages, was the ideal Victorian camellia, with petals so dense and formal that its stamens were hidden.

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Outside the Old House



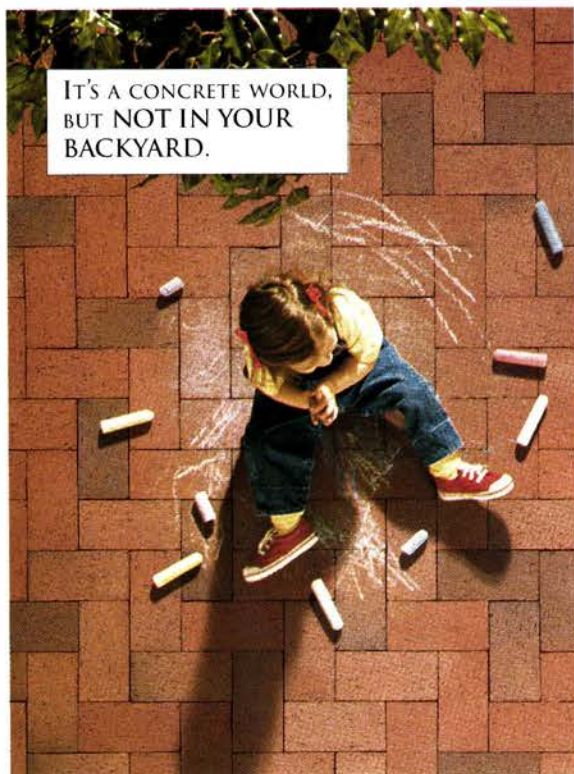
CATRIONA ERLER

'Snow Flurry' is one of a new series of fall-blooming camellias that will tolerate occasional temperatures as low as 15 below zero.

the japonicas late in the season. David Parks recommends using camellias as specimen plants, just as my father did. "Some people want to use them for foundation plantings," he says, "but they get too big." They can also serve as hedges, an evergreen backdrop for a border, or be espaliered. Parks likes to remind gardeners about the tea plant, *C. sinensis*. Its fall flowers are small but tightly clustered, but most people grow it for the new foliage that, when dried, can easily be brewed into healthful green tea. In addition, it's hardy into Zone 6. Thus gardeners lucky enough to live in the right place, with just a bit of space, can sip home-brewed tea while admiring their japonicas. 🍵

Now living in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Susan Davis Price can only dream about camellias.

For a list of
SUPPLIERS,
see page 94




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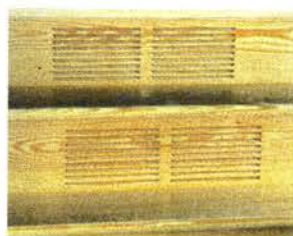
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New Life for Old Finishes

A case history on approaches to conserving interior woodwork.

By JAMES BOORSTEIN

Besides scores of panels and carvings, Edith Wharton's library included over 100 shelves that had to be conserved. Left to right: James Boorstein, Kathy Weinberg, and David Andersen.

The expression "An architect needs a good client to make a good building" applies equally well to restoration work. For a restoration project to rise above the average, it requires a good client—one knowledgeable and focused on the long- and short-term future of the house. The stewards of Edith Wharton's 1906 home, The Mount, have gone out of their way to find craftspeople who not only know their disciplines and understand how to work with old materials, but also care about preserving them.

People who routinely come up with creative solutions to the unusual conditions and challenges of old houses are generally not the same ones who dismiss every task they see on their first walk through saying "No problem!" With old houses, no two projects are exactly alike, and in our work of conserving and restoring historic interiors, we find each

repair or conservation job must be addressed on its own terms. A recent project at The Mount illustrates some of the approaches and methods we use that can be applied to other old houses in the careful work of conserving historic finishes.

STARTING STEPS TO FINISHES

Old finishes on woodwork are worth preserving because they give interiors character, depth, and a sense of place in time that most new finishes can't match. Contrary to popular belief, the majority of existing finishes on historic American woodwork can be cleaned and saved. Unfortunately, most of them are destroyed by sanding or stripping—usually due to a lack of understanding about what is possible.

When we were contacted about restoring the existing finishes in Edith Wharton's library, my first step was to ask a lot of questions. The site, Lennox, Massachusetts, is nearly six hours round trip from our office in



After carefully testing various methods for removing fine dirt from the shellac, the team chose a dilute mixture of emulsion cleaner in water, light rubbing with cheese cloth, then quick drying. An oil varnish might call for the same process, though perhaps with an alcohol vehicle.

ALL PHOTOS: JON CRISPIN EXCEPT WHERE NOTED



Above: Test areas with typical conditions are essential for determining effective methods and establishing appearance standards for the room. **Below:** Smoke detectors, sensors, and similar intrusions can be stained or painted in wood tones to subdue them.



New York City, so I wanted to be sure that the project was right for us, and we would be the right people for them. Though we have worked on jobs as distant as Los Angeles, traveling much beyond an hour to a job seems, if nothing else, environmentally inappropriate. Hiring contractors local to the job is often best, though sometimes you must look to another area for people with the necessary skills and expertise.

Studying photographs is a conservative way to begin. The custodians of The Mount sent good photos, which were helpful and indicated their seriousness. After a review and discussion the next step was to visit the building, have a look, and perform tests.

Senior staff finisher Kathy Weinberg and I drove up early one winter morning

with a kit of soaps and solvents. With historic finishes, there is no way to know what will work and what will not until you test on site. Wharton's library is situated in the southeast corner of The Mount, off a grand entry hallway. While painted wall finishes decorate the rest of the house, the library is paneled in oak from the floor nearly to the ceiling. The quarter-sawn white oak had a medium-brown color typical of the period. The woodwork was dirty, but not as filthy as it would be in a big city or in a smoking room after 100 years. Even better, it didn't suffer from multiple layers of finish—a common problem. The entire room had been protected by gentle neglect. Testing solvents with cotton swabs in an inconspicuous area revealed the original finish was alcohol-soluble—a tradi-

tional shellac coating that, though firmly intact, was very thin. For the same era building, we could also expect to find another spirit-type, alcohol-based finish or an oil varnish (not alcohol soluble).

We surveyed the condition of all the walls, which helped us determine the best places to test. The ideal choice is an out of the way area, yet one with conditions typical of the rest of the room. By applying a number of different cleansers—some water based, some solvent based—we began to see what worked. Trial and error is the only way to determine what methods and materials will produce the desired results without harming the finish. Ideally one needs to come to each project with fresh eyes and an open mind, yet educated by past experiences. Rarely is the

same recipe right for different buildings. Some mixtures are too strong; others surprisingly do not even lighten the dirt layer. The choice of tools, cloths, or abrasives presents another variable. At The Mount we worked with a narrow range of abrasives from cheesecloth to very fine steel wool. At the same time we experimented with the carvings. Since they had more remaining finish than the flat paneling, they cleaned up easily. Nearly all we had to do was remove a thin layer of very fine dust.

It is not necessary (or even appropriate) on the first visit to figure out the exact cleaning mix for a project, only to determine what is possible to achieve with the finish, and what types of products would be effective. The next step is to look for the problematic areas—some always exist. True to form, in the library we discovered a section of carving that was far darker than anything else. Though the carving was partially coated with a thin finish, there appeared to be no obvious explanation why it turned almost completely black over time. Soaps and basic solvents wouldn't touch it. From past experience, we decided that a chemical paint remover would be effective to remove the dark patch. Surfaces near doors and areas exposed to sunlight or moisture always require more attention. Each case is different, but generally you cannot expect to bring a lightened area back to match unbleached surrounding wood by cleaning or otherwise "revealing" its original color. Dye or other pigmentation have to be added.



Before starting any work, determine the condition of the film—how thick or intact is it? Years of overcleaning—not dirt—is a common cause of problems.

Historic photographs can help answer questions and fill in details regarding the original appearance of a room, and luckily these were available. For example, the cornice above the paneling had been painted to look like wood, but photographs indicated that originally the area was white.

By afternoon we had developed a sense of the room and selected one area with a range of typical conditions and elements to bring up to a finished look. Applying a thin coat of orange shellac over the cleaned woodwork brought it all together and back to life. We reviewed this preliminary sample with David Andersen, the hands-on project

manager, who thought it looked good and right. Since David wanted the library finishes to be completed by May 2002, we decided to wait until daylight-saving time to schedule the work and take advantage of the maximum amount of natural light. Good light is essential for getting the appearance of clear finishes correct.

LOGISTICS AND NUMBERS

It is impossible to know exactly how long conservation work like this will take until client and contractor can establish a firm standard for the final product—one that everyone is happy with. With a solid sense of



the end results desired for the room and a plan for how to get there, we took an inventory of the different areas—carved garlands, hanging carvings, paneled sections, doors, and bookcases—to better estimate the scope of the work. We investigated nearby housing and addressed the question of a crew: Who could we spare from other work, and who would be willing and able to be away from home (and the Internet) for a week or two? Kathy suggested an all-female team, which seemed perfect for the library of the first female Pulitzer Prize winner.

Back in New York, with a few days to think over the tests and visit, we prepared a proposal that included not one but several time/cost scenarios. The client understood that this kind of work is not figured by the square foot, and they knew that a single fixed price is often based on a worst-case scenario, which can end up being more expensive than simply paying for the actual hours worked. We were awarded the project. A few months later we returned to The Mount to tackle the entire library. Well prepared and with the right crew we managed to finish the work in one week, meeting the lowest of the three prices we estimated.

In the world of historic architecture, we are continually working to educate people about the importance of original finishes. They have come to be valued on antique furniture, but not yet in most architectural settings. Historic finishes are regularly obliterated based on the notion that conservation is more expensive than replacement. However,

preserving an existing finish can be the more economical option. Rehabilitating existing finishes and letting some imperfections remain preserves the character of a room in a way that new finishes cannot. Sometimes it is the smallest details that touch our imaginations and bring us back to time of our grandparents and before. 🏠

Carvings Care

Left to right: Cleaning recesses with soft brushes, Margaret Mamak captures run-off with her free hand; while they held more dust, the carvings had a thicker finish that sustained gentle brushing; removing dust did much to return the original appearance.

**For a list of
SUPPLIERS,
see page 94**

James Boorstein
is a principal at
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Traditional Solutions

Two new coats of orange shellac over the cleaned surfaces helped bring all the areas of the original finish together. Margaret Karkulac applies the shellac on the bookshelves with natural bristle brushes and cloths.



Shellac is mixed on site from flakes and alcohol in an approximately 1 pound cut (1 pound flakes to 1 gallon alcohol). Historic shellac is orange, not bleached.



Nonsudsing, pH-neutral products are the cleaners of choice for finish conservation. After the new shellac coats, the entire surface of the library was protected with a coat of paste wax, applied and buffed by hand.





High-

Decorative metal could steal

Sally Edwards needed to replace some ugly acoustical tiles that hid plumbing in the ceiling of her early 20th-century Virginia farmhouse. Leery of past furnace failures that led to broken pipes, she wanted quick access to them should they freeze again. Drop-in white metal ceiling panels proved an elegant and easy solution.

When Albany, New York, photographer Mike Babcock turned a bedroom in his Queen Anne into a studio, he hoped to at least echo the pressed-metal ceiling that had been installed in his parlor in the 1930s. He did even better, finding the exact match cast from the original die.

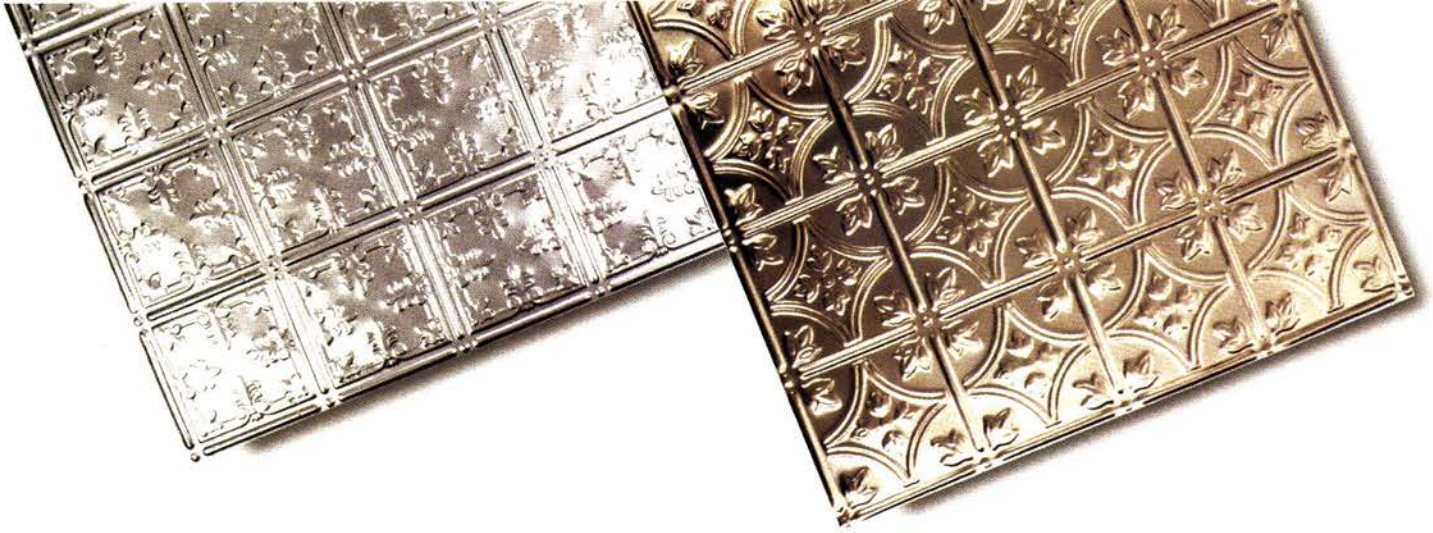
Practical, decorative, and often faithfully reproduced, pressed-



Pressed-metal ceiling panels come in patterns that range from repeats every 3" to repeats of 12" or 24" (top), which require ample room to strut their stuff. Colors include brass, copper, steel, chrome, and white (above).

Step by Step

The steps shown here employ the traditional furring-strip approach to installing ceiling panels, as suggested by AA Abbingdon. Most installers now cover the entire ceiling with plywood, which eliminates many of these steps. Manufacturers will provide even more detailed instructions, and not all are the same. For instance, W.F. Norman recommends applying the cornice first. When using panels with a large pattern, you may want to buy "filler" panels that allow you to bridge your field and cornice without cutting into the field pattern.



Style Steel

BY KATHLEEN FISHER

the visual thunder from the rest of your decor.

metal ceilings are also easy to install. Peaking in popularity right around the turn of the last century, they were available from more than three dozen manufacturers, some offering hundreds of patterns, from about 1880 to 1930. Corrugated iron was used on ceilings as early as 1868. That makes metal ceilings historically appropriate for at least a half century of house styles.

Don't have a Queen Anne with 12' ceilings and a double parlor? For a small space like Sally's farmhouse kitchen, dealers will steer you toward repeats as small as 3" and cornices as shallow as 1 1/2". In big rooms you can choose grand designs designated Colonial, Gothic, Oriental, or Empire, or flaunting Deco motifs, often with matching central rosettes and other flourishes.

Granted, they saw wider use in commercial establishments

than in houses. But metal ceilings and even walls "just weren't all that uncommon," especially in the Victorian period, says Neal Quitno, vice president of W.F. Norman, which has been operating in the same building in Nevada, Missouri, for more than a century. Nevada is a town of 10,000 about two hours south of Kansas City. Despite being off-the-beaten-path, Norman gets a steady stream of people who want nothing more than to testify to the great condition of their 100-year-old ceilings and learn about how they were made, Neal says. Today he estimates that half of Norman's sales are to residences.

Often called "tin" ceilings, they were never pure tin but steel coated with tin, like a tin can. "Tin was a generic name for sheet metal," Neal says, "just as the people who worked with it were called

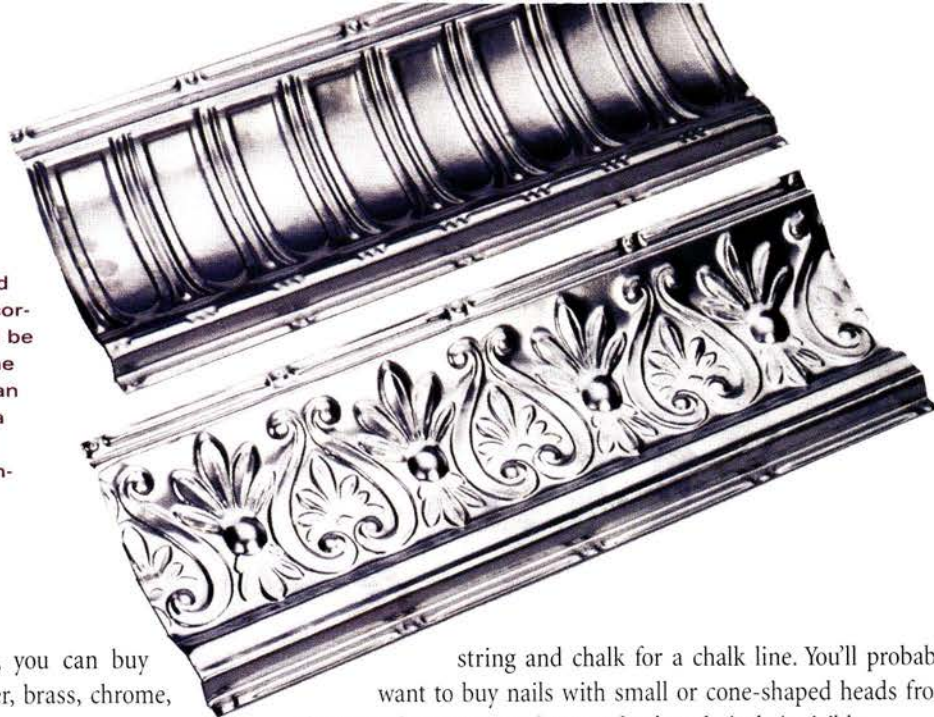


1 Find the center of the ceiling and snap a chalk line at a right angle to the ceiling beams. Then snap chalk lines to each side of this line, half the width of your furring strip, which in this case is 1". Measuring from these, snap chalk every 12" to the edge of your ceiling.

2 Screw a furring strip to the ceiling with one edge on your second chalk line and covering your center line. Working across the room, screw up furring strips with their outer edges against the chalk lines. Also fasten furring strips around the edge of your ceiling.

3 Most metal panels are 2' by 4'. Screw up short perpendicular furring strips so they are 48" on center. When you have a grid of furring strips across the room, check with a straight edge to make sure the strips are even horizontally. Where needed, loosen screws and shim out the furring strips.

Sure, you could have a wood cornice, but you'd be missing half the fun. Dealers can help you pick a metal cornice pattern to complement your field panels.



tinsmiths." In addition to bare steel, you can buy pressed metal today finished in copper, brass, chrome, and prepainted white.

A century ago, people installed pressed metal because it was not only widely available, but also relatively inexpensive. Used on walls—commonly as 4' high dadoes, but also in stairwells and even all the way to the ceiling—it could substitute for wainscoting or wallpaper. Some patterns imitated masonry such as stucco or brick. It's still highly affordable today, starting at about \$3 a square foot for field panels and \$3 a running foot for cornices. It's also fire-proof and otherwise virtually indestructible unless your ceiling springs a huge leak.

The best news for the semiskilled is that pressed metal is a no-brainer to put up. The only tools you need are heavy gloves (edges can be razor sharp), a hammer, tin snips, a tape measure, and

string and chalk for a chalk line. You'll probably want to buy nails with small or cone-shaped heads from the manufacturer to make sure they're relatively invisible.

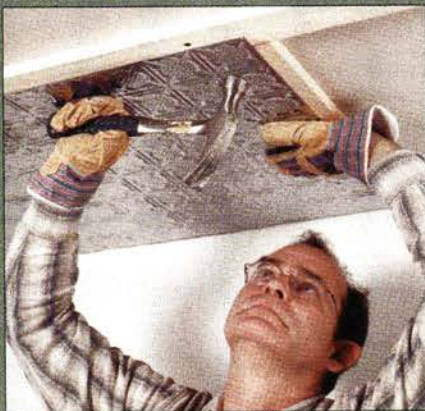
Tin ceiling panels won't hold securely if nailed directly to plaster or wallboard. The time-honored installation method is to lay a grid of furring strips as a base, an approach you'll need if you choose a design with deep coffering or if your ceiling is markedly uneven. Today many installers choose a substrate of plywood, which needs to be 3/8" thick over an existing ceiling and 1/2" thick over bare joists or rafters.

Most suppliers offer "drop in" ceiling panels that you can use if you already have a dropped ceiling or if you're adding one to camouflage utilities as in Sally's kitchen. Some of these come with an edge that falls below the metal ceiling grid to hide it; the other option is to paint the grid and tiles the same color.



4

Start laying panels in the corner of the room farthest from the door, where any imperfections will be most noticeable. Line up the panel edge with the center of the furring strip; a second pair of hands is helpful.



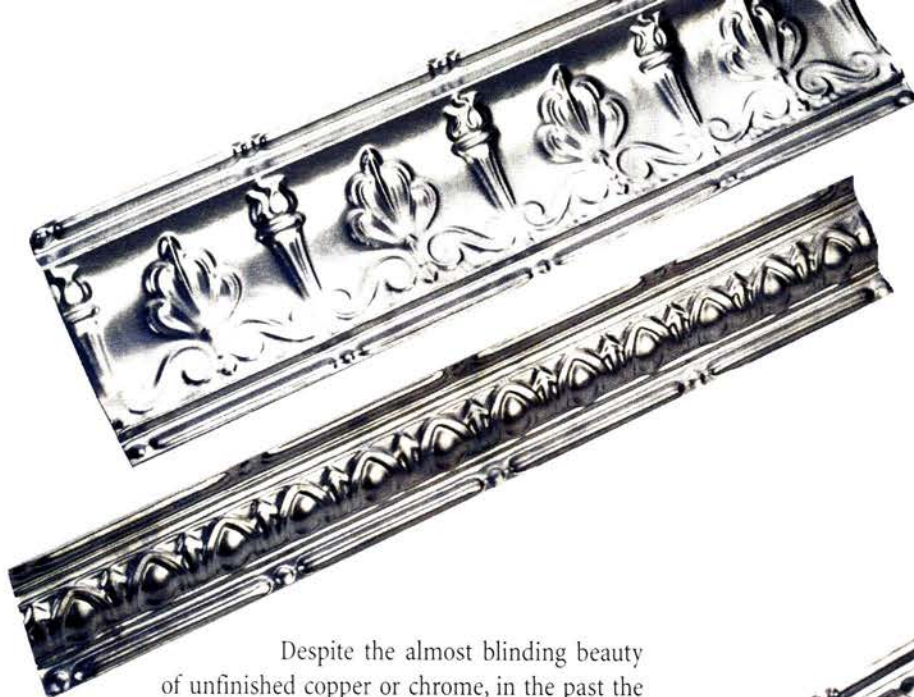
5

"Beads" along the edge of each panel help you in overlapping them. Nail edges every 6", to the side of beads that will be on the bottom and through beads that will be on top. Where edges gap, rap them with the flat head of a nail. This process is called "caulking," but you can also use latex caulk or glazing compound to close up any particularly stubborn spots.



6

If you have odd-shaped corners, metal ceiling panels are easy to cut with tin snips. The newly cut edge will be especially sharp; avoid holding the cut edge so it rubs against your palm, even with gloves on.



Metal cornices can be 10" high and project 12" from the wall, or be modest little strips less than 2" each way. You can nail narrow cornice to your wall's top plate; nail deeper cornice to the studs.

Despite the almost blinding beauty of unfinished copper or chrome, in the past the panels often came pre-painted in grey, white, or red oxide. You can preserve the original metal glow under clear lacquer or oil-based polyurethane, or be more historically correct and paint the metal with oil-based paint; you'll need to prime the panels but can do so before you install them. For steamy rooms like kitchens and bathrooms, priming the undersides is recommended.

Some metal ceiling owners accentuate their three-dimensional drama with fancier finish treatments, such as faux finishes or acid washing, or by applying multiple paint colors and wiping off part of the top layers to highlight the embossed designs. If you really get bitten by the decorative metal bug, you can use it to frame mirrors, cover bed headboards, or inset it into kitchen cabinets—"pretty much anything the imagination allows," Neal says.



For a list of
SUPPLIERS,
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7 Dealers often sell pre-coped and mitered cornices. If you need to cope your own, make a template first, using the reverse edge of another piece of cornice. It may take a couple of tries. Then use a marker to draw the edge to be cut.



8 Because of the often elaborate patterns of pressed metal, cutting a flat edge on your cornice may leave you with gaps. Instead, "fringe" the edge just a bit, which will allow you to caulk together the edges of the cornice as you did with your field panels.



If you already have the grid for a drop-in ceiling, you can upgrade its aesthetics with metal ceiling panels made to fit the standard 2' by 2' holes. Some come with flanges or "profiles" that cover the grid.

Colonial Revival

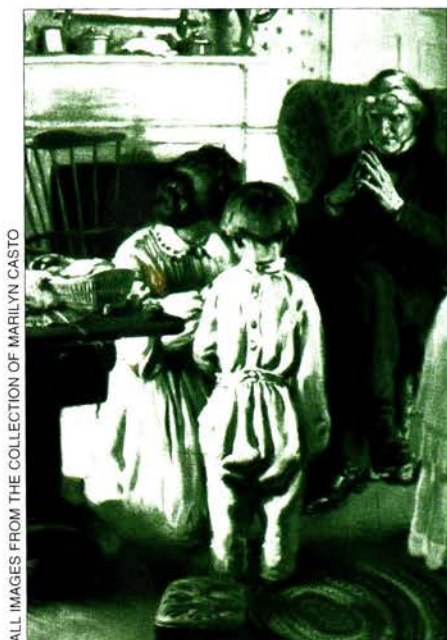
Reinvention Interiors

BY MARILYN CASTO

This perennially popular style has little to do with what early American homes really looked like.



Advertisements like the one above, which appeared in the November 1899 *Ladies' Home Journal*, often threw in images of Pilgrims and blunderbusses, but most of the furniture they extolled with "It's Colonial"—such as rocking chairs—were anything but.



ALL IMAGES FROM THE COLLECTION OF MARILYN CASTO

This story illustration from a 1906 *Harper's* exudes the sense of cozy domesticity that Colonial Revival was supposed to create.

Of the many decorative styles that have come and gone since the middle of the 19th century, none has been more enduring than Colonial Revival. A stroll through furniture stores or suburban residences or a glance at the magazine rack instantly reveals the continued appeal of colonial design. Popular though it is, the revival has seldom been noted as an accurate representation of colonial interiors.

The Colonial Revival style wove together threads of nostalgia, concern for good taste, patriotism, design reform, and some less noble or pure influences, such as a fear of new ideas and traditions brought by immigrants. Appealing to many social and economic classes, it appeared in both grand and modest houses. Colonial Revival sold—and still sells—well. Homeowners and designers sought to create a comfortable, well-furnished appearance representative of the way they wanted to believe their ancestors had lived.

Although the Colonial Revival did not reach peak popularity until much later, its origins date to the 1840s. In 1841 Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote *Grandfather's Chair*, a book in which a chair bears witness to events that happened around it. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's 1845 poem "The Old Clock on the Stairs" inspired an 1868 painting of the same name by Edward Lamson Henry, and together they perpetuated a furniture placement stereotype.

Floors were likely to be bare in colonial times, but the 1924 *House & Garden* illustration above reflects a Revival motif: oriental carpets (albeit often imitation) placed diagonally in the room. Wing chairs were popular seating and drapes graced windows in formal rooms.





In informal rooms, such as bedrooms and kitchens, the bare windows of early Americans gave way to Priscilla curtains. This 1924 *House & Garden* ad from the Wallpaper Guild claimed that you would find wallpaper "in practically all of America's historic homes dating from the Colonial period." In fact, it wasn't until the Revival period that wallpaper was more common than paint.

Original Versus Revival

Ever wonder how the colonial era compared to the Colonial Revival? Colonial Revival interiors feature many furnishings that would have been luxuries before the Revolution.

Original (1650-1776)	Colonial Revival (1840-1950)
Floors	
Bare	Area rugs Scatter rugs Diagonal rugs Oriental carpets Braided rugs
Seating	
Stools and benches	Wingbacks
Loose cushions	Sofas
Side chairs	Side chairs
Upholstery (expensive)	
Wingbacks (expensive)	
Ornament	
Carving (expensive)	Carving common Pressed wood
Windows	
Often bare	Curtains Draperies
Lighting	
Candles Oil lamps	Electric lighting
Walls	
Unfinished or whitewashed Paneling and wallpaper (expensive)	Wallpaper common Paneling
Fabric	
Minimal	Used extensively

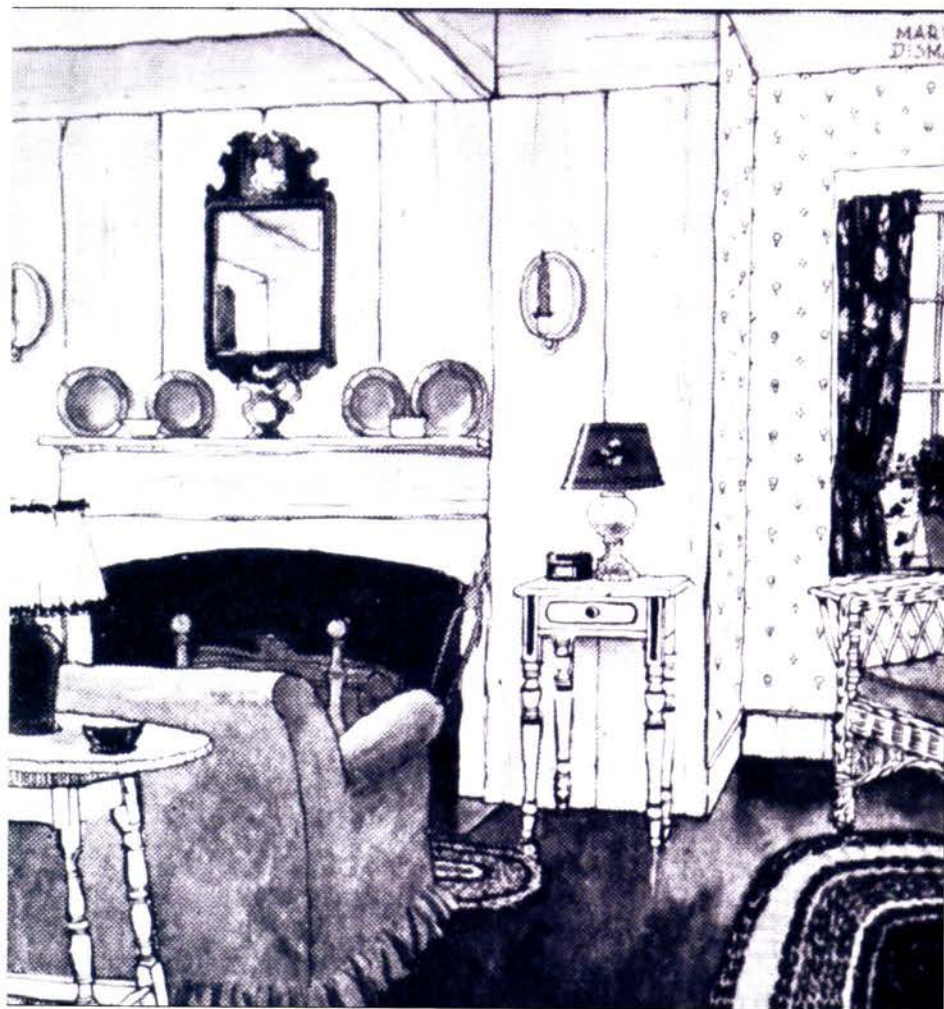
The 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia stimulated a passion for the past, called by some the "Colonial Craze." Sanitary Fairs and other 19th-century exhibitions featured New England kitchens in which their creators produced a distinct antiquarian air by gathering odds and ends that we still strongly associate with Colonial Revival. One was a huge fireplace, often surrounded by a miscellaneous assortment of kitchen utensils and herbs dangling from the ceiling. Guns and powder horns frequently adorned the area above the fireplace, despite the fact that any colonist hanging a powder horn above fire was courting trouble. Well into the 20th century, fireplaces retained their romantic Victorian association—"hearth" being practically synonymous with "home"—combining somewhat anachronistically with images of colonial ancestors huddled around the warmth of the flames.

COLLECTORS WENT FORTH TO seek antiques. Just as today, not everyone bought into the fad. L. M. Montgomery, popular author of *Anne of Green Gables*, wrote a story in which a character failed to see the charm of the old items others eagerly acquired. "But the rich folks have gone cracked over them. Yes, and pay more for them than would buy a real nice set with a marble-topped burey. You may well say there's lots of fools in the world."

Reacting against Victorian "eyesores," homeowners regarded practically anything made prior to 1830 as more tasteful and dubbed it "colonial," happily combining styles. Any furnishings from the 17th century (sometimes called Pilgrim furniture) through the early 19th-century Empire style found their way into Colonial Revival interiors. Reflecting the middle-class's new-found purchasing power, interiors filled with furnishings in quantities beyond the colonial period's wildest dreams. Among the most common furniture types were wingback chairs, gateleg and butterfly tables, tea trolleys, ladder-back chairs, Windsor chairs, pedestal tables, grandfather clocks, corner cupboards, sideboards, and fall-front desks.

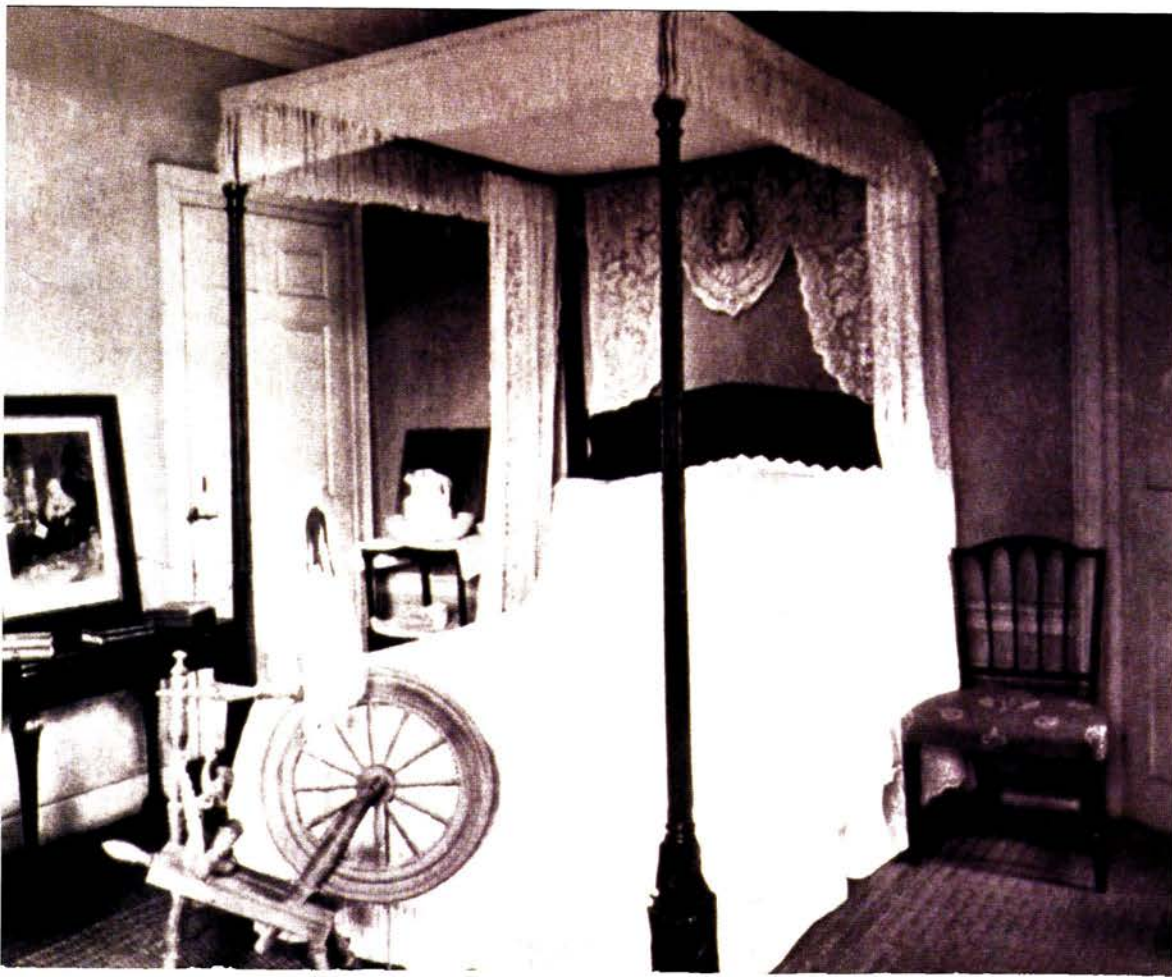
Since no one thought it always neces-





This image from *House of Simplicity* by Ethel Davis Seal (1926) hits a number of Revival hallmarks, including the Windsor chair, ruffles skirting the sofa, braided rugs, pewter plates on the mantel, and candle wall sconces.

An 1840s auction depicted in *The Quest of the Colonial* (1912) by Robert and Elizabeth Shackleton. To dress the house appropriately, revivalists had to hit the antiques circuit regularly.



Four-poster beds with ruffles, tassels, or lace canopies were de rigueur. "The head of the bed," one 1903 book pointed out to the furniture-arrangement challenged, "goes against the blank wall." This image, from Mary Northend's *American Homes and Their Furnishings in Colonial Times* (1912), captures another icon, the spinning wheel, which was often arrayed with other outmoded implements.



Sixty years after Longfellow penned "The Old Clock on the Stairs," Harper's in 1906 illustrated the staying power of this particular accessory placement.

sary (or possible) to completely fill a house with truly old items, antiques frequently shared rooms with new "colonial" pieces. Newly produced Colonial Revival furniture ranged from fairly accurate reproductions to the distinctly odd, such as rockers with claw-and-ball feet. In the interests of comfort and convenience manufacturers simply invented new "old" pieces. Tea trolleys and radio cabinets were certainly not features of the colonial period, but the furniture industry supplied them in every style from Queen Anne to Empire. Pressed wood would have been unknown as well, but that inconvenient fact didn't stop manufacturers from using the inexpensive technique. The comfort of rocking chairs overrode their absence in actual colonial interiors.

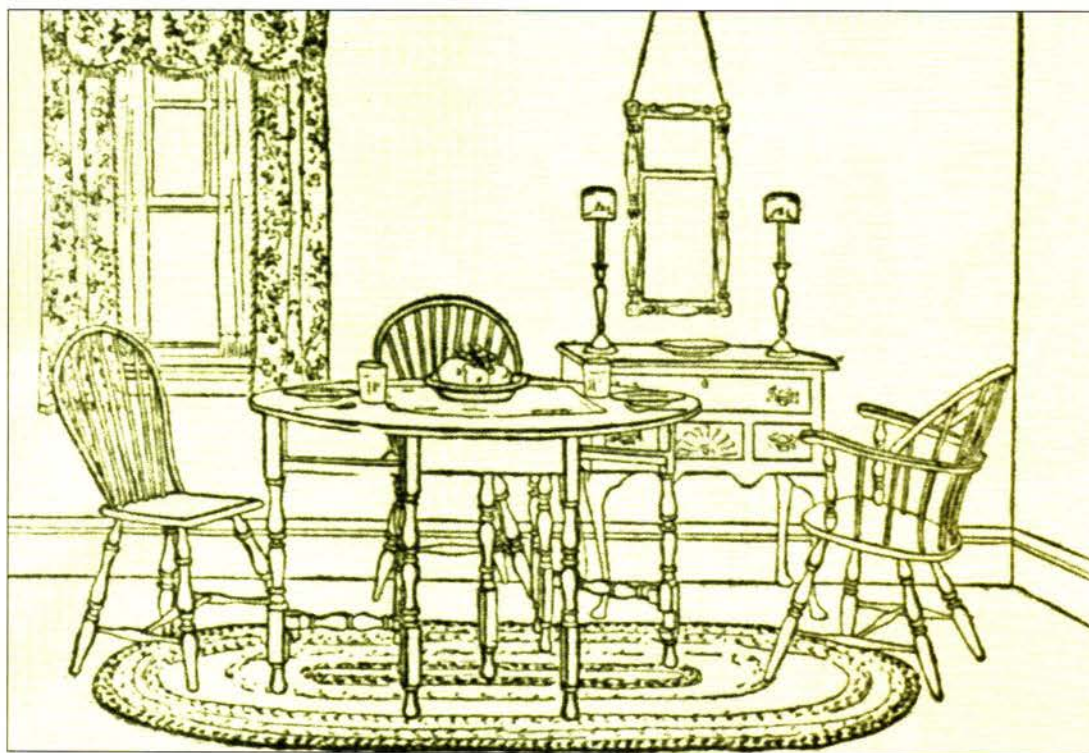
Homeowners often accessorized interiors with work implements from the past. In an industrialized present, obsolete hand production suggested simpler, less demanding times. Spinning wheels became common adjuncts of living rooms and, indeed, continue to be popular features of the Early American style. They were often accompanied by iron cooking pots, bellows, and warming pans. Pewter plates gleamed from shelves, and the rush to acquire old china of all types made pop-

ular collectibles of objects that previous owners had condemned as merely old dishes.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY Colonial Revival spaces, reflecting a lingering Victorian aesthetic, tended to appear somewhat cluttered. Early 20th-century decorators, following a trend toward simplicity in design, limited accessories but still found space for similar items—candlesticks, plates, and pots.

Lighting presented a problem. Homeowners wanted brighter illumination than existed during the colonial period and certainly preferred the safety and ease of electricity to the open flames and mess of candles and oil lamps. Manufacturers offered a variety of wall sconces and ceiling fixtures in pseudo-colonial patterns. Since such items had no real historical precedent, designers often copied a candle form, with the base as the candlestick and electric bulbs as the static "flames."

Colonial Revival floors also owed more to the era's nostalgic beliefs in a comfortable well-furnished past than to the reality of the colonial era, when most floors went bare. Multiple scatter rugs, often posi-



These two pictures give wordless proof of the virtue of elimination.

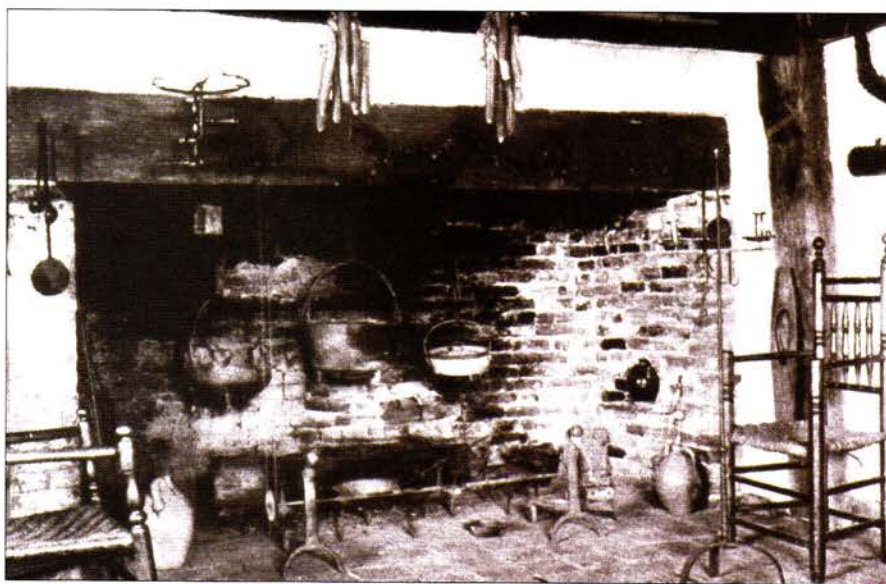
In the early 1920s, Colonial Revival was one of several styles embraced as a reaction against Victorian clutter.

tioned diagonally and frequently hooked or braided, enlivened and softened Colonial Revival interiors. Oriental-style area rugs (rarely the genuine article) offered an alternative. In bathrooms and kitchens, practicality won out and homeowners favored tile and linoleum for their ease of care and cleanliness, regardless of the fact that their ancestors would have been amazed to see such materials or, indeed, such spaces.

Colonial Revival interiors featured many more fabrics than would have been common during the actual colonial era. Ruffles edged bed skirts, canopies, and upholstered pieces. Priscilla curtains foamed around many windows, especially in casual areas. More formal spaces featured draperies headed by valances. Chintz, floral prints, and checks were especially popular.

Colors leaned toward a subdued pastel palette. Today's more advanced color research technology has revealed that our colonial forbearers favored much brighter colors, but peering through the dim lens of historical nostalgia, Colonial Revivalists preferred to think that their ancestors lived in quietly tasteful surroundings devoid of anything at all garish.

The end result of filtering colonial



design through later attitudes and perceptions was a revival that offered both literal and emotional comfort. Colonial Revival appeals to the modern world for the same reason that people in the late 19th and early 20th centuries liked it. The rooms evoke an era that seems (however erroneously) simpler and safer, full of quiet restful spaces and objects with which an imaginative person can summon the past. 🏠

Marilyn Casto is an associate professor of interior design at Virginia Tech.

Wallace Nutting photographs such as this hearth in his 1923 *Massachusetts Beautiful* did much to convey a sense of colonial accoutrements. Some spread by others—such as dried herbs and powder horns near the fire-place—would have been ill advised.

For a list of
SUPPLIERS,
see page 95



Sawyer Mark Brantley, who has been a missionary to the Ukraine and caretaker of a Blue Ridge youth camp, grew up with a passion for wood.

Three years ago, when an isolated windstorm took down some 30 trees at Leesburg, Virginia's, Oatlands Plantations—one of them an English oak probably 200 years old—the staff could have called in a trash hauler or had a huge bonfire. Instead, they gave a whistle to independent sawyer Mark Brantley, who rolled in with his Wood-Mizer LT40 and turned the biggest pieces of timber into 1 1/4" thick floorboards for the house museum's greenhouse gift shop.

H. Baker, Oatlands restoration projects manager, also needed heavy rafters and floor joists for the greenhouse project. For that he turned to Doug Lawrence who, like Mark, lives less than an hour away in the Blue Ridge foothills. Doug came to the res-

cue with 3" by 9" white oak that he had recut from old mill timbers.

These situations—a raw material left by a messy storm and a need for a unique end-product—are just two reasons why these "have sawmill, will travel" entrepreneurs are attractive. Like sawyers in conventional mills, they can salvage old-growth timbers, such as heart pine or chestnut, but often do it for less money and in a more environmentally friendly way.

For example, the narrower kerf of a portable bandsaw blade is said to produce 30 percent more useable lumber from a log than a circular saw. "The bandsaws are slower, but more accurate," says Doug. "I gain about one board for every seven I cut. It doesn't grind the log into sawdust." The sawdust that does fly gets returned to the soil immediately rather than being discarded. Lumber milled on site consumes less fuel than hauling the log or timber to a mill, then hauling it back to the point of distribution or use.

Wood-Mizer, which pretty much launched the narrow-kerf portable bandsaw only 20 years ago, says it has about 30,000 owners across the country, and that doesn't count those who have bought used Wood-Mizers when another owner wants to upgrade. The "vast majority" of owners use the tools to make money either full- or part-time, according to company literature. Factor in roughly 80 U.S. and Canadian

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Got a whole raft of potential lumber? Sawyers will dock their mills right on your property.

By KATHLEEN FISHER



A contractor uses carpentry tools to remill rescued timbers for his own house.

BY NAN CHASE

When building contractor Todd Combs discovered a load of old structural lumber a few years ago, it looked unfit for anything but a one-way trip to the landfill.

Even in great condition, old wood tends to be discarded for economic reasons: Recovery involves hours of tedious labor that costs more than new dimensional lumber and hardwood veneer. In this case the numbers made sense to Todd, who was sure he could remill the wood himself and use the new lumber for a long dreamed of home renovation. He got a few surprises along the way, but in the process honed techniques that now allow him to rescue other woods that he reuses for framing, paneling, cabinets, even furniture.

Todd grew up on a family farmstead dating back at least four generations in the Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina. As a youngster his parents' house—where he now lives with his wife Lori and daughter Sarah—had a decidedly 1970s look complete with orange Formica countertops and green shag carpet. "I knew I didn't want to live in this house forever the way it was," he relates.

Transforming the building from disco to down-home began in the mid-1990s, shortly after Todd and Lori were married and moved into the basement apartment. (He's since built his parents a new house nearby). Todd was helping to remodel a 100-year-old farmhouse near the Blue Ridge Parkway. The owner, a newcomer to

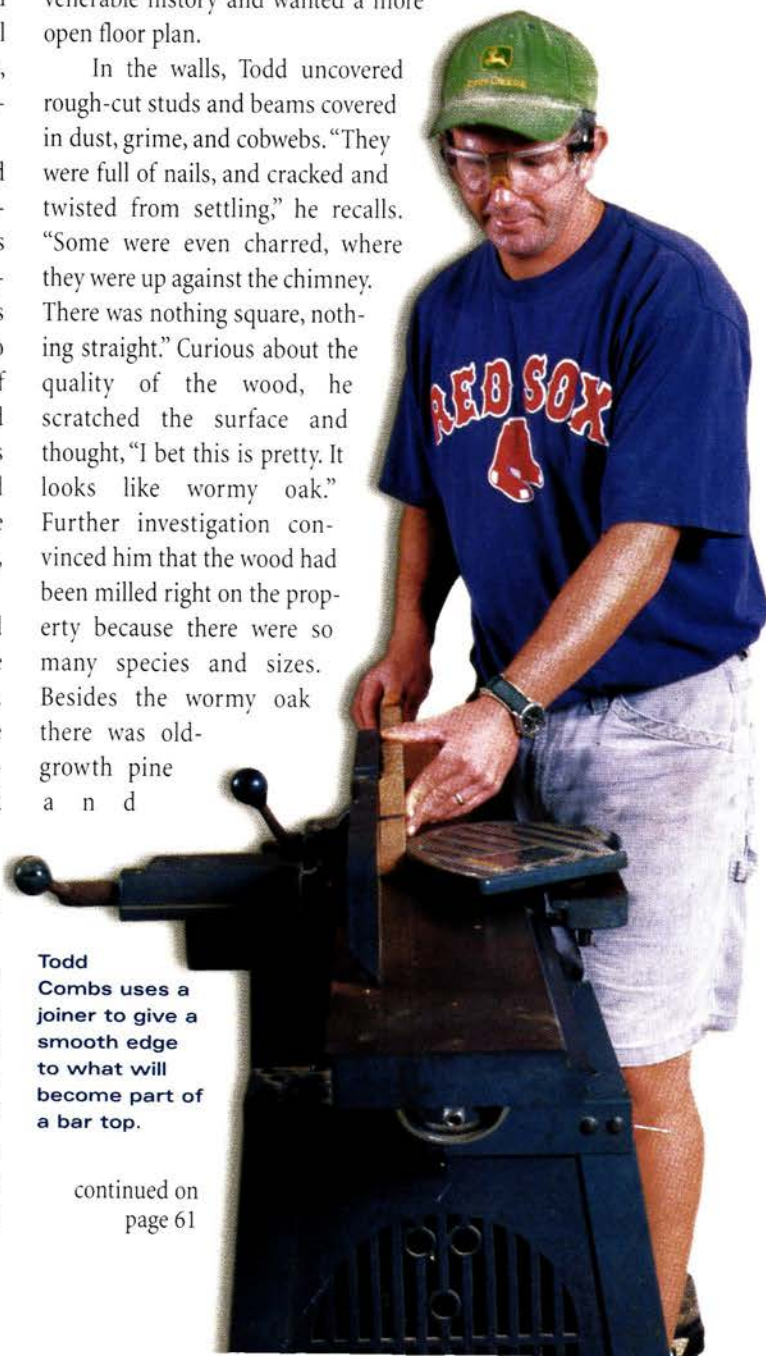
the region, wasn't interested in the house's venerable history and wanted a more open floor plan.

In the walls, Todd uncovered rough-cut studs and beams covered in dust, grime, and cobwebs. "They were full of nails, and cracked and twisted from settling," he recalls. "Some were even charred, where they were up against the chimney. There was nothing square, nothing straight." Curious about the quality of the wood, he scratched the surface and thought, "I bet this is pretty. It looks like wormy oak." Further investigation convinced him that the wood had been milled right on the property because there were so many species and sizes. Besides the wormy oak there was old-growth pine

a n d

Todd Combs uses a joiner to give a smooth edge to what will become part of a bar top.

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companies with competing products, and there are a staggering number of well-wheeled sawyers.

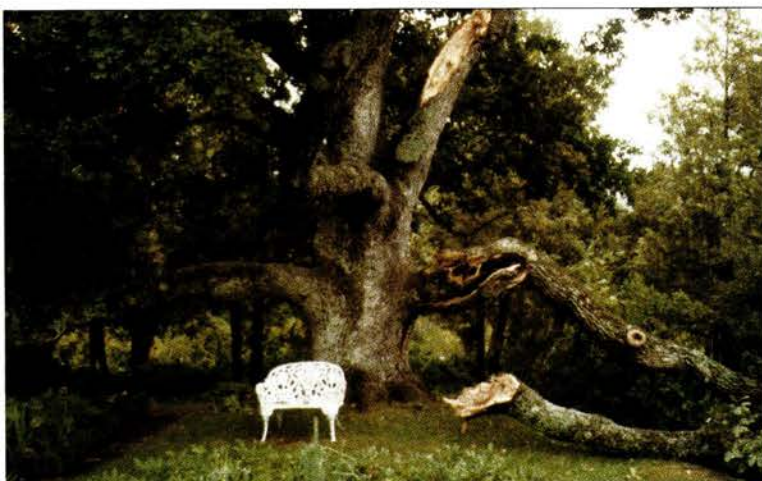
The bad news is that they aren't always easy to find. Mark and Doug get most referrals by word of mouth or from ads in local papers. Even so, Doug—who earns about 20 percent of his income from milling, in between tree farming and raising cattle—says, “I seem to be behind all the time.” This is an instance where city slickers are likely to come out on the short end of the stick. Not only are they unlikely to have wood lots or old barns on their property, but urban interstate loops aren't the friendliest places to haul a portable sawmill, typically more than 25' long. On the other hand, Wood-Mizer has a locator service that managed to find us a sawyer in a small Virginia town that can't even boast a professional house painter.

Is any job too large, or too small? Doug says he once sawed four beams to provide a flat surface for the owner to apply to a ceiling. “It took me longer to drive there and set up than it did to do the sawing.” Says Mark, “People will call about a tree they had to take down that's special to them, and they want anything of it they can save.”

Their machines handle logs up to 3' in diameter, raising them to the cutting bed with a hydraulic lift. The maximum log length for a typical machine is 21'; Mark recently got a call from Pennsylvania Dutch country about old beams perfect for a Virginia client who wanted a new floor, but to bring them home he had to have the 42', 1 1/2' thick monsters cut in half.

A job can be too dangerous. “I've reached the age that, when I get too high in an old barn, my legs are shaking,” laughs Doug, “although I can tie a rope to it and pull it down.” Nor does he cut trees too close to a house. Mark likewise has had

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Mark milled these downed limbs at Leesburg, Virginia's, Oatlands Plantation into thick plank flooring for its greenhouse gift shop.



Old timbers can be both beautiful and rugged, but flaws such as this crack along a growth ring can eat into their value.



Mark saws 1 1/2' thick warehouse timbers to 1" thick planks. They'll later be planed to 3/16" to fill a customer's request for 1,500 square feet of flooring.



hemlock. When the owner said “Just toss it,” Todd got permission to haul away a one-ton truckload of the

wood, which he stacked in his basement. There it stayed until the he and Lori got ready for a major kitchen overhaul in 2001.

The first step in remilling used lumber is digging out nails invariably embedded in each piece. The job took Todd weeks of evening work in his garage shop. “I asked people who had salvaged wood if they worked with x-rays or metal detectors,” but it turned out they employed a cruder approach.

“I used old-fashioned wire brushes to locate the nail heads—hoping to make them shine or find a hole. Then I would probe with a hole punch and try to feel metal,” says Todd. Nail removal is necessary for both safety and economics. “I ruined

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Todd holds an unfinished piece of rescued lumber against his thrice-varnished kitchen bar top, which contains a variety of wood species.



A “country cabin” look suited the Appalachian Mountain setting of the Combs house. Todd laid the rustic-textured ceramic tiles on the counters and floors.



what he views in retrospect as a near-death experience with a dead tree. Living trees, like most of those top-

pled by the Oatlands storm, are often too green for immediate use. "Every inch of thickness requires a year of open-air drying time," says Mark. Some sawyers have kilns or access to one to speed the process.

What will these services cost? Factors include 1) distance traveled, 2) additional subcontracting services (such as planing for fine woodwork), and 3) the condition of the wood. If you're on the seeking end—wanting wood for a special project—you can expect to pay more for a hard-to-find species or size. Doug says for large jobs at the client's site he charges by the board foot; on smaller jobs by the hour. Mark charges by the hour to saw the customer's wood, by the square foot when he delivers an order of flooring from elsewhere.

Splits, rotted sections, or more than the usual plethora of nails eat into the sawyer's profits. Nails provide the war stories of many timber recycling projects. It can easily take a couple hours to remove all the nails from a 10' timber, according to Mark, and Doug recalls hitting seven nails

in just one maple tree. "The blades will go through metal, but if you have a big beam sometimes you're better off to cut below the nail level," he says. "Once you cut into the beam, you lose the aged patina of the exposed surface anyway." Both sawyers say learning to use these huge machines is simple. Mark got his first chance to help another sawyer about 20 years ago, but really got hooked in the early '90s when his father had some trees cut down and the sawyer asked Mark if he wanted to finish the job. Mark later bought that portable sawmill, which he's now replaced with a bigger model.

Tempted to try a portable sawmill for the dentil mouldings and gingerbread on your porch? Prices range from about \$5,000 for a "personal sawmill" to almost \$30,000 for Wood-Mizer's Super-Hydraulic Turbo-Charged Water-Cooled diesel. Of course, there *are* all those used models out there. Warning: as with any other hobby, this one can take on a life of its own with tempting accessories like "command control" options and companion products from debarkers to kilns. 🪚

Mark uses a metal detector to find imbedded nails (below), then goes after them with a century-old nail puller (top right).



This heart pine, tongue-and-grooved and partially finished, is ready to become a floor.





one set of joiner blades and at least one set of planer blades—a couple hundred bucks,”

Todd says. He urges anyone working with salvaged lumber keep spare blades on hand. “I don’t care how hard you look, you’re going to miss a few nails. There’s no way to get them all.”

The next step was to saw the lumber straight and square again; in one severe instance a beam had contracted into a banana shape. In each case, the goal was to attain one straight edge that would pave the way for the rest. Since he didn’t have special tools he used whatever seemed to work best—top planer, joiner, table saw, or a combination. For one big piece he called on his beam saw, a close relative of the chain saw that rips lengthwise through large pieces of wood. Because the tongue-and-groove wainscoting was warped beyond ever fitting together again, he ripped all the tongues off. “We were knee deep in sawdust a couple of times,” he recalls. With all the pieces squared up, he started building kitchen cabinets, load-bearing room dividers, a media center, a long bar, even matching window sills and radiator covers.

The biggest continuous piece of this

jumbo jigsaw puzzle was the bar top, assembled from random widths and colors of wood—including redwood remilled from discarded posts he found under his own house. Todd got a smooth finish by hand-sanding with 220 grit paper between coats of marine spar varnish; he never uses steel wool because it leaves behind tiny metal pieces. The bar top currently has three coats of matte varnish leaving a smooth, waterproof top. “I was kind of nervous about using all these woods together, but pretty wood is pretty wood,” he says. “Who cares if it’s matched?”

Todd also replaced kitchen counters with a rough textured, neutral-tone ceramic, and laid similar flooring tiles in a pattern of diamonds and rectangles. Light fixtures of wrought-iron and frosted-glass plus a punched-tin valance over the kitchen sink light help roll back the decorative clock.

There’s still more wood from Todd’s initial reclamation project stacked neatly in the basement. He plans to use some of it, along with scraps of cherry flooring and other leftovers, to make coffee tables and end tables. 🪵

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Nan Chase helped restore her own old house in Boone, North Carolina.



A lava lamp on a bar divider between kitchen and living room is a nod back to the 1970s period from which the house was converted.



Imperfections such as this “wormy” pattern (left) help give old lumber its appeal. Todd used some of the remilled lumber to shape new covers for his hot-water baseboard radiators (above).

BY GEORGE ABRY

Crescent City When a pair of Comeback

The Lower Garden District of New Orleans is a splendid throwback to antebellum high society, when wealthy planters and merchants lived and entertained lavishly here on the sultry Mississippi delta.

Today the classic architectural details of its Greek Revival and Queen Anne mansions are framed by lush braids of mossy oaks, crepe myrtles, and wisteria. In the midst of this exotic postcard is a 5,000-square-foot side-hall town house encircled by double galleries. When the house was completed in 1847, James Knox Polk was president of the United States and a war between the states was unthinkable. One of the first built on the periphery of Coliseum

Square, it must have given its early owners commanding views of still largely open surroundings.

Yet in 1971, Louis and Mary Len Costa were able to buy the house for less than \$40,000, a fire-sale sum that reflected the depths to which the neighborhood and its priceless architecture had plunged since Reconstruction. The area was a slum; in the early 20th century many of its pre-Civil War and Victorian residences had been chopped up recklessly to serve as boarding rooms. Winos and derelicts populated Coliseum Square, littering it with hypodermic syringes.

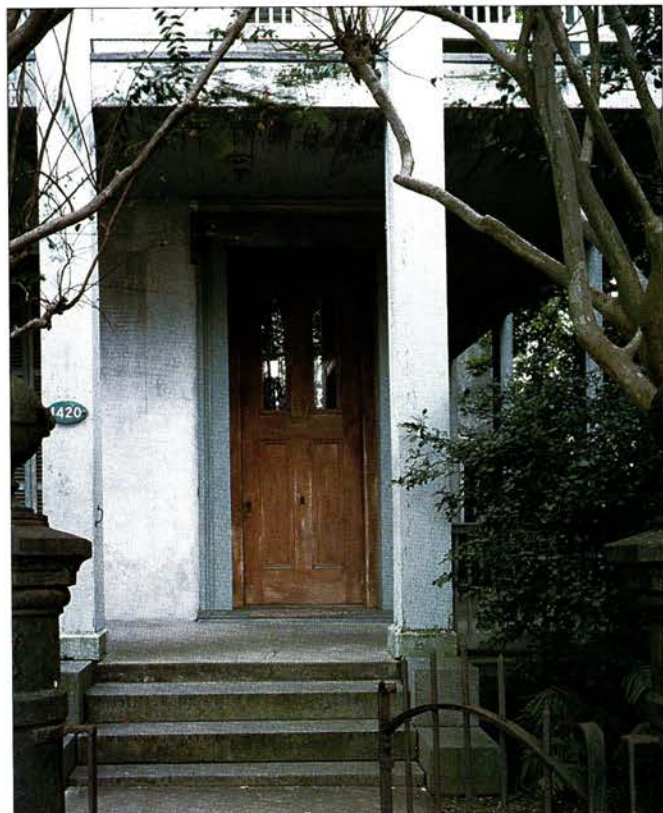
The Costas' purchase exemplified their sympathy for historic preservation—an attitude steeped in long-time urban loyalties and family tradition. Over the years they would find their lives bound not only to their own house, but to the entire Lower Garden District and its distinctive architectural history.

"I always lived in a big old house or an apartment in an old building," says Louis, an urban transportation planner who grew up in New Orleans. "It just never occurred to me to live in the suburbs—I mean, that was totally unacceptable in my family."

Adds Mary Len, an artist and Memphis transplant, "Once I moved here I realized it was my responsibility to learn as much as I could about Louisiana architecture. You have to learn how to care for anything that you have. You have to know its history, you have to know what shoulders it stands on, what foundation it has, so you can bring it forward or maintain it."

Not surprisingly given its time period, the Costa property shoulders a colorful but not always happy history. Its third owner was John Thornhill, a wealthy Virginia

A Greek key casing frames the faux bois (wood-grained) front door. The exterior brick walls originally were stuccoed, scored, and painted to resemble stone.



ALL PHOTOS RICHARD SEXTON EXCEPT WHERE NOTED



committed urbanites adopted an old house, the whole neighborhood became family.



Wooden galleries encircle the masonry building, providing a combination of proportion and simplicity typical of Greek Revival style. Two large dormers with casement windows rise above a dentiled cornice; crepe myrtles obscure double hung, sliphead windows and louvered shutters on the main two floors.

The Costas are self-described "avid auction hounds" who have furnished their home with a panoply of heirlooms, hand-me-downs, and period antiques.



PRESERVATION RESOURCE CENTER OF NEW ORLEANS

The Costas' house never looked as forlorn as this denizen of the Lower Garden District. Shown here in the 1980s, the house now has been fully restored.



planter who bought the house in 1854. Nine years later, federal troops evicted him and seized the mansion, designating it headquarters of the U.S. Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands. The home was sacked and its original paintings and antiques scattered and lost.

After buying the house, the Costas' first order of business was moving into the attic. Little did they know they would spend seven long years in that attic without heat or air conditioning—no small consequence in a city renowned not only for jazz and Creole cooking, but also for sweltering summers and dripping humidity.

The house needed too much work for them to dwell on their physical discomforts. Not only did the Costas hope to restore some of the lost grandeur and dignity befitting this pre-Civil War relic, but they wanted to return the building to a single-family home—no easy task given its bleak condition. In the 1940s a slumlord

had partitioned the once elegant rooms into nine separate apartments, each with a kitchen and bathroom. A woman who lived in one bedroom had 17 dogs. Walls were bisected with small doors, the pine floors covered with linoleum. A side gallery was filled in with weatherboarding and an assortment of windows to provide enough bathrooms and kitchens for tenants.

The sight of such a shambles didn't scare Louis. "I had lived in this city long enough to know what it was supposed to look like, that houses like this have the same floor plan, even though they had put up all these walls in odd places."

IN THE MEANTIME, RUMORS SPREAD of a pending Mississippi River bridge ramp right through the Lower Garden District. Residents set aside hammers and paintbrushes. The specter of concrete pillars uprooting centuries-old oak trees mobilized the Costas and their neighbors, who canvassed the area to marshal support for historic district status. Louis was a founding member of the Coliseum Square

Association, a group of residents who lobbied successfully to get the neighborhood placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. Local historic district status wasn't far behind.

As a result, the bridge ramp didn't happen. Scores of 19th-century mansions were spared further desecration, and when the Preservation Resource Center was formed in 1974, it helped pave the way for a neighborhood makeover that's still going strong.

Mary Len says that moving into one of the oldest neighborhoods in New Orleans required the couple to step back and look at the big picture. From a long-term vantage point, she concluded that her commitment had to go beyond merely rehabilitating her own sprawling residence from its floor to its 13' ceilings. "We didn't just commit to renovating this house," she says. "We committed to renovating the entire neighborhood." In the past 30 years they've both taken several turns on the Coliseum Square Association board of directors as well as serving in other capacities. Mary Len is currently House Tour chairman.

The once termite-riddled dining room features a salvaged mantel and faux finish mahogany paneling. The chandelier is from Louis's boyhood home.





Two American Empire sofas face the front parlor (background) and rear parlor. The crystal chandelier is from a one-time New Orleans department store, D.H. Holmes, the round Biedermeier table from a French Quarter antiques shop.

Operation Comeback, established in 1988, helped people buy blighted and abandoned homes that were attracting crime to the neighborhood.



PRESERVATION RESOURCE CENTER OF NEW ORLEANS

Louis says that “makeover” may describe what’s happening to the neighborhood, but not to their house. Other than restoring its single-family layout, they chose to work with what they had. “We didn’t reorganize anything. We didn’t gut all the walls and design a 1970s house inside.”

Instead, the Costas created their own personal décor: an eclectic blend of period pieces, hand-me-downs, auction items, and salvaged wood and antiques. In the commodious front parlor, which is painted a brilliant Pompeian red, visitors will find an American Empire sofa, an Egyptian Revival English side table, classical 19th-century Italian paintings and engravings from Paris, and a crystal chandelier from a long-lost downtown New Orleans department store—just to mention a few items from an exhaustive inventory of distinctive collectibles. The Greek key motif, an icon of the house’s architectural style, is ever present.

“The dining room is a real labor of love,” says Mary Len. “We pulled together a

lot of styles and reconstructed something that has become the center of our house.”

PEOPLE WHO RESTORE AND LIVE in old houses find that it’s a never ending process, a deadline forever pushed back. The Costas are no exception: A new roof, new gutters, termites—on and on. “I knew what the house should look like, but I didn’t realize how much money it would cost to fix or maintain it,” Louis says. “And things keep getting more expensive.”

It’s a cost of living that these preservation-minded residents are willing to pay. The restored elegance of the Costa house mirrors an ongoing architectural and social renaissance throughout the neighborhood. No longer down-in-the-dumps, the Lower Garden District in 1997 was proclaimed the nation’s “hippest” neighborhood by *Utne Reader* magazine. 🏠

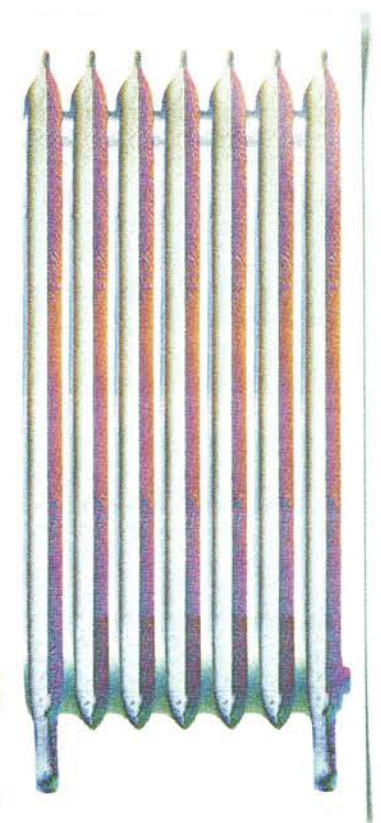
George Abry lives in New Orleans and writes frequently on history and architecture.



New Orleans artist George Schmidt painted this portrait of Myldred Masson Costa, Louis’s mother, which hangs in the rear parlor.

Hybrid Hydronics

BY DAN HOLOHAN



**How to add a
hot-water zone
to a steam-heating
system—
successfully!**

Let's say you own an old house with an antique steam-heating system that whispers to you on cold winter nights and smiles warmly with ornate cast-iron radiators. You like it just fine. Let's also suppose that you're planning a new kitchen, or you want to enclose the back porch and turn it into a year-round sitting room. That new space will want heat, and maybe you're thinking all you'll need is another steam radiator or two. Sure, it's possible to add steam radiators to an old steam system—but it's not so easy. What you're really looking for, though, is a new heating zone, and there's no reason why you have to tie into the old steam piping to get it. In fact, it may be more practical to add a brand new hot-water zone to that old steam system and even put it on its own thermostat.

Here's why. Imagine for a moment that your local heating contractor stops by to take a look at adding steam radiators. "Can you do it?" you ask.

"Not so easy," he says with an expression that conveys something between hopelessness and great expense, one that you, as an old-house owner, know well.

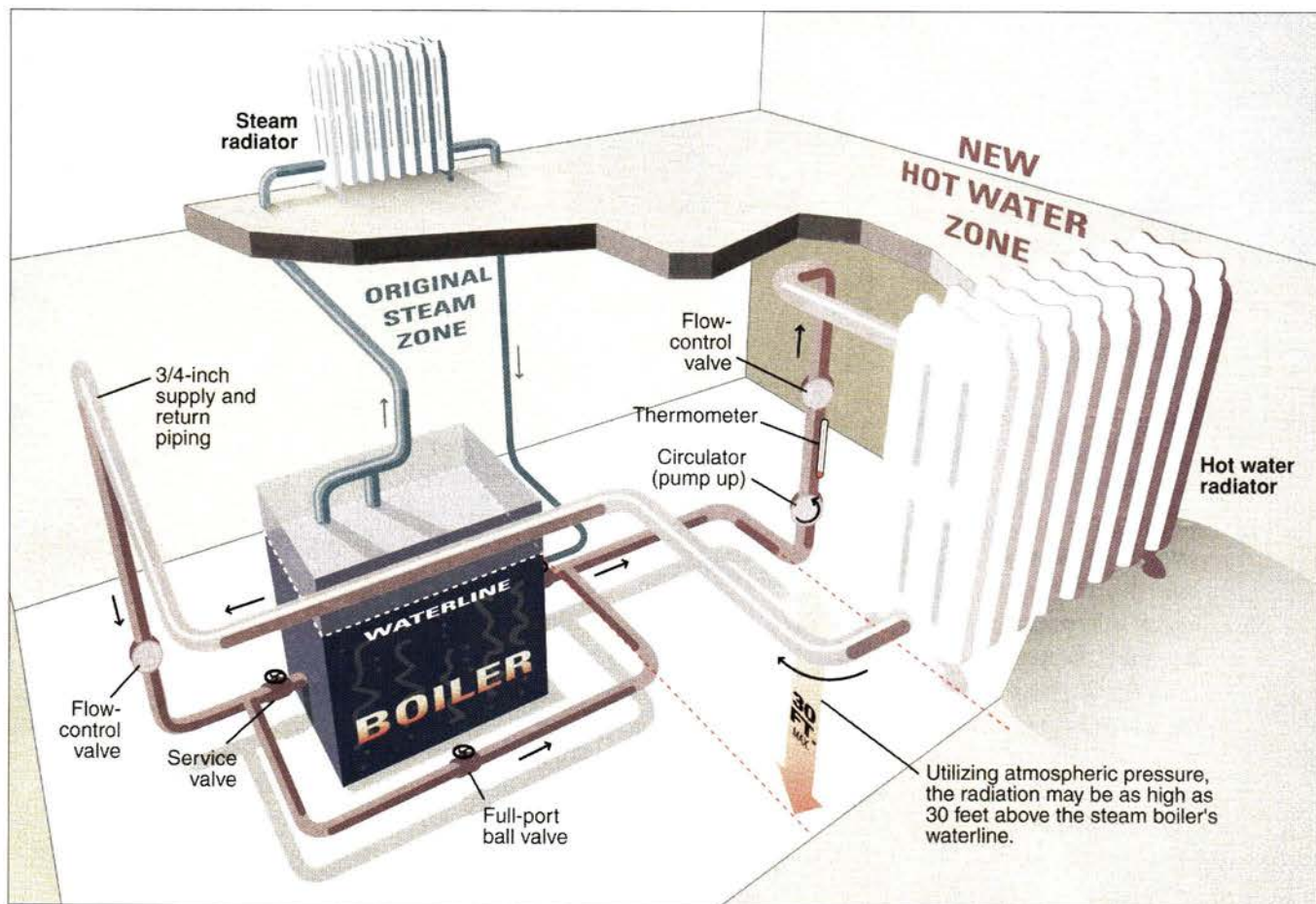
"These pipes are pretty old, and if I touch them," he snaps his fingers, "anything can happen."

Part of the challenge you face here is that most of the folks who understand steam heat happen to be dead. It's possible to add steam radiators to an old steam system, but you first have to make sure that the existing steam mains can handle the addi-

tional load. You also have to see if you can tie into that main in the basement with the proper size pipe and still get the correct pitch to the new radiators. Then you have to wonder if the new radiators will be compatible with the old system piping, and what effect all of this will have on the old boiler. Will the new piping bang and spit water when you're done? If so, what then? Creating a new hot-water zone is far from a no-brainer—indeed it's a job that's best left to the pros because they've got the right tools—but it does sidestep these issues.

LIKE WATER FROM STEAM

Here's how a pro can add a hot-water zone to your steam-heating system. First, keep in mind that a steam boiler is like a teakettle. It's partially filled with water and it uses the space above its waterline to make steam, which then races off into the piping in search of a way out (that being the air vents on the radiators and the vents near the ends of the main piping). To add a hot-water zone to that old steam system, the pro will have to grab hot water from the boiler at a point below the boiler's waterline. He'll use a circulating pump to move the water between the boiler and your new radiators, and he'll return the water to another tapping below the boiler's waterline. To ensure good circulation across



ALL ILLUSTRATIONS JOHN VAN PELT

Adding a hot-water zone (reddish piping) to a steam heating system requires tapping into opposite sides of the boiler below the water line. Installation details vary, but avoiding vents is the trick that keeps water in the system.

the boiler, that return tapping must be in a spot on the boiler that's not close to the supply tapping. If the supply and return tappings are too close together, the water will just scoot through your boiler and not remain there long enough to pick up the heat it will need to satisfy your new zone. This is where the tools and skills come in. Securing those tappings in a boiler—particularly an older boiler—can be a challenge. This is not a weekend project.

Now I know you're probably wondering how the water is going to stay in the new zone's piping if that piping is higher than the boiler. To answer this mystery, you'll need to get yourself a glass of water and a drinking straw. I'm now going to ask you to do something that you've probably been doing since you were a kid. Put the

straw in the glass of water and then place your finger over the top of the straw and lift it from the glass. The water stays in the straw, right? How come? Because the weight of the air (the atmospheric pressure) pushing the water into the straw is greater than the weight of the vertical column of water that's trying to fall out of the straw. Take your finger off the top of the straw and the air will suddenly have access to both ends of the water column. Gravity will take over and the water will fall out of the straw. The Principle of the Straw will allow you to put a hot-water zone up to the second floor of your house—even if you live in Denver!

The Principle of the Straw is also why you can't have any air vents in your new piping or radiators. If air gets in, the water

will fall from the pipe and wind up back in the boiler (and you can't use the circulating pump to fill the zone each time; it doesn't have enough power to do that). The piping to and from the new radiators should ideally be a continuous loop so that the pro can fill it with water before starting up the zone. He'll do this with a purge system, which is nothing more than two shutoff valves and two hose bibbs—one of each on the supply and the return, and below the boiler waterline. To fill the loop he'll close both shutoff valves (installed between the boiler and the hose bibbs) and open the hose bibbs. Then he'll put a hose on one of the bibbs and fill the piping and radiator with water. When water flows from the other bibb, the pro will know that he's done. Then, when he shuts the bibbs and opens the shutoff valves, the water will stay in your new zone, just as it stays in the drinking straw. Pretty cool, eh?

CLEVER CONNECTIONS AND CONTROLS

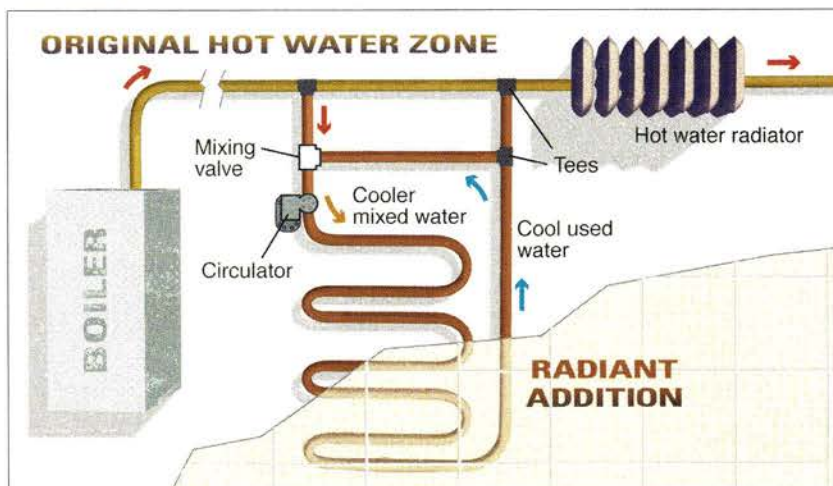
Now here's the piping trick that makes it all work. When the boiler is making steam, the temperature of the water inside the boiler is going to be hotter than 212° F. The circulator will pump this hot water out of the boiler and up into the zone. As it does this, the circulator will be adding some pressure to the water, so the water that's at the top of the system will remain liquid. But when the circulator shuts off (and that happens when the thermostat in your new zone is satisfied), the scalding-hot water suddenly loses that pressure and can flash into steam at the

high point of the system. When water flashes to steam, it increases in volume 1,700 times. This sudden expansion of steam can shove the water from the radiator and piping and dump it into the boiler. Moreover, accompanying this phenomenon will be sounds you will long remember.

To keep this from happening, the pro will pipe a boiler-bypass line between the return line and supply line of your new hot-water zone. The bypass will allow some of the water that's returning from the radiator to go around the boiler and join the hot water that's leaving the boiler. The result will be water that's about 180° F. (when the boiler is making steam). This piping technique mimics what goes on inside a kitchen sink's single-lever mixing valve. It blends hot and cold water to deliver a mix that's just right—not too hot and not too cold. In your new zone, that blending ensures that the water at the top of the new zone can't flash to steam when the circulator shuts off.

To control all of this, the installer will use three devices. A thermostat in the space will sense the air temperature and start the circulator on a call for heat. The water will move past an aquastat, which is like a ther-

Adding a Radiant Zone to a Hot-Water System



In the radiant zone the circulator (about the size of a man's fist) and the mixing valve (also very small) could easily fit inside a vanity cabinet and be accessible for future service.

You're remodeling a kitchen or a bath. You've read about the unseen comfort that radiant heating can provide to floors—even walls. You like the idea, but you're not sure how it could work off your existing hot water system. Here's a suggestion. Chances are there is a hot water supply and return line near the space you're reworking. It may be the tapings from an old radiator that you're planning to remove, or it may be a length of copper fintube baseboard. It's possible for your contractor to tap into that line and create a subzone of radiant heat within that existing zone.

The trick lies in tempering the water that's flowing through the existing system. Most radiant floor or wall systems need water that's not hotter than, say, 120° F. The water that's flowing through your existing radiators is probably around 180° F. That's too hot for the flooring materials, and you wouldn't be able to walk on that floor with your bare feet. To lower the water temperature, your contractor can use a three-way mixing valve. This valve is similar to the one you probably have in your shower. It takes a portion of the water that's already been through the radiant heat "subzone" into its Cold port. It mixes in a bit of hot water from the high-temperature zone (this goes into the valve's Hot port). It then sends the now-tempered water out to the floor through the valve's Mixed port.

Your contractor will also need a circulator, and this will be on the supply pipe that leaves the valve's Mixed port. The Hot and Cold connections to the valve will hook into the existing system with two standard tees, placed as close together as possible. He'll also use standard installation techniques when he puts the plastic or synthetic rubber radiant tubing under your floor or behind your walls. You'll have warm floors and a room that's comfortable and easier to clean.

The only drawback of a radiant subzone is that it's a slave to the zone to which it's attached. In other words, if the thermostat for that zone is in the hallway or the master bedroom, then that thermostat is going to control that zone, as well as the radiant subzone. Both the main and the radiant circulator run at the same time. You can't have separate zones with this method of piping. You could, of course, have the bath or kitchen on its own radiant zone, but that would require running pipe all the way back to the boiler room. (Keep in mind that with today's flexible plastic and synthetic rubber tubing this is a do-able, though more expensive, option).

mostat except that it senses water, not air, temperature. If the water temperature is 180° F. or hotter, the burner will not fire. The third device is called a switching relay. Its job is to start the burner if the aquastat senses a temperature below 180° F., and to stop the burner before the boiler can make steam. This allows your new zone to operate independently. You won't have to heat your entire house (with the steam system) when you just want to warm the new space with the hot-water zone. Plus, your steam system will still work off its own thermostat.

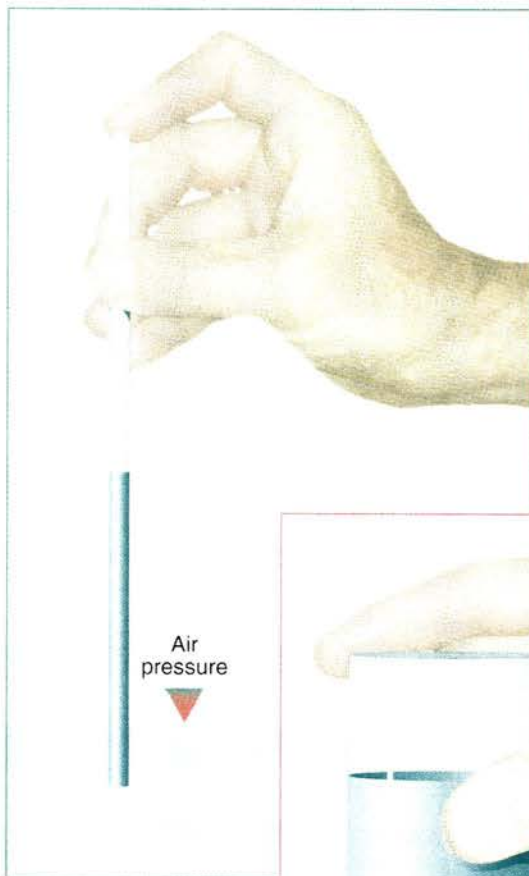
The only other things you'll need to add—and these will go on both the supply and return lines—are flow-control valves. These are weighted (or spring-loaded) check valves that will keep the hot water in the steam boiler from rising (by natural convection) into your new zone when your new thermostat is not calling for heat.

I have to tell you about a few limitations with these hybrid systems. First, there's only so much heat you can take from the boiler before you won't be able to make steam. If you read the boiler's rating plate you'll see the total load listed. It's probably in square feet EDR (Equivalent Direct Radiation). One square foot EDR equals 240 BTUH. You can safely use a third of that total load for your new hot-water zone. Have the pro do a heat-loss calculation on the new space to see what it needs. Don't guess.

The next limitation with this system involves radiant heat. Don't use this piping technique to add a radiant heating zone to your home. The water in a steam boiler is too dirty to be flowing through the tight confines of the plastic or synthetic rubber tubing we use in radiant systems. If you want radiant, the pro can still add a zone off of your steam boiler, but he'll have to use a heat exchanger and a second circulator. This installation means more controls, as well as more money. Finally, pay a bit more to get a bronze-body circulator. It will last longer than an iron-body circulator in the slightly acidic boiler water, and it's your best value in the long run.

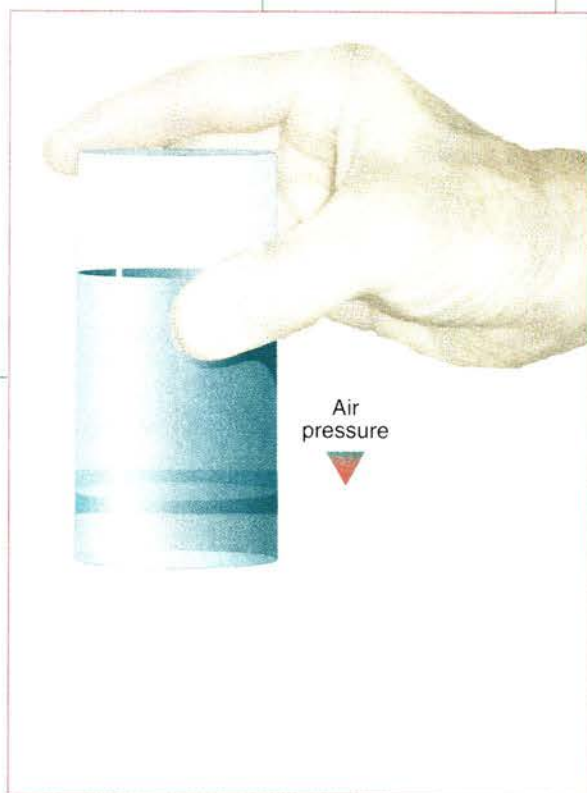
So show this idea to your heating professional and talk it over. If you have

THE PHYSICS OF SEALED ZONE PIPING



With a hot-water zone on a steam system, we rely on atmospheric pressure to keep the water up in the zone piping. It's the same effect that keeps water in a straw when you cover one end with your finger and lift it out of a glass of water.

The water won't fall out of the straw because the weight of the air on the water in the glass pushes it back up.



To prove that the effect works for piping, too, which is wider than a straw, try the same experiment with a glass in the sink.

As long as your zone piping is completely sealed, atmospheric pressure will support a column of water about 34 feet high (at sea level).

questions, visit us at www.HeatingHelp.com. Steam heat is nice, and this old-timer's trick can make it even nicer! 🏠

Dan Holohan, author and steam-heat specialist, operates www.HeatingHelp.com, where homeowners can get advice from the sharpest heating professionals around.

For a list of
SUPPLIERS,
see page 97

Greek Revival in America

BY JAMES C. MASSEY AND SHIRLEY MAXWELL

**From
Tara to
farmhouse
temples.**



JAMES C. MASSEY

Even when they eschew columns and other classical details, Greek Revival houses will embellish the doorway. A full transom and sidelights with arresting elliptical leading highlight the entrance of Hatfield in Philadelphia.

Okay, here's a test: Close your eyes and say "Greek Revival." What comes to mind? Tara from *Gone With the Wind*, maybe? A Deep-South vision of towering columns and broad verandahs set amidst Spanish moss and green lawns?

Or how about this: A small white farmhouse in Ohio with a front-facing gable, attached pilasters at the front corners, a deep, unornamented fascia board, and a rectangular transom and sidelights at the front door? Or a tall and narrow brick town house in New York with a tiny, columned porch, a side-hall plan, and a parade of small rectangular windows just below the cornice?

You couldn't go wrong with any of these options—they're all good examples of Greek Revival architecture in America—but there's no question that the less ostentatious second and third versions far outnumber the Taras. From the 1820s until the Civil War, Greek Revival was a one-style-fits-all building design choice of rich and poor, in town and country, North and South, from the Atlantic Ocean to the new Midwest and around the Cape to California. There were regional variations, to be sure, and these help to make house-gazing a continuing pleasure in all these regions.

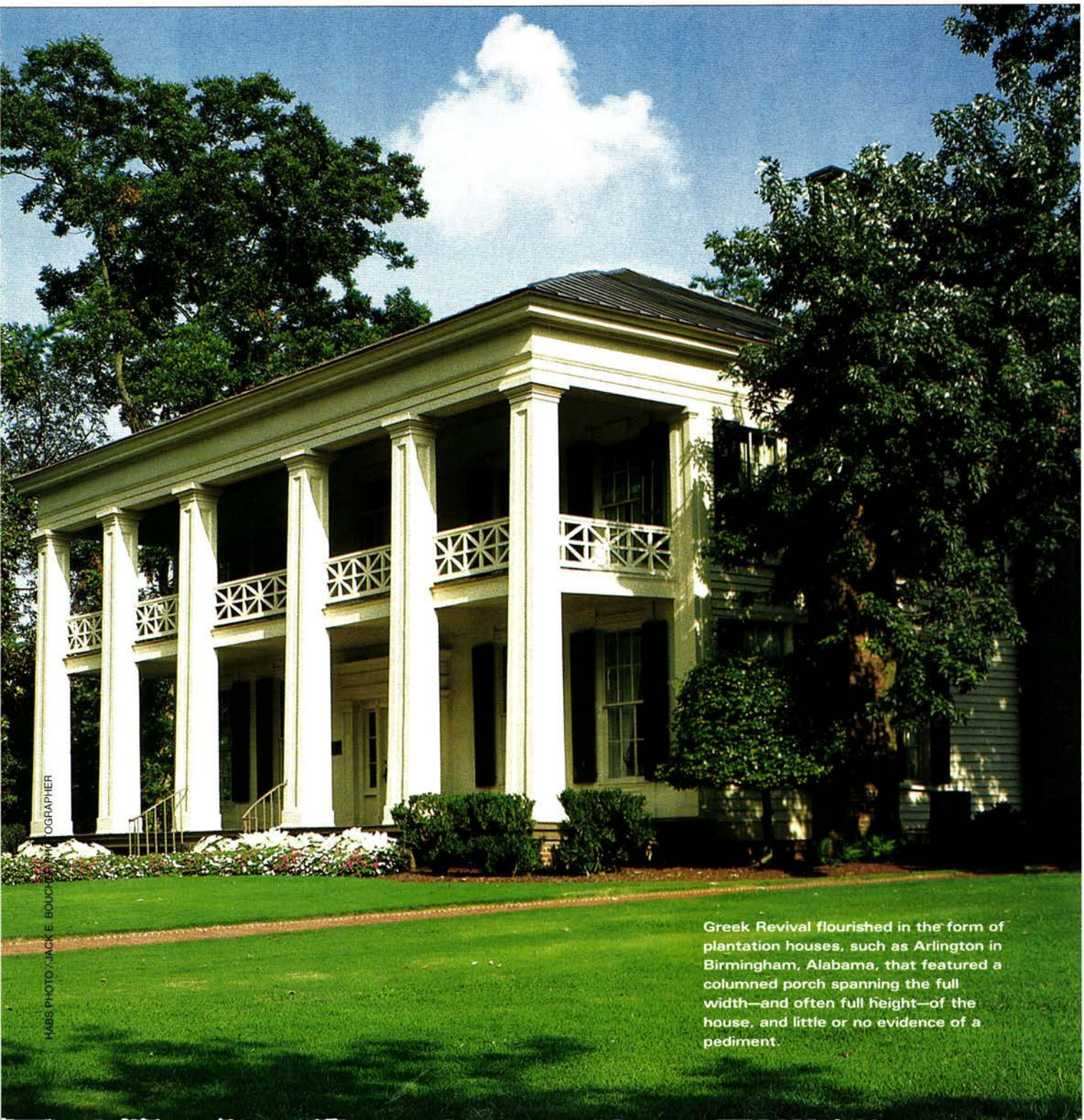
ANCIENT ARCHITECTURE REINVENTED

Americans of the early 19th century saw several good reasons for adapting at least some aspects of Greek classicism to their own houses, churches, and public buildings. For starters, Greece's struggle for





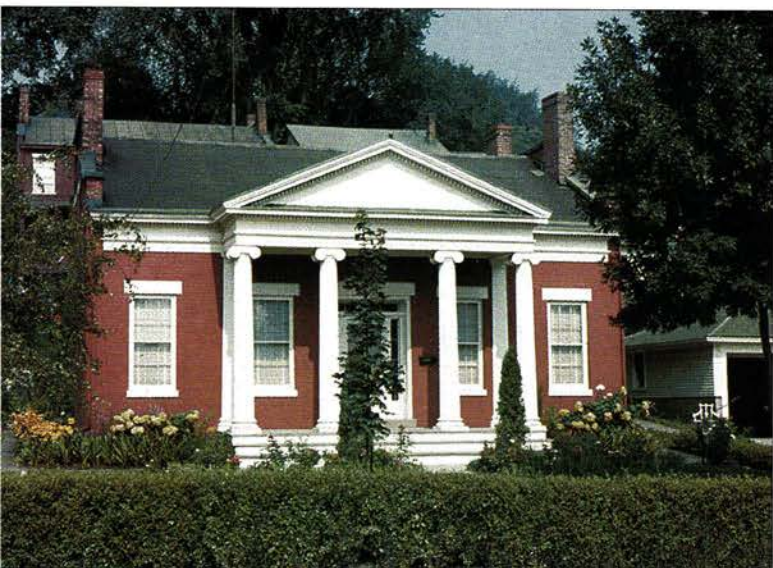
Besides the classically columned porch and pilasters at the building corners, the bold gable end with its deep cornice and returned ends marks this modest house as Greek Revival.



Greek Revival flourished in the form of plantation houses, such as Arlington in Birmingham, Alabama, that featured a columned porch spanning the full width—and often full height—of the house, and little or no evidence of a pediment.

Like wood construction, appending a smaller wing to the main, gable-front portion of the house is a particularly American adaptation of Greek Revival ideas. This circa 1825 example is in Fayetteville, New York.

ANDY OLENICK



JAMES C. MASSEY

Departing from the ancient marble models, Greek Revival also appeared in brick. Like many later buildings, this Galena, Illinois, house employs a full-height entry porch with pediment, but only four columns wide.

ture brought a sense of permanence and solidity to the spanking-new American landscape. Its very austerity proclaimed the sturdy self-reliance of a nation that was pushing westward with all its might, conquering new frontiers at the same time it was trying to establish its cultural credentials with the Old World.

Not that Americans were interested in re-creating an archeologically "pure" form of Greek architecture. While they admired the austere beauty of Greece's post-and-lintel buildings, their practical minds insisted on buildings that used 19th-century tech-

independence from Turkey was at its height in the 1820s, reminding Americans of their own hard-won sovereignty. Greece, the world's first democracy, seemed an appropriate philosophical reference point for a self-confident new republic. Plus, with its air of antiquity, Greek Revival architec-

nology and accommodated 19th-century lifestyles. They were in search of a "National Style" of architecture reflecting their own time and place—one that would represent America's abundance and energy as well as its political and cultural ideals. They wanted a style that betokened a glorious future as well as a glorious past. The Greek example, properly modified, seemed to fit their needs.

Although the details varied from region to region and from one economic stratum to another, the general characteristics of this new-old style include simplicity, as well as an emphatic rectilinear geometry and insistent symmetry of form.

VERNACULAR VARIATIONS

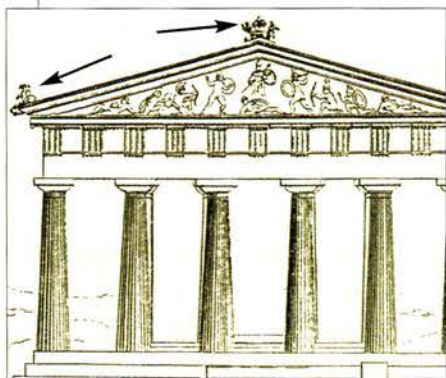
In the South, the two-storey portico (which might be called the "Tara" model) was often used even on rather small houses. At the other end of the spectrum was the charming, small temple-form house in 1 or 1 1/2 storeys, basically a cottage hiding behind a pedimented porch with columns. In New England, Upstate New York, and the Northwest Territory (Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois, which were just then being settled by a wave of New Englanders), the most

Diminutive frieze windows are another novel Greek Revival characteristic. Often appearing at the eave line in wings (to service the upper half-storey), in the 1837 Heil Brockway House in Brockport, New York, they illuminate the space and the landscape. Note the fine columns.

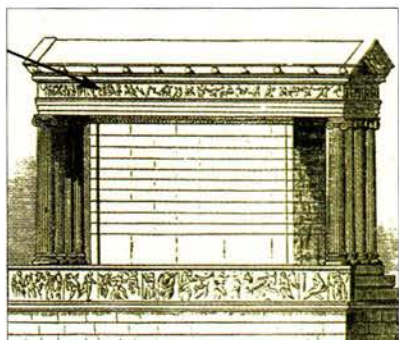


ANDY OLENICK

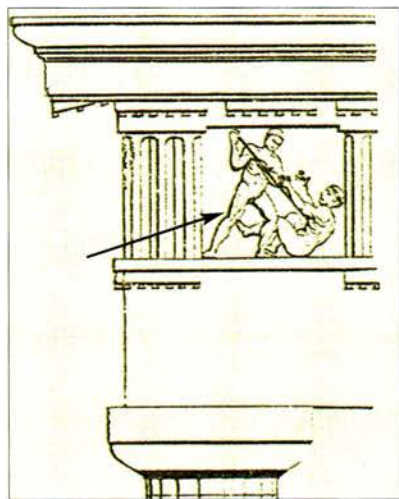
Greek Revival Keys



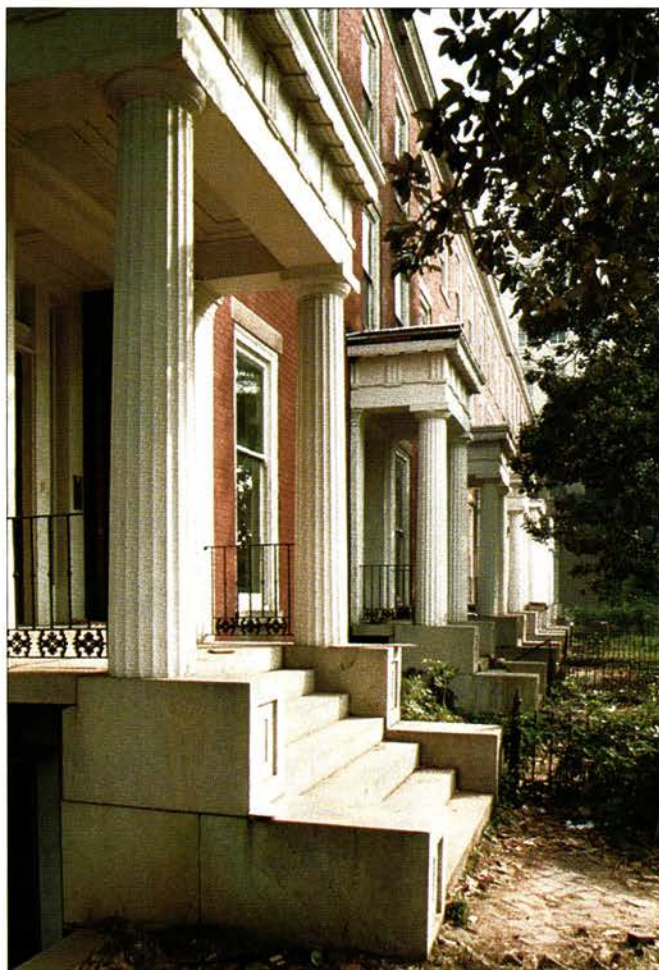
Prominent Pediments: The corniced triangle above a colonnade in ancient temples became a ubiquitous entrance-porch feature and a favorite roof gable-end treatment. High-style houses might sport acroterion (arrows) roof ornaments.



Wide Frieze Boards: The decorated band below the cornice in temples became a wide board in Greek Revival houses, usually left blank except for occasional triglyphs.



Triglyphs and Metopes: High-style Greek Revival frieze boards might sport triglyphs—stock ornament of the Doric order (arrow). Metopes—the intervening panels—were left bare.



Greek Revival took root in urban settings too. These Richmond, Virginia, row houses (1847-1853) front austere brick façades with Doric-detailed entrance porches. Greek motifs can also appear in iron fences and window grilles.

JAMES C. MASSEY

common form was a blocky farmhouse, often sans porch and full columns but with handsome pilasters or attached square columns at the corners of a pedimented gable front.

The style evolved over time as well as across geographic areas, settlement patterns, and economic strata. First, in the 1820s and 1830s, came the rich man's high-style Greek Revival "temple" with its impressive four-columned two-storey portico and prominent pediment. Then, as the middle class picked up the idea in the 1830s and 1840s, the portico was scaled down. It became a porch, with plain columns or square posts and a simplified pediment. This economy version might have four columns and three bays stretching across the entire front of the house, or it might have only a single bay at the entrance. It was more often one storey high than two storeys. In freestanding houses,

the temple form required a gable front, but practicality or preference very often called for end gables instead, with the entrance on a long side. Either way, the pediment might be formed by a full-length frieze or it might be merely suggested by bold cornice returns that extended only part way in from the corners.

Roof pitches, which had been flattening noticeably from the colonial through the federal period, became even flatter with the advent of the Greek Revival style. In fact, some roofs seemed to have no slope at all, because they were hidden behind straight parapets and balustrades, paneled or ornamented with upstanding palmettes. Other buildings had broad gables and heavy full or partial cornice returns, representing the classical Greek temple form. The cornice might display a row of tooth-like dentil moulding.

The most familiar characteristic of the



ANDY OLENICK

Orienting the Greek Revival's gable end to face the street produced the temple-front plan. A deep colonnade, such as in this 1835 house, enhanced the effect.

Greek Revival roofline, however, was a deep frieze, often undecorated except perhaps for a row of the distinctive Greek triglyph and metope ornament. This was usually enough for all but the most fashionable mansions. Even simpler dwellings might have nothing beyond a wide board frieze, minus dentils, triglyphs, or metopes, to suggest their Greek connections.

Windows became much larger in the Greek Revival period, as factory-made glass, transported to growing towns and prosperous farms by rail or canal, became easier to come by. Tall six-over-six double-hung windows brought light to graciously proportioned interiors with high ceilings. Sometimes the windows extended from near the ceiling to the floor, making it pos-

ANDY OLENICK



Though faulted by critics of the day as a limited style, Greek Revival worked at a wide range of scales. Some of the most charming houses are, in fact, little more than cottages sporting a few signature mouldings.

sible to step through to the porch beyond. Floor plans featured center or side halls.

Although Greek-derived wooden ornament was generally simple in form, the intricate decorative ironwork of the period was another story altogether. Magnificent cast- or wrought-iron designs appeared on fences, balconies, and roof-top acroteria, providing a fanciful finishing touch for the rather stiff architecture. As the Industrial Revolution matured and foundry technology improved, cast iron almost entirely replaced the earlier wrought iron.

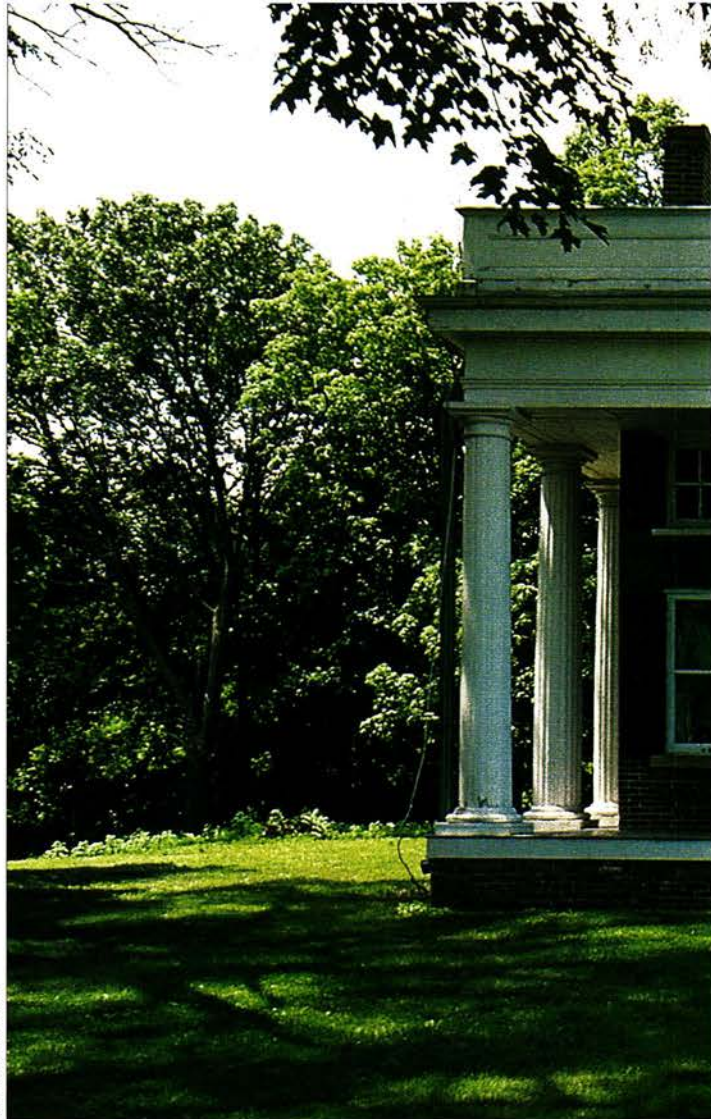
A TRANSCONTINENTAL STYLE

By 1850 railroads and canals carried machine-made wooden ornament to even remote outposts, doing away with much of the painstaking handwork once required for fluted column shafts, elaborate capitals, and other ornament. Generally, ornate Corinthian column capitals of the Georgian era were seen less frequently than simpler Ionic scrolled capitals and plain Doric columns, fluted or unfluted, without platforms, or bases. Rectangular transoms above the doorways were more common than semi-elliptical fanlights in Greek Revival houses, and while fancy tracery in wood or iron often appeared in transoms or sidelights, these were more often undecorated rectangles. Flat, wide trim surrounded doors and windows. Molded panels were often set into the walls below windows, both inside and outside the house.

The Greek Revival was, as its early proponents claimed, America's first truly national style, and it dominated the era of Manifest Destiny. It easily outdistanced the picturesque Gothic Revival, its closest competitor in the early 19th-century "War of the Styles." A very different kind of conflict brought an end to the elegance of the Greek Revival period, however. After the Civil War, Victorian eclecticism reigned on the home front. In a fast-moving industrialized country, the stark symmetry of the Greek Revival house seemed hopelessly stiff and even boring. Although the style kept its appeal for public buildings and churches, Greek Revival houses soon became relics of a simpler time, the time Before the War. 🏠

Below: In rural areas and later years, reduced expression of the Greek Revival often looked like the Captain Charles Wordin House in Belfast, Maine: two- or four-column entry porch, less than the full height or width of the house, pilastered corners, and a pronounced cornice.

JAMES C. MASSEY



BRIAN VANDEN BRINK



Left: Though built in the heart of the Midwest, the 1849 Terwilliger House in Crystal Lake, Illinois, with its full-height, wrap-around colonnade, is the same kind of "rich man's temple" that became an icon of the Deep South.

Right: High-style Greek Revival might also play down columns and temple associations to play up subtler details, such as the smooth siding, strong pilaster and cornice lines, and uncommon massing of this flat-roofed house in Newport, Rhode Island.



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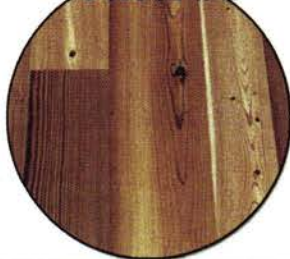
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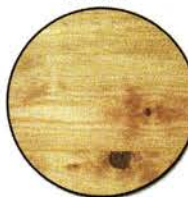
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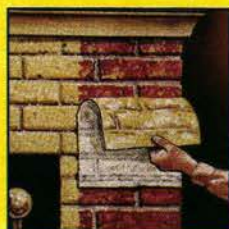
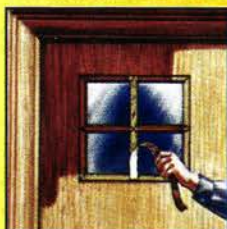
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Hot Under the Hearth

BY NANCY E. BERRY

Before you light up, determine whether your row house chimney was designed for wood burning fires.

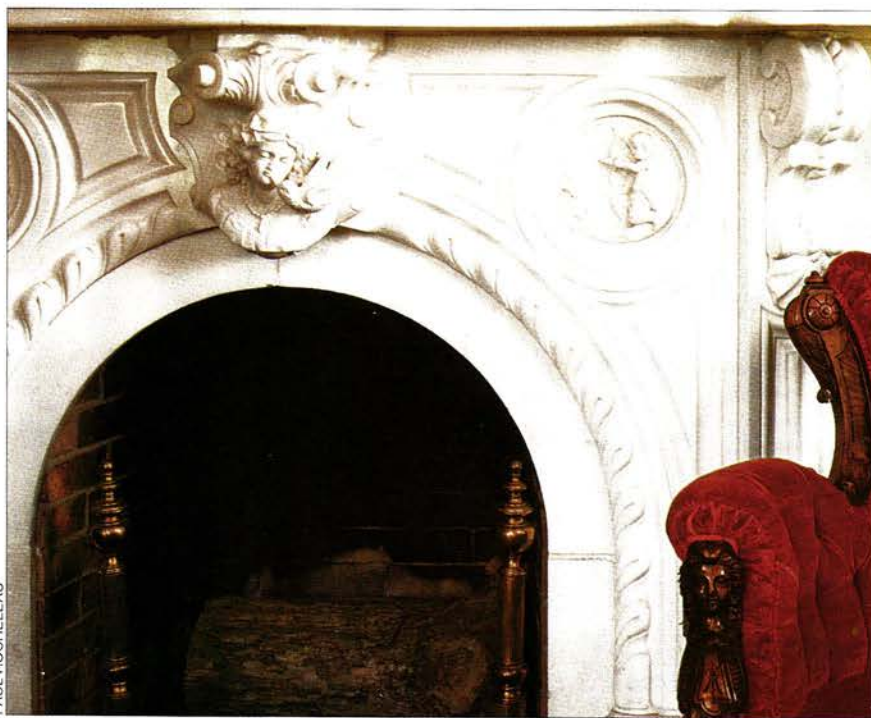
So you think you've hit the jackpot. You've become the proud owner of a two-bedroom fixer-upper in Boston's trendy South End—15' ceilings, hardwood floors, exposed brick, and a darling "working" fireplace. Winter sets in sharply with biting winds cutting down the avenue. The fireplace becomes the focal point of your 1890s home. You buy a cord of wood and store it in the basement; each night the fireplace burns brightly. Two weeks after settling in,

you come home from work to find Engine Company 22 dowsing your cozy haven. A fire has ripped through the floors and walls. At first you blame faulty wiring, but the fire chief confirms that a smoldering joist under the firebox was the culprit. How could this be? You haven't lit a fire in a day or so. The scope of your restoration project has just tripled.

"Many 19th-century row houses in Boston have joists and beams let into the chimney itself, and the lathing for the plaster behind those beautiful marble mantels can become kindling for a house fire," says Charlie Allen of Charlie Allen Restorations Inc. in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In the late 1800s the increased use of gas and central heating changed some chimney construction. Fireboxes designed for these lower temperature fuels cannot contain high-heat wood-burning fires. Often in these old buildings, the only material separating the wood subflooring and floor joists from the hearth surface was a thin layer of bricks.

Wood members set too close to a firebox can smolder for hours—even days—before they finally ignite, explains Charlie. Chimney masonry, such as brick and lime mortar, also deteriorates over the years. This decay can leave holes in the chimney, exposing wood beams and joists to heat and flames.

If you can't live without the ambient glow of a fire in your 1890s row house parlor fireplace, you'll need to have your firebox and chimney inspected to ensure sound chimney construction. If it's not up to snuff, hire an experienced contractor to bring the chimney up to code. "Not such an easy task," says Charlie. "When you're living in a row house all parties must be involved—the condo owners above and below as well as on the other side of the party wall."



Fireboxes in late 19th-century row houses were often built with shallow openings to accommodate gas jets or coal baskets.

AREAS TO CONSIDER

PARTY WALL

If you share a party wall, check the thickness of the wall to determine how many inches of brick separate the back of the firebox from your next-door neighbors. The walls of the chimney should be 8" of solid masonry. Also determine whether your neighbors are directly at the back of your fireplace. Their building's floor joists may

Joists less than 2" from chimney

Joists set into the firebox

Floorboards set into back of chimney

Faulty Construction

Below: All wood members should be at least 2" from the chimney masonry. Note the placement of the headers at the hearth and chimney.

HEARTH

The hearth masonry acts as a heat shield. If you're not sure what type of hearth construction you're dealing with, your contractor will have to investigate by removing the hearth tiles or bricks and—if wood subflooring exists—possibly rebuild the area. Again, trimmer

Above: Wood joists backing into the chimney or set under the hearth are clear indications that the fireplace was not intended for high-heat fuels such as wood.

Safer Construction

Header

Header

Party wall 8" thick

Minimum 2" clearance from masonry

joists or headers (see drawing left) must be at least 2" from the brickwork. Proper construction makes it virtually impossible for woodwork to catch fire.

FIREBOX

When inspecting the firebox, check the clearance between the wood mantel and the fireplace opening. The distance from the firebox to a wood mantel needs to be at least 6" on each side and 12"

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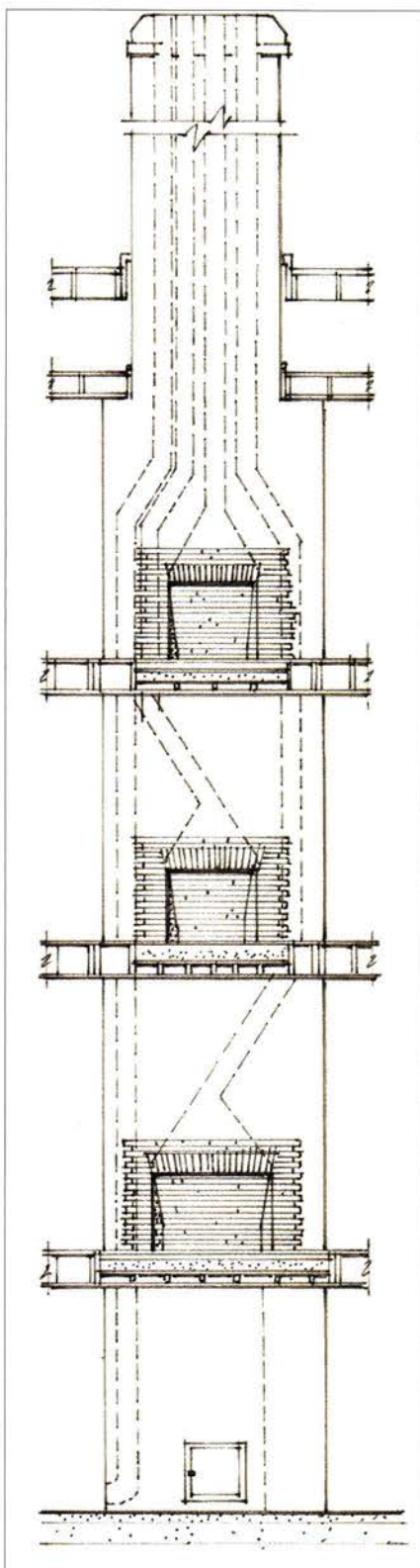
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from the top of the firebox. Ideally there should also be an air space between the back of the mantel and the fireplace. "A gas fireplace opening is typically smaller than that of a wood-burning fireplace," says Charlie. "I don't know how many times I've met row house owners who think they can burn wood in a firebox solely intended for gas jets or central-heating ducts."

Each flue in a multi-storey house is separate from the others. These multiple-flue chambers can be difficult to retrofit.



FLUES

If mortar joints between the bricks are cracked, eroded, or otherwise missing, sparks could find their way through crevices and start a fire in adjacent combustible parts of the house. To guard against this risk, old-fashioned flues should be retrofitted with a modern liner. Rectangular flues intended for wood were often built with a cross-sectional area 1/10 the size of the fireplace opening. When relining a flue

If your budget doesn't allow for reconstructing your hearth, you could opt for gas burners or a decorative panel set into the firebox.



the contractor needs to keep this ratio in mind, says Charlie. In row houses, separate flues extend from each fireplace to make the chimney draw well. Therefore, the flue from any fireplace must pass the fireplace above (see drawing left). To do this the flues are offset above the last fireplace and come together to form the chimney where it extends above the roof. The bends in the flue should be gradual to allow an easy flow of smoke up the chimney.

You'll have to decide if the glowing embers will be worth the investment or whether a seasonal dried arrangement will suffice as the centerpiece of your parlor. If the former is your wish, work with an experienced professional to rebuild the hearth and line the flue to local fire-safety codes.

Special thanks to Charlie Allen of Charlie Allen Restorations Inc. in Cambridge, Massachusetts, for help with this article (www.charlie-allen.com; 617-661-7411.)



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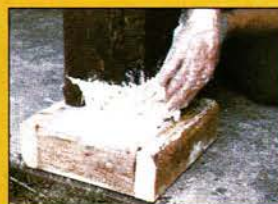
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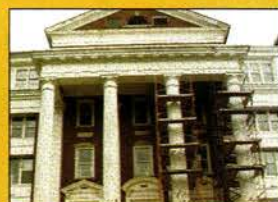
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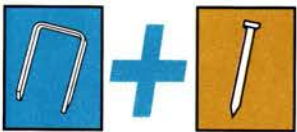
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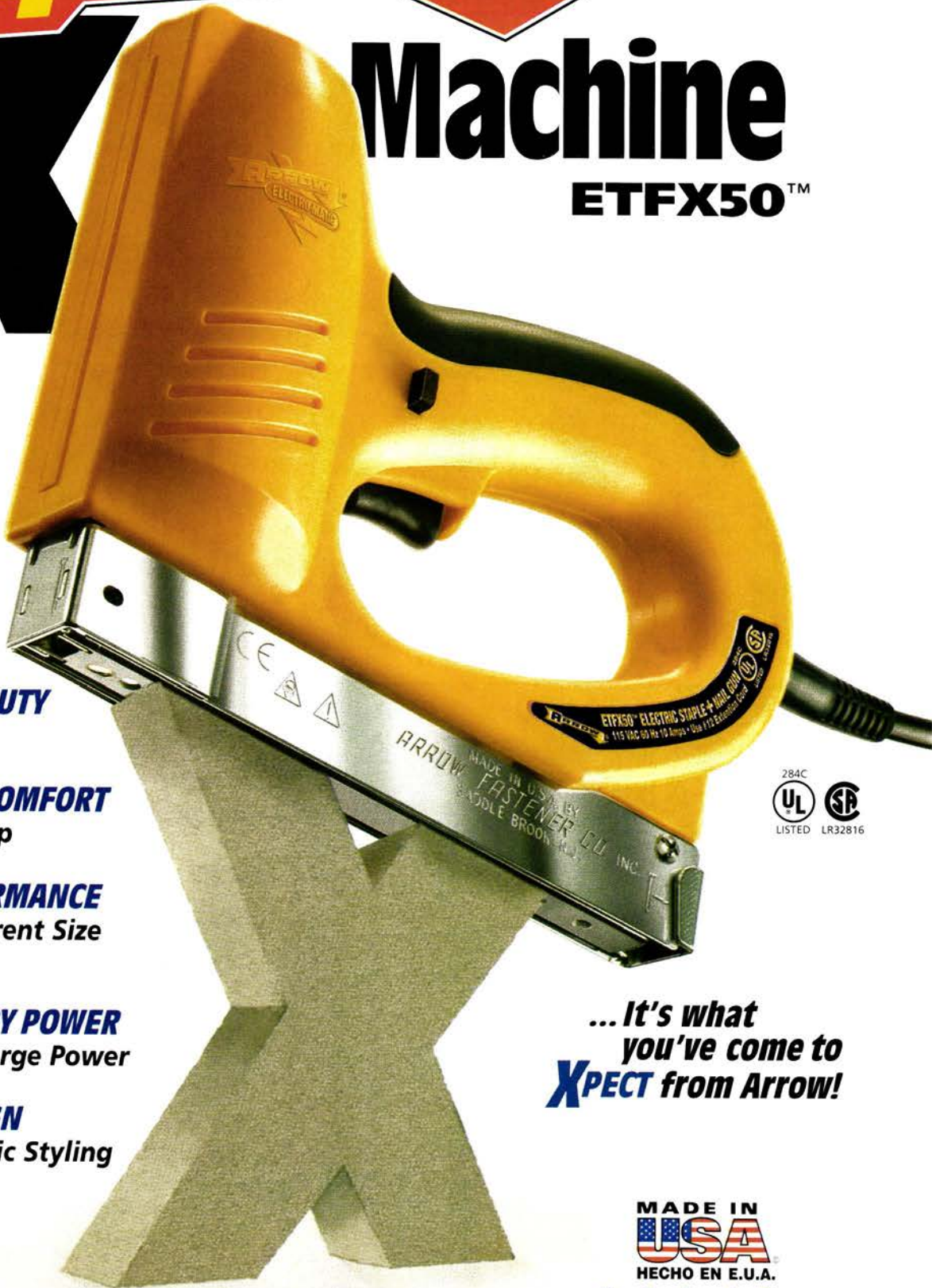
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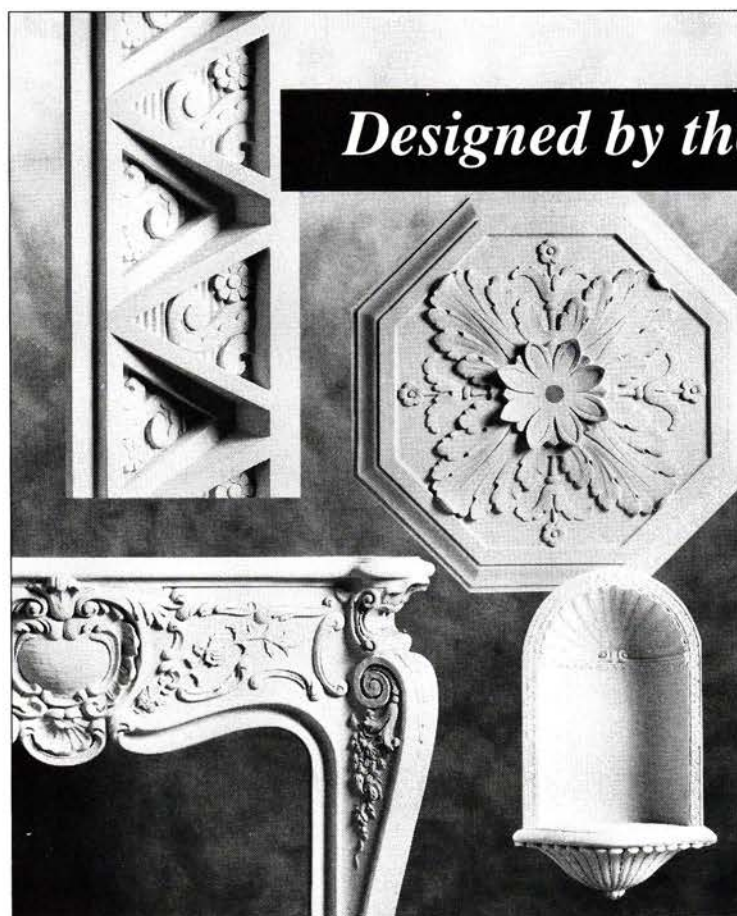
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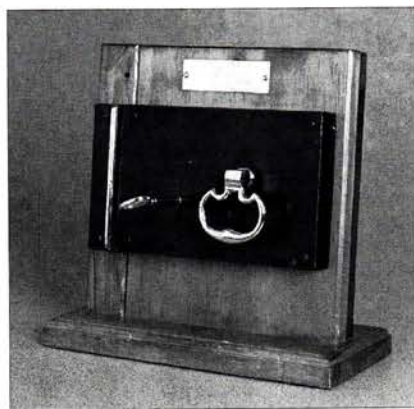


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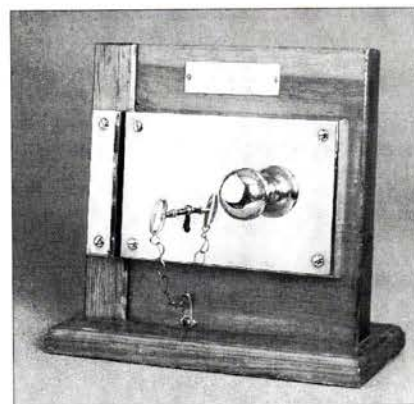
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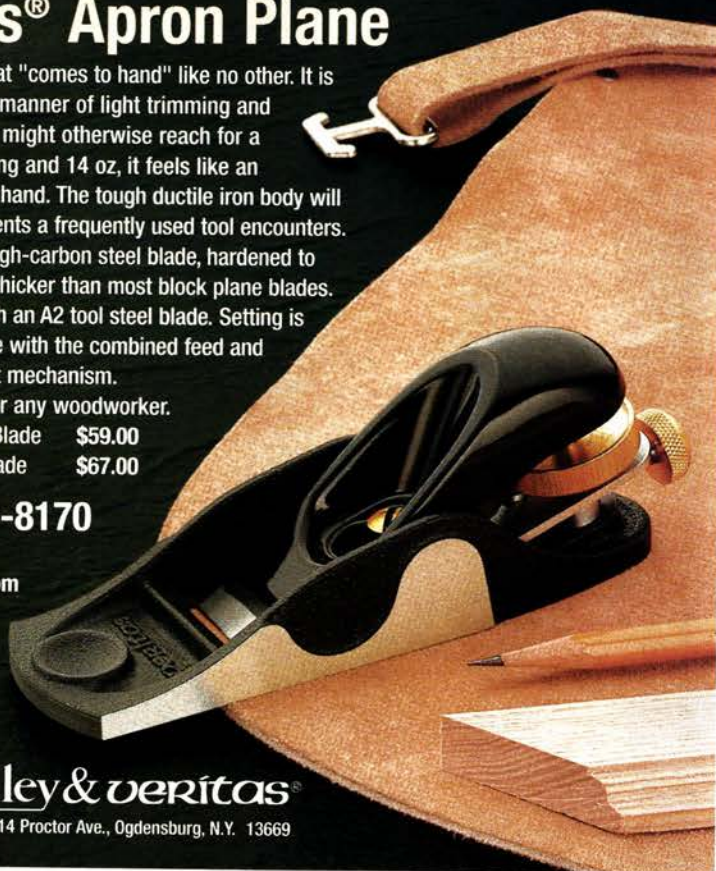
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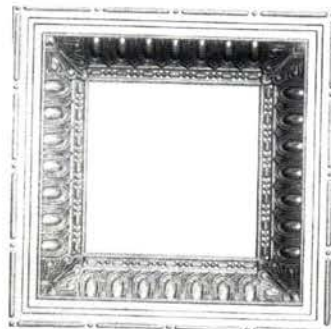
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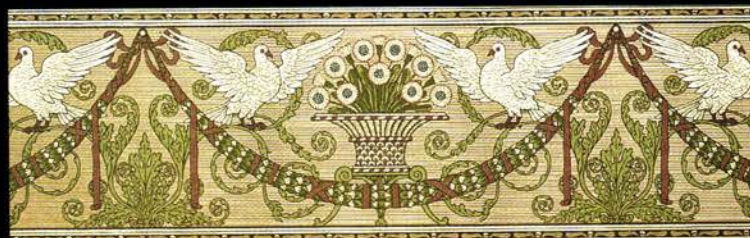
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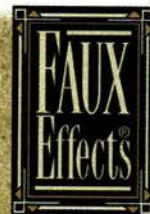
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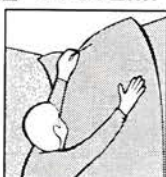
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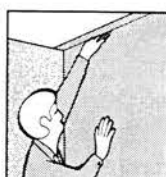
1. Cut fiberglass mat 2" longer than height.



2. Apply saturant to area to be covered.



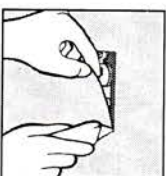
3. Apply fiberglass mat to wet surface.



4. Trim excess mat where wall meets ceiling.



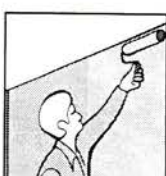
5. Trim mat at baseboard and window.



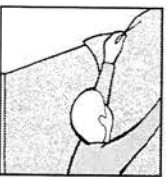
6. Trim mat at outlets, switches, etc.



7. Apply second coat of saturant to wet mat.



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





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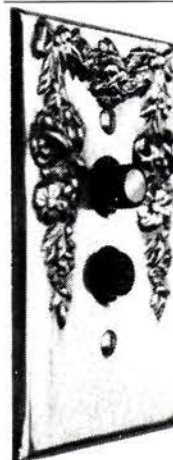
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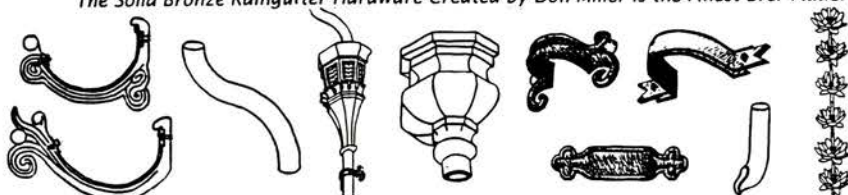
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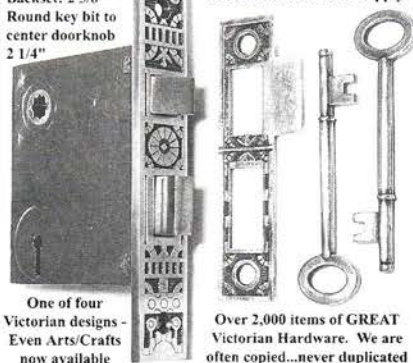
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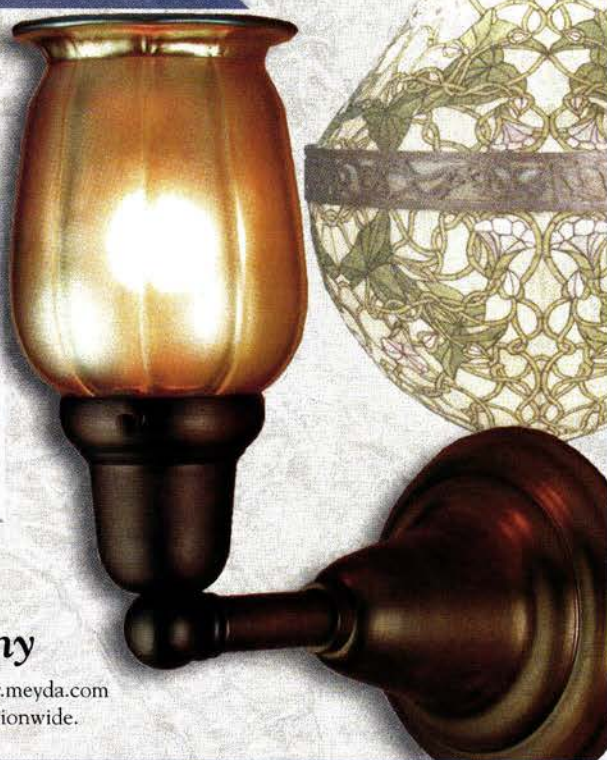
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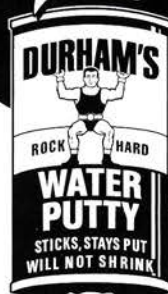
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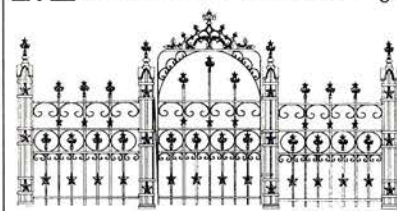
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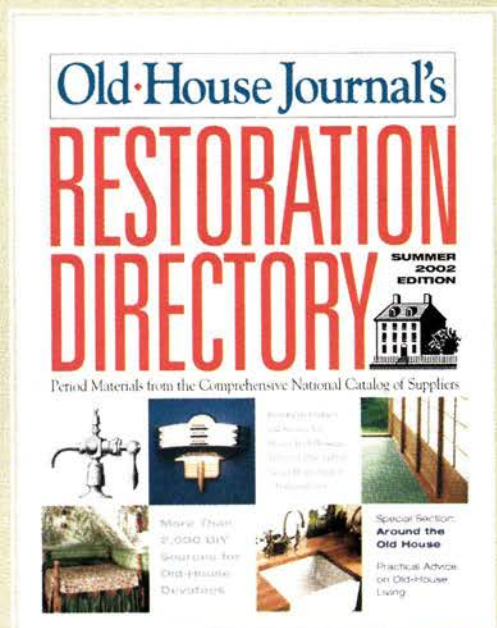
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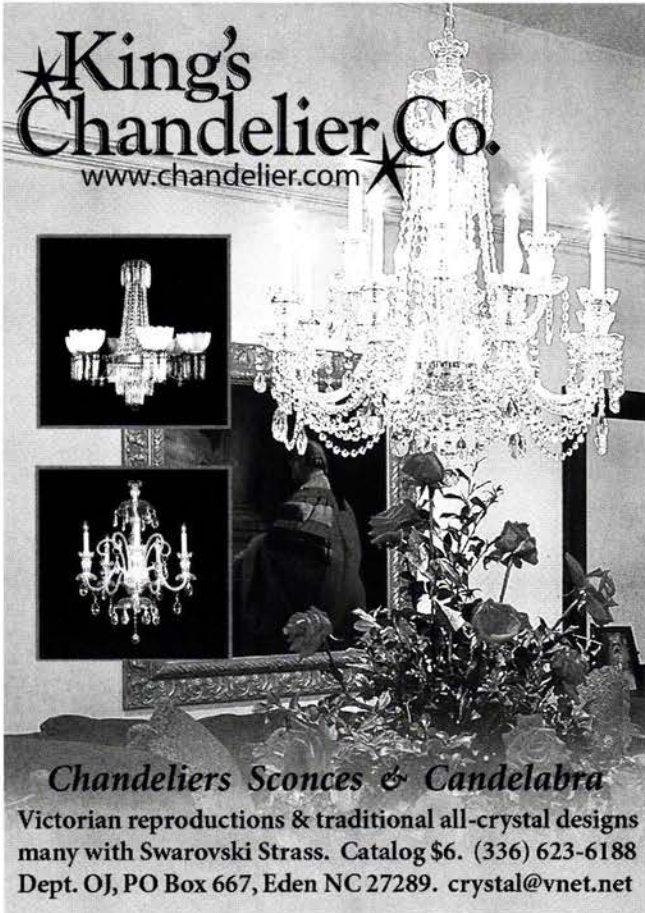
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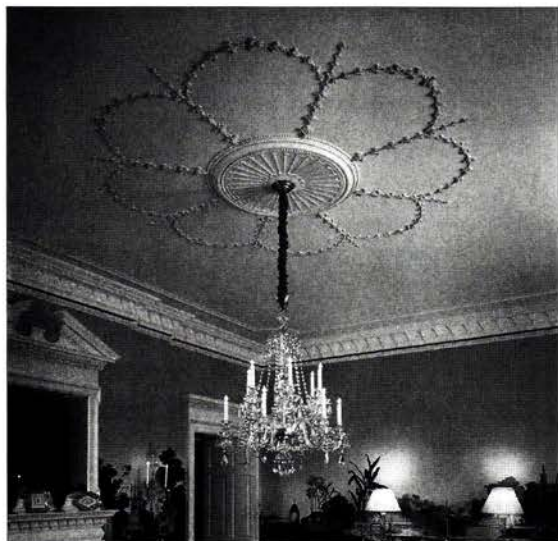
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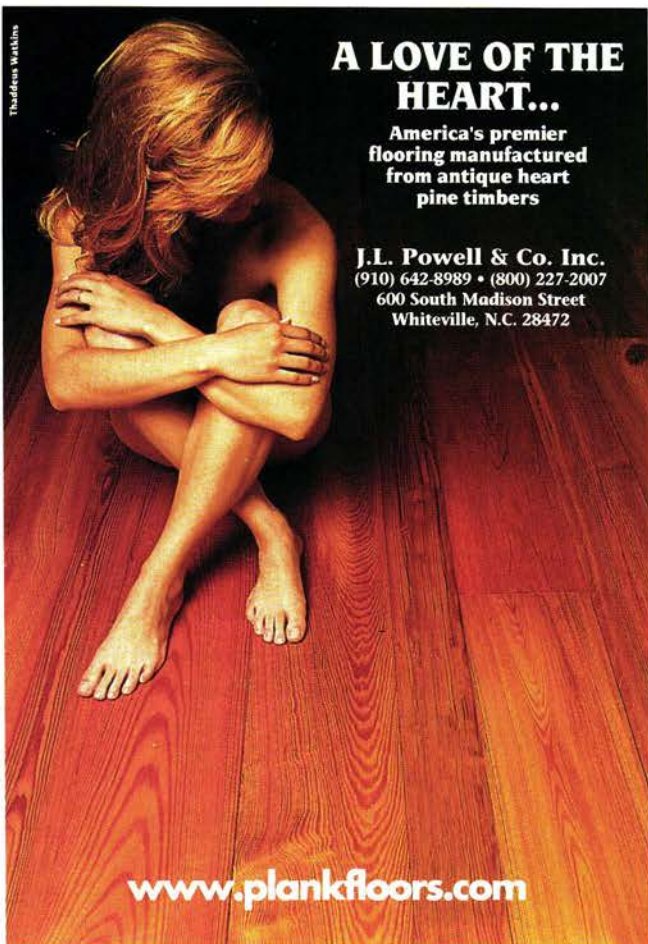
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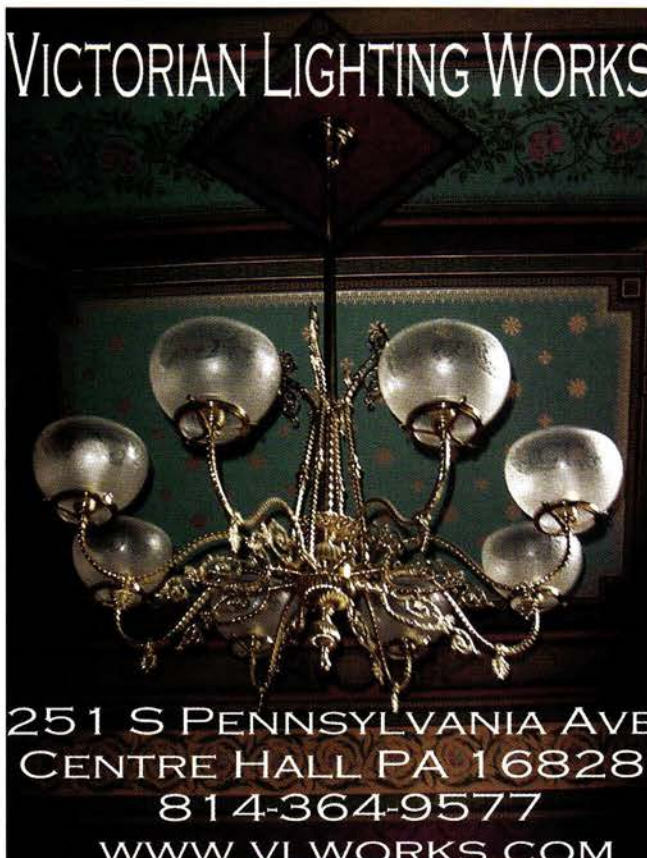
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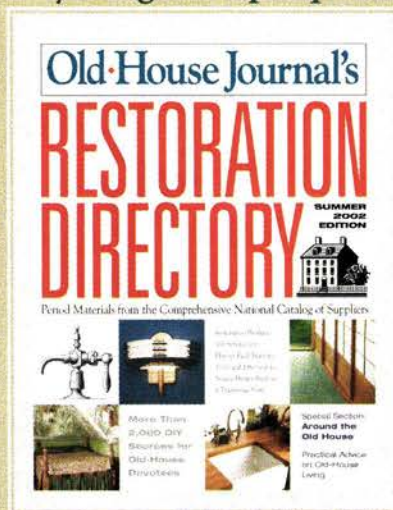
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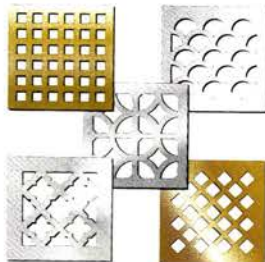
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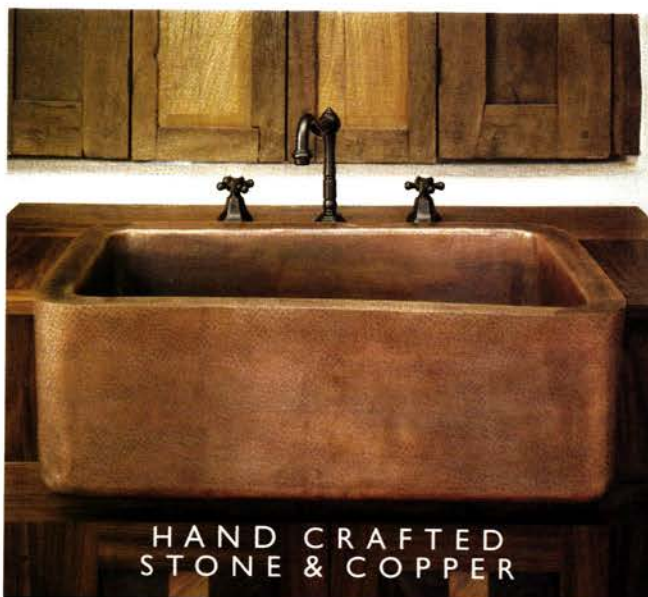
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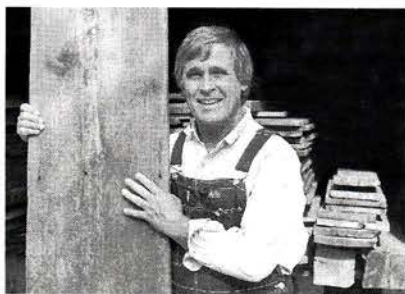
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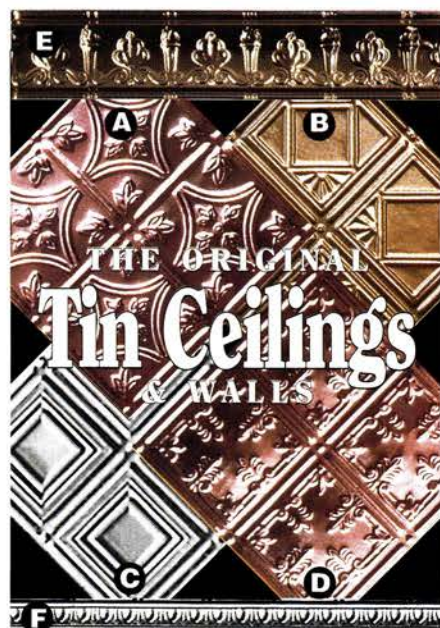
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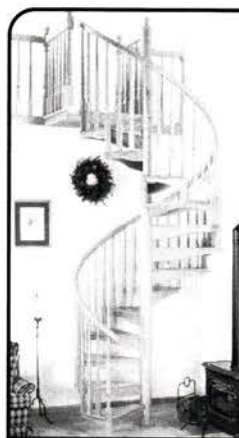
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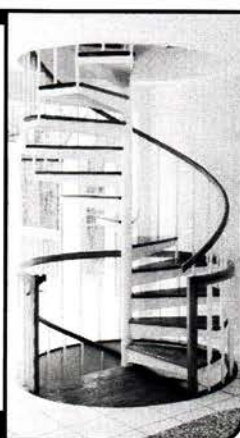
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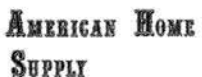
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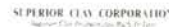
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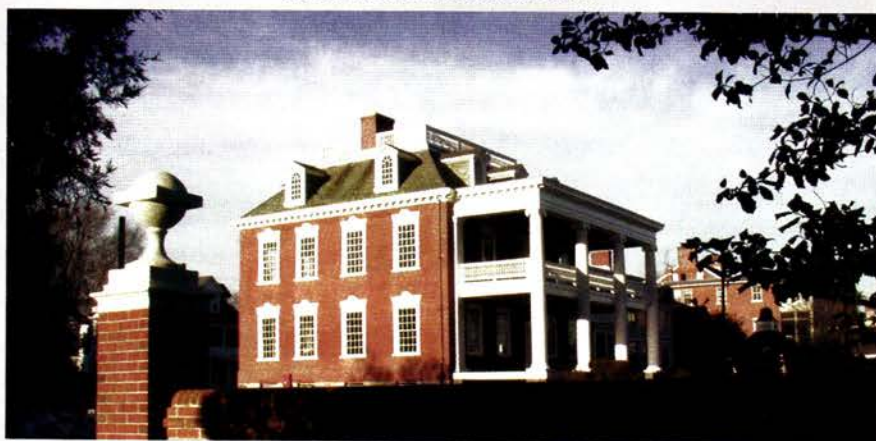


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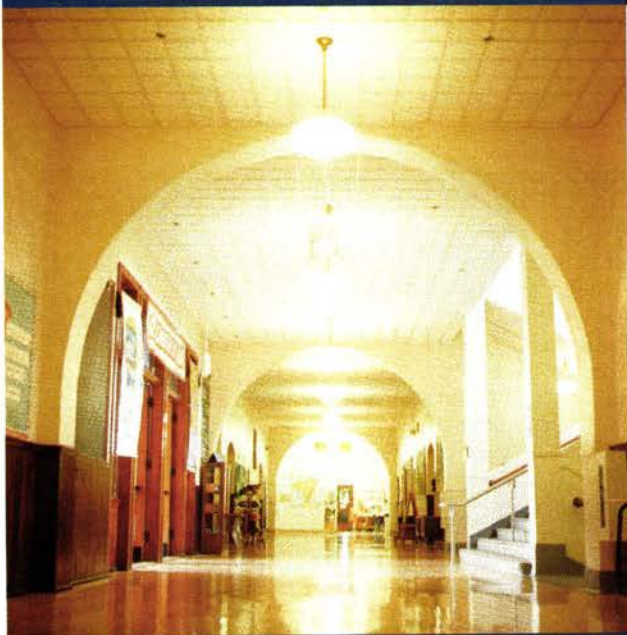
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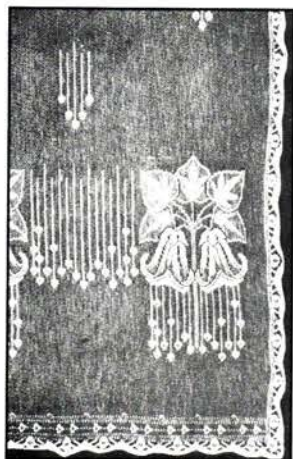
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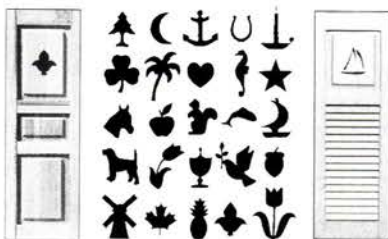


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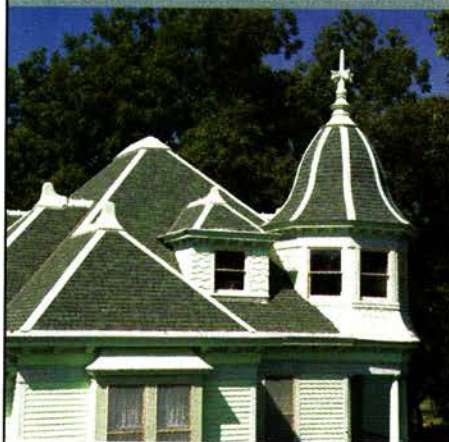
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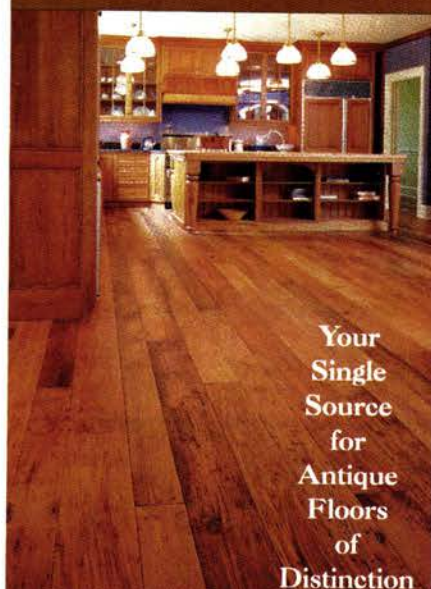
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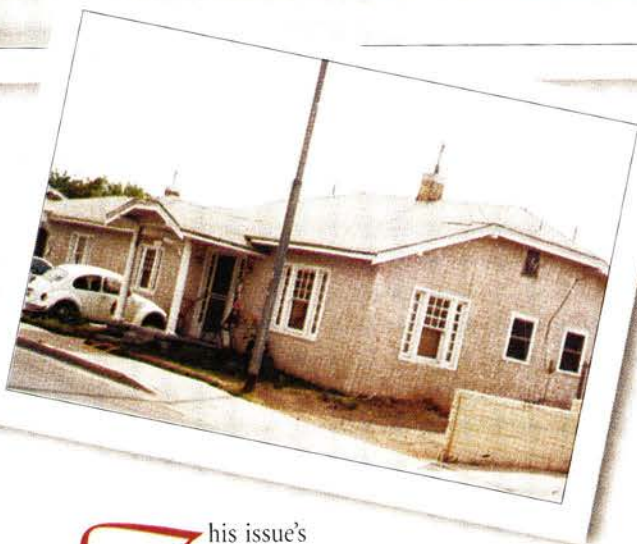
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In honor of OHJ's 30th birthday, we'd like to feature examples of houses brought back from the depths of remuddling.

If you know of a house that has been rescued from a callous re-siding job, obtuse addition, or other example of insensitive rehabilitation, send us photographs of the house in its remuddled and unremuddled state.

Follow the submission rules for "Remuddling" as outlined below.



This issue's contributor was runnin' down the road, tryin' to loosen his load...No, actually, he was in Winslow, Arizona, trying to find the "Standin' On the Corner" statue inspired by the Eagles' 1970s hit "Take It Easy," when he came upon this fine sight to see. The original house (similar to inset) has not only had its literal cover blown but has gone undercover, with a castellated parapet that suggests a need for serious protection—perhaps from those seven women who had owning and stoning on their minds? We won't even try to understand.

Win \$100 If you spot a classic example of remuddling, send us clear color prints. We'll award you \$100 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. Also, we reserve the right to republish the photos online and in other publications we own.) Remuddling Editor, OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL, 1000 Potomac Street, NW, Suite 102, Washington, DC 20007.

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