

The background of the cover is a photograph of an interior room. On the left, a portion of a lamp with a brass-colored base is visible. To the right, a shelf holds several decorative plates with various patterns, including floral and geometric designs. The overall lighting is warm and soft.

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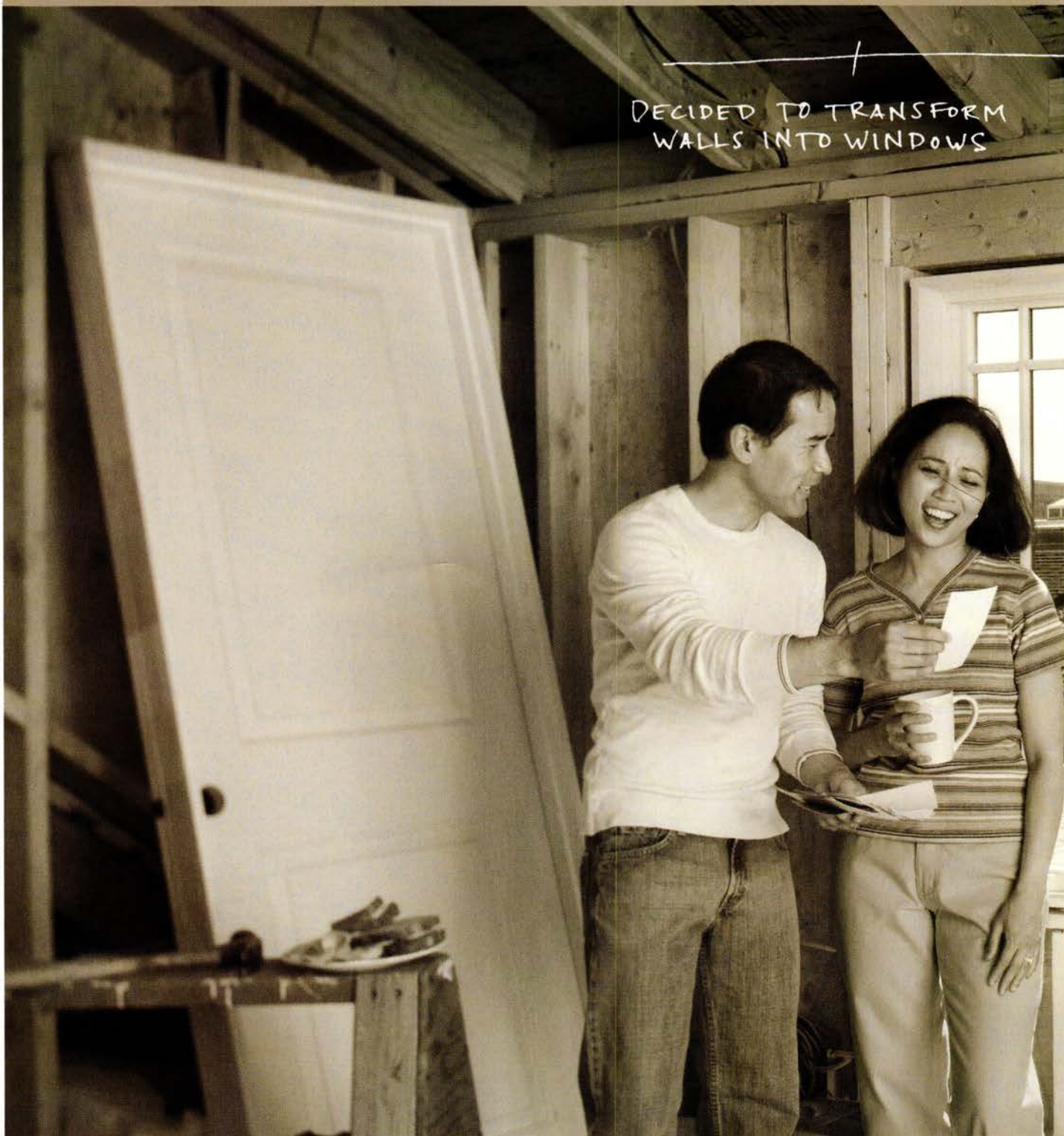
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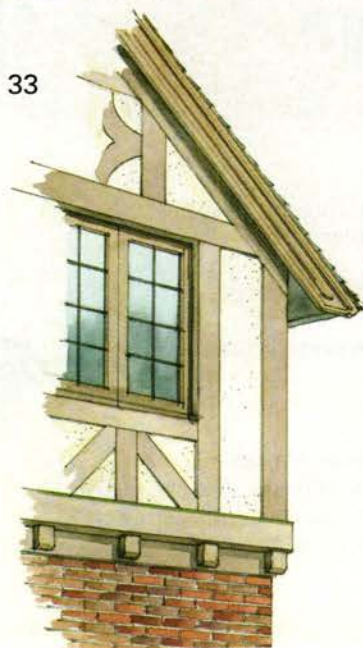
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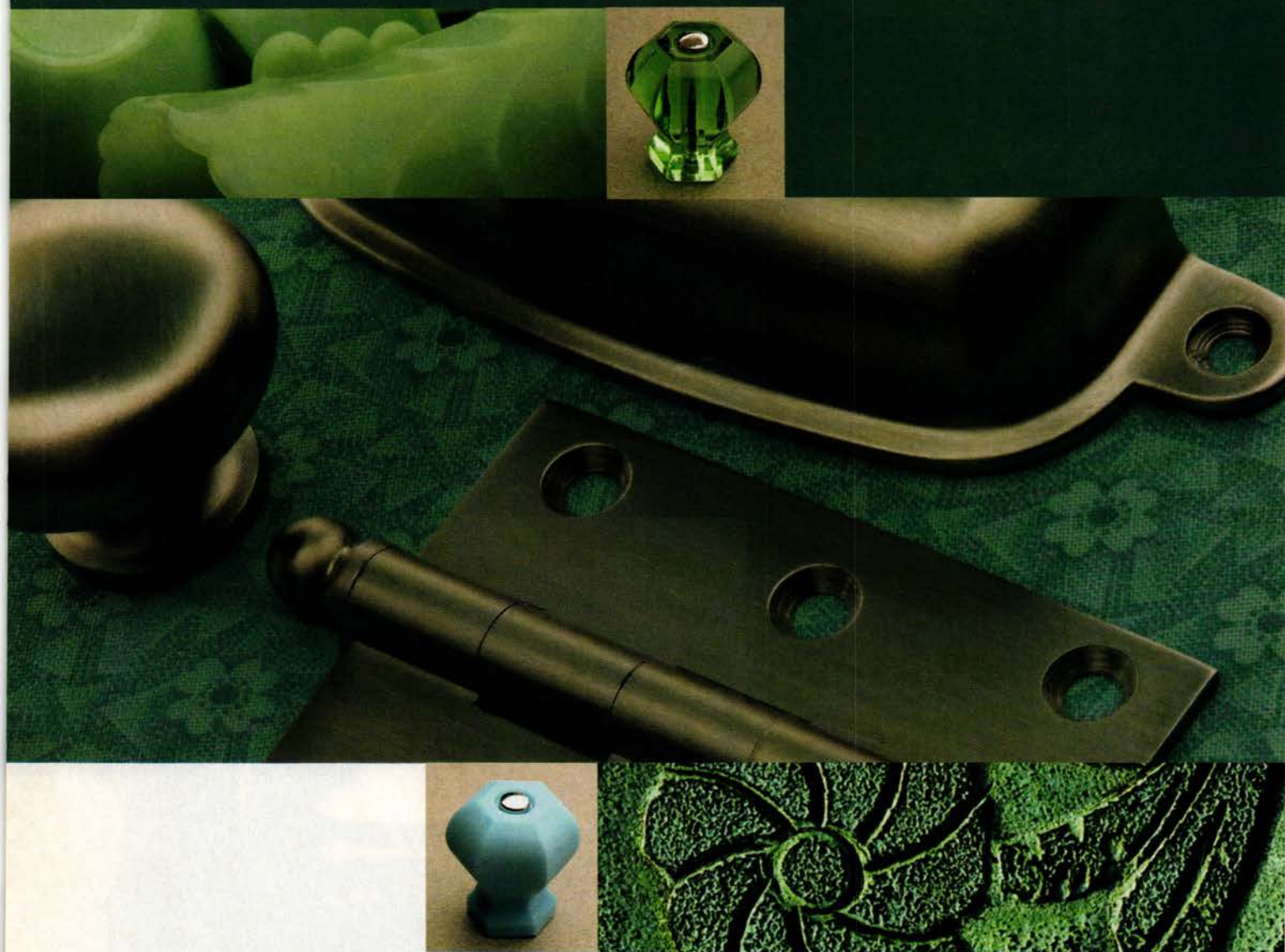
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## The Kitchen Question

Kitchens pose a perennial conundrum for old-house owners. More than ever, the kitchen is the central room of our 21st-century lifestyles. However, for many *Old-House Journal* readers, a kitchen built solely around the latest in technology and contemporary design can be a jarring anachronism in a house that is otherwise right in step with the 1790s, 1880s, or 1930s. What to do? In this issue of *OHJ* we decided to tackle this puzzle head on—not by proposing a single, universal answer, but by focusing on a few, specific pieces that many folks have asked about.

People who love historic architecture enough to live in it are often aiming for the fullest expression of the experience—for example, decorating their houses with style-appropriate wallpaper, surrounding themselves with antique furniture, collecting vintage ceramics or artwork, planting heirloom roses or vegetables. While a select few may

take this vision to an extreme level—dressing in costumes, say, or reading by candlelight—most of us are content to strike a compromise at some point with today's world of hybrid automobiles and emails. In kitchens, though, those compromises are trickier to make because there are more of them.

One approach is to create a period kitchen—that is, a room that may not have been present in the house in the past, but is nonetheless sensitive to its style and era because it is based on historically appropriate materials and features.

The article that begins on page 48 showcases a group of projects from four stylistic eras—the Victorian decades of the late 19th century, the Arts & Crafts Movement of the early 1900s, the pre-1800 Colonial period, and the mid-20th-century modern era—that are textbook examples of how key details can be used to create a period kitchen.

Another idea that is remarkably successful for existing kitchens and newly built kitchens alike is to accentuate the historic ambiance with a few well-chosen enhancements. For example, a dozen or so pieces of the right historical hardware, as the article on page 80 explains, can instantly upgrade kitchen cabinets to a particular decade. The same effect can be achieved on a larger scale with vintage appliances. Though technological conveniences like dishwashers, microwave ovens, and even personal computers are all but essential in today's kitchen, they don't have to monopolize it. A vintage cooking range or refrigerator—even if just for storage or looks—can add a healthy dose of historic colors and materials, as we see in the article on page 56, and helps even-up the chronological design score.

When it comes to creating modern kitchens that are also sensitive to old houses, every situation is different. Fortunately, there are a wealth of stylistic options and quality products to help guide us through the puzzle, and that is what makes historical design so exciting and beautiful to work with in the first place.



*Gordon H. Bock*

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## Arts & Crafts Oops

In "English Arts and Crafts Houses in America" (January/February), James C. Massey and Shirley Maxwell write, "In East Aurora, New York, Harvey Ellis was the star designer for Elbert Hubbard's Roycroft Community." This is an error, placing architect Harvey Ellis in the wrong place and working for the wrong man. Ellis was certainly a star designer but for Gustav Stickley. Ellis served as editor of *The Craftsman* magazine in 1903 and produced a range of Arts & Crafts designs. Stickley's line of Craftsman furniture was improved by Ellis's design skill. His furniture featured inlays of contrasting metals or woods, in motifs reminiscent of Mackintosh and other designers of the British Arts & Crafts Movement. The current edition of the Stickley furniture company is still producing reproductions of Ellis furniture.

Otherwise the Massey-Maxwell article was valuable.

Jean R. France  
Pittsfield, New York

*Ouch! Western New York was quite an Arts & Crafts epicenter in the early 1900s (attracting Frank Lloyd Wright, too), and we got two nodes confused. Many thanks for setting the record straight. Ellis expert Jean France is the author of the OHJ "Who They Were" profile "Harvey Ellis, Accursed Genius" (September/October 2001).*

## Tried and Truesdell

A friend asked about floor plans for the Truesdell House pictured on your December 2004 cover. It looks like it is another example of the most popular of the homes designed by Knoxville architect George Barber. Alter a few details and flip-flop the layout, and it looks like the same house as pictured below—an ad for his book of house plans.

The book, by the way, is available in a reprint edition from Dover Publications.

Its title is *Victorian Cottage Architecture: An American Catalog of Designs*.

There is a National Register-listed home of the same design just a few blocks down the road from my house here in Saginaw.

Greg Branch  
Saginaw, Michigan



## Slim Kitchens

I enjoyed Sue Senator's essay "A Perfect Fit" (September/October 2004) about her galley kitchen. My husband and I live in a brownstone row house and also have a galley kitchen that is in the rear of our house off the dining room. We also made our kitchen shipshape with a little hard work and some painting ingenuity. While it is fashionable in our area to renovate in order to make the kitchen an oversized extravaganza of granite and professional-grade appliances, we find our cozy galley is charming. In addition to respecting the traditional layout of our home, it affords us the opportunity to use our beautiful dining room. It is refreshing to hear someone else enjoys their home as it is.

Angela Ferrante  
Hoboken, New Jersey

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## Calendar

### March 16 to 19 WASHINGTON, D.C. Society of American Mosaic Artists Conference and Exhibitions

SAMA's fourth annual conference, titled "A More Perfect Union: Mosaic Aspirations," will feature workshops, presentations, vendor shows, and a party at the Torpedo Factory in Alexandria, Virginia. The conference coincides with three mosaic art exhibitions held at the Ellipse Gallery in Arlington, Virginia, and the Eleven Eleven Sculpture Space in Washington, D.C. Visit [www.americanmosaics.org](http://www.americanmosaics.org) for more information.

### March 20 PASADENA, CALIF. Pasadena Heritage House Tour

Visit six private homes in the style of Pasadena's Modern architecture. Docent-guided tours take about four and a half hours. Tickets are \$35 for nonmembers and \$30 for Pasadena Heritage members. Call (626) 441-6333 or visit [www.pasadenaheritage.org](http://www.pasadenaheritage.org) for more information or to purchase tickets.

### March 26 NEWPORT, R.I. Easter Egg Hunt and Brunch

Meet the Easter bunny and hunt for more than 1,000 eggs on the lawn of Rosecliff, a historic Gilded Age mansion. A seated brunch follows. Non-member admission is \$35 for adults, \$20 for children 6-12, \$15 for children 3-5, and \$5 for children under 2. Call (401) 847-1000, ext. 140 for tickets or more information.

## Picking Up the Pieces



Left: The Colden Mansion ruins five years ago. Below: A pen-and-ink drawing of the mansion from an 1859 map of Orange and Rockland counties in New York.

IMAGES COURTESY ROBERT WILLIAMS



We've all seen them, driving country back roads or skirting the edges of small towns: the crumbling remains of once grand homes, now abandoned to nature. Few such ruins have a history as rich, complex, and sadly frustrating as that of the Colden Mansion in Montgomery, New York.

The original property—3,000 acres—was first acquired in the early 1700s by Scotsman Cadwallader Colden, a wealthy physician, scientist, and lieutenant governor of New York. His son, Cadwallader Colden Jr., eventually acquired the land and in 1767 began erecting his second house there—a two-storey, five-bay, hipped roof house of rubble fieldstone considered the finest Georgian home in the area. Built on an I-house plan with two large parlors flanking a central hall, with two bedrooms on the second floor and a basement kitchen, it was soon doubled in size.

Interior rooms—well-documented in writing and photos—had full-height paneled fire-place walls, a paneled dado beneath a chair rail, and a perimeter cornice. The hall contained paneled wainscot-

ing and a walnut staircase.

Among the senior Colden's many interests was botany, but his daughter, Jane,

## Normandy Workshop

Go back in time during a two-week workshop in Normandy, France, restoring a 15th-century communal bread oven. The hands-on workshop will explore traditional restoration materials and methods, which are still used today to repair medieval buildings in Normandy. Workshop participants will produce oak timbers joined with traditional mortise-and-tenon joinery for the bread oven's roof, do masonry work such as stone shaping for exterior walls, and work with natural hydraulic lime products to restore interior surfaces.

The workshop takes place March 25 through April 8, 2005. It is limited to 12 people and costs \$2,500 per person, not including airfare. For more information contact Jacob Arndt at (920) 648-2232 or [nwm@charter.net](mailto:nwm@charter.net).



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ered and named are still on  
the property.

The mansion remained  
in the family for a century,  
with later owners  
modifying the  
roofline. Then in the  
1920s it fell victim to  
that stalemate, the  
estate wrangle, and  
over the next couple of  
decades was abused by  
renters, squatters, van-  
dals, and total lack of  
maintenance, even  
though a couple in  
nearby Newburgh  
struggled to buy it for  
restoration. The estate  
was sold and divided  
by a speculator in the 1940s,  
and then advertised for sale as  
an industrial park. The owner  
said he would happily sell it to  
a nonprofit but got no takers.

In the meantime, in  
addition to its roof collaps-

## Traditional Surfin'

If you're a professional working on restoration or renovation projects, be sure to visit Clem Labine's *Period Homes* website, [www.period-homes.com](http://www.period-homes.com). It provides resources for all the products and services you might need while working on a traditional residential building. Direct links to providers' websites as well as order forms for catalogs allow you to research your options quickly and thoroughly.

Clem Labine's  
**Period Homes**



Top: Interior elements were purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art to create its Verplanck room. Above: In the 1920s, new owners gave the mansion a mansard roof. A stone cookhouse stands to the right.

ing, bits and pieces of Colden Manor have been distributed throughout the state. In the late 1930s, the Metropolitan Museum of Art bought the west parlor's paneling to create an 18th-century room. A New York City antiques dealer bought several of the interior features, including the stair. Eventually these were sold to Orange County, in which Montgomery is located, and now some elements are installed in Montgomery's

Town Government Center, along with the house's date stone.

So, what's the use? For starters, there is quite a bit of the old house remaining, including parts of all nine fireplaces, and even window frames. Also on the grounds are ruins of a barn, a cistern and cook house, several wells, and the alleged site of a slave cemetery. Ruins actually have some advantages over intact structures when it comes to

## A Colorful New Look

A new book by *Old-House Journal* contributing editor Steve Jordan and Judy Ostrow shows that a simple layer of paint can do wonders for an old kitchen. *Painting Kitchens: How to Choose and Use the Right Paint for Your Kitchen Walls, Ceilings, Floors, Cabinets, Countertops, and Appliances* (Rockport Publishers) offers creative ideas and step-by-step instructions to revitalize a kitchen when complete restoration is not a financial option or isn't necessary.

The authors give detailed tech-



nical advice on the challenges and concerns specific to painting kitchens. Readers can walk through each step—planning an overall look, stripping wallpaper, cleaning, caulking, selecting tools, choosing which types of paint to use, application techniques, and overcoming any obstacles that might arise.

The book also features a full section on choosing a color palette, complete with vivid photographs and color swatches. Whether the job is simply a new layer of paint on the walls or painting cabinets,

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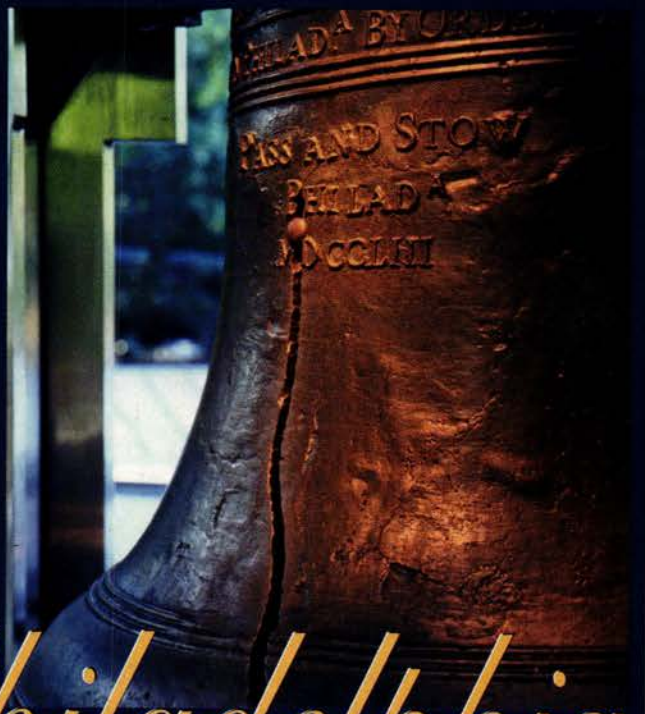
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# Philadelphia 2005

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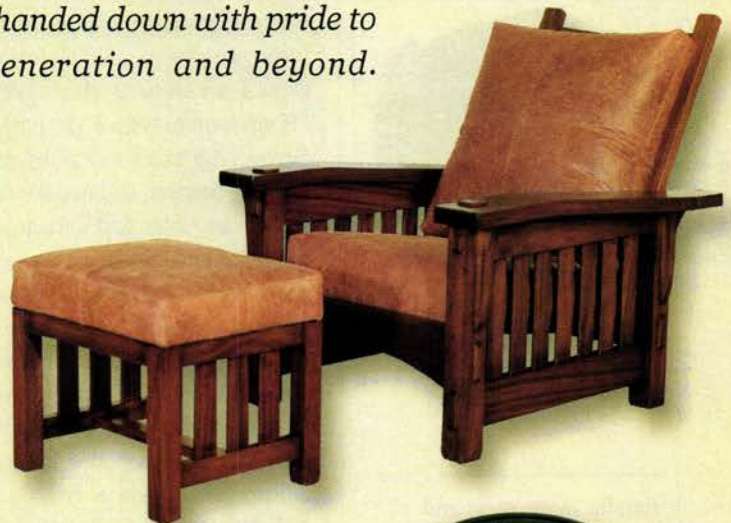




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education, because they reveal age-old construction methods, clues to decomposition causes, surprises like hidden tunnels, and opportunities for students and even the public to participate in archeology of the site.

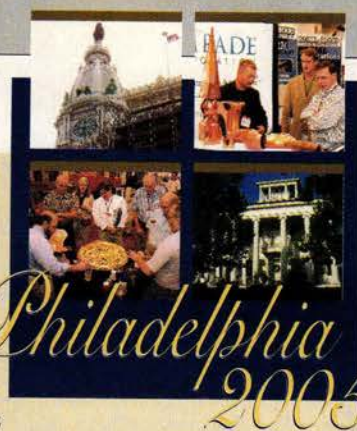
There is a glimmer of hope at the end of this tunnel, but also another legal snag. The fate of the remaining eight acres and all the relics still remaining on them are embroiled in a drawn-out State Supreme Court case involving construction of a new highway interchange about a mile away, which is being challenged because its completion would open the door to developing hundreds of acres of state-owned land. According to Robert Williams, who served as the town histo-

## Spring Fling in Philly

Along with gardening books, plans for construction-season projects can buoy the most leaden winter spirits. Usher in the productive months of summer at the Traditional Building Exhibition and Conference, April 27-30, at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia. The nearly 80 educational seminars, workshops, and tours are divided into nine thematic tracks ranging from Residential Restoration and Renovation to Traditionally Inspired New Construction to Traditional Trades and History and Design. On the show floor, more than 200 exhibitors will display hard-to-find traditional products and services.

Conference sessions such as "Practical Preservation of Old Buildings" will take the anxiety out of a preservation project, proposing a process that includes structural evaluation and prioritizing based on budget and intrinsic value of building features. Other sessions focus on particular aspects of a project. "Homespun to High Style: Early American Furnishings and Fabrics" discusses carpets, window drapery, and interior furnishing fabrics. "Craft, Color, and Cottages: Arts & Crafts Interiors" and "Updating the Colonial Home" provide practical information on creating authentic period interiors.

For those contemplating a historically inspired new construction project, "The Pennywise New Old House: Balancing Character and Budget" will offer practical information on how to create a traditionally styled house without breaking the bank. "Rediscovering Color and Pattern in Historic Interiors" explores ways to adapt color, pattern, ornament, and materials of the past to new design. "In Stock, In Style: The Making of Chadsworth Cottage" outlines a novel demonstration project for Clem



Labine's *Traditional Building* and Clem Labine's *Period Homes* magazines in which a model home was built

almost exclusively with stock items purchased through the magazines or their websites.

The Traditional Trades track covers a wealth of topics, including masonry, slate roofs, ornamental and flat plaster, stained glass, wooden shutters and porches, window restoration and replication, and decorative painting and gilding.

On the exhibit floor, Traditional Building Live! offers demonstrations by modern masters of centuries-old building crafts. A newly expanded resource center will display and sell literature from local and national preservation organizations, sponsor book signings, and feature a gallery of award-winning projects from the Great American Home Awards and Palladio Awards.

General sessions will provide a context for the theme of the conference, "Reviving Traditional Communities: Products, Practice, and Profits." Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and keynote speaker Tom Hylton will describe his commitment to reshaping attitudes about the way we live on the land and the public policy that reflects those attitudes. At the closing plenary panel discussion, "Reviving Traditional Communities," three leaders in the movement—John Norquist, president of the Congress for the New Urbanism; Roberta Brandes Gratz, author of *The Living City*; and Richard K. Green, a professor of real estate finance at George Washington University School of Business and former principal economist at Freddie Mac—will share their perspectives on meth-

ods that cities are using to rebuild neighborhoods, infrastructure, and community pride.

For more information, visit [traditional-buildingshow.com](http://traditional-buildingshow.com).

**TRADITIONAL BUILDING**  
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The mansion was abandoned in the 1930s, although its roof was still intact in this photo taken about 35 years ago.

rian for many years and championed preservation of the site, if the state gets the go-ahead for the interchange, it may buy the land and preserve it as a heritage park as its part of the trade-off. State officials recently initiated National Register designation for the nearby Colden family cemetery.



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## Watching the Furring Fly



Here, furring strips ripped from 2x4 lumber are applied to studs to build them out enough for drywall to clear the piping. Shimming and nailing at strategic spots can be part of the process.

To rebuild the bathroom in our 1880s house, we've had to remove all the failing plaster and tilework down to the studs. Our carpenter now tells us that we should fur the walls—what does he mean?  
*Bunny and Richard Cunningham*  
*Lincoln, Nebraska*

**F**urring is the general process of attaching spacers, such as wood strips or metal channels, to structural members in order to level or otherwise prepare them for new wall or ceiling finishes. In the case of your house, your carpenter may be advocating furring out the rough-sawn studs to produce the best possible drywall and tile installation. While the framing in your 1880 house may be basically plumb and level, chances

are the faces of some of the studs may be out of line as much as 3/8" after 120 years—and being less precise than the lumber sold today, they may have always been that way. Plasterers and tilers of the past did not worry about these minor variations because they could correct for them when they applied 1" or more of lath and mortar.

However, if you take the same studs and hang modern drywall—which is uniformly 1/2" thick—these variations can show up as waves in the wall. With large tiles such as subway tiles, the undulations can be much more apparent because they make it hard to keep the tile surfaces flush, one to another. A proper furring job starts with establishing new wall planes with string lines (laser levels can also help) and then building out the low areas of studs with furring strips.

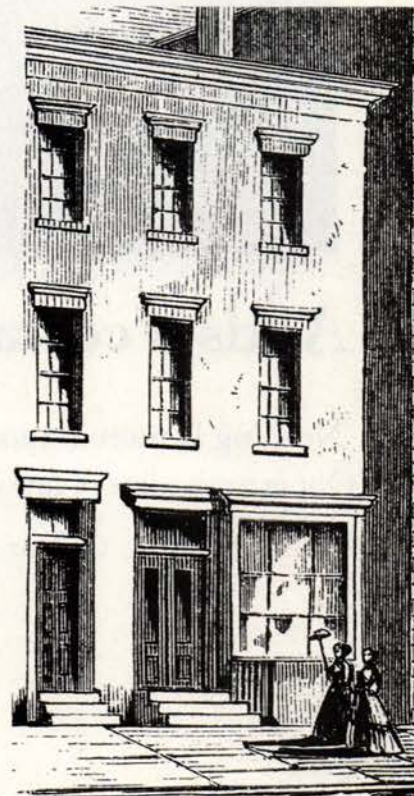
Depending upon the size and condition of the room the work can be meticulous and time consuming, but the benefits are an easier and better job when it comes to the finished drywall and tile.

## Hot House History

We are trying to find out what types of heating systems were in place in Boston row houses in the early 20th century. Any ideas?  
*Rudy Davos*  
*Dorchester, Massachusetts*

**T**hough the row houses built in many cities from the 1850s to the early 1900s regularly incorporated fireplaces on lower levels (top floors sometimes sufficed with stoves), early central heating was also part of the picture. In Boston, for example, hot-air furnaces were common by the 1850s, but being primitive, even these modern systems were eventually being retrofitted. Writing in the 1960s classic *Houses of Boston's Back Bay*, scholar Bainbridge Bunting noted, "From the large number of ... city building permits issued during the eighties, one infers that either substantial improvements were made in furnace design, or a surprising number of furnaces just wore out at that time. By the middle seventies circulating hot water systems were in use and it was possible to heat even the attic rooms by this means."

**Urban row house heat often evolved from fireplaces and stoves to hot air, to hot water or steam.**







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## Door-ology

By JOHN LEEKE

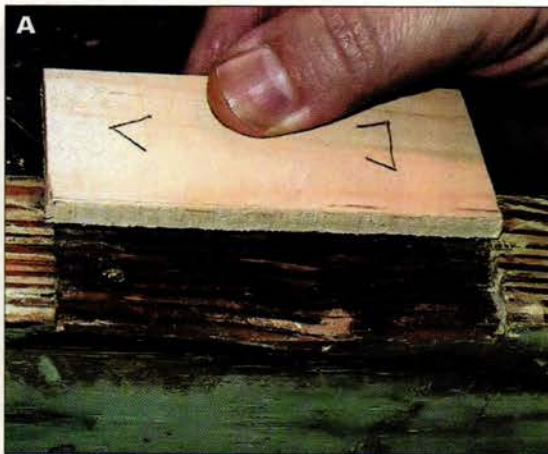
**Even antique doors that are seriously damaged can be brought back to life, but sometimes you just have to replace a worn door. Here's a useful technique for each situation.**

### Wood Dutchman Patch

**B**efore you can rehang an old door in a new space, you inevitably have to prepare it. Prep work often includes carpentry like repairing a rotten or broken mortise-and-tenon joint, cutting down or building up the door to fit the frame, and patching old latch holes and hinge gains (the notches that hold the leaves) with wood Dutchmen. To make a Dutchman repair you cut and fit a piece of new wood to replace the damaged or missing wood using the following basic steps:

- 1) Scrape paint buildup from the repair area, exposing bare wood.
- 2) Cut a slip or block of wood a bit larger in all dimensions than the repair area.
- 3) Hold the wood firmly over the repair area and scribe a mark that outlines the wood block on the surrounding surface.
- 4) Chisel out the surrounding wood accurately to the scribe marks to form a pocket so the block of wood will press-fit tightly into the pocket.
- 5) Glue the block of wood into the pocket. Usually the press-fit will hold the block in place well enough, but you may need to tack or clamp it.
- 6) With a sharp plane or chisel, plane down the proud surfaces of the block until they are flush with the surrounding surfaces.

**Patching old hinge gains is a typical door Dutchman project: A) cut patch slightly larger than gain; B) scribe patch outline on butt; C) carefully chisel gain to new dimensions; D) plane patch flush when glue is cured.**



PHOTOS THIS PAGE: JOHN LEEKE



## Faking It: Adapting moulded doors for a vintage appearance

Here, Chris Pehlke of Ontario, Canada, shows us how he dresses up a Medium Density Fiberboard (MDF) door with wood mouldings. These modern door products are manufactured as a single unit by forming wood particles and binder in giant presses. Though some come in designs that try to imitate traditional door and moulding patterns, they may look “stamped out” next to the authentic early millwork in your house. (Some even have textured surfaces that imitate wood grain, but stand out clearly as fake when compared to early doors that were almost always planed smooth.) To improve vintage appearance of an MDF utility door for a better fit with his early house, Chris adds mouldings around the panels, similar to the traditional practice.

**Basic Products:**  
a Medium  
Density  
Fiberboard  
(MDF) door  
fabricated in  
the factory  
with panel  
shapes; and  
wooden  
mouldings.

1) Select a door product that is similar to other doors in the room or floor—that is, with the panel pattern and style (raised or flat panels). If you are planning on using antique-style hardware, order the door unmilled (without holes for the door knob and hinges), and smooth (if you don't want the fake surface texture). Allow advance time because you may need to special order. Mouldings can be wood or plastic. Select a profile similar to others in your house, one with bold features that casts nice shadows. Skip over the washed-out designs that look like they are from an animated cartoon.

2) Trim the mouldings to length at a 45 degree angle with a miter saw creating miter joints. Sand off any burs or splinters to ensure a tight fit on the corners. Back off the bevel along the bottom edge slightly with a sanding block so the top of the joint that shows fits nice and snug. Lay out each piece as you go around the panel to test the length and fit. Finally, test-fit all your parts at once to ensure a tight fit and to make any adjustments.

Trim the  
mouldings to  
length with a  
miter saw.



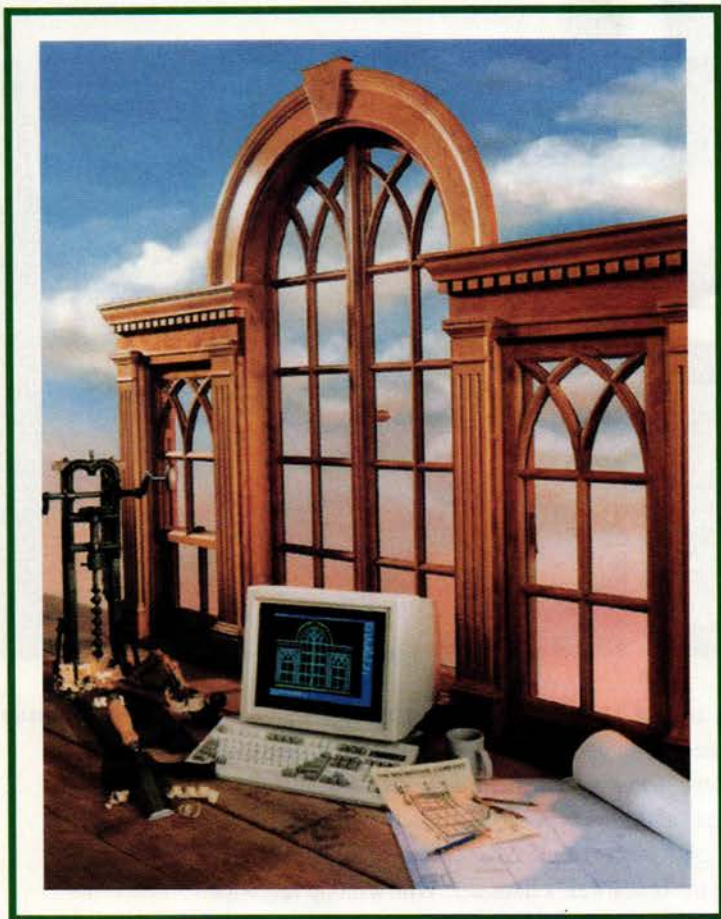
PHOTOS THIS PAGE CHRIS PEHLKE





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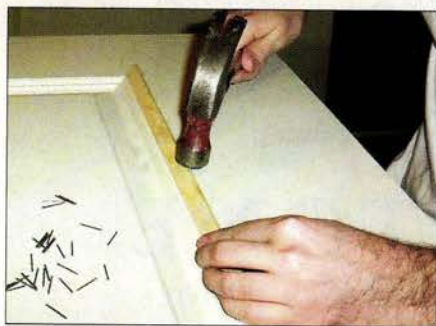
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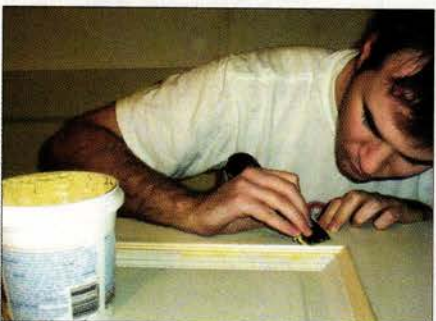
Glue and nail the mouldings to the door.



Set the nails.



Putty over the nailheads and fill any gaps between the mouldings and the door.



PHOTOS THIS PAGE CHRIS PEHLKE



The final painted result.

## MORE FROM OLDHOUSE JOURNAL.COM

For related stories online, see "Artful entrance" and "Pocket Doors on Track." Just click to "The Magazine" section, and go to the alphabetical list of recent features.

3) Glue and nail each piece as you go around. Use a flexible, water-based glue and thin brads. The glue is what actually holds the mouldings to the MDF door. The brads only hold the mouldings in place while the glue sets, so two or three per side are enough. First, lightly tack each piece to the door, so the points of the brads just barely penetrate the door's surface. Then take it up and spread on the glue. Place the piece back on the door, locating the brad points in their holes, and drive in the brads with a hammer. With a damp rag, wipe off any excess glue that squeezes out from under the mouldings.

4) Set the brad heads with a nail set so they are about 1/16" below the surrounding surface. Let the glue set before the next step.

5) Fill in the nail heads and fill any gaps between the mouldings and the door and at the joints. A water-based spackle may dry quicker than some others, but any wood filler with a thin consistency will work. Allow the filler to dry.

6) Sand around the mouldings and the door is ready for hanging. Clean, prime, and paint the door after hanging to prevent damaging the paint during all the drilling, mortising, and handling of hanging. 🛠️

**John Leeke** is a preservation consultant who helps homeowners, contractors, and architects understand and maintain their historic buildings (26 Higgins Street, Portland, ME 04103, 207-773-2306; [www.HistoricHomeWorks.com](http://www.HistoricHomeWorks.com)).





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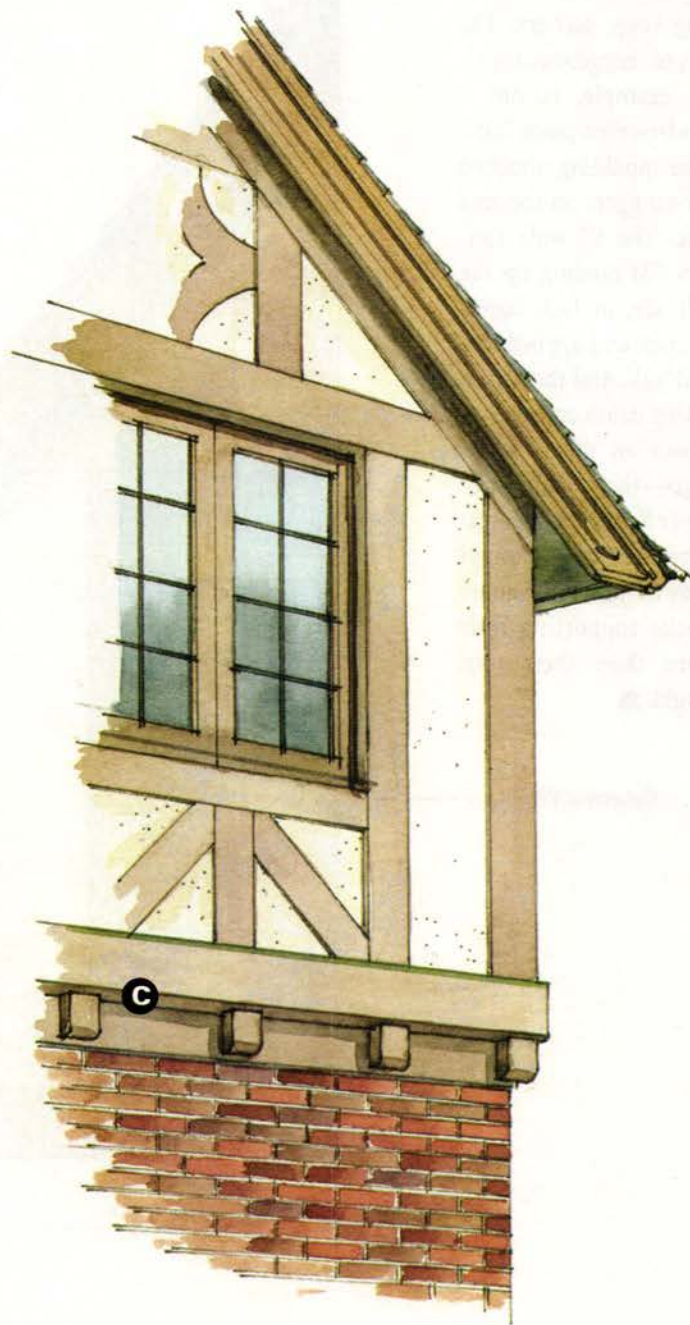
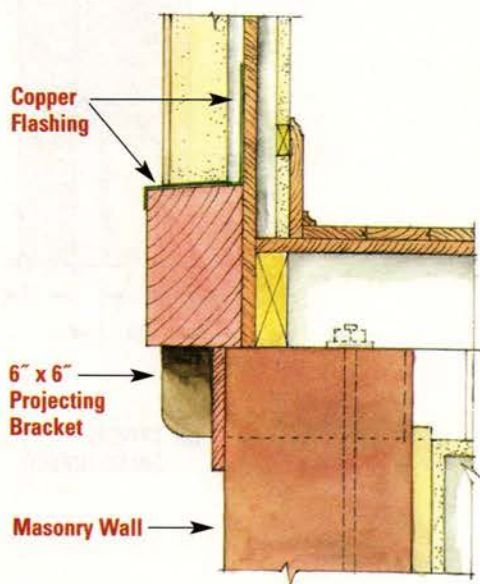


# Imitation Half-Timbering

Drawings by Rob Leanna

For the architects and homeowners of early 20th-century suburbia, the appeal of medieval English houses was the ancient ambiance evoked by heavy, hand-hewn timbers and wattle-and-daub plaster. For old-house devotees of today, the charm of thousands of English Revival houses that mushroomed across North America in the 1920s and '30s often lies in the way builders re-created the impression of age with clever construction techniques and up-to-date materials. Imitation half-timbering was the key to the Tudor look, and the details presented here are typical examples of how thin, ornamental boards and stucco could be applied to a stud-wall house for an ancient effect.

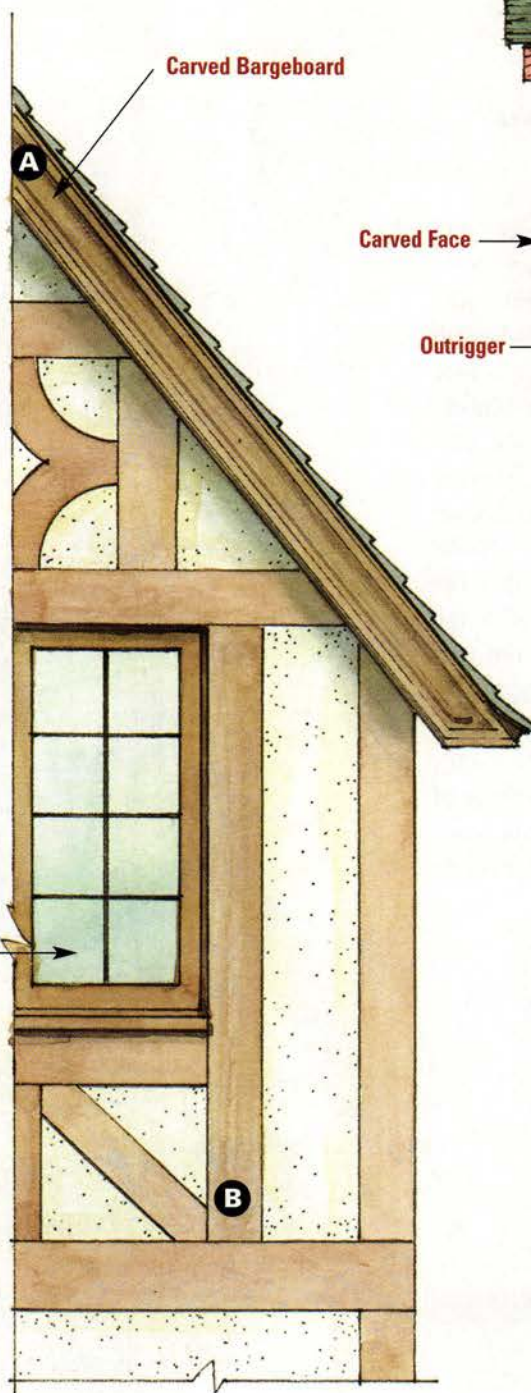
(C) SECTION THROUGH OVERHANG





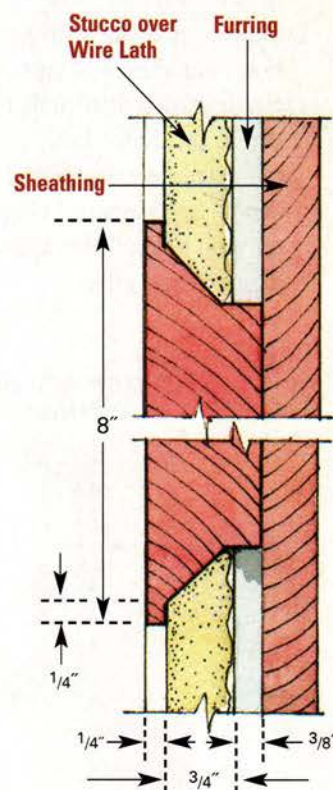
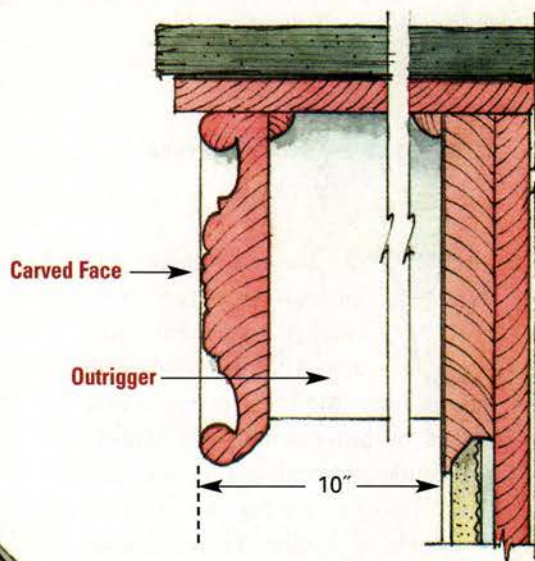
Though exposed timbers serve a structural purpose in original medieval houses, in suburban simulations they're invariably little more than cunning stage scenery. The carved bargeboard (A), for example, is not a hand-worked plank but a large moulding attached to outriggers on the roof rake. The 8" wide timbers (B) holding up the wall are, in fact, barely 1" thick and applied to a stud wall. And those projecting beam ends (C)—shown on the previous page—that cantilever upper floors into an overhang of first storey? They're just 6" square blocks supporting little more than their own weight. 🏠

Casement Window



TYPICAL HALF-TIMBER ON STUD FRAMING

(A) BARGEBOARD



(B) TYPICAL FALSE TIMBER





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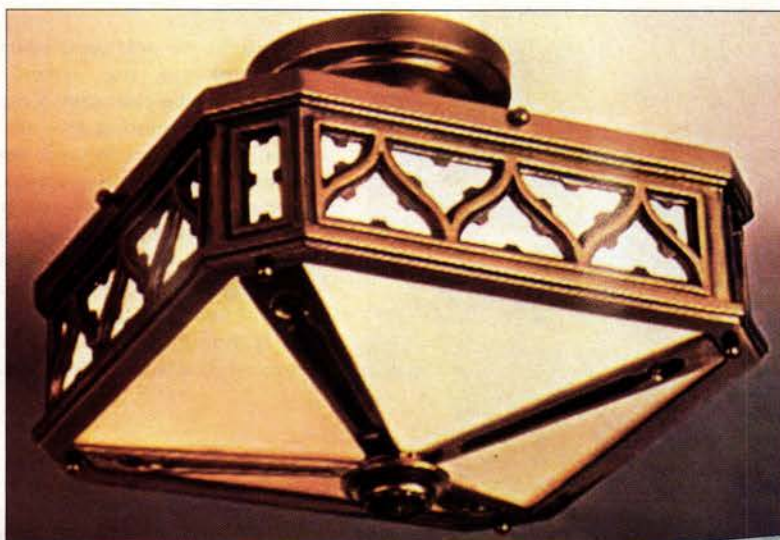
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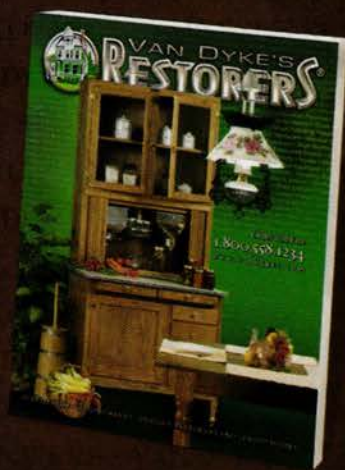
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## Visible Means of Support BY GAIL BUSH

Sawdust on snowdrifts. Not a common sight, but we started the porch during the unusually mild Midwestern fall and winter before the blizzard hit.

The new side porch will wrap around from the existing front porch (where my swing hangs now) back to the kitchen. A kitchen window will become a door. The side porch will be screened in and the front porch will remain open.

Living in an 1871 house we are continually creating and changing living space. Can space be created? Einstein says that we do not create energy, just transform it. So we transform space and by doing so we create "spots" (a la Carlos Castaneda) in our home. My favorite spot is the front porch swing. During fine weather it beckons me to sit and read and wonder and think.

Now this new living space we are creating/transforming will beckon us in different ways. It will be inside and outside; home and not home. It is our physical representation of the stage we are in as a family.

Two teenagers, 16 and 17, need space to be home and not home, with us and not with us. "Not to be offensive," my 17-year-old says, "but I do not plan on being home this summer." "Not to be offensive," I reply, "but that's just what I would expect. It's a big world out there; it's time for you to go out and taste it for yourself."

He says that when he is home he will sleep on the porch. OK. Who are you and

what have you done with that darling little boy that used to live here?

The thrill of creating (forget Einstein) new vistas is always fresh and exciting with every new construction project on the house. Now I am walking where once there was only brush and weeds and poor, dead plants from the grocery store that never quite made it in the real world of

with your friends but be home. Be home but don't be inside the house with us. Learn that you can live in one place for a long time and continually seek new vistas and new understandings. Learn that we all continue to grow and learn that our needs change.

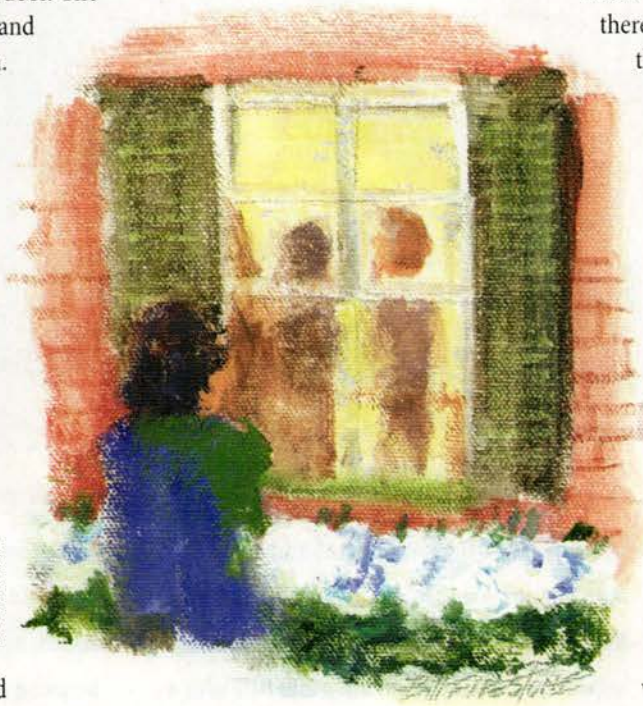
The beams holding up the roof will stay exposed just like they are now. I like visible means of support, so strong, so there, not trying to look like something they are not. Sure, we can screw in a hammock or two or those hanging chairs we saw at Navy Pier a few years ago. I told the 16-year old and his friends that they can decorate the porch. Sometimes permission is all they want and the task never gets done. Either way, it may never look as good as it does today, from the vantage of sawdust on snowdrifts.

Once this project is completed, it will not be mine. Every construction job that incubates for months belongs to me as I direct and adjust every step of progress toward completion. My children were mine until birth, when they belonged to the world.

This porch will be taken over immediately upon completion or fair weather, whichever comes first. So be it.

Yes, I understand, you must leave now. But first, sit a minute, beside me, here on the porch, and tell me about your dreams. 🏡

*Gail Bush is associate professor and director of the School Library Media Program, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, at Dominican University in River Forest, Illinois.*



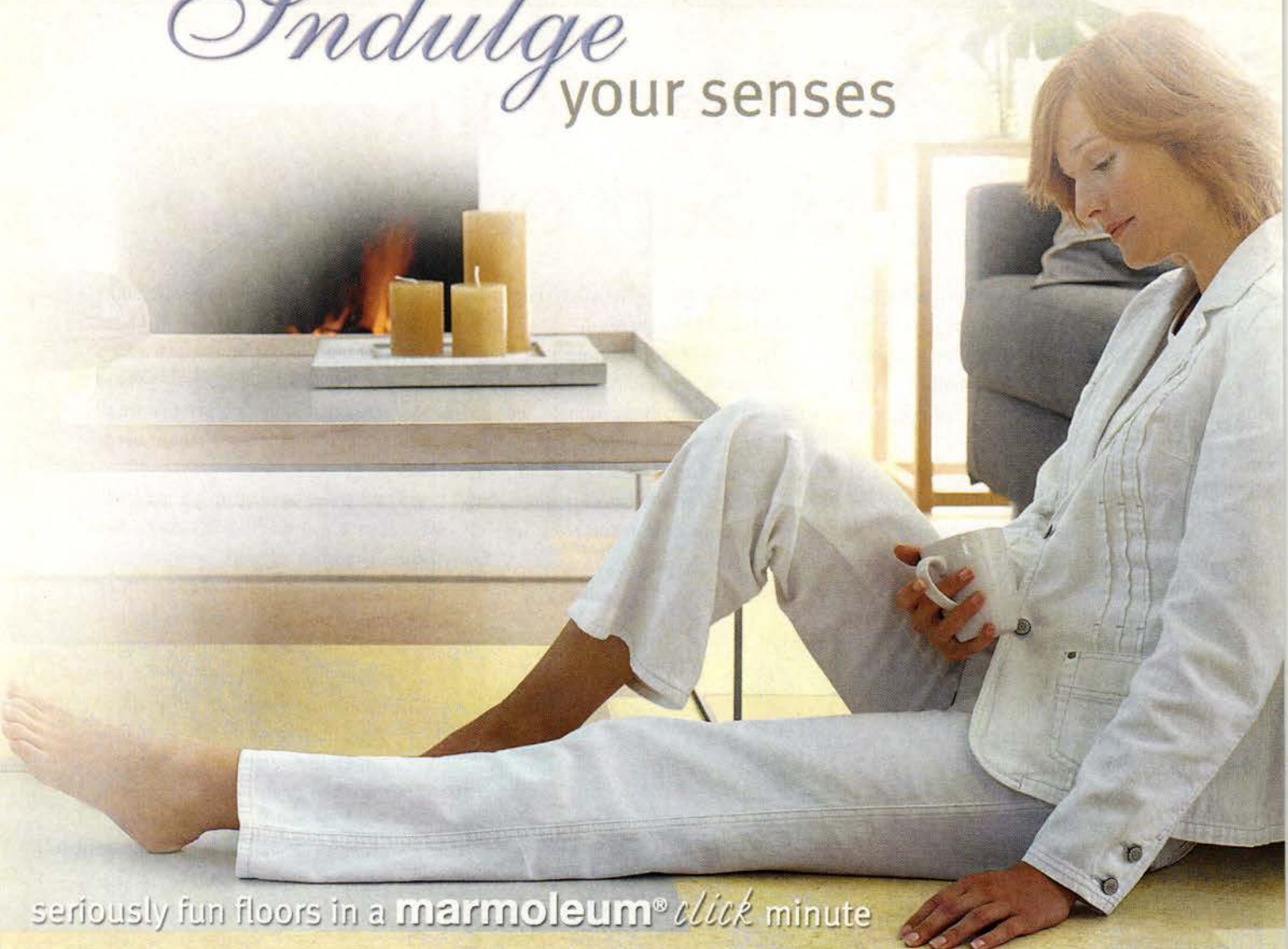
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earth and sun. The red clapboard that has been the outside of this house since just after the Civil War, built during the year of the Great Chicago Fire, is now the inside wall of this porch. All wood and nails, beams and supports. That is all it takes to increase the "spots" we nestle into and invite friends and defy the yellow jackets of late summer.

So we can let go and still have them home. It sounds like a trick; what looks like screening is actually a safety net. Be



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# A Sampler of Shrubs Worth Seeking

**Surprise the neighbors with some too-rarely seen antique bushes.**

BY KATHLEEN FISHER

Shrubs have been the backbone of many an American garden ever since settlers began putting down stakes.

Like trees, they're a year-round presence, but their charms—which often include flowers, berries, and fall color—are at eye level.

Some were popular as dooryard ornaments in the Midwest, while others were treasured single specimens on Victorian lawns. On more affluent estates, they were massed as single-species hedges or mixed as decorative “shrubberies.”

Native shrubs were some of the first called into service, with plantsmen such as Philadelphia's John Bartram making rare ones more widely available. The palette expanded immensely with Asian plant exploration in the 19th century.

Some of these favorites, such as lilacs, azaleas, and forsythias, have never gone away from front yards. Others seem to have faded into their own woodwork over the decades, despite some unique features. True, they may be a bit ho-hum or shaggy “off season,” but when they strut their stuff, it's time to turn off the TV and make a pilgrimage to the garden just to gawk in wonder. As naturalist garden writer Sara Stein puts it, “Who visits their blue spruce?”

Here are a lucky seven—restricted to natives just to keep the list short—that I'd like to see a lot more often as I stroll old neighborhoods.

**BEAUTYBERRY** (*Callicarpa americana*). My grandmother, who otherwise pretty much restricted her gardening to annuals, had one of these on the north side of her house, which I visited regularly each fall anticipating the glowing purple berries. Other writers have called them iridescent or metallic. If sited to catch the low autumn sun, they'll elicit gasps

from visitors and last for weeks—depending on your bird population.

The shrub's overall shape is sort of a spindly fountain (although this makes them a snap to prune) and the tiny lavender-pink summer flowers that precede the berries are fairly negligible. There are some non-native species and cultivars that are perfectly acceptable for the historic garden since they've been on this continent since the mid-19th century. One called *C. bodinieri* ‘Profusion’ has some of the heaviest berrying. Beautyberries are impressive massed at the edge of a wood.



Early Americans often grew Carolina allspice near their doorways, so they could catch its fruity aroma as they came and went.

Beautyberry will take on an iridescent glow when sited to catch the low autumn sun, although its knockout magenta color can make it hard to mix with the more usual scarlet shades of autumn.







PHOTOS THIS PAGE: KEN DRUSE

Above: The spires of sweet pepperbush emit an intoxicating perfume that is rare in late summer gardens. Below: When the white flowers of fringe tree smother it in late spring, it's easy to see where it gets another common name, granny grey-beard.

Clethra—in the trade since 1731 and praised by Bartram some 20 years later—has become extremely popular among gardening cognoscenti since natives began making a comeback a couple decades ago, but still has a long way to go before catching up with azaleas. Its appeal? Bottlebrush spikes of heavily perfumed flowers in autumn, when garden scents are sorely lacking. The first time I encountered them in a wood I smelled them before I saw them. White tinged with pink—more so in some named selections such as ‘Rosea’—the flowers are followed by pods of seeds that look like peppercorns, hence the common name.

**SMOKEBUSH** (*Cotinus species*). There's nothing subtle about this one. If you see it in bloom, you may screech on the brakes, park the car by a fire hydrant, and bang on the property owner's door demanding, “What is that?” The excitement comes not from the flowers themselves but from hairs on the flower stalk, lasting for weeks in midsummer, that vary from white to smoky pink. Here we have to depart from our “natives” rule because although there is a native version—*C. obvatus*—it can grow to an unshrublike 30'. Totally appropriate to the old (and smaller) garden is the species from Europe and Asia, *C. coggygria*, introduced in the mid-17th century. It has named purple-leaved selections with more pink in their put-out-the-fire “flowers.”

**FRINGE TREE** (*Chionanthus virginicus*). There are a number of woody plants that can be called either trees



It's the hairs on the flower stalks that seem to set off a three-alarm fire on the smokebush. Some selections have purple leaves and pink-tinged “blooms.”





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or shrubs, depending on both natural bent toward single or multiple trunks and how they're trained when pups. This is one, with such charming old-time names as grancy (or granny) greybeard. Bartram was pushing the native in 1760 and an Asian version, *C. retusus*, was available by the late 19th century. In recent years, like *Clethra*, they have developed a reputation as a plant worth having—although the word is hardly universal. How else to explain my neighbors' sawing down one easily worth \$200 in the course of clearing out a nasty patch of English ivy and wild grape vine? Nor do I ever see one sporting its heavy beard of white—like Christmas tinsel with less twinkle—as I drive around in May. Female fringe trees have dark blue berries that birds appreciate.

Below left: Strawberry bush is a woodland native that's probably best planted in an out-of-the-way spot—but not so far from view that you miss the seeds popping out of the bumpy pods. Below: Snowberry had a short period of popularity in the 19th century, and like its close relative the Indian currant coralberry, deserves a spot in a heritage landscape.



PHOTOS THIS PAGE: KEN DRUSE

**STRAWBERRY BUSH** (*Euonymus americanus*). "Hearts a bustin'" is another common name that has inspired at least one folk song. That's because in September or October its bumpy crimson fruits explode to reveal smooth orange-red seeds—enough to make you cry if not for lost love, the bygone summer. A stalwart of eastern colonial landscapes, it tolerates a lot of shade but works best on the semi-sunny edge of a naturalized area. It tends to get a disfiguring disease called euonymous scale, but camouflage it among other woody plants and it will thank you when popping its pods.

**SNOWBERRY** (*Symphoricarpos albus*). Introduced in the early 19th century, this was another old-garden hit because of its unusual berries—white as pearls and as big as grapes. Suckering can turn



the plant—which varies from 3' to 6' tall and wide—a bit scruffy, but that same trait makes it useful for holding banks, and shade tolerance means it will thrive along woodland edges or under eaves. A close relative, the Indian currant coralberry (*S. orbiculatus*), was introduced almost a century earlier and has smaller, purple-red fruits. It, too, seems to have fallen off the nursery map, but is a traffic stopper when mixed with other shrubs near an entryway.

Absent from this list are yet more natives, not to mention some beloved exotics. The upshot is, when seeking special touches for a historic garden, you should dare to go beyond what's on sale at the closest garden market and encourage the return of these living treasures. 🌿

*Kathleen Fisher is author of Taylor's Guide to Shrubs from Houghton Mifflin.*



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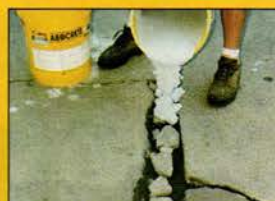
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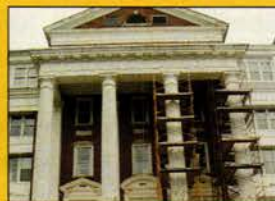
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Circle no. 228



**How do you make a new kitchen fit an old house? Four projects show how historically sensitive design and faithful details can be an option.**



DON PEARSE



DAVID GENTRY

# Restoration Recipes

BY NANCY E. BERRY AND GORDON BOCK

**W**hat do you do when your house predates any modern concept of a kitchen? This was the case in an 1820s Federal-style stone house being restored by John Milner Architects, Inc., in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania. The existing 1970s kitchen was located in what was originally the house's front parlor. Milner wanted to return that room to its intended purpose and needed to find another site for the

kitchen. He chose an ell off the dining room that had its early 19th-century cooking hearth and original wrought-iron cooking crane still intact. After carefully researching the history of the space, the firm replastered and whitewashed the walls, restored the 19th-century six-over-six windows, and installed a floor of salvaged bricks.

Once the backdrop for the kitchen was set, Lori Small of Waterbury Associates in Onancock, Virginia, worked closely with homeowner Pat Celii to create

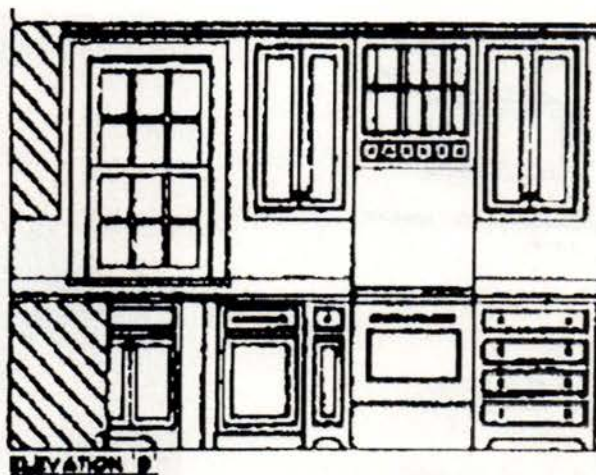
a kitchen suitable for the house's era. First Small interviewed Celii about what was important in the space. Above all, Celii wanted the kitchen to be sensitive to the historic features of the house. Working within the existing footprint of the room, Small designed period-inspired cabinetry of raised-panel, beaded inset doors with wood knobs, hand-carved turn buttons, mortise-and-tenon joinery, and reproduction cut nails. Small varied the cabinets' heights and depths to give the look of distinct cupboards and closets that contrast





with the uniform counters and cabinetry found in 20th- and 21st-century kitchens. For the appliances, hidden behind cabinet overlays, Small designed wrought-iron, acorn-motif handles forged by a local blacksmith. The cabinetry was then painted a colonial red over mustard. Small chose countertops and a farmhouse sink made of soapstone for its rustic look.

From the exposed cross beams in the center of the room's high ceilings, Small hung a reproduction colonial tin chandelier and similar chandeliers over each win-



Small designed cabinets reminiscent of antique cupboards for the 1820s kitchen in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania. Top Left: The room had its original hearth still in tact. Left: Shown here are Small's cabinet CAD drawings.





PHOTOS THESE PAGES GARY TODOROFF

The antique cast-iron, nickel-plated wood-burning cookstove dates from the 1890s. Homeowners Martin and Lesandro cook all their meals on it. Below: Dane Cowen's construction sketches.

dow. (A wood cornice above the cabinetry hides wiring.) Small was concerned that Celii wouldn't have enough storage in the kitchen and suggested a center island, but Celii preferred an antique farmhouse table to complement the house's early period. Although the kitchen appears simple, it is highly functional with a commercial dishwasher, trash compactor, spice rack, and apothecary drawers. Celii's collection of

antique colonial cookware, brownware, and pewter complete the look in this new "Federal"-style kitchen.

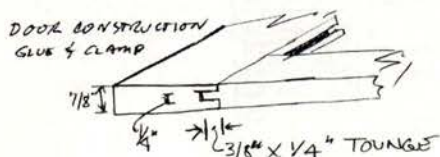
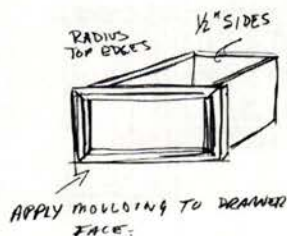
## Italianate Cooking

When old-house enthusiasts Larry Martin and Jerry Lesandro purchased their 1880s Italianate house in Ferndale, California, they wanted a kitchen that was historically accurate—but the existing 1960s kitchen wasn't cutting it. They contacted Dane Cowen, a local carpenter and preservationist, to help them create a kitchen that would build on the house's Victorian-era details. "Martin and Lesandro brought me a cabinet door from an old butler's pantry they had found," says Cowen. Working from that example, Cowen designed cabinets and mouldings for the kitchen and butler's pantry. "It's easier to create cabinets that look authentic when I work from an old piece," says Cowen. "It's the best way to copy the original proportions and scale." From locally milled redwood Cowen built traditional face-frame, raised-panel doors that sit flush with the floor and ceiling. (There is no toekick, a telltale sign of contemporary cabinetry.) For a work surface, Cowen hand-planed sugar maple countertops with a coved maple backsplash. Martin faux-finished the woodwork in golden oak.

For added storage Cowen also built a pass-through cabinet between the kitchen and dining room. "It can be accessed on both sides from the butler's shelf," he notes. Martin and Lesandro found antique cast-iron pulls, cabinet catches, and hinges for the cabinetry at a local salvage shop.

Carpenter Dane Cowen designed the cabinetry to resemble an 1880s butler's pantry. The homeowners brought him an original cabinet door to create the design.

Cowen also designed a pass through cabinet between the kitchen and the dining room. Martin faux finished all the cabinetry in a golden oak.











Brian and Kathleen Vanden Brink created their kitchen on a \$3,000 budget using salvaged 1950s Youngstown cabinets. Right: An ad for the compact steel cabinets show a unit with a built-in sink.



The drawers glide on center-mount drawer slides so you don't see the modern mechanism from the drawer sides. Cowen also installed beadboard wainscoting around perimeter of the kitchen—another popular Victorian feature. Martin and Lesandro cook on an 1890s wood-burning stove they found at an antiques store and refurbished. The sink is an undermounted cast-iron bowl coated in porcelain with wall-mounted faucets. "Wall-mounting



was typical in the Victorian era," explains Cowen, "and it is this level of historical detailing that really makes the kitchen look and feel authentic."

## Retro Recycle

When Brian and Kathleen Vanden Brink bought their 1919 two-storey farmhouse in Camden, Maine, it was, in Brian Vanden Brink's words, "a real dump and practically falling down." After jacking the house, securing the foundation, and replacing the roof, one of the first projects the couple needed to tackle was renovating the kitchen. Contractor Phil Sideris took the existing kitchen right down to the studs. "The only thing we kept from the room was a 1950s Youngstown sink," says Vanden Brink. With a budget of \$3,000, the couple needed to get creative with cabinetry. At the same time that Sideris was demolishing the Vanden Brinks' kitchen, he was renovating his own and was throwing away the original Youngstown steel cabinetry—the same company that made the sink Vanden Brink chose to save. Sideris offered the cabinets, which were in fairly good condition, to Vanden Brink for \$100. Vanden Brink refinished them with metal paint enamel and added metal half-moon pulls before having Sideris install them.

Now that they had a 1950s theme, the couple worked from an old kitchen photo to replicate design details. Sideris built open shelving to store their 1950s pastel Luray ware and a scalloped light valance over the sink. In keeping with the mid-century theme, the couple painted the kitchen a creamy white. They inherited a 1960 GE electric stove from Brian's father who hauled it all the way from Nebraska for use in their retro kitchen. "I remember when that stove was first delivered to my childhood home," says Vanden Brink. Peter and Paula Stone, the couple's close friends, came for a visit from Colorado and brought ceramic tiles as a housewarming gift. The Vanden Brinks installed them as the kitchen's colorful back-splash. Although the kitchen doesn't have all the latest amenities and gadgets of the 21st century (they finally broke down this year and bought a microwave), Brian and Kathleen are quite cozy in their modest, colorful '50s kitsch.

BRIAN VANDEN BRINK



Kathleen Vanden Brink's collection of Luray plates from the '50s and '60s adds color and whimsy to the space.





The flat-paneled cabinet seen along the far wall is actually the refrigerator. Note the decorative brackets supporting the green granite counter on the island.

## Arts & Crafts Affair

Trained as a chef, and considering a part-time catering business, Carolyn White knew what she wanted: a professional-level kitchen that would also be comfortable and fitting for an old house. With clear, precise requirements in mind, she worked with Mark Alan Hewitt AIA of Bernardville, New Jersey, to create an Arts & Crafts inspired kitchen that Hewitt describes as “a terrific architect-client story.” Without the aid of a kitchen design consultant, White took the rectangle of the space and laid out the location of all the appliances. “When it came to specifics,” notes Hewitt, “Carolyn had it all planned, like a restaurant expert, down to the dimensions for storage of pots and utensils—very straightforward.”

Straightforward was indeed the guid-

ing theme. The space is basic—a four-sided room—and the scheme to-the-point. One whole wall is devoted to storage, another carries the refrigerator plus some food prep area, and the third backs up the range and sink. The fourth “wall” is actually the open end of the kitchen, which is defined by a counter/bar and dedicated to meals ready to be served in the porch area just beyond. “It’s just a big kitchen,” notes Hewitt, “not a family room or anything tricky, but it’s also fun to eat in.”

That took care of the mechanics, but what about the aesthetics? Fortunately, the historic design direction was equally as clear. Carolyn and husband Peter (an artist and advertising creative director) are both aficionados of Arts & Crafts furnishings and buildings. While their 1916 suburban New Jersey house shows only a few Arts & Crafts details, and scant more influence from the Colonial Revival movement, after much discussion both architect and clients agreed there was enough evidence to “push one idiom over the other” in the design of the kitchen.

Designing the cabinetwork is where Hewitt and colleague Jerry Bruno made their mark. The cherry cabinets faithfully follow the “straight-line” detailing of Arts & Crafts millwork, employing the characteristic flat panels for doors and squared-off, unmoulded edges for frames. On closer inspection, however, there are subtle details and quotes from other sources that surprise the eye. Primary posts and “beams” are secured with decorative wood

PHOTOS: THESE PAGES JAMES PRINCE

Left: A bank of easy-to-inventory, glass-door storage cabinets makes up one wall. The kitchen addition is the third phase of a three-part master plan for the house that also included work on a bedroom.

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For related stories online, see “Bungalow Kitchens,” “Everything for the Kitchen Sink,” “New Light on Old Kitchens,” “Rangz in the Hood,” and “The Full Range of Cookstove Issues.” Just click to “The Magazine” section, and go to the alphabetical list of recent features.

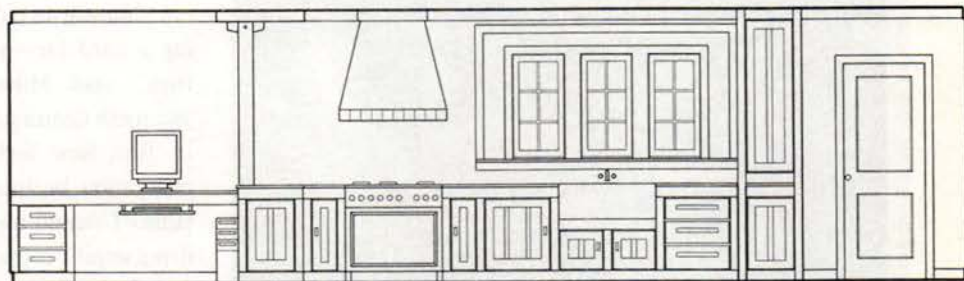






pins. Brass pull hardware—indeed any drawer metal—is eschewed for custom wood handles. And under the cantilevered counter of the center island are support brackets evoking those in the fabled Gamble House. “A good architect is only part of the equation,” cautions Hewitt, “you also have to have a good cabinetmaker,” and he gives high marks to subcontractor Chuck Bischoff of Bischoff Cabinetmaking. The results certainly help fulfill the simple, but high-quality design goals of the project to their fullest. 🏡

JERRY BRUNO



EAST ELEVATION

**Top:** The counter/bar defining one side of the kitchen is akin to Arts & Crafts era colonnades and similarly detailed with a mock ceiling beam. **Above:** The big range ventilating hood, seen in large 1910s kitchens, adds to the sink-and-stove service wall.



# Kitchen Classics

BY NANCY E. BERRY

**Vintage appliances add the perfect touch to a period kitchen.**

One of the best ways to create old-time kitchen ambience is to introduce antique appliances—in particular a cookstove and a refrigerator. Loyal cooks swear by a refurbished cooking range's ability to kick out BTUs to rival today's commercial stoves, while many old-appliance enthusiasts claim their 1930s refrigerators have never had to be serviced. Whether the early 20th-century make you're looking for is a Wedgewood, Hotpoint, Chambers, Quick Meal, or a GE Monitor Top, do your homework before buying. Here are some tips from old-appliance pros on purchasing these antique conveniences.

"Buying an old appliance is like buying a used car—you've got to kick the tires," says Mike Arnold, owner of Twentieth Century Appliance Restorations in Troy, New York, who's been in the restoration business for more than 40 years. "I started my company when these items weren't considered antiques yet," he says. "Your best bet is to look for a stove or refrigerator from the 1930s to the mid-'50s. These appliances will most likely have all the bells and whistles you're looking for today—solid construction, good oven regulation, and built-in safety features—and



This 1915 wood-burning Wedgewood stove is still in use at the Ardenwood Historic Farm in Fremont, California.



This 1928 Hot Point electric stove sits high on dainty cabriole legs, more resembling a piece of furniture than an appliance.





little extras such as clocks, lights, additional ovens, or food warmers.”

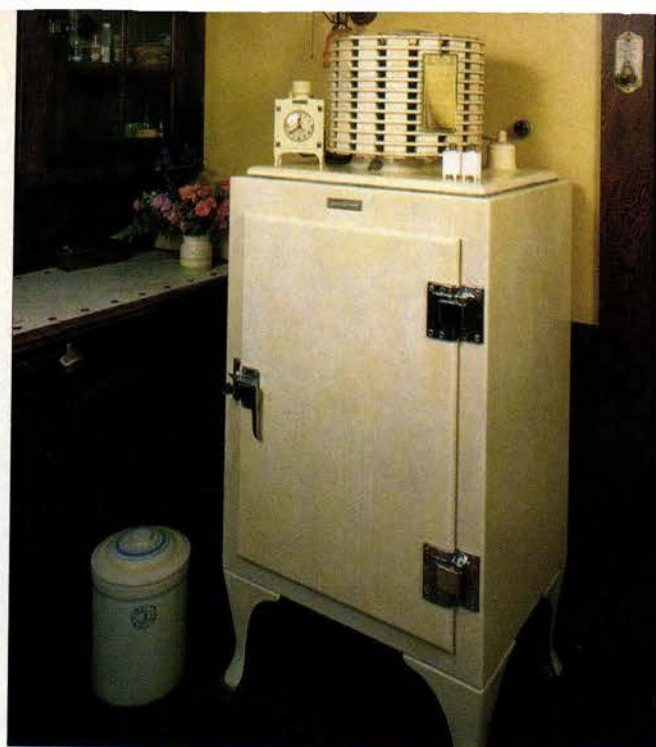
### Testing 1, 2, 3

First check to see if the cooking stove or refrigerator has all its parts, Arnold says. There were literally thousands of stove brand names by the early 1900s. Every foundry made a stove, and any department store could put its name on that stove. The number of companies making refrigerators went from 20 in 1910 to 200 by 1925. So if a refrigerator part is missing or broken it can be hard to locate.



Left: This Chambers cabinet range from the 1930s has a fold-down top when the burners are not in use.





Above left: This O'Keefe and Merritt has a glass window behind its burners. An angled mirror inside lets the cook view the oven's interior without opening the door. Above right: The Monitor Top is by far the most popular vintage refrigerator. Its compressor rests on top of its storage cabinet. Right: This Magic Chef has teardrop oven handles.



It is also important to hook up the appliance to make sure it works. "Unless you're buying from a reputable dealer, don't take the seller's word for it," Arnold says. Often a stove just needs a quick fix; dirt can be the biggest "gremlin," he says, and the simple task of cleaning and lubricating an old gas valve can bring the stove back to new. If an oven is not heating accurately sometimes the thermostat just needs to be adjusted. Another common problem is rodent infestation, in which case the insulation would need to be replaced.

## Home on the Range

Enclosed coal- and wood-burning cast-iron cooking ranges were in use in many

homes by the late 1800s—women no longer had to cook meals in an open hearth. The first gas ranges were introduced around 1880 in cities where illuminating gas was available, but they weren't insulated and lacked oven thermostats. Stoves were insulated by the 1920s and by the 1930s many safety and cooking amenities had been incorporated. The earliest 20th-century stoves were made of cast iron with nickel-plated trim and exposed valve piping, while later models were constructed of porcelain-enameled steel.

Jack Santoro, editor of *The Old Road Home*, a magazine devoted to antique appliances, has been in the business of refurbishing old stoves for 35 years. "I've

seen a real shift in my clientele—maybe the old timers have died off," he deadpans, "but we are getting calls from 25-year-olds looking for antique stoves to add to their kitchens." He says some of the most popular but hard-to-find stoves are the larger ones—60" wide with six to eight burners and rotisserie spits such as the O'Keefe and Merritt Estate or the Magic Chef 6,300 series. Another trend he sees is the popularity of small 30" stoves originally made for apartments. "1940s and '50s ranges are popular, too," he adds. He also advises buying from a reputable dealer, and looking for a stove that works, is well insulated, restored to meet today's codes, and has working heat controls. "People can get stuck with a lemon if they are not careful—you need to make sure all safety systems are in place." He advises against purchasing early (pre-1910) stoves because of their inefficiency—and they also rarely pass inspection.

Santoro believes vintage stoves are easier to repair because they are put together with screws, rather than riveted together like newer models, thus they are easier to take apart. In the past many of the working stove parts were universal, and they can be fairly easy to replace. Some early models can also be adjusted to go from natural gas to propane. By the 1950s ranges had all types of enticing features, including meters for roasts that would play "Tenderly." (Santoro even remembers a dryer that would play "How Dry Am I")



when the cycle was complete!)

Santoro sells several how-to books on repairing stoves and finds that many of the magazine's readers are willing to fix their own antique stoves. "There are a few things they can't do on their own, like replating nickel and porcelain or rebuilding thermostats," he says. Santoro recommends staying away from ranges made in 1946 and 1947. He finds these are usually constructed of scrap metals because most virgin steel had gone to the war effort. The best finds are unused stock (inventory never sold by a company), he adds. He also reminds us that a stove in good condition can be pricey—upwards of \$3,500.

## Cool News

Introduced to the domestic kitchen in the 1910s, refrigerators operating on electricity or gas-powered compressors were regular features in kitchens by the 1930s. The first indoor refrigerator to keep perishables cool was an unpowered "icebox," which appeared in homes around the 1880s. These classy cabinets were often oak or ash and lined with either zinc, tin, or porcelain and had wire racks or porcelain shelves. Insulated with cork and tar, corrugated cardboard, or fiberboard, they were a revolutionary answer to the issue of preventing spoilage.

By 1925 self-cooling refrigerators, introduced to only the wealthiest households in 1910, had become less expensive for the average homeowner to purchase. Early mechanical refrigerators resembled the cabinetry of their precursor—stalwart chests with nickel strap hinges. Later models from the 1920s were porcelain over steel. "The design of appliances really follows the car industry. Cabinets became more streamlined and more stylish with cabriole legs—while colors were white with mint green or grey trim," says Arnold. In the 1940s some manufacturers tried marbled finishes in porcelain enamel. Also in the '40s legs started to disappear and were gone altogether by the '50s.

The problems Arnold sees most often with old refrigerators are broken handles, missing shelves, or door gaskets. Today the most popular model by far is the GE



Iceboxes were typically made of oak and lined with zinc. When gas and electric refrigerators became more readily available for the average homeowner in the 1920s, the ice industry nearly collapsed.

Monitor Top, introduced in 1927. Its compressor, which rests on its white porcelain cabinet, was said to be reminiscent of the gun turret of the famous Civil War battleship, the Monitor. Arnold believes Monitor Tops are more energy efficient than today's models, and he adds, they are almost bulletproof. He advises having the seller plug in the fridge 24 hours before you go to look at it and make sure they have frozen ice cubes in the freezer.

Arnold advises staying away from antique refrigerators made after the mid-1950s. Finishes went from porcelain to plastic, cords went from cloth to rubber, and tubing went from copper to aluminum. "By then compressor styles changed to high speed. The 'frost free' feature also ate up a lot of the electricity. 'Old refrigerators use 4/5 less electricity than the later '50s and '60s models,' he adds. One thing that did happen in the 1950s was the introduction of color—green, sunshine yellow, pink, and robin's egg blue became popular.

Both Santoro and Arnold cook on antique stoves. Arnold has a 1950s electric range and a 1928 Frigidaire refrigerator. "It's a grey and white cabinet up on legs with handsome chrome hardware," he says proudly. Santoro cooks on a six-burner O'Keefe and Merritt that he swears by. When asked if they would be willing to trade in their antiques for a new commercial range, both said, "Not a chance."



The 1899 Dunsmuir House in California has a 1930s side-by-side door refrigerator in its kitchen.

For a list of  
**SUPPLIERS**,  
see page 116.



**Making sense of the adhesives market can be a sticky business, but understanding some basics helps in selecting the best types for old-house repairs.**

# Clues on GLUES

By STEVE JORDAN  
PHOTOS BY ANDY OLENICK

For some adhesive types, pulling apart freshly applied cement encourages the solvents to flash off, thereby advancing the setting when the mating parts are assembled again.



Most traditional glues were natural materials that hardened via the evaporation of water. Though many modern adhesives used petrochemical solvents, "greener" reformulations are usually based on water.

When I was a boy, we seldom had the right tools or materials at hand for any project, including adhesives. If a dried-up bottle of mucilage or white glue wouldn't work, we were out of luck. Once, my father had the ingenious idea of pasting up a homework assignment with a goo of flour and water—"After all," he reasoned, "isn't that the same as wallpaper paste?" You can guess the outcome.

Since that time, dozens of adhesive types have come on the market for the perfect stick, along with new formulations that are easier to use and, when selected appropriately, last a long time. Like most things in building construction, there is no one-size-fits-all glue. The best approach for restoration work is to have a well-chosen selection to meet most needs. To help sort out this broad industry, here's a primer on the basic adhesives types you'll find at good hardware stores, and what

you'll need to know about them for bonding around your old house.

## Glue Basics

Generally speaking, adhesives—glues (traditionally made from natural sources) or cements (frequently rubber-based)—are all liquids that solidify to bind together similar and dissimilar materials. While some adhesives can be used for a multitude of applications and conditions, you will get the best results if you carefully match the characteristics of the adhesive to the requirements of the project. For example, to repair the handle on your favorite coffee mug, you'll need a glue that 1) sets up quickly while you hold the handle tightly in place; 2) is strong enough to hold the weight of 8 ounces of scalding hot beverage; 3) is relatively invisible; and 4) is waterproof to resist dissolving in dish water. Woodworkers look for other qualities, such as quick or slow set (for careful assembly) or perhaps weather resistance





(for exterior use). Some of the less obvious but equally important characteristics are often defined in this way.

**Adhesion** The bond between a material's surface and the adhesive. Adhesion is often mechanical (where the adhesive interlocks with tiny pores and crevices in the material), but it can also be molecular.

**Creep** The tendency of an adhesive to slowly stretch, especially under stress.

**Cure** The length of time an adhesive takes to reach (or almost reach) its ultimate strength, the point at which the repaired object can be used safely.

**Flashing off** The process of encouraging the escape of solvents in solvent-based adhesives so as to speed setting—for example, pulling apart two pieces just after applying adhesive, then reassembling them minutes later.

**Open time** Also called working time and assembly time, this term refers to the period you have to assemble and clamp parts before the adhesive sets up or loses

its ability to work properly.

**Reversibility** The ability of the adhesive to be softened, and the joints disassembled, typically by applying steam, water, heat, or solvents. Reversibility is important when repairing expensive furniture.

**Tack** The initial stickiness or bonding of an adhesive; good initial tack helps with assembling parts.

**Waterproofing/water resistance** A waterproof adhesive can be immersed in water and still work; adhesives labeled water resistant are made for exposure to water and humidity, but they may fail if immersed in water.

Adhesives often create a bond that is tougher than the materials being joined, but not without following a few basic rules for good results. Parts and joints should be tightly fitted, then clamped or weighted for successful adhesion. Simply combining components in haphazard fashion is a formula for failure. Never depend on the adhesive to fill voids left by loose joints or missing pieces.

When regluing joints, remove as much of the old glue as possible to create a tight joint; new glue does not adhere well to old glue.

## White Glue

All-purpose white glue is a must-have for interior craft projects. Made with polyvinyl acetate (PVA), the first and most widely used synthetic resin for wood adhesives, it hardens through the evaporation of water. Therefore, white glue can be thinned and cleaned up with water, is safe to use around children, dries clear, sets fast and, after presoaking, washes out of clothing. White glue is the all-round best adhesive for paper, cardboard, wood, fabric, and a multitude of craft materials not subject to damp conditions. Depending on the temperature, white glue has a working time of five to 20 minutes and cures in an hour or two. I once watched my wife successfully reconstruct a centuries-old, Native American pot broken into at least 60 pieces with all-purpose, white glue. It is





The thinset adhesives used to lay tiles are usually rubbery compounds that are applied with a toothed trowel. The size and pattern of the teeth (typically notched or square) combs the adhesive to the correct, uniform thickness for an even installation.

reversible for about one month and can be softened with steam or warm water.

## Yellow Glue

Like white glue, yellow glue is based on polyvinyl acetate but formulated to be faster setting (five to 15 minutes), more viscous (to reduce ooze under clamping), and easier to sand, making it the standard wood adhesive for most carpenters and home hobbyists. Yellow glue cures overnight, cleans up with water (while wet), dries to a yellow, and is nontoxic. After hardening, excess glue can be chiseled, scraped, or sanded off surfaces. Unless otherwise specified, most products are not water resistant and should not be used for exterior projects subject to moisture or high humidity. Compared to white glue, yellow glue is generally less prone to creep but still enough so that it is generally not recommended for structural applications for this reason. Since yellow glue does not absorb stain, fastidious application and cleanup are essential to prevent the glue from showing through stains or

GLUE	DRY COLOR	ASSEMBLY	CLEAN-UP	CURE	WATER RESISTANCE
White Glue	Clear	5 – 10 min	damp cloth while wet	overnight	none
Cyano-Acrylate	Clear	30 – 60 sec	acetone	overnight	waterproof
Yellow Wood	Translucent	5+ min	damp cloth while wet	overnight	none
Dark Wood	Brown	5+ min	damp cloth while wet	overnight	none
Type II Wood	Translucent	5 min	damp cloth while wet	overnight	water-resistant
Type III Wood	Lt. brown	10 min	damp cloth while wet	overnight	waterproof
Trim Glue	Beige	5 min	damp cloth while wet	overnight	none
Polyurethane	Tan-yellow	20 min	mineral spirits while wet	4 – 24 hrs	waterproof
Epoxy	Clear or amber	varies	acetone while wet	1 – 24 hrs	waterproof
Hide Glue	Translucent	10 min	damp cloth while wet	overnight	none



sealing the wood surface prior to staining. Yellow glue is also sold in dark browns designed for use on dark woods like walnut or mahogany where the yellow version might create a thin yellow line.

If you need glue for exterior wood-working projects subject to moisture, humidity, and temperature changes, look into ASTI Type I water resistant and ANSI Type II waterproof wood glues. In general, these glues handle just like ordinary yellow glue, but they are rated either moisture resistant or waterproof according to stringent tests conducted by the American Society of Testing Engineers. When there's question about use, always read the manufacturer's recommendations.

Moulding and trim glue is a polyvinyl acetate formula specifically sold for carpenters and woodworkers who need a fast-setting glue that will not run or sag. This glue needs very little clamping time (five to 10 minutes), and resists running onto other surfaces—for example, down from a crown moulding onto gypsum wallboard. Moulding and trim glue is for interior use



Though hide glue is the adhesive of choice for fine furniture, yellow, PVA-based "carpenter's" glue—designed for most wood-working projects—is not as runny on vertical surfaces. This characteristic is enhanced for moulding and trim glue products.

only. It cleans up with water while wet.

### Polyurethane Glue

Polyurethane glue (sold under a variety of trade names like Gorilla Glue or PL glue) is a relatively new face on the "adhesive block," appearing on the consumer market only in the last 10 years. Unlike the evaporative action of white and yellow glues, polyurethane glue is chemically reactive, meaning that it cures by reacting with another liquid—specifically, the moisture

present in the air or in substrates like wood. This curing process makes polyurethane glue much less sensitive to environmental conditions and well-suited for the temperature swings and high humidity of outdoor use. Polyurethane glue has a working time of about 15 minutes and, though relatively expensive, is efficient to use because it foams to three or four times its original volume. Polyurethane glue is also extremely strong and highly polar in nature, giving it great ability to adhere to dissimilar surfaces.

#### RECOMMENDED USE

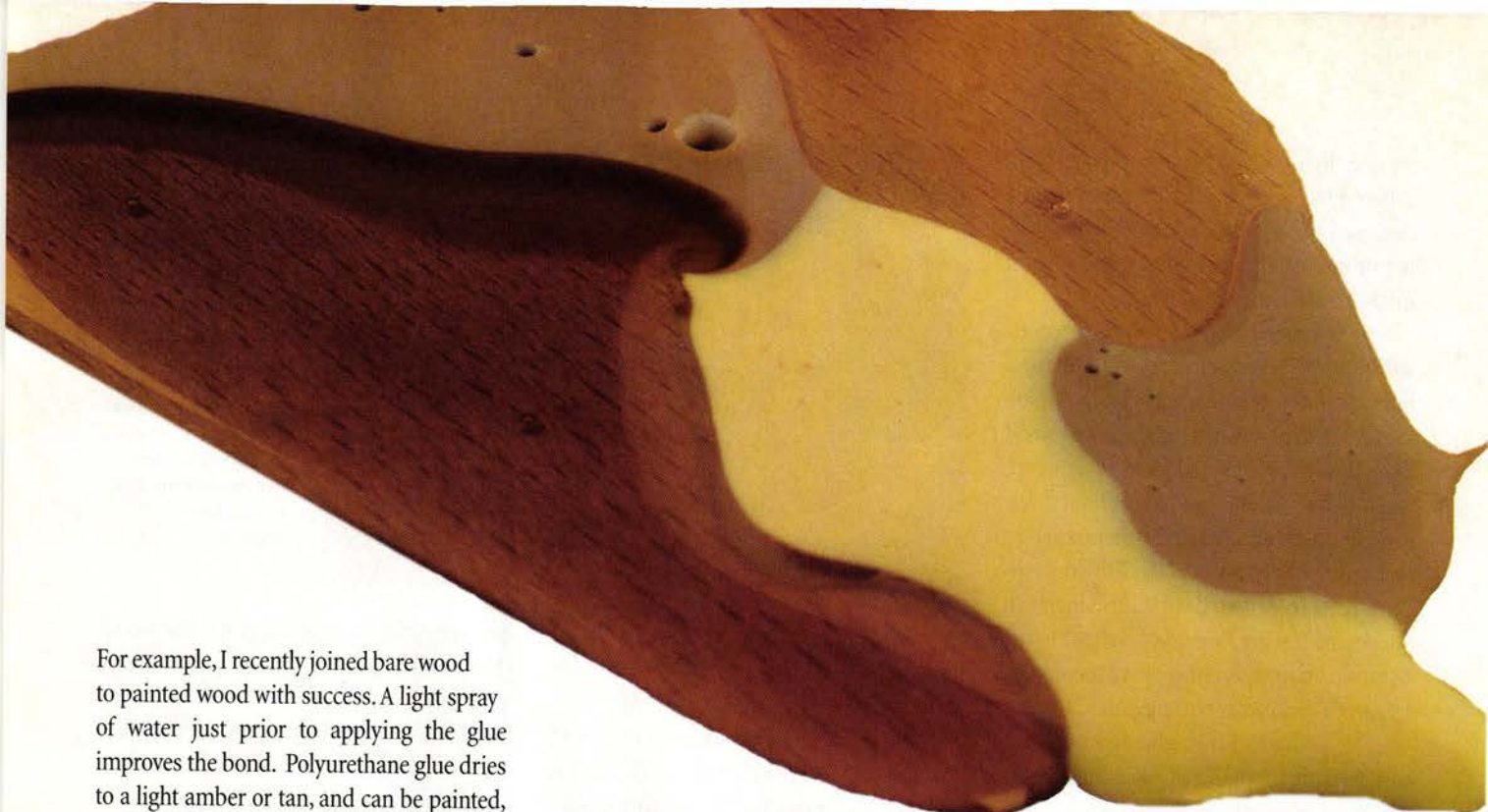
- porous and semiporous materials, craft projects; wood, paper, leather, etc.
- nonporous materials and small areas, glass, plastic, metal, etc.
- interior woodworking
- interior woodworking when using dark woods
- interior and exterior woodworking
- interior and exterior woodworking
- interior woodworking
- interior and exterior woodworking, porous and nonporous materials
- interior and exterior woodworking, porous and nonporous materials
- interior woodworking projects



All the adhesives types mentioned in this article are readily available, but remember: The characteristics noted may not be the same from one manufacturer to another. After reading the brief descriptions, check the comparison chart at left to help you determine which adhesive is best for your project or workshop.

For a list of  
**SUPPLIERS,**  
see page 116.





For example, I recently joined bare wood to painted wood with success. A light spray of water just prior to applying the glue improves the bond. Polyurethane glue dries to a light amber or tan, and can be painted, stained, and sanded. It cleans up with mineral spirits while wet, but must be scraped or sanded off the surface. Always wear gloves when working with polyurethane glue; once dry, it is difficult to remove.

## Epoxy

Though many OHJ readers are very familiar with the working characteristics of epoxy products like wood consolidants and fillers, epoxy adhesives are worth mentioning here because they fill many niches not covered by other adhesives. Epoxy is a two-part, ther-

Adhesive color may be the result of natural components, or specifically engineered to blend with common substrates, such as wood, where an obvious glue line will detract from the finished project.

mosetting (heat-reaction curing) compound that, when used correctly, creates a strong, waterproof bond—that's why it's so popular in the marine industry. Working time can vary from an hour or more to just a few minutes depending upon how the manufacturer has formulated the product, what the environmental conditions are, and how the epoxy is employed. Epoxy adhesive products are remarkably diverse, ranging

from paste fillers that are formulated to look and feel like wood, to water-white adhesives for mending glass, to structural adhesives that can be used for load-bearing conditions. Epoxy is relatively expensive and the unmixed components (resin and hardener) must be handled with care. Workers using epoxy should wear gloves and provide adequate ventilation or wear an appropriate respirator. Epoxy can be painted after sanding to create a mechanical bond.



Good clamping ensures that the adhesive is completely distributed throughout the joint, and that the parts will not migrate out of position before the adhesive sets.

## Animal Glue

Historically, hot animal-hide glue was the only game in town. It was used to assemble furniture and veneers and is still the choice of fine furniture restorers because it is strong, needs little clamping, and is reversible—joints held fast with hide glue can be steamed apart without damage to the adjacent wood parts. The original hide glue is a specialty product and worthy of an article unto itself. There is now a ready-to-use hide glue available on the hardware shelf that requires no heating, or mixing, does not have a rancid odor and is reversible, and creep resistant. This new product is still based on an animal protein formula but is improved by chemistry to conform to modern demands. This is a





Like epoxies, polyurethane glues cure through chemical reaction. Unlike epoxies, though, they are one-part products because the moisture that starts the reaction comes from the environment, causing the resin to expand and foam as it cures.

great glue for furniture repairs. If, however, you are faced with repairing a valuable heirloom piece of furniture, say, an 18th-century Windsor chair, we recommend you consult a furniture conservator first.

## Cyanoacrylate

Cyanoacrylate glue (sold as Crazy Glue or Superglue) is an acrylic resin that polymerizes in the presence of water. It was formulated by Eastman Kodak in 1958, but wasn't available on the retail market until the 1970s. Most of us have had mixed results with cyanoacrylate because we failed to understand its attributes and how it works. Cyanoacrylate sets up very quickly—in fact, almost immediately—reaching full strength in about two hours and full cure in about 24 hours. It is a tenacious adhesive that works well on nonporous surfaces and surfaces that contain a trace of moisture. It's great for attaching small plastic, metal, or glass pieces and less useful for porous materials. (Interestingly, cyanoacrylate is now commonly used on the human body for suture-free surgery.) For the best results on nonporous surfaces, apply the least amount in the thinnest possible layer and follow with pressure until the initial set takes place, usually in about one minute. Given these quick-setting properties, always have all pieces and parts at hand before applying the glue. When setting, cyanoacrylate exudes acetic acid that smells strongly of vinegar. Since it sticks tenaciously to skin and can only be removed with acetone (a strong solvent) it is not

appropriate for use by children.

## Contact Cement

Contact cements are a group of adhesives that, once applied to a substrate, continue to remain sticky or tacky, allowing them to adhere to themselves when assembled to another cement-coated substrate. Contact cements are used to bind materials that need an instant set, like laminate counter tops and rigid sheet goods, but are not appropriate for most woodworking projects. Formulations vary, but many products are based on neoprene rubber. Unlike glues, where the parts are pressed together while the glue is wet, contact cement is applied to both sides of the objects to be glued and then allowed to dry before assembly. This means that the parts must be carefully positioned because, once set, they cannot be pulled apart. Evenly applied pressure creates a stronger bond. Formerly only available in smelly, solvent-based formulas, contact cements are now made in more environmentally friendly, water-based versions.

## Tile Adhesives

Flooring adhesives, as well as noncement-based products for ceramic tile installation, usually come premixed in a bucket and are troweled into place. There are many types of flooring, carpet, and tile adhesives; before choosing one always refer to the manufacturer's recommendations to avoid compromising the installation of expensive materi-

als by using the wrong adhesive. Today's general-purpose ceramic tile adhesives are often water-borne and based on rubbers like latex so that they achieve a fast initial tack (for holding tiles in vertical positions) and remain flexible and water resistant once cured. Though high-moisture areas or specialized substrates may require specialized products, latex thinset adhesive is often recommended for common tile installations.

Specialty flooring materials may have their own adhesive requirements. When my wife and I installed our new linoleum floor, the instructions were clear: Use the manufacturer's proprietary adhesive or proceed at your own risk (all warranties were void if a substitute was used). Multipurpose adhesives are usually for the installation of sheet vinyl and carpets. You'll also find solvent-free adhesives, interior and exterior quality adhesives, stain-free adhesives, epoxy and polyurethane adhesives, latex adhesives, and asphalt-based adhesives. The good news is the solvent-laden, toxic flooring adhesives of the past have been replaced by more environmentally friendly versions, making the work site more tolerable, installation easier, and with water clean-up possible. 🏠

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For a related story online, see "Removing Linoleum Glue." Just click to "The Magazine" section, and go to the alphabetical list of recent features.



# From Roofing to Flooring

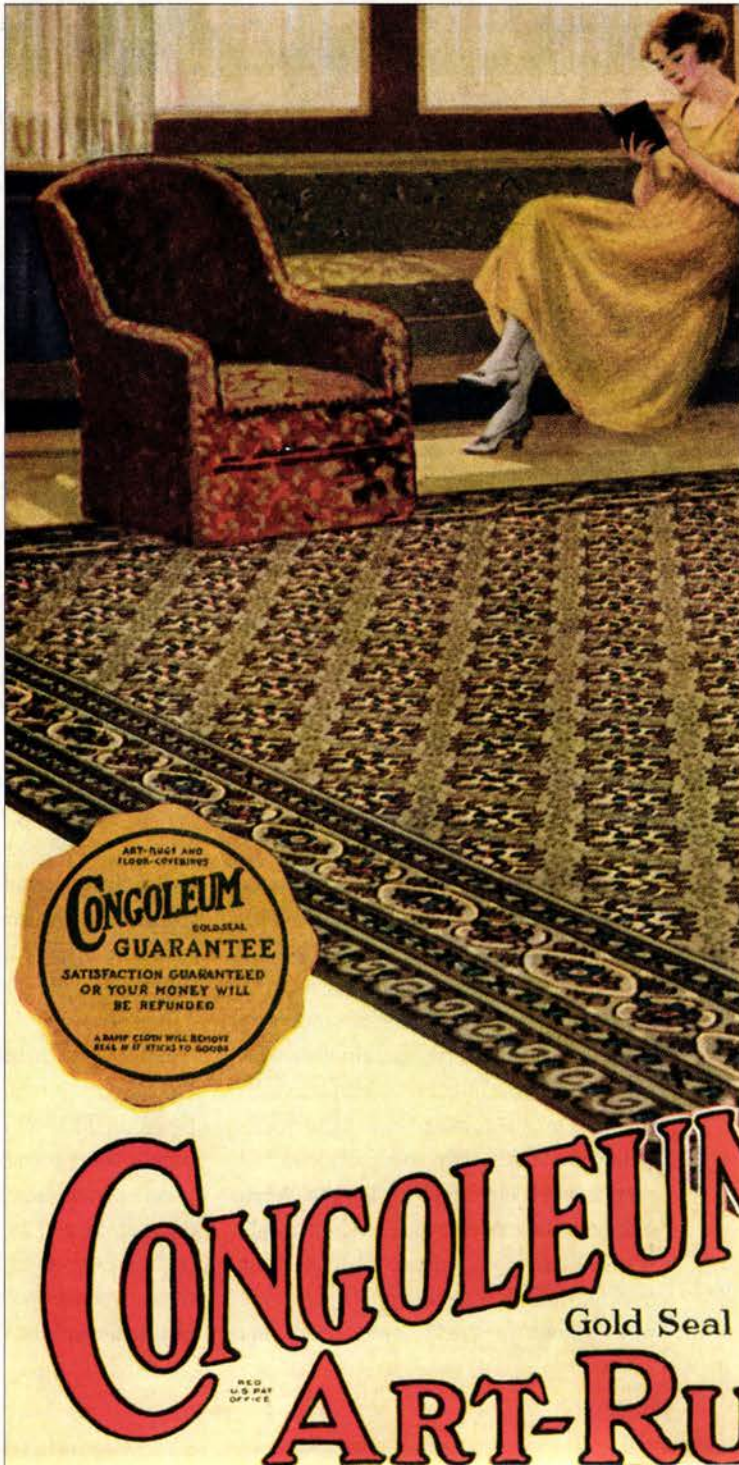
How a search for building materials markets led to a new kind of kitchen floor. BY BENJAMIN R. FOSTER

Since first appearing in England in the 1860s, linoleum has become the legendary standard by which all decorative, resilient floorcoverings are measured. Yet the original linoleum, an amalgam of ground cork and linseed oil invented by Frederick Walton, has always had its competitors, and by the 1920s among the most successful was Congoleum. The early history of this product—superficially similar to linoleum in appearance but dramatically different in manufacture—presents a firsthand view of the plucky technology and marketing behind many early 20th-century building materials, as well as the nature of a surface still to be found in many old-house kitchens.

## Fledgling Firms

The Congoleum story begins with Frank B. Foster, who was born in Middletown, Pennsylvania, in 1874. After moving to Philadelphia, his father's health started to fail so in 1892 young Foster left school to support his mother and four siblings. One of his first jobs was in sales for the Barrett Manufacturing Company in Philadelphia, a pioneer in the composition roofing industry (rolls of felt matting saturated with coal or asphalt tar that were the precursor to modern asphalt shingles). Ambitious by nature, Foster wanted to start his own roofing company, so with friend George Buchanan he bought an old mill in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, and organized the Buchanan-Foster Roofing Company. Unfortunately, the mill's machinery was unreliable, so Foster and Buchanan turned to Foster's old employer, the Barrett Company, to manufac-

As early as 1919, Congoleum promoted its ability to offer sheet-wide patterns in affordable floorcoverings with savvy advertising campaigns. The "Art-Rug" shown here recalls painted-canvas floorcloths of the 1800s, the inspiration for all resilient floorcoverings.



ART-RUGS AND FLOOR-COVERINGS

**CONGOLEUM** GOLD SEAL  
**GUARANTEE**  
SATISFACTION GUARANTEED  
OR YOUR MONEY WILL  
BE REFUNDED

CONGOLEUM Gold Seal  
**ART-RUG**

RED  
U.S. PAT.  
OFFICE





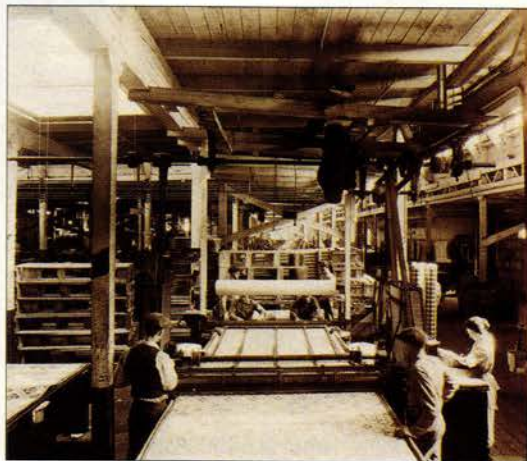
Before 1900, the decorative options for true linoleum were basically solid colors, marble patterns, or striated effects (jaspe), but shortly thereafter, the material could be stenciled and inlaid with geometric patterns. Early Congoleum, however, capitalized on more intricate printed designs.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CONGOLEUM

ture a line of roofing for them. The product, named Congo Roofing, eventually proved to be such stiff competition that Barrett bought out the company and created a new subsidiary called United Roofing & Manufacturing Company with Frank Foster as the head.

In 1909 a salesman for United Roofing, Frank Christy, hit on the idea that roofing material could be sold as flooring to small moving picture theaters in place of the rubber matting commonly used. Although the product was merchandised as "Congoleum"—a contraction of Congo Roofing and linoleum—in fact it was simply roofing with the nails and cement removed before the boxes were shipped. This product began to sell fairly well, so in 1910 Christy approached a Danville, Illinois, department store about carrying the product. While on his sales call, the



Congoleum production in 1919 was basically an adaptation of roofing manufacturing because both materials were based on rolls of asphalt-saturated felt.

*On the floor is Congoleum Art-Rug No. 348. The 6 x 9 ft. size retails for \$8.75.*

**GS**

Congoleum  
Art-Rug





Above: By 1931, flooring products like Congoleum—as decorative as they were durable—had become standard for the new breed of kitchens used by families rather than servants. Right: A fresh kitchen model in continuous countertops, streamlined appliances, and geometrical floor patterns emerged in the 1940s.



buyer showed Christy a new material similar to roofing but printed with an oak-board pattern on the wearing side. It was poorly made—sticky with too much saturant, an uneven surface, and a back that was smeared with yellow paint. It was, however, clearly a good idea, so Christy bought a square yard of each of the three patterns, cut them into envelope-sized pieces back in his hotel room, and sent them to Foster. Immediately after getting

Christy's "letters," Foster wired back to find out who manufactured the material and what kinds of merchants would buy it.

The manufacturer turned out to be one Judd Smith who had a small plant near Minneapolis and a patent on the printing process. United Roofing contracted to take his entire output and then market it themselves. Not long thereafter, though, Smith's plant burned to the ground. He was a man of such aplomb, however, that when someone woke him up to report that his factory was ablaze, all Smith asked was if it was a total loss. When the answer came back "yes," Smith is said to have replied, "In that case I'll go back to bed and come down in the morning to see about it."

The result of this disaster was that Frank Foster's United Roofing Company, still a subsidiary of Barrett, bought the rights to Smith's flooring material in 1911. Next they purchased an old iron works in Erie, Pennsylvania, where floorcovering could be produced under the Congoleum name, with Judd Smith, the original patentee, in charge. The new floorcovering was similar in appearance to linoleum, but rather than cork-and-linseed oil on a burlap backing, it was manufactured of asphalt-saturated felt. Though first marketed as a cheaper version of linoleum, the earliest, fully patterned Congoleum rugs were printed by a hand-block process, so they were still expensive to make. This meant

that if the rugs were sold below the price of linoleum, they would be a profitless product. While rug borders could be printed by machine along the edges of linoleum, at that time no one had found a way to print a full pattern on floorcovering material.

## New Machines and Merchandising

Foster was convinced that if printing machines could produce rug borders, there had to be a way to print entire

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rugs—including borders on all edges and continuous patterns inside them. He went to a paper manufacturer, John Waldron of the Waldron Company, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, to discuss making a rotary press to produce Congoleum rugs. At first Waldron was skeptical, but after many experiments and setbacks the design for a machine came to light. Estimates showed it would cost at least \$200,000 to build, and Waldron would not guarantee that it would work. Nonetheless, Foster assumed the risk, the machine was built, and the first fully printed Congoleum rug came off the press around 1913. In contrast to earlier linoleum-type floorcoverings, which had been promoted for use in living rooms, the new rug-patterned flooring became a popular item for service areas like kitchens, hallways, and other high-traffic surfaces. The business increased rapidly, so the company bought a plant at Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania, to manufacture Congoleum yard goods and still compete with cheaper linoleum grades. This company, set up in 1916 under the corporate name of the Congoleum Company, was still a subsidiary of the Barrett Company.

Foster and few close colleagues—especially A.W. Erickson, an advertising executive from New York—were convinced that extensive promotion was the key to the growth of the new product even though business was slow during the World War I years. The board of the Barrett Company, however, was unwilling to invest \$2,000 to \$3,000 a year of advertising in a product with unproven profitability, since they still saw the parent company as primarily a roofing manufacturer. The story goes that in one contentious board meeting an exasperated officer said to Foster, “If you are so sure the company is going to be successful, why don’t you buy us out?” To which Foster answered, “Mr. Erickson and I will be back later this afternoon to make you an offer.” Eventually, Foster, Erickson, and two other partners agreed to buy out the Barrett Company’s interests in Congoleum for some \$4 million,

**This plant photo shows the inspection line in the 1940s. In the late 1950s, Congoleum-Nairn was producing sheet flooring as wide as 12’.**



**The 1950s brought a vogue for patterns of individual tiles—now often made of vinyl. Like many companies in the industry, Congoleum had expanded into this new material as well as established flooring types like linoleum.**

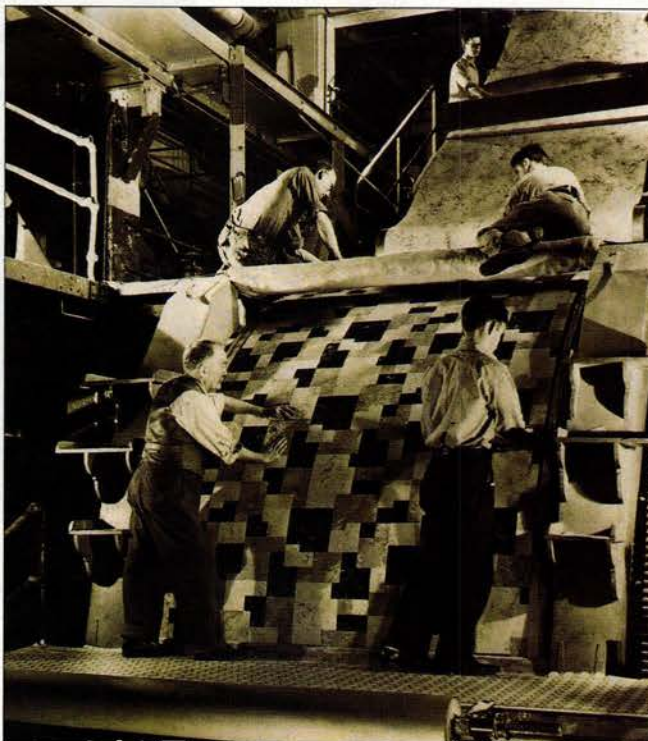
setting up the independent Congoleum Company in 1919. With Foster as president and Erickson as chairman of the board, the new company launched an extensive advertising campaign and the sales of Congoleum products soared. In the same year Congoleum Company of Canada was formed.

Other companies began to issue imitations of the product, so Congoleum responded by buying them out whenever possible. In this way, the Texoleum Company of Salem, New Jersey, was eliminated, and its production absorbed by Congoleum. Ironically, Congoleum also got into the linoleum business by buying the Farr & Bailey Manufacturing Company of Camden, New Jersey, in order to produce “battleship” linoleum for commercial uses such as hospitals. In 1924, Congoleum merged with the Nairn Company of

Kearny, New Jersey, to add inlaid linoleum to its product line, leaving Congoleum rugs to be marketed as “Gold Seal Congoleum.” In 1923 a Congoleum company was incorporated in France, and in 1924 another in England.

Congoleum was also innovative internally. Separate companies were created to manufacture the rolls on which the rugs were wound and the boxes in which they were sold. Originally, the rugs were shipped a dozen to a carton, but Christy, the veteran salesman, argued that dealers who might want only one or two of a given pattern would be reluctant to buy a dozen rugs to get what they needed. The Congoleum board voted down Christy’s proposal because it would add 73 cents to the price of each rug. Shortly thereafter they reconsidered and, after making the change, sales of the product doubled within six months. By the peak of the 1920s building boom, Congoleum was the best-selling floorcovering in America. 🏠

**Benjamin R. Foster is Professor of Assyriology at Yale University and Curator of the Yale Babylonian Collection.**





# Tour Sto

BY BRYAN REESE  
PHOTOS BY KENNETH NAVERSEN

**Historic-house rubbernecking for fun (tour participants) and profit (the community).**

“*H*as the projector arrived?” asks Terry Hartley. Volunteers are streaming in for a video presentation, and while the one bringing the screen is here, the projector isn’t. Another volunteer is setting up a refreshment table. It’s a sunny Sunday afternoon in April at the historic La Casita del Arroyo, a meeting hall overlooking the Arroyo Seco near the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California. Nearly 100 volunteers are gathered for docent training for the Bungalow Heaven Historic Home Tour, to take place in just seven days.

This chaos is more controlled than it might look at first glance since, after 15 years, tour planners pretty well know the drill. The tour has become such a large undertaking, though, that this year Hartley is one of three co-coordinators. All held the job previously. “None of us were willing to go it alone again,” she says.

Historic house tours are popping up around the country, usually in response to one too many venerable old homes knocked down to make way for one more apartment house or strip mall.

A well-done tour brochure brings in paid ads and becomes a valued memento.

The impetus may be a response to a too-developer friendly local government, or used to encourage an already growing trend to reverting multifamily Victorians back to single family (“I did it, so can you”). Turning a profit in order to continue education or specific community improvement becomes the next goal, and formation of a true old-fashioned community is a bonus.

House tours are invariably a hit. People love getting a closer look at those interiors they may glimpse while walking or driving by at dusk. But here are some tips from our experience that may make a first-time out less harried.

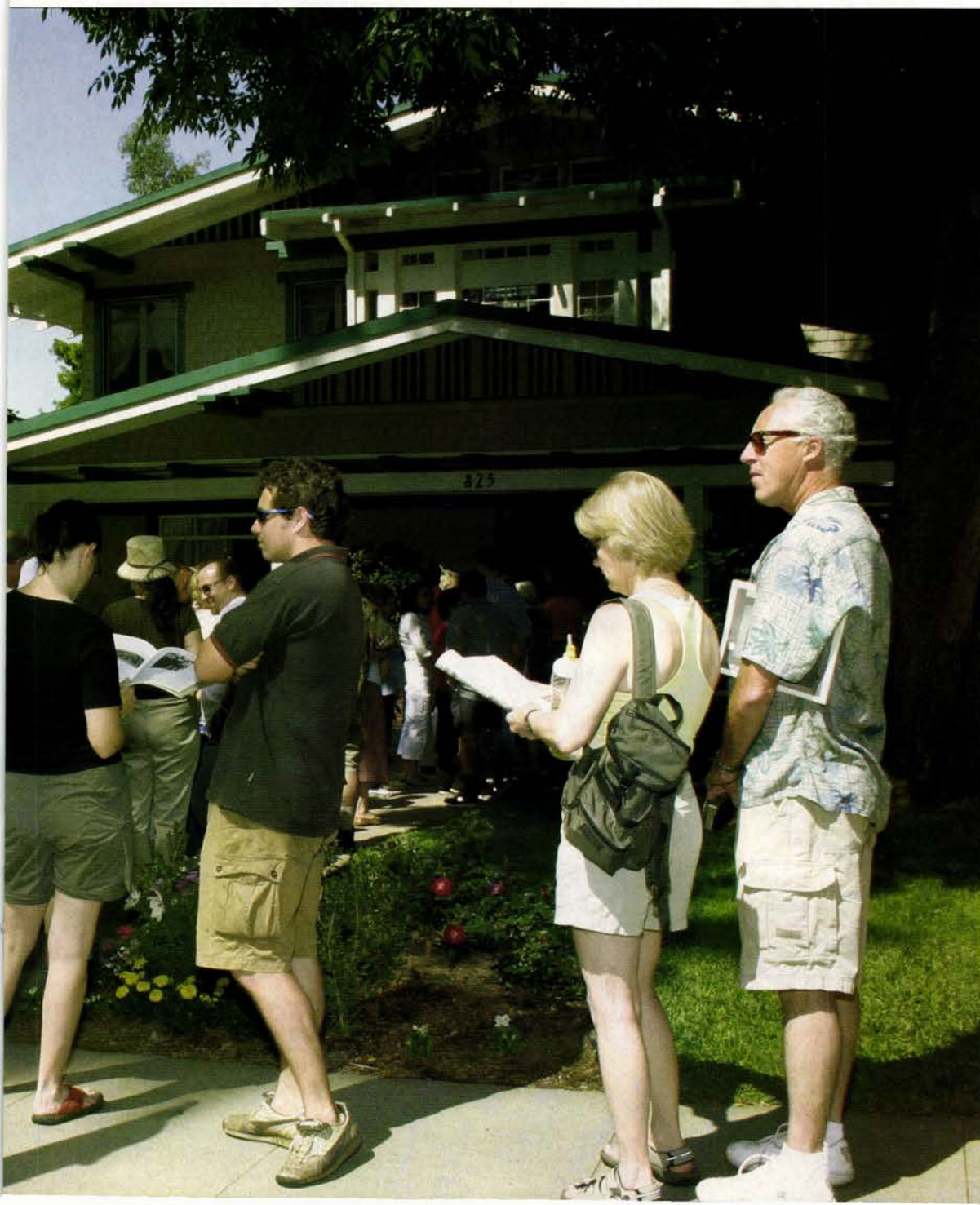




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Above: Author Bryan Reese turns on his most welcoming docent smile. Left: Everyone gets a good glimpse of interiors with a minimum of jostling, thanks to greeters who control the numbers coming through front doors.



Lines are an inescapable part of house tours, but waits aren't unpleasant with good weather and interesting reading material.



## Getting Started

In 1985, all was not quite so sunny in Pasadena. Watching a two-storey Craftsman bungalow razed for a tacky apartment house, and learning that three other lots were rezoned for an apartment, spurred neighbors to form what would become the Bungalow Heaven Neighborhood Association. They wanted to save the unique flavor of this largely intact collection of modest, early 20th-century bungalows, many of them outstanding examples of Arts & Crafts architecture. "Something had to be done to preserve the single-family character of the neighborhood," says Hartley.

The publicity and organization needed for the first historic house tour four

years later were key factors in a successful down-zoning effort, and the creation of Pasadena's first Landmark District. Unlike many other associations, after the initial threat was addressed, the organization continued to conduct its annual home tour and use the money, visibility, and network to continue improving the neighborhood with tree planting, park improvements, and more recently, restoration grants for lower-income residents. The tour has become the "glue" binding neighbors into an effective organization.

Last year, the Bungalow Heaven Home Tour featured eight homes, a lecture on the Arts & Crafts movement, vendors of historic books and lighting, demonstrations of skills such as paint stripping,

## TIP TIMELINE

### Six Months Out:

Plan publicity campaign. Set date of event, and admission price if possible.

### Four to Five Months Out:

Set tour hours, fill key positions, mail first press releases. Contact potential advertisers and vendors, shop for liability insurance, look for raffle items and souvenirs.

### Three Months Out:

Plan brochure and choose its graphic artist and writer. Obtain photos of houses and early residents.

### Two Months Out:

Finalize house research and advertisers for brochure, raffle items. Draw up volunteer requirements and set time and place for their training. Arrange land-use permits, tents, banners, tables, and walkie-talkies.

### One Month Out:

Deliver brochures. Send out last of pre-sale tickets.

### Last Weekend:

Best time for volunteer and staff training.

### Day of Tour:

Have people assure early arrivals that the tour will start on time. Arrange to have tour coordinator collect cash from appropriate venues periodically.



Above:  
Volunteers learn to operate walkie-talkies so they can communicate with each other on tour day. Right: The bustle begins early on the big day with tent setup.





strolling musicians, and an outdoor "restaurant." First timers may want to pare the homes down to about five. They won't be hard to find. The best way is simply knocking on doors, although once you have a tour committee its members may overwhelm you with nominations.

More important than selecting the houses are choosing the tour coordinator and the date. The tour coordinator has to have the organizational skills of a three-star general and the diplomacy of a politician. Anyone with experience coordinating big events should immediately move to the top of your list. In selecting the date, consider when the weather is most reliably pleasant in your area, and avoid major holidays and similar tours in your area. Last year we picked the last Sunday in April.

While most work starts about three to four months prior to the tour, your publicity campaign should begin at least six months in advance. Our association prepares a flyer to distribute in early October's Pasadena Heritage Craftsman Weekend, and develops a general press release about the same time. The press release should be no more than a single page. Most press releases will be sent out a month to six weeks before the event, but you'll need one now if you are going to send them to any national magazines.

One problem with this early deadline is that your planning won't be far enough along to give you a complete idea of the expenses involved, so in setting a ticket price, a "cost-plus" approach usually does-



n't work. Yet not listing your ticket price on fliers and press releases can suggest amateurism. Look around to see what similar tours charge, or even contact their sponsors to ask what their expenses are. You'll probably find them quite happy to compare notes.

Spend the next few months filling other key positions, contacting possible advertisers and vendors, shopping for liability insurance, looking for raffle items and souvenirs, and starting a brochure.

This year, when a local vintage stove refurbisher donated a 1950s O'Keefe and Merritt to the raffle, the group was in a quandary, says Tina Miller, another tour co-coordinator. "We'd never had a raffle item of that value. We weren't sure if we should raise the raffle ticket prices, or

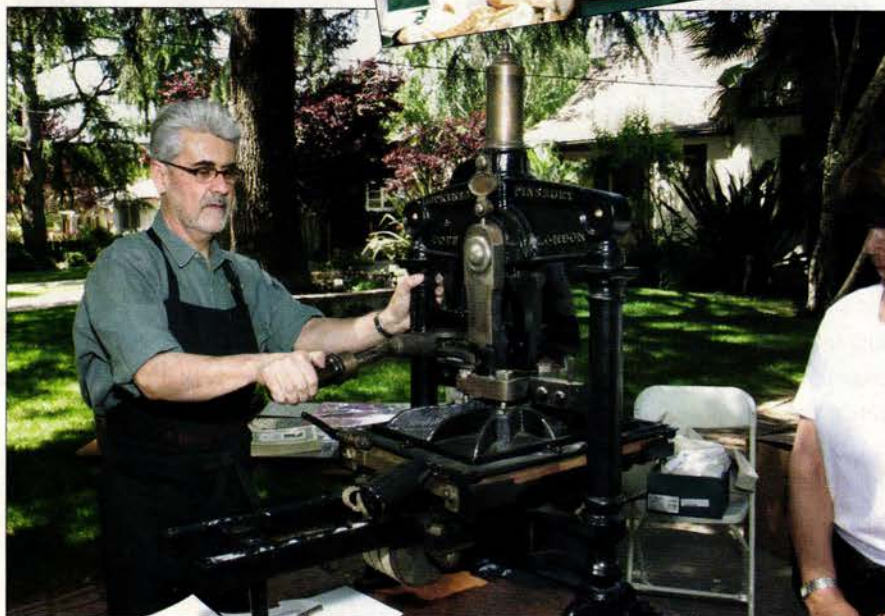
Prepaid ticket holders form a line well before the 10 a.m. opening. Some 90 percent of walk-up sales occur in the first hour.



With brochures and maps in hand, visitors plan their next move.



Complementary snacks provided by neighborhood residents are offered along the tour route, and local businesses sell more substantial fare such as sandwiches.



Sidewalk exhibits, such as this Arts & Crafts printing press (above) and a paint-stripping demonstration (right) augment the fun of house peeping.



encourage people to simply buy more tickets." In the end, they raised the ticket price on that one item.

A well written and designed brochure will bring alive the history of the neighborhood, the homes you're showcasing, and give

people a valued memento. Jim Crandall, graphic artist and husband of third co-coordinator Nancy Phillips, put together this year's brochure. "Because the houses were chosen earlier than usual this year, I had time to get replies from letters I wrote to former residents," he says. "It contributes a lot to the human interest, instead of concentrating on a lot of architectural terms."

The brochure tops our tour expenses (followed by insurance). Advertising can go a long way toward defraying this cost, though after years of cultivating advertisers, we still don't break even.

In the last two months things really start to snowball. Research on the homes and advertising sales must be completed so the brochure can be laid out and printed. Raffle items are finalized, thank-you gifts for the homeowners chosen and ordered, and volunteer requirements finalized.

Karen Sugars was volunteer coordinator last year. "For the last two weeks, I spent the whole evening on the phone trying to get volunteers," she says. "I had left three messages at one number, when someone finally called back to say it was a wrong number. I still asked them if they wanted to volunteer."

Bungalow Heaven uses a central park as its base of operations. The association must arrange for permits, a tent, banners, and tables. La Casita del Arroyo is reserved for the docent and staff training.

In the final month, all the details must come together. The brochures are delivered and the last of the pre-sale tickets sent out. About three weeks prior to the tour, pre-sale ticket buyers are notified later that they must pick up their tickets at the will-call table the day of the tour. Docents and staff are trained the last weekend. Docents to be stationed at the houses all view a videotape of the homes, see a presentation describing what is expected of them, and learn how to operate walkie-talkies to contact other volunteers.

## Tour Day

When the big day arrives, expect the majority of visitors to show up during the first hour. We always have quite a line





ready for ticket distribution promptly at 10 a.m. One of the lessons we've learned the hard way is to never give out the tour brochure prior to official opening time. Otherwise, people will show up at the tour homes early. It's helpful to have volunteers circulate through the crowd to make sure they're standing in the right line and to reassure them that the tour will open on time. This eliminates most grumbling, even if the line stretches around the block as ours usually does.

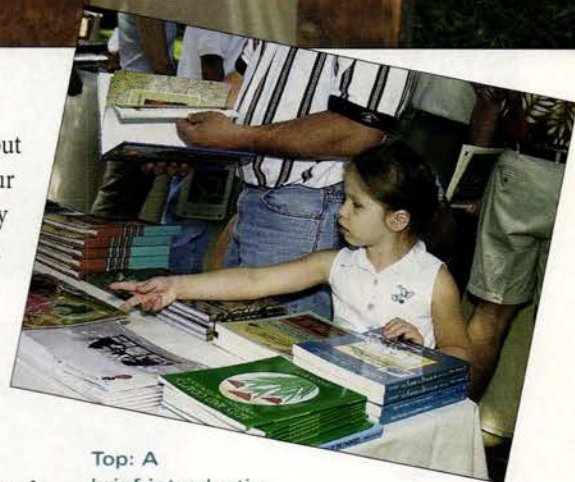
About 90 percent of walk-up sales take place during the first hour, so plan staffing accordingly. After that, you need only worry about selling souvenirs, answering questions, and conducting the raffle. We rent a golf cart so the tour coordinator can quickly travel between various venues and quickly remove cash from var-

ious locations where items are sold.

A home tour is a lot of work, but also rewarding. The investment in your neighborhood will continue to pay dividends all year long in the form of funds for neighborhood projects, and the resulting network you've created will be useful for years to come. So, what's stopping you? 🏠

**Bryan Reese**, a training manager for Amtrak, has helped with the home tour for six years.

*The National Trust for Historic Preservation offers a booklet, "Historic Home Tours: Showcasing Your Community's Heritage," for \$6 to nonmembers. Visit [www.preservation-books.org](http://www.preservation-books.org) or call (202) 588-6223.*



**Top:** A brief introduction to vintage lighting. **Above:** A young bungalow fan explores the display of books from Pasadena's Gamble House.



# Staging a Comeback

BY ANNE MCCARTHY STRAUSS ♦ PHOTOS BY LIZ GLASGOW

A Long Island house returns to its show-biz heyday.



New siding, roof shingles, and 37 windows were merely the exterior repairs made under the tight three-month deadline.



Weeds, graffiti, and decay led to a bargain price, leaving funds for restoration.

For its first four decades, the house in St. James, New York, resounded with music, dancing, and drama. Thomas Garrick, a vaudevillian and Broadway actor, had built it at the turn of the last century as a getaway. In summer, stars of the day practiced their craft on three stages, two built into the structure and another outdoors.

During his ownership through the '20s, St. James attracted such show business greats as John, Lionel, and Ethel Barrymore, the Bartons, the Colliers, and the LaRues. Some boarded with Garrick, while others







had built homes of their own in what was becoming an actor's haven. Eventually, Garrick sold the house to Cynthia Meade, a retired silent film actress who carried on the tradition in her own style.

The music stopped suddenly in 1945. When Meade learned that her son had been killed in World War II, she reacted by smashing every piece of china in her kitchen. Ultimately overcome by heartache, she abandoned the home, leaving it vacant for nearly two decades.

In the 1970s it was purchased by an eccentric mortician and her equally



Above: The indoor stage off the dining room offers guests plush sofas where they can enjoy dessert and conversation. Left: Michele D'Amour and Steven Podd use the outdoor stage to relax and entertain.



macabre husband who decorated it with props and furnishings from the funeral parlor. The grounds were left untended and became a hangout for local youngsters who offered their own touches, such as a tombstone stolen from a nearby cemetery.

By 1999 the mortician had died, and her husband was forced to put the house up for sale. Steven Podd and his wife Michelle D'Amour were encouraged by their 13-year-old daughter Lindsay to visit the house with the listing agent. "It was curiosity that drove us there at first," recalls Steve.

Steve immediately saw potential, but Michelle insisted there was no way she would consider it. By then a dilapidated shell, it was spattered with graffiti, and the property strewn with abandoned cars.

But when Steve's cash offer for far less than the asking price was accepted, Michelle reconsidered, since money for



The outdoor stage was a prime reason for the one-acre site being registered with the New York State Historical Society.



An original white stucco fountain was unrepairable and so heavy it had to be buried where it stood. The original garden design was replicated with a new fountain and benches.



Former actress/owner Cynthia Meade created a stone sculpture embedded with china she broke in anguish after learning that her son was killed in World War II.

Above: Podd and D'Amour opened the original downstairs floor plan by removing some French doors and widening a hallway, but they made the dining room smaller by 8' because it seemed too cavernous for intimate dining. Opposite: In the upstairs bath, the tub got three reglazings and a 1910 stained-glass window was repaired.





restoration was now available. Under her stipulations that the work would take no more than three months and the family would remain in their current home during that period, she agreed to the purchase. Out of respect for the home's history and their own love of the theater, they decided to incorporate each of the three original stages into their living space.

To get this extraordinarily tight-dead-lined project moving, Steve contacted Brian Capo, a local architect, and his partner, Phil DeBlasio, a contractor. Both had grown up in St. James and observed the property as nature took it over.

They began by clearing a mountain of ivy and other invasive plants from the outdoor stage. After a thorough power washing, Michelle transformed it with new landscaping and bistro tables.

Meanwhile, Capo developed architectural plans to stabilize the sagging structure and to incorporate the two indoor stages, which had been created by enclosing a front porch. He transformed the stage off the living room into a musical venue where Lindsay could practice piano and violin. The second indoor stage, with its mahogany balustrade, became a seating area off the dining room.

Because Garrick and Meade had used the home as a rooming house for actor friends, there were six small bedrooms

upstairs, which the contractors converted into three large bedrooms. The downstairs was already open, although the couple enhanced this by removing some French doors and widening the hall. Wherever possible, they retained what they could, restoring original doors and their crystal doorknobs. "The built-in shelving in the dining room is original," notes Michelle, "and all the wood floors are original. Where flooring wasn't salvageable, we replaced it with ceramic tile."

Subcontractors replaced roof shingles, and 37 double-hung windows, resided, and updated electricity and plumbing. "Phil and Brian were terrific," Steve says. "Because we had given them such a short period of time in which to complete the restoration, they hired full teams for each project, completing each undertaking in a matter of days. We moved in three months after hiring them, and all that remained to be done was a bit of painting."

The return of music and laughter to the refurbished stages was launched with a party that Steve and Michelle held in March 2000 for 200 neighbors, friends, and contractors when they moved in. Lindsay and her music instructor were joined by additional musicians and singers to entertain from the music stage. Guests flowed easily through the downstairs rooms, spilling out on to the one-acre property—large by Long Island standards. "It's a great house for entertaining," says Michelle.

Other galas have followed. Steve and Michelle, who are both school principals, host an annual Christmas party for the staff of the school where Michelle works. "Everyone seems to prefer a party at our home to going out to a restaurant," Steve says. "We always include musical entertainment from the stage as part of the event."

"We know that the actors who summertime here years ago put on performances for small groups of friends," he adds. "Although we may not perform, we do love to entertain. We're happy to be a part of the tradition." 🐾

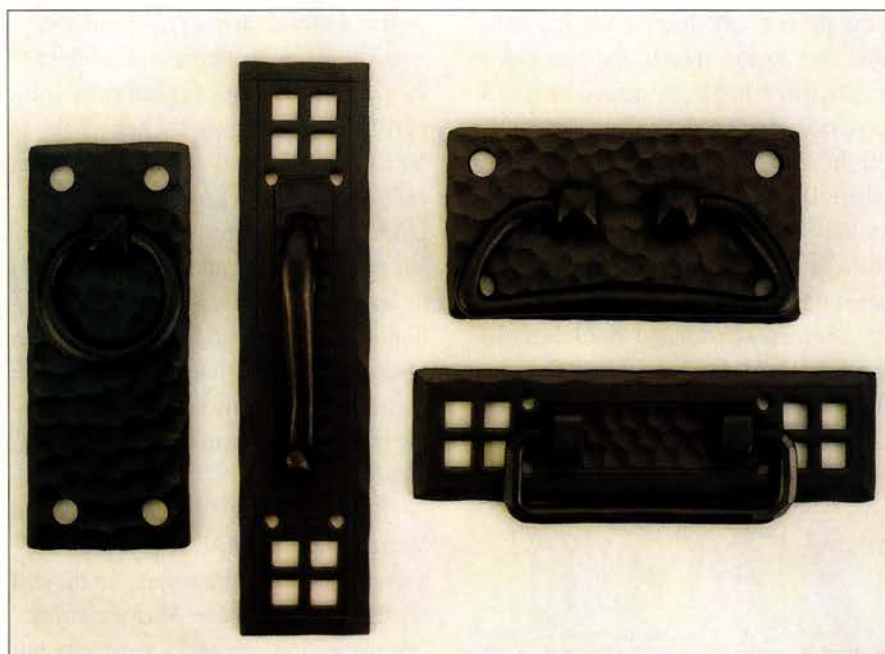
*Anne McCarthy Strauss, who lives in Long Island, New York, specializes in writing about home, food, and other lifestyle topics.*





BY TERRI HARTMAN  
PHOTOS BY ANDY OLENICK

# Handling *the Past*



**K**itchens can bedevil an old-house restorer. You want the heart of your house to be authentic, but without sacrificing efficiency or comfort. Be honest—you really don't want to live with a completely original kitchen, do you? Haven't you grown fond of running water and refrigerators?

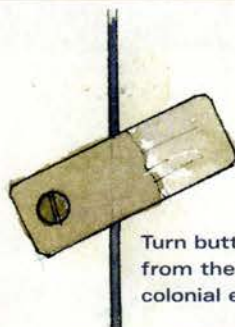
One of the easiest—and least expensive—ways to respect the original character of your kitchen is through the thoughtful use of cabinet hardware. Whether vintage or reproduction, historically appropriate cabinet hardware can help convey a period sensibility.

## Colonial and Victorian

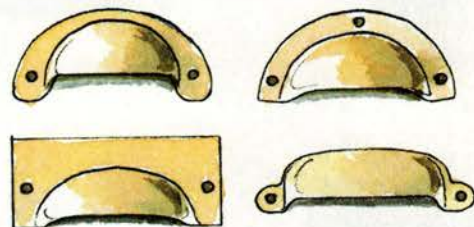
For rustic or colonial-style kitchens, plain wooden cabinet knobs painted to match

This Arts & Crafts-inspired reproduction hammered cabinet hardware is from Craftsman Hardware in Marceline, Missouri.

## Period Hardware Forms



Turn button  
from the  
colonial era



Late 19th-century bin-pull hardware



## How to choose period-appropriate kitchen cabinet hardware.

Over the past two centuries American kitchen cabinet hardware took on many different shapes and designs.



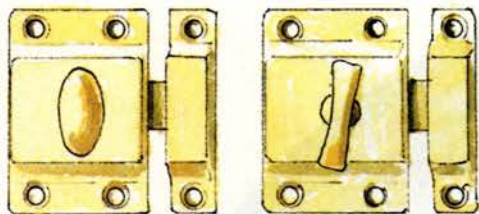
the cabinets are a sure bet, as are porcelain cabinet knobs with a center screw. Simple iron hardware—plain or hammered knobs and flush-mount hinges with exaggerated straps—also evokes the pre-industrial past. It's next to impossible to find original pieces from the era, but many manufacturers make the simple hardware these kitchens demand.

For a Victorian-era kitchen, cast-iron

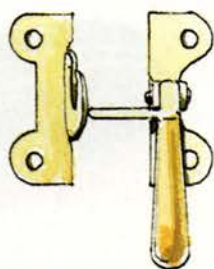
and nickel-plated hardware—and lots of it—is appropriate. In the 1880s and 1890s middle-class kitchens became places of pride, rather than dingy, utilitarian spaces. Also, Victorian meals demanded many courses, which entailed many serving dishes, and thus many cabinets in which to store the dishes. All those doors and drawers needed to be opened and closed, and bin pulls, handles, cabinet knobs, and cab-

inet latches were the way to do it. Nickel plating was developed for industrial applications in the second half of the 19th century; the new finish quickly replaced brass in kitchens and bathrooms because it doesn't tarnish.

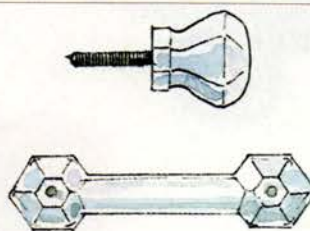
It's easy to find Victorian-style cabinet hardware. Original pieces are sold at antiques stores, and reproductions can be found anywhere from big-box discounters



Early 20th-century cupboard catches



1910s hoosier cabinet latch



1920s glass knobs

ILLUSTRATIONS: ROB LEANNA





These Eastlake-inspired Victorian pieces are from Ball and Ball.

to specialty hardware suppliers. Price really does determine quality. The least expensive pieces are stamped die-cast metal, then plated; higher quality pieces are made of heavy nickel-plated cast brass.

If your house was built anytime between 1920 and 1940, glass cabinet knobs will be right at home in the kitchen. Fluted, hexagonal, or shaped like a beehive, clear or colored, glass knobs opened cupboards in every style of early 20th-century house, from modest Sears bungalows in San Diego to grand Tudor Revival mansions in Teaneck. The simplest glass knobs were attached by either chrome or brass screws running through the center of the

knob. More elegant (and pricier) octagonal crystal glass knobs had chrome or brass shanks and no visible screws.

Original glass cabinet knobs are relatively easy to find, but there are so many variations in condition and aging that it may take quite a while to find a whole kitchen's worth of matching knobs. There are many reproduction sources for the knobs, some offering more than a dozen colors.

Revival house styles swept the burgeoning suburbs in the 1920s, and kitchen cabinet hardware sometimes echoed the exterior's romantic styling. To re-create the "Old World" look, use iron handles with fanciful arrow or fleur-de-lis ends on both doors and drawers. Hammered iron knobs and decorative strap hinges also work in Revival-

style interiors. If you're using this type of hardware, you have many options from many sources, ranging from your neighborhood hardware store for "iron look" black die-cast handles with arrow ends to importers of cast-iron European hardware fabricated using centuries-old techniques.

## Art Deco and Beyond

In the late 1920s and early 1930s Art Deco styling captured America's imagination and all facets of design. With their aerodynamic lines and curves, chrome-plated kitchen cabinet handles, knobs, and hinges resembled miniature Chrysler buildings. It will take a little persistence, but it is possible to find a roomful of original knobs and handles. If you don't want to take the long view, many specialty hardware manufacturers are reproducing the style.

If the original hardware in your 1930s kitchen wasn't shiny, chances are it was colorful. Advances in technology brought richly hued plastic cabinet knobs and handles into the kitchen—a visual relief for a nation mired in the Depression. The first plastic widely used for consumer goods was Bakelite (named after its inventor, Leo Baekeland, and the trade name for plastics produced in Britain by Bakelite Ltd. and in the United States by the Bakelite Corp.). Over the next decade, as Bakelite was replaced by other plastics that were easier to manufacture, plastic knobs and handles became

less saturated in color, but sometimes took styling

Mid-20th-century vintage plastic hardware is gaining popularity with old-house restorers.





cues from contemporary automobiles, incorporating two tones, chrome strips, and aerodynamically flared ends.

Vintage Bakelite pieces turn up in antiques stores and flea markets, but they can be pricey—they just aren't making them anymore. Other vintage plastic is more affordable, but in many cases time hasn't been kind to the plastic—it can get dull and lackluster. If you want a bright, colorful kitchen, many contemporary manufacturers make plain resin hardware that will suggest period pieces.

In the 1950s, industrial materials and productivity concepts originally developed during World War II came into the kitchen. With stainless-steel cabinetry and an overabundance of new timesaving appliances like electric mixers, blenders, and built-in dishwashers, kitchens became laboratories for living. Simple aluminum and die-cast cabinet hardware was designed with an eye for function. With a concave rather than convex profile, straightforward geometric shapes like squares and triangles took on a modern, Atomic Age dimension, and plain arch handles grew mischievous S-shaped tails. Common finishes—brass, copper, bronze, chrome—were offered in either shiny or satin versions.

Cabinet hardware in 1950s styling is relatively easy to find today. Several com-

**Vintage Colonial Revival hardware is a good match for early 20th-century kitchens.**



**Left: Antique Hardware and Home sells these brass late 19th-century reproduction Hoosier latches and pineapple keyholes.**



**These vintage glass pieces date from the 1920s and are sold through Liz's Antique Hardware.**

panies still manufacture it, just as they did 50 years ago, and common versions are available at most large retailers. With the current interest in all things mid-century, many contemporary manufacturers are creating pieces that embody the spirit and style of the times.

Whichever hardware you decide to use in your kitchen, whether you're undertaking a period-perfect restoration or a sympathetic remodel, choose something that is durable. You're going to open those drawers and shut those cabinets plenty of times during the day! 🏠

**Terri Hartman** of *Liz's Antique Hardware* in Los Angeles, California, is co-author of *Decorative Hardware* (published by Harper Collins).

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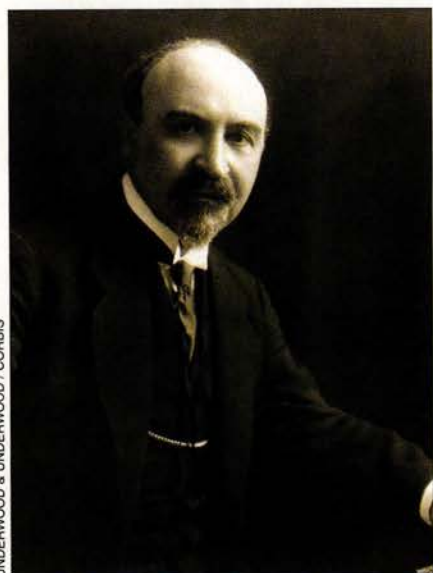
# Fantastic

BY GORDON BOCK

MODERN CENTURY

# Plastics

The growth of synthetic resins in the architecture of houses.



UNDERWOOD & UNDERWOOD / CORBIS

Well before the success of Bakelite, Dr. Leo Baekeland had become independently wealthy at 37 by selling a photographic film process to George Eastman for \$1 million. (Baekeland had dreamed of holding out for \$25,000.)

From a practical oddity in the 1860s, to the immortal punch line of the movie *The Graduate* in the 1960s, plastics have embodied the ever-changing shape and potential of man-made materials for over a century. They were able to assume myriad colors, countless shapes, and unheard-of functions that quickly exceeded any parallels in nature. Today it's useful to take stock of plastics' impact on houses, now that the futuristic laminates, phenolics, and acrylics of the post-World War II building-boom years have become the historic materials of tomorrow.

## Chemistry History

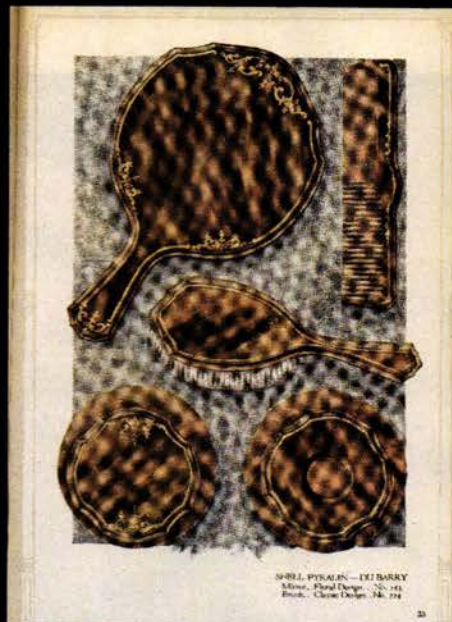
The term plastic stems from the Greek word for moldable and originally described a material that was shaped by hand—that is, something pliable in contrast to something that must be carved or chiseled. By the 1930s, plastic was being applied to an increasingly diverse family of innovative, modern materials that were soft and easily molded at some point in their creation, making them capable of being cut, extruded, molded, or otherwise worked into a tremendous variety of shapes and forms.

Though the origins of modern plastics are humble, since the 1930s early inventors have been all but canonized—even during their lifetimes—and their discoveries now have the aura of legends. Classic is the tale of John Wesley Hyatt, a printer from Rochester, New York, who read an advertisement offering \$10,000—



BRIAN VANDEN BRINK





In 1920, DuPont's Pyralin was among the first consumer plastics: cellulose nitrate manufactured to look like shell or bone for small objects like boudoir accessories.



Ideal dielectric insulators, early plastics like Bakelite found their first great use in primary electrical and radio parts. When the radio matured in the 1930s and '40, plastics moved beyond the guts to molding consumer-friendly cabinets with airstream surfaces.

Plastics also avoided the problems of metals in instruments sensitive to heat or magnetism. For example, Plaskon, a plastic developed by the Toledo Scale Company, became a popular housing for heating system thermostats.



a huge sum in the 1850s—to anyone who could devise a new substance for the manufacture of billiard balls. Ivory, the raw material up till then, was in short supply and becoming expensive, so Hyatt was intrigued by the challenge of finding a substitute. After many months of experiments that included dangerous combinations of newspaper pulp, nitric acid, and camphor, Hyatt closed in on a mixture that could be solidified by a chemical, then shaped in a press. The result was celluloid, the original thermoplastic (heat-softened) resin that, besides billiard balls, made possible the first photographic film and, after 1900, early auto safety glass. As late as the 1940s celluloid was widely used for making toothbrushes, combs, and hundreds of other objects that would not come in contact with heat.

Next in the plastics pantheon, but by no means second, is Leo H. Baekeland, a brilliant Belgian chemist. After coming to America and making a fortune in the photographic industry by 1900, Baekeland set out to synthesize a material that could be formed with heat and pressure like glass. It was known that mixtures of carbolic acid and formaldehyde would yield a bubbly, brown goo that solidified into a porous mass. By controlling the reaction in a pressurized chamber, Baekeland perfected a process for turning the chemicals into the practical equivalent of amber. This new resin—named Bakelite—was moldable, machinable, incombustible, electrically nonconductive, and instantly ideal for the new aircraft and electrical industries. After World War I, Bakelite's use in consumer products exploded, appearing in seemingly everything from radio parts to varnishes on brass beds. Combined with refined wood cellulose, the thermosetting (heat-hardened) resin could be cast into knobs and handles resilient enough to take years of manipulation. By saturating cloth, it was easily formed into tough sheets that shrugged off impact and wear in applications from electrical circuit boards to kick plates.

## The Plastics Parade

Celluloid and Bakelite were the two seeds of the ever-growing branches of plastics devised since then. Though celluloid (cel-



DOUG KEISTER



COURTESY OF THE MIT MUSEUM

Compare a kitchen of the 1930s (top), where plastics might hide in lights, stove knobs, and electrical outlets, to the 1950s "Home of the Future" living room (above) where the fluid forms of building and furnishings are solely plastics.

lulose nitrate) found limited use in building construction per se, its less flammable cousin, cellulose acetate, became popular for doorknobs and telephones where it was valued for its integral color that would not wear away. The birth of acrylic resins in the 1930s led to some of the first uses of plastics in directly architectural ways. Developed in Germany for aircraft windshields, acrylics are heat-softening resins that possess the additional quality of being crystal clear. Almost synonymous today with two of their earliest trade names—Lucite and

Plexiglas—acrylics became a quick favorite of designers for lighting. Since sheets or tubes of acrylic conduct light and are readily bent, the plastic could be used to illuminate creative shapes or transmit light around curves. Early on, acrylics were employed for novel signs where letters and designs molded or engraved into one side of the plastic seem to shine on their own when lit from above. Though some furniture was tried—particularly tabletops—early acrylics were soft and easily scratched, so they worked best in out-of-the-way locations like door





COURTESY OF THE MIT MUSEUM

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
*Product Styling*  
ARE OFFERED BY BAKELITE PLASTICS?

BAKELITE *Phenolic* MOLDING MATERIALS



Red plastic color, also durability is inherent factor in. The modern, general business air container is made from BAKELITE Phenolic material.



Experiments, innovations and discovered plastics. Exclusive design, form tested in BAKELITE Phenolic molding materials.

BAKELITE *Urea* MOLDING MATERIALS



Shaper and compound plastic with no accident in durability. The color inherent in white from BAKELITE Urea molding.



White experiments color. The durable form ability of the compound of BAKELITE Urea is confirmed by constant handling or exposure to light.

Above: The Monsanto "Plastics Home of the Future," a fixture at Disneyland into the late 1960s, was four, prefabricated, cruciform wings that "assure daylight for every room." The curved fiberglass walls and floors were a canny showcase for the limitless malleability of plastics.

Below: Mixing fillers and resin not only added opacity and reduced cost in plastic products, it made them more moldable and less brittle—ideal qualities for handles.



ANDY OLENICK

In the 1920s, combinations of urea formaldehyde and wood flour could yield plastic in the classic ivory-white. By the 1940s Bakelite and its competitors had cracked the color barrier by combining new resins with synthetic dyes.





In 1959, Ralph Wilson Sr. (founder of Wilsonart International) built a house (above) to be his residence and laboratory for new uses of laminates, such as the kitchen (top) which uses early curved counter-tops.

lintels, room mouldings, and edge-lighted screens. Lightweight and easily shaped, baluster-sheets of decorated acrylics made a dramatic, transparent addition to stair railings.

Styrene, another clear, heat-softened plastic of the early 1930s, saw most initial architectural use in insulation, while vinyl, which came on the market shortly thereafter, found an immediate application as decorative sheet flooring. Urea plastics, made with urea and formaldehyde, lent themselves well to molding, and with their hard, shiny surfaces became popular for lighting and electrical fixtures, reflectors,

door knobs, and switch plates.

## Glamorous Laminate

The ability of many of the first plastics to readily bond with other materials was soon put to work in the production of laminates, and both heat-softening and heat-hardening plastics were turned to making these industrial sandwiches. Akin to how cellulose nitrate had become the inner layer of the first safety glass, in the 1930s sheets of cellulose acetate were pressed onto either side of strips of rare wood veneers to make Parkwood—a product that surfaced high-design columns, bars,







Above: Now a museum, the Wilson House features laminate-decorated walls in the living room along with Eames furniture. Left: Led by the amoeba-like Skylark, Formica's legendary patterns of the 1950s were designed by the equally renowned Raymond Loewy Associates. Each laminate sheet is only 1/16" thick.

markets—if they could add color.

After experiments with lithographed wood sheets, the company patented the first all-paper-based laminate in 1931—in a stroke re-creating Formica as a decorative material. By topping several resin-and-paper layers with a sheet printed in an attractive, colorful pattern, the laminate quickly became an ideal surface for counters and tabletops, as well as avant-garde wall panels in public spaces. Following service in the aircraft industry during World War II, Formica became nearly ubiquitous in houses and commercial spaces alike during the building boom of the 1950s.

Plastics really came into their own in houses in the mid-20th century, propelled by the dual engines of pent-up, postwar demand and the proliferation of plastic types. In the 1950s plastics of all sorts moved beyond the industrial recesses of consumer goods to become finished, highly decorative products in their own right. New ideas for existing plastics proliferated, begetting venerable trade names like Wilsonart International in laminates and Kentile in flooring, along with new combinations, such as fiber reinforced plastics—commonly called fiberglass. By the 1960s, the reference *Plastics for Architects and Builders* could list over 70 generic uses for plastics in construction.

Taken to its logical limit, such endless versatility leads to the notion of creating a house entirely out of plastic and, indeed, such buildings have broken the building mold more than once. Most iconic today is the "Plastics Home of the Future" constructed at Disneyland in 1957 by the Monsanto Chemical Company. Designed by architect Marvin Goody and his associates. Intended as "A demonstration of the structural applications of plastics. It dazzled atomic-age visitors with molded-in lavatories and tubs; plastic-foam insulation and furniture padding; and acrylic curtains, carpets, and upholstery." "Rooms may be easily and economically added or removed to conform with the changing space requirements of the residents," highlighted a 1960 brochure—a fitting metaphor for the ever-changing role of plastics themselves in houses.

electrical equipment.

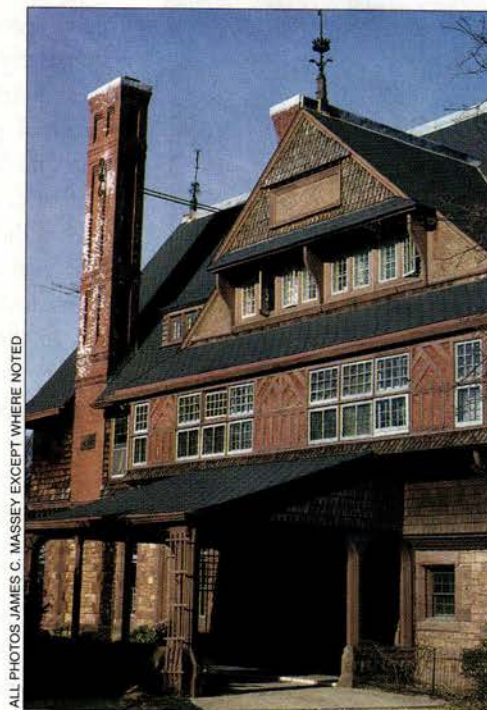
At Westinghouse, two young engineers—Daniel J. O'Connor and Herbert A. Faber—perfected a process to make very thin sheets of laminate that were more practical electrical insulators than the flakes of natural mica used at the time. When their employer showed little interest, they formed the Formica Insulation Company of Cincinnati in 1913 to produce their man-made substitute "for mica." Over the next decade O'Connor and Faber continued to refine and grow their new material into mechanical products like gears. They realized it might reach new

and staterooms. More versatile were heat-hardening plastics like Bakelite and its phenolic descendants that could be used to impregnate fibrous sheets or textiles. In fact, Leo Baekeland's General Bakelite Company supplied his resin to many manufacturers, such as the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company, which combined it with canvas to make



# Queen

BY JAMES C. MASSEY  
AND SHIRLEY MAXWELL



ALL PHOTOS JAMES C. MASSEY EXCEPT WHERE NOTED

Richardson's 1874 Watts-Sherman House in Newport, Rhode Island, started the American Queen Anne craze.

**The poster child of Victorian houses is a style that wears many faces.**

If you had to pick just one architectural style to represent the American Victorian house, you could do a lot worse than the Queen Anne. There were plenty of other house styles around in the Victorian age—which was, if nothing else, a period of rampant architectural enthusiasms. After the Civil War, American homebuilders, eager to get their architectural bearings, tramped, metaphorically speaking, through centuries of European history, finding noteworthy relics everywhere they looked. Italianate, Gothic Revival, Second Empire, Stick, Eastlake, Romanesque Revival, even Moorish and Egyptian Revival styles, all had their champions.

Yet it was the American Queen Anne, a ubiquitous symbol of prosperity, community, and family in the late 19th century, that won the heart of the nation. It popped up everywhere, in countless shapes,

ANDY OLENIK



# Anne

AND WHY WE LOVE HER SO

This classic Queen Anne in Waterford, New York, has all the common features: informal massing, corner turret, bay window, wraparound verandah, rich neo-colonial ornament in a pedimented and columned second-floor dormer, and a handsome swan-neck upper dormer.



sizes, and combinations of building materials and decorative elements, in cities, suburbs, and rural areas. The Queen Anne style might be viewed as a reaction against the rather gloomy aspect of Gothic architecture on the one hand and the rigid formality of, say, the Second Empire mansard house on the other.



Above: The Queen Anne quickly spread to the West Coast, as this ca. 1878 example in the college town of Claremont, California, demonstrates. Right: Picturesque and irregular windows and fancy dormers, as well as fine brickwork and a wrap-around verandah, distinguish this ca. 1890 house on Philadelphia's suburban Main Line in Wayne, Pennsylvania.

## Mock Medievals

Queen Anne herself, ruler of Great Britain and Ireland from 1701 to 1714, would surely have been astonished had she lived to see how 19th-century America transformed the red-brick and half-timbered buildings of her era. Taking a cue from Richard Norman Shaw, Philip Webb, E. W. Godwin, and other mid-19th-century English architects who turned away from 18th-century classicism to revive earlier, post-medieval forms, American architects produced a scattered array of freewheeling Queen Anne-style buildings. The first and most famous of these was H. H. Richardson's wonderful Watts-Sherman House in Newport, Rhode Island (1874). With its broad, high gables and expansive, multipaned casement windows, Richardson's design suggested, without mimicking, houses of the actual Queen Anne period.

The informal, irregular massing of early Queen Anne-style houses evoked the haphazard construction history of late-medieval buildings. Inevitably, as the style was adopted by less talented architects and less wealthy owners, its outlines blurred into the comfortably asymmetrical, picturesque amalgam of gables, verandahs, steep roofs, bays, and turrets that we see in so many houses built between about 1880 and 1900.

In the same way, the choice of building materials changed. In the beginning,



Above: This unusual Madison, Indiana, cement-block house features a large second-floor front gable that adds unexpected zest to the design, squaring off the bay window below with consoles and a steep rise to a decorative arch at the top. Fancy wood shingles fill out the gable.





the hallmark of the Queen Anne house was masonry, particularly brick and half-timbering, with elaborate decorative stone accents. Over time, the importance of some of these elements faded, and even wooden houses laid claim to a Queen Anne heritage. They only had to boast irregular massing—preferably with an assortment of rooflines, maybe a turret or two, a few tall, corbel-capped brick chimneys, and possibly some heavy, carved ornament decorating the many gabled dormers and bays. The carved stone of earlier years was often replaced by wooden spindlework, courtesy of new machine-driven lathes and a seemingly endless supply of wood from the hitherto-untapped forests of the American heartland. Building materials were easy to

come by—either close at hand or within reach by means of the nation's rapidly developing railroad system.

New printing technology and an advanced postal system also contributed to the spread of the Queen Anne style. It was given impetus on this side of the Atlantic by widely circulated planbooks from architects such as Henry Hudson Holly of New York, who published *Modern Dwellings in Town and Country* in 1876, including with his house plans a great deal of detailed advice about furnishing and painting them. The Connecticut firm of George and Charles Palliser (*New Cottage Homes*, published in 1887) similarly offered floor plans and elevations of Queen Anne houses and other buildings in their

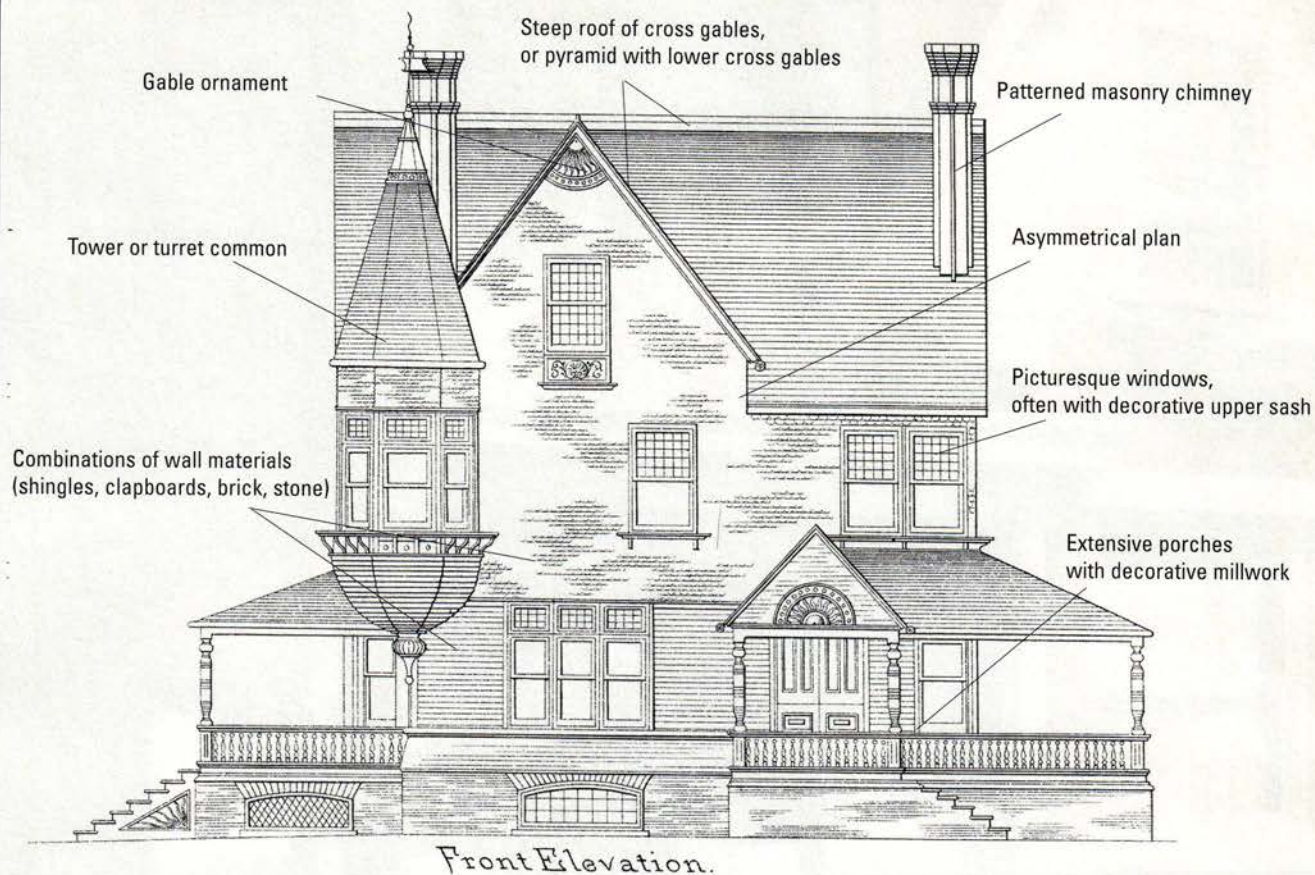
illustrated catalogs. George F. Barber established a booming architecture-by-mail business in Knoxville, Tennessee, furnishing both custom and stock designs to well-heeled clients all over the country. Many Barber houses survive today—there's probably at least one in a neighborhood near you—and many are so distinctive (some might say bizarre) that they are easily recognized by Barber aficionados. The earlier ones are quintessentially Queen Anne, with round wooden turrets and many gables.

Other noted architects producing Queen Anne designs included Samuel and Joseph Newsom of San Francisco, Peabody and Stearns of Boston, Bruce Price of New York, and G. W. and W. D. Hewitt of Philadelphia.



## QUEEN ANNE

Complex roofs, angular walls, and ever-changing materials combine to make architecturally extroverted houses.



This house on Maple Street, Madison, New Jersey's, premiere Victorian street, is a straightforward design with a fine front porch.



This is a typical 1893 Oak Park, Illinois, house in the same block where Frank Lloyd Wright built his famous home and studio in 1898.





Known as the "Eyebrow Dormer House," this handsome Queen Anne with a distinctive three-storey bay window at the left is in the small central Florida town of Lake Helen.

A great part of the appeal of the Queen Anne style lay in its versatility—the ease with which it could be adapted to houses of any size, from cottages to mansions, for families with incomes that ranged from decidedly moderate to exceptionally lavish. Queen Anne was as useful for narrow city row houses as it was for sprawling suburban mansions.

Added to this, there was also the appeal of the style's ability to serve the changing needs of the 19th-century family. Interior spaces often included generous tiled entry halls, prominent wooden staircases, paneled walls of oak and chestnut, inviting inglenook fireplaces with glazed decorative tiles, dining rooms with stained-glass windows and built-in china cabinets, modern kitchens with cast-iron cookstoves, hot and cold running water and convenient backstairs, fully plumbed bathrooms, and often, central heating systems.

On the exterior, big wraparound verandahs—not stiffly formal classical porticos—served as gracious extensions of the interior rooms, providing fine outdoor sitting rooms when the weather was clement and entrances sheltered from rain or snow when it wasn't. Smaller entrance and service porches were both decorative and useful.

### Embellish to the Max

Although there was an enormous fondness for diamond-paned casements and stained-glass windows, these were a far cry from their tiny medieval predecessors. Not only were they used in quantity, they were often impressively large. In many double-hung windows, small clear-glass panes (frequently in groups of 20 or more) formed the upper sash, while the lower sash held a single large pane, made possible by advanced glass-making machinery. They were used as well in myriad bays and

oriel windows that adorned the Queen Anne house. Thus, the Victorian demand for light and air was served all through the house without sacrificing an ounce of stylishness. Even dormer windows in attics and upper storeys were not mere practicalities but further opportunities for ornamental expression.

Exterior doors were major statements of taste and prosperity. Of heavy paneled wood with gleaming hardware, these were designed to impress both visitors and passersby. Inside, versatile pocket doors might slide into the walls to turn two small rooms into one, or be closed to form more intimate spaces. Alternatively, spindlework screens might suggest a division between rooms or set off a stair hall from an entry hall.

The post-Civil War years were the golden age of elaborate cast-iron ornament, and the Queen Anne house provided





plenty of excuses to use iron furbelows, from front-yard fences to rooftop cresting. In fact, this was a style that never faltered in the face of potential decorative meltdown. Half-timbering in gables and upper storeys; multicolored, variously shaped slate or wooden shingles on rooftops and dormer roofs, shoulders, and faces; walls laid up in patterns of varicolored brick—oh, it may have been much too much, but it was so gloriously Victorian!

And should such natural materials prove too pallid for the homeowner's taste, there was always paint to enhance the effect. Henry Hudson Holly solemnly recommended a five-color palette (including buff, dark green, red, black, and a brilliant

blue) for a recessed doorway—and then, of course, there would still be the windows and other trim to be dealt with.

With its emphasis on warmth, informality, and human scale, the Queen Anne house was a nearly perfect expression of the optimistic exuberance of Victorian America. As with all such youthful fantasies, though, there came a time when it really was too much, when the calmer lines of the up-and-coming Colonial Revival style seemed to make more sense. By about 1900, the Queen Anne's day was clearly ending. Yet its legacy surrounds us, brightening city streetfronts and old suburban neighborhoods with its slightly zany, anything-is-possible confidence. 🏠

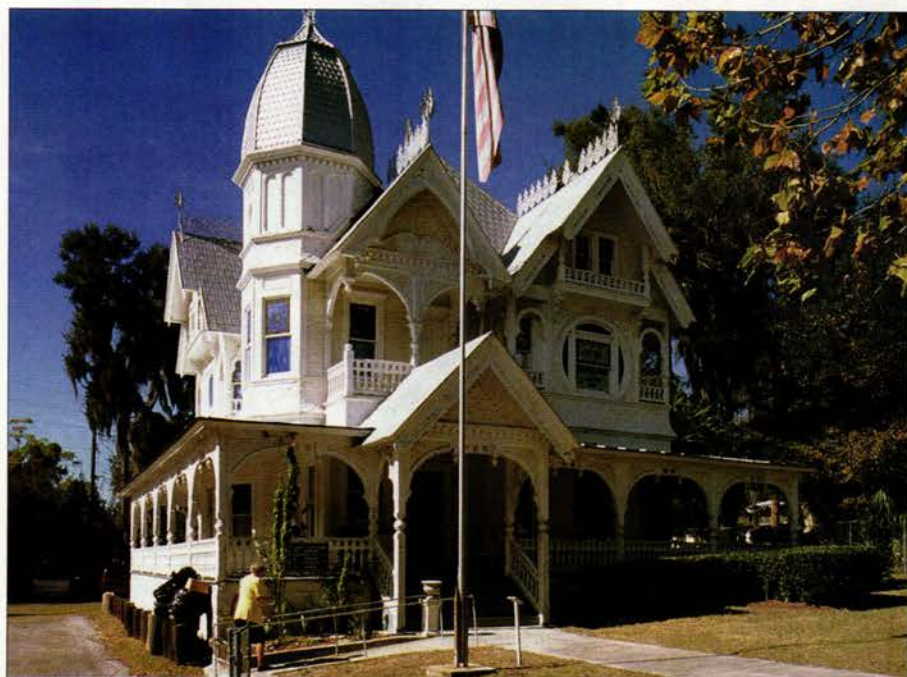
**Right: Another late Queen Anne by George Barber, this one in Edenton, North Carolina, built in 1897, is handsomely designed and well proportioned, with a notable verandah and another three-storey octagonal tower.**





This substantial brick house in Edenton, North Carolina, has an unusually fine verandah with an octagonal extension on the right, balanced on the left by a three-storey octagonal tower.

This spectacular 1893 tour-de-force by famed architect-by-mail George Barber in Mount Dora, Florida, could hardly sport more ornament even if the architect had tried.





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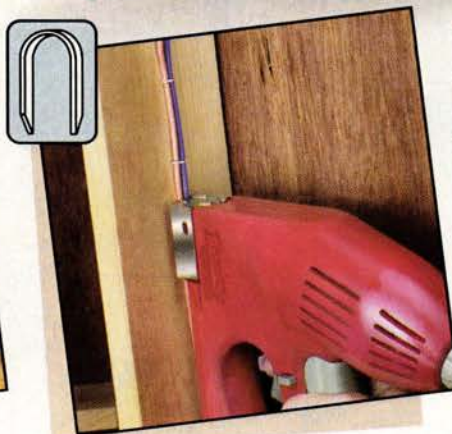


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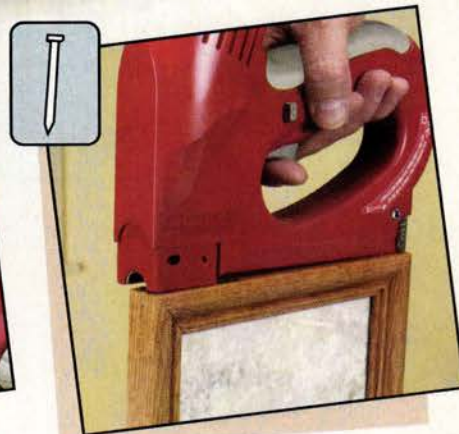
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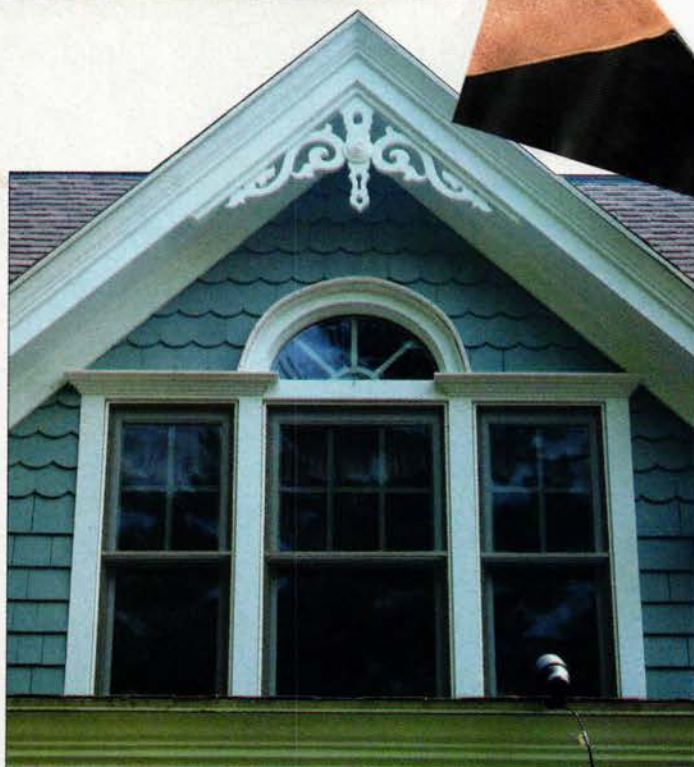
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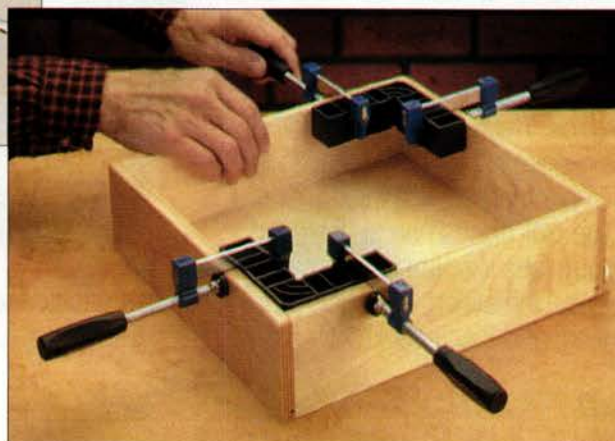


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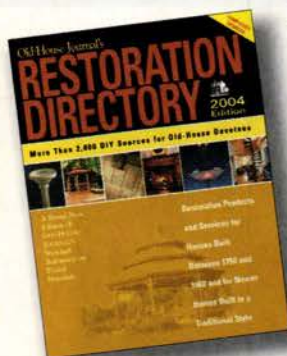
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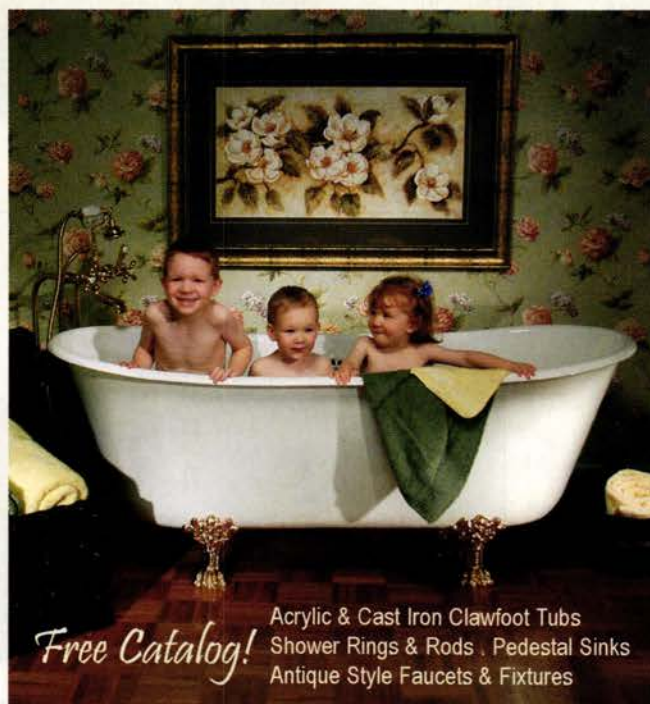
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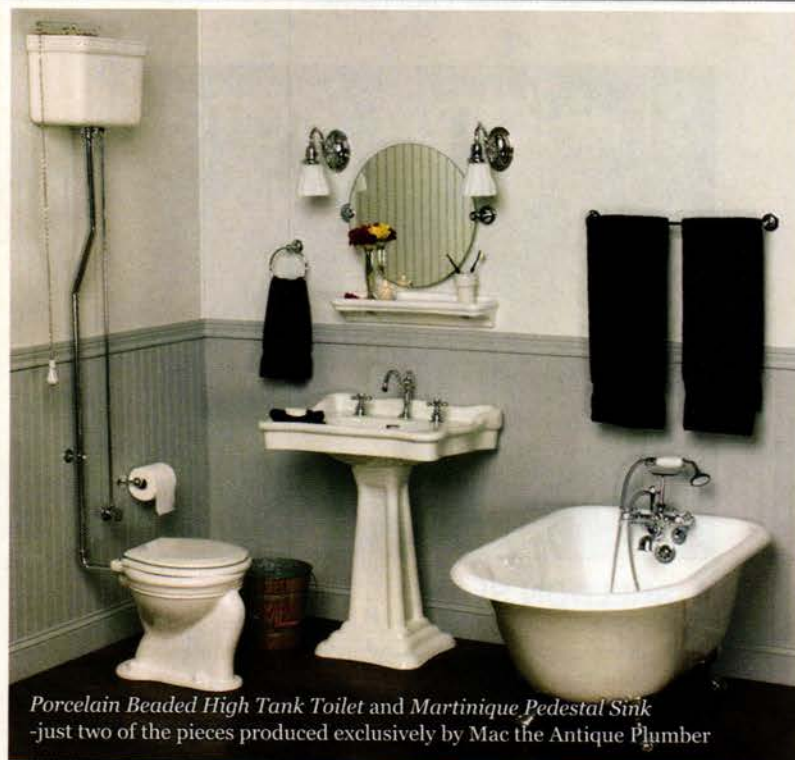
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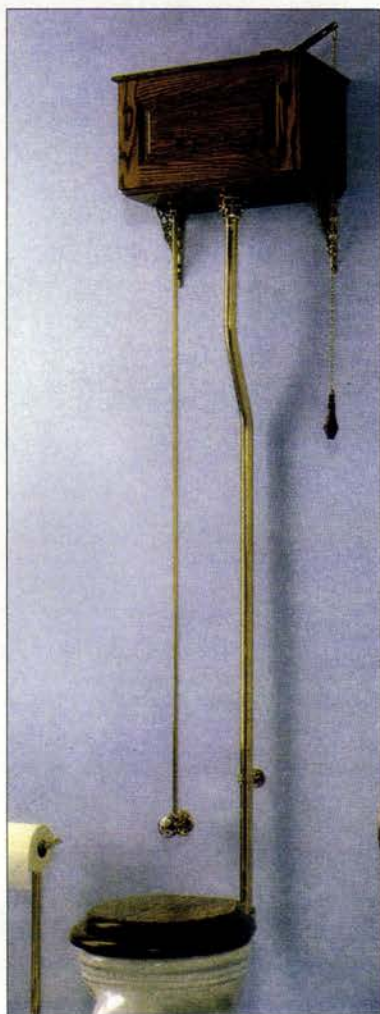
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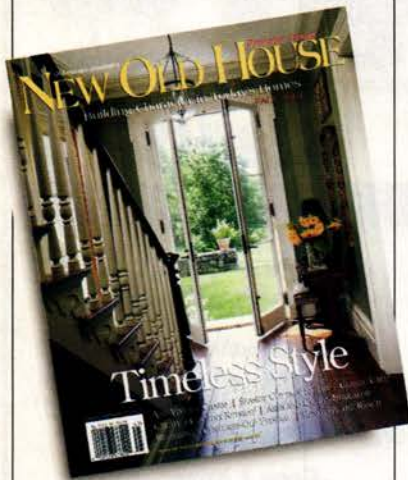
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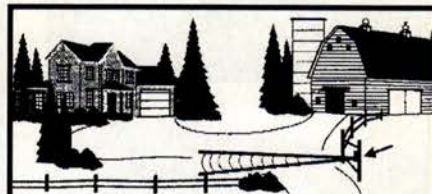
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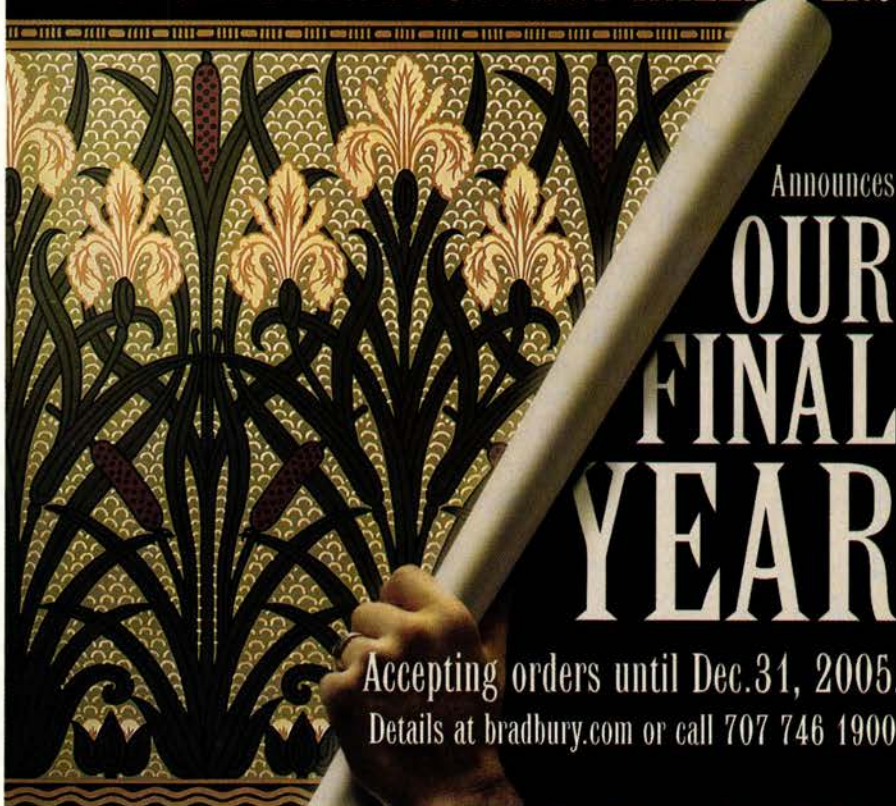
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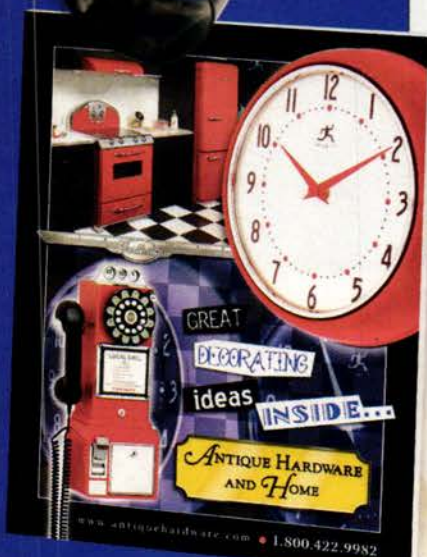
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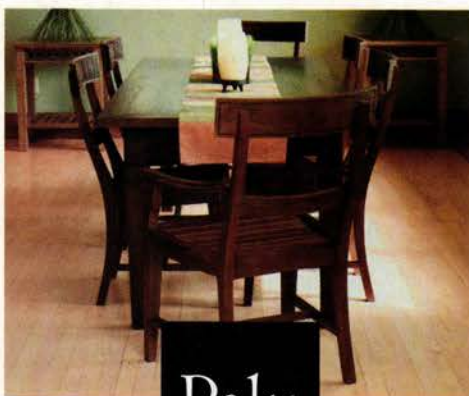
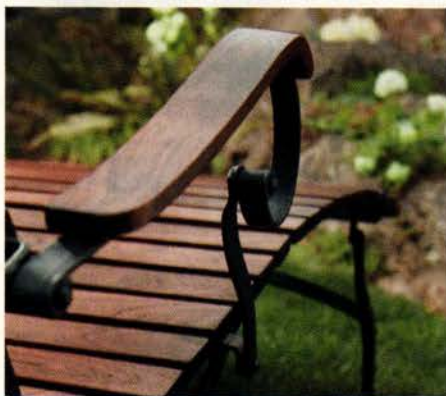
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### Outside the Old House, Page 43

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### Restoration Recipes page 48

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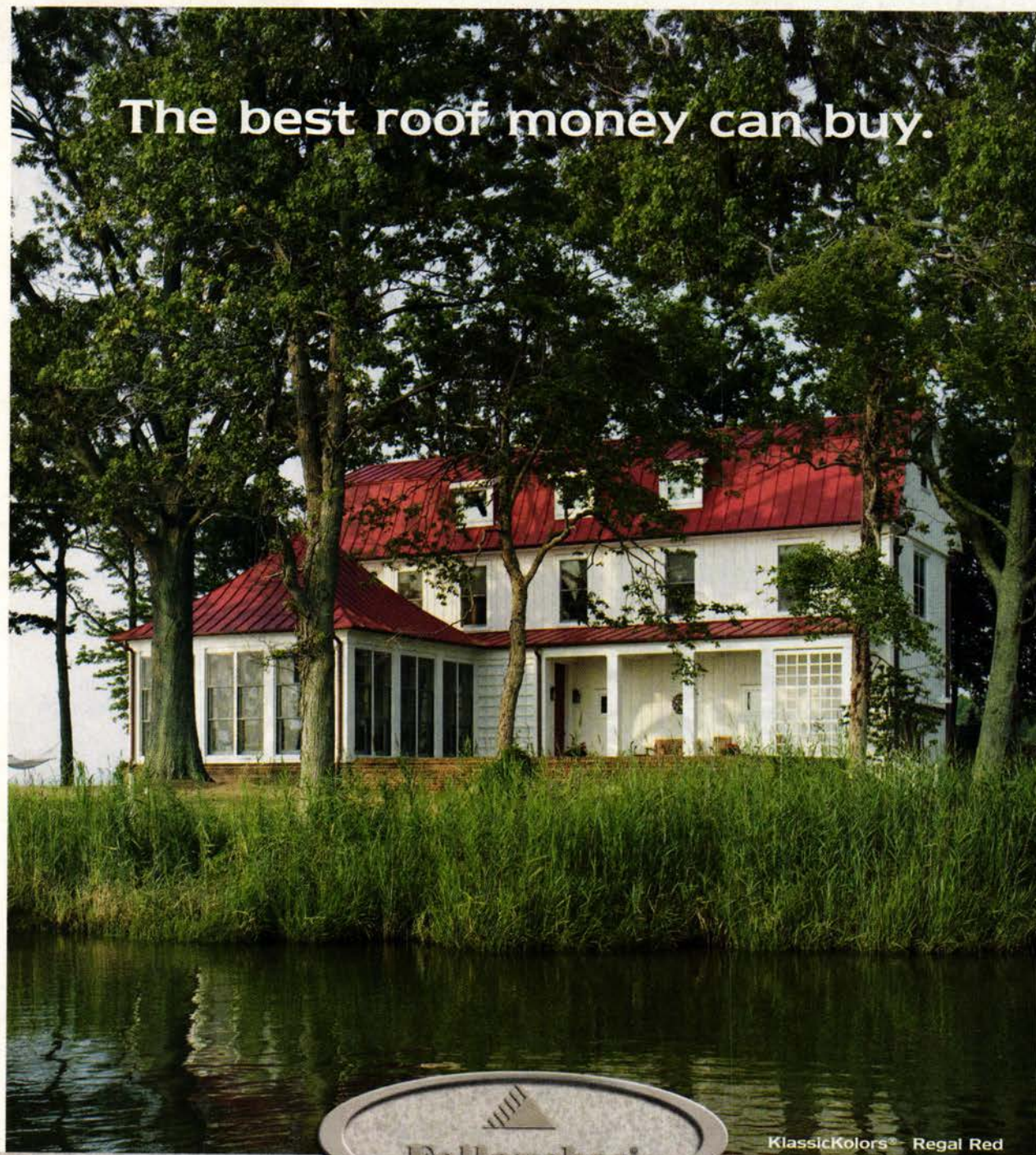
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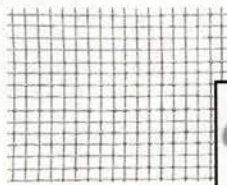
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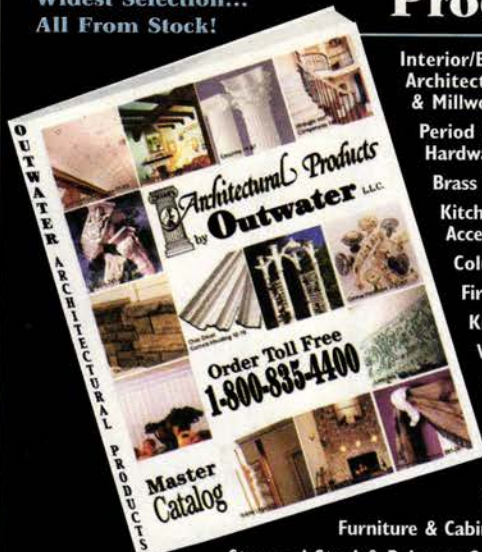


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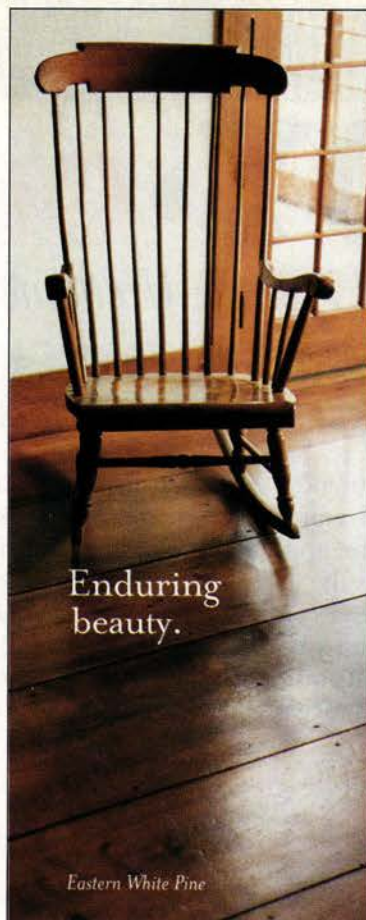
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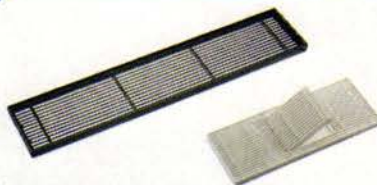
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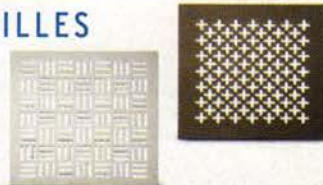
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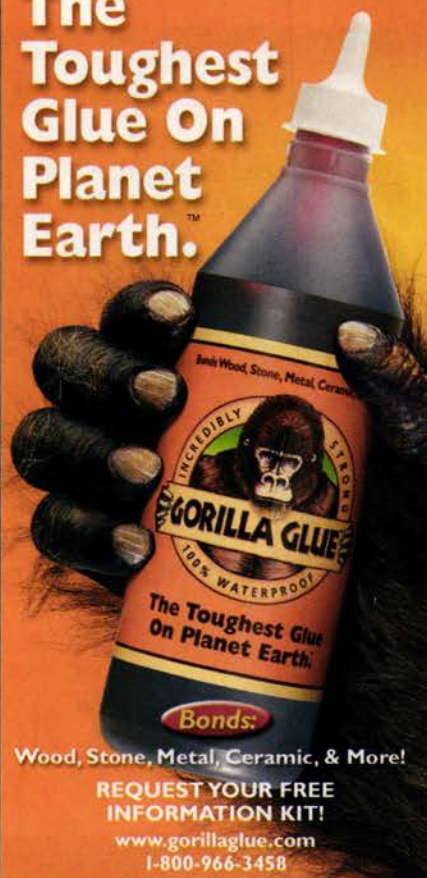
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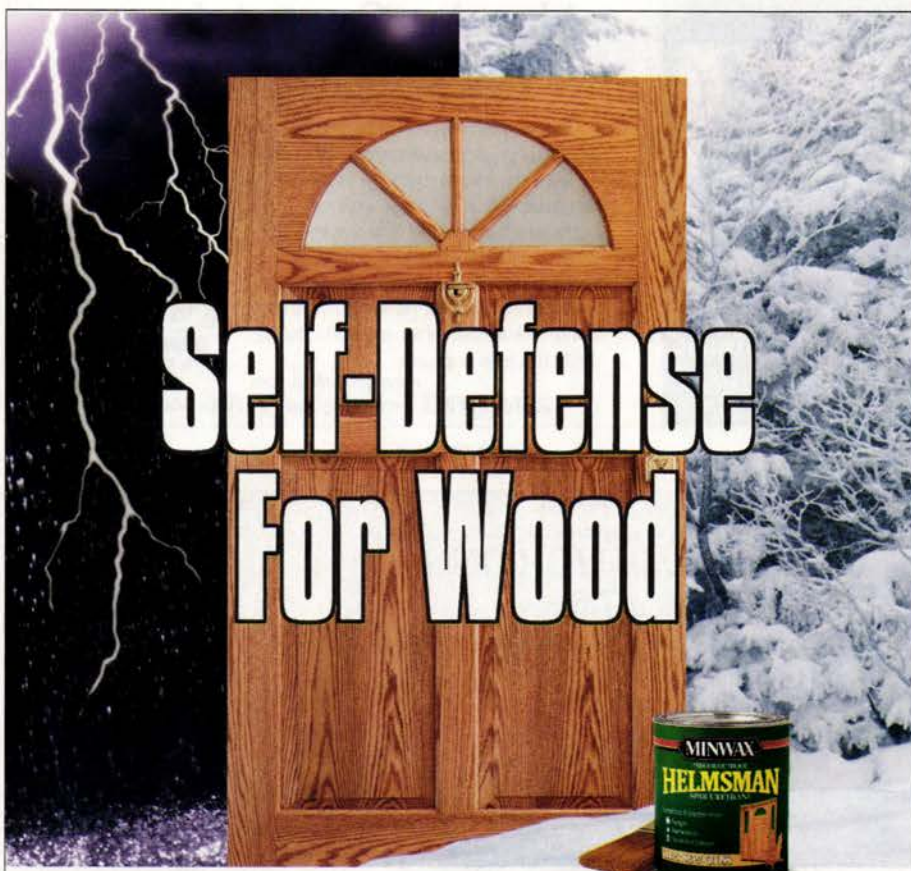
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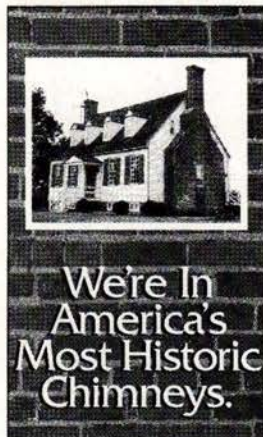


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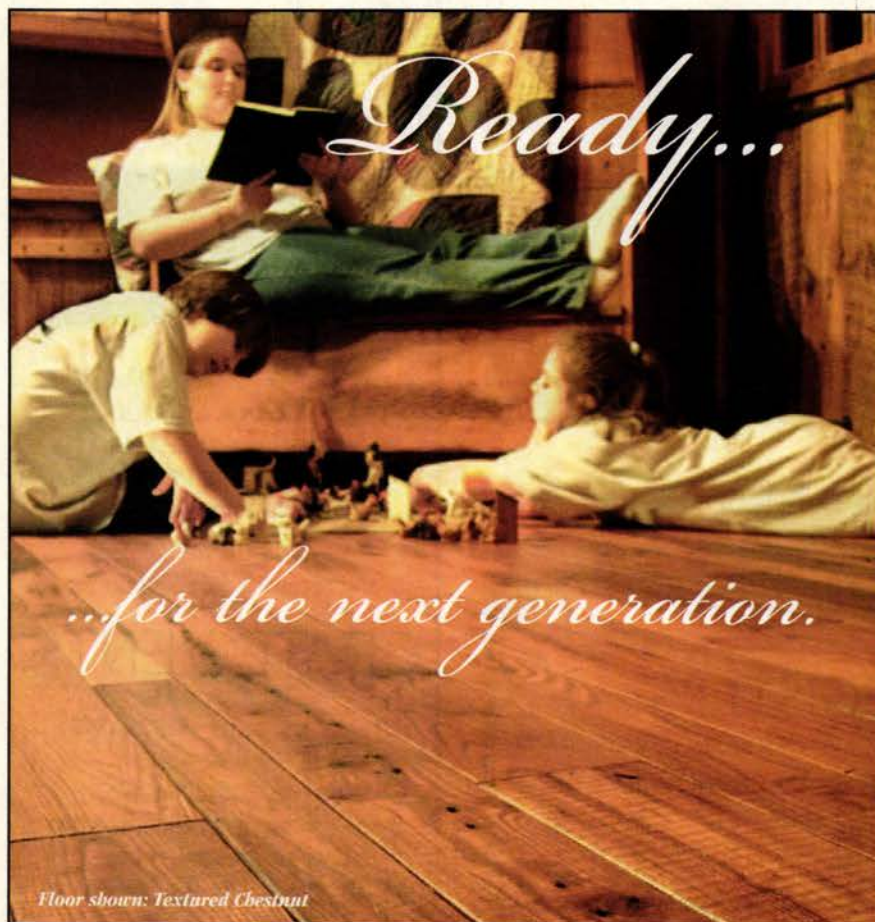
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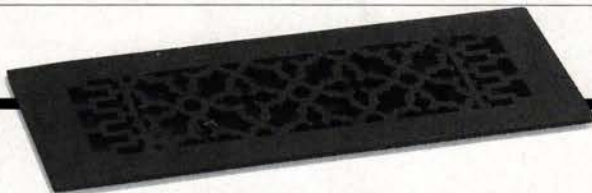
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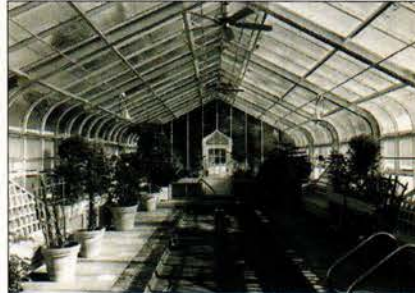
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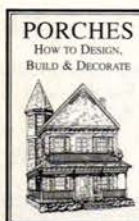
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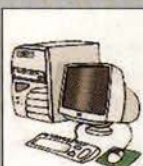
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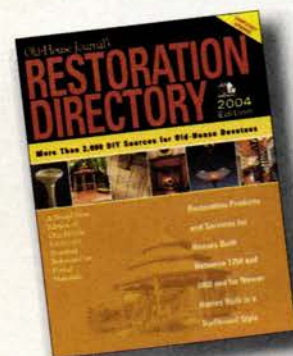
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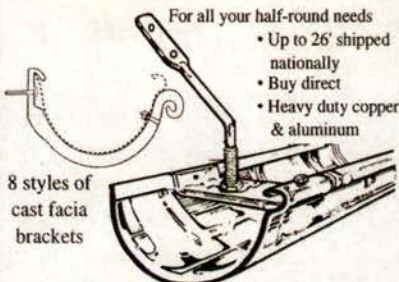


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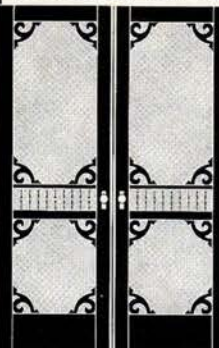


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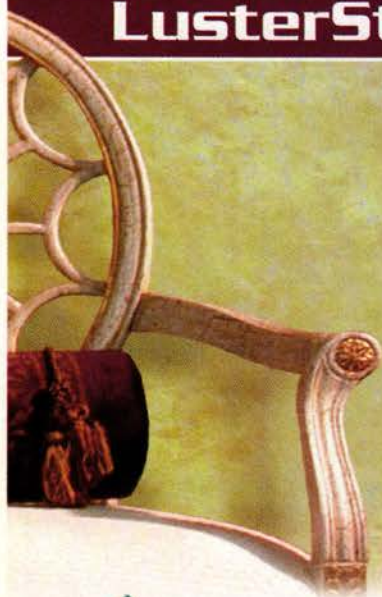
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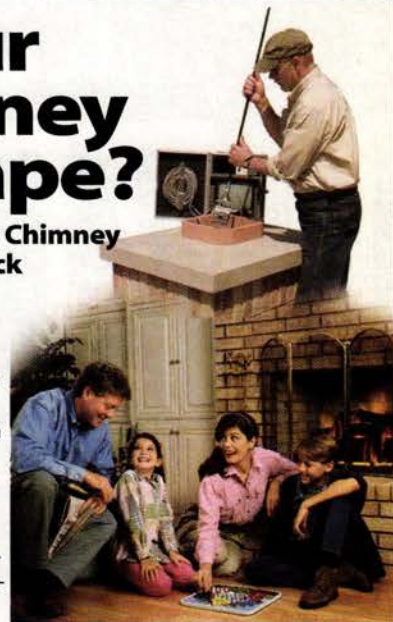
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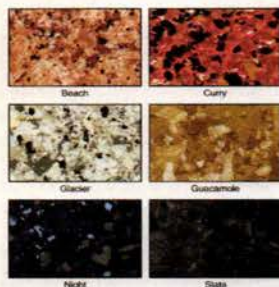
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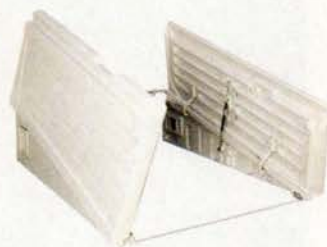
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## Peek-A-Boo

Want to show off the backyard landscaping to the street? Here's an interesting concept for an addition (although the view might be blocked once an SUV pulls in the drive). Of greater note, perhaps, is the apparent blind eye to virtually anything in the original Maryland house (shown to the right): roofline and roofing material, height, window style, overall proportions, presence or absence of dormers and shutters, foundation color. We do think the siding seems to be of a similar width, but maybe that's just an illusion. 🏠

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