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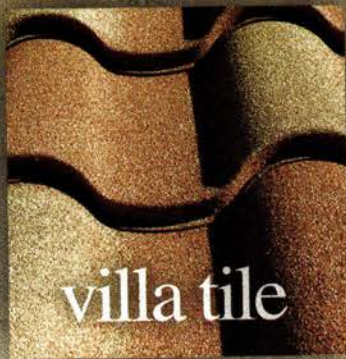
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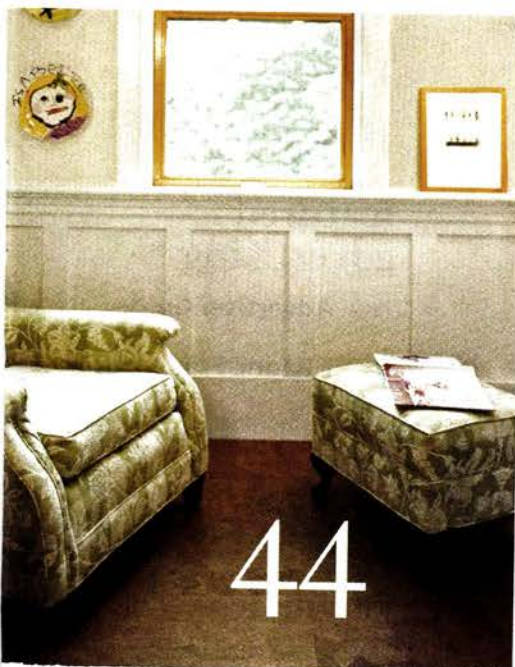
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Old House JOURNAL



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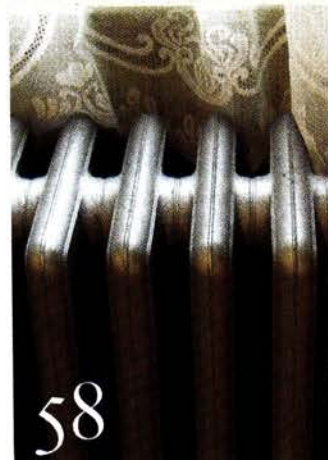
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Calling All Ghosts!

The September/October issue of *Old House Journal* has gone to the press! Ghost stories have been a perennial favorite in our magazine since it started, and for our 30th anniversary issue, we've resurrected these spooky souls once again. Check out our [latest issue of spooky tales, or read past issues](#). We've also picked out the best haunted houses and paranormal sites. Now we want to hear from you! Share your ghost story with us in our special "Spooky Stories" section. And don't forget to check out some spooky sites from our [2008's Spooky Haunting!](#)

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Latest Activity

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[Cindy Reed](#) added a photo: [American Colonial Columns](#). [America](#). 12 hours ago

[Cindy Reed](#) updated their profile photo. 12 hours ago

[Demetri](#) left a comment for [Dorota Fischer](#). 1 day ago

Blog Posts

The Carpenter and The Columns

I erected two Tuscan Columns today.



"I help my neighbor with her porch and learned with my community." "I work with the masons and the architect and learned with the masons." "I found the right way to do it."

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Welcome Home

Our new online community is designed to be a refuge for advice and ideas, as well as a digital scrapbook of your old-house restoration. Here are just a few of the things you'll find on MyOldHouseJournal.com:

Blogs from the editors on everything from their childhood fascinations with old houses to unique architecture they've encountered on their travels.

How-to videos from contributing editor John Leeke that give you in-depth instructions on projects featured in past issues of OHJ.

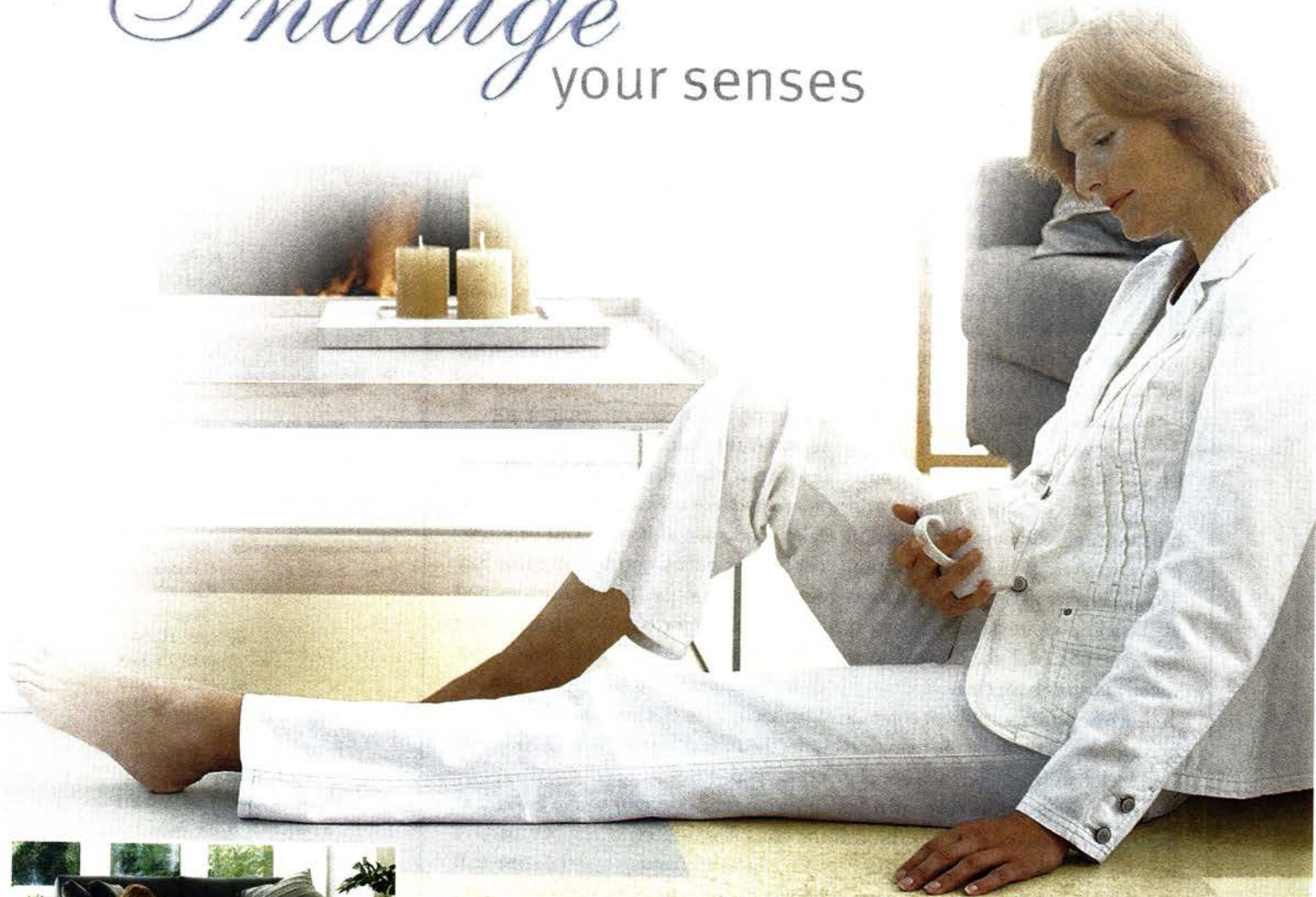
Tons of photos that show both the nitty-gritty before and the gorgeous afters of community members' restoration projects.

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editor's note

Refreshing Ideas



MARK W. ABBOTT PHOTO

HOW CAN I GET MORE storage space into my old house? It's a question I've heard over and over again in my time at OHJ, and one that often doesn't have an easy answer because most old houses weren't designed with room to spare. Sure, you can buy era-appropriate furniture like chifferobes and armoires, but they often crowd old-house bedrooms and offer limited storage. In this issue, we offer up a practical solution for any homeowner with an unfinished attic. Follow along with contributor Mark Clement as he explains how to build

attic knee walls that hide an expanse of storage space, a project he undertook in his own century-old house (see "Wraparound Storage," page 50). It's an innovative fix for an age-old problem, and the type of idea we pride ourselves on bringing you.

Since winter's chill is descending upon most of the country, we thought now was a good time for a refresher course on a couple of common weather-related old-house problem areas—namely, weatherstripping and radiators. Weatherstripping—that fundamental old-house fix for sealing leaky windows and doors—can be a low-cost, effective way to trim dollars from your heating bills. Contributing editor Ray Tschoepe takes us on a comprehensive tour of today's options and techniques, and after reading his article you'll be an expert on the subject too (see "Weatherstripping 101," page 68). And what's an old house without radiator heat? Whether steam or hot water, radiators have been a source of both warmth and consternation for decades. To learn how to troubleshoot common radiator complaints, check out our comprehensive story written by the man who knows the subject better than anybody else, Dan Holohan (see "The Radiator Handbook," page 58).

All of these articles originated from questions and concerns you've brought to us here at the editorial offices through the years. For me, one of the best parts of working at OHJ is the give-and-take between editors and readers and the sense that we all belong to the same passionate old-house community. And now we've come up with a more timely way for our extended old-house family to get connected. This month, we're launching MyOldHouseJournal.com, an online community devoted exclusively to old-house enthusiasts and the topics we all hold near and dear. It's a place where you can share your projects, post pictures of your old-house restoration, even upload videos and ask each other for advice. You can also learn about old-house-related events nationwide, add information you think would interest other old-house aficionados, and discuss ideas or concerns. Plus, you'll have access to exclusive blogs, slideshows, and videos from our editorial team—all for free. We hope it will add yet another dimension to the in-depth information we bring you in every issue, and remind you that when it comes to restoration, you're never in it alone. Lots of like-minded folks are right there with you—some next door, some across the state, and some across the country. So log on and join our new virtual community. I look forward to seeing you there.

MyOldHouseJournal.com

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letters



A Tale of Two Magazines

Old-House Journal happened to be covering some of the same topics in its September/October issue as I'd recently seen in *Preservation*: one on Montpelier, and the other on a Frank Lloyd Wright Usonian-style house. I was curious to see how the two magazines would cover the stories, and was more than satisfied with OHJ's approach.

While *Preservation*'s Montpelier article concentrated on the duPonts, the authenticity debate, and the National Trust's stewardship, OHJ only lightly touched on these aspects before getting down to the business of restoration. As for the Wright articles, reading about the 1948 Rosenbaum house in *Preservation* prior to reading about the 1934 Willey house in OHJ put into context your statement that the earlier house served as "a bridge between Wright's Prairie designs for wealthy clients and his Usonian homes for the middle class." I also appreciated OHJ's use of illustrations and focus on the interaction between the owner and the restoration team, both of which bring readers into the details of restoration and help them relate to their own past and potential experiences.

Andrew Tannenbaum
Amityville, New York



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By Popular Request

I was surprised to open the July/August issue of OHJ to see Mary Carroll's photograph of a doorknob topping the story "Age Before Beauty: The Art of Patinas." The doorknob is an identical match to one left to me by my late uncle—right down to the orange patina. My uncle was a farmer

who ended up "closing up" the farms of a number of older family members, so I had assumed the doorknob was taken out of one of these old German farms.

Does your photographer have any more information about the history of this doorknob? I'd love to know more about it.

Teresa (last name withheld by request)
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Unfortunately, I don't know much about the doorknob's origins, other than that my father, the son of a German immigrant, used the knob in our house in New Jersey when he built it in the late 1950s—although the knob is obviously much older. —Mary Carroll



Thank you so much for your article about the post-fire restoration of the Victorian home ["A House Reborn"] in your July/August issue. Thank goodness the owners didn't tear it down and start over!

I was completely smitten with the mosaic octopus you featured on the shower floor. Can you tell me more about it?

Carrie van der Wal
Austin, Texas

The design was based on a Roman mosaic of an octopus found in Herculaneum, a city buried in the eruption that claimed Pompeii. Artist Margaret Kuhn brought the ancient creature to life using Carrara and Negra Marquina marble mosaic tiles. Kuhn, who works through Portland's Pratt and Larson Tile, also added a hint of Art Nouveau styling to the octopus to better align it with the era of the house. —Eds.



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letters

Linseed Oil Lessons

I was concerned to read the advice to “clean window jambs with boiled linseed oil” in *About the House* in the September/October issue. Linseed oil is a finish material, like varnish or paint; in fact, it’s the original oil in oil paint. Before it hardens, it’s slippery, but on exposure to air, it turns, sometimes slowly, but always inevitably, hard as a rock. Nor is it a cleaning agent, unless you want to preserve the dirt.

Proper use and understanding of materials is the core of preservation technology. Please don’t allow misleading advice to induce newbies to glue their windows shut!

Bill Ward

Norristown, Pennsylvania

Mr. Ward is correct; linseed oil should only be used on wood windows as a finishing agent or sealer. To help sashes slide more easily, contributing editor Ray Tschoepe advises: “The simplest lubricant to use is good old paste wax. It can be applied and buffed dry, and typically lasts for about a year or two. There are also a number of spray lubricants that are helpful, including a dry film lubricant with TFE (tetrafluoroethylene, an unpolymerized Teflon). However, nothing is often the best material to apply.” —Eds.

Reader Tip of the Month

I read the September/October Ask OHJ column about powder coating plumbing fixtures with particular interest. While I haven’t powder coated any sinks or tubs, I did have a tub spout powder coated for a bathroom in my 1954 ranch house. Not only was the tub a non-standard 30 inches wide, but I also had to find an extra-long spout that would clear the rim. I scoured the Internet, but the only ones I could find in white were discontinued. Because I’ve had good luck with powder coating on the vintage vehicles I own, I decided to buy a chrome-finish spout and have it powder coated. For \$30, I now have the glossy white finish I was searching for. The spout has been in place for nearly 5 years, and has shown no signs of flaking.

Valerie Stabenow
Freeport, Illinois

Got a great tip you’d love to share with other old-house lovers? Let us know at OHJEditorial@homebuyerpubs.com.

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about the house

By CLARE MARTIN

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COMING SOON

The 22nd annual Arts & Crafts Conference (coming up on February 19-22 at The Grove Park Inn in Asheville, North Carolina) has announced its lecture series, which will include talks by notable Arts & Crafts authors, collectors, and curators on everything from art pottery and woodblock prints to the influence of British Arts & Crafts visionaries.

ON THE RADAR

Tune In to Historic Districts

BROCHURE-BASED WALKING tours are a standard feature in many historic districts. But lately, several districts around the country have sought to bring the walking tour into the 21st century by adapting it to new technology—namely, mp3-based audio tours that allow visitors to take a leisurely stroll (or drive) while listening to information about historic buildings on iPods or CDs.

"We wanted to do something a little more cutting-edge that would appeal to a younger generation," says Jill Doak of the Rock Island, Illinois, Historic Preservation Commission, which rolled out a downloadable audio tour of the city's Victorian-era Broadway Historic District last year.

It's not just in the implementation of these high-tech tours that preservation boards hope to acquire interest from the younger set—in Skowhegan, Maine, students from the local middle school researched and recorded an iPod tour of historic downtown businesses with support from the Local Heritage Commission.

"It got them a lot more involved in what was going on locally," says Jeff Hewitt, Skowhegan's director of community development. "They actu-



This 1880 Italianate is one of 50 homes highlighted on Rock Island's audio tour.

ally look at the downtown now instead of just passing through." Plus, he says, hearing the town's history from their perspective can be more enticing to other kids visiting the area. "If a kid hears something from another kid, it's different than listening to a grown-up."

In addition to reaching a younger audience, the audio tours also offer increased flex-

ibility over the standard brochure format—even for those who aren't so technologically savvy. "We can create CDs for people, and they can just pop them in their car," Jill says. Because each file on Rock Island's tour is individually downloadable, users can create personalized tours, or listen to one of the six specialty tours (grouped primarily by architectural style) put together by the preservation commission. In Skowhegan, where visitors can check out iPods from the Chamber of Commerce, Jeff says they hope to expand their fledgling program to create custom tours that can be uploaded on the spot.

"The thing about this type of program is that it's a good way of archiving data," he says. "It can be used in a lot of different ways."

OLD-HOUSE RESOURCE

Study Hall

When you're trying to recreate the details of an old house, simply reading about or looking at pictures of historic architectural elements sometimes isn't enough. (Not to mention the fact that, the older your house is, the harder it is to find accurate information about its features.) The opportunity to get up close and personal with original historic components is invaluable, which is why the National Park Service created the Architectural Study Collection at the Independence Historical Park in Philadelphia. Started in 1951 as a way to educate preservationists working on the revitalization of Independence Hall, and expanded when nearby



historic buildings were torn down to make way for I-95, the collection now encompasses more than 3,000 objects—everything from cornices to doors to wallpaper samples—dating from 1750 to 1830. Old-house restorers can touch, examine, and measure any of the objects in the collection, as well as research their history and usage through drawings and photographs cataloged on-site. Plans are in the works to relocate the collection from its current spot at the First Bank to the Bishop White and Todd Houses for increased public access, but for now, the collection is open by appointment only. To schedule a visit, call (215) 597-9373.

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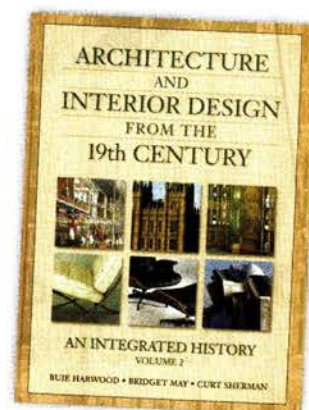
IT'S TIME TO...

Get Your Chimney Fire-Ready

Before you gather logs for that first winter fire, you'll want to make sure your chimney is in top shape. Because creosote buildup can pose a fire risk, the first order of business is cleaning. If you're familiar with the chimney-cleaning process (which typically involves vigorous scraping with a wire brush), you can attempt this yourself, but when in doubt, bring in a professional chimney sweep. Improper ventilation is another potential hazard (it can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning), so inspect the flue to make sure there are no blockages that could prevent exhaust from leaving the house. This is also a good time to check up on the condition of the chimney's mortar—if it's starting to deteriorate, you can put repointing on your to-do list for next year.

BOOKS IN BRIEF

If your old house is a puzzle waiting to be solved, then consider *Architecture and Interior Design from the 19th Century: An Integrated History* your decoder ring. As its name suggests, the book (a follow-up to the 2001 interior design textbook *Architecture and Interior Design through the 18th Century*) blends explanations of historic architecture styles with tutorials on their corresponding furnishings, recognizing, as many great designers have, that one cannot exist without the other. The resulting text is a virtual one-stop-shop for old-house enthusiasts, allowing you to bone up on the vocabulary of your home's architectural features while also researching appropriate furnishings. Working chronologically through the dozens of styles that appeared in American architecture and design after the Industrial Revolution, the book spotlights both popular styles (Arts & Crafts, Art Nouveau) and lesser-known ones (Exoticism). A plethora of pictures of historic buildings and interiors help readers visualize the connections between each architecture and interior design style. Each chapter is accompanied by a geographical list of important buildings in that style, as well as a list of the architects and designers who helped establish it, making this book an invaluable resource for anyone who speaks the language of old houses.



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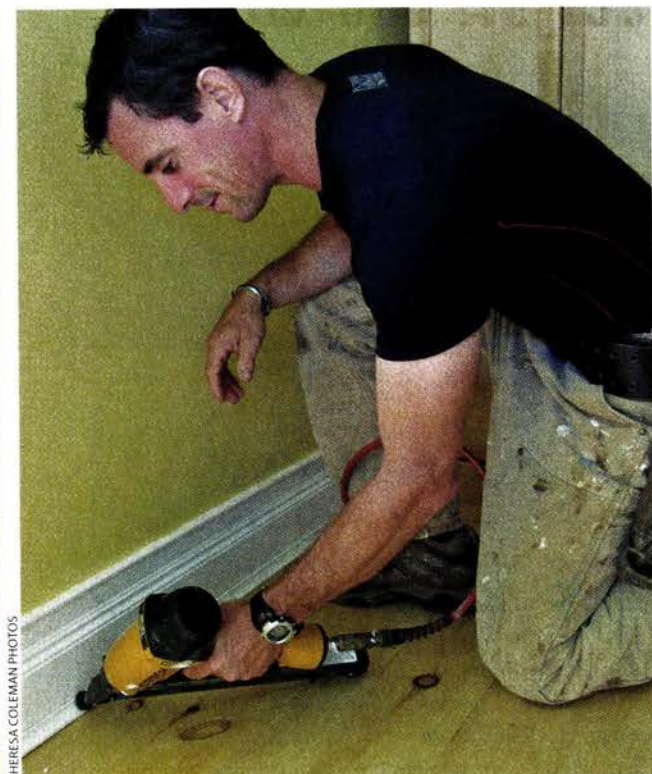
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old-house toolbox



Theresa Coleman Photos

Pneumatic Finish Nailer

Make the most of your trim-hanging time with a fine-tuned finish nailer.

By Mark Clement

When I'm hanging crown molding, popping in base, or nailing tongue-and-groove wainscoting, I can't help but wonder about the carpenters who came before me. In my career, I've repaired trim and other boards loaded with fours, sixes, eights—even cut nails—all perfectly hand-set.

I'd wonder how they did it, but I know: relentless repetition. When you do something a thousand times, you feel it in your cell structure. I believe this is part of what made those carpenters craftsmen—they were people who truly understood the homes they built.

Today, however, we have less time. So while I can appreciate the zen of hand-nailing, all my trim goes up with a pneumatic finish nailer.

What To Look For

Power. Paint-grade moldings are typically softwoods that don't task a pneumatic tool, but hardwoods and old houses' bone-dry softwoods can. The ideal driving power for a finish nailer is around 400 inch-pounds.

Feel. I go for the best mix of light weight (around 4 pounds) and primo balance. (I usually investigate this by articulating the tool as if I were nailing molding to the store shelf.) A 25-degree magazine angle enables me to squeak the tool into tight corners, while holding about 100 nails to keep me moving. I also like it when the hose nipple is angled back and away from the tool. It provides some slack when you need it—something it takes a while to notice, but an appreciable detail. Look for a nose that's the tool equivalent of Goldilocks—one you don't have to press too hard or too soft to actuate the tool.

Line of Sight. Clear sight lines to the work are critical in my book. This helps you to get the nail where you want it. It also helps you see the angle at which the tool is pointed relative to the work, which aids in driving nails straight.

Jam Clearing. A good pneumatic nailer won't jam much—but it will eventually, so a nice clearing mechanism helps. Some tools have a wire lever that opens up the nose on top, while others free the entire nail magazine from below. I'm partial to the latter.

Details. As with anything, it's the detail that separates the marginal nailers from the excellent. I like nailers that don't require me to pull the nail magazine follower back before loading nails. Oil-free (so I don't have to remember to oil it) is another plus. Contoured profile nose tips are designed to fit the beads and edges of common trim styles and are very useful. (However, I only know of one company—Bostitch—that makes these.) An easy-to-articulate depth, adjustable exhaust, and good-sized kit box are all nice, but not critical, features.

The Bottom Line

To hang trim well in less time, look for a nailer that's light but also tough and powerful—one suitably featured and engineered to match the pedigree of the house you're using it in. 🛠



Carpenter Mark Clement is working on his century-old house near Philadelphia, and is the author of *The Carpenter's Notebook*.

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ask ohj

Q My 1890s Victorian in Chicago's Lakewood/Balmoral neighborhood has a round air grille on the exterior, 3' above grade. The 16" grille connects to a clay pipe through the basement wall, which travels underneath the floor slab and ends above a brick-lined pit that's 4' in diameter. I'm curious: Was this a combustible air pipe for some type of coal-fired device?

A **Dan Holohan:** Many larger Victorian homes had provisions for fresh air. After the Civil War, Lewis Leeds of the Franklin Institute and Harriet Beecher Stowe of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* fame started a movement against what they called "vitiating air." It was a time before we knew about germs, and these two very influential people were convinced that "vapors" coming from humans living in tight confines were causing most human ailments. Leeds wrote a book about it in 1868 (*Leeds on Ventilation*), and he and Stowe went on the lecture circuit together. They got a lot of attention, especially from the

BELOW: The grille connects through the basement wall to this pipe.



wealthy, who were building their large Victorian homes at the time.

Central heating was new then, and the engineers designing steam and hot-water systems often decided to mix the two types of radiators to provide warmth and ventilation. The first type of radiator is the kind we're used to seeing—freestanding units made of cast iron. Some of these radiators were very ornate (for family quarters), while others were plain (for servants' quarters). These radiators heated the air in the rooms directly, and had no provision for ventilation.

The other type of radiator heated air from the outdoors. These were very large and heavy, and they hung within ductwork that brought in air from the outside and directed it toward the living areas. These were called "indirect" radiators. The cold, fresh air flowed in from the outdoors, often through a large duct or pipe, such as the one in your photo. As the air passed over the large radiators within the ductwork, it got warmer and lighter, and then rose by convection to the common areas, and often the bedrooms, too. Usually there were no fans involved. From the living areas, the air passed back outdoors through loosely fitting window sashes and other cracks in the building envelope.

While this must have been a very expensive system to operate, it was the Gilded Age, so who cared? Nowadays, owners of most of these large older homes have sealed the outside-air duct to save fuel. What's ironic, though, is that once the outside air can't get in, everything stops moving: Heated air won't rise if cold air can't take its place, so you wind up with no heat



PHOTOS BY MARK MILLER

ABOVE: A round air grille appears about 3' above grade on a tony Victorian's exterior.

at all. The way around this is to open the sliding doors in the ductwork, which are located just before the heater, and also allow the upstairs air to circulate back to the basement, typically via a louvered basement door.

I've visited some mansions where the air intake was beneath the portico, and the plenum for the fresh air was a brick-lined corridor, often large enough to walk through. Breakers, the Vanderbilts' summer home in Newport, Rhode Island, has a grand example of this—you could drive a small car through it!

Since you didn't describe any evidence of radiators within your ductwork, and since your pipe ends in a pit in what was once the boiler room, it's more likely that the purpose of your pipe was to bring in combustion air for the old boiler. 🏠

Dan Holohan, a longtime contributor to OHJ, is the author of the book *The Lost Art of Steam Heating*.



Have questions about your old house? We'd love to answer them in future issues. Please send your questions to **Ask OHJ, 4125 Lafayette Center Dr., Suite 100, Chantilly, VA 20151** or by e-mail to **OHJEditorial@homebuyerpubs.com**.



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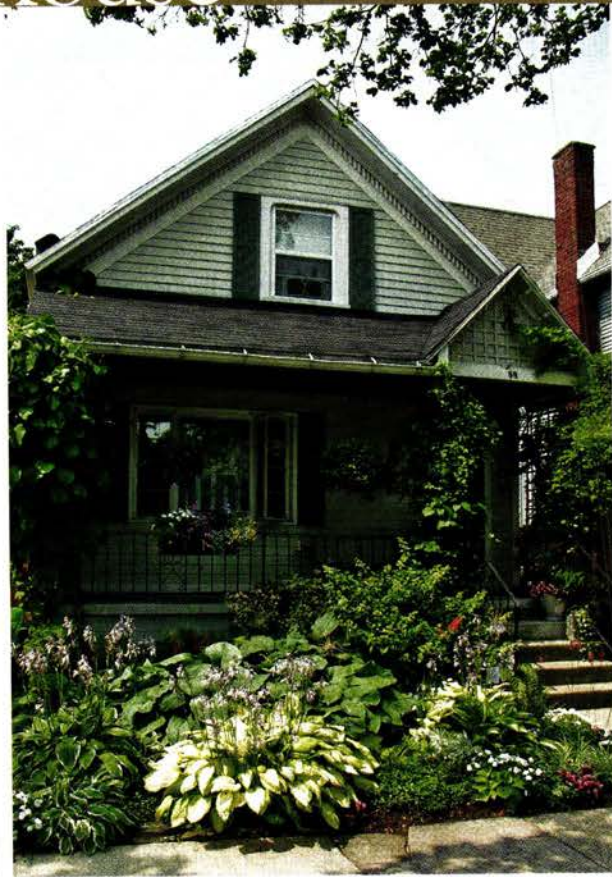
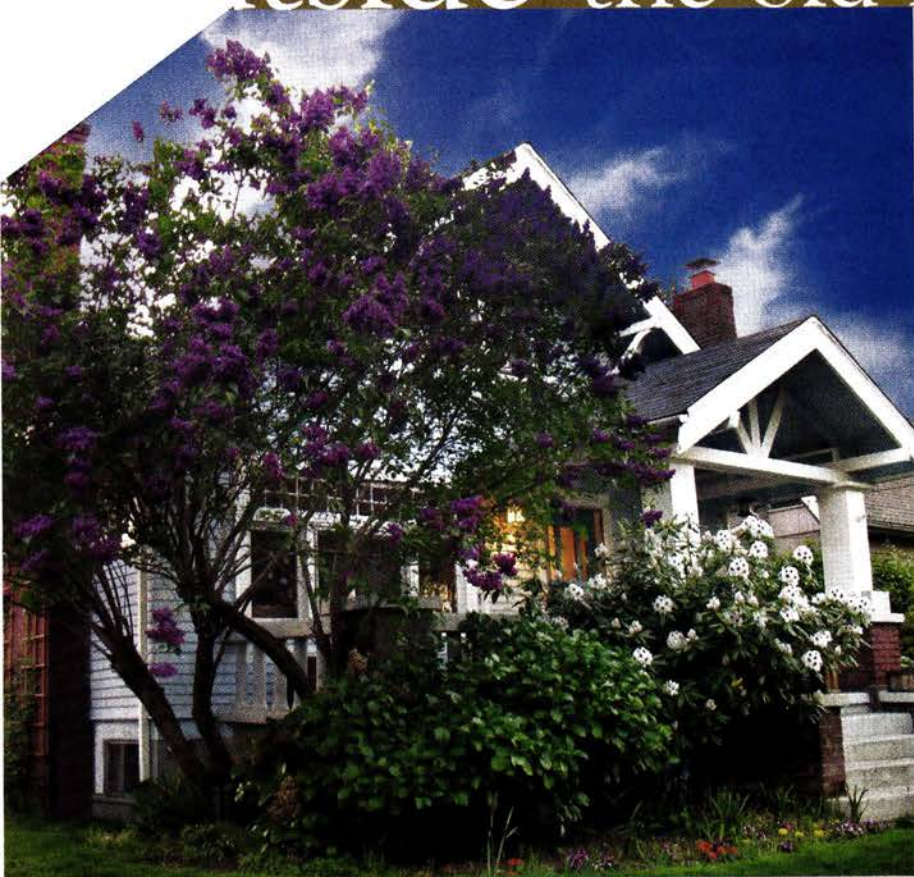
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Inside the old house



The Inherited Garden

Transform an overflowing flowerbed or a jam-packed patch of perennials into a landscape with show-stopping curb appeal.

By JO ANN GARDNER

You may be lucky enough to buy an old house with an established garden to match. That could become the starting point of a beautiful landscape, but the surviving plants might be a mixed blessing.

How do you deal with overgrown carpets of goutweed that defy pruning? What's to be done with crowded lilacs? And what about sprawling mats of iris that show promise but barely bud? Should you remove these plants and shrubs, or coax them into bloom by ruthless trimming, reducing, and dividing?

The best approach is not to be hasty. If you dig up the garden prematurely, you may unwittingly destroy bulbs or a desirable

heirloom plant that was less noticeable than its more vigorous neighbors. Be especially prudent when removing trees or shrubs, since they take years, even decades, to grow to maturity.

During the first season you spend with your inherited garden, observe what's growing from early spring through autumn, and record what you see. Draw a rough diagram of the garden, recording location, bloom time, color, and names (if possible) of all

the plants. In the fall, spread a thick, nutrient-rich organic mulch, such as rotted manure or compost, over the entire garden. This will help soften the soil and make weeding and dividing much easier come spring. If you're having difficulty deciding what to save and what to discard, take care not to throw out common plants, because they may prove useful somewhere else on your property. Robust survivors, like the common orange day-lily (*Hemerocallis fulva*) and hostas, for instance, have potential as ground covers where little else will grow. Cream-variegated goutweed (*Aegopodium podagraria* 'Variegatum') can light up a dark corner or make an eye-catching hedge if kept mown on both sides. Just as you lovingly restore and preserve the history of your old house, it's wise to take the same level of care to the land on which it sits. A thoughtful plan will help you to create a satisfying new garden from the remnants of the old.

tip

Try to envision your restored garden and its relation to the house.

Is the existing site the best place for it? Perhaps you've removed or added on a feature such as a porch, and you would prefer to plant closer to or farther from the house. If the garden is shaded with trees, consider cutting them down or thinning them out, or simply concentrate on growing shade plants beneath them. What seems like a drawback might be a budding opportunity.

LEFT TO RIGHT: The combination of a mature lilac tree and flowering shrubbery give this Portland, Oregon, home an established feel; In Buffalo, New York, a narrow yard is filled to the brim with shade-loving hostas—a perennial that's lush whether it's in bloom or not. *Narcissus* (daffodils) and tulips around a foundation are a welcome sign of spring.

Common inherited plants and how to nurture or nix them:



Botanical name: *Aegopodium podagraria* 'Varietgatum'

Common name: Goutweed

Sun exposure: ☀️

How to deal with it: Goutweed propagates quickly—12 roots will cover about 10 square feet in just two seasons. Mow down flowering stalks in early spring, and mow around the area to contain growth. To get rid of the less ornamental green goutweed, spray with Round-Up for three successive seasons.



Botanical name: *Hemerocallis fulva*

Common name: Ditch lily

Sun exposure: ☀️ ☀️

How to deal with it: Excellent for holding soil on steep banks. Pull apart large clumps of tubers, discarding old ones. Set selected tubers 18" to 24" apart, with their crowns 1" below the soil's surface.



Botanical name: *Hosta*

Common name: Hosta

Sun exposure: ☀️ ☀️ ☀️

How to deal with it: Dig up roots in late spring, as soon as new growth appears. Set divisions out, with the juncture of roots and leaves at ground level. Space them according to their expected full growth: 3' apart for large-leaved types and 8" to 12" apart for smaller-leaved types.



Botanical name: *Iris*

Common name: Iris

Sun exposure: ☀️

How to deal with it: Siberian iris and old yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) prefer moist soil; bearded iris needs well-drained, lighter soil. To divide clumps, dig up after flowering, shake off soil, and remove two-thirds of the foliage. Select two small rhizomes (surface roots) growing at an angle from the large one, cut them with a sharp knife, and reset them in soil 6" to 8" apart. Discard all hard parts.

outside the old house



Botanical name: *Narcissus*

Common name: Daffodil

Sun exposure: ☀️ ☀️

How to deal with it: If blooms are sparse, dig up and replant after leaves turn brown. Store bulbs in a dry place through the summer, then replant them in the fall. Planting depth should be two to three times the height of the bulb, allowing five large or seven to 10 small bulbs per square foot. Add a teaspoon of bone meal to each planting hole if desired.

Botanical name: *Paeonia*

Common name: Peony

Sun exposure: ☀️

How to deal with it: If old clumps are doing well, leave them alone. If you want more roots for a hedge or for another site, replant roots with three to five buds (or eyes) in rich, slightly acidic soil during fall. The planting hole should be deep enough to comfortably accommodate roots, but the tops of the buds should be no more than 2" below the surface. Add a handful of bone meal to the planting hole. Note: It may take three seasons for plants to produce abundant blooms.

Botanical name: *Phalaris arundinacea picta*

Common name: Ribbon grass

Sun exposure: ☀️ ☀️

How to deal with it: Ribbon grass has tenacious, wide-spreading roots. Space plants 6" to 12" apart to establish as a ground cover, or plant three or four roots in a large drainpipe or bucket sunk into the ground to control root spread. Cut down flowering stalks in summer.

LEFT TO RIGHT: TONI SMITH PHOTO; WWW.PERENNIALRESOURCE.COM PHOTOS

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Botanical name: *Phlox paniculata*

Common name: Border phlox

Sun exposure: ☀

How to deal with it: Old survivors are often harsh magenta shades, but some of these may be salvageable. Select the best colors, and discard any plants noticeably afflicted with whitish powdery mildew late in the season. Space plants 18" apart and divide clumps every four or five years. Cut back spent flowers before they form seeds to avoid seedlings of undesired color.



Botanical name: *Rosa*

Common name: Rose

Sun exposure: ☀

How to deal with it: Observe carefully any surviving roses to find out if they're worth keeping. To improve the condition of older, established roses, prune after they bloom; if the variety is a repeat bloomer, cut back hard in spring. When pruning, cut out all crossed, very old, or dead branches; any extra growth in the middle of the plant; and pencil-sized stems. If stems and branches are very thick and thorny, the rose may be undesirable understock, and should be discarded. The plant will thrive better in uncrowded conditions.



Botanical name: *Syringa vulgaris*

Common name: Common lilac

Sun exposure: ☀

How to deal with it: Almost any soil, except soggy, works well for lilacs. To revive overgrown specimens, follow this formula: The first season after they bloom, cut out one-third of the largest, oldest stems and thin out the small shoots; the second season, cut out another third; the third season, remove the last third. This will gradually reduce the shrub's height without sacrificing its blooming potential. 🌱

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By CLARE MARTIN

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Glamorama

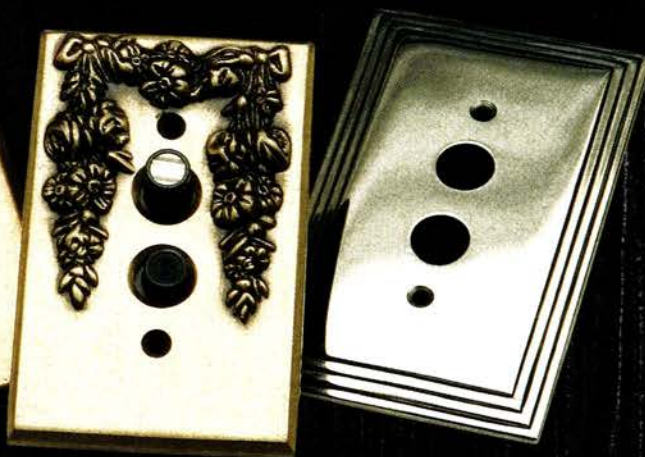
While *Sex and the City*'s Carrie Bradshaw might have made shoe-collecting cool again with her mania for Manolo Blahniks, she certainly didn't invent the trend, judging by Period's replica shoe ottoman, which is based on a piece from the 1930s. The embroidered silk interior of the tufted ottoman is ringed with 14 pockets designed to hold two weeks' worth of stilettos and slides. The shiny patent-leather exterior, embossed with a delicate fleur-de-lis design, exudes slinky Hollywood style, making it the perfect fit for Deco-era dressing rooms that call to mind cinema's Golden Age. Prices start at \$1,500 depending on fabric; \$1,750 as shown. Call (323) 461-6567, or visit www.periodcollection.com.



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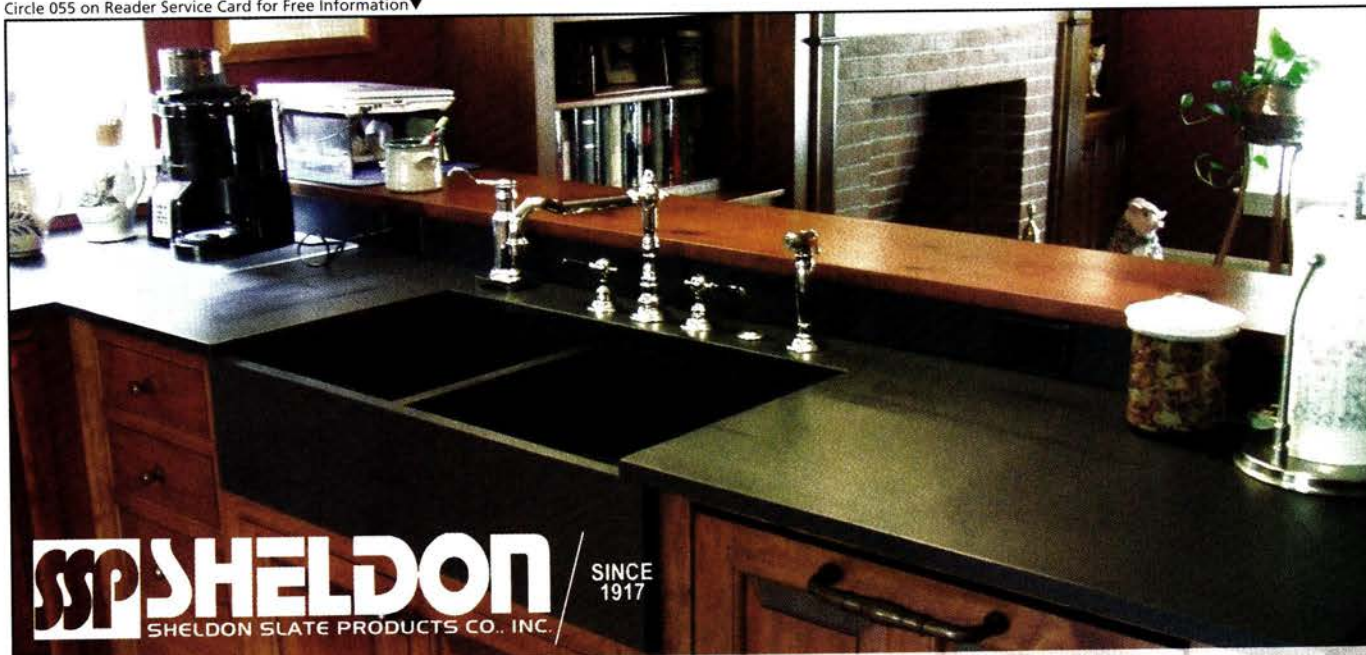
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Garages often present a puzzling conundrum for old-house owners: While most historic homes were built before the automobile became a necessity of American life, the fact remains that owning a car now is a necessity of American life—and therefore you need somewhere to stash it. When trying to match a garage to your existing home, it's the doors that can make or break the whole project. Summit Door's Vintage Collection offers wood doors in an array of classic carriage-



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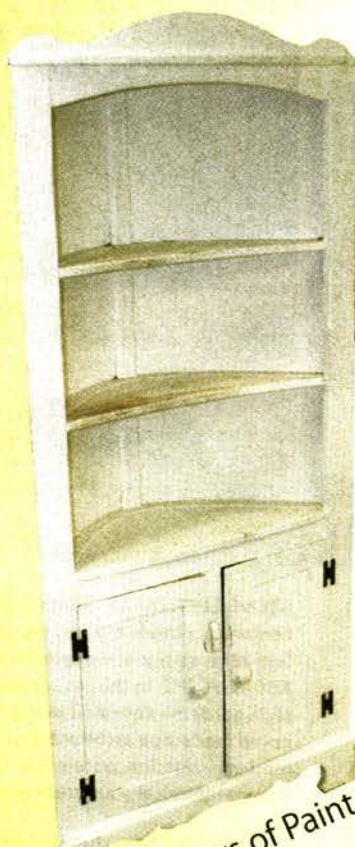


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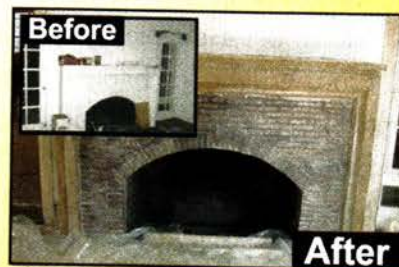


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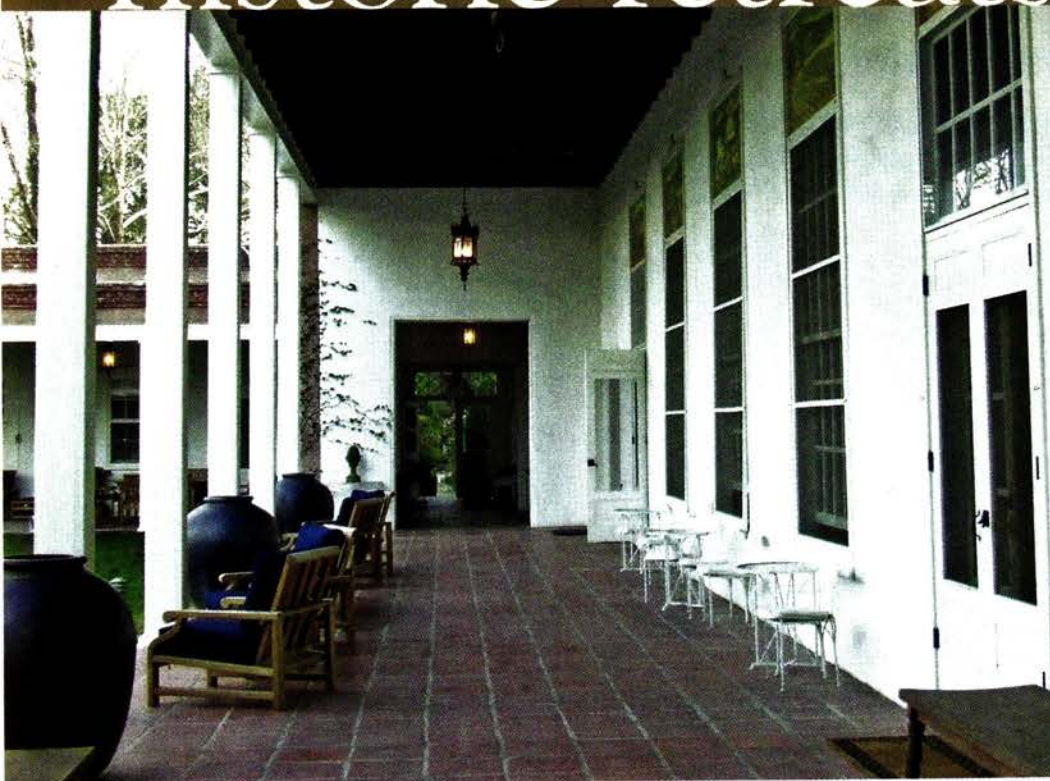
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historic retreats



Los Poblanos Inn

A 1934 inn designed by New Mexico's most famous architect offers a behind-the-scenes glimpse into the unique beauty of the state's regional architecture.

BY CLARE MARTIN

In the realm of early 20th century architecture, the name John Gaw Meem doesn't typically garner as much recognition as, say, Frank Lloyd Wright or Charles and Henry Greene. Unless you're in Meem's adopted home state of New Mexico, that is, where the architect is nothing less than a superstar.

That's because Meem is largely responsible for making New Mexico architecture what it is today—his proprietary Territorial Revival style, which blended traditional Southwest adobe construction with Neoclassical details, still dots much of the landscape in Albuquerque and Santa Fe. One of the best places to get a firsthand glimpse of

the architect's work is at the Los Poblanos Inn in Albuquerque, which is situated in a hacienda-style house that Meem designed in 1934 for political power couple Albert and Ruth Simms.

"There are only a handful of architects who are as important regionally as John Gaw Meem," notes Matt Rembe, the inn's executive director. "Here, you

ABOVE, LEFT: The La Quinta Cultural Center's *portale* is a grand example of John Gaw Meem's signature architectural feature. **ABOVE, RIGHT:** In the inn's formal Spanish-style garden—designed in the 1930s by noted landscape architect Rose Greely—the modern irrigation system was replaced with a more historically accurate one.

CLARE MARTIN PHOTOS

can live and breathe and experience the architect by sleeping on the property."

Not only does Los Poblanos offer a rare perspective on Meem's residential work (none of his other houses are open to the public), but it also provides easy access to one of his public buildings: the adjacent La Quinta Cultural Center. During their tenure in Albuquerque, the Simmses maintained the building as a public arts center that hosted rotating gallery exhibits and lectures from the likes of playwright Thornton Wilder and artist Rockwell Kent. Today, the building serves as a different sort of public gathering place, open for meetings, retreats, and special events.

"Both buildings are in the same style, but have two completely different functions and are two completely different pieces of architecture," says Matt.



And they've both been immaculately preserved. Meem put a priority on using local artists to embellish the buildings, and most of this original artwork remains in mint condition, from massive doors carved by Gustave Baumann to tin light fixtures by Robert Woodman (who also designed fixtures for many of Meem's other buildings, including the Zimmerman Library at the University of New Mexico). Also fully intact and well-preserved are the handsome beams and distinctive millwork (window casings, built-ins, even radiator covers) throughout both buildings, which Meem designed himself.

The pristine preservation is due in part to the fact that New Mexico's climate is particularly hospitable toward older structures. "We get very little rain and don't have a lot of humidity, so if buildings are built as well as these are, they can last for a long time," says Matt. Excessive sun can be detrimental to New Mexico's structures, but Meem solved that problem by using *portales*—long, wide porches that shade the building from sunlight—as a signature feature on all of his structures.

The other half of the preservation equation is the fact that, in its almost 75-year history, the property has been owned by just two families. The Rembes bought Los Poblanos in 1976 from heirs of the Simmses

The inn's main reception and gathering room features impressive original woodwork, including carved, built-in bookshelves and radiator covers.

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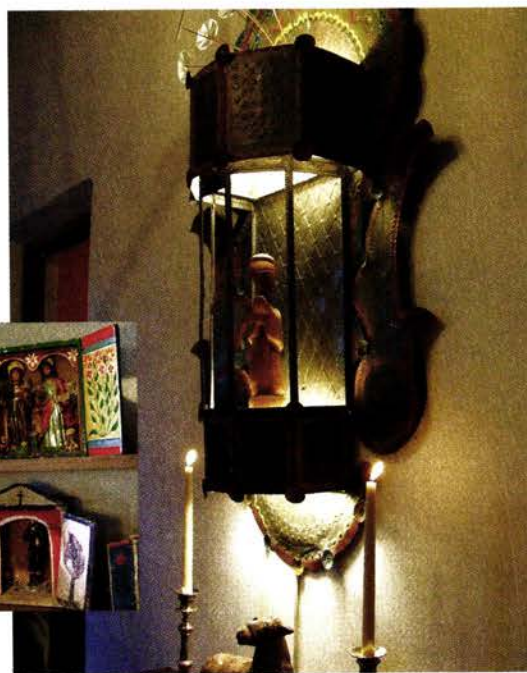
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historic retreats

"Only a handful of architects are as important regionally as John Gaw Meem."

and raised their family in the house. In the 1990s, when the La Quinta Cultural Center, which had been used by Matt's aunt and uncle as a private residence since the late '70s, went up for grabs when the couple moved to Ireland, Matt's parents knew they had to do something to save the building from encroaching development. The solution? Turn their home into a business. The 6,000-square-foot residence became the eight-room Los Poblanos Inn, the La Quinta Cultural Center was reopened to the public, and 15 acres of the Simmses' 25-acre estate were placed in a conservation easement for agricultural use. Today, the land supports lavender fields and an organic farm.

The updates remained true to the properties' original functions. In the 1930s the Simmses oversaw an experimental farm that supplied the city of Albuquerque with milk and cream while testing the viability of raising sugar beets. They also developed new varieties of roses and chrysanthemums in the Lord & Burnham greenhouse that still stands on the property. "The



Folk-art saints—including ones from New Mexico (above) and Bolivia (left)—are displayed in both buildings.

CLARE MARTIN PHOTOS

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Rates for rooms in the main inn range from \$155 to \$165 per night for guest rooms, and \$235 to \$265 for suites. Two multi-room *casitas* (guesthouses) located adjacent to the inn also are available for \$250 to \$500 per night.

Simmses were doing really progressive farming in their day," explains Matt, "so we thought, 'What is the equivalent today?' We're big believers in sustainable agriculture."

Agriculture is, in fact, essential to both the inn's past and its future. Motifs of San Isidro, the patron saint of farmers, can be seen throughout both buildings, most notably in a fresco by N.C. Wyeth-trained painter Peter Hurd along the portales of the La Quinta Cultural Center.

"These buildings wouldn't be here if it weren't for agriculture," Matt says. Now, he adds, agriculture is a key component in supporting the inn's preservation mission: The lavender grown here is used to make a variety of spa products sold both at the inn and in small shops around the country, while the organic farm supplies all of the food for the inn's meals and sustains a community-supported agriculture co-op. "If you build an infrastructure around the buildings to support a sustainable business," Matt says, "then preservation has a much higher chance of success." 🌱



CHARLOTTE PARSONS PHOTO

Built in an asymmetrical L shape, all of the inn's main rooms open up to a central courtyard, a design Meem intended to force visitors outside to enjoy the temperate New Mexico climate.

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anniversary interview

BY GORDON BOCK

Looking West



TAVO OLIMOS/POSITIVE IMAGE

One of the most original, influential, and cherished houses in America, the Gamble House in Pasadena, California, turns a century old this year. For thoughts on what's ahead for the Greene brothers' masterpiece, as well other historic buildings, we talked to Peyton Hall, FAIA, principal at Historic Resources Group in Hollywood, whose decade of involvement with the "ultimate bungalow" includes a recently completed conservation and restoration program.

GORDON BOCK: Did you learn anything new in your work on the Gamble House, or did it overturn any conventions about early 20th-century buildings?

PEYTON HALL: The Gamble House is one of the world's best-preserved architectural artifacts. Though the house is renowned for being aesthetically innovative, I was surprised to learn how advanced it is in engineering. While inspecting the basement foundation walls, we noticed ferrous rods anchoring the large mud sills to the brick wall: seismic bolts to hold down the building frame. After measuring them, our structural engineer determined that they were substantial and well-anchored in the wall, leaving less work for us to do in our seismic strengthening. So even in 1908, Greene and Greene designed for earthquake protection.

GB: Compared to the 1960s and '70s, historic preservation seems to be more conservative in terms of choosing the least aggressive approaches. Do you agree?

PH: Yes. For example, we purposely chose to call this the Gamble House Conservation Project because it integrates architects and conservators for the Historic Structure Report, construction documents, and construction. One of the primary issues was the condition of the wood shake siding and how to treat it. The shakes, which are now

very old, weathered, and sun-damaged, had originally been dipped in dark green stain, and then recoated in green paint sometime before 1940.

Our presumption was to reset the clock by taking the paint off. However, after input from architectural conservators, the project scientist, and the Getty Conservation Institute, we realized that maybe we shouldn't strip the shakes, because you can't easily take paint off without affecting the profile and the condition of the wood itself. If the paint is stable, maybe it's better to leave it in place.

Ultimately, we cleaned and consolidated the shakes with a clear preservative. It's a very light touch that brought back not only the aesthetic effects of the original dark green stain, but also allows the natural weathering pattern to read through. The house retains its time period, and it's a very re-treatable surface. This is a building we want to keep, so we should plan for the millennium, not just for a fix-up project in a 50-year maintenance cycle.

GB: On the West Coast, do you see increasing interest in adaptive reuse of large buildings?

PH: With Los Angeles in particular and West Coast cities in general, there has definitely been a sea change within the past decade. Before, most owners and developers taking on large commercial buildings preferred new construction rather than

recognizing the special appeal of historic downtowns. Then one day, I was pleasantly surprised to take a call from a client who had converted an office building in downtown Los Angeles into a very successful hotel; he asked if we knew of any other good historic properties. At the time, I was surprised to hear such a question. The fact is, there is a lucrative market in an urban center for interesting buildings, more so because of economic incentives, which include tax deductions for façade easement donation, property tax abatement for local landmarks, and a 20-percent federal investment tax credit.

GB: I think we've realized a reborn urban neighborhood is more than rehabbed living spaces. You need a place to buy milk before people will move in.

PH: Absolutely. A big milestone for Los Angeles occurred last year when a large grocery chain built the first downtown supermarket. It was a big achievement that was strongly supported by the city government and residents. Where you used to have to get in a car or commuter train and go out of downtown L.A. to buy groceries, you don't have to do that anymore. We're starting to have a community of people reusing old buildings for museums, entertainment, and all kinds of cultural facilities.

Historic movie theaters can be part of the equation, too. Many of these started as vaudeville houses and were the commercial anchor of a downtown. Though a historic single-screen theatre has a tricky time competing with a multiplex, when upgraded for a variety of presentations, it has a radiating economic influence, bringing coffee shops, restaurants, and nightclubs down the block. The whole street can benefit by investing in one building.

GB: One of the premises of materials conservation is that in the future we'll have better tools and techniques to

understand what we're looking at today. What tools would you love to have?

PH: I believe in technology, but there's no substitute for getting "up close and personal" with a building, be it a plaster wall, a wood floor, or a basement.

That said, there are new, non-destructive investigative techniques and tools, like infrared imaging scanners and small X-ray units, that hold great promise. Three-dimensional digital models of buildings can allow us to combine data in a new way to better understand, say, moisture movement. Technology that can read the condition of iron rebar in a wall without cutting and coring allows us to investigate better and conserve better. While we're investigating, we are often simultaneously documenting—providing a wonderful record of our built culture.

The success of new tools still depends on how creatively we use them. There's the science, but there's also the application. I like to say that we don't just preserve historic structures, we also design solutions. There's an enormous amount of problem-solving involved. Whether you need to replace a tongue-and-groove board in a dining room floor, conserve one of Frank Lloyd Wright's textile blocks, or insert life-safety systems in a historic structure, the conventional technology solutions can be ugly or invasive. Preservationists can take the lead in designing better solutions.

GB: Old-house folks already know that "the greenest building is the one that's already built," but as new construction continues to wave the green-building flag, will we have to remake the case on a wider scale?

PH: It's not just a marketing slogan. There's an objective component to that claim, and that's the concept of embodied energy. There's an enormous amount of energy embodied in every historic window, wood shingle, or foundation, and to replace that with a new building creates a deficit that's very hard to make up. Modest, subtle improvements can result in enormous

savings in operating energy cost. An old building that has thick masonry or earthen walls works very well in our Southern California environment—better than a 2x4 wall with batt insulation and building wrap.

I'm sure LEED and other standards will evolve to give more credit to historic buildings, but when I see a new building that gets rated LEED Platinum, it still sets my hair on end. When someone buys a historic house and lovingly coaxes out 100 more years of life, I think they deserve the same reward.

GB: Assuming the age of McMansions in far-flung developments is over, what might the future impact be on old houses and close-in historic neighborhoods?

PH: Higher energy costs and excessive commute times have made many urban centers more attractive, but rehabbing inner cities is a double-edged sword. It brings gentrification, which can raise property values and lead to the displacement of longtime residents and businesses. The recent housing boom is over, but the population will continue to grow and need houses, putting pressure on historic neighborhoods. We can't tear down historic houses, but when it comes to infill, I'm pretty open-minded about details like architectural style and materials. To me, these are less important than the streetscape and neighborhood. We should pay attention to street trees, yard setback, and the profile of the building. Whatever the design specifics of the house, we should make it as good as the old architecture around it. 🏠

For more information about Historic Resources Group and the Gamble House, visit www.historicla.com and www.gamblehouse.org.



ALISON SHEEHY PHOTO

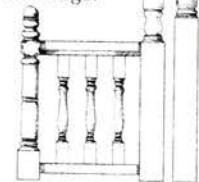
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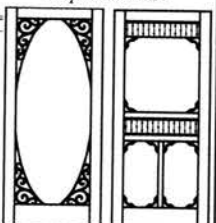
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A House *of Her Own*

THE RESTORATION OF A MASSACHUSETTS
COLONIAL REVIVAL-STYLE HOME SIGNALS THE
REBIRTH OF ITS OWNER AS WELL.

By REGINA COLE ♦ PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIC ROTH





CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Delicate light fixtures contrast with the home's bold proportions. Though it's not uncommon to find a grand, sweeping staircase in a Colonial Revival home, the earliest examples are akin to homeowner Charlotte Hart's stairs—boxed in, paneled, and supremely functional. Thin, turned balusters and a squared newel post are indicative of the period.



The first time interior designer Marisa Morra walked into Charlotte Hart's 1915 Colonial Revival house, she asked, "When did you move in?"

"That was in 2001," laughs Charlotte. "I'd already lived here for about 30 years."

"It didn't look at all lived-in," Marisa recalls. "The architecture was beautiful, but there were boxes in the corners. I assumed that she had recently bought the house and was in the process of moving."

In fact, Charlotte and her husband had bought the handsome red-brick structure, located on a corner lot in a well-established Newton, Massachusetts, neighborhood, when they were first married. They had two children and two

demanding careers, and the strain caught up with them.

"When it came to the house, we could never agree on the best course of action when things needed to be done," Charlotte says. "For instance, the ceiling leaked, but trying to decide where to start or who to call was so stressful, we never got it fixed. So the ceilings had stains, the wallpaper peeled, and we just let it go."

Eventually the marriage ended, but Charlotte's enthusiasm to take ownership of her home's restoration began anew. "I'd always liked the house, but I'd never done anything to make the rooms comfortable or pretty. I didn't even know what my tastes were, much less how to create an interior that would express them."

Today the interior of the 4,500-square-

foot home is a jewel box of Colonial Revival delicacy and refinement. The decor mirrors Charlotte's fondness for a palette of soft blue, rose, and ivory hues; antique furniture; Oriental rugs; and superb late-19th century lighting.

Painting as Inspiration

The process of turning a drab, neglected domicile into a home reflecting Charlotte's yet-to-be-discovered style began with an oil painting.

"Soon after my divorce, I visited a friend who worked in a Boston gallery," she remembers. "I was drawn to a small floral painting that dates to the turn of the 20th century. It cost more than I had ever spent on anything; certainly more money than I ever spent on myself. But I

bought that painting, and I hung it in my bedroom. Every day it reminds me that I can have beauty in my life.”

Bringing beauty to the entire house, however, was a bit more daunting. Charlotte originally hired an interior designer, who proceeded to faux-finish the front hall into a Tuscan fantasia.

“I knew I didn’t like it right away,” she laments.

Charlotte’s gallery-owner friend rushed to her rescue. She referred Charlotte to Marisa Morra, whose company, Artistic and Historic Interiors, specializes in interior design for period homes.

“Old houses are exciting to design, because they inform you what works by virtue of the details that already exist,” Marisa says. “You just need to ‘read’ the architecture, and you’ll get it right.”

Charlotte Hart’s house, she discovered, was a Neoclassic gem with a bad facelift.

“I walked in and saw that Tuscan stucco: It was orange—with squiggles.” Marisa shudders. “There was white leather furniture, tacky modern light fixtures...it was awful. Charlotte knew it was wrong, but not *why* it was wrong. But once I explained the historical and architectural background of her house, she got it.”



LEFT: Crisp, white fixtures against a pale-aqua backdrop give the bathroom a cool, relaxing atmosphere. **TOP:** The sitting room’s triple Palladian windows nod to the elegance of the Federal style while flooding the space with natural light. **ABOVE:** The home’s original kitchen was a series of small, inefficient rooms, but great care was taken to update the space in an organized yet historically sensitive manner. The custom-crafted cabinetry’s design was patterned after originals found in the butler’s pantry.





TOP: The interior design process began in Charlotte's dining room, because she already had furnishings appropriate for the space; sapphire-blue wallpaper was inspired by the tones in the Persian rug. **BOTTOM:** The wainscoting, crown molding, and handsome radiator cover help dress up the room for formal dinner parties.

History Leads the Way

Colonial Revival was a popular building style in early 20th-century New England. Just prior to World War I, Colonial Revival houses and furnishings were shorthand for conventional good taste and, for immigrants, American assimilation. Charlotte's home, which is a high-style Colonial Revival, also boasts the hipped roof and triple Palladian windows of the earlier Federal style.

Marisa says, "We first concentrated our efforts on the dining room, because Charlotte had the right table, chairs, sideboard and hutch. When we chose wallpaper and a chair fabric, there was a truly ugly, fluffy-pile, 1960s Oriental rug (bought by her husband) that Charlotte said we had to work around. I could tell that she hated it.

"After trying to work with it for a bit," she continues, "I said, 'If we design the space around a rug you despise, we'll have

a room you hate, too. If you give yourself permission to put something you love in there, everything that comes after will be easy.' For Charlotte, it was a breakthrough. She gave the rug to one of her kids, and we bought the lovely Persian that dictated the deep-blue wallpaper. Now the room is splendid!"

"At first, the process was overwhelming," Charlotte admits. "But Marisa walked me through until I felt more confident. When I couldn't visualize how something would look, she'd take me to another client's home to show me a particular wallpaper or color *in situ*."

Three years of working with Marisa finally gave Charlotte the confidence to tackle the kitchen. Through the years, the original kitchen had become an inefficient assemblage of small rooms. Marisa designed a bright, functional kitchen that features easy entry from the driveway and handsome new appli-



ances. The new cabinets are patterned after originals in the adjacent butler's pantry. A new window seat brings light into the room while providing comfortable gathering space around an antique Federal pedestal table.

"The house is in a historic district, so the plans had to go before the historic district commission," Marisa explains. "They passed easily, because we didn't change the foundation; the only structural change was to replace an existing window with one that's cantilevered, so it was done in a historically sensitive way."

Charlotte is only the house's third owner. In 1915, it was built by a local businessman as a wedding gift for his wife. After the death of two spinster daughters who lived here their whole lives, the house was occupied by another owner for 15 years before it fell into Charlotte's hands.

"Though he was in the fuel oil business," Charlotte says, "I think the original

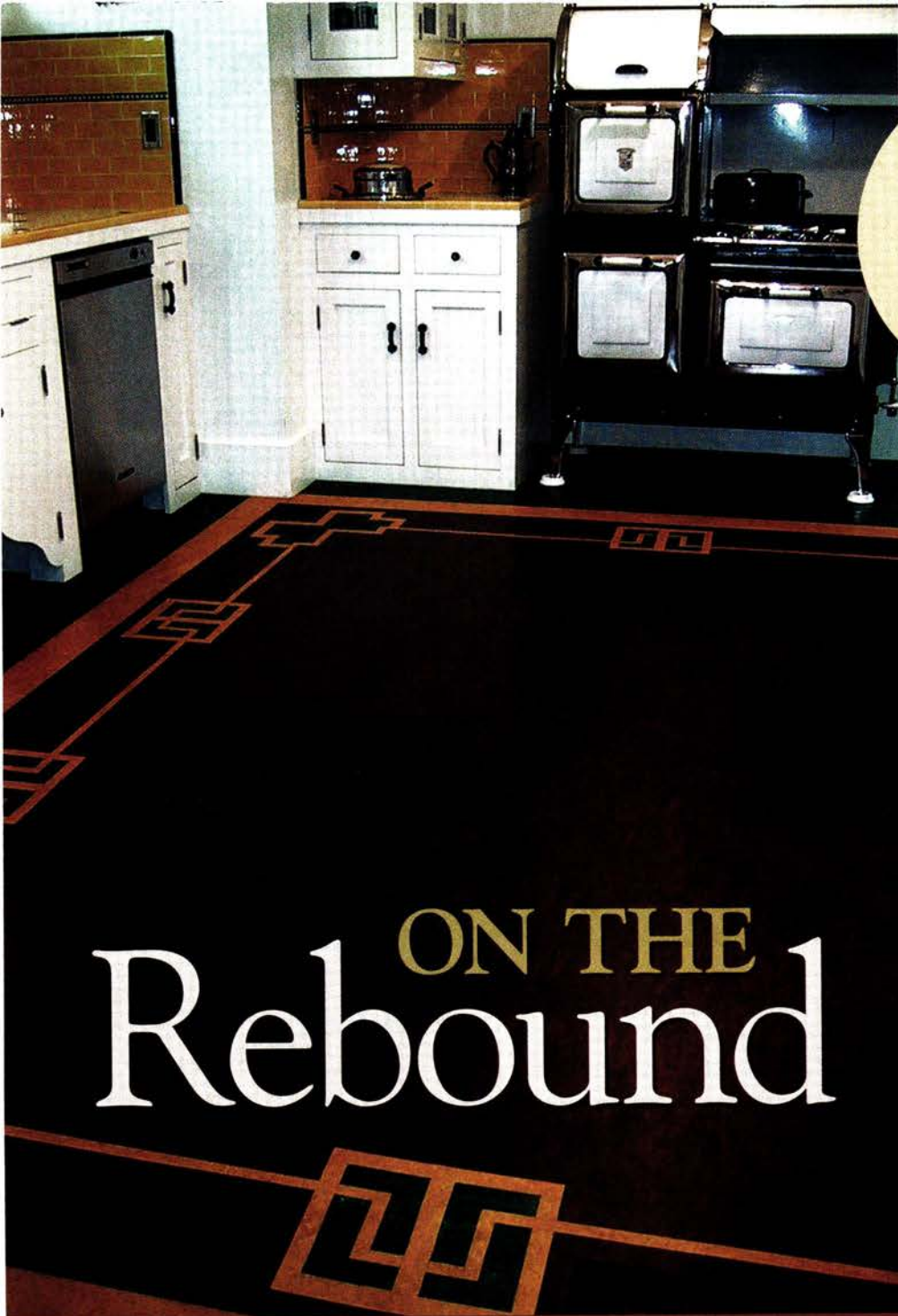
owner built an early version of a passive-solar house. The sun comes into every room as the day progresses, starting with the kitchen, which is a glorious, bright place to be in the mornings. By the later afternoon, it has moved around to the living room."

"Old-house rooms were designed more specifically," Marisa explains. "Morning rooms and parlors were generally lighter, whereas libraries and evening rooms were often darker. The enfiladed rooms determined consistent style and color throughout. For Charlotte, however, allowing herself to have things she found beautiful and that really resonated with her was the key to getting this house to look the way it does now."

Charlotte Hart's life has expanded; she sails, dives in the Caribbean, and speaks with joy about life in her beautiful home. "I love every room. Every part of this house makes me feel good." 🐾



TOP: As the third custodian of this exceptional house, Charlotte has taken painstaking care to get every detail right—inside and out. **BOTTOM:** On the back side of the house, an arbor above the Palladian windows provides a focal point for her well-manicured and very colorful garden.



ON THE Rebound

RESILIENT FLOORING
IS A HISTORICALLY ACCURATE WAY
TO GET GREEN UNDERFOOT IN YOUR
OLD-HOUSE RESTORATION, AND IT'S
BACK IN STYLE AGAIN.

By DEMETRA APOSPOROS

G

Germs. They're the reason resilient flooring became popular near the turn of the 20th century. The Victorian era was coming to an end, and new theories about germs were gaining ground, causing homeowners to start looking for easy-to-clean surfaces that wouldn't let those pesky microorganisms linger inside their houses. Marketing materials from the time made the case for removing the carpeting so popular in Victorian decorating schemes and replacing it with hard-surface flooring. "An old-fashioned floor covered with carpet closely tacked down around the edges is a very unsanitary thing," warned a 1919 brochure promoting oak flooring. "It catches dust and germs which penetrate under the carpet and can not be removed by sweeping...every footfall lets loose a little cloud to poison the air we breathe." While hardwood flooring was one solution for the times, resilient flooring materials like linoleum, cork, and rubber had the additional selling points of being cheaper to install and easy to maintain, and were being marketed by a new wave of companies.

Today, cost, authenticity, and maintenance are just some of the considerations that go into restoring old-house flooring. Another big factor for many homeowners is a product's environmental impact, and that's an area where today's resilient flooring also scores well. Of course, resilient flooring is appealing in other ways,

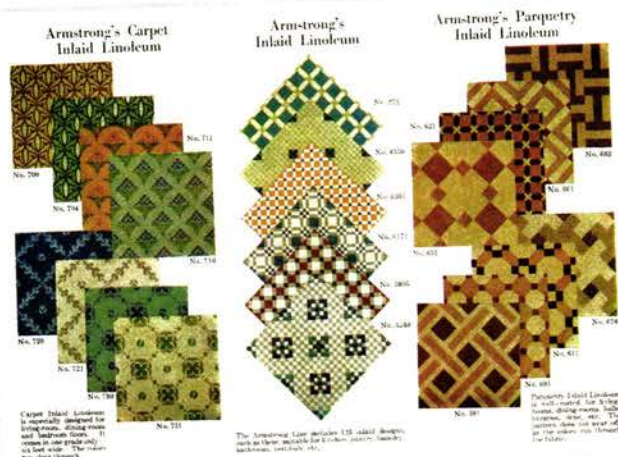
too—it's easy on the feet, offering a little bounce to your steps around the kitchen, and provides sound-proofing qualities to boot.

Linoleum is a timeless, durable fit for old-house kitchens.



DESIGN AND INSTALLATION BY LAURIE CROGAN

INSET: ARMSTRONG ARCHIVES



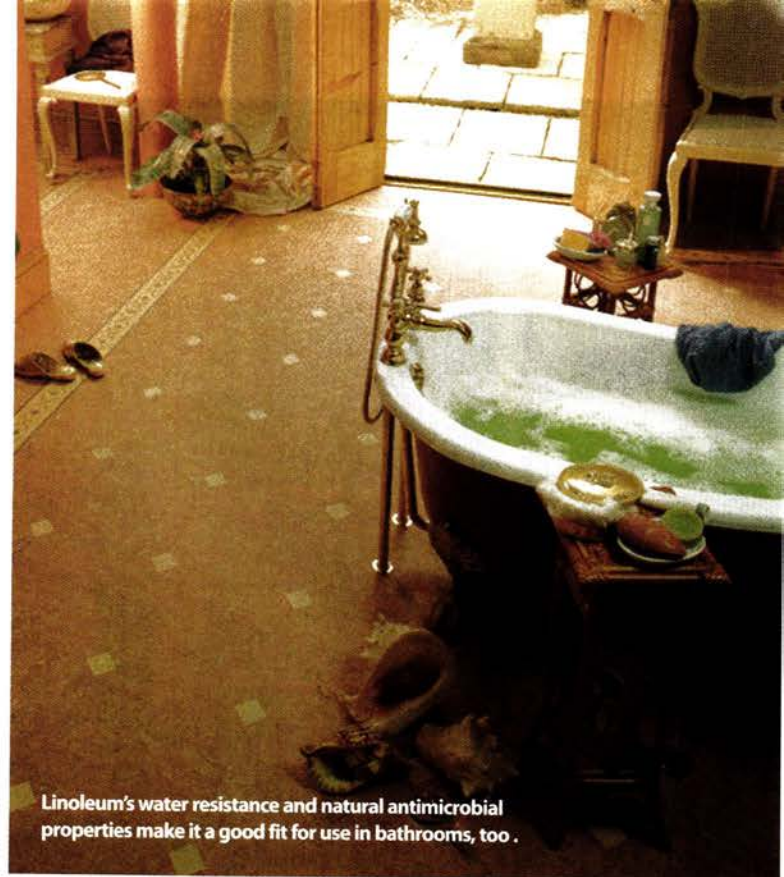
A circa-1930 advertisement from Armstrong shows a sampling of the surprising variety of linoleum patterns available off the shelf at the time.

Linoleum

Linoleum was invented by Frederick Walton, an Englishman who began experimenting with the rubbery skin that formed on an old can of oil paint, and eventually perfected the formula for the durable floor covering, which draws its name from the Latin words for two of its ingredients, flax (linum) and oil (oleum). Walton opened a linoleum manufacturing facility near London in 1864, and within a decade, the product had taken off in Europe and inspired copycats. "Linoleum may have been the first product to become a generic term, followed later by such favorites as Kleenex, Jell-O, and escalator," writes Jane Powell in her 2003 book, *Linoleum*. By the early 1900s, linoleum's popularity had jumped the pond, and manufacturing giants like Armstrong were marketing it for all rooms of the house. It proved particularly popular in kitchens and bathrooms because it held up to wear and tear, was water-resistant, and bore natural antimicrobial qualities from the linseed oil used in its manufacture. The material was so durable, in fact, that it was used for a time as the standard flooring on U.S. warships. A 1935 Congoleum-Nairn brochure touted their Sealex Battleship linoleum as being "manufactured to comply in every respect with the exacting requirements of the U.S. Government."

Early linoleum came in solids, multicolored designs resembling granite and marble (usually bearing names like Marbelle), and Jaspé, which had striated lines. It didn't take long, though, for everything from geometrics, florals, and splatters to faux ceramic tile, Persian rugs, wood, and brickwork to become available. During the 1930s, elaborate inlaid patterns became popular, which were created by cutting different colors of linoleum and inserting them, like puzzle pieces, into a solid-colored field. These included borders (Greek key, laurel leaf, and ribbon swirls, for example) and small stand-alone designs placed at room corners, or large ones in the center of the kitchen or bathroom for dramatic effect. At the

Today, you can still find linoleum tiles in marble patterns.



Linoleum's water resistance and natural antimicrobial properties make it a good fit for use in bathrooms, too.

time, a large selection of inlays was available (via a special manufacturing process) straight from the factory.

Though we don't have the same variety of designs available off the shelf today, you can still create inlays on sheet flooring with a little schooling. One California artist, Laurie Crogan, has been quite successful at reviving the art of elaborate, inlaid custom linoleum floors. Regardless of the design on your linoleum floor, they're now easier to care for than ever before. "Today's linoleum floors come with a factory-applied high-performance coating that means you don't have to do the maintenance—waxing and stripping—of years past," says Bill Freeman, a consultant to the Resilient Floor Covering Institute. Linoleum is—and always has been—made from raw ingredients that are renewable, so it's an environmentally friendly product, which is also a big selling point. "The basic materials from which linoleum is made—linseed oils, dessicants, resins, wood flour, powdered cork, ground limestone, pigments, and jute fabric (burlap)—are all renewable, and obtained without major environmental impacts," Powell notes in her book.

What's the Score?

The FloorScore tests and certifies flooring materials for compliance with indoor air quality emission requirements adopted in the state of California. Products with the FloorScore seal have passed a third-party certification process (conducted by Scientific Certification Systems), and are recognized as contributing to good, healthy indoor air quality. Much of today's resilient flooring passes the test.





Cork can be installed in a variety of interesting patterns, as this dining room floor with diamond accents and a contrasting border shows.

EXPANCO RESILIENT FLOORING



THE THREE NATURAL SHADES OF CORK TILE ALLOW THE CREATION OF BEAUTIFUL FLOORS.



A 1930s advertising booklet from Johnson Cork touted the “three natural shades of cork” used in their flooring, arranged here to form an interesting pattern. Cork floors resemble wood (at right), but with a more intricate graining pattern.

Cork

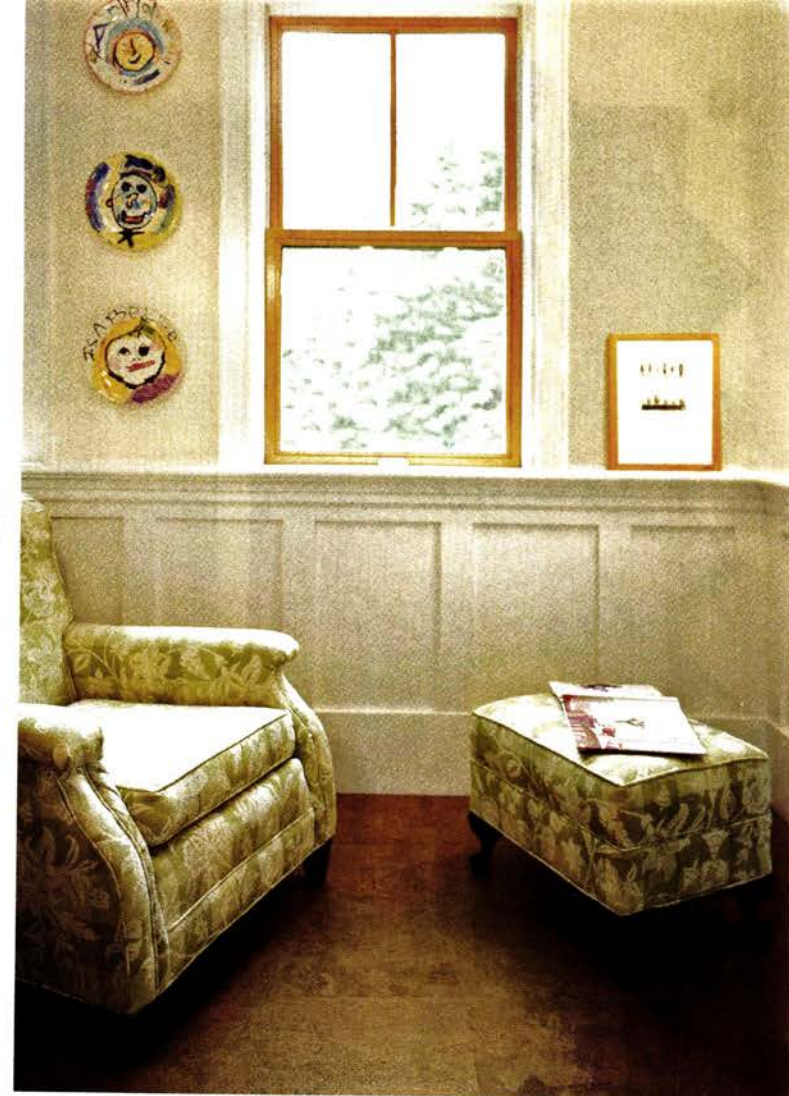
While cork flooring was offered at the beginning of the 20th century, it hit its residential apex during the 1930s, when great modernist architects—like Richard Neutra and Walter Gropius—used it in their own houses. Throughout that decade, it was marketed as a terrific product for residential use. A 1930 Armstrong Cork brochure titled “Cork, Its Origins and Uses” put it this way: “(Cork) is coming to be more and more used...in private homes every year, for it has all the necessary beauty and service features that the modern home requires, plus a degree of comfort and warmth that few other floors possess.” The same brochure hawked cork tiles in three different colors—chocolate brown, honey amber, and pale flax—natural shades that, the brochure explained, resulted from different baking times.

Warm, earthy colors have long been part of cork flooring’s appeal, as has the fact that it has always been made of renewable materials. Pure cork, baked in molds under pressure, was the entire formula in the 1930s, and while today’s process may involve some added materials, it continues to be a natural, sustainable product, harvested from the regenerating bark of cork trees. Cork can mimic wood floor installations, but with more interesting graining patterns. Another bonus unique to cork is its warmth—step on it in bare feet, and it won’t shock your feet like cold stone; in addition to its bounce, it always feels slightly warm to the touch.

Cork has a long history of being the flooring of choice for decades in public buildings like schools, museums, and churches

IT’S A SNAP

Installing resilient flooring has gotten a lot easier. Today, instead of having to glue down individual sheets or tiles of linoleum, cork, or rubber, all are available as individual tiles that snap together, for a fool-proof, fume-free installation handy homeowners can do themselves.



due to its sound-deadening qualities. This characteristic made it popular to use in the dens of private houses in the 1940s and ’50s. “In terms of acoustical qualities, cork rates the highest—it’s very quiet,” says Freeman. “Back in the 1950s, one of the biggest marketplaces for cork was in college libraries.” But, he adds, you want to be careful of where you install it, because of the three historical resilient flooring types, cork is the least impervious to moisture. When used in areas where water and dirt will get tracked across it continually—say the front entryway of a public building—it won’t hold up as well as installations of rubber and linoleum. Today, however, you can buy cork mosaic floors—created from recycled wine corks and resembling pennyround tiles—which can be sealed upon installation and which are marketed as being great for use in wet areas like saunas, showers, and pool surrounds.

Cork tiles now come in a slew of colors and patterns.





EXPANNO RESILIENT FLOORING

Modern rubber tiles are available in a wide range of colors.

Weighing In

An important thing to remember about all types of resilient flooring is that they have some spring—and this also means that heavy furniture or chairs with small, sharp feet can indent their surfaces. While most of these marks will bounce back eventually (the floors are resilient, remember), it's best to use floor protectors. Wool felt glides and floor pads are among the options available, and if your furniture has casters, make sure they are as wide as possible (double casters work, too) to help distribute the weight.



Like linoleum, rubber sheet flooring can also be inlaid with interesting designs—such as the border and corner accents shown on this custom installation.

DESIGN AND INSTALLATION BY LAURIE CROGAN

Asbestos Update

You've probably heard the warnings that removing some old floors can pose a health risk because of asbestos, which was often used in the manufacture of flooring materials and sometimes in their backings and adhesives, too. For this reason, old-house resilient floors should be removed with care, because asbestos in them can become friable and airborne during the process. For complete guidelines on how to safely remove old floor coverings, see *Recommended Work Practices for the Removal of Resilient Floor Coverings*, which can be downloaded for free on the Resilient Floor Covering Institute's web site at www.rfci.com.

Rubber

The story of rubber flooring begins in 1894, when the famed Philadelphia architect Frank Furness patented a system of interlocking 2x2 rubber floor tiles. Furness designed them for use in high-traffic train stations (places like his later masterpiece, the Amtrak station in Wilmington, Delaware), but they also saw some use in high-end houses of the day, one example being Washington, D.C.'s Christian Heurich Mansion (1894). The earliest rubber floor installations consisted of tiles that hooked together like oversized puzzle pieces.

By the 1930s, the material had evolved into square tiles, and was being heavily marketed for use in private homes. A circa-1930s Stedman Rubber Flooring Company brochure called "Modern Floors

for Modern Homes" declared it, "original and unique. From the day it is installed, all who come into contact with the floor are conscious of its restful, resilient comfort under foot, its colorful appeal to the eye, and its solidarity of structure which indicates the permanence of the material." The same brochure highlighted tiles in 30 different colors, most resembling granite or marble, which were available in 10 different sizes, from 3x3 to 12x18.

While rubber was probably the least traditionally popular of the three resilient flooring materials, a great effort was made to position it as a manly material in early advertising campaigns. "The man of the house must not have to worry about tracking in mud, dropping his golf clubs in the corner, or an occasional live ash from a pipe or cigarette," noted the same Stedman brochure. "But he does want a floor to be good-looking, and to stay good-looking without having to do much about it. So Stedman Reinforced Rubber tile is a natural choice because it resists dents, mars, and burns, never wears out, and is easily taken care of."

Rubber flooring today, of course, is considered so easy to maintain that it is commonly used commercially. It is available in a wealth of colors, and can be purchased in versions made from either recycled materials, or raw rubber.

A 1930s-era Stedman Products Company ad from *Country Life* magazine boasted rubber tiles as "the modern material for floors."



An original rubber kitchen floor in Washington, D.C.'s Anderson House, built in 1905, shows how early tiles fit together like pieces of a puzzle.

SUPPLIERS' LIST:

CORK DuroDesign Flooring Inc.
www.duro-design.com
(888) 528-8518

Expanko Resilient Flooring
www.expanko.com
(800) 345-6202

We Cork
www.wecork.com
(800) 666-2675

LINOLEUM Armstrong
www.armstrong.com
(717) 397-0611

Forbo
www.forboflooringna.com
(866) 627-6653

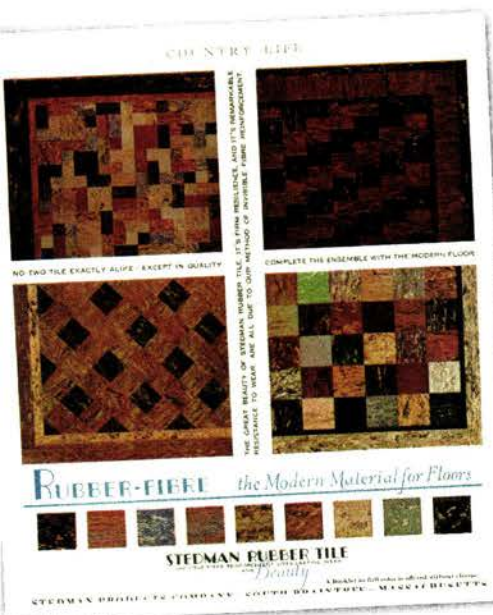
Tarkett
www.tarkett.com
(800) 367-8275

RUBBER Flexco
www.flexcofloors.com
(800) 633-3151

Johnsonite Rubber Flooring
www.johnsonite.com
(800) 899-8916

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES Linoleum City
www.linoleumcity.com
(323) 469-0063

Second Hand Rose
(vintage linoleum)
www.secondhandrose.com
(212) 393-9002





Wraparound STORAGE

Need more storage space in your old house? Create it by adding knee walls to an unfinished attic.

BY MARK CLEMENT ♦ PHOTOS BY THERESA COLEMAN

I can tell I've officially joined the old-house owners' club because I need more storage space than my circa-1900 Foursquare provides. The good news? I was able to create substantive storage space by thoughtfully renovating my unfinished walk-up attic. The project rescued a husk of a space, remained true to the room's original lines, and created living and storage areas my family uses and appreciates every day.

The graceful hip roof capping my home created a wide-open attic that was both unfinished and underutilized. To make the most of it, I installed paneled knee walls around the attic's perimeter, closing off a storage area and finishing the room at the same time. Since doors actually make up the bulk of the walls, my wife, Theresa, and I can readily access our stuff—everything from printer paper to holiday decorations

to that boogie board I always forget to bring to the beach—without having to call in a team of movers.

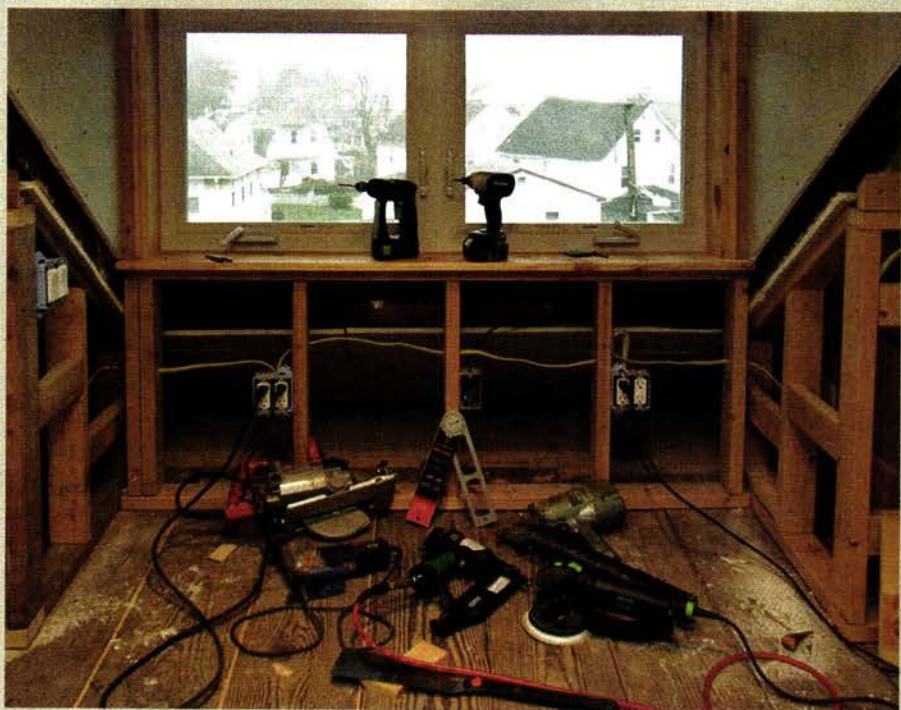
Design Decisions

When we dreamed up the scheme for our knee walls, our overarching design theme was “make it look like it grew there.” In an effort to create a seamless fit, we intentionally used materials and techniques that

would have been available to the carpenters who built our house. Our components were simple: 2x4 framed walls, 1x6 knotty-pine tongue-and-groove paneling, and steel hardware.

We knew the knee-wall closets had to be sized properly in order to look right, so we used the room as our guide. A wall 50" out from the house's top plate (where the rafters hit the wall) rendered a graceful line around the room. Combined with the rafters' pitch, it left us with a 42"-tall wall plane on the room side.

Our design also called for the wall's top edge to be notched around the bottom cords of our rafters. Getting this to work required some advanced carpentry and lots of tools.



LEFT: A job like this requires careful planning and lots of tools. Here, the wall's frames, which jog beneath the windows, are ready to be enclosed.

tip To Notch, or Not to Notch

We notched our walls around the bottom rafter cords, but an easier technique (requiring less advanced carpentry skills) is to dead-end the wall at the rafters. Just bring a return down from the angled plane of the ceiling—a piece of drywall, for example—so it meets the bottom of the rafters, leaving a straight line. You'd then run your tongue-and-groove planks up to this line and cover the gap with a piece of trim.



Fitting the tongue-and-groove paneling around the rafters requires making angled cuts in three planes. Start by transferring rafter measurements to panel stock using a 7" bevel square.



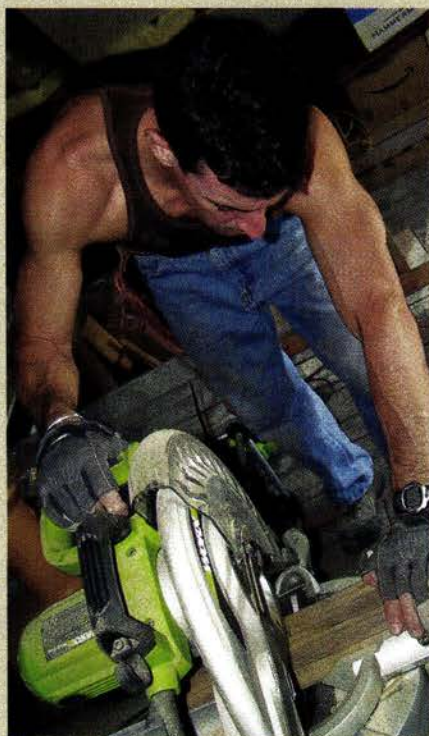
A jigsaw makes the first cut into the tongue-and-groove—but other saws, like a Japanese-style pull saw and a miter saw, can come in handy, too.



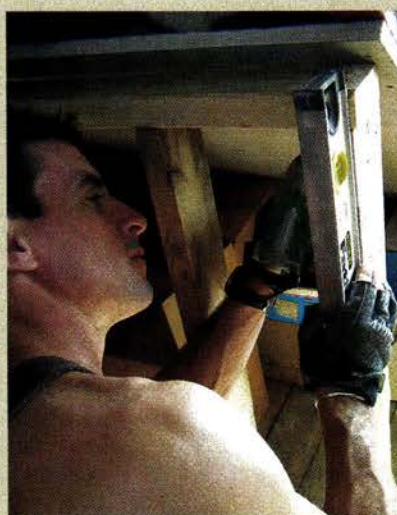
The finished piece fits snugly around the rafter. Mapping out the notch on a scrap first, then copying it on the finished piece, ensures a perfect fit.

tip Finding the Angle

For notching around the common rafters, I used my 7" bevel square to transfer measurements from the rafter to panel stock. The hip rafter intersects the first piece of tongue-and-groove in three planes of space—up, across, and through—and each needs an angle cut. The best way to get accurate cuts is to map out the notch on a scrap, then copy it on the finished piece. At the cut bench, I used a series of saws—miter saw, dual-bevel jigsaw, and Japanese-style pull saw—to put steel on wood at various angles.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: A miter saw cuts studs quickly and accurately (use eye protection when sawing); good layout requires measuring the framing elements carefully, which helps ensure seamless fits throughout the project; plumb studs are very important—a three-foot level leaves little room for error. **BELOW:** A sketch shows key layout measurements.



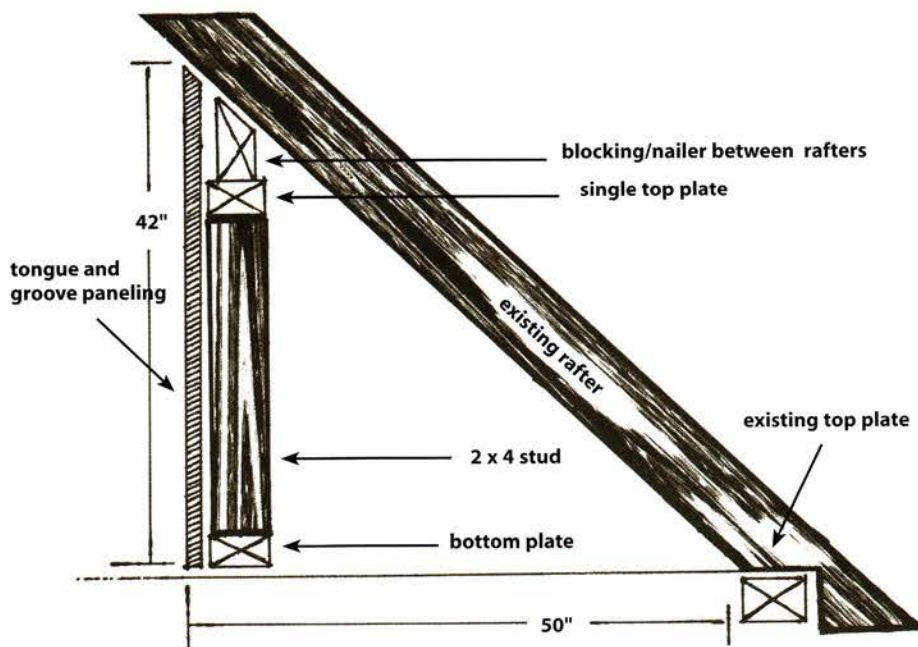
Any successful carpentry project starts with a good layout, and this requires plans in three dimensions. To locate walls, measure out from the top plate in each corner of the room; the intersecting lines create a crosshair. From the crosshair, extend each line out using a framing square. Next, take a 4' level and plumb up to the first common rafter on each side of the hip rafters; this is the wall-height location. After doing this in each corner, snap chalk lines on the floor and across the bottoms of the rafters to see where the walls and floors should intersect.

Once floor lines are snapped, mark off the door locations. My door openings are each about 42" wide and 36" high, and evenly spaced in the finished field of the wall. Once I marked those locations, the fun part—framing the walls—could begin. Since framing pieces are short, you can cut studs quickly and accurately with a miter saw.

With lines snapped and doors located, you can now transfer those marks to your wall's top and bottom plates. I cut the plates to length and transferred my layout marks from the floor plate. Next, I laid out studs on the plate. Finally, I transferred the marks from one plate to another with a speed square. Because flush doors don't have a 1-by door jamb like standard doors, use the studs as jambs instead. Be careful to keep the studs plumb—and openings square—upon installation; framing and trim are practically one and the same on a project like this. Start running paneling in the corner and work out from there. Make sure the first piece you install is dead-plumb, because every other piece registers off of it.

Door Assembly

I built and installed the doors as I installed the paneling. Each door will be four to five boards, depending on where it falls among the field of tongue-and-groove boards. You want to use the groove of one board to overlay the tongue of the next where each door slab meets, so using a full board on each of these pieces is best. Each door assembly's



NATHAN WINTER ILLUSTRATION

tip

Insulation and Air Flow

Before we began, we insulated and drywalled the rafters behind the knee walls. If you do the same, before stuffing rafter bays with insulation, be sure to install baffles—air channels—against the roof deck. This keeps an air channel open, allows the roof to breathe, and helps prevent mold and rot from hampering your roofing system.

height will likely vary slightly, because if your old house is like mine, the floor makes a rumpled bath towel look flat.

To assemble the doors, you'll need to create door blanks (the basic door shape). First, lay out each blank's overall width. Next, rip one side of the groove off, then squeeze subsequent boards onto the tongue of the first board. You'll probably need to rip the hinge-side board to width.

Cut top and bottom rails for each door blank out of 1x4. Make them 2" shorter than the door width.

Square a line across the first board, then dab some construction adhesive and place the rail (1x4) on the line. Next, fasten it in place with 1/4" narrow crown staples. (You could use screws, but staples make very fast work of the job and have great holding power.) Then weave in the subsequent boards, squeezing them tight to the first board and fastening. Repeat for the top rail.

Take the entire blank to the slide compound miter saw and square-cut one end; then measure for the finished height and square cut the other. I made one cut, flipped the blank over, registering the blade on what I just cut, and finished the job. Note: Cutting this width requires two passes with the saw; to be safe, you should have a cut table. (I can't get by without a cut station, which I made in my shop for just a few bucks.) Finally, install the door blanks using steel strap hinges and a steel pull. Leave about 1/8" at the jamb to give the door room to travel.



Square a line, dab some construction adhesive, and place the 1x4 rail (rails should be 2" shorter than door width) on the line.



Fasten the rail onto the first board using 1/4" narrow crown staples, then weave subsequent boards in, fastening as you go.



Take the blank to the slide compound miter saw and square cut one end. Then measure for finished height and cut the other end.



Install the door blanks using steel strap hinges, leaving about 1/8" gap at the jamb to allow room for the door to travel.

Finishing Touches


The final carpentry step is installing the base molding (I used 1x4 knotty pine), then wiping the boards down with a couple of coats of boiled linseed oil (be sure to open the windows). Oil brings out the grain and patina in the wood like nothing else, aging the classic pine walls and helping them feel like they grew with the room. 🏠

Mark Clement is working on his century-old house near Philadelphia, and is the author of *The Carpenter's Notebook*.

tip

Easing Access

While our new storage area has lots of doors, we found we sometimes needed that thing stored at the very back. So we built wheeled carts and put all of our stuff on them. Now we simply wheel a cart out of the way to reach the storage area's dark recesses.

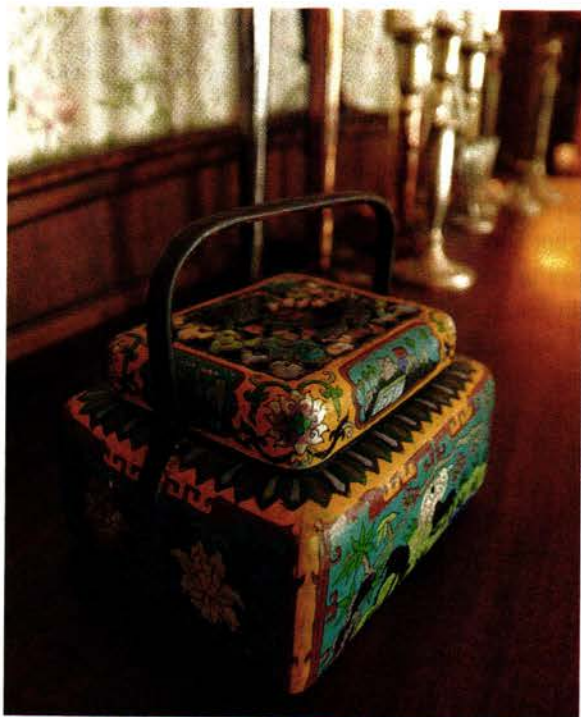


The authors' dining room features a cornucopia of eBay finds, including the light fixture, the Karastan rug, and much of the china displayed along the plate rail.

Ready, Set, eBay!

THE VENERABLE ONLINE AUCTION SITE CAN BE A TREASURE TROVE OF OLD-HOUSE PARTS—IF YOU KNOW HOW TO PLAY THE GAME. A COUPLE VETERANS OF eBay'S TRIUMPHS AND TRAGEDIES OFFER SOME HARD-WON LESSONS.

By TONY AND CELINE SEIDEMAN



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Some of the authors' eBay finds include: An antique enamel Chinese incense burner; a burly bronze horse purchased for \$1 (and shipped for close to \$100); a dog painting (in elaborate frame) bearing a strong resemblance to the couple's late pet; and delicate lace window panels.

PHOTOS BY DWAYNE FREEMAN

We still feel bad about sniping Minimu's wedding dress. We didn't mean to grab it. But the dressmaker we had hired to make Celine's gown had already missed two deadlines, so Celine set forth the decree: "Log on to eBay. We're getting a wedding dress tonight."

Minimu was a toughie. We put in a bid. She countered. We countered. Then, seconds before the auction closed, we put in an exceptionally high bid. Celine wore the dress on our wedding day.

Wedding dresses and old houses have a lot in common. They're unique, expensive, and you don't buy them that often. The same can be said for all sorts of things—from Arts & Crafts light fixtures to peacock wallpaper—that we've purchased for our 1903 transitional Shingle-style Victorian on eBay.

Yet dealing with eBay—or any Internet auction site—is something of a gamble. Although it offers untold millions of items and can create unprecedented opportunities to find pieces that would have been almost impossible to unearth just a decade or so ago, eBay also can plunge the average user into a gambling hell equal to anything that can be found on the Vegas strip.

Take our lavender toilet. On a visit to the Washington, D.C., salvage store The Brass Knob, we purchased a 1940s sink that was the perfect shade of lavender to match the roses in the accent tile in our master bathroom. Which meant that we needed to find a toilet that was the same perfect shade of lavender. And so the eBay search began.

Apparently the ghost of Minimu lurks in eBayspace, waiting for her revenge. And

she got it. Who would have thought someone else would be looking for a lavender toilet? But they were—and they got the one we wanted, for just \$1 more than our top bid. Still, eventually, we found another. We won our toilet for a such a reasonable price that the wooden crate to hold it cost almost as much as the device itself.

No room in the house has required more visits to eBay than our kitchen, a space that was originally part laundry room and part food preparation area. Our kitchen design is essentially a work of fiction—one that reaches across eras and decades, and therefore involved lots and lots of online auctions. Perhaps the biggest catch—and the best eBay story—was our Kelvinator FoodaRama. The Kelvinator was the first full-featured side-by-side refrigerator ever produced. It hit the market in 1955, and



The authors' hard-won lavender toilet makes a bold statement in the bathroom of their 1903 home. During a recent restoration project, the toilet's plumbing was destroyed, so they're now on the hunt for another.

was the Cadillac of cooling devices for its time.

Antique refrigeration devices of any kind are relatively rare on eBay, but FoodaRamas are truly an endangered species. But with ongoing encouragement from Celine, I began the hunt. We finally found one, which the listing claimed had been only used by a Michigan widow on weekends to cool cans of frozen orange juice mix.

We bid, thinking not many people would be interested in purchasing such a beast from the middle of nowhere. Once again, the spirit of Minimu intruded, and we got sniped—someone outbid us at the last moment.

Feeling depressed and defeated, I didn't bother to visit eBay for several weeks, which turned out to be a superb strategy. The person who outbid us ended up dropping out, so the owner offered us the Kelvinator at the top price. When I failed to respond, he lowered it. By the time I checked the site again, we were able to get it at 40 percent off.

As we've completed various projects in our house, our need for eBay has declined. The fact that so many places on the net offer a multitude of specialty products also has drawn us away from the massive auction site. But we have no doubt we'll continue to need that one weird thing—and we know the best place to go to find it. Even if Minimu's cyber ghost is still pursuing us. 🐻

Tony and Celine Seideman are working to restore their 1903 Peekskill, New York, home one historic tile, light fixture, refrigerator, roll of wallpaper, and stove at a time.

Anatomy of an eBay Auction

An eBay newbie? Check out these auction essentials so you'll know what to expect.

View the highest bid

Check the time remaining

See who else is bidding

Watch items you're not ready to bid on

Get details on the piece

PR VINTAGE BRUSH McCOY 746 VELLUM ARTS & CRAFTS VASES

Item number: 160280189156

Bidder or seller of this item? [Sign in](#) for your status

Watch this item in My eBay

Interact with the seller

Current bid: **US \$27.00**

Your maximum bid: **US \$** [Place Bid >](#)

(Enter US \$28.00 or more)

End time: **9 hours 25 mins** (Sep-15-08 18:01:34 PDT)

Shipping costs: [Calculate](#)

Ships to: United States, Europe, Canada, Australia, Japan

Item location: **Creweil, OR 97426, United States**

History: [A bid](#)

High bidder: ***** (216 ☆ 1)**

You can also: [Watch this item](#) [Get SMS or IM alerts](#) [Email to a friend](#)

Listing and payment details: [Show](#)

Meet the seller

Seller: [mitchell's antiques](#) (3583 ☆) [eBay](#) [eBay](#)

Feedback: **100% Positive**

Member: since Jul-07-98 in United States

[See detailed feedback](#)

[Ask seller a question](#)

[Add to Favorite Sellers](#)

[View seller's other items](#) [Store](#) | [List](#)

[Visit seller's Store](#)

[Mitchell's Antiques, Creweil, Oregon](#)

Buy safely

1. Check the seller's reputation

Score: 3583 | 100% Positive

[See detailed feedback](#)

2. Check how you're protected

PayPal Up to \$2,000 in buyer protection. [See eligibility](#)

Returns: Seller accepts returns: 3 Days Money Back

Check the seller's feedback

Description

Item Specifics

Original or Reproduction: **Original**

Material: **POTTERY**

Period or Style: **Arts & Crafts Movement**

eBay the Right Way

1 Hone your search skills. A good search is key to finding the items you need. If you're looking for something common, such as "refrigerator," add words to keep the number of results reasonable. If you're looking for something unusual, such as "lavender toilet," a short, simple search probably works best. Also, recognize that people don't know how to spell. We've found some great items listed under "nouveaux" instead of "nouveau."

2 Check out the seller's ratings. There are some not-so-nice people on eBay, as there are everywhere. But one of the site's more brilliant features is its rating system for the people who buy and sell. We've found that anything below a 97-percent favorable rating is getting into risky territory. Though that may sound like perfectionism, the reality is that once bad people start getting negative ratings, they simply create new identities. So a small number of negative responses can send a big, clear message.

3 Be ruthless in bidding. Several approaches can help to avoid last-minute losses. One is to use sniping tools. Though the auction service officially frowns on them, sniping tools slip in your bid seconds before the auction closes. Of course, if your competitor is also using sniping tools—or your sniping bid isn't high enough—you'll still lose. You also can try the blocking bid—a bid that's so irrationally high no one would consider outbidding you.

4 Understand the importance of packing. It's amazing how awkward and fragile many of the items needed to restore a historic home can be. It's even more amazing how bad people are at packing them. Try to work with people who understand how to protect the items they ship. In many cases, this means

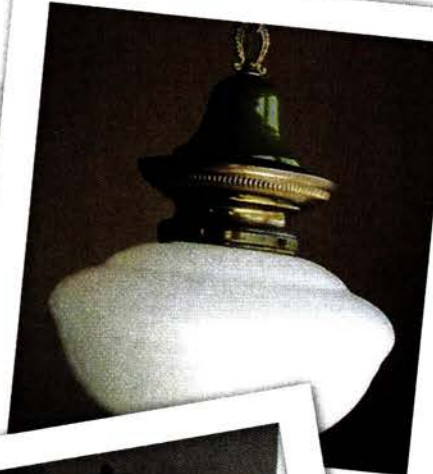
spending \$50 or even \$100 on wood crates. But the investment will be worth it to keep your precious purchase from being destroyed.

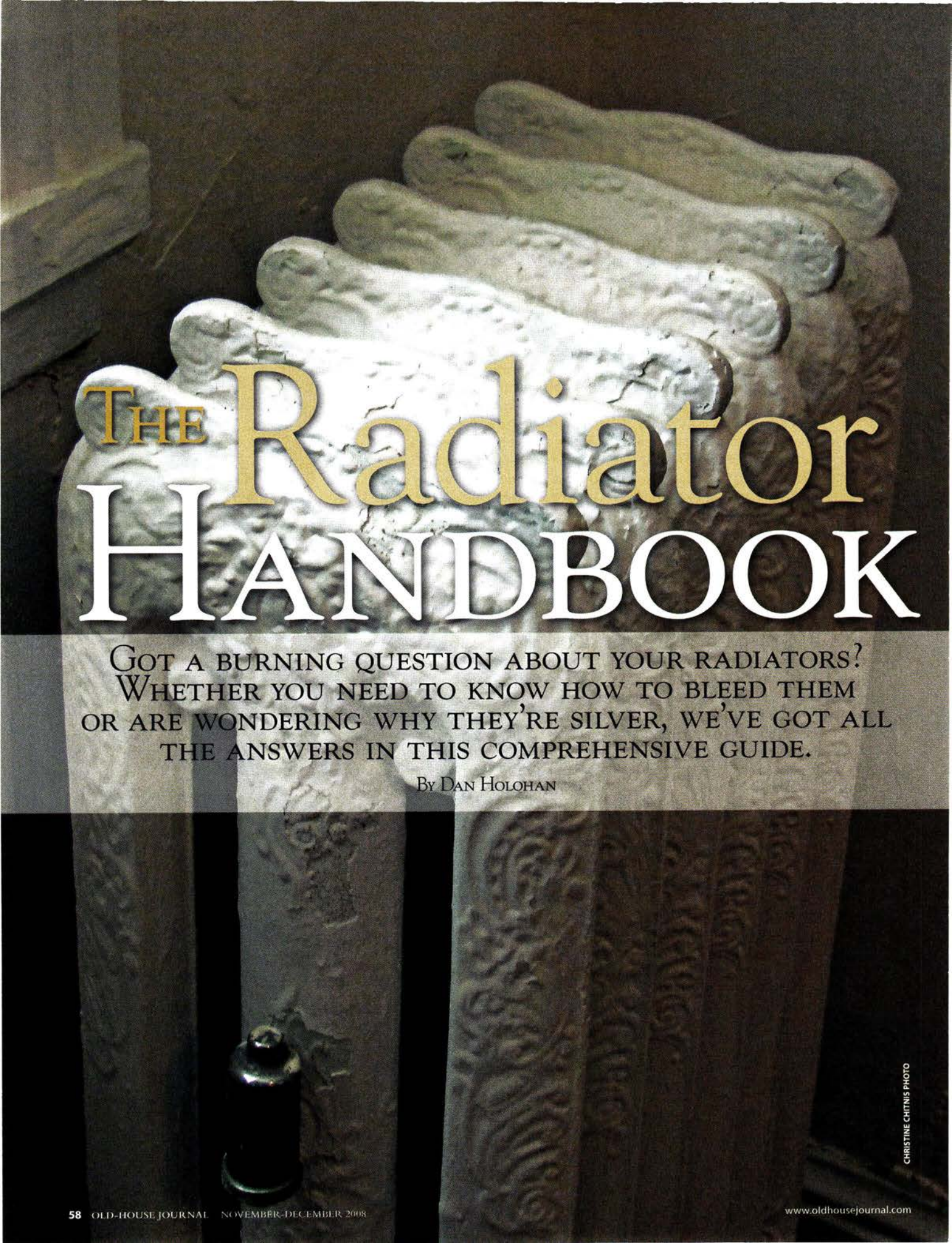
5 Choose your shipping company wisely. On their first attempt at getting the Kelvinator into our house, the moving team dropped it down our porch stairs. However, I filed a claim, and we ended up getting the exterior of our refrigerator restored for free. Not every shipment has gone that well, though: Federal Express destroyed two antique stoves we purchased, and its claim process was so awkward, inconvenient, and draining that we never got our money back. UPS, on the other hand, paid us the real value of a copper range hood that got squished in transport.

6 Keep your transactions in the system. If you're buying online, stick with PayPal for payments, and avoid any sellers who want to finish their transactions outside of the eBay system. PayPal backs up its transactions with cash. We've had a few deals that have gone bad that have been saved by PayPal. (And we've had a few that went from bad to worse, because we paid by money order instead of using the system.)

7 Respond quickly when you've been wronged. Though eBay and PayPal have protections, they also have time limits. Know what these are and file your complaints within them. If your seller seems to be trying to run the clock, move even more quickly to protect your investment.

Recent items up for grabs on eBay include (from top) a 1930s schoolhouse-style light fixture, an antique Louis XV corner chair, a leaded-glass Victorian door top, a 1930s Kalamazoo wood cookstove, and an antique Art Nouveau Majolica tile.





THE Radiator HANDBOOK

GOT A BURNING QUESTION ABOUT YOUR RADIATORS?
WHETHER YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW TO BLEED THEM
OR ARE WONDERING WHY THEY'RE SILVER, WE'VE GOT ALL
THE ANSWERS IN THIS COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE.

By DAN HOLOHAN

CHRISTINE CHITNIS PHOTO

Hot-Water Radiators 101

In hot-water radiators, a pressure-reducing valve between the city water and your hot-water heating system keeps it filled all the time. Most two-story homes need 12-psi pressure, and that's the factory setting of the valve. If your old house has three stories and there are radiators on the top floor, you may need to adjust the valve to feed water at 18-psi pressure to make sure the radiators at the top are full.

Once filled, a circulating pump moves the heated water from your boiler to your radiators and back. In the old days, many hot-water heating systems didn't have circulating pumps; the water flowed by gravity, with hot water rising and cold water falling. Because of this, many freestanding, cast-iron radiators have their pipe connections at the bottom of the radiator. The heated water enters the radiator and rises by convection, while the cooler water inside the radiator falls back to the boiler.

Before circulating pumps arrived, the

path of least resistance for the water was always the top-floor radiators. The old-timers slowed the flow to the uppermost radiators by inserting a metal orifice (a nickel-size piece of metal with a small hole) inside the radiator's supply valve. A contractor friend told me his grandfather would make these from Prince Albert tobacco tins. He would use tin snips to cut a circle and then punch a hole with a nail—worked like a charm.

The challenge, though, is that when you add a pump to the system, the path of least resistance shifts to the radiators on the first floor, and that often causes the radiators upstairs to be cold. Where there is no flow of hot water, there is no heat. If you vent and don't get any air, and the radiator still doesn't get hot, this is most likely the problem. The pros know this, and on a troubleshooting call, most will remove the orifices from the upper-floor radiators and install them on the lower-floor radiators to help balance the system.



JOSEPH HILLIARD PHOTO

A hot-water radiator in Ruthmere, a 1910 Beaux Arts house in Elkhart, Indiana, displays a typical bottom-end pipe connection.

STEAM RADIATORS 101

If you have steam heat, each of your radiators will have either one or two pipes. All steam radiators take advantage of gravity to get the condensed steam (called "condensate") back to the boiler. The key to making it all work is to keep the system pressure low. If you can't heat your old house with 2-psi pressure or less (that's the pressure the Empire State Building uses), something is wrong.

High-pressure steam can hold the air vents on a one-pipe steam system closed, and with the vents locked closed, the air can't leave the system. If the air can't get out, the steam can't get in. High pressure also can cause the condensate to stay up in the system, and this can lead to hammering sounds and high fuel bills. The device that controls the pressure is the "pressuretrol," and it's on the boiler. For house heating, it should always be on its lowest possible setting.

One-pipe steam radiator sections often are connected only across their bottoms. A section is like an individual slice in a loaf of bread. Steam is lighter than air, so when it enters a one-pipe steam radiator through the supply valve at the bottom of the radiator, it will rise, pushing the air ahead of itself. The air will leave the radiator through the air vent, which is on the last section, and about a third of the way down from the top. Why? If the vent were at the very top of that last section, the lighter-than-air steam would close it before most of the radiator got hot. Remember, if the air can't get out, the steam can't get in.

Two-pipe steam radiators have the steam-supply valve on either the top of the radiator or (more rarely) on the bottom. The

return—the pipe the condensate uses to return by gravity to your boiler—is always at the bottom of the radiator. This might take the form of a steam trap, or it might be what we call a "vapor" device, which is found in dozens of shapes and sizes. Unlike one-pipe radiators, you can adjust the supply valve on a two-pipe radiator to let in more or less steam, which is the main advantage of this system. In a one-pipe radiator, the steam and condensate share that confined space within the one-pipe supply valve, and if you throttle that valve, you'll get a lot of banging noises and squirting air vents as the steam tosses the water around in the tight confines of the partially closed valve.

history NOTE

Hot Lunch

Radiators once pulled double duty in the dining room.

- Bundy's Hot Closet (right), introduced in their 1894 catalog, was a natural leap; a 1922 luncheon held inside the New York Edison Company's boiler (below) was more of a stretch.





Steam radiators connected across both the top and bottom can be converted easily to run on hot water.

CLARE MARTIN PHOTO

Candidates for Conversion

Because two-pipe steam radiators have connections across both the top and bottom of each radiator section, they can be converted to run on hot water. (One-pipe radiators, on the other hand, can't be converted, primarily because they're only connected on the bottom.) Old steam radiators typically require more maintenance than their hot-water counterparts (including flushing the boiler's low-water cutoff once a week so the boiler doesn't clog and burn out), which is why many contractors recommend conversion.

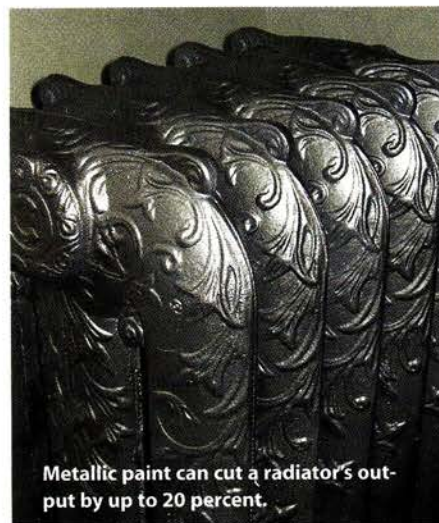
There's much to consider before you do this, though. Because hot-water radiators have to run at a lower temperature, your radiator needs to be large enough to deliver ample heat on the coldest days. Since most steam radiators are oversized to begin with (see "Appearance Is Everything," right), this usually isn't a problem. The biggest question to consider is whether your steam radiators and old pipes can take the 12- to 18-psi pressure required by a hot-water system. Up until now, that old steam system has been working with less than 2-psi pressure. If there are any leaks, you'll notice them when you switch to hot water, so it's best to look for leaks while you still have steam. A simple way to do this is to raise the pressure (only temporarily!) to 10 psi and conduct a thorough search for leaks.

APPEARANCE IS EVERYTHING

When the airborne Spanish Influenza pandemic of 1918 arrived and took the lives of 675,000 Americans, many people became afraid of the air within their homes—and for good reason. The Board of Health responded in 1919 by insisting that people keep their windows cracked open during the winter to let in fresh air. Consequently, radiators got bigger—big enough to heat an entire house on the coldest winter day, often with the windows open. (On milder days, the thermostat will shut off one-pipe steam radiators before they can get hot all the way across.)

Oversizing radiators was the norm during the Roaring '20s, but when the Great Depression arrived—and because the Spanish Influenza never returned—people began shutting their windows to save fuel, and all those oversized radiators working overtime made it pretty hot inside.

People soon learned, thanks to a 1935 National Bureau of Standards report, that paint containing metal flakes could cut a radiator's output by up to 20 percent. They began bronzing their radiators with either aluminum or gold bronzing paint, which is



Metallic paint can cut a radiator's output by up to 20 percent.

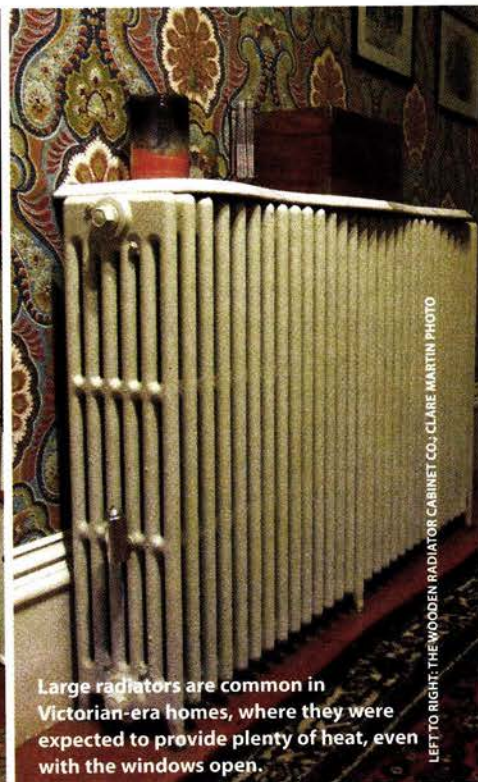
THIS OLD CHICAGO FLAT PHOTO BY CHRISTINA

why many old radiators are colored either silver or bronze.

People also discovered that putting an enclosure over a radiator would cut down on its output. A simple shelf over the top of a cast iron radiator cuts 20 percent of its output. The classic radiator enclosure, which has a solid top and a metal, perforated front, will reduce output by 30 percent, which is why we find them in so many houses.

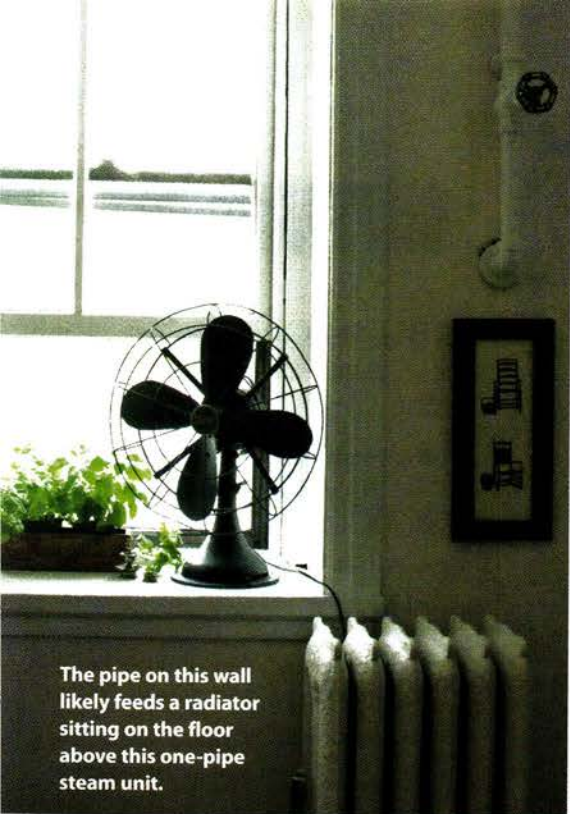


Wooden covers provide an attractive way to disguise radiators, but they also cut down on output by as much as 30 percent.



Large radiators are common in Victorian-era homes, where they were expected to provide plenty of heat, even with the windows open.

LEFT TO RIGHT: THE WOODEN RADIATOR CABINET CO.; CLARE MARTIN PHOTO



The pipe on this wall likely feeds a radiator sitting on the floor above this one-pipe steam unit.

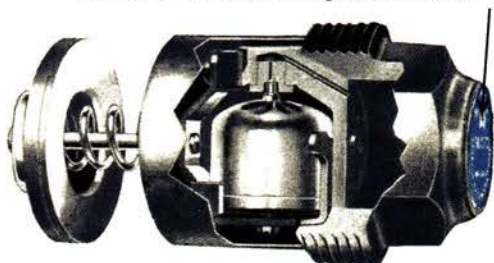
ALLI COATE PHOTO

AN UNUSUAL VENT

If you have one-pipe steam radiators and you can't find the air vents, you may have a unique product from the long-gone American Radiator Company called In-Air-Rid. This was a popular air vent during the 1920s and '30s because it was completely inside the radiator. There was nothing to bump into, and it lasted for a very long time.

The vent takes the place of the plug on the upper side of the radiator, opposite the side with the supply valve. If your radiator is unpainted, you'll be able to see the American Radiator label with the words "In-Air-Rid." Pay close attention to that dot over the letter "i" in the word "Air"—that's where the air leaves the radiator. Knowing this, you can imagine the heating problems that will crop up whenever someone paints over that label. If the air can't get out, the steam can't get in. Fortunately, the remedy is an easy one: I've fixed plenty of these radiators with an unbent paper clip.

The In-Air-Rid vents through a dot over an "i".



DAN HOLOHAN ARCHIVES

Radiator Repair

BLEEDING

If you find your hot-water radiators aren't as warm as you'd like, they might need bleeding. Because cold water holds more air than hot water, when the water is heated, that air comes out of the solution and rises to the top, usually finding a home in the radiators. Once there, it can block the flow of water, causing

some radiators to remain cold. "Bleeding" is the process of opening an air vent to allow the trapped air to escape so that flow can continue.

To bleed a hot-water radiator, look for the air vent near the top. Turn down your thermostat to stop the water from flowing. Have a small bucket and a rag ready to catch any squirts, and then open the vent with a screwdriver or a vent key (old-fashioned clock-winding keys often fit radiator vents). Once the air stops sputtering and the water begins to flow, you're done.

All steam radiators start out completely filled with air, and they will bleed themselves automatically as long as the system is working properly. One-pipe radiators bleed through their air vents; two-pipe radiators bleed through the device you see on the outlet side of the radiator (that's the pipe closest to the floor).



THIS OLD CHICAGO 2 FLAT PHOTO BY CHRISTINA

LEAKS

When it comes to fixing leaking radiators, there's no easy solution—it all depends on where the leak is and how severe it is. Steam radiators, because they're under much less pressure than hot water radiators, are usually the easier of the two to fix. To begin, first determine where the leak is. An inspection mirror (available at your local hardware store) can help, since it will allow you to see around corners and up into spaces not easily viewed. If the leak is just a pinhole, and not a major disaster from a hard freeze, you may be able to fix it.

There are no products you can pour into a radiator to stop a leak, but a representative from J-B Weld Company of Sulphur Springs, Texas, says many of their customers have had great success using J-B Weld to fix old cast-iron radiators. Several professionals who visit my web site, HeatingHelp.com, also report having used it to successfully repair radiator leaks.

The process is a bit involved, though. First, drain the radiator and remove any paint, primer, or rust from the area of the leak. Next, clean the surface with a non-petroleum-based cleaner, such as acetone or lacquer thinner, to remove all dirt, grease, and oil. Then rough up the surface with a file, mix the two elements of the product together in 50/50 proportions, and apply it to a thickness of no less than 1/2 inch, being careful not to get any on your skin or in your eyes. After letting it dry for at least 15 hours, you can check and see what you've got.

I asked if the product could handle the fluctuations in temperature—and resulting expansion and contraction—common in cast-iron radiators. The rep told me the product actually "softens" when heated, and will move with the metal. It's not the sort of softening you'll notice, though. You'd have to get the temperature up to 400° F to see that happen (the product is good up to 500°). Typically, a steam radiator will top out at about 229°, and a hot-water radiator at about 180°. As long as you can access the leak (and are willing to put in the effort), it sounds like this might be a good solution. 🛠️

Dan Holohan runs the popular web site *HeatingHelp.com* and has written 15 books on the subject, including *The Lost Art of Steam Heating*.



STYLE

BY JAMES C. MASSEY AND
SHIRLEY MAXWELL

In the optimistic quarter-century before the Civil War, adventuresome American homebuilders had more design options than ever before in the nation's history. In fact, they faced a veritable architectural smorgasbord of styles.

On the one hand, they could embrace the reassuring but confining symmetry of Greek Revival architecture, secure in its uplifting symbolic references to our own young republic. Alternatively, they could exercise the exoticism of the picturesque Gothic Revival, so popular with reformers in Great Britain and Europe because of its supposed connection to the aesthetic and moral "purity" of medieval churches and cottages.

Or, they could opt for one of the up-to-date "Italian" styles—every bit as romantic as the Gothic Revival but infinitely better adapted to the freer (and more family-oriented) lifestyle of an increasingly large and prosperous middle class. The Italian villa, an impressive, square-towered, irregularly shaped mansion with deep eaves, was based on the northern Italian country houses of Tuscany. The style celebrated wealth and modernity, two characteristics widely embraced by a burgeoning middle class. Its cousin, the Italianate "bracketed cottage," was a bit less ostentatious, yet stylish enough for a new generation of homeowners.

Most folks chose option three. From coast to coast, north to south, the Italianate was America's most popular house style from about 1840 until well after the Civil War.

LEFT: Painted in the warm earth tones typical of the period, this Michigan Italianate is small, but still bursting with ornamentation.

Viva ITALIANATE

PARALLELING AMERICA'S INDUSTRIAL
REVOLUTION, THE ITALIANATE
OFFERED HOMEOWNERS AN
AESTHETIC THAT WAS AT ONCE
ROMANTIC AND PRACTICAL.



MIDDLE CLASS MANIA

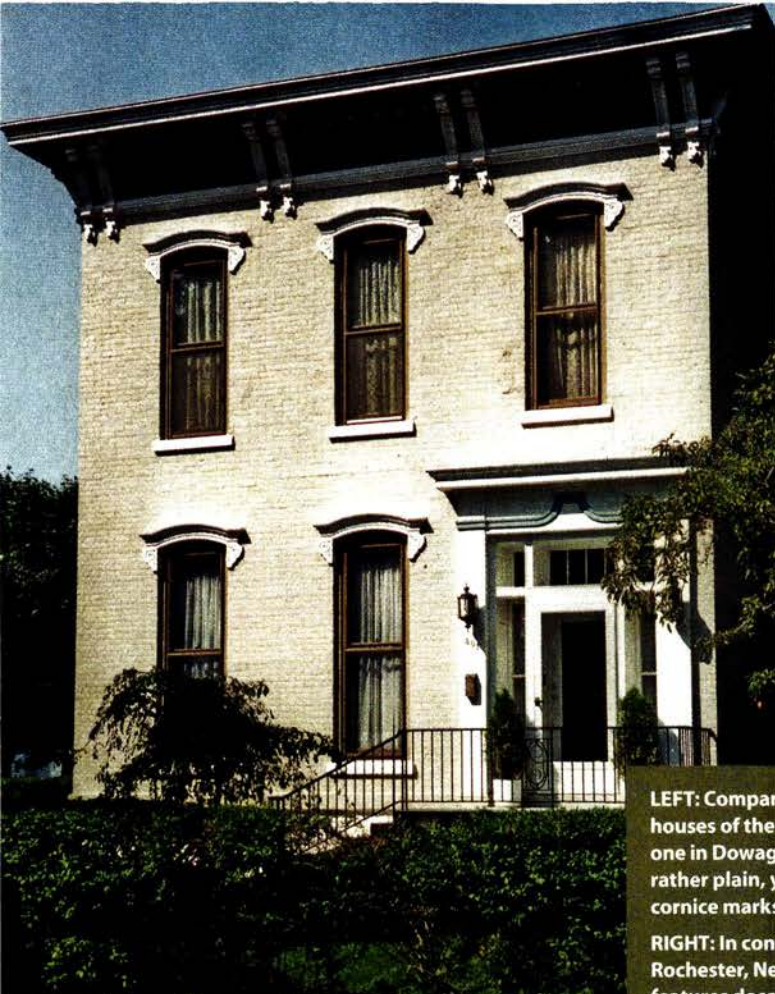
There's no denying that Italianate architecture was often merely a way to apply fashionable ornamentation and interesting shapes to traditional center-hall houses—which was good news for the culturally timid. In more ambitious hands, however, the style could readily become the means of providing flexible, asymmetrical floor plans that made home life easier for families.

The Italianate style swept into America's consciousness on a tsunami of advice books about modern life, morality, and architecture. Social and aesthetic reformers rushed to give the new middle class a crash course in the finer points of 19th-century living. Their advice on one point was unequivocal: Get out of the big city before it's too late!

Nineteenth-century thought was focused on the family with unprecedented urgency, and for good reason. As the Industrial Revolution matured, it produced an astounding population explosion in America's cities. (One source cites an urban growth rate of 700 percent in the 30 years before the Civil War.) Dirt, disease, crime, and pollution made American cities unsuitable backdrops for family life. The countryside and the suburbs, on the other hand, offered an excellent counterpoint to these urban ills—at least for those who could afford to move to the country. Well-designed, “tasteful” houses like the villa and the bracketed cottage were essential to a happy, healthy suburban existence.

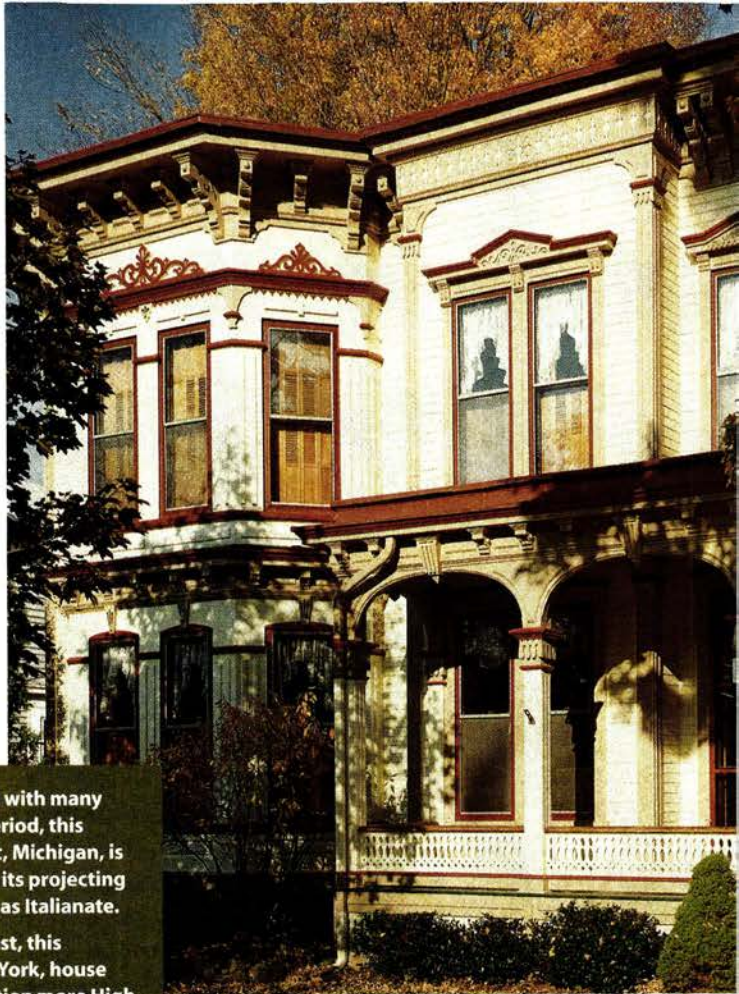


TOP: Built in 1859, Ashton Villa in Galveston, Texas, is one of the country's great Italian mansions. **ABOVE:** The elegant double doors in the second-story hall of this Italianate lead to an open porch.



LEFT: Compared with many houses of the period, this one in Dowagiac, Michigan, is rather plain, yet its projecting cornice marks it as Italianate.

RIGHT: In contrast, this Rochester, New York, house features decoration more High Victorian than Italianate.



THE VISIONARIES

The most influential advocate of the Italianate style in America was A.J. Downing, an energetic young landscape designer and pattern-book author from Newburgh, New York. His books, *Cottage Residences* (1842) and *The Architecture of Country Houses* (1850), were widely distributed and eagerly consulted for their drawings and descriptions of houses, floor plans, and landscaping that suited the changing times.

Downing was primarily a landscape designer and social reformer rather than an architect. He relied heavily on the designs of others, notably the English-born Calvert Vaux and fellow New Yorker Alexander Jackson Davis, to illustrate his books. (Both Vaux and Davis produced their own architectural-pattern books as well as contributing to Downing's.) That is not to say that Downing was

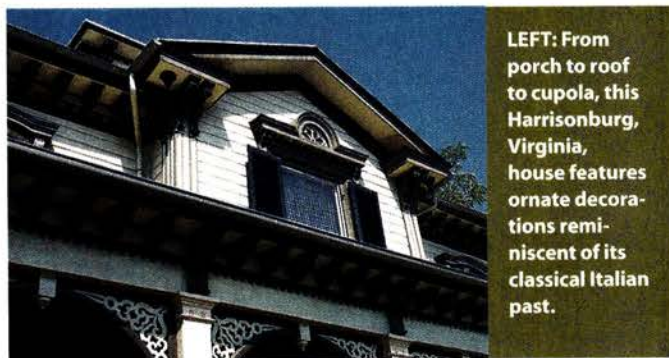
committed solely to the Italianate style, however.

Until his untimely death in 1852 in a Hudson River steamboat explosion, he remained true to his Gothic architectural ideals—so much so that the era's distinctive, small, Gothic Revival houses are frequently referred to as “Downingsque.” Nonetheless, his presentation of the work of Vaux, Davis, and others in the Italian style gave enormous impetus to the style's popularity.

In keeping with their interest in promoting healthier lifestyles and higher aesthetic standards, Downing, Vaux (in *Villas And Cottages*, 1857), and Davis (in *Rural Residences*, 1837), along with other pattern-book authors, envisioned Italian villas set in generously spaced, “naturalistic” rural landscapes rife with vegetation and towering evergreen trees. As it happened, though, most Italianates were built on smallish town or city lots, often quite close to neighboring buildings.

Downing particularly admired the Edward King House, a grand brick villa built in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1845. Its architect, Richard Upjohn, another English transplant, is best known for his Gothic church designs, but like many architects—including Vaux and Davis—he worked in both Gothic and Italian styles. The King

OPPOSITE: Homes in Rochester, New York (top), and Charleston, South Carolina (bottom), demonstrate the possibilities for regional variation within the Italianate style.



LEFT: From porch to roof to cupola, this Harrisonburg, Virginia, house features ornate decorations reminiscent of its classical Italian past.

TOP LEFT: GREATER DOWAGIAC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PHOTO BY VICKIE PHILLIPSON; TOP RIGHT: ANDY OLENIK PHOTO; BOTTOM: JAMES C. MASSET PHOTO

How to Identify Italianate Style

Since Americans have always been inclined to take a practical rather than a purist approach to their buildings, it's hardly surprising that most American villas and Italianate houses have both Gothic and Italian features. In general, however, watch for the following clues to identify an Italianate:

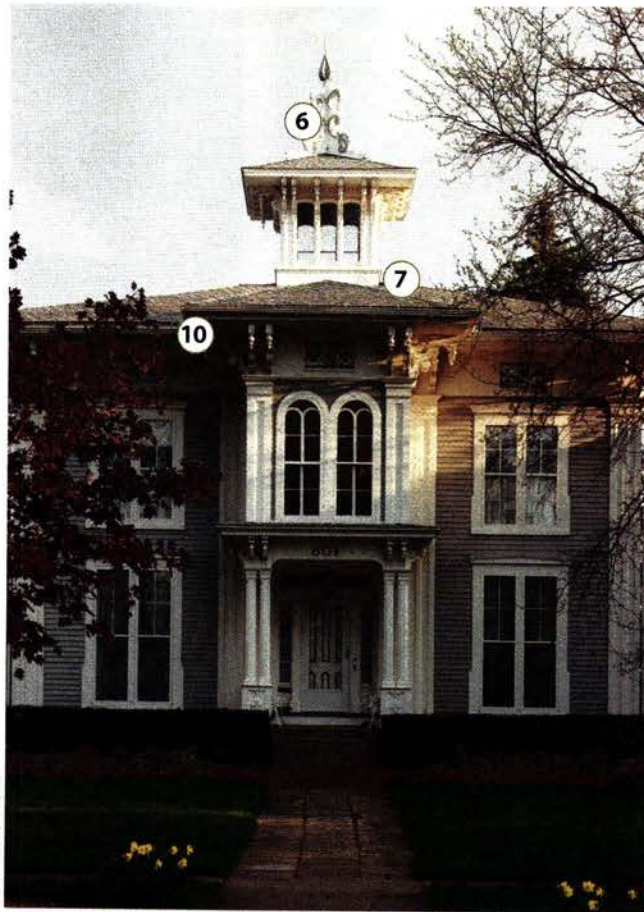
1 Covered verandas with round-arch openings, often supplemented by a variety of smaller entry, service, or sitting porches

2 Usually (but far from always) picturesque, with asymmetrical massing

3 Three-part "Venetian" windows (more common in mansions than smaller houses)

4 Bay windows and full bays, most often with round-arch windows and molded or pedimented hoods

5 "Webbed" (joined) chimneys, producing a more massive appearance



ANDY OLENICK PHOTO

6 Square cupolas, or belvederes, providing light and air to interior spaces

7 Varied roof lines: gabled, low-hipped, almost flat; concave on towers, bay windows, or porches

8 Varied roofing materials, ranging from pricey slate or lead to more economical tin or terne

9 Very broad eaves

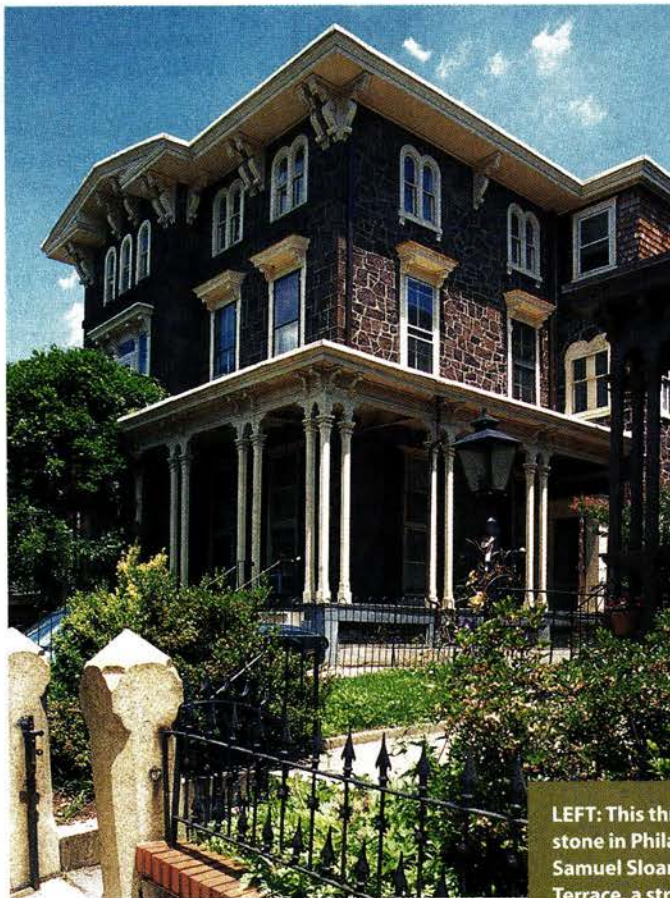
10 Prominent brackets and consoles supporting the eaves and around windows

11 Rounded rather than pointed arches at windows, doors, and other openings

12 Stone construction for the grandest houses; brick or wood (sometimes vertical board-and-batten) for the less expensive ones



JAMES C. MASSEY PHOTO



LEFT: This three-story brownstone in Philadelphia is part of Samuel Sloan's 1861 Woodland Terrace, a street of semi-detached houses.



RIGHT: Restrained in its ornamentation, this Vermont home relies on a fine hooded entry sheltering fancy double doors for its decoration.

OPPOSITE: A middle-class row house in Washington, D.C., is typical of thousands built in post-Civil War America.

House is one of the earliest and most striking American examples of the villa. It displays a nearly perfect array of Italianate features, including a massive four-story tower; an asymmetrical but harmonious mix of porches, wings, and balconies; deep, bracketed eaves; and a panoply of round arches.

Other notable architects who practiced in the Italian style include John Notman of Philadelphia, who is credited with designing the very first Italianate villa on this side of the Atlantic in 1839, the Bishop George Washington Doane House in Burlington, New Jersey. Henry Austin of New Haven, Connecticut, was responsible for the great Italian villa now known as the Morse-Libby House (Victoria Mansion) in Portland, Maine, built in 1858. A year later, Philadelphia's Samuel Sloan designed an entire block of Italianate houses (Woodland Terrace) in Philadelphia. In North Carolina, A. J. Davis designed an early villa, Greensboro's Blandwood, in 1844. Orson Squire Fowler, the phrenologist and octagonal-house enthusiast, used Italian ornament on his constructions—and indeed, most octagonal houses are trimmed in the Italianate manner.

FLEXIBLE FLOURISHES

The floor plans recommended by the era's Italianate trendsetters were relatively flexible, with multiple means of access to the

outside, free-flowing interior passages between rooms, and varied opportunities for cozy nooks and family gathering spaces, as well as clearly defined public areas.

No matter how Italian the exterior, furniture and interior trim were often Gothic in style—or French, English, even Egyptian. "Italianate" is not a term easily applied to the decorative arts.


Decoration on the Italianate exterior was no less fanciful. Advances in technology made the production of decorative cast-iron ornament easier and cheaper, so it shows up frequently on balconies and porches, as well as in fences and roof cresting, whether in rounded Italian designs or in Gothic or Classical ones. Villas always had the added feature of at least one square, multistoried tower and, for the most part, decidedly asymmetrical massing.

As the architectural eclecticism of the postwar era enveloped America, the appeal of Italian style dimmed, but took its own sweet time to leave the scene completely. As late as 1876, the style was featured in Atwood's *Modern American Homesteads*, and the book's back pages carried an advertisement for *Bicknell's Village Builder*, proudly displaying a gloriously ornamented Italian house. Soon enough, however, a new national craze arose, and the Queen Anne and other High Victorian styles swept the Italianate permanently aside. 🏡



Weatherstripping 101

GET READY FOR WINTER'S CHILLS BY LEARNING HOW TO PROPERLY INSTALL WEATHERSTRIPPING ON YOUR WINDOWS AND DOORS. BY RAY TSCHOEPE



When people decide to replace the original windows on their old houses, it's usually because they think new ones will save them money and energy. But there's a much cheaper way to increase energy efficiency than writing a check for replacement windows—and one that maintains your home's historic integrity, too. Good weatherstripping—which limits the amount of air that freely flows past closed windows and doors—can drastically improve the performance of drafty old windows and is simple and

inexpensive to install yourself. Weatherstripping can be applied almost any time of the year, but up North, we start thinking about it once the weather turns cold. (Conversely, in the South, weatherstripping comes into play when summertime temperatures start to soar and air conditioning seeps out through cracks around windows and doors.) Making plans now to weatherstrip the windows and exterior doors in your house can make a significant difference in both your energy bills and your home's comfort level.

BROWN MANSION PHOTO BY JOSEPH HILLIARD



LEFT: Weatherstripping helps keep winter weather at bay on even the coldest days. **ABOVE:** The brass flange installed here is one of many ways to tighten up drafty areas around windows.

To figure out where you need to install weatherstripping, start with this simple, eye-opening test. On a day when a breeze is blowing through your neighborhood, take a candle and a box of matches and head for your windows and doors. Light the candle, and let it burn for a few moments before blowing out the flame. As the plume of smoke drifts from the smoldering wick, slowly move the candle around the window a couple of inches from the interior stop molding and the sash. Even slight drafts will disturb the rising smoke and reveal areas that could benefit from an application of weatherstripping.

Getting a Tight Fit

A few factors account for many of the leaks that develop over time around old-house windows and doors. First, wood expands and contracts with changes in humidity, which adds friction to surfaces that fit together tightly. This friction slowly wears down the wood on surfaces that rub together—you may not see it, but you can feel it in the form of a draft. Add this to the fact that houses settle over time (some of them drastically), and it's easy to see why old homes can be drafty indeed.

Weatherstripping is a layer that's added



Weatherstripping Windows

There are plenty of good weatherstripping options to choose from, depending on where your window needs it most.

1 Brass or bronze flanges are secured along one edge and then sprung along the other to press tightly against the moving sash.

2 Polypropylene or nylon flanges have a barbed leg that inserts securely into slots cut into the stop moldings, jamb, or sash; their "spring" is shaped during manufacturing.

3 Integral weatherstripping has a metal strip with a rigid fold that is nailed to the jamb and inserted into channels cut into the sash.

4 Soft, ribbed, adhesive-backed foam is easily applied to the bottom rail of the sash.

5 Interlocking metal weatherstripping consists of two opposing U-shaped metal strips designed to cup together and provide an airtight seal between the meeting rail's mating surfaces.

6 Thin compression silicone tubing can be applied mechanically in a slot, or via adhesive, to seal the smallest gaps between meeting rails without affecting locking mechanisms.

7 Thicker silicone compression tubing attaches to the top of the upper rail to accommodate larger gaps that develop as a result of house settling and paint buildup.

to fill in gaps and keep the drafts away, and it comes in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. Some weatherstripping products—like those made of silicone rubber or vinyl bulbs and felt—can be compressed between meeting edges and are good to use in areas like the stop molding or latch side of a door. Some weatherstripping materials—like leaves,

brushes, and flanges—are intended to fill in gaps between sliding surfaces, and work well between sash windows and door jambs. The ideal weatherstripping for any application will be effective; easy to install, repair, or replace; inexpensive; and almost invisible.

If you need to weatherstrip a door or a casement window, choose a compress-



RAY TSCHOEPE PHOTO

An array of current weatherstripping options shows the wide variety of materials available today—from metal and rubber strips, to silicone rubber tubes.

tip

It's not the main reason to weatherstrip, of course, but good weatherstripping also adds an element of soundproofing. When windows are closed, people living on bustling streets will experience noticeably quieter interiors after a good weatherstripping installation.

Sealers: Metal vs. Plastic

Windows have been the object of weatherstripping efforts since the 19th century—while most houses only have two or three entry doors, windows often number in the dozens. The simplest weatherstripping on the market today is a low-tack rope of caulk that can be pressed into the cracks around windows and doors that won't be opened during the cold months, and removed in minutes once the weather warms. While you'll have to reapply this type of weatherstripping each year, installation only takes about 10 to 15 minutes per window.

At the other extreme in terms of installation labor lies the integral, interlocking metal weatherstripping that was introduced in the 1920s. It is still available today, and requires that a thin cut be made around the perimeter of each sash to accommodate a metal flange nailed to the inner side of

ible weatherstripping product, which will work on all sides of the door or window. You'll find that some stop moldings are available with an attached compression bulb (a long foam tube). These work reasonably well for the top and sides of the door. You may have to adjust the weatherstripping on the hinge side, however, so the door isn't blocked from closing by the foam's extra bulk. Door bottoms are usually weatherstripped with brushes or rubber strips mounted to thin pieces of wood called sweeps, which are simply nailed or screwed to the lower edge of the door.

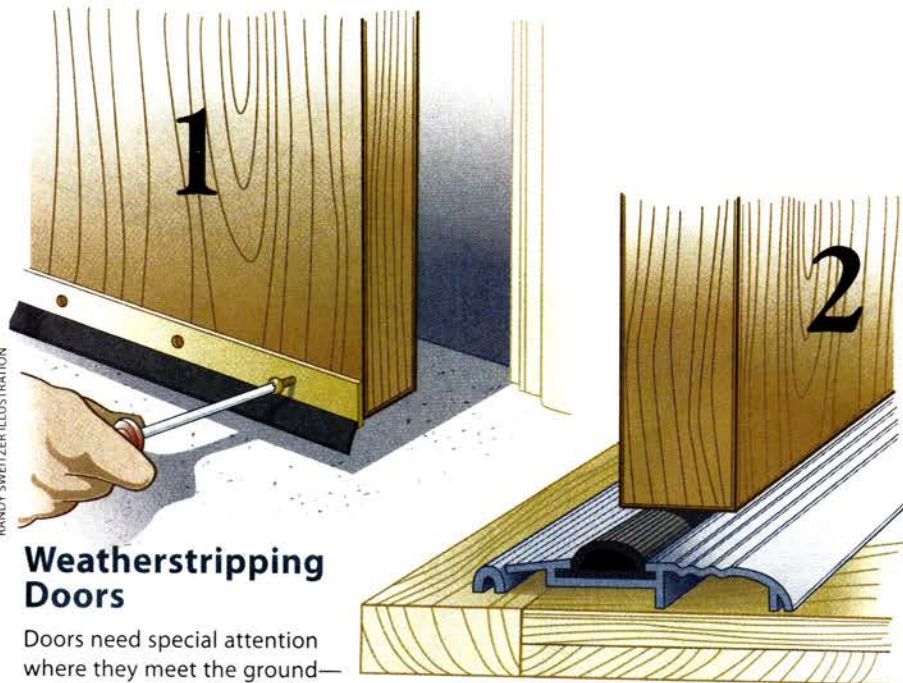
Although weatherstripping can be applied to several surfaces, I prefer to avoid application to the sash or the inside jamb since it can interfere with proper functioning of the sash weight system, and will require sash removal for replacement or repair. Instead, I've found it's possible to get very good results using weatherstripping on the interior and exterior stop moldings and the parting bead. These small pieces of wood are somewhat sacrificial, allow sashes to remain intact, and, perhaps best of all, let sash weights remain readily accessible for any needed repairs down the road.

Installing Leafseal Weatherstripping

- 1** Remove the stop molding and mark the point along the inside edge that will be slotted for the plastic strip.
- 2** Mount a router bit with a very thin slotting bit onto a router table. These bits usually are available through the manufacturer of the plastic weatherstripping.
- 3** Pass the stop molding through the bit to create the slot. Remember, the open side of all leaf-type seals should face the exterior in colder climates, and the interior in warmer ones.
- 4** Next, press the stripping into the slot to secure it. Here, a white plastic strip is used for clarity, but a brown strip is usually more appropriate.
- 5** Secure the stop molding with the attached strip into position. This strip was cut to fit the entire length of the molding, and keeps the window from rattling when opened.



RAY TSCHOEPE PHOTOS



Weatherstripping Doors

Doors need special attention where they meet the ground—a good seal also can help keep out moisture on a rainy day.

1 Sweeps can be a long, flexible flaps of rubber or rubber strips with bristles, which are screwed onto the interior bottom of the door.

2 Threshold applications use a combination of metal and silicone rubber tubing, sometimes combined with a central arched rubber gasket.

the window jamb. Under ideal conditions, it's an excellent way to seal windows, but it does suffer from a number of shortcomings. Whenever the sash is removed for repairs or painting, the weatherstripping must be removed with it. Paint buildup is common at the upper end of the strip where it peeks above the lower sash, and raising and lowering the window over this lump of paint can be quite difficult, or even impossible. On thinner sash (smaller than 1¼"), the groove cut into the sash perimeter is so close to the edge that the sash is likely to split if stressed. Additionally, the slot usually runs into the groove that houses the chain or cord, increasing the likelihood that these will get snagged on the upper edge of the weatherstrip. Finally, the interlocking strip at the meeting rail requires the removal of a fair amount of original material—a fact that can raise concerns about maintaining historic integrity, and one that makes this method less popular today. Repairs to this weatherstripping are best accomplished through replacement—whenever I come across this type of weatherstripping, I remove it, fill in the grooves, and replace it with a less invasive material.

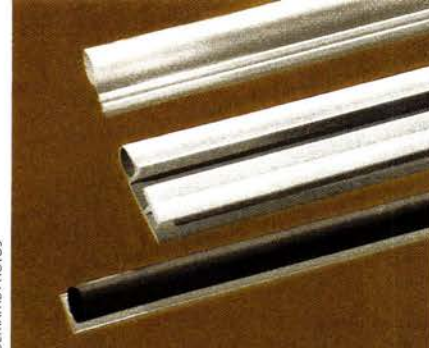
A more common type of metal weatherstripping uses thin metal strips that are

nailed to the inside of the jamb and then sprung so that the edge of the leaf presses against the sash. These afford an easy installation, although one that's a bit tedious, as it requires placing nails approximately every inch or so and "springing" the metal strips by prying up their unfastened edges to create a tight fit against the sash. These strips are generally made from copper, bronze, brass, or zinc—metals unlikely to corrode but still stiff enough to retain their spring so they keep the air out. Be wary of versions sold at big-box home centers, though. They often are made of aluminum, which, due to its softness, doesn't retain its spring action and will begin to fail a short time after installation.

There are a variety of spring plastic strips (or leafseals) and bulbs that are easy to install and quite effective. Those backed with adhesive can be installed effortlessly in minutes, and are easily replaced. A better plastic spring weatherstrip is one installed in a thin (approximately ⅛") groove, which holds better than adhesives, lasts for many years, and also is easy to replace. 🏠

Ray Tschoepe, an OHJ contributing editor, is director of conservation at the Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust in Philadelphia.

ULTRAFAB PHOTOS



ABOVE: Silicone compression tubing is available with a variety of attachment flanges.

BELOW: Brush-type weatherstripping comes in a range of thicknesses.



tip

You should never paint any weatherstripping. Paint buildup almost always causes problems—either impeding the weatherstripping's flexibility or hampering its ability to move smoothly, requiring more force to close windows. Additionally, silicone rubber weatherstripping doesn't hold paint—it will peel off in a matter of days.

ANDY OLENICK PHOTO



Brass channel strips are easily nailed into place—be sure to use brass- or copper-plated brads to prevent galvanic corrosion.



Back From the Brink

A budget- and maintenance-minded overhaul renewed the luster and livability of an 1892 Minneapolis Shingle Victorian.

BY THE OHJ EDITORIAL STAFF
PHOTOS BY WILLIAM DOHMAN

When Marlee MacLeod and Corinne Wright bought their 1892 Shingle Victorian, which had been a rental property for decades, they knew it had been neglected, but they weren't prepared for the foosball table they found in the dining room—a holdover from the home's frat-house days. "The house was in a pretty unusable state," says Marlee. "It was a sad house that needed modernizing and beautifying." The couple had a lengthy wish list of repairs, but they wanted to work within a budget and were prepared

to take on as much work as possible to cut costs, preferring to put their money toward other things. "We wanted to spend our money on the best craftsmanship and architecture we could find," says Marlee. Also high on their priority list was the creation of functional, low-maintenance spaces to accommodate the two dogs and three cats in the family at the time. "We didn't want to have a house where you felt you couldn't spill anything," explains Marlee. "We wanted a place that would stand up to wear and tear."

They brought this wish list to U+B, a Minneapolis-based architecture and design firm that prides itself on a highly collaborative design process. And that's a good thing, because Marlee and Corinne had ideas about every aspect of the

repairs, all of which centered on keeping the house's history intact while bringing it back to life. U+B's project manager, Edie Sebesta, and Mark Burgess, the principal in charge, started their work on the full-width porch, which was basically falling apart. The couple wanted the porch screened in to contain their pets (and to have a place to eat outside without being attacked by Minnesota mosquitoes), and they also wanted it to be as maintenance-free as possible while keeping the feel of the original. So Mark and Edie replaced the rotted wood Doric columns with composites, "which are essentially maintenance-free," says Edie. "They were delivered on site in several pieces, and the contractor cut them to fit in a manner similar to the way the



ABOVE: The porch was rebuilt and screened in to accommodate the owners' pets. **BELOW:** The dining room's built-in, glass-topped original buffet became the inspiration for a new cabinet in the family room.

OPPOSITE: The 180-degree swinging door linking the kitchen and the dining room is new, created from a five-panel door repurposed from elsewhere in the house and carefully inserted into the existing wainscoting.





The U+B team designed a screening system that fits inside the original porch rails, creating a space where the couple can eat outside, "without being attacked by Minnesota mosquitoes," jokes Marlee.



ABOVE: The kitchen is visible through a door off of the stairs. RIGHT: A custom, built-in TV cabinet was created to reclaim a space where a wall was long-ago removed. To channel the feel of the dining room's buffet, it's topped by a stained glass window featuring an abstract pattern of cats and dogs. The result complements the room's grand original Composite Order columns.

PRODUCTS:

Dining Room: Original light fixtures; Cork paint, Benjamin Moore. **Porch:** Tuscan Plain columns (Design No. 200), Chadsworth; Hopper Semi-Flushmount light fixture in bronze, Restoration Hardware. **Family Room:** Eastlake cabinet knobs, Rejuvenation; Custom stained glass, Robert Perrella; Custom cabinet, Choice Wood Company; Crisp Morning Air paint, Benjamin Moore. **Bathroom:** Classic Scald-Guard faucets with white cross handles, Delta; Umpqua light fixtures in chrome, Rejuvenation; Dog accent tile, Pet Art by Angie; Glass accent tiles, Modwalls; Corian Oceanic countertops, Dupont; Blue Bay Marina paint, Benjamin Moore. **Kitchen:** Upshur and Lombard light fixtures in brushed nickel, Rejuvenation; Vinyl 12" floor tile in Mono Black and Polar White, Armstrong; Handmade cat tile, Terrapin Tile; Prism 2" Jade Blend glass tiles, Modwalls; Beadboard, Azek; Corian Platinum countertops, Dupont; Undertone sink, Kohler; Standard Collection pull-out faucet, American Standard; Lexington cabinets, Legacy Cabinets; Eastlake-style drawer pulls, Van Dyke's Restorers; Garland Green and Lemon Soufflé paint, Benjamin Moore. **Mudroom:** Dog cabinet pull, Direct Door Hardware.

originals would have been installed."

Inside the house, one of the biggest challenges was getting new millwork to blend with the old. There were pieces of trim missing throughout the house, which had to be replaced. "Base and chair-rail trim pieces had been chopped out through the years to add piping or other structural elements, so we had to have new router knives cut to match existing woodwork," Edie explains. That detailing was easy compared to the cabinet built to fill an opening in the family room where a wall was most likely removed, leaving an awkward shape. The cabinet's design resulted from a bit of a disagreement between Marlee and Corinne. "I'm not a big TV person, but Marlee is," Corinne says. One wanted a TV in the room; the other didn't. The compromise: Hide it in a cabinet built to look original.

"We designed the cabinet to accommodate TV and audio and all the accessories, and be fully enclosed," says Edie. "There are fabric infill panels that let

sound travel through closed doors, and an eye in the wall that enables the remote control to operate." The cabinet, which was built by Choice Wood Company, was stained on site to match the woodwork, and loosely modeled on the original buffet in the dining room. Adding to the antique feel, the piece is topped by a stained-glass panel bearing an abstract design of cats and dogs (to reflect Marlee and Corinne's love of animals) in rich colors pulled from glasswork original to the house. It was created by Huntsville, Alabama-based artist Robert Perrella, who drove it to Minneapolis and installed it himself. Creative woodwork also was finessed in the dining room, where an access door to the kitchen was added. "The trick was inserting a door into a paneled wall and making it look seamless," says Mark. They succeeded, repurposing a five-panel door original to the house.

Original details inspired many of the paint colors the couple chose, too, as Corinne explains: "We pulled subtle



ABOVE: Dual sinks in the master bathroom are simple in design and complemented by matching era-appropriate medicine cabinets and lighting. To economize, the couple selected plain white tiles, but splurged on custom glass mosaics and hand-painted tiles (below) that bring a splash of color around the bathroom and reflect their love of animals.



colors out of the tile work surrounding the parlor fireplace and used them on the walls." Marlee painted most of the walls, and along the way discovered a talent for refinishing hardware to match using paints and stains—in one case making a brass plate look like brushed nickel, in another making a plastic thermostat cover resemble old brass. "Our contractors knew from day one that if there was something we could do ourselves, we wanted to do it," Marlee says. "We're lucky they were OK with that."

In the kitchen, the couple wanted to create an eating area, make better use of the space they had, and brighten up the dark room. U+B's initial sketches for the room included subway tile on all the



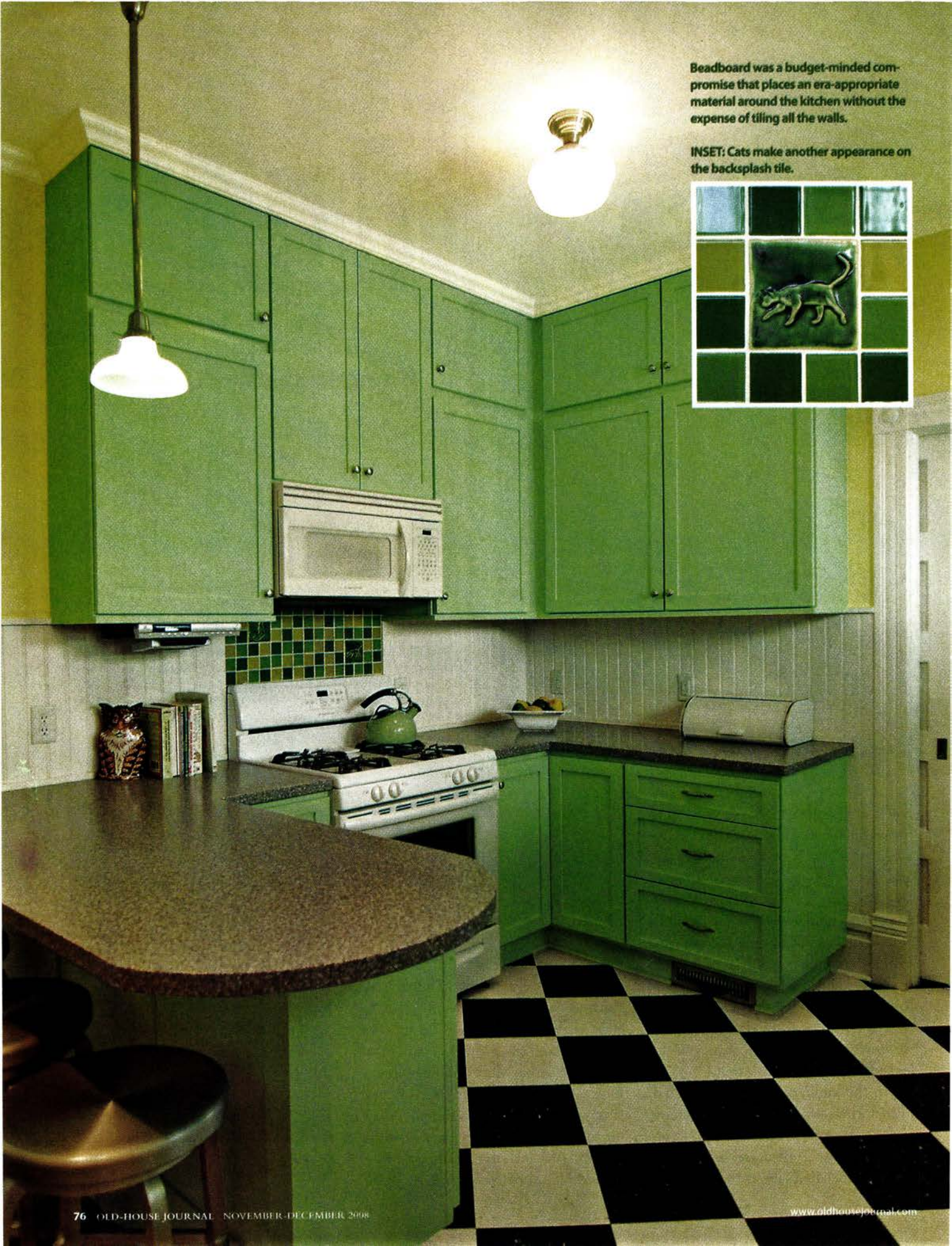
walls. "We just couldn't afford to have the tile throughout," says Marlee. So they settled on beadboard for most of the walls, and tile—purchased from an overrun sale that Marlee found online—for the backsplash behind the stove and sink. (In the upstairs bathroom, pricey art tiles pepper a generic field of white ceramic tiles, making a little go a long way. Marlee also saved money by, "cart-



An original wallpaper sample is framed on the entryway wall where Marlee discovered it.

Beadboard was a budget-minded compromise that places an era-appropriate material around the kitchen without the expense of tiling all the walls.

INSET: Cats make another appearance on the backsplash tile.



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ing every single box of tiles to the house myself.")

To eke out more space in the small kitchen, U+B inserted the refrigerator into what had been the servants' staircase and reorganized the space, adding a small counter that fits three barstools for a cozy eating area. "We knew that if we expanded the kitchen, we'd have to give up things we love from the rest of the house, and we weren't willing to do that," Marlee says. "The only thing we gave up was the maid's staircase." The company also moved the sink to the exterior wall, flanking it with glass-fronted cabinets. To get more light into the room, they added windows behind the cabinets. "You want a lot of light in a kitchen, but you don't want to lose storage space," Mark explains. "So we installed windows behind the cabinets and added an obscuring film so the neighbors don't see all the dishes. It's worked out well, because you also get light reflected off of the neighbor's house."

"Putting the windows behind the cabinets was brilliant," raves Marlee.

Corinne agrees. "The kitchen is such a great room—it's all brand new, but feels like it's been a part of this house forever." 🐾

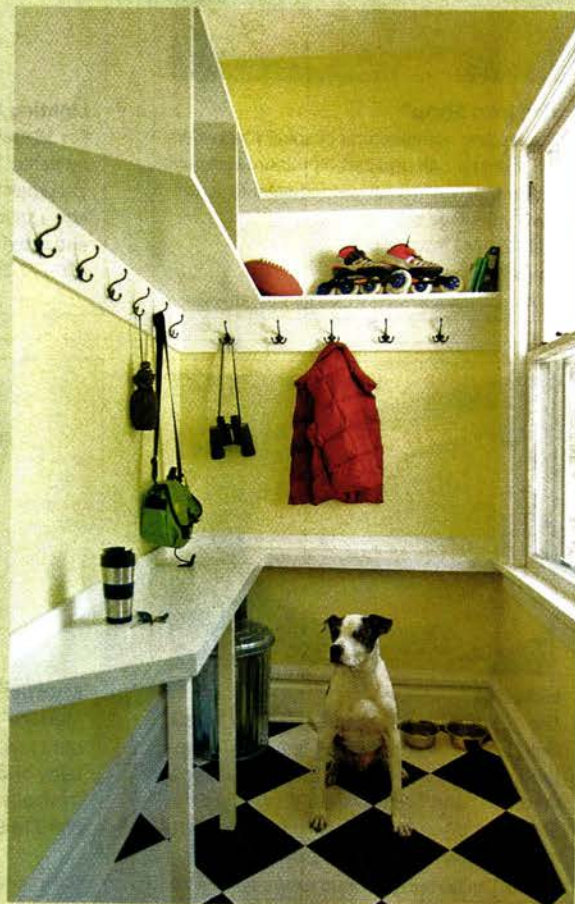


To bring light into the dark kitchen, U+B installed windows—chosen to match the originals as closely as possible from the outside-the-house view—behind the kitchen cabinets.



ABOVE: The laundry chute's door features a whimsical doggy pull.

RIGHT: The back door vestibule was retooled into a mudroom, a necessary space for dog owners living in a city with harsh winter weather.





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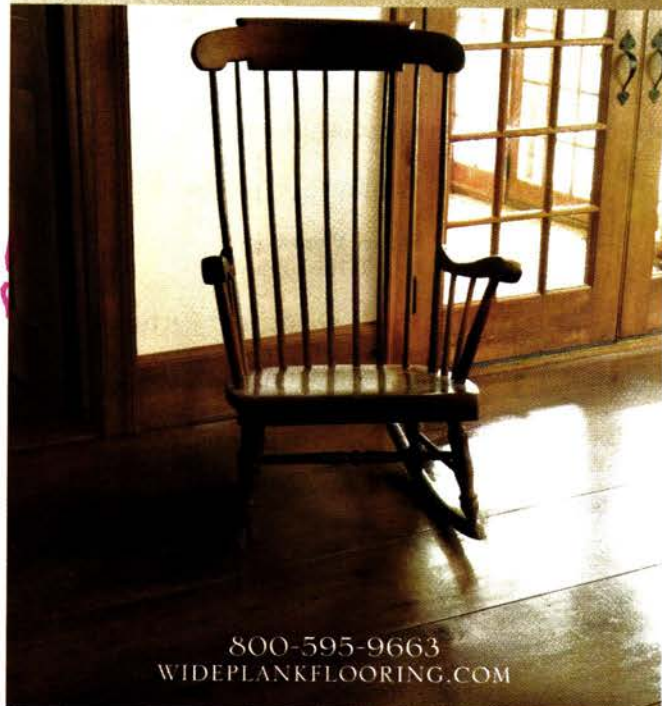
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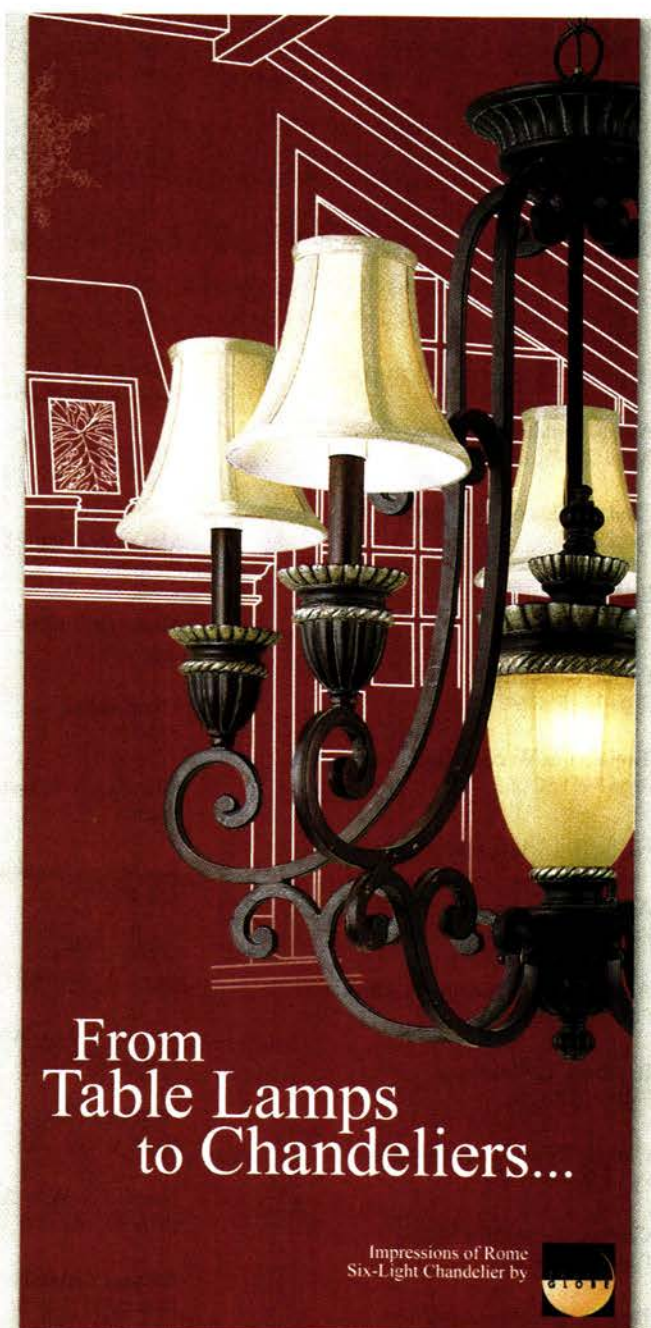
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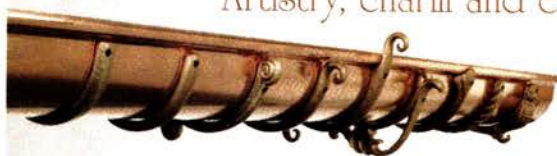
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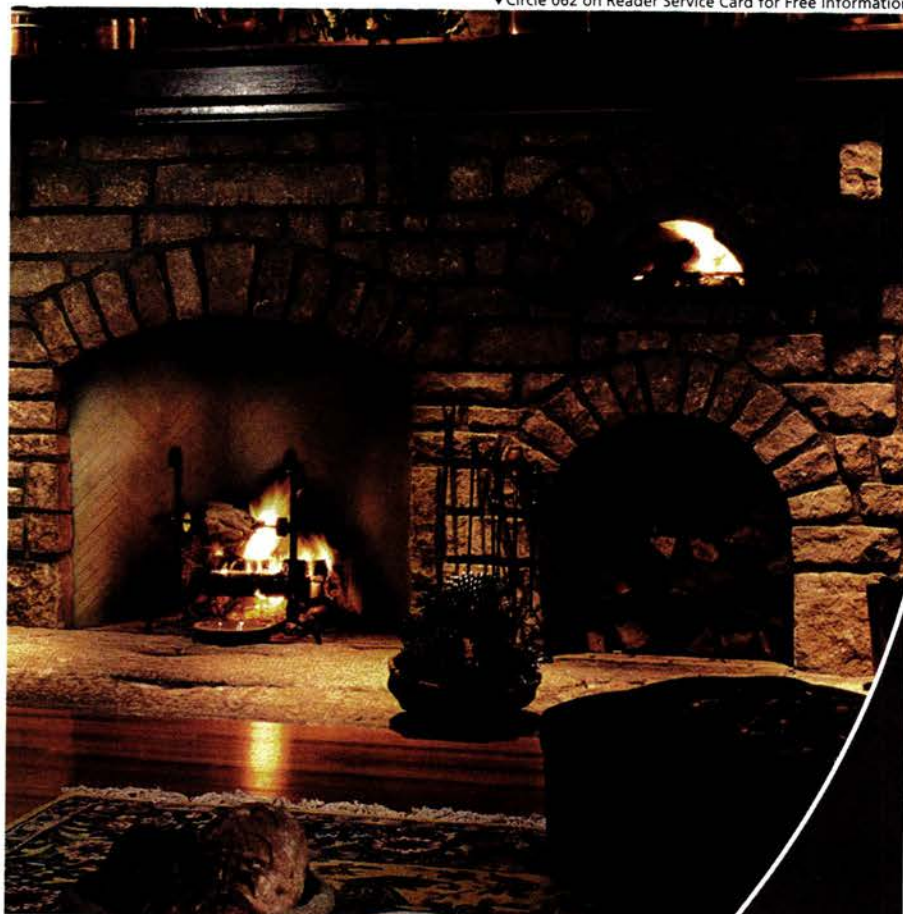
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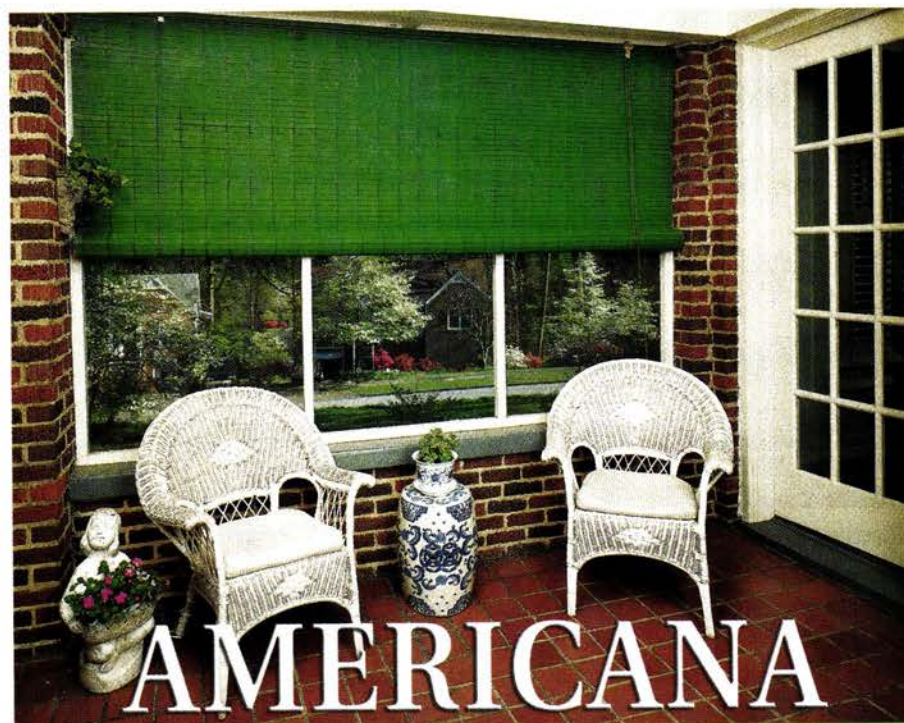


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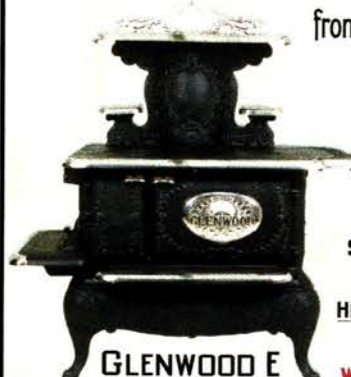
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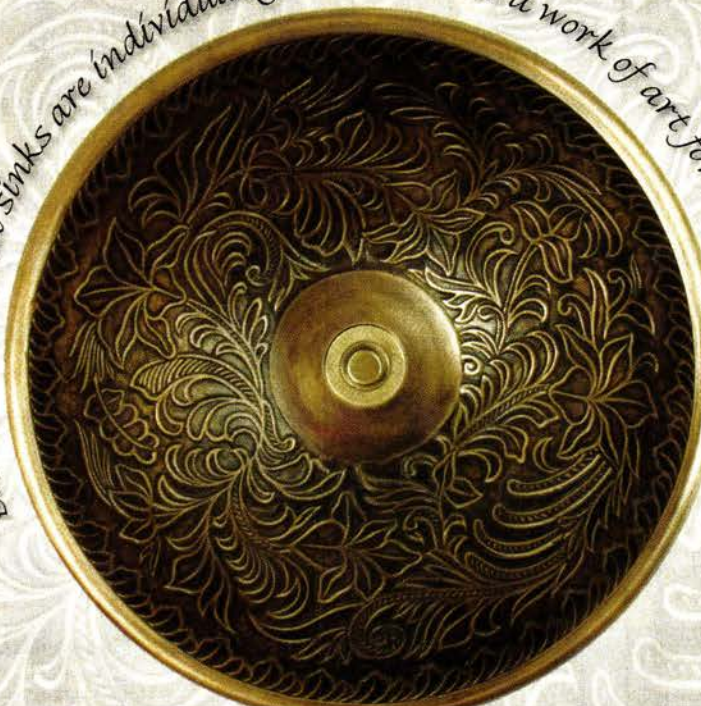


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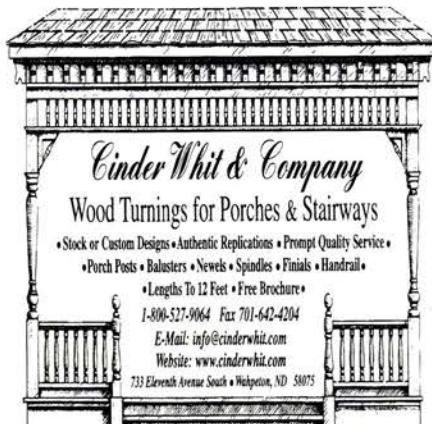


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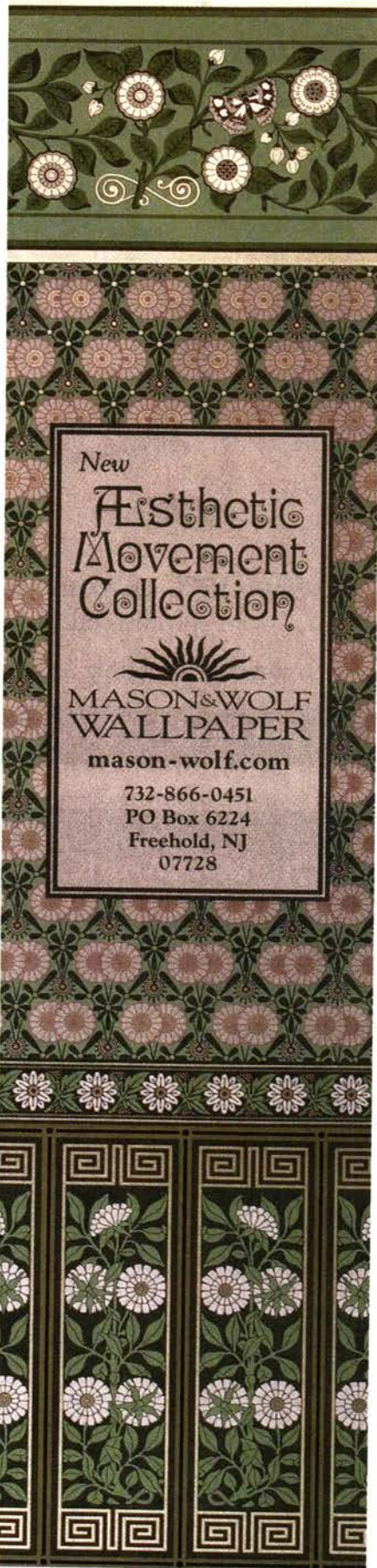
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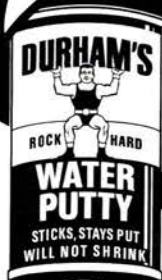
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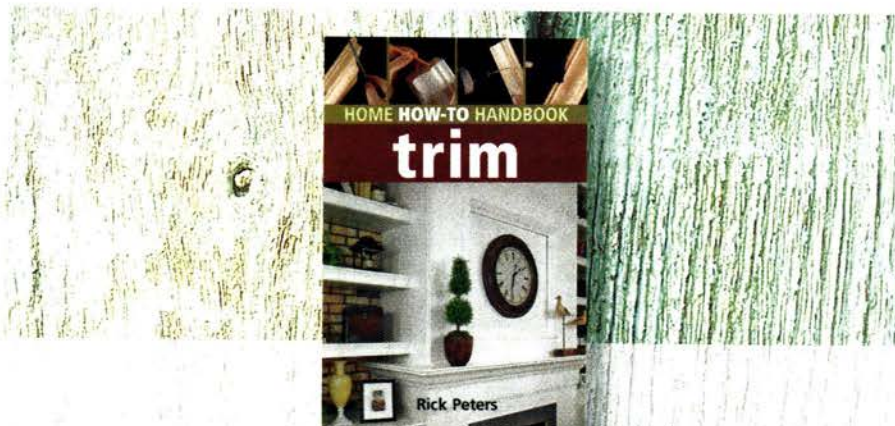


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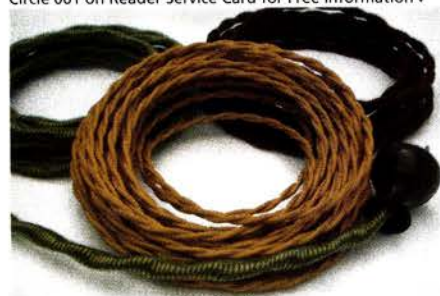
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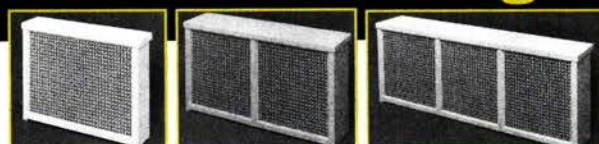
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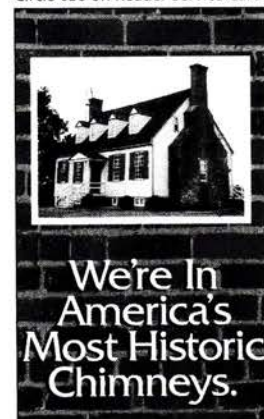
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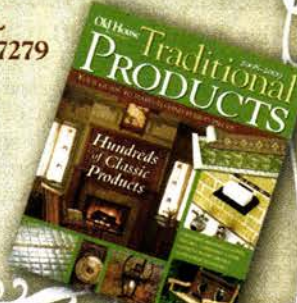
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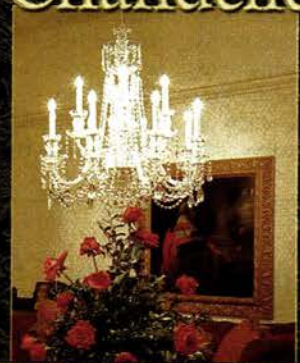

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Historic Properties

SPOTLIGHT HOUSE



WASHINGTON, DC—Rich with history, this 193-year-old, semi-detached 2-bedroom Federal frame house has been updated for today's sophisticated buyers with, among other amenities, a renovated granite and stainless kitchen featuring custom maple cabinetry, a remodeled full bath, a new half bath and central air. Wide plank, random-width heart pine floors and 2 fireplaces are among its coveted original details. Enjoy a deep lot with "horse walk" side entry and an approximately 60-foot garden. \$860,000. **BEST ADDRESS®** Real Estate, LLC. 202-965-4663. Preview photos, floorplans: www.BestAddress.com

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COCOA, FL—1928 Mediterranean Revival fully restored. Enjoy a wood-burning fireplace in the living room, private balcony off master suite in this 3 bedroom, 2 bath historic home. Wrought iron wrapped porch off formal dining room plus in-ground pool with gazebo all on a triple lot. 1-minute to Indian River with boat launch. Commute to NASA, Cocoa Village, Orlando and airport. \$375,000. Carol Patterson, 321-543-3556 or carol@riverbreezes.com, www.RiverBreezes.com



HONOKAA, HI—Classic art deco design built in the 1930s, the T. Yamatsuka Building has been meticulously restored with 2 commercial retail establishments. 13-foot ceilings. 3 bedroom ocean view plantation residence plus a studio apartment and storage below. Land 7,228 sq. ft.; building area: 3,668 sq. ft. Gross income: \$38,000; 2007 Expenses: \$6,522. Downtown on the north Hamakua coast. \$750,000. Stacy Disney, Lava Rock Realty, 808-345-2591.

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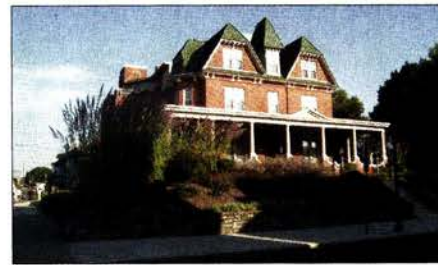
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CHAMPAIGN, IL—1867 brick Italianate, 3,740+ sq. ft., 2-story home plus full stone/brick basement and attic. On National Register and local landmark. Preservation covenants. Original faux graining, ornate plaster parlor ceiling, fancy radiators, 4 bedrooms plus "servants" area. Updated in 1920; 1950 kitchen. New roof. Structurally sound, needs new mechanicals and updating. Large corner lot. Big 10 college town. \$299,900. Preservation & Conservation Assoc., 217-359-7222. www.pacacc.org



HAGERSTOWN, MD—This immaculately restored Queen Anne style home, built in 1897, is adjacent to Hagerstown's Arts & Entertainment District which showcases the Historic Maryland Theatre and the acclaimed Maryland Symphony Orchestra. Six off street parking spaces, gourmet kitchen, spacious entry foyer, 5 bedrooms, refinished hardwood floors, walls re-plastered and entire building re-painted. Lease at \$9/sq. ft. or own for \$455,000. Ron Bowers, Advantage Realty LLC, 301-745-1620 or 301-733-7159



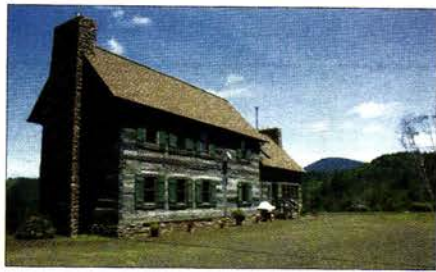
HAGERSTOWN, MD—For sale or lease. This 9,100+ sq. ft. 4-story, brick 1831 mansion has had over \$300,000 in improvements. Located on 0.68-acre corner lot with 42+ parking spaces, lot entrance and exit, plus a covered side entrance. Features a working elevator to all levels inspected monthly. Business on lower level. Two to three full apartments. Owner will lease back until present business is moved. \$995,500. Ron Bowers, Advantage Realty LLC, 301-745-1620 or 301-733-7159.

Historic Properties

SPOTLIGHT HOUSE



FREDERICKSBURG, VA—Stevenson-Doggett House, 1817 federal brick with two income-producing dependencies leased as offices: one 10' x 20,' the other (antebellum cook's quarters) 2-story 2 bedrooms, 2-1/2 baths. Main house with 1960s addition has 4 bedrooms including master suite, 4 baths, 2 half-baths, 7 fireplaces, 11' ceilings, eat-in kitchen, butler's pantry, library/family room, sun porch and ground-floor apartment (living room, 1 bedroom, 1 bath, separate laundry and entrance.) Walled gardens, 3-car parking, \$2,250,000. G. Brown, Coldwell Banker Elite, 540-735-2606, gbrown@coldwellbankerelite.com



GOLD BEACH, OR—1740s log home disassembled in Virginia and shipped to Gold Beach. 2,300 sq. ft., 3 fireplaces, original copper lined sink and much, much more. On almost 10 acres with incredible ocean views. \$750,000. United Country, 800-999-1020, Ext. 108. www.unitedcountry.com/oldAmericanTreasures—a full color magazine of older and historic properties for sale. Just \$5.95.



AUSTIN, TX—Built in 1935 from bricks from the demolition of the University of Texas Old Main, this stately residence is a duplex with 2-bedroom apartments upstairs and down, but would convert nicely to single-family use. There is also a garage apartment. All the character of a Tudor revival style home of the era is here, along with views of the UT tower. Offered for \$729,000. Lin Team, Old Austin Realtor 512-472-1930, www.TheKinneyCompany.com



BUCKEYE HOLLOW, VA—“Scott-Walker House” circa 1792 Federal with 2' thick stone walls. Original mantels, floors, doors, wainscoting and chairrails. VA Landmark with 2,712 sq. ft. on 0.80 acres. 5 fireplaces. 2 baths. 5 bedrooms. Architect designed addition with components from a 1790 house with a country kitchen which opens to a great room with cathedral ceiling opening to a screen porch. \$295,000. Dave Johnston, “The Old House Man”, 804-343-7123 AntiqueProperties.com



HALIFAX, VA—Magnolia Hill, circa 1843. Greek revival architect designed home, 7 private acres with original plantings, 5 bedrooms with approx. 6,000 sq. ft. Most mantels, hearths, and moldings are original. Gorgeous woodwork, wide board pine floors, curved stairway with walnut balusters. Walking distance to village of Halifax. House needs general restoration. \$349,000, The Davis Co. Realtors, Honey Davis/Broker, 877-575-1100, www.honeydavis.net



LYNCHBURG, VA—Grand Victorian, circa 1895 restored and ready to move in. Wrap-around porch with gazebo-like sitting area. Breathtaking stairway in foyer with original oak moldings. 12-ft. ceilings, arched doorways and hardwood floors throughout. 7 fireplaces with original mantels. Master bedroom & 1st floor bedroom with private baths. Kitchen with butler's pantry. Central heat and air. Priced to sell. \$249,000. Max Sempowski, Antique Properties, 434-391-4855 or www.oldhouseproperties.com

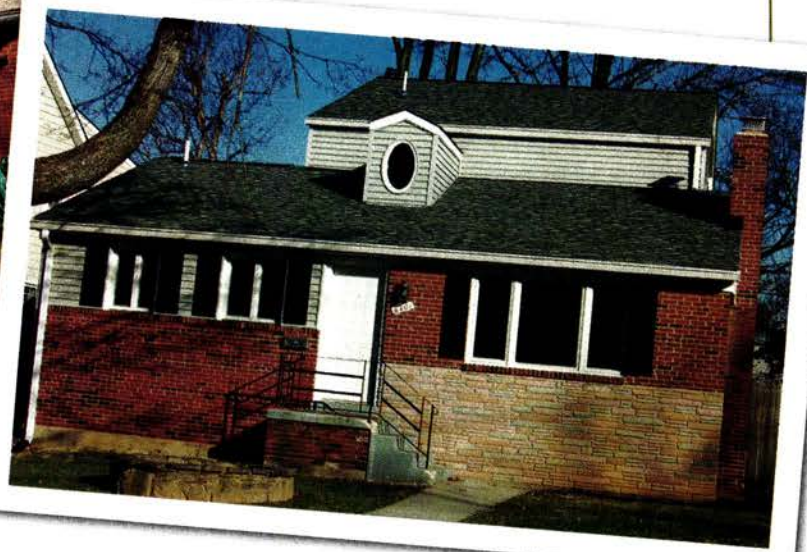
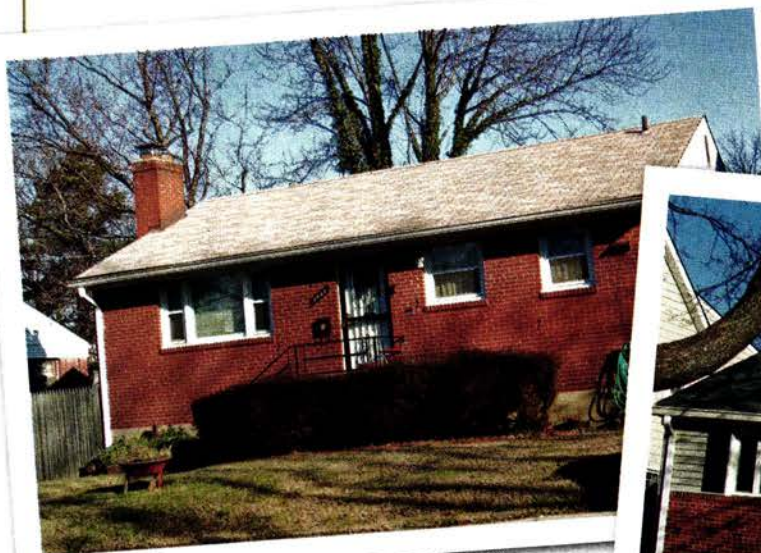


MIDDLESEX COUNTY, VA—Rural Paradise. LaGrange, circa 1749 planter home with four fireplaces. 65 acres of privacy offering fantastic dependencies: soaring screened pavilion enclosing pool, summer kitchen, fireplace, attached pool house with full bath, cedar sauna and upstairs office. Appalachian-style log cabin with loft; timber frame low-country building for winery, gift shop, meeting room and more! \$653,000. Jane Ludwig, Bay Meadows Real Estate, 804-436-6341.



NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, VA—West End, circa 1790. Own a part of early Virginia history. Impeccably restored. 32+/- acres. Close to Chesapeake Bay. Spectacular views. Grand living and dining rooms, library, gourmet kitchen, morning room, breakfast room, tavern room and 8 fireplaces. Master bedroom w/lavish bath, 4 additional bedrooms and 3 baths. Guesthouse. Dependencies. \$3,200,000. Jane Ludwig, Bay Meadows Real Estate, 804-436-6341 or 804-435-0140

remuddling



Downer Periscope

LIKE SUBMARINES ON PATROL, houses trying to gain more space can quickly find themselves in troubled waters. These ranches sitting side by side are a good example. On one (above, left), the original architecture shows a simple streamlined form with a side-gabled roof, brick cladding, and vertical windows. Next door (above, right), a surging second-story, aluminum-siding-clad addition resembles an overzealous wave about to wash over the original building. Connecting the old and the new, an under-scaled front-gabled dormer juts out like a periscope, complete with porthole window.

"Maybe they want to keep a more watchful eye on the neighborhood," suggests our contributor. We think that when houses dive into new design leagues, it's easy for them to get submerged. 🐠

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