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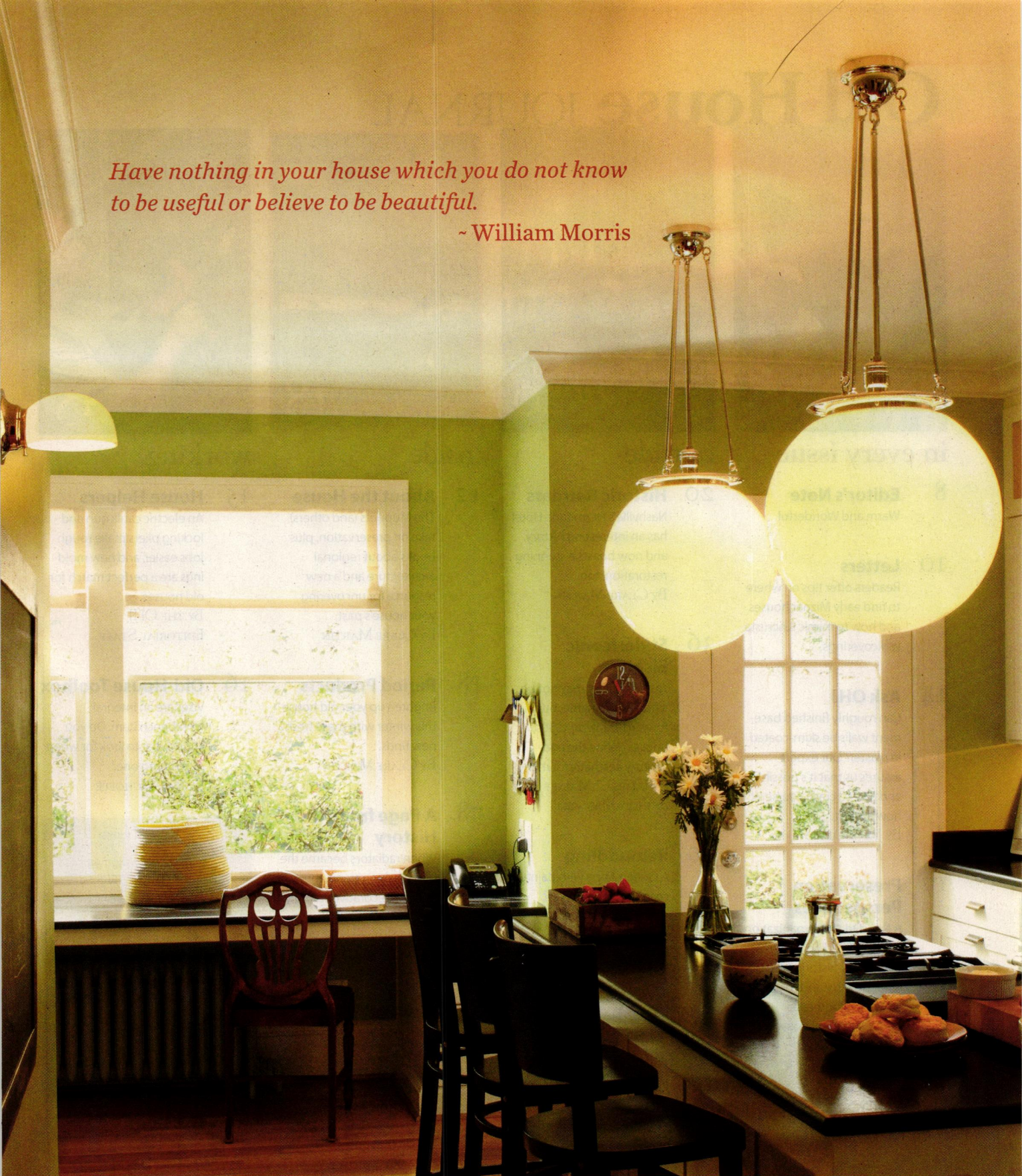
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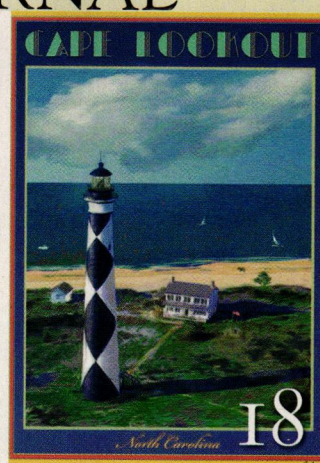
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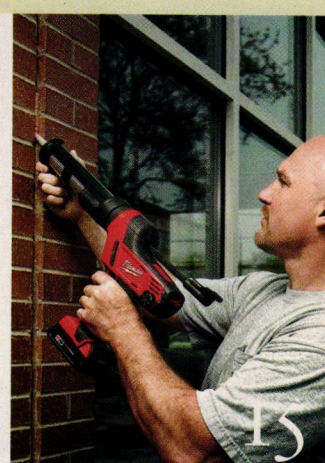
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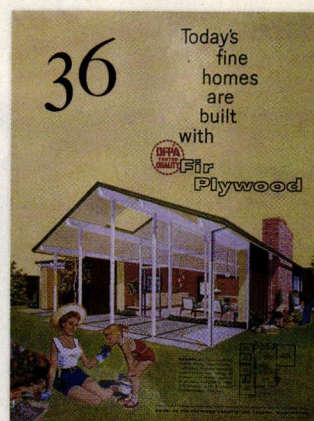
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Cover: Photo by Van Ditthavong. Beneath an eyesore of an exterior, a restoration team in Austin, Texas, finds and restores a marvelous 1907 house. Story page 30.



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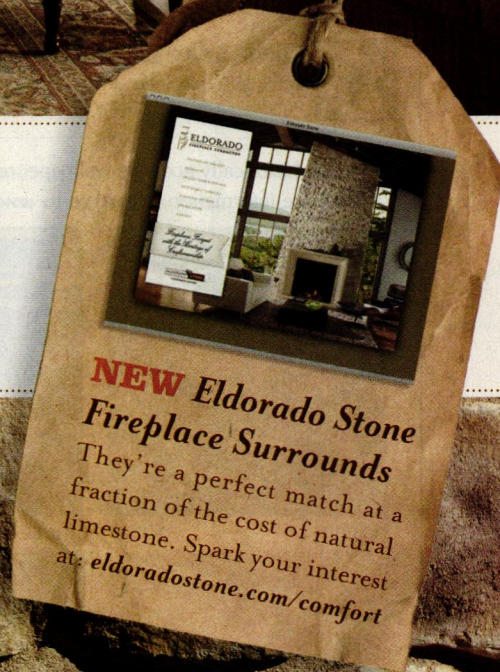
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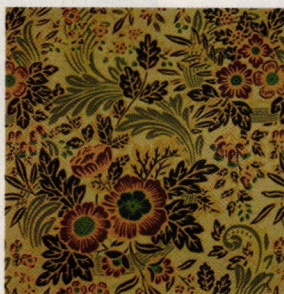


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VAN DITTHAVONG PHOTO

Restoration, Presto!

Undertaking a meticulous restoration like the one on the Byrne-Reed House spearheaded by Humanities Texas (above, and on page 30) is a painstaking, time-consuming effort. But when you hit the fast-forward button, the effect is magical—and inspiring. Check out a time-lapse video of the project to watch the house go from remuddled to magnificent in less than two minutes.

More Modernist Communities

This month, our Style experts explore the rise of Joseph Eichler's modernist developments in California (see page 36)—but Eichler wasn't the only one peddling modernist design to post-war suburbia. In the mid-20th century, developments that interpreted cutting-edge design on a livable scale were springing up across the country. Our guide tracks some enduring favorites.

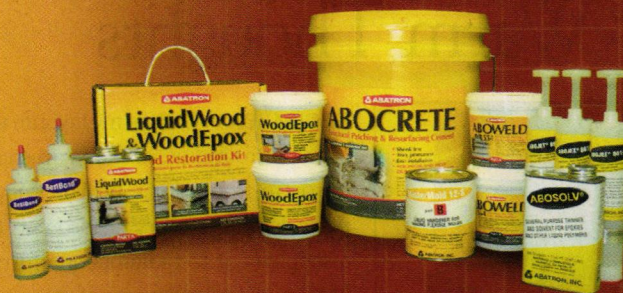
Explore a Historic Neighborhood

The dedication homeowners Ryan Knoke and Montana Scheff brought to their Minneapolis house (see their handiwork on page 40) extends to their historic Park Avenue neighborhood, too. They funneled their considerable research on the neighborhood (known as Minneapolis's "Golden Mile" because of its wealth of finely appointed mansions) into a popular historic walking tour—and they're sharing the highlights with us online.



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Warm Thoughts



DECEMBER IS ONE of my favorite months—when snowy vistas surround us, and we can snuggle up with a cup of cocoa in front of the hearth. Maybe you use your fireplace as your primary heat source, or maybe you use it as a supplement to radiators or a furnace (I've done both). Maybe, even, you're one of many old-house owners who can't use your fireplace at all because the chimney stopped working decades ago. If so, take heart—there are plenty of modern paths to getting your fireplace functioning again, or making it operate more efficiently. We've created a list of options in "Fired Up" (see page 46). On a related topic, if you've ever considered adding a forced-air system to

an old house (whether for heating or cooling), you should check out our story on mini-duct HVAC systems (see "Small Wonder," page 24), technology that's made updating old house systems much less intrusive.

Woodwork is one of the most defining features of any old house, and restoring it can present one of the greatest challenges. I remember well the weeks I spent stripping glossy white paint off built-in bookcases in my first old house, a 1905 Foursquare in Pittsburgh. I wish I'd known then about the approach homeowners Ryan Knoke and Montana Scheff took on their Minneapolis house (photo at right). Their smart work in stripping paint and rebuilding missing moldings, then staining them to match original samples, is a testament to the old-house work ethic. Their techniques can help your house shine, too (see "Sincere Wood Finishing," page 40).



Living room woodwork, restored to its original luster.

Speaking of a house that shines, be sure to check out our story on the restoration of the Byrne-Reed House in Austin by Humanities Texas. You won't believe your eyes when you look at the before pictures—the house's original features had completely disappeared beneath a mask of 1970s "updates" (see "A Remarkable Transformation," page 30). But thanks to solid detective work by the architectural firm Clayton & Little and determination on the part of Humanities Texas, this architectural gem has been returned to its pre-remuddled splendor. Now that's a story to warm you by the fire.

Wishing you a healthy, prosperous 2012.

daposporos@homebuyerpubs.com

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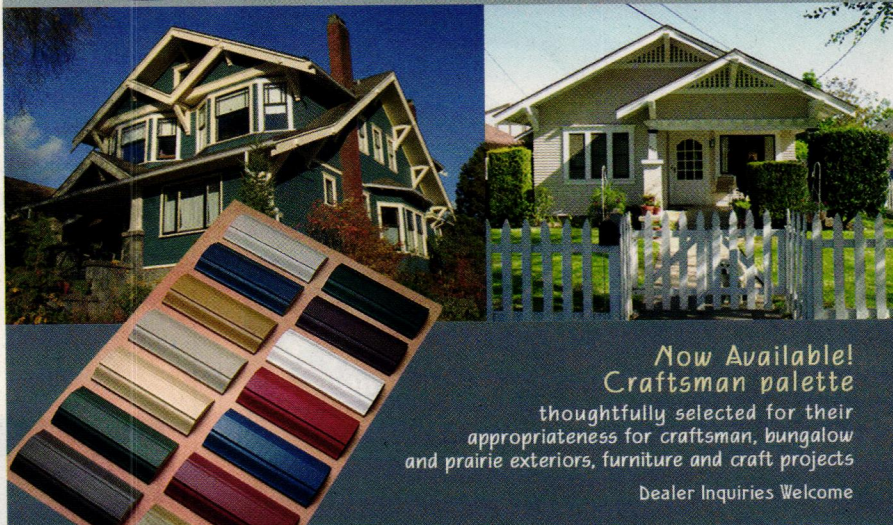
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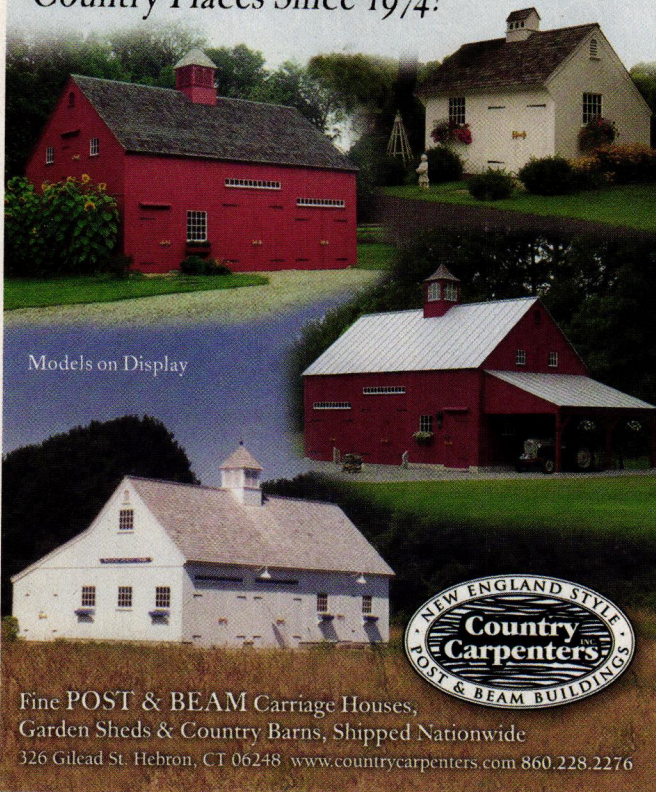
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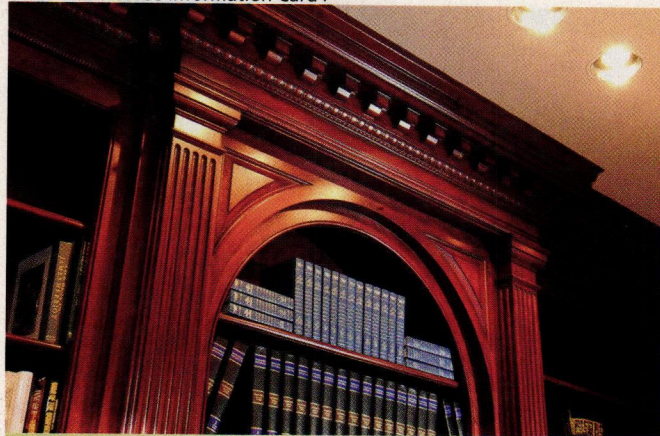
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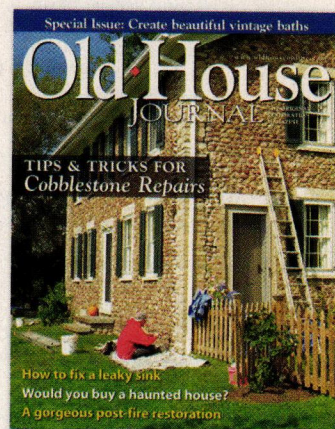
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letters

Time Warp

The article “Baths Made Simple” [October/November] mentions “restoring” a bathroom in an 1872 house. No, no, no. Bathrooms did not come indoors until the 1890s, if then. Bathtubs, maybe, but setting up a room for personal cleansing usually involves a toilet. Owners of houses earlier than the 1890s have a detective job. Look at the original floor plan and figure out where the bathroom was fitted in. If you want to “restore” the house to its 19th-century condition, good luck with the outhouse.

Jean France
Rochester, New York



WALTER KIDD PHOTO

Missing Mizners

I'm so happy to see people making great efforts to save a historic building, especially an Addison Mizner house [“Rock of Ages,” October/November]. Magnificent restoration work! Just to clarify, there are quite a few more Mizner houses standing north of the Mason-Dixon line—especially in Long Island, New York.

Raymond Martinez
Via OldHouseOnline.com

Good catch! Early in his career, Mizner did design several “country houses” in Long Island. However, unlike Rock Hall, these homes are not in the architect’s signature Mediterranean Revival style, which is why they’re often omitted from the list of his great works. —Eds.



Reader Tip of the Month

My partner and I are restoring a Gothic Queen Anne; the entrance originally had tooled leather panels below the chair rail. To replace it, we wanted something that had the look of Lincrusta without the cost. We started experimenting with faux treatments on embossed wallpaper (above). We painted on an “undertone” and then applied Gel Stain over it and wiped it with a paper towel. To our surprise, we got an authentic look at a fraction of the cost.

Paul Stewart

Via MyOldHouseOnline.com

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

Gilding the Hall

I'm an avid reader of your fine publication and save the back issues for referral and ideas. In the October/November issue, the article “Artful Living” refers to a “Gild Hall.” It seems the authors meant to say “Guild Hall,” a structure with which I am very familiar, as our Episcopal church has one for its guild. The other gild is, of course, a reference to gold.

William L. M. H. Clark
Algoma, Wisconsin

You're correct about the distinction between gild vs. guild—but Arden's founders left out the “u” on purpose. The Arden Club reports on their website (ardenclub.org): “One of the utopian ideas embraced by many of the founders was the idea that words should be spelled the way they sound. This improvement to spelling was prevalent across America and was promoted by President Theodore Roosevelt, the Simplified Spelling Board, and others.” —Eds.

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By CLARE MARTIN

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COMING SOON

February means Arts & Crafts time at the Grove Park Inn—and this year is extra special, as the **Arts & Crafts Conference** celebrates 25 years. Festivities during the weekend (Feb. 17-19) will include dancing and social hours, exhibitor giveaways, and a special lecture series that will highlight different regional approaches to the Arts & Crafts movement. For more information, visit arts-craftsconference.com.

ON THE RADAR

Lights, Camera, Preservation!

They've taken Manhattan, and now the Muppets are taking on...historic preservation? Yep, it's true. The latest Muppet movie, which hits theaters on November 23, features Kermit, Fozzie, Miss Piggy, and the rest of the gang taking on a greedy oil tycoon (played by Chris Cooper) who wants to demolish the historic Muppet Theater. (Word is that the ornate, National Register-listed Los Angeles Theatre, designed by S. Charles Lee in 1931, served as the location for the Muppet Theater.)

Just in case you're not able to catch this Muppet-style feat of preservation advocacy, we've rounded up a few other notable historic-preservation storylines captured on film.

How I Met Your Mother: In a story arc that spanned most of the CBS sitcom's sixth season, the show's main character, architect Ted Mosby, gets the chance of a lifetime to design a skyscraper in New York City—but it means demolishing the Arcadian, a long-neglected but architecturally notable hotel. Preservation advocate (and potential love interest) Zoey Pierson leads the charge against the teardown.

Two Weeks Notice: The act of saving historic buildings from the wrecking ball is a major plot driver



In the latest Muppet movie, the gang rallies to save their historic Muppet Theater from destruction.

for this Sandra Bullock and Hugh Grant romantic comedy. Lawyer Lucy Kelson falls for her boss after she persuades him not to tear down the Coney Island Community Center (played by the Childs Restaurant Building, which was designated a New York City Landmark shortly after the film's release).

Mad Men: Though this groundbreaking show is practically a primer for anyone interested in mid-century design, only one episode thus far has dealt directly with historic preservation. With typical tongue-in-cheek hindsight, the third-season episode "Love Among the Ruins" depicts copywriter Paul Kinsey joining in the doomed fight to save McKim, Mead, & White's historic Penn Station from being razed to build Madison Square Garden.

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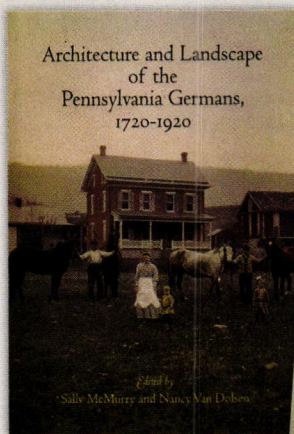
One of the best things about owning an old house is peeling back the layers of its history. Traditionally, such a pursuit has translated to hours spent among the dusty stacks and microfiche machines of the local library. BuildFax can give you a leg up on that research—for \$40, they'll wade through the construction records and compile them into an easy-to-read report on the structural history of

your house—things like when additions were constructed or when major systems were updated. It won't tell you whether the original owner of the house was, say, an illustrious lumber tycoon (you'll still have to hit the library for that), but it can give you essential information you'll need to make decisions about future repair projects. For more information, visit buildfax.com.

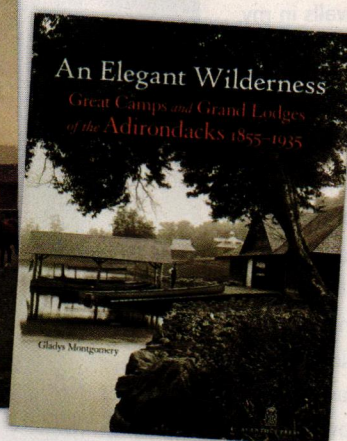
BOOKS IN BRIEF

While many historic house styles were borne of the latest fashions, shifting cultural values, or the cutting-edge vision of an influential architect, others were shaped by the land on which they sit, with their materials and design dictated by what was locally available and practical for the climate. A pair of new books examines the provenance of two distinctive forms of regional vernacular architecture: the austere farmhouses of Pennsylvania Dutch country, and the elegantly rustic camps and lodges of the Adirondacks.

In *Architecture and Landscape of the Pennsylvania Germans*, 10 professional preservationists perform a scholarly dissection of different iterations of the local



building tradition, from rural farmhouses and outbuildings to commercial and religious buildings. Bolstered by floor plans and black-and-white photos, it's a good resource for anyone looking to restore one of these buildings—or anyone who just wants to learn more about Pennsylvania German culture and architecture.



By contrast, the so-called “great camps” of the Adirondacks provided a more upscale version of rural vernacular architecture, where log walls and cane chairs effortlessly mingled with Oriental rugs and fine china. In *An Elegant Wilderness: Great Camps and Grand Lodges of the Adirondacks*, author Gladys Montgomery looks at the rise of the upstate New York woods as the getaway of choice for the *crème de la crème* of early 20th century society. Gorgeous archival photos provide a glimpse into life at 25 iconic Adirondack camps, making this book an ideal virtual escape to another time and place.

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Q: The basement walls in my 100-year-old farmhouse are brick, and the mortar is starting to disintegrate—can I safely skim-coat it to keep it from deteriorating further?

A: **Jacob Arndt:** Disintegrating mortar usually points to a water problem, one you'll first need to solve: Ensure that you have proper drainage outside, a well-graded landscape that slopes away from the house, and gutters and downspouts that flow freely and extend at least 18" away from the building.

Once your moisture issue is resolved, you can apply a layer of lime plaster over the brick for a finished appearance, and to protect your bricks. It's important to use the right skim-coat material so you don't trap moisture that enters by thermal dampness or failed gutters. A plaster made of natural hydraulic lime and sand wicks moisture away from the wall, allowing things to stay dry, unlike cement-based plasters, which will trap moisture and can even attract it.

Begin by cleaning the wall by briskly brushing on a solution of muriatic acid diluted 10-to-1 in a five-gallon bucket. Rinse thoroughly after cleaning, paying attention to how fast the wall absorbs moisture. If it absorbs within seconds of splashing it with a brush full of water, then you have an excellent base for plaster without any added preparation work. As long as the shiny sheen of water disappears from the brick or stone within a minute or two, you don't need to add a bonding agent. (Historic homes rarely need the addition of a bonding agent, as old brick and stone are usually porous.)

Begin by mixing natural hydraulic lime (NHL) and sand in a wheelbarrow until thoroughly combined. Start with

a small batch—one shovel of NHL and two of sand, mixing with water until the consistency resembles pancake batter. Working initially with small batches lets you observe how the plaster behaves on the wall, allowing you to change consistency as necessary as you mix new batches. (If your mix is too dry, it will peel off on your second pass, and you'll know to add more water.)

Let this mixture sit for about 15 minutes to fatten up while you moisten the wall—you want it good and damp, but not soaked and shiny, because some of your plaster needs to soak into the wall. Never apply plaster to a dry wall; it will rob the plaster of moisture it needs to cure and harden properly.

Use a steel trowel to apply the plaster, smearing it onto the wall about 1/4" thick—deep enough to cover the small irregularities in the brick or stone work. Start at the bottom and work up.

Once you've used up your initial small batch, mix another batch of plaster, this time using two shovels of NHL and four of sand. When you have that dry-mixed, check the plaster on the wall—it should still be wet, but stiffer than when you first applied it. Leave it alone as you



GAYLE OGLESBAY PHOTO

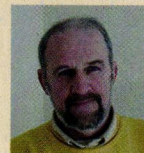
Skim-coating a brick or stone basement wall can help stop deterioration—as long as you use the right materials and address moisture infiltration first.

add water to your second batch until it reaches pancake-batter consistency.

While that sets up, smooth out the fins on your new plaster application with a wood float trowel. It's important to use a wood trowel—not steel—here, because steel will draw the water to the surface and rob suction from your fresh plaster.

Then begin smearing your second batch of plaster on the wall, working up until you reach a natural stopping point at a corner. Remember to keep your brick or stone substrate damp, but not soaking. Keep baptizing the wall ahead of you to make sure it's not too dry.

As long as you maintain reasonable water discharge systems outside at the foundation, this plaster application will hold up for years, giving your basement a clean, hygienic surface. 🏠



Jacob Arndt, principal of Northwestern Masonry & Stone Co., is a preservation consultant and architectural stone carver.

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.

house helpers

Our editors pick the best new products to make your old-house projects easier.

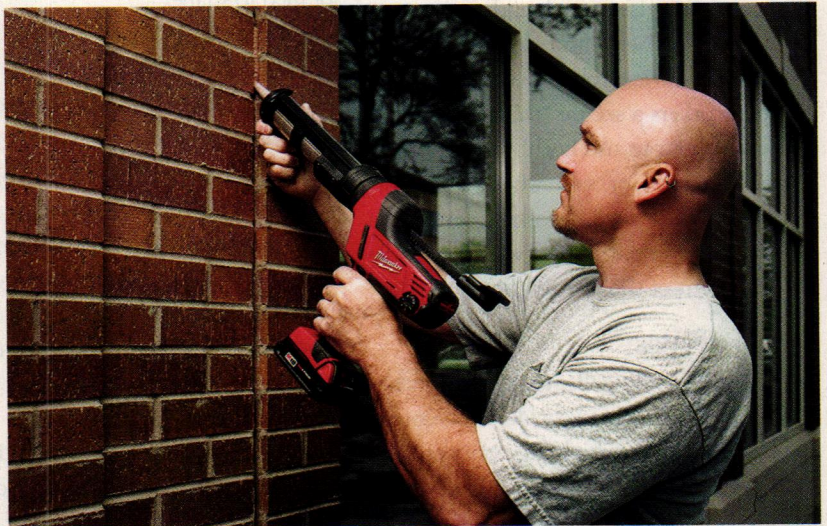


Match Points

It can be difficult to find period moldings to match originals that have gone missing in an old house—many folks have had to go so far as to have special knives cut (modeled off of fragments of original pieces). The recently launched Classical Molding collection from the Kuiken Brothers Company will make matching old moldings much easier. Featuring 66 historically accurate molding profiles in a range of architectural styles—Early American, Georgian (shown), Federal, Greek Revival, Colonial Revival, and Traditional Revival—these popular moldings are in stock, double-primed, and buffed, so they're ready to be installed, whether you need crown, casing, base, chair rail, or panel molding. Prices vary; casing starts at \$2.39/foot. Call (201) 705-5375, or visit kuikenbrothers.com.

Sure Shot

All caulk guns are not created equal. Milwaukee Electric Tool's new M18 Cordless Caulk and Adhesive Gun is a case in point: It delivers 950 pounds of force, has a variable-speed trigger, and boasts a six-setting maximum speed dial that optimizes the tool's flow rate (0" to 21" per minute). The result is incredible pushing force for particularly tough caulk and adhesive applications, and a high level of bead control. A special anti-drip mechanism stops material from oozing when you let go of the trigger, and a quick-change carriage allows for easy switches between 10-oz., quart, and sausage-style material containers. The M18 kit includes compact battery pack, 30-minute charger, and carrying case. \$279. Call (800) 729-3878, or visit milwaukeetool.com.



Locked In

Locking pliers can be an indispensable toolbox staple. C.H. Hanson's redesigned automatic locking pliers generate 1,660 pounds of tip pressure with just 83 pounds of force, and can lock to any size without having to adjust the tool via a knob. A quick-release lever opens the pliers, letting them move easily from one object to another, a more ergonomic design eliminates points that can pinch your hand, and a "set and forget" feature lets you control the pressure, from slight to extreme. Curved-jaw 10" locking pliers, \$20.36. Call (800) 827-3398, or visit chhanson.com.

old-house toolbox

Workbench Vises

When two hands aren't enough, a workbench vise can provide salvation.

By RAY TSCHOEPE

If you ask most woodworkers what they consider to be the heart of their shop, you might be surprised to learn that it's not the 5-hp table saw or the 20" bandsaw.

Rather, they'll probably cite the workbench as the true center of activity. While the typical workbench is usually little more than a heavy table, it has a crucial accessory: a vise at each end.

These vises—and dozens of other clamping devices related to them—afford woodworkers a secure “third hand” that allows them to use both hands to drill, plane, carve, or saw wood. For most homeowners, a woodworking vise and a machinist's or mechanic's vise can handle 90 percent of the projects you'll tackle.

Vise Types

The woodworking vise is a simple mechanism, consisting of two wide, flat cast-iron plates (or jaws), which are connected by a large, coarsely threaded Acme screw. One jaw is usually fixed, while the other moves. (A few styles eliminate the need for a fixed jaw by using the side or end of the workbench as the fixed side.) In almost every case, the vise jaws are fitted with wood faces so that clamped material is protected from being marred by the cast iron. Woodworking vises can be mounted on top of a workbench, but are more commonly mounted at the same height as the workbench.

The machinist's vise is probably the most common type of vise—it's the one that comes to mind when you think of

your father's workbench. Machinist's vises are almost always mounted on top of workbenches and feature two relatively narrow jaws that are opened and closed by a rotating iron or steel handle. While these narrower jaws certainly can be used for woodworking, you're limited in the size of wood you can clamp. Machinist's vises truly excel at clamping metals—such as flat steel or threaded rod—that need to be cut or filed to shape.

What to Look For

Woodworking vises come in an extraordinary number of variations, ranging from basic mechanisms to those designed to accommodate the needs of pattern-makers. These pattern vises not only clamp a variety of irregularly shaped pieces of wood, but also allow you to rotate and lock the wood into virtually any orientation. They're among the most versatile vises, but they can be quite expensive.

For a good basic woodworking vise, look for one that offers the broadest jaws and largest clamping capacity for the money. For convenience, you might also consider a vise with a quick-release mechanism, which allows you to disengage the tightening mechanism so the vise jaw can be slid open or closed to gently engage the wood, then clamped securely with a simple partial turn.

On machinist's vises, helpful features include a body that rotates or has a small anvil cast into it to bring clamped material into a comfortable orientation for filing or drilling.

Remember, when purchasing any type



RAY TSCHOEPE PHOTO

A basic woodworking vise holds a 2x4 tight against the workbench for sawing.

of vise, go for the best that you can afford. Little-known bargain brands are usually constructed from poor-quality cast iron, which is prone to cracking under repeated stress. In addition, the jaws may not align, and the finish leaves much to be desired.

With care, a high-quality vise will serve you for the rest of your life—and perhaps even your children and grandchildren's lives, too. 🏠

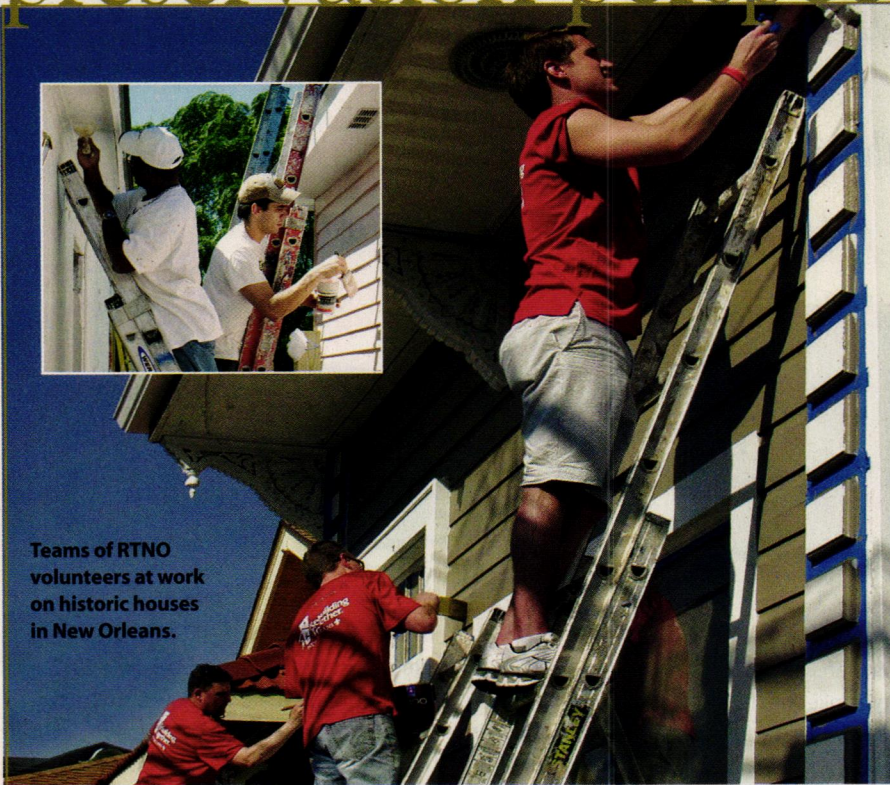


Ray Tschoepe, one of OHJ's contributing editors, is the director of conservation at the Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust in Philadelphia.

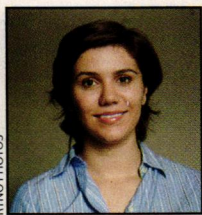
preservation perspectives



Teams of RTNO volunteers at work on historic houses in New Orleans.



Come Together



RTNO PHOTOS

Rebuilding Together New Orleans (RTNO) restores historic buildings and helps low-income property owners make repairs. We spoke with executive director Daniela Rivero to learn how.

By DEMETRA APOSPOROS

DEMETRA APOSPOROS: What's RTNO's background, and how does it work?

DANIELA RIVERO: We're a program of the Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans, and part of the Rebuilding Together network, which has 200 affiliates around the country. Our mission is to improve the quality of life of low-income homeowners through home repairs and community revitalization. We do everything from paint jobs and exterior work to new roofs and full renovation of a house that's gutted.

DA: Who does the repairs?

DR: We work with contractors, have skilled staff and AmeriCorps service members who

work with teams of volunteers—many of them come from out of town, from universities and faith-based groups—and we have a volunteer coordinator. Our goal is to have about 75 people a day volunteering all year round, and we get higher capacity certain times of the year, like spring break. In order for us to go into a neighborhood, they have to request that we come in, and we prioritize the projects.

DA: How do you prioritize?

DR: We have an eligibility matrix, where we measure the level of need of the homeowner, their age, the scope of work on the house, and any special needs. For example, if we have a family that needs to get back

into their house but has an OK living situation, they don't get the same priority as a family living in a gutted building.

DA: How did Hurricane Katrina impact your work?

DR: Before Katrina, we were more of a small home-repair program, but afterward we became more all-encompassing, doing full renovations of gutted houses.

DA: Have you tackled a lot of houses post-Katrina?

DR: We've done about 350 houses post-Katrina, which in the scope of the tragedy is not that much. But there is a multiplicative effect when you rebuild a house...it usually incites the neighbors to improve their home, and makes others more prone to come back. We see it in many neighborhoods we've worked in—the people we've moved in have really anchored the community, and served as a magnet for recovery.

DA: Tell me about your deconstruction program.

DR: It started in 2007, after FEMA started demolishing a lot of historic houses—which we fought. We reached a compromise—that they would let us salvage the historic elements. We think deconstruction is an alternative to demolitions; it's creating value out of nothing. The salvaged items go to our salvage store or our warehouse, where they're recycled in our rebuilds.

DA: Are items in the salvage store available to the general public?

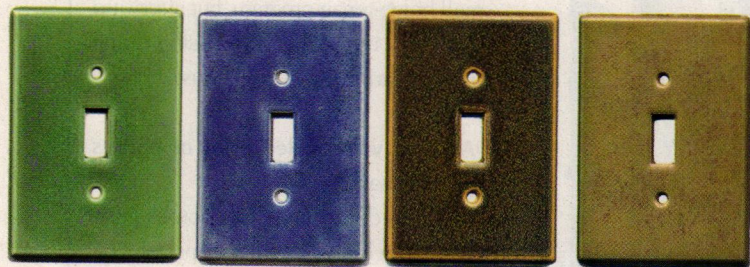
DR: Yes, and they're very affordable. For example, you can find a set of giant pocket doors from an old house that is reasonably priced. There are a lot of people looking for quality materials at a low price.

For more information on Rebuilding Together New Orleans, visit rtno.org.

period products

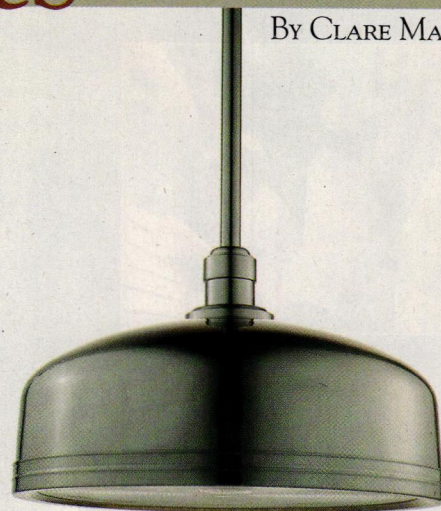
BY CLARE MARTIN

Brighten up your old house this winter with these fresh new finds.



Colorful Clay

Handmade pottery has long been a standby of Arts & Crafts decorating. With their new collection, Clay Squared to Infinity applies the rich earth tones of Arts & Crafts pottery to a universally overlooked surface: the switchplate. Their Arts & Crafts ceramic switchplates come in one of four colors—from jadeite green to neutral beige—and multiple configurations, so you never again have to worry about previous owners' cheap plastic updates ruining an otherwise pristinely re-created room. From \$20 each. Call (612) 781-6409, or visit claysquared.com.



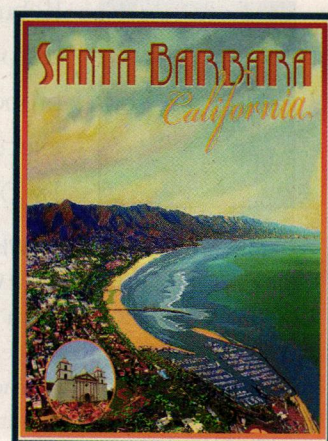
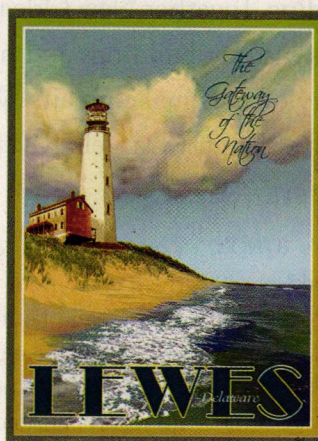
Hang Time

Basic pendant lights are a must-have for utilitarian-style 19th- and early 20th-century kitchen remodels. The Winslow from Hudson Valley Lighting is an instant classic: Its oversized shape makes it an ideal focal point, but at the same time, its understated design (with either a satin nickel or nickel-trimmed milky white glass shade) won't detract from other standout kitchen elements. \$375. Call (845) 561-0300, or visit hudsonvalleylighting.com.



Work of Art

When people say that life imitates art, they usually don't mean it quite this literally: Farrow & Ball's Broccato Papers feature patterns lifted from decorative brocade fabrics found in Italian Renaissance-era paintings at London's National Gallery. While the design elements (oak leaves, acorns, birds, thistles, and trellised florals) are appropriate for a wide variety of period homes, the wallpapers' fresh colors and metallic sheen makes them far from musty. \$245 per roll. Call (888) 511-1121, or visit farrow-ball.com.



Beachy Keen

If cooler temps have you longing for sunny summer days, why not add a bit of the beach to your walls? Taking his cues from Art Deco-era travel posters, artist Aurielo Grisanty (a resident of Rehoboth Beach, Delaware) has created a series of spot-on illustrations that honor classic American seaside towns, from Santa Barbara to Fire Island. The colorful, retro-style images are guaranteed to perk up a blank wall—or a drizzly day. Unframed posters, \$35; framed, \$135. Call (302) 537-6617, or visit beachtownposters.com.

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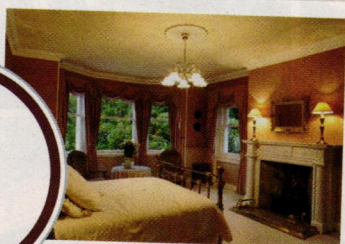
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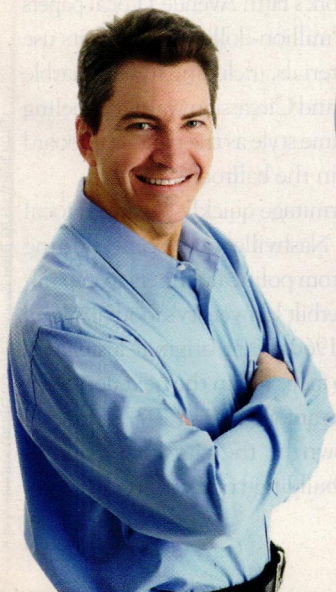
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The Hermitage Hotel

With a storied past and updated glamour, Nashville's Hermitage Hotel dominates the city's social scene.

BY CLARE MARTIN

When a hotel sits at the intersection of politics (the Tennessee State Capitol is one block north) and country music (the Ryman Auditorium, the historic home of the Grand Ole Opry, is two blocks south), you can imagine it might rack up some interesting stories over the years. And indeed, in its 101-year history, Nashville's Hermitage Hotel has amassed quite a collection.

There's the time that a guest room was emptied of furniture and blanketed with canvas so cowboy minstrel Gene Autry's beloved horse, Champion, could stay with him in the hotel. Legendary pool shark Minnesota Fats lived there for eight years; the management sprang for a \$3,200 Steepleton billiards table so

he'd have somewhere to play. In the early 20th century, the hotel served as a staging ground for the women's suffrage movement; it's hosted presidents, governors, and countless entertainers over the years.

But the Hermitage Hotel's story hasn't always been a happy one. The Beaux Arts building debuted in 1910, designed by

ABOVE: The skylight in the lobby and walnut paneling and chandeliers in the ballroom are original; the entrance was revamped in 2002.

native son J.E.R. Carpenter—who, as the first Tennessean formally trained in architecture, boasted a notable resume that included stints with H.H. Richardson and McKim, Mead, & White. (Carpenter would go on to design several luxury high-rise apartments along New York's Fifth Avenue.) Local papers praised the “million-dollar hotel” for its use of exotic materials, including Italian marble in the lobby and Circassian walnut paneling (cut in the same style as the paneling aboard the *Titanic*) in the ballroom.

The Hermitage quickly became a focal point on the Nashville social scene, hosting everything from political dinners to pep rallies for Vanderbilt University's football team. But by the 1960s, that original luster was beginning to fade, and in the next decade, it would disappear for good. In 1977, the hotel was shut down by the city for numerous health- and building-code violations.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE HERMITAGE HOTEL EXCEPT WHERE NOTED

A major restoration in 1980 brought the Hermitage back from the brink of destruction. The distinctive Italian painted-glass skylight that illuminates the lobby, which had been painted with black tar pitch at some point to control leakage, was painstakingly restored. Crumbling sections of the veranda's terracotta walls were replaced, and acoustical tiles that had been added in the Capitol Grille, the hotel's restaurant, were removed.

And yet, the hotel still struggled to stay above water for most of the 1980s and '90s. Finally, in 2000, salvation came in the form of Historic Hotels of Nashville LLC, which bought the Hermitage and closed its doors for a year to embark upon its most ambitious renovation project to date. The \$17 million effort sought to update the hotel's early grandeur for a 21st-century clientele by meticulously restoring public spaces while adding the latest amenities.



Architect Ron Gobbell, whose firm, Gobbell Hays, led the restoration effort, says the team used historic photographs of the hotel as a guide for bringing back certain elements, but didn't shy away from taking an interpretive approach in other areas. "In today's world, people expect a much richer environment," he explains. For instance, in the original iteration of the hotel, a cigar stand occupied the west wall of the lobby. Today, that same wall is home to a cozy seating area anchored by a fireplace with a clas-

sical mantel and marble surround, topped by a massive 11' x 7' gilded mirror that was rescued during the 1980s restoration.

In the ballroom, where the burled walnut paneling had dulled thanks to years of finish deterioration and grime, crews worked tirelessly to remove the dirt and old varnish by hand. Once the wood had been stripped, they hand-applied three new coats of varnish to return the paneling's lustrous gleam.

Upstairs, the guest rooms were completely transformed. "We essentially took

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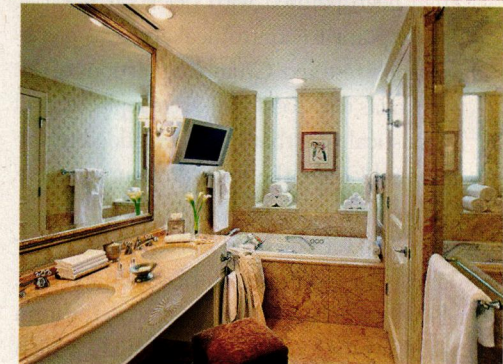
Rates start at \$220 per night, based on double occupancy. If you just want to soak in the historic grandeur of the restored lobby, afternoon tea is served in front of the fireplace Thursday through Sunday, starting at 3 p.m.

out everything they had done in the 1980s," Gobbell says. The '80s remodel had created suites with a parlor and bedroom; this project removed the parlor, creating more spacious bedrooms and expanding the bathrooms to include both walk-in showers and luxurious soaking tubs.

Throughout the various renovations, there's one part of the hotel that's remained virtually untouched: the green and black Art Deco-style men's room in the base-

ment, which is believed to have been added in the 1940s. When their research turned up evidence of the original 1910 bathroom, the hotel's current owners debated whether to take out the distinctive terrazzo floors and mint-green sinks, but Gobbell put his foot down. "I said, 'I don't take many stands, but I'll stand up for this bathroom,'" he laughs. The owners agreed, and the space received only minor updates (including the restoration of its original shoeshine stand). The bathroom has become a landmark in its own right, even winning the title of "America's Best Restroom" in an online contest.

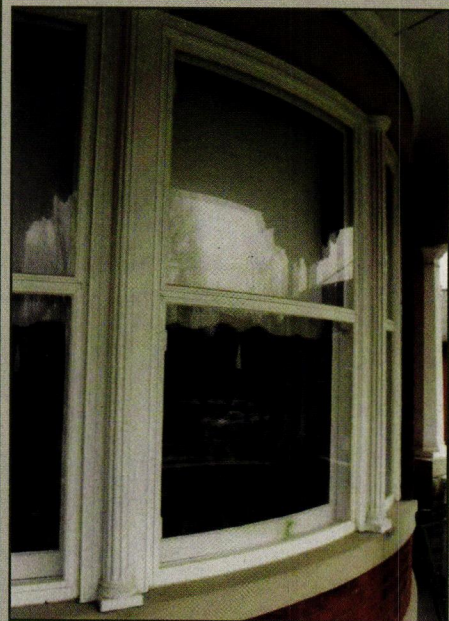
Since its grand reopening in 2003, the Hermitage has resumed its place at the center of Nashville's social and political scenes. It's not uncommon to see legislators and lobbyists breaking bread at the Capitol Grille, and the guest register often boasts celebrity names. But the real star



The Art Deco men's room in the basement (top) boasts its original shoeshine stand; a luxurious marble-lined guest bathroom (bottom).

is the hotel itself, which weathered a century of changing fortunes to emerge more elegant than ever. 🏠

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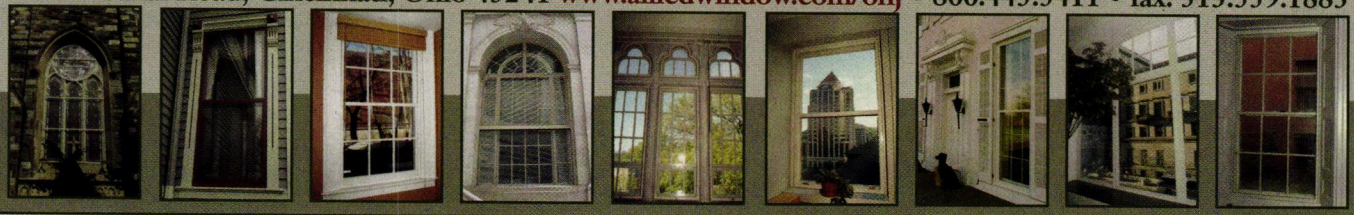


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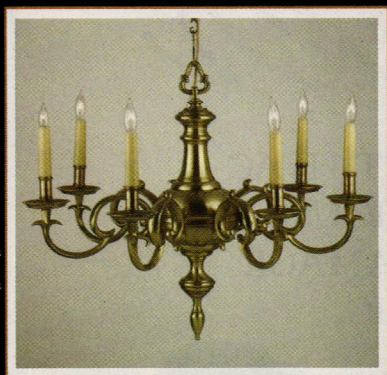
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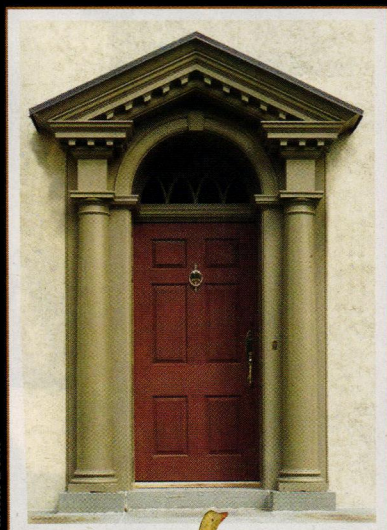
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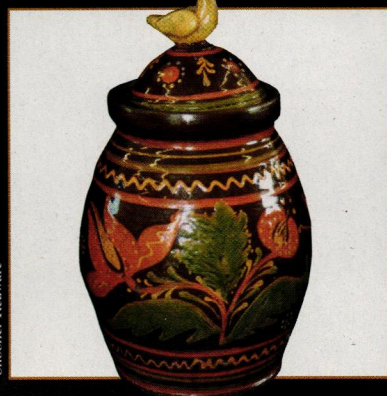
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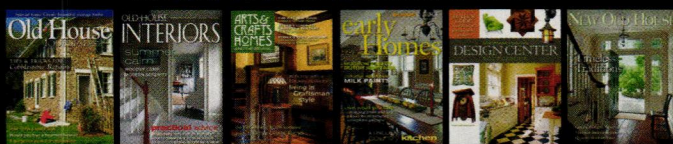
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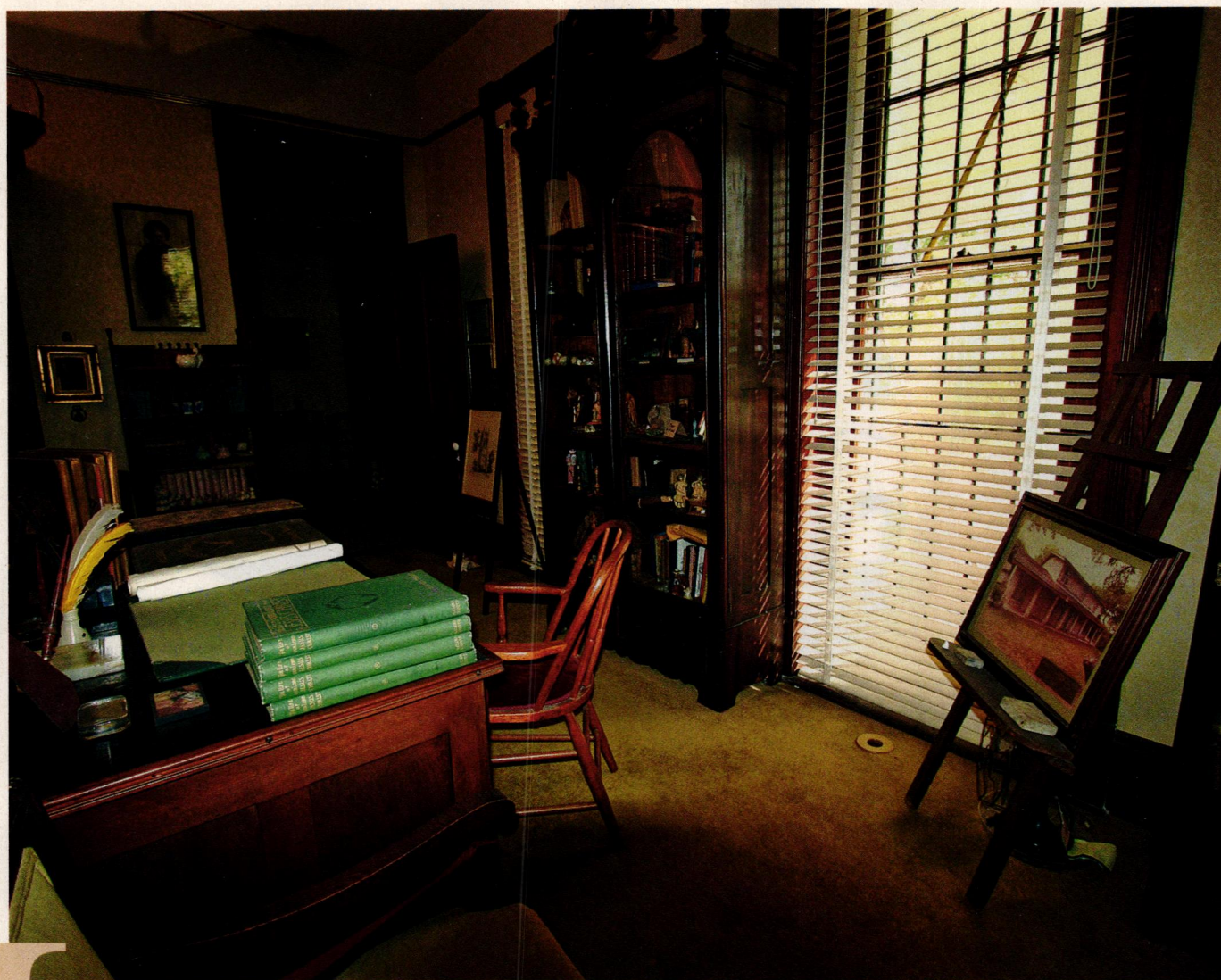
Smaller than a compact disc, high-velocity mini-duct vents are an unobtrusive choice for heating and cooling old houses.

SMALL *Wonder*

A HIGH-VELOCITY, MINI-DUCT HVAC SYSTEM CAN BRING AN OLD HOUSE UP TO DATE WITH MINIMAL DAMAGE TO ITS HISTORIC FABRIC.

By JEFFERSON KOLLE

SPACEPAK PHOTO



PEGGY LEE OSTER PHOTO

In Maryland, the summers are brutally hot. Just ask the Sisson family: Starting around April each year, their three-story 1942 brick house became more like a brick oven, even with the help of a few window-unit air conditioners.

They briefly considered installing a traditional central air conditioning system—"but if we'd done that," says Welmoed Sisson, "we would have lost all our closets because that's where the giant metal ductwork would have had to go." Fortunately for the family's comfort and the house's well-being, Welmoed's husband, Bob—in her words, "an avowed technogeek"—discovered an alternate

solution: a high-velocity, mini-duct HVAC system.

As the name implies, the system pushes conditioned air at high speeds through small ducts. For old-house owners, the main attraction is that the small (3" diameter), flexible ducts can be snaked through walls and on top of ceilings without the need to cut big chases or drop a ceiling. And unlike the large wall-, floor-, or ceiling-mounted air registers and grilles required for a traditional HVAC system, mini-duct systems deliver conditioned air through grilles that are smaller than an audio CD.

While high-velocity mini-duct systems are often used to cool old houses that are heated by radiators, they also can be used to deliver heat. Two companies in the

At the Flower Hill Museum in Austin, a vent blends in with the flooring.

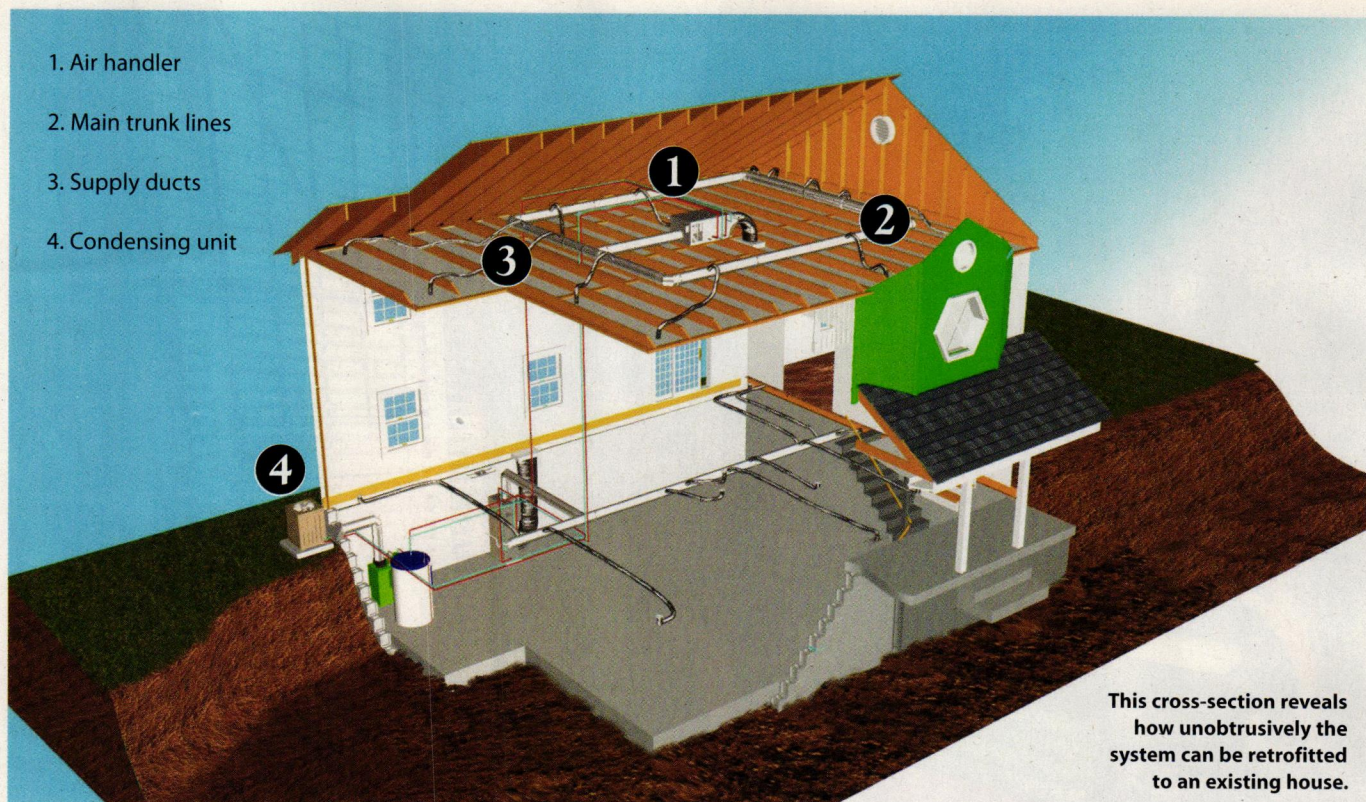
U.S., Unico and SpacePak, manufacture complete systems that also can be mixed and matched with other companies' furnaces and air-conditioning components.

HVAC Basics

Having some basic knowledge about how traditional heating and cooling systems work will help you understand what's involved with installing a mini-duct system.

An air conditioner does make rooms cooler, but what it's actually doing is removing the heat from the air in your house. More accurately, it moves the heat from inside the house to the outside.

Central air-conditioning systems are comprised of both indoor and outdoor



This cross-section reveals how unobtrusively the system can be retrofitted to an existing house.

UNICO ILLUSTRATION AND PHOTOS

components. A closed loop of copper tubing contains a refrigerant, commonly known as Freon, that is constantly circulated from the inside of the house to the outside, then back in.

You've undoubtedly seen the outdoor component of an air-conditioning system—the compressor/condenser unit, which is usually set on a concrete pad on the shady side of the house, making a fair amount of noise and giving off a large amount of heat.

Inside the house is a matrix of ductwork connected to a plenum, which is a large air distribution box. From the plenum, one system of ducts delivers cooled air to the rooms through vents on the floors, walls, or ceilings. A second duct system, known as the return, pulls warm air from the rooms. Connected to the plenum is an air handler with a fan and an evaporator inside.

Here's how it all works in concert: Pressurized liquid refrigerant enters the house inside the loop of copper tubing, where it's carried to the evaporator. The

evaporator then sprays the refrigerant through a nozzle, causing its temperature to drop as it evaporates inside the tubing and turns to a gas. At the same time, warm air from the return ductwork passes over the evaporator, causing the heat in the air to be absorbed by the cooled, gaseous refrigerant. The cooled air is then pushed through the air handler, into the plenum, out through the delivery duct, and through the vents into the room.

Back to the now-hot, gaseous refrigerant: It's pumped outside the house into the compressor/condenser unit. The compressor further pressurizes the gaseous refrigerant, which raises its temperature. The high-pressure, high-temperature refrigerant gas enters the condensing coil, where it is cooled to a liquid state by a fan blowing outside air across the condensing coil. The fan blowing across the coil releases the heat into the atmosphere and cools



The system's air handler and trunk lines are easily installed in extra attic space.



LEFT: Small, flexible insulated ducts can fit into a variety of spaces where boxy traditional ductwork can't go.

BELOW: The compact air handler is available in both horizontal and vertical configurations; its module construction means you can customize it depending on whether you need heating, cooling, or both.



the refrigerant, turning it back to a liquid before it re-enters the house, and the whole process continues.

Forced-air heating systems use the same ducts as the A/C, but the air is heated by a gas- or oil-fired furnace and pushed through the ducts into the rooms.

The Mini-Duct Approach

A high-velocity, mini-duct system operates similarly to conventional systems in that it also moves heat out of a house by absorbing it indoors and releasing it outside. Both systems use refrigerant, an air handler, evaporator, and a compressor/condenser.

So how is a mini-duct system different? To understand the distinction, imagine that a mini-duct system is a plastic drinking straw and a traditional system is a cardboard paper-towel tube. To get an idea of how much space a mini-duct system takes up in your house, think about how many straws you can stand upright in an average coffee mug versus how many paper-towel tubes. Now think about blowing air through a plastic drinking straw and then through the cardboard tube. In order to exhale the same amount of air, it has to travel much more quickly through the straw.

The velocity of air that comes through a mini-duct vent has a lot to do with both where the ducts are located in a room and the number of ducts used. Going back to the straw and cardboard tube, imagine blowing that air on a stick of burning incense. When you blow through the tube, chances are the smoke will just continue on its lazy way to the ceiling. But blow through the straw, and the smoke will disperse and move through the room. That's due to the high speed of the air and something called Bernoulli's principle: an increase in air speed creates

a vacuum behind the air flow that pulls more air back toward the source of the flow.

The result is that the air in a room will be better mixed. With a traditional A/C system, the air can stratify: Slow-flowing, cool air pools near the floor, while temperatures in other areas of the room can be 5 to 7 degrees higher. SpacePak's Ted Brown says setting a mini-duct thermostat to 72 degrees will feel the same as a conventional A/C thermostat

What About Ductless?

Mini-duct systems aren't the only high-tech HVAC product captivating old-house owners these days. Ductless systems (also called mini-split systems) are another option that involves minimal alteration of historic building fabric. In a ductless system, air cooled in an outdoor compressor is delivered directly through refrigerant lines to an indoor delivery unit, which blows the cooled air into the room. Ductless systems also can be used in conjunction with a heat pump to warm a house. (Because they're more powerful than traditional window units, it takes fewer ductless units to heat and cool a house.)

Installation is generally cheaper and easier for ductless systems than for mini-duct or traditional ones because no ductwork has to be run. They also can be easily configured for zone heating or cooling (see "In the Zone," page 28). The downside? The indoor air delivery unit, usually mounted on a wall near the ceiling, can be a pretty conspicuous piece of modern equipment in an otherwise pristine period room.



In the kitchen of the Flower Hill Museum, ducts were snaked through a pantry closet to avoid disturbing the original floors.

PEGGY LEE OSTER PHOTO

In The Zone

Zone heating and cooling—in which you control the temperature only in the rooms you use—is a great way to reduce energy consumption, and it's easy to do with mini-duct systems. Recent innovations from SpacePak allow them to install a thermostat in every room of a house. The thermostats are connected to a control board that operates a small motor and pump, which opens and closes a damper and regulates the amount of air entering a room. "Even though a family might have a 4,000-square-foot house," says SpacePak's Ted Brown, "chances are, they're only using about 1,200 square feet of it at any given time."

their own heating sources, from electric furnaces to gas-fired boilers to a reverse-cycle heat pump that absorbs heat from outside and moves it to the inside of a building. Their mini-duct systems also can be hooked up to a variety of other manufacturers' oil, gas, or electric boilers or furnaces, or can be retrofitted to some existing systems.

Installation & Costs

The first step to installing a mini-duct system, says Dave Corcoran, owner of D&D HVAC in Somers, Connecticut, is to make a heat-loss calculation for the building (taking into account such factors as geographic location, solar orientation, insulation levels, and number of windows and doors) to decide its air conditioning needs. The air handler is installed first, often mounted in an attic. From there, Corcoran's crew installs the main trunk lines—6" or 7"-diameter insulated ducts that feed the air handler and can be laid on joists or hung from the rafters.

Next, the 3"-diameter flexible ducts are run from the trunk to the ceilings and walls in various rooms, where they're attached to small vents in the ceilings, walls, or floors. To get to rooms on lower

set to 68 degrees. "We've had customers call us to say that their thermostats must be broken because the rooms feel so much cooler than where they've set the dial."

Mini-duct systems also have the advantage of removing up to 30 percent more humidity than a traditional system—drier air feels cooler than more humid air of the same temperature.

You also can operate a mini-duct A/C system on dehumidify mode, a great way

to reduce energy costs if you don't need to cool your house but just want to knock down the mugginess in the air.

Heating your house with a mini-duct system has the same benefits as cooling: quick, unobtrusive installation and superior air circulation. Adding heating capacity to a mini-duct system simply requires adding a source of heat that can warm air to be pushed through the ductwork. Both Unico and SpacePak manufacture



UNICO PHOTO

floors, the 3" ducts can be snaked through interior or non-insulated walls or through existing chases.

Inline sound attenuators (similar to car mufflers) are installed on the ducts to reduce any wind noise from the high-velocity air. "These systems aren't any more noisy than traditional ones," Corcoran says.

The size of the ducts makes them fast to install; a typical installation takes just a few days. "It's rare that we can't find a way to get the ducts to a room," adds Corcoran. "For traditional systems, you run the ducts and cut in the grilles where you're able to. With a mini-duct system, you run the ducts and install the vents where you want them."

The cutting-edge technology does make mini-duct systems pricey (on average, about 25 to 40 percent more than a conventional HVAC system), but material

For the ultimate mini-duct camouflage, Unico offers a variety of wood-finished vents to match the grain and tone of hardwood floors.

costs are only one factor in the equation.

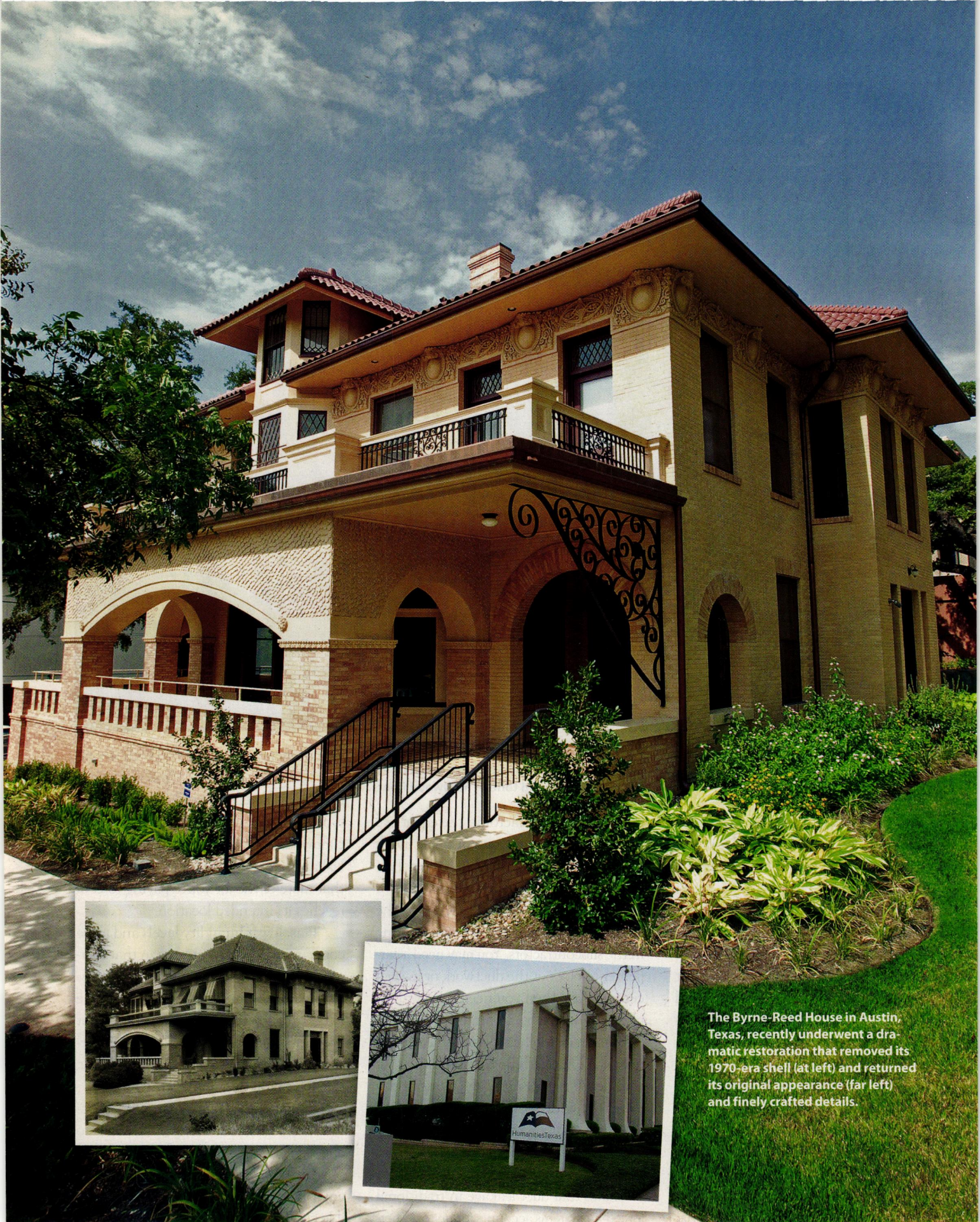
"A conventional system takes much longer to install," points out John Baldasaro, national sales manager for SpacePak, "and in most cases, when the HVAC guys are finished, it's time to bring in the subcontractors. You may need a carpenter to box out the ductwork or lower a ceiling. And then you need a drywall or plaster guy, maybe a painter or even an electrician if switches or outlets need to be moved." That adds up to more time that your house is in disarray and more money to get the extra work done.

It's also important to take into account the total system performance when comparing costs. The Energy Conservatory estimates that duct leakage in traditional forced-air systems accounts for up to 25 per-

cent of energy costs. Based on both laboratory and on-site testing, Unico estimates that its insulated ductwork has "less than 5-percent duct leakage," and Baldasaro claims that SpacePak has a 0-percent leakage rate. Ducts that don't leak mean that more of the air you're paying to cool reaches its intended location.

Plus, lower humidity levels and more constant air temperatures mean that thermostats can be set higher. "The industry rule of thumb is that every 1 degree Fahrenheit you raise your thermostat accounts for a 3-percent savings in air-conditioning costs," says Randy Niederer, Unico's marketing manager.

Before the advent of mini-duct systems, old-house owners often had to choose between preserving the integrity of their home or staying cool enough to enjoy it. Now, they can have both—invisible cooling and intact period rooms. 🏠



The Byrne-Reed House in Austin, Texas, recently underwent a dramatic restoration that removed its 1970-era shell (at left) and returned its original appearance (far left) and finely crafted details.



Victorian geometric tiles on the front porch were unearthed beneath 4" of concrete—they remained virtually unscathed.

A Remarkable Transformation

HISTORICAL PHOTOS COURTESY OF HUMANITIES TEXAS

LIKE A FROG PRINCE, AN OLD HOUSE IN TEXAS REVEALED ITS TRUE BEAUTY WHEN THE RIGHT HERO CAME ALONG.

STORY BY BETH GOULART ♦ PHOTOS BY VAN DITTHAVONG

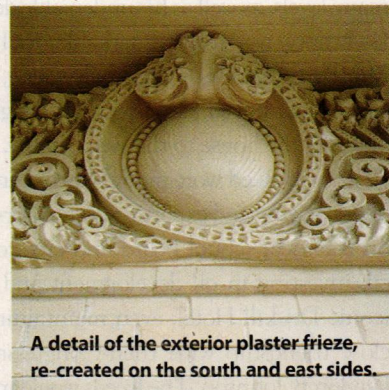
Once upon a time, an unremarkable, 1970s mausoleum-style building sat at the corner of 15th and Rio Grande streets in downtown Austin, Texas, its white stucco façade and unadorned columns casting sharp rectangular shadows in the Texas sun.

Today, cars slow at the intersection to soak in the beauty of that same building,

now restored to its original early 20th-century appearance. The story of how the Byrne-Reed House went from eyesore to head-turner has all the makings of a real-world fairy tale.

Distinctive Beginnings

Long ago, the house was a turn-of-the-century beauty, designed by C.H. Page, Jr., a local "it" architect of his time, and built in 1906 for a prominent local family, the Byrnes. Its style might best be described as "Texas eclec-



A detail of the exterior plaster frieze, re-created on the south and east sides.



Old photos were critical to the restoration. A shadow visible in Ruth Reed's wedding portrait (below, on wall at upper left) guided the design of the decorative scroll on the stair landing.



CASEY DUNN PHOTO

tic"—with Spanish-style terracotta roof tiles, Richardsonian Romanesque arches, Prairie-style porches, and Art Nouveau friezes tucked under the eaves, it melded many architectural styles, defying true categorization. Yet its architect's attention to detail on many levels, as well as his undeniable desire for beauty, was truly remarkable. In 1915, Mrs. Byrne died disappointingly young, and Mr. Byrne moved closer to their daughter and sold the house to the Reed family.

David Reed wore many hats in central Texas, buying and exporting cotton, serving on the local school board and city council, investing in oil development and the iconic Driskill Hotel, even maintaining a close friendship with then-Congressman Lyndon B. Johnson. The Reeds would make

this their home for three and a half decades, raising a family and even marrying a daughter here. They remodeled the house twice, moving a couple of interior walls to create a larger living room. Upon David Reed's death in a plane crash in 1948, the building's fortunes changed dramatically.

In 1952, an insurance company purchased the home and modified it for use as an office building. In 1969, stucco was wrapped on a steel frame around the entire building—"a 1970s stucco slipcover," says architect Ken Johnson, one of a phalanx of knights in shining armor who would ultimately rescue the home from this shroud. At the same time, a line of soldier-straight, two-story columns was added along the north façade. By 2000, the once-lovely home was

unrecognizable—a behemoth, stuccoed office building. With its square shape, tall rectangular windows, and overall lack of curves, it looked like something that could have been designed with Legos.

Inside, the changes were a history buff's horror story. The sprawling porch had been enclosed and divided into offices, its tile floor drowned in concrete. Interior doors and windows had been masked with drywall and stucco, and ceilings had been dropped with acoustic tile and florescent lighting panels. Architect Emily Little describes its pre-restoration condition succinctly: "It was a mess."

Turning Tides

The hero of our story is Humanities Texas, a nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The organization had been looking for a new home for some time, says Michael L. Gillette, its executive director. "We wanted a building that evoked heritage," he remembers. "We didn't want a glass box." They wanted to be downtown, too. So although the stucco-

ensconced building didn't exactly scream "heritage"—at least not the kind they had in mind—in 2006, Gillette and the Humanities Texas board took a leap. Like the princess who kissed a frog without knowing just what would happen, they bought the building, intending to restore it. They would spend the next three and a half years raising funds from a variety of sources for what would ultimately be a nearly \$5 million project. Austin architectural firm Clayton & Little mapped out the restoration.

The Humanities Texas staff and a collection of traveling exhibits already occupied the building when construction began, so the architects and contractors started demolition on a micro scale to avoid disturbing the workspace. They cut more than a dozen holes, each 2' square, into the drywall and stucco at strategic locations on the building's interior and exterior. Each hole was big enough to peer into, an attempt to get a peek at what lay beneath. But the holes didn't prepare the team for a series of stunning surprises unearthed as demolition got underway in earnest.

The surprise that Gillette remembers as "probably the most exciting discovery" came on the porch. Contractors pummeling through the 4"-thick concrete floor were amazed to find original geometric tile beneath it. The concrete hadn't adhered to

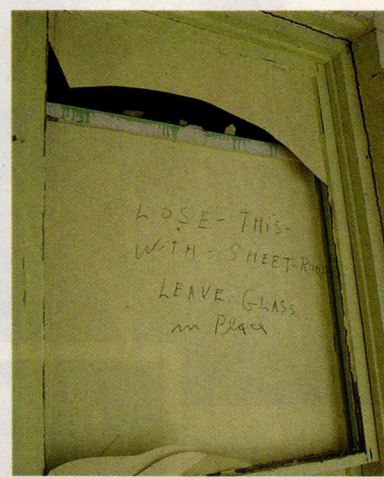


Intricate plaster moldings and appliques were returned to the dining room.

the tile, so it released easily. Consequently, the majority of the tile was left essentially unblemished; most tiles needed only a rudimentary cleaning. Other surprises ranged from the mundane to the fortuitous. A toilet paper roll sitting on its holder inside a wall was simply a colorful anecdote. But the crew also found two historic windows in their entirety—original sash, intact glass,

functioning hardware, and even screens in place—completely encased in stucco and wood paneling. One window was left open in what seems to have been a harried remodel.

Then there were the surprises most home restorers can only dream of uncovering. A segment of wrought-iron railing from a second-story porch was found embedded in a plaster wall, and used as a guide to replicate



An old photograph (inset) shows kids playing cards in front of built-ins; the room today. A note scrawled by 1970s-era renovators—"Leave glass in place"—hints at their sensitivity to the building.

Wrought Iron Railings

When the Byrne-Reed House's second-story balcony railings were originally fabricated, craftsmen fastened them together using mechanical connections. "It was all cut and drilled and tapped and screwed together—in some cases, it was hot-riveted," says Gary Walker of Quality Fence and Welding in San

Antonio, Texas. When Walker was approached with an original segment of that railing and asked to re-create it, he turned to welding—a faster, modern means of attaching all the pieces together.

Even creating those pieces, though, required some ingenuity. "Those scrolls were handmade way back in the day," he says, "so it wasn't like you could just pull a measurement off them." Instead, he and his team traced

every curve onto cardboard with a pencil, then cut out the pieces with a razor. They used these as guides to make steel jigs that they molded each curve around, heating the metal with a blowtorch and shaping it as they went.

Walker's proudest achievement, however, is the 700-pound corbel that flanks the front entry. With a daunting size and no original for reference, Walker's team used a CAD system to draw a replica from an old photograph, then printed the drawing on a plotter and used that printout to shape their jigs. They made each scroll individually, then welded them all together.

Scrolls were re-created with the help of intricate tracings.

its missing kin. A couple of sections of the concrete railing that had surrounded the first-floor porch remained intact, entombed inside an exterior wall, and also were used to guide replacements. Many sections of the original plaster frieze that had crowned the building, as well as parts of the concrete capitals that topped the porch columns, were likewise uncovered intact.

Perhaps most helpfully, pieces of the home's original clay roof tiles were unearthed during excavation for utilities—they had apparently been thrown into the yard when they were replaced with standard-order composite tiles some half a century ago. One tile still bore its manufacturer's name: Ludowici-Celadon Co. That same

company, now known simply as Ludowici, was contracted to match the original tile to restore the entire 5,100-square-foot roof.

As the demolition continued, the villains of our fairy tale—the remodelers who had

betrayed the home's history with their heavy-handed changes—started emerging as unlikely saviors. Wittingly or not, they had preserved much of the home's story even as they obliterated other parts. The words "leave glass in place" were discovered in pencil on one sheetrock-enclosed window. Could that have been a worker's attempt to leave a clue for future restorers?

Photo Finish

Not all of the team's guidance came from the demolition process. They also were armed with historic photographs contributed by descendants of both the Byrne and Reed families. The team used the photos at the beginning of the project to identify targets for the exploratory holes, then later as guides for restoring details, from exterior plasterwork to the staircase inside. "We couldn't have done it without them," says Little.

Some details stared out plainly from the photos—the plaster trim around the porch arches, for instance. Others emerged more subtly. When restoring the partial wall at the base of the house's grand central staircase, for instance, the architects had little to go



TOP LEFT: HUMANITIES TEXAS; BOTTOM LEFT: QUALITY FENCE AND WELDING

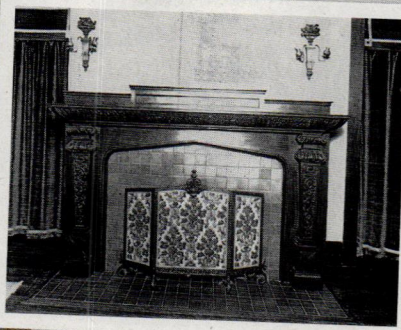


Tile fragments excavated in the garden confirmed the original roof's manufacturer—Ludowici—who was able to provide a perfect match.





Lacking evidence of its original appearance, the team placed a simple mantel on the main hall fireplace. With new photo documentation (below), they now plan to restore it someday.



on. Then Johnson noticed a shadow on the wall in a bridal portrait from Ruth Reed's 1934 wedding. The shadow clued him into how, at the time, a piece of carved wood decorating the landing had curved back on itself before abutting the adjacent wall. The architects built a cardboard mockup of the shape they thought would create that shadow and set it in place to make sure they had it right before having a local woodworker Joe Zambrano carve the final piece.

The photos also helped supplement information the architects dug up from the city's records. A broad understanding of the house's history guided their decision to restore the exterior to 1907, the year the home was completed. Inside, though, they opted to take it back to 1948. The slightly altered Reed floor plan

from that year better suited the functionality Humanities Texas needed from the building. The team also thought it made sense to reflect the imprint both families had left on the house.

The staff of Humanities Texas and the architects who planned this restoration hope to do more over time. Toward the project's end, a visiting antiques dealer recognized carvings in the house as the work of Peter Mansbendel, a local wood and plaster carver who was prolific throughout Texas during the early 20th century. That led architect Little to explore an archive of Mansbendel's work, eventually coming across a photograph of the original fireplace in the Byrne-Reed House's main hall. Before they stumbled upon this information, the

team had opted to keep the fireplace as simple as possible in the absence of data about its original appearance. Now they hope to restore it one day. But even without the reproduced mantel, the house is already living its happily ever after. 🏠



Watch the Byrne-Reed House's remarkable transformation through time-lapse photography.

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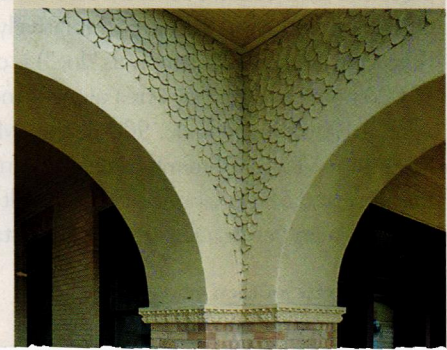
HUMANITIES TEXAS PHOTO

Exterior Plaster

It took Martin Diaz, Sr., a plaster craftsman with three decades of experience, six weeks to develop a technique for re-creating the unusual scalloped texture of the original exterior walls on the house's first-floor porch.

He studied an old photograph, counting the number of "tears," he calls them, over an area of wall to determine the size of each. Then he began experimenting. Like a cookie baker, he scooped cement from a 5-gallon bucket, then pressed each mound flat onto a test board. He tried every trowel in his kit, and even a cut-down plastic soda bottle, but nothing produced a tear the right size and shape. Finally, a trip to Wal-Mart yielded an ice-cream scoop that was just right. The key was to use the exact same amount of cement for each tear, he says, and the ice-cream scoop—which he estimates held between 9 and 12 ounces—did the trick.

After honing his method on a test board, Diaz set to work on the house itself. He hung the walls with heavy metal lathe, then draped them in three coats of plaster—about 3/4" thick—and let it dry for at least 48 hours. Section by section, he re-wetted the cured plaster to aid adherence, then added a layer of Bondo adhesive. Working one tear at a time, he dipped his scoop into the cement, then used a trowel to flatten the scoop onto the wall. All told, he made some 10,000 tears. He instructed the crew to wait at least a week to 10 days before painting so that any residual moisture had time to evaporate to avoid potential cracking in the future.





Iconic Eichlers

EXPLORING A CALIFORNIA DEVELOPER'S POPULAR MODERNISTIC DESIGNS.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JAMES C. MASSEY AND SHIRLEY MAXWELL

California's Bay Area Peninsula is a place where devotees of mid-20th-century "Soft Modern" architecture flock to find their dream homes. Many of these homes are "Eichlers"—one of the legions of geometrically spare, eminently livable houses erected from 1950 to 1966 by the now-legendary developer Joseph L. Eichler.

In communities strung along U.S. Route 101 and the historic Camino Real, from San Mateo and Palo Alto to San Jose, there are literally thousands of Eichler designs, the modern-day objects of near-cult-like reverence for their unadorned elegance, efficiency, and ease of living in relatively small space. Eichler (known to aficionados simply as "Joe") is credited with building 10,000 homes in the Bay Area alone—including 2,700 in Palo Alto, 1,100 in Sunnyvale, 900 in San Mateo, another 275 in Mountain View, and many others in San Jose, Cupertino, the East Bay, and Marin County. He also built 900 or so in southern California and even a few in New York state.

Not all Eichler houses are in large developments, however. His company, Eichler Homes, erected many "infill" houses on small, leftover tracts spurned by other builders. Thus, singly or in pairs or threes, Eichlers can be found tucked in among blocks of California ranch houses. They aren't necessarily small, either—while Eichler's early tract houses were just over 1,000 square feet, he also built large custom homes.

What makes Eichler houses special enough to attract admirers more than 50 years after they were built? As important as the modernist aesthetic was—and still is—the Eichler appeal went beyond the clean lines, glass walls, open floor plans, and nearly invisible indoor-outdoor connections found in myriad postwar California houses.

A Modern Idea

Eichler's enormous success at homebuilding—his second career—came by blending excellent community planning, artistic vision, and advanced technology to produce exceptional modern houses at a reasonable price. Until he retired in middle

Spotting an Eichler

Because Eichler's formula for affordable modernity was so appealing—and so successful—imitations were inevitable. Few if any, however, have the inner integrity of materials and workmanship to match the originals. Some clues to true Eichlers include:

Exteriors

- ◆ One story
- ◆ Nearly flat rooflines, or low front gables, with the notable exception of architect Claude Oakland's tall, broad-shouldered, mid-front gable
- ◆ Massive masonry chimneys
- ◆ Post-and-beam construction, with projecting exposed beams
- ◆ Vertical-board siding of redwood or Philippine mahogany
- ◆ Long, horizontal ribbons of windows; frequently clerestories
- ◆ Narrow, vertical, floor-to-ceiling windows in public areas like entries and living rooms
- ◆ Glass walls and sliding-glass doors
- ◆ Deep overhangs, lattices, or partial walls for privacy
- ◆ Single—and later, double—garages at front of house, often plus carport and/or enclosed entry atrium
- ◆ Relatively shallow front yards, with nearly 100 percent of the lot used for house and patios, pool, etc.
- ◆ Wide, flat, single- or double-paneled entry doors with bold but simple hardware

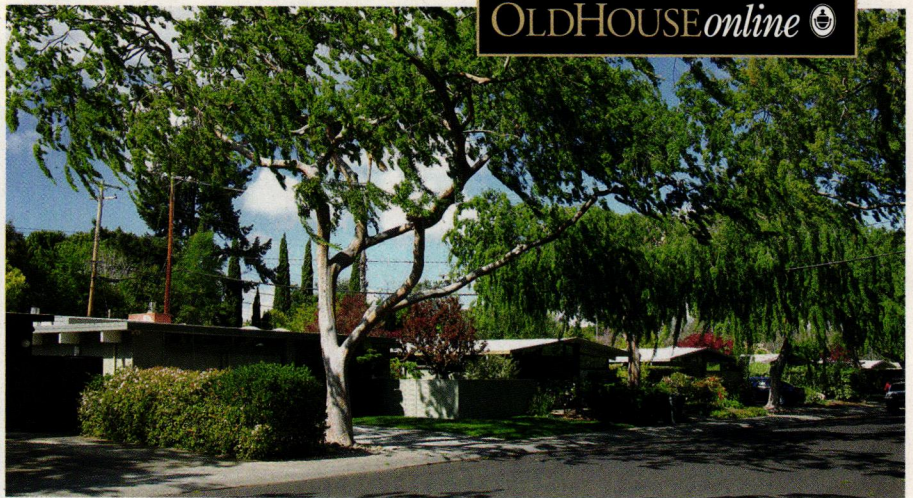
Interiors

- ◆ Open floor plan, with common areas (living room, kitchen, dining room) clearly separated from private areas (bedrooms, bathrooms)
- ◆ Redwood or Philippine mahogany paneling; wood cabinetry supplanted during Korean War by Masonite panels



Check out our list of other beloved mid-century modern developments.

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TOP: Channing Park in Palo Alto features "flat tops" with recessed double doors sheltered by a partially open roof area that provides ample light. A prominent projecting brick chimney is a typical 1950s design element. ABOVE: Lush planting and mature trees typify the California landscape, shading houses and street in this Palo Alto neighborhood.

other on projects; sometimes they worked separately for Eichler Homes. All of them shared Eichler's vision of providing the middle class with simple but excellent homes at affordable prices.

Quality Construction

The standout appeal of the Eichler house was the consistently high quality of its construction, materials, and finishes. The houses were built quickly—they had to be in order to meet the urgent needs of millions of returning veterans with V.A.-insured mortgages and growing families—but they were built with care and with excellent materials. Post-and-beam construction made it easy for crews to move rapidly from job site to job site, erecting sturdy frames for houses, then installing attractive, durable interiors through a well-choreographed series of individual tasks. Paneled walls and open beams required no plastering, sanding, painting, or finicky woodwork. This meant that, in Eichler developments, luxury and efficiency came at a remarkably affordable price.

When the first Eichler homes went up in the late 1940s, wartime shortages of building materials were easing, making it possible to provide high-end features such as redwood tongue-and-groove exterior siding and interior paneling, as well as copper

Further Reading

Eichler: Modernism Builds the American Dream by Paul Adamson and Marty Arbunich (Gibbs Smith, 2002)



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: The high, open front entrance gable and a matching courtyard on the interior are found in a number of Eichler models. A 1950s plywood ad features an Eichler with a large, open gabled patio. Palo Alto's Walnut Grove subdivision features a mix of Eichler and Burke & Wright models in virtually identical designs.



tubing for the radiant heating pipes installed in the concrete-slab floors. The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 brought renewed rationing, which forced Eichler to find substitutes for the exterior redwood boards and to use Philippine mahogany panels inside, yet he managed to sustain the overall quality of his homes.

Flexible Designs

Eichler designs were constantly evolving—changing floor plans, adding extra bedrooms and baths, enlarging and altering earlier features. Single-car garages were soon exchanged for double garages, often supplemented by flexible-use carport/patios; multiple indoor-outdoor spaces, such as atriums and terraces, were added or reconfigured. The aim was to provide ever more luxurious and efficient features.

Eichler's introduction of a second bathroom in the 1953 Fairmeadow development was, surprisingly, the first time such an amenity had been offered in moderately priced homes in the area. Needless to say, the resulting separate master suite quickly became a standard feature of three-bedroom houses. Similarly, Eichler Homes introduced its atrium-centered house in 1958, placing outdoor living within the heart of the home, and the grand, open central gable designed by architect Claude Oakland for the firm in the mid-1960s was soon a signature Eichler element.

No matter how various and complex the designs became, however, a central premise remained: simplicity, ease of use, and utmost enjoyment in an affordable house.

Outdoor Amenities

The houses followed a long-standing California custom of occupying almost every inch of the building lot, with shallow front yards, narrow side yards, and outdoor living areas, often including patios and pools, concentrated within compact, high-fenced




rear yards. However, careful siting and design made the homes reassuringly private. Garages, carports, and privacy walls faced the street front and sheltered the bedrooms located in the front of the house, which had high clerestory windows.

Family life was oriented toward the rear of the lot, which often was enclosed by privacy walls. Even glass walls and sliding doors that opened onto interior spaces appeared to focus outdoors, onto sunny enclosed patios or small, lush gardens.

The street layouts of Eichler subdivisions were as forward-looking as the house designs—and as varied. Eichler was always searching for new ways to bring owners into a closer relationship with their homes and neighborhoods. Occasionally, he overreached: The circular street pattern he introduced at Fairmeadow in Palo Alto in 1953 slowed traffic but confused visitors—and real-estate agents.

Eichler Homes faded from California's building scene in the late 1960s, although Joe Eichler himself never ran out of ideas for improving his dream houses for the common folk, expanding into the construction of urban San Francisco town houses and apartment complexes before his death in 1974. But it will always be his light-filled, heartwarming, single-family houses that capture the imagination of a swelling army of fans. 🏠



All of the house's exterior wood has been completely stripped and repainted; it now looks as good as the day it was built.

SINCERE WOOD FINISHING

Ingenuity, hard work, and determination helped these Minnesota homeowners restore their woodwork—inside and out.

By RICHARD L. KRONICK ♦ PHOTOS BY NOAH WOLF

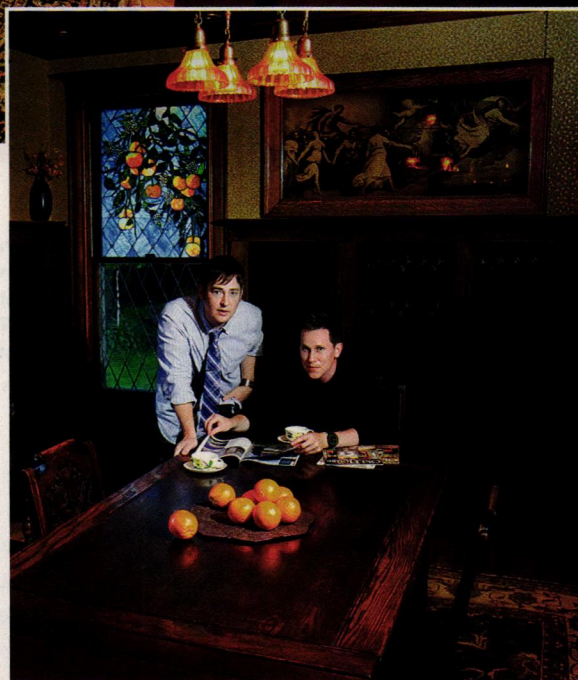


As you approach Ryan Knoke and Montana Scheff's house in Minneapolis—a two-and-a-half-story Colonial Revival designed and built by Minneapolis master builder Barclay Cooper in 1905—you know you've happened upon something special.

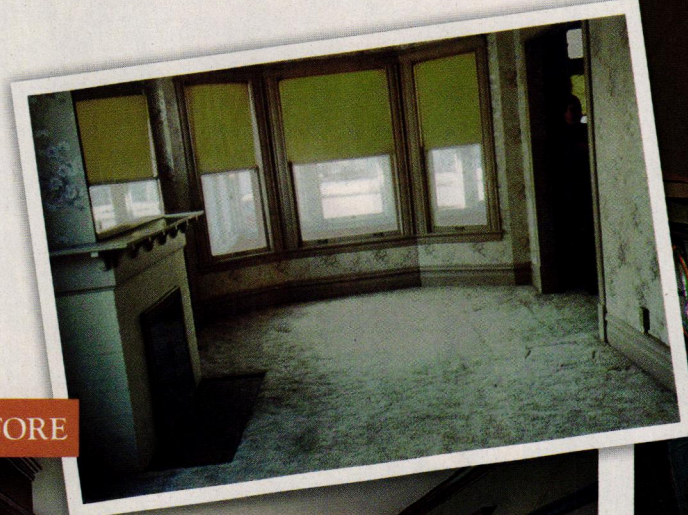
The matched topiaries flanking the front gate are like palace guards with plumed helmets—standard bearers, but also standard setters. They communicate clearly that this house has been restored with sincere attention to detail. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the finishes Ryan and Montana have applied to wood, both inside and outside the house.

New Old Moldings

Ryan and Montana bought the house in 2004 from a 101-year-old man who had lived there since 1932. Luckily, most of the home's original cherry woodwork remained intact with its original finish. However, the living room had been “modernized” in the



Homeowners Montana Scheff (at left) and Ryan Knoke have stripped and painted all of their exterior woodwork, and rebuilt missing moldings in the living room, staining them to match original examples. TOP: The Minneapolis house boasts many original details.



BEFORE



AFTER

ABOVE: The living room got a dramatic makeover, with the remaining woodwork stripped of dusty rose paint. The crown molding and door caps also had to be rebuilt; they were stained to match the original finishes in the rest of the house. **RIGHT:** An overview of the completed room shows its transformation.



AFTER

1950s, and as a result, the room's ornate moldings—topping the walls, doors, and windows—had been removed. In addition, the living room's remaining woodwork had received a thick coat of dusty rose paint. Ryan and Montana began the room's restoration by stripping away the paint and vinyl wallpaper, which uncovered ghosts of the original cornice moldings. Determined to restore the room to its former grandeur, they tapped the expertise of Gary Anderson, a third-generation cabinetmaker and carpenter who lives across the street. (Gary hand-shaped some of the pieces; others were off the shelf from various specialized suppliers.)

Gary guided Ryan and Montana to use cherry for the moldings

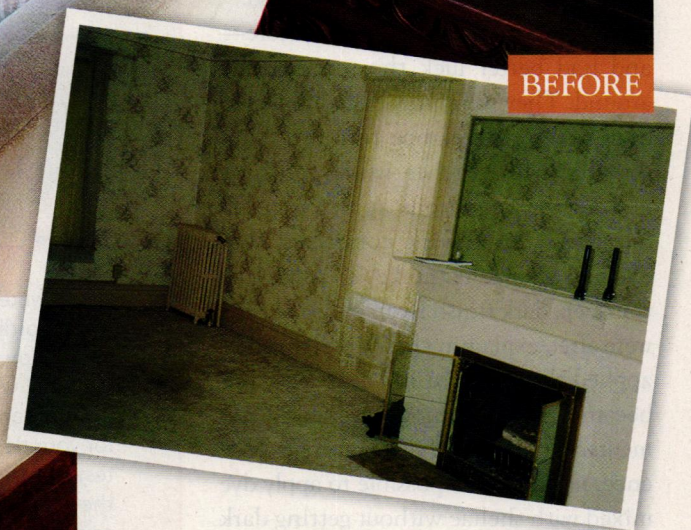
to match the surviving trim, then created the crown molding in two layers: a picture rail, and a 4"-high piece with ogee and flute. Next, he assembled the door caps in three layers, milling the bottom piece on his shaper to match original moldings elsewhere in the house, customizing the profile of the main piece with a hand molding plane, and adding a flat piece on top to give the ensemble some heft.

Interior Finishes

After they had settled on the wood and design, Ryan and Montana turned their attention to the finish. They wanted the new moldings to match original finishes in other parts

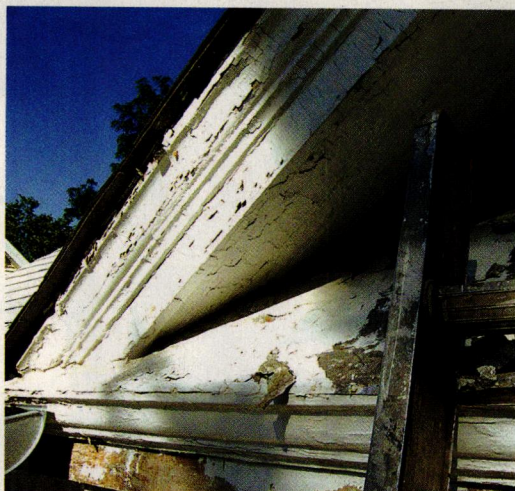


BEFORE



The missing door caps (far left) were assembled from three separate pieces, and the crown molding (near left) from two. Both were made of cherry wood, then custom dye-stained.

Before Ryan and Montana's work on the exterior, their old paint (at right) was crumbling away. A first pass with a heat gun and paint scraper (in process, far right) removed most of the old paint—but a thin layer of residue remained.



of the house, but there was a problem. "Modern stains were never dark enough," explains Montana. "I wondered if we had to use an ebony stain with something else on top of it." After a bit of Internet research, Ryan and Montana decided to visit a nearby woodworkers' supply store, where a salesclerk advised them to try a dye with the brand name Trans Tint, but he couldn't tell them how to apply it. "I experimented with dye, but when I put shellac over it, the dye re-liquefied and became very streaky," says Montana. "I knew there had to be a better method."

So the two went back to the store—and had better luck the second time around. They were introduced to Kevin Southwick, a freelance furniture conservator who teaches wood finishing and answers questions at the store on Saturdays. Southwick confirmed that dye plus shellac is the key to achieving the deep, dark finish Ryan and Montana were after, explaining how wood finishers applied this mixture 100 years ago. But because their techniques weren't documented, "unless you have years of experience, it's almost impossible to apply dye mixed with shellac without getting dark lines where the brush strokes overlap," Kevin says.

In the absence of documentation, Kevin developed his own multi-layer process, which is time-consuming, but possible for amateurs to master. He says that even

with the multi-layer approach, you still need to distribute the materials evenly and avoid overlap marks. Ryan and Montana followed his exacting directions (see "Dye-Staining Woodwork," below) to stain the new woodwork. Throughout the rest of the living room, they hand-stripped paint from the surviving original wood trim and used Southwick's method on the surfaces.

The result is woodwork that glows with a deep, dark cherry color.

Exterior Approaches

Ryan and Montana carried the same attention to detail to their work on the house's exterior. "The previous owner painted and retouched the exterior all the time, so there was a huge buildup of paint—but the

Dye-Staining Woodwork



1

Dilute water-soluble dye according to the package instructions. Then, use extra pieces of wood to test the proportions and number of coats for your desired finish. (Your test surfaces should match the actual finished surface as closely as possible.) After some experimenting, Ryan and Montana ended up with a 2:1 mix of two different colors, red mahogany and brown mahogany.

Apply the dye quickly with a large, natural-bristle artist's brush (purchased from an art supply store), then wipe it off. Don't be alarmed if the color isn't what you're expecting. "Our particular dye color looked very pink before we put the shellac over it," says Montana.



2



After using carbide scrapers, the wood was very clean (far left); also visible are nails primed with a rust inhibitor. Ryan carefully applies a coat of finish paint (near left).

wood was well-protected,” Montana says. They began by using a heat gun and paint scraper to remove the paint. Then they used carbide scrapers to take off the remaining thin layer of residue, first making sure the clapboards were tight, with no nails sticking up that might nick their scraper blades. (They hammered down all nails flush with the wood—taking care not to hit them too

hard, which can split the wood—and didn’t countersink the nails, because the resulting holes would need filling.)

For clapboards, fascia boards, window trim, window sash, and other similar flat, relatively broad surfaces, Ryan and Montana fitted their scrapers with 2” blades. “They’re so sharp that they act like mini-planes, removing any residue left over from the heat gun

process,” explains Ryan. The two used various profiles to get into small spaces between dentils and in curved, recessed areas. “By the time we were done with all the stripping, the wood was so clean that we joked about how it looked like we’d just refinished a giant piece of furniture,” says Ryan.

Next, they lightly sanded the wood to prepare it for finishing. “Sometimes the edge of a clapboard gets a little furry from the stripping process,” says Ryan. “We removed that with sanding blocks and used folded sheets of sandpaper to get into really small places.”

They then reinvigorated the wood by brushing on a mixture of one part linseed oil thinned with two parts turpentine, wiping away excess with a towel, then letting it dry in the hot sun for a couple of days. The linseed oil treatment helps with paint adhesion.

Next, Ryan and Montana painstakingly covered each nail with an oil-based, rust-inhibiting primer. Once that dried, they went over every surface with a coat of oil-based exterior primer. Then they caulked every joint, including seams between clapboards and areas where clapboards meet the windows and moldings.

Finally, they applied two layers of high-quality latex paint. While it took them months to do just one side of the house, the results are worth the effort. Inside and out, the house is a picture-perfect testament to the sincerity of their restoration. 🏠



Brush on an oil-based urethane to prevent the dye from re-liquefying.

3

Apply two to four coats of amber shellac with a thick, 2” natural-bristle varnish brush. Montana dipped the brush into the shellac and blotted it on an old towel to remove excess, then applied it quickly using long, even strokes.




4



Wipe on a satin-finish, oil-based urethane. “Shellac has a shiny look; the satin topcoat cuts the sheen and makes it look older,” says Kevin Southwick.

5



The gas flame
on Valor's
Windsor Arch
adjusts from
6,500 to 20,500
BTUs per hour.

Fired Up

There's a wide array of options today in fireplace technology. Many are a great fit for old houses, but you need to know your facts.

BY THE OHJ EDITORIAL STAFF

A crackling fire is one old-house accessory that's always in demand on cold winter nights, adding warmth and ambience to a room. While wood- or coal-burning fireplaces traditionally kept folks warm in the depths of winter, modern inserts can do the same with aplomb. New units are more efficient, less polluting, present fewer safety hazards, and come in a variety of styles and sizes. Inserts and stand-alone coal baskets or woodstoves can be a good choice for retrofitting a traditional fireplace for better energy efficiency and safety, or for getting flames into a non-functioning original fireplace. They have historical precedent, too: Victorian gas fire-log inserts were a fashion statement beginning around 1890.

Today you can find an array of historic-minded inserts in a range of sizes that burn a variety of materials—from wood and gas to pellets and cherry pits. When making selections, size is one of the most important factors—both the size of your original fireplace

opening and the size of your room. Small, old fireplaces can be hard to fit, while smaller rooms can overheat under today's hyper-efficient, high-BTU inserts. Read on for more essential things to consider before buying a fireplace insert.

Venting Systems, Explained

Old-house wood- and coal-burning fireplaces have chimneys that vent smoke and draw air through their flues—which were lined with clay tiles beginning around 1905. Today's modern inserts use a variety of sophisticated venting systems that are retrofitted into existing chimneys.

B-vent: Draws air necessary for combustion from within the home and vents the products of combustion outside the building.

Direct-vent: A closed-combustion system that takes no air from inside the home—it draws air in from outside and vents to the outside, through a single vent. Most direct-vent systems use a coaxial vent—two pipes in one that brings air in through the outer chamber, and vents air out through the inner chamber.

Vent-free: No chimneys required—these inserts use room air for combustion, and also vent into the room. They come with a standard Oxygen Depletion Sensor pilot (ODS), which shuts the burner down if oxygen levels in the room fall below a certain limit. While vent-free units quickly gained popularity after their introduction, they are controversial among many safety experts, who recommend installing multiple carbon monoxide detectors in homes where they're used to guard against carbon monoxide buildup and poisoning. Additionally, they're not approved for use in all areas, and can add significant amounts of water vapor to your living spaces, which can damage old plaster and wallpaper.

Crib Note Comparisons

Vented units will have a higher BTU output than vent-free ones. Most vented gas fireplaces and log sets range between 20,000 and 60,000 BTUs/hour, and wood inserts can reach 75,000 BTUs/hour. Vent-free heater products have a maximum capacity of 40,000 BTUs/hour.

Concerns & Solutions

Warmth. Both wood and gas units can burn hot—up to 75,000 BTUs per hour, depending on their fuel and venting system (see “Crib Note Comparisons,” above). However, such revved-up output can overwhelm some old-house rooms—especially smaller ones measuring 15' x 15' or less with only one doorway. Pay attention to BTUs; when dealing with smaller room sizes, find either a lower BTU output (up to 30,000), or a unit that is easily adjustable (like a gas insert that readily turns down to a gentle 10,000 BTUs).

Ease of use. If convenience is your most desired feature, consider a gas unit. Gas fires can provide heat at the touch of a button, can be as efficient as a gas furnace, and don't require combustion products to be carried in or away.

Firebox size. Many old-house fireplaces have small or shallow dimensions that can be difficult to fit. One solution is a Franklin stove. These stoves, designed in 1742 by Benjamin Franklin, have a hooded enclosure in the front and firebox in the rear—cutting-edge technology for the time that produced more heat and burned less wood in a safer fireplace. Because they are meant to sit in front of the fireplace opening on short legs, they work more readily with small openings, and their style is well-suited to the architecture of early houses.

Reversibility. If you want to be able to change your mind easily and remove the insert, or you're more interested in ambience than warmth, an electric fireplace unit might be the choice for you. They can add the look of real flames, don't need to be vented (so they can be inserted into a fireplace



ABOVE: The Brunel 1A wood stove from Stovax is a Franklin stove lookalike that measures just 15½" wide and 11" deep. **LEFT:** A plug-in coal basket from Burley throws 5,000 BTUs of heat.

with a non-functional chimney), and can generate up to 5,000 BTUs of heat after a simple install—just plug it in.

Open flames. If you don't want a glass-fronted unit, but want to increase the efficiency of your masonry fireplace, consider a gas log or coal set. (These work well in small fireplaces, too.) They burn cleanly and can throw a decent amount of warmth into a room. Caveat: These sets must be vented through terracotta or steel liners. If your house has neither, the price to add a steel liner will approach the cost of a full insert.

Word of Warning

Early inserts of the modern age (from the 1970s and '80s) often were installed improperly into chimneys too large to vent the flue gases quickly. When gases slow down, they can cool enough to allow extra creosote to condense on the walls—which can cause structural damage or even a chimney fire. Make

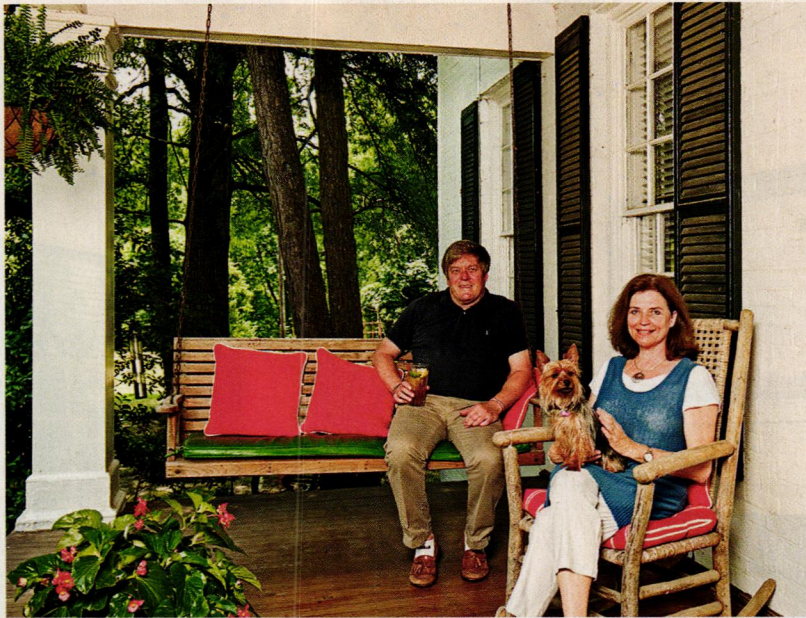
sure chimney liners are correctly sized. The Chimney Safety Institute of America recommends that liners extend to the top of the chimney for safest operation, and be inspected annually on all chimneys in use. (For more information on chimney liners, visit oldhouseonline.com/making-sense-of-chimney-liners.)



OLD-HOUSE LIVING



The Cherry Mansion was built to face the river, but when roads supplanted water transportation, the back façade became the front, facing Savannah's main street.



For Love & War

For two generations, a Tennessee family has preserved the 19th-century riverfront house that served as a backdrop for a key Civil War battle.

STORY BY REGINA COLE ♦ PHOTOS BY JOSEPH HILLIARD

When Mary Ann Gilchrist was growing up in the charming southwest Tennessee town of Savannah, strangers were always trooping through the house. Her home—the circa-1830 Cherry Mansion, a brick Federal house with a Greek Revival addition overlooking the Tennessee River—played a pivotal role in the Civil War, hosting Ulysses S. Grant and the Union army in the weeks prior to the Battle of Shiloh. Mary Ann’s parents happily opened up the house to curious tourists in their spare time. In 2004, Mary Ann moved back into her childhood home with her husband and two sons, and she’s kept up the hospitable tradition, guiding visitors through on weekends and during vacations.

In 1862, the Cherry Mansion saw history, tragedy, courage, and intrigue; it also represented the deep divisions between North and South. But that’s not what motivated Mary Ann’s father, Bob Guinn, to buy the house in 1934.

“This house was his passion, but I

never got the feeling that he was into the Civil War,” she says. “My father was from this area; he played in the yard as a child. A big magnolia tree he remembered is still here.”

Guinn became a historic preservationist long before it was chic because he



ABOVE: In 1862, General Grant rushed down these steps and through the gate to cross the Tennessee River, where the battle of Shiloh had begun without him. **TOP:** Anthony and Mary Ann Gilchrist relax on the front porch with their Yorkshire terrier, Lola.



TOP: The pianoforte where the Irwin sisters serenaded their Union officer guests, still in the parlor, was the first piano in town. **ABOVE:** The floors and early 19th-century mantels are original, but Bob Guinn installed Italian marble fireplace surrounds downstairs when he bought the house during the Depression. **RIGHT:** While most of the original furnishings were lost to the elements when they spent years in a leaky shed, the secretary and the pianoforte date to William Cherry's ownership years.



loved his hometown, Mary Ann explains. When a grand but long-neglected house was threatened with destruction, he stepped in to save it.

"The Cherry family had died or moved away," Mary Ann says. "The porches were rotted away; the hallway was damaged. It took him three years to restore the house."

Making History

In 1821, James Rudd built a log cabin and established a landing and ferry on the grounds of the Cherry Mansion; several years later, he sold Rudd's Ferry to David Robinson, who built the nucleus of the present house. The original L-shaped, two-story house was built from bricks made on the riverbank and surrounded by a substantial stone wall. It consisted of three rooms on each floor; the downstairs rooms boasted 12' ceilings, carved poplar chair rails and wainscoting, panel-



The dining room's built-in china cabinet and the Federal wood window pelmets that hang above nine-over-nine windows are survivors of the 1830s, their style timelessly chic.

ing, crown moldings, and elegant fireplace mantels. In 1840, Robinson added two more rooms to the finest house in town. When his youngest daughter, Sarah, married William H. Cherry in 1842, the house became their wedding gift.

Cherry, a prosperous merchant, cotton broker, and staunch Unionist, was pleased to open his home to Major General Ulysses S. Grant when the Union Army of Tennessee arrived here in 1862. By then, widower William Cherry was remarried to Annie Irwin. She and her two sisters, also married to Cherry relatives, supported the Confederacy.

Grant set up his headquarters in a tent on the lawn while he slept in the house. He took his meals here, often joined by other Union generals. After dinner, the Irwin sisters serenaded the

Yankee officers at the piano. Word has it that Grant removed his uniform coat in their presence out of respect for their sympathies. Stories also tell of the Irwin sisters carrying memories of their dinner conversation with their Union guests to the Confederate soldiers the next day. Records show that a federal patrol stopped the women as they attempted to smuggle boots, socks, and other supplies to their Rebel relatives under their hoop skirts. They were taken into custody and sent to a collection point for prisoners, but when Grant heard of their capture, he ordered their release following their promise to desist.

Confederate troops fired on encamped Union soldiers across the river at dawn on April 6, 1862. Grant, taken by surprise, abandoned his breakfast to ferry

to the battle developing around a crude log house of worship known as Shiloh Church. By the time one of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War ended, nearly 24,000 men were killed, wounded, or missing. A field hospital was set up in the yard of the Cherry Mansion, and by April 9, hospital boats were moored in the river below the house. The Cherrys joined other Savannah families in caring for wounded soldiers, both Confederate and Union. Two Union generals, W.H.L. Wallace and C.F. Smith, died at Cherry Mansion. Both had been among the officers entertained by the Irwin women.

The Past Reclaimed

After the Civil War, the house entered a long period of decline. Late in the 19th century, when a bridge replaced the ferry



Anthony and Mary Ann Gilchrist in the kitchen, which she calls “our everything room.” “We live in it,” she says. The less formal rooms of the home still boast their original 1830s brick fireplace surrounds. Throughout the house, millwork, flooring, and hardware are original.

across the Tennessee River and Savannah grew into a substantial town, the house was reoriented from the river to the dirt road leading past what had been the back door. Its classic Southern dogtrot design, featuring a wide central hall and identical Federal front and back doors with side- and fanlights, enabled the switch. When Bob Guinn bought the house, he removed the rotted wraparound piazzas and replaced them with front and back porches, formalizing the switch by giving the house distinctive front and rear façades.

“In archival photos we see that the original piazza columns were quite slender,” Mary Ann says. Her father’s hefty replacements speak not of Empire elegance, but of the muscular Arts & Crafts styling popular at the time.

He crowned the roof with a widow’s walk; its balustrade and the new porch railings were inspired by the Chinese Chippendale style popular

during the 1930s.

When Bob Guinn bought the house in 1934, the Cherry Mansion had one small bathroom and a single closet. Guinn converted the closet into a new upstairs bath and installed a powder room off the hall, under the staircase. He built an inside kitchen, then dismantled the outdoor kitchen and outhouses. He added dormers to bring light into the upstairs rooms and added storage in the form of closets built into bedroom corners, taking cues for their design from the bedroom doors.

Original architectural elements in the Cherry Mansion include the Southern longleaf pine flooring, crown moldings, and beautifully designed window pelmets. The house’s eight fireplaces boast their original Federal mantels, each one different.

“Dad added Italian marble to the downstairs fireplaces,” Mary Ann says. “The upstairs fireplaces have their origi-

nal brick surrounds; I confess that I like them better.”

Aside from her father’s modernization, the rooms housed by the massive white-painted brick walls look much as they did in 1862. The piano the Irwin sisters played for the Union generals still occupies a corner of the parlor; the opposite corner is home to the desk used by General Grant. Bob Guinn didn’t save them because of their Civil War associations, but because they were part of this house before him. An instinctive preservationist, he furnished the house with period antiques, replacing some of the original furnishings that had been ruined after being removed by the previous homeowner and stored in a leaky shed across the street.

For Civil War buffs, especially those fascinated by the complex and bloody Battle of Shiloh, gazing at the piano and desk in the parlor of the Cherry Mansion



is an essential pilgrimage. Looking out the window, they can see the landing where the ferry rushed Grant across the river. The view of the opposite bank is little changed since the Civil War; Shiloh Battlefield is now a national park. Against this gentle landscape, the history embodied in the Cherry Mansion speaks of divided families, heroism, and the extraordinary courage of women who performed appallingly grisly humanitarian work.

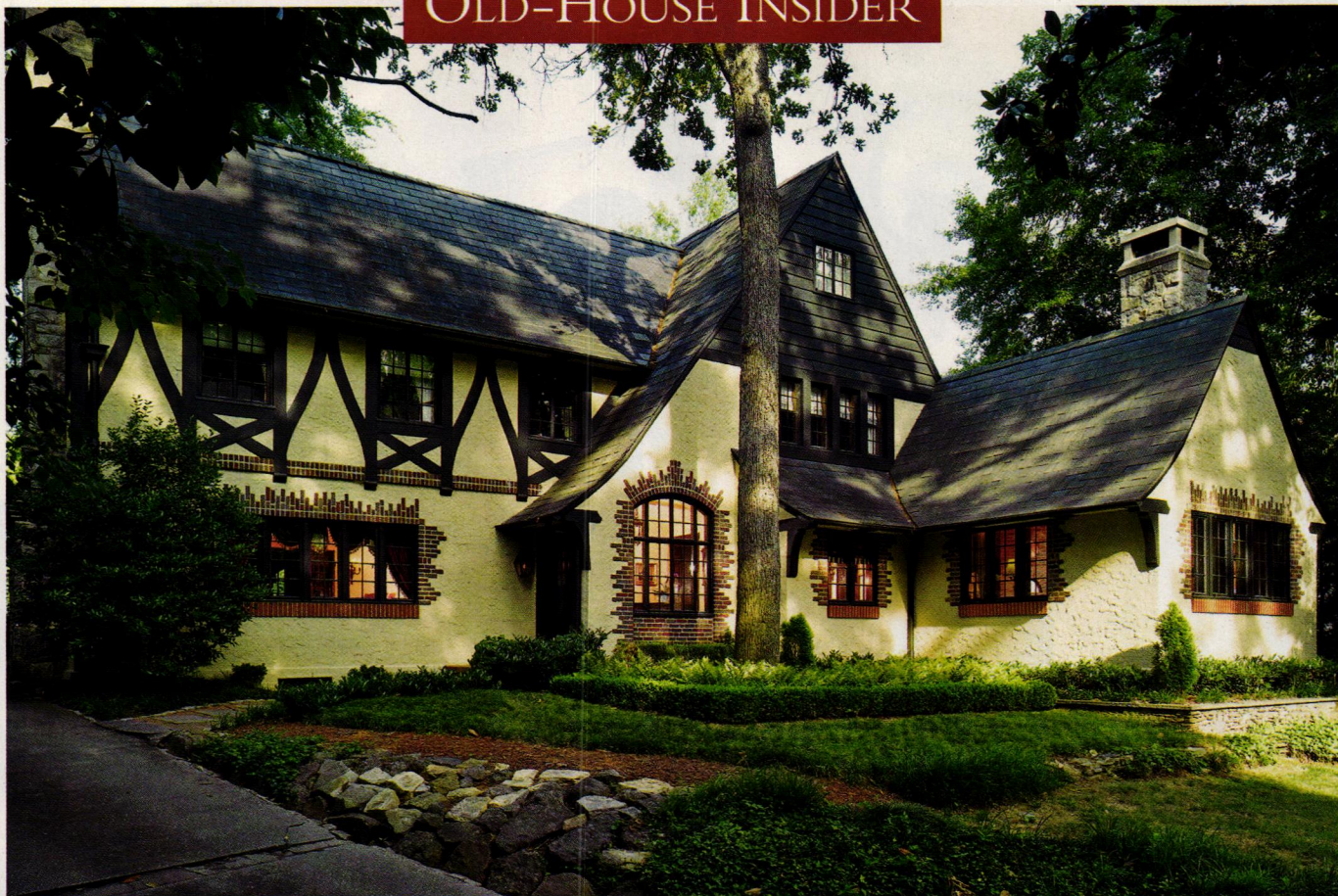
Mary Ann Gilchrist, like her father, understands her home's importance. "When I grew up, my dad always said, 'Promise me you'll take care of this.' Now I say the same thing to my sons." 🏠

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: In Southern fashion, bedrooms flow into one another and open to the veranda. The view west, across the Tennessee River, looks much as it did 150 years ago. The garden on the south side of the house is Anthony Gilchrist's domain. "He works here every morning and evening," Mary Ann smiles. The stairs' newel post and turned balusters display transitional Federal-Greek Revival styling.





The woodwork in the stair hall exemplifies the prevailing character of the original design. OPPOSITE: Thanks to proper proportions and careful attention to matching materials, the new front addition (at right) looks as if it's always been part of the Tudor house.



Added Charm

Meticulous research plus a dash of ingenuity equals a seamless addition to an Atlanta Tudor.

STORY BY CLARE MARTIN ♦ PHOTOS BY JOHN UMBERGER

Altering the original footprint of an old house always requires a sleight of hand: cladding materials must be matched, rooflines copied, window sizes and shapes perfectly replicated. But most additions are tacked onto the back of a house, where a slight margin of error usually isn't noticeable. Changing the front elevation of a historic house, however? That requires Houdini-caliber architectural magic.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HARRISON DESIGN ASSOCIATES



PHOTO COURTESY OF HARRISON DESIGN ASSOCIATES

An existing porch was expanded and enclosed to create a family room (top); the antique French limestone mantel sits opposite monogrammed glass doors (inset) that lead to the living room.

When Malcolm and Kelley Oakley undertook such a project on their Atlanta Tudor, they felt compelled to get it right, given the home's famous pedigree: It was built in 1925 by local firm Ivey and Crook for the son of author Joel Chandler Harris. "They really viewed themselves as stewards of the house," says architect Greg Palmer of Harrison Design Associates, whom the Oakleys brought on to help them achieve their vision. "One

of our major directives was that a person should be able to walk through the home and not tell where the old house stopped and the addition began."

Change in Plans

The first major collaboration between Greg and the Oakleys was to determine a floor plan for the expanded house. Malcolm and Kelley wanted plenty of space to entertain (though their priorities changed during the project when they found out Kelley was pregnant with twin girls—"now we use the space for chasing after little kids," she laughs); the



In the newly expanded dining room, French doors flanking the fireplace lead out to the covered terrace. Malcolm and Kelley scrapped plans for ornamental plasterwork on the ceiling, instead going with a subtle glaze that gives it a slight metallic sheen. "At night, with the glow of the antique chandeliers, it's really neat," says Kelley.

original iteration of the design called for adding more than 6,000 square feet onto the 5,000-square-foot house.

Plans changed, however, after September 11, 2001, when Malcolm, a private investor, became spooked by the instability in the stock market. "We decided to regroup and cut way back," Kelley says. "We ended up adding only about 2,500 square feet." But the unexpected change proved to be fortuitous: "I'm so glad we scaled the project back," Kelley says. "It's definitely more in line with what was originally here."

The pared-down design still included their favorite features of the original plan: an enlarged kitchen and dining room, a larger nursery and master-bedroom suite, and an outdoor terrace and pool. The

project required two major additions on the south side of the house: The expanded kitchen and breakfast nook (a must-have for amateur chef Malcolm) were bumped off of the front of the house, while the second-floor master suite and covered terrace below were extended off the back.

Making Matches

For the front addition, Greg and his team faced the daunting task of perfectly matching the existing stucco, decorative brickwork, slate roof, and windows. Some details came together after tireless research: "We went through probably half a dozen or more mock-ups before we found the brick we wanted," says Greg. In the end, they used a combination of two different bricks to replicate the texture and color of the wire-cut originals. The mortar required a bit of trial and error, too:

Unable to achieve the proper color with traditional masonry sand, Greg decided to use river-run sand instead. "It was a more common technique for the era in which the house was constructed," he explains.

To replicate the rolled steel casement windows, Greg tracked down the original shop drawings at the Atlanta History Center and sent them to Crittall, a cen-

PRODUCTS: Exterior: Trim and beam work, Bilton Construction; Reclaimed slate roofing, Buckingham Slate Co.; Steel windows, Crittall. Terrace: Landscape design, Richard Anderson; Outdoor kitchen copper hood, Zirkon, Inc.; Pool, Dolan Pools. Interior: Trim and doors, Randall Brothers; Plaster work, Wade Plastering; Hardwood floors, Olde Savannah Flooring. Foyer: Antique rug, Moattar. Breakfast Room: Beams, Wyatt Childs, Inc. Kitchen: Cabinets, Atlanta Custom Cabinets.



ABOVE: An expanded kitchen was high on homeowner Malcolm Oakley's wish list. The larger space features a commercial-grade range and a custom-made island with a butcher-block top.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Atlanta Custom Cabinets:
(770) 425-8995

Bildon Construction: (404) 351-1664

Buckingham Slate Co.: bvslate.com

Crittall: crittall-windows.co.uk

Dolan Pools: (404) 305-8435

Moattar: moattar.com

Olde Savannah Flooring:
oldesavannahflooring.com

Randall Brothers:
randallbrothers.com

Richard Anderson:
richardandersonla.com

Wade Plastering: (404) 862-4842

Wyatt Childs, Inc.: wyattchildsinc.com

Zirkon, Inc.: (770) 529-6546

turies-old English window manufacturer, to create the new windows needed for the addition. "The new ones were weather-stripped a little better," he says, "but the

sight lines are exactly the same."

Other details required a little bit of ingenuity. Unable to find weathered slate that was a perfect match for the roof's originals, Greg decided to improvise: He moved slates from the rear of the house to the new addition, then filled in the rear roof with reclaimed Buckingham slate. "We broke it at the ridge so you can't see the two types of slate at one time," he explains.

Re-creating the artistic skip-trowel texture of the original stucco also took a bit of maneuvering. "The trick to it," says Greg, "was getting the stucco installers to loosen up enough to place stucco in

that texture—they were so used to doing perfect stucco."

Inside Out

The same attention to matching old and new was carried through to the interior of the house as well. The main house boasted plenty of original details, from rich woodwork and beamed ceilings to monogrammed sidelights surrounding the French doors to the living room. "We let the existing house be our guide for new materials," says Greg.

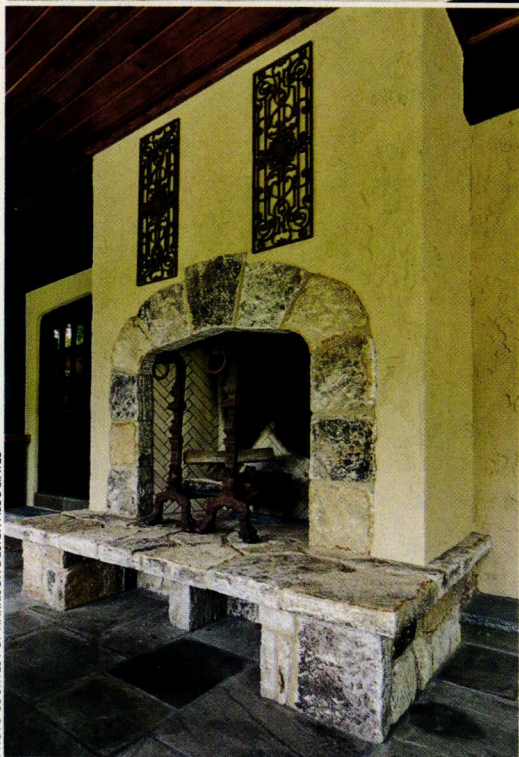
Once again, his team went to great pains to replicate the slightly imperfect texture of the original interior plaster;

The new front addition houses a breakfast room, which is warmed by a pizza oven imported from Italy. "It literally weighs a ton," says Kelley. "They had to bring it into the house with a crane."





ABOVE: The overhang of the second-floor master suite addition (at left) allowed for a new covered terrace housing an outdoor kitchen. New half-timbering is cypress instead of pine, but was carefully cut and painted to match the original trim.



ABOVE: The outdoor fireplace's stone Tudor arch is a rustic counterpoint to those on the carved limestone mantels indoors.

they also matched up hardwood flooring and ground new knives to custom-make moldings in the same style as the originals. The style and era of the house also provided cues for new components—a traditional butler's pantry was carved out between the expanded kitchen and dining room; the outdoor fireplace on the new terrace features a rustic Tudor arch.

Interior designer Karen Ferguson, also part of the staff at Harrison Design Associates, worked with Malcolm and

Kelley to pin down appropriate décor decisions. "We were careful to pick quality materials that you would have seen back in the 1920s—even for things as small as the tiebacks and hardware for the drapes," she says. "The Oakleys wanted to make sure the quality is what it would have been, even if no one saw them."

The couple's reverence for the original house may have helped guide the expansion, but Kelley gives full credit to Greg and his team for translating their vision into reality. "Anything we thought of, they had a solution for," she says. "There was no detail they left untouched." 🏡

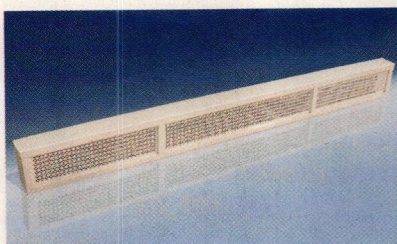
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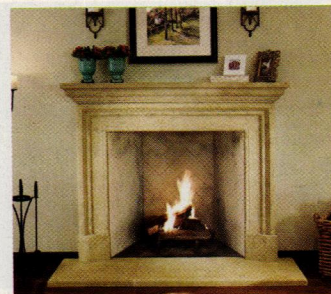
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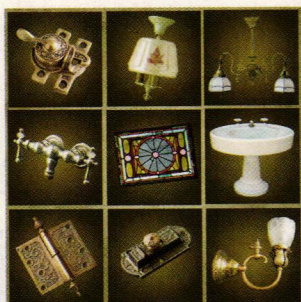


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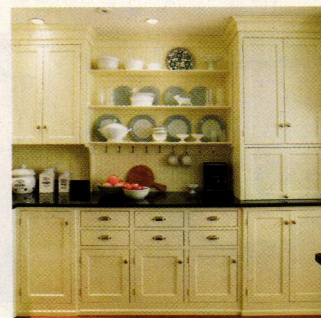
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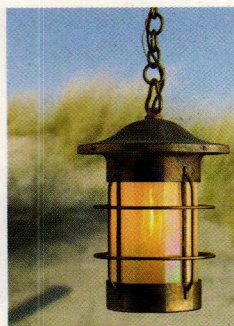
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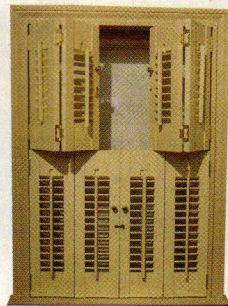
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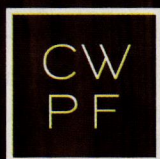
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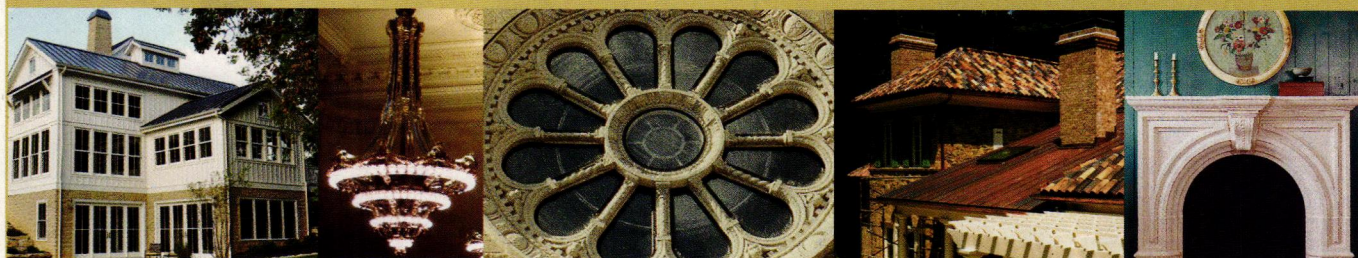


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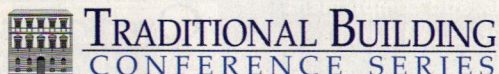


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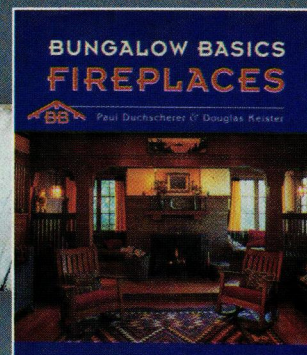
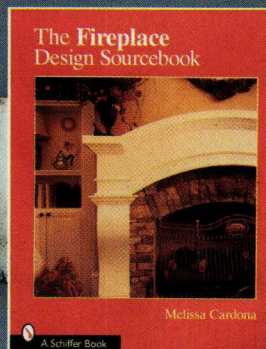
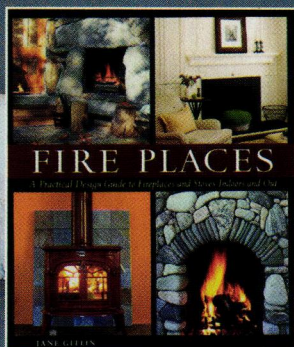
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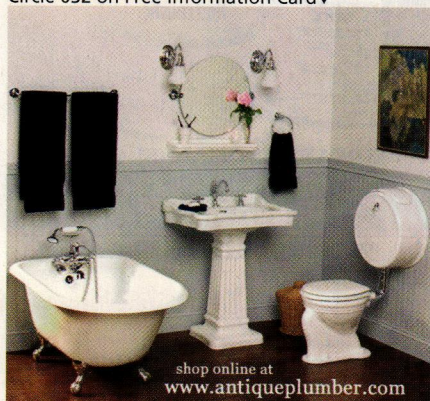
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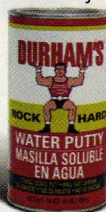
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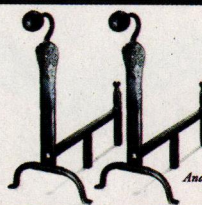
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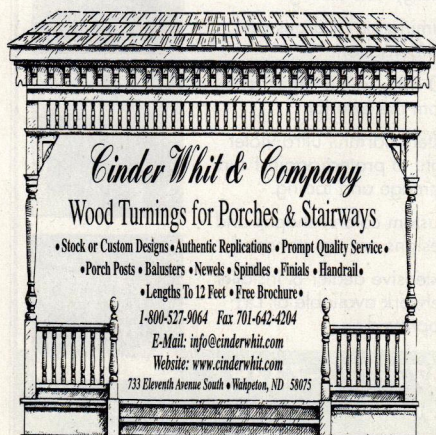
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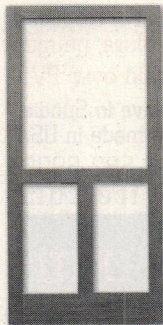
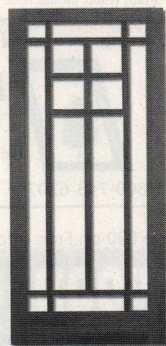
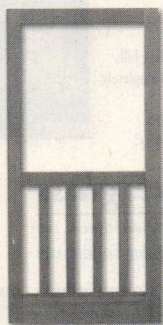
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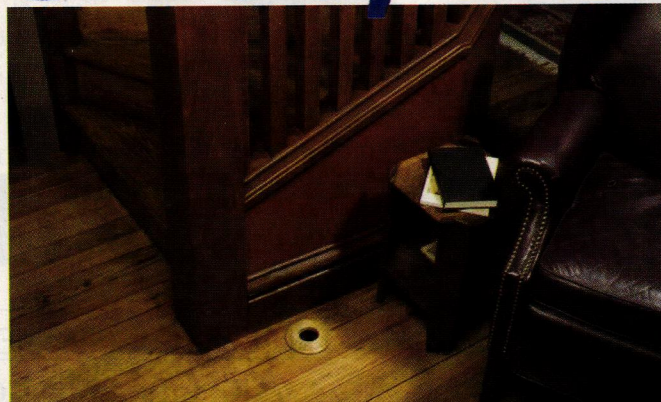
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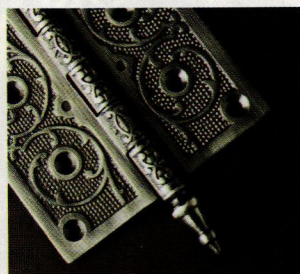
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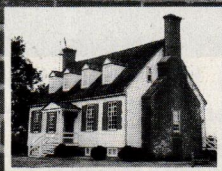
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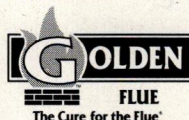
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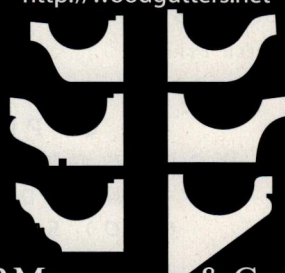
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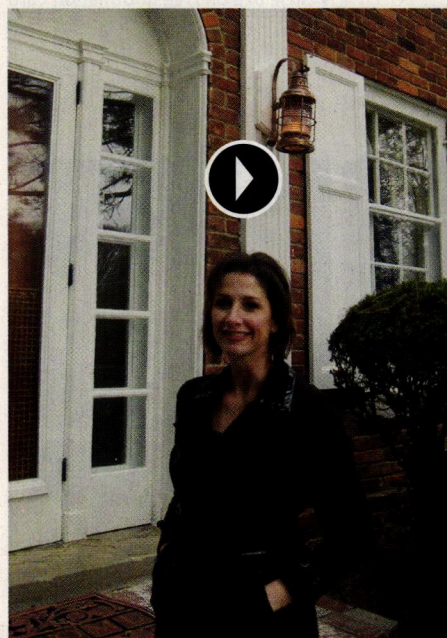
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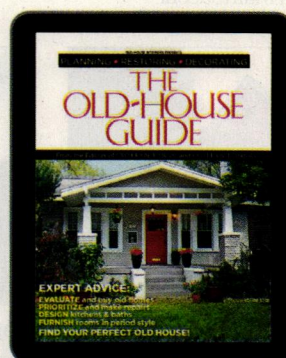
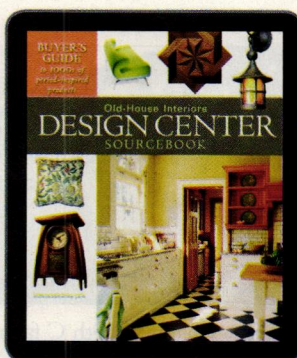
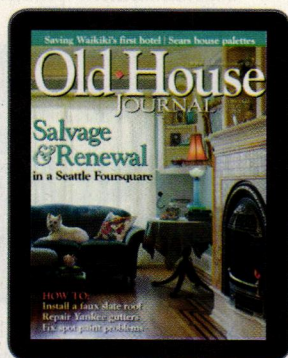
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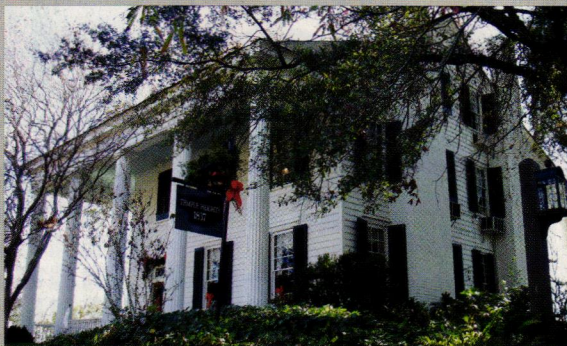
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Historic Properties

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COLUMBUS, MS—Temple Heights, circa 1837. Included in the National Register, Historic American Buildings Survey, and a MS Landmark. Beautiful 4-story planter's townhouse with 14 Doric columns combining Federal and Greek Revival details. Carefully restored and maintained, furnished with period American and Continental pieces. Showcased in The Magazine Antiques. Terraced grounds have series of parterres and 2 period outbuildings—one a guesthouse. A river town, Columbus is home to MS University for Women, Columbus Air Force Base, and has one of the top Main Street programs. Most furnishings available for purchase. \$945,000. Dixie Butler, 662-328-0599.

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DURHAM, CT—The Robert Fairchild House, circa 1730. Chestnut floors, wainscoting, raised paneling, moldings, and 4 fireplaces, one with beehive oven. Seamlessly blends historic character with today's amenities. 2,800 sq.ft., 3 bedrooms; living, dining & keeping rooms; eat-in kitchen; den w/built-ins, and sun porch. 2nd floor master suite in former ballroom. 1.5+ acres. 2-car garage. \$395,000. Betsy Anderson, William Pitt Sotheby's, 203-641-3233. www.297MainSt.com



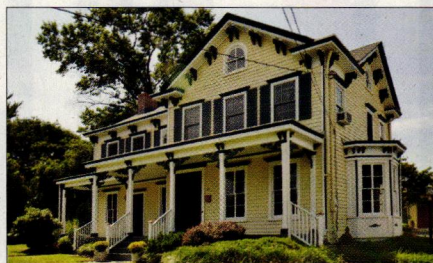
GALENA, IL—Circa 1840 Gothic brick farmhouse meticulously restored using period fixtures. 2,600 sq.ft. 4 bedrooms, 3 baths with whirlpool tub. Clawfoot tubs, marble sinks. Custom crafted kitchen. Hot water heat, two air conditioning systems. Just under one acre on the edge of town. Former bed and breakfast. City utilities. \$345,000. Frank Budreck, 708-860-3439 or budreck@aol.com. www.908ridge.com



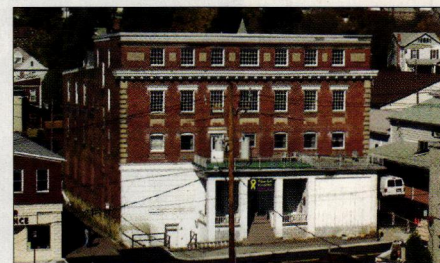
GALENA, IL—1857 US Marine Hospital. 6,300 sq.ft. situated high on a hill on 11 mostly wooded acres with river frontage. Magnificent detailed heavy cast iron staircase winds to the belvedere. Extremely sound structurally with brick ceilings throughout but needing total restoration. Large rooms, high ceilings, very private. Five block walk to town. \$849,000. Frank Budreck, 708-860-3439 or budreck@aol.com. www.usmarinehospital.com



VICKSBURG, MS—Stately Victorian, circa 1868, features 6 bedrooms, 5 baths. The adjacent 1881 guesthouse has 3 bedrooms, 3 baths and 3-room suite with full kitchen and private bath. New Orleans inspired courtyard garden, in-ground pool surrounded by hand made bricks. Top ranking, turnkey B&B with beautiful antiques. 7 rental units and owners suite. Mississippi River view. \$600,000. Pam Powers, Powers Properties, 601-831-4505 or ppowers@liveinthesouth.com



EDISON, NJ—Charming 19th C farmhouse. Fireplace in new kitchen; large living & dining rooms with fireplaces. Front and back porches, patio, 4 bedrooms and new bath, 3rd floor ready to be finished. Master offers walk-in closet and access to bath. Gingerbread trim, wainscoting, moldings, 11-ft ceilings and wide plank floors. Well maintained; fenced w/storage shed. Close to NYC transportation and shops. Stephanie Smith, Coldwell Banker, Westfield, NJ. 908-230-8585. www.HistoricHomesNJ.com



MEYERSDALE, PA—1905 Colonial Hotel on National Register. Downtown anchor along Great Allegheny Passage trail. 25,000+ sq.ft. including lobby, parlors, dining room with Du Brau murals, 55+ guestrooms, baths with clawfoot tubs, 4 fireplaces, grand staircase, and atrium. Oak and walnut trim. Many original features. Marketing and rehabilitation plan completed. \$150,000. Scott Boyer, RE/MAX Premier, 814-445-4748 or rscottboyer@remax.net. www.historiccolonialhotel.com

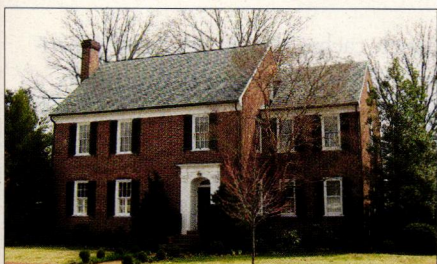
Historic Properties



WALTERBORO, SC—Restored antebellum, 3 bedroom, 2 ½ bath home built about 1849 and on the National Register. First floor master suite with separate sitting area, family room with bay window with garden views including a bamboo forest. Heart pine floors, formal living and dining room. Home warranty! About 1 hour to Charleston, SC. \$249,900. Call for United Country's Specialty Catalog of historic real estate. United Country, 800-999-1020, Ext. 108. www.unitedcountry.com/old




BELLE HAVEN, VA—Majestic brick 5 bedroom home. Doric columns, cantilevered staircase, hardwood floors and original woodwork. Historically accurate storm windows, 5 skylights and 7 working fireplaces. 3 porches, carport, and stables w/electricity. Close to shopping, restaurants and deepwater marinas & boat ramps on both Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean. Truly remarkable! \$675,000 with 5.7 acres; \$750,000 with 24.09. Blue Heron Realty Co., 757-678-5200. www.BlueHeronVa.com



FREDERICKSBURG, VA—50 miles south of Washington, DC. The Dr. Phillip Cox House. Circa 1931. Handsome Colonial Revival built with the finest materials—brick, slate, and copper. Elegant but comfortable interior with updated amenities. Dramatic staircases, built-ins, wood-burning fireplace, woodwork & more. Move-in condition. Located in Historic Downtown with lovely gardens. \$850,000. Susan Pates, Johnson and Glazebrook, Realtors, 540-809-9443 or Susanpates@aol.com

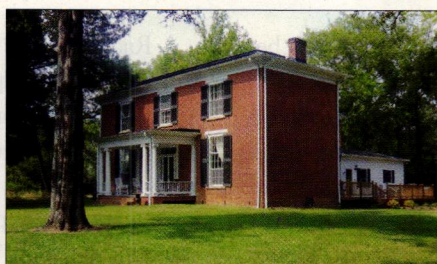
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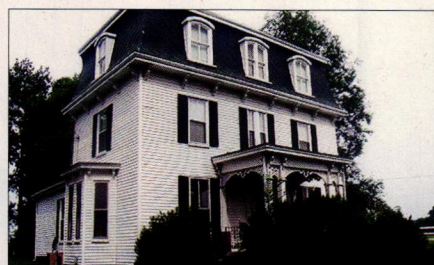
RUSSELL, PA—Solidly built by the renowned lumberman Guy C. Irvine in 1835 and continuing to be in superb condition, The Locusts is on the National Register and is 10 miles south of Lake Chautauqua. 14 acres of beautiful gardens and vistas. Has a separate carriage structure. The exterior of the main house is a Georgian red brick and two-story style with strikingly unusual large bridged chimneys on each of its sides. Irvine's passion for the lumber business is evident in wide-planked chestnut floors lying as flat and true as they were in 1835, with the interior crown moldings, baseboards and wide windows in a Greek Revival style. Warren County's premier property. \$400,000. 412-261-8902.



COVINGTON, VA—Luke's Mountain mansion is a spectacular find. It was built in 1919 and situated on 24+ acres. Fabulous mountain views and the city lights at night. A family's paradise—big rooms, woods to play in, and a large in-ground pool. Plenty of space for large family - 12,000+/- sq.ft., 9 bedrooms, 6 baths, 2 half baths, formal living and dining rooms, music room. \$719,000. Louise Showalter, Fairfield Farms Realty, LLC, 540-862-1150. www.fairfieldfarmsrealty.com



HALIFAX, VA—Springfield. 1842 Greek Revival 3,600 sq.ft. brick estate nestled on 48 acres. Interior crafted by master woodworker Thomas Day and his shop. Except for the kitchen wing, the house is original in every detail. 6 fireplaces ingratiate every room. Ionic columns, chamfered door panels and newel posts. Central 3-zone HVAC. Must see to appreciate \$479,000. Max Sempowski, Antique Properties, division of Keller Williams, 434-391-4855. www.oldhouseproperties.com



DINWIDDIE, VA—Tres belle! Beautiful French Beaux Arts home built in the early 1900s and restored in the early 1990s has many unique details. 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, living room w/pocket door, transoms, pine floors, lovely staircase goes all the way to the 3rd floor. Move in ready! On 1 acre in historic VA village. \$179,900. United Country's Specialty Catalog features vintage homes and farms steeped in history. United Country, 800-999-1020, Ext. 108. www.unitedcountry.com/old



LODI, WI—Historic eloquence inside and out. Large unique lot with semi-circle drive, private in-ground pool, and brick exterior. Interior features solid oak floors, wide trim, crown molding, murals dating back to the 19th century and a cupola for taking in rooftop views of the historic downtown. \$349,000. Kyla Jensen, WI Real Estate Professionals, LLC, 608-772-2787 or kbjensen@live.com. For more info and video tour, visit: www.whirligighd.com/vtour/vtour_new.php?action=listingtour&listingID=1171&show=video



National Single Column pattern of American Radiators.

In this arrangement of color, the Radiator is subdued by being painted to match the wall paper, in contradistinction to the arrangement shown in illustration on page opposite.



National Two-Column pattern of American Radiators.

The decorative treatment of this Radiator makes it an object of interest in itself. It has the decorative value of a picture, a rug, or a piece of drapery.

**Radiation & Decoration, American Radiator Company,
Chicago, Illinois, 1905**

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Radiating Decorative Value

L usciously lilac to match the delicate blossoms behind it, the radiator above on the right is no wall-flower. In fact, the caption below the picture sells it as having “the decorative value of a picture, a rug, or a piece of drapery.” One would imagine its multi-hued companion on the left would be considered an equally bold accessory, yet its caption assures us that this radiator “is subdued by being painted to match the wall paper.”

In the 21st century, old cast iron radiators are often scorned as hissing, hammering space hogs only good for drying out wet socks and harboring dust bunnies. However, just a century ago, steam heat represented a huge step forward from smoking fireplaces, hungry wood stoves, and clumsy coal grates. Radiators were technology worthy of celebration.

Radiators had so much cachet that in 1905 the American Radiator Company published *Radiation & Decoration*, a 48-page full-color promotional booklet that placed their product front and center in the home. Installed beside fashionable walls featuring the latest artistic papers, 14 different models were meticulously painted to either blend in with or make a standout statement in their high-design room settings.

How many homeowners actually embraced such style-setting creativity? Hard to say. But the next time you look over at that hulking silver beast making noises in the living room, you might ask yourself what bold (or “subdued”) surprises could be hiding under those many layers of paint. 🏠


Bo Sullivan is the historian for Rejuvenation and the owner of Arcalus Period Design in Portland, Oregon. He is an avid collector and researcher of original trade catalogs.

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remuddling



Aging Gracelessly

It's not just trying to grow that deforms old houses; in the hands of some owners, simple remedies for the ravages of age can be damaging, too. Case in point: these two Queen Annes sitting side by side. While one house (at right) maintains all of its architectural birthmarks—unified clapboard siding, a front porch, a prominent entry door with sidelights, and a couple of fanciful lozenge windows—its neighbor (at left) has lost them all. Instead, it's had a siding face-lift, been excised of its (likely blemished) front porch, and faces visitors with a big-box-special entry door and an array of false-divided-light windows.

"This house is a testament to the benefits of local historic district designation," laments our contributor. We think that when old houses go under the knife, it's best to have a sensitive, historic-minded surgeon at hand. 🏠

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