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## features

### 32 Spanish Accent

In a quest to marry their kitchen renovation with the architecture of their Spanish Revival house, these homeowners took charge of the details—including laying tile and tracking down antique lighting.  
By CLARE MARTIN

35 PLUS: Should you use vintage lights?

### 36 5 Choice Saws

A few good saws are must-haves for a range of home restoration projects. Here are the top picks from a professional carpenter, with tips on how to use them.  
By MARK CLEMENT

### 50 Rebirth of a Kitchen

A Colonial Revival kitchen gets a fitting, creative, 1940s-minded retrofit that's heavy on the salvaged elements.  
By RICHARD L. KRONICK

55 PLUS: When to go with repro lights.

### 58 Style: Great Expectations

The in-city Baltimore suburb of Guilford delivers an enormous array of quality vintage buildings.  
By JAMES C. MASSEY AND SHIRLEY MAXWELL



## Old-House Living

### 26 Prairie Home Companion

The ambitious restoration of a long-vacant Prairie house is a sparkling example of one homeowner's determination and vision.  
By THOMAS CONNORS

## Old-House Insider

### 42 A Timely Transition

A grand, eclectic house in Portland, Oregon, gets a kitchen to match—one that's grounded by French bakery style.  
By DEMETRA APOSPOROS



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## in every issue

- 8 Editor's Note**  
Modern Vintage Kitchens
- 10 Letters**  
Readers weigh in on the real cost of energy retrofits, and we track down sources for period-friendly driveways and fireplaces.
- 14 AskOHJ**  
Can combination porcelain-and-metal bath fixtures be safely refinished? Our expert points out the pros and cons.  
By DON HOOPER
- 17 Preservation Perspectives**  
Through their innovative Junior Board, Georgia's Watson-Brown Foundation puts teenagers in touch with funding preservation.  
By DEMETRA APOSPOROS



## outside

- 18 Outside the Old House**  
Antiques aren't just for indoors—adding vintage elements to the garden is a great way to complement your old house.  
By CATHERINE B. HARPER
- 22 My Town**  
An architectural writer's tour of Boston favorites touches on three centuries of history.  
By DAN COOPER
- 80 Remuddling**  
An Italianate house has lost that welcoming feeling.



## inside

- 12 About the House**  
Could restoring your house get you in trouble? Plus, a new carpentry app and two books that will help you plan an architecture-themed vacation.  
By CLARE MARTIN
- 25 Period Products**  
Add a splash of color to your kitchen with these cheerful, period-friendly finds.  
By CLARE MARTIN
- 78 A Page from History**  
One big innovation in mid-century lighting brought some unusual overhead developments.  
By BO SULLIVAN



## working

- 16 Old-House Toolbox**  
That old standby—the tape measure—will carry you far if you're schooled on a few practical attributes.  
By MARK CLEMENT
- 21 Tools & Materials**  
A color-changing caulk and an eco-friendly sealant bring modern benefits to run-of-the-mill projects.  
By THE OHJ EDITORIAL STAFF
- 56 Restore It Right**  
Reclaiming the fine details on old hardware is as easy as stripping off decades' worth of paint buildup.  
By THE OHJ EDITORIAL STAFF

## on our cover:

p. 32 →

p. 32, 42, 50

p. 35, 55 →

p. 14 →  
p. 56 →



← p. 22

Cover: Photo by Greg Kozawa. An eclectic Portland house gets a kitchen update with period French flair. Story page 42.

← p. 36



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- 76 Historic Properties**



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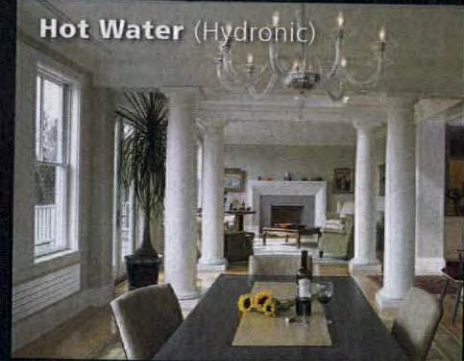
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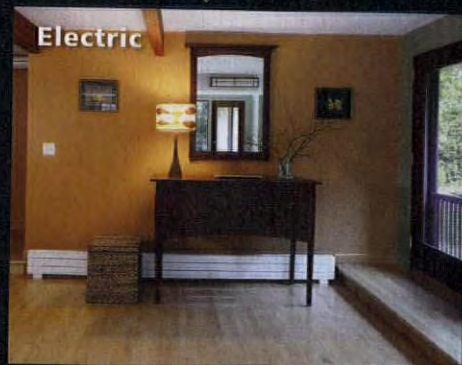
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## Anatomy of a Kitchen Update

You'll be downright amazed when you see the difference between Ryan Knoke and Montana Scheff's cramped, dated 1970s kitchen and the breezy 1940s-inspired room they designed to replace it (above and page 50). For even more behind-the-scenes scoop on this awesome transformation, browse through additional before-and-after photos of the kitchen in our special online gallery.

## Best Bets in Boston

After you read native son Dan Cooper's roundup of architectural sights in Boston (page 22), we bet it won't take much to convince you to book a quick summer getaway to Beantown. But just in case you're still on the fence, check out our online guide to history-minded summer events in one of America's oldest cities.

## The Skinny on Saws

Mark Clement's article on must-have saws for DIYers (page 36) will set you straight on which type is best for your project. But how do you decide which model to buy? Head online to access saw-related tool reviews from previous issues, which spotlight the essential features you'll want to look for in a saw and which ones you can live without.



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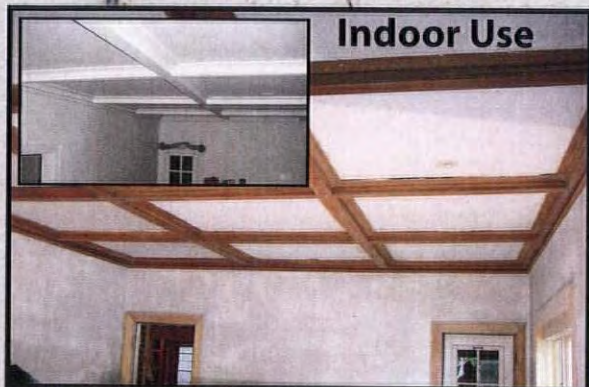
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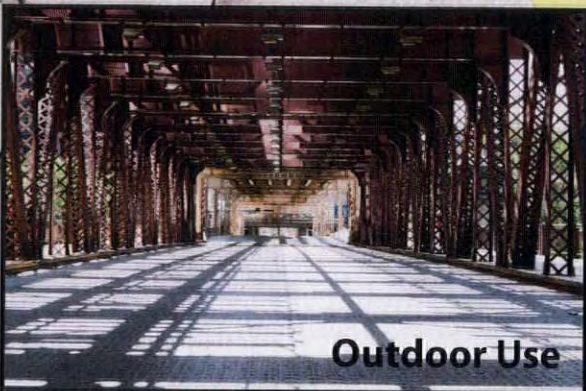
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# editor's note

## Kitchen Vision



I HAVE SUCH FOND MEMORIES of my grandmother's kitchen. It wasn't very big, but it had everything Yiayia needed to get the job done—a hulking 1940s stove, a stand-alone wooden work table where I spent many hours watching her knead dough for the bread she made every few days, and a porcelain sink with built-in drainboard. It was the center of her universe, and maybe mine, too, when I was greeted by the smell of her baking bread.

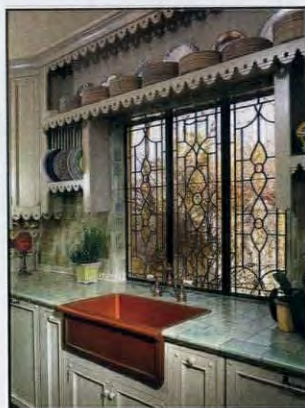
There's no denying that today's kitchens are the heart of the house. Part meal-planning and prep center, part kids' homework station, part family gathering spot, part entertainment hub—modern kitchens are a busy place! Which is why it's so important to get their

details right. If you're looking for ideas, you've come to the right place. In this issue, we visit kitchens that homeowners retrofitted to three different, distinctive styles—Victorian eclectic, 1940s, and Spanish Revival (see “A Timely Transition,” “Rebirth of a Kitchen,” and “Spanish Accent,” beginning on pages 42, 50, and 32, respectively). These spot-on spaces can help you nail such details as tile, trim, islands, appliances, and lighting. Speaking of lighting, we've also got two sidebars that can help you narrow down choices by explaining what to look for in both vintage lighting (page 35) and reproductions (page 55).

Once you've envisioned your perfect kitchen, you might want to check out a whole-house project of note in *Old-House Living*. Homeowner Gary Carlson took possession of his Prairie-style house after it had sat vacant for seven full years, so his to-do list was extensive. You'd never know it by looking at the finished product (see “Prairie Home Companion,” page 26).

If your project list is likewise long, you won't want to miss this issue's story on saws. Professional carpenter Mark Clement weighs in on 5 must-have tools to carry you through a wide range of typical restoration projects, and offers helpful hints on using them effectively (see “5 Choice Saws,” page 36).

Whether you're just getting started removing remuddled elements, or are mapping out the kitchen of your dreams, we've got you covered.



The Spanish kitchen's stellar style.

daposporos@homebuyerpubs.com

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# letters

## How Green Is Green?

What is the carbon footprint of producing the materials for the geothermal system used in the house featured in "Grounds for Change" [April/May]? How much of the old system went to the landfill? Has this been taken into account in assessing this house as "green"?

Also, shouldn't the \$160,000 for the system be divided by the time in months of heating and cooling while living there and then added to the monthly heating/cooling bill for a more accurate figure than \$7 per month?

Please don't get me wrong; geothermal and solar energy are the wave of the future—but perhaps they should be used in new construction, and we should leave the old houses alone.

Donald Loughrey

Via oldhouseonline.com



From homeowner David Neiblum: "The carbon footprint was dramatically less than the prospect of building a new house (even a much smaller one) and including central air, which this house lacked.

None of the old system went to the landfill: The two oil boilers were recycled and used in area houses that needed new furnaces, and the copper piping for the system was recycled, as were about 20 cast iron radiators that were removed.

Oil bills for the old system were between \$3,000 and \$5,000 a month from November to March, along with \$400 a month for electricity—these bills now are \$0 for oil and \$7 for electricity. Depending on various factors, the system should pay for itself in five to seven years." —Eds.

## Reader Tip of the Month

My husband and I laid  $\frac{3}{4}$ " hex tile in our kitchen and bathrooms. We found that an old rolling pin was very useful to help ensure that each tile was pushed into the mortar and was even with the ones beside it without having to touch each tile individually.

Angela Ghorzi

Via email

Got a great tip to share with other old-house lovers? Let us know at [OHJEditorial@homebuyerpubs.com](mailto:OHJEditorial@homebuyerpubs.com).

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## Drive Design

In the April/May issue, there's a spectacular photo of the exterior of the Eitzen Mansion [Old-House Living, "Lasting Legacy"] during a cocktail party. The material used for the driveway—which appears to be irregular cobblestone assembled in jigsaw fashion—contributes greatly to the remarkably warm feeling of the outdoor space. Do you have any insight?

John C. Gustafsson

Via email

We checked with homeowner Pam Green, who reports that the driveway is new, built to replace a worn-out, unoriginal driveway. It's made of dyed and stamped concrete that resembles gray cobblestones and red bricks, and was inspired by a circa-1911 photo of the house. —Eds.



## Fired Up

In your February/March article on fireplaces ["Hearth of the Matter"], you showed a fireplace with a black wrought iron fire screen or enclosure on page 29. Do you know who the manufacturer of that piece is? Thanks for your assistance, and keep up the terrific articles like this one!

Stan Wolcott

Via email

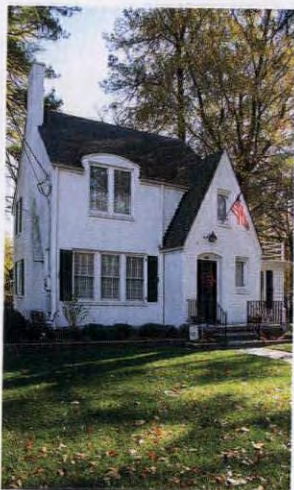
The fireplace (shown above) is a Fireplace Xtordinair gas insert faceplate (fireplace.com) set in a surround of Motawi field and decorative tiles (motawi.com). —Eds.

## Searching for Sears

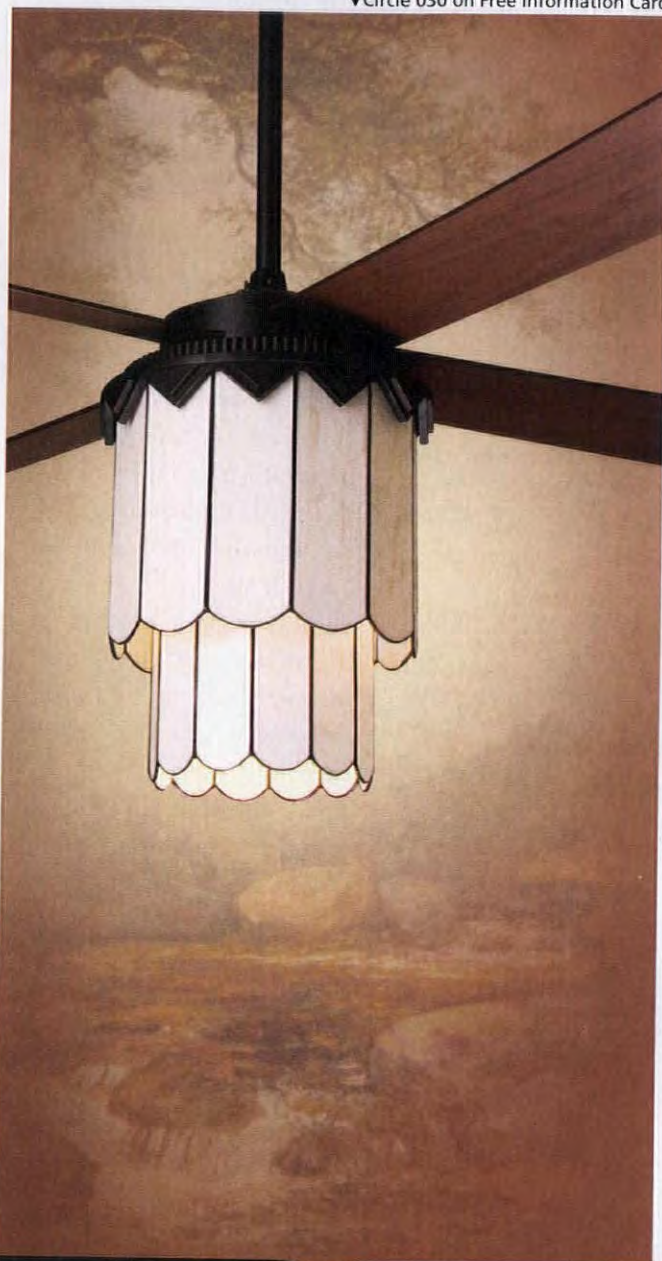
I have never been able to identify the style of my 1929 house until I saw the Cambridge Old English [right] shown in your article on Sears houses ["Sears' Surprise," April/May]. I have been unable to find that particular house listed on other websites for Sears homes.

Bobby Barbuto

Via email



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By CLARE MARTIN

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JULY 28

PORTLAND, OR

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Get a glimpse inside five of Portland's grandest restored homes—spanning a variety of different styles—on this annual tour sponsored by the Architectural Heritage Center. (503) 231-7264; visitahc.org

## ON THE RADAR

# Restoration in Violation?

Nina Smith thought she was doing the right thing when she bought a 1914 Foursquare in Lakewood, Ohio, and carefully began stripping off its aluminum siding to restore the original clapboards underneath. So a few months into the project, she was understandably surprised when she received a notice from the local building department to maintain her siding. Despite attempts to cooperate with the

authorities (while still taking the time to properly strip, repair, prime, and paint the original clapboards), Smith has found herself in the midst of a protracted court battle to fend off criminal charges of noncompliance levied by the building department.

Smith admits her case is somewhat extreme, provoked by a harassing neighbor and a building department with a less-than-stellar reputation. Still, it's not uncommon for DIY restorers to run up against local governments during the restoration process.

If you're restoring a property that's been vacant or is particularly derelict, check your city's property maintenance requirements to make sure those items—which can include things like peeling paint, sagging gutters, missing shingles, and rotting eaves—go to the top of your to-do list to avoid being dinged for a violation by a neighbor or building inspector.

Most homeowners know to check whether per-

mits are required before beginning repairs, and to follow all regulations and approvals mandated by local historic preservation commissions. However, keep in mind that permits may require the work to be performed within a certain time limit, though extensions are often possible if you can show progress (though in Smith's case, her careful prep work has repeatedly been met with claims from the inspector that "prep work doesn't equal progress"). Many homeowners are able to get around time-limit restrictions for exterior work by completely restoring one side of a building at a time, but Smith points out this probably wouldn't have helped her.

"This all started when I only had siding removed from the front of the house," she says. "I honestly have no idea what I could have done to prevent this from happening." For more on Smith's story, visit [1914foursquare.com](http://1914foursquare.com).



Nina Smith's Foursquare before she removed the aluminum siding (below) and after stripping and priming clapboards (left).



NINA SMITH PHOTOS

## OLD-HOUSE RESOURCE

### Cut It Out

When tackling large-scale carpentry projects (such as creating kitchen cabinets or built-in bookcases), it's essential to plan ahead by making a cut list to ensure you don't waste lumber. With the new CarpenterPro iPhone and iPad app, you input the dimensions, grain direction, and quantity for

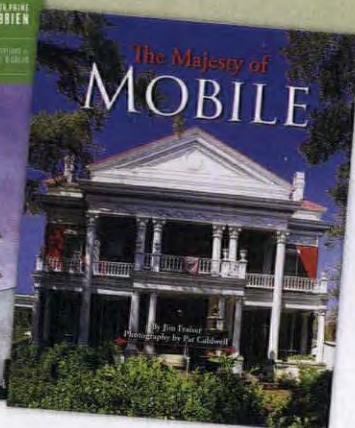
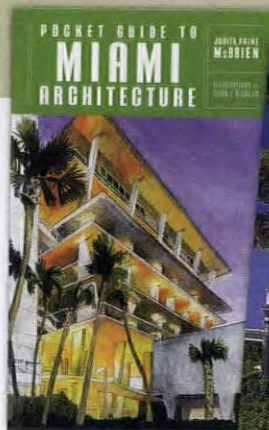
each part you need to cut, and the app generates a detailed list that allows you to easily see where cuts should be made on each sheet of plywood. You can save the cut list as a pdf or send to a printer, or buy an add-on app that allows you to print stickers to mark each part.



## BOOKS IN BRIEF

If you're like most old-house aficionados, historic architecture probably figures heavily in your travels. This summer, those seeking out grand old buildings in the southern half of the U.S.—specifically in Miami, Florida, and Mobile, Alabama—have a couple of new books to help them track down local treasures.

For fans of Mediterranean Revival or Art Deco architecture, Miami tops the must-visit list. The *Pocket Guide to Miami Architecture* divides the city and its surrounds (including Miami Beach and Coral Gables) into five compact tours based on the historic development of each neighborhood. Each tour hits both the iconic showstoppers and the lesser-known gems—in Coral



Gables, for example, author Judith Paine McBrien spotlights both the opulent Mediterranean Revival architecture introduced in the 1920s by city planner George Merrick and the simple board-and-batten buildings that preceded it. Although accompanied by detailed illustrations, this guide isn't for armchair travelers—rather, as the name suggests, it's best carried with you as you navigate the city's vibrant streets.

In a neighboring state but virtually another world away, Mobile, Alabama, remains a bastion of the Old South on the Gulf Coast. This genteel city often gets lost in the shuffle amidst the flash of Charleston, Savannah, and New Orleans, but its eclectic collection of Greek Revival mansions, Italianate row houses, and fancifully painted Queen Annes merits a visit by architecture buffs. *The Majesty of Mobile* spotlights 66 of the city's most beloved historic homes scattered throughout 12 neighborhoods. Accompanied by full-color interior and exterior photos, the book is both a guide to this architecture-rich city and a primer on the popular house styles of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

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# ask ohj

**Q:** I'm having a Sphinx shower unit restored with new stems, and they mentioned replating the handles. Does it make sense to replating old combination fixtures, or is it better to preserve the patina? Also, can the porcelain be buffed? It's a bit dull.

**A:** **Don Hooper:** Your questions apply to the cosmetic restoration of the whole range of antique bathroom fixtures—from sink and tub faucets to shower assemblies, and even chrome- or nickel-plated bathroom accessories.

Most early bathroom fixtures, such as the Sphinx shower control valve, were made of brass parts, and include brass and white china handles and a white china escutcheon cover. The parts hidden from view inside the wall and behind the cover are unfinished brass, while exposed brass parts were polished and nickel-plated. Nickel plating is a relatively soft coating that's less durable than chrome plating; after many years of use, it will wear down and eventually disappear completely.

When the nickel plating has deteriorated, dulled, or worn away completely, the brass beneath it is visible, and the finish becomes splotchy and irregular. If all fixtures in an old period bathroom have such a worn appearance, it may be aesthetically acceptable to leave the exposed metal showing its patina. But most people like their bath fixtures to have a clean, new appearance (even on 100-year-old pieces), which is possible through cosmetic restoration—polishing and plating—of the metal parts.

All restorers replating the metal parts



**LEFT:** Metal parts, like those on this Sphinx fixture, can be replated to as-new condition (below), or gently cleaned.



of antique bathroom fixtures unless specifically asked not to (an exception is polished brass, which is either left unfinished and must be polished regularly, or coated with lacquer or polyurethane to inhibit tarnishing). Most old fixtures are replated in polished or brushed nickel or chrome. (Polished silver and gold are also possible, albeit costly.) Whatever finish is chosen, there are some considerations.

The first involves the process of stripping and polishing—many people assume that parts with a china component can't be stripped and polished, but this isn't true. The chemical stripping process doesn't damage the china, as long as the part isn't left soaking in the chemicals longer than necessary to remove the grime and old plating.

During the polishing process, however, great care must be used to prevent the high-speed polishing wheel from overheating the metal, which will crack the china part. (If not used with care, the wheel also can grab the part from a worker's hand and fling it to the ground.) The rest of the plating process is pretty

simple; the parts are wired up and hung in plating tanks. You need to be confident that the shop doing your restoration knows that these parts are both fragile and irreplaceable.

Cosmetic restoration tends to be expensive because it is labor-intensive, the workplace is a hazardous area (so insurance costs are high), and the chemicals and waste disposal are costly, all of which gets passed on to the consumer. Because of this, and the risk of damage to these precious fixtures, I suggest resisting stripping, polishing, and replating whenever possible. Instead, I like to clean and hand-polish fixtures myself. You can do the same.

Pour some CLR or Lime-Away into a basin of water, then soak the parts for 5 to 10 minutes. (Don't leave them soaking too long—i.e. hours—or the mild acid in the cleaners will begin to degrade the shine on the china and plating.) Then, put some Zud on a scrubber and scrub the part until clean.



**LEFT TO RIGHT:** To clean up vintage fixtures, you'll need a basin, scrub brush and sponge, some CLR or Lime-Away, and Zud. Soak the part in a mixture of water and one of the first two cleaners, then brush it down and follow up with Zud on the scrubber. Rinse well.



## MORE QUESTIONS ANSWERED

When done, rinse off with water. (If working on fixtures installed on a wall, spray them with Lime-Away first, then scrub with Zud and rinse.) Repeat as necessary.

Insofar as polishing the china trim pieces, I know of no effective way to do that. While shiny, polished, replated metal parts may present a contrast with old, slightly worn china trim, it shouldn't be displeasing—it's a reflection of the age and history of your unique fixtures. 🏠



**Don Hooper, owner of Vintage Plumbing Bathroom Antiques, has been collecting, selling, and restoring antique bathroom fixtures for more than 35 years.**

**Q:**

**I'm stripping varnish off a black walnut stair rail, and a white film is showing up in select areas. I've been removing the stripper with water as directed. Help! –Holly**

**A:** If the stripper is removed before it completely breaks down the varnish, it can leave a white film. Try a scrubber dipped in Lacquer Thinner—rub the area down, then wipe dry with a cloth. –Lair

**A:** It's likely that the first coat is shellac, and denatured alcohol is the solvent for that; it also will remove any residual layers of varnish and paint. Always use Scotch-Brite

scrub pads [instead of steel wool] with these solvents to reduce the fire hazard from contact with electric outlets. –Bill

**A:** Reapply a generous amount of the same stripper, and let it sit on the wood the recommended time. Remove the stripper in even wipes, then wipe down with a mildly abrasive pad and remove remaining residue with a paper towel. –Ken

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](mailto:OHJEditorial@homebuyerpubs.com).

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# old-house toolbox

## Tape Measure

*To find a tape that measures up, keep it simple.*

BY MARK CLEMENT

I bought my first tape measure back in high school when I worked as a helper for a local contractor. Despite having been through umpteen different tapes over the years, I've found that the first type of tape measure I bought is the one I've come to rely on.

In carpentry, everything starts with measuring dimensions, so I spend gobs of time with a tape in my hands. It's there all the way from general measurements to determine room size to rough framing 16 centers to splitting a  $\frac{1}{16}$ th for crown. Heck, I even use it to point at things when showing or explaining something.

Basically, I have a tape in my hand almost constantly during many aspects of a project, so I need one I don't have to think twice about.

### What to Look For

**Size and Fit.** The tape that fits my hand like a glove is what I call a box-style tape: 25' long with a metallic housing that's about 1½" wide and 3" square. I realize this is subjective, but I can manipulate this type the best. I can hold it in my hands, and "brake" the tape with my finger as I measure a wall or floor, or bend it into an inside corner.

Tapes with a different shape don't fit my hand as well, or cause me to fumble, albeit momentarily. But a second here and there is valuable time: Using a tape I'm at one with means I'm not distracted—and there is real, measurable value in that.

**Hook End.** There have been lots of innovations in the hook end of a tape measure from manufacturers over the years, but for me, nothing beats the basic L shape. The various contours I've seen come and go tend to tip the tape over as it pays out. While they may work well for tasks like framing or plumbing, overly contoured ends make the blade slightly top-heavy; they can even get caught in the wind. Plus, they can get stuck more easily on stuff you don't want them to catch on, like gaps between the floor and wall or tree branches and shrubs.

**Recoil.** Some tapes recoil super-quickly, but the tension required to get the blade back in the box that fast means it's harder to "brake" when taking measurements in situations where I can't hook the end—for example, when measuring trim from an inside corner joist. It's a matter of degree, but again, it's something I'd rather not devote a brain cell or two to. For me, tapes with a gentler recoil are easier to use and get back in the box fast enough.

**Grip.** I had a tape once that had an all-rubber over-mold housing. It was nearly impossible to drop, sure, but I couldn't get it into and out of my tool pouch without a fight—no fun on a ladder (or anywhere).

**Standout.** This manufacturer's term refers to how long you can extend the blade of the tape before it bends. It's an important feature, but not a make-or-break one. On job sites—framing, roofing, trim—where you need to hand the end of your tape to someone else, sizeable standout undeniably saves steps, but if working alone or on smaller projects, it's



**No-fuss features make for a tape measure you can use without a second thought.**

not as crucial. However, I've found that standout less than 7' leads to wasted time.

### The Bottom Line

For me, a tape I can grab out of my pouch and use without thinking about it saves minutes of frustration and downtime. Ironically, the best tape measure is one with a few simple features done extremely well. In this case, less is more—you can measure it. 📏



Carpenter Mark Clement is working on his century-old American Four-square in Ambler, Pennsylvania, and is the author of *The Carpenter's Notebook*.

TERESA COLEMAN CLEMENT PHOTO



# preservation perspectives



**LEFT:** The 2011-2012 Thomson Junior Board. **ABOVE:** A Board-funded grant created a Historic Structures Report for Washington, Georgia's Toombs House.

## Fostering Preservationists



Georgia's Watson-Brown Foundation gives high school students the chance to fund preservation projects. We spoke with Michelle Zupan, curator of Hickory Hill & the Tom Watson Birthplace, to learn more. **BY DEMETRA APOSPOROS**

**DEMETRA APOSPOROS:** What is Watson-Brown's Junior Board?

**MICHELLE ZUPAN:** It's a talented group of local high school students whose mission is to preserve local history. Part historic preservation, part youth philanthropy, the board fosters civic responsibility, heightens appreciation of local history, and introduces students to disciplined, thoughtful giving.

**DA:** How many kids sit on the Junior Board?

**MZ:** It varies by year, but usually 30 to 33 from the combined boards. We have three Junior Boards, each affiliated with a historic house in a different part of Georgia.

**DA:** How are kids selected?

**MZ:** The original board was hand-selected by high school counselors and history teachers, but today's board is self-selecting; members from the previous year choose who they think will best fit—looking for an understanding of historic preservation and a genuine passion for preserving history.

**DA:** Is it a one-year term?

**MZ:** They typically come on in their sophomore or junior year, and stay as long as they're a member in good standing. Older members add a level of comfort to new ones—knowing you're distributing \$33,000 in funds can be a little intimidating.

*When they become  
community leaders,  
they'll have preservation  
on their radar screen  
as being important.*

**DA:** How do funds get broken down?

**MZ:** That figure is per board. If a single project spoke heavily to them, they could award it in one grant. But generally grants range from \$600 to \$18,000.

**DA:** Do they get guidance in making the grant decisions?

**MZ:** There are coordinators for each board who discuss the grants and help steer the kids toward the stronger ones. The questions we want them to think about are: Is this really historic preservation? Is this something really important right now, or is there something more important this organization should be doing instead? But ultimately, the decision is theirs.

**DA:** What have they funded recently?

**MZ:** Last year they did a substantial grant to Meadow Garden for some desperately needed restoration. It will include new clapboards, window glazing, and new porch posts and balusters.

**DA:** What's the goal of the program?

**MZ:** To foster a spirit of philanthropy in high school students who may never have been exposed to it before.

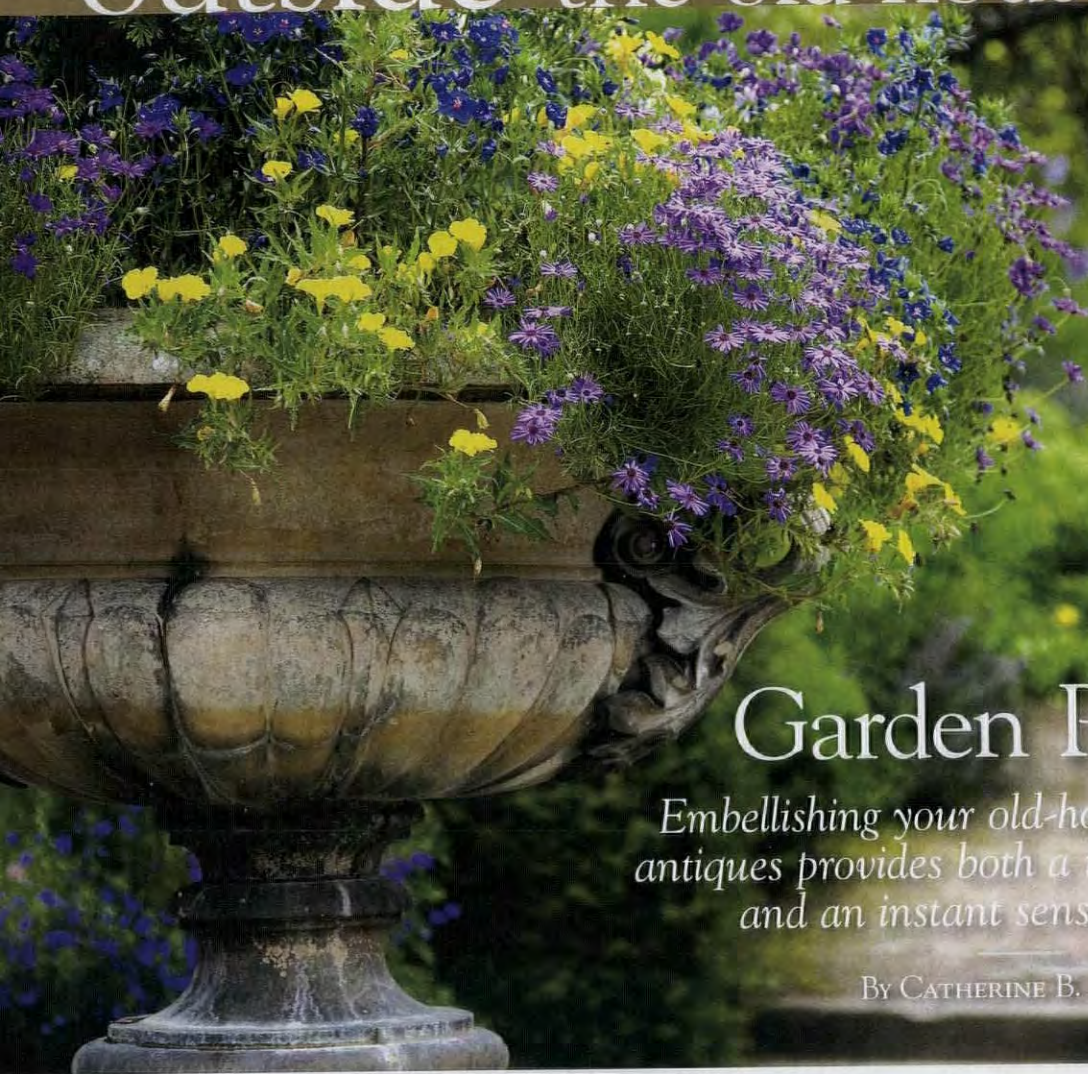
**DA:** Do some students go on to preservation careers?

**MZ:** Some do go into historic preservation, or archaeology, or architecture. But all of them have the spirit of preservation in them, so when they become community leaders, they'll have it on their radar screen as being important.

For more information, visit [watson-brown.org](http://watson-brown.org)



# outside the old house



## Garden Patina

*Embellishing your old-house garden with antiques provides both a unique focal point and an instant sense of history.*

By CATHERINE B. HARPER

**A**ntiques. The word often brings to mind a Ming vase, Tiffany lamp, flow blue platter, or a Belter chair. But to Joan Bogart, a dealer who specializes in garden antiques, the word inspires images of a Timmes bench, cast iron urns, a Coalbrookdale plant stand, or a Fiske fountain.

Bogart had her “aha!” moment in the 1970s when she studied a museum exhibit catalog and noticed photos of cast iron furniture interspersed with those of grandly upholstered parlor sets. The resemblance was undeniable: The same exquisite details that were carved into wood were also cast in iron. “I realized,” she recalls, “that you can bring the interior of your restored home outdoors by putting a cast iron bench in your back yard!” Her insight was the same

revelation early Victorians had as they domesticated their yards with outdoor versions of their interiors, extending their living space beyond the home’s four walls.

In fact, the Victorians were just reviving a time-honored practice of garden embellishment that began with the Romans, who displayed copies of Greek statues in their villa gardens. Later, during the Renaissance, Italians salvaged the



**TOP:** A wide urn serves as an antique sentry for a formal garden entrance. **INSET:** The title page from Shirley Hibberd’s 1870 book *Adornments for Homes of Taste* features a variety of vintage urns.





Romans' statuary to incorporate in their own gardens. Well-to-do American colonists, in turn, imported the garden styling of European tastemakers—Martha Washington's father-in-law, for example, used lead copies of Roman statuary in his Williamsburg garden. For the Victorians, it was a reflection of status to ornament their gardens with souvenirs of antiquity purchased on their Grand Tours of Europe, thus propagating the tradition of garnishing one's yard with antiques.

Increasingly, old-house restorers striving for period consistency find that adding a garden antique helps achieve authenticity. No mere decorative accent, a garden antique provides a focal point while adding a layer of age to the design.

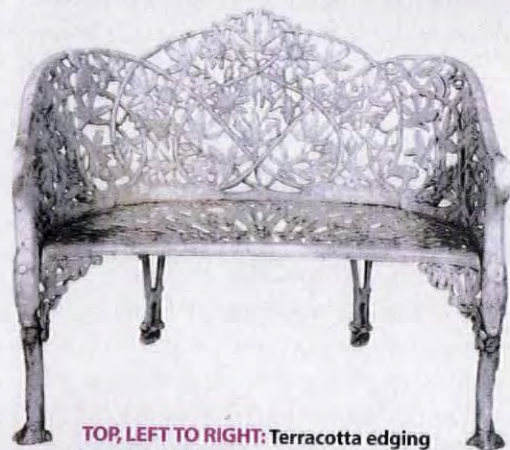
## Outdoor Embellishments

The most popular garden antique, both during the Victorian era and now, is the urn. It wasn't until cast iron foundries mass-produced affordable versions of this garden staple that the emerging middle class could enhance their gardens with urns in revival styles from ancient to Renaissance. Today, as then, upright urns are best for

small gardens, with wide urns requiring a larger space.

In summer days before air conditioning, Victorians eschewed entertaining in their homes' overheated interiors for the open-air parlors of their gardens. Proper furnishings were essential. A cast iron settee and chairs were grouped with a small table, an arrangement that still works for entertaining, reading, or relaxing. Fern mania broke out in the 1800s and inspired manufacturers to design seats with fern fronds arching across the open backs. Other naturalistic patterns included grapevines, rustic interlacing twigs, lily-of-the-valley, and the highly desirable passion flower. Many seats and benches were originally painted, and today can be left "shabby chic" or repainted.

Salvaged gates, trellises, and other elements can lend architectural drama to a garden. The side of a shed can become a beautiful focal point when embellished with tall antique fence sections planted with climbing heirloom roses, honeysuckle, or clematis. Hitching posts can be repurposed to tether top-heavy flowers. Remnants of a broken pedestal or stone balustrade can be inexpensive and follow the Victorian



**TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT:** Terracotta edging tiles help define a diminutive garden bed. An antique plant stand serves as an outdoor pantry, the vintage containers filled with different herbs. **ABOVE:** Floral motifs were popular on cast iron benches.

example of including a "ruin" as a sentimental homage to the past.

Stand-alone elements can provide a focal point for the garden. Statuary—such as carved stone and cast iron dogs, sphinxes, goddesses, and nymphs—have a lineage going back to Roman courtyard gardens. A sundial provides the perfect allusion to the timelessness of a garden. Historically, sundials were set in the center of a garden bed, often raised on low platforms of brick or stone. Mid-19th-century plant stands



# outside the old house

in freestanding or semicircular forms (for snug placement against the house) provide a decorative base for displaying plants. Heavy cast iron multi-tiered designs and lightweight wirework stands were equally cherished by Victorians.

It's the fountain, however, that takes the top prize of garden ornamentation. In the 19th century, the tiered fountains of J.W. Fiske and J.L. Mott were a preeminent attraction at public parks and international exhibits like the Crystal Palace and the Philadelphia Centennial. After 1870, when industrial advances made small-scale plumbing possible, the fountain was scaled down for private ownership. If an antique fountain cannot be returned to working order, its basin can be manually filled and emptied, becoming the grandest birdbath on the block. Keep in mind that fountains should be kept away from trees or bushes that shed leaves and flowers, and if a fountain is mounted in a brick wall, the wall must be reinforced for structural support.

## Collectible Care

When selecting an antique for the garden, scale is as important as placement—let the size and formality of the space suggest the size of the antique, but keep in mind that the massive piece that looked magnificent on site at an estate sale will not retain its grandeur when shoehorned into a garden nook. Remember to keep ornaments and plants in balance so that they link to the house and each other harmoniously. A significant antique can be cleverly used to distract from a less attractive part of the garden, but too many antiques in a small space creates a visual competition that detracts from the overall ambience, so it's better to be selective.



Originally fabricated for outdoor use, garden antiques are sturdy enough to withstand the rigors of weather, but Chini Alarco Whitmore, owner of Charles Whitmore Gardens, offers some specific advice. There's no need to line an antique urn when preparing it for plants, but to ensure proper drainage, place a 1" to 2" layer of clay shards or shale pebbles on the bottom, spade on a layer of mulch, and finish with a nutrient-enriched organic soil. At the end of the season, turn the urn upside down and raise it slightly off the ground so air can circulate.

Terracotta pots should be brought inside after the first frost to prevent them from getting damaged by the freeze/thaw cycle. Stone antiques can stay uncovered outdoors. Drain fountains before the first frost and, along with fences, clean in the spring, check for rust, and touch up with rustproof oil-based paint if need be. (Smaller cast iron pieces can be taken indoors during the winter.) It's also a good idea, upon purchasing a garden antique,



**TOP:** Spreading clay shards on the bottom of an antique urn helps facilitate drainage.

**INSET:** Illustrations from an 1882 book show two popular garden accessories of the day.

**BOTTOM:** A circa-1870 zinc fountain by Mott.

to ask the seller if there are any particular directions for its maintenance.

Restoration does more than connect us to the past; it reenergizes the past and allows us to relish the same pleasures our predecessors enjoyed. In this respect, a garden antique is not a shrine to a bygone era, but rather a point on the circle of its existence, coming around the curve once again as it is reused by yet another generation.

*Catherine B. Harper is a freelance writer who specializes in Victorian décor.*



# tools & materials

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



## In the Pink

It can be hard to judge when caulk is dry enough to paint, but Red Devil's ColorCure takes the guesswork out of the equation. The caulk goes on pink, then turns white when ready for paint (one to two hours later, depending upon the climate). It can be used indoors or out, and adheres to a variety of materials, including glass, wood, masonry, and tile. ColorCure is also low-VOC, free of toxic chemicals, and cleans up easily with water. \$3.98 per tube. Call (800) 423-3845, or visit [reddevil.com](http://reddevil.com).



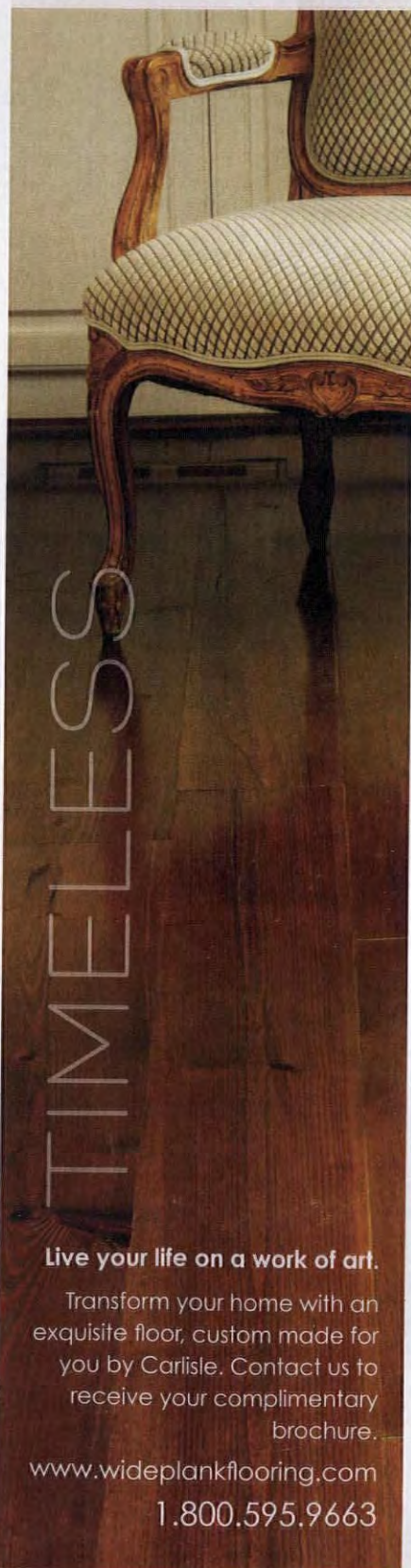
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# my town

## Boston, Massachusetts

*A local shares his favorite buildings  
from three centuries of history.*

BY DAN COOPER

**B**oston arguably has a greater time-span and amount of historic architecture than any other major American city. The challenge is where to begin, what to include, and what to omit?

Focusing on specific historic houses and neighborhoods in Boston proper (not Cambridge, Newton, Brookline, or the other suburbs) and examining places that the typical tourist directive might overlook helps old house buffs explore Boston on a deeper level. Geographically, Boston is a rather small city that can be appreciated largely on foot (a near-necessity, since on-street parking can be challenging at best). Leave your car at the Boston Common Garage and work away from it in various directions.

Late spring and mid-fall are great times to visit; summer is nice enough, but the emerging and departing foliage is spectacularly enchanting (and Boston's winters can rival Chicago's).

### Beacon Hill

Much has been made of the winding streets of Beacon Hill, praise that's well-deserved. It's exciting to wander randomly, turning corners at whim, and let each step become a discovery. Start at Beacon Street, along the Common, and move north. Preservation restrictions here are among the most stringent in the

country, so remuddling has been minimized. Louisburg Square is a spectacular collection of Neoclassical row houses built during the first half of the 19th century; they surround a private mall. Walking west from the foot of Beacon Hill, cross Charles Street to see other examples of slightly later structures on streets such as Chestnut and Brimmer.



### Back Bay

At the western end of Beacon Hill and the Public Garden lies the Back Bay. This is one of the few areas in the city laid out in a grid (which is why it's so darned confusing driving around Boston). It was, and is, a very posh neighborhood with spectacular row houses built of brick and brownstone, with some later limestone additions. Back Bay was built entirely on landfill, its marshes and swamps displaced in the mid-19th century with railcars of gravel brought in from the suburbs. Most structures are built atop wooden pilings hammered into the earth.

Just off of the Public Garden sits an overlooked jewel, the Gibson House Museum. Built in 1859, it was home to the Gibson family until the 1970s, when the last heir died with a provision that the house be preserved as a museum. It offers a fascinating glimpse of upper-middle-class Bostonian life in the second half of the 19th century.



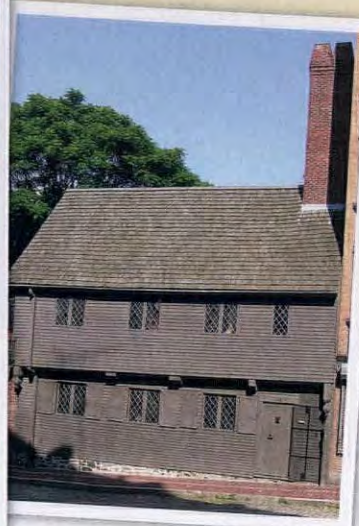
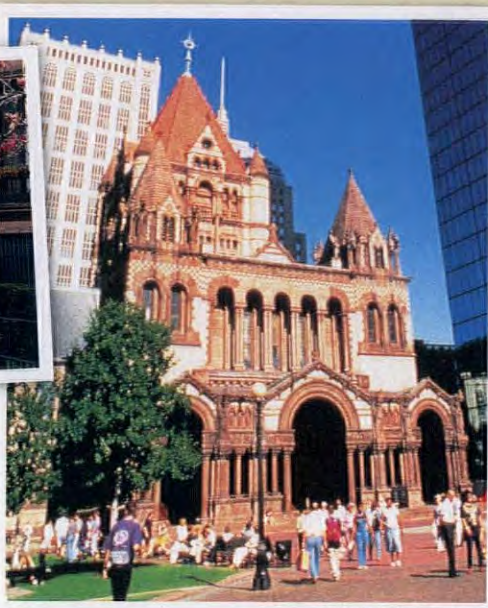
**FAR LEFT:** Many examples of Federal architecture can be seen on the winding streets of Beacon Hill.

**LEFT:** The Gibson House Museum offers a window into Bostonian life in the second half of the 19th century.





**ABOVE:** Spring in bloom along stately Commonwealth Avenue in Back Bay. **CENTER:** Architect H.H. Richardson's masterpiece, Trinity Church, is a late-Victorian gem. **RIGHT:** The Paul Revere house may be the most well-known historic house in Boston.



LEFT AND CENTER: GREATER BOSTON CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU PHOTOS; RIGHT: PAUL REVERE HOUSE MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION PHOTO

Commonwealth Avenue and its splendid mall, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, is the grandest of Back Bay's streets, and each house is an excellent example of 19th-century urban architecture—it's worth it to walk up one side and down the other. The earliest dwellings are found at the east end, by Arlington Street, and evolve stylistically as one heads west (cross streets are named in alphabetical order). Equally enchanting, but more sequestered, are the parallel Marlborough and Beacon streets. (Make sure to traverse the cross streets, too.) On the southern side of Commonwealth at Hereford, look for a white limestone chateau-style residence, more at home on 5th Avenue in Manhattan. Also linger at the intersections of Commonwealth and Dartmouth Street or Massachusetts Avenue to see grand mansions belonging to the Ames families.

Although not a residence, a mandatory stop is H.H. Richardson's Trinity Church in Copley Square. A truly stunning example of Romanesque Revival architecture, it is often regarded as the most beautiful building in Boston.

## Colonial and Georgian Boston

The Paul Revere house on the Freedom Trail is well-known, but at least two more gems come to mind. First is the Harrison Gray Otis House, on the far side of Beacon Hill, which was designed by Charles Bullfinch (the architect for our gold-domed State House). Otis developed Beacon Hill and was mayor of Boston; his former house is the sole remaining mansion of this prosperous neighborhood, and its interiors have been meticulously restored by Historic New England. South of Boston proper, in the Roxbury neighborhood (a short drive), is the Shirley-Eustis House, a country home built by the British Royal Colonial Governor. It's a fascinating example of Georgian architecture, and though now surrounded by buildings of later centuries, offers a glimpse into a far earlier era.



**ABOVE:** Located in the Roxbury neighborhood, the Shirley-Eustis House was built by the British Royal Colonial Governor. **LEFT:** The Harrison Gray Otis House is an outstanding example of a high-end 18th-century dwelling, both inside and out.

SHIRLEY-EUSTIS HOUSE ASSOCIATION PHOTO BY FREDERIC C. DETWILLER



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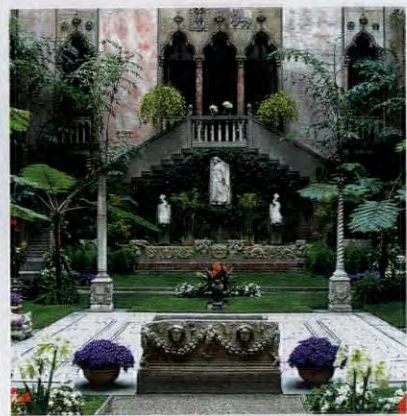


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## my town

ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM PHOTO BY THOMAS LINGNER



The atrium at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum is a favorite respite of Bostonians.

### The South End

Developed in the mid-19th century, just prior to Back Bay, Boston's South End features block upon block of bow-front row houses interspersed with trendy restaurants and shops. Still walkable from the Common Garage—at least for those who enjoy prolonged strolls—visiting Rutland and Concord squares will continue the theme of park-like malls that separate the facing rows of houses.

The South End fades into the Fenway area (as does Back Bay), eventually leading to the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. It's hard to believe this was indeed someone's home, but the interior has been strictly preserved, per Mrs. Gardner's wishes. The towering atrium, built to replicate a Venetian courtyard, is magical; Bostonians crowd here on winter weekends to remind ourselves that spring will eventually reemerge. 🌱

Boston area native Dan Cooper has authored a wealth of articles about historic buildings and design, as well as the book *New Classic American Houses* (The Vendome Press, 2009).

Need an excuse to visit Boston? Consult our online guide to the city's summer events.

**OLDHOUSEonline**



# period products

By CLARE MARTIN

*Add a splash of color to your kitchen with these cheerful, period-friendly finds.*

## Making Lemonade

During the 1930s, homeowners battled the economic blues by covering their kitchens with cheerful wallpaper, often patterned with flowers or fruit. Why not follow suit during these tough times with York Wallcoverings' modern spin on kitchen kitsch? Their Bistro 750 Collection features a variety of whimsical wallpapers, like these juicy green and yellow striped, polka-dotted, and gingham lemons, which are an ideal vintage-inspired addition to a mid-20th-century kitchen. \$43 per single roll. Call (800) 375-9675, or visit [yorkwall.com](http://yorkwall.com).



## Tangerine Dream

Homes in the 1960s were all about eye-popping colors—so if you're redoing a kitchen in a mid-century ranch or split-level, don't be afraid to go bright. Pyrolave's glazed lava-stone countertops are super-durable—they can withstand heat, chemicals, stains, and UV rays—and come in several groovy colors, including lime green, mustard yellow, turquoise, and orange. As a result of their high-temperature firing, the countertops have a slightly crazed finish that lends a hint of patina. \$250 to \$350 per square foot. Visit [pyrolave.com](http://pyrolave.com).



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If you're looking for an all-purpose faucet for a period-inspired kitchen, you can't beat a gooseneck design. Dating back to the earliest days of indoor plumbing, gooseneck faucets married elegant style with practicality—their high-arching shape was designed to easily accommodate pots and pans underneath—making them popular through the early 20th century. Pfister's new Ainsley faucet replicates the gooseneck's traditional styling while adding modern must-haves like a matching side spray. Available in either a stainless steel or polished chrome finish (shown). From \$119. Call (800) 732-8238, or visit [pfisterfaucets.com](http://pfisterfaucets.com).



## On the Wall

When the first wall oven was introduced in the late 1940s, the appliance became a must-have for mid-century houses—and it's made a comeback in recent years. The new Northstar wall oven from Elmira Stove Works bridges the best of yesterday and today: retro styling that looks right at home in a mid-century kitchen, plus features beloved by modern-day at-home chefs, like convection and electric self-cleaning. Best of all, it's available in the company's nine '50s-inspired colors, including Candy Red (shown), Buttercup Yellow, and Robin's Egg Blue, or in a custom color. \$2,995. Call (800) 295-8498, or visit [elmirastoveworks.com](http://elmirastoveworks.com).





# Prairie Home Companion

*An avid preservationist breathes new life into a crumbling  
Prairie-style house designed by a disciple of Frank Lloyd Wright.*

STORY BY THOMAS CONNORS ♦ PHOTOS BY SCOTT VAN DYKE





**LEFT:** Sarah Bell hand-painted the geometric frieze in the front hall, which is based on a vintage design. **ABOVE:** Gary Carlson (center) with Kurt and Sarah Bell on the back porch. **OPPOSITE:** Restoring the exterior involved chemically stripping epoxy-based paint from the bricks and stucco.

Rockford, Illinois—the state’s third largest city—has seen better days. Once touted by *Life* magazine as highly livable and as “nearly typical as any city can be,” it has since endured the collapse of its manufacturing economy and the myriad social ills that follow. As lifelong resident Gary Carlson observes, “It really was a beautiful city, but at some point we lost our way. The best assets we have now are the wonderful old buildings.”

An active participant in local preservation efforts since the 1970s and a big believer in preservation as a revitalization tool, Gary has not only served as president of the Rockford Preservation Commission, but has also personally restored a number of buildings in town, including a 1905 Craftsman worker’s cot-

tage that now serves as the office for his used car dealership. His latest project—undertaken with the help of friends and restoration specialists Kurt and Sarah Bell—is his own home, a large brick and stucco residence attributed to architect Lawrence Buck, who worked for Frank Lloyd Wright in Chicago before opening

his own practice in Rockford in 1903.

Like the city itself, the seven-bedroom residence had not held up well over the years. Built in 1908 for Oscar Wigell, who owned a music store and piano salesroom, the property suffered from well-intentioned updates, subsequent neglect, and threats of demolition before Gary acquired it in 2002. When he bought the house from the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois, he agreed to maintain its status on the city’s register of historic places. To take advantage of historic preservation tax credits, he also had to adhere to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. However, he’s quick to





**ABOVE:** The home's parlors have been returned to their original appearance, with gleaming woodwork and appropriate light fixtures. The fireplace is faced with distinctive Seneca quarry tile. **BELOW:** Gary reconfigured a bedroom to create a library within the house's tower; the balustrade for the new staircase matches the original one on the main stairs. **OPPOSITE:** In the dining room, a reproduction gasolier-style fixture hangs over the Stickley dining-room table.



explain that he isn't slavish about restoration. "Kurt, Sarah, and I feel that it's important to save old buildings, but that they have to continue to work and function. Everything can't be a museum."

## Shaping Up

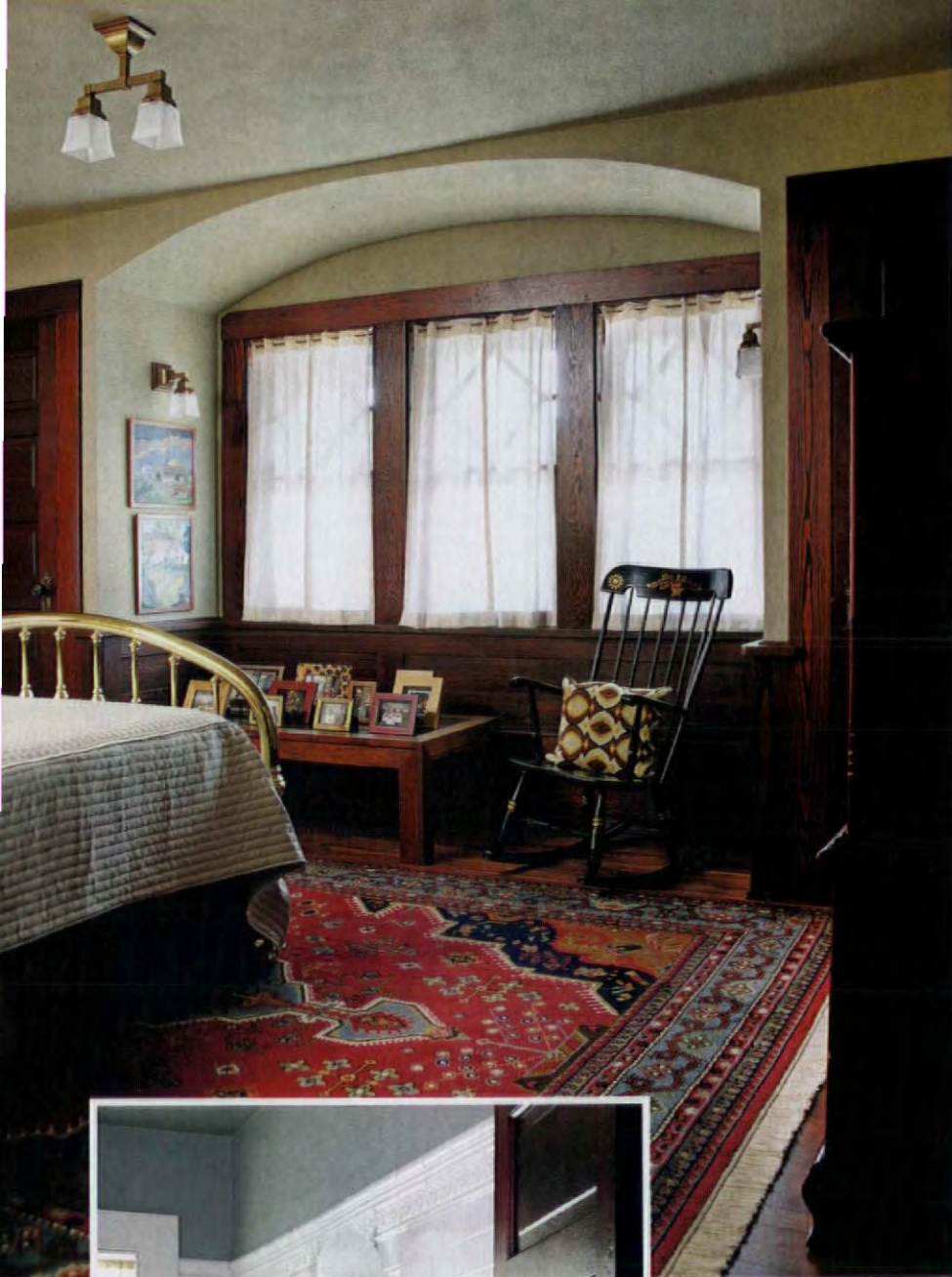
Save for squatting animals, the house had been vacant for seven years, and the damage ran deep. "Most of the pipes had burst, and the plaster had separated from the wood lathe," Gary recalls. Acting as general contractor, Kurt Bell removed all the trim, plaster, and lathe. "Then we installed insulation, put in an all-new electric system in metal tube conduit, all-new plumbing, and replastered," says Gary. "Although it looks original, it's pretty much a new house underneath the skin."

The next major project was the exterior. The previous owners had spray-painted the entire façade with an epoxy-









almost eerie to see." A crew from Mike Harris Mason Contractor Inc. spent five days in the rain addressing the issue. (The home's large eaves allowed the men to work despite the weather). "I drove by one day and they all had these yellow raincoats on," remembers Gary. "It looked like a hornet's nest."

As for the home's slate roof, a large section of it had been removed and replaced with composite shingles, which had started to leak. The original copper flashing, gutters, and downspouts had long since disappeared. Gary caught a lucky break when Robert Raleigh, Jr., the owner of Renaissance Roofing in nearby Belvidere, Illinois, noticed the slate that capped the house and gave him a call. "He does a lot of salvage and had just bought a 200-year-old roof off an Army building on Long Island that was the same color as mine. Because the slate he had was heavier than mine, he replaced the 2x4 support timbers in the attic with 2x8s and replaced 2x6 rafters with 2x10s." In addition, Robert installed new copper flashing, gutters, and downspouts.

## Interior Designs

While the home retained much of its original detail, including Victorian doorknobs, extensive millwork, and a handsome fireplace with Seneca quarry tile and an inglenook, other decorative features had been lost or compromised. The original lighting fixtures had been chucked in favor of cheap replacements (some not even intended for interior use), and just a few pieces of leaded glass remained in the dining room's built-in cabinet.

An acquaintance introduced Gary to the daughter of a previous owner, who produced family photographs from the 1950s; they revealed that the cabinet's upper portion and windows in the dining room's pocket doors had once sported leaded glass with a stylized floral motif. While these were removed from the property when it changed hands in the 1980s, through this new contact, Gary was able to track down the person who had bought the original panels, strike a



**ABOVE:** The one-time master bedroom has matching closets on either side of the alcove. **LEFT:** White subway tile and a console sink bring period style to a bathroom.

infused paint, a band-aid attempt to avoid much-needed repointing. To remove it, they applied a chemical stripper and left it on overnight, then power-washed it off. "When we took it off," says Gary, "all the mortar came with it. So all the bricks were precariously hung. It was





A connection with a previous owner led Gary to the leaded-glass panels that once graced the pocket door and built-in cabinet in the dining room; he had new ones fabricated to match for the kitchen (above) and the hallway outside a guest bedroom (right).



deal, and restore them to their original locations. Gary then had local glass artist Frank Houtkamp re-create the design for the swinging door to the kitchen.

An additional touch true to the spirit of the home is Sarah Bell's decorative painting in the front hall: a period-appropriate geometric frieze she discovered in a book called *Authentic Stencil Patterns: 1890-1930*. Although undated, the design—done in green, red, yellow, and gold—suggests a transition from the Victorian era to Mission style, she says.

While the parlors and dining room have been returned to their original appearance, Gary did allow himself one dramatic intervention, reconfiguring two bedrooms into a master bedroom and den, then breaking through the ceiling to create a library in the third-floor space, which had been dedicated to servant use when the house was built. Accessed by a new staircase and open to the den below, the library sits in the tower that gives

the residence its distinctive profile. This contemporary arrangement is made sympathetic to the spirit of the house with a balustrade that matches the stacked arrow design of the spindles in the home's main staircase.

The original kitchen had been given an Art Moderne makeover in 1944, with steel cabinets and linoleum countertops—and like the rest of the house, it was in utter disrepair. Gary replaced the steel cabinets with ones made from cherry-stained ash, along with a terracotta floor and honed black granite countertops. A large plate glass window installed in the '40s was replaced with French doors, which lead to a terrace atop the garage Gary added to the rear of the house. Constructed from bricks salvaged from a decrepit detached garage on the property, the addition's style matches that of the 1908 residence.

Gary's 30-month project earned him a personal call of congratulations from

Professor Michael Jackson, chief architect at the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, and awards from both a local historic preservation association and the statewide group Landmarks Illinois. Although delighted to receive such kudos, Gary's greatest satisfaction may well lie elsewhere. "I wasn't planning to move here, but this was something we were going to lose," he says. "A part of me hopes that people will see this and want to do something like it themselves." 🏠





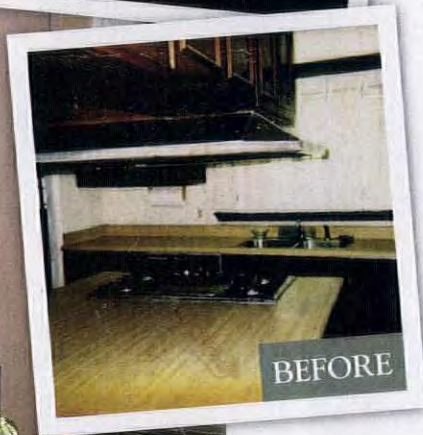
STORY BY CLARE MARTIN ♦ PHOTOS BY MARTY SNORTUM

# SPANISH *Accent*





Salvaged tile, leaded glass windows, and vintage lighting transform a Spanish Revival kitchen from eyesore to showstopper.



Their love of old houses was, in part, what drew Chuck and Judy Kohlhaas to El Paso, Texas. The couple had spent nearly two decades restoring old homes in New York and New Jersey until they uprooted in 1994 to take over a family business, lured by a love of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture.

"At the turn of the century until about World War II, El Paso was a very wealthy place because of the railroads and mining industry," explains Chuck. "That's why there are a lot of big old houses here."

The 1929 Spanish Colonial Revival house they purchased, in fact, had been built by a wealthy merchant, who filled it with dramatic archways, walnut doors, Batchelder tile, and wrought iron detailing. Over the years, however, it had been subjected to some misguided modernizations, particularly in the kitchen.

"We were told there was a fire in the kitchen in the 1960s or '70s," Judy says. "It looked like they either didn't spend all the insurance money to rebuild it or didn't get enough to do it well." Dark-stained plywood cabinets sucked all the light from the room, and the counters were covered in cheap Formica with a paltry backsplash. A poorly constructed island in the center of the room was listing to the side. Even the kitchen's one redeeming feature—Batchelder tile flooring—had been improperly laid directly over a wood floor; as a result, none of the doors to the kitchen closed.

### Tile Transformation

Chuck and Judy's vision for their revamped kitchen was clear: They wanted it to look like it had always been part of the house. While gathering ideas, Judy stumbled across a book called *The Goddess Home Style Guide*, which featured a kitchen with a farmhouse sink backed by an elaborate tile backsplash and surrounded by cabinets with a distinctive scalloped edge. She called in her friend and neighbor, architect Martina Lorey, and asked if she thought it was possible to recreate a kitchen like that in their space. "Absolutely," Martina replied.

In deference to the Batchelder and Spanish-style tilework

**LEFT:** With a tiled island and backsplash, leaded glass windows, and custom-made cabinets, the kitchen is sympathetic to the Spanish Colonial Revival house—a far cry from its previous incarnation (inset).

INSET: JUDY KOHLHAAS PHOTOS



# TILE TIPS

As soon as she saw how easy laying a tile countertop could be, Judy Kohlhaas was inspired to tackle the project herself for her kitchen rehab. "It's really an easy craft, and no one should shy away from it," she says. Here, she offers a few hard-won tips for first-time tilers:

**1 Plan on paper first.** Knowing that the herringbone design she wanted for the island might be tricky to execute, Judy first had her husband, Chuck, create a full-scale layout on paper. They attached it to a 4' x 8' sheet of plywood and laid it on top of the island to get a sense of whether the pattern would work.

**2 Have the right tools.** Judy bought an MK-370 wet tile saw on eBay to use for the project. She measured the tiles for cutting with a ruler, but later discovered that she could have used an angle-cutting attachment on the tile saw to make more perfect 45-degree edge cuts. She used a thin-set spreader to ensure that the mortar was applied evenly, and used small pieces of wood to check the spacing of grout lines. (You also can buy tile spacers to guarantee uniform grout.)

**3 Start small.** For beginners, using small batches of thin-set mortar at a time will allow you to work at a comfortable pace. "I started out mixing rather large batches, but the mortar would set up before I could use it all," Judy says. "I quickly learned that small batches worked better for me." She filled about a quarter of a 5-gallon bucket with thin-set mortar, which stayed workable for about an hour before beginning to set up.

**4 Choose grout carefully.** Chuck and Judy used an epoxy grout for the island, which is much more durable and stain-resistant than cement-based grout and doesn't require sealing. "It wasn't presented as an option by the professional tilers for the rest of the kitchen, but I really wish it had been," says Judy. However, keep in mind that its glue-like properties make epoxy grout a bit trickier to work with—it tends to stick to everything, says Judy, so you should work carefully and clean up promptly with a solvent.



**LEFT & ABOVE:** The edging for the island was the easiest part, says Judy; the 5¾" x 2½" cornice tiles are designed to curve around the counter's edge. Cutting the angles of the herringbone tile freehand proved to be the biggest challenge.

found throughout the house, tile would be the centerpiece of the new kitchen. On a trip to San Francisco, Judy happened upon the Walker Zanger showroom and discovered the inexpensive Mission-style field tile that covers the countertops, backsplash, and island. It's accented with blue Mexican tiles that Judy scored on eBay for 20¢ apiece. The island countertop and backsplash above the stove also feature decorative blue tiles that Martina salvaged from the 1914 Alhambra Theater, which had been sitting in her garage for decades. "She deemed our project the right one for the tiles," Judy says.

Amassing the tiles turned out to be the easy part—getting them installed

was the challenge. Although they hired "the best tiler in town" to install the new travertine flooring (attempts to save the Batchelder tile floors laid in the '50s proved unsuccessful, so Chuck and Judy rescued what they could), he wasn't able to stick around long enough to install the tile on the counters, backsplash, columns, and island. As a result, Judy often found herself correcting the sub-par work of the new tilers.

"When they went out to lunch, I was constantly straightening and rearranging the tiles," she remembers. Finally, one day, she asked the workers if she could try out their tile saw. Once she saw how easy it was to use, Judy went out and bought one and finished the job herself



# Vintage Lighting

The lighting in Chuck and Judy Kohlhaas' kitchen is all vintage—the 1920s Art Deco fixtures, which Judy found on eBay, were salvaged from an old theater. “At that point, we had the tiles from the Alhambra Theater,” says Judy, “so I thought I would honor the theater a little bit by putting in theatrical light fixtures.”

Considering vintage lighting for your kitchen project? In general, going vintage is best if:

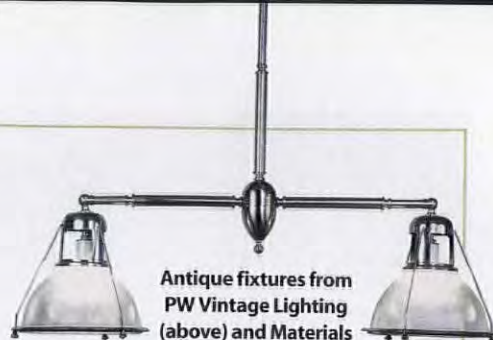
- ◆ **You want something truly unique.** If you're looking for a fixture that can serve as a focal



point—say, above an island or within a breakfast nook—a vintage light is the way to go. Getting that distinctive look doesn't require going fully vintage, though; you can also pair a reproduction fixture with a vintage shade.

## ◆ You only need one or two lights.

Like most antiques, vintage lights can be hard to find in pairs or suites. If coordinating fixtures is a concern, you'll likely need to limit the number of lights you use. On the other hand, if you don't care whether the chandelier matches the sconce, using a variety of vintage lights in similar styles (for example, Art Deco sconces with different backplates) can help facilitate an eclectic look, as if the house evolved over time.



Antique fixtures from PW Vintage Lighting (above) and Materials Unlimited (left).

- ◆ **You don't mind paying more** (or doing a bit of work). Fully restored vintage lights can be pricey, sometimes running into the thousands of dollars. Bargains abound, too, but keep in mind that lower-priced fixtures might require a bit of work. For example, Judy scored her salvaged theater lights for around \$100 to \$200, but she rewired and repainted them herself.

(see “Tile Tips,” opposite). “I was much happier at lunchtime when I didn't have to pull up or straighten tiles,” she says.

## Glass Action

The kitchen also gets a decorative boost from leaded glass windows, which Chuck and Judy designed themselves, taking inspiration from a book on Spanish Colonial Revival houses in Santa Barbara and Palm Beach. Two of the original multi-paned steel casement windows were still in the kitchen when they moved in, but three others had been replaced with a picture window during a 1950s remodel.

Fortunately, Chuck and Judy were able to get steel casements that were being removed from the house next door. The sizes were quite a bit off, but through Chuck's steel fabrication business, “we were able to have the frames cut, pieced, and welded back together,” he says.

Having previously created almost a hundred leaded glass windows for a Tudor house they owned in New Jersey, Chuck and Judy had plenty of expertise to draw upon when designing the leaded glass panels for the five windows—but this time, instead of cutting and soldering the glass themselves, they relied upon Judy's eBay savvy to find an artisan who could fabricate their elaborate design.

## Old Meets New

The cabinet detailing was copied directly from the book that sparked Judy's inspiration, with the size and shape customized to hold her collections of Venetian glass and 1920s Lenox china. The doors of the breakfront, which holds the Venetian glass, are inset with Bendheim restoration glass to match the original wavy glass found throughout the rest of the house.

“When it first came in, the cabinet-maker called the architect and said, ‘This glass is imperfect’—he was really upset about it,” remembers Judy. “She said, ‘No, that's what it's supposed to look like!’”

The “perfectly imperfect” aesthetic is furthered by the choice of lighting—vintage 1920s Art Deco fixtures Judy found on eBay. “Even though it's Spanish,” says Chuck, “the house still reflects the interest in Art Deco at the time.”

In concert with the many other antique touches in the kitchen (including the copper sink and faucet), the overall effect is of a space that appears to have been barely changed over the years.

“People come in and say, ‘I guess you just switched out the appliances,’” says Judy. “That's exactly the effect we were going for—we wanted something that looks like it's been here for a long, long time.”



**ABOVE:** Like many of the kitchen's decorative elements, the copper sink and faucet were eBay finds. Chuck and Judy designed the leaded glass windows themselves.

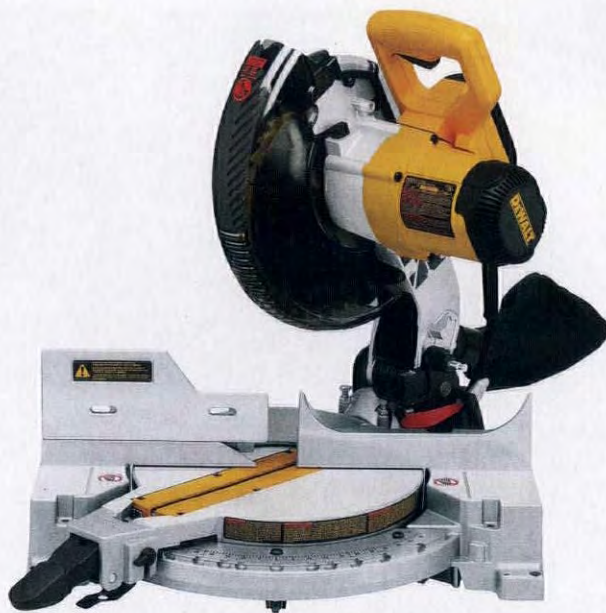


Mark gets to work with his sliding compound miter saw, a tool he relies on for all kinds of finish trim projects.



OPPOSITE: COMPOUND MITER SAW COURTESY: DEWALT





# 5 Choice Saws

**Whether repairing woodwork or removing added partitions, the right saw will make your project smoother. Here's how to select the best tool for the job and use it wisely.**

STORY BY MARK CLEMENT ♦ PHOTOS BY THERESA COLEMAN CLEMENT

The most important saw I have in the shop or on a restoration job site is the one I need to do the task in front of me at that moment.

Whether you're undercutting a door jamb to add a new floorboard or tile, or cutting out studs and plates from a horribly remuddled partition wall addition, the phrase "right tool for the job" exists because it's true. The reason the saw at hand is the most important isn't because it's fancy or expensive or refined; it's because restoration suc-

cess is about doing all the steps well with the right tool. If I can't do a task—large or small, difficult or easy—progress comes to a halt.

I mainly rely on five saws to see me through: a reciprocating saw, circular saw, miter saw, table saw, and a Japanese handsaw. While having these saws is great, it's only half the battle. Using them efficiently and safely is the other half. Everything from the right blade to the right accessory combines to make good work great and keep your restoration train running down the rails.





A recip saw is just the tool for removing a rotted sill plate and studs—and cutting through nails around them—to replace these damaged structural members.

## Reciprocating Saw

A recip saw, invented by the Milwaukee Electric Tool Corporation in the 1950s and branded Sawzall, is used mainly for demolition. While this word is generally anathema in a restoration context, I've seen many wonderful old homes chopped up into rental units where what once were doors have been studded up and drywalled over. Then there are the original basements retrofitted with awful 1970s paneling and landscapes littered with rusting store-bought metal sheds.

Chances are very good that as an old-house restorer, you'll need to take some things apart before you can have a shot at putting them back together, and the tool for this go-hard-or-go-home work is a reciprocating saw.



For cutting through most construction-related material, I use a 10" "demolition" blade. Designed to take a beating, these blades' small, hook-shaped teeth are configured for cutting the hodgepodge of nail-embedded wood, plaster, drywall, and just about anything else you'll find.

One thing I really rely on this saw for is what I call smart demolition—in other words, I can use it to remove an item carefully. Take, for example, a door opening that's been covered over with studs and drywall. I can use the saw to cut the dry-

wall away in manageable pieces. Then, instead of pounding on the studs nailed into the jambs and floor to pry the nails or dislodge the wood (which doesn't work, by the way), I run the saw between the member that's staying and the one that's going, and cut the nails. This frees the work piece without bashing it, and minimizes both work and collateral damage.

Outdoors, if I'm cutting apart a metal shed or some fence posts, I'll use a metal-

ABOVE: RECIPROCATING SAW COURTESY



# Corded or Cordless?

Cordless tools have come a long way in the last five years with the introduction of fully featured combination kits and increasingly advanced lithium ion batteries, so it's reasonable to consider going totally cordless for your circ and recip saws. Cordless tools tend to be smaller, and of course, there's no cord to get in the way. However, they still aren't quite as fast or powerful as corded tools. For heavy-duty, long-

lasting work when you're crunched for time, corded is still king. Yes, you have to deal with the cord, but the trade-off is that you're getting dependable, uninterrupted power. —M.C.



Depending upon your workload, today's impressive array of cordless tools can carry you far.



cutting blade. Since unsupported metal will usually flop around, I minimize that vibration by pressing the shoe of the saw firmly against the work. If I have to cut tree branches (or roots, for that matter, which are common obstacles in post holes) I swap out the blade for one with more aggressive teeth, such as the Skil "ugly blade."

## Circular Saw

Circular saws are the big daddy tool for just about any project, and they come in two flavors: sidewinder and worm drive.

Sidewinders are lighter and smaller, and generally have the blade on the right side and the motor projecting out the left. Worm drives are front-heavy, in-line saws named for the worm gear inside that turns the blade. I'm a worm-drive guy myself—its configuration jibes with the way I work, letting me make my cuts faster—but both configurations get the job done.

Restoration projects often require rough carpentry—a floor has been damaged by a longtime leak; a porch is falling apart; the bathroom floor framing has been eviscerated by previous plumbers. A circular saw is the go-to tool for cross-cutting and ripping framing members and sheet stock like plywood.

A circ saw is also the tool you need for removing a damaged floorboard. (Make



Circular saws, whether worm-drive (above) or sidewinder (left) can team with a shoot-board to make long, accurate cuts, as above.

two passes down the length of the damaged board—enough to get a bar in there—then carefully pry the two pieces free. Removing the bottom of the groove on your replace-

ment piece lets you easily lay it into the void.) Setting the saw to the right depth and keeping a keen eye on the blade will enable you to make the precise cut required for this project because you want to cut up to—but not into—the adjoining floorboard. This is one of the many reasons I like worm drives:





**ABOVE:** Outfeed support is critical for both production and safety, and enables you to work alone. Mark uses a 2x4 clamped to a Jawhorse to create a stable base. **BELOW, LEFT:** Mark made this work station using a sheet of plywood and some 2x4 blocks, all sitting on sawhorses bridged by 2x4s laid flat. Used to neatly organize tools, materials, and even coffee cups and cell phones, it keeps everything within easy reach, creating a tidy and efficient job site. **BELOW, RIGHT:** Portable table saws are best for ripping boards.

Despite weighing nearly twice that of a sidewinder, the blade is on the left, so as a right-hander, I can see what I'm doing without craning my neck over the saw.

A circ saw, a straight-edge called a shoot-board, and a fresh blade are my first picks for trimming door bottoms and stiles. I can set the saw and straight-edge to make precise cuts in century-old doors to square them up for new openings. The worm drive's in-line body easily passes by the clamps that hold the straight-edge down—not always possible with a sidewinder's outboard motor.

## Miter Saw

If there's a core to my tool setup, it's the miter saw. While it can be used for cross-cutting framing, angling pergola rafters, or slamming through umpteen fire-blocks, it is primarily a finish tool I rely on for trim—base, casing, chair rail, crown—and my standard is a 12" dual bevel sliding compound miter saw.

But a miter saw isn't magic. In order for it to really shine, it needs to be set up properly—not on the ground with a couple of bricks on either side—to hold up a 12' length of crown molding.

While I've built a custom work table

for my miter saw, you can buy stands or build out less involved setups with just a few 2x4s, a sheet of  $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood, and some 2x4 blocks. Whatever route you choose, the thing that makes a miter saw effective is what's called infeed and outfeed support—surfaces on the left and right of the saw that support the work, enabling you to cut it accurately.

Having this allows you to see what you're doing—notably which side of your pencil line the blade is passing through. When I position the work in my miter saw, I look right down the blade plate and line up my pencil mark with the edge of a blade tooth, making sure to keep the thickness of the blade on the waste side of the piece. It might sound simple, but it takes practice. I also use premium blades for premium work, like Vermont-American's King Carbide or Ridgid's titanium-coated sawblades. They're expensive but worth it, because they cut accurately and cleanly, and you can sharpen them multiple times.

## Portable Table Saw

Another "frame-to-finish" tool, a table saw is designed to cut planks down their length, a process called ripping. While some portable job-site table saws are



Consult our archive of saw-related tool reviews to determine which model to buy.

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**LEFT:** Japanese-style saws come in a range of shapes and sizes. Kugihiki (top) is a small flush-cutting saw with a flexible blade, while the Rip Dozuki (bottom) has teeth with beveled tips that aid in cross-cutting. **BELOW:** A Plywood Saw has specially hardened teeth. The Azebiki saw's slight curve (bottom) is perfect for getting into corners.



## Japanese Saw

I've already said that the most important saw I have is the one I'm using at the moment. However, a saw that continually gets me out of scrapes is my Japanese handsaw.

I don't use it frequently, and you could make the case that the raft of new oscillating tools could take its place, but I love it for undercutting door jambs to accept new flooring. I can run the tool flat and make the cut easily—about a hundred times better than any jamb saw I've ever seen. The tool cuts on the pull stroke (most Japanese saws do this), and because the teeth go all the way to the end of the blade (not all Japanese saws have this feature; check before buying), I can essentially cut out of a corner.

There are more saws, of course, and all have critical-need uses: A jab saw for working plasterboard, plaster, or dry-wall; a coping saw—one of my absolute favorites—for inside corners on various moldings (molding is almost always more accurately installed by coping rather than mitering); even a chainsaw for anything from lot-clearing to firewood. But no matter how big or small your stock of saws, the most important tool in your arsenal is the one you need to get the job done. 🛠️

*Carpenter Mark Clement is working on his century-old American Foursquare in Ambler, Pennsylvania.*

capable of opening wide enough to cut a 24"-wide piece of sheet stock like MDF or plywood, they're really not designed for it, and it's dangerous (not to mention almost universally inaccurate) to try. This is the domain of the circular saw (and shoot-board, if you need accuracy), or full-fledged contractor or cabinet saw with infeed and outfeed support. But table saws are the main tool for tuning a board to the right width and sometimes thickness. They're hyper-handy on any project using tongue-and-groove material like flooring or pine paneling. Not only can you use a table saw to rip boards to make graceful transitions around corners, but you can remove the

bottom or back part of a groove to lay it over the tongue of the previous board as you near the end of a run. You also can use them to cut the parts for a cabinet face frame, or to trim cedar starter-strips or final pieces on siding jobs.

Much like the miter saw, a table saw benefits from outfeed support. I've had terrible luck with the various roller stands you can buy in stores. However, a site-made table that's a little lower than the saw's deck works great. One of my favorites is a Rockwell Jawhorse with a 2x4 T-clamped in the jaws at the right height.

When cutting material that will show—say, a threshold for a flooring project, parts for a bookcase, or a column wrap—the better the blade, the fewer saw marks that will appear in the cut. (Always look for saw marks on an appearance-face cut and sand them out, because they become glaring once painted or stained.) The Freud Fusion blade is one of the best all-around table saw blades I've worked with. It leaves a very clean cut and ably handles most materials.

One final note: If you're super-serious about woodworking or doing a large-scale molding or cabinet package where you're milling the parts, a job-site-type table saw isn't enough tool. It will get you by, but the heavier iron of a contractor or cabinet saw will do it better. They're bigger, more expensive, and not intended to be moved often, but they deliver the power and stability that type of work demands.

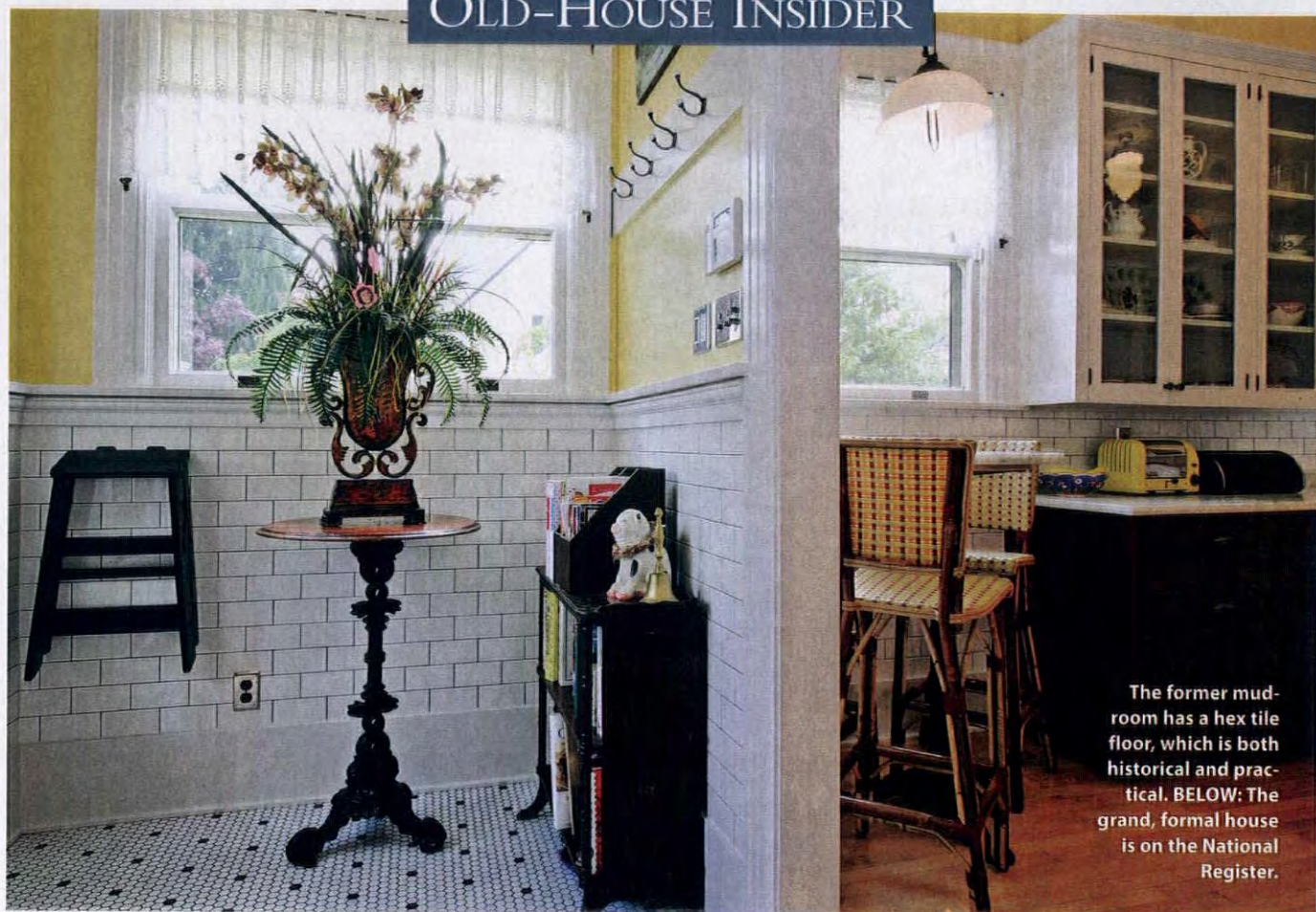






The reconfigured kitchen is open and sunny, thanks to an expansive new doorway that incorporates the former butler's pantry and mudroom into the kitchen proper.





The former mud-room has a hex tile floor, which is both historical and practical. BELOW: The grand, formal house is on the National Register.

# A Timely Transition

**The sensitive updating of a gracious kitchen in Portland, Oregon, includes a bit of period French flair.**

STORY BY DEMETRA APOSPOROS  
PHOTOS BY GREG KOZAWA

As a child, Anna Quarum was haunted by the circa 1913 Portland house she now calls home. Growing up right next door at a time when the building was sorely neglected, she remembers how gray and run-down it appeared, and that the owners regularly played pipe organ music, which spooked the area kids.







**ABOVE:** A modest center island hides copper bins for flour and sugar, and is topped with a wooden counter, made to match the one on the buffet across the room. Electrical outlets on both ends add to the work table's utility.

**INSET:** Anna's collection of animal-themed molds creates a focal point beside the sink.



"It was quite frightening; there were always neighborhood stories about the haunted house," she says. "I never thought I would live here."

But as an adult living across town with her husband, Merrit, she found that having her own children changed things. The couple decided they needed a house with more room and a nice yard with big open spaces where the kids could run around. So they started looking for an older home—only to find that many of them had lost their integrity to

remodels over the years. Not this one. "The interior was almost all original," Anna says. "That was the selling point for us."

So when it came time to make the kitchen more user-friendly, maintaining a historic feel was a top priority for Anna. "The idea was to stay as consistent as possible with what would have been done when the house was built," she explains. To help her carry out that vision, she turned to Anne DeWolf of Arciform LLC.

### French Connection

A big challenge to overcome was the use of space. "The adjacent butler's pantry and





**ABOVE:** The original kitchen buffet was restored. Its pass-through to the dining room (at center) is still functional.

the back porch were neither big nor small, but they made the kitchen very crowded,” explains Anne. “So we decided to incorporate those two areas into the kitchen.” Removing the wall between these ancillary rooms—and turning the one that separated them from the kitchen into a wide passageway topped by clerestory windows—opened up the space and flooded it with light. Instead of trying to match the kitchen’s original wood floors, the opened area has hex tiles underfoot, a period-appropriate choice. The tiles are warmed via a decidedly more modern selection—radiant heat, powered by a system of electric mesh.

The overall feel of the kitchen evokes an early 20th-century French bakery, a look that Anna, an avid cook, had admired for years. “I find things like copper pots and French bakery style to be quite beautiful, so



**LEFT:** In order to completely cover the walls in subway tiles, the radiator was removed, then re-installed. The use of white tiles with a dark grout helps to give the kitchen a French feel.

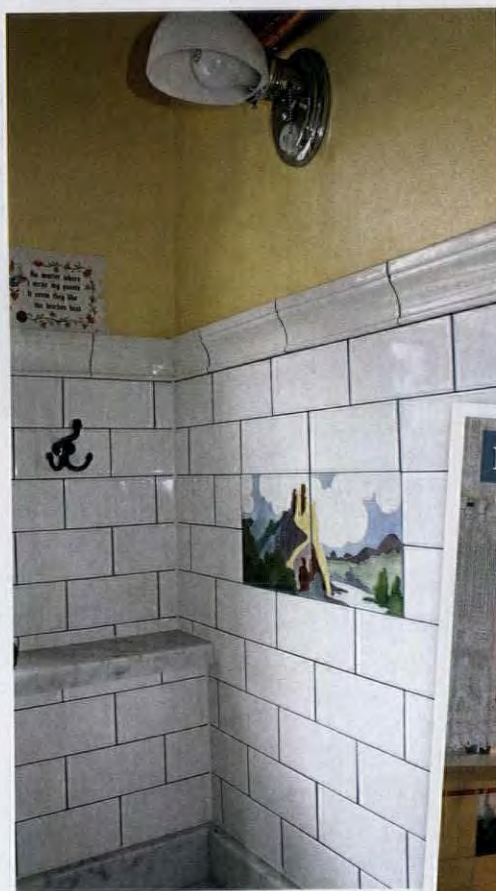


I wanted a kitchen like that,” she says. Anne worked to propel that vision in several ways, starting with the grout. “Dark grout with subway tile seems to be common in French bakeries,” she says—and it’s also a practical choice, as it hides dirt. Mixing dark lower cabinets with white upper ones was another design strategy. “French bakeries often have display cases that are stained dark and are topped by white cabinets,” Anne explains. In addition to appearing in a host of *boulangeries*, the dark lower cabinets resonate with the Honduran mahogany woodwork found throughout the rest of the house.

As part of the quest to preserve as many original materials as possible—a vision both women shared—most of the original upper cabinets were preserved, the maple floors in the main room were refinished, windows were restored, and the

**PRODUCTS: Appliances:** Dishwasher, Asko; 424 under-counter wine refrigerator, Sub-Zero; Professional range, Five Star; Range hood, Vent-A-Hood; Custom hood cover (decorative accent), McCoy Millwork. **Built-in elements:** Alice lower cabinets, Arciform LLC; Somerset round knobs and cup pulls, Knobs and Hardware; Carrara marble counters & backsplash, Arciform LLC; Hartford mahogany legs (on the island), Woodcrafters. **Furnishings:** Maison Gatti bistro chairs and classic table base, Cap Sud; Enclume double-dutch crown pot rack, Williams-Sonoma. **Lighting:** Brightwood pendant and Jefferson ceiling fixture, Rejuvenation; Elevator light with bell shade, Pulley-Lights.com. **Tile:** 1" glossy hex floor tile and 3x6 Rittenhouse Square wall tiles, Dal-Tile; Sonoma Tilemakers Canal 2½x8 ceramic cap, United Tile; Hi-Art steel ceiling, W.F. Norman.





**LEFT:** Hand-painted scenic tiles from the original kitchen were carefully salvaged and reused. Several were re-installed in nearly the exact same spot.



**LEFT:** The swinging door to the dining room retains its original stained glass transom.

**OPPOSITE:** Dark-stained lower cabinets help ground the room and add to the French bakery feel. A farmhouse sink and gooseneck faucet are a period-perfect combination.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Arciform LLC:  
oldhomenewlife.com  
Asko: askousa.com  
Dal-Tile: daltile.com  
Five Star: fivestarrange.com  
Knobs and Hardware:  
knobsandhardware.com  
Maison Gatti/Cap Sud:  
capsudusa.com  
McCoy Millwork:  
mccoymillwork.com  
Pulley-Lights:  
pulley-lights.com  
Rejuvenation: rejuvenation.com  
Sub-Zero: subzero-wolf.com  
United Tile: unitedtile.com  
Vent-A-Hood: ventahood.com  
W.F. Norman: wfnorman.com  
Williams-Sonoma:  
williams-sonoma.com  
Woodcrafters: woodcrafters.us

decorative 6x6 scenic tiles scattered around the room were painstakingly removed and re-laid in similar locales to accent new subway tile walls. (The original subway tiles were too damaged to keep.) The large, hand-painted decorative tiles bear nautical themes, but their significance to the original homeowners is lost to history.

### History Revisited

Another French twist is the subtle layering of textural elements—in this case, different, complementary period details, which add to the room's rich appearance—from ornate Victorian tin ceiling tiles to cool, classic white Carrara marble counters to dark metal Arts & Crafts drawer pulls. The treatment jibes with the architecture of the house itself, which is an eclectic blend of Jacobean,

Colonial Revival, Neoclassical, and even some Arts & Crafts architectural details.

You'd never know by looking at them, but those ceiling tiles were one of the trickier elements to install. "When you use a large-scale pattern, it's not very forgiving," explains Anne—especially if you're working around a centered light fixture, as was the case here. To make the pattern flow seamlessly, Anne's team increased the depth of the moldings and crown in certain areas of the room, such as above the sink.

One of the room's standout features is a modest island. Anna, an accomplished baker, had requested that it have integrated flour bins, and Anne looked to vintage Hoosier cabinets for design inspiration. Anna loves the convenience of the substantive copper bins: "I've got my flour, sugar, and baking sup-









plies underneath." Anne jokes, "She's the only client in 15 years who's wanted flour bins! Nobody else would want the extra cleaning that comes with them."

The island's counter is a bit unusual, too. Instead of butcher block, it's a flat-grain piece of wood. "We matched the counter on the existing original kitchen buffet," explains Anne. While the table appears to be freestanding, it's actually wired to the floor, owing to electrical outlets on each side—a modern-day necessity for a busy hands-on work station.

While the room's turtle-shade wall sconces are original, Anna found many complementary reproduction light fixtures at Rejuvenation's Portland store. An exception is the light above the bistro-style breakfast table, which came from a company that specializes in reproduction pulley lights. "Anne helped me find that little pulley light, and we both agreed that

it was pretty cute," Anna says.

Throughout the project, the women often shared a similar vision. "I love my job because I have clients who love their houses," says Anne. "When the client is passionate and opinionated, it makes for the best design project because they come in with inspirational photos and design elements." Without a doubt, Anna entered this project with plenty of ideas—she had been collecting them for years. "I have to confess that some of my ideas came from old movies. When I'm watching old movies, I always look at interior features and make note of ones I like," she says. "Anne and I were on the same track; she made this process really easy."

Anna may not have ever pictured herself living in this home, but today she couldn't appreciate it more. "This house is a treasure," she says. "I feel like I'm walking around in a piece of history every day." 🏠



**ABOVE:** The cabinet beside the second sink, in the former butler's pantry, rests on scrolled brackets.

**LEFT:** Above the custom bistro table, the pulley light can be lowered and raised on a whim. It coordinates well with the original turtle-shade sconce.

**OPPOSITE:** Designer Anne DeWolf created a custom cover for the range hood and a niche to keep spices and oils in easy reach above the stove.















**LEFT:** A reproduction light fixture mingles with vintage Stetson Pottery and an ad depicting the 1948 Roper range.

**OPPOSITE:** Salvaged casement windows, butcher-block countertops, and an antique sink lend a sunny air to the tiny kitchen, which in its previous incarnation (below) was dark and cramped.

# Rebirth of a Kitchen

SIMPLE GROUND RULES AND A BIT OF INGENUITY HELP TO CREATE A SUNNY, 1940S-INSPIRED SPACE.

STORY BY RICHARD L. KRONICK ♦ PHOTOS BY NOAH WOLF

When Montana Scheff and Ryan Knoke bought their 1905 Colonial Revival on Minneapolis' historic Park Avenue, they were pleased to find that most of the 2,500-square-foot house was intact and restorable. (For more on their woodwork restoration, search "sincere wood finishing" on [oldhouseonline.com](http://oldhouseonline.com).)

The kitchen, however, was a notable exception. "It was the worst part of the house—the one room where we looked at each other and said, 'I'm not sure how to put this back together!'" Montana remembers.

The kitchen had been drastically altered in the 1970s in some odd ways. A harvest gold stove and refrigerator so tightly hemmed in the door leading to the back porch that it opened only part way. "You nearly had to turn sideways to get through it," says Ryan. Furthermore, there was a general lack of light and air. "If you burned toast in here, the smell lasted for a week!" says Montana. No wonder—the '70s remodel included just one window, an inoperable center pane with glass block on either side. Dark-stained pressed-wood cabinets seemed to absorb what little natural light filtered in.

The drop ceiling stepped down once and then leveled off again as it approached the outside wall, making a



wide section of the ceiling actually vertical. As a result, the workspace around the sink felt like a tunnel. The top half of the walls was covered with busy orange and yellow floral-print wallpaper, and the





With the new configuration, Ryan and Montana were able to fit a small island into the kitchen. The sign on the staircase, which they found in the garage, is from the previous owner's real-estate business.

bottom half was finished in beige plastic tile. The nouveau-scully look was completed with dark brown low-pile carpeting—except on the servants' stairs, which were covered in pea green shag.

Ryan and Montana weren't sure where to start undoing the '70s-era damage, so they took a step back and established three general principles. First, the kitchen would remain relatively small. "Several people said we should enlarge the room by knocking out the maid's stairs," Ryan says, "but that simply wasn't an option. We love the open staircase. In fact, it was the only thing we actually liked about the kitchen!" A second given was that the kitchen would

have a historical look to complement the house's turn-of-the-century style—but with at least a few modern conveniences, like a dishwasher and a garbage disposal.

Finally, Ryan and Montana would use salvaged materials wherever possible to create the illusion that the new kitchen had always been there. "We love old houses and their original architectural details," Ryan says, "and that extends to every room, including the kitchen. So using authentic components wherever possible just seemed natural to us."

"Since vintage cabinets, sinks, windows, and moldings are available through salvage yards, and are usually better quality

than the modern remakes," adds Montana, "why not use them? It just made sense."

### Found Space

Some clues about the room's original layout were revealed when Ryan and Montana dismantled the kitchen. When they tore out the carpeting, they found the ghost of a doorframe between the main part of the kitchen and the passageway to the dining room. Removing the drop ceiling revealed shelves near the ceiling in the passageway. And when they took out the tile and wallpaper, they found ghosts of additional shelves and a counter. "That was a revelation!" says Montana. "We real-



ized there had been a butler's pantry in the passageway."

They decided to reincarnate the doorway (minus the door, to give the kitchen a more open feel) and the butler's pantry. A visit to the ReUse Center, a Minneapolis nonprofit that recycles building components, miraculously turned up a period pantry cabinet that precisely fit their space and met their aesthetic standards. "The pantry is built like a tank," says Montana, "but installing it was actually quite easy. We just slipped it into the new space we had framed and screwed it onto the studs. It had no countertop, so we had one made out of Carrara marble. Not only is it a timeless look, but it's also great for rolling out dough."

The pantry doors came with traditional recessed wood panels, but Ryan and Montana preferred doors with glass inserts for the upper cabinets. "I cut out the wood panels with a jigsaw," says Montana, "then I bought some old windows with wavy glass from the ReUse Center. I removed the glass and took it to the hardware store to have it cut to fit the cupboard doors." He routed out a recess for the glass inside the panels, then attached the glass with clear silicone glue. The result is totally convincing—the pantry appears to be original to the house.

When they hired a craftsman to build new cupboards for the rest of the kitchen, they let the pantry dictate the styling: flush-closing frame-and-panel cabinet doors with flat panels (wood rather than glass) and drawer fronts that overlay the face frames. To further unify the look of the old and new cupboards, they installed reproduction period-style cabinet hardware throughout.

## Salvage Solutions

To banish the kitchen's darkness, they found a six-light casement window to go into the butler's pantry and a pair of

## Butler's Pantry Transformation



**LEFT:** Upon dismantling the kitchen, Ryan and Montana found ghosts of original butler's pantry shelving (visible on the back wall below a mock-up of the new passageway). **RIGHT:** The layout of the pantry was reconfigured to add a salvaged casement window to bring in additional light.



**LEFT:** The dimensions for the new passageway between the kitchen and pantry were based on a ghost Ryan and Montana found under the carpet. **RIGHT:** With beadboard wainscoting and a reproduction light fixture, the new butler's pantry pays homage to the original space.



matching casements to replace the inoperable window over the sink. All three, found at an architectural salvage company, came from the same house. To bring in even more natural light, they found a French door for the exit to the back porch. The door and most of the window casings are also salvage; Montana made the window headers, windowsills, and crown moldings.

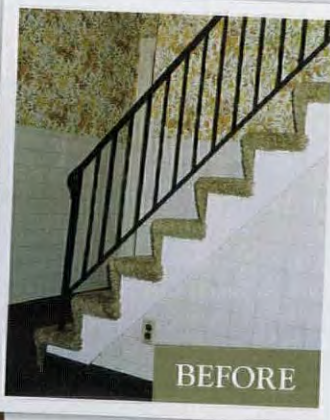
Another found object greatly determined the kitchen's layout and character: The previous owner had left a 1948 Roper range in the basement. "It was still connected down there and in working order," says Ryan. He and Montana loved the Roper's Streamline Moderne styling, and they found that it was in excellent condition. "All we had to do was clean it," says Ryan.

To go with the Roper, they found a 1954 General Electric refrigerator-freezer for \$12 at an estate sale. "It works perfectly, and the interior is in fantastic shape," says Ryan. "We did have it resurfaced, but it was less than \$100. Some of its coolest features

are the revolving shelves and the foot pedal that you push to open the door when your hands are full of groceries." Realizing that the fridge might need to be replaced at some point or that they might sell the house some day, they had their cabinetmaker construct a niche for it that will also fit a modern-sized refrigerator.

They later found original magazine ads for both appliances; the ads are displayed on the kitchen walls, along with an old hand-painted sign from the previous owner's real estate business that they found in the garage. The kitchen sink, which sits in a new maple butcher-block counter, is another item found at the ReUse Center. "We looked all over town again and again for just the right old sink," says Montana. "But everything we found was too tall to fit under the windows. This one has a low enough backsplash, and it also has a modern-size drain opening that fits a disposal unit."

**BELOW & LEFT:** Green shag carpeting was removed from the stairs; the 1970s wrought iron railing was replaced with a salvaged newel post and a banister made to match others in the house.



## Finishing Touches

One of the kitchen's most beautiful components is the small island. "At first, we had an antique baker's table here," says Ryan, "with two flour bins below and drawers above. It was charming, but because of the flour bins, you couldn't sit at it—so there was no place to eat in the kitchen." They looked for something to replace it, but couldn't find anything that was the right fit for the narrow space. Finally, Montana designed a unique piece of furniture that has thick legs and flared feet; it was built by their neighbor, Gary Anderson, a third-generation cabinetmaker. They ordered a marble top to match the counter in the butler's pantry. "On weekends we sit here and have a nice leisurely breakfast," says Ryan. "This little piece really changed the feel and usability of the kitchen for us."

Ryan and Montana decided on bead-board wainscoting for the walls after finding a ghost of a molding underneath the plastic tile. A chunk of plaster that fell off the wall during deconstruction showed





**ABOVE:** The refrigerator nook was designed with enough space to fit a modern fridge.

**LEFT:** Ryan and Montana customized the salvaged butler's pantry by adding glass doors.

that the kitchen had originally been painted a light green; the upper parts of the walls are finished in paint that was color-matched to that shard. The room's crowning touch is its tin ceiling. "We looked at reproduction tin ceilings," says Ryan, "and they just looked too new, too perfect. That's not what we wanted." So they bought an old tin ceiling that had been salvaged from a St. Paul warehouse. To retain its antique look, they decided not to strip it. Instead, they just scraped off the loose, flaky paint, thoroughly cleaned it—first with a wire brush and then denatured alcohol—and repainted it.

The result of several years of hard work—and dedication to some basic principles—is a kitchen made of many parts from many sources that, at first sight, give the illusion that they've always been together. It's old and new and delightfully comfortable and functional throughout. 🏠

## Reproduction Lighting

For their kitchen restoration, Ryan and Montana chose reproduction schoolhouse-style fixtures. These days, reproduction lighting is easy to find—plenty of companies produce spot-on copies of historic fixtures, particularly those from the early 20th century.

How to know whether reproduction lights are the right fit for your kitchen overhaul? It's a good idea if:

- ◆ **You're on a budget.** There are plenty of exceptions, of course, but generally a reproduction fixture will be less expensive than a fully restored antique one. And the simpler you go, the more you can save: Schoolhouse- and industrial-inspired fixtures are such a big trend right now that it's not hard to find them on the cheap at all kinds of stores (though keep in mind that the cheaper you go, the more you'll sacrifice authenticity).
- ◆ **You need something specific.** Whether it's three identical pendants to top an island or a sconce in a particular size, being able to find exactly what you want from a large stock of fixtures is one of the big benefits of going repro. Most reproduction lighting companies offer a wide variety of interchangeable fixtures and shades, so your options are virtually endless. In addition, it's easier to match existing finishes in your house (companies may offer up to a dozen finish choices) or order coordinating hardware suites.

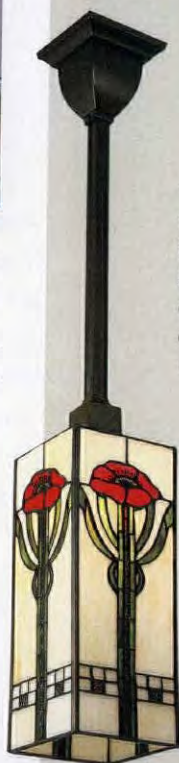
- ◆ **You don't have time to search.** For some people, the thrill of finding a one-of-a-kind fixture outweighs the time spent combing antique stores, eBay, and the like. But if you have a tight deadline in mind for your kitchen project, you may not want to wait for the perfect light to come along. With reproduction fixtures, what you see is what you get—today and six months from now. You'll also have the peace of mind of knowing that if the fixture gets damaged (say, a shade breaks), you can easily replace it.

—OHJ Editorial Staff

Ryan and Montana selected reproduction light fixtures from Rejuvenation for their kitchen. Other repro options include (from top) an early American sconce from Heritage Lanterns, an Arts & Crafts-style pendant from Turn of the Century Lighting, and a Victorian-era gas-style chandelier from Renaissance Lighting.

See more before-and-after photos of this kitchen in a special online gallery.

**OLDHOUSEonline** 🏠





# Stripping Hardware

BY THE OHJ EDITORIAL STAFF ♦ PHOTOS BY ANDY OLENICK

**M**any old pieces of hardware—whether hooks, hinges, or escutcheons—are adorned in the kind of delicate detailing that would turn their modern, big-box counterparts green with envy. But after decades of being “freshened up” by yet another coat of paint, even the most elaborate hardware will lose many of its fine-tuned details. To bring them back, you’ll need to remove the old layers of paint weighing them down. Follow these steps to get the job done.



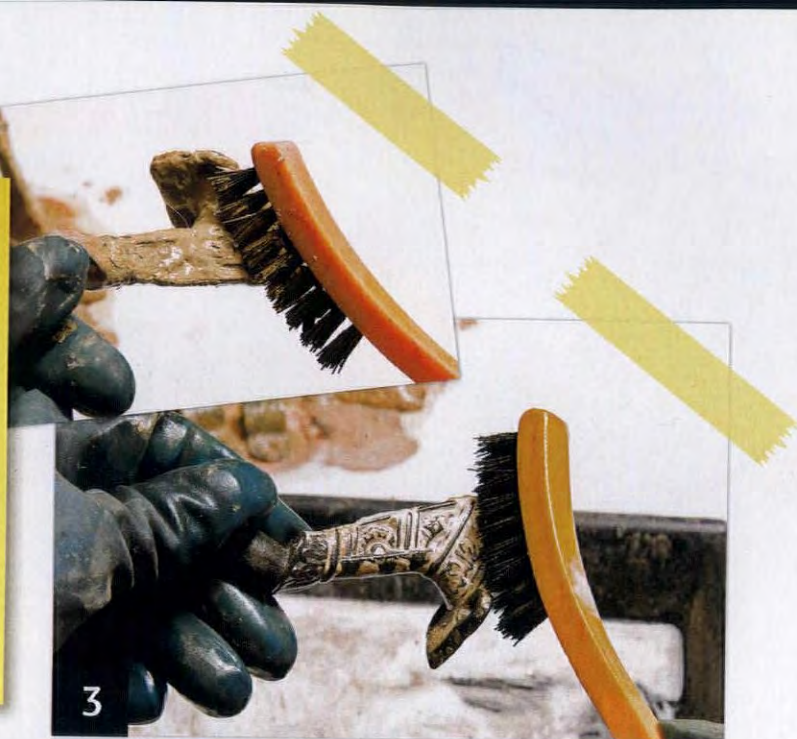
◀ 1. Most of the Eastlake-style patterning on this Victorian-era coat hook has disappeared beneath paint buildup. To remove the paint, assemble the following tools: paint stripper, paintbrush, wire or heavy-duty nylon brush, nylon scrubbing pad, pick, paint tray, and mineral spirits.

2. Wearing protective rubber gloves (latex won't hold up), use the paintbrush to liberally apply the stripping agent. Next, set the pieces on newspaper or cardboard and let them sit for at least one hour, and up to 24 hours for pieces with excessive paint buildup. Always work in a well-ventilated room, and if you suspect your hardware harbors lead paint, follow lead-safe practices (see [epa.gov/lead](http://epa.gov/lead)). ▶





3. When the paint begins to pucker, it's ready to be worked off. Use the wire or nylon brush to scrub away the paint; dipping both hardware and brush into mineral spirits (in the paint tray) helps expedite removal. After the bulky buildup dissipates, dip the scrubbing pad in the mineral spirits and rub it over the surface several times. (If paint remains, you may need to apply the stripper and repeat the process a second time.) ►



◀ 4. Use the pick (or another sharp object) to clean out small crevices in the finer details. Work in small sections until you've scraped away all the paint to uncover the most delicate patterns.

5. With all of the original details now visible, the finished, stripped hook appears good as new. It's ready to be carefully painted again (a single time), or left alone and reinstalled, taking its proper place as a supporting old-house player. ►







# Great Expectations

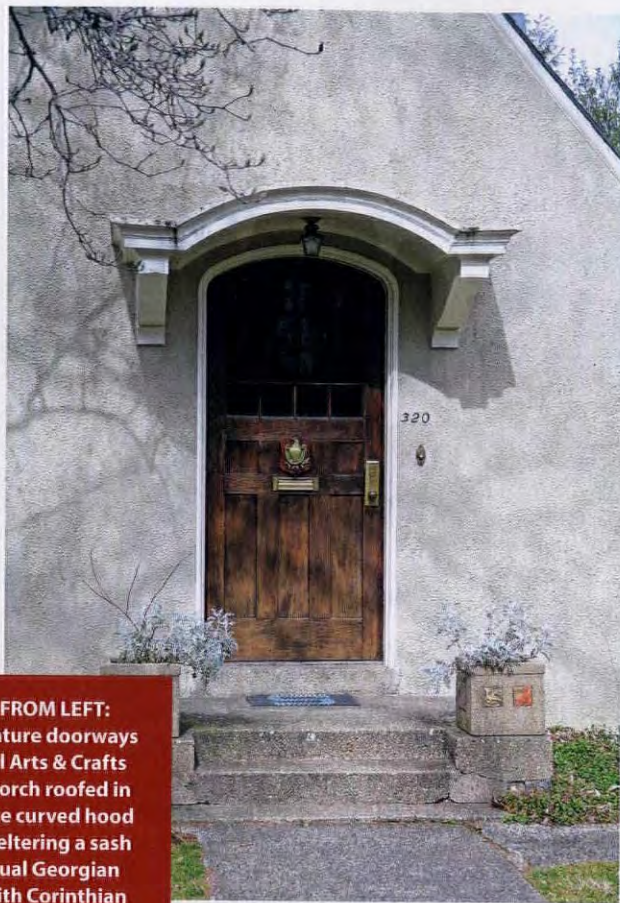
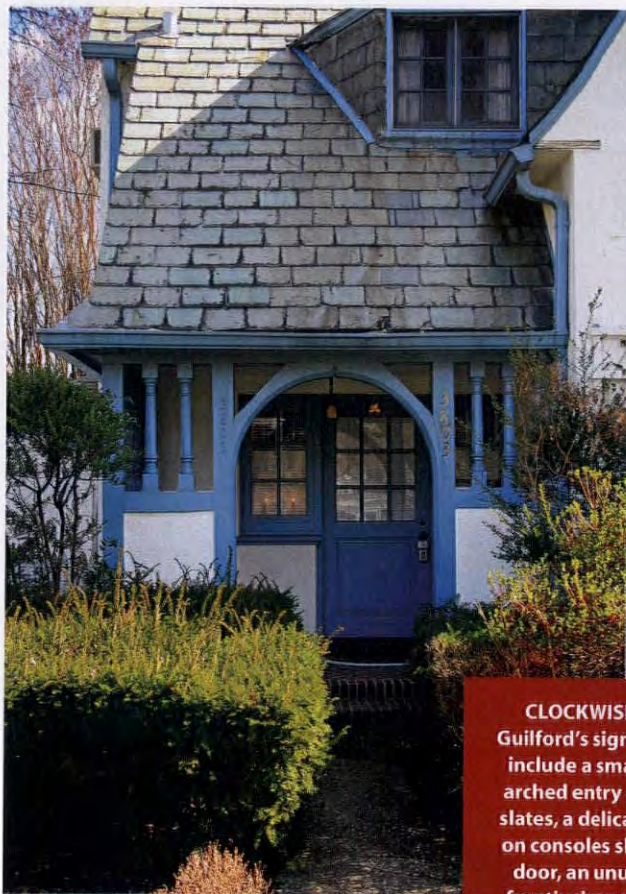
BALTIMORE'S IN-CITY SUBURB OF GUILFORD IS AN ELEGANT, WELL-PLANNED COMMUNITY OF STANDOUT OLD HOUSES.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JAMES C. MASSEY AND SHIRLEY MAXWELL

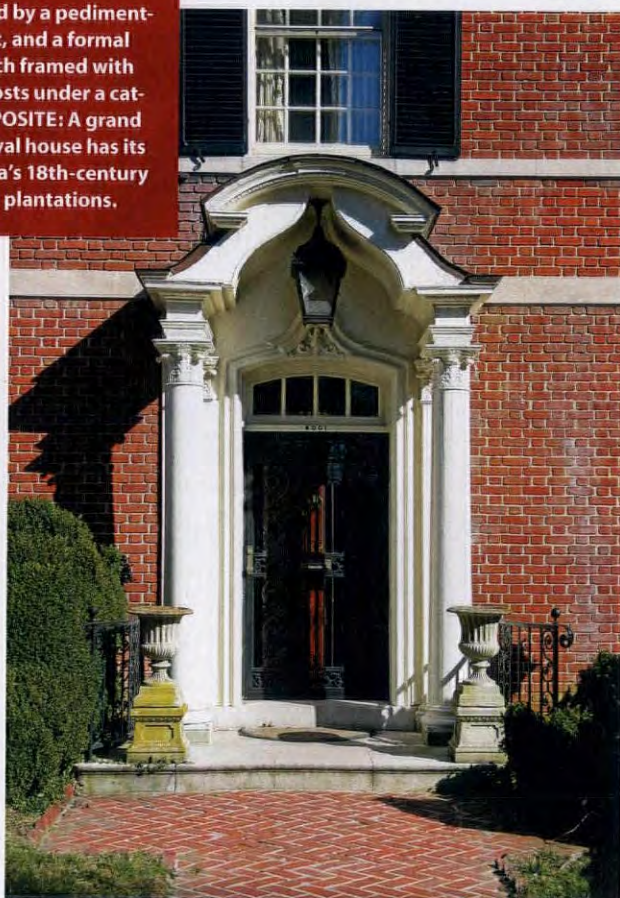
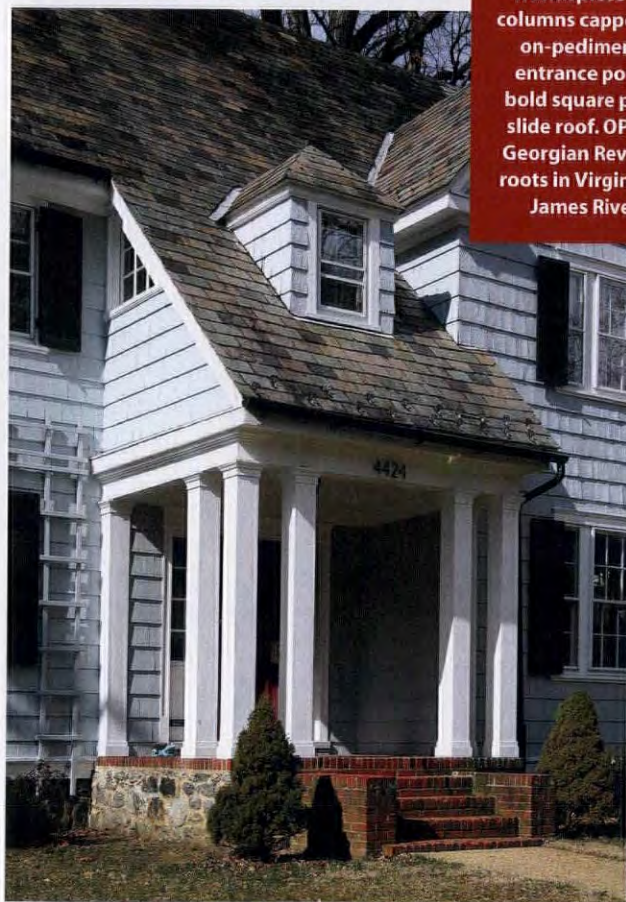
Unlike many planned subdivisions, Guilford—northeast Baltimore's deeply coveted residential oasis—did not spring into being with a single impetuous leap. Instead, it evolved slowly, gracefully, and with unwavering intentionality. Its 210-acre expanse was planned and platted well in advance of construction, its landscape as carefully thought out as its houses. Guilford took shape over nearly 40 years—from 1913 to 1950—and came to include 800 houses in a dozen or so architectural styles; its charm and distinction remain intact.

While Guilford's near neighbor, Roland Park, developed at the end of the 19th century and reflects a late-Victorian aesthetic (with Queen Anne, Shingle Style, and early Colonial Revival houses), Guilford, also owned by the Roland Park Company, moved into the 20th century with up-to-date versions of the Colonial Revival, and also added American and English Arts &





**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:**  
Guilford's signature doorways include a small Arts & Crafts arched entry porch roofed in slates, a delicate curved hood on consoles sheltering a sash door, an unusual Georgian frontispiece with Corinthian columns capped by a pediment-on-pediment, and a formal entrance porch framed with bold square posts under a cat-slide roof. **OPPOSITE:** A grand Georgian Revival house has its roots in Virginia's 18th-century James River plantations.







**ABOVE:** Like many Guilford houses, this row of fine Colonial Revival homes on Northway is on a raised grade.

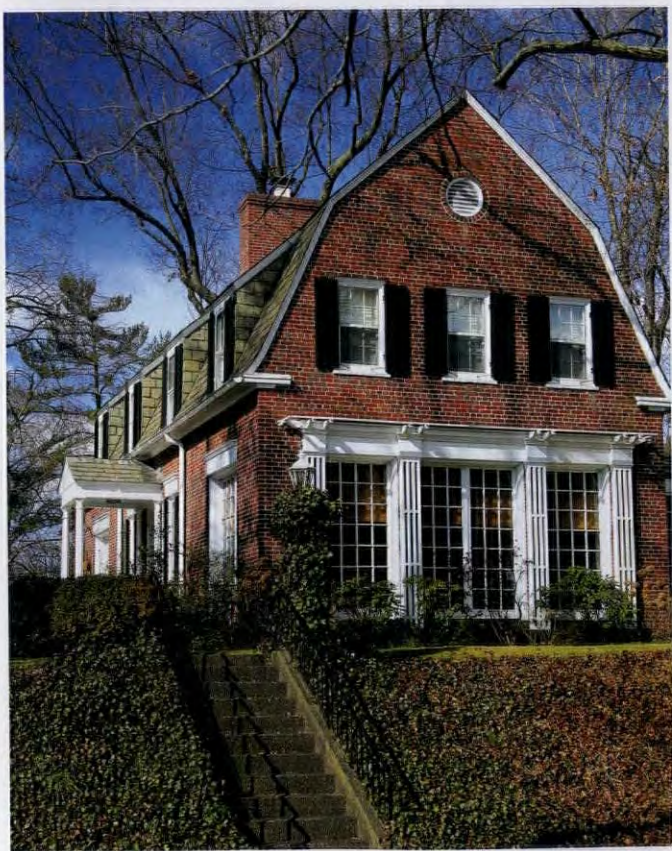
**LEFT:** In an unusual twist for the neighborhood, this Dutch Colonial turns its gambrel-roofed end toward the street.

Crafts and Old English styles.

The 1920s and early '30s brought a spate of new construction that resulted in an array of between-the-wars eclectic revival styles, as well as more academically accurate versions of Colonial and Georgian Revival. After the Depression and World War II, attention centered almost exclusively on the Colonial Revival, now pared down to accommodate shortages of cash and materials—and also to fit a growing taste for simplicity.

### Thoughtful Planning

Many of the houses are set on commandingly high lots, but all except the very largest have identical setbacks, a practice that, combined with an orderly tree pattern, lends regularity to the streetscape. No electric lines or telephone poles mar the effect; they are tucked out of sight underground or behind the houses. Since Guilford was an automobile-era development, many houses have small garages matching the house style. A few churches and a single school are old Guilford amenities, but there are no commercial buildings—no loss, since businesses abound on sur-







**ABOVE:** Old English designs are common; this formal Jacobean house features battlements, buttresses, and Tudor arches.

rounding streets.

The houses vary in size and character, from sedate brick rows to cozy Cape Cods to imposing Georgians, with a few outright mansions lording over mini-estate-sized lots. Building materials are mostly brick, stone, stucco, and half-timbering, with some frame and shingles.

The remarkable charm and consistency of this multi-style development grew out of its founders' broad vision and careful oversight; in order to protect the high-quality materials, design, and construction that built Guilford, an equally high standard of maintenance continues to be enforced. For instance, Guilford's ubiquitous slate and terracotta tile roofs are essential components of its character, and their repair and replacement are rigorously controlled by the Guilford Association, legal successor to the Roland Park Company. Consequently, on many quiet afternoons you can hear the gentle tap-tap-tap of the slater's hammer as it shapes, sizes, and places the slates, making its own music, accompanied by a chorus of Guilford's church bells ringing the hours.

## Differing Styles

Many of the earliest home designs came from Edward L. Palmer, Roland Park's architect, but buyers also were encouraged to select their own architects with the approval of the Roland Park Company. Thus, a number of talented architects brought their skills to bear in Guilford, including the nationally prominent Classicist John Russell Pope and Baltimore's own Laurence Hall Fowler.

Some early houses show the influence of English Arts & Crafts luminaries like C.F.A. Voysey and H.M. Baillie Scott. These houses have asymmetrical massing with sections of varying heights,

sometimes combining a steeply sloping roof on one section with a flat main roof, plus lower shed-roofed end sections. Their flat wall surfaces of stone or stucco are often punctuated with prominent entries framed by massive swans-neck-and-pineapple pediments, decorative wall plaques, multiple-paned leaded casement windows with stone frames, and tall chimneys topped by terracotta chimney pots.

The American Arts & Crafts house prevalent in Guilford is smaller, less formal, and more domestic in appearance. It is picturesquely asymmetrical, usually with multiple gables. Guilford's examples most often have stucco walls. Timber-framed

## Peaceful Surroundings

The suburb's sophisticated layout and landscaping were developed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., son and successor to Olmsted, Sr., remembered for New York's Central Park and other landscape masterpieces. The younger Olmsted's plan for Guilford is much acclaimed for its sweeping, curvilinear streets and parkways that follow the land's natural contours. Carefully tended public parks are green grace notes within the community; one, Sherwood Park, is now a celebrated tulip garden created in the space of a filled pond.





**ABOVE:** Local fieldstone and simple lines recall Maryland's Colonial farmhouses. **LEFT:** A fine Arts & Crafts house shows a very steep two-story gable and variegated slate roof.



entry porches sometimes add to the picturesque effect, and casement windows are often grouped in ribbon-like arrangements.

Half-timbered Old English (a useful term that includes Tudor, Elizabethan, and Jacobean styles) cottages and houses have brick walls with smooth stucco infill between exposed horizontal and diagonal braces of dark wood; casement windows; and often multiple gables and steep cat-slide roofs.

Guilford's French or Norman Revival houses typically feature at least one rounded corner or entrance turret, as well as steep, hipped roofs pierced at the edges by segmental arched dormers. They also might have a formal, segmental-arched entrance of stone, as well as one or more one-story bays sheltered by outward-curving metal awnings. Walls are generally stone or stucco.

Italian, Spanish, and Mediterranean sources provide the inspiration for the lightest and brightest of Guilford's houses, with their white or cream-colored flat walls and orange or green terracotta barrel-tile roofs. The Mediterranean Revival is the most formal, symmetrical, and ornamental of the

## A Word About Roland Park

Before beginning work on Guilford, the Roland Park Company (a development company founded 1891) was responsible for the planning and building of Roland Park, one of the first and still one of the loveliest of Baltimore's planned suburbs. Influenced by the English Garden City Movement, Roland Park was, like Guilford, laid out by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and with architectural guidance from Laurence Hall Fowler. It contains residences designed by the era's best architects in Early Colonial Revival, Shingle, Queen Anne, and Old English styles. As in Guilford, the development was, and is, closely controlled by covenants in the property deeds designed to ensure quality and permanence. Not surprisingly, it has retained its standing among Baltimore's premier communities.



three, while Spanish is the least. Italian and Mediterranean characteristics may blend almost seamlessly, but the deep eaves of the Italian and the ornately decorated flat walls of the Mediterranean provide some clues to the architect's intentions. Spanish houses have no trim surrounding their deeply recessed round-arched doors and windows, but the doors themselves are bold statements in dark-stained wood with large strap hinges. Arcaded porches are typical, with small, wrought iron faux balconies at the second floor.

## Old Favorites

It is the Colonial Revival that forms the architectural heart of Guilford. This perennial American favorite is everywhere, in brick, stone, stucco, and frame, in every sub-style found in the Northeast. Its evolution can be traced from 1913 to 1950 on Guilford's streets. Baltimore's love affair with the row house is represented in Guilford in the suburb's earliest houses. Ranging along the eastern boundary of the community are a number of short rows of small Colonial Revival dwellings, often grouped around quaint courtyards, like tiny colonial villages. In the 1920s and '30s, single-family, relatively informal Colonial dwellings of rubble fieldstone or red brick were extremely popular here, boasting gabled slate roofs and dormers with small-paned, double-hung sash. The occasional Dutch Colonial, identified by its signature gambrel roof with continuous dormers, might be of stone brick, stucco, or frame construction. The postwar version of Colonial Revival, also of brick or stone, is plainer and lower, with flatter wall surfaces and less decorative detail.

The diminutive but durable one-and-a-half-story Cape Cod cottage, beloved in the 1930s and later, is here usually found in brick, with a slate roof and slate-sided dormers—not a pure version of the style, but charming all the same.

The Georgian Revival house—formal, large, and often further expanded by lateral wings—displays elaborate period



**TOP:** This Old English house uses half-timbering, stone, and stucco in a picturesque design of the 1920s. **ABOVE:** Several Spanish Colonial Revival houses add to the variety of styles in the Guilford Historic District.

detailing, especially at the entry. Topped by a hipped or end-gable roof, it is usually of red brick but sometimes of stone.

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2001, Guilford is looking forward to a grand centennial celebration in 2013. If you visit this year, you're likely to find Guilfordians busy in their yards and parks, planting, replanting, and caring for their neighborhood's leafy heritage, still guided by Olmsted's century-old tree-planting plan. If you happen to be there in the springtime, you might be dazzled by the kaleidoscopic glory of 80,000

tulips blooming in Guilford's famous Sherwood Gardens (just east of the 4100 Block of St. Paul's Road). If you can't get to Guilford before summer, rejoice in the splendor of Sherwood's thousands of annuals in resident-tended plots. And, of course, any time of year is a great time to enjoy a self-guided strolling tutorial on Guilford's eclectic architecture of the first part of the last century. If you're really rushed, start with the unit block of St. Martin's Place—then come back to see why some folks just can't stop looking at Guilford. 🏡



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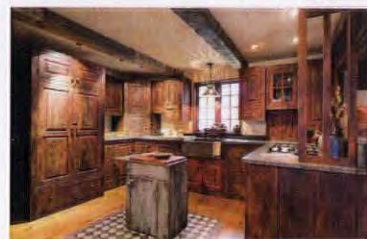
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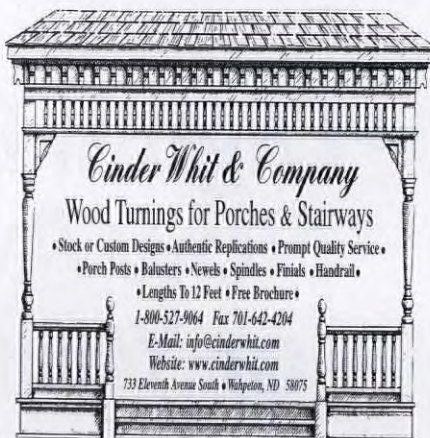


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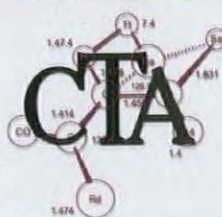
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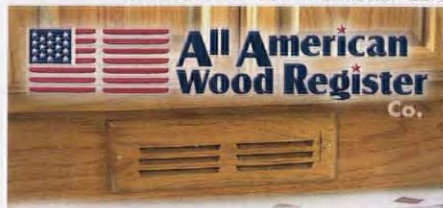
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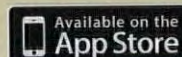


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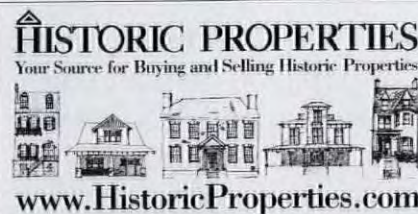


# Historic Properties

## SPOTLIGHT PROPERTY



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**VIDALIA, GA**—McLemore Cottage, circa 1864. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, this 3 bedroom, 1 bath, 1,872 sq.ft. cottage is in good condition and requires only minor upgrades. The property includes 3.68 acres of land within 2 miles of downtown Vidalia. May qualify for tax incentives. \$95,000. Kate Ryan, Programs Manager Preservation Services, The Georgia Trust, [kryan@georgiatruster.org](mailto:kryan@georgiatruster.org) or 404-885-7817. [www.georgiatruster.org](http://www.georgiatruster.org)



**WASHINGTON, GA**—Georgia Greek Revival, circa 1832. Located in an historic town, this 5,169 sq. ft. home with 18 columns encircling it, features 6 bedrooms, 4 baths, parlor and formal living room, gathering room, numerous fireplaces and more. On 1+ acre with 2 bedroom, 1 bath guesthouse. \$498,000. United Country's Specialty Catalog features vintage homes, grand old mansions, farms and ranches steeped in history. United Country, 800-999-1020, Ext. 108. [www.unitedcountry.com/old](http://www.unitedcountry.com/old)



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**EDISON, NJ**—Charming 19th C farmhouse. Fireplace in kitchen; large living and dining rooms with fireplaces. Front and back porches, patio, 4 bedrooms, 1 1/2 baths, 3rd floor ready to be finished. Master offers fireplace, 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. \$399,900. Stephanie Smith, Coldwell Banker, Westfield. 908-230-8585.



**ELKINS PARK, PA**—Tucked away down a private drive is the P.A.B. Widener Bank Barn and Cottage. Only 12 miles from Philadelphia sits this remarkable 19th century residence. Abundant privacy & cottage gardens, one gets the best of old and new. The 3-story bank barn is insulated (yet not heated). Main cottage is completely restored with all new baths & kitchen. Also a small wood shop and 2-bay garage. \$487,500. Scott Laughlin, Prudential Fox & Roach, 215-248-6529. [www.classic-neighborhoods.com](http://www.classic-neighborhoods.com)



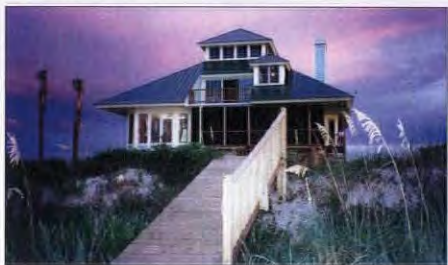
**RUSSELL, PA**—The Locusts. Built by lumberman Guy C. Irvine in 1835. In superb condition and on the National Register. Georgian red brick, 2-story exterior with unusually large bridged chimneys. Wide-planked chestnut floors lying as flat and true as they were in 1835, with the interior crown moldings, baseboards and wide windows in a Greek Revival style. Separate carriage house. 14 acres. 10 miles from Lake Chautauqua. Warren County's premier property. \$400,000. 412-261-8902.



# Historic Properties



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**HARBOR ISLAND, SC**—Oceanfront beach house on Atlantic coast. Traditional southern coastal architecture in this 3,000 sq.ft. home in a gated community on this barrier island. 3 bedrooms, 3 1/2 baths, fireplace, deck, private walkway to beach. "Widow's watch" provides private retreat with 360-degree views of the ocean. Built in 1992, needs some updating. 1 hour from Hilton Head, 11 miles from Beaufort. \$900,000. Gwen Bailey, 843-263-0929 or [bob34541@aol.com](mailto:bob34541@aol.com)



**FARMVILLE, VA**—The Withers House, circa 1939. This brick Colonial Revival is pristine and original in every detail. Grand hall, parlor, library, office, dining room, kitchen and butlers pantry. Family room with fireplace in basement. 1st and 2nd floor master suites. Separate 2nd floor quarters with 2 bedrooms and full bath. 2-car garage. Priced to sell. \$395,000. Max Sempowski, Antique Properties div. of Keller Williams, 434-391-4855. [www.oldhouseproperties.com](http://www.oldhouseproperties.com)

## SPOTLIGHT PROPERTY



**RICHMOND, VA**— C.F. Brauer house, built in 1904, is an impressive Queen Anne Victorian sitting on a hill overlooking Richmond, VA. Four stained glass windows, five fireplaces, pocket doors, and all the heavy renovations completed. A contributing structure to the Union Hill National Historic District, a short distance to the interstate and the Amtrak station, this solid brick home is ready to be polished into a fine gem. \$619,000. Elaine Graham, Realtor, Joyner Fine Properties, 804-967-2726. [www.elainegraham.com](http://www.elainegraham.com)



**AUSTIN, TX**—The Brady House, a 1915 Arts & Crafts bungalow, is a City of Austin Landmark located at 1601 Pearl Street in the historic Judges Hill neighborhood. The one-and-a-half-story house has a rock-face brick façade and sits on a corner lot with porches on two sides. The interior needs complete restoration. There is a large garage and upper apartment built in 2008 in the rear. \$750,000 Lin Team, Old Austin REALTOR®, Kinney Company Real Estate, 512-472-1930. [lteam@austin.rr.com](mailto:lteam@austin.rr.com)



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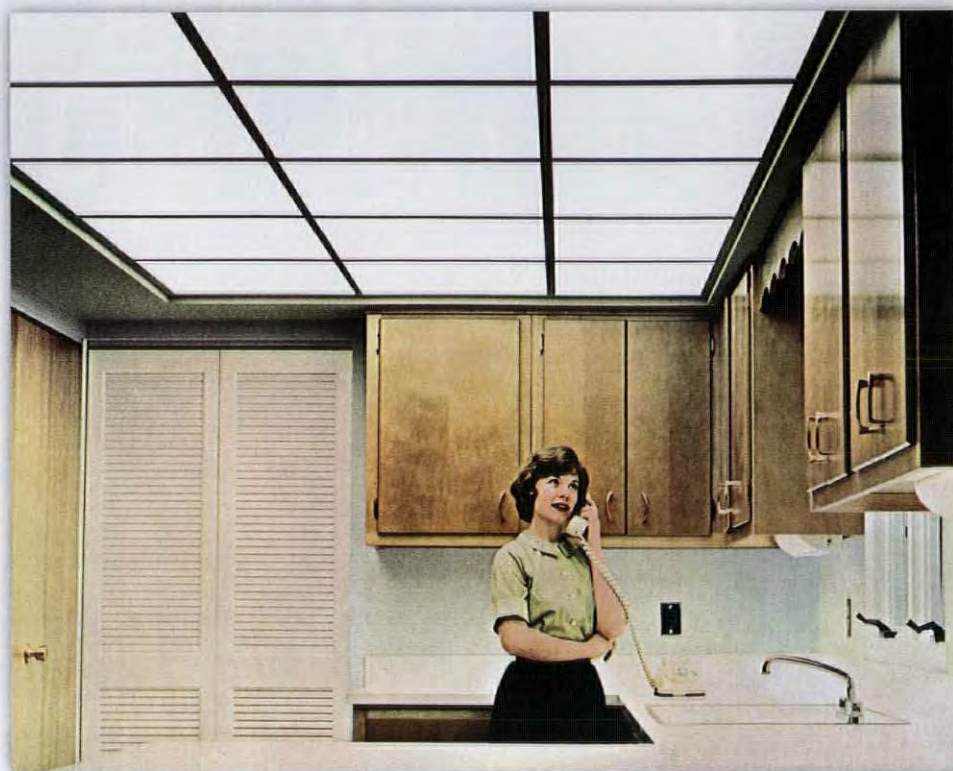


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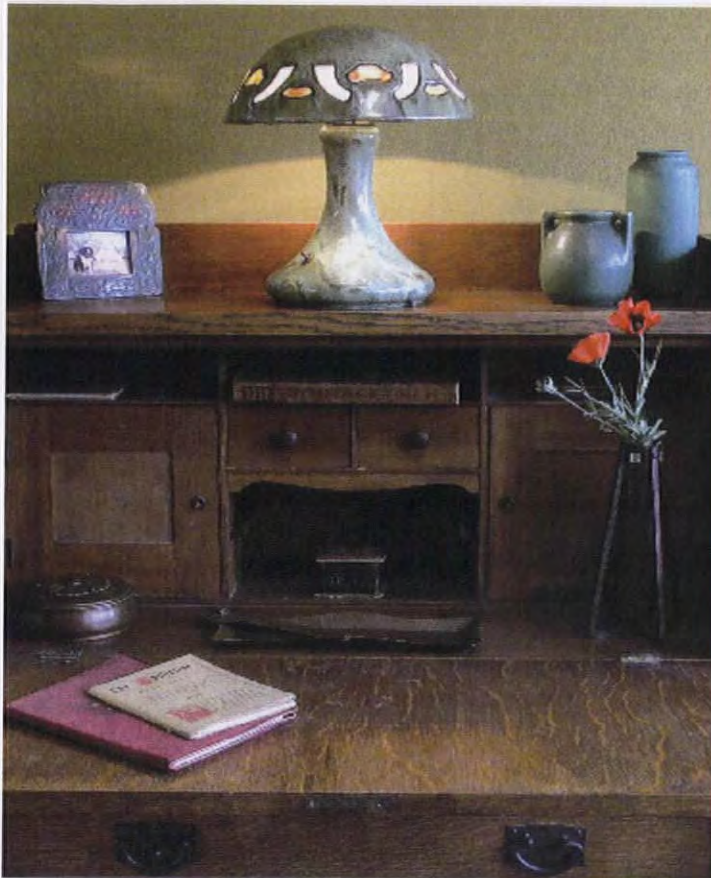
With the sort of marketing cleverness that only American manufacturers could concoct (why sell just one light fixture for every kitchen when you could sell 16 instead?), the early 1960s saw the rise of the “shadowless kitchen”—a far cry from the lonely carbon-filament bulb on a cord in the middle of the room. Made up of eight to 16 individual fluorescent fixtures within a vast diffusing grid that covered most of the ceiling (and a couple under the cabinets to boot), the system boasted enough light to give shadow-seeking groundhog Punxsutawney Phil a heart attack. The John C. Virden Company of Cleveland, Ohio, was a major main-

stream lighting manufacturer known in the industry for jumping on the latest trend bandwagon, and their 1961 catalog depiction of the concept promoted it as the very latest “home improvement system.”

Though we might see shadowless kitchens in a less favorable light today (particularly in century-old homes “improved” by such systems), they played a role in the long advance of kitchens from dark sweatshops for servants to the bright and open center of family life we know today. And given that Virden’s Luminous Ceiling Kits could create up to 192 square feet of glowing goodness, they may have had another use as well—as a benign alternative to a stiff cocktail that would keep the blues at bay while getting that proverbial dinner on the table. 🍷

**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.**





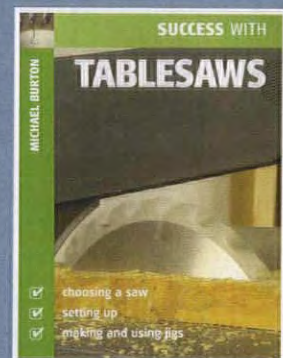
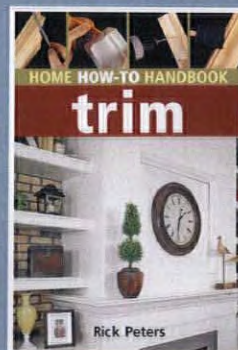
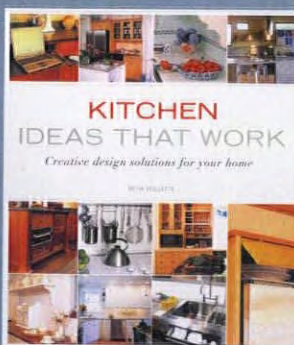
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# remuddling



## Defensive Maneuver

When old houses get updated with security in mind, they can wind up resembling something other than a home. Case in point: these two Italianates in the same rural town. While one (at left) remains almost entirely original, retaining its homey shutters, clapboard siding, and full-width front porch, the other (at right) has long since lost these welcoming features. Instead, it's been beefed up with brawny board siding, an entry portico approximating a sentry box, and an expansive, fort-like addition. The only remaining clues to its architectural origins are a brightly painted cupola and some telling eave brackets.

"Every time I drive by, I want to start pulling off the siding," says our contributor. "It comes across not as a house, but a fortress!" We think that when houses get dressed defensively, they tend to repel more than just potential invaders. 🏰

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