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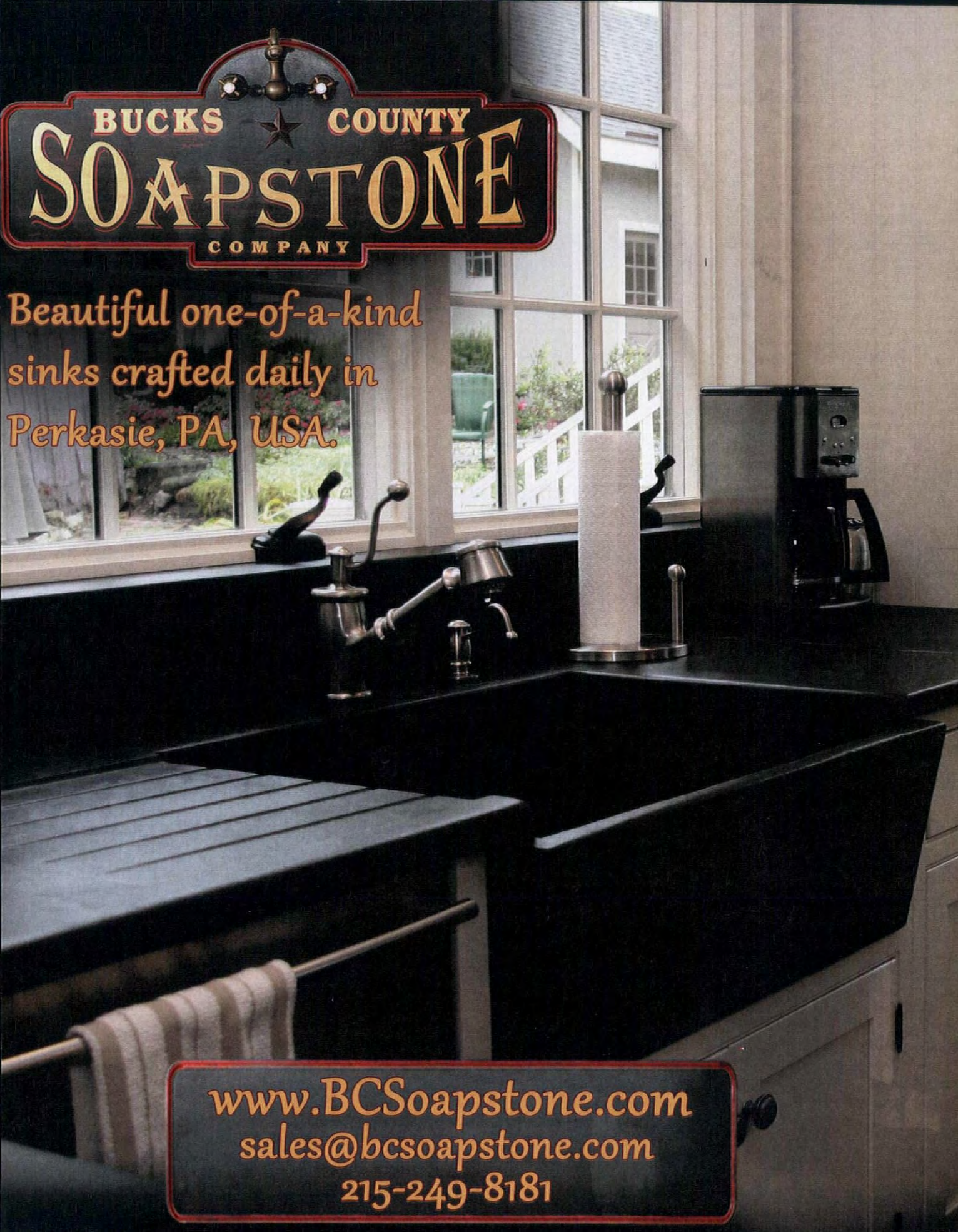
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Old-House JOURNAL

features

26 Energy-Saving Stars

Boning up on easy old-house energy fixes can save you lots of green—and benefit the planet, too.
By GORDON BOCK



44 First, Do No Harm

The 18th-century Lyman Estate in Waltham, Massachusetts, gets an energy retrofit that's mindful of its historic architecture.
By KATIE HUTCHISON

50 Style: Desert Rose

The Pueblo Revival houses of Santa Fe, New Mexico, offer a glimpse into the area's past, as well as unforgettable vignettes.
By JAMES C. MASSEY AND SHIRLEY MAXWELL

54 Window Wizardry

Reglazing is often the first step to improving the efficiency of drafty windows. A seasoned pro walks us through the process.
By JOHN LEEKE



40

Old-House Living

30 Time Capsule

A DIY-minded couple in Alexandria, Virginia, gets creative with restoration projects in their narrow row house.
By AMY KOLCZAK

Old-House Insider

40 Saving Face

Work on a Minneapolis Mediterranean Revival replaced a muddled sunroom with one matched to the architecture, renewing the entire façade.
By CLARE M. ALEXANDER

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Old House JOURNAL



in every issue

- 8 **Editor's Note**
Old-House Commune
- 10 **Letters**
Inspired by recent issues, readers show off their own projects; plus, some insight into a quirky old-house term.
- 14 **Ask OHJ**
Proper prep is key to lasting repainting jobs; our expert explains why.
By DUFFY HOFFMAN
- 16 **Preservation Perspectives**
Students at Ball State University popularize historic preservation through an innovative multimedia project.
By DEMETRA APOSPOROS

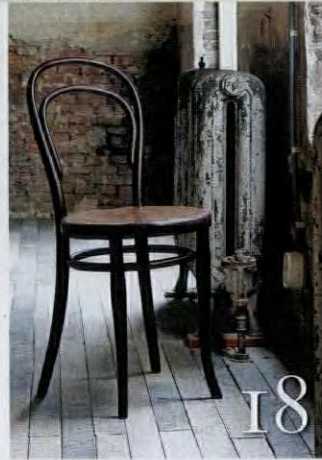
featured advertising

- 65 **Free Information Guide**
- 76 **Historic Properties**



outside

- 20 **Historic Retreats**
A downtown Detroit inn offers a window into the past by combining 6 Victorian-era homes into one lodging destination.
By JEFF SAMORAY
- 24 **Outside the Old House**
Newer, sturdier varieties of lilacs can be a stunning addition to old-house gardens.
By JESSIE KEITH
- 80 **Remuddling**
A Queen Anne duplex needs a happily ever after.



inside

- 12 **About the House**
How Gen Y is shaking up preservation, and the latest resources for making your old house greener.
By CLARE M. ALEXANDER
- 18 **Period Products**
Perk up period interiors with these innovative new finds.
By CLARE M. ALEXANDER
- 78 **A Page from History**
It's curtains for drafts in this Victorian-era advertisement.
By BO SULLIVAN



working

- 17 **Tools & Materials**
A source for endless, efficient hot showers, and a new breed of moisture meter.
By THE OHJ EDITORIAL STAFF
- 19 **Old-House Toolbox**
Traditional files and rasps can be just the tool needed for a variety of tasks.
By RAY TSCHOEPE
- 36 **True Grit**
A pro's look at 5 handy sanders can put you on track to finding the right one for the job at hand.
By MARK CLEMENT
- 48 **Restore It Right**
For small areas of damaged wood, a Dutchman patch provides salvation.
By STEVE JORDAN

on our cover:

p. 30 →

p. 24 →

p. 36 →

p. 54 →

← p. 26, 44

Photo by Nathan Winter. A narrow row house in Virginia gets livened up with traditional red paint. Story page 30.



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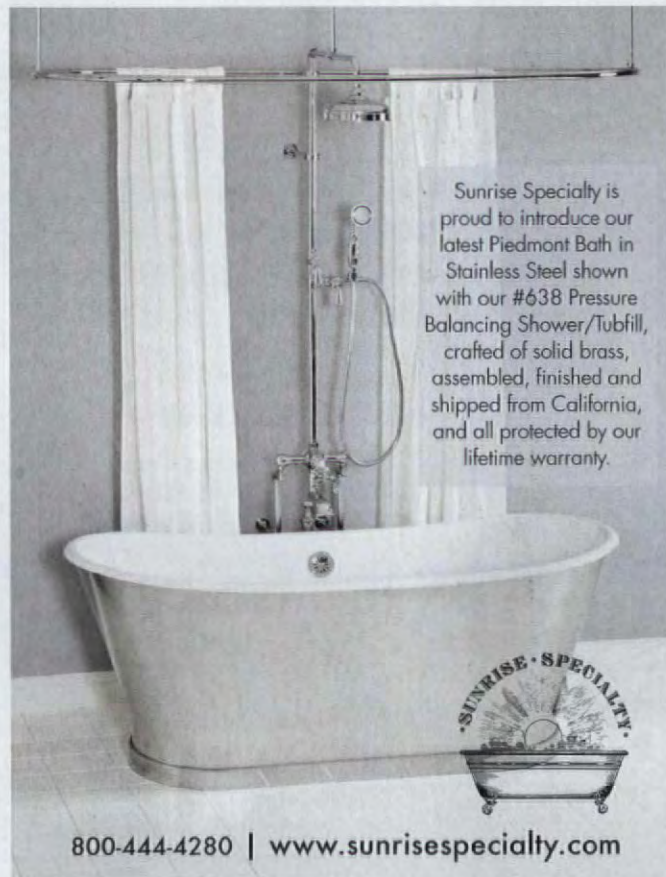


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ALEX SANTANTONIO PHOTO

Make Your Own Wainscot

Our Old-House Living subjects, Alex and Wendy Santantonio, have been working on DIY projects together since they were high-school sweethearts. Their D.C.-area row house (check it out on page 30) is filled with examples of their ingenuity, including a staircase wainscot with integrated handrail (above) that was inspired by one they saw at a local restaurant. If you want to replicate this feat of woodworking in your own home (or are just curious as to how they did it), we've got a link to their step-by-step tutorial.



JOHN LEEKE PHOTO

Reglaze Like a Pro

Once you've finished reading window expert John Leeke's instructions for reglazing sash windows (page 54), you'll be ready to try your hand at the project. Before you start, though, head online to get a few more tips from the author, plus a video of the process, to make the task a little bit easier.

Save More Energy

Sure, saving energy is partially about making effective tune-ups to your house's building envelope. (To see how to do this in a minimally invasive way, turn to page 26 or 44.) But to really reap the benefits of an energy efficiency update, you also have to tweak your everyday behavior. Check out our list of simple adjustments you can make that will add up to a big impact on your energy bottom line.

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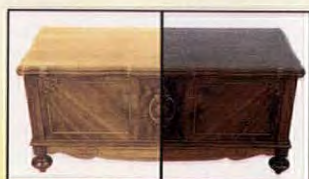
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Community Ties

PEOPLE OFTEN ASK ME what makes *Old-House Journal* so special. It certainly could be our content—stories you can't find anywhere else, whether it's a DIY restoration project like reglazing windows (see "Window Wizardry," page 54), an energy-efficient retrofit on a historic mansion (see "First, Do No Harm," page 44), or a pair of homeowners' innovative restoration solutions for their narrow row house (see *Old-House Living*, page 30).

While our content is key, I think what really makes OHJ stand out is our community at large—passionate old-house enthusiasts who are eager to learn and share information and experiences, and who want to do right by their vintage buildings and the neighborhoods they populate. In our 40 years of publication, this desire to share the latest knowledge about old-house tips, techniques, designs, and products has remained largely the same, but the ways in which we do it have changed dramatically.

I'm guessing many of you have visited our website, oldhouseonline.com, to read a story or look for information or a product. Maybe you've also checked out our digital edition on your iPad or joined in a discussion on our message boards at myoldhouseonline.com. But do you get our Facebook updates? They're chock-full of links to the latest magazine articles and news items we find interesting or just plain cool. (Check it out at facebook.com/oldhousejournal.) If you're a Pinterest fanatic, we've got a page there, too (pinterest.com/oldhouseonline), bedecked with fabulous images of old houses that will

flood you with inspiring restoration and décor ideas. And starting this month, we've also got a Twitter presence (@Demetra_OHJ). The more time I spend surfing online these days, the more I'm impressed with how many compelling things there are to find—ideas, conversations, home stories, movements, and

even people. Lately, I've connected with a host of young preservationists tweeting about saving historic buildings in Buffalo, Detroit, and Washington, D.C.

It's a brave new world from OHJ's beginnings 40 years ago, when our three-hole-punched newsletter sent via snail mail was state-of-the-art. And it makes me realize how lucky we are to now have so many ways of communicating with one another while exploring our shared passion for old houses. So remember to check in and drop us a line, via any (or all) of the above. We're also recruiting an old-house advisory panel (sign up at oldhouseonline.com/advisory-panel). Participants will help shape OHJ's content, and have a chance to win a \$250 gift card.

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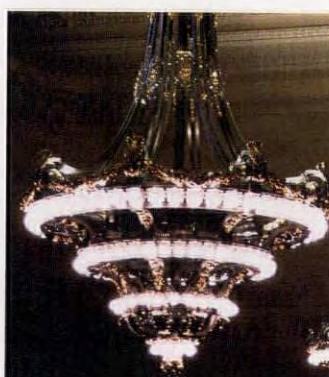
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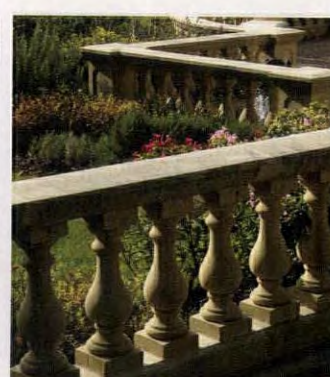
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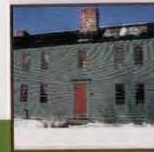
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letters

Cabinet Conundrum

In your February/March 2013 issue of *Old-House Journal*, the Old-House Living article pictured a "parson's cabinet" [below, left]. We have a 1919 Craftsman home with a similar built-in cabinet [right], but it is on the other side of the wall behind the fireplace, not next to it, as in this house. We've always been curious as to the correct name of our built-in. How did the "parson's cabinet" get its name, and what is its function? Thanks for helping to solve our mystery! It certainly is a conversation piece.

Ken and JoAnne Fisher
Muscatine, Iowa



We checked with the homeowner and author, Walter Broughton, who says: "I picked up the term from the Scrantons' daughter, who used it to refer to that cupboard on one of her visits. Apparently, the term was used in colonial New England to refer to a cabinet near the fireplace in which liquor could be put—presumably where the parson was unlikely to find it. When I bought the house, there were two small prohibition-era bottles of liquor still there." —Eds.

Lock Mysteries

Thanks for your very interesting article on repairing old door-knobs [Ask OH], December/January]. Is there a way to date a mortise lock? I have one that is almost identical to the one shown in your article, but there's very little in the way of identification. I have another mortise lock that says "Pat. Nov 5 1912" on the inside, so I think that one may have been made then.

Linda G.

Via OldHouseOnline.com

According hardware expert Bill Rigby, "dating mortise locks to a specific year is problematic since many locks were listed in catalogs for more than 40 years. Our usual best guess is to follow the date of the house's construction. The patent date on your other lock may have been for an improvement to the inside mechanism." —Eds.



Reader Tip of the Month

To get the look of old plaster on dry-wall walls, I like to use a textured finish like Sherwin-Williams Faux Impressions Dimensional Basecoat. You're supposed to roll it on with a sea sponge roller, then knock it down with a trowel, but I apply it with a wide spatula and play with it on the wall until it has marks I like. When it's dry, I sand lightly with a drywall sponge to get rid of any nibs or rough places. You can add more layers if you want more dimension, or use it thinly and smooth it for a subtle texture. It makes a beautiful surface to paint.

Jill Perkins

Via MyOldHouseOnline.com

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



Show & Tell

Relating to your story about stained glass in the most recent issue ["Stained Glass Savvy," February/March], I wanted to share a photo of a reproduction stained glass window I used to replace a stairway door [left]. It was love at first sight for me, and though the window had to wait almost three years in a crate in the cellar, it finally found a prominent home where it's the first thing visitors see when coming through the front door.

Pat Durbin

Port Townsend, Washington

After reading the story on building a linen press in your October/November 2012 issue ["Out of the Closet"], I thought your readers might enjoy seeing the linen press that sits in the spacious upstairs landing of our 1902 house in Rochester, New York [left].

The house has many Craftsman-style details, including lovely brackets on the front porch and side, and stained glass windows in living room and stair landing.

Sharon E. Orienter
Rochester, New York



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about the house

By CLARE M. ALEXANDER

CALENDAR

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APRIL 13
PORTLAND, OR
Kitchen Revival Tour
The Architectural Heritage Center's annual tour of beautifully restored Portland kitchens highlights eight different homes in a variety of house styles. (503) 231-7264; visitahc.org

APRIL 20-27
VARIOUS LOCATIONS, VA
Historic Garden Week
Now in its 80th year, this event opens access to approximately 200 historic gardens and buildings across the state, from stately plantations to rural schoolhouses. (804) 644-7776; vagardenweek.org

MAY 18
OAK PARK, IL
Wright Plus Housewalk
This year's annual peek into private Chicago-area homes designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and his contemporaries features four houses that have never been on the tour before, plus the lush landscape of the Cheney Mansion Oasis. (877) 848-3559; gowright.org

ON THE RADAR

Preservation's New Generation

Across the country, the workings of local historic preservation groups tend to tread the same familiar territory: lectures and seminars, house tours, the occasional campaign to save a threatened building. But in recent years, new organizations aimed at bringing preservation-minded Gen Y-ers together have been putting a different spin on the tried-and-true concept.

Although their priorities are the same as their more established predecessors—saving, preserving, and celebrating historic buildings—the way these groups go about achieving their goals is often decidedly different. In New York, for example, Buffalo's Young Preservationists spend each Valentine's Day delivering "heart bombs"—homemade valentines with messages like "Love me, don't leave me" and "Don't demo and grade! Fix and save!"—to beautiful old houses targeted for demolition.

"We don't have nonprofit status or a board to answer to, which lets us be more flexible," explains BYP member Bernice Radle. "We're able to be the rabble-rousers."

Even the monthly meetings of young preservationists' groups break with tradition: Happy hours are the norm, usually held at bars located in historic buildings. The group Inherit Baton Rouge (an under-35 offshoot of the Foundation for Historical Louisiana) even hosted a "Huey LongNeck Pub Crawl" that paid homage to the former governor

with historic-trivia-laced visits to several hotspots in one downtown historic district.

It's not all fun and games, though—young preservationists' groups are just as serious as their traditional counterparts about the mission of historic preservation. BYP holds protests and roundtable discussions, and regularly meets with building owners and developers to discuss properties in peril.

"We decided in the beginning that we weren't going to be soft," Radle says. "We really fight for what we believe in."



Each February, Buffalo's Young Preservationists emblazon abandoned houses with valentines to raise awareness.

OLD-HOUSE RESOURCE

A Smarter Thermostat

Getting your house to the perfect temperature before you walk in the door used to mean leaving your heat or air-conditioning running while you were gone—a big energy-waster. But these days, thermostats have merged with Wi-Fi to offer users remote access via computer or smartphone. Systems like Ecobee and Nest (right) also have interactive components that analyze usage and make automatic adjustments designed to save more energy (and money). Smart thermostats can be swapped in for traditional models fairly easily, although you'll probably want to call in an electrician to make sure everything is connected properly.



BOOKS IN BRIEF

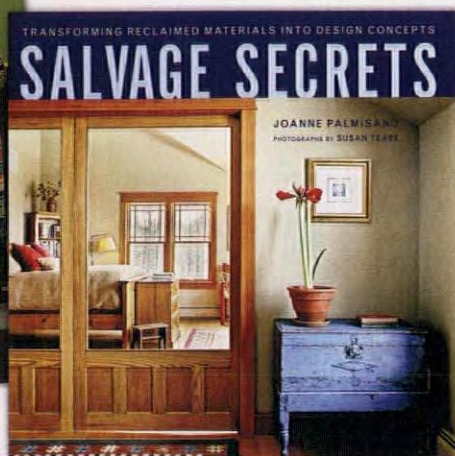
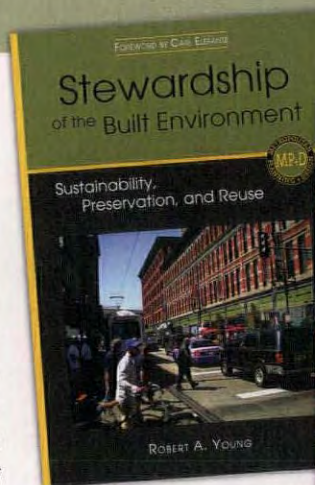
Restoring an old house in a “green” way is often less about incorporating the latest new technology and more about figuring out how to recycle or reuse old components. While most old-house enthusiasts are well-versed in vintage materials, a little fresh perspective can’t hurt every now and then—and two recent books provide it in spades.

In *Stewardship of the Built Environment: Sustainability, Preservation, and Reuse*, author Robert A. Young takes a philosophical look at the role of historic preservation in the ongoing push toward more sustainable buildings and communities. Supported by countless case studies of buildings that got it right,

Young’s in-depth analysis of the many factors that go into making a building sustainable (everything from location to energy usage) is a must-read for anyone interested in preservation’s role in the green movement.

On a more hands-on note, Joanne

Palmisano’s *Salvage Secrets* offers a multitude of ideas for decorating with architectural salvage, from the classic (clawfoot tubs and brick fireplaces) to the creative (a bank of lockers and repurposed diner stools in a funky kitchen). Organized by material, the book runs through the basics of what you’re likely to find, where you’ll find it, and how you can use it. Even if you’re a permanent fixture at your local salvage shop, this book is worth a look for the envy-inducing design ideas alone.



Palmisano’s *Salvage Secrets* offers a multitude of ideas for decorating with architectural salvage, from the classic (clawfoot tubs and brick fireplaces) to the creative (a bank of lockers and repurposed diner stools in a funky

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Q: Paint is peeling off my interior doors where they meet the jamb. Why is this happening, and how can I stop it?

A: **Duffy Hoffman:** Unfortunately, this is a sign of corners being cut during the paint job. A lot of people don't understand that proper prep is critical on previously painted surfaces. Without it, new paint won't adhere properly and will eventually begin to peel.

Doors are one of the biggest challenges. Because they take a lot of abuse, they're often the first place you'll notice bad paint prep. When doors in houses from the 1830s to the 1950s were first coated, they were most likely primed with a lead-based oil primer, followed by two coats of lead-based oil paint. These hefty original coatings need to be sanded off in order for any new coats to properly adhere.

To check whether your paint has good adhesion, do a crosshatch test on one of the doors. (If one door has adhesion problems, they usually all do.) You'll need a roll of masking tape and a sharp knife. Take the knife and make a tic-tac-toe design on the door, slicing down to the first coats of paint. Next, apply the tape over this mark. Leave it on for a day before yanking it off in a quick motion. If paint coatings come off with the tape, it means proper preparation was not done. Painting over poorly adhered coatings will not cure the problem; the result will be that the new paint will start chipping after



ABOVE: When doors aren't properly prepped before repainting, chips and dings are inevitable.

it's bumped or the door is closed hard. Until the paint coatings are completely removed, the challenge of chipping paint will continue.

To paint a door with well-adhered previous coatings, first check the door for fit. (A poor fit can add to the problem, rubbing on the jamb and causing friction.) Using proper dust protection, sand all surfaces of the door with 100-grit sandpaper, including the edges, top and bottom—you can leave the door hanging for this. Vacuum all dust off the door, and wipe it down with a

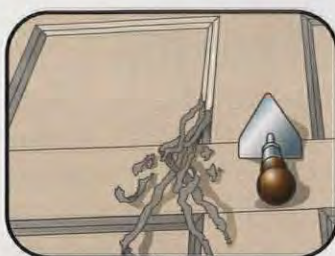
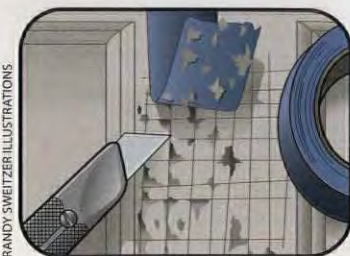
cloth dunked in warm water and a dab of dish soap to clean grease and get dust out of profiles, which is critical to good paint adhesion. Next, take a tack rag and lightly wipe the door down, unfolding the rag as you go so you're always using a clean part to dust off door surfaces.

Once the door is completely dry, it's time to prime it. Use a quality oil brush and the oil primer of your choice. Always mix penetrol (paint additive) into the primer for a smoother finish. If you want it to dry faster, add a little Japan drier (an accelerator) to your pot, and mix well. (If painting a color, tint the primer to match.) Apply a thin coat of primer to the door, and let it dry to manufacturer's specifications—don't rush it, as doing so invites paint failure.

Once the door is properly primed, you can use an oil or latex paint to finish it. Before applying the first finish coat, scuff the door down with 150-grit sandpaper, then clean it as you did above before applying a thin coat of finish paint.

When using oil paint, place 2" of paint from the can into a separate container, then add 2" of penetrol and mix thoroughly. (When finishing with latex, mix the paint with flowtrol.) This formula, if done correctly, will give you a great, clean sheen and an even finish. Always apply two coats, sanding and cleaning between them. After it dries, wipe the finish coat off with a wet rag only (no soap).

For doors where paint is not well-adhered after a crosshatch test, your only option is to take down the door, remove all of the previous coatings, and start over. You



FROM LEFT: If your doors fail the crosshatch test—i.e., scored paint pulls easily away with tape—you need to start from scratch. Scrape away the paint down to bare wood. Then, carefully wipe the door down before priming.

MORE QUESTIONS ANSWERED

may be able to dry scrape if paint removes readily when a scraper is pulled across the door. If not, use an infrared heater (a safe and fast way to remove paint). After removing all the paint, sand the door with a palm sander until it's smooth, then follow the same process as above to get a long-lasting, great-looking paint job. 🏠



Duffy Hoffman, a third-generation craftsman, specializes in home restoration and painting issues. Reach him at sash masterduffy.com.

Q:

Does anyone know an effective and easy way to remove old glued-down carpet? This ugly carpet is over the basement concrete floor. —Shelley

A: At my Ace Hardware, I saw a set of heavy-duty scraper blades that attach to a Sawzall made exactly for your kind of job. —John K.

A: Try Franmar's products (franmar.com). I used their mastic remover to salvage quite a bit of old ceramic tile, and it worked great. —Karen

A: Any paint stripper will loosen the adhesive

once you get the carpet up. I have used a few different kinds of that jelly stripper. Apply with a paintbrush in an area of about 2 square feet. Let it stand for 15 minutes, then scrape it off with a sharp 3" scraper. (The scraper will dull over concrete, so you'll need to grind the edge frequently.) Don't forget your knee pads. —Terry

Have questions about your old house? We'd love to answer them in future issues. Please send your questions to **Ask OHJ, 2520 55th Street, Suite 210, Boulder, CO 80301**, by email to OHJEditorial@homebuyerpubs.com, or on Facebook at facebook.com/oldhousejournal.

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preservation perspectives



ABOVE: Students prepare to film an interview.
RIGHT: Muncie's neighborhoods are defined by grand houses like the 1902 Smith House in the Old West End, built by a carriage woodwork tycoon.



History Lesson



An immersive learning project at Ball State University has students documenting historic buildings. Telecommunications instructor Chris Flook explains.
By DEMETRA APOSPOROS

DEMETRA APOSPOROS: You assigned university students to catalog historic buildings via photos and documentary filmmaking—what was the impetus for the project?

CHRIS FLOOK: While I'm a lifelong resident of this area, I didn't move downtown until about five years ago, which is when I discovered the staggering breadth of structures here. I figured plenty of students, arriving for just four years, would have no understanding of Muncie's historical significance, let alone the residents. The project was a way to educate them, bridge the "town and gown" divide, provide a window into the past, and a service to the residents.

DA: What was the assignment, exactly?

CF: The whole idea was for students to tell stories, but I initially envisioned it as a one-stop resource for all things architectural, including policy and zoning laws. The students said it needed to be far more accessible, and started talking to the historic

preservation office in Muncie to find houses with interesting stories. Then the project evolved into popularizing the importance of preservation, and how that fits into the cultural identity of the city.

The project evolved into popularizing the importance of preservation.

DA: What was the end result?

CF: We aim to take pictures of every building in every historic district. We've already taken photos of each outstanding building and most significant structures, and produced the documentary film, *Stories and Legends: Historic Preservation in Muncie, Indiana*, which won the Aurora Award for best show and was screened at the Heartland Film Festival. The overall project also won the Governor's Award for preservation of historic places.

DA: How many students were involved?

CF: There were close to 70. Some of the photographers, along the way, found they had a strong interest in architectural photography. And both of our directors now hope to produce stories that, like this, can help a community.

DA: You also joined forces with the Midwest Restoration Festival?

CF: Yes, that's a new endeavor by some residents in the Emily Kimbrough District. They select a house that needs significant improvement and get designers and craftspeople to donate their work in exchange for online publicity. We had a group of our marketing students help get the word out—2012 was the first year—and our students also took hundreds of photographs.

DA: And four more documentaries are yet to come?

CF: There are 12 historic districts in all, about half with a really diverse housing stock or an interesting story. The students traced the historic narrative or slant on preservation efforts of four districts in films, which will premiere in May.

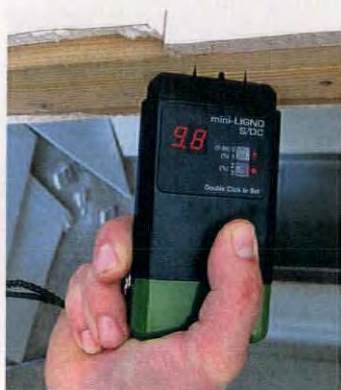
For more information, and to see the entire project, visit historicmuncie.org.

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By CLARE M. ALEXANDER



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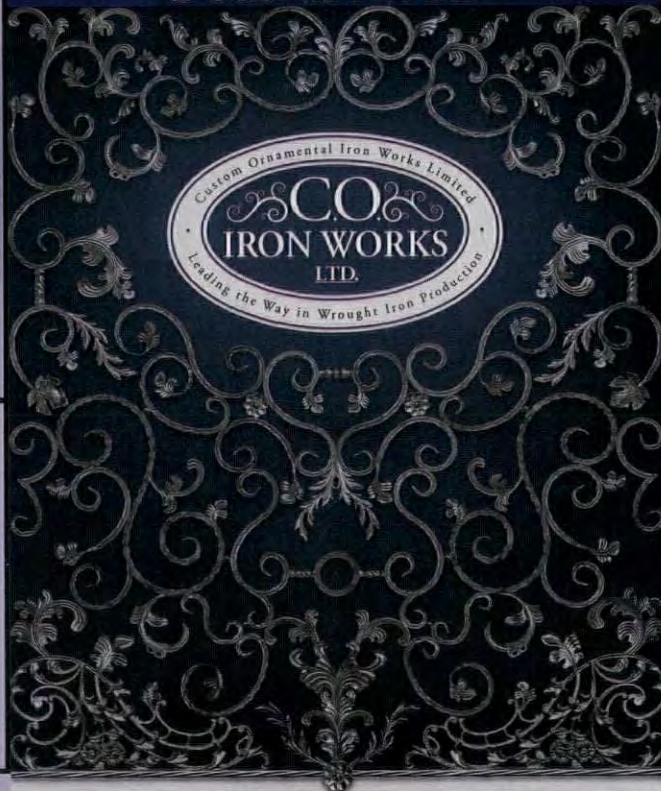
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old-house toolbox



Rasps excel at removing wood. INSET: From left, a hand-cut rasp, machine-made rasp, and two files.

Files and Rasps

These age-old hand tools are still relevant, but getting the most from them means using the right one for the job.

By RAY TSCHOEPE

If you could rummage through your grandfather's toolbox, you'd probably find, among the hammers, planes, and chisels, an assortment of files and rasps.

Files—bars of steel into which a series of angled, shallow grooves have been cut—are still fairly popular on the shelves of home centers and hardware stores. Although they're useful at shaping wood, where they really excel is at shaping metal.

Less familiar to most do-it-yourselfers are rasps. Rasps are like files in many ways, but are specifically designed to shape wood. Rather than rows of shallow cutting edges, their surfaces are covered with hundreds of tiny teeth. In good condition, they can remove wood quickly without excessive clogging.

How to Use Them

Hardened steel files are excellent at sharpening a wide variety of tools, such as

axes, paint scrapers, masonry chisels, and drawknives. They also can be used to widen holes drilled in metal or wood, as well as to de-burr holes and the cut edges of sheet metal.

Like files, rasps are available in a variety of shapes, and they're graded on a scale of one to 15—the higher the grade, the smoother the surface they create. Rasps are particularly useful when shaping irregular forms; you can use them to chamfer beams or columns, shape repaired brackets and corbels, bullnose stair tread edges, or even to shape furniture legs.

Using a rasp or file is a two-handed process. Your dominant hand grasps the handle, while the other hand guides the end, applying light pressure during the push stroke. With a few exceptions, the

cutting edges of rasps and files are designed to cut on the push stroke. When you draw back on the tool, remove your downward pressure, returning it on the push stroke. Keeping the pressure equal as you "saw" back and forth will almost always dull the edges of your rasp or file.

What to Look For

The usefulness of a rasp is largely determined by its manufacture. Many inexpensive rasps are machine-made. By contrast, the most expensive rasps employ a craftsman to punch each tooth by hand, which creates a certain irregularity. Hand-cut rasps produce smoother finishes precisely because one tooth does not follow the other exactly, which means they're less likely to leave ridges.

Rasps and files often appear on store shelves without handles, but if you use them alone, you risk driving the relatively sharp tang into your palm. Make sure to purchase a quality handle or repurpose one from a broken item in your toolbox.

As you use a file or rasp, the spaces between the teeth will fill with debris, making the tool less effective. To prevent this, clean the teeth frequently with a small, stiff-bristled brush. An old toothbrush will work, but you also can purchase brushes designed for this task, such as a "file card," which resembles a wire brush with a crew cut.

The Bottom Line

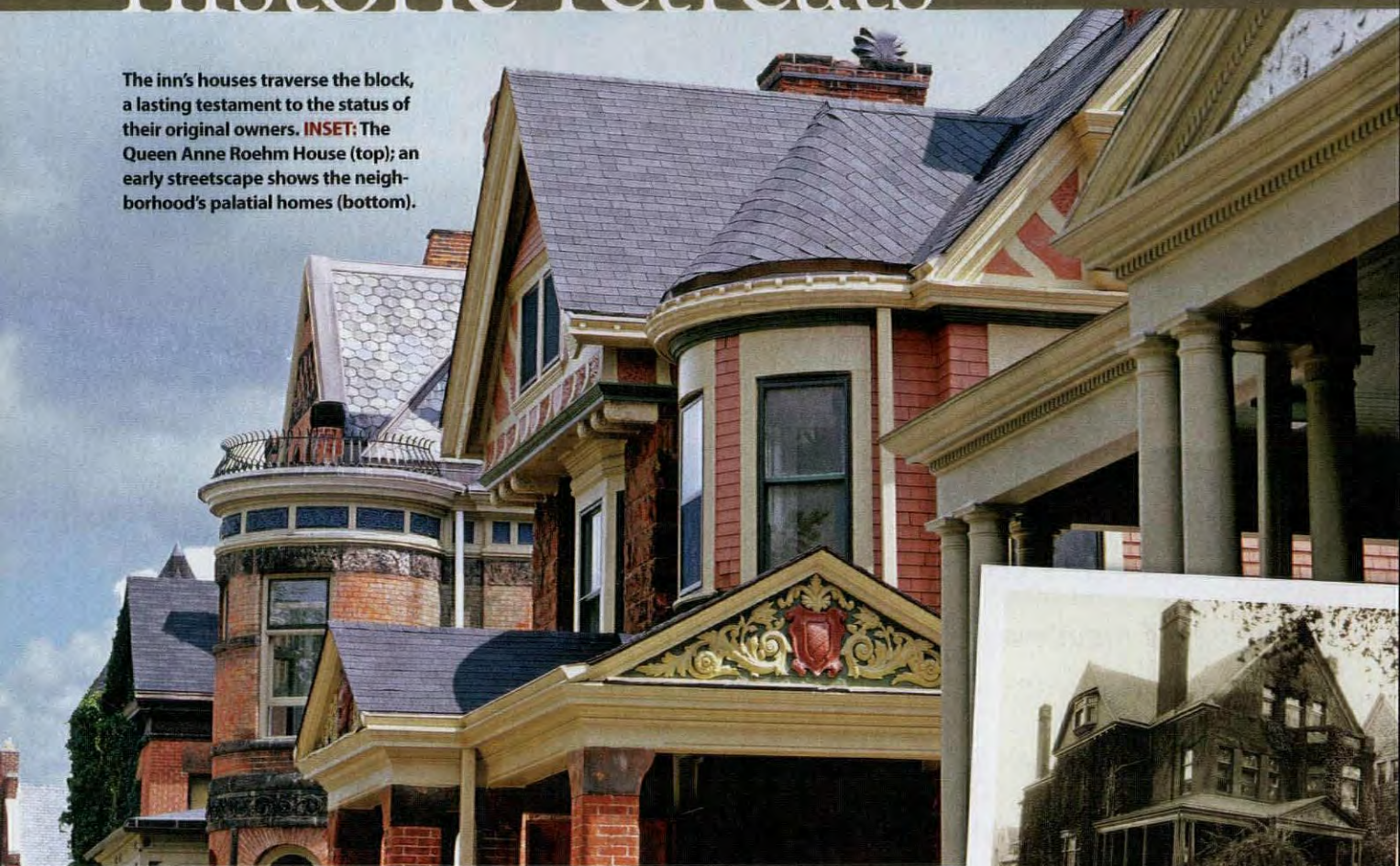
Files and rasps are the tools that fill the gap between the saw and the sandpaper. A small collection of both will add greatly to your craft capabilities. 🛠



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

historic retreats

The inn's houses traverse the block, a lasting testament to the status of their original owners. **INSET:** The Queen Anne Roehm House (top); an early streetscape shows the neighborhood's palatial homes (bottom).



The Inn on Ferry Street

This collection of stunning Victorian-era homes and carriage houses offers a window into what Detroit was like before the automobile.

By JEFF SAMORAY

To stay at the Inn on Ferry Street is to experience old Detroit. Not the Detroit of the Model T, but the city of the 1880s, when railroad and lumber barons reigned supreme.

The experience doesn't center on just one upper-class household, however, because the inn is a group of four beautifully restored Victorian-era homes and two carriage houses set on one block of East Ferry. In a city defined largely by a century of steel and chrome, the Inn on Ferry Street maintains the refined atmosphere Detroit's

elite enjoyed in the days before the rubber hit the road.

The street traces its origins to the 1850s, when it was part of a large farm owned by the D.M. Ferry Seed Company. One of the first to package and sell seeds by mail to farmers and home gardeners, the company began developing the land into a residential district for wealthy Detroiters by the mid-1880s.

The majority of these homes built on former farmland between 1885 and 1920 represent a variety of Queen Anne, Richardsonian Romanesque, and Colonial Revival designs. Though this midtown

Detroit neighborhood eventually entered a period of decline, many of its homes still stand. East Ferry was designated a state historic district in 1976, and the street was listed in the National Register four years later.

Historic Stewardship

John Scott, a prominent Detroit architect; George Owen, owner of a dry goods business; Herman Roehm, a hardware magnate; and William Pungs, a railroad executive and early automotive pioneer, were the original owners of the homes and carriage houses comprising the inn. They built their houses between 1886 and 1892. None of the original owners lived here very long, though; by the late 1920s, they had either died or moved to other neighborhoods.

As Detroit grew alongside the burgeoning automobile industry, more residents relocated further from the city center. In the 1930s, the inn's homes became dormitories for the Merrill-Palmer Institute for Motherhood Training, an organization affiliated with Wayne State University. By the 1970s, Merrill-Palmer had sold the homes to the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA), located just two blocks away. The DIA had no immediate plans for the homes, but held on to them for future development, with various nonprofit agencies leasing the homes for offices in the interim. In the mid-1990s, the DIA partnered with the University Cultural Center Association (now Midtown Detroit, Inc.) to explore redevelopment options.

"We recognized the homes as an important, intact block of historic property," says Sue Mosey, president of Midtown Detroit. "We considered renovating them as single-family homes, retail space, or guest rooms for people visiting midtown attractions. In the end, it made sense to define the properties collectively as a boutique hotel."

Thanks to the foresight of city officials, community leaders, and local foundations, Mosey and her team obtained more than two dozen funding sources to complete an 18-month, \$8.5 million restoration on the homes. The 40-room hotel opened in September 2001.

"One of the reasons we created the inn was to preserve the fantastic architecture," Mosey says. "We also sit in the center of a cultural and educational community." The DIA, Wayne State University, the main branch of the Detroit Public Library, and the College for Creative Studies are all located within two short blocks. "Because we're much closer to those institutions than the downtown hotels, we meet a need in the marketplace," she says. "It may seem unconventional to operate a hotel across several restored homes in an urban setting, but we contribute to our creative neighborhood. We also cater to people who are looking to more fully explore unique and intriguing places on foot."



ABOVE: The grand staircase in the Roehm House. **INSET:** Pictured on the same staircase, a daughter of the Cliff family, who were the home's second owners. **BELOW:** The parlor in the Pungs House.

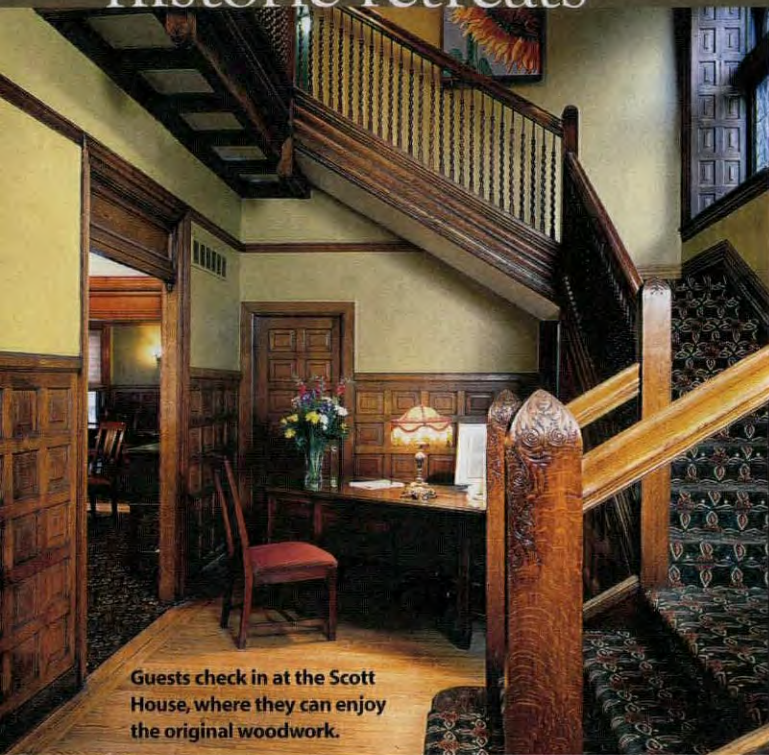


A Restoration Puzzle

With restored windows, wraparound porches, and decorative trim, the inn's homes appear much as they did originally. Inside, visitors enjoy different layouts in each one—no common areas or guest rooms are the same.

The Scott House, where guests check in, is a Queen Anne with a spacious living/dining area where guests receive a complimentary breakfast. Its woodwork features a carved-sun decorative motif, which is also the inn's logo. The Roehm House, another Queen Anne, is built of red brick and sandstone and features a two-story bay window and a second-floor suite. By contrast, the Pungs House, built of St. Lawrence marble, is a Richardsonian Romanesque vision. The Owen House blends both architectural styles, featuring a massive

historic retreats



Guests check in at the Scott House, where they can enjoy the original woodwork.

three-story staircase with elaborately turned balusters and newel posts. Guests often use the extra-large front parlor (featuring two gas fireplaces and a baby grand piano) for weddings.

Another reminder of the pre-automobile era is the two carriage houses. The John R. Carriage House was converted to a single-family home in 1926. In addition to a downstairs parlor, it boasts seven guest rooms. Though smaller than those in the main houses, the rooms are bright, with plentiful windows. The Smith Carriage House originally belonged to the Pungs House, evident by its matching architecture. It features custom-built swinging wooden carriage doors that replicate the long-lost originals. A private suite on the second floor incorporates two guest rooms and a sitting room, while the first level serves as reception and conference space. Guests often entertain in the outdoor terrace and garden.

Adapting these structures for hotel use was challenging, in part because they'd spent decades as dormitories and offices. Mosey worked closely with local architect Lis Knibbe and a consulting firm to develop a plan that would balance preservation and renovation. That meant respecting original features while removing walls that subdivided rooms; inserting modern bathrooms; updating wiring, ductwork, and mechanical systems; and installing safety systems.

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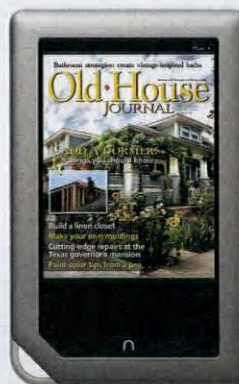
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"The project was like a big puzzle," Mosey says. "We had to figure out how to get the most out of each building's floor plan while preserving as much of the original character and layout as possible."

Thankfully, nearly all of the original architectural details from each home were intact, including ornately carved oak wainscoting, fireplace mantels, and staircases. Workers restored unpainted woodwork in the Scott and Owen homes and the carriage houses with a thorough cleaning. (The budget didn't

allow for stripping painted surfaces in the Roehm and Pungs homes.) Specialists restored other items like cast-iron fireplace inserts, original light fixtures, and flooring, including a parquet floor in the Pungs House.

"We had a ton of historical photos to guide our restorations," Mosey says. "The large leaded-glass window on the stairway of

the Scott House was broken and lay scattered in hundreds of pieces. We hired a specialist who spent a whole year restoring it."

Mosey and her team haven't finished their restoration project just yet. Midtown Detroit also has acquired 110 East Ferry, the last unrestored home on the block. It will soon provide four extended-stay apartments for longer-term guests. 🏠

The comfortable guest rooms, like this one at the Pungs House, boast modern amenities.



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outside the old house



Lovely Lilacs

Once a garden classic, this flowering shrub has lately been shunned for its short blooming season. But a new breed of lilacs keeps the show going much longer.

By JESSIE KEITH

JESSIE KEITH PHOTO

Lilacs' romantic looks and honeyed fragrance evoke Victorian gardens and sumptuous bouquets. In full spring glory, the soft, paniced blooms of lavender, purple, white, or pink bedeck the bushy shrubs, inspiring ooohs and ahhs. If only the show lasted longer: After just two weeks, the flowers fade, transforming most lilacs into plain shrubs with little landscape appeal. For this reason, they've become unpopular with design-savvy gardeners and are grown only by diehard fans (or those who inherit them with their old houses). But this doesn't have to be the case. A few lilacs break the mold by offering long-lasting good looks without shirking on flower quality.

Lilac Lore

The long history of lilacs is comparable only to that of roses, lilies, and tulips. The most familiar common lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*) is a large, multi-stemmed shrub from the mountains of southeastern Europe. Its voluptuous, fragrant blossoms were first brought to the courts of Vienna in the 1500s, and their popularity rapidly spread throughout northern Europe. In the 1600s, they were imported to the New World by colonists seeking a piece of home. By the Revolutionary War, lilacs were common across eastern North America and eventually moved westward with pioneers.

The flowers were ubiquitous in 19th-century paintings, songs, and poems. Claude Monet's *Resting Under the Lilacs* (1873) depicts a time when they were an Old World garden standard—a popularity echoed in New World works. "The Lilac" (1888), a classic American song by Gustave H. Kline, tells of love shared through lilac blossoms, and Walt Whitman's stirring poem "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" (1900) speaks of lilacs as an eternal symbol of spring. Americans commonly planted lilacs near their entry doors, where the delicate spring flowers could be most appreciated.

It's hard to say when lilacs fell out of favor, but most point to a gradual shift in gardeners' needs. Landscape design and "curb appeal" took precedence over the fleeting beauty of seasonal flowers, and lilac breeders didn't help the cause by continuing to focus on bigger, better blooms rather than long-term good looks and higher pest and disease resistance. In his latest *Encyclopedia of Trees and Shrubs*, author Michael Dirr writes of common lilacs, "It is unfortunate that such a treasured shrub with such wonderfully fragrant flowers should [still] have so many flaws."

That said, there are some lilacs that break the mold. Several new varieties and revered species alter the status quo by providing continuous beauty to the garden.

Lilacs that Last



Bloomerang Purple

The compact Bloomerang Purple® is the poster child for new lilac breeding with its pleasingly low, bushy habit (3' x 5'), and ever-blooming branches that produce large, fragrant purple flower clusters all season, as long as summer's heat doesn't get too high (above 85 degrees during the day and 75 at night—it's the warm nighttime temperatures that usually inhibit growth). Bloomerang even resists powdery mildew, the number-one foliage disease of lilacs. Plant it along a sunny foundation or in a large container.



Miss Kim

One of the most popular landscape lilacs is the Manchurian 'Miss Kim' (*Syringa pubescens* ssp. *patula* 'Miss Kim'), and it's easy to see why. The round, dense shrub reaches 7' and has pretty, pale lavender-pink flower clusters that are mid-purple in bud. Its disease-resistant oval leaves are medium green, turning attractive shades of burgundy-red in fall—unlike most other lilacs, which lack fall color. It's an ideal shrub for large foundation plantings.



Old Glory

If you're looking for a rounded, statuesque lilac with old-fashioned looks and strong disease resistance, then try *Syringa* 'Old Glory.' Bred at the U.S. National Arboretum, it bears many fragrant, bluish-purple flowers in early spring. Though slow-growing, it will eventually reach a height of 11', so it's best planted as a showpiece on an open lawn.



Littleleaf Lilac

Tough, adaptable, and beautiful, littleleaf lilac (*Syringa pubescens* ssp. *microphylla*) is a rounded, spreading Chinese native with consistent good looks. In late spring, it bears highly fragrant lavender-rose flowers that shine above small, clean gray-green leaves. These may bloom again in late summer or fall, if growing conditions are not too stressful—too hot or too dry—and plants are planted in a good location with fertile soil and enough sun. Seek out the old-fashioned variety 'Superba,' which has rich pink flowers, and plant it in a large, open shrub border where it can reach peak potential.



Early Lilac

As its name suggests, the early lilac (*Syringa oblata* var. *dilatata*) begins its blooming season sooner than other varieties. Starting as early as March, the early lilac bears loose panicles of slender, lilac-purple flowers with light fragrance. The uniformly rounded variety 'Cheyenne' (6' to 8') grows well in the Deep South and bears loads of delicate lilac-blue flowers that are pink in bud. It also boasts glowing burgundy-bronze fall color. Plant as a specimen or add to a spacious, opulent shrub border.

Lilac Maintenance

Lilacs need a few basics for good health. A site with full sun and ample airflow will encourage the best habit and flowering while discouraging foliar diseases like powdery mildew. It's also essential to plant lilacs in average to fertile soil that's slightly alkaline to neutral and has good drainage. Bone meal is a good, all-natural fertilizer for lilacs and should be spread around the canopy shadow at the rate of ¼ cup for every ¼" of trunk diameter. These remarkably hardy shrubs grow best in cold climates, often tolerating USDA hardiness zones 3 and 4, but may become stressed in areas with hot summer days and nights (daytime temperatures over 85 degrees Fahrenheit and nighttime temperatures over 75), so Southern growers should choose heat-resistant lilacs like 'Cheyenne.'

Pruning should be done sparingly, if at all. Most lilacs bloom on old wood, so prune just after flowering. Dead or lilac-borer-infested stems can be removed at any time. Borer damage is easily identified by round or half-moon-shaped exit holes that appear at stem bases. Old, ungainly lilacs can be rejuvenated by cutting back the oldest stems by one third while retaining the strongest new shoots.



ENERGY-SAVING STARS

Being efficient about energy upgrades can save you lots of green. BY GORDON BOCK

The call for conserving energy is everywhere these days, from stanching global warming and weaning the U.S. off of foreign fuels to just making household heating and cooling affordable.

While the siren song of energy tax credits for big-ticket building projects is tempting, if you're trying to save dollars, why not spend time, money, and effort where it will get you a payback in a timely manner? One way to do this in an old house is to concentrate on energy upgrades that are themselves efficient. Start with the simplest, lowest-investment efforts that can give

you the biggest (and quickest) bang for your buck. It's a strategy that's not only easy on the pocketbook, but also has the least impact on the historic fabric of an old house.

Perform an Energy Audit

If you consider improving energy efficiency as problem-solving—and you should—the classic first step is to define and limit the problem. In an old house, this means identifying locations where the building is losing heat (or in the case of cooling, gaining heat).

ABOVE: DIY fixes like weatherstripping around windows can add up to significant savings.

ANDY GLENICK PHOTO

Want more energy-saving tips? Log on and sign up for our newsletter.

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Love the Efficiency You Already Have

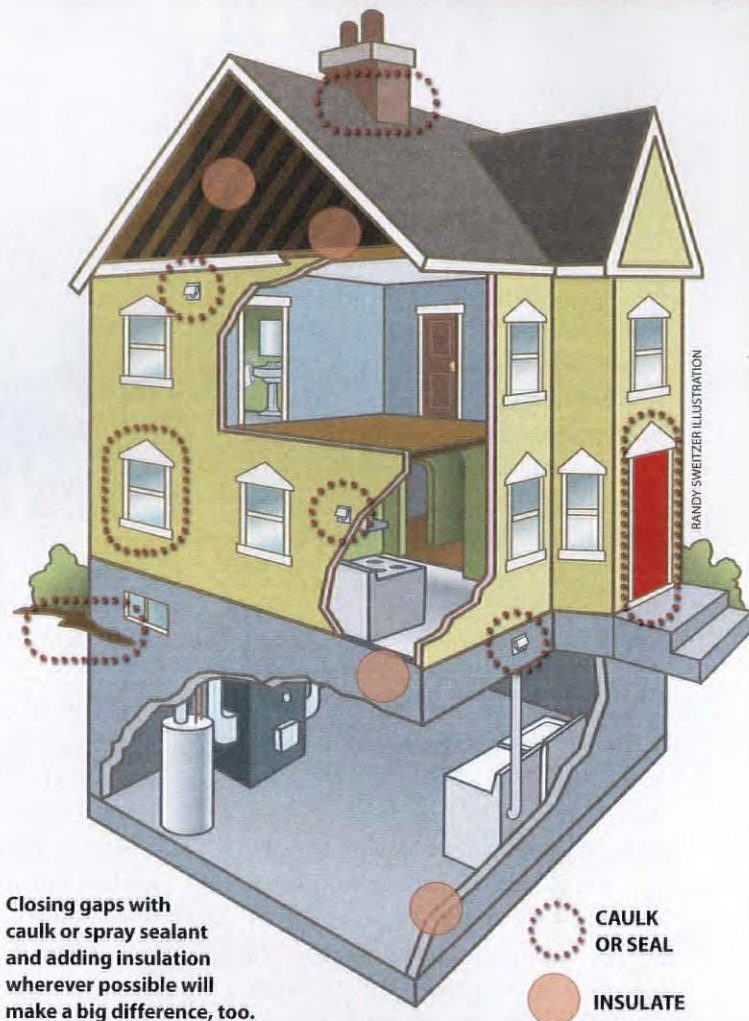
Recognize and take advantage of the conservation features that may already be present in your old house. Most buildings erected before the era of cheap energy were built with materials and techniques worked out in their locale for good environmental reasons, such as solid masonry or adobe that are thermal barriers, or deep eaves that limit solar gain in summer. After the 1850s, many houses began incorporating design features that we would now call, in green building parlance, examples of passive cooling and heating, such as awnings and shade trees, or upper windows or transoms that promote interior air circulation. Getting these features functioning again—or just using them properly—can be a big energy assist, and historically in step with the building to boot.

Rather than guess, the best way to do this is to seek professional help in the form of an energy audit. Utility companies sometimes offer rudimentary versions of this service at no charge, but hiring an independent auditor will produce an analysis that's not only bias-free, but also more in-depth, with the potential to pay for itself in energy savings.

An energy audit begins by documenting the energy usage of the building (fuel and power bills, age and type of mechanical systems and big appliances, number of occupants, and energy usage patterns), then moves on to an actual examination of the building, typically with two tests. In a blower door test, the auditor attaches a fan to a door; while the fan draws air out of the house, the auditor looks for air leaks by using a puffer tool that leaves a smokelike trail where there's air movement.



DARIO SABLJAK PHOTO/FOTOLIA.COM



RANDY SWEITZER ILLUSTRATION

Closing gaps with caulk or spray sealant and adding insulation wherever possible will make a big difference, too.

In an infrared thermography test, the auditor surveys the building with an infrared camera that produces thermal images—their cartoon colors reveal relative conditions, such as yellowish “hot” windows indicating leaking heat, or blue-and-red walls that might indicate uneven insulation. There's no cheap substitute for a professional energy audit, but you can get a handle on some of the same leakage issues by looking for drafts with a lighted incense stick (jogging smoke signals a draft); also, any place where you can insert a dollar bill between window or building parts is a potential air path.

Make the Most of Mechanicals

One of the most cost-effective—and least invasive—energy upgrades you can undertake is simply staying on top of normal maintenance and updates to your existing mechanical systems. For example, in forced-air heating and cooling systems, replace clogged air filters and slipping fan belts so machinery operates at maximum efficiency. Check all exposed ducts for poor seals and connections—which can account for a 20-percent air loss—and fix them with duct sealant. In steam and hot-water systems, bleed radiators, replace faulty air vents, and have boilers checked and cleaned at recommended intervals.

You barely need tools or training to perform many such tasks.

LEFT: Thermal images—like those on this handheld infrared camera—can help pinpoint leaking heat (which appears as yellow and red).

For example, if foundation plantings are encroaching around your heat pump or air-conditioning condenser, they are likely blocking its ability to exchange heat and should be pruned clear by at least 3'.

Many of the new kinds of energy-thrifty equipment promoted for average houses can be helpful in an old house, too. The list is long, but runs from inexpensive programmable thermostats and low-consumption CFL and LED light bulbs to more expensive mini-split heating and cooling systems, high-efficiency water heaters and boilers, and even geothermal heating systems.

Deal With Drafts

Anyone who lives in an old house already knows that historic buildings tend to be leaky, but when it comes to plugging holes in the weather envelope (roof, walls, windows), little things add up to a lot—as much as 50 percent of the heat loss in a building. Fortunately, leaks are simple and efficient to control if you start with the biggest offenders first. Examine the house and seal up any openings with caulk or spray sealant. Gaps along the tops of foundations are almost a sure bet, as are wall penetrations from long-gone plumbing pipes or electrical installations that were sealed poorly or not at all. In basements, crawlspaces, and attics, focus on large cracks and anywhere sunlight is visible; dirty areas on insulation are telltale signs of air movement. Also seal around chimneys and masonry, and examine where different materials meet. Pay particular attention to plumbing, dryer, and kitchen vents; electrical outlets; and recessed lights and registers in second-floor ceilings. Fireplaces also are major air passages that, when not in use, should be blocked with a closed damper and even a solid screen across the hearth.

Windows get a lot of scrutiny in the hand-wringing over energy efficiency, and while a single-pane window alone is not the thermal barrier that a new double-pane window can be, studies show that old sash with well-fitting storms is quite comparable (see “Investing in Storms,” right). Studies also indicate that much of the heating (or



ROMAN MILERT PHOTO/FOTOLIA.COM

LEFT: Adding insulation is crucial, particularly in areas that are easily accessible, such as basements and attics.

cooling) loss in windows—historic and recent replacements alike—isn't through the glass, but through air infiltration, which is manageable. Start by making sure the window is in good working order, with sashes snug in their channels and closing at top and bottom. Next, make sure that sash locks pull the meeting rails snugly together (their main purpose over and above security). Then get out the caulk gun and seal up any exterior cracks between the trim and the siding. (For more tips on tuning up sash windows, see page 54.)

If you want to get in deeper (especially if you're otherwise removing the sashes for overhaul), you can retrofit the window with weatherstripping. There are many designs on the market, but a lot of professional restorers favor neoprene bulb types that slide into a kerf (saw blade cut) made with

a router or on a table saw. Most agree that the places for bulb weatherstrips are along the top of the top sash, the bottom of the bottom sash, the meeting rail on one sash, and on the stop moldings where they meet the inner sash.

Some folks find that the sash channels themselves are a source of air movement, and also install channel liners to improve the seal where the inner and outer sash slide. For those who feel that their weight pockets would be better filled with insulation (especially where the weights are long gone), it's possible to retrofit traditional sash with spring balances.

While you're weatherstripping your windows, do the same for their larger cousins: exterior doors. If the doors are already fitted with spring metal or bulb weatherstrips, check their condition, make repairs, and adjust any moveable stops for a proper seal. Pay particular attention to the bottom of the door, which can be fitted with a sweep-type weatherstrip to seal tightly against the threshold.

Insulate Strategically

There's no question that improving the thermal efficiency of the entire building envelope

Investing in Storms

If there has ever been an old-house energy mantra, it's storm windows, storm windows, storm windows. Ageless as this technology is, it still stands up to science and economics because the air space created by adding a storm—whether on the interior or exterior of the prime window—slows the transfer of heat. A storm can just about double the R-value of a window, bringing it close to the performance of a double-glazed window; plus, it keeps the historic window in the building and out of a landfill. In addition, storm windows can be made with low-E or laminated glass that will enhance energy conservation without tampering with the prime window.



ANDY GLENICK PHOTO

Small Changes Add Up

Today, there are many low-impact ways to add to your energy-savings bottom line. Clockwise from left: Window Quilt's insulated window treatments keep drafts at bay. Mitsubishi's M-Series split HVAC system can efficiently heat or cool a room without ductwork. A faceted vanity globe is a new halogen offering from GE. Adding an insulator to the attic access, like this one from Attic Covers, keeps drafts out of the house. Inexpensive programmable thermostats, such as Emerson's White-Rogers series, let you preset temperatures for maximum savings.



lope has the potential to mitigate heat and cooling losses, but adding insulation to walls can be a significant project. However, using the same best-bang-for-your-buck yardstick, you can make significant improvements without going off the deep end mechanically or financially by insulating two of the most important parts of the building: the attic and the basement or crawlspaces.

Once you consider that most heat is lost vertically through the roof, and that attics are typically the most accessible parts of the building's bones, adding attic insulation becomes a no-brainer. If the attic is unfinished (a "cold attic"), you have an ideal opportunity to add loose fill or batt insulation between the rafters, which is not only relatively easy, but also efficient, because you're limiting the thermal envelope to just around the living space. If there is already insulation between the joists—say, a few inches of loose fill from decades ago—you can add more unfaced batt insulation right on top of this to increase the R-value. Experts say that once you exceed the height

of the joists, you can keep going to a depth of 10" to 14" by laying the blankets perpendicular to the joist bays. This insulates over the joists and mitigates them as thermal conductors. (Make sure you leave air passages where the joists meet the eaves.)

The alternative to insulating the attic floor is to insulate the underside of the roof—an approach that increases the thermal envelope's volume, but one that's desirable if the attic will be used more as a living space or if it contains mechanical equipment (air conditioning and ducts) that will run more efficiently when cool. In this scenario, moisture is more of a concern. Batt insulation with paper or foil facing should be installed with the facing toward the living space—that is, toward the installer. Maintaining ventilation paths is also critical at the bottom and top of the rafter bays. Don't forget to insulate and seal the access to the attic, whether it's a conventional door or a simple hatch.

Basements and crawlspaces are often the second most cost-effective line of insula-

tion attack. If the basement is unfinished and doesn't contain equipment, consider adding insulation between floor joists to create a thermal barrier to the living areas above. Be sure to install the insulation with the facing toward the living space (in this case, away from the installer). Also, it pays to limit moisture collection in these spaces by laying a moisture barrier (typically heavy plastic sheets) on exposed dirt floors or by pouring a concrete floor.

Once you've worked your way through these upgrades, you can step back and consider the list of larger and more time-consuming improvements, such as adding vestibules to exterior doors, or maybe even a solar collector somewhere. By that time, you'll already be enjoying the improved energy savings and comfort of your more efficient old house. 🏠

Gordon Bock, co-author of *The Vintage House* (vintagehousebook.com), is a historic building lecturer and instructor, and former editor of OHJ.

OLD-HOUSE LIVING

The living and dining rooms were the most intact areas of the row house, requiring relatively minor updates. Replacing the brick front steps with hefty cast iron ones (opposite, bottom) was one of the more involved projects, requiring buy-in from the couple's next-door neighbors, too.



Time Capsule

Two determined DIYers piece together their home's history while creating a memorable restoration story of their own.

STORY BY AMY KOLCZAK ♦ PHOTOS BY NATHAN WINTER & MELISSA NEWMAN

When they first started restoring their circa-1886 Queen Anne-influenced row house in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia, Wendy and Alex Santantonio hoped for a window into its past—a lost letter or personal effect of some kind—but they've uncovered precious few remnants.

"The only thing we found with a date is an obituary from 1936 inside a wall," says Alex. It wasn't until they started digging in the backyard that they hit pay dirt. Excavating a hole for a small pond, the couple discovered shards of blue-and-white transferware, pottery, oyster shells, and marbles. "We collected a bag

of treasures," says Wendy.

Future generations in the 15'-wide working-class row house won't be as frustrated in their research efforts. "We've been leaving time capsules of our own," says Wendy. A hundred years from now, they imagine someone unearthing a picture of the couple on their wedding day (sealed in the living room ceiling above the pendant fixture) or the family pets posing in front of a Christmas tree (in the office).

Within the walls, they've tucked away a dozen notes about their lives and the house, a news story about a rare earthquake in Virginia, pictures of their restoration efforts, and items "we removed but didn't want the house to





Get a link to the couple's tutorial on building this staircase wainscot.

OLDHOUSEonline

CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: A creative paint scheme brought life to the narrow entrance hall. Wendy and Alex solved a stair-rail dilemma by building their own wainscot with an integrated handrail. The couple added hinges to the transom over the front door to make it operable.

lose," says Alex, "such as a possibly original light switch." They've even signed and dated the back of molding they reinstalled.

To help fill in the blanks on the home's history, Wendy headed to the archives at a local library, where she charted previous residents with city directories and perused newspapers, noting a violin theft from a music teacher at their address.

Diving In

Back in 2002, when the newlyweds first toured the house, they weren't daunted by what seemed to be a few years of benign bachelor neglect. "We thought we'd strip some stuff and it would be in good shape in about a year," says Alex. "We didn't realize the level of effort necessary—or the level we would want to put into it."

Though only in their early 20s at the time, Wendy and Alex weren't exactly novices. As high-school sweethearts in Cleveland, they were already refinishing estate-sale finds. "Most kids were out sneaking beer," says Wendy. "We were stripping paint." Alex went on to develop plumbing, electrical, and carpentry skills, spending one summer working for a contractor who renovates historic homes and another in a shop removing glazing from 800 windows that had been in the 1930s Tudor Arms Hotel. "The entire summer was about saving original wavy glass," says Alex.

That foundation would help the couple manage an unexpected overhaul early on in the kitchen, part of a 1900 rear addition, after extensive termite damage was revealed. While a contractor put in a structural beam and concrete footers, Wendy and Alex took a shot at the rest,

insulating the space and installing new exterior wood siding and electrical and drywall throughout. "It thrust us into working on things we weren't comfortable with," says Alex, "and forced us to figure it out." Now consummate DIYers, they've undertaken most of the work in the house.

A software developer, Alex brought his own high-tech handiwork to the space with built-in audio and smart-home systems—"totally unnecessary toys," he admits. Wendy views the infrastructure as one of their simple Victorian's surprises. "We have the look of an old house but modern functionality," she says. A marketing director by day, Wendy jots down ideas in a sketchbook of their projects. "He makes it happen," she says.

The formal living and dining rooms, where the couple first began their restoration, were both "very much intact,"

Wendy says, judging from the mirror-image row house next door. In the living room today, Alex spots the flaws in their rookie methods—cracked caulking in the molding and a few bumps in the plaster. “Now we know how to get a perfectly smooth finish.” They added period touches, too—egg-and-dart medallions and a gas-burning reproduction coal basket in the shallow fireplace.

In the dining room, the couple uplifted a sagging ceiling using plaster buttons and removed a bulky air intake box that partially blocked a window, reconfiguring it for a cast iron floor register—one of their more challenging endeavors. Along the way, they refinished the original heart pine floors and restored areas where poor patches indicated the movement of doors and walls, reflecting the home’s varied past as apartments and a rooming house. “The floors gave us a lot of clues,” says Wendy.

In the vestibule, they found others. Evidence of hinges on both sides of the doorframe served as a blueprint for reinstalling French doors on the exterior entrance. Alex fashioned them over several months from salvaged sidelights and—with a nod to his restoration roots—outfitted them with wavy glass from Cleveland, given to the couple by Wendy’s parents after a rental property renovation. While stripping the vestibule wainscoting—which inspired the paneled style they had created in other rooms—the couple was amazed to find it was crafted out of old doors, tipped off by a knob hole. “We had searched for a router bit to mimic its profile, never realizing we were simply after a door,” says Alex.

The oversized guest bath, another ’80s remuddle, was taken back to its original configuration, too. Wendy and Alex removed a double shower that could have easily held six, and divided the space to create an office, where they exposed a brick wall that once marked the back of the house. The couple did



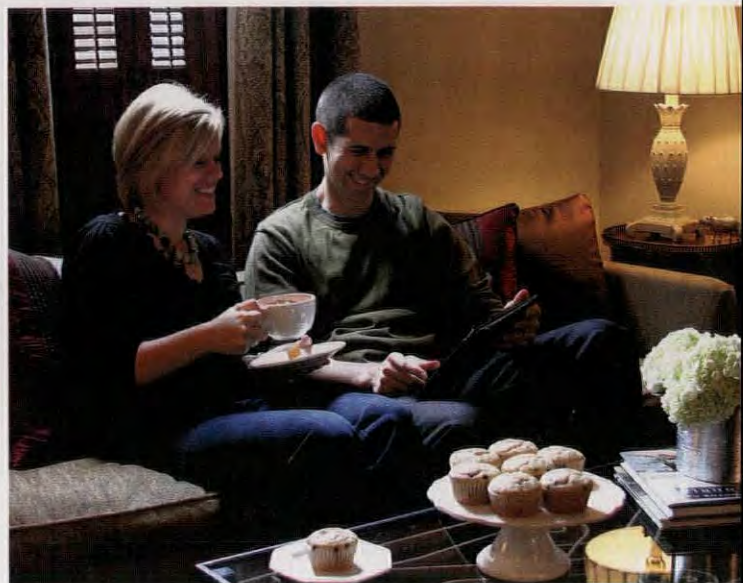
Until they can completely remodel the kitchen, Wendy and Alex made do with new butcher-block countertops and subway tile for the backsplash.

all the work, calling on professionals only to cut tempered glass for a new frameless shower. Wendy is especially proud of the result, particularly the custom built-in medicine cabinets and wainscoting.

Next Steps

The home’s biggest design challenge was a long, narrow entrance hall lead-

ing to the staircase, both spaces devoid of detail. A harlequin paint pattern added flair on the walls, while a leaded glass transom installed in the towering doorframe removed some of its awkward height. The window has begun to sag, so its face hinges have since been added to the do-over list. Wendy sees the bright side. “It looks like it’s been there forever,” she says.



LEFT: Wendy and Alex (above, in the living room) replaced an inappropriate garden gate with one that Alex custom-built and fitted with a salvaged cast iron register cover Wendy scored on eBay.

Along the stairs, wainscoting with an integrated hand-rail—a concept the couple spotted in a nearby restaurant—turned out to be both a practical and

she had imagined. She struggled with springing for a purely aesthetic upgrade when major work remained inside the house. Ultimately, it was a now-or-never moment—since a future neighbor might not be up for the investment, they decided to go for it.

The next step involved facing the city's board of architectural review. Alex wrote to adjacent residents and created an extensive proposal with detailed drawings. At the hearing, approval took less than a minute. It was an open-and-shut case of restoration. "We were more intimidated by the process than we needed to be," says Alex.

Back inside the house, the to-do list includes overhauling the master bath and swapping the family room and kitchen for easier access to the dining room. "The advantage of moving slowly is that we can live in the space and figure out how we want to use it," says Wendy. The couple chips away at smaller projects, too, like matching the original hinges found on each floor and adding lifts to their static transoms. "It may not be the most historically significant home," says Alex. "But we still see ourselves as stewards of a piece of Americana." 🏠

Along the stairs, wainscoting with an integrated hand-rail—a concept the couple spotted in a nearby restaurant—turned out to be both a practical and elegant solution for continuing the line of visual interest. Alex opted for raised panels to match those he created in the guest bath, using poplar for the rails and stiles and MDF for the panels to account for the region's humidity.

The home's other set of stairs called out for a transformation, too—the couple hoped to replace clunky exterior brick steps with a cast iron set to boost the simple façade's curb appeal. They researched patterns typical to Old Town, but online searches and salvage yards turned up little. Finally, while watching an episode of *This Old House*, they learned of a local craftsman who could do the job.

Since the stairs were shared with the adjacent house, the neighbors had to be on board. Luckily, they were. "I was the one who needed to be convinced," says Wendy. The total cost would run roughly \$15,000, twice the amount




ABOVE: Formerly part of the guest bathroom, the office features a massive built-in desk made by the couple.



ABOVE: In the master bedroom, Wendy and Alex used salvaged doors to create a custom closet along one wall. **BELOW, LEFT:** The new guest bathroom, where the couple laid period-friendly tile and created custom wainscoting, replaced a 1980s remuddle. **BELOW, RIGHT:** The guest bedroom features an inviting window seat overlooking the backyard and a headboard that the couple fashioned from another salvaged door.



A man wearing sunglasses, a black t-shirt, and red work gloves is sanding a long wooden plank with a random orbit sander. He is standing outdoors in front of a wooden fence. The sander is a dark, circular tool with a handle. The plank is light-colored wood, and the fence is made of vertical wooden slats.

Powerful with a gentle touch, the right angle random orbit sander is the go-to for opening grain on a woodworking project or hogging off stock or finishes.

true GRIT

How to choose and use the right sander for your old-house upgrades.

By MARK CLEMENT

I have a love-hate relationship with sanding. It's tedious, dusty, and shows progress in agonizingly slow increments. (Who's inspired now?) However, the tool geek in me loves sanding. It puts you in touch with the work in a way only repetition can. Sanding knocks down saw marks; evens up pieces; removes paint, blemishes, and wood filler; it flushes and feathers drywall and plaster repairs, and opens wood grain to allow a finish to penetrate. It makes whatever you built "look like it grew there," to quote a woodworker friend of mine.

It's hard to love sanding, though, if you're using the wrong tool for the job. Just because a tool is for sale doesn't mean it works. Here are my 5 go-to tools for sanding everything from new wood to old plaster.

1 6" Right Angle Random Orbit Sander

If you have lots of sanding staring you down—anything from stair treads to dented doors, paint prep to glued-up panels—you'll lose a lot of speed if you don't own a 6" right angle random orbit sander. If there's one tool I reach for more than any other to sand wood or remove finishes, it's this one.

It's by no means inexpensive (expect to spend several hundred dollars), but a good right angle sander is worth it. While the 5" random orbit sander you'll find crowding the shelves of your local home center works for a lot of tasks, it just doesn't have the juice to work as accurately and quickly as a larger right angle unit.

More power and versatility—some units feature a wood removal setting and a finer sanding setting—make this

tool useful for everything from wood floor repairs to woodworking to sanding hard-to-reach places. Indeed, some have enough power to run a 36-grit floor sanding disc, which could save you from renting floor-specific sanding equipment when refinishing wood floors.

On the gentler side, with a fine-grit disc, the 6" right angle random orbit sander is adept at prep work, from opening the grain of new lumber to sanding a newly stripped door or the flat parts of unfinished furniture.

Lead Lines

If you're working on a house that was built before the 1970s, chances are you'll encounter lead paint. The dangers are real, especially for children, which is why the Environmental Protection Agency requires contractors working on lead paint to be EPA certified.

While DIYers don't need certification, the key for working safely is information. Use a lead testing kit to see if lead is actually present. For example, lead may only be present in trim, but not in the walls and ceilings. In older houses, like mine for example, it's everywhere.

There are restrictions on how you can deal with lead safely: You can't take off paint with an open flame; go with a low-temperature heater or stripping agent instead. Vacuums must have HEPA filters and be rated for working with lead; you can't use air cleaners or standard shop-style vacs. Work sites must be wet-mopped for final cleanup. For dealing with major-league dust, there are units similar to air cleaners, but they depressurize rooms into a HEPA-filtered unit.

Bottom line: Know what lead you have and make a safe plan for dealing with it. For more guidelines, visit epa.gov/lead.



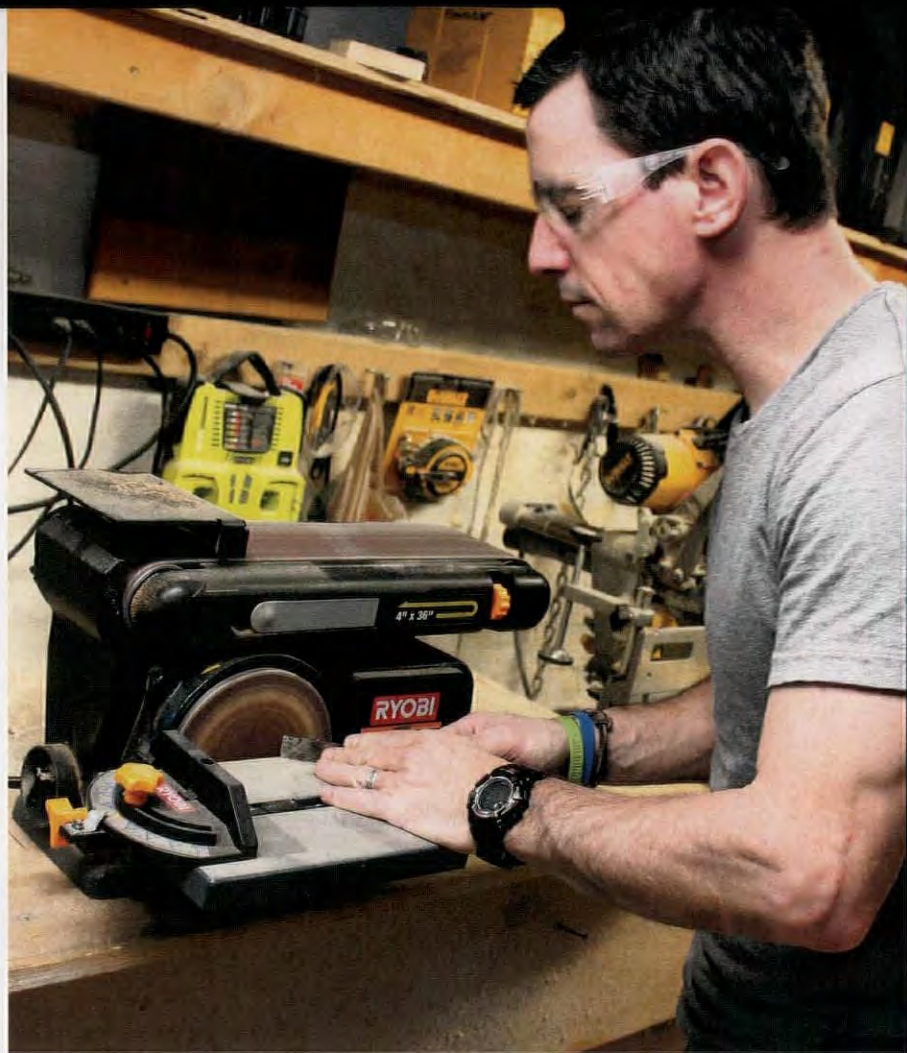
2 Stationary Sander

For small parts—anything from custom shelf brackets to painted-over hinges to small blocks or even art projects (I made a candleholder for my wife out of a knot that fell out of an old Douglas fir joist)—the stationary sander stays still, and you bring the item to it rather than vice versa. You can even sand some curves.

However, my favorite use for the stationary sander is to sharpen stuff. Whether it's a chisel or a lawn mower blade, it's easier to get and hold the angle required on a stationary sander than on any sharpening stone or bench grinder I've used. It's usually outfitted with a belt and disc, both of which enable you to see and stabilize the object as you sharpen it.

There are two things to remember when using a stationary sander, which packs quite a bit of power (the 4" x 24" belt rotates at 3,450 rpm). First, make sure you have a firm grip on whatever you're sanding. Second, pay attention to which direction the belt is turning; this will

allow you to ease the piece onto the tool and provide the proper resistance. If you're sharpening a metal item, the disc does like to let sparks fly, so always wear safety glasses and stand so the sparks are shooting away from you.



3 Sanding Attachments

I'd love to claim that I only sand precious, old-growth wood to bring it back to life, but the reality is that a lot of sanding I do is for walls and ceilings—drywall for a kitchen or bath, repairing pocked plaster under a leaky window, feathering out plasterboard dimples, removing remuddled arched door heads.

The key to sanding these types of surfaces effectively (especially in an occupied home) is to be mobile and fast while minimizing cleanup. The best tool I've used for this is an inexpensive but well-designed sanding head that attaches to

my shop vacuum. Muscle-powered to be sure, this unit has a joint just like a traditional pole sander, and is fast and effective, capturing dust at the source.

For powered sanding (and a lot more money), there are systems that combine a higher-end vacuum (or dust extractor) with a powered sanding head on an extension wand. Power is usually good, but these sanders aren't right for every project—with areas that require a bit more finesse, like where you've applied joint compound, it's easy to go too far, too fast.



4 Oscillating Multi-Tool

Tool manufacturers have tried to crack the code for sanding hard-to-reach areas with varying degrees of effectiveness—until oscillating tools hit the market en masse. With low-profile triangular heads, peel-and-stick paper, and super-high vibration speeds, they go where other tools don't: the nooks and crannies of metal porch railings, around stair balusters, even on wood patio furniture. They're even ideal for sanding down nail-hole filler on trim projects. Plus, with several interchangeable attachments available, they have many more uses than sanding—they're also handy for light-duty cutting, scraping, etc.



Clearing the Air

Home improvement in general, and sanding specifically, generates lots of dust. The finer it is, the further it can get away from you, floating throughout the entire house. While many sanding tools have attachments for vacuums to capture dust at the source, using one isn't always effective or practical (read: more trouble than it's worth after you've gotten tangled in the hose a zillion times).

The first place to keep dust out of is your lungs. Dust masks can handle a little dust, but for major sanding, a respirator is an affordable and more effective option.

The second best line of defense is to contain the dust in the room. There is hardly a better tool for this than an air cleaner. Essentially a box with fans and filters, a good one can cycle air through a room several times an hour. Dusty air goes in; clean air comes out. It doesn't get everything, but it gets a lot.

Taping sheet plastic over doors will sort of hold the dust at bay, but not for really big dust explosions. Systems that seal the opening while allowing egress are the best bet and worth the time it takes to set them up. We make our own version—sort of a homemade screen door with plastic sheeting over it.

One simple, highly effective tactic is to shut off and/or tape up any HVAC vents in and around the work area. The biggest dust distributor in a house can be the heat or A/C blower. And when you're done with the project, change the filter.



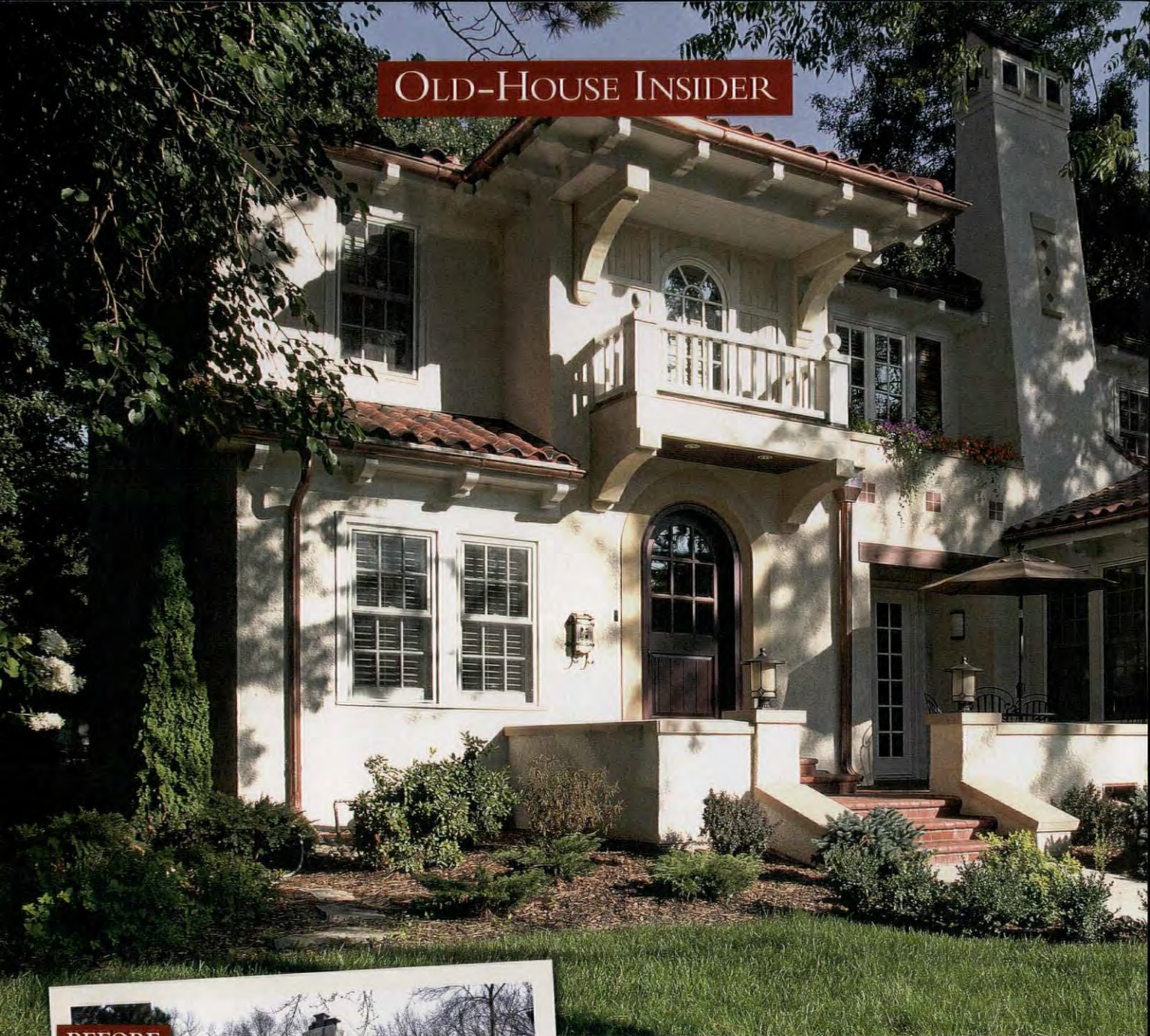
5 Angle Grinder

Typically a tool for metal, concrete, and masonry, a 4½" angle grinder is uber-effective at heavy-duty sanding operations. Outfitted with wood sanding wheels, grinders are ideal for quickly removing lots of material. For example, if you damage a subfloor removing the awesome pink tiles the previous homeowner installed, you can effectively sand it smooth again and repair it with cementitious floor leveler so it will accept new flooring. An angle grinder is also the first line of defense in some paint

removal projects—say, a metal porch railing—where you can use a wire wheel or flapper to knock the paint off. (For tips on removing old paint safely, see "Lead Lines," page 37.)

Suit up and boot up if using a grinder. At 10,000 rpm, they eject boatloads of dust (see "Clearing the Air," right) and are a lot of tool to handle. 🏠

Mark Clement is an old-house carpenter and host of the *MyFixitUpLife* podcast.



BEFORE



ABOVE: An incongruous solarium marred the front of the 1920s Mediterranean Revival house; TEA2 Architects built a more appropriate version on its footprint while also adding more interest to the façade.

Saving Face

Reworking an unsightly sunroom addition returned character and class to a lakeside Mediterranean Revival house in Minneapolis.

BY CLARE M. ALEXANDER



TEA2 ARCHITECTS PHOTOS

By the time Todd Noteboom and his then-wife toured the Mediterranean Revival house that would eventually become their home, it had already scared off countless other prospective buyers. "Our real-estate agent told us that many folks who had considered buying pulled up front and wouldn't even do a walk through," he remembers.



ABOVE: A clean-lined limestone mantel replaced the old plaster-and-brick version. To the right of the fireplace, a new set of doors allows the family easy access to a dining table on the terrace when the weather is warm.

BEFORE



It's not hard to see why: While the façade still boasted its original cream-colored stucco and red clay tile roof, it had been marred by the 1980s-era addition of a sunroom that would have looked more at home on a fast-food restaurant than it did on the 1926 house. But Todd was so charmed by its location—across the street from a busy channel on Minneapolis' Lake of the Isles—that he was willing to overlook the house's conspicuous cosmetic flaw.

Sunny Side Up

Despite its incongruous appearance, Todd had to admit that the sunroom had its perks. "When our kids were really young, we filled it with toys—they loved it," Todd says. Plus, the heated addition looked out on the lake, allowing the fam-

ily to commune with the outdoors even during Minnesota's frigid winters.

Still, when they embarked upon a restoration six years after moving into the house, Todd imagined jettisoning the sunroom in favor of an expansive terrace—until architects Tom Ellison and Andrea Peschel Swan of TEA2 Architects, whom he hired to oversee the project, suggested reworking the space into something more appropriate for the house's age. "We're in Minnesota, where you can only use a terrace three months of the year," Tom points out.

The final design combined the best of both ideas: A new sunroom with a bank of nine-over-nine double-hung wood windows rests on the footprint of the old one, while the existing terrace, which sits between the sunroom and main entry,



LEFT: The new sunroom's double-hung nine-over-nine windows allow for better ventilation than the previous fixed Plexiglas, which often caused the room to overheat. **BOTTOM:** A new built-in cabinet brought the study in line with the home's vintage architecture.



was enlarged and made more accessible with the addition of glazed doors in the living room. "The sunroom is my favorite place to go sit in the morning with a cup of coffee and the paper," says Todd. "In the summer, we live out on the terrace."

The architects also made some other small but significant tweaks to the home's façade, extending the roof and balcony over the front entrance, beefing up the front door and entry porch, and converting an unusable balcony off the guest bathroom into a flower box. "The house was so flat," says Andrea. "The only depth you got was from that solarium—we took it a little further and added some dimension."

PRODUCTS: Exterior: Bi-fold doors and metal-clad double-hung windows in Stone White, Marvin; Mahogany wood entry door, Select Millwork; Builder, Nilles Builders, Inc. Living room: "Hepplewhite Ivory" paint, Benjamin Moore; Limestone mantel, TEA2 Architects. Bathroom: "Gray Wisp" paint, Benjamin Moore; 3x6 subway tile with 1x8 border in Ice White, American Olean; Sink and shower fixtures, Waterworks; Lugarno sconces, Restoration Hardware; Undermount sink, Kohler.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

American Olean: americanolean.com

Benjamin Moore: benjaminmoore.com

Kohler: kohler.com

Marvin: marvin.com

Nilles Builders, Inc.: nillesbuilders.com

Restoration Hardware:
restorationhardware.com

Select Millwork: selectmillwork.com

TEA2 Architects: tea2architects.com

Waterworks: waterworks.com

Inside Out

Several rooms inside the house, which had likewise been updated in the '70s or '80s, got a facelift as well. In the living room, the architects replaced an overbearing brick-and-plaster mantel with a graceful limestone one that's more in line with the style of the house, adding additional support in the basement to shore up its weight. In the study, which sits on the opposite side of the entryway, they added a new built-in cabinet. The guest bedroom and bathroom situated over the living room also were reconfigured with a more efficient floor plan and period-appropriate materials.

Finally, the architects turned their attention to the front yard, where they put in a retaining wall at the street level to give it a gentler slope, making it a more usable space for the kids. Combined with the new sunroom, living room, and study, the overall effect is a friendlier, more approachable house. "When you bring living spaces to the front of the house, you create a more active and open participation with the community," observes Tom.

Todd has definitely noticed the change: "Neighbors that we hadn't met before would walk up the steps and compliment us on the house," he recalls, "and thank us for what we've done for the neighborhood." 🏡



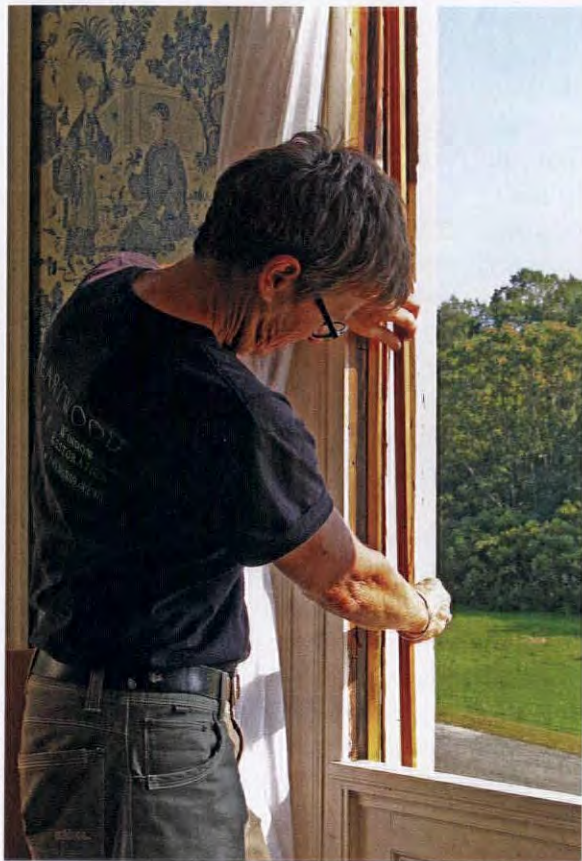
ABOVE: Located directly above the living room, the guest bathroom was also remodeled; TEA2 enlarged the space and added period-friendly touches like subway tile, a limestone countertop, and an inset medicine cabinet.

First, Do No Harm

An energy-saving retrofit at a National Historic Landmark demonstrates how old-house owners can increase efficiency with minimal disruption.

By KATIE HUTCHISON





THIS PAGE: Windows that were in poor shape (below) were fully restored by Jade Mortimer (far left) and fitted with new storms (left). **OPPOSITE:** Built in the late 18th century, the Lyman Estate's main house was remodeled over the years by successive generations.



When performing an energy retrofit on a historic house, sometimes what you choose *not* to do can be as significant as what you choose *to* do. That was certainly the case at the Lyman Estate, a circa-1793 home in Waltham, Massachusetts, owned by Historic New England.

Because the Lyman Estate is a National Historic Landmark, Historic New England was careful to adopt minimally invasive energy upgrades in order to protect the house's historic fabric. "We want to do everything we can that's consistent with our preservation philosophy, and that means no non-reversible interventions," explains Historic Preservation Services Manager Sally Zimmerman. "The older or the rarer or the more significant the property, the gentler the intervention should be."

The Lyman Estate is definitely a significant property. Designed by woodcarver and architect Samuel McIntire for

shipping merchant Theodore Lyman, the Federal style mansion, also known as The Vale, is part of a grand estate that grew to include greenhouses, a carriage house, and a gardener's cottage on 37 acres. The mansion has undergone two significant transformations: the first in 1882-83 when a third generation of Lymans owned the estate and refashioned it in the Victorian style, and later in 1917 when a fourth generation of Lymans reimaged it in the Colonial Revival style. In 1951, a fifth generation of Lymans deeded the property to Historic New England, which has preserved it to the period of the last significant renovations in the early 20th century.

Gentle Intervention

As with any project intended to demonstrate measurable improvements, having a baseline was critical. At the Lyman Estate, that baseline took the form of a comprehensive energy audit. In addition to using electricity and oil usage to determine an annual energy consumption of 619 million Btus, Historic New England performed blower door tests to measure air infiltration rates and implemented thermal imaging to pinpoint heat movement through the building. Not surprisingly, the windows proved a primary source of heat loss. The meeting rails and the bottom of the lower

sashes were particularly vulnerable. The building joints at baseboards and crown moldings were also prone to infiltration.

"Everyone should have an energy audit," recommends Zimmerman. "You don't want to solve a problem you don't have." You also don't want to create a problem, either. At the Lyman Estate, that meant avoiding adding insulation to the walls. "It's a more extensive solution than the problem may warrant, and its performance over time is still unknown," Zimmerman warns.

Instead, Historic New England tuned up the Lyman Estate by restoring and weatherstripping existing windows, improving air sealing, adding storm windows, insulating the attic, replacing conventional incandescent bulbs with CFL or LED versions, and upgrading to a multi-zoned, high-efficiency, natural-gas-fueled HVAC system.

Tight Seal

At the Lyman Estate, air sealing included everything from installing removable, slow-expanding sealers to repairing plaster surfaces and installing storm windows. "There were air-sealing issues at the building joinery—the plates, the sills, and the wall studs—that we will not deal with," explains Preservation Manager Colleen Chapin. "We'd have to take off trim and clapboards." Gaps that were accessible and less than an inch wide, like those around plumbing, HVAC, and wiring penetrations on the third floor, were prime candidates for an application of slow-expanding sealer. Gaps larger than an inch were plugged with rock wool. Repairing the basement's plaster ceilings and exterior plaster walls, where significant holes had appeared over the years, also helped prevent cool air from entering heated spaces.

Rather than replace the 120 windows that date to the circa-1917 Colonial Revival renovation, Historic New England elected to have them restored by Heartwood Window Restoration. The restoration targeted compromised glazing and paint,

rotting rails and stiles, damaged sash cords, and malfunctioning hardware. "We used a steam method to remove all the glass and all the glazing putty," explains Jade Mortimer, Heartwood's owner. "Then with heat guns, we removed all of the paint, down to bare wood. Once it was bare wood, we repaired anything necessary."

Mortimer steers clear of epoxies, which don't expand and contract the same way putty does, preferring to first treat the windows with a 50/50 mix of boiled linseed oil and turpentine. "It conditions and consolidates the old wood," she explains. "If there are deep checks from drying out, we'll put on glazing putty to smooth it out." Areas with more significant rot call for Dutchman repairs (see page 48 for more). The final steps are to prime the windows with an oil primer, install the glass with linseed oil putty, and then apply two coats of paint inside and out.

To create a tighter seal, Historic New England fixed the double-hung windows' upper sash atop removable side jacks, while leaving the sash weights, cords, and pulleys

in place in unobstructed weight pockets. Fixing the upper sash allowed it to be tightly sealed with caulk, while the bottom sash remains fully operational. (The upper sash could be returned to full operation at a later date by removing the jacks and caulking.) Heartwood also replaced parting beads and installed new weatherstripping. "Once you restore these windows, they begin to appreciate monetarily," Mortimer says.

Supporting Players

To reduce air infiltration through the restored windows, the Lyman Estate was outfitted with three different types of storms. Because the house is a National Historic Landmark, exterior storms weren't permitted on 75 percent of the building, so Historic New England installed removable interior storm units from Innerglass where there hadn't been storm windows in the past. Most are Low-E glass; those that are excessively large or unusually shaped are made of UV-rated Plexiglas.

The aluminum storm windows already in place weren't in good shape—many were

RIGHT: Blower door tests helped Historic New England analyze the house's energy loss.



KATIE HUTCHISON PHOTO



missing glass or weren't closing properly. For highly visible locations, craftsman Jim Ialeggio fashioned wooden exterior storm units with removable bottom screen inserts. Less visible locations received Allied's low-profile aluminum exterior storms with removable screens.

Using the East Parlor as a test sample, Historic New England's blower door test determined that prior to the window restoration and addition of storms, there was the equivalent of a 155-square-inch hole in the parlor's wall. With window conservation and weatherization, the figurative hole was reduced to 143 square inches, or by roughly 10 percent. The addition of the interior storms brought it down to 111 square inches—about a 30 percent reduction from the original.

Similar tests on windows with exterior storms revealed an additional 10-percent reduction in air infiltration, for a total 20-percent reduction in those areas. The interior storms appear to perform better because they "effectively keep the weight pocket component outside," Chapin says.

On the unused third story, Historic New England insulated the floor (removing some floorboards to access joist cavities), as well as the attic floor above the adjacent wings, which are roughly on the same level. Green Stamp Insulation blew in dense-pack cellulose to achieve the equivalent of R38 insulation. Though third-floor windows

were restored, storm units were not installed there, so Historic New England plans to initially rely on passive ventilation at that level. "We will definitely be monitoring our humidity levels to determine if passive ventilation is sufficient," Chapin says.

Existing oil-fired hybrid boiler/air handler configurations, which Historic New England estimated to be less than 85 percent efficient, were replaced with four new natural-gas-fueled, high-efficiency modulating furnaces. Four new A/C units with heat pumps and variable speed control also were installed. "Taken together, these units are projected to be approximately 97 percent efficient," Chapin notes, "with the built-in ability to determine which energy source is most economical—electric or gas—depending on the ambient weather conditions."

Ducts were resized as needed to improve distribution, and new ducts were installed. The ductwork was largely confined to the third floor and basement, both of which were easily accessible. Exposed

To help mitigate energy leaks, workers installed dense-pack cellulose in joist bays on the third floor (top left), insulated ductwork (above), and sealed penetrations around plumbing and wiring (left).

ducts were sealed and insulated with Knauf Insulation Friendly Feel Duct Wrap.

Instead of the four original heating and cooling zones, there are now 19 zones serving 25 rooms. The increase in zones allows local temperature management and targeted programming, as well as remote temperature management.

Since Historic New England began monitoring the Lyman Estate's energy consumption upon completion of the project in May, stats indicate a 40-percent reduction compared to the same period in 2009, and a 49-percent reduction compared to 2010. "There's a whole behavioral thing, too," Chapin adds, "which for a homeowner could be a little easier than for us." Bottom line: No matter how extensive an old-house energy retrofit is, it takes a change in behavior to really make it successful. 🏠

See more suggestions for easy ways you can save energy in your home.

OLDHOUSEonline 

Make a Dutchman

BY STEVE JORDAN ♦ PHOTOS BY ANDY OLENICK

A Dutchman is a small wood patch that's used as a repair where fillers won't reliably hold up—for example, on areas subject to abrasion, tension, or stress. They're also used when aesthetics demand an “in kind” material, like filling a gouge or missing piece on unpainted trim or furniture. Dutchman patches provide long-lasting solutions, and are easy to make if you have some basic woodworking tools and know-how. I installed one on the bottom edge of this sash.



▲ 1. Start by assembling your tools: a straight edge, combination square, router and straight bit, ruler, wood chisel, block plane, epoxy, random orbit sander, and enough wood to create the patch. Ideally, the wood should be the same type as the original, and match its grain as closely as possible. Begin by laying out the area to be removed and marking the boundaries with a sharp pencil or utility knife.

▼ 2. If the existing surface is painted, strip the area around the repair, including all places where the router plate slides, so the router can move smoothly across the surface. Using a square and a straight edge, mark the area to be removed. Next, attach a straight edge (and stop blocks if needed) to guide the router. Wearing eye and ear protection (a leather apron is also a good idea for router work), slowly move the router along the guides, taking care not to remove too much material at a time. (Removal also can be done with a wood chisel or an oscillating saw and chisel.) When finished, carefully square the corners with a sharp wood chisel.

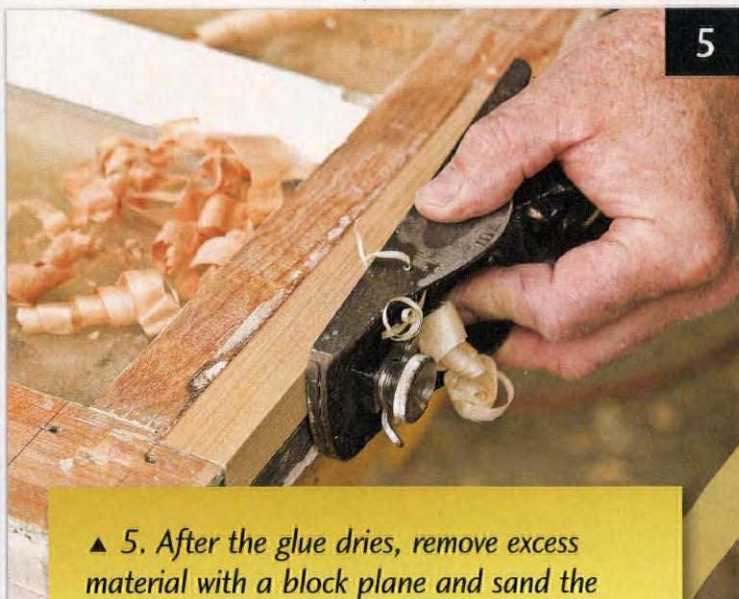




▲ 3. Next, cut the patch from the new wood. Depending on the repair, you can do this one of two ways: Cut out the damaged material, then cut a piece to fill the void; or make the replacement piece first by tracing its perimeter over the damaged area, and then removing material to install the patch. Either way, a snug fit is essential except at the top, which should stand about $\frac{1}{16}$ " proud for planing and sanding. Since this repair was open on one end (along the bottom edge of the sash), I chose the first method.



▲ 4. Now it's time to insert the patch. Your choice of glue depends on how the patch is exposed to the weather. For interior patches, ordinary wood glue will suffice. For an exterior patch, use waterproof glue (epoxy, polyurethane, weatherproof carpenter's glue). I prefer epoxy because, when needed, I also can mix it into a paste that will fill voids. For this project, I used five-minute, two-part epoxy to complete the work quickly. After test-fitting your patch, apply the glue to all surfaces, and install it in the void. To maximize the bond, clamp the patch (done here in two directions). ▼



▲ 5. After the glue dries, remove excess material with a block plane and sand the patch smooth using a random orbit sander and 100-grit paper. Fill any cracks between the old and new surface with a filler, allow it to dry, and sand smooth. The repair is now ready for priming and painting.





Desert Rose

A MIX OF OLD AND NEW ARCHITECTURAL TRADITIONS CREATES A REMARKABLE LANDSCAPE IN SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO.

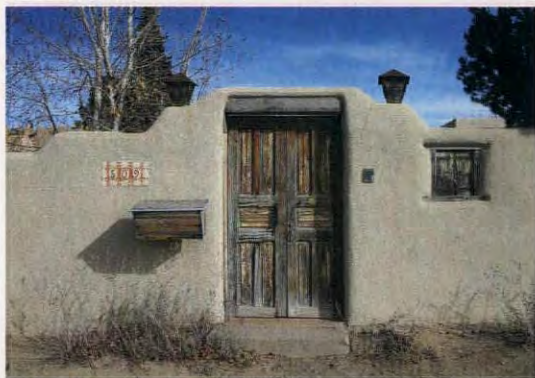
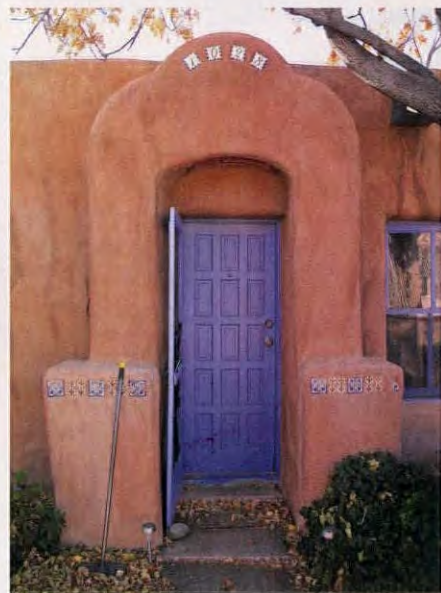
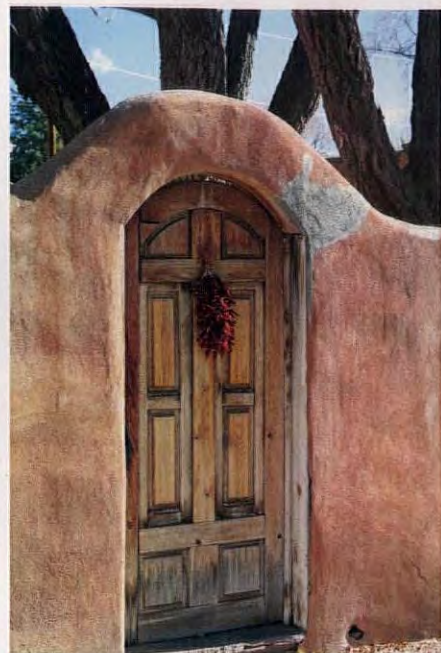
STORY AND PHOTOS BY JAMES C. MASSEY AND SHIRLEY MAXWELL

In Santa Fe, New Mexico, where Native American, Spanish, and Anglo cultures meet and blend as seamlessly as the earth-toned features of its ancient high-desert landscape, the old is always fashionable.

A hundred years or so ago, some of Santa Fe's savviest business and political leaders decided to embrace their small and struggling territorial capital's past by promoting an official architecture for the town. They called it "Old-New Santa Fe Style." Picturesque adobe buildings—new or old—combined with stunning scenery, wonderful weather, and a uniquely New Mexican slant on life made Santa Fe irresistible to artists, writers, and their wealthy patrons—not to mention Eastern tourists

heading west on the new transcontinental Santa Fe Railroad. The juxtaposition of the early 20th-century Arts & Crafts movement, which emphasized regional and indigenous history and culture, also bolstered interest.

Before long, the newly popular "Santa Fe Style" tightened into what amounted to unwritten policy (codified in 1957 with a historic district ordinance that required the use of "Old Santa Fe Style" for new construction). Even large Queen Anne-style houses were sometimes "pueblo-ized" with a coat or two of stucco over their original façades. Today, a century after New Mexico gained full statehood, the town fathers' decision remains in play, resulting in a city dominated by Pueblo Revival, Spanish Revival, and Territorial Revival buildings—the new "Old-New Santa Fe Style."



OPPOSITE: Strong geometric forms with a typical carved-wood door mark the 1923 Edward Brooks House. **CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** The continued vitality of the Santa Fe Style is evident in this more recently built art studio on Canyon Road. Three entrance doors in adobe surrounds—two in walls, one in the house—are a core Santa Fe Style tradition. A postwar Pueblo Revival house on Coronado Road.

Native Culture

The term “pueblo” (Spanish for “people”) refers to a village, the people who live in it, and the culture they create. Pueblo Revival houses are usually one (occasionally two) stories in height, and generally horizontal in line and asymmetrical in shape. They are characterized by invisible flat roofs supported by *vigas*, wooden-pole beams that project through the walls. The roofs are drained by *canales*, trough-like wood or (more frequent today) metal channels that also project from exterior

Pueblo Perspective

Pueblo societies have inhabited New Mexico’s arid plains and mesas since at least the 11th century, and Spaniards who entered the area in the 16th century looking for gold instead found well-established pueblos—communal settlements with sophisticated religious, political, and artistic traditions. Of the hundred or so pueblos that once existed near Santa Fe, 19 are still active and (with permission and within very specific limitations) may be visited. Each is a separate sovereign entity, with its own governmental structure, language, and cultural practices. Each has its own attractions, but for purists, Acoma (Sky City) is perhaps the best documented, though the most restricted and least accessible (70 miles west of Albuquerque atop a high mesa, and limited to prearranged guided tours). Other popular pueblo sites include Taos, Santa Clara, San Ildefonso, Isleta, and the pueblo and mission ruins at the Pecos National Historical Park, 17 miles east of Santa Fe.



ABOVE: A classic 1950s developer's Pueblo Revival with the common steel casement windows and wide *portale*, or recessed front porch.

LEFT: The late 19th-century Territorial Revival style introduced Anglo building practices such as the double-hung sash and signature brick coping on the roof edge seen here.



walls. Thick plastered walls have gently rounded corners, sometimes hugged by adobe buttresses.

Decoration is scant, confined mostly to blue- or red-painted wood trim at windows and doorways. *Portales*—long, narrow covered porches, generally with flat roofs and log posts—are customary, though not mandatory, on the fronts or sides of Pueblo Revival houses, providing shelter from the relentless desert sun. Entrance doors may be single or double, usually of vertical-board construction.

Windows in the oldest buildings were wood-sash casements. Steel casements were popular from the 1920s to the 1950s, while modern, updated windows more likely have aluminum or vinyl sash. New double-hung or horizontal-slider windows often replace casements altogether. Three-part picture windows aren't uncommon in 1940s and '50s houses.

Spanish Influence

Somewhat less frequently seen in Santa Fe, but still an important reminder of the city's heritage, is the Spanish Revival or Mission style. Here again, stuccoed adobe is the building material of choice. Roofs are usually flat, but may have a slight pitch. Porch roofs and pent eaves over the windows may be covered with rounded barrel tiles, often of a highly visible red hue.

The original Western ranch house and Spanish mission influences are evident in frequent round-arch openings in windows, doors, and arcaded porches (the inevitable *portales*). Asymmetrical massing supplies an extra measure of Arts & Crafts charm.

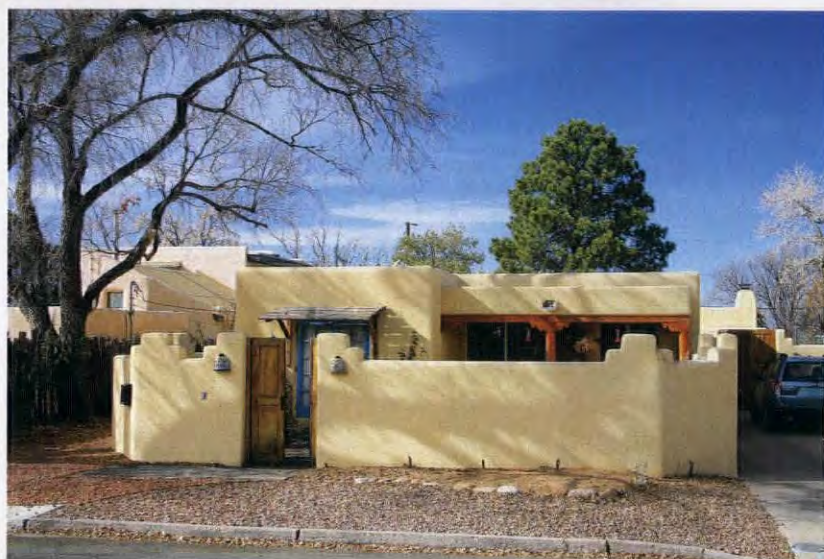
Territorial Ties

The final element in Santa Fe's lexicon of historic styles is Territorial Revival. New Mexico was a territory from 1846, when the United States wrested it from Mexican ownership after the Mexican War, until 1912, when it was finally admitted to the union as our 47th state. The Territorial Revival style reveals the Anglo influence that appeared when the Yankees started moving to the inland west, bringing along a much-simplified version of Greek Revival style.

More symmetrical than either the Pueblo or Spanish Revivals, Territorial Revivals had a flat roof, like the Pueblo, but topped by a coping or rim of hard, dark brick that retarded



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: A porch with round arches on this 1940s house shows Spanish Revival influences. This 1928 Pueblo Revival has the understated lines favored by master architect John Gaw Meem. Walled front yards are a common Santa Fe feature, as in this 1950s example.



The Art of Adobe

The traditional building block for all of Santa Fe's styles, whether in large buildings or small houses, is sun-dried adobe brick plastered with mud. In the Native American tradition, men kneaded clay with water, formed it into blocks, and laid the blocks in walls while women made and applied the mud-plaster finish. Though genuine adobe is still sometimes used, it has mostly been supplanted (except for museum-type restorations) by adobe-looking cement blocks and Portland-cement stucco. John Gaw Meem, New Mexico's premier Pueblo Revival architect of the 1920s and '30s, strongly recommended using modern materials, such as hollow clay tiles, in order to prevent erosion from New Mexico's ever-present winds and less frequent but troublesome rain.

weathering at the edges of its soft adobe walls. The walls also had crisper edges than those of Pueblo or Spanish Revival houses. Windows and doors were topped by slightly pitched wooden caps shaped like shallow inverted V's.

The window openings in the first original Territorial houses contained double-hung wooden sash, but these houses reverted to the more "picturesque" casements hankered after by 20th-century revivalists. To be fair, casements may have been more practical, since they provided better ventilation in New Mexico's hot, arid, and relatively bug-free climate.

Doors are of vertical-board or herringbone-patterned wood. Wooden trim around windows and porches, as well as doors, will most likely be painted the signature New Mexico turquoise or sky blue, though red and brown make occasional appearances.

Landscape Magic

Unabashed and skillful xeriscaping produces yards that, though often brown or gray, are surprisingly appealing as they abandon

water-guzzling greenswards in favor of native plants and gravel. Front gardens are frequently softened and made private by adobe walls or screens made of unfinished wooden poles of varying heights and circumferences lashed tightly together. Nearly house-height adobe walls may be entered through heavy paneled and carved wooden gates or doors. Metal fences are rare, and so minimally decorated (perhaps with just a trace of rust) that they blend unobtrusively, like courteous houseguests, into the brown-and-gray background.

Above all, Santa Fe's architectural magic seems to emanate from the textures and hues of the clay and lime that color its buildings—aged ivories, arroyo-mud browns, apricot and peachy pinks, sunny yellows, and bold ochres—washed by a brilliant sun emblazoned on the vast blue umbrella of a New Mexico sky. It's a scene to bedazzle a nascent Georgia O'Keefe, D. H. Lawrence, or John Gaw Meem—or the next art collector, budding archeologist, historian, or scientist who opens the door of a Santa Fe art gallery or museum. 🏡



Old windows usually contain lead paint—always follow lead-safe work practices. For more information, visit epa.gov/lead.

Window designs have evolved over centuries to enhance the beauty of a building, keep out the storms, let in the breeze, and give you a view of the trees, the moon, and the universe beyond. Not to mention, they've held up to decades of use and abuse. But with a round of maintenance and a few repairs, old wood sash windows will easily last another century.

Window glazing is a combination of science and art that can only be developed with experience. As a beginner, start with sash from the barn or back room, where your early results will be good enough as you improve your technique. Once you have done 10 sashes, trying to do better each time, you'll be more proficient. By the time you get around to the front windows, your glazing will look just fine.

LORDPHOTOS PHOTO/FOTOLIA.COM

WINDOW WIZARDRY

PRO TIPS FOR GLAZING AND PAINTING WOOD
SASH LIKE AN EXPERT.

By JOHN LEEKE

Paint & Glazing Procedure

What You'll Need

To get started, gather your tools and materials.

TOOLS:

- ✓ Brush for polishing with whiting
- ✓ Brushes for sash painting (and brush-cleaning tools and supplies)
- ✓ HEPA vacuum, if sanding old wood or primer
- ✓ Metal can with water for oily rags
- ✓ Putty knife

MATERIALS:

- ✓ Glazier's points
- ✓ Linseed oil
- ✓ Pre-treatment, if needed
- ✓ Oil-based alkyd resin or linseed oil paint and primer
- ✓ Putty or glazing compound
- ✓ Rags
- ✓ 100-grit sandpaper
- ✓ Tack cloth
- ✓ Turpentine
- ✓ Whiting

1 PRE-TREAT, IF NEEDED

This step may not be needed if all wood surfaces are perfectly sound. If the bottom edge of the lower sash's bottom rail is in good condition, it doesn't need treatment since it has done well bare for so many years. However, if it shows signs of water deterioration, give it a coat of pre-treatment.

When you apply a pre-treatment to the bare wood, put it on the sash (both faces), muntin bars, and muntins. If you are using consolidating oil, put it in the glazing rabbets, too, and also add extra at each joint so it soaks in and treats the end-grain within.

(Be careful not to apply pre-treatment to the side edges of the sashes and top edge of the upper sash.) Let the treatment dry before proceeding.

If you're not going to pre-treat the entire sash, apply a consolidating oil or linseed oil mixture to the glazing rabbet. This prevents the wood from absorbing too much oil from the putty, which can lead to putty adhesion problems.



Deteriorated wood should be pre-treated, except in the few locations noted below.

2 SAND WOOD SURFACES, IF NEEDED

All surfaces and arrises should feel smooth. Sand off nibs and whiskers, then dust with a HEPA vacuum and tack cloth.



THE OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL

Vol. VIII No. 9
September 1980

Old Windows

IT'S TRUE that windows are a major source of heat loss from a building, and that unmaintained windows offer plenty of room for improvement. But we're not going to do away with a window in order to save money. They have too many other advantages.

An old, single-glazed, loose-fitting window is "leaking" in several different ways. It's no wonder many people are confused about where to begin.

First, windows lose winter heat, gain summer heat, and admit winter cold through infiltration. Air flows through cracks around the frame, around the sash, and around the glass. If you have a loose, single-glazed window, this is probably your worst problem.

Generally, the order of priorities for dealing with old windows is as follows:

- Caulk and weatherstrip to cut infiltration.
- Use night insulation to block conduction losses during the cold, dark night.
- Install storm windows outside or inside.
- Repair loose, rotted, or broken sash and reglaze the windows.
- If the trouble lies with the casing, consider keeping the sash but replacing the channels (called "balances").

—Patricia Poore



Material Matters

Before you get started with window work, know your basic materials—glass, metal, paint, putty, stone, and wood—and their characteristics:

- ◆ **GLASS:** brittle, stiff, readily cut to any size, lasts forever unless broken by a sharp blow
- ◆ **METAL:** tiny points that hold the glass in place
- ◆ **PAINT:** a sticky liquid that dries into a flexible, weather-resistant film (and looks good)
- ◆ **PUTTY:** soft and pliable, firms to a resilient solid, hardening as it ages until it eventually weathers away or crumbles out
- ◆ **STONE:** in the form of whitening, a fine powder made by grinding up soft chalk stone or limestone, used to both make putty and to clean glass
- ◆ **WOOD:** stiff, strong, slightly flexible, swells a bit when wet, shrinks back when dry

These materials are layered and lapped into a system that holds up to the weather and gives you a clear view of the outdoors. They can last for decades before failing gracefully, allowing the window to be easily repainted and reglazed.

Methods of painting and glazing vary depending on the character of the local windows, the climate, and the skills of the worker. The methods and materials presented here have worked well for many folks in different locations around the country.

3 PRIME THE SASH

Prime all the surfaces of the sash except the side edges (that run in the tracks) and the face margins. Do not prime the glazing rabbets if they were pre-treated with an oil-resin. Allow to dry thoroughly.



Puddling the primer at each joint helps it soak in and seal the end-grain.

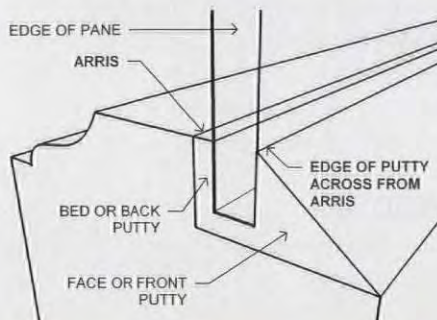
If you are priming the glazing rabbets, start by brushing a little puddle of primer on at each joint; it will soak into the joint and help seal the end-grain. Leaving some primer puddled on the surface at the joints also makes it easier and quicker to get primer into the corners when you come back to brush the primer out across the surface.

4 SAND PRIMED SURFACES, IF NEEDED

As above, sand off any nibs and whiskers until all surfaces feel smooth. Dust with a HEPA vacuum or brush and tack cloth. Re-prime any spots or areas of bare wood where sanding removed the primer.

5 BED THE PANE

Start by making sure all the panes fit by laying them in place in the sash. When you take them out, keep them in an order you can remember so they go back where they belong. (I lay the panes out on the bench in



A solid "bed" of putty in the sash's glazing rabbets helps seat the pane of glass.

the same arrangement; some stick on blue painter's tape and number it.) Warm up the putty by kneading it in your hand, then press the putty into the glazing rabbet with your fingers, thumb, or the heel of your hand.

Next, lay a "bed" of putty in all the glazing rabbets of the sash. Place each pane of glass on the bedding putty, making sure the bottom edge of glass rests on the neck of the lower glazing rabbet.



When placing glass, ensure the bottom edge rests on the lower glazing rabbet's neck.

Jiggle the pane slightly with your fingers along the edges so it beds down into the putty. Leave at least $\frac{1}{16}$ " of back putty between the glass and the shoulder of the glazing rabbet. You should have some putty squeezing out along all the edges of the glass.

Panes wider than 24" may require spacer blocks between the edges of the glass and the neck of the glazing rabbet—little pieces of wood or plastic that help secure heavier panes until the putty firms up.

6 SET GLAZING POINTS

Set at least one point per edge on panes smaller than 6" or 8". On larger panes, set points away from the corners of the glass at least one-fourth the length of the edge, and then every 8" to 10" in between.



To install glazing points, lay the sharp end toward the rabbet, then lay the flat end of a putty knife across the tabs (above) and gently work the points into the wood. Both tabs should rest against the rabbet (below).



Lay the point flat on the glass with the sharp end leading into the neck of the glazing rabbet. Set the edge of the putty knife across the tabs and wiggle it side-to-side, pushing the point into the wood until the tabs are flush with the neck of the glazing rabbet. (The wiggle helps ease the point into the wood with less stress on the glass.) You may have to hold thin muntins from behind to keep from breaking the rib or muntin.

7 TOOL THE FACE PUTTY

Go around the entire sash, placing and packing lines of putty; it doesn't have to look good at first. Some people roll the putty into little snakes—you can do this, but it takes extra time. I like to quickly distribute the putty using the palm of my hand or a putty knife.

Next, pack the face putty into place—put the end of the putty knife on the pane and wiggle the knife slightly to force the putty into place. It still doesn't have to look good.

Finally, tool the surface of the face putty using the “end edge” or “in line” technique (see next page) to form an even bevel that



The putty is roughly packed with a putty knife at first, before the final tooling.

looks good and packs putty firmly into the glazing rabbet, forming a good seal all along the glass and wood. You should be able to look through the pane and see that the edge of your putty is directly across from the arris on the other side of the glass (see illustration, opposite). Form neat miters at the corners, where the bevels meet.

8 POLISH AND CLEAN THE PANE

Immediately after tooling, you'll need to polish the outside of the pane with whiting to clean oil from the putty off the glass and “dust up” the putty's surface to promote drying.

Glazing Breakdown

There are several different types of putties and glazing compounds to choose from. A brief explanation of each can help you decide which to use based on the work at hand.

◆ TRADITIONAL PUTTY (linseed oil variety)

Typically contains boiled or raw linseed oil and whiting. It firms up within a few days or weeks, then hardens over a period of months or years. It is referred to as “knife grade” because it can be applied and smoothed with a putty knife.

Look for:

- Allback Linseed Oil Putty (can be painted immediately with Allback paints)
- Crawford's Natural Blend Painters Putty

◆ GLAZING COMPOUND (modified oil type)

This knife-grade material typically contains a mixture of different oils (linseed, soybean, process, mineral) and plasticisers, drying agents, whiting, ground limestone, powdered talc, etc. It firms up within a few days or weeks and to a semi-hard state, retaining some resilience.

Look for:

- Sarco MultiGlaze Type M (skins over in a few or several days; must be applied in the shop, as it requires a steady temperature for best curing)

- Sarco Dual Glaze (slower to skin over, but longer-lasting in service; for outdoor use)
- Glazol Glazing Compound
- Perm-E-Lastic
- DAP '33' (included because it is so commonly available, but not considered as effective as other glazing compounds by many window specialists)

◆ ACRYLIC ELASTOMERIC TYPE

This is applied with a caulking gun and is referred to as “gun grade.” It typically contains acrylic resin and water and is subject to shrinkage. It cures to a flexible, almost rubber-like consistency.

Look for:

- Glaze-Ease 601 (dries quickly for painting within 24 hours; requires very different tooling methods)

◆ ACRYLIC TYPE

This might be knife- or gun-grade and typically contains acrylic resin, limestone, quartz, and water. It hardens in a few days and may shrink or crack under some conditions.

Look for:

- Aqua-Glaze (dries quickly; can be painted within a few hours)

Tooling Techniques



◆ END EDGE

Keep the edge of the putty knife on the glass through most of the stroke. This technique leaves no putty on the glass, which saves time. Hold the knife at a slight angle to compress the putty into the glazing rabbet during the stroke, leaving a smooth, flat bevel of putty. Stroke slowly to allow the putty to “flow” onto the underneath side of the knife.



◆ IN LINE

Hold the knife at a slight angle so the putty compresses into the glazing rabbet and leaves a smooth, flat bevel of putty.

This technique leaves a little putty on the glass that you will have to go back and remove. I like to do so by taking my warm wad of putty, forming it into a ridge, and wiping it along the edge of the pane, which picks up the waste putty.



When polishing with whiting, wear goggles and a respirator to keep it out of your eyes, nose, mouth, and lungs.

Use whiting on a soft brush to gently polish the pane and remove prints.

Tamp a dry, soft-bristled 3" or 4" paintbrush into the dry powdered whiting and work a small amount into the bristles. Starting at the top of the panes, gently dust the surface of the glass with the brush. Work down the panes to remove all the whiting and oil from the glass surface. It's OK to brush the surface of the putty, but be careful to not jam the ends of the bristles directly into it.

Sweep any remaining buildup of whiting out of the lower corners, and finish with wide, sweeping diagonal strokes, which leaves the pane clean, clear, and free of oily fingerprints and whiting.

9 TOOL THE BACK PUTTY

Flip the sash over, and use a putty knife to trim off the excess putty that squeezed out from the bedding.



On the back, use a putty knife to remove excess putty and tool it for a good seal.

10 POLISH AND CLEAN THE PANES

“Polish” the inside of panes with whiting, as in Step 8. Then set the sash aside to let the putty cure. (Cure times will vary depending upon the putty used and the environmental conditions.) Place the sash in correct vertical position, exterior side out, and lean it slightly back to avoid distorting the putty bevel.

11 PRIME THE PUTTY, IF NEEDED

Some putty and paint combinations need to be primed; others don't—check the manufacturer's recommendations. Apply primer to face putty bevels and interior seals, lapping it $\frac{1}{16}$ " onto the glass. Let dry.



12 PAINT THE SASH AND PUTTY

Brush two topcoats of paint onto the entire sash (except the side, top, and bottom edges if they're not being painted), lapping paint $\frac{1}{16}$ " onto the glass, which seals out rainwater and extends the putty's service life. Use high-quality enamel or exterior house paint. Waterborne 100-percent acrylic paint is good, as are oil-based alkyd resin or linseed oil paints.

If you use acrylic house paint, be sure to take a rag and wipe off the side margins of the sash and the meeting surfaces of the meeting rails. This will help prevent the sash from sticking to the sash track and stops.


John Leeke is a historic building specialist based in Portland, Maine, and owner of Historic HomeWorks (historichomeworks.com).



When painting with acrylic paint, be sure to wipe meeting edges down with a rag.

Log on to get more expert reglazing tips and a video of this process from John Leeke.


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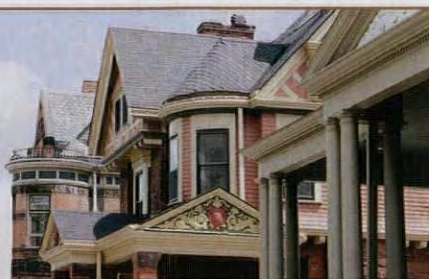
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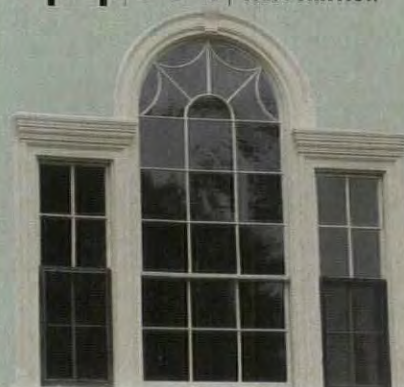
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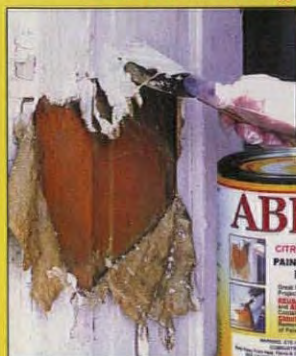
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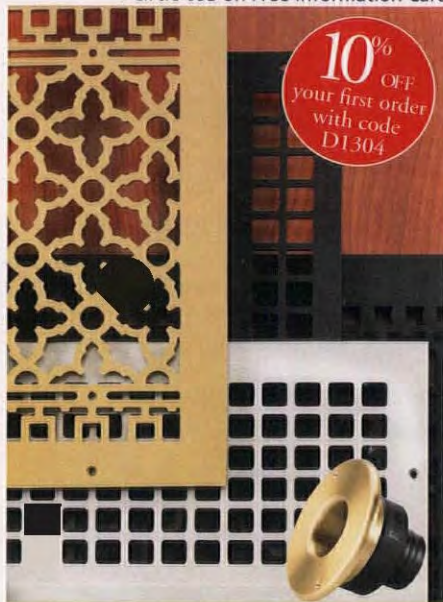
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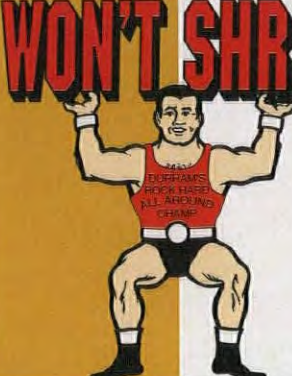
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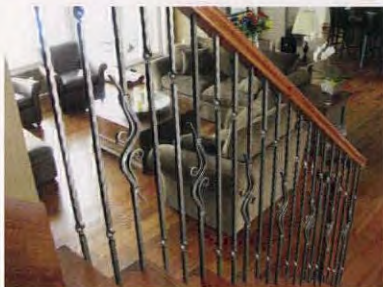


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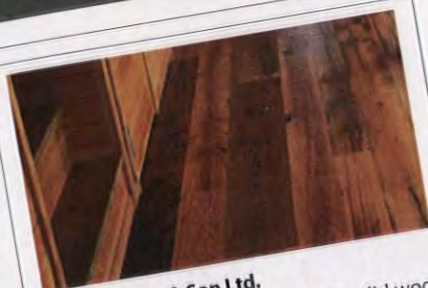
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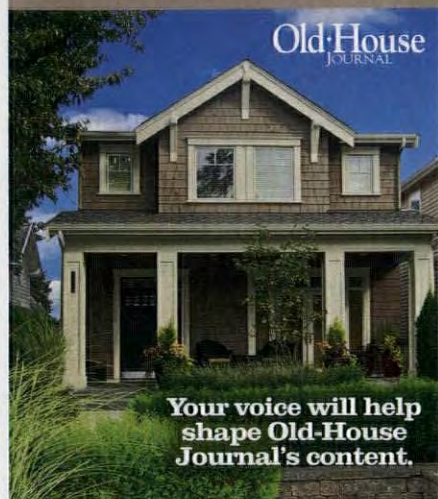
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TARBORO, NC—The Phippen House, circa 1881, is an architectural masterpiece located in the historic district. This 5 bedroom, two-story with 4,915 +/- heated sq.ft. has spacious rooms, marble and slate fireplaces, beautiful moldings, heart pine floors, period light fixtures/chandeliers, built-ins, sunroom, 4 covered porches, patio and fenced backyard on 0.86 acre landscaped corner lot. \$284,000. Mary Ann Cumpata, Tarboro Realty, 252-904-0387. www.tarbororealty.com



OXFORD, NJ—Brick mansion circa 1820 built by George W. Scranton. On 6 acres in northwestern NJ. 9+ bedrooms, 8 marble fireplaces, Florentine plaster ceilings, wall & ceiling moldings, ornamental plaster rosettes, 7" thick floors, 35' living room with pocket doors, library for 5,000+ books built by master-cabinetmaker, ceramic tiled kitchen with granite counter top, 2 artesian wells. Multiple uses. \$675,000. Richard Maximoff, 908-391-5000 or maximoff@comcast.net.



AMSTERDAM, NY—A 36,000 sq.ft. armory currently utilized as residence/bed & breakfast with options for some commercial uses. Designed in 1895 by Isaac Perry, de facto NY state architect. Magnificent, flexible use historical with quarters in high Victorian, 10,000 sq. ft. gymnasium/drill shed. Excellent condition. Full details with dozens of photos and floor plans at: www.UpstateCastle.com \$1,000,000. Mike Franklin, Select Sotheby's International Realty, 518-580-8500 x3012.



KEENE VALLEY, NY—Great piece of Adirondack history at a bargain price! Amazing great camp with original circa 1880 charm & character. Beautiful woodwork throughout. 5 large fireplaces, 2 kitchens, unique balcony in living room, huge bedrooms, many porches, including 2 large sleeping porches. 9 bedrooms, 3.5 baths. River access and mountain views. 80% of the house is seasonal while remainder used year-round. \$349,000 Adirondack Realty, 518-576-9840. www.adkrealty.com



BIRDSBORO, PA—Architectural masterpiece by renowned architect Frank Furness. Circa 1888, 13,700 sq.ft., 42 rooms, 16 bedrooms, 9 baths and 10 hand carved European fireplaces. 3 acres, zoning variance: bed and breakfast, restaurant, office, private residence. Listed as one of the 21 most noted homes in the world. The ultimate antique, Brooke Mansion is 95% original. Circular rosewood library, pocket doors. 1 hour west of Philadelphia. \$1,900,000. 800-358-2290. www.brookemansion.com



PITTSBURGH, PA—Baywood, a Landmark property, situated on 1.8 acres, is a beautiful 2 and 1/2 story Victorian restored to its original splendor. Magnificent woodwork, hand-painted walls and ceilings, original stenciling duplicated in entry hall to 3rd floor and hardwood floors. Updated kitchen and baths with much attention to original detail. A park setting within the city—an unusual opportunity. \$2,100,000. Kelly Meade, Howard Hanna, 412-361-4000 or kmeade@howardhanna.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 unusual 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.



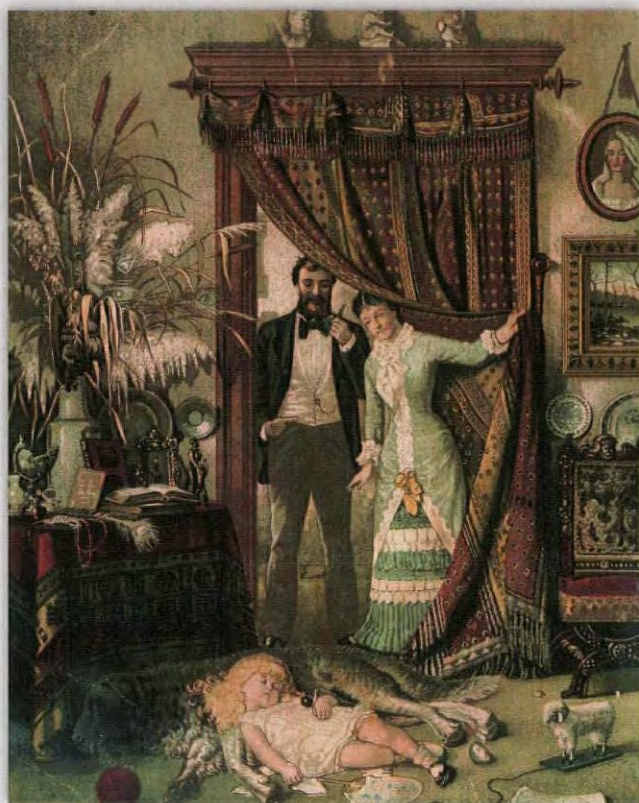
FREDERICKSBURG, VA—"Elmhurst." Circa 1871. Architecturally-brilliant High-Style Italianate manor house built by Washington Elms of Saratoga, New York. Creative and authentic rehabilitation done in 2006. Placed on the list of Virginia Landmarks and National Register. MRIS#FB7700900. \$1,500,000. Susan Pates, owner/ broker, Long and Foster, 540-809-9443 or susanpates@aol.com. www.patespropertiesonline.com.

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Trade Card, E.P. Waite & Company, Crayon Portrait Artists, New York City, circa 1885

Dog-Tired but Toasty Warm

Who says Victorians weren't into saving energy? There's no better way to conserve precious resources than by taking an afternoon nap in the cozy comfort of a furry (and sustainable) heat source. Just about the only thing that could disturb this sentimental domestic scene is one of those nasty drafts that big old Victorian houses are so famous for. But these doting parents have taken care of that with a heavy and elaborately fringed portière between the parlor and the hall.

Portières—a fancy name for door curtains—weren't just for looks. In an era before tightly sealed doors and windows, and before central heating systems replaced fireplaces and wood stoves in every room, portières were a practical and attractive means for keeping cold drafts out and warm air in. They remained popular well into the 1900s, especially in Arts & Crafts homes.

Though this E.P. Waite & Company trade card is not dated, the New York firm's status-conscious customers (who would mail in photographs so Waite could produce life-sized "Bust Crayon Portraits" like the one on the wall) would have responded to the array of Aesthetic Movement tropes that place this vignette squarely in the 1880s. The peacock feathers and cattails, oriental art pottery, exotic wall-mounted chargers, opulently woven textiles, and Japanese fan were all visual cues validating the "artistic" tastes of Waite's striving clients, served up in a romantic Victorian fantasy that—like that opulent portière—warmed tender hearts and insulated aspiring egos against the cold drafts of a dog-eat-dog world. 🐕

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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HISTORIC HOME SHOW

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Storybook Style?

Fairy tales often contain images of picture-perfect cottages dripping in quaint architectural details. What's fashionable in storybooks, however, isn't always believable in real life. Take, for example, these two Queen Anne duplexes around the block from each other. While one (at left) beckons with its original clapboard siding, double-hung windows, boxy first floor, and small gabled entry portico, the other channels a more unsettling character. Like a wolf lying in wait for Little Red Riding Hood, the house (at right) has disguised itself with modern siding and a stuccoed first floor, slider windows, an attached garden arch, and a steep asymmetrical gable around the front door.

"Every time I walk past, I cringe at how badly the different elements fit together," laments our contributor. We think that when old houses get once-upon-a-timed, there's often no happy ending. 🐺

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OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL (ISSN #0094-0178) is published six times a year: January, March, May, July, September, and November by Home Buyer Publications and Active Interest Media Inc. The known office of publication is located at 475 Sansome Street, Suite 850, San Francisco, CA 94111. The editorial office is located at 2520 55th St., Suite 210, Boulder, CO 80301; 800-826-3893. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA, and additional offices. Vol. 41, No. 2. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Old-House Journal, P.O. Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235. SUBSCRIPTIONS: For subscription questions or address changes, call 800-234-3797 (US only), 386-447-2398 (outside the US). Subscription rates are: US: \$27 per year, Canada: \$35 per year, Other countries: \$41 per year. COPYRIGHT: 2013 by Cruz Bay Publishing, Inc. This publication may not be reproduced, either in whole or part, in any form without written permission from the publisher. PRINTING: RR Donnelly, Strasburg, VA. Printed in the USA.



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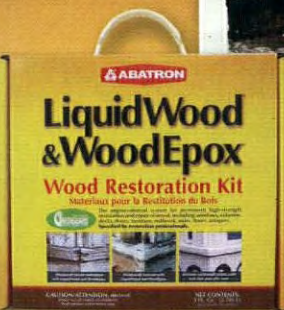
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Wood Restoration

Before



After

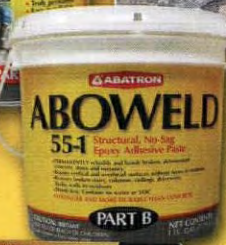


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