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MAGAZINE

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# Old House

## JOURNAL

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Queen Anne**  
*Victorian mantels,  
spectacular windows*

**ROMANTIC  
1929 HOME**

  
**HOW TO**  
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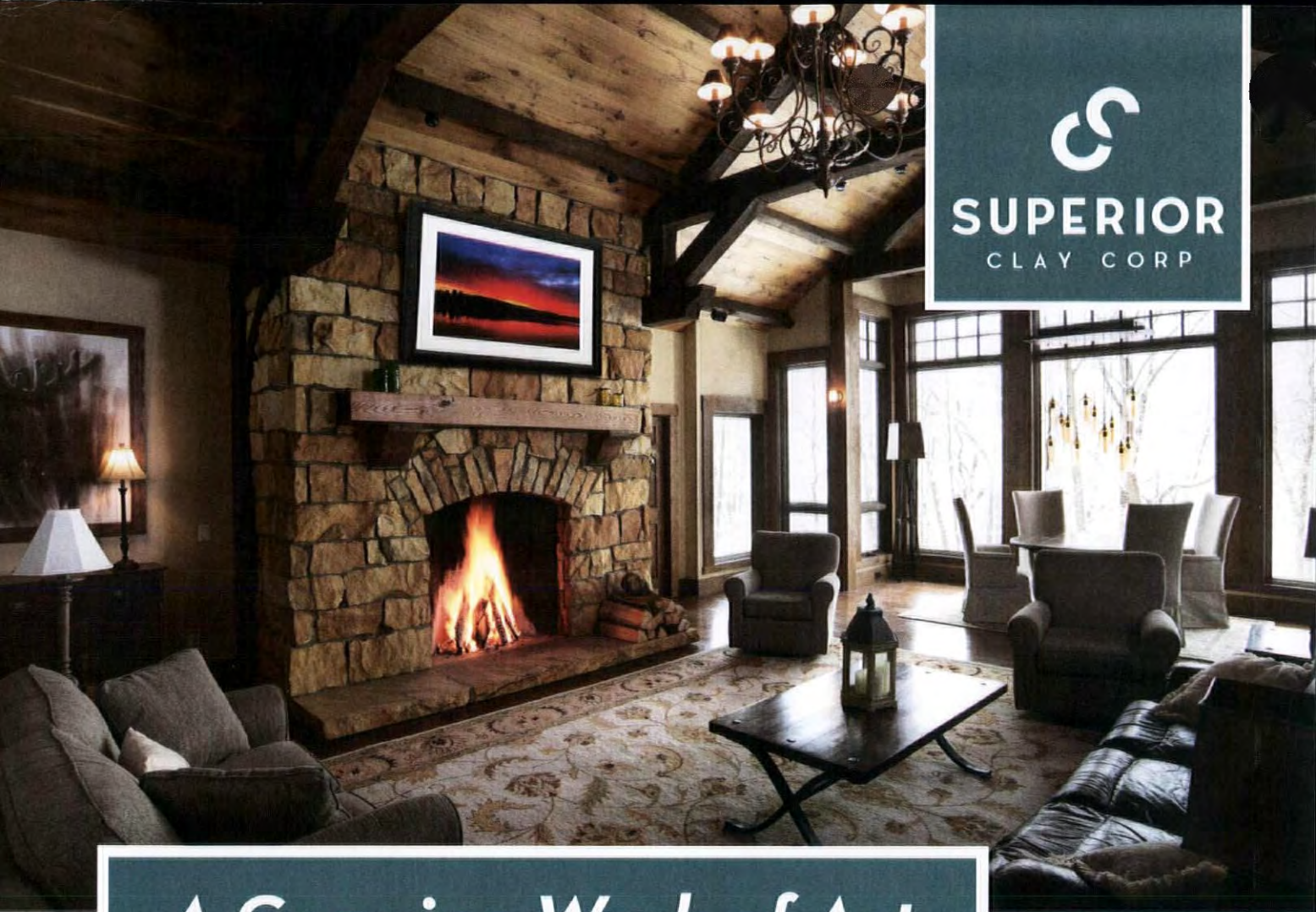


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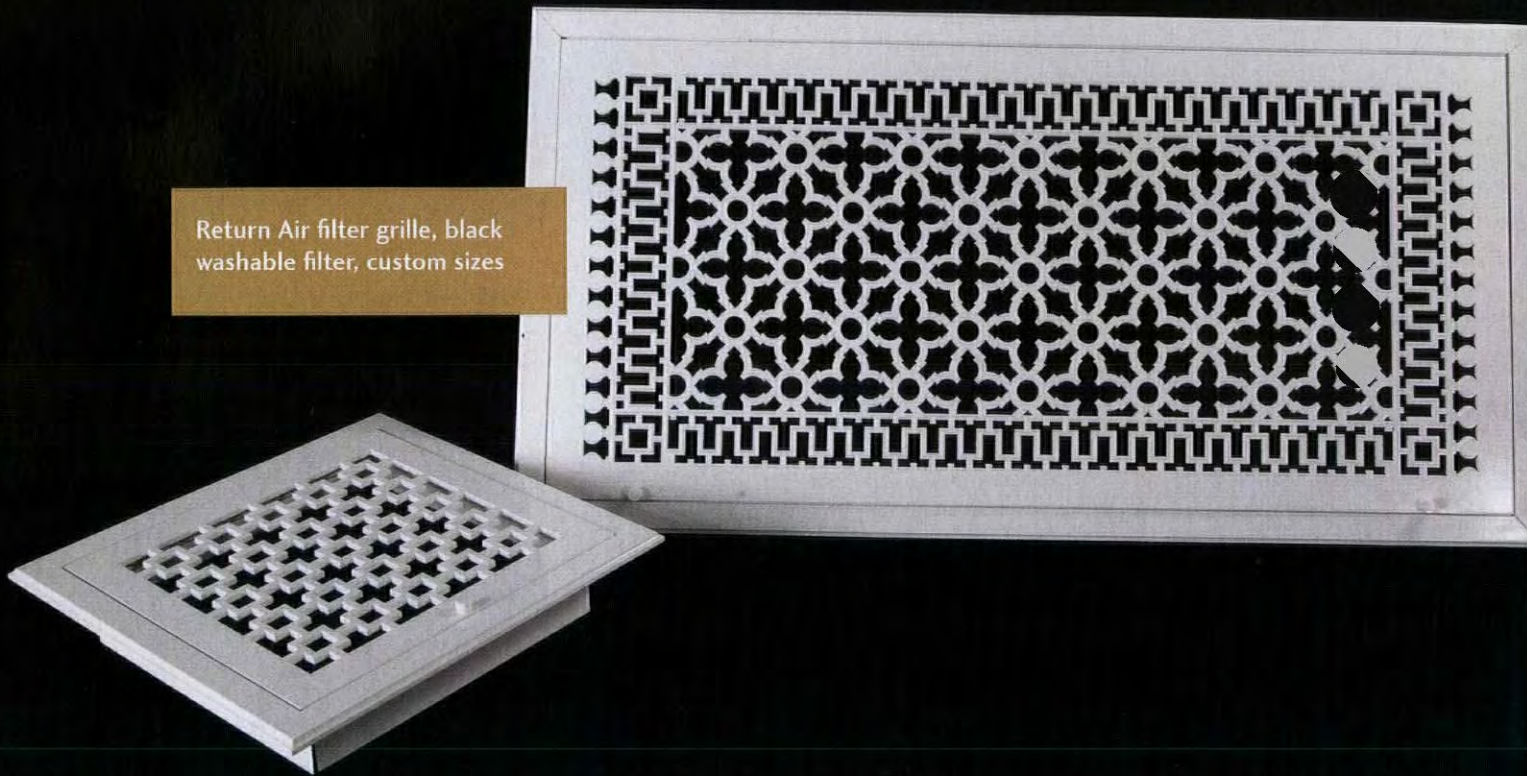
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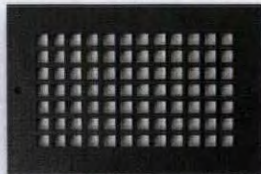
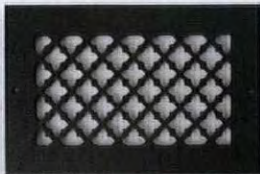
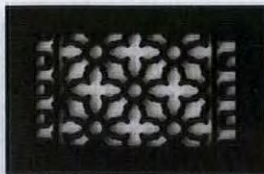
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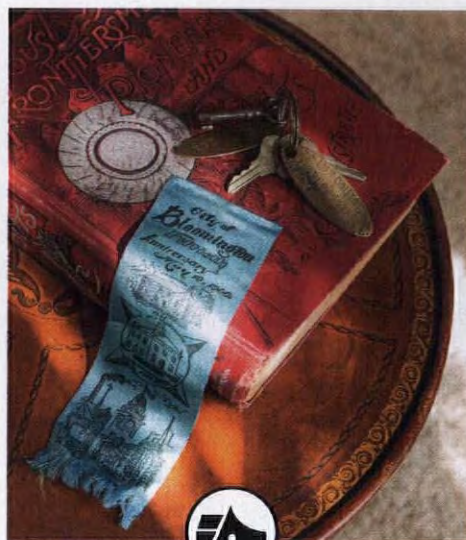
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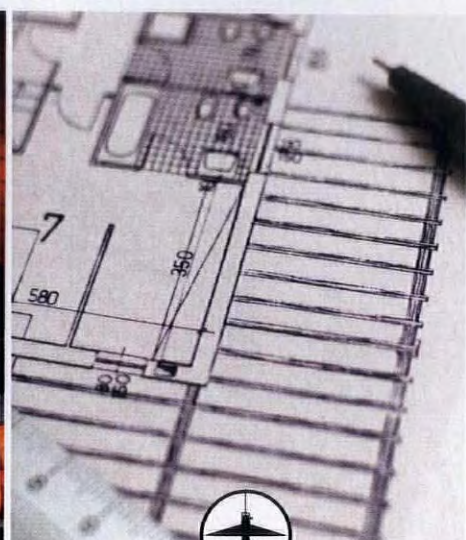
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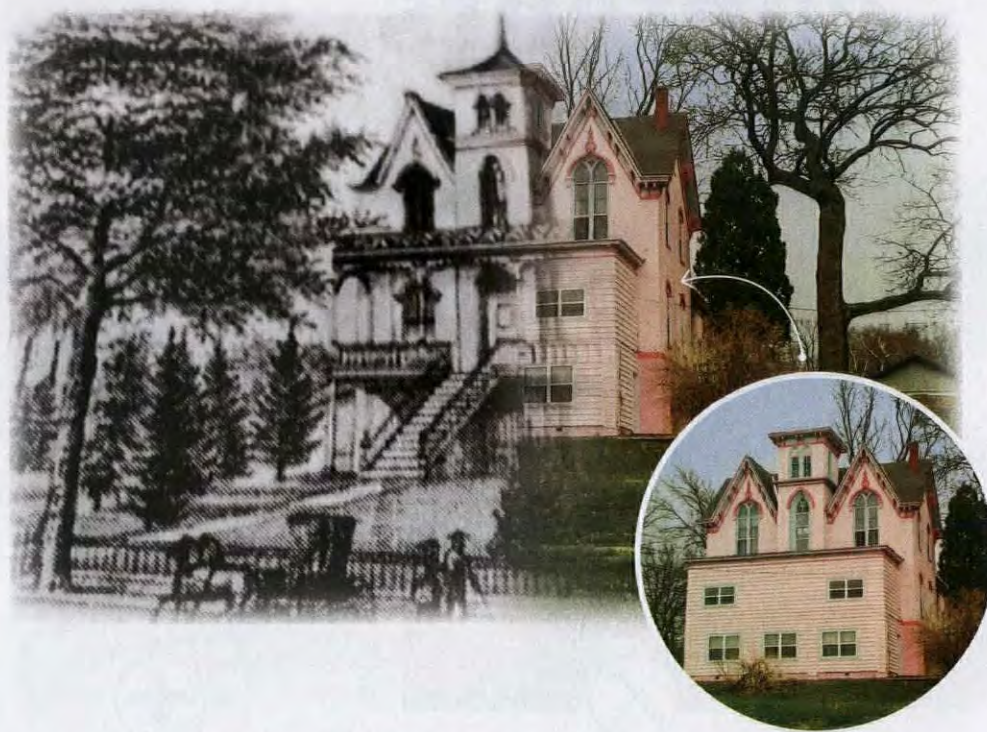
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COVER PHOTO BY ERIC ROTH. SEE STORY ON PAGE 62.





## Case of the Missing Piazza

In OHJ's June 2017 issue, this photo of an unfortunate Midwest Victorian ran on the "Remuddling" page. We speculated that the boxy addition took the place of a piazza, or porch. Because there's no apparent entry door, some correspondents thought that this is the back of the building. But the placement of the *campanile* (tower) suggests that this is the house's front elevation.

*Mistero risolto!* The sender of the photo, Kathy, later followed up with the engraving above, writing: "Here's the drawing I was searching for, showing the pink house as it originally looked." With an unusual combination of Gothic Revival and Italianate elements, the Romantic-era house was formal in the manner of an Italian Villa, with an elevated *piano nobile*, or principal floor. The porch spanned the width of the façade. Kathy confirms that the "addition" was made during the house's conversion to five one-bedroom apartments. (We're still scratching our heads about the disappearance of an entry door, what with all those tenants.)

"Remuddling" premiered in OHJ in October 1981 and has been a highly popular feature ever since. There have been objections, for sure, starting with my own mom, who called it "mean." Objectors have stood up for the property rights of owners. (To which I counter, What people do to the outside of their homes is a very visible matter of public record, and so subject to commentary.) One person even quietly championed insensitive remodeling because it liberates architectural elements to be salvaged by those with a restoration mindset.

Other readers love the feature, calling it instructive. "It's everything on one page," wrote one reader: "comedy in the ridiculous things done to houses, drama ('what will happen next?'), and sociology as we see what people do to the artifacts of previous generations."

Please keep sending "Remuddling" photos. I'll take "Unmuddlings," too, where the After photo shows a happy ending. *Grazie!*

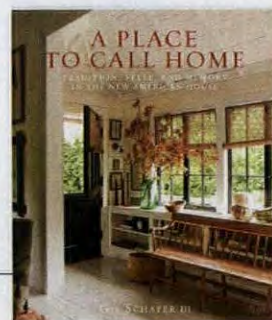
*Patti Poore*



## SIDE NOTES

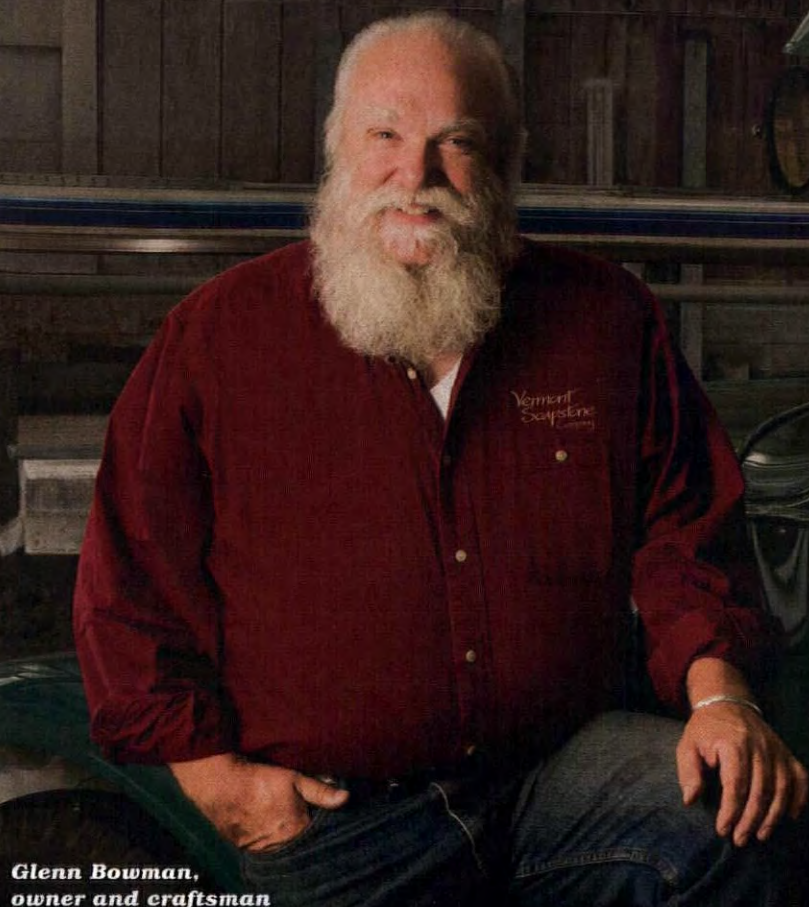
### SENSE OF PLACE

Architect Gil Schafer says that successful houses celebrate the small moments of life—they are imbued with memory and anchored in a sense of place. The design or remodeling is successful if the people who live there fully embrace it as home. In his new book, Schafer shares essentials: reading the landscape, incorporating memory, balancing formality and simplicity. Then he presents seven homes in depth, including an apartment with a view of Central Park, a hillside cottage in Northern California, an updated 1930s Connecticut Colonial, a new Adirondacks camp, and his own house in Maine. Photos and text emphasize place, style, scale, and materials. Schafer even covers "the spaces in between"—mudrooms, closets, and laundry rooms—explaining their value. **A Place to Call Home** (Rizzoli, October 2017, \$55).





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I've been fortunate enough to see a lot of the world; without question, the ancient places are the most memorable. Roman ruins in Turkey, castles in Austria, Greek temples. Egyptian pyramids: the old structures may be dusty and chipped, but the foundation always remains. I think every one of them is a monument to our will and a testament to the benefits of cooperation.

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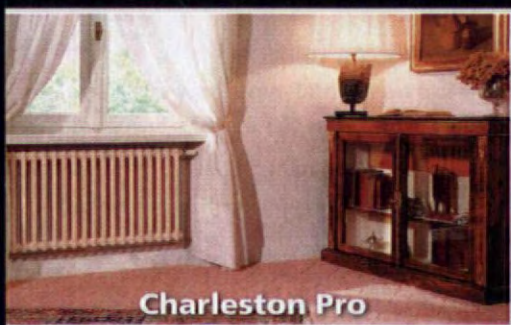




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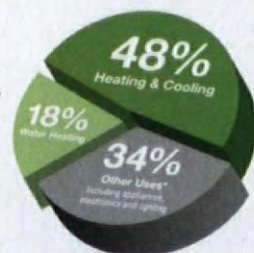
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# INSPIRE

Artifacts found in the Illinois Victorian: an 1885 lockset, old keys, a silk ribbon from the city's 1900 fair, and a vintage book about adventurers.



## VICTORIAN

BUILT IN 1885, ENLARGED IN 1897, THE QUEEN ANNE HOUSE went into decline, was rescued and then almost lost, and finally found its stewards.

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### LOST AND FOUND

The comeback of a Queen Anne tower house.

+ VICTORIAN MILLWORK

24

### STAYING TRUE

Adding onto a 1929 Spanish Colonial.

+ COLOR TILE EXPLOSION

### 32 SUCCESS!

### 34 WINDOW SHOPPING

Homes with outbuildings.





A lovely  
Victorian house  
with history  
goes through  
decades of ups  
and downs, and  
finally fulfills a  
family's dream.



# Lost & Found ... *a restoration tale*

BY BRIAN D. COLEMAN | PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM WRIGHT



Enjoying  
the porch  
swing: Andy,  
Corbin, Kyle,  
and Marie.

THE AMERICAN HEARTLAND, says commentator Ronald Brownstein, comprises those states “that don’t touch an ocean.” Bloomington, Illinois, in the middle of the heartland, has a wealth of 19th-century architecture. One is the Behr Home, built 1884–85 for successful dry-goods merchant Henry Behr and his four children. Originally just a modest frame house, it was enlarged in 1897 in the Queen Anne style and given a three-storey tower. | After Behr descendants left in the 1940s, the grand Victorian went into decline, eventually becoming a nursing home covered in asphalt and aluminum sidings. The interior was institutionalized, with original details either torn out or covered as rooms were partitioned. The original double entry doors went to a salvage yard. The lovely staircase was blocked and the second floor unused for years; floors were covered up.



The wide front porch is a favorite spot; children love the porch swing, a replacement made to replicate the original seen in old photographs. **OPPOSITE (top)** Gaining privacy from trees that have grown up around the house, the 1885 Victorian Queen Anne has decorative shingles and a romantic tower with the original slate roof.







A photograph of a dining room. On the left is a dark wood buffet with glass-fronted upper cabinets displaying various pieces of china. In the foreground, a dark wood dining table is set for breakfast with white dishes, silverware, and glasses of orange juice. A large crystal bowl filled with red apples sits in the center of the table. In the background, a wooden chair is visible, and on the wall hangs a framed sepia-toned photograph of a group of people. A white arrow points from the text block to the china cabinet.

### LIFE GENTEEL

The dining room boasts its original, leaded-glass buffet, now filled with antique and family china. (Someday the owners may run this house as a B&B.) In the dining room and upstairs hall, reclaimed hardwood floors were laid to match original flooring in the two parlors.



**FAR RIGHT** Ornate fretwork outlines the formal ladies' parlor in front, which is furnished with guest-worthy Victorian pieces. **RIGHT** Fluting and carvings embellish the columns flanking the oak mantelpiece. **BELOW** The entry hall welcomes guests with an impressive, winding staircase. Quarter-sawn oak woodwork has never been painted.



In 2001, two local businessmen recognized the house's potential and began a two-year, historically sensitive renovation—updating HVAC, plumbing, and electrical systems, adding insulation, and removing the later sidings. Rotten porches got new columns and railings, the roof was replaced (and clay ridge cresting added), the grand stair reopened. The businessmen sold the house to a young couple who love Victorian architecture.

The couple lost the house, unfortunately, during the subsequent real-estate bust. Andy and Marie Streenz became the next owners. They'd dreamed of owning a big Victorian that might be run as a B&B when they retire. With four bedrooms and three full baths, 3,500 square feet of living space, and a capacious entry, this house could accommodate guests and, for now, their growing family. The couple were enchanted by the stained and beveled glass, a gorgeous keyhole window, three porches, oak woodwork (never painted), and built-in bookcases.

The Streenzes' move-in day was not for the faint of heart;

The first renovation in 2001 was sensitive to history, and reversed many of the changes made after the 1940s. The pretty oak staircase was liberated from a coverup.

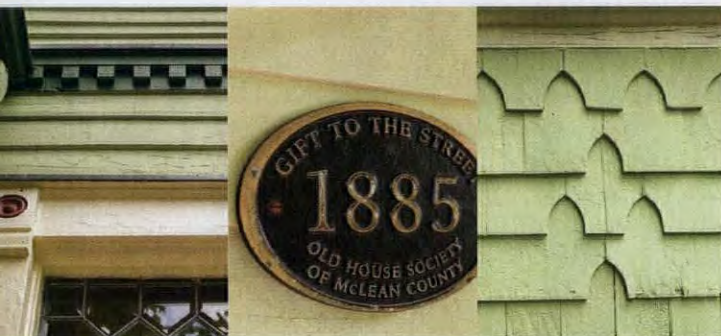




## Magnificent Mantels

The homeowners believe that the handsome fireplace surrounds in the two main rooms, given their stylistic differences, belong to different decades. The golden-oak mantelpiece in the ladies' parlor (the front, formal parlor at right) probably dates to the 1897 style remodeling of the house. In the gentlemen's parlor (rear parlor, opposite and above), the fireplace is likely original to the 1885 house. In the ladies' parlor, the tile surround, insert, and cover are 100% original, at least to 1897. The insert is covered in repetitive fleurs-de-lis with a "Man of the Northwind" at the top of the frame. In the gentlemen's parlor mantel is

*faux marbre*: marbleizing over slate, embellished with stencils. The firebox cover is not original to this house but is an appropriate antique. "When we moved in," Andy Streenz says, "the cast-iron cover was missing, so I bought one with similar dimensions on eBay. I had to cut the sides down and add a small section at the bottom for it to fit properly."



### More Online

Learn more about Queen Anne houses: [oldhouseonline.com/articles/the-charm-of-queen-anne-houses](http://oldhouseonline.com/articles/the-charm-of-queen-anne-houses)

**ABOVE** (left to right) Sparkling beveled-glass windows were intact. They were carefully cleaned and conserved. • The award plaque was given by the Old House Society of McLean County in 2003. • Fancy-cut shingles preserved beneath asphalt and aluminum sidings were stripped and repainted.

after the foreclosure, windows and screens were broken and thieves had begun to ransack the home; appliances were gone. With the power cut, pipes had burst. Andy and Marie found floor grates, locksets, and other vintage hardware disassembled and neatly stacked in the dining room, pending illegal sale on Craigslist. Plumbers stood by on moving day; as the water was turned on zone by zone, they cut holes and repaired leaks as they found them. When water cascaded down the foyer chandelier and the plaster collapsed from a burst pipe above, Andy began to doubt the wisdom of their purchase.

But the love of old houses prevailed. The exterior was prepped and repainted, the previous paint job having failed due to lingering effects of the asphalt siding removal. The new color scheme is Victorian and pleasantly leafy: moss green and maroon and yellow, all in National Trust paints from Valspar.

Only the two parlors had hardwood floors, which were stripped and refinished. Reclaimed hardwood flooring was added to the dining room and upstairs hall; layers of old linoleum were peeled off bathroom floors, which were tiled. The master bath's original marble sink had been sitting at a salvage yard





#### KEY DETAILS REMAIN

The 1885 Aesthetic Movement gentlemen's parlor is centered on an ornate, marbled slate mantel. The cast-iron firebox cover features a Victorian woman with a parrot and a dog.





since 2001; Andy found it, bought it, and put it back in the house.

The previous owners still cared for the house, dropping by to show Andy and Marie where they'd hidden (above pantry cabinets) historic Behr family photographs for subsequent owners to find. The period images showed a pair of substantial entry doors with beveled glass, which had been replaced in the 1940s. Months of internet searching lead to the discovery of a similar pair of seven-foot-tall, oak entry doors that would just fit the 56"-wide opening. Antique beveled glass windows and a bronze Victorian lockset and plates make the salvaged doors look original.

Simple furniture suits the family. There's a mix of handed-down antiques and local finds—including a set of fine antique china the couple stumbled upon on a walk in the woods. (It had been used for target practice by a disgruntled divorcé.) An antique desk for \$50 was refinished for the library. A velvet-covered rosewood settee was found for the ladies' parlor.

## Antique Mortise Locks

### REPAIR & RESTORATION

Andy Streenz is a professional locksmith who specializes in antique locks. In his house, he methodically removed and cleaned all existing locks to make them functional. Most problems with antique mortise locks stem from paint buildup, broken springs, and lack of lubrication. Here are Andy's step-by-step instructions to help you renew and keep your old locksets.

1. Unscrew one of the knob set-screws; **remove knobs and spindle from the door.**
2. Remove the wood screws from the mortise lock and **pull the lock body out of the door edge.** If there is excess paint, pry through the spindle or keyhole to aid removal. This is a good time to strip any paint from escutcheons.
3. Carefully **unscrew the case cover** to reveal the mortise lock's inner components. Important: Snap a photo of the lock to aid reassembly.
4. **Remove all paint** from parts, **reassemble them, and apply a light spray lubricant.** If you have any broken or missing springs, you may need to take the assembly to a local locksmith for fabrication or a salvage warehouse to find a replacement.
5. **Reassemble the lock** in reverse order. Take care to replace any shims or spindle washers that may have fallen out on removal of the lock.



**TOP** In the library, the floor-to-ceiling key-hole window is inset with stained-glass panels. The antique Cary safe and desk were found at local resale shops and have been restored. **LEFT** Original locksets were stripped and restored; the back door has panels with mouldings and a decorative onlay.





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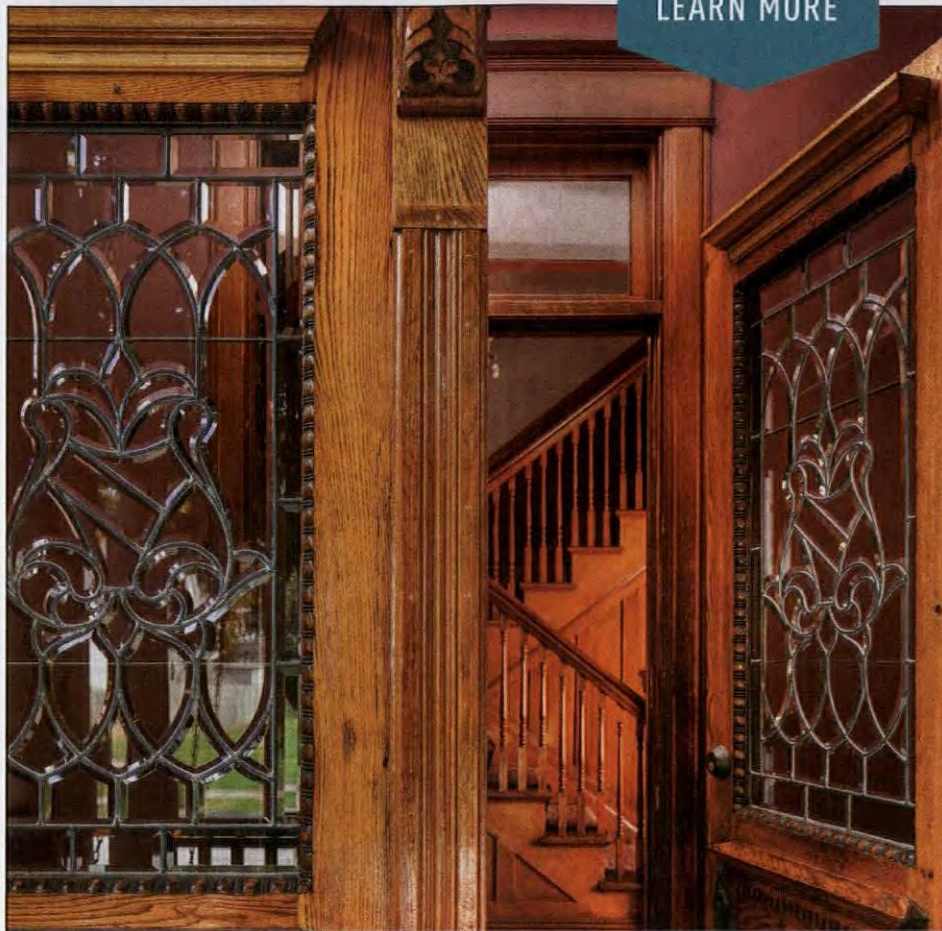
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## 19th CENTURY MILLWORK

A RIOT OF EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR ORNAMENT IN WOOD.

➔ Along with cheap labor, the new mechanical saws and mass manufacture that came with the Industrial Revolution created a burgeoning market for wood embellishment, inside and out. “Gingerbread” was even added to earlier houses, especially when the owners added a new front porch.

The Victorian era’s most common ornaments are still in production: from big wood brackets under the cornice to bull’s-eye corner blocks in window trim. The local millworks usually can closely match any surviving piece you bring in. Choose components cut from durable, insect-resistant, dimensionally stable wood with a low moisture content (kiln-dried poplar, Western red cedar, redwood, mahogany). For elements not at eye level,

or in extreme conditions, today’s resin and engineered substitutes are a good option; when they are painted, it’s hard to tell them from wood.

The keys to longevity are good design (including flashing as necessary), non-corroding fasteners, caulk, and paint. Before you install any wood ornament, be sure to prime all surfaces. Add two coats of paint to every exposed surface, and maintain the finish.

**ABOVE** Handsome oak entry doors are period replacements for missing originals; the beveled-glass panels are also salvage and complement those still on the house. Staircase and trim are original.

## VOCABULARY OF VICTORIAN MILLWORK

**BALUSTRADE** A better word than the inexact “banister,” it means the assembly of a top rail, balusters or spindles, and a foot rail or bottom moulding, used on a staircase, balcony, or porch.

**BARGEBOARD** The trim piece, carved or pierced or otherwise embellished, fixed to the projecting edges of a gable in the roof. Very popular in Gothic Revival architecture, also common on Queen Anne and Tudor houses.

**BRACKET** A projection from a wall or vertical surface providing structural or visual support under overhangs such as a cornice or balcony. Scroll-sawn wood brackets were popular.

**CORNER BLOCK** A square used at corners where mouldings and trim change direction around windows, doors, and mantels, eliminating the need for miter joints. Most common was the bull’s eye, a set of concentric circles, which is still available as stock millwork. Foliate (leaf and flower pattern) blocks were also popular in the Victorian era.

**FINIAL** An ornament, usually pointed, atop an architectural element such as a gable or newel.

**FRETWORK** An openwork ornamental design consisting of repeating elements within a band or border. The infill may be designs cut with a scroll saw, or repeated turnings, or ball-and-spindles.

**GINGERBREAD** A reference to an excess of applied wood ornament, commonly referencing Gothic Revival and Victorian Queen Anne houses.

**SPANDREL** The triangle formed between an arch and the outside frame. In stairbuilding, the vacant or filled triangle under the stair, and also the triangular ornaments applied to an open stringer where risers meet treads. In historical millwork, the ornament used to span the top of a doorway or bay, and also in corner treatments.

**SPINDLE** A slender, lathe-turned element used in a balustrade or as part of decorative fretwork.

### SELECTED SOURCES

*These companies sell stock and custom Victorian millwork, with many period designs.*

**Blue Ox Millworks** [blueoxmill.com](http://blueoxmill.com)

**Cumberland Woodcraft** [cumberlandwoodcraft.com](http://cumberlandwoodcraft.com)

**The Gingerbread Man** [gingerbreadman.com](http://gingerbreadman.com)

**Mad River Woodworks** [madrivewoodworks.com](http://madrivewoodworks.com)

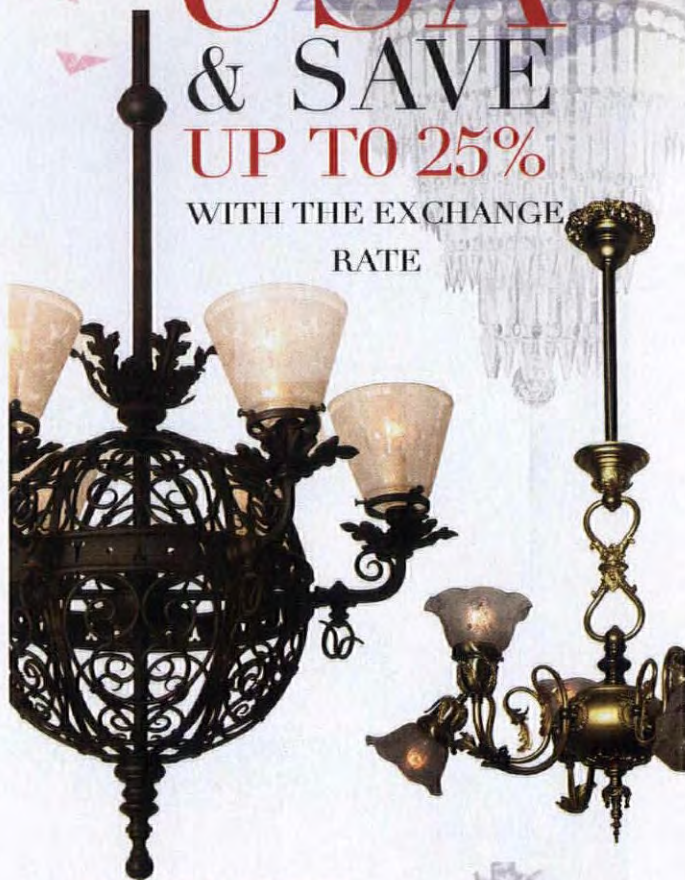
**Pagliaccio Turning & Milling** [pagliaccio.com](http://pagliaccio.com)

**Vintage Woodworks** [vintagewoodworks.com](http://vintagewoodworks.com)

**Western Spindle** [westernspindle.com](http://westernspindle.com)



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[Shown above: Ceiling Panel No. 213 & Shield No. 2958]



**Sometimes** we have to spend time away from our childhood home so that we can see it fresh. Susan Comden moved to Los Angeles for college, marriage and family, and a career in commercial real estate. Then she and her husband, Len, decided to remodel their lifestyle and buy a house in La Jolla, Susan's hometown. La Jolla is one of the spectacular coastal California enclaves, akin to Monterey, Santa Barbara, and Malibu. ■ "I have always been partial to Spanish architecture," Susan says, "especially all the wonderful seaside homes built in the 1920s and 1930s." ■ The couple met Linda Marrone, a local broker who specialized in historic homes. "Linda steered us to this vintage 1929 Spanish Colonial Revival house in the Barber Tract, an older area of La Jolla," Susan says. The house was designed by architect/builder J.W. Gernandt of San Diego.

#### A SUN PORCH ADDED EARLIER

A narrow, 180-square-foot enclosed sun porch had been added by a previous owner. Upgraded with period details and large, arched doors, it now seamlessly connects the original living room to a private patio.



**LEFT** The comfortable 1929 house presents its original, modest street façade. A heavy stuccoed cornice marks original parts of the house. The balcony at far left is original. **ABOVE** The 1929 roofing tile, still in service, was matched for the addition; Spanish red clay tile remains readily available.





### DETAILS MARK ADDITIONS

Old and new sections merge, but the architect left hints: new additions have wood corbels rather than the heavy cornice. The bedroom balcony, custom ironwork by a local company, was patterned on the interior stair rail.

# Staying True

The addition to this 1929 Spanish Colonial is modest and seamless, the upgrades pitch perfect (tile everywhere!), all thanks to dedicated homeowners and their sympathetic architect.

BY THOMAS SHESS | PHOTOS BY LARNY MACK

**A prior owner** had added a 180-square-foot enclosed sun porch to the rear of the 2,000-square-foot house. Besides that small addition, the house was original. “Love at first sight!” Susan remembers; “the Spanish features were all here: stucco, recessed arched windows, wrought iron, hand-hewn beams, Spanish decorative tiles on the fireplace and stair risers, and quarter-sawn oak flooring.”

The old house needed some minor improvements to bring it to contemporary

comfort. Initially, two small bedrooms upstairs shared a bath in the hall. But “we wanted a master bedroom with its own bath,” Susan says, “and we needed to update and, we hoped, expand the kitchen.” The original kitchen was very small, with the refrigerator kept on the service porch, where the old icebox had been.

Susan and Len also wanted to preserve the Spanish-style house for the future, by way of gaining a historic designation for it. So they needed a rare architect—some-

one who would understand the integrity of the period house, follow historical guidelines, and yet make functional improvements.

Their history-minded broker Linda Marrone recommended Ione Stiegler, FAIA, of IS Architecture. Her firm has renovated many historic houses in La Jolla and the San Diego area. With a penchant for historic preservation, “Ione had a reputation for sensitivity to period detail,” Susan says; “she’s a kindred spirit.”





The large living room opens to the sun porch, which was added by a previous owner to the rear of the house. Patio areas and the wall beyond are new.



**ABOVE** The kitchen area was expanded. Over the range is a display of original Tropico tiles (in a field of generic tile). Tropico (1920–23), in Glendale, was bought out by Gladding McBean, the ceramics firm founded in 1875.

## The original formal areas in the house were left as-built, paying respect to the intentions of the builder and honoring conventions of the period.

Stiegler accepted the challenge. “We had wonderful design meetings and looked at lots of ‘inspiration’ photos,” says the architect. “It helped that Susan had remodeled buildings in the past, had a good grasp of the process, and knew what things she wanted to oversee personally.”

Smiling, Susan Comden counters, “That’s nice of Ione to say, but the project, from our first handshake, was *her* baby.”

Right away, they faced their first hurdle. Although this house is eight houses removed from the ocean, due to strict coastal regulations, at purchase the property was held to the same reviews as an oceanfront home. They had to apply for a Coastal Development permit, which often takes a lot of time to process. But no neighbors objected to the design, and the permit was granted quickly.

Adding just five feet between the original kitchen and existing garage, Stiegler and associate architect Joseph Reid re-configured the space. “Most houses of the 1920s and ’30s have kitchens we consider too small,” Stiegler says. “We *live* in our kitchens today.”

The clients and architects also decided to slightly expand the downstairs bath, add a separate laundry room, enlarge the upstairs master suite—adding a fireplace and master bath—and upgrade the sun-room addition with beamed ceilings and arched doors to the patio.

“It was important to respect the original builder’s formal areas, living and dining rooms,” Stiegler says. “Too many owners today want to tear down all the walls to create an open living concept that is not in keeping with a historic house.



### ORIGINAL TILE SET THE TONE

The fireplace in the living room is studded with D&M tile; the stair risers (opposite) and these fireplace tiles are the only tile original to the 1929 house. New and vintage tiles have been added to kitchen, porch, and master bedroom.







**ABOVE** In the improved sunroom addition, the bar backsplash is set with old Batchelder tiles collected by the homeowner. The wide arched opening leads to the living room.

**RIGHT** The new patio, like the adjacent sun porch, is laid with concrete tiles. **BELOW** The breakfast room is part of the kitchen. A five-foot addition allowed for a new laundry room.

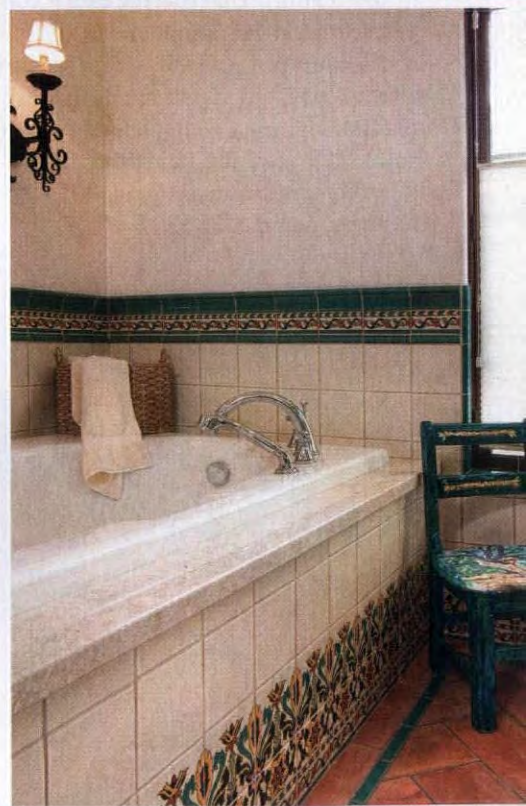


The renovated kitchen and breakfast room are essentially in their original locations. A five-foot addition holds the laundry and a hall to the garage.



## ADDED MASTER

A new master suite was added over the original kitchen and new bumpout to connect to the garage. The authentic-looking fireplace is set with collected Batchelder tiles. In the master bath, located in space that used to be the master bedroom, both the green backsplash and cap tiles, and the exotic design at the base of walls, are contemporary reproductions of California tile.



For the expanded kitchen and informal dining area, we did design an open concept. We also minimally enlarged the opening between the living room and the rebuilt rear porch, for better flow."

Most old homes don't have an *en suite* master bed and bath. Stiegler used the old larger bedroom for a new master bath; with an addition over the kitchen, she added a master bedroom complete with a fireplace and an ocean-facing balcony.

Susan Comden says that no one realizes the house had an addition. It's at the rear and seamless. "We completely hid the new massing behind the existing house," Stiegler says. "In keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation, we complemented but

did not exactly copy the original: the eave lines are slightly different on the addition." That becomes apparent when it's noted that the original house has a deep, stuccoed cornice, while the addition has wood corbels. The renovation added only 400 square feet, bringing the total to 2,580. The home's scale has not changed.

Even with an addition, the architects were able to get historic designation for the house. Its official name for the record, after the original owners, is the Harold and Maude Brown House. The homeowners have also received the Historic Preservation Award from the San Diego Historic Resources Board.

FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 87.



# AN EXPLOSION OF COLORFUL TILE

IN REPRODUCTION, HISTORIC CALIFORNIA TILE HAS MADE A DELICIOUS COMEBACK.

“The project really sings because of the Spanish-style tile, tile, tile,” says architect Ione Stiegler. [See previous story.] “And for that, homeowner Susan Comden gets all of the credit.

“My firm has many vintage catalogs from Southern California tilemakers,” Steigler continues, “as well as books on the subject, so we were familiar with the tiles Susan was looking to re-create. But it was her tenacity on eBay and at antiques stores, finding the historic tiles, which is truly awe-inspiring.” The Spanish Colonial Revival house has some original tile, as well as vintage and reproduction tile added during renovation.

“California” tile, often in stylized patterns inspired by Islamic art, became an almost universal garniture of Mediterranean and Spanish Colonial Revival houses of the period 1915–1930s. Besides Hispano-Moresque designs, stylized floral and aquatic themes—fish, waves—were popular in decorated tiles.

“Susan and Len’s project is an homage to California’s rich tradition of tile making,” says architect Stiegler. Illustrious makers included Catalina Pottery and Malibu Potteries, Batchelder tile in Pasadena, California Clay Products, and Gladding McBean.

Vintage tile, when you are able to find it, is usually priced at a premium, especially if you find it unset (still in the box) and in any quantity. That was the case involving a cache of unset Tropico Tile that Susan found at an antiques store in Pasadena.

The tile types available in the 1920s and ’30s have been revived. Today’s offerings include Spanish-influenced California tiles (Malibu and Catalina), textural Batchelder tiles, and hand-painted Talavera tile. Revived techniques—*cuenca*, *cuerda seca*, *tubeline*—are still used by small-batch artisanal studios as well as larger manufacturers.



**ABOVE** Back and front iron gates, probably dating to the 1920s, came from a local antiques store. The tile inserts decorating the piers are original Tropico tiles collected by the homeowner, as “unset” units purchased in a box of two dozen. **LEFT** In the more public downstairs bathroom, tile is a stunning reproduction of a Malibu Potteries (1926–1932) design found in the 1929 Adamson House in Malibu. **OPPOSITE** In the kitchen, antique tiles set into a generic field are Tropico (1920–23) tiles found by the homeowner.



## CALIFORNIA TILE

### California Pottery and Tile Works

calpot.com Malibu & Catalina tile tradi-

tions • **Fireclay Tile** fireclaytile.com

California & Moorish designs, glazed

thin brick, hand-painted designs •

### Malibu Ceramic Works malibuceramic

works.com Malibu/Catalina, Hispano-

Moresque, Batchelder-reproduction,

subway tile etc. • **Catalina Island Tiles**

spookshows.com/mat/index.htm

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**Tile West** missiontilewest.com Large

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styles & more • **Native Tile** nativetile.

com California tile for fireplace, floor,

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**Craftsman Tile** pasadenacraftsman

tile.com Original & Batchelder-repro-

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### RTK Studios rtkstudios.com California

field & trim tiles, decos, murals, etc.

for architectural applications • **Tile**

**Restoration Center** tilerestoration

center.com Restoration & custom

work; reproductions of Batchelder &

Claycraft tiles

RELATED TILE SOURCES, SEE PAGE 87.

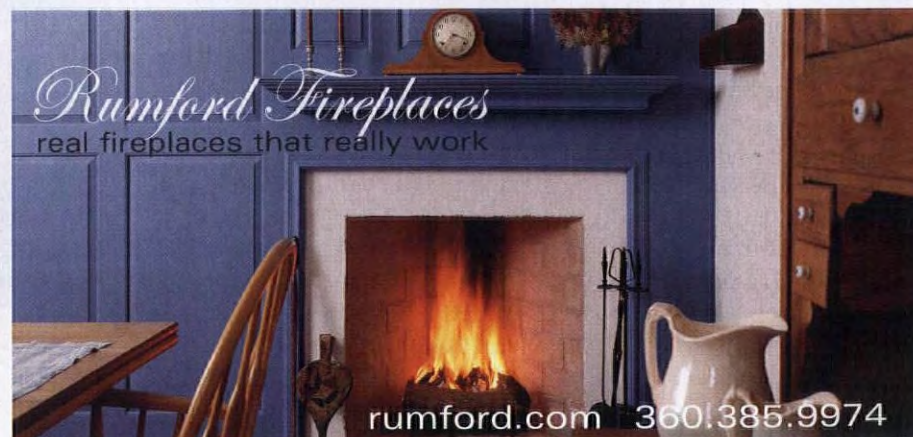


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**ABOVE** The house with its boxcar addition. **RIGHT** Now there's a compatible bay on the rear, and upper and lower porches have been restored.



## DELETING A POOR ADDITION

With better space planning inside, we don't miss the ugly add-on. **By Courtney Neff, Brunswick, Maine**

**Hello to OHJ!** Your regular "Remuddling" page (and the occasional "unmuddling") gave us both the inspiration and the courage to uncouple a 1970s caboose from our house. A shoebox on a boxcar, it was incompatible in every way with this lovely if modest 1881 Victorian Italianate home.

Although we do have old photographs of the front and side of the house, we were unable to find documentation of the original rear elevation. We decided to duplicate the typical bay window that remains on the front of the house. That gave us a casual dining space near the kitchen, overlooking our new garden.

The newly renovated kitchen looks like it was always part of the

house, unlike its 1970s predecessor. It's got a restored 1925 stove, a beautiful old slate sink, and quarter-sawn oak cabinets from The Kennebec Company. Their designer Jeff Peavey worked with my wife, Donna, who is a retired art teacher, to design the room.

Other rooms in the house needed a lot of work, but we didn't make any dramatic changes. The living room has beautiful light from its original bay and another tall window. We relied on salvaged materials to lend authenticity in our repairs and additions.

This spring, our house was chosen to be the subject for our historic neighborhood association's Arts and Architecture program.



**BEFORE** Part of the previous kitchen and a breakfast area were inside the bland 1970s addition. **ABOVE** Demolishing the boxy addition exposed the original rear wall.



## THE STYLE

### ITALIANATE?

The word refers to the more freewheeling American expressions in a series of Renaissance-inspired styles ca. 1845 to 1900. Associated with 19th-century farmhouses, it became the most popular building style for decades, throughout the country.

#### TUSCAN VILLA

This purist type has a foursquare footprint and cubic massing. Its hipped roof is topped with a square cupola called a belvedere.

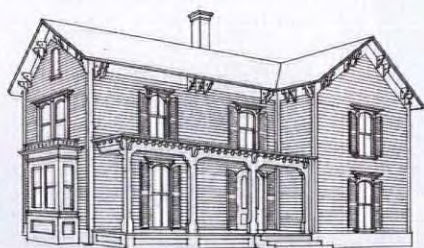


#### ITALIAN VILLA

Unendingly picturesque, this noble variant is asymmetrically (usually) anchored by a square tower called a campanile. Note quoins at the corners.

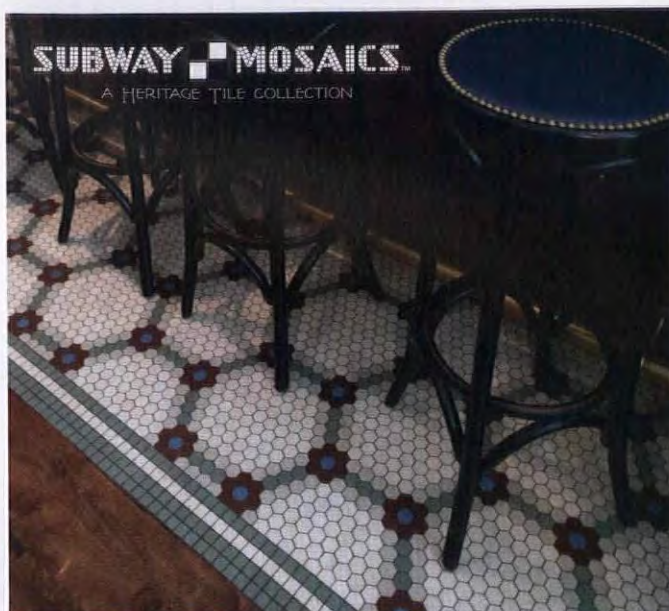
#### SIMPLE ITALIANATE

The word "Italianate" refers to a combination of Italian Renaissance shapes and details rendered in simplified, or occasionally exaggerated, fashion.



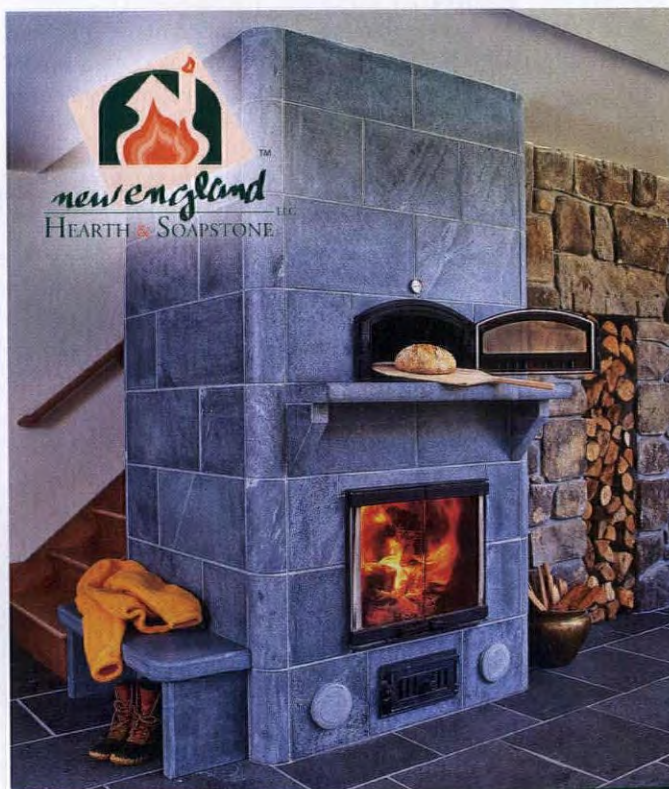
#### ROW HOUSES

The related urban high style was Renaissance Revival, but row houses were often built in the vernacular: brownstone in Manhattan, wood in San Francisco.



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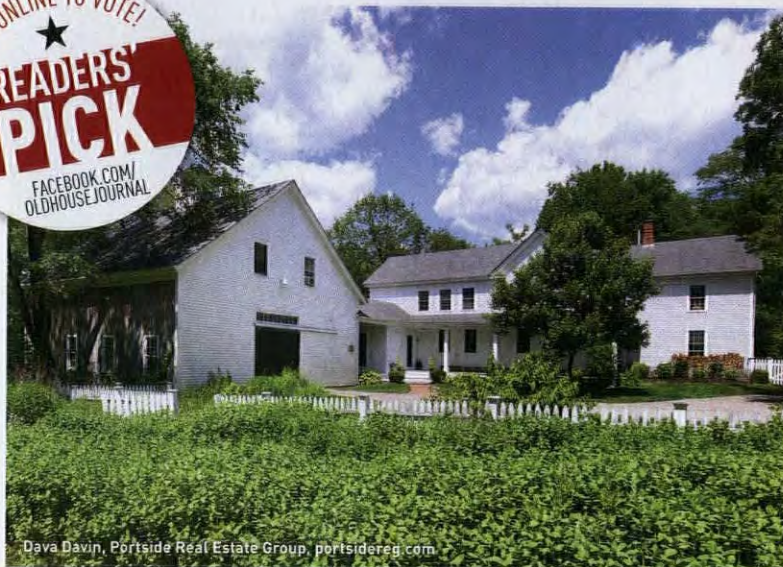
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## Outbuildings, Too

Barns and other outbuildings add to a property's historic character. Five picturesque examples follow.



Dava Davin, Portside Real Estate Group, portsidereg.com

### FREEPORT, ME / \$725,000

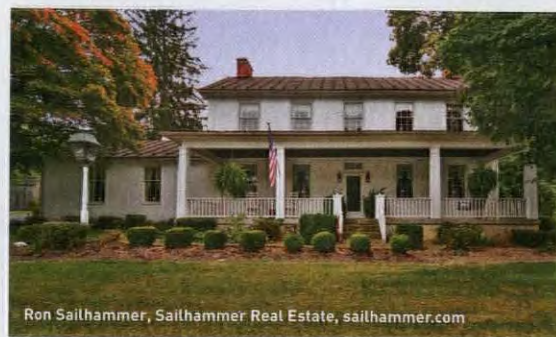
Built around 1870, this farmhouse was added to in the "big house, little house, back house, barn" tradition. Sensitively renovated, it includes a reproduction cookstove, soapstone countertops, original spindled staircase, and a low farmer's porch.



Brandon Mosher, River Hills Properties, riverhillspropertiesllc.com

### SPRINGFIELD CENTER, NY / \$545,000

A big red barn and other outbuildings complete the setting for a ca. 1840 renovated farmhouse painted inside and out in period colors. Original chestnut flooring and rebuilt Rumford fireplaces remain; the sympathetic, unfitted kitchen has a drainboard sink.



Ron Sailhammer, Sailhammer Real Estate, sailhammer.com

### SHIPPENSBURG, PA / \$349,000

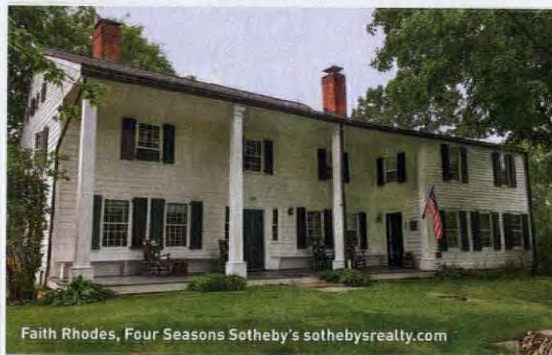
This 1820s Greek Revival farmhouse is replete with a stone-and-timber bank barn and packing house. Plaster-coated stone walls are 2' thick. See a staircase with decorative end-boards, built-in cupboards, plus period windows and mantels.



Alan Maddox, Five Star Realty, maddox5star.com

### DUNDEE, KY / \$74,900

A spectacular entry with Queen Anne-glass door panels, sidelights, and transom greet visitors to this 1872 Folk Victorian. Elaborate fretwork graces the front porch—and there's a wood-sided barn on the property. Interior details include original rim-lock hardware and a clawfoot slipper tub.

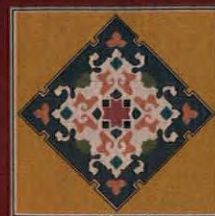


Faith Rhodes, Four Seasons Sotheby's sothebysrealty.com

### NORTH BENNINGTON, VT / \$725,000

Across from a historic covered bridge, the 1769 William Henry House is the earliest survivor in town. Besides the detached barn, the National Register property has wide-plank floors, a paneled dining room, multiple period fireplaces, and original wrought-iron hardware.





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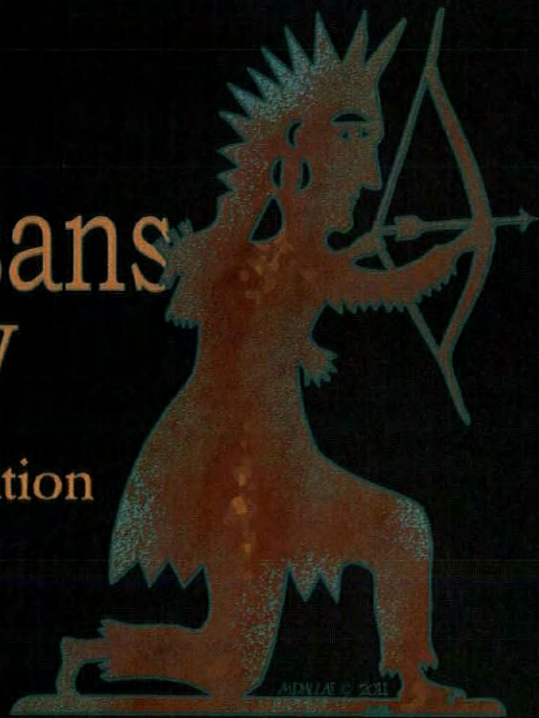
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## the FIREPLACE

CHIMNEYS & FIREPLACES ARE INTRINSIC FEATURES OF OLD HOUSES, AND IMPORTANT TO KEEP UP FOR YOUR SAFETY. GET THE BASICS. **page 38**

46

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**54 SALVAGE IT**  
**56 DO THIS, NOT THAT**  
**58 ASK OHJ**







Old-house fireplaces and the requisite chimneys that exhaust them are misunderstood fixtures. Learn more for better comfort and safety.

BY MARY ELLEN POLSON

# UNDERSTANDING FIREPLACES

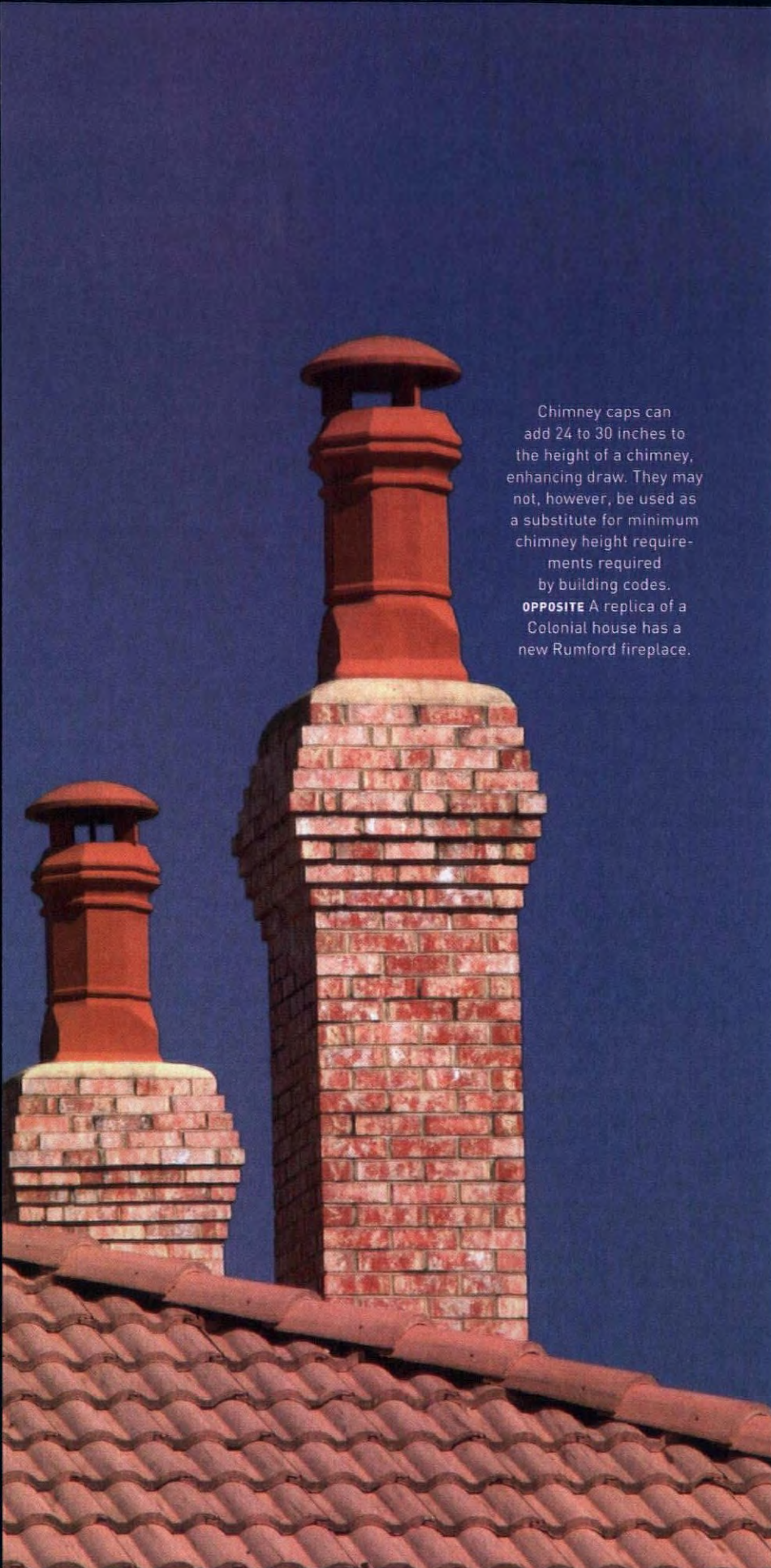
Nothing like the flickering flames and cozy warmth of a fire on a cold, damp evening. That is, if the fire actually catches and draws without smoke billowing into the room.

Chimneys work on the principle that hot air rises because it is less dense than cold air. When a chimney is filled with hot gas, the gas tends to rise because it is less dense than the air outside. The rising hot gas creates a pressure difference called draft, which draws combustion air into the firebox and expels the exhaust gas outside.

Most old-house fireplaces draw well because they were built by masons skilled in the art of chimney and firebox construction. Over time, however, conditions that affect draw may change. "The house has to be in a pressure situation that allows the chimney to draw," says Tyler McClave of Superior Clay, a maker of Rumford fireplaces.



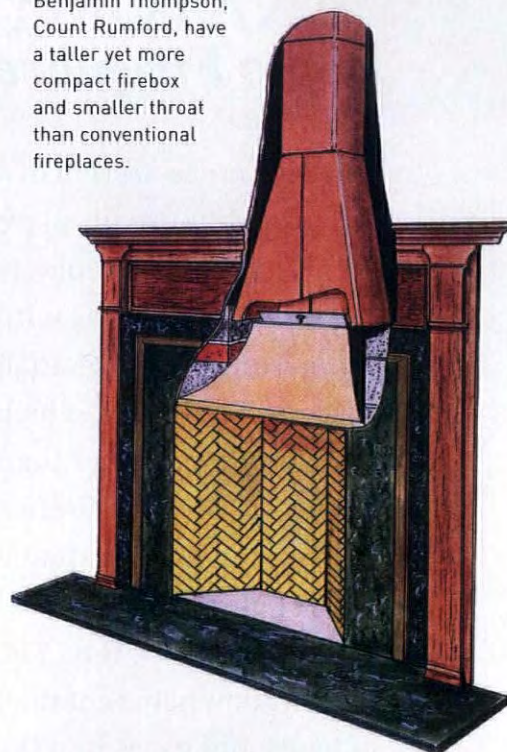




Chimney caps can add 24 to 30 inches to the height of a chimney, enhancing draw. They may not, however, be used as a substitute for minimum chimney height requirements required by building codes.

**OPPOSITE** A replica of a Colonial house has a new Rumford fireplace.

**RIGHT** Rumford fireplaces, based on a pattern developed in the 1700s by Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford, have a taller yet more compact firebox and smaller throat than conventional fireplaces.



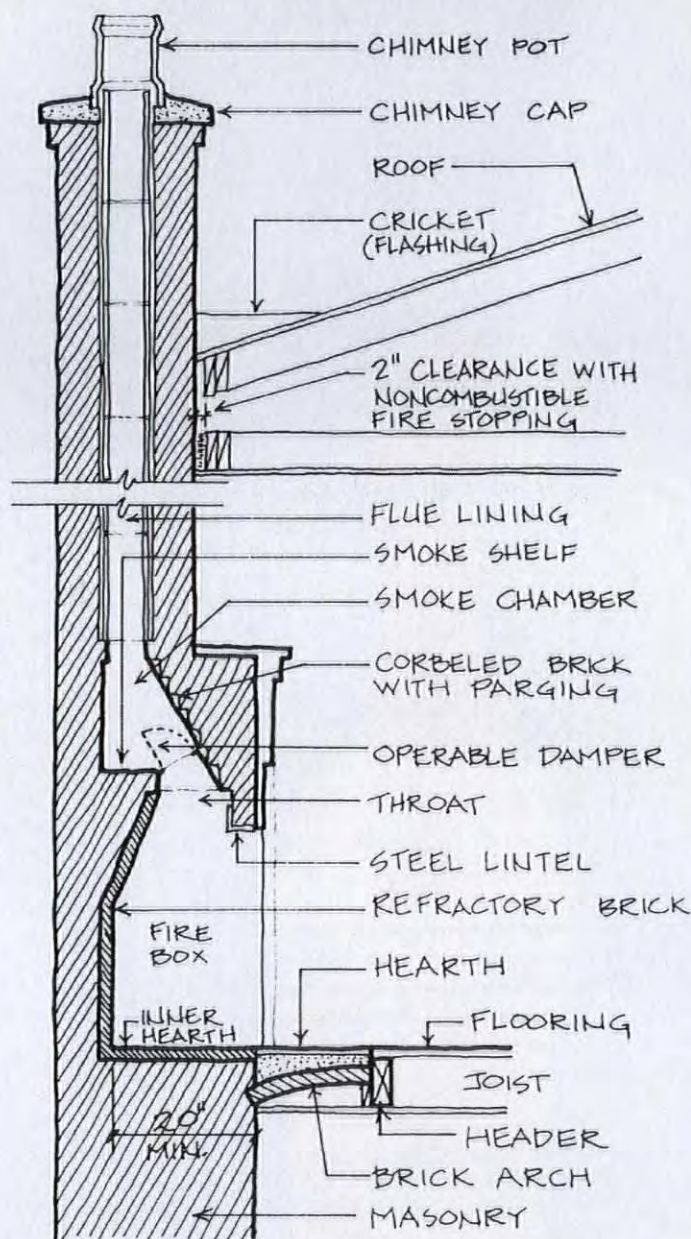
## Rumford's Radiant Idea

Count Rumford's fireplace design, taller than earlier conventions, was also shallower, with widely angled covings to better reflect and radiate heat. He advocated plastering and whitewashing the firebox to keep it clean and reflective. Modern physicists argue that what really happens is that, whitewashed or not, the firebox absorbs heat and re-radiates it out into the room. There isn't a significant difference in performance between whitewashed plaster and soot-covered brick.



## ANATOMY of a Fireplace

As this cross-section of a typical old-house fireplace indicates, fireplaces begin below grade with a masonry support, then rise up to a firebox, which opens to a flue. Rather than a straight shot, the firebox delivers smoke and exhaust through a narrow throat at the base of the flue. The configuration helps channel exhaust and gases into the flue, where they quickly exit through the top of the chimney.



In a conventional wood-burning fireplace, the hot gases formed by combustion create turbulence that swirls around and eventually finds its way through the throat—a tight spot near the bottom of the flue—and out through the chimney. In the more compact design of a Rumford chimney, named for the physicist who invented the style in the 18th century, the throat is narrower and more streamlined, so that the turbulence and smoke evacuate more quickly. “It’s sort of like squeezing the end of a water hose to make it flow faster,” McClave says.

The hotter the gases in the chimney are compared to the air temperature outside, the better the chimney will draw. That’s why a fireplace that draws well in cold weather is sometimes smoky or fitful when it’s not cold outside. The turbulence created during combustion has a harder time finding its way up the flue.

Taller chimneys tend to draw better than those built to the minimum requirements, as do chimneys built within the exterior walls of a house rather than outside.

That said, houses draw air just like chimneys do, according to the Wood Heat Organization ([woodheat.org](http://woodheat.org)). Warm air tends to push up towards the top of the house, creating higher pressure near the roof and lower pressure on the ground floor and basement. The difference in pressure at different points in the house is called the stack effect.

A house with two or three storeys produces more stack effect than a one-storey Ranch or an Arts & Crafts Bungalow because it produces a taller column of warm air. Houses with more leaks in the upper levels—and old houses typically fall into that category—produce more stack effect. [text cont. on page 44]



## THE PRO TIP

**Cracked bricks and crumbling mortar are warning signs of a deteriorating chimney. Have damage repaired by a professional certified by the Chimney Safety Institute of America.**

## Cleaning Brick & Stone

Count yourself lucky if your brick or stone fireplace surround is just dirty. If someone painted over it in the past, restoration is harder.

Over time, small, black, carbon-based particles become embedded in the surface of masonry fireplaces. Removing this built-up dirt is usually fairly labor intensive, and effective cleaning materials range from art-gum erasers—they really work!—to a variety of household and specially formulated cleaners.

The go-to cleanser in the past was trisodium phosphate (TSP), but this harsh chemical is a notable pollutant of waterways. Today there are more eco-friendly cleaners, such as

Chimney Rx. Even a wash with window cleaner can significantly improve the appearance of materials like stone or rugged brick.

Since masonry is so varied, experiment with a variety of cleaners, beginning with the gentlest. When working with any kind of harsh cleaner, use a sponge or wire brush and wear long rubber gloves to protect hands and arms.

Painted surfaces require more elbow grease and the process is messy. Start with gentle hand-scraping with a variety of tools, with or without a heat gun or infrared tool, such as Eco-Strip's Speedheater, to loosen paint from the surface.

Since masonry surfaces

tend to be at least slightly rough, it's almost impossible to get all of the paint off without one or more applications of a proprietary cleaner specifically formulated for jobs like this. Only a few, such as Blue Bear's Soy-Gel, are free from harsh chemicals. Be sure to protect other surfaces. In the end, the results may be well worth the mess.



**ABOVE** Never paint a brick or stone surround—or a future owner may be forced to do this. **LEFT** Blue Bear's Soy-Gel removes paint from masonry safely and easily.



## THE PRO TIP

**Mortared in place** as the chimney is constructed, hollow vitrified clay flue liners are the traditional material for lining chimneys. They are available in various shapes, sizes, and lengths.



# Do you need a chimney liner?

Old chimneys are subject to wear and tear, from chinks in the mortar and percolating moisture to the buildup of creosote inside the flue. While many of these issues can be addressed with proper maintenance, the enclosed nature of the chimney makes it impossible to see or anticipate every potential hazard. That's why many chimney sweeps and building professionals often urge owners to install chimney liners as a safety precaution.

Chimney liners perform three functions:

- They protect the building by insulat-

ing any flammable material around the chimney from the hot gases in the flue.

- They protect the masonry, brick or stone, as well as the mortar from the deleterious effects of the acidic chemistry of the by-products of burned gas, oil, or wood.
- Finally, a liner can be sized to optimize airflow through the flue.

Chimneys constructed before the first decades of the 20th century were usually straightforward affairs of brick or stone. As the masonry was laid up, the interior of the chimney received a parging coat of mortar as a means of protecting the brick or stonework and mortar joints from the effects of the acids created during the combustion process.

Early in the 20th century, masons began to install rectangular tubes of terracotta as the chimney was built. These clay flue liners were stacked and mortared as the chimney rose around them. When complete, the clay liners could last 50 years or more.

Problems arise when inspections find that one or more of the clay liner pieces have developed cracks or breaks. Repair made by replacing individual flue "tiles" is not only difficult, but also can be quite destructive. Usually an interior or exterior wall must be opened to remove the broken clay flue liner and replace it.

Clay is durable and has a low material cost. Normally unaffected by heat and combustion acids, clay liners are sometimes prone to thermal shock, particularly when the outside air temperature is very low. Impurities and even minor

defects during the manufacturing process can increase the chance of damage. Alternative liners include metal and cast-in-place masonry liners. Like clay, both have pluses and minuses.

Metal liners are commonly galvanized steel, aluminum, or stainless steel. For straight runs they can be supplied as bolt-together sections. For chimneys that present with turns, stainless steel (for example) is supplied in a corrugated tube to assist bending and produce a virtually seamless flue from the firebox opening or stove to the top of the chimney.

## UNLINED CHIMNEYS

don't retain heat as well as lined flues, leading to more condensation of flue gases and **creosote** buildup.

Call the chimney sweep when creosote reaches the thickness of a dime—or once a season with regular use.

A new liner will undoubtedly decrease the diameter of the flue, which may affect how well a chimney draws if the fireplace is an open one. Decreasing the size of the flue can actually be a benefit if the liner serves a stove or insert. (Metal liners are required by code for both.) While aluminum and stainless-steel liners have shorter lifespans than either clay



**TOP** Clay flue liners made by Superior Clay. **LEFT** An old square flue before lining; the same flue, after being lined using the Thermocrete process.

**OPPOSITE** A stainless-steel flue liner kit made by Duraflex.

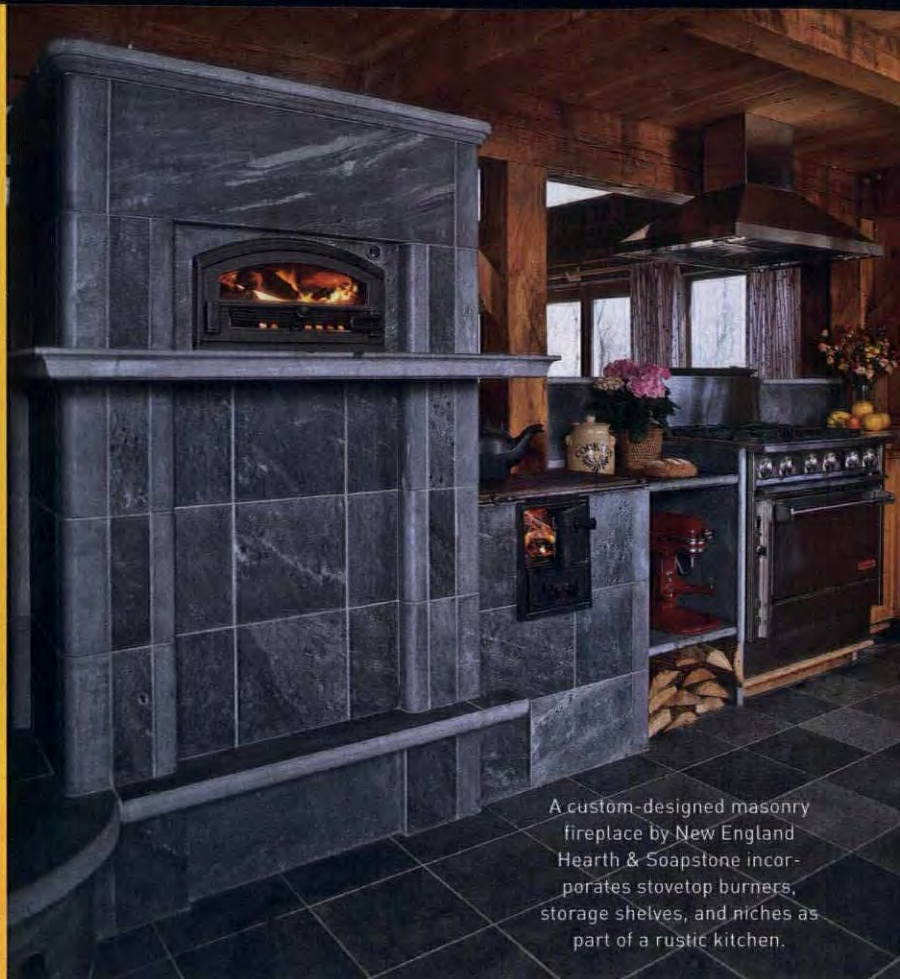


or masonry, they are far easier to replace. The cost is not insignificant, with most liner jobs running from about \$1,200 to \$2,400.

Cast-in-place liners are installed in one of three ways. In a system marketed by Thermocrete, a rotating spray nozzle can be lowered into any chimney to spray on a coating that can be layered over several passes. This process will maintain the diameter of the existing flue as it repairs cracks and chips in a clay liner or unlined chimney. The surfacing can be refreshed in the event of coating failure.

Another process, available from Supafllu, involves inserting a long rubber tube into the chimney flue. The tube is then inflated and a lightweight, heat-resistant (refractory) cement is poured around the tube. When it hardens, the tube is deflated and pulled from the chimney, leaving behind a smooth flue suitable for use with any fuel. This permanent liner is also known to strengthen older chimneys. It is, however, non-reversible and about twice the cost of a stainless-steel liner. If the masonry fails, the alternative is to reline the chimney with a stainless-steel liner.

Finally, the Ahrens system employs a vibrating bell that is lowered into the chimney. As it is drawn up, a refractory cement is slowly installed around the bell, which subsequently packs it tightly to the walls of the chimney. The end result is a liner not unlike the lining described above, and at about the same cost. —Ray Tschoepe



A custom-designed masonry fireplace by New England Hearth & Soapstone incorporates stovetop burners, storage shelves, and niches as part of a rustic kitchen.

## WHOLE HOUSE FIREPLACES

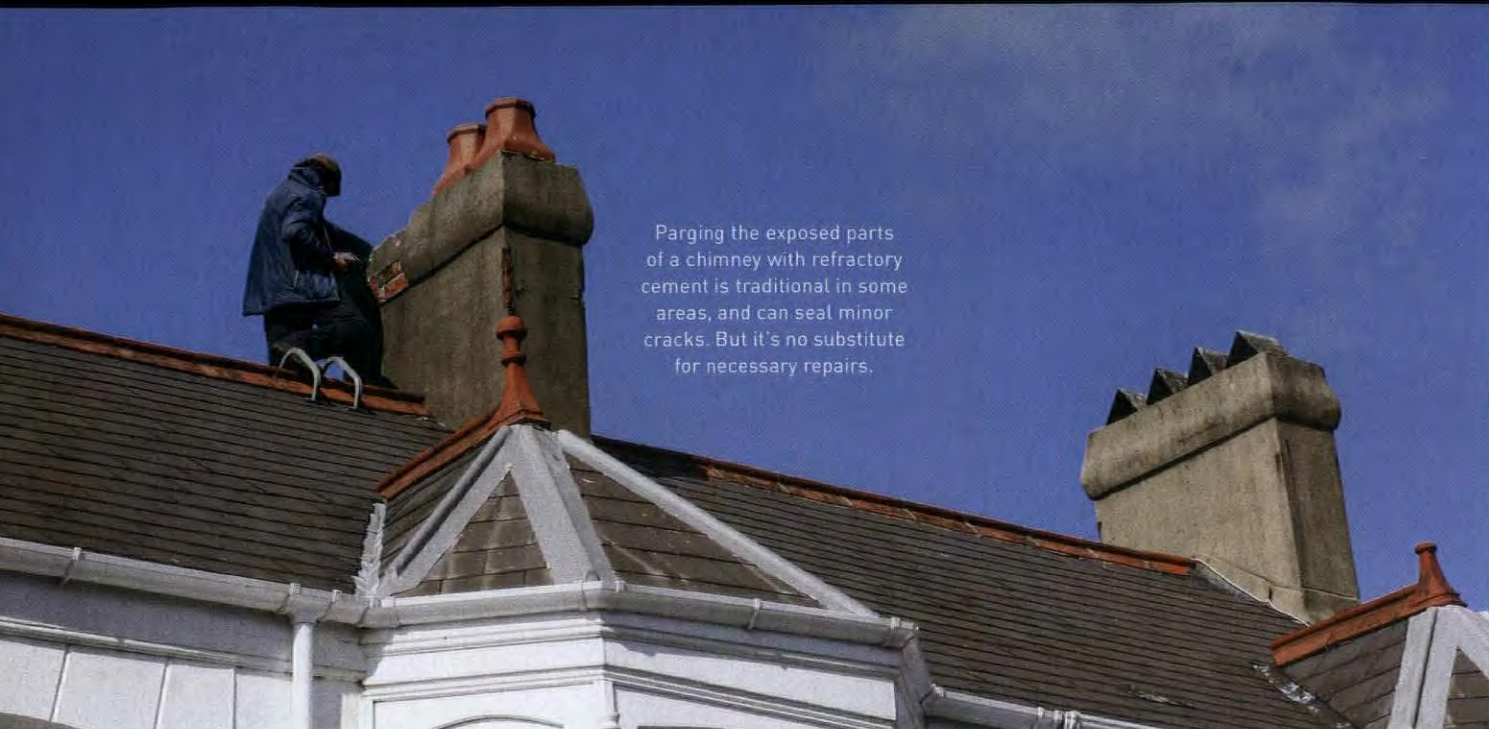
Suppose your old house has lost its original fireplaces, or that it's cost-prohibitive to restore them. Or you're interested in a whole-house heating method that burns a low-cost material.

The answer could be a masonry fireplace. With a heritage that goes back hundreds of years to the earliest stoves in Scandinavia and Europe, masonry fireplaces are massive, enclosed whole-house heaters with heat-exchange channels that conserve energy and slowly release it. Masonry stoves use less wood than wood stoves or fireplace inserts to produce more heat. What's better, they produce fewer emissions, not least because fueling one even in the coldest weather means opening the door to reload only twice a day.

Masonry stoves are considered radiant heat sources. While they require a certain amount of mass and surface area to heat a given amount of space, they can be embellished with such features as warming benches and bake and pizza ovens. And a masonry fireplace burns clean, so that you'll always see flickering flames or glowing coals through the firebox opening.

While fireplace inserts typically run from \$4,000 to \$7,000 including installation, masonry fireplaces are a bigger undertaking. They not only weigh between 1½ and 3 tons, but are also more expensive because they're usually custom built. M. Teixeira Soapstone makes compact units finished in soapstone that begin at \$5,000 to \$6,000. Custom-designed masonry fireplaces made by 30-year veteran Rod Zander of New England Hearth & Soapstone range from \$20,000 to \$25,000 finished in tile or stone.





Parging the exposed parts of a chimney with refractory cement is traditional in some areas, and can seal minor cracks. But it's no substitute for necessary repairs.

## Dampers

**Easy to open and close** with a pull on a chain, poker, or latch, a damper is essential for fireplaces in colder climates. Without one, heat generated by a furnace will go straight up the chimney. • In many older houses, cast-iron dampers are located in or near the throat of the chimney. In chimneys that lack a top screen, **a cast-iron damper is subject to rust** and can collect leaves, soot, or bird and squirrel nests. It's usually dirty to handle, and opening the damper

after the fire is already going is a recipe for both a smoky house and burns. • If the chimney lacks a damper, by all means install one. But there's no need to place it in the traditional throat location, which is difficult to reach and seal effectively, whether you are a professional or a homeowner.

**Instead, choose a top-sealing unit** (see Resources, p. 87). They are much easier to install, even as a DIY project, and eliminate the need for screening at the top of the chimney.



**LEFT** Constructed of cast aluminum and stainless steel and set with silicone gaskets, a Seal Tight damper won't rust or corrode.

A chimney that draws well should not be affected by the stack effect inside the house. A chimney can, however, become smoky or fail to draw well if the house is too airtight, especially if other appliances that vent air are running. "If the bath or kitchen fans are on, the fireplace may get smoky," says Jim Buckley of the Buckley Rumford Company.

Assuming the fireplace is in good working order, the damper is open, and that there are no obstructions, do a test to see whether the chimney is drawing properly. Hold a stick of incense or a candle in the throat of the fireplace, Buckley advises. If the smoke goes up the chimney, the problem isn't pressurization; it could be that the chimney flue is cold (or it could be your fire-building skills).

If the smoke blows down and out into the room, that means

there is a down draft in the chimney—that is, air is being drawn into the house rather than exhausted out the chimney. You'll need to neutralize the down draft before lighting a fire. Usually this can be accomplished by opening a window or turning off an air-handling vent, which alters the air pressure in the house.

Start with a small experiment, such as opening a door or window on a lower floor. Wait a few minutes, then test again with the incense or candle. If that didn't work, turn off a ventilation fan. Test again. Still no luck? Try closing an upstairs window or skylight. Eventually you should find a solution to the internal pressurization problem and the chimney should draw properly.

Once that happens, set up a fire in the firebox, light it in several places with a match or igniter, and sit back to enjoy the cheerful glow.



Furniture images courtesy of Kevin Hurley Photography



Buffet painted with Black Dog Salvage Furniture Paint in Appalachian Sunset.

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# From Attic to the Basement

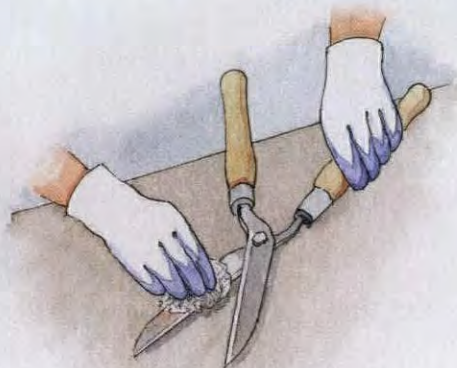
Pre-winter projects for unglamorous areas: organize those tools, insulate the attic, upgrade your water heating system.

By Lynn Elliott

**HOURLY**

## Care for Your Tools

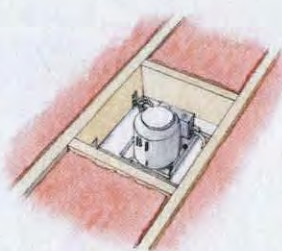
Piled in a bucket, tossed in a drawer—we take tools for granted. With a bit of attention, they'll be more functional and last longer. After each use, wipe tools with a clean rag. Check for damage or corrosion. Rusty? Scrub with steel wool and rust remover; wear heavy gloves to prevent getting cut. Wash and repeat, then dry thoroughly. Lubricate moving parts with all-purpose oil, avoiding handles. For rough handles, use medium-grit emery cloth to sand first across and then with the grain. Coat with linseed oil. Keep tools sharp with a medium-grit sharpening stone, lubricated, depending on type, with water or honing oil. Organize clean tools: in boxes, on shelves or in cabinets, from hooks on a pegboard. Hang lawn tools, don't store them on the floor. For everyday tools like hammer and screwdriver, keep a handy cache in a small tool carrier.



**DAY**

## Insulate the Attic

A properly insulated attic saves on heating bills and can help keep the house cooler in the summer. Blanket or batt insulation, 16" to 24" thick and with or without a vapor-retardant foil backing, fits between the joists and may be laid over older insulation.



### STEP 1

Wear dust mask, long sleeves, goggles, work gloves. Have plywood handy, long enough to span three joists, to stand on. Remove old insulation if flattened or moldy. Seal drafty spots with appropriate spray foam. If there is no existing vapor barrier, choose foil insulation batts, or line between the joists with 4- to 6-mil polyethylene sheeting; staple to attach. Cut holes around lighting or electrical fixtures.

### STEP 2

Use baffles to keep insulation away from soffits (don't cover them) to allow ventilation in your attic. Baffles come in 4' lengths and range between 14 1/2" and 22 1/2" wide. Choose a snug fit for your rafters. Place baffles between rafters, starting from the point where rafter and joist meet. Staple edges. When you're ready, batts of insulation can be laid directly next to baffles. Box out lighting fixtures: covering with batts presents a fire hazard.

### STEP 3

Working from the outer edges of the attic toward the exit, roll batts between joists. Cut to length with a utility knife. Run new batts perpendicular to any old insulation to cover any gaps. End joints should abut, but not compress each other. Cut insulation to fit around obstructions; don't stuff it, which decreases effectiveness. Lift wires or cables and place batts beneath them. Run another layer perpendicular to the first if needed.

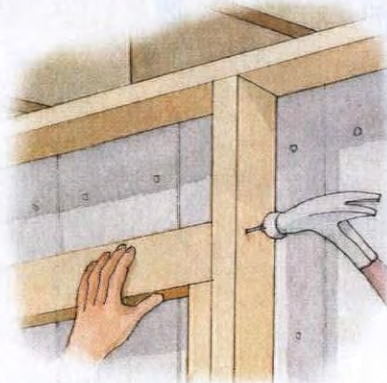


## Install a Tankless Water Heater

Tankless water heaters heat water as it circulates through coils in the system, using gas or electricity on demand instead of continuously. The new water heater will need to be mounted on a wall and vented: choose its location before you start.



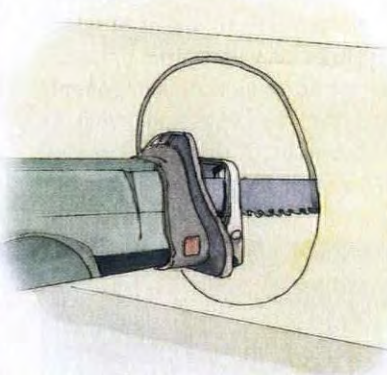
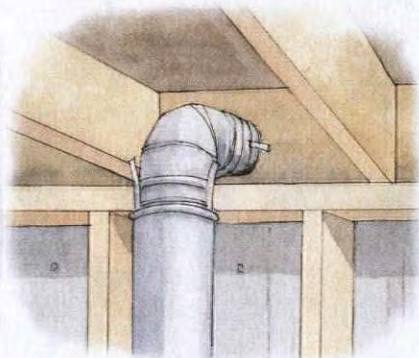
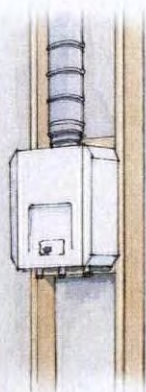
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2

3

4



### STEP 1

Turn off the water and gas. Remove old water heater. For gas water heaters, you need a tee and a valve. Install them if your existing line doesn't have them. Run a flexible gas supply line from the tee to the water heater, but don't attach it yet. Using copper pipe, install hot and cold water lines that run from the existing lines to the water heater. Apply flux on the joints of the pipes and solder with a blowtorch. Bell hangers hold the pipe against the wall.

### STEP 2

Using 2"x4" lumber, create a mounting platform for the water heater 4" away from the wall. Hang the heater. Per manufacturer's instructions, connect shut-off valve and sediment trap. Attach the gas line to the shut-off valve. Then connect to water supply lines.

### STEP 3

Turn on the gas and bleed the line if needed. Check for leaks and turn off the gas. Next connect the vent shaft on the water heater to the vent. Using heat-resistant silicone sealant, attach a connector to the vent shaft on heater and secure with a hose clamp. Then put on the vent pipe and retaining ring. Fold over tabs to secure. Slide on an elbow, adjusting it to face toward outside vent.

### STEP 4

Tankless water heaters require a stainless-steel flue to handle corrosive gases. Install a new one if necessary. Choose the position of your vent and drill a hole through the wall to outside. Using it as a guideline, go outside with the vent thimble and outline it on wall. Cut out a vent hole with a reciprocating saw. Attach interior and exterior vent thimble, vent pipe and hood. Turn on water and gas or plug in (for electric). Start heater as directed by manufacturer.





^ **FIRE WITH FLOURISH**

Shown with a reflective fireback made of hot-rolled steel that effectively throws heat, the Fleur-de-lis fireplace grate holds wood in the optimum position for burning. Both components come in various sizes and styles. As shown: \$437. Grate Wall of Fire, (800) 274-7364, [gratewalloffire.com](http://gratewalloffire.com)



^ **A MANTEL DARK & STONY**

Soapstone has always been an ideal material for fireplaces. The mantel and surround are composed of 1 1/8"-thick Church Hill soapstone from Virginia. Mineral oil was applied to give the fireplace an aged look. Materials and installation: about \$5,000. M. Teixeira Soapstone, (877) 478-8170, [soapstones.com](http://soapstones.com)

^ **LOW-PROFILE RADIANT**

Recalling early industrial design, the Steam Flow Form radiator offers a low-to-the-ground option for steam or hot-water systems. Fins arranged in a spiral around the heating tube radiate heat throughout the room. They come in 36" and 72" lengths. \$1,295 and up. Steam Radiators, (800) 966-0587, [steamradiators.com](http://steamradiators.com)



## Winter Hot Stuff

Keep warm next season tackling a new project—or relaxing with a new heat source.



^ **A WARM GLOW** ^

The H6 Series gas fireplace with herringbone liner and traditional log set has a secondary heat exchanger to circulate warm air through convection. The fireplace viewing area is 36 1/8" wide x 25 1/2" high. \$4,600 as shown. Valor, (866) 782-6804, [valorfireplaces.com](http://valorfireplaces.com)



< **SUPER QUICK STRIPPER**

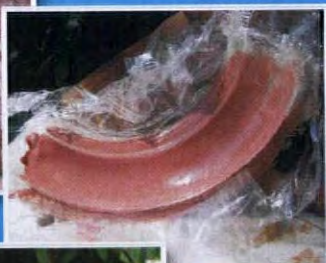
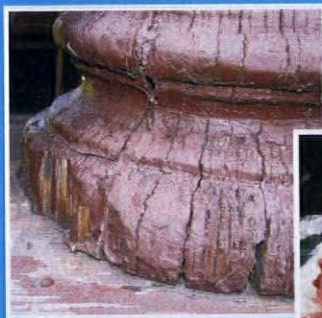
Just introduced in the U.S., the Speedheater Cobra infrared paint remover softens paint, varnish, and adhesives in mere seconds without scorching the wood. Using about 75% less energy than a typical heat gun, it works well on curves and crevices, too. \$499. Eco-Strip, (703) 810-7297, [eco-strip.com](http://eco-strip.com)



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# How Transom Windows Work

An OHJ reader gives a step-by-step account of replacing a transom operator for functioning over-door windows that open and close.

By Alex Santantonio

 Transom windows over most of the doors in our 1880s row house are important to its authenticity. Transoms historically were used to allow passage of air and light between rooms even when doors were shut. They make perfect sense in row houses, which typically have long, narrow floor plans with windows only at the front and back.

This house originally had four transom windows; all were painted shut. My wife, Wendy, and I not only restored them, but also added two more, including one completely fabricated in our basement woodshop using salvaged glass.

The mechanisms for working transoms were diverse in their construction and styles. They include bottom-hinged transoms with latches and chains that had a long pole to pull the latch open; side-hinged transoms that opened like doors; and top-hinged transoms with fixed lifts that could be hand-operated.

The most common type uses a long rod to operate a lift mount bracket attached to the transom sash. Restoring an existing transom is fairly straightforward, provided the window is in good condition and you have all the operable parts.



Bringing light and air to the vestibule, this restored transom window and operator are at the row house entry.

To make a transom window operational, the goal is to install it so that the window can be opened to a 30-degree angle or so. That's enough to allow airflow without making the window hard to open or close.

The window lift operator should be set at a comfortable mounting height for an

average adult to easily slide the window open. We mounted the clasp of our transom at a height of 50" above the floor, roughly the same as a light switch. If you want to set the lift operator higher, first pinch the clasp and move the rod completely into the "up" position to fully extend the rod. This is important to ensure

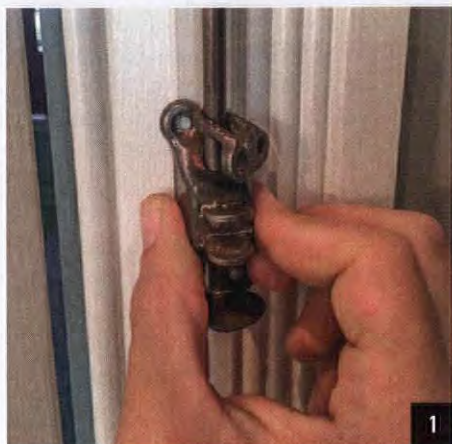
## A TRANSOM LIFT (or operator) consists of the following:

- **the spring pinch clasp** that sits near the bottom of the lift and allows the operator to set the open/closed position of the lift. (This piece mounts to the wall and provides the lower support.)
- **a long rod** that serves as the operating mechanism and extends from below the clasp to near the top of the transom.
- **the supports** that mount to the wall at the transom's midpoint and top connection and which allow the rod to move up and down.
- **the hinge assembly and lift mount bracket** that attaches to the transom sash and is hinged against the rod. (This hinge and the rod's upward motion is what actually opens the transom.)



## INSTALLING A TRANSOM OPERATOR

1. Place the **spring pinch clasp** on the door sash trim about 50" above the floor. Mark pilot hole locations.
2. Position the **lift mounting bracket** against the sash and then mark additional hole locations.
3. Secure the **clasp and mounting bracket** with screws. Attach the **hinge assembly** and check to see if it's in the right position to properly operate the transom.
4. The completed, **operational transom window**, shown in the closed position.



the rod won't run into the ceiling when it's all the way up.

Once you've got the location of the clasp on the trim, hold the assembly in place and mark the screw locations. While continuing to hold all in place, have another person climb onto a stepstool or ladder and place the upper support bracket about 1" above the lift's hinge. Then mark those screw locations. Remove and drill your pilot holes based on the marks. Then simply drive screws to secure the mount.

Placing the rest of the components is pretty simple. Secure the clasp and supports in your pilot holes. (The middle support piece is still not attached at this point.) Next, pinch the clasp and lower the rod so that the hinge assembly, when collapsed against the wall, puts the top of

the mount bracket near the upper support piece, and the upper section of the rod is still within that same support. This will give you the position of the rod when the transom is fully closed.

Climb back up the ladder and position the lift mounting bracket against the sash to determine and mark screw hole locations for the mounting bracket. To drill the screw holes for the bracket, put some tape on your drill bit to mark the drilling depth based on the screw length.

Finally, position the middle support bracket where it will not impede the function of the lift, drill pilot holes, attach the support bracket with screws—and step back to admire your functional transom. If the mechanism is balky, add a squirt or two of WD40 to keep it squeak free.

## Salvaged Hardware

Sometimes essential pieces of the transom operating mechanism are missing. Several companies sell reproductions as kits, but if you are buying a salvaged transom, make sure all the parts are there. Missing lift hardware is sometimes available through salvage dealers and online vendors such as eBay. Santantonio believes that old transom lift hardware is among the rarest items to survive in today's old homes, as parts are fairly delicate, and many original lifts were damaged and removed over the years.

### resources

- **Historic Houseparts**  
historichouseparts.com  
*New & salvaged transom hardware; vintage transom windows*
- **House of Antique Hardware**  
houseofantiquehardware.com  
*Reproduction sets in brass, cast iron & steel; latches, hinges*
- **Transoms Direct**  
transomsdirect.com  
*New transom windows; some hardware*
- **Vintage Hardware & Lighting**  
vintagehardware.com  
*Solid-brass transom hardware in many finishes, also adjustable & extra-long; latches & hinges*
- **Van Dyke's Restorers**  
vandykes.com  
*Steel transom operators for bottom-hinged windows; latches, hooks, safety catches*

*Restorers Alex and Wendy Santantonio blog about projects at two historic houses—an 1880s Victorian row house and a 1908 Foursquare: [oldtownhome.com](http://oldtownhome.com)*



“ We drew the proposed cabinet in elevation, concentrating on coveted details. I didn’t refer to a room plan. ”



As a serial renovator, I already had a rapport with my cabinetmaker. We sat down casually, early in an extensive job, to sketch up a Victorian-style bath vanity. The working drawing for the cabinet shop was done in elevation. When the cabinet was delivered—to the newly built room—I realized that the tall section, with drawers as deep as the cabinet, was blocked by the toilet. Oops. —*Peter Carlsen*

## THE FIX

This was not a disaster as renovation mistakes go. But our long-time reader was horrified at his “novice mistake” all the same. So was the cabinetmaker, who graciously accepted responsibility and made a new side piece—a satisfactory fix. The remade section has a false back and a single narrow cabinet door, which opens to reveal shallow shelves. The redundant [original] side piece was repurposed as a built-in set of drawers for the bathroom upstairs.

How did this happen? The usual ways: (1) Over confidence: The renovator trusted the cabinetmaker, who assumed the renovator knew what he was doing. Hah! (2) Getting lost in the reeds: Clearances were overlooked in the excitement of researching and then specifying period details like wood species, ogee edges for the marble, and Eastlake-style cast brass hardware. (3) Not having a full set of detailed plans: The size of the new powder room was known, but a floor plan showing placement of fixtures was not done before the cabinet was ordered. Novice mistake, indeed!

No big deal. Had this been a run of kitchen cabinets, though, or the placement of a staircase, it could well have cost a lot of time and money to fix. Always a good idea to have a full set of plans from the outset!



### Share Your Story!

What have you, your spouse, pet, contractor, previous owner (you get the picture) screwed up? Email us at [lviator@aimmedia.com](mailto:lviator@aimmedia.com).



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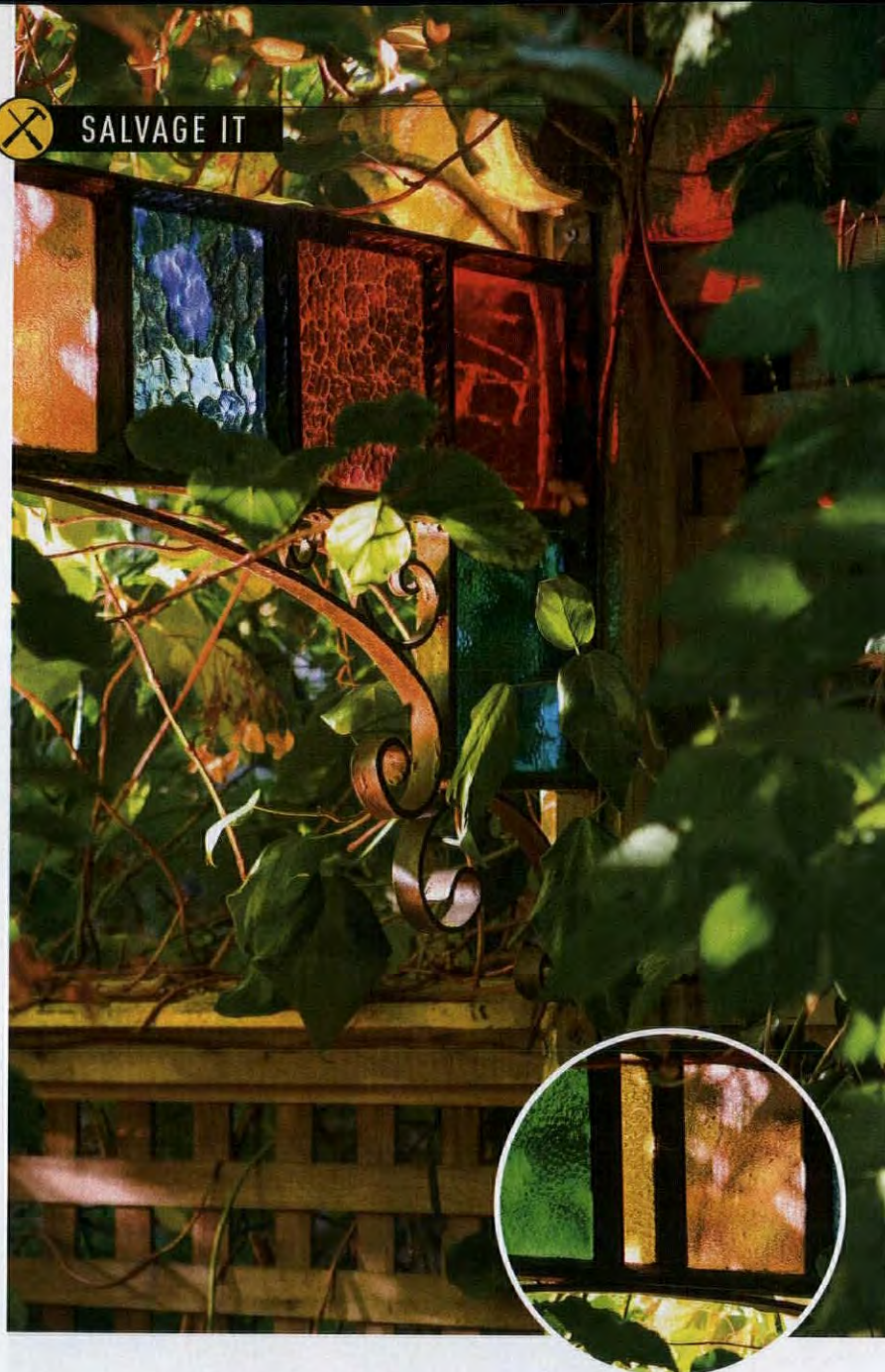
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## SALVAGE IT



# A Colorful Welcome

Glass adds sparkle and dimension, perhaps even color, to the garden, and it holds up well. **By Brian D. Coleman**



The Victorian house in Seattle had a cramped side yard, with just a narrow, 48"-wide path between the house and the neighbor's fence. But this was the gateway to the nicely manicured backyard. The homeowner wanted to add an invitation to proceed, and maybe a bit of sparkle. One day, as he poked through the basement of a local salvage dealer, he came across a century-old iron arch—and it was four feet wide. Inset with pretty but not precious colored-glass panels, it would be perfect as both a focal point and an entryway to the rear garden.

**ABOVE** Hops and ivy wind around a colored-glass and steel archway dating to the early 20th century: a romantic entry to the garden path.

### THE COST

SALVAGED ARCH/WINDOW	\$225
4 PANES NEW GLASS	\$45
CAULK + PUTTY	\$19
PAINT	\$25

**TOTAL \$314**

## easy 1-2-3

### 1. REPLACEMENT GLASS

Several panes were cracked or missing; the owner chose textured colored glass for even more interest. Each pane was blocked into its steel square with shims, a dot of caulk set in each corner to secure the glass within the frame, and allowed to set for 24 hours. Sash putty was carefully applied with a putty knife at a 30-degree angle on both sides of the glass and the entire frame allowed to cure for several weeks. (The putty must skin over and harden before paint will adhere properly.) The putty was sealed with tinted oil-based primer, followed by a coat of Benjamin Moore's 'Black Satin' exterior latex.

### 2. THE ARCH ASSEMBLY

Nothing to it: the steel frame was simply lag-bolted to the existing wood fence and, on the other side, to a 4x4 post. Plants twist and climb over the wood trellis installed as an open roof over the path and the steel arch. The arch has half-disappeared into the landscape; glimpsing a secret garden beyond, visitors step through as the colored glass sparkles above.

### 3. ALTERNATIVE IN WOOD

Any (not precious or rare) wood-frame or steel window of suitable interest can be used in the garden. Take care to make it weatherproof (as most windows are, with proper finishing). Allow for seasonal expansion and contraction of metal or leaded joints. Protect the window with flashing that sheds water: a beveled cap of copper or painted wood glued or screwed into the frame. Prime and paint sash with a high-quality exterior paint.



## GLASS IN THE GARDEN

Glass will shrink and expand with cold and heat, so take steps to avoid breakage. These tips come from pros at Glass Expressions ([glassexpressions.com](http://glassexpressions.com)).

- For the comes that hold individual pieces of stained glass, choose softer lead; copper foil is generally used for interior work.
- Leave more than typical space at joints:  $\frac{1}{8}$ " instead of  $\frac{1}{16}$ ".
- Use a good polishing compound to seal glass and lead. Try Stained Glass Finishing Compound, a carnauba wax by Clarity Glass ([clarityglass.com](http://clarityglass.com)).
- Any type of glass should stand up outside, but thicker glass weathers better. Fused glass is generally thicker and works well in outdoor settings.
- Just polishing the glass every few years will clean it and keep it sparkling.



**ABOVE** When you come across salvaged windows, metal or wood, think creatively about reuse as garden ornament. **LEFT** Broken or missing glass is easily replaced—or upgraded—with colored, textured, fused, or opal or opaque glass from retail and online suppliers.

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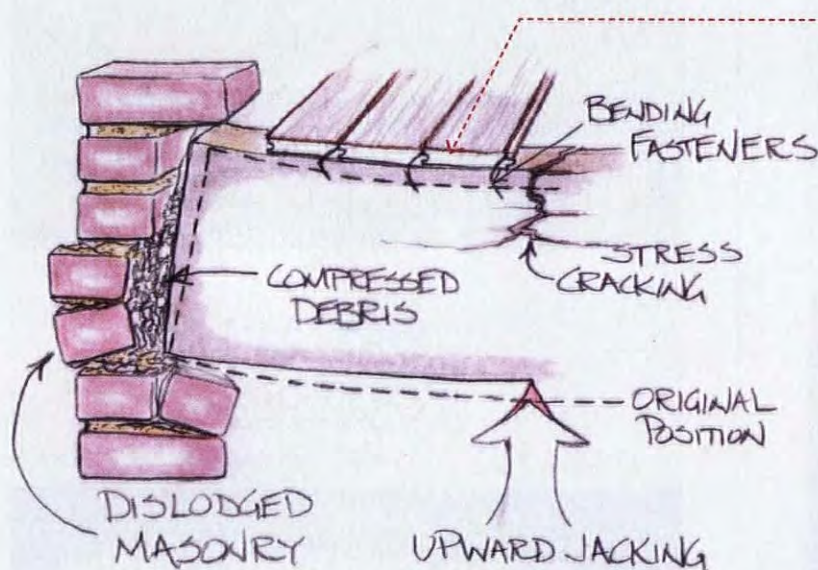
# Fixing Sagging Floor Joists

A pronounced slope in the floor is disconcerting. Either the joist ends have rotted where they sit in pockets in a masonry wall, or the loading of the joist(s) has caused it to develop a downward curvature called a crook. If the joist ends have rotted, several techniques may be used to re-secure the joists. When a joist has developed a crook, however, producing a bowl-shaped floor, the inclination is to jack it up. But, no matter how slowly you go about it, jacking usually produces disappointing results. Once the wood has deformed over time, it's hard to undo it. Also, the flooring itself, and fasteners, have deformed in accommodation to the bowing, and resist being reversed. **By Ray Tschoepe**

## WRONG WAY

### FORCING THINGS

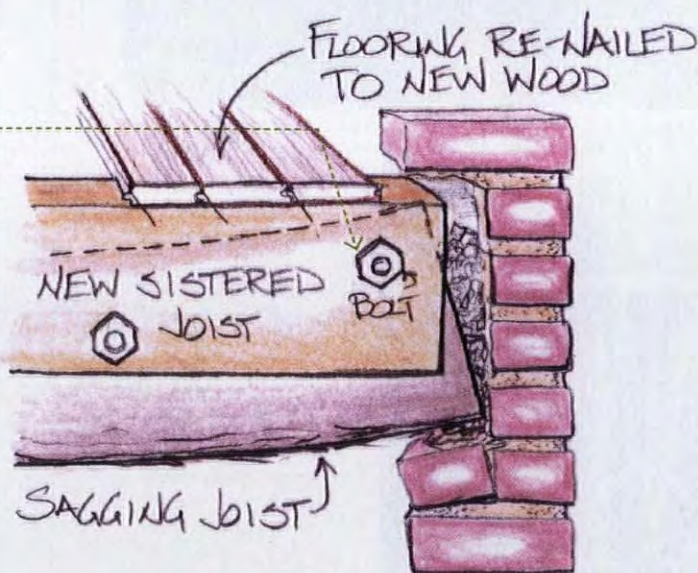
Trying to jack up joists that have set into a crook over a long period of time usually doesn't work. Pushing up on the center low point of the joist will yield unwanted consequences. The joist pocket (particularly if the joist is fire-cut at a slight angle) will fill up with debris. As the joist is forced upward, that debris compresses and puts pressure on the exterior masonry or wall, sometimes causing units to dislodge or the wall to buckle. Reverse bending sometimes will induce cracking in the top of the joist; bent flooring nails will resist movement in the opposite direction.



## RIGHT WAY

### JACK THE FLOORING & SISTER

If the flooring itself is noticeably sloped, such that large gaps have opened between flooring and baseboard, rectify the situation by jacking up the flooring, not the joist, until fasteners are exposed. Cut the nails or screws with a metal cutting blade. Attach a new, straight joist to the original (called sistering) and through-bolt the assembly. The sistered lumber does not have to extend into the pocket or be the same width as the original joist. Then simply re-nail the flooring to straightened, sistered joists.



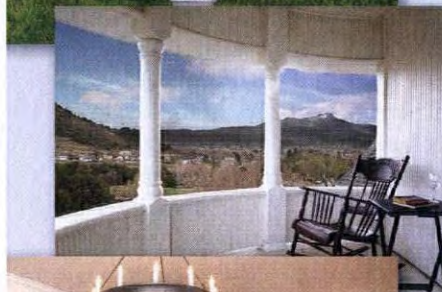




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Floral linoleum rugs may be hiding under later carpeting or vinyl floor coverings.

**Q:** We're renovating a Craftsman house in Nashville, Tenn. During some demo, we uncovered a floral linoleum rug, but unfortunately we damaged it with a saw cut before we knew it was there. Can you share any restoration tips? —*Rob Beach & Sarah Silva*

**A:** Your linoleum "rug" is worth preserving if possible, because they don't make them anymore. The floral rugs date to the 1930s–50s. I'd assume a cut could be repaired with the use of a glue syringe and, if necessary, having an artist infill-paint any missing pattern on the surface. You might try hiring a painting (i.e., canvas) conservator, finding one through a local art college or antiques restoration business.

Cleaning the linoleum should start with the most innocuous solvents (water) and move up from there as necessary. A dilute solution of ammonia is often suggested. Always test in an inconspicuous spot. Cleansers specifically made for cork and linoleum floors (which are different from vinyl) are sold. Be sure to remove all the old wax, which dulls the floor. Rinse thoroughly and dry with towels.

New (true) linoleum does not need waxing, but you will want to wax your old rug to add luster. Buy a product specific to linoleum, probably through a flooring dealer. Liquid acrylic floor polishes work well, applied every six months. (Paste wax will not deliver a shine.) You can use a lightweight buffing machine with a linoleum pad to enhance shine. Every few years, strip all wax with a compatible product and a nylon scrubber, rinse and dry the floor (and let it air dry), then reapply wax to the clean floor.

In my own renovations I've found that something old, once it's repaired "as well as possible" and cleaned up, need not be perfect to remain as a beloved part of the house. And you can always set a chair over the cut!

—*Patricia Poore*

I need info on venting hollow, round porch columns. It appears they should be sitting on feet to allow air to flow up into the hollow center. I've seen many columns rotting from the inside out; the wood then expands, popping joints and blistering paint. I cannot use wood substitutes in this historic district. —*Barry Felice, Cape May, N.J.*

TODAY'S WOOD COLUMNS are made to vent top and bottom. The column sits on a plinth (flat pedestal) routed or molded at the bottom of each side to allow airflow into the column. Note that even traditional wood-column manufacturers supply an aluminum plinth, or a molded urethane base with plinth; once painted, it's unnoticeable. The top may be vented through the face of the column (on a protected side facing the house), out through a hole in the top of the capital, or through a hollow entablature above the column. Screen vent holes on the inside.

Old columns sitting directly on masonry, and Doric columns with no base or plinth, should be set on a thick lead plate, which is chiseled to conform to the base and with vent gaps cut in. —*Patricia Poore*



**ABOVE** An unvented wood column eventually rots from the inside.

**LEFT** Detail of a new column base and vented plinth from Chadsworth Incorporated (shop.columns.com).





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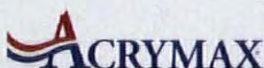
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# DESIGN

A detailed architectural floor plan of a house is shown, featuring a kitchen, bathroom, and living areas. A black pen lies diagonally across the right side of the drawing. The drawing includes various dimensions and labels, such as '7', '580', '350', and '80'.

## ADDITION SAVVY

Factors to consider,  
hidden expenses,  
and sage advice from  
three architects.

**page 62**







# PLANNING FOR *adding on*

Adding on to an existing house can be tricky. These architects dealt with previous bad additions, cramped layouts, and setback requirements. **BY MARY ELLEN POLSON**

**W**HETHER A HOUSE is on the National Register or is simply from an earlier era, a host of factors must be considered even before interviewing a contractor or architect about building an addition. Site conditions, materials, budget, and how the new will relate to the old are issues as important as the program for use of new space.





A skylight and light-filled passageways to adjoining rooms make the remodeled kitchen the heart of the early 19th-century Cape Cod-style house. This space uses the footprint of a previous addition on the house.

**DESIGN**

Sandra Vitzthum, Architect,  
Montpelier, VT:  
[sandravitzthum.com](http://sandravitzthum.com)

**PROJECT LOCATION**

Montpelier, VT

**SCOPE:**

*Reconfiguring added-on  
space in an 1800s Cape Cod*





**LEFT** A new porch that opens off the reconfigured space (a previous addition) brings the facade into balance, restoring integrity to the 19th-century Cape.

**OPPOSITE** (far right) The dining room was relocated to the rebuilt 1950s den.

## Addition Inside an Addition

Ill-conceived additions on a pristine early Cape had seriously compromised its integrity. A den and garage tacked on in the 1950s or '60s had cut off all natural light to the dining room. The kitchen lacked storage and the house needed a mudroom.

Sandra Vitzthum, the architect who managed the project, solved most of the dilemmas in this 3-D puzzle with a surprising decision to relocate the kitchen to the despised dining-room space. "It was so dark, the owners wouldn't eat

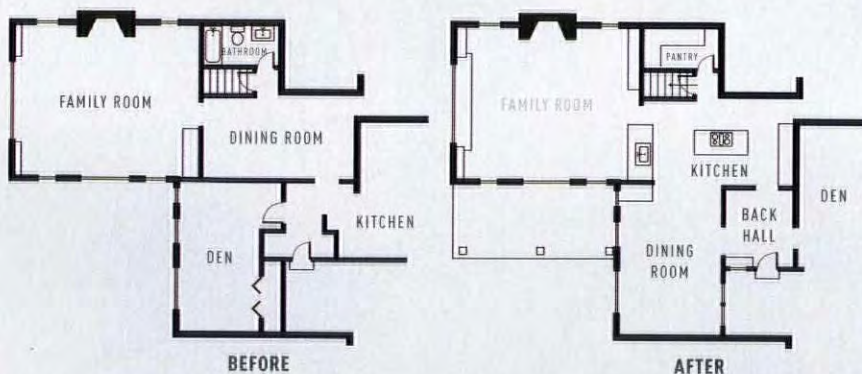
there," says Vitzthum. "We transformed it by making it the hub of the house."

With the clients won over, all the walls between the old dining space, the family room, and the den came down. The floors were leveled and rebuilt, and new passages conceived to create more natural transitions between rooms. Now, "you can stand at any point in the new plan and look through to the other spaces."

In retrospect, "it probably would have cost

less to demolish the den and start over. We found there were structural problems, but we couldn't have known that until after we started."

The new plan created a light and airy kitchen with plenty of storage space. Its vaulted ceilings spill additional light into the dining room, which has windows on two sides and opens onto a porch addition. Instead of the twisted route of dark rooms and dead ends the owners endured for years, each room segues effortlessly into the next.



**ABOVE** (before) Additions from the mid-20th century were dark and closed off. (after) Relocating the kitchen into the old dining room space allowed it to become the hub of the house. It has a clear connection to the new dining room, which replaced an old den addition. Both rooms flow effortlessly to the family room and a new porch.





A farmhouse pantry tucks behind the kitchen; the stairway leads down to a new laundry room.

**INSET** Additions dating to mid century made the dining room the darkest in the house.



**The first is cost.** Additions to historic houses are typically more expensive per square foot than those on newer homes. "If we're talking about a historic house, we're talking about historic appearance, materials, and character," says David Heide of David Heide Design Studio. "There's nothing basic about that. Everything [the owner] is trying to do with regard to their house has to be custom made. Each time you work with an old house it's unique."

Even a modest addition to an old house can be expensive. "The cost that comes with something like this is in the attention to detail," agrees Howard L. Miller of The Johnson Partnership. Although the remodel on p. 66 was not even 100 square feet, "it cost a bunch of money because we carried over the details of the house."

Old houses are also subject to more concealed conditions than are new ones. Examples include broken ridge boards (look for a telltale sag in the roofline), rotten floor joists, and obsolete wiring and plumbing. All must be addressed before new construction can begin, says architect Sandra Vitzthum. "Quite often, renovation can be more expensive than building from scratch."



It's helpful to have an architect or builder who is experienced in negotiating with local agencies regarding setbacks and the zoning and building issues that come up.

A good architect or contractor will talk about budget from the beginning, and once the initial plans have been thrashed out, will interview contractors and get estimates for the scope of work, says Miller. From there, the budget can be adjusted up or down depending on what the owner can afford or wants to do.

Since older houses in cities and towns are often built close together on lots that no longer conform to modern subdivision regulations, "the first thing we do is look at the lot lines, the size of the lot, and determine what the limitations are, including any height restrictions," says Heide. "Any responsible architect should do that before the first meeting."

It's also helpful to have an architect or builder who has experience negotiating with local agencies to resolve building or zoning issues posed by a historic project. In Seattle, for example, many houses in older neighborhoods were built 3' from the property line. Now the required setback is 5', but "there's a certain amount of accommodation in the Seattle city code," says Miller. "If the house was already built at 3' feet from the property line, they will let you extend your house at the old 3' setback."

Whether you work with an architect or not, it's a good idea to find a contractor who is familiar with old-house issues. "I'm always impressed with a builder who, before they even start the addition, says 'this existing floor is out of plumb by an inch and a half,'" says Heide.

A good contractor will understand the importance of leveling the floors between

Adding a small addition allowed the architect to fill in a missing corner of this Seattle Box, but the real transformation was experienced inside.



## Completing the Box

The four-bedroom plan on the second floor of this Seattle Box had been crowded by unnecessary hallways and poor use of space. By adding a small addition—literally just 8' x 12'—architect Howard L. Miller was able to reconfigure the interior, filling in a missing piece of the exterior at the same time.

"We completed the Seattle Box," says Miller, referring to the region's name for its variant of the American Foursquare. "In this case, the square was missing one corner."

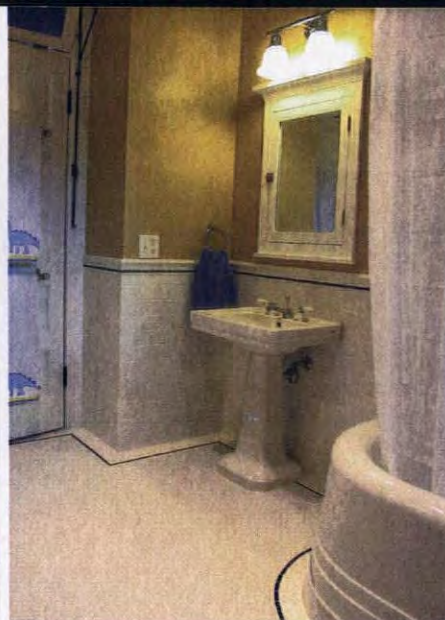
The second floor now has a true master suite with a much larger closet and a real master bath, a large children's bath and a guest bath, plus an upstairs laundry—all without reducing the size of any

bedroom. Along with the small addition, eliminating about 6' of hall space provided the space needed to make all the rooms work more comfortably.

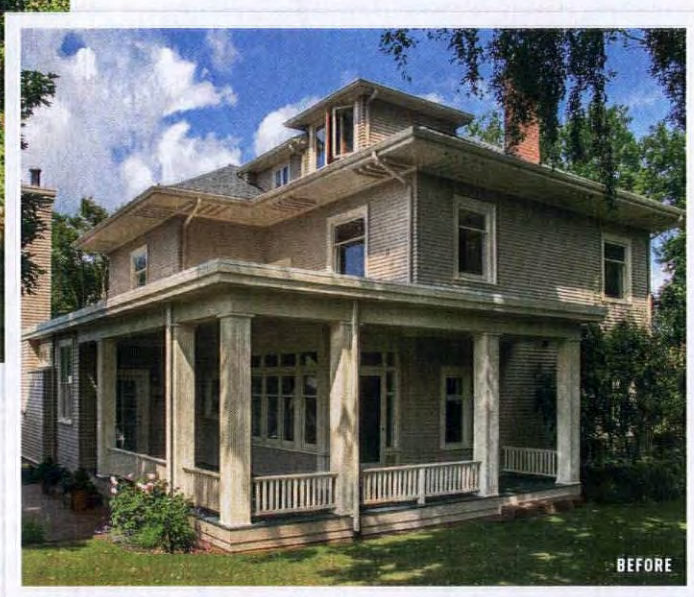
As part of the new arrangement, Miller angled some of the entry doors to give the hall a stronger period feel. The original operable transom windows above the bedroom doors were reconditioned with new hardware, allowing for natural ventilation.

If it looks as though the addition was meant to be, it was. There was already a floor and foundation for the new space. "You can see the dashed line on the porch. That's what squares up with the rest of the house."





**ABOVE** (left) Operable transoms over the doors and slight jogs in wall alignments give the hall a turn-of-the-20th-century feel. (right) The enlarged children's bath has a new rolled-corner tub.



**INSET** Architect Miller took care to continue original architectural details along the eave.  
**BELOW** (before) An awkwardly placed bath and long hall made the second floor feel cramped. (after) Adding just 96 square feet allowed for a full master suite with a larger closet. Miller carved out an additional bath plus a laundry room, as well as more closet space for guests.

#### DESIGN

Howard L. Miller,  
The Johnson Partnership,  
Seattle, WA: [tjp.us](http://tjp.us)

#### PROJECT LOCATION

Seattle, WA

#### SCOPE

Whole-house remodel and  
small addition to a 1903  
"Seattle Box"

On the exterior, Miller repeated the design of beam ends under the eave line of the addition. "It helps tie the addition to the house." A careful observer would notice that the spacing between the beam ends is a little off. That's because the old ones weren't moved. "We left them where they were. They aren't exactly equal distance apart, but it's hard to tell."





# Painting Inside the Lines

Old houses, even large ones, are often built too close to neighboring property lines according to present-day building codes. That was the case for this early 20th-century Arts & Crafts cottage. The existing porch, patio, and garage were mere feet from the back property line, and the garage and an embankment wall bordering the driveway stood flush with the side property line.

"This was a very complicated project," says designer David Heide. Applying for and receiving variances to current setbacks was time consuming, taking three months. "Luckily we have experience working with the city and know what questions to ask. We have yet to be turned down."

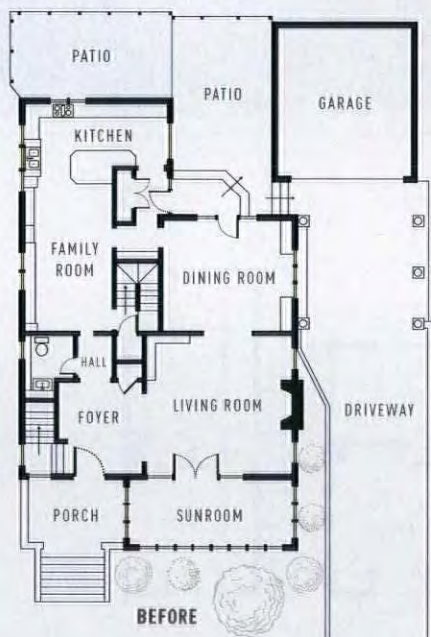
Once the approval process was underway, Heide demolished the existing garage and made plans to rebuild it below grade. In another complication, the soil underneath the new addition and new driveway had to be injected with chemical stabilizers to support the new construction. Since the retaining wall along the driveway literally sat on the property line, rebuilding it meant coming to an accommodation with the neighbors.

With site issues under control, Heide still had to find space for a new

family room. He reclaimed the old step-down patio between the existing kitchen and dining room and extended it by creating a terrace on top of the garage. In keeping with the owners' desire to entertain, the family and dining rooms open right onto the terrace.

On the interior, a once-awkward combination kitchen and family room has been redefined into a well-equipped period-style kitchen and adjacent breakfast room. Throughout the renovation, Heide carefully considered sight lines from all the rooms in the house toward the lake, choosing only the best. "It was pretty amazing, the views we were able to provide."

The refreshed Arts & Crafts cottage gained appropriate period elements as well as a new family room and outdoor terrace. **INSET** The approach to the existing garage was awkward and cramped. The room off the portico was probably a later addition.







#### DESIGN

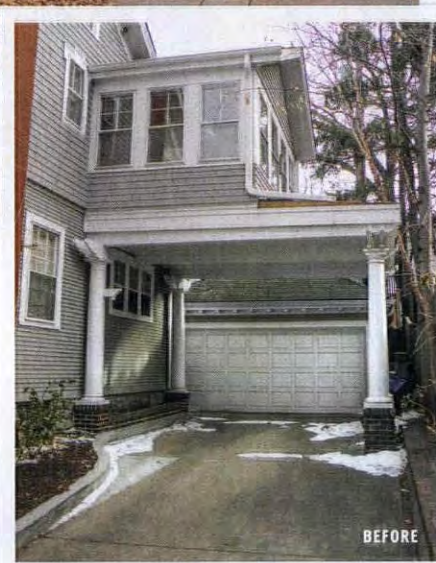
David Heide Design Studio,  
Minneapolis, MN:  
dhdstudio.com

PROJECT LOCATION  
Minneapolis, MN

#### SCOPE

*Family room and terrace  
addition, kitchen remodel  
to an Arts & Crafts cottage*

**OPPOSITE** (before) The garage and patio were crammed into a miniscule backyard. (after) Reclaiming space from a patio and extending a terrace and pavilion over a new below-grade garage opened up ample outdoor space with sight lines to a lake.



**LEFT** The new terrace just off the family-room addition extends living and entertaining space, and offers views to a lake. The terrace flooring is natural Ubatuba granite.



the original part of the house and the new one. "They plan for it," continues Heide. Since old houses are rarely plumb, "sometimes it's a combination of lifting one side and lowering the other."

Arm yourself with knowledge to decide what elements of the existing house you want to keep, especially when dealing with a builder "who may have good intentions, but prefers to rip out the old because it's less trouble," says Vitzthum. "Plaster should be kept if at all possible. It's actually more sound deadening than Sheetrock, and it's an all-natural material.

**The builder may have good intentions—preferring to rip out old material because that's easier. Owners must be clear about what to keep.**

"Quite often a contractor will say, 'You've got to rip out the windows and walls and insulate', but what they don't tell you is that two-thirds of a building's heat is lost through the roof. It makes so much more sense to leave the walls alone and put all of the effort into insulating the attic," especially in colder climates.

Finally, be willing to discuss with your architect or contractor some of the intimate details of how you expect to live in the new space. Be ready to talk about money, privacy, and even parenting as well as your reasons for expanding the existing house. Sometimes a smaller addition or simply rearranging existing space can solve your issues with less fuss.

Bear in mind that the scale of any addition should be appropriate to the original scale of the house. "You don't want things disproportionate," says Heide. "One should let the house tell the story of its evolution. But from our client's perspective, if it's seamless, we've succeeded."

FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 87.





# A Housewife's Kitchen, 1931

Decade of transition: the eat-in kitchen with wall cabinets and lively colors; icebox in the back hall.



*Cabinets are painted in green and cream with a red accent, a popular scheme through the mid-1940s. The bungalow breakfast nook tucks into an arched niche.*



Signature Hardware has this versatile 42" enameled cast-iron **wall sink** with integral fluted drainboard. Disposal flange and backsplash-mount faucet sold separately. \$995.95. [signaturehardware.com](http://signaturehardware.com)



Many bar-cart designs are over-embellished or industrially streamlined; this iron tray **cart on wheels** with distressed red paint has old-fashioned utility. By Park Designs through online retailers; \$137.95 from [everythingprimitives.com](http://everythingprimitives.com)

The old-fashioned **bean pot** is a kitchen stalwart. The stoneware bean pot (shown in Truffle) is from Le Creuset's Heritage line. Safe to 500°, 4.5 qt., about \$160 through online retailers. [lecreuset.com](http://lecreuset.com)



Brick-pattern linoleum, wildly popular for decades, is no longer made. So how about real 1/2" thin-cut salvaged **brick flooring** that installs like ceramic tile using thin-set? Price is \$6 per square foot, from Vintage Brick. [brickssalvage.com](http://brickssalvage.com)







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# Bathroom Aesthetic

A light-hearted Victorian Revival example draws from fancy hotel powder rooms. **By Patricia Poore**

The 19th-century house in Washington, D.C., did not have enough bathrooms. The solution upstairs: Divide an extra bedroom to create both a large master bathroom (shown here) and a smaller one to serve another bedroom. A few structural fixes came first, including hinging the door on the outside of the casing to provide clearance for the toilet, and adding LVL beams to shore up the heavy marble floor.

Because the windows face the brick wall of a neighboring house, framed antique stained-glass window panels were added to block the view and provide privacy while admitting daylight. The fun was in specifying Victorian treatments. Adding these bathrooms didn't come cheap, the homeowner admits. But she had thought about the project for 20 years, collected some nice pieces, and decided to "go for it."

The shower has Carrara marble wall tiles embellished with a diamond-pattern listello. Marble also appears in the thick countertop and backsplash of the double console sink. The Renaissance Revival mirror, from a mantelpiece, was already part of the owner's collection, which also included the crystal chandelier and large Victorian wall brackets (sconces).



## 1. FURNISHINGS

Antiques (or fine reproductions) make all the difference to period style. Here, the Renaissance Revival mirror, a wall cabinet, the chandelier and sconces, and the brass coat tree all are vintage and came from the owner's collection.

## 2. AESTHETIC DECORATION

The 'Iris' frieze after English Aesthetic Movement designer Walter Crane looks toward Art Nouveau and has a modern graphic quality. Its placement at a high wainscot level (rather than top of wall) brings human scale to a room with high ceilings.





1

3

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### 3. CONSOLE WITH FLOURISH

Simultaneously bold and delicate, the double-basin console floats over the floor space. Shaped brackets tie the backsplash to a shelf detail at the top. Carrara marble suggests sanitary purity in the otherwise colorful room.

### 4. A MARBLE FLOOR

Elegance and class continue in the hotel-worthy floor of green marble tiles, inset with ivory squares and the handsome, two-color diamond border.

## BE INSPIRED...

Gaslight styling, pressed-glass shades, and crystals distinguish the little 'Jenny 2' Victorian two-arm fixture from King's Chandelier. Hand-polished lacquered brass, 20"x20", with pipe, flush, or chain mount; \$849. [chandelier.com](http://chandelier.com)



This Rococo-style cast-brass vanity mirror from Renovator's Supply adds a finishing touch. It's 12 1/4" tall, \$85. [rensup.com](http://rensup.com)

Urban Archaeology's gorgeous double washstand also comes in a single-bowl configuration: their Victorian 2-leg base in a choice of metal finishes. With oval basin and your choice of six marbles including Carrara; call for pricing. [urbanarchaeology.com](http://urbanarchaeology.com)



The 'Iris' frieze paper is part of the full Fenway roomset in Bradbury & Bradbury's Morris Tradition collection. In four colorways (Aesthetic Green in the bath), the suite includes marsh-inspired designs for ceiling, frieze, wall fill, and dado. Frieze \$41/yd, shown below in Rose and Indigo. [bradbury.com](http://bradbury.com)







# Aging in Place

New designs, products, and adaptations help us stay in our treasured houses for as long as we like. **By Mary Ellen Polson**

## 1. DOUBLE DUTY

A classic in solid brass, the Circe 48" grab bar doubles as a towel bar. With a sturdy three-post design, the bar comes in polished chrome with installation hardware. It conforms to ADA guidelines. \$492. Ginger Co., (949) 417-5207, [gingerco.com](http://gingerco.com)

## 2. BRIGHTEN IT UP

We need more light to see as we age. Don't compromise a period interior: use high-performance Eco-Cove LEDs. Intended for hard-to-reach locations, the dimmable LEDs have a 50,000-hour lamp life. They come in 10 1/2" and 21" lengths. \$170 and up. Creative Systems Lighting, (626) 336-4511, [cslighting.com](http://cslighting.com)

## 3. EASE OF USE

Colonial-inspired levers and thumb-latches are easier to work than door-knobs. The mortise cylinder lock-set has an easy-to-grasp grip and interior spindle latch. For 1 3/4" thick doors, it measures 16" high x 2 3/8" wide. \$907.38. Acorn Manufacturing, (508) 339-4500, [acornmfg.com](http://acornmfg.com)

## 4. DRAWERS, NOT DOORS

Increase accessibility by specifying drawers instead of doors where possible. Shown in cherry with dovetailed joinery, these traditional drawers are also equipped with a soft-close mechanism. Pricing varies. Crown Point Cabinetry, (800) 999-4994, [crown-point.com](http://crown-point.com)

## 5. COMFORT WITH STYLE

Featuring an 8" rain showerhead with gooseneck arm, the thermostatic set is fitted with easy-use levers and a hand-held shower. The faucet keeps the water within 1° F of the temperature you set. \$1,573. Strom Plumbing by Sign of the Crab, (800) 843-2722, [signofthecrab.com](http://signofthecrab.com)



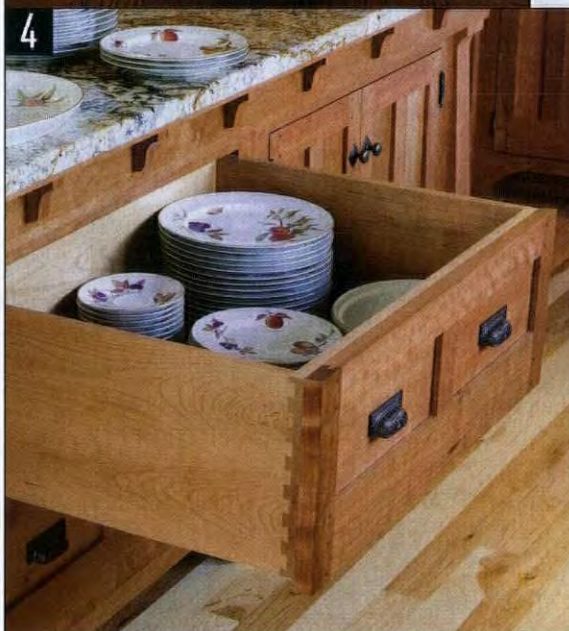
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Serial restorer **Mary Ellen Polson** is known for her discerning eye for period furnishings.



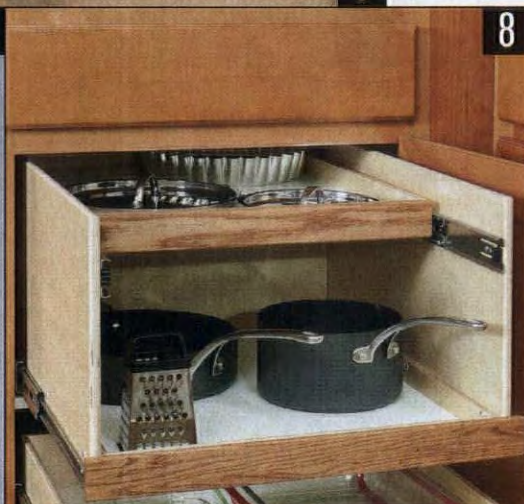
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#### 6. NO CONSTRAINTS

Available with sliding patio doors in traditional designs and features, the high-performance Low Profile Sill is less than  $\frac{3}{4}$ " high, making for easy transitions from the house to the outdoors. The sills are priced as part of the overall door set. Marvin, (800) 533-6898, [marvin.com](http://marvin.com)



7



8

#### 7. CURBLESS SHOWER

Take a shower without navigating a step with Banyo Cordoba Bypass Plus semi-frameless sliding shower doors. The clear glass blends well into historical homes. They are 72" wide x 75" tall with an entry width of 34". \$1,146. Fleurco, (888) 568-2121, [fleurco.com](http://fleurco.com)

#### 8. ORGANIZED FOR LIFE

These made-to-fit, full-extension organizers put the contents of a cabinet where you can reach them. The Double Dek slide-out organizer incorporates a unique retractable second level for spaces up to 24" wide. \$209. Single slide-outs and specialty shelves: \$99 and up. Slide-A-Shelf, (800) 575-4335, [slideashelf.com](http://slideashelf.com)



9

#### 9. NOT-SO-DEEP SINK

Kitchen sinks that are only 8" deep, like the Manor House Fireclay apron-front model, demand less reaching to wash dishes or prep vegetables than do deeper ones. The sink measures 27  $\frac{5}{8}$ " long x 19  $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide. About \$993. Franke, (866) 687-7465, [franke.com](http://franke.com)



10

#### 10. ONE-TOUCH CLEAN

The Acticlean self-cleaning toilet lets you easily wash the loo at the touch of a button. It has two cleaning cycles, Deep Clean and Quick Clean, and comes with a replaceable cleaning cartridge. \$608. American Standard, (800) 442-1902, [americanstandard-us.com](http://americanstandard-us.com)





THEY STILL MAKE...

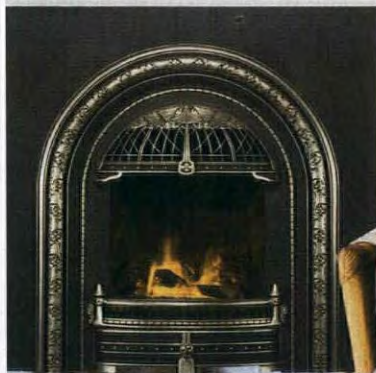
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When it comes to new home elevators, customization is assumed! Trimmed to match the house, the access door blends right in; open it to find the car wainscoted or paneled in hardwood. Options extend to panel styles, stainless steel and glass, and a variety of doors and gates. You may even supply your own light fixture. Adding a residential elevator starts with your architect, who uses the manufacturer's design guides in planning. The local distributor then creates specific, accurate plans and the elevator is built. Installation is by the distributor.

A winding drum elevator is similar to early versions, using aircraft cables attached to a rotating drum and variable-speed motor. Hydraulic drives are popular for their quiet ride. An inline gear drive elevator, counterweighted for energy efficiency, doesn't require a machine room. Shown: a LU/LA (limited use/application) elevator with custom car and hoistway styling, designed for a museum. Symmetry Elevators, (877) 568-5804, [symmetryelevators.com](http://symmetryelevators.com)



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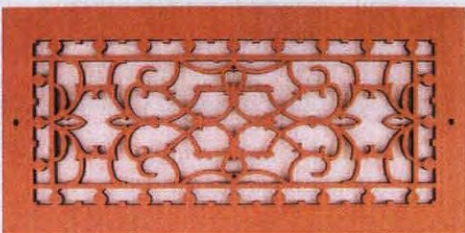
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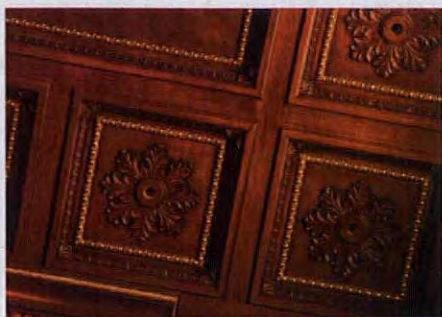
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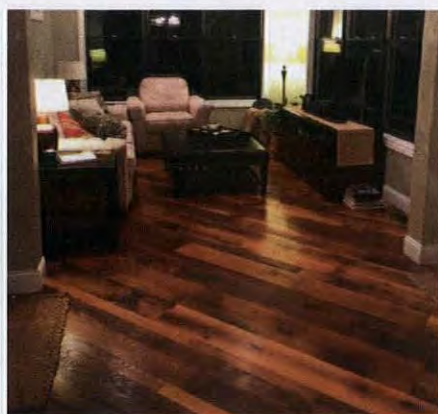
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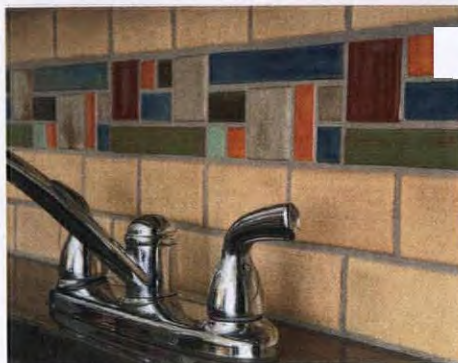
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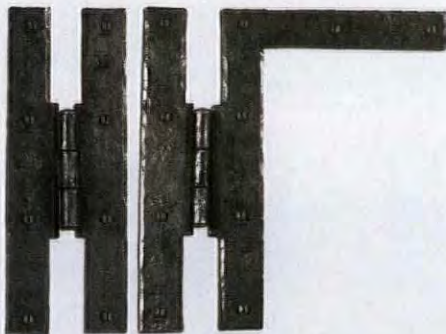
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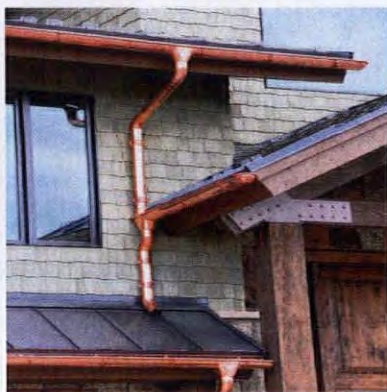
### MR Direct Bronze Basins

Classic, and in a class all their own; original bronze designs make a personal statement in the bath. Intriguing vessel, undermount, and topmount styles to choose from. Same day shipping. Quality products at affordable prices. 877-946-5725; [www.mrdirectint.com](http://www.mrdirectint.com)



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### Park City Rain Gutter

Supplier of high quality European half round gutters & smooth round downspouts. We maintain high stock levels of; Copper, Zinc, Galvanized, and Painted Steel and offer fast shipping. 435-649-2805; [www.pccraingutter.com](http://www.pccraingutter.com)



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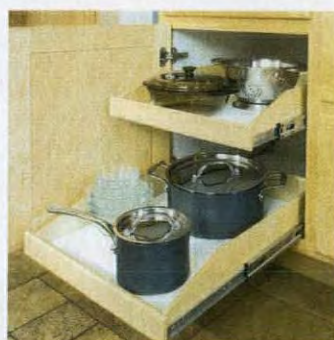
207-997-3615 518-642-1280  
[www.sheldonslate.com](http://www.sheldonslate.com)



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[LOGHOME.COM](http://LOGHOME.COM)

## ADVERTISING INQUIRIES

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES

Becky Bernie  
(978) 879-4045  
[bbernie@aimmedia.com](mailto:bbernie@aimmedia.com)

Carol Murray  
(978) 879-4361  
[cmurray@aimmedia.com](mailto:cmurray@aimmedia.com)

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE, EVENTS

Julia Hite  
(978) 729-4321  
[jhite@aimmedia.com](mailto:jhite@aimmedia.com)



## VICTORIAN LOST & FOUND PAINTS

body 'Belle Grove Moss'; accents 'La Fonda Trail Green' & 'Fairmont Penthouse Garnet'; window trim 'Homestead Resort' **Valspar Historic Colors of the National Trust** valsparpaint.com  
**ANTIQUE LOCK RESTORATION**  
**Andy Streenz:** locksmith@billskeyandlockshop.com

## Related Resources

**Cooper Lace** cooperlace.com  
*Reproduction & adapted designs for Victorian lace curtain panels in styles neoclassical to Eastlake*

See also **MILLWORK COMPANIES** listed on p. 22.

See also **VICTORIAN LIGHTING** listed at Kitchens + Baths below.

## SPANISH STAYING TRUE

### ARCHITECTS

**I S Architecture**  
isarchitecture.com

### PAINT

walls 'Antique Linen'; ceiling 'Swiss Coffee' **Dunn-Edwards Paints** dunnedwards.com

### ANTIQUES, SALVAGE

**Revival Antiques, Pasadena:** revivalantiques.com

### DINING TABLE, SIDEBBOARD

custom **Arte de Mexico** arte demexico.com

p. 26 **LIGHTING** Lamps Plus  
lampsplus.com

p. 28 **TILE FLOORS** sunroom, laundry, patio 'Artillo Spanish Cotto' concrete tiles **Arto arto.com**  
**SUNROOM PENDANT** **Arte de Mexico** artedemexico.com

p. 29 **BATH FLOOR** (master) high-fired terra-cotta tile, 6.5"x13" Cotto line, color: Spanish **Walker Zanger** walkerzanger.com

pp. 29, 30 **BATH TILES** California Pottery and Tile Works  
calpot.com

## Related Resources

### CALIFORNIA TILE MAKERS

Please see p. 31.

### MEXICAN HANDCRAFTED TILE

**La Fuente Imports** lafuente.com  
com **C.V. Tile & Stone** cvtile.com  
**Tierra Y Fuego** tierrayfuego.com  
**Mexican Tiles** mexicantiles.com

## ARTS & CRAFTS PERIOD TILE

**Carreaux du Nord** carreauxdu nord.com **Craftsman & Prairie-** inspired art tile, decos & field tiles for architectural applications

**Clay Squared** claysquared.com  
*Handmade ceramic tiles in styles Victorian to mid-century* **Cle Tile** cletile.com  
*Glazed thin brick tile; subway tile in various forms & colors; penny floor tile*

**Derby Tile** derbypottery.com  
*Patterned relief tile with tinted glazes* **Fay Jones Day** fayjonesday.com  
*A&C colors & motifs in handmade tile for fireplace, kitchen & bath*

**Heritage Tile** heritagetile.com  
*Collections include classic bath floor & wall tiles, mosaics, new*

**Batchelder Pavers** line **Motawi Tileworks** motawi.com  
*Deco, field, mural, panel tiles in Arts & Crafts/Prairie, Nouveau, Charley Harper, mid-century designs*

**Pewabic** pewabic.com  
*Field tiles in historic glazes* **Ravenstone Tiles** ravenstonetiles.com  
*Arts & Crafts custom accent relief tiles, tile sets*

**Terra Firma** terrafirmaarttile.com  
*Handmade A&C tile for all architectural applications* **Weaver Tile** weavertile.com  
*Decorative tiles in A&C motifs for fireplace, kitchen & bath*

**Fireplace Tutorial** firesofttradition.com  
*Cast-iron fireplace surrounds, gas coal baskets, plus mantels, hearths*

**Grate Fires** gratefires.com  
*Cast-iron gas coal fireplaces* **Buckley Rumford** rumford.com  
*Rumford fireplaces, plans, components; links to other products*

**M. Teixeira Soapstone** soapstones.com  
*Soapstone fireplaces, masonry heaters, mantels* **New England Hearth & Soapstone** rodzander.com  
*Custom masonry heaters in soapstone & tile*

**Superior Clay** superiorclay.com  
*Rumford fireplaces, plans & components; wood-fired ovens, chimney liners, fire brick, chimney pots*

**Travis Industries** travisindustries.com  
*Wood, pellet & gas stoves, inserts & fireplaces*

**Valor Fireplaces** valorfireplaces.com  
*Radiant gas fireplaces, inserts, freestanding & outdoor stoves*

**Victorian Fireplace Shop** victorianfireplaceshop.com  
*Gas & electric fireplace inserts and accessories*

**Vermont Soapstone** vermontsoapstone.com  
*Custom fireplaces, hearths & fire brick*

**Chimney Liners & Caps**  
**Ahrens Chimney** ahrenschimney.com  
*Two-liner masonry chimney liners*

**DuraVent** duravent.com  
*Duraflx & other metal chimney liners* **Supaflu** supafllu.com  
*Masonry chimney lining system*

**Woodland Direct** woodlanddirect.com  
*Fireplace, wood stove & chimney products; Seal Tight top dampers*

**Ventech Industries** ventechindustries.com  
*Thermocrete chimney liners*

## CHIMNEY MAINTENANCE

**American Building Restoration Products** abrp.com  
*Fireplace & masonry cleaning products*

**Eco-Strip** eco-strip.com  
*Infrared Speedheater + Cobra paint removers*

**Franmar** franmar.com  
*Blue Bear Soy-Gel paint/urethane stripper*

**Chimney Rx** chimneyrx.com  
*Cleaners, sealers & strippers for chimneys, fireplaces*

## DAMPERS

**Benson Energy** controlcover.com  
**Seal Tight Damper** usfireplaceproducts.com

## QUICK MAKEOVERS

### TANKLESS WATER HEATERS

**Rheem** rheem.com  
*Tankless design & other gas or electric water-heating systems* **Stiebel Eltron** stiebel-eltron-usa.com  
*Digital tankless electric & heat-pump water heaters*

## PLANNING ADDITIONS

pp. 62-5 **ARCHITECT** **Sandra Vitzthum**, Montpelier, VT: sandravitzthum.com

**CABINETS** **Gray Hill Woodworking & Design**, Plainfield, VT: grayhillwoodwork ing.com

**PENDANT LIGHTS** **Conant Metal & Light** conantmetaland light.com

**SINK** **Shaws Fireclay Apron sink** **Rohl** rohlhome.com

**BIN PULLS** **Horton Brasses** horton-brasses.com

**PAINT** **Farrow & Ball** farrow-ball.com

**D.R. LAMPSHADES** custom **The Lamp Shop**, Burlington, VT: shophelamp.com

pp. 66-7 **ARCHITECT** **Howard Miller, The Johnson Partnership**, Seattle, WA: tjp.us

**BATHTUB** 'Skirted Bow' **Americh** americh.com

pp. 68-9 **ARCHITECT** **David Heide Design Studio**, Mpls., MN: dhdstudio.com

**GARAGE DOORS** **Great Northern Door Co.** greatnortherndoor.com

**FRENCH DOORS** **Marvin** marvin.com

**STONE** natural **Chilton limestone veneer**

**TERRACE FLOOR** **Ubatuba granite**

## Related Resources

**Classic Rock Face Block** classicrockfaceblock.com  
*Rock-face concrete blocks suitable for restoration projects & period-style new construction*

**Coppa Woodworking** coppawoodworking.com  
*Custom-made wood screen & storm doors in over 300 styles*

**Vintage Doors** vintagedoors.com  
*Handcrafted, solid wood doors made in USA*

## KITCHENS & BATHS

### WALLPAPER

**Bradbury & Bradbury** bradbury.com

### SINK BASE

**Urban Archaeology** urban archaeology.com

### FAUCETS

**Perrin and Rowe** perrinand rowe.co.uk

### STAINED GLASS

vintage **Olde Good Things** ogtstore.com

### FLOOR

marble **Tile Shop** tilesshop.com

### SHOWER FLOOR

mosaic marble **Aldoukan Group** aldoukangroup.com

### BORDER/TRIM TILES

**Architectural Ceramics** architecturalceramics.com

### TOILET

**Toto** totousa.com

## Related Resources

### VICTORIAN LIGHTING

**House of Antique Hardware** houseofantiquehardware.com  
*Victorian chandeliers & other period lighting*

**Turn of the Century Lighting** tocl.ca  
*Solid brass lighting in period designs*

**Victorian Lighting Works** vlworks.com  
*Reproduction gas & electric light fixtures in brass*

## VINTAGE VISION

### LINOLEUM

**Forbo Flooring** forbo.com

## THEY STILL MAKE

**Enterprise Elevator Products** (a Bella division) elevatorgates.com  
*Custom gates & doors*

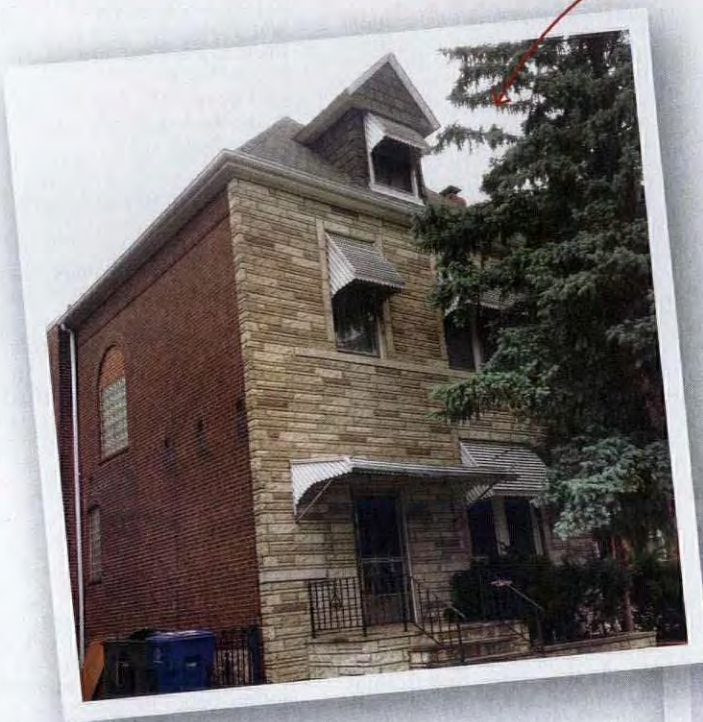
**Symmetry Elevators** (manufactured by Bella) symmetryelevators.com  
*Leading supplier of in-line gear, hydraulic drive & winding-drum residential elevators; wheelchair lifts; dumbwaiters, etc.*

**Related Resources**  
**Inclinator Co.** inclinator.com  
*Residential elevators, wheelchair lifts, dumbwaiters*

**Savaria** savaria.com  
*Home elevators & other accessibility equipment*

**Waupaca Elevator Co.** waupacaelevator.com  
*Residential elevators & dumbwaiters*





## DON'T

... forget to consider ultimate height and girth when planting trees or large bushes. Eventually they not only hide the house, but also cut down on daylight inside, keep siding from drying out, and may harbor pests.



## DON'T LOOK AT ME!

The archival photograph was sent to us by OHJ reader Ruthanne Bullock. It shows the house that her grandparents built in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1926. More recent photos tell a story of changes over time. The articulated entry was reduced in size and importance, and all of the limestone Beaux Arts details have been chopped off or covered. The once-handsome brick façade hides behind an obvious veneer of faux stone, probably added between 1945 and 1970.

And then there's that tree. How often do you see an old house diminished by a large specimen planted too close to the house? "Remuddling by trees" is a subset of short-sighted stewardship.



“...when houses go into Witness Protection.”

—Julie Stephenson

**TWO WAYS TO WIN!** If you spot a classic example of remuddling, submit it to [lviator@aimmedia.com](mailto:lviator@aimmedia.com). We'll give you \$100 if your photos are published. If you want to see your witty words on this page, enter our monthly caption contest at [facebook.com/oldhousejournal](https://facebook.com/oldhousejournal).