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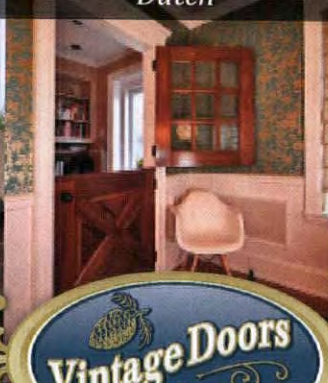
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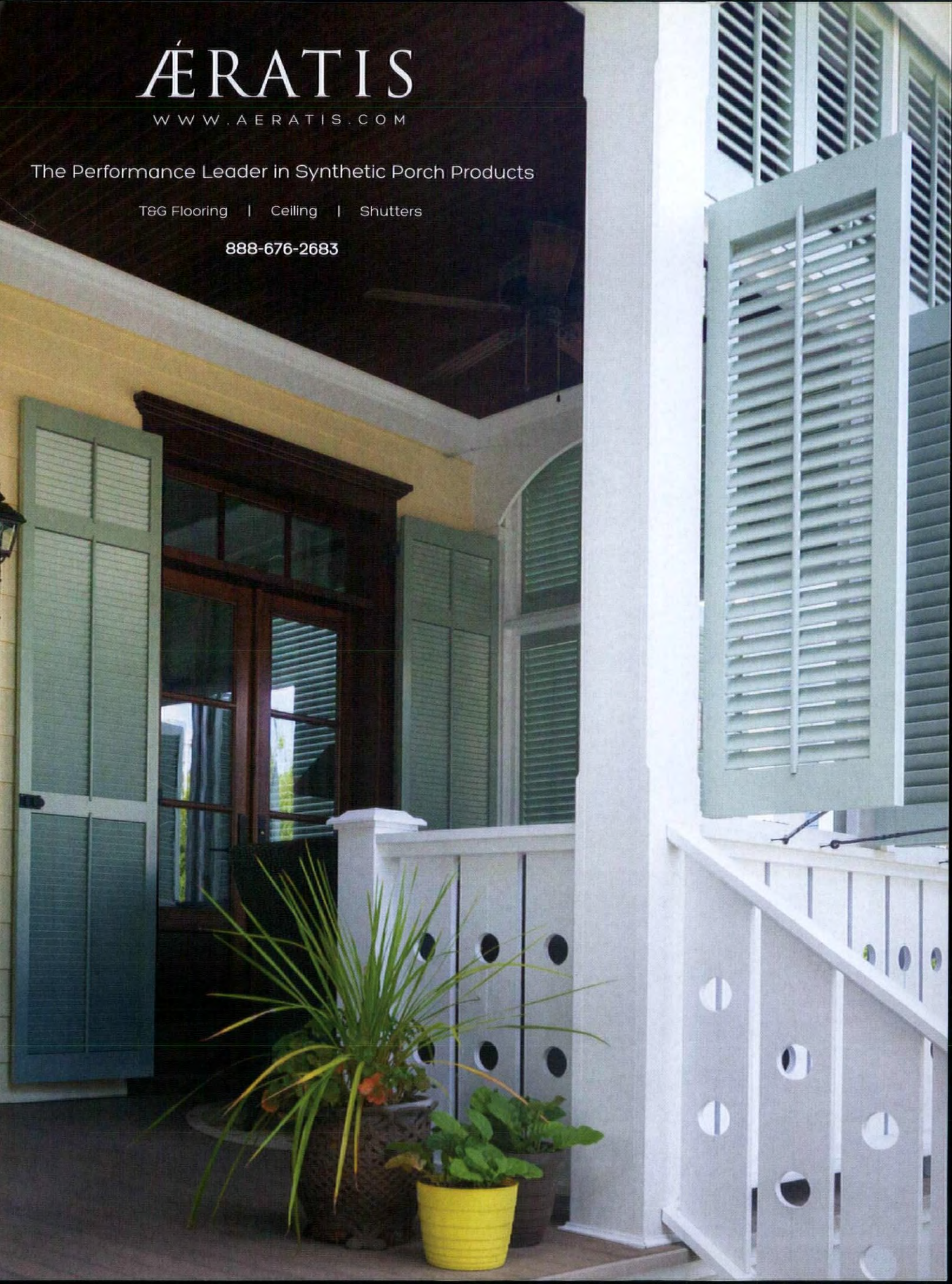
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ON THE COVER Under a trellis, a wood stoop for sitting pretty. PHOTO BY BRIAN VANDEN BRINK. SEE STORY ON PAGE 40.



Tell me a story . . .

Marketers and ministers know this: If you want your audience engaged and your point well made, if you hope they'll remember, then tell a story. Don't lecture or preach. Tell a good story.

To those who look and listen, houses tell stories about their builders and occupants. The oldest houses embody more stories. Then there are houses "right out of a storybook," the eccentric ones widely known as Storybook Style houses, which spin a tale of Hollywood sets, American soldiers home from Europe, and medieval fantasies.

Not everything can be a fairytale, of course. A restoration article, for example, must get down to business: this material, this tool, this process. Tell me how to build a stoop or porch steps, though, and I'll tell you why. Because when you sit on the stoop—a place between the private house and the public street—you see that Mrs. Wilson is back from Florida and the little boy across the street has a new puppy. Stoop-sitting is the social commitment that binds a neighborhood.

Wood porches, it's true, need a fair amount of upkeep. We need instruction on carpentry, epoxy, and painting. But we do it all for the stories. Years ago, in the country, I lived in a house called Salamovka (above). It was a long-neglected house, managed reluctantly by a park service, and in bad repair. I have rich memories of those summers spent mostly on the porch. Its roof leaked buckets, of course, and balusters were missing by the running foot, but there was so much porch it didn't matter. Family, kids, guests would sit to watch the weather gather in a valley over the river, sheltered from violent August thunderstorms. The porch smelled of honeysuckle. The side near the big farmhouse kitchen was the place to haul sweet corn to shuck it while sitting on the single step, while the screen door slammed behind.

Later I bought a shingled house that had been built with a big front porch and a kitchen porch, but they were long gone. I put them back. Not because it was cheap or easy, but because I wanted the stories.



Patricia Poore

SIDE NOTES

ARTS & CRAFTS HOMES

For OHJ readers who enjoyed its sister publication, *Arts & Crafts Homes and the Revival*: Regular coverage with new material is available at the ACH website. Find a deep archive of bungalow and Craftsman house tours, new homes by revival designers, period inspired kitchens and baths, and travel destinations for the Arts & Crafts aficionado. (Read Brian Coleman's new tour of Scotland, and visit the Roycroft Campus.) Find how-to, know-how, and repair articles. The Products & Services Directory is well-organized and illustrated, pointing the way to appropriate materials and today's artisans. And while you're there browsing, sign up for the free editorial e-newsletter that's delivered twice a month.

Arts & Crafts Homes will publish an annual "bookazine" print issue and directory, on sale Oct. 9. If you read OHJ or go to any of our websites, you'll hear all about it, including how to order a copy direct from the publisher, artsandcraftshomes.com



Welcome to Arts & Crafts Homes!

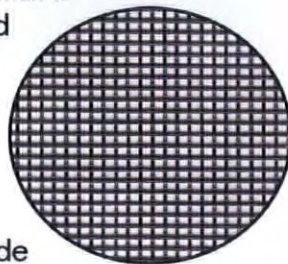
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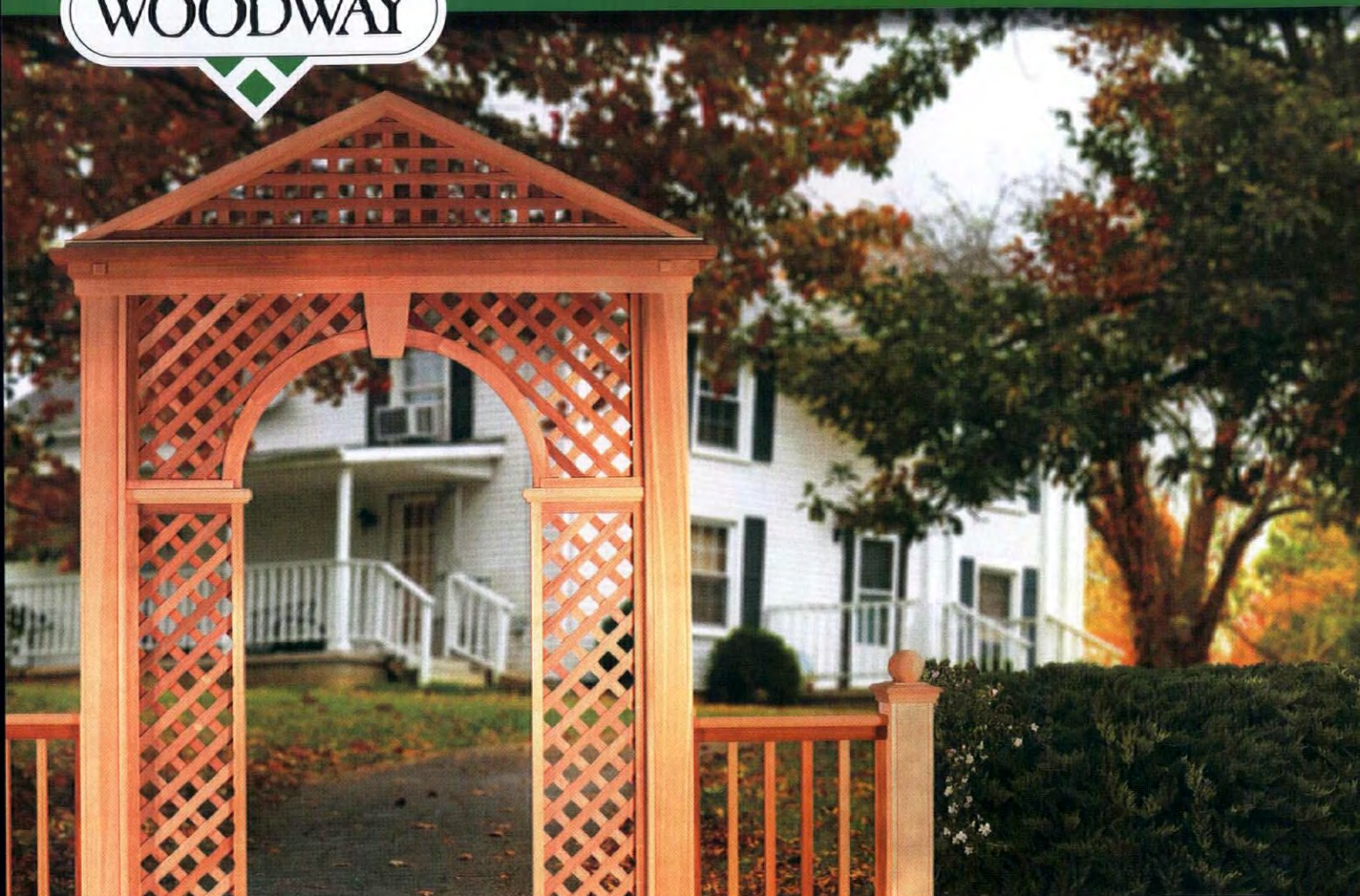
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Storybookish Whimsies

Evoking the fanciful and the fantastic, Storybook Style delights the child in all of us. **By Mary Ellen Polson**

1. GOTHIC VIGOR

Accented with scrolls, medallions, and fleur-de-lis brackets, the Calandra chandelier is lit by six faux amber candle lights mounted on spiked arms. The gilded tobacco finish adds Gothic ambience. Measuring 36" wide, the total suspended length can range from 4' to 8'. \$4,491. Meyda Tiffany, (800) 222-4009, meyda.com

2. COTTAGE ARCH

No Storybook cottage is complete without a round-top door, especially if it's this raised-panel style in African mahogany. Clear insulated glass panes create another arch. \$5,000 and up. Vintage Doors, (800) 787-2001, vintagedoors.com

3. DREAMY DISTORTION

No. 7 in the Artisan Series, this stepped display bookcase is unconventional. It's 54" high x 30" wide x 16" deep. Each made-to-order bookcase comes in more than 30 paint and stain colors. \$1,650. Dust Furniture, (219) 464-9100, dustfurniture.com

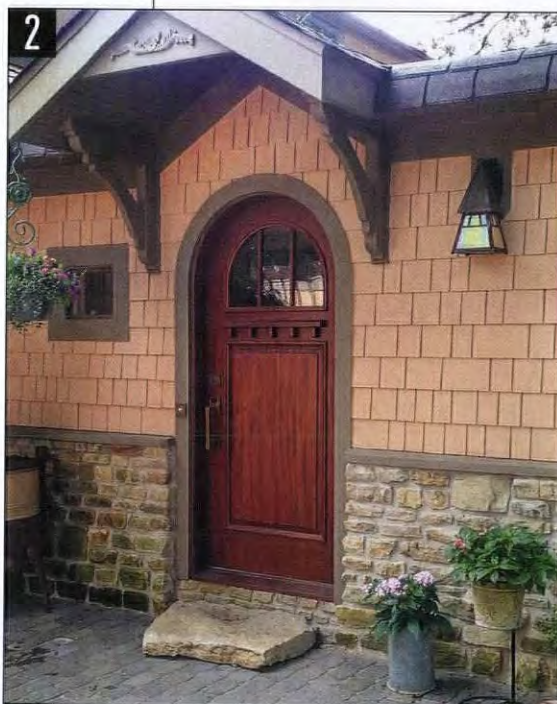
4. DANCING MICE

"If there are mice in the pantry, they best be mine," quips David Berman of Trustworth Studios. This new reissue of a Silver Studio paper is scaled for the back of pantry shelves; \$7/sq.ft. It's shown with Angelic Forest, a magical C.F.A. Voysey-designed wallpaper that presents a garden inhabited by birds and fairy angels. Produced digitally, the paper is 21" wide and comes in 30-sq. ft. single rolls, each \$210. Trustworth Studios, (508) 746-1847, trustworth.com

1



2



3



4



5



6



5. ELIZABETHAN TWIST

Perfect for a courtly dining hall, the Tully armchair has barley-twist arms and legs and nail-head accents. Reminiscent of Elizabethan Revival style, the chair measures 44 1/2" high x 24 1/2" wide x 25" deep. \$1,500 and up. Stickley, (315) 682-5500, stickley.com

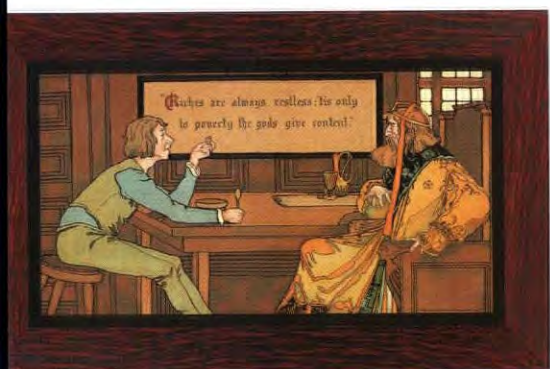
6. HERALDIC CLAY

One of a series of art tiles with heraldic names, Gilly Flower is composed of two tiles fused together with piercings and relief. The multi-colored floral tiles are finished with lead-free glazes. \$210 each. Tudor Tile, (360) 647-2596, tudortile.com

8



7



7. MOTTOES MEDIEVAL

Taber-Prang art prints—lithographs produced ca. 1904–1905—are prized for their allusion to life in the Middle Ages. Giclée reproductions measure 16 1/4" x 9 1/4". \$40. In a quarter-sawn oak frame: \$165. Ford Craftsman Studios, (817) 919-8470, fordcraftsmanonline.com

10



8. BRICK PEANUT BRITTLE

Lumpy and distorted clinker bricks invite freeform installations for foundations and walls, entry stairs, and chimney bases. Bricks from the Old Pasadena collection are mostly red, some with black charring. Gavin Historical Bricks, (319) 354-5251, historicalbricks.com

9. THATCH IN SHINGLES

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10. BOLT THE CASTLE KEEP

The medieval-style iron surface bolt coordinates with Salzburg Imperial entry sets from the same distributor. Forged in Austria, the bolt comes in 8" and 12" lengths. Surface and flush strikes to secure a door or gate are included. \$121–\$130. Ironlock Imports, (877) 650-5101, locksandlevers.com

Porch & Garden

Enhance your summer with new furniture, great tools, a planter, or even a pool. **By Mary Ellen Polson**

1. TAKE A PLUNGE

Gracefully sized like fountains, these saltwater plunge pools come ready to install with an engineered concrete shell, tiled interior, variable speed pump and filter, and LED pool light. The standard size measures 7' x 13'. \$21,750. Soake Pools, (603) 749-0665, soakepools.com

2. SPRING FORWARD

Inspired by steel spring chairs first made in the 1940s, the Gracie chair uses a simple cantilevered design that allows the occupant to gently bounce cares away. They're offered in sets of two, in four playful colors. \$269. Crosley Furniture, (800) 815-4796, crosleyfurniture.com

3. CALL THE JETSONS

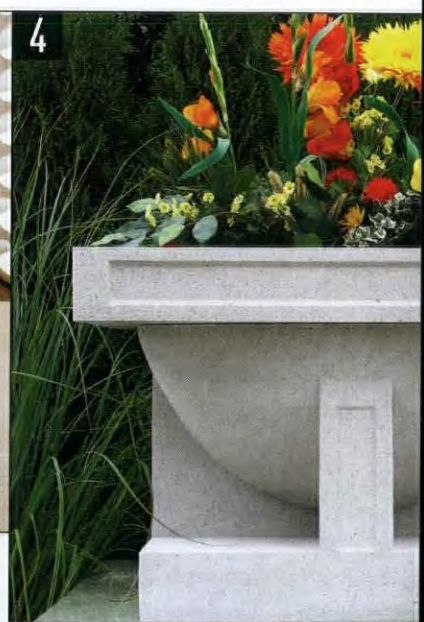
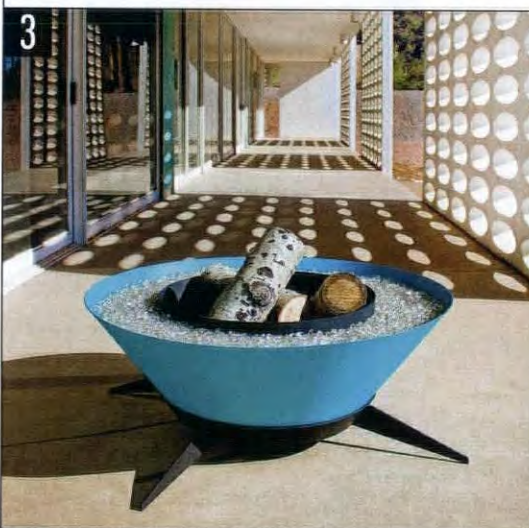
Perched on tapered, Atomic Age legs, the Astrofire firepit can be configured to burn wood or propane/natural gas. Crafted from hand-rolled 14-gauge steel, it comes in seven colors. The 22"-wide pit has a tabletop option. \$1,450-\$1,750. Boxhill, (520) 909-6109, shopboxhill.com

4. THE WRIGHT PLANTER

Designed for the entrance to Frank Lloyd Wright's studio, the Oak Park Studio Vase is made of cast sandstone. At 34 3/4" wide x 23 1/2" high, the medium size matches the scale of the original; it weighs 800 pounds. \$1,424 before shipping. Oak Park Home & Hardware, (773) 836-3606, oakparkhome-hardware.com

5. MONTANA FORGED

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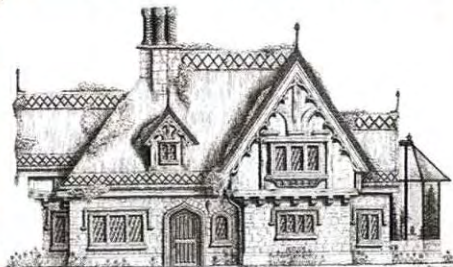
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MOBILE, AL / \$440,000

A 1905 Arts & Crafts Bungalow on brick piers has a pyramidal roof, a broad, gas-lit front porch with large square columns, original tiled fireplaces, stained glass, period woodwork, and a back porch with a swing.



RANDOLPH, NJ / \$679,000

Tuttle Cooperage is a historic barrel-maker's house dating as early as 1797, but with later additions. The oldest section of the National Register house is a summer kitchen in the English basement, with old brick floors, ceiling beams, a walk-in fireplace with a bee-hive oven, and iron cranes for cooking over the hearth.



NEW ORLEANS, LA / \$759,900

Raised basements were essential for homes in low-lying areas. With a deep bracketed roofline, this raised Italianate cottage features floor-to-ceiling windows, heart-pine floors, a grand arch between parlors, and period mantels and doors.



APEX, NC / \$549,999

This ca. 1905 Queen Anne on low brick piers has two front gables with lapped fish-scale shingles, a restored wraparound porch, and a new tin roof. Inside find tongue-and-groove pine flooring, the original staircase, nine fireplaces, vintage shiplap.

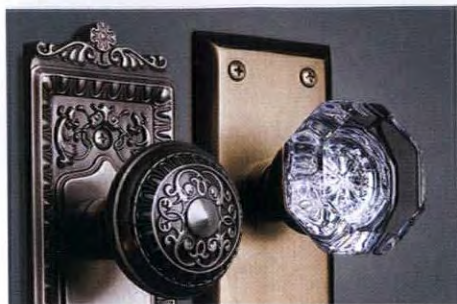


WASHINGTON, DC / \$879,000

A deep, ornate cornice, ribbon coursing, and a setback entrance give this ca. 1890 brick row house architectural depth. Transoms over doors, an original staircase with spandrel ornaments, patterned brick fireplaces, and a full English basement await.

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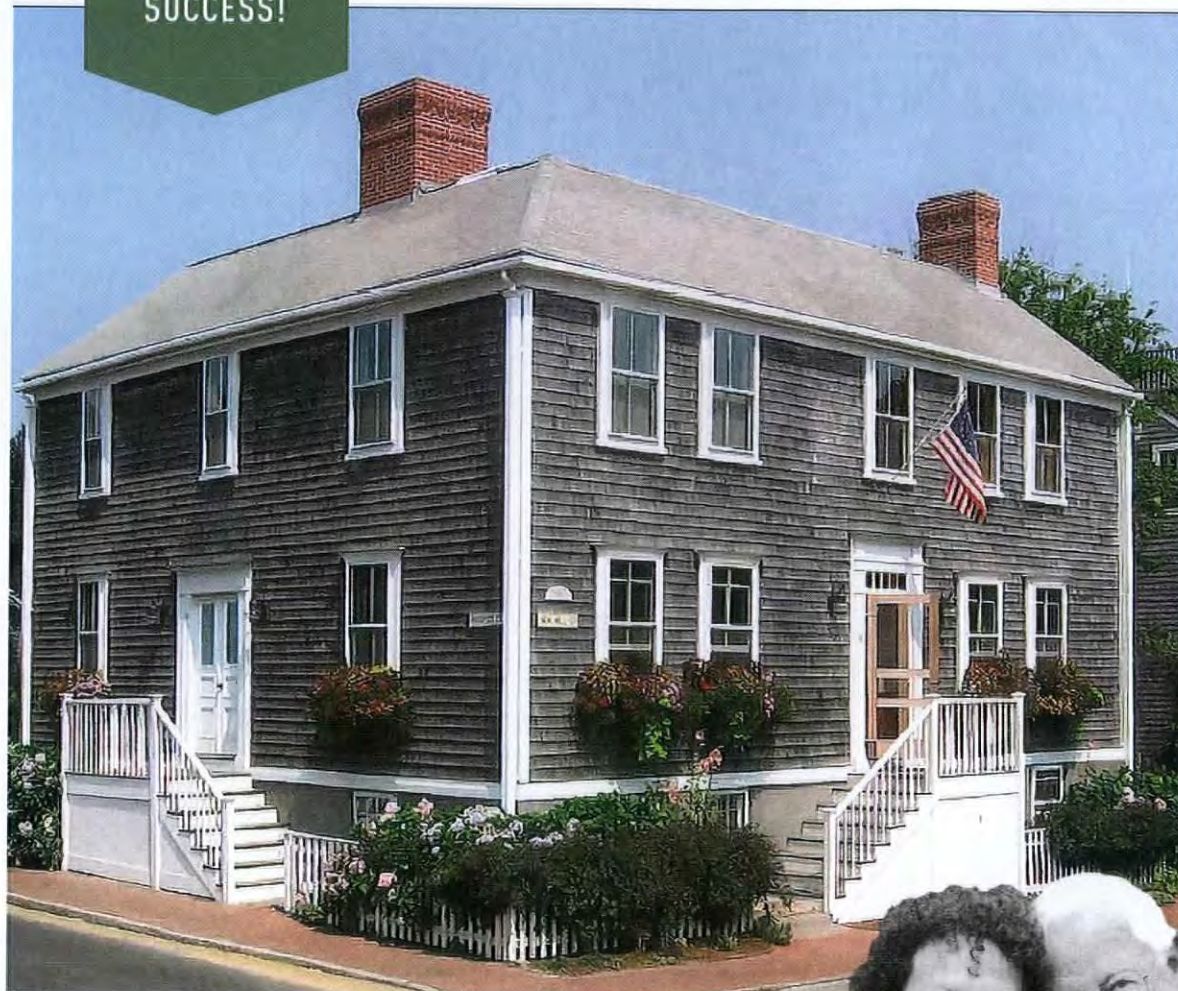
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AN OLD NANTUCKET HOUSE

This family was on a mission to revive and protect the historic 1809 structure. **By Mary Bergman, with Esta-Lee & Harris Stone**

On Nantucket Island off the Cape Cod coast in Massachusetts, quaint cobblestone streets and sandy beaches make for a booming real-estate market. The high turnover threatens the island's more than 800 pre-Civil War era homes. Every year, more are gutted and their original building materials carted away for disposal. Preservation is an uphill battle.

So I'm happy to share a successful rescue. Esta-Lee and Harris Stone set out to find a historic home that needed restoration and protection. The 1809 house they fell in love with was in serious need of repair. It had most recently been a boardinghouse, and many elements had faded or been covered up. The very foundation required repointing and new stucco. Fireplaces and transoms had been boarded up; floors were dirty, scratched, and dull; plaster walls were cracked; all the mechanicals needed upgrading.

"The first time we walked through the house with potential contractor Mickey Rowland," says Esta-Lee, "he warned, 'if you're interested in gutting this house, then I'm not your guy'. That's when I knew he was perfect for the job."





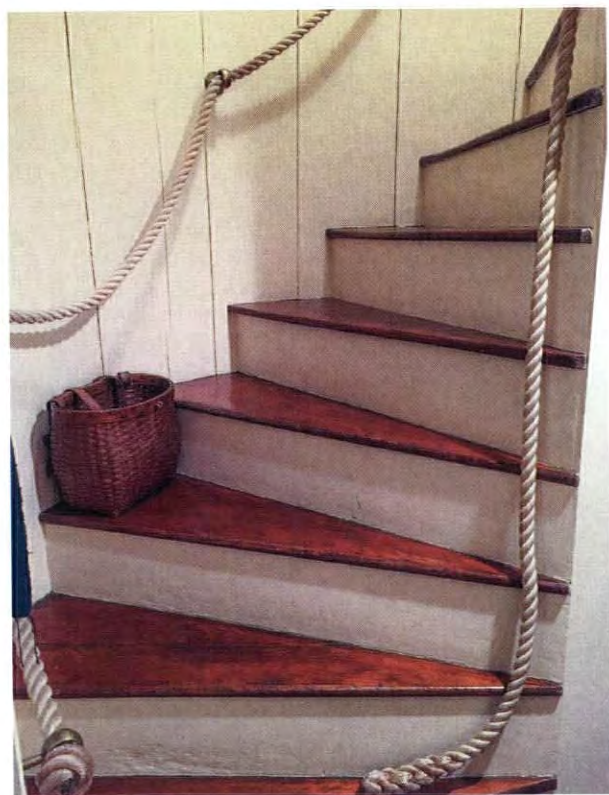
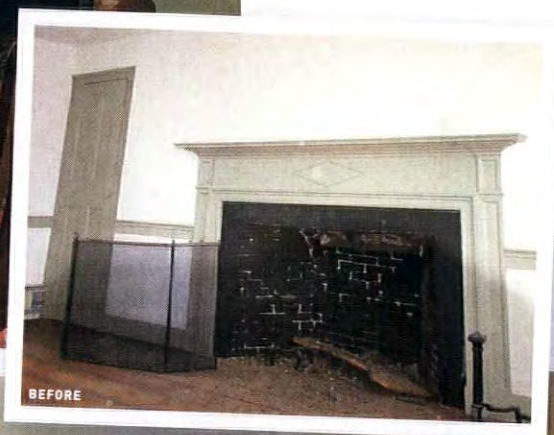
OPPOSITE Built near the curb, the old house has typical Nantucket entry steps. The former boardinghouse required a great deal of restoration. **INSET** Homeowners Esta-Lee and Harris Stone.

LEFT The right-side parlor has plain trim, all original.

BELOW A top-floor bedroom fireplace during restoration.

BOTTOM LEFT The winder staircase behind what's now the side entry is early; a more formal stair was added when the house was extended in the 19th century.

BELOW RIGHT The wainscoted left-side parlor today.





Esta-Lee and Harris had read a few books about furnishing old houses, but nothing about the nuts and bolts of restoration. They'd found preservation carpenter Sandy Kendall, who in turn recommended Milton Rowland to design the repairs. Pen Austin, an expert in repairing plaster, restoring chimneys, and refinishing floors, restored the home to its original look. Austin echoed Nantucket's whaling past by "scrimshawing" scenes into one fireplace's new plaster surround.

Now the Stones have a comfortable home; it's like visiting world travelers, not another white-on-white decorator showroom. Though the rooms are traditionally modest, the Stones give a Christmas party for 60 every year, and 13 family members of three generations spend time here during the summer.

What makes this property all the more special is that the Stones made sure the house and their little piece of Nantucket will be preserved for future generations: The Stones worked with the Nantucket Preservation Trust to put a preservation deed restriction on the property. It covers exterior and interior changes. "I walk through these rooms, and am amazed to think of how many before me have passed through the space," says Esta-Lee Stone.

MARY BERGMAN IS COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR FOR THE NANTUCKET PRESERVATION TRUST.

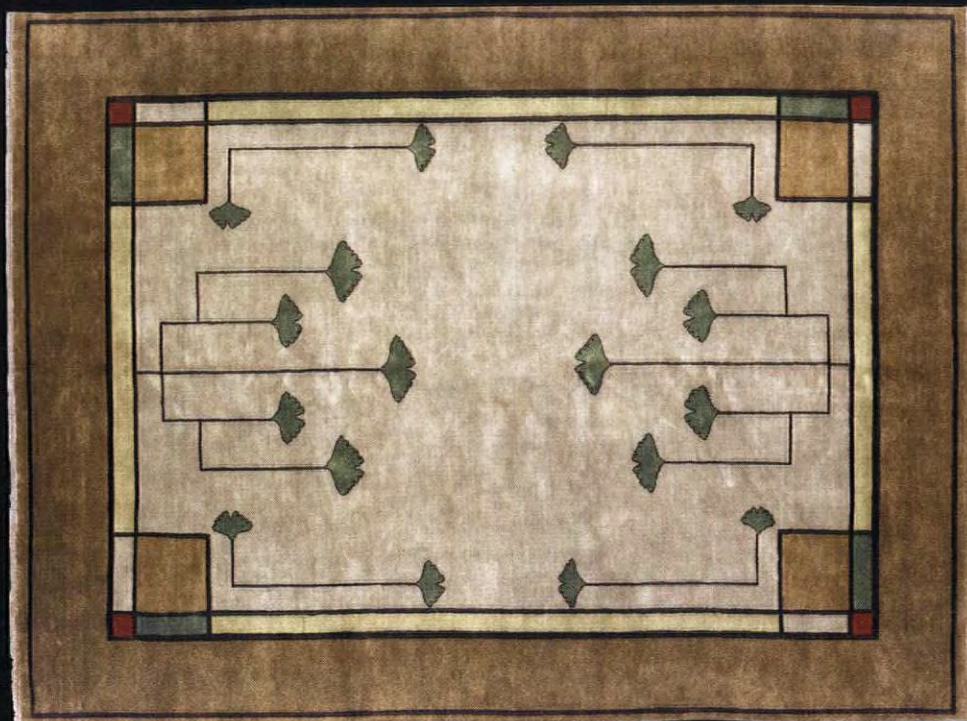


BEFORE

TOP This period mantel was salvaged from a nearby home. **ABOVE** The stove was repurposed for a basement bedroom. **RIGHT** Extra bedrooms, baths, an office, and a laundry now occupy the raised basement.



BEFORE



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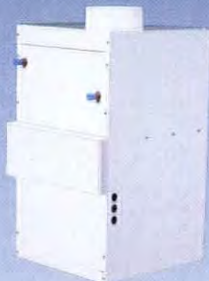
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A large *oeil-de-boeuf* window brings light into a mudroom and is a dramatic focal point on the exterior. The glazed door is from the 1920s.

USING PERIOD-INSPIRED GLAZING TO BRING IN THE LIGHT

Windows • Transoms •
French doors **page 24**



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THE VIEW THROUGH THE GLASS: PERIOD-INSPIRED GLAZING
The glass chosen for windows and doors can transform an interior while it manages light and the view.



32 VINTAGE VISION
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BOLD NEW WORK

A preservation easement required the new wing to re-create the volume of an 1840s timber-frame barn that had been dismantled and moved. The energy-efficient door system and transom by Marvin replicate the barn-door opening.



The VIEW THROUGH THE GLASS

Glazing—the glass configuration chosen for windows and doors—can transform interior environments by bringing in light and by opening or concealing views; glass allows connection between interior spaces and to the outdoors. Modern glazing systems, deftly used together with design that considers proper proportion and compatible style, make it possible to reach for the sky while remaining firmly sheltered indoors. | By Mary Ellen Polson



A HARBOR VIEW

The owners of a smallish Second Empire house on Boston's North Shore had requested a sitting area off the new master bedroom on the second floor, preferably with a beautiful prospect. Architect Mat Cummings answered with a cupola-like tower that includes broad banks of operable sash windows that not only bring light into the suite, but also afford a coveted vista. "The tower has beautiful views of the water over the rooftops of Marblehead Harbor," Cummings says.

Crowning each bank of windows is an elliptical arch, overlaid with a grid of simulated divided lights—a nod to high-style window details dating to late 19th-century Queen Anne and Shingle Style dwellings. The windows are purposely different from those used elsewhere in the renovation, though they maintain the essence of the historic house. "I wanted the room to stand out," says Cummings.

From this vantage point, the eye sees from the yard below into the infinite blue.



TOP RIGHT A new sunroom on the back of a Second Empire cottage offers abundant light and views of Marblehead Harbor.

INSET & LEFT Tucked into the ell formed by the old house and a new two-storey addition, the sunroom acts as a covered porch for the rear entry and is the platform for a New England coastal tradition: a widow's walk with harbor views.



W

indows may be the eyes of the house, but that doesn't mean that they are always in the right place or that we like everything they show us. That's why a good designer or architect considers sight lines not only when building new but also when renovating historic houses.

"If the view is the painting and the window is the frame," says David Heide, a Minneapolis architectural designer who works extensively in historic restoration, "think about what's beyond the opening that still aligns with the rules of the house but also makes sense experientially when you're inside looking out."

Just as it makes sense to add glazing (if it had been limited) when the view is of a lake or a mountain, it also makes sense to remove or otherwise conceal a window that gives a prospect of, say, a building topped with concertina wire. Transparent or translucent glazing in doors and windows will bring light into a dark interior; opaque glass or panels minimize too-bright sunlight in a hot climate. *[text cont. on page 30]*

Those Aren't Doors, They're Windows!

Long neglected and in disrepair, the 1924 Mediterranean-style villa in a landmarked historic district was otherwise perfect for an extended family looking to convert it into two separate living spaces. A key element in the work, designed by David Heide Design Studio, was returning the building's signature arched casement windows to their original size and shape.

In the more traditional downstairs unit, the team recast the dining room space as a new, period-appropriate kitchen, linking it directly to the living room. The passage is a stunning set of arched, double French doors with wavy Art Nouveau muntins near the top, found during the careful "forensic demolition" of the house. A small addition—the breakfast room flooded with light—replaced the dining room eliminated by request of the clients.

Heide likes to convert any single-glazed windows to double glazing by adding a layer of vintage storm-window glass: "You get the old, wavy glass without compromising energy efficiency."

FOOL THE EYE

Patterned after the arched windows on the exterior, the French windows aren't operable. "These are actually fixed, designed to look like doors, but the doors don't open," says designer David Heide. "The room's too small."

ABOVE Floor-to-ceiling arched windows masquerading as doors are actually fixed in place because there's no room for an in-swing. **RIGHT** A pair of arching French doors with wavy Art Nouveau glazing bars joins the living room to the kitchen, which replaced the dining room in the original floor plan.





Timber-frame beams supported by trusses mark the back of the original 1790 house. Architect Cummings brought in the light with sash windows, a skylight, and a French door.

NOT SO MATCHY-MATCHY

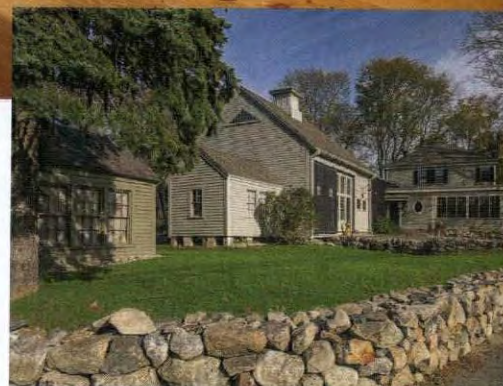
When a house dates to 1790 and has made it through at least one fire and had modifications in every century since, most people would throw up their hands on choosing a window style. But to architect Mat Cummings, the house's diverse history gave him permission to play with multiple influences. "We didn't want to play the Match Game because there was too much to match."

Consider that the main part of the house has Federal windows with large glass panes and thin muntins. A boxy addition at the front is a full-on Arts & Crafts sunroom with folding French doors and leaded- and stained-glass windows. The old kitchen, with crumbling vinyl flooring and appliances that had stopped working, had no windows at all.

While doing exploratory work in the kitchen area, Cummings discovered that a dropped ceiling concealed evidence of an old timber-frame barn with large trussed beams. The architect decided to expose them and add more where sections were damaged or missing, establishing a farmhouse theme.

To bring light into the kitchen and the

adjacent sitting room, he used a mix of divided-light windows: sash windows in the kitchen over the sink and taller casements in the sitting room. Around the corner in the mudroom is, in the words of the architect, a "wicked cool" round window with a keystone motif at each of four points (shown on p. 23). The room connects to yet another sunroom through a pair of refurbished sliding barn doors that are three-quarters glass. "There's not too much we didn't touch in the house," says Cummings.



ABOVE A long-term restoration of a historic 18th-century house with multiple add-ons deftly brings light into all of the rooms, making the interior both functional and comfortable.

BELOW Originally part of an old timber-frame barn, the sitting room adjacent to the kitchen connects to the mudroom and barn; it's lit by tall, divided-light casement windows.



SUN-SPLASHED PARLOR

A sunroom with lozenge-shaped leaded glass was added a century ago, bringing light into the more formal areas of the house through French doors. A stained-glass window in the Arts & Crafts sunroom adds a rosy tint to the room (inset).





TOP In an Arts & Crafts cottage, the sunroom afforded the only lake view until a recent renovation opened up interior sight lines. **ABOVE** Darkened by a dated built-in that went to the ceiling, this dining room was opened up when designer David Heide introduced a pair of fixed, nine-light windows and a French door opening to a new terrace.

Another consideration is existing additions to an older building. Rather than going with the window style of the oldest part of the house, it's usually better to work with the period and style of the addition. For example, an addition to a Colonial-era Georgian house during the early 19th-century Federal period would have had windows with the larger lights (panes) and delicate muntins typical of Federal. Today, it's perfectly acceptable to use the same trick—introducing more modern glazing—provided it's done well, says Massachusetts architect Mat Cummings, who specializes in historic restorations. If the new glazing is on the back of the house, further liberties may be taken, especially if the house has had many modifications throughout its history.

Fenestration (the arrangement of windows and doors on the elevations of the building), however, must stay true to the underlying design of the structure. Such elements as sills, mullions between windows, and the muntins separating divided lights (panes) should be in keeping with original details, if not an exact match. That's true of all the new glazing shown on these pages.

A house that has survived for a century or more has had the benefit of many adaptations by its occupants, some for the worse, but usually many for the better. "I find," says Cummings, "that the oldest houses in the country are far more functional than new ones."

art of concealment

Despite having French doors on two sides of the room, large double windows, and a white-painted ceiling, the dining room in **this 1897 Tudor Revival appeared dark and two-dimensional**. A garage hard by the house meant the blinds on the window facing the table were kept closed, keeping the room perpetually dim. • **David Heide Design Studio completely reconceived the wall,**

deepening the existing arched recess to accommodate a new, period-style buffet with art-glass cabinets and a beveled-mirror backsplash. Heide replaced the windows over the buffet with a three-panel art-glass window featuring clear and pastel translucent and bull's-eye glass. Period double sconces on either side of the triptych play up light and the

sparkle of the existing crystal chandelier. All of the extra glazing reflects and amplifies the light coming into the room.

While the rhythms of the buffet add another three-dimensional element, Heide further enhanced the room's architectural lines with a favorite paint palette: soft cinnamon brown on walls and pale rose on the ceiling. "It makes the white

on the woodwork pop," says Heide. "You see the architecture in a different way when there is contrast between the wall and the casing."

BELOW A re-creation of a grand built-in buffet and a triptych art-glass window brought life to a listless Tudor Revival dining room and also resolved a problem: the original windows had looked out over a garage roof just seven feet away.



BEFORE AND AFTER

You'd never know that the built-ins in the dining room's niche are not original to the 1897 house. Both the delicately colored triptych window and the period sideboard with leaded-glass doors were added.



A New Sun Parlor, 1930

Illustration from the 1930 edition *Style Book* by drapery-hardware maker Kirsch of Sturgis, Michigan



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The 'Capistrano' outdoor daybed from Serena & Lily has a Twenties Empire Revival feel. It's made of hand-wrapped resin "rattan" on an aluminum frame and measures about 80" long by 42.5" deep. MSRP \$2,498. serenaandlily.com

"The image is almost a lesson in all the wonderful, old-school things no longer available today, except perhaps on Etsy. This period of interior design is ascendant, however, so expect reproductions soon."

—Bo Sullivan, Bolling & Co.



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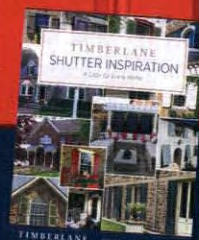
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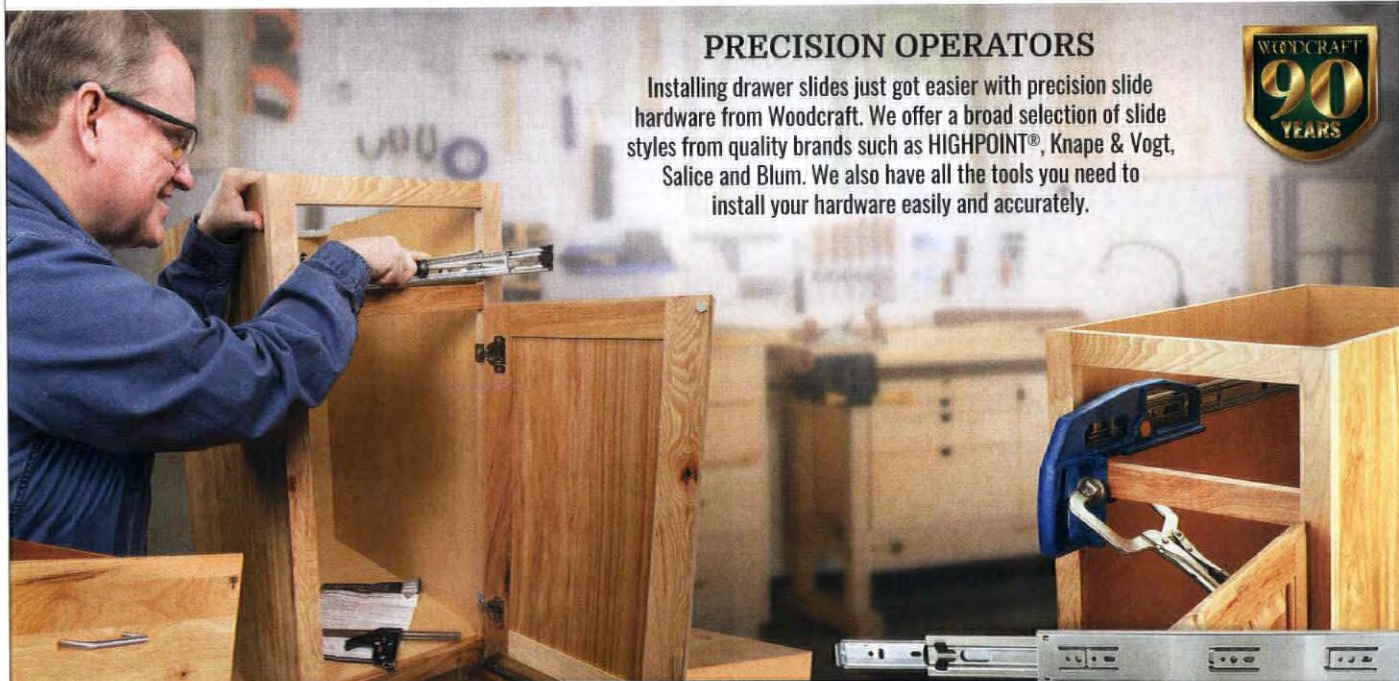
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Revival Kitchen of the Bungalow Era

Owners of this 1913 house turned back the clock on some intrusive remodelings. **By Mary Ellen Polson**

This cozy kitchen is in a “Hapgood house” in Mountain Lakes, New Jersey. About 500 such Craftsman-inspired homes built by developer Herbert J. Hapgood after 1911 survive. Today’s owners, Suzanne and Rick Solch, purchased theirs about 20 years ago. At the time, “the house didn’t look especially Arts & Crafts,” Suzanne says; remodeling had taken away much of the integrity from the stuccoed 1913 house.

After lots of work—stripping fireplace brick, replacing the stair rail, removing down lights in the living-room ceiling—the Solches furnished the house

in true Craftsman style. For the use of textiles and window treatments, they looked to Gustav Stickley’s advice from his magazine *The Craftsman* (1901–1916). In the kitchen, windows are fitted with very practical roller shades, stenciled in paint. (They’re from the Handwerk Shade Shop: thehandwerkshop.com.)

The incised and paint-decorated cottage table and chairs date to the 1930s or ’40s. The Storybook-style chandelier is a reproduction from Mica Lamps. The green-and-black tableware is German: the couple have traveled extensively and are avid collectors with eclectic taste.

1. WARM PALETTE

This one is neither a “sanitary white” period kitchen, nor an over-the-top revival version. Copper and natural wood anchor a space saturated with soft teals and greens.

2. CRAFTSMAN MOTIFS

The room gets period credence and personality from motifs chosen by the owners: a three-leaf stencil on the roller shades, Stickley cabinet pulls, and nature by way of black bear relief tiles.

3. ORIGINAL FOOTPRINT

The kitchen remains in its original location in the back of the house, and is separated from the dining room by a door. No additions were made, although what’s now the stove alcove used to be a small ice-delivery porch.

4. MODERN FUNCTION

Despite its average size and old-fashioned appeal, the kitchen has plenty of storage (note the narrow cabinets around the stove), new granite counters, and a Heartland reproduction range that fits in yet works like today’s high-end appliances.





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In the New Jersey kitchen, the decorative tiles—**black bears and dragonflies**—and field tiles are from Pratt & Larson, known for their extensive glaze colors. Besides field tiles and mosaics, the company makes decorative relief tiles depicting animals, botanicals, sea life, fruits and vegetables, and ironworks-inspired designs. Find a dealer at prattandlarson.com





THEY STILL MAKE...



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No bubble-dome skylights these! Metal and glass skylights and roof lanterns—which look like mini conservatories—may be familiar rooftop sights in London, New York, and beyond. They bring light into a stairwell or a windowless bathroom. The old ones were fitted with clear, pressed, or colored glass.

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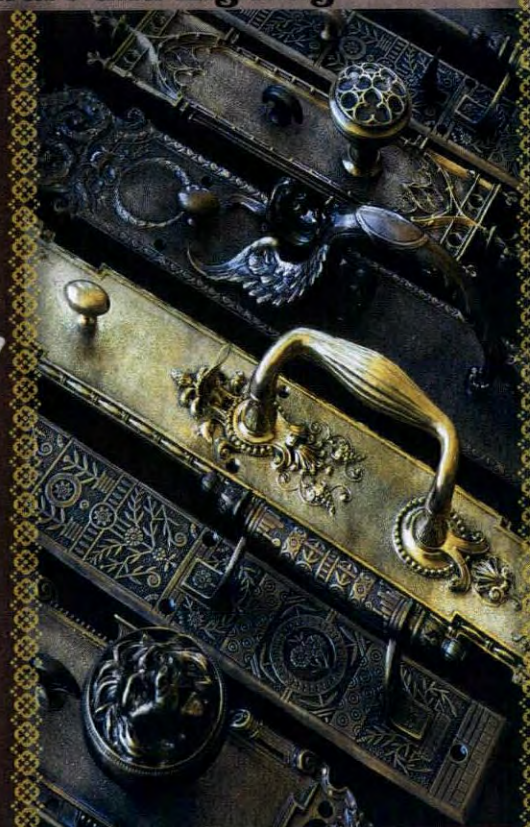
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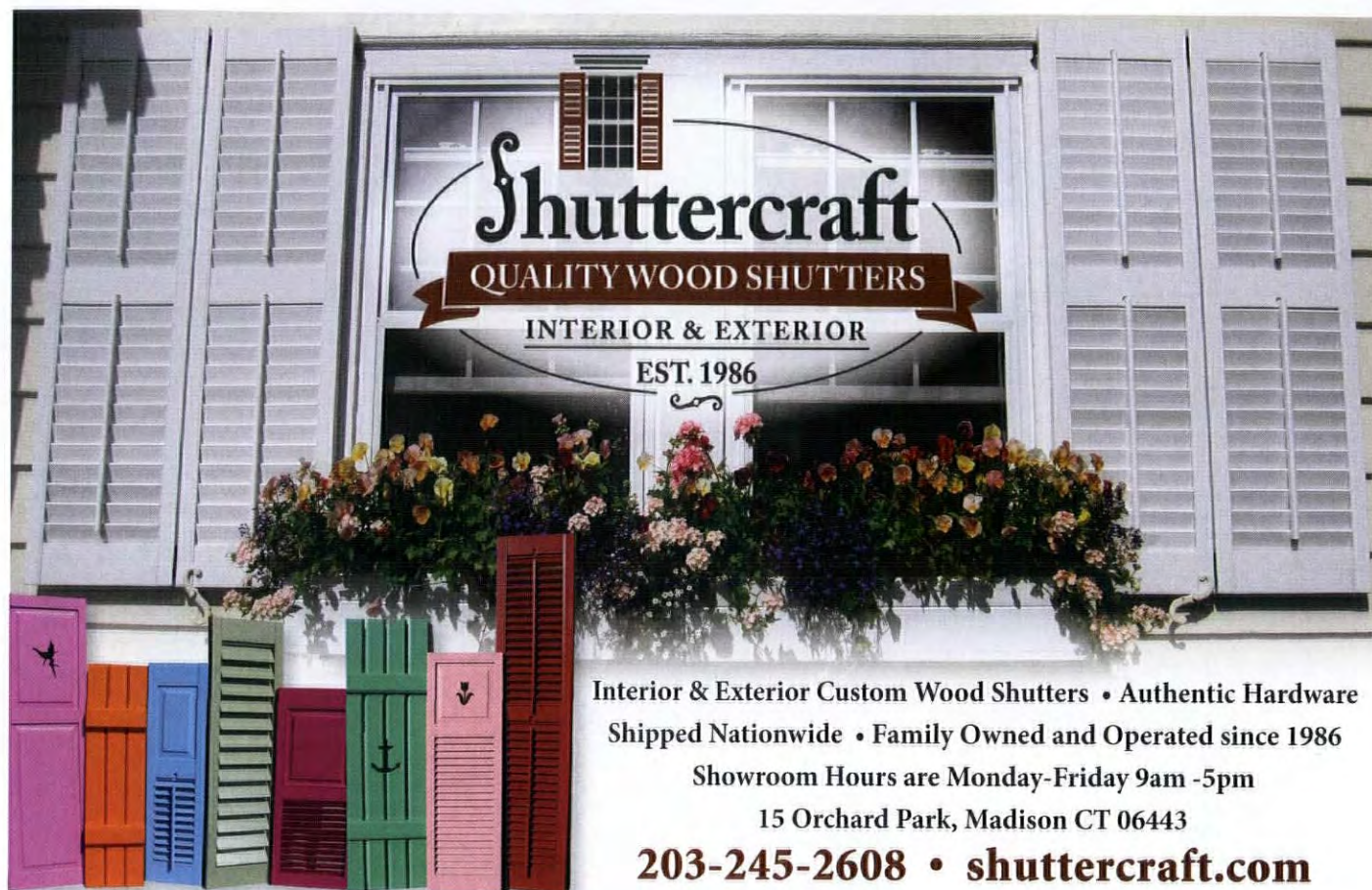


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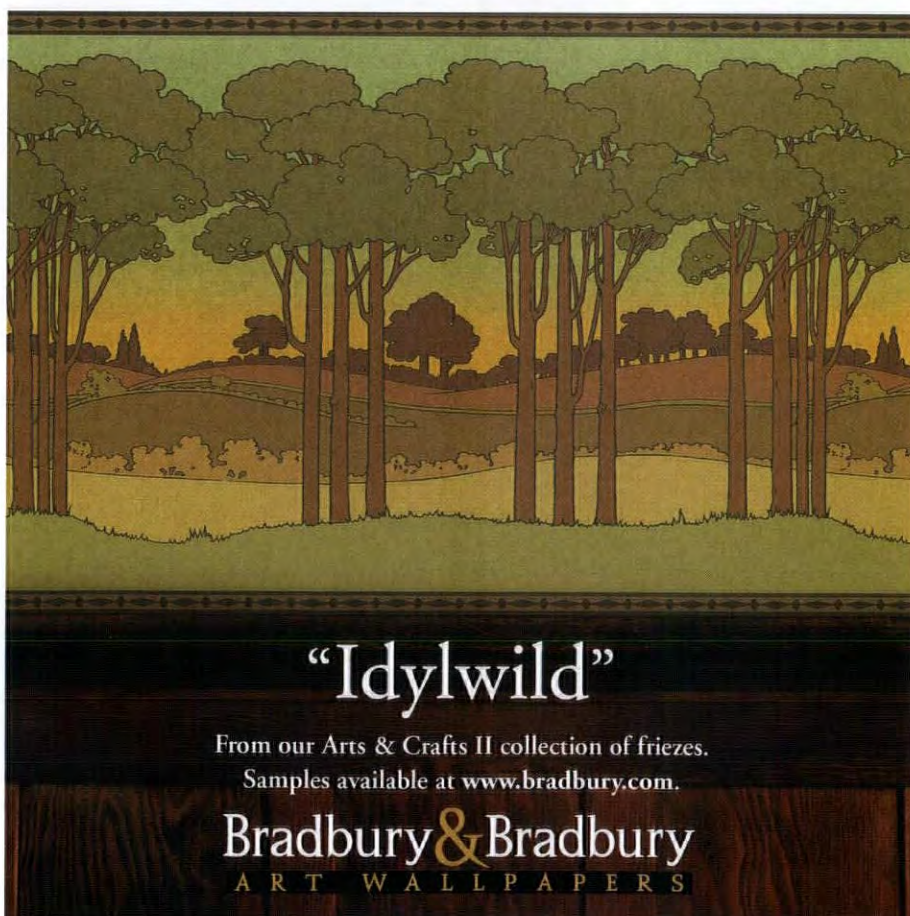


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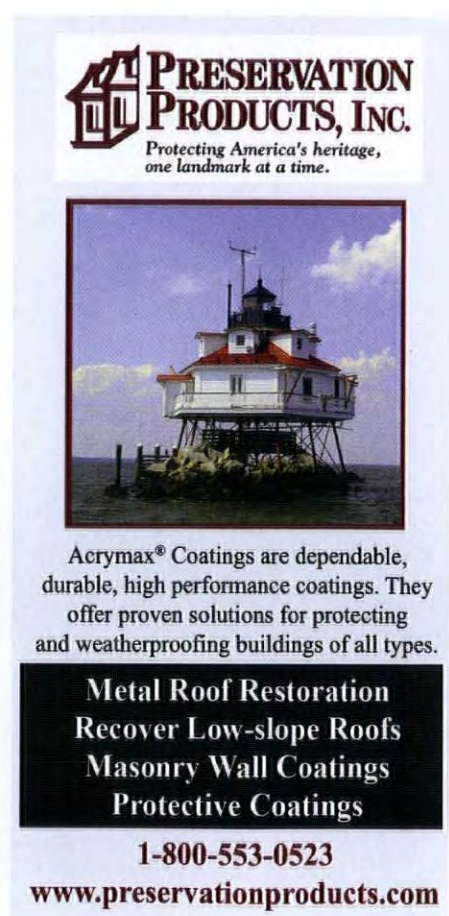


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56 AN ELECTRICIAN SCREWED UP

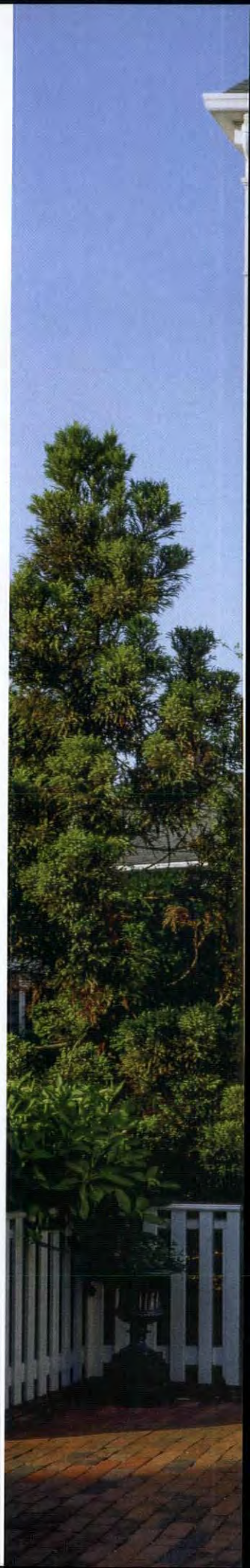
58 SALVAGE IT
61 DO THIS, NOT THAT
63 ASK OHJ

WELCOME TO GRACEFUL STOOPS & ENTRY STEPS



The landing pad between house and front walk or city sidewalk, a “stoop” may be as small as a single step to the front door of a country farmhouse, or as tall and imposing as the stone steps leading to the parlor floor of a Brooklyn brownstone. The word “stoop” comes from the Dutch term for “step,” and has become a handy moniker for all sorts of structures that provide access to the house or porch. • Stoops and entry steps are ignored until they fall into disrepair. That’s when it becomes clear just how essential they are to appearance and safety. A stoop with missing or broken steps is not only a hazard, but also affects curb appeal. **BY MARY ELLEN POLSON**

RIGHT In locales like Nantucket and Charleston, where houses were built right on public sidewalks, turning the stoop so that it opens to the side is an elegant solution, permitting a landing wider than the door. **ABOVE** A single step would have sufficed—but this low, welcoming stoop becomes an Arts & Crafts-period porch with the addition of built-in benches and an arched trellis. The benches offer a place to sit or set packages, and bench sides also function as handrails.





➔ **Guidelines for Construction** At a minimum, a stoop consists

of a single step of natural stone, poured concrete, concrete block or other masonry, or wood. The most historical materials are stone and wood, with concrete becoming more prevalent in the 20th century. For comfort and safety, make the stoop wider than the door. Any stoop with three or more steps should be securely anchored to the house, have at least one railing or side wall, and terminate in a landing in front of the door. Taller stoops should have railings on both sides. A wood stoop with multiple steps should rest on a poured concrete pad or piers, so that no wood touches the ground.

Building a Wood Stoop Constructing a stoop from durable lumber requires basic carpentry skills, a knowledge of porch mechanics, and a bit of math.

Calculating Rise and Run

First, some terminology: The treads are the horizontal walking surfaces of the steps. In a stoop made from lumber, treads rest on or are rabbeted into stringers, the inclined boards on either side of the stoop. (In masonry construction, wood forms take the place of stringers; in both cases, stringers help define the three-dimensional look of the stoop.)

The vertical distance between one tread and the next is called the unit rise. For exterior steps, a comfortable rise from step to step is about 7" to 7½". The tread depth, or its horizontal travel, is called the unit run. In exterior steps, the depth of the tread should be deeper than the distance between treads—at least 11". No matter what the measurements, each step should be the same height and depth as the others. Otherwise, it confuses the user and becomes a trip hazard.

One way to calculate the proportional relationship between the rise and run is to add twice the run to the rise. The number should equal 25" to 27". With a rise of 7", for example, subtracting 14" from the low figure (25") produces a run of 11".

Another formula says that the sum of the unit rise and unit run should be about 17½". Using this method and the same 7" rise, the run would then be 10½", roughly



LEFT This partially completed project shows the location of stringers that support the steps and risers. The builder, Bill Cigliano, back-paints every scrap of wood and he added two extra stringers for additional support. "I try not to have a span of more than 2' between stringers because you get too much bounce," he says.



ABOVE The finished stoop for a turn-of-the-century house in the Chicago area includes shaped railings with period newel posts, a wide landing, and triple treads cut from 2" x 12" stock. Using three treads produces superior drainage, and is comfortable for stoop sitting.

Planning a stoop

A cutaway layout for a set of porch steps shows the location of treads, risers, and supporting stringers in relation to one another. Steps and risers are uniform. The bottom step and supporting stringer rest on a concrete pad; the top of the stringer engages the house beneath the landing.

STEP TERMS

NOSING The projection of a tread beyond the riser, usually rounded.

PITCH LINE An imaginary line that runs at an angle along the front of the nosings of the treads.

RISER The vertical element of the step between treads.

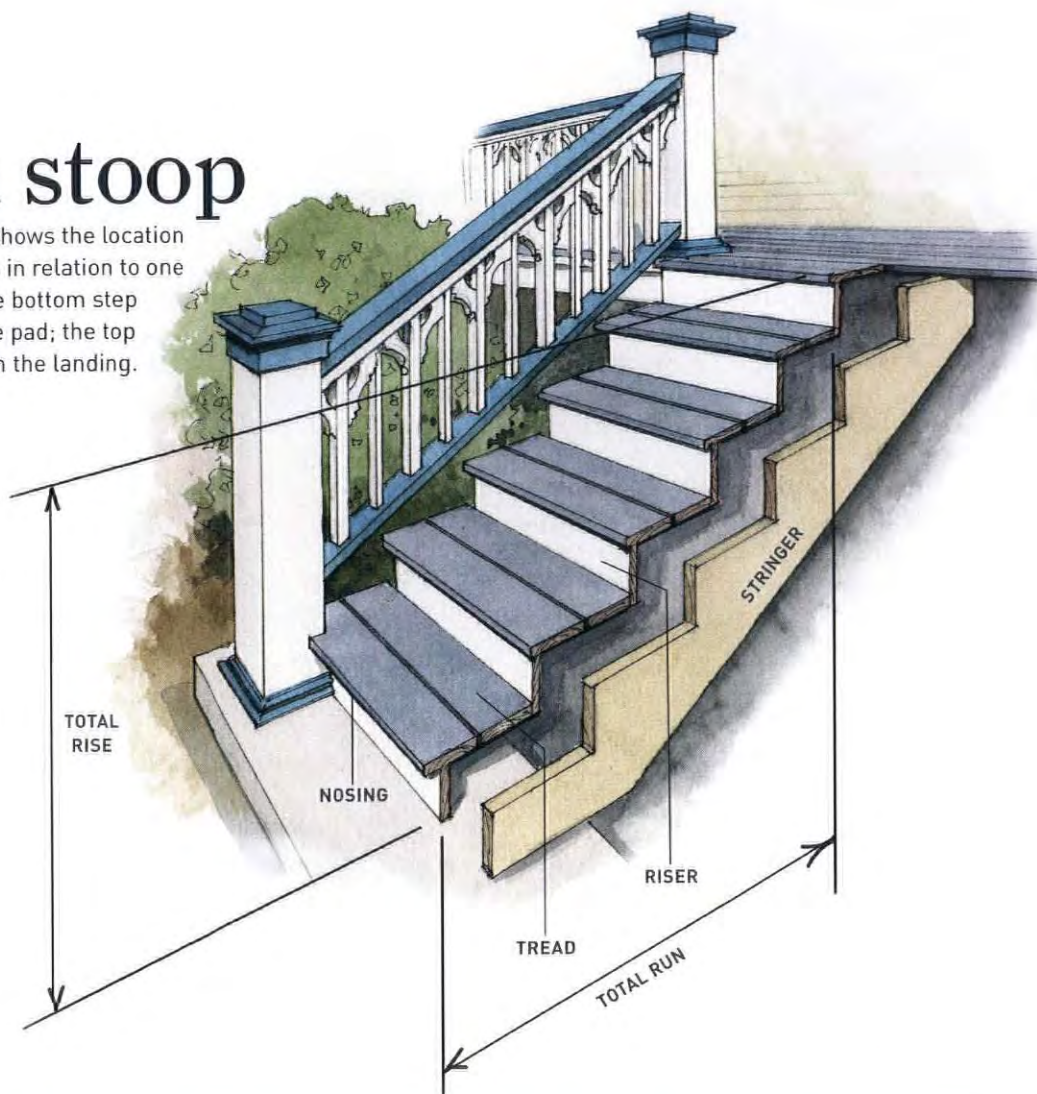
RUN The total horizontal travel of a staircase or steps.

STRINGER Inclined side member that serves as both carriage and face, also called a horse. Open stringers are more common than routed, closed stringers for porch steps.

TREAD The horizontal top of a step.

UNIT RISE The vertical distance between one tread and the next.

UNIT RUN Depth of a tread (distance of travel per step) excluding nosing.



the same as the first sum.

Both formulas produce approximate figures, reflecting the need to tweak the numbers to accommodate conditions on site. For example, suppose the total rise—the distance between the ground and the porch landing—is 61". Dividing 61" by the 7" unit rise equals about 8, which becomes the number of treads. Since steps don't come in fractions, dividing 61" by 8 yields a unit rise of $7\frac{5}{8}$ ", a figure that's easy to measure whether the work is done in wood or masonry. To figure the total unit run, multiply the number of steps by either $10\frac{1}{2}$ " or 11", depending on the formula used. This should produce deep steps with a gradual rise ideal for an entry stoop.

Once you've arrived at these figures, determine the pitch line. Sometimes called the rake of the stairs, the pitch line is the imaginary line that runs from the

CUTTING THE STRINGERS Once you have all the rise and run measurements, use them to mark out the first stringer. For open stringers: Choose a 2" x 12" piece of rot-resistant red cedar, pressure-treated pine, or redwood with as few knots as possible. The stringer should follow the desired pitch line of the stair, and the cuts will follow in zigzag fashion to follow the rise and depth of each step. ● Lay out the cuts by placing a framing square on the stringer board; mark and check the positions of all before making any cuts. Align the blade and tongue of the framing square so that the rise and run dimensions fall on the edges of the stock. Once you've marked the first planned cuts, slide the square along to lay out the next, taking care to mark each step accurately. ● Leave a foot or two of extra stock at both the top and bottom ends of the stringer. You won't know exactly where and how the ends will be cut until you determine where the stringer will land. The top anchor may require another 18" of stringer, for example, if it continues under the porch. If the foot lands on a finished surface such as a poured concrete pad, the bottom riser will have to be "dropped" by the thickness of a tread to keep the stairs consistent. ● Use the first stringer to mark cuts for the second outside stringer and any additional stringers to support the stair carriage. As a rule of thumb, use one stringer for every 2' of span. Before laying the treads, use a level and check in several places to make sure the base for your new stoop is square and level.

base of the steps along the tip of the tread nosing to the top of the run. Pitch lines are usually specified by code; a comfortable pitch line falls between 26 and 33 degrees. (Since this is an imaginary line, it can be tested while laying out the first stringer.)

It should go without saying that all steps should be level as well as consistent in height. It's also critical that the stoop not direct water to the house. If the ground below what will become the bottom step isn't level, take measurements at several points from house to ground along the pitch line and average them. Better yet, level the ground before beginning work on the stoop.

Treads and Risers

Popular tread options for exterior steps include configurations with single, double, and triple boards per step. The front board should have a "nose" to help it shed water. Cut the treads from 2" x 12" stock, and locate them at least 3/8" from posts or other vertical lumber for air clearance and drainage. Use galvanized or treated deck screws as fasteners.

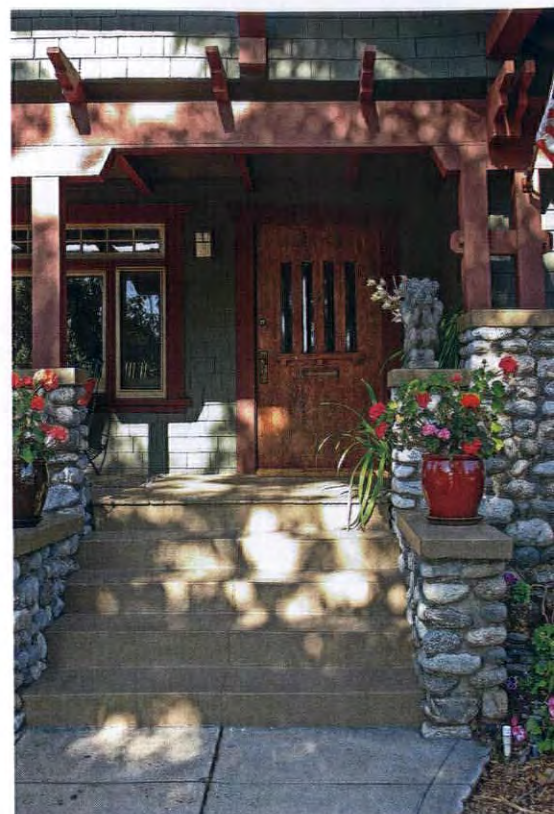
The advantage of double- or triple-board treads is that they drain water more quickly and they're less likely to cup than single-board, full-depth treads. It's standard practice to leave a 1/4" gap between each board of a double or triple tread for drainage. If using risers, leave a gap of 1/4" wherever the tread meets the riser, for ventilation and drainage.

Should you need to make any adjustments to account for variations on the ground, make up the difference on the bottom step. It's OK if it's slightly lower than the rest of the steps, provided the others are uniform in terms of rise. Be sure to leave a gap of at least 1/8" between the ground and the bottom of the first riser.

RIGHT The treads on this wide, graceful stoop are much deeper than the risers are tall, making for easy walking. Measurements for every step must be uniform to avoid a tripping hazard.

OPPOSITE Concrete steps work well for stoops, especially in forgiving climates like southern California. Poured correctly, leveled, and back-filled with stone, gravel, or concrete block—not soil—they'll last for decades.





RAILS & POSTS

New stoops that rise 30" or more off the ground must comply with building codes regarding rail height, typically about 34" to 36" from the front of the tread. If any parts of a stoop that is original to the house are still present, by all means use them as a template for rebuilding, especially with architecturally important components such as top rails, spindles, and post caps.

You're in luck if there's an existing concrete platform underneath what will be the bottom of the stair run. If it's in good condition, use it as a support for the bottom posts. Anchor the posts to the concrete with concrete screws. If the slab is missing or in poor condition, remove it and pour a new slab. It's important that the post at the bottom of the stoop not directly touch the ground. If there isn't a concrete pad, pour concrete piers to support the stoop posts. (A Sonotube collar works well for this.) Place a 4" x 1/2" bolt in the middle while the concrete is still wet. After the concrete has cured for a day or two, slip a galvanized post base over the bolt and fasten with a washer and nut. Slide on the new post, making sure that it rests at least 1" above ground level.



A simple two-step granite stoop at a Georgian entry is beautifully proportioned.

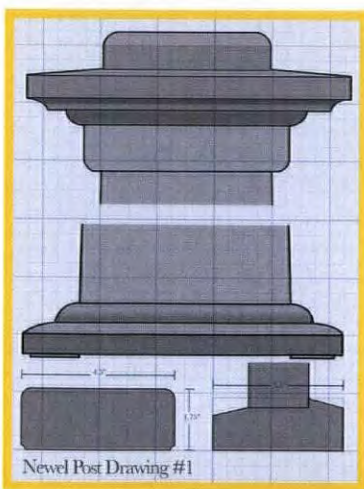
ANCHORING *and* Skirting

To anchor a stoop with multiple steps to the house, fasten a 2" x 8" board to the faceplate below the door with large galvanized deck screws. Reinforce the bottom of the steps with a 2" x 8" board that runs between the exterior stringers. Butt any interior stringers into this support.

To conceal open areas underneath the stoop but allow for ventilation, add skirting. A skirting apron is typically composed of latticed panels that are hung or hinged to the framing. Lay a bed of crushed stone underneath to keep wood from touching the ground.

THE PRO TIP

Looking for clues to what the steps originally looked like? If there's no evidence at your house, look around the neighborhood for homes with original steps still in place. Take into consideration the type of construction (wood or brick, for instance) and whether one material—concrete, wood, brick—dominates.



Newel Posts When Chicago-area carpenter Bill Cigliano rebuilt the porch and stoop on his 1907 home, he **milled new rails and balusters to match the originals** from Red Grandis, a sustainable, tropical wood similar to mahogany. While new posts can be milled from a single piece of lumber, it's difficult to get quality stock that will hold up to exposure from wind, snow, and rain. "Most of the newel posts I repair rot from the inside out," Cigliano says. • That's one reason he builds his posts as 4" x 4" boxes of pressure-treated pine mitered and glued together at the corners, then slips them over a galvanized post base. He finds that **treated pine is harder than cedar and less prone to cracking. All wood is back-painted** (primed with oil-based paint on all sides) to protect it against moisture. He also **staples 1/4" PVC shims to the bottom of each post to prevent any wood from wicking up moisture** from the ground. • Cigliano air dries clear, knot-free cedar stock for post caps in his workshop before milling them into shape. For shaped mouldings, he uses a PVC that won't shrink or swell, such as AZEK, then **caulks behind them** to ensure low maintenance and longevity.

LEFT (top) Bill Cigliano's post caps are always beveled to direct water away from the wood. He draws newel post details to scale before constructing them, often giving owners two or three different profiles to choose from. (bottom) The finished cap is made from cedar that's been allowed to air dry for several months. Trim mouldings are cut from PVC composite and back-caulked to give them greater longevity.

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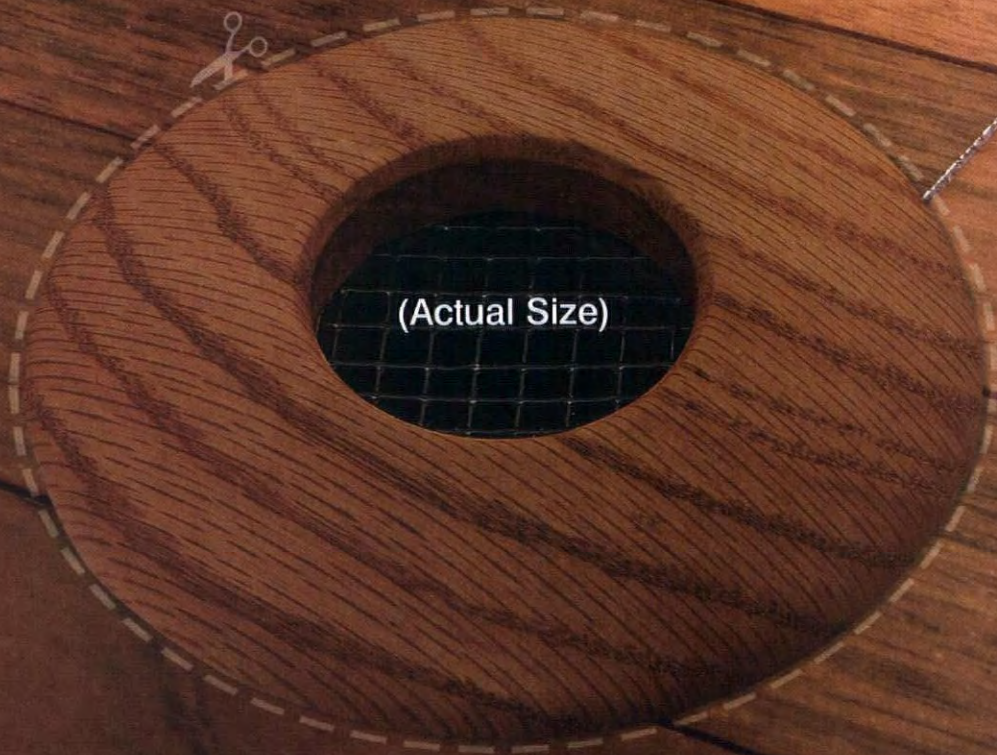
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^ GRIND AND CUT

Angle grinders like the 6" WEP 15-150 easily make rough cuts through metal. Given a wire-brush attachment, this powerful 13.5-amp tool also makes short work of heavy rust, caked-on cement, or other hard-to-remove coatings on metal. \$225-\$270. Metabo, (800) 638-2264, metabo.com

< QUICK FIX

Retard the spread of light rust on iron railings, lampposts, mailboxes, or patio furniture with Extend rust inhibitor. The fast-drying, milky-white latex formula in the 10.25-ounce aerosol can also acts as a primer for paint or other finishes. \$5.99. Loctite, (800) 624-7767, loctiteproducts.com



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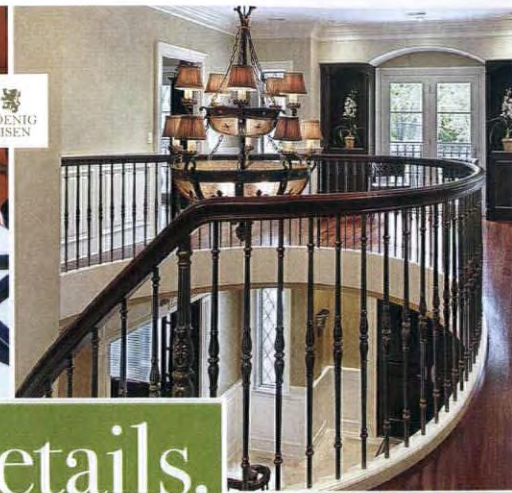
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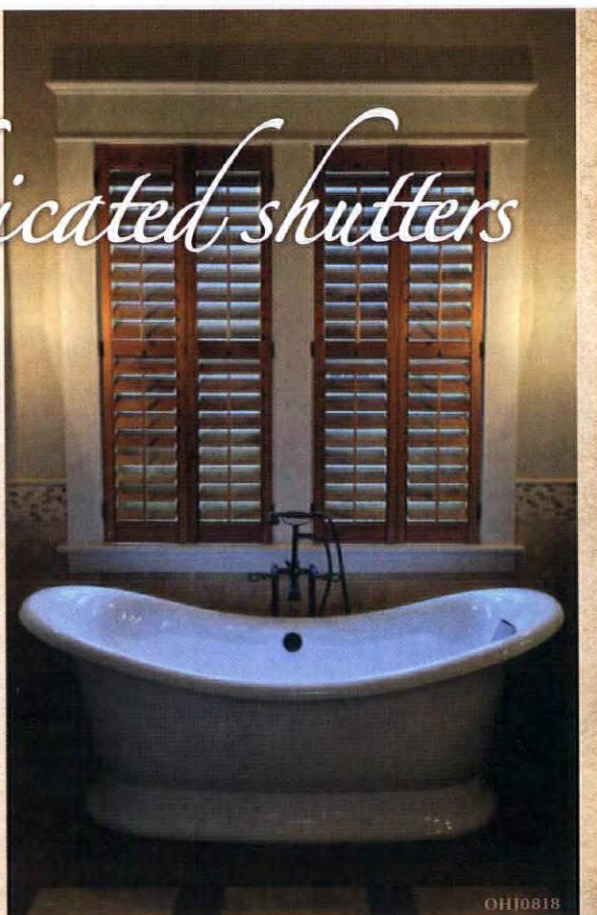
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Finishing Touches for the Season

Details for summertime: add a flowerbox, update to a better mailbox, clean screens like a pro.

By Lynn Elliott

HOUR

Install a Flower Box

Galvanized steel brackets are the sturdiest option for attachment, but wood and wrought iron are also good choices. For double-hung windows, measure 1" down from under the sill on one side of the frame. For out-swing windows, measure 6" to 8" down. Mark and repeat on the other side. Align the top of the bracket with the mark. For wood siding, position the top screw hole toward the bottom of the clapboard. Then mark both brackets' screw holes. Repeat on the other side. (The window may not be level, so don't use it as a guide.) Create a pilot hole with a countersink drill bit and fill it with a bit of caulk to seal the hole. Then attach the bracket with 3"-long galvanized decking screws. For masonry, use a masonry drill on its lowest setting to bore pilot holes. Tap in the plastic wall anchors and then attach brackets. Attach box to brackets per manufacturer instructions.



DAY

Mount a Traditional Mailbox

Be aware that the U.S. Postal Service sets standards for mailbox height and location; check your area's guidelines.



STEP 1

Start by digging a posthole 6" to 8" from the curb. Go no deeper than 24". Pour 6" of gravel in the bottom of the hole to allow for drainage. According to the USPS, the post must be set 41" to 45" high, from street level. Use a wood or metal mailbox post with a perpendicular cross arm. Insert the post into the hole and brace it securely with support posts. Check the height of the post above ground and adjust as necessary. Also: make sure the post is plumb.



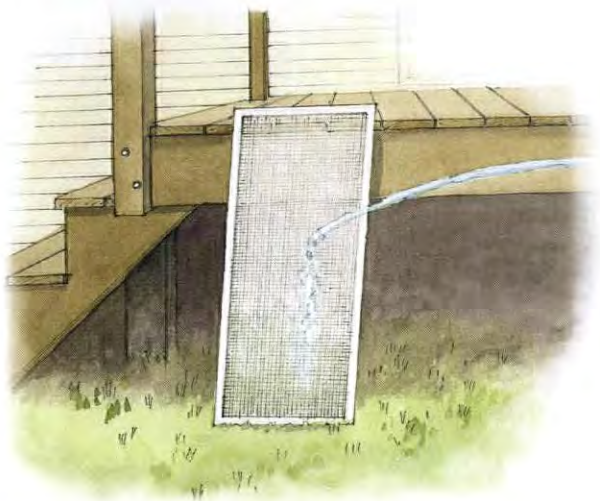
STEP 2

Mix up concrete and pour it around the post, tamping as you work to remove air pockets. Fill only until the concrete is 2" to 3" below ground level so that it can be covered with soil later. When finished, check that the post is still plumb; adjust as necessary. Smooth the concrete in a slope away from the post for drainage. Allow it to cure, leaving the support posts in place. For metal posts, screw the mailbox into place on the metal mounting bracket. For wood posts, place the mailbox on the mounting board and check that it can open without obstruction. Trim the board as necessary. Attach the mailbox to the mounting board with wood screws through the mounting holes. Remove any remaining supports around the post. Affix house numbers that are at least 1" tall to the mailbox.

Efficiently Wash Windows and Screens

Ideally, windows and screens should be washed twice a year.

Use a pro's tools and techniques to make the job easier.



STEP 1

Remove the screens and bring them to a location outside with room to work. Mix $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon of warm water with a tablespoon of dishwashing liquid or white vinegar. Dampen the screens with a hose and then scrub both sides with a rag or sponge dipped in the solution. A toothbrush is handy for stubborn dirt. Use light pressure to avoid damaging the screen. Rinse with a hose, using low pressure to prevent the tearing or sagging of the screening, and let dry.

STEP 2

As the screens dry, mix 1 or 2 tablespoons of dishwashing liquid in a 5-gallon bucket of warm water. Don't make it too sudsy. If your windows have large panes, it is worthwhile to use a microfiber window scrubber to wash the windows. For windows with divided lights, use a sponge. Start working on the upper storeys of the house. For the second storey, attach a telescoping pole to the scrubber or squeegee. If the house is taller, use an extension ladder, following all instructions for secure positioning.



STEP 3

Sweep the scrubber across the window, loosening any dirt. Then pull a squeegee across the pane in a reverse S pattern. For small panes, just swipe vertically or horizontally. Start at the top of the window and work downward, keeping the squeegee in contact with the window as you move it steadily across the glass pane, overlapping each pass as you work. Wipe excess water off the squeegee with a rag as you go. Dry the windowsill and edges of the frame with another rag. Continue on to the next window. Replace the screens when they are dry.



You'd never know the vintage chairs gracing the porch of a coastal Foursquare had not recently been painted.

Vintage Garden Chairs Rid of Rust

A surprising but simple approach to restoration uncovered great color and patina on a pair of old metal chairs. **By Wendy Santantonio**



When our neighbors offered us two vintage metal garden chairs, which, it turned out, they couldn't use or return to the seller, my husband and I jumped at the chance to add them to furnishings we'd collected for our country home.

The chairs had a beautiful patina; I loved the many shades of green and turquoise shining through the finish. The chairs were pretty rusty, however, so I needed to clean them up, though I hoped to preserve most of the original paint. The goal was to seal them to protect them from outdoor weather without losing

patina. At the same time, we wanted to make sure no one would come away with green streaks on their pants after sitting on the chairs.

I tackled this project with my friend Sarah. Not only did it go much faster with a second set of hands, but the project was a lot more fun, too. We set up the chairs and supplies outside in the sunshine and got to work.

The first step was giving each chair a good hand-sanding with steel wool to knock off any rust. We used both 0 and 00 steel wool, depending on which was

most effective in any given area. Although progress seemed slow, the transformation was incredible. We figured the more we rubbed, the more paint we risked removing. Instead, as the top layer of rough rust came off, most of the original paint became more visible and more vibrant.

Rather than the color being largely brown with a little aqua and turquoise, now we had mostly green and turquoise with just a few brown areas. We were thrilled with the results. We scrubbed until we were satisfied with the color,

There is no new paint on these mid-century chairs; the glossy yet patina-rich finish came back with just elbow grease and a paint additive used as a rust-inhibitive coating.

having removed the bulk of the rust. Then we wiped each chair thoroughly with a clean rag, getting ready for the next step.

We had decided to seal each of the chairs with Penetrol, a paint additive formulated for use with oil-based paints; it improves adhesion, reduces brush marks, and restores luster while inhibiting rust. Be sure to use Penetrol and not Flotrol (both are from the same maker), as Flotrol is water-based and would quickly encourage rust on any bare ferrous metal exposed to moisture.

We applied the Penetrol with foam brushes. The work was quick and easy, but Penetrol produces strong fumes, so I would recommend working outside or in a well-ventilated area. The difference

PROTECTING METAL

The old saw about what makes for a lasting paint job goes double or triple for metalwork—whether cast-iron railings, fences, or interior window-sash fittings. Prepping the metal before priming adds years to the life of the finish coat.

OSPHO When applied, this rust converter and primer stabilizes metal surfaces before painting. Applying or dipping rusty metal into a bath of Ospho (ospho.com) causes iron oxide (rust, in other words) to chemically change into iron phosphate, a dark, inert, hard surface that is paint ready.

LINSEED OIL If the metalwork is small and can be removed from its setting (old doorknobs or cast-iron sash pulleys, for example), give the pieces a warm bath in a mixture of water and a linseed-oil soap, such as Allback (from Solvent Free Paint, solventfreepaint.com). A retired slow cooker comes in handy. Add enough water to cover the rusty parts, then put in a few squirts of the linseed-oil soap. Mix with a stirring stick, turn the slow cooker to high, and allow the parts to bathe for three or four hours so that they are fully coated.

Allow the treated metal to dry for 24 hours before using or reassembling.

PENETROL An additive that makes oil-based paints flow smoothly, Penetrol (flood.com) is also an excellent coating to keep metals protected from the elements. It displaces water, and creates a soft, protective layer that inhibits rust. After application, allow to dry for at least 24 hours. Apply multiple coats as needed.

CLEAR-COAT LACQUERS There are many varieties of spray- or brush-on lacquers that effectively coat and inhibit rust on metal. Look for a lacquer formulated for the application you have in mind (UV protection, salt corrosion, etc.). Some require that the surface be primed before using, but one, Permalac (permalac.com), can be applied directly to bare surfaces.



1. The chairs came with great patina, but rusty brown patches had begun to dominate the finish.



2. Hand-sanding with 0 and 00 grades of steel wool removed a surprising amount of rust, revealing the underlying paint colors.



3. Here the homeowner and her friend apply the first coat of Penetrol, a paint additive that adds a soft, sealed finish to metal.



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4. The chairs were propped up indoors to dry thoroughly.



5. The finished chair looks great after sanding and sealing.

in color after applying a coat of Penetrol was amazing. The color of the original paint was further intensified, resulting in a rich, saturated color and finish.

At this point in our work, a storm started to roll in, so we moved the chairs indoors out of the weather. They were probably fully dry after about 24 to 36 hours, but we left them inside for a couple of weeks, as we'd gone back to the city.

On our next trip to the house, the chairs were ready for use. They now occupy a place of honor on the front porch, where the restored color picks up some of the light aqua from our front door and echoes the mottled, dark-green hues of the roofing.

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GENTLE TO VIGOROUS

Whether painted or unpainted, rusty metalwork responds well to scrubbing with various grades of steel wool, or from wire-brushing, sanding, or grinding. Whatever the method used, you must immediately seal the metal with a rust inhibitor to prevent rust from returning.

LIGHT SURFACE RUST Start with fine, 000 or 0000 steel wool, polishing the surface until smooth.

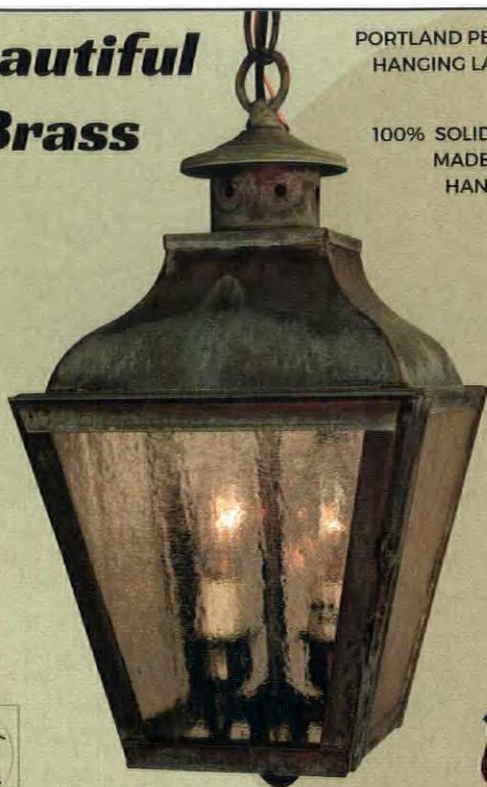
MODERATE RUST Use a more aggressive steel wool (0 or 00), then finish with a finer grade of steel wool.

HEAVY RUST Use a wire brush to knock off the oxidation, or—depending on the shape of the metalwork—sand or grind it off. A smooth surface responds well to sanding with progressively finer grits of sandpaper (80, 100, 150). If there's a lot of metal to sand (as on a cast iron fence), try an angle grinder, which uses tougher abrasive metal blades or wheels.

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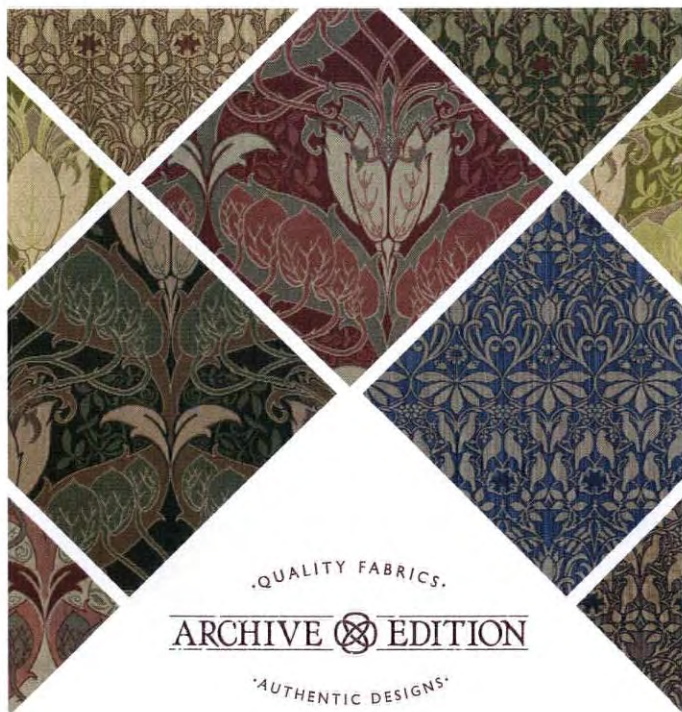
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“I was thrilled to uncover an early, hand-pegged girder under the siding. But someone else had gotten there first.”



Needing access to floor joists during renovation, we removed some of the siding on our Greek Revival house—and found an original, 180-year-old structural girder. Just inches away from the antique pegs, however, someone in the past had cut a crude channel along the side to run electrical cable in the notch. We think it might have happened in the 1960s to power a window air conditioner (no longer needed). —*Ferri Maren*



Share Your Story!

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

THE FIX

Although it's code-legal to run wiring through notches and holes in beams and girders, it has never been legal (or safe) to run the notch down the thickness of the beam. Nor has reusing wiring that no longer meets modern electrical codes.

To begin, make sure the old wire is completely disconnected from any potential power source (you may have to follow the line through gaps in the wall or ceiling to determine this). Once you're sure it's not hot, remove it. Since the girder is massive, this notch shouldn't have compromised its integrity. If it's sound, leave it in place.

As for running future wiring, try to avoid cutting into beams if at all possible. If you must, any holes or notches should go through the top of the joist or girder, not along the perimeter from top to bottom. To avoid weakening the support beam, the notch cannot fall in the center third of the joist, according to the International Residential Code book (see portions online at archive.org). The maximum notch depth should not be deeper than $\frac{1}{3}$ the overall depth of the joist. For an 8"-thick joist, that means the notch cannot be more than roughly $1\frac{1}{4}$ " deep—a tight fit for an electrical conduit.

The code is more lenient about holes drilled through joists, however. The hole can be up to $\frac{1}{3}$ the depth of the joist—or $2\frac{1}{2}$ " for an 8" beam. Any hole must be at least 2" away from the edges of the joist.

Another problem with your situation is that the cable appears to be nonmetallic (NM) cable, or rag wire. In widespread use from the 1920s through the early 1960s, NM cable is sheathed in an insulated, rubberized fabric coating. It no longer meets code, and tends to deteriorate and become brittle with age. Most of these mid-20th-century wires also lack a grounding conductor, so touching a live wire can give off a shock.




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SALVAGE IT



Barnwood in a Cabin

An aesthetically and historically appropriate use of reclaimed wood serves a kitchen. **By Brian D. Coleman**

 Marianne and Jon grew up in Norwegian ski country not far from Oslo, and had long dreamed of owning a *seter*—a simple farm cabin. They found an old timber cabin set in the midst of a forest, in an off-the-grid place with no road or running water. It was rundown. Working with architect Benedicte Sund-Mathisen, who is Marianne's sister, they fixed up the cabin, extended it, and added some necessary amenities.

The look, though, remains appropriately rustic. Kitchen cabinets and shelving are made from reclaimed barnwood bought from a farm further north. The leather pulls were made from a vintage sled harness. Walls and counters are concrete. Vintage touches include industrial signal wall lights and a brass backsplash behind the cooktop, treated with acid for an aged look.

THE COST

10'-RUN OF CABINETS	\$1,800
1 GAL. CONVERSION VARNISH	\$220
GRX CABINET SCREWS	\$23

TOTAL \$2,043

how it happens

1. EARLY PREPARATION

American reclaimer Jesse Benedict (barnwoodkitchencabinets.com) dismantles antique barns to preserve them or reclaim their lumber. Each piece is carefully labeled. Benedict says reclaimed wood from barns works well in any rustic setting. For kitchens, he selects only sturdy, tight-grained boards to use in face frames and door stiles and rails; drawer fronts and panels, held in place, may be made of lesser boards. He chooses boards with character: wide grain patterns, deeply weathered grooves, knots, and even holes from nails or pitchforks.

When a barn is disassembled, boards are de-nailed on site with the help of a metal detector. Wood is sprayed with boric acid to rid it of bugs and mold, then kiln-dried to a 9-10% moisture content, not lower.

2. CONSTRUCTION POINTS

Cabinets in the Norwegian cabin include a combination of base units and open shelves. Thick, 1.5-2" barnwood was used for the shelving—dried, sanded, and finished with the original unmilled edge. Floorboards with heavy patina from old haymows and threshing floors work best for open shelves. Lower base cabinets were made from a solid wood $\frac{3}{4}$ " box, then faced with $\frac{3}{4}$ " barnwood that was back-planed to the same thickness as the doors and drawers. Cabinets are usually finished with flush inset doors and drawers for a vintage look, but full overlays can also be built. Cabinets are screwed together, not nailed, for sturdiness.

3. FINISHES & CARE

Putting a finish on barnwood isn't easy. Polyurethane on any surface that has



TOP An unused, dilapidated Pennsylvania barn will be recycled as paneling, cabinets, and flooring. **ABOVE** Barnwood with nails removed, stacked and awaiting new uses.

weathered grey will turn an unpleasant black color. A low-VOC, two-part conversion varnish here was floated onto the surface, then baked into the wood before cabinet construction, creating a crystal-clear finish that preserves the natural, silvery grey of the weathered wood. Recommended cleaning is with diluted mild soap and water, avoiding oils and most modern formulations.

A NOTE ON COST: It's obviously variable, but assume raw, unfinished barnwood purchased direct at \$4–5.50 per square foot. Simple, finished cabinets cost about \$180 per linear foot.



The kitchen project is from **Niki Brantmark**, creator of the award-winning interior design blog *My Scandinavian Home*, which is inspired by her life in Malmö, Sweden. Originally from London, Brantmark is the author of *The Scandinavian Home* (CICO Books, 2017) as well as *Lagom: The Swedish Art of Living a Balanced, Happy Life*, and her first book, *Modern Pastoral*.

Brantmark's books cover both classic and more eclectic modern homes and interiors in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland. Light, weather, nature, wood—these drive design in Scandinavia. *The Scandinavian Home* shows urban examples from minimalist to Bohemian, country houses filled with color and textiles, and rustic homes. Her book *Lagom* ("not too much, not too little"), a thoughtful discourse on the Swedish lifestyle, offers home tips for "minimalist mindfulness."

resources

Private salvage companies, eBay, even Home Depot are carrying reclaimed barnwood. Here are some specialists:

benedictbarns.com

carlsonsbarnwood.com

elmwoodreclaimedtimber.com

montanatimberproducts.com

thebarnpages.com

oldewoodltd.com

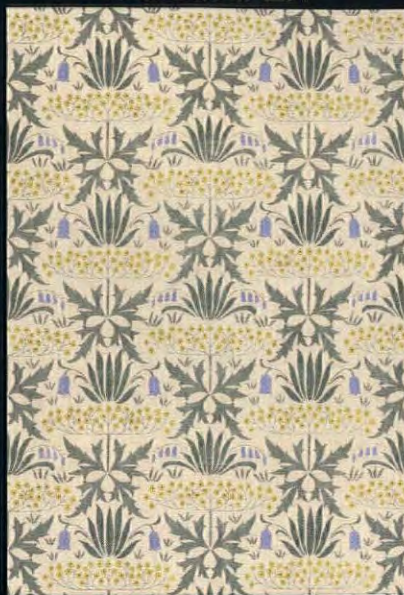
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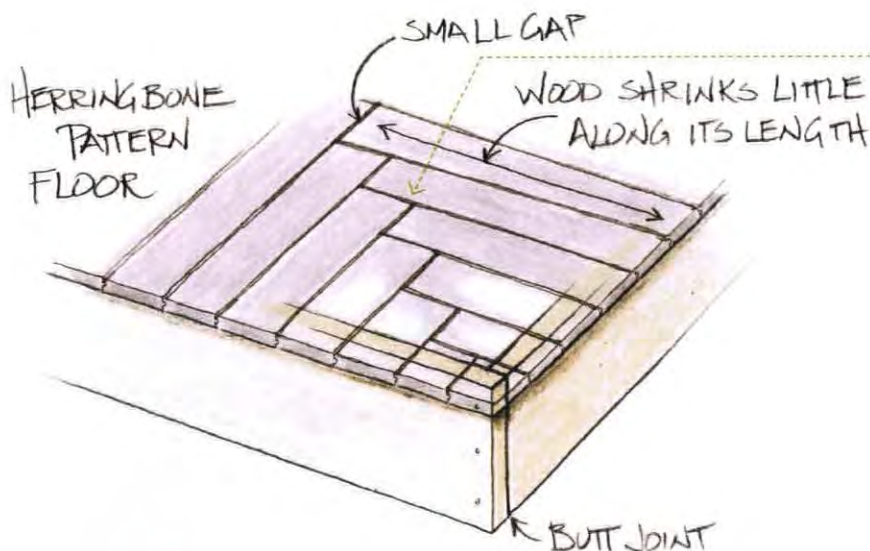
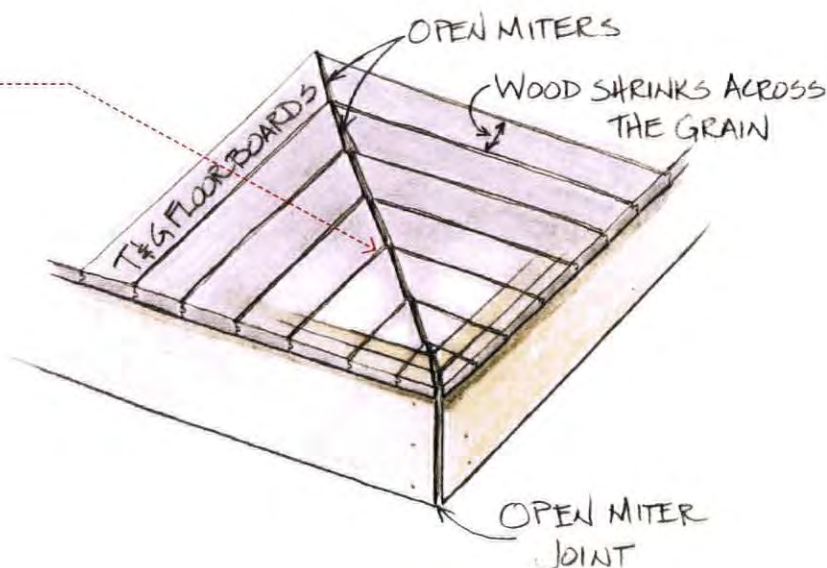
Miter Joints Outdoors

Most joinery is designed to accommodate the movement of wood—expansion and shrinkage—due to changes in temperature and moisture content. For example, doors are designed with unfastened panels to mitigate the seasonal movement of the stiles and rails and the panels themselves; held tight, joints would open or panels crack. Other joinery is not as easy to conceal. Consider the miter joints on door casings. Seasonal wood shrinking across the grain always causes the joint to open on the inside corner; high humidity causes the joint to open on the outer edge. A flexible filler and paint typically are used to mask the problem, and it's no wonder corner blocks became popular, as they make a miter unnecessary. Suitable joinery becomes even more important outdoors, as in porch floors. **By Ray Tschoepe**

WRONG WAY

POOR USE OF MITERING

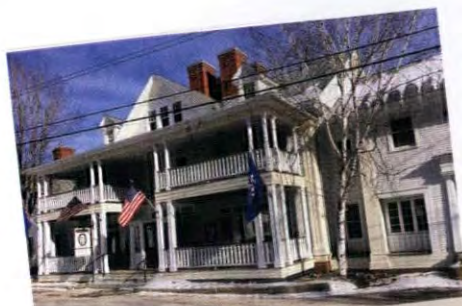
Laying floorboards that turn a corner by using a series of miter joints may seem easier, but after a few seasons the joints will have opened. Open joints expose a great deal of end grain, which wicks moisture and leads to wood failure. Similarly, a mitered corner on fascia board will open and be not only unsightly but also an invitation to water incursion and insects.



RIGHT WAY

BUTT AND HERRINGBONE

Although the miter joint is designed to eliminate end-grain exposure, mitering sometimes makes matters worse. On wood porches, for example, multiple opportunities seem to call for miter joints. But when floorboards turn a corner, the better option is to interleave boards in a herringbone pattern using multiple butt joints. These are less likely to leave a gap at the intersection. As another example, it's always better to join fascia boards using a butt joint, to prevent an open miter later on.



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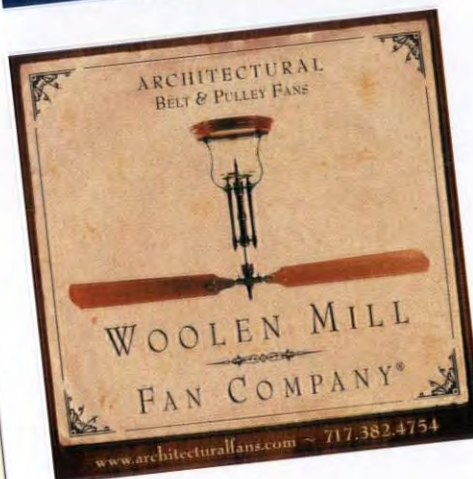


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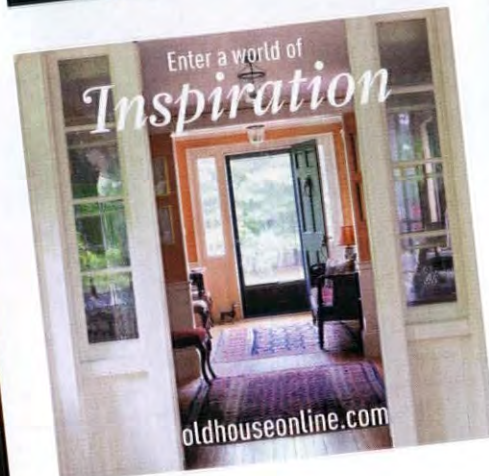
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Q: My outdoor porch has a concrete floor and steps. It was painted, probably 50 years ago, with brick-red paint, and repainted more than once with latex paint, which did not adhere well. The red paint has worn in places, but appears extremely durable. The Rust-Oleum concrete paint stripper and 3000 psi power washer I used to remove the latex did not faze the original paint. I would rather repaint with a more subdued color. How can I remove the old paint or get latex to adhere? — *Neil Wolf, via email*

A: The answer is not as obvious as I thought. Concrete itself presents adhesion problems, because it's porous and alkaline, and walking surfaces are especially problematic. New, unfinished concrete is easy enough to deal with given modern products. Previously finished surfaces are harder.

The red you see may be a stain applied when the concrete was wet, making it integral, or it might be an oil-based coating (in a formulation no longer made), or it may be an early, postwar epoxy. If you can get the floor and steps absolutely clean, with no embedded dirt and no grease, and a surface with no peeling or other paint failure, you should be able to repaint successfully. First, all subsequent latex paints must be completely removed.

Looks like you already did a good job, using the right paint stripper and power washing. If any stains remain, clean with TSP or an oil-stain remover from a company like SEAL-KRETE; rinse, and allow to dry. Be sure all mildew and mold are killed and stains removed. If the surface is very smooth you may need to etch it with HCl acid; you can buy acidic etching liquids from Rust-Oleum and cement-products companies. I think it's unlikely you will need to do this on a weathered exterior surface. (Please use full safety equipment when using TSP and acid.)

All patching should be done and have cured. You do not need a sealer. The floor must be thoroughly dry. Since you will be priming and then applying two or three thin coats of masonry paint, with 24-hour drying periods, you'll need up to four days with no precipitation and, ideally, low to average humidity. Apply one coat of a bonding primer to assure compatibility and adherence with the old finish. Whether acrylic or oil-based, this should be a formula specifically for masonry; it may be labeled "elastomeric." Use a roller; do not spray.

I was surprised to find that epoxy coatings, the most durable for concrete walking surfaces, are not recommended for previously painted concrete, especially if the paint was oil-based. So that means you should use a masonry finish paint specified for floor surfaces, one compatible with your primer. Both acrylic latex and oil formulas are available. (Sherwin-Williams Porch & Floor Enamel, for example, is latex and can be used on concrete.) Use a spray gun or brush and roller. Apply at least two thin coats, 24 hours apart. Note that optional paint additives can lend texture for "grip" (safety). Please consult with a knowledgeable person at the paint or masonry store when you buy products.

—*Patricia Poore*



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INSPIRE



PRESERVED *THE REBIRTH OF AN 1830 FARMHOUSE*

A designer uses a light touch
in a fire-damaged old
house. **page 76**

Following an old New England tradition, the clapboarded house is painted white with black shutters. Inside and out, simplicity and history reign.

66

HOME SWEET GNOME
Period Revival turns to fantasy.
+ THE STORYBOOK STYLE

76

AN 1830 FARMHOUSE
A Connecticut classic rescued.
+ SOAPSTONE, SLATE, GRANITE

86

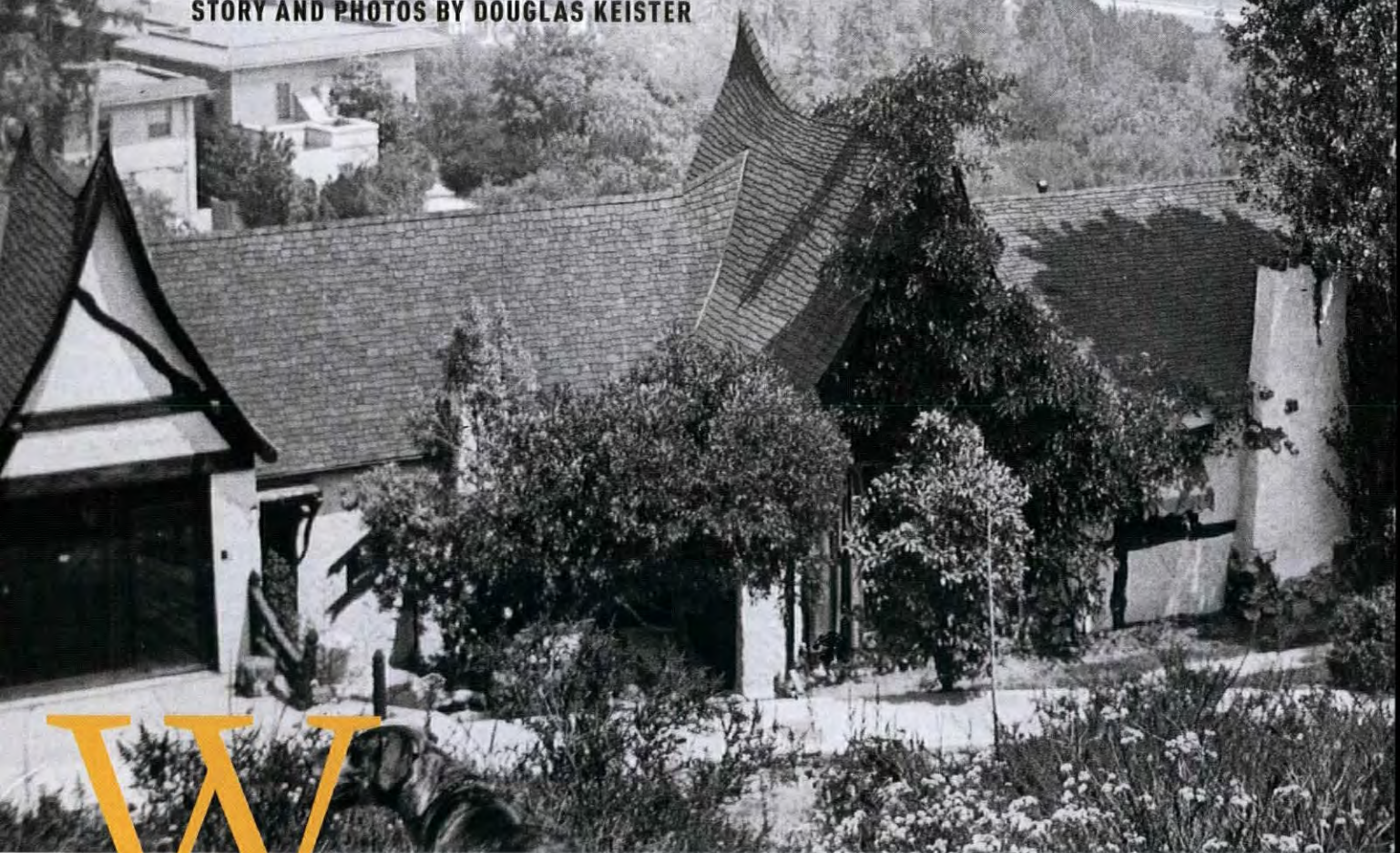
COTTAGE GARDEN ORDER
A postdiluvian reclamation.
+ A DIY WATER FEATURE



Home Sweet gnome

The European Period Revival trend of the 1920s took a hard turn toward fantasy, once upon a time, and it started in Los Angeles.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DOUGLAS KEISTER



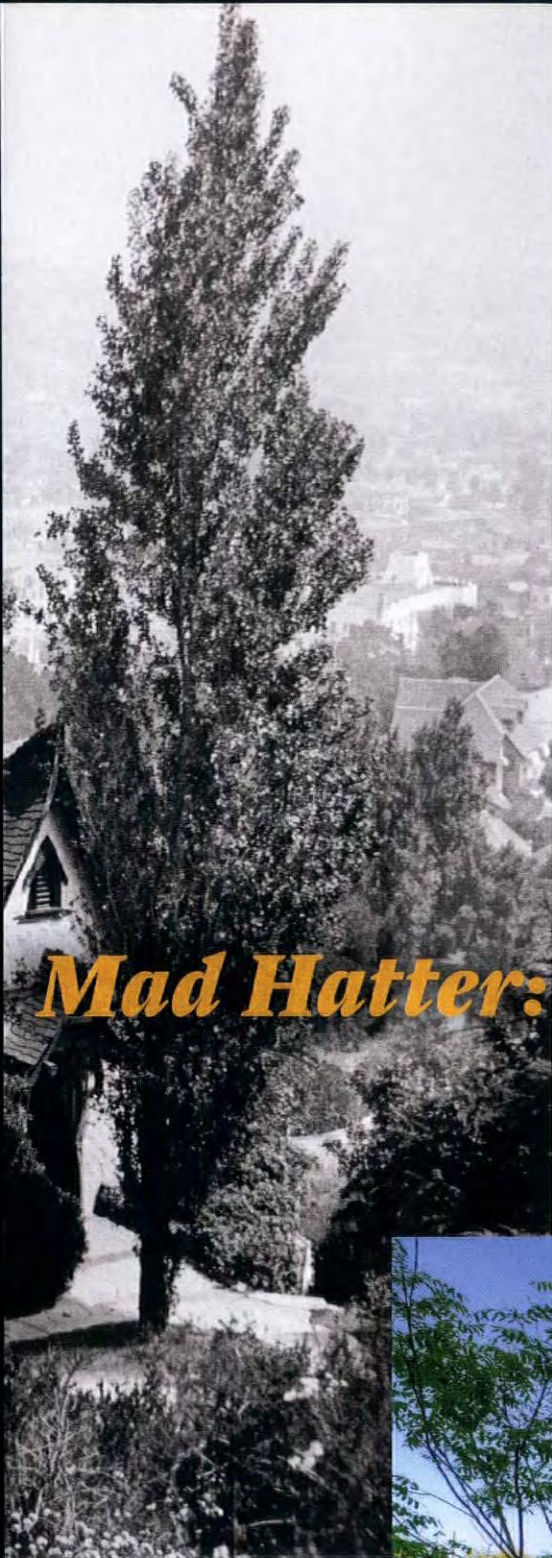
WIND YOUR WAY along the steep hillside flanking Griffith Park in Los Angeles, and you'll encounter streets with old-world names like Inverness, Cromwell, Aberdeen, and Dundee. It seems fitting that, after rounding a curve on Glendower Avenue, you stumble on a house straight out of a fairy tale. In a city known for make-believe and artifice, this Storybook home built in 1923

is a touchstone to which all others of the style may be compared. Its studied imperfections are perfectly imperfect.

Compared with its upright neighbors, the home is wonderfully bonkers, to echo Alice. Indeed, a few years ago the current owners installed a new weathervane: a witch on a broomstick, which is very appropriate, though installed straight and plumb, unlike anything else on the house.

Fate intervened. A ferocious windstorm skewed the weathervane, bending it to a jaunty angle. The homeowners decided to leave it alone.

The genesis of the house can be traced to a civil engineer named Rufus Buck, who was likely inspired by some of art director Harry Oliver's creations. Oliver holds title to the Storybook Style's first permutations; it was he who designed the



Mad Hatter:

“Have I gone mad?”

Alice: *“I’m afraid so.*

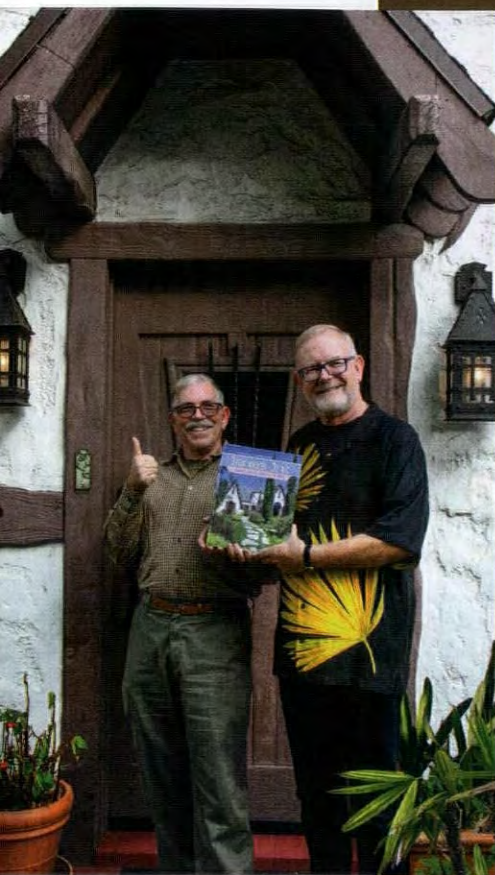
You’re entirely bonkers.

But I’ll tell you a secret.

All the best people are.”



ABOVE, TOP Archival images capture the eccentric mock-antiquity of the house soon after it was built. **RIGHT** The Hlafler-Courcier house of 1923 was inspired by art director Harry Oliver’s Tam O’Shanter Restaurant, just three miles down Los Feliz Boulevard. Civil engineer Rufus Buck designed the house, introducing wiggly timbers and a split chimney.



ABOVE Enthusiastic owners Chris Parson (left) and Donald Brown, who bought the house in 1999, are only its third owners.

In 2014 the house was declared a city Cultural-Historical Monument.

RIGHT The dining room has the feel of an old-world boardinghouse, complete with a Scottish trestle table made in Ohio. **OPPOSITE** (bottom) The three-legged dining chairs of American oak have cutouts from which they could be hung on pegs on the pub wall.

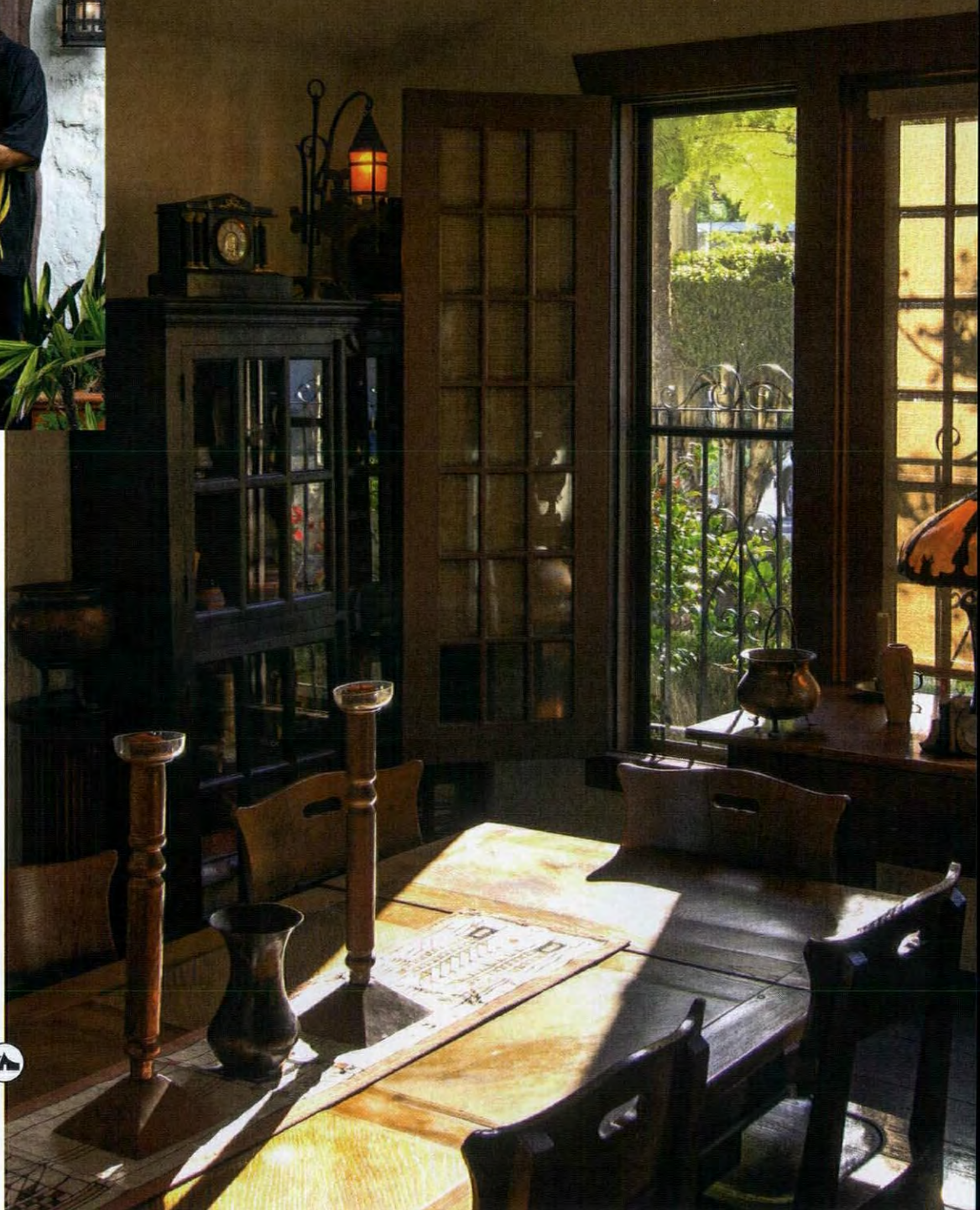
More Online

A 1936 Scandinavian Storybook home:
oldhouseonline.com/articles/scandinavian-storybook



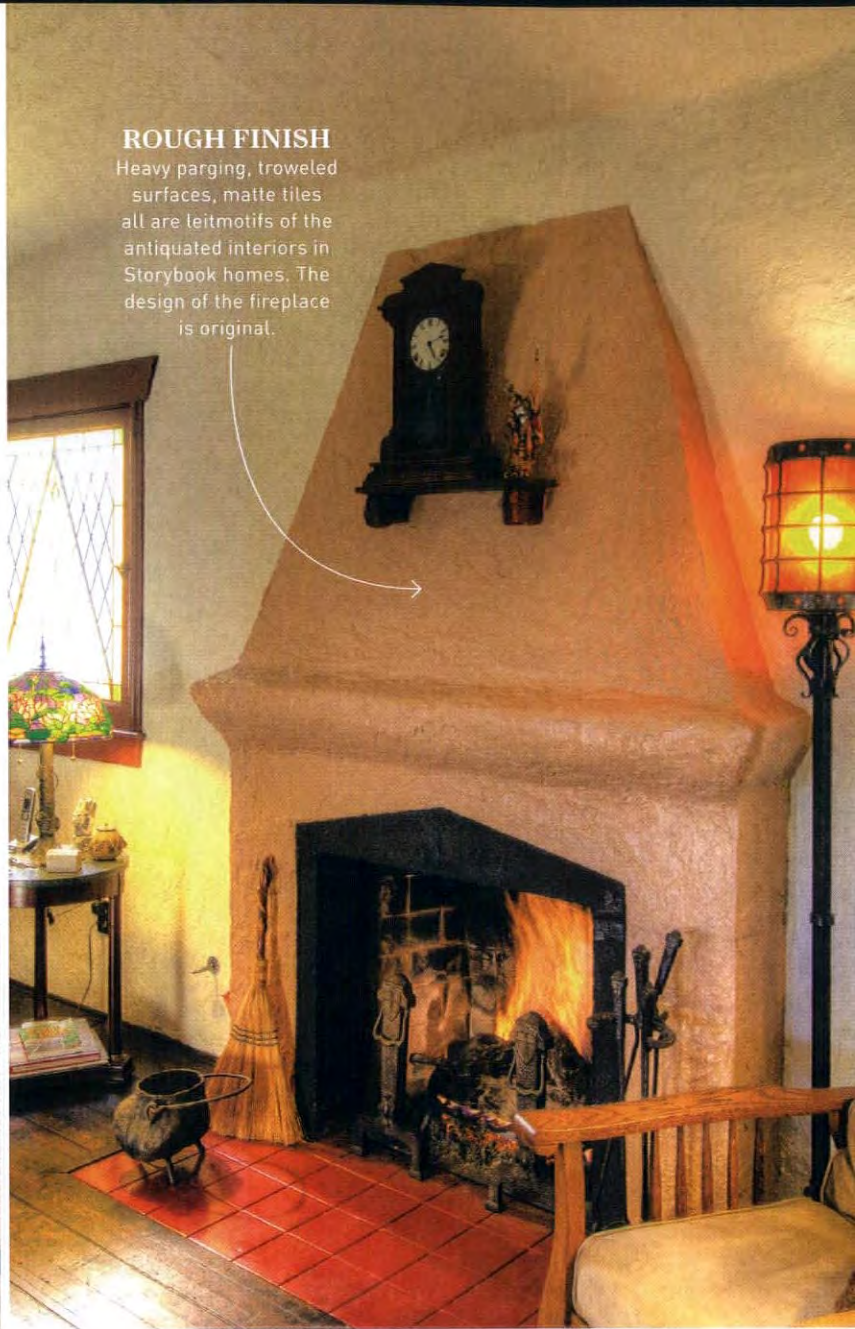
MEDIEVALIZED

Lighting in the 1920s often looks like it came from a castle in old Europe. The theme carried over to Spanish and Tudor Revival homes of the period.



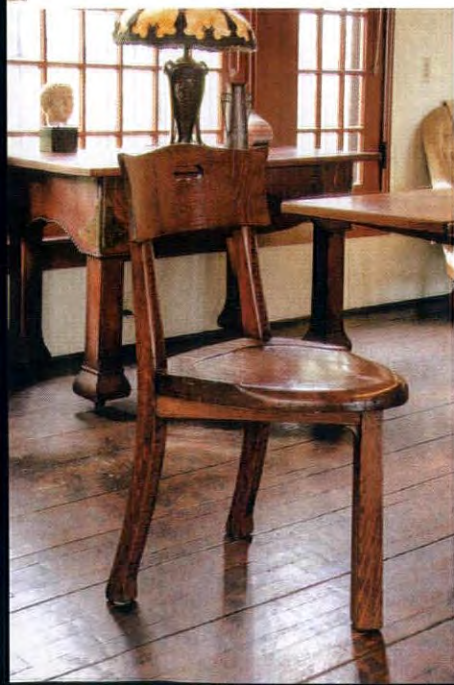


ABOVE Recently installed upright and plumb, the weathervane was fatefully made to echo the house by a ferocious wind. **BELOW** The mail slot [with a hinged flap] is original to the house. **RIGHT** The only modification made to the parged fireplace was the addition of a code-compliant gas burner.



ROUGH FINISH

Heavy parging, troweled surfaces, matte tiles all are leitmotifs of the antiquated interiors in Storybook homes. The design of the fireplace is original.



Tam O'Shanter, a swayback restaurant built in 1921, as well as the first Storybook Style home, now called the Witch's House (or Spadena House), which was built as a movie set in Culver City, also in 1921.

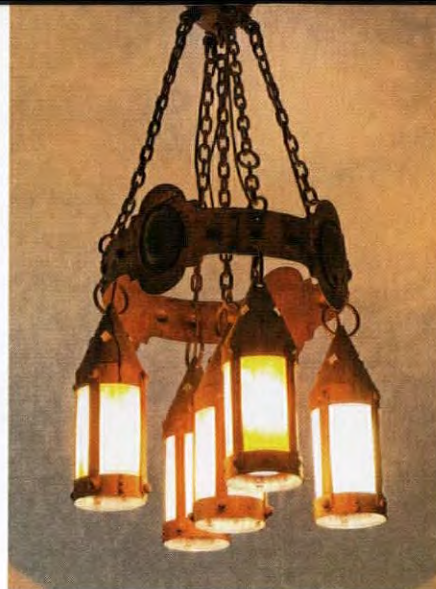
Little is known about the original owner of this house, a woman listed as Lulu Hlaffer, except that, like others during the Great Depression, she may have fallen on hard times as the home went into foreclosure in 1931. In 1933, it was acquired by John and Irene Courcier. The house would remain in the Courcier family until Donald Brown and Chris Parsons bought it in 1999. Luckily for Brown and Parsons, little had changed in three quarters of a century, save for some features added by

the Courciers, which are best described as eclectically Bohemian.

The first order of business was essentially to clean the slate. Later carpets and linoleum were ripped up, exposing beautiful oak floors. Unsympathetic light fixtures were removed. Window air conditioners and awnings were jettisoned, and modern heating and air conditioning unobtrusively installed. Upgrades were made to the kitchen and bathrooms.

As with most Storybook Style homes, the exterior features artificial aging, a big part of the charm. But it needed tending to, after 70 years of real-time aging. The owners' biggest challenge may have been discovering artisans skilled in the sympha-

BELOW The bedroom has an artful blend including a reproduction Arts & Crafts-style bed, a fireplace surround of tiger oak salvaged from a house in St. Louis, and a cloister bench from a mid-19th-century French monastery. **RIGHT** The bold copper and slag glass chandelier came from a home nearby. **OPPOSITE** (top) A favorite among the owners' collection is this remarkable early-19th-century Alsatian armoire with a crenelated top and a bartizan (a projecting corner turret that overhangs the castle wall).



BELOW (top) The large double "torch" sconce has mica shades and an iron finish. (middle) Simple sconces with candle covers are from Belgium, made from railroad tie spikes. (bottom) The single pendant wall bracket has the peaked cap seen on medievalized fixtures.



thetic repair of Storybook houses.

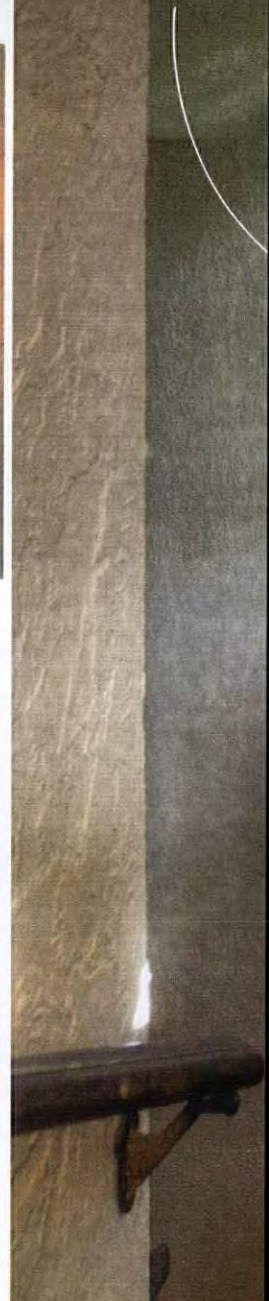
Soon Brown and Parsons, who are avid antiquers and travelers, could set upon "medievalizing" and rustivating the interior with a blend of wrought-iron and mica light fixtures, old-world antiques, and some bungalow-era Arts & Crafts furniture. Rooms are relaxed, comfortable, and unpretentious as a result.

Unlike the case with more academic styles—Aesthetic Movement, Art Deco, even Arts & Crafts—original Storybook interior decorating was not married to any particular ethos. Medieval and rustic do fit its informality. Doilies are discouraged, but battle axes are perfectly okay.

It has been said that Storybook Style is the architecture that makes you smile. The houses are, in short, paeans to a less hurried and complex time. If you stumble across one, take the time to stare and absorb all the cartoonish curves and whimsical dilapidation: it's good for your soul! You may spy a few lawn gnomes and twinkling pixies. Don't worry if others think you are bonkers for liking them. All the best people do.

SEIGNEURIA

The current owners' furniture collection includes a straight-backed Louis XIV Seignorial chair with fleur-de-lis motif, made probably for a high-ranking official. Above it hangs a massive light fixture of the 1920s, with popular Storybook motifs including shield and broad axes—and more fleurs-de-lis.





Given Storybook's romanticized European roots, **medieval and rustic** designs fit its informality. In other words, **doilies are discouraged**, but battle axes are perfectly okay.






“A demand rose for **homes that would reflect the status of the stars and . . . fantasy.** . . . Unlike the sedate manors of bankers and businessmen, these houses would be fanciful monuments to the pathologically flamboyant.” —ARROL GELLNER IN *Storybook Style*

20th CENTURY STORYBOOK HOMES

A HOLLYWOOD TAKE ON MEDIEVAL AND EUROPEAN DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE. By Patricia Poore

 **Fairytale, Hansel & Gretel, Storybook:** These are names commonly given to a whimsical style that enjoyed only a brief moment but never ceases to bring a warm smile to those who encounter it. It appeared in the Los Angeles area in the early 1920s, reached its height of popularity just before the Depression, and then it was gone, save for a few isolated examples. The style is theatrical and often humorous. The houses are unusually well crafted, of brick and stucco, shingles and even thatch—all artistically rendered to suggest great age.

DID YOU KNOW that the famous sign, when constructed, read HOLLYWOOD-LAND? That's right—it was the promotional sign for a subdivision begun in 1923. Advertisements touted the quaintness of the steep hillside setting and the quirkiness of its homes: the developers required that homes be built in “French Normandy, Tudor English, Mediterranean and Spanish styles,” a nod to the growing popularity of Historical Revival styles at the time. The architecture police weren't patrolling, however, and some of the homes constructed were, well, eccentric. A crack publicity staff succeeded in attracting the likes of Bela Lugosi, Humphrey Bogart, Gloria Swanson, Felix Adler (author of *Three Stooges* two-reelers), and cellist

RIGHT Spadena House in Beverly Hills, “a cleverly wrought caricature of dilapidated antiquity,” is the ultimate Storybook example.

FAR RIGHT Builder Hugh Comstock called his own house in Carmel “Hansel.”



the HALLMARKS

- FANTASY** What distinguishes a Storybook from a Revival house is exaggeration. Look for a turret *and* rubble stone or clinker brick *and* a catslide roof, plus such nonfunctional whimsy as fake dovecotes and castle-like crenellations.
- EUROPEAN DETAILS** Look for Spanish ironwork, French Norman towers, Tudor half-timbering, round-arch doors, rolled-eave “thatched” roofs and jerkin-head gables, medieval stained glass, and casement windows.
- FALSE AGING** The roof ridge may be swaybacked, the rough-troweled stucco “peeling” to reveal rubble stone, the shingles laid in irregular waves. Sometimes walls purposely were built out-of-square and out-of-plumb.
- MANIPULATION** Many of these houses have wings and gables, step-backs and add-ons that both suggest they grew over the ages and that hide their true size. Steep roofs, oversize and undersize elements manipulate scale.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE Normandy Village, an apartment complex in Berkeley built 1926–28 by William R. Yelland, evokes rural villages in Northern France, patterned on war memories. A bulging dovecote echoes turrets. Inside a house by W.W. Dixon.

Efrem Zimbalist Sr. In the development were built some early, and well publicized, Period Revival houses that crossed a line into what can only be called Storybook Style.

It's no surprise that the center of the theatrical Storybook Style should be Hollywood, land of make-believe. The stars—the star system dates back to silent films—wanted flamboyant, one-of-a-kind homes. Los Angeles was full of set designers and craftsmen used to evoking foreign locales and a sense of the past for the movies. “As Hollywood flourished in the early '20s, Period Revival homes began to dot the area in growing numbers,” writes Arrol Gellner in the book *Storybook Style*. “Most were relatively sober examples of Spanish Revival, Normandy, or half-timbered modes; yet tucked among them could now be found isolated outbreaks of Storybook Style madness. The upshot was at once ironic and fitting: Los Angeles, a city renowned for its youth and impermanence, would devise for America the consummate version of instant antiquity.”

Spadena House, for example, was designed by the art director Harry Oliver in 1921 and built for the Willets studio in Culver City to house offices and dress-



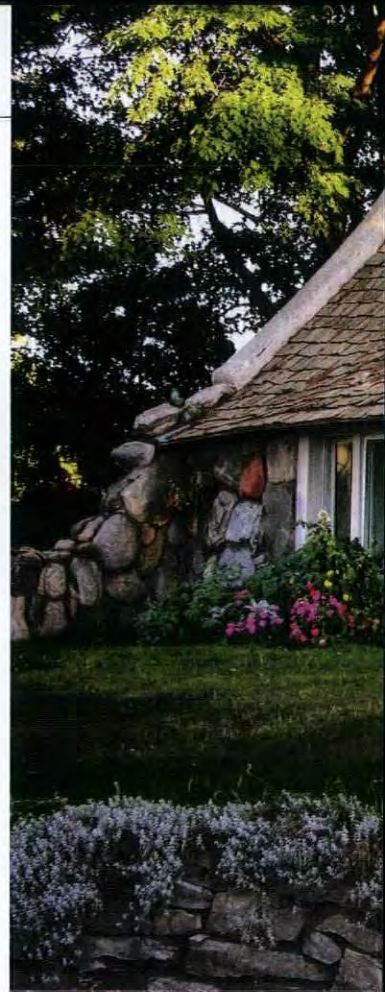
ing rooms. It doubled as a movie set and appeared in silent films. (In 1934 it was relocated to Beverly Hills, and has since been a private residence.)

The style is easy to spot: battered walls, upswept roofs, deeply recessed front doors in archways with a random edging of bricks or stone and perhaps brick voussoirs, turrets and entry towers, exaggerated or cartoonish chimneys, metal casement windows, jerkin-head dormers, rough-troweled stucco. The roofs are often a giveaway: usually laid with wood shingles or slate, they may even have a sway or sag in the ridge, suggesting great age.

“These are houses that embody the utmost joy in creation, yet which never demand to be taken too seriously,” writes Arrol Gellner. “It remained for the elements of exaggeration, artifice, and humor to be fused into the Period Revival mixture, in a process that could

perhaps only have transpired in one place in America—a city in which a clutch of quaint but well-behaved home styles would be transmogrified into movie-caliber fantasy.”

The style did not, of course, spring from nowhere overnight. It was, perhaps, a manifestation of the Picturesque movement that began in 18th-century England—architecture based on vernacular, medieval forms, meant to elicit emotion more than intellectual appreciation. By the 1920s the popularity of Spanish Revival architecture, especially in California, had broadened into a fascination with European revival styles in general. Storybook Style is the most exuberant. It spread across the country, courtesy of movie celebrity and magazines. Though not common, Storybook houses can be found from Milwaukee to Maryland, in Washington, D.C., and Asheville, N.C., and even in staid New England.

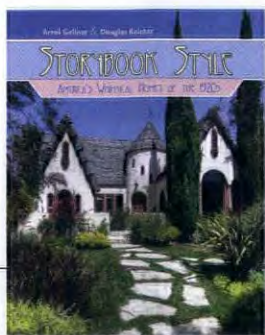


ABOVE The mushroom-like Half House by Michigan architect Earl Young, built in 1947, is a late example built almost entirely of granite boulders and local fieldstone.



the whole storyBOOK A sense of fun enlivens this style-defining book, which refers to its subject as “a rambunctious evocation of medieval Europe” and “the court jester among 1920s house styles.” The new, second edition updates and expands on the 2002 original. Written by architect Arrol Gellner, the book is equally the brainchild of photographer Douglas Keister, a frequent contributor to OHJ, whose previous books include the Arts & Crafts Bungalow trilogy. Gellner’s text, a good read, is a cultural and architectural examination of houses that often bring a grin. Among other things, he explains the influence of World War I on the popularity of European revival styles: “the quaint rural architecture of Flanders, France, and Germany [was] firmly fixed in every soldier’s mind.” He tells us about the superb homes designed by William R. Yelland and Carr Jones, both working around San Francisco during the second half of the Twenties. The authors also visit more recent Storybook houses.

STORYBOOK STYLE
America’s Whimsical Homes of the 1920s
 by Arrol Gellner and Douglas Keister
 Schiffer, 2017; hardcover, 176 pages



STORYBOOK TODAY

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STORYBOOK HOMES storybookhomes.com Picturesque designs in a Storybook Collection, custom home design; working plans, specifications.

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MANY MORE SUPPLIERS ON P. 95.

With a light touch,

a Connecticut big house–little house configuration is restored after a fire. “Good old noncombustible plaster is what saved the historic house,” says the interior designer.





Rebirth of a ca. 1830 Farmhouse

BY PATRICIA POORE / PHOTOGRAPHS BY STACY BASS

THIS STORY IS ABOUT THE RESCUE of an antique Connecticut farmhouse, which got a sympathetic renovation after a fire. Parts of it were severely damaged from smoke and water. Then, inspections turned up structural problems and areas that needed to be brought up to code. Happily, the main house was mostly intact. A small bath had been added many years ago, upstairs at the end of a hall, and a kitchen put into the old, one-storey ell.

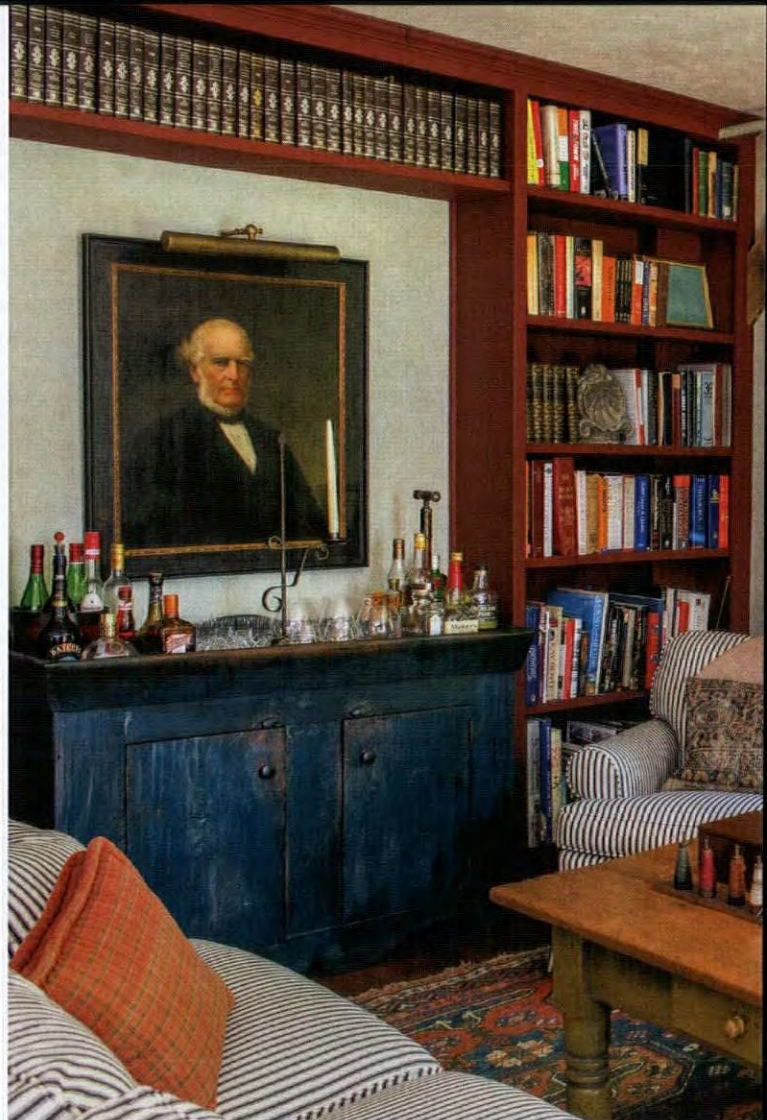
"I saw a house with plenty of history to preserve," says interior designer Sarah Blank, "yet it needed to be made functional for the 21st century." Sarah's clients, the Ross family, had an emotional tie to the old house and agreed to a preservation approach. "We decided to add a second floor above the ell, for a master suite to include a needed second bathroom. Although the original chestnut



ABOVE Unfussy but pretty, the gardens surrounding the house include a private pool area and a vegetable patch. (inset) A classical bust is among the garden ornaments. **OPPOSITE** Like the Federal-period farmhouse and rooms inside, the garden is a simple country affair, with split-rail fences and hardy cottage-garden shrubs and flowers.



RIGHT Purchased at an estate sale, the antique dry sink with its original blue paint survived the fire and was professionally cleaned. The Victorian bird cage is a favorite piece. **LEFT** The house's original framing was all chestnut. Reusing and exposing some of it during the restoration added to the ambience.



LEFT In the family parlor, the embellished mantelpiece and split door (which leads to a closet) are original, and suggest that part of the house dates to ca. 1820. **BELOW** (left) Original iron hardware in the house has been supplemented with new, blacksmith-made pieces. (right) Chestnut timbers were repurposed to frame the new master bedroom. They were painted white to brighten the room. **OPPOSITE** (bottom) The boxed back stair remains in its original location, leading from the dining room to bedrooms upstairs.





the millwork

Some elements survived the fire to be cleaned and restored or reclaimed: windows, a mantelpiece (above), the back stair. The chestnut frame was largely intact and reused or repurposed. After reconstruction according to modern building codes, the interior is virtually new, but woodwork and trim were patterned after what was here before.

framing and wall boards were found insufficient by the building inspector, the wood from this area of the house was salvaged and used for decorative purposes in the rebuild."

Sarah Blank, a Connecticut native who continues to study classical architecture, has been involved in the restoration of houses dating back to the mid 1700s. "I've spent a lot of time with Thomas Hubka's *Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn,*" she says, referencing the seminal book about New England's historic vernacular dwellings.

"When I got here, I realized that this house is a jewel, with its classic simplicity untouched." The main block is the "big house," with a "little house" connector to a "back house" later addition. Blank insisted that the ell and back house remain secondary to the main house in size, finishes, and importance, but the original proportions carry throughout the whole.

Using the old glass, the original windows were salvaged and restored, and new windows upstairs match exactly: They are single-glazed, multi-light wood windows with lead counterweights. "We had heat-loss calculations done," Blank explains, "and due to the thickness of exterior walls and adequate insulation, the single-glazed 'new old' windows meet code. The house is quite warm and cozy."



VENETIAN CARPET

Affordable, woven wool striped carpeting was very popular for staircases in the 19th century. This one is by Thistle Hill Weavers.



ABOVE Based on its framing and the local historical society's estimate, the vernacular house dates to ca. 1820, the ell to ca. 1830. The white body and trim with black shutters is a classic 19th-century New England color scheme.



ABOVE Painted walls in the dining room were ragged by a decorator friend of the owners.

The chandelier, a Colonial Revival take on an original, is by Scofield Lighting.

LEFT The old wood floor was painted in a traditional checkerboard pattern, set on the diagonal, with a plain border.





LIGHT FILLED

The kitchen in the ell had to be completely rebuilt due to structural concerns. Its design was kept simple: Shaker style, honed stone, plaster walls—and almost no upper wall cabinets.

kitchen's tale

The kitchen in the ell had to be dismantled and rebuilt, in order to support the second floor, which contains the new master bedroom and bath. All the old timbers were reused in the reconstruction.

Befitting the farmhouse, the kitchen design is frank, simple, and functional. Simple cabinets have a Shaker feeling. The refrigerator is masked behind cabinet fronts. A modest island holds a prep sink and beverage cooler.

New plaster-on-lath walls in the room were left unpainted, their hard surface beautiful as-is. Neutral grey paint on the cabinets softens the transition from the pale plaster to the black-granite counters. Everything feels timeless and elemental: wood floor, metal hood, stone counters, wrought-iron hardware.

On the window wall, the absence of wall-hung cabinets is period-sensitive, and opens up the room to light. The custom range hood is standing-seam metal. Hardware is blacksmith-made wrought iron.





OVERSHOT

Overshot-weave coverlets were made with a plain woven undyed cotton warp and weft; repeating geometric patterns were made with a supplementary dyed woolen weft.



LEFT Trim in the master bath matches that in the en-suite bedroom.

ABOVE The guest bath has the only tub, a historical and functional built-in with a soapstone cap on the surround. The sink area and WC are separate.

Many interior details were restored or re-created, and many furnishings and artwork conserved. "I have to say, Chubb Group was amazing," Sarah Blank says about the insurance carrier, who offers a historic-house policy. "The company understood the family's love of this house and its history. They were present through the entire project.

"We were able to save the original chestnut framing, which was reincorporated in the reconstruction and design," Blank says. The restoration, including the upstairs addition and kitchen and bath remodeling, was completed in record time in 2011. "Brian Ross, the homeowner, loves this old farmhouse," his designer says. "He wanted to preserve its architectural heritage. All new walls are real, hand-troweled, three-coat plaster on wire lath. The finish is beautiful . . . there's no drywall anywhere. In the kitchen, new plaster walls were left unpainted.

"I am a realistic designer," Blank says. "We are all getting older, not younger! Brian's office on the ground floor can become the master bedroom, if necessary, in the future." Next to it she specified an accessible bathroom with a three-foot doorway and curbless shower—the shower floor is recessed into the basement.

DECORATING AND FURNISHING was a collaborative effort between the designer and Ross. "This is a country house," Sarah Blank explains. "In general, we returned the house to what it had been before the fire. Plain plaster walls, plain window treat-



ABOVE The hall window is above the front door. The large cupboard is very old and was purchased at auction. The fixture is an authentic reproduction.

OPPOSITE Tall-post beds in the house are 20th-century reproductions. This one was repainted. The applied pillow shams were made by a local woman, who also made the draperies.



Renovation returned the country house to its roots, “what it had been before the fire,” says the designer. Plaster walls and simple treatments are the rule, even in new spaces.

ments. We added bathrooms, of course, but they are naïve in their design: wood floors, very simple vanity cabinets, a built-in bathtub. Everything simple.”

Furnishings include a mix of antiques and comfortable leather and upholstered pieces. A lot of the furniture already in the house was salvageable, after being professionally cleaned and reupholstered as necessary. Artwork, too, was restored.

“The house did not have a name, as far as we knew,” says Blank. “I asked the Rosses to pick one: It’s Colinwood, in honor of their son. In so many ways, this project was a labor of love.”

FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 95.

ABOVE The study fireplace was replaced in kind, as the original was charred in the fire. In several rooms, trim colors were matched to what had been in the house, but it’s unclear if they are the original colors. **LEFT** The designer reverted to double-hung windows, replacing a 1960s picture window in the study. **TOP RIGHT** A full basement went in under the rebuilt ell, becoming a wine cellar with board walls made from the original chestnut sub-flooring.

SOAPSTONE, SLATE, AND GRANITE

WHICH OF THESE NATURAL STONES SHOULD YOU PICK FOR COUNTERTOPS? By Patricia Poore

➔ Would you be surprised to learn that granite is porous and thus needs more upkeep than the others? Or that soapstone used for countertops isn't soft, like the little soapstone blocks used for carving in art class? • A metamorphic rock, **SOAPSTONE** is made up primarily of magnesite, dolomite, chlorite, and talc. Steatite is its geological term. Artists' soapstone, with up to an 80% talcum content, is not the same soapstone used for countertops, with perhaps 30% talc. Because of the talcum, soapstone does have a warmer, softer or silkier feeling than granite, which is quite hard and cold. • Soapstone is completely heatproof—your whole countertop becomes a trivet. As it is nonporous, it is naturally anti-microbial, it's nearly impervious to staining, and acid doesn't affect it. It is a dense stone that won't chip easily or break, but it can be scratched or dented—which can be repaired by sanding. Countertop-thickness soapstone doesn't require a substrate for support.

Soapstone is not surface-perfect like Corian or laminate. It has veins and even larger streaks of quartz or crystals called amphiboles. It will change color slightly depending on degree of use, and it will pick up slight dents, thus it develops a patina. Oiled soapstone has a slight sheen, but doesn't take a glossy surface as does polished granite. These attributes make it ideal for kitchens meant to look historical—on the other hand, soapstone can be a beautiful counterpoint in an otherwise sleek, modern kitchen.

Soapstone does not need to be sealed. Most people apply mineral oil, at least initially, to oxidize the surface, imparting an even, charcoal-to-black color. "After we install the stone, which comes out of the ground light grey, we tell people to oil it 'once a day for a week, once a week for a month, once a month for a year'," says Glenn Bowman of Vermont Soapstone. "If you don't keep up, nothing bad happens."

The process is exceedingly easy: cheap drugstore-brand mineral oil is wiped on, left for five minutes, and then wiped off in several passes until the stone has no oily feel. "We've begun offering wax as an alternative to oil," Bowman says. "It holds up for months, if not a year, but it's time-consuming to apply and you have to let it cure for a week with no standing water, no appliances put back in place."

Soapstone doesn't offer a wide color selection. Some areas produce dark grey soapstone with black or green undertones. You can ask for a slab with a lot of veining, large mineral deposits—or not. But you won't have the endless color, pattern, and graining options available with granites from around the world. Soapstone is quarried in slabs about 30" deep by 7'. So extra-long countertops will need a seam. Since the stone is almost monochromatic, well-done seams are not obvious.

SLATE, TOO, a fine-grained sedimentary, metamorphosed stone composed largely of quartz and muscovite (a mica) with biotite, chlorite, hematite, and other minerals, is durable and nonporous. Like soapstone, slate needs less fuss and upkeep than granite and certainly than marble. Slate has a subtle shift of coloration but the effect is uniform. You can get slate in black, charcoal, lighter grey or pewter, brown-black, and dark with undertones of green, purple, or red. Slate won't easily chip or scratch and stands up to heat. On the downside, slate is slightly brittle, so less "working" of edges is done—corners can be sharp. Creating a sink is expensive. Slate is usually honed to a matte smooth finish, especially for use in kitchens.

GRANITE IS DURABLE and often very beautiful, with a wide range of colors and patterns. It may be highly polished, or honed for a matte surface. But granite is a porous stone. It must be resealed (usually about twice a year, depending on use), and spills should be wiped up immediately. The sealer is expensive and takes some care in application.

All of these countertop materials are expensive to buy and install. Then again, they don't wear out. When you add up the cost of stone, preparation, and installation, prices are comparable. The biggest range in materials price comes with granite, because there are so many varieties.





Urns hold flowering annuals, starting with pansies and violas, replaced after Memorial Day for summer bloom, then evergreen branches in October.

OPPOSITE Pilasters create a classic Greek Revival entry in rural New York.



A COTTAGE GARDEN

EMERGING OUT OF MUD AND STUMPS, A PRETTY GARDEN FLOURISHES AROUND AN 1835 GREEK REVIVAL FARMHOUSE. THE HOMEOWNER, A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT, SET OUT TO CREATE "AN ORDERLY PLAN WITH STRUCTURE AND A RATIONAL CIRCULATION SYSTEM" TO UNDERLY AN ABUNDANCE OF DAYLILIES, IRISES, AND LILACS. BUT FIRST, 30 INCHES OF SILT NEEDED TO BE REMOVED. **STORY AND PHOTOS BY STEVE GROSS & SUSAN DALEY**



In 2011, disaster struck again as Hurricane Irene caused creeks to rise, inundating village homes. Moving water knocked down the renovated carriage barn, carried fallen trees perilously close to the house, and left up to 30 inches of sandy silt behind. The house needed emergency renovation, the garden a do-over.

The garden is a Colonial Revival interpretation.

"My clients want low maintenance," says the designer, "but taking care of my borders is fun for me; the formal structure gives me a sense of calm."

WHEN Steve Whitesell discovered the hamlet of North Blenheim, in 2009, the area was between disasters. The small village is alongside the Schoharie River in a narrow valley in Upstate New York. In the late 20th century, 25 Greek Revival homes here survived and were listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The first disaster came in 1990, when many of the town's pre-Civil War houses were leveled by a fireball that erupted from a gas-pipeline explosion, sending flames 60 feet and setting fire to treetops.

One of the Greek Revival houses spared from the fire belonged to an elderly woman who grew red tulips alongside a white picket fence. Hers was the house that Whitesell, a licensed landscape architect, bought in 2009. Living in New York City, working for the Parks Depart-

ment, Steve had been searching for a farmhouse not too far from the city, where he could do some weekend gardening. This ca. 1835 house, which came with a small carriage shed, was on one-third of an acre and afforded views of neighboring barns, fields, and mountains. "I liked that there was a good, level garden area with rich soil," Steve says, "large enough to do something interesting, but still manageable."

He began working on his garden design, elaborating on the existing cottage garden that had run a little wild. Establishing axes and creating green-lawn "runner paths" and "area rugs," Steve aimed to create "an orderly plan with structure and a clear, rational circulation system." He cut down some scrubby trees to open up the space. Down came some old peaches infected with borers, and a plum that had succumbed to an ice storm during Steve's first



ABOVE In the roadside bed, golden hops are interplanted on tall poles with *Clematis viticella* 'Polish Spirit' to provide a long season.

Hops reference the agricultural history of the area. A "borrowed view" of the neighbor's red barn is backdrop.

LEFT A paved walkway of locally quarried bluestone now runs in front of the house. The double border has golden grass, *Amsonia* 'Blue Ice', and *Kirengeshoma palmata* from Japan.



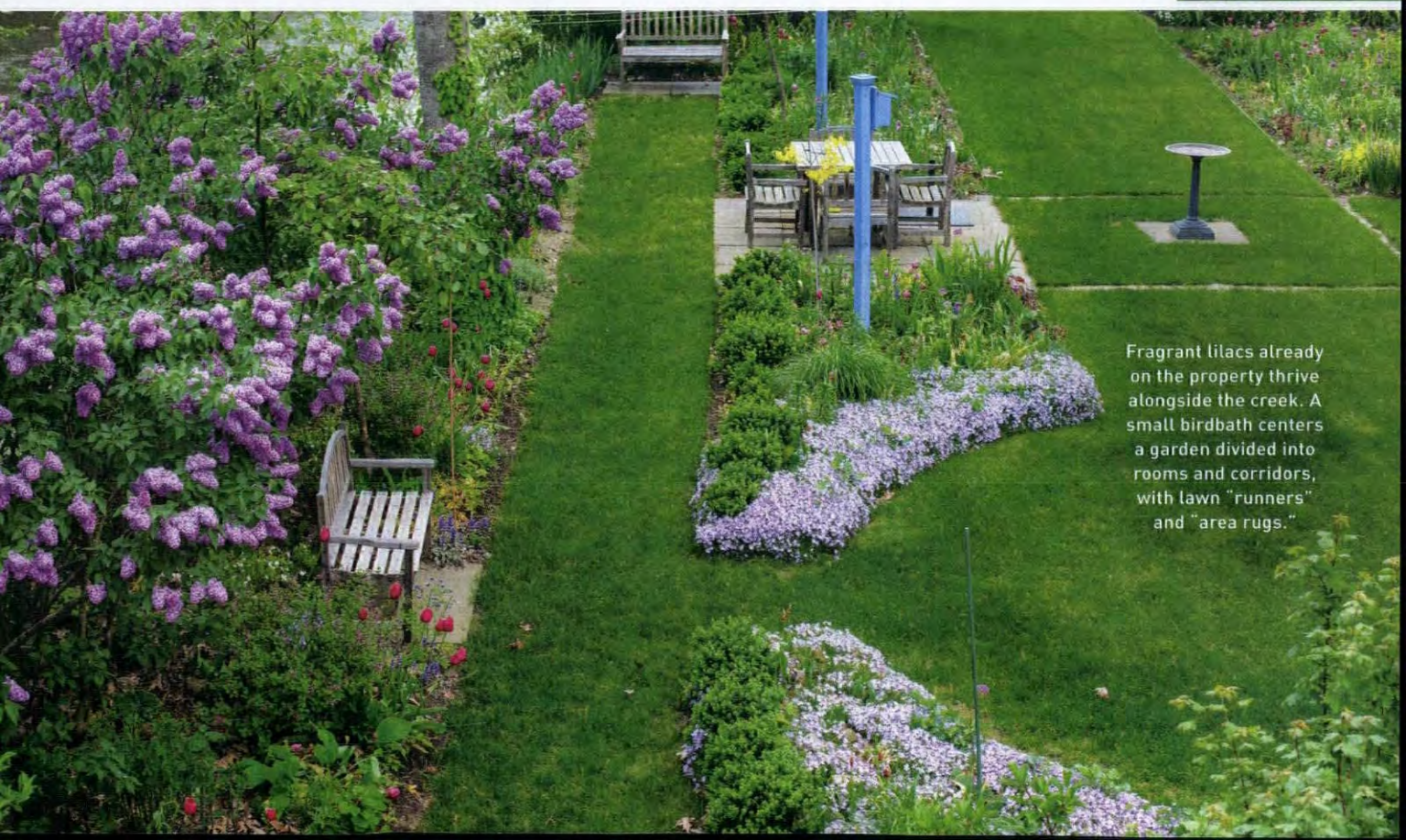
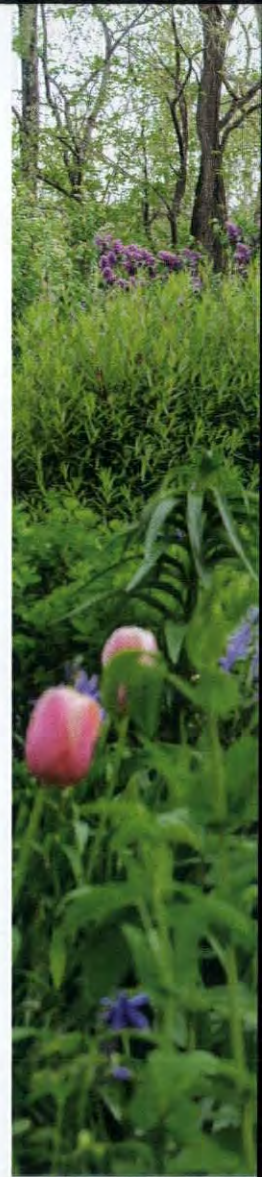
Bird boxes on tall poles provide a vertical design element alongside desert candle or foxglove, *Eremurus* 'Shelford Pink'.

winter here. He put in double perennial borders with hues of blue, purple, pink, garnet red, and yellow, backed with hardy English boxwood.

Only two years later, disaster struck again. A catastrophic flood due to Hurricane Irene in 2011 caused the creeks to rise more than 20 feet, inundating village homes and sweeping away the famous Blenheim Covered Bridge. The moving water knocked down Steve's newly renovated carriage barn, which ended up overturned in the neighbor's yard. Up to 30 inches of sandy silt was left behind when floodwaters receded. Several large, uprooted trees had floated into Steve's yard, and narrowly missed crashing into the house.

Now his house needed emergency renovation, and Steve also faced the grueling labor of starting over in the garden. He moved about 100 wheelbarrow loads of silt to reduce sandbars, level drifts, and fill scoured, sunken areas. "Miraculously," he says, "many plants survived to grow back." Twin urns he'd placed by his freshly painted front door were intact after the hurricane. "Although they were underwater, they weren't even knocked off their pedestals."

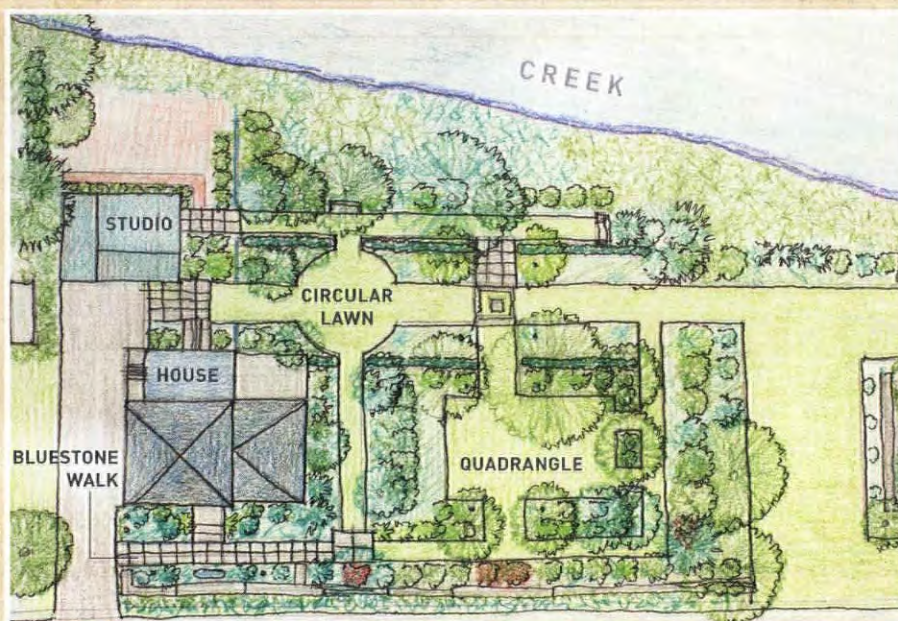
The white picket fence was washed away, but Steve admits he'd never really liked it. "I'd painted it a month or so before the flood, and I didn't ever want to do it again." He had



Fragrant lilacs already on the property thrive alongside the creek. A small birdbath centers a garden divided into rooms and corridors, with lawn "runners" and "area rugs."



A circular
lawn area edged in
lavender creeping phlox
forms the center of this
garden, where two main
paths cross. The pink
tulip is 'Menton'.



the garden plan

"I wanted to keep the view of the creek open," says Steve Whitesell. "I also wanted to create a fairly formal layout to complement the house, with double herbaceous borders, crossed axes, and dense planting with variety to gain a long bloom period." The circular lawn section is backed by a double line of hardy English boxwood *Buxus sempervirens* 'Vardar Valley', which provides evergreen structure in winter. To the west of the house, a quadrangle is bordered by shrubs and ornamental trees.



TOP (left) The new garage with a studio and summer bedroom above replaced the old carriage barn destroyed in the hurricane. (right) On the west side of the garden, two white arches support the honeysuckle vine *Lonicera sempervirens* 'John Clayton'. **ABOVE** Decorative cast-stone roundels were inserted into the wall as Steve Whitesell built it.

already begun to replace it with a dry-laid stone wall, using stones brought in by cart from old, tumbledown walls enclosing a neighbor's field.

The smashed carriage barn was replaced with a small building Steve designed to serve as a garage with a studio/summer bedroom and balcony above. "I'd finished renovating the carriage shed the day before the flood," he says. "Its replacement has a ground floor of concrete block, filled with reinforcing bars that tie the walls to the thick floor slab; it's built like a bunker and shouldn't budge in any future flood."

The house next door was abandoned after the flood, and Steve was able to acquire it and its acreage to double the size of his garden. The

biggest challenge has been bringing in all the reconstruction materials; dozens of truckloads of stone and soil and thousands of plants were used to create what is a relatively small garden. "Though the garden will never be finished, most of the heaviest work is done now. When I hit my 50s, I realized I'd better get to work before I started to fall apart," he laughs.

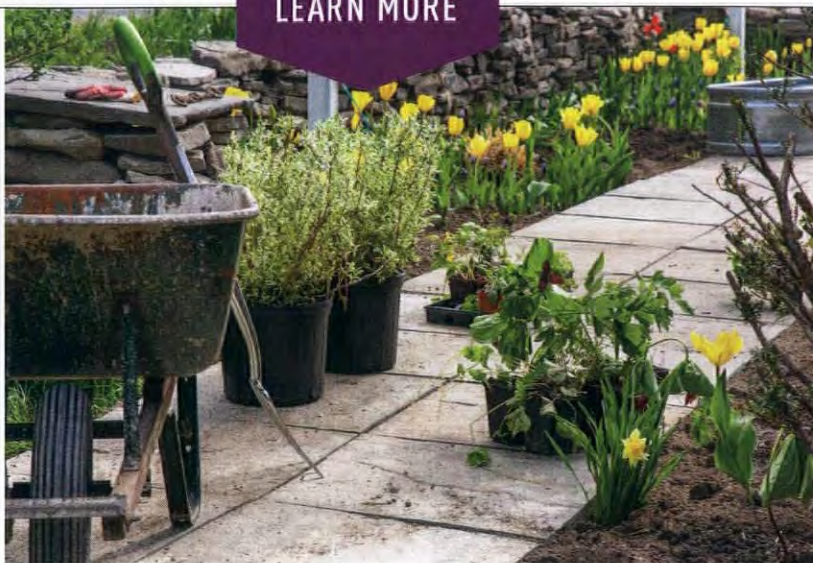
Today, Steve Whitesell lives in Blenheim full time, his postdiluvian garden a bit of paradise regained. Steve has placed wooden benches and a dining table under an umbrella, "but I don't really use them that much," he says. "Whenever I sit down, I see something that needs weeding, and I get back to work."

ABOVE A small dining patio of bluestone edged with brick is set into the border garden, with views of the creek and a neighbor's horse pasture.

LEARN MORE



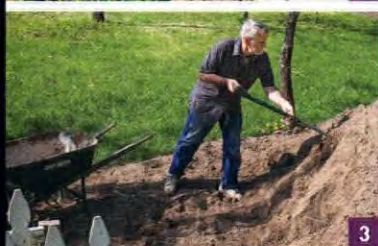
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1. The owner tamps down sand to provide a level base. 2. The galvanized trough is set with its lip just above grade. 3. The excavated dirt is used to fill. 4. A pump in the trough aerates water.

A DO-IT-YOURSELF WATER FEATURE

A BURIED TROUGH FOR WATER PLANTS AND SOOTHING SOUND.



Steve Whitesell created his small, ornamental water feature from a galvanized livestock watering trough he bought at an Agway. It's about 4' x 2', and 18" deep. "These do come in bigger sizes—but I got the largest one that would fit into my tiny car."

Steve positioned the trough next to the stone wall he'd constructed, which is about 5' tall on the garden side and 2 ½' tall on the street side. He dug the hole with a hand shovel, and created a level base with several inches of sandbox sand. The lip of the trough purposely was left several inches above the grade, so that soil and mulch won't wash in.

The small, submersible recirculating pump has a jet to keep the water aerated. Steve says the sound of it helps muffle traffic sounds when milk trucks rumble by. "I plug the pump into an exterior outlet, and keep it running from April to November. The jet goes about a foot high and looks quite nice."

The dense planting around the trough will eventually drape over and blur its edges. Steve planted a dwarf cattail in the pond, along with evergreen, golden-leaved *Acorus gramineus* 'Ogon' around the edge—which loves wet soil and thrives in the water jet's splash area. "Frogs sometimes show up, but they get eaten by the water snake that's taken up residence."



LEFT The golden evergreen rush *Acorus gramineus* 'Ogon' and the deciduous grass *Carex elata* 'Bowl's Gold' were brought in for planting near the water feature.

BELOW The submerged trough garden just after construction; plants will eventually grow over the edges.

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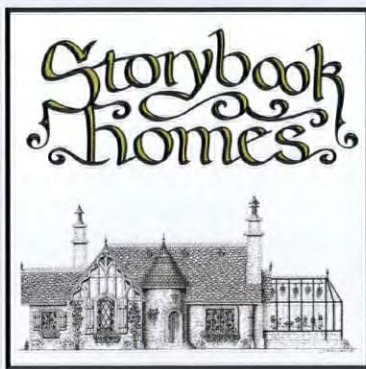
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CABINETS quarter-sawn oak **Quality Custom Cabinetry Inc.** qcci.com

TILE Pratt & Larson prattandlarson.com

CHANDELIER LF202 'Cottage Small Chandelier', Vintage Iron Collection **Mica Lamps** micalamps.com

ROLLER SHADE Handwerk Shade Shop thehandwerkshop.com

HOOD 'Canterbury' with custom details **RangeCraft** rangecraft.com

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MILLWORK Aeratis aeratis.com Porch flooring & decking materials **Azek** azek.com PVC mouldings & trim **The Gingerbread Man** gingerbreadman.com Exterior decorative trim, brackets, spandrels, etc. **Woodway Products** woodwayproducts.com Porch deck, rails & post cladding

HOME SWEET GNOME

Related Resources

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ROOFS

 (more on p. 75)

Bartile bartile.com Modern roofing tile simulating slate, clay tile, split timber roofs; storybook textures & custom solutions **Copper Exclusive** copperexclusive.com European-trained artisans specializing in copper (zinc, steel, etc.) roofing &

wall cladding, ornamentation **Copper Summit Inc.** coppersummitinc.com Copper cupolas, awnings, domes, finials, chimney pots in old English & French styles **Custom Shingles** customshingles.com Decorative wood shingling including steam-bent wood "thatch," aka Storybook or Hobbit roofs **EJM Copper Inc.** ejmcopper.com Architectural copper (aluminum, brass, zinc, steel) including European-style cupolas, spires, gutters **Endureed** endureed.com Natural-look, fireproof & wind-rated synthetic thatching materials **Huber & Associates** huberroofing.com Historic roof restoration, sheet metal, clay, thatch **McGhee & Co. Roof Thatchers** thatchinc.com Creating English roof thatching with a life expectancy of 60 years **Ornametals** ornametals.com Old-world-style copper & zinc gutters, metal ornaments, finials, weathervanes **Renaissance Roofing** claytileroof.com Restoration of historic roofing systems; inventory of materials

MASONRY/CAST STONE

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LIGHTING/METALWORK

 (more on p. 75)

Hans Duus Blacksmith handduusblacksmith.com Heirloom custom lighting fixtures inspired by ancient designs **Mica Lamps** micalamps.com Old-world collections include 'Iron Abbey' and 'Storybook Lighting'; work in iron and copper **Steven Handelman Studios** stevenhandelmanstudios.com Custom wrought-iron lighting & metalwork in styles including Gothic, French Norman & Storybook Tudor **Vintage Lights** vintagelights.com Selling only vintage (antique) fixtures, searchable by decade or style; many Storybook designs

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COZY FARMHOUSE

DESIGNER

Sarah Blank, Sarah Blank Design Studio, Greenwich, CT: sarahblankdesignstudio.com

EARLY TEXTILES Thistle Hill Weavers thistlehillweavers.com

LIGHTING chandelier **Scofield Lighting** remains.com • pewter-shade pendants **Authentic Designs** authenticdesigns.com

SINK nickel **Native Trails** nativetrails.net

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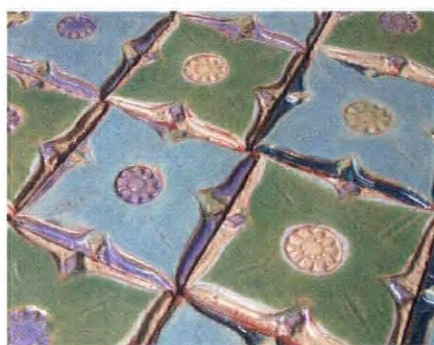
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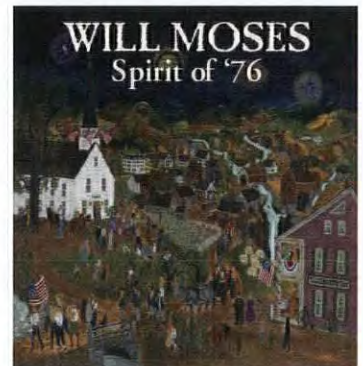
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