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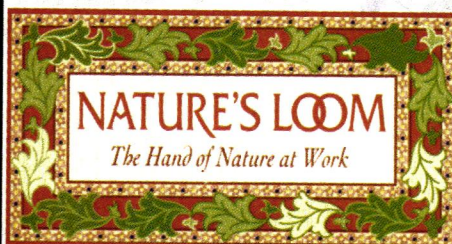
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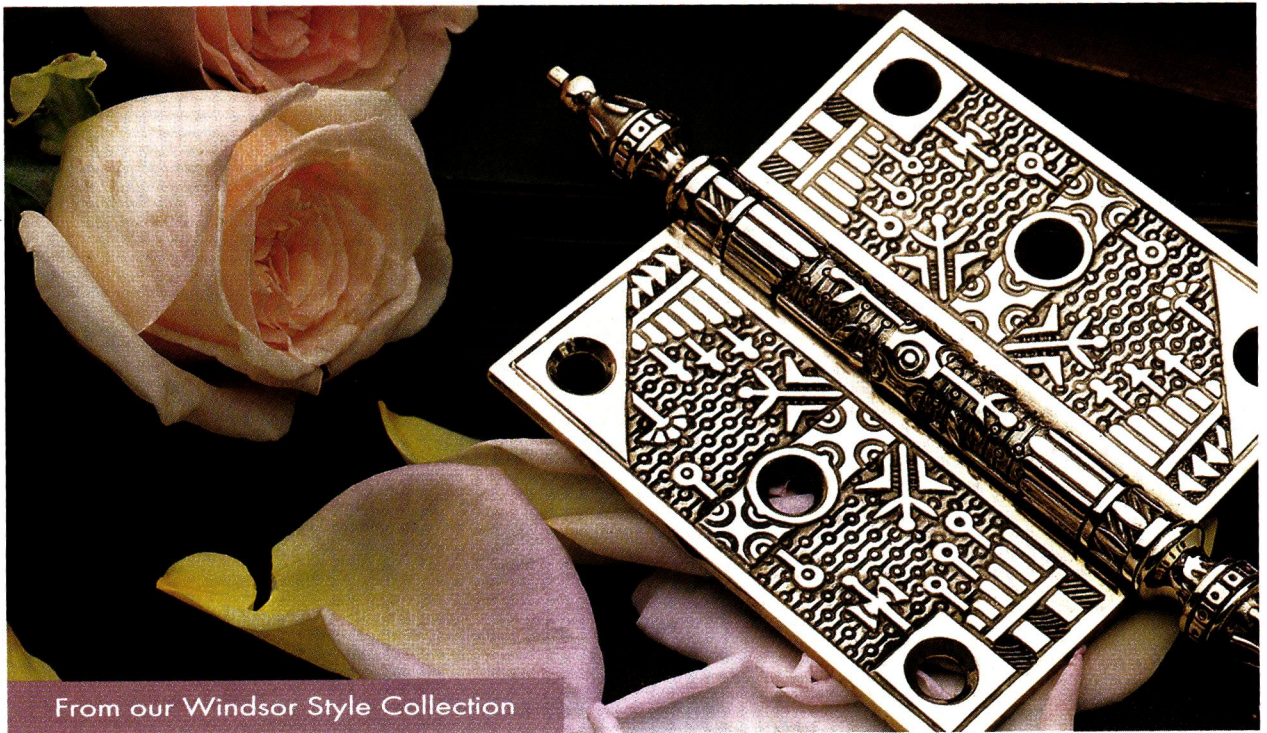


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Even in the Vieux Carré, few residents are as cool in their appreciation of the past.

BY REGINA COLE

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On sensitive agricultural land in California wine country, a new house has all the warmth, quirks, and soft edges of an old one.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALAN WEINTRAUB

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY CAROLYN BATES

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A practical history of counterpanes, bedspreads, and quilts reveals tradition—and social mores of the past.

BY MARY ELLEN POLSON

**ON THE COVER:** *The owner of a new house with Mediterranean style and old-house warmth stockpiled ideas and architectural salvage for years before construction. Her French fabrics were purchased at factories and flea markets. Cover photograph by Alan Weintraub*



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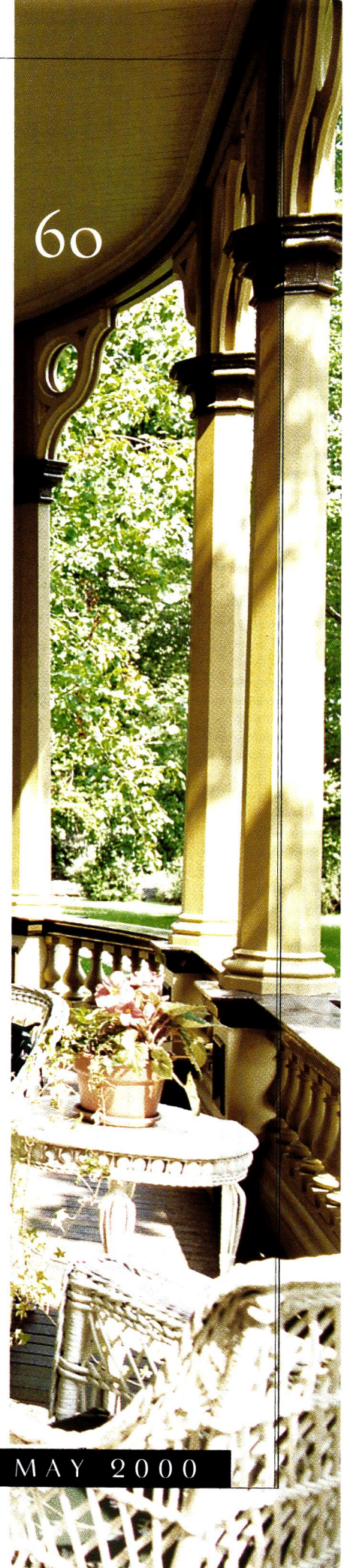


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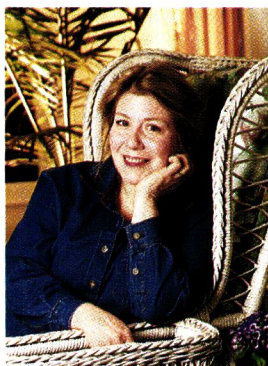
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MAY 2000

# Staying Home

UH OH. GROWING UNMISTAKABLY: I want to be home. It's not social burnout or temporary exhaustion, but a huge change in attitude regarding my life's center. I linger behind when they've gone to school and work, checking for full hampers and plants that need water. Unmade beds, messy and sad, call to me. I am sick to death of a house where "nobody's home," where the breakfast dishes are still in the sink at 5 o'clock and rooms were never aired on an unexpectedly warm day. Sometimes Peter gets a preschool virus and, without notice, I stay home for a day or two. Our old dog is happy; toys are sorted, refrigerator art is rearranged, fresh flowers replace last month's drooping blossoms pungent with decay.



Isn't this what I wanted—to enjoy being home—during those years of disruptive renovation? Why, then, do I fear turning into that woman in the late '70s who advocated wearing only a ruffled French apron when you meet your tired husband at the door with a martini? Besides, after a day or two at home, I'm behind at work. Comfort and housework are impediments to my calling! Aren't they?

But I can't shake the obvious: Home is important, as a place and a psychological construct. We are missing vital nurture if we debase it. I thought that finishing my house (more or less) would uncomplicate my life. And, true, it has removed the need to move out periodically. But it has opened serious questions. If I'd liked being home a decade or two ago, would I have had a career? And why did I pick derelict houses and live on unfinished jobsites over the past 20 years? —to avoid settling in by having a place no one would *want* to go home to?

And what does it mean now that I find housework rewarding? Such thoughts embarrass me, but I trust this audience of house lovers. To you I risk saying: the laundry is best folded the same day it's washed. Someone should be home when the kids get off the school bus. I long to be home alone in a space I created.

If you're almost done with your house project, beware. You may become a home-body.

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## letters

### CONDEMNED TO TOUR

I JUST FINISHED READING the March issue and found your Editor's Welcome ["On the House Tour"] both delightful and disturbing... delightful because it's written in such a wonderful style, disturbing [because] you made me realize what I face.

We live in Brewers' Hill, the second oldest section of Milwaukee. Every other year, the Home Association holds an open-house tour. There are 15 houses open and ours will be one. We expect 1,500 people.

Ours is the biggest house in Brewers' Hill, built of Cream City brick in 1881. It has 25 rooms. We bought it 15 years ago and paid \$750. We plan to light the first floor by gas (at least the Men's Parlor, the Library, the Dining Room, and the Lady's Parlor). Anyway, as I write the workmen are hammering and sawing away. The noise is deafening, the dust worse. The tour takes place on the first Saturday in June. The house will be ready. I'm sure of that, but oh what a hassle, oh what a mess.

Thank you very much for what you said. I can quit feeling like a condemned man.

—TERRY BOUGHNER  
Milwaukee, Wis.

### BUILDING A BUILT-IN

IN THE FEATURE on the Swedish Arts and Crafts house in Maine in your March issue, a photo of a kitchen alcove appears on page 54. Can plans be obtained for the built-in bench?

—CHARLENE LAVOIE  
Winsted, Conn.

*The house itself dates to ca. 1914; built-ins such as the kitchen nook were recently*

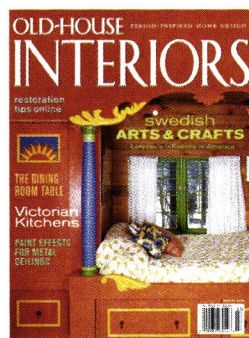
*made and installed by local craftsman Greg Marston, (207) 647-8378. Wood-carving throughout the house such as the table on page 57 were crafted by Bob Dunning (207) 647-2815. No plans exist for the kitchen nook, but a builder or cabinetmaker looking at the photo would be able to sketch it for you. Adorable as it is, construction is simple; it's made of paint-grade beaded board and lumber, and stock parts.* —THE EDITORS

### DESIGN AUTHORITY TWEAKER

I HAD THE MOST extraordinary reunion in the past year with a fellow by the name of Dan Cooper, after 23 years of no contact. You know him; he writes for your magazine (which Santa delivered to a friend of mine).

While Dan moves on, he doesn't forget what's been left behind. He allows himself, amidst the crazy pace of our times, to reflect, and in his own way maintains a healthy [skepticism] for the authorities in this world he's found himself in. I appreciate that. It makes reading his stuff enjoyable even though I have no expertise whatsoever in half of what he's talking about. Now isn't that a skill? He's a translator of a most unique breed. Come to think of it, he brought that same style to those guitar lessons [I gave him] so many years ago. Honor the teacher and then, without embarrassing her too terribly much, take all she's taught you and blow her out of the water with your own interpretation. Go, Dan, and you too, for recognizing his talent and sharing it with us all.

—SUE DALEY  
Erie, Pennsylvania



Thanks. We welcome Dan Cooper's contributions to the History of Furniture column, and more. —PATRICIA POORE

#### CURTAIN OF REALITY

I AM SHOPPING for curtains for my 1910 Queen Anne house. I am having a difficult time finding examples of authentic styles for a middle-class home. Many books and magazines feature curtains and portières for the Vanderbilt mansions; others are so-called "Victorian-inspired." It seems that few know what the [authentic] thing is anymore. I need proper lengths for curtains and drapery; materials; and especially styles.

—KEN ROGINSKI  
Freehold, N.J.

*I hear you! How much better to be inspired by the original, rather than an already interpreted version. I think your query deserves a whole article, so stay tuned. Meantime, check out the truthful advice in Victorian Interior Decoration by Gail Caskey Winkler (©1986, in print and in many libraries). Readers can reply to ken@oldhouseguy.com.*

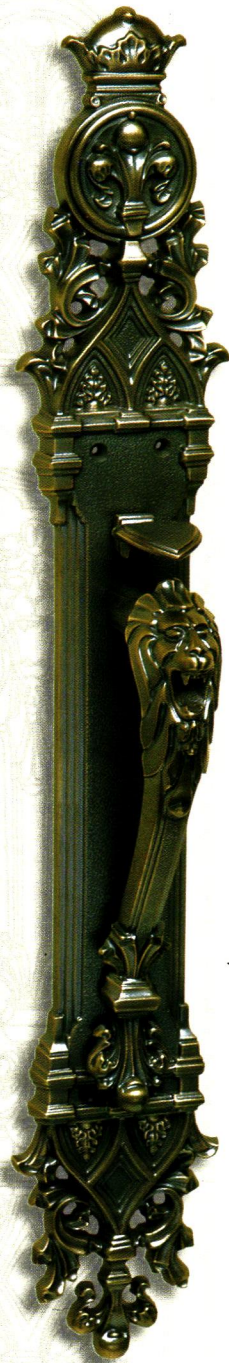
— PATRICIA POORE

#### SEEING AUDUBON

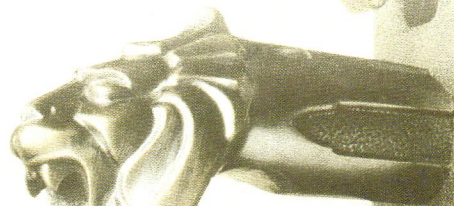
Reader Wendy Lienhart of Kenyon Oppenheimer (fine art dealers and conservators in Chicago) points out that the original version of John James Audubon's Audubon's Fifty Best is housed in the Chicago Field Museum (not the Terra Museum as stated in "Furnishings," March 2000).

#### TOPIARY NUMBER

The correct phone number for the Ladew Topiary Gardens in Monkton, Maryland, is (410) 557-9466. See page 74, March 2000.



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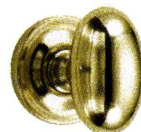
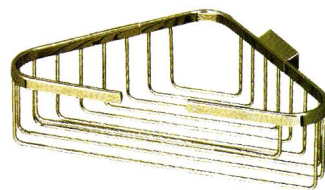


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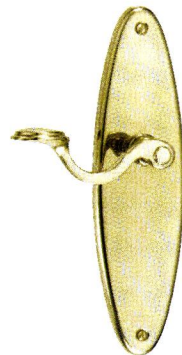
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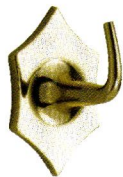
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by Regina Cole



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## Garden Flowers

Tulip Time is what Duralee Fabrics calls this fabric in their Pinlico Gardens Collection.

Clear colors are printed on 100% cotton duck for the myriad sunny uses of summer. The coordinate, also shown, is Stripe Time. \$53 per square yard, to the trade. (631) 273-8800.

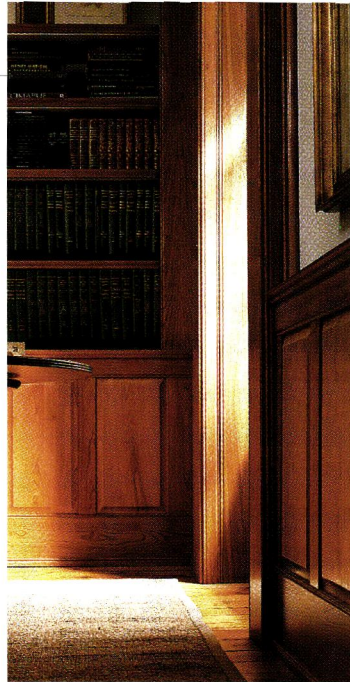


• Toe of Frog

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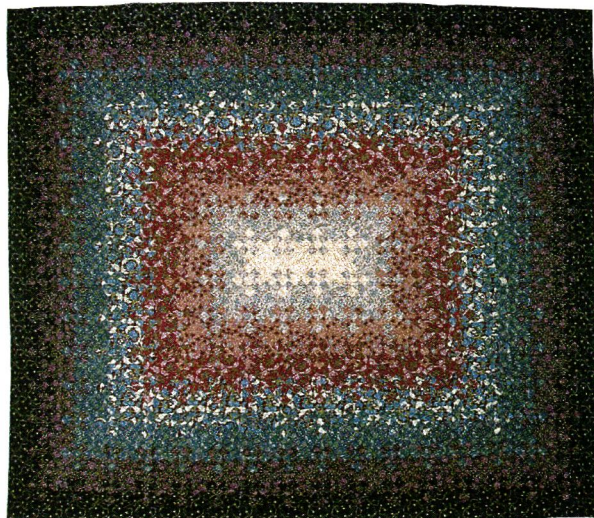
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Woven, printed, or plain bamboo is bordered with traditional Indian silks or cottons to make shades that are simple, elegant, traditional. From Silk Route, prices range from \$7.56 per square foot to \$14 per square foot; for hardware, add \$12 per bamboo shade. Call (813) 832-5605.

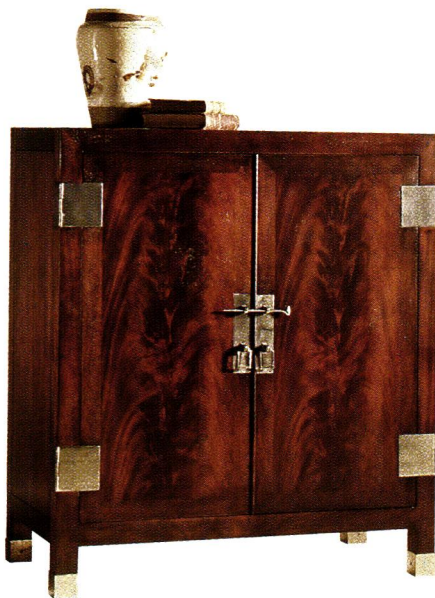
### Screen Saver ▶

Shoji screens are room dividers with a long history of creating space and privacy. These, from Window Modes, are available in 11 standard cedar frame designs; they can be carried within tracks or free-standing. Through showrooms, call (914) 592-4545.



### Cabinet Post ▶

Early-18th-century Chinese design influences the Ming Cabinet from Milling Road. In solid crotch mahogany and mahogany veneers, the interior has two adjustable shelves and four small drawers. \$2,637; call (336) 751-9643.



### Hand Carried ▶

From Hong Kong, Persimmon Home offers traditional hand-crafted objects like this Ogee Wooden Container. Stained crimson with a carved hexagonal motif in the lid, it has rattan handles. \$68 US; Email: [info@persimmonhome.com](mailto:info@persimmonhome.com).



### Textured Table ▶

Teak and bamboo in the two-drawer table from American Homestead's Plantation Key collection are the essence of hot-weather style. In the same materials are a sofa table, an armoire, and a TV cabinet. Call (800) 495-4205.



◀ Sleep Tight

Wrought iron beds are made by hand at Compasstar. But the rigidity of the modern frame system is nothing like rickety beds of memory. Westminster, pictured, ranges from \$1,349 for a twin to \$1,649 for king size. Call (888) 265-9019.



Sweet Dreams

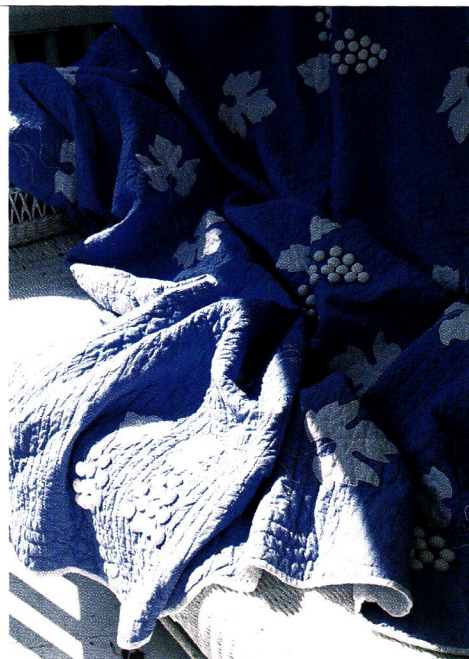
Upon My Pillow ▶

From White Linen come these embroidered organdy pillow shams in 100% cotton. Finished with a 3" ruffle, in tender shades of ecru, white, sage, and gold, they are the essence of femininity. Prices range from \$40 to \$81, depending on size and colors. Call (914) 769-4551.



Soft and Warm ▶

Trapunto is a technique favored by early-19th-century quilters, who separated threads on the back and inserted cotton for depth in the pattern. From Judi Boisson's American Home collection, prices range from \$450 for a twin to \$850 for a king-sized quilt. Call (516) 283-5466.

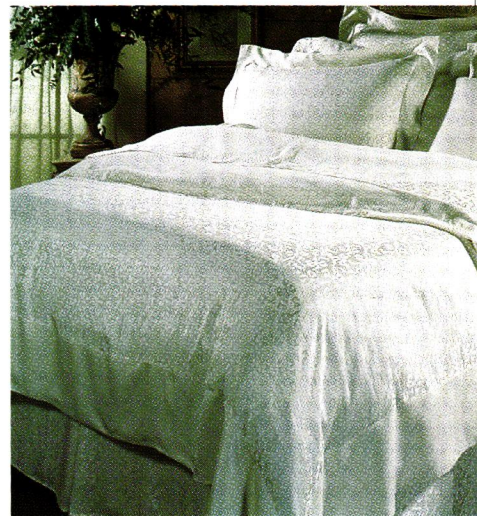


Lap of Luxury ▶

D. Porthault, who made fine linens for the carriage trade generations ago, also designs for the better-known American fabric giant Dan River. Bedding with a refined sensibility is available at retailers; call (800) 782-9568.

◀ Breezy Blossoms

Freshford from Laura Ashley, in sapphire or berry red, is available in sheet sets (\$75 to \$225), pillow cases (\$65), comforters (\$95 to \$215), shams (\$45 to \$65), dust ruffles (\$65 to \$120), curtains (\$125), or by the yard at \$29.50 per yard. Call (800) 367-2000 for locations of Laura Ashley shops.



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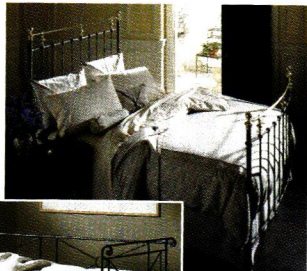


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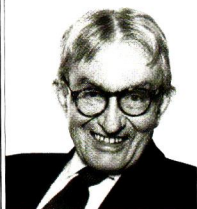
Circle no. 713



## On the Roadshow

by Wendell Garrett

Now in its fifth season, *The Antiques Roadshow* attracts more than 14 million viewers each week—comparable to *NYPD Blue*. The lure for those entering metropolitan convention centers during taping is part adventure, part



has reached seven thousand. Everyone who gets in is granted at least a cursory appraisal. A few—those with notorious treasures or egregious fakes or riveting stories to tell—are videotaped for television.

*The Antiques Roadshow is currently PBS's most-watched program, projected to soon hit 20 million (heterogeneous) viewers per week.*

Why has *The Roadshow* nonchalantly broken all public television viewing numbers? How does one explain its broad appeal to both young and old, rich and poor—without gender, ethnic, or religious preferences? It may be attributable in part to the Millennium Moment. Crossing the threshold into a new age, Americans are Janus-faced in anticipating the future with optimism and anxiety, while looking backward with nostalgia and cultural homesickness to an increasingly foreign past. (During and after the Centennial Exhibition of 1876 in Philadelphia—when the machine, the city, and the immigrant wave

[continued on page 24]

### Houses in the Movies: Great Response

In the January 2000 issue I shared my tendency to judge movies by their setting—historic houses and period rooms—and invited readers to tell me about their favorite “movie houses.” Letters have so far named 122 movies, some obvious and others obscure. We’ll soon print stills, with critiques, in the magazine. Some teasers: ■ Movies most mentioned: *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1943), *Practical Magic* (1998), and *Gone With the Wind* (1939) ■ Actress most men-

tioned: Bette Davis ■ Actor most mentioned: Jimmy Stewart ■ Decades of choice: 1940s and 1990s

For artful metaphor, see *The Magnificent Ambersons*; director Orson Welles used a late-19th-century mansion to reflect the inner turmoil of his characters. A must-see: *House on Haunted Hill* (1958) with Vincent Price. In this movie, one of Frank Lloyd Wright’s textile-block houses of the 1920s (in Los Angeles) was ridiculously retrofitted with gaslights and Victorian furniture.

—PATRICIA POORE

### Showhouse for Keeps

The Crane Estate at Castle Hill in Ipswich, Mass., was the summer home of a plumbing magnate. On the property (now owned by Trustees of Reservations) is a Shingle-style house undergoing top-drawer rehabilitation as a historic inn. From April 29–May 24, it’s a Designer Showhouse elegantly appointed by 25+ juried designers. Much of this decoration and furnishing will remain when the inn opens for business in July. For information: (978) 356-7774.



Design board: Lisa Bonneville, for the Breakfast Room.

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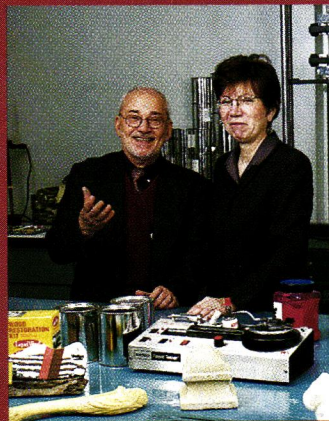
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“When the pilot announces, ‘Ladies and gentlemen, we have begun our descent into North Carolina,’ a smile finds its way across my face . . . soon I will be in a car that will stop on a quiet street . . . I will ‘be home again.’ ” —MAYA ANGELOU

were changing the very nature of the agrarian country of memory—citizens launched the antiques collecting movement to salvage something from a vanishing America.) It may also be linked to sheer greed and avarice. “We the people” have the inherent right in the American system of capitalism to buy cheap and sell dear. • But, while criss-crossing this broad land of ours with *The Antiques Roadshow*, I have become genuinely impressed with the average American’s acute awareness of the *pastness* of the past. Those uncommon common folk may not subscribe to the academic historian’s conception of epochs and periods, of continuity and change. But in their essential goodness they are willing to learn history by reading artifacts. †

He’s a chemist. She once bought an antique chair that was—well, it was falling apart. When John scoffed, Marsha replied, “If you’re so smart, why don’t you make a wood filler that’ll work on my antiques?” Twenty years later, **JOHN AND MARSHA CAPORASO** (yes, they got married) are the principals of Abatron, the company whose products hold together an awful lot of old-house parts.

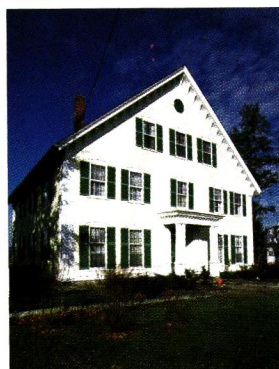
John Caporaso, a custom formulator, came from Italy in 1955. Until the antique chair episode, however, his compositions were for the electronics and the aircraft industries. But when his new wood consolidant worked, he and Marsha decided to show it off at a restoration trade show. The response was huge. Today Abatron makes hundreds of different wood epoxies, consolidants, coatings, acrylics, and concrete patching products. The electronics and aircraft industries still rely on Caporaso (the moon rocks are encased in an Abatron product,) but the conservation and repair market now accounts for approximately 50% of the company’s business. Call (800) 445-1754.



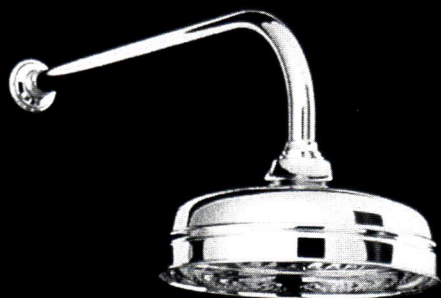
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- May 12–14: **6th Annual Philadelphia Furniture and Furnishings Show**, Pennsylvania Convention Center. (215) 440-0718
- May 20–23: **Decorex USA**, Open-to-the-Public Day: May 23, North Pavilion, Javits Convention Center, New York City. (800) 272-SHOW

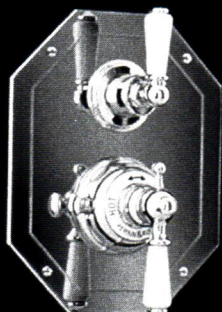
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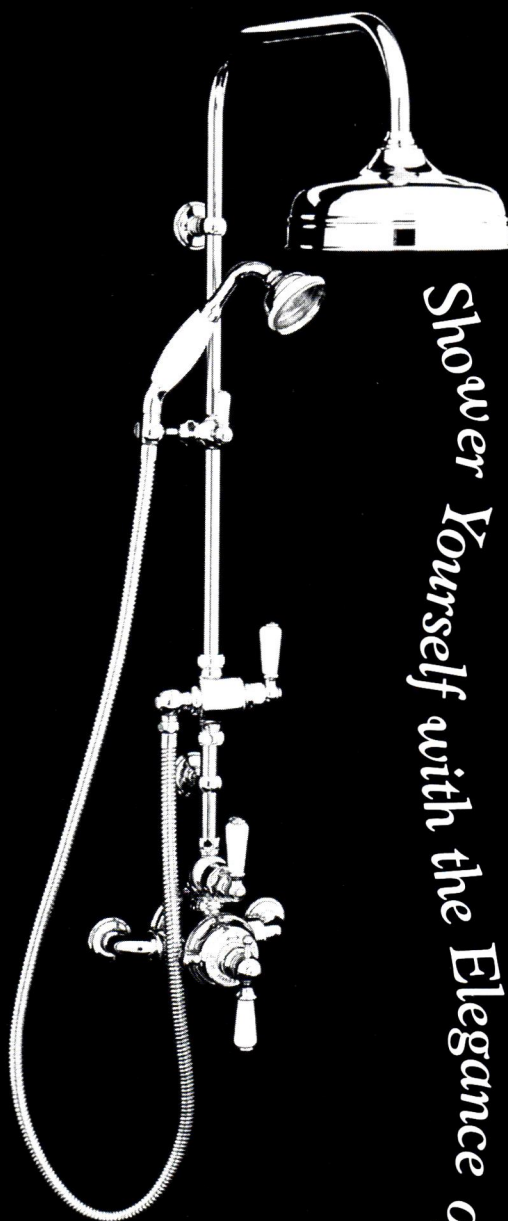
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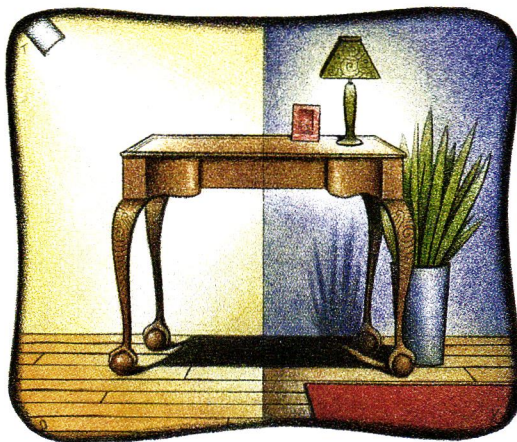
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## Collectors, and Decorators

BY THATCHER FREUND

WHEN MARIO BUATTA, the rotund society decorator, was named chairman of the opening night party in 1973, the New York Winter Antiques Show had long had a reputation as the most prestigious antiques show in the country. This preview party stood high on the list of social engagements for the country's leading collectors of antiques, who came for the mahogany chests, gilded eagles, and polished silver sauce boats that glimmered from a succession of exquisite booths, beckoning, waiting for someone to pick them up. Yet it stood nowhere on the list of social engagements for the city's leading socialites.

Looking for a way to generate income, the East Side Settlement House, the charity that runs the show, engaged Buatta to change that. In his first year, he managed to get two thousand New Yorkers to buy tickets to the affair, and the money he raised exceeded that of any other party in its history. More surprising still, some of the most beautiful people in the world came back to the Park Avenue armory each year in ever greater numbers to drift among the finest things to be had anywhere in the world. Though these New Yorkers did not know much about antiques, they seemed very much at home. They came back because they found, to their surprise, that they themselves, as pretty as they were, were made more beautiful still by the splendor of the place. The objects held so much beauty, in other words, they could spare a little for the guests. In return, the people lent the antiques a charming glamour and sophistication, which could make even rare old things seem more special still.

In the years I spent observing the world of American antique furniture, I came to see that, to flourish, pretty things must find a place where pretty people can come to look at them. Mario Buatta is the person chiefly responsible for making this truth evident to me.

The beautiful people did not come on opening night so much to buy antiques, as to drink champagne and linger with their friends. It was true, perhaps, that they might spend a little money on some nice thing that would look good beside the couch. But that was not the point. These people really came out that night because the armory, filled with so many pretty things, made for such a lovely party. Watching them each year, one could not help feeling that living well is the just reward of beauty.

These people were Buatta's clients, or the clients of John Saladino, or Mary Louise Guertler, or some other famous decorator. They were the sort of people who might have been in the Bahamas the day before, and were leaving for Paris in the morning. And yet, for all the chatter and the wine, the fine food, the music playing somewhere far away, one could see that the dealers who stood before their booths on opening night were never idle. One could see that other people, people not of New York society, not-so-beautiful people, had drifted through the armory's doors as well.

These people were collectors. They had flown in from Boston or Cleveland or Philadelphia, not because the party was so grand, but because they really cared about the chests and bowls and [continued on page 29]

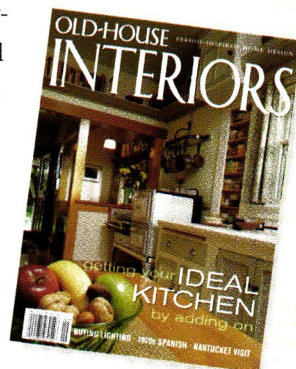


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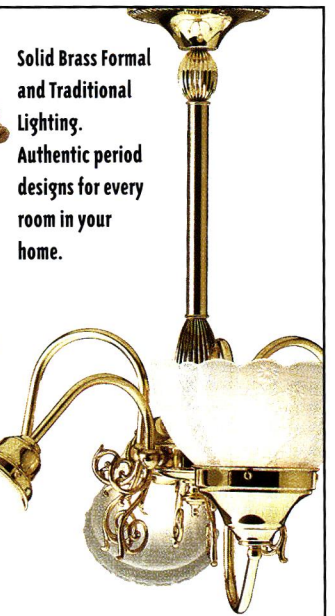
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other things they found for sale. Beneath the social whirl one saw their faces spring into large smiles when they came across an object they had sought. One saw the quick, happy transfer of personal checks between them and the dealers.

It made for a strange affair, to see two such different sorts of people stop beside a painted cupboard, say, and know that each found something different there. One of them saw the fine craftsmanship, the long history, and the deep beauty of the thing itself. The other saw how well that thing might look in context with some other piece, or in a whole room full of other pieces.

*Decorators tend to see objects in the context of a room, while the eyes of a collector always fall on a single object.*

The two groups shunned each other, and one had no trouble seeing why. The collectors, who loved the single thing, viewed the socialites as shallow, while the socialites, who appreciated how the many things might fit together, regarded the collectors as obsessive and provincial. It was puzzling to think that, while both loved beauty, they could have such very different notions of what that beauty was; and to reflect that they who shared so much, shared so little.

Objects tell stories, and in combinations with the things that have surrounded them for a long time, they tell other, more powerful stories. This is something collectors often do not understand. They concentrate on the single thing, isolated as art against a wall, while decorators love combinations, the many things together.

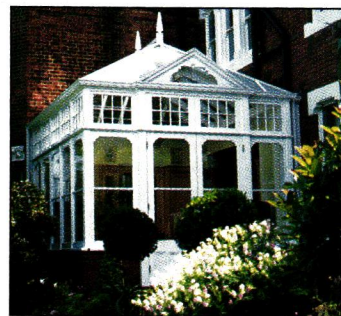
Mario Buatta succeeded so well because he knew the power that antiques hold over people. As a man

who reproduces English country homes, Buatta has an unusually fine sense of what makes the original houses so remarkable. These old mansions are filled with objects that people have carried inside over the past seven or eight generations, "With each generation," Buatta once explained, "leaving behind its collections of things, the stories of one's life." These homes possess the sorts of contexts that one cannot re-create. They hold centuries of history at a glance. Time, of course, is against a decorator like Buatta. He must achieve the look of layered history, not in two hundred years, but in a couple. His philosophy is simple. He will not do

a house all at once, but, "A few dabs today, a few more tomorrow, and the rest when the spirit moves me."

When he was chairman of the show, Mario Buatta liked to put on panel discussions filled with such society decorators as John Saladino and Noel Jeffrey. The ladies who came to listen to these talks seemed to care less about what made one antique unique and another not, than about the way such things looked together. They wanted their homes to tell stories the same way that real English country homes tell stories. They wanted history right then. They couldn't wait two hundred years to have it. Mario Buatta knew it was his job not to help others connect to the past, but to help them invent a past. "A lot of us didn't inherit these things," he explained one day. "But we want our houses to look that way. That's what we all strive for."

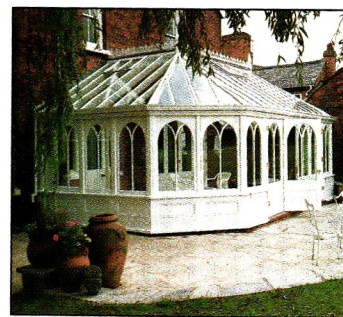
John Sal- [continued on page 32]



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adino, on the other hand, has an unusually good feel for the power of the single object. I watched one afternoon as he tried to explain this to the ladies. The rooms that he arranges resemble those of Italian villas, where ancient walls and arrangements of crusty Continental furniture give one an even greater sense of history than Buatta's houses do. Saladino understands what he has called "the hand of man" worn into the objects over centuries. In Rome, he once said, he learned to love corrosion. He is "a stickler for the original finish." He pointed out that day how an old mirror, with its original mercury plating, brings one in touch with "all the people who have gazed in it."

Decorators tend to see objects in the context of a room, while the eyes of a collector always fall on a single object. Most decorators do not understand, as Saladino does, what makes the one thing so important. They think nothing of stripping off original finishes to suit the fashions of the moment. They will paint columns onto Biedermeier chests because they view objects differently from collectors. They will destroy the one thing to achieve a notable success with the many. In their own way, such decorators are as shortsighted as those who appreciate the one thing, but not the many things together.

Encountering a tasteless room full of beautiful objects—no less than encountering the tasteful room full of ordinary things—helps one to appreciate such people as John Saladino, who care about both. ♦

THATCHER FREUND is the author of *Objects of Desire: The Lives of Antiques and Those Who Pursue Them*. He is at work on a novel set in 18th-century America.



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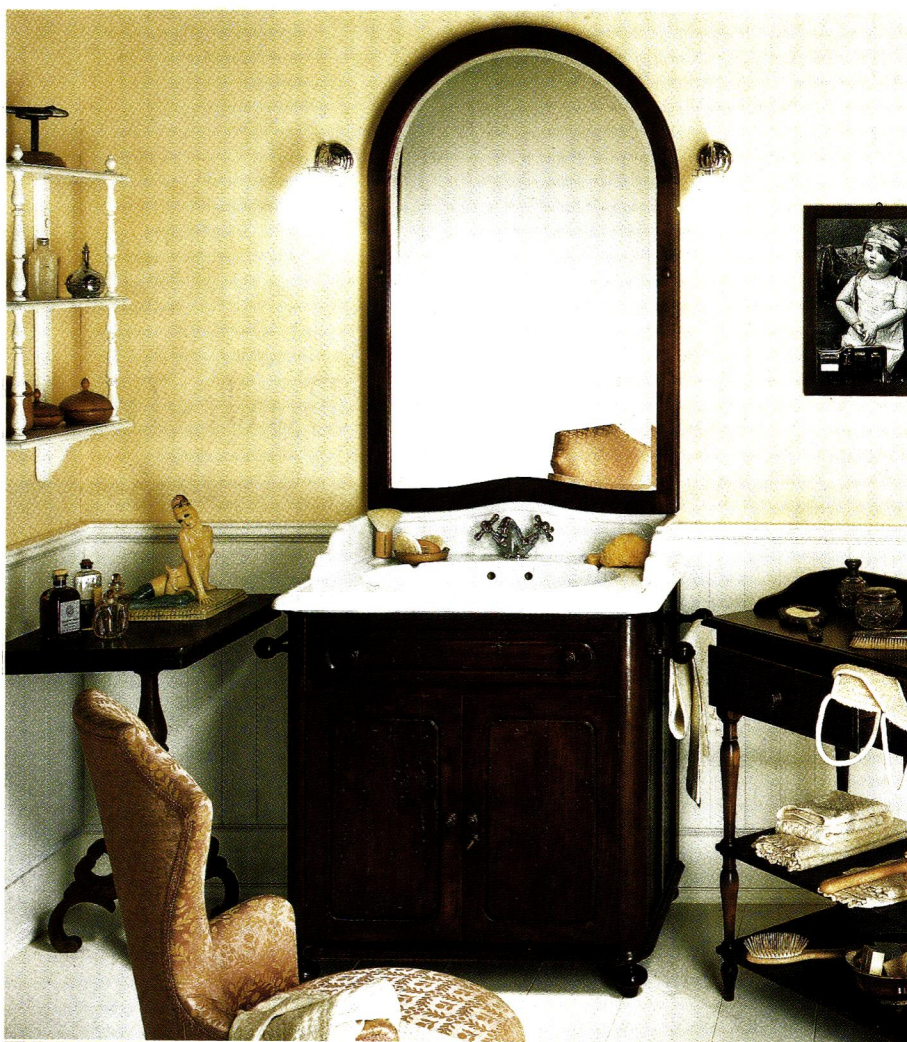
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## Crafting Period Built-Ins

BY MARY ELLEN POLSON

**N**O MATTER WHEN your house was constructed, there's always room for a period built-in. Who wouldn't want an ingeniously designed bookcase, sideboard, case of drawers, cupboard, or bench, crafted in the materials and style of the house, and conveniently located just where you need it?

If you think built-ins are just for bungalows, consider historic precedent. While it's true that the heyday of built-ins coincided with the Arts and Crafts era, the concept of an attached piece of furniture that fits snugly into a room is as old as the corner cupboard. In the 1820s and 1830s, the Shakers expertly incorporated drawers, cupboards, and pegged mouldings into their sparsely furnished rooms. At the height of the Gilded Age, Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman Jr. advocated building bookcases on base cabinets set directly into niches in the walls of a room.

The best built-ins are long wearing, solidly built from quality materials with a clear sense of how the finished piece fits into the room and the rest of the house. "If someone puts a lot of work into something, it has power that's subtle, difficult to measure, and difficult to describe," says Eric Swanson, owner of Swanson Woodwork, a custom cabinet-maker in Boston, Massachusetts. "That's the real reason behind the fascination with the [continued on page 34]

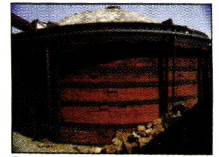


**ABOVE:** Architect Bernard Maybeck was also a craftsman—builder, as his cabinet and case of drawers for a 1906 Shingle-style house in Marin County, California, demonstrates. **RIGHT:** Built-in shoe bins are original to the master bedroom closets in a 1948 Massachusetts home.



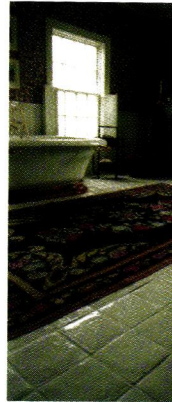


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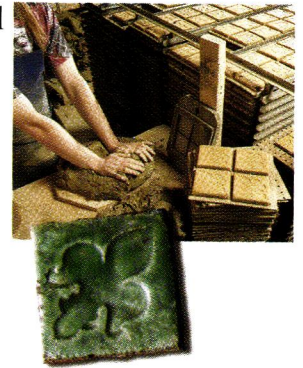


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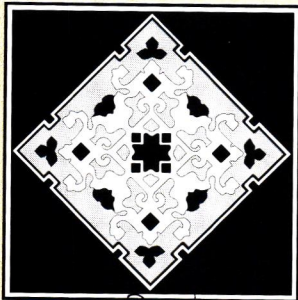
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**LEFT:** All of the components for two double-width cabinets are milled and assembled in Eric Swanson's Boston shop before they go to the job site.

**BOTTOM LEFT:** The finished cabinets, built into the architecture of the room.

**OPPOSITE:** A Shaker built-in, ca. 1830.

ask neighbors for referrals and also check the Yellow Pages.

The variables that come into play include *design* (the style elements of the piece), *craftsmanship* (the quality and detailing of the workmanship), and *cost* (the price you will ultimately pay). Depending on your circumstances, there are several possible approaches to take, including:

- Building the piece yourself, using lumber cut to size at a building or home center.
- Hiring a carpenter to build the fixture on-site to your specifications, using stock materials and mouldings.
- Hiring a trim or finish carpenter to design and build the piece. He or she may make custom millwork and do some off-site assembly.
- Hiring a custom cabinetmaker



*Depending on the approach you choose, the price of a built-in could range from a few hundred dollars to \$20,000 or more.*

Arts and Crafts Movement—people are responding to the intrinsic power invested in the work.”

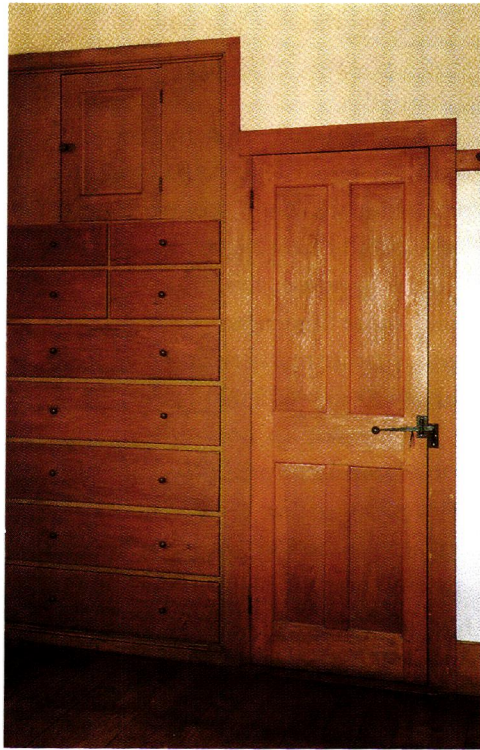
While early-20th-century built-ins were often stock components ordered from a builder's catalog, unfortunately, that's no longer the case today. Adding a built-in is similar to ordering custom or semi-custom cabinet work, and is priced accordingly. You'll also need to be articulate in describing what you want, knowledgeable about the skills needed to create it, and astute enough to choose the right person or firm to accomplish the task. It's also an excellent idea to work with a local craftsman;

to design and build the fixture in his or her shop.

- Hiring an architect or interior designer to both design the piece and have it built off-site, usually by a cabinetmaker or carpenter.

Any of these methods can potentially yield satisfactory results, but depending on the approach you choose, the price of the finished piece could range from a few hundred dollars to \$20,000 or more. Unfortunately, paying more doesn't necessarily guarantee the best results.

“People can pay twice,” Swanson says. “You can pay to have a designer draw something, and pay again



to have a craftsman re-engineer it so it can be built to a budget.”

When you hire a designer, you're paying for his or her aesthetic vision, so be sure that's what you want, Swanson says. "Designers and architects rarely think in terms of how something can be made. They think in terms of how they want it to look."

If the design is unrealistic given the existing budget, the result can be a poorly built rendition of a beautiful design. While commissioning a cabinetmaker who also designs can be a less costly approach, this route also has its disadvantages. "His or her design vocabulary may be more limited," Swanson says. "Craftspeople tend to think in terms of building what they know how to build. You better be sure you like their work. The chances are good that you're going to get more of the same."

While carpenters and cabinetmakers are both capable of producing quality work, you should be aware that the two professions may use dif-

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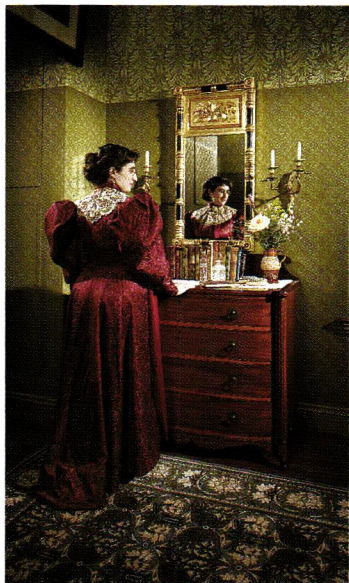


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ferent approaches to construct a built-in. Cabinetmakers tend to work in terms of sub-assemblies built in a shop. A carpenter's work is more additive, with many of the components sized and cut on-site.

The latter method has its advantages, especially if you have a team of carpenters already at work in your home. Skilled carpenters usually charge substantially less than the \$60 per hour typical of cabinetmakers, and in a restoration setting, they may already be familiar with the moulding profiles in the house.

On the other hand, hiring a carpenter to create a built-in may turn your living room into a job site. And though a good carpenter will

which aspects of a job tend to increase its cost. Surprisingly, it's not the wood.

In high-end cabinetry, the cost of the materials tend to be small in proportion to labor—sometimes as little as 10% to 12% of the overall budget, Swanson says. Even opting for a more luxurious wood—mahogany rather than poplar—may add only \$500 to a \$15,000 project.

One way to hold down costs is to eliminate or pare down the use of mouldings that require multiple saw set-ups and/or the creation of custom knives. While you don't want to add flat-panel, Arts and Crafts-style cabinets to an Italianate parlor with egg-and-dart mouldings, choosing

*You'll also need to be articulate in describing what you want, knowledgeable about the skills needed to create it, and astute enough to choose the right person or firm to accomplish the task.*

do as much of the work as possible off-site, he or she isn't likely to have the full range of tools found in a cabinetmaker's shop, including an array of precision saws and the capacity to cut knives for custom mouldings. Where a carpenter might use a butt joint or a spline to connect intersecting pieces of wood, "a cabinet maker will typically use a mortise and tenon—a true machine joint," Swanson says. "Especially in painted work, two projects may look very similar when they're first done. In five or 10 years, the cabinetmaker's product will be noticeably more sound, because the joints were all joined and glued together. It isn't a matter of skill—it's about approach."

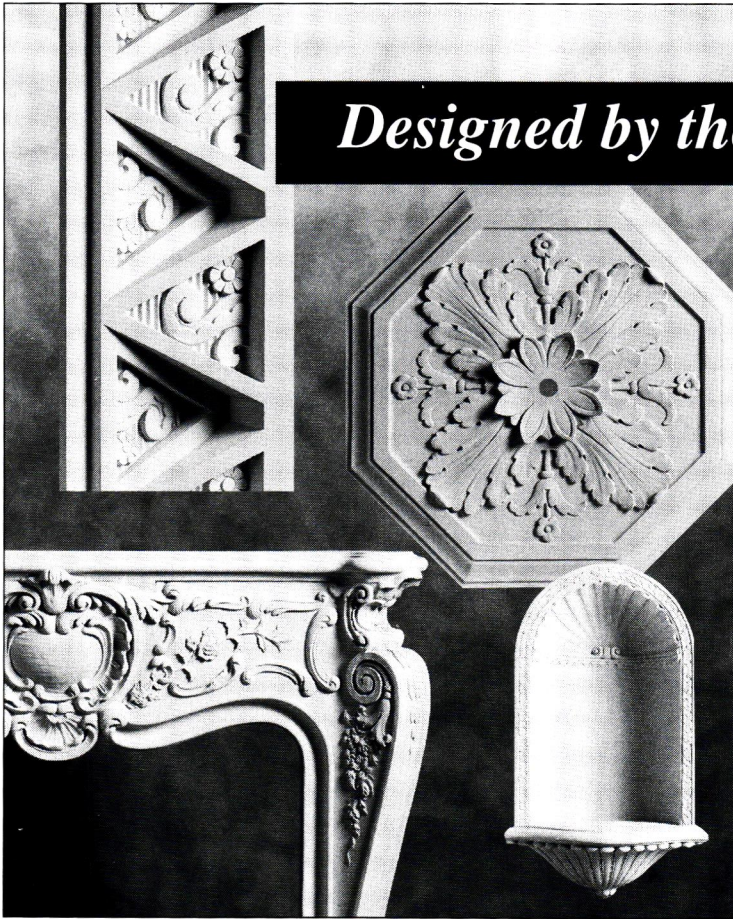
Whether you hire a high-end designer or a retired carpenter who will do your project for next to nothing, it's also a good idea to know

simpler moulding profiles could hold down your cost—as could asking the craftsperson to build the cabinet as a freestanding piece of furniture.

Inevitably, custom built-ins cost more because they are fitted in such a way that they become part of the room. That's what you're paying for. "If the craftsperson does his or her job well, the hand of the maker will be invisible," Swanson says. "To install a piece of built-in work so that it's seamless is very difficult. Every piece is scribed to fit floors that undulate and walls that may be slightly bowed. By the time we're through installing it, you won't be able to put a piece of paper between the wood and the plaster." ♦

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## Furniture: Antique or New?

BY MARITA THOMAS

A PERIOD HOUSE furnished entirely in authentic furniture from its era is a rarity, particularly so if it is someone's home. That's the experience of a sampling of interior designers who regularly work on old-house interiors. All say that more than 90 percent of their interior restoration projects include a mix of antiques and reproductions. In addition to using faithful period reproductions, the designers say they often also include adaptations, and furniture that is not truly faithful to the style of the home but merely "sympathetic" or "compatible."

The price and availability of antiques are among the reasons for the mix, but not the only ones. Other considerations are comfort, ease of maintenance, durability, and scale. "People today are bigger—taller and heavier—than they were in the seventeenth century," points out Shirley Pritchard, IIDA (International Interior Design Association), principal of Pritchard & Associates, Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. "Old beds just don't fit too many of my clients."

Even though Lisa Bonneville Design is located in Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts, an area rich with antiques, owner Lisa Bonneville, ASID (American Society of Interior Designers), says, "Most all of our projects include reproductions." She applies three criteria to the choice be-



*A new Thomas Moser chair (right) may suit the old-house owner better than the original ca. 1790 Nantucket Windsor chair.*

tween an antique or a reproduction. First, she asks: "Can we find an appropriate original at auction or through a dealer? Next, is the cost prohibitive? Finally, is the piece in working condition? People want serviceability from their furniture and that includes comfort."

"Let's face it, very few antique chairs are comfortable," adds Mandy Culpepper, the owner of Interior De-

sign, Inc., in Atlanta. "Horsehair is definitely not comfortable," she emphasizes. "Durability is another issue. Old pieces, such as early Italian and French chairs and tables, are usually too fragile to be enjoyed, especially in homes with active kids."

"To most clients the enjoyment factor is as important as getting hung up on particular intricacies of a period home," says [continued on page 40]

# Age Deepens The Character.

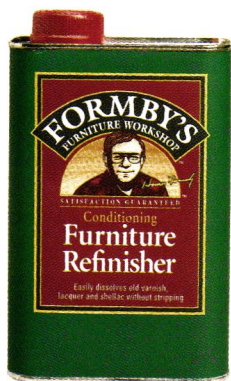
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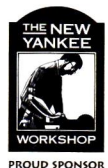
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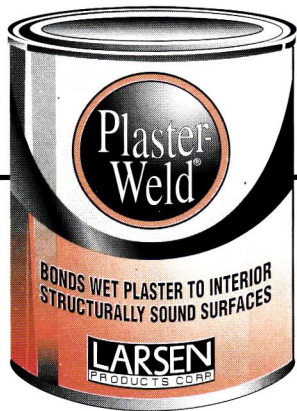
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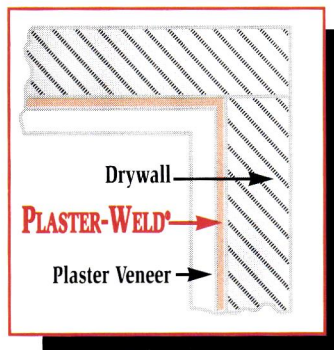
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Pritchard. "Once in awhile, I have purists, especially those building an addition. I try to move them away from strict purism. After all, if there was electricity in the eighteenth century, these homes would have had it and plumbing, too. We're not going to do away with the kitchen. For comfort, durability and utility, compromise is sometimes necessary."

Original, high-styled, eighteenth-century tables have a mirror finish, Pritchard offers as an example "Well, in those days, people had a staff to maintain the polish. Not so today. As a result, people either end up putting a high-gloss urethane finish on it, and 'ghosts' develop when it's used, or they put a pad on top. Neither is authentic to the style of the day. I'd rather see clients select a good, serviceable reproduction."

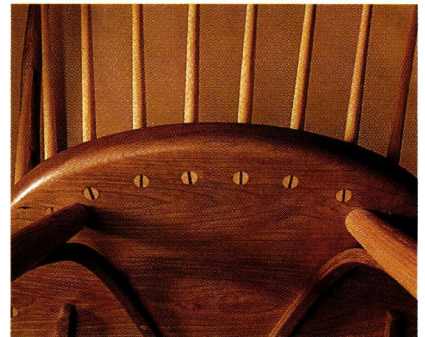
Culpepper recently completed a cabin from the late 1700s in which she used true American antiques with just one exception, the sofa. "That's because there were no sofas at the time the cabin was built," she says. To blend with the antiques, she selected a traditional sofa in a masculine Ralph Lauren fabric.

Her client had the advantage of seeing what he was getting from the start, a factor that Bonneville considers important. "We might find an original chair that needs repair, refinishing, and reupholstering," she explains. "Each of these processes raises the initial cost, and the client can't even see the result, let alone sit in it, before making the investment. A lot of clients would rather be safe and go for a reproduction that they can see and try out before buying it."

"Federal style, which is what I do most," Bonneville adds, "is easy to blend with other styles, and most of my clients aren't purists. Victori-

ans are more pure," she suggests.

Yet, from the heart of San Francisco's Victoriana, author, historian, and interior designer Paul Duchscherecher says: "The most common statement I get at the start of a project is, 'I don't want it to look like a museum.' People live much more infor-



*"When we are the guardians of a are more important than absolute*

## SHOPPING FOR REPRODUCTIONS

*Here is a sampling of reproductions from companies that interior designers use as sources for furniture in period homes.*

*Leather club chairs are in a collection from **Holland & Company**; bench-made in Europe with tools and methods used 200 years ago. Phone 800-446-5526.*

*Pieces in **Baker Furniture's The Stately Homes Collection** are based on originals in Great Britain's historic houses. Phone 616-361-7321.*

*The **Kindel Furniture Company** makes adaptations from originals at Winterthur, among them beds made in the early 1800s. Reproductions feature the same historic designs, but are available in queen and king sizes. Phone 616-243-3676.*

***Patina** carries furniture with painted decoration of motifs such as fanciful ferns and insects, rendered by hand in old-world finishes. Phone 404-233-1085.*



mally today. They are usually more interested in the feeling of a period home than in authenticity in every piece. What's more, many clients can't afford a whole house full of quality antiques and they don't want junk." Duchscherer says that just like furniture today, antiques were also produced in a range of quality levels.

The same is true of reproductions. Bed reproductions pose particular problems, the designers say. "Often, the proportion gets lost when a period bed is simply scaled up to king-size," according to Pritchard. "Some companies simply make the frame of a rice-carved four-poster from Charleston, for example, longer

*period home, finish and proportion authenticity in every piece."*

*A number of the famous pieces originally designed by Harvey Ellis for Gustav Stickley's Craftsman Workshops in 1903-04 are faithfully reproduced, including the inlays, in the Mission Collection from L.&J.G. Stickley. (An original Harvey Ellis writing table recently sold at Christie's for \$74,000.) Phone 315-682-5500.*

**Kinloch Woodworking** reproduces rare American 18th-century furniture featuring hand-carved fluting, reeding, and other historic elements like Philadelphia ball and claw feet. They are expensive, but less so than the originals. Phone 610-347-2070.

Classic Biedermeier furniture, reproduced by **Guy Chaddock & Co.**, retains the proportion and scale of the originals, but is styled for comfort today. Phone 661-395-5960.

Reproductions of Georgian furniture by **Chelsea House** include the detailing and craftsmanship of an original without the fragility. Phone 704-867-5926.

and wider, without sizing up the posts and carvings. The comfort is there, but it doesn't look right." Her solution is to have a reproduction made.

"I am blessed to work in an area with some highly skilled woodworkers," she says. "Together we modify the proportions and the turnings to fit both the scale of the bed and the aesthetic of the period. These are true, bench-made pieces," she points out, "made with the same techniques and workmanship as originals from their era. Unlike many reproductions, their value will at least be maintained and could increase with time."

Generally, however, the chief difference between an antique and a reproduction is enduring value. "Antiques are apt to grow in value," Pritchard points out to her clients. "A reproduction, like a new car, depreciates in value the day it is bought."

Price and value are considerations, no matter how stellar a client's budget. "An authentic Louis XVI chair may begin at about \$6,000," says Culpepper, "while a suitable, good-quality reproduction would range from \$1,500 to \$2,000. Compromises like this give clients the look they want, additional comfort, and save some of the budget for a more important piece elsewhere."

"When we are the guardians of a period home," Duchscherer concludes, "finish and proportion are more important than absolute authenticity in every piece. Most clients want to be respectful of the architecture, but they also want to live in it. A room that is composed into a coherent period entity that combines antiques and good reproductions—or even pieces from a compatible era—can accomplish this better than a roomful of antique artifacts plopped down here and there." ✦



©SVB Photo: Thia Kong

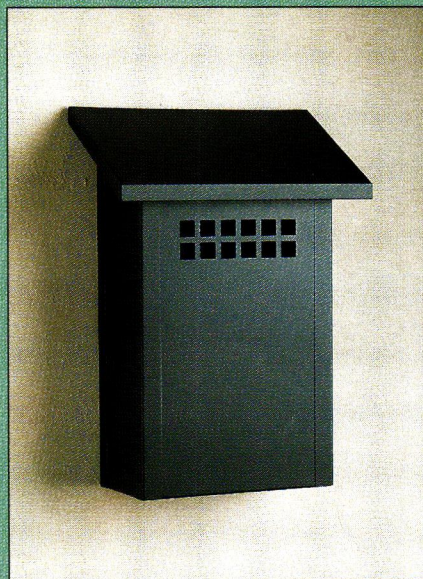
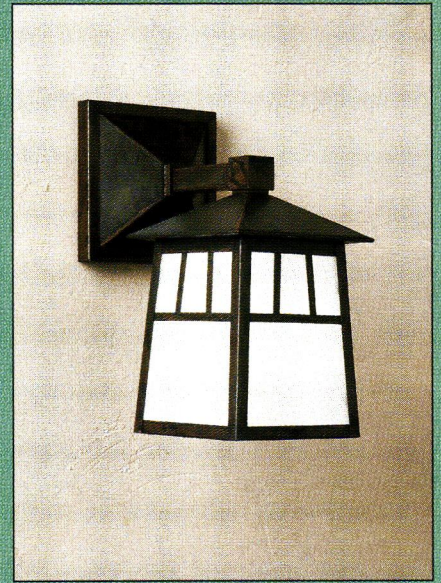
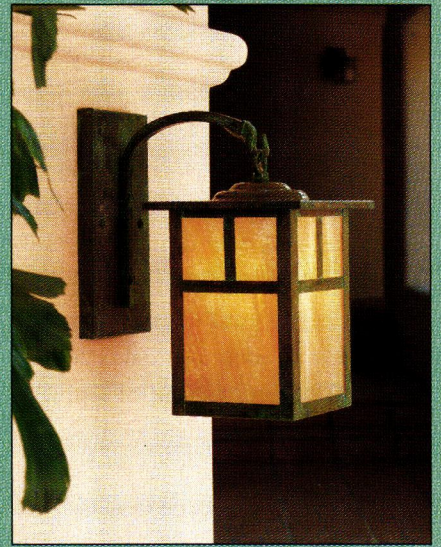
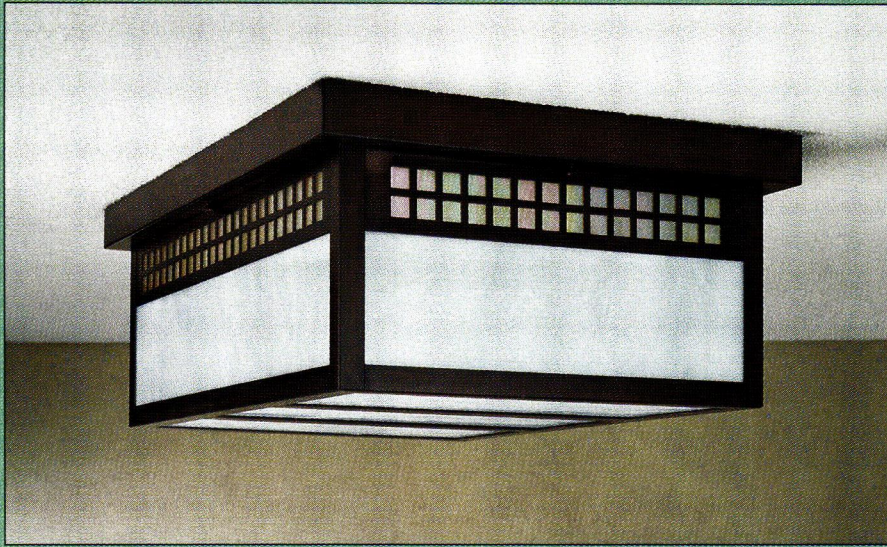
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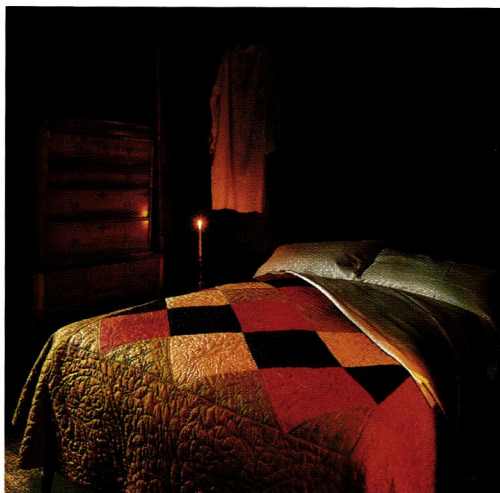
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**UNDER COVER**

*In your quest for period authenticity, don't overlook the bed! Here's a rundown on quilts, coverlets, counterpanes—and when they were used.*  
(page 72) ▶



**ALPACA RANCHITO**

*A new house in wine country has the warmth and quirks of an old one thanks to years spent planning and collecting architectural antiques.* (page 50) ▶



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*The self-made man ca. 1870 wanted a Second Empire house. Visit the stylish Park-McCullough house in Vermont.* (page 60) ▶



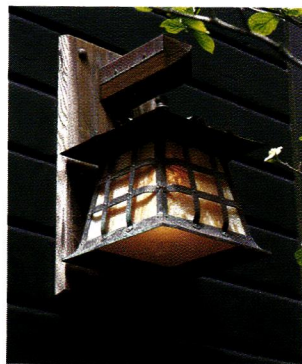
**NEW ORLEANS REAL**

*An 1885 cottage in the Vieux Carré is a very cool interpretation of the regional vernacular. Even without air conditioning.* (page 44) ▶



**LIGHTING OUTDOORS**

*Lanterns, gaslight, Mission sconce—what is the best way to illuminate your porch and posts?* (page 68) ▶

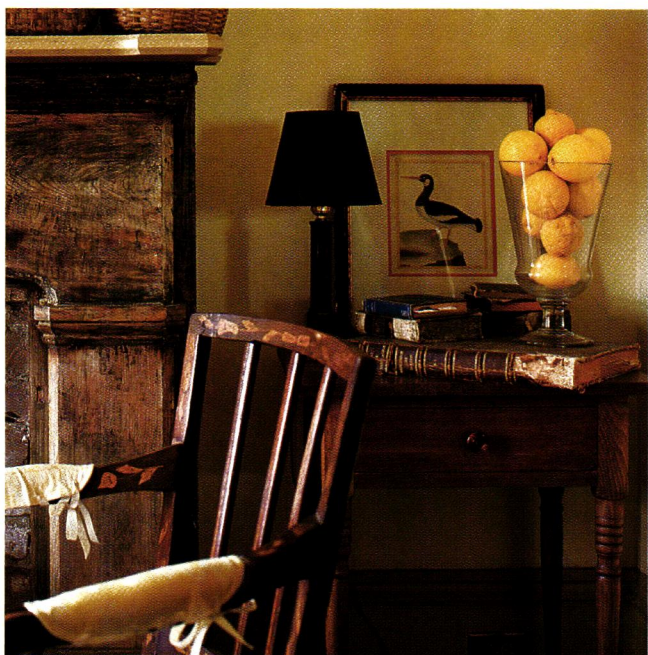




# NEW ORLEANS REAL

*Even in the Vieux Carré, the historic heart of a city that adores authenticity, Mary Cooper's 1885 cottage is a standout. Few French Quarter residents are quite so cool in their appreciation of the past.*

*by Regina Cole | photographs by Steve Gross and Susan Daley*



THE RAISED CENTER-HALL cottage on Chartres Street stands near St. Louis Cathedral and Preservation Hall, just downriver from where American natives lived when they were the only residents in this steamy bog. In New Orleans history, this is ground zero. But, even for the French Quarter, Mary Cooper's vernacular house has something special.

Or maybe it's more a matter of what her home does *not* have. For

**OPPOSITE:** An 1885 chest came from a local vestry. **TOP:** (left) Louvered shutters guard floor-length windows from the sun. (right) Three old children's chairs. **ABOVE:** (left) Fireplace mantels are cypress. (right) Buildings are raised.

one thing, there are no screens at the doors and tall windows. "I sleep under mosquito netting," Mary says. Absorb this piece of information while she explains that the house doesn't have air conditioning, either.

Actually, Mary Cooper doesn't

put it that way. "I live without *modern* air conditioning," she says. "The house's cooling comes from cross-ventilation and from ceiling fans, not from Freon." She points out that, before fluorocarbon cooling, houses were built to catch cool breezes coming off the Mississippi River. Raised seven feet above ground level, her house's windows are shaded by the hip roof. Louvered shutters, too, keep the summer sun out of the rooms.

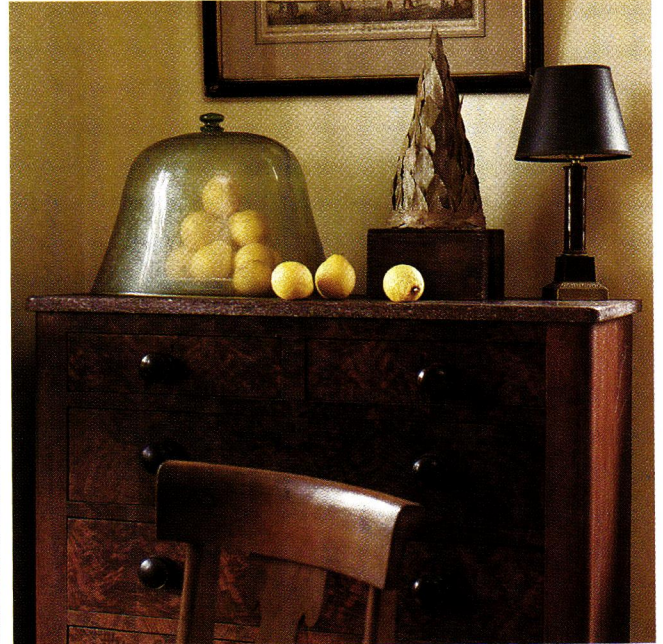
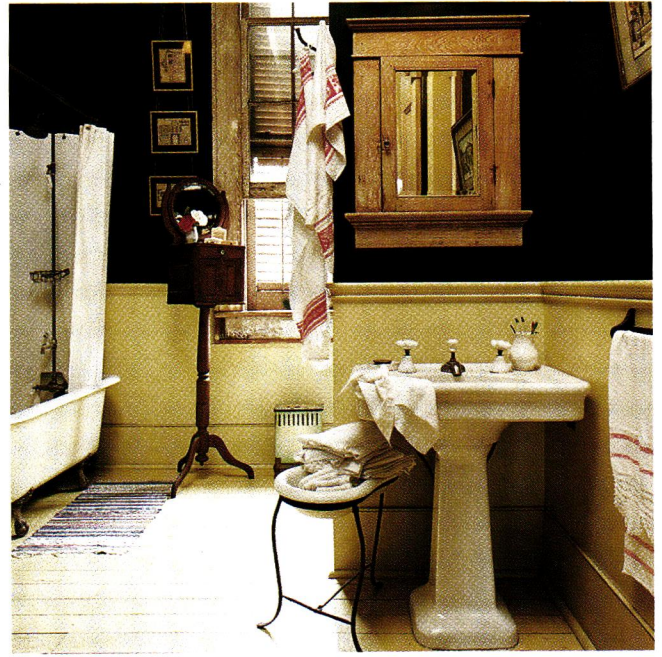


The dining room is large, stretching across the whole back of the house. At this end, an early-20th-century, Central American calendar rug, a present from a man who helped build the Panama Canal, hangs over a cypress bench built by the house's original owner.



**THE KITCHEN** had been gutted by the time Mary Cooper came to this house, but the wainscot remained here, as it did throughout the cottage. The shadow of a sink against one wall, as well as a hole for the stove pipe in the chimney, indicated which room had been the kitchen. The old sink was a serendipitous find under a neighbor's house. In a city where early houses were built up off the ground, these under-the-house areas have traditionally been used for storing things that are no longer in use, but not quite ready for the dump. The sink, which has two drainboards, dates to 1927. The porcelain soap dish atop the sink's original faucet was a happy find at a flea market many years ago, but Mary had never put it to use. "I never had a place to put it." The pegboard "obviously is not true to the period," she explains. "But there was no storage whatsoever, and if I can't see something, it doesn't get used."

- The pegboard is a practical solution to a common old-house problem: that of integrating storage space into a kitchen. In their attempt at old-fashioned "style," many approaches miss the point (the kitchen was a service space) and introduce modern or anachronistic armoires, shelving units, étagères, or other furniture. In this kitchen, function takes precedence, resulting in a workspace with a strong period sensibility that's integrated into a historic house.



Upper window transoms were made to be removed in the summer to let out the hot air; lower sashes are raised to invite cooler breezes.

“Windows are placed across from each other to create convection currents,” Mary explains. “There are 13-foot ceilings. The wide center hall funnels air through. And there are no houses close enough to block any air movement. The house is designed for the climate, and it works.”

**TOP: (left) Louvered shutters keep out sunlight. (right) The bathroom, created from half a bedroom, is home to Mary’s grandfather’s shaving stand. ABOVE: (left) Mary’s quilt collection. (right) Simple old furniture suits the house.**

I have no intention of ever installing air conditioning.”

A prosperous German sugar boiler (a well-paid professional who turned cane syrup into sugar) built the cypress and pine, one-and-a-half-storey cottage one block away from

here in 1885. In 1907, it and another house were moved when a levee began to fail. The proximity of “undeveloped” land on Chartres Street made the relocation possible. That might have been the last time anyone cared that much about this house, until Mary.

“After World War II it was converted to a rooming house known as the RiverView Hotel. And it went downhill from there. By the time we





got here in 1984, it had been empty for 12 years and a pack of wild dogs lived in the yard.”

Clues pointed to where the original kitchen had been. It was also evident that there had been a black iron stove, but Mary drew the line at that much authenticity: “I couldn’t live with a wood-burning stove in New Orleans!” She did, however, find a sink with beautiful original legs and two drainboards. It provides

**In the bedroom are the elements that make it possible to live without screens or air-conditioning: louvered blinds at the tall windows, mosquito netting over the bed, a ceiling fan. The curtains are made from German overprinted fabric.**

period ambiance. “In New Orleans they built up off the ground, which made a convenient place where people could throw things. We found this fabulous sink under someone’s house—it was thrilling!”

In fact, many of the house’s fur-

nishings were found as cast-offs, restored by the homeowner. A chair caner by profession, Mary points to a number of chairs that she found “just before the garbage man.” Her restored seating is in every room. The bedroom curtain rods, rings, and brackets, too, were a surprise find at an unmarked box at a junk auction. They are among Mary Cooper’s favorite pieces of hardware, and they perfectly suit the house. ✦

A terrace in the courtyard: Joan hemmed the block-printed fabric, purchased at a flea-market in France, while riding trains through the French countryside. Chairs are French antiques. Alpacas and llamas (opposite) have little impact on the land.





# EL RANCHITO

## *de las Llamas y Alpacas*

*With modest impact, a good house rises on historic land in wine country.*

*by Patricia Poore | photographs by Alan Weintraub*

**I**T ALL STARTED AS a project for their youngest son Dan. “We wanted him to have a ‘4-H experience,’ to be around animals,” Joan Speirs explains. “But it couldn’t involve slaughter—we’d been city people for a while.” Joan knew something about llamas, low-impact work animals, and alpacas, which produce a fiber second only to vicuna. “Llamas, it turned out, are like peanuts: you can’t have just one,” she laughs. Her tone becomes earnest and loving: “They are seductive, sensuous animals.” Before long the Speirs family had a five-acre ranch, and a course had been set. Twelve years later, 150 llamas and alpacas roam the 118-acre ranchito in the Santa Ynez Valley, about 30 minutes northwest of Santa Barbara.

The house is new, but it feels comfortably established, even old. “It was a house in my head for a long while,” Joan admits. “I liked what I had, so we built the house around that.” Before an architect was hired, Joan took pictures and measurements of all their furnishings

and put them in a looseleaf binder. Antiques (good quality but cheerfully worn) had been purchased over time, usually one piece per year and usually from the antiques dealer Gep Durenberger (since retired), a close family friend.

For her Mediterranean house (“it’s Italian outside, for the most part, and French inside”), she stockpiled architectural elements before construction: antique doors, vintage hardware, salvaged building elements, and old or rebuilt lighting fixtures. She and her husband Don planned a house that looked as if it had been appended over the years. Even with ceilings of 13 feet and higher, it’s not particularly large. Wings surround a courtyard.

Building is severely restricted on open land in Santa Barbara County, especially agricultural land. The Speirs parcel, once part of a Spanish land grant, is the triangle formed by the confluence of a small river and a creek. It is not highly sensitive land, politically or archaeologically—no long-term settlement, no



**ABOVE:** Purchased in North Carolina, the gate may be from India. **OPPOSITE:** Antique French cupboard doors were mounted in the double-framed plaster walls, creating a media cabinet. The rug, bought years ago, is now precious. The hassock reflects the melony terra cotta of the front entry hall (not shown).

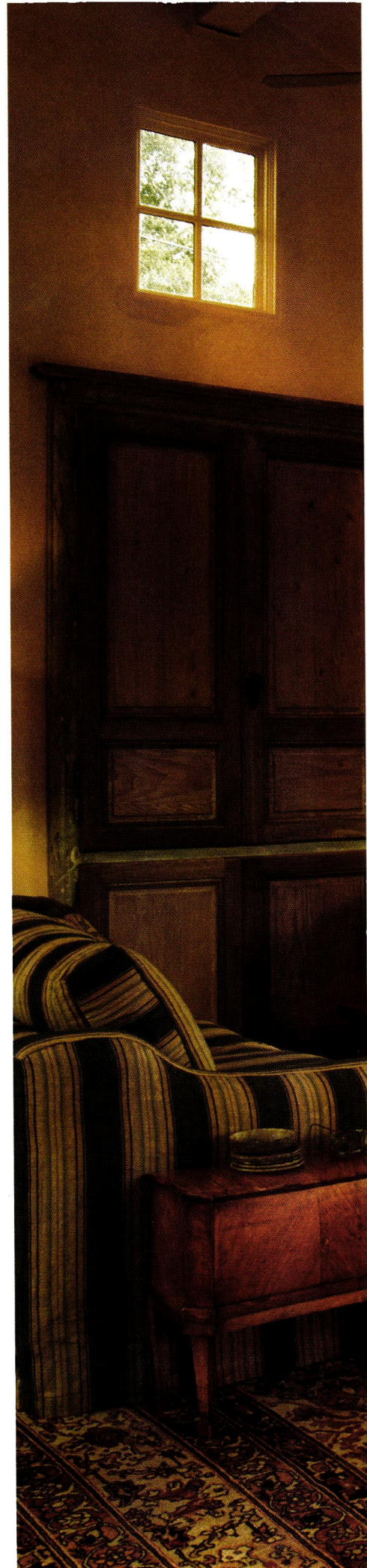
burial grounds. That's why they were allowed to build. Most probably, pre-Chumash Indians had hunting camps here. Still, many restrictions were imposed: an archeologist oversaw road construction, trees had to be fenced. Getting ready to build took seven years. "I'm not, I don't think, an overly spiritual person," Joan says, "but it became so clear that this place is special. There's a large oak . . . it's hard to describe, but you can feel the past.

"It's good they made it take so long. I remember when we were finally ready, I hated my own bulldozers. So I asked for help. A Chumash leader consulted for us; he pointed out which was the mother tree—the oldest—and which the seedlings. We went slow. I asked for his blessing, which he gave."

JOAN MOVED TO the Valley first; for 12 years her husband split his week between Palos Verdes and the llamas. ("It was marriage heaven," she confesses, "but eventually Don wanted to be here all the time, too.") A money manager, he has since moved to a firm close by.

For all its unique beauty, the project had to come in on budget and on time. Big-ticket items were offset by the owner's willingness to find and use inexpensive materials judiciously. "The lumberyard would often *give* me the twisted beams I had hand-picked!"

When the floor tile was delivered to the jobsite, Joan says she realized that the tile size was disproportionate. "The budget wouldn't allow shipping it back. So I cut every





The French, hand-carved chandelier is one of Joan's favorite pieces from her "buy one good thing a year" collection. The painting is by son Garrett.



*Budget decisions worked to add character: Twisted timbers (for beams) and concrete “seconds” (for door and fireplace surrounds) look time-worn. Using three pieces (instead of one large slab) of Belgian limestone to cap the kitchen work table made it affordable; Joan found she preferred the rustic grout seams.*

piece myself.” Concrete fireplace and door surrounds were selected in person; they were “seconds” at the CDI custom-concrete business in Tucson. “We colored it with shoe polish.”

Beautiful French fabrics used in the house were bought “at the factory” and as remnants . . . in France. Part way through construction, Joan realized she could charge all her building materials on a credit card that awarded airline miles. “After the house was built, I went to Europe!”

Herself a kitchen designer who has run a bed-and-breakfast inn and consulted on interior design, Joan nevertheless credits success to the house’s long incubation, serendipitous finds—and her friends. Friends like the Oklahoma-based garden designer Dr. James Yoch; designer Linda White (Joan’s sister); and interior designer Mary Wood. With friend Bill Swatsek, Joan had collected old fixtures, parts, and pieces. Then Bill would rework them into fixtures with the patina of age. Most of the paintings in the house are by son Garrett Speirs, a plein-air painter recently relocated to California from Italy. His wife Ginny did the faux finishing, painting baseboards, chair rails, etc. right into the plaster.

For a new house with the soft edges of an old one, “Use old stuff,” Joan advises. “Besides, I had a contractor who never said no!” ♦

**ABOVE:** The floorcloth (Mediterranean figs and a broken plate) was made by daughter-in-law Ginny. Friend and kitchen designer Diane Johnson provided moral support and sources. **RIGHT:** Integral-color stucco blends with the open fields of the Santa Ynez Valley.



# SECOND EMPIRE

THE ARCHITECTURE ON THE OUTSIDE is not a reliable cue to interior decoration, at least when it comes to Second Empire houses of the American Victorian period. The style's name comes from the reign of Napoleon III (who rebuilt Paris with a sophistication much admired); their distinguishing mansard roofs are named after the French 17th-century architect François Mansart. But are these houses French? No! They are most decidedly Amer-



ican—plain or fancy, of wood or stone, with Italianate windows or Gothic ornament—built in boom towns from Portland, Maine, to Port Townsend, Washington. ■ Look for guidance from three sources: (1) the year of construction: an 1862 house will be different from an 1880s house; (2) the details and embellishments: fireplace mantels and staircases will be overt with their style; and (3) the degree of fanciness: as a group, the grandest Second Empire houses are among the most ostentatious in our history. Many mansard-roofed houses are, however, hardly more than

cottages. Wall and ceiling decoration, furniture, carpets, and even the stylistic vocabulary will follow accordingly. ■ The Second Empire style was popular for residences for only twenty years, from about 1865 until 1885. But what swirling eclecticism those years saw! From Rococo and Louis XV, to Renaissance Revival during the 1870s, to Queen Anne and Aesthetic in the '80s, and back again to the Rococo—it's the Victorian era at a glance.

*by Patricia Poore*

**Often the mansard roof was the only obviously French element. Even Newport's Chateau-sur-Mer, redesigned by Richard Morris Hunt after 1871, favored Aesthetic Movement rooms inside.**

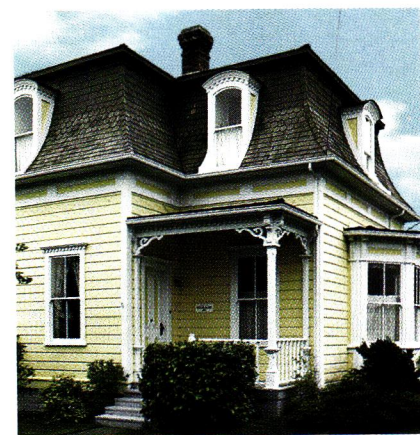
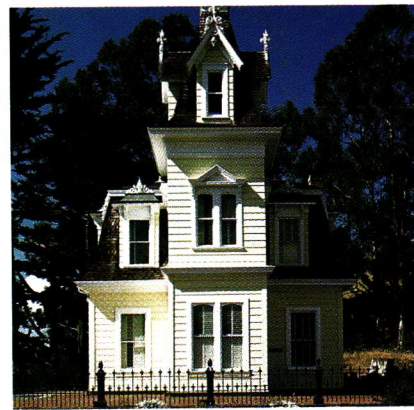
**OPPOSITE:** Its French salon dates from a later redecorating by Ogden Codman Jr. around 1920. **ABOVE:** Pared-down Rococo at Norlands (1867), a summer estate in Livermore, Maine.





*After remodeling by Richard Morris Hunt after 1871, Chateau-sur-Mer became the most lavish Second Empire house in America. But Hunt preferred Aesthetic taste . . . Codman decorated the Louis XV salon in 1920.*





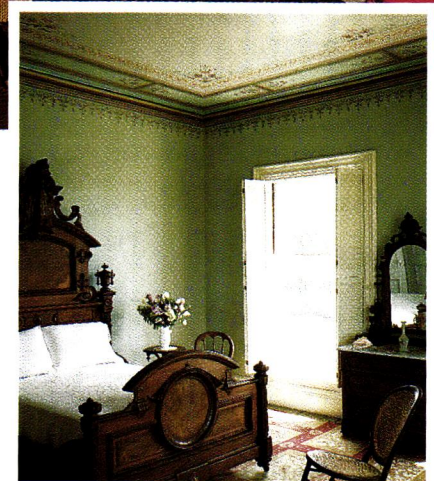
Beneath the mansard roof, the house might be French, Italian Renaissance, cottagey, or even Stick Gothic. **LEFT:** Unlike formal public buildings, residences might be quite plain. (from the top) Houses in Machias, Maine; Salem, Virginia (1883); Tiburon, Calif. (1874); Coupeville, Wash. (1875). **ABOVE:** A Second Empire "tower house" in Santa Cruz (1882) has convex and straight mansards over Italianate bays and doors.

FOR HOUSES BUILT DURING THE 1860S, think *étagère*, that carved whatnot shelf in dark walnut, mahogany, or rosewood. Rococo decoration, of course, is characterized by the S curve: cabriole legs, serpentine valances, curlicued plasterwork. The furniture *is* the style. Victorian Rococo is Louis XV. (Heavy neoclassical or Empire furniture was still acceptable, and the Gothic was a continuing vogue).

Renaissance Revival was the

interior style of choice after 1860 and until 1890—massive carved furniture with medallions and caryatids. But the Rococo did not disappear, especially for wealthy clients and their decorators. Another thing: Today's Victorian Revival interiors often reflect an integrated vision. I've rarely seen a mid-Victorian photograph in which that was the case.

Amidst political scandal and the reform movement in design, Second



**TOP:** The Butternut Room (named for its trim and furniture), very Aesthetic, at Chateau-sur-Mer. **ABOVE:** More typical (in style and formality) is the bedroom at Norlands, with its Renaissance Revival bed and marble-topped dresser.

*It is sometimes hard to tell the difference between an American Second Empire house and an Italianate one; indeed, it may be deemed Second Empire only by virtue of the mansard roof.*

Empire, by the 1880s, had been vilified as the “General Grant style,” but mansarded houses were still being built across the country. By now, the Queen Anne Revival or Old English style, Japonisme and the Aesthetic Movement were familiar. Aesthetic simplicity and practical art was not fully embraced by the nouveau riche, who made their point with French interiors. Chateau-sur-Mer in Newport, Rhode Island, is the spectac-

ular exception. Architect Richard Morris Hunt preferred the turned oak spindles and stylized carving of tastemaker Charles Eastlake. But the castle-like chateau also has a French-style ballroom with a mid-19th-century parlor suite by Leon Marcotte. As late as the 1960s, the mansard house was identified with Victorian ugliness and shadow characters. Today, it shares the popularity of the beloved Queen Anne that superseded it. ✦

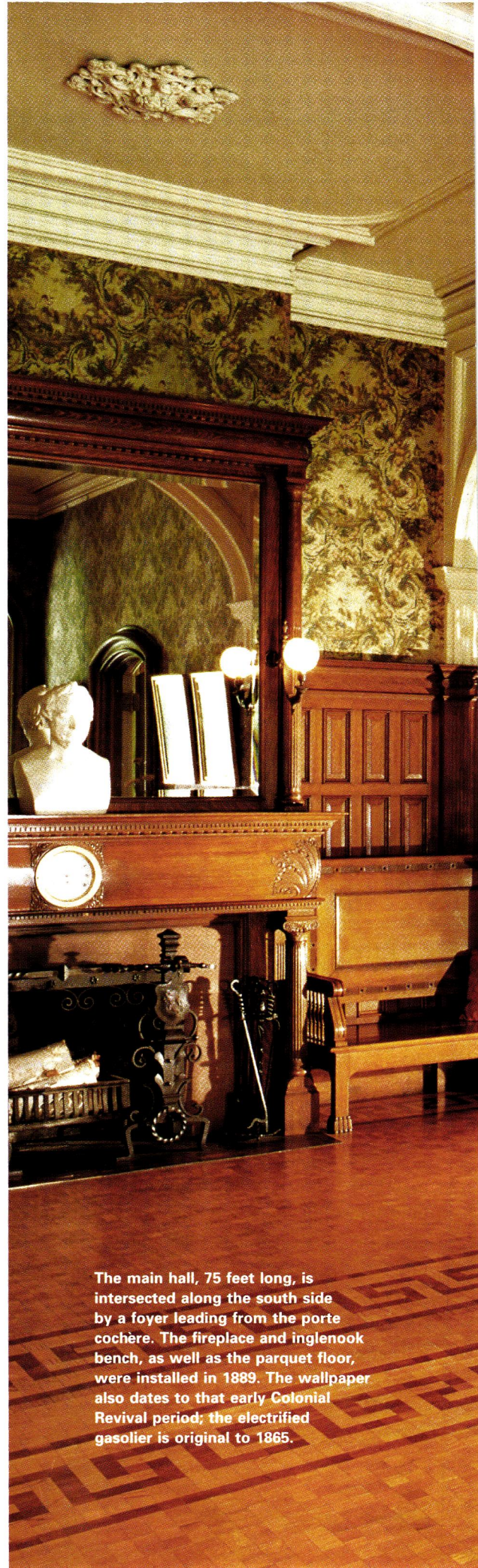


# MANSARD STATUS SYMBOL

*Vermont's Park-McCullough House, built in 1865, proves that not even northern New England escaped the fashionably French influence of Second Empire architecture.*

**I**N NORTH BENNINGTON, VERMONT, this local boy made good. At the age of 23, Trenor Park, a largely self-educated lawyer, married the daughter of a former governor. In 1852 he took his young family to Gold Rush California. He made a fortune and, upon his return to Vermont, bought his father-in-law's farm and put a big, fashionable house on it. Built only a few miles from where he had grown up in poverty, the three-storey, mansard-roofed house is a grand monument to realized ambition. • The Park-McCullough House, as it is known today, was built in 1865. It was

BY REGINA COLE | PHOTOGRAPHS BY CAROLYN BATES



The main hall, 75 feet long, is intersected along the south side by a foyer leading from the porte cochère. The fireplace and inglenook bench, as well as the parquet floor, were installed in 1889. The wallpaper also dates to that early Colonial Revival period; the electrified gasolier is original to 1865.

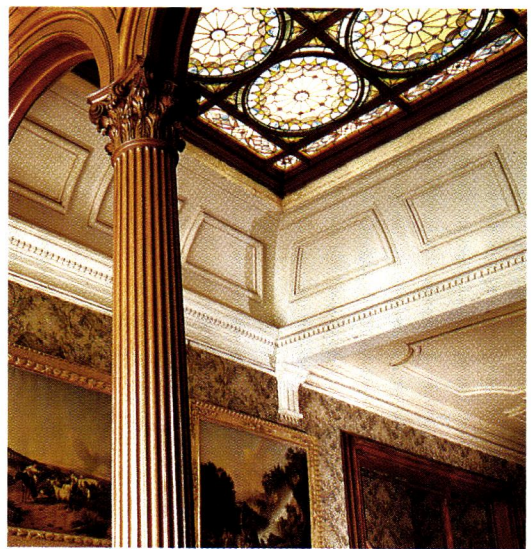






designed by the prolific Henry Dudley of the prominent New York architectural firm Diaper and Dudley. Park's house was a departure for Dudley, who usually worked in the Gothic Revival style; it is one of only three Dudley-designed Second Empire mansions. It was natural that the Parks would choose the Second Empire style. Not a revival from the past, it was based on contemporary French architecture: Just as Mrs. Park bought clothes that came from Paris, so was her home fashionable and French.

Mid-19th-century houses often spoke in mixed stylistic vocabularies, and the Parks' home was typical in this regard. The bell-cast mansard roof covered in slate shingles identifies the



**LEFT:** The library served as a study for both Trenor Park and his son-in-law, Governor John McCullough. **TOP:** The dining-room table is a carved Italian Renaissance reproduction. **ABOVE:** A colonnade and skylight embellish the third-floor stair landing.



**THE DRESS** is just one item saved in a treasure trove of family memorabilia that includes letters, construction records, menus, receipts, and travel souvenirs. It stands ready in the bedroom she occupied for 74 years, including the years of her marriage to John McCullough. In the window alcove stands a writing desk given to her by her parents for her 16th birthday. John and Lizzie's children were photographed in the grapery (right), as nursemaids hid behind the foliage.

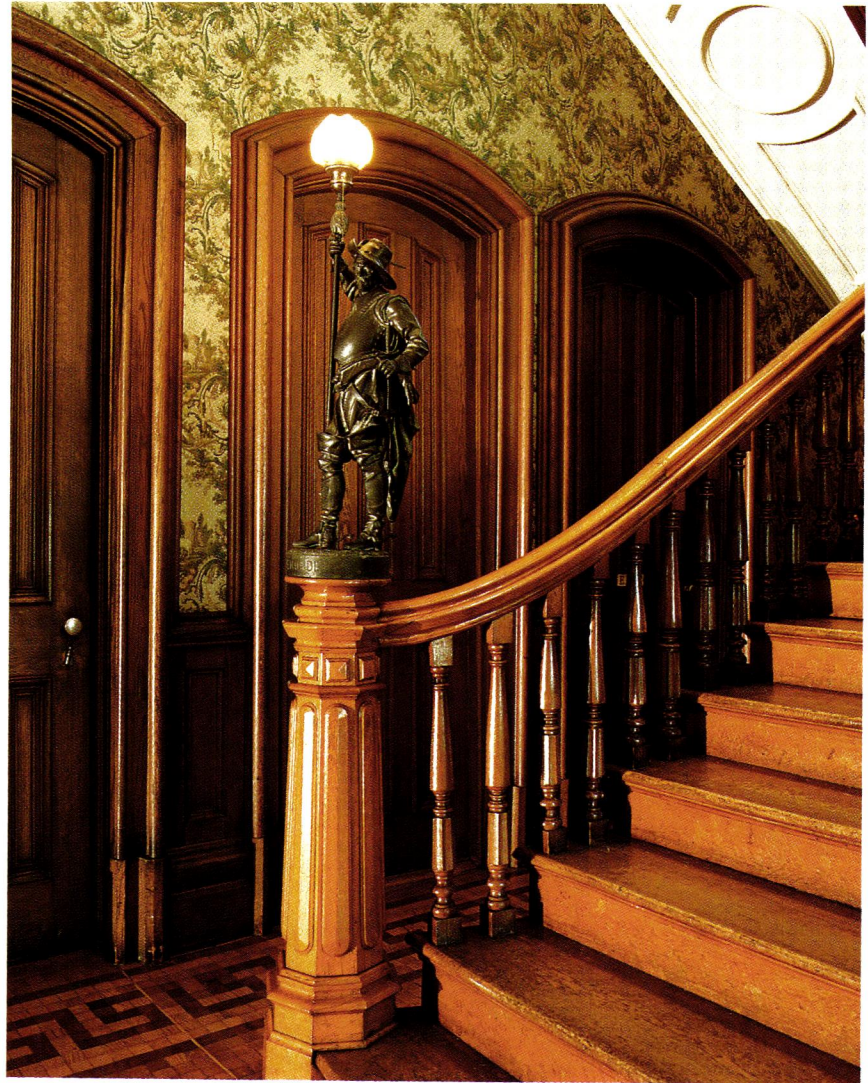




**RIGHT:** A pair of figural newel lamps represent the two factions of England's Civil War. This one shows a cavalier of King Charles I; the other post is topped by one of Oliver Cromwell's Roundheads. **BELOW:** Technological house systems were sophisticated for the 1860s. Most second-storey bedrooms had private baths, plumbed for hot and cold water.

structure as Second Empire; the overall massing and round-arched windows, however, are reminiscent of the Italian Villa style. Octagonal verandah columns and sawn-wood brackets derive from Gothic architecture.

The Park-McCullough House incorporated the latest technological advances. Park specified machine-made building elements, unusual for rural Vermont in 1865. Built-in systems for plumbing, lighting, heating, and ventilation were also state of the art, including hot and cold running water to upstairs bathrooms, built-in registers that delivered both fresh and heated air, and gas lighting served by an automatic gas machine in the cellar. (Trenor Park's insurance agent initially refused to write a fire insurance policy because of that newfangled contraption!)



*Machine-made building elements were unusual for rural Vermont in 1865. So were the plumbing, lighting, heating, and ventilation, hot water to upstairs bathrooms, and gas lighting served by a gas machine.*

THE INTERIOR FEATURES A DRAMATIC 75-foot-long central hallway terminating in a monumental staircase lit from above by a stained-glass skylight. Interior woodwork is rendered in white oak, black walnut, chestnut, and butternut, and has retained its clear finish. In fact, the original materials of the house, including the fabrics, are in a remarkable state of preservation. Superbly crafted bronze chandeliers, now electrified, remain throughout.

The chandeliers, the grand stairs, the French roof . . . these were all status symbols of the time, and fitting





**ABOVE:** In the butler's pantry, a picnic basket and a portable tea set rest atop an early dishwasher. **BELOW:** (left) The carriage barn and grapery are set amidst lush gardens. (right) Designed by architect Dudley as a dog house, this miniature Second Empire mansion became the children's playhouse, complete with wood-burning stove and diminutive furniture. It's a constant source of delight to contemporary visitors, who have to stoop to enter its tiny rooms. **OPPOSITE:** The verandah encircles the house on three sides.





rewards for Trenor Park's entrepreneurial victories. But a different personality permeates the house, especially the private spaces—that of Lizzie McCullough, the eldest of Trenor and Laura Park's three children. She was three years old when she accompanied her parents to California, and sixteen when her family moved into the house. Lizzie continued to live here after marrying John McCullough, who was elected governor of

Vermont in 1902. Her touch is evident in furnishings and also in travel mementoes and the huge archive of family papers. (Her parents left the house to their three children, but Lizzie paid her brother and sister \$23,333 for their shares, and lived here until 1938, when she died at age 90. Her daughter Bess occupied the home until her death in 1965.)

Lizzie and John made the only extensive alterations to the house in

1889, when they introduced the early Colonial Revival style to the hall in the form of parquet flooring, a new fireplace surround, and an inglenook. A bay window was built on the dining room so that visiting President William McKinley could see a serenading band in the garden while eating lunch. Rather than obliterating any of the past, the McCulloughs' renovations added another layer to an already lively mix of styles. ✦



# Style Conscious Lighting Outdoors

BY MARY ELLEN POLSON

**W**HO SAYS OUTDOOR lighting is a modern concept? Hand-carried lamps, lanterns hung from hooks, and torches mounted on posts have been with us for a very long time. The hard-wired electrical outdoor fixture may be relatively new, but the best period designs strongly resemble fixtures that are hundreds of years old. Electricity has just made it easier to put that castle-gate lantern where you want it.

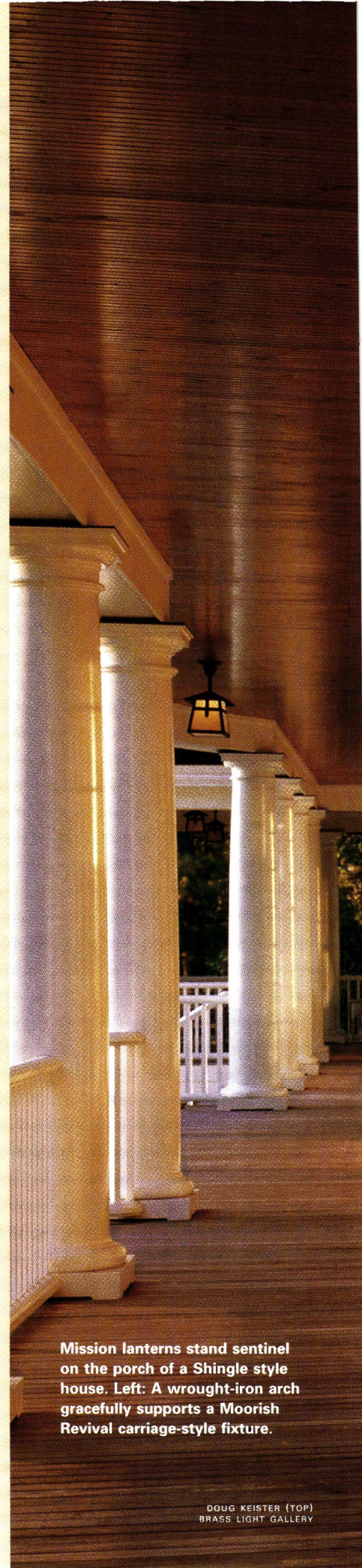
## EARLY AMERICAN

Thanks to our long love affair with the Colonial Revival, the choices for exterior lighting based on colonial-era fixtures are vast. Most designs replicate the look of hand-carried or post-mounted lanterns suitable for lighting a walkway. Lantern shapes can be rectangular, hexagonal (with or without slanted sides, as in the perennially popular carriage-style

lantern), round, or in the form of a bell, onion, or pineapple. The fixture's cap may be flat, steeply hipped, or cone-shaped. Materials range from flat black iron and wrought iron to tin, pewter, copper, and brass, fitted with clear, amber, or salt-glazed glass.

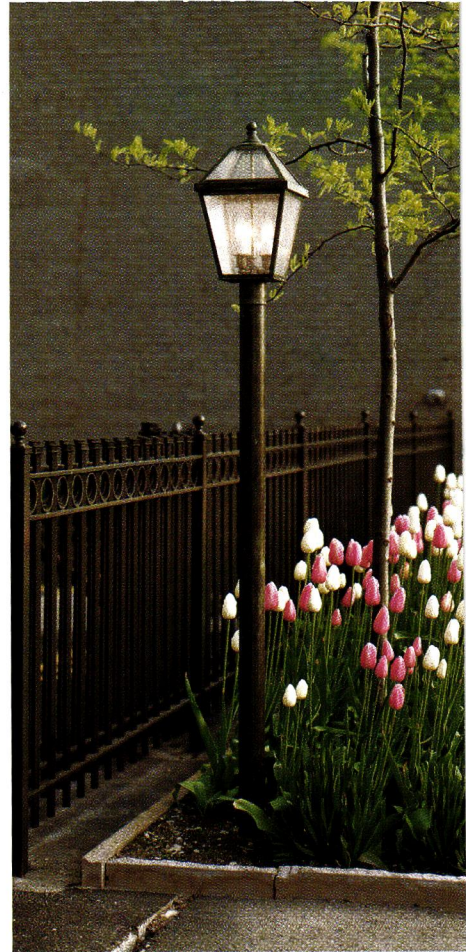
## VICTORIAN

Lights for Victorian porches take their visual cues from the heavily ornamented, cast-iron lights that were fixtures on 19th-century city streets. Residential lights were just as likely to be mounted on wall brackets as freestanding posts, however. While the slant-sided carriage-style lamps carried over into the 19th century, globe, acorn, and hexagonal lanterns in frosted and opaque shades are more typical of the era. Cast and wrought iron as well as well-weathered copper were favorite materials for exterior lanterns. The most elaborate were capped with a griffin or crown of Gothic spears.



Mission lanterns stand sentinel on the porch of a Shingle style house. Left: A wrought-iron arch gracefully supports a Moorish Revival carriage-style fixture.





## SUPPLIERS

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392-5649, [www.americanperiod.com](http://www.americanperiod.com)

#### AUTHENTIC DESIGNS (802) 394-7713,

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#### BALL & BALL (610) 363-7330,

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#### CONANT CUSTOM BRASS (800) 832-4482,

[www.conantcustombrass.com](http://www.conantcustombrass.com)

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#### HANOVER LANTERN (717) 632-6464,

[www.hanoverlantern.com](http://www.hanoverlantern.com)

#### HERITAGE LANTERNS (800) 544-6070,

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#### NEWSTAMP LIGHTING CO. (508) 238-7071

#### NORWELL MANUFACTURING CO. (800) 822-

2831, [www.lightingpoint.com](http://www.lightingpoint.com)

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7141, [www.periodlighting.com](http://www.periodlighting.com)

#### R.D.S. HISTORIC LIGHTING (860) 526-1800

#### WALPOLE WOODWORKERS (800) 343-6948,

[www.walpolewoodworkers.com](http://www.walpolewoodworkers.com)

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#### CONCORD LIGHTING (619) 275-2303,

[www.concordlighting.com](http://www.concordlighting.com)

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[www.herwig.com](http://www.herwig.com)

#### ROBINSON IRON (800) 824-2157,

[www.robinson-iron.com](http://www.robinson-iron.com)

#### ROY ELECTRIC CO. (800) 366-3347,

[www.westfieldnj.com/roy](http://www.westfieldnj.com/roy)

#### URBAN ARCHAEOLOGY (212) 431-4646

#### VICTORIAN LIGHTING WORKS

(814) 364-9577, [www.vlworks.com](http://www.vlworks.com)

### ARTS AND CRAFTS/PRAIRIE

#### ARROYO CRAFTSMAN (888) 227-7696

#### BRASS LIGHT GALLERY (800) 243-9595,

[www.brasslight.com](http://www.brasslight.com)

#### HISTORICAL ARTS & CASTING (801) 280-

2400, [www.historicalarts.com](http://www.historicalarts.com)

#### METRO LIGHTING & CRAFTS (510) 540-

0509, [www.metrolighting.com](http://www.metrolighting.com)

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(360) 352-0694

#### REJUVENATION LAMP & FIXTURE CO.

(503) 231-1900, [www.rejuvenation.com](http://www.rejuvenation.com)

### ECCLECTIC REVIVAL

#### ARTE DE MEXICO (818) 508-0993,

[www.artedemexico.com](http://www.artedemexico.com)

#### MICA LAMP CO. (818) 241-7227,

[www.micalamps.com](http://www.micalamps.com)

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## COLONIAL REVIVAL

Far plainer than their High Victorian counterparts, Colonial Revival fixtures are an interesting amalgam of true colonial styling and new technology—usually in materials most early Americans couldn't begin to afford. The electric candle began gracing the "colonial" fixture almost as soon as Edison had perfected the light bulb. You'll find the carriage-style post fixture in brass as well as flat black iron, and hand lanterns in copper and brass as well as pewter or tin.

## ARTS AND CRAFTS/PRAIRIE

Arts and Crafts lighting may have come of age in the 20th century, but these boxy fixtures are medieval throwbacks. Suspended from chains, the rectangular or flared lanterns of hand-hammered Arts and Crafts fixtures

glow orange as torchlight through mica glazing. Made of iron, copper, or brass, banded with simple bars or spikes, they are often treated with patinated finishes to enhance the appearance of great age.

Ironically, the contemporaneous lights of the Prairie School style reflect a conscious attempt by a group of Chicago architects (including Frank Lloyd Wright) to invent a new, modern form of lighting suited to the broad prairies of the Midwest. Clean lines and the use of geometrically patterned art glass distinguish Prairie School designs from those of the Art and Crafts Movement.

## ECLECTIC REVIVALS

Mediterranean, Tudor, Spanish Colonial, Norman—despite the far-flung geographic designations of the Ro-

manic Revival styles of the 1920s and '30s, many of the exterior lighting fixtures are remarkably similar. Wrought and forged iron twist and curl into heart shapes in heavy or light filigree patterns. Heraldic sconces, pendants with tops as peaked as a witch's hat, and the ubiquitous carriage-style lantern all appear in richly ornamented fixtures. Glazing can be clear, tinted, rippled, seeded, or made of mica. There are as many finishes as there are metals—even rust can be a preference. When original fixtures from 1920s Spanish Colonial Revival homes in California's Hollywood Hills come in for mica replacement, they are often completely rusted, Ralph Ribicic of Mica Lamp Co. notes. "We get specific instructions not to disturb that," he says. "They don't even want the cobwebs removed." ✦



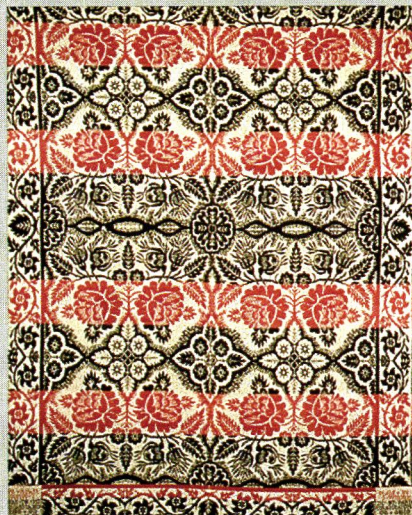
**OPPOSITE, LEFT AND RIGHT:** A trio of wall-mounted carriage-style lanterns accents a trellis and doorway, while a scaled-down version of an early American street light graces a garden bed.

**LEFT:** Architects Greene & Greene took Arts and Crafts lighting to new artistic levels in their interpretations for the Gamble House (1908-09) in Pasadena. The broad, slightly upturned slope of the cap on the lantern shown here demonstrates a strong Japanese influence, while the delicate tracery of its art glass recalls Art Nouveau. **ABOVE:** Craftsmen bent wrought iron into fanciful shapes in the eclectic lighting designs of the 1920s.

# UNDER COVER

## *A History of Bedspreads*

by Mary Ellen Polson



**T**HE GUEST ROOM in the 1948 Moderne house was intact down to the desk accessories and curtains. The only jarring note in an otherwise perfect room was the bedspread—a tufted, white Martha Washington coverlet that came from the right era (the post-war Colonial Revival), but was all wrong for the streamlined style of the house.

Maybe it's just oversight, but why is it that those of us who go to great lengths to decorate with au-

thentic furnishings so often neglect the bed? Certainly, historic bed coverings defy neat categorization, and there are also period fabrics, color preferences, patterns, and designs to consider. Complicating matters are the subtle differences in spreads popular over a long period of time (particularly quilts), and the continual revival and reinvention of some very old techniques, such as candlewicking, in new forms.

Seen in another light, however, a little historical knowledge can be





Pieced, patchwork or appliqué, the homemade quilt was the workhorse spread of the 19th century. LEFT: The woven coverlet reached its design apex with the adoption of the Jacquard attachment.

liberating. Once you understand that “white work” was all the rage during the Federal period, making a historical choice becomes easier if your home was built in 1800. And you may be pleasantly surprised to learn that some of today’s most fashionable fabrics have long been associated with the bedroom.

Spreads for the bed can be loosely sorted into a few overlapping categories: *counterpanes*, *coverlets*, and *quilts*. A *counterpane* is a bed covering made of one layer, often decorated

with embroidery. Early counterpanes were considered part of a set of formal bed hangings that included draperies and bed curtains. While a *coverlet* can refer to any bed covering, historically speaking it usually refers specifically to the woven coverlets popular in the 19th century. A *quilt* is a bed covering with a top and a back that has been stitched together, typically in a pattern, with or without appliqué.

#### COUNTERPANES

In colonial times, the top covering

for what could be a thick layer of bedclothes was the counterpane, intended for show and not warmth. Counterpanes were almost universally made from imported fabrics, usually cotton, silk, or worsted wool (a firm-textured wool with a pleasant sheen). With the other bed hangings, these early bedspreads could be worth more than any piece of furniture in the house, including the bed.

The counterpane might be a solid color or print (copperplate prints of pastoral scenes in a single color,



**LEFT:** The white tufted bedspread has been a favorite in every American century. **ABOVE:** Sumptuously decorated Crazy Quilts burst on the scene at the 1876 Centennial in Philadelphia.

such as red, green, brown, and blue, came into vogue in the 1750s), or embroidered with crewelwork. Late in the colonial period, cottons and chintzes imported from India printed with the “Tree of Life” motif and other designs began to eclipse wool as a material for bed hangings and

bedclothes. Many women who couldn’t afford fine counterpanes wove or embroidered their own, using a variety of handwork, including appliqué and reverse appliqué (a technique that involves cutting out the design from the main ground and sewing colored fabric to the layer beneath

to show through and create contrast).

After the break with England, imported chintzes disappeared. Patriotic women everywhere began to use white linen and cotton for counterpanes and quilt tops. Exquisitely hand-decorated with fine silk embroidery, hand-knotted tufting or candlewicking, and cording and stuffing, there was nothing boring about these all-white spreads. Women used fine needlework to create flowers, leaves, and vines in raised relief around a central medallion or flower-filled urn.

White spreads reached the height of fashion about 1790, when entire bedrooms were done in white. The white-work craze lasted well into the mid-19th century, when women who couldn’t afford a white spread turned white-backed quilts wrong-side up to follow the prevailing fashion. White work disappeared only to re-emerge in the form of candlewicking in the 1890s, and in the machine-made “colonial” bedspreads of the 1940s. A direct descendent is chenille, a fabric whose name is based on the French word for cater- [continued on page 76]

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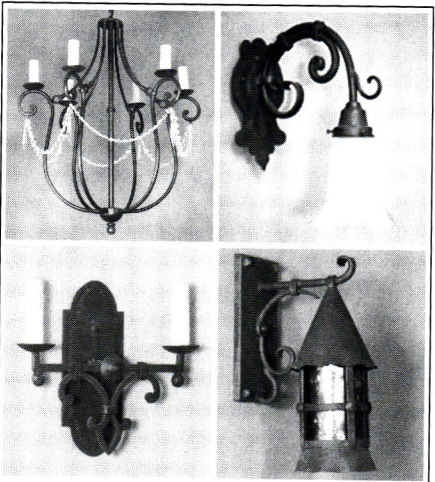
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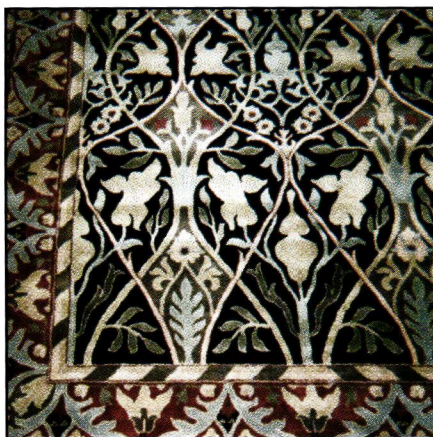
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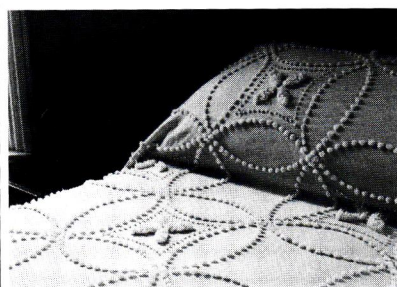


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**In the mid-18th century, intricate scenes were copperplated in solid red, blue, brown, or green on a white ground. Toile was a favorite Colonial Revival fabric.**

pillar. Chenille was a popular spread material in the 1930s and '40s.

**COVERLETS**

Well into the 19th century, the woven coverlet was the poor man's counterpane. Warm as well as inexpensive, coverlets were usually woven on a loom from locally produced wool on a linen and cotton warp. Early coverlets typically combine one or two bold, primary colors with a light ground (blue and white was a favorite combination). Coverlets were woven in a variety of patterns called "drafts," whose origins might trace to England, Scotland, Ireland, or Germany.

One of the most common types of coverlets from colonial times through the late 19th century was the over-shot coverlet, a highly geometric pattern easily recognized by its floating wefts, which skip over sections of warp threads in regular progressions. A more expensive woven coverlet was the double weave, which required twice as much yarn. In the early 19th-century, double weaves were woven

on looms that accepted a Jacquard attachment, making it possible to create complex, curving patterns in the design. By mid-century, most woven coverlets were produced in factories. Just as they were ready to fade from the picture, the Colonial Revival movement brought them into vogue again. Today's woven coverlets are apt to be afghans or throws, not full-blown coverlets, although at least one or two companies (see Sources, p. 74) make Jacquard coverlets.

**QUILTS**

Quilts—pieced, patchwork, appliquéd or otherwise—didn't often appear in this country until the late 18th century. Before that, quilts were considered rare and expensive. Early quilts were usually whole-cloth coverlets made from a single color, often a deep indigo blue. While some quilts featured large, decorative appliqués at the center of the spread, the British ban on fabric manufacturing during the late colonial period made every scrap of fabric [continued on page 78]

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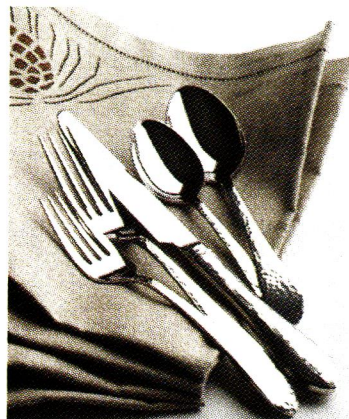
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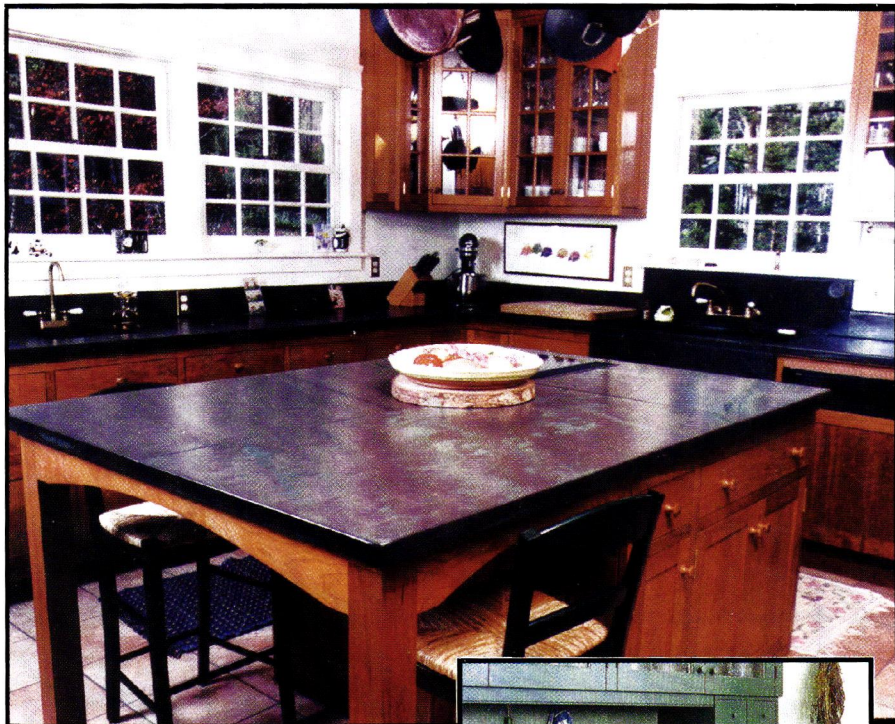
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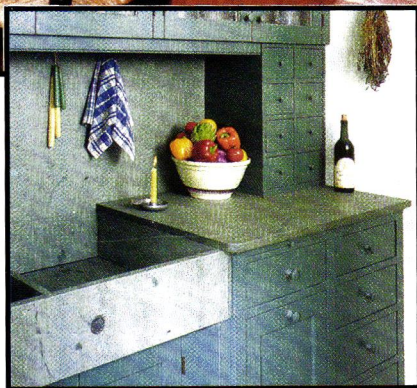
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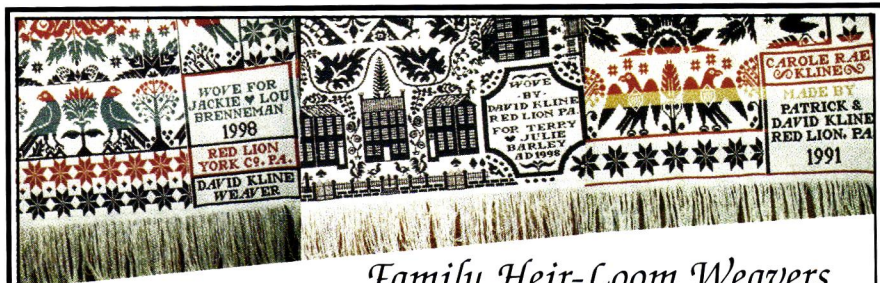


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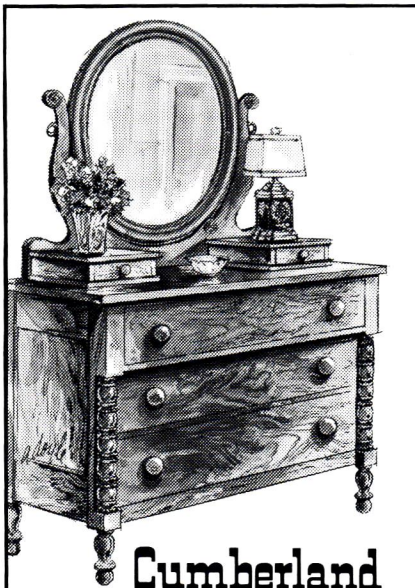
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precious. By Revolutionary times, the era of the pieced quilt was under way. Women quickly learned to quilt in blocks of squares that could be pieced together until there were enough for an entire quilt.

By the 1840s, American mills were churning out millions of yards of inexpensive calico, and quilting was more than a craze. The kaleidoscope of appliqué and piecwork patterns crisscrossed all parts of the nation, moving north and south, then west with the pioneers. Log Cabin, Pineapple, Tumbling Blocks, Diamond in the Square, Four Block Appliqué, and Wedding Ring are just a handful of the thousands of patterns that have been identified—many during the Depression, understandably a strong era of quilt revival.

Among the most popular is the Crazy Quilt, an early artifact of the Aesthetic Movement that debuted at the Centennial exhibition of 1876 in Philadelphia. Pieced together from asymmetrical scraps of silk, velvet, satin, and other luxury goods, the Crazy Quilt featured a spider's web of elaborate stitchery.

By the late 19th century, a world of fabrics was available for the boudoir, including glazed and figured chintz, damasked and moiréd silks and satins, linens, and Jacquarded wool blends—not to mention "colonial" revivals, such as toile. While some of these fabrics were the artisan-made spreads of the Arts and Crafts Movement, others were machine made as cheaply as possible, such as cretonnes that were printed on both sides. By the 1930s and '40s, manmade fibers like rayon and viscose were blended with old-fashioned wool and cotton in bedspreads for the modern era. Clearly, the counterpane had evolved into the modern bedspread. ✦



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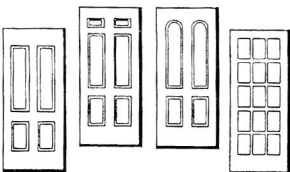
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## The Value of your Floors

BY PATRICIA POORE

I HAD NO CHOICE but to include flooring in my specifications as part of the renovation of a 1904 Arts and Crafts house: original floors were butchered or missing. “Deal” subflooring—softwood planks—over a crawlspace had gaps up to an inch wide, filled by a desperate previous owner with (I kid you not) plaster of paris. Two pine floors were salvageable. But because the plan had been changed so radically and so often, the rest of the floors were disfigured with sawcuts and plywood patches. Time to start over.

There was another reason to rethink the floors. This house had gone from being a summer cottage to a year-round (heated) house. Practical considerations aside, the whole building had become more . . . finished. Flooring is not structural; it is a finish material that defines the character and even the color of a room. During major renovation, it should be considered early on by the architect or interior designer. For wood floors, make the decision early—especially if you want exotic species, remilled or salvaged boards, or a very large order. Lead time can run into months. Also, you’ll want two weeks or more for the wood to be stickered (stacked) on site so its moisture



Interior designer Robert Currie specified restoration for an old wood floor in this elegant Shingle-style house in New England.

content has stabilized *before* it is laid.

Wood flooring can be laid over above-grade concrete slabs (with a ¾-inch thick plywood subfloor and a vapor barrier of asphalt felt and mastic or polyethylene). These days, it’s no problem to install wood flooring over radiant heating systems. (Parquet, tongue-and-groove, or beveled-edge strip flooring are recommended. Manufacturers do not recommend installing plank flooring over 4" wide over a radiant system.)

Another manufacturers’ warning comes as a surprise, given the preponderance of bleached and pickled floors in magazines over the past five years. They say, don’t do it. If you want the look, specify factory-finished

flooring. On-site pickling, which involves bleach, harms the wood fibers, affecting wear and longevity.

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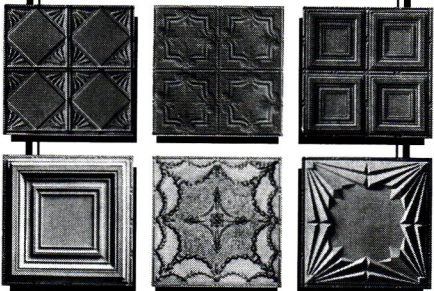




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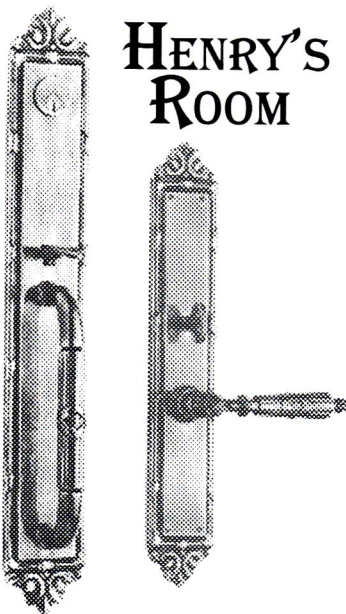
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available from specialty firms as remilled stock. Literature abounds, and most suppliers will send actual samples.

Most hardwood floors—oak, maple, ash, cherry, etc.—are dense and hard-wearing. They take all finishes well. Softwoods can be dense, such as heart pine, or soft, such as fir. Less dense woods will mar and dent easily, which makes them suitable for low-traffic rooms or installations where wear (even purposely accelerated wear) is appropriate. The cut, too, is important. Quartersawn oak, for example, is radially cut from the tree in a way that produces extremely dense, hard boards with a consistent ray pattern. Flatsawn boards will be slightly less dense, with a more distracting (some say decorative) flame pattern. Make choices according to what was (or still is) in the house, regional tradition, and design preference.

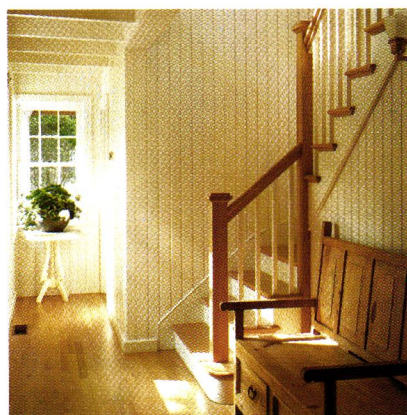
The majority of hardwood flooring sold is strip flooring, usually 2½" wide. Most of this is tongue-and-groove, blind-nailed (through the protruding tongue along the edge of each strip) into the subfloor. Boards are at least 3" wide in plank floors. These are often face-nailed (or screwed) into the subfloor; plugs cover the holes. Parquet comes in standard patterns of 6" x 6" blocks.

## WHAT ABOUT FINISH?

PREFINISHED FLOORS HAVE ADVANTAGES: factory control and consistency, on-site time savings and scheduling ease. Upfront purchase price may be lower

on boards that will be finished on site, and you'll have the option of nonstandard finishes. No rule of thumb; just be sure to consider all costs, plus time, when comparing options.

Polyurethane is usually fine for new or heavily sanded, older hardwood floors. It's less successful for softwoods and lightly refinished floors, where incomplete bonding can cause delamination of the finish with wear (dragged furniture, dog claws). Other options include shellac (beautiful and renewable but not water resistant); oil varnishes (more flexible than urethane); penetrating oils (these may darken wood but show no surface damage and are renewable); and wax (alone or over an oil finish as a sacrificial surface).



Reclaimed red-oak flooring was used in this Martha's Vineyard renovation by Mark Hutker & Associates, Architects.

I'm turned off by two modern tendencies: (1) to use an overly rustic, antique wood floor full of dings, black marks, knots, and flame pattern, in an otherwise finely finished installation; and (2) over-the-top expense and fanciness in the use of exotic hardwoods, inlaid striping, etc., where it would never have occurred when the house was built. It's easy to get carried away with strong aesthetic statements, given the character of wood flooring. Use it, but please control yourself. ✦

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Contact the Hardwood Manufacturers Association for tech specs and more: (800) 373-WOOD; [www.hardwood.org](http://www.hardwood.org). The suppliers listed on page 84 are also a wealth of information.



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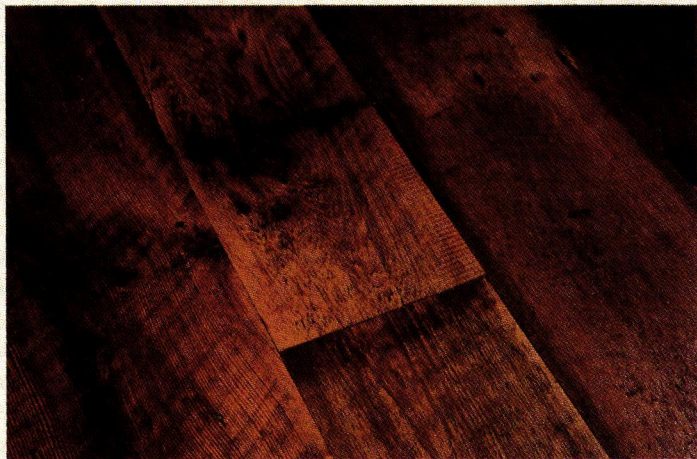


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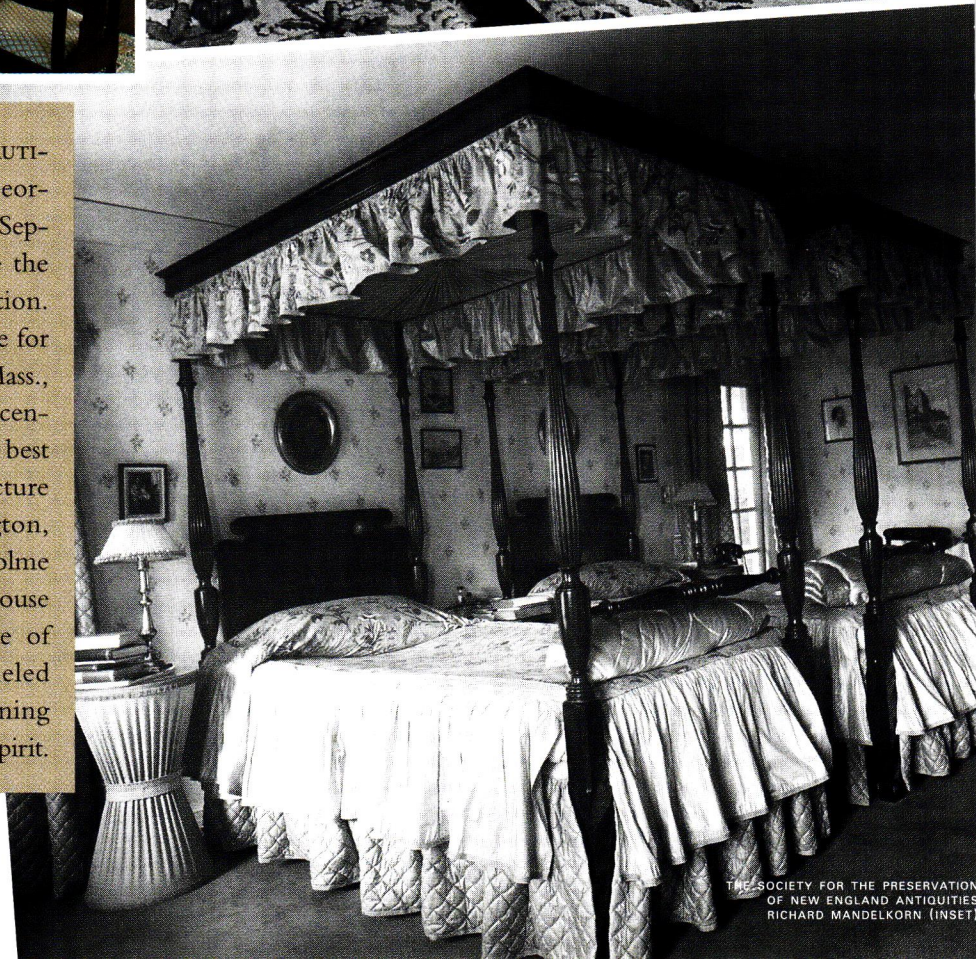
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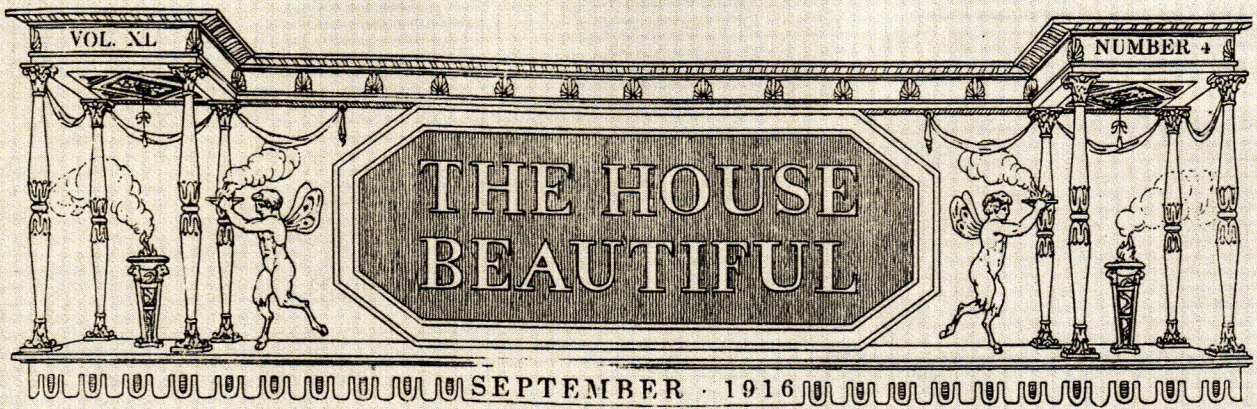
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WHEN THE HOUSE BEAUTIFUL featured this Georgian-style beauty in September of 1916, it wouldn't be the last time the house got attention. Built by architect Harry B. Little for his own family in Concord, Mass., it's an exemplar of the early 20th century Colonial Revival. Little was best known for his public architecture (National Cathedral, Washington, D.C.). His design for Little Holme was influenced by the Turner house in Salem (Hawthorne's House of Seven Gables). • White-enameled woodwork survives in the dining room, with furnishings in similar spirit.

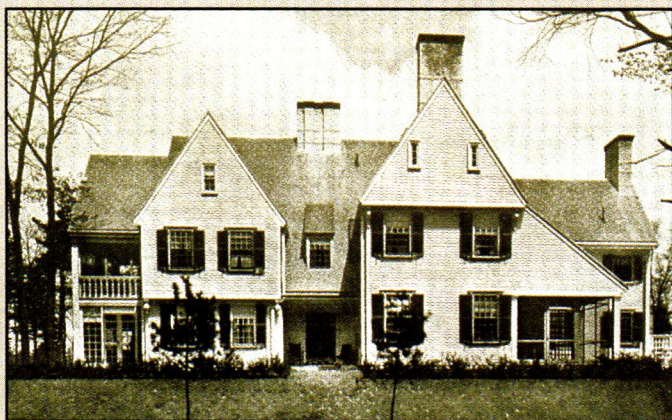


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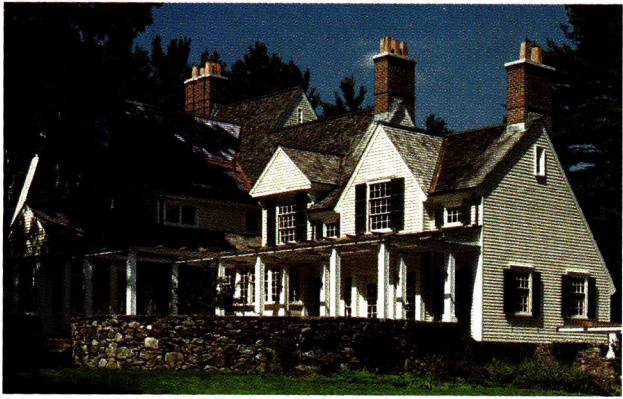


## “LITTLE HOLME”

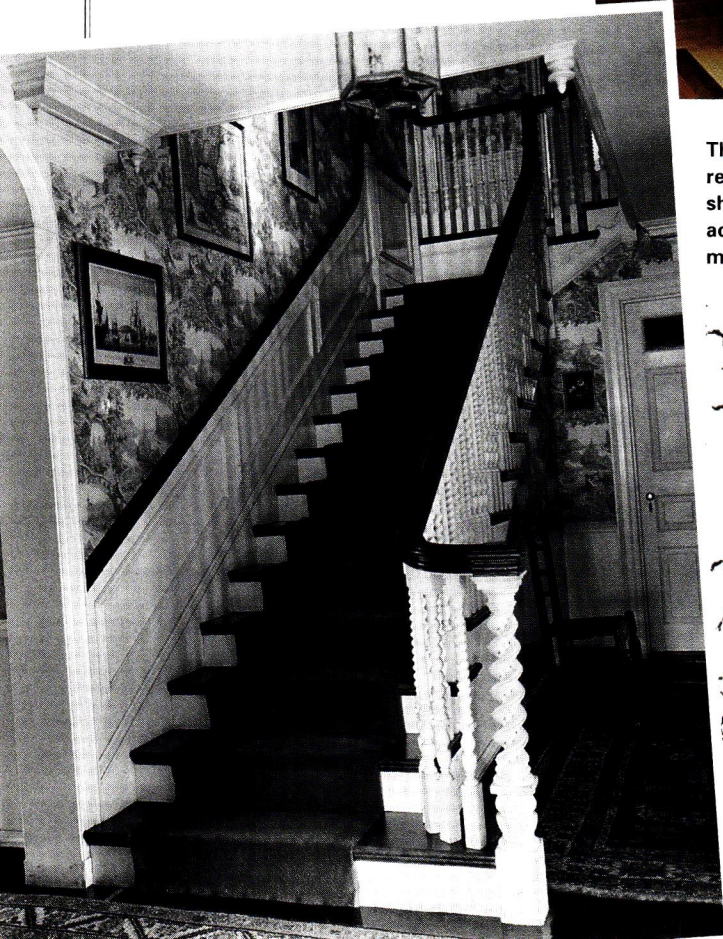
THE HOUSE WHICH THE ARCHITECT, MR. HARRY B. LITTLE, HAS BUILT FOR HIMSELF  
AT CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS



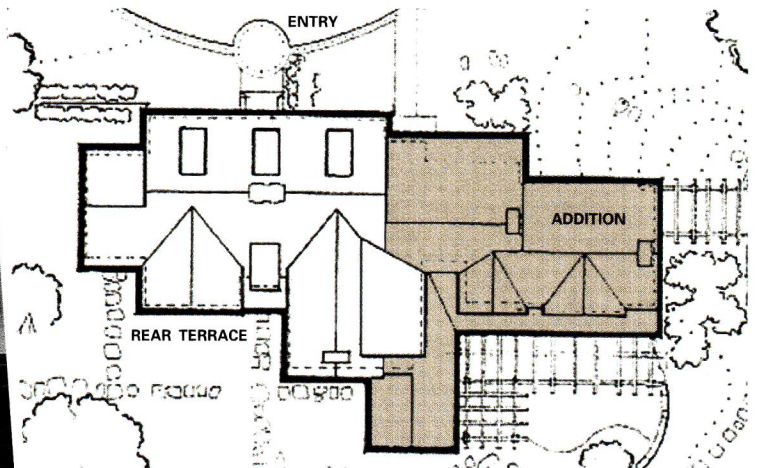
**BELOW:** The back of the house today, with its beautifully realized addition (see shaded area of plan, bottom).



During restoration and renovations 1994–1998, architects Mary McKenna & Associates sought expert advice in redoing the aluminum-leaved ceiling, which once again reflects the candlelight. • New work includes a kitchen with a bedroom above, a dining terrace, and a wing for a two-storey library. Ms. McKenna studied Little's own library commissions before designing this one. *McKenna & Assoc., Winchester, Mass.: (781) 729-5318. ♦*

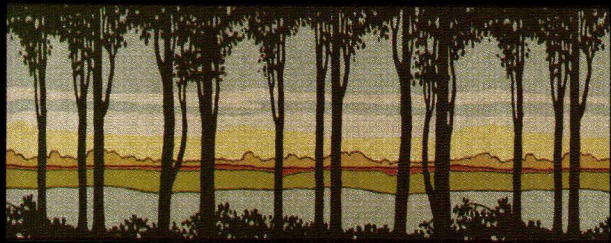


The archival photo of the stair hall (left) is one of many that aided the restoration of fine original features. Inspired by the detail and craftsmanship of Harry Little, Mary McKenna & Associates, Architects, made their addition (seamless on the outside) a contemporary composition using many notes found in the older house: Delft tile, neo-Georgian paneling.

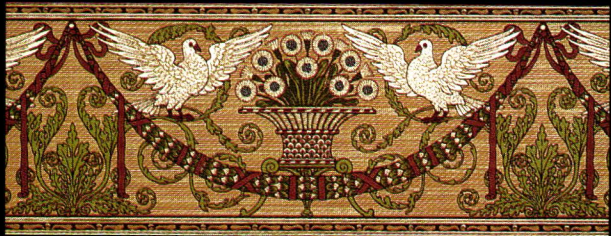




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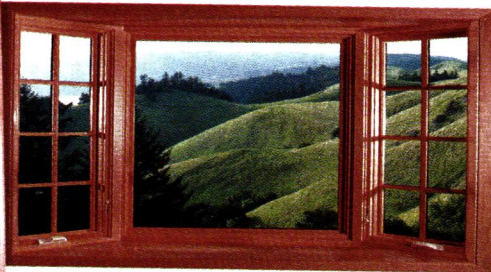
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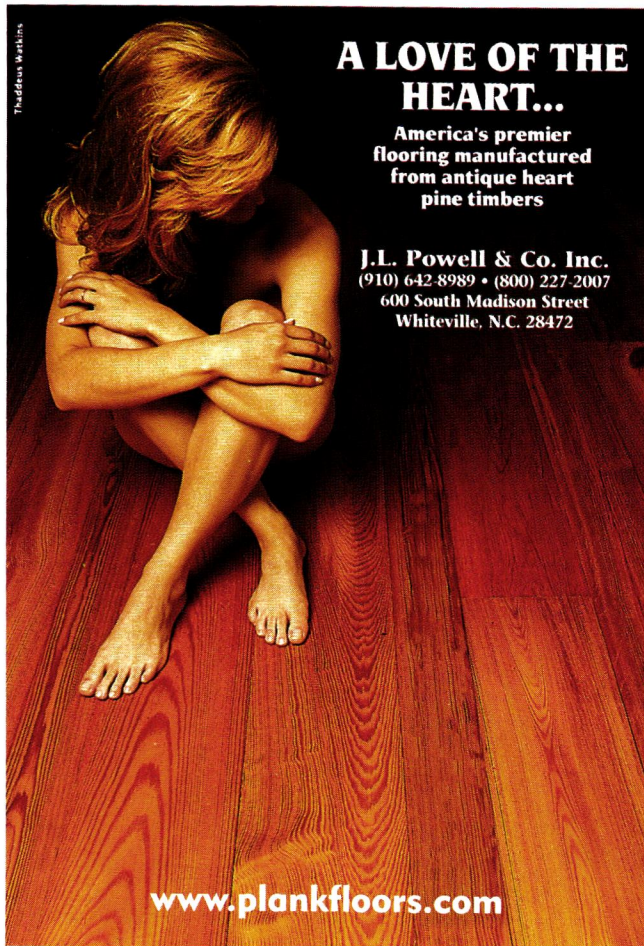
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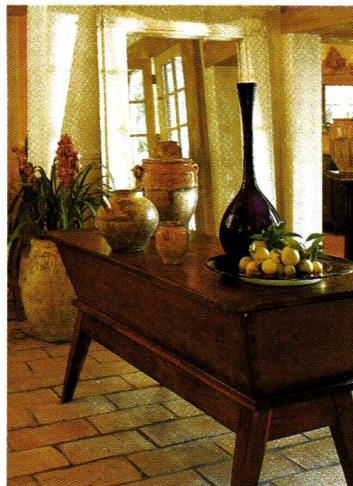
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## Extremely Cool

REVIEWED BY PATRICIA POORE

CALIFORNIA AND New York. There is a difference. New York celebrates urbanism, even upstate; California embraces the dream of Eden, even in a Los Angeles penthouse. Not always but often enough, New York looks to Europe and classicism; California, to Mexico and the Pacific. New York can't get over formality, California comes off relaxed even in the hands of a perfectionist designer. New York has an edge; California feels good.

All of that noted, New York and California interiors have something in common. Not always (but often enough to fill books), they are extreme. They are witty or snobby or acid or dramatic, perfect or raw—ugly. Visiting such interiors can knock you off your safe course. You don't have to love their spaces. You just have to love their freedom.

You can find, of course, strong colors and collecting obsessions any

place. The trick is to find strong personal statements that are also unarguably good design. Taschen's architectural interiors series has done that in their hefty volumes *New York Interiors* (1997) and *California Interiors* (recently released). These are great contemporary interiors (subjectively speaking), not all of them the result of extreme wealth. Alongside the abodes of successful directors and rock musicians, socialites and international fashion czars, we're shown small apartments and old houses, some furnished with an exuberant reliance on used furniture. ("Light-hearted and penny-pinching luxury amidst flea-market splendor" is how the editor put it.)

*California Interiors* takes us into a designer's restored Victorian firehouse, a remodeled swim club in Los Angeles, a wine-country studio; to experimental architecture in Big Sur and an Arts and Crafts cabin in Berkeley. There are apartments, houses, stu-

**LEFT:** In New York, fashion designers insisted "greens must be strident, oranges must burst with energy," giving a 1950s sensibility to their '20s apartment. **ABOVE:** Los Angeles designer Thomas Beeton created Mediterranean stage-set interior.



**LEFT:** In Oakland, Calif., antiques dealers (and admitted pack rats) live in a former artist's studio amidst magnificent imperfection. **BELOW:** In a small coastal town in northern California, an outdoorsy new house combines barnlike proportions with such 1950s hallmarks as afghans and cushions in mustard and avocado .

dios, lofts, cottages, houseboats, cabins, ranches, a 1940s Teton trailer, and penthouses—all inhabited by spirited people.

A lot of the raw space, adaptively reused, is old. There are Modernist houses: steel, glass, and concrete. Many of the spaces make creative use of folk art and antiques. You'll see Wright's Storer House (one of his concrete "textile block" houses in the Maya idiom) meticulously restored . . . and a five-floor houseboat, decorated in a "Neo-Mexican meets Venice" mode with Oaxacan folk art, hand-plastered pink walls, handmade tiles, marbled columns, and an old iron stove.

Look to these interiors for the most serene, pure monochrome you've seen . . . and for layer upon layer of colorful Mexican folk art. Look here for wonderful photos of Charles and Ray Eames' own house (a Case Study House of 1949) in the Pacific Palisades, much-photographed but not often with this degree of playfulness and personality. Look for the fusion interiors that happen when transplanted Easterners bring their furniture yet somehow end up with a California house.

*California* concludes with a list of shopping havens in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Big Sur, Carmel, and a dozen other hot spots around the state, selling everything from antiquarian books to junk, including design centers, linen sources, sculpture gardens, and anything else you can think of. [continued on page 94]



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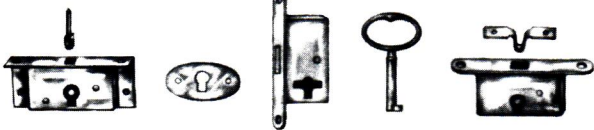
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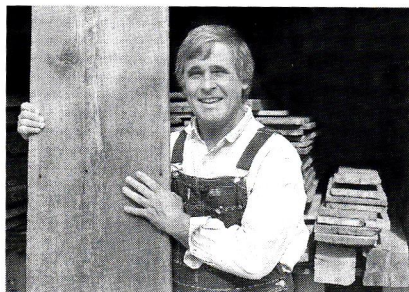
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*New York Interiors* has attitude, that familiar sneer that would dismiss even the outer boroughs and can't fathom the world west of the Hudson. "Living in New York is a thrilling experience," the jacket copy promises. This is a documentary of the ways not-so-average people have made themselves feel at home in New York and environs. We are taken from the grandiose upper-class splendor of a 14-room apartment on Park Avenue to a minimalist townhouse in Greenwich Village (and eventually to Brooklyn and north along the Hudson). Through window glass we see not lush foliage, not lakefront blue, but fire escapes. Visit Brooke Astor and Bill Blass, Oleg Cassini and Todd Oldham, Isabella Rosellini and Donald Trump. See the just-out-of-New York digs of Alexander Julian, Steven Spiel-

berg, and Margaret Suckley, last owner of Victorian Wilderstein. *New York* is intense and competitive; the places chosen for this book are fabulous, often eccentric, always assured. ✦

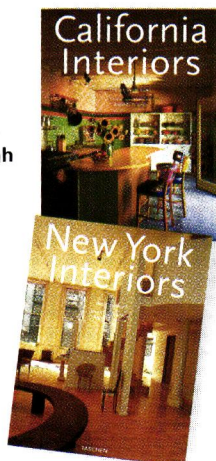
Owners of a landscape gardening business restored an 18th-century foundry (later an ice cream factory) for their residence in Long Island City, across the East River from Manhattan. Brick walls and worn paving stones remain.

#### California Interiors

by Diane Dorrans Saeks.  
Taschen, 1999. Hardcover,  
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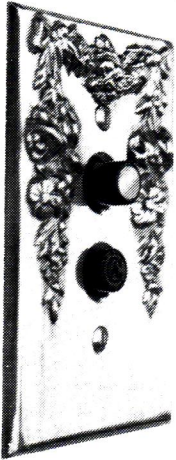
#### New York Interiors

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# ask THE EDITORS

## White Tile Alternative

Our 1891 house has lots of original oak and pine woodwork. Unfortunately, the bathrooms were modernized in the 1960s and there's not a trace left of what was replaced. Would it be appropriate to continue the theme of woodwork in the bathrooms, and not use any white tile at all?

DAN AND WINIFRED BRAND  
THETFORD, VERMONT

**Y**es. While it is true that in the 1890s both the City Beautiful Movement and the desire for more sanitary, germ-free bathrooms ushered in the use of lots of white paint and white tile, in 1891 the use of natural wood was still paramount in interiors. This extended to bathrooms.

There are many examples of bathrooms with natural woodwork in mid- to late-Victorian houses. Before the widespread production of porcelainized cast-iron fixtures, bathroom "furniture" closely resembled the furniture in bedrooms. A sink might emulate a Renaissance Revival vanity or low chest, and sometimes the whole toilet was installed in a wood box that looked like a chest. Large slabs of marble surround the sink and possibly the tub, both on horizontal and vertical surfaces.

The bathroom shown above would be a good model for your house. This tub is copper lined with tin, but you might like to place a porcelain tub in a similar surround. The floor here is painted wood; you could have natural or painted wood, or perhaps linoleum. The walls are a lovely



**The instrument hanging above the tub in the bathroom of the overseer's house at Vermont's Marsh-Billings Farm is a thermometer. This style of sconce is available as an antique or reproduction. Built in 1890, the house was modern for its time.**

golden yellow, which complements the wood. The simple green roller blind at the window is all that's needed. The corner sink, not shown, is a small, round, painted porcelain bowl under-mounted in a chamfered slab of marble. It is supported on filigree metal brackets, with all the plumbing pipes visible. A sink cabinet in the same style as the tub surround would also be appropriate. If you have room, a separate shower with large marble tiles in a beadboard closet (or perhaps just in a glass enclosure) would be the perfect finishing touch.

## Valance Balance

**Is there a standard height for window valances? Some of my windows go to**

**the ceilings, but my bedroom windows are lower on the walls. My house is Colonial Revival, built in 1927.**

HELEN REYNOLDS  
PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA

**T**here's no one-size-fits-all answer. The proper height and style for window valances (or their advisability at all) depends on architecture, fabric, formality of furniture, period—a host of variables. If your ceilings are tall (nine feet plus, preferably), your windows vertical rather than horizontal in line, and your furniture fairly formal, then go for an elaborate valance of swags and trim with floor-length curtains. Swags are by their very nature luxurious; don't be stingy with either size or trim. The bottom of the central



swag should generally hit at the middle of the top window pane. But if yours is a low-ceilinged cottage or Garrison Colonial with diamond-pane windows, please forgo any but the smallest, simplest valances. Some cotton, unlined Colonial Revival valances, usually gathered, were actually only about five to six inches tall and mounted inside the windows. There are also flat, stiff, shaped valances lined with buckram that are used in Colonial Revival interiors; these can be much shorter than swags and still be used with floor-length curtains. I've seen sheer, unlined, colored silk curtains with tiny silk fringe used successfully in formal, low-ceilinged Colonial Revival rooms, but again, you would have to use only the shortest valance or no valance at all.

The low windows in your bedrooms could be tricky; you might mount valances at door height, but only if the resulting valances cover enough of the windows without looking too long. If not, they will look top-heavy.

## Cracked

Is it possible to repair a crack in an old porcelain sink, or is it necessary to reglaze the whole surface?

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*Answers in this month's issue were provided by contributing editor SUSAN MOORING HOLLIS, principal at Historic Interiors, Inc.: (978) 371-2622.*

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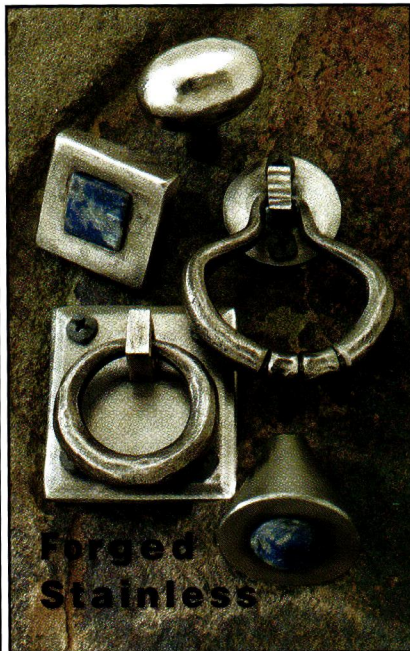


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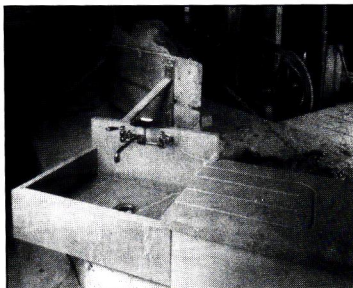
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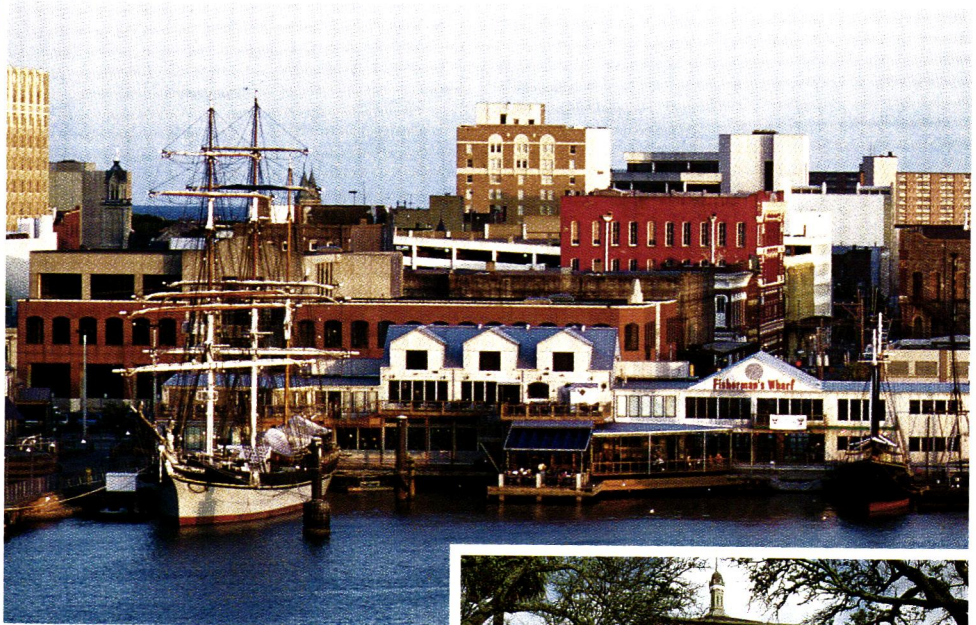
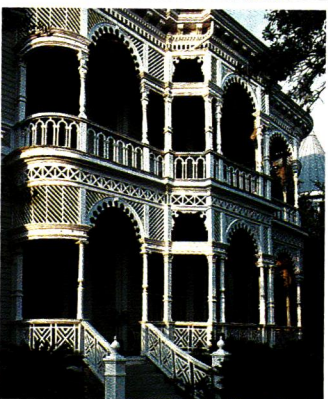
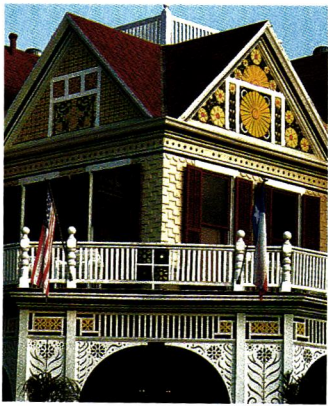
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# Like Nawlins, with a Texas Swagger

BY ELMO BACA



**G**ALVESTON—MORE COMPELLING even than this Texas city's outrageous pecan pie are the blocks and blocks (and blocks!) of exquisite historic architecture, rivaled in quality and beauty by few places in America. The story of the place is deeply satisfying, a great, Southern, *Gone with the Wind* saga except with a happy ending: the grande dame is saved and her beauty restored by preservationists after a long decline. Although many restoration projects remain to be done, today's Galveston boasts a unique vernacular type, sometimes described as New Orleans-style townhouses with a Texas swagger.

After its founding in the mid-1830s, Galveston's star rose meteor-



ically as the busiest port in Texas. For the next six decades, the narrow sandbar in Galveston Bay welcomed a never-ending tide of cotton, textiles, building materials—and people. Besides the bustling but grim trade in African slaves, Galveston's port teemed with boatloads of European immi-

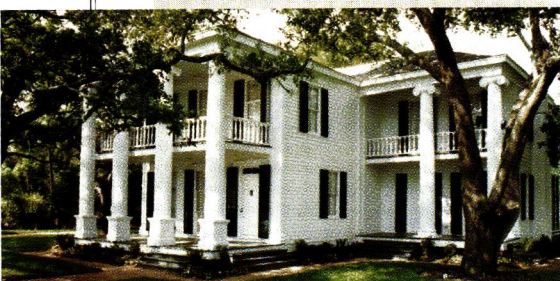
grants seeking prosperity in the vast arena of Texas. German artisans in particular settled in Galveston and helped construct the remarkable buildings and houses celebrated throughout her history. (By 1900, some Galveston boosters liked to compare the Strand with Wall Street.)

**TOP:** Galveston is an island city with magnificent siting and architecture. **HOUSES:** (counterclockwise) A Painted Lady at 17th and Ball Streets; the lacy Victorian Sonnentheil House at 18th and Ball; verandahs on Post Office Street; the ca. 1875 Garten Verein, once a German social club.

*Consider the epic drama of Galveston, Texas, a city of exquisite architecture which remade itself after the vicious hurricane of 1900, and again after decades of economic decline.*



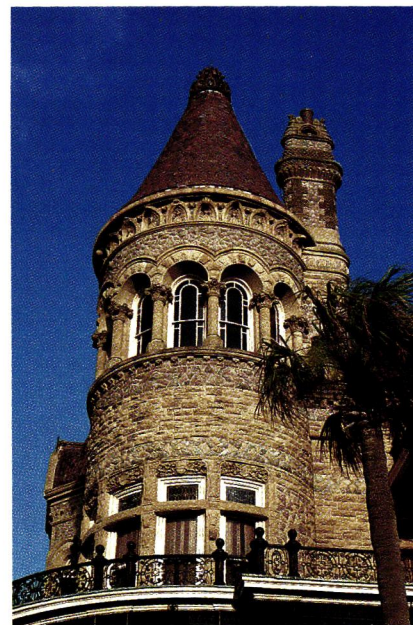
Surviving as Galveston's oldest house, the beautiful Michel B. **MENARD HOUSE** (1838) was professionally restored by the Burns family and local architect David V. Barker in 1994-5. The immaculate Greek Revival siren flirts with passersby on 33rd Street. Its siting on a generous lot far west of the commercial district saved it from the great wall of water that crashed on the city. ■ Its present owners have retained the original formal floor plan and furnished the interior in a high-style interpretation of frontier Greek Revival. The house is open to the public Sat. & Sun. noon to 4pm.



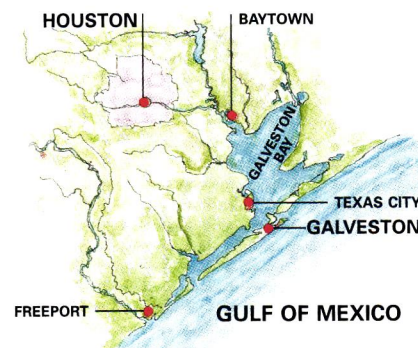
Times were so good for Galveston's 38,000 residents, only the heavens could spoil it. On September 8th of 1900, a monstrous storm drifted westward from Africa to wreak vengeance. The hurricane killed six thousand people and leveled a third of the buildings, a catastrophe that resounds still and defines the character of the city and its people.

Determined to rebuild, the city erected a new, 17-foot-high concrete seawall and raised the grade of hundreds of building sites. Financed by commercial interests in cotton, retail, banking, insurance (and a growing industry in tourism and gambling), Galveston rebounded by 1920, but lost her preëminence to nearby Houston. By World War II, a steady economic decline had left many buildings vacant and decaying.

A beautiful and haunting picture book—*The Galveston That Was*, published in 1966 by photographers Ezra Stoller and Henri Cartier-Bresson—rallied the city to action. Under

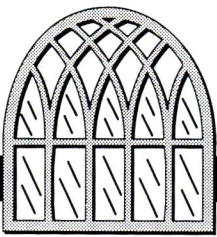


The Bishop's Palace was built for transplanted Virginian Colonel Gresham of native stone. The stair took 61 craftsmen and carvers three years to build.



the aegis of the Galveston Historical Foundation, one of America's most effective preservation programs has realized an architectural renaissance. Boasting architectural riches in each of its four historic districts, Galveston offers many events highlighted by the boisterous annual **MARDI GRAS** and the popular **HISTORIC HOMES TOUR** held during the first week in May.

Spend hours in Galveston wandering through her great commercial streets, graceful residential neighborhoods, and curious back alleys. Galveston astonishes the first-time visitor with her [continued on page 102]



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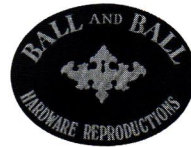
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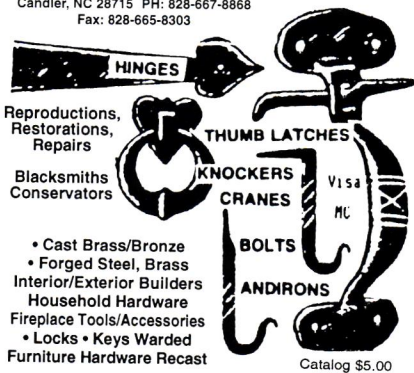


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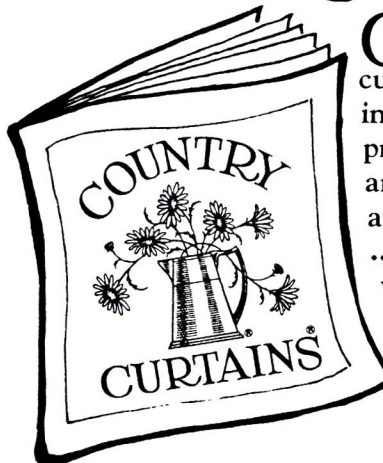
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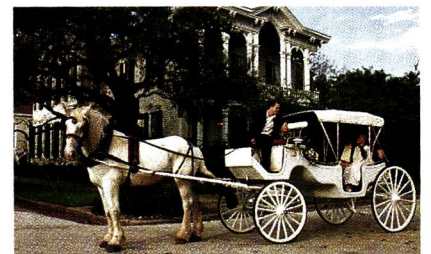
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In the **WEST END** district are the city's two oldest homes, the **MENARD HOUSE** (1838) and the **WILLIAMS HOUSE** (1839). The West End is an architectural record of the aspirations of Galveston's African-American community.

Right now is an especially good time to visit Galveston, as the city observes the centennial anniversary of the great storm. ★

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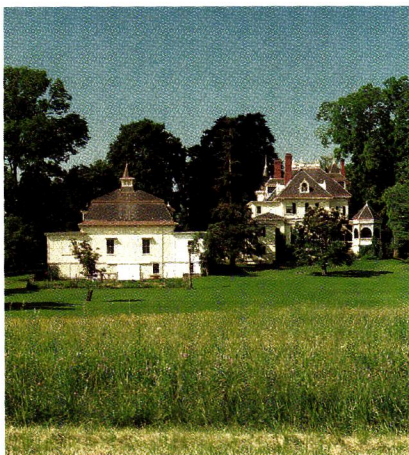
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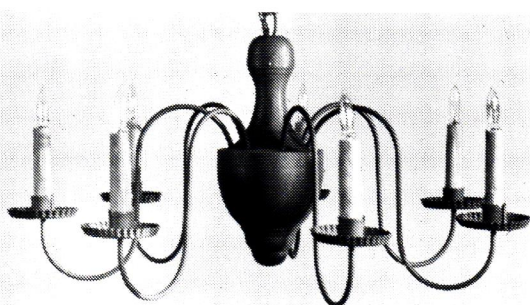
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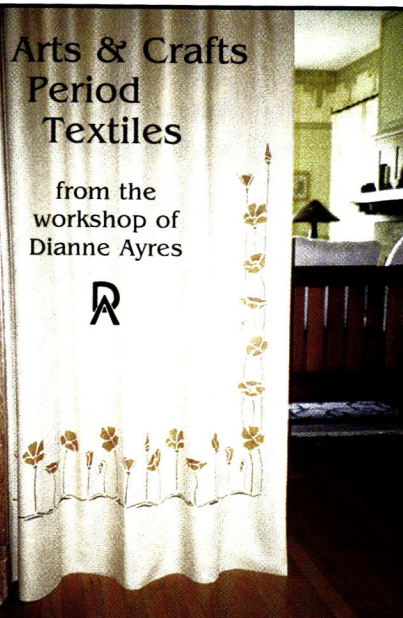
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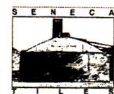
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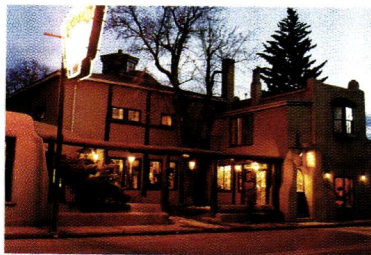
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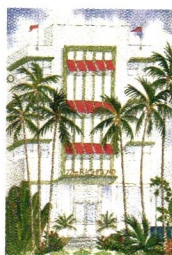
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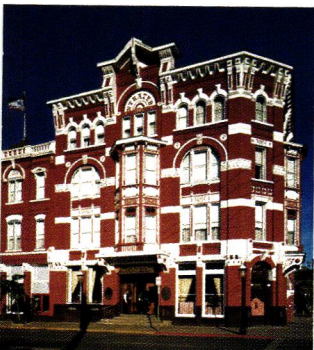
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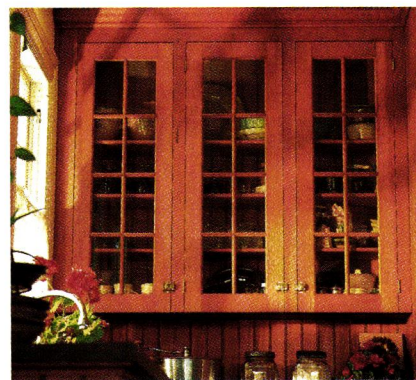


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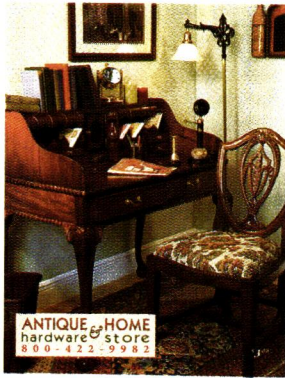
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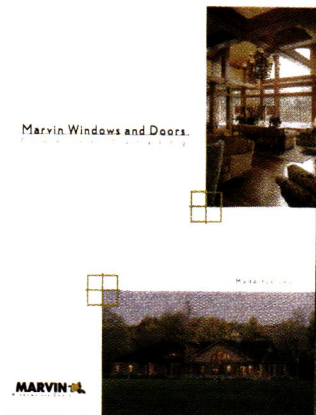
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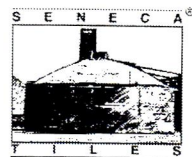
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# Find it here

The editors have compiled this section to give you more information about products and services in this issue. Objects not listed are generally available, or are family pieces or antiques.

## News & Views pp. 22-24

Lisa Bonneville, ASID, Principal, Bonneville Design, 68 Summer St., Manchester-by-the-Sea, MA 01944. (978) 526-4491. [lbd@shore.net](mailto:lbd@shore.net).

## Furniture: Antique or New pp. 38-41

For Thomas Moser catalogs and showroom locations call (800) 708-9703. ■ Winterthur reproduction furniture is made by Hickory Chair and Kindel Furniture companies. For dealers call Hickory Chair (828)328-1801, online: [www.hickorychair.com](http://www.hickorychair.com) or call Kindel (616) 243-3676, online: [www.artnet.com](http://www.artnet.com). Windsor chairs are not currently among the items in either of the Winterthur furniture lines. ■ Shirley Pritchard (610) 388-2652 ■ Lisa Bonneville (978) 526-4491 ■ Mandy Culpepper (404) 822-6388 ■ Paul Duchscherer (415) 861-6256 ■ IIDA, Chicago, Ill. (312) 467-1950 ■ ASID, New York, NY (877) 275-2743.

## New Orleans Real pp. 44-49

Chair caner, Mary Cooper can be reached at (504) 945-8537.

## El Ranchito pp. 50-55

Interested in llamas and alpacas? See Joan Speirs's website: [www.silcom.com/~alpaca](http://www.silcom.com/~alpaca). ■ Please address the editors, and not the homeowners, for further information about the house. Architect: Larry Clark, Carpinteria, Calif. (805) 684-8258. ■ Contractor: Jim Quick, Coastal Builders, Santa Ynez, Calif. (805) 688-7604. ■ Kitchen Designer: Diane Johnson (714) 642-4059. ■ Interior Design: Linda White, (310) 581-8181. ■ Mary Wood Design, (310) 688-7344. ■ Custom lighting fixtures: Bill Swatsek, Lawndale, Calif. (310) 370-9762. ■ Kitchen Cabinets: Valley Oak Cabinets, Santa Ynez, Calif. (805) 688-2754. ■ Painter: Wayne Shaw & Assoc., Santa Ynez, Calif. (805) 688-7942.

## Second Empire pp. 56-59

Norlands is part of a living history complex in Livermore, Maine. It is open daily 10am-4pm through Labor Day and after on weekends 10am-4pm through Columbus Day. Call (207) 897-4366.

## Mansard Status Symbol pp. 60-67

The Park-McCullough House, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, is

open to visitors daily from mid-May through October. Tours can be arranged; call (802) 442-5441 or write to The Park-McCullough House, North Bennington, Vermont 05257.

## Extremely Cool pp. 90-94

*New York Interiors* and *California Interiors* are two of a 13-part series of Taschen books on interior style.

## Ask the Editors pp. 96-97

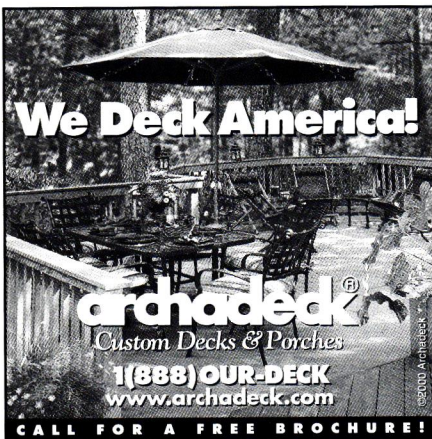
Billings Farm and Museum, Woodstock, Vt., open year-round. Founded as an experimental farm devoted to conservation and environmental protection. Events include late-19th century cooking demonstrations, and farming activities such as horseshoeing, barrel-making, and milking. Call (802) 457-2355.

## Like Nawlins with a Texas Swagger pp. 99-102

The Michael B. Menard house is open to the public noon-4pm, Sat. & Sun. Also available for rentals and pre-arranged tours. Call (409) 762-3933.

## Motifs pp. 114

Sunflower panel by Bradbury & Bradbury Wallpapers Benicia, Calif. (707) 746-1900. [www.bradbury.com](http://www.bradbury.com). Catalogs \$12. ■ For contemporary sunflower tiles: Designs in Tile, Mount Shasta, Calif. (916) 926-2629.



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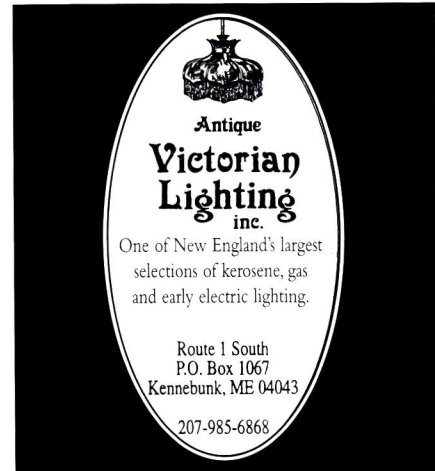
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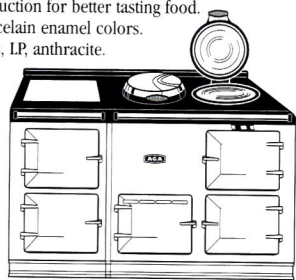
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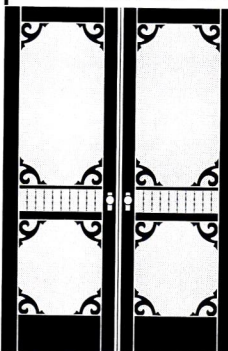
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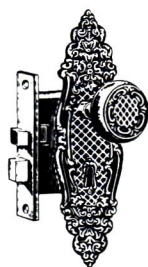
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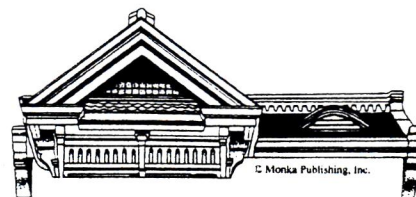
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# MOTIFS

## Sunflowers

TRUE SUNFLOWERS (genus *Helianthus*) are native to the Americas: this is the flower of the Inca sun god, not the Greeks. In the 16th century sunflowers made their way into European gardens and finally into the poetry of Blake and Shelley, Thomas Moore and Alfred, Lord Tennyson. They signalled unwavering fidelity—or infatuation. “The poet and essayist Dora Greenwell in 1848 used the flower’s compulsive daily movements as a metaphor for sexual desire and slavery,” writes botanist Bobby J. Ward, an expert on plant lore. In religious symbolism, the flower meant constancy and devotion, the meaning that survived in the Victorian “language of flowers.”

We best remember the sunflower as a symbol of the Aesthetic Movement (1870s and 1880s) and, of course, as Vincent van Gogh painted them at Arles in Provence. Victorian decorative arts, van Gogh, and the spectacular sunflower itself are popular again.



Stained glass surrounds a sunflower (above) by William Peckitt, ca. 1750, in the south transept at York Minster in England. Bradbury and Bradbury’s dado panel is from their Aesthetic Movement revival series (right).

**BELOW:** A highly stylized sunflower motif is a hallmark of Victorian art-movement decorative design, as in the fireplace surround by Minton (Cohen–Bray house, Oakland, Calif.; tiles ca. 1878). **BOTTOM LEFT:** A panel by Pugin, at the Palace of Westminster.



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