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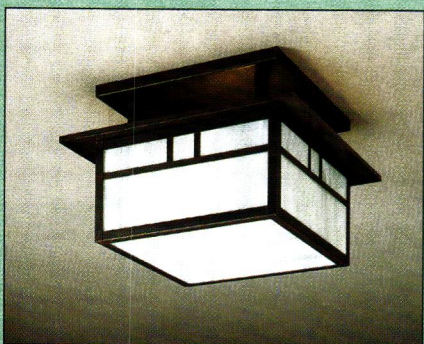
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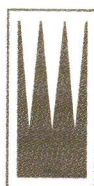


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VISITS

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They bought the comfortable house for its location, but they knew it was special.

BY DAVID E. BERMAN

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It was a flamboyant decade, in Seattle as everywhere else. Visit a Jazz Age house with all the right moves, lovingly kept.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LINDA SVENDSEN

PERIOD INTERIORS

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BY BRIAN D. COLEMAN

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Garden furniture is as old as civilization. In America, you can choose among Windsor chairs and wicker, cast iron and limestone.

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In the California of haciendas and orange groves, an art tile tradition developed in the spirit of the Arts and Crafts movement.

BY MARY ELLEN POLSON

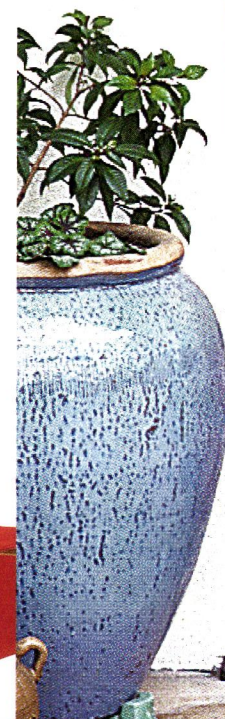
ON THE COVER: *Painted rocking chairs always look at home on an American porch and are a long-lived tradition in the Mid-Atlantic and New England. This house, called Twelve Oaks, is in Boydton, Virginia. Cover photograph by Tony Giammarino.*



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VOLUME VI, NUMBER 4

What passions!

FROM MY DESK at work today I called my husband, a walking encyclopedia of mythology. "It was Demeter's grief at the loss of Persephone to the underworld that caused the barrenness of the earth, right?" Yesterday, I wanted to know the year Prohibition was repealed. (And—just when were power saws invented?)

No, I'm not an undergraduate picking from the salad bar of the humanities. I am the editor of a design magazine, grateful and happy for my career choice. What passions and history we uncover as we develop each issue! (Read this one and you'll find answers to all of the questions above.) Period design is a hieroglyph, a coded language to the abilities and aspirations of each era.

Here is something else I love: finding the themes. It is uncanny!—how the same person or book or event emerges as a constant in any given issue. It always happens to some degree, but in this particular issue it took over. Brian Coleman, our West Coast editor, submitted his story about using period textiles months ago. (Much of what's available dates to the early-20th century—see page 38.) More recently Brian wrote to us about a "bungalow in Seattle" furnished with objects from the 1920s and 1930s (page 54). Mary Ellen Polson yearned

to write about California tile (page 78). I noted the recent publication of books about 20th-century potteries (page 92)—right about the time I realized I owned one Rookwood, one Roseville, and one McCoy piece, all left behind in houses I'd bought. Add an introduction to the Jazz Age (page 62) . . . all of a sudden we've produced an issue devoted, among other things, to "Design Between the Wars." The style—not

Edwardian, not Arts and Crafts, not Modern—has been undersung.

A few readers have complained that we've become "too contemporary." I have two things to say about that. (1) The 1920s–1950s is not contemporary. It is *the era in jeopardy*, too recent to warrant wide respect and in danger of loss due to impatience. (2) Please wait a month or two. I just went to a trade show sponsored by SPNEA, at which I fell (back) in love with 18th-century cherry bedsteads, tilt-top tables, pieced quilts, Windsor chairs, floorcloths and firescreens. (And, as long as I live, of course, I will cherish Victorian.) Just wait.



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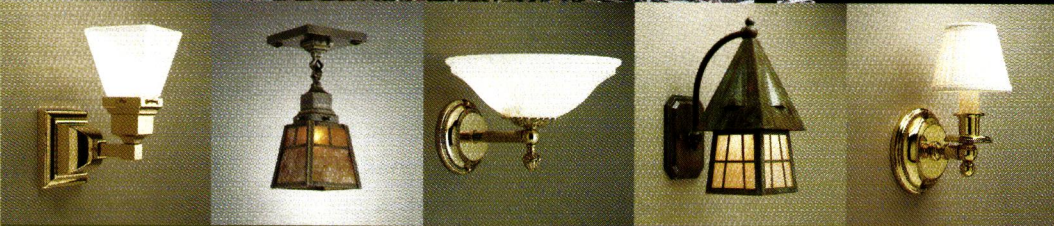
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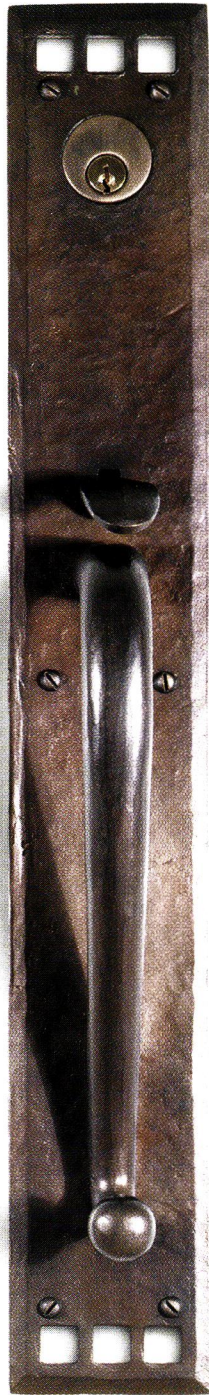


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Letters

NO NEWS IS GOOD

THE COVER ARTICLE of your April/May 2000 issue, "Ranchito in Wine Country," was well written and describes a lovely, new California home. But historic wannabes belong in *Architectural Digest*, not *Old-House Interiors*. Your "period-inspired home design" subtitle gives you an out. But there is no shortage of bona fide old houses worth featuring . . . the reason I subscribe to your fine magazine.

—PETER FLAGG MAXSON
Architectural Historian
Austin, Texas

STAYING HOME

UNLIKE MOST of your readers, I don't live in an old house. Instead, out of necessity, I live in a new house in which we've incorporated as much warmth and detail as possible. *Old-House Interiors* is one of my favorite magazines because it provides lots of ideas and inspiration for the inside of my home. The April/May issue is particularly wonderful, beginning with [Patricia Poore's] thoughtful and touching letter. ["Staying Home," page 8] I read it aloud to my husband; we're going to have it framed and hung on the wall. Thank you for articulating something that confuses many of us, yet almost all of us understand instinctively.

—LAURA BRYANT
Creve Coeur, Missouri

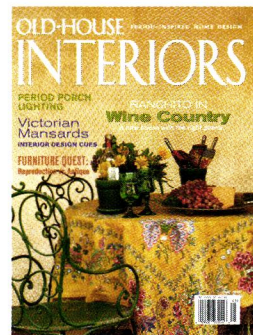
THANK YOU FOR sharing your thoughts in the Editor's Welcome. I laughed while I read the column and then got teary-eyed sharing it with my husband. I never thought anyone else would express what I feel privately every day: The magnetic pull of my comfortable, *cared-for* home is so strong.

Yet the fulfillment and enjoyment from my work is powerful as well. I suppose that desire for the best of both worlds is why my office is attached to my home. I can be home when the kids get off the bus.

—KATHY DUSTMAN, OWNER
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CALLING ROMANTICS

THANK YOU, *Old-House Interiors* readers, for sending me information and photos of Romantic Revival-style houses ["Romantic Call," p. 26 in Feb./March 2000]. I received e-mails



and letters from all over the country. Interestingly, the most response came from Wisconsin, perhaps because of the German-influenced "Hansel and Gretel" houses there. I will be shooting this spring on the West

Coast, and in the Midwest in late summer. I've already taken some photos here in the West. Judging by the enthusiastic response of homeowners and people who've seen the photos, *Storybook Style* will be a welcome resource for aficionados of historic architecture.

If you live in the Midwest, you still have time to contact me about your house (e-mail is best).

—DOUG KEISTER
www.keisterphoto.com
Albany, Calif.

COMFORTS OF CARE

I WANT TO applaud you, not only for a fine magazine, but in particular for Cheryl Mendelson's article "House-keeping Truths" [Dec./Jan. 2000]. I found myself relating to and chuckling at her description of her past.

But her analysis of what housekeeping really is struck a chord within my heart and soul. I am going to order Ms. Mendelson's book *Home Comforts*.

There are a lot of major social issues this nation must deal with. One has to wonder how many of them could be healed in some measure if more women took homemaking seriously. I certainly have felt a "rightness" when my own home has been in order.

—SHERYL RABER
Hansville, Wash.

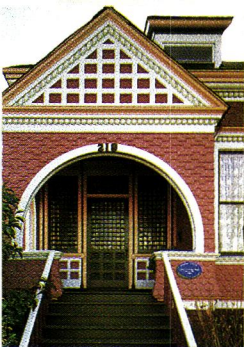
MOVIE SETS

[REGARDING] your comments on houses in the movies in the Dec./Jan. 2000 issue: For further information on interior styles from the movies, you may wish to consult *Forties Screen Style: A Celebration of High Pastiche in Hollywood*, by Howard Mandelbaum and Eric Myers, a wonderful keepsake of the work of some of the best set designers in Hollywood.

—GERALDINE M. FLATLEY
Bronx, N.Y.

CALLING PAINTED LADIES

The authors of the "Painted Ladies" series of books are again looking for recently painted Victorian houses (polychromed, of course). Contact Michael Larsen and Elizabeth Pomada through www.PaintedLadies.com, or send photos and information to them at 1029 Jones Street, San Francisco, CA 94109.



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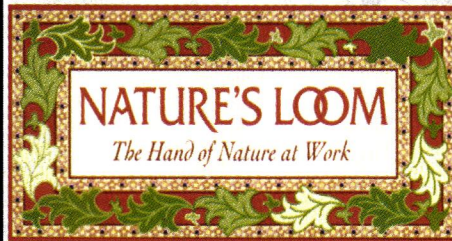
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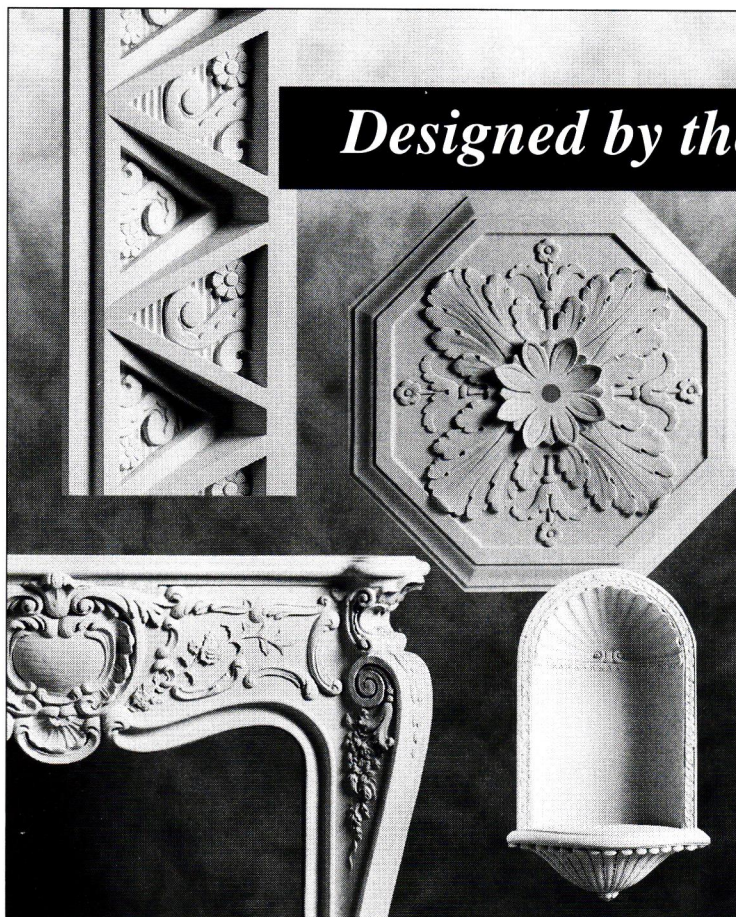


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Websites and information, page 112



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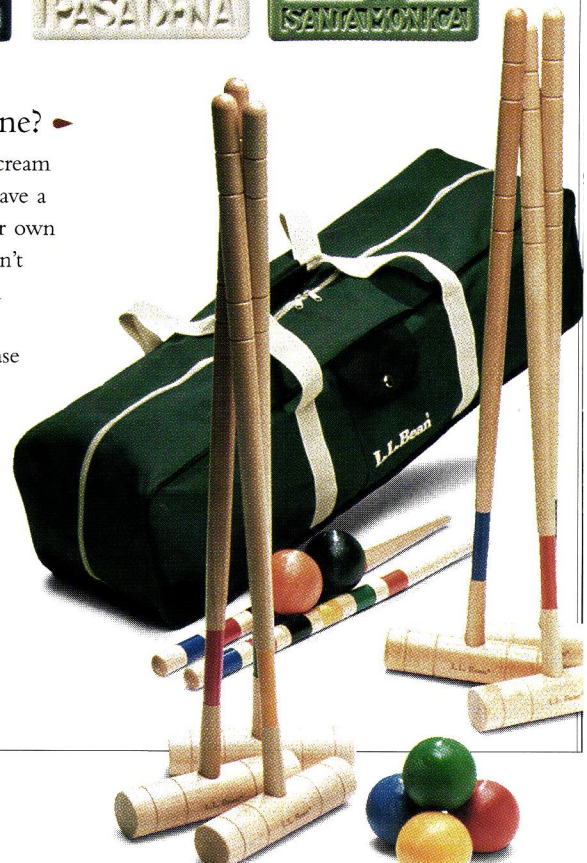


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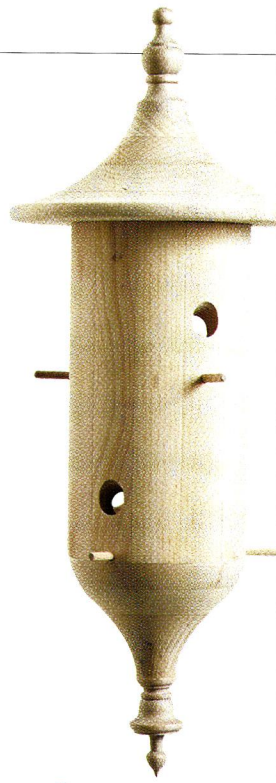
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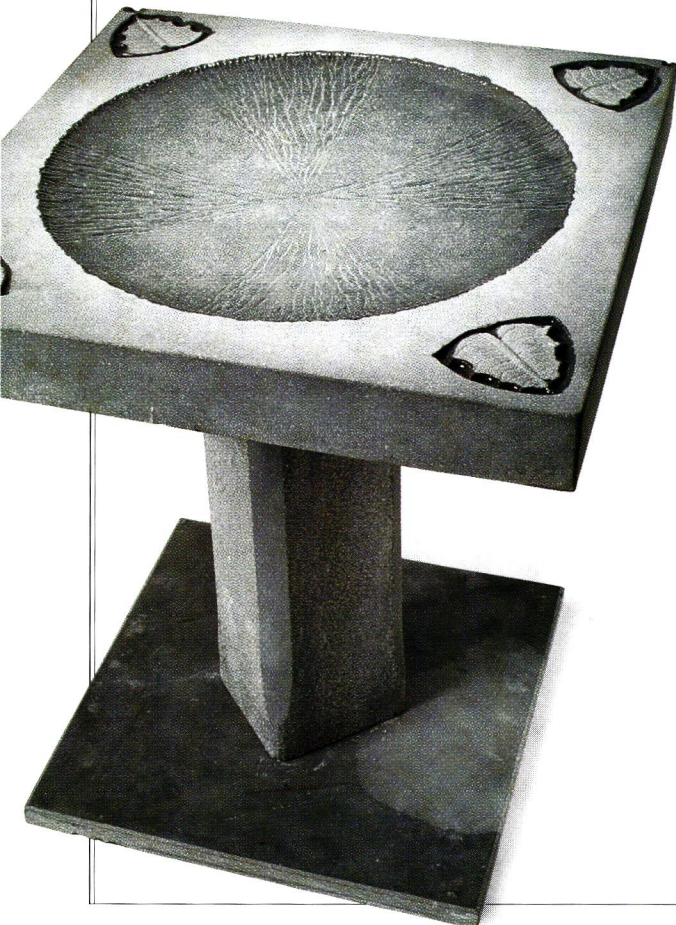
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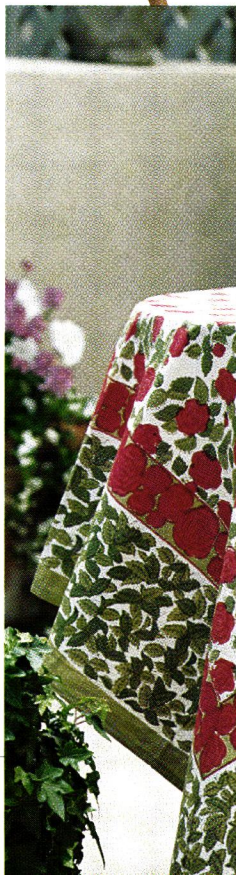
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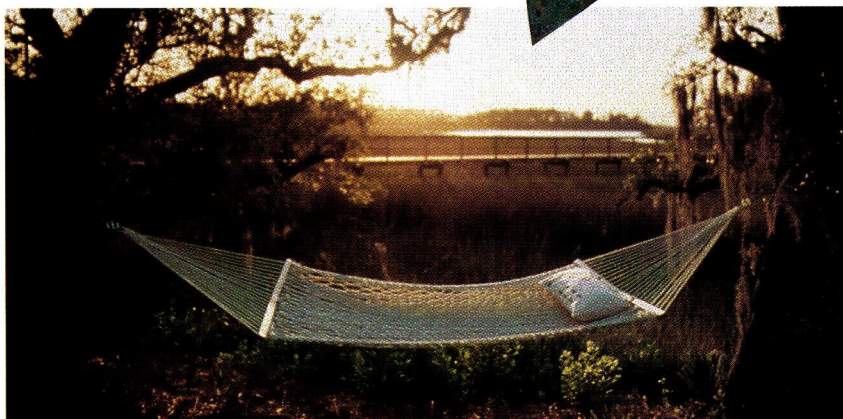
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Sunny Afternoon •

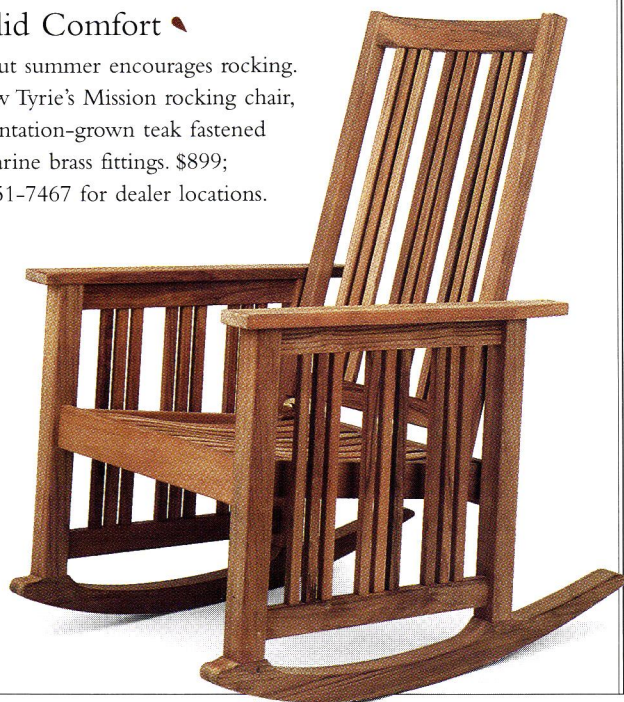
There are far, far worse ways to spend a summer afternoon than in a Pawley's Island Hammock. Available from the Hammock Source in both cotton and polyester rope, they range from \$126 to \$170, depending on size. Call (800) 334-1078.



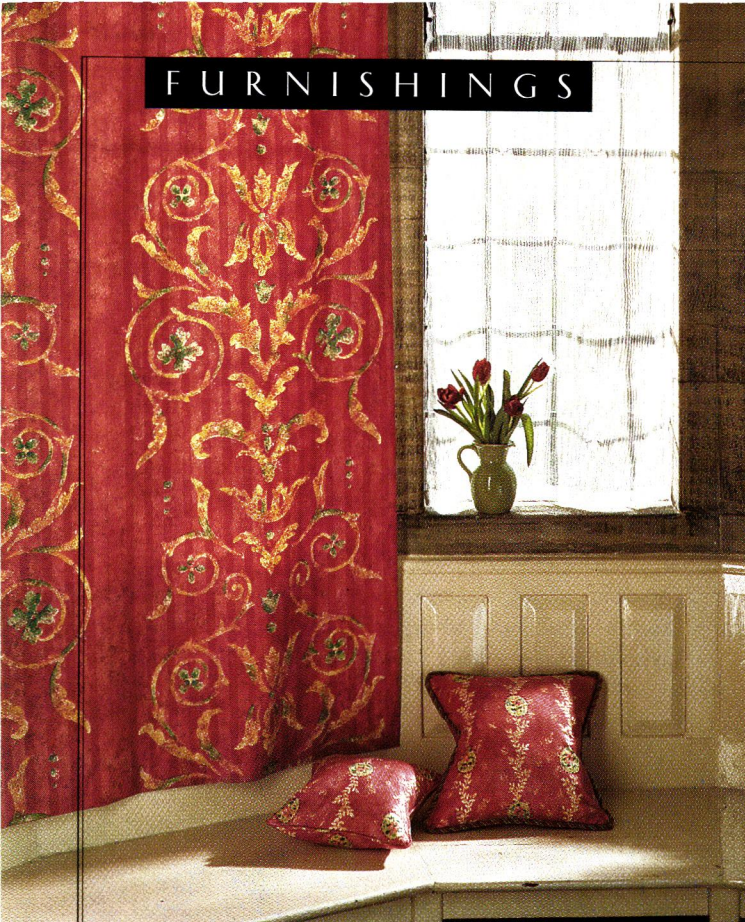
Solid Comfort •

Something about summer encourages rocking. Do it in Barlow Tyrie's Mission rocking chair, made of plantation-grown teak fastened with marine brass fittings. \$899;

call (800) 451-7467 for dealer locations.



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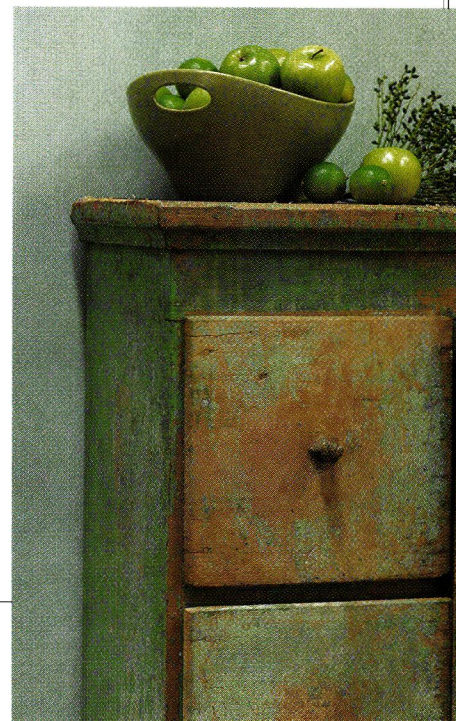
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Websites and information, page 112

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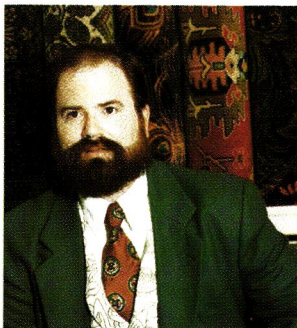
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news & VIEWS



It's getting to the point where almost any 19th-century American house museum curator in need of replacement carpeting immediately calls John Burrows. Visitors walk on J.R. Burrows & Co. products at the White House, Gracie Mansion, the Iowa Governor's Mansion, and the White House of the Confederacy. His wallpapers, curtains, and carpets appear on the big screen in "Runaway Bride," "A River Runs Through It," and "Great

Expectations." In his quiet way, this historical design merchant has educated countless people about textiles and papers for house styles that range from Neoclassical to Arts and Crafts. Homeowners love his cotton lace, the Voysey and Morris carpets still woven at the English mills that originally produced them, fabrics and wallpapers designed by obscure or almost-forgotten artists like Candace Wheeler and Jennie B. Jones. In a world of multinational conglomerates and voice mail, these buyers love to deal with human beings who take the time to explain the difference between an Aubusson and an Axminster. Some folks have said that it's a downright 19th-century experience. When John's not talking carpets, he's spearheading efforts to save a neighboring building, negotiating the steps of a *schottische*, or sponsoring a fancy-dress ball in full formal 1890 regalia. Burrows is also on the technological cutting edge: his website (www.burrows.com) was one of the first in the field. If you'd like to talk, and buy, the old-fashioned way, call (800) 347-1795.

“Anyone can still respond to [Dickens's] portrayals of the chaos and unhappiness caused by defective housekeeping.

Ruined and inedible meals, tools lost and broken, accidents, dirt, poor health, frustration, quarrelsomeness, shame—all these, which Dickens paints with vivid colors, are still the outcome of household neglect.”

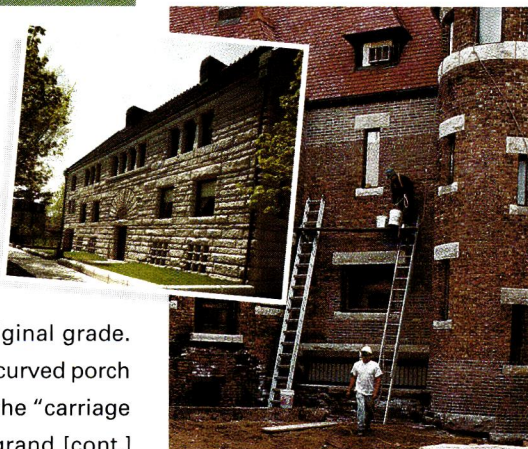
—CHERYL MENDELSON in *Home Comforts* (1999)

GLESSNER RENOVATION

For more than a century, the severe stone façade of Chicago's Glessner House has sheltered tender areas within. One of these, a medieval-style interior courtyard, reopens to the public in June after a year-long restoration. The courtyard

project is the first of several major capital improvements planned at the national historic landmark, the last work by American architect H. H. Richardson. Visitors will once again see the courtyard's stunning terra-cotta tile roof and salmon-colored Chicago common brick freed from years of dirt and soot. The

foundation has been damp-proofed, the brickwork re-pointed, and the courtyard has been returned to its original grade. In other work, a curved porch that welcomed the "carriage trade" into the grand [cont.]



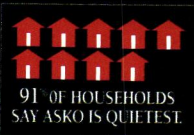
“Living is a messy business. The saddest truth for me is that so many people treat their houses as a place to create a perfect setting for some future event. In the meantime, no living is going on.”

—ALEXANDRA STODDARD in *Feeling At Home* (1999)

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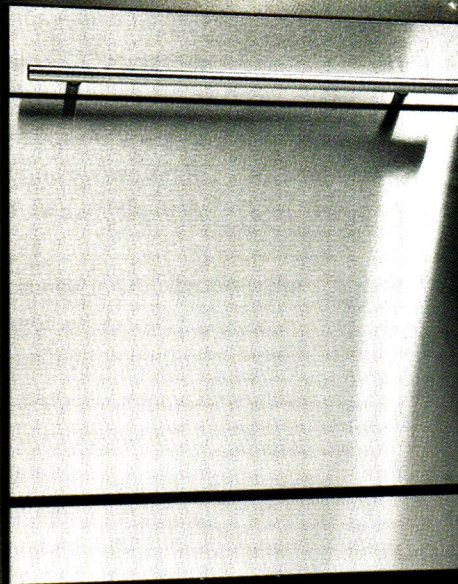
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living hall has been restored, as has the servant's porch and more than 100 windows. Next on tap will be the conversion of the historic coach house into a center for education and museum exhibits. The Glessner House is open for tours Wednesday–Sunday. Call (312) 326-1480.

Summertime . . . and the Learnin's Easy

■ Through Aug. 31: Learn how a group of reformers changed interiors at this museum exhibit: **Leading "The Simple Life": The Arts and Crafts Movement in Britain 1880–1910**, The Wolfsonian—Florida International University, Miami Beach (305) 531-1001.

■ June 9–July 23: **Summer Program in Classical Architecture 2000**, an extensive six-week training program for architects, interior designers, preservationists, educators, and

builders. Institute for Classical Architecture, New York (917) 237-1208.

■ June 10–11: View a two-day **Civil War Encampment at Bowen House**, Woodstock, Connecticut (860) 928-4074.

■ June 28: **Afternoon Tea with Mrs. Jack**. "Meet" Isabella Stewart Gardner, who was a frequent visitor at Henry Davis Sleeper's house, Beauport: Gloucester, Massachusetts (978) 287-0800.

■ June 10: **Historic Preservation in Big Cities: A Roundtable for Community**, Historic Seattle (206) 622-6952.

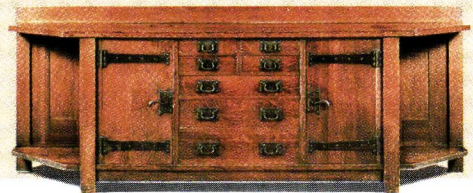
■ June 25–July 21: **MESDA Summer Institute**, Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, Winston–Salem, North Carolina (336) 721-7360.

TWO OLD-HOUSE GUYS NAMED KEN

A self-described purist, OHI reader Ken Roginski is a

World Record Set for American A&C Furniture

An important Gustav Stickley sideboard set a world record for American Arts and Crafts furniture at Christie's last November. Stickley made the oak and wrought-iron piece for his home on Columbus Avenue in Syracuse, New York, in 1902. Sold to an anonymous phone bidder for \$596,500, the sale eclipsed the \$362,000 Barbra Streisand paid for the piece in 1988.

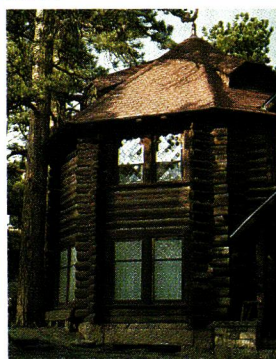


man on a mission: to protect old-house owners "from being brainwashed by money-motivated advertisements for vinyl siding, cheap replacement windows, and other inferior, modern building products." What **OLDHOUSEGUY.COM** lacks in sophistication, it makes up for in earnestness. No banner ads here, just one voice spreading the preservation gospel. Ken's even got a section that displays before-and-after shots of his own restoration project—nice work! This old-

houseguy walks the walk. Ken Holmes is another web guy who digs old houses. While employed by Hanley–Wood, Ken helped bring *Old-House Journal* online (as well as several other Hanley–Wood titles). Ken has since moved on to create **OLDHOUSEWEB.COM**, which, not surprisingly, resembles *oldhousejournal.com*. The site bristles with how-to information, message boards, supplier lists, even the OHW store (as opposed to the OHJ store). Ah, the free-agent economy!



OPEN HOUSE The Hiwan Homestead Museum in Evergreen, Colorado, is a 17-room log home that started out as a two-room cabin in 1886. Mary Neosho Williams, a Denver Civil War widow, came here with her daughter, Josepha, who went on to become one of Colorado's first female physicians. Mrs. Williams added on in 1896;



Josepha and her husband did so again in 1914 and 1918. Their only child, Frederic H. Douglas, became a curator of Native American arts: he assembled the extraordinary collection of Indian artifacts that fills the house. It makes for a beautiful combination: log construction, Arts and Crafts styling, and the vibrant colors and bold designs of Native American baskets, pots, and fabrics. Call (303) 674-6262.

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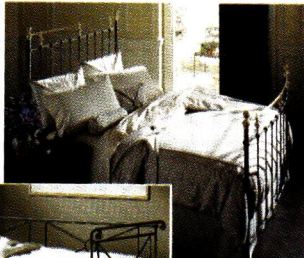


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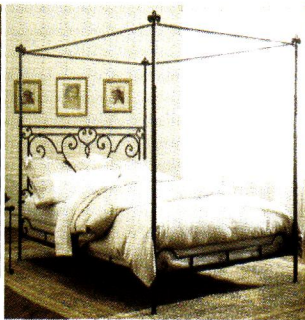
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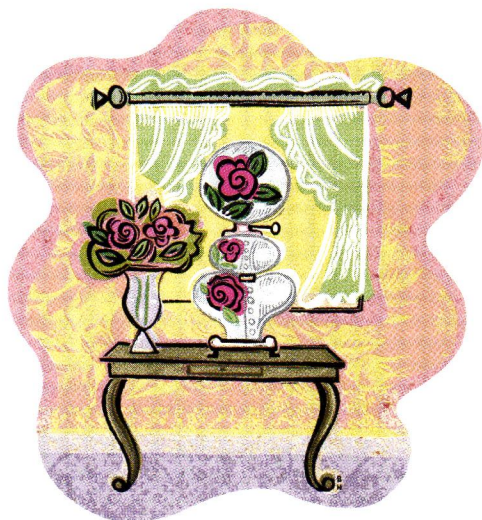
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Victorian Goes to the Movies

BY NANCY A. RUHLING

WHEN I WATCH A MOVIE that takes place in the 19th century, I can't take my eyes off the sets. I can't help it. Hollywood gets so much of it wrong.

How unfortunate! The Victorian era (more-or-less covering the years 1837 to 1901) was one of history's richest in terms of style and decoration. Most of us got our negative impressions of it, I think, from the movies.

From the Westerns, we learn that the only civilized place in this shoot'em-up time is the brothel, where gaudy women in scandalous, sequined skirts hold court in even gaudier, red-velvet rooms.

From the monster films and from the psychological thrillers, notably Alfred Hitchcock's "Psycho" (1960) and George Cukor's "Gaslight" (1944), we learn that 19th-century houses, particularly those in the Victorian eclectic Gothic Revival style, are houses of horror—where stairs creep, ghosts hide, and people really do get bumped off by things that go bump in the night.

In musicals like "Show Boat" (1936 and 1951) and "Hello, Dolly!" (1969) everyone bursts into song at the drop of a fancy feathered hat. They also give the impression that Victorian interiors, with their dissonant styles, were done in carnival colors to rival the psychedelic Sixties. The interiors look like imitations of badly designed stage sets.

In fact, Hollywood has led us to believe that Victorian homes were knick knock-cluttered white elephants inhabited by weird old ladies draped in doilies.

With this in mind, I offer these mini-reviews of sev-

eral well-known films set in the Victorian era. I review not the script nor the acting, but the interior design.

**** **"The Magnificent Ambersons" (1942).** This visual masterpiece by Orson Welles didn't win any Oscars and was a disaster at the box office—I presume because of its all-too-authentic depiction of Victorian styles and mores. In a melancholy tale that chronicles the rise and fall of a wealthy family, the Ambersons live in an 1873 Victorian mansion with mansard roof, a front piazza, widow's walk, a tower, and Gothic Revival details (—what would become the quintessential horror-film house). When the butler opens the front door, which has etched-glass panels, the viewer is led through the encaustic-tiled foyer and into gaslit rooms with expensive French flocked wallpaper, thick velvet draperies, and tinkling crystal chandeliers. Welles got the decoration right: had he stopped there, I would have given him a five-star rating. Alas, to convey the somber mood of the plot, he shot the black-and-white film in deep shadow, making the characters ghost-like. Hence he was among the first directors to plant the idea in filmgoers'—and set designers'—minds that Victorian houses were vast, creepy caverns filled with dark, ugly furniture where tragedy lurked in secret passageways.

(no stars) **"Gone With the Wind" (1939).** The most famous film of the genre may have won nine Oscars, a record at the time, but when it comes to authenticity, it flunks all of my tests. The settings are not real, [continued on page 29]

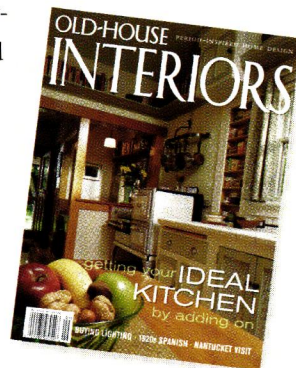


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Although the Victorian era was one of history's richest in terms of style, most of us got negative impressions of it from the movies.

which may account for the fact that all the rooms of Tara and the other plantations look as though they were designed to coordinate with each other like matching pin-striped suits. They are filled with 1930s Colonial-style furniture and some Empire pieces, which by the time of the Civil War would have been hopelessly out of date—and out the door of well-to-do homes. As if it were an afterthought, the designer did throw in a couple of period appropriate Rococo Revival pieces. Just to make sure that every decade of the Victorian period was covered, he even added a couple of pieces from the 1880s and 1890s, notably the anachronistic hall stand in the house Ashley Wilkes lived in after the war.

If all of this were not bad enough, most of the walls are painted white. That was a design sin in opulent houses of the Victorian era.

Hollywood really outdid itself with what has come to be called the “Gone With the Wind” lamp, the prototype of which illuminated several key Rhett–Scarlett scenes. The lamp, which has matching glass globes above and below the burner, got its nickname from the movie, which took place in the 1860s and 1870s. There is just one little hitch: It wasn’t even invented until the 1880s! And everybody should have known better in 1939 because the lamp remained popular until the 1920s, only two decades before the movie was made.

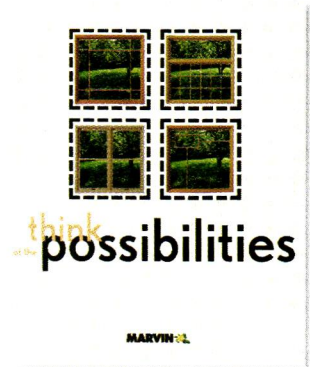
**** “The Heiress” (1949).** William Wyler’s version of Henry James’s *Washington Square* and of the popular Broadway play doesn’t take any chances: The

furnishings span an entire century, from 1820 to 1920, even though the plot takes place only in the 1840s and 1850s. A decade after her role in “Gone With the Wind,” Olivia de Havilland must have been surprised, along with the rest of us, to again see the “Gone With the Wind” lamp which now had traveled even further back in time. Despite losing her one and only love, she is a very lucky woman because, without leaving the comfort (or discomfort) of her time period, she gets to sit on a Belter parlor suite from the 1860s, dance under Japanese lanterns from 1870s, rock in wicker from the 1880s, and hang her coat upon a cast-iron rack from the 1890s. Let’s just say that it’s not a pretty sight, especially under all that gaslight.

We apparently aren’t the only ones who noticed because, even though the film won four Oscars, none of them was for set design. We don’t know whether Henry James abhorred Victorian decoration as much as his fellow novelist and interior designer Edith Wharton. In Hollywood, it doesn’t matter: the walls are white here, too. “The Heiress” gets a few more demerits for reinforcing the image—in brutal black-and-white, no less—of the eccentric Victorian spinster wearing out-of-date costumes who spends all of her time embroidering while locked inside her old-fashioned house.

*** “The Old Maid” (1939).** If you ever had any doubts about whether the Victorian era was dowdy, the title of this Civil War-era film starring Bette Davis sets things strait-laced once and for

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all. (That's true even if you don't know it is based on a novel by Edith Wharton, who is most responsible for the disparagement and demise of the Victorian styles.) With its ruffly Priscilla curtains, four-poster Colonial-style canopy beds, grandfather clocks, Hepplewhite chairs, and, of course, "Gone With the Wind" lamps, the decor can only be described as 1930s Hollywood meets the Mayflower Pilgrims.

The real 19th-century furniture—Rococo Revival, plus one spectacular Renaissance Revival parlor suite—makes its appearance only in the 1880s, when it would have been nearly two decades out of date. (By then the old maid really is old enough and sour enough to earn her title.) As if in homage to Wharton's new decorating ideas, the walls in all the houses throughout the film remain Wharton's favorite colonial-revival color, white. The message is clear: Victorian is ugly as an old maid.

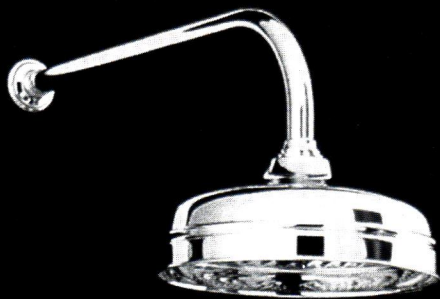
* **"Meet Me in St. Louis" (1944).** Judy Garland sings her head off about the fair, but she sure isn't singing the praises of the decor of her Victorian house in ca. 1900 St. Louis. Hollywood has wasted all that Technicolor on this one: once again, most of the walls are white. The middle-class Smith family is living in Midwestern Missouri, so you can forgive a lot of things for being out of date. But most of the furnishings, including the Renaissance Revival bedroom set in the grandfather's room, the English Empire sideboard in the dining room and the Egyptian Revival bust by the front stair balustrade, would have been considered dimly old-fashioned. The only "new" (and believable) items (in what is best described as a half-hearted attempt at a 1860s Rococo

Revival design scheme) are the 1890s gleaming brass bed in one of the girls' rooms and the 1890s white wicker in the front parlor. The St. Louis World's Fair (1904) introduced electricity to the populace, and the Smiths certainly would not have had electricity in their house until several years afterward. But that didn't bother the set designer, who threw in an electric/gas chandelier and some electric table lamps, including a couple of Tiffanys, along with the gaslights.

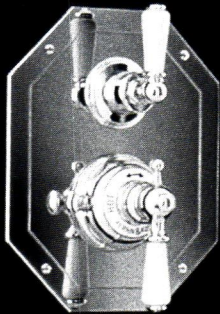
*** **"Oklahoma!" (1955).** The set design in this film is more than OK. Hollywood finally got it right, but it took all the way to 1955 to do it! From the red-and-white checked tablecloth in the country kitchen to the pump organ in the front parlor, this farmhouse, with its lemon-yellow gingerbread trim, looks as though it came from a 1905 Sears catalog. There's even an authentic sprinkling of a few cherished heirlooms, including a Rococo Revival whatnot, brought along when the pioneering family went West. Here is, in its reality, middle-class Victorian, and just as up-to-date as Kansas City.

When called upon to come up with a frightening scene for the dream sequence, however, the designer followed the lead of all the other "Victorian" films, bringing in big, bad Victorian stuff to create a Rococo Revival setting worthy of the best little movie brothel in Hollywood. The designer even gives a cameo role to a Victorian house that looks just like the one that would appear five years later—in "Psycho." ✦

NANCY A. RUHLING writes about art, antiques, and interior design, and gives lectures on "How to Make Your Home Romantic."



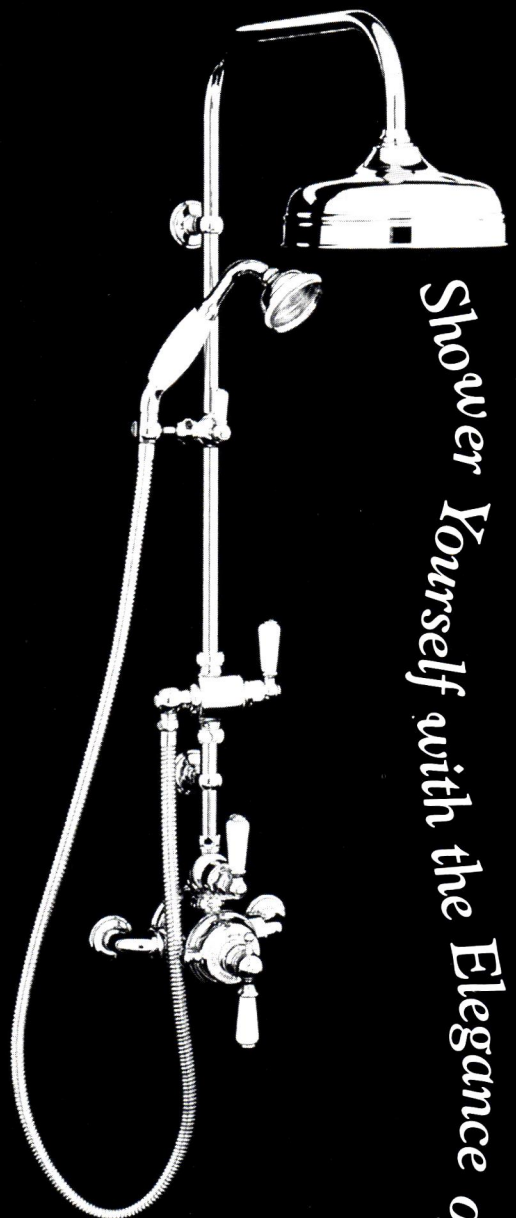
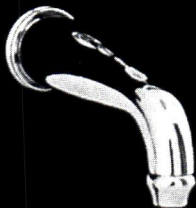
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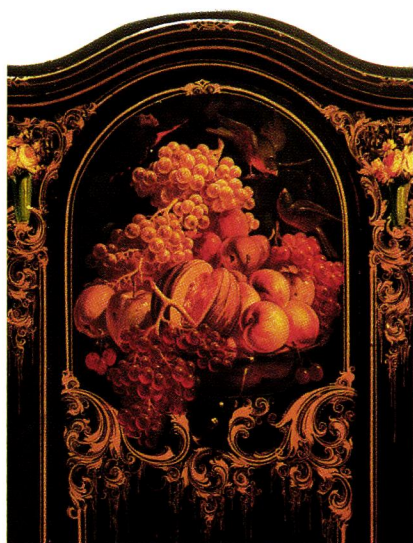
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Cottage Pine Furniture of the 19th century mimicked the styles of the times, whether Empire, Rococo, or Eastlake. Featuring painted finishes, it granted the middle class “hardwood taste on a softwood budget.”



Cottage Pine Furniture BY DAN COOPER



The richest example of cottage pine furniture known is this bedstead made in Gardner, Massachusetts, ca. 1855. The lush fruit and scenery were painted by Edward and Thomas Hill, who later went on to fame as landscape artists.

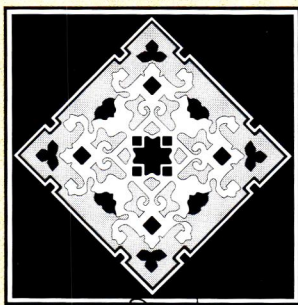
YOU'RE PADDING through a dreary antiques mall that seems to specialize in toys from your youth which are now being pawned off as antiques. You turn the corner into the “furniture section” (read: stuff gathered from the tree-belts of suburban America) and there, bathed in the warm glow of every clamp-light the joint could muster, is a Victorian bedroom set with what appears to be a hundred pieces: high-backed bed, dresser, commode, towel rack, side table, rocker, and a whole bunch of chairs. Only there's something weird about it. It's not hardwood. It's painted to look like hardwood. But with pin stripes and flowers, no less.

Welcome to the world of cottage pine, the 19th century's inexpensive alternative to hardwood furniture. Long considered to be quaint at best, and at worst a disappointing substitute for treasured walnut or chestnut pieces, mid-century painted pine is becoming appreciated for its unique decorative aspects. As recently

as last week, however, folks were stripping off the delicate 19th-century painting and slapping on pumpkin pine stain sealed with hastily brushed coats of polyurethane in order to achieve a “country” look.

Following in the tradition of the painted, mixed-woods furniture of previous centuries, cottage pine became popular in the 1830s. It coincided with the invention of the circular saw, the tool that allowed lumber to be milled in far greater quantities than did the laborious pit-sawing of the past. As the average American's employment shifted away from agrarian self-sufficiency towards factory work, he had to pay someone to make his furniture. While the well-to-do could afford the newly popular black walnut pieces for their bedrooms (or at least the master bedroom), many folks had to make do with the more economical, but exuberantly painted, pine.

It is the rare piece of cottage pine that was not intended for use in a bedroom. [continued on page 34]



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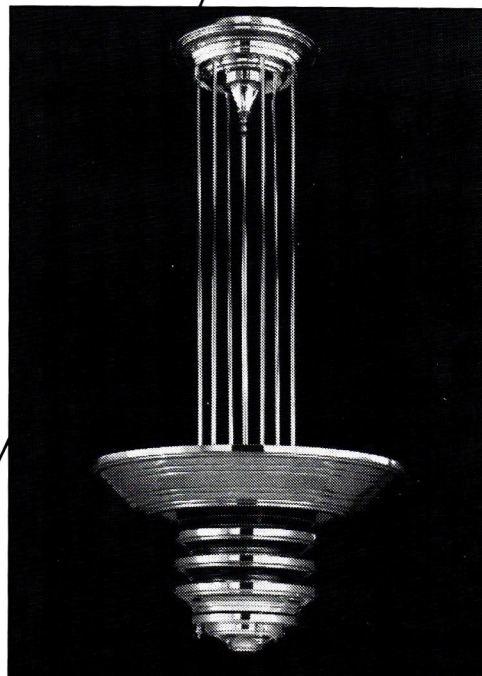
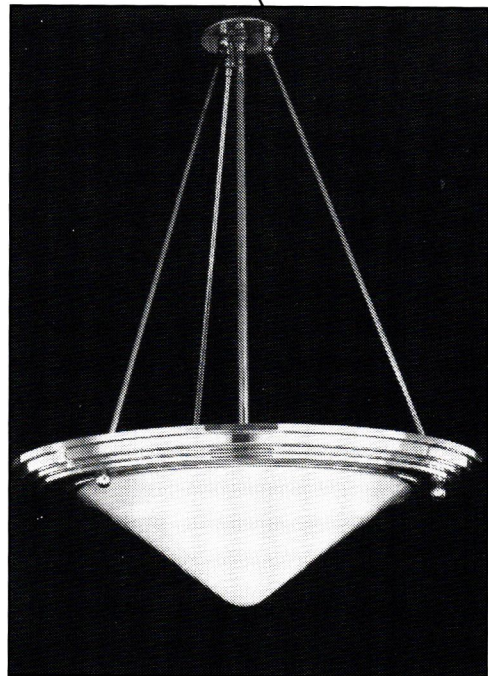


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RIGHT: A dressing chest, ca. 1850, is typical: white pine was grained to simulate oak, drawer fronts pinstriped and decorated with rococo flourishes.

FAR RIGHT: Collectible pieces of cottage pine feature oval painted landscapes centered on main panels.

OPPOSITE: Graining was often naïve and boldly brushed, not intended to fool anyone. **BELOW:** A bedroom at Sunnyside, Washington Irving's home in Tarrytown, New York, features an early-19th-century pinstriped sleigh bed, along with chairs, dresser, and other pieces.



Long considered to be, at best, a quaint substitute for treasured walnut or chestnut pieces, mid-century painted pine is now appreciated for its unique decorative aspects.



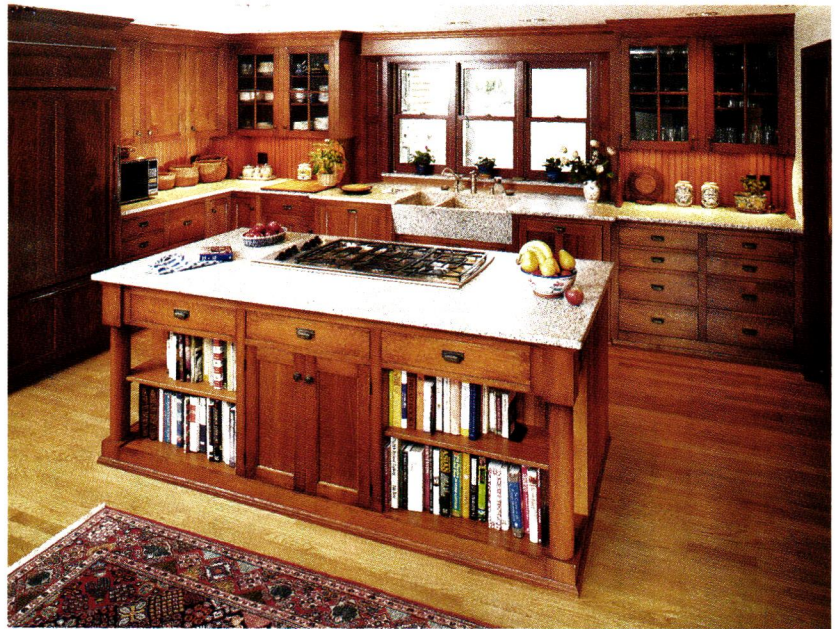
Perhaps it was felt that painted softwood wouldn't hold up to the heavier use of visitors. Cottage pine could also have been considered too informal and "cheap"-looking for public presentation. With the exceptions of the Hitchcock-type chair, Shaker furniture, and ebonized pieces, painted parlor pieces appear to be non-existent in the 19th century. Almost all inexpensive, middle-class dining and parlor furniture from 1840–1880 seems to have been built from either black walnut, chestnut, or oak. Exceptions must certainly occur. (This author once sold—far too cheaply, he might add—an exceptional, diminutive cottage pine secretary-topped desk in a late Empire style, grained in imitation of oak with walnut "mushroom" knobs.)

Cottage pine furniture adheres to no particular style. Chameleon-like, it adapts to the popular forms of any given decade, although the bulk of it seems to fall into a late Renaissance Revival/early Eastlake mélange. It first appears in Empire-style bedside commodes, in the form of a lift-top cabinet with a small half-drawer placed off to one side of the front. Most are grain-painted in im-



itation of a hardwood. It is not unusual to find a Gothic touch, such as an arch, added as the 1830s progressed. Interestingly, the grain painting is not necessarily intended to deceive the eye, for the work is naïve and boldly brushed. Flourishes such as clusters of acorns or oak leaves may appear in corners of the top and sides, along with pinstriping.

As with hardwood bedroom sets, the next stylistic variation seen is influenced by the Renaissance and Rococo Revivals. Rococo furniture of the 1850s–60s was frequently ornamented with a “racetrack” moulding: long, thin horizontal drawer mouldings that were connected by semi-circular returns at the ends of the drawer or bedstead. In the cottage pine rendition, these mouldings were often painted in a trompe l’oeil fashion on the flat drawer face with no relief. Drawer hardware was usually the hardwood fruit-and-nut pulls used on many mid-century cabinet pieces. In the Renaissance versions, the raised-relief burl panels are simulated with paint. With both styles, the characteristic arch-topped bed and dresser show up with the corre-



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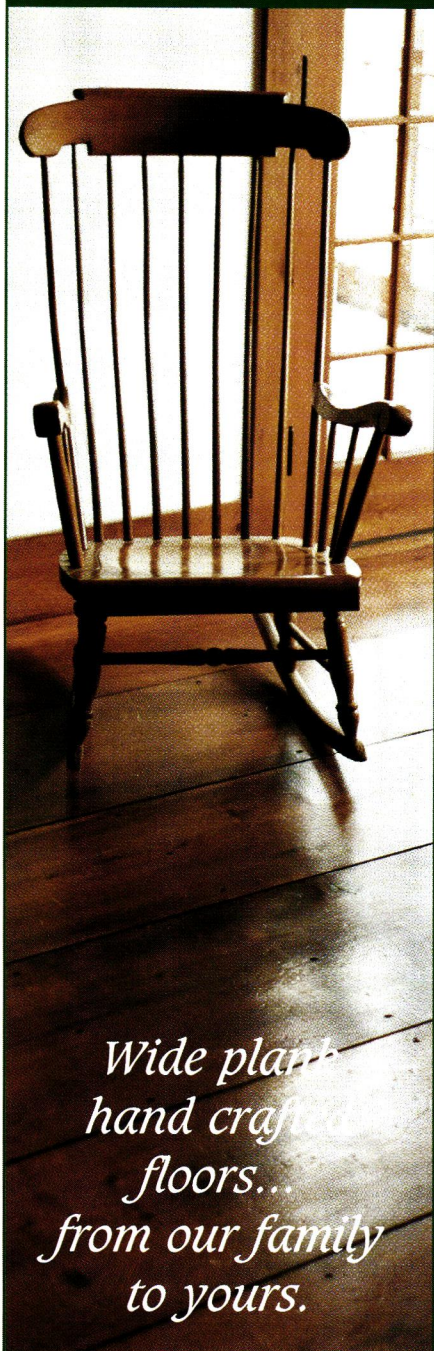
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sponding pediments and other accoutrements.

The flat, rectilinear massings of the Eastlake style lent themselves readily to cottage pine renditions. Eastlake furniture by definition has superficial ornamentation. The chip carving and incised linework that proliferated during this period was easily imitated by paint. The broad panels devoid of mouldings also created a blank canvas for some of the finest decorative painting in this genre.

In the 1890s, cottage pine wandered off into the stylistic sunset. With the coming of the Colonial Revival, there was an influx of inexpensive oak and faux mahogany-finished woods on middle-class furnishings,

colorings of an almost pastel, carousel-horse nature. The graining may be bold and naïve, or subtle and life-like, usually with one species such as oak or walnut, but also with dark and light woods, and sometimes with faux knots. Most sets were painted professionally, but, like many pieces of machine-made Victorian furniture, they could be purchased "in the white" (unfinished) at a savings to the end user. Bear in mind that decorative painting was an extremely popular activity among all classes of the 19th century. The pastel colorings are usually rendered in various shades of tan, buff, grey, soft blues, and greens. The most desirable pieces have magnificent landscapes painted on the main panels of the

Cottage pine furniture became popular in the 1830s, coinciding with the Industrial Revolution and the invention of the circular saw.

along with the occasional white-enamel finish. Brass and iron beds also became popular.

The decoration of cottage pine falls into two basic schools; grained in imitation of real wood, or delicate

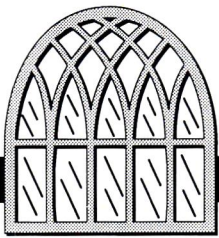
headboards, usually some pastoral or forest vignette. Sometimes the bucolic motif is carried through to the mirror frame and drawer faces on the dresser. This feature propels a set's value up at least 50% over a regularly painted or grained suite. Sometimes, you'll find marble tops on dressers and/or commodes, apparently in conflict with the concept of economical furniture. But the marble did protect the finish from water stains.

It is the highly decorative painting that makes a cottage pine piece of value to collectors and museums. As with the prized original painted finishes of 18th-century furniture, the value of a cottage piece plummets with refinishing. Preserve the finish. If nicks and dings cause you to lose sleep, in-paint them with artist's acrylic. Paste wax, or perhaps a very light coat of shellac, will help preserve the artistry for generations. ♦

SOURCES

Although no reproductions of cottage pine furniture are made today, painted furniture is very popular. Some sources:

- **THE FARMHOUSE COLLECTION**, Hailey, Idaho (208) 736-8700
- **HABERSHAM TOCCOA.**, Toccoa, Georgia (800) 422-3774
- **BETSY KRIEG SALM**, Interlaken, New York (607) 387-5330
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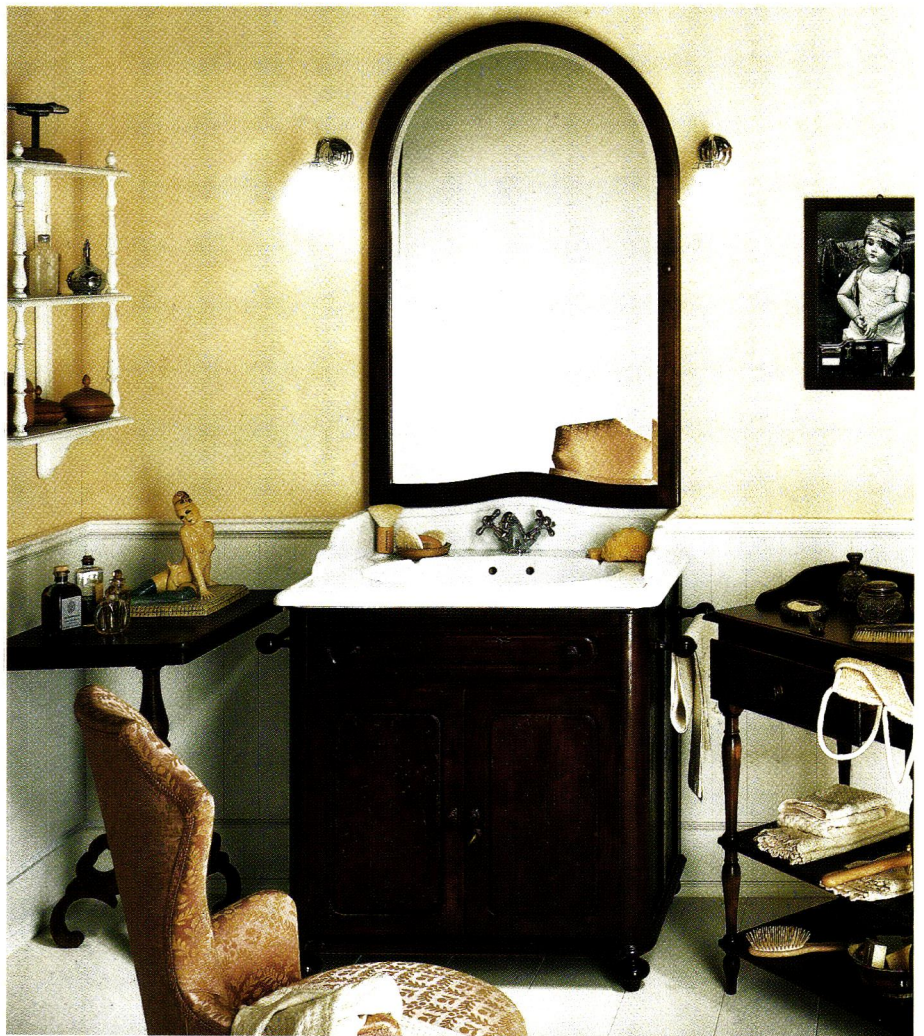
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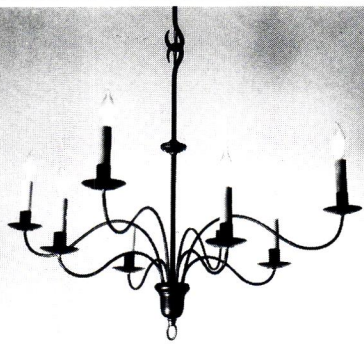
BY BRIAN D. COLEMAN

LAY RUGS AND hang curtains: the room changes, becoming quieter, softer, more inviting. The soft goods lend a tactile dimension, from the gentle cushioning of a velvet sofa to the scratchy stiffness of a horsehair chair seat. Decades of minimalist interiors and naked windows have left many people intimidated by the idea of choosing textiles. I've used acres of them, mostly vintage—including rugs and fabrics for upholstery, drapery, spreads, and table scarves—and I've helped other people with theirs. Along the way I've met enthusiastic experts.

One such person is Betsey Telford, the dynamic owner of Rocky Mountain Quilts, an [continued on page 40]



TOP: Vintage fortuny, embroidered silk, and appliqued boiled wool await a creative hand. **LEFT:** Shimmering silks and chiffons of the 1920s are stored in a pine drawer. **ABOVE:** A gilded gesso tieback handles the portière of Victorian woven fabric.



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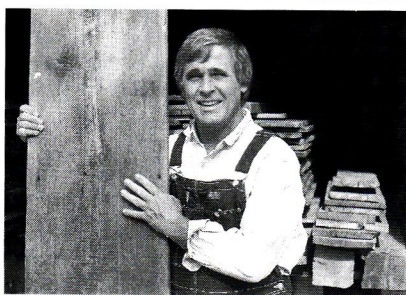
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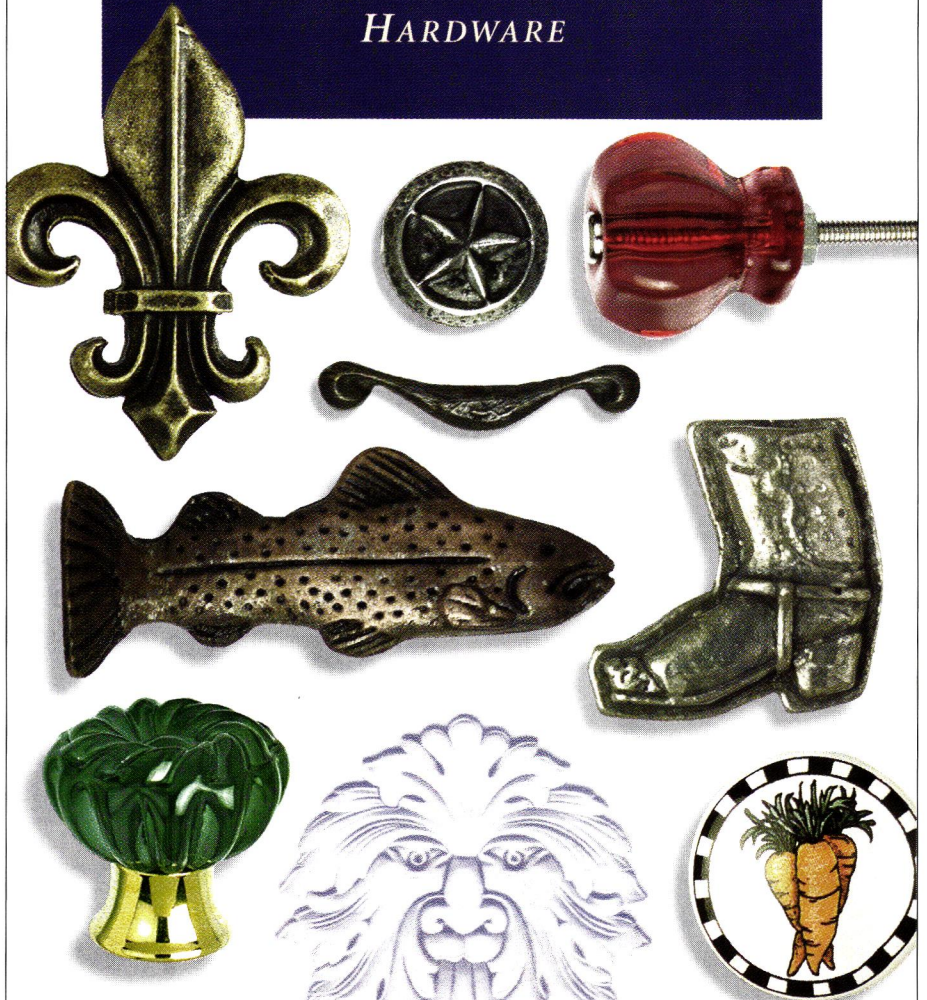
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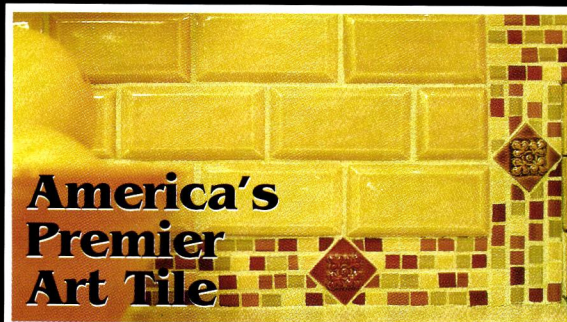
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Don't be afraid to include vintage textiles in your old-house decor. They really aren't as delicate as you think. And they often can be cleaned and conserved.

antique quilt and textile business in York, Maine. "Most people are leery of old fabrics—they don't realize they can be cleaned and conserved. Earlier fabrics were meant to last!" she says. "Textiles were a mark of affluence in the 18th and 19th centuries. People passed their fabrics down from generation to generation. Our discardable synthetics were unknown.

"Common sense tells you how to use old textiles," Betsey continues. Fragile fabrics (silk, chintz, or delicate lace) should be used only where they will not be subjected to daily wear and handling. Use them for curtains and wall hangings, or draped on a piano. Sturdier fabrics such as velvets, wools, even 18th-century linsey-woolsey [made by pre-Revolutionary colonists with wool from mutton sheep and linen from England] can be used on beds or as throws, where they can withstand

handling if you're careful. In Betsey's 1748 home adjoining her shop, 150-year-old quilts cover beds and are laid over tables and sofas. One truly spectacular, 200-year-old chintz quilt in still-vibrant blues, reds, and khakis hangs on the stairwell wall. The antique textiles contribute to the warmth and colonial-era feeling of the house.

I caught up with Sarah Truitt, a textile archivist, rummaging through bins of fabrics at New York's 26th Avenue flea market. Sarah maintains



a vast inventory of over 100,000 textiles dating from the 1790s to the 1960s. She has catalogued myriad patterns and styles in materials from 19th-century silks to 1940s mens' pinstriped suiting. Sarah provides patterns for designers including Vera Wang and Liz Claiborne and for companies like L.L. Bean and Land's End, as well as for individual restoration projects. "I use old textiles everywhere!" Sarah confesses. She has homespun dishtowels from the turn of the century in her kitchen ("unrivaled—we don't use any paper towels") and printed cotton from the 1940s instead of paper napkins. Colorful old fabrics, not contact paper, line her dresser drawers. "Don't be afraid to use an old piece of fabric," Sarah exhorts, echoing Betsey Telford.

Many dealers in antique textiles encourage customers to be adventuresome. "Textiles don't have to be perfect," says Kay Mertens of New York, who encourages buyers to "mix and match." If you can't find six vintage curtain panels that match, use two complementary sets. Try using old fabric in a new way: as pillows, or by framing a special fragment, even as a shower curtain (with liner).

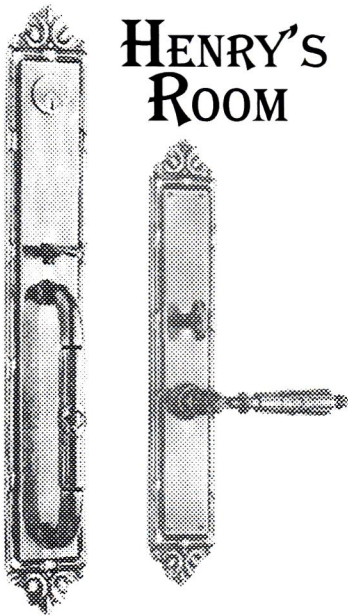
Carol Tate, a Seattle designer who specializes in upholstery, is often asked to use old fabrics on favorite antiques. "Old textiles are wonderful for restoring the authenticity of a piece," Carol agrees, "but two points need to be considered: the strength of the [continued on page 42]



LEFT: Printed and Jacquard paisley shawls (19th century), or a 1920s checkered wool blanket, are ready to enhance a room. **ABOVE:** Sarah Truitt among her fabric swatches and textile-salesmen's sample books from the past.

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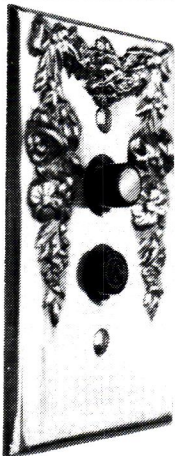
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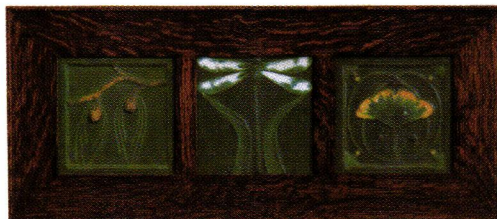
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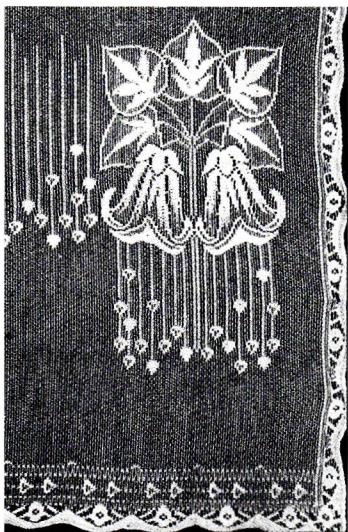
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old material, and the appropriateness of the fabric." Reupholstering involves a lot of tugging and pulling on the fabric. Muslin can sometimes be used first, then the antique material is sewn over it. A fragile, 19th-century silk will not last on a piece you'll sit in every day, so reproduction fabric is recommended. Don't be afraid to combine fabrics, using salvageable sections with newer fabric. Some ways to use fragments: Frame the back of a settee; run a needlepoint bell-pull down the center of a chair; use an old piece of embroidery as a border on the deck and front of a sofa.

CLEANING AND STORAGE

Raised in England and France, Danielle Swanson grew up surrounded by vintage textiles. Danielle's English grandmother "was a true textile hoarder," buying up large bolts of pre-War fabrics in the years following World War II when no one else was interested. So it's really no surprise that Danielle herself, after inheriting her grandmother's collection, decided to open



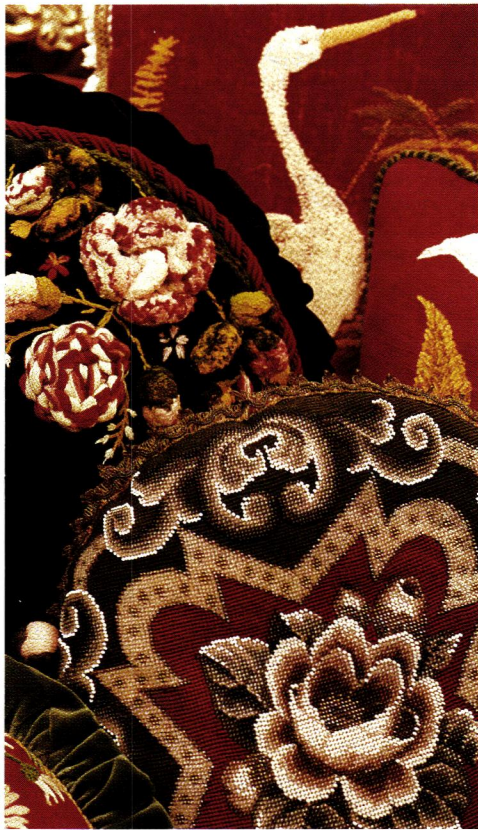
her own vintage textile shop in the picturesque town of Essex, Massachusetts, thirteen years ago. Her shop would put you in mind of Ali Baba; curtains, portieres, valances, and pan-

GLOSSARY

Confused between warp and the weft, or by a voided velvet?

brocade a woven fabric with raised designs created from additional wefts, originally made in silk but now found in all materials. **brocatelle** woven silk with two warps creating a slightly raised design. **bullion fringe** that is twisted and thick. **calamanco** cotton fabric similar to chintz. **chenille** from the French word for caterpillar, fabric woven from yarn with a looped or cut pile. **chintz** originally from India, a glazed, printed cotton, usually with floral motifs. **damask** a silk, wool, or linen reversible fabric in which the patterns are defined by the

weft and the warp; originated in Damascus. **dimity** a cotton, finely woven, with ridges created by the double or triple yarns used. **flax** used to make linen, this is the oldest known source of vegetable fiber; also used to make linseed oil. **gimp** open trim or braiding on upholstery. **jacquard** woven fabrics made on a loom invented by Joseph-Marie Jacquard in 1802. **lambrequin** a pelmet that covers a window or door. **linen** strong, absorbent fabric woven from flax. **lampas** woven usually in silk; additional wefts and warps add designs and colors. **mohair** woven from angora goat hair, which may be mixed with silk to produce a heavy, soft textile. **muslin** a plain-weave cotton



Victorian scraps and remnants, beaded and embroidered, become sumptuous pillows. The strawberries are 19th-century stumpwork.

shelves. Danielle advises that you buy a textile if you love it. "Don't be in a hurry—daydream! The use will suggest itself in time," she counsels. "I recently used material my grandmother had bought over seventy years ago to make a dress for a wedding."


Danielle has become adept at cleaning and restoring old textiles. "The Irish," she recalls, "used to throw their linens over the hedgerow!" Danielle likes to rejuvenate hers by a gentle washing followed by hanging them outside for several weeks, where the sun will bleach out stains including nicotine. Laces, if not too large, are best cleaned by putting them in a lidded jar with mild detergent and shaking them, as this prevents the weight of the lace from pulling on itself. Velvets respond well to a good shaking, gentle vacuuming, and may also be freshened by tumbling them in a dryer with no heat and a few

els of 18th- and 19th-century English and American silks, brocades, tapestries, and velvets are draped and swagged on the walls, and folded into multi-hued piles in racks and on

that may vary in texture from coarse to fine. **passementerie** French for trimmings, cords, and tassels. **pelmet** shaped or swagged material placed above a window or door to hide the top of the curtain. **pile** raised loops that are cut to produce the face of the fabric. **plush** fabric with a raised, even pile resembling velvet, made from cotton, silk, wool, or synthetics. **repp** strong fabric with a ribbed pattern made from cotton, wool, or synthetics, often used in upholstery. **ruche** a strip of fabric gathered and used to trim upholstery or curtains. **satin** a plain-weave fabric, originating in China, which has a smooth, shiny surface and dull back. **silk** a lustrous, strong fabric made from the yarn

produced from cocoons of silk worms. **ticking** striped linen or cotton, densely woven and commonly used for pillows and mattresses. **toile de Jouy** printed cotton, first created in 1760 in Jouy-en-Josas near Versailles, depicting romantic and sometimes current-event scenes. **velvet thick**, rich fabric in which the pile warp is raised in loops. **Voided velvet** has loops which have been cut into patterns. **warp** fixed threads set lengthwise on a loom. **weft** the threads that are woven through the warp from side to side on the loom, producing the pattern in the fabric. **worsted** fabric made from wool yarn which is strong and smooth.

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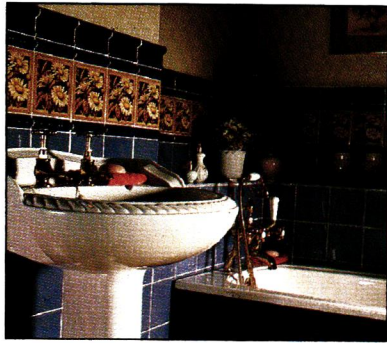
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THE VICTORIAN ELEGANCE SEMI-ANNUAL ANTIQUE SHOW, 2 times per year at the Richardson Civic Center, Richardson, Texas (near Dallas). Vintage Victorian fashions, accessories, and textiles, plus lectures. Upcoming: Sept. 23-24 and Feb. 24-25, 2001. Promoters: (972) 235-5139.

sheets of Bounce fabric softener. "A little turpentine will take out many grease stains," Danielle advises.

"Who wants to sleep underneath a dirty old quilt?" asks Betsey Telford. Betsey recommends testing a small section of each color of the fabric with a drop of lukewarm water. Vegetable dyes, used until the mid-19th century when aniline dyes were introduced, are often fugitive. If the colors hold, washing gently with a mild detergent such as Orvus (a product used to wash cow's udders) will often remove most dirt and grime. A textile is often best dried outside, placed upside down over a white-cotton sheet. Betsey strongly recommends consulting a professional textile conservator if you have any doubts, or if the textile is valuable.

"How you store textiles is very important," Danielle Swanson warns; she advises rolling fragile pieces rather than folding them, with the design on the outside. (Paper-towel cardboard rolls or mailing tubes work well.) This prevents creases and maintains the fabric's flexibility. If you do have creases or wrinkles, "hang the piece in a steamy bathroom."

The Smithsonian Institute, which

has a large textile collection, recommends textiles have no direct contact with wood, tissue, or wrapping paper, all of which are acidic. Wrap the textile in a clean, white-cotton cloth, such as a pillowcase or bed-sheet, to store it. Fabrics should not be sealed airtight in plastic, as moisture can condense inside the bag and the plastic may give off harmful fumes as it decomposes. Remember not to crush delicate fabrics underneath heavier ones. The best place for storage, says the Smithsonian, is the top of a dresser drawer, protected from light. (Both natural cellulose fibers, as found in cotton and linen, and animal fibers, as found in silk and wool, are damaged by sunlight as well as artificial light.) Air the fabric once or twice a year and, if it is stored folded, refold it along new lines.

"Indeed, it ought to be a cardinal rule in every home that the silver, linen, and fine manners are to be used every day." So wrote Emily Holt in *The Complete Housekeeper* in the late 19th century (quoted in Michele Clise's *The Linen Closet*). "Use brightens and whitens all three, and does not wear them anything like so much as lying in wait for company." ✦

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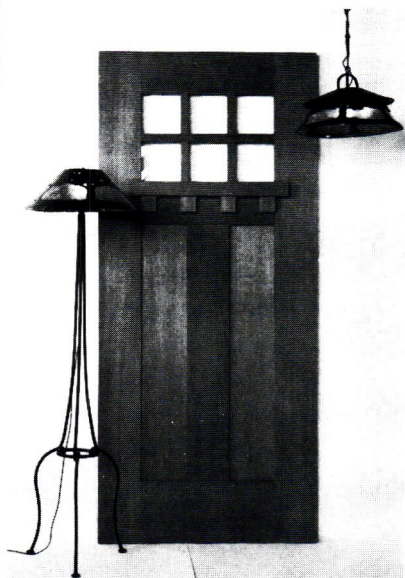
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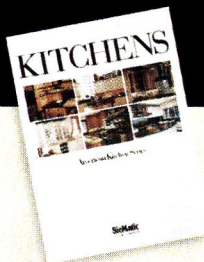


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LIVING OUTDOORS

Happily, there are no hard-and-fast rules for choosing among the many kinds of outdoor furniture: wood, stone, iron, or wicker.
(page 66) ▶



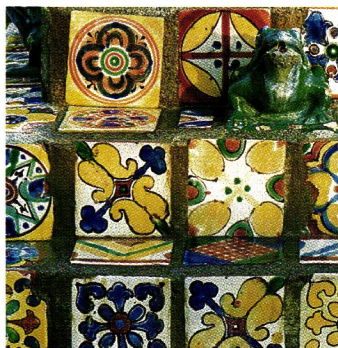
WHAT CHARACTER!

The clients were told that deep, mellow colors would bring out the best in their “oppressively dark” rooms . . . how one family has embraced Arts and Crafts.
(page 48) ♣



ROARING BUNGALOW

When they bought this house in Seattle, it was almost miraculously intact. They made it even better with their collecting: Steuben and Frye glass, Rookwood ashtrays, parrots and monkeys. Welcome to the Jazz Age. (page 54) ♣

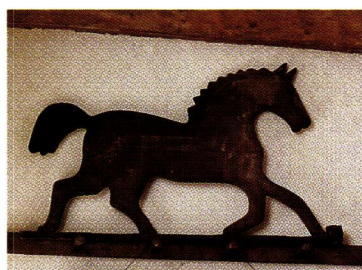


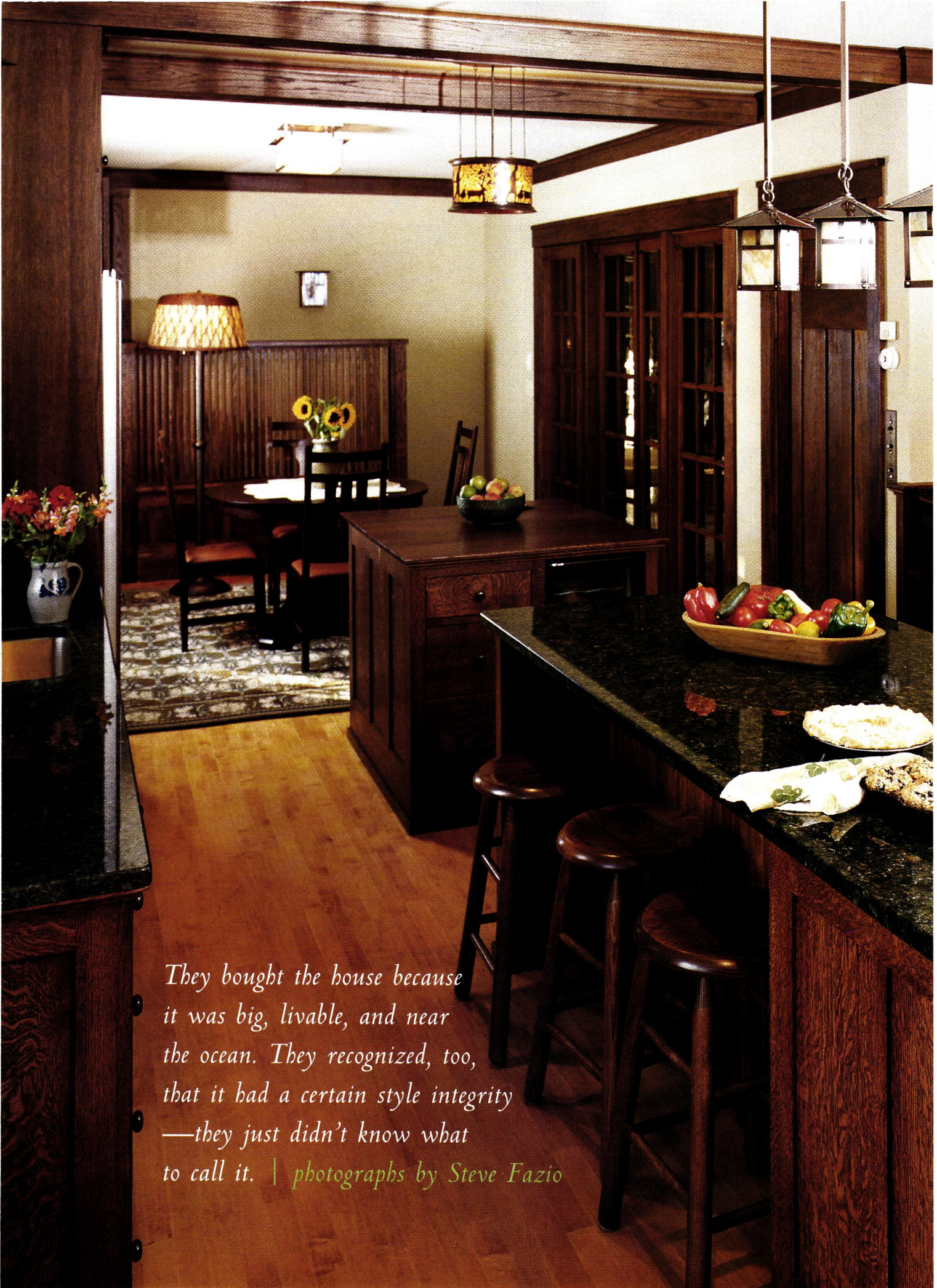
ART TILE JEWELS

In California ca. 1910–1930s, designers practiced tile as theater—using tiles on stair risers, in bathtub niches, and on vaulted kitchen ceilings.
(page 78) ♣

COUNTRY IS BORN

Nina Fletcher Little was among the first to collect “the country arts.” They remain as intended at Cogswell’s Grant.
(page 72) ♣





They bought the house because it was big, livable, and near the ocean. They recognized, too, that it had a certain style integrity—they just didn't know what to call it. | photographs by Steve Fazio



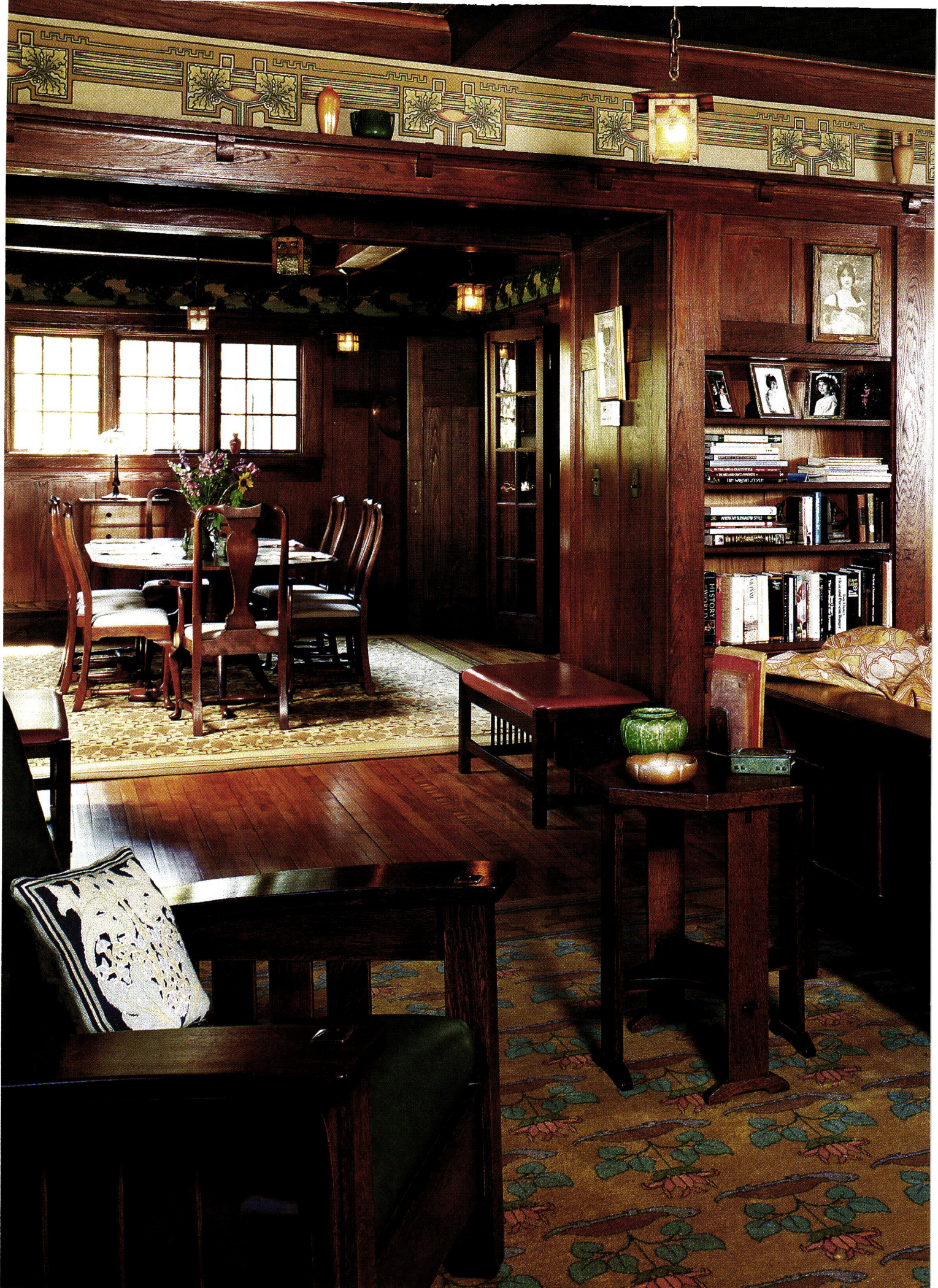
CHARACTER INTACT

BY DAVID E. BERMAN

GOOD ARCHITECTURE deserves to be treated to the style in which it was built, not subjected to the vagaries of fickle fashion. Those of us who have survived our own voyages through the sea of regret that is restoration have often wished that the expenditure in emotion, labor, and money to put back what once had been were not so high. In short, the more supercilious of us wish, over a glass of wine (preferably a nice Syrah) that, as a friend of mine put it, “the great steaming twit of a moron who messed up my house was in the lowest level of Hell alongside the aluminum-siding salesman.”

But there were no such regrets in the case of this seaside jewel. The new owners knew its character was quite intact (if roughened) when, at the urging of a mutual friend,

The house's original open plan, woodwork details, and Arts and Crafts metalwork carry through in the new kitchen. ABOVE: Soft green paint on exterior woodwork emphasizes the kitchen entry. The front porch was left enclosed, but made more sympathetic to the original architecture.





Appropriate period friezes (these are wallpaper) enhance the rich woodwork; white paint had detracted from color harmony. Lamps, artwork, and ceramics are antiques; lighting and carpets are reproductions. Furniture is both old and new. Original and reproduction textiles are from the author/designer, through his Trustworth Studios.



they called me for guidance. (The mutual friend is a decorator, who demurred when they called on her first, saying, "What you have here is a good Arts and Crafts house. But I can't stand this style.") I went at once. Principal rooms were virtually unchanged, retaining their original wood finish, period hardware, and Stickley lighting fixtures.

My prospective clients knew that their 18th-century Queen Anne furniture and red-and-blue oriental rugs did nothing for the "oppressively dark" interiors, and vice versa.

I told them the obvious: Change the white paint of ceiling and frieze to dark, mellow colors so as to bring out the highlights of the woodwork. Remove the 75-watt clear light bulbs in the original lanterns and replace them with 25-watt (or carbon filament) bulbs. Consider olive-green carpets. They smiled, saying they'd think about it and call me back . . . which they did. Three years later.

IN THE INTERVAL they studied up, so by the time our work together began we spoke the same language. They'd

gotten over an earlier impulse to tear out the staircase's bench seat with its original Stickley newel-post light. We covered the ceiling, after all, with faux gilded burlap, and we installed new Arts and Crafts-period paper friezes which, despite being darker than the white paint, appeared to lighten the effect of the natural woodwork. We installed carbon-filament bulbs and everyone who came by exclaimed, "How this room glows!" From the original manufacturer came English carpets designed by C.F.A. Voysey and William Morris. New and old Arts



LEFT: The porch, long ago enclosed, is made appropriate with unglazed pavers, laid with narrow grout lines over new radiant heating. A Voysey reproduction rug accompanies antique Bar Harbor wicker. **ABOVE:** An outdoor showerbath added with simple detailing. **BELOW:** The lamp is an antique Bradley and Hubbard piece.



and Crafts furniture made a sympathetic interior, easy to maintain.

The original kitchen was long gone and its replacement was bad. The Kennebec Company in Maine, known for their period cabinet details, designed and built a new one.

My clients survived this project comparatively unscathed. (A few disquieting moments came during leaps of faith, for which we are all now grateful.) Lingering late-night guests, succumbing to the womb-like interior characteristic of Arts and Crafts, must occasionally be thrown out. ✦



YOWSAH! a 1925 bungalow revisits the ROARING TWENTIES

by Brian Coleman | photographs by Linda Svendsen

FLAPPERS. BOOTLEG GIN. Clara Bow. The Charleston. Lucky Lindy and flagpole sitters, government graft taken in stride by a restless public. It was a flamboyant decade—even in Seattle, where, in 1925, a bootlegging judge “thanked” the police lieutenant who had helped him supply the speak-easies by building him a fashionable, Mediterranean-style bungalow on a hill overlooking Lake Washington.

Miraculously, little changed in the sturdy house over the next 55 years. When Ron Weber and Bill Peiffer bought it in 1981, the fanciful wrought-iron gates still graced the winding steps and iron curves screened the front door. Inside, mahogany woodwork gleamed, highlighted by the beveled-glass French doors and Batchelder tiles. Baby-pink tiles in the bathroom had escaped mid-century taste changes, as had the original jadite-green and beige kitchen. You could almost hear Rudy Vallee crooning “Vagabond Lover” on the old radio.

“All we had to do was cosmetic work,” Ron confesses. They painted walls a dark peach, keeping period fixtures and woodwork intact. They decided

LEFT: The dining room has a mahogany cove moulding, arched windows, glass-fronted corner cabinets, and fancy doors. The Italianate, 1920s walnut table rests on an Aztec-influenced Wilton carpet. **RIGHT:** The davenport piled with period cushions dates to the 1920s.







to furnish the house as if the police lieutenant had just moved in. “We pored over period advertisements and magazines,” Bill explains, “to get an idea of what would have been here.” Mediterranean-revival chairs were paired with painted iron torchières. The pair started to collect glistening Steuben glass and opalescent Frye glass, “smart” smoking accessories, Rookwood ashtrays and bookends.

Ron and Bill divided the long living room with a 1920s davenport still covered in its original cream-and-grey printed velvet. At one end

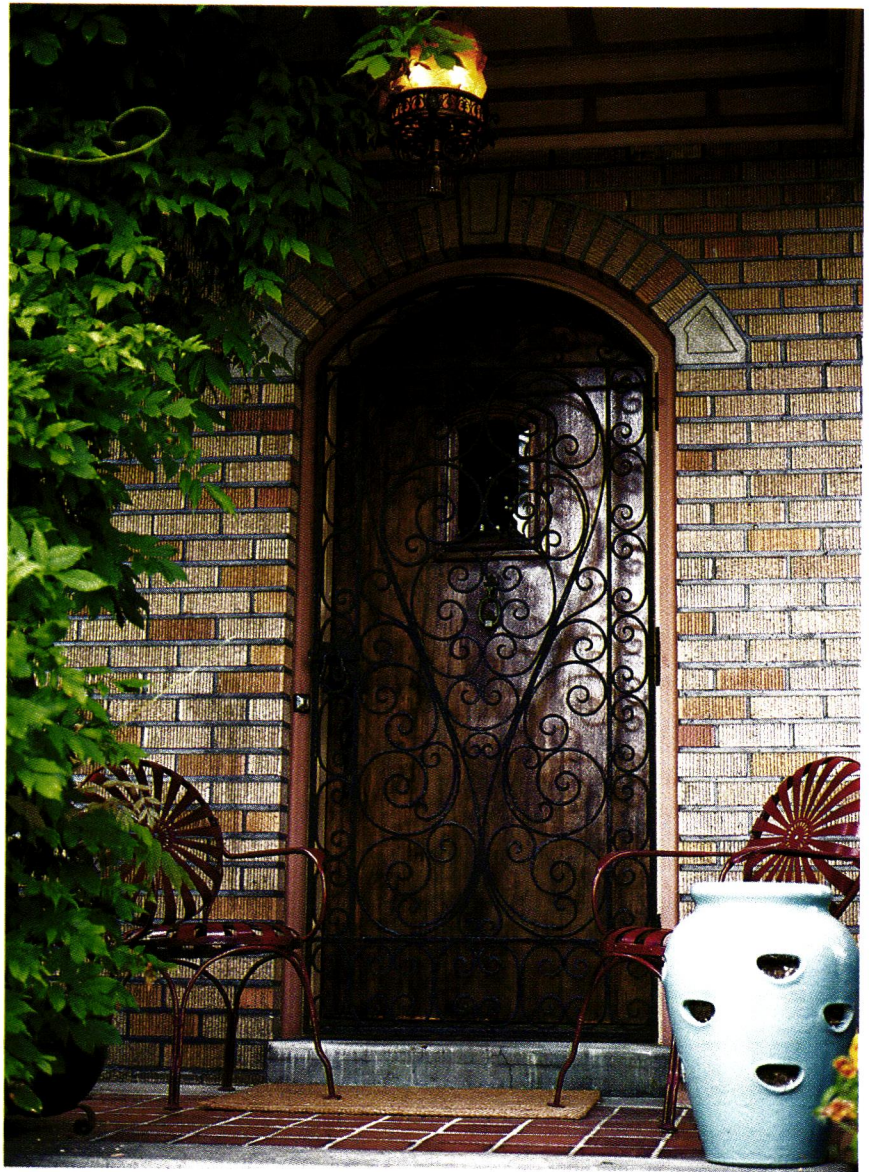
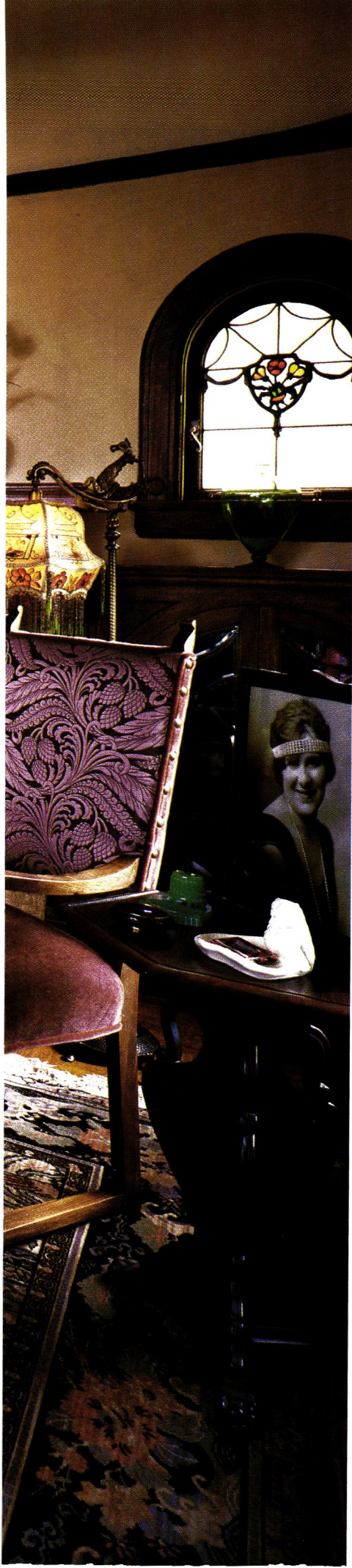
of the room, fat pipe-smoking Dutchmen hold up tile shelves on the Batchelder fireplace. A crane flies before a full moon on the handpainted gesso firescreen. Popular oriental motifs are repeated in the pagoda and flowers delicately handpainted on the fringed and beaded silk lampshade, which swings from an iron floor lamp. Peacocks and mystical landscapes of the Far East swirl underfoot in the multihued Wilton carpet.

To one side of the davenport stands a five-foot-tall combination torchière and fan. A Spanish-style

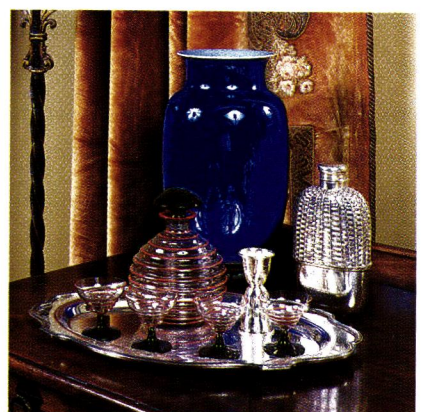
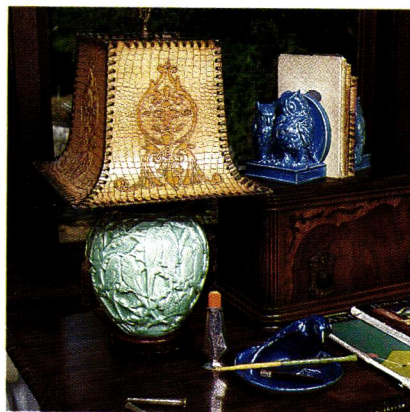


Miraculously untouched since 1925, the kitchen boasts original, cream-color cabinets and stove hood. The owners added the 1927 GE stove and found its matching stove clock. A jadite-green mangle doubles as a work station. The coil-top refrigerator was made in 1930. ABOVE: Glamorous and high style, the pink bathroom was inspired by Hollywood: colored fixtures, recessed tubs, and elaborate tiles were all the rage. The wrought-iron aquarium seems straight from the set of a Gloria Swanson movie.





Centered around the Batchelder-tiled fireplace, the long living room is furnished with Mediterranean-revival chairs, Rookwood ashtrays, Steuben glass vases, and an exuberant Wilton carpet—an exotic and colorful *mélange* typical of Jazz Age interiors. ABOVE: The 1930s iron chairs are just like the ones in the movie “Casablanca.” BELOW: (left) Rookwood owl bookends and a parakeet lamp add to the exoticism. (right) Gorham sterling hip flask (for hooch) accompanies a martini glass ensemble.





*“We pored over period advertisements and magazines,”
Bill explains, “to get an idea of what would have been here.”
A colorful mélange of exotic styles emerged, typical of the decade.*

sofa table is lit by an elegant black Steuben lamp, made in 1927, which still has its original shade of pleated silk. At the other end of the room sits turned Mediterranean furniture.

Passage from living room to dining room is through arched doors with beveled and stained glass in a spiderweb motif. A walnut dining table and chairs with 1920s Italianate forms fill a room lit by an elegant iron chandelier with its original paint and amber teardrop prisms. The Wilton carpet here is unusual, with an Aztec-derived pattern. Amethyst Steuben candlesticks and a matching bowl rest on the table; more of the collection is kept in the twin corner cabinets. Illuminated by glowing Steuben art-glass shades, the arched and mirrored cabinets spectacularly display Steuben dishes and stemware in iridescent gold, peacock blue, and soft pink.

WALK INTO THE KITCHEN and you can almost hear “Yes, We Have No Bananas” coming out of that phantom radio. It is 1925 in here; the creamy cabinets and their pulls, the hexagonal tile were perfectly preserved—“The kitchen convinced us” to buy the house, admit the owners. They ran across the 1930 working refrigerator, which fit perfectly in the niche that had been designed for one. Another lucky find was the 1927 GE electric stove with warming oven. A jadite-green mangle, once used for

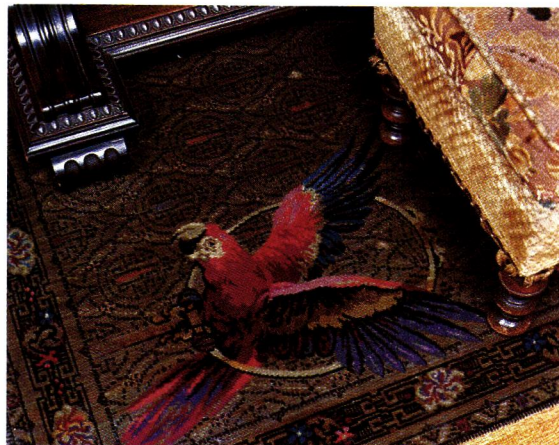
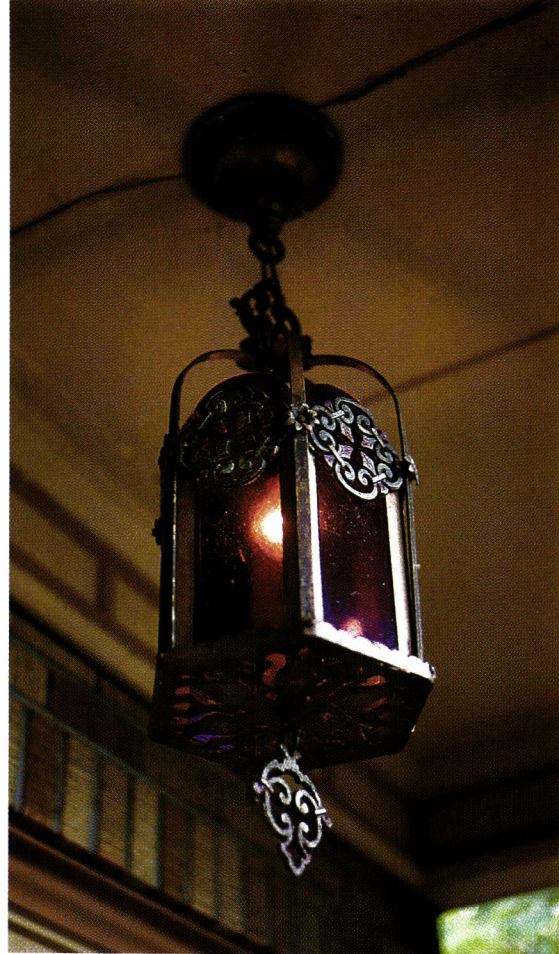
pressing sheets and pillowcases, doubles as a workstation.

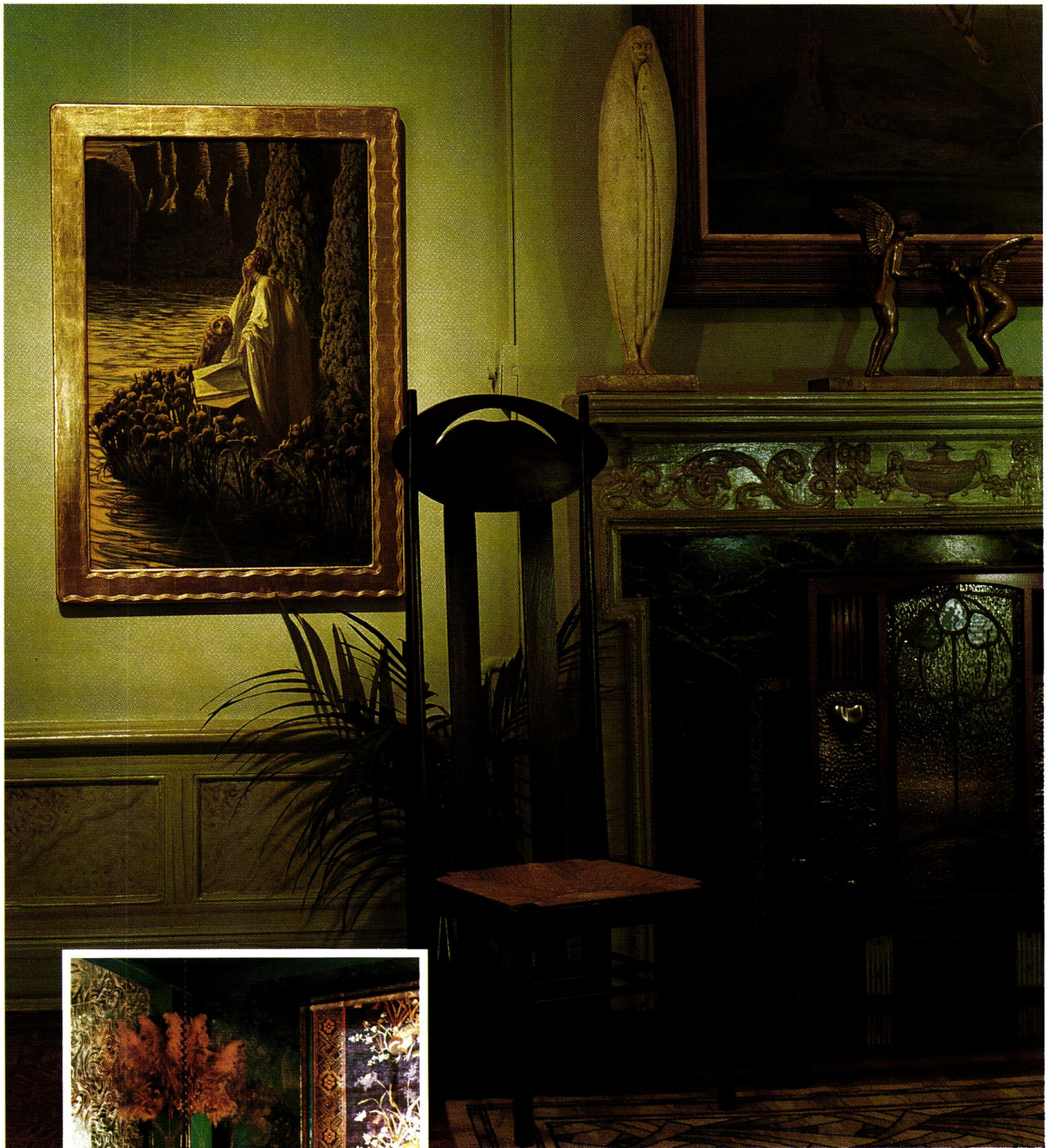
Colorful vintage appliances and cookware crowd the shelves: a 1920s hotplate, brilliant-blue Fostoria glass plates. The breakfast nook overlooks the backyard fountain. “The sense of humor of the 1920s is what I really enjoy,” Ron says. He’s found an assortment of light-hearted paraphernalia including cheery parrots, a puppy-dog dishtowel holder, and the Japanese pagoda birdhouse from 1932, held by a chain of swinging monkeys, which houses their singing finch *Caiaphas*. Whimsical as it is, the period kitchen actually works.

Bathrooms were revolutionized during the 1920s. Inspired by silent films of Cecil B. DeMille featuring beautiful women luxuriously bathing in exotic opulence, manufacturers and the public spurned the “hygienic” white cells of the previous decade. This pink bathroom was the height of fashion: no clawfoot tub or high-tank toilet here. Instead, a modern toilet and square china sink accompany a recessed Roman tub. The gold and pink wall sconces with painted silk shades add to the glamour in this Hollywood bath. Ron and Bill added only the Deco overhead fixture.

Over two decades, Ron Weber and Bill Peiffer have recaptured the fun and romance of the Jazz Age through their collecting, inspired by this marvelously intact house. ♦

OPPOSITE: A pair of built-in corner cabinets lit by golden Steuben-glass shades hold a rainbow of Steuben art glass and stemware. **RIGHT:** (top) The original amber-glass and wrought-iron porch light remains. (center) A brightly hued parrot flaps its wings in the Wilton carpet. (bottom) Ron Weber and Bill Peiffer motor in the 1930 Franklin club sedan with an air-cooled engine (no water or fan).





*Interior design between the Wars
It was flashy, eclectic, colorful, freewheeling, and
modern, emerging in the disobedient tumult of the
Twenties. But it was quaintly historical, too,
embracing every revival from Tudor to Pueblo.*

JAZZ AGE STYLE

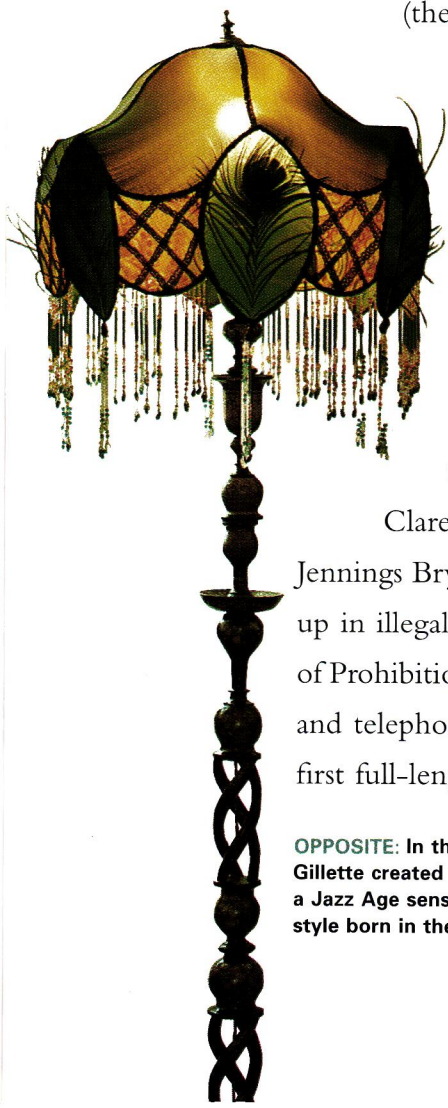
SCOTT FITZGERALD christened it “the Jazz Age” with a bottle of bathtub gin. It was the Lawless Decade, the Era of Wonderful Nonsense, the Get Rich Quick Era, the Age of Confusion—the Roaring Twenties. Wild speculation and optimism characterized the decade, from Charles Ponzi’s pyramid scheme in Boston in 1920, to the Florida Land Boom, to the Great Crash of 1929. It was the beginning of buying on credit—why scrimp and save when you could buy a brand-new Model T for a few dollars down? Millions of Americans did. Probably the most defining change was Prohibition. Passed in 1920

by Brian Coleman

(then repealed in 1933), Prohibition kick-started the stunning backlash to “the dry decade” which would break down all the old inhibitions and rules. ■ Americans had, after all, just finished saving democracy. It was high time to let loose. Women who had worked in factories during the War had no intention of letting a fella with a five-cent cigar send them home. Starting with the right to vote, granted by the 19th Amendment in 1920, women led the rebellion. Hair was bobbed and corsets tossed, low-waisted dresses hemmed above the knees.

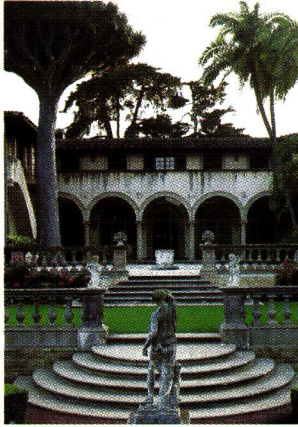
Clarence Darrow and The Theory of Evolution battled William Jennings Bryan and the Bible at the Monkey Trial. Speak-easies sprang up in illegal nightclubs and basements, selling hooch in bold defiance of Prohibition. Fatty Arbuckle’s sex scandal rocked the press. From radio and telephones to Al Jolson’s “The Jazz Singer,” released in 1927, the first full-length talkie film, change was everywhere.

OPPOSITE: In the Victorian-period apartment of a New York art dealer, designer Richard Gillette created a glowing backdrop. Colors, faux finishes, and “modern” furnishings lend a Jazz Age sensibility. **FAR LEFT:** Bold graphics and 1930s lighting evoke the Art Deco style born in the Jazz Age. **THIS PAGE:** Who could forget the beaded lampshades?



THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE 20s

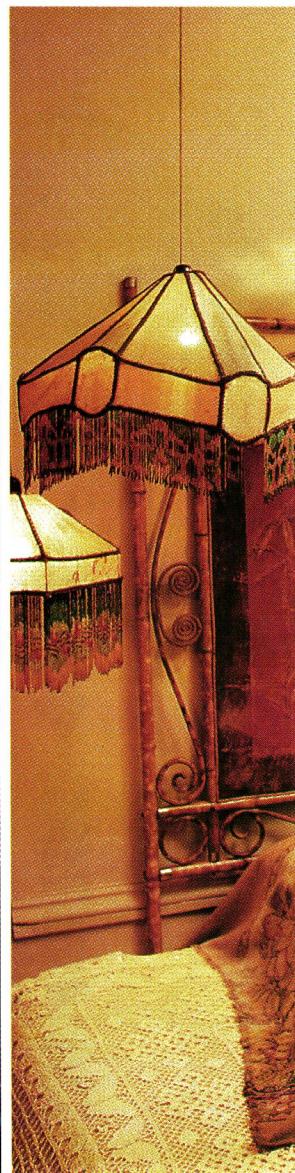
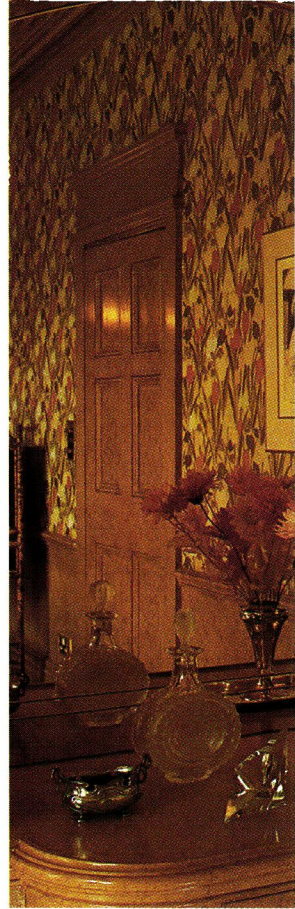
World War I had ended and the suburbs were booming. People wanted something different, with more pizzazz than the standard Foursquare; many had seen Europe. "Picturesque" and historical housing styles proliferated. With the new technologies and building standards, anyone could afford a French chateau or English manor—solid masonry was no longer necessary now that stone and brick veneers had been per-



fectured. You could even order your whole house in a kit from Sears! ■ The Colonial Revival style was to be the most popular and enduring of the various revivals. Gone was the old-fashioned front porch, but the garage had arrived. Gambrel roofs topped the popular Dutch Colonial variants. Second only in popularity to Colonial, English Tudor was re-interpreted in styles ranging from self-consciously vernacular, "thatch"-roofed (really shingles) cottages to stately "stockbroker" mansions. Steep roofs and gables, diamond casements, half-timbering, and imposing chimneys evoked Merrie Olde England, no matter that the render (stucco) was cement. For Francophiles, *les petits chateaux*, with their conical tower entrances and exaggerated rooflines, brought home the Normandy farmhouse. ■ The 1915 Panama-California

Exposition inspired the Spanish Colonial Revival. White-stuccoed walls, red tile roofs, and arched windows (their awnings supported by wrought-iron spears) were hallmarks of the Twenties hacienda. Exotic ornamentation was sometimes added in Churrigueresque (Spanish Baroque) or Plateresque (Moorish) styles. Pueblo Revival, a variant, celebrated our Native American heritage. The flat roofed adobes were actually modern earth-tinted stucco over a wood frame. ■ Log cabins and rustic lodges evoked the Frontier. Swiss chalets with flatsawn decorative trim were transplanted from the mountaintops of Switzerland to the suburbs of The Jazz Age. You could find just about any style, each with a modern twist.

INSET ABOVE: Kirk Johnson house, Montecito, Calif. 1927. **CENTER:** Prohibition and jazz were uniquely American, but high times and breakthrough style were as evident in Western Europe. These two interior vignettes are in London, decorated by aficionados of 1920s–30s style. **BELOW:** Period fabrics and lighting.



*"The Jazz Age was wicked and monstrous and silly.
Unfortunately, I had a good time."*

—JOURNALIST AND SOCIAL CRITIC HEYWOOD BROWN (1888–1939)
quoted by Kevin Rayburn in THE 1920S (online)

THE MIGRATION to urban centers had begun as machines replaced men down on the farms. As morals and manners changed, people unshackled their rooms. Both the formal elegance of the Edwardian era and the "honest simplicity" of the Arts and Crafts movement were supplanted by a hankering after Modern design. Technological advances in furniture making, along with the use of veneers, made mass production profitable for the large furniture companies in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and other manufacturing centers. Interpretations of historical styles were favored: Jacobean, Queen Anne, Spanish Renaissance. But these examples were only vaguely reminiscent of the actual periods.

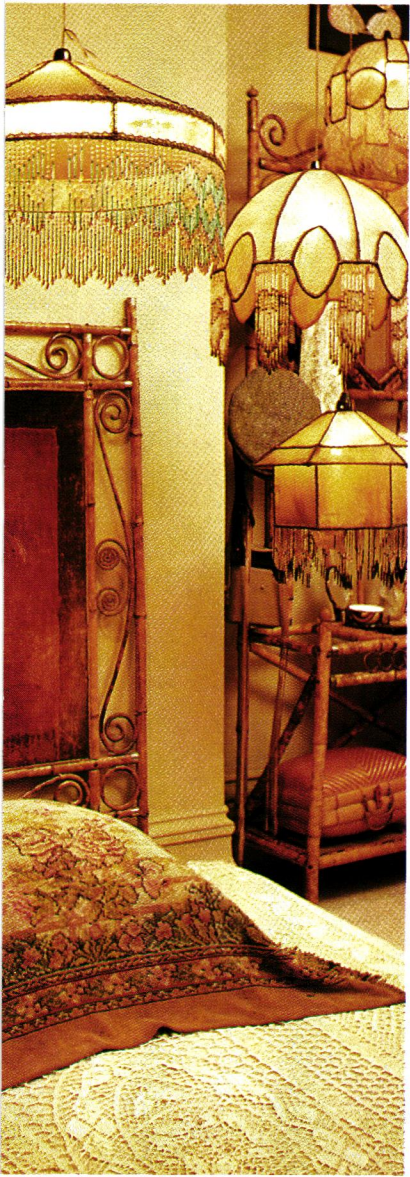
Painted furniture was popular, often with decals or stencils in exotic styles from polychromed "Egyptian" to red-lacquered "Oriental." As rolled-up stockings and short hemlines became the vogue, legs on furniture came out as well. Cabriole legs classified a mahogany-veneered buffet as "Queen Anne," while massive, turned legs made a similar piece "Tudor." Intricate and exotic veneers (like zebrawood) were a favorite ornamentation, replacing carved embellishments. As electricity became commonplace, special end tables were designed to hold the new lamps. Davenport tables, telephone chair-and-table combinations, and smoking stands were introduced to popular acclaim. It wasn't until the mid-Thirties, however, when Prohibition was finally repealed, that the icon of the American living room debuted: the low cocktail or coffee table for the sofa.


The formal parlor was history; well-stuffed furniture made a comfortable "living room." After dinner, all would gather around the radio cabinet. While Mama and Aunt Selma played Mah Jongg, the family listened to Rudy Vallee croon, or to Eddie Cantor belting out "Making Whoopee."

Convenience and color invaded the kitchen. Cozy breakfast nooks were set in small alcoves, masculine oak tables and chairs gradually replaced by daintier, ash and veneered pieces painted in a rainbow of colors. ("Is your preference seagull gray, Chinese red, canary yellow, kingfisher blue or pheasant green?" asks a period ad [as described in Swedberg's *The Furniture of the Depression Era*].) Decalcomanias, or decals, and stencils in the form of everything from flowerbaskets to parrots on a swing were applied to tables and chairs, overhead light globes, and serving trays. Even the spatula and colander were cheerfully painted, usually in green or red with ivory pinstriping.

Cecil DeMille put Gloria Swanson in a sunken Roman tub in the 1919 film "Male and Female," in an opulent room far removed from the all-white, cold, and utilitarian bathroom most moviegoers had at home. Soon manufacturers offered plumbing fixtures in Tang Red and Clair de Lune Blue; ads featured palatial bathrooms with marble and mosaic tiles and arched recesses for the tubs.

All the fun came to a sudden halt in 1929. But we can thank technology and optimism, flappers and bootleggers for a rich and colorful decade of design. ✦





HISTORY GARDENS

Living in Style Outdoors

Pull up a chair—or maybe two—in the great outdoors. You'll be keeping company with untold generations of your forebears. BY MARY ELLEN POLSON

FORGET THE IDEA that garden furniture is a modern conceit. Whether the choice is a log rolled up to the fire or a smooth stone placed by a stream, people have been making themselves comfortable outdoors for a very long time.

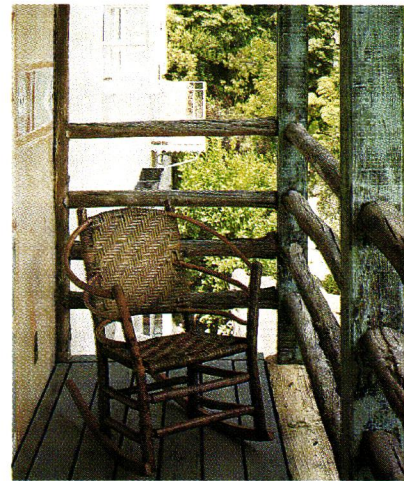
Not surprisingly, many forms of outdoor seating go deep into history. There's evidence that the Romans wove chairs out of wicker, for instance, and the freestanding stone trestle bench dates to Renaissance—if not Roman—times. Rustic furniture, so

familiar to us from the late-19th-century Adirondack Great Camps, was in vogue in both China and Europe in the 1700s.

Prior to the 19th century, however, folks made little distinction between indoor and outdoor seating. Pulling chairs and tables out of the house to use in the garden was a means of domesticating the outdoors, says John Danzer, owner of Munder-Skiles, a purveyor of reproduction garden furniture in New York. "There was a lot of carrying in and out," Danzer says. "You see it in European portraiture—the family is having tea outside with



The popularity of the Adirondack chair has spread far from its Northwoods origins. The slanted back is ideal for relaxation, and the broad arms are ample for book or drink, making this the perfect chair for an outdoor room with a view.



LEFT: The classically proportioned stone bench supported on pillars has Renaissance roots. **ABOVE:** A rustic porch chair, in the Midwestern style made famous by Old Hickory Furniture Co. **BELOW:** Cast and wrought-iron furniture had a long reign in the 19th century, leading to 20th-century revivals like this elegant patio set.

a candlestick table and chairs.”

An exception, however, was the Windsor chair. Built of scrap wood, its joints tightened over a fire, the brightly painted Windsor chair was intentionally made for outdoor use. George Washington left more than 30 of them outside to weather on the front porch at Mount Vernon.

Thomas Jefferson’s famous “Chinese Chippendale” bench was undoubtedly a novelty when he designed it in 1801. The wooden slat- or fretwork bench reappeared on the grounds of the great summer “cottages” of the Gilded Age—and it is popular again today.

For much of the 19th century, however, garden seating was squarely in the Iron Age. A spin-off of the Industrial era, cast-iron garden furniture became a reality for well-to-do families as early as the 1830s. Despite the heft of the medium, most cast-iron tables, loveseats, benches, and

chairs were rendered in intricate, Rococo patterns that suggest lace rather than rivets. The earliest designs from the 1840s are rustic, in a style resembling bark-covered twigs and saplings. Later styles imitate grapevines and leaves (1850s), Gothic arch and quatrefoil shapes (1850s and 1860s), and ferns (1870–1890).

If cast iron could be shaped to resemble rough-hewn saplings and twigs, the next logical step was to fashion furniture out of the real thing. Andrew Jackson Downing was one early advocate, but “rustic” in all its variations didn’t catch fire until the last decades of the 19th century. While the bark-coated Northwoods style gets most of the attention, other rustic forms include the woven hickory chairs of Indiana and the circle-backed “cedar gypsy” furniture of the Appalachians. Let’s not overlook the classic, slung-back Adirondack chair, patented as the Westport chair in





LEFT: Cushioned with chintz pillows, wicker has long been a porch favorite. The wicker industry got a mini-boost in the 1920s when Lloyd Loom adapted woven art fibers to craft weatherproof chairs, tables, and settees. **BELOW:** The Windsor was the early American version of the all-purpose knock-around chair.



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Once durable woods like redwood and teak moved outdoors, the chaise longue leaped from the bedroom to the garden.



ABOVE: In the 1930s and '40s, metal furniture was as likely to be made from aluminum as iron. **LEFT:** Wooden side-arm benches — like this version of Jefferson's "Chinese Chippendale" design — are among the most enduring types of garden furniture.

1905. It has long since passed into the public domain.

Wicker was a porch and garden favorite for much of the late-19th century. Woven from the fibers or twigs of willow, rattan, or other reedy materials, it was a perfect medium for many convoluted Victorian designs. After reaching an initial peak about 1900, wicker furniture experienced a revival in the 1920s, after Marshall Burns Lloyd perfected a method for creating a traditional-looking, weatherproof wicker from twisted strands of kraft paper in 1917.

By the early-20th century, garden furniture was an established tradition in a variety of mediums, from wood and stone to metal and wicker. It continues to re-inventive itself, as

it has for centuries.

In Danzer's opinion, there's a clear relationship between the architecture of an old house and the kind of furniture that's appropriate for the lawn and garden—a link between the settled, interior world of the house to the wider, natural world outdoors. For that reason, lawn and garden furniture should be chosen with as much care as a fine piece of indoor furniture. "People don't realize," he says, "that sometimes the best room in the house is outside." ♦

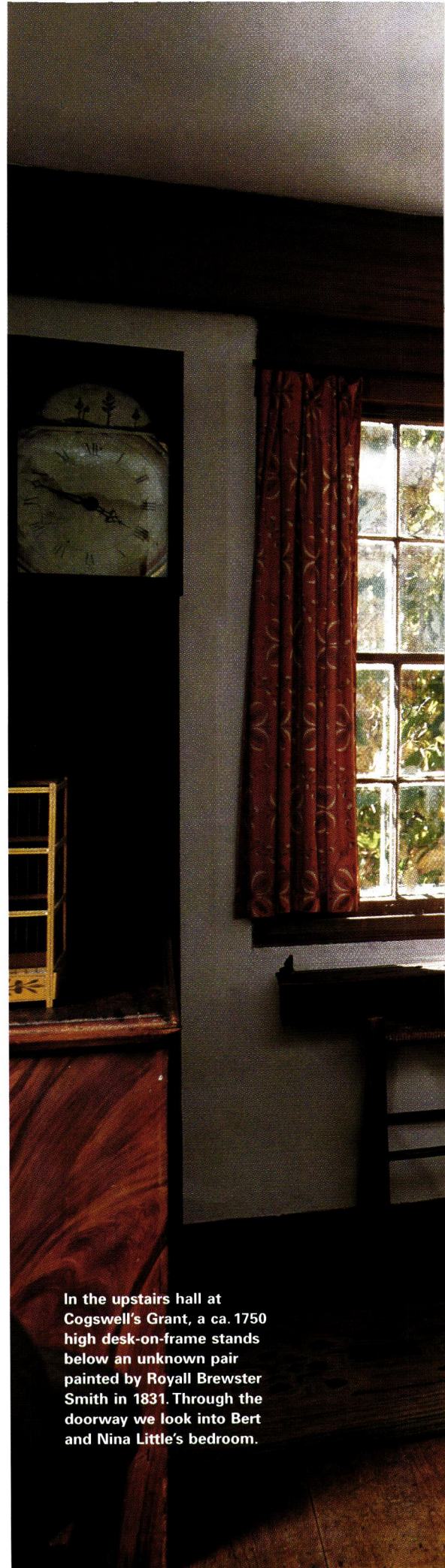
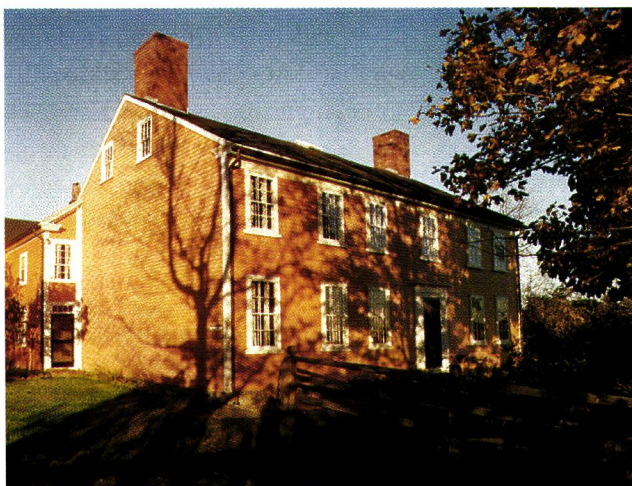
"Re-inventing the Garden Seat: Historical to Modern Designs by Munder-Skiles" will be on exhibit at the New York School of Interior Design, June 8–Aug. 3. Call (212) 472-1500, ext. 194.

Essential Country

The assemblage of country arts at Cogswell's Grant is arguably the best anywhere. It survives along with its avid collector's meticulous early research.

by Regina Cole | photos by Sandy Agrafiotis

BY THE TIME Cogswell's Grant opened to the public in 1998, it was already famous. "This house preserves intact the collection of a prominent collector—in the setting in which she originally displayed it," says Jane Nylander, president of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, which owns the 18th-century farmhouse in Essex, Massachusetts. "It shows the accumulation of her knowledge." From 1937 until 1993 Cogswell's Grant had been the summer home of Bertram K. and Nina Fletcher Little. He was director of SPNEA from 1947 to 1979. Nina began to collect New England folk art shortly after they were married in 1925; six decades of systematic collecting made her one of the



In the upstairs hall at Cogswell's Grant, a ca. 1750 high desk-on-frame stands below an unknown pair painted by Royall Brewster Smith in 1831. Through the doorway we look into Bert and Nina Little's bedroom.







LEFT: In a daughter's room a green maple and pine rocking Windsor settee made between 1810 and 1830 sits on a huge, early (1850–1900) hooked sampler rug. In the corner is an early 18th-century New England blanket chest with turnip feet. (This room was finished a century after the rest of the house, hence the 19th-century woodwork.)

ABOVE: A crane decoy considers the Queen Anne grain-painted chest in maple and pine, made in Maine 1740–1765. The unknown woman with a fan was painted by Royall Brewster Smith in 1831.

COUNTRY ARTS: NATIONWIDE

Important collections can be seen at the following museums. Call for hours.

- OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE**, Sturbridge, Mass. (508) 347-3362
- **SHELBURNE MUSEUM**, Shelburne, Vermont (802) 985-3344
- **THE BENNINGTON MUSEUM**, Bennington, Vermont (802) 447-1571
- **MUSEUM OF AMERICAN FOLK ART**, New York (212) 977-7170
- **NEW YORK STATE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**, Cooperstown, New York (607) 547-1400
- **THE HENRY FRANCIS DUPONT WINTERTHUR MUSEUM**, Winterthur, Delaware (302) 888-4600
- **ABBY ALDRICH ROCKEFELLER FOLK ART COLLECTION**, Williamsburg, Virginia (757) 220-7670
- **HENRY FORD MUSEUM**, Dearborn, Michigan (313) 271-1620
- **LIGHTENER MUSEUM**, St. Augustine, Florida (904) 824-2874
- **THE MUSEUM OF INTERNATIONAL FOLK ART**, Santa Fe, New Mexico (505) 476-1200
- **PANHANDLE PLAINS HISTORICAL MUSEUM**, Canyon, Texas (806) 651-2244.

country's foremost scholars on what she christened "the country arts." The couple bequeathed the house to SPNEA after their deaths in 1993.

Country arts (or American folk art) refers to objects usually made by unschooled artisans or by little-known itinerant artists. Many, like tavern signs and weathervanes, were utilitarian. Others were created simply to please the eye, such as the murals of Rufus Porter or the utopian, visionary paint-

ings of Edward Hicks. What distinguishes them from the fine-arts tradition is that they are the unself-conscious efforts of people not inhibited by ancient rules of class, religion, and education. Nina Fletcher Little saw this expression in its many forms as New England's singular cultural heritage.

Eventually, the rest of the country caught up to her aesthetic. Eighty years after Nina Little began her col-

lection, public taste for "country style" or "primitive" objects is at an unprecedented level, inspiring fine-arts reverence and costly decorating schemes. Aged weathervanes hang on white loft walls, gravestone rubbings are displayed in carved and gilded frames.

Cogswell's Grant is, however, no gallery. The low-ceilinged old rooms gracefully accommodate colorful furnishings. Nina Little collected things that had personal meaning: either they had a geographic connection to the house, or they related to her or husband Bert's family histories. In her efforts to establish a piece's provenance, she searched old newspapers, deed registries, account books, probate records, diaries, family and business papers, even tombstones. Her painstaking research resulted in knowledge that produced many books and magazine articles—and an extraordinarily well-documented collection.

Its *in situ* aspect is invaluable. Not only did Nina Little buy painted boxes and hooked rugs long before they made the auction circuit, but she also learned, through her research, to display and use them. She sought out as-yet-unappreciated, 18th- and 19th-century redware, and lined it up prettily on an old pine dresser in the dining room. It was used for family meals. Old leather fire buckets became wastebaskets. One of her sons recalls that his home looked different from those of his friends, but he didn't know that he was living with an important collection. These were just the old things his parents loved.

"I hope that the house inspires collectors to pursue stories and to research the things they own," Jane Nylander says. She adds, smiling, "And I suppose it will inspire some artful imitation." ✦

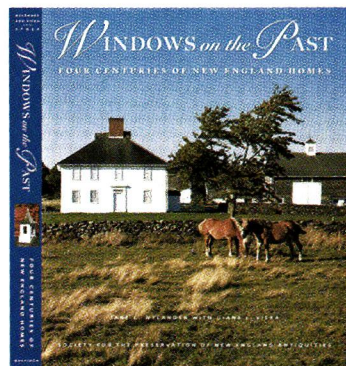
WINDOWS ON THE PAST When visiting house museums, we hope to catch glimpses of the past. We may ogle great wealth or glean information about period furnishings or personalities. Whatever else we seek in once-inhabited rooms, though, we want what is ultimately unknowable: the perceived reality of by-gone moments. We want to know sensations and thoughts of people no longer alive. What was it like to live then and there?

Hunger for such insight explains the increasing popularity of "backroom" or "down and dirty" museum tours. Visitors line up to see laundries, cellars, privies, and clothes yards (sometimes in preference to touring formal rooms). Real life seems to linger in the humble spaces where the work of daily life was conducted. We feel a stronger connection when we see that people in the past, too, designed their houses around the prosaic necessities of the human body.

Cogswell's Grant is one of 35 houses owned and operated by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, 25 of which are furnished and open to the public. They range from the neoclassical Harrison Gray Otis House to the ancient Coffin House, from 19th-century eclecticism at Castle Tucker to sleek Modernism at Gropius House. No matter how architecturally or economically distinct, every SPNEA house is also a place where people slept, ate, bathed, reared children, comforted the sick, gave birth, paid bills, stored possessions, wrote letters, and died.

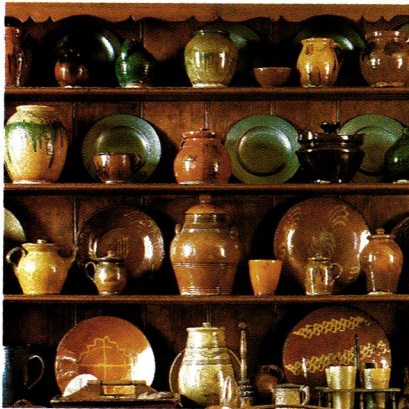
In the newly published *Windows on the Past: Four Centuries of New England Homes*, authors Jane Nylander and Diane Viera showcase SPNEA's vast collection while bringing the houses to life. They discuss architecture and landscaping, but they also escort us to privies and to read tombstone inscriptions. Nylander and Viera's lucid prose, together with David Bohl's beautifully composed photographs, show readers who slept where, what was in the medicine chest, what cookbooks were used.

We will probably never really know how an 18th-century woman felt. But a careful, open-minded examination of her home, together with a reading of this book, will go a long way towards helping us understand that she was, after all, not so very different from us.





CLOCKWISE: (from left) In a back room, a 19th-century bonnet stand. Nina's office was in a tiny first-floor room. The refined front parlor is presided over by Mary Fitch Cabot of Salem, Mass, painted by John Greenwood in 1748. The McArthur family of Limington, Maine. Redware in the pine dresser was used by the Little family.





TILE *between the wars*

BY MARY ELLEN POLSON

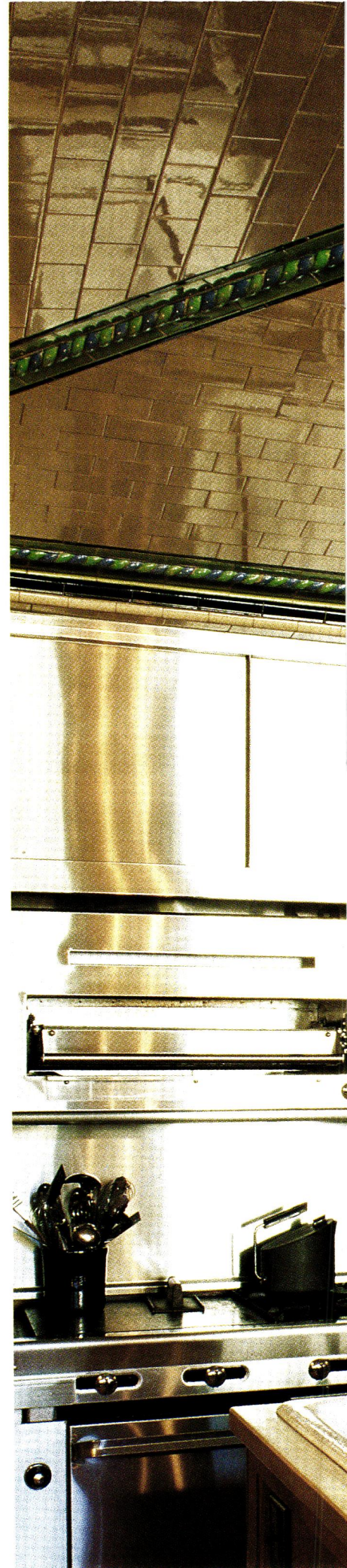
IT WAS the California of Latin lovers and orange groves, of *haciendas* and palm-lined avenues. The Arts and Crafts movement had run its course by the end of the first World War, but an art tile tradition that began in Ernest Batchelder's back yard in 1910 continued to thrive here in the 1920s and '30s, bursting into spectacular bloom as Californians embraced a style of architecture that romanticized the state's Hispanic past.

The spanking-white stucco houses in the new Spanish Colonial and Mediterranean Revival styles sparkled with tiles, set into walls and floors in jewel-like vignettes, or hung floor to ceiling in tapestries of colorful, textured clay. This was tile as theater: Every surface was fair game for dis-

play, from stair risers trimmed with brilliant Arabesque florals, to bathroom walls lavished with scenics of Spanish galleons and Mayan figures in bas relief.

In an atmosphere where the weather was always perfect and both women and men were bound to be movie stars, creating a fantasy world through decorative tile may have seemed perfectly natural. "After World War I, for the first time, a lot of people had been out of the country and seen the world," says Diane Winters, a contemporary artisan who makes Arts and Crafts tiles. "They were interested in exotic themes—the Middle Ages, the Spanish and Moorish—romantic images of places far away or long ago."

ABOVE: Brilliantly glazed in blues and yellows, California's take on the Spanish-Moorish tradition appeared everywhere in the 1920s. **RIGHT:** The kitchen in this 1926 Spanish Revival house got the floor-to-ceiling treatment. **FAR RIGHT:** Newly installed Islamic Revival tiles set off a doorway at a Berkeley, California, *hacienda* to perfection.

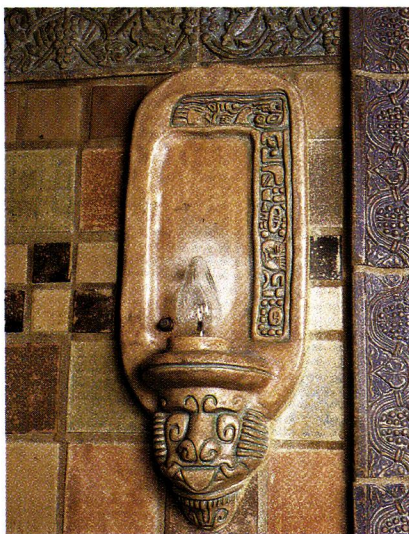
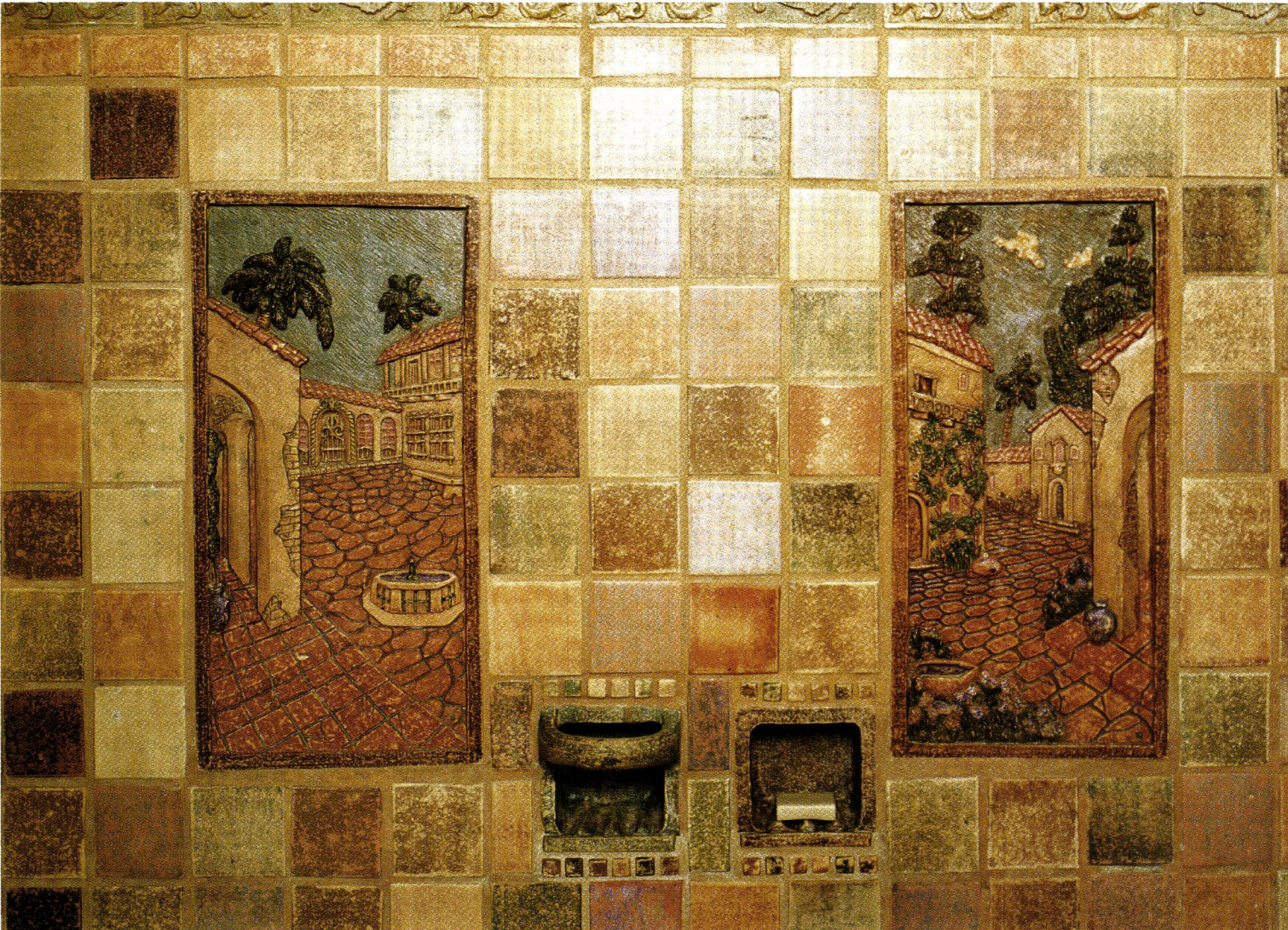




California art tiles of the 1920s and '30s were crafted in two distinctive "looks," says Joseph A. Taylor of the Tile Heritage Foundation in Healdsburg, California. The first is a thick relief tile in muted colors—"the Batchelder or Claycraft style that's tied to the Arts and Crafts movement directly, physically, and philosophically," Taylor says. "Then there are the tiles made by Malibu Potteries, Catalina, Calco, and others that draw from the Spanish, Mexican, Near East, and Moorish traditions with Arabesque designs."

Characteristic of the matte- and slip-glazed relief tiles in the Batchelder genre was the scenic, or landscape, tile. These tiles could be enormous, measuring 8"x16" or more, and large tiles were often combined to create murals. While Batchelder produced his share of scenics, others like Claycraft in Los Angeles and Muresque in Oakland [text continued on page 82]



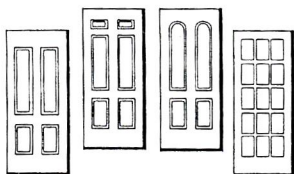


A Spanish Revival house built in 1930 in Oakland hoards multiple treasures from Muresque, a long-defunct tilemaker. **TOP:** Enormous, high-relief scenic tiles in a bathtub surround capture the romance of the Hispanic past while suggesting the leisurely lifestyle of 1920s California. **ABOVE:** A Mayan-style scone in the master bathroom.

CONTACTS IN CLAY While more than 50 tilemakers were churning out red, brown, and bisque field tile, fantastic scenics, and Arabesque florals in 1930, most were out of business by the start of World War II. The only survivor from California's golden era of tile is **HANDCRAFT TILE** (408-262-1140, www.handcrafttile.com). The Milpitas company offers tiles in both the Arts and Crafts and Spanish-Moorish traditions, including designs that date to the 1920s. **RTK STUDIOS** (805-640-9360) makes and installs Spanish-Moorish tiles in the style of Catalina and Malibu Potteries. **CLAYDOG DESIGNS** (828-253-5820) produces Moroccan and specialty tiles. **ANN SACKS** (800-278-8453, www.annsacks.com) offers custom relief tiles and scenic murals, and interlacing tiles in the Spanish-Moorish tradition in its Kibak line. **TILE RESTORATION CENTER** (206-633-4866, www.tilerestorationcenter.com) creates relief tiles and scenics in the style of Ernest Batchelder. **DESIGNS IN TILE** (530-926-2629, www.designsintile.com) offers floral interlacing Persian Revival tiles and other period designs. **MISSION TILE WEST** (626-799-4595) is a clearinghouse for tilemakers in both California traditions. Other tilemakers working in related genres include **NORTH PRAIRIE TILEWORKS** (612-871-3421), **SONOMA TILEWORKS** (707-837-8177), **SENECA TILES** (800-426-4335, www.handmadetile.com), **TERRA DESIGNS** (973-328-1135), **ASHEVILLE TILEWORKS**, (800-340-4591), **MOTAWI TILEWORKS** (734-213-0017, www.motawi.com), **PEWABIC POTTERY** (313-822-0954, www.pewabic.com), and **FULPER TILE** (215-862-3358).

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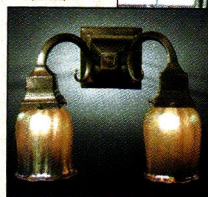
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Malibu Potteries (1926–1932) was famous for its beautifully colored Spanish–Moorish tiles. A favorite color was orange, which got its fresh-picked color from uranium in the glaze.

took the scenic tile further into realms of fantasy. One of Taylor’s favorite tiles, for example, is a triptych of knights on horseback, galloping through a redwood forest.

Although field tiles from these and other manufacturers tend toward the reds, browns, and bisques that naturally occur in clay, scenic tiles are often highlighted with vivid reds, greens, and blues. The relief is so marked it resembles carving.

While themes back East trended toward the Anglo–European past, tile-makers in Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area increasingly used scenics to illustrate the emerging Arcadian lifestyle. A Mission courtyard scene sheltered by palm trees and an arcade isn’t just a romantic glimpse of the past—it captures the quintessential California notion of indoor–outdoor living, years before the debut of the Ranch house. Anything novel might pop up in a relief tile, from geometric designs hastily copied from recent Maya or Aztec discoveries in Meso–America to the covered wagons, cowboys, and Indians of Hollywood westerns.

Tilesetters mixed and matched tiles

with abandon, regardless of theme. “Most of these tiles were made for the fireplace market, and they put them everywhere *but* the fireplace,” says Riley Doty, an Oakland tilesetter who specializes in art tile installations. “The eclecticism is part of the character of the tile.”

Just as start-up manufacturers had emulated Batchelder, so new tile-makers mimicked the Tunisian and Spanish imports flooding into the country in the early 1920s. Where the matte tiles of Batchelder and his competitors tended toward subdued earth colors, the glazed, predominantly floral tiles in the Spanish–Moorish tradition were as brilliantly colored as birds in a tropical aviary. “Most of the southern California tile-makers started with Tunisian designs, then electrified the patterns with brighter colors,” Doty says.

A single tile in one of the distinctive, interlacing Moorish patterns might feature five or six colors—fresh-picked orange, luminous turquoise, vivid royal blue, shiny black, tropical green, and gesso white. Oranges and yellows were especially favored; orange tiles [continued on page 84]



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received their vivid coloring from uranium in the glaze.

Among the best were Malibu Potteries, founded in 1926; Catalina, begun by William Wrigley Jr. to supply building materials on Santa Catalina Island; and California Faience, the company that furnished much of the tile for William Randolph Hearst's fantasy castle at San Simeon.

Shiny and slightly granular, tiles in the Spanish-Moorish tradition were integral decorative elements in the Spanish and Mediterranean-influenced houses of the times. Builders used them to define steps and door openings, to decorate fountains, benches, walls, and niches, or in some cases, to imitate a full-size Persian rug on a gallery floor.

Although he never stopped making tiles in the Arts and Crafts genre, by the late 1920s even Batchelder was offering tile in the Moorish vein. The Batchelder-Wilson "Patina Glazes" brochure from 1929 offers such novelties as "Mayan relief tiles" (a yellow, black, blue, and white Moorish floral design), and blue and yellow tiles in an Art Deco pattern. "He just added more brightly colored tiles to his line in the late '20s to accommodate the marketplace," says Taylor. "But it was never the primary product."

In a wildly competitive and inventive marketplace, tile styles were bound to overlap. Doty points out a tile where the design is Spanish-Moorish, but the finish is a copy of a glaze by an Arts and Crafts master. "So you've got a knock-off of a Grueby Arts and Crafts glaze superimposed on an exact copy of a Tunisian traditional motif," he says. "And the colors have nothing to do with any particular style—whoever made it was just re-inventing the world. This is California tile in the 1920s." ★

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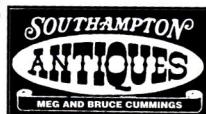
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It's All in the (Big) Details

BY PATRICIA POORE

DESIGNERS often get involved with such outside details as lighting and paint color. But three exterior details, I think, are too often overlooked—and they're biggies: window awnings, shutters, and garage doors. The architect and builder don't concern themselves because such things are considered decorative. The interior designer is not called upon to specify them because they are more building envelope than design and furnishing. But each of these old-fashioned, still-available components is a key to pulling off a restoration.

Awnings are most appropriate for late- and post-Victorian house styles, especially Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Bungalow, Spanish or Mediterranean, and other period revivals.

AWNINGS This has to be the biggest lost opportunity of the past forty years. Practical as they are at reducing glare and solar gain (and at reducing air conditioning costs), awnings are also a shortcut to that old-fashioned air. (We rounded up some of the best contacts, and they're listed on the next page.) American romance with awnings began in earnest during the 1890s. (Awnings evolved from fabric tents and canopies used in the Mediterranean and Middle East.) Fabric was gradually replaced by aluminum after World War II. Common



What makes all the difference in this painting by Edward Hopper?—shutters closed and awnings unfurled against the summer sun, a house still in its prime. [The Mansard Roof, Gloucester, Mass., 1923]

places for awnings are porches and sunrooms. Awnings on all major window openings will look better than just a few here and there. (A standard window awning costs about \$150.) Or consider shading all the windows on the southern elevation.

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SHUTTERS For the sake of authenticity, good proportions, and practicality during hurricanes, you want wood shutters that really close. And no, we're not talking custom woodworking shops anymore. If you know where to look, standard styles are readily available in board-and-batten, panel, [continued on page 88]

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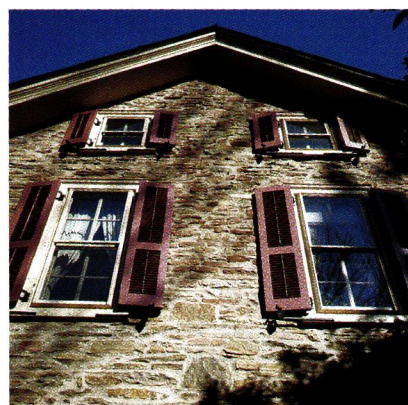
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AWNINGS Most awnings are still custom made by local dealers, who fabricate them from fabrics and hardware made by major suppliers. The old-fashioned awning mechanism (a cord pulled and tied off on a cleat) is still inexpensive and available. But the European retractable awning retracts flat, preventing unsightly folds that collect rainwater (and mildew). The two supporting arms are hinged in the middle. Operation is by hand crank or electric motor (which can be controlled by automatic photo-electric and wind-sensitive devices). It can be expensive for large porch awnings. Venetian, accordion, and circular awnings are fixed. ■ **AGELESS AWNINGS**, Brookfield, WI (800) 999-8307 [www.agelessawnings.com] ■ **ANCHOR INDUSTRIES**, Evansville, IN (812) 867-2421 for dealer locator [www.anchorinc.com] ■ **ASTRUP CO.**, Cleveland, OH (216) 696-2820 [www.astrup.thomasregister.com] ■ **DURASOL**, Rock Tavern, NY (877) DURASOL for dealer locator [www.durasol.com] ■ **EIDE INDUSTRIES**, Cerritos, CA (800) 422-6827 [awnings.com] ■ **GLEN RAVEN MILLS**, Glen Raven, NC (336) 227-6211 [www.sunbrella.com] ■ **HARRIS AWNING**, Essex, MA (800) 582-5565 ■ **WINDOW MODES**, New York, NY (800) 671-2066 [www.windowmodes.com]

BELOW: A curved-top door with match-board panels and glazing perfectly suits this English-style house. **RIGHT:** Solid awnings complement a Victorian house. **FAR RIGHT:** Working, wood shutters on a stone I-house in Pennsylvania are new.



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SHUTTERS

The woodworking companies that make traditional, working shutters generally offer standard styles including early board-and-batten, panel, louvered, and cottage style (with cutouts in a panel). Their catalogs will help you pick a style appropriate for the age of your house and your region. They offer the hard-to-find hardware, too. **FEDERAL REPRODUCTION SHUTTERS**, Danvers, MA (978) 777-1964 ■ **KESTREL MANUFACTURING**, Stowe, PA (800) 494-4321 [www.diyshutters.com] ■ **KINGSLAND ARCHITECTURAL MILLWORK**, Norfolk, PA (860) 542-6981 ■ **SHUTTERCRAFT**, Guilford, CT (203) 453-1973 [www.galaxymall.com] ■ **SHUTTER DEPOT**, Greenville, GA (706) 672-1214 ■ **TIMBERLANE WOODCRAFTERS**, North Wales, PA (215) 616-0600 [www.timberlane-wood.com] ■ **VIXEN HILL**, Elverson, PA (800) 423-2766 [www.vixenhill.com]

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cottage (with cutouts), louvered, and louver-and-panel types approximating styles from 1700 to the 1940s and suitable from New England and Charleston to the Prairie School and Tudors. See page 88. Most companies listed provide hardware including strap hinges and shutter dogs. Retail prices run about \$180 per pair of 42-inch-long shutters with a pair-width of 32 inches.

Those folksy shutters with a shape cut out of the panels are associated with Dutch Colonial Revival houses and were immensely popular from about 1915 until World War II. If you own any sort of house from that period, it probably had shutters, and those shutters may have had cutouts. (The historical precedent, however, is colonial. In the 18th century, shutters were closed in winter. The cutouts—a diamond, circle, half moon—prevented condensation, let in some light, and gave inhabitants a peep hole.) Today many panel cutouts are available standard. (Birds, flowers, fleurs-de-lis, squirrels, hearts, pine trees, shamrocks, moons, acorns, and anchors are popular.)

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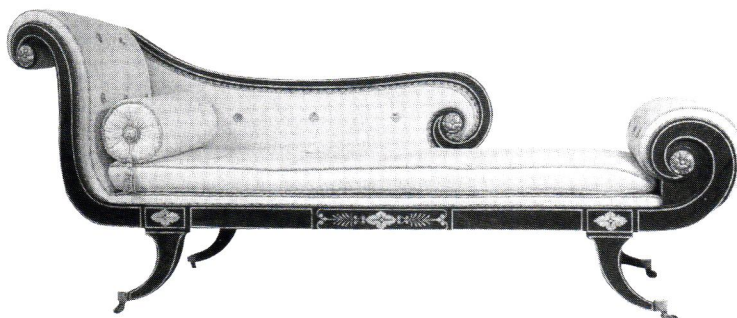
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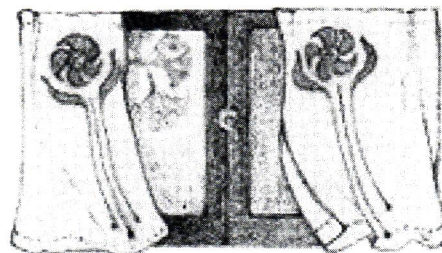
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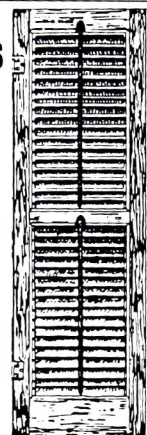
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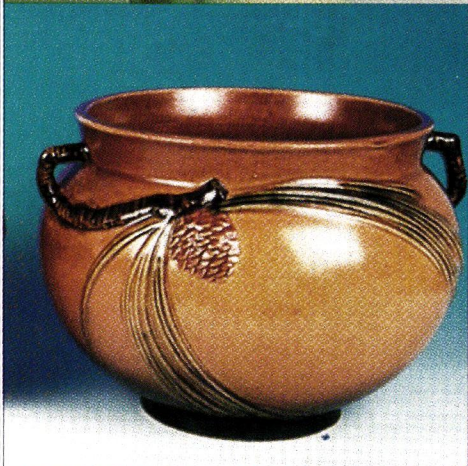
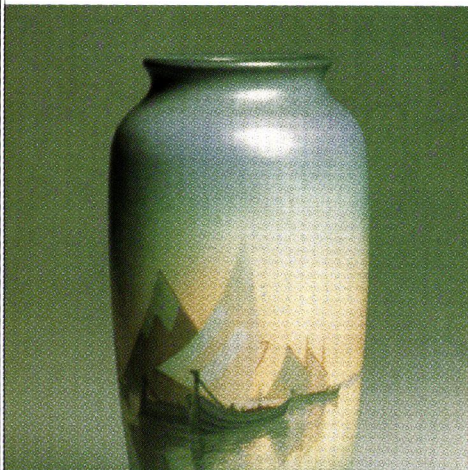
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WITH THE ASCENSION of the Arts and Crafts movement and heated collecting of art pottery comes a growing interest in much of the pottery of the 20th century. Manufacturers—Rookwood, Roseville, Weller, Owens, McCoy, Van Briggle—have come back from obscurity (and, in some cases, from bankruptcy) as their names become important to collectors.

If you are not already steeped in the colorful histories and just plain fun of this pottery, you may wonder what the fuss is about. McCoy, espe-

cially, was a commercial manufacturer supplying the chain stores (think Woolworth's) and turning out promotional items by the hundreds of thousands: pink poodles, shiny green praying hands, ashtrays, kitschy cookie jars, and cowboy-boot planters. The company, however, dates back to 1848 (as the W.F. McCoy Pottery); each generation of the family and its successors produced diverse product lines.

Three books from Schiffer cover avidly collected pottery from about 1890 to 1960: Rookwood, Roseville, and McCoy. [continued on page 94]

Examples from three influential potteries of the early- and mid-20th century.

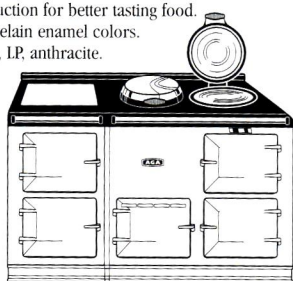
ABOVE: (top to bottom) Vase from Rookwood's Vellum glaze line, decorated by C. Schmidt, 1922. Roseville bowl from the Pine Cone Modern line, introduced in 1953. Detail of McCoy green console bowl, 1956. **TOP RIGHT:** McCoy fan vase is one dating from 1954.

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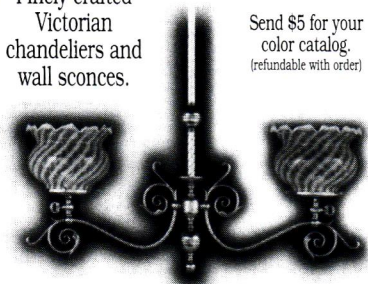
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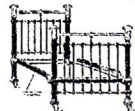
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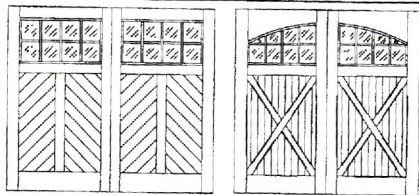
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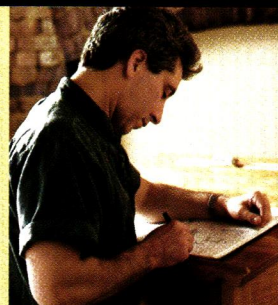
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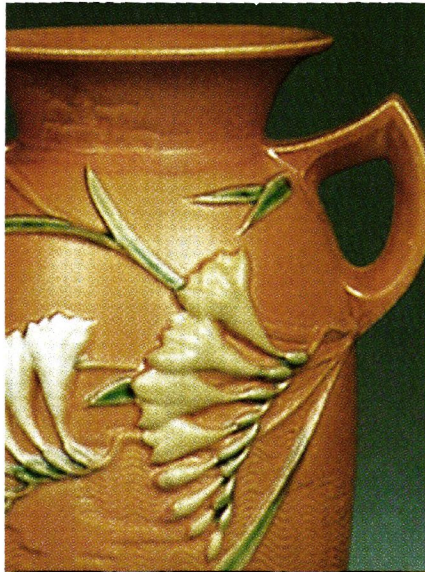
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BELOW: Four vases dating from 1897 to 1909: handpainted by artists who signed them, from Rookwood. **TOP RIGHT:** (clockwise) "Ovenproof" in the mark dates this McCoy casserole to after 1950. Decorated artware jardiniere with lion-head handles, a special variant of the Majolica line from Roseville (1902) fea-



tures decals and air-brushing. Cookie jar, 1962–63: McCoy commemorated current events. Roseville's popular "Freesia" line was introduced in 1945. **RIGHT:** Pieces from McCoy's 1960 El Rancho Barbecue Service with the Cookie Wagon.



Rookwood is the cream. The Cincinnati pottery founded by Maria Longworth Nichols in 1880 won gold medals in Paris and had an international reputation. Around 1915, Rookwood started mass-producing commercial (or undecorated) ware lines. It boomed throughout the Roaring Twenties, but never recovered from the Crash, the Depression, and the War. A new owner produced religious statuary in the 1940s and '50s. Rookwood, then operating from Mississippi, closed in the summer of 1967.

One of several potteries that arose near the fine clay of Zanesville, Ohio, Roseville Pottery was estab-

lished by George F. Young. Roseville designed and manufactured 132 different pottery lines. The Schiffer book on Roseville is the most comprehensive to date, and beautiful with 840 color photos. The bulk consists of captions and photos with names, glazes, sizes, and values (prices). But author Mark Bassett also offers personal asides (how to use ebay to get

recent auction prices).

McCoy is the easiest to collect now, as many prices for products after 1945 remain in the \$15–125 range. Some of the McCoy pieces are wonderful whimsy. A few are good examples of Art Deco design. Many others are merely nostalgic. From the book: "It is inviting and wholesome, qualities sought [continued on page 96]

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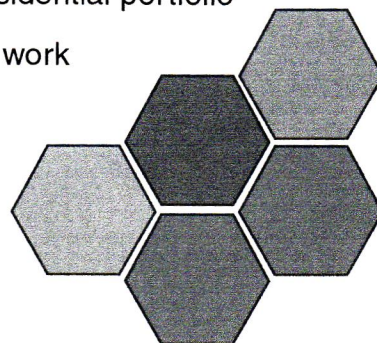
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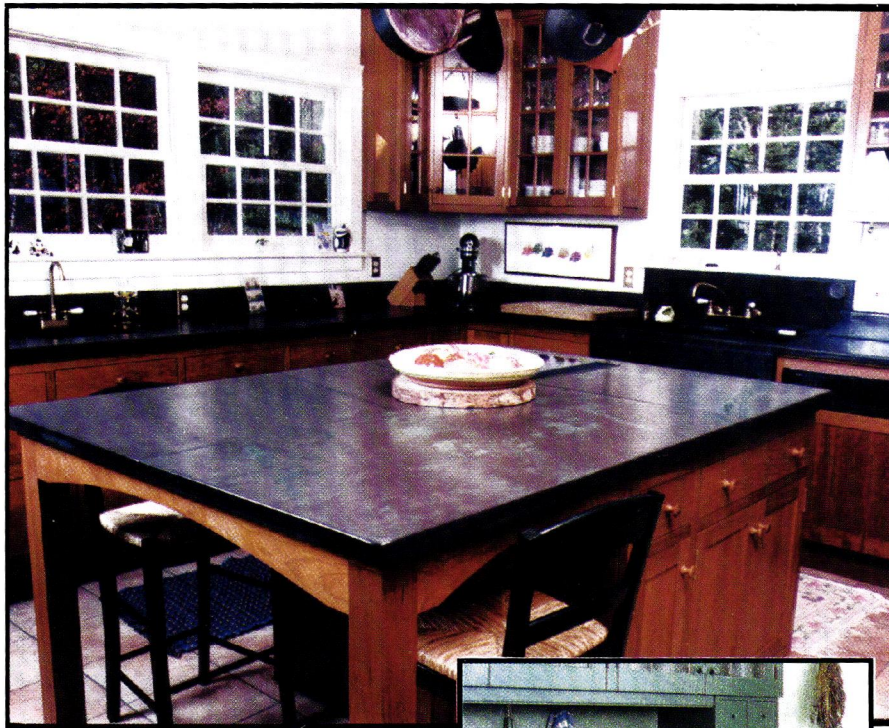
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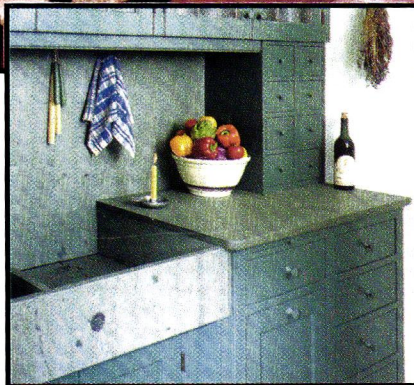
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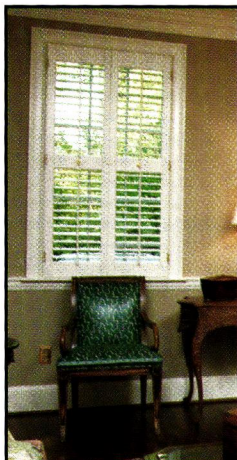


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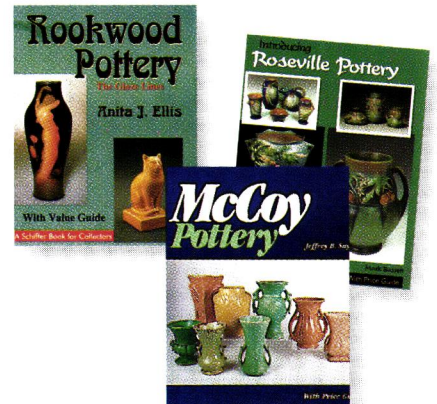


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and seldom found in society today. The figural pieces are often humorous." Almost all of the pieces reflect middle-class society's tastes—chuck wagons from the era of the Western movie, Mammy cookie jars and lazy susans, Uncle Sam and W.C. Fields in stoneware.

There's a *lot* of McCoy. Four generations of the family operated various potteries. (Through a complicated series of partnerships and investments, McCoy has some of the same roots as Owens and Roseville, dating to the 1880s and 1890s.) Around 1926 Nelson McCoy had left utilitarian ceramics behind, turning to the artwares and "hooking his star to the chain stores." Thus, the main focus of this book on the art pottery are products produced by the Nelson McCoy Pottery Co. and its immediate predecessor, the Nelson McCoy Sanitary Stoneware Co.

The business closed in 1990. ✦



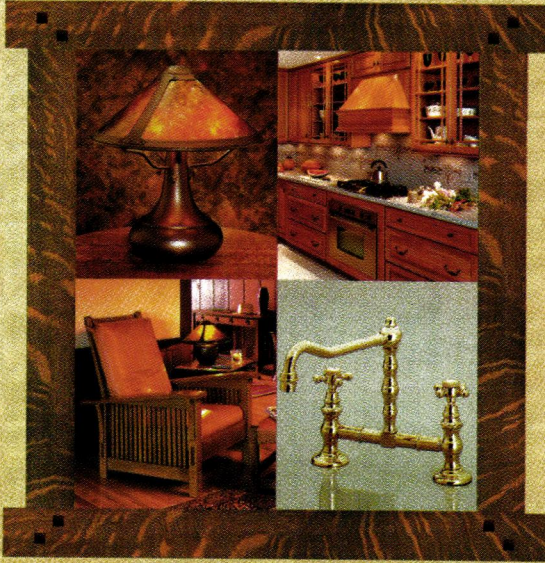
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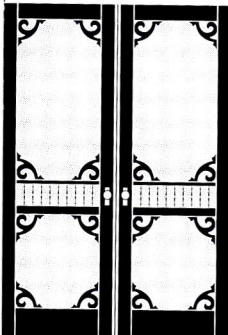
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ask THE EDITORS

Beauty and the Bead

What is the origin of beaded-board paneling? It seems as if every new, traditional-style house is full of it, often painted white. When did this kind of woodwork come into use, and was it usually painted?

WENDY BAHRAMIAN
NANTUCKET, MASSACHUSETTS

Beaded board, or beadboard, is a variation on centuries-old tongue-in-groove panel construction. (Here the bead refers to a round profile cut as a moulded edge along the length of a board, not to a lineup of small, round elements—another kind of bead moulding.) Some of the earliest houses in Colonial America had vertical-paneled walls made of wide boards with beveled and beaded edges, called shadow-edge paneling. The boards and their decorative edges were planed by hand, and the beads were often quite large—a half-inch wide or more. By sometime in the 19th century, it was more common to see narrow beads 1-1/2 to 3 inches apart on boards sold by the linear foot. By this time, power saws were in general use, so finer cuts could be made more easily.

Machine-produced beadboard was associated with the less formal spaces of buildings: kitchens, hallways, and even stables. (Old-timers still refer to beadboard as “porch-ceiling lumber” and even “train-car siding.”) Much of this utilitarian beadboard was clear-finished with shellac or varnish. That way, swelling and shrinking between



Beadboard was generally an informal or utilitarian wood finish from about 1870 until 1920. (That's a train station in Dwight, Nebraska, at right.) ABOVE: A modern painted finish evokes cottage style.

boards would go unnoticed. (Paint tends to crack along the t&g edges with movement.) In attics and pantries, it may have been white-washed for cleanliness and light reflection.

As the Victorian period progressed, so did the ornamental use even of machined woodwork. Beaded boards, in different widths and with multiple beads, appeared in public rooms and grander houses. It was favored for the cottage or Shingle-style houses in resort areas of the Northeast—perhaps because they were deliberately informal. Shingle style has enjoyed a revival, as has the use of



comforting, old-fashioned beadboard.

White enamel on beadboard is not new; many an old bathroom or hallway wainscot has been painted to “clean it up.” Greens from hunter to teal were common in the Northeast, and brighter colors are not unheard-of. If your beadboard is fir or oak, consider a clear finish. Pine generally looks better painted, but the choice is yours!

Natural Steel

We're looking to keep the metallic look of the tin ceiling in our remodeled kitchen. We've seen similar ceilings both in person and in the decorating magazines, but no one's been able to tell us how to achieve it—not even the folks who sell the ceilings! Any advice?

STEVE SAARI

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Viewed in a historical perspective, that you want your tin ceiling to look like metal is a little bit ironic. These mass-produced ceilings were intended to be painted in imitation of costly decorative plaster! Actually, they're not tin or tinplate anymore, but steel or steel alloy. That is, they rust, so your ceiling will require some sort of protection.

First off, you need to remove the oily residue left by the manufacturing process. Wipe the metal panels with mineral spirits or turpentine, and wear gloves to protect you from the very sharp edges. Do this before the ceiling is installed, if you can. After installation, choose between two types of finish: a clear one that lets the metal show through, or metallic-color paint. If you prefer the former, check into the various polyurethanes and acrylic finishes on the market to find one compatible with raw steel. Experiment on scrap material to make sure that the finish has good adhesion on metal, and a pleasing shine (or lack thereof). The easier route may be to select a metallic paint designed to be used on metal after appropriate priming (read labels).

Craftsman Maple

We are at last getting around to restoring the kitchen of our 1906 Craftsman house, which has never been remodeled. I would appreciate

your advice on how the maple countertop should be refinished to provide some resistance to bumps and spills.

DONALD WEGGEMAN

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

It's great that you want to retain the original countertop. Maple is one of the hardest and most impervious of woods (it was often used as flooring in old laundry rooms and butler's pantries), so it is a sensible counter material. In fact, it doesn't take wood stain well and so is often left natural or finished with a penetrating oil.

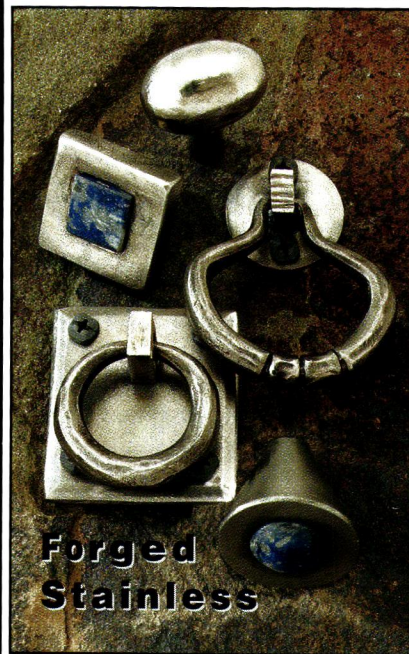
Presumably your countertop is the worse for wear. If the thickness of the counter will allow, sand it down with a palm sander to remove nicks and stains. (You will also remove any patina the counter has acquired in its 94 years. If the damage doesn't warrant sanding, you could try shaving it with a cabinetmaker's scraper, which would preserve most of the patina.) Stains can be lightened with a solution of oxalic acid or bleach (not together).

Are you going to use the maple counter as a cutting board? If so, use a finish manufactured as safe for use on wooden salad bowls and cutting boards. Maintain it as the finish label recommends. If the countertop is to remain nick-free by the use of a separate cutting board, consider finishing your clean, dry, oil-free maple with a matte-finish polyurethane—at least three thin coats and up to eight. Whichever approach you take, the best way to protect against spill damage on wood counters is to keep them dry. Wipe up spills immediately and don't let wet items sit for long.

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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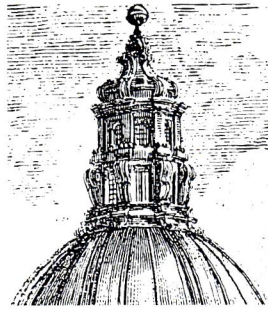
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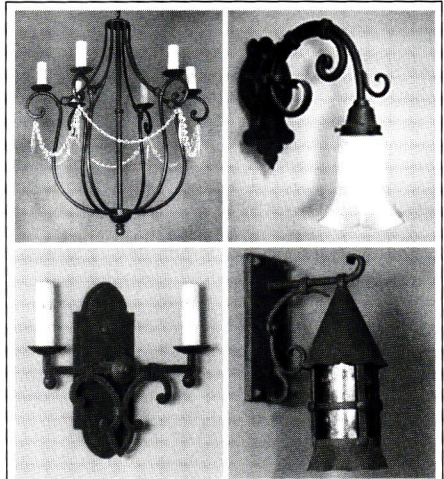
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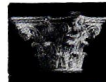
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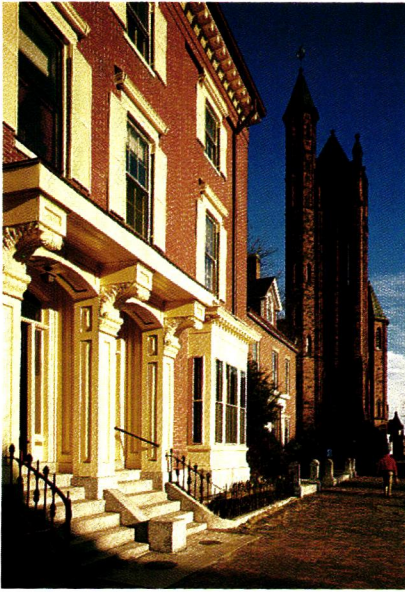
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The Mid-Maine Coast BY REGINA COLE

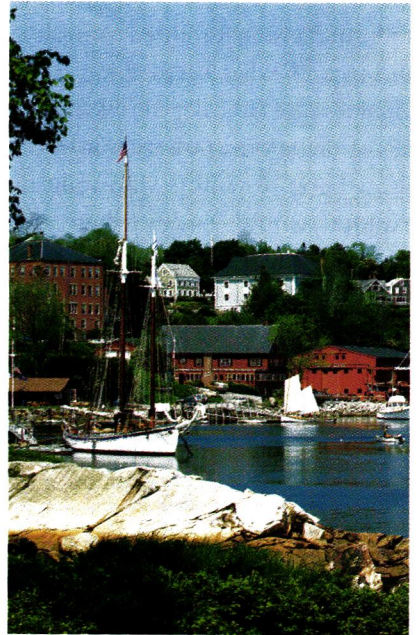


CLOCKWISE: (from top left) A Romanesque church tower along Portland's State Street. A summer home on North Haven. On Penobscot Bay, sheltered Rockport Harbor. A cottage near Belfast.

SAILING THE COAST of Maine is the best way to see a state renowned for its natural beauty. There are 5,500 miles of coastline and about the same number of islands offshore—a sailor can spend a very long time exploring anchorages with crystalline water, abundant wildlife, breathtaking vistas, and the profound tranquility found in places where nature's grandeur is undiminished by "civilization." Historic ports such as **BOOTHBAY HARBOR, CAMDEN, SOUTHWEST**

HARBOR, and NORTHEAST HARBOR are rich with waterfront commerce, old neighborhoods, and people known for their sturdy independence. Many live off the sea—not easy on this rock-bound and foggy coast, where the weather is so harsh as to inspire hyperbole. But for a few short summer weeks, there is no more beautiful coastline on earth.

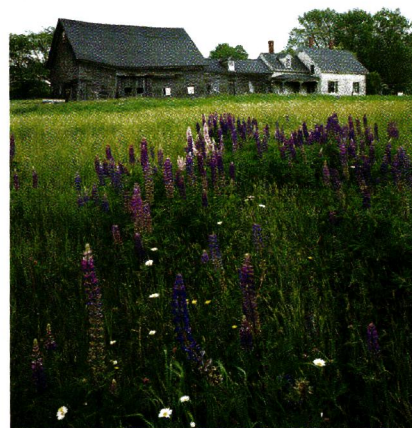
Some of the state's most historic villages survive on the offshore islands. **MONHEGAN, MATINICUS, SWAN'S**



The coast between Portland and Mount Desert Island has been a magnet for summer tourists for over 150 years, yet has remained curiously uncorrupted.



CLOCKWISE: (from left) The Olson House, painted by Andrew Wyeth in "Christina's World." Shingle-style houses are at home on Maine's coast. Lupines thrive in abandoned fields.



ISLAND, VINALHAVEN, NORTH HAVEN, ISLE AU HAUT—these were settled in the 18th century, when being close to the fishing grounds was advantageous and water transportation was easiest. Island life is very different from mall- and subdivision-oriented America, and part of what keeps these communities alive is the dependable schedule of the **MAINE STATE FERRY SERVICE**, also a boon to visitors who want to explore remote worlds where the lobster is unsurpassed.

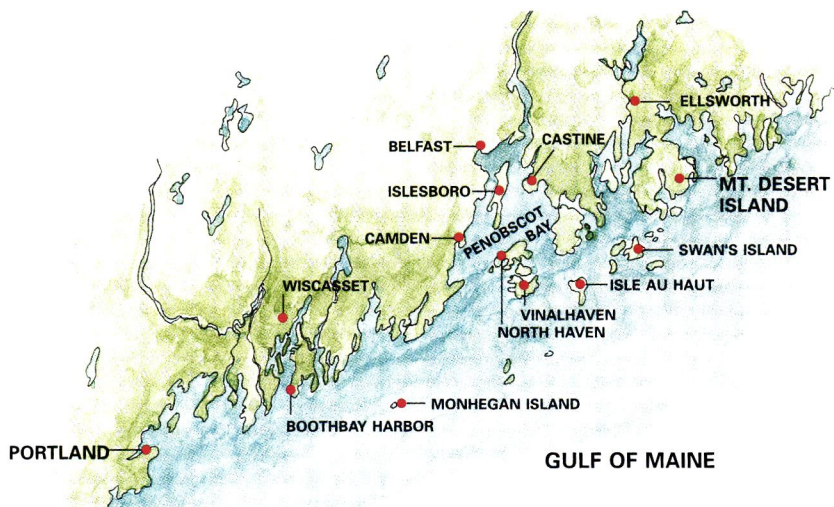
But Maine can be explored

on land, as well. Heck, you can even *drive* around Maine, though sightings of moose, islands, lighthouses, historic forts, windjammers, and lobster pounds can be distracting. (And that's not mentioning the shopping opportunities: Maine is simply crawling with antiques dealers.)

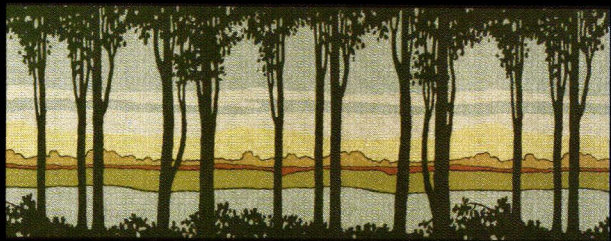
The most sparsely populated state east of the Mississippi experienced a boom during the late 18th and early 19th century. Maine was a wild frontier where adventurers made huge fortunes, especially in lumber.

A British embargo of East Coast harbors during the War of 1812 ended Maine's prosperity, leaving architecture that poverty has preserved for nearly 200 years. **BELFAST, WISCASSET, CASTINE,** and **ELLSWORTH**, to mention a few, have neoclassical buildings that date to long-ago prosperity.

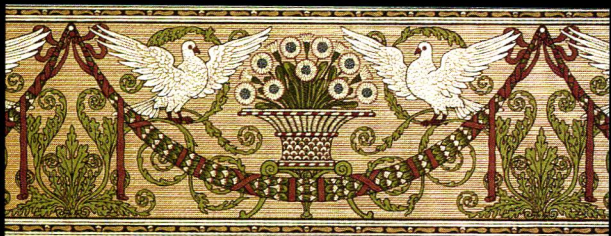
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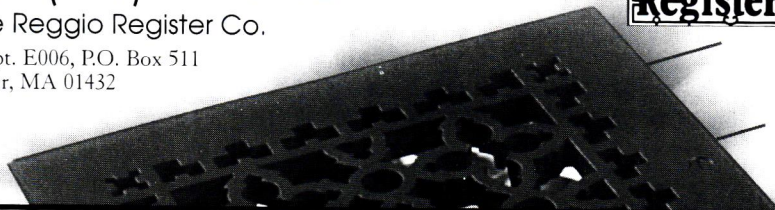
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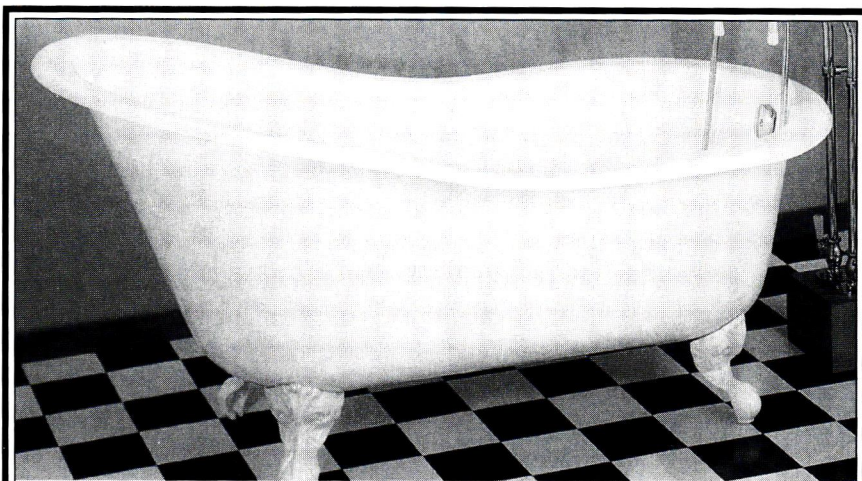
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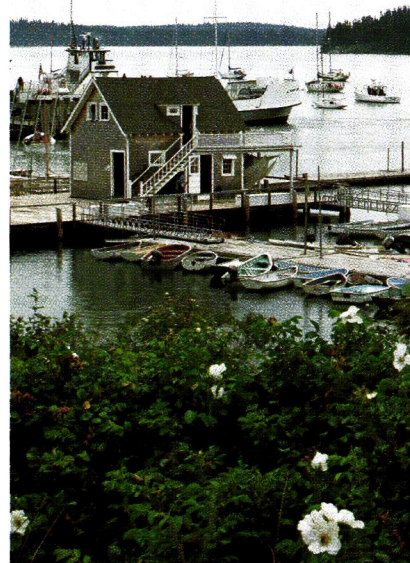
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Informally, Maine is known as "Vacationland." Before the Civil War, Bostonians and New Yorkers began to come here on their yachts to breathe the fresh air, eat lobster, and restore the soul. Yet the coastline between Portland and Mount Desert Island has been curiously uncorrupted by so many visitors over so long a period a time. Maybe it's because this coast is rugged, its bold granite edging icy, deep water. It inspires awe and respect, and not despoiling. ✦

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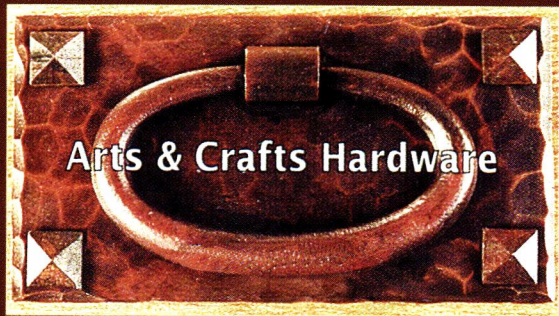
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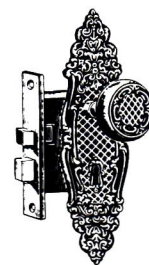
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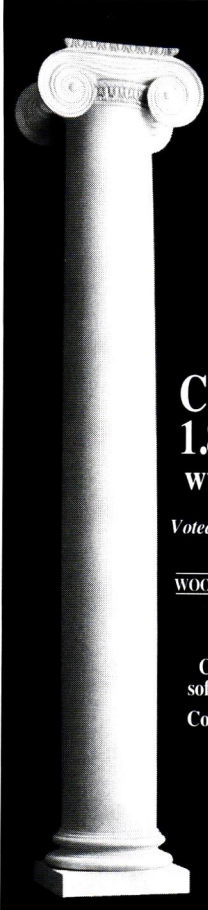
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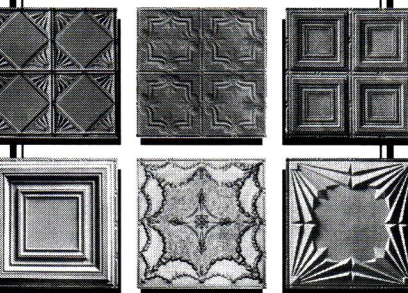
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The editors have compiled this section to give you more information about products and services in this issue. Objects not listed are generally available, or are family pieces or antiques.

Furnishings pp. 15-20

p. 15 The Heirloom Collection also offers hand-embroidered nightgowns, table linens, and dust ruffles made by a women's sewing cooperative, which provides income to Haitian families. Haiti Projects, Inc.: (978) 283-0892. ■ Weatherend Estate Furniture: www.weatherend.com **p. 16** Enstyle display planters: www.iwihome.com **p. 18** Stone garden ornaments can be seen on www.minerva-cg.com **p. 19** Windchimes: www.cosanti.com ■ Hammock: wwwthehammocksource.com ■ **p. 20** Maine Wool & Design Group: www.rugdesign.com

Cottage Pine Furniture pp. 32-36

Painted bedstead with canopy, Gardner, Mass., about 1855; Heywood Bros. & Co. Pine; 88 1/2" x 63 1/2" x 84 1/2". Gift of Richard Greenwood, 1978.305.

Vintage Fabrics? Go Ahead! pp. 38-44

p. 38 Rocky Mountain Quilt's website:

www.rockymountainquilts.com.

Character Intact pp. 48-53

p. 48-49 Cabinetry by Kennebec Co., 1 Front Street, Bath, ME 04530. (207) 443-2131, email: info@kennebec.net; portfolio \$10. ■ Counter lighting: Arroyo Craftsman, 4509 Little John St., Baldwin Park, CA 91706. (888) 227-7696; free literature. ■ The Drover lighting fixture: Trustworth Studios, Box 1109, Plymouth, MA 02362. (508) 746-1847. ■ Dining area lamp: J.M.W. Gallery, 144 Lincoln St., Boston, MA 02111 (617) 338-9097, www.jmwgallery.com. ■ Carpet: J. R. Burrows & Co., P.O. Box 5232, Rockland, MA 02370. (800) 347-1795, www.burrows.com; free literature. **p. 50** Oak leaf border: Bradbury & Bradbury, P. O. Box 155, Benicia, CA 94510. (707) 746-1900, www.bradbury.com. Catalog \$12. ■ Ceiling fixtures: original Stickleys. Armchair: L. & J.G. Stickley, 1 Stickley Dr., Manlius, NY 13104. (315) 682-5500, www.stickley.com. Traditional or Mission catalog \$10. ■ Carpets: J. R. Burrows & Co., see above. **p. 51** Pillows and throw: Trustworth Studios, see above. ■ Couch: L. & J. G. Stickley, see above. ■ End tables, lamp and armchair, J.M.W. Gallery, see above. ■ Let Us Prey wall hanging, Trustworth Studios, see above. **p. 52** Wicker: antique pieces. ■ Wall sconce: Arroyo Craftsman, see above. ■ Planter: J.M.W. Gallery, see above. ■ Carpet: J. R. Burrows & Co., see above. **p. 53** Table lamp: J.M.W. Gallery, see above. ■ Candle stick:

United Crafts, 127 West Putnam Ave., Greenwich, CT 06830. (203) 869-4898, www.ucrafts.com. Catalogs \$10.

Living in Style Outdoors pp. 66-71

Many of the furniture pieces shown are family items photographed in private settings. Refer to source guide for similar furnishings.

Essential Country pp. 72-77

Cogswell's Grant, on Spring Street, Essex, MA 01929. Open May-October. (978) 768-3632. **p. 76** *Windows on the Past: Four Centuries of New England Homes* by Jane Nylander and Diane Viera \$45; call (617) 570-9105 ext. 227 or through your bookstore.

The Maine Coast pp. 101-105

For tourist information: Call (888) MAINE-45, or visit www.visitmaine.com. ■ The Morse-Libby House, also called "Victoria Mansion", is at 109 Danforth Street, Portland, ME 04101 (207) 772-4841.

Motifs p. 114

Morris "Fruit" wallpaper (and fabric): Arthur Sanderson & Sons, 285 Grand Ave., Englewood, NJ 07361 (201) 894-8400; to the trade or through Charles Rupert Design, 2004 Oak Bay Ave., Victoria, BC V8R 1E4 Canada. (250) 592-4916. Catalogs \$6. ■ Ruthmere, 302 East Beardsley Ave., Elkhart, IN 46514 (219) 264-0330.



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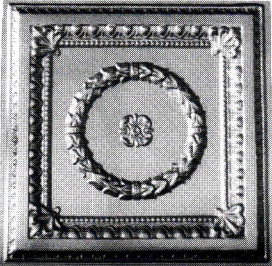
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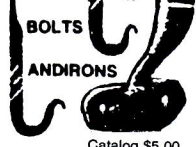
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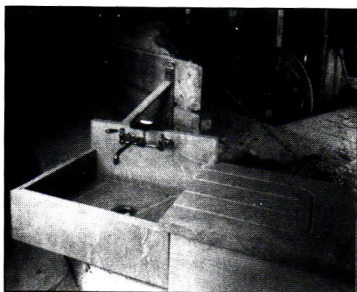
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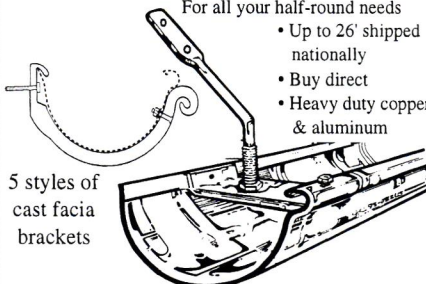
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MOTIFS

IT IS ONE of the three blessed fruits in Buddhist tradition, a Greek sign of rejuvenation, a Hebrew token of fecundity, and a Christian symbol of eternal life. A deliberate and beautiful use of the pomegranate motif is at Ruthmere, the stunning Beaux Arts house built for Albert and Elizabeth Beardsley in 1910 in Elkhart, Indiana. Representations of the fruit are carved into the Cuban mahogany, moulded into plaster, painted on ceilings. The museum takes the pomegranate to be a metaphor

Pomegranates

for the Beardleys' wealth. (The fruit is associated with pleasure over practicality—the province of the leisure class.) ✦ Then there is the Greek myth: The virgin Persephone, picking flowers, is carried off by Hades, god of the underworld. Her mother Demeter seeks her daughter in vain, her grief robbing the earth of its fertility (i.e., the coming of winter). Persephone has eaten the seeds of a pomegranate, thereby sealing her fate as wife of Hades. The gods allow her to return to earth each year (spring); but for part of each year she must remain the dark goddess of death. This rejuvenation became analogous to the concept of immortality, and was recognized as a Christian symbol of resurrection. ✦ Perhaps the use of pomegranates was meaningful to the Beardleys: Ruthmere was named for the daughter who died in infancy. —*Research by Kimberley A. Wagner, curator at Ruthmere*



CLOCKWISE: (from top center) Stylized pomegranate ceiling painting at Ruthmere; the crown-like fruit symbolizes not only resurrection but also the Queen of Heaven herself, and is often included in devotional art depicting Mary and her Child (da Fabriano, ca. 1400); "Pomegranate" or "Fruit," a wallpaper designed by Morris in 1864; Asian porcelain plate ca. 1660.

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