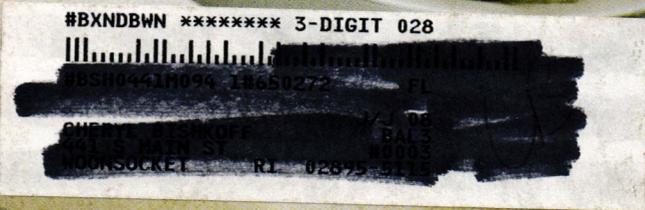


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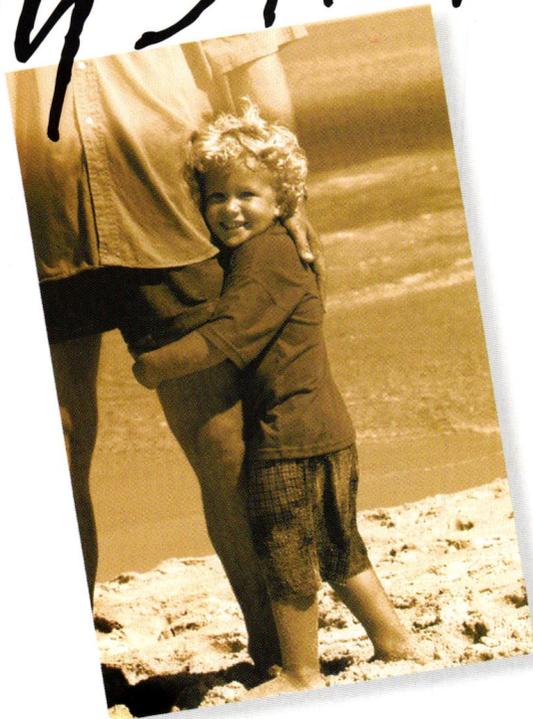
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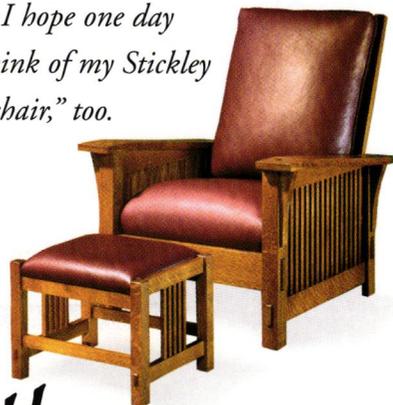
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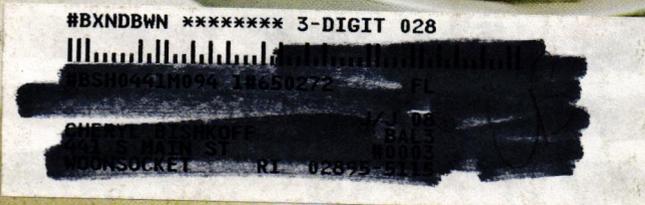
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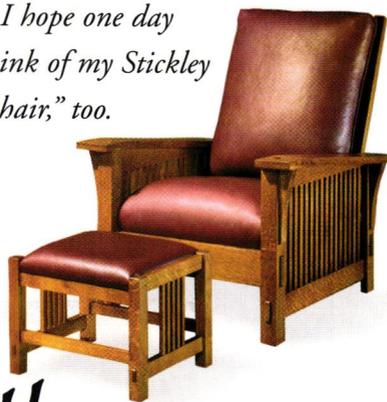
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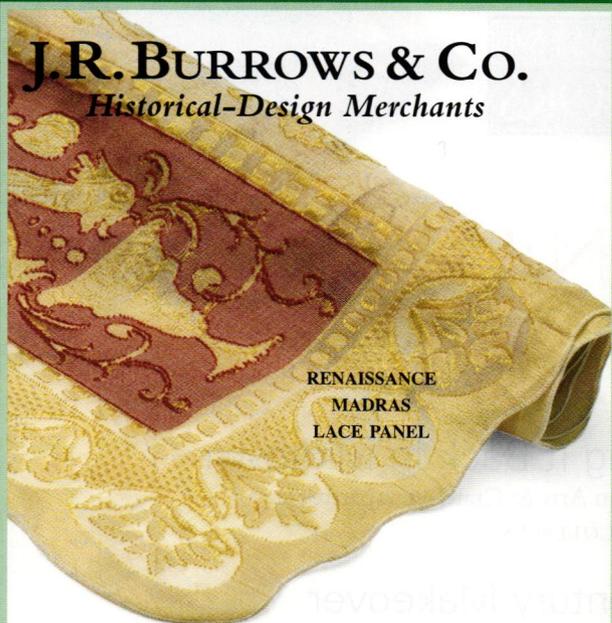


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ON THE COVER: *Time-honored materials include marble in an English country bathroom. Cover photograph by Christopher Drake/Red Cover.*





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Clutter mutter

THOUGH I've never bought one, I love Victorian houses. There was an Italian Villa, its massive cornice heavy with brackets, down near Fourth Avenue in Brooklyn, where our staff used to go to sit at intimate dining tables in rooms with high ceilings and carved marble mantels, to sip sherry from tiny crystal glasses. There was the narrow Queen Anne in Chicago, never changed, a polychromed and turreted time capsule from 1885 with a surprise waiting upstairs: behind an oak door, a glass-tiled Art Deco bathroom worthy of Radio City Music Hall, something a previous owner splurged on when she got an inheritance. Much appreciated was a Victorian house in Jonesborough, Tennessee, with so many layers of accumulation you couldn't take it all in: original wallpaper hung with tapestries overlaid with paintings and daguerreotypes. Outside, chickens ran free in the gravel drive, while inside, strawberries floated in a lead-crystal punchbowl filled with a sweet, lethal nectar.

But *étagères* . . . I'm not sure about them. They invite clutter—in fact, they elevate it. Already I'm struggling with the mail, the papier-mâché mask for which my son received an A in art class, clarinet reeds and all the tiny things discovered behind the doors of the Advent calendar. Yet none of these would look good on an *étagère*. I would have to buy more things for that.

“*Étagère*” is French and means something like staging. Smaller versions are often called “whatnots.” Even better are the words for the stuff you put *on* the shelves, *tchotchkes* being the finest. I studied Russian and know about the *tch* sound; Google has 12,700 citations with my spelling. At koshernosh.com they spell it *tsatske*, defined as a gadget, knickknack, or special woman. (Ahem.) On a Yiddish site it's spelled *tschotkes*.

For your entertainment, here are some synonyms: gewgaw and gimcrack. Knickknack, bric-a-brac [give the dog a bone]. Bauble, trinket, doodad, spangle. Whimwham, kickshaw, clinquant, bagatelle. Trumpery, junk, worthless finery, miscellany, odds and ends, and, of course, frippery.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patricia Jones". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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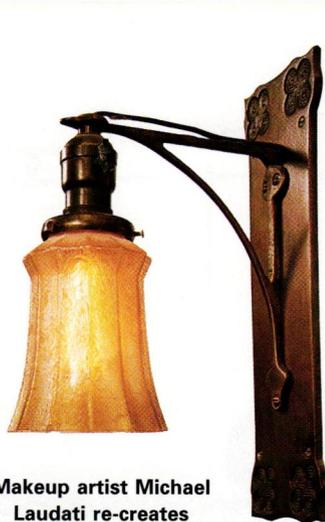


PROFILE

A building cosmetologist? It's not as crazy as it sounds. A highly skilled and in-demand movie makeup artist for over 20 years, Manhattanite **MICHAEL LAUDATI** has made up everyone from Harrison Ford to King Kong. But between films, he's an ardent preservationist in his urban hometown—with a unique specialty: He's an expert on the work of architect brothers George and Edward Blum, who erected Arts and Crafts apartment buildings throughout New York City in the early years of the 20th century. Laudati employs the principles he learned in film-making, starting with careful research. He recently restored the double lobbies of the Adlon, a 1912 Blum building in the theater district, which had been heartlessly "sanitized" in the 1980s. Laudati recast Celtic mouldings and reproduced lighting fixtures and entrance doors from period photos. (See the story on p. 62.) He won the Best Grassroots Preservation Award of 2003 from the Victorian Society. Laudati is still in demand as a cosmetologist—but this time for *buildings* in need of a makeover: mlaudati@mindspring.com; (212) 222-5452.



The complaint . . . about modern steel furniture, modern glass houses, modern red bars, and modern streamlined trains and cars is that all these *objets modernes*, while adequate and amusing in themselves, tend to make the people who use them look dated. ” —E. B. White, *The New Yorker*, 1934.



Makeup artist Michael Laudati re-creates and restores period lighting fixtures as part of his passion for restoration.



High and Historic

Colorado has a fascinating past: archaeological ruins, boom-town bungalows, even historic campgrounds and ski culture. All will be on the agenda at Saving Places 2005, the largest statewide preservation conference in the U.S. The event, sponsored in part by *Old-House Interiors*, will be held Feb. 2–4 at the Mosque of the El Jebel Shrine Temple, also known as the 1770 Sherman Street Complex, in Denver. (Built

in 1907, the National Register building is one of the best examples of Moorish-inspired architecture in Colorado.) Conference workshops will include sessions on face-to-face fund-raising, the architectural heritage of Snow Country, historic campground preservation, saving Colorado Bungalows, ancient rock shelters and pueblos, and Englewood's Arapahoe Acres, the first Modernist National Register Historic District. There will even be a pub crawl of Denver's historic watering holes. To register or for more information, contact Colorado Preservation, (303) 893-4260, coloradopreservation.org

Shady Grove

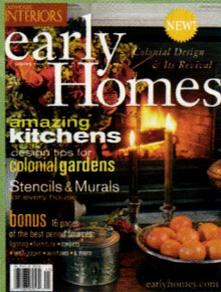
Pull up a Roycroft chair or an Old Hickory rocker before one of two massive stone fireplaces at the Grove Park Inn and enjoy the 18th annual Arts and Crafts Conference and Antiques Show Feb. 18–20. A familiar cast of characters is sure to be on hand in Asheville, N.C., as well as hand-picked newcomers in contemporary crafts and classic Arts and Crafts antiques. This year's event includes a special one-man show, "Frank Lloyd Wright," by Broadway actor Will Stutts. While the historic Grove Park Inn books up well in advance, other lodging is available elsewhere in town. A three-day conference pass is \$125. Contact (828) 628-1915, arts-craftsconference.com

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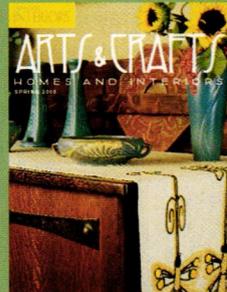
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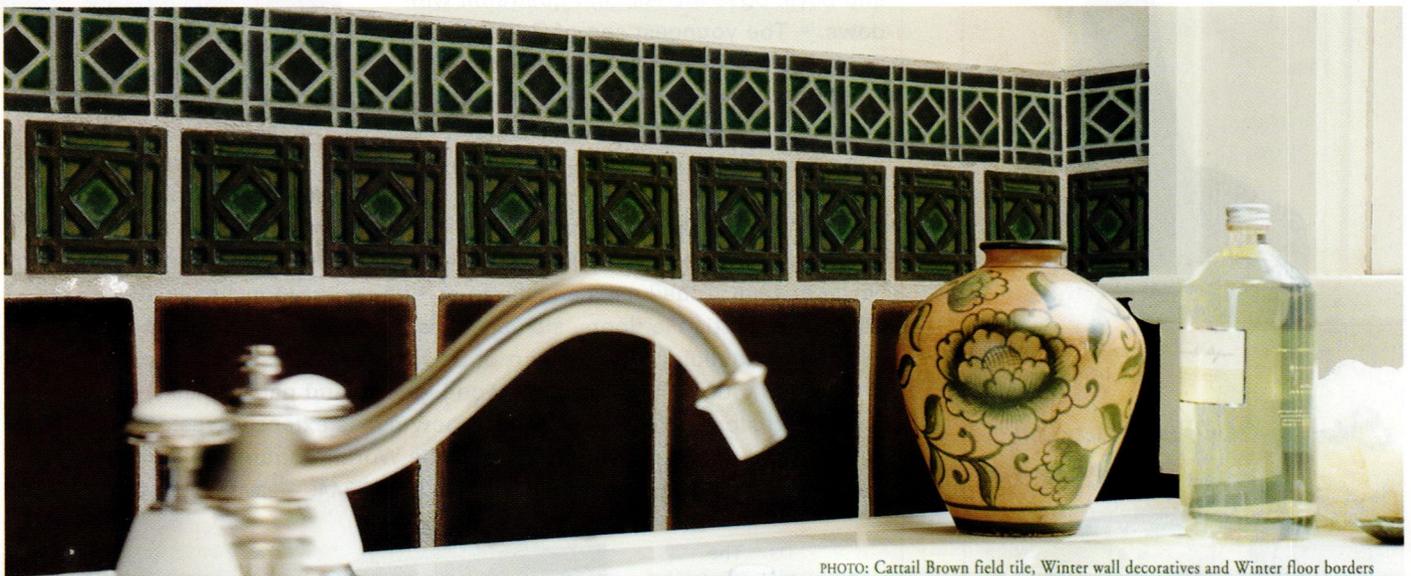


PHOTO: Cattail Brown field tile, Winter wall decoratives and Winter floor borders

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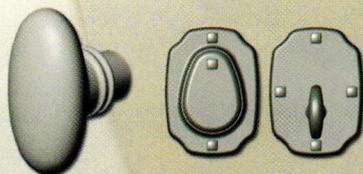
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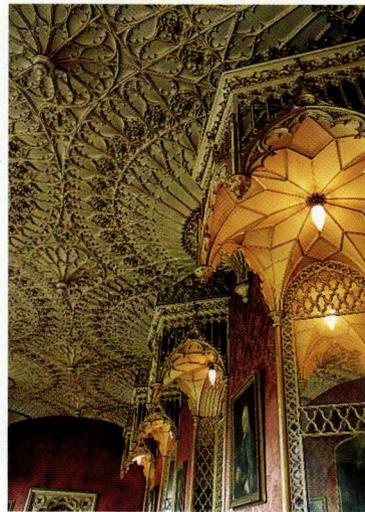
Hudson Immersion

Wilderstein. Olana. Locust Grove, the Italianate home of Samuel F. B. Morse. Make plans now to join the Victorian Society in America's fall study tour (Oct. 14–15), which offers an intimate glimpse into these houses and more as it focuses on the history of the mid-Hudson River Valley. Participants will stay at the Beekman Arms/Delameter Inn in Rhinebeck (the Delameter Inn, de-

signed by Alexander Jackson Davis, is one of the finest examples of a American Carpenter Gothic cottage in the U.S.). Other activities include tours of the historic towns of Hudson, Kingston, and Rhinebeck. For more information, contact the Society, (215) 545-8340, victoriansociety.org

OPEN HOUSE

Sited on a picturesque hill above the Thames in fashionable Twickenham, today a West London suburb, **Strawberry Hill** is inarguably the most famous Gothic house in England. It's also one of the world's most endangered sites. The house was acquired by **Horace Walpole** in 1749, who over the next fifty years added battlements, towers and bays, ogee arches, and quatrefoil windows. ■ The youngest son of Britain's first Prime Minister, Walpole was a dilettante, an author and collector who filled his castle with a world-famous collection of fine art, antiques, and curiosities. Fireplaces based on medieval tombs, Renaissance stained glass from Flanders, library bookcases with pierced Gothic arches all were incorporated into the interior. Strawberry Hill became one of the premier "salons" of the day and a popular tourist site as well; Walpole and his housekeeper gave tours. ■ Lady Frances Waldegrave, who inherited the castle in 1846, added substantially to it: 19th-century touches include Minton encaustic-tile floors, stained-glass skylights, and a Turkish boudoir. In 1923, the building became part of St. Mary's University College, and remains so today. Constructed of wood, stucco and papier mâché—not carved stone—the building fabric now needs extensive restoration. To help, and to arrange a tour, contact the World Monuments Fund in the U.K.: wmf.org; telephone 11 (44) 20 7730 5344. —BRIAN COLEMAN



TOP: The 18th-century interiors at Strawberry Hill, famous for more than 200 years, are in need of repair.

RIGHT: Walpole spent fifty years creating his "Little Gothic Castle," a kind of cross between medieval castle and abbey.





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Arts & Crafts World

Today's Arts and Crafts Movement is more vigorous than ever, and increasingly global in outlook and expression. That's why an exhibition on the worldwide influence of the original Arts and Crafts Movement, opening at the Victoria & Albert in March, is so timely. "International Arts and Crafts" will feature more than 300 masterworks in varied media, tracing the movement from its heyday in late-19th-century Britain to America, through central and northern Europe and Scandinavia, and as far afield as Japan. A central thesis is that this movement, once thought quaint and backward, was a precursor to 20th-century innovation and Modern design.

TOP: A C.F.A. Voysey desk in oak with brass panel and copper hinges. BELOW: A 1903 silver and opal goblet from Germany by Ernst Riegel.

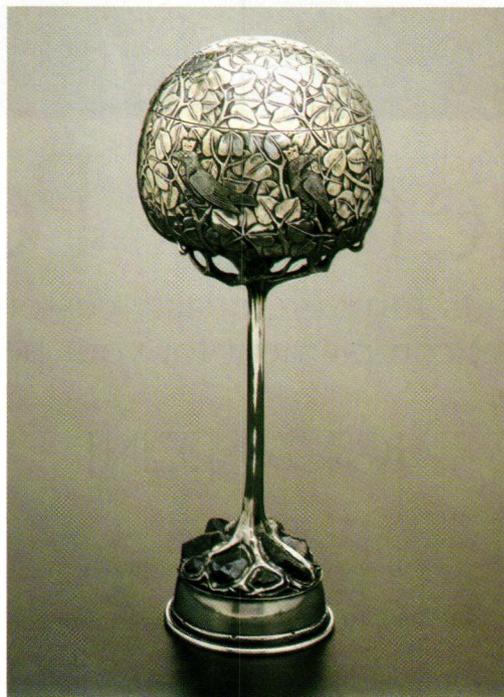
One of themes of the exhibition is to demonstrate that Arts and Crafts has a common language, one shaped by topography and geography, but nevertheless recogniz-

able in its symbolic use of nature, pattern, and ornament. No place is this emphasis more apparent than in the home: the



show will include reconstructions of two domestic room sets, one American and one Japanese.

In addition to the familiar figures and works of William Morris, Gustav Stickley, and Frank Lloyd Wright, the exhibition will explore the Darmstadt Artists' Colony in Germany, the work of the Wiener Werkstätte in 1920s Vienna, Scandinavian Arts and Crafts, and finally, the Mingei (Folkcraft) movement in Japan, which lasted from the mid-1920s until 1945. "International Arts and Crafts" is scheduled to run March 17–July 24 at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 11 (44) 20 7942 2000, vam.ac.uk



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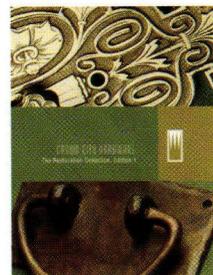


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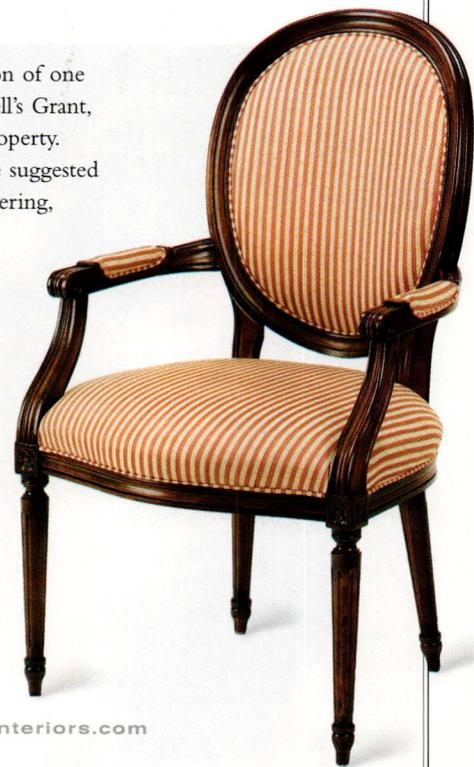
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Ezekiel Hersey Derby Farm is an adaptation of one of the most recognizable murals at Cogswell's Grant, an 18th-century Historic New England property. The mural measures 9' high x 6' wide. The suggested retail price is \$199. From Brewster Wallcovering, (800) 366-1700, brewsterwallcovering.com

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With as much period detail as an Eastlake doorknob, this reproduction rotary doorbell measures 4 3/8" high x 3 3/8" wide. Available in antique brass, antique copper, or antique nickel, the Stella sells for \$45. Contact Historic Houseparts, (888) 558-2329, historichouseparts.com

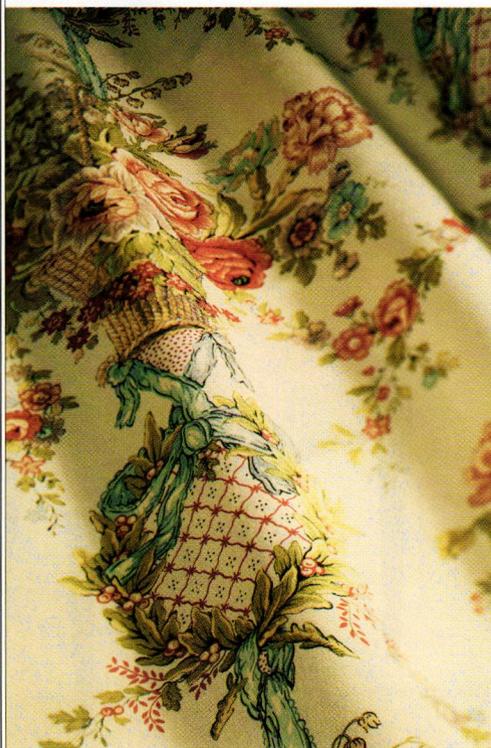
◀ Old Brass

Each of these reproduction brass furniture pulls and finials is a direct lost-wax casting of a period original. The process re-creates the irregular surfaces and minor imperfections seen on true antiques. Contact Londonderry Brasses for pricing, (610) 593-6239, londonderry-brasses.com



◀ Floral Belle

One of 60 fabrics in the first offering from Vervain, "Emaline" is based on a document from the 1860s. The linen and cotton floral print, which comes in five colorways, is \$104 per yard at S. Harris and Fabricut showrooms across the country. Contact Vervain, (800) 611-8686, vervain.com



▶ New Folk Art

Painting on new and antique furniture, Dan and Marlene Coble explore folk-art painting techniques, including the grain painting on this miniature five-drawer chest. Measuring 12" W x 6" D x 14" H, it sells for \$325. Contact D.R. Coble & Co., (260) 665-2362, drcobleandcompany.com



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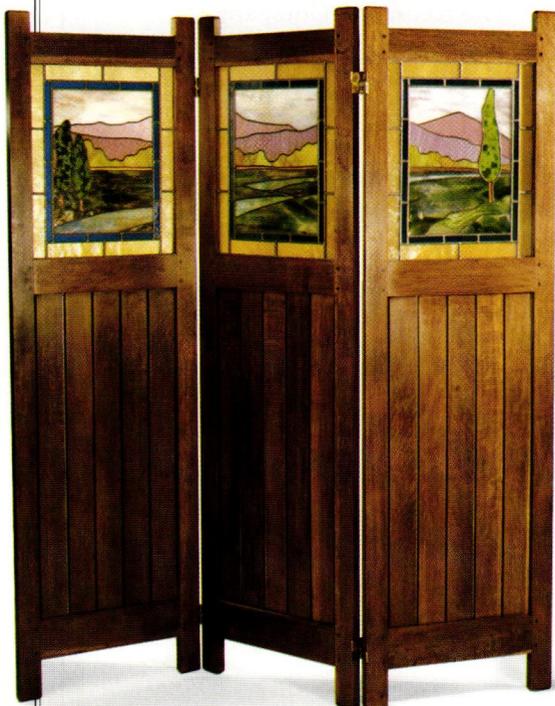
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Evocative of pre-Raphaelite drawings, Delaney's Rose is offered in three colorways: rose, cadet blue, and yellow ochre. List prices for the 1 1/2" knobs range from \$18.50 to \$20.50. The 4" pulls are \$26 to \$28.50. From Notting Hill, (262) 248-8890, Nottinghill-usa.com



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Robert Hause hand-builds each of his pieces from hand-selected quartersawn white oak, finished with shellac and hand-rubbed wax. The three-paneled divider features custom stained glass. The piece is priced at \$3,400. Contact The Art of the Craft, (910) 343-0082, artofthecraft.com

Polychrome Collectible ◀

Not all collectible art tiles are antiques. These 4" x 8" polychromed tiles are available framed. The Rennie's Lattice trio in retro lime, green salmon, and gold salmon is \$315. The 4" x 8" Peacock tile is \$168. Contact Motawi Tileworks, (734) 213-0017, motawi.com



Louis Frieze ◀

Inspired by a Louis Sullivan design, the Celtic frieze can be ordered to fit an exact space or scaled to the size of a room—as can the Dragonfly pattern. (They're both digitally generated.) Prices begin at about \$7 per square foot. From Carol Mead Designs, (707) 552-9011, carolmead.com



◀ Gustav's Light

Closely patterned after a Gustav Stickley original, the wall sconce is available with square or heart-shaped cut-outs. The sconce measures 5" x 6½" x 6½". As shown, it's \$685. From Arts & Crafts Hardware, (586) 772-7279, arts-n-craftshardware.com

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The square, tapered Craftsman column is a fitting pillar for an Arts and Crafts colonnade. Measuring 5' high, it tapers from 5¼" at the top to 7" at the base. Prices range from \$98 to \$200. Contact McCoy Millwork, (800) 236-0995, mccoymillwork.com



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Front and Center

Display your tchotchkes proudly on this four-shelf arched wall cabinet decorated with shell carving, reeded columns, and leaf and vine motifs. Finished in American cherry, it measures 35½" H x 21¼" W x 8½" D. The piece is \$449. From Howard Miller, (616) 772-7277, howardmiller.com



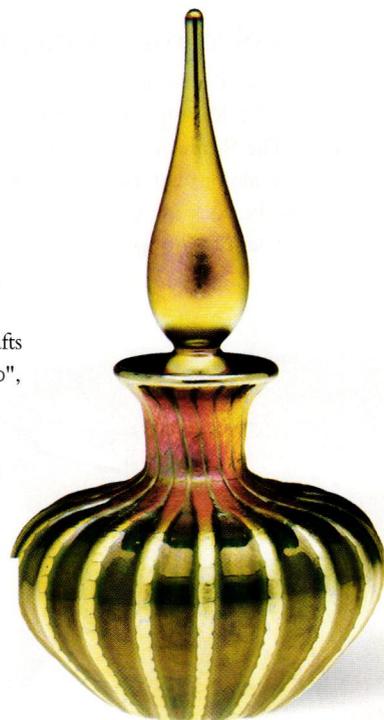
Tiny Sleeper

Slightly gothic in its appeal, the Hanging Bat cabinet vase is a perfect specimen for a favorite shelf. The limited-edition piece is hand-thrown and -decorated. It's available in leaf green and three other colors for \$88 from Ephraim Faience Pottery, (888) 704-7687, ephraimpottery.com



Silvery Moon

Hand-worked in silverplate, the Vine mirror is patterned after the hand-hammered chargers of the Arts and Crafts tradition. It comes in 14", 20", and 26" sizes. Prices range from \$120 to \$400. Contact Susan Hebert Imports, (503) 248-1111, ecobre.com

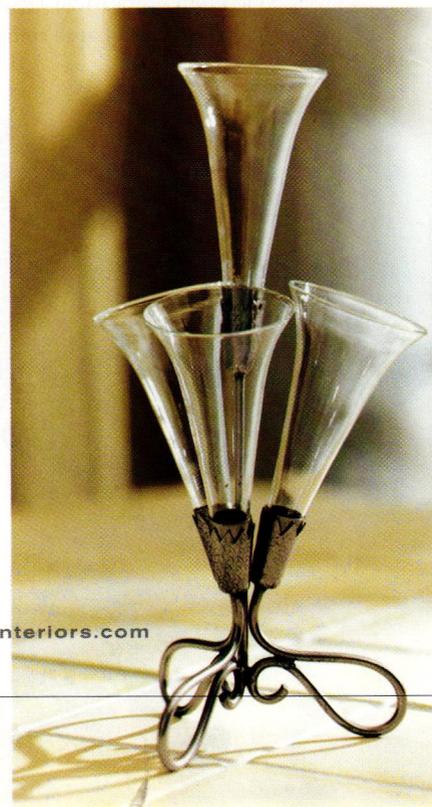


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Victorians were fond of water-filled brackets that allowed them to hang flowers on walls. This tabletop version in antique nickel and glass offers four flutes for floral sprigs. The fluted vase centerpiece lists for \$32 from America Retold, (518) 822-0100, americaretold.com



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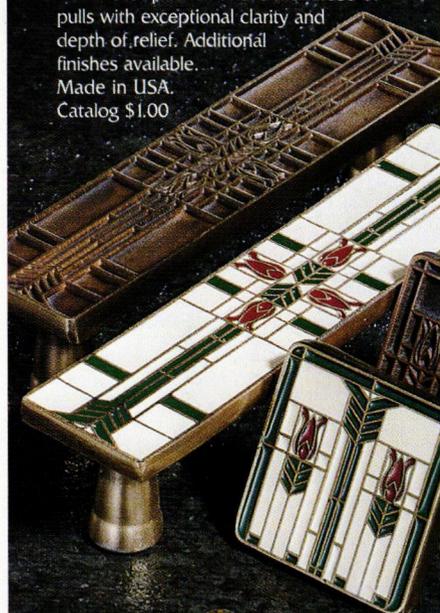


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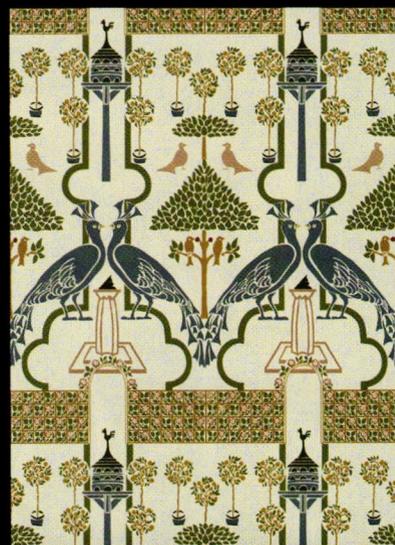


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In The Little Room, it's all about the details—particularly if the house is Victorian and the owner's motto is "too much is never enough."

BY PATRICIA POORE

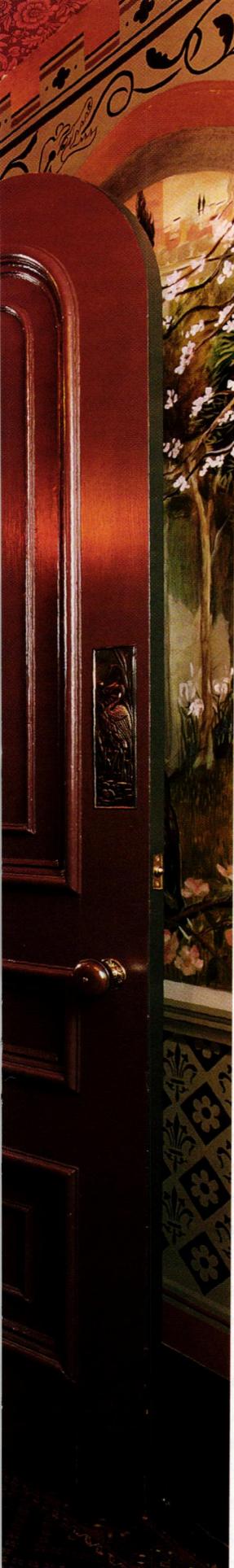
DURING THE VICTORIAN period, well-appointed indoor bathrooms were the province of wealthy urbanites. Their tiled wainscots were topped with decorated and embossed tiles; tubs were either built into cabinetwork or they were sculptural, rolled-rim and claw-footed beauties. The sink counter was probably marble. There might be a sitz bath, foot bath, bathtub, and shower in the same room. Mirrors, wall cabinets, perfume bottles, shaving brushes, and gaslight brackets all were stylish.

So we have the go-ahead to ornament our own Victorian bathrooms, provided we can get over our 20th-century, no-frills plumbing, sanitary sensibilities. Brian Coleman, a writer and editor for this magazine, certainly did. These are his bathrooms, one in a tiny New York City apartment, the other in his Seattle house.

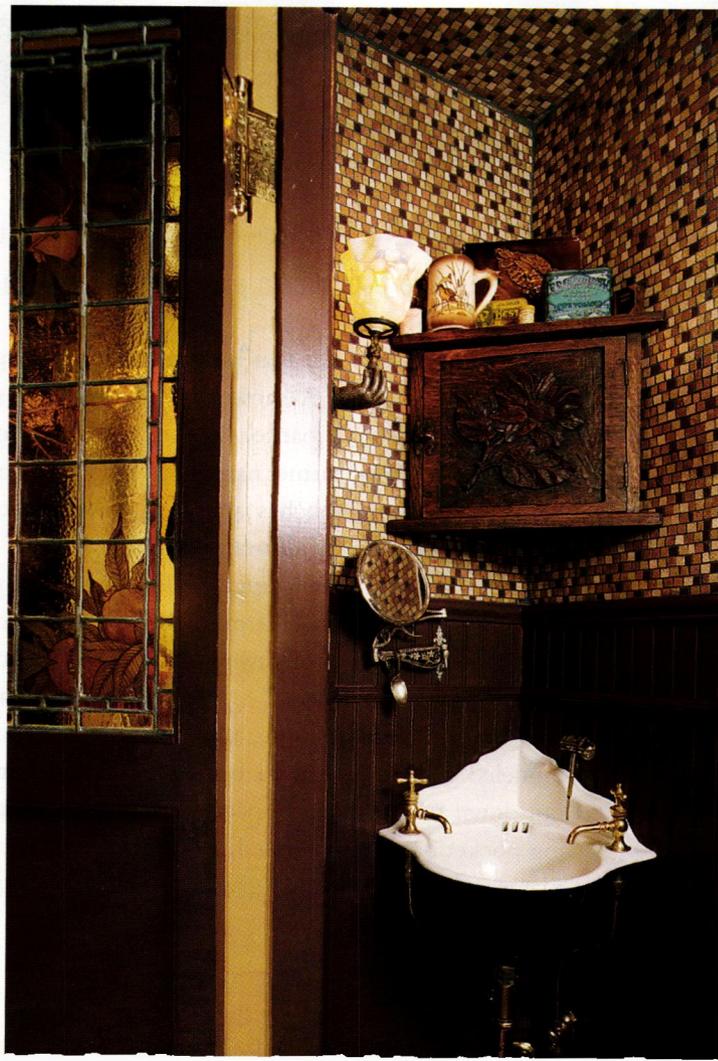
"The facilities" are split in New York: the enclosed wc is across from the sink and shower area. The building was a 19th-century tenement apartment with just one toilet per floor; individual water closets were added during the 1930s. (Baths were taken



The Ornamented Bath



Hand-cut mosaic tiles cover walls and ceiling, with Low Art Tile sunflower panels in the shower stall. "I wanted it to look like a really clean subway station," Brian explains. An antique firescreen just fit the window opening, so he installed it as a privacy screen in the wc. The tile sets of medieval knights are antique.



NEW YORK

The wc opens off the library; the arched door was found at a flea market. The high-tank elephant trunk toilet is so named because of the way the bowl's base curves back; these were popular in the 1870s as the design allows users to examine their eliminations: Victorians were very health-conscious. The tiny corner sink is from a Victorian schoolhouse, the "hand" wall sconce is ca. 1880. An Arts and Crafts-period stained-glass window was made into a door; the vintage Eastlake-style hinges have square pins.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAN MAYERS

The rare, rib-cage shower stands in place of a tub. Everything works: overhead needle spray, bars that spray horizontally, and the kidney sprays. The Victorian window shade has its original pattern still outlined in glitter. **BELOW:** A small walnut commode holds socks and towels. On top: a ca. 1870 silver-plated dressing-table mirror and pitcher and bowl set.



Why not have something stupendous to stare at? Besides, it's a lot of fun to go over the top when you're decorating a small room.



in the kitchen, in a tub that became the kitchen counter.) A shower had been added, but it encroached on the hall, so Brian and his partner narrowed the stall. Finishing touches are . . . everything. "All the hardware is authentic," Brian says, including 1880s hinges cast with geishas. "It makes a big difference especially in tiny rooms, where every detail is seen."

In the Seattle house, the remodeled bathroom had to be torn out down to the studs. A space-saving pocket door was installed, as was a large, colored- and etched-glass win-

dow. Antique fixtures include the old-fashioned shower and a sitz bath (not shown), considered an aid to digestion and good for hemorrhoids. (Brian says they use it to wash the dog.)

"Of course, I cannot let any surface stay bare for long, so I added a collection of Victorian perfume bottles and decanters . . . and collar-stay containers, old photo pins of long-lost loved ones, an incense burner in the form of a silver-plated dog smoking a pipe." The wallpaper in the room was hand-stenciled from a Victorian pattern book. ♦



SEATTLE

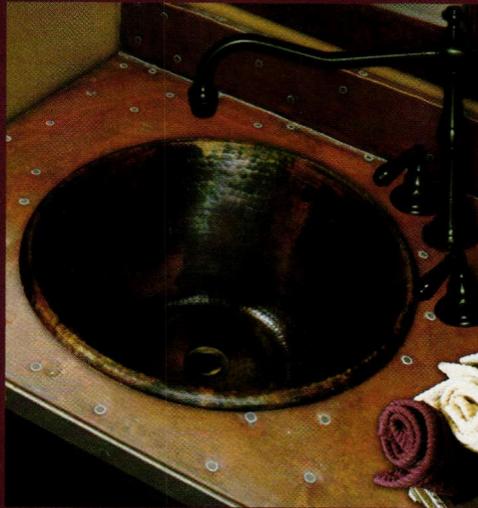
This ca. 1870 elephant trunk toilet has an embossed design. "I have five or six spare toilets in the basement," Brian admits; "I'm a sucker for a good-looking toilet." The early Mott's paper holder dates to when toilet paper came in sheets, not rolls. The slop pail was used before indoor plumbing was common. The marble sink with brass legs is old, as are the faucets.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM WRIGHT



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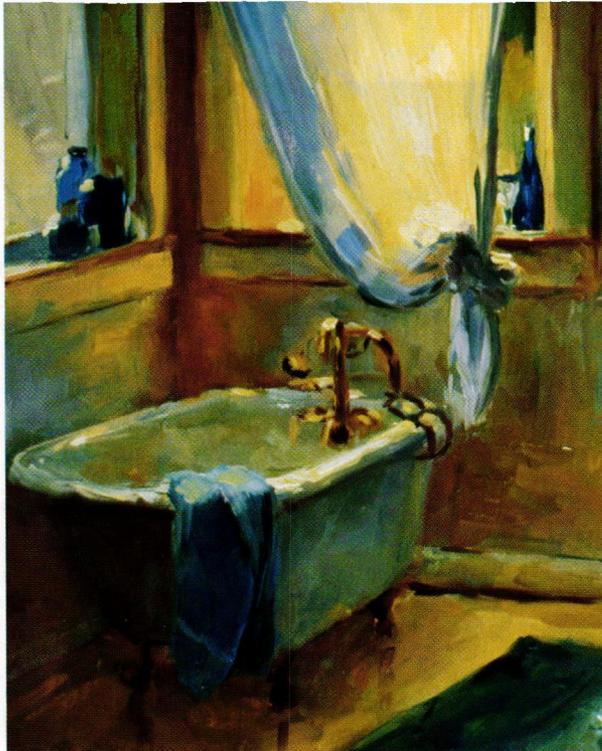


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The Bathroom

BY JANE SMILEY

THE BEST TIME to take a bath is before bed. The faintest hint of steam rising off the still surface, a good strong light shining down from the overhead fixture—no mysteries here, the mysteries are in the book I’ve brought with me to the shore of the tub. The bath is deep—my preferred tub is by Kohler, called The Greek. After looking at it (okay, transfixed) for a few seconds, I step in, get down, stretch out. The Greek is only four feet long, but the spillover drain is thirty inches above the floor of the tub. With the tub full, I am covered almost to the shoulders, almost to the angles of my bent knees. Getting in does for me what an old cigarette-smoking friend of mine once told me that the first puff of her morning cigarette did for her—it assuages the desire. That’s enough. It doesn’t have to do any more. I hear some people bathe to get clean, but I bathe so often that cleanliness isn’t the primary issue.

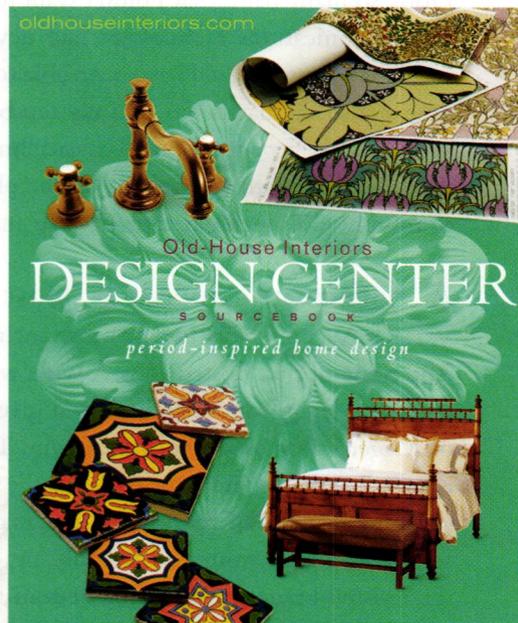
You have to give a lot of thought to the floor of the bathroom. Builders have irresponsibly, in my opinion, given in to “master bath syndrome.” The first symptom is carpeting in the bathroom, which is only one degree less distasteful than carpeting in the kitchen. Shampoo, conditioner, soapy water, makeup, Dippity-Do and Minipoo. Feces, urine, vomit. Once I was awaiting the arrival of an older, male, and somewhat intimidating poet and novelist. Some twenty minutes before he was due,

my daughter staggered into the bathroom with a groan, and I found her there, coiled over the stool, vomiting. I murmured comforting phrases and held her forehead with one hand and her hair, twisted out of her face, with the other. She heaved and heaved. Witnessing her, I felt my own dinner come up, and I had to turn and vomit into the sink. Just then I heard the front door open, and my husband say to the visitor, “I don’t know where Jane is. She ought to be down any minute.” So, no carpet in the bathroom. But tiles are slippery (the bathroom is the most dangerous room), wood flooring rots, and vinyl sheeting tends to curl up. My favorite floor is composed of **those little hexagonal white tiles** they used to use in the ’thirties. They have enough surface to be gripped by wet toes, and you can clean them in a few minutes with a mop and a bucket. Sybarites can buy some fluffy rugs, which are easily pushed aside when the bathroom is required to receive an accident.

Once I ran away from my boyfriend to a hotel. I wouldn’t let my friends tell him where I was, and between baths I made calls to those in the know to find out what his reaction was and how it was progressing. There were some strains in our relationship, but mostly I thought that running away was a dramatically artistic thing to do. I planned to work every moment on a passionately intense but enigmatic [continued on page 36]

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story I was writing about my sexual and emotional history. I ended up taking ten baths in thirty-six hours before I got bored and went home. That was the only time I took so many baths that I didn't want to take any more. If communications technology had developed then to where it is now, I would have been able to take the phone with me to the bathroom, and my ten baths might have become one very long one. I wasn't hungry. I couldn't sleep. Taking a bath and talking on the phone fulfilled all of my physical needs, as they have so many times since.

A bathroom needs at least one good window, preferably two or more, including a skylight. And none of that frosted glass. A wide window that runs along the length of the bathtub and gives out on a view of Magen's Bay on the island of Saint Thomas, and the islands beyond where they rise into the rose and indigo morning sky out of the velvety aquamarine and purple sea, is ideal. But from the bathtub, any landscape, even the twisted branches of winter trees in the back yard, is worth contemplating. The contrast between the naked,

comfortable, half-floating self and the world outside is always reassuring. Should sleet be slashing at the skylight as well, then the bather has the choice of enjoying the sound effects (a delicious little shiver) or drowning them out by lifting her toe to the faucet handle and introducing more hot water into the tub.

It's amazing to contemplate, but I lived without my own source of hot water for some four years in the early 'seventies. I had enough money to eat and sleep, but I scrounged for baths. Often, at the houses of friends, when everyone was settling down after dinner for a little conversation, I would say, "Would you mind if I took a bath?" Usually, even people I didn't know very well were startled enough to say, "No, go ahead." I hitchhiked through Europe with my first husband, and baths were at a premium. In our archaeological phase, in Winchester, England, the common bathroom had a nice old claw-footed tub, but owing to pressure on the hot water supply, you had to choose your time of day very carefully. In addition, friends we made, true archaeologists who lived in a tent outside the house, owned their own trowels, and

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subsisted on one pound sterling per week, frequently expressed contempt for another member of the dig, who, they said, was “scrubbing her skin off” with frequent bathing. The acme of our friends’ summer was the four days they spent, him holding her upside down by the feet, her removing, trowel by trowel, the contents of a medieval tanner’s pit. The contents were known as coprolites. In the Middle Ages, tanners cured leather with animal manure. During these four days, both of our friends felt that bathing would be a waste of time and elected to wait until the excitement was over. I kept my own baths something of a secret.

I always thought I wanted a Jacuzzi in the bathroom. Most tubs do come with a whirlpool version, and many master baths, especially those with giant master-and-mistress-closet-with-automatic-light facilities, have them. I was disabused of my fantasies, however, when my book publisher put me up in the penthouse suite of a small hotel off Picadilly in London. I Jacuzzied every spare moment, but in the end, I wasn’t woman enough to withstand the pounding. The splashing water made it impos-

sible to read my book, and the jet-powered heat destroyed the very peace that I sought. I emerged over-stimulated but under-conscious.

Not everyone has his or her most intimate bathroom relationship with the tub. My sixteen-year-old daughter, for example, enjoys the tub, but is far closer to the sink, above which, of course, hangs the mirror. I think of sink-people as **face-oriented rather than body-oriented**. They take good care of their complexions, floss regularly, pluck their eyebrows, are careful to blend liquid foundation smoothly into their necks, and wear contact lenses. The sink is below them, entirely useful, drain closed, ready to receive anything that drops. They lean over the sink, or sit on it, closer and closer to the mirror. They put their feet in the sink in order to shave their legs. Some people even prefer to wash their hair in the sink. And they think that water from the sink faucet is more potable than water from the tub faucet.

Master bath types love the double sink. They drop “his” sink and “her” sink into acres of countertop as if that’s going to solve every problem, but somehow a

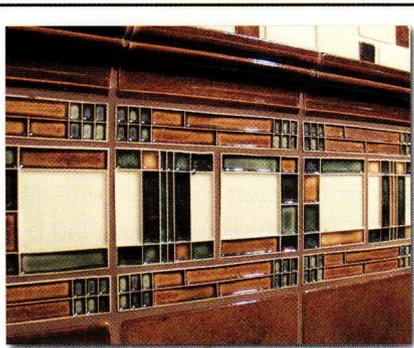
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pedestal sink with makeup containers around the edge is more appealing, more a work in progress than a mess. Too much countertop collects things, not only makeup bottles and half-empty samples of shampoo and old razors (danger expresses itself in the bathroom every time you turn around) and dirty towels and needle-point covers for Kleenex boxes, but also decorative touches, like vases of Italian glass flowers that need to be dusted petal by petal as well as hair and dabs of toothpaste and bits of soap and sand from the beach and small toys and candy wrappers wadded into tiny balls. Too much countertop is a natural magnet—and an excuse for **too much mirror**.

The main reason for a mirror in the bathroom is to silver the ambient light and thereby lift the spirit. Twenty-four inches wide by thirty inches tall is abundant to the task. Any more and you end up taking window space. And too much mirror invites two or more people to think they can use the bathroom at the same time, which entirely defeats the larger purpose of the bathroom. Of course there are those inner-directed types whose most profound relationship is with the stool. I am not one of them, but I feel they should be fully accommodated. A shelf is good, stacked with a few back issues of *Bon Appétit*, a volume of short stories by Dorothy Parker, and some catalogues.

It may be that shower takers and tub bathers are separate breeds, like cat lovers and dog lovers, but I prefer both. That sluicing feeling should have its place in every life. The shower head, though, should be at least six and a half feet high, and the water pressure strong enough to blast away thought. Mostly I shower in the morning. A bath in the morn-

ing seems like a needless brake on the day, not to mention an act of aggression against the other bathroom users, but from time to time, after a feverish night of the flu, half-sleeping, half waking, intermittently shivering and sweating into the bunched and creased bedclothes, whirring with partly comprehended imaginings, I want to subside into a hot bath more than anything. The bathroom is the most forgiving place for illness. It's the only place in the house where you can bleed in peace.

I read about a woman with twenty-one children once. The bathroom was her favorite room. Mine, too. Alone and naked, sunk in the life of the body, the inner life. The tiny tiles are smooth and cool against the soles of your feet. The light is bright, shined up by the mirror. The sounds of the house are muffled or, better still, lost in the therapeutic sound of water running. Your stuff is spread all over the place, claiming the bathroom, temporarily, as **your own space**. The book. The glass of orange juice. The short stack of Fig Newtons. The clean towels, clean floors, clean basins, clean mirror, and clean windows. If you've cleaned them yourself, this is your chance to enjoy them. Vapory fragrances commingle. The color palette of your little world here is mostly neutral—whites or creams—with more vivid accents of towels, pictures, and rugs enlivening the eye here and there. You are Self Centered, as is your perfect right in the bathroom. ✦

JANE SMILEY is a fiction writer and essayist whose book *A Thousand Acres* won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1992. This essay was first published in *Home*, American Writers Remember Rooms of Their Own (Random House, 1995).

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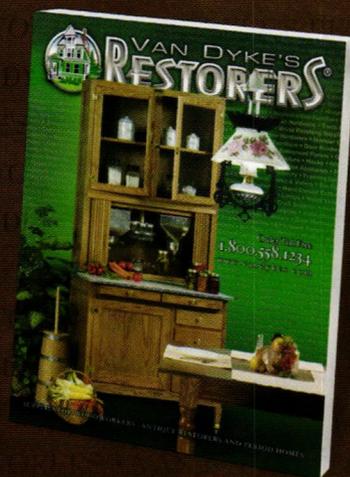
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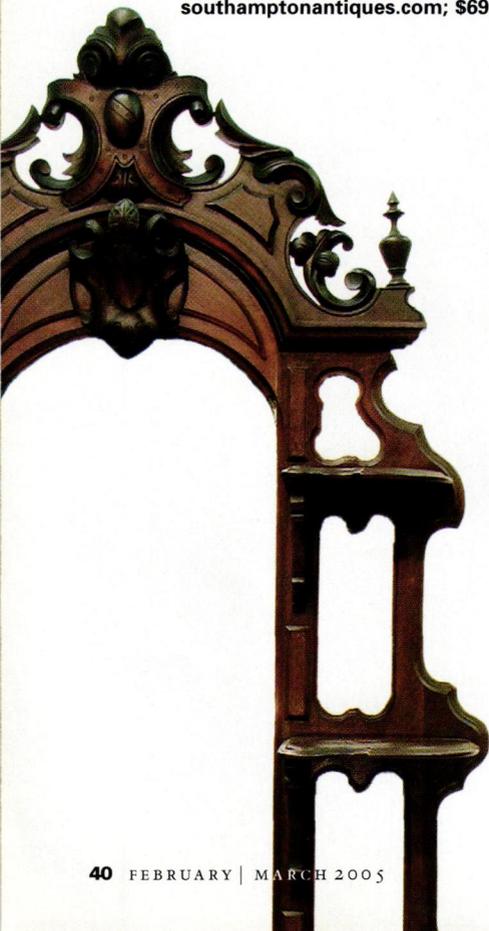
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ABOVE: A Victorian Gothic étagère, one of two known (see page 42); this one is in New York's Metropolitan Museum. **TOP RIGHT:** Walnut étagère in the Renaissance Revival style, American, ca. 1870. [Southampton Antiques, 413/527-1022, southamptonantiques.com; \$6950]



What-for a Whatnot?

BY DAN COOPER

YES, Americans have always collected trinkets, but it took the Industrial Revolution and a burgeoning middle class to create supply and demand for millions of sentimental breakables, which everyone since has displayed to reveal a bit about our personalities. Never was the trend greater than during the Victorian era of the mid-19th century, a time that saw impressive furniture used for nothing else than to elevate and display gewgaws. Into the parlors came the étagère.

The term is derived from the French word for stage or floor (in the sense of storey). This is a piece of furniture with at least two or three shelves, perched one above the other, allowing vertical display of objects without taking up much floor space. The sky (actually, the ceiling) was the limit as the number of shelves found on étagères in more affluent homes be-

The nineteenth century was the era of knickknacks—but the mantel shelf is only so wide. Enter the étagère, a stage for collectibles.



came a veritable staircase of curios.

The curio cabinet, or vitrine, is indeed related to the étagère, and the two forms can sometimes be found in one piece of furniture. A curio cabinet is a case piece with a glass door, often with glass-enclosed side panels used to imprison the especially ugly wedding presents. Many an étagère has a glass-fronted cabinet lodged in the middle of its framework; conversely, curio cabinets are oft garnished with an open étagère top. Whether the piece is a vitrine or étagère is determined by preponderance: whichever function takes up the greater massing of the piece. A “whatnot” is a generic term for all of these forms, including smaller floor-standing and wall-hung shelving units.

Étagères first appear with any frequency during the early 1840s, a time when several opposing styles collided. The [continued on page 42]

LEFT: An 1870s Renaissance Revival-style étagère in walnut and marble, recently auctioned for \$3250 by Wooden Nickel [513/241-2985, woodennickelantiques.net]

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Those cute little piecrust tables with concentric, stacked levels are known as “dumbwaiters.” They were used to serve food and tea. Today they are often pressed into service as display shelving, but they are not, historically or technically speaking, *étagères*.

waning neoclassical or Empire style was morphing into the newly popular Gothic, while Rococo Revival was nascent and the Elizabethan Revival was fleeting by. The amalgam period is referred to by those in the antiques field as Transitional, as no one has yet come up with a better term for an Empire/Gothic/Elizabethan/Rococo *mélange* that looks like it was assembled in the dark, heavily varnished, and thrust upon the public. It is not uncommon to find a piece of furniture veneered in flame mahogany (a typically Empire trapping) in a vaguely Rococo form embellished with Gothic arches, and maybe even supported by Elizabethan barley-twist columns.

Each shelf of an *étagère* was fitted, usually, with an open gallery or solid backboard that prevented little picture frames from plummeting down the backside and into a hot-air register. The new and phenomenally popular fret-saw was used to make elaborate, lacy walnut panels to serve this purpose. A hundred years later, one of these delicate galleries would invariably snap, causing unscrupulous antiques dealers to rip them off the entire piece. Look on the back of any naked *étagère*: you’ll see the screw holes.

The *étagère*’s many shelves were supported with either turned spindles or fret-cut brackets. Well-to-do folks purchased far grander pieces with highly carved brackets and galleries;

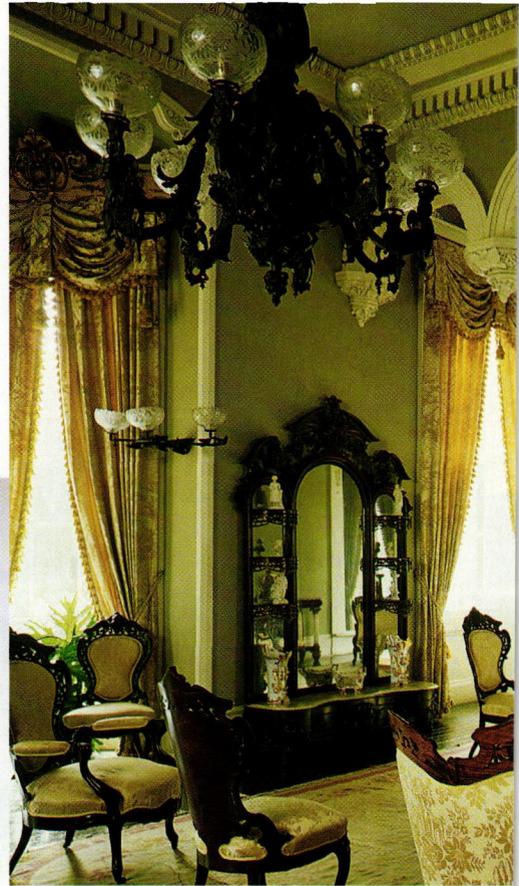


ABOVE: Ten feet of spires, cusps, and “rose windows.” Rosewood with original French polish. [Antique Room, 718/875-7084, antiqueroom.com; \$125,000] **TOP RIGHT:** Rococo Revival *étagère*, part of an 1850s suite of carved rosewood furniture at Stanton Hall, Natchez, Miss. **RIGHT:** An *étagère*-desk at Rosedown in Louisiana.

the best pieces had a marble-topped base cabinet with doors or drawers.

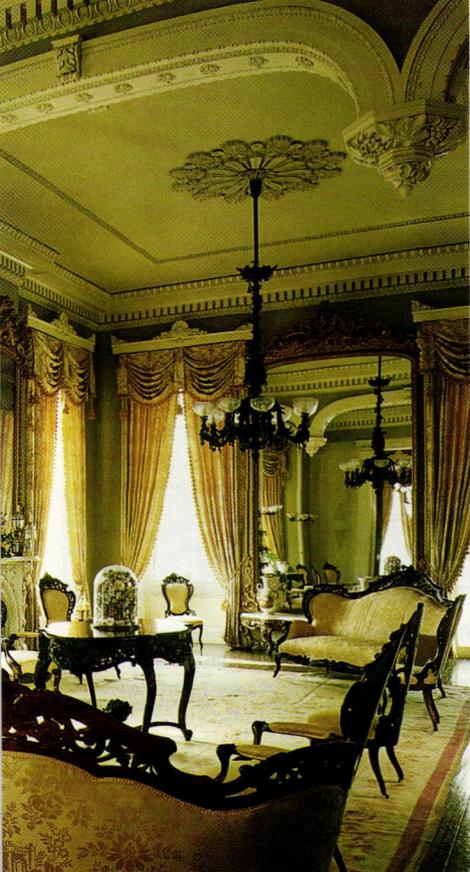
Many an *étagère* took up residence in a dark corner of a parlor. Corner units were specifically designed for the junction of two walls. They were perfect for taking up the space, and giving a home safely removed from traffic patterns to cherished possessions.

Étagères were of course all for show, and therefore most often found in the public rooms of a house. They were, therefore, fabricated of the best



quality materials and workmanship the owner could afford. Styles paralleled popular fashion as it evolved.

Beginning in the middle of the 19th century, massive Rococo Revival and Renaissance Revival sideboards, resplendent with carved wooden fruit



and dead rabbits, incorporated small display shelves. But these were specifically intended for dining service pieces. The display areas were likely to be called galleries or cup-boards.

BY THE 1880s, the acquisition of knick-knacks had reached a frenzy, and *étagères* became *de rigueur* furnishing. An omnipresent piece in wealthy 1880s parlors was the towering, Eastlake–Aesthetic Movement *étagère* constructed of walnut or ebonized cherry. It announced the homeowner's refinement laden with blue-and-white china and silver-plated giftware dripping with Asian motifs. Look in any engraving or photograph of this period: the *étagère* rivals the fireplace as the focal point. This was, in fact, the era when the fireplace overmantel became a flamboyant, elevated *étagère* stacked with stuff. Guests wandered amidst a veritable city of *étagère*–skyscrapers populated by quasi-Asian and Middle Eastern booty.

Those with new Colonial Re-

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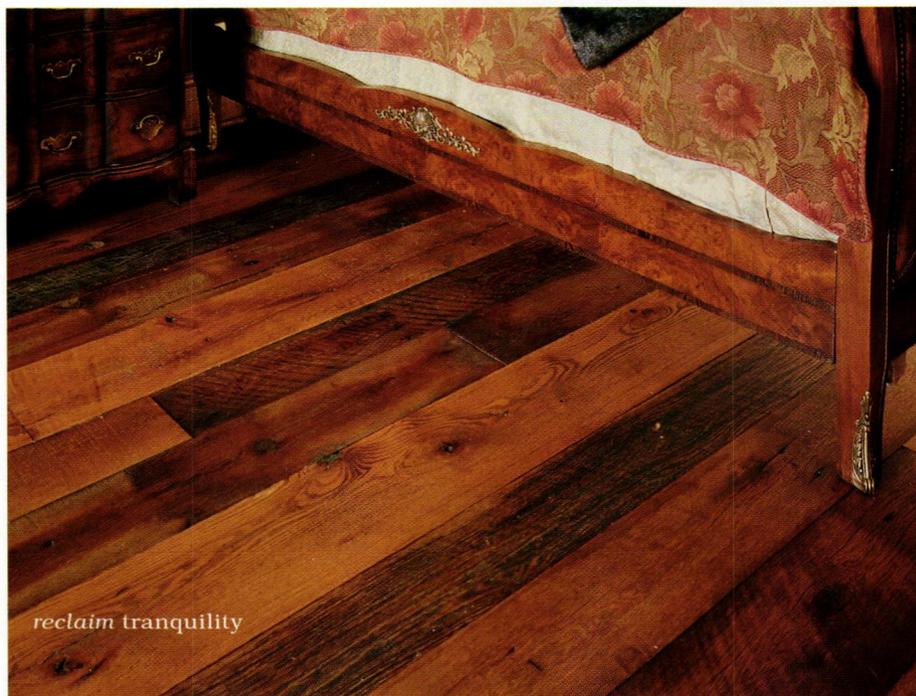
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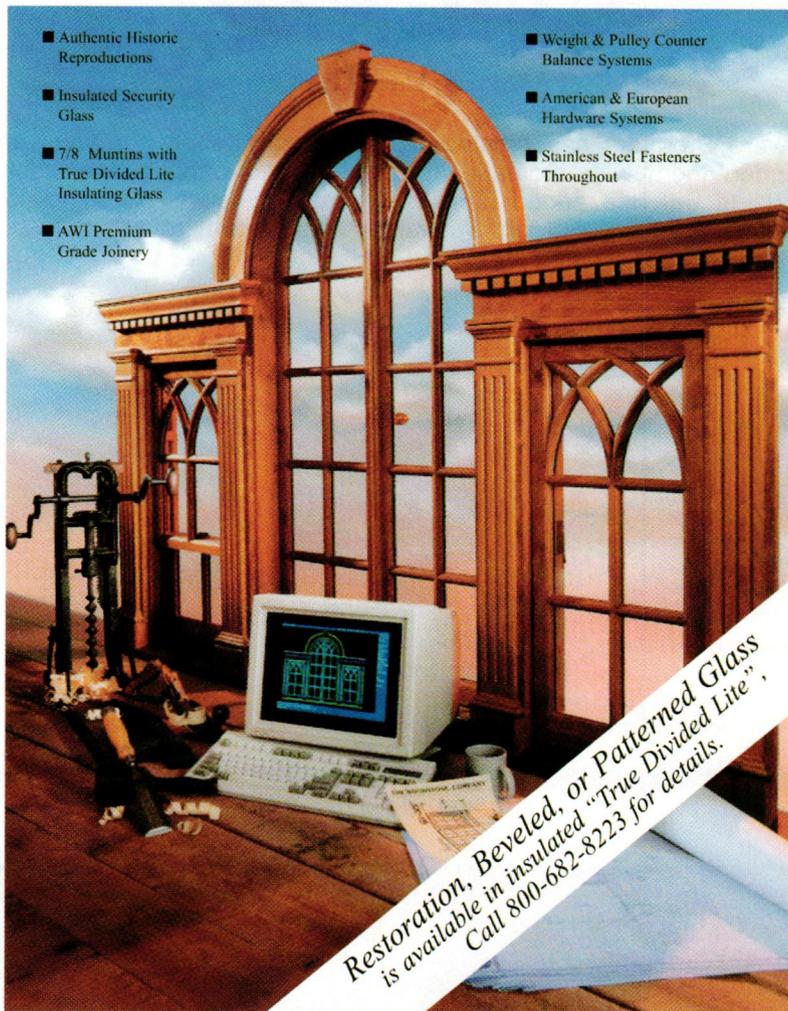
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Rococo Revival étagère of laminated rosewood, John Henry Belter, New York, ca. 1850. [Joan Bogart Antiques, 516/764-5712, joanbogart.com; \$25,000]

vival sentiment, too, gladly welcomed the étagère home. After the Centennial in 1876, Americans began collecting Things Olde. Étagères from this time were embellished with motifs reminiscent of the 18th century—Sheraton-style oval fans, Adamesque swags, claw feet, Chippendale-inspired finials—which were somehow incorporated into the Eastlake form.

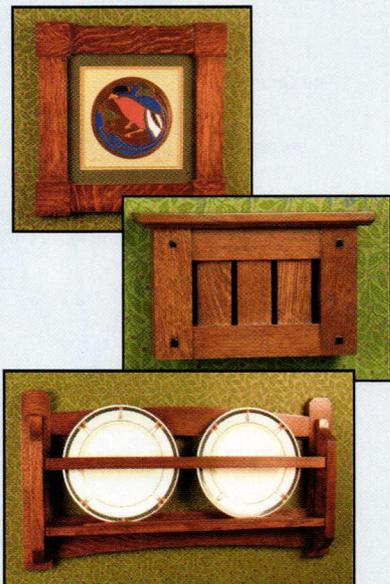
In the 1890s, we see fewer stand-alones, as smaller rooms led to combining the functions of two pieces of furniture into one. So you can find desk-étagère hybrids, such as the ubiquitous Larkin desk, and mahogany-stained, vaguely Art Nouveau vitrine-étagères.

The whole idea fell from grace during the first part of the 20th century. Our passions for indiscriminate collecting had cooled, but more importantly, fashion dictated a less cluttered look at home. Today our sidetables hold photo frames and vases. The étagère itself has been replaced by more functional bookcases and built-in display cabinets. ✦

DAN COOPER'S own historic étagère was made of cinderblocks and planks.

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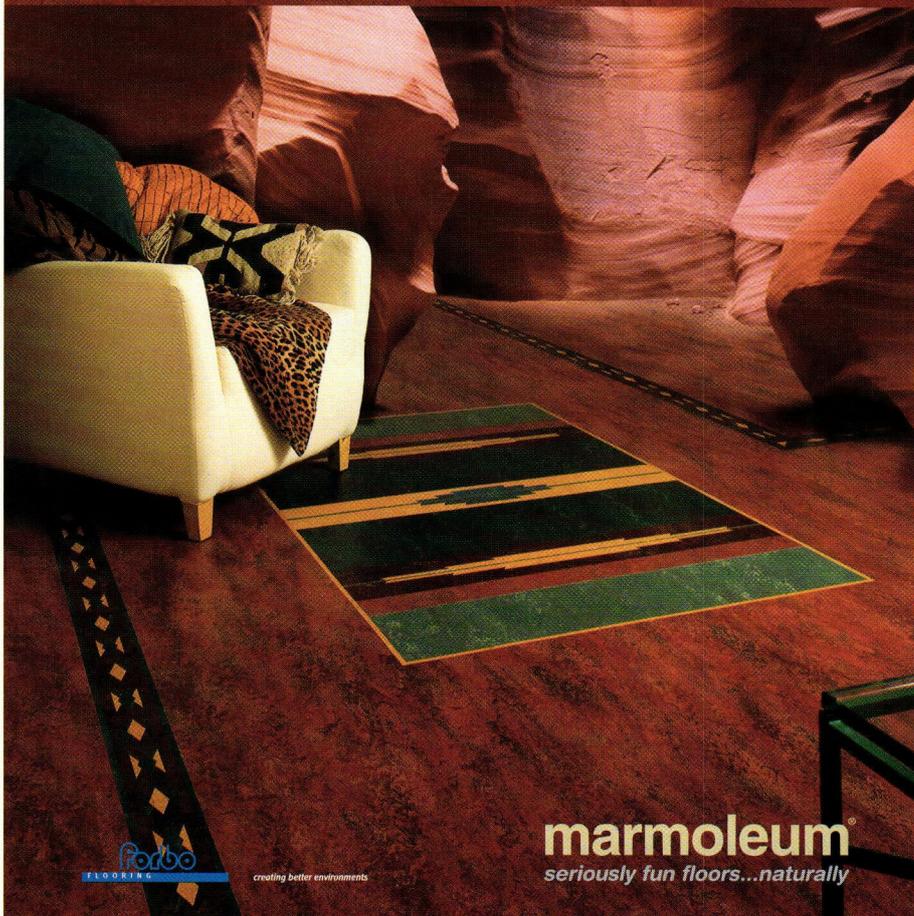
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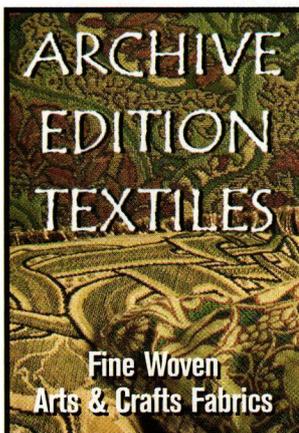


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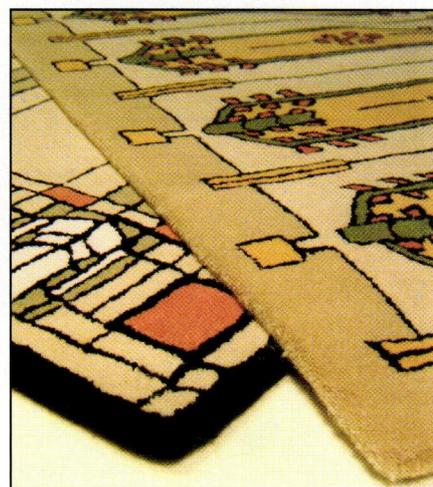
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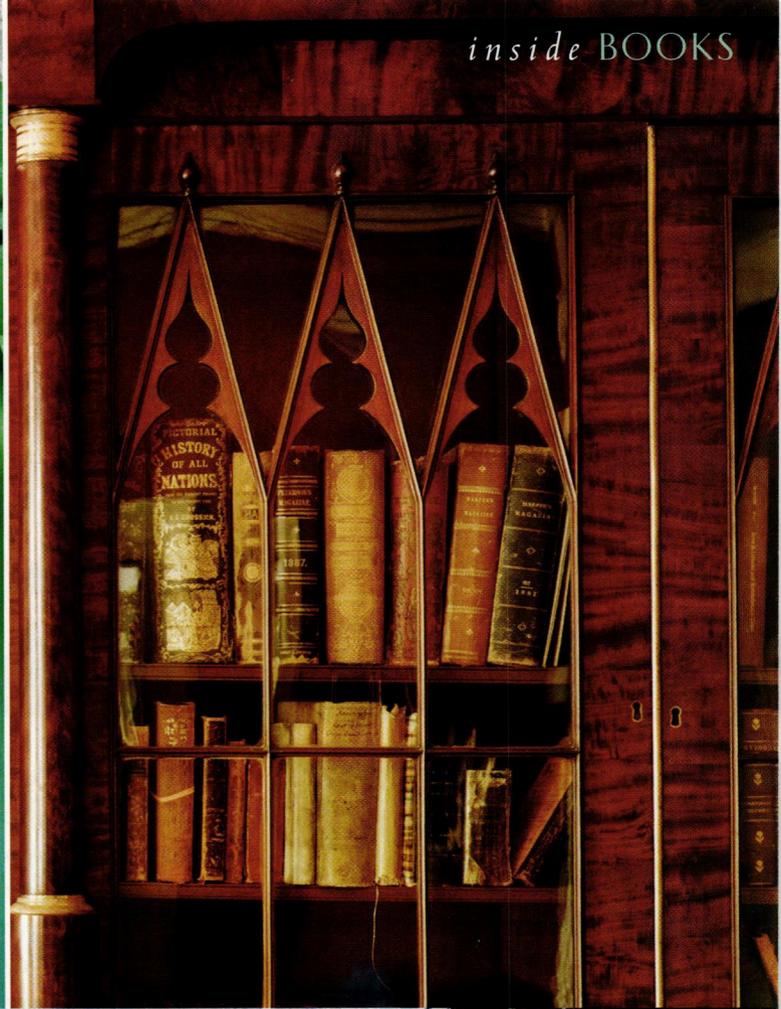


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Inspired Ground

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRET MORGAN

SOME PLACES are special, inspirational, even sacred, and have been recognized as such for a long time. If you are sensitive to such things, and familiar with the eastern United States, you will have recognized the numinous quality of the Hudson River Valley. Several fine books have celebrated the painters—

Hudson River School, they are called—of this region rich in history, mystery, and beauty. Now there is a book that documents three hundred years of incomparable architecture inspired by a place like no other.

The film director James Ivory, who lives in Columbia County in New York State, writes in the book's

A new book documents important houses in the Hudson Valley—but it's also a tribute to fine work, eccentricity, and fidelity to a sense of place.

Carved decoration in the English Rococo style, dating to the 1750s at Philipse Manor Hall, a house begun in 1682. Detail of a Classical secretary-bookcase with Gothic embellishment, made in Albany ca. 1800. The majestic Hudson, inspiration to so many.

Van Cortlandt Manor, Locust Lawn, Montgomery Place, Boscobel, Edgewater, Sunnyside, Lyndhurst, the Armour–Stiner Octagon, Olana, Minnehaha, Springwood—houses that belong not just to New York but to our history.



TOP: Bronck Museum (Coxsackie, 1663–1738); Samuel Hunting House (Dutchess County, ca. 1840); Nuits (Irvington, ca. 1860), Delamater House (Rhinebeck, 1844). **ABOVE:** A fine, paneled fireplace wall at the Van Cortlandt House, 1748, in The Bronx.

Foreword: “The Hudson River Valley’s hold on us, its attraction for us, is out of all proportion with everything about it except its evident beauty, which from the first stirrings of an artistic consciousness in this country has been celebrated by painter and

writer. . . . The region’s history . . . has yet to be presented (one might say ‘produced’) in the thorough-going fashion of New England, Virginia, Charleston, or parts of the deep South.” Of the historic houses in this new book, Ivory writes: “Some of them seem to be monuments to pride and power, others to a feeling for beauty, while still others may seem like monuments to eccentricity.”

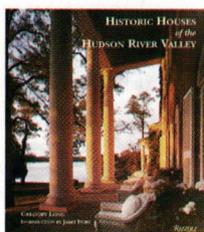
Historic Houses of the Hudson River Valley shows us the homes of the early settlers of the 17th century, the estates of the landed gentry of the 18th century, and the baronial mansions of 19th-century captains of industry. Chapters document Dutch vernacular cottage style, elegant Federal and Greek Revival houses, and grand Gothic and Italianate country estates. Many of the sites are historically significant, including two Colonial houses that headquartered American generals during the Revolution. Then there’s Washington Irving’s whimsically made-up Sunnyside; here we find Olana, the Persian fantasy of landscape painter Frederic Edwin Church. Over thirty houses along the Hudson, from New York City to

Albany, are shown. Included is a directory of museums (many of these houses are public) along with a map.

The book was created in association with the Preservation League of New York State. Its text was written by Gregory Long, president of the New York Botanical Garden since 1989, a student of New York’s history, and a trustee of the Preservation League of New York State. He has been restoring Greek Revival farmhouses in rural New York since 1973. This book joins Rizzoli’s stellar lineup celebrating New York: *Dutch Colonial Homes in America* (photographed by Geoffrey Gross, text by Roderic H. Blackburn); *Catskills Country Style* (photographed and written by Steve Gross and Susan Daley); and the classic *Bricks and Brownstone* (by Charles Lockwood). ✦

REVIEWED BY PATRICIA POORE

Historic Houses of the Hudson River Valley 1663–1915 by Gregory Long; Rizzoli, 2004. Hardcover, 255 pages, \$55. Through your bookstore.





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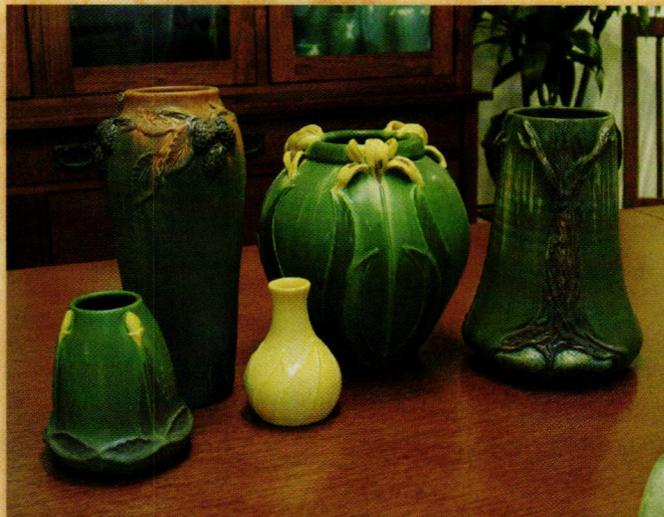
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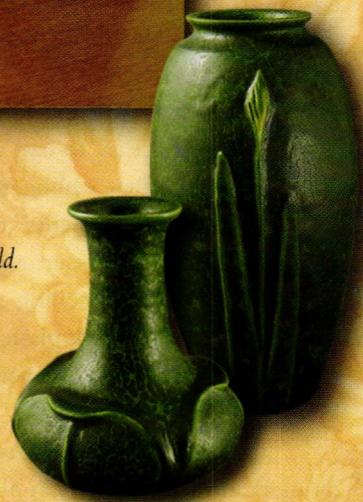
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Crowning Glory

Plaster embellishment, like the medallion in the middle of the ceiling, is easy enough to replace today.

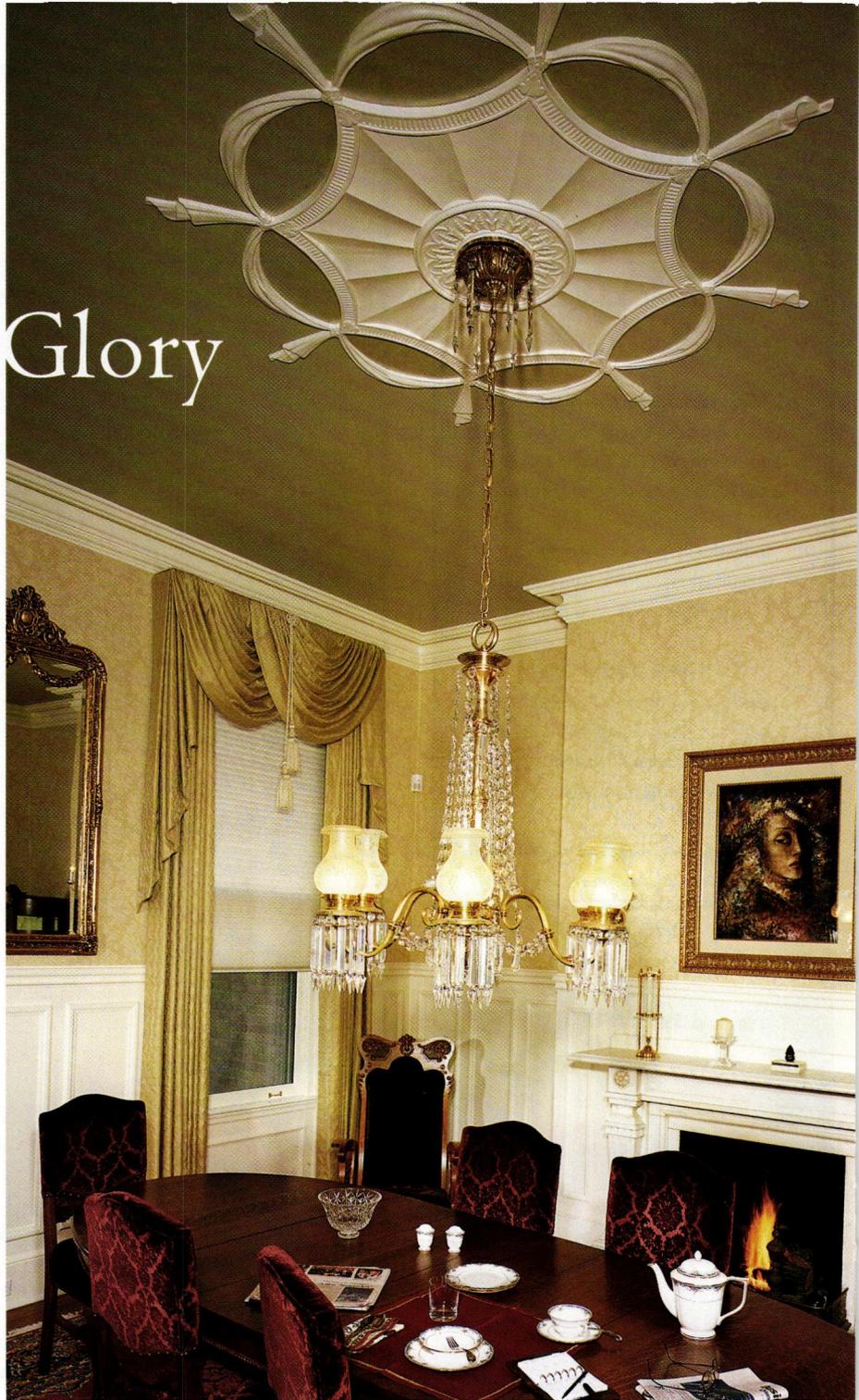
BY REGINA COLE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRUCE MARTIN

LUCKY FOR US, humble plaster is, as ever, easy to cast and to apply, so that ceiling medallions lost to “improvements” can be put back. Once we’ve seen a period room with its plaster ceiling rosette in place, though, a blank plaster ceiling in a Victorian house never again looks quite finished.

Plaster mouldings and rosettes or medallions were first applied to the ceilings in high-style, 16th-century English rooms to embellish the wood understructure. Initially, decorative plasterwork was cast into the wet ceiling plaster and, after it cured, was carved *in situ*. Later, it was cast off-site in wood moulds. Medallions evolved into logical, central focal points from which hung lighting fixtures. Ceilings were finished with plaster medallions as surely as women wore hats.

The best of today’s plaster ceiling medallions are made in the time-honored way. At the Boston Ornament Company, for instance, they are still made from ground gypsum, which is mixed with water, cured in moulds, and attached to ceilings with drywall screws and panel adhesive. Only the



The chandelier is the final jewel in the formal dining room of a mid-19th-century urban house. The fixture hangs from a 74-inch neoclassical ceiling medallion, cast in 17 pieces and assembled on site. An original salvaged from a post office was the model.

moulds have changed with time; easy-to-make and -use rubber has replaced carved wooden moulds.

Boston Ornament owners Bruce Jones and Clayton Austin and seven employees, in business since 1985, serve an ever-increasing clientele in greater Boston. “A lot of Boston’s

Back Bay townhouses were chopped up into apartments during the mid-20th century, and many architectural details were destroyed,” they say. “Many of our clients are new owners restoring them as single-family homes. We often install new plaster ornaments [even] where [continued on page 52]



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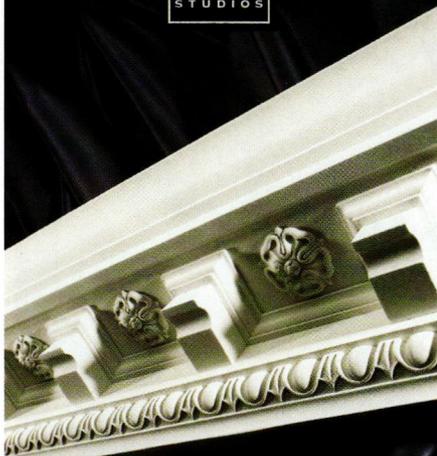
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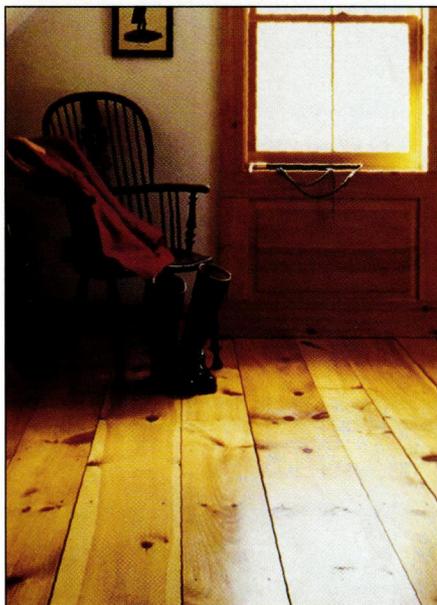
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all evidence of the original is gone.”

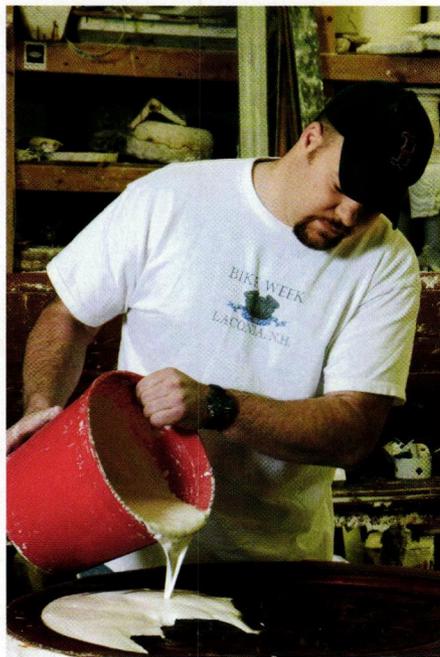
Austin and Jones like to use old plaster ornaments as patterns from which they make new moulds. In the dining room of one Back Bay Boston house, they installed a large, neoclassical medallion cast from an original rescued from a post office being demolished. “Because of its size, this medallion was cast in 17 pieces. The center and each of the eight swags and drop drapes constitute an individual piece,” Austin explains.

“For a new medallion, we make a pattern out of wood, plaster, and clay. Then we brush on silicone or urethane-based rubber, which becomes the mould. When we have an original piece in hand, of course, we already have our pattern.

“Medallions are a small part of our business,” says Austin. “We also make mouldings, cornice mouldings, wall niches, fountains, brackets—all sorts of indoor and outdoor work.”

For exterior applications, the plaster mix is weatherproofed with the addition of acrylic. “Or, if the homeowner wants to replicate cast bronze,” says Jones, “we mix in bronze powder. The end product looks like and has the characteristics of bronze, without the weight or the cost.”

Even in indoor use, porous plaster requires the protection of primer and paint, which is easier to apply before the piece is attached to the ceiling. The design can be highlighted with finishing touches. On the dining room ceiling [p. 50], flat areas in-



Ben Sharpe learned his trade at Lenox China; his father was with Wedgwood in England.

STEP 1: Sharpe pours the plaster mix (powdered gypsum and water) onto the rubber mould.



STEP 2: He then uses his hands to smooth it and work it into the deeper recesses. To effectively interact with water and become uniformly hard, gypsum powder must be fresh.



The owners of Boston Ornament Co., Clayton Austin (left) and Bruce Jones, hold a freshly cast wall bracket.

CENTER & CIRCUMFERENCE

There are two ways to determine the proper size of your ceiling medallion. The simplest is to use the chandelier as a guide: "The circumference of the medallion should be roughly that of the chandelier," says Clayton Austin. "If the chandelier is big for the size of the room, the medallion will keep things in proportion."

But in neoclassical rooms, the plastered ceiling is its own ornament, not a visual anchor for hanging fixtures. "Then you use the size of the room and, more particularly, the ceiling

height, as a guide," Austin responds. "A small room with a high ceiling will look better with a large medallion, so it's really a matter of scale."

His rule of thumb: a 9- to 10-foot ceiling supports a 26-inch medallion; for 11- to 12-foot ceilings, use 36-inch medallions. For higher ceilings, expand the medallions proportionally.

Jones offers this general rule: "Don't put a small medallion on a large ceiling. Better too big than too small." When in doubt, paste a paper template to the ceiling.



STEP 3: A layer of fine sisal fiber provides reinforcement. Fiber threads are stronger than woven fabric. Early plasterers knew this when they incorporated animal hair into plaster.



STEP 4: Sharpe applies another layer of plaster to completely encase the fiber.



STEP 5: As the plaster begins to set, he smooths the surface with a tool called a busk.

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STEP 6: Sharpe peels the mould away from the finished plaster ornament. A great advantage of today's rubber moulds is the material's light weight and malleability. The rubber mold can be used repeatedly for five years or more.



... OR PLASTIC?

Big-box stores and mail-order catalogs offer plastic ceiling medallions for sale, which, once painted, might look like a decent plaster substitute for low cost. But only if the piece is exceedingly plain. Plastic objects (from Barbie dolls to 'rubber' balls) are manufactured by injection moulding. Because the liquid pre-plastic material is squirted into moulds at high pressure and temperature, the moulds are machined out of metal.

The high cost of metal forming keeps moulds simple, without deep recesses and fine detail. And, just as a cake won't fall cleanly out of an ornate pan, a rigid metal mould has inherent design limitations.

In the case of ceiling medallions, mouldings, cornices, brackets, and rosettes, old-fashioned plaster ideally meets design requirements and is affordable. "And," adds Clayton Austin, "it's flameproof."

side the swags got a coat of ceiling paint made reflective with mica.

"We encounter homeowners who want us to cast holes into the pieces," says Austin. "But, actually, it's easier to cut the hole on-site, so that it fits the specific chandelier. A lot of rooms, too, have medallions as decoration, without any chandeliers." ✦

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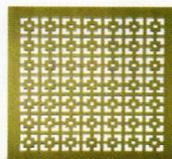
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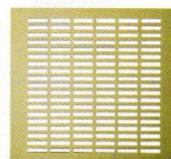
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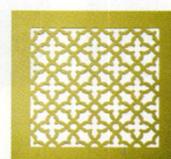
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A TALE OF TWO CAPES

Two couples, two antiques businesses, and two little Cape Cod houses full of history. (page 69) ♣

MID-CENTURY MAKEOVER

Vibrant color and the owner's way with textiles really made the rooms in this post-War house come alive. (page 64) ♣

A JARDIN ANGLAIS FOR TODAY

This conservatory is a stunning throwback to the Victorian mania for a tropical paradise brought home. (page 77) ♣



BRINGING IT BACK IN MIDTOWN

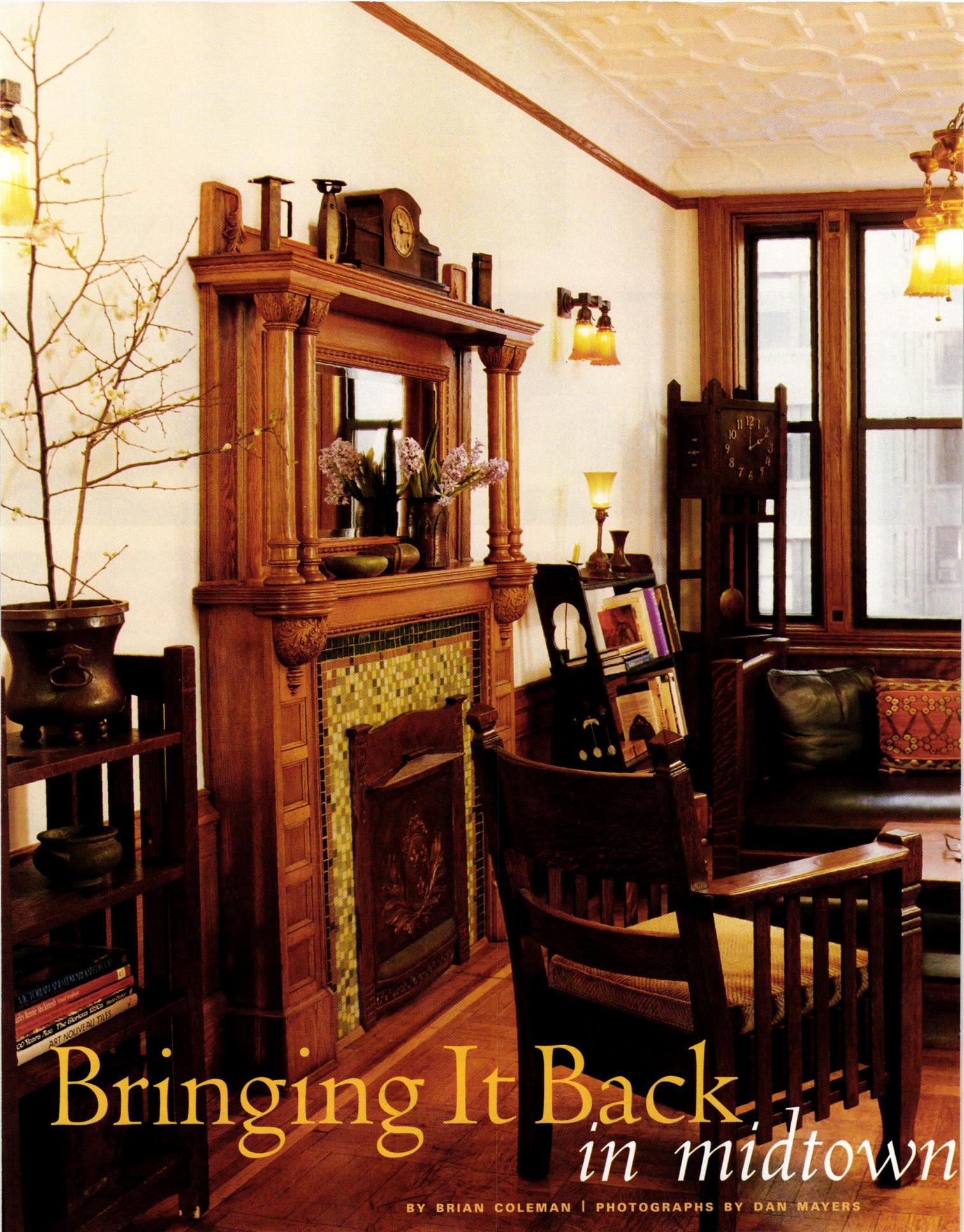
Hand-picked salvage and Arts and Crafts furnishings complete the restoration of a 1912 apartment in Manhattan. (page 58) ♣



THE LANGUAGE OF THE STAIRCASE

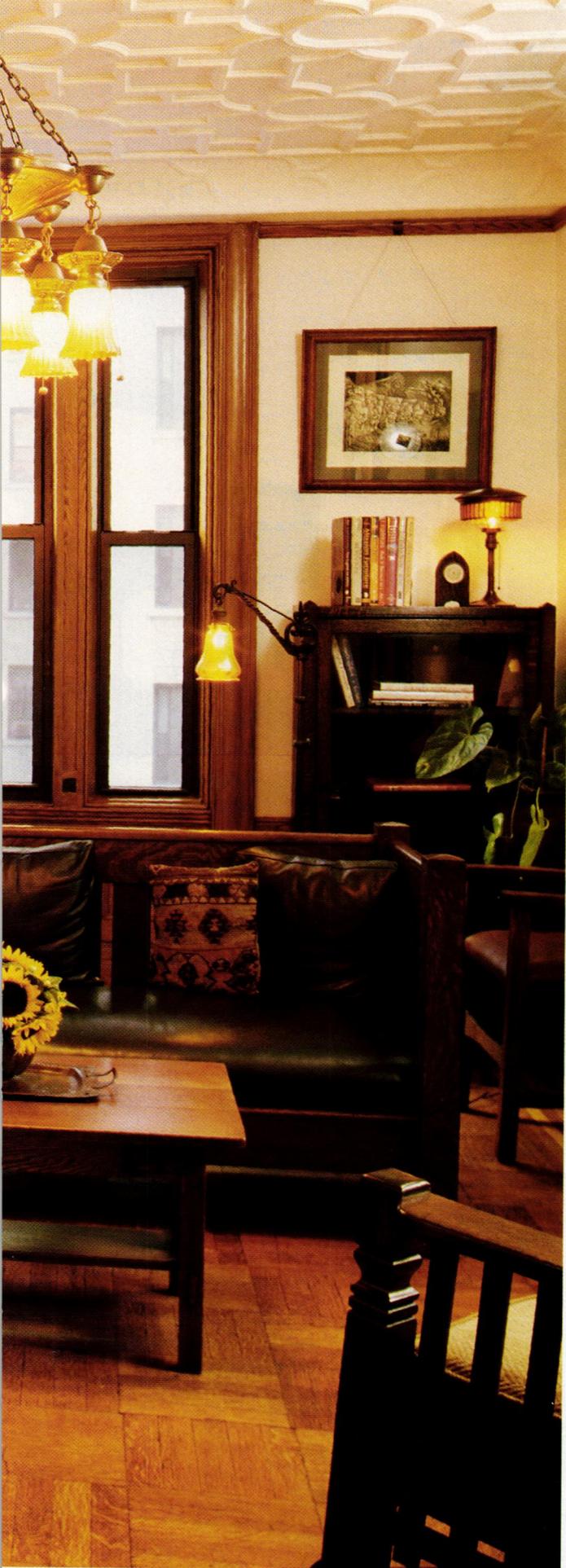
Consider the form, the newel, balusters and handrail, and applied ornament in the design of this key to style. (page 82)





Bringing It Back *in midtown*

BY BRIAN COLEMAN | PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAN MAYERS



After restoring his Arts and Crafts-era apartment, this makeup and makeover artist turned his attention to its once-elegant lobby.

SKYSCRAPERS and high-rises tower on every block; honking horns and streaming humanity are constants. Midtown Manhattan is hardly the place you'd expect to find this quiet, century-old building. When George and Edward Blum built the Adlon, a 15-storey "hotel apartment" off Broadway in 1912, it made perfect sense. The residential building in the heart of the Theater District became a favorite for actors and entertainers like Bela Lugosi, Art Carney, and Whitey Ford. Apartments were detailed in the fashionable, forward-thinking Arts and Crafts style, with handsome woodwork and mouldings, large mullioned windows, oak and tile fireplaces. A retreat for well-heeled Manhattanites, the build-

Original to the apartment's parlor: the strapwork ceiling, generous windows, and sconces. The mantelpiece and brass chandelier are from a salvage dealer. TOP: An old ad for the Adlon hangs above an antique oak desk.



The owner restored the plate rail and saved the original ceiling. He found the period brass ceiling fixture while working on a movie in Chicago. Arts and Crafts furnishings are flea-market and antiques-store finds.



ing's amenities included bellhops, daily maid service, and built-in wall safes for guarding the wife's diamonds and pearls.

The old Adlon was well built, and remained an apartment house for seventy years, after which it was converted to co-ops. When the lobby was "updated" it lost most of its character, a fate shared by many of the apartments. When Michael Laudati and his wife Despina first saw their apartment—actually two apartments sold as a 1700-square-foot unit—it was in "estate sale" condition. The woodwork had been painted mint-green throughout, and the parquet floors were covered in brown shag. Mint-green paint covered even the imitation brick walls in the kitchen.

The kitchen (never large, as these apartments were not primary homes) had no cabinets; orange Formica covered the single long counter.

Still, it took only a three-minute viewing to hook both Michael and Despina. The extra-wide, six-over-one windows had never been replaced, and their unusual side case-ment panels allowed a breeze in. Plaster ceilings boasted their original designs. The wood parquet was there under a loose corner of shag carpet.

Michael, a professional makeup artist for the movies, is very adept with his hands. He's Harrison Ford's personal artist and he designed makeup for King Kong; over twenty years his skill has matured. In-between films, he'd become an ardent preser-



TOP LEFT: An old mirrored closet door, pieces of trim, and vintage coat hooks were used to make a built-in hall tree. **ABOVE:** Salvaged antique lighting includes bold Arts and Crafts pieces. The golden-oak mantel, also salvage, needed stripping and refinishing. The owner added mosaic tiles.

To the LOBBIES

Michael Laudati owns the apartment shown, but he also refurbished the building's double lobbies, heartlessly "sanitized" in the 1980s. He was able to bring back their Arts and Crafts elegance by recasting Celtic-patterned custom mouldings and by replicating light fixtures and entrance doors from period photographs. He discovered the 1912 Grueby floor tiles intact underneath white ceramic tiles. Michael used salvage creatively, recycling old door plates and brass shelf brackets to make period-look wall sconces, and turning old brass mail slots into recessed lighting for the entry steps.

Word soon spread. Michael Laudati was awarded the Victorian Society's prestigious Best Grassroots Preservation Award of 2003 for the Adlon lobby restoration. Rejuvenation of a building is not all that different from creating makeup, he explains: both are about beauty. Michael is so in demand that he's launched a second career—as "a cosmetologist for buildings in need of a makeover."



LEFT: Michael found an oak Arts and Crafts mantel and installed it in the lobby to create a focal point for a seating area.

vationist in his hometown—Manhattan—with a focus on the unique lobbies and apartments of George and Edward Blum, architect brothers whose early-20th-century apartment buildings throughout New York City are known for their Arts and Crafts details. Michael Laudati used the same principles learned in filmmaking for his restoration. For example, he started with careful research, including paint analysis and study of archival photographs. He made plaster casts of period mould-



RIGHT: Owner Michael Laudati used old sections of wrought-iron fencing to make his bed, where his miniature greyhound loves to sleep. Notice the old wall safe to the right of the window. These were installed when the building was an "apartment hotel" for Broadway performers.

OPPOSITE: The bathroom sink and cabinet were made from a salvaged sink top, stained-glass panels, and wooden table legs. The clawfoot tub was also found at a salvage shop. Wall tiles are original.

Combining his artistic expertise in makeup, good hands, and well-chosen salvage, Michael Laudati works movie-like magic. His work extends beyond his re-created apartment, beyond his building's double lobbies, to other Arts and Crafts buildings.

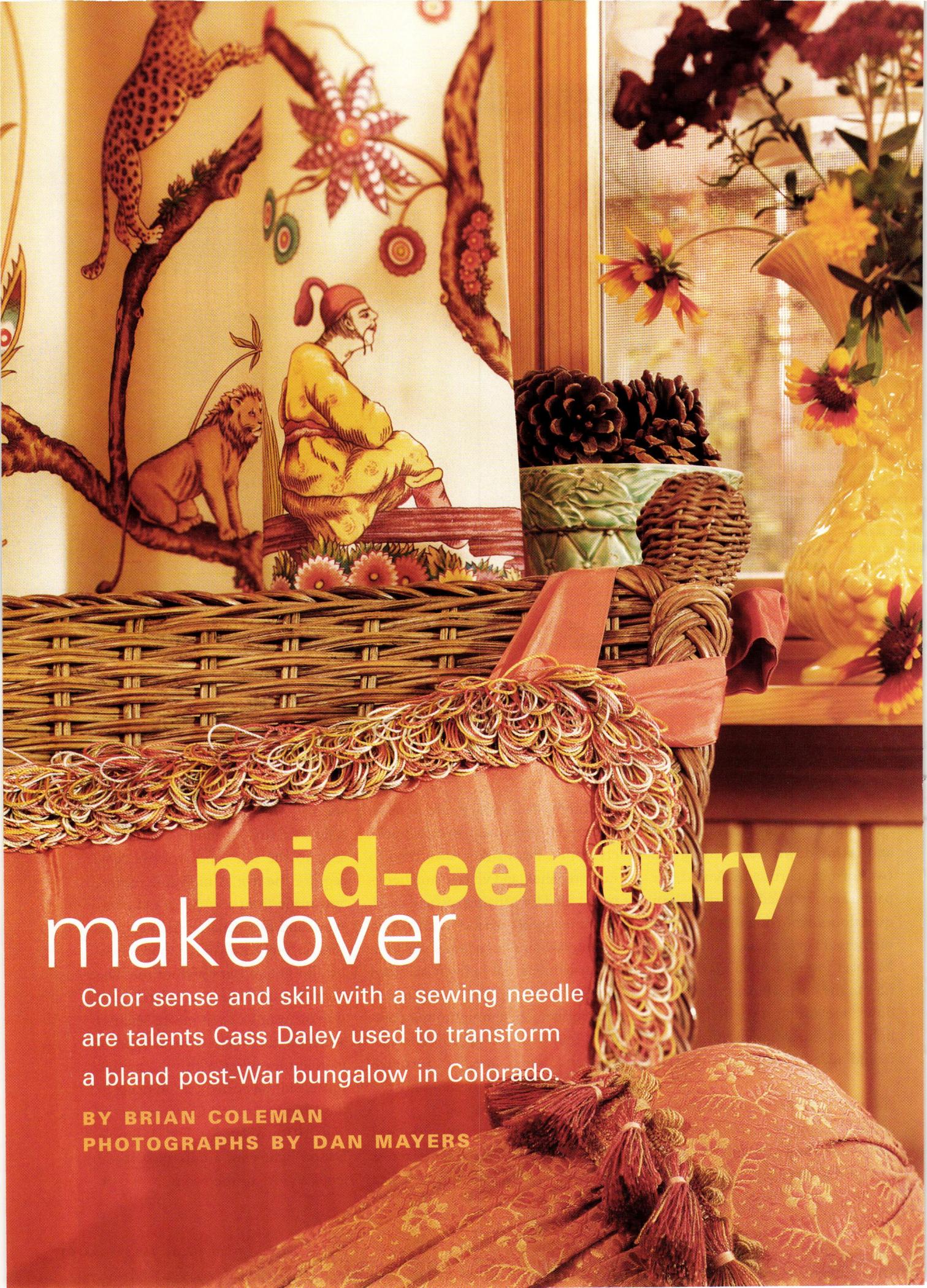
ings to bring the rooms back to life. After updating the electrical systems and taking down walls between the two former apartments, Michael repaired and restained the original parquet floors. Knowing that the Blums often used faience tiles in their work, Michael inserted small glass mosaic tiles in the cornerblocks of the windows. He found a 1910 brass pan light for the living room, stripped it, and added Favrile glass shades.

MICHAEL USED SALVAGE whenever he could. He found an old mirrored closet door and mounted it to the wall in the entry foyer, adding small

mirrored panels to each side, to make a compact hall stand. Cornice brackets from a flea market were used to support a shelf, and vintage iron hooks were added for hanging hats and coats. Trimmed with period wainscoting and moulding that matches what's in the apartment, the built-in hallstand looks original. In the dining room, the replacement aluminum windows were removed and appropriate six-over-one sashes installed. Original wainscoting was refinished and the missing plate rail restored.

More salvaged pieces went into the bathroom. Michael came across an 1890s marble sink top at a flea

market, which he then fashioned into a pedestal sink by adding old mouldings to the sides and wooden table legs for the feet. A medicine cabinet was made from a cache of old trimwork and two panels of stained glass that he found at a salvage shop, where he also got an old clawfoot tub. The room's original seven-foot-tall subway tile wainscot was intact; Michael accented the walls with a floor of marble tiles offset with glass mosaic squares in the corners, an homage to the Blums' Arts and Crafts aesthetic. The 1930s toilet was left. A simple Edison light with a milk-glass shade lends a glow to the room. ♦



mid-century makeover

Color sense and skill with a sewing needle are talents Cass Daley used to transform a bland post-War bungalow in Colorado.

BY BRIAN COLEMAN
PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAN MAYERS



LEFT: Curtains in cotton "Chinoiserie Exotique" were trimmed in a wooden ball fringe for a home-spun look; a matching, hand-sewn lampshade has glass fish beads. **BELOW:** The 1949 bungalow was treated to a playful palette. Plans call for a river-rock chimney. **OPPOSITE:** The wicker chair next to the fireplace is upholstered in coral colors: Scalamandré's Shimmer silk and Penelope lampas, accented with looped fringe.



DESIGNING with color comes naturally for Cass Daley, who won a national sewing competition at the age of ten. She subsequently earned a master's degree in fashion design, and today runs a thriving business: as an *haute couture* seamstress and interior designer to clients from homemakers to international royalty and television personalities.

Cass Daley maintains a studio in New York City, but she and her husband Pat bought a small second

home out West several years ago. Cass and Pat (who does much of the carpentry) transformed the 800-square-foot house into a bungalow bursting with color and Cass's detailed handiwork. Built in 1949, the house offered only a small living room, the kitchen, and two bedrooms. So their first project was to enclose the carport, turning it into a rustic den (and adding 200 square feet of living space).

Cozy additions include the arched river-rock fireplace, knotty-

color
is really what made
rooms come alive:
coral, persimmon,
sky blue. Pottery of
the 1940s suggested
wall colors in
the living room;
textiles sparkle.

pine wainscoting, hickory floors, an inviting window seat, and classic French doors opening into the living room. Split pine logs on the ceiling added to the cabin look. But what really made the room come alive was Cass's use of color. Walls were painted a sunset orange for warmth; over 40 fabrics and trims in a rainbow of hues, from coral and persimmon to sky blue, are in the room.

Comfortable furniture—like walnut-stained wicker chairs—found at tag sales and antiques shops tone things down. Cass's talents show throughout the room. She made pillows in one of her favorite designs, Scalamandré's "Under the Ice," featuring fanciful fish. She even embroidered the fish design on a cushion.

From her mother, Cass inherited a collection of 1940s McCoy pottery—which provided the scheme for the living room. She painted two walls "McCoy green" and lavished



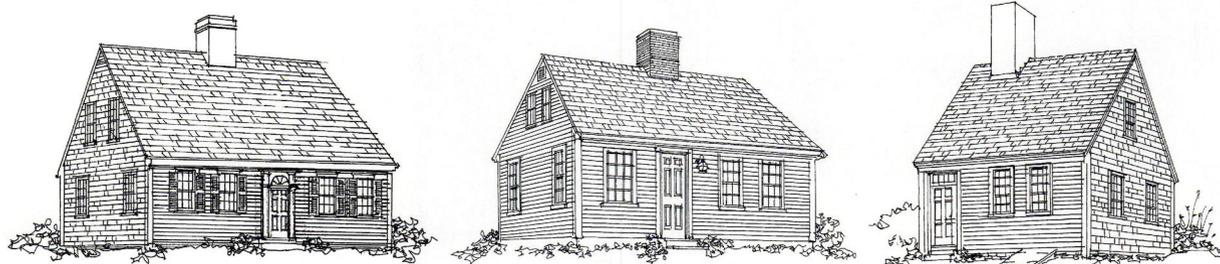
A wrought-iron chandelier lights the small dining area off the kitchen; its shades are covered in Shirred Stripe in Naples yellow. Roman shades on the French doors are in Arabella cream linen union with a fruit motif.

"McCoy yellow" on the opposite wall. A ten-foot-wide picture window and a nine-light front door were added to bring light into the rather dark room. Furniture is simple. Heirlooms include Cass's great-great-grandmother's marble-topped side table, and an old sofa and chair that she updated with a butter-yellow twill. A pair of wing chairs, now slipcovered in a floral stripe, came from a tag sale. The hand-knotted "wildflowers" rug by Claire Murray pulls the room together.

The exterior of the 1949 house needed a lift—starting with a palette of daffodil yellow accented with green shutters and a pink door. A new picket fence adds privacy. The couple brought in eleven tons of topsoil and then planted over 75 perennials, 750 tulip and daffodil bulbs, and eleven trees. A winding flagstone walk adds storybook character; the small stoop was widened so two can sit (in bent-willow chairs). At dusk, the family watches foxes, raccoons, even an occasional moose or deer pass by. ✦



ABOVE: Cass had an ottoman made to her specifications, and covered it in a cotton print called "Persian," also from Scalamandré, then accented its tufting with antique Bakelite buttons of the 1940s. **LEFT:** In the den (formerly the carport), Cass Daley made pillows in patterns with appropriately rustic themes. She hand-stitched the silk plaid pillows on the baby rocker. **TOP:** A collection of McCoy pottery suggested the color scheme for the living room.



THE CAPE COD STYLE

HERE ARE TWO Cape Cod styles, really: the originals, modest and practical houses built from 1690 until 1850 or so; and the homey Colonial Revival Capes of the 20th century. The originals were most often half or three-quarter Capes, shingle-clad, sited to take advantage of the sun's rays, their interiors centered on the hearth-warmed kitchen. Revival houses, neat and nostalgic behind their white picket fences, are most often symmetrical full Capes, often clapboarded and shuttered, painted white, with more formal and flexible floor plans.

The term "Cape Cod House" was used as early as 1800, in a comment by Yale College president Timothy Dwight on a visit to Cape Cod in Massachusetts. Even by then, the type had spread; by 1740, such houses had been built throughout most of New England, and also on New York's Long Island. By 1790 it had made its way into southern New York State. Homesteaders brought the Cape Cod house with them to central New York, to the area around Lake

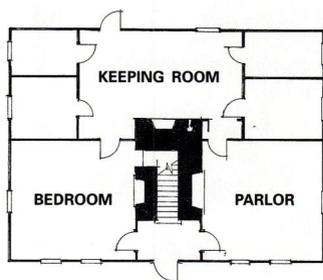
Erie, and by 1830 into Ohio and Michigan.

Regional variants with gambrel and bowed roofs (for headroom), and sometimes with small dormers (for added light in the loft space), appeared in Massachusetts and Connecticut. As the house type was brought west during the early 19th century, builders added popular Greek Revival details. Inside, the earliest houses

were spare and simple, with floors and furnishings of pine. Wide plank floors might be painted in a reddish-brown or pumpkin orange, and spattered. Later, trade brought oriental rugs and china.

Although Victorian styles eclipsed the plain Cape, these houses came back, in greater

numbers than ever, during the Colonial Revival of the 1920s and '30s, often larger than the originals and with different framing methods, interior plans, staircases, and details. Owing to the romantic associations of 18th-century models and the ubiquity of 20th-century Capes, this is arguably the most recognized house style in America. ♦



by Patricia Poore

TOP: (left to right) The full Cape or double Cape was the most common variant during the style's 20th-century revival, but rare in the 18th century. The three-quarter Cape was a mainstay in 18th- and early-19th-century New England. The half Cape was a kind of "starter house," often added to over subsequent years. **ABOVE:** Typical floor plan for an early full Cape, with the keeping room or kitchen the center of activity; note doors to the yard, pantries, and birthing or infirmary bedrooms.

ANTIQUES

Richard and Edith Broderick (left in the photo below) are joined by Brad and Dusty Finch as they pose in front of Spyglass Antiques. The Finches' antiques store specializes in early maritime art and American antiques.



A Tale of Two Capes

Less than two miles apart, on a winding beach road actually on Cape Cod in Massachusetts, sit two historic Cape Cod houses that are surprisingly similar. Each is owned by a couple who run an adjacent antiques store. The foursome shares something of that New England starch with their old houses.

Photographed and written by Franklin and Esther Schmidt



LEFT: The Finches' 18th-century Cape is entirely original but for siding added by a previous owner. **RIGHT:** Woodwork in the dining area is original; a New England trestle table dates from the early- to mid-1700s. **BELOW:** What appears to be wainscoting is actually paint over original plaster; Brad added the chair rail. Classic checks are on wide pine flooring that had been painted over two centuries.

ALL FOUR INDIVIDUALS, none of whom is native to Massachusetts, have a passion for the preservation of their 18th-century homes. Edith and Dick Broderick, and Brad and Dusty Finch, made a life amidst the history and artifacts of their community as they restored and maintain their historic homes. Although a generation apart in age, the two couples have become close friends, mentoring each other through the ins and outs of collecting and old-house restoration.

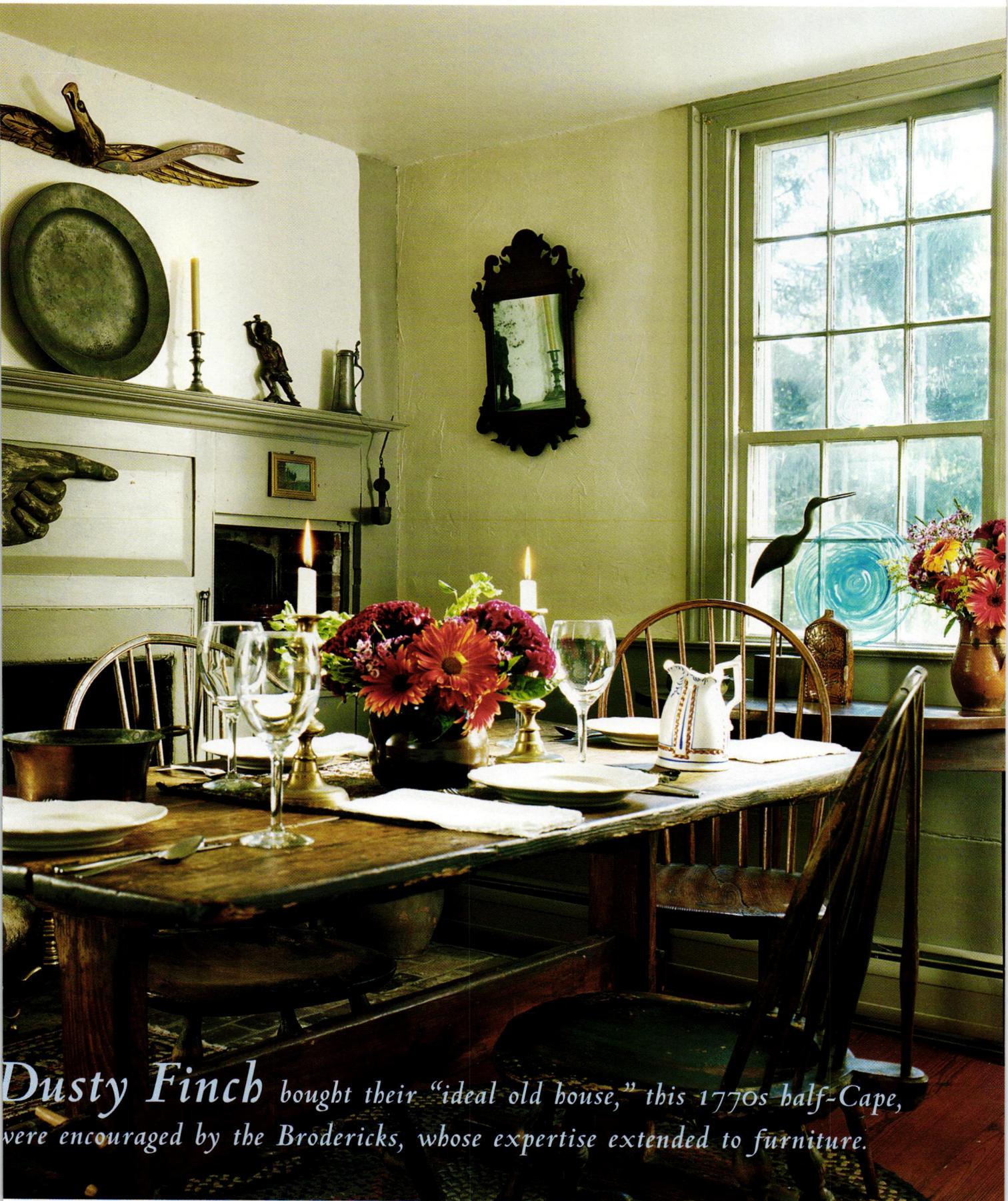
Their houses are described as half-Capes, the version in which two

window bays sit to one side of the front door. Each house is "stoic" in the New England tradition, having endured over two centuries of hurricanes, nor'easters, blizzards, economic depressions, and the most dreaded nemesis of historic communities: progress.

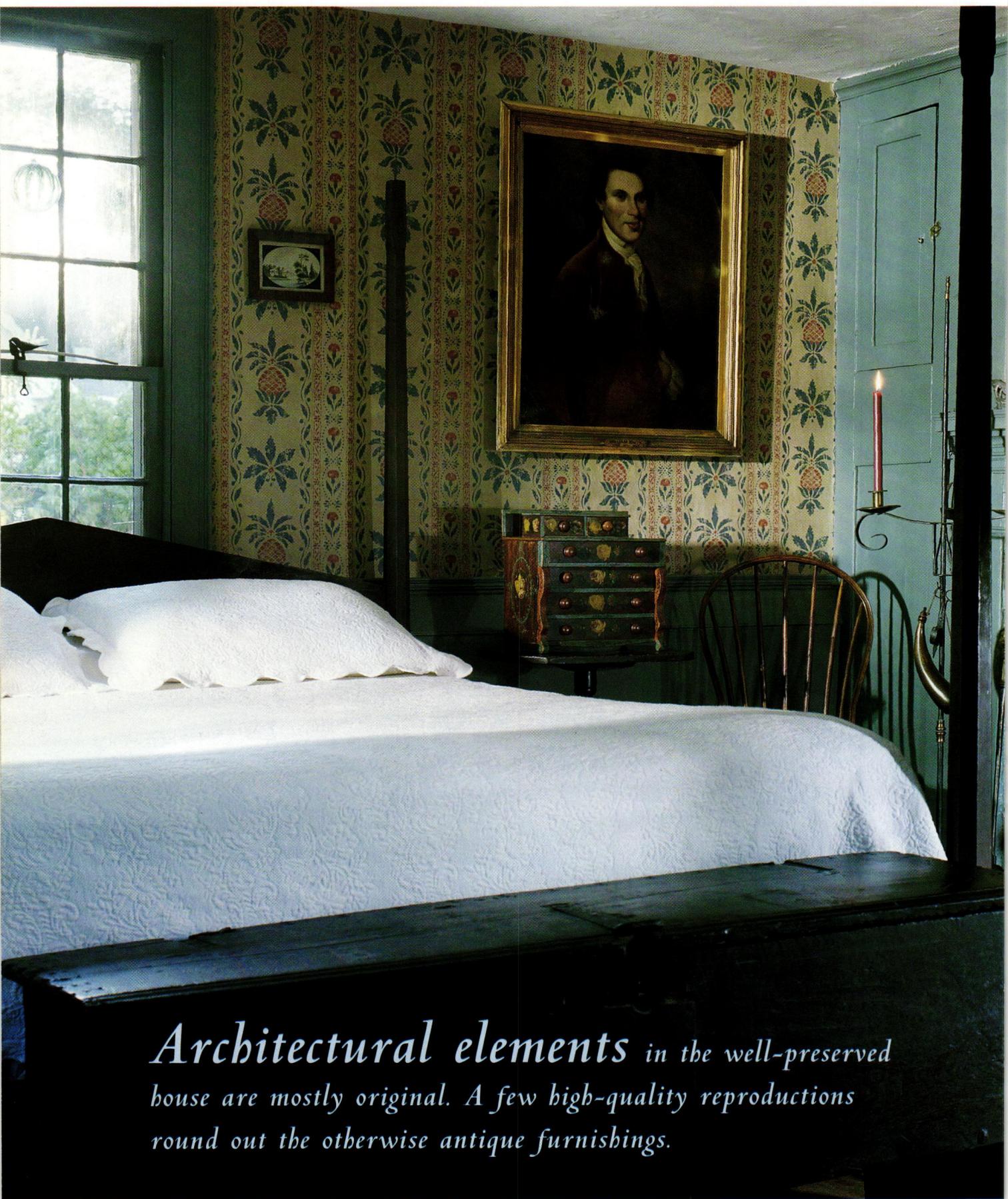
THE FINCHES arrived in the community in the early '90s, after spending years on the West Coast. Brad worked at an antiques shop specializing in marine and nautical objects, a unique niche in which he quickly developed



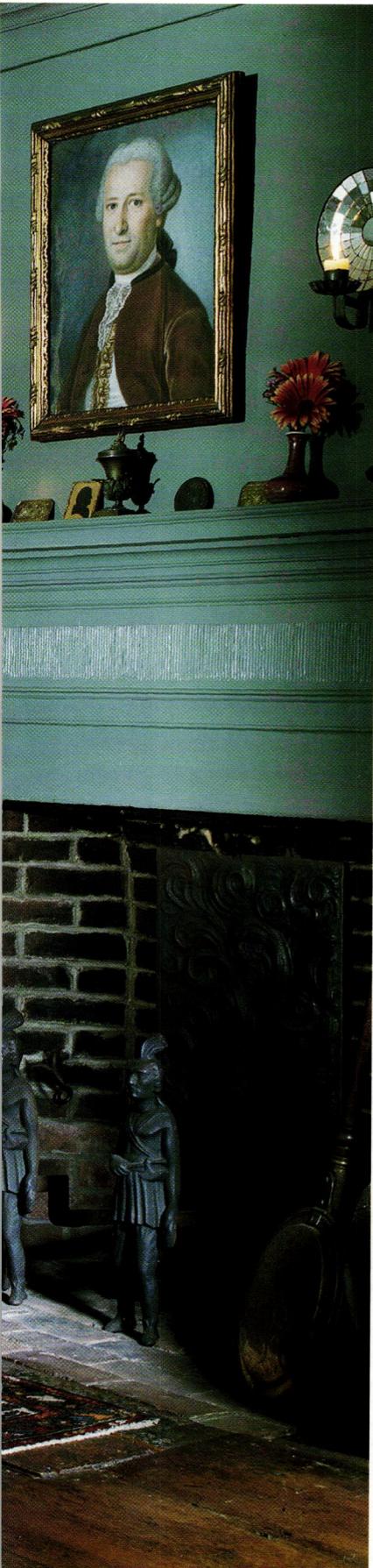
*Brad & ...
in 1997. The...*



Dusty Finch bought their "ideal old house," this 1770s half-Cape, were encouraged by the Brodericks, whose expertise extended to furniture.



Architectural elements in the well-preserved house are mostly original. A few high-quality reproductions round out the otherwise antique furnishings.

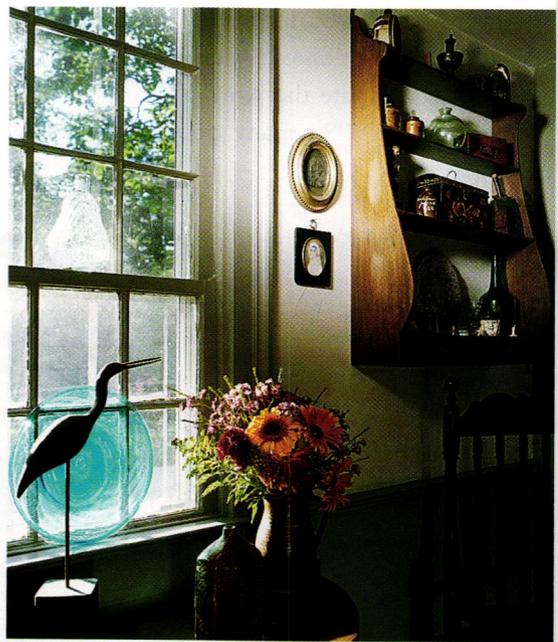


expertise. Soon he was owner of the store. He, Dusty, and their five children lived elsewhere on Cape Cod, eventually finding their “ideal old house” for sale; they moved in in 1997.

“Our house had stayed in one family from the late 1770s until the 1970s,” Brad recounts, “and most of its owners, from that point on, took great care of it. Many architectural elements appear to be either original or at least a hundred years old.” He feels that “the mortise-and-tenon beaded doors are in fact original.”

Dusty and Brad would love to restore the house further. They want, for example, to remove the vinyl siding a previous owner installed in the late 1970s. Brad has some concerns: “Who knows the condition of the clapboards we know are underneath? So, for the moment, we’re leaving the house as-is. We’ve made no structural changes, and our plan is to leave well enough alone,” he explains.

In the meantime, the couple’s thriving antiques business is conducted from the old barn. They sell



TOP: On the Finches’ porch: a mid-19th-century dry sink and a 10-foot-long Windsor bench of the 1830s. **ABOVE:** The whale-end walnut shelf displaying some of Brad and Dusty’s treasures was made in the early 1800s. **LEFT:** A late-16th- to early-17th-century Pilgrim-period chest with chipped carving sits at the foot of the reproduction bed. All woodwork in this 18th-century room is original.

Dick & Edith Broderick bought their Cape, which needed refurbishment, in 1992, intending semi-retirement and pursuit of second careers in art. Instead, their collection of antiques and folk art spawned a business.

a full range of furniture and accessories, though still with a focus on marine and nautical antiques and art.

IN 1992, five years before the Finches found their Cape, former graphic designer Dick Broderick and his wife Edith, a former high-school art teacher, bought their own house nearby. They had moved to Cape Cod from Connecticut. They designated the old barn adjacent to their house as a shared art studio, incorporating their edited collection of antiques and folk art to decorate the workspace.

“So many people stopped by



ABOVE: The Brodericks' 18th-century Cape has a 1930s addition on the right. **LEFT:** The ca. 1830 portrait of the midshipman in the Brodericks' living room is attributed to Isaac Sheffield. **RIGHT:** New wainscoting in the addition is patterned after original remnants found in the house. The table was made by Brad Finch's twin brother.

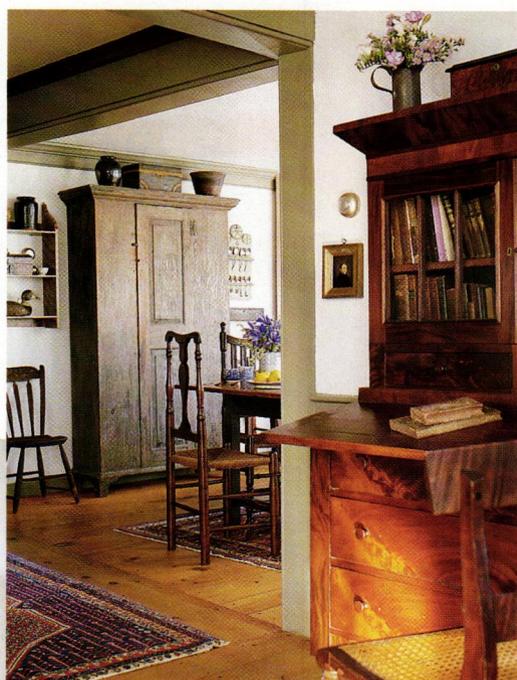




Folk art and antiques are at home in the period-appropriate but very comfortable interior. The house, added to in the 1930s and changed over the years, retains some of the original material and its old Cape Cod character.



LEFT: The staircase in the original part of the Broderick home was re-configured to make it more user-friendly. **BELOW:** This pencil-post bed is a period-style reproduction. The red bed stairs are mid-19th century. **RIGHT:** Gracing the entrance to the dining room is an 1825–1830 transitional Sheraton–Empire secretary bureau. The leather writing area was replaced by Brad Finch, a master leather artisan.



and bought the *antiques* instead of our original works,” Edith recalls, so, “being pragmatists, we [shifted] the business from creating new, to selling historic art and antiques.” One day, their neighbor and antiques-store competitor, Brad Finch, stopped by to check out the new dealer in town.

“We were older,” Edith Broderick says, “and had been collecting a long time, but Brad had been in the antiques business longer. So we had ideas and experience to offer one another. Brad taught us a great deal about historic maps and things nautical, and we encouraged him in the areas of antique portraits and furniture.”

Unlike the Finches’ house, the Brodericks’ was not in good shape when they bought it. Edith and Dick refurbished, restored, and added on

to the old structure, maintaining its lines and historical feeling.

Edith explains that her house is not well documented. “We know it was built by a Colonel Jonathan Snow, probably in the late-18th century. He left it to his daughter. Beyond that, ownership is unknown. On Cape Cod, a great many real-estate documents have been lost to fire. We do know that there was some restoration work done in the 1930s.”

Among elements known to be original are the mouldings and trim

in the oldest part of the house. Using Benjamin Moore paints, Dick and Edith have maintained appropriate historical colors on the interior, as well as the exterior, on which they applied an opaque stain. This couple, too, continues to run a thriving antiques business that now focuses on portraiture and folk art.

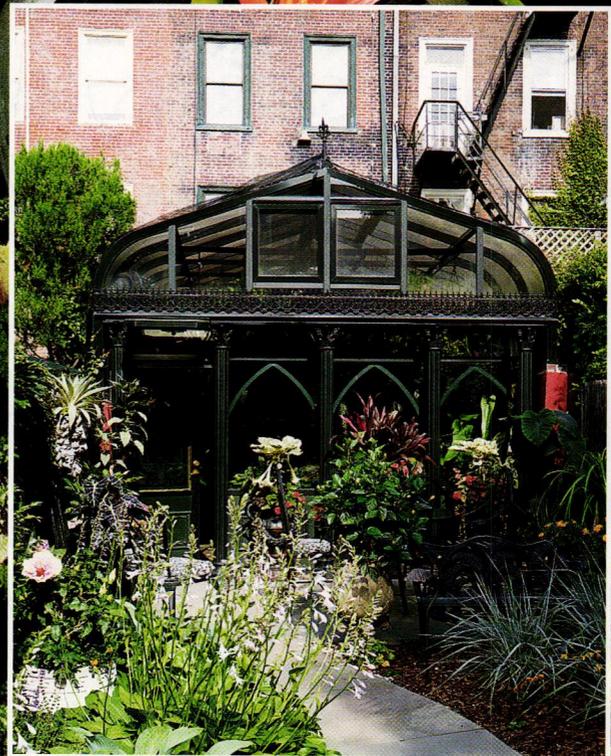
The Brodericks and the Finches are antiques dealers of the old school. Their approach is a throwback to (or survival of) a past ethic, different from those off-the-interstate, rented mall booths overseen by unschooled cashiers. As much stewards of their wares as salespeople, the Brodericks and Finches do the requisite research, overlaid on instincts honed over years, and they deal in the objects they love. Their homes reflect their knowledge. ✦

A Jardin Anglais for Today

Behind his Philadelphia row house, over the former patio, a conservatory maven built an exquisite Victorian room, modern in construction, and grew a tropical paradise. **BY BRIAN COLEMAN | PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICK HALES**

THE VICTORIANS were fascinated by the exotic rainforests of Brazil, the steamy jungles of Africa, the tiger-infested wilds of India. By the middle of the 19th century, they'd started building glass and iron conservatories to bring home a "tropical paradise." Called *jardins anglais*—English gardens—they were planted differently from symmetrical, geometrically laid-out French gardens. These naturalistic conservatory gardens were designed with paths winding through "valleys of rocks" covered with rare and unusual plants. Lush thickets of ferns, vines climbing to the moss-covered roof, even decaying tree trunks supporting

A gas/electric gilt bronze dragon wall sconce with Quezal shades pokes out amongst *Cattleya* orchids, *Guzmania* bromeliads, calatheas, and dinner-plate size "Iron Cross" begonias. **INSET:** The narrow lot is only 14 feet wide, sandwiched between adjoining city row houses.





RIGHT: A Victorian Fiske aquarium rests in front of a fiberglass raintree planted with orchids, bromeliads, and Spanish moss. **LEFT:** Tropical red cordylines (Ti plants), *Brugmansia suaveolens* 'Variegata' (variegated angel's trumpet), and tuberous begonias fill the 19th-century cast-iron urns outside. **BOTTOM:** The dining area at the rear of the conservatory overlooks a fiberglass grotto and is lit by a jeweled chandelier.



RIGHT: A French Victorian wall sconce of an elephant's head amidst a collection of rare philodendron adds to the exotic décor.



SEVEN SECRETS *for Success*

1. Remember the four important points in growing conservatory plants: light, water, air movement, and temperature. On these points, **PLAN AHEAD**—retrofits are hard after plants are established.
2. Remember, even small conservatories often have a number of **MICRO-CLIMATES**.
3. Try to include a **QUARANTINE** area for new plants.
4. **CULL PLANTS** weakened by disease or insects, without hesitation.
5. Bear in mind that some **PLANTS MAY BE LOST**; even the greenest thumb has a brown tip from time to time.
6. Have a **BACK-UP POWER** source for outages, e.g., gasoline generator, propane heater.
7. Train a friend or neighbor to become your **CONSERVATORY SITTER** for when you are away.

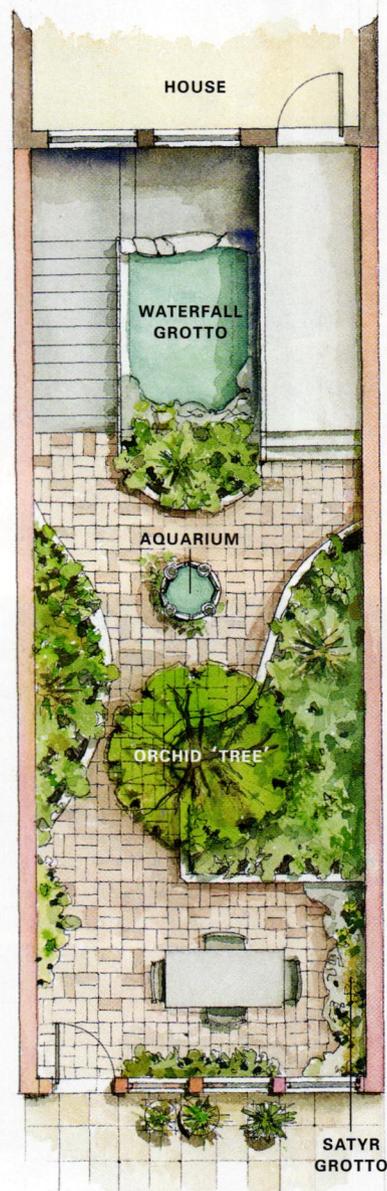




THE PLAN

Tailor-made

A forty-foot-deep patio already existed behind the owners' 14-foot-wide, Philadelphia row house. The new cast aluminum and polycarbonate greenhouse was placed on a concrete footing and walls of stuccoed cinderblock. Plants are in the ground.



bromeliads and orchids were planted to evoke the wild profusion of a jungle. The foliage of giant palms and *Passiflora* obscured the ceiling. More extravagant conservatories were alive with imported chrysalides, out of which came butterflies to delicately flutter amidst the leaves.

This is exactly the type of “glass house” that John Whitenight got in his head to design one exceptionally cold winter’s night five years ago. He and his partner, a Philadelphia lawyer, share an 1860s Italianate house—a very narrow row house, just 14 feet wide, but boasting a 40-foot-long brick patio at the rear, the perfect location for a conservatory.

John studied the famous English conservatory at Chatsworth House

in Derbyshire (a since-demolished model for the 1851 Crystal Palace exhibition space). As in that conservatory, John put plantings into beds in the ground, rather than in seasonal pots and containers, to better achieve the look of a natural habitat. Following the Philadelphia Historic Planning Commission’s approval of his plans, John began by having an Irish mason pour a four-foot concrete footing around the perimeter, which was then topped with eight-foot-tall walls of cinderblock, stuccoed on both sides. The greenhouse superstructure was placed on top and supported by aluminum trusses. (Cast aluminum was used throughout to deter rust.) Polycarbonate panels, which allow 85%



LEFT: Bacchus, the Roman god of wine, is the focal point of the grotto near the dining table. **ABOVE:** A 19th-century dragon wall sconce amongst carnivorous *Nepenthes* pitcher plants. **RIGHT:** *Miltonia* (pansy) orchid. **BOTTOM:** An antique, bronze fountain from Charleston rests outside the conservatory.



of UV rays to penetrate, were installed instead of glass; they are shatterproof, an important consideration with an inner-city row house. The façade was designed with bulletproof security glass. The patio's original brick floor was relaid on a four-inch concrete foundation with several French drains; extra bricks were recycled to line the planting beds.

Altogether the structure offers 170 square feet of planting space, designed in curving, asymmetrical beds centered on a custom-made, nine-foot-tall artificial tree trunk. Made of fiberglass poured over steel reinforcement rods, the "tree" has over a dozen pockets for bromeliads and orchids. Each orchid was methodically wrapped in moss, then wire-lashed into the tree. Roots soon bound the plants firmly to the trunk.

Fiberglass was also used to create two grotto fountains, which were popular elements in naturalistic Victorian gardens. One cascading fountain fronts the basement kitchen, while the second is centered on a mischievous satyr overlooking a dining table at the rear of the conservatory. A rare 19th-century cast-iron Fiske aquarium is another focal piece for the middle of the room. Exotic lighting includes a jeweled Byzantine chandelier over the dining table, and a pair of French, bronze wall sconces done as elephant heads, their trunks poking stiffly out of the surrounding greenery as if sensing a passing parade of maharajas.

JOHN WHITENIGHT began collecting tropical specimens from around the world. He now has over 120 plants,



ABOVE: John Whitenight examines a hybrid *Phalaenopsis* orchid 'kaleidoscope'. **RIGHT:** The c. 1875 Fiske aquarium rests in the center of the conservatory, with a 30 year-old staghorn fern (*Platycerium bifurcatum*) hanging above. **LEFT:** The owners' hyacinth macaw Maisie enjoys the tropical conservatory.



including 60 varieties of orchids, ten different staghorn ferns, 30 species of anthuriums, and ten philodendrons including one of the rarest, *Philodendron santa leopoldina*. (Found only in the remote jungles of Brazil, just ten plants are known to exist.) One of John's more bizarre orchids is *Bulbophyllums Phalaenopsis*. Nicknamed "the Stinker," the Malaysian plant was highly sought-after in Vic-

torian times for its oddity: its flowers look and smell like rotting flesh.

John advises would-be conservatory designers to remember several key points. Good air movement is essential, as the air must be buoyant at all times to prevent mildew, rot, and insect infestation, as well as overheating and burning from the sun. (John has a complex system of four ceiling fans and five auxiliary ones that run continuously.) Plants should be allowed to dry out between waterings to avoid root rot. Misting overhead sprinklers water automatically twice a day during the summer, but during the cooler winter months John just moistens the brick floor to provide humidity, which should always be maintained at 60–70% or greater. Finally, the temperature and type of water used on the plants



is very important. In this conservatory, all water is filtered to remove chlorine and the pH is closely monitored. Only tepid water is used, as cold water shocks plants.

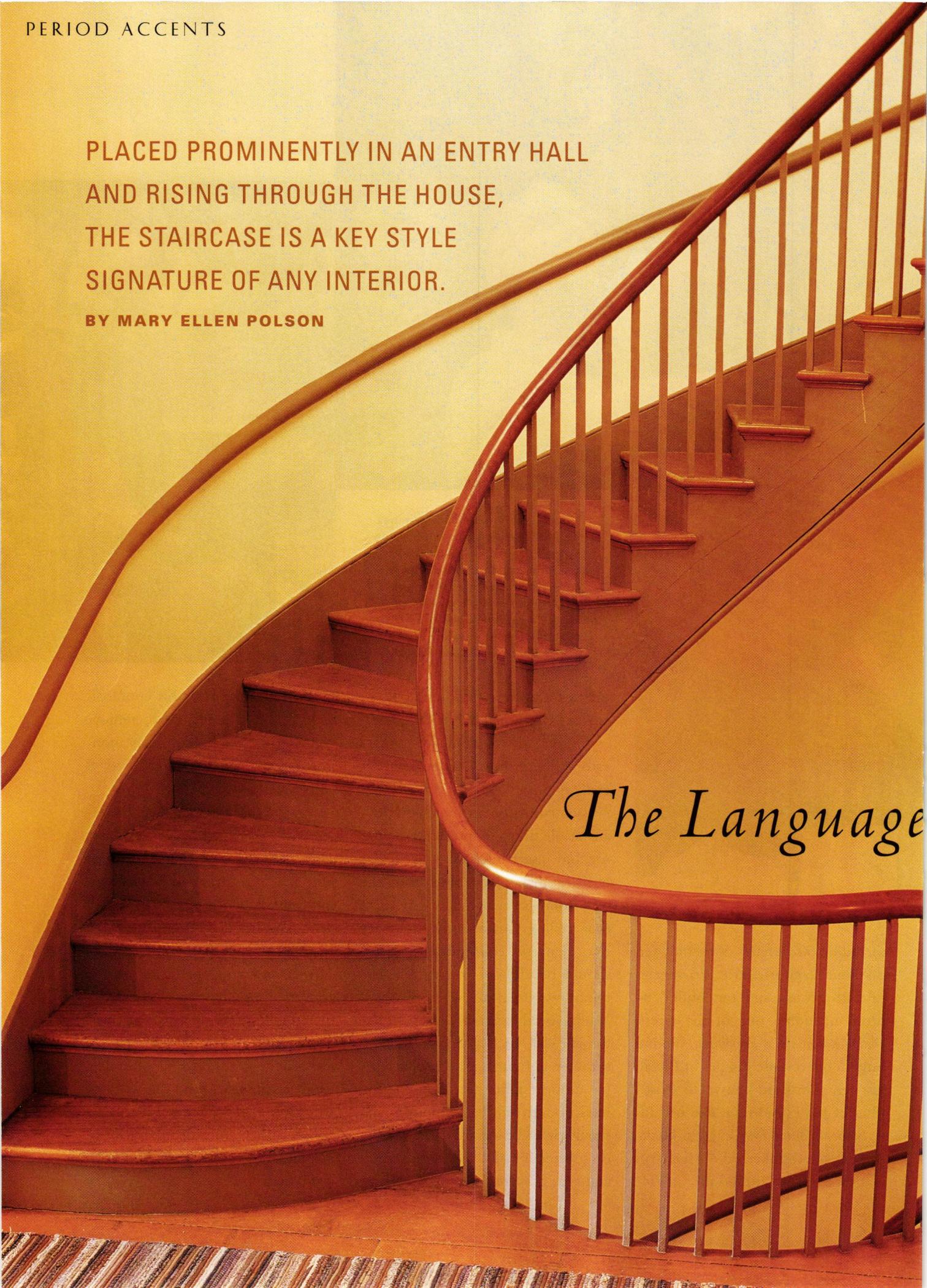
Consider first, of course, the siting of the conservatory. An east–west axis is best for capturing sunlight, as northern exposures will not produce sufficient light for growing orchids or most other flowering plants.

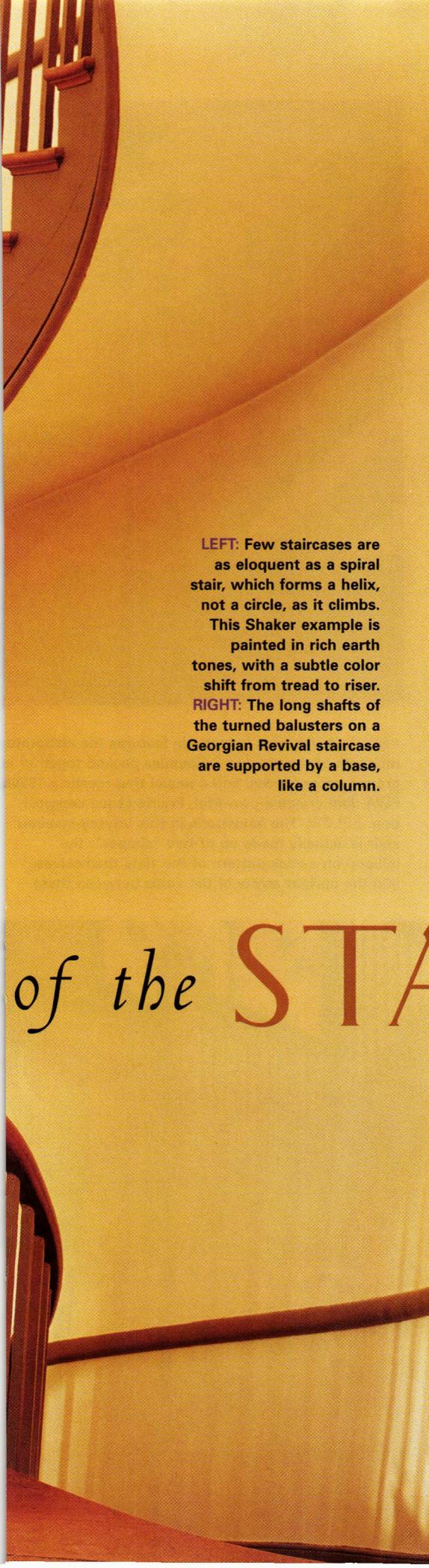
John says that he spends an average of two hours a day in the conservatory, pruning and grooming, spraying for insects and fungus; he uses only non-toxic chemicals such as rubbing alcohol and Safer Soap. He's found the work so enjoyable that he recently began a conservatory consulting business, helping others create their own tropical paradise. ♦

PLACED PROMINENTLY IN AN ENTRY HALL
AND RISING THROUGH THE HOUSE,
THE STAIRCASE IS A KEY STYLE
SIGNATURE OF ANY INTERIOR.

BY MARY ELLEN POLSON

The Language





LEFT: Few staircases are as eloquent as a spiral stair, which forms a helix, not a circle, as it climbs. This Shaker example is painted in rich earth tones, with a subtle color shift from tread to riser.

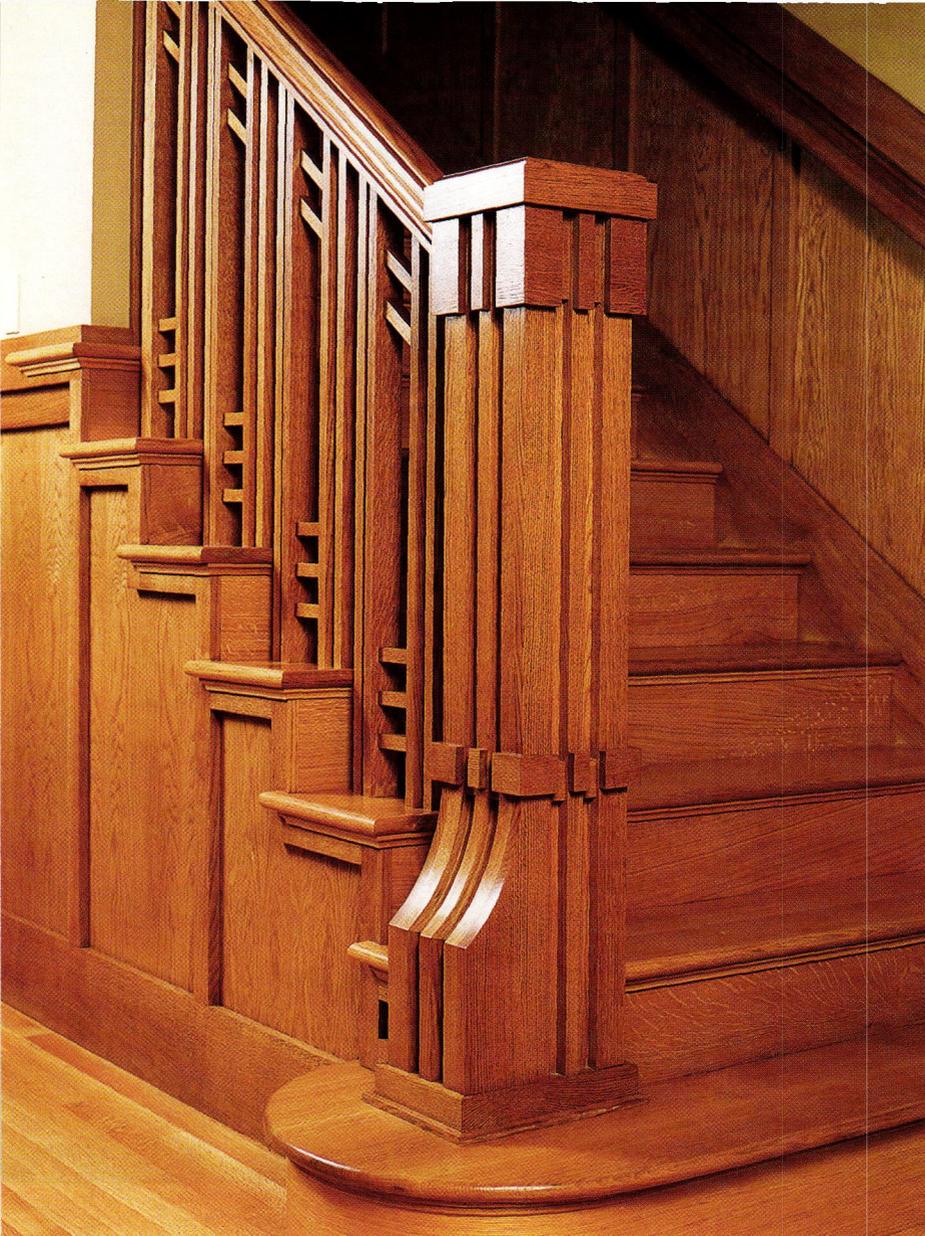
RIGHT: The long shafts of the turned balusters on a Georgian Revival staircase are supported by a base, like a column.



of the STAIRCASE

TREAD AND RISER, stringer and handrail: a staircase can be merely utilitarian or a stunning work of art. These complex assemblages are much more than feats of architectural symmetry and the builder's art, although they certainly are that.

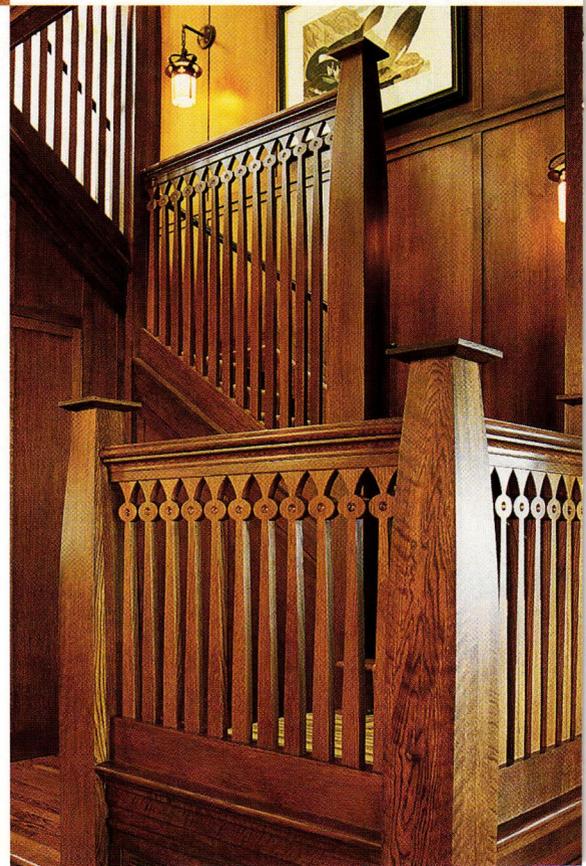
There are as many ways to build a stairway as there are types of stairs—and there are at least half a dozen of those. Straight, turning, dogleg, spiral, box, and winding stairs, all have a place in American homes. Some do the job more comfortably than others: turning stairs—runs of stairs that make 90-degree turns with pauses at square or full-length hall landings—are much easier to climb than a romantically elegant spiral stair with treads in [text continued on page 86]



ABOVE: A Victorian balustrade features the elaborate millwork of the era. **LEFT:** Spindles packed together in groups, cross-braces, and a newel that recalls a 1930s PWA dam create a powerful, Prairie-esque composition. **BELOW:** The balustrade in this Voysey-inspired stair is actually made up of two "shapes": the lollipop-on-a-stick pattern of the slats themselves, and the upright arrow of the voids between them.

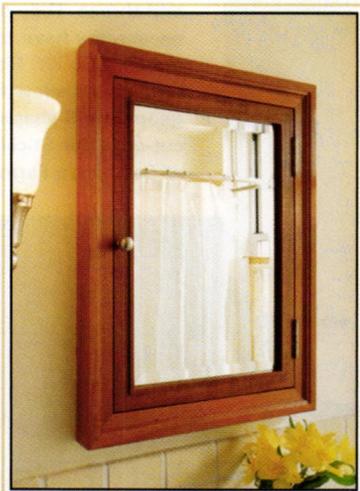
The NEWEL

A newel is the alpha and omega of a staircase: the handrail originates from here. Newels can be square like a post, cylindrical, turned on a lathe, tapered, or carved. In classical stairs, the handrail itself becomes the terminus for the balustrade, as it spirals in a tight curl called a *volute*. Dress up a square newel much as you would a formal room, with various applied mouldings, plus three-dimensional elements like recesses or a finial on top (carved balls or pineapples are especially appropriate for early American staircases). If your staircase is attached to the wall on one side, you need only a single newel; if it is free on both sides, you'll need a pair. Wherever the stair turns as it makes its way up, recall the design of the newel, on a smaller scale, for the necessary rail posts.



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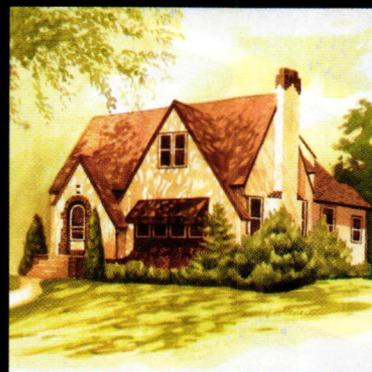
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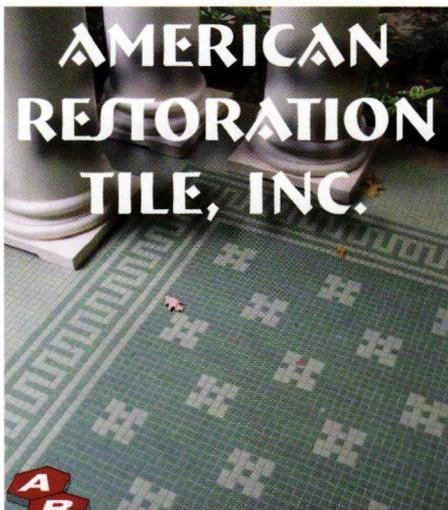


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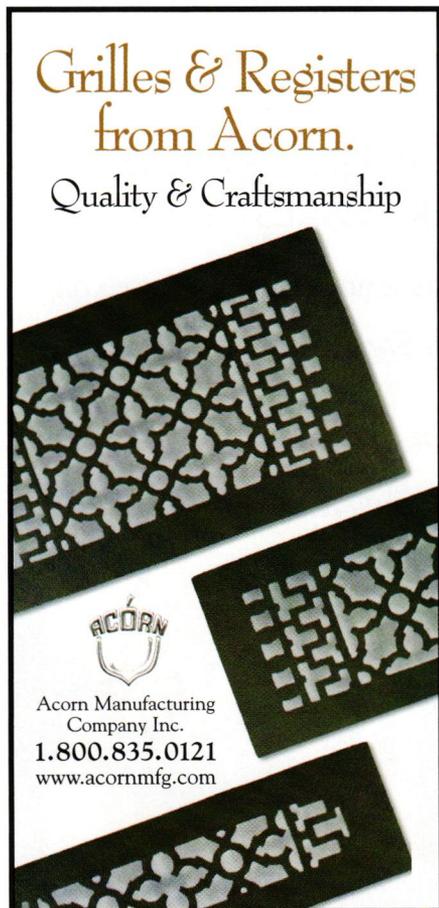
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LEFT: Spindles can be straight or tapered, spaced at regular intervals, or grouped in twos and threes. They don't necessarily have to match. **BELOW:** Flat, broad slats allow for geometric S-shaped cut-outs (for Stickley) at Craftsman Farms.



SLATS & SPINDLES

A slat is flat, and a spindle or baluster is shaped. Both serve the same supporting role in a balustrade, but the looks they offer can be very different. A slat is simply a flat piece of wood, with or without ornament. Slat are ideal when you want to give a staircase a feeling of enclosure. Spindles can be round, square, or tapered; spindles tend to create an almost musical sense of repetition in a staircase.

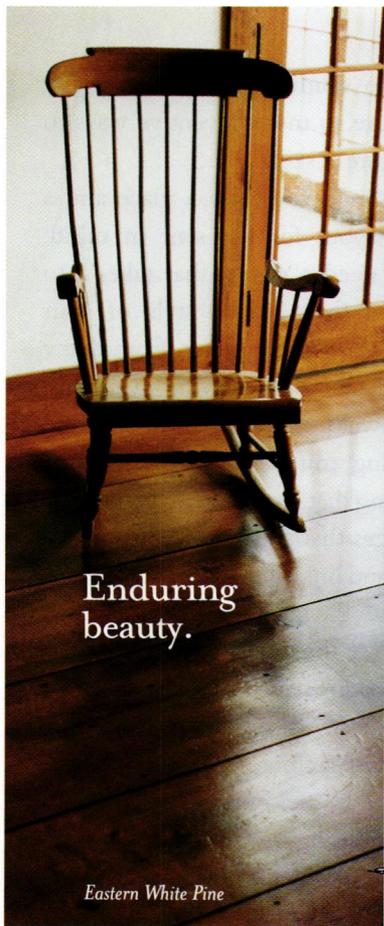
Slats lend themselves to cut-out designs. These cut-outs can be geometric, like a stylized letter or circle, or of a natural element like a ginkgo leaf. The carpenter simply traces the pattern onto one slat, or two adjoining ones, and then cuts them out with a jigsaw. Three-dimensional spindles can vary a great deal, even in a single staircase. (In Georgian or neoclassical staircases, for example, three or four slightly different patterns of turned balusters might be used in a single flight.) Spindles can also be grouped in twos or threes, spaced in repeating patterns like stripes on fabric, or combined with cross-bars or insets. The choice is limited only by your imagination and the skill of your builder.

the shape of pie wedges. (That said, there's nothing like having a winding stair at the center of your home, even if you're out of breath when you reach the third floor.)

With the help of structural beams and other technical advances, today's sophisticated builders can approach the grandeur of stairs built by master craftsmen centuries ago, even the sinuous helix of a spiral stair that appears to float from one level to an-

other. Given the limitations older homes pose, however, adding a new staircase to a period home is not a matter to be taken lightly.

The first rule of thumb is to allow plenty of room for a new stair—not only so that the stair's width, turnings, and landings fit comfortably into the house, but also to allow the staircase to be viewed. This may pose a problem in finite spaces like townhouses, where extra room is



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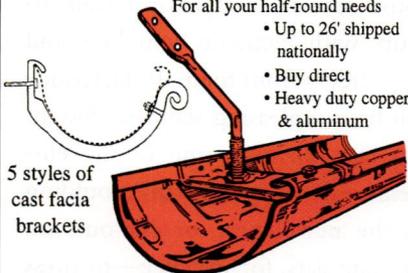
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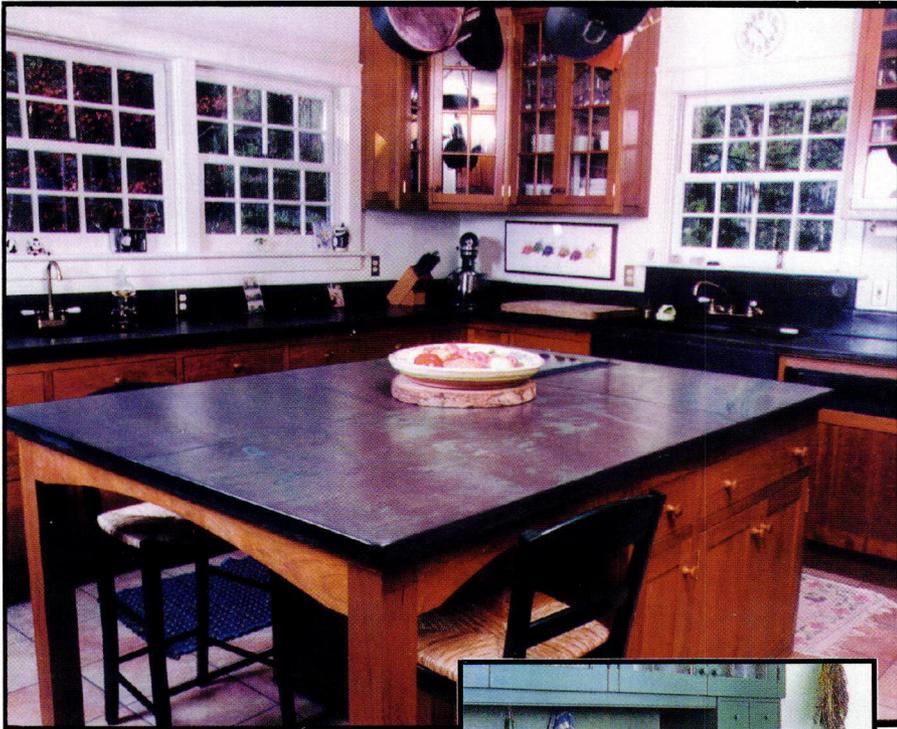
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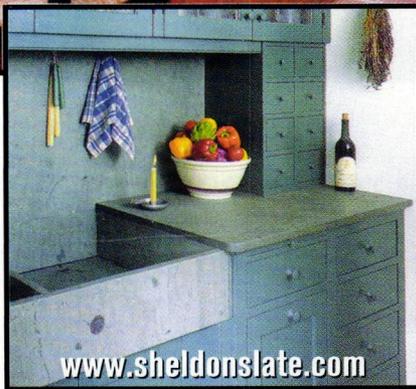
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hard to come by—but that's why there are so many inventive ways to configure a stair.

Once you have a place and a basic layout for the stair in mind, you'll need a design that takes into account the age and style of your house. A stair is built up from many components: balusters and handrails, the newel post, treads and risers, and finishing touches like wainscot or paneling that covers the stringers (the carriages that support the treads and risers and link all the pieces together). Of these, the newel post and the balusters offer the most scope for inventive design (see "The Newel," p. 84, and "Slats and Spindles," p. 86).

Use architectural cues that exist in your house, or houses like it, to develop a language for your new staircase. In a Federal house built about 1820, for instance, a newly built stair could include three-dimensional balusters turned on a lathe and a newel post or handrail volute closely modeled on one found in a similar house of the period. In an open-string stair, you might use a decorative spandrel ornament to finish the stringer below the tread nosing return. (See p. 86, top left.)

Suppose your house has no original staircase at all, and very little trim? Since a period staircase is often one of the most elaborately decorated constructions in any home, this means you can play the style card up or down. Find a staircase in a house similar in style and scale to yours with elements you like, and adapt freely from them. In fact, once you have a pleasing staircase design, you can borrow some of the elements—the shape of trim moulding on the newel post, or cut-outs on the stair slats, for instance—to dress up the rest of your house. ✦

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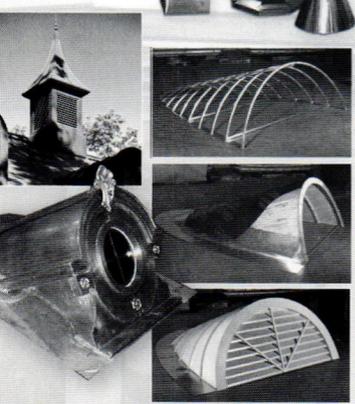
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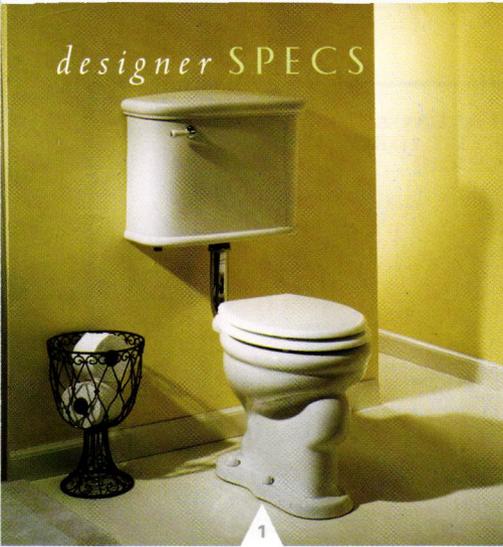
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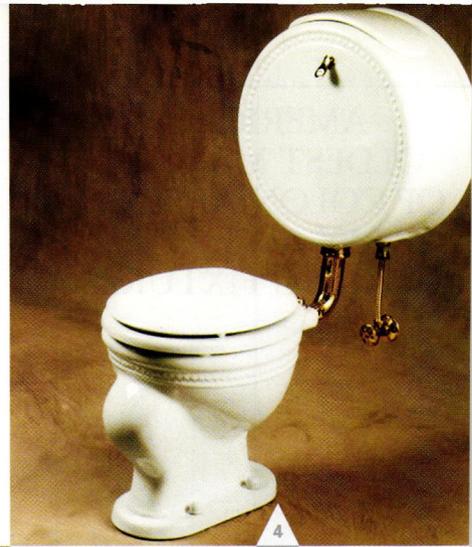
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3



5

A Royal Flush

BY DAN COOPER

FOR THE MOST PART, creating a convincing “vintage” lavatory or full bathroom is not too difficult; pedestal sinks, clawfoot tubs, subway tiles, and all the rest are readily available once more. But when it comes down to the toilet, many homeowners give short shrift to their purchase decision. The most frequently used fixture in The Little Room is an afterthought: a standard hardware-store water closet is plunked down on that 4-inch flange.

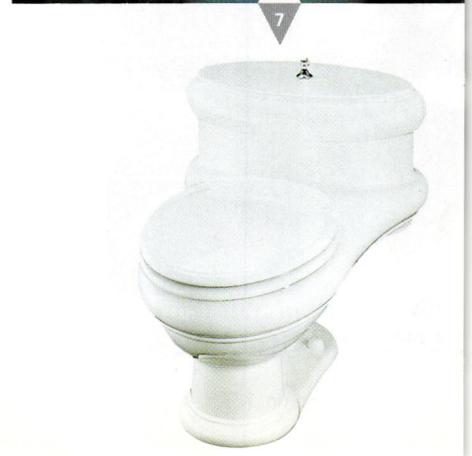
Fortunately, manufacturers have addressed the desire for reproduction toilets. Look again: you now have a large selection of styles in all price ranges. Some are dead-ringers for antiques, [text continued on page 94]

Design Sampler

1. **BATHROOM MACHINERIES** “The Lydia,” old-style WC with wall-mounted tank, \$795
2. **KOHLER** The squared-off “Memoirs” series toilet, in many off-whites, neutrals, or black, \$204 in plain white
3. **AFFORDABLE ANTIQUE BATH** Raised-panel oak tank with brass brackets, about \$900 inclusive
4. **MAC THE ANTIQUE PLUMBER** “The Pillbox” exclusive beaded toilet and tank, about \$800
5. **LE BIJOU** The rounded “Cambridge,” with backsplash and raised decoration [price available only through distributors]
6. **HERBEAU** “The Charleston,” for Victorian and Colonial Revival sensibilities, \$2,300 MSRP
7. **KOHLER** “The Revival” late-1920s–’30s toilet, with a tall tank or as this one-piece model, \$540–\$1,496



6



7



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REPRODUCTION & DECORATED

Several companies sell distinctive reproduction toilets—with very old-fashioned styling, or with painted decoration. **AFFORDABLE ANTIQUE BATH & MORE** (888) 303-2284, bathandmore.com Porcelain “Victoria” and wooden high-tank toilets; fluted-base water closets ■ **BATHROOM MACHINERIES** (800) 255-4426, deabath.com Exclusive 1910 “Lydia” bowl has the look of an old-style water closet; also oak, mahogany, and corner-fit high-tank toilets and cast-iron Thomas Crapper High Cistern Victorian reproduction toilet ■ **HERBEAU CREATIONS** (800) 547-1608, herbeau.com “Bathroom Couture ‘Charleston’” paint-decorated toilet with pull-up knob; on their website, see ‘Furniture’ at “Powder Room Couture” for Gothic throne [\$12,000 MSRP] and unique sinks ■ **LE BIJOU COLLECTION** (305) 593-6143, lebijoucollection.com “Classic Whites” line features traditional-style, low-tank toilets ■ **MAC THE ANTIQUE PLUMBER** (800) 916-2284, antiqueplumber.com Exclusive porcelain pillbox toilet, plus wooden (beaded, raised-panel, and picture-frame) and porcelain high-tank toilets ■ **SUNRISE SPECIALTY** (510) 729-7277, sunrisespecialty.com Oak and porcelain high-tank models with 1.6 GPF ■ **VAN DYKE’S RESTORERS** (800) 558-1234, vandykes.com Offers a Victorian, porcelain high-tank pull-chain toilet ■ **VOGUE COMMODOE** (860) 434-5184, voguecommode.com Elegant hand-glazed toilets

RIGHT: Waterworks’ “Bristol” low-tank toilet and bidet. **BELOW:** Vogue Commode sells “Tess’s English Garden” toilet.



ANTIQUÉ PLUMBING

Salvage yards sell fixtures as-is, so be sure you can find parts and that the old toilet, once installed, will pass inspection. Some plumbers will install a non-low-flow toilet, and many won’t. Companies listed below specialize in plumbing fixtures and have a national clientele, but many local salvage yards also sell toilets.

BATHROOM MACHINERIES (800) 255-4426, deabath.com Original china high-tanks; bowls and parts ■ **HISTORIC HOUSEPARTS** (888) 558-2329, historichouseparts.com Vintage toilets and tanks ■ **LOOLOO DESIGN** (800) 508-0022 looloodesign.com Authentic antique fixtures ca. 1880–1910 ■ **OHMEGA SALVAGE** (510) 204-0767, ohmegasalvage.com Vintage originals ■ **VINTAGE PLUMBING BATHROOM ANTIQUES** (818) 772-1721, vintageplumbing.com Rare and unusual toilet bowls, tanks, and bidets, including those of the Victorian era

REVIVAL STYLES

Higher-end toilets offer design choices not seen in the squat, cheapest models. Old-fashioned styles recently have become more popular in all price brackets.

AFFORDABLE ANTIQUE BATH & MORE (888) 303-2284, bathandmore.com Low-tank models with square and fluted column bases; the “Neo-Venetian” with curved backsplash on the tank ■ **AMERICAN STANDARD** (800) 442-1902 americanstandard-us.com Old-style models include “Antiquity,” “Town Square,” and “Reminiscence” ■ **FIXTURE UNIVERSE** (888) 404-2744, fixtureuniverse.com They sell the American Standard and Porcher models mentioned here, plus Kohler selections ■ **KOHLER** (800) 456-4537, kohler.com Selection of classically designed one- and two-piece toilets, many 1920s–30s, Artist Series paint-decorated models ■ **PORCHER** (800) 359-3261, porcher-us.com “The Classic” and “Archive” are two of their models ■ **VINTAGE TUB & BATH** (877) 868-1369, vintagetub.com Extensive collection from various makers, including Herbeau’s Gothic “Dagobert” throne selling for \$9,799 ■ **WATERWORKS** (800) 998-BATH, waterworks.com Low-tank toilets in simple designs “suitable for Retro to cottage bungalow” homes; starting at \$450

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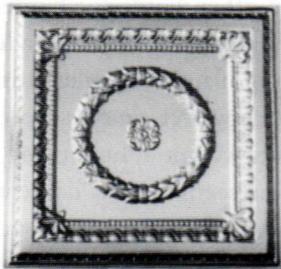
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some are hyper-styled luxury models, and many others have a vaguely old-fashioned appearance. All are a step above the \$69 model from Home Improvement World.

HOW HIGH IS YOUR TANK? We're all familiar with the high-tank toilet, also called a pull-chain or gravity-flush toilet. The wall-mounted tank, in Victorian-era oak or "sanitary" white ceramic, looms overhead, and is emptied down a pipe to the bowl when you pull the long chain. (At least one firm also offers a cast-iron version.)

The next variation in the plumbing pantheon is the low-tank toilet, an excellent choice for those who want a vintage look without resorting to a high-tank model—either due to space limitations, or because a 20th-century look is preferred. Sometimes

half century, the salvage yard is probably your best resource.

OLD FIXTURES, NEW CODES. Many an old-house purist wants *everything* in the house to be from the same period. Although antique sinks and tubs meet or can be easily adapted to meet modern plumbing codes, old toilets present a challenge. Foremost is the amount of water they use. Most if not all vintage toilets use much more than the dictated 1.6 gallons per flush. The folks at Bathroom Machineries in Murphys, California, who have sold many fine antique toilets, offer this advice: "Though most high-tank toilets will flush quite well on 1.6 gallons, they are not certified as low-water-consumption fixtures. Installations subject to inspection may require a historical or special variance

Those who go for a true antique toilet will find

decorated bowls with blue or brown transferware prints as nice as those on any soup tureen.

referred to as "snorkel toilets," low-tank models are wall-mounted (instead of resting directly on the back of the bowl) and convey water from the tank by means of a wide chrome- or nickel-plated pipe. The most distinctive is the pillbox-style toilet, with its flat, round tank. Toilets are available in styles reminiscent of the early 1900s through Art Deco.

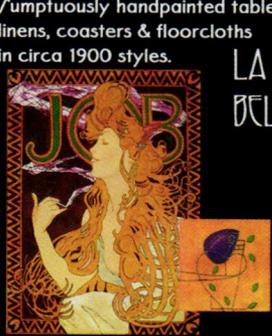
WHITE-OUT. After World War I, the popularity of the all-white sanitary bathroom (and kitchen, for that matter) declined, and the colored-porcelain era came to American homes. This trend lasted well into the 1970s; over time, the most common colors were sunny yellow and robin's-egg blue, along with pink and unusual variations on jade green. For those re-creating a bathroom dating to that

permit. Consult with your local building department before making a purchase." In other words, the burden is on the homeowner to ensure a legal installation of an older toilet. It is remarkable, however, among the old-house nuts we know, how many antique toilets seem to have "come with the house . . ." [To cut down on water usage, remember the old Earth Day method: displace some of the tank's capacity with a sealed plastic milk container weighted with gravel. Do not put bricks in the tank, as they will release grit.]

Those who elect the true antique route will find bowls with blue or brown transferware prints as nice as those on any soup tureen, along with fanciful oak tanks and many designs not available in reproduction. ♦

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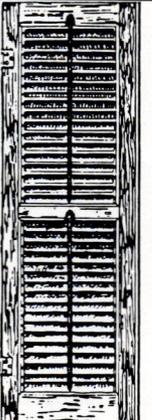
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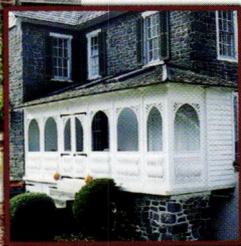
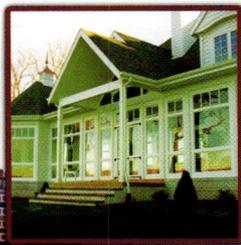




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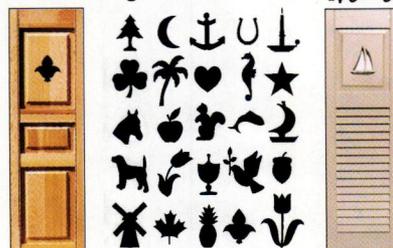
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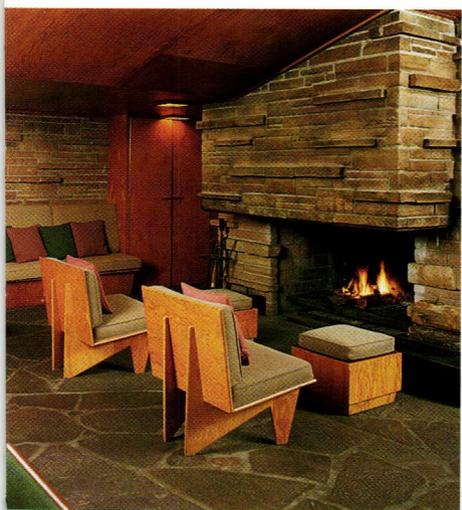
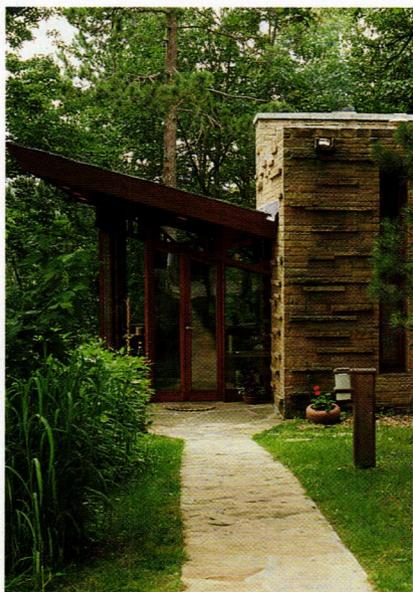
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Renting History

BY MARY ELLEN POLSON



LEFT: The Seth Peterson Cottage comes with Wright-designed furniture. **ABOVE:** The piano-shaped pool at Twin Palms. **RIGHT:** Its interior is outfitted with pieces by Knoll and Vladimir Kagan.



I'VE LIVED IN marvelous places: a 1923 Colonial Revival in North Carolina, a Second Empire row house in Boston, a 1960s cantilevered house in Maine inspired by Falling-water. Trouble is, I can't seem to stay put. As soon as I find the perfect home, life disrupts my plans.

Clearly, I'd do better if I were a serial renter of historic dwellings than an owner. What better way to experience such special homes than on vacation, a week or a month at a

time? I could easily spend the rest of my summers sitting on the deep, west-facing porch of a certain shingled summer cottage in coastal Maine where I've spent a handful of days in the past few years. A family home built in 1910, it's never been for sale. The porch offers long views of a spectacular sound. In an upstairs bedroom, pencil marks on a pine door darkened by age chart the growth of all the children in the family over the course of the 20th century.

I could easily spend the rest of my summers sitting on the deep, west-facing porch of a certain shingled summer cottage in coastal Maine.



ABOVE: The cozy Servant's Wing at Standen, available to let. **RIGHT:** Pamphill Green, a thatched-roof cottage on the grounds of Kingston Lacy, a 17th-century National Trust estate in Dorset.



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Finding a historic and architecturally compelling vacation rental isn't necessarily easy and is seldom cheap. If you are persistent, you'll locate that special place. In the United States, I've had good luck poring over a ubiquitous vacation-rental websites—Cyberrentals.com. There, I've discovered and booked a 1920s waterfront camp in Maine and a 1950s knotty-pine cottage perched over a glacial pond on Cape Ann. That one's such a restful retreat that I'm a repeat visitor.

One of my best finds is an architectural gem and preservation miracle: the **SETH PETERSON COTTAGE**, a 1958 Frank Lloyd Wright house in the Wisconsin Dells, where my husband and I stayed briefly last summer. Owned by the nonprofit Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy, this rustic one-bedroom dwelling on a lonely wooded hill rents for \$275 per night, year-round. The price doesn't stem demand; at press time, most dates for 2005 were already gone.

Rentals support significant upkeep on the house, rescued from ruin and threatened by demolition more than once. Mahogany plywood

ceilings, mitered glass windows that craftily support the roof, and Wright-designed plywood chairs (which easily splinter when dragged across the stone floors) are expensive to maintain in a wet, cold climate.

Another rare find is **THE LODGE**, a classic 1895 beach cottage with a sloping pyramidal roof and deep, wraparound porch in a late-19th century coastal enclave near St. Augustine, Florida. The restored house is owned by a fourth-generation member of the Pittsburgh Mellons, who makes it available for rent.

If you prefer Movie Colony glamour to old money, you'll be pleased to learn that you can rent **TWIN PALMS**, the 1947 mid-century Modern home of Frank Sinatra in Palm Springs. The pool is famously in the shape of a piano. When the sun hits the posts in the breezeway at the right angle, shadows seem to form keys at the base of the pool. A visible crack in a bathroom sink is said to have come from a bottle of scotch hurled by Sinatra during a fight with his second wife, Ava Gardner. Immersion in the Sinatra mystique doesn't come cheap: a week



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The breakfast room at Lily Pond Estate, a luxury rental on Nantucket.

at Twin Palms is \$12,000.

Abroad, agencies for rentals in France, Italy, and England occasionally offer real castles and historic palazzos among the cottages. One agency not to be missed is the National Trust Holiday Cottages, which offers more than 300 vacation retreats. Several are within or on the grounds of the magnificent estates owned by the Trust. Imagine living at **STANDEN**, a showplace of the Arts and Crafts Movement, designed by friend-of-William Morris Philip Webb and furnished with Morris fabrics, carpets, and wallpapers. (Comfortably outfitted lodgings are in the Servant's Wing.)

Also available for holiday rental is **THE TURRET**, the northwest wing of Charlecote Park, a 700-year-old Tudor estate where William Shakespeare is said to have been caught poaching deer. Or make yourself at home at the Garden House at **POWIS CASTLE**, a medieval keep that dates to 1200. To find that perfect rental spot, you'll have to wade through the holiday cottages site, however: there is no user-friendly index to rentals on Trust properties. Prices, expressed in pounds, range from about \$400 to \$3,700 per week. You may find, however, that the perfect getaway isn't the most expensive. Like my knotty-pine cottage on the mill pond, sometimes the best retreat is the one that makes you feel the happiest. ✦



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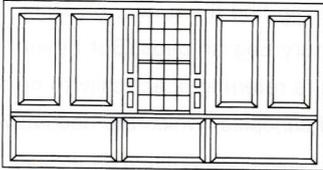
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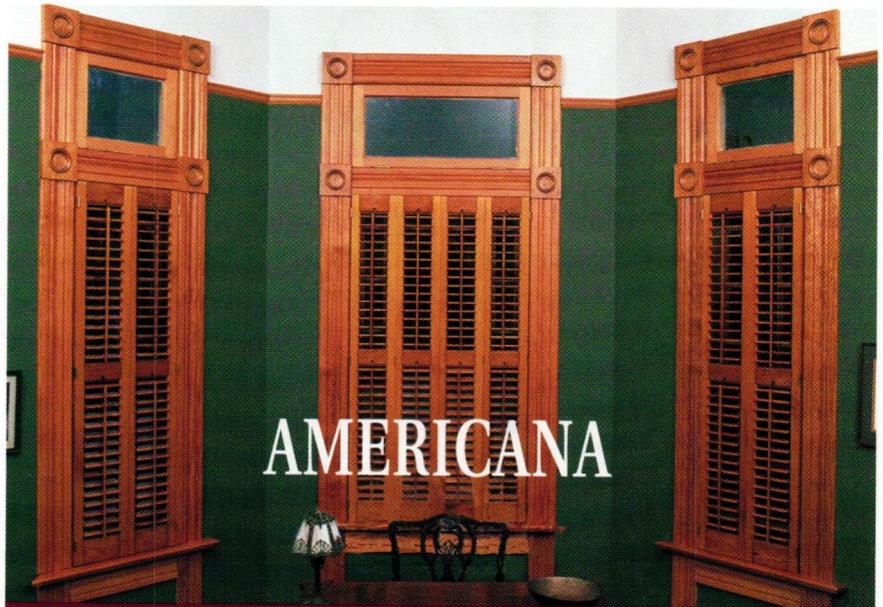
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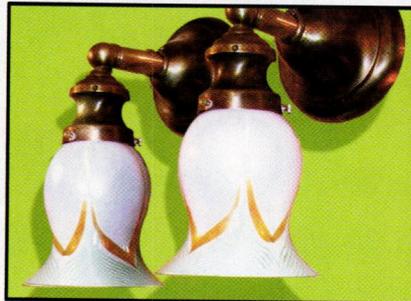
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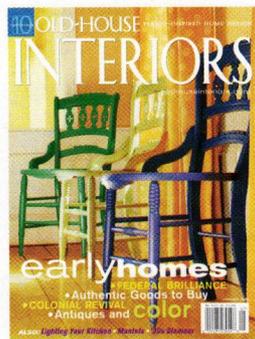
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back&forth

REFLECTION

I JUST RECEIVED the [January] issue of *Old-House Interiors* . . . when I got to page 12, your “wintertime thoughts” blew me away. No, yours is not “just” a decorating magazine, although it is that—splendidly. Is there another so-called shelter magazine that publishes the kind of thoughtful, intelligent, and sometimes wickedly funny writing that yours does? Has there ever been an editor of a (once again) so-called shelter magazine who asks in print, “How are we to live our lives?”? With you, we get the passion that comes with reflecting on and



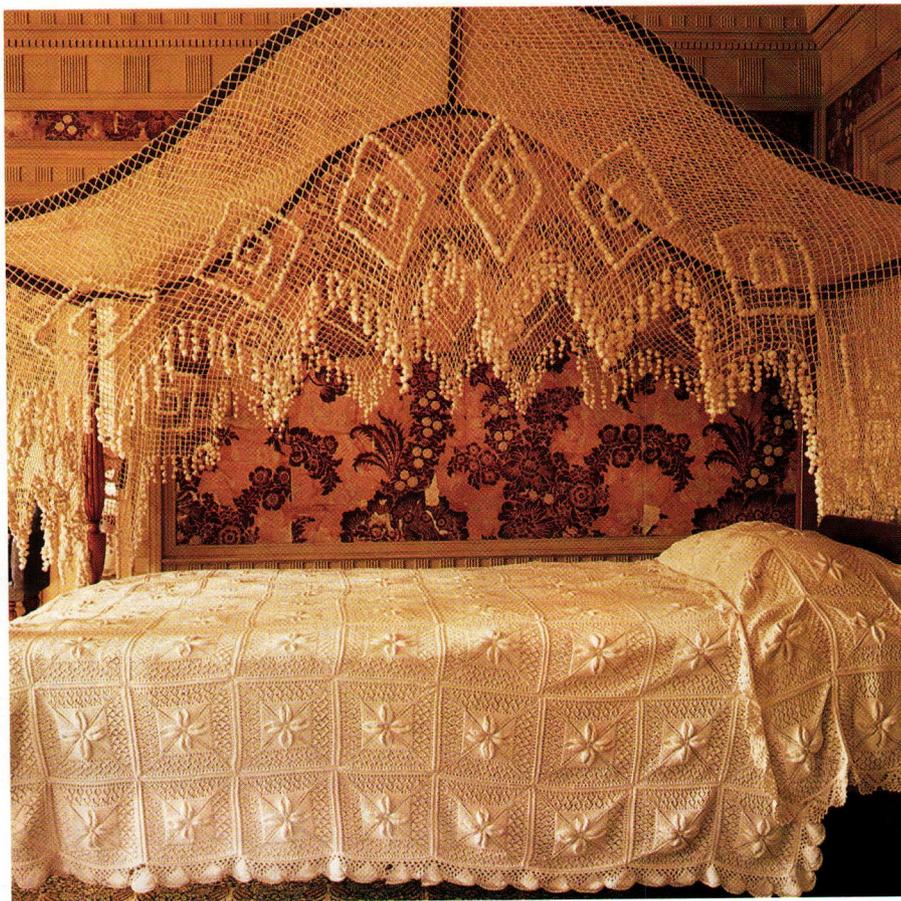
questioning one’s own direction and then convincing oneself that that direction is worthy of trust. There must surely be a market for writing that brings wider social and ethical questions into the world of aesthetics, home, design, etc.—and vice-versa.

Also, the January cover is glorious, the perfect antidote to winter’s greyer side.

—NANCY HILLER
Bloomington, Ind.

JAZZY BATHS

ENJOYED your article in the November 2004 issue concerning vintage bathrooms—especially when I turned



Canopy beds historic?

I love the look of canopy beds, but it seems they are most often shown in little-girls’ rooms. Are those lacy canopies really colonial, or “ersatz”?

—MOIRA SULLIVAN, RUTHERFORD, N.J.

Bed hangings—overhead canopies and side drapery that can be closed—date to the 13th century and were something of a necessity during most of our drafty history. They provided both privacy and warmth. They were particularly lavish during the 18th century, in the French Rococo period of Louis XV as well as the neoclassical style of Louis XVI. In colonial America, they were plainer (made of homespun fabrics or imported ones, depending upon the wealth of the householder); you can find them, too, on 19th-century English beds. But I think you’re referring specifically to netted bed canopies, which are decorative, not functional. While it’s possible that early Americans had openwork summer dressings for their beds (long since gone), the lacy look belongs more to the Colonial Revival of the 20th century. Canopy beds came back into style from the late 1890s through the 1940s, and with them the lighter dressing.

Canopy beds were certainly found in master bedrooms. The one shown is at the Sarah Orne Jewett house in South Berwick, Maine, built in 1774 but re-interpreted by Ms. Jewett, the author, ca. 1890. I’ve noticed netted canopies on four-poster beds in several Shingle Style houses of the same period. —P. POORE

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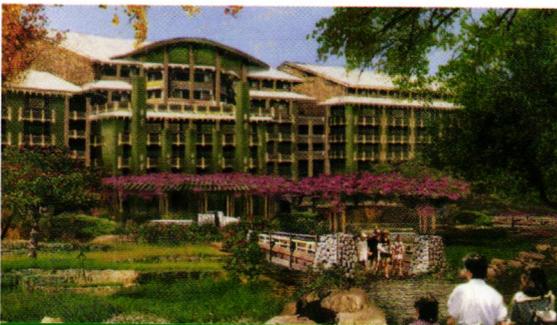
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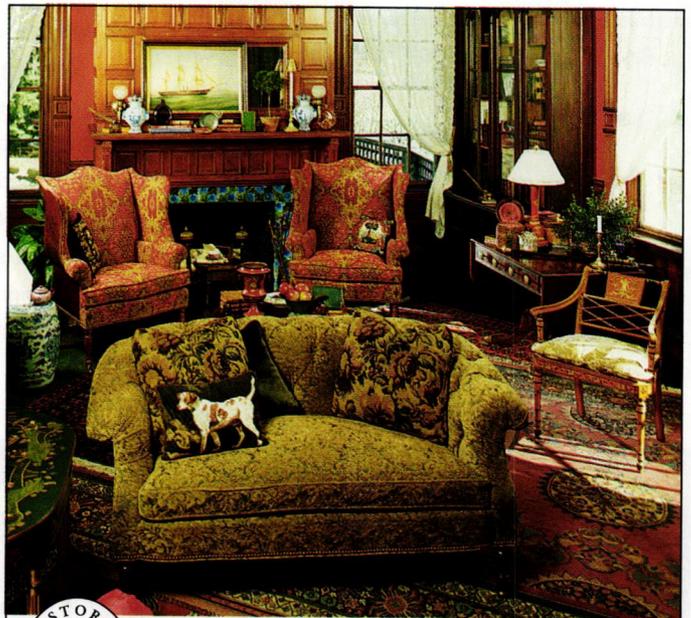
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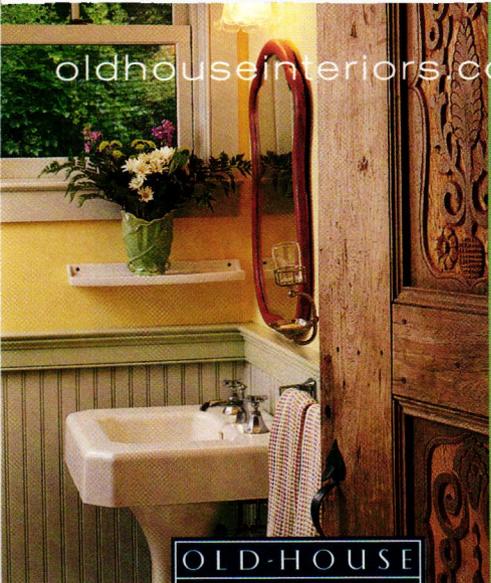
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to page 36 and saw the photograph of the black-and-blue tub enclosure. It's in one of four and a half vintage baths in our 1929 Mediterranean house. Trying to find plumbing parts, replacement tiles, etc. is a daunting task, [so] being recognized in your publication is one of the small rewards.

To anyone interested in these baths, please find the book *Bungalow Bathrooms* by Jane Powell and Linda

Svendsen [Gibbs-Smith, Publisher]. It is an informative resource and entertaining book with many beautiful photos—and I don't say this just because three of our bathrooms are featured.

If you ever want to do an article on Twenties Art Deco/Mediterranean-style homes, let me know, as I have the privilege of living in one.

—STEPHEN (AND LORRIE) BAILEY
Altadena, California

Cape Cod Kitchen?

We own a traditional Cape Cod home built in 1923. (A Massachusetts builder brought the design with him.) It is original except for the kitchen, which was "modernized" in the 1970s. We would like to restore it (the cabinets, counters, tile) to as close to the 1920s design as possible. Do you have any suggestions? We would be glad to purchase past issues. —BOB HAWKES, BAKERSFIELD, CALIF.

Coincidentally, there's a feature about Cape Cod houses in this issue, starting on p. 68. We don't show any kitchens in that article, but no matter. You're seeking information about 1920s kitchens, not about "Cape Cod kitchens" *per se*. The Twenties saw the dawn of the modern kitchen, so it's possible to get a fairly authentic look without compromising convenience. A majority of houses already had electricity and appliances.

We targeted 1920s kitchens especially in the Sept. 2004 and Spring 1998 issues. Another great resource is the book *Bungalow Kitchens* by Jane Powell and Linda Svendsen [Gibbs-Smith, Publisher], which shows surviving and recreated period kitchens. They tend to be smallish and simple: cabinets painted off-white; linoleum floor; countertops of tile, linoleum, or wood; a freestanding Hoosier-type storage cabinet and a center work table. The book is a treasure trove of design details, all suitable for bungalows, Foursquares, Romantic houses (Tudor, Spanish), and Colonial Revival homes—including Capes. —P. POORE

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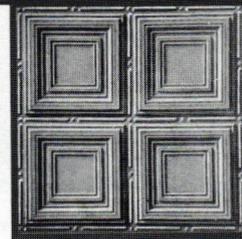
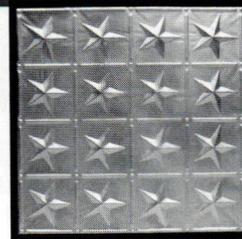
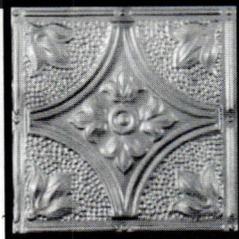
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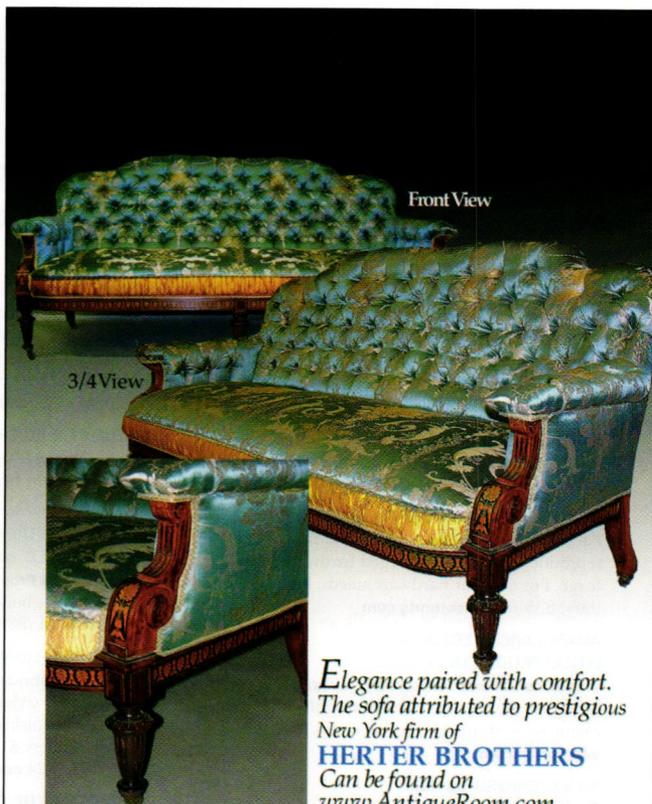
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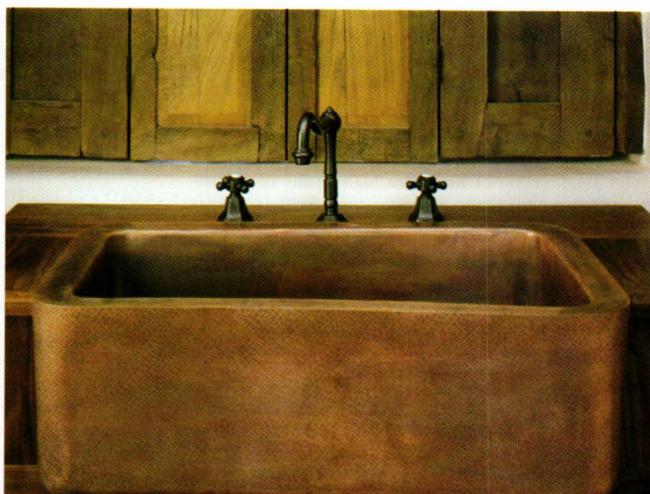


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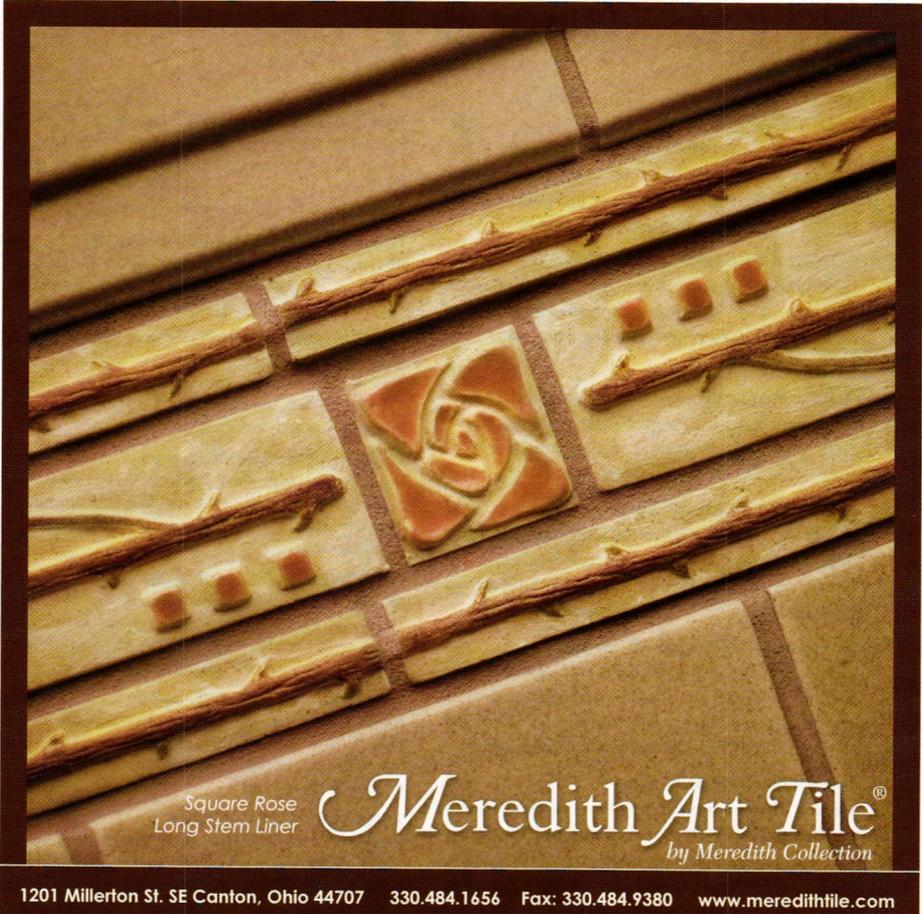
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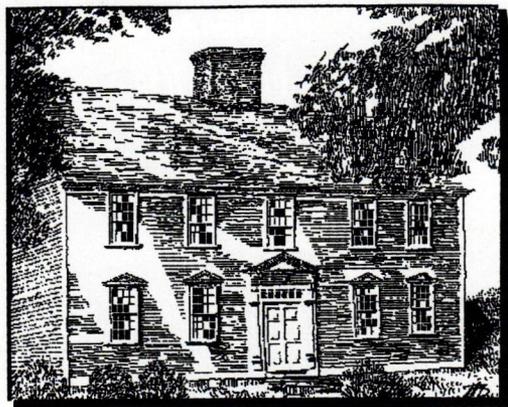
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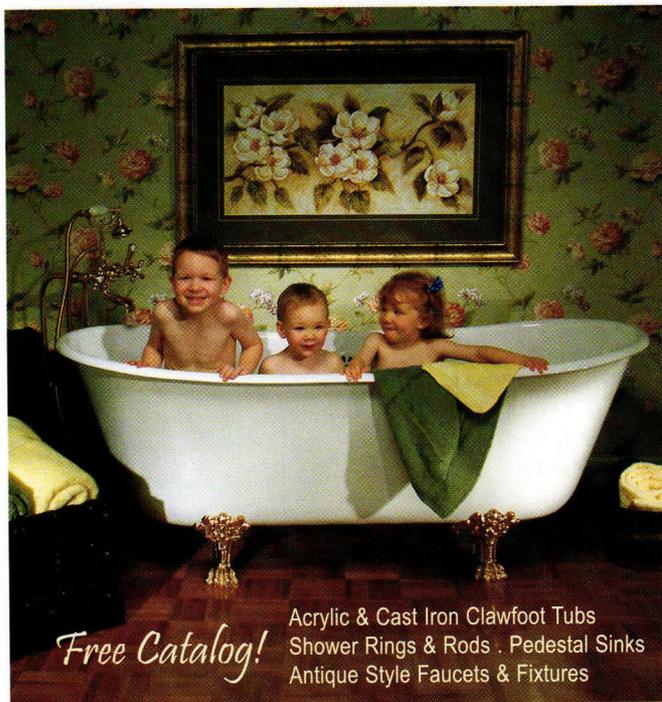


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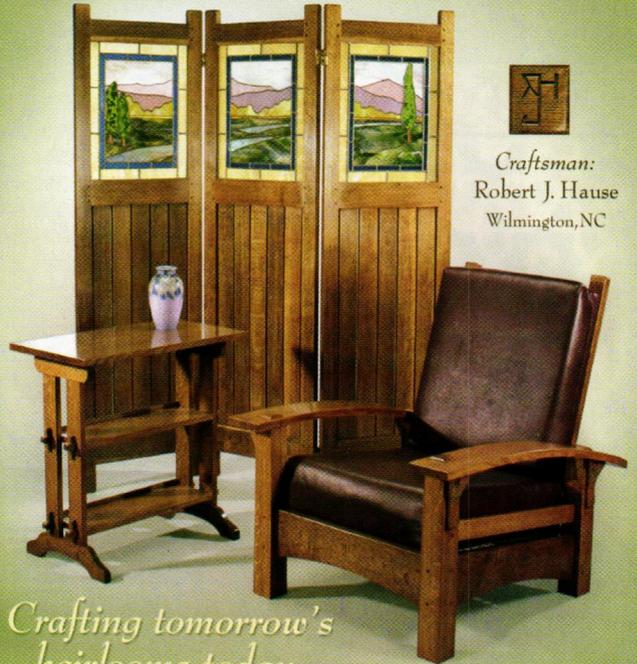


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MOTIFS

The rare Regency table ca. 1800–1830 has an octagonal top.

LEFT: Octagons and eight-pointed stars in 17th-century marble inlay at the Itimad-ud-Daulah tomb in Agra, India; an octagon border on a Persian textile; carved wooden door with Saint John the Evangelist and a moon in the octagon at Mexico's Cathedral de Zacatecas.



Octagons

MUCH LIKE THE CIRCLE, the octagon symbolizes regeneration and rebirth. Many religions use octagonal forms to suggest the circle of life; in Christianity, the baptismal font is usually eight-sided. For Hindus, the points of the octagon represent the eight divisions of the day. An eight-sided structure often is used to support a neoclassical temple's round

dome. Octagons may be found woven into oriental carpets, again as symbols of renewal. In the early-19th century, French Empire as well as English Regency designs incorporated octagons in fabrics including silk lampas, brocades, and damasks, lending the materials a simple, classical elegance. ■ The geometry of the octagon is practical and versatile: the shape was a favorite for

Victorian dinner sets, and the octagonal platter was often the special one for breads or cakes. And it was, of course, during the Victorian era that the octagon took on cult status as followers of phrenologist Orson Squires Fowler built eight-sided houses (which were *not* so very practical), in the earnest belief that they afforded better health to the occupants.—BRIAN COLEMAN

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