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THE MOST BELIEVABLE ARCHITECTURAL STONE VENEER IN THE WORLD™

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An Ohio couple proves it's possible to complete a kitchen makeover for a song. Their finished room—a 1920s vision—offers plenty of inspiration.

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By JEFFERSON KOLLE



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By DEMETRA APOSPOROS

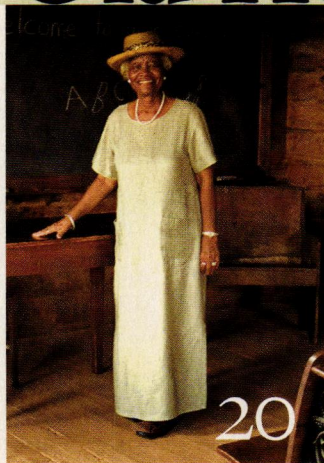
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An Art Deco townhouse in Chicago gets reverted from chopped-up apartments to Jazz Age gem.

By LEE BEY

Old House JOURNAL



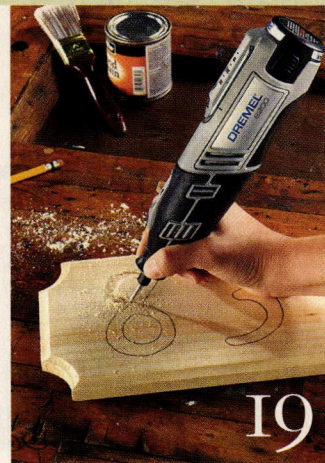
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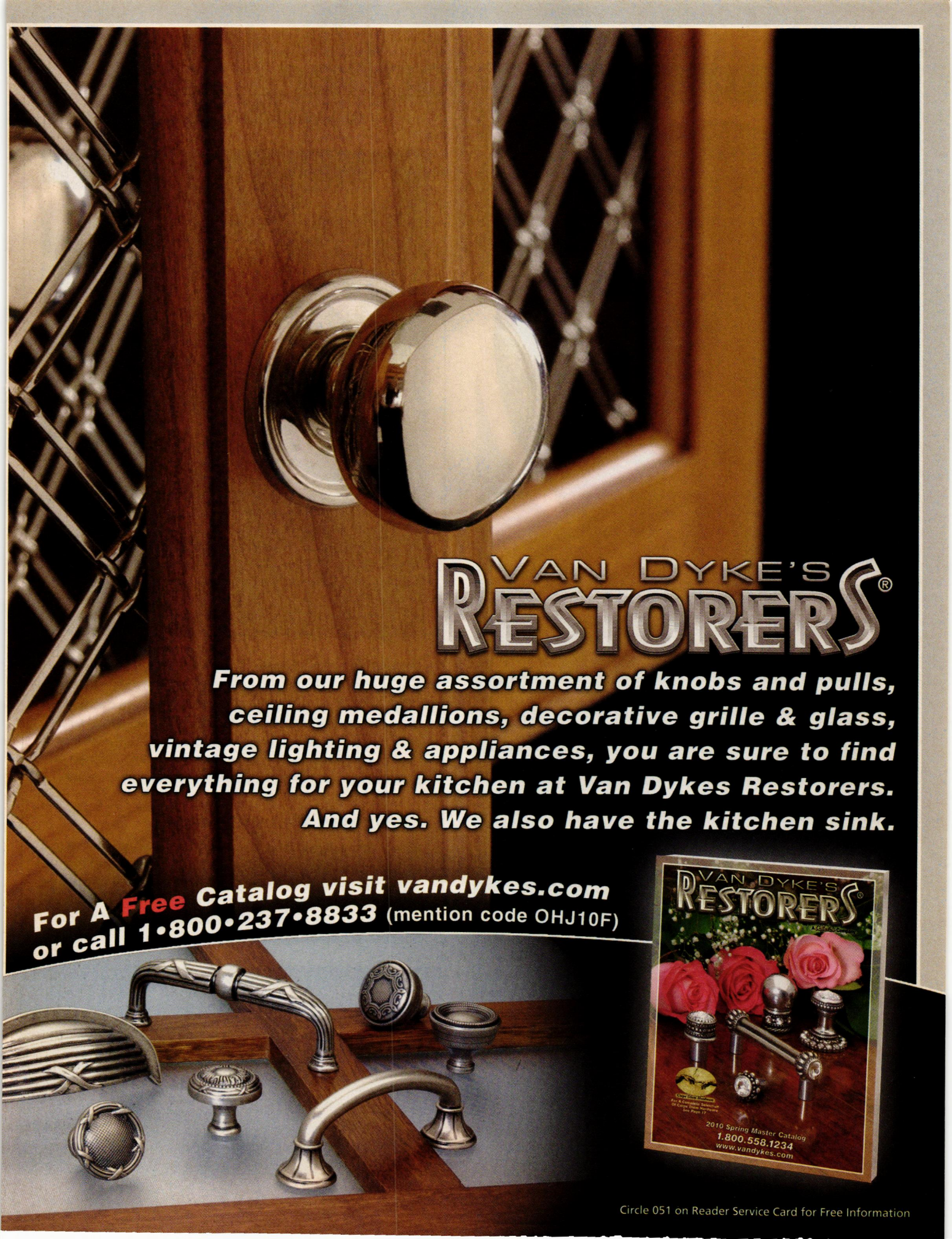
Cover: Photo by David Whelan. Beadboard walls and vintage lights are a natural fit in a rehabbed 1913 Seattle bungalow. Story page 52. Visit oldhousejournal.com.

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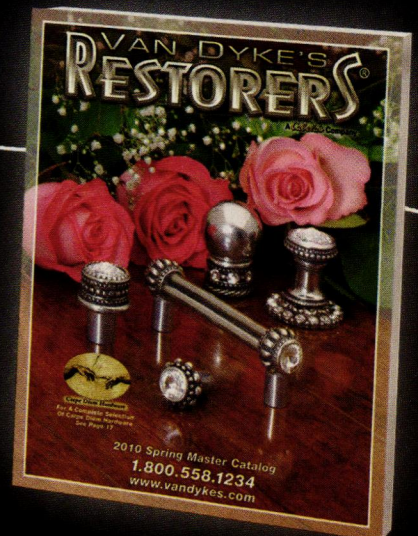
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WILLIAM WRIGHT PHOTO

Paint Perfection

Houses that are veritable works of art (like author Brian Coleman's, above and page 32) don't just happen overnight. It takes lots of careful planning, dreaming, and sketching to create a paint scheme that pops—and stays true to the history of the house. Go behind the scenes to see how Brian settled on the fanciful combination of colors that highlights his home.

Download Vintage Charm

Older homes demand kitchen and dining spaces with vintage charm, and eating nooks are a sweet way to turn back the clock. If you long for a cozy breakfast nook like the one in the revamped 1920s kitchen of Ken Lay and Mary Bryan (page 28), you're in luck. We've got the building plans for their built-in benches available online in a free download!

Lightning Strikes Again

The early days of lightning-protection systems were marked by misinformation, unscrupulous salesmen...and some pretty eye-catching decorative designs. In the past century or so, we've cleared up the myths (get the facts on page 48) and gotten wise to the shysters, but those original designs are still going strong. Read up on lightning-rod history, and find the best resources for antique and reproduction components in our special online guide. •

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editor's note

Design Decisions

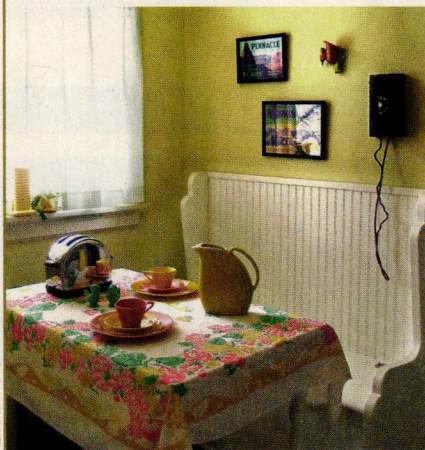


MARK W. ABBOTT PHOTO

RESTORING A KITCHEN is one of the biggest challenges we face in bringing new life to an old house. Not only must we decide what era is most appropriate (put an 1880s kitchen in your Shingle Victorian, or a 'state-of-the-art' 1920s kitchen?), but there are so many period products to choose from today that it can be hard to narrow them down. While some folks I know get a headache just thinking about all of the possibilities, I prefer to look at the bright side: We have so many options!

In this issue, we look at some wildly different approaches

to tackling the kitchen challenge. First, we check in with an Ohio couple determined to remake their kitchen for next to nothing. Not only did they succeed, but they managed to create such a sweet vision of a 1920s kitchen—complete with breakfast nook and tiled countertops—that you just might want to try it at home (see “The \$3,000 Kitchen,” page 28). Next, we get a professional carpenter’s overview of the best approach on do-it-yourself cabinet installations. The



KEN LAY PHOTO

A cozy breakfast nook—outfitted in vintage dinnerware—suits a Tudor house.

many tricks he reveals will help you get the job done easily, and perfectly (see “Hang Time,” page 38). Our last kitchen story just might be my favorite, because it mirrors so many couples I know who reach an impasse on how to approach or finish a project. (You probably know the type—many jobs started, few of them finished.) The Seattle couple in our Insider story sat with some unfinished projects in their bungalow for several years. But when they finally completed the work, the end results—including the kitchen—were worth waiting for (see “In Due Time,” page 52). They give me hope for my own roster of unfinished jobs.

This spring, I feel like I’ve been waiting forever for the sun to peek out after one of the worst East Coast winters on record. Now that it’s warming up, my thoughts have turned to gardens. I long to have a beautiful, era-appropriate landscape to match my house. If you do, too, get inspired by two stories full of ideas. “Best in Show” lays out the newest breeds of traditional bedding plants (see page 24), while in “Colorful Curb Appeal,” author Brian Coleman reveals how he created a garden that not only complements his house, but plays off of its paint scheme to better accent the architecture (see page 32). While I know my house and garden are a long way from resembling Brian’s work of art, I can continue to dream. Maybe I’ll start with some potted plants on the steps.

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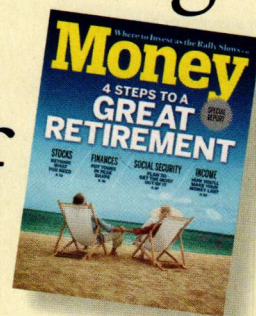
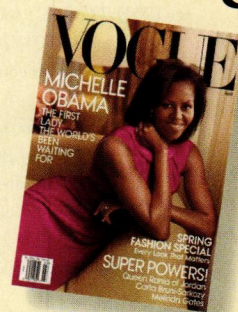
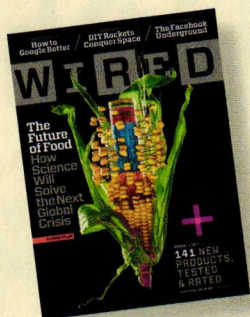
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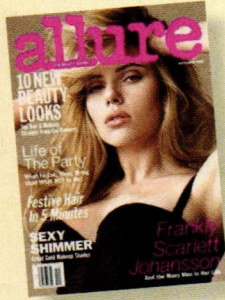
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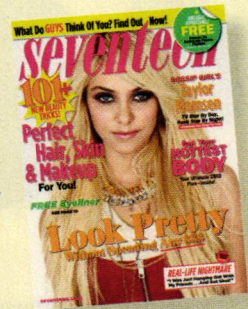
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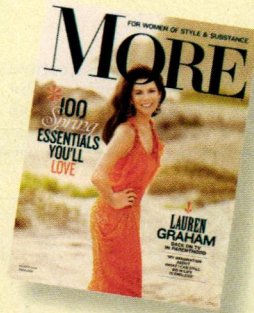
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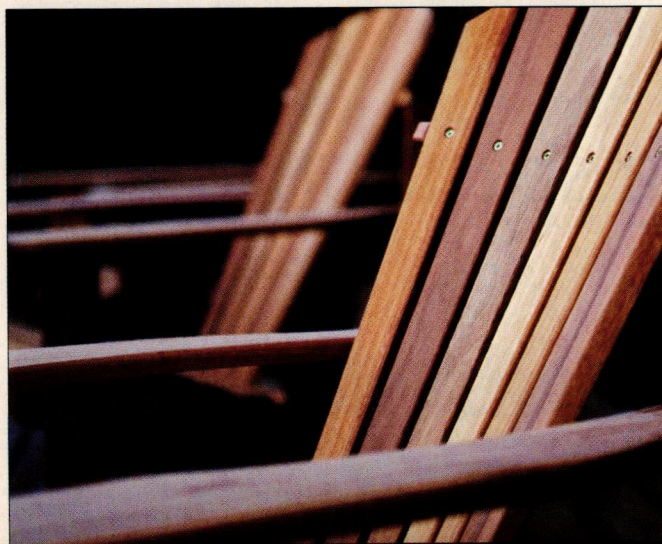
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letters

Reader Raves

I just wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed your April/May issue. My husband and I are some of OHJ's original subscribers. Our Folk Victorian has benefited so many times from the insightful advice in your magazine. Through the years, we noticed that OHJ seemed to lose its original purpose—the articles about do-it-yourselfers and their creative solutions to old house woes steadily dwindled until we were pretty much just looking at pretty pictures.

Sadly, we stopped our subscription for several years. Then, some time ago I picked an issue up in the bookstore and leafed through it. Could it be? I saw articles I wanted to read! We have resumed our subscription, and I love getting it in the mail again. Please, please, please keep going in this new (original) direction!

Cecile Morgan
Alabama

Reader Tip of the Month

When cleaning windows, the cheaper the paper towel, the better. The brand-name paper towels have stuff in them to increase absorbency and tend to leave streaks. Unprinted newsprint used for packing and shipping works well and doesn't leave ink on your hands. When I worked as a picture framer, we used commercial "C fold" hand towels (the kind that fit in a dispenser) to clean glass.

Janice S. Morgan
Via MyOldHouseOnline.com

Got a great tip to share with other old-house lovers? Let us know at OHJeditorial@homebuyerpubs.com.

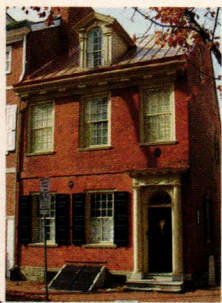
Demolition Fury

Like you, I can't believe a home like La Ronda [Editor's Note, January/February] could be demolished. With the crash of the stock market in 1929, it would be interesting to know how many homes were built that year in the U.S. I happen to live in the only home built in my town in 1929 [above], which replaced a burned Victorian in a prominent neighborhood. While my house doesn't match La Ronda's grandeur, it speaks volumes on the attention to detail, craftsmanship, and care that went into its construction.



The least the new buyers of La Ronda could have done was let the home be dismantled for its architectural features so others could benefit. Shame on them!

Brett Stahl
Monmouth, Illinois



Georgian or Federal?

I have never fully understood the differences between Federal and Georgian architecture, and your story on Society Hill [April/May]—despite the gorgeous pictures of some very fine homes—just adds to the confusion.

On page 60, the photo caption for the Nevel house [left, top] cites the decorated dormer window and cornice as good examples of the Georgian style. But then on the facing page, the sidebar states that Georgian house windows are relatively small compared to Federal ones. It cites the photo above it of row houses [left, bottom] as representative of the Federal style, yet their dormer windows and cornices have similar decoration as shown on the previous page. And certainly the Nevel house has the larger windows.

David Mason
Halifax, Massachusetts

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Distinguishing between Georgian and Federal architecture is always a complicated task, and we apologize for inadvertently muddying the waters. The row houses in this photo are a bit of an anomaly, as our author explains: "These are smaller houses, thus with smaller windows, contrary to the norm." However, their six-over-six sash is in keeping with Federal tradition. —Eds.

Photo Perspectives

Although your articles are generally concise and informative, I found "Set in Stone" [April/May] curiously disappointing. Rather than directing attention to the home, it focused on the couple: posed in front of the house, on the patio, etc. By the end, I knew too much about Lou and Denise and too little about the house.

Ellen Gallagher
Via e-mail

The photos of the Tortorellis' stone cottage ["Set in Stone"] are just beautiful! They make you feel as if you could touch this special home. Well done.

Gwen King
Via the web site

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about the house

BY CLARE MARTIN

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THROUGHOUT NEW
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Centennial Open House

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of Historic New England, the preservation group is opening up all 36 of its historic houses—from primitive 17th-century dwellings to forward-thinking mid-century ones—in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island for free afternoon tours. (617) 227-3956; historicnewengland.org

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The historic neighborhood of South Park plays host to a day of all things old house, including walking and trolley tours of the district's early 20th-century homes, and exhibits from manufacturers of period-appropriate products. (619) 233-6679; oldhousefair.com

JUNE 23-27
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ON THE RADAR

Preservation in Jeopardy

Historic preservation received a crippling blow in February, when President Obama submitted his budget for the 2011 fiscal year to Congress. Noticeably absent was funding for two of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's successful grant programs: Save America's Treasures and Preserve America.

The backlash from preservationists was immediate.

"The outpouring of support we've seen from across the country has been very heartening," says Bobbie Greene McCarthy, executive director of Save America's Treasures.

What's frustrating is that just last year, the president and Congress authorized continued funding for these two programs—but the \$30 million used to fund them in 2010 hasn't been entirely cut from the budget; it's simply been reallocated for other



Saved properties include Louisa May Alcott's Orchard House (above) and Brooklyn's Weeksville settlement (below).



OLD-HOUSE RESOURCE

Start Digging

You probably already know that Craigslist is a great place to score a deal on a new sofa or dining-room table...but with the site offering up everything from job postings to personal ads, it's not exactly targeted to specific interests. Enter DiggersList.com, a new Craigslist-like offshoot that's just for DIY restorers and renovators. DiggersList's stock and trade is recycled building materials—everything from reclaimed flooring to antique brick pavers—so

it's perfect for finding items for old-house projects. You also can browse for used tools, appliances, and furniture, or find a specialty contractor in the "services" section. The only downside? So far, the classifieds are only available for major metropolitan areas in a handful of states, but plans are already in the works for expansion—a button on the home page lets you suggest cities to be added to the DiggersList arsenal.

purposes within the Park Service for 2011.

McCarthy and other preservationists feel that's a mistake, given the programs' proven track record of creating jobs—in its 12 years in existence, Save America's Treasures has spawned around 16,000 jobs.

Not to mention it's been instrumental in preserving the history of America's built environment, from the house where Louisa May Alcott penned *Little Women* to Thomas Edison's research lab. "These sites are the way you tell stories about history," says McCarthy. "We always complain that young people don't understand history. Where else are these stories more vividly told?"

The National Trust's advocacy center has launched a grassroots campaign to help communicate what's at stake, encouraging members to write to Congress and post about the issue on social-networking sites. Should the cuts stand, preservation could be in for an uphill battle. "If something is out of the budget for a year, it's difficult to get it back in," says McCarthy. "But if it is cut, we'll do a full-court press to get it restored next year."

To get involved, visit preservationnation.org and click on "Saving America's Treasures."

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BOOKS IN BRIEF

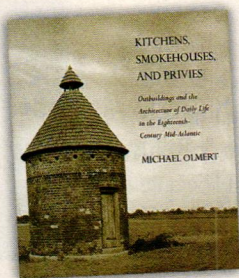
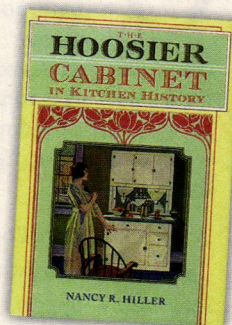
In recent architectural history, no part of the house has experienced such a fast-paced and encompassing overhaul as the kitchen. In the span of a couple centuries, kitchens have transformed from rustic outbuildings to high-tech command centers that will practically cook your food for you. Two new books chart a few of the more notable pit stops on the kitchen's incredible journey.

In *Kitchens, Smokehouses, and Privies*, literature professor Michael Olmert turns his scholarly eye on the utilitarian outbuildings often found clustered near homes in the 18th century. Organized by outbuilding function (in addition to the three in the title, Olmert also tackles laundries, dairies, iceboxes, dovecotes,

and even offices), the book examines both the day-to-day uses and typical architecture of each structure. In that regard, it's not only a fascinating glimpse of kitchen evolution, but

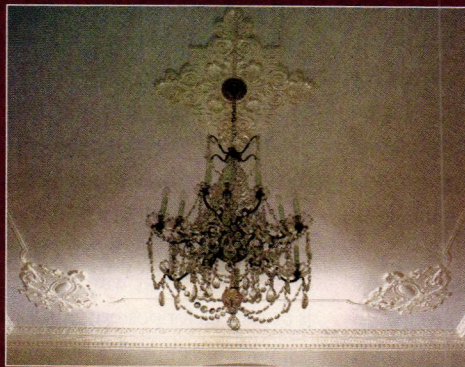
also a blueprint for anyone planning to build a traditionally styled outbuilding.

In *The Hoosier Cabinet in Kitchen History*, cabinetmaker Nancy Hiller takes a narrower view, choosing to focus on a single (albeit revolutionary) item. When it burst onto the scene in the early 20th century, the Hoosier set a new standard for kitchen efficiency. With a bevy of vintage advertisements to illustrate her tale, Hiller thoroughly chronicles the all-purpose cabinet's legacy as a harbinger of domestic revolution.



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ask ohj

Q: We were preparing the bathroom wall of our 1903 house for wallpapering when we discovered this mural under thick layers of lead paint. It appears to be a hand-painted mural rather than a wallpaper border. Can you tell us anything about it?

A: **Dan Cooper:** I agree; your delightful wall treatment appears to be a mural, as I don't see any vertical seams, and its overall height precludes it from being "railroad tracked" or run horizontally as one would hang a wallpaper frieze or border. It also seems to be painted on top of some sort of backing material, perhaps muslin or canvas, which was done to protect it from potential wall shifting that might occur as the plaster cured or the house settled after construction.

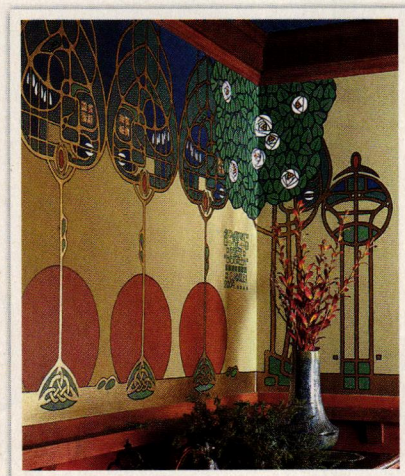
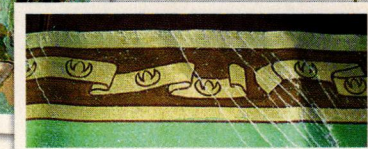
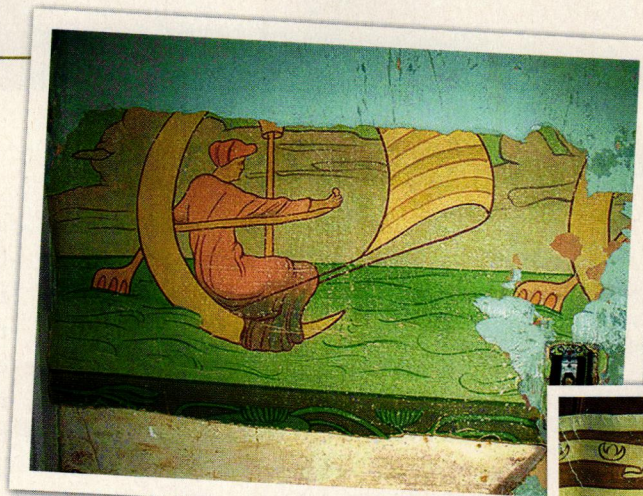
Murals have long been a popular form of decorative wall treatment. Their application allowed the residents of a building to choose precisely what theme they wished to have on their walls, instead of selecting pre-determined wallpaper patterns. As murals were unique and handcrafted,

they could be considerably more expensive than wallpaper, and were prized by their owners. In the late 18th and early 19th century, primitive murals were painted by itinerant artists like Moses Eaton or Rufus Porter. However, murals also could be quite magnificent and ornate, as evidenced by John Singer Sargent's murals in the Boston Public Library or Maxfield Parrish's "Old King Cole," which now hangs at the bar in the St. Regis Hotel in Manhattan.

Your mural seems to have a mythological origin that involves Dawn circling the Earth, judging by the images of women sailing on floating crescent moons. Nocturnal and pagan themes were often prevalent in decorative motifs around 1900. It's an unusual take on the subject, though, since the mural does not feature Apollo, who would have heralded the dawn with horse and chariot.

The lower border of lily pads is most likely a way in which the artist "grounded" his or her work—at this period in time, decorative wall and ceiling treatments were typically framed, not simply left floating on the plaster. Water lilies were a favorite of designers working in the Arts & Crafts style at the turn of the century. The scrolled motif of the upper border seems to be vaguely medieval, but could also feature stylized water-lily flowers.

The presence of crescent moons, stylized water-lily flowers and sun-adorned sails on this circa-1900 mural hints at a nocturnal allegory, a popular decorative motif during the time period.



Today, the tradition of mural painting is carried on by artists such as CJ Hurley (above). There are also many regional artists who work in the style of the earlier muralists.



Dan Cooper has consulted on historic interiors, including wallcoverings, for nearly 20 years and is the founder of Cooper's Cottage Lace.

Have questions about your old house? We'd love to answer them in future issues. Please send your questions to **Ask OHJ, 4125 Lafayette Center Dr., Suite 100, Chantilly, VA 20151** or by e-mail to **OHJEditorial@homebuyerpubs.com**.

BOTTOM: COURTESY OF CJ HURLEY/ CENTURY ARTS

old-house toolbox



NOELLE LORD PHOTOS

Carbide Scraper

For removing stubborn built-up finishes, a tough, professional-quality carbide scraper is your best bet.

BY NOELLE LORD



If you live in an old house, the chances are good that you'll eventually have to scrape built-up paint or debris off of *something*. The secret to any successful scraping job, both in removing an old finish and also avoiding damaging historic surfaces, is to use a sharp tool with the right-shaped scraper.

Once reserved for professionals, carbide-blade scrapers have now become readily available at most tool retailers. The myriad of blade choices makes this remarkably sharp, durable, and versatile tool a toolbox must.

Where to Use It

Many older surfaces, from painted wood

to stone, are abrasive and will quickly dull basic steel scrapers—which, in turn, will dull your enthusiasm for your project, and possibly lead you to damage the surface by scraping too quickly. Tungsten carbide, on the other hand, is at least three times harder than steel, and well worth the investment if you're planning on removing paint from woodwork, scraping glue, scouring efflorescence from stone or brick, or getting rid of calcimine on plaster. Carbide scrapers work well in partnership with any paint-stripping method to remove both the residue and stubborn leftover finish.

Carbide scrapers also are great for molding restoration because the variety of scraper sizes and shapes allows you to work carefully with your molding profile and not remove detail. If you're working to free molding, for instance, a paint

bead often holds it to the adjoining woodwork. A triangular-shaped carbide scraper can be tucked right into that joint to remove the paint bead.

What to Look For

Carbide scrapers come in a large variety of sizes, both the blades and the tool itself. Better-quality models have two key components: First, the blade should attach to the handle with a strong bolt and washers. You want to be able to really lean on the tool for tough scraping, and you don't want to have to keep tightening the blade. If the blade moves, even slightly, the scraper will be significantly less effective and potentially cause marring to fine surfaces.

Comfortable, ergonomically correct handles also are essential to protect your grip from unnecessary strain. Longer handles offer better leverage for scraping, but could be bulky in smaller areas.

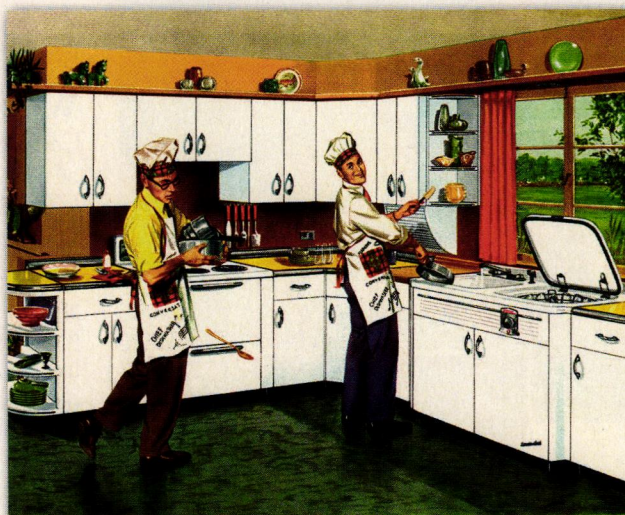
Many blade styles are sharp on each side, so you can simply reverse or rotate the blade when it becomes dull. Although blades can be sharpened, replacements are fairly inexpensive. If sharpening, remember that as with a good knife, the angle must be kept the same across the sharp edge. Thicker blades are easier to sharpen, and also will reduce any risk of flex and increase the influence of the sharp edge against the surface to move your project along faster.

The Bottom Line

Keep your carbide scrapers clean and dry, as you would any quality tool. High-quality scrapers are pretty rugged, but should a handle become cracked or loose, don't use the tool, as the pressure required for scraping could lead to a nasty injury if the handle detaches. 🛠️



OHJ contributing editor Noelle Lord is a writer, consultant, and teacher who shares her passion for old buildings through Old House C.P.R., Inc.



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Youngstown Kitchens, Mullins Mfg. Corp., Warren, Ohio, 1952

A Domestic Revolution

ON THE COVER OF THEIR 1952 CATALOG, Youngstown Kitchens promoted “the world’s newest kitchen ideas” with a revolutionary concept: men in the kitchen. In a campaign clearly aimed at newly empowered postwar wives, Youngstown ads of the late ‘40s and early ‘50s featured an ongoing series of quirky and charming Norman-Rockwell-with-a-twist illustrations, with a surprising number depicting apron-clad males of questionable kitchen competence.

Youngstown was the country’s leading manufacturer of all-metal kitchens, offering signature details like a Rolling-Door Spice Cabinet and Cusheen countertops. And that’s not a washing machine beside the sink—it’s a Youngstown exclusive: the Jet-Tower Dishwasher with Positive Hydro-Electric Control.

Perhaps Youngstown’s cutting-edge kitchen gadgetry and masculine materials made it safer for men to don a “Chief Dishwasher” apron and enter the female domain. While the ladies are conspicuously absent from this mid-century milieu, we can only assume they are nearby...the 1950s weren’t *that* revolutionary. 🏠

Bo Sullivan is the historian for Rejuvenation and the owner of Arcalus Period Design in Portland, Oregon. He is an avid collector and researcher of original trade catalogs.

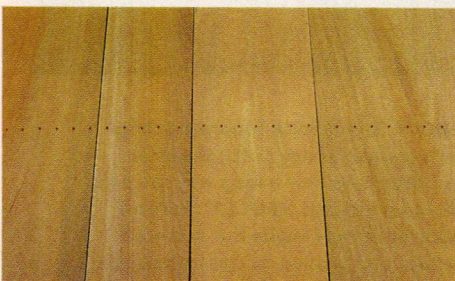
house helpers

Our editors pick the best new products to make your old-house projects easier.

Nail It

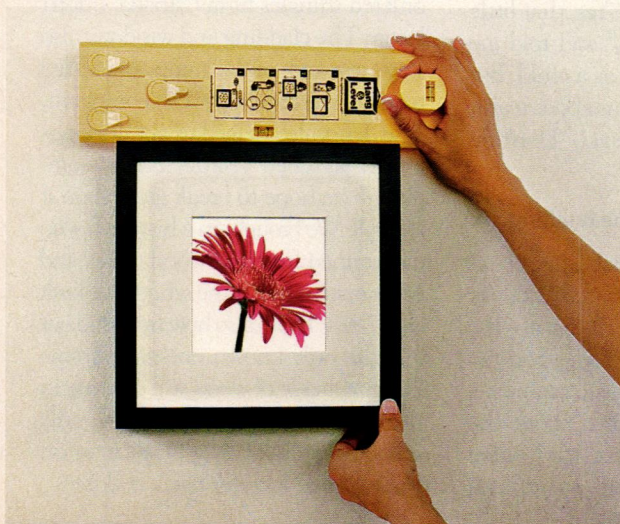
A great old house—be it Queen Anne Victorian or classic Cape Cod—outfitted in cedar shingles is a thing of beauty. If you've ever tackled re-shingling yourself, however, you know how hard it can be to get individual shingles precisely aligned—and proper nail placement is key to a long-lasting installation. The Easy Nailing System by SBC Cedar Shingle

Manufacturer aims to help. Each shingle comes embossed with an easy-to-read nail line marking the standard 5" exposure (4" or 6" exposures can be easily accommodated, too, by measuring up or down from the markings). The feature is now standard on SBC's entire line of shingles, from Green Naturals to special-order, prefinished Custom Colors. Prices start at \$130/square for Grade "B" Green Naturals. Call (418) 594-6201 or visit sbccedar.com.



Picture This

Ever wished you could take the guesswork out of hanging paintings (and eliminate the excess nail holes that result from hanging a picture too high or too low)? Now you can, thanks to the new Hang & Level, which makes installing pretty-as-a-picture artwork groupings easy. Simply hang your painting on the device's hooks and hold it to the wall until you find the right position, then remove the picture and push the buttons to mark the spot where nails or hooks should get hammered. Once the nail's in place and your picture is up, two built-in spirit levels make it simple to get your masterpiece perfectly straight. \$20. Call (866) 428-HANG, or visit utrdecorating.com.



Remote Possibilities

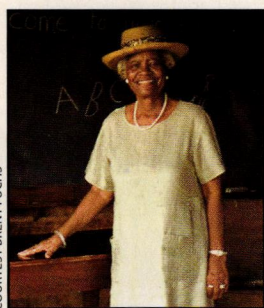
Restoration professionals swear by the Dremel, a rotary tool with interchangeable heads that help it get into corners, around curves, and even under tight spaces to cut, sand, grind, carve, rout, polish, and more. The new Dremel 8200 offers all of this functionality, without a power cord to get in the way. Powered by a rechargeable lithium-ion battery, the cordless multi-tool is compatible with all Dremel accessories and attachments, has a 360-degree grip zone, and boasts a variable speed range of 5,000 to 30,000 rotations per minute. Prices range from \$99 to \$139. Call (800) 437-3635 or visit dremel.com.

preservation perspectives



LORETTA Y. JACKSON COLLECTION

In the Spotlight, Finally



COURTESY BRENT FUCHS

The serendipitous discovery of a long-lost one-room schoolhouse leads to its salvation and the founding of a museum dedicated to preserving its legacy. We spoke with Loretta Y. Jackson, founder of the One-Room Schoolhouse Restoration Project, to learn more.

By DEMETRA AOSPOROS

DEMETRA AOSPOROS: How did this building come to your attention?

LORETTA Y. JACKSON: I was a regent at the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma, working on a documentary for Black History Month about what it was like growing up African-American in rural Oklahoma counties during the early 20th century. I was talking to people who had worked on farms, and asked the question, “What did you do except pull cotton?” They responded, “We went to school and church.” When I asked them where they went to school in Verden, an all-white community, they told me about the schoolhouse.

DA: How were you able to track down the school?

LYJ: I was told the school had been on the farm owned today by the Loveless family.

I went to the courthouse and discovered that the property’s previous owner was a black man named Alan Toles who had obtained the land through the Homestead Act of 1862. Then I went to talk to the Loveless family. Their daughter, Kay, who is I think in her 70s, said, “Yes, that little building is still out there,” and told me how she used to play in it as a child. But then she said her family was about tear it down to clear the land. I said, “Don’t do that. Let me have it.”

DA: So then you moved the building.

LYJ: We moved it to Chickasha, about 6 miles to the east. We paid \$3,000 for the building and \$5,000 to move it—the money came from private funds and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, after I spoke to my senator about the project. Soon after the move, the Verden Separate School became an official

ABOVE: The Verden Separate School as it appears today (left); the little building has come a long way since its discovery (right). **FAR LEFT:** Loretta Jackson stands inside the restored school surrounded by classroom artifacts from the early 20th century.

project of the Oklahoma Centennial Commemoration and was funded in part by a grant from the Oklahoma Legislature.

DA: How much restoration work was needed?

LYJ: The walls and floors are original. The roof was restored through a grant from the National Trust; shingles came from the same place in Canada as the originals—how this black man ordered shingles from Canada, I don’t know. The cladding and windows also were restored, and a ramp was added to make the building ADA compliant. The Trust also helped us get drawings for an attached visitor’s center complex—we hope to break ground on it this fall. We brought in a historian who determined from the wood, nails, and other materials that the school was built circa 1910. That’s also how we found out it is the only known one-room frame building made of wood still existing in the state of Oklahoma, and the only schoolhouse built by a black man on black-owned land for black children.

*Her family was about tear it down to clear the land.
I said, "Don't do that. Let me have it."*

DA: Did Toles build the school for his own children?

LYJ: His own children and whoever else could attend—on an average day, there might be 15 kids. He also hired a teacher to work there on barter. Apparently the black kids didn't miss working on the farm to attend school—they only went when the weather was bad. And the white farmers had no idea this school was there.

DA: How do you continue to spread the word about the school?

LYJ: The Country School Association of America is holding their national conference here June 21-23, and will visit the one-room school in Chickasha. Theatre artist Jerome Stevenson wrote a play about the school, "A Room with Vision," which was used to introduce the State Tourism Department's "Soulful Stories: The African-American Story in Oklahoma." We're also collecting stories from anyone who attended a one-room school—we want to put them into a book, and use them to supplement the learning experience at the museum.

DA: The school—now on the National Register—has been called the most significant African-American artifact in the state of Oklahoma. What do you hope people will get out of touring it?

LYJ: Oklahoma has a wonderfully unique and diverse history, but the African-American story—especially in rural areas—tends to get less focus, and a great deal of artifacts have been lost. Our plan is to make this an educational facility so that people—not only tourists, but also schoolchildren—can step back in time and get an authentic learning experience that includes hands-on activities, movies, and storytelling. We also plan to accommodate genealogy research. 🏠

If you attended a one-room school, send your stories to:
P.O. Box 2044
Chickasha, OK 73023

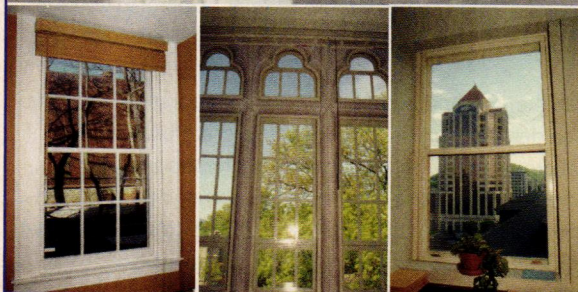
For more information on the Verden Separate School, visit the Loretta Y. Jackson African American Historical Society at lyjaahs.org.

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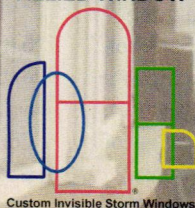
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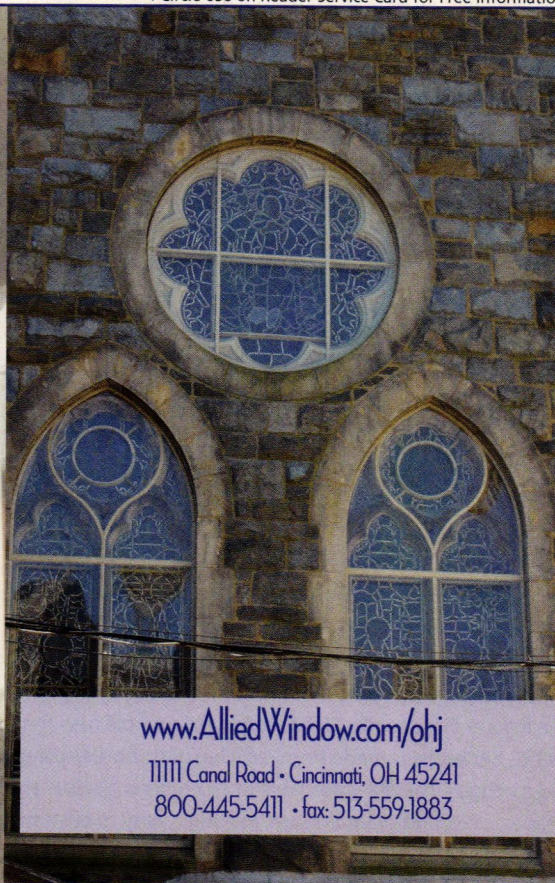
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period products

By CLARE MARTIN

Period-appropriate but cutting-edge kitchen products, plus traditional add-ons for the garden.

Faucet Fix

Like most items in the kitchen, faucets are becoming increasingly high-tech, boasting loads of convenience-minded features. The only problem? Most of these modern faucets come in equally modern forms that are out of sync with historic homes. Not so for Jaclo's Steam Valve Original faucet: Its deck-mounted bridge design, curved gooseneck, and porcelain lever handles are turn-of-the-century perfect, and the latest and greatest faucet features—like a pull-out sprayer—are all there, too. As shown, \$1,675. Call (800) 852-3906, or visit jaclo.com.



Canterbury Tales

When you don't have the budget (or patience) for an entire kitchen overhaul, the next best option is to start with the smaller details. The easiest and cheapest place to begin? Cabinet hardware—the more distinctive, the better. Fortunately, Atlas Homewares' Canterbury collection packs a lot of decorative punch in a small package. Inspired by the heraldic imagery of medieval England, the intricate detailing and shiny enamel finishes on the knobs and pulls will add instant pizzazz to kitchens in homes derived from the same period (think Tudor and Gothic Revivals). \$11 to \$15 each. Call (800) 799-6755, or visit atlashomewares.com.



Glass Action

For most old-house owners, the word "debris" conjures a variety of not-so-pleasant images: that stuff clogging up your gutters, old paint flaking off a rotting window, the detritus after you've removed those "updated" particleboard cabinets from the kitchen. But in the hands of the folks at Fireclay Tile, "debris" takes on a whole new meaning. Their Debris Series tile is made from recycled glass bottles using centuries-old methods. The tile is available in 112 different colors and a variety of shapes, sizes, and glaze finishes, making it easy to customize countertops and backsplashes in a range of old-house kitchens. From \$23.40 per square foot. Call (408) 275-1182, or visit fireclaytile.com.



Georgian Peach

Restoring kitchens in Colonial houses is always a challenge, given that kitchens as we know them today simply didn't exist back then. Plain & Fancy's new Georgian Cottage cabinet suite helps bridge the gap

between the 18th and 21st centuries by incorporating signature Georgian details—egg-and-dart molding, graceful arches, and classical proportions—into cabinetry built for modern kitchens. Convenience features like customized tray organizers come hidden behind a distressed crackle finish that provides an instantly aged appearance. For pricing and specifications, call (800) 447-9006, or visit plainfancycabinetry.com.



Greene Gardens

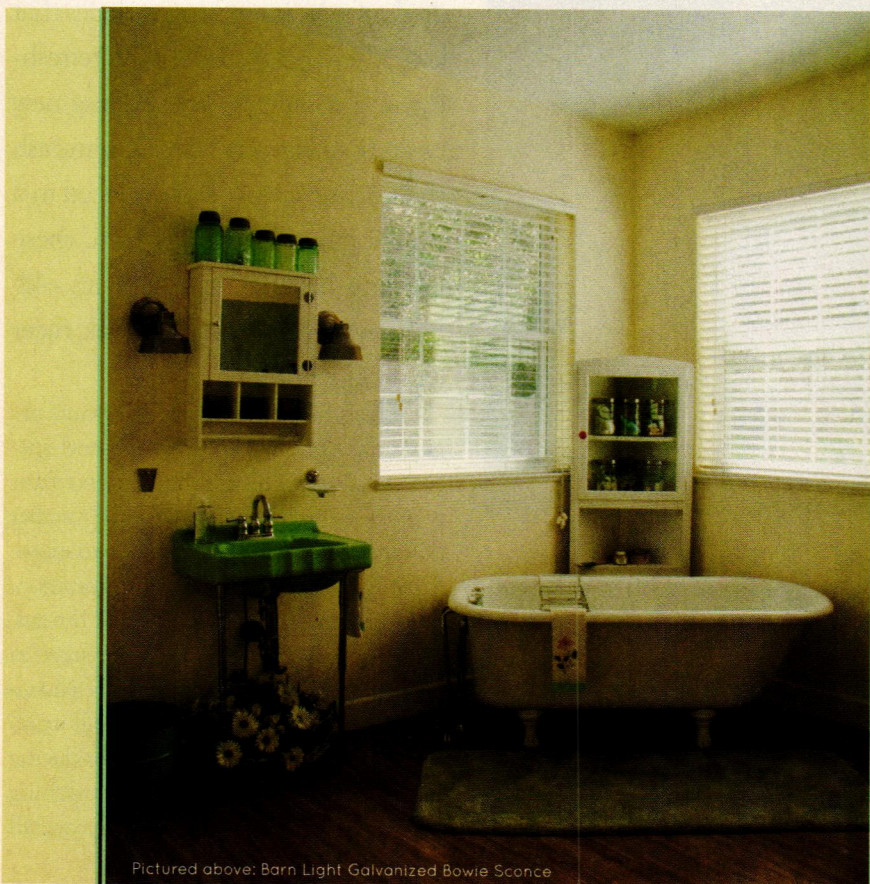
Want to add instant Arts & Crafts cred to your garden? Then outfit it with the new Blacker collection from Washington-based artisan Tim Celeski. Inspired by the iconic Pasadena bungalow Greene & Greene created for lumber magnate Robert Blacker, the collection (including Adirondack chairs, settees, occasional tables, and formal benches) features some of the architect brothers' most beloved hallmarks, like cloudlift detailing and square-peg joinery. As shown, the 96" bench is \$4,000. Call (360) 297-6699, or visit celeski.com.

Water World

One of the key tenets of traditional garden design is the anchor—a standout landscaping feature around which the garden flows. Fountains are a natural choice for this focal point, not only for their visual dominance, but also for the soothing sounds they offer. Stone Forest's Old World collection of fountains takes inspiration from the picturesque gardens of England, France, and Spain, and boasts everything from wall fountains perfect for sun-baked, vine-covered courtyards (such as the French Rosette, shown) to classical two- and three-tiered designs ideal among neatly clipped rows of boxwood. French Rosette fountain, \$3,000. Call (888) 682-2987, or visit stoneforest.com.



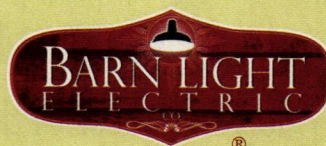
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Pictured above: Barn Light Galvanized Bowie Sconce



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outside the old house



LEFT: Dahlias, like the blooms accompanying this Georgian home, have long been an old-house garden staple. Today's newest varieties add even more punch to these tried-and-true favorites. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** The striking red and yellow blooms of *Dahlia* 'Honka Surprise.' **OPPOSITE, BOTTOM:** Perennial redvein rumex and 'Sweet Kate' spiderwort balance the bold color of *Dahlia* Mystic™ Desire.

Classic bedding plants like dahlias, coleus, impatiens, and petunias have long been American garden favorites. Their seemingly timeless appeal stems in part from their consistent beauty and ease of growth—but scientific innovations play a part, too. Each year, plant breeders introduce hundreds of new, interesting varieties that keep these beloved standbys refreshing and contemporary. Adding new twists to old favorites doesn't diminish their classic looks. When placed in a traditional or historic garden, these bedding beauties still offer an old-fashioned feel—they just look nicer for a longer time.

That's because early garden plants are more like their wild-type (or parent) species, which often means they are less robust performers with leggier stems and smaller flowers that come in fewer color variations. With careful selection and hybridization, however, newer, better varieties hit the garden scene each year. Only the best remain in commerce, which is why a number of garden-worthy "heirloom" varieties are still available. A plant breeder's goal in introducing new varieties is to offer more eye-catching plants with bigger show and better overall performance.

Best in Show

Today's newest bedding annuals combine old-fashioned appeal with long-lasting beauty.

By JESSIE KEITH

TERESA NIELSEN-HAYDEN PHOTO; ALL OTHER PHOTOS BY JESSIE KEITH

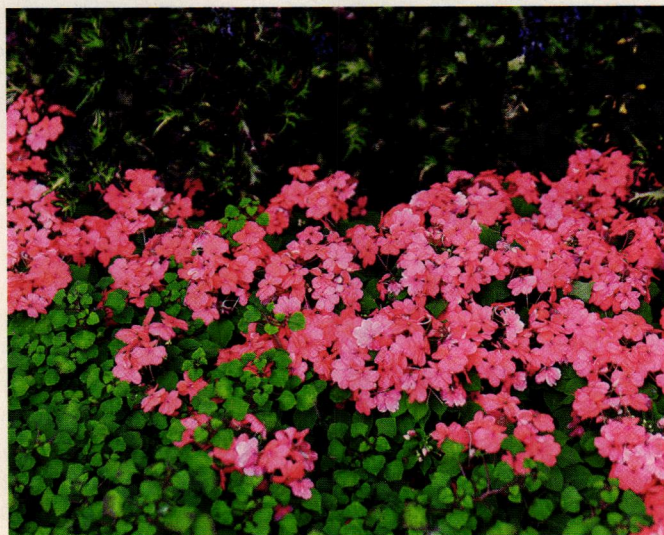


Dahlias

Dahlias were first discovered by Spanish conquistadors in 17th-century Mexico, where their flowers had been revered by the Aztecs centuries earlier. The first bedding dahlias were sold to North American gardeners in the beginning of the 1800s. Early forms had single and double flowers with tall, weak stems that stood above more open, less vigorous plants. Since then, thousands of varieties of all colors, shapes, and sizes have become available, many with more compact habits and increased verve.

Some newer dahlia introductions offer old-fashioned single blooms in spectacular color combinations. One of these elegant beauties is Mystic™ Desire (also called 'Scarlet Fern'), a recent addition to the Mystic™ Series. Its sultry single flowers are deep tangerine orange and stand tall on strong, slender stems that hover above a tidy clump of purple-tinged foliage. The effect is stunning. Another innovative beauty is 'Honka Surprise,' which sports huge single reddish pink and yellow flowers with petals that curl inward.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The warm color of 'Henna' coleus stands alone in this classic garden pot. The subdued leaf color of The Flume™ (left foreground) blends well with red *Salvia splendens* and soft annual *Pennisetum* in this late summer garden. *Impatiens Firefly*™ Watermelon adds a sweep of big color to this flower border.

Coleus

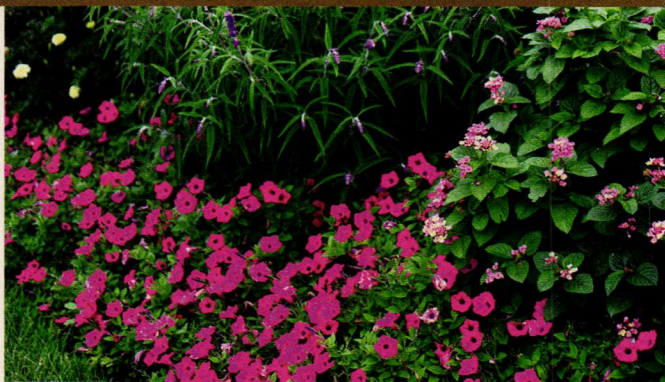
Coleus is arguably the greatest bedding plant for knockout foliage. The colorful leaves of this Southeast Asian native add voluminous color to partially shaded landscapes all summer. Wild coleus tend to have simple leaves in broken shades of purple, green, red, and yellow, with the first garden varieties also bearing these simple colors—though many also had ruffled or lobed edges. Today's offerings are much more diverse and exciting.

The dramatic new 'Henna,' with coarsely edged chartreuse leaves highlighted in copper and burgundy, is a perfect example of exceptional coleus color innovation. The Flume™ is another novel upstart selection, albeit with more subdued color. It's a low-growing, bushy coleus with elongated pink leaves dotted with burgundy blotches and edged in green.

Impatiens

Almost every shade gardener has planted impatiens, also called busy lizzies. These indispensable bedding plants have origins in East Africa. They were first introduced to the American garden market in the late 19th century, but didn't become widely popular until the early 20th century. Wild forms are taller, less bushy, and have smaller flowers in shades of red, pink, or white. Modern introductions tend to be more compact and bloom-filled, and come in many sizes, colors, and forms.

Several spectacularly tiny dwarf impatiens have been pioneered in recent years. Some of the best include the diminutive beauties in the Little Lizzy™ and Firefly™ series. Unlike the popular members of the Elfin Series, a group of compact impatiens first introduced in the 1970s, these recent varieties have both tiny flowers and short stature. The dainty blooms densely cover the plants, so they create a big show despite their size. Pretty new selections, like the soft pink Firefly™ Watermelon, are especially appealing.



Supertunia™ Mini Bright Pink has lots of electric pink flowers perfect for brightening garden edges. Pair it with *Lantana* and *Salvia leucantha* for a big garden show.

Petunias

Contemporary petunias are hybrids of several species native to Mexico and North America. The best known of these is *Petunia integrifolia*, a low-growing specimen that bears lots of small, purple-pink flowers in summer. When petunias were first introduced in the early to mid-19th century, they were much like their wiry, small-flowered parents. Larger, double-flowered forms started appearing in popular seed catalogs around the 1870s. Today's plants come in lots of novel shapes and sizes, and are more floriferous and vigorous.

One outstanding new petunia with old-fashioned looks is Supertunia® Mini Bright Pink, a member of the popular Supertunia® Series. Its numerous small pink flowers resemble those of *Petunia integrifolia*, but the blooms are more abundant and the trailing plants look good with minimal care from spring to fall.

Culture and Use

These bedding ornamentals are all wonderfully easy to grow but are also frost tender, so they must be grown when outdoor temperatures are warm and accommodating. Generally speaking, dahlias and petunias prefer full to partial sun, and coleus and impatiens are best suited to sites with partial sun or shade. When watered regularly and provided fertile potting soil or well-drained garden loam, these plants will thrive. Adding slow-release fertilizer, or regular applications of water-soluble fertilizer, will encourage them to perform to their fullest. Dahlias can be dug up in the winter, stored indoors during the cold, and replanted outside in late spring after the threat of frost has passed.

Flower standards like these grow as well in garden containers as they do in colorful old-fashioned borders. Their bright colors are easy to design with and will add charm to any older home. This summer, add a new trick to your garden repertoire with a few of these soon-to-be classics. 🏡

Jessie Keith is a professional horticulturist, garden writer, and plant photographer who lives in Wilmington, Delaware.

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Vintage advertisements and fruit crate labels, a 1920s sconce, and a Homer Laughlin Seville Santa Fe tea set liven up the wall that once held a clumsy bank of cabinets.





THE KITCHEN

A Cincinnati couple gives their tired Tudor kitchen a retro makeover—at a rock-bottom price.

STORY BY CLARE MARTIN ♦ PHOTOS BY KEN LAY

The house was like a dream: A 1932 Tudor in Cincinnati's Westwood neighborhood, under the care of the same owners for nearly half a century, and immaculately preserved, with the original woodwork, bathroom fixtures, and Batchelder fireplace still intact. Ken Lay and Mary Bryan, avid Arts & Crafts collectors, knew instantly that it was "the one."

There was just one problem: the kitchen. Remodeled in the late 1950s when the previous owners took up residence, it was a clunky mélange of poorly placed cabinets, sparkly pink worn Formica countertops, and dingy brown linoleum. "It was a 1950s kitchen, but it wasn't a cool 1950s kitchen—it was the kind people roll their eyes at," says Mary. "'Depressing' would be the best word to describe it."

The couple knew they wanted a retro-style kitchen that would both fit the time period of the house and appeal to their finely honed aesthetic sensibilities (Ken is a graphic designer by trade;

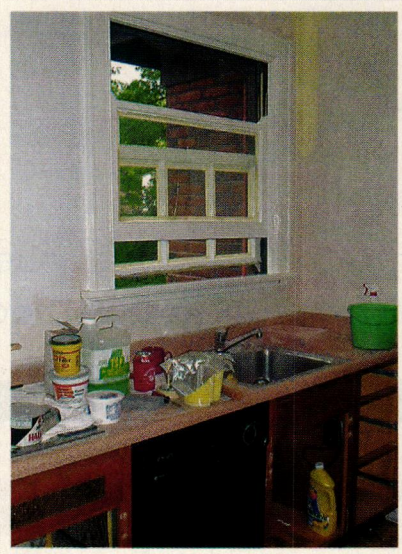


Mary has a degree in interior design), but they were also aware of falling property values in the area, and didn't want to sink too much money into a kitchen overhaul. The solution? Buy as much as possible off the shelf, and perform all of the work themselves. The strategy paid off, netting them a refreshed retro kitchen for a price tag of under \$3,000.

Bench Bonanza

Ken and Mary started the rehabilitation by creating what has quickly become one of their favorite spaces—the sunny breakfast nook. The previous owners had left behind an early 20th-century Sellers table, so Ken went about designing a pair of benches to match it. “I did a lot of research on what would have been there at the time,” he says. “I wanted something with kind of an Art Deco/machine age feel.”

To soften the Deco-inspired lines and blend the benches with the house's pedigree, he selected beadboard backing. He also added hinged lids to up the room's storage ante. He called upon a former colleague, a hobbyist woodworker who was out of a job, to help him select materials and build the benches. “I designed them, he built them, and Mary filled them,” Ken jokes.



The couple bid a fond farewell to the pink countertops and stainless steel sink.

ABOVE: The shallow single-bowl sink and faucet with porcelain cross handles (left) were must-haves; a restored period telephone and toaster (right) lend authenticity to the breakfast nook.

In addition to providing a repository for the couple's collection of vintage tablecloths, the nook has become Mary's de facto office for the one day a week she works at home. “I'm in the breakfast nook for nine or 10 hours straight,” she says. “I never get tired of being there.”

Retro Redo

With the nook in place, Ken and Mary turned their attention to the remainder of the kitchen—namely, the cabinets, countertops, and floor, which were the room's most offensive elements. An upper bank of cabinets was obscuring the light from one of the room's original double-hung windows,

so the couple decided to remove it. Doing so drastically cut down on the kitchen's storage space, but, says Mary, it ended up being a blessing in disguise, as it's forced them to be more thoughtful in their collecting. “Now every time we pick something up at a flea market or antique store, we really have to think about it,” she says. “There's

Restoration Budget

Flooring	\$300	Sink	\$100
Paint	\$120	Faucet	\$150
Tile	\$560	Cabinet hardware	\$305
Materials & labor		Lighting	\$250
for benches	\$625	Additional tools & supplies	\$150
Custom window shades	\$80	TOTAL	\$2,740
Wood for countertops	\$100		

nothing in the kitchen we don't use—even the vintage stuff.”

Ken did help alleviate the loss of storage by installing wire shelving in the utility hall that runs from the kitchen to the basement entrance, turning it into a modern-day butler's pantry. “Having everything visible, I can do my grocery list in a minute,” Mary says. “I won't ever go back to upper cabinets—I love the open feeling.”

The actual butler's pantry (original to the house), which the couple uses to store their vast collection of vintage tableware, simply needed its Formica countertops and faux-colonial hardware replaced. On a tip from the previous owners' daughter, the Lays discovered the pantry's original nickel catches and bin pulls sitting in a coffee can in the corner of the garage. “We even found jars of original screws,” Ken says. “In some cases, I was able to use the original screw holes.”

The kitchen's lower cabinets, installed in the 1950s remodel, were kept intact, but Ken removed the doors and painted them, then outfitted them with Art Deco-style chrome reproduction hardware.

For the countertops, Ken called upon his tiling expertise (he had previously retiled the kitchen and bath in an 1880s town house). The couple borrowed an idea from Jane Powell's *Bungalow Kitchens* (“It was our bible,” says Ken) and used sheets of black and white 2" hex tile laid with ¼" grout joints. (They ignored Powell's recommendation to remove the tiles from their backing and reduce the pre-sized joints to ⅛", which Mary says they regret: “The grout lines are pretty wide and can get messy.”) They complemented the daisy-pattern countertop with white subway tile, black border edging, and a matchstick tile detail on the backsplash.

When it came time to tackle the floor, however, the harmonious restoration process experienced a major bump. Mary, referencing original blueprints of the house (which they'd found tucked away in the butler's pantry), was adamant about restoring the yellow pine flooring that had graced the room when the house was built. Ken, on the other hand, loved the 1920s “sanitary” look of black-and-white checkerboard linoleum. The stalemate was beginning to threaten their marriage when they came upon a compromise via an unlikely source.

“We were watching *You've Got Mail*,” remembers Ken, “and Meg Ryan's kitchen in the movie has a really nice butter and teal checkerboard linoleum pattern.” Mary conceded that she could live with the checkerboard floor as long as they steered clear of the “cliché” black and white, so they updated the color scheme to black and cream, laying the tiles on the diagonal. “The floor was



The butler's pantry, outfitted with original hardware, a new wood countertop, and retro Royledge shelf edging, houses vintage dishware and kitchen accessories, like a 1950s-era Sunbeam mixer.

the only thing we argued about,” she says, “and we both ended up loving the compromise even more than we loved our original ideas.”

Savvy Shopping

Throughout the kitchen, the couple's eye for design and nose for a bargain combined to keep both period style and budget on track. Their biggest splurge was the built-in benches; smaller details like the pendant light shade above the breakfast nook and period Porcelier sconce near the sink were flea-market or eBay finds.

“We like to spend our time obsessively searching for things that are going to be right in the house,” Mary says. “If you want to save a lot of time, you can't do a renovation like this.”

Ken says calling upon his restoration experience and being willing to get his hands dirty were key to restoring the kitchen cheaply. “The real money is in hiring people to do things,” he observes. “If you can shop with an eye for simplicity and do things yourself, you won't spend a lot of money.”

Want to add a 1920s-style breakfast nook to your own kitchen? Download the plans for Ken and Mary's benches.

OldHouseJournal.com

Pots of richly hued coleus and geraniums line the front steps, accenting both stained glass and paint colors, while a passion vine clammers over the Saracenic arch.





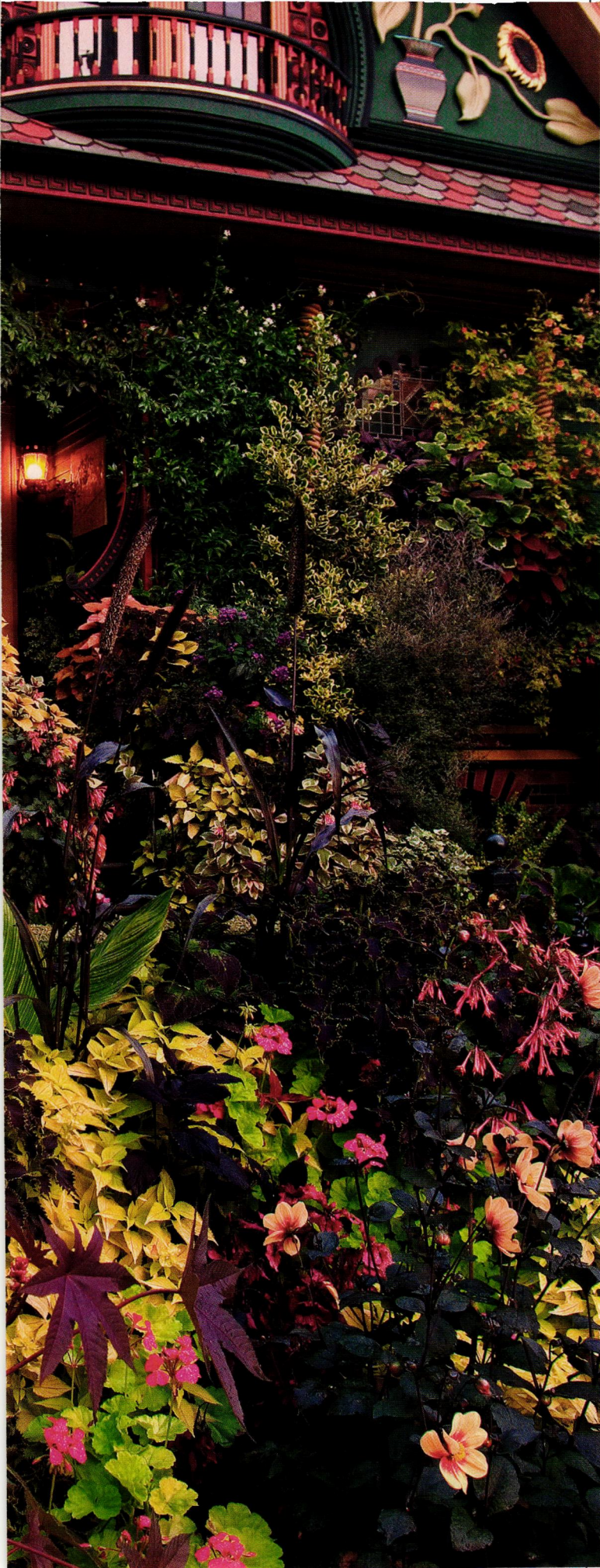
The garden's colorful palette was carefully chosen to complement the autumnal colors on the fanciful Queen Anne Victorian.

Colorful Curb Appeal

Coordinating your garden with your paint scheme can pump up your home's overall allure. **STORY BY BRIAN COLEMAN | PHOTOS BY WILLIAM WRIGHT**

An enticing home, one that grabs your attention as you walk by, is often described as having “curb appeal.” The phrase can be applied to houses in pretty much any style or design, but all have this in common: They make people stop and stare.

Perhaps the home is a storybook cottage with swooping rooflines and a turret straight out of “Hansel and Gretel,” or maybe it’s a polychromed Victorian in a rainbow of tones. Sometimes it’s not the house at all, but the garden that causes cars to slow down and drivers to lean out their windows and point. With my house in Seattle, it’s been a



bit of all three: The turreted house, in a colorful paint scheme, is nicely complemented by landscaping that was carefully coordinated to match my home's bold hues, resulting in a cohesive—and attractive—whole. But it wasn't always this way.

When I bought the house two decades ago, it was covered in white vinyl siding, the yard was full of dead grass, and planting beds were littered with broken bottles. Over the years, I've transformed the early 1900s Craftsman into my dream house, a high-style Queen Anne Victorian, adding a turret, sunflower and griffin carvings on the upper gables, and roof cresting created from a late-1800s cemetery fence. After I painted the house in a late-19th-century fall palette of deep green, burgundy, black, copper, and gold—a combination derived from period sourcebooks of popular era house colors—I guess I shouldn't have been surprised when I came home one afternoon to find a wedding party posing on my front steps. Creating a garden to complement my fanciful *grande dame* was a major undertaking.

Mapping Changes

The sole survivor of the previous owner's landscaping efforts was a surprisingly virulent holly plant, which covered the front yard in perpetual shade. It needed to go, so with the help of landscape designers Charles Price and Glenn Withey, I attacked the yard, devising a garden to coordinate with the new colors of the house. While color was our primary consideration, we researched and used as many Victorian plants as we could.

Because the front yard is shallow, only 22' deep, and easily overwhelmed by the two-story house, we planted variegated English holly trees (*Ilex aquifolium*) in the parking strip to anchor the garden and visually pull it down and out toward the curb. They have since been pruned, based on classic English topiary gardens, into conical accents marking the garden's entrance.

Seattle was built on a series of hills, with many of its early 20th-century homes designed with sloping front yards meant for planting. Although these beds were often later replaced with low-maintenance rock gardens and walls, I chose to keep my garden beds intact for color and visual interest. My landscape designers and I evolved an admittedly high-maintenance scheme of seasonal plantings whose colors would coordinate with the autumn palette of the house.

While the fall and spring are attractive with winter pansies and a few bulbs, the yard really comes into its prime in the summer, when it blooms in vibrant swathes of color from hybrid, sun-tolerant cultivars of coleus in a rainbow of burgundy, chartreuse, copper, and gold; dark-leaved dahlias (*Dahlia* 'Moonfire'), with their bronze leaves and pale ochre and orange flowers; and fancy-leaved pelargoniums such as 'Vancouver Centennial,' with its intense, two-toned foliage of deep terracotta and chartreuse. Victorian favorites include lime green and yellow variegated *Plectranthus*; Fuchsia 'Gartenmeister Bonstedt,' with reddish bronze foliage and intense, deep red single flowers that show all summer; and the purple-foliaged castor bean (*Ricinus communis* 'Carmencita'). One of my favorites is the Persian



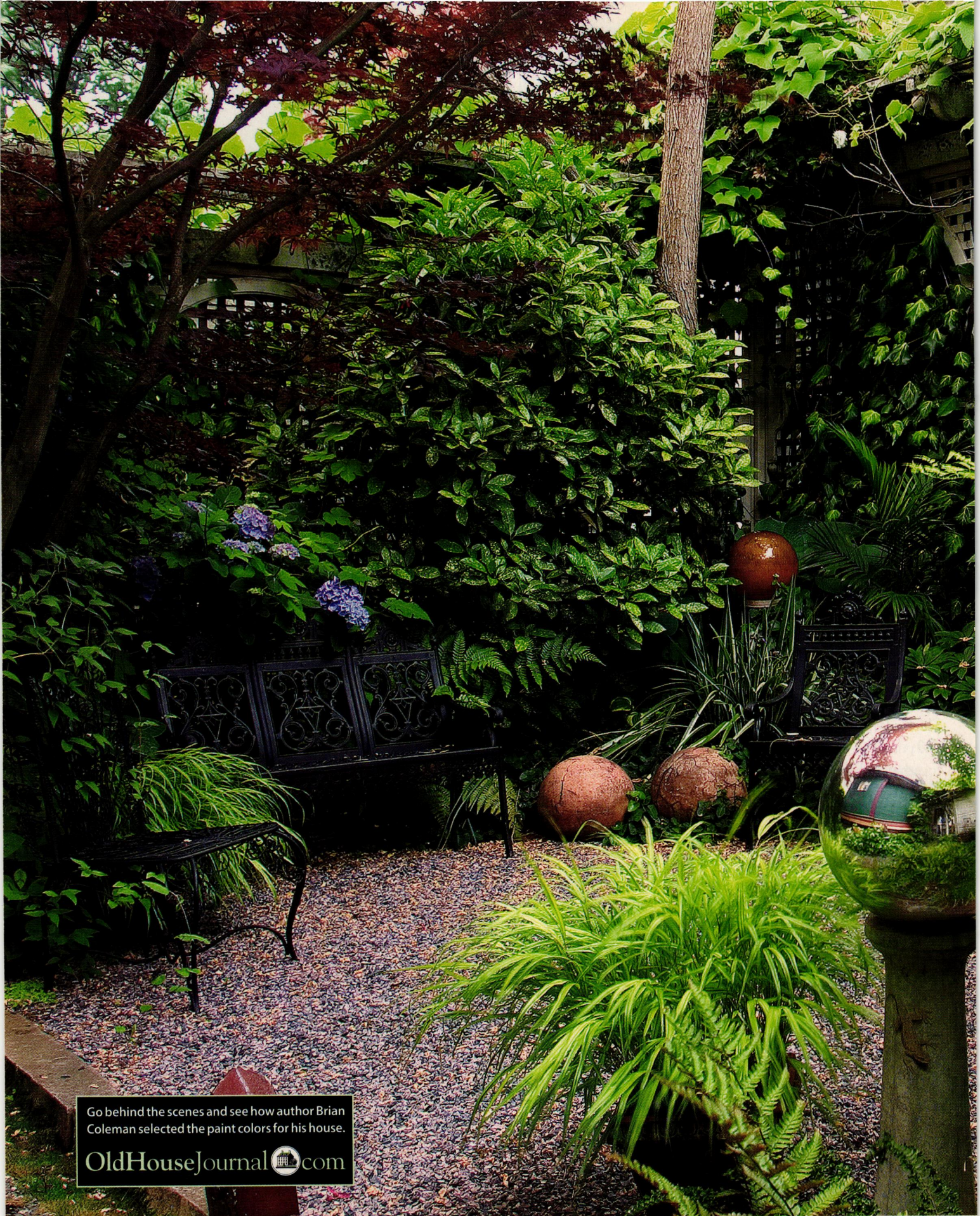
CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: An antique Fiske fountain, the whimsical window box featuring two alligators chasing an anxious baby, and the entry gate created from two salvaged window grilles. **OPPOSITE:** A riot of colorful annuals and perennials fills the front beds each summer.

Shield plant (*Strobilanthes dyeriana*), with its metallic-looking silver and purple leaves. I used architectural salvage to help tie the garden together and provide a foundation of instant age for the plantings, running antique iron fencing that I found at a flea market along the top of the slopes, and backing it with a neatly clipped dwarf boxwood hedge (*Buxus sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa') for year-round structure.

I had "Long Tom" Victorian pots—long, narrow, thinly lipped pots ideal for seedlings—custom made in combinations of black and red to coordinate with the colors of the house, and placed them on the front steps. We filled them with fragrant lavender heliotrope (*Heliotropium arborescens*); fancy-leaved pelargoniums like 'Mrs. Pollock,' 'Skies of Italy,' and 'Mrs. Henry Cox'; and modern, colorful coleus cultivars like 'Carrot Top,' 'Sedona,' and 'Inky Fingers.'

To add even more visual interest, I commissioned a hand-carved window box with alligators eyeing an anxious baby—the design inspired by fanciful carvings I saw on Cardiff Castle in Wales—for the front window, and planted it with multicolored Canna, orange-flowered abutilon, and the tender, trailing Fuchsia 'Autumnale' (its kaleidoscopic, deep pink and terracotta foliage turns yellow, then pale green through the season). I installed more Victorian salvage to help anchor the flowers and add to the ambience, placing vintage iron griffins at the bottom of the porch steps, and a cast iron Fiske fountain, set as a focal point, in the upper front yard.





Go behind the scenes and see how author Brian Coleman selected the paint colors for his house.

OldHouseJournal.com



The tiny back yard is a private retreat enclosed by a lattice fence, planted with shade-tolerant ferns, hydrangeas, and perennials, and accented with vintage architectural finds.



The house's colors appear in backyard blooms, too.

Yard Work

In the narrow side yard on the north, which never sees direct sun, we planted low-maintenance Hosta 'Halcyon' and 'Regal Splendor,' which are both relatively bug-proof. Different evergreen and herbaceous ferns, mostly forms of Dryopteris, along with another of my favorites, the 'Tatting Fern' (*Athyrium felix-femina* 'Frizelliae'), were used to fill in the narrow planting beds along the house, along with variegated Persian ivy (*Hedera colchica* 'Dentata Variegata') in creamy white and slate green.

To enclose the tiny back yard, I built an arched lattice fence topped with an arbor and planted table grapes (*Vitis* 'Interlaken' and 'Niagara') to clamber over it. Another variegated Persian ivy (*Hedera colchica* 'Sulphur Heart') was trained up the lattice arches. Two 12'-tall locust trees (*Robinia pseudoacacia* 'Frisia'), along with a red-leafed Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*), screen the backyard from neighboring houses that look down directly into the space. After several years of effort, I gave up trying to keep a lawn alive in the constant shade and replaced it with a more practical ellipse of colored gravel, which I surrounded with antique clay edging tiles. I found more Victorian garden ornament: a pair of large terracotta balls; a set of wrought iron benches with a matching chair; and a massive, late-19th-century iron planter of a stag's head supporting an open-weave basket—a typically curious Victorian creation.

Like all gardens, the work is never done—with help from gardener Riz Reyes the hollies and box are patiently pruned twice a year, seasonal plantings revised and updated as local nurseries change their stock, and perennials replaced as they become leggy or overgrown. But I don't mind: With strong color, architectural salvage, and a sense of whimsy, my garden remains what I hoped it to be—a creative and enjoyable extension of my Victorian home. 🏡

Brian Coleman is a practicing psychiatrist in Seattle, Washington, who has turned his love of old houses into a second career as the author of 14 books and numerous articles on the decorative arts.

Hang Time

A carpenter's own kitchen install offers tricks for hanging cabinets that are plumb, level, and square—in rooms that aren't.

STORY BY MARK CLEMENT

PHOTOS BY THERESA COLEMAN

In theory, setting kitchen cabinets should be easy: Strike a couple of level lines, fasten cabinets to the wall, and presto! You have a new kitchen. Setting cabinets is a tempting DIY project because the installation principles are basic, but the reality—especially in the old-house world of crooked floors and uneven wall surfaces—is more complicated. Installing new kitchen cabinets that

look like they were built with your old house requires technique and planning. Whether you're doing it yourself or managing a contractor, my tricks-of-the-trade suggestions,

from strategies for working alone to compensating for that out-of-plumb wall, can help turn your kitchen project into a plumb, level, and square reality.





TOP: To install kitchen cabinets, author Mark Clement starts by creating a control point (or level line) around the room by placing his laser level on a 4' stepladder, aiming a laser dot at each corner of the room, then connecting the dots with a snap of blue chalk lines. As a final precaution, he double-checks the line with a spirit level to make sure it's true. **BOTTOM:** After finding the floor's high point, Mark measures up to determine the actual cabinet height, then snaps another line and screws the ledger beneath it. It's important that the ledger board is the straightest one you have. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Mark's cabinets, plumb and level despite uneven walls and floors, await countertops.



Design

All kitchen renovations start with detailed design, usually in partnership with your cabinet shop or supplier. The basics to get your designer started are clear measurements of the space—height, width, door locations, window locations, width of trim, thickness of trim (i.e., how far the trim projects from the wall). Never guess: The difference between a $\frac{5}{8}$ " thick door/window casing and a $1\frac{1}{4}$ " inch trim board can impact cabinet size or a drawer's ability to open, especially in tight spaces like galley kitchens. With this information, the designer will spec and order the boxes (you'll pick the doors and finish, of course).

Step One: Measure Carefully

For a room with its flooring and wall cladding intact, the first thing I do is mark a control point or level line on every wall getting cabinets. This line is an arbitrary control point from which all other measurements are taken. In my kitchen, I struck it all the way around the room.

Placing my laser level atop my 4' stepladder gives me a line in a good location—about 51" above the floor, a location just 3" under the typical upper cabinets' bottom rail (which usually sits at 54"). I

aim a laser dot at each corner of the room, snap blue chalk lines between them, then double-check the lines with a spirit level.

Now that I have a level line, I can accurately measure to see if the floor is level (which is never the case in old houses). I walk around the room with my tape and measure from my level line down to the floor every few feet in order to find the floor's high point.

When I'm done, the smallest measurement between my level line and the floor is the floor's high point, which is the control point for the next phase of layout.

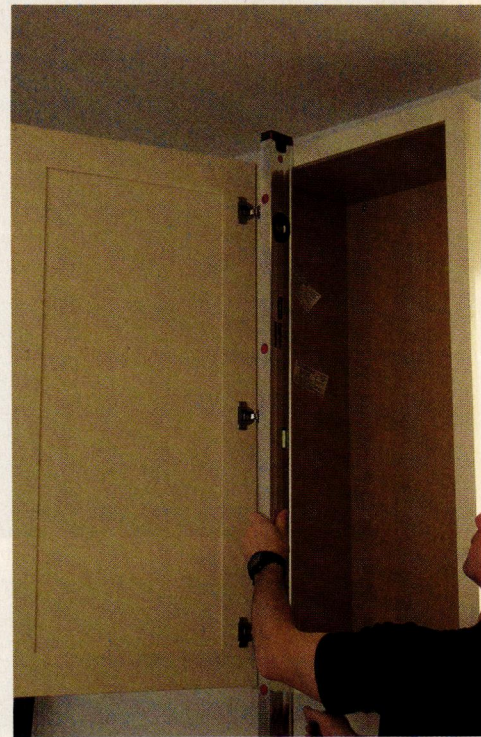
After I've found the high point, I use

it to figure out where the base cabinets will sit. From the floor's high point, I measure up $34\frac{1}{2}$ " and mark it on the wall. In my case, that was $16\frac{1}{2}$ " down from the level line struck earlier. I then measure down from my level line $16\frac{1}{2}$ " in each corner of the room, connecting the dots by snapping chalk lines in between. This is the line on which the top rails of the base units will be fastened.

Next, I measure for the upper cabinets' location. Again from the floor's high point, I measure up 54", then strike another level line around the room (this measurement will sit above the initial level line). This second line represents the bottoms of the upper cabinets, which sit on the layout line.



ABOVE: Mark always starts installing a row of cabinets from an inside corner. When working alone, it can be challenging to lift cabinets and hold them in place as you attach them to the wall. To make the task easier, Mark likes to build a simple T-brace, which, combined with his Jawhorse, helps support the cabinet from beneath. Because he installed blocking between the studs, he doesn't need to lay out the back of the cabinet in order to find the studs with his fasteners; he can simply screw into the rear four corners of the cabinet's carcass. Note that his bold layout markings—which help ensure that the right cabinet ends up in the appropriate spot (see "Map it Out," page 42)—are clearly visible on the wall to the right. **ABOVE, RIGHT:** Once the first cabinet is hung, Mark uses his 4' spirit level to make sure that it is hanging plumb both front-to-back and left-to-right. It's important that this first cabinet be installed perfectly, as it will become the control point for all of the others fastened on either side.



Step Two: Install the Upper Cabinets

I find it easiest to install the upper cabinets first—no base cabinets in the way. First, I screw a straight ledger board to my layout line. Next, I decide where to start, which usually means working my way out of an inside corner (where a cabinet touches two walls).

I hoist the first cabinet to the ledger (See "Helping Hand," opposite page) and fasten it. If I have blocking between the studs, I just sink screws in the cabinet carcass's four corners. If not, I mark stud locations inside the cabinet.

It's important to get this first cabinet as perfect as possible, because it will become the control point for all the other cabinets. If it's even a tiny bit off, that small error is projected through the rest of the cabinets, and three or four cabinets later, a small error becomes a big mistake. So, with the cabinet secured on the wall, I check that it's level and hanging plumb (straight up and down). It only takes a small wall surface imperfection to throw a cabinet out of plumb. If the wall is out of plumb (often the case in old houses), I shim behind the cabinet with full-size

RIGHT, TOP: Old houses are famous for odd-ball surfaces to contend with, and Mark's is no exception. His plan called for the corner cabinet to be 1" off of this exposed brick wall. In order to figure out which part of the wall was sticking out the furthest, Mark used his level as a straightedge. Then he closed the gap with a filler, provided by the cabinet company, that he ripped to size on site. **BELOW:** Mark measures up 34½" from the floor's high spot—the control point for the bases—to mark the line where the tops of the base cabinets will sit.

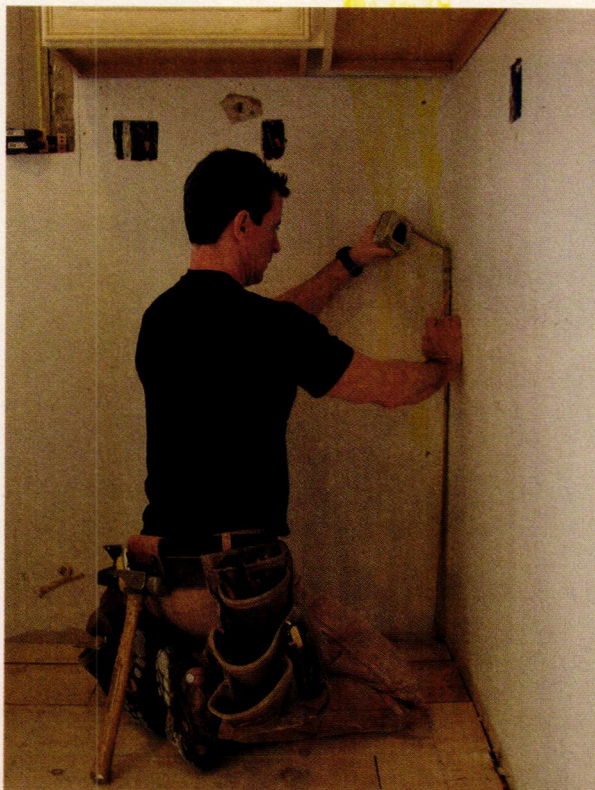
Helping Hand

Setting cabinets alone can pose some lifting challenges. Different carpenters take different approaches. I like to use my Jawhorse with a small site-built T-brace to help position and support the cabinet (see photo, far left) while I make final adjustments and fasten it to the wall. This trick is fast and easy to set up.

cedar shims until the cabinet sits perfectly plumb.

The second cabinet is registered off of the first one. I lift it into place, then fasten it to the wall, taking care not to overdrive the screws. The next step is to flush up and fasten the face frames together. Different carpenters have different approaches for doing this, including removing all the doors and clamping the face frames with specials clamps. I typically clamp the carcasses' top and bottom rails just behind the face frames.

Next, I pre-drill the face frame edges, slightly countersinking the hole. Then I sink a trim-drive screw to hold the face frames fast; now the two cabinets are one. (Note: If you have help to hoist and hang, you can attach an entire run of cabinets on the floor and hang them as one single unit.) Finally, I double-check plumb and level again (it doesn't take much to throw you off), and repeat the process until the uppers are done.





ABOVE: It's important to ensure that the cabinets are level and plumb in all directions. To guarantee that this is the case, Mark carefully checks all of the surfaces using a torpedo, a 2' level, and a 4' level consecutively. Then he double-checks it.



ABOVE: Base cabinets need to align with the uppers completely. Here, Mark plumbs down from the installed upper cabinet to line up the position of a stand-alone base. The stove will sit between this base and the corner unit, so he also measures the front opening to be certain it will fit.

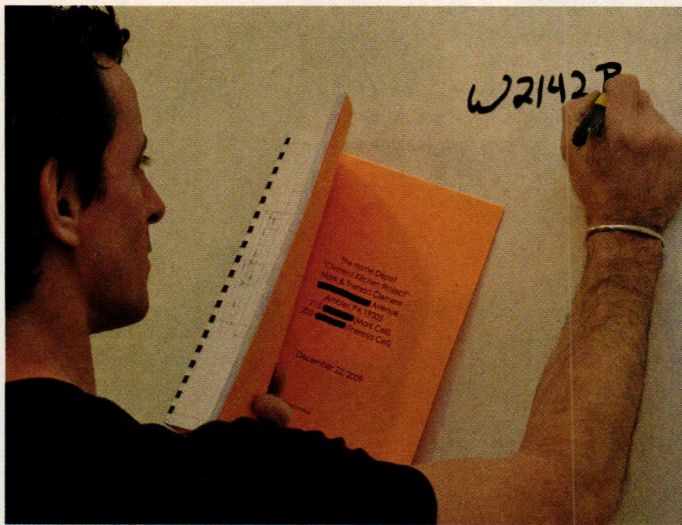
Strip the Packaging

I can't over-emphasize how important it is to be organized on the job site. Cabinets come strapped, wrapped, and blocked to protect them during shipping. The trash piles up fast. A clean work site is elemental to staying organized, so I use the very boxes cabinets ship in as trash containers. As soon as a cabinet comes out of a box, the box and packaging go out of the house.



Taking Delivery

Delivery? What's that have to do with plumb and level? Strategy. Cabinet installation takes a game plan from start to finish. Not tripping over yourself while working (or being prepared for a contractor to take over entire rooms or egress paths in your house) makes the important work of plumb, level, and square 50 percent easier. Cabinets take up more room than you think; I commandeer at least one large room (or parts of two, if possible) adjacent to the kitchen to store them once they arrive. A garage is OK as long as cabinets aren't in there, exposed to humidity, for too long—don't leave hardwoods in a garage for more than 48 hours, or they can start to warp. I also organize cabinets in order of how they'll be installed—uppers, bases, and trim stock.



Map It Out

Good layout is a key ingredient for a successful cabinet installation. Even in small kitchens with basic designs, one cabinet can look exactly like another, and it's terribly easy to hang the wrong cabinet in the wrong place.

Nothing works like real-time, full-sized layout, so I transfer the plan to the wall, writing which cabinets go where. This serves two important purposes: it forces me to read, see, and understand the meaning of every word and letter on the plan, and it creates a simple, effective double-check during installation.

Step Three: Install the Base Cabinets

The bases are installed in essentially the same way, except that instead of resting them on a ledger, you register them to your level line on the wall and shim beneath and behind them as needed. Checking them for plumb and level in multiple directions—and often—is crucial.

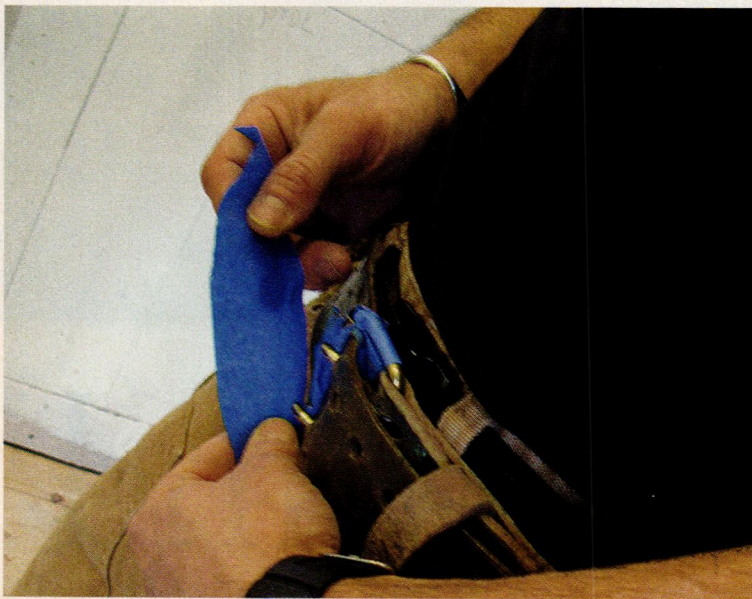
Also, register end units for plumb down from the uppers—especially those that stand alone, like units on either side of a stove. If the top and bottom cabinets are offset from each other, you'll notice later on.

This is the time to double-check spacing for appliances, too. It's easy for a cabinet to project off the wall slightly out of square, and the result will be that

the stove or dishwasher no longer fits.

The point, of course, is for your new kitchen to fit as well as your home's original—installed with the same integrity and care and in plumb, level, and square. 🛠️

Carpenter **Mark Clement** is working on his century-old American Foursquare in Ambler, Pennsylvania, and is the author of *The Carpenter's Notebook*.



ABOVE: One of Mark's biggest fears when installing cabinets is lifting (or dropping) one past his belt buckle and gouging a door. It hasn't happened yet, but as a preventative measure he wraps his buckle in blue tape before going to work. **RIGHT:** Cabinets often need to be drilled or worked on (in Mark's case, for under-cabinet lighting). Laying them directly on a job-site floor is risky; Mark finds cardboard to be the perfect substrate to protect both the cabinet and the floor.



STYLE



The picturesque Queen Anne style survived into the 20th century in Carson City, exemplified by the Herman Springmeyer House, circa 1908, with its fanciful conical porch roof.

A Frontier Find

NEVADA'S CAPITAL BOASTS AN ARCHITECTURAL BONANZA.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JAMES C. MASSEY AND SHIRLEY MAXWELL

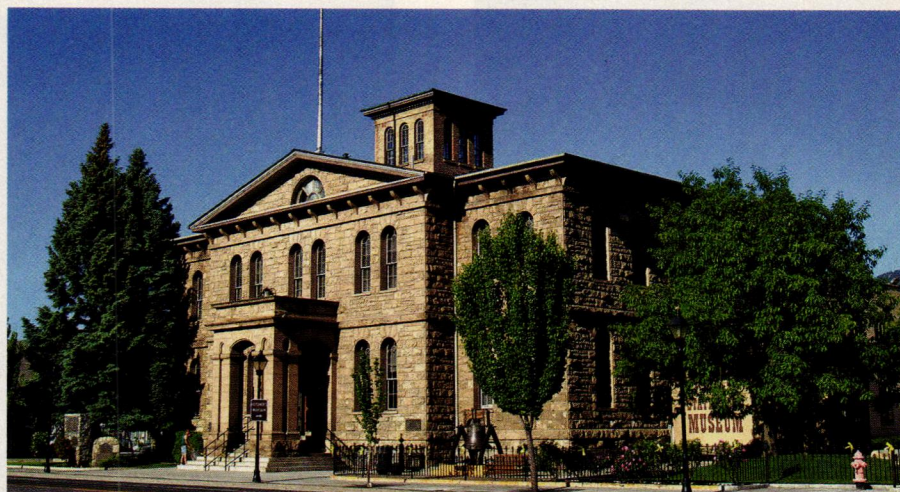
Carson City, the capital of Nevada, has grown into a modern mini-metropolis, but it's still a town that cherishes its frontier beginnings and post-Civil War past. Its old buildings are a remarkably sophisticated collection of the architectural styles that captured America's fancy after the Civil War, often rendered in an unmistakably western vernacular.

Tucked up against the Sierra Mountains in western Nevada's high desert country, the town was founded in 1858 and named for the nearby Carson River. (The river, in turn, had been named for Kit Carson, legendary trapper, guide, and fighter.)

Carson City is a hop-skip-and-a-jump from Lake Tahoe, Reno, the storied ghost town of Virginia City, and the long-abandoned gold-mining camps that built the West. Yet it is emphatically not a ghost town. (For the record, its historically significant metal was silver, not gold.) And while it has its share of neon-spangled casinos and slot spots (this is Nevada, after all), there's more than gambling to this little city.

Architectural Riches

Carson City's historic building stock runs the gamut from churches, schools, and other institutional buildings—such as the imposing Nevada State Capitol and the U.S. Mint (now the Nevada State Museum), which was constructed in 1864 to turn gold and silver from the fabled Comstock Lode into



TOP: One-story-plus-mansard-roof houses, like the 1875 Belknap House, are uncommon. Note the handsome pair of bay windows at the side. BOTTOM: The U.S. Mint, home of the famed Carson City silver dollar, was designed by Alfred B. Mullett using distinctive local sandstone. The 1869 building is now the Nevada State Museum.

coins—through modest settlers' homes, commodious Victorian mansards, and substantial Queen Anne houses.

Meandering through the city's residential historic district west of Carson Street provides tantalizing glimpses of what the town may have looked like in successive decades of the 19th century. (A helpful Kit Carson Trail Map at the Visitors' Center gives dates for selected buildings.)

Stone Surprises

As in many parts of the timber-rich United States, wood was by far the most common house-building material in Carson City, with brick a distant second. Here, however, these mundane choices are overshadowed, if not outnumbered, by the distinctive use of local sandstone, quarried by convicts from the Nevada state prison and used in the construction of buildings large and small, public and private. Sometimes laid as rough-hewn blocks, sometimes given a flat, polished surface, the shimmering, multihued stone lends an unexpected pastel glamour to the town.

RIGHT: The Foreman-Roberts House Museum is noted for its exuberant Gothic Revival ornament. Built in 1864 in Washoe City, it was moved here via railroad in 1874. **BELOW:** The 1863 Ormsby-Rosser House is typical of small early houses in Carson City.



One of Carson City's best-loved landmarks is the small Gothic Revival Foreman-Roberts House on Carson Street, originally constructed in 1864 in nearby Washoe City (which, like many early mining towns, was short-lived). Saloon keeper James Doane Roberts and his British-born

wife, Annie, had the house transported to Carson City in 1874, probably by flat car on the brand-new Virginia and Truckee Railroad. In Nevada's up-and-down mining economy of the 1870s, moving houses from town to town was fairly common.

The two-story clapboard-covered

house could well have been inspired by A. J. Downing's 1842 architectural pattern book, *Cottage Residences*, but it has a Western flavor all its own. Its lacy, jig-sawn wooden ornament (a fine example of Carpenter Gothic detailing), absurdly steep gables, pointed-arch windows, and bright yellow paint job have made it a favorite with locals and visitors alike. Preservation groups rose up in its defense when it was threatened with demolition to make room for a park in 1969, and the little landmark is now a house museum surrounded by a miniscule public park.

Literary Landmark

The Orion Clemens House (1863-64) on Division Street is a large, L-shaped, gable-fronted frame residence sporting Italianate brackets and deep cornice returns. Over the years it has lost its shapely Italianate window trim and acquired a covering of stucco over the original wooden siding. Orion Clemens was the first (and only) secretary of the Nevada Territory. He intended his new house to serve as a part-time governor's mansion, because he often was called upon to serve as acting governor. Clemens was the elder brother of Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens), and Twain spent some time there during a stint as a reporter for a Virginia City newspaper. Twain's impressions of his brother's house can be found in his autobiographical travelogue *Roughing It*.

Materials in Spades

The Rinckel Mansion on North Curry Street (1876) is one of only a few brick



ABOVE: Frame gable-and-wing houses are common. This one on Ann Street is enhanced with wooden quoins on the gabled front.



residences in Carson City—and the only known architect-designed house in town. Built by Charles H. Jones for a German immigrant who made his fortune in the Comstock mines, the imposing two-story house is crowned with impressive iron cresting.

Sandstone in distinctive pink, green, and brown tones is used to good effect in the Thomas J. Edwards House (circa 1883) at the corner of Minnesota and Musser Streets. Typical of 1880s vernacular style, a pretty two-story side bay and a welcoming front porch with graceful arches between the square posts relieve the austere lines of the gable-fronted house.

The 1875 Belknap House on North Nevada Street is a simple but handsome example of the Mansard style in frame and clapboard. (In more elaborate, citified forms, Mansards are referred to as Second Empire—or even “General Grant Style,” in recognition of their popularity during the presidency of Ulysses S. Grant.) Arched hoods shield the dormer windows, and dignified modillions underline the cornice—but there’s a note of Western whimsy in the flat, applied “dentils” on the frieze and the curvy pendant trim on the porch.

One-story L-shaped cottages enlivened by spindlework and Carpenter Gothic trim are representative of the respectable work-



TOP: No fewer than three bay windows adorn the 1875 Olcovich-Meyers House, designed in a late Italianate style with Gothic Revival gables. **ABOVE:** The warm-toned local sandstone is used in major public buildings and in a few houses, including the circa 1883 Edwards House, where it was laid in a random ashlar pattern.

ing-class houses of the 1870s and 1880s. They were often the homes of folks who had their own ideas about design and decoration, aided perhaps by a drawing or two from the architectural pattern books that circulated even to the late-19th-century Nevada frontier. They provide a delightful sidebar to Carson City’s old-house scene.

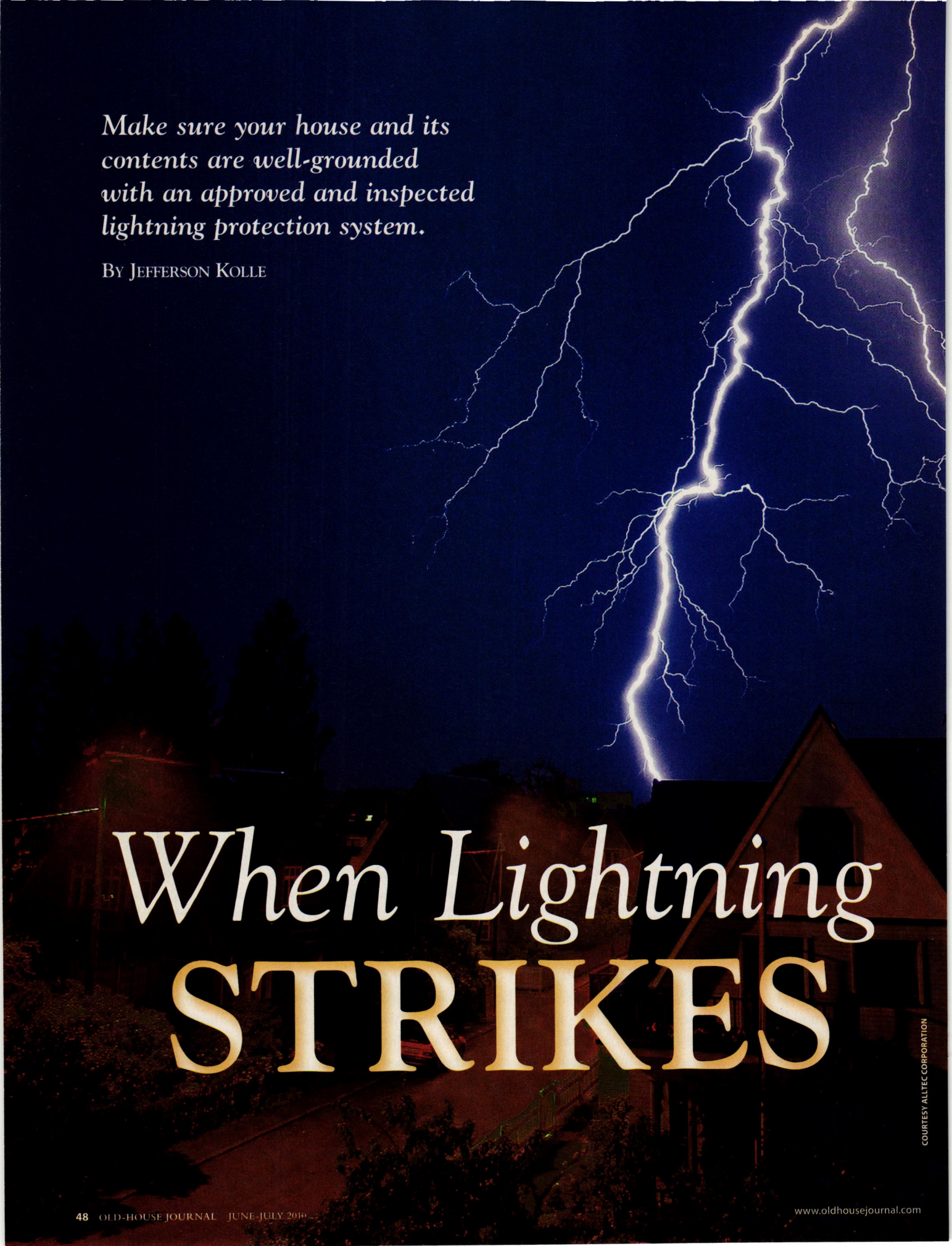
An intrepid pedestrian could take in all this post-Civil War charm on foot.

Those who are willing to hop into their cars and venture beyond the city limits (and well beyond the Victorian era) will be rewarded by the unassumingly handsome sandstone buildings of the Stewart Indian School campus (circa 1890-1930, and a National Historic Landmark).

Carson City has rightly been called Nevada’s hidden treasure—and it’s more than worth the hunt. 🏠

Make sure your house and its contents are well-grounded with an approved and inspected lightning protection system.

BY JEFFERSON KOLLE



When Lightning **STRIKES**

COURTESY ALLTEC CORPORATION

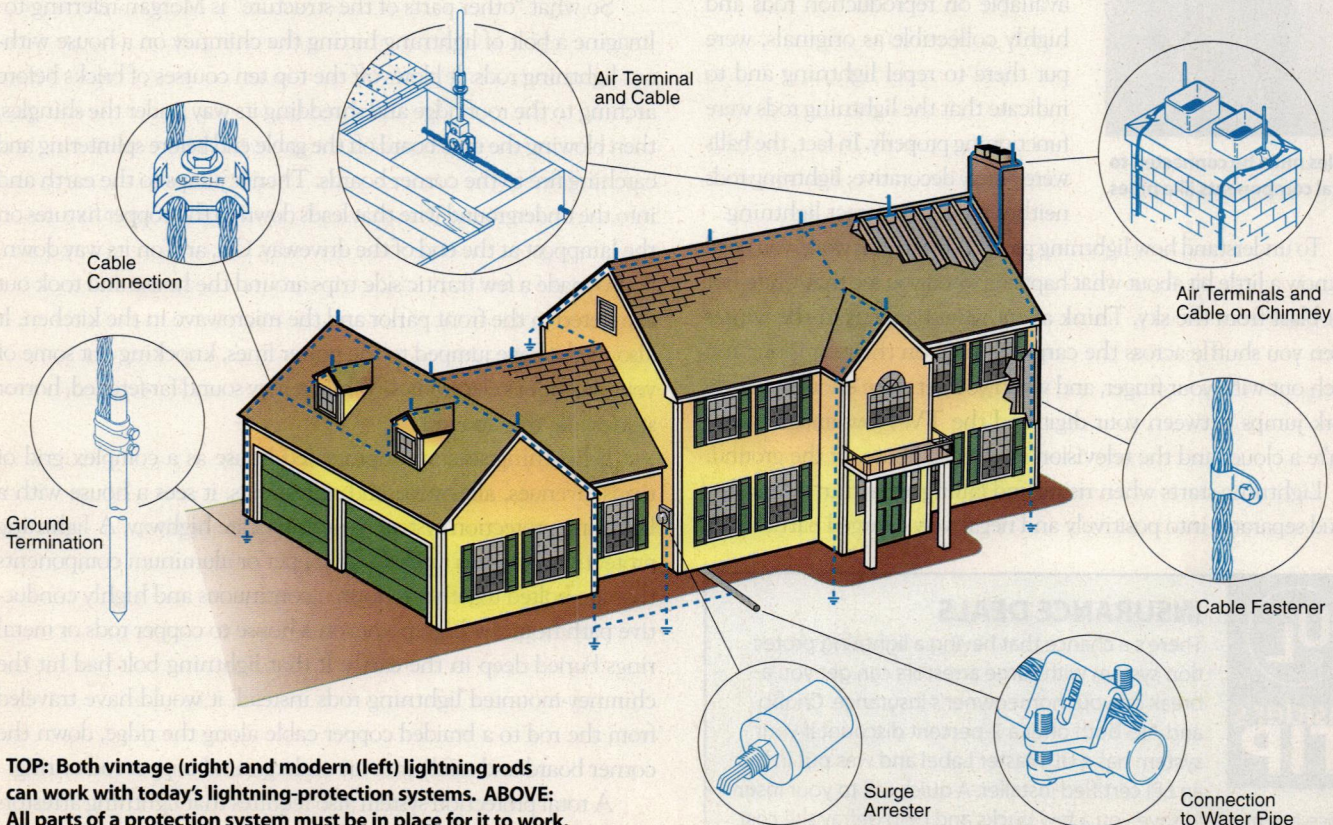
When Benjamin Franklin did his kite-key-and-cloud experiment on a stormy night in Philadelphia in the middle of the 18th century, it's hard to imagine that such a simple yet extremely dangerous act would spark a debate regarding lightning rods that still crackles today.

The costs from lightning-strike damage have risen in recent years, not because of the number of houses getting hit, but rather due to the destruction of sensitive, big-ticket electronic components therein. Computers, audio-video equipment, telephone systems, even that new refrigerator with the LED readout are all susceptible to high currents, and it's likely that your run-of-the-mill surge protector won't do much when a lightning bolts zaps your house.

But take heart: Compared to centuries ago, when dishonest lightning-rod salesmen would prey on fear-stricken folks who had seen their homes destroyed by a strike, we now know more about lightning and how to protect against it. A properly installed and maintained lightning protection system, consisting of cables, con-



nectors, air terminals (the industry-preferred term for the rooftop rods), and at least two grounding rods sunk deep into the earth, can save your house. And while there are still some questionable devices and practices, better products, certification programs for installers, and even breaks on your homeowner's insurance all have helped clear up some of the controversies.



TOP: Both vintage (right) and modern (left) lightning rods can work with today's lightning-protection systems. **ABOVE:** All parts of a protection system must be in place for it to work.

EAST COAST LIGHTNING EQUIPMENT, INC., PHOTO AND ILLUSTRATION



Lightning can do serious damage to roofs, blowing off chimney bricks and shingles.

Look Out for CSST

It's possible that corrugated stainless steel tubing (CSST) was installed in your house as a gas line. Flexible CSST is relatively easy to snake through existing walls and has been used since 1989. It's a great product—until lightning strikes, and then high voltage can rupture the tubing's thin plastic covering and start a fire. You're too late to file for the class-action suit that awarded vouchers for the installation of a lightning protection system to ground the CSST, but you should know if you have CSST in your home. The tubing is typically covered with bright yellow plastic, although some brands use black plastic. If you have any doubts, it's worth calling a home inspector or plumber.

cloud-to-ground lightning strike, which happens about 20 million times every year, begins when an invisible channel of negatively charged air moves from the cloud toward the positively charged earth. The lightning doesn't care whether the positive point is a tree, a sailboat mast, or your chimney; all it wants is to get into the ground. A lightning rod system doesn't repel or attract lightning; it merely facilitates that travel of electricity to the earth.

"A properly installed lightning protection system performs the simple yet invaluable task of providing a network of low-resistance paths for lightning current to follow in preference to other parts of the structure," says Jennifer Morgan, principal of East Coast Lightning Equipment, one of the largest suppliers of protection products in the country.

So what "other parts of the structure" is Morgan referring to? Imagine a bolt of lightning hitting the chimney on a house without lightning rods. It blows off the top ten courses of bricks before arching to the roof ridge and shredding its way under the shingles, then blowing the rake board off the gable end before splintering and catching fire to the corner boards. Then it jumps to the earth and into the underground wire that leads down to the copper fixtures on the lamppost at the end of the driveway. Oh, and on its way down, it also made a few frantic side trips around the house and took out the stereo in the front parlor and the microwave in the kitchen. It also might have jumped to the power lines, knocking out some of your neighbor's electronics. While it may sound far-fetched, horror stories like this abound.

If lightning sees an unprotected house as a complex grid of roads, avenues, alleyways, and side streets, it sees a house with a lightning protection system as an interstate highway. A lightning protection system is made from copper or aluminum components that are bolted together to form a continuous and highly conductive path from the high points on a house to copper rods or metal rings buried deep in the earth. If that lightning bolt had hit the chimney-mounted lightning rods instead, it would have traveled from the rod to a braided copper cable along the ridge, down the corner board and safely into an underground copper rod or ring.

A total protection system also requires that lightning arrestors be installed on all incoming lines, including electric, cable, and telephone. These protect lightning from destroying your electronics



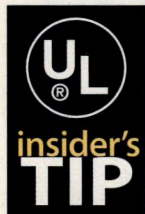
Cables must be connected to metal components like pipes.

Lightning Facts

If you look to the rooftops of some period buildings, you can see a row of sentinel-like lightning rods—often adorned with glass balls—stationed along the ridge, on chimneys, or atop turrets. For the longest time it was thought that the balls, which are still available on reproduction rods and highly collectible as originals, were put there to repel lightning and to indicate that the lightning rods were functioning properly. In fact, the balls were purely decorative; lightning rods neither repel nor attract lightning.

To understand how lightning protection systems work, you need to know a little bit about what happens when you see that white-hot bolt blast from the sky. Think about what happens in the winter when you shuffle across the carpet to turn on the television: You reach out with your finger, and when you get close enough, a little spark jumps between your digit and the TV. Now imagine that you're a cloud, and the television is a tree, a house, or the ground.

Lightning starts when rising and falling air within a thundercloud separates into positively and negatively charged particles. A



INSURANCE DEALS

There's a chance that having a lightning protection system with surge arrestors can get you a break on your homeowner's insurance. Chubb and AIG both offer a 2-percent discount if your system has a UL Master Label and was put in by an LPI certified installer. A quick call to your insurance agent could save you a few bucks and help defray the cost of having a system installed.

RIGHT: Lightning-protection system components include both the decorative (finials and glass balls) and practical (cables and connectors).

via power lines. Remember: Your house may have a protection system, but you also need to protect yourself from your neighbors who don't.

Underwriters Laboratories (UL)—the same company that approves everything from fire extinguishers to toaster ovens and provides the little labels you've seen on myriad products—has strict compliance regulations for all the parts of a lightning protection system. Heavy-gauge copper and aluminum rods, cables, and connectors keep the lightning on the interstate and prevent it from veering down a side street to start a fire on your roof or blow the clapboards off your sidewalls. Along with approving the individual parts of a system, UL and other governing organizations such as the Lightning Protection Institute (LPI) and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) have strict mandates about the installation of the parts.

Exact standards ensure that all the components of a system, as well as all the other metal parts in a house, including gas lines, well casings, and underground water lines, are connected by an uninterrupted circuitry to several grounding points in the earth.

Because a lightning strike will immediately find any flaw in the circuitry of a protection system, usually with devastating results, it's important to keep in mind the words of Judy Ackerman, cofounder of East Coast Lightning Equipment: "Partial protection is as good as no protection."

Don't Try This at Home

If you search around online, you'll find several sites that will sell you almost everything you need to set up a lightning protection system on your house. What they can't sell you is the peace of mind that you've done it right. Do you really want to test your first-time lightning rod project on a bolt that's several hundred million volts and has a temperature upwards of 54,000 degrees Fahrenheit?

Rob Cooper, president of Associated Lightning Rod Co., has been installing lightning rods on buildings for more than 40 years. He says customers sometimes balk when he tells them that lightning protection can cost anywhere from \$1,500 to \$3,500, depending on the size of their home. But as he puts it, "For less than 1 percent of the cost of your house, you're getting an awful lot of protection."

When you contact an installer, ask to see his credentials. UL certifies installers—check ul.com/lightning for a list of qualified installers in your area. After a UL-certified installer finishes a job, a third party UL inspector will come to the site to make sure every thing is up to snuff, and issue a certificate stating the system's compliance. On some older installations, you can still find a small, brass UL inspection plaque nailed to the wall, usually near where a cable is attached to a ground rod.



Inspect Your Gadgets

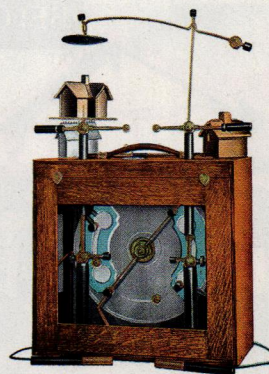
When my wife and I moved into our house several years ago, I was happy to see a row of lightning rods on the ridge. But when I looked more closely, I saw that the workers on a more recent re-roofing job had left several of the rods unattached, and they dangled by their cables. And then I noticed that the one of the braided cables was no longer connected to the ground rod.

Cooper says this is a common occurrence, and that if your house is ever re-roofed, it's important to put into the contract that the contractor is responsible for contacting and paying a UL certified inspector to check out the lightning protection system after the roofing job is finished. He also suggests getting your system checked out after house painting and chimney work.

It's also a good idea, he says, to get existing systems inspected on any old house you own or are considering purchasing. Chances are, even if the rods, cables, and grounds all check out on a system that's more than 15 years old, it probably has inadequate surge arrestors for all the different utility lines that come into the house.

The old adage is true: You never know where lightning will strike. But when it does, it's heartening to know that certified installers using approved products can protect you and your house. 🏠

Jefferson Kolle, a former restoration carpenter, lives in an old house in Connecticut.



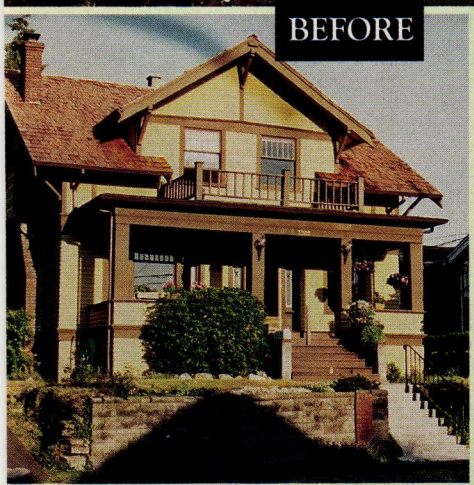
Lightning-rod salesmen of yore often traveled with machines like the one above, which simulated lightning strikes.

Find out more about vintage lightning rods—including where to track down antiques and reproductions.

OldHouseJournal.com



AFTER
BEFORE



In Due Time

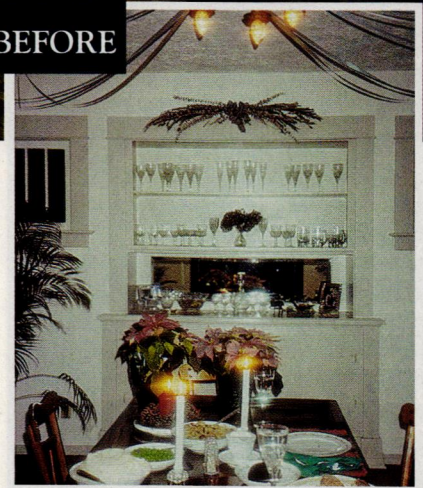
A Seattle couple finds that taking it slow with their restoration reveals ideas—and a gem of a finished product—that were worth the wait.

STORY BY DEMETRA APOSOROS ♦ PHOTOS BY DAVID WHELAN

BELOW: Architect Tim Andersen helped homeowners Mary Kennedy and Andy Lyle restore their home's period beauty by uncovering ceiling beams once hidden (top inset), adding wainscoting and era-appropriate trim, and creating a delicate arch over the bay window; new stained glass doors completing the original buffet (see bottom inset) were created by a local artisan. The couple spent seven years finding the closely matched antique sconces and chandelier. **OPPOSITE:** A second-story door—lost for decades—was returned to provide deck access.



**AFTER
BEFORE**



When Mary Kennedy and Andy Lyle bought their 1913 Seattle bungalow in 1991, it was far from perfect. Much of the original trim had been removed, ceilings had been dropped using acoustic tile, and most of the windows had been ‘updated’ in aluminum. When a piece of upstairs ceiling unexpectedly caved in one day, the couple knew they needed to make some major changes, but they didn’t want to rush into anything—they preferred to live in the house for awhile and get to know it first.

It wasn’t until nearly a decade later, while attending a Historic Seattle lecture on “Remodeling versus Remuddling,” given by local architect Tim Andersen, that the restoration wheels began to click. They soon hired Tim to develop a master plan for their house, aiming to address three major areas—the dining room, master bedroom, and kitchen, which they planned to attack

in stages. “Our goal was to stay in the house during any renovation work,” says Mary, so the projects were done in phases over many years.

Turning Back the Clock

The dining room, the first restoration target, presented a number of challenges. Its once-prominent ceiling beams had

been ruined when wires were threaded through them during an electrical update, the whole mess then covered by acoustic tiles. The room’s original woodwork was long gone—even the buffet was devoid of upper cabinet doors. Tim started by designing new accents based on remaining clues. “Since windows were placed at what could have been plate-rail height,



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Architectural Antiques Ltd: vaaltd.ca

Benjamin Moore: benjaminmoore.com

Baldwin: baldwinhardware.com

California Faucets: calfaucets.com

Country Doctor Construction: lyleherbig@comcast.net

Dynamic Architectural Windows & Doors: dynamicwindows.com

James McKeown Stained Glass: (206) 524-9177

Loewen: loewen.com

Octavia Chambliss: octaviachambliss.com

Pottery Barn: potterybarn.com

Rejuvenation: rejuvenation.com

Richlite: richlite.com

Rohl: rohlhome.com

Schaub & Company: schaubandcompany.com

Seattle Tile Company: seattletile.com

St. Thomas Creations: stthomascreations.com

Velux: veluxusa.com

Vent-a-Hood: ventahood.com

Vintage Wood Sash & Storm Window Co: (206) 782-5656

Woodinville Cabinets: (425) 483-1304

this became the datum," he says. "We designed a plate rail with board-and-batten wainscot below." While Tim couldn't find evidence of an original colonnade, he felt there should be one. "The 9½'-wide opening into the living room was too wide," he says. "Both rooms would be more usable if the corners were enlarged and furnished."

The colonnade's stained glass doors, and those on the original buffet, are new, created by local craftsman James McKeown, who has repaired original art glass installations around Seattle's historic Capitol Hill neighborhood for years. His Arts & Crafts-lined floral design includes a subtle curve atop the buffet doors that replicates an era-appropriate arch Tim added over the room's bay window. The bay's aluminum windows were replaced with handcrafted wooden replacements—made with antique glass—to match two original windows flanking the buffet.

"We were so excited when the dining

room was done," says Andy. "The way it turned out gave us the courage to keep going with work on the rest of the house."

Ending the Impasse

The master bedroom was next. It had been partially demolished years earlier when Andy—inspired to turn a closet into a bathroom—took a hammer to the space while Mary was away on business. The project soon stalled, however, when the couple couldn't agree on how to proceed. "We were sleeping in the guest room and basically using the master bedroom as a garage, because we couldn't make any decisions," says Mary—until Tim arrived on the scene.

"When couples have divergent views, I'll ask them each to send me a list of top priorities," says Tim. "The key to reconciling differences is to ask what's best for the house—what will improve its livability and function—and move the conversation past personal preferences."



AFTER
BEFORE

In the case of the bedroom, that meant removing the ceiling and adding a ridge beam, tongue-and-groove paneling, and plenty of skylights. An existing deck—previously accessible only by climbing through a window—was fully restored, and now has its own door and new period-appropriate slatted deck rails with spade-shaped cutouts. “During the Craftsman era, motifs for cutouts in railing slats were often hearts, spades, or diamonds,” explains Tim.

Because Mary and Andy like to leave their bedroom door closed to keep their cats out, Tim designed a transom above the room’s door to facilitate airflow—a nice period feature that works wonders in the space, as do the pocket doors used on the closet and the bathroom.

The bathroom itself combines the best of old and new with a claw-foot tub, inset medicine cabinet, and radiant floors beneath hexagonal tiles that are inter-

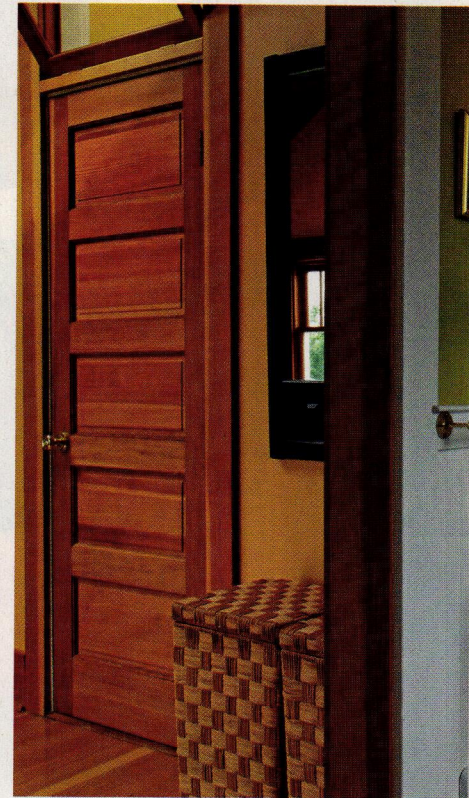


ABOVE: The kitchen was bumped out to repair a muddled, tiny floor plan that resulted when a powder room was added to the house. The 1950s Wedgewood stove is the focal point of the new design; the couple painstakingly painted the beadboard walls themselves. “Looking back, I can’t believe we lived with the old kitchen for as long as we did,” says Mary. **OPPOSITE:** The new colonnade between the living and dining rooms is a period-perfect addition.

Taking It Slow

There’s a lot to be said for taking your time in making restoration decisions. You need to live in a house and get a feel for its rhythms before you start changing, removing, or adding anything. If you move too fast, it’s easy to make a change you’ll later regret; Mary and Andy know this all too well. Their first project involved repairs to their living room fireplace, which they undertook soon after purchasing the house with the help of an interior decorator who wasn’t well-versed in old houses. “As soon as that fireplace went in, we knew it was wrong,” says Andy. “It was like a contradiction. That was the first lesson.” Years later, Tim helped them make the fireplace better suit the era of the house.

“Remuddling is often a consequence of working with designers or contractors who only do things one way—their way,” explains Tim. “Beware of ‘experts’ who imply that novices should defer to their superior judgement.”



AFTER BEFORE

LEFT: Tim raised the roof on the master bedroom and added skylights to create a bright, welcoming retreat. The transom over the door, another period detail, helps facilitate airflow. **ABOVE:** The master bathroom was carved out of a former closet, and combines vintage features like an inset medicine cabinet and pedestal sink with state-of-the-art conveniences like tile floors warmed by radiant heat.

PRODUCTS: All paints, Benjamin Moore. Dining Room: Versailles forged solid brass cup and cabinet pulls, Schaub & Company; Vintage chandelier and reproduction art glass flute shades, Architectural Antiques, Ltd.; Vintage sconces, Seattle Building Salvage and Rejuvenation/Portland; Reproduction storm windows, Vintage Wood Sash & Storm Window Co.; Stained glass, James McKeown; Confederate Red paint. Kitchen: Black Diamond countertops, Richlite; Under-cabinet range hood, Vent-a-Hood; Windows, Loewen; Custom cabinets, Woodinville Cabinets; Polished nickel cup pulls, flat black cabinet and cup pulls, Schaub & Company; Custom table, nook, and island, Country Doctor Construction; Brass door hinges, locks, and levers, Baldwin; Perrin & Rowe single-handle faucet and side spray, Rohl; Concealed-mount café curtain rods, Rejuvenation; Striped café curtains, Pottery Barn; Vintage holophane and schoolhouse shades, Seattle Building Salvage; Pale Sea Mist (walls) and Confederate Red (island) paint. Master Bedroom: Coronado single-pole pendant and shades and Carlton two-light wall bracket, Rejuvenation; Brass door hinges and hardware, Baldwin; Exterior door and windows, Dynamic Architectural Windows & Doors; Skylights, Velux; Copper Hill paint. Master Bathroom: Coos Bay single-shade fixtures and Mendenhall medicine cabinet, Rejuvenation; Windows, Quantum Windows & Doors; 1" matte finish hex tiles, Seattle Tile Company; Richmond petite pedestal sink, St. Thomas Creations; Venice faucet, California Faucets; Swallowtail paint.



persed with a flower pattern—a design the couple likes so much, they plan to use it in their downstairs bath as well. Mary is tickled with the end result. “In the morning, the bedroom is like a sun machine—I love it!”

Period-Perfect Details

Mary is much less enthusiastic when describing the kitchen she and Andy inherited with the house, which was tiny, and had been awkwardly chopped up thanks to an earlier conversion of a service stairway into a powder room. “The kitchen was almost too horrible to describe,” she says. “We could basically fit one person in there to cook, and in order to open the spice drawer, you had to first open the door to the stove!”

Tim suggested adding a 114-square-foot bump-out to provide enough space for a decent-sized kitchen. Mary and Andy swallowed any hesitations they felt about the scope of the project, and soon the ideas began to flow. Mary had always wanted a breakfast nook that incorporated storage; Andy wanted that storage

to accommodate his stereo’s subwoofer. The couple had long been coveting a 1950s Wedgewood stove, so Tim suggested they make it the centerpiece of the new design. It’s accented by countertops made of compressed recycled paper, beadboard walls, a farmhouse sink, and a collection of vintage lighting fixtures Mary and Andy spent years gathering.

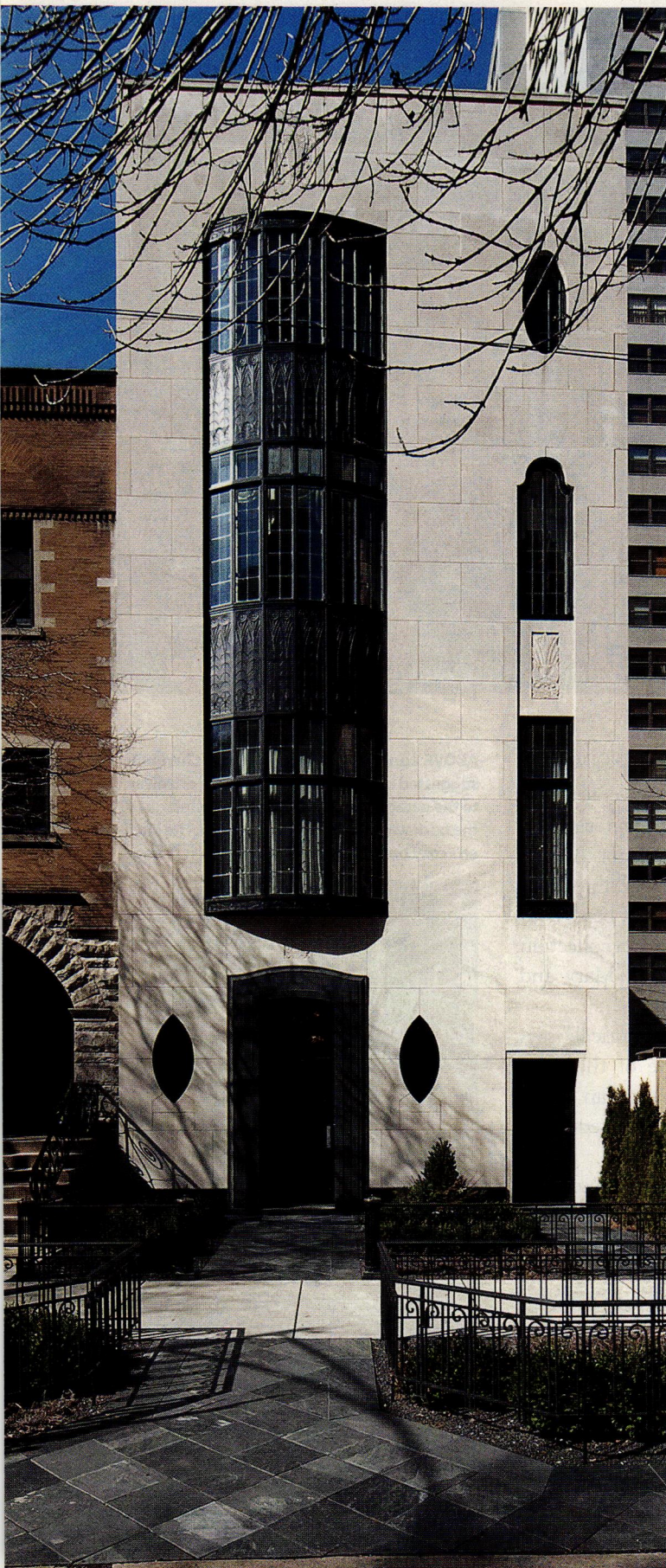
“Lighting is absolutely critical,” says Andy. “It’s probably one of the most important things to creating an atmosphere or a mood, and we wanted to get it right.”

It turns out that after all those years of struggling with decisions, the couple proved pretty good at making the right ones for their house. “I found Mary and Andy willing to do whatever it took to understand their options; assess materials, finishes, and fixtures; and make informed decisions,” says Tim.

“I don’t think we would have nearly the house we do without Tim’s assistance,” says Andy. “But now we come home after a long day and say, ‘This is pretty nice—we’re really lucky to live here.’” 🏡

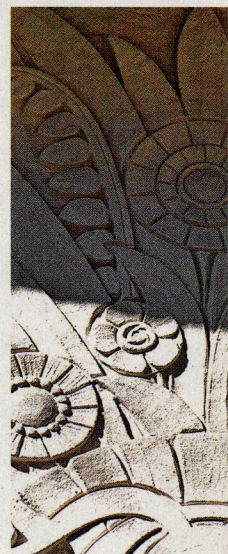
ABOVE: Landscape designer Octavia Chambliss suggested creating a patio where the driveway to the garage once stood, to take advantage of the back yard’s sunniest spot. **BELOW:** The kitchen’s cozy breakfast nook boasts hidden storage.





OLD-HOUSE LIVING

All That Jazz



CUT UP INTO APARTMENTS AND FALLING INTO DISREPAIR, AN ART DECO TOWN HOUSE RECLAIMS ITS JAZZ AGE GRANDEUR, THANKS TO THE TIRELESS EFFORTS OF ONE CHICAGO COUPLE.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LEE BEY

Enter the posh Art Deco town house on Chicago's Astor Street, and you get the sudden urge to straighten your cummerbund and check your cufflinks and tuxedo scarf—for all the world, you'd swear it was the 1930s and Jean Harlow just might sweep past in a silvery silk robe. Go up two floors, and you're greeted by a towering 16' rotunda with an elaborate domed skylight and a ritzy marble floor. You'd almost expect to hear a Louis Armstrong 78 playing on the console.

OPPOSITE: Built in 1929, the tall narrow home is a Chicago skyscraper in miniature. **BELOW:** Art Deco floral motifs run throughout the building, from the front door (left) to the lobby light fixture (center left) to the renewed bay window (center right and right). **BOTTOM:** Owners Gregory and Randa Dumanian in the home's spacious living room.



The town house looks as stunning now as it did when it arrived 80 years ago on this tony-but-traditional block of late 19th- and early 20th-century dwellings. Credit goes to Gregory and Randa Dumanian, who bought the home 12 years ago, after it had been diced up into smaller apartments. Chunks were threatening to fall from the building's French limestone façade, and the 18-ton, three-story cast iron bay window was slowly peeling away from the building. But the couple was undeterred.

"I stood in the dining room and fell in love," Randa says. Greg's initial response came in Armenian: "*Balasch dan, chem arner*"—"If they gave it for free, I wouldn't take it."

But the Dumanians looked past the unsympathetic interior alterations to see what the residence once was, and decided they were willing to put in the work to make it a masterpiece once more.

Small-Scale Skyscraper

Real estate banker Edward P. Russell built the home for his family in 1929. It was designed by Holabird & Root, an architecture firm most noted for creating many of the skyscrapers in the still-young city of Chicago. A residential commission this small would have been unusual





for the firm, but Russell was the banker to utility mogul Samuel Insull, one of the company's biggest clients. And the construction budget of \$195,000, according to the *Chicago Tribune*, was no small sum. Adjusted for inflation, it would be the equivalent of \$2.4 million today.

Holabird & Root took the commission seriously, and gave the slender town house the proportion, verticality, and amenities of a skyscraper, like the nicely lit entry lobby with wood paneling, terrazzo flooring, a cage elevator, and a sweeping staircase. The town house even functions structurally like a skyscraper, with wide, column-free interiors.

The home caused a sensation when it was completed. The *Tribune* ran a photo of the house in December 1929 hailing it as a "20th-century residence" for its "simple lines and restraint in the employment of ornamentation."

Restoration contractor Roger Keys, who oversaw nearly two years of improvements to the home, believes Holabird & Root used the house to test new methods of skyscraper design and concrete pouring techniques that they would later employ in taller buildings. "It's an amazingly well-built house," he observes.

Russell kept the house for nearly a decade. He sold it in 1938 for \$65,000, according to the *Tribune*. Although it put on a good face to Astor Street, behind the limestone façade, the home would spend the next 60 years in a slow decline.

Turning Back the Clock

The Dumanians found a listing for the home in 1998. "The agent said, 'It's in very sad shape and doesn't show well,'" Randa recalls. "It looked like a war zone. Asbestos tile, plywood everywhere, shaggy green carpeting."

Yet, she was in love with the house. "That was the first mistake," she says, smiling. "You don't fall in love with real estate."

But it was a courtship destined for marriage. Greg remembers the house as a kid



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Dining room doors open onto the home's dramatic rotunda. The marble-floored staircase was added by the Dumanians. Greg called upon his surgery skills to restore the home's original light fixtures.



ABOVE: The dining room features an antique Art Deco mirror. **RIGHT:** In the home's traditional kitchen (complete with Deco stepped ceiling), Randa and Greg discuss decorating plans with interior designer Dima Turkmany.



growing up in the neighborhood. He would later collect Art Deco furniture—he still has a few pieces—as a young medical resident in Boston in the 1980s, fueled by a fondness for Fred Astaire movies as a child.

Among the first tasks on the Dumanians' list was restoring the spaces to their original dimensions by tearing out the partition walls that subdivided the rooms into smaller apartments. "It was partitioned off in a very weird way," says Chicago architect John Kelly, whom the Dumanians hired to oversee the house's first rounds of restoration. "It was like a commune."

Pulling down the walls restored a view from the dining room through the rotunda and into the living room, where the big bay window beautifies and illuminates the space. The sightline had been obscured for decades.

"I remember the day they pulled down the wall and you could see that axis," Randa says. "We went to Gibson's to celebrate."

John's task was to create a living space for the Dumanians on the first and second floors of the building. (The third floor would be a condominium unit under separate own-

ership; the Dumanians also own the fourth floor and penthouse.) The biggest challenge in doing this involved designing an internal staircase that would lead down from the rotunda to link the Dumanians' second-floor living space with bedrooms on the first floor. Engineers were concerned that cutting into the concrete floors to install the pinwheel-like marble stair would weaken the structure. They also were worried the floor's thickness might not allow for enough clearance for the stairs to be traversed without some serious ducking. But without the stair, the Dumanians would have had to pass through the building's common spaces to fully access their home.

It took workers a week to cut through the building's concrete bones to make room for the new stair, as the Dumanians and their architect nervously awaited the outcome. "I was concerned it would look like a thing we added," John says.

Fortunately, the building was able to structurally and physically accommodate the stair. The geometric Art Deco railing, designed by John, picks up details from the home's original grillework. The marble stair curls downward from the edge of the rotunda as if it had been there all along. "The railing is one of the main things that ties it in to the rest of the house," John observes.

Nailing down the home's details was a



Matt, examined the stonework, and found spalling and patches from previous repairs. Water had gotten behind some of the stone and caused the anchors to rust. Some new stone would be needed, but the near-white limestone was unlike any Roger had seen in the Midwest. Randa's research turned up the reason: The stone was from a quarry in Lens, a mining town in southern France.

It took seven months get the stone—three of which were spent just getting the quarry to return Roger's phone calls. Fortunately, a local stonemason had a connection to the quarry, and the order for 100 square feet of 4"-thick stone was finally placed. Armed with the new stone, Roger replaced decayed stones and made Dutchman repairs on the façade. The patch work included repairing decades-old fixes that were done with visually incompatible—but easier to obtain—Bedford limestone. New mortar was painstakingly matched and colored to replicate existing mortar.

The next task was even more daunting: repairing the beautiful but failing three-story bay window. The bay was simultaneously slipping downward and leaning forward away from the home's façade, allowing water and wind to get in behind the window's housing and cause decay. Workers discovered a half-inch of corroded steel flakes from the window hiding behind the walls.

The window's structural problems

task within itself, Randa says. "This is not an American Art Deco. It's not Miami chrome and vinyl—this is very European, which makes it challenging."

The couple was actively involved in the improvements. Randa got blueprints and other information on the home from the Chicago History Museum, and before the building was habitable, she would visit the job site and monitor the construction work.

"I'd show up and order these men around," says Randa, who has a background in structural engineering. When she noticed the concrete interior stairs were poured incorrectly, she dug out the cement before it hardened—using a plastic spoon, the only implement she could find.

Then there were original ceiling lights, composed of 70 to 80 decorative glass rods, each of which needed to be reseated into its own plaster holder on the fixture. After getting a quote of \$15 per rod, Greg decided to fix the lights himself. "I'm a hand surgeon," he says. "I know how to sling plaster."

TOP: Casements in the home's library are part of the three-story bay facing the street. RIGHT: The evening sun pours in through dining room windows—part of a rear bay window that was also restored.

Façade Facelift

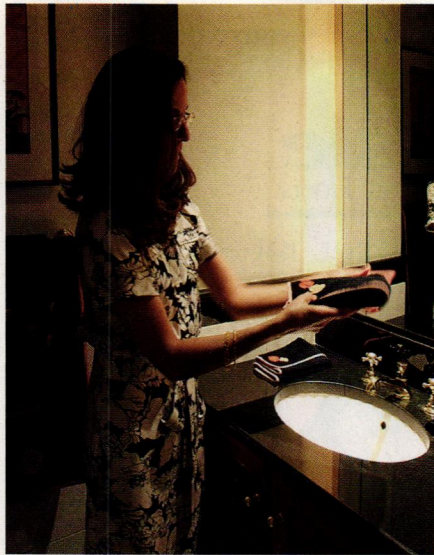
The Dumanians also took on the challenging task of repairing the home's stone façade, but had some trouble finding a contractor with the expertise—and the fortitude—to properly tackle the job. Then they met Roger Keys, owner of RW Keys Decorating, who had seen his fair share of restoration work during his 35-year career.

The team, led by Roger and his son



weren't solely caused by age and weather. The team discovered that the window was anchored securely on the upper floors but far less so at the base, causing the steel anchors to weaken under the window's tonnage. Roger oversaw the creation of a new system of stainless steel connections and structural piping, hidden behind the home's walls, upon which the window would be anchored.

Roger and architectural preservationist Marty Hackl rebuilt the deteriorated leaded glass coming in the casement windows. Leaded glass and screws were painstakingly removed from each window, numbered, catalogued, and put back. Roger tracked down a suburban company with old-fashioned metal-making equipment to remake exact replicas of the windows' hinges and openers. Then they chemically stripped the bay's metal exterior, removing decades of paint, scaling, and weathering, revealing a beautiful lead-coated cast iron detailing of palms, ferns, and plants. Once the entire bay was restored, the team used a pair of old-fashioned 20-ton screw jacks to



A first floor powder room is contemporary, but has flashes of Art Deco.

lift it slowly into place. To prevent damage ("If you do it too quickly, you could crack the cast iron," Roger says), they spent two weeks moving the window just 1/2" upward, while pulling it inward 5/8".

With the window in place, work returned to the rotunda, where Roger rebuilt the

space's signature skylight. The design of the skylight's glass—abstract lines laid randomly like pick-up sticks—was original to the building, but the blueprints showed an entirely different design, one with a heavier Art Deco sunburst motif that the Dumanians preferred.

When the weather is nice, sunlight pours in through the new UV-resistant glass skylight and illuminates the rotunda. At night, an array of LEDs (replacements for a bulky, glitchy bulb system) allows the skylight to function like a modern light fixture.

"It looks like it's from the '30s, but it would have been impossible to make this in the '30s," Matt says.

The Dumanians, who have a teenage son and daughter, say they are happy with their home, which Randa refers to as her third child. The couple will often surprise architectural tour docents by inviting the groups in right off the street to have a look inside, to witness first-hand how the Dumanians have seamlessly blended Jazz Age style with contemporary living. 🏠



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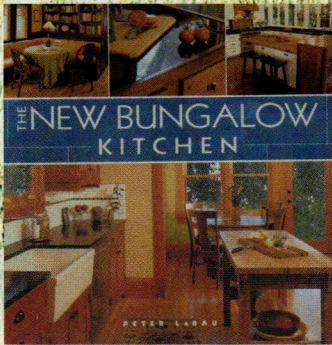
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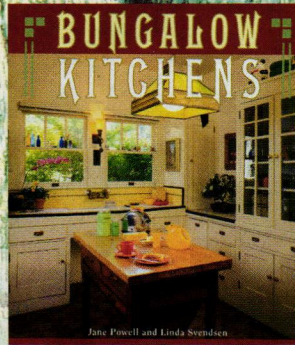
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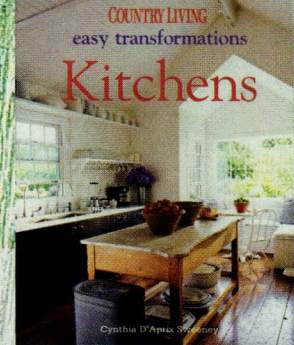
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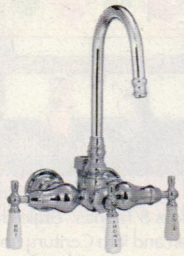
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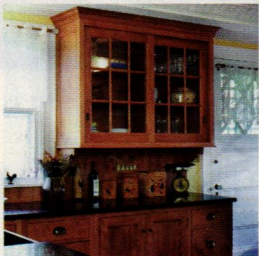
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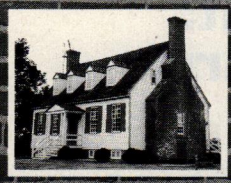
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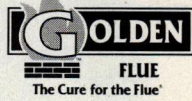


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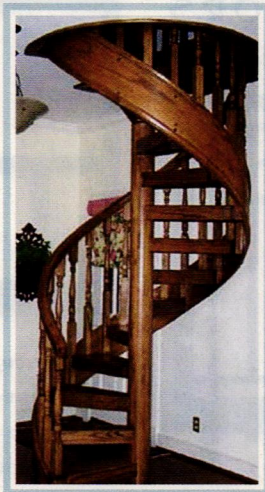
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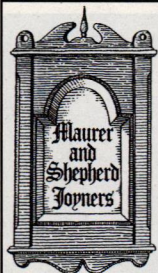


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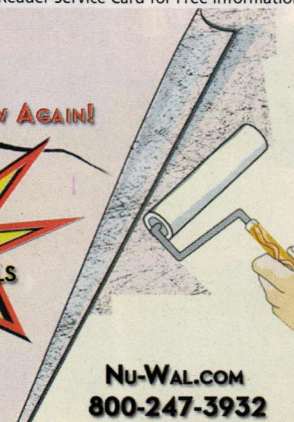
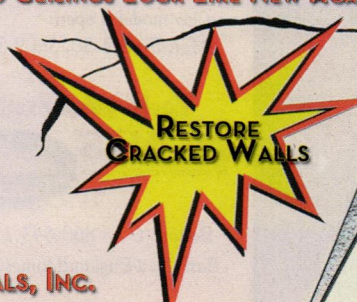
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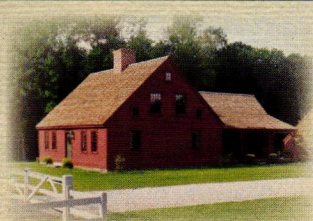
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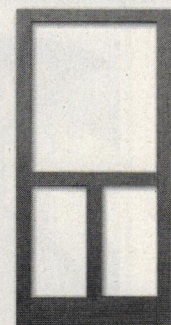
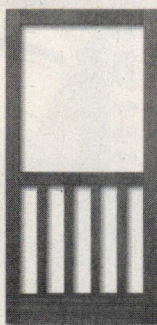
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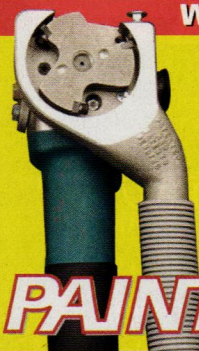
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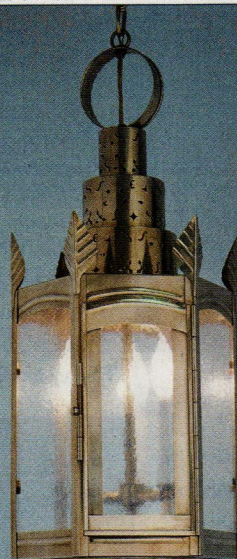
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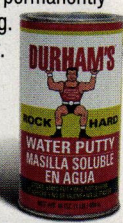
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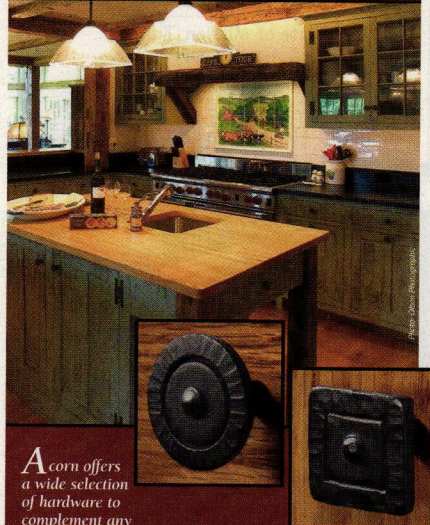


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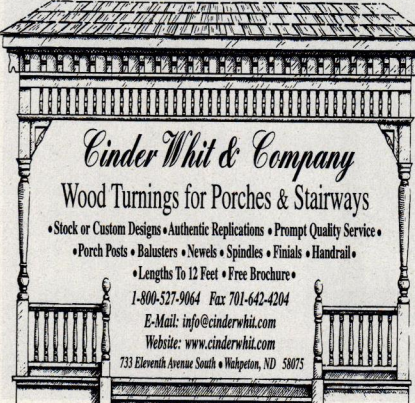
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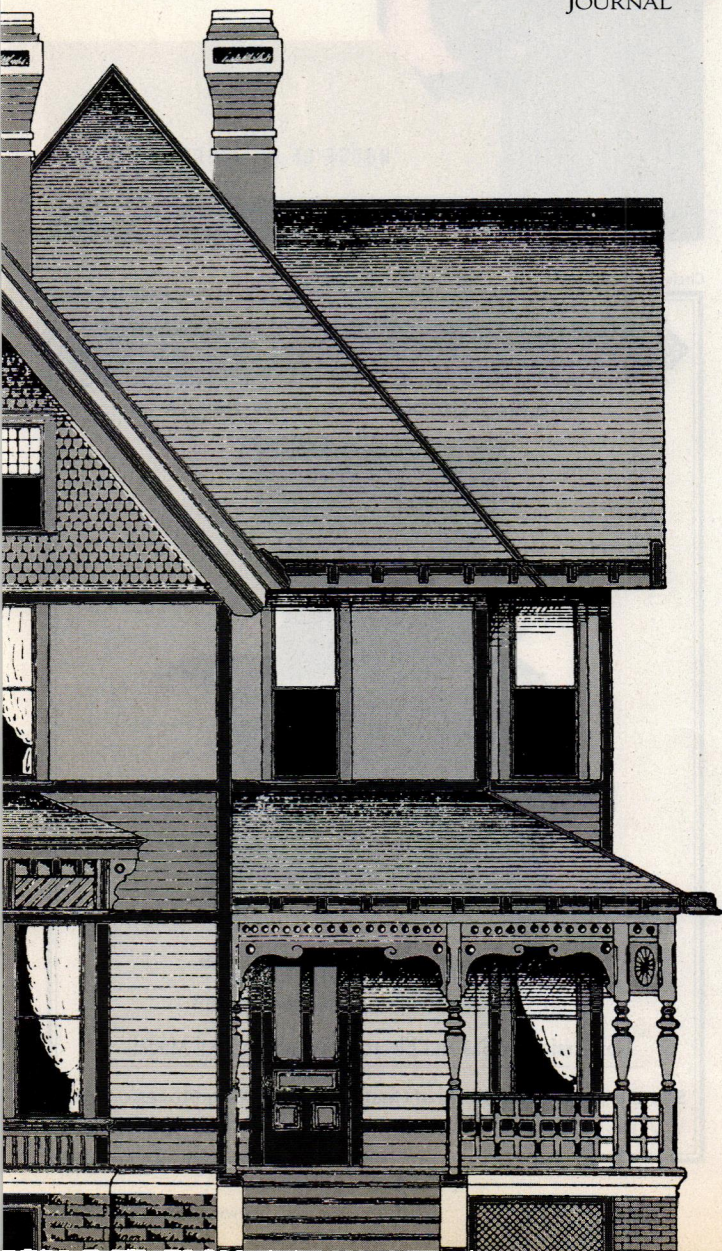
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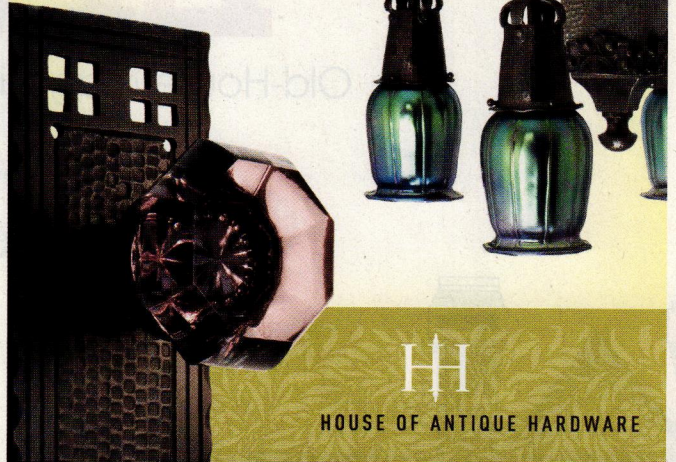
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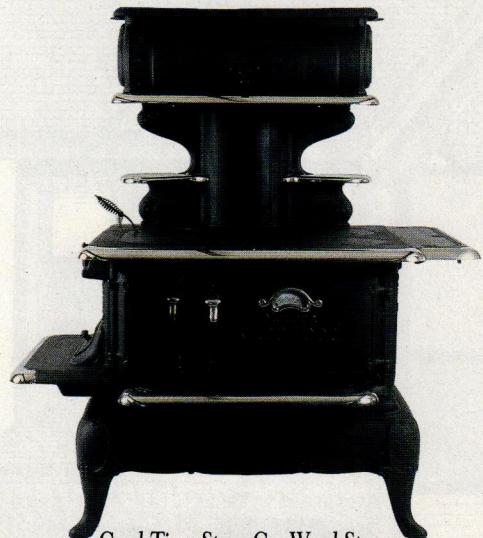
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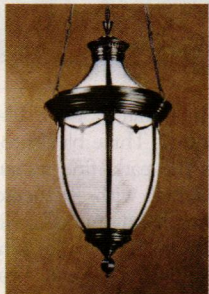
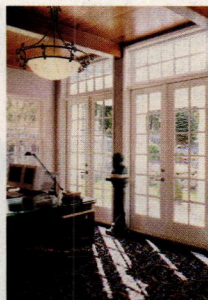
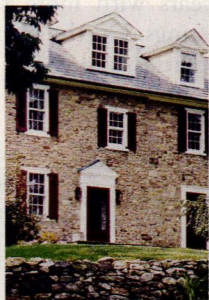
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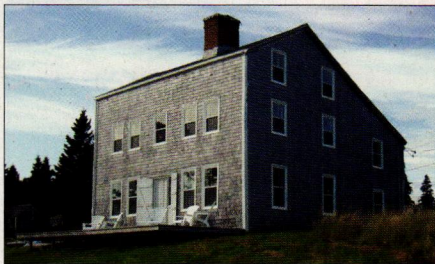
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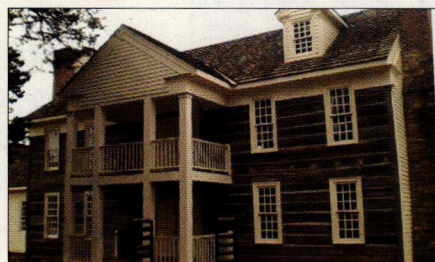
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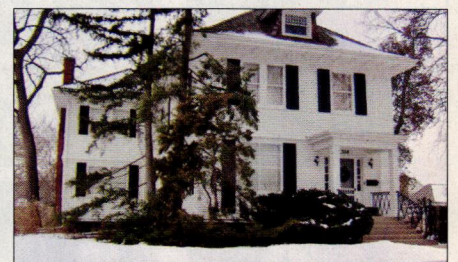
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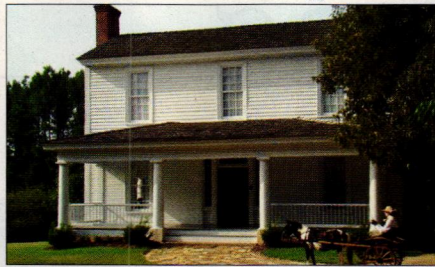


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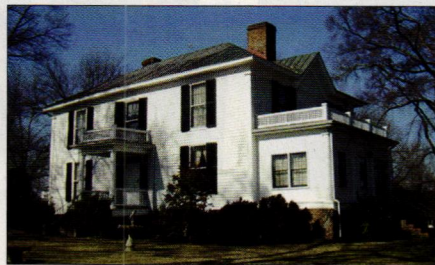
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After learning from longtime neighborhood denizens that their home's then-disintegrating porch had vanished in 1943, the couple stripped the siding to search for clues, and uncovered ghosts of the original structure. A circa 1910 photo—blown up to show details—helped them produce the missing pieces. The Lemms' out-of-thin-air work seems to have had a supernatural effect on the rest of the neighborhood, too. "Some of our neighbors discovered they also had beautiful front porches hiding under layers of siding and windows," says Christopher. "Others just thought we were nuts, and moved away." 🏠

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