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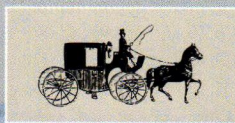
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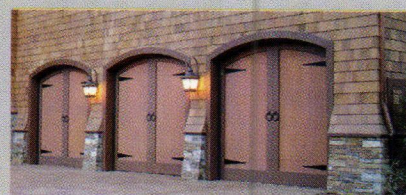
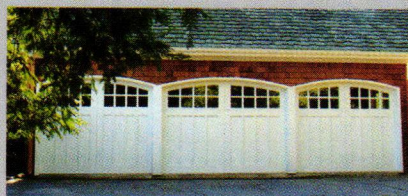
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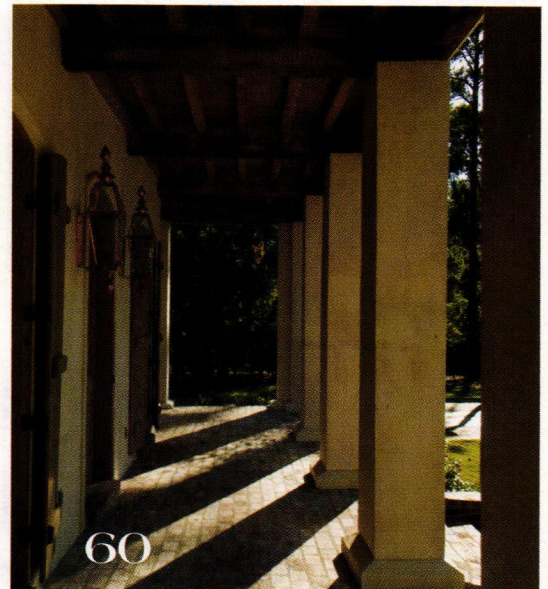
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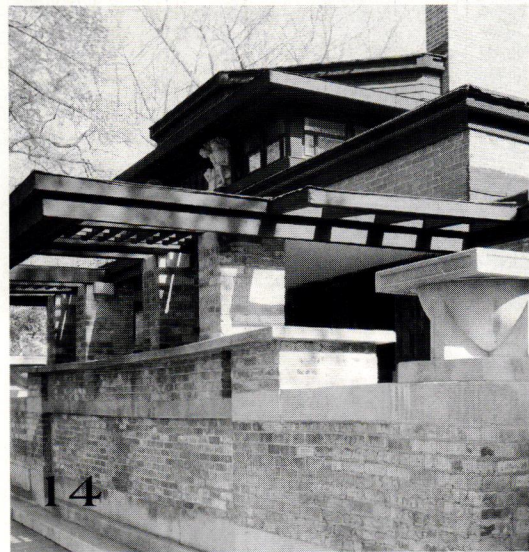
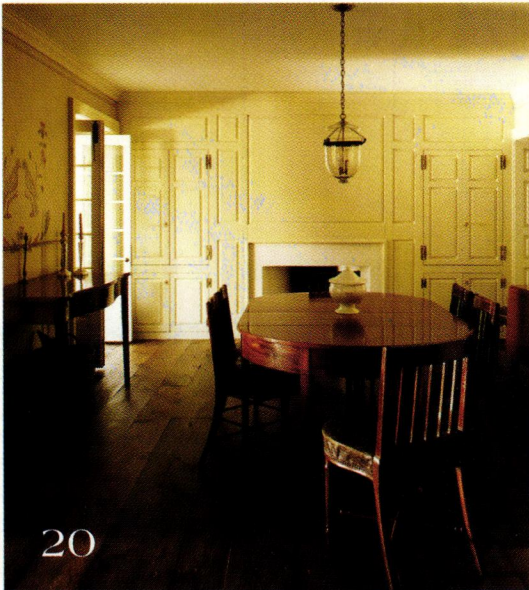
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Cover photo by Eric Roth
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Rural Landscape



How many of us have dreamed of owning a piece of land somewhere tucked away from the world where we could go and get away from the stresses of modern-day life? A place with a small farmhouse—not fancy—with views out to a stand of trees or an open meadow. A month after 9/11, I found myself on a plane flying to Maine to look at just such a farmhouse, a fixer-upper surrounded on 100 acres—literally in the middle of nowhere—with barns, a pond, and an ancient apple orchard. When I was asked by the real estate agent to don an orange hat so hunters would spot us while exploring the property, I knew I wasn't in Washington, D.C., anymore. Although at that point in my life a move to this idyllic landscape didn't come to fruition, I have never let go of this dream. And it seems I'm not alone. Many Americans are finding solace in rural landscapes in houses that respect their surroundings as well as the building traditions of a particular area.

Editor-at-large Russell Versaci takes an in-depth look at the phenomena of "New Ruralism"—a way of creating new communities located in rural areas to help preserve this country's agrarian history while offering homeowners small-town living adjacent to farms, wildlife habitats, and open space.

Architect Stephen B. Chambers designs a new old house for a couple in East Texas. Located on a cattle farm, the home looks as though it has always been a part of this prairie landscape. The 1,900-square-foot stone house has become a place of respite for this active couple.

Wouter and Maria Eshuis designed and built their own new old house in Canada's rural landscape just outside London, Ontario. Today, they raise horses on this breathtaking farm. Looks like the days of going "back to the land" are definitely coming back into fashion.

Nancy E. Berry
Editor

Old-House Journal's

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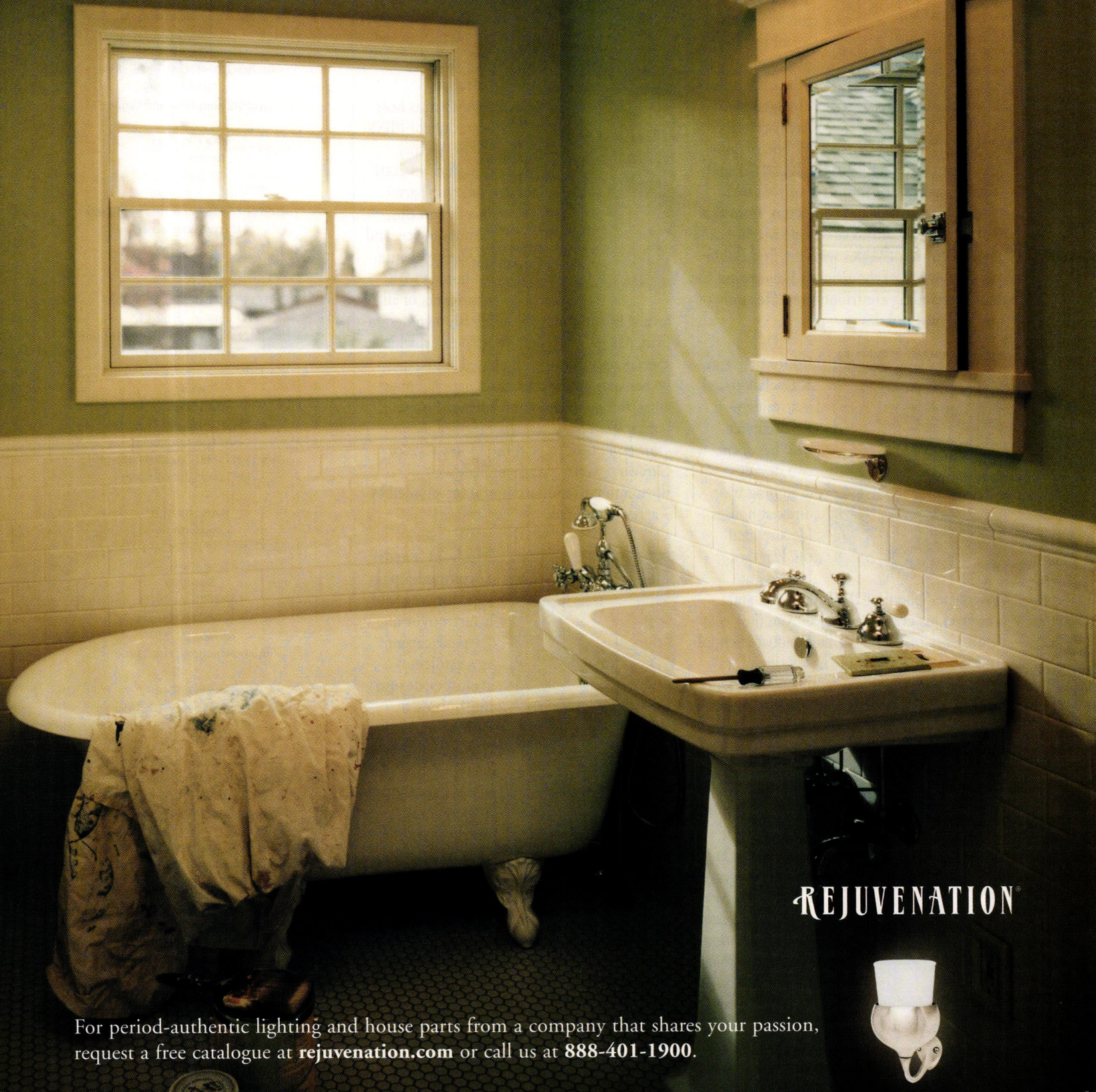
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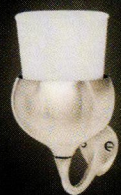
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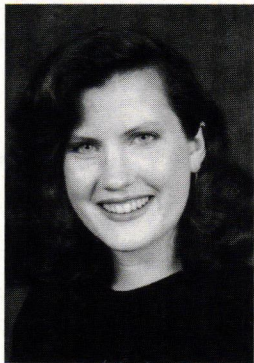


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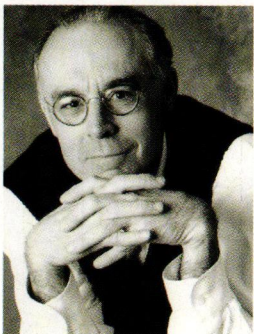


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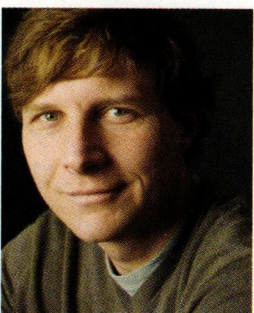
Christine G.H. Franck is a designer and educator with a practice in New York City. She is the former director of the academic programs of the Institute of Classical Architecture &

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Editor-at-Large **Russell Versaci** is a residential architect who has spent two decades designing traditional houses. He attended the Harvard University

Graduate School of Design in 1973 and received his graduate degree from the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Fine Arts in 1979. He has designed traditional country houses, cottages, and farmhouses, as well as restorations and significant additions to period homes. Also an author, Versaci's debut book is titled *Creating a New Old House* (Taunton Press, 2003).



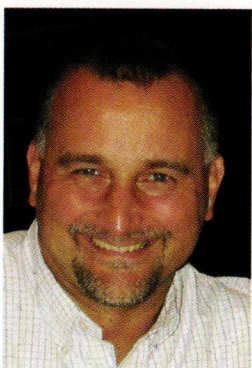
Logan Ward has written about architecture and historic preservation for the *New York Times*, *House Beautiful*, *Cottage Living*, and many other magazines. In 2000, he and

his family moved from Brooklyn to Swoope, Virginia, to re-create the life of 1900s dirt farmers, the subject of his recently released memoir, *See You in a Hundred Years: Four Seasons in Forgotten America*. Logan now lives with his wife and two children in Staunton, Virginia.



Garden writer **Michael Weishan** is host emeritus of PBS's "The Victory Garden" in 2001 and has shared his design tips, expert advice, and trademark sense of humor with gardeners of all

levels. In addition to heading his own design firm, Michael Weishan & Associates, which specializes in historically based landscapes, he has written for numerous national magazines and periodicals and authored three books: *The New Traditional Garden*, *From a Victorian Garden*, and the *Victory Garden Gardening Guide*. Weishan lives west of Boston in an 1852 farmhouse surrounded by 3 acres of gardens.



Michael Tardif developed a passion for new old houses over a 15-year career as a project architect designing homes in Boston and on Cape Cod. Now editorial director of Design Byline in Bethesda,

Maryland, he writes regularly about architecture, design firm management, sustainable design, and design and construction technology. His first book, *Financial Management for Design Professionals: The Path to Profitability*, co-authored with Steve L. Wintner, AIA, was published by Kaplan Publishing in December 2006.

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New Ruralism

Developers are looking to our agrarian past to create communities.

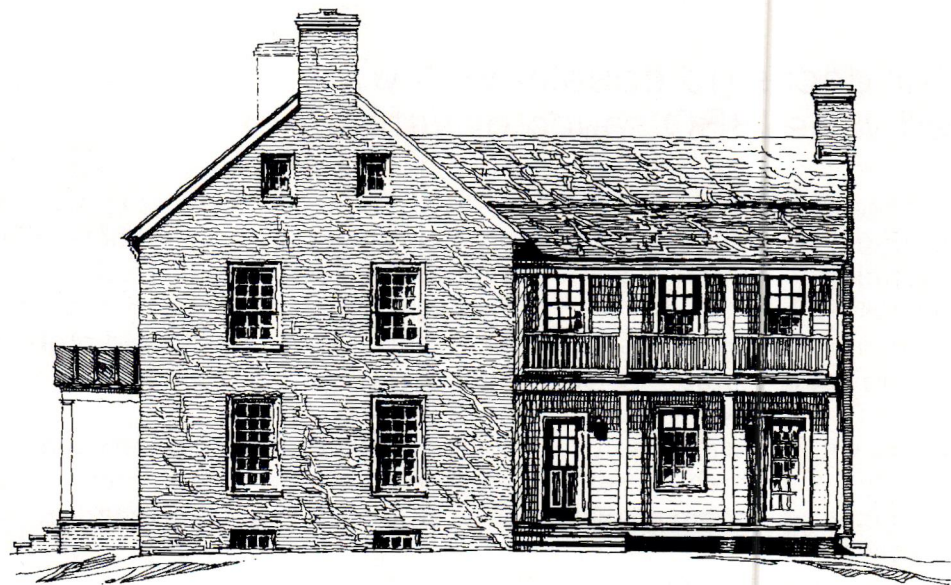
TEXT BY RUSSELL VERSACI

The *Wall Street Journal* sees change on the horizon as it scans the marketplace for lifestyle trends. Here's a recent bulletin: "Catering to Americans desire to live green, developers around the country are creating communities on or adjoining farms, pitching views of sorghum fields, grazing livestock, and local—very local—food, such as eggs residents collect from the henhouse."

Many Americans are getting their hands dirty again—picking apples, weeding the vegetable garden, feeding the horses, even gathering their own eggs—but they're not exactly going back to the farm. Instead, they're moving to new places that are steeped in the rhythms and character of the farm but also offer the trappings of urban connectivity—cell phones, email, internet access—to provide the best of both worlds.

In response to this new market demand, rural communities are taking shape, often at the urban edge where the city yields to the countryside. One of the oldest is Prairie Crossing, an hour's drive from Chicago. On a direct rail line from the city, this neighborhood of traditional Midwestern homes preserves 5,000 acres of farmland in conservation easements where residents enjoy a lake, wetlands, prairie, and an organic farm. In a centuries-old farming valley near Boise, Idaho, a community called Hidden Springs reinvents rural traditions in a new small town with a neighborhood farm, wildlife habitat, and nature trails on 800 acres of open space.

Welcome to the New Ruralism. The flip side of New Urbanism, New Ruralism is a strategy for creating new communities in country places by building on traditions from America's agrarian past. In the face of remorseless development pressures, New Ruralism offers an enlightened way to preserve



rural landscape and agricultural heritage while meeting new market demands.

Preserving these pieces of America's past has become the mission of a growing number of entrepreneurial environmentalists who see reconnecting Americans to their country roots as good business—and, ultimately, good business just might save the farm.

Not long ago the landscape of America was neatly divided into cities and countryside, which was the last stop before the wilderness. Farms and ranches built in regional vernacular styles dotted the mainly open landscape, while small market towns served as centers for the community.

Back then the land was considered precious, and everyone knew that their way of life depended on treating it with respect. That ethos of shared responsibility changed with the advent of production housing after World War II. The land became a commodity to be developed into commuter subdivisions.

Nowadays, a monoculture inflects city and countryside alike with the "geography of nowhere." All across America the distinctiveness of the rural edge is disappearing, erased by exurban development that devours open landscape, natural resources, and the rural way of life and replaces them with miles of tract mansions in the middle of farm fields.

New Ruralism offers a better way to develop rural areas. It is based on a new concept for community-building called preservation development," in which environmental stewardship intersects with the free market economy. This approach seeks to preserve the character of a place by reinterpreting old traditions, patterns, and customs in the design of new communities.

Historically, small American towns grew up at rural crossroads where houses and shops were clustered together, thinning out to scattered farms and ranches in the surrounding countryside. New Ruralism strives to replicate this tra-



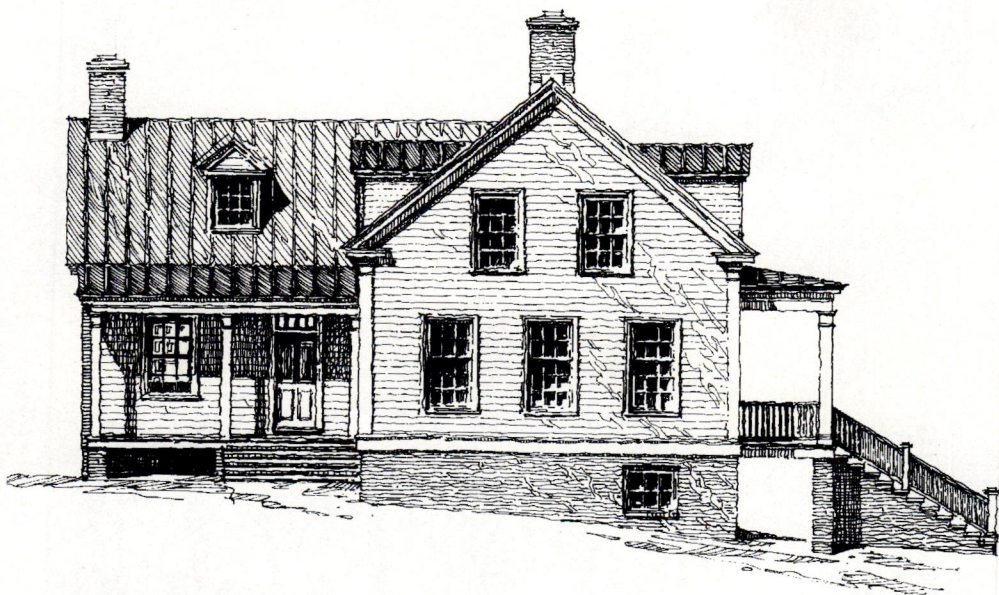
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ditional pattern, with most of the land conserved for agriculture, recreation, wildlife habitat, and natural settings. For an ever-growing market of homebuyers, these features are very attractive.

Clearly, new rural communities are intended to bring in good returns to their developers, but they are also guided by sound principles of stewardship: maintaining agrarian traditions, creating a small-town sense of place, respecting the natural environment, and building traditional homes of appropriate regional character.

Some preservation developments are patterned after the traditional neighborhood designs of New Urbanism, while others resemble old-fashioned farming villages. What they have in common is respect for the land and culture, but how they approach their objectives is often quite different.

Serenbe is a new community of 900 acres in the Chattahoochee Hill country southwest of Atlanta where 70 percent of the land is preserved as green space. Its 224 home sites are tightly clustered in two hamlets, Selbourne and Grange, organized around town centers with the outskirts set aside for farming, eques-

trian trails, wetlands, and open meadows of wildflowers.

Serenbe is a complete rural community of shops, offices, galleries, restaurants, a grocer, an inn, and a range of homes from townhouses to estates. The businesses are supported in part by visitors who patronize the place from metropolitan Atlanta, less than a half-hour's drive away. Residents enjoy locally grown food and provide a ready-made market for the organic farm on the property.

Bundoran Farm in the Virginia Piedmont fifteen minutes southwest of Charlottesville is a conservation community founded on a different set of principles. Its 2,300 acres of still-working farmland are 90 percent conserved for cattle pastures, apple orchards, and managed forests. That would seem to leave no room for houses, but there are nearly 100 home sites on lots ranging from 2 to over 50 acres, scrupulously located in "the seams" between agricultural and forest areas to protect privacy and views.

At Bundoran Farm the key to maintaining so much green space is a unique system of easements and protective cov-

enants. Large lots have designated buildable areas of about an acre, while open land easements guarantee that cows can roam across all the lots without being cut off by fences. The net result is a community of homes where residents share the experience of living on a professionally managed working farm, the character, function, and maintenance of which are preserved forever.

While Serenbe and Bundoran Farm are quite different in character, both feature new homes patterned after the region's vernacular architectural traditions. Here the new old house is right at home in establishing a sense of place. A simple farmhouse, updated for the way we live today, is a natural fit.

By mining history for precedents, these new rural developments encourage home designs that honor the spirit of the countryside. They are designed to be smaller and less intrusive on the land, using the best sustainable building practices for a greener footprint. Native building materials and craft techniques are encouraged, building local architectural character into homes meant to last for generations. The result is new homes that share in living traditions by blending with historic roots.

Rather than bulldozing the countryside into oblivion, the preservation developments of New Ruralism draw the best of the past into the present. By flipping standard developer logic on its head, New Ruralism uses the tools of land development to champion environmental stewardship. Mixing sustainability with good business could become a powerful model, for the principles of New Ruralism may be our last best hope for preserving America's rural heritage against the assault of urban sprawl. **NOH**

Russell Versaci is an architect and author of Creating a New Old House (Taunton Press, 2003). He is also the creator of the Simple Farmhouse Portfolio (illustrations shown). He can be reached via email at russell@russellversaci.com.



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Frank Lloyd Wright's design philosophies relate directly to green design.

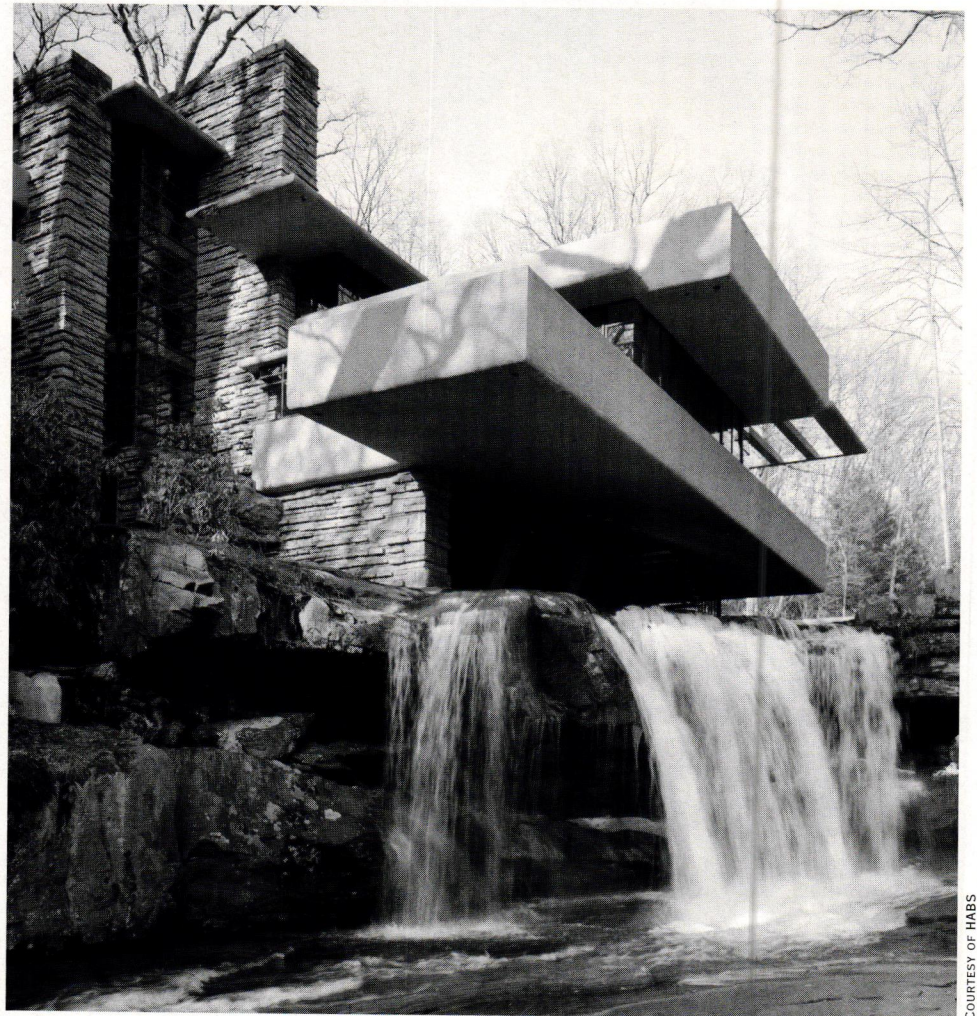
TEXT BY ERIC CORY FREED

In recent years, green design has finally received the recognition it deserves. The challenges of global warming, dwindling fossil fuels, and surging energy demands are requiring our buildings to change. Buildings have the largest environmental impact, responsible for 70 percent of total human consumption (that includes everything: energy, water, and materials combined). In the near future, every building will be a green building.

The global energy crisis of the 1970s brought some pioneering efforts in energy conservation. The Willis Faber and Dumas Headquarters by architect Norman Foster is widely considered to be the first modern green building. Built in 1977, the English building features a grass roof, a daylit atrium, and mirrored windows used to reduce solar gain. It recalls what you imagine when thinking of the prototypical green building.

But in contrast to the modern green building movement of the '70s, the first truly green buildings were beginning to take shape over 40 years earlier by a renegade American architect. Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959), regarded as the most important architect of the twentieth century, was the real first green architect. Although the term “green building” was not even invented yet, Wright was creating natural and energy-efficient structures that serve as a model of green building for us today. His wonderful array of houses, built of natural and renewable materials, opening to views of nature, and warmed by their orientation to the sun, are textbook examples of green building.

A tempestuous, often arrogant, genius with as volatile a personal life as prolific an architectural career, Wright had an immeasurable impact on the field of architecture. Spanning seven decades, his



COURTESY OF HABS

work embodied what he termed “organic architecture,” referring to buildings that connect to nature and their surroundings. Wright’s innovations and contributions to modern architecture are vast, including the carport, central heating, the open floor plan, curtain walls, the split-level living room, the corner picture window, and radiant floor heating. So why would it be absurd to assume his contributions to green design?

The Office of the Federal Environmental Executive (www.ofee.gov) defines

Frank Lloyd Wright's Falling Water is one example of his many green designs.

green building as: “the practice of 1. increasing the efficiency with which buildings and their sites use energy, water, and materials and 2. reducing building impacts on human health and the environment, through better siting, design, construction, operation, maintenance, and removal—the complete building lifecycle.” Following this definition, a look at some of Wright’s build-



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Frank Lloyd Wright's Home and Studio in Oak Park offers examples of his green design philosophies.

ings shows how they fit the definition of a green building.

Among the hundreds of Wright's completed buildings, three stand out as obvious examples of sustainable design. These not only show the width and breadth of Wright's genius but also remind us of the variety of his work.

Fallingwater in Bear Run, Pennsylvania—Wright's most famous work—is perched dramatically over a waterfall. Its iconic terraces redefined the International style in architecture. In 1991, the American Institute of Architects named Fallingwater the "Best All Time Work of American Architecture."

Completed in 1936, Fallingwater came at a time when most thought the 69-year-old Wright to be at the end

of his career. The building is a marvel of sustainable design. Utilizing locally quarried natural stone, the home is passively cooled from the breeze created by the stream below. Natural linoleum and cork floors accent the naturally finished wood and stone interiors. The entire structure is carefully built around the natural features. The living room hearth centers on large stones found on the site. The sun-shading trellis gracefully dances around the existing trees.

Jacobs House I, Westmorland, Wisconsin

Outside of Madison, Wisconsin, the Jacobs House's construction began around the same time as Fallingwater. Although Wright was considered an

architect for the rich and famous, a newspaper reporter and his wife challenged Wright to build an affordable house for only \$5,000. It was the first of many affordable houses Wright would create throughout his career.

In order to lower costs, the 1,300-square-foot house is built from reclaimed materials, such as reject bricks and unwanted knotty boards of pine coated with natural wax. The plan is arranged on a 24- by 48-inch grid to reduce the amount of construction waste and the need for cutting plywood. It was one of the first homes to use energy-efficient radiant heating in the floor slab and, like nearly all Wright buildings, runs along an east to west axis to maximize the use of the sun to warm the building.

Early Philadelphia



*Philadelphia William and Mary slant
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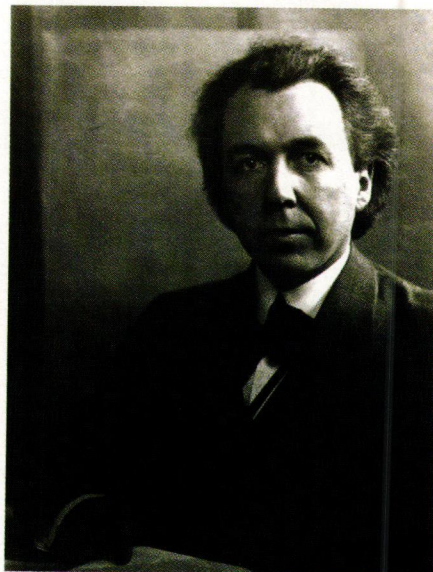
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Frank Lloyd Wright

Jacobs House I, Madison, Wisconsin

Nearly a decade after approaching Wright to design an affordable home for them, the Jacobs asked him for a new home to meet the needs of their growing family. Wright's final design, dubbed the "solar hemicycle," is configured in a half-donut plan open to the south. In what is now seen as a classic passive solar design, the home is designed to remain comfortable throughout the seasons.

The solar hemicycle is essentially one large room whose entire south wall is made of glass. A large, flat overhang shades the summer sun but allows the winter sun in to warm the building. The concrete floor stores the heat of the incoming winter sun and releases it in the evening to keep the home comfortable year-round. To the north, the house is set into an earthen mound to insulate and protect it from cold winds.

Completed in 1949, the home features movable wood partitions to allow the spaces to be flexible and adaptable. An indoor/outdoor pool is used to naturally cool the home in the hot Wisconsin summers. Once again, the home utilized locally quarried stone and wood finished with a natural wax finish.

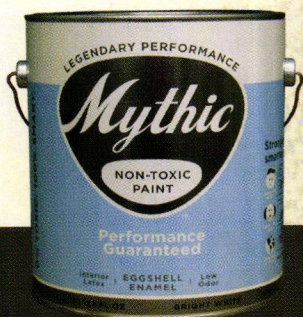
The innovations found within the work of Frank Lloyd Wright have solidified him as the greatest influence on modern architecture. "Organic architecture," the term he used to define his creative process, is inherently green and stands as an example of Frank Lloyd Wright as the first green architect. In the (near) future, buildings such as these will be commonplace. Perhaps by looking to the past, we can glimpse the future of building. **NOH**

Eric Corey Freed is principal of organicARCHITECT, part sustainable architecture firm, part research think tank, based in San Francisco. Eric studied under students of Frank Lloyd Wright. He teaches Sustainable Design at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco and University of California Berkeley. Eric is author of Green Building & Remodeling for Dummies (John Wiley & Sons).

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Pining Away

The lowdown on salvage flooring for the new old house. **TEXT BY MARY GRAUERHOLZ**

Patti Marks needed a board. Not your average ho-hum plank harvested from a young pine tree, but one born of old-growth wood, with a mellow hue and the marks of old age, a board with a story to tell.

Just one slim piece of coveted heart pine would complete a floor in Marks's Cape Cod, Massachusetts, home. Marks had come to Cataumet Sawmill, in Falmouth, Massachusetts, an old-fashioned, eco-conscious operation that still uses wood-fired kilns to dry the wood and is known throughout the Northeast for its gorgeous heart pine salvaged flooring.

Tom Adams, owner with Ted Wolf of Cataumet Sawmill, was her go-to guy. On this raw gray day, Adams searched through piles of wood—a jumble of joists from an old shoe factory, a small mountain of planks from a demolition site. Then he found it—a deep-sheen beauty with markings here and there that bespoke of its long golden history.

Flooring made of salvaged wood has been capturing homeowners like Marks with its good looks, strength, and roots in recycling. For many homeowners, the wood simply looks better; they will say the color is more varied and the markings unique. Others love its history. Then there are many people who see it as a way to save our forests. The most coveted salvaged wood is from first-growth, or virgin, forests that were first logged by early European settlers in the 1600s. Virgin forests have almost disappeared from our country.

Besides giving this old wood new life, reclaimed wood saves other trees from being felled. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, approximately 250,000 buildings are torn down every year, yielding perfectly good



ERIK KVALLSVIK

wood—and in many cases, gorgeous, healthy wood that can give a house both cachet and an edge on the market. Other types of salvaged wood started out as trestles or wooden tanks. Goodwin Heart Pine in Micanopy, Florida, recovers wood from rivers, vestiges of logging 100 years ago, when logs were lashed together and floated to their destination. “Most of the logs have ax marks on them,” says co-owner Carol Goodwin. “It means they were cut before the 1880s.” Goodwin has published three booklets on restoring the longleaf heart pine ecosystem.

Architect Peter Zimmerman incorporated salvaged flooring in this new old house dining room.

Bob Falk, a research engineer with the USDA Forest Products Laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin, mulls the quarter of a million buildings demolished every year, many of them constructed during the Industrial Revolution. “That’s about a billion board feet of structural lumber,” Falk says. “And that figure doesn’t include the millions of board feet of hardwood flooring and exterior siding of redwood, cedar, and cypress, as well as the millions of wood doors and windows

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Archer Buchanan Architects relied on salvaged materials to create the illusion of age in this new old house.

available for reuse." It is, Falk notes, the ultimate in recycling and sustainability.

For Falk, the co-author with Brad Guy of *Unbuilding: Salvaging the*

Architectural Treasures from Unwanted Houses, reclaiming wood is a no-brainer. "The original forests are largely gone," he says. "The wood they produced still resides in our building infrastructure and can be salvaged for reuse when a building is taken down. We did these

forests an indignity by cutting them and not preserving enough of their grandeur. We shouldn't do them a second indignity by landfilling the lumber they produced. The old-growth forests are nearly extinct, and so will be the lumber they produced, if we don't make an effort to reuse it."

Falk's philosophy has legions of fans today. The ever-quickenning surge of eco-minded construction and recycling has added powerful energy to the demand for reclaimed wood. Demand, naturally, has driven prices.

Max Taubert, owner of Duluth Timber Company, in Duluth, Minnesota, remembers selling barn beams in the 1970s for aesthetic detailing. However, most old lumber was shuffled off for use in the construction of the guts of structures, never to be seen. Today, with eco-conscious construction on the tip of almost every tongue, recycled wood flooring continues to rise in popularity.

"Recycling changed the dynamics of everything," Taubert says. Today he sells salvaged wood throughout the country, much of it for flooring. Most of it is old-growth Douglas fir, primarily from warehouses and factories in the Pacific Northwest, the majority of it dating to the late 1800s and early 1900s. He recently purchased tanks constructed of old-growth redwood from a winery in California.

People who love reclaimed wood invariably love the old buildings and structures from which it originates. "I like the old buildings," says Tom Adams. "I don't like to see the good ones torn down." Much of his wood comes from factories built in the Northeast during the Industrial Revolution. The durability and beauty of this old wood, some of it from trees hundreds of years old, is unparalleled for building, Adams says. His sawmill is known as a source for antique heart pine, also called "hard pine." At Cataumet Sawmill, his reclaimed wood is sawn, dried in wood-fired kilns, planed,

ERIK JOHNSON

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and cut on a rip saw. A select grade sells for \$5 to \$15 a square foot. Adams has sent wood to locations as far afield as the West Indies and Hollywood.

With the demand for flooring from salvaged wood have come breathtaking prices. As Taubert says, "People started paying a premium to buy recycled wood." Its popularity isn't all good news, as far as Taubert is concerned. "It's gotten so valuable that it's kind of disheartening," he says. "Most of the trade is to the wealthy." Andrew St. James, operations manager at Goodwin Heart Pine, concedes that salvaged heart pine flooring is probably double the price of standard-grade new oak flooring. But fans of reclaimed wood floors say it's a bargain.

The popularity of salvaged wood also has brought the trade some choice hair-raising stories. "It's a cutthroat business," Adams says. As he says of the wood, "It's very popular, and it's finite." Bob Falk says that while most brokers and sellers are honest, buyers would be wise to deal with a seller with an established track record. His lab examined a sample of wood that had been sold as heart pine, which is expensive, available only from salvage, and native to the United States. The wood, it turned out, actually was radiata pine, a cheaper plantation wood from New Zealand. "It's a little like the wild, wild West," Falk says. "There are snake oil salesmen out there, and buyers need to educate themselves so they don't get stung." If the deal seems too good to be true, Falk adds, it probably is.

Max Taubert will always be a fan of salvaged wood, for its beauty, strength, history, and an almost indefinable allure. "I knew intuitively all along that this wood is very special," Taubert says. "This is a finite thing. The ancient forest is a finite resource. There is only so much of it. It's the culmination of eons of evolution that will never again happen." **NOH**

Mary Grauerholz is a freelance writer living on Cape Cod.

For Resources, see page 68.


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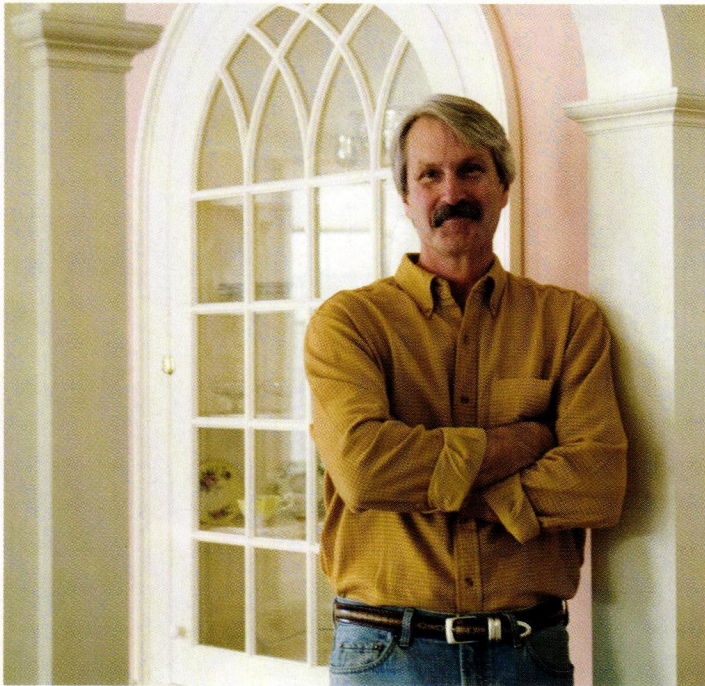
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Preserving the Present

How one New England craftsman honors techniques from the past to build houses for today. **TEXT BY STEPHEN T. SPEWOCK PHOTOS BY ERIC ROTH**



Above Doug Gest started his company back in the 1970s. Today he has a staff that creates beautiful works of art in Traditional wood.

Starting out as a general carpenter in the early 1970s, Doug Gest quickly grew despondent with production home building and its often substandard fabrication. To offset his growing level of disdain, he began holding himself to a higher standard of carpentry. "I began to approach my work from a craft perspective," remembers Doug, asking himself, "How was that piece originally made, and how do I re-create it?" He eventually befriended other folks in the general area who shared the same passion for not just antique homes but the antique tools and methods required to refurbish or even re-create such homes.

By 1975, the group offered to salvage two to three local area homes that had been abandoned and were to be torn down. Once the homes were disassembled, the group transported most of the salvaged material down to coastal home





sites in southern New England, where the pieces were reassembled into newly constructed period reproduction homes. Anything that couldn't make the trip due to neglect or decay had to be re-created to exact detail. However, a situation quickly arose where the craftsmen were unable to accomplish the task with modern power tools, so Doug and his friends used antique tools from the same era to re-create some of the detailed cornice, cove, bed, and crown moldings.

It was while learning how to use these old tools that Doug gained a deep respect and admiration for the carpenters of yesteryear. "One had to have a working knowledge of a lot of tools and techniques—many of which have been lost, especially in today's business model of production homebuilding." With these tools, not only was Doug able to re-create these fantastically detailed period pieces, but also he learned how

to make these unique pieces by hand. "It gave me a whole new appreciation for the difficult work of earlier carpenters, which most modern carpenters take for granted." Doug quickly discovered the same appreciation from a growing number of clientele who were willing to pay the additional costs associated with such time-consuming craftsmanship.

TAKING STOCK

In 1978, Doug Gest Restorations and The Joiners Shop—where they re-create traditional custom architectural millwork—were founded in Hartland, Vermont. Nestled just across the Connecticut River is Hanover, New Hampshire, home of Dartmouth College. Fifteen minutes north is Norwich, Vermont, and only 10 minutes northeast lies Woodstock—world famous for the Woodstock Inn. "Main Street in Woodstock is one of the most beautiful, quintessential drives of

New England, certainly from an architectural perspective," says Doug. "I don't think there is a better display of traditionally restored antique homes anywhere in the world."

Along with all the beautifully appointed homes come an awful lot of restoration projects, most of it performed within 30 miles of the shop—despite being well linked by highways to Hartford, Boston, and New York. "We've been fortunate that despite the recent construction slowdown, there still is a vibrant market in high-end custom renovations, where clients continue seeking the rewards of quality woodworking. Obviously, clients won't pay anyone to 'play' with hand tools, but they will invest in authentic, hand-built craftsmanship that stands the test of time."

Typically, these clients share a mutual appreciation and sensitivity for high

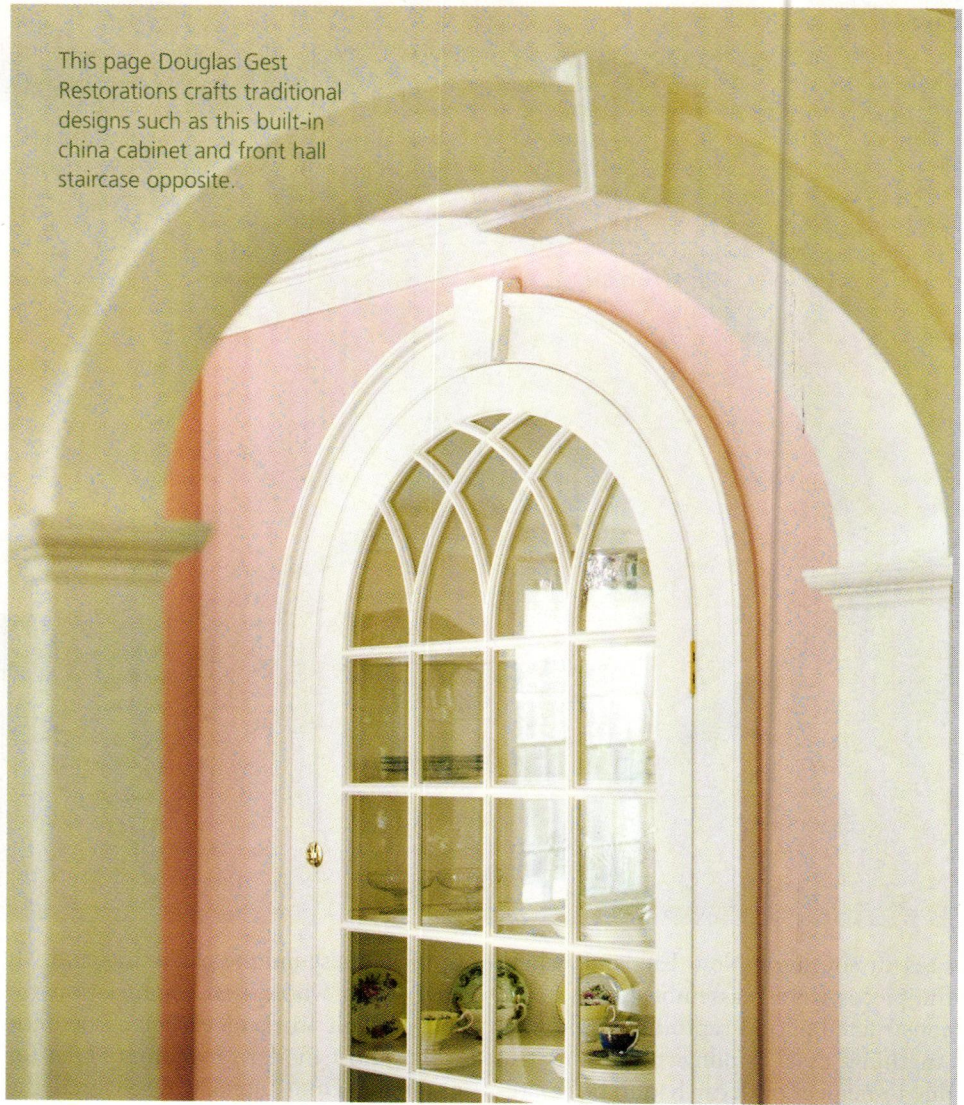
quality products that are handmade with exceptional details and are period appropriate—every aspect that Doug has built his company around. “The right client is the most important factor in a successful project,” states Doug. “The most rewarding and satisfying projects are those where there are openness and two-way communication, in a team approach, with like-minded appreciation for the work involved.”

And the work is significant. While many builders turn to well-established manufacturers for their millwork, Doug doesn’t like picking from somebody else’s interpretation of history. “We make all our own millwork, with most jobs averaging around 5,000–6,000 board feet of rough stock purchased from suppliers of managed resources, which we turn into period pieces in our shop and then use to finish antique reproduction or custom homes,” says Doug. “By manufacturing our own millwork, we can re-create a client’s desires to the exact specifications for the time period, area, style, or custom piece. Each detail of a plan comes out perfect, whether it’s a Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, or custom antique reproduction.”

That said, Doug realizes that it’s not practical in today’s market to make everything by hand, thus steadying his company’s work flow to just two to three projects at one time. “As a small company, it provides the best balance for us to have work and get paid appropriately for the work that we do, maintaining a fair business model for both our clients and employees while remaining true to the craft.”

With only 30 to 40 percent of the work focusing on historical preservation and antique reconstruction, the company has ventured further into more “spec-type” homebuilding, where the period reproduction work is custom-designed. Most recently, Doug has explored doing just the design and fabrication work in the shop and then partnering with a qualified contractor to do the installation at a more remote project site—as long

This page Douglas Gest Restorations crafts traditional designs such as this built-in china cabinet and front hall staircase opposite.



as there is a confident fit with all parties involved. “There’s always a need for the type of craftwork we do, even if we don’t install it ourselves,” he says.

PATH LESS TRAVELED

Today’s building market is vastly different than it was 30, 15, or even 5 years ago. In an effort to capture decreasing profit margins, smaller companies not only shrink crew sizes but also attempt to streamline efficiency by using workers in multiple disciplines, thus enabling the same outfit to juggle diverse projects in an effort to cover the bottom line. “You’ve got framers who paint and finish guys who do roofing,” says Doug.

“Everyone’s wearing different hats to just get the job done more quickly, which automatically results in lowered levels of craftsmanship.”

At the other end of the spectrum, bigger companies attempt to stay competitive by cutting overhead, typically accomplished by subcontracting more and more work. “The problem with that is the people actually doing the work don’t belong to the company putting its name on the work. This creates an atmosphere where if a problem arises, it just gets passed along to the next guy to fix, occasionally getting handed over to the client—and often without their knowledge.”



“I personally made a conscious decision not to follow those divergent trends. In the type of work that we do, there is no appeal to become like everyone else. Our business model has succeeded by getting the right people in the right place to handle all aspects of period reproduction work that we take on.”

For almost 30 years, Doug has maintained a consistent team of between 8–12 full-time employees. At the head of the class is the top craftsman, Ken Grace. “He is a very talented master carpenter who is capable of building anything for any project,” boasts Doug. Helping with all aspects of office and design work is

Marc Head, Doug’s right-hand man for 20 years.

The rest of the staff is flushed out with an average of four carpenters and two painters, which surprisingly presents a challenge itself. “With today’s job sites geared toward speed and efficiency, there’s less priority given to the craft of woodworking. Oftentimes, there just isn’t enough reward for craftsmen on a broad scale in today’s marketplace.”

How does Doug encourage his staff to bridge that gap? By believing in the craft, of course! “To be a good carpenter, you have to be a good craftsman, and vice versa. To be a good craftsman, you

must enjoy doing something tangible with an equal passion to learn and know all the terms, tools, materials, and history of why things are made the way they are. “In the field of woodworking, there must be a desire to learn how to do it and a serious focus on how to make all the items in a house by hand,” says Doug.

Except for framing, all installations are assembled in the shop and finished by hand on-site with simple hand tools. That includes all clapboards, interior and exterior trim, and other intricate details found in doors, windows, or built-ins. The premise is to take the time to make it right the first time, thus saving time and money in the future by extending the life of the house. The result is a long-standing period-authentic structure.

PRESENT TO PASS

The choice to stay small has forced Doug to turn down many lucrative opportunities over the years. Yet by staying focused on the company’s niche market, he can protect the quality of the work. “Along with energy, drive, and desire for perfection, you need an artistic perspective to achieve greatness in this field. I appreciate what we’ve accomplished as a small outfit over the years, mostly enhancing the built environment around us.

When asked about the future of craftsman woodworking, Doug waxes philosophical, “‘New old houses’ started out as a flagship term for selling reproduction antique homes yet has evolved into the last bastion for skilled craftsmanship, allowing those of us a venue to aspire to building beautifully detailed period homes. The goal is to keep that bar high for the individual aspects of period-style homes, the process by which they’re re-created, and those who build them.” Seems the carpenter has passed through craftsman to become artisan. **NOH**

Stephen T. Spewock is a freelance writer who lives west of Boston.

Douglas Gest Restorations and The Joiners shop. 802-436-2496.

Greening the Garden

What we can do to create greener plants and a greener planet.

TEXT BY MICHAEL WEISHAN PHOTOS BY JANE BOOTH

Ask your average gardener, and chances are most consider horticulture a green pursuit. After all, what could be more natural than nature? But in reality, gardening has far more to do with the will of man than the will of the world around us. At best, a garden is the human version of nature perfected; at worst, it's nature tamed, or even corrupted. Every time we as gardeners alter things outdoors, we shift the ecological balance ever so slightly. Mostly, these changes are benign. Sometimes they are even beneficial. But all too often we intervene outdoors with the intent of inflicting a particular vision on the land, regardless of whether or not this concept flows in harmony with what Mother Nature has in mind. You only have to tour the wastefully watered communities of the desert southwest, or wander through the mushroom-like developments of Mac-manions on former farmland in the Northeast, to see how freely we humans impose our vision on the landscape around us. Unfortunately, this kind of callous disregard comes with a high price. Many dangers we've recognized, and ignored, for years: loss of open space, destruction of wilderness habitats, diminution of endangered species, pollution of natural resources. Add to this the latest bane, global warming, and suddenly even the most conscientious gardener starts to wonder what he or she can do to, if not prevent, at least mitigate, some of these issues.

Fortunately, there are some very simple things we as gardeners can do make our gardens as green as possible. Here's three quick steps to get you started.

Recycle

Surprisingly, gardening is a petroleum



Taking small steps in the garden today can produce a healthier garden and planet. Weishan suggests recycling plant pots, conserve water, and cut back on chemical fertilizers as well as the size of your green lush lawn to help the environment.

intensive hobby. Take your average pack of petunias for example. Everyone of these plants has consumed a remarkably large amount of petro-energy in order to appear before you on the shelf at your

nursery: the gas or oil required to heat the greenhouse where they germinated, the chemical fertilizers used to hurry them to bloom, even the gasoline needed to transport these beauties to your door



all add up fast. Far and away the greatest amount of oil, however, is contained within the plastic pot that houses them, and here's where you can easily make a considerable reduction in your garden's carbon footprint: recycle the pots, flats, containers, and other plastic paraphernalia you accumulate each season. Many nurseries now actively encourage their customers to return these materials for

reuse. (Why not? It saves them the trouble of buying new ones year after year.) And for those that don't, most pots these days are made from #2 plastic, which is accepted by the majority of recycling centers across the country—simply add your pots and flats to your weekly recycling bin. Granted, it takes a bit of effort to corral all these bits and pieces at the end of each growing season, but if you

can save at least a portion of this plastic from the landfill, you are way ahead of the game.

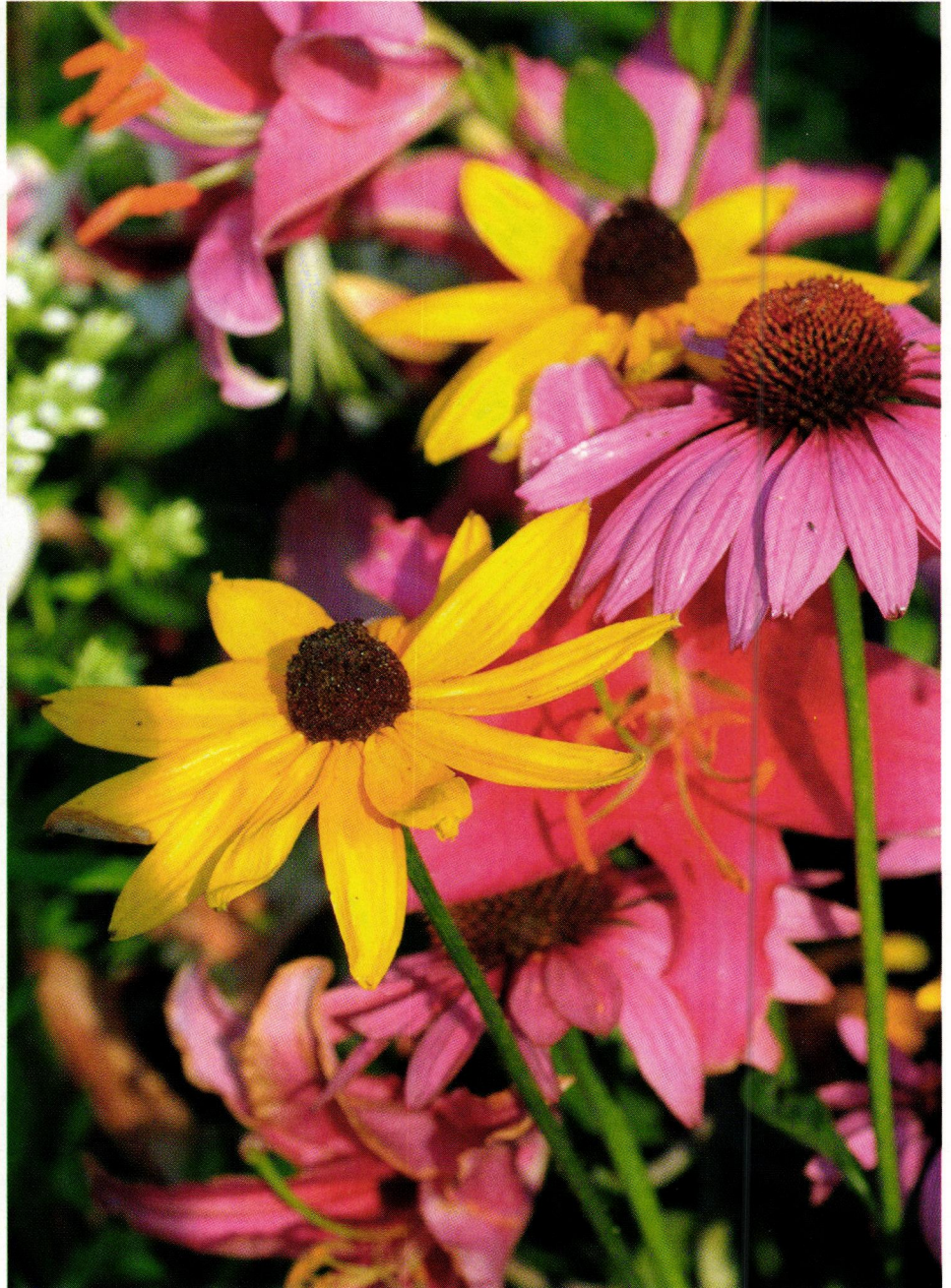
Conserve

Many studies have suggested that the next 50 years are going to be critical for the world's water supply. Growing populations, combined with hotter environmental conditions, are projected to

put great stress on the global supply of H₂O. Here's an area where saving the world one step at a time definitely begins at home. Monitor your garden's water use carefully. Get a simple rain gauge, set it out on your lawn or garden bed, turn on your hose or irrigation system, and find out how long it takes to accumulate one inch of water—the amount the majority of plants need per week throughout the growing season. Most people don't have the vaguest idea how much water their systems deliver in a given period of time, and instead simply turn on the faucet till "things seem wet." Accurately monitoring your water usage will not only improve the health of your plants, but it will save you considerable amounts of money. Cautious fertilizer use is another great way to conserve: not only are fertilizers heavily petro-based, their overuse is one of the main causes of water pollution throughout the world. If you use chemical fertilizers, follow the instructions precisely; don't guess the application amount. (Who hasn't thrown in "just another handful" because that didn't seem "quite enough"?) Or, better yet, switch to organic fertilizers like manure and compost, which not only enrich the tilth of the soil, but are far less likely to spread into adjacent watersheds than their chemical cousins.

Harmonize

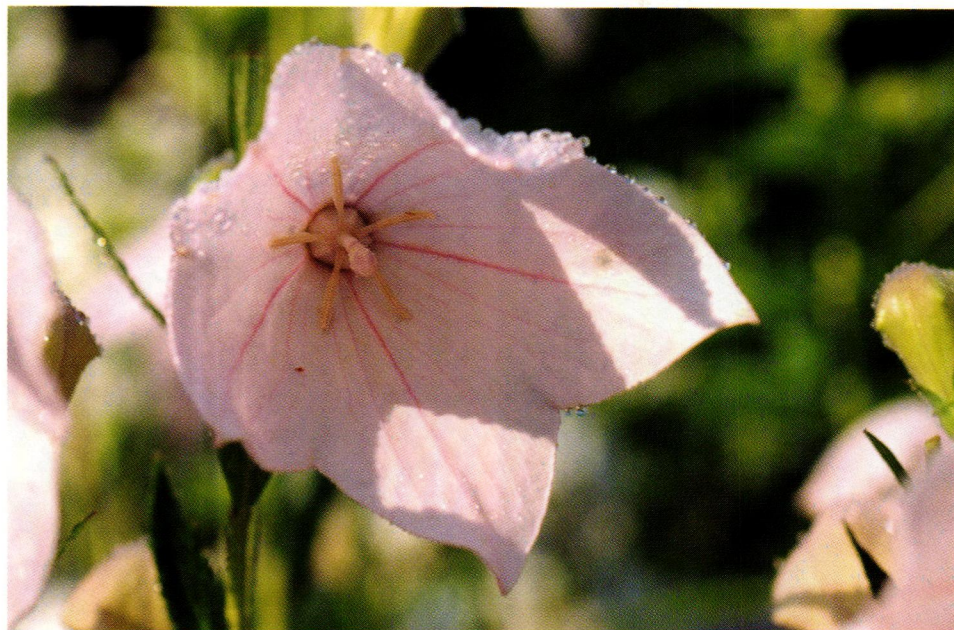
Finally, try to harmonize your landscape not only with your house, as I am continually advocating, but also with climate around you. If you live in a dry region, for instance, remove or reduce water hungry species and replace them with those content with less moisture. If you're in a forested part of the United States, embrace shade and woodland plants; if you're in the prairies, or the far South, find native species that thrive in these areas. Not only will you save back-breaking effort, wasted time, and considerable resources in not having to fight Mother Nature, your landscape will look



Planting flowers that thrive in your region's climate is another way to stay green in the garden.

all the better for embracing the environment around it. And of course, think about reducing or eliminating entirely large grass spaces. As much as I love a good piece of greensward, there is no single surface more resource hungry than

the lawn. From the energy required to sow it, to the chemicals needed to maintain it, to the water required to green it, to the oil required to mow it, grass eats resources faster than a duck takes to water. Not to mention the fact that most



gasoline mowers emit more pollution in one cutting session than your automobile does in a full week of driving. Smaller lawns, mown by hand or electric mower, are definitely the emblem of a new, more environmentally friendly garden.

I know, thinking about global climate change is not nearly as fun as planning that new patio, but a firm resolve now, coupled with decisive action on some reasonably easy steps, will mean that your little patch of green will be green, and stay green, for years to come. **NOH**

Michael Weishan is a freelance writer and owner of Michael Weishan & Associates. He has authored many books including: The New Traditional Garden and The Victory Gardening Guide.

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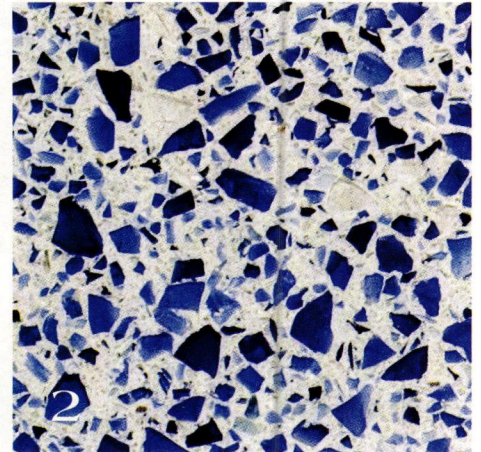
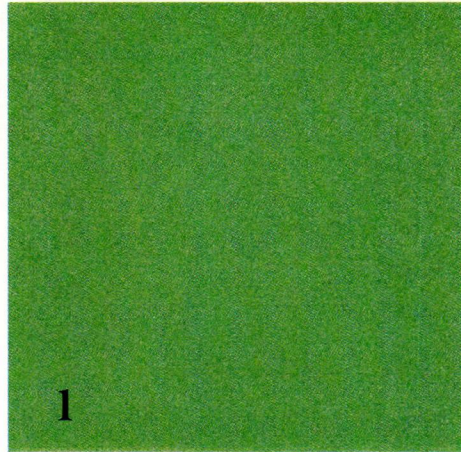
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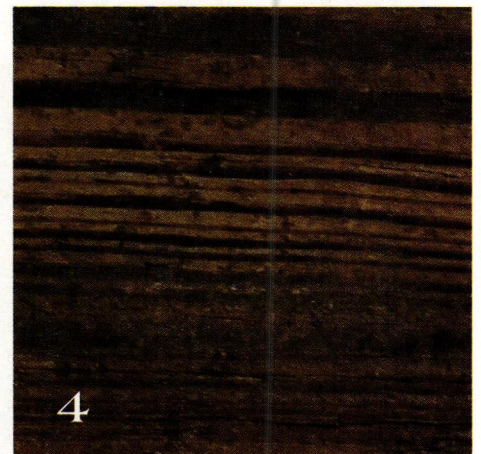
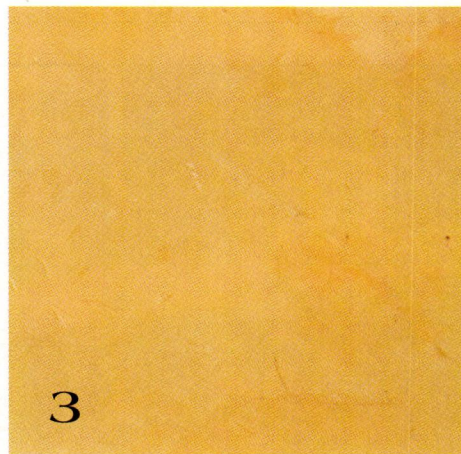


2 Faux Terrazzo

Terrazzo tiles can be found throughout many homes built in the 1930s. Wausau Tiles makes a reproduction for today's homes that looks like its historical prototype.
www.wausautile.com

3 Master Plaster

Decoliss creates interior plaster for your new old house walls and floors. And it's nontoxic too! www.limes.us

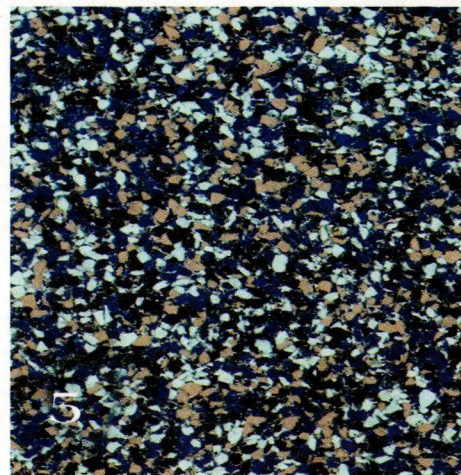


4 Salvaging the Past

Another sure way to green your home is to use recycled wood flooring. Shown here is Elmwood Heartpine in reclaimed rustic grade.
www.elmwoodreclaimedtimber.com

5 Recycle Rubber

At the turn of the last century, rubber was often used for its soundproofing qualities to cover floors in service areas. Ecosand recycles rubber to create this 1900s surface.
www.gerbertltd.com



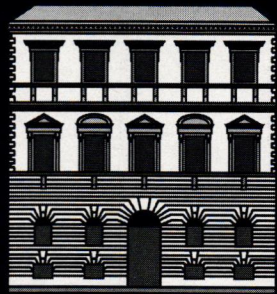
6 Get Corked

Cork was also a sought-after floor covering for its soundproofing qualities as well as being easy on your feet. www.habitusnyc.com



For more information, see page 68.

TRADITIONAL BUILDING



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The homeowners prefer dining outdoors when seasonable. All exposed wood is cedar. Opposite A formal garden links the house to the barn complex. During construction of the limestone house, great care was taken to protect the ancient spruce trees next to the main entrance. Boxwood rims each section of the formal garden, adding form and interest in winter. Told that too many pine needles would compromise the life span of cedar shake shingles, the homeowners went with double-weight asphalt shingles instead.





La Belle Vie

Wouter and Maria Eshuis create a beautiful life—and new old house—outside London, Ontario.

TEXT BY SALLY LAMOTTE CRANE PHOTOS BY ROBIN STUBBERT





Tucked in the verdant rolling hills outside of London, Ontario, the country estate of Wouter and Maria Eshuis has undergone a mighty transformation. At the heart of this 56-acre farm today sits a stone-clad main house, an 1830s guest house with pool, five acres of cultivated lawn and gardens, and three new structures next to an old barn and silo—a horse barn, a workshop, and a garage. The result is *Belle Vie*, French for “beautiful life.” What is most remarkable is that this couple designed, built, or renovated these buildings themselves, on a budget, requiring remarkable vision, perseverance, and personal toil. They also designed and implemented extensive landscaping.

Just over 25 years ago, the young couple from the Netherlands, visiting relatives in this part of southwestern Ontario, was smitten by the property despite its caving-in outbuildings, scattered debris, and knee-high grass. “It was a royal mess, but we could see through it,” says Wouter. “We saw the tall trees and the rolling earth, tucked away behind the hill. We liked London and its countryside for its European feel.” The farm reminded Maria of Toulouse, the French region in which she once dreamed of settling. Her goal was to build a stone French-style cottage here, she says, “with slate floors without baseboards and furnished in a French neo-Colonial style.”

When they bought the property in 1983, the Eshuises moved into a portion of an aluminum-clad 1970s ranch house connected with a rambling midsection to the land’s original 1830s structure. Over time, the couple created a plan for their property while raising five children. In 1993, they removed the 1830s cottage, hauling it across the property to a new foundation. Then they demolished the middle section. Their plan was to build a new stone house that would incorporate the ranch house, covering it in stone while they lived within. Unsatisfied by several drawings rendered by an architect, Wouter, an entrepreneur, designed the house himself, later receiving an engineer’s stamp of approval. “We truly believed that the more simple the lines, the more practical the house would be for us,” says Wouter. “I don’t know what was used more, the pencil

Opposite Window seats ring the living room, which faces south to capture sunlight. Many of the French-styled furnishings were acquired at auction. The built-in bookcases lie flush to the wall. Right Slate floors cover the first floor. Pine posts and beams reinforce the natural feel of the house. A Douglas fir ridge beam runs the length of the room to provide architectural support.





or the eraser. Through trial and error, we made it the way we wanted it, keeping it simple, not posh.”

The result is a cross-gabled, two-story limestone house with a one-story wing incorporating the old house, now housing the children’s bedrooms. The organic, natural feel of the stone structure, implying solidity and age, complements its towering trees, garden, and rock wall surroundings. The wide hipped-roof porches encourage outdoor living, leading the family into numerous gardens and eventually out to the barn and the horse pastures. The only sounds to be heard are the whoosh of wind through the 100-year-old spruces, bird songs, or the calls of roosters, dogs, and horses.

Maria went on a quest for limestone of a certain color, eventually finding success in a distant quarry. The owner said that if the couple handpicked the limestone, they could have it for the cost of transportation. It took three truckloads of 25 tons each, all handpicked, costing \$1,200 in total. Wouter laid the 7-inch-thick solid stones around the existing wing himself and then enlisted a family member’s help for the new portion of the house. In the window sills and in arches above the upstairs windows, he placed Belgium granite blocks, once thought to be ship’s ballast.

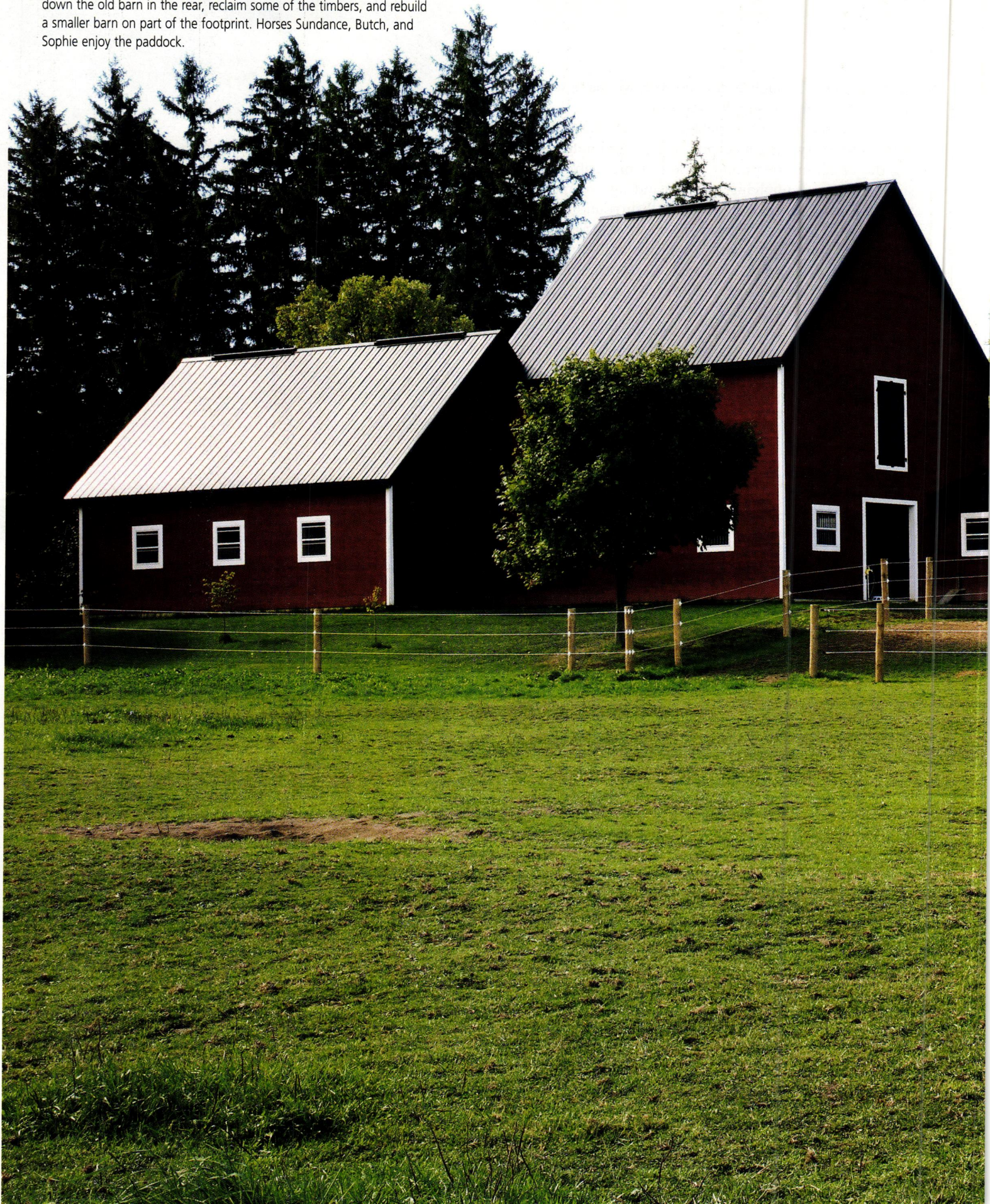
They bought random slate for the floors from a bankruptcy auction. Wouter spent three months creating smooth edges with a water saw. Maria sorted each slate by color so that Wouter could lay them with gradual shifts in color. He participated in almost all phases of constructing the 5,300-square-foot home. “I laid the flooring, hung dry wall, and did a good part of the plumbing,” he says. He helped with the timber framing but relied on the help of a roofing crew and an electrician. “A lot of this was a labor of love,” says Wouter. “I don’t know if I could do it all again. I know I would hire more people in the future.”

The interior wood is pine, with the exception of a Douglas fir ridge beam shipped from British Columbia to provide strength for the 28-foot length of the living room. The walls are stress-skin panels, efficient for heating the home during Canadian winters. Desiring double-hung, solid-wood windows with true divided light, the homeowners selected Marvin windows and French doors. The foundation is concrete with a full heated basement. A woodstove in the spacious, French-styled living room and two furnaces with forced-air heat provide and redistribute warmth. Wouter insisted on a Rumford fireplace

Opposite A massive 12-foot-long dining table with maple top and pine sides dominates the dining room. The oak blanket chest on the right rear wall and the oak chest on the left wall are family pieces brought over from the Netherlands. The candelabras are also from Holland. Bought at auction, the antique dining table is comprised of two boards—one is 12 inches wide and the other, while cracked, is 30 inches wide.



A three-car garage, horse barn with hayloft, chicken coop, and workshop building are the most recent additions to the property. Plans are to tear down the old barn in the rear, reclaim some of the timbers, and rebuild a smaller barn on part of the footprint. Horses Sundance, Butch, and Sophie enjoy the paddock.





* De gustibus non est disputandum *



Merol

Nuts St. Georges

Chablis

Bordeaux

Zinfandel

Veggie Family Pro

in the dining room. Maria's Aga cooker was the first item placed in the new house. She is a fine cook and trained dietician. Together, the Eshuis represents Aga across Ontario. Maria leads Aga cooking workshops in her kitchen. Wouter is a trained and licensed Aga installer who also troubleshoots for the venerable British company.

Around 1998, the couple completely renovated the original 1830s cottage, now located by the pool and used as a bed & breakfast. They built a new portico, removed plaster ceilings to expose and reinforce beams, and installed steel rods to reinforce the side walls. Wouter placed maple boards salvaged from a tobacco warehouse over the second-story floors, refinished the first-story floors, and added new plumbing and fixtures, as well as an Aga cooker in the kitchen. "We made a lot of alterations, but the feeling is still very old," says Maria.

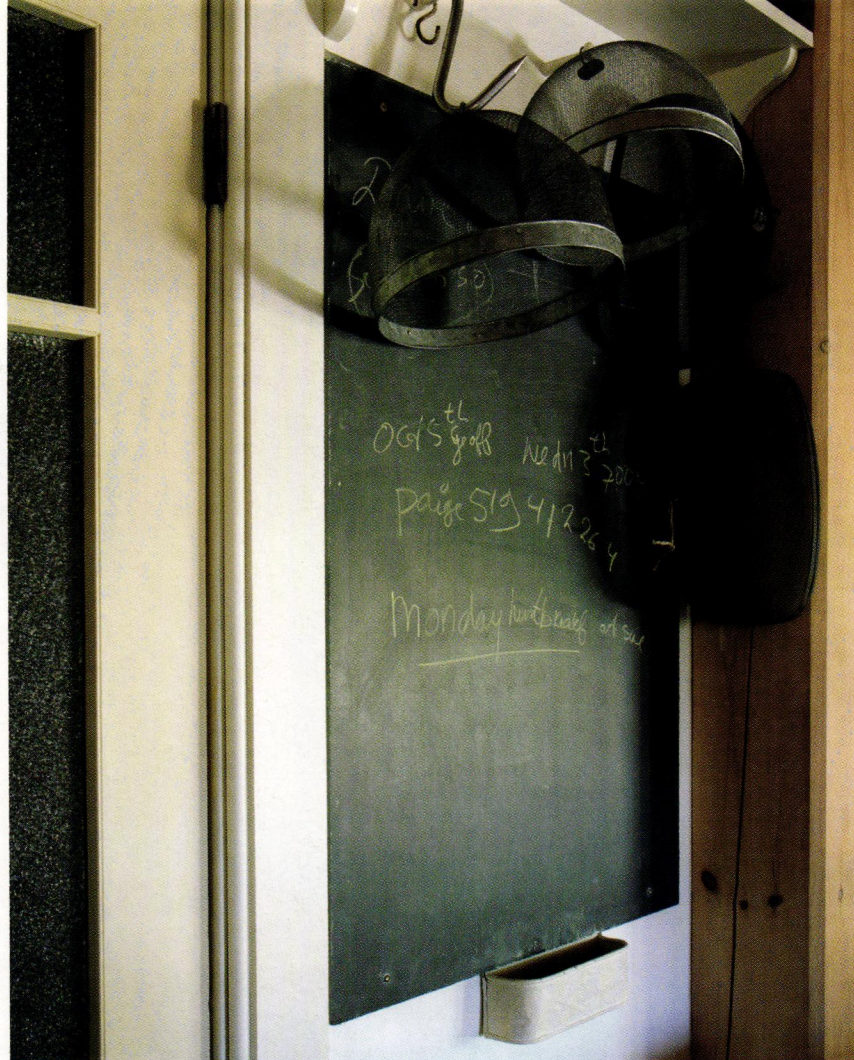
Nestled close to the main house, century-old spruce trees lend age to the new stone structure. The homeowners flattened the hilly lawn between the house and barn so that Maria could put in what she calls her "mini-Versailles," a formal French garden. It is comprised of 16 blocks of white flowering plants edged in boxwood, separated by grass paths, with pea gravel running down the center and around the perimeter. She uses greater color in the formal and informal gardens elsewhere on the grounds, except red, and relies on terraces, rock gardens, plush lawn, and rows of trees, like beeches, to add interest.

In 2006, Wouter and a worker built a trio of buildings partially over the footprint of a razed horse barn. In addition to a central horse barn and loft, they built a three-car garage on one side and a workshop building with attached chicken coop on the other. The garage and workshop are the same dimensions. All are boarded in pine and painted with a special Swedish paint noted for its red color. Never one to rest, Wouter plots his next project—tearing down their old rickety barn, rescuing timbers, and putting on his tool belt once again. NOH

Sally LaMotte Crane is a freelance writer and editor who lives along the coast of Maine.

For more information, see Resources page 68.

Opposite The Latin phrase along the beam above the British Aga cooker translates into, "There's no disputing about taste." A convenient spigot fills pots sitting on the cooker. Old Dutch jars sit above the wall tiles. A salvaged door leads into a walk-in cooler. Stored above the chalkboard are covers to protect food from bugs during outdoor summer dining. The Belle Vie emblem made by a tenant proclaims the "Beautiful Life" that the homeowners have enjoyed since finding their property in 1982.







Kitchen Detail

The Classic Group updates a 1930s kitchen that is both functional and fits into the home's original design.

TEXT BY NICOLE MARANHAS PHOTOS BY ERIC ROTH

Set back from a wooded lane in Wayland, Massachusetts, this 1937 Colonial Revival is enchanting for more than its classic beauty. Designed by Boston architect Eleanor Raymond, noteworthy for doing work with vernacular forms as well as for being one of the few female architects of her time, the house is both rare and elegant in its simplicity—something the homeowners have known since they bought the house in the 1980s.

They were less enchanted with the small utilitarian kitchen, designed during a time when kitchens were used solely for cooking. Regarding the repeated attempts to update the floor-

ing and wallpaper, “We kept trying to give it face-lifts,” say the homeowners. As the years passed, the couple longed for a gathering space where they could entertain family and friends. They found The Classic Group, a design-build firm in Lexington that specializes in historic restoration and renovation, to create a contemporary kitchen that would fit with the home’s vernacular sensibility.

The new kitchen feels as though it has always been part of the home. The Classic Group designs a dream kitchen perfect for catering large parties as well as a place to enjoy morning coffee and views of the gardens.



of the house. Expanded by 7 feet, the room is an inviting open space. A sunny breakfast nook overlooks the gardens, replacing a screen porch that once stood at the end of the terrace. Details borrowed from elsewhere in the house seamlessly blend old and new. A shed roof above the addition and breakfast nook was inspired by the roof of an enclosed porch formerly adjoining the family room. Beadboard ceilings incorporate a motif found throughout the house, while simple window casings and door openings mirror their original counterparts. For the exterior, white-painted cedar shingles match the original siding.

The centerpiece of the kitchen is a custom-built island, topped with polished granite and surrounded by bar stools for informal dining or chatting with the chef. "Originally, we wanted the island to contain the stove, but when we saw the sketches, we all agreed it chopped up the space." The stove stands against the exterior wall, while the sink and dishwasher are housed unobtrusively in the island. A second sink and commercial dishwasher beneath a wall of glass-door cabinets can accommodate large dinner parties.

choosing an interesting granite," Eadie says. Next, they searched for just the right lights to cast a glow over the rosy stone: French ceramic weighted pendant lamps in coral red boast spectacular shape and color. Animal etchings on the creamy tile backsplash recall the home's wooded surroundings. In the breakfast nook, coppery birds nestled among the arms of the chandelier play off the backsplash tile and the bronze hue of the outdoor fountain. Black countertops are honed granite to mimic the look of soapstone, allowing the island granite to shine.

The homeowners opted for a travertine stone floor, which is durable and practical for pets. Eadie suggested laying the stone in a random pattern to create an easy flow between the kitchen and breakfast nook, a slightly imperfect effect that adds to the warmth of the rooms.

In addition to installing central air and radiant heating in the house, The Classic Group also transformed a second porch into a year-round conservatory and created a terrace in view of the kitchen to provide a graceful transition between the house and landscape, a picturesque sweep of gardens cul-

"We didn't want the kitchen to look like a museum—we wanted something that would fit with the house."

Kochman Reidt + Haigh created the traditional custom cabinetry. "We didn't want the kitchen to look like a museum," say the homeowners, "but we wanted something that would fit with the house." Simple frames with flat recessed-panel doors offer a fresh take on the original style. The furniture bases on the cabinetry flanking the stove are detailed with decorative cutouts in place of standard toe-kicks. Instead of a factory finish, The Classic Group hand-painted each cabinet on-site with as many as 10 coats for durability as well as the look of an "old school" paint job, complete with brushstrokes.

Kochman Reidt + Haigh designed cabinet interiors with equal care. "We work with homeowners cabinet by cabinet, drawer by drawer, to understand how they are going to live in their kitchens," says Bob Clinton of Kochman Reidt + Haigh. Here is a kitchen in which every item claims a home of its own: Knives fit neatly into custom slots; teacups are snug in cubbies. Bottom cabinets feature sliding drawers or swing-out shelves so that no corner is wasted. A roll-out pantry turns a narrow space into an inconspicuous storage center. With everything out of sight, the countertops remain uncluttered and ready for use.

For the interiors, designer Nancy Barrett Eadie collaborated with the homeowners to select finishes and furnishings that evoke a sense of warmth. "We started with the island,

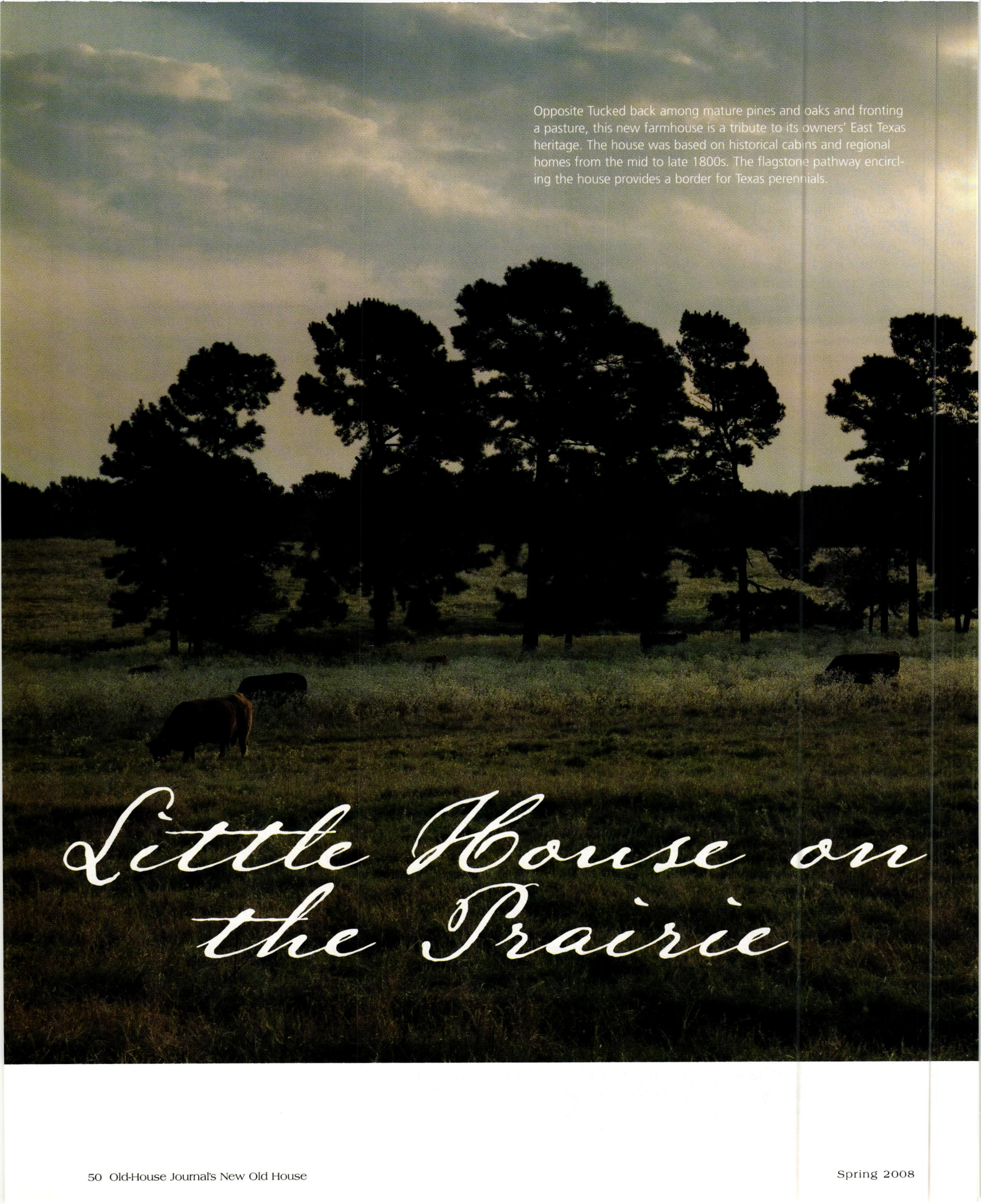
tivated by Sue Whitcombs. Overall, the new spaces preserve the harmony of three fields—interior, exterior, and landscape—for which Raymond was known.

"They thought about every detail so carefully," say the homeowners of The Classic Group. The team even set up a temporary kitchen in the dining room—complete with protective walls, flooring, appliances, and a sink—to ensure the homeowners would not be inconvenienced during construction. "I'd heard these horror stories about people cooking in their bathrooms with hot plates," says one of the homeowners. "I even had a view of my gardens."

The final result is undoubtedly one that would have pleased Raymond, not only because the renovations carry the imprint of the original house but also because she believed first and foremost in designing homes to reflect the needs and lifestyles of the homeowners. Watching the home bask in the late morning sun—wisteria framing the pergola above the terrace, breakfast windows opening to the fresh air, a dog cheerfully barking in the kitchen—one gets the sense of a family truly at home. **NOH**

Nicole Maranbas is a freelance writer who lives in Chatham, Massachusetts.

For Resources, see page 68.



Opposite Tucked back among mature pines and oaks and fronting a pasture, this new farmhouse is a tribute to its owners' East Texas heritage. The house was based on historical cabins and regional homes from the mid to late 1800s. The flagstone pathway encircling the house provides a border for Texas perennials.

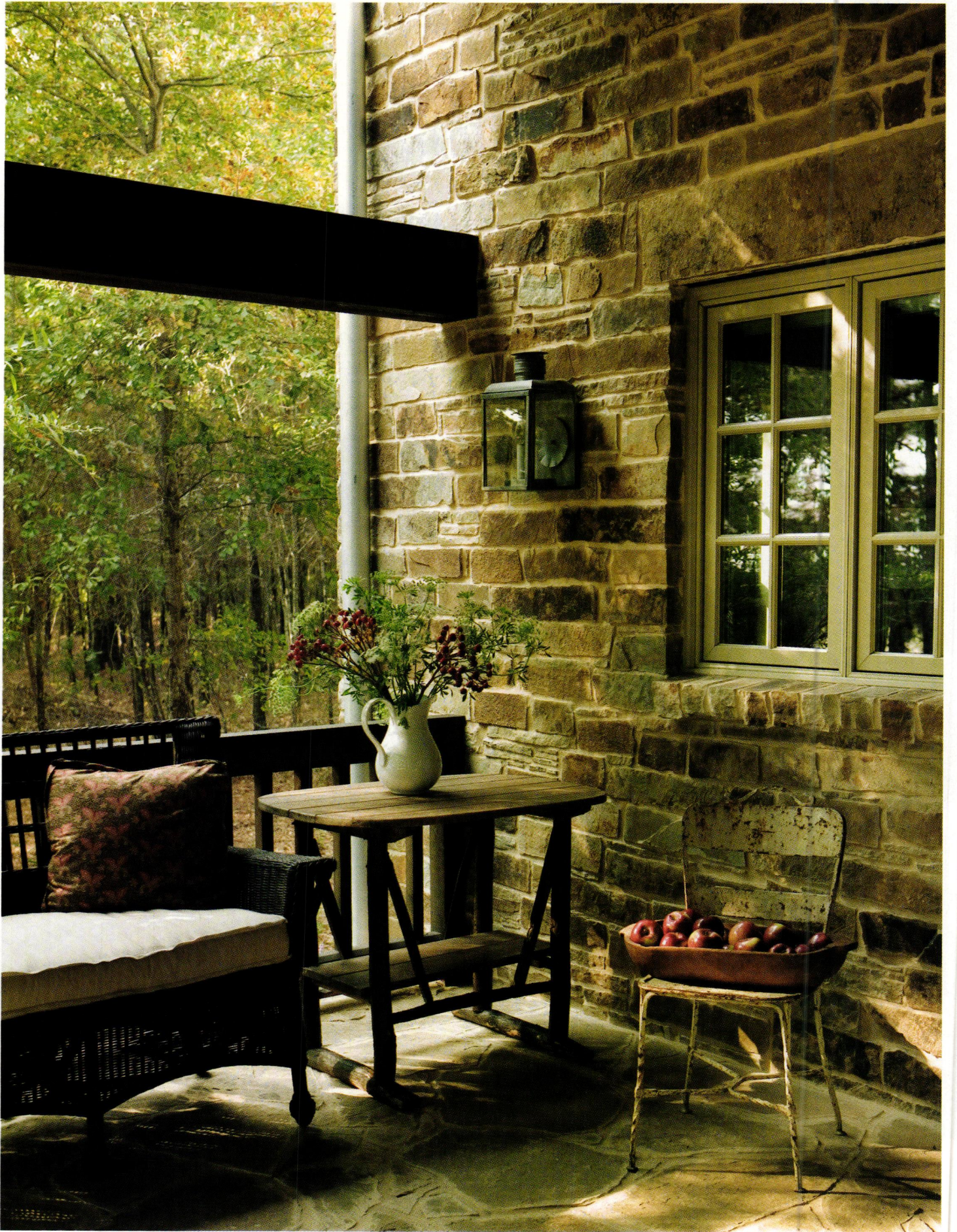
Little House on the Prairie



Architect Stephen B. Chambers brings traditional sensibilities to East Texas.

TEXT BY J. ROBERT OSTERGAARD PHOTOS BY ERIC ROTH





M “Where are you from?” These days—with so many of us traveling far from our roots in search of a better job or a better climate or a different way of life—it’s become an increasingly common question. And why not? Asking where someone hails from doesn’t just pinpoint a geographic spot, it may also reveal something about a person’s history and heritage. Where we come from is a part of who we are.

Ask this question of a certain married couple in East Texas—Susan and Josiah—and they might respond with a quizzical look or a gentle smile. After all, they’re liable to be standing on the very land that’s been in Susan’s family for over 130 years. Ask about the farmhouse on that land, though, and you’ll be surprised to learn it’s only about three years old.

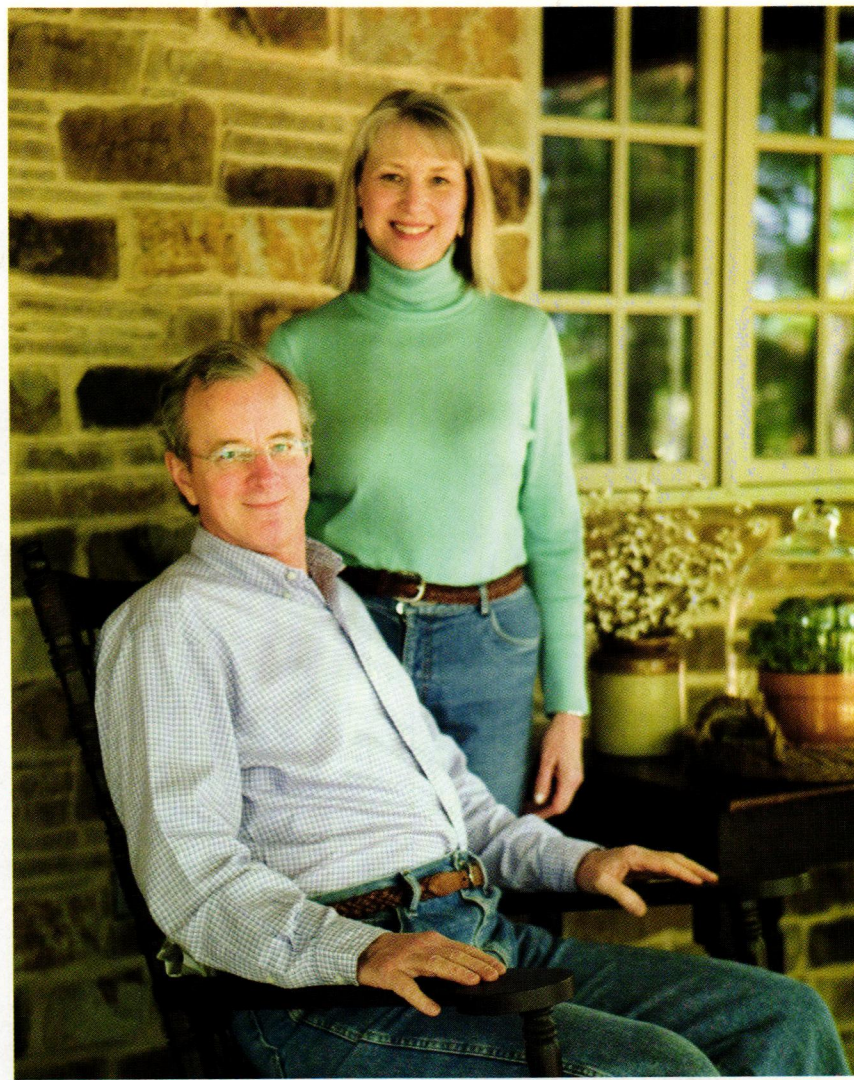
The house was designed by Stephen B. Chambers, A.I.A., a Dallas-based architect with more than 30 years experience in residential design and historic renovation. It’s a weekend retreat for the couple, but it’s something more than that. Susan and Josiah consider this their true home. It’s a tribute to their ancestry, to East Texas, and to their life together.

“The land has been in my family since 1871,” Susan says. “It was purchased by my great-great-grandfather. So, when we went to Steve to design us a house, we explained to him how important the land was to us and that this was a house we’d own forever because we do not plan to sell the land.”

“I remember what we said to Steve,” Josiah continues. “We said, ‘Steve, we would like you to design us a farmhouse that will look as if it could have been built by Susan’s ancestors when they acquired the property in 1871.’”

To accomplish this task, Chambers and his clients chose to site the house back in a forest of mature pine and oak trees facing the open meadowland pasture where cattle graze. “That was a delicate operation,” Chambers says. “You had to make the house look as established as possible, like the trees had actually grown up around the house.” The site slopes toward the meadow, so Chambers started the house close to the grade in the back and allowed the house to rise up on a pier-and-

The gabled ends of the front porch were left open to catch as much of the breeze as possible. When the weather is fine, you’ll find owners Susan and Josiah here. Architect Stephen Chambers chose a rich mix of natural materials—cedar, Oklahoma tan flagstones, and Arkansas sandstone for the façade—lending beauty and durability to the exterior.





beam foundation toward the front. "Instead of pushing the house down in the ground, so to speak, we made it so it seems to rise toward the meadow. This gives it nicer view out to the field."

In designing the house, Chambers and his clients drew from the distinctive architectural traditions of East Texas. "They're very interested in history," Chambers says. "And in particular, Texas history. So we spent a good bit of time looking at and doing research on historical Texas homes from the 1800s: small, almost cabin like houses."

As he explains, early Texas houses were often simple box-like structures with a gabled roof that were then added on to over the generations. Looking at the front of this house, the dormer windows on the second floor cut deeply into the roofline, as though the upstairs rooms were carved out of former attic space. From the side of the house, at the kitchen entrance, the saltbox profile gives the illusion of a later addition. "They built as much house as they could to start with," Chambers says of the early settlers. "Then they moved up into the attic and then added a shed on back for more space. So that's really where the form and shape of this house come from."

Among the most prominent exterior features, the big front porch is typical for Southern houses throughout the 1800s. Big porches were important in old homes," Chambers says, "because they let you sit comfortably out of the sun and take in the breeze. Our weather down here is hot. Unlike up North where the big concern is to keep warm, down here it's to keep cool."

As one might expect, Chambers and his clients chose building materials appropriate for their East Texas location, like galvanized steel roofing and a stone exterior. "It's called Arkansas Café Chop," Susan explains. "It's a sandstone. Most newly built stone houses tend to be Texas limestone. But this is East Texas, and it's very humid. We were concerned it would become blackened over time. This stone is aging very gracefully, because it has all the brown colors and variations in it."

The choice of stones and their placement became a labor of love for Susan and their mason, Derrick Johnson. "The crowning glory of the house is the stonework," she says. To give the exterior and chimney a more rustic appearance, the mason split many of these dimension stones, weaving the smaller pieces throughout the courses. Susan and Josiah also went out into

The kitchen is a mix of fine finished cabinetry—like flush-frame cabinets—balanced against rustic touches, such as the soapstone counters and open shelving. The hutch reads as a single, freestanding piece of furniture, "like a breakfront or a secretary," according to the architect. It is topped by a crown-molding detail found by Interior designer Mary Cates book of antique furniture and reproduced by Fisher Cabinetworks of Flint, Texas.





Top According to architect Steve Chambers, the intent of the open floor plan downstairs was to "make the space live as large as possible." Although the walls are clad in pine boards, the owners and architect wanted a more finished look for the interiors. This was achieved by separating the boards one-quarter inch during installation, and then painting them Benjamin Moore China White. Doors, door trim, and window trim are painted Benjamin Moore Bennington Gray. The 5-inch-wide pine board flooring selected for use throughout the house is a lesser grade of pine, adding to the fiction that this is a much older house. The idiosyncratic saltbox shape and distinctive masonry are especially evident when approaching the house from the driveway. In time, the owners intend to build a garage barn here.

Below Susan and Josiah relax on the front porch. Bottom A screened porch is a dependable and desirable adjunct to the master bedroom. The porch is stained concrete—more casual than the flagstone front porch—and the double doors are an echo of the front entry.



An attention to detail in choosing fixtures and furnishings was essential to achieving a historic effect, even in less-frequently seen rooms, such as the upstairs bath. The Porcher console lavatory sink with Newport Brass faucet was selected in part because of its traditional detailing, and also because it provides ample surface area for guests' toiletries. Additional space is offered by a petite wire table from Room Service, in Dallas, Texas. The sconces are from Pottery Barn.



their pasture and gathered some of the native iron-ore stone to add to the mix. “There’s a fair amount just below the surface,” Josiah says. “And occasionally, walking the property, you’ll come across them. I asked the mason to incorporate them because I thought it was consistent with the theme of a house that looked like it might have been built in 1871.”

Smaller details, like the lighting, were also chosen with East Texas in mind. As Susan points out, much of the reproduction lighting on the market has a New England aesthetic. So, to light the front porch, she selected oversized barn lights that transcend any regional connotations. “These seemed to look Texas enough for us,” she says. The kitchen chandelier is an adaptation of a one-of-a-kind folk art fixture from Old Deerfield, Massachusetts, she points out, so it’s also not a typical New England fixture.

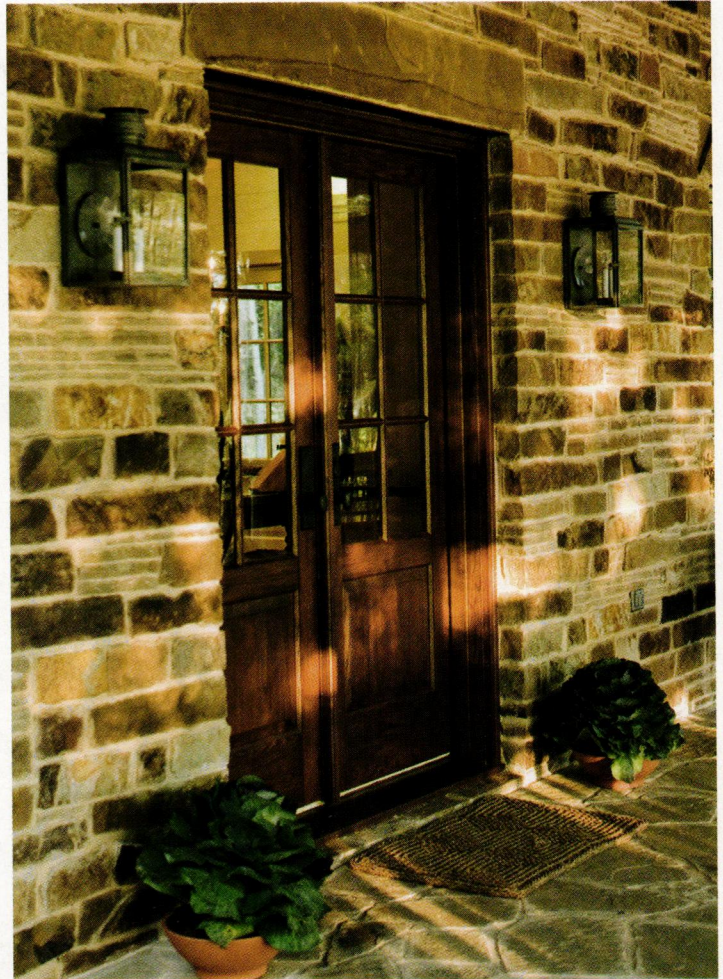
Susan and Josiah had one other requirement for their house: that it be small and manageable enough for a couple, but also flexible enough to comfortably accommodate visiting family and friends. “We asked Steve to design it as small as he could to accomplish what we want,” Josiah explains. At 1,950 square feet—and with the master bedroom and bath on the first floor—it’s just right for two people. But the house works well for hosting overnight guests in the two upstairs bedroom suites and for entertaining, too. In fact, they specifically requested the front porch be large enough for two large dining tables—enough space to seat 16. “When the weather is good, which is most of the year, we sit out on one of the porches,” Susan says. “We consider those to be major rooms of the house.”

With the new farmhouse complete, Susan, Josiah, and Stephen Chambers have turned their attention to another meaningful project here: the reconstruction of a double-pen dogtrot log cabin, which will serve as a guesthouse. Like their new house, this structure has special significance for the owners, as it’s the original log cabin that Josiah’s great-great-grandfather built when he moved to Texas in 1856. The logs have been transported to their property, the plans have been drawn up, and work is set to start soon. For Susan and Josiah, it’s another way to deepen their roots with their land, a continuation of their families’ histories, and part of a heritage that is sure to be treasured by their own descendants. NOH

Robert Ostergaard is a freelance writer living in New York.

For more information, see Resources page 68.

The 1920s were among the inspirations for the master bath. “You can imagine that someone had remodeled the house then,” Susan says. Blue wainscoting and an antique-inspired hexagonal tile floor—found in all three bathrooms—unify and enliven the space. The bathtub is a reproduction made from an original mold, and the motif topping the medicine cabinets was copied from photos of antique cupboards.



Lost Rabbit is a Traditional Neighborhood Development in Madison County Mississippi. The new community draws on the building traditions of the South to create a warm welcoming sense of place in its house designs.

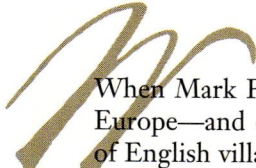


Paradise Hound



Why a developer and a group of builders and architects are going against the grain of suburban sprawl to build a traditional neighborhood in the heart of Mississippi.

TEXT BY JUDI KETTLER



When Mark Frascogna was 12 years old, his mother went to Europe—and came back with the most amazing photographs of English villages and Italian hillside towns. Frascogna would grow up to be a land developer, but as a kid, he just knew that he loved the ways those places looked—quaint town centers that flowed organically into the countryside and houses built by various generations that all looked like they belonged. Where were these kinds of cities in the southeast where he was growing up, he wondered?

It turns out that it was much more than just a kid dreaming: in the decades to come, this kind of thinking would evolve into New Urbanism—a compact, mixed-use, and walkable pattern of development, where the streets are narrower, the architecture of the houses and buildings reflects the history and makes sense in that space, and the town center is easily accessible by foot. Seaside, Florida—designed by architects Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk (principals of the firm DPZ)—was one of the first New Urbanist developments (also called Traditional Neighborhood Development, or TND). Frascogna was fascinated with Seaside early on, and when 260 wooded acres in Madison County, Mississippi, became available, he jumped at the chance to develop a New Urbanist community. Thus, Lost Rabbit was born.

Located along the Natchez Trace Parkway, Lost Rabbit is based on traditional neighborhood principles, says Michael Barranco, founder of Barranco Architecture and the lead architect for Lost Rabbit. “It’s based on how neighborhoods used to be built,” he says, modeled after European villages and hill towns and American colonial communities. It’s a deliberate decision to build against suburban sprawl, which is characterized by homes that are unnaturally large and unrelated to any historical tradition. “We’ve hoodwinked people into thinking that that type of building is quality,” Barranco says. A community like Lost Rabbit—where the architecture and the sense of place and walkability are supremely important—represents a clear departure.

New Urbanist pioneer DPZ developed the town plan, which is based on the scale of a neighborhood—approximately a quarter of a mile, or a five-minute walk. There are three parts to Lost Rabbit, and each will be developed in phases—the town center, the Garden District, and the Lakes District. “We wanted three decidedly different neighborhoods with different character,” says Steve Mouzan, an architect and principal of the New Urban Guild, who acted as a consultant on the Lost Rabbit project.

The town center construction began last year. It was designed with a city like Portofino, Italy, in mind. Built around a marina, it contains mixed-use buildings—retail, office, restaurants, nightlife, townhouses—and is easily accessible, so that a car isn’t necessary (cars aren’t banned though). The streets at

the town center “crank,” or angle and break slightly, and there are piazzas for gathering. A few blocks from the town center, the Garden District is primarily residential and is designed in the style of a grid—strongly resembling American colonial towns. The last phase will be the Lakes District, which has a more rural character—more like a 1920s neighborhood.

Deciding on a style of architecture for the homes in Lost Rabbit was an extensive and carefully thought-out process. Mouzan helped to lead the planning meetings, or “charrettes,” where architects discussed various styles. They ultimately decided on French Colonial as the dominant style. “It’s the indigenous architecture of the region, and we decided it was the single best architecture for the space—which is what TND is all about,” Mouzan says. Keeping the architecture to one predominant style doesn’t mean that all of the homes will look the same: There is still plenty of room for innovation and originality. But it does mean that each home has to abide by a certain architectural code—to ensure both integrity of form and quality.

There will be 600 housing units in total, Barranco says, including townhouses, cottages, and large houses. Smaller units could go for around \$300,000, with the biggest homes selling for a few million. All of the homes are the same quality though, Mouzan says: “We’re not sacrificing that.”

Design work started about four years ago, and home construction began two years ago. About 40 houses have been completed so far, and the first residents have already moved in. Frascogna plans to build about 25 homes a year, stretching it over about 12 years. “We want to create a credible neighborhood,” he says, not one that appears to have just popped up overnight. Young professionals and empty nesters seem to be the big buyers so far, Barranco says, but he expects the community to attract many different types.

The idea is to create a self-contained, sustainable community, with organic gardens, plenty of places to walk, a sports complex, and a town center that serves all of the residents’ basic needs. “We’re trying to encourage as much pedestrian and bike activity as possible,” Barranco says. Eventually, Lost Rabbit might include a school and a church—they have reserved civic sites that could be used for those types of structures.

“New Urbanism has only begun to relearn the basics of how to build something as great as an Italian hill town or the Cotswolds,” Mouzan says. For now, the learning curve continues, with the hope that Lost Rabbit will develop into that special kind of place—a new town with an old feel, where everything looks as if it belongs. **NOH**

Judi Ketteler is a freelance writer.

For more information, see Resources page 68.



Top Lost Rabbit's showhouse's study is traditional in architectural detailing in its French doors and built-in cabinetry. Left The living space in the showhouse is decorated in sophisticated contemporary pieces. Above The town center operates around a marina.

Craftsman Design

Jonathan Miller Architects creates a harmonious Craftsman-inspired house for Traditional Building's Design Challenge competition. TEXT BY NANCY E. BERRY



COURTESY OF JONATHAN MILLER ARCHITECTS

The first annual Traditional Building Design Challenge took place during the Traditional Building Exhibition and Conference in Chicago last year. The American Institute of Building Design, the Institute of Classical Architecture & Classical America, and *New Old House* magazine put eight architects to task to design a new old house that would fit into one of Chicago's nationally recognized historic districts—the Ridgeland/Oak Park, the Gunderson, or the Frank Lloyd Wright Prairie School of Architecture historic district.

Working with set parameters, such as period (1880 to 1920), lot size (50 by 125), square footage (2,200 to 3,200), and style (Foursquare, Prairie style, bungalow, or Victorian), the competitors had three days on the show

floor to complete the renderings and floor plans by hand and then present them to the judges.

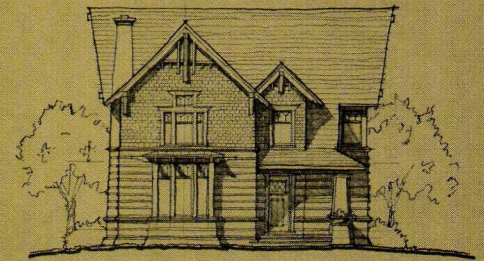
Architect Jonathan Miller Architects winning entry is a Craftsman house with Prairie style detailing. His design influences were homes located in the neighborhood of Oak Park as well as work by architects Frank Lloyd Wright and John S. Van Bergen. The highlights of this Design Challenge winner are its open floor plan, grand fireplace, spacious kitchen, wine bar, walk-in pantry, laundry room, and mudroom. Each bedroom has its own bathroom suite, and the master bedroom features a private outside terrace.

Miller recommends that the house be finished with a clay tile roof, cedar shake siding, horizontal board and batten, timber eave brackets, and exposed dovetail rafters. **NOH**

Craftsman House



Side Elevation



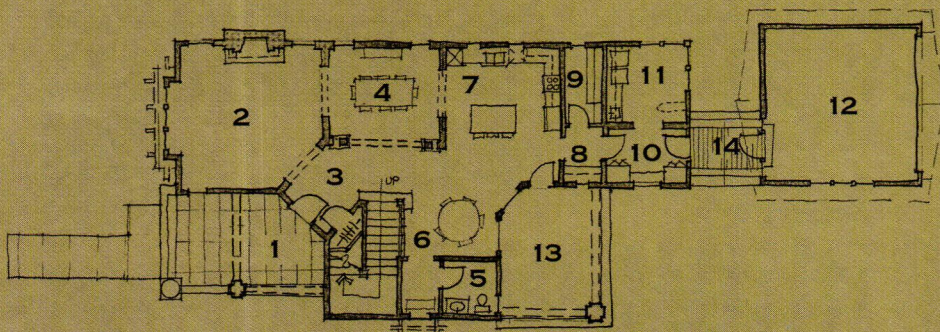
Front Elevation

Square Footage:

MAIN LEVEL - 1,762 SQUARE FEET
UPPER LEVEL - 1,503 SQUARE FEET
TOTAL 3,265 SQUARE FEET

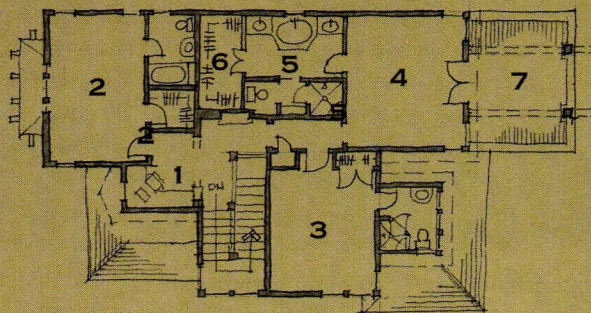
House Dimensions:

36'-8" WIDE BY 70'-8" DEEP
(NOT INCLUDING SEPARATE GARAGE)



First Floor

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1 FRONT PORCH | 8 WINE BAR |
| 2 LIVING ROOM | 9 PANTRY |
| 3 ENTRY | 10 MUDROOM |
| 4 DINING AREA | 11 LAUNDRY |
| 5 POWDER ROOM | 12 GARAGE |
| 6 BREAKFAST NOOK | 13 COVERED PORCH |
| 7 KITCHEN | 14 TERRACE |



Second Floor

- | |
|--------------------|
| 1 COMPUTER STATION |
| 2 BEDROOM |
| 3 BEDROOM |
| 4 MASTER BEDROOM |
| 5 MASTER BATH |
| 6 MASTER CLOSET |
| 7 TERRACE |

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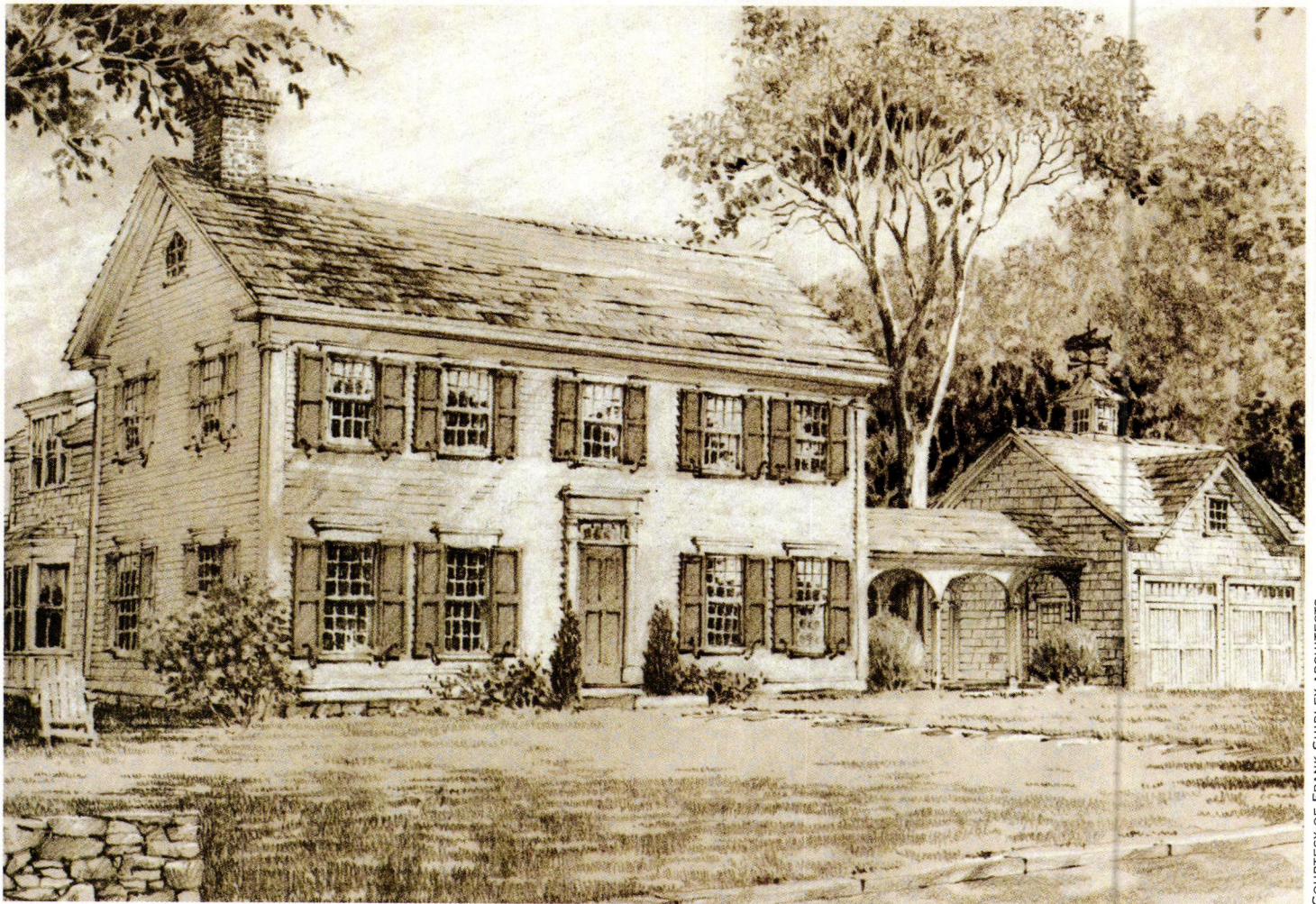
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New England Appeal

Frank Shirley adapted historical American home design principles to today's living for this New England New Old House plan.



COURTESY OF FRANK SHIRLEY ARCHITECTS

The second annual Traditional Building Design Challenge hosted in Boston brought about this wonderful traditionally style home designed by first-place winner, Frank Shirley of Frank Shirley Architects of Cambridge, Massachusetts. The design of this Design Challenge winner had to fit into the historic district of Old King's Highway on Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Shirley chose a building that is true to Cape Cod's rich architectural vocabulary—it would sit well with the areas Saltboxes and Capes—yet carries an ambitious set of modern features and comforts. Shirley chose clapboard and shingles appropriate for the region. The clapboard is reserved for the front of the house (the formal side), while more economical materials such as shingles are used for the side and rear walls as well as for the carriage house. A true Yankee approach

to homebuilding.

The interior spaces in older homes had clear distinctions between public and private areas. This new old house design also maintains traditional public spaces (the front hall, living room, and dining room) are located on the first floor at the front of the house, while the private rooms, (the bedrooms and kitchens) are located at the rear and second floor of the house. To accommodate today's lifestyles, the kitchen serves as a transition point from public to private zones and opens onto a breakfast room and family.

A charming breezeway connects the two-car garage, which has traditionally styled doors. The breezeway is also a practical architectural element to go from house to garage during New England's Nor'easters. **NOH**



Front Elevation

Square Footage:

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UPPER LEVEL - 1,625 SQUARE FEET

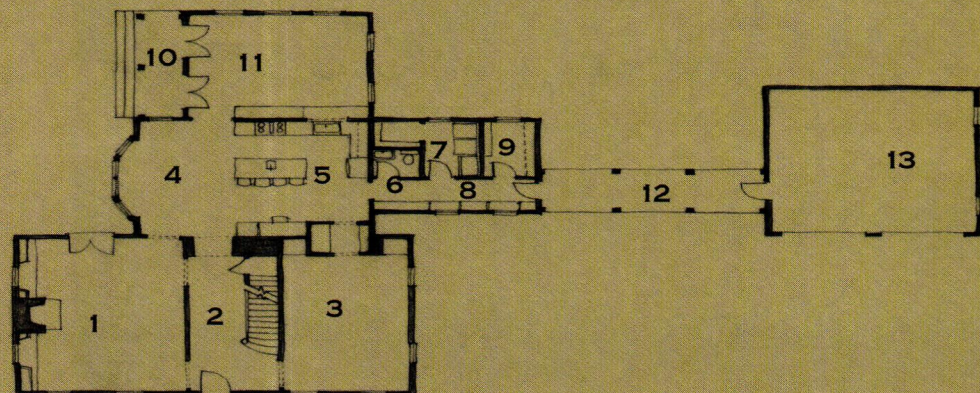
GARAGE - 485 SQUARE FEET

BREEZEWAY 140 SQUARE FEET

98 FEET WIDE BY 56 FEET DEEP

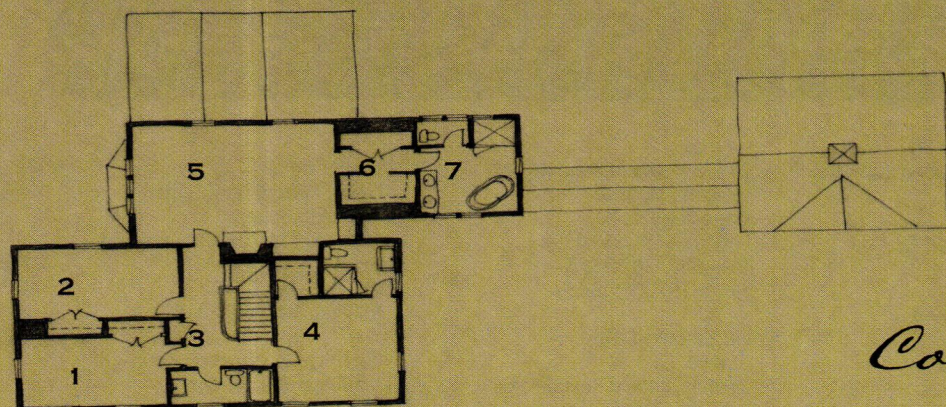
(INCLUDING BREEZEWAY AND GARAGE)

House Dimensions:



First Floor

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1 LIVING ROOM | 8 MUDROOM |
| 2 FRONT HALL | 9 WALK-IN CLOSET |
| 3 DINING ROOM | 10 PORCH |
| 4 BREAKFAST NOOK | 11 FAMILY ROOM |
| 5 KITCHEN | 12 BREEZEWAY |
| 6 POWDER ROOM | 13 GARAGE |
| 7 LAUNDRY | |



Second Floor

- | |
|------------------|
| 1 BEDROOM |
| 2 BEDROOM |
| 3 HALL |
| 4 GUEST BEDROOM |
| 5 MASTER BEDROOM |
| 6 MASTER CLOSET |
| 7 MASTER BATH |

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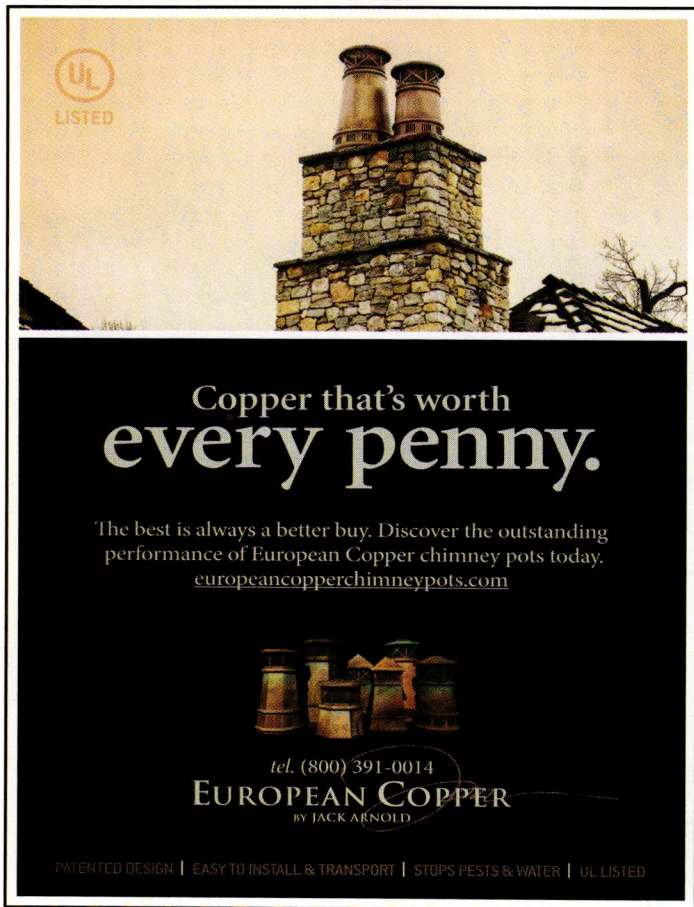
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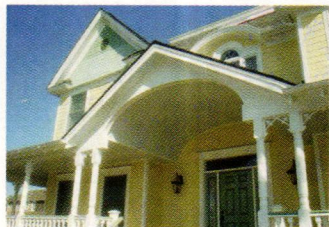
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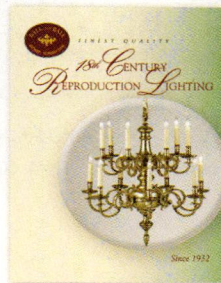
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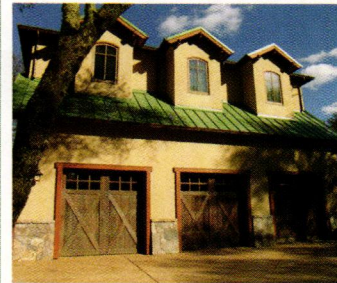
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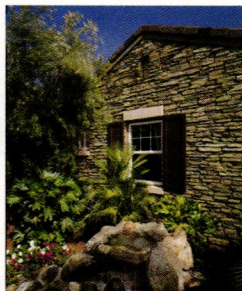
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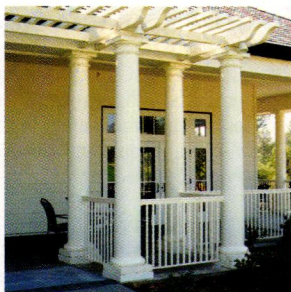
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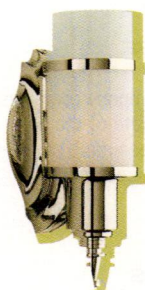
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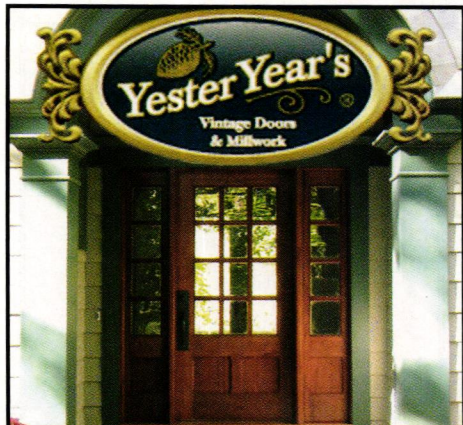
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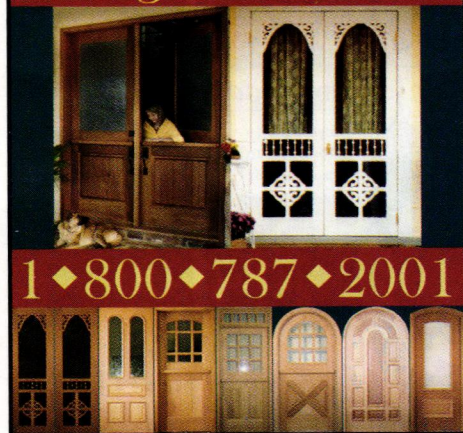
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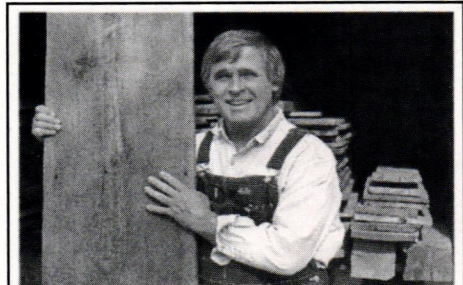


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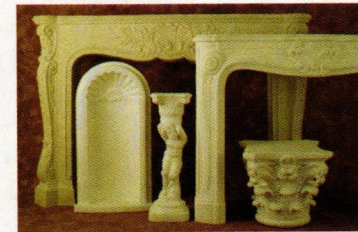
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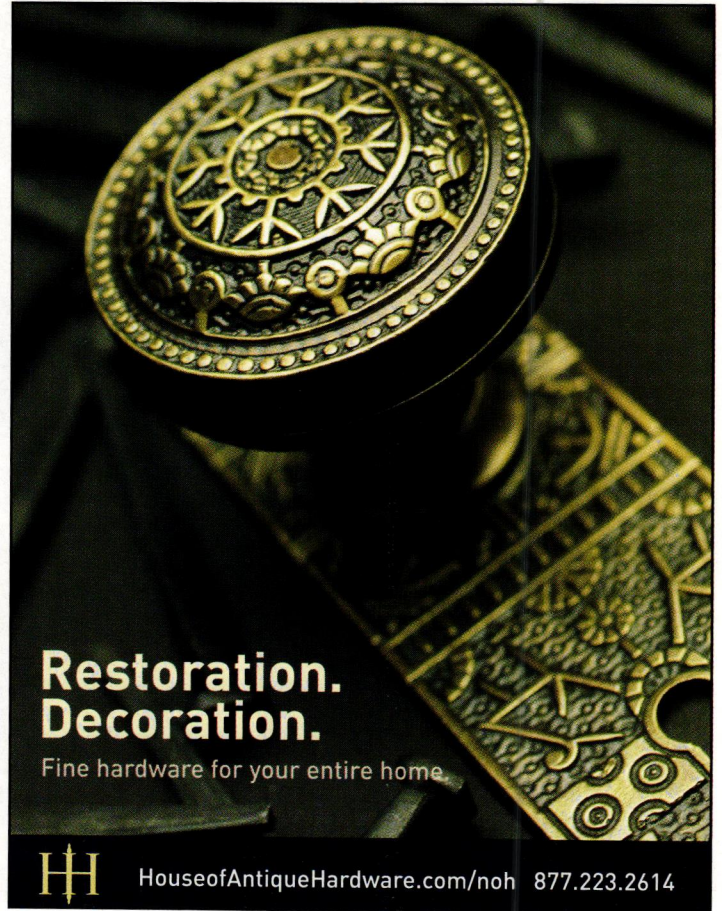
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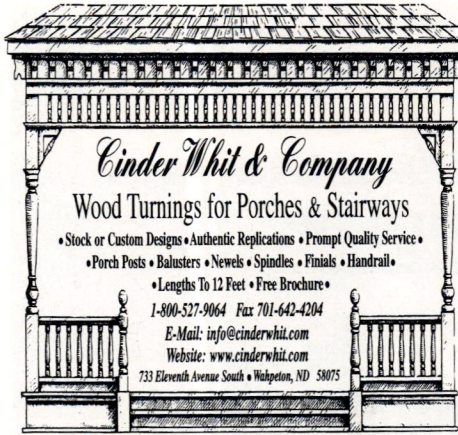
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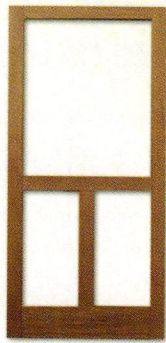
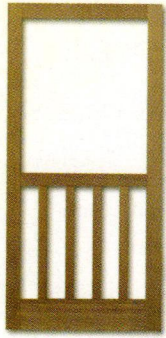
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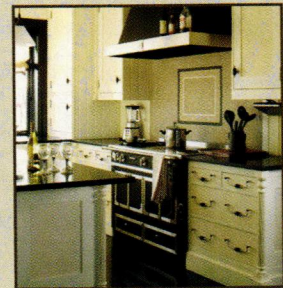
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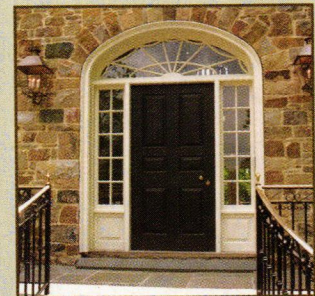
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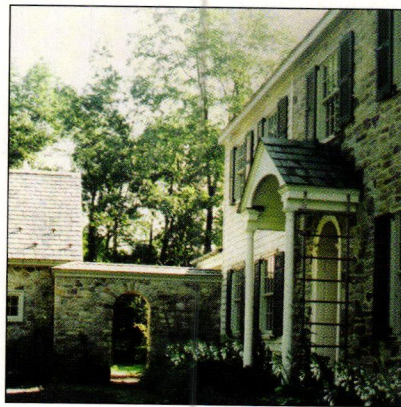
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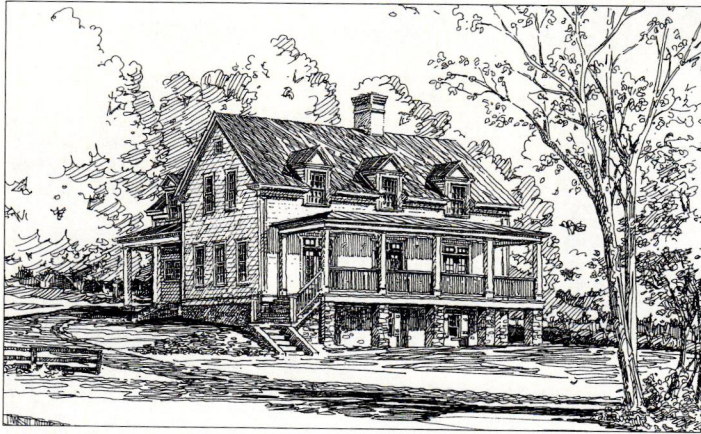
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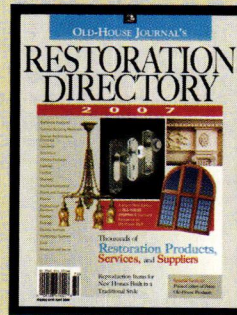
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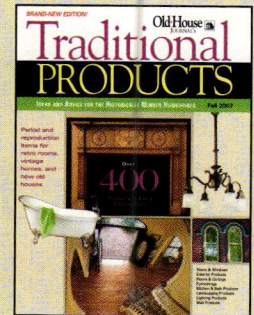
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Stephen B. Chambers worked with his clients to select the stone for the project in East Texas featured on page 50. Stone Mason Derrick Johnson of Tyler, Texas, and his team used an Arkansas sandstone for the facade of this house based on vernacular farmhouse forms. An Arkansas limestone is used for the lintels and for the windows and doors.

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