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VOLUME XV, NUMBER I

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ON THE COVER: *The King of Siam bedroom in the Round House. Photograph by Edward Addeo.*



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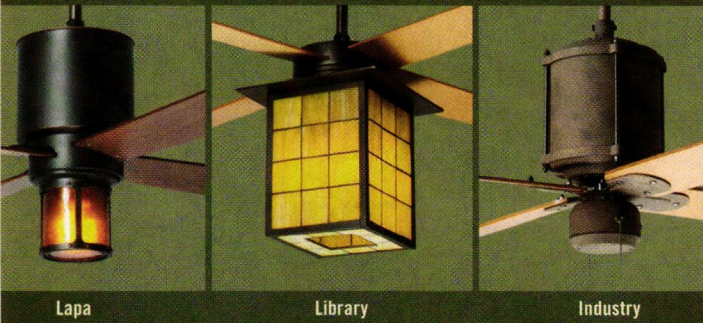
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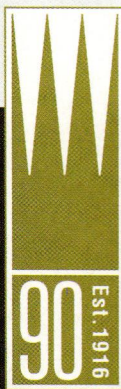
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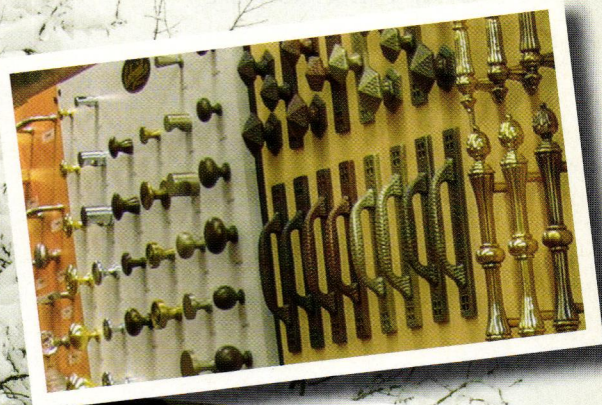


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The year coming up

I LOOKED BACK TO this page one year ago, in the first issue of 2008. On it I bemoaned the disappearance of eccentricity as new money flooded into my city, developing every last lot, covering old shore paths with black asphalt, obliterating a clamshell-strewn yard.

Well. That was then. Development is ongoing in Gloucester, but surely it has slowed, here and throughout the country. "The economy" will get worse before it gets better. Repercussions are terrible. It is a shakeup and a shakedown, and many of the casualties will have done no wrong.

So for me to suggest that there is a silver lining would be mean-spirited. There is nothing good about jobs and homes lost, nothing good about living in heightened fear. Still, lessons will be learned; some people and some companies will get stronger. No one would invite clinical depression, but the introspection that comes of hitting bottom can be life changing. No one wants cancer, but surviving it adds nuance to a personality.

And no one wants the country, or the world, to be in this kind of chaos. But since it has happened anyway, what will we get out of it? In contemplating my own losses, I've found a deep serenity about the people and things and tasks I love, which have little to do with material wealth. In the magazine's struggle to stay alive, its staff has been extraordinarily creative and cohesive. Maybe, in the larger world, both gratitude and innovation will be in greater supply.

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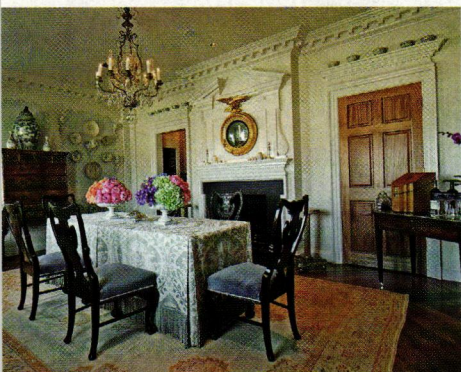
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Carpets: behind, The Oak Park PC-7B, front, The Oak Park PC-7A Image: Brantewood Estate Helensburgh, Scotland

Winterthur in Texas

When Winterthur Museum and Country Estate decided to partner with Historic Fort Worth for a designer show-house, the organization hired restoration architect John Milner to design the house, and local boy Brent Hull of Hull Historical Millwork to do the interior woodwork.



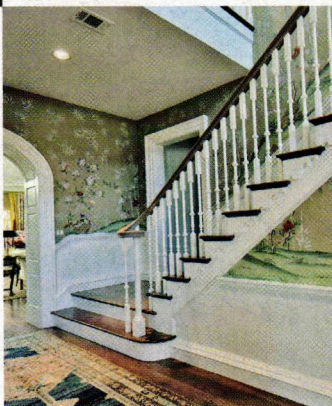
Details in the dining room include fluted columns in corners of the rooms and a false door. The mantels and staircases throughout the house are accurate replicas of 18th century originals at Winterthur.

"The idea was to show people what a classical interior can look like and how it works in a new house," says Hull, who is Winterthur's sole millwork licensee (hullhistorical.com).

Milner, of John Milner Architects in Chadds Ford, PA (johnmilnerarchitects.com), based the new house on Readbourne, a Georgian house built in Maryland in 1733, for which Winterthur has extensive documentation. The mouldings, mantels, paneling, and other trim in the living room, dining

room, master bedroom, and study are all exact copies of original millwork collected by Henry du Pont at Winterthur. Details in the rooms on the first floor are more Georgian in character, Hull says, while the mouldings upstairs are more Federal. Hull is the author of the forthcoming book *Traditional American Rooms* (Fox Chapel Publishing, Spring 2009), which documents 20 Georgian and Federal rooms at Winterthur.

Carrying millwork based on classical rules of proportion throughout the house helped unify the rooms, which were decorated by more than a dozen designers. "Going back to these



traditional models is a great way of putting together rooms that look right and feel great," Hull says. "You walk into an old room and it just feels right."

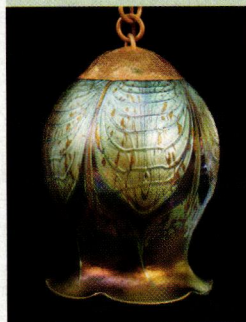
For more about Winterthur, visit winterthur.org; for more pictures of the completed house, visit historicfortworth.org



PROFILE

EVAN CHAMBERS of Pavonine Glass discovered his preferred medium 10 years ago, when he saw a glass blowing at Carl Radke's Phoenix Studios not far from his California home. Soon after, his sister snuck him into a glass-blowing course she was taking at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. Chambers, the son of two Pasadena artists, jumped in with both feet. He took courses and did studio work with George Jerich and Sonny Cresswell, specialists in Art Nouveau lustre glass. For the past four years, he's owned his own studio with a partner, glass artist Elaine Hyde. "Elaine especially has really brought me up to speed on how to get a nice luster," says Chambers, now 28. ■ Adding luster to Art Nouveau glass is tricky. Tin must be added at just the right temperature, in a matter of seconds at the very end of the process, and

Evan Chambers creates mouth-blown Art Nouveau-style lustre glass like the lamp shade below, using a series of techniques, including feathering the glass with a pick.



interact perfectly with the silver in the glass to create the desired effect. "It's the combination of these two metals that gives lustre glass a good luster," Chambers says. Another trademark technique for Art Nouveau glass is feathering. To achieve it, the artist wraps the glass when it's still solid (before air is blown into it) with a band of glass of a different color. Then he takes a tool called a feathering pick and moves the hot line of glass around on the molten surface. ■ In addition to complete lamps, Chambers also creates metal sculptures, casting the bronze and copper himself before blowing glass through the piece. "My glass

is very traditional. I feel like that's the way it should be. My metalwork is more 100% from my imagination, and I'm really happy about that." Pavonine Glass, (805) 215-9269, pavonineglass.com —MEP

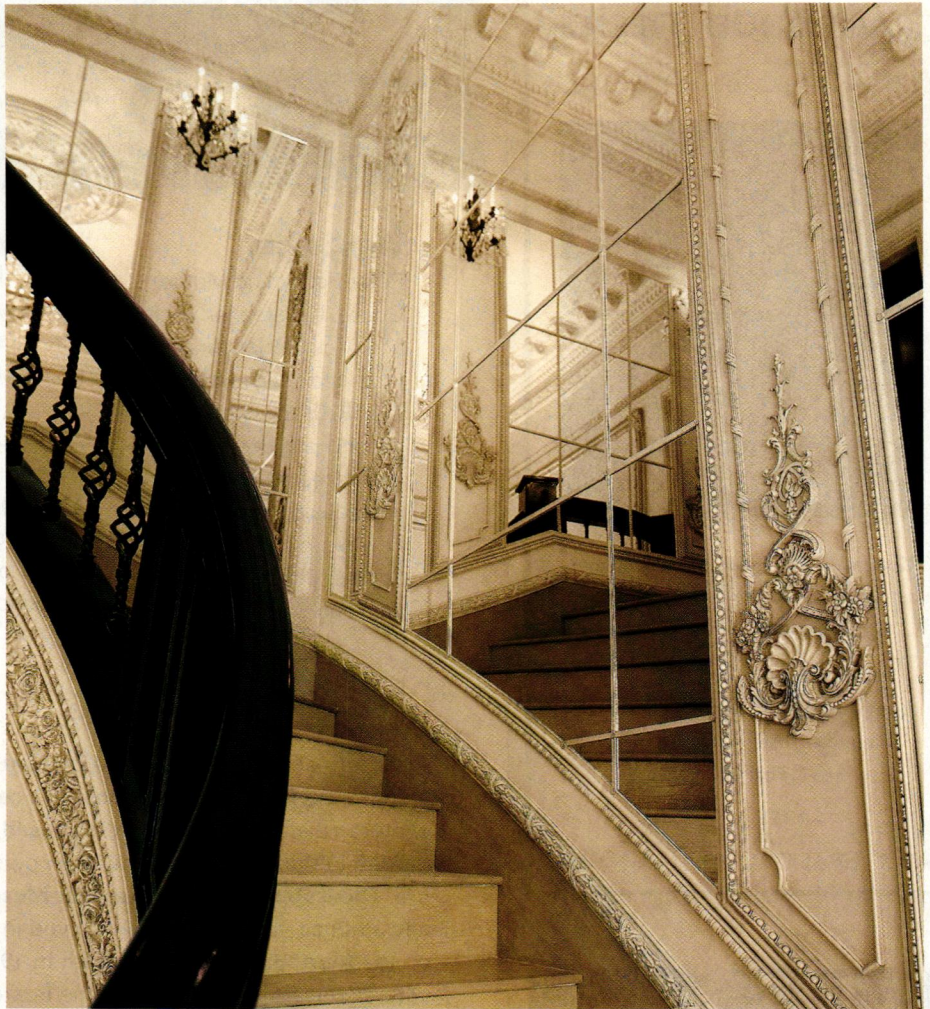


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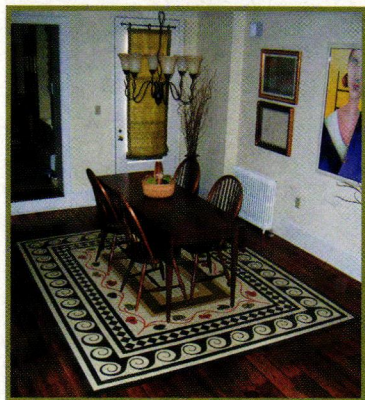
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LEFT: Detail of the staircase panel. Vertical French Shell panel shown is RMF 7082 (12"x28",
under \$250.00) plus linears from our "TITANIC" collection to compose this beautiful panel.
From Titanic archival photographs, Lenna recreated the original ornamentation for the
film. The entire collection is featured in Vol. I, Part III.

2/09

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Christopher Robin leads an "expedition" in this frieze based on drawings from *Winnie-the-Pooh*.

Wall Stories

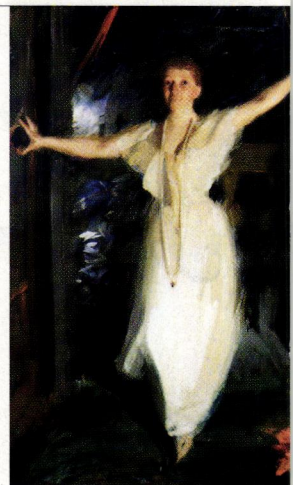
Peter Rabbit and Mother Goose. Christopher Robin and Alice in Wonderland. From their beginnings in the 1870s, children's wallpapers have been strongly influenced by literature and popular culture. A new exhibition, "Wall Stories: Children's Wallpapers and Books," explores

these connections with a delightful presentation of about 30 papers illustrated with nursery rhymes and designs inspired by works of fiction and adventure. Luckily for those planning a child's room, some of the themes represented in the show are still in production: Carol Mead Design (carolmead.com)

offers two different "bunny" designs, and House Vernacular has more than half a dozen lines in its Nursery Paper collection (housevernacular.com). The show continues through April 5 at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in New York, (212) 849-8400, cooperhewitt.org

OPEN HOUSE

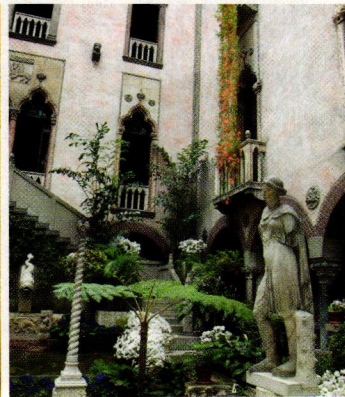
A century ago, heiress Isabella Stewart Gardner created the perfect antidote to Boston's cold, dark, wet winters when she built a light-suffused, temperate garden in the courtyard of her own personal museum. The **Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum** isn't really a house, although Gardner lived in an apartment on the fourth floor until her death in 1924. Opening with a concert by members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra on New Year's Day, 1903, this replica of a 15th-century Venetian-style palazzo presents an astounding and wide-ranging collection of art in a personal and intimate setting. Mrs. Gardner collected much of the art in just a few years, and personally supervised the construction of the palazzo and the installation of the collection. On view are such treasures as the only fresco by Piero della Francesca outside Italy, a Rembrandt self portrait as a young man, and Gardner herself, painted by John Singer Sargent and others. (Several priceless treasures by Vermeer, Rembrandt, and others stolen in 1990 are still at large.) The courtyard, brimming with flowers year round, remains the museum's beating heart: a restful place to pause and reflect on a remarkable environment for art created by one woman. Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 280 The Fenway, Boston, (617) 566-1401, gardnermuseum.org



"Mrs. Gardner in Venice," an 1894 painting by Anders Zorn

LEFT: The Titian Room houses masterworks by the Renaissance artist and Bellini.

RIGHT: The winter display of trailing nasturtiums in the museum's courtyard.





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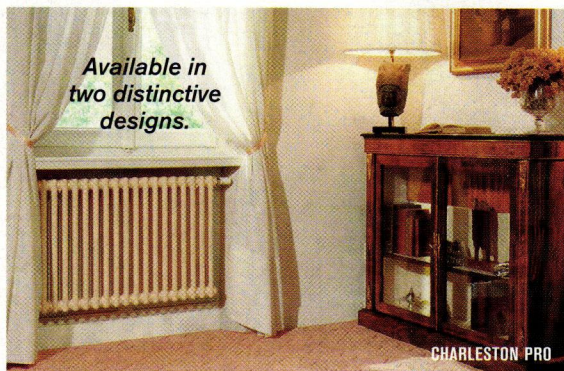


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A January tradition in New York, the Winter Antiques Show features 75 dealers of American, English, European, and Asian fine and decorative arts from antiquity through the 1960s. This year's exhibition, "The Fragile Art: Extraordinary Objects from The Corning Museum of Glass," presents glass artistry spanning four continents and three millennia. The show runs from Jan. 23 to Feb. 1 at the Park Avenue Armory (at 67th Street), with a gala opening night party on Jan. 22. A young collector's night will be held Jan. 29. Proceeds benefit East Side House Settlement. (718) 292-7392, winterantiquesshow.com

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ANTIQUES AT THE ARMORY

Jan. 23-25, 69th Regiment Armory, New York Runs concurrently with the Winter Antiques Show (free shuttle between venues). (973) 808-5015, stellashows.com

COLORADO WINTER SYMPOSIUM

Jan. 24, Boettcher Mansion, Golden, CO Christian Gladu speaks on creating Arts and Crafts homes. Colorado Arts & Crafts Society, (720) 497-7632, colorarts-crafts.org

"THE WOMEN OF TIFFANY STUDIOS"

Jan. 31, Art Center College of Design, Pasadena. Margaret K. Hofer will speak as part of the Sidney D. Gamble Lecture Series. Friends of the Gamble House (626) 793-3334, gamblehouse.org

THE MODERN SHOW

Feb. 27-March 1, 69th Regiment Armory, New York (973) 808-5015, stellashows.com



An English textile from Cora Ginsburg, at Winter Antiques.

ARTS AND CRAFTS CONFERENCE & ANTIQUES SHOW

Feb. 20-22, Grove Park Inn, Asheville, NC This year's event features a seminar, "Arts & Crafts Across the Pond: American Interpretations of British Arts & Crafts Icons," by *OHI* Editor-at-Large Brian Coleman. (828) 628-1915, arts-craftsconference.com

TRADITIONAL BUILDING EXHIBITION AND CONFERENCE

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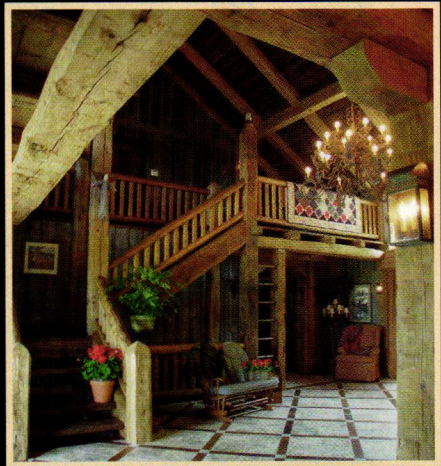


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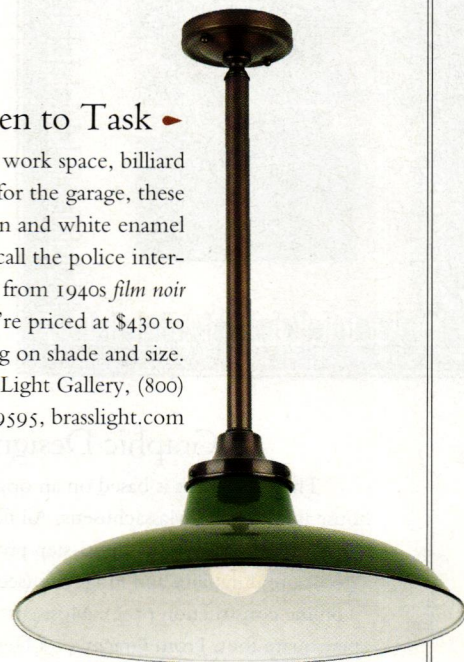
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Taken to Task

Perfect over a work space, billiard table, or for the garage, these vintage green and white enamel pendants recall the police interrogation lights from 1940s *film noir* movies. They're priced at \$430 to \$875, depending on shade and size.

From Brass Light Gallery, (800) 243-9595, brasslight.com



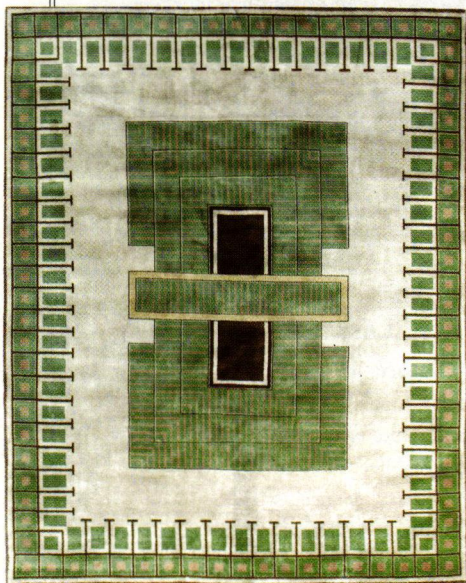
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Magic Carpets

Linear Wonder

Strongly influenced by the geometric designs of Frank Lloyd Wright, the Usona is hand knotted in India using wool imported from New Zealand. An 8' x 10' rug in this new design sells for \$2,800. From The Persian Carpet, (800) 333-1801, persiancarpet.com



Graphic Design

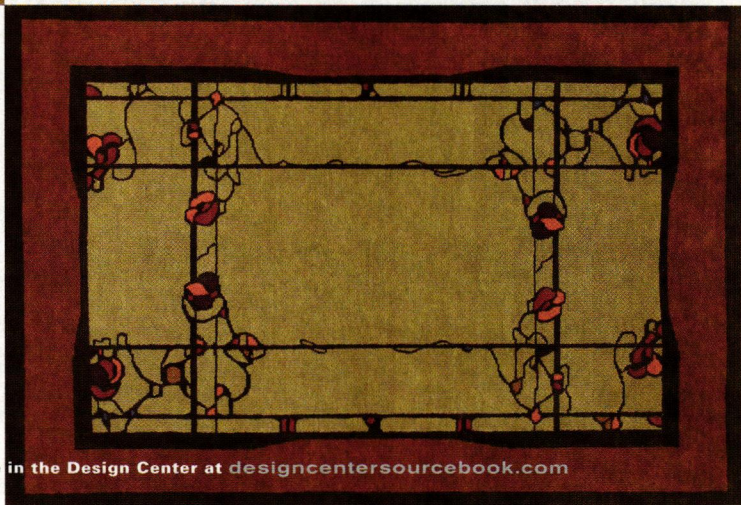
The Isaac Buck is based on an original house in Hanover, Massachusetts. All floorcloths are made with a multi-step process to insure durability and longevity (see the online construction page). Most cost \$40 per square foot. From Gracewood Design, (503) 922-0386, gracewooddesign.com

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Stained-Glass on the Floor

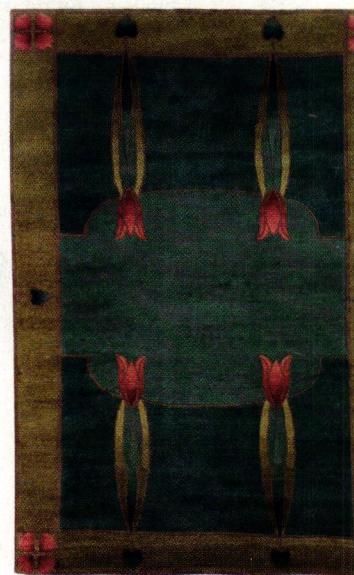
Just introduced, Pasadena Spice re-creates stained-glass patterns familiar from the Ultimate Bungalows of Greene & Greene. In hand-carded, -spun, -dyed, and -knotted Himalayan wool, a 9' x 12' rug retails for \$4,320. From Tiger Rug, (877) 828-9500, tigerrug.net

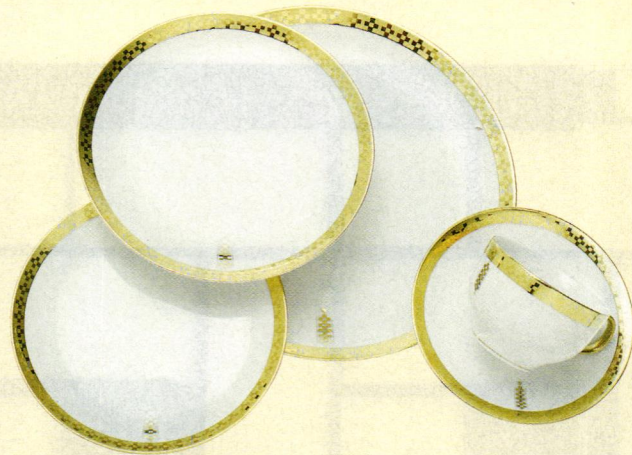


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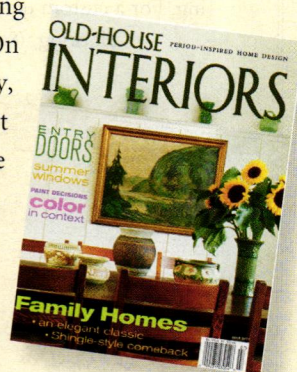




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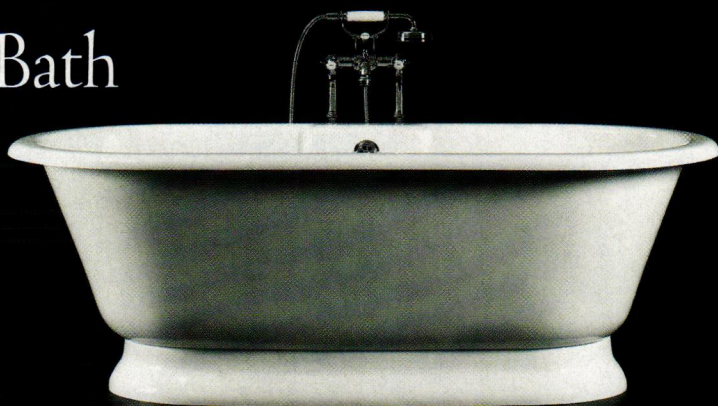
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Compose a stone tile "rug" at any size you desire with Plaza, a 4¾" mosaic from New Ravenna. It's artfully composed of gold-accented white flowers on a green background. Prices for the 24" x 42" rug shown begin at \$166 per square foot. From Norberry Tile, (206) 343-9916, norberrytile.com



Roman Baths

NEOCLASSICAL ELEGANCE IS NEVER OUT OF STYLE, IN HOUSES NEW OR OLD. THE POINT IS MADE IN THESE TWO TRADITIONAL BATHROOMS. **BY PATRICIA POORE**

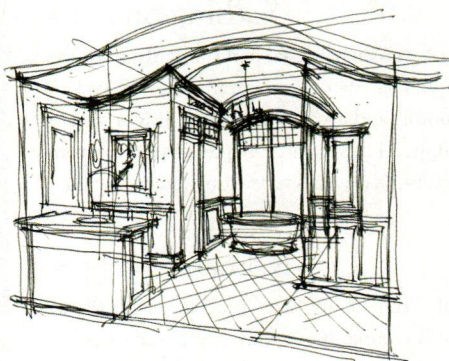


THE OLD-FASHIONED bathroom made a comeback two decades ago; such early-20th-century standards as pedestal sinks, white tile, beaded-board wainscot, hexagon mosaic floors, and ca. 1920 light fixtures are readily available. Bathrooms thus outfitted seem to fit into houses of any age and style. A second popular approach has been the Craftsman bathroom, another hundred-year revival, today featuring slate and oak, art-tile accents, and brass Mission sconces.

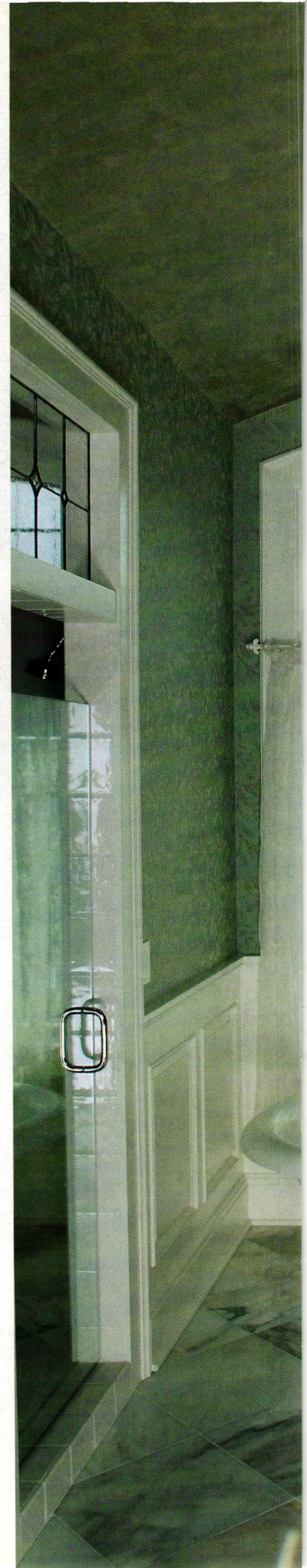
Through all of this, of course, fixtures with classical lines have never gone out of style. Indeed, a beautiful trend is toward the formal, neoclassical bathroom. These bathrooms designed by Visbeen Associates, Ar-

chitects, make an illustrative pair: the first is rather European and luxuriously old-fashioned with stylish painted vanities; the next is coolly classical.

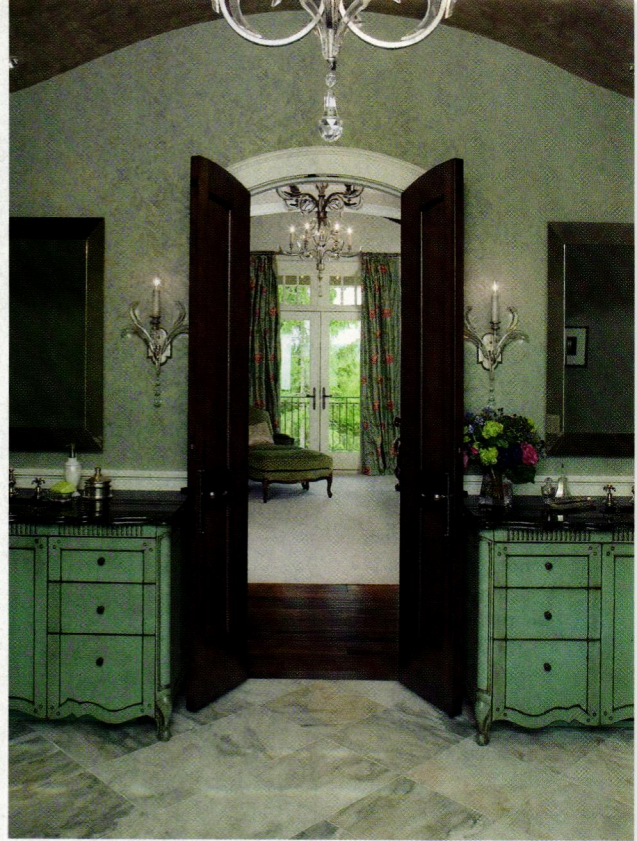
Two Creeks is an English manor in an updated Tudor style, with stonework and steep rooflines. Ceilings are interesting throughout the house; a vaulted one in the mas-



This beautifully detailed bath is in a new English-inspired house. Classical woodwork surrounding the soaking tub lends intimacy in the marble-floored room; transoms over doors are leaded glass. The twin vanities suggest another era of luxury.



THIS LUXURIOUS BATHROOM IS OUTFITTED LIKE OTHER ROOMS, WITH FURNITURE, A CHANDELIER, AND FINE WOODWORK AND GLASS.

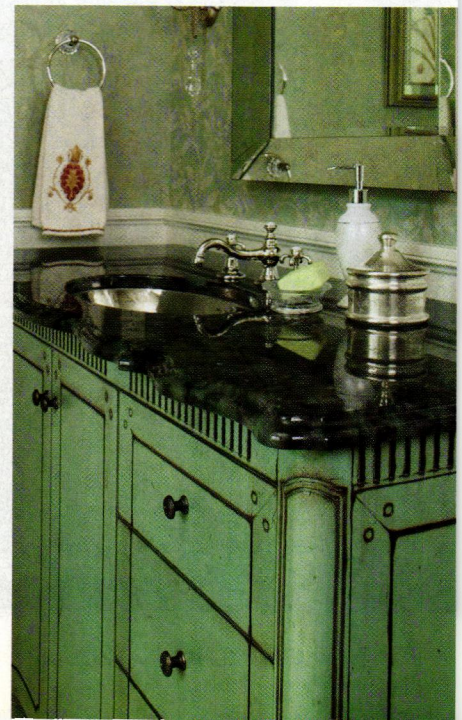


TWO CREEKS *Ada, Michigan, 2008*

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TOP: Twin vanities flank the door to the bedroom.
RIGHT: Inspired by a furniture piece, vanities have turned legs, hand carving, inlaid moulding, and a multi-layer rubbed and glazed finish. The ogee edge on the granite countertop matches the corner radius.



This neoclassical master bath is at Ingleside, a new house with A&C and Shingle elements. The room recalls old, luxury hotel bathrooms in its timeless materials and detailed austerity.



Grand Rapids, Mich., 2005 **INGLESIDE**

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ter bedroom carries into the master bath. It has a softly glowing (and mildew resistant) specialty finish by paint decorator Diane Hasso, who created the multi-step troweled finish with an "embedded" texture that can someday be easily repainted.

Ingleside is an Arts and Crafts-inspired house with elements of the Shingle Style. The interior is transitional, with a classical hall and kitchen and raised-panel wainscots and a Craftsman-inspired home office. The neoclassical bathroom is given elegant proportions with a wainscot of marble ashlar tiles finished with a Greek fret design. Matching porcelain sinks on legs symmetrically flank a doorway on the long wall opposite the bathtub. The tall cabinet is capped with a graceful cornice. ✦

WAYNE VISBEEN, *Visbeen Associates, Inc., Grand Rapids, MI: (616) 285-9901, visbeen.biz*



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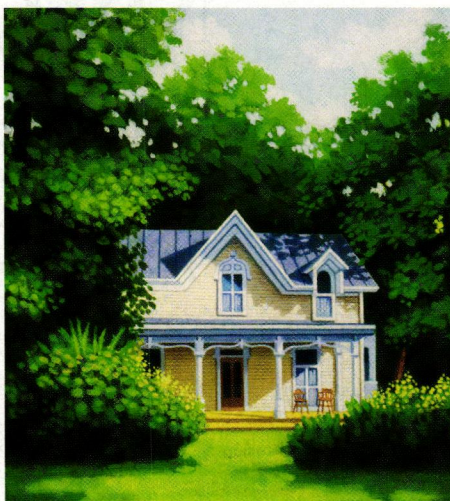
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What's in a House Name?

BY CATHERINE LUNDIE

MY GRANDPARENTS lived in a charming 1879 Ontario cottage: snugly symmetrical, with a single center gable. High up on the brick façade was a belt course made of bottle bottoms, a building tradition brought to Canada by Scottish brickmasons. The name of the place, carved into the stone in the gable over the door, was Crystal Cottage.

I can see, in retrospect, that it was Crystal Cottage, with its gleaming glass trim and letters carved in a quaint arch, that fired my lifelong fascination with naming houses. It's an ancient custom, dating as far back as 700 BCE, according to Joyce Miles' highly entertaining *Owl's Hoot: How People Name Their Houses*.

In fledgling America, naming provided a way to establish ownership of a land claim: Master Maycock's Dividend and Smith's Hundred are early Virginia examples. In the two centuries before street names and house numbers were regulated, a house name served a practical purpose as well.

According to Miles, the practice is still common in Great Britain. Yet in talking about it with people here, I made a curious discovery: many Americans are uncomfortable with the idea; they see it as pretentious. Here's one expression from an online rant: "Why can't I name my home? I'm permitted to be as self-important as the next guy, right?" To give this fellow his due, some house-names are a tad ostentatious. The other day I drove past a typically mediocre mini-mansion with a huge, chest-thumping sign that proclaimed it THUNDERGUST.

In a chat at the Houston Architecture Information Forum, Dbigtex56 shrewdly wrote, "Naming makes sense only if the house is distinctive. Naming every house in a tract development would be like Mr. Tyson naming each of his chickens."

BUT WHAT ABOUT old-house owners? Should we stand accused of pomposity if we give our old beauties a name? A resounding NO, I say! There's no denying we're a house-proud lot, but we have every right to be. Each old house is unique. It's also demanding, and chances are that you've invested the proverbial blood, sweat and tears in it, in the process becoming deeply attached. Our desire to name our homes isn't about impressing the neighbors or upping real-estate value. It's about expressing our attachment to a house with personality.

I offer these suggestions for naming your house:

AFTER THE FAMILY NAME: the Vanderbilts used theirs when they named Biltmore, as did Henry Clay Frick, whose Pittsburgh home is called Clayton. If a suffix isn't to your liking, you can simply add "House" to your own surname. In England, more than in youthful America, one can legitimately use the words Castle, Manor, Hall, Grange, or Park as well. Yet it's not without precedent here: San Simeon, aka Hearst Castle, comes to mind. William Randolph Hearst was impervious to the slings and arrows of public opinion.

Or, first names can be joined to give the house a moniker. Alan and Molly, for example, [*cont. on page 28*]

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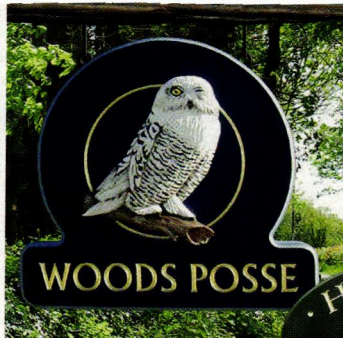
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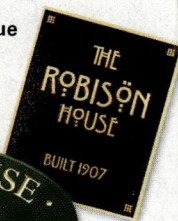


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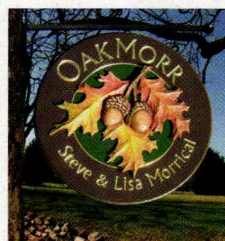
Historically, house names were incised in stone, hand-painted in gold leaf on a fanlight, even incorporated into stained glass. Signs are today available in such materials as carved wood, engraved slate, polymer resin with embossed lettering, cast aluminum, and ceramic. ■ The most popular form is the plaque, which can be screwed onto a door or wall or hung from a sign-post, wrought-iron bracket, even from chains on the front porch. ■ Wooden signs can be plain or carved and decorated with a motif. Ceramic tiles can be used to spell out a name.

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suggest Alamo. I've always found that approach a bit hokey, confirmed when I experimented with my husband's name and my own: Toddcat . . . eeew!

DERIVED FROM NATURE: Such names are perhaps the most common, based on trees, flowers, animals and birds, weather, or geography. Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater (a house built over a waterfall) is a famous example.

The historic name of editor-in-chief Patricia Poore's house is Tanglemoor. Finding itself now on a suburban street near the beach, the house was once the only one in a wild, tangled moorland close by the rocky Atlantic shore.

New Jersey-based architect Philip Kennedy-Grant finds naming for a sense of place the most cogent approach. "For me, the notion of naming has to do with tying the building overtly to the geography," he says. Although he often draws on natural elements for names like Stonestrow, he also, interestingly, takes it beyond the literal, sometimes bestowing a name that is "about characteristics that reinforce the story behind the design; for example, The Orchards, wherein the [new] house incorporates landscape elements to be seen as remnants of the former farm."


DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Think the House of the Seven Gables in Salem, Mass. Architecture-based names can also refer to unique materials used in the building (like Crystal Cottage).

LITERATURE AND THE ARTS: Here lies a boundless well-spring of inspiration. Although tenth U.S. President John Tyler's Virginia property was called Smith's Hundred for two centuries, he renamed it Sherwood Forest in a nod to his reputation as a political outlaw (or maverick, in today's parlance). I've always been partial to Charles Dickens' Bleak House; J.K. Rowling's The Burrow is undeniably cozier.

THE PLOT: Writer Joyce Miles believes that some folks "have an instinct for the [house's] underlying plot or theme" and that can make a name memorable or evocative. Assist that instinct, she says, with research into of the history of your house and your area. Read up on local legends, talk to old-timers for their memories. (Near Isaac Pickering's 1747 Pennsylvania house lies a tiny, overgrown foundation said to be the home of a Lenni Lenape Indian; the property is called Tuckamony Farm for her.) This creative approach honors history.

IRONY: Still can't get past that lingering self-consciousness about giving your house a name? Try an alternate spelling for a bit of ironic humor. For example: an 1881 Queen Anne built at Brant Point on Nantucket was given the apparently regal name Sandanwede.


Architect Philip Kennedy-Smith sums it up: "I think the name can outlive the owners, if it is apt." Yes, like my grandparents' Crystal Cottage, with its sparkling belt course of many, many beer bottle bottoms (happy bricklayer?). The pretty-sounding euphemism matches the quintessentially Victorian house. ♦



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Finding Old Florida



BY SALLY TREADWELL

ONCE UPON A TIME, long before glittering *Miami Vice* skyscrapers and Disney fantasies scrawled their signature across the state, there was a whole other Florida. A wild Florida, where legendary “Barefoot Mailmen” trudged sleepy lawless shores before there was a road between Palm Beach and Miami. Where eccentric personalities and powerful magnates flavored the growth of entire towns. And actually, that Florida still exists. Go look for it.

Start with the Barnacle House in Coconut Grove, a house that the Barefoot Mailmen would have known. As a follower of Emerson, pioneer Ralph Munroe tucked his 1891 home into the tranquility of a now rare old-growth hammock on Biscayne Bay; as a naval architect he built a Smart House, with a hurricane-sturdy octagonal core, shipwreck-salvage framing, and a natural air-conditioning system.

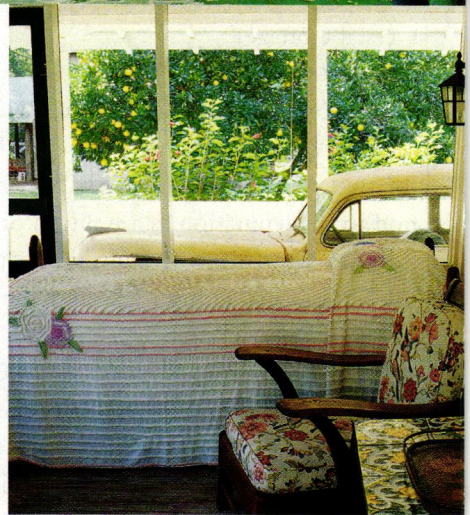
Quintessential Florida means the River of Grass. Paddle silently, observantly through the Everglades’

10,000 Islands with the brightly dressed ghosts of Seminole Indians in your peripheral vision. Stop off at the Smallwood Store—once a fur-trading frontier outpost and site of a notorious murder, now a museum—and, like John Wayne and Roosevelt, eat stone crab claws at the evocative Rod and Gun Club.

But Florida also means unutterably gorgeous Gilded Age estates: Ringling’s Cà d’Zan in Sarasota, Flager’s Whitehall in Palm Beach; and Vizcaya, industrialist James Deering’s spectacular winter palazzo in Miami. A thousand artisans put together the cool, antique-strewn interiors, shell grottoes, Italianate gardens, and fanciful breakwaters that so entranced painter John Singer Sargent.

Or there is artists’ Florida. The wild creatures are gone now from Frederic and Evelyn Bartlett’s joyful and painterly romance of a plantation, the Bonnet House on Fort Lauderdale’s beachfront, but it remains a deeply personal vision.

Creep down sandy lanes to find little Cracker cottages, homes

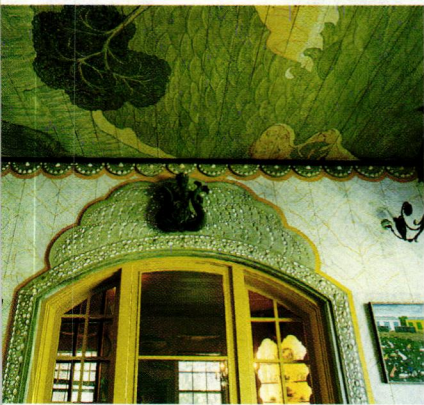


ABOVE: Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings’ old car is parked right next to her sleeping porch in Cross Creek.

to pioneers and cowboys. Rural 1930s has stopped dead in its tracks at writer Marjorie Kinnan Rawling’s home in Cross Creek, an accessible and perfect example. Apalachicola, meanwhile, remains an authentic working seaport, crammed with century-old buildings from its cotton-trade days and beloved by Slow Food seafood junkies and no-glitz slow vacationers.

Edison’s winter home in Naples is a unique [continued on page 33]

OPP, TOP: (left) Henry Flagler put St. Augustine on the tourist map with the Hotel Ponce de Leon (now part of Flagler College), designed by Thomas Hastings in 1887. (right) You almost expect a gondola to float into view at the spring-fed Venetian Pool in Coral Gables. **BELOW:** A ceiling at the Bonnet House, the 1921 Fort Lauderdale home of artists Frederic and Evelyn Bartlett.



BROWSING Old Florida

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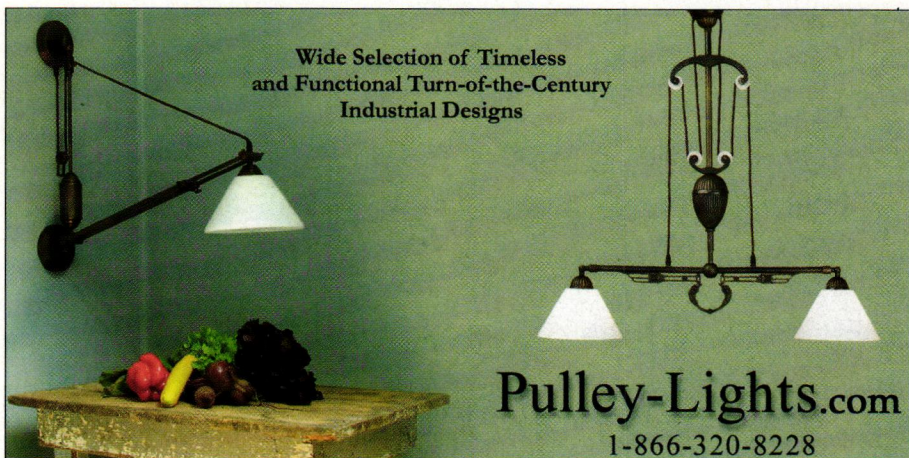
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Vintage roadside citrus shops, like this one in Citra, are quickly disappearing.

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glimpse of an endlessly creative mind. A first light bulb still burns in his cluttered laboratory and his humor in "the doghouse"; you'll see electroliers he designed, the first modern swimming pool; a solution to cat versus bird.

Find the opposite of Disney in Victorian towns like Winter Park with its winding brick streets, canals, moss-draped live oak canopy, and "mansion" charmers like Andalusian farmhouse-style Casa Feliz. Just north, Mount Dora dodged the Sherman-like march of Highway 441 to preserve a historic lakeside resort town that's become a favorite haunt for antiquers and cyclists. Look for the Steamboat Gothic Donnelly House.

Maybe, though, you'll find the essence of hidden Florida in Vero Beach. Waldo Sexton, quirky builder of the don't-miss McKee Botanical Garden's Hall of Giants, has deposited a magpie collection of salvaged Addison Mizner treasures there—check the Driftwood Inn, the Patio, the Ocean Grill.

You can practically hear bankrupted and now-revered Mizner, whose comprehensive vision shaped Boca Raton, as well as Palm Beach's enchanting shopping district and famed clubs and houses, laughing. Because somehow they work perfectly. But like all the best things in Florida, you'll have to look for them. ✦

ARMCHAIR FLORIDA

The mouth-watering photos in *Old Florida*, by Steve Gross and Susan Daley (Rizzoli: 2003) will get you out of that armchair and into the car to marvel at the Florida you can't believe you missed. We've used them liberally to illustrate this piece. For a peek at pioneer Florida, track down *The Forgotten Frontier: Florida Through the Lens of Ralph Middleton Munroe*, by Arva Moore Parks. Reprinted 2004; through your bookseller.)

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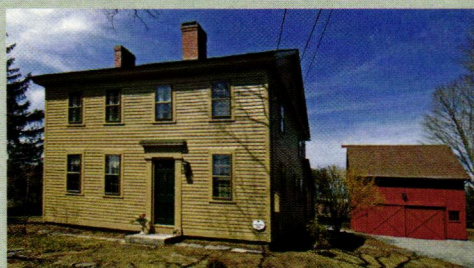
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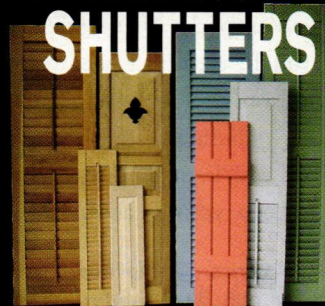
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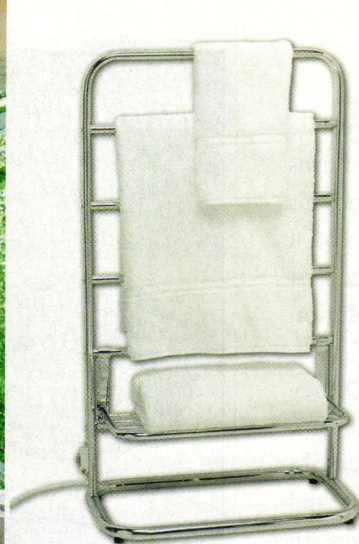


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House a little chilly? Even if you've turned down the thermostat to save on your heating bill, there's no need to sacrifice warmth in the bath.



Warming Up the Bath

BY MARY ELLEN POLSON

A WARM BATHROOM is a luxury in winter. Luckily, it's one that almost anyone can achieve without sacrificing period style. Some of the most desirable options are also the most affordable: plug-in electric towel warmers can be had for under \$150, and overhead rain-shower fixtures begin at about \$60. A good pressure-balanced mixer can cost as little as \$200. At the other end of the spectrum are jetted pedestal tubs and steam shower systems, which can set you back a few thousand dollars.

Towel warmers and radiators come in two basic styles: the traditional round-tube shape and the flat-panel "Euro" style. Other options include tubular towel-warming

baskets, which can be mounted in tight spaces to keep hot fluffy towels within easy reach.

While every towel warmer generates heat, some of the hard-wired versions are powerful enough to be rightly considered radiators. Inexpensive electric models that put out 100 watts or so will not only dry the towels in a small bathroom, but also reduce dampness and mildew. More powerful hard-wired electric or hydronic towel radiators can easily heat larger spaces if they're sized and placed properly. Neither gets too hot to touch: electric towel warmers should only reach 140° F, while hydronics generally range between 120°F and 150°F, depending on how hot you keep your heating system.

Think of these radiators as zoned heating. A good dealer will help you tailor the units to the needs of the space, which can include variables like the amount of tile or stone, the type and location of existing heat sources (e.g., steam radiators or forced air), and the number of windows. If space is too tight for even a small towel warmer, you can probably find room along the baseboard for a couple of horizontal radiator panels, which should supply all the heat a tiny bath needs.

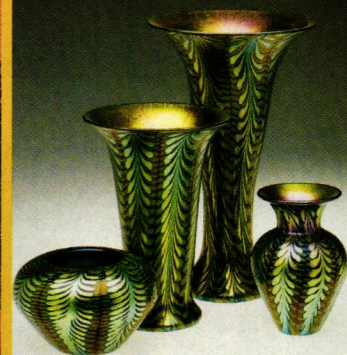
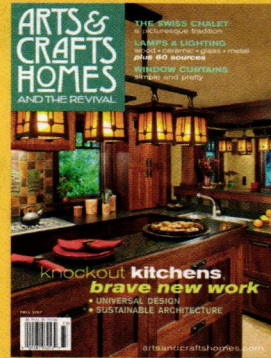
Ultimately, though, it's the water in the bath or shower that warms the most. If you will be upgrading the shower anyway, be sure to install a pressure-balanced or thermostatic mixing valve. [continued on page 36]

LEFT: Flat-panel radiators, like these from Runtal North America, take up little space. **MIDDLE:** The Chelsea plug-in electric towel rail from Signature Hardware is an inexpensive way to add warmth. **RIGHT:** (top) The Victorian thermostatic mixer from Harrington Brass Works delivers precise temperature control in the shower. (bottom) The Ferlo from Myson is sized for a small bathroom.

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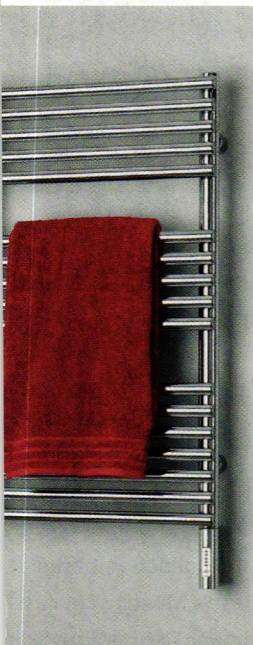
oil-fired boilers and other HVAC products ■ **WESAUNARD** wesaunard.com English towel warmers,

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The simpler, less costly pressure-balance valve keeps the water pressure in the shower constant, preventing sudden fluctuations in water temperature (when the toilet is flushed, for instance). Thermostatic valves are more sophisticated, mixing hot and cold water to fairly precise temperatures (within 1 degree Celsius of the setting). The valve also compensates for fluctuations in incoming water pressure. Prices for these truly luxurious valves begin at about \$1,000, although you can certainly spend more. Many of these mixers are available in suites that include

period-inspired shower heads and cross-handled knobs or levers. Some come with memory settings, which allows for each family member to choose and record a preferred shower temperature.

For shower lovers who can't get enough humidity in winter, a steam shower is another hot option. Installing one usually involves a major retrofit, since you will need a spot for the generator and may have to make modifications to accommodate steam shower doors. On the plus side, a 20-minute steam uses only about two gallons of water. A




FAR LEFT: Thermo-Sol's Temp-Touch Control for steam showers allows for adjustable temperature and memory settings. **LEFT:** Runtal's traditional Neptune comes in either electric or hydronic versions.

basic system, including generator, steam head, and temperature controls, starts at about \$3,000. Once you've added stereo speakers, light and aromatherapy packages, and other bells and whistles, the price nudges higher.

Prefer an old-fashioned tub bath? Reproduction roll-top designs with claw feet begin at about \$1,000 in either cast iron or the more environmentally friendly acrylic. These deep tubs are unsurpassed for soaking and also come in double-ended styles that accommodate two (or multiple children). You can also specify claw feet in the style and finish of your choice. High end choices include custom-made tubs in copper, steel, marble, and even teak.

If you are looking for a traditional tub that also accommodates a water- or air-jet system, your best option is a pedestal or Roman tub. The skirt conceals the tubes and motor, and strategically placed jets will turn any bathtub into a home spa. Expect to pay upwards of \$4,000 for a fully equipped air-jet tub. ✦

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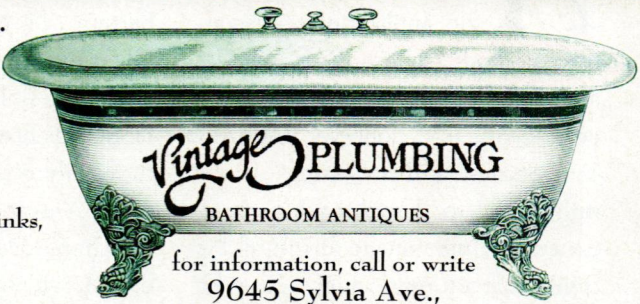


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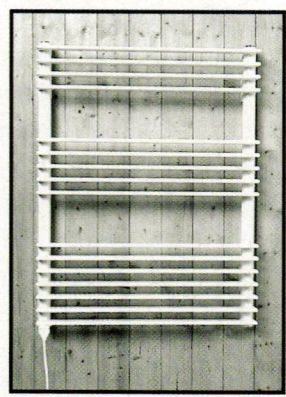
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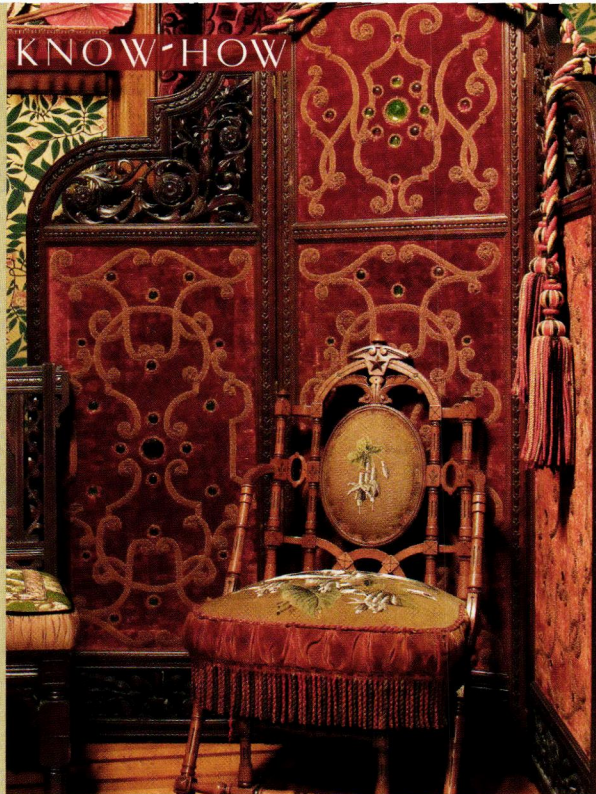


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Forensic Upholstery

BY BRIAN D. COLEMAN

ACCORDING to Webster's Dictionary, forensics is the application of scientific methods in the investigation of a crime. Baltimore decorative-arts consultant and collector Andrew Van Styn says that "crime" is the right word to describe what's happened to some vintage furniture. He thinks that a forensic approach, with careful study followed by conservation, is appropriate for restoration. Van Styn specializes in Aesthetic Movement furniture, where elaborate upholstery schemes were often an integral part of 19th-century furniture. He takes as much effort in recreating upholstery as he does with frame and foundation.

Van Styn starts with careful examination and analysis of the existing materials, looking for clues. He cautions that you should never

send a chair out for stripping and reupholstering without doing this first, because all evidence will be lost. Clues to the original design may include tack holes that show where the fabric was first placed. Van Styn methodically counts the holes on each section—seat, back, and arms—to help in his determination. The foundation, which is the material used for stuffing the chair above the springs and below the outer or show cover, tells much of the story. Look for foam rubber or other recent materials, including blond (modern) horsehair or wooden additions screwed in at the tack rail (often used to replace a built-up, sewn horsehair foundation, which would have been original). Changes like these alter the chair's profile, including the seat height, a crucial element in reconstructing the original scheme. [continued on page 40]

ABOVE: This beaded Hunzinger parlor chair retains all of its original upholstery—making it a good model for restoration of another. **RIGHT:** (top) A similar chair, meticulously restored using the original tapestry velvet. [See *The Furniture of George Hunzinger* by Barry Harwood (Brooklyn Museum, 1997; oop).]



The Hunzinger Ribcage **FANCY** **PARLOR CHAIR**

Now in the collection of the New Orleans Museum of Art, this chair was at one time covered in a Fifties dirty-beige and very lumpy Naugahyde. Andrew Van Styn found a second, tattered Art Deco flora underneath, with tears that revealed a dirty black velvet. Proceeding cautiously around the sides, he couldn't believe his eyes: the sooty velvet was not black but had a floral tapestry pattern. The center seat panel was indeed salvageable, but fabric edges around the rusted nail heads frayed and fell apart. Van Styn carefully cleaned the fragment. Referring to a similar Hunzinger chair with intact upholstery, he was able to use the original velvet as the center seat panel adding gold satin ruching below and on the gathered button on the seat back.



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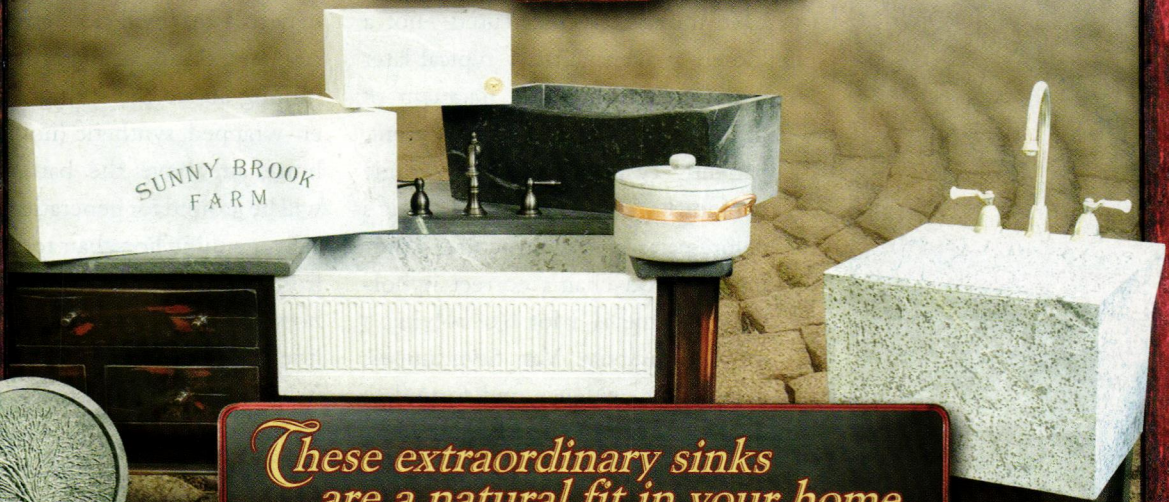
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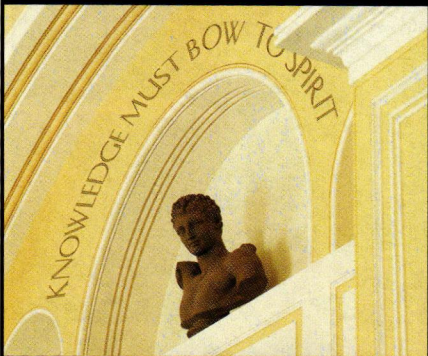


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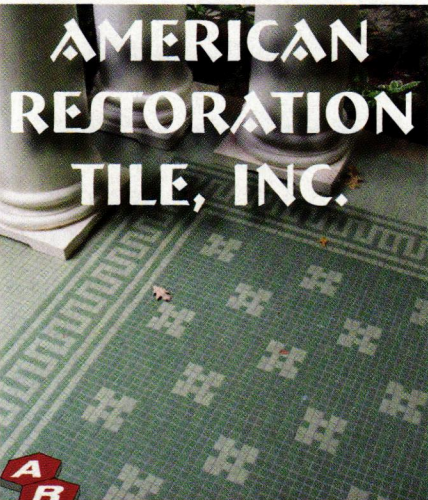


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ABOVE: A Kimbel & Cabus oak armchair was restored with cotton webbing beneath a stuffed horsehair foundation. **RIGHT:** On the back, arms, and seat is a Gothic velvet from Scalamandré ('Capard'); the 19th-century, robin's-egg-blue silk fringe was found at a flea market.

Be sure to study the existing fabric closely. Van Styn often uses a magnifying glass to look at the tightness of its weave. In the 19th century, a tightly woven silk or damask would have most likely been used—not a loosely woven fabric, a typical later replacement. If only a fragment of the original show cover is present, patiently conserve it to help guide decisions for a replacement fabric's color, pattern, and structure. Finding a period chair's correct upholstery scheme is a lot like solving a murder mystery, Van Styn muses; you gather evidence and formulate theories to figure out who did what, where, and why.

NOW THE RESTORATION process begins. Van Styn wants to ensure his chairs will last, so he uses stable

Kimbel & Cabus

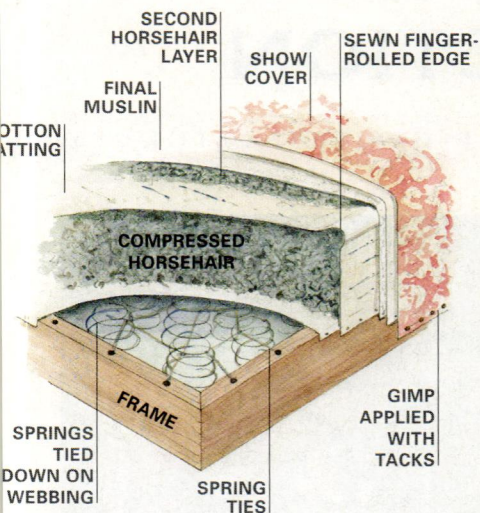
MODERN GOTHIC ARMCHAIR

This armchair had been completely stripped and came as a clean slate. While original catalogs (available at the Cooper Hewitt Library) show it was covered in a somber leather, the client wanted to use an exuberant period fringe he had found. Van Styn chose a coarse Scalamandré tapestry velvet that complemented the straightforward design of the pegged-oak chair.

The seat (originally constructed without springs) was re-created per tradition with webbing and pressed horsehair. That coveted period fringe was liberally applied along the back and arms as well as the seat, making the armchair fancy enough for the parlor.



materials that will not rapidly deteriorate. Cotton batting is best for the stuffing above the springs, as is linen-wrapped, synthetic (not genuine) horsehair above the batting—both will be around for generations. Ironically, genuine horsehair today comes from the manes of South American horses (as most remaining American horsehair now is shipped to China); it has a lighter consistency and less bounce than the tail horsehair of the 19th century. Modern, synthetic horsehair is superior to mane horsehair, in Van Styn's opinion, as it better approaches tail horsehair's body and consistency.



Frame conservation is important, and guides the upholstery project. If a frame has been compromised by loose joints and requires regluing and tightening, the entire foundation (excluding the springs) can be carefully removed; once the foundation has been stabilized the stuffing can be reinstalled or, if it's no longer usable, taken as a model for the replacement. When replacing foundations, Van Styn stresses the importance of using construction techniques of the 19th century: hand-tied springs and hand-sewn, compressed horsehair foundations are the *sine qua non* for all of his projects.

Once the frame and foundation have been built, the show cover is applied with an eye to details favored during the 19th century: cording below the seat with ruching along the edges, button tufting if originally present, and liberal use of passementerie such as tassels and trims, fringes and brass, gimp tacks (never glue!). Silk—especially lampas, brocades and damasks (all of which have slightly raised designs in their weaves)—were most popular for expensive Victorian chairs. These fabrics can last for many years with proper attention, which

Ebonized Anglo-Japanese PARLOR SETTEE

When Van Styn found this settee, it had been covered in white muslin. Underneath found only horsehair stuffing, no show cover—until, he took off the last center section of the back, where he discovered a full panel of the original, two-toned purple velvet and printed floral gold and rose damask. The pile had been worn away, but the rich purple was discernible. Fortuitously, he located a nearly identical settee, with the same upholstery, at the Cincinnati Art Museum, attributed to well-known furniture maker Mitchell Rammeberg. So Van Styn located purple velvet and a floral silk lampas of similar scale and pattern density to re-create a historically accurate design. (Collection of Mickey and Donna Lewis.)

includes avoiding direct sunlight, the use of small slipcovers over the arms and across the back and seat top if the chair receives frequent use, and regular but gentle cleaning with a soft vacuum brush. ✦

ANDREW VAN STYN *can be contacted at andrew@vanstyn.com*



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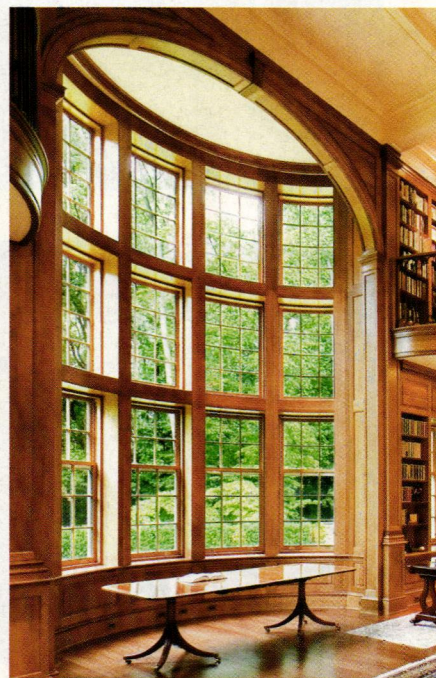


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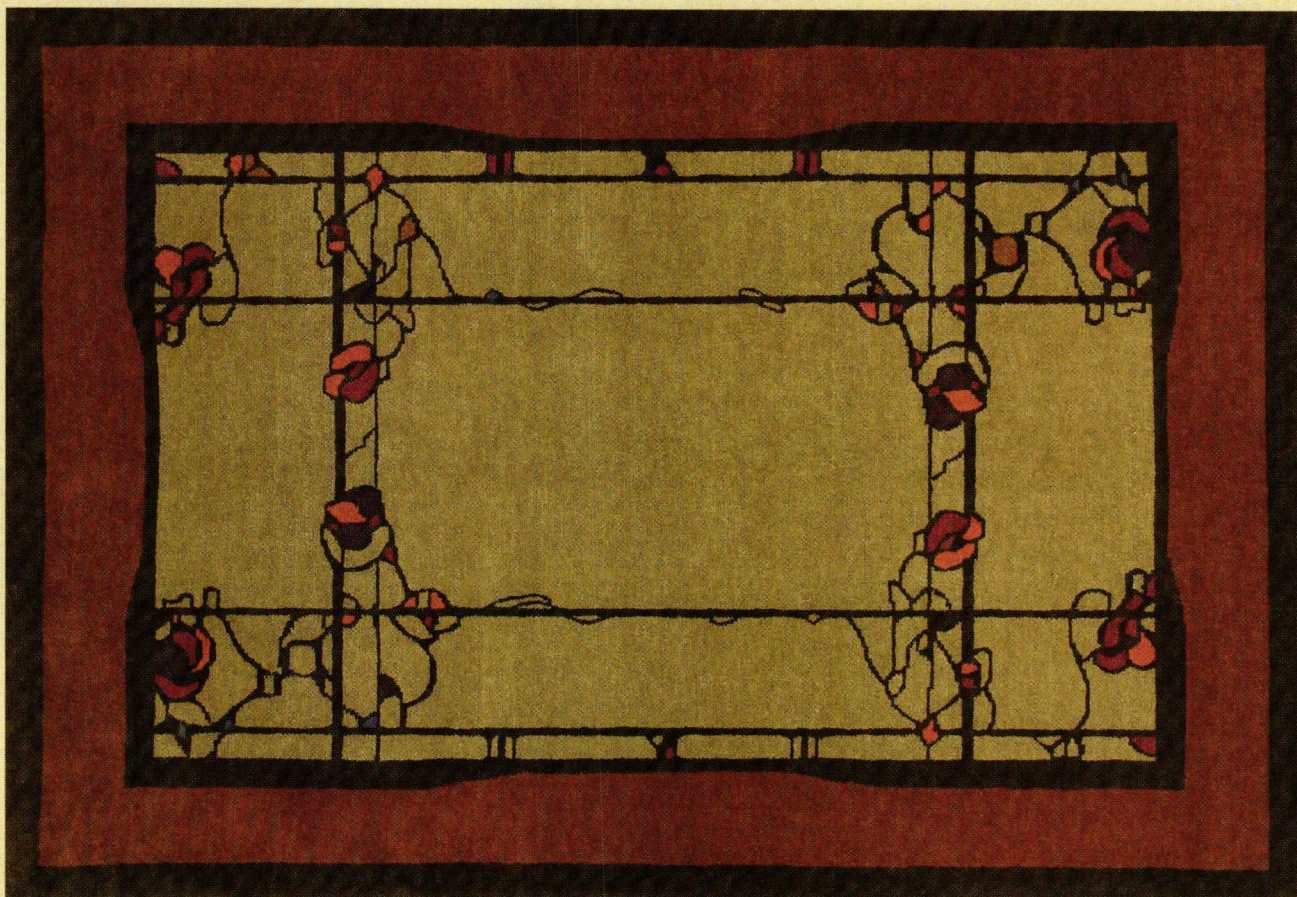
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LIFE IN THE ROUND HOUSE

Handsome collections fill fifteen rooms that spiral around a dramatic staircase in a restored circular house of granite. Built by a Victorian mogul, once an abandoned curiosity, the Bowers Round House is today an inspiration.

(page 44) ♣



FROM DECO TO ATOMIC

Wallpapers in the first half of the 20th century ranged from international high style and geometrics to lyrical designs, vines, fruits and florals.

(page 60) ♣



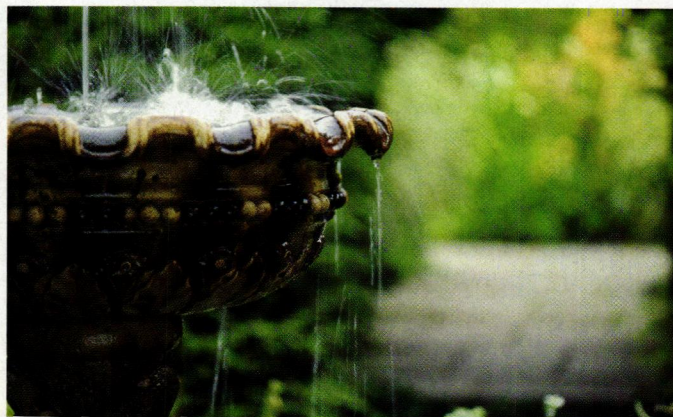
A MIRACLE OF OLD NEW YORK

In Brooklyn's Bay Ridge section, a colonnaded Greek Revival frame house is a surprise amidst Thirties-era apartments. The structure has been meticulously restored, and rooms made comfortable with eclectic furnishings. (page 52) ♣

GARDEN FAUX BOIS

Concrete faux bois, or fake wood, is a re-emerging art form: benches, tables, birdbaths, pots, and fountains made in France or by Mexican-American artisans.

♣ (page 57)



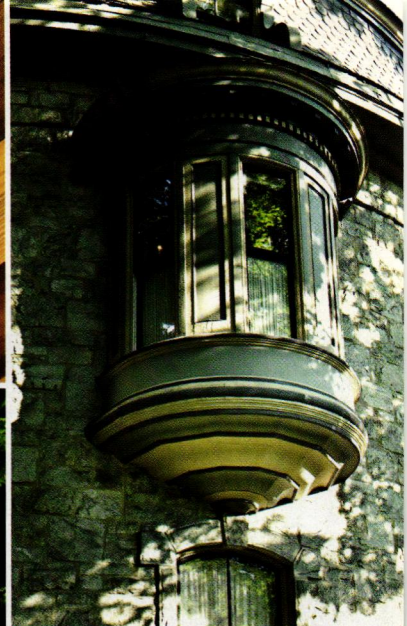
Life in the ROUND HOUSE

Inspired by a Scottish turret, mogul Jonathan Bowers built a house of 18-inch granite blocks from his own quarry. The 1872 house has fifteen rooms that wind around a dramatic circular staircase.

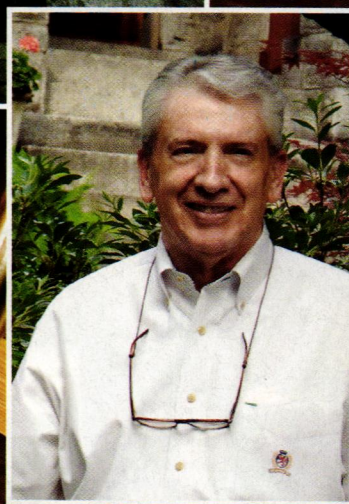
BACK IN 1986, Bob Roach had just finished restoring a comfortable Victorian house in Waltham, and had no intention of moving. But while he was visiting friends in Lowell, he paid a visit to an architectural oddity he'd seen in a real-estate ad in the Trust's "Preservation News." For sale: a round house of granite, the 40-foot-diameter stone façade capped by a Mansard roof. Every room is different—and there are no corners. The living room is oval, the dining room round, and closets are like wedges of pie.

First named Wannalancit Castle (after an Indian chief), what came to be known as the Bowers Round House was a meeting place for high society. By the early 20th century, the house had seen a series of occupants, and in the Twenties was a French club. Vacant by the late Sixties, it was a mere curiosity when a young couple stepped in to begin its

BY BRIAN D. COLEMAN | PHOTOGRAPHS BY EDWARD ADDEO



The spectacular central staircase has alternating bands of black walnut and oak. LEFT: (and above) Geometry is art in 1872 the Mansarded house of granite, punctuated by oriels and topped by a cupola. BELOW: Homeowner Bob Roach graciously offers the house for fundraisers and cultural events.



Even with its **granite austerity** and monumental stair, the house provides a soft intimacy with curving rooms and Victorian collections. Oval parlor, soaring stair hall, and round dining room create a panorama.



ABOVE: The oval parlor and round dining room flank the stair hall. **BELOW:** Even walnut doors are curved. **OPPOSITE:** An Empire-inspired, terra-cotta and gold-star wallpaper from Osborne and Little emphasizes the parlor's classical symmetry. Formal draperies on the front windows made from velvet panels decommissioned from the Canadian French Embassy. Bob's heirlooms fill the room.



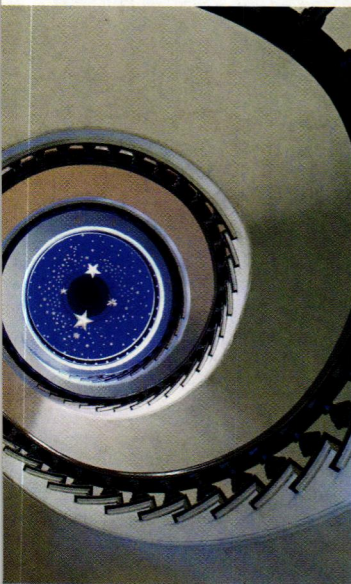
restoration in 1971. The project proved to be too much, and they moved to Florida.

When Bob Roach saw the *grande dame*, it was habitable, but needed significant updating. Upstairs, striped oak and walnut floors were intact, but sculpted green wall-to-wall covered banged-up oak floors downstairs. The kitchen had a ceiling of Masonite panels hiding evidence of a fire. The living room's plaster ceiling was unsalvageable, and mantels had gone missing. Most disconcerting was the active habitation of squirrels and bats, who gained



A 66-inch mahogany dining table centers the perfectly round dining room. Original Lincrusta wall covering is painted a classic Wedgwood blue. Beyond is a glimpse of the blue-and-white morning room.





FROM LEFT: The starry ceiling of the cupola beckons from the top of the magnificent staircase. Wedgwood blue and apple green plaques and vases decorate the Lincrusta on dining-room walls. Carved lion heads ornament stair balusters. Softly colored Wedgwood spills over built-in shelves in the dining room.



BELOW: The morning room sparkles with cobalt glass and blue-and-white china.

easy access into the cupola from overgrown trees, and would fall, unexpected, down the dizzying stair.

But Bob Roach is an interior designer and a lifelong fan of 19th century design. He looked up to the cupola's star-studded ceiling, and he was hooked. He sold his restored house near Boston and moved to Lowell, to begin renovations in the basement, a dirt-floored space that became his office; the root cellar became a bathroom. Old steam radiators were carefully sandblasted and preserved and an up-to-date gas furnace installed; wiring and plumbing were brought up to code.

THE BACKDROP for Bob's collections in foyer and hall are walls painted in Benjamin Moore's 'Decorator's White', which reflects light from adjoining rooms back into the windowless passages. The dining room,

built as a library, is the only truly round room in the house. (During the 19th century, dinner parties were held in the curving, third-floor ballroom.) Original embossed Lincrusta still on the walls was given a coat of Benjamin Moore's saturated Wedgwood Blue, to highlight Bob's collection of ceramics displayed in marble niches. Two classic Schumacher wallpaper borders became a frieze, emphasizing the circular ceiling.

Between dining room and kitchen, a cozy morning room was given over to the choreographed display of blue and white: Flow Blue, Blue Willow, Royal Copenhagen, Meissan, and Dedham Pottery plates cover the walls, and jewel-tone cobalt glass in the windows sparkles in the sunlight. The kaleidoscopic effect is lively yet surprisingly relaxing, perhaps owing to all the blue, or to the unerring presentation.



BELOW: Bedrooms open off the circular central hall and winding stairs on the second floor with the master bedroom on the left. **RIGHT:** In the bedroom dedicated to the King of Siam, a four-panel fabric screen stands behind the bed; opulently swagged window treatments are in a multi-color Italian moiré silk.



BELOW: Behind the kitchen, the back hall was stripped to reveal handsome two-tone wainscoting; the cabinet houses Calico plates. **OPPOSITE:** (clockwise) Terra-cotta and forest-green silk draperies in the King of Siam room. The master bath's copper tub has brass dolphin feet. A window bay and netted canopy lighten red grasscloth walls.



The fire-damaged kitchen needed some Victorian details. Bob removed track lights and Masonite, installing a beaded-board ceiling and echoing the one original cabinet with new redwood cabinets of the same design. An oriental rug softens the slate floor. An antique oak hutch holds Victorian majolica, beautiful with copper teakettles and molds.

ON THE SECOND FLOOR, the master bedroom is lit with a large window bay, allowing the use of a dark red grasscloth on walls for intimacy. The master bath is papered in an elegant Boussac Paisley in rich oranges and rusts to complement a handsome

new copper tub with brass feet. Period touches include Victorian faucets from an old hospital and a vintage, Turkish hanging lantern.

The front bedroom is dedicated to the King of Siam, said to have stayed here during a visit to Lowell's legendary textile mills. Walls in Earth Brown, a burnished green from Sherwin-Williams, anchor an oriental palette.

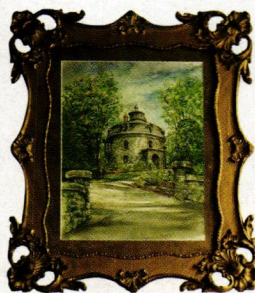
The crown of the house is certainly the hand-painted ceiling of stars, beckoning upward toward the cupola. During its restoration, the painter covered the stairway opening with a drop cloth. He couldn't look down. ♦



Anything but Square?

The Bowers House, listed in the National Register since the 1970s, is unusual; round barns are more common than round houses. Only a handful of 19th-century examples survive. A round house built in 1896 in Missouri was thought to be tornado resistant. Others were inspired by the Victorian era's Spiritualist Movement (a round house has no corners for lurking spirits). Although a circle provides the most interior space for the envelope, round houses are difficult to build and furnish. Octagons were the popular alternative. ■ Several thousand octagon houses were built following publication of Orson Squires Fowler's book *The Octagon House: A Home for All*, in 1848. According to Fowler, the octagon offers multiple benefits regard-

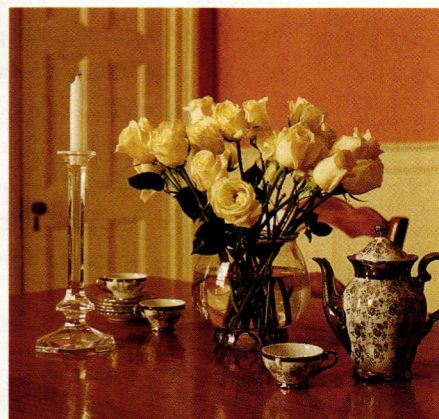
ing cost and health. Examples open to the public today include Longwood in Natchez, Miss., and the John Richards House in Watertown, Wisc. For a list of octagon, hexagon, and round houses, visit octagon.bobanna.com





Comfortably furnished with Mission-style chairs and hand-built bookcases, the library in Maryanne Ruggiero's Brooklyn Greek Revival retains its original fireplace and mantel. Most of the mouldings in the first floor rooms survived intact.

In an out-of-the-way corner of Brooklyn, an astonishing survivor—a freestanding Greek Revival in wood—has been immaculately restored, ready to face the next century.



A MIRACLE *of* OLD NEW YORK

by Mary Ellen Polson

photographs by Steve Gross & Susan Daley

SET BACK FROM THE STREET, as though retreating behind tiers of lace, the Bennet-Farrell house is astounding, an antebellum anomaly amid the clutter of 1930s-era apartment houses. Here in Bay Ridge, the neighborhood best known as the setting for the film *Saturday Night Fever*, the 1847 house once stood as the crowning triumph of a 200-acre estate on nearby Shore Drive, where it enjoyed a commanding view of the Verrazano Narrows and the approach to New York Harbor.

It was the kind of house where a reigning member of the merchant class would take a position on the broad front porch and literally watch his or her wealth sail into

LEFT: Tall, delicate windows with original sashes and glass overlook the deep front porch, which was rebuilt.

MIDDLE: The deeply paneled front doors feature a rosette motif. Restoring the porch required re-creating missing columns and other details. **RIGHT:** The owner favors rich, lively colors throughout the house.

port, says Anita Bartholin Brandt, AIA, the architect who worked on the house's restoration. "This really captures that well-to-do era of successful merchants who lived high up on the hill," she says.

The house had already been moved once (in 1913) because of land use pressures. Like so many landmark New York houses without protected status, it was threatened by demolition, most recently in the late 1990s. In that instance, a compromise was struck: the owner-developer received permission to build condominiums on part of the lot, while the house was landmarked on the remainder. Maryanne Ruggiero, a radiologist and Brooklyn native, saw the property soon after it went on the market. "I bought the house from the contractor who was

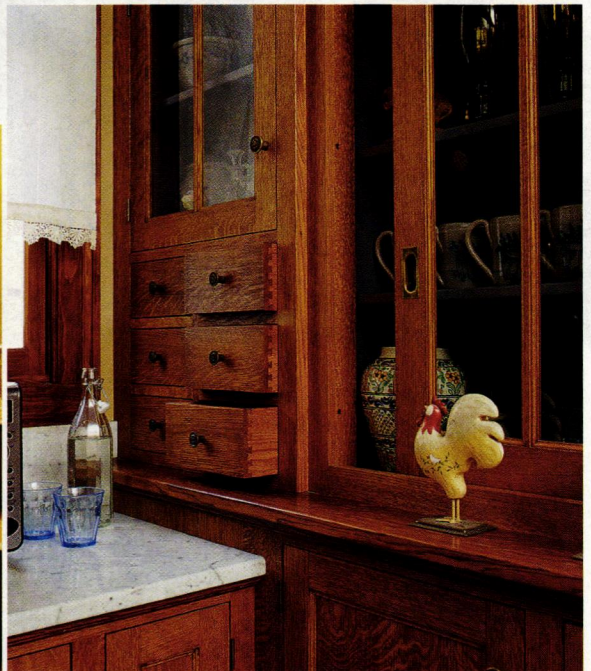
RIGHT: In keeping with a Mediterranean sensibility, the dining room is furnished with a farmhouse table and French Country-style chairs. **BELOW:** Decorative parapets over the front porch and along the roof had been missing for decades; an old picture gave clues for the restoration; decorative acanthus leaves and scrolls were inexpensively re-created in stamped metal.



The RESTORATION STORY

ARCHITECT: Anita Bartholin Brandt, AIA, New York, NY (212) 358-1162, abbarchitects.com ■ **CONTRACTOR:** PRESERV Building Restoration Management, Brooklyn, NY (718) 768-3600, preservinc.com

DETAILS **WOOD RESTORATION:** Abatron (800) 445-1754, abatron.com ■ **EXTERIOR ENRICHMENTS:** (decorative stamped metal) W.F. Norman Corp. (800) 641-4038, wfnorman.com ■ **ENTRY SET:** Omnia Industries Ornate Collection, (973) 239-7272, omniaindustries.com ■ **KITCHEN:** (cabinets) Kennebec Co., Bath, ME (207) 443-2131, kennebeccompany.com (island) British Traditions, (888) 332-7484, britishtraditions.com (light pendants) Rejuvenation (888) 401-1900, rejuvenation.com (range) Viking (888) 845-4641, vikingrange.com



TOP LEFT: The owner chose quartersawn oak cabinetry with late Victorian Eastlake-inspired bin pulls and knobs for the new kitchen, which (top right) also includes a French Provincial-style island and marble baking station (above right); this physician makes her own pizza. **ABOVE LEFT:** The stair landing on the second floor affords a view of the restored porch and parapet.

[initially] going to knock it down,” says Maryanne, who has three children and acquired the place with her former husband. “It was basically a disaster on the inside. I saw the potential when I walked in.”

The house was structurally sound, though, and after closing the deal, the couple hired an architect and restoration contractor to guide its restoration, with help from a \$200,000 loan from the New York

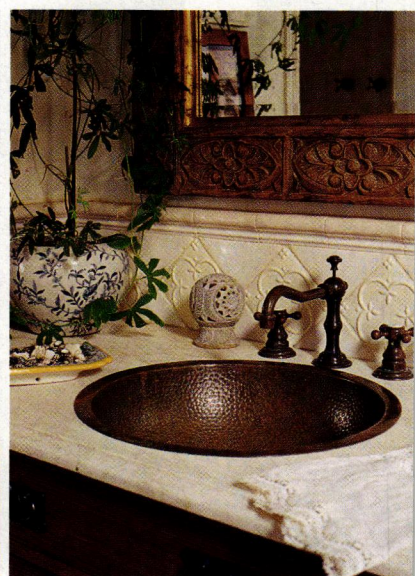
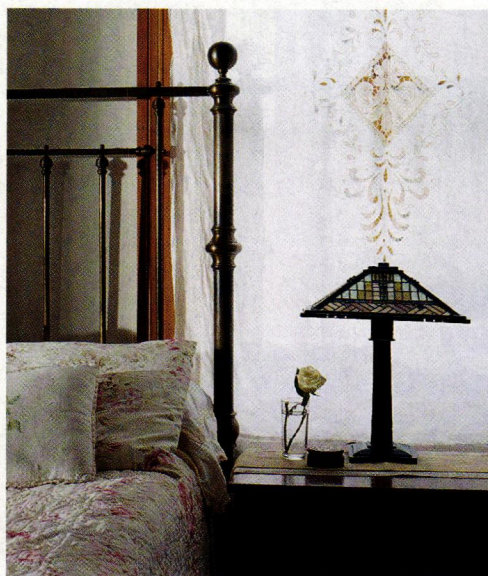
Landmarks Conservancy Historic Properties Fund. (In 2005, the project won the Conservancy’s prestigious Lucy G. Moses Award.)

The exterior got a full make-over, including new roof, skylight, and drainage systems, and the restoration of the front and rear porches. “The house found the right client,” says Brandt, the architect. “She was willing to put her money where it mattered, and did it right.”

The skin of the house was in remarkably good condition, thanks to its original coat of lead paint (lead is an excellent preserver, Brandt notes). In spite of that, much of the house was suffering from serious dry rot, requiring extensive wood restoration with consolidants and epoxies (often proprietary brands made by Abatron).

Remarkably, the windows were also in excellent shape, with

“It’s a surprise that something like this [19th-century house] has been there so long, and in wood.” —PROJECT ARCHITECT ANITA BARTHOLIN BRANDT, AIA



old glass and thin, graceful muntins. “They’re beautiful, they’re original, and they’re very delicate,” Brandt says. To make them weather tight, each window was carefully removed, and weatherstripping was cut into it, a technique that immediately improved Ruggiero’s heating bill.

Inside, Ruggiero has brought an eclectic, Mediterranean sensibility to the house, which is still sparsely furnished in places. In the library, the original, plantation-style windows, draped in lace panels, reach from the floor to near the ceiling. Maryanne’s Italian uncle, Angelo R. Arborea, built the bookcases, using Greek Revival profiles that appear elsewhere in the house. Ruggiero is still mulling paint and wallpaper choices and in some cases furnishings for this and other rooms.

If the interior is still a work in progress, the same can’t be said of

the outdoors, where a succession of bowery spaces have exploded under the influence of Maryanne’s green thumb. There are apple, pear, and cherry trees; dogwoods, a Peegee hydrangea, golden chain tree, smoke-bush, and a lavender bed. Maryanne laid the narrow brick walk that runs along one side of the house herself: a series of bricks laid to create squares within squares. “I wanted to create a pattern where I didn’t have to cut the bricks,” she says. Instead of grass, the small front yard is perpetually green and low to the ground, thanks to a ground cover of Reiter (or weeping) thyme.

A historic photograph of the house revealed that it had once had decorative parapets over the front porch and along the roof line. Both were enriched with acanthus and scroll ornament—authentic Greek Revival touches that are often lost to time

LEFT & MIDDLE: Antique Italian linens with hand-crocheted inlay at the windows and on the brass bed pick up the soft white of the marble fireplace in the master suite. **RIGHT:** White Italian tiles set off the marble counter in the bath. On the floor (not shown) is a nostalgic “daisy” tile pattern in white and green hex tile with brick-red dots.

on homes of the period, Brant notes.

Despite a tight budget, the owners opted to re-create the parapets complete with applied ornament. Rather than use wood, Brandt found the detail she was looking for in stamped metal, from pressed metal ceiling specialist W.F. Norman. “That’s how we got the detail without the cost,” she says.

As a final touch, Brandt also designed replacements for the missing staircase that leads up to the porch and the cast-iron fence and gate. “When we finished,” she says, “it really looked like a Martha Stewart wedding cake.” ✦

Our garden writer and hands-on practitioner describes his latest obsession, an overlooked art form coming back into vogue. **WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY KEN DRUSE**

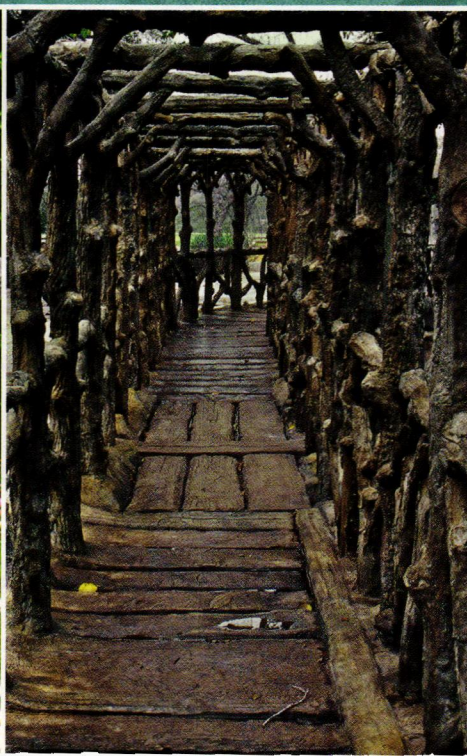
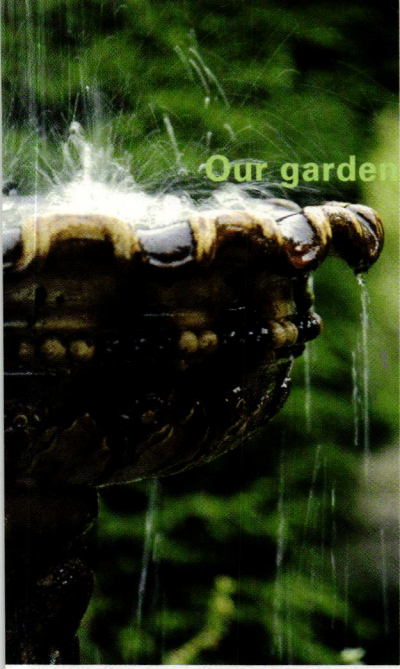
garden faux bois & trabajo rústico

RECENTLY I've been photographing examples of concrete *faux bois* (fake wood), garden art that simulates wooden benches, tables, birdbaths, containers, and ornaments. Much of it is French, made from about 1890 to 1910, its heyday ending by 1930. Antique French *faux bois* is generating a lot of interest lately; several avid collectors have driven prices up, and inferior garden furniture in this style is coming in from China.

I also look for structures in

what is known as *trabajo rústico*—"rough work" by Mexican artists. Mexican concrete art in the U.S. was produced by a handful of people, and popular around limestone pits in San Antonio, and for Michigan industrialists' lake estates. Unlike the French work of the late 19th century, *trabajo rústico* pieces made in the 20th century were unique works of folk art (and thus harder to knock off). Such pieces were not highly regarded and much was destroyed.

Much carved concrete *faux bois* is French, ca. 1900; pieces shown here include a fountain, and a garden set with carved birds and flora. **BELOW:** Two examples of *trabajo rústico* by Dionicio Rodríguez: the San Antonio bridge and an eccentric bench.



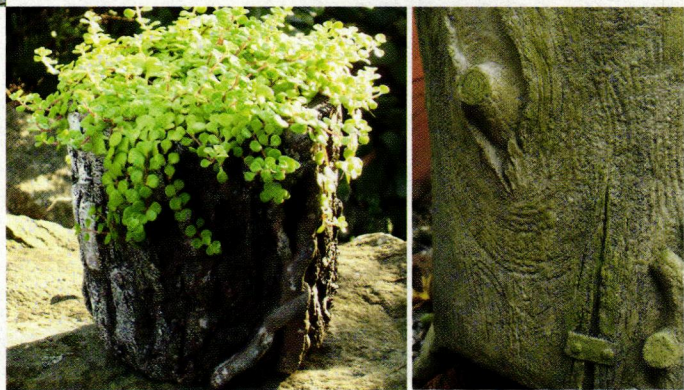


DO IT YOURSELF?

I'm busy making *faux bois* containers—I cannot resist touching stuff, and besides, I can't afford the antiques. I prefer the uncolored material in the French style. Sometimes I apply a glaze of diluted acrylic paint: a touch of chartreuse for moss, and grey for age and to highlight carved details. ■ I fortify my concrete for the New Jersey climate. I start with store-bought "topping-mix" or "sand mix" (if it is fine-textured), or my own mixture of one part Portland cement to three parts construction-grade sand. I add about a tablespoonful of fluffed nylon fibers (a masonry supply) to one quart of dry concrete mix. I also use a liquid polymer additive (ad-mix) following directions on the container. Before adding the next layer of concrete, I spray the first with water, or brush on ad-mix or similar "concrete bonding agent," which makes the next coat go on more easily. ■ Besides keeping a few pieces for my own gardens, I've donated some to charity auctions, and sold others to people who are willing to drive and pick up. Concrete is heavy—shipping is tomorrow's bridge to cross. —KEN DRUSE

To see Ken's complete instructions for making faux bois containers, go to oldhouseinteriors.com

THIS PAGE: Recent *faux bois* stump containers for the garden by author Ken Druse. He warns that some of the Texas pieces and those imported from Asia will not survive outdoors in far-north winters where freeze-thaw cycles crack and destroy thin concrete. "If you buy an Asian piece, be sure it's kept dry over winter, perhaps in the garage."
OPPOSITE: Three remarkable examples of faux concrete work: a W.P.A.-sponsored bridge in Tulsa, Okla.; a thatched-umbrella structure by Rodríguez; and a barrel chair by the contemporary studio Cortés.



A BIT OF HISTORY: As early as 1840, tastemaker Andrew Jackson Downing recommended building outdoor benches, tables, and structures like gazebos out of branches and tree trunks. Downing's friend Frederick Law Olmsted and his collaborator Calvert Vaux specified similar elements in 1854, for New York's Central Park. Such pieces have a short life and regularly must be remade.

Concrete reinforced with

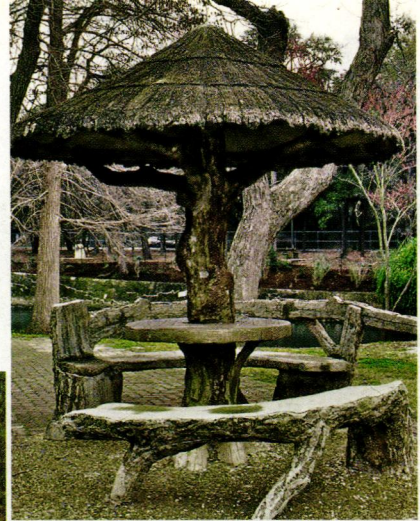
metal rod and wire (*ferrocement*) was patented in 1867 by Joseph Monier, a French gardener who exhibited tubs and pots at the Paris Exhibition that year. French artisans soon recognized that concrete, while moist or semi-hardened, could be carved and molded to simulate wood.

Structures of concrete *faux bois* are found in public parks around the world—Japan, Turkey, Argentina. In the U.S., such pieces are the

work of Mexican artisans who, from the 1920s through the '40s, came north for employment and to escape the ravages of the 1910 revolution. South Texas was rich in limestone, the principal ingredient in cement. Mexican surgeon Dr. Aureliano Urrutia immigrated to San Antonio in 1914 to become a prominent member of the community. He built an elaborate residence for himself called *Miraflores*, which included

Stone, too, was often carved to look like wood.

Look for stumps and trunks in stone in old cemeteries: a chopped tree monument may represent a life cut short.



nine works by Dionicio Rodríguez, the pre-eminent master of reinforced concrete landscape art. Word spread about Rodríguez's remarkable constructions: umbrella-like shelters with talapa roofs mimicking straw thatch, a 125-foot-long fence with rails in imitation of twenty species of trees, a now-historic streetcar shelter.

Rodríguez worked through the Depression and until his death in 1955. His creations stand in Little Rock, Arkansas (a working mill featured in the opening scenes of the 1939 movie "Gone With The Wind"), and as far north as Detroit and Chicago. One of Rodríguez's collaborators was Maximo Cortés, who worked with him in San Antonio's Brackenridge Park, which stands on the site of the original cement quarry. The Wooden Bridge is

among the few constructions signed by Rodríguez. Built in 1925, the curved bridge spanning the headwaters of the San Antonio River resembles a wooden pergola and includes 33 pairs of tree-trunk pillars.

"Surfaces of crosscut and hewn logs, tree trunks, logs and branches with heavily textured and peeling bark, knotholes, stalactites, insect borings, and patches of lichen" is how his work is described in a new book by Patsy Pittman Light, *Capturing Nature: The Cement Sculptures of Dionicio Rodríguez*. Unlike most of the European pieces, the Rodríguez works are in living color, tinted with pigments made from secret recipes.

And today, his great-nephew Carlos Cortés, son of Rodríguez's collaborator Maximo Cortés, produces furniture, containers, works of

art, and even bridges in his outdoor studio in a neighborhood near the Alamo [studiocortes.com]. Inspired by his relatives' work and by nature, he reproduces the textures and colors of aging cut branches and trunks.

Cortés's medium is steel-reinforced concrete. People say that concrete "dries," but more precisely it cures; water is the catalyst that produces heat to slowly harden the material. Before it has hardened, Carlos Cortés begins to carve details using tools he's fashioned from forks, steel brushes, nails, and knives.

Even in its south Texas homeland, *trabajo rústico* is little known: until a decade or so ago, it was too familiar to notice. Only when the concrete bus shelters, park benches, and staircases began to receive landmark status was a revival possible. ✦



In the turbulent world of the '30s, '40s, and '50s, wallpapers changed dramatically. Some were cutting edge or boldly graphic; others reintroduced old favorites in new ways.

from deco W to atomic

BY MARY ELLEN POLSON



TOP: (left) Starfish, Grille, Sunflowers, and Viennese Trees, new from Adelphi Paper Hangings. (right) Bradbury & Bradbury's suite of Postwar kitchen papers in vibrant cherry reds, greens, and blues on soft grey and white.

ABOVE: Deer, a vintage reproduction from the 1930s or '40s from House Vernacular.

OPPOSITE: Ever-popular diaper patterns and geometrics come together in a 1940s-inspired red and white paper (by Laura Ashley ca. 1975; discontinued).

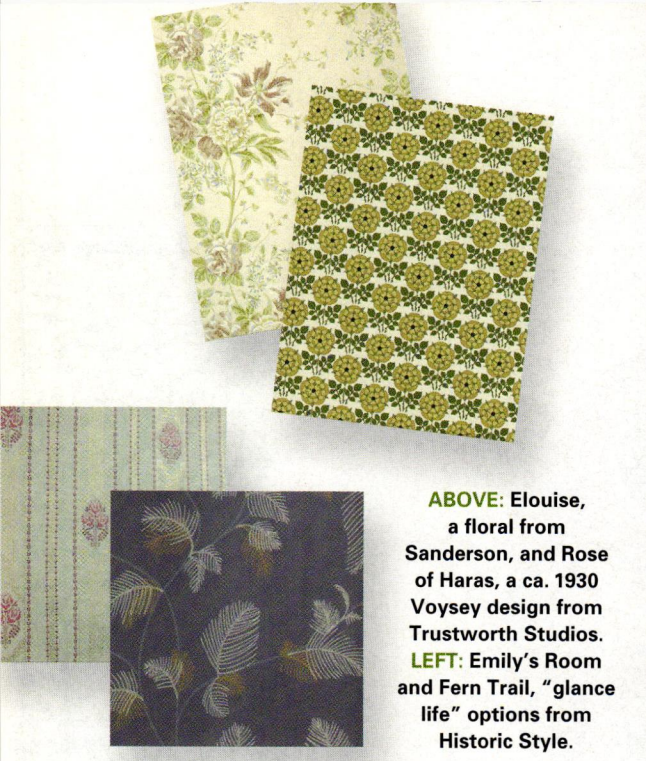
WHEN STEVE LARSON of Adelphi Paper Hangings decided to explore the idea of introducing a line of Art Deco-era papers a couple of years ago, he admits he had a preconceived notion of what they would be like: geometric, starkly modern, like nothing that had gone before.

After doing some research at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in New York, however, Larson changed his assessment. In the line introduced last spring, "we ended up with patterns that are not so much geometric as they are lyrical."

Despite the never-before-seen designs formed by movements that include the Vienna Secession, Bauhaus, and Modernism, wallpaper patterns with flowers, vines, and other familiar motifs were still current in the wallpaper books of the 1930s. "You still get florals and roses and all sorts of classic designs," says Historic Style's Stuart Stark, who has an in-depth collection of original wallpaper books. "Then you get the hard-edge Art Deco designs mixed in with them."

A typical example of a high-end paper includes Adelphi's Grille, an in-house design from France that features two planes of color. The slightly wavy colored lines cross each other but are not enmeshed like a plaid,





ABOVE: Elouise, a floral from Sanderson, and Rose of Haras, a ca. 1930 Voysey design from Trustworth Studios. **LEFT:** Emily's Room and Fern Trail, "glance life" options from Historic Style.



TOP: A traditional floral paper of the 1940s. **LEFT:** Oasis, a Bradbury paper inspired by Edgar Brandt. **RIGHT:** Bradbury's Zenith is based on a design from French Art Deco metalwork.

and the design is something that probably couldn't have been produced before the 20th century, Larson says. Another striking paper is Viennese Trees, a Dagobert Peche design from the Viennese Secession movement. "It's a little hallucinatory," Larson says. "Those half circles start turning into twisting bands that run across the wall."

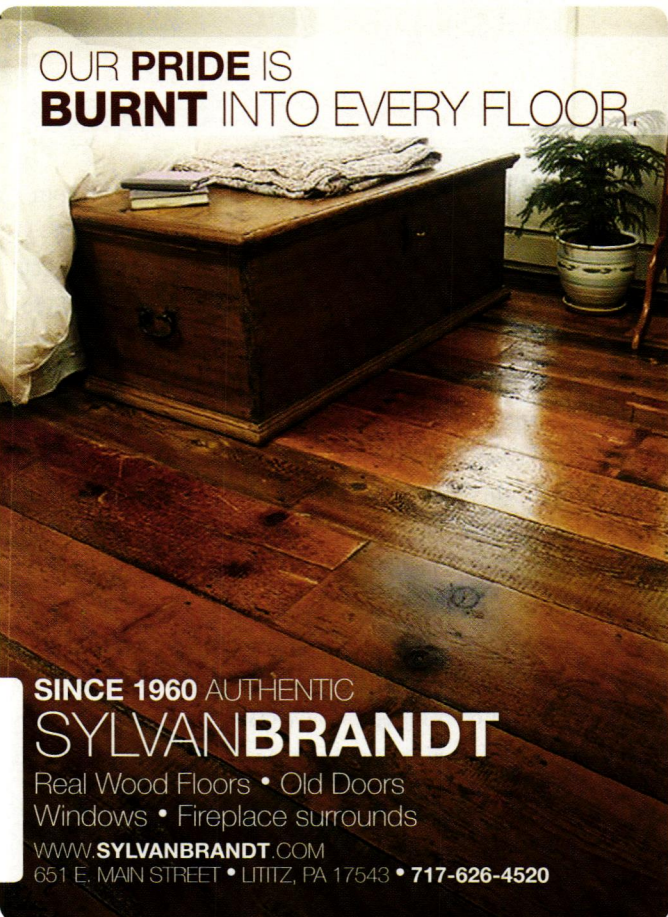
Despite their cutting-edge looks, papers like Grille and Viennese Trees were intended, then as now, for residential use. "More than a few designers said they would be just right for a New York City apartment," Larson says.

One of the wallpaper trends that began in the 1920s that carried into the '30s was the idea of "glance life." The idea is that someone just passing by the room would get an impression of sparkle and shimmer: the glint of

glass on a framed watercolor, well-polished furniture, a chrome ashtray or martini shaker—or the subtle glisten of mica in the striped wallpaper on the walls. "It shows that a room is beautifully cared for and well maintained and fresh," Stark says. "It's adding jewelry to your outfit; it's adding sparkle."

Emily's Room, which dates to the 1920s, is a good example of a paper with glance life, Stark says. For environmental reasons, wallpaper makers can no longer add real mica to reproduction papers, but screen printing specialists like Bradbury & Bradbury come close with the silver, gilt, bronze, and copper effects in papers like Oasis and Zenith, both Art Deco papers, and GeeGee, an Atomic Age paper.

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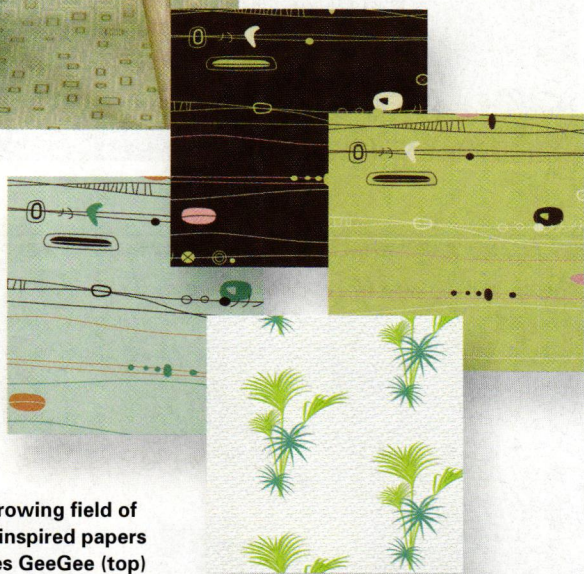
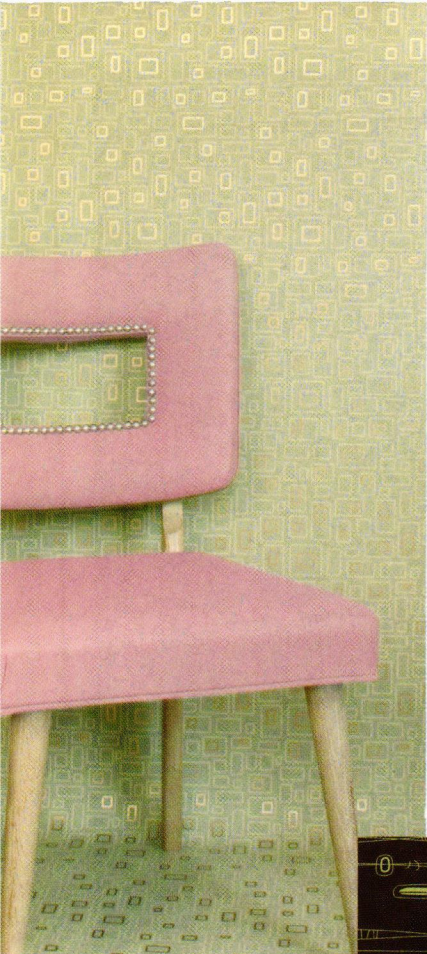
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The growing field of Fifties-inspired papers includes GeeGee (top) an Atomic Age paper from Bradbury & Bradbury, and a suite of Mid-20th-Mod papers from Gate Multimedia.

As for color palettes, the original '30s colorways can be “pretty intense,” Larson says. One of the most incendiary is a color referred to as Tango, an almost juicy orange, says Stark. “It became particularly popular, especially in combination with black.” The pastels and flowers we associate with 1920s walls carried forward for decades, he says, although “by the end of the '30s, all the colors greyed out.” The lack of color may have been a response to the emotional toll of the Great Depression, or perhaps because dyes were expensive or in short supply. “The colors were all subdued, which is fascinating to see from a distance, in retrospect.”

“You still get florals and roses and all sorts of classic designs. Then you get the hard-edge Art Deco designs mixed in with them.” —STUART STARK, HISTORIC STYLE

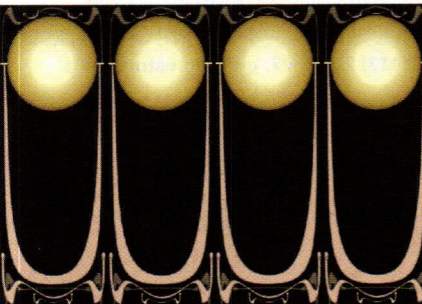
New for the 1940s were tropical fantasy papers, with giant tropical leaves on dark backgrounds in many shades of green. Other papers of the '40s and '50s offered familiar motifs in on subdued backgrounds with bursts of color that pop visually.

If there is a signature color for the 1950s, it is a sharp spring green. “Today we would call it a soft lime,” say Stark, “not quite as sharp as lime, but in those tones.” The 1950s and '60s also brought in patterns with an intense graphic quality with repeating shapes, like Bradbury's Atomic Doodle. Thanks to innovators like the English designer David Hicks, who was strongly influenced by the brilliant hues of India, wallpapers of the late 1960s exploded with psychedelic patterns and acid-edged colors: the perfect style complement for the drug-soaked Decade of Love. ✦

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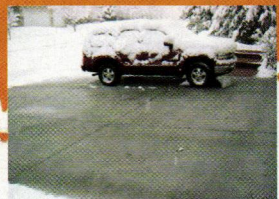
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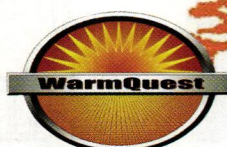
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DIALOG

back&forth

SAN DIEGO COMEBACK

IN THE LATE '30s, we (Mom, my brother, and I) landed in San Diego—what a nice time to arrive in a small city that was just beginning to grow outward. [Refer to “A Red Tile Romance,” OHI December 2008, p. 52.] I lived in Mission Hills, an older section, also filled with the Spanish-type homes. (Mr. Jackson’s home is in Kensington, a distant newer area at the end of Adams Ave.) When I think back sixty-some years, I can picture things that no longer exist. So it’s wonderful to open a magazine and see that some of the familiar homes are being restored and cherished.

—ALICIA BELL
Middletown, R.I.

INVASION WORRIES

IN RENOVATING our (not truly old) beloved reproduction Colonial, I have invested much time and energy to learn what sort of plants are best for our garden, and have gotten a surprising education in the process. A great deal of what passes for gar-

dening in America is ecologically destructive, and your article “Stalwarts in the Garden” perpetuates this confusion. [October 2008] Certain plants are invasive when planted in a non-native setting, because natural mechanisms for control that evolve over millenia are thwarted. Your article mentions good plants, like *Clethra*, *Lonicera*, and *Viburnum*, but fails to distinguish between native and foreign species.

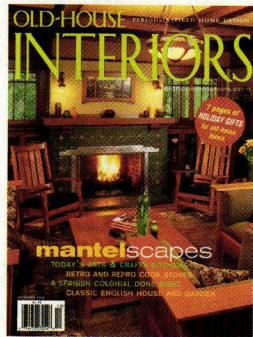
—MARTHA KLEIN, RN, MPH
northwest Connecticut

AUTHOR VICKI JOHNSON RESPONDS:

Without question, we have evidence that certain plants are to be avoided, if not banned. I wish all gardeners were as concerned as you are. Ken Druse and I worked together compiling the list of shrubs: Ken has been growing most of them for years and has witnessed no potential hazards. Neither of us is aware of any specific dangers posed by any of them.

Ken and I are also concerned about problems posed by many native plants, given changes brought on by air pollution and other factors—poison ivy being

a dramatic example. Another native, Virginia creeper, can become a devouring monster in some gardens (even in the Northeast), and reports are growing that its sap is toxic. The issue of “plants that belong here vs. those that cause harm here” has become very complicated!



STOVE BLACK RICHARDSON

The founder of **GOOD TIME STOVE** is Richard M. Richardson—as everyone at *OHI* well knows, since he’s been a long-time resource and advertiser. I misremembered Richard’s last name when I passed on his helpful advice in the December 2008 article “Retro Stoves Considered.” My apologies to the man better known as Stove Black Richardson, who runs the family business with daughter Sara the Stove Princess. —BRIAN COLEMAN

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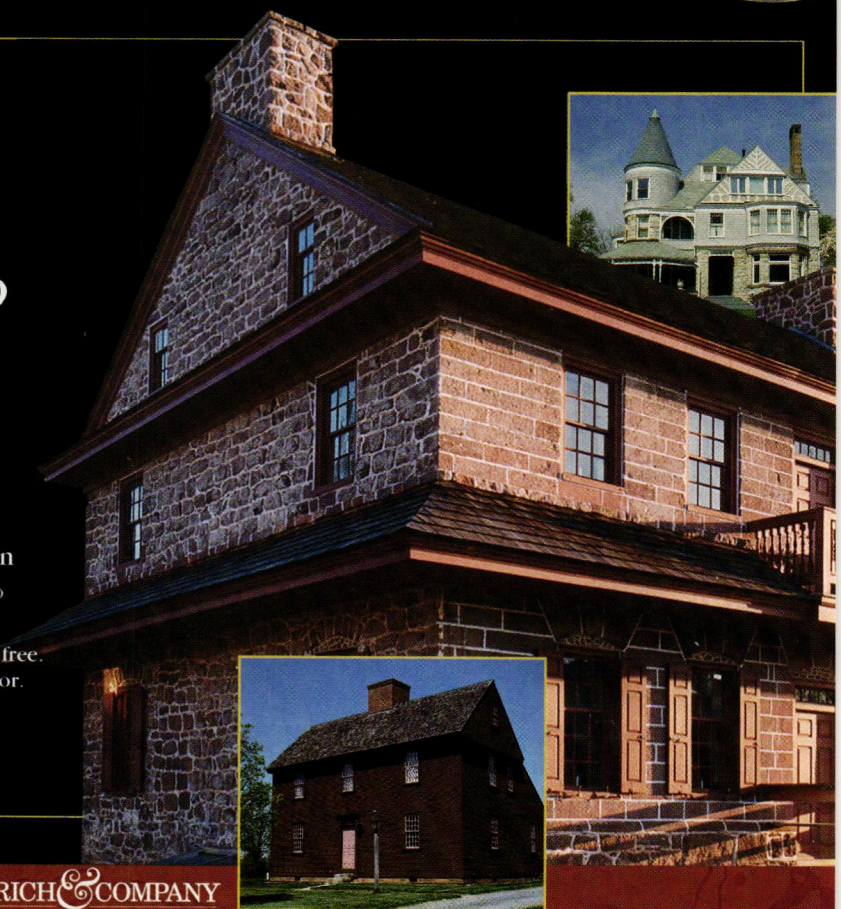
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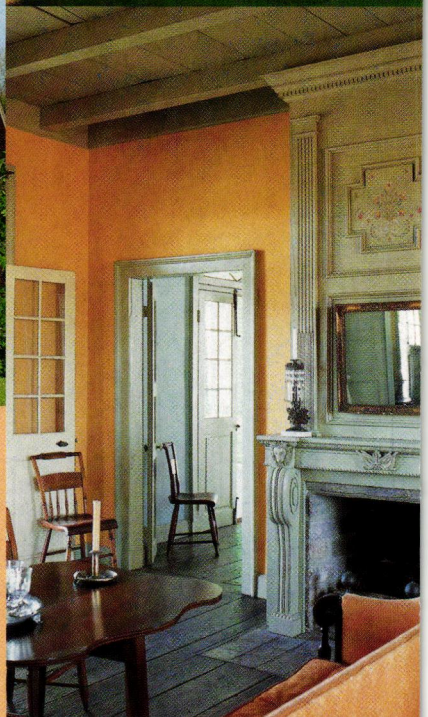
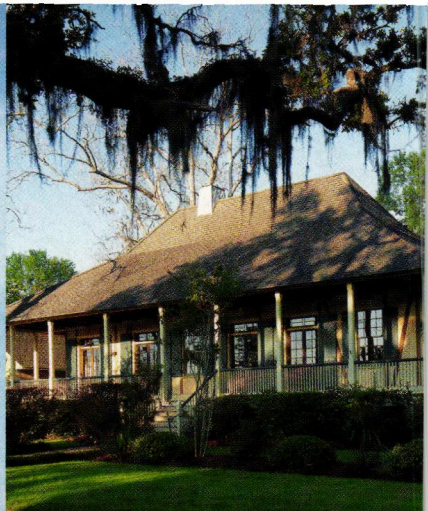
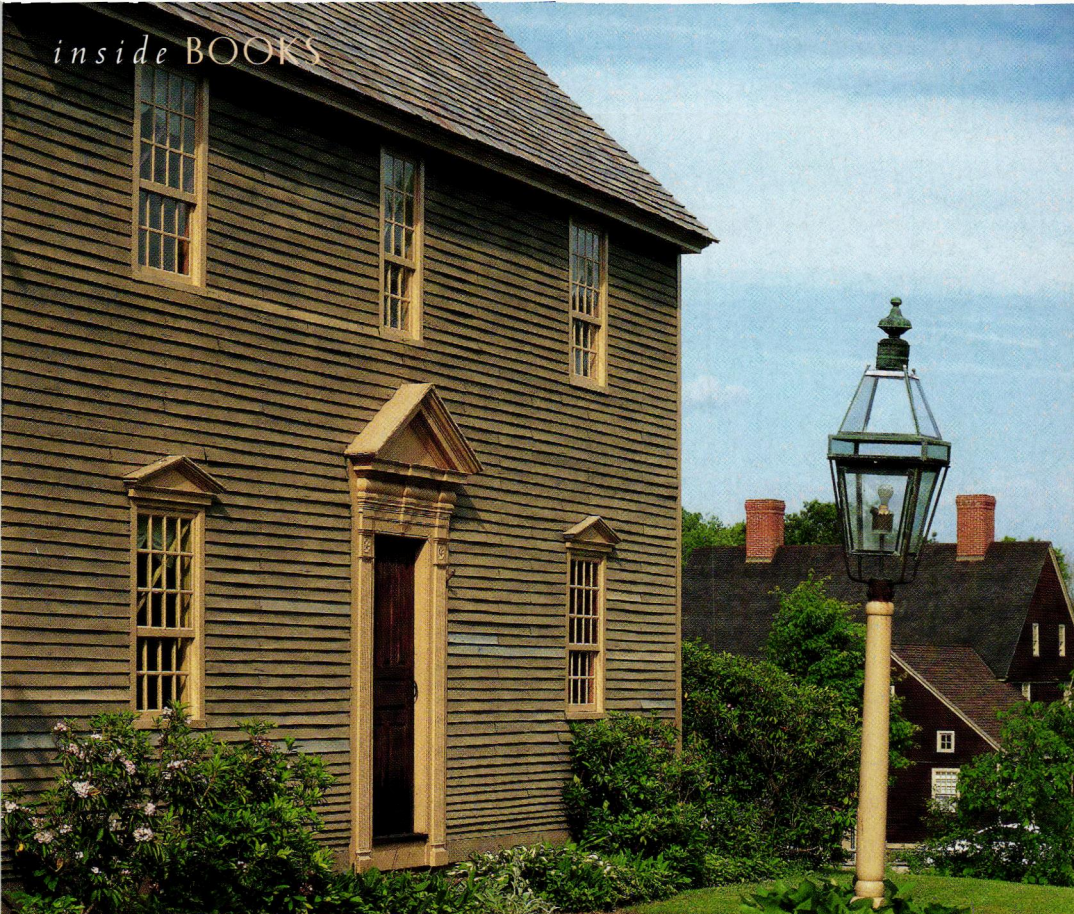


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Roots of Home *American vernaculars*

AT FIRST IMPRESSION, architect Russell Versaci's new book confounded me: I kept wanting to pigeonhole it and it refused. It's not a guide to historic styles or a catalog of details; it's neither a history of American architecture nor a showcase for today's traditional architects. Old houses, replicas, and new work mingle in each chapter.

"I am an architectural tourist," Versaci writes, and reading his Introduction, I grasped what he means by "Roots of Home." He says his decades of travel, studying old houses and using that knowledge in his practice, made him want to better understand architecture's *context*. Social history, culture, and environment shaped regional traditions. He ends up identifying "the ten colonial cradles of home"—from Alta California to the St. Lawrence, Ches-

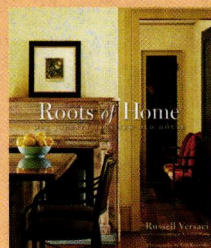
apeake Bay to New England. Then he organizes important prototypical house types in four sprawling chapters devoted to our Spanish, French, English, and Continental heritages. Here are the log cabins, stone farmhouses, saltboxes, haciendas, Dutch houses, and plantations. Each chapter presents new and rebuilt houses in the context of the old, along with pithy sidebars on special places, building elements, and vernacular types.

This book is not about reproducing the past. It's about the ongoing work of building well and with a sense of place. ♦

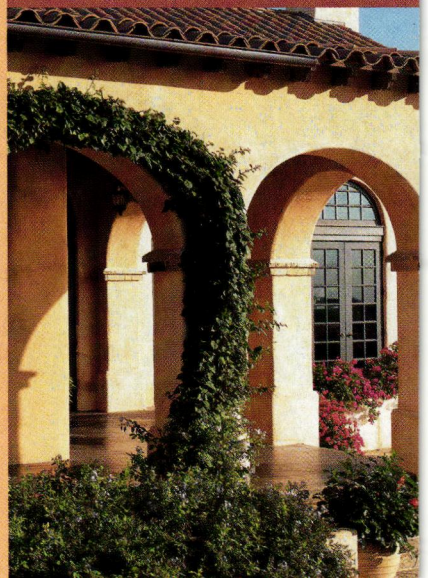
REVIEWED BY PATRICIA POORE

Roots of Home

Our Journey to a New Old House
by Russell Versaci.
Taunton Press,
2008. Hardcover,
265 pages, \$45.00.



FROM TOP LEFT: This typical Connecticut River Valley home is a replica. A hipped roof and gallery define the raised Creole cottage. The carved mantelpiece is a remarkable feature in a 1799 New Orleans house. A new house recalls Texas Mission architecture.



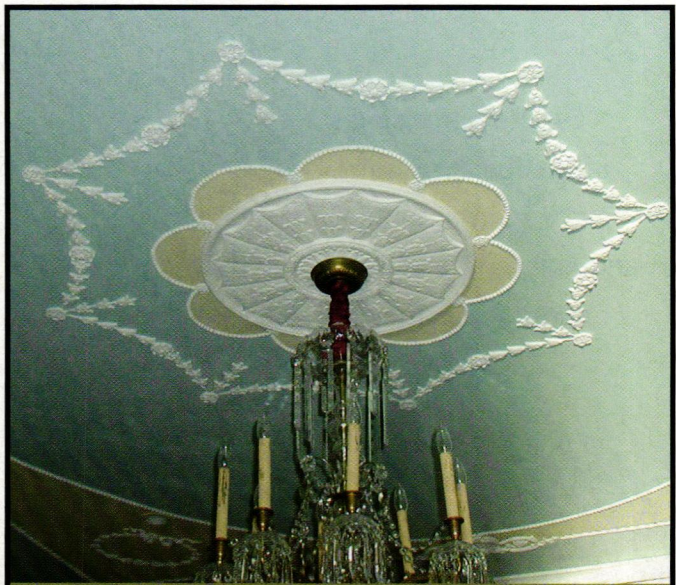


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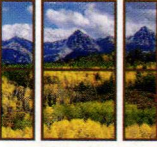


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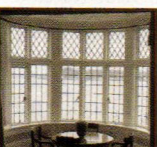
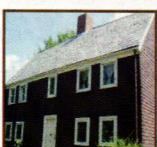
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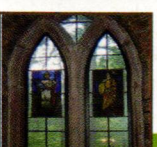

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On the surprising affordability of trim pieces, ornaments, and onlays in plaster, compo, urethane, and wood.



Trimming Out BY PATRICIA POORE

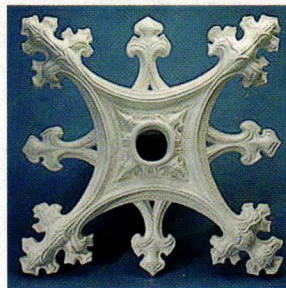
LAST JUNE, Catherine Lundie's excellent overview of mouldings and trim made readers hungry for ornament, but apparently begged some questions. "So—plaster is for the State House, and polyurethane is okay for spec houses—as long as you don't look too close?" wrote one reader. Several others asked about cost, plain and simple: what's the cheapest?

Plaster, the versatile and time-honored material, is for the State House (and museums, and the New York Public Library). But plaster is also for residential use. Medallions, mouldings, and ornaments are readily available from the living archive of such companies as Decorator's Supply in Chicago, and expert plasterers can be found to work on site.

At any rate, it's hard to make an apples-to-apples comparison among the various types of trim. In general, architectural ornament is surprisingly affordable; you're paying for the *n*th cast, not for the original, hand-carved pattern. (A medium-size medallion in reinforced plaster, 16 to about 25 inches in diameter, runs from about \$120 to \$300 depending on complexity. Polyurethane medallions in that size category typically run from \$35 to \$140; they will not have the complexity or depth of relief of plaster.) When it comes to installation, lightweight polyurethane ornament is easily a do-it-yourself job. Installation of, say, a precast plaster ceiling medallion is not complex, however.

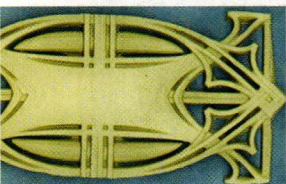
Onlays, or small, three-di-

mensional ornaments, are usually made of compo, a traditional blend of oil, resin, and chalk or whiting in a glue matrix. These ornaments are made in almost infinite variety—not only dentils and egg-and-dart, but also Rococo carvings of musical instruments, Aesthetic dolphins, Greek corbels, designs by Sullivan and



Wright, and geometric Art Deco motifs. Compo is also used for running trim. (Several companies offer highly flexible polyester trim that takes a radius and bridges uneven surfaces.)

Many of these companies offer ornament in Gothic, Deco, and even Modern vocabularies. Fine finish and proportion are the goals in the use of mouldings, cornices, and ornamentation. ✦ [See page 72.]



TOP: Plaster? The dome ceiling is embellished with J.P. Weaver's pliable "Petitsin" compo ornaments. The small medallion is Focal Point's egg-and-dart pattern #833 in polyurethane. **LEFT:** An onlay from Decorator's Supply, #11237, reproduces ornament designed by Louis Sullivan. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Decorator's Supply #750 is an exuberant Gothic 20-inch plaster medallion: \$135.98.

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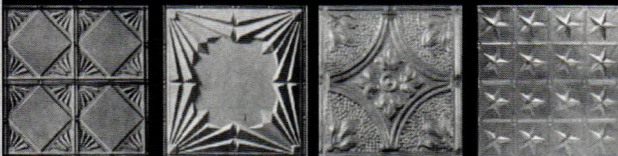
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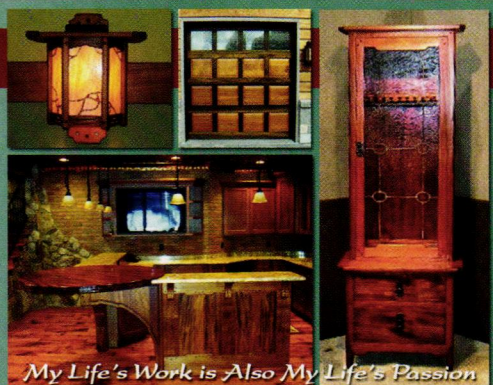
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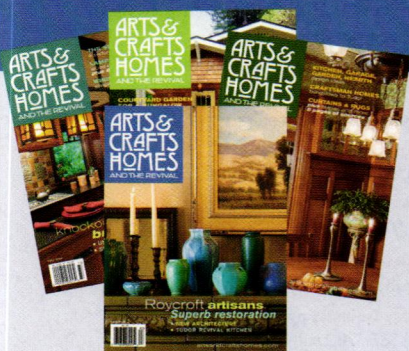
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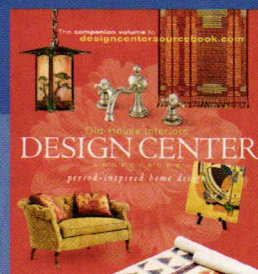
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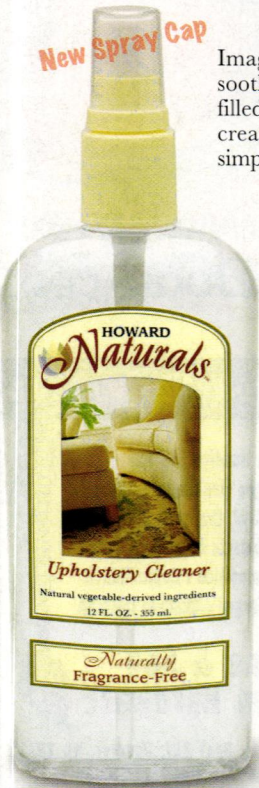
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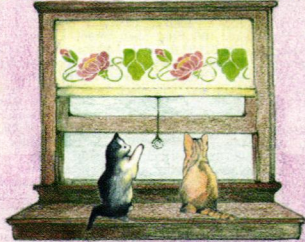


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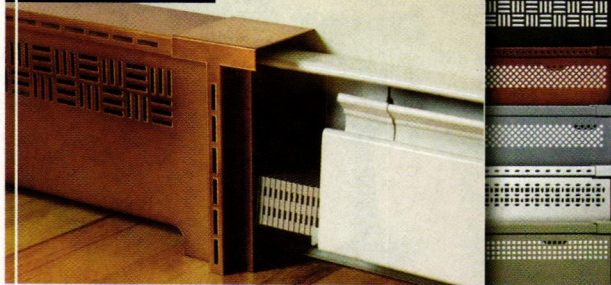
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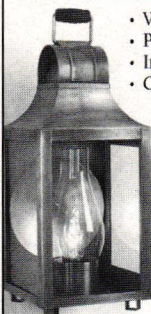
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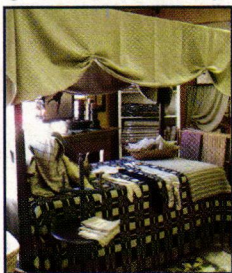
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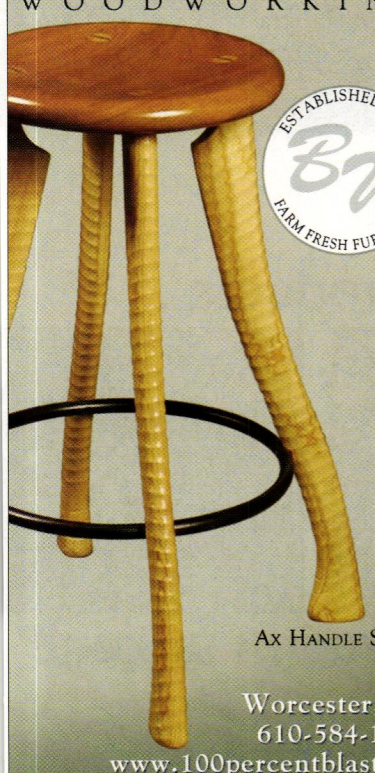
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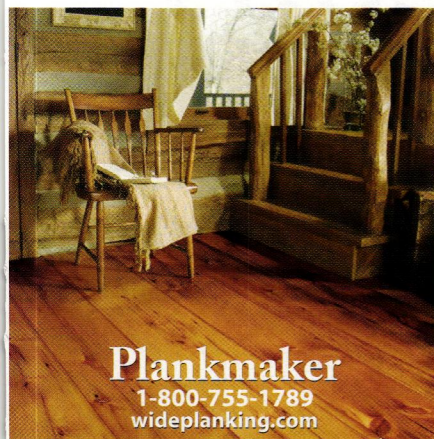
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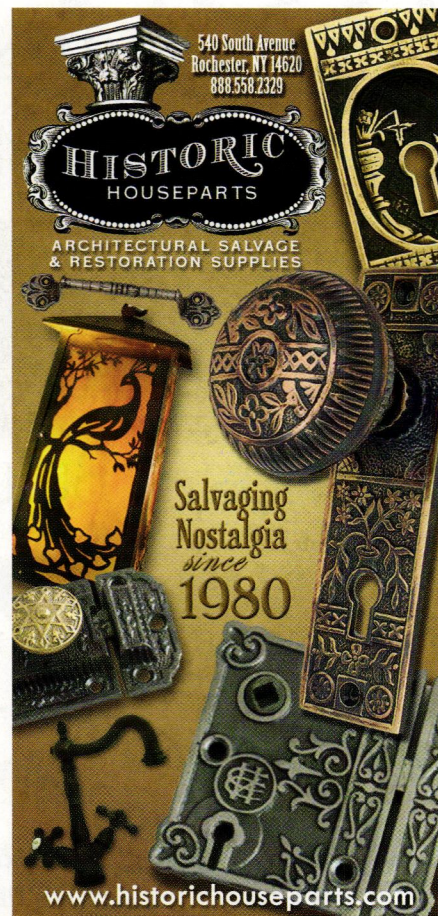
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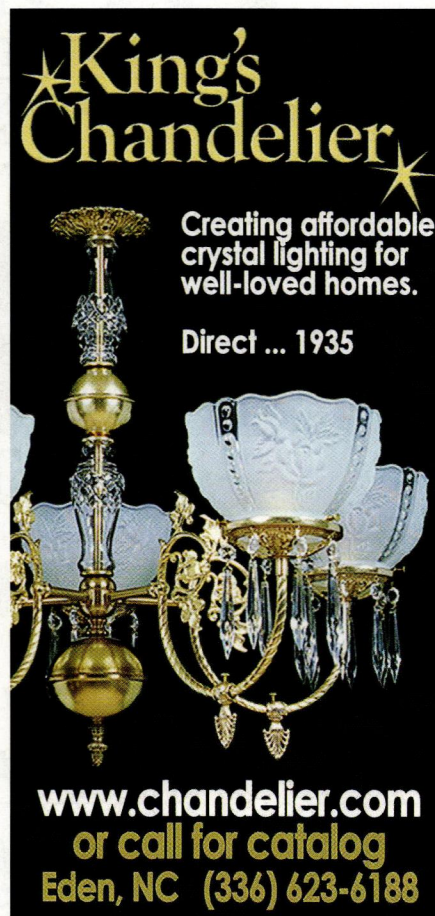


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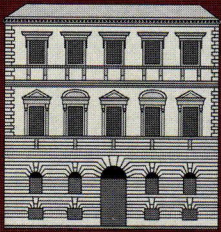
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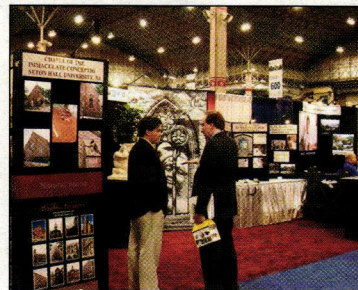
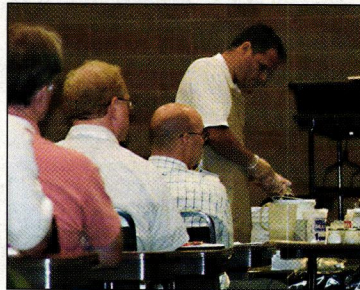


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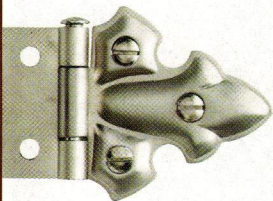
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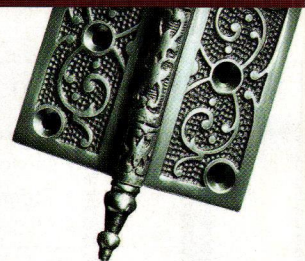


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ENTER ONLINE OR BY MAIL. SEND US:

- Photos or jpegs of your project.
- An image of what inspired it. [A photocopy is fine; we'll handle permission to use the images.]
- Two or three paragraphs describing the inspiration for your project, your intention, and the work you did.
- Your name, full street address, phone number and email address [for editor's use only], the age and style of your house.
- OPTIONAL: A photo of your house's exterior; other photos that provide context.

Questions? (978) 283-3200; info@oldhouseinteriors.com

MAIL TO:

Old-House Interiors, "Inspired By"
108 E. Main Street, Gloucester, MA 01930

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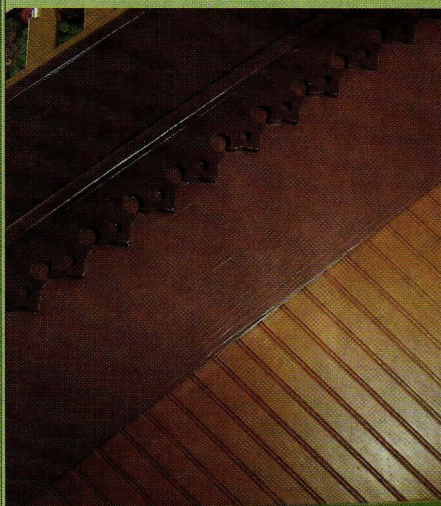
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The newly built Victorian staircase was inspired by a salvaged newel post (below at center right) and some turned balusters, as well as a run of antique wood trim (below). The rest of the stair was fabricated to match.



decorative salvage

BY KATHERINE FAITH MORGAN OPELIKA, ALABAMA

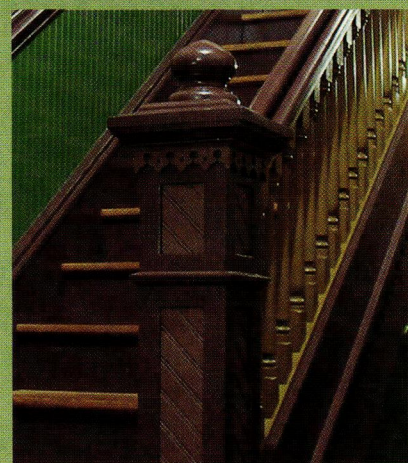
FOR YEARS, the center stair hall of our Folk Victorian house sat unfinished, its new gypsum-board walls primed and ready, as we pondered how to design the space so that it flowed into adjoining rooms. We are a family of artists, and so we are apt to put off projects for long periods as we look for the right inspiration. We are also a family of perfectionists!

Our greatest challenge: how to re-create a staircase that would be “as good as old.” In an architectural antiques shop near Mobile, we found two sets of similar balusters. From another dealer, we acquired

an old newel post, and also some antique trim with a gothic or stylized fleur-de-lis motif. These salvaged parts provided the inspiration for fabricating the new staircase.

We used the antique trim beneath the open stringer of the stairs—and we also crafted a smaller version of it to attach below the newel-post caps. That pulled the design together, even though the stair was based on old parts from different sites. ✦

RIGHT: The owners created a smaller version of the pretty stringer trim for the salvaged newel post (shown “as purchased” above). The new stair seems all of a piece.



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