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ON THE COVER: *Period-inspired and filled with light, this new kitchen is in a 1910 Craftsman house. Cover photograph by Philip Clayton-Thompson.*



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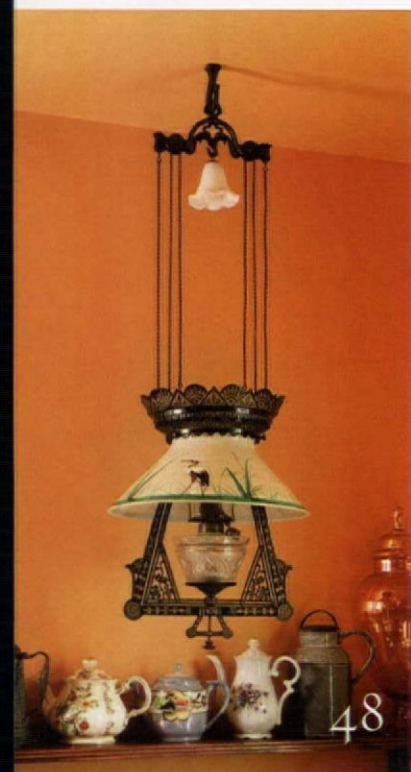
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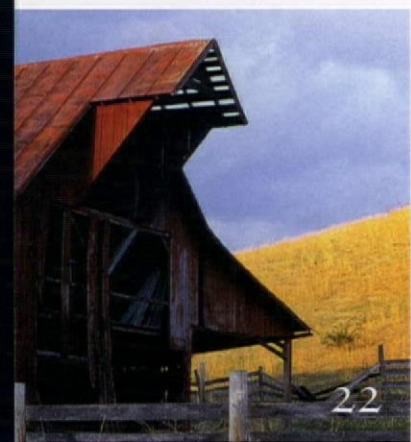
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Preservation & new work

FEATURES IN THIS ISSUE got me thinking once again about how much interiors evolve over the years. A house's exterior changes, too, of course: asphalt shingles on the roof, a porch enclosed. Still, much attention has been paid to exterior preservation in the past 30 years. Inside, though, change was and is inevitable because of evolution in technology and expectations. Gone are the outhouse, the summer kitchen, unheated bedrooms, harvest-gold and avocado-green appliances.

Not all remodelings mean loss of details or integrity. In "Craftsman Transitions" (p. 38), a succession of sensitive owners added to the house and nudged it closer to its 1910 Craftsman-era feeling without obliterating its original style and flow. The new kitchen is undoubtedly the handsomest and most integrated in the history of the house.

Then, in "Better Than Original" (p. 48), 21st-century owners built a conjectural Victorian-era kitchen that closely follows evidence of the original floor plan, including a separate pantry. They had no moral obligation, either to this house or to the historical record, to create a reproduction kitchen; the original was long gone. Nor were they charged with preserving the kitchen as they found it, as it was inferior to the house in many ways. Their own careful work, however, will probably be seen as worthy of preservation in the future, because the kitchen—built with period elements of high quality, some of them antique—is so well matched to the 19th-century house.

Change is inevitable, and you, too, are part of the living history of your house. Just remember the two golden rules: **1. Never destroy good old work.** Fix bad original design; squat and do nothing; add your own mark . . . but do exercise humility during your tenure. Don't destroy what others did well. **2. To thine own style be true.** In whatever repair or addition you do undertake, consider the period and style of the house, preserving its message and its integrity.



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Naked Lunch, Anyone?

When furniture-maker Charlie Shackleton felt he needed to do something to revive his interest in woodworking—the co-owner of ShackletonThomas in Bridgewater, Vermont, has been at it for 22 years—he sent out an invitation to dozens of people: come build a table together. The Naked Table Project was born.

In workshops of a day or a weekend, participants assemble, sand, and finish an heirloom table



they then take home with them. The sustainably harvested sugar maple tables are made using pin mortise-and-tenon joinery. “It takes about six hours to put together,” says Shackleton, whose wife and partner is pottery designer Miranda Thomas (see “Furnishings,” p. 18). “We use all grades of wood, so nothing gets wasted.”

The response to the Naked Table project has been “amazing,” says Shackleton. “It resonated with a lot of people who weren’t furniture-makers, which is great.”

Upcoming events include a one-day workshop on Sept. 25 and a weekend workshop Oct. 9–10 (Columbus Day weekend). Participants can choose to make one of four designs (rectangular, round, oval, trestle). For the one-day event, the cost ranges from \$1,600 to \$2,700 (depending on the table made). The cost of the Columbus Day weekend event, which includes lodging at a local inn, meals, and a forest excursion, ranges from \$3,200 to \$4,300 per couple. Shackleton Thomas, (802) 672-5175, shackletonthomas.com — MEP

“We’re big believers in things that are truly handmade.”

— CHARLIE SHACKLETON, SHACKLETONTHOMAS

FROM TOP: The rectangular Naked Table, designed by Charles Shackleton. Clients sand tables between coats of a natural finish produced in Vermont. Every Naked Table event includes a celebratory feast where tables are placed end to end and everyone who helped dines on food from local sources.



PROFILE

CLAUDIA MILLS has always been fascinated by the possibilities of fabric. After she worked her way through every division in the art department at Ohio University, she settled on weaving. “When I started, I was just so enamored with what the fabrics would look like scrunched together in the weaving process.”

“Scrunching” still fascinates her. For more than two decades Mills has been designing and hand-loomed vividly colored, plain-woven rag rugs in recycled cotton and other materials. Plain weaving is the simplest rug pattern there is (like making pot holders, Claudia says), but her use of colors is highly sophisticated. She works in “shadow blocks,” where the eye mixes two adjacent colors to create a third.

It can take a full day to set up the warp (the vertical yarn), which establishes the rug’s pattern. The weft is made up of individual strips of fabric about ¾” wide. As each strip is woven into the warp, it’s beaten down to compress it. “You have to [hit down hard] because you want the rug to be very tight,” Claudia says. For rugs made of more delicate materials like silk, either she or her associate may have to adjust the pressure to ensure that the finished rug moves freely and isn’t stiff.

A longtime resident of Boston, Claudia moved to Philadelphia recently to be with her fiancé, bronze sculptor Eric Berg. Lately, she’s been experimenting with a new category of materials: recycled clothes. Claudia just completed a rug made from one of her associate’s treasured prom dresses. “It really came out beautifully. Plus I have pictures of her in the prom dress.” Claudia Mills Studio, (215) 386-2347, claudiamills.com — MEP

TOP: Claudia Mills creates traditional rag rugs in a surprising color palette, using recycled materials. **RIGHT:** One of her color-blocked rugs shows





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19th Century Cabinetmaker

A free man of color, Thomas Day (1801–1861) was the most successful cabinetmaker, white or black, in North Carolina in the decades before the Civil War. The revival of interest in Day's work has resulted in a new exhibition and book that explore his contribution to furniture-making and architecture in the antebellum South. Featuring 70 examples of his furniture, "Beneath the Veneer: Thomas Day, Master Cabinetmaker" continues at the North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh through May 2011.

"Day was unique because he was one of a few cabinetmakers who could design the architectural elements for a room and then create the furniture to complement it," says Patricia Phillips Marshall, exhibit curator and co-author (with Jo Ramsay Leimenstoll) of *Thomas Day: Master Craftsman and Free Man of Color* (UNC Press, 2010, \$40).

Characterized by fluid lines, spiraling forms, and undulating shapes, Day's work melded popular design forms with personal motifs that also appeared in his interior millwork, making it highly recognizable. North Carolina Museum of History, (919) 807-7900, ncmuseumofhistory.org



OPEN HOUSE

Locust Grove, a 1790s National Historic Landmark in Louisville, Kentucky, is undergoing a remarkable restoration. In 2008, new documentary evidence revealed that the house's interior was much more similar to the grand Federal homes of the East than previously thought. As a result, the home built by William Croghan and Lucy Clark Croghan is being treated to historical block-printed papers by Adelphi Paper Hangings; new paint in shades of verdigris, ochre, and rose; and reproduction floor coverings. One of the papers, 'Arabesque,' was re-created from block-printed and hand-painted samples on site (an excellent copy of the French Reveillon paper of the same name, according to Adelphi's

Steve Larson). • Locust Grove was also home to Croghan's brother-in-law George Rogers Clark, founder of Louisville and a Revolutionary War general. Clark spent the last nine years of his life here, from 1809 until his death in 1818. Visitors to the house included a Who's Who of early American history: Presidents James Monroe and Andrew Jackson, Vice President Aaron Burr, John James Audubon, and the youngest Clark brother, William, of the Lewis & Clark expedition. The house reopened to the public with a series of celebratory events in June, including a symposium on how the interior wallpapers and textiles were re-created. Historic Locust Grove, Inc., 561 Blankenbaker Lane, Louisville, KY, (502) 897- 9845, locustgrove.org

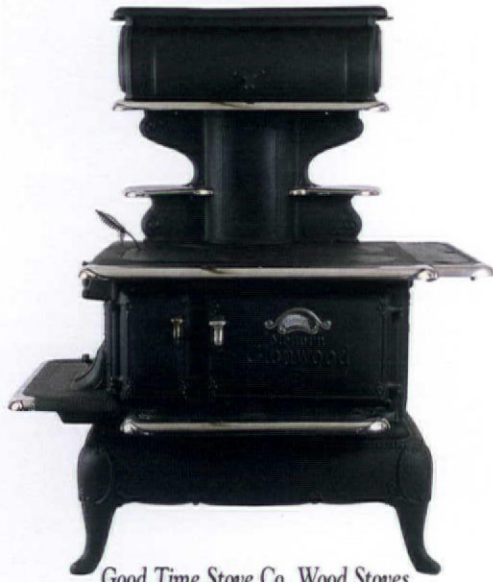


ABOVE: The 55-acre Locust Grove site includes the original smokehouse and eight other stone and log farm buildings. **RIGHT, FROM TOP:** The wall color in a bedroom is based on early paint colors found in the house; on the floor is a new Venetian carpet made by Thistle Hill Weavers. The dining room is papered in 'Plymouth Ashlar' in a custom colorway. The figured 'Arabesque' wallpaper reproduced for the Great Parlor features vignettes of dancing sprites and cupids.



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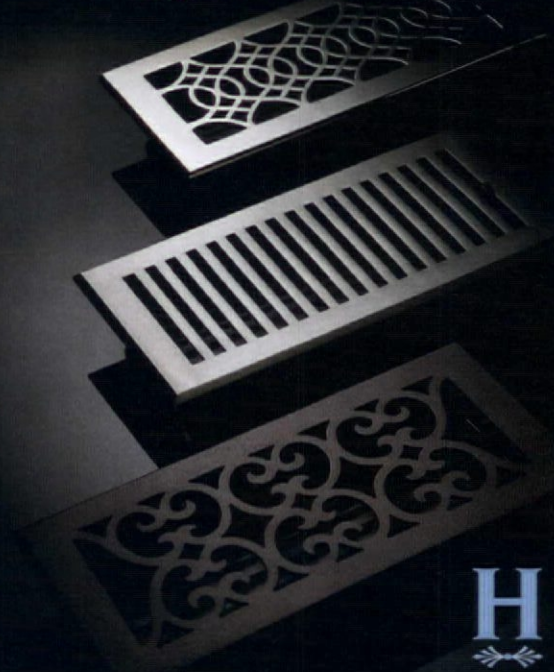


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Joseph Urban's striking color scheme for buildings in the General Exhibits group at the 1933 Chicago World's Fair.

Don't miss...

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- **FINE FURNISHINGS MILWAUKEE**, Oct. 2-3, Harley Davidson Museum, Milwaukee, WI. (401) 816-0963, finefurnishingsshows.com
- **WRIGHT WAY CALIFORNIA**, Oct. 12-18, Santa Monica, CA. Private tours of Wright's iconic Hollyhock and Freeman houses, four Greene & Greene masterworks (the Gamble, Blacker and Laura-belle Robinson houses, plus Casa Baranca), and the Sam Maloof house and studio. Trip concludes with Pasadena Heritage's Craftsman Weekend. Member price: \$3,295. Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust, (708) 725-3852, gowright.org
- **CRAFTSMAN WEEKEND**, Oct. 15-17, Pasadena, CA. Craftsman House Tour, historic neighborhood tours, contemporary and antique furnishings and accessories, special events at historic sites. Pasadena Heritage, (626) 441-6333, pasadenaheritage.org
- **CRAFTSMAN HOMECOMING**, Oct. 16, Craftsman Farms, Morris Plains, NJ. Black-tie-optional gala dinner, live and silent auctions, and fundraiser to kick off the 100th anniversary of Gustav Stickley's Log House. Craftsman Farms, (973) 540-0311, stickleymuseum.org
- **FINE FURNISHINGS PROVIDENCE**, Oct. 22-24, Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence, RI. (401) 816-0963, finefurnishingsshows.com
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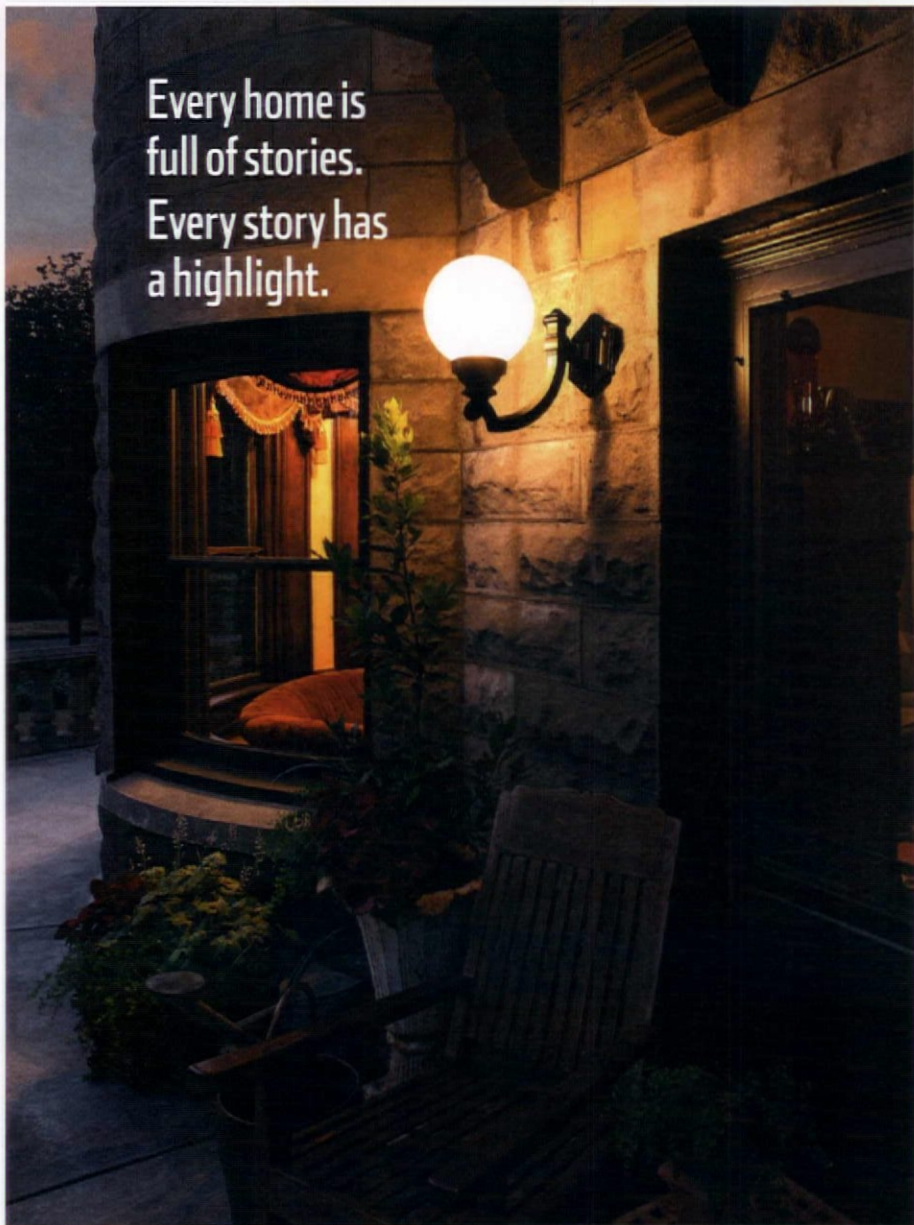
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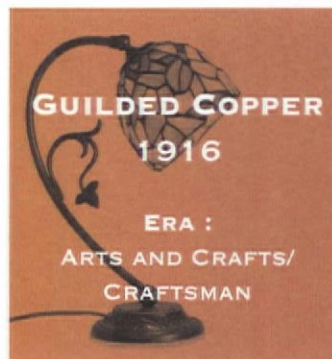
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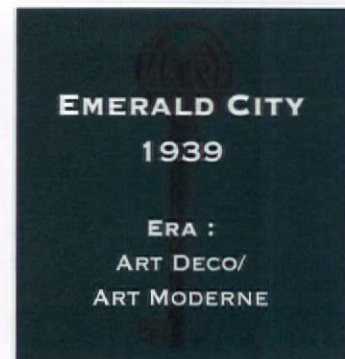
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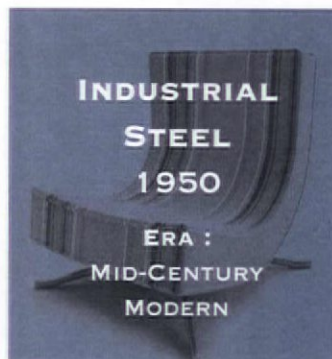
GUIDED COPPER
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ERA :
ARTS AND CRAFTS/
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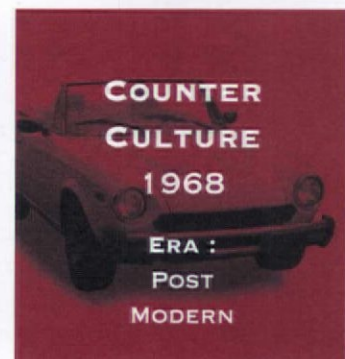
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For the Modernist

The Valor H4 direct-vent fireplace goes almost anywhere you want a fire. The 24,000-BTU unit ignites without electricity and comes in several sleek surround and finish choices. The version shown costs about \$3,170 before installation. From Miles Industries/Valor Fireplaces, (800) 468-2567, valorfireplaces.com



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The wood-burning DEVA 100 cookstove in durable cast iron has a ceramic glass cooktop and nickel and chrome details. The 46,000-BTU range is large enough to hold a 20-pound turkey. The non-catalytic stove lists for \$4,999. From HearthStone, (802) 888-5232, hearthstonestoves.com

The Colors of Water

Tiles from the Watercolors series offer a sense of depth and fluidity, like water itself. The 4" x 4" field tiles are \$32 per square foot. Acanthus cap tiles cost \$40 each. Plaza base tiles are \$21 each. From Pratt & Larson Ceramics, (503) 231-9464, prattandlarson.com



♠ For the Home Olympics ♠

A combination sculpture and fire pit in mild steel, the Berkeley "fire feature" cleverly conceals a natural or LP gas tank within. With a fire ring, igniter, and all connections, the 80"-tall sculpture costs \$3,200 to \$3,500, depending on finish. From Raw Urth Designs, (866) 932-7510, rawurth.com



♠ Sunset Effect ♠

Blue-green art glass and pine tree silhouettes grace the Tiffany Tall Pines fire screen. Measuring 72" wide by 32" high, the folding screen has a black powder-coated finish. Screens in this series sell for about \$1,125 to \$1,800. From Meyda Tiffany, (800) 222-4009, meyda.com

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Leaf, Poker & Tongs ♠

The Leaf fireplace set includes hand-forged tongs, poker, shovel, and broom, all on a matching stand. Each piece is 30" tall. The set sells for \$445.75. (Items are also available separately.) From Historic Housefitters, (800) 247-4111, historichousefitters.com



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Rappahannock COUNTY

This rural county of 7,000 residents, an hour-and-a-half drive from Washington, D.C., has changed little in 250 years. Travelers revel in the mix of historic architecture and untouched countryside at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

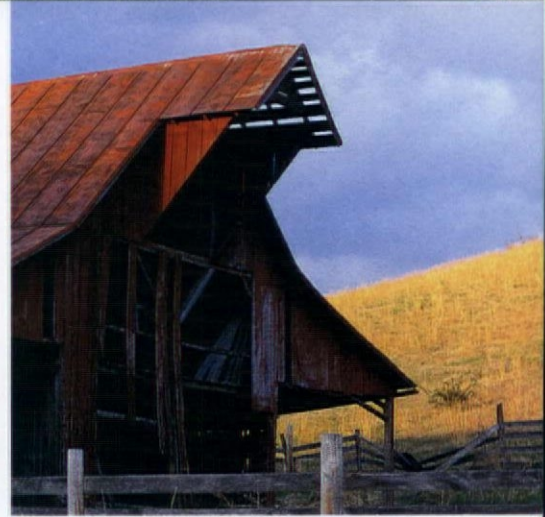
WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY FRANKLIN & ESTHER SCHMIDT

AMONG THE VAST NUMBER of places where George Washington is reported to have slept, Rappahannock County is one that has proof. In the mid-18th century, 17-year-old George came to what was then a western outreach of Virginia to survey a parcel of land in the foothills.

When Washington surveyed the town (which is now the county seat of Washington, the first community of 28 in the U.S. to be named for the first president), its population numbered 200. During the Civil War, the community grew to 500 people; today, 150 years later, the town's population is once again at about 250.

It never expanded beyond the five-by-two-block grid that Washington the surveyor plotted in 1749.

Indeed, what makes the county unique is how little it has changed. The view from hilltops, across pastures and farms, is startlingly like it was two centuries ago. This is nothing short of amazing, given its proximity to the nation's capital just 75 miles to the east. The four-direction panorama takes in orchards, heirloom vegetable farms, grass-fed livestock, and a growing number of vineyards and wineries that sustain the local eateries; the farm-to-table offerings have made Rappahannock a foodie destination.



TOP: The Middleton Inn is an elegant brick house built early in the 19th century. **ABOVE:** An iconic old Rappahannock barn. **OPPOSITE:** Washington, Virginia, was the first of more than two dozen communities in the U.S. named for our founding president.

This rustic, unchanged agricultural county attracts travelers, and tourism is a major source of revenue. Today the county hosts a thriving arts community and a very large (per capita) number of bed-and-breakfast inns, as well as four-star and five-



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star hotels. Galleries and antiques shops abound, along with music and theatre. An art tour takes place the first weekend in November; a new summer music festival has been established at Chateauville (headed by Lorin Maazel, former director of the New York Philharmonic and now a Rappahannock resident). Historical markers describe Civil War

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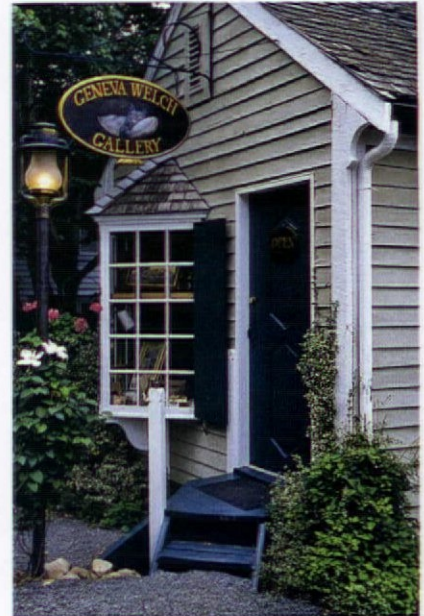
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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A brick sidewalk leads to the County Courthouse. This farmstand in Sperryville sells produce and cider from local orchards; owner Roger Jenkins packs a crate behind his father-in-law, Randolph Clater. With a growing number of artists and galleries (including the Geneva Welch Gallery), Rappahannock has been referred to as the SoHo of the South. The owners of Hopkins Ordinary refer to the inn's architecture as Victorianized Federal.



events, commemorating figures such as General Pope, Stonewall Jackson, and Mosby's Raiders.

Unforgiving zoning is what has restricted growth, both in the outlying countryside and within town borders. The Rappahannock League for Environmental Protection (one of five environmental nonprofits here) is one of the oldest conservation organizations in Virginia. Such organizations, a proactive historical society, and several individuals have worked to shield the area from the maelstrom of development prevalent just outside its borders.

ELECTRICITY DIDN'T ARRIVE here until the eve of World War II, and Rappahannock remains delightfully, purposefully behind the times. The "McMansion craze" missed the county, as even weekend and retired residents prefer homes, restored and new, that fall within local architectural traditions. Typical colonnaded brick colonial buildings are surpassed in number only by Virginia's vernacular, two-over-two farmhouses. Victorian residences add to the mix.

Of the five villages here, only three have sidewalks. In the county seat—locally called "Little Wash-

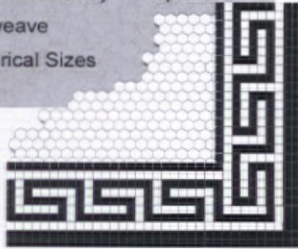
ington"—two or three blocks have walkways paved in brick. You will find no big-box stores, franchises, retail chains, or traffic lights. Instead, the county offers mile after mile of unpaved roads to explore, rivers for fishing or canoeing, and many hiking trails. ✦

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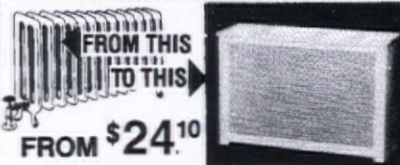
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A ground-source (geothermal, geo-exchange) heat pump uses the constant temperature underground as an exchange medium to regulate temperature in the house. Is it for you?

LEFT: A ClimateMaster outdoor split-system heat pump, the building's heating and cooling plant.

the lowdown on GEOTHERMAL

BY BRIAN D. COLEMAN AND PATRICIA POORE

GEOTHERMAL pertains to the earth's heat—and harnessing it is nothing new. Until the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D., Pompeii was warmed by a sophisticated geothermal heating system. Italy was first to produce geothermal electricity in 1904. Today, cities from Boise to Reykjavik use geothermally produced electricity. Klamath Falls, Oregon, even captures ground heat and pipes it under roads and sidewalks to keep them from freezing in winter.

Geothermal power comes from heat stored in the earth—from the planet's formation and the radioactive decay of minerals, and, nearer the surface, from the sun. A few feet down, the crust's temperature is relatively constant at 45 to 58 degrees Fahrenheit, year round. Geo-ex-

change heat pump systems take advantage of this by circulating water or other liquids through continuous loops of plastic pipes buried in the ground (or a water source like a pond). Those are closed-loop systems; an open-loop option uses well or surface water as the exchange liquid, which is returned to the source.

The fluid collects heat from the soil during winter and carries it through the system to a heat pump in the building, where the heat is compressed to produce more heat that warms air to 90 to 105 degrees, which is moved through the house via standard ductwork. Or it can send heated liquid through an under-floor radiant system. During summer, a reverse process occurs as circulating fluids transfer heat from the building back into the earth.

The very reliable, efficient system provides pleasantly even heat and year-round humidity control, and it's much quieter than air conditioning.

Ground-source heat pumps also can be used to heat a portion of the hot water supply. In winter, the heat pump reduces water-heating costs by about half. In summer, heat taken out of the house is used to heat the water at great savings.

Pumps are the size of a small refrigerator or furnace and can fit in a closet (no venting is needed). When space is not available, a small, unobtrusive exterior unit such as those from ClimateMaster does the job. Maintenance is simple (e.g., filter changes). Underground pipes are expected to last 50 years and perhaps much longer. Ground-source heat pumps may be

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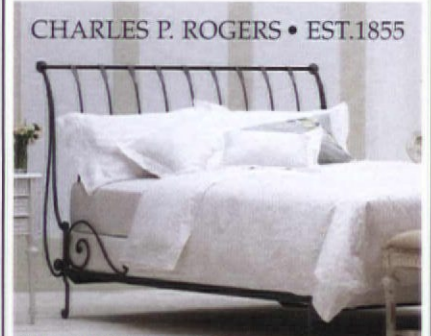


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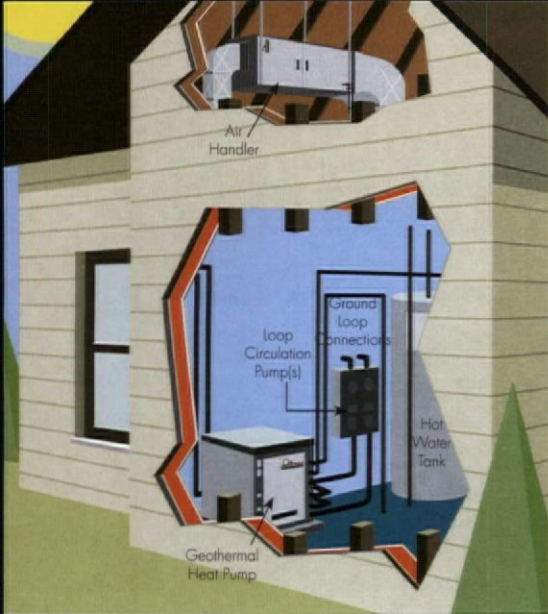


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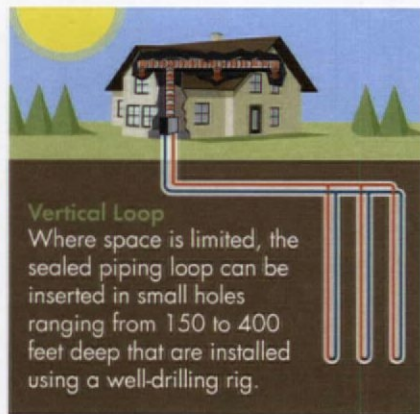
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LEFT: The cutaway shows how an indoor split-system pump delivers warmed air and preheats household water. **BELOW:** The air handler houses compressor, air coil, blower, filter, and electronic controls; sizes and configurations vary.



ABOVE: The drawing depicts a closed-loop, liquid-to-air system using vertical loops, which are deeper but not as space-consuming as horizontal pipes.

added to existing fossil-fuel furnaces to increase their efficiency.

Retrofitting an older house for geothermal heating is not complicated, but it may be expensive. The system can be installed in all but the smallest lots, under lawns, driveways, even the house. Pipes can be run horizontally or vertically, depending on the amount of land surface available. Horizontal installation involves laying pipes in trenches 4' to 5' apart at depths of 3' to 4'; this trenching will, however, disturb established landscape and tree roots. In space-efficient vertical installations, more expensive and perhaps complicated by the substrate, deep bore holes are drilled 10' to 15' apart.



Geothermal heat is cleaner than systems that burn fossil fuels on site and is considered easy on the environment. (You won't be off the grid, though, as electricity is used to run the pumps.) Many states offer tax credits for installation of geothermal systems. A ground-source heat pump can be expected to decrease energy use 25 percent to 40 percent, sometimes much more. Upfront cost is high, however; units cost about \$2,500 per ton of capacity, or \$7,500 for an average house—almost twice the cost of a conventional system. Drilling can add \$10,000 to \$30,000.

And depending on the particulars, pumps last only about 15 to 25 years. Nevertheless, many homeowners are able to recoup initial installation costs after three to seven years. Some experts claim that, in the case of existing homes, it will take 16 to 20 years for a closed-loop system to pay for itself.

So...is geothermal heating and cooling for you? Every site and situation is different. If you are truly interested in switching, consult local experts and installers. General guidelines, given current costs and technologies, look like this:

Do consider a ground-source heat pump if you are building new (or are substantially remodeling and adding space); if your current systems need to be replaced, you have already insulated, yet your energy bills are high, and your property lends itself to trenching or boring; if you are a die-hard believer in going green by example (i.e., there's a Prius in your driveway).

This sort of system is probably *not* for you if you have working HVAC systems in place and are not adding on; if you have little land or are sited on or near ledge (bedrock); if you would need to retrofit ductwork or radiant pipes; or if you plan to sell before payback (three to 20 years, depending on installation costs). ✦

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On the care and feeding of a vintage floor, and how to determine whether to preserve, refinish, or replace.

YOU'VE painted the ceiling and papered the walls. The woodwork gleams and the windows are clean...and only now do you see that the floors really look *dirty*.

Although it's true that few things spruce up a room like a freshly sanded and varnished floor (or a new floor), there are several arguments to be made for not refinishing, at least not without forethought. Aside from the expense and the dust—and you have no idea what it's like until you've lived through a floor sanding—you may find the floor has fewer lives than you expected.



Interior designer Robert Currie specified restoration, not replacement, for an old wood floor in this elegant Shingle Style house in New England.

This Old Floor

BY DAN COOPER

SANDER, SPARE THY DRUM (BELT) Most wood floors (from the mid-19th century onwards) are connected via interlocking edges called tongue and groove, a laying method that minimizes gaps and keeps the faces of the floorboards from cupping. The upper and lower tabs are about $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick, and can withstand only two or three sandings before they start splintering, ruining the appearance of the floor. If your floor has already been sanded once or twice in its history, especially by someone a bit too enthusiastic

with the sander, you will need to take great care to preserve the floor as you refinish it.

That's true, too, with oak carpet, an alternative to tongue-and-groove popular from about 1880 to 1920. This is a hardwood veneer applied over lower-grade pine flooring (originally meant to be carpeted). The strips of flooring tend to be quite narrow (typically $\frac{1}{4}$ " to $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide). They are face-nailed, meaning they are not tongue-and-groove, but simply tacked down

with finish nails into the joists. Nail holes that appear uniformly every 16" indicate oak carpet. This finish flooring was milled at just $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick, so once again, it can handle only a couple of sandings.

Is there an alternative to sanding that lets you restore the floor? Sometimes, rather than sanding off the old finish and with it some of the floor surface, an otherwise-sound wood floor can be lightly abraded—scratch-sanded or screened—to permit application of a compatible

WHICH WOOD SPECIES, WHERE?

Consider regional variations, and whether your house, as built, was urban or country, high-style or a vacation cabin. These are guidelines:

- **SOFT PINE** Found in early houses, and often where wall-to-wall carpeting was intended as the finish surface. Common ca. 1700–1900.
- **WHITE OAK** Popular throughout the 19th and 20th centuries; better floors used quarter-sawn lumber (tight grain, flecks instead of flames). White oak is more expensive than coarser red oak. Used in all rooms, not as often in kitchens.
- **MAPLE** Often used in pre-1900 kitchens. It's hard and resilient; pores are very tiny, so gunk and grease won't collect.
- **FIR AND SOUTHERN YELLOW (HARD) PINE** Replaced oak and maple after 1900. Use of fir and hard pine continued into the carpeted decades of the mid-20th century.



LEFT: Reclaimed heart pine flooring from Carlisle Wide Plank Floors. **RIGHT:** Remilled chestnut flooring, from Chestnut Specialists, is popular in some regions and no longer available as new growth. **TOP:** Signs of a past in remilled pine from Vesper's Antique Woods.



finish. You'll get a floor that's not bad-looking and certainly better and more protected than before.

WEAR AND TEAR If there's limited damage to one area of an otherwise good floor, judicious patching can save it. Too much, of course, results in a patchwork effect—and it will test the skill of the carpenter trying to match new wood to old. Sound old wood can be moved to prominent areas, and the patches done in dark corners or under rugs and furniture. Matching wood can be salvaged from closet or attic. Whether you will be happy with a patched floor depends on your “compulsive meter.” If you must have perfection (and frankly, if you must, you

shouldn't be living in an old house), a patched and refinished floor may bother you.

FINISHING UP If a floor is scratch-sanded or screened (not entirely stripped of its old finish), then you must use a compatible finish for reapplication. Most likely this will be an oil-based varnish or oil-based polyurethane. New wood may be sealed with a water-based finish or penetrating oil, or time-honored shellac in non-wet rooms. Every finish has its own attributes regarding shine, longevity, and abrasion resistance.

THE NEWLY FLOORED Sometimes you have to start fresh. Maybe there's rot, all-over splintering, too many

patches, huge gaps, or urine stains. Maybe there was never a finish floor in the first place. Owners of pre-1850 houses who prefer the informal appearance of wide pine often choose reclaimed lumber. It is considered “greener” because it doesn't involve newly felled old-growth trees, it may be less expensive, and it has character to match the truly old house, due to markings made by previous joinery, nails, and wear. Victorian and later homes usually are better suited to hardwoods. Remember that hardwoods may have been used in public rooms, softwood upstairs, and “deal” (usually butt-jointed wide boards of soft pine or fir) in back halls and attics. †

FOR RESOURCES, PLEASE SEE P. 70.



Are You My Type?

BY CATHERINE LUNDIE

A FEW MONTHS AGO I came across a book by Emily Post called *The Personality of a House*. The title intrigued me, because I'd just spent the weekend house-hunting, and was reminded again that I react strongly to some homes. I don't mean the mildly bemused "how could anyone choose that wallpaper/paint/sofa?" reaction. I'm talking about something visceral—a gut reaction, if you will. Upon crossing various thresholds I've experienced instantaneous delight, dislike, even—in one memorable instance—fear. Like most people (so I suspect), I've also fallen in love.

What makes us decide, "This is the one"? I believe it's more than just walls and woodwork, the physical characteristics; it's something we sense rather than just see. Could it be that each dwelling does possess its own personality? I turned to Mrs. Post: "The personality of a house is indefinable, but there never lived a lady of great cultivation and charm whose home, whether a palace, a farm-cottage, or a tiny apartment, did not reflect the charm of its owner. Every visitor feels impelled to linger,

and is loath to go." Hmm. Not exactly what I was looking for (and anyway, I'm pretty sure I don't fit the profile of "a lady of great cultivation and charm").

Still intrigued by the idea, I Googled the phrase "house personality." One thing that came up was a quiz designed to determine my architectural personality. Not quite what I was after, either, but who could resist the come-on's narcissistic appeal: "The house style you like can be a blueprint for your personality." After answering such puzzling questions as what I serve at dinner parties, and my favorite color, the verdict flashed on screen: "You're a lively Spanish Colonial!"

Wow. Easterner that I am, lover of Capes and woodland, I didn't see that coming.

"Like a Spanish Colonial home, you are warm with an eye toward the romance of living . . . Spanish Colonial homes take a simple construction style and add artistic details . . . denoting, like you, a love of art and individuality."

I forced my reluctant husband to take the quiz; ap-



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PATRICIA POORE, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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parently he's a ranch house, "simple and suburban by nature."

How about *Old-House Interiors* Senior Editor Mary Ellen Polson? Turns out she's a lively Spanish Colonial, too! Her good sport of a husband is a refined Victorian. (Did I mention they live in a 1947 Manhattan apartment building?) I cajoled a whole list of people into taking the quiz, and everyone agreed that their analysis was incorrect. Or, as my teenaged niece Ariana pithily commented when

It's true that architectural styles embody certain traits; the style may be stately, rustic, or whimsical. I was looking, though, for evidence of indefinable personality in individual houses.

pegged as a highbrow Greek Revival: "Not."

The vehemence suggests that there's something to this—that we do feel one "expresses one's personality" when one chooses a house. It's true that architectural

styles embody certain traits; the style may be stately, rustic, or whimsical. I was looking, though, for evidence of indefinable personality in individual houses.

I found support in what I considered an unlikely source: *realtor.org*, "the business tool for real-estate professionals," which featured an article on—wait for it—house healers! House healers are not to be confused with practitioners of *feng shui* and *vaastu*, whose goal is to balance a home's energy and create a harmonious environ-

ment. A house healer is called in for those stubborn properties that just won't sell, no matter how attractive or well-priced. The premise behind house healing is that the unenthusiastic response of prospective buyers is not simply subjective, but actu-

ally a response to negative energy filling a property. Not *Amityville Horror* levels of bad energy, just the emotional and spiritual baggage that comes along with previously inhabited homes.

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Now, I've always found real-estate agents to be pretty hard-headed individuals, so I took this article (and the very existence of house healers) as vindication of my theory that houses exhibit personality. If houses do retain the emotional and spiritual residue of previous owners, imagine how much buildup there is in an old house, which has seen generations of inhabitants.

But this is what true old-house people want, isn't it? We don't want a new house, even if it is a pitch-perfect replica in the architectural style we adore. We want the personality as well as the patina of our well-lived-in dwellings.

SATISFIED, I returned to Emily Post, who captures something fundamental to my argument: "Houses without personality are a series of rooms with furniture in them. Sometimes their lack of charm is baffling; every article is 'correct' and beautiful, but one has the feeling that the

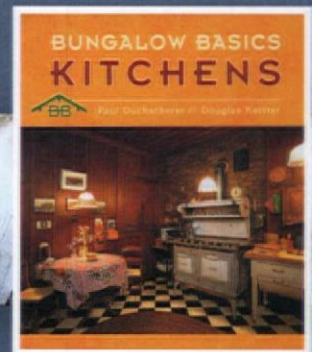
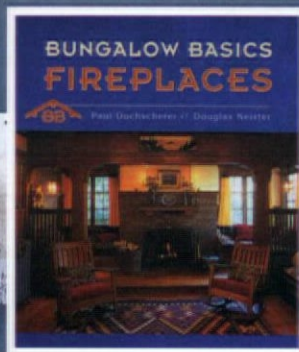
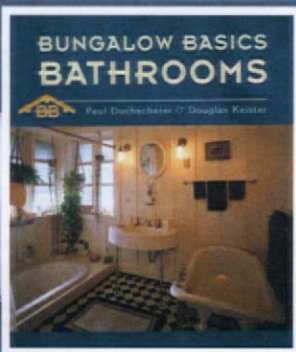
decorator made chalk-marks indicating the exact spot on which each piece of furniture is to stand. Other houses are filled with things of little intrinsic value, often with much that is shabby, or they are perhaps empty to the point of

If houses really do retain the emotional and spiritual residue of previous owners, imagine how much buildup there is in an old house, which has seen generations of inhabitants.

bareness, and yet they have that 'inviting' atmosphere ..."

My first words, as I stepped through the front door of the house we eventually bought, a Colonial Revival in upstate New York, were these: "I think we've found it!"

On the day we moved in, an octogenarian neighbor who has lived on this street all her life stopped by to welcome us to the neighborhood. "You'll like living here," she said matter-of-factly. "This has always been such a happy house." ✦



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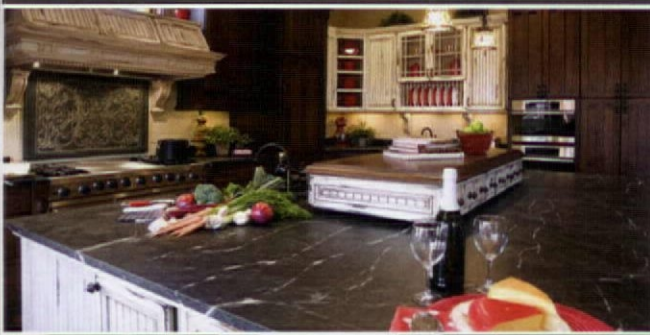



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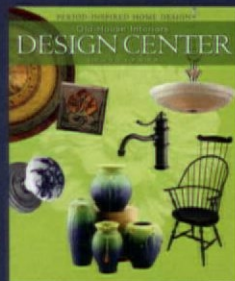
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OLD-HOUSE INTERIORS

OCTOBER 2010



CRAFTSMAN TRANSITIONS

A collection of period posters adds to the color in this handsome house in Portland, Oregon. (page 38) ♣

BANQUETTE SEATS

Upholstered benches are a cozy and colorful way to add seating, hide a bit of storage, rescue a dull corner, or accent a room. (page 58) ♣



BETTER THAN ORIGINAL

This homey and old-fashioned kitchen looks like the real thing, a survivor from the 19th century, but it's actually the result of loving obsession with the details. (page 46) ♣



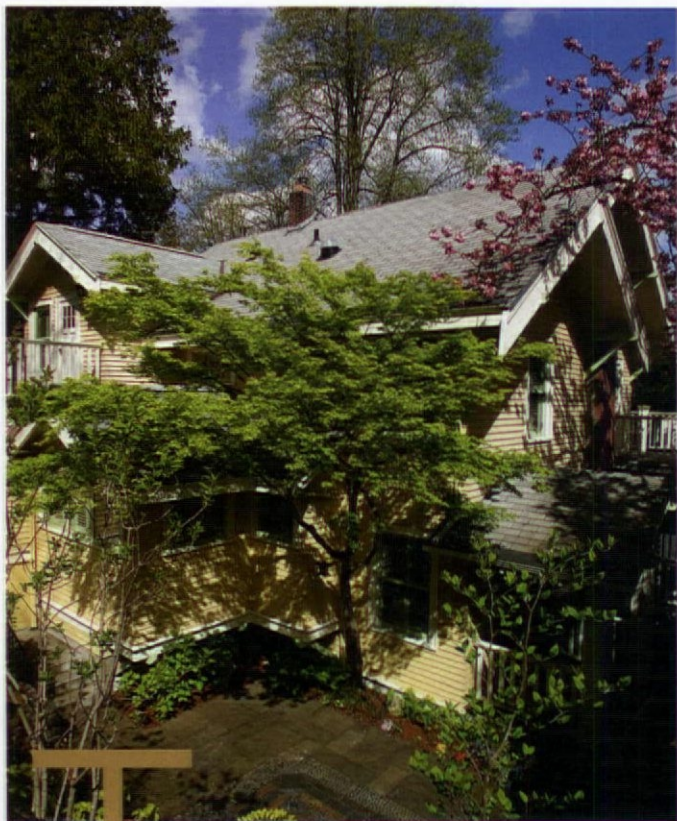
HYDRANGEAS IN THE GARDEN

Excellent as specimens, massed, and for cut flowers, these cultivars and species are assets that provide months of bloom. (page 54) ♣

KITCHEN AUTHENTICITY

For those who would go beyond period-inspired to truly authentic, without anachronism, here are seven rules to follow. (page 52)





THE DAYLIGHT-STARVED Pacific Northwest has always inspired architects to design houses with lots of windows. But what if you are a serious collector of poster art from *la Belle Epoque*? You want not just light but plenty of wall space, too. Before finding this 1910 house, “We must have seen 50 or 60 places!” recalls Dan Bergsvik. “Our realtor was on her way to get a new listing from friends, and asked if she could bring us along. Well, the house never went on the market, because we signed a purchase contract 15 minutes after we viewed it.”

When Dan Bergsvik and Don Hastler retired in 2006, they left San Francisco to return to Dan’s hometown of Portland, Oregon, where both men have family. The San Francisco house they left was an 1800 square-foot. Craftsman,



Craftsman **Transitions**

A 1910 house, nicely restored and with handsome additions,
provides the right mood for a lifetime collection of period posters.

BY DONNA PIZZI | PHOTOGRAPHS BY PHILIP CLAYTON-THOMPSON



ABOVE: The restored entry staircase is visible beyond the parlor. A Toulouse-Lautrec “La Revue Blanche” faces off with an Alphonse Mucha “Job” poster. An Eastlake settee is paired with a post-WWI floor lamp with a handmade mica shade by Sue Johnson Lamps in Berkeley. The “L’Éclair” poster is by New York artist Henry Atwell Thomas (1834–1904). **LEFT:** Off the parlor, the open porch has column capitals wrapped in copper. The 1910 house (opposite) has undergone significant remodeling, including a garage addition.



ABOVE, LEFT: The previous owners designed and built the period-style built-ins with leaded glass. Don collects green and pink Depression glassware. **CENTER:** Mission oak chairs surround a mahogany table topped with a ca. 1900 Austrian Secessionist-style vase. The Art Nouveau sideboard has carved fuchsias. The 1897 Century poster by Maxfield Parrish won second prize in a magazine poster contest; he was semi-disqualified for using five colors instead of the requisite four. The 19th century German-school oil of an Apostle balances three Parrish prints. **OPPOSITE, BOTTOM:** A cameo was carved into this old seashell. **LEFT:** The porch was partially enclosed to create a sunroom. Note the antique glass chandelier above the dining table.



and they had a fondness for Arts & Crafts houses. This one in Portland had been expanded to 3,100 square feet of living space by the previous owners—serial restorers who'd done much of the work themselves.

An attractive selling point was the finished basement, which provides private guest quarters with a modern laundry and bath (and also a room for flat storage of posters). A portion of upper and lower porches had been turned into sunrooms off the dining room and master bedroom. Having discovered evidence of the original foyer staircase, the previous owners restored it; now it leads up to a new breakfast nook and

garage before heading back down into the kitchen.

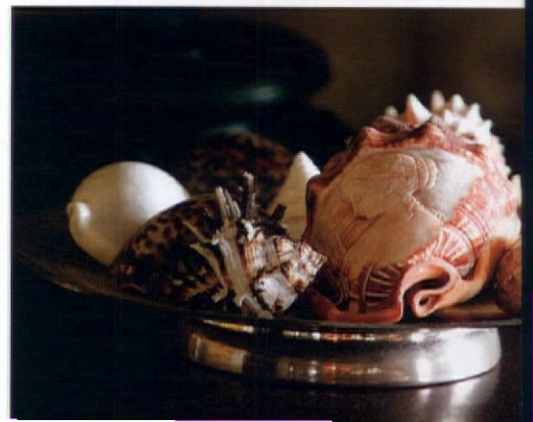
WHEN DAN AND DON moved their furnishings into the house, everything fit perfectly. With plenty of wall space for display, they had Art Media frame more of the posters in their collection. "The outstanding ones—by Mucha, Lautrec, Bonnard, and Chéret—were hung in rooms where we spend the most time," Don says.

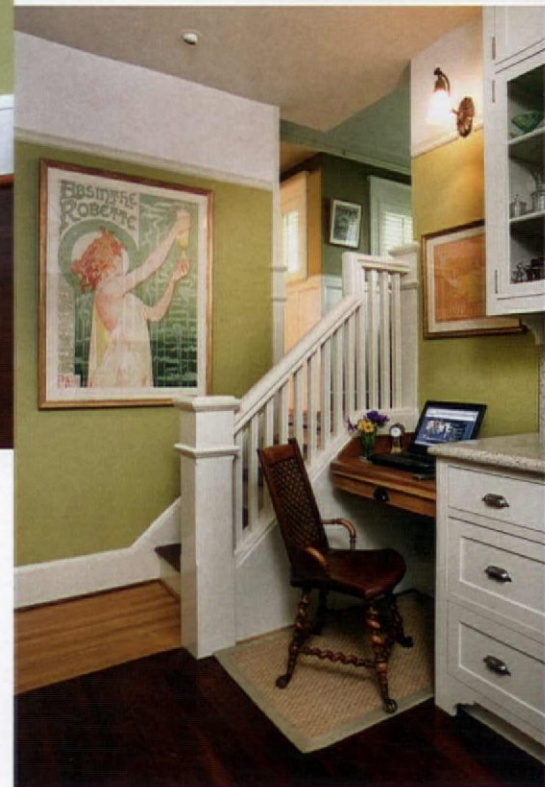
Dan's very first poster, purchased in 1973, was one of the 256 prints from the *Les Maitres de l'Affiche* series: the 1890s "Exposition Russe" poster. For just 27 francs a year, sub-



RESOURCES

- POSTERS** (U.S. sources) Elizabeth Norris, Vintage European Posters, Oakland, CA: vepca.com ■ Sarah Stocking Fine Antique Posters, San Francisco, CA: sarahstocking.com
- **FRAMING** Art Media, Inc., Portland, OR: artmediaonline.com ■ **INTERIOR DESIGN** Garrison Hullinger, Portland, OR: garrisonhullinger.com ■ **CONTRACTOR** Flanagan Construction, Alvadore, OR: stephen.k.flanagan@gmail.com
- **REPLACEMENT WINDOWS** Marvin Windows and Doors: marvin.com ■ **DOORS & WINDOWS** Classic Sash & Door Co., Portland, OR: classicsash.com ■ **KITCHEN APPLIANCES** Heartland Appliances: heartlandapp.com ■ **KITCHEN LIGHTING** Rejuvenation: rejuvenation.com ■ **MISSION CHAIRS, BEDROOM** Butterfield & Butterfield, San Francisco, CA: butterfields.com ■ **DECO FURNITURE** P.H. Reed Furniture, Portland, OR: phreed.com





scribers to the series by publisher Imprimérie Chaix received four prints (*maitres*) each month, from 1896 until 1900. “After we met in 1978, Don and I made annual trips to Paris—

treasure hunts to find all 256 in the series,” says Dan. “We were well past the halfway point when a poster dealer friend chewed me out: ‘Why aren’t you buying the originals?’”

From that point, they began to attend auctions and the biannual International Vintage Poster Fair (held in Chicago in March, and in New York and San Francisco in October). Exhibitors are members of the International Vintage Poster Dealers Association (IVPDA). In Paris, they met Mireille Romand, owner of Galerie Documents and great-great-granddaughter of Edmond Sagot, an influential print and poster dealer of the 1890s. “Mireille has become a

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Heartland’s Classic gas stove is crowned by an Italian platter. The old-style refrigerator is also from Heartland. **ABOVE:** The restored and adapted staircase leads up to a new breakfast nook and garage, then back to the foyer. Dan bought his first RStK Austrian porcelain vase in college; two years later, he found another, and it would be another 15 years before he found more. The Internet has made the search easier.



a light-hearted
KITCHEN RE-DO

Period-inspired millwork and reproduction fixtures soften the transition from the restored house to the remodeled kitchen, where a clerestory window in the gable lets in plenty of light. The original fir floors were stained in a dark cherry color. Cabinets, hardware, and lighting are all very much of the Craftsman period. Practical granite countertops have a honed finish for a soft sheen and feature a classical edge detail. The exuberant period-style gas range and refrigerator are modern reproductions by Heartland Appliances.

the POSTERS

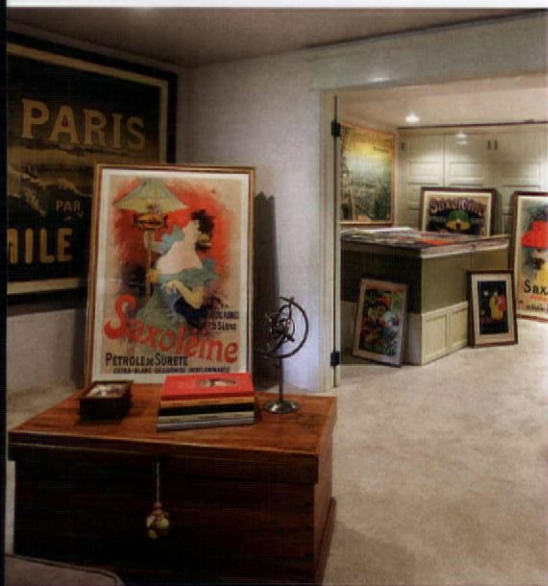
TRAINED AS a lithographer in London, artist Jules Chéret opened his own printing shop in 1866, when most advertising posters were executed in black and white. By the 1880s, Chéret's posters depicted joyful women at Parisian cafes, dance halls, and the famed Moulin Rouge, all in color. In 1891, the dealer Edmond Sagot issued a price catalog that hailed posters as fine art.

"It was a technological revolution and wildly popular," explains collector Dan Bergsvik. "Sagot bought poster overruns to sell in his shop for two or three francs. That's why a lot of these posters survived."

The subscription series *Les Maîtres de l’Affiche* featured the work of 96 artists, but with Chéret working as the artistic director of Imprimerie Chaix, his own imagery dominated. Other artists in the series included Toulouse-Lautrec, Denis, Bonnard, Vallotton, Mucha, Parrish, Grasset, and Steinlen. Today, the series posters are highly collectible, priced at as little as \$100 and as high as \$10,000. They generally featured beautiful women selling mundane products such as Saxoline lamp oil.



ABOVE: An upstairs view down to the breakfast nook is a riot of poster art; several of the large pieces were framed specifically for this stair hall. **BOTTOM:** From the basement guest room, French doors open to the poster room, where large rolled posters can be safely stored.



good friend and also the source of some of our best pieces," says Don.

"Getting to know the IVPDA dealers from around the world was crucial to building our collection," says Dan, who has been buying antiques since he was 17. He spied the Eastlake overmantel in a Portland antiques store when he was 20, and it has graced each of his homes.

The 1889 American clock hanging in the kitchen belonged to Dan's great-grandparents, who were homesteaders in Oregon. "I was told they packed their belongings onto the backs of mules and headed to the

coast. At one point, a mule slipped and fell, but the clock survived because they'd wrapped it in a feather mattress."

Everything in this household gets that sort of attention, including the 300-plus hollow glass tubes on the early 1900s French chandelier, which was crated by a Parisian dealer at Le Louvre des Antiquaires and shipped to San Francisco in the 1980s, ending up in this Portland dining room in 2006. It takes a full day to clean all the glass tubes and rehang them, but that's what keeps history alive. ✦



TOP RIGHT: In the den, a French iron chandelier from the 1930s has Degue-designed shades. (The center bowl is a replacement.) The Eastlake-style overmantel came from a Portland antiques store years ago. **RIGHT:** The Art Nouveau bedroom set dates to the 1890s. The enclosed sun porch is at right.





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BY DONNA PIZZI | PHOTOGRAPHS BY PHILIP CLAYTON-THOMPSON

WHEN KIM AND ROY FOX came across this 1884 house in Portland, Oregon, it had 26 code violations against it. "It was truly condemned," Kim reports. Nevertheless, 30 years ago, "we paid the full \$20,000 asking price, even though the roof was rotted, the brick foundation had sloughed into the basement, and the second floor bath was visible through the kitchen ceiling," Roy says. The couple labored for a year and a half just to make the place habitable. They even put in a new, high-end 1980s kitchen.

"We worked with a kitchen designer on a standard U-shaped layout, going for a Victorian ice cream-parlor look," Kim explains. "The sink, stove, and fridge went into what had been the old pantry. We put in Corian countertops, oak cabinets, and vinyl flooring."

Roy wasn't thrilled with the re-

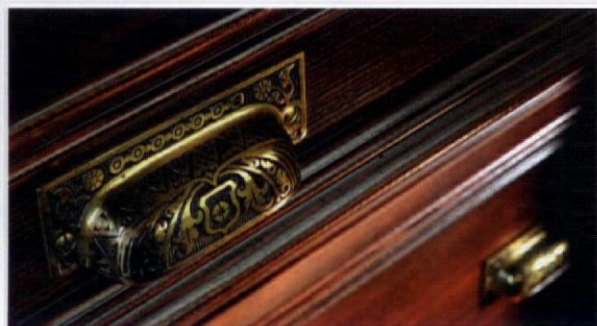
RIGHT: Outside, the ca. 1884 Victorian wears Rookwood Collection colors by Sherwin Williams: Blue Green body with Sash Green trim, a Terra Cotta belt, and window sash in Dark Red. **BELOW:** The scene-stealing 1915 Eriez stove is fully functional.



The TEAM

RESTORATION CONSULTANT Karla Pearlstein, Restoring History, LLC, Portland, OR, (503) 452-7772, restoringhistory.com ■ **DESIGNER** Matthew Roman, Roman Design, LLC, Portland, OR, (503) 998-6095, roman.design@earthlink.net ■ **WOODWORKING** Brendon Powell, Mountain View Doors & Woodworking, mountainviewdoor.com ■ **PLUMBING RECLAMATION** Walter K. Parker II, Old School Plumbing, Dudley, MA, (508) 765-6613, walter-parker.com

SOURCES **FAUCETS** (restored antiques by J.L. Mott) Rejuvenation Salvage, Portland, OR, (503) 238-1900, rejuvenation.com ■ **ICEBOX HARDWARE** Robinsons Antique Hardware, Lake Odessa, MI, (616) 374-7750, robinsonsaniques.com ■ **SALVAGE** Aurora Mills Architectural Salvage, Aurora, OR, (503) 678-6083, auroramills.com ■ **LIGHTING** Dave Vaughn Lighting, Portland, OR, (503) 574-2825 ■ **STOVE** Erickson's Antique Stoves, Littleton, MA, (978) 857-8014, erickstove@gmail.com
more sources listed on p. 70



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Details make the kitchen authentic: the refrigerator hidden behind an icebox cabinet, the restored gas stove, a ca. 1875 oil lamp rescued by Dave Vaughn and period hardware (this pull covers the dishwasher's telltale indicator light).

sult. "I knew as soon as we finished that it would have to go. The transition from the kitchen to the living area, which we'd kept true to the original style, was jarring." Although the vinyl flooring was replaced after a kitchen fire in 1993, the couple's authentic dream kitchen would have to wait until 2007. That's when the Foxes met with restoration consultant Karla Pearlstein.

"We tested each other about how historic to get," Roy says of their

first meeting. "Kim and I wanted an 'old feel,' whereas Karla was gently pushing for authenticity."

Karla remembers when the lightbulb went on over Roy's head, as she was describing the probable layout of the 1880s-era kitchen. Kim was not as easy to convince. "I loved my kitchen layout! It was a wide-open space with lots of storage and room for family."

Karla brought building designer Matthew Roman on board.

Together they wooed the Foxes with vintage photographs and Victorian plan books.

"They recommended we place the stove where the original chimney had been . . . but the space held our round oak table, where we'd brought up our kids for 25 years," Roy says. "That was tough."

Roman's elevation drawings included sketches of the cabinets in the restored pantry, and showed the return of the stove to its original lo-



TOP: The place for dish storage and cleanup, the pantry has etched glass that was shipped from Liverpool (Roy's ancestral home). The Eastlake-style design was inspired by the staircase. This countertop is red oak. **INSET:** Site of the original pantry, before the 1980s renovation.

ation, along with reconstruction of the wall that once divided the pantry (and scullery) from the cook room. The beautiful drawings convinced Roy and Kim to start demo-

lition in January 2008.

"Demolition gave us an archaeological history of the house," says Roy. Physical evidence of a missing wall provoked an ebullient late-night call to Karla, an affirmation that she'd

steered them in the right direction.

While Karla researched plumbing and lighting sources, the Foxes scoured the Internet for a period stove. A 1925 Magic Chef that looked good online turned out to be rusty and flawed. Karla told them to get their money back and go see stove restorer Dave Erickson, whose showroom is in an 1860s train depot in Littleton, Massachusetts. So they flew to Boston to inspect Erickson's stove choices in person: a 1920s Magic Chef, a Victorian model, and a 1915 Eriez stove. Kim chose the Eriez for



LEFT: The pantry has the larger sink. It is natural soapstone; the owners were not willing to install wood countertops in wet areas. **TOP:** The unique antique faucet was purchased online and rebuilt. **ABOVE:** The new kitchen table will become an heirloom.

its elegant lines, mint condition, and three ovens. It was the perfect size to go with the handcrafted furniture that Lee Johnson was making to replace the round oak table.

Brendon Powell had built some Victorian screen doors for the house and came to bid on doors for the kitchen. A fine and knowledgeable craftsman, Brendon stayed around to create the cabinetry, icebox, and trim. For elements of the beaded-board wainscot, the team looked at existing wainscot in the house and trim details on the staircase. Brendon had knives

cut to match the unusual pattern. He built much of the cabinetry on site, milled the new wainscot in his shop, and even gave his opinion on preliminary paint colors: "Ugly! You can't use that in here!"

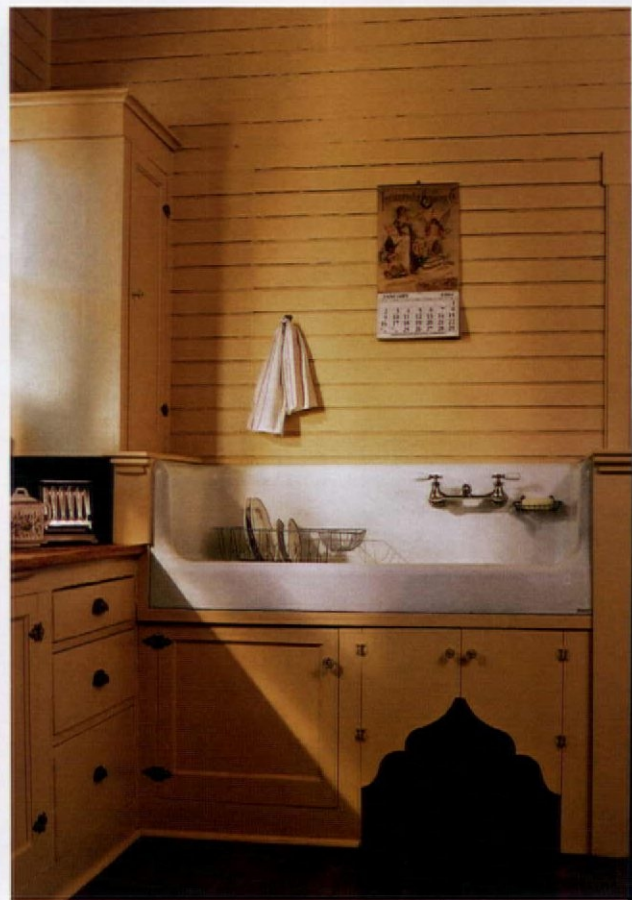
Then came the refrigerator dilemma. When an icebox company failed to deliver, the Foxes found the Liebherr Company, a German appliance maker that offers an integrated refrigerator of reasonable size. Working from Matthew Roman's sketches (which took cues from a McCray icebox), Brendon Powell built a wooden case and doors

to house the fridge at his shop.

The five-member team says they talked through the details of the project in a single evening. "Amazing," says Kim, who stripped and stained the original wood floors, then finished the wainscotting and cabinets.

"We each learned something from the others," says Matthew. "It was a true team project." As Karla says, "Early on, Matthew and I realized what special clients we had in Kim and Roy. They were willing to indulge in the esoteric nuances of old kitchens." ✦

How authentic do you want to be? These photos show surviving period kitchens. Clockwise from right: Plain woodwork and bin pulls, California, 1915. Beadboard found under drywall in a kitchen restored to 1902. Large slate sink and an unembellished shelf, Maine, 1898. Fir, utilitarian hardware, and linoleum tiles, Massachusetts, 1910.



AUTHENTICITY

MOST READERS of this magazine want a modern, period-inspired kitchen. A sizable minority take it further: they strive to re-create a kitchen that looks as if it is original, or as if it dates from a long-ago renovation. (Look closely, of course, and you may spy an electrical outlet—or the refrigerator tucked into a back hall.) If this sounds like you, consider these seven rules.

(1) WATCH THE SCALE Appropriate size is critical for credibility. The Victorian-era kitchen often included a large cook room or cook room and scullery, accompanied by a larder and a butler's pantry. Bungalow kitchens were smaller. Even if you enlarge yours with a bump-out be sure to keep the kitchen in scale, and **(2) KEEP THE FLOOR PLAN** Mimicking the original floor plan lends timelessness and also helps with scale. Look for clues: a chimney shows you where the stove was located, old plumbing holes suggest sink placement. Use a center table rather than an island or peninsula. Tie the kitchen to a pantry or service porch (where ice would have been delivered).

(3) USE TIMELY MATERIALS Try to stick to materials common in the period you're re-creating. Look at books and visit house museums to get a feel for wainscoting (Victorian beaded board, glossy paint, or subway tile?), flooring (fir and pine were ubiquitous), countertops (something like Monel is decade-specific), and the sink (sinks were big, before automatic dishwashers). Oddly enough, kitchen wallpaper was more likely to be found in a modest or farm

house, because the undecorated kitchens of wealthy and urban households were for servants.

(4) STUDY CABINETS, or have them designed and built by a company that specializes in period kitchens. Even unfitted kitchens may have had built-in cabinets floor to ceiling, but long runs of base and overhead cabinets date to the Thirties and later. Stick with the period's preferred woods and finishes. Fine woodwork would have been seen only in a butler's

pantry. **(5) ALLOW MULTIPLE COUNTER SURFACES** Before laminates like Formica were introduced, kitchens of any size often included several different countertop materials: scrubbable wood, a piece of marble for rolling dough, slate or tile around the sink or stove.

(6) TAKE CARE WITH LIGHTING It's possible to get the right look and adequate illumination if you combine period fixtures with invisible indirect lighting, as in a cove or under a cabinet. Avoid can lighting, spots, and tracks. Single pendants from the ceiling, a sconce centered on a countertop—these were standard. Kerosene lamps were used in rural areas (and can be electrified). Urban houses had electricity early, but kitchen fixtures were utilitarian: a bulb on a cord. Don't be tempted to put dining-room fixtures in the kitchen. Consider iron or an antiqued bronze or brass metal finish for Victorian houses, nickel from about 1890 to 1925. **(7) OBSESS OVER DETAILS** but, in general, keep it simple: plain cabinet doors; bin pulls, latches, and hooks; an open shelf over the sink. At the windows, use tan or dark-green roller shades, muslin, or perhaps lace panels. †



BY PATRICIA POORE

ABOVE: The black iron stove was a kitchen icon throughout the Victorian era and until 1920 or so. Shown above is an antique that was converted from wood burning to gas by AntiqueStoves.com. Modern dials are hidden behind the small door to the old ash cleanout, at the left of the main oven.



Hydrangeas IN THE GARDEN

EXCELLENT AS GARDEN SPECIMENS AND FOR CUT FLOWERS, THESE CULTIVARS AND SPECIES ARE ASSETS THAT PROVIDE MONTHS OF COLORFUL BLOOM. **BY JAMES T. FARMER III**

LET ME INTRODUCE you to my colorful friend LEONA . . . the acronym for five types of hydrangeas that will give you blooms for half the year or more: Limelight, Endless Summer, Oak Leaf, Nikko Blue, and Annabelle. Hydrangeas are native to the Appalachian region of the U.S. and to the islands of Japan. *H. quercifolia* (Oak Leaf) and *H. arborescens* (Annabelle) are the only two North American natives; these species have made the Southeastern U.S. and Appalachia their natural habitat, growing from Florida to Pennsylvania in pockets of shade, in understory plantings, forest scenes, and on river

banks. Gardeners in zones 6–9 can grow hydrangeas with ease.

In zones 7 and 8, blooms will stretch from May to October if you remember LEONA and site plants well. In my Georgia garden, Oak Leaf hydrangeas start blooming in May. After Oak Leaf, Nikko Blue and Endless Summer kick in, along with Annabelle. All three bloom close together, but the Nikkos turn green and shades of aqua after their classic blue shade, and may even show coral, rust, and chartreuse.

Endless Summer blooms multicolored on each plant, with blues, pinks, and lavenders. Endless Sum-

mer will blossom again well into summer to finish up in the fall. (I count on their russet, coral, and aubergine blooms for autumn arrangements.) Annabelle blooms hard through June, and then the white flowers turn chartreuse green for added color in July and August. Limelight, a new offspring of *H. paniculata*, provides the grand finale from July through September. Creamy white panicles turn lime-green, with coral-pink edging.

As cut specimens, hydrangeas are a mainstay in floral décor. (Although the blooms of some hydrangea and viburnum—“snowball

OPPOSITE: *H. paniculata* 'Limelight' is a newer variety of a classic; it's a showstopper that glows in the limelight of summer, with chartreuse and lime green panicles. **RIGHT:** *H. macrophylla* 'Endless Summer' spills over an antique French cistern—appropriately enough, since these blue mopheads are often referred to as French hydrangeas. **BELOW:** a single flower can be elegant, as with *H. macrophylla* 'Nikko Blue,' cut short for a crystal globe vase.



bush”—species resemble one another, the hydrangea is the better cut specimen, as its blossoms last longer.) Large, spherical, and colorful, hydrangea blossoms add drama to arrangements, and are dependable for months after they're dried.

When you cut blooms, do so early in the morning, then allow the cut stems to condition in warm water before you handle and arrange them. A sharp, angled cut allows more surface area to be exposed on the stem so that more water can be absorbed. Ask your floral supplier for a product called Hydraquick, which helps open the vascular tissue

for greater water uptake.

IN THE GARDEN, native soil amended with rich organic matter is the foundation for flourishing hydrangeas. Sunlight is key for bloom quality and quantity. For those of us in zones 7 and 8, Limelight, Oak Leaf, and Annabelle (or the *paniculata* and *quercifolia* species in particular) tolerate exposure to sun with plenty of water, but these plants also appreciate some high shade and solar relief, flourishing in spots with morning or late afternoon light. Though shade-tolerant and even shade-appreciative, hydrangeas, like all flowering plants,

do require sufficient light to produce blooms.

The amount of water they need depends on the amount of sunlight: in full sun conditions, hydrangeas need regular watering for hydration, leaf rigidity, and flower fervor. A hearty soaking two to three times per week ensures thorough watering of the roots.

The soil's pH—whether it is naturally acidic or alkaline—is a major factor in cultivating hydrangeas. A more acidic soil, with a pH less than 7, keeps the blooms blue, especially with *H. macrophylla* cultivars such as Nikko Blue and End-

LASTING *arrangements*

Dried hydrangeas were used in colonial-era Williamsburg for wreaths, arrangements, and Christmas decorations. The dry blossoms last for months and add unique shape to indoor bouquets. Timing is essential: cut them from the bush when the bloom color is past peak, and petals feel more papery than fleshy. The flowers will rustle. Try honing your skill at recognizing when these “dried on the bush” blossoms are ready. You won’t need silicone gel to preserve them. Some more tips:

- Arrange the cut blossoms in place, then allow them to dry further in their arrangement. (Once they are fully dry, they become too brittle to arrange.)
- Keep dried arrangements out of direct sunlight.
- Traditionally, hydrangeas have been used in specimen arrangements and also accompanied by grass and sedge, yarrow, lotus pods, and roses. Feathers are a lovely and ancient complement to hydrangeas.



TOP: Dried specimens make a classic composition in a silver julep cup. **ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT:** Blue varieties display a full range of color between lapis lazuli and lavender—striking against the deep green leaves. *H. macrophylla* ‘Glowing Embers’ is a jewel-toned ruby to deep pink to rosy flower. In the basket: Glory Blue.



LEFT: Hydrangeas massed in the garden: As Nikko Blue fades, the flowers take on tones of jade, teal, and char-
truse, a delight on the plant and also in cut or dried arrangements.

BELOW: Classic cut arrangements low and high add color to the author's dining room. **RIGHT:** What better to welcome guests than *H. macrophylla* 'Glory Blue,' here decorating the entrance on the occasion of the author's sister's wedding. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Landscape, floral, and interior designer James T. Farmer III, arranging white Annabelle and Forever Pink blossoms.



The hydrangea HAS BEEN A PART OF THE JAPANESE GARDEN GENRE FOR CENTURIES, AND IS ALSO INTEGRAL TO UNITED STATES WOODLAND GARDENS.

less Summer. A basic or alkaline soil with a pH greater than 7 will bring you pink and red blooms. To change bloom color, you may use aluminum, applied as aluminum sulfate. Coffee grounds, vegetable peels, and pine bark will mildly change pH. Adding lime de-acidifies soil, making it more alkaline. Acidic fertilizers do the opposite. By playing around with these, you can broaden the palette into jewel tones including amethyst purple, lapis blue, and peridot green. Given pockets of nutrients in soil layers, you can have

multi-colored flowers on the same plant.

Hydrangeas root very easily. Simply stick cut stems into potting soil or directly into garden beds. Prune your hydrangeas twice a year, once during dormancy (I use Valentine's Day as my benchmark, and remove spent flower heads and thin stalks at this time), and again during bloom—when you cut for arrangements. Canes removed during dormancy can be used for propagation; in mild climates, just stick the stems in the ground. Cutting during

bloom encourages new growth and further bloom.

From the daintiest of lacecaps to the massive panicles of mopheads, hydrangea blossoms are spectacular grace notes in the garden. Plant wisely and you'll have lots of bloom time as well as a year's worth of table centerpieces. ✦

JAMES T. FARMER III is a Southern-bred plantsman and designer. He invites readers to visit his new (and still growing) website: jamesfarmerdesigns.com

Banquettes, or upholstered benches, are a cozy and colorful way to add seating, hide a bit of storage, rescue a dull corner, or accent a room.

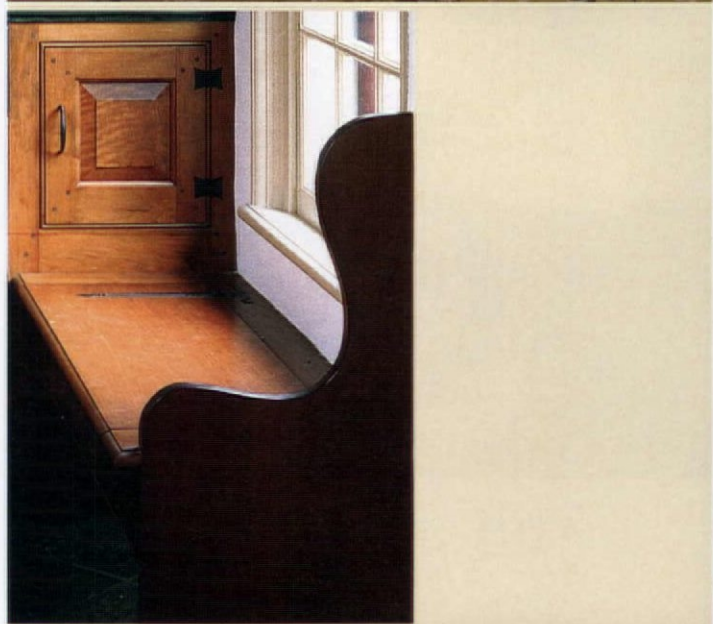
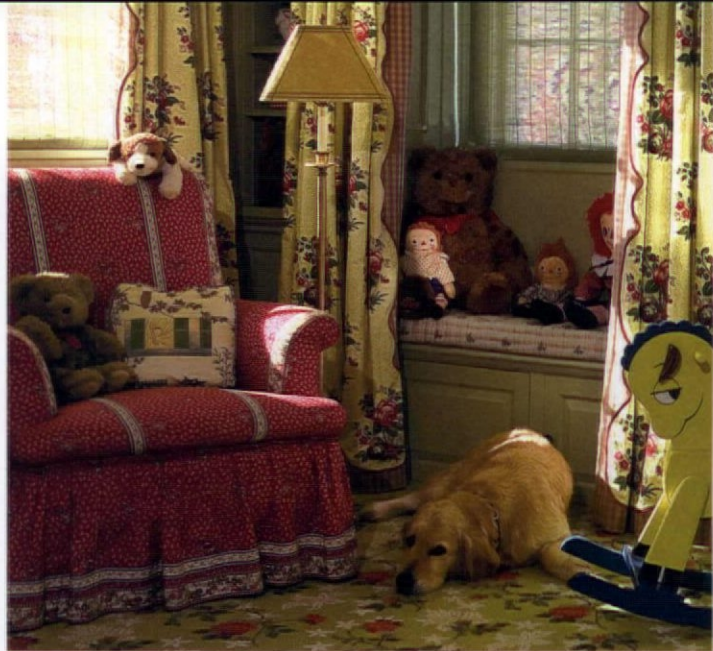
Banquette SEATS

BY BRIAN D. COLEMAN

I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER the built-in banquette in my grandmother's kitchen. It was a narrow bench covered in shiny red vinyl, nestled up to the kitchen table, where I sampled cookies while doing my homework. "Banquette" derives from the French word for an upholstered bench placed up against or built into a wall. Whether for dining or gazing out a window, a banquette is intimate and casual. Banquettes have been popular since the French aristocracy put benches in their dining rooms and covered them with tapestry cushions.

Outspoken American decorator Elsie de Wolfe, who was famously fond of all things French, popularized "la banquette," building them into libraries, parlors, and ballrooms (but not kitchens) for her well-to-do clients.

It was during the bungalow era that built-in seats became more common. Entire breakfast nooks with bench seats were built into the family kitchen, which was likely to be the domain of the housewife, no longer of servants. And of course, space-saving built-ins were used throughout the





ABOVE: Welcoming guests in the hall: a corner banquette inspired by Colonial Revivalist Wallace Nutting. **RIGHT:** This banquette from Crown Point Cabinetry doubles as an impromptu mudroom, the perfect spot to put on coats, boots, and galoshes. **OPPOSITE, TOP TO BOTTOM:** In a nursery, a cozy window seat has hidden storage. A window seat mimics a colonial settle in a kitchen by Sean Steuber. Barry Dixon turned the unused hall opposite a dining room into extra seating; note the padded, button-tufted alcove wall.



EDWARD ADDEO; DESIGN BY BARRY DIXON
 COURTESY SEAN STEUBER (OPPOSITE, CENTER)
 COURTESY CROWN POINT CABINERY (BOTTOM RIGHT)

THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT: In the eaves of an upstairs bathroom, a built-in bench provides storage and seating. An oak banquette is built into the wainscot in an Arts & Crafts Tudor house. Casual comfort is suggested by a banquette that's part of the beadboard wainscot, softened with seat and back cushions. **OPPOSITE, BOTTOM:** In his own home, Barry Dixon turned a corner of the butler's pantry into an informal dining spot with a corner banquette of limed oak and cozy cushions.



houses of the period—underneath windows, in fireplace inglenooks, alongside staircases. Bench seats often had hinged lids to accommodate storage. (Others were open underneath, sometimes with shaped brackets supporting them from below.) Seats with high backs created a sense of privacy, a room within a room. The popularity of banquettes continued for several decades, especially in the historical revival houses of the late '20s and until World War II.

Think outside the kitchen if you want to add a banquette today. Several of the photos in this article show the work of designer Barry Dixon, who has used the idea to add elegance to an entry, a “secret hideaway” for children in an upstairs hall, and an upholstered breakfast nook in a pantry. Don't limit yourself to straight lines, either. Curved and L-shaped corner banquettes soften spaces and bring unused areas back to life. ✦

FOR RESOURCES, PLEASE SEE P. 70



ABOVE: A high-backed, upholstered banquette in a corner of an upstairs hall creates a children's nook for games and reading.
RIGHT: In a house by Connor Homes, a U-shaped bench with a wainscot back creates a breakfast nook around the table.



On HEIGHT & CUSHIONS

The recommended height for a window seat is like that of any bench or chair: 18" to 20" finished height, including cushions. Assume you need about 2' of width per person using the seat. Dining banquettes need not be deep (18" to 20" is standard); go much deeper, and it's hard to reach the table. If you plan to nap on a window seat, make it at least 24" deep. Standard boxed seat cushions are about 2" tall, but can be made thicker and plusher—in which case the bench should be lower to offset the height of the cushion. ■ Today's seat cushions are usually made from a thick foam core inside a down wrap; the upholstered top cover slips over this. A zipper or a Velcro closure makes the cover removable for cleaning. Upholstery conservator Andrew Van Styn often makes cushions of goose down and feathers packed around small innerspring coils. His cushions make a window seat as comfortable as a sofa. ■ Back cushions add more color and comfort. These can be attached to the banquette back with traditional chair ties on hooks, or with Velcro.



From hot-air vents to radiators and even baseboard heat, visible parts of the heating and cooling systems can be made more appropriate for your old house.



Heating Made Pretty BY MARY ELLEN POLSON

There's no need to put up with flimsy vent covers or radiators with flaking paint. Period-friendly products let you gussy up the less-than-attractive evidence of your HVAC system, and many choices are quite affordable. That's especially true for grilles, the wood or metal faceplates that cover heat registers and cold-air returns. A quality cast-metal version with a perforated design can cost as little as \$30. In oak or another hardwood, prices start at about \$40. Cast-metal grilles are available in an ever-expanding range of period-inspired styles in steel, aluminum, bronze, even copper. Most of these grilles feature perforated designs descriptively called

basket-weave, honeycomb, or tear-drop. Classical designs include scroll—any design with figural, openwork curves—and Grecian, an openwork radial pattern found in Greek architecture. Styles in wood tend to be basic, such as the straight-slotted, directionally louvered pattern sometimes called "Rickenbacker," and the classic egg-crate grid.

The circular vent covers associated with high-velocity HVAC systems can pop up anywhere, even in the midst of deep cove molding. While both SpacePak [spacepak.com] and Unico [unico.system.com] offer a choice of outlet covers, you may want

to swap them out or cover them with decorative, medallion-like covers from Decorator's Supply or Beaux-Artes.

What to do about those behemoths of yore, the upright radiator? (True, the ornate Victorian ones were pretty; Burnham still makes them, with updated functionality.) Companies like ARSCO Manufacturing and Monarch Products offer radiator covers in the now-classic cloverleaf, cane, and Grecian patterns of the 1920s and '30s. As for those ugly baseboard units that



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Radiator covers made by cabinetmakers are a specialty of Fichman Furniture Inc. The Hot Hoop from Runtal is actually a radiator that heats the bathroom. The Grecian, a standard metal grate from ARSCO since the 1930s. Mission-style wood cabinet from Central Radiator Cabinet Co.



A baseboard heater is turned into room trim with a cover by OverBoards.

invariably have lost, bent, or rusty covers, give them the slipcover treatment with a decorative baseboard cover. Radiant Wraps, for example, offers parquet, trellis, and an alternating dashed "cobblestone" style. A more expensive tack is to conceal the radiator as part of a built-in bookcase or wall unit. The Wooden Radiator Cabinet Co. has been doing customized wall units for years, and now offers an affordably priced, do-it-yourself kit.

Did you know you can replace a balky or missing upright radiator with a baseboard unit? Less noticeable and quieter than many vintage radiators, they're also easier to keep clean. Other options include close-to-the-wall radiators with traditional styling from Steam Radiators, and a host of flat fin, hoop, and even corkscrew units from Runtal North America. The unit can blend in with the décor or make a clean, updated statement. ✦

REGISTERS & grilles

- **ACORN MANUFACTURING** (800) 835-0121, acornmfg.com *Cast-iron grilles in early 20th-century patterns*
- **ARCHITECTURAL GRILLE** (800) 387-6267, archgrille.com *Custom grilles in aluminum, brass, bronze, stainless steel*
- **BEAUX-ARTES** (410) 867-0790, beaux-artes.com *Decorative grilles and vent covers*
- **CRAFTSMAN HOMES CONNECTION** (509) 535-5098, crafthome.com *Heating vents and grilles in Arts & Crafts styles*
- **DÉCOR GRATES** (800) 903-9036, decorgrates.com *Grilles and registers*
- **DECORATOR'S SUPPLY** (800) 792-2093, decoratorssupply.com *Grille covers in dozens of sizes and finishes*
- **GRATE VENTS** (815) 459-4306, gratevents.com *Egg-crate and louver*
- **HAMILTON SINKLER** (866) 900-3326, hamiltonsinkler.com *Classic scroll, domed, and interlocking patterns*
- **HOUSE OF ANTIQUE HARDWARE** (888) 223-2545, hoah.biz *Period-inspired registers and grilles*
- **IRON AGE DESIGNS** (206) 276-0925, ironageregisters.com *Register covers*
- **LAURELHURST FAN CO.** (971) 570-3131, laurelhurstfancompany.com *Ventilation fans and covers in period styles*
- **REGGIO REGISTER** (800) 880-3090, reggioregister.com *Period wood and metal grilles, registers, vent covers*
- **SIGNATURE HARDWARE** (866) 855-2284, signaturehardware.com *Vent covers and heat registers*
- **VAN DYKE'S RESTORERS** (800) 558-1234, vandykes.com *Grilles, registers, and vent covers*



The Victoria register in cast brass from House of Antique Hardware.

RADIATORS, covers, & related heating products

- **ARSCO MANUFACTURING CO.** (800) 543-7040, beautifulradiators.com *Custom-fit steel in Grecian, cloverleaf, and cane grille patterns; unlimited custom powder-coat colors*
- **BURNHAM** (717) 397-4701, burnham.com *Ornate cast-iron radiators with modern function*
- **CALORIQUE** (800) 922-9276, calorique.com *Radiant floor warming systems*
- **CENTRAL RADIATOR CABINET CO.** (773) 899-3940, eradiatorcovers.com *Enclosures in solid wood, metal covers*
- **FICHMAN FURNITURE** (416) 999-8000, fichman.com *Custom-made wooden radiator cabinets, also hutches and bookcases that integrate radiators*
- **MONARCH PRODUCTS** (201) 507-5551, monarchcovers.com *Radiator enclosures, custom options*
- **OVERBOARDS** (800) 835-0121, go-overboard.com *Paintable, cast-aluminum baseboard covers in raised panel, Shaker, and fluted Federal styles*
- **RADIANT WRAPS** (973) 857-6480, radiantwraps.com *Steel and aluminum slipcovers for baseboards in parquet, trellis, other patterns*
- **RUNTAL NORTH AMERICA** (800) 526-2621, runtalnorthamerica.com *Unique radiators*
- **STEAM RADIATORS** (800) 966-0587, steamradiators.com *Streamlined for one- and two-pipe systems*
- **WINDY RIDGE CORP./VEHA** (800) 639-2021, veha.com *Hot water radiators and towel warmers*
- **WOODEN RADIATOR CABINET COMPANY** (800) 817-9110, woodenradiatorcabinet.com *Enclosures in Shaker and Prairie-inspired patterns; DIY cabinet kit*



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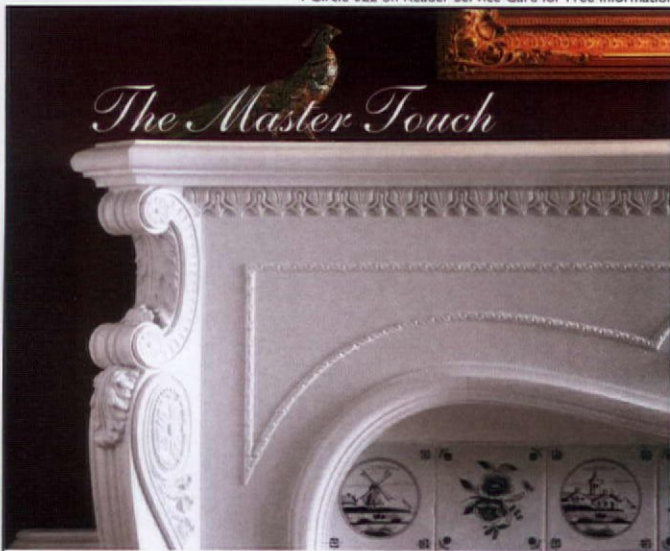
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DIALOG

back&forth



MORE TO READ

I MAY BE GOING against the flow (isn't everyone who over-improves an old house?), but I wish your articles were longer. In every issue there are at least a few things shown in photographs that aren't described, and references to styles or people that I'm not familiar with. Break up the text, run it into the back—but please give us more.

—ELENA SCHMID

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

FAB MEMORIES

I ASSUME that at age 60 I am among your older readers. Seeing people “restoring” 1950s ranches [“Back to Mid-Century,” Jul.–Aug. 2010, p. 46] still has me shaking my head, but I admit it's with more fondness lately. With a good eye and a sense of humor, the young couple did make a nice space. Looking at the photos, in fact, I actually got a whiff of something—they say memory and smell are closely related. Sanka, a vacuum tube about to blow in the Motorola?

—DANNY THOMPSON

Atlantic City, New Jersey

SOUTH CAROLINA BACK ISSUE?

I'VE ENJOYED *Old-House Interiors* (and *Old-House Journal*) for many years. (I'm the owner of an 1860 Greek Revival/Italianate vernacular house.) I'm wondering if you publish an index so that subscribers can find previous articles. For example, I'm planning a visit to South Carolina, and I seem to remember an article on a preserved and restored plantation there, which I might like to visit.

—LESLIE FISHER

Concord, Massachusetts

To search back issues, go to books.google.com; type in "Old-House Interiors" and use the search box. We have several times mentioned Drayton Hall, outside of Charleston in Ashley River, S.C., an untouched study property that was once a plantation. The Palladian-style, Georgian-era house was built from 1738–42. It is an important and beautiful structure, if you'd like to visit, find out more at draytonhall.org.

We've shown several photos taken at Magnolia Plantation and Gardens (magnoliaplantation.com), which is very near Drayton Hall. Middleton Place is nearby, too: middletonplace.org

To see all the S.C. plantations that offer tours, go to south-carolina-plantations.com/plantation-tours.html

Hope that helps! —PATRICIA POORE



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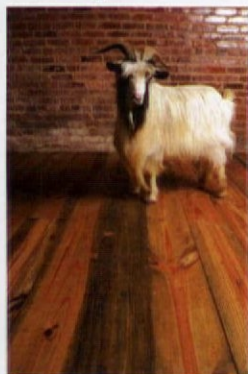
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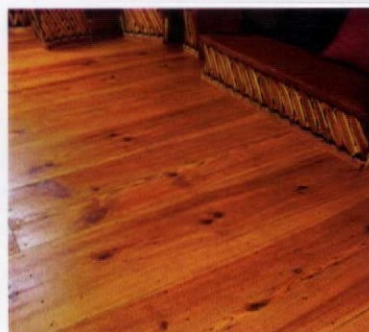
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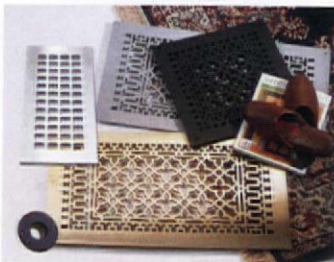
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This Old Floor pp. 30-31

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Better Than Original pp. 48-51

See list on p. 50; also: **PLASTERING** Christian Wolstencroft, Regency Plaster, Inc., Portland, OR: (503) 880-9859 ■ **VINTAGE HARDWARE** Historic Home Hardware, Bastrop, TX: historichomehardware.com ■ **CUSTOMIZED HARDWARE (ETC.)** Hippo Hardware, Portland, OR: hippohardware.com **p. 52 PANTRY HARDWARE** Urban Remains, Chicago, IL: urbanremainschicago.com **p. 53 SOAPSTONE SINK** Classico Marmo, Portland, OR: (503) 233-0224

Banquette Seats pp. 58-61

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New dining room in a 1904 house: ▶
The mahogany bar-top had been salvaged. Design of the rest was inspired by a Stickley chair and a favorite architect of the period.



Nostalgic previous owners of my house had salvaged the mahogany bar counter when a local restaurant—site of their early romance—burned down. Installed parallel to a long wall, the bar narrowed and overwhelmed the dining room. It sat on a rough plywood base to which was stapled 1970s blue-and-black broadloom carpeting. Clever sayings about whiskey and women decorated the rear wall.

During a major restoration effort, I decided to keep the bar top. With a couple of linear feet removed, it tucks comfortably into one end of the long room. Now, how to design a wet bar around it? Lucky for me, old houses come with clues. This house reminds me of the work of architect John Calvin Stevens in Maine. So I



The archival photo shows a dining-room china cupboard in a 1909 house by architect John Calvin Stevens in Portland, Maine. The new bar's upper cabinets echo his leaded-glass design.

patterned the decorative wall shelf and the leaded-glass cabinet fronts on elements in a Portland house designed by Stevens. The bar's pedestal gains proportion from a series of battens that echo the Stickley dining chairs, the beamed ceiling, and a battened Tudor door nearby.

—TRISH O'DONNELL, *Cape Ann, Mass.*

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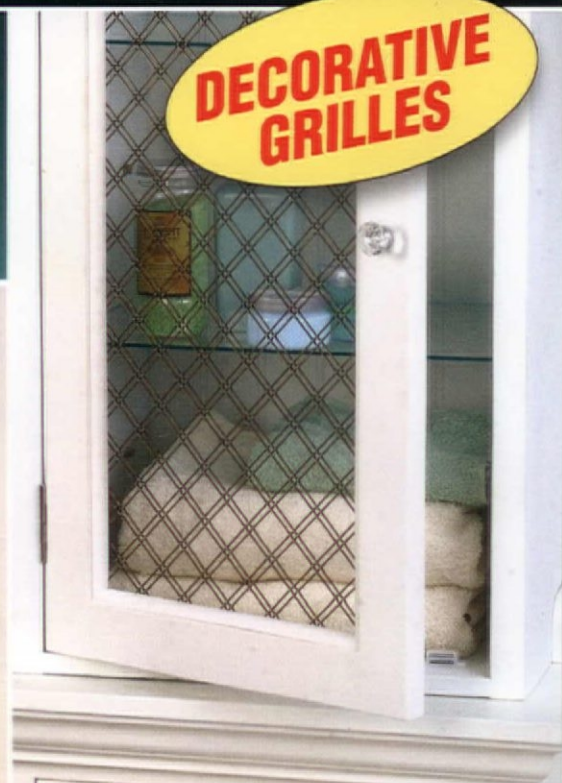
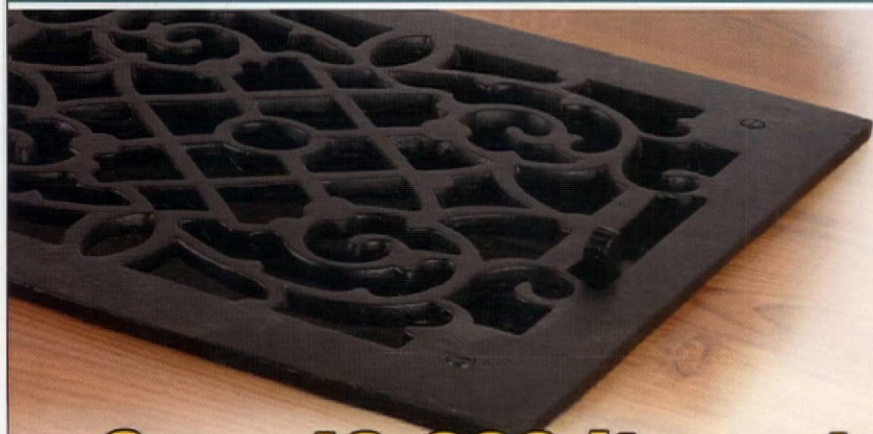


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