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OLD HOUSE JOURNAL

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ON THE COVER A classic old-house porch scene. (Renovation by Dewing Schmid Kearns Architects, Concord, Mass.)
PHOTO BY BRIAN VANDEN BRINK. SEE PAGE 34.



The Wide World of Preservation

The words "historic preservation" retain some of their snooty image, I suppose, but my own involvement in it has been down and dirty (which is to say, under the fingernails). Given it to do over, I'd marry this field all over again. I love both the physical work on old houses and the magazine work. Preservation allowed me to pursue so many interests; I've never been bored! Through OHJ, I learned about construction and building mechanics, social history, architectural styles and terminology, design … and the ghosts who walk the halls. I've been privy to beautiful work past and present that could only have come from the maker's soul.

I've met a motley and dedicated assortment of chemists and architects, engineers and decorators, historians and writers. Remarkably, all share a kind of joyful dedication. The people who end up involved in old houses have a penchant to blur the line between work and home life. They want to leave things better than they found them.

As a homeowner who restored old houses for my family to live in, I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that preservation has given us back our past. As I research a house or work on it, I find myself in touch with previous owners—those who are gone—not in a spooky way but because it forces me to see how short our time is. I find in most old-house people a respect for the past and because of that, better perspective.



Most old houses are not exemplars, and nobody famous ever lived there. But even a stoic little Cape or Greek Revival farmhouse embodies centuries of history and, well preserved, is a cultural artifact. Victorian houses and Craftsman Bungalows conjure an era. A cluster of old houses defines a neighborhood or town. It's all worthy of preservation.

MORE AT **oldhouseonline.com/web-exclusives/historic-preservation-month**



SIDE NOTES

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VOLUME XLIX, ISSUE 3

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EDITOR'S OFFICE
10 Harbor Road
Gloucester, MA 01930
(978) 282-3170

PUBLISHED BY ACTIVE INTEREST MEDIA
P.O. Box 20730
Boulder, CO 80308

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By Mary Ellen Polson


1


2


3


4

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2. HOUSE GENTLE BEES

The teardrop-shaped Mason bee house attracts non-stinging Mason bees, some of nature's best pollinators. Female bees will fill the replaceable tubes with eggs, nectar, and pollen. The bamboo house measures 10" high x 5 ¾" wide x 5 ¾" deep. $21.95. Gardener's Supply, (888) 833-1412, ***gardenerssupply.com***

3. AROUND THE FIRE

With a simple, timeless shape, the Infinite fire bowl anchors any outdoor seating area. Equipped with an efficient 65,000 BTU gas burner, it's available in a smooth honed or textured travertine surface finish, in four colors similar to limestone. At 36 ¼" diameter, 18 ½" deep, it's $2,649. Kindred Outdoor, (888) 445-1904, ***kindredoutdoor.com***

4. DANISH TEAK

The Skagerak Drachmann bench is a quintessentially Scandinavian take on the teak garden bench. The '165' measures 65" wide x 22 ¾" deep x 33 ¾" high. The natural teak version weathers to a silver-grey patina; $1,999. House and Hold, (877) 638-6171, ***houseandhold.com***













5. GOTHIC IN THE GARDEN
Lavished with scrollwork, the Victorian chair looks like wood, but is crafted from an eco-friendly polymer that won't split, rot, or decay. It comes in white, red, or black and measures 46" tall x 32½" wide x 38" deep. $1,195. Charleston Gardens, (866) 469-0118, ***charlestongardens.com***

6. A GRACEFUL TABLE
The Rockford dining table by Anderson Teak rests on unusual tapered and engraved legs. Made from sealed, premium teak, it measures 65" long x 36" wide x 29" high. Assembly required; $1,230. LuxeDecor, (888) 733-3201, ***luxedecor.com***

7. THE PARK CLASSIC
Made in France by the same company that produces iconic metal bistro sets, the Louisiane bench is a powder-coated steel version of the wooden park bench. It measures 60" wide x 28" deep x 24" high. In red, dark green, dark blue, or mustard yellow: $900. Horne, (877) 404-6763, ***shophorne.com***

8. LIKE OLD WICKER
The Weathered Verandah chair is constructed of rattan and bamboo, then given a special finish that creates the effect of faded wicker. The chair measures 37" tall x 30" deep x 23½" wide. $448. Antique Farmhouse, (904) 677-2927, ***antiquefarmhouse.com***

9. PIPE BE GONE
Unsightly pipe in the yard or driveway? Cover it discreetly with this pipe cover: a hollow obelisk with a sphere on top. Use it on its own or hide a 6" pipe up to 23" high. Garden Artisans, (410) 672-0082, ***gardenartisans.com***

10. HERITAGE PAVERS
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2. COPPER & GASLIGHT

Add the alluring flicker of gaslight to an entry door or exterior wall with the Cotton Exchange flush-mount lantern. It's available in seven different sizes and can also be outfitted for electricity or liquid propane. $375 to $600. Bevolo, (504) 522-9485, ***bevolo.com***

3. OLD ENGLAND

Suggestive of English carriage lanterns, the London, a four-sided, curved-arm exterior wall light, syncs with Tudor or Colonial Revival settings. Shown with Waterfall art-glass panels, it measures 13" high x 8" wide at the base; $855 and up. Brass Light Gallery, (800) 243-9595, ***brasslightgallery.com***

4. MARITIME LIGHT

Made on the seacoast, the Caged Onion lantern in Verdi Gris looks ready for the deck of a storm-tossed ship—or your front porch. The fixture measures 19" tall x 10½" wide x 13" deep. Choose from clear, optic, or seedy glass and various finishes; $540 to $595. Northeast Lantern, (800) 892-1206, ***northeastlantern.com***

5. OUTDOOR CHANDELIER

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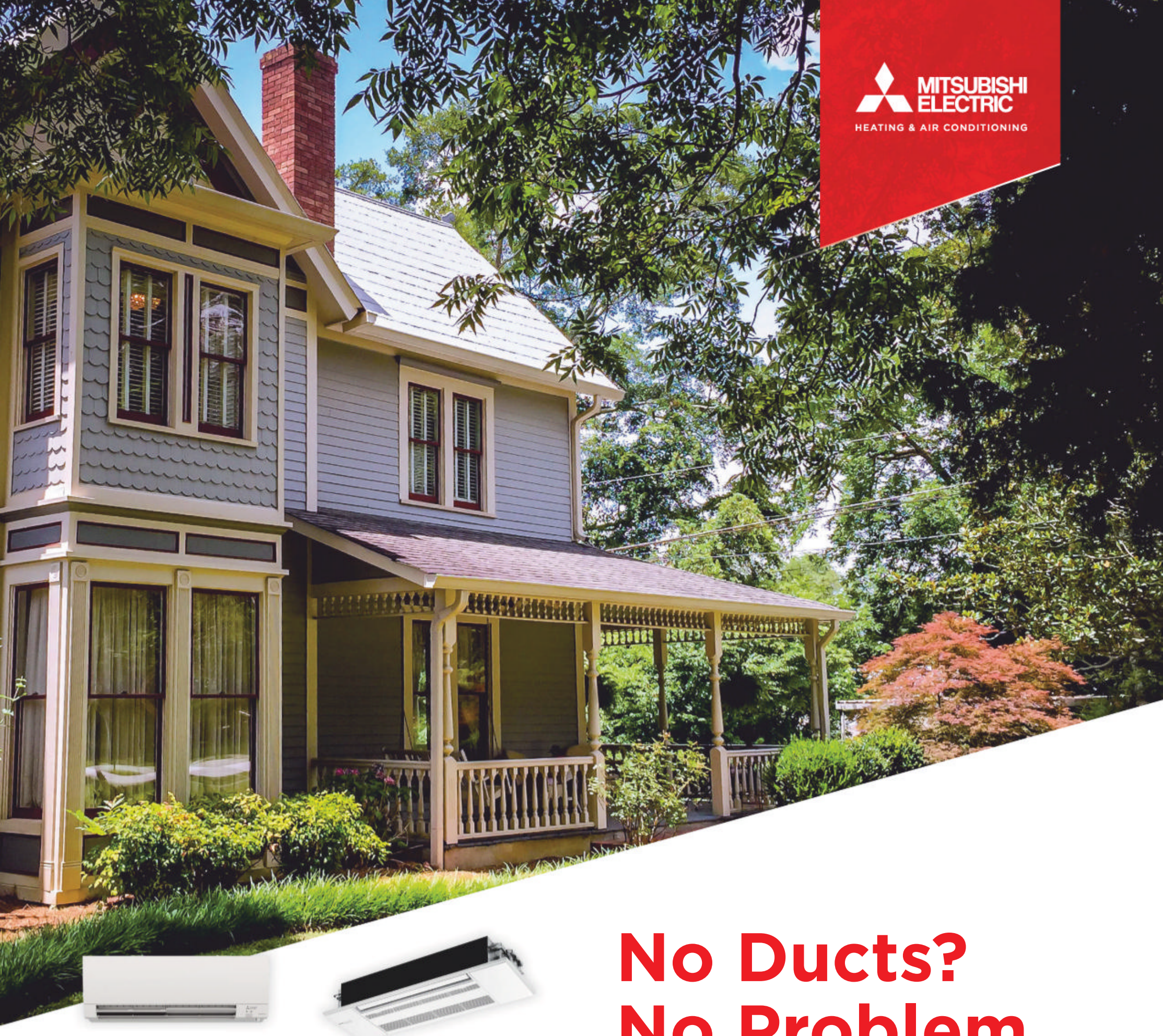












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It's About the Porch

In the late 1800s, houses with capacious porches show up everywhere—especially in the South.

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Ken Parris, Greater Athens Properties, greaterathensproperties.com

WASHINGTON, GA / $348,600

Built in 1793, The Cedars got a Neoclassical makeover about 1805—and then later was remodeled in the Queen Anne/Eastlake style, in 1885. Features include a third-storey tower, a wraparound verandah, and intact period millwork, inside and out.



Beau Thomas, EXP Realty, beauthomas.exprealty.com

MAURICE, LA / $249,900

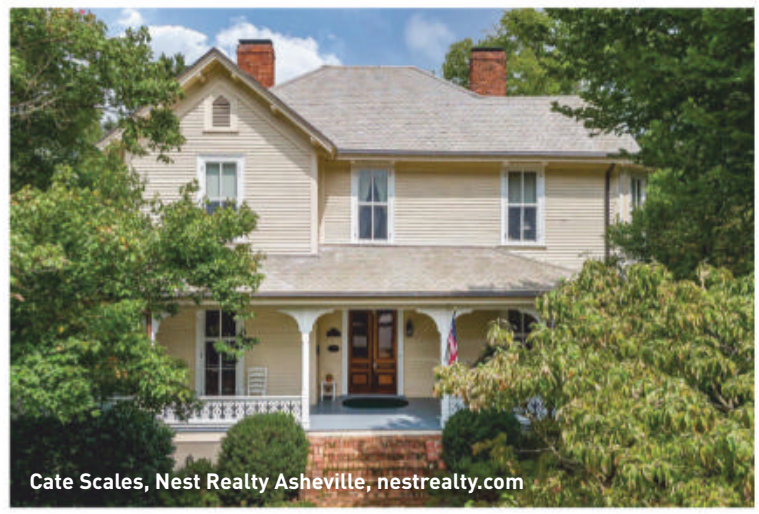
An unusual, apron-shaped roof crowns the wraparound porch on this diminutive, transitional house built in 1917. The interior has tall ceilings, original beadboard-clad walls, and double French doors topped with an operable transom window.



Bobbi Godwin, Connell & Co. Realty, buysellconnell.com

PENSACOLA, FL / $325,000

On this 1897 Queen Anne Cottage, floor-to-ceiling windows open to a porch lavished with fretwork and unique columns. It has four original fireplaces (one's a converted coal-burner with a 1920s insert).



Cate Scales, Nest Realty Asheville, nestrealty.com

ASHEVILLE, NC / $1,450,000

Two-over-two windows with wavy glass and a full-width porch decked in original gingerbread railings adorn this fully restored 1883 Queen Anne home. Inside: original woodwork, vintage tubs (including a metal one), and a period-sympathetic kitchen.



Rhonda Smith, Rhonda Smith Team, rhondasmithteam.com

MADISON, GA / $1,450,000

Fluted Doric columns on the full-width porch of this 1853 Greek Revival lead to a broad entry foyer with original woodwork. Find 13½' ceilings, plaster walls, architrave door and window surrounds, and floor-to-ceiling windows.

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RIGHT The new house has both clapboard and board-and-batten siding. Like the 19th-century farmhouse that inspired it, it's painted white. **BELOW** Family photos from the 1950s show the old family farmstead, which still stands nearby.



DATE Built in 2018, modeled on a 19th-century farmhouse that had been in the family.
LOCATION Hancock, N.H.
PROGRAM To design and build a not-too-big family house, cast in the rural New England vernacular. Important considerations included low-impact efficiency, sustainability in construction and operation, healthful living, and planning for aging in place.
DESIGNER Patricia Gaylor Interiors: **patriciagaylor.com**

A HOME FROM MEMORY

When we got the chance to re-create a childhood gathering place, we built a house that's both fitting and efficient. **By Patricia Gaylor**

A big white farmhouse in Hancock, New Hampshire, served for a long time as the gathering place for Edward Gaylor's family; he has wonderful memories of visiting his grandparents there, every summer when he was a boy, and those memories never left him. The old house had been sold many years ago. Still, Edward—who is my husband—kept alive the idea of going back home to remake that legacy. As it turned out, a small piece of the original land remained in the family. In time, an opportunity arose for us to build a house on that land, and we decided to go for it.

The idea behind the design was not to create a replica, but rather to emulate the style and atmosphere of the old house. We had limitations on size due to the property width and, of course, budget. We discussed layout and what things were important to us, both physically—like needing a first-floor bedroom—and emotionally—like choosing winders for the staircase, [*text cont. on page 17*]

JACK STADTLANDER

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ABOVE The front door is in the style of ca. 1900 farmhouses. The narrow, rail-less farmer's porch is common in the area. **BELOW** The first level has a fairly open plan. Floors throughout are pine, from Carlisle Wide Plank Floors. **RIGHT** The powder room was designed around an old pedestal sink that was in the family, but kept in storage for many years. The wallpaper is 'Fox & Hare' by York Wallcoverings.





achieving AUTHENTICITY

How do you re-create the look of an antique farmhouse today, with so many factors in play?

• **BE SMART ABOUT SIZE.** Square footage drives the budget. Better to go smaller with a good design that maximizes usefulness and efficiency. Plus, you may have money left for better materials and finishes.

• **IT'S OKAY TO ACCOMMODATE LIFESTYLE.** In a new house, it's fine to have an open floor plan in the main rooms. And, to allow aging in place, to have a bedroom and bath on the first floor.

• **BUILD IN EFFICIENCY FOR FUTURE SAVINGS.** Current building codes will go a long way to ensuring energy efficiency in new construction. Learn about insulation, window options, LED lighting, the best appliances, and so on.

• **USE LOCAL MATERIALS WHEN POSSIBLE.** Lumber and flooring can be from the region, cabinets and millwork produced locally. It's good for the local economy, reduces your carbon footprint, and makes the building more vernacular or authentic.

• **USE SALVAGE AND REMNANTS.** You can save money and keep stuff out of the landfill if you reuse old materials and objects. Also, buy leftovers: scrap wood for shelves or cabinets, remnant marble for a short countertop, etc.





ABOVE Vintage bits add charm and age to the simple kitchen. Tongue-and-groove, V-joint pine boards clad the ceiling. Subway tile in soft green, with grey grout, adds color and texture to the black-and-white room. **RIGHT** The front porch gets the morning sun.



BELOW Valances sewn by the owner incorporate scraps from her vintage tablecloths. **BOTTOM** A small expanse of open shelving is practical and budget-friendly—and it allows display of favorite pieces.





as a reminder of the old house. We both wanted pine floors to set the vintage tone.

As an interior designer with a focus on sustainability, I was determined to use local materials, and also salvaged, reused materials, in the construction of the house. The wide-plank pine flooring throughout is from a wonderful company called Carlisle Wide Plank Floors. The flooring was harvested and milled locally, which reduces the carbon footprint of the house. As an added benefit, the local wood also looks authentic.

In the powder room, a salvaged pedestal sink from my father-in-law's house was finally brought back to use, after being in storage for many years. And in the bathroom upstairs, a table given to us by an old friend got turned into a vanity cabinet. Scrap flooring was used as shelves in a living room niche. Old, pale-blue bottles found in a bottle dump are a sculptural touch on a windowsill.

The farmhouse-style kitchen was designed on a modest budget. I used plain planks on the ceiling and as cladding on the vent hood. The idea was to make the area look like it had been converted from an existing back porch, as was so often done in the old houses.

I made the simple window valances using cotton gingham along with scraps from a vintage, fruit-motif tablecloth. I'm an incurable collector of vintage enamelware, too, which I display on the walls and on shelves. I think the vintage bits add both history and charm.

The "decorating concept" is to mix pieces that hold memories with thrift-shop finds and sturdy furniture.

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MODERN **BEGINS**

HOUSES 1917–1944 ARE DIVERSE, WITH ROOMS STYLED BY HOLLYWOOD OR BY NOSTALGIA ... ARTS & CRAFTS BUNGALOWS THEY ARE NOT. **page 20**

WILLIAM WRIGHT FOR MKYDESIGN.COM

Art Deco barware, a favorite indulgence of the Prohibition era, occupies the terra cotta-red dining room of a tile-roofed "Span–Deco" house, built in 1928 in California.

20 **DECORATING BETWEEN THE WARS:** TRANSITIONAL PASTICHE
Rooms might be flashy, eclectic, freewheeling, and modern —but treatments were quaintly historical, too.

+ **26** THEY STILL MAKE
28 VINTAGE VISION
30 KITCHENS + BATHS

Several housing booms after about 1917 brought us comfortable houses that are decidedly not Craftsman Bungalows. Indeed, in much of the USA, an "old house" refers to one built in the 1920s or later. Some of these houses belong to an obvious genre—Colonial, Modernist, Tudor. Others are weird suburban mash-ups. In decorating, what falls between Arts & Crafts and Bauhaus? ■ Art Deco, the style most associated with the Jazz Age, never made it to the residential mainstream. Householders usually opted for a plush, romantic look; think of those Hollywood movies offering an antidote to the Depression years. Eclectic rooms featured colorful fabrics, provocative art, faux finishes, and troweled plaster. **BY PATRICIA POORE**

the Jazz Age & beyond

FREEWHEELING INTERIORS 1917–1944



THE ERA saw tremendous social and technological changes, two major World Wars, and the Great Depression. Design was just as diverse and fractured, taking in the waning influence of Arts & Crafts, a pervasive Colonial Revival, historical European styles embraced by returning soldiers, the first of several Victorian revivals, and "modern" ideas from Art Deco and Surrealist to Hollywood Glam. Regarding interior decorating, a useful over-simplification might be this: If it wasn't edgy, it was very, very homey.

Nevertheless, if you're looking to decorate your 1920s or '30s house with a nod to its period, you don't have to choose between Art Deco and Granny style. You can mix a Stickley rocker and Depression glassware. You can place a Tiffany-style lamp on a Sheraton table. The style police won't beat down your door. This era is not about period correctness.

Some common influences marked the interiors of almost all of these houses. First is a return of traditional elements such as columns, brick hearths, and classical trim. Many houses were built with European-inspired details, from arches between rooms to multi-pane sash in an oriel or a bay window. (Sometimes it's hard to tell whether the arch was meant to suggest Tudor England or Moorish Spain.) In decorating, a "historical chic" was popular—

LEFT A beaded lampshade and a period-revival chair with tapestry upholstery create a Jazz Age vignette. **OPPOSITE** Remodelings were undone to bring back a 1930s-era kitchen for this modest Tudor in Indiana. The arched nook is original, the tablecloth and furniture vintage, the fixture Art Deco.

GRIDLEY + GRAVES PHOTOGRAPHERS (OPP.)



VINTAGE FUN IN A COZY NOOK

Collectibles of this period, including dishware and textiles, are abundant. The blue-green pottery cued the colors in the kitchen. Vinyl composition tile was cut and laid to look like period linoleum.

HISTORICAL REVIVAL & bric-a-brac

Touched by **Hollywood glamour and Modernism**, the decorating style that emerged in the Twenties was also quaintly historical, embracing every revival from Tudor to Pueblo. Furnish with vintage furniture, rugs, and lighting. **Go plush with wing chairs** and textiles. **Stun with a bit of Art Deco**—or find a spot for a Rococo rosewood étagère. A theatrical room might glow with Victorian, Regency, classical Greek, and even Chinese elements.

schemes inspired by 18th-century Italy, say, or the reign of Louis XVI. The nostalgic Old Colonies style, a hybrid of English Art Movement and just-stirring Colonial Revival tastes, had given way to a more correct, classical Colonial Revival, which became "Early American" after the restoration of Williamsburg in 1937.

"After the First War, there was a sea-change in interiors," writes decorative-arts historian Dan Cooper. "The Arts & Crafts Movement had paved the way for the Romantic Revivals, most notably those of the Tudor and Mediterranean styles, which had been lurking in the cupboard since 1900 and were now sweeping through the suburbs like an architectural brushfire.

"Suddenly every wall was troweled with rough or textured plaster. Textures ranged from a plain sanded surface to something one might call Volcanic Crater."

That textured plaster suggested Old World homes, as did beamed, coffered, and "Jacobean" (strapwork) ceilings. Coved ceilings were in vogue. (The concave arc of plaster might be treated as part of the wall, or part of the ceiling, for different effects.) In wallpaper, stripes, florals, and small Colonial-style prints were popular; oatmeal and tapestry papers lent texture.

For furniture, loose interpretations of historical styles were favored: Tudor and Jacobean, Queen Anne, and Spanish Renais-

BLACKSTONEEDGE.COM; FROM *RETRO HOME*, COURTESY RIZZOLI [OPP.]

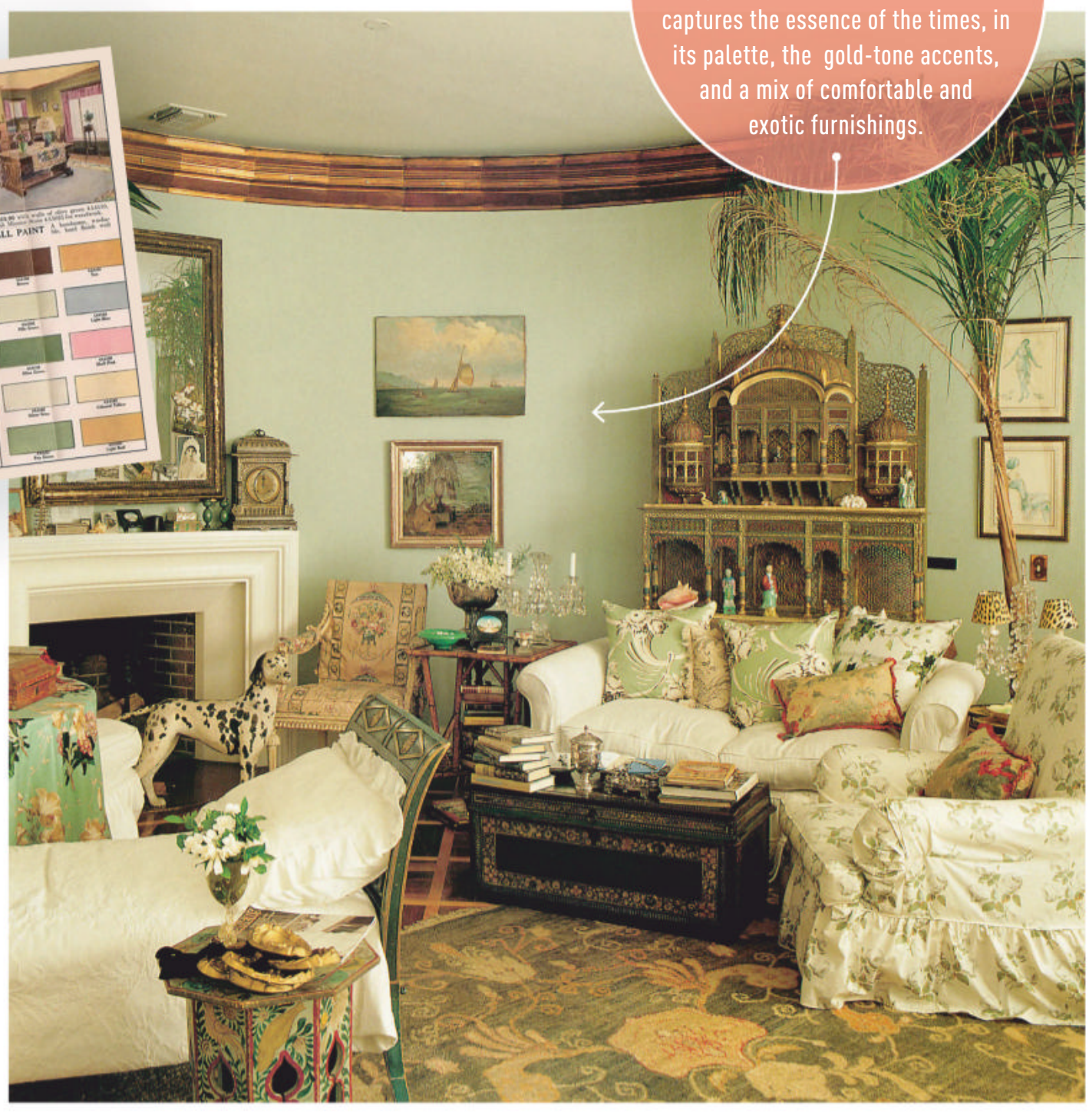
THE COLOR PALETTE

Jazz Age colors of the Twenties came in romantic palettes of pink, green, and mauve, with accents in Chinese red or butterscotch yellow. **Pastels were saturated,** not the greyed tones of Arts & Crafts. Woodwork was left natural or painted in Colonial Revival off-whites. Depression-era colors of the 1930s were clear and lively: lilac and lavender, **seafoam and mint green, orange and coral**. • Palettes are more prescriptive for houses built with a strong affinity for a particular style. Pastel yellows and blues, for example, are common in Colonial Revival houses, while rich terra cotta and turquoise turn up in Spanish architecture. **Art Deco colors are bright and deep**, and often used as an accent with black, white, grey, and metallics.



MINT GREEN IN THE 1930s

A sophisticated distillation of Depression-era trends, this room captures the essence of the times, in its palette, the gold-tone accents, and a mix of comfortable and exotic furnishings.



RIGHT Clear mint green was a favorite pastel in these years; furnishings in the room come from Africa and the Orient. **ABOVE** A suggested palette and illustrative room views appear in the Gordon Van Tine house-plan catalogs of the 1920s. **OPPOSITE** A luxurious drapery fabric set the tone for a period makeover for the interior of a 1929 Storybook Tudor house in Portland, Oregon. Fireplace tiles were treated to a gold-leaf and tortoise-shell finish.









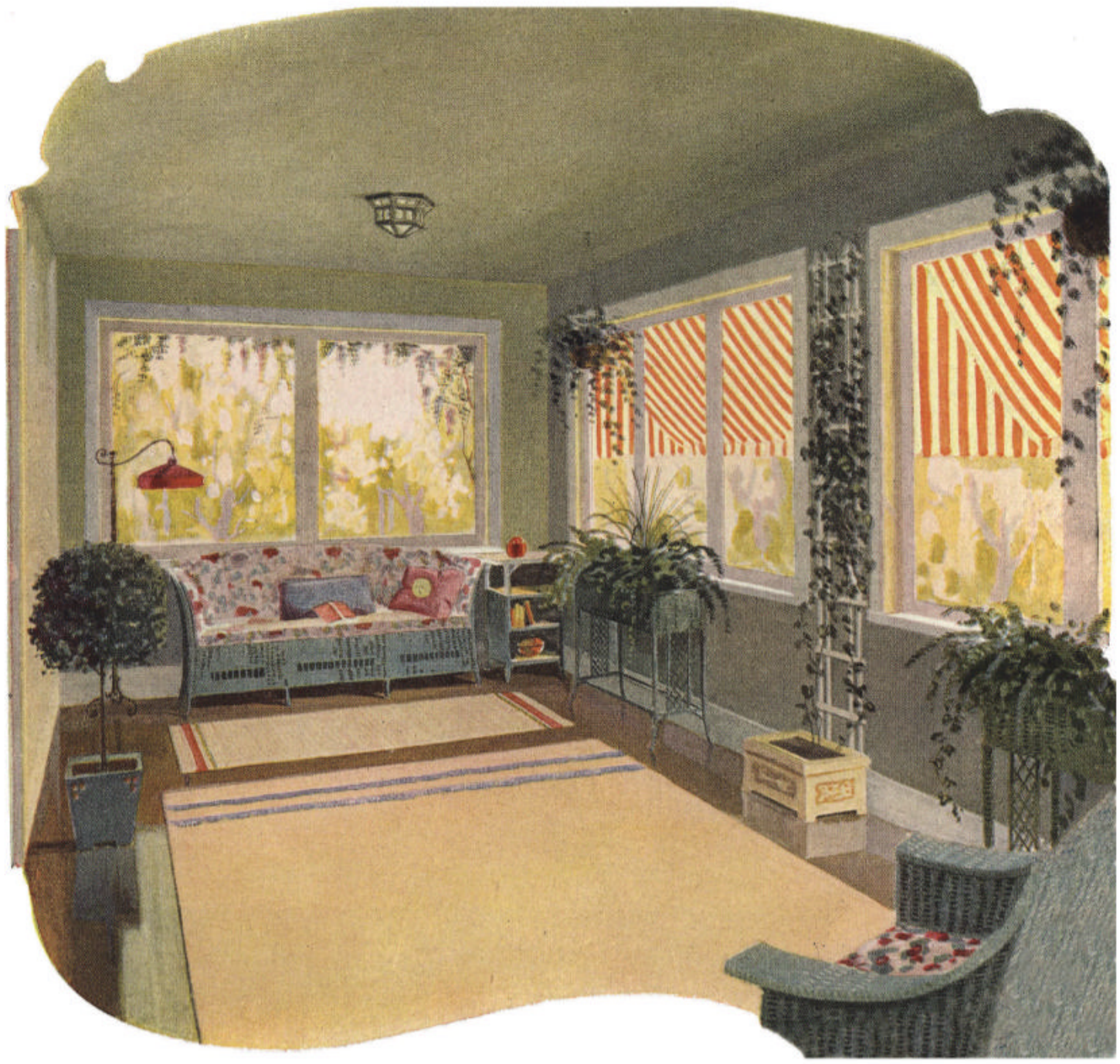


LEFT A nostalgic cottage design exhibits English and Colonial motifs. **RIGHT** French Norman, Dutch Colonial, semi-Bungalow, and Tudor designs from Loizeaux, 1927. **BELOW** Casual sun-rooms are familiar still. The illustration is from a 1926 house-plans book.

THE ERA

Modernism was on the rise, but had little effect on most residential building. Instead, house styles made a conservative return to tradition and revival. Builders' plan books laid out such offerings as Dutch Colonial, Spanish Mission, and English Tudor. "Houses in the 1920s reflect a return to historical revivals," historian John Burrows says, "and the rooms inside them exhibit the same eclecticism as the era's neighborhoods."

The builder's intention and a whiff of the times remain in certain leitmotifs that can be found across several period styles—arched doorways, troweled plaster, sun parlors and French doors, Colonial Revival mantels. These are elements to preserve, whatever your decorating approach. Take a cue from the house, but rest assured that this era grants permission to mix it up.



GORDON VAN TINE HOMES CATALOG, 1926 (TOP LEFT & BTM.); DAN MAYERS (OPP.)

More Online Period-perfect decorating: **oldhouseonline.com/house-tours/english-cottage-on-the-lake**



Tufted chairs, animal skins, and silver accents are luxe, exotic, and graphic. The marble horse's head is 1920s Chinese. Mirrored furniture is from the 1940s.

high PASTICHE

One of the best descriptions of this style period comes from Howard Mandelbaum and Eric Myers in their book *Forties Screen Style* (St. Martin's Press, 1989). **"High Pastiche**, a wildly eclectic style," they say, "is the blend of motifs and design factors that the movies elaborated into **the architecture of dreams**." The style is modern, yet plush and layered—these are not the frozen rooms of Art Deco, a style that even in its heyday was rare in residential interiors.

sance. Heirlooms, Mission pieces, or a Modern Movement accent might be thrown into the mix. Painted furniture was popular, often with decals or stencils, in exotic polychromed "Egyptian" or red-lacquered "Oriental" styles. If a mahogany-veneer buffet had cabriole legs, it was classified Queen Anne; a similar piece with heavy, turned legs was called Tudor.

"Favorite furniture styles," adds interior-design historian John Burrows, "included Sheraton chairs, tables, and sideboards; Windsor chairs; Empire tables, tufted Chesterfield sofas; and slipcovered wing chairs." Fabrics ran to plain silks and linens, patterned chintz in the English style, and rich-toned velvets.

Lighting design came into its own between the Wars, when colorful and ornamental fixtures replaced the utilitarian electric lights of the early 1900s. Look for Art Deco and Streamline designs; painted glass shades; blowsy, pieced-fabric lampshades dripping with gimp; and graceful bridge lamps.

Rooms of this period have been called High Pastiche—not parody, but rather imitation in honor of the past. In many cases, the homage mixes various styles and periods to become something distinct, and very much of the era.

FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 87.



THONET CHAIRS

The famous, award-winning No. 14 Bentwood Chair was first produced in Germany in 1859, invented by Michael Thonet, who had been working with steam-bent wood processes. Never out of style, these chairs were especially popular during the Jazz Age. Today they are produced in the Czech Republic by Ton. Retailers in the U.S. include Bauhaus2YourHouse, which has a wide selection of custom options (wood veneer or cane seat, multiple wood-stain and pigmented colors) and also Rejuvenation, which sells a version with a padded leather seat.

The familiar chair shown here is a stock item from Williams–Sonoma: the Ton 14 Caned Dining Side Chair, available in black, white, or natural for $295. Williams–Sonoma, **williams-sonoma.com**

Traditional by Design

As beautiful as they are hardworking, period-reproduction door sets are a must-have in any traditional home. With looks ranging from colonial revival to mid-century modern, there are endless ways to express your personal style. For the widest selection of vintage door sets, as well as hardware & lighting for every room, shop online at House of Antique Hardware.

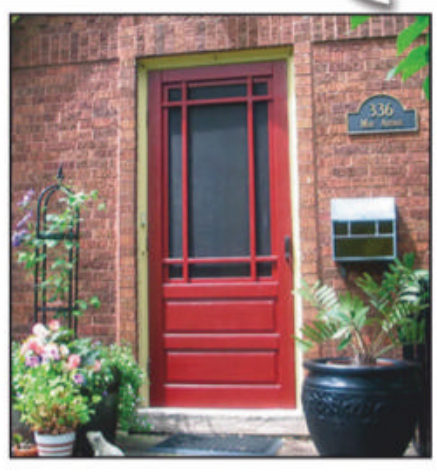


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On the Furnished Porch, 1921

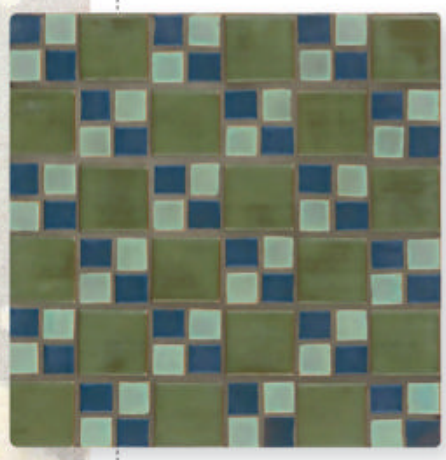
From *Home Tile Designs*, the Associated Tile Manufacturers.



At the dawn of the Jazz Age, a family takes tea on a tiled porch furnished with a natural-fiber rug, a hanging swing, and wicker. Textiles in strong colors are everywhere.



The All Seasons settee swing from Lloyd Flanders features the character and convenience of weather-resistant Lloyd Loom wicker, invented in 1917. The swing has a built-in reticulated foam seat and comes in 18 finishes. It measures 58" wide x 21" high x 28" deep. ***lloydflanders.com***



Small squares in three shades of green and blue, from Clay Squared to Infinity, make up this distinctive mosaic tile pattern. All flooring tiles are handmade and nonslip; about $49 per sq. ft. ***claysquared.com***



The Tea Tabard teapot cozy in Japanese Red from Koffee Kompanions suggests textiles of the 1920s and 1930s. The cozy is lined with Thinsulate and features custom-cut bias binding and a hang-up loop. It's $23.95 plus shipping. ***etsy.com/shop/KoffeeKompanions***



The Strawberry Thief pillow by Natalie Richards, of Paint by Threads, is adapted from a timeless William Morris design. The hand-embroidered "berries" are raised, 3D elements called stump-work. In muted plum or natural linen, the pillow measures 12" x 18". $300. ***paint-by-threads.com***

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New Kitchen in a Sears House

An architect's update of a simple classic shows exemplary modesty.

By Patricia Poore /Photos by Rob Karosis

Sometimes renovation lets the original house shine, rather than changing its character. This kitchen is part of a gentle upgrade to a late-1920s Sears kit home. The clapboard house remains a delightful, no-frills reproduction of a New England Colonial. Its five-bay, two-storey main block is flanked by a wing on each side, one of which was built as an attached garage.

Residential architect James Crisp, whose firm is based in Dutchess County, in New York's Hudson Valley, says that the clients asked for a better use of the space—to make it open, bright, and family-friendly. The expanded kitchen is generally in its original location. A capacious dining area occupies the far end of the room opposite the windows. (About 450 square feet were added to the house overall, bringing it to just over 2,500 square feet.)

At the same time, Crisp converted the existing two-car garage into a master suite: "When we're asked to add a lot of space, the first place I look is the garage—which is often taking up valuable real estate. In most cases, a conversion costs less than building from the ground up." Codes required a change in level between garage and house; space between the concrete floor and new flooring accommodates plumbing and ductwork.





1. AN IN-KITCHEN PANTRY
One wall serves as a kind of butler's pantry, with extensive storage above and below a soapstone counter. The area can accommodate food preparation, a cocktail bar, or a sideboard for serving, all outside of the working galley between range and island.

2. MIXED COUNTERTOPS
Perimeter counters are heat- and stain-proof soapstone, while the prep island has an expanse of warm, renewable butcher block. Using more than one countertop material is practical as well as historical.



3. PERIOD LIGHTING

"Holophane" or prismatic-glass pendants have a no-nonsense integrity. Popular from the 1890s through the 1950s, these industrial lamps offer a timeless appearance while providing extra-bright illumination without glare.

4. FURNITURE-LIKE CABINETS

Between generous windows, the pairing of glazed upper cabinets and a matching lower cabinet suggests a freestanding piece of period furniture. The base cabinet includes a beverage cooler.

BE INSPIRED...



Known for authentic reproductions, Brass Light Gallery also sells refurbished vintage lighting, including increasingly hard-to-find **Holophane fixtures**. Many are entirely antique; vintage Holophane shades also available on reproduction fixtures. Priced about $540–$1,150 depending on rarity. ***vintagebrasslight.com***



Custom maker Crown Point Cabinetry has a user-friendly, deeply educational website that lets you browse by style, door type, components, and more. Their **classic raised-panel** 'Century' door is shown here in a square inset face frame; maple in Friendly Yellow. ***crown-point.com***



John Boos (johnboos.com) dealer Kitchen Source offers many options in **butcher-block** countertops (end grain, edge grain, four wood species, size, thickness, finish). Their price for a custom-order, 60" long, 25" deep, premium edge-grain hard rock-maple countertop, 1¾" thick in an oil finish: $432. ***kitchensource.com***



Think you might have a Sears kit house? The award-winning **1996 book** by Katherine Cole Stevenson and H. Ward Jandl is still available. See houses 1908–1940 in this guide to identification of 450 models. New paperback price is $35 at ***amazon.com***

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RESTORE



PORCH FAILS+FIXES

BESIDES THE ROOF, IT'S THE DECK AND BALUSTRADES THAT, EXPOSED TO THE ELEMENTS, FARE POORLY. REPAIR TIPS FOLLOW.

page 34

BRIAN VANDEN BRINK

Hydrangeas surround the porch on an old Martha's Vineyard house recently restored by Hutker Architects.

34 **PORCH RESTORATION:** THE DECKS AND THE RAILS
Keep the flooring and the balustrades in good repair to avoid porch failure.

40 TOOLS + MATERIALS
42 KNOW-HOW
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48 OLD HOUSE DIYer
50 DO THIS, NOT THAT
53 STUFF A ROOFER SCREWED UP

RESTORING PORCHES DECK & RAIL

The most common porch fails happen with the flooring and the balustrades or rails. Keep them in good trim! **BY MARY ELLEN POLSON**

COURTESY FURST WOODWORKING



Wrapping around two corners of the house, the deck and balustrades of this 115-year-old verandah were rebuilt about four years ago and remain in pristine condition.

Beautiful but frail, ***the 115-year-old verandah was beginning to come apart.***

Columns and capitals were damaged, spindles and railings needed attention, and the porch flooring—originally laid in a herringbone pattern at each rounded corner—was beyond repair. • Once master woodworker Sidney Furst and his team stripped off the old deck, however, they were surprised to find mostly solid 2x12 support joists beneath it. The previous restorer had even signed his work, noting the date of repair: 1986. • That the porch had survived more than 30 years since the previous restoration shows how durable porches can be when they're kept up—and how vulnerable they are when not. "Rebuilds are not cheap," says Furst, a fourth-generation cabinetmaker and restorer who lives near St. Louis, Missouri. "To do them right takes a lot of time and effort. If the porch is kept in good repair, you'll get a lot more [years of] use out of it."

Maintenance is of the utmost importance, Sidney Furst admonishes. The most vulnerable areas on the porch, and the quickest to show signs of wear and tear: the porch floor (deck) and the balustrade (comprising balusters, top and bottom rails, and fasteners). "Make sure the porch deck drains properly, and keep the porch painted to keep moisture out."

PORCH **floors**

MINOR REPAIRS Peeling paint, cracking, splitting, cupping, and rot appear first on the exposed ends of porch floorboards, where they're fully exposed to the weather. Over time, even the tiniest paint cracks allow water to penetrate, causing paint to peel and exposing the wood.

To prevent damage, paint or stain floorboards every other year at minimum. Paint stair treads and other heavily traveled areas more often. Make sure the wood is sound, then scrape off any loose paint before priming and repainting.

While a single damaged board may not sound like an emergency, "rip it out and replace it immediately," urges Furst. One failing board can be the first link in chain that leads to more damage.

To determine if a board is spongy, probe it gently with an awl to see whether it's beyond repair. Remove the damaged section or the entire board with a reciprocating saw, then examine the structural


5


1


2


3


4

Step by Step Porch Repair

one When contractor Sidney Furst peeled back the failed porch deck, he was surprised to discover the understructure was sound and needed only minor repairs. Flooring under the column has been left intact to support it.

two Furst laid the new flooring in the porch's two radiused corners in a herringbone pattern, which steps the joints between mating boards.

three The herringbone corner is elegant in appearance, but more importantly, the pattern eliminates a straight, diagonal seam that would be more vulnerable to failure.

four Using tongue-and-groove boards that reach the full depth of the porch gives the flooring greater longevity. The restoration team trimmed the edges with a circular saw, then treated the ends to multiple coats of primer and sealer before final staining.

five (top) Furst Woodworking custom-milled replacements for balusters that were too far gone to repair, as well as making new porch columns. The primed and sealed brown baluster just lacks a top coat of paint.

slope *and sweep* **Moisture is the enemy of the tight paint seal**

that's so hard to maintain. If water ponds in spots after a rain, that may indicate the porch no longer slopes properly. A porch with tongue-and-grove flooring should slope between ⅛" and ¼" per linear foot (closer to ⅛" per foot for deeper porches). **Avoid laying or placing anything on the porch that can trap moisture**, such as a planter without a footed saucer or tray. Floor mats and rugs, even waterproof ones, can also trap moisture. If you use a rug, move or relocate it frequently, exposing the boards to sunlight and fresh air.

COURTESY FURST WOODWORKING; LINDA SVENDSEN ARCHIVE (OPP.)

In warm, sunny locales from Savannah to Santa Cruz, the porch floor of choice isn't wood, but scored concrete. While concrete doesn't rot, it comes with its own set of problems over time: pockmarks, holes, cracks large and small. • **Small cracks, pitting, and holes can be repaired with a variety of patching materials.** One specially formulated for concrete is **Abocrete, a liquid epoxy that can be used to fill voids, or to completely resurface the porch**. (The epoxy can be tinted to match the original concrete color, and sand can be added to prevent slip hazards.) The solvent-free material applies with a brush or paint roller and cures in one to five hours. Before beginning any repair, however, sweep and thoroughly clean the porch surface with a heavy-duty cleaner and a bristle brush. Allow to dry. Apply one to two coats, and remember to include those classic score lines, too!



Concrete porches were especially popular in California and the Southwest in the 1910s and '20s. Squares were usually 30"x 30" or 36" x 36". Some were formed up as separate pours; others were scored after pouring.

The Concrete Porch Deck

framing underneath. Any suspect joists should be sistered (doubled up with similar lumber) or replaced.

Choose wood of the same width and species, and cut the new tongue-and-groove board to length. (Not all porch decks are laid in tongue & groove, but it's the best bet.) If the repair requires only a partial board, make sure the board is long enough to center on the next joist over. Prime the replacement board on all sides (Furst uses a mix of wood thinner and Thompson's WaterSeal) before blind-nailing it into place. Follow up with a couple of coats of paint—or better yet stain, which penetrates and protects the wood and won't peel like paint.

REPLACING THE DECK If portions or all of the flooring needs to be replaced, the work will likely touch structural posts or columns. Before removing the wood beneath these supports, carefully stabilize them in place or install stout temporary supports to keep the roof stable.

Replace the deck with wood of the highest quality available. Choose a rot-resistant species such as Douglas fir, cedar, cypress, ipe, mahogany, or another tropical wood, or alternatively, a quality PVC product formulated especially for porch floors (see "Shop Tour," page 39). New flooring should match the original in thickness, width, shape, and texture.

THE PRO TIP

Before assembling mating parts of a balustrade, prime or seal the hidden sides of all joints. *For rails spanning more than 8', place one or two small, painted support blocks between the bottom rail and the porch floor.*

Lay boards running perpendicular to the house. Furst orders boards that are 8' and 12' long to run the full depth of the porch. Where there are changes of direction, cut the boards where they meet along the diagonal. Of the two common patterns, miter and herringbone, Furst chose the latter because a 1930s photo showed it was original to the house. "You don't want a straight-line seam."

Furst primed each board on both surfaces and every hidden part, and followed up with two coats of Thompson's WaterSeal. The floor was allowed to cure and dry before the final coat of stain.

BALUSTRADES

Consisting of top and bottom rails and the connecting vertical balusters or spindles, balustrades typically outline the perimeter of the porch and are exposed to weather. Balustrades built from dense, old-growth wood can survive for well over 120 years. That's why it's always preferable to repair an old-growth balustrade and its component parts than to replace it.

There are three general types of balusters: a simple square or rectangular shape; a flat, pattern-sawn support, such as a board with a decorative edge or cutout; and a three-dimensional, turned shape. Balusters fail sooner than the supporting rails, and are more likely to have been replaced.

MINOR REPAIRS If the balusters or railings are loose, examine points of attachment for rusted fasteners, split wood, or decay. If the fasteners have failed but the wood is sound, remove the attachments, along with any peeling or alligatored paint. (Test for lead first; if you find it, follow lead paint protocols to remove it.) For balusters nailed or screwed in place, reattach them using hot-dipped galvanized or stainless-steel nails or screws, setting the heads below the surface and filling in with wood filler or epoxy.

Where wood is decayed, remove it and refill voids using a two-part epoxy



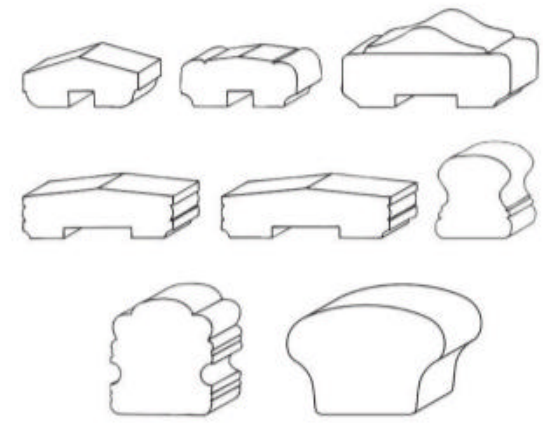
The most common balusters are simple, square spindles (below left); fancier varieties are flat-sawn, sometimes with decorative cutouts (middle), or turned on a lathe (right).

such as those made by Abatron or West System. Allow the patched wood to cure, then sand smooth, taking care that it mates perfectly with adjoining parts. Prime all elements before reattaching, then seal and paint.

REMILLING When balusters or railings are missing or too far gone, it may be possible to find new ones from a specialty supplier, or have them custom-mill new parts to match. A mill may already have the correct profile; otherwise, the mill may need to make new knives to make an authentic replica (see Resources, p. 87).

Determine the size and shape of a missing baluster by examining or temporarily removing an existing baluster to use as a sample. Remove any heavy paint buildup to establish original dimensions. Scrape and clean joints and repair deteriorated areas with exterior wood filler or epoxy. Match profiles, depth, and thickness as closely as possible; cut new pieces from wood of comparable or better quality.

Include about ½" of overage on both ends of the baluster. Measure from the bottom surface of the top rail to the top surface of the bottom rail. Lay out joints for the new piece with a pencil, using a sliding bevel to transfer any angles. Then trim the baluster to fit with a handsaw and test-fit it. Trim as needed with a hand plane or wood file. Seal the ends and any exposed end-grain with a high-grade primer or epoxy. Apply a paintable, water-repellent coating on all exposed surfaces. Prime the baluster and then fasten it into place with hot-dipped galvanized or stainless-steel nails. Set the heads below the surface and back fill with wood filler or epoxy. Seal the joints and fastener holes and paint the baluster.



Several **specialty millworks offer top-rail profiles** taken from period examples.

These are stock designs from ***Mad River Woodworks****, which also does custom work.*



LEFT Measuring 2½" deep x 1½" high, a flat corner brace in zinc-coated stainless steel, from Grainger, makes a strong hanger for a restored rail.

Historically, porch deck boards were milled from Douglas fir, cedar, or other rot-resistant wood. Once planed and sanded, boards were a standard 7/8" thick.

Now to the rails. It's all but impossible to find wood of the quality used in a century-old rail, so save as much of the original as possible, even if ends are rotted. Bottom rails tend to fail first; top rails usually have a beveled top to shed water. Before removing a section of balustrade for repair, note how rails are fastened to posts at either end: mortised, braced, or simply nailed or screwed? Save hardware and reuse it, or use stainless-steel screws, countersunk and filled.

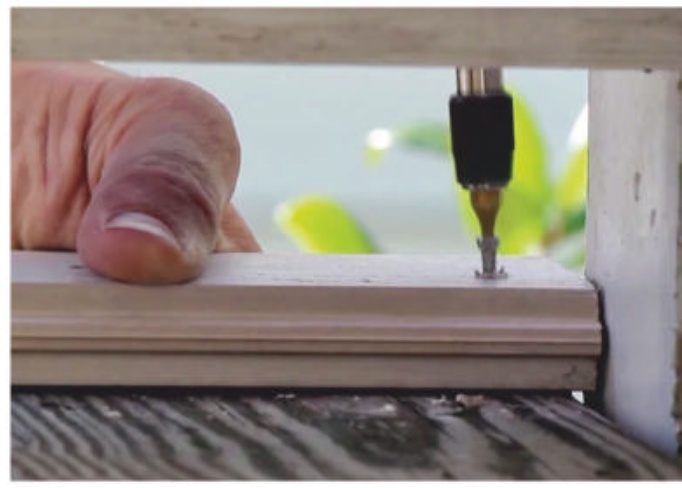
EPOXY REPAIRS A rail with damaged ends or soft spots may be repaired with epoxies. In areas with punky wood, drill small holes at intervals, and drip a liquid two-part epoxy into the holes. This method allows the epoxy to seep into the fiber of the wood, filling voids and strengthening the wood. For rails rotted an inch or two at the ends, extend them by applying a two-part epoxy mixed to the consistency of peanut butter. Apply, then wrap the ends with sheet metal to hold the rough shape. Add layers as needed. Once cured, hand plane, chisel, and sand the repair to match the correct rail profile.

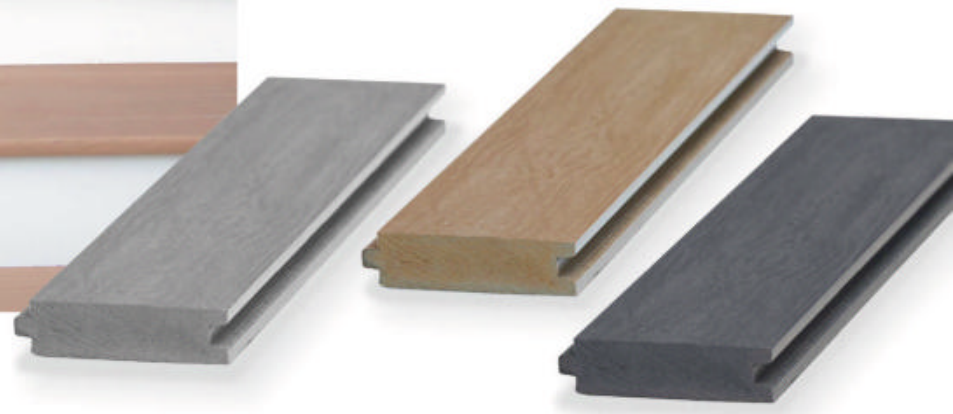
REMILLING If you must replace a rail, check specialty millworks to see if they carry (or can mill) rails with the same profile. They may need to glue up stock to get the required thickness. Make sure the lumber is glued up horizontally; a vertical seam eventually permits water to seep in.

REASSEMBLY If you use flat corner braces, be sure they're large enough to offer good support, but not so large they show. Cut a mortise for the brace in the end grain of the railing so the rail will fit flush against the post. Attach the upright part of the brace to the post. Lower the rail onto the brace and secure from below.

GROSS & DALEY PHOTO; HENRIK NORDSTROM; COURTESY WESTERN SPINDLE







SHOPTOUR: AERATIS

Even restoration pros will tell you that most wooden porch floors begin to fail within five years—because it's almost impossible to get wood of the quality typical a century ago. Enter Aeratis (pronounced AIR–it-tis). Chris Tidwell and his partner formed the company about 15 years ago, specifically to make weatherproof PVC porch flooring that would look nearly identical to historic floorboards of the 19th century.



Approved by many historical commissions, Aeratis porch flooring comes with a 10-year-warranty and now appears on historic properties in every state. Oak Alley Plantation near New Orleans, where the film "Interview with the Vampire" was shot, was an early adopter. "They've put seven or eight million people on that porch since 2009," Tidwell says. "They used to spend $30,000 to $40,000 per year to maintain it. Now they just mop it."

Aeratis tongue-and groove flooring is milled exactly ⅞" thick x 3⅛" wide, the same as planed, sanded, and painted decking on porches of the late 1800s. It's made from high-density, dimensionally stable PVC that won't degrade from UV exposure. Boards are lightly embossed with wood-grain patterns taken from actual wood boards. Three standard colors include a classic battleship grey. From five feet away, Tidwell asserts, it's almost impossible to tell it isn't real wood.

Paint-ready boards from the Traditions line are even more convincing. They are formulated so that the paint chemically bonds to the surface. "The paint doesn't peel—you have to wear the paint off with foot traffic."

Aeratis products are made in a wholly U.S.-owned factory in China. Ingredients, which include colorants, minerals, and UV inhibitors, are mixed together, then pulled into an extruder and heated to form the core. As the hot core is pushed and pulled through, the acrylic-based cap is added. The material cools and relaxes, then is reheated until it's the correct size, then embossed. "Everything we make is usable on both sides."

Aeratis also makes two profiles for historically correct porch ceilings (narrow and wide beaded board), and custom-order shutters that require on-site assembly. Paint can last seven years or more on the shutters, even though they're exposed to the full brunt of the sun: "They won't expand and contract even on the hottest days."

ABOVE LEFT Aeratis tongue-and-groove porch flooring installs with a traditional slope. Accessories include bullnose end caps and quarter-round wall trim. **RIGHT** (top to bottom) Aeratis decking installs with screws and, once the first board is squared, with a pneumatic nailer to shorten project time. • Embossed with wood patterns on both sides, three colors of decking come ready to install. • Paint-ready Traditions boards are hard to tell from real wood, after color is applied.

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Porch Projects

What you need to keep porch or deck in repair.



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Clear vertical-grain Douglas fir porch decking is a standard for long-lived porch floors. These tongue-and-groove boards measure 3⅛" wide and come in lengths from 3' to 12'. Depending on volume, cost is $5.95 to $8.25 per sq. ft. Altrufir, (877) 372-9663, *dougfirflooring.com*

3. ENRICH THE GRAIN

Protect and stain a porch floor or deck with Timber Oil, a triple blend of premium oils that penetrate the wood, protecting it from water damage, mildew, and UV degradation. Comes in five colors; $57.99 per gallon. Thompson's WaterSeal, (800) 367-6297, *thompsonswaterseal.com*



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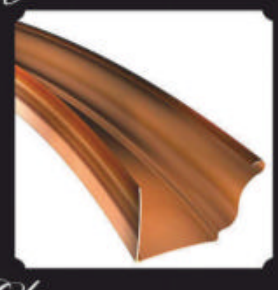
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Lengths of dressed bluestone create informal steps in a side garden, shoring up an undulating lot and providing architectural dimension.

Stone in the Landscape

Stonescape your property—or even re-engineer it—with natural stone that's local, or from as far away as China. **By Mary Ellen Polson**

One of the delights of living in an old house is the built-up landscape that surrounds it. Meandering paths, stone walls, perhaps an old millstone found in the woods out back are elements that place the house within its environment and suggest long-time settlement.

Suppose, however, that the yard is bare. Rest easy: native stone is widespread across the country, and remedies can turn even the most ordinary setting into a natural scenic delight. Think of stone as a means of creating curb appeal, or to create transitions, to solve landscaping problems (say, shoring up a slope that threatens the back patio), or to define spaces, turning discrete areas into outdoor rooms.

At any good stone yard, you'll likely find several types of stone: building stone, dimensional stone, stone veneer, and landscaping stone. You may also find reclaimed stone, a category that includes such standards as 200-year-old street cobbles and 150-year-old slate slabs harvested from urban sidewalks. Some types of landscaping stone can be used structurally, and some types of building and dimensional stone can be used in landscaping settings, so there is overlap. When choosing materials, it's probably best to go with stone intended for the landscape. It tends to be less expensive, for one thing; and reclaimed materials once used as building stone (and now marketed for stonescaping) offer character and signs of wear less common in newly cut stone.

stoops Flat stone slabs of granite, bluestone, or sandstone, correctly sized and placed, are an excellent means of creating secure access to your home. (Be sure to lay sedimentary stones as they were naturally bedded, to avoid spalling of the face layer.) The stones have subtle variations that provide traction, will last longer than the house itself, and are literally the first step linking house to landscape. Build them up in tiers to reach a comfortable height.

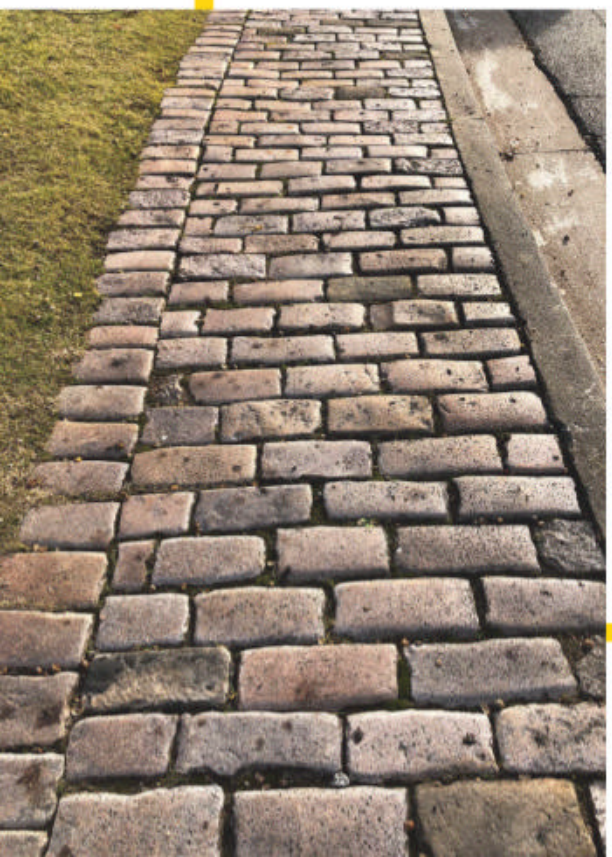
pathways, steps In locales like New England where stone litters the landscape, it was common, historically, to pluck flat, native stones from fields and lay them out as informal paths linking areas—back door to side porch, for instance. In the eastern U.S., bluestone is most common for stone paths; out West, orangey-pink Arizona flagstone is a natural fit. For transitions from a lower area to a higher one, choose broad, thick stone slabs for steps that blend into the surroundings. Accent the steps with natural stone boulders, partially buried into the surrounding soil, to visually anchor them into the landscape.

COURTESY STONE CURATORS (THIS PAGE & OPP., LIMESTONE); COURTESY THOMPSON BLDG. MATLS. (OPP., AZ STONE); COURTESY INGERSOLL LAND CARE (OPP. TOP)









FROM TOP TO BOTTOM
Thick slabs of Massachusetts schist make sturdy steps down a low hill. • Reclaimed limestone plank pavers, imported from China, have a smooth to rough texture, ideal for walks or steps. • Arizona flagstones, in soft, bright pinkish orange hues, include this "buckskin" variety. • Rounded or roughly rectangular, cobblestones like these from Historical Bricks pave paths and drives and edge garden beds.

STONES FOR *Landscaping*

Depending on where you live, some types of stone may be more common than others. For the most natural appearance, choose stone native to your region.

- **Bluestone** A dense, hard, fine-grained sandstone or siltstone of medium to dark bluish-grey color that splits readily to form thin slabs. A variety of flagstone, bluestone is most common in New York and the mid-Atlantic, although it may be found in other regions.
- **Cobblestone** Naturally rounded or dressed rectangular stones, familiar from historic streetscapes, that make excellent pavers for driveways and paths.
- **Field Stone** Field stones are loose rocks separated from ledges by natural processes and scattered throughout fields; many are glacial in origin. They're sized from small to house-sized and adapt to many uses.
- **Flagstone** Thin slabs of stone used for flagging or paving walks, driveways, patios, and more. Appearing all across the U.S., flagstone is made of fine-grained sandstone, bluestone, schist, quartzite, or slate.
- **Granite** A fine- to coarse-grained igneous rock formed by volcanic action and consisting of quartz, feldspar, and mica. Practically indestructible, granite is ideal for steps, plinths, and terraced walls.
- **Limestone** A sedimentary rock composed of calcium carbonate, including varieties hard enough to use in landscaping applications.
- **Quartzite** A compact granular rock composed of quartz crystals, firmly cemented together. Like granite, it has a high crushing and tensile strength and comes in a broad range of colorations.
- **Sandstone** A sedimentary rock consisting of quartz, cemented with silica, iron oxide, or calcium carbonate. Sandstone is durable, has a very high crushing and tensile strength, and a wide range of colors and textures. It makes an excellent material for steps.
- **Schist** A foliated metamorphic rock that splits readily into flat planes, making it a good choice for paving stones and patios.
- **Slate** A very fine-grained metamorphic rock derived from sedimentary rock shale. Like schist, it splits easily into relatively thin slabs ideal for paving, steps, and more.



LEFT Stack granite or bluestone slabs at a safe, convenient height for easy access into the house. **BELOW** Broad, fieldstone stepping-stones from Stone Curators link a secondary structure to the main house, providing continuity and instant age. **BOTTOM** When a sloping yard threatened a New England farmhouse, the owner had the upper lawn terraced with salvage granite blocks from a nearby farm. Steps and stone edging define pathways and an outdoor eating area paved with reclaimed brick.



patios and fire pits Natural stone flagging is also ideal for outdoor sitting areas including patios and fire pits. Choose from formal rectangular and square-cut flagstone, or randomly shaped flags with natural edges. To ensure the patio lasts, lay a deep base of sand and gravel, and do not mortar the stones in place. That way, the stones will be able to move without cracking during freeze–thaw cycles. As for fire pits, the working part can be as simple as a ring of raised stones around a copper vessel, or structurally built from cut stone.

walls and terraces The low stone walls used to define property lines in New England and the mid-Atlantic were hand-laid from local field stones. For similar walls, choose a locally available stone; you can either supply the labor yourself, or hire skilled masons. Building stone walls is highly labor intensive. This is especially true if the wall is terraced to support a slope and hold back runoff. For such a major project, hire a landscaping crew to design and engineer the project. Depending on its location, the resulting terraced walls can serve as an enclosure for a patio, or as an alfresco dining area paved with local flagstone.

accents Oddities, such as the large to humongous glacial erratics found in New England, give a home landscape exceptional character. Large boulders, millstones, and plinths are just a few of the options available to set your yard apart.

FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 87.



COURTESY STONE CURATORS; ROB KAROSIS (BTM)



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Scrap Metal to Planters

Vibrant bromeliads and lacy ferns, prickly-edged agave and spiky cacti—all growing in scrap metal! **By Brian D. Coleman**

Loree Bohl is fond of foliage plants, the stranger the better. She gardens in the temperate 8b USDA Plant Hardiness Zone, in Portland, Oregon—which lets her take full advantage of unusual and even "dangerous" (spiny, thorny, poisonous) plants that thrive in Southern California, the desert Southwest, or faraway rainforests. Generous use of planters is one key to her success. In them she can grow delicate, less-hardy species, which she over-winters indoors. She creates planters using such salvaged materials as stock tanks, the galvanized tubs used provide water to livestock. Loree has managed to work 12 tanks into her small, urban garden, to hold ferns or to become a water feature.

considerations

Succulents work well in dish planters, as they don't require much soil and will survive hot days and dry conditions. Bromeliads and other epiphytic plants also do well with little soil, as long as they are kept moist with water in the center cup formed by their leaves. Annuals are an easy-care accent that can be discarded at the end of the season.

Watering is straightforward: a gentle, daily misting keeps the plants happy. When the weather has been especially hot and dry, plants are given an occasional thorough soaking.

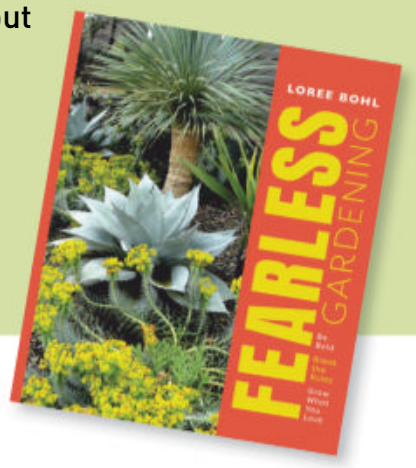
DISH PLANTERS

Inspired by shallow dishes atop cylinder pedestals, hands-on gardener Loree Bohl fabricated her own. She began with a galvanized post from a chain-link fence, cutting it down with a hack saw to the right height, then pounding it into the ground with a mallet. The dish was made from the cap of a chicken feeder, turned upside down. Covered with a square of window screening to prevent washout, the hole in the center provides drainage. Bohl says that any sort of wide, shallow bowl can be used, from a glass fixture shade to a hubcap. The dish is not attached to the post, allowing it to be taken inside for the winter. Instead, a length of clear rubber tubing (for a refrigerator water line) was slit, then pressed around the top edge of the post to give the bowl stability and grip.

WILLIAM WRIGHT



***LOREE BOHL** is a well-known author*, and founder of the popular blog The Danger Garden (thedangergarden.com; and @thedangergarden on Instagram), where she counsels gardeners to live life a little dangerously. Her latest book is *Fearless Gardening: Be Bold, Break the Rules, Grow What You Love*. She says gardening advice is too often rule-bound, stifling creativity and the possibility of a unique garden. Take risks, Bohl says. Not every experiment works, but plenty do, as proven in her own garden.



HANGERS

Bohl became a regular at salvage yards, bringing home such things as an angular heating vent she filled with exotic bromeliads. An aluminum trashcan lid was recycled as a pleasingly round, shallow planter. Bohl detached a three-prong wire hook from a hanging basket, then wound the wires around the handle of the lid (now the back of the planter). A narrow wood cleat in back holds the wires and keeps the lid from flipping forward on the wall. A Y-shaped branch set it across the inside of the lid (attached with thin wires on each end) holds the bromeliads, ferns, and moss in place.

OPPOSITE Loree Bohl's Portland garden is filled with planters and stands made from recyled metal ducting and troughs. **INSET** A garbage-can lid becomes the perfect shallow, hanging wall planter for *Asplenium nidus* (bird's-nest fern) and bromeliads. A manzanita branch and moss hold everything in place.



THIS WOOD CAME FROM A CENTURY OLD BARN

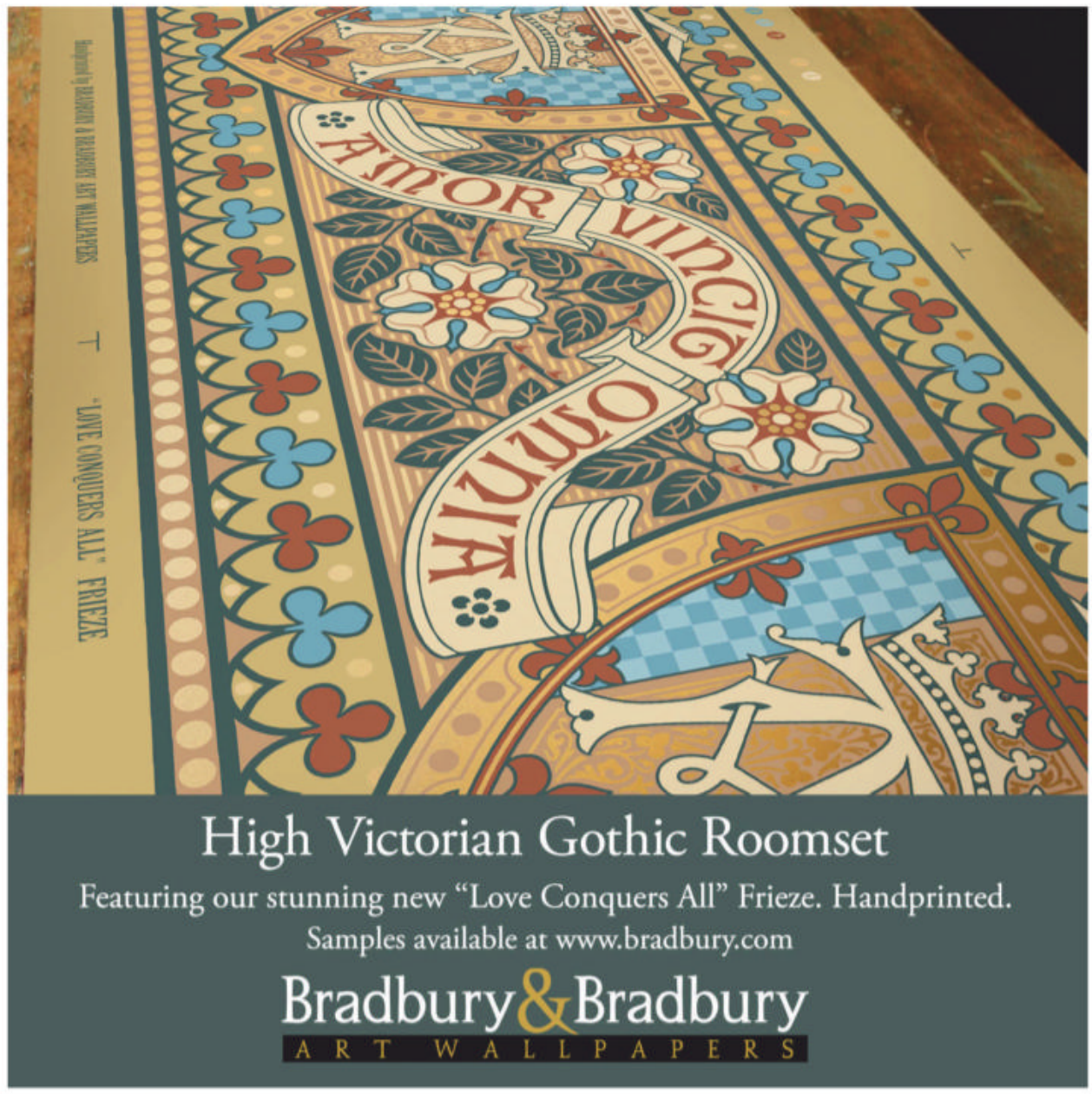
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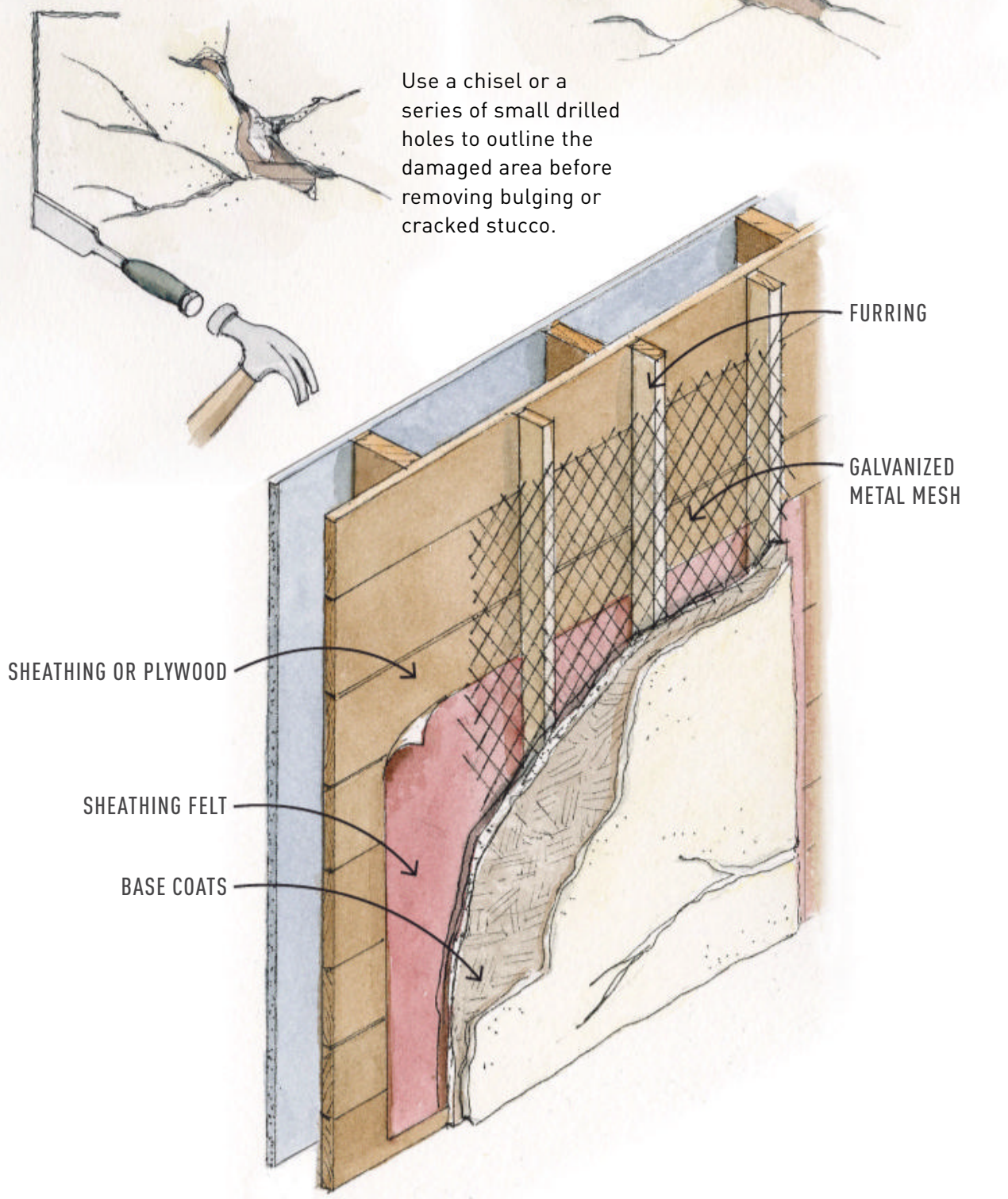
Basics of Stucco Repair

If only a portion of the exterior stucco is damaged, fixing it may be an easy task. **By Lynn Elliott**

Stucco made with Portland cement

was an exterior finish of choice for many houses built in the 1920s. (Stucco prior to 1900 normally was lime-based.) The cementitious material could be tinted various colors, and given a textured finish that might be smooth or coarse depending on the aggregate in the mix: sand, pebbles, or mica. Stucco typically is applied over wood lath or metal mesh, although the substrate might be masonry.

Despite its durability, *even Portland-cement stucco can deteriorate. Spalling, bulging, and cracks need to be addressed to maintain the integrity of a stuccoed exterior. Before beginning a patching project, watch the weather. Overcast (not rainy) days are your friend. Too much sun, or harsh weather, may prevent the mortar from curing correctly. For further protection from the elements, consider covering patched areas with a tarp.*



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROB LEANNA

STEP 1

Before patching damaged areas, find and correct the underlying problem causing deterioration. Determine how much stucco needs to be removed. Loose stucco often bulges and feels spongey to the touch. Tap gently with a wood or acrylic hammer on the wall and listen—weak keys will sound hollow, while intact keys send back a solid sound. Use a chisel, or create a series of holes with a drill, to outline the hollow areas. Don't just pull off loose stucco because secure sections may come off as well. Cut out the area to be patched with an angle grinder fitted with a diamond cutting blade. Go only as a deep as the thickness of the stucco. Pry off the loose piece. Remove only as much stucco as you can patch in a day, so that the area isn't left exposed.

STEP 2

How are the lath, structural members like the sill, and the insulation? Repair any damage and, if needed, shore up structural members. To replace rotted lath, use plywood cut to fit. Staple water-resistant sheathing felt over the plywood. Attach furring strips over the felt. Nail galvanized metal mesh to the furring strips. The mesh will act as lath.

STEP 3

Determine the type of mortar that matches the original stucco. Mix 1 part Type N mortar to 3 parts mason's sand in a bucket. Keep the mixture amount small—only enough for an hour's work—because partially set mortar can't be used. Apply the scratch coat: a ⅜"-thick first coat of mortar. Mortar is worked into the mesh lath with a trowel and hawk, and then smoothed with a screed. Because the mortar contains no bonding agent, swipe a 6" plaster/stucco scarifier across the mortar; the scratches help create a bond with the next coat. Let dry for 24 to 48 hours.



Using the scarifier.

STEP 4

Lightly mist the scratch coat, including the original stucco edges, with water and a bonding agent. Next, apply the brown coat; it's usually the same formula for the base coat with 1 part bonding agent to 4 parts water, but check the manufacturer's directions. Multiple coats may be required to match the thickness of the original stucco. Each coat should be ¼" to ⅜", no more. Allow each coat to dry 24–48 hours.



Applying the finish coat with a metal float.

The finish coat will make the patch level with original stucco and match its texture. Mix packaged stucco mix (such as Conproco or Quikrete) as directed. As you apply the finish coat, feather the edges of the patch, but don't overlap the old stucco. Modern stucco mixes are colored with tints. Experiment with colors as well as mix-ins to match the original texture. Lightly mist the stucco as it cures over 24 hours; protect from strong sunlight and rain with a tarp.

WHAT CAUSES **Damage**

Water causes most stucco failures. Improper mixing of mortar, bad installation, house settlement, and weather also contribute. Unchecked water dripping where it shouldn't will cause stucco to delaminate, creating bulges and cracks. Wood lath rots and warps; metal lath corrodes. ● ***Sources of water include rain from overflowing gutters or backsplash, wicking from the ground, leaky plumbing, and vapor migration from inside the house. Find the solution: Repair gutters, drip edges, and flashing; add a vapor barrier; fix leaky plumbing; mitigate the capillary action of groundwater.*** ● ***Settling is the most common cause of cracks; poor initial installation and seismic activity are others. Investigate to find the reason for cracks that grow or change direction. For foundation problems, a professional assessment may be needed. For hairline or stable cracks, proceed with the repair.***

stucco TYPES

Because of its durability, fire resistance, and low-maintenance qualities, stucco has long been used as an exterior finish, starting with the Romans and continuing to this day. Two types commonly found on American old houses are lime stucco and Portland-cement stucco. The two are not interchangeable. Lime stucco, flexible and less prone to cracking, is composed of sand, water, and slaked lime as well as an aggregate for texture. Portland cement is a mixture of cement, sand, water, and slaked lime, with the addition of an aggregrate. It, too, is durable and versatile, but hardens more than lime stucco and can be brittle.

For either type of stucco, the texture of the finish coat may come from mix-ins including sand, mica, or pebbles. (Lime stucco often includes animal hair.) The best matches for your original stucco will come from local sources; check local quarries for sand and small pebbles that may blend in. Do test patches until you get a match. Stucco may be painted, but also may be tinted before it is applied.

When repairing stucco, use the type that matches the original. To determine which it is, mix one part muriatic acid with 10 parts water in a lidded glass or plastic, acid-resistant jar, and drop a chip of the stucco into it. Close the lid tightly and shake. Lime stucco dissolves in acid, Portland cement does not. Caution: When working with muriatic acid, wear gloves, goggles, and protective clothing. Work outdoors because of the fumes. Pour the acid into the water, never the reverse.

Constructing Porch Column Plinths

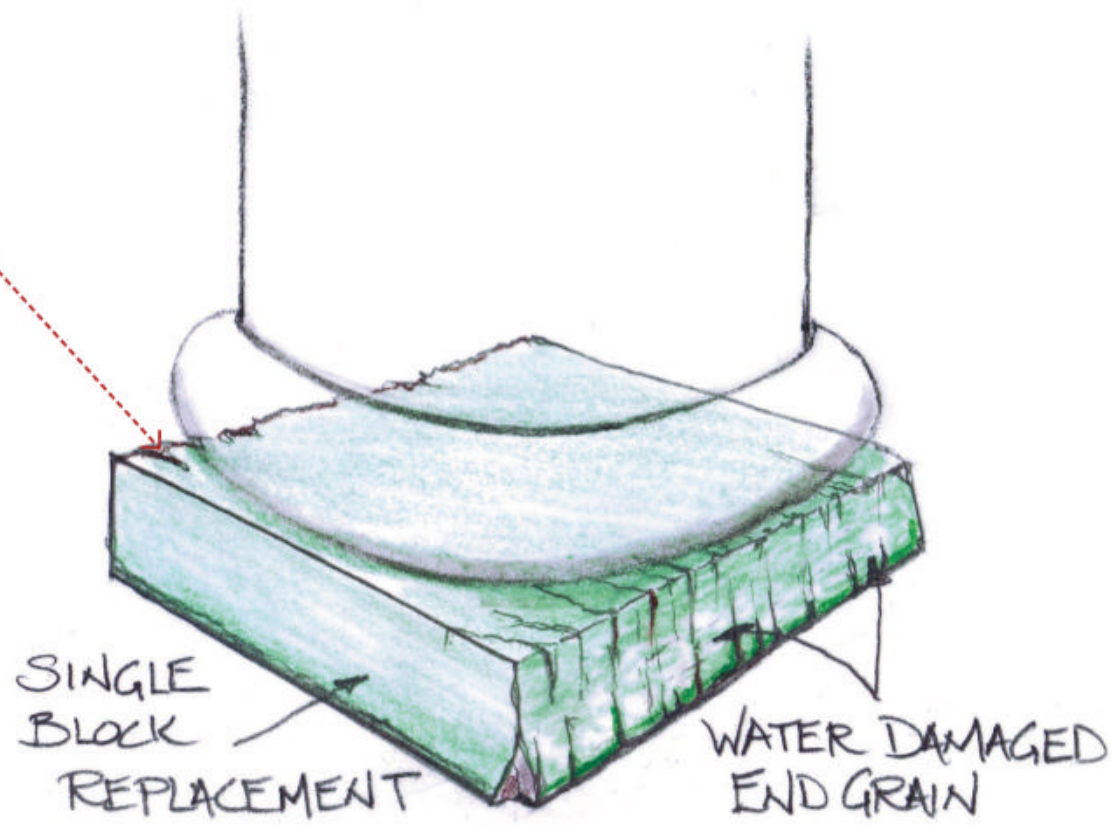
A wooden porch is a valued feature of so many old houses. For most of the 19th century, through the Victorian period and into the first three decades of the 20th century, the porch was a defining feature of architectural style. Porches also preserve the social connection with neighbors and passersby.

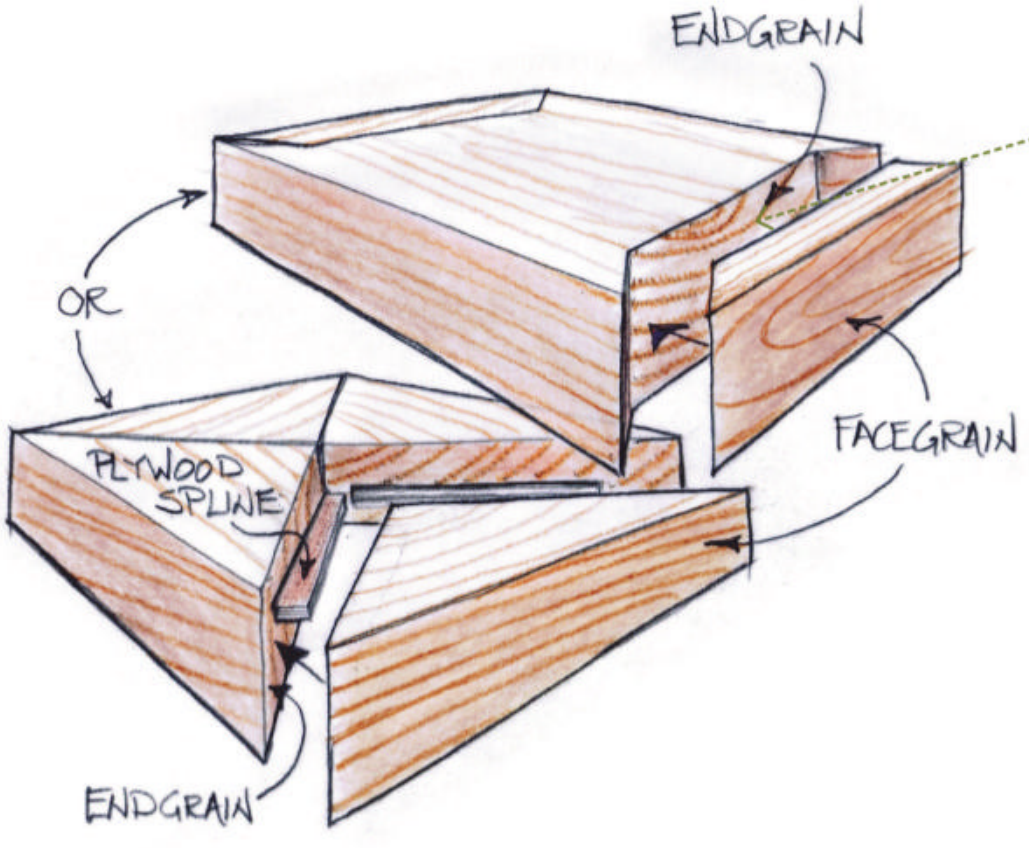
Still, porches come with a price. Exterior wooden structures exposed to the elements require good, rot-resistant materials, competent construction, and considerable maintenance. Some parts are more apt to fail than others. For example, the square block or plinth that separates a column base from the decking is often in direct contact with rainwater and snowmelt. Exposed end grain is to be avoided, as it wicks in moisture. **By Ray Tschoepe**

WRONG WAY

SKIMPING ON THE PLINTH

Replacing a load-bearing element of the porch requires safety planning, as the structure overhead must be slightly raised and securely supported before you move a plinth, base, or column. So yes, it's tempting to address a rotted plinth by simply filling the voids with epoxy and repainting. Such a repair is temporary. And replacing a plinth with a single block of wood just repeats the mistake; end grain will absorb water, promoting fungal deterioration.





RIGHT WAY

AVOID EXPOSED END GRAIN

When the plinth has begun to rot, you need to replace it. Avoid using a single block of wood; instead, use one of two good techniques. (1) Join four triangles cut from wood with a waterproof glue such as epoxy. Use splines for alignment and extra strength. (2) Alternatively, you can remove an inch or two of wood from the end-grain sides of a block, replacing it with mitered lengths of the same species, to cover the end grain.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY TSCHOEPE

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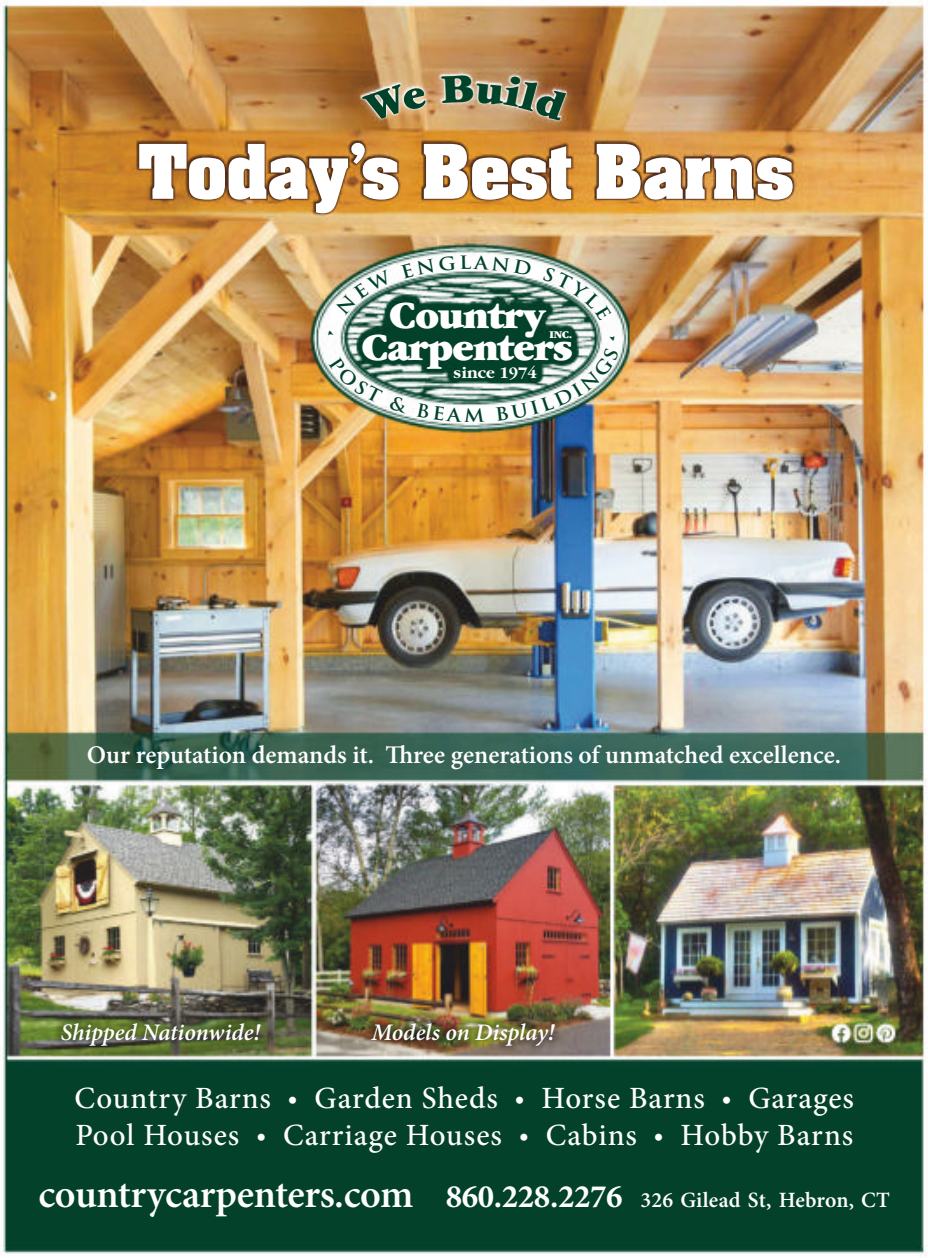
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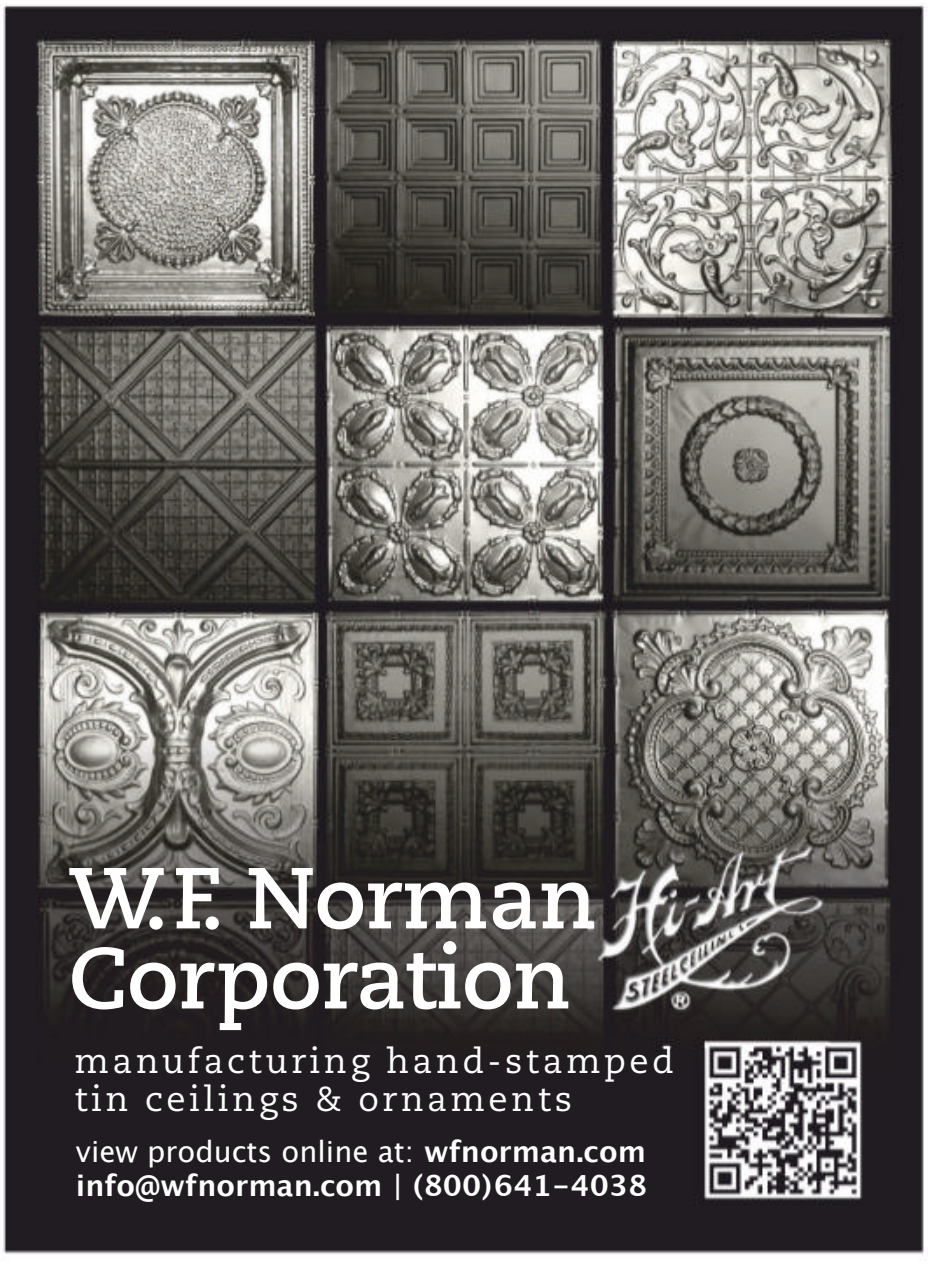
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> **“Someone customized a downspout to drain roof runoff through a porch column. The water trickles out a weep hole at the base of the column.”**



A year ago, we moved into our relatively well-cared-for brick American Foursquare (built in 1918). Soon we noticed something odd, under the porch soffit. From the gutter that collects water on the porch roof, a downspout was installed with a turn that empties it into one of the Tuscan-style wood columns! Which we assume is hollow. I doubt that's recommended practice; do you think it was done for aesthetic reasons? ***—Broward and Pam Haley***

ILLUSTRATION BY BRETT AFFRUNTI

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What have you, your spouse, pet, contractor, previous owner (you get the picture) screwed up? Email us at **lviator@aimmedia.com**.

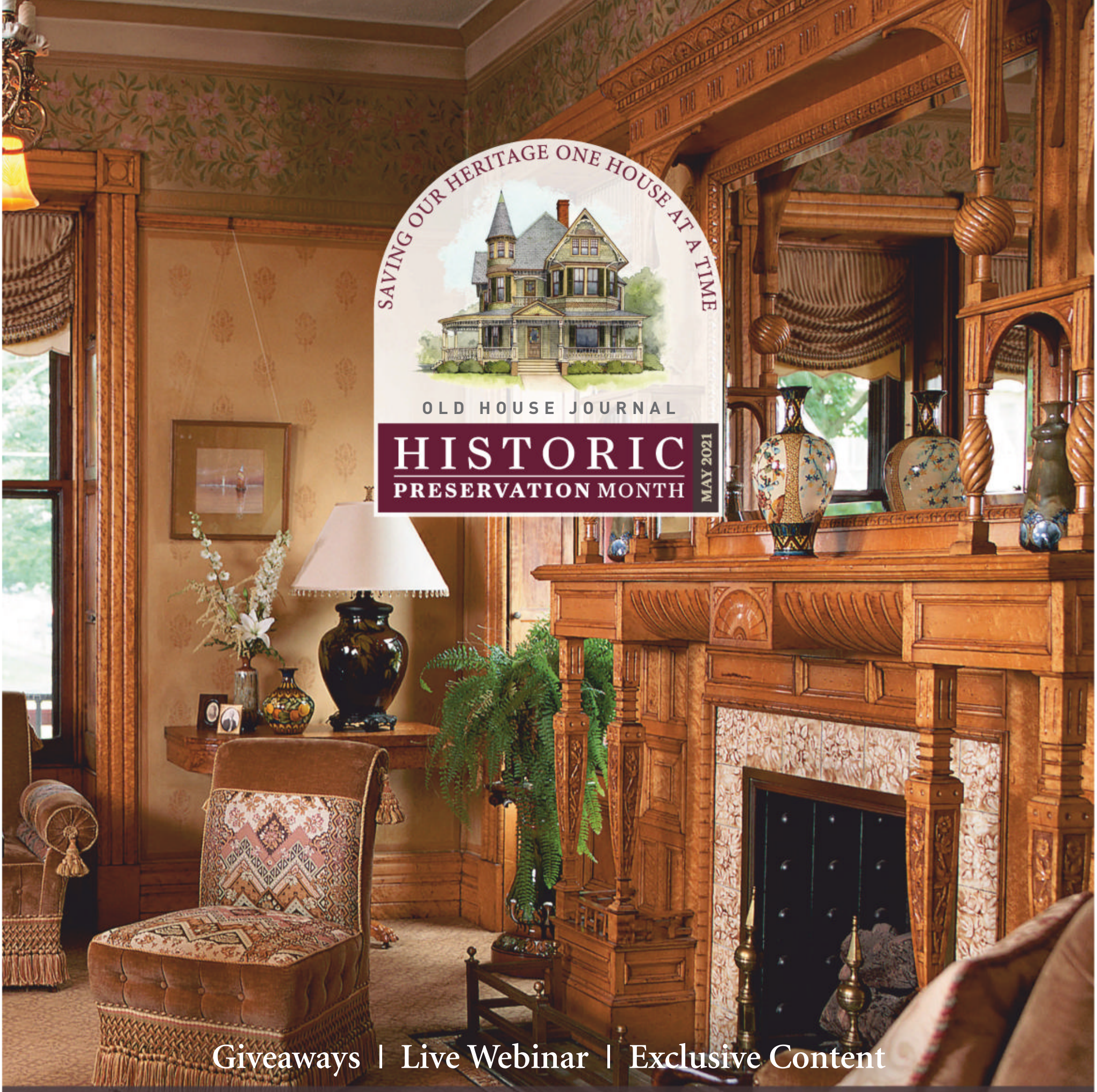
THE FIX

There's nothing aesthetically pleasing about a gutter draining into a classical column! It's a horrible idea, even if most wood porch columns are hollow or partially hollow and vented both top and bottom. They're constructed that way so that air can flow through, speeding evaporation when moisture builds up in times of high humidity.

Purposely shooting water into the column interior is a whole 'nother kettle of fish. (And it stinks.) The water will quickly rot the column from the inside out, which could lead to failure of the porch roof. If you haven't done so, remove the downspout immediately, then install new gutters and downspouts to divert water away from the house and porch.

All of the water that hits the porch roof should ideally drain to one downspout, positioned at the roof's lowest point. If the roof has integral gutters—which form a sort of three-dimensional tray around the perimeter—the pitch is often set so that the water is funneled to drain into a vertical gutter or leader on the facade of the house, where it's less noticeable. Water that emerges at the bottom should enter gutter extensions or French drains that direct it well away from the foundation.

If that solution isn't practical, set up a gutter and downspout assembly that parallels the column. (Hire a professional gutter installer for this task.) The vertical gutter should be at least a couple of inches away from the soffit, the column, and the base. Although the downspout will be noticeable, this method has the advantage of diverting water at a point further away from the main part of the house. Choose a factory-finish color that blends in with the trim, or paint the gutter assembly after installation. Include gutter extensions or backfill with gravel at the base.



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Every May, with the National Trust leading the way, the country celebrates **National Preservation Month**. Since 1973, OHJ's coverage of DIY conservation and repair, historical design, and period-inspired interiors has fostered a steady praise of old houses as embodied energy, as a tangible record of the past, and for their contribution to neighborhoods.

ERIC ROTH

To celebrate and learn more, visit

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INSPIRE

LAYERED

IS THE HISTORY IN A CA.1700 HOUSE.

Today's owner builds on the work of preservationists prior. **page 56**

In the antique Massachusetts house, windows in the stairwell may be shuttered for antique ambiance; open, they illuminate the recent murals. The bust is Apollo Belvedere.

KINDRA CLINEFF

56 **HONORING ITS INTEGRITY**
A First Period house and garden.
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Decades of benign stewardship.
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Restoration of the vernacular.
+ A FOLK-BUILDING LEGACY

HONORING Integrity
IN A FIRST-PERIOD HOUSE

On Boston's North Shore, an interior designer adds another layer to this legacy house with a strong personality.

BY TOVAH MARTIN
PHOTOS BY KINDRA CLINEFF

When she adopted the ca. 1700 Oliver Goodrich House on Boston's historic North Shore, Jessica Marbain knew she would have to walk a fine line. "You have to respect the integrity of an old house, but it needs to be livable," says the interior designer. When she took on this project in 2014, she faced substantial issues of comfort. The interior was only partially insulated and there was no heat to the second floor. • On the plus side, "the house is adorable."



ABOVE Trumpet creeper (*Campsis radicans*) trained on the walls and a line of 'Nikko Blue' hydrangeas soften the severe, Puritan façade of the Oliver Goodrich House. **TOP** Wth its light-hearted, floral upholstery, the living room is luminous in white. **OPPOSITE** The oldest part of the house dates to ca. 1700; a gambrel section and kitchen ell came later.





HEART OF THE HOUSE
Today's dining room retains the original fireplace with its functioning beehive ovens and antique iron fireback. Stained-glass crests are set into both windows. Mural paintings feature fanciful creatures.

Presenting a modest, strict, Puritan face to the street, the old house has picturesque rooflines, a stone retaining wall that incorporates a millstone, and a visionary garden that might be called quirky. Alluding to the town's agricultural heritage, the property occupying a bit less than an acre has a hornbeam tunnel, a small orchard—and a boxwood maze.

The interior is a phenomenon of preservation. Every square foot is endowed with the artistic, insightful, collaborative work of the previous owners, Alan Collachicco and William Towne, and the craftspeople they hired. Marbain's goal was to make the house comfortable by today's standards. She would also make it personal by adding furnishings to reflect her style. (The designer admits to a preference for expanses of space and lots of glass—while this weathered house has tiny windows and "cozy" rooms.) "A period house should be respected, but also appreciated for how it can survive," Marbain contends.

Originally the home of a Revolutionary War patriot who became one of General Washington's bodyguards, the Oliver Goodrich House has been faithfully preserved over centuries. Prior owner Collachicco was a talented interior decorator who had a singular vision for the house. While preserving its integrity, he added



With original beams and fireplace, the dining room is in the gambrel section that juts from the back of the house. A mahogany sideboard and oriental carpet add luster. The chandelier is candlelit. **OPPOSITE** A French vase and a pair of foo dogs accompany a pair of Chinese lamps that belonged to this owner's father.



An English chinoiserie cabinet adds mystique. Rooms are softly lit by table lamps.



“The house captured my heart and stirred my creativity,” says owner and designer Jessica Marbain. “It’s become less of a project, and more of a home.”

layers, including murals by the fine artist Julia Purinton of Medusa Studio.

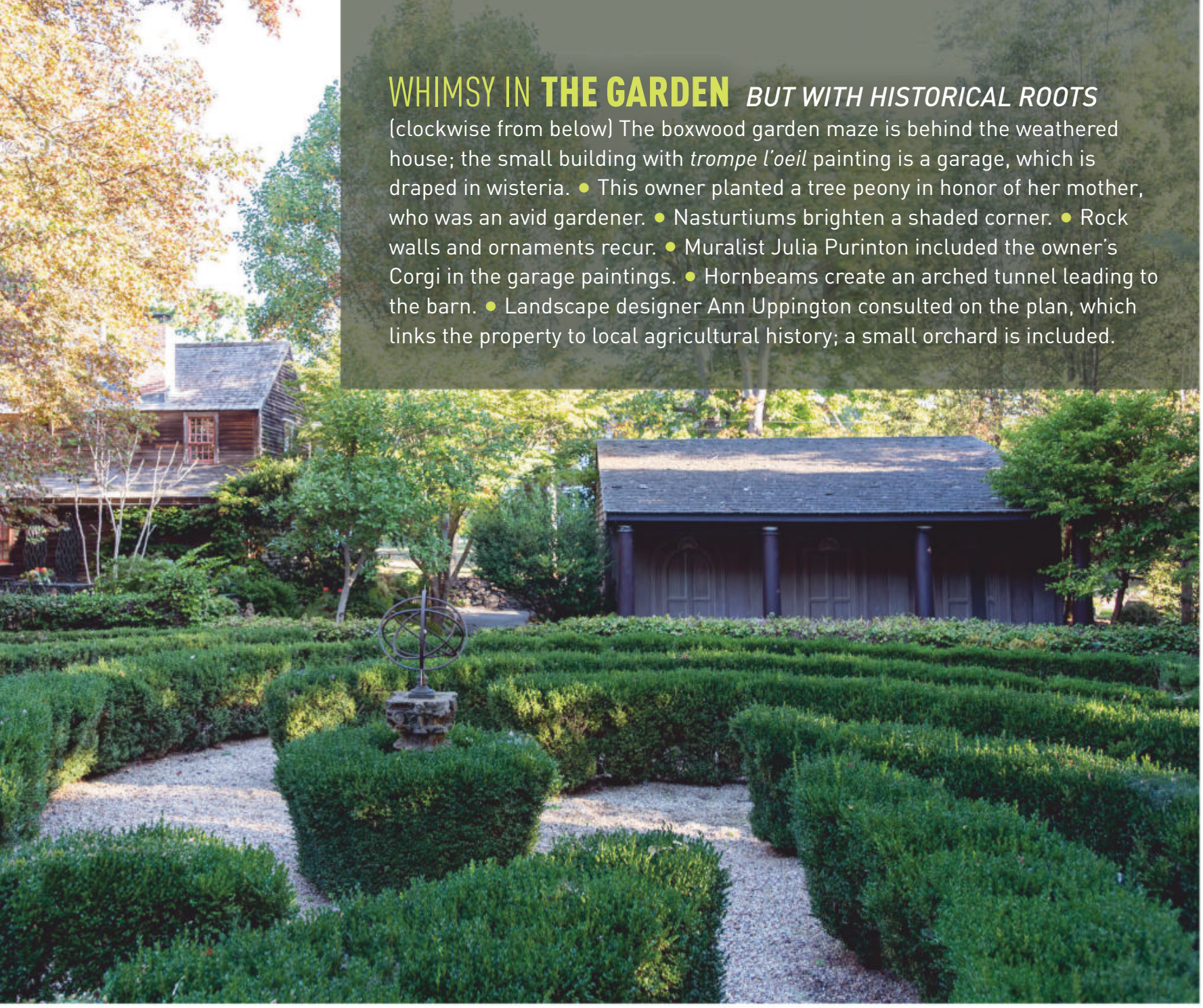
“He was what I call a ‘method decorator’,” Purinton says. “He would create a fictitious story, a script, for each project and decorate the space accordingly. The story he created for his own house was of a family who moved to America from Europe, centuries ago, bringing with them fine trappings that would embellish their new home with Old World sensibility and imagination.” Purinton created wall murals echoing medieval tapestries, adding warmth and character to the rooms. Whimsical creatures and jungle vines run through the dining room. Faux-framed scenes are painted on the upstairs landing. Collachicco took the idea even further: to age the new paintings, he sanded and applied wax to the walls. When Marbain arrived, she felt compelled to preserve all the layers of the house.

“When I first looked at the house,” she remembers, “I thought there’s no way I can do this,” given her personal design style. It was the location near her daughter—and the garden—that sold her. “I’ve never regretted the purchase,” she says.

The conscientious revitalization required technical savvy. By using a pump to extend the oil-fired, hot-water system, she brought heat to the second floor. Air conditioning was added. The house has low ceilings and small windows, indicative of its age. Marbain retained the solid exterior doors, but added glass storm doors so that, with the old doors open, light could enter. “It expanded the psychological size of the

WHIMSY IN **THE GARDEN** *BUT WITH HISTORICAL ROOTS*

(clockwise from below) The boxwood garden maze is behind the weathered house; the small building with *trompe l'oeil* painting is a garage, which is draped in wisteria. • This owner planted a tree peony in honor of her mother, who was an avid gardener. • Nasturtiums brighten a shaded corner. • Rock walls and ornaments recur. • Muralist Julia Purinton included the owner's Corgi in the garage paintings. • Hornbeams create an arched tunnel leading to the barn. • Landscape designer Ann Uppington consulted on the plan, which links the property to local agricultural history; a small orchard is included.

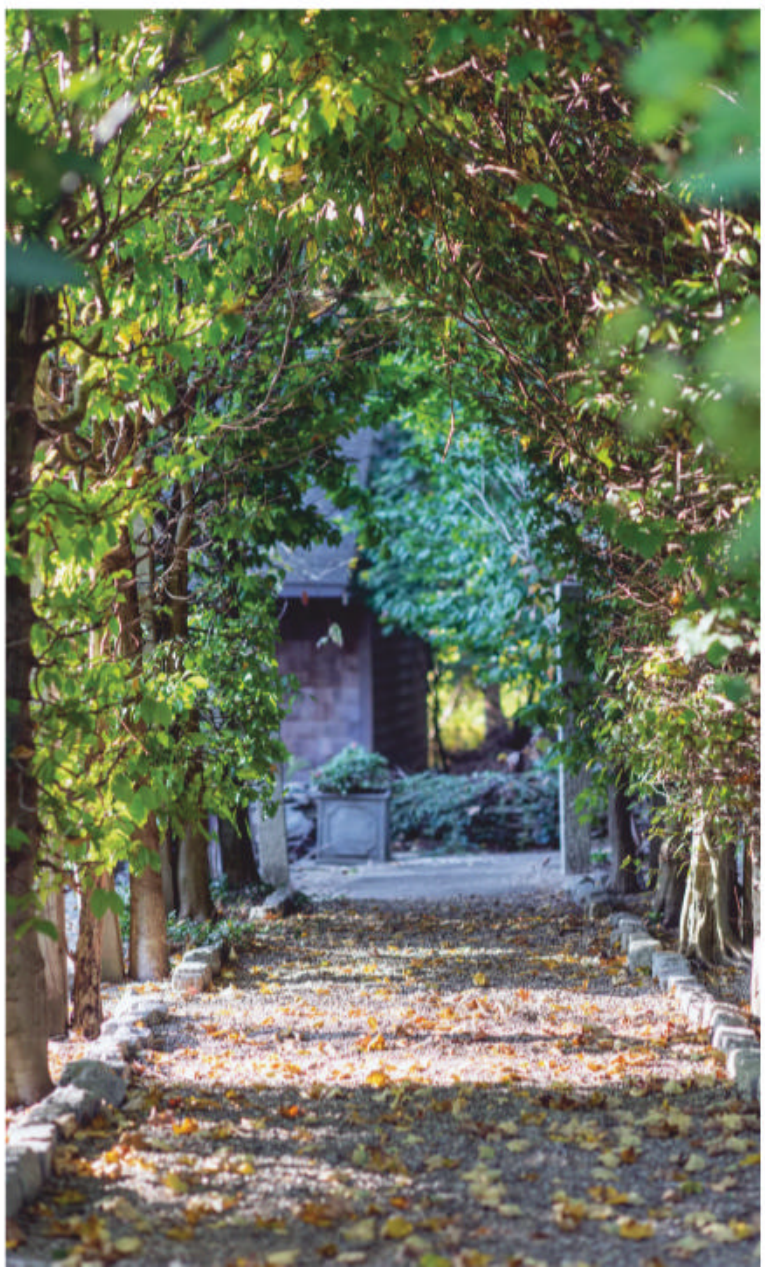








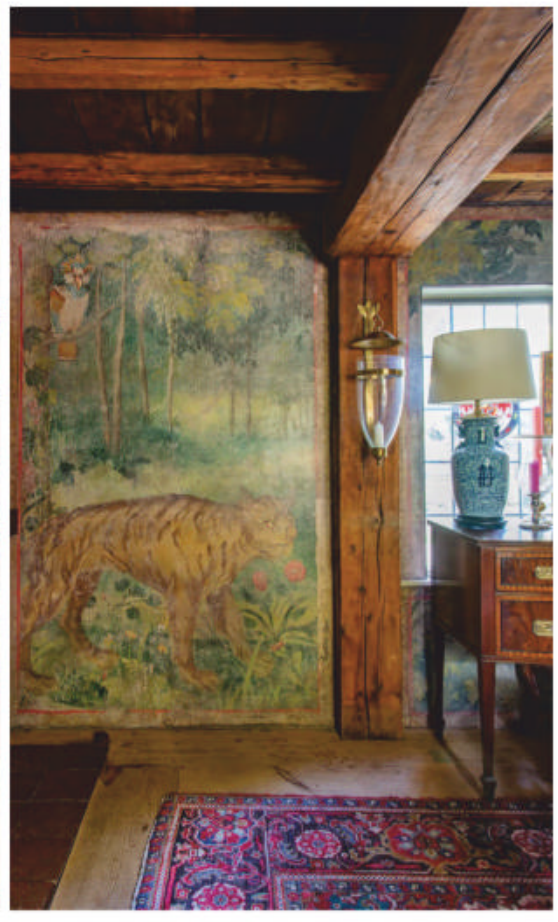












ABOVE (left to right) The spare foyer features a clock/barometer and a primitive painting. • The colors of the stair runner echo those in the chinoiserie cabinet. • Contemporary artist Julia Purinton's mural features a tiger and an owl. **BELOW** The kitchen addition off the gambrel section has high ceilings and ample space. The French toleware chandelier was found at an auction.



small rooms," she says, "yet when I close the old doors, the house looks unchanged."

Buying new furniture was unnecessary. Marbain did what generations always have, using family heirlooms and hand-me-downs. "My parents' furniture got a second life, and I was surrounded by things that are important to me," she says. Reupholstered in Brunschwig & Fils fabrics, the furniture joined light-colored rugs, bringing an Arts & Crafts Movement layer to the house's story line. Marbain added her own collection of pastoral art work.

Located in an existing rear extension, the kitchen is airy and needed no alterations. The previous owners had painted it a buttery color and added modern lighting. In the parlor, Marbain kept the muted green paint color already on wainscotting "It's a good neutral, picking up colors in the furnishings; it looks right in every season."

She kept sightlines flowing so that space would not be segmented into blocks of color. A generous number of lamps give the ancient house warmth in the evening. Glazed ceramic lamp bases further enhance the light, as do mirrors and glassware. "You can capture light all sorts of ways," Marbain says.

FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 87.



A MAZE FOR A FIRST-PERIOD HOUSE

MODELING A NEW ENGLAND GARDEN ON A 17TH-CENTURY FRENCH MAZE. By Tovah Martin

It was the previous, preservationist owners of the Oliver Goodrich house who contacted landscape designer Ann Uppington. (See previous story.) When it came time to create the landscape around their ca. 1700 house, they were open to suggestions. Uppington had ideas that were novel, though period-appropriate.

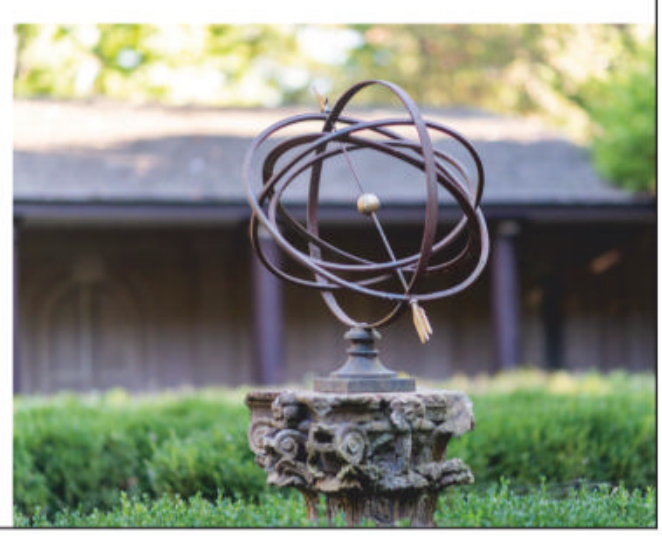
In retrospect, the designer says, she thinks her fascination with calligraphy influenced her recommendation to install a maze. It was ambitious for a property of less than an acre. Uppington decided to adapt a maze-garden design installed in the 17th century, in Chantilly, France.

In every sense, the spiraling maze is perfect for the property. First of all, the term: "labyrinth" and "maze" are often used interchangeably, but they differ. A labyrinth is a circuit that winds clearly to a center and back out. A maze has multiple means to a destination, often with dead ends. The spiraling circuits at this house create a maze surrounding an armillary sphere at the center. Composed of rows of carefully clipped hedges, the evergreen maze that Uppington designed is graphic both summer and (long) winter. No protection is needed.

Today's owner Jessica Marbain explains that Uppington bought dozens of 'Green Mountain' boxwoods in gallon pots from a wholesale nursery, placing plants two feet apart. The trick was in planning for the growth of the boxwoods, so that even at their maturity, pathways would be of sufficient width for walkers. Leaving two to three feet for the pea-stone walkways, and at least four or five feet between the spiraling circuits, provided ample room for plant growth.

Within three years, the boxwood was well on its way to being filled in. Today the maze is remarkable and even swank, tucked in next to the garage with its *trompe-l'oeil* paintings. Like the house, the maze fits seamlessly and yet has panache.

TOP The garden maze consists of pea-stone paths between spiraling boxwood hedges. **RIGHT** An armillary sphere is at the center of the tightly wound maze. The garage is seen at upper right in the photo.



KINDRA CLINEFF


NO
340

NINETEENTH CENTURY PRESERVATION

BENIGN STEWARDSHIP: ***This 1890 brownstone has had just two owners.***

My late wife and I moved into our home on Manhattan's Upper West Side in 1965. The dwelling is one in a row of nine brownstones built in 1890 in the English-basement mode; that is, with a stoop to the parlor floor, and the basement a half-storey below curb level. The first owner–occupants were the Schweers family, who moved in during the spring of 1890 and remained in residence for 75 years. **BY HERBERT LEVY / PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVE GROSS & SUSAN DALEY**



ABOVE Elements of the Romanesque façades are different from those of familiar Italianate rows. The arched windows are a beautiful focal point. **OPPOSITE** The street façade and stoop are clad in brownstone. The parlor-floor entrance is surmounted by a stained-glass fanlight, over which a face is carved in the stone.

Sensitively preserved in all **its Victorian glory,** the house with high ceilings, handsome woodwork, and stained glass feels opulent. Yet, when it was built as part of a speculative row, in 1890, it was not as a millionaire's house. Today the interior feels timeless.





ABOVE Chandeliers, installed as gasoliers and since converted to electricity, are original to the house.The hand-painted decoration is original and has been professionally conserved. **RIGHT** Victorian-period furniture acquired over time fills the parlor. The firebox has a heating unit behind a ceramic radiator in the form of faux logs.

After Papa Schweers died in the first decade of the 20th century, little work was done on the house.

The family did add direct electrical current through the arms of the parlor chandelier (the gas connection remained); they installed a gas stove to supersede the kitchen's coal stove, and replaced an original metal bathtub with a clawfoot tub—in the house's only full bathroom. (The Victorians would have regarded as weird the modern mania for multiple bathrooms.)

When we arrived, the house was, in truth, a wreck, but our only option, financially, was to move right in and live there. This



THE FRONT PARLOR
Nice proportions in the large, tall rooms are provided by the picture rail and cornice. The mantelpiece is cherry; tiles are French.

neighborhood in the West 80s was at the time considered to be deteriorating and unsuitable for conventional mortgage loans. By 1965, the flat roof should have been replaced four times. When I first saw the 17' x 19' kitchen, it was by the light of a single 25-watt bulb. The flooring appeared buckled, but I thought it was a trick of the dim light. No, the hot-water tank next to the long-unused coal stove had leaked for years, and as a result the sub-floor and joists had rotted. Had we not acquired the house when we did, the coal stove would have fallen into the cellar.

Similarly, the advanced ages of the "children" who occupied the house meant that they had not recognized leaking waste lines, until plaster ceilings came down. The white and gold-encrusted Art Nouveau wallpaper in the front parlor, coming off the walls, had turned bottle green; we only discovered the original colors accidentally.

I was a government employee receiving a regular salary, but it was not munificent. We used up our savings buying the house, then borrowed what money we could from parents to cover repairs that had to be done immediately: the roof, electrical wiring, two new bathrooms, and the heating system. We were reduced to refinishing the house one room at a time, as money became available. As it turned out, that was useful, as it gave



us time to think things through. I had learned to paint, which involved plastering and spackling. We bought $500 worth of paint and it lasted 20 years. Wallpaper was out of the question; it was altogether too expensive. My wife wanted different colors in different rooms, but I explained that while I had learned to paint I had not learned how to estimate the amount of paint each room might require: one color had to cover the whole house.

My wife, Barbara, decided we did not need three closets plus the butler's pantry, which sits between the kitchen and the family's dining room on the basement level. So I carefully took down the wall separating the kitchen from the closets, and she designed a kitchen where the closets had been. The original basement kitchen became a family room. I reused the doors and the trim to create two closets in the family room.

Considered middle-class housing when it was built, this house nevertheless was well constructed and boasted handsome woodwork, high ceilings, and plaster cornices, all of which survive. The Moorish-style fretwork, too, is original. It's unknown whether it was included at the initiative of the builder, or requested by the Schweers family. It may have been that this was the "model home" in the row of nine, and thus fancied up with finer details to show prospective owners all the extras—which, I





ABOVE Natural light streams through the window extension. **RIGHT** An exotic Victorian fretwork screen dividing the front parlor is original to the house. The Japanese wedding kimono, a gift from the owner's naval-officer son, is suitable decoration. Pocket doors separate the front parlor from what is now the rear parlor. **BELOW** Woodwork in most of the house is oak or chestnut. The rolltop desk is from the 1880s. The pine corner cabinet from a New Jersey house probably dates to the 18th century.





ABOVE From the rear parlor, once the formal dining room, a door leads to a service area with china closets, a butler's sink, and a stair to the kitchen. **INSET** About 30 years ago, the current owner added a large "window box" or conservatory to the rear façade. Replacing the old windows, it extends five feet from the interior of the room, and is 11 feet wide and nine feet high.

FAMILY DINING
Dining-room furniture was bought years ago from the granddaughter of the people who commissioned it, perhaps in the 1850s.



ABOVE The dining room, at the front of the basement level, is lit by a glass chandelier made in Czechoslovakia in the 1930s. It was purchased from a used-furniture dealer in the early 1960s. **LEFT** The parlor's fret-work screen has Aesthetic Movement and Moorish design elements.

suspect, would have been ignored by most buyers.

Eventually, the house was restored, as it deserved to be. We repaired all of the original stained glass, and electrified the chandeliers in the parlors. Young, professional decorators conserved and restored the painted ceiling in the front parlor. Barbara stripped all of the woodwork in the house, refinishing it with renewable shellac; she said she wanted the next restorer to have an easier time of it. The stripping took her three years, as she worked on it an hour or two at a time.

Bedrooms in the house, still without wallpaper, are purely functional. The original bathroom, with the clawfoot tub that was added early in the 20th century, is authentic.

As to the furnishings, we were incredibly lucky. My father-in-law taught himself cabinetmaking; he became the equal, I do believe, of the best professional artisans of his time. He used 18th- and 19th-century furniture techniques. We were almost his only clients. We collected old, battered Victorian furniture that friends and friends of friends would have thrown out otherwise. I used to joke that we gave him firewood and he returned to us furniture.

FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 87.





WHAT'S BEHIND THOSE BROWN FAÇADES

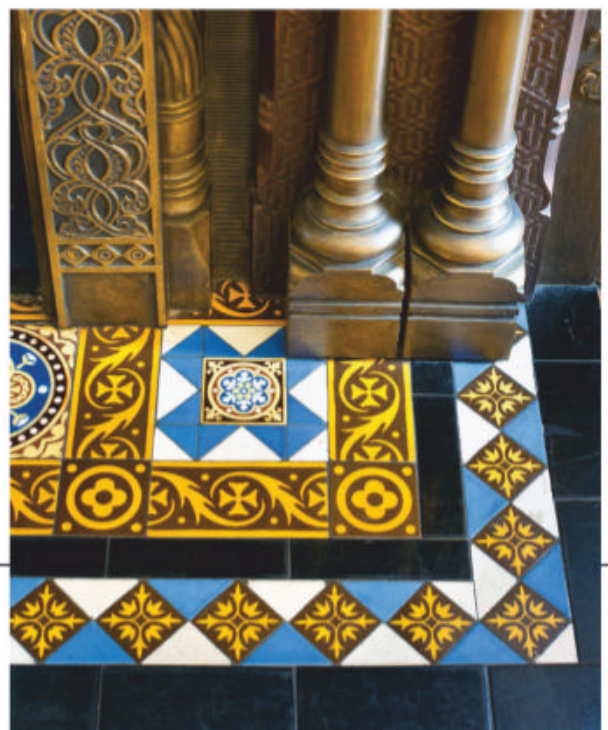
NEVER BEEN INSIDE? MANY INTERIORS ARE A VICTORIAN WONDERLAND.

From West Virginia to Boston and Chicago—but nowhere as prevalent as in Brooklyn and Manhattan—row houses clad in sandstone present dark, imposing façades. Their flat fronts, bays, or bows form a rhythmic wall in the streetscape. A touch of whimsy might be seen in a transom fitted with curlicue stained glass, or a storybook head carved into the stone.

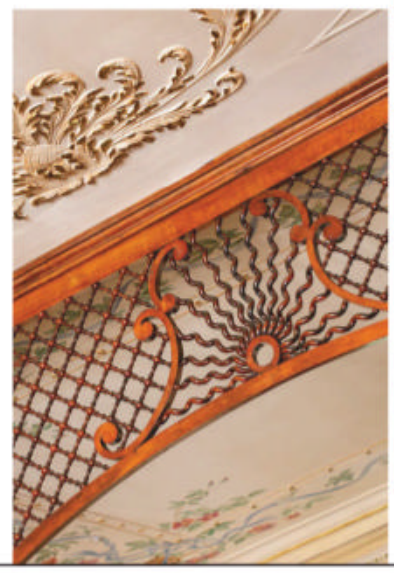
Inside, though, these Victorian-period houses dazzle with materials now considered rare and fine, rendered—often by immigrant labor—with finesse and expertise: three-coat plaster with a hard finish and crown mouldings run in place; encaustic tile; nine-foot-tall pocket doors of walnut or oak; etched glass panels; grand staircases; and hardwood parquet flooring.

STEVE GROSS AND SUSAN DALEY, *photographers who keep an atelier in Manhattan, took these photos in well-preserved brownstones.*





CLOCKWISE (from top left) Oriels and bays in a Brooklyn brownstone row. • Wedgwood-like colors complement original cast and moulded plaster. • The woodwork is often complex and gorgeous, especialy in stairhalls and parlors. • Ornaments may be neoclassical or exotic. • The encaustic-tile hearth survives in a Hoboken brownstone.



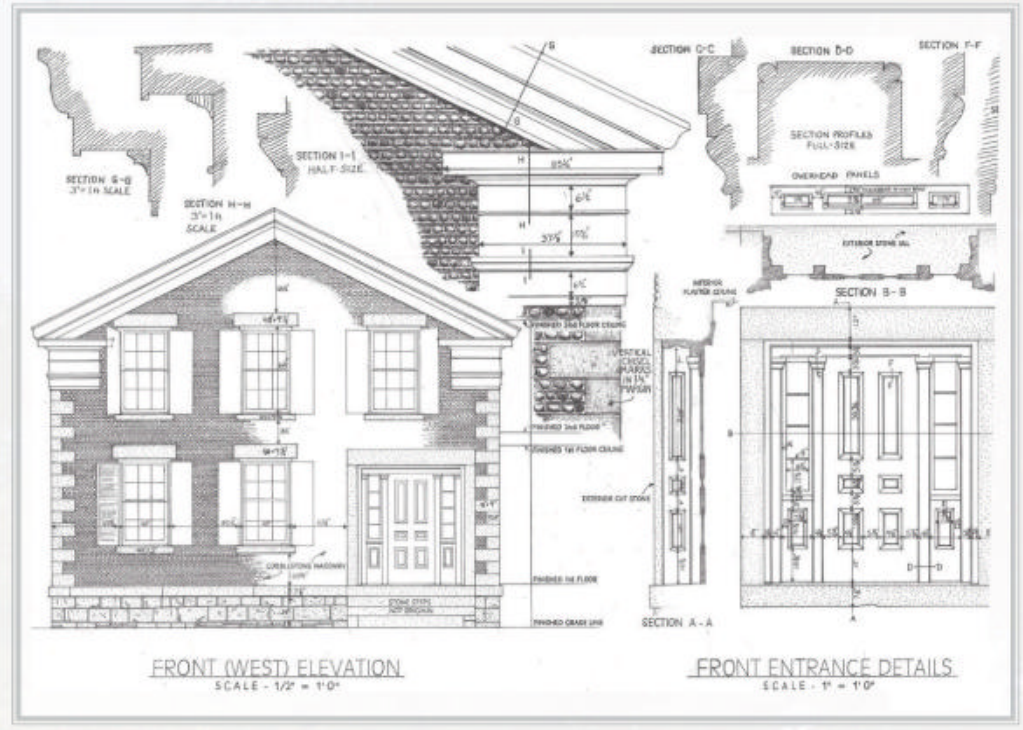
More Online A GOOD RESOURCE: **brownstoner.com**

curating an old COBBLESTONE COTTAGE

Few people outside of this region in Upstate New York are aware of its cluster of eye-popping cobblestone buildings. Dating from the 1830s–50s, structures that include houses, churches, town halls, and schools were constructed using cobbles shaped by Ice Age glaciers and erosion by water. Exterior walls are made of rows of cobblestones embedded in lime mortar with attention to decorative effect. This example, a Greek Revival-era addition to an earlier house, is the only one in Fayetteville.

Restoration of a surviving vernacular house has taken 50 years to complete. PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRAD LOPERFIDO, REVETTE STUDIO

BRAD LOPERFIDO/REVETTE STUDIO, REVETTE.COM



The cobblestone portion was a defining addition to an older post-and-beam structure. **ABOVE** The cobblestone house was measured and drawn by Paul Briggs, a regional authority on cobblestone masonry and a restoration mason.





LEFT Cobblestone masonry is laid up with lime mortar. Dressed stone was used for window lintels and corner quoins. **ABOVE** The 1840 stair curves around the original foyer pendant. Plasterwork and woodwork in the cobblestone house are exceptionally fine.

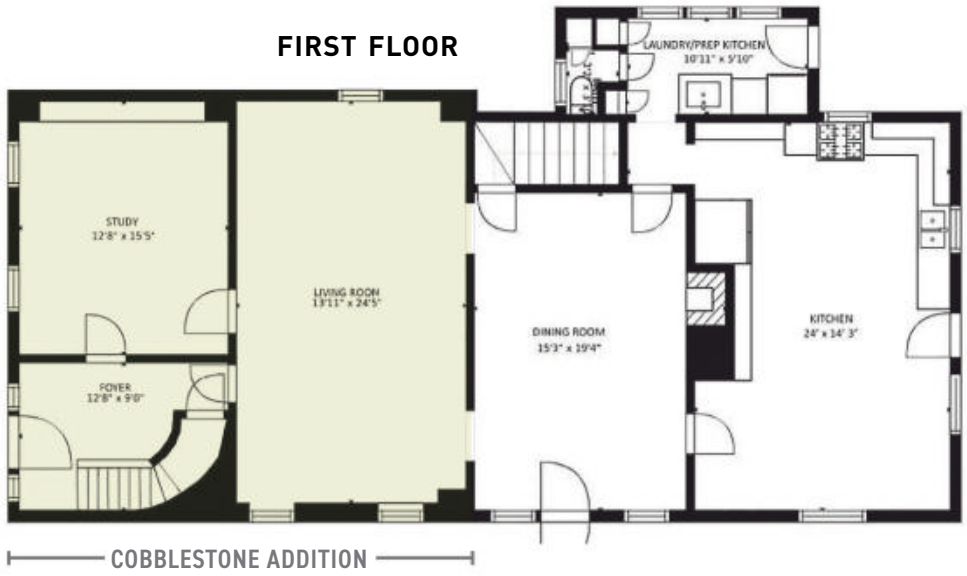


The primary attraction of this historic property is the house of cobblestone masonry, which has direct ties to the Erie Canal "cobblestone period" of the 1840s. Decades of informed work led to its preservation.

The Stone Cottage, as it was named by its original owners, is actually a consuming addition to a ca. 1805 post-and-beam, one-room settlement house—itself an early development in a land claim given to reward a Revolutionary War veteran from the New York regiment. Michael Hutchins acquired the farm after arriving in Fayetteville in 1818. Between 1835 and 1840, he moved here from his house in the village, and added the Greek Revival-style cobblestone portion to the old frame house.

The 1840s were the height of the so-called Cobblestone Period along the Erie Canal between Syracuse and Buffalo. The Hutchins house is the only cobblestone structure in Fayetteville. The hops and grain farm stayed in the family until 1915. Subsequently, much of the farm was sold, and the house endured a series of earnest but insensitive improvements through the 1950s. It changed hands several times more and was subjected to further compromises, all done to accommodate renters.

From 1969 until 2018, Virginia Denton and her colleague Antje Lemke owned the house. Denton served as Director of the Syracuse University Office of Design and Construction, where she oversaw new construction and renovation of all







TOP LEFT The cobblestone addition comprises today's entry, living room, and study. The older frame building holds the dining room and kitchen. **LEFT** The rear of the frame building is now the kitchen; it had held a woodshed, a hired man's room, and the summer kitchen. **ABOVE** The antique dough chest came from a bakery. Wainscoting is patterned on that in a Vermont church of the same period.

RIGHT Today's dining room is in the ca.1805 post-and-beam house, directly connected to the cobblestone addition. **OPPOSITE** (bottom) This view from the living room, or east parlor, takes in the entry door and the circular staircase, both at the front of the cobblestone structure.



Adaptive reuse was the ethic behind conversion of a small farmhouse, which had been moved to the property, into a scholarly library.

facilities. She had a lifelong interest in historic preservation. Ginny Denton devoted her free time to the hands-on preservation and restoration of this house. When she introduced modern amenities, they were not period re-creations but rather followed her "good goes with good" sympathy toward the original buildings.

Restoration efforts included bringing back the delicate window muntins and trim details that had been over-painted; and repair of the original wide-plank wood floors and window shutters. The roofing and unsalvageable plaster were replaced in kind. The historic lime mortar was stabilized and repointed in 2006 by Paul Briggs, a mason long recognized for his knowledge of cobblestone structures.

The integrity of the 50-year effort is apparent. After Ginny Denton's passing, her cousin Christopher Borg gathered a team of preservationists and tradespeople, who brought Ginny's vision to the finish line in 2020. The property is now curated by new owners sensitive to its special architecture and important place in history.









ABOVE Virginia Denton, shown here ca. 1972, undertook the decades-long restoration of the historic site. **RIGHT** The ca. 1805 post-and-beam house was restored to its original intent, with informed adaptations. The entire house (inset shown ca. 1970) was in poor condition, with the older frame section suffering the most indignity.

FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 87.



The house is located beyond the patio, which serves the old farmhouse that became a library.



the LIBRARY

A second building on the property became an adaptive-reuse project. During the 1950s, a smaller house had been moved to the next lot from a neighboring farm. Virginia Denton's parents bought it in the 1970s so as to be closer to their daughter. Ginny provided drawings for its renovation, including a living-room addition. Later, Ginny converted the house to a library for her co-owner Antje's extensive book collection. (Antje Lemke, a librarian at Syracuse University, was an authority on the works of Dr. Albert Schweitzer and the Brothers Grimm, as well as an accomplished violinist.) The second floor is now guest quarters. In 2017, a small kitchen was added.



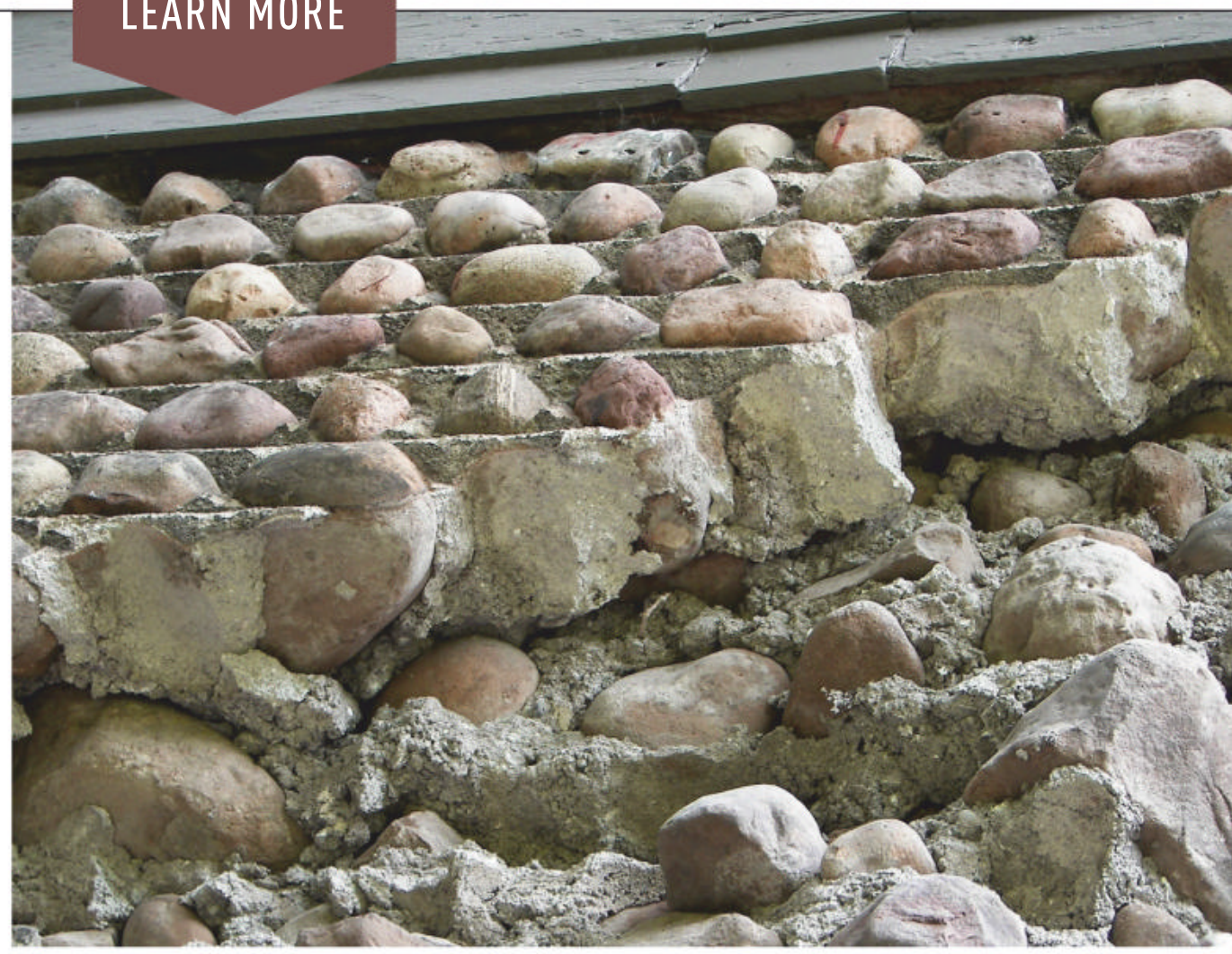


RIGHT (top & bottom) A small farmhouse moved to the site in the 1950s has been expanded and adapted as a library, with guest quarters above. **MIDDLE** Modern incursions, like the kitchenette in the library, are simple and functional, without reference to period conjecture.

ANTJE LEMKE (PORTRAIT & BEFORE, OPP.)

LEARN MORE





ON COBBLESTONE MASONRY

A FOLK-BUILDING LEGACY PECULIAR TO LIMITED REGIONS

Sometime before 1830, the first cobblestone structure was built in Upstate New York. For the next 40 years, cobblestone buildings appeared from Lake Ontario, south into the Finger Lakes region, and as far west as the Illinois–Wisconsin border, where the second-largest cluster was built in the 1840s–50s. Although most cobblestone buildings are farmhouses, and in the Greek Revival style, other building types, built in styles from Federal to Gothic Revival, are found as well.

The word cobblestone comes from the Middle English "cobelston" (cob meaning rounded lump). Cobblestones or cobbles are classified as being 2 ½ to roughly 10 inches in diameter; i.e., a cobblestone can be held in one hand. Natural cobbles were created by glaciers and later by wave action on the shores of the Great Lakes.

A European precedent is seen along the coast of Sussex, England, where buildings were, as early as 1750, made of rounded beach flints laid in horizontal rows. It's the refinement of the decorative mortar treatment that makes American cobblestone construction unique.

> **"A PEBBLE IS A STONE** *that can be held by two fingers, a cobblestone can be held by one hand, and a boulder needs two hands to hold."*
>
> —FROM THE BOOK *COBBLESTONE LANDMARKS OF NEW YORK STATE*

An early building method interlaced cobbles with a simple rubble wall. The second construction method used a rubble core faced with smaller cobbles as well as long bonding stones that reached into the core. Stones on the face were matched, yet the stones were of irregular dimensions. This was popular through the 1840s. A third method started with a rubble wall; then a cobblestone veneer was laid separately. In this method, stones were small and regular, with no bonding stones. All used a soft lime mortar.

It's possible that 1,000 to 1,200 such cobblestone buildings were constructed, and 90% of them may be found in a 75-mile radius of Rochester, New York. This vernacular building type has its own museum, founded in 1960. The open-air Cobblestone Museum counts a cobblestone church, a cobblestone schoolhouse, and a cobblestone residence (dating 1834–1849) among its historic buildings. The Museum maintains a list of all known cobblestone structures in North America. Many resources are available to scholars and students. **Cobblestone Society and Museum, Albion, N.Y.: cobblestonemuseum.org**

ABOVE (left) At the Cobblestone Cottage (see previous story), temporary wood forms secure new cobblestones during repair. • (right) The neatly laid veneer wall with lime-rich mortar is clearly seen over the rubble wall. **OPPOSITE** Neat rows and proper mortar in the restored wall.

PAUL BRIGGS (THIS PAGE); BRAD LOPERFIDO/ REVETTE STUDIO, REVETTE.COM (OPP.)

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TERMINOLOGY

adapted from the Cobblestone Museum

BEAD Projecting half-circle of mortar, about 1" wide, to embellish joints.

COURSE Each horizontal layer of stone in the wall.

CORD Measure of 99 cubic feet of stone.

JOINT The division between stones, both horizontal and vertical.

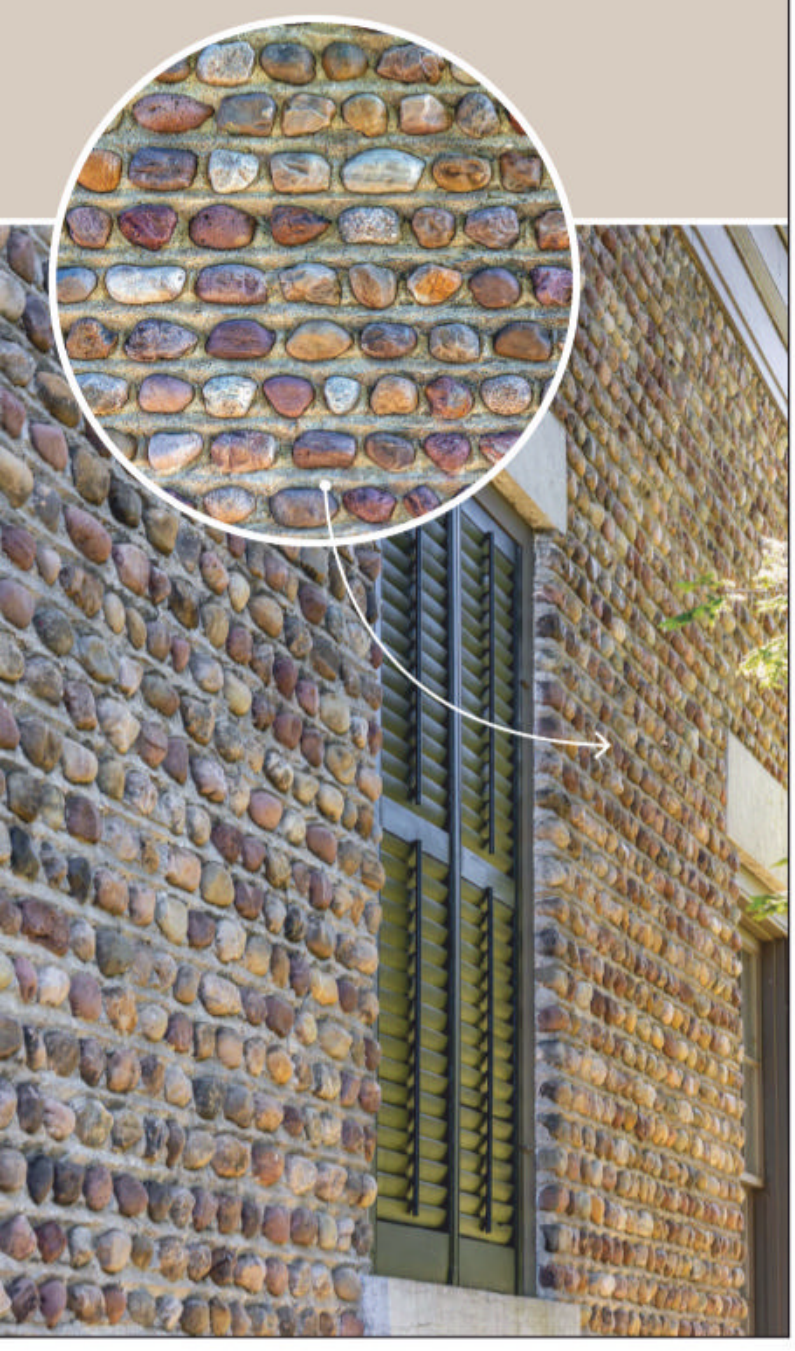
PERCH Measure of 16½ cubic feet of rubble stone.

POINTING The process of filling joints with mortar.

QUOINS Large, dressed stones for the corners, usually limestone or granite.

SORTING BOARD A plank with holes of various sizes, through which stones are sorted.

STONE BOAT A flat sled, drawn by horses or oxen, on which stones were collected in the fields and then transported.



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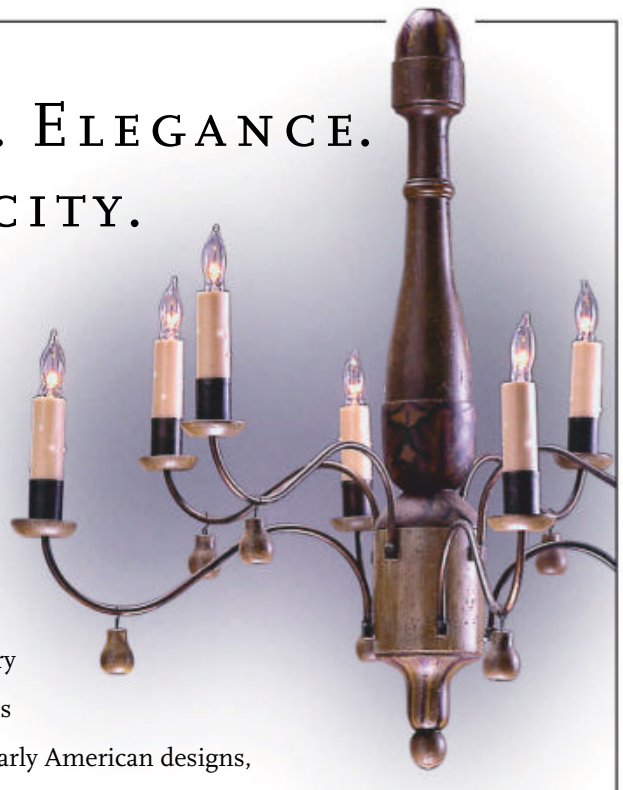
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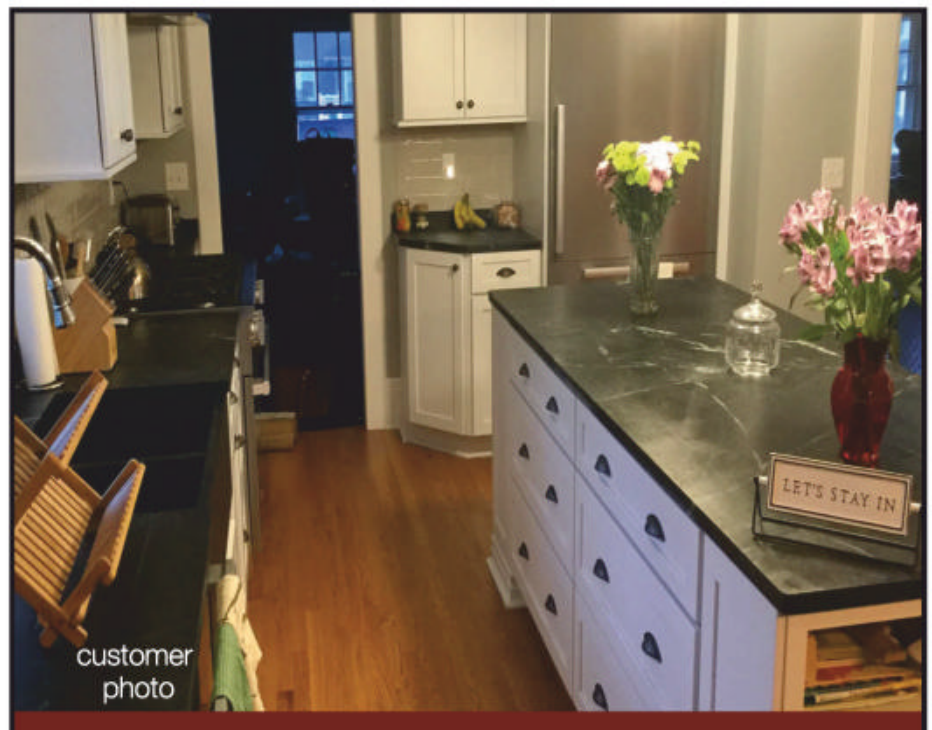
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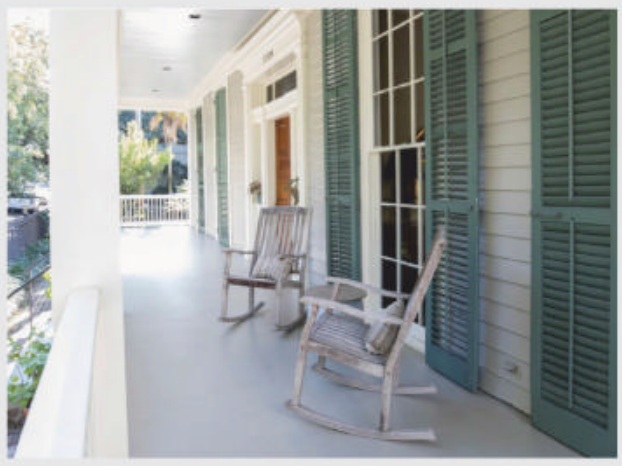
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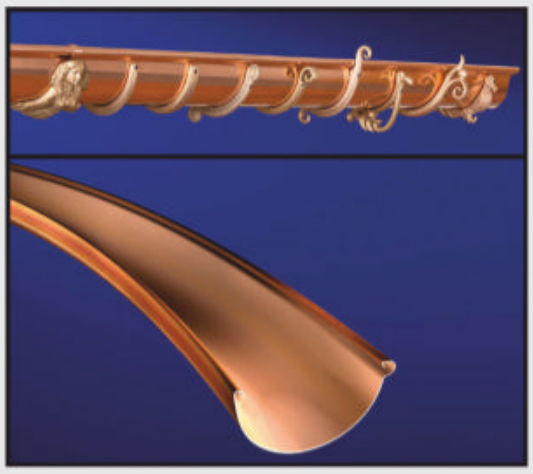
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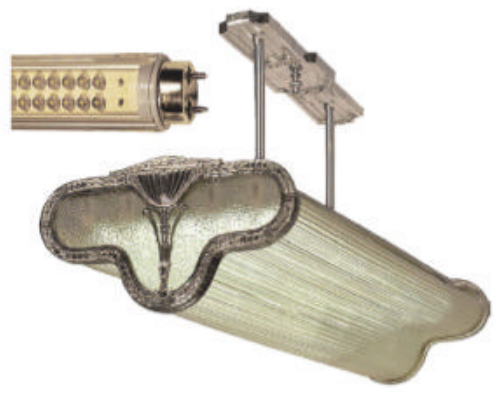
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PREP/REPAIR **Abatron** abatron.com *Epoxies & compounds for repairing wood, metal, concrete etc.* **American Building Restoration Products** abrp.com *Cleaners, washes, polishes, and enhancers for wood and other surfaces* **GCP** gcpat.com *Grace Ice & Water Shield roof underlayment* **Preservation Products** preservationproducts.com *Elastomeric membrane & protective coatings* **Scherer Bros. Lumber Co.** schererbros.com *Custom mouldings & knives* **Specification Chemicals** spec-chem.com *Flat & metal roof repair & underlayments* **Tremont Nail** tremontnail.com *Steel cut & hot-dip galvanized nails* **West System** westsystem.com *Marine epoxies suitable for wood restoration*

LANDSCAPE STONE

Ashfield Stone ashfieldstone.com *Schist for flagging & landscaping* **Buechel Stone Corp.** buechelstone.com *Landscaping stone, cut stone* **Champlain Stone** champlainstone.com *Building, dimensional, landscaping stone & veneers* **Eldorado Stone** eldoradostone.com *Stone veneers* **Gavin Historical Bricks** historicalbrick.com *Salvaged brick, cobbles, stone* **Green Mountain Soapstone** greenmountainsoapstone.com *Soapstone for outdoor kitchens, more* **M. Teixeira Soapstone** soapstones.com *Soapstone for outdoor kitchens & more* **Sheldon Slate** sheldonslate.com *Slate for patios & landscaping* **Stone Forest** stoneforest.com *Fountains, basins, garden accessories in stone* **The Stoneyard** stoneyard.com *Landscaping stone* **Vermont Soapstone** vermontsoapstone.com *Soapstone for outdoor kitchens, more* **Vermont Verde** vtverde.com *Soapstone for outdoor kitchens & more*

DIYer: STUCCO REPAIR

Larsen Products larsenproducts.com *Maker of Weld-Crete & Plaster-Weld*

BROWNSTONE PRESERVED

RESOURCE **Brownstoner** brownstoner.com *Brooklyn/NYC real estate, interiors, referrals, events, newsletter, podcasts*
GASLIGHTS **Allen's Antique Lighting** antiquelight.com *Fine antique lighting ca. 1840–1920, American & European, in all Victorian styles; antique shades* **Appleton Antique Lighting** appletonlighting.com *Antique lighting including gaslight era* **C. Neri Antiques** thenericollection.com *Antique astral, argand, sinumbra, student lamps* **House of Antique Hardware** houseofantiquehardware.com *Victorian reproductions (sconces, pendants, chandeliers)* **King's Chandelier Co.** chandelier.com *Victorian gaslight reproduction chandeliers & sconces, crystal fixtures* **Rejuvenation** rejuvenation.com *Several simple reproduction designs, also antique lighting, mostly from 1900 & later* **Victorian Lighting Works** vlworks.com *Authentic reproductions in many sizes & configurations* **Vintage Hardware & Lighting** vintagehardware.com *Antique & reproduction period lighting with a wide selection*

COBBLESTONE COTTAGE

LIME MORTARS **deGruchy's LimeWorks** limeworks.us *Manufacturer, distributor & educator for historic masonry* **Lancaster LimeWorks** lancasterlimeworks.com *Historic masonry specialists offering natural lime products*

Related Resources

EXT. SHUTTERS **Shuttercraft** shuttercraft.com

FIRST-PERIOD INTEGRITY

DESIGNER **Jessica Marbain Interiors,** Mechanicsburg, PA: (717) 697-6344
MURALS Julia Purinton, **Medusa Studio**, Ipswich, MA: medusastudio.com

Related Resources

EARLY LIGHTING **Historic Housefitters** historichousefitters.com *Handmade 18th-century style lighting* **Period Lighting Fixtures** periodlighting.com *Reproductions of early American fixtures 1620–1850*



ORIGINAL



REMUDDLED

KAREN SZYMASZEK

A MOMENT IN ARCHITECTURE, LOST

Lustrons are prefabricated, enameled-steel houses that were developed in response to the post-World War II housing shortage. Interiors, too, are steel, designed for budget-friendly modular construction and easy cleaning. These houses were built only from 1947 until 1950, when the company went out of business, but at least 2,000 remain—in 36 states, from New York to Oklahoma, and from Massachusetts to Louisiana. A large number are found in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Ohio, and Kansas. Some Lustrons today are restored or preserved by a small but dedicated following, and even are listed in the National Register. Many others have been razed, remodeled, or added onto until they are unrecognizable.

Shown here are two Lustron houses in Rockford, Illinois; both are the popular Westchester Deluxe model. One is intact, at least outside. On the updated house, the only original element visible is the roof, as fake brick covers the porcelain-enameled panels that identify a Lustron.

> “...it’s definitely lost its Lustron.”
>
> — John Shiflet

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OLD HOUSE JOURNAL (USPS#001-078) (ISSN #0094-0178) is published bi-monthly: February, April, June, August, October, and December by the Home Group of Active Interest Media HoldCo, Inc. The known office of publication is located at 5710 Flatiron Pkwy., Suite A, Boulder, CO 80301. Periodicals postage paid at Boulder, CO, and additional mailing offices. Vol. 49, No. 3. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Old-House Journal, P.O. Box 37274, Boone, IA 50037-0274. SUBSCRIPTIONS: For subscription questions, call 800-234-3797 (US only), or email us at subscriptions@aimmedia.com. Subscription rates are: US: $24 per year, Canada: $44 per year.
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