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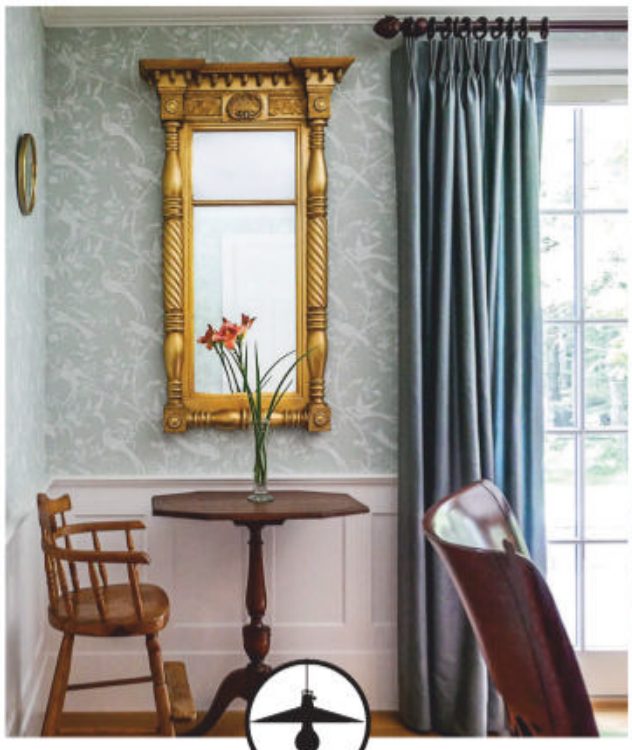
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OLD HOUSE JOURNAL

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FEBRUARY 2023







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**ON THE COVER** Everything is just right in this little 1920 bungalow.
**PHOTO BY WILLIAM WRIGHT. SEE PAGE 60.**



# The house in winter

Anything in your house that may look dirty and worn-out this winter probably seemed pleasantly rustic last summer—I know this from experience. In my college years I spent summers at a big, stripped-down old house perched above the Delaware River. Though the wildflowers we collected and arranged in chipped mugs were our only "decoration," those hot days on the romantically ruinous porch were sweetly scented. Nights spent on a cot mattress laid on the floor enhanced the sense that we were at camp. Later, that first summer living in Gloucester, when I was very pregnant, it didn't matter that the rental was too small; a deck overhung the saltwater river and sunshine streamed through skylights cut as an afterthought.

Tanglemoor, my family's home for 30 years, has spent summers thrown open to the sea and tracked with sand, smelling like dog and last night's barbeque. In summer there are no icy drafts, and the to-do list has no urgency: so much better to wade in the low tide at dusk! Summer was at first the reason I bought this house.

But neither of these houses, unrestored, were particularly tolerable in the cold darkness of winter. Because, in winter, we find what's right with the home we've created and also what is lacking. We live life cocooned inside, breathing exhaled air, hearing the evening news and phone conversations bouncing off four walls. In the months ahead, we may notice if there is nowhere to read or to cry. In February, we may discover that some rooms are dark or unhappy, dingy or bare, uncomfortable or ugly.



Winter vision may even bring action. The fix might be simple: a floor lamp to read by. Maybe the too-white walls should be painted ochre. Storm windows can make a room habitable. Pay attention; you shouldn't have to wait for summer to be happy.



# SIDE NOTES

**WESTERN HERITAGE**

Our roving contributing editor Regina Cole writes: "I just returned from Lubbock, Texas, where I was pleasantly surprised to discover and tour the National Ranching Heritage Center, a 27-acre museum that includes 55 historic structures. Dating from the late 1700s to the mid-20th century, all were dismantled then reassembled here; most were residences but there is also a bunkhouse, a church, a smokehouse, a schoolhouse, and utility structures. A museum building offers exhibits. And there's a collection of windmills. It struck me as the Western Williamsburg."

The Center is open all year. Special exhibits and events, from chuckwagon breakfasts to a Summer Stampede Western art and gear show, are listed on the website. A highlight, in December, is Candlelight at the Ranch, with luminarias and holiday-themed buildings lit by candles, oil lamps, and kerosene fixtures. Find cowboys, kettle corn, cocoa, live music—all accessible and free. National Ranching Heritage Center at Texas Tech University: ***ranchingheritage.org***

LARS JOHANSSON/ADOBE STOCK (TOP); COURTESY RANCHINGHERITAGE.ORG (BTM).

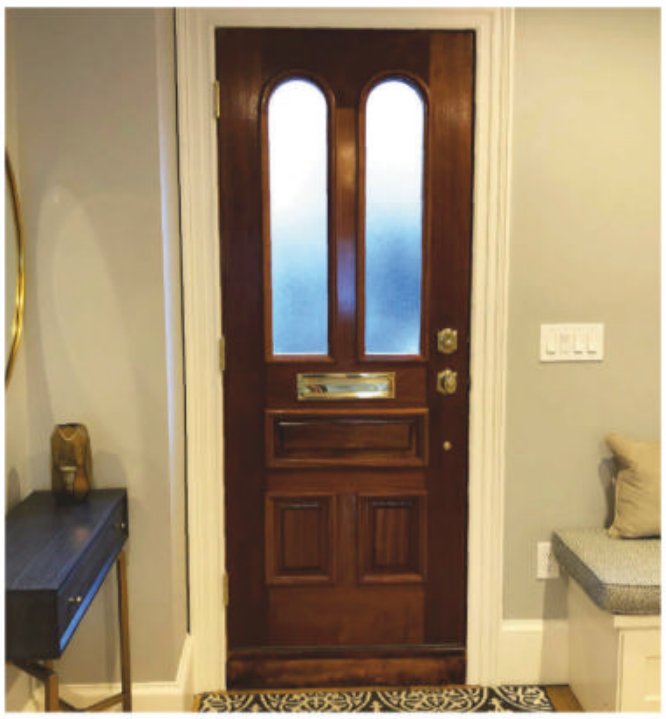
*Photo of a chuckwagon, from the archive.*



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

PUBLISHED BY ACTIVE INTEREST MEDIA
2143 Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50312



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# Arts & Crafts Revival

New introductions—and some recent classics. **By Mary Ellen Polson**



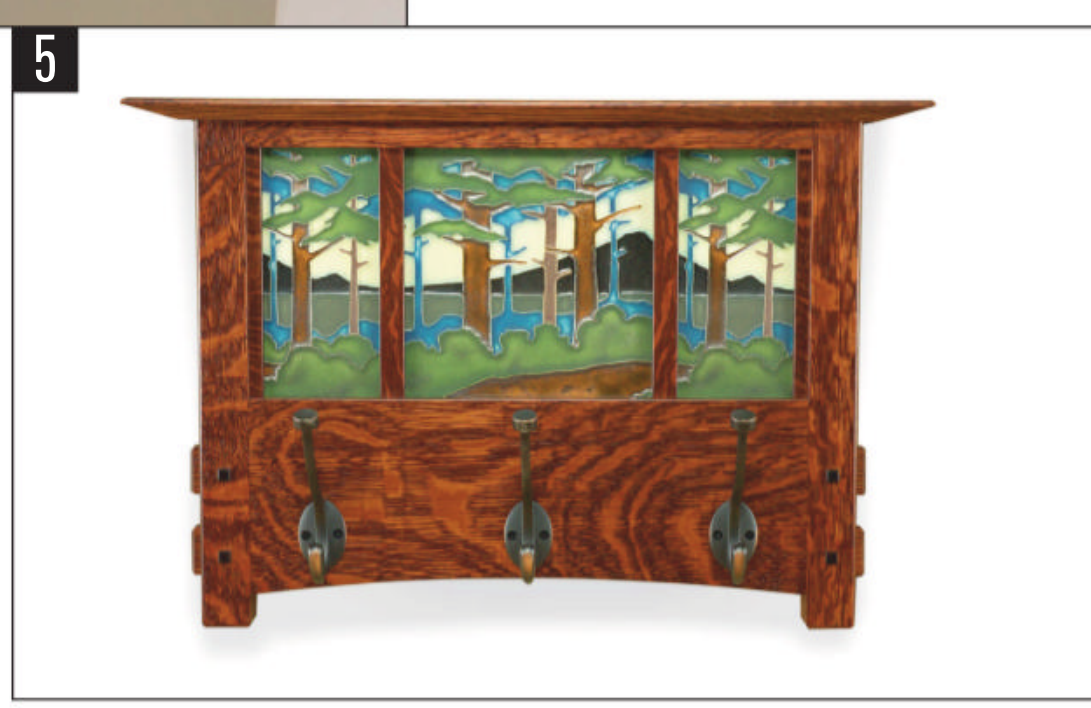













**1. ROSE RED**
The 4" x 4" Rose tile from Motawi is based on a period Dard Hunter design. It's custom-framed in 3" wide white quarter-sawn oak with beveled moulding, mitered corners, and a hand-rubbed wax finish. As shown: $144.38. Dard Hunter Studios, (740) 779-3300, *dardhunter.com*

**2. ELDER TREES**
In the Swedish Arts & Crafts tradition, "Under the Elder Tree" is part of the new Special Edition Forest Wallpaper Collection. Available in four colors, the pattern features woodland wildlife entwined in vines and branches. It's sold in double rolls: $138. Borås tapeter, +46 10-182 21 20, *borastapeter.com*

**3. ASIAN INFLUENCE**
A replica of a fixture in the iconic Gamble House, the 'Inglenook' lantern can be mounted as a ceiling or wall light. In mahogany with leather strap handles and leaded art glass, it's available in two sizes, for $1,802 and up. Old California Lighting, (800) 577-6679, *oldcalifornia.com*

**4. PINECONE TILES**
The Pinecone collection is among Bill Shearrow's many original Arts & Crafts tile designs, from the former Meredith Tile. Elements include the 6" x 6" window-pane deco ($80 each), the 7⅝" border ($35), and the 1⅝" square accent tile ($17.50). Shearrow Tile & Pottery, (330) 455-4324, *shearrowpottery.com*

**5. QUARTER-SAWN RACK**
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the rack measures 24" wide x 16" high x 2" deep; $625. Schlabaugh & Sons, (319) 656-2374, ***schsons.com***

**6. AT TABLE**

The Morris & Co. dinnerware collection is inspired by well-known patterns of the visionary British designer William Morris. In dishwasher-safe, high-fired porcelain with 7-karat-gold rims, components include dinner and salad plates, salad bowls, chargers, an oval platter, and napkin rings; $22.95 to $99.95. Williams–Sonoma Home, (877) 812-6235, ***williams-sonoma.com***

**7. WINDOWPANE**

Made of heavy cast brass with an aged patina, the Craftsman mortise lock set has the distinctive windowpane pattern pioneered by Pacific Hardware around 1912. Finished with round glass knobs, the set includes two skeleton keys: $199. House of Antique Hardware, (888) 223-2545, ***houseofantiquehardware.com***

**8. CALIFORNIA COLOR**

Printed on a grand scale, the Colinas de Oro frieze takes its colors and motifs from the golden hills and poppy fields of old California. The frieze measures 24" high and has a 72" repeat. The border is machine-printed with archival-quality latex inks; $58 per yard. Bradbury & Bradbury, (707) 746-1900, ***bradbury.com***

**9. CRAFTED IN OAK**

This refined Arts & Crafts-style kitchen is the work of a long-time cabinetmaker known for meticulous craftsmanship and the use of traditional woodworking methods. The inset, flat-panel cabinets are made from quarter-sawn oak. Custom quote. Kennebec Co., (207) 443-2131, ***kennebeccompany.com***

**10. ROSY PILLOW**

Compact and petite, the "Three Roses" pillow is Natalie Richards' take on the stylized Roycroft rose. All decoration is hand embroidered with each rose worked in silk thread in satin stitch. Leaves are worked in stem stitch. Finished pillow: $175. Paint By Threads, (951) 545-7451, ***paint-by-threads.com***

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### 3. PEACEFUL FRIEZE

A simple landscape frieze from C.F.A. Voysey's most prolific period, Dove and Holly features a gently arching holly tree reminiscent of Gothic tracery. Paired mourning doves suggest peace, making the 1902 design one of the artist's most tranquil. Priced at $7 per sq. ft. Trustworth Studios, (508) 746-1847, ***trustworth.com***

### 4. VICTORIAN FRETWORK

Rob Bennett uses bent lamination to create the curves in graceful arched spandrels like the Victoria. The 4' high design can be extended to any length over 5'. Spandrels may be crafted in a variety of woods and finishes. About $850. Wabashiki Woodworks, (812) 236-5493, ***wabashikiwoodworks.com***

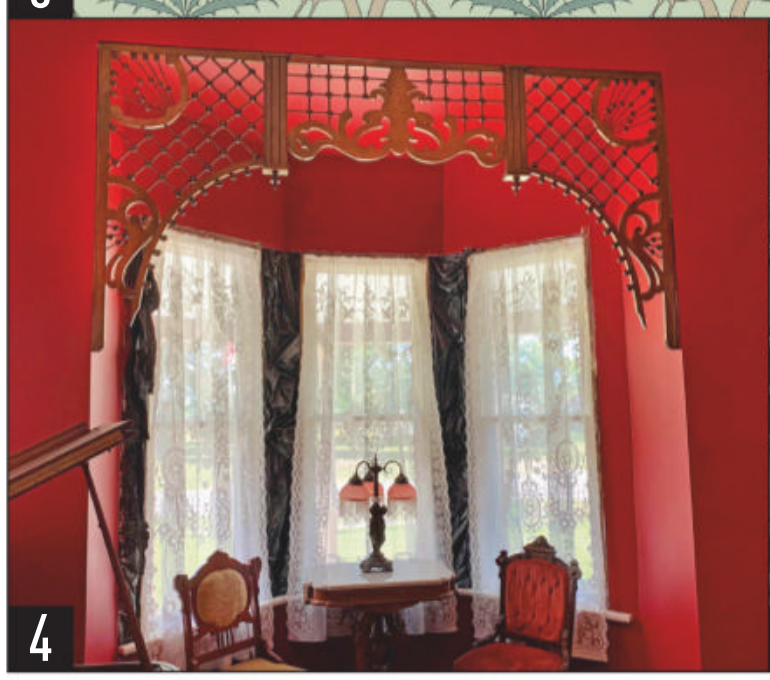
### 5. HAIL THE QUEEN

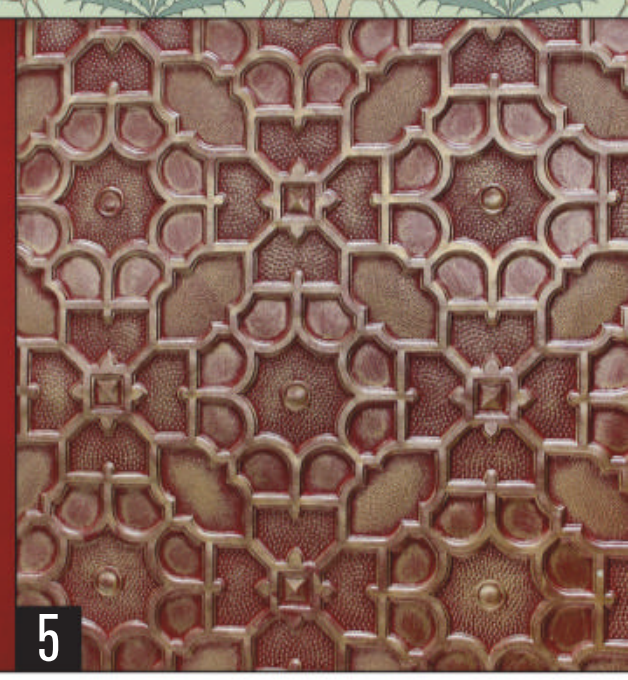
Named for the late Queen, 'Elizabeth' is a deeply textured, small-scale Lincrusta pattern that takes well to coloration and highlighting. Made from linseed oil and wood flour, embossed, fire-rated material is flat-backed and extremely tough. It's $480 per 33' roll. From wallpaperdirect, (855) 972-9273, ***wallpaperdirect.com***


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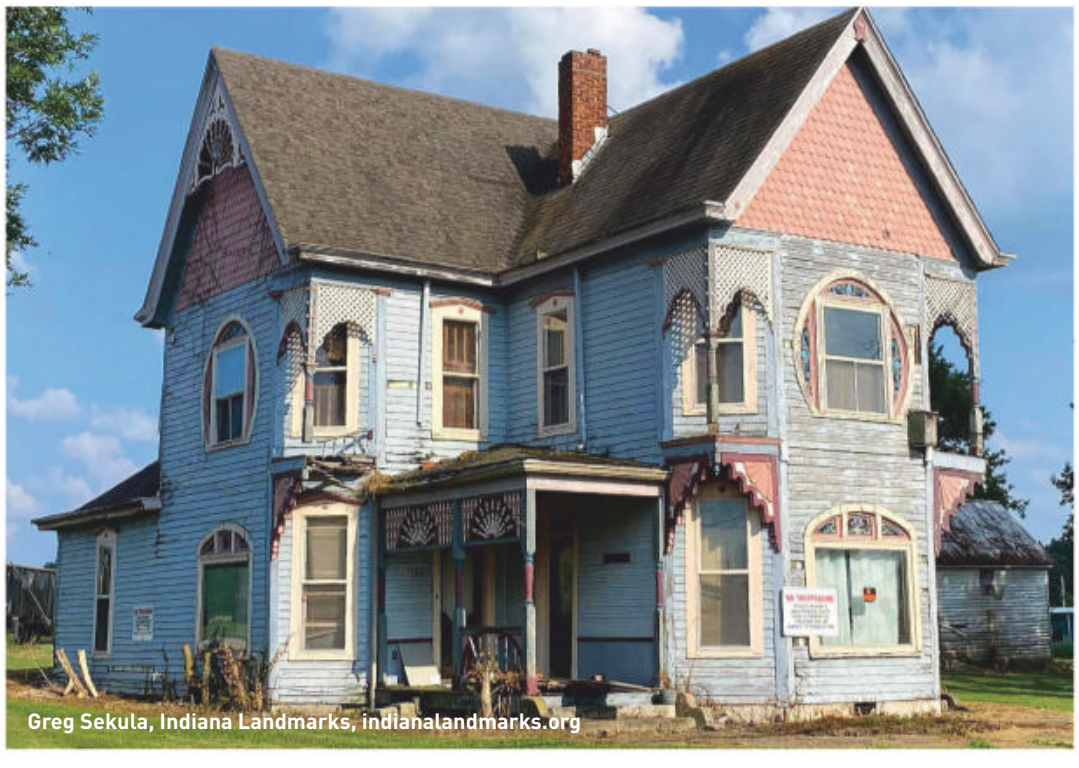
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Cathleen Turner, Preservation North Carolina, presnc.org

**AVERASBORO, NC / $75,000**

Stabilized but needing restoration, this 1835 house with a temple entry has exquisite woodwork, Federal and Greek Revival mantels, a winder stair with Chinese Chippendale railing, faux crotch-mahogany wainscot.



Greg Sekula, Indiana Landmarks, indianalandmarks.org

**CAMPBELLSBURG, IN / $44,900**

The Wilkins house, built in 1860, was given a Queen Anne makeover in 1890 using the designs of pattern-book architect George F. Barber. Find bay windows with horseshoe and arched windows and fretwork porches.



Cheri Emerson, Hodnett Realty, hodnettrealty.com

**CAMDEN, AR / $179,900**

A superb example of intact, pre-Civil War architecture, this 1857 Greek Revival mansion retains its double-height, colonnaded porches. Doors and windows have unique, hooded surrounds; find Greek Revival mantels inside.



Ron Duke, Kentucky Real Estate Sales & Finance, realtor.com

**LEBANON, KY / $89,250**

This ca. 1845 Italianate diamond-in-the-rough with stuccoed brick needs extensive work but retains such features as roof brackets, period mantels, and a hand-carved handrail and turned balusters.



Timothy Nelson, Doran Post and Associates, doranpostandassociates.com

**LEXINGTON, NE / $229,000**

From the curving lemonade porch to the semi-circular foyer and second-floor library, this 1902 Queen Anne is loaded with charming details: never-painted woodwork, and period built-ins including a kitchen pantry.



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# FROM BLAND TO GRACIOUS

Bold, well-proportioned design moves made this 1927 Dutch Colonial look more historic—while adding needed space. **By Patrick Mulroy**

**TOP** The façade came alive with restoration of the clapboards and shingles and a period paint scheme. **ABOVE** The house had been covered in white aluminum and vinyl sidings. **ABOVE RIGHT** Master craftsman and company owner Patrick Mulroy of ReModern Builders.

**For a 1927 Dutch Colonial Revival house** in Watertown (west of Boston), this project included demolition of the existing attic/third floor to build a new, taller third storey with an office, a bathroom, and a bed/sitting room. The new roof structure includes four dormers, one on the front. The exterior was redone with appropriate sidings, period trim, a new roof, and a rebuilt front portico. The colonnaded pergola porch, too, is new.

Clients Jeanne Segal and Dick Williams found my company through their dear friend Keith Brown, the architect for this project. (They'd worked with him and his wife, Helene, in musical theatre!) It was my honor to realize his vision before he passed away. It was Keith who suggested the open pergola porch after the zoning board rejected both a music room and a screened porch. Jeanne says the pergola is "a heavenly treehouse."

The exterior was completely rebuilt from wall sheathing outward. The architect specified very detailed mouldings for the exterior, with a distinct variation for each floor and pitch change. The gracious mouldings terminate in a beautiful, curved fiberglass gutter that rings the home. Much of the exterior millwork was custom-run for this project, with very few stock mouldings used.

We added flared pent roofs to the end gables and a flared skirt below the pergola, and we changed the pitch of the [*text cont. on page 18*]

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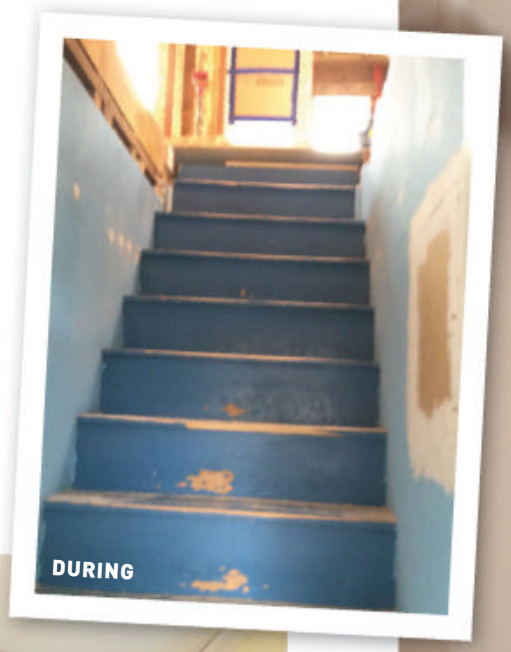





**ABOVE** Adding three feet to the overall height of the attic at the rear opened up space for a guest/sitting room, which became an online-tutoring office during the recent pandemic lockdown. **INSET** Arched windows were added to the third-level space above the pergola. **LEFT** The pergola deck is replaceable ipe over a waterproof rubber membrane. **BELOW** The gambrel ends are a highlight; note the series of dormers on the rear elevation.












**ABOVE** Meticulous, beautifully designed millwork is evident throughout the remodeled spaces. **INSET** Steep and not built to code, the old attic stair was removed. **LEFT** The small, third-floor bath is nicely detailed with built-in storage and an accessible shower. **BOTTOM** One new space, an office for homeowner Dick Williams, has built-in bookcases, file cabinets, and storage behind doors.

rear bump-out roof. That and restoration of wood sidings turned the house from a basic builder's colonial to a high-style eye-catcher.

The front portico was rebuilt in a more appropriate scale, with fluted Doric columns, a curved interior pediment, and a beadboard ceiling. The chimney was rebuilt from the second floor through the roof with a classic red-brick look, and a new roof was installed with custom copper and powder-coated flashings.

Inside, for access to the new third-floor space, we built a new staircase with a gooseneck railing and a curved top tread. The old attic stair had been steep and non-conforming. That curve in the stair tread mirrors segmental arches prominent in the gable ends, in the windows and a window bench, and in the bathroom vanity space.

The bathroom, though small, is full of sharp details. Dick's office, guest room, and bathroom are full of intricate millwork and convenient storage. A skylight at the top of the stairs brings in wonderful light.

This project was an amazing collaboration that included the architect, the homeowner clients, and my company. I was on site every day, consulting with the owners on logistics (they moved out when we took off the attic and roof!) and on decisions big and small. We worked closely with the architect regarding interior finishes, trim details, paint and stain colors, and so on.

The project was substantially completed within 18 months. Due to the Covid–19 lockdown and health concerns, interior finishes were paused for five months before completion. "You and your crew were a joy to have in our home," Jeanne wrote; "always helpful, thoughtful, conscientious, and cheerful. Dick loved being part of the process. We couldn't be happier … you can be so proud of your team's outstanding workmanship." That's a success!


FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 87.

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Shown: Inspired Collections / Capitol Hill

# DESIGN



## CREATING VIGNETTES

Sometimes the way to get started with furnishing is to pick a wall, a corner, an alcove, or a landing.

***+ Picture-hanging approaches for all eras, with rules of thumb tried and true.***

**page 22**

CAROLYN BATES

Federal-era antiques set the tone in one corner of a Colonial Revival house designed by Richard Wills.


22 **START WITH A VIGNETTE:** EASING INTO A FURNITURE SCHEME
Some spaces are easier to imagine than others, so start with those, then let them inform bigger decisions.

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# Start with a VIGNETTE

FURNISHING A WHOLE ROOM, LET ALONE A WHOLE HOUSE, CAN BE DAUNTING. HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO EASE IN. **BY PATRICIA POORE**



***You have to start somewhere! To get your feet wet, try thinking in vignettes.*** Vignettes are those "tight shots" you see in magazines—not the whole room, but rather a little grouping. It might be an easy chair/table/lamp all tucked into a corner, or tall plants placed on each side of a wicker settle on a long wall. The idea enlarges on the "art unit" of Victorian times, a carefully composed and artistic arrangement of furniture and *objets*. • Though it sounds risky to furnish one spot without considering the whole room, this approach may work quite well. Some spaces are just easier to "see." You may have a good sense of what would look right on the stair landing, or between a bed and the window—even if furnishing the room as a whole is unnerving. A favorite piece may need to go where it will fit—so put it there and consider it a given.

**ABOVE** A famous and personal vignette: folk Sussex chairs and Rossetti's portraits of daughters Jenny and May Morris against 18th-century paneling, at Kelmscott Manor, home of William Morris. **OPPOSITE** In a sunporch that became a breakfast room, the round table and early-19th-century thumb-back Windsor chairs begat a circular display of French Quimper faience plates against the clapboard wall.

JEREMY COCKAYNE/ARCAID; BRIAN VANDEN BRINK (OPP.)






## Still not sure it works?

Try taking snapshots of the vignette or room from several angles. Oddly, you're better able to see what's awkward or missing when you look at those pictures than when you're standing in the room! A solution may come to you.

# PICTURE-HANGING tips

• **The advice to center your art at 57" from the floor ("eye level") is an excellent starting point.** Eye level is, however, lower in a dining room, where everyone is seated, than in a hallway. In period houses, other factors weigh in: ceiling height and odd proportions, height of wainscots and plate rails, and conventions of the era.

• **Keep in mind that most people hang pictures too high.** Forget where the ceiling is—consider the viewer.

• Generally, **do create a center point across the walls**, with the center of each framed piece the same distance from the floor.

But: **There is precedent for breaking the "center" rule.** For example, three framed pieces hung with their bottoms level, the same distance above the top rail of a wood wainscot, will give a formal and ordered feeling to the grouping.

• In gallery-type hanging, with multiple framed pieces hung over one another, **consider hanging the upper-wall pieces to lean downward away from the wall for better viewing**. Lower art can be hung flat to the wall.

• **Create an arrangement on the floor (or a large tabletop) before committing** to wall hanging. Better yet, create a kraft-paper template (the same size and shape) of each framed piece, then tack them in place to arrange and re-arrange for a pleasing composition.

• **Create vignettes by hanging art close to the table or sofa.** Don't leave wide, distracting swatches of wall between furniture and artwork. Aim for three to six inches.

• **Bigger pictures (or a related grouping) are generally better than small pieces orphaned on a wall.** More is usually better than less; if not in a whole house or a whole room, then certainly on one wall or going up a stair. Commit to it!

• In the 19th century, **special art often rested on an easel.**

• Decorators advise framing all art in a room the same way, or sticking to one wood species or matte color. But **that might ruin the "evolved over time" sensibility** that suits old houses; frame for the art, not the room.

• **Emphasizing the vertical adds height** to a room.

• In framing and hanging, **emphasizing the horizontal generates calm and widens a narrow room**.

• **Victorian arrangements famously mixed frame shapes**: ovals for portraits, circles for silhouettes, using wide and vertical subjects together.

GROSS & DALEY PHOTOGRAPHY; JEAN KALLINA (OPP. LEFT); ERIC ROTH (OPP. RIGHT)

WHEN YOU MOVE FORWARD with the vignette, three things happen: **(1) With limited expense, you've furnished one area to completion. (2) What you've chosen sets a style and mood to direct the rest of the furnishing. (3) You limit and define the size and placement of other pieces by a process of elimination.** Here are some other ideas for room-starter vignettes: a table in the hall (with it, consider a lamp, a tabletop collection, and hung artwork); built-ins or scaled furniture to fit in a window bay; a well-lit reading corner; seating near the fireplace; a large signature piece on the only unbroken wall; a grouping to play up existing symmetry (as between doors or flanking windows, or around a staircase).

You may not want a museum room, but furnishing in sync with the date and design vocabulary of the house is a shortcut to non-faddish rooms that "look right." Your house is giving you clues, so take them. Seek out specialty suppliers that do reproduction, traditional, or adapted styles. You can, over time, acquire a few antiques to set the period mood. To fill in and assure sturdy comfort, rely on good reproductions, classics, or interpretive designs.

Good furniture is not cheap—a reason to avoid mistakes. The more you furnish with classic, adaptable pieces, the fewer oddball pieces you'll get stuck with. By oddball, I don't mean unusual favorites or family heirlooms, but rather the sofa you can never move because it



**LEFT** Essence of a vignette: just a chair and a lamp, with a place to set a cup of tea. **RIGHT** In the everyday parlor of a 1777 Massachusetts house, a fine symmetry comes from art and chairs flanking a tall-case clock against the papered wall, all from the same period. **OPPOSITE** A table placed near bookcases turns a corner of the hall into a library; note the framed photos hanging from the picture rail.



## USING PICTURE MOULDINGS

Many old houses have a narrow moulding called a picture rail, positioned either near the crown of the wall—just below the ceiling—or at the bottom of a frieze band. The moulding is rabbeted to accept a brass picture hook (above), from which framed wall art or a mirror may be hung on cords or picture wire. This handy system allows you to remove or reposition art without damaging the wall surface. Hammering nails into plaster inevitably leaves a pock mark or a crack; damage is even worse if the room is wallpapered.

Section by section, give any existing rail a tug to check that it's well secured into the wall. Consider adding a picture-rail moulding, especially if you intend to paper the room. In Victorian rooms and those with higher ceilings, the rail is generally below the frieze, about 12"–27" below the ceiling. By the early 20th century and for low-ceilinged rooms, install the rail just below the ceiling, cove, or crown moulding. Miter outside corners, cope inside corners, and install with construction adhesive and/or nails into lath and studs.



Centered beneath a period painting and candle sconces, a dresser serves as a sideboard in this authentic replica of a Colonial gambrel.

won't fit through any doorways. Sofas, wing chairs, small tables, and chests should be classic (whatever their style vocabulary) and modestly scaled. That way, they can move from living room to bedroom to library as your living space evolves. Still, don't be afraid to "fall in love" with a special item now and then. The occasional unrelated piece is wonderful in a well-considered scheme.

Wherever you start, consider scale. Think in terms of volume—that is, the width, length, and height of your room—before you go shopping. For example, the footprint of a gabled attic room may technically be large enough to hold a king-size bed, but once you've wrestled that baby up the stairs (good luck with the box spring), it looks all wrong under the sloped ceiling, and you'll hit your head when you get out of bed. Large, high-ceilinged rooms can stand up to (or demand) pieces of greater size and scale, like tall armoires, highboys, and massive sideboards. In smaller, low-ceilinged rooms, less is usually more; edit out one or two pieces, take a leaf out of the table, and the room may work better for it.

Finally, don't fall for fads. Take your time. Live in a room for a while, even if it's not to your liking yet, to see how the light moves, what normally goes on in the room, what's missing, and so on.






**ABOVE** This vignette started with a diminutive desk placed where it would fit: in a nook under the eaves. **TOP** A woodblock print and antique collectibles, artfully arranged on the oak sideboard, make a single statement in an Arts & Crafts interior.

CAROLYN BATES (LEFT); WILLIAM WRIGHT (TOP RIGHT); GROSS & DALEY PHOTOGRAPHY


FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 87.




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## VICTORIAN GAS FIREPLACES

Gas fireplaces and retrofit inserts are made in styles historical and contemporary by Valor Fireplaces. They create an efficient, controllable heat source without the particulates that result from wood burning. Shown is a zero-clearance gas fireplace from the Portrait series in the Windsor Arch Front style, in brushed nickel with coals. (Another to see is the Senator Front, in classical Federal style.) These are also sold as inserts designed to be installed within an existing masonry cavity or fireplace, with the existing chimney used to run venting. Inserts are typically less expensive compared to a zero-clearance renovation or fireplace replacement. The company also sells gas stoves and electric fireplaces. Find education, specifications, dealer locations, and support at their website: **valorfireplaces.com**

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# A Color Scheme for Every Room, 1928

Illustration from a customer paint brochure by E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Co.



*"Curtains of light blue and the deeper blue of the rug harmonize with the upholstery [with] a blue field and a repeat of the [desk's] Mandarin Red in the pattern. The waste-basket and the circular-top table have been finished with Jade Green."*

*Colorful room schemes and painted furniture were popular in the Jazz Age 1920s and '30s. The combination of black and red with blue and pops of jade green is decidedly different from the previous Arts & Crafts palette.*

The mahogany John Townsend Fall-front Desk (ca. 1770, Newport, R.I.) is indicative of fine reproduction work by Justin Kauffman of Noblesville, Indiana. A graduate of Boston's North Bennet Street School, he specializes in 17th- through early-19-century furniture. Custom quotes. ***kauffmanfinefurniture.com***





Adaptable and elegant, rosette pulls have been used for centuries. Horton Brasses offers many designs in brass with a choice of finishes. Crafted with several boring sizes and with round or oval backplates. Shown is the LD-RP-2 (2 ¾") rosette pull from their Londonderry Brasses collection; made to order, $56.55 each. ***horton-brasses.com***



Slipcovered chairs, especially in floral designs like the Indie Wingback Skirted Chair, are perennial favorites. Shown in a tropical floral and crafted from kiln-dried wood, the chair measures 39" high x 33" deep x 32" wide; $877.49. Jennifer Taylor Home, ***jennifertaylorhome.com***



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# Craftsman Details in a Kitchen

An excellent layout and period motifs distinguish this mid-sized kitchen in a bungalow-era house. **By Patricia Poore**

No adding on, just a shift in the location of the door that leads to the home office—space problem solved! Now the sink counter can run the length of a wall. Befitting the old house in Portland, Oregon, the new kitchen by Craftsman Design is in the "sanitary" white-kitchen mode of the era. Better still, white-painted cabinets, budget-friendly white appliances, and a porcelain sink reflect light to create a cheerful room.

Though not part of a modernized open plan, the kitchen feels spacious and connected. A glazed door lends a view to the office. Arts & Crafts-era details include inset cabinets, carved brackets, a linoleum floor, a ceramic-tile backsplash, and an island made from a salvaged piece. Red Dragon granite countertops and a complementary green wall paint enliven the scheme.







**1. PERIOD DETAILS**
Sawn brackets beneath the range hood recall the fancy-cut ends of rafter tails on bungalow eaves and porches. The flooring, cabinet design, hardware, and pendant lights all are based on those found in this period's kitchens.

**2. PERSONAL TOUCHES**
A repurposed vintage piece became the movable island. The owner provided the pendant lights. A ca. 1910 chair is visible in the office beyond. Such personal touches keep the unique room from looking all-new.

ECKERT & ECKERT PHOTOGRAPHY




**3. A WINNING PALETTE**
Accenting with red and green—colors opposite on the color wheel—adds energy to the essentially white kitchen. Upper walls painted Devine Color™ Hosta, from Miller Paint, complement Red Dragon granite and a henna-color linoleum floor.

**4. EFFICIENT SPACE**
The modest space is meticulously detailed. Cabinets carried up to the ceiling, a countertop that widens near the sink, and plenty of drawers add function and storage; a glazed door makes the room feel bigger.

# BE INSPIRED...



From Brass Light Gallery, the Spring Green **one-light brass pendant** (in a choice of 13 metal finishes) is a bungalow-era classic. Shown in Architectural Bronze with a Satine cone shade; other glass shades available for the 2¼" fitter. The fixture is $509. ***brasslightgallery.com***



Period-perfect, sustainable, soft underfoot, **linoleum from Forbo** is available in a huge range suitable for single-color and mixed patterns. This is Marmoleum from the Marbled collection, in the Fresco tone-on-tone pattern, color #3203 Henna. Other reds and oranges, too. Sheet linoleum runs about $5 per sq. ft. uninstalled. ***forbo.com/flooring/en-us/***



Picardie **glassware from France** has been around for over 80 years. The shatter-resistant tempered glass withstands temperature extremes. Glasses are stackable. Available in sets of six (9 oz. or 11 oz.) or six each of four sizes as a set of 24 for $126. ***williams-sonoma.com***

Comfortable to use, the beveled edge **recessed sash lift** from House of Antique Hardware comes in six finishes, for $5.59–$7.49 apiece. It's an authentic reproduction of Craftsman-era window hardware, spare enough to use in modern interiors. Overall: 3 ⅛" wide by 1⅝" tall. ***houseofantiquehardware.com***



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# RESTORE



Joelle Huntsberry adds a finish coat to a historic plaster ceiling. The work requires not just experience, but also the ability to re-create the composition of the original plaster in materials and their proportions.

JOELLE HUNTSBERRY

## PLASTER IN DEPTH

**A FINISHING SCHOOL for historic plaster**, with expert instruction. Patching, specialty techniques, and unusual treatments.

**page 36**


**36** **PLASTER REPAIRS:** HISTORIC & ARCANE
Matching and reproducing historic plaster finishes: on sheen, specialty plasters & earthen floors.

**44** TOOLS + MATERIALS
**46** KNOW-HOW
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# HISTORIC & ARCANE plaster repairs

BY MARY ELLEN POLSON

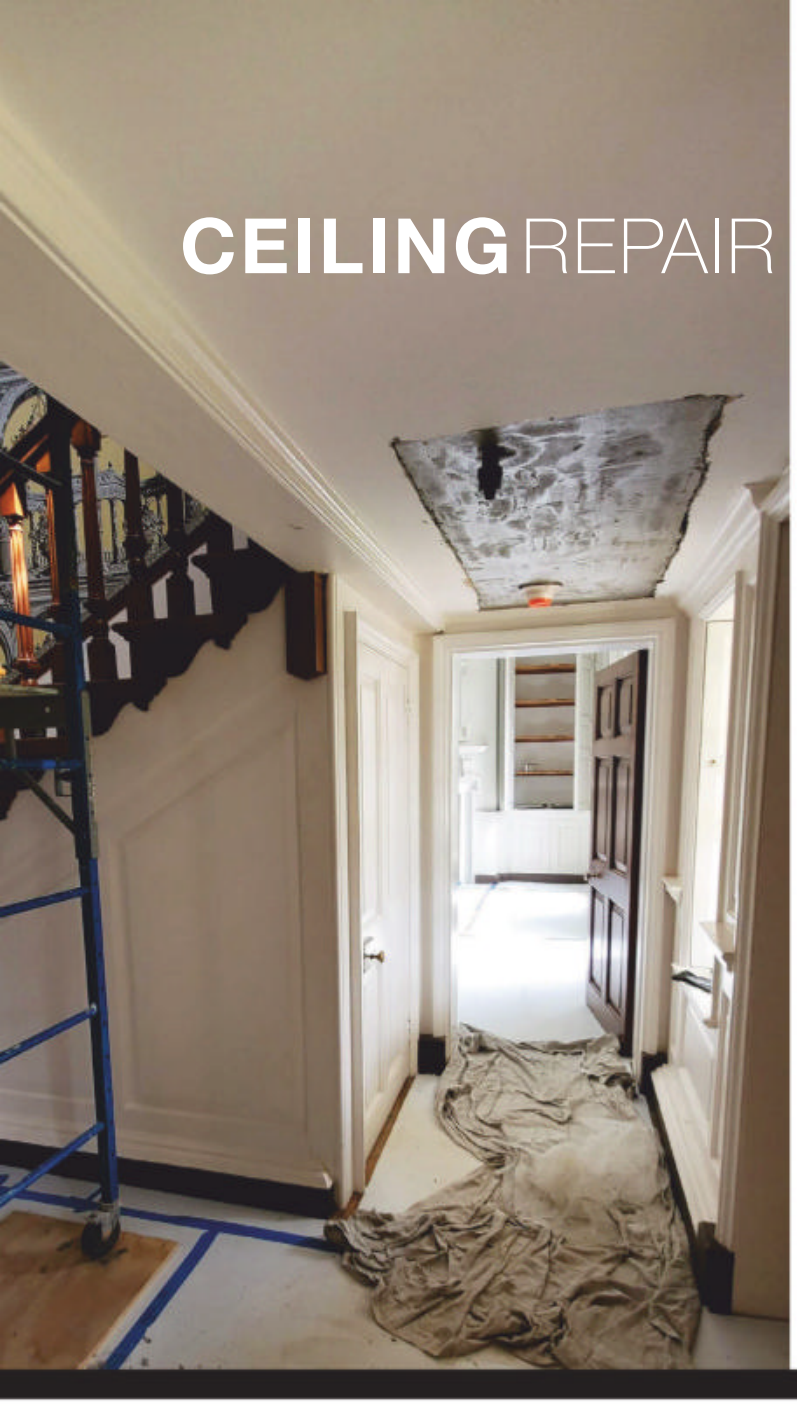


Finish plasters are typically made from natural materials that may include lime, aggregates, marble dust, and pigments, plus an agent (such as water, carbon dioxide, or stearic acid) that sets the material.



NIKOA DALI / ADOBE STOCK

***Anyone who has restored original plaster walls*** is familiar with three-coat plaster: a scratch coat over wood or metal lath, a brown coat, and a top coat. As for historically correct surface finishes, things go beyond one, two, three. Matte and high-sheen finishes—including some that are waterproof—along with textural effects have been in use for centuries and are especially relevant today. Plus: Have you heard of earthen finishes for floors? • Whether you're a novice or a pro, patching or matching a historic plaster finish can be tricky. That's because the composition of the plaster found in American homes has continually evolved as available materials changed and innovations were developed. • Determining what components are in a 180-year-old plaster, for example, requires a bit of detective work. Most plasters that old will necessarily contain sand and lime, but the proportions of each component, where they come from, and even how the lime is produced all make a difference in the finished surface.

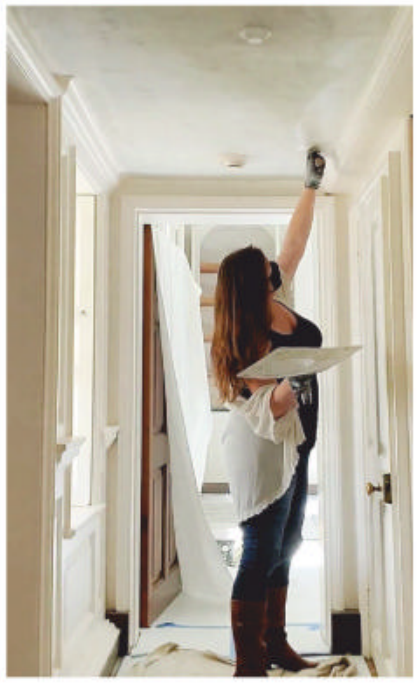


# CEILING REPAIR *& matching*

At historic **Gunston Hall**, the 1759 home of founding father George Mason, Joelle Huntsberry was asked to **repair a section of ceiling** after a new sprinkler system installation.







**LEFT** The repair after she installed new lath and a scratch coat. **ABOVE** (left to right) After bringing the scratch and second coats up to roughly the level of the new sprinkler heads, Huntsberry prepares to finish the top coat. • She uses a light touch around the modern intrusions in the ceiling. • She works her way down the repair area, blending in the top coat with trowel strokes to emulate the finish in the existing old plaster.

***"You want to replace like materials with like materials,"*** *says Joelle Huntsberry, who has restored plaster and other surfaces at historic sites including Montpelier and Historic Jamestown, near her Virginia home. It may mean adding lime made from local oyster shells to the mix—or adding goat hair.*

Unlike modern plastering materials, lime allows the walls to breathe, a term that essentially means walls that regulate moisture. Once it's set, plaster does not expand and contract with humidity, so adding it to a long-existing wall requires skill and knowledge. "You want the plaster to move together, you want it to behave the same as the plaster that's already there."

In the best circumstances, the life of historic plaster is about 200 years, Huntsberry says. Replacing old plaster means understanding both the ratio of sand to lime (she generally uses 2 ½ parts sand to 1 part lime), but also the size of aggregate added to the mix.

Each coat has its own formula. The rough or scratch coat has a lot of aggregate, for example, while the top or white coat has very little. Aggregate is key to building up the thickness of the plaster surface. Getting the thickness right comes into play if, for instance, you are repairing a plaster ceiling to the same level as a 21st-century sprinkler system—exactly the work she completed at Gunston Hall, the 260-year-old home of founding father George Mason.

In that project, she began by installing fresh wood lath followed by three coats of plaster. For the scratch coat, she used enough aggregate to build depth up to about 1". For the second coat, she used much smaller aggregate, just enough to create a level surface for the top coat. "Then I went over that third coat three to four times while it was still wet, blending it and working it into previous coats."

Huntsberry uses [*text cont. on page 42*]

## TERMS of Lime

**> HYDRATED LIME** (*calcium hydroxide*) results when water is added to quicklime. AKA builder's lime, this is typically the dry bagged lime sold by masonry suppliers.

**> HYDRAULIC LIME** (*calcium oxide*) is made from limestone that naturally contains silica or that has had silica added during the burning process. The silica fuses with some of the quicklime to form a cementitious compound that allows the lime to set with the addition of a percentage of water.

**> LIME PUTTY** is a non-hydraulic lime that cures over a long period by slowly absorbing carbon dioxide from the air. Lime putty is also called pure, air, or fat lime.

**> QUICKLIME** (*calcium oxide*) is a high-alkali product resulting from burning pure limestone at temps between 1650 and 2100 degrees F. Extremely reactive with water, most quicklime is converted for masonry use by adding water, or quenching.

**> SLAKED LIME** (*calcium hydroxide*) or quenched lime forms when just enough water is added to quicklime to convert it to safer, less caustic hydrated or builder's lime.

JOELLE HUNTSBERRY; COURTESY JH WALL PAINTS (OPP.)



# lime washes & PAINTS

***Lime wash is one of the oldest coatings in existence, but lime washes and paints are among the hottest surface coatings in use now,*** given the mini explosion in companies that offer lime coatings. Capable of producing matte and mottled surface effects and luminosity not possible with conventional latex paints, they are naturally organic and breathable. • ***Lime wash is a blend of hydraulic lime and water to which small amounts of casein and table salt are added to produce a chalky, high-pH coating for walls or wood, which is bacteria and mold resistant.*** If overly watered down, the wash becomes runny and leaves streaks, so it can be difficult to apply. Lime paints, on the other hand, are full-bodied, creamy paints that come in a range of earth colors and dry to a matte, suede-like finish. • ***Both lime washes and lime paints can be used on brick, wood, stone, and plaster, but any previously painted surface will require a primer that allows the lime finish to bond to it.*** Most suppliers recommend using at least two coats over a primed finish, often suggesting that the top coat be diluted at a ratio of one part water to one part paint. This treatment allows for some of the full-strength undercoat to shine through the lighter top coat.

## whitewash *RECIPE*

FROM LIMEWORKS.US

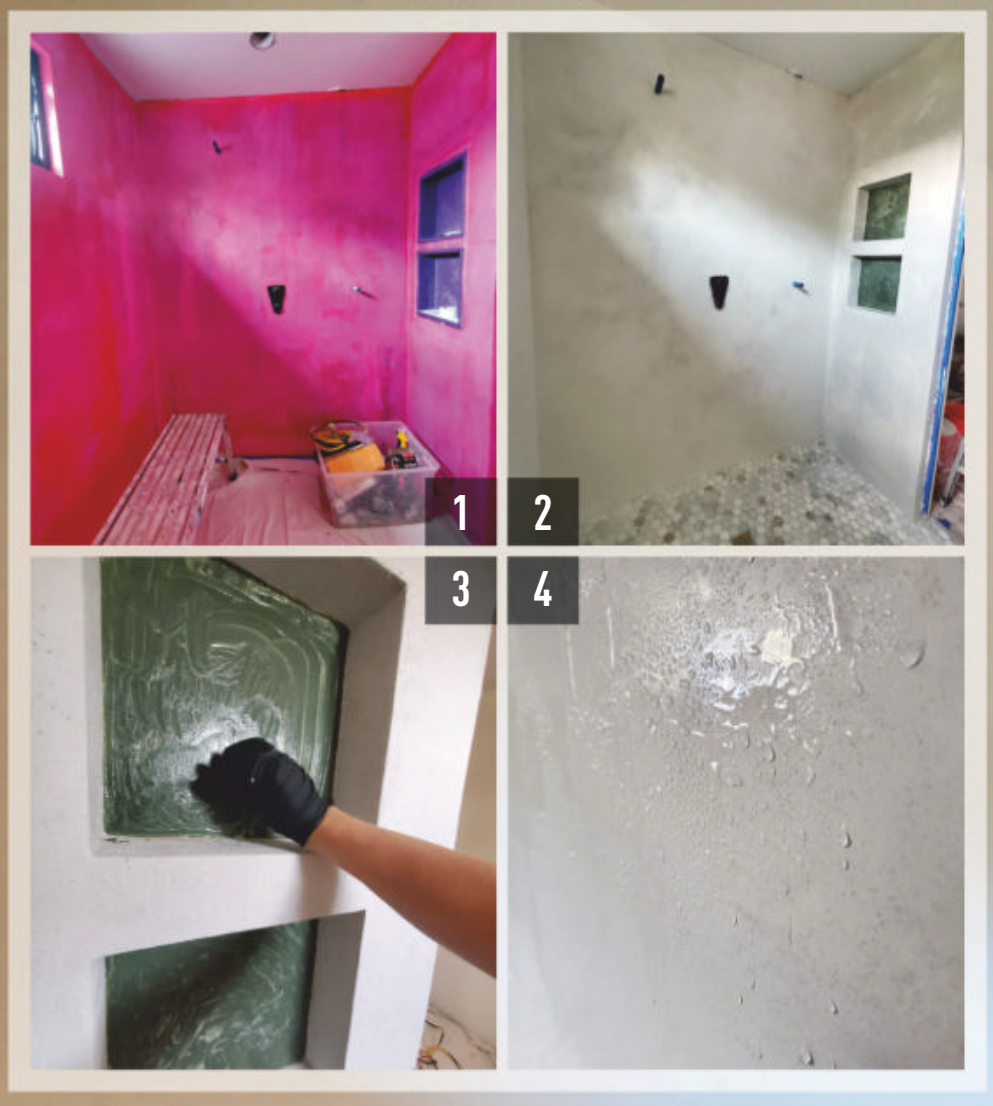
- **10 lbs hydraulic lime**
- **2 gallons of water**
- **¼ cup of casein powder** *dissolved in hot water*
- **½ cup of Borax** *(to help prevent mold and repel insects, along with the lime)*
- **3 lb common table salt** *(helps harden the whitewash)*
- **¼ teaspoon laundry bluing** *for extra whitening*

*The mixture should have the consistency of skim milk when complete.* ***Yield: 20 gallons.***





Lime washes and paints, used for millennia, work particularly well on masonry and other absorbent surfaces. **TOP** Lime washes are traditional on wood, partly because the high pH (alkalinity) of lime inhibits mildew and repels insects.




***step one*** A shower to be finished with the tadelakt technique begins with a water-repellent substrate coated with a waterproof membrane called Redguard.

***step two*** The tadelakt finish is applied in successive coats, with the goal of achieving the smoothest finish possible, comparable to a level 5 drywall finish.

***step three*** The finish, which cures with olive-oil soap, must be compressed by scouring with small hard stones to make it as durable as possible.

***step four*** The tadelakt finish is seamless and grout free; if no harsh chemicals are used on the surface, it will last for years.

**FINISHED ROOM** The completed tadelakt shower is literally seamless as well as waterproof and mildew resistant. The finish can be touched up by washing with black olive-oil soap and water, which also conditions the finish.

**THE PRO TIP**

***Tadelakt is a type of polished lime plaster.*** *When rubbed with olive-oil soap, the calcium hydroxide in the plaster reacts with the stearic acid in the soap and forms a water-repellent calcium stearate surface.*

## tadelakt

Newly trendy as a means of finishing wet areas such as bathrooms, tadelakt finishes have a long history in the old world. These organic, handmade finishes were developed by the Romans, by way of Morocco, by mixing lime with olive-oil soap. Olive-oil soap is rich in stearic acid, which repels water. The finish is entirely natural, and, unlike a tiled finish, it has no grout lines to attract dirt and mildew. The cost of a tadelakt finish is comparable to a high-end tile installation, says Huntsberry. It is not, however, a DIY project. The finish is applied in multiple coats over a water-resistant substrate, such as waterproof wallboard treated with a waterproof membrane. After the set (first) and leather (or second) coats have dried, the third and final coat must be compressed with stones and a finishing trowel. “You are pushing the plaster together, literally pushing out any air bubbles,” says Huntsberry. “The stones help because they have a higher compressive strength.” A tadelakt finish can be conditioned by regular cleanings with black olive-oil soap and water.



Prized as a wall finish for hundreds of years, Venetian plasters get their smoothness and highly illuminated sheen from marble dust.

# venetian PLASTER

***Venetian plasters go back to Roman times but were popularized as interior and exterior wall finishes in watery, Renaissance-era Venice for their waterproofing and antibacterial properties. Known as* marmorino *in Italian, Venetian plaster is a combination of lime putty and crushed marble, which can be tinted to give it a wide range of colors. Varying the size of the marble aggregate yields many different textures, from polished marble to coarse, sand-like, or distressed finishes. Like all lime-based plasters,* marmorino *is extremely breathable. It is also hydraulic because it contains silica and aluminum, so it sets with water and is extremely stable and long lived.***

## *finishing* TROWELS

Self-taught, Joelle Huntsberry says **one of her earliest mentors, Sigi Koko of Down to Earth Design, presented her with her first trowel**. It was Japanese, and Huntsberry has loved these lightweight finishing trowels ever since. "**They're strong and flexible and don't rust.** You can get a full range of sizes for every purpose, from rigid trowels to super flexible."

**Japanese trowels usually have triangular points at the head and square ends at the back.** Made of **stainless steel, they are ideal for getting into tight spaces** and finishing up small areas. Similarly, round-headed pool trowels are highly flexible and can be used in similar ways. Finally, **rectangular finishing trowels do most of the heavy lifting of getting the top coat in place and troweled to the correct thickness**. Among the finest are those made in Italy for Venetian plasters.

**RIGHT** A lightweight Japanese trowel from Color Atelier.



JOELLE HUNTSBERRY (TOP & OPP.)

*More Online* Basics: **oldhouseonline.com/repairs-and-how-to/repairing-historic-flat-plaster-walls-ceilings/**

# earthen floors

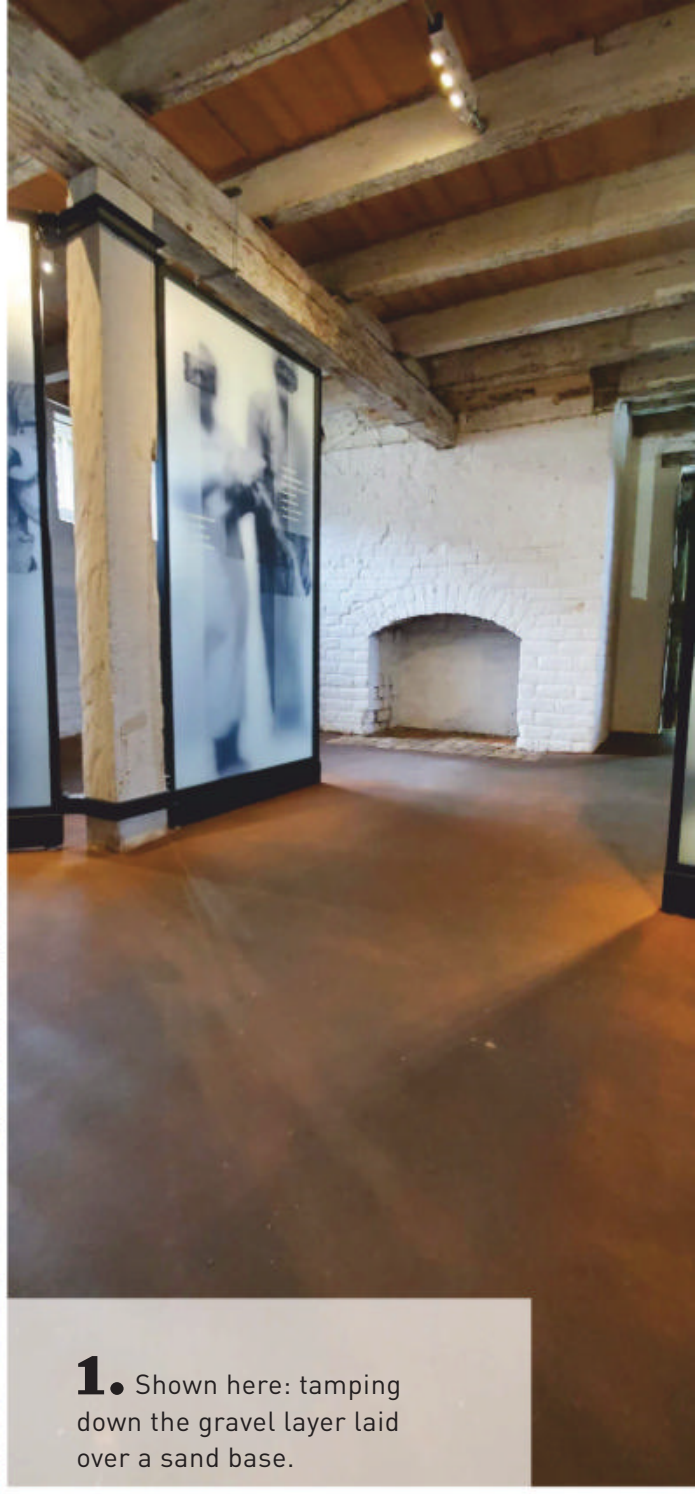
One of **the simplest historic finishes is an earthen clay floor, in use for more than a thousand years**. Unlike lime and plaster finishes for walls, there is nothing in the clay as a surfacing material that sets or has a chemical reaction. "An earthen floor is the opposite of concrete. It can really save the building" by regulating moisture. **That makes an earthen floor a very practical choice for buildings of any age, especially historic homes.** Unlike concrete, **a clay floor absorbs ground moisture and slowly releases it into the air** instead of into the walls. In effect, it acts like a massive humidifier. If there is a moisture problem beneath the house, this floor will show signs long before a concrete floor would. The method is simple, too: Apply several coats of good-quality, wet clay over a dry substrate topped with a sand and gravel base several inches thick. Apply the clay slip much as you would successive coats of plaster. Then compress the top surface by pushing down with a trowel. Burnish the top coat with a finishing towel. Drying time depends on the minerals and amount of elasticity in the clay. With an earthen floor, there's less concern about the amount of time it takes it to dry, even if it dries quickly. Finally, to prevent dust from forming, the burnished surface may be sealed with beeswax or tung oil.









**1.** Shown here: tamping down the gravel layer laid over a sand base.

**2.** Thick layers of clay are laboriously troweled into place, then rolled smooth.

**3.** At Montpelier, Huntsberry compresses the top coat using pressure from a trowel.

***after*** That finished earthen floor (above), in what is now a basement-level exhibit space.

brushstrokes and trowel touches to match the new plaster flawlessly with the old. "You do whatever is needed to make it look like it's always been there."

For a large repair like this one, Huntsberry uses hydraulic or builder's lime. Hydraulic lime sets with water and can be used for all three coats (scratch, brown, and finish).

In certain cases, she might use hydrated lime as a finish coat. Although chemically the same as hydraulic lime, hydrated lime is much more volatile than builder's lime and is generally used only for finishing. Hydrated plaster must be kept out of sunlight, covered with burlap or plastic, and sprayed as needed to keep the plaster with the right moisture content during cure.

Cure time for hydrated lime plaster is at least a week a week between coats. "In that seven days, you are babying the recent application of plaster and making sure it stays moist." Knowing when to add water, by misting with a spray bottle, comes from experience. "I can go up to a wall and feel whether it has enough moisture in it," she says.

Hydrated lime may be added to hydraulic lime to cause it to set more slowly. Hydrated lime is also the type used in Venetian plaster, one of several decorative finishes Huntsberry offers.

Another is tadelakt, a waterproof plaster surface used in Moroccan architecture, going back 2,000 years. Waterproof, it's used not only for walls and ceilings, but also for baths and sinks.

Huntsberry learned these techniques and other plastering skills from several mentors who shared with her their own knowledge and artistry of the plastering craft. "One great thing about these historic materials, they are still being used around the world," she says. "The knowledge of how to use them is still with us."

JOELLE HUNTSBERRY


FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 87.

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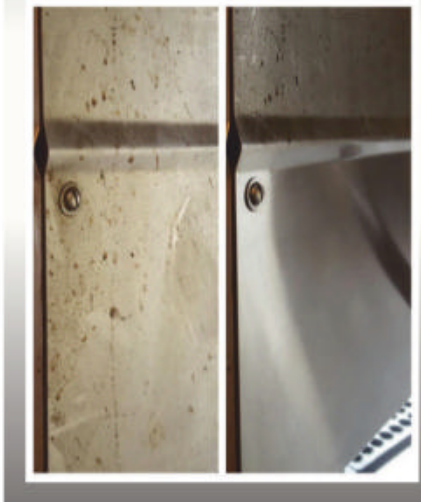
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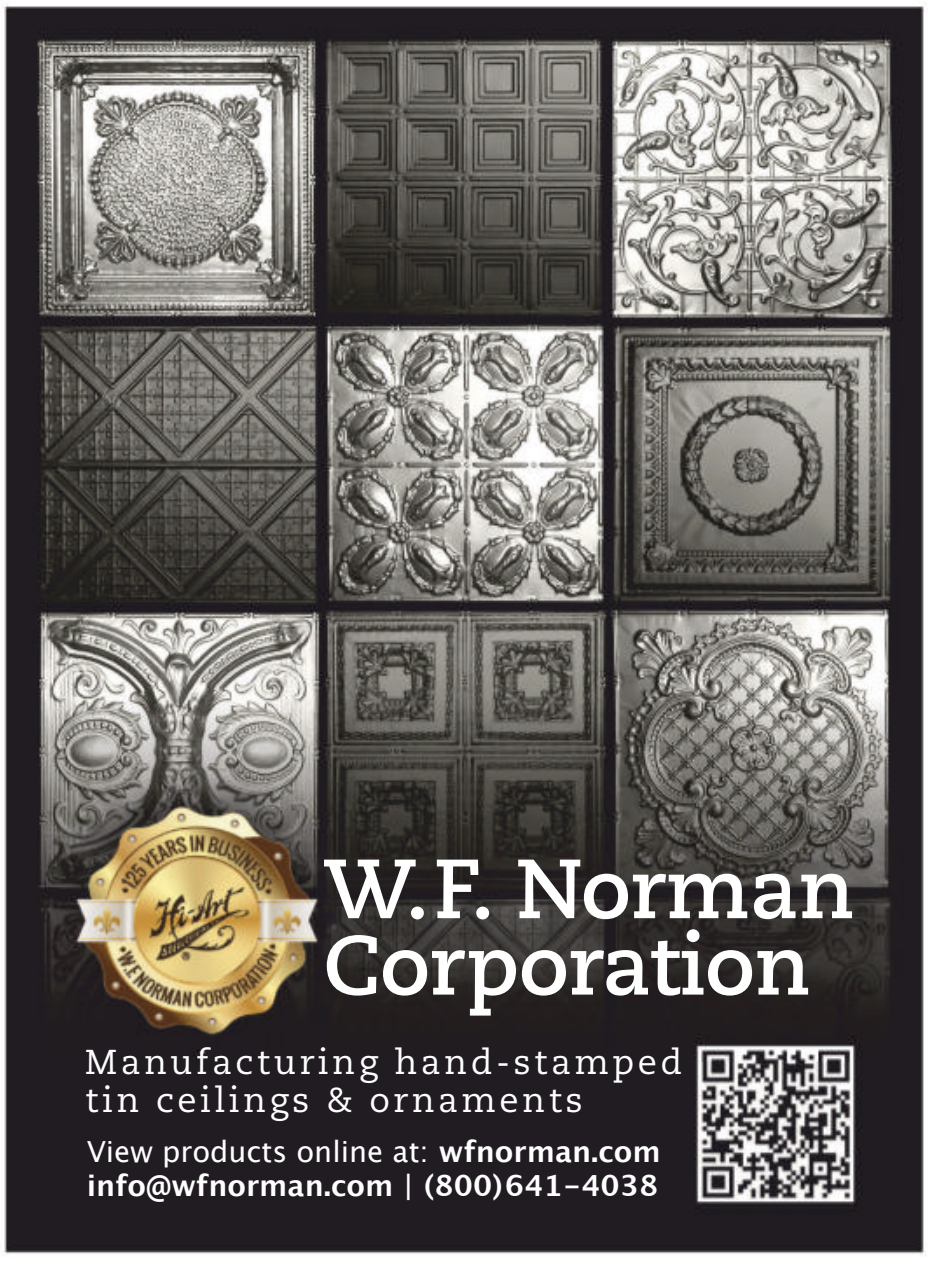
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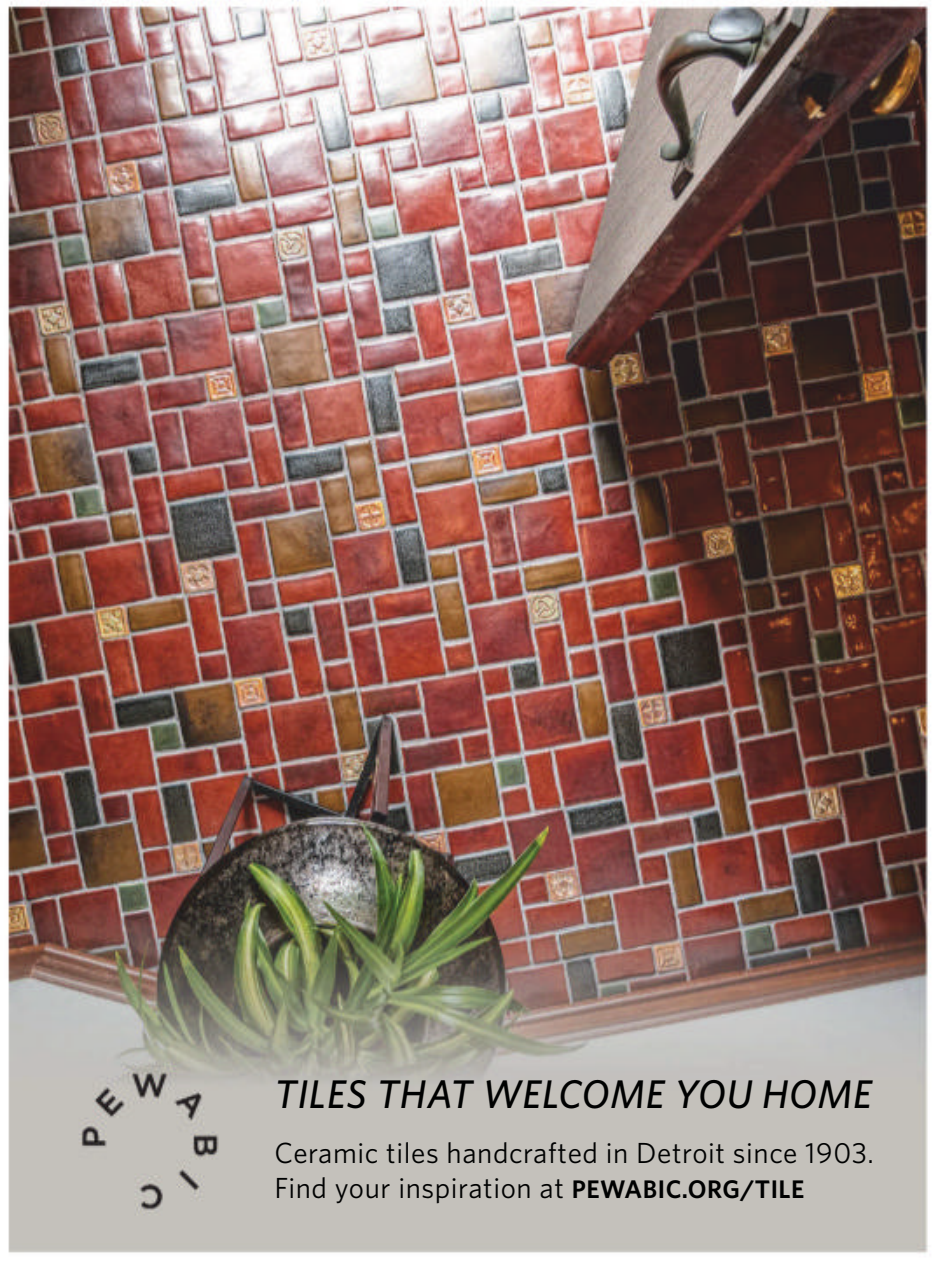

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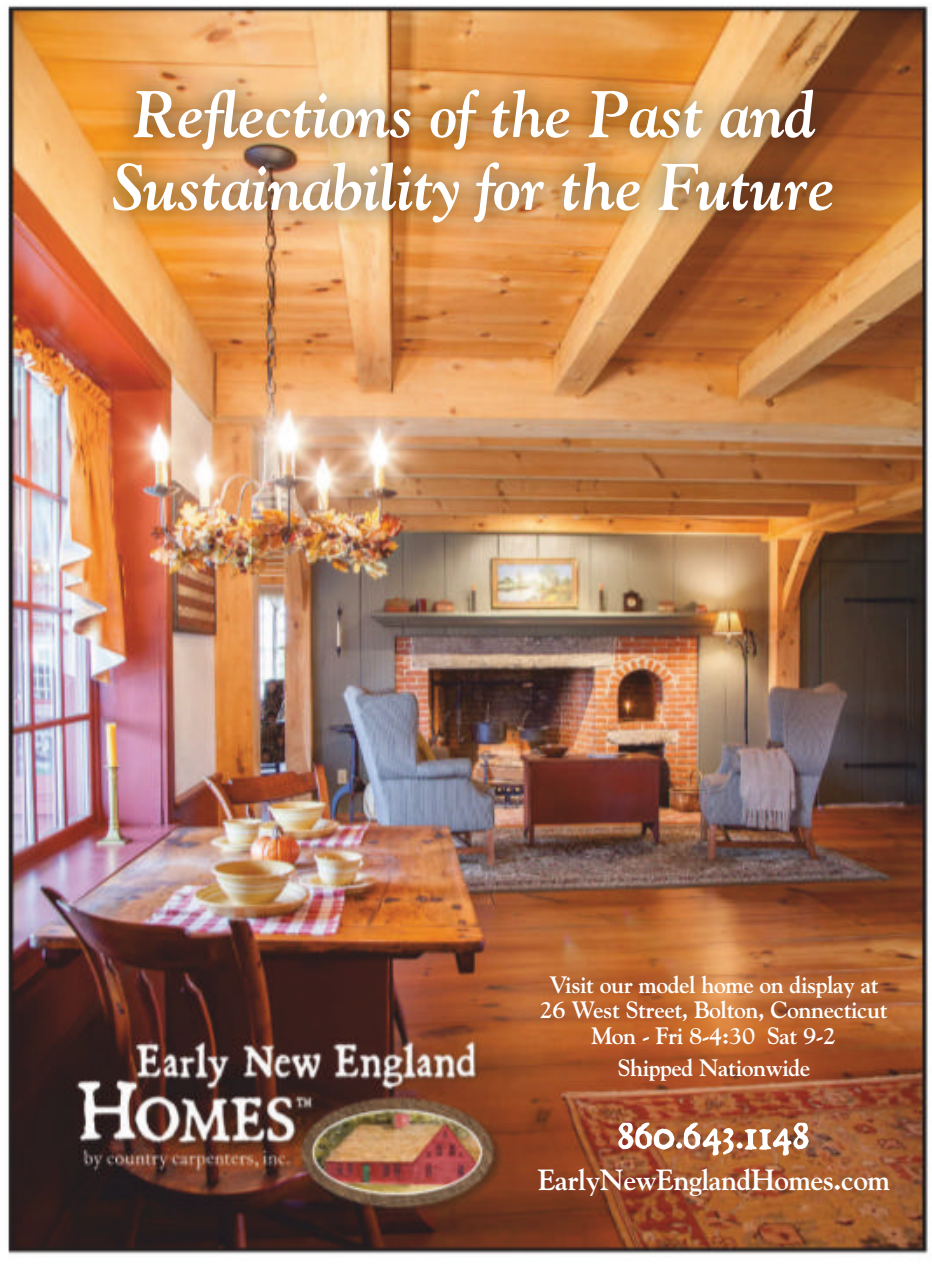






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# Restoring a Vintage Sconce

A few new parts, a simple refinishing technique, plus vision and elbow grease bring old light fixtures back to life. **By Gina Bellous**




I've been collecting antique light fixtures for several years now, mostly bargains from Facebook Marketplace or eBay. After finding a few gorgeous pieces—like the Eastlake chandelier I plan to hang in my Queen Anne parlor—I realized I had to teach myself how to rewire and restore vintage lighting.

My first project was a 1907 Bryant pan light that broke down into a surprising number of pieces, all of which needed to be cleaned before wiring could be replaced and the fixture reassembled. In some cases, I improvised [*text cont. on page 48*]

One of a pair of sconces restored by the author, with all new wiring. She gave them an ombre and gold finish reminiscent of early-20th-century polychromed fixtures. **BEFORE** Dull and dingy, the sconces had lost their original finish.

## *Rewiring & Reassembly*

*As you disassemble the fixture, take photos of each piece as you remove it so you will have a record of how everything goes back together. You'll want to reattach the parts in reverse order of their removal, replacing any damaged or missing parts as you work.*

**1. After inserting the wire (p. 47), place the bobeche** (collar) and candle cup holder so that they sit directly over the copper mount on the arm. I made a copper ring from a piece of flashing to help hold the bobeche in place. Slip a brass hex nut over the wires to secure the candle cup in place.

**2. Install good-condition** original or new metal sockets. Put the socket in first, before connecting any wires, to avoid twisting or putting tension on them.

**3. To wire the socket,** take the black wire (the hot wire) and attach it to the gold contact on the socket. Use a wire stripper with a built-in gauge. For an 18-gauge wire, line up the wire so that it meets the 18-gauge hole, then clamp down and give the stripper a little twist. The plastic insulation comes right off. Leave a little more than ½" of the wire exposed.

**4. Twist the exposed wire,** bending it over to form a small half loop.

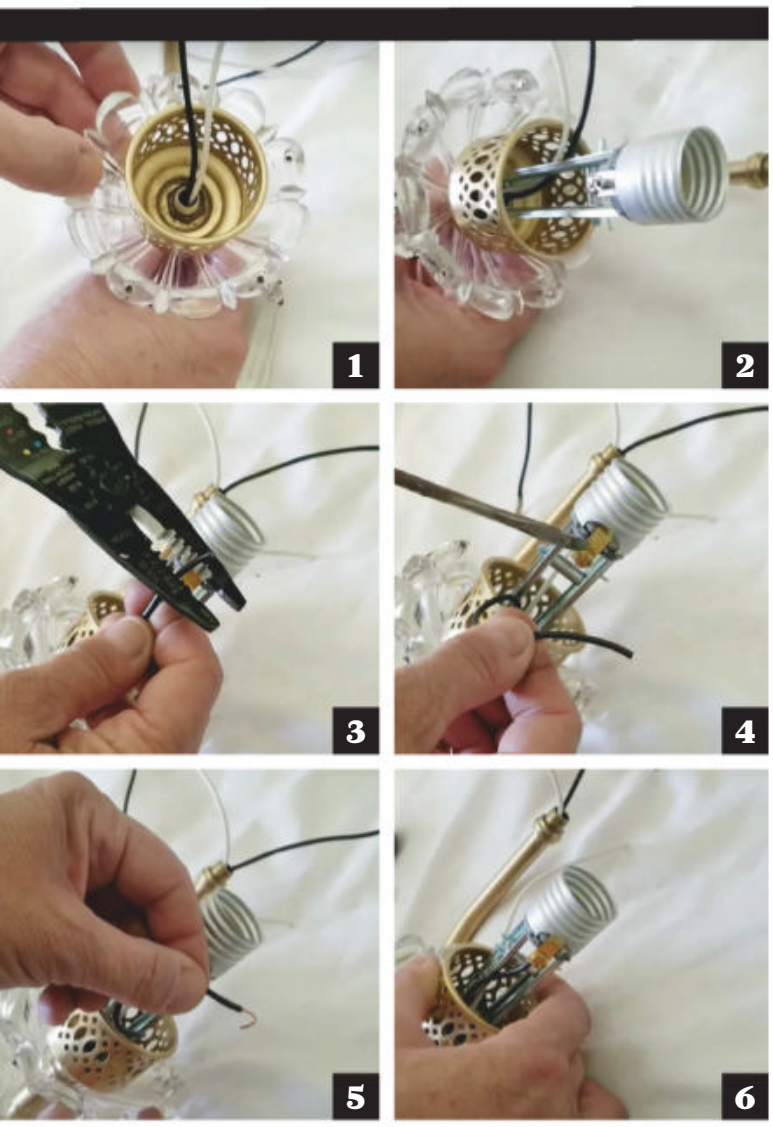
**5. Attach this to the gold contact** on the right side, so that when the wire is tightened, it will move in a clockwise direction. Tighten the wire with a screwdriver around the contact until firmly in place, then pull the rest of the black wire through the other end of the fixture. As you pull, leave a small amount of slack adjacent to the socket.

**6. Continue with the white wire,** which is the neutral wire. It attaches to the silver contact on the other side of the socket. The rest of the process is just like the procedure with the hot wire: line the neutral wire up in the 18-gauge hole, clamp down, and give the wire stripper a

GINA BELLOUS



**ABOVE** To conceal the socket and add a period touch, slip a faux wax-candle cover into the cup holder before adding the lightbulb.




turn to remove the plastic. Twist the exposed neutral wire and bend it over the contact in a small half loop, again to the right side so that, when it's tightened, the wire will move in a clockwise direction. It's very important from a safety standpoint that both wires are attached so they move clockwise. Pull the excess white wire through, leaving a small amount of slack around the contact.


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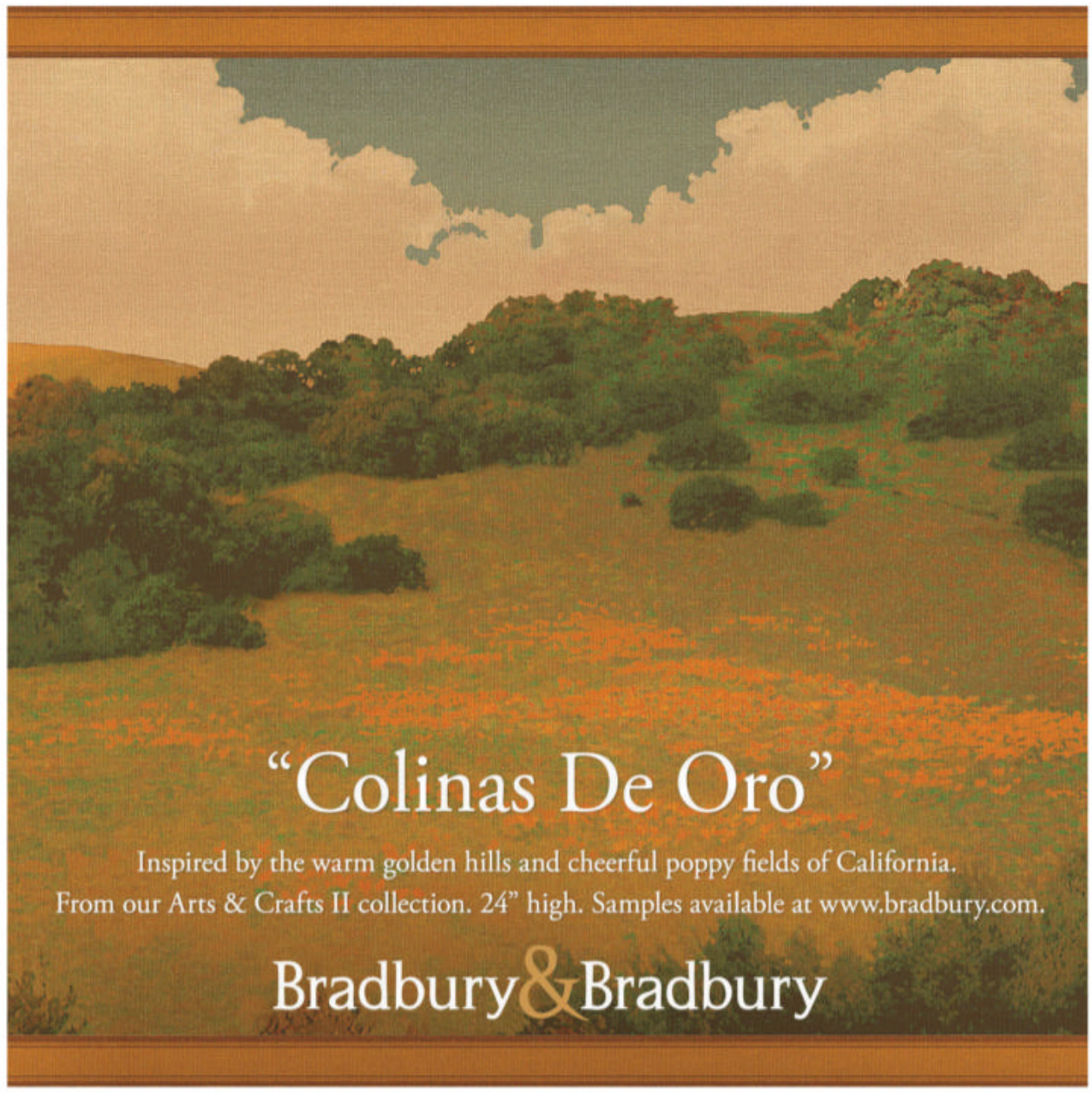
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## Polychroming

***Many of the fixtures I've collected would have been polychromed, with the relief picked out in a brighter color—such as gold against a darker background. For this sconce, I used just three coats of widely available metallic paints and a final coat of metallic finish wax to achieve the look I wanted.***

**STEP 1** Spray the sconce backplate with a coat of gold metallic paint. This will serve as the undercoat.

**STEP 2** Lightly spray hammered- copper metallic paint over the gold. Take care that the "hammered" look doesn't appear; allow some of the warmth of the gold undercoat to shine through.

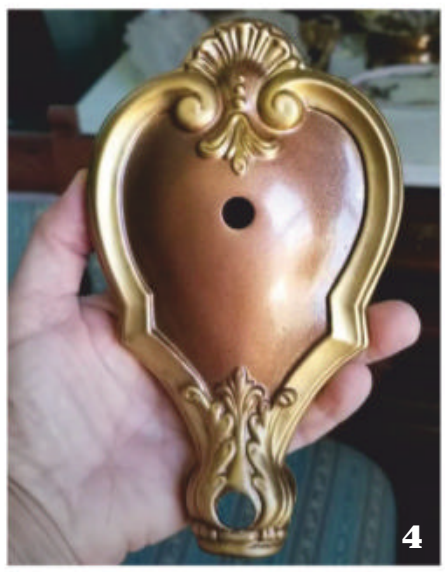
**STEP 3** Apply an antique dark copper metallic spray just around the raised edges. Keep the lighter center of the hammered-copper coat intact. This gives the fixture depth and creates the ombre effect typical of an early-20th-century polychrome fixture.

**STEP 4** Apply a gold-leaf metallic finish wax on the raised areas to further highlight them. I used Rub'n Buff from Amaco.


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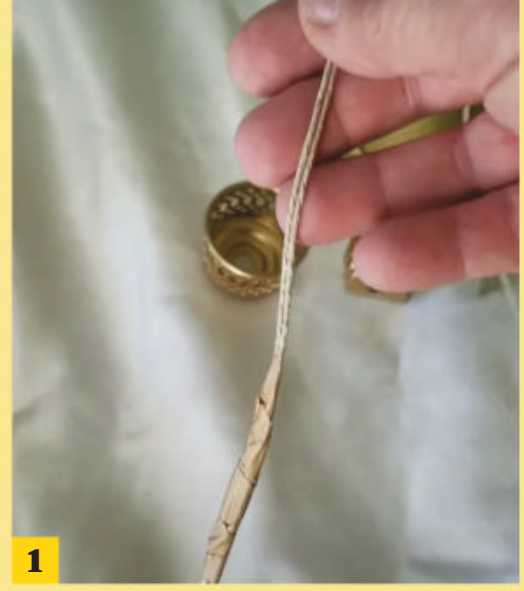

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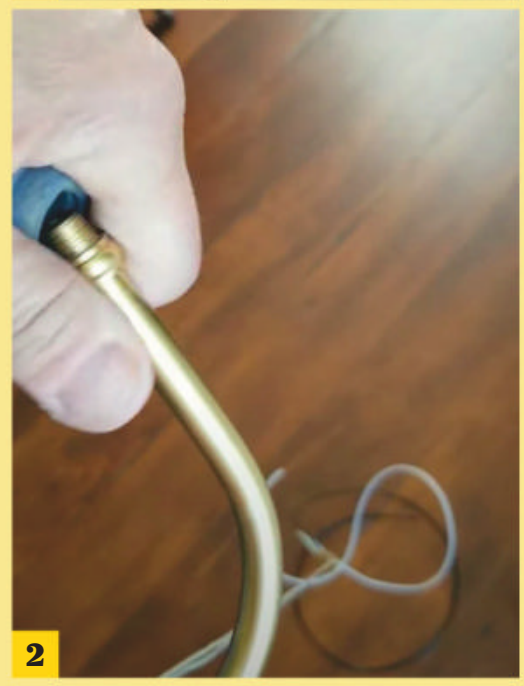

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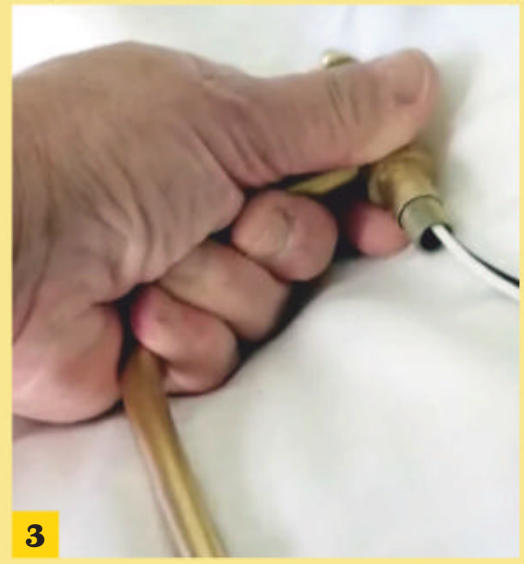
Go step by step and follow the protocols for safety, and rewiring a fixture is pretty easy. It's essential to document the order of disassembly so you can put it back together.

replacements for small but essential parts that were missing. Since that first light, I've rewired dozens of fixtures, including an ornate chandelier that I restored with a polychrome finish and rose-colored shades. Now that chandelier hangs in the guest room. Not only are the fixtures I've restored unique and beautiful, but also there is no way I would be able to afford similar ones in pristine condition—and no replicas are made.

If you follow electrical-work safety protocols and the steps outlined in this article, rewiring an old light fixture is actually pretty easy. It's essential to document the order in which your remove every part, so that you can reassemble correctly in reverse order. Take photos before and during disassembly.


1


2


3

## Pulling Wire

**1. To ease the new electrical** wires through the fixture, attach string to the cording, using extra-sticky paper tape. Wrap the tape around the cord so that it's tapered toward one end.

**2. Insert the taped cord** into one end of the fixture arm. Place a vacuum cleaner hose at the other end and use the suction from the hose to pull the wire through the arm.

**3. The cord should follow.** If it resists, pull on the string gently until the cord comes through.


FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 87.





**ABOVE** Third generation: Michael Krauss and Maria Peragine are flanked by sons Luke and Sam, the company's marketing and tech handlers. **LEFT** The West Rupert, Vermont, showroom was formerly a toothpick factory. **BELOW** (from top) One of Authentic Designs' proprietary finishes, gunmetal can read bluish or dark bronze in different light. • Patterns for center-body fixtures (and a chair leg or two), on display in the woodshop.

**SHOP**TOUR:

*Historical lighting at*

# Authentic Designs

The founder began making period lighting fixtures for his own restoration of a Long Island farmhouse. **By Mary Ellen Polson**

***Michael Krauss and Maria Peragine are the second-generation owners of Authentic Design,*** makers of early replica lighting, founded in 1966 by Michael's father, Danny. Today's showroom and workshop are housed in a restored toothpick factory in rural Vermont. Terne, brass, and shaped-wood fixtures glitter with electric candlelight. "Everything you see is built here," says Michael.

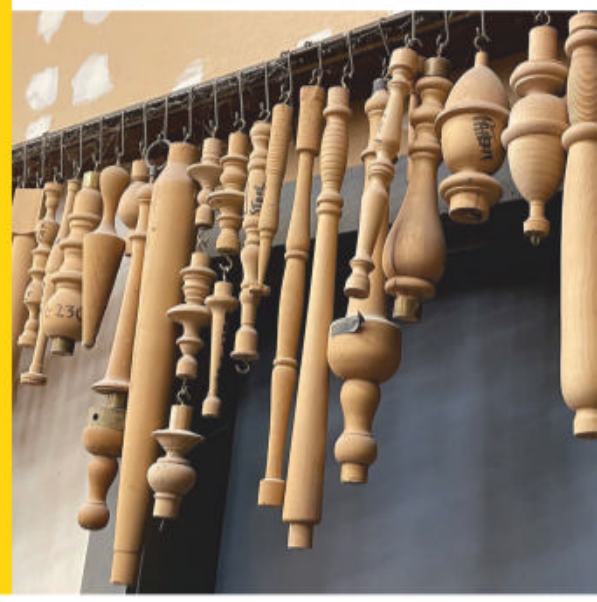
A talented team hand-forms or lathe-turns bases, then applies finishes, inserts concealed electrical wiring, and UL-tests each fixture. Wiring skinny-arm fixtures requires a knack: Wires forced through bent arms are almost impossible to thread once past 360 degrees. "For the most part, we make lighting to order because we have so many models and so many finishes," Maria says.

Most fixtures are based on historic originals—some brought to them by clients. Authentic Designs keeps "build books" with exploded drawings for each model. Fixtures with wood center bodies are produced, from octagonal wood blocks, on a duplicating lathe that exactly follows the contours of the company's many pattern blanks. While the duplicating lathe is a timesaver, Krauss says, "functionally, it is pretty much identical to what a 19th-century wood lathe did."

Alchemy plus artistry produces the beautiful finishes. Some will continue to darken with age. Others can be enhanced with verdigris or other treatments. Painted finishes usually begin with application of paint in a spray booth, followed by brush painting by hand.

Their subtle finishes are best appreciated at the showroom. (800) 844-9416, **authenticdesigns.com**







# New Lamps from Old Parts

When antique parts from different objects are put together, it's called a marriage. These examples sing! **By Brian D. Coleman**

Twenty years ago, Nancy Heckler was renovating an old farmhouse. She had trouble finding suitable table lamps: most were boring—not stylish, well-made, or period-sensitive. So she began making her own, often reconstructing old lamps. She collected lampshades and eventually amassed thousands of parts, from finials to bases. Friends asked her to make them lamps and a business was born—not a repair shop, she notes, but a studio offering one-of-a-kind art lamps. It's called Luminola Custom Vintage Lighting: **facebook.com/luminolalightingdesign/**

**ABOVE** From her curated collection of thousands of vintage and antique parts, Nancy Heckler designs and crafts lamps by restoring bases and shades while adapting old parts and pieces. Each one-of-a-kind lamp is rewired and ready for use.

### The Cost

You'll also need a wire stripper, utility knife, pliers, and a flathead screwdriver.

| | |
|---|---|
| VINTAGE LAMP BASE | $50+ |
| VINTAGE SHADE | $35+ |
| REWIRING KIT | $12 |
| ELECTRICAL TAPE | $ 5 |
| 1/8 IP-27 METAL LAMP PIPE | $12 |
| TOTAL | $114+ |

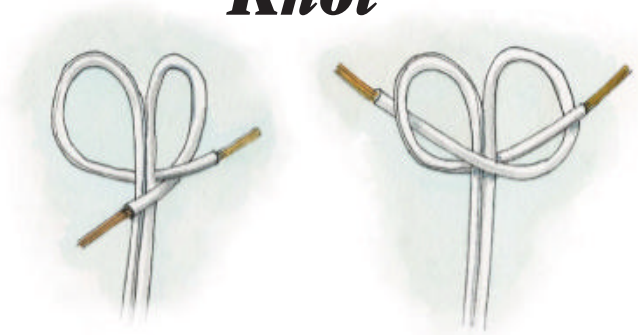
## *to begin*

Heckler finds old, often broken lamps everywhere—at flea markets and antiques malls, at garage and estate sales. She won't hesitate to buy beat-up old lamp if she can salvage one special part, whether it's the prancing-horse base of a TV lamp, a Bakelite finial, or a period lampshade. She methodically takes each lamp apart, keeping components that will be useful, and organizes them by color, composition, and use.

Design begins with a tall, ⅜"-diameter wooden dowel that has been mounted vertically to a square base as a mockup tool. Heckler stacks and restacks items around the focal point on the stem, be that a jadite vase or a glass bauble. She then takes the model apart and restacks pieces onto ⅜" OD table lamp pipe (⅛ IP-27 metal lamp pipe), which is securely attached from the lamp's base to the top socket shell assembly. A harp is added to support the shade. Standard 18-gauge lamp wire (SPT-1) is run from the bottom through the pipe and attached to the

HOW TO TIE AN

## *Underwriter's Knot*



*Step One* *Step Two*

socket. A final test run with a lightbulb ensures everything is working properly. Heckler finishes by selecting just the right shade, which might be fiberglass, parchment, paper, mica, or old glass. She works with color, texture, and form to complement and balance the base, creating a new old lamp.

## *rewiring: 7 easy steps*

Rewiring an old lamp is straightforward; the simplest way is to buy a rewiring kit at the hardware store. It'll contain an 8' minimum cord length lamp wire, a plug on the end of the wire, a harp, and a 660 watt/250 volt socket.

**1.** Unplug the lamp and take off the shade and harp.
**2.** Loosen the socket, unscrewing the side screw and turning it counterclockwise but leaving it in place.
**3.** Cut off the electric cord at the bottom with the wire stripper, leaving about two inches, and pull out the socket.
**4.** With a flathead screwdriver, pop open the outer socket shell and remove it from the socket to expose the inner socket.
**5.** Push the new wire up through the metal stem, leaving six inches at the bottom, securing it with an underwriter's knot.
**6.** Strip the ends of the new wire and attach them to the terminals on the new socket with the screws: the silver screw is for the neutral (ribbed) wire, the brass screw is for the hot (smooth or copper-color) wire.
**7.** Reassemble the socket shell around the socket and screw it into the stem, then pull the excess cord down through the bottom.

*This knot is used to reduce strain on the terminal screws and keeps the wires from breaking free of the socket.*
***Step One:*** *Form a loop with one wire so that it passes behind the cord. With the second wire, form another loop that passes across the cord.*
***Step Two:*** *Feed the end of the first loop through the second loop. Do the same with the end of the second loop through the first one. Pull both ends to tighten the knot.*

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|---|---|---|
| OLD HOUSE JOURNAL | 0094-0178 | 10/1/22 |

| 4. Issue Frequency | 5. Number of Issues Published Annually | 6. Annual Subscription Price |
|---|---|---|
| JAN/FEB, MAR/APR,MAY/JUN,JUL/ AUG,SEP/OCT, NOV/DEC | SIX | $24.00 |

7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4): 2143 GRAND AVENUE, DES MOINES, IA 50312 — Contact Person: Paige Nordmeyer; Telephone: 515-875-7053

8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer): 2143 GRAND AVENUE, DES MOINES, IA 50312

9. Full Names and complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)
Publisher (Name and complete mailing address): ACTIVE INTEREST MEDIA HOLDCO, 2143 GRAND AVENUE, DES MOINES, IA 50312
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|---|---|
| OLD HOUSE JOURNAL | Oct-22 |

| 15. Extent and Nature of Circulation | | Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months | No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run) | | 44,993 | 44,019 |
| b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail) | (1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541. (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies) | 30,649 | 29,668 |
| | (2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541. (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies) | 0 | 0 |
| | (3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS® | 2,295 | 2,000 |
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| c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4)) | | 32,814 | 31,668 |
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| e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3) and (4)) | | 435 | 345 |
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| g. Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3)) | | 11,744 | 12,106 |
| h. Total (Sum of 15f and g) | | 44,993 | 44,019 |
| i. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c / 15f x 100) | | 98.69 % | 98.62 % |

| 16. Electronic Copy Circulation | Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months | No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date |
|---|---|---|
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| b. Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies | 33,077 | 31,808 |
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| Paige Nordmeyer | 9/20/22 |

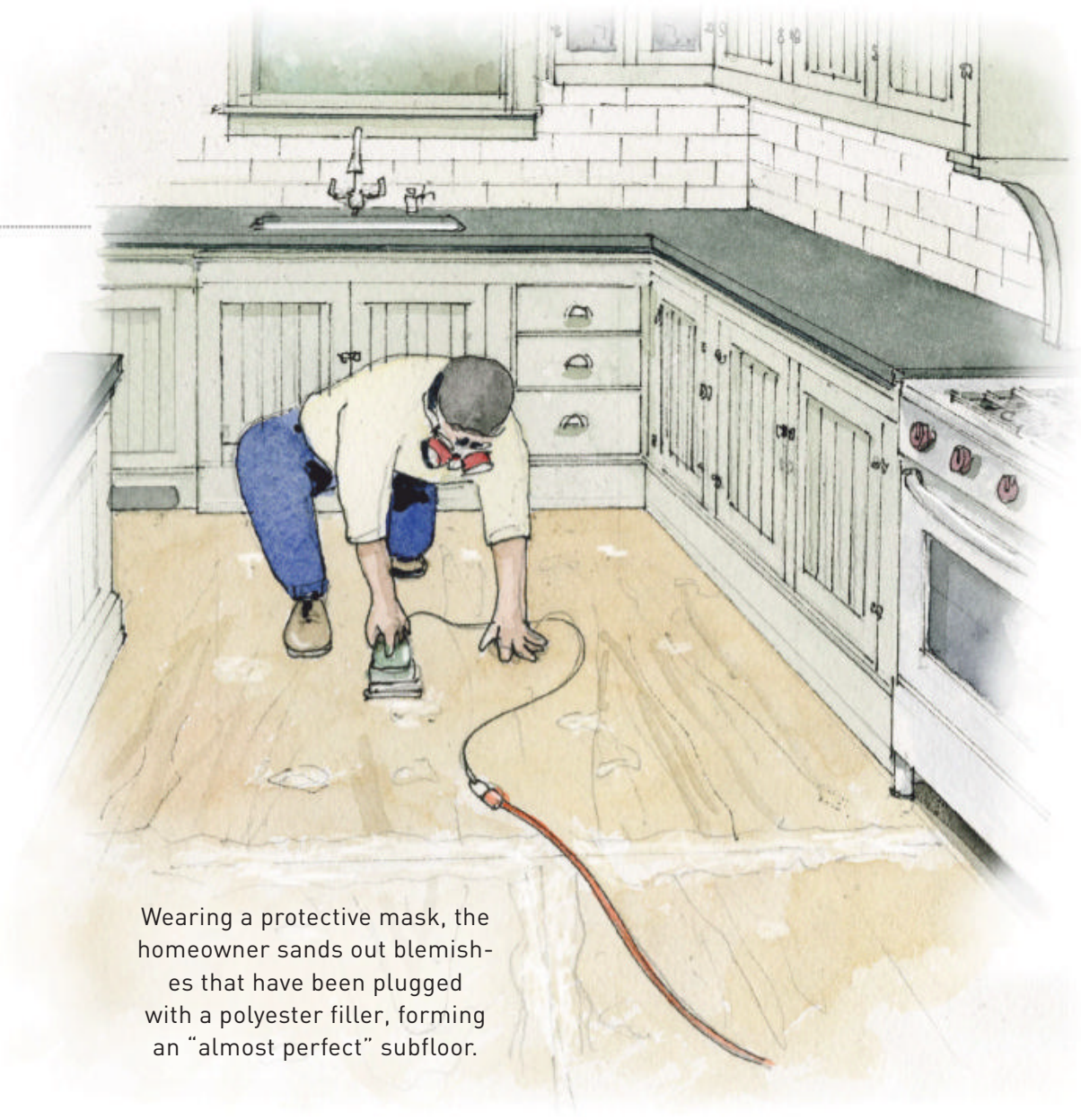
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# LAYING LINO TILES

Parallel or on the diagonal, one color or a checkerboard: real linoleum is practical and lends period appeal. Precut tiles make it a DIY job.

**Linoleum is homey** and durable, as well as hypo-allergenic, antimicrobial, and biodegradable. Neither as hard as commercial tile nor as soft as vinyl, it is easy underfoot. The color goes all the way through so it doesn't wear off. You can buy it in sheets or as tiles. A checkerboard is a time-honored choice. Black and white is classic, but many other combinations have been used.



Wearing a protective mask, the homeowner sands out blemishes that have been plugged with a polyester filler, forming an "almost perfect" subfloor.

***Your color choice will complement the rest of the kitchen and perhaps conjure up a certain decade from the past. These illustrations suggest Forbo Marmoleum Solid in Rosemary Green 3355 and Black 3323.***

***Although manufacturers suggest that linoleum be installed professionally, many people familiar with old-house repairs and projects find the job manageable. These illustrations are based on an actual DIY job in the kitchen of a ca. 1930 house.***

## THE SUBSTRATE

Lino tiles today generally come in 12" and 20" squares, whereas historic linoleum tiles were 6" or 9". You can have the supplier cut 20" tiles into four 10" squares to approximate the older look. In a large room, 12" may be fine. Under any kind of resilient flooring, the substrate must be secure, seamless, and smooth, as joints and movement will show up in the relatively pliant linoleum. Standard practice is to lay smooth-faced ¼" Lauan plywood over the subfloor, fastening the sheets every 6" or so with ring-shank nails, joints staggered. In this job, the subfloor was already new tongue-and-groove plywood glued and screwed to the old floor. So the owners elected to use polyester filler in blemishes, then gave the surface a thorough sanding.

Some tips: Leave kick boards off the cabinets for now, so that the lino can be laid to extend slightly under cabinets. Undercut door casings at the floor to slip tiles beneath the trim. A shoe moulding will cover less-than-perfect measuring or cutting.

## DESIGN & LAYOUT

A checkerboard can run square to the walls or on the diagonal. Use actual tiles or colored paper to test it out on the floor. Diagonal placement "moves the eye" and often makes the room feel bigger. Look at your pattern layout from other rooms to check for calm sightlines. For a very subtle checkerboard, consider two similar colors, or two different colors of the same saturation (dark or light). You can even alternate the "marble grain" from tile to tile for a slight basketweave effect. Instead of a checkerboard, you can create a zigzag or plaid-like pattern. Also consider a border.

Once you have a design, find the

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROB LEANNA



*More Online* Checkerboard gallery: **https://www.oldhouseonline.com/kitchens-and-baths-articles/checkerboard-kitchen-floors/**



Popping a carpenter's chalk line helps center the pattern across the floor and keep tiles in alignment.

center of the room, then use a level and a carpenter's chalk line to mark it: you'll follow this mark to align the pattern. Check that tiles will fit across the room from this start line, with only small pieces remaining at the walls. If walls bisect large pieces of tile on just one side of the room, adjust the starting point until edge pieces are even on both sides.

## LAYING TILES

Have supplies at hand: the recommended adhesive, notched trowels, straightedge, razor knife, rubber hammer, dust brush, and rags. Knee pads are recommended. Be sure the substrate is very clean and dry. Lay out the installation with a few more chalk lines. Begin at your predetermined start point, usually the center point of the pattern in the room. For a diagonal pattern, align the tiles' corners with the start line. Apply linoleum adhesive with a notched trowel, per the linoleum manufacturer's instructions, over a small area—aim to cover an area of at least two, but no more than four, tiles. Line up two or four tiles as straight as possible while keeping the mastic off the surface. (If you get adhesive on the top of a tile, immediately wipe it off with a slightly damp cloth. Too late? Once it's dry, it will come off with mineral spirits.

## SETTING TILES

When those tiles are in place, pound them down soundly with a rubber hammer. Keep checking your pattern and tile orientation so you can move a tile before it sets. Slowly and methodically work your way out to the sides, and then across the room. Plan your exit.

Measure and cut carefully so you don't run out of tiles from discarding your mistakes. A checkerboard installation means buying a minimum quantity of two different colors—you don't want to have to re-order two boxes.

## EDGES & CORNERS

A few tools are all you need to cut the edges of linoleum tile. To trim the tile, the homeowner is using a razor knife, a straightedge, and a board as a work surface.

If you have an out-of-square wall, use a carpenter's bevel gauge to copy the angles. (A bevel gauge is useful for all cuts if the room is significantly out of square.)

Once you've fitted in all full-size tiles, cut edge and corner pieces using a sharp razor utility knife. At pipes, measure, cut the hole, then make a straight cut from the hole to the least visible edge of the tile, so you can maneuver it around the pipe. Cut tiles, supported on a board, with a very sharp razor knife, using a speed square or framing square as a straightedge. Use a carpenter's profile gauge to measure unusually shaped areas. A sharp rasp will clean up minor imperfections on tile edges; use it, too, for minor adjustments.

Don't walk on the floor for three days. If you must, lay plywood over the linoleum and walk gingerly.

***THANKS TO STEVE AND LISA JORDAN FOR SHARING THEIR DIY TECHNIQUES.***





As you place each floor tile, carefully wiggle to help set it firmly in the adhesive.



**LEFT** After carefully laying a field of tiles and pounding them in place, the owner goes over seams with a wallpaper seam roller. **ABOVE** To trim the edges of linoleum tile, the homeowner is using a razor knife, a straightedge, and a board as a work surface.

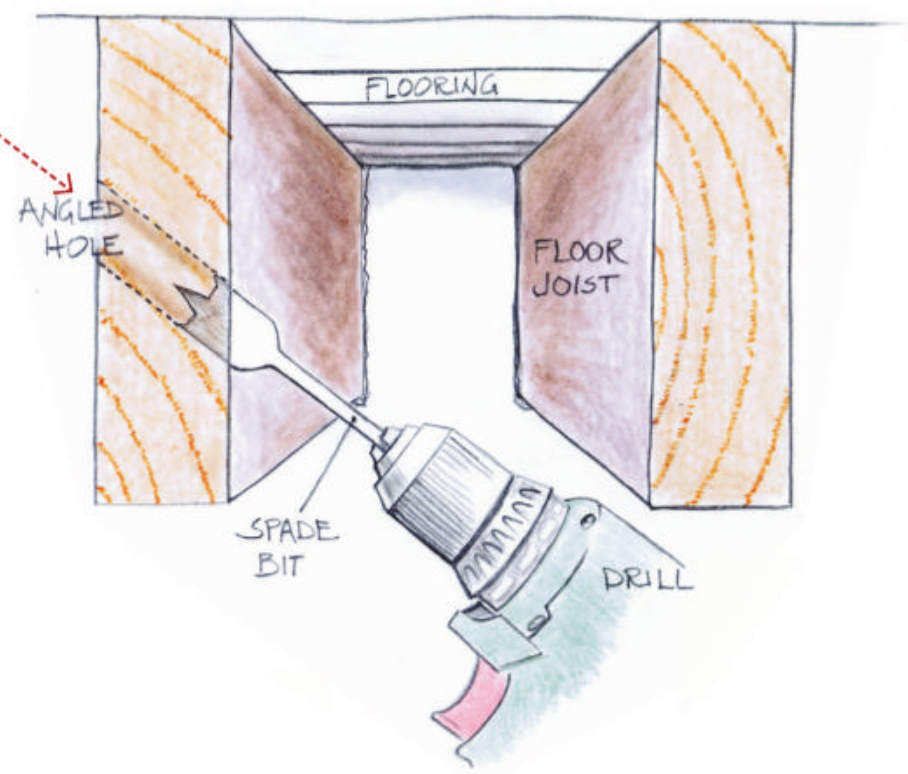
# Drilling Holes in Tight Places

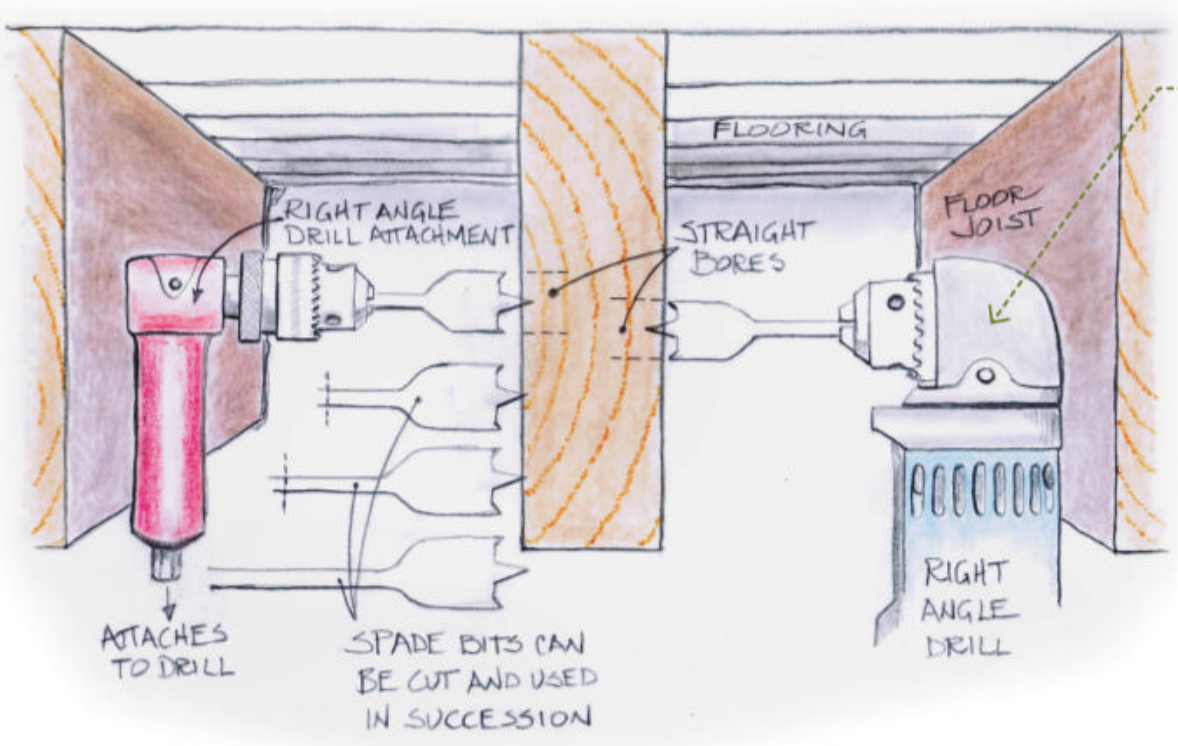
Ample space usually exists between floor joists or studs to allow drilling holes for plumbing or wiring. Eventually, however, you will encounter a space that cannot accommodate the drill and the bit. When this happens, consider buying or renting one of these items. First, a short drill bit: Spade bits come in short lengths, or you might simply cut a regular bit to a shorter length. Second, attachments designed to fit into a drill chuck: These hold the bit at a right angle to the drill body. Third, drills designed for just this situation: The chuck is positioned at a 90° angle to the drill body. It's a more expensive solution, so look to borrow or rent a drill like this unless you do a lot of drilling in tight spaces. **By Ray Tschoepe**

## WRONG WAY

### OFF AT AN ANGLE

Without the proper bits or drills, boring in tight spaces—and being careful to introduce the hole in the recommended middle third of the joist, etc.—can be daunting. Angled holes, whether directed horizontally or vertically, may work for flexible wire, but are completely unsuited for water or gas lines. Further, depending on the incline, steeply angled holes can remove a significant amount of wood and consequently should be avoided when possible.




## RIGHT WAY

### SOLUTIONS EXIST

If even a short drill bit won't afford the space you need, opt for a right-angle attachment or even a right-angle drill. These significantly reduce the amount of space required to maneuver and use the drill. If space is still too tight for a standard spade bit, buy several bits and cut them into perhaps three lengths. Drill, using each successively longer length, by fitting each longer bit into the partially drilled hole.

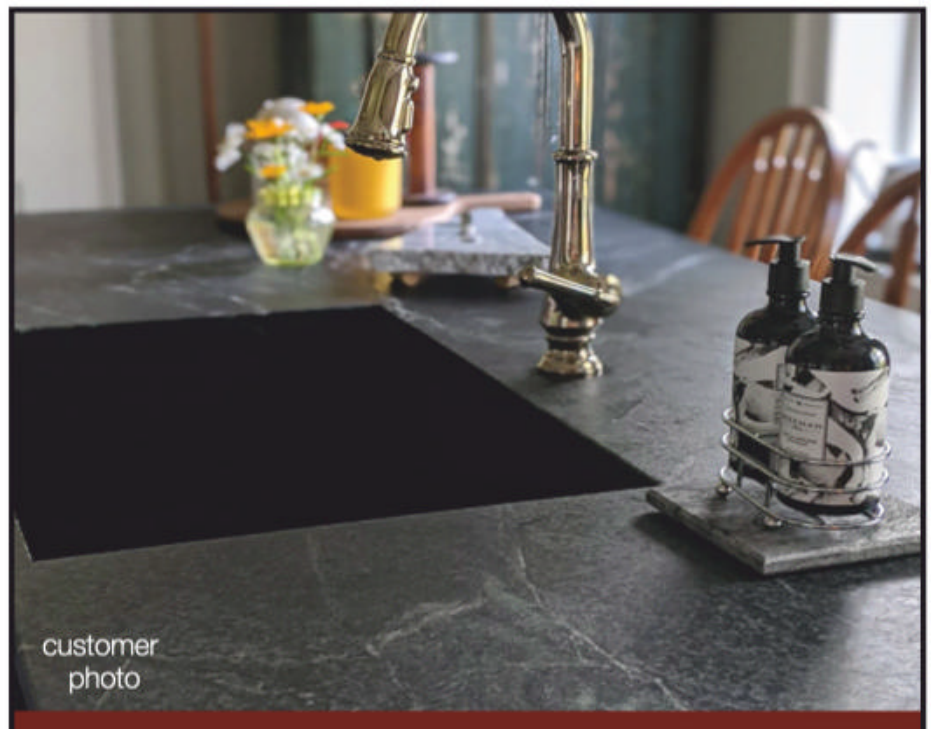
ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY TSCHOEPE

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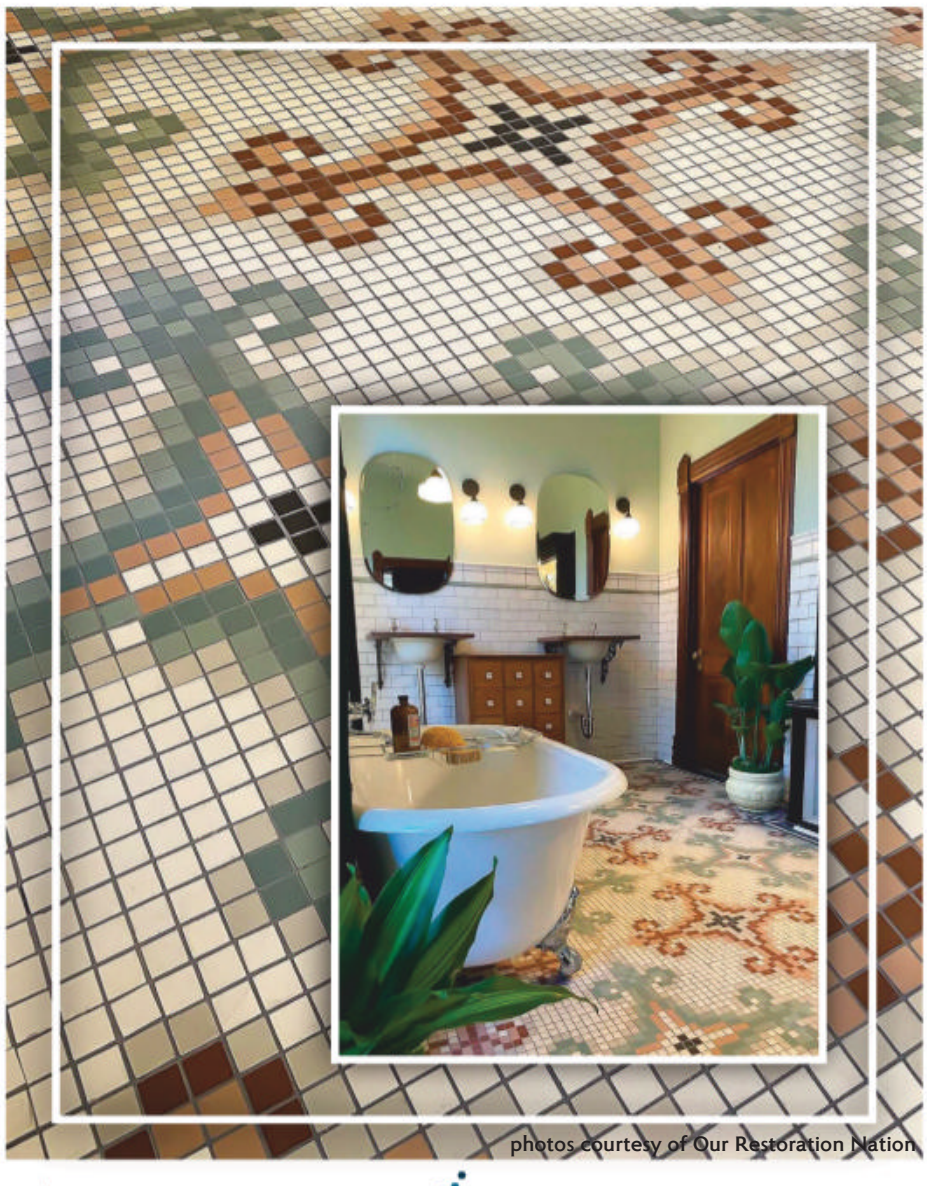
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**LEFT** Brass number tacks match sash to corresponding openings. **ABOVE** A vintage set of Acro Tacks.

**Q:** I'm removing my 1910 double-hung wood windows for restoration and every sash is a different size. Do you know a permanent way to label each window and its sash (e.g., "LR north")? There must have been a system! A Sharpie isn't doing it. *—Donna Plante*

**A:** I just know we've covered this sometime in the past 50 years, so I went looking for "window buttons," "sash ID," etc. Nope, they are called sash tacks or number tacks, dating to Acro Hold-Tite Numbering Tacks popular since the 1940s. Cards hold two of each number. You can use them to match up sashes, storms, or screens to their respective window openings. You also can use them for shutters—or really any other house part that has multiple pairings. Made of brass, the barbed tacks really grip the wood and stay legible.

No room here for inscriptions like "BR West" . . . just a number. Pick a window to call 1, then count them clockwise or counterclockwise around the house. Place one tack on the sash and its mate in the window opening.

You can find vintage Acro tacks online, but reproduction sets are available: SRS Hardware (srshardware.com) has them in sets numbered 1–25 and 26–50. Look for a discount on the ten-card contractor's packs. House of Antique Hardware sells them, too (houseofantiquehardware.com).

In old houses, wood windows each may be unique in size and shape, or they may have gotten that way through settlement. Marking them before sash removal will save time and frustration! *—Patricia Poore*

I am a facilities manager looking for 1920s porcelain shower faucet handles in the cross pattern. I believe the tub and shower valves are from American Standard. Can you help? *—Dan Clark, Bradford, Mass.*

Those cross-style faucets also are called spoke-handle faucets, a popular design made in both metal and porcelain. Find a useful article and an extensive source list at *oldhouseonline.com/repairs-and-how-to/plumbing-electrical/bathroom-retrofits-other-plumbing-fixes/*

Your best bet is to scour local salvage houses that stock vintage plumbing parts, which may offer faucet handles as sets. Not far from you: Architectural Salvage in Exeter, N.H. (603-773-5635, oldhousesalvage.com) and NorEast Architectural Antiques near Seabrook (603-394-0006, noreast1.com). Walter Parker, "the old school plumber" (508-341-3331, oldplumbfixer.com) is in Dudley, Mass. The Chicago Faucet Shoppe (chicagofaucetshoppe.com) has a large antique inventory. *—Mary Ellen Polson*




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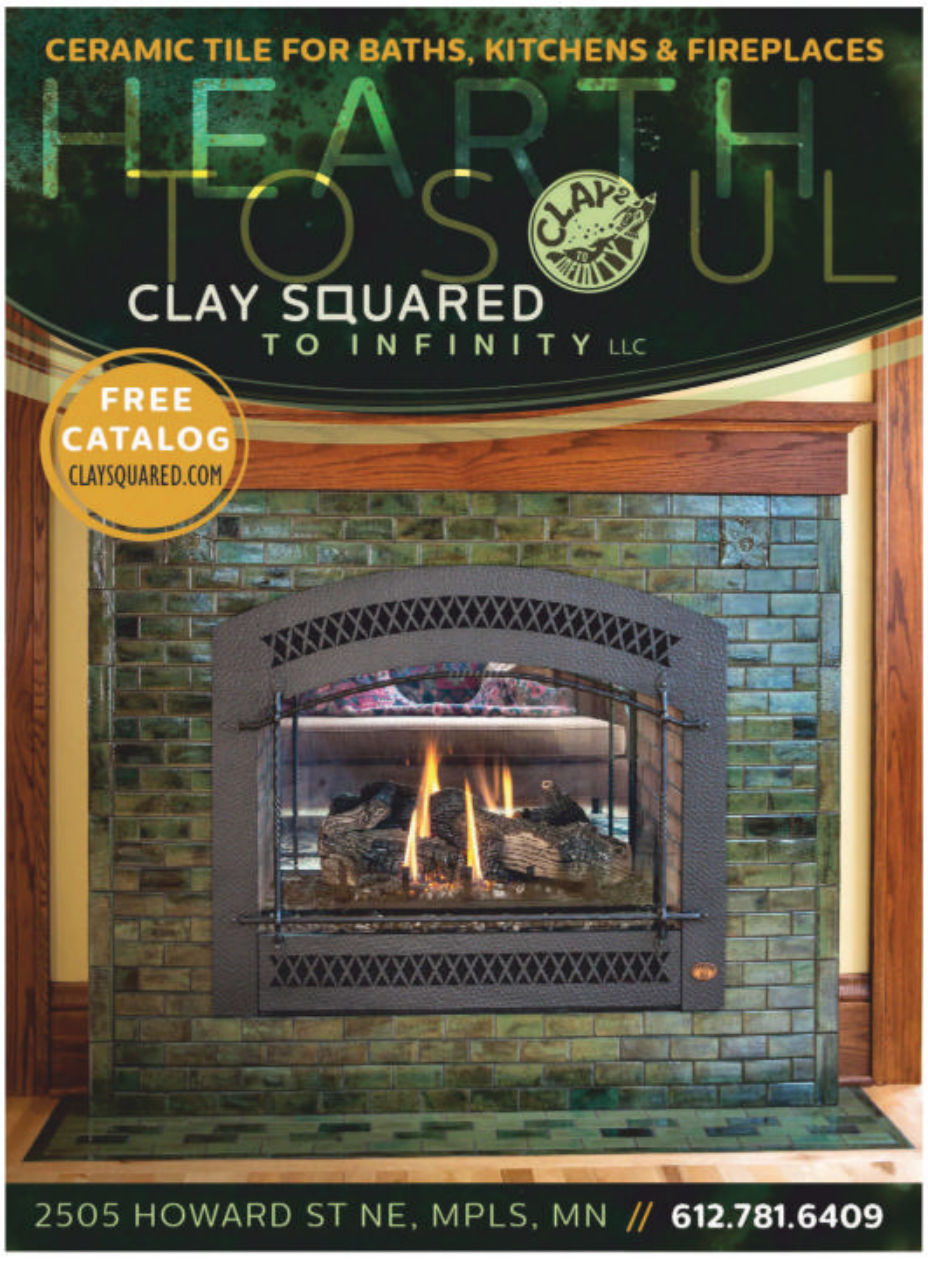


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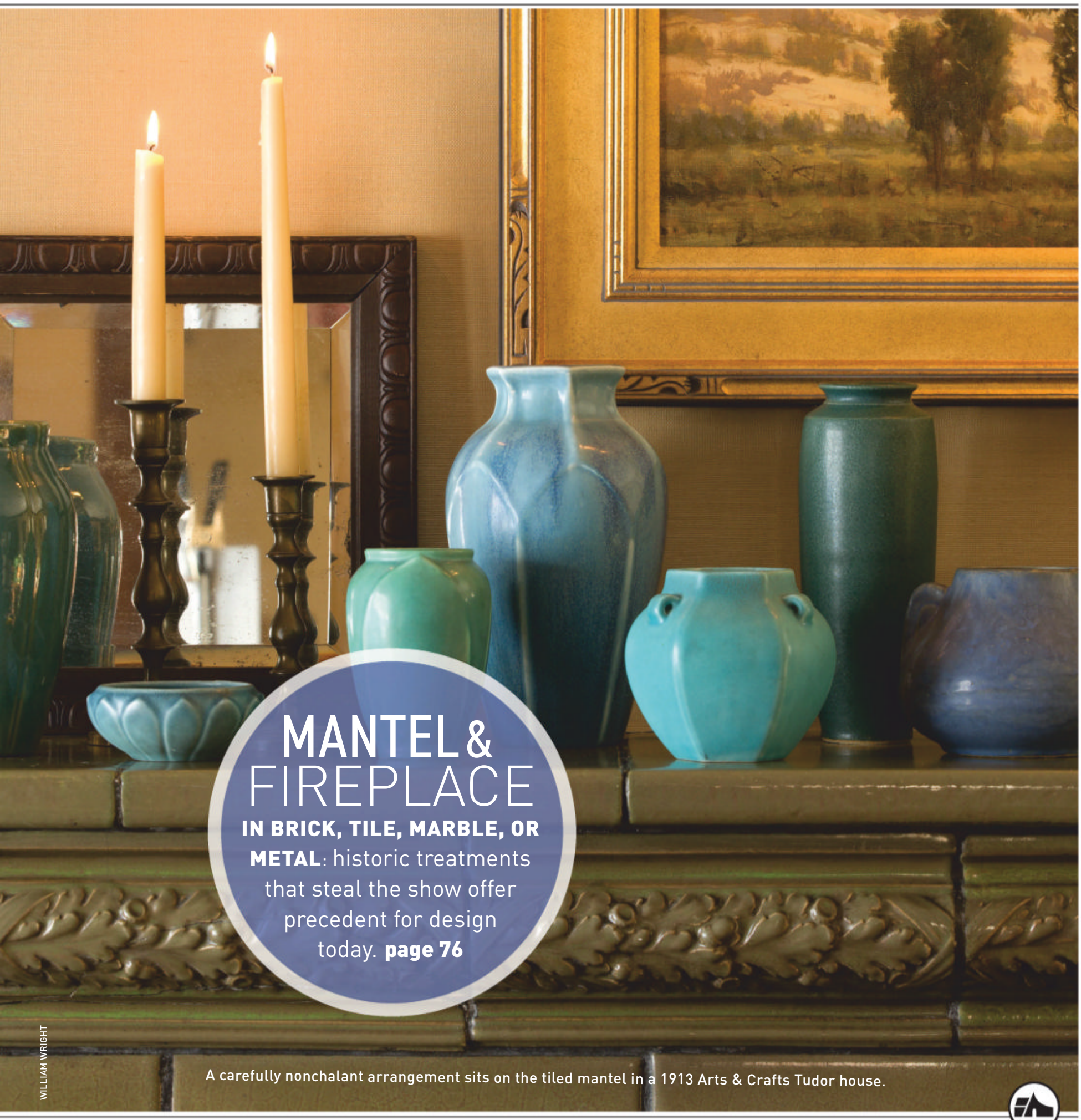
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# INSPIRE



## MANTEL & FIREPLACE

**IN BRICK, TILE, MARBLE, OR METAL**: historic treatments that steal the show offer precedent for design today. **page 76**

WILLIAM WRIGHT

A carefully nonchalant arrangement sits on the tiled mantel in a 1913 Arts & Crafts Tudor house.


**60** **AN ARTISTIC HOUSE**
Restoring a tiny 1920 bungalow.
**+ CONTEMPORARY POTTERY**

**68** **MID-CENTURY DONE RIGHT**
A Cinderella story from Encino.
**+ WATER-WISE LANDSCAPE**

**76** **HEARTH & HOME**
Fireplaces unique and historic.
**+ ON THE MANTEL**



## SUBSTANTIAL HEARTH

The original sandstone fireplace anchors the west side of the living room. A mix of vintage and new American Arts & Crafts furnishings includes leather-covered Morris chairs.



Above the mantel, a California plein-air painting in a gilded oak frame adds a luminescent glow. **RIGHT** Broad, overhanging eaves frame the portico. Original window glass and front door and the painted redwood lap siding lend street appeal.



# AN Artistic House
## EVERY INCH BELOVED

***Boulevards lined with palm trees are populated with bungalows and Spanish Revival homes*** in neighborhoods with scenic views stretching from the Santa Ynez Mountains to the Pacific; year-round temperatures are in the 70s. It's easy to see why Santa Barbara is so popular, and why housing is in demand. When Steve Dowty and Dee Duncan were looking for a home near the city's historic downtown, Steve, an architect, knew that anything affordable would require renovation. He wasn't discouraged when they found a 1300-square-foot house in the historic Bungalow Haven District. Built circa 1920, its bones were good and he could see past problems he called "cosmetic": Texcote sprayed over redwood siding; fir trim inside slathered in layers of blue and white glossy paint; oak floors hidden under green shag carpeting.

### WITH A GOOD EYE, THIS COUPLE MADE A TINY BUNGALOW A THING OF BEAUTY

*By Brian D. Coleman / photographs by William Wright*

**POTTERY COLLECTING** began when a neighbor gave Steve a ca. 1910 vase by the Los Angeles potter Cornelius Brauckman. His interest piqued, Steve began acquiring richly hued American and British pottery.





**LEFT** Watercolors painted by owner Steve Dowty hang above an oak Craftsman-style cabinet used for extra kitchen storage in the breakfast room. **RIGHT** Homeowners Steve Dowty and Dee Duncan on the front porch. • (below) Cabinets from Steve's grandparents' bungalow were restored and now display more of the pottery collection in the living room. **BOTTOM LEFT** A collection of early-20th-century Bretby pots on display. **OPPOSITE** The dining room is centered on a Stickley-design oak dining table from Hile Studio, Inc.



Nevertheless, the original layout had never been altered. Rooms were open, filled with light from exceptionally large windows. The original sandstone fireplace in the living room was intact, and cracked plaster ceilings were easily repaired.  A generous backyard had space for extensive gardens, and even offered vistas towards the Pacific and the Channel Islands.

A weighty sandstone fireplace centers the western end of the living room. The couple's mix of vintage and new Arts & Crafts furnishings include a custom Stickley reproduction settle, leather-covered Morris-style chairs, and a comfortable Stickley rocker. Above the mantel, a California plein-air painting in a gilded oak frame adds a luminescent glow.

Steve Dowty began collecting pottery when a neighbor gave him a ca. 1910 Grand Feu vase by LA potter Cornelius Brauckman. His interest piqued, he began acquiring Arts & Crafts ceramics including Rookwood, Niloak, and Weller, along with pots by British makers including Ault, Bretby, and Martin Brothers. Before long, richly hued vases, jugs, candlesticks, and bowls crowded cabinets and tabletops throughout the house.

At the center of the house, the spacious dining room boasts a sparkling, leaded-glass, built-in china hutch on the south wall, which  holds more of Steve's extensive pottery collection. The focus is on a Stickley Director's oak



## British Pottery

*Collector Steve Dowty says that British pottery complements his vintage American pieces.* ***Three favorites:*** ***• Martin Brothers (1877–1923)*** *The four brothers were famous for eccentric, often grotesquely modeled figurines—such as "Wally Birds"—and for wheel-thrown ceramics. They specialized in a distinctive salt-glazed stoneware with an orange-peel texture reminiscent of work in the Middle Ages.* ***• Bretby Art Pottery (1883–1933)*** *Henry Tooth and William Ault produced both inexpensive pressed pottery (often figural animals and birds) and more costly thrown wares. Innovative finishes imitated bronze, copper, steel, and wood.* ***• Ault Pottery (1887–1923)*** *Ault left Bretby in 1887 to run a pottery with his daughter Clarissa. He was known for glazes in turquoise and yellow; Christopher Dresser designed for him.*





**ABOVE** The built-in fir medicine cabinet is original. **LEFT** A wicker basket holds seashells collected on beaches nearby. **BELOW** The main bath was updated with a double casement window and nickel-plated, period fittings. **BOTTOM** Oranges and chickens Martha and Mabel in the garden, where bananas also grow.



**Simple, modest,** and filled with light, the restored ca. 1920 bungalow is now a comfortable family home that celebrates history, craftsmanship, and art.

dining table and comfortable, Gustav Stickley-design V-backed dining chairs upholstered in butterscotch leather, all from Warren Hile Studio. A sizeable chandelier from Arroyo Craftsman glows above. Under the window, a handsome Prairie-style desk is the perfect spot to read the mail while gazing at banana and citrus trees in the garden.

THE BACKYARD has been terraced into two levels separated by a low, sandstone-and-brick wall, and planted with fruit trees, with a small pond and stream in the center. Mable, a Plymouth Bard Rock hen, and Martha, a New Hampshire Red, settled in as permanent residents and were much appreciated by homeowners and neighbors for their daily production of one egg each.

Restoration of the little bungalow actually began in the kitchen, with the stripping of its painted woodwork. It was then stained a light limed-oak color and protected with three coats of McCloskey heirloom varnish. (Steve undertook this stripping himself, using heat guns, liquid stripper, and sanders. But, after the kitchen was finished, he sagely hired out the remainder.) Pendant lights illuminate the new center island, which is on casters. The island countertop is a maple butcher block, practical for food preparation. Other countertops are the original, earthy magnesite.

Every inch counts in the small room. New upper cabinets, built to match the original base cabinets in fir, add much-needed storage space. Dishwasher drawers are concealed within cabinets. Above the wainscot, walls are painted in cozy, warm Hubbard Squash, from Sherwin-Williams. An adjacent butler's pantry has become a cheerful breakfast room, its walls painted Sherwin-Williams Indian White—a warm buff color. The breakfast room opens to the dining room.

The bathroom had been remodeled by the previous owner, who installed a generous casement window. Steve and Dee added Arts & Crafts period details: a one inch-hex tile floor, subway-tiled walls, and period-style fixtures including a pedestal sink and a diminutive clawfoot tub tucked beneath the window.






FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 87.

## IN THE KITCHEN,

Arts & Crafts-style pendant lights from Arroyo Craftsman illuminate the new center island (which is on casters). The top is maple butcher block, practical for food preparation. Other countertops are the original, earthy magnesite, restored after the owners peeled off shiny white tiles. (Magnesite, a cementitious compound popular in the 1920s, was made from magnesium powder and water and poured in place, then ground and polished to a high sheen.) • Dishwasher drawers are concealed in cabinets. New upper cabinets, built to match the original fir base cabinets, add much-needed storage space. Above the wainscot, walls are painted in cozy, warm Hubbard Squash from Sherwin-Williams.

Magnesite counters are original; the butcher block island is movable. **RIGHT** Steve's grandparents' vintage stove was restored and put to good use in the lightly renovated kitchen.



# TOMORROW'S COLLECTIBLES

## CONTEMPORARY MAKERS OF ARTS & CRAFTS POTTERY.



**CLARK HOUSE POTTERY**
Unique work in the Arts & Crafts vein, some of it reminiscent of the work of "mad potter" George Ohr.
*facebook.com / Clark House Pottery*



**EPHRAIM POTTERY**
Kevin Hicks and team produce collaborative designs, hand thrown, sculpted, and finished with proprietary glazes.
*ephraimpottery.com*



**HOG HILL POTTERY**
The North Carolina studio of John and Scottie Post; working in verdigris, lusters, folk pottery, and cuerda seca.
*hoghillpottery.com*



**DOOR POTTERY**
A Wisconsin studio producing nature-inspired work in the tradition of Grueby, Rookwood, and Teco.
*doorpottery.com*



**ERIC OLSON POTTERY**
Original designs are formed and glazed by hand in the artist's Florida studio. Olson is influenced by the early-20th-century movement.
*ericolsonpottery.com*



**JCR DESIGNS**
Julie Calhoun–Roepnack produces art pottery in the North Carolina/A&C spirit, integrating carving and scraffito.
*jcrdesigns.net*



**KEN TRACY POTTERY**
Detailed botanical designs from a studio in Pineville, Louisiana. *facebook.com / Ken Tracy Pottery*



**ODD INQ**
Ceramics by Jonathan White Studio, in Maine, inspired by nature and industry. *oddinq.com*



**ONE ACRE CERAMICS**
Citing many influences, Thomas and Sarah Gelsanliter produce art pottery and tableware. *oneacreceramics.com*



**PAUL J. KATRICH**
Highly collectible luster pottery from his studio in Michigan: every work is unique, handmade, and never repeated. "Third Eye" is a recent piece. *katrich.org*



**PEWABIC POTTERY**
Besides tile, this Detroit pottery founded in 1903 offers multiple vase collections and ornaments, bowls and kitchen mugs. *pewabic.org*



**PRATT CLAY STUDIO**
Wisconsin potter Mary Pratt is influenced by botany, creatures, and medical illustration. *prattclaystudio.com*



**SHEARROW POTTERY**
Ohio's Bill Shearrow uses unusual techniques (naked raku) for porcelain art pieces. *shearrowpottery.com*



**SUZANNE CRANE FINE STONEWARE**
In her Virginia studio, Crane handcrafts delicate botanical vases, teapots, lamps & more. *suzannecrane.com*

# mid CENTURY

A TIRED, POSTWAR BUILDER'S BUNGALOW IS UPGRADED WITH MID-CENTURY MODERN DISCIPLINE IN A CINDERELLA STORY FROM ENCINO, CALIFORNIA.

BY BRIAN D. COLEMAN / PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN NEITZEL

**In 1915, when Los Angeles annexed Encino,** this was a dusty, ten-square-mile area of fruit orchards and sheep ranches in the San Fernando Valley. Following World War II, blocks of bungalows, including this house built in 1949, went up to provide affordable housing for soldiers. Never anything fancy, this house had two bedrooms and one bath, but was set on a generous lot, as land was still cheap. It was inexpensively covered in stucco and board-and-batten siding over 2x4s. Despite 110-degree summer temperatures in the Valley, the builders didn't bother with insulation.

Only two owners followed over the next 75 years; the updates were without frills. A back porch was enclosed during the 1960s and given knotty-pine paneling and a linoleum floor. Set on a concrete slab several steps lower than the house, to account for the foundation's





Textured concrete walls with metal control joints and an expansive window on the front porch give the house sophisticated, Mid-century Modern appeal. **LEFT** Homeowner Jim Davidson with Mickey, his German Shepherd, greeting from the porch.



**DROUGHT-TOLERANT** plantings soften the façade: *Aloe striata* (coral aloe), which blooms with two-foot-tall spikes of coral-red flowers in early spring; large *Aloe ferox* (Cape aloe,) whose lance-shaped leaves grow up to nine feet tall; and clumps of *Zephyranthes candida* (white rain lily).



The open family and dining room stretches across the back of the house, overlooking the rear terrace and garden. Simple furnishings include comfortable, Italian-leather Natuzzi sofa and chairs. Dining chairs are from Rapport International Furniture, in Los Angeles.

## LIGHT, OPEN SPACE

The former rec room was gutted, then reconfigured into a dining and family room. Walls of glass opening with sliding doors by Fleetwood bring the outside terrace and gardens inside. The dining table is 10 feet long.

LEARN MORE

# A GOOD GRAVEL PATH

Landscape contractor Marilee Kuhlmann and landscape architect Tom Rao, of Urban Water Group, designed and built the gravel paths for water-wise drainage. Here is their procedure.

**When we walk, drive, or move equipment over soil—or even just roll a trash can over the ground—we compact the soil. Compaction limits the infiltration of rainwater into the soil.** A gravel path can be permeable if the soil under the path is minimally compacted. Eco-Rain cells or another recycled paver product is used to disperse weight over a larger area, which lessens soil compaction. A two-inch Eco-Rain device, made of recycled plastic, creates a more stable walking surface than would loosely laid gravel on soil. It can be installed for ADA compliance. Water is held in the gravel-filled chamber and slowly infiltrates the soil. The cost is approximately $8 to $15 a square foot depending on the materials used. Gravel needs edging to hold it in place; recycled material is more economical than steel or stone edging.

We excavate for a path a depth of 2¾ to 3 inches, then level the area, install the edging, and place an Eco-Rain drainage cell system on the soil. No weed barrier is used. The cell device is approximately 9 square feet and is cut to fit; the cost is about $30. We backfill the cell device with cheap, crushed stone to a ¾" inch depth. Crushed stone with sharp edges has more water-holding void space compared to rounded stone. We top with a ¾" layer of decorative gravel, which covers the last ¼" inch within the cells, then more gravel to cover the top of the device. The ¼" to ½" remaining in the excavated space limits stone from traveling or popping out of the path.

**urbanwatergroup.com**





**RIGHT** (from top) The plastic drainage device and edging have been installed over the excavated pathways. • The finished gravel paths drain well without soil compaction and are very stable for walking compared to loose gravel without the open-cell plastic layer.

SAXON HOLT FOR URBAN WATER GROUP (PHOTOS RIGHT)

**RIGHT** A latticed, open terrace extends the house into the rear garden. It is bordered with arching clumps of golden-yellow painted bamboo (*Bambusa vulgaris* 'Vittata') across the back and feathery sago palm (*Cycas revoluta*) in the foreground, with mounds of thyme honey-myrtle (*Melaleuca thymifolia*) that blooms with soft, purple flowers throughout the year.





**RIGHT** The U-shaped kitchen is light and open, with new, rift-walnut veneer cabinets, a glass-tiled backsplash, and Caesarstone countertops.
**LEFT** Globe pendants and a Sputnik chandelier emphasize Mid-century Modern design.
**OPPOSITE** The narrow kitchen was updated in mid-century style. Globe-pendant lighting hanging over the bar counter was found online. The bar stools are from Rapport.



crawl space, the porch work was low budget, with windows left inoperable to avoid the cost of hinges, latches, and screens.

The kitchen had been remodeled, too, with inexpensive, dark-brown, particleboard cabinets, white-laminate counters, and plastic drawers, which had cracked and were held together by duct tape. The roof of a front-porch addition had improper support and was sagging in a worrisome manner. Interiors had been "brightened" in discordant hues: baby blue in the hallway, peach in the bedrooms, accompanied by orange shag carpets. A rusty chain-link fence separated the sidewalk from the burnt lawn.

When Jim Davidson saw the home for sale in 2008, he planned to update it to turn it into rental property. He started with new windows, but as he began working with architect Jose Fernandez and contractor Carlos Perez, Jim realized the job would go far beyond cosmetic fixes. The carport, an addition on the west side of the house, was so riddled with termites it needed to be taken down. That cheaply built kitchen and rear 1960s addition also had to go. Jim decided to bite the bullet and do things right, embarking on a major renovation to transform the ugly duckling into an attractive residence—for himself. As he drove around Encino neighborhoods looking for inspiration, he was drawn to the better Mid-century Modern homes. Upgrading within the period seemed to be the right move.

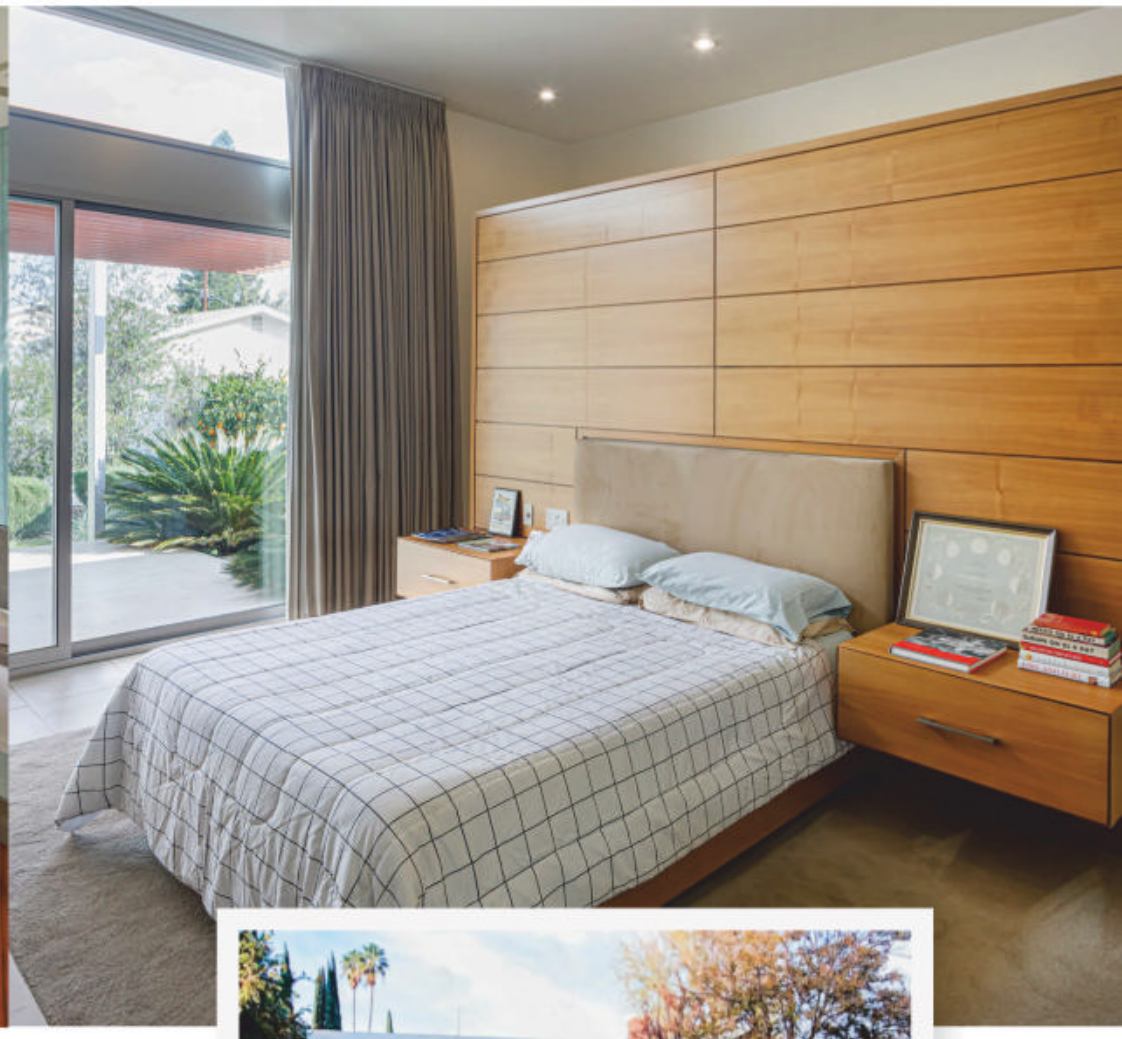
The façade was redone with a windowless, 12'-tall textured cement wall with metal control joints. This provided privacy from the street and disguised a gable over the two-car garage, which was enclosed to become a third bedroom. The entry was reconfigured with a 5 ¾' x 6 ¼' window overlooking the

**Davidson restores** vintage cars. Two large garages house 17 of them, from a 1941 Packard LeBaron to a 1970 Citroen DS. He wonders if the the streamlined designs of those classic autos led him to choose Mid-century Modern for the house.

















**TOP** (left) The primary bath opens to a private courtyard. Walls are lined with glass-block tiles to bring light inside. • (right) The light-filled primary suite has glass walls overlooking the rear garden. A floating wall screens closets and storage space. **LEFT** Homeowner Jim Davidson polishes a 1955 Topaz and White Jade Packard 400. Behind him is a 1956 Lincoln convertible in Huntsman Red. **ABOVE** (top) This is the postwar bungalow in 2008, before renovations. • (above) The rear façade and terrace, before restoration.

porch, along with floating concrete steps leading to the walkway. Materials were recycled whenever possible: the newer windows, which no longer fit, were donated to Habitat for Humanity.

Working with Marilee Kuhlmann and Tom Rao from Urban Water Group, who specialize in drought-tolerant landscapes, low water-usage plantings were selected to soften the rectilinear façade. Four *Parkinsonia* 'Desert Museum' palo verde trees screen the front yard from the street; they haven't been watered in five years yet stand 20' tall. Water conservation has been a primary focus. Driveways and walks were divided into five- to seven-foot concrete slabs separated by gravel, allowing rainwater to soak back the ground rather than running off into sluices and storm drains that send fertilizer and pollutants into the ocean. For irrigation in the dry season, a sophisticated system collects rainwater from the roof and stores it in four cisterns that hold 5,000 gallons each.

An open floor plan with expansive windows and minimal ornamentation—hallmarks of Mid-century Modern houses—replaced the cramped and dated interior. Light now streams into the living room through a floor-to-ceiling window overlooking the porch and front garden. The existing fireplace got a handsome, leathered granite surround in Absolute Black.

Furnishings are simple: a honey leather sofa and chairs by Natuzzi; a hinged, diptych oil by Salt Lake City artist Bill Laursen.


FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 87.



**LEFT** In Santa Monica, the front garden of a Tudor was transformed into a lush, water-wise landscape with drought-tolerant *Kurapia* replacing the lawn. Sun-loving African daisy *Arctotis stoechadifolia* adds bright color. **BELOW LEFT** Low water, high color: the orangey blossoms of Peruvian lily *Alstroemeria* 'Indian Summer' with yellow sundrops *Calylophus berlandieri*. **BELOW** Gravel over Eco-Rain cells allows drainage; *Aloe tongaensis* 'Medusa' plants ring the perimeter.





# CLIMATE-APPROPRIATE LANDSCAPES

## A Q&A WITH EXPERTS WHOSE BEAUTIFUL DESIGNS ARE ECOLOGICALLY SOUND.

No matter where you reside, it's becoming increasingly important to conserve water and plant wisely. Marilee Kuhlmann and Tom Rau, founders of Los Angeles-based Urban Water Group, specialize in low-water-use plantings and water conservation. Here's my interview with them. —**BRIAN D. COLEMAN**

**What is climate-appropriate landscaping?** This approach minimizes the amount of water and maintenance required. We integrate hardscape, grading, soil restoration, plant palette, rainwater harvesting, and irrigation methods into a cohesive whole. By understanding the available water resources and horticulture, we create spaces that go beyond arid desert landscapes. Instead, the result is fertile and conveys the sense of place, is aesthetically pleasing, has shade and shelter, reduces ambient temperatures, provides habitat and food for wildlife, and promotes well-being.

**What advice do you have for homeowners?** We each need to understand our impact; many of our misguided old "gardening" methods are not serving us well. For excellent booklets (free to download), check out the Green Gardens Group: **greengardensgroup.com/consulting node** (G3 Landscape Guidelines section). They explain what you need to build a garden or to better understand the processes, if you decide to hire a professional. We recommend Douglas Tallamay's book *Bringing Nature Home*, which explains how to bring biodiversity to your garden. Maintenance is easier if you have a looser, more natural gardening style that allows the products of nature to serve a purpose. Let that leaf lie right where it landed, let the flower produce seed for the birds, leave the aphids for the ladybeetles to clear up. If you do move debris, compost it and return that compost to the soil. Good soil has better water retention.

**What plants do you recommend?** Avoid plants with a high water requirement, like riparian (wetland) plants. Native oaks are the kings of biodiversity support; we'll use desert willows where space is limited, and also the native Catalina cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia ssp. lyonii*). There's a manzanita species to go into any size space; our favorite right now is *Arctostaphylos* 'John Dourley', good for a bird garden.

SAXON HOLT FOR URBAN WATER GROUP

*More Online* Garden books: **oldhouseonline.com/gardens-and-exteriors/books-old-house-gardeners/**





**LEFT** Wood "bamboo" is an Anglo–Japanese element in an 1886 New England house. **BELOW** Shelves for figurines flank the brick arch of a ca. 1900 fireplace, in Vermont. **OPPOSITE** In the Aesthetic 1886 house, cherry wood and plaster painted in the Japanese style create a stunning entry-hall fireplace.

# HEARTH & HOME

*Unique, historic fireplaces show that style variants went far beyond Federal restraint and Arts & Crafts brickwork. The mantel might be anything from a rustic shelf let into stone to a soaring architectural composition . . . it might be of carved wood or marble, slate or cast iron, with paint decoration or a clever faux finish.* **BY PATRICIA POORE**

ONLY THE exterior of a house and perhaps its staircase are more indicative of style than the fireplace. The neoclassical mantels of the Federal period, particularly those of Samuel McIntire in Salem, Massachusetts, are considered the apex of design. Arts & Crafts-era fireplaces with their neatly laid brick or art tile are another favorite. For these pages, we've deliberately selected some of the more unusual examples.

A mantel is the decorative frame for the fireplace opening. The word also may refer to an entire mantelpiece—say, with an overmantel or flanking display shelves—or simply to the mantelshelf. The surround is the material between the firebox and the mantel: heatproof stone, concrete, tile, or brick. Throughout the decades, motifs were interpreted differently in rural homes versus in high-style, urban dwellings.

**a brief history** Houses of the wealthy had elaborate, carved mantels as early as the mid 1700s. After the Revolution, decorative mantels popularized through builder's pattern books were lighter than their Georgian precedents, interpreting the neoclassical designs of Robert Adam. By 1800, American mantels often had delicate colonnettes flanking the fireplace opening, with a shelf above. Composition ornament (applied urns, swags, flowerpots) was already available, though mantels were also carved entirely in wood.

By the 1820s, the Greek Revival style introduced a less refined style for mantelpieces. Wood surrounds were simplified and made to look like they were built from slabs of marble. By the mid-19th century, some fireplace surrounds actually were made of marble (or slate painted in imitation of marble). Many mid-19th-

GROSS & DALEY PHOTOGRAPHY (TOP & OPP.); CAROLYN BATES



## FIREPLACES AT CENTER STAGE

Find stunners in every era: at Mount Vernon, in this 1886 Victorian, in the inglenook at the 1909 Gamble House. Although most mantels are modest, almost anything we can dream up has a precedent.

# Retain and restore **any original mantels, as they are an important element of style. If you're planning to add a fireplace or replace a missing mantel, consider how proportions, materials, and styles changed over time. Be assured that, for every period, you have many design options.**





**LEFT** The mantelpiece at Standen, by architect Philip Webb, is in keeping with the English Arts & Crafts style of William Morris. **FAR LEFT** Red brick and a copper hood add to the medieval atmosphere in an American Arts & Crafts room. **OPPOSITE** (clockwise from top left) Georgian carving in a 1797 Maine house. • Exotic fireplaces in an 1883 brownstone are made of cast iron. • Mid-Victorian carved marble. • Local cobblestones and slate at an 1890s summer camp. • At The Willows in New Jersey: a foyer mantelpiece in oak and chestnut, carved by a German cabinetmaker, 1854.

century marble mantels have an arched firebox opening. Spandrels forming the arch may overflow with carved fruits, leaves and flowers, or cherubic figures in three-dimensional relief. The style progression continued, embracing the Gothic Revival (pointy) and Renaissance Revival (carved wood, often figural).

Late Victorian Aesthetic or Eastlake mantels showed influences from medieval to Turkish and Japanese. Throughout the mid- and late-Victorian period, imported art tile was often used for the surround. The mantel proper may be minimal while the overmantel is an elaborate construction for the display of worldly *objets d'art*. A Victorian overmantel is indeed an étagère or whatnot, with niches and shelves backed by mirrors for better display—and to amplify gaslight. Appearing, too, in Georgian and Renaissance Revival treatments, the overmantel persisted in some fireplaces of the Arts & Crafts era. Today we think of art tile for bungalow-era fireplace surrounds, though brick was probably more prevalent. Prairie School mantels are modern, usually constructed all in masonry, with bold geometry such as a semicircle arch.

In the 20th century, the most widespread style for mantels was Colonial Revival. Wood mantels often were painted an off-white color. Various arch shapes define Tudor Revival and Spanish Colonial Revival mantels.

**design cues today** Fireplaces are different in every era and with every design style, so it's hard to make rules about overall size, which relates to height and width of firebox and surround, as well as room features. Puny looks terrible; on the other hand, going "baronial" can result in an overscaled, awkwardly proportioned focal point. Scale relates to both the actual and relative size of a piece in the room. Proportion deals with the relationships among various elements. You can have a well-proportioned mantel that is simply too big for the room. More likely, you'll encounter reasonably scaled mantels with distorted proportions, such as a too-narrow lintel (header) or overly wide legs. The hearth (extended fireplace floor) should always be wider than the mantelpiece, so that the legs sit on the hearth.

On a practical note: Old fireplaces allow heated air to go up the chimney, even actively drawing air out of the interior. Their efficiency can be improved by the use of a damper (at the throat above the firebox, or near the top of the chimney), by covering the firebox during cold weather, or by retro-fitting the firebox with a stove or modern insert that vents into the chimney flue.

SANDY AGRAFIOTIS (LEFT); COURTESY NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES; OPP. (FROM TOP LEFT): TODD CAVERLY; GROSS & DALEY PHOTOGRAPHY; PAUL ROCHELEAU; EDWARD ADDEO; SCOTT DORRANCE


FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 87.







## A HISTORICAL SCRAPBOOK

of period style and varied materials reveals carvings, polychromy, rustic brick and formal marble, local stone, and even pre-fabricated cast-iron mantelpieces painted to look like gilded wood.





# THE MANTELSCAPE

## A WELL-DRESSED MANTEL ADDS PERIOD SENSIBILITY. By Patricia Poore

You might bring out the inherent (or preferred) style of the room and your house with what you display on the mantel and how you arrange those objects. Even if your fireplaces themselves are plain and mundane, well-chosen accessories and objects will make a style statement to complement the house.

Traditional options **for the wall over the mantel** include artwork such as a painting, a mirror, taxidermy, or a textile. In the eclectic first quarter of the 20th century, art was often a plein-air or landscape painting, a portrait, or such period favorites as Edward Curtis prints of Native Americans. When a mirror was used, often it was beveled glass set into mouldings over the hearth, rather than a florid piece hung on the wall, as in previous periods. Animal heads continued to be popular in western and rustic homes and in dens.



**ABOVE** Casual beauty lends an Old Colonies sensibility to the old house.

Objects of great variety long have been **displayed on the mantelshelf.** These include travel photos in frames; pottery; candlesticks; vases with or without flowers; leather-bound books; framed art tile; antique ceramics; collectibles such as boxes, glassware, silver and pewter; small statues; and finds from nature—a bird's nest, a branch or driftwood, pinecones, seashells. The style and degree of formality in your house will guide you. Choose a theme, and remember that only the Victorian period championed clutter.

**The arrangement itself** helps define your style. Colonial Revival displays are symmetrical, sometimes obsessively so. Arts & Crafts arrangements sometimes use symmetry, as well, but often have an unstudied feeling with asymmetrical placement of objects—but balanced, of course, by height or volume.

Finish the look by choosing **the right fireplace accessories**. So many offerings are out there, from hand-forged tools to Art Nouveau screens. Different styles are available in both brass and iron. Generally, bright brass looks better in classical Colonial Revival and other more formal homes, while iron or bronze blend with very early, rustic, Craftsman, Tudor, and Spanish Colonial Revival interiors.

## *three* PERIOD EXAMPLES, *their motifs and arrangements* BY ALLISON KYLE LEOPOLD



**THE FEDERAL PERIOD, ca. 1789–1840**
A split set of four late-18th-century brass candlesticks, prized Chinese Export china (Perry didn't open trade with Japan until 1852), and a mid-18th-century Continental oil-on-board portrait, as may have arrived with a colonist, make for a simple and elegant display.



**MID VICTORIAN, ca. 1850–1875**
Increasing wealth and trade-happy empire building meant there was a lot of stuff. A Romantic oil painting backs a gilded Continental clock under a glass dome, blue Minton vases, brass figural candlesticks, fairy lamps with Burmese glass shades, and a cigar lighter.



**ARTS & CRAFTS ERA, ca. 1895–1925**
Displays are about quality and meaning, not quantity or opulence. An art-movement charger, pots by Van Briggle, and a Heintz bronze-over-sterling vase are honored. The philosophy implied by the Roycroft books is part of the aesthetic.

ERIC ROTH (TOP); LINDA SVENDSEN ARCHIVE, STYLED BY BRIAN D. COLEMAN (BTM.)



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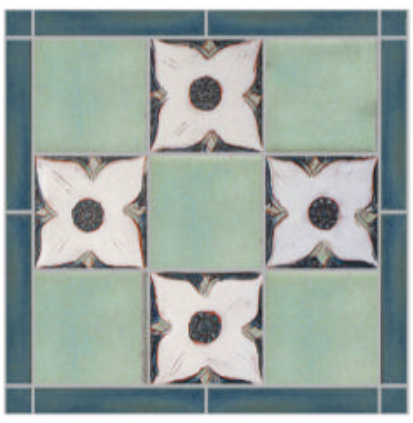

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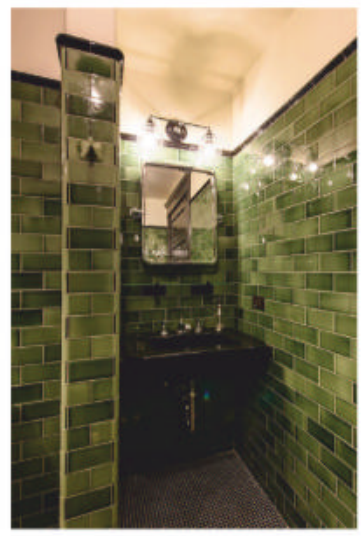
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**888-223-2545;**
**www.houseofantiquehardware.com**




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### JH Wall Paints

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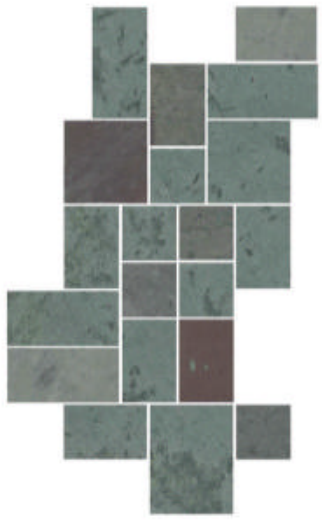
**207-443-2131; kennebeccompany.com**




### Plaster Magic®

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### Sheldon Slate Products

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### Specification Chemicals, Inc.

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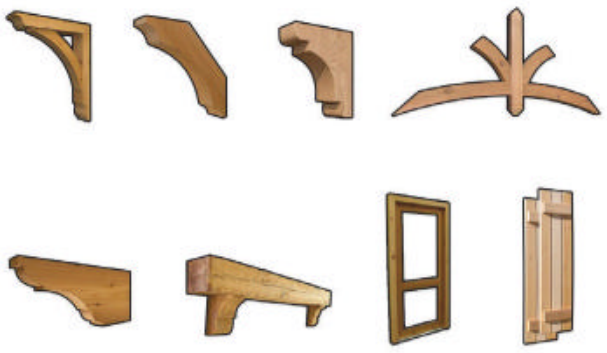
**413-582-6909; www.sundialwire.com**

# **PRODUCT** SHOWCASE



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Vintage and antique picture hanging paraphernalia for your home, Victorian to Arts & Crafts and beyond. We also offer picture rail hooks, picture nail covers and French gallery rods to complete the look and hang your art.
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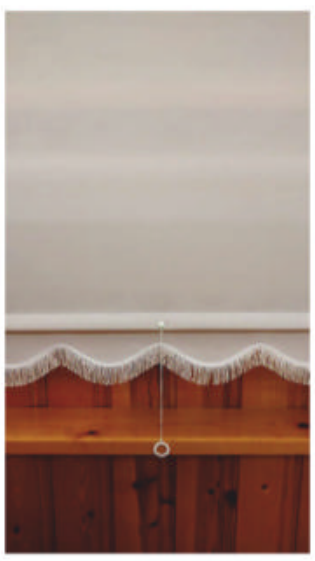
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# Resources

## SUCCESS: BLAND TO GRACIOUS

**BUILDER** Patrick Mulroy, **ReModern Builders, LLC** remodernbuilders.com
**GUTTERS** **FiberGutter** fibergutter.com
**CUSTOM TRIM** PVC **Whitewood Millwork** whitewoodmillwork.com
**WINDOWS** all-wood **Jeld-Wen** jeld-wen.com
**PAINT** body Saybrook Sage HC114 trim Manchester Tan HC81 accents Louisburg Green HC113 Richmond Gold HC41 **benjaminmoore.com**

## DESIGN: VIGNETTES

**PICTURE HANGING**
**House of Antique Hardware** houseofantiquehardware.com *Picture-rail mouldings, tassels; rail hooks in many styles* **Classic Accents** classicaccents.net *Brass hooks, kits, cord & tassels.* **Swan Picture Hangers** swanpicturehangers.com *Traditional hangers, hooks, tassels, brass nails, rosettes, cord & chain, picture-rail mouldings; Romantic, Victorian, Craftsman & Contemporary styles*
**PICTURE FRAMES**
**The Frame Gallery** theframegalleryboston.com *Custom framing, museum standards, period framing, restoration* **Craftsmen Hardware** craftsmenhardware.com *Hammered copper frames, wood frames* **Dard Hunter Studios** dardhunter.com *Authentic Arts & Crafts wood frames* **Fine Lines Framemakers** finelinesframing.com *Arts & Crafts, Prairie, custom wood frames* **Holton Studio Frame-makers** holtonframes.com *In-stock and custom wood frames with a specialty in authentic Arts & Crafts design & construction* **Mission Furnishings** missionfurnishings.com *Custom A&C-style picture frames* **Oak Park Home** oakparthome-hardware.com *Craftsman/Mission picture frames*
p. 21 **DESIGNER** **Sandra Vitzthum Architect** sandravitzthum.com
p. 24 **WALLPAPER** 'Golden Lily' **Morris & Co.** morrisandco.sandersondesigngroup.com
p. 25 **WALLPAPER** 'Votive Goddess' **Adelphi Paper Hangings** adelphipaperhangings.com

## CRAFTSMAN KITCHEN

**DESIGN/BUILD** **Craftsman Design**, Portland: craftsmandesign.com
**PAINTS** walls Miller Devine Hosta • cabinets Miller Devine Ship **Miller Paint** millerpaint.com
**KNOBS, BIN PULLS** **Rejuvenation** rejuvenation.com
**FLOORING** **Forbo Marmoleum** forbo.com/flooring/en-us/
**COUNTERTOPS** Red Dragon granite 2 cm thickness with a 1/8" radius edge profile

## PLASTER IN DEPTH

**AUTHOR**
**Huntsberry Interiors** instagram.com/joellehuntsberry *Custom plaster & finish plaster, including historic lime, tadelakt, Venetian, clay, earthen*

**PLASTER & LIME; REPAIR**
**American Clay** americanclay.com *Tinted clay, lime putty* **Color Atelier Paint** coloratelierpaint.com *Lime paint, plaster, tools* **Custom Building Products** custombuildingproducts.com *RedGuard waterproofing membrane* **DeGruchy's Limeworks US** limeworks.us *Lime mortars, binders, plasters, mineral paints; mortar analysis* **Down to Earth Design** buildnaturally.com *Custom earth-based building construction & finishes* **Durham's Water Putty** durhamswaterputty.com *Rock Hard Water Putty for plaster, drywall, wood & more* **Earthaus Plaster** earthausplaster.com *Lime plasters & putties, mineral pigments* **Japanese Plastering** japaneseplastering.com *Japanese lime plasters, tools* **JH Wall Paints** jhwallpaints.com *Zero-VOC lime wall paints, mineral primers, lime slurry* **Keim** keim-usa.com *Mineral silicate paints, indoor & masonry exterior* **Lancaster LimeWorks** lancasterlimeworks.com *Lime plaster & stucco, lime washes, black soap for tadelakt* **Modern Masters** modernmasters.com *Low-VOC acrylic Venetian plasters, top coats, Japanese trowels, metallic paints* **Package Pavement** packagepavement.com *Historic lime mortars, other concrete products* **Plaster Magic** plastermagic.com *Plaster repair adhesives & conditioners; kits* **Purity Limewash** purity-limewash.com *Natural lime paint finishes, primers, sealers* **Portola Paints** portolapaints.com *Lime wash paints, clay finishes* **Saint Astier/TransMineral USA** limes.us *Natural hydraulic lime, lime putty, Venetian plasters, lime paint, olive-oil black soap for lime plaster* **Specification Chemicals** spec-chem.com *Wall & roof repair products* **Vasari Plaster** vasariplaster.com *Lime paints & plasters*

## RESTORING A SCONCE

**PARTS**
**My Lamp Parts** mylampparts.com *Antique replacement parts* **Sundial Wire** sundialwire.com *Authentic cloth-covered & braided cord; lamp parts & wire*
**FINISHES**
**Amaco** amaco.com *Rub 'n Buff wax metallic finishes* **Krylon** krylon.com *Metallic spray paints* **Rust-Oleum** rustoleum.com *Metallic spray paints*

## DIY LINOLEUM

**REAL LINOLEUM**
**Armstrong** armstrong.com *Marmorette with NATURcote linoleum* **Forbo** forbo.com/flooring/en-us/ *Marmoleum linoleum in panels, squares, click system* **Linoleum City** linoleumcity.com *Retail source for linoleum*
**Related Resource**
**Laurie Crogan Inlay Floors** inlayfloors.com *Artist working in linoleum, cork & rubber to create custom decorative floors*

## ARTISTIC HOUSE

p. 61 **TABLE LAMP** **Mica Lamps** micalamps.com
**PAINTINGS** **The Oak Group**, Santa Barbara: oakgroup.org
p. 62 **DINING TABLE** **Hile Studio Inc.**, Monrovia, CA: hilestudio.com
**CHANDELIER** **Arroyo Craftsman** arroyo-craftsman.com
p. 63 **STICKLEY FURNITURE** reissues available from **Stickley** stickley.com
p. 65 **PENDANT LAMPS** **Arroyo Craftsman** *see above*
**BUTCHER BLOCK** **John Boos & Co.** johnboos.com
**Arts & Crafts Specialties**
**Bradbury & Bradbury Art Wallpapers** bradbury.com *Several collections of bungalow-era wall & ceiling papers, friezes, borders* **David Heide Design Studio** dhdstudio.com *Full-service architecture & interiors firm specializing in Prairie and Craftsman design* **Heritage Tile** heritagetile.com *Subway, mosaic & square tiles of the period* **Melton Workroom** meltonworkroom.com *Finished textiles, kits, stencil & applique, curtain hardware of the period* **The Persian Carpet** persiancarpet.com *Vintage or new handmade rugs in traditional & Arts & Crafts designs* **Vintage Doors** vintagedoors.com *Int./ext. doors &,screen doors in Craftsman, Prairie, Tudor styles*

## MID-CENTURY ENCINO

**ARCHITECT** Jose Fernandez, **F&B Design**, Culver City, CA: fandbdesign.com
**LANDSCAPE** **Urban Water Group** urbanwatergroup.com
p. 70 **CHAIRS** **Rapport International Furniture**, Los Angeles: rapportfurniture.com **SOFA/CHAIRS** leather **Natuzzi** natuzzi.com (North American store locator at website) **OIL DIPTYCH** artist **Bill Laursen**, Salt Lake City **GLASS DOORS** **Fleetwood** fleetwoodusa.com
p. 73 **COUNTERTOPS** **Caesarstone** caesarstone.com **BAR STOOLS** **Rapport International Furniture** *see above*

## HEARTH & HOME

**COMPONENTS**
**Driwood Moulding** driwood.com *Mantels & mouldings, in stock or custom* **More Than Moldings** morethanmoldings.com *Wood corbels, brackets, etc.* **TimberBuild** timberbuild.com *Wood corbels & other mantel components*
**ART TILE**
**Clay Squared to Infinity** claysquared.com *Tile suitable for fireplace surrounds* **Motawi Tile** motawi.com *Arts & Crafts art tile for fireplace, backsplash & more* **Pewabic Pottery** pewabic.org *Custom art tile for surrounds and hearths* **Shearrow Tile & Pottery** shearrowpottery.com *Handmade Arts & Crafts-style tiles, most with botanical motifs, for installations*
**Related Resources**
*More at* oldhouseonline.com/tile/

# “Helluva bar fight, you should see the other guy.”

—Chris Dodd

**DON’T** forget that some interior renovations end up affecting the exterior appearance of the house.



### “ONE-EYED WILLY”

Our correspondent writes: “I love *Old-House Journal.* When I saw this house in my neighborhood, I thought it might be a contender for Remuddling. It’s an otherwise attractive house, but a developer thought it would be a good idea to remove a front window. I call the house One-Eyed Willy. Such a terrible idea! What were they thinking?!

“The Detroit Shoreway in Cleveland is full of old houses. But the flippers and developers see dollar signs, so it has also become a hotbed of remuddling, inside and out,” she explains. “Many homes have been gutted to appeal to those looking for an open-concept floor plan.”

People remove a window to gain wall space for built-ins or furniture, and sometimes to block the view of a too-close neighbor. This one is a puzzle, though, as the removal is upstairs on the front of the house and robs a large section of that floor of natural light. The change also leaves the façade visually unbalanced.



**RIGHT** This intact American Foursquare is in the same neighborhood. **ABOVE** Lose something?

SARAH GREYWITT

**TWO WAYS TO WIN!** If you spot a classic example of remuddling, submit it to **lviator@aimmedia.com**. We’ll give you $100 if your photos are published. If you want to see your witty words on this page, enter our monthly caption contest at **facebook.com/oldhousejournal**.



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 2143 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50312. Periodicals postage paid at Des Moines, IA, and additional mailing offices. Vol. 51, No. 1. 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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